Histories

HERODOTUS

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Ἱστορίαι

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Histories · Herodotus

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/herodotus/histories

Greek text: A. D. Godley (1856–1925, ed.), *Herodotus*, 4 vols. (Loeb Classical Library; London: Heinemann, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920–1925), via the Perseus Digital Library (github.com/PerseusDL/canonical-greekLit) (canonical-greekLit, tlg0016.tlg001.perseus-grc2), CC BY-SA 4.0. Square brackets mark words the editor regards as interpolated; lost text is marked "…". English: translated from the Greek with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are book and chapter; the small numbers in the text are sections.

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INTRODUCTION

"Herodotus of Halicarnassus here presents his inquiry, so that what people have done may not be erased by time." With that sentence, written in the fifth century BC, history as we know it begins. Herodotus set out to record the great war between the Greeks and the Persian Empire—and to find out why it happened.

His search for causes takes him around the known world. Before the armies meet, we hear how Croesus of Lydia asked Solon who was the happiest of men, how Cyrus built the Persian Empire, how the Egyptians embalm their dead and the Scythians fight their wars, and what lies at the edges of the earth. Herodotus reports what he saw and what he was told, often giving several versions and saying which he believes.

The last third of the work tells the story of the invasions themselves: the Athenian victory at Marathon in 490 BC, and ten years later Xerxes' vast army, the stand of Leonidas and his Spartans at Thermopylae, and the sea battle at Salamis, which saved Greece. Later scholars divided the work into nine books and named each after one of the nine Muses.

Book 1 (Clio)

Why Greeks and Persians fought; Croesus of Lydia and Solon; the rise of Cyrus the Great and the Persian conquest of Asia.

PREFACE

Herodotus states his purpose: to record great deeds of Greeks and non-Greeks and why they fought.

1.0 This is the presentation of the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus. Its purpose is that what people have done may not be blotted out by time, and that great and marvelous deeds, some displayed by Greeks and some by non-Greeks, may not go unsung. Among other things, it shows why they went to war with one another.[1]

THE STOLEN WOMEN: IO, EUROPA, MEDEA, HELEN

Persian and Phoenician accounts trace the quarrel to a series of abducted women, ending with Troy.

1.1 Now the learned men among the Persians say that it was the Phoenicians who caused the quarrel. They say that the Phoenicians came from the sea called the Red Sea to this sea of ours, and settled the land they still live in today. At once they took to long voyages, and carrying Egyptian and Assyrian cargoes they put in at various places, among them Argos. 2 At that time Argos was the foremost of all the places in the land now called Greece. The Phoenicians, they say, came to this Argos and set out their

1 Halicarnassus (modern Bodrum, in south-western Turkey) was a Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor. Herodotus was born there around 484 BC.

cargo for sale.[2] [3] On the fifth or sixth day after their arrival, when they had sold almost everything, a large number of women came down to the shore, and among them was the king's daughter. Her name, they say, was Io, daughter of Inachus, and on this the Greeks agree. [4] The women were standing by the ship's stern, buying whatever goods they most wanted, when the Phoenicians urged each other on and rushed at them. Most of the women got away, but Io was seized along with some others. The Phoenicians threw them into the ship and sailed off for Egypt.

1.2 This, according to the Persians, is how Io came to Egypt, and not as the Greeks tell it, and this was the first of the wrongs. After this, they say, some Greeks put in at Tyre in Phoenicia and carried off the king's daughter Europa. They cannot give their names, but these may have been Cretans. So far, they say, it was tit for tat. After this, though, the Greeks were to blame for the second wrong. [2] They sailed in a long ship to Aea in Colchis, on the river Phasis. There they finished the rest of the business they had come for, and then carried off the king's daughter Medea. [3] The king of the Colchians sent a herald to Greece to demand compensation for the abduction and to ask for his daughter back. The Greeks answered that they themselves had been given no compensation for the abduction of Io of Argos, so they would not give any either.[3]

1.3 In the second generation after this, they say, Alexander son of Priam heard all this and wanted to get himself a wife from Greece by abduction. He was quite sure he would pay no penalty, since the Greeks had paid none. [2] So he carried off Helen. The Greeks decided first to send messengers to demand Helen back and to ask for compensation for the abduction. When they made these demands, the Trojans threw the abduction of Medea in their faces: the Greeks, the Trojans said, had neither paid

2 For Herodotus the "Red Sea" includes the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.
3 This is the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece. Colchis lay at the eastern end of the Black Sea.

compensation nor given her back when asked, and yet they wanted compensation from others.[4]

1.4 Up to this point, they say, there had been nothing but abductions on both sides. From then on, though, the Greeks were very much to blame, because they began a military expedition into Asia before the Persians made one into Europe. 2 Carrying off women, in the Persians' view, is the act of wrongdoers. But to make a great fuss about avenging them once they have been carried off is the act of fools, and to pay them no attention is the act of sensible men. For clearly, if the women had not wanted it themselves, they would never have been carried off. 3 The Persians say that they, the people of Asia, made nothing of having their women carried off. The Greeks, by contrast, gathered a great expedition for the sake of a Lacedaemonian woman, then came to Asia and destroyed the power of Priam. 4 Ever since then, they say, they have always regarded the Greek world as their enemy. For the Persians claim Asia and the non-Greek peoples living in it as their own, but they consider Europe and the Greek world to be something separate.[5]

1.5 That is how the Persians say it happened, and they find that their hostility to the Greeks began with the capture of Troy. 2 About Io, however, the Phoenicians do not agree with the Persians. They say they did not use abduction to bring her to Egypt. In Argos, they say, she had been sleeping with the ship's captain. When she found out she was pregnant, she was ashamed to face her parents, and so she sailed away with the Phoenicians of her own free will, so that she would not be found out. 3 That is what the Persians and the Phoenicians say. For my part, I am not going to say whether these things happened this way or some other way. Instead I will point out the man I myself know to have first begun doing wrong to the Greeks, and then I will go on with my account, covering small cities and great ones alike. 4 For many of the cities that were great long ago have become small, and those that were great in my own time were small

4 Alexander is Paris, prince of Troy.
5 Lacedaemonians: the Spartans and the communities they ruled.

before. Knowing, then, that human happiness never stays in the same place, I will make mention of both alike.

CROESUS OF LYDIA

Herodotus begins with Croesus, the first non-Greek known to have subjected Greeks to tribute.

1.6 Croesus was a Lydian by birth, the son of Alyattes, and tyrant of the peoples on this side of the river Halys. The Halys flows from the south between the Syrians and the Paphlagonians and empties northward into the Black Sea, the so-called Euxine. 2 This Croesus was the first non-Greek we know of to subjugate some of the Greeks and make them pay tribute, and to make friends of others. He subjugated the Ionians, Aeolians and Dorians of Asia, and he made friends of the Lacedaemonians. 3 Before Croesus' reign all the Greeks were free. The expedition of the Cimmerians that reached Ionia, which came before Croesus' time, was not a conquest of the cities but a raid for plunder.[6]

1.7 The rule, which had belonged to the Heraclids, passed to Croesus' family, called the Mermnads, in the following way. 2 Candaules, whom the Greeks call Myrsilus, was tyrant of Sardis and a descendant of Alcaeus son of Heracles. For Agron, son of Ninus, son of Belus, son of Alcaeus, was the first of the Heraclids to be king of Sardis, and Candaules son of Myrsus was the last. 3 Those who were kings of this country before Agron were descendants of Lydus son of Atys, after whom this whole people was named Lydian; before that they had been called Meonians. 4 The Heraclids, to whom these kings had entrusted the government, obtained the rule because of an oracle. They were descended from Heracles and a slave woman belonging to Iardanus, and they ruled for twenty-two generations, five hundred and five years, son taking over the rule from father, down to Candaules son of Myrsus.[7]

6 A tyrant was a ruler who had seized sole power; the word did not necessarily imply cruelty.

7 Sardis, in western Asia Minor, was the capital of Lydia.

GYGES AND THE WIFE OF CANDAULES

Candaules makes his bodyguard Gyges see the queen naked; she makes Gyges kill him and take the throne.

1.8 Now this Candaules fell in love with his own wife, and in his love he believed that his wife was by far the most beautiful woman in the world. Among his bodyguards there was one, Gyges son of Dascylus, whom he liked especially, and believing what he did, Candaules used to confide even his most serious affairs to this Gyges; above all, he would praise his wife's looks to excess. 2 Not long afterward (for things were bound to turn out badly for Candaules), he said this to Gyges: "Gyges, I don't think you believe me when I tell you about my wife's looks—people trust their ears less than their eyes—so find a way to see her naked." 3 Gyges cried out and said, "Master, what an unsound thing to say, telling me to look at my mistress naked! When a woman takes off her clothes, she takes off her modesty with them. 4 People worked out long ago what is right, and we ought to learn from it. One of those things is this: each of us should look at what is his own. I believe she is the most beautiful of all women, and I beg you not to ask me to do what is unlawful."

1.9 With words like these Gyges tried to fend him off, afraid that some harm would come to him from it. But Candaules answered: "Don't worry, Gyges. Don't be afraid of me, thinking I'm saying this to test you, or of my wife, thinking some harm will come to you from her. To begin with, I'll arrange things so that she won't even know you've seen her. 2 I'll put you in the room where we sleep, behind the open door. After I've come in, my wife will come to bed too. There's a chair near the entrance. She'll take off her clothes one by one and lay each of them on it, and you'll be able to look at her at your leisure. 3 Then, when she walks from the chair to the bed and you're behind her back, it's up to you to make sure she doesn't see you going out the door."

1.10 Since Gyges could not escape, he went along with it. When Candaules judged it was time for bed, he brought Gyges into the room, and soon afterward his wife came in too. As she came in and laid down her clothes, Gyges watched her. 2 When her back was to him as she went to the bed, he slipped out and made his way outside—and the woman caught sight of him going out. She realized what her husband had done, but she neither cried out in her shame nor let on that she had noticed; she had it in mind to take revenge on Candaules. 3 For among the Lydians, and among nearly all other non-Greeks too, it is a great disgrace even for a man to be seen naked.

1.11 So for the moment she gave nothing away and kept quiet. But as soon as it was day, she got ready those of her household servants she saw were most loyal to her, and sent for Gyges. He came when he was called, thinking she knew nothing of what had happened, for he had been used to coming before whenever the queen sent for him. 2 When Gyges arrived, the woman said: "Gyges, there are two roads before you now, and I give you the choice which one you want to take. Either kill Candaules and have me and the kingdom of Lydia, or you must die yourself, right here and now, so that you won't go on obeying Candaules in everything and see what you shouldn't. 3 One of you must die: either he, who planned this, or you, who looked at me naked and did what is not allowed." For a while Gyges was astounded at what she said; then he begged her not to force him to make such a choice. 4 He could not persuade her, though. He saw that the necessity truly lay before him: either kill his master or be killed by others himself. He chose to survive. So he asked her: "Since you're forcing me to kill my master against my will, tell me how we're going to go about it." 5 She replied, "The attack will come from the very place where he showed me naked, and it will be made while he's asleep."

1.12 When they had arranged the plot, and night had come (for Gyges was not let off, and there was no way out for him at all: either he or Candaules had to die), he followed the woman into the bedroom. She gave him a dagger and hid him behind that

same door. [2] Then, while Candaules was asleep, Gyges slipped out and killed him, and so took both the wife and the kingdom. This is the Gyges whom Archilochus of Paros, who lived at the same time, mentioned in an iambic trimeter.[8]

1.13 He gained the kingdom and was confirmed in it by the oracle at Delphi. For when the Lydians took Candaules' fate badly and were up in arms, Gyges' supporters and the rest of the Lydians came to an agreement: if the oracle declared him king of the Lydians, he should be king; if not, he should give the rule back to the Heraclids. [2] The oracle did declare it, and so Gyges became king. But the Pythia added this much: vengeance for the Heraclids would come upon Gyges' descendant in the fifth generation. Neither the Lydians nor their kings took any account of this saying until it was fulfilled.[9]

1.14 That is how the Mermnads took the tyranny, stripping it from the Heraclids. Once he was tyrant, Gyges sent offerings to Delphi, and not a few: of all the silver offerings at Delphi, most are his. Besides the silver, he dedicated a vast amount of gold, and among it the thing most worth remembering: six golden mixing bowls set up there as his offerings. [2] These stand in the treasury of the Corinthians and weigh thirty talents. To tell the truth, though, the treasury does not belong to the Corinthian state but to Cypselus son of Eetion. This Gyges was the first non-Greek we know of to dedicate offerings at Delphi, after Midas son of Gordias, king of Phrygia. [3] For Midas, too, dedicated the royal throne on which he used to sit to give judgment, and it is well worth seeing; this throne stands in the same place as Gyges' bowls. The gold and silver that Gyges dedicated is called "Gygian" by the Delphians, after the man who gave it.[10]

1.15 Once he was in power, Gyges too led an army into the territory of Miletus and of Smyrna, and he captured the town of Colophon. But since no other great deed came from him in a

8 Archilochus was a Greek poet of the seventh century BC; a surviving line of his begins "I do not care for the wealth of Gyges, rich in gold."
9 The Pythia was Apollo's priestess at Delphi, who spoke his oracles.
10 The talent was a unit of weight, roughly 26 kilograms (about 57 pounds), and also a large sum of money.

reign of thirty-eight years, we will pass him by with this much said. I will make mention instead of Ardys son of Gyges, who was king after Gyges. He captured Priene and invaded the territory of Miletus. While he was tyrant of Sardis, the Cimmerians, driven from their homes by the nomad Scythians, came into Asia and took Sardis, all except the acropolis.

1.16 Ardys reigned for forty-nine years and was succeeded by Sadyattes son of Ardys, who reigned for twelve years; Sadyattes was succeeded by Alyattes. 2 Alyattes made war on Cyaxares, the descendant of Deioces, and on the Medes. He drove the Cimmerians out of Asia, took Smyrna, which had been founded from Colophon, and invaded the territory of Clazomenae. He did not come away from there as he wished, but with a heavy defeat. During his reign, however, he accomplished other deeds, and these are the ones most worth telling.

1.17 He made war on the Milesians, having inherited the war from his father. He would march against Miletus and besiege it in this way. Whenever the crops in the fields were ripe, he would invade with his army, and his army marched to the music of panpipes, harps, and flutes, both women's and men's. 2 When he reached Milesian territory, he did not pull down the houses out in the countryside, or set fire to them, or tear off their doors, but let them stand where they were. Instead, he would destroy the trees and the crops in the fields and then go back home. 3 For the Milesians had control of the sea, so that a blockade was no use to his army. The Lydian did not pull down the houses for this reason: so that the Milesians would have a base from which to sow and work the land, and he himself, once they had worked it, would have something to ravage when he invaded.

1.18 He waged war in this way for eleven years, and in that time the Milesians suffered two great disasters: one when they fought at Limeneium in their own territory, the other in the plain of the Maeander. 2 For six of the eleven years Sadyattes son of Ardys was still ruling the Lydians, and it was he who was invading Milesian territory with his army at that time, for this Sadyattes was also the one who had started the war. For the five years that

followed those six, the war was waged by Alyattes son of Sadyattes, who, as I have already shown, inherited it from his father and pressed it hard. [3] None of the Ionians helped the Milesians bear the burden of this war, except only the Chians. They came to their aid to repay like for like, since the Milesians had earlier helped the Chians fight their war against the people of Erythrae.

1.19 In the twelfth year, while the army was burning the grain, something of this kind happened. As soon as the grain caught fire, the flames, driven by the wind, reached a temple of Athena known as Assesian, and the temple caught fire and burned down. [2] At the time no one took any notice, but after the army got back to Sardis, Alyattes fell ill. As his illness dragged on, he sent envoys to Delphi, either on someone's advice or because he himself decided to send and ask the god about his illness. [3] When they reached Delphi, the Pythia said she would not give them an answer until they rebuilt the temple of Athena that they had burned at Assesus, in Milesian territory.

1.20 This is how I know it happened, as I heard it from the Delphians. But the Milesians add the following. Periander son of Cypselus, they say, who was a very close guest-friend of Thrasybulus, then tyrant of Miletus, learned of the answer the oracle had given Alyattes and sent a messenger to tell Thrasybulus, so that he would know in advance and could plan for the situation.[11]

1.21 That is how the Milesians say it happened. When this answer was reported to Alyattes, he immediately sent a herald to Miletus, wishing to make a truce with Thrasybulus and the Milesians for as long as it took him to build the temple. While the envoy was on his way to Miletus, Thrasybulus, who had learned the whole story clearly in advance and knew what Alyattes meant to do, devised the following plan. [2] He gathered all the grain there was in the town, both his own and that of private citizens, into the marketplace, and gave the Milesians

11 Guest-friendship was a formal, often hereditary bond of hospitality and mutual obligation between men of different cities.

notice that when he gave the signal, they should all start drinking and reveling together.

1.22 Thrasybulus did this and gave these orders for one reason: so that the herald from Sardis would see a great heap of grain piled up and the people enjoying themselves, and report it to Alyattes. 2 And that is just what happened. When the herald had seen all this and delivered the Lydian's message to Thrasybulus, he went back to Sardis, and, as I learn, it was for no other reason than this that peace was made. 3 Alyattes had expected that there was a severe famine in Miletus and that the people had been worn down to the last extremity of misery. But when the herald returned from Miletus, what he heard was the opposite of what he himself had supposed. 4 Soon afterward the two sides made peace, on condition that they would be guest-friends and allies of each other. Alyattes built two temples to Athena at Assesus instead of one, and he himself recovered from his illness. That is how things went for Alyattes in his war with the Milesians and Thrasybulus.

ARION AND THE DOLPHIN

Thrown overboard by sailors, the singer Arion is carried to land on a dolphin's back.

1.23 Periander, the man who revealed the oracle's answer to Thrasybulus, was the son of Cypselus, and he was tyrant of Corinth. The Corinthians say, and the Lesbians agree with them, that a very great marvel happened in his lifetime: Arion of Methymna was carried on a dolphin to Taenarum. Arion was a singer to the lyre second to none of his day, and the first man we know of to compose the dithyramb, give it its name and produce it, at Corinth.[12]

1.24 They say that this Arion, who spent most of his time at Periander's court, wanted to sail to Italy and Sicily, and that after earning a great deal of money there he wished to come back to Corinth. 2 He set out from Tarentum, they say, and since he trus-

12 The dithyramb was a choral song in honor of Dionysus.

ted no one more than Corinthians, he hired a ship crewed by Corinthian men. But out on the open sea these men plotted to throw Arion overboard and keep his money. He realized this and begged them, offering them his money but pleading for his life. [3] He could not persuade them, however. The sailors ordered him either to kill himself, if he wanted burial on land, or to jump into the sea at once. [4] Driven to this desperate pass, Arion begged them, since that was their decision, to let him stand on the quarterdeck in his full costume and sing; and he promised that once he had sung he would do away with himself. [5] The prospect of hearing the best singer in the world delighted them, and they withdrew from the stern to the middle of the ship. He put on his full costume, took up his lyre, stood on the quarterdeck and performed the Orthian song from beginning to end; and as the song ended he threw himself into the sea, just as he was, in his full costume. [6] The sailors sailed off to Corinth, but a dolphin, they say, took Arion on its back and carried him to Taenarum.[13] There, according to them, he went ashore and made his way to Corinth in his costume, and when he arrived he told the whole story. [7] Periander did not believe him, kept Arion under guard and would not let him go anywhere, and waited watchfully for the sailors. When they arrived, they were summoned and asked if they had any news of Arion. They said that he was safe and well in Italy and that they had left him doing well in Tarentum—and at that Arion appeared before them, just as he had been when he jumped overboard. They were thunderstruck and, now that they had been caught out, could no longer deny it. [8] This is what the Corinthians and the Lesbians say, and at Taenarum there is a small bronze offering dedicated by Arion: a man riding on a dolphin.

[1.25] Alyattes the Lydian, after fighting the war against the Milesians to its end, died some time later, having reigned for fifty-seven years. [2] When he recovered from his illness he dedicated at Delphi—the second of his family to do so—a great silver

13 The Orthian song (nomos orthios) was a solo composition known for its high, stirring pitch.

mixing bowl and a stand of welded iron. Of all the offerings at Delphi it is the one most worth seeing. It is the work of Glaucus of Chios, the one man of all mankind who invented the welding of iron.

1.26 When Alyattes died, his son Croesus succeeded to the kingship at the age of thirty-five. The first Greeks he attacked were the Ephesians. 2 When he besieged them, the Ephesians dedicated their city to Artemis by tying a rope from her temple to the city wall. Between the old city, which was the one then under siege, and the temple is a distance of seven stades. 3 These were the first Croesus attacked; afterwards he attacked the Ionians and Aeolians, each in turn, bringing different charges against different peoples. Where he could find greater grounds he brought greater charges, and against some of them he brought even trivial ones.[14]

1.27 When the Greeks of Asia had been subdued and made to pay tribute, he next had the idea of building ships and attacking the islanders. 2 Everything was ready for the shipbuilding when a visitor came to Sardis: some say it was Bias of Priene, others Pittacus of Mytilene. Croesus asked him whether there was any news from Greece, and his answer, they say, put a stop to the shipbuilding. 3 "King," he said, "the islanders are buying up ten thousand horses, intending to march against you and Sardis." Croesus, hoping he was telling the truth, said: "If only the gods would put that idea into the islanders' heads—to come against the sons of the Lydians with horses!"[15] 4 The other took him up: "King, you seem very eager in your prayer to catch the islanders on horseback on the mainland, and your hope is a reasonable one. But what do you think the islanders are praying for, ever since they learned that you were about to build ships against them, if not to catch Lydians at sea? Then they could take vengeance on you for the Greeks who live on the mainland, whom you are holding in slavery." 5 Croesus, they say, was greatly

14 A stade was about 600 feet (roughly 180 meters).
15 Bias and Pittacus were both counted among the traditional Seven Sages of Greece.

pleased with this conclusion, and since he thought the man had spoken to the point, he took his advice and stopped building ships. And so he made a pact of friendship with the Ionians who live on the islands.

1.28 As time went on, nearly all the peoples living this side of the Halys river had been subdued; apart from the Cilicians and the Lycians, Croesus had conquered all the rest and held them under his rule. They are these: Lydians, Phrygians, Mysians, Mariandynians, Chalybes, Paphlagonians, the Thracians called Thynians and Bithynians, Carians, Ionians, Dorians, Aeolians and Pamphylians. When these had been subdued and Croesus was adding them to the Lydian realm,

CROESUS AND SOLON

Croesus shows Solon his treasures, but Solon will not call him happy before seeing how his life ends.

1.29 there came to Sardis, then at the height of its wealth, all the sages of Greece who happened to be alive at that time, each arriving in his own time. Among them was Solon, an Athenian. He had made laws for the Athenians at their request and then gone abroad for ten years, sailing off on the pretext of seeing the world, so that he would not be forced to repeal any of the laws he had laid down. 2 The Athenians could not do that themselves, since they were bound by solemn oaths to live for ten years under whatever laws Solon made for them.[16]

1.30 So for these reasons, and to see the world, Solon went abroad, and he came to Egypt, to the court of Amasis, and then to Sardis, to Croesus. When he arrived, Croesus entertained him as his guest in the palace. Then on the third or fourth day, at Croesus' order, servants took Solon around the treasuries and showed him how great and rich everything was. 2 When he had looked at it all and examined it as far as he had the chance, Croesus put this question to him: "My Athenian guest, a great

16 Solon was the Athenian statesman and poet whose law code dates from the early sixth century BC.

deal of talk about you has reached us here, about your wisdom and your travels—how in your love of wisdom you have traveled over much of the earth to see it. So now a desire has come over me to ask you whether you have ever yet seen anyone who was the most blessed of all men."[17] [3] He asked this expecting that he himself was the most blessed of men. But Solon did not flatter him in the least; he spoke the plain truth. "King," he said, "Tellus of Athens." [4] Croesus was astonished at the answer and asked sharply, "On what grounds do you judge Tellus to be the most blessed?" Solon said: "First, Tellus lived when his city was prospering, and he had fine and noble sons, and he saw children born to every one of them, and all of them survived. Second, when he was well off in life, by our standards, the end of his life was most glorious. [5] For when the Athenians fought a battle against their neighbors at Eleusis, he came to the rescue, put the enemy to flight and died a most splendid death. The Athenians buried him at public expense on the very spot where he fell, and honored him greatly."

1.31 When Solon had spurred Croesus on by telling him all about Tellus and his many blessings, Croesus asked whom he had seen next after him, fully expecting at least to carry off second prize. Solon said, "Cleobis and Biton. [2] They were Argives by birth, they had enough to live on, and on top of that they had such bodily strength as this: both alike were prize-winning athletes, and what is more, this story is told about them. The Argives were holding a festival of Hera, and their mother absolutely had to be driven to the temple in a cart, but their oxen did not come back from the field in time. Since time was running out, the young men put themselves under the yoke and pulled the wagon, with their mother riding in it. They brought her forty-five stades and arrived at the temple. [3] After they had done this, in full view of the assembled festival, the best end of life came to them, and in them the god showed that it is better for a human being to be dead than to be alive. The Argive men crowded around and called the young men blessed for their

17 Amasis was king of Egypt from 570 to 526 BC.

strength, while the Argive women called their mother blessed for having such children. [4] Their mother, overjoyed at the deed and the praise, stood before the statue of the goddess and prayed that she would grant Cleobis and Biton, her children, who had honored her greatly, whatever is best for a human being to obtain. [5] After this prayer, when they had sacrificed and feasted, the young men lay down to sleep in the temple itself and never rose again; this was the end that held them. The Argives had statues made of them and dedicated them at Delphi, as men who had proved themselves the best."

[1.32] So Solon awarded these two second place in happiness. But Croesus, irritated, said: "My Athenian guest, is our happiness so utterly dismissed as nothing that you don't even rank us with private citizens?" Solon said: "Croesus, you are asking about human affairs a man who knows that the divine is altogether jealous and troublesome. [2] In a long span of time one gets to see many things one would rather not, and to suffer many too. I set the limit of a human life at seventy years. [3] Those seventy years make twenty-five thousand two hundred days, if no intercalary month is added. But if every other year is to be lengthened by a month, so that the seasons come round at the proper time, then over the seventy years there are thirty-five intercalary months, and these months make one thousand and fifty days. [4] Of all these days in the seventy years, which come to twenty-six thousand two hundred and fifty, not one brings anything at all like any other. So, Croesus, man is entirely a creature of chance. [5] To me you appear to be very rich and king of many people. But as for what you asked me, I can't call you that yet, not until I learn that you have ended your life well. The very rich man is in no way more blessed than the man who has just enough for the day, unless fortune stays with him so that he ends his life well with all his good things about him. Many very wealthy men are not blessed, while many with a modest livelihood are fortunate. [6] The very rich man who is not blessed has the advantage over the fortunate man in two respects only, while the fortunate man has the advantage over the rich, unblessed one in many. The rich

man is better able to fulfill his desires and to bear a great disaster when it strikes him. But the other has the advantage in these ways: he is not as able as the rich man to bear disaster and desire, but his good fortune keeps them away from him, and he is sound in body, free of sickness, untouched by troubles, with fine children and good looks. 7 If, besides all this, he also ends his life well, then he is the man you are looking for, the one who deserves to be called blessed. But until he dies, hold back and do not call him happy, but fortunate.[18] 8 Now, no one, being human, can gather all these things together, just as no country is self-sufficient in providing everything for itself: it has one thing and lacks another, and the country that has the most is the best. In the same way no single human body is self-sufficient: it has one thing and lacks another. 9 But whoever keeps the most of these things to the end and then ends his life gracefully, he, King, in my view has the right to bear this name. One must look to the end of every matter, to see how it will turn out. For the god has given many people a glimpse of blessedness and then torn them up by the roots."

1.33 In saying this, Solon did not please Croesus in any way, and Croesus, thinking him of no account, sent him away. He considered him a thoroughly ignorant man, someone who disregarded the good things at hand and told people to look to the end of every matter.

ATYS AND ADRASTUS

A dream warns Croesus his son will die by an iron spear; the exile Adrastus kills him by accident.

1.34 After Solon had gone, a great retribution from the god overtook Croesus, presumably because he had considered himself the most blessed of all men. Soon afterwards, as he slept, a dream stood over him and revealed to him the truth of the mis-

18 Solon distinguishes being ὄλβιος, truly blessed or happy in a life completed well, from being εὐτυχής, merely fortunate: the origin of the saying "call no man happy until he is dead."

fortunes that were to come concerning his son. [2] Croesus had two sons. One of them was disabled, for he was deaf; the other was by far the first in every way among the young men of his age. His name was Atys. It was this Atys that the dream pointed out to Croesus: he would lose him, struck by an iron spear-point. [3] When he woke up and thought it over, the dream terrified him. He found a wife for his son, and though the young man had been accustomed to command the Lydians in the field, he no longer sent him out on any such business anywhere. Javelins, spears and every such thing that people use in war he had removed from the men's quarters and piled up in the inner chambers, so that nothing hanging on the wall might fall on his son.

1.35 While he was busy with his son's wedding, a man arrived at Sardis in the grip of misfortune, his hands unclean. He was a Phrygian by birth, of the royal family. He came to Croesus' house and asked to receive purification according to the custom of the country, and Croesus purified him.[19] [2] The Lydians' way of purifying is much like the Greeks'. When Croesus had performed the customary rites, he asked where he came from and who he was, saying: [3] "Sir, who are you, and from where in Phrygia have you come to sit at my hearth? What man or woman did you kill?" He answered: "King, I am the son of Gordias son of Midas, and my name is Adrastus. I killed my own brother without meaning to, and I am here because my father drove me out and stripped me of everything." [4] Croesus answered him: "You are descended from men who are our friends, and you have come to friends. Here you will lack nothing as long as you stay in our house, and the more lightly you bear this misfortune, the more you will gain."

1.36 So he lived in Croesus' house. At this same time a monster of a boar appeared on Mysian Olympus. It would come rushing down from that mountain and ravage the Mysians' fields. Often the Mysians went out against it, but they did it no harm and instead suffered harm from it. [2] At last messengers from the

19 A killer, even an unintentional one, was considered polluted and had to be ritually cleansed before he could rejoin society.

Mysians came to Croesus and said: "King, a huge monster of a boar has appeared in our country and is ravaging our fields. We are eager to kill it, but we can't. So now we ask you to send your son with us, along with a picked band of young men and dogs, so that we can rid our country of it."[20] 3 That was their request. But Croesus, remembering the words of the dream, said to them: "Don't mention my son again; I wouldn't send him with you. He has just been married, and that is what occupies him now. But I will send picked Lydians and my whole hunting pack with you, and I will order those who go to be as eager as they can in helping you rid your country of the beast."

1.37 That was his answer. The Mysians were satisfied with this, but then Croesus' son came in; he had heard what the Mysians were asking for. When Croesus refused to send his son, at any rate, with them, the young man said to him: 2 "Father, once the finest and noblest thing for us was to go to wars and to hunts and win a name for ourselves. But now you have shut me out of both, though you have seen no cowardice or lack of spirit in me. With what eyes am I to face people now, going to and from the marketplace? 3 What sort of man will the citizens think me, and what sort will my new wife think me? What sort of husband will she think she is living with? So either let me go on the hunt, or persuade me by argument that it is better for me to have things done this way."

1.38 Croesus answered: "My son, I am not doing this because I have seen cowardice or anything else unbecoming in you. A vision came to me in a dream while I slept and said that you would not live long, that you would die by an iron spear-point. 2 Because of this vision I hurried on this marriage of yours, and I do not send you out on the ventures that come up, but keep guard over you, in the hope that I can somehow smuggle you safely through my own lifetime. You are, as it happens, my one and only son; the other, whose hearing is ruined, I do not count as mine."

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20 Mysian Olympus is a mountain in northwestern Asia Minor, not the Olympus in Greece.

1.39 The young man answered: "Father, it's understandable, after seeing a vision like that, that you should keep guard over me. But there is something you don't understand, something in the dream that has escaped you, and it's right that I should explain it to you. 2 You say the dream told you I would die by an iron spear-point. But what hands does a boar have, what iron spear-point, for you to be afraid of? If it had told you I would die by a tusk, or by something else like that, then you would be right to do what you're doing. But as it is, it said by a spear-point. So since our fight isn't against men, let me go."

1.40 Croesus answered: "My son, in a way you have beaten me by setting out your view of the dream. So, as one beaten by you, I change my mind and let you go on the hunt."

1.41 Having said this, Croesus sent for the Phrygian Adrastus, and when he came, said to him: "Adrastus, when you were struck by a grievous misfortune, which I do not hold against you, I purified you, and I have taken you into my house and keep you there, providing for all your needs. 2 So now—since you owe me good in return for the good I did you first—I want you to be my son's guardian as he sets out on the hunt, in case any thieving bandits appear on the road to do you harm. 3 Besides, you too ought to go where you can win distinction by your deeds. It runs in your family, and you have the strength besides."

1.42 Adrastus answered: "King, otherwise I would not be going to a contest like this. It isn't fitting for someone who has met with such misfortune to go among young men of his own age who are doing well; I have no wish for it, either, and for many reasons I would have held myself back. 2 But now, since you are pressing me and I must do what pleases you—for I owe you a return of good—I am ready to do this. As for your son, whom you bid me guard, you may expect him to come home unharmed, as far as his guardian can see to it."

1.43 When Adrastus had answered Croesus in these words, they set out, equipped with picked young men and dogs. They reached Mount Olympus, searched for the beast and, when they

found it, surrounded it in a ring and hurled javelins at it. [2] Then the guest—the very man who had been purified of the killing, Adrastus by name—threw his javelin at the boar, missed it, and hit Croesus' son. [3] So he was struck by the spear-point and fulfilled what the dream had foretold. Someone ran to bring Croesus the news of what had happened, and when he reached Sardis, he told him of the fight and of his son's fate.

1.44 Croesus was devastated by his son's death, and he lamented all the more bitterly because the killer was the man he himself had purified of bloodshed. [2] In the terrible anguish of his misfortune he called on Zeus of Purification, calling him to witness what he had suffered at the hands of his guest. He called on him too as Zeus of the Hearth and Zeus of Comradeship, naming the same god each time: of the Hearth, because he had taken the guest into his house and, without knowing it, had been feeding his son's killer; and of Comradeship, because he had sent him as a guardian and found him his worst enemy.

1.45 After this the Lydians arrived carrying the body, and behind it followed the killer. He stood in front of the corpse and gave himself up to Croesus, stretching out his hands and urging Croesus to slaughter him over the dead man. He told of his earlier misfortune and how on top of it he had ruined the man who had purified him, and said that his life was no longer worth living. [2] When Croesus heard this, he took pity on Adrastus, even though his own grief was so great, and said to him: "Stranger, I have from you all the justice I need, since you condemn yourself to death. It is not you who are to blame for this evil that has come upon me, except that you carried it out without meaning to; it is some god, I suppose, who long ago warned me of what was to come." [3] So Croesus buried his son as was fitting. But Adrastus son of Gordias son of Midas, the man who had become the killer of his own brother and the killer of the man who purified him, waited until the tomb was quiet and the people had gone. Then, recognizing that of all the people he knew he was the most heavily burdened by misfortune, he slaughtered himself on the grave.

CROESUS TESTS THE ORACLES

Worried by Persia's rise, Croesus tests the oracles, enriches Delphi and asks whether to march on Cyrus.

1.46 Croesus sat in deep mourning for two years, bereft of his son. But then the overthrow of the empire of Astyages son of Cyaxares by Cyrus son of Cambyses, and the growing power of the Persians, put an end to Croesus' mourning. Instead they set him thinking whether he might somehow check the Persians' growing power before they became great.[21] 2 With this in mind he at once set about testing the oracles, both those among the Greeks and the one in Libya. He sent men off in different directions: some were to go to Delphi, some to Abae in Phocis, some to Dodona, while others were sent to Amphiaraus and to Trophonius, and others to the Branchidae in the territory of Miletus. 3 These were the Greek oracles to which Croesus sent for a prophecy. He also dispatched others to Ammon in Libya to consult him. His purpose in sending them was to test what the oracles knew, so that if one was found to know the truth, he could send to it a second time and ask whether he should undertake a campaign against the Persians.[22]

1.47 He gave the Lydians the following instructions before sending them off to test the oracles. They were to count the days from the day they set out from Sardis, and on the hundredth day they were to consult the oracles, asking what the king of the Lydians, Croesus son of Alyattes, happened to be doing at that moment. Whatever each of the oracles prophesied, they were to write it down and bring it back to him.

21 Astyages was king of the Medes, whose empire Cyrus took over around 550 BC.
22 Amphiaraus and Trophonius were heroes with oracular shrines in Boeotia, and the Branchidae were the priestly family of Apollo's oracle at Didyma near Miletus. Ammon's oracle lay at the Siwa oasis in Libya, which for Herodotus means all of Africa west of Egypt.

[2] What the rest of the oracles prophesied, no one reports. But at Delphi, as soon as the Lydians entered the hall to consult the god and asked the question they had been given, the Pythia spoke as follows in hexameter verse: [3] I know the number of the sand and the measures of the sea,
I understand the mute, and I hear the one who does not speak.
The smell has come to my senses of a hard-shelled tortoise
boiling in bronze together with the flesh of a lamb;
bronze is laid beneath it, and bronze is put on above it.

1.48 The Lydians wrote down what the Pythia had prophesied and went off back to Sardis. When the others who had been sent around also arrived with their oracles, Croesus unfolded each of the writings and looked them over. None of them satisfied him. But when he heard the one from Delphi, he at once prayed to the god and accepted it, believing that the only real oracle was the one at Delphi, since it had found out what he himself had done. [2] For after sending the envoys to the oracles, he had waited for the appointed day and contrived the following. Thinking of something that would be impossible to discover or guess, he cut up a tortoise and a lamb and boiled them together himself in a bronze cauldron, with a bronze lid placed on top.

1.49 That, then, was the answer Croesus received from Delphi. As for the reply of the oracle of Amphiaraus, I cannot say what it told the Lydians after they had performed the customary rites at the shrine (for this is not reported either), except that Croesus believed he had found a truthful oracle in this one too.

1.50 After this he tried to win the favor of the god at Delphi with great sacrifices. He sacrificed three thousand animals of every kind fit for sacrifice; and he heaped up a great pyre and burned on it couches overlaid with gold and silver, golden bowls, and purple cloaks and tunics, hoping by these means to win the god over all the more. He also ordered all the Lydians, every one of them, to sacrifice to this god whatever each of them had. [2] When the sacrifice was over, he melted down an immense quantity of

gold and beat it out into half-bricks. He made them six palms long on the longer side and three palms on the shorter, and one palm high. There were a hundred and seventeen of them. Four of these were of refined gold, each weighing two and a half talents; the other half-bricks were of white gold, weighing two talents each. 3 He also had a statue of a lion made of refined gold, weighing ten talents. When the temple at Delphi burned down, this lion fell from the half-bricks (it had been set up on them), and it now lies in the treasury of the Corinthians, weighing six and a half talents, since three and a half talents of it melted away.[23]

1.51 When Croesus had finished these, he sent them to Delphi, and these other things along with them: two mixing bowls of great size, one of gold and one of silver. The gold one stood on the right as you entered the temple, the silver one on the left. 2 These too were moved when the temple burned down. The gold one now lies in the treasury of the Clazomenians, weighing eight and a half talents and twelve minas besides; the silver one stands in the corner of the temple's forecourt and holds six hundred amphoras, for the Delphians mix wine in it at the Theophania.[24] 3 The Delphians say it is the work of Theodorus of Samos, and I think so too, for it does not seem to me to be ordinary work. He also sent four silver jars, which stand in the treasury of the Corinthians, and he dedicated two basins for holy water, one of gold and one of silver. The gold one bears an inscription naming the Lacedaemonians, who claim it as their offering, but they are wrong: 4 this too is Croesus' gift. The inscription was made by one of the Delphians who wanted to please the Lacedaemonians; I know his name but will not mention it. The boy through whose hand the water flows is the

23 A palm (handbreadth) was about 3 inches; "white gold" is probably electrum, a pale natural alloy of gold and silver.

24 A mina was a sixtieth of a talent, about a pound; an amphora, as a liquid measure, held about 9 gallons. The Theophania was a Delphic festival celebrating the god's appearance.

Lacedaemonians', but neither of the basins is.[25] 5 Along with these Croesus sent many other offerings that are not especially remarkable, including round silver castings, and also a golden statue of a woman, three cubits high, which the Delphians say is a likeness of Croesus' baker. Besides this, Croesus dedicated his own wife's necklaces and belts.[26]

1.52 These were the things he sent to Delphi. To Amphiaraus, having learned of his excellence and his fate, he dedicated a shield made entirely of gold and a spear of solid gold throughout, the shaft as well as the head being of gold. Both of these were still lying in my own day at Thebes, in the Thebans' temple of Ismenian Apollo.[27]

1.53 Croesus instructed those Lydians who were to take these gifts to the sanctuaries to ask the oracles whether Croesus should campaign against the Persians, and whether he should add some army of men to his own as friends. 2 When the Lydians arrived where they had been sent and had dedicated the offerings, they consulted the oracles, saying: "Croesus, king of the Lydians and of other peoples, believing these to be the only true oracles in the world, has given you gifts worthy of your discoveries. Now he asks you whether he should campaign against the Persians, and whether he should add some army of men to his own as allies." 3 That was their question, and the judgments of both oracles came to the same thing. They foretold to Croesus that if he campaigned against the Persians he would destroy a great empire, and they advised him to find out who were the most powerful of the Greeks and make them his friends.

1.54 When the answers were brought back and Croesus learned of them, he was overjoyed with the oracles. Fully expecting to destroy the kingdom of Cyrus, he sent once again to Pytho, found out how many Delphians there were, and gave them two gold staters a head. 2 In return the Delphians gave Croesus and

25 Theodorus of Samos was a celebrated sixth-century BC architect and bronze-caster.

26 A cubit was about 18 inches.

27 Amphiaraus, a seer, joined the expedition of the Seven against Thebes knowing he would die; as he fled from the battle, the earth swallowed him up.

the Lydians the first right to consult the oracle, exemption from fees, and seats of honor, and granted that any of them who wished could become a Delphian for all time.[28]

1.55 After his gifts to the Delphians, Croesus consulted the oracle a third time; for once he had received proof of its truthfulness, he could not get enough of it. This time his question was whether his monarchy would last a long time. 2 The Pythia gave him this answer: But when a mule becomes king of the Medes,

then, tender-footed Lydian, by the pebbly Hermus
flee, and do not stay, and do not be ashamed to be a coward.[29]

1.56 When these verses reached him, Croesus was far more pleased with them than with all the rest, expecting that a mule would never be king of the Medes instead of a man, and that therefore neither he nor his descendants would ever lose their rule. After this he took care to inquire who were the most powerful of the Greeks, so that he might win them over as friends. 2 By inquiry he found that the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians stood out, the former of Dorian stock, the latter of Ionian. These were the foremost peoples, and in ancient times the one was Pelasgian, the other Greek. The one has never yet moved anywhere; the other has wandered a great deal.[30] 3 In the time of King Deucalion it lived in Phthiotis, and in the time of Dorus son of Hellen in the land below Ossa and Olympus called Histiaeotis. When it was driven out of Histiaeotis by the Cadmeans, it lived in Pindus and was called Macednian. From there it moved again to Dryopis, and from Dryopis it came at last into the Peloponnese and was called Dorian.[31]

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28 Pytho is an old name for Delphi. The stater was a gold coin weighing about a third of an ounce.

29 The Hermus is the chief river of Lydia.

30 The Greeks thought of the Pelasgians as the earliest, pre-Greek inhabitants of Greece.

31 In Greek myth Deucalion survived the great flood, and Hellen was the ancestor of the Greeks (Hellenes); Phthiotis, Histiaeotis, Pindus and Dryopis are regions of northern and central Greece.

1.57 What language the Pelasgians spoke I cannot say with certainty. But if one must speak from the evidence, one may judge from the Pelasgians who still exist today: those who live in the town of Creston above the Tyrrhenians, who were once neighbors of the people now called Dorians (at that time they lived in the land now called Thessaliotis); 2 those Pelasgians who settled Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont, who had once lived alongside the Athenians; and all the other towns that were Pelasgian but changed their name. Judging from these, the Pelasgians spoke a non-Greek language.[32] 3 If, then, the whole Pelasgian stock was like this, the Attic people, being Pelasgian, learned a new language at the same time as it changed into Greeks. For the people of Creston do not share a language with any of their present neighbors, nor do the people of Placia, but they do share one with each other. This shows that they have kept the form of language they brought with them when they migrated to these places.

1.58 The Greek people, on the other hand, has always used the same language ever since it came into being, as it seems clear to me. After it split off from the Pelasgians it was weak, but from a small beginning it has grown into a multitude of peoples, chiefly because Pelasgians and many other non-Greek peoples joined it. So it is my opinion that before this the Pelasgian people too, being non-Greek, never grew to any great size.

PISISTRATUS IN ATHENS

Seeking Greek allies, Croesus learns how Pisistratus seized and twice regained the tyranny at Athens.

1.59 Of these peoples, then, Croesus learned that the Attic one was held down and torn apart by Pisistratus son of Hippocrates, who at that time was tyrant of the Athenians. For when Hippocrates was still a private citizen and was attending the Olympic games as a spectator, a great portent happened to him. He had offered

32 Creston was a town in Thrace; Placia and Scylace lay on the Sea of Marmara, near the Hellespont.

sacrifice, and the cauldrons standing there, full of meat and water, boiled without fire and overflowed. [2] Chilon the Lacedaemonian, who happened to be there and saw the portent, advised Hippocrates, first, not to bring into his house a wife who could bear him children; second, if he happened to have one already, to send the woman away; and if he happened to have a son, to disown him.[33] [3] But Hippocrates, they say, was unwilling to follow Chilon's advice, and afterward this Pisistratus was born to him. When the Athenians of the coast and those of the plain were at odds with each other, the former led by Megacles son of Alcmaeon and those of the plain by Lycurgus son of Aristolaïdes, Pisistratus, with his mind set on tyranny, raised a third faction. He gathered partisans, made himself nominally the champion of the men beyond the hills, and contrived the following. [4] He wounded himself and his mules and drove his cart into the marketplace as though he had escaped from his enemies, who had supposedly tried to kill him as he was driving out into the country. He begged the people to grant him a guard of some kind. He had already won a good name in his command against the Megarians, when he took Nisaea and performed other great deeds.[34] [5] The Athenian people were deceived, and picked out men from among the citizens and gave them to him. These became not Pisistratus' spear-bearers but his club-bearers, since they followed behind him carrying wooden clubs. [6] These men rose up together with Pisistratus and seized the acropolis. From then on Pisistratus ruled the Athenians. He neither disturbed the existing offices nor changed the laws, but governed the city under its established institutions, managing it well and properly.

[1.60] Not long afterward the partisans of Megacles and those of Lycurgus made common cause and drove him out. That was how Pisistratus first held Athens, and how he lost his tyranny, which was not yet firmly rooted. But those who had driven Pis-

33 Chilon, a Spartan ephor, was counted among the Seven Sages.
34 The three factions were regional: the coast, the plain around Athens, and the hill country beyond the mountains of Attica. Nisaea was the port of Megara.

istratus out began quarreling with each other all over again. [2] Megacles, hard pressed by the factional strife, sent a herald to Pisistratus, asking whether he would be willing to take his daughter as his wife in return for the tyranny. [3] Pisistratus accepted the proposal and agreed on these terms. To bring about his return they then devised a scheme that, as I find, was by far the silliest—seeing that from ancient times the Greek people has been set apart from the non-Greek as cleverer and freer of foolish naivety—if indeed these men at that time played such a trick on the Athenians, who are said to be the foremost of the Greeks in wisdom. [4] In the deme of Paeania there was a woman named Phye, four cubits tall less three fingers, and handsome in other respects as well.[35] They dressed this woman in a full suit of armor, put her in a chariot, and showed her beforehand the bearing that would make her look most impressive. Then they drove into the city, having sent heralds running ahead of them. When these reached the city, they proclaimed what they had been told to, saying: [5] "Athenians, receive Pisistratus with goodwill. Athena herself has honored him above all men and is bringing him back to her own acropolis." So they went about saying this, and at once the rumor reached the demes that Athena was bringing Pisistratus back. The people in the city, convinced that the woman was the goddess herself, prayed to this mortal woman and received Pisistratus.

1.61 Having recovered his tyranny in the way described, Pisistratus married Megacles' daughter in accordance with his agreement with Megacles. But since he already had sons who were young men, and since the Alcmaeonids were said to be under a curse, he did not want to have children by his new wife, and so he had intercourse with her, but not in the normal way. [2] At first the woman kept this hidden. Later, whether in answer to her questions or not, she told her mother, and her mother told her husband. Angry as he was, he made up his quarrel with his opponents in the faction struggle. When Pisistratus learned

35 A deme was a village or district of Attica. Four cubits less three fingers is nearly six feet.

what was being done against him, he left the country altogether. He went to Eretria, and there he took counsel with his sons.[36] [3] The view of Hippias prevailed, that they should win back the tyranny, and so they set about collecting gifts from the cities that owed them some favor. Many gave large sums of money, but the Thebans outdid them all in what they gave. [4] After that—to cut a long story short—time passed, and everything was made ready for their return. Argive mercenaries arrived from the Peloponnese, and a man from Naxos named Lygdamis, who had come to them as a volunteer, showed the greatest zeal, bringing both money and men.[37]

1.62 Setting out from Eretria, they came back in the eleventh year, and the first place in Attica they seized was Marathon. While they were encamped there, their partisans from the city came to join them, and others streamed in from the demes, people to whom tyranny was more welcome than freedom. [2] So these gathered together. The Athenians in the city, as long as Pisistratus was collecting money, and later too when he took Marathon, paid no attention. But when they learned that he was marching from Marathon on the city, then at last they went out to meet him. [3] These men marched out in full force against the returning exiles. Pisistratus' men, having set out from Marathon, were advancing on the city, and the two sides came together at the sanctuary of Athena of Pallene, where they took up positions facing each other. [4] Then, guided by the will of heaven, Amphilytus the Acarnanian, an oracle-reciter, appeared beside Pisistratus. He came up to him and delivered this prophecy in hexameter verse: The cast has been made, the net is spread wide, / and the tuna will dart in through the moonlit night.[38]

1.63 This was the prophecy he gave him, in a state of divine inspiration. Pisistratus grasped its meaning, declared that he

36 Megacles' family, the Alcmaeonids, were held to be polluted because an ancestor had killed supporters of Cylon, a would-be tyrant, after they had taken sanctuary (late seventh century BC).
37 Hippias was Pisistratus' eldest son, later tyrant of Athens himself.

accepted the oracle, and led his army forward. The Athenians from the city had just then turned to their meal, and after the meal some of them had turned to dice and others to sleep. Pisistratus' men fell upon the Athenians and put them to flight. [2] As they fled, Pisistratus devised a very clever plan, so that the Athenians would not rally again but would stay scattered. He mounted his sons on horseback and sent them on ahead. Catching up with the fugitives, they repeated what Pisistratus had told them to say, urging them to take heart and each go home to his own affairs.

[1.64] The Athenians did as they were told, and so Pisistratus held Athens for the third time. He rooted his tyranny firmly with many mercenaries and with revenues of money, some coming from Attica itself and some from the river Strymon. He also took as hostages the sons of those Athenians who had stood their ground and not fled at once, and settled them on Naxos [2] (for Pisistratus had conquered this island too in war and handed it over to Lygdamis). Besides this, he purified the island of Delos as the oracles required, and he purified it in this way: from all the ground within sight of the sanctuary he dug up the dead and moved them to another part of Delos. [3] So Pisistratus was tyrant of the Athenians; and of the Athenians, some had fallen in the battle, while others had gone into exile from their homeland with the Alcmaeonids.[39]

LYCURGUS AND THE RISE OF SPARTA

Sparta gains good laws under Lycurgus and, after recovering Orestes' bones, gets the better of Tegea.

[1.65] This, then, was the situation in which Croesus learned the Athenians were held at that time. He learned, too, that the Lacedaemonians had escaped from great troubles and were by now getting the upper hand over the Tegeans in war. For in the

38 Pallene was a deme of Attica on the road between Marathon and Athens; Acarnania is a region of western Greece.
39 The Strymon is a river in Thrace, near rich gold and silver mines.

reign of Leon and Hegesicles at Sparta, the Lacedaemonians, though successful in their other wars, kept coming to grief against the Tegeans alone. [2] Even earlier than this they had been the worst-governed of almost all the Greeks, both in their dealings with one another and in having no contact with foreigners. Their change to good government came about like this. Lycurgus, a man of standing among the Spartans, went to the oracle at Delphi, and as he entered the hall the Pythia at once spoke these words:

> [3] You have come, Lycurgus, to my rich temple,
> dear to Zeus and to all who hold Olympian homes.
> I am in doubt whether to declare you god or man;
> but still I rather think you a god, Lycurgus. [4] Some people say that, besides this, the Pythia also set out for him the order that is now established among the Spartans. But according to the Lacedaemonians themselves, Lycurgus brought these institutions from Crete when he was guardian of Leobotes, his nephew, who was king of the Spartans. [5] For as soon as he became guardian, he changed all the customs and saw to it that they were not transgressed. After that Lycurgus established the military institutions—the sworn bands, the companies of thirty and the common messes—and besides these the ephors and the elders.

1.66 That was how they changed and came to be well governed; and when Lycurgus died they built a shrine to him, and they hold him in great reverence. With good land and no small number of men, they shot up at once and flourished. And then it was no longer enough for them to live in peace: looking down on the Arcadians as weaker than themselves, they consulted the oracle at Delphi about the whole of the Arcadians' land. 2 The Pythia gave them this answer: You ask me for Arcadia; you ask for much; I will not give it to you.

There are many acorn-eating men in Arcadia,
who will hold you back. But I do not grudge you:
I will give you Tegea, to dance in with stamping feet,
and its fine plain, to measure out with a line.

3 When the Lacedaemonians heard the answer that was brought back, they left the rest of the Arcadians alone and marched against the Tegeans carrying fetters, trusting a deceptive oracle and fully expecting to enslave the Tegeans. 4 But they were beaten in the encounter, and those of them who were taken alive worked the Tegeans' plain wearing the very fetters they had brought with them, after measuring it out with a line. These fetters in which they were bound were still preserved in my own day at Tegea, hanging around the temple of Athena Alea.

1.67 In the earlier war, then, they had continually fared badly against the Tegeans. But by the time of Croesus and the reign of Anaxandridas and Ariston in Lacedaemon, the Spartans had already gained the upper hand in the war. This is how it came about. 2 Since they were always being beaten in the war by the Tegeans, they sent envoys to Delphi to ask which of the gods they should propitiate in order to prevail over the Tegeans in war. The Pythia answered that they should bring home the bones of Orestes son of Agamemnon. 3 When they were unable to find Orestes' tomb, they sent once more to the god to ask where Orestes lay. When the envoys asked this, the Pythia gave this answer:

> [4] There is a place, Tegea, in Arcadia, on level ground,
> where two winds blow under strong compulsion,
> and blow and counter-blow, and woe lies upon woe.
> There the life-giving earth holds Agamemnon's son;
> bring him home, and you will be master of Tegea. [5] When the Lacedaemonians heard this too, they were no nearer to finding it, though they searched everywhere, until Lichas, one of the Spartans known as the Agathoergi, or Doers of Good, found it. The Agathoergi are the citizens who leave the cavalry each year, the five oldest. During the year in which they leave the cavalry they must not stay idle, but go wherever the Spartan state sends them, each to a different place.

1.68 It was one of these men, Lichas, who found it in Tegea, partly by luck and partly by wisdom. There was free contact with the Tegeans at that time, and he went into a smithy and watched iron being forged, and was amazed as he looked at what was being done. [2] The smith, seeing his amazement, stopped work and said, "Stranger from Laconia, if you'd seen what I saw, you'd really be amazed, given that you find iron-working such a marvel now. [3] I wanted to make a well in this yard here, and while I was digging I came upon a coffin seven cubits long. I couldn't believe there had ever been men bigger than the men of today, so I opened it, and I saw the body was as long as the coffin. I measured it and covered it over again." So the smith told him what he had seen, and Lichas, thinking over what was said, concluded that this was Orestes, according to the oracle. He reasoned like this: [4] in the smith's two bellows, which he saw, he found the winds; in the anvil and the hammer, the blow and counter-blow; and in the iron being forged, the woe that lies upon woe—his conjecture being something like this, that iron was discovered to the harm of humankind.[40] [5] Having put this together, he went back to Sparta and told the Lacedaemonians the whole affair. They brought a charge against him on

40 Seven cubits is some ten and a half feet.

a made-up story and drove him into exile. He went to Tegea, told the smith of his misfortune, and tried to rent the yard from him, though the smith would not let it. [6] In time, when he had persuaded him, he moved in; he dug up the grave, gathered the bones and went off to Sparta carrying them. And from that time on, whenever they tried their strength against one another, the Lacedaemonians were far superior in war; and by now most of the Peloponnese had been subdued by them as well.

[1.69] Croesus, then, learning all this, sent messengers to Sparta carrying gifts and asking for an alliance, having instructed them what they were to say. They came and said: [2] "Croesus, king of the Lydians and of other peoples, has sent us with this message: 'Lacedaemonians, the god has told me in an oracle to make the Greek my friend; and since I learn that you are the leaders of Greece, I invite you, in accordance with the oracle, wishing to become your friend and ally without trickery or deceit.'" [3] That was the message Croesus sent through his messengers. The Lacedaemonians, who had themselves heard of the oracle given to Croesus, were pleased at the Lydians' coming and swore oaths of guest-friendship and alliance; for they were also bound to him by certain kindnesses Croesus had done them still earlier. [4] The Lacedaemonians had sent to Sardis to buy gold, wanting to use it for the statue of Apollo that now stands at Thornax in Laconia; and when they offered to buy it, Croesus gave it to them as a gift.

[1.70] For these reasons, then, the Lacedaemonians accepted the alliance, and also because he had chosen them as friends in preference to all the other Greeks. They themselves stood ready whenever he sent word; and besides, they had a bronze mixing bowl made, covered on the outside around the rim with figures and large enough to hold three hundred amphoras, and set off with it, wanting to give Croesus a gift in return. [2] This bowl never reached Sardis, for one of two reasons that are told. The Lacedaemonians say that when the bowl, on its way to Sardis, was off the coast of Samos, the Samians learned of it, sailed out in warships and seized it. [3] But the Samians themselves say that

the Lacedaemonians bringing the bowl were too late, and when they learned that Sardis and Croesus had been taken, they sold the bowl in Samos, and private individuals bought it and dedicated it in the sanctuary of Hera. And it may well be that those who sold it said, once they were back in Sparta, that it had been taken from them by the Samians. That, then, is how things went with the bowl.

1.71 Croesus, mistaking the meaning of the oracle, made an expedition into Cappadocia, hoping to bring down Cyrus and the power of the Persians. 2 While Croesus was preparing to march against the Persians, one of the Lydians, who was already thought to be wise and who from this advice won a very great name among the Lydians, counseled Croesus as follows; his name was Sandanis. "King, you're preparing to march against men of this sort: they wear trousers of leather and the rest of their clothing of leather too, and they eat not as much as they want but as much as they have, since the land they live in is rugged. 3 What's more, they don't drink wine, they drink water; they have no figs to eat, and nothing else that's good. If you win, what will you take from them, when they have nothing at all? And if you lose, think how many good things you'll throw away: once they've tasted our good things they'll cling to them, and nobody will be able to push them off. 4 For my part, I'm grateful to the gods that they don't put it into the Persians' minds to march against the Lydians." This was his advice, but he did not persuade Croesus. For before the Persians subdued the Lydians, they had nothing luxurious or good.

1.72 The Cappadocians are called Syrians by the Greeks. These Syrians, before the Persians came to power, were subjects of the Medes, and at this time of Cyrus. 2 For the boundary between the Median empire and the Lydian was the river Halys, which flows from a mountain in Armenia through Cilicia, and after that has the Matieni on its right as it flows and the Phrygians on the other side. Passing these and flowing on northward, it divides the Syrian Cappadocians on the right from the Paphlagonians on the left. 3 In this way the river Halys cuts off almost all

of lower Asia, from the sea opposite Cyprus to the Black Sea. This is the neck of the whole of this land; the journey across takes an unencumbered man five days.

1.73 Croesus marched against Cappadocia for these reasons: because he longed for land and wanted to add it to his own portion, but above all because he trusted the oracle and wanted to punish Cyrus for what he had done to Astyages. 2 For Cyrus son of Cambyses had subdued Astyages son of Cyaxares, Croesus' brother-in-law and king of the Medes, and held him in his power. Astyages had become Croesus' brother-in-law in this way. 3 A band of nomadic Scythians, after a falling-out at home, slipped away into Median territory. At that time the tyrant of the Medes was Cyaxares, son of Phraortes son of Deioces. At first he treated these Scythians well, as suppliants; and he valued them so highly that he entrusted boys to them to learn their language and the art of archery. 4 Time went by, and the Scythians would always go out hunting and always bring something back, until one day it happened that they caught nothing. When they came back empty-handed, Cyaxares (for he was, as he showed, extremely quick to anger) treated them very harshly and insultingly. 5 Having suffered this at Cyaxares' hands, and feeling they had been treated in a way they did not deserve, they decided to cut up one of the boys who were being taught by them, prepare him as they used to prepare wild game, bring him to Cyaxares and give him to him as though it were game, and, once they had given it, make their way as fast as they could to Alyattes son of Sadyattes at Sardis. 6 And that is what happened. Cyaxares and the guests who were dining with him tasted that meat, and the Scythians, having done this, became suppliants of Alyattes.

1.74 After this, since Alyattes would not hand over the Scythians when Cyaxares demanded them, there was war between the Lydians and the Medes for five years. In it the Medes often defeated the Lydians, and the Lydians often defeated the Medes; and they even fought a kind of night battle. 2 They were still carrying on the war on equal terms when, in the sixth year, an engagement took place in which it happened that, in the thick of

the battle, the day suddenly became night. Thales of Miletus had foretold to the Ionians that this change of day would happen, setting as its limit the very year in which the change actually took place.[41] 3 When the Lydians and the Medes saw night come on instead of day, they stopped fighting, and both sides became all the more eager for peace to be made. Those who brought them to terms were Syennesis the Cilician and Labynetus the Babylonian. 4 These were also the men who pressed for the oath to be sworn, and they arranged an exchange of marriages: they decided that Alyattes should give his daughter Aryenis to Astyages, Cyaxares' son. For without strong necessity, strong agreements will not hold together. 5 These peoples swear oaths in the same way as the Greeks, and in addition, when they have cut the skin of their arms, they lick each other's blood.

CROESUS CROSSES THE HALYS

Croesus crosses the Halys, fights Cyrus indecisively, and is besieged in Sardis.

1.75 It was this Astyages, then, his own grandfather on his mother's side, whom Cyrus had subdued and held in his power, for a reason I will make clear later in my account. 2 Croesus held this against Cyrus, and he sent to the oracles to ask whether he should march against the Persians; and when a deceptive oracle came, he took it to be in his favor and marched into the Persians' territory. 3 When Croesus reached the river Halys, he then—so I maintain—took his army across by the bridges that were there; but according to the common story among the Greeks, it was Thales of Miletus who took it across for him. 4 The story goes that Croesus was at a loss how his army would cross the river (for these bridges, they say, did not yet exist at that time), and that Thales, who was in the camp, made the river, which flowed on the army's left, flow on its right as well. He did it, they say, like this: 5 starting above the camp, he dug a deep channel, lead-

41 Thales of Miletus was later counted among the Seven Sages; the eclipse he is said to have predicted is usually dated to 28 May 585 BC.

ing it round in a crescent so that it would pass behind the camp where it lay; the river, turned out of its old bed into the channel at that point, would flow past the camp and fall back into its old bed again. The result was that as soon as the river was split, it could be forded in both places. [6] Some even say that the old bed dried up altogether. But this I do not accept; for how did they cross it on the way back?

[1.76] When Croesus had crossed with his army and come to the place in Cappadocia called Pteria (Pteria is the strongest part of this country, lying roughly level with the city of Sinope on the Black Sea), he encamped there and laid waste the Syrians' farmlands. [2] He took the city of the Pterians and enslaved its people, took all the towns around it, and drove the Syrians, who had done nothing wrong, from their homes. Cyrus, for his part, gathered his own army, took along all the peoples living in between, and came to meet Croesus. [3] Before setting his army in motion, he sent heralds to the Ionians and tried to make them revolt from Croesus. The Ionians, however, would not be persuaded. When Cyrus arrived and encamped opposite Croesus, the two tried their strength against each other there in the land of Pteria. [4] A fierce battle took place and many fell on both sides; in the end, when night came on, they parted with neither side victorious. That is how the two armies fought.

[1.77] Croesus found fault with the size of his own army (the force he had engaged with was much smaller than Cyrus'), and because of this, when on the next day Cyrus made no attempt to attack, he marched back to Sardis. He intended to call on the Egyptians under their sworn agreement [2] (for he had made an alliance with Amasis, king of Egypt, even before the one with the Lacedaemonians), and to send for the Babylonians as well (for he had made an alliance with them too, and at that time the tyrant of the Babylonians was Labynetus), [3] and to summon the Lacedaemonians to come at a stated time. Once he had assembled these and collected his own army, he meant to let the winter go by and march against the Persians at the start of spring. [4] With this in mind, when he reached Sardis he sent her-

alds to his various allies, giving notice that they should assemble at Sardis in the fifth month. As for the army that had been with him and fought the Persians, the part of it that was made up of foreign troops he discharged entirely and dispersed, never imagining that Cyrus, after so evenly matched a contest, would march on Sardis.

1.78 While Croesus was turning these plans over, the whole area outside the city filled with snakes; and when they appeared, the horses left their pastures, went to them and ate them. When Croesus saw this, he thought it was a portent, as in fact it was. 2 At once he sent envoys to the interpreters at Telmessus. The envoys arrived and learned from the Telmessians what the portent meant, but they never managed to report it to Croesus: before they sailed back to Sardis, Croesus had been captured. 3 The Telmessians, however, judged as follows: that Croesus must expect an army speaking a foreign tongue to come against his country, and that when it came it would subdue the inhabitants; for the snake, they said, is the child of the earth, and the horse is an enemy and an incomer. This was the answer the Telmessians gave Croesus when he had already been captured, knowing nothing as yet of what had happened at Sardis and to Croesus himself.[42]

1.79 Cyrus, as soon as Croesus marched off after the battle at Pteria, learned that Croesus intended, once he had marched away, to disband his army. On deliberating, he found that the thing to do was to march as fast as he could on Sardis, before the forces of the Lydians could be gathered a second time. 2 Once he had decided this, he acted on it with speed: he marched his army into Lydia and arrived as the bearer of his own news to Croesus. Then Croesus, thrown into great perplexity, since things had turned out contrary to his expectation and not as he himself had supposed, nevertheless led the Lydians out to battle. 3 At that time there was no people in Asia braver or more

42 Telmessus, in south-western Asia Minor, was famous for its hereditary diviners.

warlike than the Lydians. They fought from horseback, carried long spears, and were fine horsemen.

1.80 They met on the plain that lies before the city of Sardis, which is large and bare (rivers flow through it, the Hyllus among others, and rush together into the largest, called the Hermus, which flows from the mountain sacred to Mother Dindymene and empties into the sea near the city of Phocaea). 2 There, when Cyrus saw the Lydians drawing up for battle, he was alarmed by their cavalry, and on the suggestion of Harpagus, a Mede, he did the following:[43] he gathered all the camels that followed his army carrying food and baggage, took off their loads, and mounted men on them dressed in cavalry gear. Having fitted them out, he ordered them to go ahead of the rest of the army against Croesus' cavalry; he told the infantry to follow the camels, and behind the infantry he posted all his cavalry. 3 When they had all been drawn up, he urged them to kill, without sparing, any of the other Lydians who got in their way, but not to kill Croesus himself, not even if he resisted when being taken. 4 Those were his orders. He set the camels facing the cavalry for this reason: the horse is afraid of the camel, and cannot bear either the sight of it or the smell. This was the very purpose of his device: to make Croesus' cavalry useless, the arm in which the Lydian fully expected to shine. 5 And when they met in battle, as soon as the horses smelled the camels and saw them, they turned back, and Croesus' hope was ruined. 6 Yet the Lydians did not turn cowards even then; when they understood what was happening, they leapt from their horses and engaged the Persians on foot. In time, after many had fallen on both sides, the Lydians were routed; they were driven back inside their walls and besieged by the Persians.

1.81 So a siege had begun for them. Croesus, thinking the siege would last a long time, sent more messengers out from the walls to his allies. The earlier ones had been sent round giving notice to assemble at Sardis in the fifth month; these he sent out to ask

43 Mother Dindymene was the Phrygian Mother of the gods (Cybele), named after Mount Dindymus.

them to come to his aid as quickly as possible, since Croesus was under siege.

1.82 So he sent to his other allies, and in particular to Lacedaemon. Now at this very time the Spartans themselves happened to be caught up in a quarrel with the Argives over a place called Thyrea. 2 This Thyrea had been part of Argive territory, and the Lacedaemonians had cut it off and taken it for themselves. The whole region westward as far as Malea also belonged to the Argives, both the land on the mainland and the island of Cythera and the rest of the islands. 3 When the Argives came out to defend the land that was being cut off from them, the two sides met for talks. They agreed that three hundred men from each side should fight, and that the land would belong to whichever side won. The main body of each army was to go back to its own country and not stay while the fight went on. The reason was that if the armies were present, one side or the other might see its own men losing and come to their help. 4 Having agreed on this, they withdrew, and the picked men left behind from each side joined battle. They fought and were evenly matched, and of six hundred men only three were left: Alcenor and Chromius of the Argives, and Othryades of the Lacedaemonians. These were the ones still alive when night came on. 5 The two Argives, believing they had won, ran off to Argos. But Othryades, the Lacedaemonian, stripped the Argive dead, carried their armor to his own camp, and stayed at his post. On the next day both sides arrived to find out what had happened. 6 For a while each claimed the victory. The Argives said that more of their men had survived; the Lacedaemonians pointed out that the Argives had run away, while their own man had stood his ground and stripped the Argives' dead. 7 In the end the quarrel brought them to blows, and they fought; many fell on both sides, and the Lacedaemonians won. From that time on the Argives, who until then had been obliged by custom to wear their hair long, shaved their heads. They made a law, with a curse attached, that no Argive man should grow his hair long, and their women should not wear gold, until they had recovered

Thyrea. [8] The Lacedaemonians made the opposite law: they had not worn their hair long before this, and from then on they did. As for Othryades, the one man left alive of the three hundred, they say that he was ashamed to go home to Sparta when his comrades had been killed, and took his own life there at Thyrea.

1.83 This was the situation the Spartans were in when the herald from Sardis arrived, asking them to come to the help of Croesus, who was under siege. Even so, once they had heard the herald, they were eager to help. They had already made their preparations, and their ships were ready, when another message came: the Lydians' fortress had fallen, and Croesus had been taken alive. At that, deeply distressed by the disaster, they gave it up.

1.84 This is how Sardis was taken. On the fourteenth day of Croesus' siege, Cyrus sent horsemen around his army to announce that he would give gifts to the first man to climb the wall. [2] After this the army made an attempt, without success. Then, when the rest had given up, a Mardian named Hyroeades tried to climb up at a part of the acropolis where no guard had been posted, since there was no fear that it would ever be taken from that side. [3] At that point the acropolis is sheer and cannot be attacked. It was the one place around which Meles, an earlier king of Sardis, had not carried the lion that his concubine bore him, when the Telmessians had ruled that if the lion were carried around the wall, Sardis would never be taken.[44] Meles carried it around the rest of the wall, where the acropolis could be attacked, but passed over this part as being sheer and unassailable; it is the side of the city that faces Mount Tmolus. [4] Now this Hyroeades the Mardian had seen, the day before, one of the Lydians come down at this part of the acropolis after a helmet that had rolled down from above, and pick it up. He took note of it and turned it over in his mind. [5] This time he climbed up himself, and other Persians climbed up after him. Once a good number had made the climb, Sardis was taken and the whole city was sacked.

44 The Mardians were a Persian tribe.

1.85 As for Croesus himself, this is what happened. He had a son, whom I mentioned earlier, a decent boy in every other respect but unable to speak. In the days of his prosperity Croesus had done everything he could for him. Among the other measures he thought of, he had sent men to Delphi to consult the oracle about him. 2 The Pythia gave him this answer: Lydian by birth, king over many, Croesus, great fool,

do not wish to hear in your halls the much-prayed-for voice
of your son speaking. Far better for you that this stay
apart from you; for he will first speak on a day without blessing.

3 As the fortress was being taken, one of the Persians, not knowing who Croesus was, came at him to kill him. Croesus saw him coming but, in his present misfortune, paid no attention; it made no difference to him whether he was struck down and died. 4 But this son, the one who could not speak, when he saw the Persian coming at him, broke into speech out of terror and anguish and said, "Man, don't kill Croesus!" That was the first thing he ever said, and from then on he could speak for the rest of his life.

CROESUS ON THE PYRE

Sardis falls; on the pyre Croesus calls on Solon's name, and Cyrus spares him.

1.86 So the Persians took Sardis and captured Croesus himself alive. He had reigned fourteen years and been besieged fourteen days, and, just as the oracle said, he had brought his own great empire to an end. The Persians who had taken him brought him to Cyrus. 2 Cyrus had a great pyre heaped up and set Croesus on it, bound in chains, with twice seven sons of the Lydians beside him. Perhaps he meant to sacrifice them to some god or other as the first fruits of his spoils; perhaps he wished to fulfill a vow; or perhaps, having learned that Croesus was god-fearing, he put him on the pyre for this reason, wanting to know whether some

divine power would save him from being burned alive. [3] So Cyrus, the story goes, was doing this. And as Croesus stood on the pyre, even in such dreadful straits, it came to him that Solon's words to him had been spoken with the god's help: that no one among the living is blessed. When this struck him, he drew a deep breath, groaned, and, breaking a long silence, called out three times: "Solon!" [4] Cyrus heard it and told the interpreters to ask Croesus who it was he was calling on, and they went up and asked him. For a while Croesus kept silent under their questions, but then, when they pressed him, he said, "A man I would have given a great fortune to have every tyrant talk with." Since what he told them made no sense to them, they asked again what he meant. [5] When they persisted and kept pestering him, he told them how Solon, an Athenian, had once come to him, and after viewing all his wealth had made light of it, and what sort of things he had said; and how everything had turned out for him just as Solon had said—though Solon had been speaking no more about Croesus himself than about all humankind, and especially those who think themselves blessed. While Croesus was telling this, the pyre had already been lit, and its outer edges were burning. [6] Cyrus heard from the interpreters what Croesus had said, and he changed his mind. He reflected that he, a human being himself, was handing over to the fire alive another human being, who had once been no less happy than he was. Besides that, he feared retribution, and considered that nothing in human life is secure. So, the story goes, he ordered the burning fire to be put out as quickly as possible and Croesus and those with him to be brought down. But for all their efforts, they could no longer get the fire under control.

1.87 Then, the Lydians say, Croesus learned that Cyrus had changed his mind. When he saw every man trying to put out the fire and unable now to master it, he cried aloud to Apollo, calling on him, if any gift of his had ever pleased the god, to stand by him and save him from his present plight. [2] As he called on the god in tears, out of a clear and windless sky clouds suddenly

gathered, a storm broke, rain came pouring down in torrents, and the pyre was put out. At that, they say, Cyrus understood that Croesus was dear to the gods and a good man. He brought him down from the pyre and asked him this: [3] "Croesus, who on earth persuaded you to march against my land and become my enemy instead of my friend?" Croesus said, "King, I did this, to your happiness and to my own wretchedness. The one to blame for it was the god of the Greeks, who urged me to make war. [4] No one is so foolish as to choose war over peace: in peace sons bury their fathers, in war fathers bury their sons. But I suppose it pleased the divine powers that it should turn out this way."

[1.88] That is what he said. Cyrus had him released, seated him close by, and treated him with great consideration; he and all those around him gazed at him in wonder. Croesus, lost in thought, kept silent. [2] Then, turning and seeing the Persians plundering the Lydians' city, he said, "King, should I tell you what is on my mind, or is it better to keep silent for now?" Cyrus told him not to be afraid and to say whatever he wished. So Croesus asked him, saying, [3] "What is that great crowd doing, so busily?" Cyrus said, "Plundering your city and carrying off your wealth." Croesus replied, "It's not my city they're plundering, or my wealth; none of it belongs to me any more. It's what is yours that they're carrying and driving off."

[1.89] What Croesus said caught Cyrus' attention. He sent the others away and asked Croesus what he saw in what was being done. Croesus said, "Since the gods have given me to you as your slave, I think it right, if I see something further, to point it out to you. [2] The Persians are arrogant by nature, and they are poor. If you let them plunder and keep great wealth, here is what you can expect from them: whichever of them gets hold of the most, count on him to rise up against you. So now, if you like what I'm saying, do this. [3] Post some of your bodyguards as watchmen at every gate, and have them take the goods from the men carrying them out, telling them that a tenth of it must by necessity go to Zeus. That way you won't make yourself hated by taking their

goods by force, and they, recognizing that you are acting justly, will hand them over willingly."

1.90 Cyrus was overjoyed to hear this, since he thought it good advice. He praised it warmly, ordered his bodyguards to carry out what Croesus had suggested, and said to Croesus, "Croesus, since you, a king, are ready to do good deeds and speak good words, ask for whatever gift you would like to have at once." 2 Croesus said, "Master, you will please me most if you let me send these fetters to the god of the Greeks, whom I honored most of all the gods, and ask him whether it is his custom to deceive those who treat him well." Cyrus asked him what complaint against the god made him ask this. 3 Croesus went back over his whole plan for him, and the oracles' answers, and above all his offerings, and how the oracle had urged him on to march against the Persians. As he told this, he came back again to his request that he be allowed to reproach the god with it. Cyrus laughed and said, "You shall have this from me, Croesus, and anything else you ever need." 4 When Croesus heard this, he sent some Lydians to Delphi with instructions to lay the fetters on the threshold of the temple and ask whether the god was not ashamed of having urged Croesus, with his oracles, to march against the Persians in the belief that he would put an end to Cyrus' power—from which these were the first fruits he had won—and to show the fetters as they asked. They were to ask this, and also whether it was the custom of the Greek gods to be ungrateful.

1.91 When the Lydians arrived and delivered their message, the Pythia, it is said, gave this reply: "What is fated not even a god can escape. Croesus has paid for the crime of his ancestor five generations back, who was a bodyguard of the Heraclids, went along with a woman's treachery, murdered his master, and took his royal office, to which he had no claim at all. 2 Loxias was eager that the disaster of Sardis should come in the time of Croesus' sons and not in Croesus' own, but it was not possible to

divert the Fates.[45] 3 As much as they allowed, he achieved, and granted to him as a favor: he put off the capture of Sardis for three years. Let Croesus understand that he was taken these three years later than his fate decreed. Second, he came to his aid when he was burning. 4 As for the oracle he was given, Croesus has no right to complain. Loxias foretold that if he marched against the Persians, he would destroy a great empire. In the face of that, if he meant to plan wisely, he should have sent and asked whether the god meant his own empire or Cyrus'. Since he did not grasp what was said and did not ask again, let him admit that the fault is his own. 5 When he consulted the oracle for the last time, Loxias spoke of a mule, and he did not grasp that either. For this Cyrus was the mule: he was born of two parents not of the same people, his mother of nobler stock and his father of humbler. 6 She was a Mede, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes; he was a Persian, a subject of theirs, and, though beneath her in every respect, he married the woman who was his sovereign lady." This was the answer the Pythia gave the Lydians. They carried it back to Sardis and reported it to Croesus, and when he heard it, he acknowledged that the fault was his and not the god's. That is how it went with the reign of Croesus and the first subjugation of Ionia.

1.92 Croesus has many other offerings in Greece, not only the ones I have mentioned. At Thebes in Boeotia there is a golden tripod, which he dedicated to Ismenian Apollo; at Ephesus there are the golden cows and most of the columns; and in the temple of Pronaia at Delphi there is a great golden shield. These were still in existence in my own time, while others of his offerings have been lost. 2 Croesus' offerings at Branchidae in the territory of Miletus are, as I learn, equal in weight and similar to the ones at Delphi ... The ones he dedicated at Delphi and at the shrine of Amphiaraus were his own property, the first fruits of the wealth he inherited from his father;[46] the other offerings came from the

45 Loxias is a title of Apollo. The ancestor meant is Gyges, who killed King Candaules at the urging of Candaules' wife.

46 Pronaia ("Before the Temple") was a title of Athena at Delphi.

property of an enemy, a man who before Croesus became king had been his political opponent, working to have the rule of Lydia go to Pantaleon. [3] Pantaleon was a son of Alyattes, but Croesus' brother by a different mother: Croesus was Alyattes' son by a Carian woman, Pantaleon by an Ionian. [4] When Croesus came to power by his father's gift, he put the man who had worked against him to death by dragging him over a carding comb. His property, which he had consecrated even before this, he then dedicated in the way I have described, at the places I have named. That is all I will say about the offerings.[47]

1.93 The land of Lydia does not have many marvels worth writing about, as other countries do, apart from the gold dust washed down from Tmolus. [2] But it does offer one work by far the greatest of all, apart from the works of the Egyptians and the Babylonians. The tomb of Alyattes, Croesus' father, is there. Its base is made of great stones, and the rest of the tomb is a mound of earth. It was built by the market traders, the craftsmen, and the girls who work there as prostitutes. [3] Five boundary stones still stood on top of the tomb in my day, with inscriptions carved on them recording the share each group had built, and when measured, the girls' share proved to be the largest. [4] For the daughters of the common people of Lydia all work as prostitutes, collecting dowries for themselves; they do this until they marry, and they give themselves away in marriage. [5] The circumference of the tomb is six stades and two plethra, and its width is thirteen plethra. Next to the tomb lies a large lake, which the Lydians say never runs dry; it is called the Gygaean lake. That is what this monument is like.[48]

1.94 The Lydians' customs are much like those of the Greeks, except that they prostitute their daughters. They were the first people we know of to strike and use coins of gold and silver, and the first to become retail traders. [2] The Lydians themselves say that the games now played both by them and by the Greeks were their own invention. They say that these were invented among

47 A carding comb was a board set with spikes, used to comb out wool.
48 A plethron was about 100 feet, a sixth of a stade.

them at the same time as they sent a colony to Tyrrhenia, and this is the account they give of it.[49] 3 In the reign of Atys son of Manes, they say, there was a severe famine throughout all Lydia. For a while the Lydians went on enduring it, but then, when it did not end, they looked for remedies, one of them devising one thing and another another. It was then, they say, that dice and knucklebones and ball games and all the other kinds of games were invented—except board games, for the Lydians do not claim the invention of those. 4 Having invented them, they say, they used them against the hunger like this: they spent one whole day playing, so that they would not be looking for food, and on the next they stopped playing and ate. They lived this way for eighteen years. 5 But when the evil did not let up and pressed on them harder still, their king divided the whole Lydian people into two parts and had them draw lots, one part to stay and the other to leave the country. He appointed himself to lead the part whose lot was to stay where they were, and his own son, whose name was Tyrrhenus, to lead the part that was leaving. 6 Those who drew the lot to leave the country, the story goes, went down to Smyrna and built ships. They loaded them with all the useful goods they could carry and sailed away in search of a living and a land, until, after passing many peoples, they came to the Umbrians. There they founded cities, and they have lived there ever since. 7 Instead of Lydians, they changed their name after the king's son who had led them out; taking their name from him, they were called Tyrrhenians. So the Lydians had been enslaved by the Persians.

THE MEDES: DEIOCES

How the Medes gained their freedom from Assyria and Deioces made himself their king.

1.95 From here on my account has to look into who Cyrus was, the man who destroyed Croesus' empire, and how the Persians came to lead Asia. I shall write according to what some of the

49 Tyrrhenia is Etruria in Italy; the Tyrrhenians are the Etruscans.

Persians say: those who do not wish to glorify the story of Cyrus but to tell it as it really happened. I do know of three other ways the story of Cyrus could be told. [2] The Assyrians had ruled upper Asia for five hundred and twenty years when the Medes became the first to begin revolting from them. Somehow they fought the Assyrians for their freedom, proved themselves brave men, threw off their slavery and became free. After them the other peoples did the same as the Medes.

[1.96] All the peoples of the mainland were now independent, and this is how they came back under tyranny again. There was a wise man among the Medes named Deioces, the son of Phraortes. [2] This Deioces fell in love with tyranny, and this is what he did. The Medes lived in villages. In his own village he was already well regarded, and he now devoted himself to practicing justice more than before and with greater zeal. He did this at a time when there was a great deal of lawlessness throughout Media, because he knew that injustice is the enemy of justice. The Medes of his village saw how he conducted himself and chose him as their judge. And since he was courting power, he was upright and just. [3] By doing this he won no small praise from his fellow citizens. The people in the other villages had previously been at the mercy of unjust verdicts, and when they heard that Deioces was the only man who judged rightly, they were glad. They too began coming to Deioces to have their cases judged, and in the end they would entrust them to no one else.

[1.97] The number of people coming to him kept growing, because they heard that cases turned out according to the truth. Deioces realized that everything now depended on him. He would no longer sit in the seat where he used to sit to judge, and he said he would judge no more. It did him no good, he said, to neglect his own affairs and spend the whole day judging his neighbors' disputes. [2] Robbery and lawlessness in the villages were now even worse than before, so the Medes gathered in one place and held a discussion among themselves about the situation. In my opinion, it was Deioces' friends who did most of the talking: [3] "We can't go on living in this country the way things

are now, so come, let's set up a king over ourselves. That way the country will be well governed, we can get back to our work, and we won't be driven from our homes by lawlessness." With words of this sort they persuaded themselves to be ruled by a king.

1.98 They at once began proposing who should be made king. Deioces was the name every man put forward and praised most, until they agreed that he should be their king. 2 He told them to build him a house worthy of a king and to strengthen him with a bodyguard. The Medes did so. They built him a large, strong house at the place in the country that he pointed out, and they allowed him to choose his bodyguards from among all the Medes. 3 Once he held power, he compelled the Medes to make a single city, to maintain it and to pay less attention to the other towns. The Medes obeyed him in this too, and he built the great, strong walls that are now called Ecbatana, set in rings one inside the other. 4 The wall is designed so that each ring is higher than the next one outside it by just the height of its battlements. The site, being a hill, helps somewhat to make it so, but it was done still more by design.[50] 5 There are seven rings in all, and the innermost contains the palace and the treasuries. The largest of these walls is roughly the size of the circuit of Athens. The battlements of the first ring are white, of the second black, of the third crimson, of the fourth blue and of the fifth orange. 6 So the battlements of five of the rings are painted in colors; of the last two, one has its battlements plated with silver and the other with gold.

1.99 Deioces built these walls for himself and around his own house, and he ordered the rest of the people to live outside the wall, all around it. When everything had been built, Deioces was the first to establish the following ceremonial: no one was to come into the king's presence, all business was to be done through messengers, and the king was to be seen by no one. Beyond this, it was to be shameful for anyone at all to laugh or spit in his presence. 2 He surrounded himself with this solemnity for the following reason. His peers had been brought up

50 Ecbatana was the Median capital, modern Hamadan in western Iran.

with him, were of no meaner family and were no less brave. He did not want them to see him, resent him and plot against him; if they did not see him, they would think he was a being of a different kind.

1.100 Once he had arranged all this and made himself secure in his tyranny, he was a harsh guardian of justice. People would write down their cases and send them in to him, and he would decide the cases brought in and send them back out. 2 That was how he handled lawsuits, and he had other arrangements as well. If he learned that someone was behaving outrageously, he would summon him and punish him as each offense deserved; and he had spies and eavesdroppers throughout all the country he ruled.

1.101 Deioces, then, united the Median nation alone and ruled it. The Medes consist of these tribes: the Busae, the Paretaceni, the Struchates, the Arizanti, the Budii and the Magi. These are the tribes of the Medes.

1.102 Deioces had a son, Phraortes, who took over the rule when Deioces died after reigning fifty-three years. Once he had it, he was not content to rule the Medes alone. He marched against the Persians, attacked them before any others and made them the first subjects of the Medes. 2 After that, holding these two nations, both of them strong, he set about subduing Asia, going from one people to the next. At last he marched against the Assyrians, those Assyrians who held Nineveh and had once ruled everyone. At that time they had been left without allies, since these had revolted from them, but otherwise they were in good shape. Phraortes marched against them and was killed, after ruling twenty-two years, and most of his army with him.

1.103 When Phraortes died, he was succeeded by Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes son of Deioces. He is said to have been far more warlike even than his ancestors. He was the first to organize the peoples of Asia into units, and the first to arrange each kind separately: spearmen, archers and cavalry. Before that they had all been mixed together in a jumble. 2 It was he who fought the Lydians when the day turned to night in the middle of the battle,

and he who brought all of Asia beyond the river Halys under his control. He gathered all his subjects and marched on Nineveh, both to avenge his father and because he wanted to take this city. [3] He met the Assyrians in battle and defeated them, but while he was besieging Nineveh a great army of Scythians came upon him, led by the Scythian king Madyes son of Protothyes. The Scythians had invaded Asia after driving the Cimmerians out of Europe; pursuing them as they fled, they had come in this way into Median territory.[51]

1.104 From Lake Maeotis to the river Phasis and the land of the Colchians is a thirty days' journey for a man traveling light. From Colchis it is not a long crossing into Media: there is only one people in between, the Saspeires, and once past them you are in Media. [2] The Scythians, however, did not invade by this route. They turned off onto the upper road, which is much longer, keeping the Caucasus range on their right. There the Medes clashed with the Scythians, were defeated in battle and lost their empire, and the Scythians took over the whole of Asia.[52]

1.105 From there they went on toward Egypt. When they were in Palestinian Syria, Psammetichus, king of Egypt, came to meet them and with gifts and entreaties turned them back from going any farther. [2] On their way back they came to the Syrian city of Ascalon. Most of the Scythians passed by without doing any harm, but a few who stayed behind plundered the temple of Heavenly Aphrodite. [3] This temple, as I find on inquiry, is the oldest of all the temples of this goddess. The temple in Cyprus was founded from it, as the Cyprians themselves say, and the one on Cythera was founded by Phoenicians who came from this part of Syria. [4] On the Scythians who plundered the temple at Ascalon, and on their descendants for all time, the goddess inflicted a female disease. So the Scythians say that this is the

51 The battle in which day turned to night is the one told at 1.74, during a solar eclipse usually dated to 585 BC.

52 Lake Maeotis is the Sea of Azov; the Phasis is a river of Colchis, in modern Georgia.

reason they suffer from it, and also that visitors to Scythia can see among them the condition of those whom the Scythians call Enarees.[53]

1.106 For twenty-eight years the Scythians ruled Asia, and their arrogance and contempt turned everything upside down. Apart from exacting from each people the tribute they had imposed on it, they also rode around and seized whatever each people had. 2 Cyaxares and the Medes invited most of them to a feast, got them drunk and slaughtered them. In this way the Medes recovered their empire and ruled over the same peoples as before. They also took Nineveh (how they took it I shall show in another account) and brought the Assyrians under their control, except for the territory of Babylon.

THE BIRTH OF CYRUS

Warned by dreams, Astyages orders his infant grandson Cyrus killed, but a herdsman raises him.

1.107 After this Cyaxares died, having reigned forty years including the years of Scythian rule, and his son Astyages succeeded to the kingship. Astyages had a daughter whom he named Mandane. He dreamed that she urinated so much that she filled his city and flooded the whole of Asia besides. He laid the dream before those of the Magi who interpreted dreams, and when he learned from them what each detail meant, he was frightened. 2 Later, when this Mandane was old enough for marriage, he would not give her as wife to any of the Medes worthy of him, because he feared the vision. Instead he gave her to a Persian named Cambyses, whom he found to be of a good family and a quiet temperament, and whom he considered much lower than a Mede of middle rank.

1.108 In the first year that Mandane was living with Cambyses, Astyages saw another vision. He dreamed that a vine grew from his daughter's genitals and that the vine covered all Asia. 2 After seeing this and laying it before the dream interpreters, he sent

53 The Enarees were Scythian diviners who adopted women's roles.

for his daughter from Persia, since she was about to give birth. When she arrived he kept her under guard, intending to destroy whatever she bore; for the dream interpreters of the Magi had told him that the vision meant his daughter's offspring would reign in his place. [3] Astyages was guarding against this, and when Cyrus was born he summoned Harpagus, a member of his household, the most loyal of the Medes and the steward of all his affairs, and spoke to him as follows. [4] "Harpagus, the task I'm about to give you—don't mishandle it in any way, and don't deceive me and take others' side, or you'll bring ruin on yourself later. Take the child Mandane bore, carry him to your house and kill him. Then bury him however you like." [5] He answered, "My king, you have never yet seen this man do anything to displease you, and I'll take care not to wrong you in the future either. If it's your wish that this should be done, then my part is to serve you properly."

1.109 After giving this answer, Harpagus was handed the child, dressed for death, and went home weeping. When he got there he told his wife everything Astyages had said. [2] She said to him, "So what do you intend to do now?" He answered, "Not what Astyages ordered. Even if he loses his mind and raves worse than he's raving now, I won't go along with his plan or serve him in a murder like this. [3] There are many reasons I won't kill him. The boy is a relative of mine, and Astyages is old and has no male offspring. [4] If, when he dies, the tyranny is to pass to this daughter, whose son he's now killing through me, what's left for me after that but the greatest of dangers? For my own safety the child has to die—but the killer must be one of Astyages' own people, not one of mine."

1.110 So he spoke, and at once he sent a messenger to one of Astyages' cowherds, the one he knew grazed his herds on the most suitable pastures and in the mountains most full of wild beasts. His name was Mitradates, and he lived with a woman who was a slave like himself. The name of the woman he lived with was Cyno in the Greek language and Spaco in Median, for the Medes call a dog *spax*. [2] The foothills where this cowherd had

his pastures lie north of Ecbatana, toward the Black Sea. In this direction, toward the Saspeires, Media is very mountainous, high and thickly wooded; the rest of Media is all flat. [3] The cowherd was summoned in great haste, and when he arrived Harpagus said this: "Astyages orders you to take this baby and leave it in the most deserted part of the mountains, so that it will die as quickly as possible. And he told me to tell you this: if you don't kill it, but save it in any way, he'll put you to the most terrible of deaths. I've been ordered to see it lying exposed."

[1.111] When the cowherd heard this, he picked up the baby, went back the way he had come and reached his homestead. Now his own wife, as it happened, had been in labor the whole day, and somehow, as heaven would have it, she gave birth just then, while the cowherd was away in the city. Each was anxious about the other: he was afraid about his wife's delivery, and she was wondering why Harpagus had sent for her husband, which he did not usually do. [2] When he came back and stood before her, his wife, who had not expected to see him, was the first to speak, asking why Harpagus had sent for him so urgently. He said, "Wife, when I went to the city I saw and heard something I wish I'd never seen, and I wish it had never happened to our masters. Harpagus' whole house was full of weeping, and I went in, stunned. [3] The moment I was inside, I saw a baby lying there, gasping and wailing, dressed in gold and embroidered clothes. When Harpagus saw me he told me to pick up the baby as fast as I could, carry it off and leave it where the mountains are most full of wild beasts. He said it was Astyages who had laid this on me, and he threatened me again and again if I didn't do it. [4] So I picked it up and carried it, thinking it belonged to one of the household slaves—I'd never have guessed where it really came from. Still, I was amazed to see it dressed in gold and fine clothes, and to see open weeping going on in Harpagus' house besides. [5] Then, straight away on the road, I learned the whole story from a servant who saw me out of the city and handed the baby over to me. It turns out it's the son of Mandane, Astyages'

daughter, and of Cambyses son of Cyrus, and Astyages orders it killed. And here it is."

1.112 As he spoke, the cowherd uncovered the baby and showed it to her. When she saw how big and handsome the child was, she burst into tears, clasped her husband's knees and begged him not to expose it on any account. 2 He said he could not do otherwise: spies would come from Harpagus to check, and he would die a terrible death if he did not do it. Since she could not persuade her husband, the woman spoke again, as follows. "Since I can't persuade you not to expose it, then do this, if it absolutely must be seen lying exposed. I've given birth too—but I gave birth to a dead child. 3 Take that one and lay it out, and let's raise the son of Astyages' daughter as if he were ours. That way you won't be caught wronging our masters, and we won't have planned badly for ourselves: the dead child will get a royal burial, and the living one won't lose his life."

1.113 The cowherd thought his wife was quite right, in the circumstances, and he did it at once. The child he had been carrying off to put to death he handed over to his wife; his own child, the dead one, he took and placed in the basket in which he had carried the other. 2 He dressed it in all the other child's finery, carried it to the most deserted part of the mountains and laid it there. When the baby had been lying out for three days, the cowherd went to the city, leaving one of his herdsmen behind to watch it. He went to Harpagus' house and said he was ready to show him the baby's body. 3 Harpagus sent the most trustworthy of his bodyguards, saw the body through their eyes, and buried the cowherd's child. So that child was buried, and the cowherd's wife took the boy who was later named Cyrus and raised him. She gave him some other name, not Cyrus.

1.114 When the boy was ten years old, something of the following kind happened to him and revealed who he was. He was playing in the village where these herds were kept, playing in the road with other boys his age. In their game the boys chose as their king this boy, the one known as the cowherd's son. 2 He assigned some of them to build houses and others to be body-

guards; one of them, I suppose, was to be the King's Eye, and to another he gave the honor of carrying messages, assigning each his task.[54] [3] One of the boys playing with him was the son of Artembares, a man of standing among the Medes. He did not do what Cyrus had told him, so Cyrus ordered the other boys to seize him. The boys obeyed, and Cyrus dealt with the boy very roughly, giving him a whipping. [4] As soon as he was let go, the boy was all the more indignant, since he felt he had been treated in a way unworthy of himself. He went down to the city and complained to his father about what he had met with at Cyrus' hands—though he did not say "Cyrus" (that was not yet his name), but "the son of Astyages' cowherd." [5] Artembares went to Astyages in the anger he was in, taking the boy with him, and said he had suffered outrageous treatment. "My king," he said, "this is how we've been abused by your slave, a cowherd's son!"—and he showed him the boy's shoulders.

1.115 When Astyages had heard and seen this, he wanted to avenge the boy for the sake of Artembares' rank, and he sent for the cowherd and the boy. When both were there, Astyages looked at Cyrus and said, [2] "So you, the son of a man like this, dared to treat the son of this man, the first man at my court, so shamefully?" The boy answered as follows. "Master, I did this to him justly. The boys from the village, and he was one of them, made me their king in their game, because they thought I was the best suited for it. [3] The other boys carried out their orders, but this one disobeyed and paid no attention, until he got his punishment. So if I deserve some punishment for this, here I am."

1.116 As the boy said this, Astyages began to recognize him. The cast of his features seemed to resemble his own, his answer seemed too much like a free man's, and the time of the exposure seemed to match the boy's age. [2] Stunned by all this, he was speechless for a while. When at last, with difficulty, he recovered himself, he wanted to send Artembares away so that

54 The "King's Eye" was a royal official who watched over affairs on the king's behalf.

he could get the herdsman alone and question him under pressure, and so he said, "Artembares, I'll deal with this in such a way that neither you nor your son will have any cause for complaint." [3] So he sent Artembares away, and at Astyages' order the servants took Cyrus inside. When the herdsman was left all alone, Astyages asked him where he had got the boy and who had handed him over. [4] The herdsman said that the boy was his own son and that the woman who bore him was still living with him. Astyages told him that he was not being sensible if he wanted to be put to severe torture, and as he spoke he signaled to his bodyguards to seize him. [5] As he was being led off to the torture, the herdsman at last disclosed the true story. Beginning at the beginning, he went through it all, holding to the truth, and ended by pleading with the king and begging him to forgive him.

[1.117] Now that the herdsman had revealed the truth, Astyages paid less attention to him. But he was deeply angry with Harpagus, and he ordered his bodyguards to summon him. [2] When Harpagus was there, Astyages asked him, "Harpagus, by what death did you dispose of the child I handed over to you, the son of my daughter?" Harpagus saw the herdsman there inside, and so he did not take the path of lies, for fear of being cross-examined and caught out. Instead he said this: [3] "My king, when I took the baby, I considered carefully how I could do what you wanted and stay blameless toward you, without being a murderer in the eyes of your daughter or of you yourself. [4] So this is what I did. I summoned this herdsman here and handed the baby over to him, telling him that you were the one who ordered it killed. And in saying that, at least, I wasn't lying, because those were your orders. But I handed it over to him with these instructions: to put it out on a deserted mountain and stay there watching over it until it died. And I threatened him with every kind of punishment if he didn't carry this out to the end. [5] When he had done as he was ordered and the baby had died, I sent the most trustworthy of my eunuchs, and through

them I saw it and had it buried. That, my king, is how this matter went, and that is the death the child met."

1.118 So Harpagus told the story straight. Astyages hid the anger he felt toward him over what had happened. First he repeated the whole affair to Harpagus, just as he had heard it himself from the herdsman; then, once he had gone over it all again, he finished by saying that the boy was alive and that all had turned out well. 2 "What had been done to this boy," he said, "distressed me greatly, and being at odds with my daughter was no light thing to me. So, since fortune has taken a good turn, first send your own son to join the newcomer; and second—since I intend to offer sacrifices for the boy's deliverance to those gods to whom this honor belongs—come and have dinner with me."

HARPAGUS' BANQUET

Astyages serves Harpagus his own son at dinner; Harpagus later helps Cyrus overthrow the Medes.

1.119 When Harpagus heard this, he bowed down before the king and went home, making much of the fact that his offense had turned out for the best and that he had been invited to dinner on so happy an occasion. 2 He went in as quickly as he could. He had one son, an only child, about thirteen years old; he sent him off, telling him to go to Astyages' palace and do whatever the king told him. He himself, overjoyed, told his wife what had happened. 3 When Harpagus' son arrived, Astyages slaughtered him and cut him up limb by limb. Some of the flesh he roasted and some he boiled, and when he had it all well prepared he kept it ready. 4 When the dinner hour came and the other guests and Harpagus had arrived, tables full of mutton were set before the others and before Astyages himself. But before Harpagus was set the flesh of his own son—all of it except the head, the hands and the feet. These lay apart in a basket, covered over. 5 When Harpagus seemed to have had enough to eat, Astyages asked him whether he had enjoyed the feast. Harpagus said he

had enjoyed it very much, and then the men whose task it was brought in the boy's head, covered over, and the hands and the feet. Standing beside Harpagus, they told him to uncover it and take whatever he wanted of it. [6] Harpagus did as they said, uncovered the basket, and saw what was left of his son. Seeing it, he did not lose his composure but kept control of himself. Astyages asked him whether he knew what animal's flesh he had eaten. [7] He said that he knew, and that whatever the king did was pleasing to him. With that answer he took up the rest of the flesh and went home. There, I suppose, he meant to gather it all together and bury it.

[1.120] That was the punishment Astyages imposed on Harpagus. To decide about Cyrus, he summoned the same Magi who had interpreted his dream in the way I described. When they came, Astyages asked them how they had interpreted the vision. They gave the same answer as before, saying that the boy was bound to become king if he had lived on and not died first. [2] He replied to them as follows: "The boy is alive and well. While he was living in the countryside, the boys of the village made him their king. And he carried out everything that real kings do: he assigned bodyguards, doorkeepers, messengers and all the rest, and ruled over them.[55] [3] So what do you think all this points to?" The Magi said, "If the boy is alive and has been king without any design behind it, take heart on that score and set your mind at rest: he will not rule a second time. Some of our prophecies, too, have come out as trivial things, and things to do with dreams, at any rate, come in the end to something quite feeble." [4] Astyages replied, "I too, Magi, am strongly of that opinion: now that the boy has been called king, the dream has been fulfilled, and this boy is no longer any danger to me. All the same, think it over carefully and advise me what will be safest for my house and for you." [5] To this the Magi said, "My king, it matters a great deal to us too that your rule should prosper. Otherwise it passes into foreign hands, going over to this boy, who is a Persian; and we, who are Medes, would be enslaved and count for nothing in the

55 The Magi were a Median priestly caste, experts in dreams and ritual.

eyes of the Persians, since we would be foreigners. But while you, our fellow countryman, are established as king, we have our share in ruling and receive great honors from you. [6] So we have every reason to look out for you and your rule. If we saw anything to be afraid of now, we would tell you all of it in advance. But as it is, since the dream has turned out to be something trivial, we ourselves are confident, and we urge you to be the same. Send this boy away, out of your sight, to Persia and to his parents."

[1.121] When Astyages heard this, he was glad. He called Cyrus and said to him, "My boy, I wronged you because of a dream that has not come true, but by your own destiny you have survived. So now go happily to Persia; I'll send escorts with you. When you get there you'll find a father and a mother very different from Mitradates the herdsman and his wife."

[1.122] With these words Astyages sent Cyrus away. When he came home to the house of Cambyses, his parents received him; and when they learned who he was, they welcomed him with great affection, since they had believed he had died back then, just after his birth. They asked him how he had survived. [2] He told them that before this he had not known, but had been entirely mistaken; on the way he had learned everything that had happened to him. He had thought he was the son of Astyages' herdsman, but on the journey from there he had heard the whole story from his escorts. [3] He said he had been raised by the herdsman's wife, and he kept praising her all the way through; in his story it was Cyno this and Cyno that. His parents took up this name, and to make the Persians think the boy's survival was more the work of the gods, they spread the story that Cyrus had been exposed and that a dog had nursed him.[56]

[1.123] That is where this story came from. When Cyrus grew to manhood and was the bravest and best liked of his generation, Harpagus courted him, sending him gifts, because he longed to take revenge on Astyages. He could not see how he himself, a

56 "Cyno" suggests the Greek word for a female dog; Herodotus said earlier that the woman's name meant this.

private man, could punish Astyages; but seeing Cyrus growing up, he tried to make him his ally, likening Cyrus' sufferings to his own. [2] Even before this he had brought about the following. Since Astyages was harsh toward the Medes, Harpagus met with each of the leading Medes, one by one, and persuaded them that they ought to put Cyrus at their head and depose Astyages from the kingship. [3] When he had accomplished this and everything was ready, Harpagus wanted to reveal his plan to Cyrus, who was living in Persia. Since the roads were guarded, he had no other way of doing it, so he devised this scheme. [4] He prepared a hare: he slit open its belly without plucking out any of the fur, and, leaving it just as it was, put a letter inside, in which he had written what he thought fit. Then he sewed the hare's belly back up, gave nets to the most trustworthy of his servants, as though he were a hunter, and sent him off to Persia. He instructed him by word of mouth to tell Cyrus, as he gave him the hare, to cut it open with his own hands and to let no one be present while he did so.

[1.124] All this was carried out, and Cyrus took the hare and cut it open. Finding the letter inside, he took it and read it. The writing said this: "Son of Cambyses, the gods are watching over you; otherwise you would never have come to such good fortune. Now take vengeance on Astyages, your murderer. [2] As far as his intentions go, you are dead; it is thanks to the gods and to me that you are alive. I think you learned all this long ago: both what was done about you yourself and what I have suffered at Astyages' hands because I did not kill you but gave you to the herdsman. Now if you are willing to listen to me, you will rule all the land that Astyages rules. Persuade the Persians to revolt, and march against the Medes. [3] Whether I am appointed by Astyages as general against you, or some other distinguished Mede, you will have what you want; for these men will be the first to desert him, come over to your side, and try to overthrow Astyages. Since everything here, at least, is ready, do this, and do it quickly."

1.125 When Cyrus heard this, he considered what would be the cleverest way to persuade the Persians to revolt. Considering it, he found the following to be best suited to the moment, and this is what he did. 2 He wrote what he wished in a letter and called an assembly of the Persians; then, unfolding the letter and reading it out, he said that Astyages was appointing him general of the Persians. "And now, Persians," he said, "I order each of you to report here with a sickle." That was Cyrus' order. There are many Persian tribes; some of them Cyrus gathered together and persuaded to revolt from the Medes. 3 These are the ones on which all the other Persians depend: the Pasargadae, the Maraphii and the Maspii. Of these the Pasargadae are the noblest; among them are the Achaemenids, the clan from which the Perseid kings are descended. 4 Other Persians are these: the Panthialaei, the Derusiaei and the Germanii. These are all farmers. The rest are nomads: the Dai, the Mardi, the Dropici and the Sagartii.

1.126 When they had all arrived with what they had been told to bring, Cyrus gave them an order. There was a stretch of Persian territory overgrown with thorns, about eighteen or twenty stades across in every direction, and he ordered them to clear this ground in a single day. 2 When the Persians had accomplished the task set before them, he ordered them next to come back the following day, having bathed. Meanwhile Cyrus collected all his father's herds of goats, flocks of sheep and herds of cattle in one place, slaughtered them, and made preparations to entertain the Persian army, with wine as well and the most suitable food. 3 When the Persians arrived the next day, he had them recline in a meadow and feasted them. After dinner Cyrus asked them which they preferred: what they had had the day before, or what they had now. 4 They said there was a great difference between the two: the day before had brought them nothing but hardship, today nothing but good things. Seizing on this answer, Cyrus laid bare his whole plan, saying, 5 "Persians, this is how things stand for you. If you're willing to listen to me, you can have these and countless other good things, with no slave's labor

at all. If you're not willing to listen to me, you'll have countless labors like yesterday's. [6] So listen to me now, and become free. I believe I was born by divine fortune to take this work in hand, and I consider you men no worse than the Medes, in war or in anything else. Since this is how things stand, revolt from Astyages at once."

[1.127] The Persians, now that they had found a leader, gladly set about freeing themselves; they had long resented being ruled by the Medes. When Astyages learned what Cyrus was doing, he sent a messenger and summoned him. [2] Cyrus told the messenger to report back that he would come to him sooner than Astyages himself would like. On hearing this, Astyages armed all the Medes, and, like a man whose wits a god had damaged, he appointed Harpagus as their general, forgetting what he had done to him. [3] When the Medes took the field and engaged the Persians, some of them—those who had no part in the plot—fought; others deserted to the Persians; but most of them deliberately played the coward and fled.

[1.128] The Median army had disgracefully broken up. As soon as Astyages heard of it, he said, threatening Cyrus, "Even so, Cyrus won't have cause to rejoice." [2] With that, he first impaled the dream-interpreters among the Magi, who had persuaded him to let Cyrus go; then he armed the Medes who were left in the city, young men and old. [3] He led them out, engaged the Persians and was defeated. Astyages himself was taken alive, and he lost the Medes he had led out.

[1.129] As Astyages stood there a prisoner, Harpagus came up to him and gloated over him and mocked him. Among the other wounding things he said to him, he asked him in particular—referring to his own dinner, at which Astyages had feasted him on his son's flesh—what it was like to be a slave instead of a king. [2] Astyages looked at him and asked in return whether he regarded Cyrus' work as his own. Harpagus said that since he had written the letter himself, the achievement was rightly his. [3] Astyages then argued that he had shown himself the stupidest and most unjust man alive. The stupidest, he said, because if

what had happened really was his doing, he could have become king himself, yet he had conferred the power on someone else; the most unjust because, for the sake of that dinner, he had enslaved the Medes. [4] If he absolutely had to give the kingship to someone else and not keep it himself, it would have been more just, said Astyages, to bestow this prize on some Mede rather than on a Persian. As it was, the Medes, who were innocent of all this, had become slaves instead of masters, while the Persians, who had formerly been the Medes' slaves, had now become their masters.

1.130 So Astyages, after reigning for thirty-five years, was deposed from his kingship in this way, and because of his harshness the Medes bowed beneath the Persians. They had ruled Asia beyond the river Halys for a hundred and twenty-eight years, apart from the time during which the Scythians ruled. [2] Later on, however, they regretted what they had done and revolted from Darius; but after revolting they were subdued again, defeated in battle. At this time, though, in the reign of Astyages, the Persians and Cyrus rose up against the Medes, and from then on they ruled Asia. [3] Cyrus did Astyages no further harm and kept him at his own court until he died. That is how Cyrus was born and raised and became king. Later he subdued Croesus, who had started the wrong, as I have told already; and having subdued him, he thus became ruler of all Asia.

PERSIAN CUSTOMS

How the Persians worship, celebrate birthdays, deliberate while drunk, raise their sons and bury their dead.

1.131 As for the Persians, I know that they observe the following customs. It is not their custom to set up statues, temples or altars; in fact they call those who do so fools—because, in my opinion, they have never believed, as the Greeks do, that the gods are of human form. [2] Their custom is to go up to the highest mountain peaks and offer sacrifices to Zeus, and they call the whole circle of the sky Zeus. They also sacrifice to the sun and

the moon, to earth, fire and water, and to the winds. [3] These are the only gods they have sacrificed to from the beginning, but they have also learned to sacrifice to the Heavenly Goddess, learning it from the Assyrians and the Arabians. The Assyrians call Aphrodite Mylitta, the Arabians Alilat, and the Persians Mitra.[57]

[1.132] This is the established form of sacrifice among the Persians for the gods I have named. They build no altars and light no fire when they are about to sacrifice; they use no libation, no flute music, no garlands, no barley grains. When any of them wishes to sacrifice to one of these gods, he leads the animal to a clean place and calls on the god, with a wreath, usually of myrtle, around his tiara.[58] [2] The man who sacrifices is not permitted to pray for blessings for himself alone; he prays that all the Persians and the King may prosper, for he himself is of course included among all the Persians. When he has cut the victim up limb by limb and boiled the meat, he spreads out the softest grass he can find, especially clover, and lays all the meat on it. [3] When he has set it out, a Magus standing by chants a song of the birth of the gods—that, they say, is what the chant is—for it is not their custom to offer sacrifice without a Magus. After waiting a little while, the man who made the sacrifice carries the meat away and uses it however he likes.

[1.133] Of all days, the one each of them is accustomed to honor most is his own birthday. On that day they think it right to serve a larger meal than on other days. The wealthy among them serve an ox, a horse, a camel and a donkey, roasted whole in ovens; the poor among them serve the smaller kinds of livestock. [2] They eat few main dishes but many extra courses, which are not served all at once. For this reason the Persians say that the Greeks are still hungry when they stop eating, because after the main meal nothing worth mentioning is brought to them; if something were brought, they say, they would not stop eating. [3]

57 Mitra (Mithra) was in fact a male Persian god; Herodotus seems to have confused him with a Persian goddess, probably Anahita.
58 The tiara was a soft Persian headdress, not a jeweled crown.

They are very fond of wine, and they are not allowed to vomit or urinate in front of anyone else. Those are the rules they keep. It is their custom to deliberate on the most serious matters when they are drunk. [4] Whatever they decide in their deliberation, the master of the house in which they are deliberating puts before them again the next day when they are sober. If they still approve of it when sober, they act on it; if not, they let it go. And whatever they have first deliberated on sober, they reconsider when drunk.

[1.134] When they meet one another in the street, you can tell by this whether the two are equals. Instead of greeting each other with words, they kiss each other on the mouth. If one is slightly lower in rank, they kiss each other on the cheek. If one is of much humbler birth, he falls down and prostrates himself before the other. [2] Of all peoples they honor most those who live nearest to them (after themselves, of course), next those who are next nearest, and so on, honoring them in proportion as they go outward. They hold in least esteem those who live farthest from them. They consider themselves by far the best of mankind in every respect, others to have a claim to excellence in proportion to their nearness, and those who live farthest from them to be the worst. [3] Under the rule of the Medes, the nations also ruled one another in this way. The Medes ruled over all of them and over those who lived nearest to themselves; these ruled their neighbors, and these in turn the peoples next to them. It was on the same principle on which the Persians bestow honor, for the nations went on in this order, each ruling and governing the next.

[1.135] The Persians are more ready than any other people to adopt foreign customs. They wear Median dress, thinking it finer than their own, and in war they wear Egyptian breastplates. They take up all sorts of pleasures when they hear of them. In particular, they have learned from the Greeks to have sexual relations with boys. Each of them marries many lawful wives, and acquires a great many more concubines besides.

1.136 After prowess in battle, it is held to be the chief proof of manly excellence for a man to show many sons. To the man who shows the most the King sends gifts every year, for they think that numbers are strength. 2 They educate their sons, from the age of five to twenty, in three things only: riding, archery and telling the truth. Before the age of five a boy does not come into his father's sight but lives with the women. The reason for this is that if he dies while still being raised, he may cause his father no grief.

1.137 I approve of this custom, and I also approve of the following. Not even the King himself puts anyone to death for a single offense, nor does any other Persian inflict irreparable harm on any of his household for a single offense. Instead he weighs the matter up, and only if he finds that the wrongs outnumber and outweigh the services does he give way to his anger. 2 They say that no one has ever yet killed his own father or mother. Whenever such a thing has happened, they say, inquiry has inevitably shown that the child was either one passed off as theirs or born of adultery. For it is not likely, they say, that a true parent should die at the hands of his own child.

1.138 What they may not do, they may not even speak of. They consider lying the most shameful thing of all, and after that owing debts. There are many other reasons for this, but chiefly, they say, it is because a man in debt is bound to tell lies as well. Any citizen who has leprosy or the white skin disease does not come into the town or mix with the other Persians. They say he has it because he has committed some offense against the sun. 2 Many of them drive out of the country any foreigner who catches these diseases, and white doves too, on the same charge. They do not urinate or spit into a river, or wash their hands in one, or allow anyone else to do so. They revere rivers above all.

1.139 Here is another thing that happens to be true of them. The Persians themselves have not noticed it, but we have. Their names, which reflect their persons and their grandeur, all end in the same letter, the one the Dorians call *san* and the Ionians

sigma. If you look into it, you will find that Persian names end in this letter, not some of them and not others, but all alike.[59]

1.140 These things I can state with certainty from my own knowledge. What follows, though, about the dead is told as something secret and not openly. It is said that the corpse of a Persian man is not buried until it has been torn by a bird or a dog. 2 I know for certain that the Magi do this, since they do it openly. The Persians, at any rate, coat the corpse in wax and then bury it in the earth. The Magi are very different both from other men and from the priests in Egypt. 3 The Egyptian priests make it a rule of purity to kill no living thing except what they sacrifice. The Magi, by contrast, kill everything with their own hands except dogs and human beings. They make a great contest of it, killing ants and snakes and other creeping and flying creatures alike. As for this custom, let it be as it was established from the beginning. I will return to my earlier account.

CYRUS AND THE IONIANS

The Ionians ask Cyrus for terms too late, and his generals conquer the Greeks of Asia.

1.141 As soon as the Lydians had been subdued by the Persians, the Ionians and Aeolians sent messengers to Cyrus at Sardis. They wished to be his subjects on the same terms on which they had been subjects of Croesus. When Cyrus heard their proposal, he told them a story. A piper, he said, saw some fish in the sea and piped to them, thinking that they would come out onto the land. 2 When he was disappointed in his hope, he took a net, cast it around a great number of the fish and hauled them out. Seeing them leaping about, he said to the fish, "You can stop dancing for me now, since you wouldn't come out and dance when I was piping." 3 Cyrus told this story to the Ionians and Aeolians for a reason. Earlier, when he himself had asked the Ionians through messengers to revolt from Croesus, they had refused. Now that

59 *San* and *sigma* were two Greek names for the letter S. The rule holds for men's names in their Greek forms (Dareios, Kyros), not for the Persian originals.

the business was done, they were ready to obey Cyrus. [4] So it was in anger that he said this to them. When the Ionians heard his answer brought back to their cities, each city built walls around itself, and they gathered at the Panionium, all except the Milesians, for Cyrus had made a treaty with them alone, on the same terms the Lydian had given them. The rest of the Ionians decided by common agreement to send messengers to Sparta to ask the Spartans to help the Ionians.[60]

1.142 These Ionians, to whom the Panionium belongs, happened to have founded their cities in the place with the finest sky and climate of all the peoples we know. [2] No other region is like Ionia, neither the lands above it nor those below, neither those to the east nor those to the west. Some are oppressed by cold and wet, others by heat and drought. [3] They do not all speak the same language, but four different varieties of it. Miletus is the first of their cities toward the south, and after it come Myus and Priene. [4] These are settled in Caria and speak the same dialect as one another. The following are in Lydia: Ephesus, Colophon, Lebedus, Teos, Clazomenae and Phocaea. These cities have nothing in common in their speech with those mentioned before, but share a dialect among themselves. There are three more Ionian cities. Two of them are on islands, Samos and Chios, and one, Erythrae, stands on the mainland. The Chians and Erythraeans speak the same dialect, but the Samians have one of their own. These are the four forms of the language.

1.143 Of these Ionians, then, the Milesians were sheltered from fear, having made their treaty, and the islanders among them had nothing to dread. The Phoenicians were not yet subject to the Persians, and the Persians themselves were not seafarers. [2] These Ionians had split off from the other Ionians for no other reason than this. At that time the whole Greek race was weak, and by far the weakest of its peoples, and the least regarded, was the Ionian. Apart from Athens, there was no city of any note. [3] Now the other Ionians, the Athenians among them, shunned the

60 The Panionium was the Ionians' common sanctuary on Mount Mycale, described below (1.148).

name, not wanting to be called Ionians. Even now most of them seem to me to be ashamed of the name. But these twelve cities gloried in it. They founded a sanctuary of their own, which they named the Panionium, and they resolved to let no other Ionians share in it (and in fact none asked to share in it except the Smyrnaeans);

1.144 just as the Dorians of what is now the territory of the Five Cities (the same region was formerly called that of the Six Cities) take care to admit none of the neighboring Dorians into the Triopian sanctuary. They have even excluded from participation those of their own number who broke the sanctuary's law. 2 In the games of Triopian Apollo, long ago, they used to give bronze tripods as prizes to the winners, and those who received them were not to take them out of the sanctuary but to dedicate them there to the god.[61] 3 Now a man of Halicarnassus named Agasicles won, and disregarded the custom. He carried the tripod off to his own house and nailed it up there. For this reason the five cities, Lindus, Ialysus, Camirus, Cos and Cnidus, excluded the sixth city, Halicarnassus, from participation. That was the penalty they imposed on them.

1.145 In my opinion the Ionians made twelve cities and refused to admit more for this reason. When they lived in the Peloponnese, they were also in twelve divisions, just as there are now twelve divisions of the Achaeans, who drove the Ionians out. First, next to Sicyon, comes Pellene. Then come Aegira and Aegae, where the ever-flowing river Crathis is (the river in Italy got its name from it), and Bura, and Helice, where the Ionians took refuge when they were defeated in battle by the Achaeans. Then Aegium, Rhypes, Patrae, Pharae and Olenus, where the great river Peirus is, and Dyme, and Tritaea, whose people alone of these live inland. These twelve divisions now belong to the Achaeans, and in those days belonged to the Ionians.

1.146 That is why the Ionians, too, made twelve cities. It would be great folly to say that these are any more Ionian than the

61 The Triopium was a cape near Cnidus in southwest Asia Minor, site of the common sanctuary of the Dorian cities of the region.

other Ionians, or of any finer descent. No small part of them are Abantes from Euboea, who have nothing to do with Ionia, not even the name. Mixed in with them are Minyans of Orchomenus, Cadmeans, Dryopians, a breakaway group of Phocians, Molossians, Pelasgian Arcadians, Dorians of Epidaurus and many other peoples. 2 And those of them who set out from the Prytaneum of Athens and think themselves the most nobly born of the Ionians did not bring wives with them to the colony. Instead they took Carian women, whose parents they had killed.[62] 3 Because of this killing, these women made a law for themselves, bound themselves by oaths and handed it down to their daughters. They would never eat with their husbands, nor call their own husband by his name, because the men had killed their fathers, husbands and sons and then, after doing this, had lived with them.

1.147 This took place at Miletus. As kings, some of them set up Lycians descended from Glaucus son of Hippolochus, others Pylian Caucones descended from Codrus son of Melanthus, and others both together. But since they cling to the name somewhat more than the other Ionians, well then, let them be the Ionians of pure descent. 2 In fact all are Ionians who are descended from Athens and celebrate the festival of the Apaturia. All of them celebrate it except the Ephesians and Colophonians. These alone of the Ionians do not celebrate the Apaturia, and that on the grounds of some murder.[63]

1.148 The Panionium is a sacred place on Mycale, facing north, set apart by the Ionians in common for Heliconian Poseidon. Mycale is a promontory of the mainland that runs out westward opposite Samos. There the Ionians used to gather from their cities and hold a festival to which they gave the name Panionia. 2 [It is not only the Ionians' festivals that have this feature. The fest-

62 The Prytaneum was the Athenian town hall, where the city's sacred hearth was kept; colonists set out carrying fire from it.

63 The Apaturia was an Ionian festival at which children were enrolled in their father's kinship group (phratry).

ivals of all the Greeks alike end in the same letter, just as the names of the Persians do.]

1.149 These are the Ionian cities, and these are the Aeolian ones: Cyme, called Phriconis, Larisa, Neon Teichos, Temnus, Cilla, Notium, Aegiroessa, Pitane, Aegaeae, Myrina and Gryneia. These are the eleven ancient cities of the Aeolians. One of them, Smyrna, was taken from them by the Ionians, for these cities on the mainland too had once been twelve. 2 These Aeolians happened to settle a better country than the Ionians, but one less favored in its climate.

1.150 This is how the Aeolians lost Smyrna. They took in some men of Colophon who had been defeated in civil strife and driven out of their homeland. Later, the Colophonian exiles waited until the Smyrnaeans were holding a festival to Dionysus outside the walls, then shut the gates and seized the city. 2 When all the Aeolians came to help, they made an agreement: the Ionians would give back the movable property, and the Aeolians would leave Smyrna. When the Smyrnaeans had done this, the eleven cities divided them among themselves and made them their own citizens.

1.151 These, then, are the Aeolian cities on the mainland, apart from those settled on Mount Ida, which are separate. 2 Of the cities that hold the islands, five occupy Lesbos. (The sixth city on Lesbos, Arisba, was enslaved by the Methymnaeans, although its people were of the same blood.) One city is settled on Tenedos, and another on the so-called Hundred Isles. 3 Now the Lesbians and Tenedians, like the Ionians who held the islands, had nothing to fear. The remaining cities, however, decided by common agreement to follow the Ionians wherever they led.

1.152 When the messengers of the Ionians and Aeolians arrived at Sparta (all this was being done in haste), they chose the Phocaean, whose name was Pythermus, to speak for them all. He put on a purple cloak, so that as many Spartans as possible would hear of it and gather, then came forward and spoke at length, asking them to help his people. 2 The Lacedaemonians would not listen at all and decided not to help the Ionians. So the

messengers left. But the Lacedaemonians, though they had sent the Ionian messengers away, nevertheless dispatched men in a fifty-oared ship, in my opinion to spy on the situation of Cyrus and of Ionia. [3] When these men arrived at Phocaea, they sent the most distinguished of their number, whose name was Lacrines, to Sardis to deliver a message to Cyrus from the Lacedaemonians: he was to harm no city of Greek land, since they would not stand by and let it happen.

[1.153] When the herald had said this, Cyrus is said to have asked the Greeks who were with him who these Lacedaemonians were and how many of them there were, to make such a proclamation to him. On learning the answer, he is said to have told the Spartan herald, "I've never yet been afraid of men like these, who have a place set aside in the middle of their city where they gather and cheat one another under oath. If I stay healthy, it won't be the troubles of the Ionians they'll be chattering about, but their own." [2] Cyrus flung these words at all the Greeks, because they set up marketplaces and buy and sell in them. The Persians themselves are not accustomed to use marketplaces, and in fact they have no marketplace at all. [3] After this Cyrus entrusted Sardis to a Persian named Tabalus, and the gold of Croesus and of the other Lydians to a Lydian named Pactyes to take charge of. He himself marched off to Ecbatana, taking Croesus with him and treating the Ionians as of no account for the time being. [4] For Babylon stood in his way, and so did the Bactrian people, and the Sacae and the Egyptians. He intended to lead the army against these himself, and to send another general against the Ionians.

[1.154] When Cyrus had marched away from Sardis, Pactyes led the Lydians in revolt against Tabalus and Cyrus. He went down to the coast and, since he had all the gold from Sardis, hired mercenaries and persuaded the people of the coast to join his campaign. Then he marched on Sardis and besieged Tabalus, who was shut up in the acropolis.

[1.155] When Cyrus heard of this on the road, he said to Croesus, "Croesus, where will all this end for me? It seems the Lydians

will never stop making trouble for others and having it themselves. I'm wondering whether it might be best to enslave them all. As things stand, I seem to have acted like a man who killed the father and spared the children. [2] That's what I've done: I've taken you, who were more than a father to the Lydians, and I'm carrying you off, while I handed their city over to the Lydians themselves. And then I'm surprised that they've revolted from me!" So Cyrus spoke what was on his mind. Croesus, afraid that he would uproot the people of Sardis entirely, answered him as follows. [3] "My king, what you have said is reasonable. But don't give way to anger in everything, and don't destroy an ancient city that is blameless both of what happened before and of what is happening now. What happened before was my doing, and I carry the guilt on my own head. As for what is happening now, the wrongdoer is Pactyes, to whom you entrusted Sardis. Let him be the one to pay you the penalty. [4] Pardon the Lydians, and give them these orders, so that they will neither revolt nor be a danger to you. Send word forbidding them to own weapons of war. Order them to wear tunics under their cloaks and soft boots on their feet, and tell them to teach their sons to play the lyre and the harp and to keep shops. Soon, my king, you'll see them turned into women instead of men, so that there will be no danger of their revolting."

[1.156] This was the advice Croesus gave him, judging it better for the Lydians than being enslaved and sold. He knew that unless he offered a weighty enough reason, he would not persuade Cyrus to change his mind. He was also afraid that even if the Lydians escaped their present danger, they might some day revolt from the Persians and be destroyed. [2] Cyrus was pleased with the advice, relented in his anger and said he would follow it. He summoned a Mede named Mazares and ordered him to announce to the Lydians what Croesus had advised. Besides this, Mazares was to enslave all the others who had joined the Lydians in the attack on Sardis, and at all costs to bring Pactyes himself to him alive.

1.157 Having given these orders on the road, Cyrus marched on to the Persian homeland. Pactyes, learning that an army coming against him was close at hand, took fright and fled to Cyme. 2 Mazares the Mede marched on Sardis with whatever portion of Cyrus' army he had. Finding that Pactyes and his followers were no longer in Sardis, he first compelled the Lydians to carry out Cyrus' orders. As a result of these orders, the Lydians changed their whole way of life. 3 After this Mazares sent messengers to Cyme demanding that Pactyes be handed over. The Cymaeans decided to refer the question for advice to the god at Branchidae. There was an oracle there, established from ancient times, which all the Ionians and Aeolians used to consult. This place is in the territory of Miletus, above the harbor of Panormus.

1.158 So the Cymaeans sent envoys to Branchidae and asked what they should do about Pactyes in order to please the gods. When they asked this, the oracle's answer was that they should hand Pactyes over to the Persians. When the Cymaeans heard this answer brought back, they set about handing him over. 2 But while the majority were bent on this, Aristodicus son of Heraclides, a citizen of high standing, stopped the Cymaeans from doing it. He distrusted the oracle and thought that the envoys were not reporting truthfully. He held them back until other envoys went to ask a second time about Pactyes, and Aristodicus was one of them.

1.159 When they reached Branchidae, Aristodicus consulted the oracle on behalf of them all, and asked this: "Lord, Pactyes the Lydian has come to us as a suppliant, fleeing a violent death at the hands of the Persians. They are demanding him, and telling the Cymaeans to give him up. 2 We fear the power of the Persians, but we haven't yet dared to hand over the suppliant until you make it plain to us which of the two we should do." That was his question, and the god again gave them the same answer, telling them to hand Pactyes over to the Persians. 3 At this Aristodicus did something he had planned beforehand. He went all the way around the temple and took out the sparrows and all the

other kinds of birds that had nested in it. While he was doing this, it is said, a voice came from the inner sanctuary, directed at Aristodicus, saying: "Most impious of men, how dare you do this? Are you ripping my suppliants out of my temple?" [4] Aristodicus, they say, was not at a loss for an answer: "Lord, you protect your own suppliants like this, yet you tell the Cymaeans to give up theirs?" And the god, they say, replied in turn: "Yes, I do tell you to, so that by your impiety you may perish all the sooner, and never again come to the oracle asking about handing over suppliants."

1.160 When the Cymaeans heard the answer that had been brought back, they did not want to perish by handing him over, nor to be besieged by keeping him among themselves, so they sent him away to Mytilene. [2] When Mazares sent messages demanding Pactyes, the Mytilenaeans began preparing to hand him over for a price—how much, I cannot say for certain, because the deal was never completed. [3] For when the Cymaeans learned what the Mytilenaeans were doing, they sent a boat to Lesbos and carried Pactyes off to Chios. From there he was dragged by the Chians out of the temple of Athena, Guardian of the City, and handed over. The Chians handed him over in return for Atarneus; [4] this Atarneus is a district of Mysia, opposite Lesbos. The Persians took charge of Pactyes and kept him under guard, wanting to produce him before Cyrus. [5] And for a long time afterward no Chian would use barley grown in this Atarneus for the sprinkling of grains in a sacrifice to any god, or bake sacrificial cakes from its grain; everything produced in that land was kept away from all their rites.

1.161 So the Chians handed over Pactyes. After this Mazares marched against those who had joined in besieging Tabalus. He enslaved the people of Priene, and he overran the whole plain of the Maeander, letting his army plunder it, and Magnesia likewise. Soon after this he fell ill and died.

1.162 When he died, Harpagus came down to succeed him in the command. He too was a Mede by birth—the man whom Astyages, king of the Medes, had served that lawless feast, and

who had helped Cyrus win the kingship. [2] This man, appointed general by Cyrus at that time, came to Ionia and began taking the cities with earthworks. Whenever he had shut people up inside their walls, he would pile up mounds against the walls and so take the cities by storm.

1.163 The first city in Ionia he attacked was Phocaea. These Phocaeans were the first Greeks to make long voyages, and it was they who discovered the Adriatic, Tyrrhenia, Iberia and Tartessus. [2] They sailed not in round-hulled merchant ships but in fifty-oared ships. When they came to Tartessus, they became friends of the king of the Tartessians, whose name was Arganthonius. He was tyrant of Tartessus for eighty years, and lived a hundred and twenty years in all.[64] [3] The Phocaeans became such good friends of this man that at first he urged them to leave Ionia and settle wherever they liked in his own country. Then, when he could not persuade them of that, and having learned from them how the Mede was growing in power, he gave them money to build a wall around their city. [4] And he gave it unsparingly: the circuit of the wall runs to many stades, and all of it is of large, well-fitted stones.[65]

1.164 That, then, was how the Phocaeans came to have their wall. Harpagus marched his army up and besieged them, putting forward the proposal that he would be satisfied if the Phocaeans would agree to pull down just one battlement of the wall and dedicate a single house. [2] The Phocaeans, bitterly resenting slavery, said they wanted one day to deliberate, and would then give their answer; [3] and they asked him to withdraw his army from the wall while they deliberated. Harpagus said he knew very well what they meant to do, but he would let them deliberate all the same. So while Harpagus withdrew his army from the wall, the Phocaeans in the meantime launched their fifty-oared ships and put aboard their children and wives and all their movable goods, and also the statues from the temples and

64 Tartessus was a kingdom in southern Spain.
65 Greeks often called the Persians “Medes”; here “the Mede” means Cyrus’ Persian power.

the other offerings, except whatever was bronze or stone or painting. When they had put everything else aboard, they embarked themselves and sailed for Chios. The Persians took possession of Phocaea, emptied of its men.

1.165 The Phocaeans wanted to buy the islands called the Oenussae, but the Chians would not sell them, fearing that the islands would become a trading center and their own island would be shut out because of it. So the Phocaeans set off for Cyrnus. Twenty years before this, at the bidding of an oracle, they had founded a city on Cyrnus called Alalia.[66] 2 Arganthonius had died by this time. As they set out for Cyrnus, they first sailed back to Phocaea and slaughtered the Persian garrison that had received the city from Harpagus and was guarding it. Then, when they had done this, they laid powerful curses on any of their company who should stay behind; 3 and besides this they sank a lump of iron in the sea and swore not to return to Phocaea until that lump came up again. But as they were setting out for Cyrnus, more than half of the citizens were seized with longing and pity for their city and the familiar places of their land, and breaking their oath, they sailed back to Phocaea. Those of them who kept the oath put out from the Oenussae and sailed on.

1.166 When they reached Cyrnus, they lived together with those who had come earlier for five years, and they set up temples. But because they kept raiding and plundering all their neighbors, the Tyrrhenians and the Carthaginians made common cause and sailed against them, each with sixty ships. 2 The Phocaeans too manned their vessels, sixty in number, and went to meet them in what is called the Sardinian Sea. They joined battle, and the Phocaeans won a kind of Cadmean victory: forty of their ships were destroyed, and the twenty that survived were useless, for their rams had been wrenched aside. 3 They sailed back to Alalia and took aboard their children and wives and as much

66 Cyrnus is the Greek name for Corsica.

of their other property as their ships could carry, and then they left Cyrnus and sailed to Rhegium.[67]

1.167 As for the men from the destroyed ships, the Carthaginians and the Tyrrhenians [divided them by lot, and of the Tyrrhenians the Agyllaeans] got by far the greatest number of them; they led them out and stoned them to death. Afterward, everything of the Agyllaeans' that passed the place where the stoned Phocaeans lay became twisted, crippled or paralyzed—sheep, draft animals and people alike. 2 The Agyllaeans sent to Delphi, wanting to make amends for their offense. The Pythia told them to do what the Agyllaeans still perform even now: they make great offerings to the dead men, and hold athletic and horse-racing contests in their honor.[68] 3 That was the fate these Phocaeans met. The others, who had fled to Rhegium, set out from there and acquired a city in the land of Oenotria, the one now called Hyele. 4 They founded it after learning from a man of Posidonia that the Pythia's oracle had told them to found a cult of Cyrnus, who was a hero, and not to settle the island.[69]

1.168 That is how things went with Phocaea in Ionia. The people of Teos did much the same. When Harpagus took their wall with an earthwork, they all boarded their ships and sailed off to Thrace, and there they founded the city of Abdera. Timesius of Clazomenae had founded it before them, but got no good of it; he was driven out by the Thracians, and now he receives honors as a hero from the Teians in Abdera.

1.169 These were the only Ionians who would not endure slavery and left their homelands. The other Ionians, except the Milesians, met Harpagus in battle just as those who left had done, and they proved themselves brave men, each fighting for his own city. But they were defeated and captured, and they stayed where they were, each people in its own place, and did what they were ordered. 2 The Milesians, as I have said before,

67 A "Cadmean victory" was one that cost the victors nearly as much as a defeat (later called a "Pyrrhic victory").
68 Agylla is the Etruscan city of Caere.
69 Hyele, later Elea (Velia), lay on the west coast of southern Italy, south of Posidonia (Paestum).

had made a sworn agreement with Cyrus himself and kept quiet. So Ionia was enslaved for the second time. And when Harpagus had subdued the Ionians on the mainland, the Ionians who held the islands took fright at this and surrendered to Cyrus.

1.170 The Ionians were in a bad way, but they went on meeting at the Panionium all the same, and I am told that Bias of Priene put a proposal to them that was most useful. Had they followed it, it would have allowed them to be the happiest of the Greeks. 2 He urged the Ionians to set sail together in a common fleet to Sardinia and then found a single city for all Ionians. In this way, he said, they would be free of slavery and be happy, inhabiting the largest of all islands and ruling others; but if they stayed in Ionia, he said, he could see no prospect of freedom for them any longer. 3 That was the proposal Bias of Priene made after the Ionians had been ruined. But a good one had also been made before Ionia's ruin, by Thales of Miletus, whose family was Phoenician in origin. He urged the Ionians to have a single council chamber, located at Teos (for Teos, he said, was at the center of Ionia), while the other cities would go on being inhabited but would be regarded as if they were districts of one state. Such were the proposals these men put before them.

1.171 After subduing Ionia, Harpagus made war on the Carians, the Caunians and the Lycians, taking Ionians and Aeolians along with him. 2 Of these, the Carians came to the mainland from the islands. In ancient times they were subjects of Minos, were called Leleges, and held the islands. They paid no tribute, as far back as I am able to reach by hearsay, but whenever Minos needed them, they manned his ships. 3 Since Minos had conquered a great deal of territory and was successful in war, the Carian people were at that time by far the most renowned of all peoples. 4 They made three inventions that the Greeks adopted. It was the Carians who started fastening crests on helmets and putting devices on shields, and they were the first to fit shields with handles. Until then, everyone who used shields carried them without handles, guiding them with leather straps

slung around their necks and left shoulders. [5] A long time after this, the Dorians and Ionians drove the Carians out of the islands, and so they came to the mainland. That is what the Cretans say happened to the Carians. The Carians themselves, however, do not agree with this. They believe that they are native to the mainland and have always gone by the same name they have now. [6] As evidence they point to an ancient temple of Carian Zeus at Mylasa, in which the Mysians and Lydians share as kinsmen of the Carians, for they say that Lydus and Mysus were brothers of Car. These have a share in it; but those of another people who have come to speak the same language as the Carians have no share in it.

1.172 The Caunians, in my opinion, are native to the place, though they themselves say they come from Crete. In language they have come to resemble the Carian people, or the Carians the Caunian—I cannot determine this for certain—but their customs differ greatly from those of the rest of mankind, the Carians included. For them the finest thing is to gather in groups for drinking according to age and friendship, men, women and children alike. [2] They had once set up foreign cults, but afterward they changed their minds and decided to worship only their ancestral gods. So all the Caunians of military age put on their armor and, striking the air with their spears, marched as far as the borders of Calynda, saying that they were driving out the foreign gods.

1.173 Such are the ways of the Caunians. The Lycians came originally from Crete (in ancient times all of Crete was held by non-Greeks). [2] When Europa's sons, Sarpedon and Minos, quarreled in Crete over the kingship, and Minos got the upper hand in the strife, he drove out Sarpedon himself and his partisans. Driven out, they came to the land of Milyas in Asia; for the land the Lycians now inhabit was in ancient times Milyas, and the Milyans were then called Solymi. [3] While Sarpedon ruled them, they were called by the name they had brought with them, the name by which the Lycians are still called today by their neighbors: Termilae. But when Lycus son of Pandion, who had likewise

been driven out of Athens by his brother Aegeus, came to the Termilae and to Sarpedon, then in time they came to be called Lycians after Lycus. [4] Their customs are partly Cretan and partly Carian. But they have one custom of their own in which they resemble no other people: they name themselves after their mothers and not after their fathers. [5] If one man asks another who he is, he will give his descent on his mother's side and list his mother's mothers. And if a citizen woman lives with a slave, her children are considered well-born; but if a citizen man, even the foremost among them, has a foreign wife or a concubine, the children have no citizen rights.

1.174 So the Carians were enslaved by Harpagus without having done any brilliant deed—neither the Carians themselves nor any of the Greeks who live in that country. [2] Among others who live there are the Cnidians, colonists of the Lacedaemonians. Their land faces the sea—it is called Triopium—and begins from the Bybassian peninsula, and all of Cnidia except a small strip is surrounded by water [3] (on the north it is bounded by the Ceramic Gulf, on the south by the sea off Syme and Rhodes). This small strip, then, about five stades wide, the Cnidians set about digging through while Harpagus was subduing Ionia, wanting to make their land an island. All of their land would then have lain inside the cut, for the isthmus they were digging is where Cnidian territory ends toward the mainland. [4] Many hands were at work, but the workers seemed to be injured more than was natural, and in a more uncanny way, on the rest of their bodies and especially their eyes, as the rock splintered; so they sent envoys to Delphi to ask what was standing in their way. [5] The Pythia, as the Cnidians themselves say, gave them this answer in iambic trimeter: Do not build towers on the isthmus, and do not dig it through: / Zeus would have made an island, had he wished. [6] When the Pythia gave this answer, the Cnidians stopped their digging, and when Harpagus came against them with his army, they surrendered without a fight.

1.175 There were the Pedasians, who lived inland above Halicarnassus. Whenever some misfortune was about to befall them

or their neighbors, the priestess of Athena grew a great beard. This happened to them three times. They were the only men around Caria who held out against Harpagus for some time and gave him the most trouble, having fortified a mountain called Lida.

1.176 In time the Pedasians were wiped out. The Lycians, when Harpagus drove his army into the plain of Xanthus, came out to meet him and fought, few against many, and showed great valor. But they were defeated and penned into their town, and they gathered their wives, children, property and servants into the citadel, and then set fire to the whole citadel so that it burned. 2 Having done this and sworn terrible oaths together, they went out against the enemy, and all the Xanthians died fighting. 3 Of the present-day Lycians who say they are Xanthians, most, apart from eighty households, are newcomers. Those eighty households happened to be away from home at the time, and so they survived. That was how Harpagus took Xanthus, and he took Caunus in much the same way, for the Caunians for the most part followed the Lycians' example.

1.177 So while Harpagus was turning the lower part of Asia upside down, Cyrus himself was doing the same to the upper part, subduing every people and passing over none. Most of these we will pass over; but I will recall those that gave him the most trouble and are most worth telling about.

BABYLON

Herodotus describes the walls, temples and queens of Babylon, then Cyrus' capture of the city.

1.178 When Cyrus had brought the whole mainland under his control, he attacked the Assyrians. Assyria has many other great cities, I suppose, but the most famous and the strongest, and the place where their royal seat had been established after Nineveh was destroyed, was Babylon, a city of the following sort. 2 It lies in a great plain and is square, each side a hundred and twenty stades long, so that the circuit of the city comes to four hundred

and eighty stades in all. Such is the size of the city of Babylon, and it was laid out as no other city we know of. [3] First a moat, deep and wide and full of water, runs all around it; then comes a wall fifty royal cubits thick and two hundred cubits high. The royal cubit is three fingers longer than the ordinary cubit.[70]

[1.179] Besides this I must also explain where the earth from the moat was used up, and how the wall was built. As they dug the moat, they made bricks from the earth carried out of the excavation, and when they had molded enough bricks, they baked them in kilns. [2] Then, using hot bitumen for mortar and inserting mats of reeds every thirty courses of brick, they built first the sides of the moat and then the wall itself in the same way. [3] On top of the wall, along its edges, they built single-roomed buildings facing one another, and between the buildings they left room for a four-horse chariot to turn. There are a hundred gates set all around the wall, all of bronze, with posts and lintels of bronze as well. [4] There is another city eight days' journey from Babylon, called Is. There is a small river there, also called Is, which flows into the Euphrates. This river Is brings up many clots of bitumen along with its water, and it was from there that the bitumen was brought for the wall at Babylon.

[1.180] This, then, is how Babylon was walled. The city has two sections, because a river divides it down the middle. Its name is the Euphrates; it flows from Armenia, large, deep and swift, and empties into the Red Sea. [2] Each of the two walls has its arms carried down to the river. From there the return walls run along both banks of the river as a rampart of baked brick. [3] The town itself is full of houses three and four stories high. It is cut through by straight streets, both the others and the cross streets that lead down to the river. [4] At the end of each street there were small gates in the rampart along the river, as many as there were lanes. These too were of bronze ... leading [these too] down to the river itself.

[1.181] This wall is the city's breastplate. Another wall runs around inside it, not much weaker than the first, but narrower. [2]

70 A finger was about three-quarters of an inch.

In the middle of each section of the city a walled compound was built: in one, the royal palace, within a great and strong enclosure; in the other, the sanctuary of Zeus Belus, with bronze gates, which still existed in my day. It is square, two stades each way. [3] In the middle of the sanctuary a solid tower has been built, a stade long and a stade wide. On this tower stands another tower, and yet another on top of that, up to eight towers.[71] [4] The way up to them has been built on the outside, running in a spiral around all the towers. About halfway up there is a resting place with seats, where those who are climbing sit down and rest. [5] On the last tower stands a great temple. In the temple lies a large couch, richly covered, and beside it stands a golden table. No image of any kind has been set up there, and no human being spends the night there except a single woman of the country, whichever one the god chooses out of all of them. So say the Chaldaeans, who are priests of this god.

1.182 These same men also say, though I do not believe them, that the god himself visits the temple and rests on the couch. According to the Egyptians, the same thing happens in the same way at Egyptian Thebes. [2] There too a woman sleeps in the temple of Theban Zeus, and both these women are said to have intercourse with no man. It is the same at Patara in Lycia with the prophetess of the god, whenever there is one. There is not always an oracle there, but whenever there is, she is shut in at night inside the temple with the god.

1.183 The sanctuary in Babylon also has another temple lower down. In it there is a great seated statue of Zeus in gold, and beside it stands a great golden table. The footstool and the throne are of gold too. According to the Chaldaeans, eight hundred talents of gold went into making these things. [2] Outside the temple is a golden altar, and there is also another, large altar, on which full-grown sheep are sacrificed, since on the golden altar only sucklings may be sacrificed. On the larger altar the Chaldaeans also burn a thousand talents of frankincense every year, at the time when they celebrate this god's festival. At that

71 "Zeus Belus" is Herodotus' name for Bel-Marduk, the chief god of Babylon.

time there was also still in this precinct a statue of a man, twelve cubits high, of solid gold. [3] I did not see it myself; I am reporting what the Chaldaeans say. Darius son of Hystaspes had designs on this statue but did not dare to take it. Xerxes son of Darius did take it, and he killed the priest who forbade him to move the statue. That is how this sanctuary is adorned, and there are also many private offerings.

[1.184] Babylon no doubt had many other kings too, whom I shall mention in my Assyrian history, and they adorned its walls and its sanctuaries. Among them were two women. The first to rule lived five generations before the later one, and her name was Semiramis. She built embankments across the plain that are well worth seeing; before that, the river used to flood the whole plain like a sea.[72]

[1.185] The second queen after her was named Nitocris, and she was more intelligent than the one who had ruled before her. She left monuments, which I shall describe. She also saw that the empire of the Medes was great and restless, and that they had taken many cities, Nineveh among them, so she took every precaution she could in advance. [2] First, the Euphrates, which flows through the middle of their city, used to run straight. By digging channels upstream she made it so winding that it now comes three times to one of the villages in Assyria as it flows. The name of the village the Euphrates comes to is Ardericca. Even today, those who travel from this sea of ours to Babylon, sailing down the Euphrates, come to this same village three times, on three separate days. [3] That is what she did there. She also heaped up an embankment along each bank of the river, remarkable for its size and height. [4] Far upstream of Babylon she dug a basin for a lake, a little way off from the river. She dug it down to water level throughout, and made its circumference four hundred and twenty stades. The earth dug out of this excavation she put to use by heaping it along the banks of the river. [5] When the digging was done, she brought in stones and built a stone rim all

72 Herodotus' promised Assyrian history either was never written or has not survived.

around the lake. [6] She did both these things, making the river winding and turning the whole excavation into a marsh, so that the river would be slower, its force broken by many bends, the voyages to Babylon would be winding, and after the voyages there would follow a long circuit of the lake. [7] She carried out this work in the part of the country where the passes were and the shortest route from Media, so that the Medes would not mix with her people and learn about her affairs.

1.186 These were the defenses she dug deep around the city, and from them she made the following addition. The city was in two sections with the river in the middle, and under the earlier kings anyone who wanted to cross from one section to the other had to cross by boat. In my opinion this was a nuisance. But she foresaw this too. When she was digging the basin for the lake, she left this further monument from the same work. [2] She had very long stones cut. When the stones were ready and the site had been dug, she diverted the whole stream of the river into the place she had dug. While it was filling and the old riverbed had dried out, she lined the banks of the river through the city, and the stairs leading down from the small gates to the river, with baked bricks in the same way as the wall. She also built a bridge, roughly in the middle of the city, with the stones she had quarried, binding the stones together with iron and lead. [3] Every morning she had squared timbers laid across it, and on these the Babylonians made their crossing. At night they would take these timbers away, so that people would not cross over at night and steal from one another. [4] When the excavation had been filled by the river and become a lake, and the work on the bridge was complete, she led the Euphrates out of the lake back into its old bed. So the excavation, by becoming a marsh, seemed to have served its purpose, and the citizens had been provided with a bridge.

1.187 This same queen also devised the following trick. Over the busiest gate of the town she built herself a tomb, high up above the gate itself, and on the tomb she carved letters that said this: [2] "If any of the kings of Babylon who come after me is short of

money, let him open the tomb and take as much money as he wants. But he is not to open it for any other reason, unless he really is short of money; it will not be the better for him." [3] This tomb remained undisturbed until the kingship passed to Darius. Darius thought it outrageous that this gate should be of no use at all, and also that he should not take the money when it lay there and the inscription itself was inviting him to. [4] He made no use of this gate because, whenever he drove through, he would have had the corpse over his head. [5] When he opened the tomb, he found no money, only the corpse and letters that said this: "If you were not insatiable for money and greedy for shameful gain, you would not have opened the resting places of the dead." Such, it is said, was this queen.

1.188 It was against this woman's son that Cyrus marched. He bore his father's name, Labynetus, and held the rule of Assyria. When the Great King goes on campaign, he is well supplied from home with food and livestock, and he also takes with him water from the Choaspes, the river that flows past Susa. That is the only river the King drinks from, and no other. [2] This water from the Choaspes is boiled, and a great many four-wheeled wagons drawn by mules carry it in silver vessels and follow him wherever he travels.[73]

1.189 On his way to Babylon, Cyrus came to the river Gyndes. Its sources are in the Matienian mountains, and it flows through the land of the Dardanians and empties into another river, the Tigris, which flows past the city of Opis and empties into the Red Sea. This river Gyndes can be crossed only by boat. When Cyrus was trying to cross it, one of his sacred white horses, in a fit of high spirits, plunged into the river and tried to cross, and the river swept it under and carried it away. [2] Cyrus was furious with the river for this outrage, and he threatened to make it so weak that in future even women would cross it easily without wetting their knees. [3] After making this threat, he put off the campaign against Babylon and divided his army in two. Having

73 Labynetus is probably Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, which fell to Cyrus in 539 BC.

divided it, he marked out with stretched cords a hundred and eighty channels on each bank of the Gyndes, running off in every direction. Then he posted his men along them and ordered them to dig. [4] Since a huge crowd was working, the work got done, but even so they spent the whole summer there at it.

[1.190] When Cyrus had punished the river Gyndes by splitting it into three hundred and sixty channels, and the next spring was beginning to dawn, he finally marched on Babylon. The Babylonians had marched out and were waiting for him. When he came near the city, the Babylonians engaged him, were defeated in the battle, and were driven back into the town. [2] They had long known well that Cyrus was not one to rest, and they saw him attacking every nation alike, so they had laid in provisions for a great many years beforehand. So they took no notice of the siege, while Cyrus was at a loss, since a great deal of time was passing and he was making no headway at all.

[1.191] Whether someone else suggested it to him in his difficulty, or he worked out for himself what he had to do, this is what he did. [2] He posted his whole army at the point where the river enters the city, and posted others again behind the city, where the river leaves it. He ordered his men to enter the city that way as soon as they saw that the stream had become fordable. Having stationed them like this and given them these instructions, he himself marched off with the part of his army that was unfit for fighting. [3] When he reached the lake, Cyrus did the same kind of thing that the queen of the Babylonians had done to the river and the lake. He led the river by a channel into the lake, which was then a marsh, and so made the old riverbed fordable as the river sank. [4] When this had happened, the Persians who had been posted for this very purpose entered Babylon by way of the bed of the Euphrates, which had sunk to about the middle of a man's thigh. [5] Now if the Babylonians had heard beforehand or found out what Cyrus was doing, they would have let the Persians get into the city and then destroyed them miserably; for by shutting all the small gates that led to the river and climbing up

onto the ramparts that ran along the riverbanks, they would have caught them as in a fish trap. [6] As it was, the Persians came upon them unexpectedly. The people who live there say that the city was so large that, when those in the outer parts of the city had been captured, the Babylonians living in the middle did not know they had been captured. It happened to be a festival, they say, so they went on dancing and enjoying themselves all that time, until at last they learned the truth for certain.

1.192 That is how Babylon was taken for the first time. How great the resources of the Babylonians are I shall show by many other things, and in particular by this. The whole land the Great King rules is assessed, on top of its tribute, to supply food for him and his army. Of the twelve months in the year, the Babylonian territory feeds him for four, and all the rest of Asia for the other eight. [2] So in resources the Assyrian land amounts to a third of all Asia. The governorship of this land, which the Persians call a satrapy, is by far the most powerful of all the provinces. When Tritantaechmes son of Artabazus held this district from the King, a full artaba of silver came in to him every day.[74] [3] The artaba, a Persian measure, holds three Attic choenixes more than an Attic medimnus. He also had horses of his own, apart from the war horses: eight hundred stallions for covering the mares, and sixteen thousand mares to be covered, since each of these stallions covered twenty mares. [4] He also kept so many Indian dogs that four large villages on the plain were exempt from other taxes and assigned to supply food for the dogs. Such were the possessions of the ruler of Babylon.[75]

1.193 The land of the Assyrians gets little rain, and that little is what nourishes the root of the grain. It is by irrigation from the river, though, that the crop grows to ripeness and the grain comes to harvest. Here the river does not rise over the fields by itself as it does in Egypt; the land is watered by hand and with swing-beams. [2] The whole Babylonian territory, like the Egyp-

74 A satrap was a Persian provincial governor; his province was a satrapy.
75 A medimnus was about 52 liters (roughly 1½ bushels); a choenix was a forty-eighth of a medimnus, about a liter.

tian, is cut through with channels. The largest of the channels is navigable. It faces the winter sunrise and runs from the Euphrates into another river, the Tigris, on which the city of Nineveh stood. Of all the lands we know, this is by far the best at bearing Demeter's grain ... [3] It does not even attempt to bear other trees at all: neither fig, nor vine, nor olive. But it is so good at producing Demeter's grain that it generally yields two-hundredfold, and when it is at its very best, three-hundredfold. The blades of wheat and barley there easily grow four fingers wide. [4] As for millet and sesame, I know perfectly well how tall a tree they grow into, but I shall not mention it, well aware that even what has already been said about the crops has met with great disbelief among those who have not been to Babylonia. They use no oil except what they make from sesame. Date palms grow all over the plain, most of them bearing fruit, and from these they make food, wine and honey. [5] They tend them in the same way as figs, and in particular they take the fruit of the palms the Greeks call male and tie it onto the date-bearing palms, so that the gall wasp may enter the date and ripen it, and the fruit of the palm will not drop off. The male palms carry gall wasps in their fruit, just as wild figs do.

[1.194] I am now going to describe what I consider the greatest wonder of all in that country, after the city itself. Their boats that travel down the river to Babylon are round and made entirely of hide. [2] In Armenia, which lies upstream of Assyria, they cut willow to make the frames, and around these they stretch hides as a waterproof covering on the outside, like a hull. They do not mark off a stern or narrow it into a prow, but make it round like a shield. They line the whole boat with straw, load it with cargo and let it be carried down the river. Mostly they carry palm-wood casks full of wine. [3] The boat is steered with two paddles by two men standing upright; one pulls his paddle in, while the other pushes his out. These boats are built both very large and smaller; the largest of them carry a load of as much as five thousand talents. Each boat has a live donkey on board, and the larger ones several. [4] When they have sailed to

Babylon and disposed of their cargo, they sell off the boat's frame and all the straw at auction, load the hides onto the donkeys, and drive them back to Armenia. [5] It is impossible to sail up the river by any means, because of the swiftness of the current; that is also why they make their boats not of wood but of hides. When they have driven their donkeys back to Armenia, they make more boats in the same way.

[1.195] Such are their boats. Their clothing is this: a linen tunic reaching to the feet, and over it a man puts on another tunic of wool and wraps himself in a small white cloak. He wears shoes of the local kind, much like Boeotian slippers. They wear their hair long and bind their heads with turbans, and they perfume their whole bodies. [2] Each man has a seal and a hand-carved staff. On top of each staff is carved an apple, a rose, a lily, an eagle or something else, since it is not their custom to carry a staff without an emblem.

BABYLONIAN CUSTOMS

The Babylonians' bride auction, their care of the sick, their burials and the rite at Aphrodite's temple.

[1.196] This, then, is how they dress and adorn their bodies. Their customs are as follows. The wisest of them, in my judgment, is this one, which I learn the Eneti in Illyria also practice. In every village, once a year, the following was done. When girls reached marriageable age, they would gather them all together and bring them in a body to one place, and a crowd of men would stand around them. [2] A herald would make each girl stand up in turn and offer her for sale, starting with the best-looking of them all. Then, once she had been sold for a great deal of gold, he would put up the one who was next best-looking after her. They were sold as wives.[76] All the wealthy Babylonians who were ready to marry outbid one another for the most beautiful. But the men of the common people who were ready to marry

76 The Eneti (Veneti) lived at the head of the Adriatic; Herodotus counts them as Illyrians.

had no need of good looks, and they would take money along with the plainer girls. [3] For when the herald had finished selling the best-looking girls, he would make the plainest stand up, or any of them who was disabled, and put her up for sale too, asking who was willing to take the least gold to marry her, until she was given to the man who offered to take the least. The gold came from the good-looking girls, and in this way the beautiful ones provided dowries for the plain and the disabled. No man was allowed to give his own daughter in marriage to whomever he liked. Nor could a man who had bought a girl take her away without a guarantor. He had to provide guarantors that he really would marry her, and only then could he take her away. [4] If the couple did not get along, the law was that the gold be paid back. Anyone who wished could also come from another village and buy. [5] This, then, was their finest custom, but it has not survived to the present. Instead they have recently hit on something else [so that the girls would not be wronged or taken off to another city]: since their conquest, when they were ill-treated and their households ruined, every man of the common people who is short of a living prostitutes his daughters.

1.197 Their second wisest custom is this. They carry their sick out into the marketplace, since they do not use doctors. People come up to the sick man and give him advice about his illness. Anyone who has himself suffered something like what the sick man has, or has seen someone else suffer it, comes up and advises him, urging him to do whatever he himself did to get over a similar illness, or saw someone else do to get over it. They are not allowed to pass a sick man by in silence without asking what illness he has.

1.198 They bury their dead in honey, and their laments for the dead are much like those in Egypt. Whenever a Babylonian man has had intercourse with his wife, he sits beside burning incense, and the woman does the same somewhere else. At daybreak they both wash, for they will not touch any vessel until they have washed. The Arabians do the same.

1.199 The most shameful of the Babylonians' customs is this. Every woman of the country must once in her life sit in the temple of Aphrodite and have intercourse with a stranger. Many women who think it beneath them to mix with the rest, being proud of their wealth, drive to the temple in covered carriages and wait there, with a large retinue following behind them. 2 Most of them, though, do as follows. Many women sit in the sacred precinct of Aphrodite, wearing wreaths of cord around their heads; some are arriving while others are leaving. Passages marked out by ropes run in every direction through the crowd of women, and the strangers walk along them and make their choice. 3 Once a woman has sat down there, she does not go home until one of the strangers has thrown silver into her lap and had intercourse with her outside the temple. When he throws it, he must say just this: "I call on the goddess Mylitta for you." Mylitta is what the Assyrians call Aphrodite. 4 The silver may be of any amount at all. She will never refuse it, for that is not permitted to her, since this silver becomes sacred. She goes with the first man who throws it and rejects no one. After the intercourse, having discharged her obligation to the goddess, she goes home, and from then on you will not win her, however great a gift you give her. 5 Those who are blessed with beauty and stature are soon released, but the unattractive ones wait a long time, unable to fulfill the law; some of them stay as long as three or four years. In some parts of Cyprus too there is a custom much like this one.

1.200 These, then, are the customs established among the Babylonians. There are also three clans among them that eat nothing but fish. When they have caught the fish and dried them in the sun, they do this: they throw them into a mortar, pound them with pestles and sift them through linen. Then anyone who likes kneads the meal into a cake and eats it that way, while another bakes it like bread.

CYRUS AND TOMYRIS OF THE MASSAGETAE

Cyrus invades the land of the Massagetae and is killed by Queen Tomyris' army.

1.201 When Cyrus had subdued this nation too, he conceived a desire to bring the Massagetae under his rule. This nation is said to be both large and warlike. They live toward the dawn and the sunrise, beyond the river Araxes, opposite the Issedones. Some say that this nation is Scythian.[77]

1.202 The Araxes is said to be both larger and smaller than the Ister. There are many islands in it, they say, about the size of Lesbos, and on them live people who in summer eat roots of every kind that they dig up. They have also found, it is said, fruits on trees that they store up for food when ripe and eat during the winter. 2 They have found other trees too, they say, that bear a fruit of this sort: when they gather in groups and light a fire, they sit around it in a circle and throw the fruit onto it. As they breathe in the smell of the burning fruit, they become intoxicated by it, just as the Greeks do with wine, and the more fruit is thrown on, the more intoxicated they become, until they get up to dance and break into song.[78] This is said to be their way of life. 3 The river Araxes flows from the land of the Matieni, the same place the Gyndes comes from—the river that Cyrus divided into three hundred and sixty channels. It empties through forty mouths, all but one of which run out into marshes and shallows. In these, they say, live people who eat raw fish and whose custom is to wear sealskins as clothing. 4 The one remaining mouth of the Araxes flows through open ground into the Caspian Sea.

1.203 The Caspian is a sea on its own and does not connect with the other sea. For the sea the Greeks sail, the sea beyond the Pillars that is called the Atlantic, and the Red Sea are in fact all one sea. But the Caspian is separate, a sea on its own. In length it is a

77 The Massagetae were nomads of Central Asia, east of the Caspian Sea.
78 The Ister is the Danube.

voyage of fifteen days for a rowed ship, and in breadth, at its widest point, eight days. Along its western side stretch the Caucasus mountains, the most extensive and the highest of all mountain ranges.[79] The Caucasus is home to many nations of every kind, most of them living off what the wild forest provides. [2] Among them, it is said, there are trees whose leaves are of a special kind: the people crush them, mix them with water and use them to paint figures on their clothing. These figures do not wash out but wear out along with the rest of the wool, as if they had been woven in from the start. These people, it is said, have intercourse in the open, like livestock.

[1.204] So on the west of this sea called the Caspian the Caucasus forms the barrier, while to the east, toward the rising sun, there follows a plain that stretches beyond the reach of the eye. Of this great plain the Massagetae hold no small share—the people Cyrus was so eager to march against. [2] For there were many weighty reasons urging and spurring him on. First was his birth, the belief that he was something more than human; second was the good fortune he had enjoyed in his wars. For wherever Cyrus chose to march, it was impossible for that people to escape him.

[1.205] The Massagetae were ruled by a woman, a queen whose husband had died. Her name was Tomyris. Cyrus sent to her and wooed her, claiming that he wanted her as his wife. But Tomyris understood that what he was wooing was not her but the kingdom of the Massagetae, and she refused his approach. [2] After this, since trickery was getting him nowhere, Cyrus marched to the Araxes and openly made war on the Massagetae, bridging the river so that his army could cross and building towers on the boats that were to ferry it over.

[1.206] While he was busy with this work, Tomyris sent a herald with this message: "King of the Medes, stop pressing on with what you are so eager to do. You can't know whether it will turn out well for you once it's done. Stop, rule your own people, and put up with seeing us rule the people we rule. [2] But you won't be

79 The Pillars are the Pillars of Heracles (the Strait of Gibraltar).

willing to take this advice; you'd rather do anything than keep the peace. Well then, if you're so very eager to test the Massagetae, come: give up the labor you've taken on of bridging the river. We'll withdraw three days' journey from the river, and you can cross into our land. [3] Or if you'd rather receive us in your land, do the same yourself." When Cyrus heard this, he called together the leading Persians, and once they were assembled he laid the matter before them and asked their advice on which course to take. Their opinions all came out the same: they urged him to let Tomyris and her army into his own country.

[1.207] But Croesus the Lydian, who was present, found fault with this opinion and set out the opposite view, saying: "King, I told you once before that since Zeus has given me to you, I would do all I could to avert any mistake I saw threatening your house. My sufferings, bitter as they were, have been my lessons. [2] If you think you're immortal and command an army of immortals, there'd be no point in my giving you my opinion. But if you recognize that you too are a man, and that those you command are men as well, then learn this first: human affairs are a wheel, and as it turns it never lets the same people prosper forever. [3] So my view on the matter before us is the opposite of theirs. If we choose to let the enemy into our country, this is the danger it holds for you: if you're beaten, you lose your whole empire as well. For it's obvious that if the Massagetae win, they won't run back home; they'll march on your provinces. [4] And if you win, you don't win as much as you would if you had crossed into their land, beaten the Massagetae and pursued them in flight. For I'll turn the same argument around: once you've beaten your opponents, you'll march straight into Tomyris' realm. [5] And apart from what I've said, it would be shameful and intolerable for Cyrus son of Cambyses to give way to a woman and retreat from his own land. So what I think we should do now is cross, advance as far as they withdraw, and then try to get the better of them by doing this. [6] As I understand it, the Massagetae have never tasted the good things of Persia and have no experience of great luxuries. So for these men let's slaughter plenty of sheep,

without stinting, dress them, and lay out a feast in our camp, and with it bowls of unmixed wine, without stinting, and food of every kind. [7] When we've done that, let's leave behind the weakest part of the army and withdraw with the rest back to the river. For unless my judgment fails me, when they see so many good things they'll turn to them, and what remains for us after that is a display of great deeds."

[1.208] These were the opposing opinions. Cyrus let go of the first and chose Croesus' plan, and he sent word to Tomyris to withdraw, since he would cross over to attack her. She withdrew, as she had first promised. Cyrus then placed Croesus in the hands of his own son Cambyses, to whom he was handing over the kingship, and gave him strict instructions to honor Croesus and treat him well if the crossing against the Massagetae should go wrong. Having given these instructions and sent the two of them off to Persia, he crossed the river himself, and his army with him.

[1.209] When he had crossed the Araxes and night came on, he had a vision as he slept in the land of the Massagetae. It was this: in his sleep Cyrus seemed to see the eldest of Hystaspes' sons with wings on his shoulders, overshadowing Asia with one wing and Europe with the other. [2] Now Hystaspes son of Arsames, a man of the Achaemenid family, had Darius as his eldest son. He was then about twenty years old, and he had been left behind in Persia, since he was not yet old enough to serve in the army. [3] So when Cyrus woke up, he thought the vision over.[80] Since the vision seemed to him a serious matter, he summoned Hystaspes, took him aside alone and said, "Hystaspes, your son has been caught plotting against me and my rule. I'll show you how I know this for certain. [4] The gods watch over me and show me in advance everything that's coming. Last night, as I slept, I saw the eldest of your sons with wings on his shoulders, overshadowing Asia with one and Europe with the other. [5] So after this vision there's no way he isn't plotting against me. Now go back to Persia as fast as you can, and see to it that when I've

80 The Achaemenids were the Persian royal clan.

conquered these people and come back there, you bring your son before me to be questioned."

1.210 Cyrus said this believing that Darius was plotting against him. But in fact a divine power was showing him in advance that he himself was going to die right there, and that his kingship would pass to Darius. 2 Hystaspes answered as follows: "King, may there never be a Persian born who would plot against you—and if there is, may he die as quickly as possible! You made the Persians free instead of slaves, and rulers of everyone instead of being ruled by others. 3 If a vision tells you that my son is plotting rebellion against you, I hand him over to you to do with as you wish."

1.211 With this answer Hystaspes crossed the Araxes and went to Persia to keep his son Darius under guard for Cyrus, while Cyrus advanced a day's journey from the Araxes and carried out Croesus' advice. 2 After this Cyrus and the sound part of the Persian army marched back to the Araxes, leaving the useless part behind. A third of the Massagetae's army then attacked and killed those of Cyrus' army who had been left behind, though they fought back. Then, seeing the feast laid out, once they had overcome their opponents they lay down and feasted, and when they were full of food and wine they fell asleep. 3 The Persians attacked, killed many of them, and took many more alive, among them the son of Queen Tomyris, who was commanding the Massagetae. His name was Spargapises.

1.212 When she learned what had happened to her army and to her son, she sent a herald to Cyrus with this message: 2 "Cyrus, you who can never have enough blood, don't be puffed up by what has happened. It was with the fruit of the vine—which you people fill yourselves with until you go so mad that, as the wine sinks into your bodies, foul words float up to your lips—it was with a drug like that that you tricked my son and overcame him, not by strength in battle. 3 So now take my word, for my advice is good: give me back my son and leave this country unpunished, though you've done outrage to a third of the Massagetae's army. If you won't do this, I swear by the sun, the lord of the

Massagetae, that I will give you your fill of blood, for all your thirst for it."

1.213 Cyrus paid no attention to any of these words when they were reported to him. But Spargapises, the son of Queen Tomyris, when the wine wore off and he realized what a plight he was in, begged Cyrus to have him released from his bonds, and his request was granted. As soon as he was freed and had the use of his hands, he killed himself.

1.214 That, then, is how he died. Tomyris, since Cyrus had not listened to her, gathered all her forces and engaged him in battle. I judge this battle to have been the fiercest of all the battles ever fought by non-Greeks, and my inquiries tell me that it really was. 2 First, it is said, they stood apart and shot arrows at each other; then, when their arrows were used up, they fell on each other and fought hand to hand with spears and daggers. They kept on fighting for a long time, it is said, and neither side was willing to run. In the end the Massagetae won. 3 Most of the Persian army was destroyed there, and Cyrus himself died, after a reign of twenty-nine years in all. 4 Tomyris filled a skin with human blood and searched among the Persian dead for Cyrus' body. When she found it, she plunged his head into the skin, and as she defiled the corpse she spoke these words over it: 5 "You destroyed me, though I am alive and beat you in battle, by taking my son with a trick. But I, as I threatened, will give you your fill of blood." Of the many stories told about how Cyrus' life ended, the one I have told seems to me the most believable.

1.215 The Massagetae wear clothing like the Scythians' and live in a similar way. They fight both on horseback and on foot (they do both), as archers and as spearmen, and their custom is to carry battle-axes. They use gold and bronze for everything. For spearheads, arrowheads and battle-axes they use bronze throughout, while for headgear, belts and shoulder-straps they adorn themselves with gold. 2 In the same way they put bronze breastplates around the chests of their horses, but use gold for the reins, bits and cheek-pieces. They use no iron or silver at all,

for there is none in their country, whereas gold and bronze are there in vast quantities.

1.216 Their customs are as follows. Each man marries a wife, but they use the wives in common. What the Greeks say the Scythians do is done not by the Scythians but by the Massagetae: when a Massagetan man desires a woman, he hangs his quiver in front of her wagon and has intercourse with her without fear. 2 No limit is set on their lifespan except this: when a man grows very old, all his kinsmen gather and sacrifice him, along with livestock, then boil the meat and feast on it. 3 This is regarded among them as the most blessed end. A man who dies of disease they do not eat but bury in the ground, counting it a misfortune that he did not live to be sacrificed. They sow no crops but live on their livestock and on fish, which the river Araxes supplies them in abundance. 4 They drink milk. Of the gods they worship only the sun, and to it they sacrifice horses. The thinking behind the sacrifice is this: to the swiftest of the gods they give the swiftest of all mortal creatures.

Book 2 (Euterpe)

Egypt: the Nile, Egyptian customs and animals, and the history of the pharaohs.

2.1 When Cyrus died, Cambyses took over the kingship. He was the son of Cyrus and of Cassandane, daughter of Pharnaspes. She had died before Cyrus, and he had mourned her deeply himself and ordered all his other subjects to mourn her as well. 2 Cambyses, then, the son of this woman and of Cyrus, regarded the Ionians and Aeolians as slaves inherited from his father. He made an expedition against Egypt, taking with him others of his subjects, and the Greeks under his control among them.

PSAMMETICHUS' EXPERIMENT

An Egyptian king raises two infants in isolation to discover which people is the oldest.

2.2 Before Psammetichus became their king, the Egyptians believed that they had been the first of all people. But ever since Psammetichus became king and wanted to know who the first people had been, they have believed that the Phrygians came before them, and that they came before everyone else. 2 Psammetichus could find no way of discovering by inquiry who the first people had been, so he devised the following plan.[1] He gave two newborn children of ordinary parents to a shepherd to be raised among his flocks, in this way. He ordered that no one should utter a single word in their presence. They were to lie by

1 Psammetichus I was king of Egypt from about 664 to 610 BC.

themselves in an empty hut, and at the proper times the shepherd was to bring goats to them, let them drink their fill of milk, and see to everything else. [3] Psammetichus did this and gave these orders because he wanted to hear what word the children would first burst out with, once they had outgrown their meaningless crying. And that is exactly what happened. When the shepherd had been doing this for two years, one day as he opened the door and went in, both children ran up to him, stretching out their hands, and said "bekos." [4] When he first heard this, the shepherd kept quiet. But when he came often to look after them and kept hearing this word again and again, he finally told his master, and at his command brought the children before him. Psammetichus heard it himself, and then asked which people call anything "bekos"; and on inquiry he found that it is the Phrygian word for bread. [5] So the Egyptians, judging by this evidence, conceded that the Phrygians were older than they were. This is how it happened, according to what I heard from the priests of Hephaestus at Memphis. The Greeks tell many foolish stories, among them that Psammetichus cut out the tongues of some women and then had the children raised by these women.[2]

[2.3] That is what they told me about the raising of the children; but I heard other things too at Memphis when I talked with the priests of Hephaestus. I even went to Thebes and to Heliopolis for this very reason, wanting to know whether they would agree with the accounts given at Memphis, since the people of Heliopolis are said to be the most learned in their traditions of all the Egyptians. [2] As for the stories about the gods that I heard, I am not eager to relate them, except only their names, since I believe that all people know equally much about such matters. Whatever I do mention of them, I will mention only because my account compels me.

[2.4] But as for human affairs, this is what they told me, all in agreement with one another. The Egyptians, they said, were the

2 By "Hephaestus" Herodotus means the Egyptian god Ptah, whose great temple stood at Memphis.

first of all people to discover the year, dividing it into twelve parts according to the seasons; and they said they had discovered this from the stars. In my opinion their reckoning is wiser than the Greeks', inasmuch as the Greeks insert an extra month every other year to keep the seasons in line, while the Egyptians make their twelve months thirty days each and add five days every year beyond that number, and so the cycle of the seasons comes around to the same point. 2 They also said that the Egyptians were the first to use names for twelve gods, and that the Greeks took these over from them; and that they were the first to assign altars, statues and temples to the gods, and to carve figures in stone. For most of these things they showed me evidence that it had happened this way. They said that the first human being to be king of Egypt was Min. 3 In his time, they said, all of Egypt except the Theban nome was marsh, and none of the land that now lies below Lake Moeris stood out of the water. It is a voyage of seven days up the river from the sea to that lake.[3]

THE LAND OF EGYPT

Egypt is the gift of the Nile: Herodotus measures the country and explains how the river built it.

2.5 And I thought what they said about the land was right. For it is plain to anyone with sense who sees it, even if he has not been told beforehand, that the Egypt to which the Greeks sail is land the Egyptians have gained, the gift of the river. The same is true of the region still farther up from this lake, as far as three days' voyage. They said nothing of the kind about it, but it is another case of the same sort. 2 For the nature of the land of Egypt is this. First, when you are still sailing toward it and are a day's run from land, if you let down a sounding line you will bring up

3 A nome was one of Egypt's administrative districts. Lake Moeris is the lake of the Fayum, west of the Nile.

mud, and you will be in eleven fathoms of water. This shows that the silt carried out from the land reaches that far.[4]

2.6 Next, the length of Egypt itself along the sea is sixty schoeni, according to our definition of Egypt as running from the Gulf of Plinthine to Lake Serbonis, along which Mount Casius stretches; it is from this point, then, that the sixty schoeni are reckoned. 2 For people who are short of land measure their country in fathoms; those less short of it, in stades; those who have a lot, in parasangs; and those who have a very great abundance, in schoeni. 3 A parasang equals thirty stades, and the schoenus, which is an Egyptian measure, sixty stades.[5]

2.7 So the coast of Egypt would be three thousand six hundred stades long. From there inland as far as Heliopolis, Egypt is broad, all of it flat, well watered and muddy. The road from the sea up to Heliopolis is about the same length as the road from Athens that runs from the altar of the Twelve Gods to Pisa and the temple of Olympian Zeus. 2 If you worked it out, you would find only a small difference in length between these roads, no more than fifteen stades. The road from Athens to Pisa is fifteen stades short of fifteen hundred, while the road from the sea to Heliopolis comes to exactly that number.[6]

2.8 But going upriver from Heliopolis, Egypt is narrow. On one side a range of the Arabian mountains stretches along it, running from north toward the south and southwest and continuing all the way up toward the sea called the Red Sea. In this range are the quarries where the stone for the pyramids at Memphis was cut. Here the range ends and bends away toward the regions I have mentioned. Where it is at its longest, I was told, it is a journey of two months from east to west, and its eastern edges produce frankincense. 2 Such, then, is this range. On the Libyan side of Egypt another rocky range extends, in which the pyramids stand. It is covered with sand and runs in the same

4 A fathom is about 6 feet.

5 A parasang is roughly 3½ miles and a schoenus (as Herodotus reckons it) roughly 7 miles.

6 The altar of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian agora was the point from which road distances were measured; Pisa is the district of Olympia.

direction as those parts of the Arabian range that run southward. [3] So from Heliopolis on there is no longer much land, considering that this is Egypt: for about fourteen days' voyage upriver Egypt is narrow. The land between the ranges I have mentioned is level, and where it is narrowest it seemed to me to be no more than about two hundred stades from the Arabian range to the one called Libyan. From there on Egypt is broad again. That, then, is the nature of this land.

2.9 From Heliopolis to Thebes is a voyage of nine days upriver, and the distance is four thousand eight hundred and sixty stades, which is eighty-one schoeni. [2] Putting together these figures for Egypt: I have already shown that the coastline is three thousand six hundred stades; how far it is from the sea inland as far as Thebes I will now indicate, namely six thousand one hundred and twenty stades. And from Thebes to the city called Elephantine is one thousand eight hundred stades.[7]

2.10 Most of this land I have described seemed to me too, just as the priests said, to be land gained by the Egyptians. For it was evident to me that the space between the ranges I have mentioned, which lie above the city of Memphis, was once a gulf of the sea, just like the regions around Ilium, Teuthrania, Ephesus and the plain of the Maeander—if one may compare small things with great. [2] For of the rivers that silted up those places, not one deserves to be compared in volume with even a single mouth of the Nile, which has five.[8] [3] There are other rivers too, not as large as the Nile, that have produced great results. I could give the names of several, and above all the Achelous, which flows through Acarnania and, where it empties into the sea, has already turned half of the Echinades islands into mainland.

2.11 In Arabia, not far from Egypt, there is a gulf of the sea running in from the sea called the Red Sea, as long and narrow as I am about to describe. [2] In length, if you set out from its inner

7 Elephantine is an island city at the First Cataract of the Nile, near modern Aswan.

8 Ilium is Troy; Teuthrania, Ephesus and the Maeander plain are all on the Aegean coast of Asia Minor.

end to sail through to the open sea, the voyage takes forty days under oars; in breadth, where the gulf is widest, it is half a day's sail. And there is an ebb and flow of the tide in it every day.[9] [3] I believe that Egypt too was once another such gulf: one gulf running in from the northern sea toward Ethiopia, and the other, the Arabian, which I am about to speak of, running from the southern sea toward Syria. Their inner ends almost bored through to meet each other, leaving only a small stretch of land between them. [4] Now if the Nile should choose to turn its stream into this Arabian Gulf, what would stop the gulf from being silted up by the river's flow within twenty thousand years? For my part, I expect it would be filled within ten thousand. How then, in all the time that passed before I was born, could a gulf not be silted up, even one much larger than this, by a river so great and so hard-working?

2.12 So as regards Egypt, I believe those who tell these things, and I am also firmly convinced myself that it is so. For I have seen that Egypt juts out beyond the neighboring land, that shells are found on the mountains, that salt forms on the surface, so much that it even eats away at the pyramids, and that the only sandy mountain in Egypt is this one above Memphis. [2] Besides, the soil of Egypt is not like that of Arabia, which borders it, nor of Libya, nor even of Syria (for Syrians inhabit the coast of Arabia). It is black and crumbly, being mud and silt carried down from Ethiopia by the river. [3] Libya, we know, has redder and somewhat sandier soil, and Arabia and Syria have soil that is more clayey and stony.

2.13 The priests also gave me this strong piece of evidence about this land. In the reign of King Moeris, they said, whenever the river rose at least eight cubits, it watered Egypt below Memphis; and Moeris had not yet been dead nine hundred years when I heard this from the priests. But now, unless the river rises at least sixteen or fifteen cubits, it does not overflow onto the land. [2] And it seems to me that the Egyptians who live below

9 This gulf is what we call the Red Sea; Herodotus' "Red Sea" is the southern ocean beyond it.

Lake Moeris, both in the other districts and in what is called the Delta, if this land keeps rising in height at the same rate and growing in the same proportion, will—since the Nile will no longer flood it—suffer for all time to come the very thing they once said the Greeks would suffer. [3] For when they learned that the whole land of the Greeks is watered by rain and not by rivers as theirs is, they said that someday the Greeks would be cheated of a great hope and go terribly hungry. What this saying means is that if the god chooses not to send them rain but to afflict them with drought, the Greeks will be gripped by famine, since they have no other source of water at all except Zeus alone.

2.14 That is what the Egyptians have rightly said about the Greeks. But now let me explain how things stand for the Egyptians themselves. If, as I said before, the land below Memphis (for this is the land that is rising) should keep rising in height at the same rate as in time past, what else can happen but that the Egyptians who live there will go hungry—if their land gets no rain and the river is no longer able to overflow onto their fields? [2] For at present, certainly, these people gather the fruit of the earth with less labor than anyone else in the world, the rest of the Egyptians included. They have no toil breaking up furrows with the plow, or hoeing, or doing any of the other work that other people labor at over their crops. Instead, when the river rises of its own accord and waters their fields, and after watering them recedes, each man sows his own field and turns pigs into it. When he has had the pigs tread in the seed, he waits for the harvest; then he has the pigs thresh the grain, and so he brings it in.

2.15 Now suppose we want to follow the Ionians' views about Egypt. They say that the Delta alone is Egypt: its coastline, they say, runs from the place called the Watchtower of Perseus to the Fish-Salteries of Pelusium, a distance of forty schoeni, and inland from the sea it extends as far as the city of Cercasorus, where the Nile divides and flows to Pelusium and to Canopus; the rest of Egypt, they say, belongs partly to Libya and partly to Arabia. If we used this account, we could show that the Egyp-

tians formerly had no country at all. [2] For the Delta at least, as the Egyptians themselves say and as I believe, is land laid down by the river and has only recently, so to speak, come into view. If, then, they had no country at all, why did they go to such lengths over their belief that they were the first people? Nor would they have needed to make that experiment with the children, to see what language they would speak first. [3] But I do not think that the Egyptians came into being along with what the Ionians call the Delta. I think they have always existed, ever since the human race began, and as the land advanced, many of them stayed behind and many gradually moved down into it. In any case, in former times Thebes was called Egypt, and its circumference is six thousand one hundred and twenty stades.

2.16 If, then, our view of these matters is right, the Ionians are mistaken about Egypt. But if the Ionians' opinion is right, I can show that the Greeks, and the Ionians themselves, do not know how to count, since they say that the whole earth consists of three parts: Europe, Asia and Libya. [2] They really must count the Delta of Egypt as a fourth, if it belongs neither to Asia nor to Libya. For by this account it is not the Nile that divides Asia from Libya: the Nile splits around the point of this Delta, so that the Delta would lie between Asia and Libya.

2.17 So let us set aside the Ionians' opinion. Our own view on these matters is this: Egypt is all the land inhabited by Egyptians, just as Cilicia is the land inhabited by Cilicians and Assyria the land inhabited by Assyrians; and we know of no boundary between Asia and Libya, properly speaking, except the borders of Egypt. [2] But if we follow the view customary among the Greeks, we shall have to consider that all Egypt, starting from the Cataracts and the city of Elephantine, is divided in two and has a share in both names, part of it belonging to Libya and part to Asia. [3] For the Nile, starting from the Cataracts, flows down to the sea and divides Egypt down the middle. As far as the city of Cercasorus the Nile flows in a single stream, but from that city on it splits into three channels. [4] One of them turns east; this is called the Pelusian mouth. The second

channel runs west; this is called the Canopic mouth. The Nile's straight course is this: flowing down from upstream it reaches the point of the Delta, and from there it cuts the Delta down the middle and empties into the sea. This channel carries neither the smallest share of the water nor is it the least famous; it is called the Sebennytic mouth. [5] There are also two other mouths that branch off from the Sebennytic and run to the sea. Their names are these: one is the Saitic, the other the Mendesian. [6] The Bolbitine and Bucolic mouths are not natural mouths but were dug.

[2.18] My opinion that Egypt is as large as I have shown it to be in my account is also borne out by an oracle given by Ammon, which I learned of after I had formed my own opinion about Egypt. [2] The people of the cities of Marea and Apis, who live in the part of Egypt bordering Libya, considered themselves Libyans and not Egyptians. They were annoyed by the religious rules about sacrifice, because they did not want to be barred from eating cows. So they sent to Ammon, saying that they had nothing in common with the Egyptians: they lived outside the Delta, they agreed with them in nothing, and they wanted to be allowed to eat everything.[10] [3] But the god would not let them do this. He said that Egypt was the land that the Nile covers and waters, and that the Egyptians were those who live below the city of Elephantine and drink from this river. That was the oracle's answer to them.

WHY THE NILE FLOODS

Herodotus rejects three Greek theories of the summer flood, gives his own, and traces the river's course.

[2.19] When the Nile floods, it covers not only the Delta but also parts of the land said to be Libyan and Arabian, in some places as far as two days' journey on either side, sometimes more than that and sometimes less. About the nature of the river I could learn nothing, either from the priests or from anyone else. [2] I

10 The Greeks identified Ammon, whose oracle was at Siwa, with Zeus.

was eager to learn from them why the Nile comes down in flood for a hundred days, starting at the summer solstice, and then, as it approaches that number of days, recedes and shrinks back into its channel, so that it stays low the whole winter until the summer solstice comes round again. [3] About none of this could I learn anything at all from the Egyptians, though I asked them what power the Nile has that makes it behave in the opposite way to other rivers. I asked about the things I have mentioned because I wanted to know them, and also why it is the only river of all that gives off no breezes.

[2.20] Some Greeks, however, wanting to be famous for their wisdom, have offered three explanations of this water. Two of them I do not think worth mentioning, except to indicate what they are. [2] One of these says that the Etesian winds make the river rise by preventing the Nile from flowing out into the sea. But the Etesian winds have often failed to blow, and the Nile does the same thing all the same.[11] [3] Besides, if the Etesian winds were the cause, the other rivers that flow against them would also have to behave the same way as the Nile, and even more so, since they are smaller and have weaker currents. Yet there are many rivers in Syria and many in Libya that behave in no way like the Nile.

[2.21] The second explanation is less scientific than the one just mentioned, but more marvelous to tell. It says that the Nile does these things because it flows from Ocean, and that Ocean flows around the whole earth.

[2.22] The third explanation is by far the most plausible, and the most mistaken. It too says nothing at all, claiming that the Nile flows from melting snow. But the Nile flows out of Libya through the middle of Ethiopia and comes out into Egypt. [2] How, then, could it flow from snow, when it flows from the hottest regions into regions that are mostly cooler? For a man capable of reasoning about such things, the first and strongest evidence that it is not even likely to flow from snow is provided by the winds,

11 The Etesian winds are the strong northerly winds that blow across the eastern Mediterranean every summer.

which blow hot from those regions; [3] the second is that the country is always without rain and without frost, whereas after a snowfall it must without fail rain within five days, so that if it snowed, these regions would get rain; the third is that the people there are black from the heat. [4] Kites and swallows live there all year round and never leave, while cranes, fleeing the winter that comes in the Scythian country, go to these places to spend the winter. If, then, it snowed even a little in this country through which the Nile flows and in which it begins, none of these things would be so, as the argument compels us to conclude.

[2.23] As for the man who spoke of Ocean, he has carried his tale off into the unknown, and so there is no refuting him. For my part, I know of no river Ocean; I think Homer or one of the poets before him invented the name and brought it into his poetry.

[2.24] But if, having found fault with the opinions put forward, I must declare my own opinion about these obscure matters, I will say why I think the Nile floods in summer. In the winter season the sun is driven from its old course by the winter storms and goes to the upper parts of Libya. [2] To put it as briefly as possible, that is the whole of it: whatever country this god is nearest to and most directly over is likely to be most thirsty for water, and the rivers that are native to it are likely to shrink.

[2.25] To explain it at greater length, it is like this. As the sun passes over the upper parts of Libya, it does the following. Since the air in those regions is always clear, the land is warm and there are no cold winds, the sun, as it passes over, does just what it usually does in summer when it travels through the middle of the sky: [2] it draws the water to itself, and having drawn it, drives it away into the upper regions, where the winds take it up, scatter it and dissolve it. So it is natural that the winds blowing from this country, the south wind and the southwest wind, are by far the rainiest of all winds. [3] In my opinion the sun does not send off all of the Nile's yearly water each time, but also keeps some back around itself. When the winter grows milder, the sun goes back to the middle of the sky, and from then on it draws equally

from all the rivers. [4] Until then, the other rivers flow high, because a great deal of rainwater is mixed into them, their country being rained on and cut by torrents; but in summer, when the rains fail them and they are drawn on by the sun, they are weak. [5] The Nile, however, gets no rain, and is the only river drawn on by the sun at this time, so it naturally flows much lower than it does itself in summer. For in summer it is drawn on equally with all other waters, but in winter it alone bears the strain.

2.26 That is why I have come to believe that the sun is the cause of these things. In my judgment this same sun is also the cause of the air in that region being dry, since it scorches its path; and so summer always prevails in the upper parts of Libya. [2] If the positions of the seasons were reversed—if the south wind and midday stood in that part of the sky where the north wind and winter now stand, and the north wind stood where the south wind now stands—if this were so, the sun, driven from the middle of the sky by the winter and the north wind, would go to the upper parts of Europe as it now goes to those of Libya; and as it passed through the whole of Europe, I expect it would do to the Ister what it now does to the Nile.

2.27 As for the breeze, and why none blows from the river, my opinion is that it is not at all likely that anything should blow from very hot places; a breeze generally blows from something cold.

2.28 Let these things be as they are and as they were from the beginning. As for the sources of the Nile, none of the Egyptians, Libyans or Greeks I talked with professed to know them, except the scribe of Athena's sacred treasury in the city of Sais in Egypt. [2] He, to my mind, was joking when he claimed to know exactly. What he said was this: that there are two mountains with sharply pointed peaks, lying between the city of Syene in the Thebaid and Elephantine, and that the mountains are called, one Crophi and the other Mophi;[12] [3] that the sources of the Nile,

12 The goddess of Sais, in the western Delta, was Neith, whom Herodotus calls Athena. Syene is modern Aswan, opposite the island of Elephantine.

which are bottomless, flow from between these mountains; and that half the water flows toward Egypt and the north, and the other half toward Ethiopia and the south. [4] That the springs are bottomless, he said, Psammetichus king of Egypt had put to the test: he had a rope woven many thousands of fathoms long and let it down there, and it did not reach the bottom. [5] So the scribe, if what he said really happened, showed, as I understand it, that there are strong eddies and a backflow there, and that because the water dashes against the mountains, a sounding line let down cannot reach the bottom.

[2.29] From no one else could I learn anything at all. But this much more I did learn, going as far as was possible: up to the city of Elephantine I went and saw for myself, and beyond that my inquiry rests on hearsay. [2] As you travel up from the city of Elephantine, the country rises steeply. Here you must rope the boat on both sides, as one does an ox, and so make your way; and if the rope breaks, the boat is gone, swept away by the force of the current. [3] This stretch takes four days to sail, and here the Nile winds like the Maeander; there are twelve schoeni that have to be passed in this way. After that you will come to a smooth plain, where the Nile flows around an island called Tachompso. [4] Upstream from Elephantine the inhabitants are already Ethiopians, and they hold half the island, Egyptians the other half. Next to the island is a great lake, with nomadic Ethiopians living around it. When you have sailed across it, you will come to the stream of the Nile, which flows into this lake. [5] Then you will disembark and travel by land along the river for forty days, because sharp rocks jut up out of the Nile and there are many reefs, through which it is impossible to sail. [6] When you have crossed this country in the forty days, you will board another boat and sail for twelve days, and then you will come to a great city called Meroe. This city is said to be the mother city of the rest of the Ethiopians. [7] The people there worship only Zeus and Dionysus of the gods, and they honor these greatly; they have an oracle of Zeus, and they go to war whenever this god commands them through his oracles, and to wherever he commands.

2.30 Sailing on from this city, you will reach the Deserters in the same length of time again as it took you to come from Elephantine to the Ethiopians' mother city. These Deserters are called Asmach, a word that in the Greek language means "those who stand at the king's left hand." 2 These two hundred and forty thousand Egyptians of the warrior class revolted and went over to these Ethiopians for the following reason. In the reign of King Psammetichus garrisons were stationed in the city of Elephantine against the Ethiopians, another at Daphnae of Pelusium against the Arabians and Assyrians, and another at Marea against Libya. 3 Even in my own day the Persians keep their garrisons in the same places as they were under Psammetichus: Persians stand guard both at Elephantine and at Daphnae. Now these Egyptians had been on guard for three years and no one relieved them of their duty; so they took counsel, came to a common agreement, revolted from Psammetichus all together and set off for Ethiopia. 4 When Psammetichus learned of it, he went after them; and when he caught up with them, he pleaded with them at length, urging them not to abandon their ancestral gods, their children and their wives. One of them, it is said, showed his genitals and said that wherever these were, there they would have children and wives. 5 When they arrived in Ethiopia, they put themselves at the service of the king of the Ethiopians, and he rewarded them as follows. Some of the Ethiopians had fallen out with him; he told the Egyptians to drive them out and live in their land. Since these men settled among the Ethiopians, the Ethiopians have become gentler, having learned Egyptian ways.

2.31 So the Nile is known for a four months' journey by water and land, beyond its course in Egypt; for that, when you add it up, is how many months you find are spent traveling from Elephantine to these Deserters. It flows from the west, from where the sun sets. Beyond this no one can say anything for certain, for this country is desert because of the heat.

2.32 But here is what I heard from some men of Cyrene. They said that they had gone to the oracle of Ammon and had come to

talk with Etearchus, king of the Ammonians, and that somehow, from other topics, they got to chatting about the Nile, and how no one knows its sources; and Etearchus said that some Nasamonian men had once come to him. 2 This people is Libyan, and lives in the Syrtis and in the country a short way east of the Syrtis.[13] 3 When the Nasamonians arrived and were asked whether they could tell him anything more about the deserts of Libya, they said, according to him, that there had been among them some headstrong sons of powerful men, who, once they grew up, devised all sorts of extravagant schemes, and in particular chose five of their number by lot to go and see the deserts of Libya, and to find out whether they could see more than those who had seen the farthest. 4 For along the northern sea, from Egypt all the way to Cape Soloeis, where Libya ends, the whole coast is inhabited by Libyans, many Libyan peoples, except for the parts the Greeks and Phoenicians hold; but inland from the sea and from the people who live down by the sea, Libya is full of wild beasts; and beyond the land of wild beasts there is sand, terribly waterless and empty of everything. 5 The young men, then, they said, were sent off by their companions well supplied with water and food. They went first through the inhabited country, and after crossing it they came to the land of wild beasts, and from there they crossed the desert, heading westward. 6 After crossing a great stretch of sandy country over many days, they at last saw trees growing on a plain; they went up and began picking the fruit that was on the trees, and while they were picking it, some small men, shorter than men of ordinary height, came up to them, seized them and led them away. The Nasamonians, they said, understood nothing of these men's language, nor did their captors understand the Nasamonians'. 7 The men led them through vast marshes, and after crossing these they came to a city where everyone was the same size as their captors, and black in color. Past the city flowed a great river, flowing from the west toward the rising sun, and crocodiles could be seen in it.

13 The Syrtis is the great gulf on the coast of modern Libya.

2.33 Let me take the account of Etearchus the Ammonian only this far, except to add that, as the Cyrenaeans told it, he said the Nasamonians returned home, and that the people they had come to were all sorcerers. 2 As for this river flowing past the city, Etearchus too conjectured that it was the Nile, and reason points that way. For the Nile flows out of Libya, cutting through the middle of it; and, as I conjecture, inferring what is unknown from what is plain to see, it sets out on a course of the same measure as the Ister's. 3 For the river Ister begins among the Celts and the city of Pyrene, and flows through the middle of Europe, dividing it. The Celts live beyond the Pillars of Heracles and border on the Cynesians, who live farthest west of all the peoples settled in Europe. 4 The Ister ends by flowing through the whole of Europe into the Black Sea, at Istria, where colonists from Miletus live.

2.34 The Ister, since it flows through inhabited country, is known to many; but about the sources of the Nile no one can say anything, for the part of Libya it flows through is uninhabited desert. About its course, I have told as much as my inquiries could reach. It comes out into Egypt. Egypt lies roughly opposite mountainous Cilicia; 2 from there to Sinope on the Black Sea is a five days' journey in a straight line for a man traveling light; and Sinope lies opposite the place where the Ister comes out into the sea. So I think that the Nile, crossing the whole of Libya, matches the Ister.

EGYPTIAN CUSTOMS

Egyptians do many things the reverse of other peoples; their priests, gods, festivals and sacred animals.

2.35 So much, then, for the Nile. I am going to extend my account of Egypt, because it has more marvels than any other country, and in comparison with every other country it offers works beyond the power of words; for this reason more will be said about it. 2 Just as the Egyptians have a climate of their own and a river that behaves differently from other rivers, so in almost

everything they have established customs and laws that are the reverse of those of other people. Among them the women go to market and trade, while the men stay at home and weave; and whereas everyone else weaves by pushing the weft upward, the Egyptians push it downward. 3 The men carry loads on their heads, the women on their shoulders. The women urinate standing up, the men sitting down. They relieve themselves indoors and eat outdoors in the streets, explaining that what is shameful but necessary should be done in private, and what is not shameful, in the open. 4 No woman serves as priest of any god or goddess; men are the priests of all of them, gods and goddesses alike. Sons are under no obligation to support their parents if they do not want to, but daughters must do so whether they want to or not.

2.36 Elsewhere, priests of the gods wear their hair long; in Egypt they shave. Among other people it is the custom for those most closely touched by a death to have their heads shorn in mourning; the Egyptians, when there is a death, let the hair grow on their heads and chins, though until then they have been shaven. 2 Other people live apart from animals; the Egyptians live together with them. Other people live on wheat and barley, but for an Egyptian it is the greatest disgrace to live on these; they make their bread from olyra, which some call zeia. 3 They knead dough with their feet but clay with their hands, and they pick up dung with them too.[14] Other people leave their genitals as they were born, except those who have learned otherwise from the Egyptians; the Egyptians practice circumcision. Every man has two garments, every woman only one. 4 Other people fasten the rings and ropes of their sails on the outside, the Egyptians on the inside. When they write letters or calculate with pebbles, the Greeks move the hand from left to right, the Egyptians from right to left; and while doing this they say that it is they who go rightward and the Greeks who go leftward. They

14 Olyra (zeia) is probably emmer, a hulled wheat.

use two kinds of writing, one called sacred and the other common.[15]

2.37 They are religious to excess, more than any other people, and these are some of their customs. They drink from bronze cups, which they scour every day; not just some of them do this, but all. 2 They wear linen clothes, always freshly washed, and take particular care over this. They circumcise themselves for the sake of cleanliness, preferring to be clean rather than more comely. The priests shave their whole bodies every other day, so that no louse or any other unclean thing may be found on them while they serve the gods. 3 The priests wear only linen clothing and sandals of papyrus; they are not permitted to wear any other clothing or any other footwear. They wash in cold water twice every day and twice every night, and they perform other rites that are, one might say, countless. 4 They also enjoy no small benefits. They neither use up nor spend any of their own property. Sacred bread is baked for them, each of them receives a large quantity of beef and goose meat every day, and they are also given wine made from grapes. They are not permitted to eat fish. 5 The Egyptians hardly sow beans at all in their country, and those that do grow they neither eat raw nor cook for food. The priests cannot even bear to look at them, because they consider beans an unclean kind of pulse. Each of the gods is served not by one priest but by many, one of whom is high priest; and when a priest dies, his son is appointed in his place.

2.38 They believe that bulls belong to Epaphus, and for this reason they test them as follows. If the priest sees even a single black hair on the animal, he considers it unclean. 2 One of the priests, appointed for this purpose, searches for these signs, with the animal both standing up and lying on its back. He also pulls out its tongue to see whether it is clean of the prescribed marks, which I will describe in another part of my account, and he examines the hairs of its tail to see whether they have grown naturally. 3 If the animal is clean in all these respects, he marks

15 The "sacred" writing is hieroglyphic and its cursive form, hieratic; the "common" is the everyday script now called demotic.

it by winding papyrus around its horns, then smearing sealing-clay on it and pressing his signet ring into it; and so they lead it away. Anyone who sacrifices an unmarked animal is liable to the penalty of death. This, then, is how the animal is tested, and their sacrifice is established as follows.[16]

2.39 They bring the marked animal to the altar where they are going to sacrifice and light a fire. Then, at the altar, they pour wine over the victim, call upon the god and cut its throat; once they have cut its throat, they cut off its head. 2 They flay the body of the animal, but the head they load with many curses and carry away. Where there is a market and there are Greek traders living among them, they take it to the market and sell it; where there are no Greeks present, they throw it into the river. 3 The curses they pronounce over the heads are these: that if any evil is about to befall either themselves, the sacrificers, or Egypt as a whole, it may be turned onto this head. 4 So with regard to the heads of sacrificed animals and the pouring of wine, all Egyptians observe the same customs alike for all their sacrifices; and because of this custom no Egyptian will taste the head of any other living creature either.

2.40 The removal of the entrails and the burning, however, are done differently for different sacrifices. But I am now going to speak of the one they regard as the greatest goddess, in whose honor they hold their greatest festival ... 2 When they have flayed the bull, they pray and take out the whole of its belly, leaving the vital organs and the fat in the body; then they cut off the legs, the end of the loin, the shoulders and the neck. 3 Having done this, they fill the rest of the bull's body with pure loaves, honey, raisins, figs, frankincense, myrrh and other spices. When they have filled it with these, they burn it, pouring a great deal of oil over it. 4 They fast before the sacrifice, and while the offerings are burning they all beat their breasts; when they have finished beating their breasts, they serve a feast of whatever is left of the offerings.

16 In Greek myth Epaphus was the son of Zeus and Io; the Greeks identified him with Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis.

2.41 All Egyptians sacrifice clean bulls and bull calves, but they are not permitted to sacrifice cows, which are sacred to Isis. 2 For the image of Isis is a woman with cow's horns, just as the Greeks depict Io, and all Egyptians alike revere cows far more than any other livestock. 3 For this reason no Egyptian, man or woman, would kiss a Greek man on the mouth, or use a Greek man's knife, spits or cauldron, or taste the meat of a clean bull that has been cut up with a Greek knife.[17] 4 They bury cattle that die in the following way. The cows they let go into the river; the bulls each town buries in its outskirts, with one horn, or both, sticking out as a marker. When the carcass has rotted and the appointed time comes, a barge arrives at each town from the island called Prosopitis. 5 This island is in the Delta, and its circumference is nine schoeni. There are many other towns on this island of Prosopitis too, but the one from which the barges come to collect the bones of the cattle is called Atarbechis, and in it there stands a holy temple of Aphrodite. 6 From this town many people travel about, some to one town and some to another; they dig up the bones, carry them off and bury them all in a single place. They bury other animals that die in the same way as the cattle, for the law laid down for them concerning these is the same: they do not kill them either.

2.42 All those who have a temple of Theban Zeus or belong to the Theban district abstain from sheep and sacrifice goats. 2 For the Egyptians do not all worship the same gods alike, except for Isis and Osiris, who they say is Dionysus; these two they all worship alike. Those who have a temple of Mendes or belong to the Mendesian district abstain from goats and sacrifice sheep.[18] 3 The Thebans, and those who abstain from sheep because of them, say that this custom was established among them for the following reason. Heracles, they say, wanted at all costs to see Zeus, and Zeus did not want to be seen by him; but in the end, when Heracles kept pleading, Zeus contrived this: 4 he flayed a ram, cut off its head and held it in front of himself, and, putting

17 Io, an Argive princess loved by Zeus, was turned into a cow.
18 Herodotus' "Theban Zeus" is the Egyptian god Amun of Thebes in Upper Egypt.

on the fleece, showed himself to Heracles in that form. That is why the Egyptians make the image of Zeus with a ram's face; and the Ammonians took this from the Egyptians, since they are colonists of the Egyptians and Ethiopians and speak a language between the two. [5] In my opinion, it was also from this that the Ammonians took their name, for the Egyptians call Zeus Amoun. The Thebans do not sacrifice rams; they hold them sacred for this reason. [6] But on one day of the year, at the festival of Zeus, they slaughter a single ram, flay it and dress the image of Zeus in the fleece in the same way, and then they bring another image, of Heracles, up to it. When they have done this, all those around the temple beat their breasts in mourning for the ram, and then they bury it in a sacred coffin.

2.43 About Heracles I heard this account: that he was one of the twelve gods. About the other Heracles, the one the Greeks know, I could hear nothing anywhere in Egypt. [2] Now, that the Egyptians did not take the name of Heracles from the Greeks, but rather the Greeks from the Egyptians—specifically, those Greeks who gave the name Heracles to the son of Amphitryon—I have many proofs, and among them is this. Both parents of this Heracles, Amphitryon and Alcmene, were of Egyptian descent. Moreover, the Egyptians say they do not know the names of Poseidon and the Dioscuri, and these gods have not been accepted among their other gods. [3] Yet if they had taken the name of any divinity from the Greeks, these were the ones they would have been not least but most likely to remember, if indeed they were already making sea voyages at that time and some Greeks were seafarers, as I expect and as my judgment tells me. So the Egyptians would have known the names of these gods even better than that of Heracles. [4] No: Heracles is an ancient god among the Egyptians. As they themselves say, it is seventeen thousand years to the reign of Amasis from the time when the twelve gods, of whom they consider Heracles one, came into being from the eight gods.

2.44 Wanting to get clear knowledge about these matters from whatever source I could, I also sailed to Tyre in Phoenicia, hav-

ing learned that there was a holy temple of Heracles there. [2] I saw that it was richly furnished with many offerings, and in it were two pillars, one of refined gold, the other of emerald, shining brilliantly at night. I talked with the priests of the god and asked how long it had been since their temple was founded. [3] I found that they too disagreed with the Greeks. They said that the god's temple had been founded at the same time as Tyre itself, and that it was two thousand three hundred years since they had been living in Tyre. In Tyre I also saw another temple of Heracles, who had the title of Thasian. [4] I went to Thasos too, and there I found a temple of Heracles founded by the Phoenicians who sailed out in search of Europa and settled Thasos; and this was five generations of men before Heracles the son of Amphitryon was born in Greece. [5] So my inquiries clearly show that Heracles is an ancient god. And in my opinion those Greeks act most correctly who have founded and maintain two temples of Heracles: to the one, as an immortal, under the title Olympian, they sacrifice; to the other they make offerings as to a hero.[19]

2.45 The Greeks say many other things without having looked into them, and among their foolish tales is this one they tell about Heracles: that when he came to Egypt, the Egyptians crowned him with a garland and led him out in procession to sacrifice him to Zeus. For a while, the story goes, he kept quiet, but when they began the preliminary rites on him at the altar, he turned to defend himself and slaughtered them all. [2] In my opinion, the Greeks who tell this story are wholly ignorant of the character and customs of the Egyptians. These are people for whom it is not lawful to sacrifice even animals, except pigs, bulls and bull calves (provided they are clean), and geese; how could they sacrifice human beings? [3] Besides, if Heracles was only one person and, as they say, still a man, how could he possibly kill many tens of thousands? Having said this much about

19 Europa was a Phoenician princess carried off by Zeus; her brothers were sent to search for her.

these matters, may we keep the goodwill of both gods and heroes.

2.46 The Egyptians I mentioned do not sacrifice goats, female or male, for the following reason. The Mendesians count Pan among the eight gods, and they say these eight gods came into being before the twelve. 2 Their painters and sculptors paint and carve the image of Pan just as the Greeks do, with a goat's face and goat's legs. They do not believe he really looks like that; they think he is like the other gods. But why they represent him this way, I would rather not say. 3 The Mendesians revere all goats, the males more than the females, and the goatherds of the males are held in greater honor. Among the he-goats one in particular is revered, and when he dies, great mourning is decreed for the whole Mendesian district. 4 In Egyptian both the he-goat and Pan are called Mendes. In my own lifetime this portent occurred in this district: a he-goat had intercourse with a woman openly. It was done for everyone to see.

2.47 The Egyptians consider the pig an unclean animal. For one thing, if any of them brushes against a pig in passing, he goes to the river and dips himself in it, clothes and all. For another, swineherds, though native Egyptians, are the only people of all who do not enter any temple in Egypt. Nobody is willing to give his daughter in marriage to one of them or to take a wife from among them, so swineherds give their daughters to one another and take their wives from one another. 2 The Egyptians do not think it right to sacrifice pigs to the other gods; only to the Moon and to Dionysus do they sacrifice pigs, at the same time, at the same full moon, and then they eat the meat. Why they abhor pigs at their other festivals but sacrifice them at this one, there is a story the Egyptians tell; but though I know it, it is not seemly for me to tell it. 3 The sacrifice of pigs to the Moon is carried out as follows. When the sacrificer has killed the animal, he puts together the tip of the tail, the spleen and the caul, covers them with all the fat from around the animal's belly, and then burns them in the fire. The rest of the meat they eat at the full moon on which they offer the sacrifice; on any other day they

would no longer taste it. The poor among them, for lack of means, shape pigs out of dough, bake them and sacrifice these.

2.48 For Dionysus, on the eve of the festival, each person slaughters a piglet in front of his door and then gives it to the very swineherd who sold it to him, to take away. 2 The rest of the festival of Dionysus the Egyptians celebrate in almost exactly the same way as the Greeks, except for the choral dances. Instead of phalluses they have invented something else: figures about a cubit high, worked by strings, which women carry around the villages, with a member that nods up and down and is not much smaller than the rest of the body. A pipe leads the way, and the women follow, singing in honor of Dionysus. 3 Why the figure has such a large member and moves only that part of its body, there is a sacred story told about it.

2.49 Now, in my opinion, Melampus son of Amytheon was not ignorant of this sacrifice but well acquainted with it. For it was Melampus who introduced to the Greeks the name of Dionysus, his sacrifice and the procession of the phallus. He did not grasp the whole account precisely when he revealed it, but the wise teachers who came after him revealed it more fully. Still, it was Melampus who instituted the phallus that is carried in procession for Dionysus, and it is from him that the Greeks learned to do what they do.[20] 2 So I say that Melampus was a wise man who acquired the art of divination for himself, and that, having learned much from Egypt, he introduced many things to the Greeks, the rites of Dionysus among them, changing a few details. For I will certainly not say that what is done for the god in Egypt and what is done among the Greeks coincide by chance; in that case the Greek rites would be in keeping with Greek ways and not recently introduced. 3 Nor will I say that the Egyptians took this or any other custom from the Greeks. My view is that Melampus learned the rites of Dionysus chiefly from Cadmus of Tyre and those who came with him from Phoenicia to the land now called Boeotia.[21]

20 Melampus was a legendary Greek seer and healer.
21 Cadmus was the legendary Phoenician founder of Thebes in Boeotia.

2.50 In fact, the names of nearly all the gods came to Greece from Egypt. That they came from non-Greeks I find, on inquiry, to be the case; and I think they came above all from Egypt. 2 For except for Poseidon and the Dioscuri, as I said earlier, and Hera, Hestia, Themis, the Graces and the Nereids, the Egyptians have always had the names of the other gods in their country. I am repeating what the Egyptians themselves say. The gods whose names they say they do not know were, in my opinion, named by the Pelasgians—except Poseidon, about whom they learned from the Libyans. 3 For no people have had the name of Poseidon from the beginning except the Libyans, and they have always honored this god. The Egyptians, for their part, pay no worship at all to heroes.

2.51 These customs, then, and others besides, which I shall describe, the Greeks adopted from the Egyptians. But making statues of Hermes with an erect phallus is something they did not learn from the Egyptians. They took it from the Pelasgians—the Athenians first of all the Greeks, and the others from them. 2 For the Athenians were already counted as Greeks at the time when the Pelasgians came to live alongside them in their land, and that is how the Pelasgians too began to be counted as Greeks. Anyone who has been initiated into the rites of the Cabeiri, which the Samothracians perform, having received them from the Pelasgians, knows what I mean. 3 For these Pelasgians who came to live with the Athenians had formerly lived in Samothrace, and it is from them that the Samothracians received their rites. 4 So the Athenians were the first Greeks to make statues of Hermes with an erect phallus, having learned it from the Pelasgians. The Pelasgians told a sacred story about this, which is revealed in the mysteries on Samothrace.[22]

2.52 In earlier times the Pelasgians offered all their sacrifices with prayers to gods, as I know from what I heard at Dodona. But they gave none of them a title or a name, because they had not yet heard of any. They called them gods, *theoi*, because the

22 The Cabeiri were gods worshipped in mystery rites on Samothrace, an island in the northern Aegean.

gods had *set* (*thentes*) all things in order and held every allotment in their hands.[23] [2] Then, after a long time had passed, they learned the names of the other gods, which had come from Egypt, and much later they learned the name of Dionysus. Some time after that they consulted the oracle at Dodona about the names. This oracle is considered the most ancient of the oracles among the Greeks, and at that time it was the only one. [3] So when the Pelasgians asked the oracle at Dodona whether they should adopt the names that had come from non-Greeks, the oracle told them to use them. From that time on they sacrificed using the names of the gods, and later the Greeks took them over from the Pelasgians.

2.53 But where each of the gods came from, whether they had all always existed, and what they looked like, they did not know until the day before yesterday, so to speak. [2] For I think that Hesiod and Homer lived four hundred years before my time, and no more. It was they who composed a theogony for the Greeks, gave the gods their titles, divided up their honors and their skills, and showed what they looked like. [3] The poets who are said to have lived before these men were, in my opinion at least, born after them. Of all this, the first part is what the priestesses of Dodona say. The later part, concerning Hesiod and Homer, is what I say.

2.54 About the oracles, the one in Greece and the one in Libya, the Egyptians tell the following story. The priests of Theban Zeus said that two women, priestesses, were carried off from Thebes by Phoenicians. They had learned, they said, that one of them was sold into Libya and the other to the Greeks, and these women were the first to found oracles among the peoples I have named. [2] When I asked them how they could speak with such exact knowledge, they answered that they had made a great search for these women. They had not been able to find them, but they had later learned what they were telling me about them.

23 Dodona, in Epirus in northwestern Greece, was an oracle of Zeus, where the god was thought to speak through a sacred oak.

2.55 This is what I heard from the priests at Thebes. But the prophetesses of Dodona tell it this way. Two black doves flew up from Thebes in Egypt; one of them went to Libya and the other came to them. 2 It perched on an oak tree and announced in a human voice that an oracle of Zeus must be established there. They understood that what was being announced to them was divine, and so they established one. 3 The dove that went to the Libyans, they say, told the Libyans to establish the oracle of Ammon, which also belongs to Zeus. This was what the priestesses of Dodona told me—the eldest was named Promeneia, the next Timarete, and the youngest Nicandra—and the other people of Dodona who serve at the temple agreed with them.

2.56 My own view of this is as follows. If the Phoenicians really did carry off the sacred women and sell one of them into Libya and the other into Greece, then I think this woman was sold to the Thesprotians, in the land now called Greece and earlier called Pelasgia—the same land. 2 Then, while she was a slave there, she founded a shrine of Zeus under an oak that grew there; it was natural that a woman who had served in a temple of Zeus at Thebes should remember it in the place where she ended up. 3 After that, once she had learned the Greek language, she established an oracle. And she said that her sister had been sold in Libya by the same Phoenicians who had sold her.[24]

2.57 I think the women were called doves by the people of Dodona because they were non-Greeks, and their speech sounded to them like birds' cries. 2 After a while, they say, the dove spoke in a human voice—that is, when the woman spoke in a way they could understand. As long as she spoke her foreign tongue, she seemed to them to be uttering sounds like a bird. How, after all, could a dove speak with a human voice? And by saying that the dove was black, they indicate that the woman was Egyptian. 3 The forms of divination at Thebes in Egypt and at Dodona do in fact closely resemble each other. Divination from sacrificial victims, too, came from Egypt.

2.58 It was the Egyptians, it seems, who were also the first people to hold public festivals, processions and ceremonies of approach to the gods, and the Greeks learned these from them. My evidence for this is that the Egyptian ones have clearly been held for a very long time, whereas the Greek ones were introduced recently.

2.59 The Egyptians hold festivals not once a year but many times. The chief one, and the most eagerly kept, is at the city of Bubastis, in honor of Artemis; the second is at the city of Busiris, in honor of Isis. 2 In this city is the greatest temple of Isis, and the city lies in the middle of the Egyptian Delta. Isis, in the Greek language, is Demeter. 3 Third, they hold a festival at the city of Sais for Athena; fourth, at Heliopolis for the Sun; fifth, at the city of Buto for Leto; and sixth, at the city of Papremis for Ares.[25]

2.60 When they travel to the city of Bubastis, this is what they do. Men and women sail together, a great crowd of both in every boat. Some of the women have castanets and rattle them, some of the men play the pipes the whole way, and the rest of the women and men sing and clap their hands. 2 Whenever they come to some other town on their voyage, they bring the boat in close to the bank and do as follows. Some of the women do what I have described; others shout and jeer at the women of that town; others dance; and others stand up and lift their clothes. They do this at every town along the river. 3 When they reach Bubastis, they celebrate the festival with great sacrifices, and more grape wine is drunk at this festival than in all the rest of the year. Those who gather there, men and women but not counting children, come to as many as seven hundred thousand, as the local people say.

2.61 That is how things are done there. How they hold the festival of Isis at the city of Busiris I have already told. After the sacrifice they all beat their breasts, men and women alike, very many tens of thousands of people; but for whom they beat them-

24 The Thesprotians were a people of Epirus, in whose territory Dodona lay.
25 Herodotus' Egyptian "Artemis" of Bubastis is the cat-headed goddess Bastet.

selves it would not be holy for me to say. [2] The Carians who live in Egypt go even further than this: they also cut their foreheads with knives, and this shows that they are foreigners and not Egyptians.[26]

2.62 When they gather at the city of Sais, on the night of the sacrifice they all burn many lamps in the open air around their houses. The lamps are saucers full of salt and oil, with the wick floating on top, and they burn all night long. The festival is called the Lamp-Lighting. [2] Those Egyptians who do not come to this festival also keep the night of the sacrifice and themselves all light lamps, so that lamps burn not only in Sais but throughout Egypt. Why this night has received light and honor, there is a sacred story that is told about it.

2.63 At Heliopolis and Buto they only perform sacrifices when they gather. At Papremis they perform sacrifices and rites just as elsewhere; but when the sun is going down, a few of the priests busy themselves around the image, while most of them stand at the entrance of the temple with wooden clubs. Others, more than a thousand men who are fulfilling vows, each also carrying a club, stand in a crowd on the opposite side. [2] The image is kept in a small wooden shrine covered with gold, and the day before they carry it out to another sacred building. The few who have been left with the image draw a four-wheeled cart carrying the shrine and the image inside it. The others, standing in the gateway, refuse to let them in, and the men under vows, coming to the god's aid, strike them, while they fight back. [3] Then a fierce fight with clubs breaks out, heads are smashed, and in my opinion many even die of their wounds—though the Egyptians told me that no one dies. [4] The local people say that this festival was established for the following reason. The mother of Ares lived in this temple. Ares had been brought up elsewhere, and when he had grown to manhood he came, wanting to be with his mother. His mother's attendants, never having seen him before, would not let him pass but kept him out. So he brought men from

26 The Carians came from southwestern Asia Minor; many had settled in Egypt as mercenaries.

another city, handled the attendants roughly, and went in to his mother. Because of this, they say, this fighting has become a custom in honor of Ares at the festival.

2.64 It was also the Egyptians who first made it a religious rule not to have intercourse with women in temples, and not to enter temples unwashed after being with a woman. Nearly all other people, except the Egyptians and the Greeks, have intercourse in temples and go into a temple unwashed after rising from a woman, believing that human beings are no different from the other animals. 2 For they see, they say, the other animals and every kind of bird mating in the temples of the gods and in their sacred precincts; and if this were not pleasing to the god, the animals would not do it either. These are the reasons they give for what they do, but I, for one, do not find it acceptable.

2.65 The Egyptians are extraordinarily scrupulous in all their religious practices, and in particular in the following. 2 Although Egypt borders on Libya, it does not have many wild animals; but all that it has are considered sacred, both those that live alongside people and those that do not. If I were to say why the animals are dedicated as sacred, my account would descend into divine matters, which I am especially reluctant to relate; what I have said touching on them, I said because I was compelled to. 3 Their custom concerning the animals is as follows. Keepers, both men and women, are appointed from among the Egyptians to feed each kind separately, and son takes over this office from father. 4 In the cities, people fulfill their vows to them in this way. They pray to the god to whom the animal belongs, then shave their children's heads, either all of the head or half or a third of it, and weigh the hair against silver. Whatever it weighs, they give to the woman who keeps the animals, and she in return cuts up fish and gives it to the animals as food. 5 That is how food is provided for them. If anyone kills one of these animals, the penalty is death if it was deliberate; if it was accidental, he pays whatever penalty the priests fix. But whoever kills an ibis or a hawk, deliberately or not, must die.

2.66 There are many animals that live alongside people, and there would be many more still if it were not for what happens to the cats. When the females have given birth, they no longer go to the males, and the males, though they try to mate with them, cannot. 2 So they have devised a trick. They snatch the kittens from the females or steal them away and kill them—though having killed them, they do not eat them. The females, robbed of their young and wanting more, then come to the males; for it is an animal that loves its young. 3 When a fire breaks out, something uncanny happens to the cats. The Egyptians stand at intervals and keep watch over the cats, not bothering to put out the blaze, but the cats slip between or leap over the people and spring into the fire. 4 When this happens, the Egyptians are overcome with great grief. In any house where a cat dies a natural death, everyone who lives there shaves off their eyebrows only; where a dog dies, they shave the whole body and the head.

2.67 Cats that have died are taken to sacred buildings in the city of Bubastis, where they are embalmed and buried. Dogs are buried by the people of each city in sacred tombs in their own city, and ichneumons are buried in the same way as dogs. Shrews and hawks are taken to the city of Buto, and ibises to Hermopolis. 2 Bears, which are rare, and wolves, which are not much bigger than foxes, they bury wherever they are found lying.[27]

THE CROCODILE

Crocodiles, how some Egyptians revere them and others hunt them, and the hippopotamus and other creatures.

2.68 The nature of crocodiles is as follows. During the four most wintry months the crocodile eats nothing. It has four feet and lives both on land and in water. It lays its eggs on land and hatches them there, and it spends most of the day on dry ground but the whole night in the river, since the water is warmer than the night air and the dew. 2 Of all the mortal creatures we know, this one grows from the smallest beginning to the greatest size.

27 The ichneumon is the Egyptian mongoose.

It lays eggs not much bigger than a goose's, and the hatchling is in proportion to the egg; but as it grows it reaches seventeen cubits and even more. [3] It has the eyes of a pig, and large teeth and tusks in proportion to its body. It is the only animal that has no tongue, and it does not move its lower jaw; it is also the only animal that brings its upper jaw down onto the lower. [4] It also has strong claws, and on its back a scaly hide that cannot be pierced. It is blind in the water but extremely sharp-sighted in the open air. Because it lives in the water, the inside of its mouth is always full of leeches. All other birds and animals flee from it, but the trochilus is at peace with it, because the crocodile benefits from the bird. [5] When the crocodile comes out of the water onto land and then opens its jaws (it generally does this facing the west wind), the trochilus slips into its mouth and swallows the leeches. The crocodile enjoys the benefit and does the trochilus no harm.[28]

2.69 To some of the Egyptians crocodiles are sacred; to others they are not, and they treat them as enemies. Those who live around Thebes and Lake Moeris consider them very sacred indeed. [2] Each of these peoples keeps one crocodile, chosen from all the rest and trained to be tame. They put earrings of glass and gold in its ears and bracelets around its forefeet, give it special food and sacrificial victims, and treat these crocodiles as well as they possibly can while they live; when they die, they embalm them and bury them in sacred tombs. [3] But those who live around the city of Elephantine even eat them, since they do not consider them sacred. They are not called crocodiles but *champsae*. It was the Ionians who named them crocodiles, because they thought they looked like the "crocodiles" found in their own country, in stone walls.[29]

2.70 There are many ways of hunting them, of every kind; I describe the one that seems to me most worth telling. The hunter baits a hook with a pig's back and lets it down into the middle of the river, while he himself stands on the river bank

28 The trochilus was probably a kind of plover.
29 In Ionic Greek *krokodeilos* was the word for a lizard.

with a live piglet, which he beats. [2] Hearing its squeals, the crocodile makes for the sound, comes upon the pig's back and swallows it; then they haul it in. When it has been dragged out onto land, the very first thing the hunter does is plaster its eyes with mud. Once he has done this he masters the rest very easily; if he does not, only with great effort.

[2.71] Hippopotamuses are sacred in the district of Papremis, but not to the rest of the Egyptians. In appearance the animal is like this: it has four feet, with cloven hooves like an ox's; it is snub-nosed, has a horse's mane, shows tusks, and has a horse's tail and voice; and it is as big as the biggest ox. Its hide is so thick that, once dried, it is made into smooth javelin shafts.

[2.72] There are also otters in the river, which they consider sacred. Among fish, too, they regard the one called the lepidotus and the eel as sacred; these, they say, are sacred to the Nile. And among birds, the fox-goose.

THE PHOENIX

The phoenix, sacred snakes, the winged serpents of Arabia, and how the Egyptians live and eat.

[2.73] There is another sacred bird, whose name is the phoenix. I have not seen it myself, except in paintings; for it rarely visits them—once every five hundred years, as the people of Heliopolis say. [2] They say it comes when its father has died. If it is like the paintings, this is its size and appearance: some of its feathers are golden and others bright red, and in outline and size it is very like an eagle. [3] They say that it does the following, though to me what they say is not credible. It sets out from Arabia, brings its father, encased in myrrh, to the temple of the Sun, and buries him in the temple of the Sun. [4] It carries him in this way, they say: first it molds an egg of myrrh as large as it is able to carry, and then tries carrying it. When it has tested it, it hollows out the egg and puts its father inside, and with more myrrh it seals up the part of the egg it had hollowed out to put its father in. With the father inside, the weight is the same as before. Hav-

ing sealed it up, it carries him to Egypt, to the temple of the Sun. That is what they say this bird does.

2.74 Around Thebes there are sacred snakes, not at all harmful to people. They are small, and they have two horns growing from the top of the head. When they die they are buried in the temple of Zeus, for they say they are sacred to this god.

2.75 There is a place in Arabia lying roughly opposite the city of Buto, and I went there to find out about the winged snakes. When I arrived I saw snake bones and spines in quantities impossible to describe. There were heaps of spines, some large, some smaller, and some smaller still, and there were many of these heaps. 2 The place where the spines lie scattered is something like this: a pass leading out of narrow mountains into a great plain, and this plain adjoins the plain of Egypt.[30] 3 The story is that at the beginning of spring winged snakes fly from Arabia toward Egypt, and that the birds called ibises meet them at the entrance to this country and do not let them past, but kill them. 4 The Arabians say that the ibis is greatly honored by the Egyptians because of this deed, and the Egyptians themselves agree that this is why they honor these birds.

2.76 The ibis looks like this. It is a deep black all over, it has the legs of a crane and a strongly hooked beak, and it is about the size of a corncrake. That is what the black ones look like, the ones that fight the snakes. But the ones that crowd more around people's feet (for there are two kinds of ibis) 2 are bare on the head and the whole neck, with white feathers except on the head, the neck, the wingtips and the tip of the rump (all these parts I have named are a deep black), while in legs and beak they resemble the other kind. The snake is shaped like a water snake, 3 and its wings are not feathered but are most like a bat's wings. Let that be enough said about sacred animals.

2.77 As for the Egyptians themselves, those who live in the cultivated part of Egypt train their memories more than anyone else in the world, and they are by far the most learned in history

30 Buto was a city in the Nile Delta; Herodotus' "Arabia" includes the desert east of the Nile.

of all the peoples I have put to the test. [2] Their way of life is as follows. For three days in a row each month they purge themselves, pursuing health with emetics and enemas, because they believe that all diseases come to people from the food that nourishes them. [3] And in any case the Egyptians are, after the Libyans, the healthiest people in the world—because of the seasons, in my opinion, since their seasons do not change. For it is at times of change that diseases most often strike people: changes of every kind, but above all changes of season. [4] They eat bread, making loaves out of emmer, which they call kyllestis. They drink a wine made from barley, since there are no vines in their country. Some fish they dry in the sun and eat raw, others they eat preserved in brine. [5] Of birds, they eat quails, ducks and small birds raw, after first salting them. All the other birds and fish they have, apart from those they regard as sacred, they eat roasted or boiled.

2.78 At the gatherings of the wealthy, when dinner is over, a man carries round a wooden corpse in a coffin, carved and painted to look as lifelike as possible, about one or two cubits long. He shows it to each of the drinkers and says, "Look at this as you drink and enjoy yourself, because this is what you'll be like when you're dead." That is what they do at their drinking parties.

2.79 They keep to their ancestral customs and adopt no others. Among their customs, which are remarkable in other ways too, there is in particular one song, the Linus, which is sung in Phoenicia and in Cyprus and elsewhere, though it has a different name in each nation. [2] It turns out to be the same song that the Greeks sing and call the Linus. So among the many things in Egypt that astonish me, one is this: where did they get the Linus? They have clearly been singing it forever. In Egyptian the Linus is called Maneros. [3] The Egyptians told me that Maneros was the only son of the first king of Egypt, and that when he died before his time the Egyptians honored him with these laments, and that this was their first and only song.[31]

31 The Linus was a Greek lament, named after a mythical youth who died young.

2.80 There is another point on which the Egyptians agree with the Lacedaemonians, and with them alone among the Greeks: their young men, when they meet their elders, give way and step aside, and they rise from their seats when their elders approach. 2 But in this they agree with no Greeks at all: instead of greeting each other in the streets, they bow, lowering a hand to the knee.

2.81 They wear linen tunics with fringes about the legs, which they call calasiris, and over these they throw white woolen cloaks. But nothing woolen is brought into temples, nor is anyone buried in wool, for that is not lawful. 2 In this they agree with the practices called Orphic and Bacchic, which are really Egyptian and Pythagorean: for anyone who shares in these rites, too, it is not lawful to be buried in woolen clothes. There is a sacred story told about this.[32]

2.82 The Egyptians have also discovered these other things: which god each month and each day belongs to, and what a person born on a given day will meet with in life, how he will die and what sort of person he will be. Those Greeks who have practiced poetry have made use of these things. 2 They have also identified more portents than all the rest of mankind put together. When a portent occurs, they watch for the outcome and write it down, and if anything like it ever happens later, they believe it will turn out the same way.

2.83 Divination among them is arranged like this. The art belongs to no human being, but to certain of the gods. There is an oracle of Heracles there, and of Apollo, Athena, Artemis, Ares and Zeus, and the one they hold in the greatest honor of all is the oracle of Leto in the city of Buto. Their methods of divination, however, are not all the same, but differ from one another.

2.84 Medicine is divided up among them in this way: each doctor is a doctor of one disease and no more. The whole country is full of doctors. Some are set up as doctors of the eyes, others of

32 Orphic and Bacchic rites were Greek mystery cults; the Pythagoreans were followers of the sixth-century BC philosopher Pythagoras.

the head, others of the teeth, others of the belly, and others of diseases that cannot be seen.

2.85 Their mourning and burials are as follows. When a household loses someone of any account, all the women of that house smear their heads, or even their faces, with mud. Then they leave the body in the house and roam through the city beating their breasts, with their clothes girt up and their breasts bared, and all their female relatives with them. 2 The men, separately, beat their breasts too, with their clothes girt up as well. When they have done this, they take the body to be embalmed.

EMBALMING

The three grades of Egyptian embalming and what each one costs.

2.86 There are men appointed for this very task who practice it as their craft. 2 When a body is brought to them, they show those who brought it wooden models of corpses, painted to look real ..., and the most elaborate of these, they say, is the method of one whose name I do not think it right to mention in such a matter. The second they show is inferior to this and cheaper, and the third is the cheapest. After explaining, they ask the relatives which method they want used for preparing the body.[33] 3 The relatives agree on a price and go away, and the embalmers, left behind in their workshops, carry out the most elaborate embalming as follows. First they draw out the brain through the nostrils with a hooked iron, removing part of it this way and part by pouring in drugs. 4 Next they make a cut along the flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone and take out the entire contents of the abdomen. They clean it out and rinse it with palm wine, and then rinse it again with ground spices. 5 Then they fill the belly with pure ground myrrh, cassia and other spices, except frankincense, and sew it up again. After this they embalm the body by covering it in natron for seventy days; they are not per-

33 The unnamed one is Osiris, the Egyptian god of the dead, whose body was said to have been the first embalmed.

mitted to embalm it for longer than that.[34] 6 When the seventy days have passed, they wash the body and wrap the whole of it in bandages cut from fine linen, smearing them on the underside with gum, which the Egyptians generally use instead of glue. 7 Then the relatives take the body back and have a wooden case made in human shape. When it is ready, they enclose the body in it, shut it up and keep it safe in a burial chamber, standing upright against the wall.

2.87 That is how they prepare the bodies of those who choose the most expensive method. For those who want the middle method and wish to avoid great expense, they prepare them like this. 2 They fill syringes with the oil that comes from the cedar and fill the abdomen of the corpse with it, without cutting it open or removing the intestines. They inject it through the anus, stop it up so that the liquid cannot run back out, and embalm the body for the prescribed number of days. On the last day they let out of the abdomen the cedar oil they put in earlier. 3 This has such power that it brings the intestines and internal organs out with it, dissolved, while the natron dissolves the flesh, so that nothing is left of the body but the skin and bones. When they have done this, they give the body back as it is, without doing anything more to it.

2.88 The third method of embalming, which is used for those of more limited means, is this: they rinse out the abdomen with a purgative, embalm the body for the seventy days, and then give it back to be taken away.

2.89 When the wives of distinguished men die, they are not handed over for embalming right away, nor are women who are very beautiful or of greater standing. Only when they have been dead for three or four days are they handed over to the embalmers. 2 They do this for the following reason: so that the embalmers will not have intercourse with the women. For they say that one of them was caught having intercourse with the fresh corpse of a woman, and that a fellow craftsman denounced him.

34 Natron is a naturally occurring salt that dries out the body.

2.90 If anyone, whether an Egyptian or a foreigner alike, is found dead, seized by a crocodile or taken by the river itself, the people of whatever city he is washed up at are strictly required to embalm him, lay him out as finely as possible and bury him in a sacred tomb. 2 No one else may touch him, neither his relatives nor his friends; the priests of the Nile handle him with their own hands and bury him, as though he were something more than a human corpse.

2.91 They avoid using Greek customs, and, to put it in general terms, the customs of any other people whatsoever. The rest of the Egyptians hold to this, but there is a large city called Chemmis in the Theban nome, near Neapolis. 2 In this city there is a square sanctuary of Perseus the son of Danae, with palm trees growing all around it. The gateway of the sanctuary is of stone and very large, and on it stand two great stone statues. Inside this enclosure there is a temple, and in it stands a statue of Perseus.[35] 3 These people of Chemmis say that Perseus often appears to them, often out in the countryside and often inside the sanctuary, and that a sandal he has worn is found, two cubits long; and whenever it appears, all Egypt prospers. 4 That is what they say. And they do these Greek things in honor of Perseus: they hold athletic games that include every kind of contest, offering livestock, cloaks and hides as prizes. 5 When I asked why Perseus made a habit of appearing to them alone, and why they differed from the rest of the Egyptians in holding athletic games, they said that Perseus was descended from their city. Danaus and Lynceus, they said, were men of Chemmis who had sailed to Greece, and tracing the line down from them they arrived at Perseus. 6 He came to Egypt, they said, for the reason the Greeks also give, to bring the Gorgon's head from Libya, and he came to them as well and recognized all his kinsmen. By the time he reached Egypt he had learned the name of Chemmis,

35 Chemmis is modern Akhmim in Upper Egypt.

having heard it from his mother. And it was at his own command, they said, that they celebrate athletic games for him.[36]

2.92 All these are the customs of the Egyptians who live above the marshes. Those who live in the marshes follow the same customs as the other Egyptians—among other things, each of them lives with one wife, just as the Greeks do—but to keep their food cheap they have discovered these further things. 2 When the river is full and has turned the plains into a sea, many lilies grow in the water, which the Egyptians call lotus. They pick these and dry them in the sun, and then they pound the center of the lotus, which looks like a poppy-head, and make loaves from it, baked over a fire. 3 The root of this lotus is also edible and fairly sweet; it is round, about the size of an apple. 4 There are other lilies too, like roses, which also grow in the river. Their fruit grows in a separate pod that springs up beside them from the root, and in appearance it is very like a wasps' comb. Inside it are many edible seeds about the size of an olive stone, and these are eaten both fresh and dried. 5 The papyrus, which grows every year, they pull up out of the marshes. They cut off the upper part and use it for other purposes, but the lower part that is left, about a cubit long, they eat and sell. Those who want to enjoy their papyrus at its very best bake it in a red-hot oven and eat it that way. Some of them live on fish alone: when they catch them, they gut them, dry them in the sun and then eat them dried.

2.93 Fish that swim in shoals are not often found in the rivers; they are bred in the lakes and behave like this. When the urge to breed comes over them, they swim out to the sea in shoals. The males lead the way, scattering their milt, and the females, following, gulp it up and conceive from it. 2 When they have become full in the sea, they swim back up, each to their own haunts. This time, however, it is no longer the same ones who lead: the leadership passes to the females. Leading the shoals, they do just what the males did: they scatter their eggs, a few

36 In Greek myth Danaus fled from Egypt to Argos; Lynceus married one of his daughters, and Perseus was their descendant.

grains at a time, and the males, following, swallow them. These grains are fish. [3] From the grains that survive and are not swallowed, the fish that grow up are formed. Those caught swimming out to the sea are found to have the left side of their heads rubbed, while those caught swimming back up have the right side rubbed. [4] This happens to them for the following reason. They keep close to the land on their left as they swim down to the sea, and as they swim back up they hold to the same shore, pressing against it and touching it as closely as they can, so as not to lose their way because of the current. [5] When the Nile begins to rise, the hollows in the ground and the marshes beside the river are the first to fill, as the water seeps through from the river. And as soon as they are full, they all teem at once with little fish. [6] Where these are likely to come from, I think I understand. In the previous year, when the Nile recedes, the fish lay their eggs in the mud and leave with the last of the water; and when the season has come round and the water returns, these fish are immediately hatched from those eggs.

[2.94] That is how it is with the fish. The Egyptians who live around the marshes use an oil made from the fruit of the castor-oil plant, which the Egyptians call kiki. They make it like this. Along the banks of the rivers and lakes they sow these castor plants, [2] which in Greece grow wild of their own accord. Sown in Egypt, they bear plenty of fruit, but it smells foul. When they have gathered it, some crush it and press it, while others roast it and boil it down, and they collect what runs off. It is greasy and no less suitable for lamps than olive oil, but it gives off a heavy smell.

[2.95] Against the gnats, which are plentiful, they have devised the following. Those who live above the marshes are helped by towers, which they climb up to sleep in, because the wind keeps the gnats from flying high. [2] Those who live around the marshes have devised something else instead of towers. Every man owns a net, with which he catches fish by day, and at night he uses it like this: he sets the net up around the bed where he rests, then crawls in under it and sleeps. [3] If he sleeps wrapped in a cloak or

a linen sheet, the gnats bite through these, but through the net they do not even try.

2.96 Their boats, the ones they use for carrying cargo, are made of acacia, a tree very like the Cyrenaic lotus in shape, whose sap is gum. From this acacia they cut planks about two cubits long and lay them together like bricks, building the boat in the following way. 2 They fasten the two-cubit planks around long, close-set pegs. When they have built the hull this way, they stretch crossbeams over the top. They use no ribs, and they caulk the seams from the inside with papyrus. 3 They make a single steering oar, and this is thrust down through the keel. They use a mast of acacia and sails of papyrus. These boats cannot sail upstream unless a strong wind holds steady, but are towed from the bank. Downstream they travel like this. 4 There is a door-shaped raft made of tamarisk wood, bound together with a mat of reeds, and a stone with a hole bored through it, weighing about two talents. The raft is tied to a rope and let go to float ahead of the boat, and the stone is tied to another rope behind. 5 The raft, with the current pressing on it, moves quickly and pulls the baris (for that is the name of these boats), while the stone, dragged along behind on the bottom, keeps the boat on course. They have a great many of these boats, and some carry many thousands of talents.

2.97 When the Nile floods the land, only the towns can be seen standing out above the water, very much like the islands in the Aegean Sea. All the rest of Egypt becomes open sea, and only the towns stand out. So when this happens, people no longer ferry themselves along the channels of the river but straight across the middle of the plain. 2 Anyone sailing up from Naucratis to Memphis, at any rate, travels right past the pyramids. This is not the usual route either; that goes past the point of the Delta and the town of Cercasorus. And if you sail across the plain to Naucratis from the sea and Canopus, you will pass the town of Anthylla and the one called Archandrus' Town.[37]

37 Naucratis was a Greek trading town in the western Nile Delta; Canopus lay on the coast at the Delta's western mouth.

2.98 Of these, Anthylla, a notable town, is assigned as a special grant to supply shoes for the wife of whoever is king of Egypt at the time. This has been the practice ever since Egypt came under the Persians. 2 The other town, in my opinion, takes its name from Archandrus, son of Phthius son of Achaeus, the son-in-law of Danaus; for it is called Archandrus' Town. There could be some other Archandrus, of course, but at any rate the name is not Egyptian.

THE KINGS OF EGYPT

The priests' list of kings from Min to Sesostris, and Sesostris' conquests.

2.99 Up to this point, what I have said comes from what I saw, my own judgment and my inquiries. From here on I am going to tell the Egyptians' accounts as I heard them, though something of what I saw myself will be added to them as well. 2 Min, the first king of Egypt, the priests said, protected Memphis with a dike. The whole river used to flow along the sandy mountains on the Libyan side, but Min, upstream about a hundred stades from Memphis, built up the bend to the south with earth, dried up the old channel, and channeled the river to flow midway between the mountains. 3 Even now the Persians keep this bend of the Nile under close guard, so that it stays in the course it is held to, and they shore it up every year; for if the river were to break through and overflow here, all of Memphis would be in danger of being flooded. 4 When this Min, the first king, had turned the area that had been cut off into dry land, he first founded on it the city that is now called Memphis (for Memphis too lies in the narrow part of Egypt). Outside it, to the north and west, he dug a lake from the river all around it (on the east the Nile itself bounds it). Next he built the temple of Hephaestus in it, which is large and very much worth describing.

2.100 After him the priests read out from a papyrus roll the names of three hundred and thirty other kings. In all these generations of men there were eighteen Ethiopians and one native

woman; the rest were Egyptian men. [2] The woman who reigned had the same name as the Babylonian queen, Nitocris. They said that she took vengeance for her brother. The Egyptians had killed him while he was their king, and after killing him they handed the kingship over to her. To avenge him, she destroyed many Egyptians by a trick. [3] She had a very long underground chamber built, they said, and gave out that she was going to inaugurate it, though she had something else in mind. She invited many of the Egyptians she knew to be most to blame for the murder and gave a feast for them, and while they were dining she let the river in on them through a large hidden channel. [4] That was all they said about her, except that when she had done this, she threw herself into a room full of ashes, so as to escape punishment.

2.101 Of the other kings, they said, there were no achievements to show and nothing of any distinction, except for one, the last of them, Moeris. [2] As his memorial he produced the gateway of Hephaestus' temple that faces the north wind; he dug a lake, whose circumference in stades I shall show later, and built pyramids in it, whose size I shall mention together with the lake itself. All this, they said, was his work; the others did nothing at all.

2.102 So I shall pass over them and make mention of the king who came after them, whose name was Sesostris. [2] The priests said that first he set out from the Arabian Gulf with warships and subdued the peoples living along the Red Sea, until, sailing on, he reached a sea that could no longer be navigated because of shoals. [3] When he had come back from there to Egypt, according to the priests' account, he took a large army and marched across the mainland, subduing every nation that stood in his way. [4] Wherever he met peoples who were brave and fiercely eager for their freedom, he set up pillars in their lands with inscriptions giving his own name and his country's, and stating that he had subdued them by his own might. [5] But where he had taken the cities easily and without a fight, he inscribed on the pillars the same things as for the nations that had shown cour-

age, and in addition he carved a woman's genitals, wanting to make it plain that they were cowards.

2.103 Doing this, he went right through the mainland, until he crossed from Asia into Europe and subdued the Scythians and the Thracians. These, in my opinion, are the farthest the Egyptian army reached; for in their country the pillars can be seen standing, but beyond it there are none. 2 From there he turned and went back. When he reached the river Phasis, I cannot say for certain what happened next: whether King Sesostris himself detached some part of his army and left it there to settle the land, or whether some of the soldiers, tired of his wandering, stayed behind around the river Phasis.

2.104 For it is evident that the Colchians are Egyptians. I say this having noticed it myself before I heard it from others. When it occurred to me, I asked both peoples, and the Colchians remembered the Egyptians better than the Egyptians remembered the Colchians. 2 The Egyptians said they thought the Colchians were descended from Sesostris' army. I myself guessed as much, partly because they are dark-skinned and curly-haired. That in itself proves nothing, since there are other peoples like that too. But I guessed it more from this: the Colchians, the Egyptians and the Ethiopians are the only peoples in the world who have practiced circumcision from the beginning. 3 The Phoenicians and the Syrians of Palestine admit themselves that they learned it from the Egyptians, while the Syrians around the rivers Thermodon and Parthenius, and their neighbors the Macrones, say they learned it recently from the Colchians. These are the only peoples who circumcise, and they evidently do it in the same way as the Egyptians. 4 As for the Egyptians and Ethiopians themselves, I cannot say which of them learned it from the other, since it is evidently something very ancient. That the others learned it through their contact with Egypt, I find this a strong proof as well: those Phoenicians who

have dealings with Greece no longer imitate the Egyptians in the matter of the genitals, and do not circumcise their children.[38]

2.105 Come now, let me mention another way in which the Colchians resemble the Egyptians. They and the Egyptians are the only peoples who work linen, and they do it the same way; and their whole way of life and their language are similar. The Greeks call Colchian linen "Sardinian," but the linen that comes from Egypt is called Egyptian.

2.106 Most of the pillars that Sesostris, king of Egypt, set up in the various lands no longer appear to survive, but in Palestinian Syria I saw them myself, still standing, with the inscription I have mentioned and the woman's genitals. 2 There are also two figures of this man carved in the rock in Ionia, one on the road that leads from the territory of Ephesus to Phocaea, and one on the road from Sardis to Smyrna.[39] 3 In each place a man is carved, four and a half spans tall, holding a spear in his right hand and a bow in his left, and the rest of his gear matches, for it is both Egyptian and Ethiopian. 4 From one shoulder to the other, across the chest, runs an inscription carved in Egyptian sacred writing, which says: "I won this land with my own shoulders." Who he is and where he comes from he does not show here, though he has shown it elsewhere. 5 This is why some of those who have seen these figures guess that they are an image of Memnon, but they are very far from the truth.[40]

2.107 This Egyptian Sesostris, the priests said, was returning home, bringing back many people from the nations whose lands he had subdued, and when on his way back he reached Daphnae near Pelusium, his own brother, to whom Sesostris had entrusted Egypt, invited him and his sons to a feast, then piled wood all around the outside of the house and set it on fire. 2 When Sesostris learned of this, they said, he immediately consulted his

38 The "Syrians" of the Thermodon and Parthenius, on the southern coast of the Black Sea, are the Cappadocians, whom the Greeks called Syrians.
39 The surviving relief on the road from Sardis to Smyrna (at Karabel, near Izmir) is in fact the work of a local Anatolian ruler of the Hittite era, not an Egyptian king.
40 A span is about 9 inches. Memnon was a legendary Ethiopian king who fought for Troy.

wife, for he had brought his wife along with him too. She advised him to lay two of their six sons across the fire, making a bridge over the burning part, so that the rest of them could walk over their bodies and escape. Sesostris did this, and two of the sons were burned to death in this way, but the rest were saved together with their father.

2.108 When Sesostris had returned to Egypt and taken vengeance on his brother, he put the crowds he had brought from the lands he had subdued to the following use. 2 It was they who dragged the stones that were brought to the temple of Hephaestus in this king's reign, stones of enormous size; and it was they who were forced to dig all the canals that exist in Egypt today. And so, against their will, they made Egypt, which before had been passable everywhere for horses and wagons, lacking in both. 3 For from that time on Egypt, though it is all flat land, has been unfit for horses and wagons. The cause of this has been the canals, which are many and run in every direction. 4 The king cut up the country for the following reason. Those Egyptians whose cities were not on the river but inland, whenever the river went down, ran short of water and had to drink rather brackish water, drawing it from wells.

2.109 That, then, is why Egypt was cut up. This king, they said, also divided the land among all the Egyptians, giving each of them an equal square plot, and he made this the source of his revenue, imposing a tax to be paid every year. 2 If the river carried away part of anyone's plot, the man would come to him and report what had happened, and the king would send men to inspect it and measure how much smaller the land had become, so that from then on the owner would pay in proportion to the tax assessed. 3 In my opinion this is how geometry was discovered, and it came from here to Greece; for the Greeks learned of the sundial, the gnomon and the twelve parts of the day from the Babylonians.[41]

2.110 This king was the only Egyptian who ruled over Ethiopia. As memorials he left stone statues in front of the temple of Hep-

haestus: two of thirty cubits, of himself and his wife, and of his four sons, each of twenty cubits. [2] Long afterward, the priest of Hephaestus would not allow Darius the Persian to set up a statue in front of them. He said that Darius had not achieved deeds like those of Sesostris the Egyptian: Sesostris had subdued as many other nations as Darius had, and the Scythians besides, while Darius had not been able to conquer the Scythians. [3] So it was not right, he said, for Darius to set up a statue in front of that king's offerings unless he surpassed him in his deeds. They say that Darius forgave him for this.

2.111 When Sesostris died, they said, his son Pheros succeeded to the kingship. He undertook no military campaigns, and it was his lot to go blind, for the following reason. The river had come down in its greatest flood ever up to that time, to eighteen cubits, and when it had risen over the fields a wind struck it, and the river became full of waves. [2] They say that this king, in an act of reckless arrogance, took a spear and hurled it into the middle of the river's eddies, and immediately afterward his eyes became diseased and he went blind. He was blind for ten years, they say, and in the eleventh year an oracle came to him from the city of Buto, saying that the time of his punishment was over and that he would see again if he washed his eyes in the urine of a woman who had had intercourse with her own husband only and had known no other men. [3] He tried his own wife first, and then, when he did not see again, all the women one after another. When he had recovered his sight, he gathered the women he had tried, except the one whose urine had restored his sight when he washed in it, into one town, which is now called Red Clod. Having assembled them there, he burned them all, together with the town itself. [4] The woman whose urine had restored his sight he took as his own wife. Having escaped the affliction of his eyes, he dedicated offerings in all the notable temples, and in particular, which is most worth mentioning, he dedicated works well worth seeing in the temple of the Sun: two

41 The polos was a bowl-shaped sundial; the gnomon was the upright pointer that casts the shadow.

stone obelisks, each made of a single stone, each a hundred cubits high and eight cubits wide.

HELEN IN EGYPT

The Egyptian priests say Helen spent the Trojan War in Egypt, not in Troy.

2.112 After him, they said, the kingship passed to a man of Memphis whose name in the Greek language is Proteus. His precinct is in Memphis today, very beautiful and well appointed, lying to the south of the temple of Hephaestus. 2 Phoenicians from Tyre live around this precinct, and the whole area is called the Camp of the Tyrians. In Proteus' precinct there is a temple called the temple of the Foreign Aphrodite. I conjecture that this temple belongs to Helen, daughter of Tyndareus, both because I have heard the story that Helen stayed with Proteus, and especially because it is named after the Foreign Aphrodite; for none of the other temples of Aphrodite anywhere are called temples of the foreign one.

2.113 When I inquired, the priests told me that the story of Helen went like this. Alexander, after carrying Helen off from Sparta, was sailing away to his own country. When he was in the Aegean, contrary winds drove him off course into the Egyptian sea, and from there, since the gales did not let up, he came to Egypt, to what is now called the Canopic mouth of the Nile and to Taricheae. 2 On the shore there was a temple of Heracles, which is still there today. If anyone's servant takes refuge in it and has the sacred marks put on him, giving himself to the god, no one may lay a hand on him. 3 This custom has stayed the same from the beginning down to my own time. So some of Alexander's servants, learning of the custom attached to the temple, deserted him. Seating themselves as suppliants of the god, they accused Alexander, wanting to do him harm, and told the whole story of Helen and the wrong done to Menelaus. They made these accusations before the priests and the warden of this river mouth, whose name was Thonis.

2.114 When Thonis heard this, he sent a message with all speed to Proteus at Memphis, which said: 2 "A stranger has come here, a Teucrian by birth, who has committed an unholy deed in Greece. He beguiled the wife of his own host and has come here bringing her with him, and a great deal of property too, driven to this land by the winds. Are we to let him sail away unharmed, or should we take away what he came with?" 3 Proteus sent back an answer, which said: "Seize this man, whoever he is, who has committed unholy acts against his own host, and bring him to me, so that I may find out what he has to say for himself."[42]

2.115 When Thonis heard this, he arrested Alexander and detained his ships, and afterward brought the man himself up to Memphis, along with Helen and the property, and the suppliants as well. 2 When they had all been brought up, Proteus asked Alexander who he was and where he was sailing from. He told him his lineage and named his homeland, and also described his voyage and where he was sailing from. 3 Then Proteus asked him where he had got Helen. When Alexander wavered in his story and did not tell the truth, the men who had become suppliants refuted him, setting out the whole story of the wrong he had done. 4 In the end Proteus announced his decision to them, saying: "If I didn't consider it of great importance never to kill any stranger who has been caught by the winds and come to my land, I would have punished you on the Greek's behalf. You are the vilest of men: after receiving hospitality, you committed the most unholy deed. You went after your own host's wife. And that wasn't enough for you: you set her heart fluttering and stole her away, and now you've gone off with her. 5 And not even that alone was enough for you: you've come here after plundering your host's house as well. 6 So now, since I consider it of great importance not to kill strangers, I won't let you take this woman and the property away. I'll keep them safe for your Greek host until he comes himself and wishes to take them home. As for you and your shipmates, I order you to leave my land for some

42 Teucrian means Trojan, after Teucer, a legendary early king of Troy.

other within three days; otherwise you will be treated as enemies."

2.116 This, the priests said, was how Helen came to Proteus. I think Homer also knew this story. But it was not as well suited to epic poetry as the other one, which he used, so he deliberately set it aside, while still making it clear that he knew this story too. [2] [For] it is plain from the way he describes Alexander's wanderings in the *Iliad* (and nowhere else did he go back on what he had said): how, as he was bringing Helen home, he was driven off course and wandered to various places, and how he reached Sidon in Phoenicia. [3] He mentions it in the Exploits of Diomedes, and the lines go like this: There were the robes, richly embroidered, the work of women
of Sidon, whom godlike Alexander himself
had brought from Sidon, sailing over the broad sea,
on the voyage on which he carried off Helen, daughter of a noble father.[43]

[4] He mentions it in the *Odyssey* as well, in these lines: Such were the cunning drugs the daughter of Zeus possessed,
good ones, which Polydamna, wife of Thon, had given her,
an Egyptian woman, whose grain-giving land bears the most
drugs, many of them good when mixed, and many deadly. [5] And Menelaus says this too to Telemachus: In Egypt, though I was eager to come home, the gods still
held me back, since I had not offered them perfect hecatombs. [6] In these lines he shows that he knew of Alexander's wandering to Egypt; for Syria borders on Egypt, and the Phoenicians, to whom Sidon belongs, live in Syria.[44]

43 The "Exploits of Diomedes" was the ancient title of a section of the *Iliad*; the lines quoted are *Iliad* 6, lines 289 to 292.
44 The "daughter of Zeus" is Helen; the lines are *Odyssey* 4, lines 227 to 230 and 351 to 352.

2.117 In the light of these lines, this passage too shows—not least, but most of all—that the *Cypria* is not by Homer but by someone else. For in the *Cypria* it is said that Alexander reached Ilium with Helen on the third day out of Sparta, with a favorable wind and a smooth sea; but in the *Iliad* Homer says that he wandered off course with her.[45]

2.118 So much, then, for Homer and the *Cypria*. When I asked the priests whether what the Greeks say happened at Ilium is an idle tale or not, they gave me this answer, saying that they knew it from inquiries made of Menelaus himself. 2 After the abduction of Helen, they said, a great Greek army came to the land of the Teucrians to help Menelaus. When it had landed and set up camp, the army sent messengers to Ilium, and Menelaus himself went with them. 3 Once they were inside the walls, they demanded back Helen and the property that Alexander had stolen from Menelaus and made off with, and they demanded satisfaction for the wrongs done; but the Teucrians, the priests said, told the same story then and afterward, both on oath and without it: that they did not have Helen or the property being claimed, but that it was all in Egypt, and that it would not be just for them to pay the penalty for what Proteus, the Egyptian king, was holding. 4 The Greeks thought they were being mocked, and so they besieged the city until they took it. But when they had taken the wall and Helen was nowhere to be found, and they heard the same story as before, then at last the Greeks believed the first account and sent Menelaus himself to Proteus.

2.119 Menelaus came to Egypt and sailed up to Memphis. He told the truth about what had happened, was received with great hospitality, and got Helen back unharmed, and all his own property besides. 2 Yet even after receiving all this, Menelaus behaved unjustly toward the Egyptians. When he was eager to sail away, he was held back by a lack of sailing winds; and when this went on for a long time, he devised an unholy deed: 3 he took two children of local men and made sacrificial victims of

45 The *Cypria* was an early epic, now lost, on the events leading up to the Trojan War.

them. Afterward, when it became known that he had done this, he was hated and pursued, and he fled with his ships toward Libya. Where he went from there the Egyptians could not say. Of these things, they said, they knew some through inquiry, while what had happened in their own country they spoke of with exact knowledge.

2.120 This is what the Egyptian priests said. I myself accept the story told about Helen, reasoning as follows: if Helen had been in Ilium, she would have been given back to the Greeks, whether Alexander was willing or not. 2 For surely Priam was not so out of his mind, nor the rest of his kin, that they were willing to risk their own lives, their children and their city just so that Alexander could live with Helen. 3 And even supposing they had felt that way at first: many of the other Trojans were being killed whenever they engaged the Greeks, and there was never a battle in which two or three or even more of Priam's own sons did not die—if one is to rely at all on the epic poets. With things turning out like this, I for my part expect that even if Priam himself had been living with Helen, he would have given her back to the Achaeans, if it meant being rid of the troubles he faced. 4 Nor was the kingship going to pass to Alexander, so that with Priam an old man the government would be in his hands. It was Hector, who was both older and more of a man than he, who was to inherit it when Priam died, and it was not fitting for him to give way to a brother who was doing wrong—especially when that brother was bringing great troubles both on Hector himself and on all the other Trojans. 5 The truth is that they could not give Helen back, and the Greeks did not believe them when they told the truth—because, as I declare my own opinion, a divine power was arranging things so that by perishing in utter destruction they would make it plain to mankind that for great wrongs the punishments from the gods are also great. That is what I think, and I have said it.

2.121 After Proteus, they said, Rhampsinitus took over the kingship. As his memorial he left the gateway of the temple of Hephaestus that faces west, and opposite the gateway he set up two

statues twenty-five cubits tall. The Egyptians call the one standing on the north side Summer and the one on the south Winter; the one they call Summer they worship and treat well, and to the one called Winter they do the opposite.

RHAMPSINITUS AND THE THIEF

A clever thief repeatedly robs King Rhampsinitus' treasury and finally wins the king's daughter.

2.121a This king, they said, possessed great wealth in silver, which none of the kings who came after him could surpass or even come close to. Wanting to store his treasure safely, he had a stone chamber built, one of whose walls was part of the outer wall of his palace. But the builder, plotting against him, contrived this: he fixed one of the stones so that it could easily be taken out of the wall by two men, or even by one. 2 When the chamber was finished, the king stored his treasure in it. As time went on, the builder, near the end of his life, called his sons to him (he had two) and told them how, looking out for them so that they would have plenty to live on, he had played a trick when he built the king's treasury. He explained clearly to them everything about removing the stone and gave them its measurements, telling them that if they kept these carefully they would be the stewards of the king's treasure. 3 He died, and his sons wasted no time getting to work. They went to the palace by night, found the stone in the building, removed it easily, and carried off a great deal of the treasure.

2.121b When the king, the story goes, happened to open the chamber, he was amazed to see that the vessels were short of treasure, but he could not tell whom to blame, since the seals were unbroken and the chamber was locked. When he opened it a second and a third time and each time the treasure seemed smaller (for the thieves did not stop plundering), he did this: he ordered traps to be made and set them around the vessels that held the treasure. 2 The thieves came as before, and one of them crept in; as soon as he went up to the vessel, he was caught in

the trap. Realizing what trouble he was in, he at once called his brother, showed him what had happened, and told him to get in as fast as he could and cut off his head, so that he himself would not be seen and recognized and bring his brother to ruin as well. The brother thought he was right; persuaded, he did it, then fitted the stone back in place and went home, carrying his brother's head.

2.121c When day came, the king went into the chamber and was astounded to see the thief's body in the trap without its head, while the chamber was undamaged and had no way in or out. At a loss, he did this: he hung the thief's corpse from the wall, set guards over it, and ordered them to seize and bring to him anyone they saw weeping or lamenting. 2 With the corpse hanging there, the mother, they say, took it terribly hard. She spoke to her surviving son and ordered him to find some way, however he could, to take down his brother's body and bring it home; and if he neglected to do this, she threatened to go to the king and inform him that her son had the treasure.

2.121d His mother kept pressing him hard, and for all he said he could not persuade her, so he devised this scheme. He got some donkeys ready, filled skins with wine, loaded them on the donkeys, and then drove them along. When he came near the men guarding the hanging corpse, he pulled at the necks of two or three of the skins and undid their ties. 2 As the wine poured out, he beat his head and shouted loudly, as though he did not know which donkey to turn to first. When the guards saw all the wine running out, they ran together into the road with vessels and collected the spilled wine, counting it a windfall. 3 He railed at them all, pretending to be angry; but as the guards tried to calm him, he pretended after a while to be soothed and to let his anger subside, and at last he drove the donkeys off the road and set about putting the loads in order. 4 As more talk went on, and one of the guards joked with him and got him laughing, he gave them one of the skins. They lay down right where they were, intending to drink, and they took him in and told him to stay and drink with them; and he, naturally, let himself be persuaded

and stayed. [5] As they greeted him warmly over the drinking, he gave them another of the skins too. The guards drank freely, got very drunk, and, overcome by sleep, dropped off right where they had been drinking. [6] Late in the night, he took down his brother's body and, to insult them, shaved the right cheeks of all the guards; then he loaded the corpse on the donkeys and drove off home, having done what his mother had ordered.

[2.121e] When the king was told that the thief's corpse had been stolen, he was furious. Determined at all costs to discover whoever it was that was contriving these things, he did the following —which I, for one, do not believe. [2] He set his own daughter up in a brothel, with orders to receive every man alike, and before having sex with them, to make each tell her the cleverest and the most unholy thing he had done in his life; and whoever told her the story of the thief, she was to seize him and not let him get away. [3] The girl did what her father had ordered. The thief, learning why this was being done and wanting to outdo the king in cunning, did this: [4] he cut off the arm of a freshly dead man at the shoulder and went with it under his cloak. He went in to the king's daughter and, when she asked him what she asked the others, he told her that the most unholy thing he had done was to cut off his brother's head when he was caught in a trap in the king's treasury, and the cleverest was to get the guards drunk and take down his brother's hanging corpse. [5] When she heard this, she grabbed hold of him. But in the dark the thief held out the dead man's arm to her; she seized it and held on, thinking she was holding the hand of the man himself; and the thief let it go and was gone, escaping through the door.

[2.121f] When this too was reported to the king, he was astounded at the man's resourcefulness and daring. In the end he sent word around to all the cities, offering him immunity and promising a great reward if he would come into his presence. [2] The thief trusted him and came, and Rhampsinitus admired him greatly and gave him this daughter in marriage, as the cleverest of all men: for the Egyptians, he said, surpass all other people, and this man surpassed the Egyptians.

2.122 After this, they said, this king went down alive to the place the Greeks believe to be Hades, and there played dice with Demeter, sometimes beating her and sometimes losing to her; and he came back again bringing a gift from her, a golden napkin. 2 Because of Rhampsinitus' descent, they said, the Egyptians celebrate a festival dating from his return. I know that they still celebrate it in my own day, but I cannot say whether this is the reason for the festival.[46] 3 The priests weave a robe within that one day, and then they bind the eyes of one of their number with a headband, lead him wearing the robe to the road that goes to the temple of Demeter, and go back themselves. They say that this priest, with his eyes bound, is led by two wolves to the temple of Demeter, twenty stades from the city, and that the wolves then lead him back from the temple to the same place.

2.123 Let anyone who finds such things credible make use of what the Egyptians say; my principle throughout this whole account is to write down what each people tells me, as I heard it. The Egyptians say that Demeter and Dionysus rule the world below. 2 The Egyptians were also the first to put forward this doctrine: that the human soul is immortal, and that when the body perishes it enters another living creature as it is being born; and when it has made the round of all creatures of the land, the sea and the air, it enters a human body again as it is being born; and this cycle takes three thousand years. 3 There are Greeks who have adopted this doctrine, some earlier and some later, as if it were their own; I know their names, but I do not write them down.

CHEOPS AND THE PYRAMIDS

Cheops and Chephren build the great pyramids by forced labor; Mycerinus rules more justly.

2.124 Down to the reign of Rhampsinitus, they said, Egypt enjoyed complete good order and great prosperity; but Cheops, who became king after him, drove them into every kind of misery.

46 Herodotus identifies Demeter with the Egyptian goddess Isis.

He closed all the temples, first barring the Egyptians from sacrificing there, and then ordered all of them to work for him. [2] Some were assigned to drag stones from the quarries in the Arabian mountains as far as the Nile; others he ordered to receive the stones once they had been ferried across the river in boats, and to drag them to the mountains called Libyan. [3] They worked in gangs of a hundred thousand men at a time, each gang for three months. It took ten years of the people's grinding toil to make the road along which they dragged the stones—a work they built that is not much less than the pyramid, in my opinion. [4] For it is five stades long, ten fathoms wide, and eight fathoms high at its highest point, and it is made of polished stone carved with figures. The ten years, they said, went to this road and to the underground chambers in the hill on which the pyramids stand, which he had made as burial vaults for himself on an island, bringing in a channel from the Nile. [5] The pyramid itself took twenty years to build. It is square, each side eight plethra long, and its height the same; it is of polished stone, fitted together with the greatest precision; none of the stones is less than thirty feet long.

[2.125] This pyramid was built in the following way: in the form of steps, which some call "battlements" and others "altar-steps." [2] When they had first built it in this form, they raised the remaining stones with devices made of short pieces of timber, lifting them from the ground onto the first tier of steps. [3] Whenever a stone reached that tier, it was placed on another device standing on the first tier, and from there it was hauled up to the second tier on another device. [4] For there were as many devices as there were tiers of steps—or else they moved the same device, a single one and easy to carry, up to each tier in turn, once they had taken the stone off. Let both versions be given, as both are told. [5] So the topmost parts of it were finished first, then they finished the parts next below, and last of all they finished the parts at ground level, the lowest. [6] It is recorded in Egyptian writing on the pyramid how much was spent on radishes, onions and garlic for the workers; and if I remember

rightly what the interpreter said when he read me the inscription, the sum was one thousand six hundred talents of silver. [7] If that is so, how much more is likely to have been spent on iron for the work, and on food and clothing for the workers? They spent the time I have mentioned building the works, and in my view a further period, and no short one, cutting and transporting the stones and digging the underground excavation.

2.126 Cheops sank to such wickedness, they said, that when he was short of money he set his own daughter up in a brothel and ordered her to raise a certain sum—how much, they did not tell me. She raised what her father had ordered, but she also had the idea of leaving a memorial of her own, and she asked each man who came to her to give her one stone for the works. [2] From these stones, they said, was built the pyramid that stands in the middle of the three, in front of the great pyramid; each of its sides measures one and a half plethra.

2.127 This Cheops, the Egyptians said, reigned for fifty years. When he died, his brother Chephren took over the kingship. He treated the people in the same way as his brother, and among other things he too built a pyramid, though it does not reach the dimensions of the other's; [2] I measured these as well myself. (There are no chambers underground beneath it, and no channel comes into it from the Nile as one flows into the other pyramid. There the water flows through a built conduit and around an island inside, on which they say Cheops himself lies.) [3] He laid the lowest course in variegated Ethiopian stone, and he built his pyramid next to the great one, making it forty feet short of the other's size. Both stand on the same hill, which is about a hundred feet high. Chephren reigned, they said, for fifty-six years.

2.128 They reckon this as one hundred and six years, during which the Egyptians suffered every kind of misery, and for all that time the temples were shut and never opened. Out of hatred the Egyptians are not very willing to name these kings. They even call the pyramids after the shepherd Philitis, who grazed his flocks in that region at that time.

2.129 After him, they said, Mycerinus, the son of Cheops, became king of Egypt. He disapproved of what his father had done. He opened the temples and released the people, who had been worn down to the last extremity of misery, to go about their own work and their sacrifices, and he judged their lawsuits more justly than any other king. 2 For this, of all the kings who have ever ruled Egypt, they praise him most. Besides judging well in general, whenever someone complained about his verdict, he would give the man something from his own property and so satisfy his anger. 3 But while Mycerinus was being kind to his subjects and conducting himself in this way, his misfortunes began with the death of his daughter, the only child he had in his household. He was deeply grieved at the blow that had fallen on him. Wanting to give his daughter a burial more remarkable than anyone else's, he had a hollow wooden cow made, had it gilded, and then buried this dead daughter of his inside it.

2.130 This cow was never buried in the earth. It could still be seen in my own time, in the city of Sais, lying in the palace in a richly decorated chamber. Every day they burn all kinds of incense beside it, and every night a lamp is kept burning beside it until morning. 2 Near this cow, in another chamber, stand images of Mycerinus' concubines, as the priests in the city of Sais told me. Wooden colossi do stand there, about twenty of them, carved naked. Who they are, however, I cannot say, beyond what is said.

2.131 Some people, though, tell this story about the cow and the colossi. Mycerinus, they say, fell in love with his own daughter and then lay with her against her will. 2 Afterward, they say, the girl hanged herself in grief, and he buried her in this cow. Her mother cut off the hands of the maids who had betrayed her daughter to her father, and so now their images have suffered what the living women suffered. 3 In my opinion they are talking nonsense when they say this, about everything else and especially about the colossi's hands. I saw for myself that these figures had lost their hands through age; the hands could still be seen lying at their feet even in my time.

2.132 The cow is covered all over with a purple cloth, except for the neck and head, which are left showing and are gilded with a very thick layer of gold. Between the horns there is a golden representation of the disk of the sun. 2 The cow is not standing but kneeling, and it is the size of a large live cow. Every year it is carried out of its chamber, at the time when the Egyptians beat their breasts for the god whom I will not name in a matter of this kind. 3 That is when they bring the cow out into the light. They say the girl, as she was dying, begged her father Mycerinus to let her see the sun once a year.

2.133 After his daughter's death, the second thing that befell this king was this. An oracle came to him from the city of Buto saying that he would live only six more years and die in the seventh. 2 He took this very hard and sent a reproach to the god at the oracle. He complained in return that his father and his uncle, who had shut the temples, paid no regard to the gods and even ruined their people, had lived a long time, while he, a pious man, was to die so soon. 3 A second answer came to him from the oracle, saying that this was exactly why his life was being cut short: he had not done what he was meant to do. Egypt was destined to suffer for a hundred and fifty years; the two kings before him had understood this, but he had not. 4 When Mycerinus heard this, he took it that his sentence had already been passed. He had a great many lamps made, and whenever night came he would light them and drink and enjoy himself, never stopping by day or by night, roaming the marshes and the groves and wherever he heard there were the best places for pleasure. 5 He devised all this because he wanted to prove the oracle a liar: by turning his nights into days, he would have twelve years instead of six.

2.134 This king left a pyramid much smaller than his father's. It is square, each side twenty feet short of three plethra, and half of it is built of Ethiopian stone. Some Greeks say it belongs to Rhodopis, a courtesan, but they are wrong. 2 In fact, it seems to me that the people who say this do not even know who Rhodopis was. Otherwise they would not have credited her with

building such a pyramid, on which countless thousands of talents, so to speak, have been spent. Besides, Rhodopis was in her prime in the reign of Amasis, not of this king. [3] Rhodopis lived a great many years after the kings who left these pyramids. She was Thracian by birth, the slave of Iadmon son of Hephaestopolis, a Samian, and a fellow slave of Aesop the fable-writer. For Aesop too belonged to Iadmon, as was shown not least by this: [4] when the Delphians, in obedience to an oracle, proclaimed again and again that whoever wished should claim compensation for Aesop's life, no one else came forward except the grandson of Iadmon, another Iadmon, who claimed it. So Aesop too belonged to Iadmon.[47]

2.135 Rhodopis came to Egypt brought by Xanthes of Samos. She came to ply her trade, and there she was freed for a large sum by a man of Mytilene, Charaxus son of Scamandronymus and brother of Sappho the poet. [2] So Rhodopis was set free. She stayed on in Egypt, and being very alluring, she made a great fortune—great for a Rhodopis, that is, but not enough to stretch to a pyramid like that. [3] Since a tenth of her fortune can still be seen to this day by anyone who wants to look, there is no need to credit her with great wealth. Rhodopis wanted to leave a memorial of herself in Greece: to have something made that no one else happened to have thought of and dedicated in a temple, and to dedicate it at Delphi in remembrance of herself. [4] So with a tenth of her fortune she had a great many iron spits made, big enough to roast an ox, as many as that tenth would pay for, and sent them to Delphi. They are still piled together there now, behind the altar the Chians dedicated, directly opposite the temple itself. [5] The courtesans of Naucratis tend, somehow, to be alluring. For one thing, this woman, about whom the story is told, became so famous that every Greek learned the name of Rhodopis. For another, a later one, named Archidice, became the subject of songs throughout Greece, though she was less talked about than the first. [6] When Charaxus went back to Myti-

47 According to tradition, the Delphians had put Aesop to death.

lene after buying Rhodopis' freedom, Sappho mocked him bitterly in a song.

2.136 That is all I have to say about Rhodopis. After Mycerinus, the priests said, Asychis became king of Egypt. He built the eastern gateway for Hephaestus, which is by far the most beautiful and by far the largest. All the gateways have carved figures and a countless variety of architectural features, but this one has them far more than any other. 2 In his reign, they said, since money was very scarce, a law was made for the Egyptians that a man could obtain a loan by pledging his father's corpse as security. A further clause was added to this law: the lender was to have control of the borrower's entire family tomb, and the man who gave this pledge was to suffer the following penalty if he refused to repay the debt: when he himself died, he could not be buried, either in that ancestral tomb or in any other, nor could he bury any member of his family who died. 3 Wanting to outdo the kings who had ruled Egypt before him, this king left as his memorial a pyramid made of bricks. On it there is an inscription carved in stone which says: 4 "Do not belittle me in comparison with the stone pyramids. I surpass them as much as Zeus surpasses the other gods. For men plunged a pole into a lake, gathered up whatever mud stuck to the pole, made bricks of it, and built me in this way."

2.137 That, they said, was what he accomplished. After him a blind man from the city of Anysis reigned, whose name was Anysis. In his reign the Ethiopians and Sabacos, the king of the Ethiopians, invaded Egypt with a large force. 2 The blind man fled into the marshes, and the Ethiopian ruled Egypt for fifty years, during which he did the following. 3 Whenever any Egyptian committed an offense, he would not put any of them to death. Instead he sentenced each according to the seriousness of the wrong, ordering him to heap up earth by his own city, whichever city each offender came from. In this way the cities became higher still. 4 They had first been raised by the men who dug the canals in the reign of King Sesostris, and a second time under the Ethiopian, when they grew very high. 5 Other cities in

Egypt were raised high too, but in my opinion the city of Bubastis was built up most of all. In it there is a sanctuary of Bubastis that is very well worth describing. Other sanctuaries are larger and more costly, but none is more delightful to look at. Bubastis in the Greek language is Artemis.

2.138 Her sanctuary is like this. Apart from the entrance, the whole of it is an island. Two channels come in from the Nile, without joining each other: each runs in as far as the entrance to the sanctuary, one flowing around it on one side and the other on the other. Each is a hundred feet wide and shaded by trees. 2 The gateway is ten fathoms high and adorned with remarkable figures six cubits tall. Since the sanctuary is in the middle of the city, you can look down on it from every side as you walk around. The city has been built up high, while the sanctuary has been left undisturbed as it was made in the beginning, so one can see right into it. 3 Running around it is a wall carved with figures, and inside is a grove of very tall trees planted around a great temple, in which the statue stands. The sanctuary is a stade long and a stade wide. 4 At the entrance there is a road paved with stone, about three stades long, leading east through the marketplace, and about four plethra wide. On either side of the road grow trees tall enough to touch the sky. It leads to a sanctuary of Hermes. That is what this sanctuary is like.

2.139 In the end, they said, the Ethiopian departed in the following way. He saw a vision in his sleep and fled. It seemed to him that a man stood over him and advised him to gather together all the priests in Egypt and cut them in half. 2 After seeing this vision, he said that in his view the gods were holding this out to him as a pretext, so that he would commit sacrilege and suffer some harm from gods or men. He would not do it; besides, the time foretold for his rule over Egypt was over, and he would leave. 3 For while he was in Ethiopia, the oracles the Ethiopians consult had declared that he must reign over Egypt for fifty years. So, since this time was running out and the vision in his dream troubled him, Sabacos left Egypt of his own accord.

2.140 When the Ethiopian had gone from Egypt, they said, the blind man came back from the marshes and ruled again. He had lived there for fifty years on an island he had built up out of ash and earth. Whenever Egyptians came to him bringing food, as each had been assigned to do without the Ethiopian's knowledge, he would tell them to bring ash as well with their gift. 2 No one before Amyrtaeus was able to find this island: for more than seven hundred years the kings before Amyrtaeus could not discover it. The island's name is Elbo, and it measures ten stades in every direction.[48]

2.141 After him, they said, the priest of Hephaestus reigned, whose name was Sethos. He treated the warrior class of the Egyptians with contempt, as though he would never need them. Among other insults he heaped on them, he took away their fields; under the earlier kings each of them had been granted twelve choice arourae. 2 Afterward Sanacharibus, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched a great army against Egypt, and so the Egyptian warriors refused to come to the rescue.[49] 3 The priest, trapped and at a loss, went into the inner shrine and lamented before the statue the fate he was in danger of suffering. As he wept, sleep came over him, and in his vision it seemed that the god stood over him and told him to take heart: he would come to no harm if he went out to meet the Arabian army, for the god himself would send him helpers. 4 Trusting in these dreams, he took those Egyptians who were willing to follow him and encamped at Pelusium, since that is where the ways into the country lie. Not one of the warriors followed him, only traders, craftsmen and men of the marketplace. 5 When the enemy arrived there, a swarm of field mice poured over them in the night and gnawed through their quivers and their bows, and the handles of their shields as well, so that the next day, as they fled without their weapons, many of them fell. 6 This king still

48 Amyrtaeus led an Egyptian revolt against Persian rule in Herodotus' own century.

49 An aroura was an Egyptian land measure of about two-thirds of an acre. Sanacharibus is the Assyrian king Sennacherib (reigned 705 to 681 BC).

stands in the temple of Hephaestus, in stone, holding a mouse in his hand, with an inscription that says: "Whoever looks at me, let him revere the gods."

2.142 Up to this point in the account it was the Egyptians and the priests who told the story. They showed that from the first king down to this priest of Hephaestus, the last to reign, there had been three hundred and forty-one generations of men, and in that time there had been the same number of high priests and of kings. 2 Now three hundred generations of men come to ten thousand years, since three generations of men make a hundred years; and the forty-one further generations, over and above the three hundred, make one thousand three hundred and forty years. 3 So in eleven thousand three hundred and forty years, they said, no god had appeared in human form; and they said that nothing of the kind had happened either before or afterward among the remaining kings of Egypt. 4 In this time, they said, the sun had four times risen out of its usual place: twice it had risen where it now sets, and twice it had set where it now rises. And nothing in Egypt was changed by this, neither what the land and the river produce for them, nor the course of diseases, nor deaths.

2.143 Before my time, when Hecataeus the prose writer was in Thebes, he traced his own descent and linked his family to a god in the sixteenth generation. The priests of Zeus did to him what they also did to me, though I did not trace my own descent. 2 They took me into the inner hall, which is large, and counted out, pointing to each, as many wooden colossi as they had said; for every high priest sets up an image of himself there during his lifetime. 3 So, counting and pointing, the priests showed me that each one was the son of his own father, going through all of them, starting from the image of the one who had died most recently, until they had shown me every one.[50] 4 When Hecataeus traced his descent and linked it to a god in the sixteenth generation, they set a genealogy of their own against his, based

50 Hecataeus of Miletus (c. 500 BC) was a geographer and genealogist, an important predecessor of Herodotus.

on their count, refusing to accept from him that a human being could be descended from a god. They countered him like this: they said that each of the colossi was a piromis born of a piromis, until they had shown all three hundred and forty-five colossi [each called a piromis], and they linked them neither to a god nor to a hero. Piromis in the Greek language means a man both fine and good.

2.144 So they showed that all those whose images stood there were men of this kind, and far removed from gods. 2 Before these men, they said, the rulers of Egypt had been gods, who did not dwell among human beings, and one of them was always the one in power. The last of them to reign over the country was Horus son of Osiris, whom the Greeks call Apollo. He deposed Typhon and was the last to reign over Egypt. Osiris in the Greek language is Dionysus.[51]

2.145 Among the Greeks, Heracles, Dionysus and Pan are thought to be the youngest of the gods. Among the Egyptians, however, Pan is very ancient and is one of the eight gods who are said to be the first. Heracles belongs to the second generation, the so-called twelve, and Dionysus to the third, who were born from the twelve gods. 2 I have already shown how many years the Egyptians themselves say there were from Heracles to King Amasis. Pan is said to be older still, and Dionysus the youngest of the three. For him they reckon fifteen thousand years to King Amasis. 3 The Egyptians say they know these things precisely, because they have always kept count of the years and always recorded them in writing. 4 Now, from the Dionysus who is said to have been born of Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, to my own time is about sixteen hundred years. From Heracles, the son of Alcmene, it is about nine hundred years. From Pan, the son of Penelope (for the Greeks say that Pan was born of her and Hermes), it is fewer years than from the Trojan War, about eight hundred to my time.

2.146 Anyone may adopt whichever of these two accounts he finds more convincing. My own opinion about them has already

51 Typhon is the Greek name Herodotus uses for the Egyptian god Seth.

been stated. Heracles the son of Amphitryon appeared in Greece and grew old there. If Dionysus the son of Semele and Pan the son of Penelope had likewise appeared and grown old there, one might say that they too were men, born later, who bore the names of those earlier gods. [2] As it is, the Greeks say of Dionysus that as soon as he was born, Zeus sewed him into his thigh and carried him to Nysa, which lies beyond Egypt in Ethiopia. As for Pan, they cannot even say where he went after he was born. So it has become clear to me that the Greeks learned the names of these two later than the names of the other gods. They date their birth from the time when they first heard of them.

2.147 That, then, is what the Egyptians themselves say. Now I shall relate what other peoples say happened in this country, where the Egyptians agree with them. Something of what I saw myself will be added to it as well. [2] After the reign of the priest of Hephaestus, the Egyptians were free. Since they could not live for any length of time without a king, they set up twelve kings and divided the whole of Egypt into twelve parts.[52] [3] These kings intermarried and ruled on the following terms: they would not overthrow one another, no one would seek to have more than another, and they would be the closest of friends. [4] They made these rules, and guarded them strictly, for this reason. At the very beginning, as soon as they took up their tyrannies, an oracle had told them that whichever of them poured a libation from a bronze bowl in the temple of Hephaestus would be king of all Egypt. They used to meet together in all the temples.

THE LABYRINTH

The twelve kings build a vast labyrinth near Lake Moeris, which Herodotus has seen himself.

2.148 They also decided to leave a memorial in common. Having decided this, they built a labyrinth a little above Lake Moeris, roughly near the city called the City of Crocodiles. I have seen it

52 The priest-king of Hephaestus is Sethos, whose reign Herodotus has just described (2.141).

myself, and it is beyond description. [2] If one added up all the walls and other works the Greeks have produced, they would turn out to have cost less labor and expense than this labyrinth. And yet the temple at Ephesus is remarkable, and so is the one at Samos. [3] The pyramids, too, were beyond description, and each of them was equal to many great Greek works. But the labyrinth surpasses even the pyramids.[53] [4] [For] it has twelve roofed courts, joined to one another, with their doors facing each other. Six face north and six face south, and a single wall surrounds them all on the outside. Inside are rooms on two levels, some underground and others above them. There are three thousand in all, fifteen hundred on each level. [5] We saw the upper rooms ourselves as we went through them, and we speak of them from our own viewing. About the underground rooms we learned from what we were told. The Egyptians in charge would on no account show them, saying that the tombs of the kings who first built this labyrinth were there, and the tombs of the sacred crocodiles. [6] So about the lower rooms we report what we heard. The upper ones, which are greater than any human works, we saw for ourselves. The passages through the halls and the winding ways through the courts were so intricate that they gave us endless wonder as we went from a court into the rooms, from the rooms into colonnades, from the colonnades into other halls, and from the rooms into other courts. [7] The roof of all this is of stone, like the walls. The walls are full of carved figures, and each court is surrounded by columns of white stone, very closely fitted. At the corner where the labyrinth ends stands a pyramid forty fathoms high, with large figures carved on it. The way into it has been made underground.

[2.149] Such is this labyrinth. Yet the lake called Moeris, beside which it is built, offers a still greater wonder. Its circumference is three thousand six hundred stades, or sixty schoeni, equal to the length of Egypt itself along the sea. The lake lies lengthwise

53 The temples at Ephesus and Samos, of Artemis and of Hera, were among the largest Greek buildings.

from north to south, and at its deepest it is fifty fathoms deep. [2] The lake itself shows that it was made by hand and dug out. Roughly in the middle of it stand two pyramids, each rising fifty fathoms above the water and built as far again below it. On top of each is a colossal stone figure seated on a throne. [3] So the pyramids are a hundred fathoms high, and a hundred fathoms make exactly one stade of six plethra. The fathom measures six feet, or four cubits; the foot is four palms, and the cubit six palms. [4] The water in the lake does not rise there naturally, for this region is terribly dry. It has been brought from the Nile by a channel. For six months it flows inward into the lake, and for six months outward into the Nile again. [5] During the six months while it flows out, the lake brings a talent of silver every day into the royal treasury from the fish. When the water is flowing in, it brings twenty minas a day.

2.150 The local people also said that this lake has an underground outlet into the Syrtis in Libya, running westward into the interior along the hills above Memphis. [2] I could not see the earth from this excavation anywhere, and I was curious about it. So I asked the people living nearest the lake where the excavated earth was. They told me where it had been carried, and they easily convinced me, for I knew by report that something similar had happened at Ninus, the Assyrian city. [3] Sardanapallus, king of Ninus, had great wealth, which was kept in underground treasuries, and some thieves made a plan to carry it off. Starting from their own houses, they took their bearings and dug underground toward the royal palace. Whenever night came, they carried the earth from the tunnel to the river Tigris, which flows past Ninus, and dumped it there, until they had done what they wanted. [4] I heard that something similar happened with the digging of the lake in Egypt, except that it was done by day, not by night. As the Egyptians dug, they carried the earth to the Nile, and the river would take it up and spread it away. That, then, is how this lake is said to have been dug.[54]

54 Ninus is Nineveh, the Assyrian capital. Sardanapallus was the Greeks' name for a legendary last king of Assyria.

2.151 The twelve kings ruled justly. In time they sacrificed in the temple of Hephaestus, and on the last day of the festival, as they were about to pour libations, the high priest brought out the golden bowls they usually poured from. But he miscounted and brought eleven for the twelve of them. 2 Psammetichus, who was standing last in the row, had no bowl. So he took off his helmet, which was bronze, held it out and poured the libation from it. All the other kings wore helmets too, and they happened to be wearing them then. 3 Psammetichus held out his helmet without any cunning intent. But the others took to heart what he had done, and they recalled the oracle, which had told them that whichever of them poured a libation from a bronze bowl would become sole king of Egypt. With the oracle in mind, they did not think it right to kill Psammetichus, because they found by questioning him closely that he had done it without any forethought. Instead they decided to strip him of most of his power and drive him into the marshes. He was not to leave the marshes or have any dealings with the rest of Egypt.

2.152 This Psammetichus had once before been an exile. He had fled from the Ethiopian Sabacos, who had killed his father Necos, and had gone to Syria. When the Ethiopian left Egypt because of what he saw in his dream, the Egyptians of the nome of Sais brought him back. 2 Later, when he was king, it was his lot to be driven into exile a second time, into the marshes, by the eleven kings because of the helmet. 3 He knew that they had treated him with outrage, and he planned to take vengeance on those who had driven him out. He sent to the oracle of Leto in the city of Buto, which is the most truthful oracle the Egyptians have. The answer came that vengeance would come from the sea when men of bronze appeared.[55] 4 Psammetichus could not at all believe that men of bronze would come to help him. But not long afterward, some Ionians and Carians who had sailed out to plunder were forced to put in at Egypt. They came ashore armed in bronze. One of the Egyptians had never before seen men armed in bronze, so he went to the marshes and told Psam-

55 Sabacos' dream and departure are told in 2.139.

metichus that men of bronze had come from the sea and were plundering the plain. [5] Psammetichus saw that the oracle was being fulfilled. He made friends with the Ionians and Carians and, by promising them great rewards, persuaded them to join him. Once he had won them over, he overthrew the kings with the help of these allies and of the Egyptians who supported him.

2.153 Once he was master of all Egypt, Psammetichus built for Hephaestus the gateway at Memphis that faces the south wind. Opposite the gateway he built a court for Apis, where Apis is kept whenever he appears. It has colonnades all around and is full of carved figures. Instead of columns, colossal statues twelve cubits high hold up the court. Apis in the Greek language is Epaphus.

2.154 Psammetichus gave the Ionians and Carians who had helped him win power places to live facing each other, with the Nile between them. These places were named the Camps. He gave them these places and paid them everything else he had promised. [2] He also placed Egyptian boys with them to be taught the Greek language. The interpreters in Egypt today are descended from these boys who learned the language. [3] The Ionians and Carians lived in these places for a long time. They lie toward the sea, a little below the city of Bubastis, on what is called the Pelusian mouth of the Nile. Later, King Amasis moved them from there and settled them in Memphis, making them his bodyguard against the Egyptians. [4] Since they settled in Egypt, we Greeks have had dealings with them, and so we know accurately everything that happened in Egypt from the reign of King Psammetichus onward. They were the first people of a foreign language to settle in Egypt. [5] In the places from which they were removed, the slipways for their ships and the ruins of their houses were still there in my time.

2.155 That is how Psammetichus came to hold Egypt. I have already mentioned the oracle in Egypt many times, and now I shall give an account of it, since it deserves one. This oracle in Egypt is a sanctuary of Leto. It stands in a great city near what is called the Sebennytic mouth of the Nile, as one sails upstream

from the sea. [2] The city where the oracle is located is called Buto, as I have said before. In this Buto there is a sanctuary of Apollo and Artemis. The temple of Leto, which houses the oracle, is itself large, and its gateway is ten fathoms high. [3] I will describe what caused me the greatest wonder of all the things to be seen there. In this precinct is a temple of Leto made from a single stone, in both height and length. All its walls are equal to these dimensions, forty cubits each. Another stone is laid on top as the roof, with a cornice four cubits deep.

2.156 So of the things I saw at this sanctuary, the temple is the most marvelous. Second to it is the island called Chemmis. [2] It lies in a deep, broad lake beside the sanctuary at Buto, and the Egyptians say that this island floats. I myself never saw it floating or moving, and when I hear it said, I wonder whether an island can really float. [3] At any rate, there is a great temple of Apollo on it, with three altars set up. Many palm trees grow there, and many other trees, some bearing fruit and some not. [4] The Egyptians tell the following story to explain why it floats. Leto was one of the eight gods who came into being first, and she lived in the city of Buto, where this oracle of hers is. Isis entrusted Apollo to her keeping, and Leto kept him safe by hiding him on this island, which did not float before but is now said to float. She hid him when Typhon came searching everywhere, wanting to find the son of Osiris. [5] They say that Apollo and Artemis are the children of Dionysus and Isis, and that Leto was their nurse and their protector. In Egyptian, Apollo is Horus, Demeter is Isis and Artemis is Bubastis. [6] It was from this story and no other that Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, took the idea I am about to mention, and he alone of the poets before him did so: he made Artemis the daughter of Demeter. The island, they say, became floating for this reason. That is what they say.[56]

2.157 Psammetichus reigned over Egypt for fifty-four years. For twenty-nine of those years he besieged Azotus, a great city of

56 Aeschylus was the Athenian tragic poet (died 456 BC). The play referred to here is lost.

Syria, until he took it. Of all the cities we know of, this Azotus held out under siege the longest.[57]

2.158 Psammetichus had a son, Necos, who became king of Egypt. He was the first to attempt the canal leading to the Red Sea, which Darius the Persian later dug. Its length is a four days' voyage, and it was dug wide enough for two triremes to row side by side.[58] 2 The canal takes its water from the Nile, starting a little above the city of Bubastis, near Patumus, the Arabian city, and it flows into the Red Sea. In its first stretch it is dug through the parts of the Egyptian plain that lie toward Arabia. Above the plain lies the range of hills that stretches toward Memphis, where the stone quarries are. 3 The canal runs along the foot of these hills for a long way from west to east. Then it passes into a gorge, running from the hills southward to the Arabian Gulf. 4 The shortest and most direct crossing from the northern sea to the southern sea, which is also called the Red Sea, starts from Mount Casius, which marks the border between Egypt and Syria. From there it is exactly a thousand stades to the Arabian Gulf. 5 That is the shortest route, but the canal is much longer because it is more winding. In the reign of King Necos, a hundred and twenty thousand Egyptians died digging it. Necos stopped partway through the digging because an oracle stood in his way, saying that he was doing the work in advance for the foreigner. The Egyptians call all people who do not speak their language foreigners.[59]

2.159 Once he had given up the canal, Necos turned to military campaigns. Triremes were built, some on the northern sea and some in the Arabian Gulf, on the Red Sea, and their slipways can still be seen. 2 He used these ships when he needed them. On land he met the Syrians at Magdolus and defeated them, and after the battle he took Kadytis, a great city of Syria. 3 He dedicated the clothes he had been wearing when he achieved these

57 Azotus is Ashdod, on the coast of Palestine.
58 Triremes were warships rowed by three banks of oars.
59 The northern sea is the Mediterranean. "Foreigner" renders barbaros, the word Greeks used for all non-Greeks, here applied to the Egyptians' term for non-Egyptians.

things to Apollo, sending them to Branchidae in Milesian territory. Afterward, having ruled sixteen years in all, he died and handed the throne to his son Psammis.[60]

2.160 While this Psammis was king of Egypt, envoys came to him from Elis. They boasted that they ran the games at Olympia more justly and finely than anyone in the world. They believed that not even the Egyptians, the wisest of men, could improve on their arrangements. 2 When the Eleans arrived in Egypt and explained why they had come, the king summoned the Egyptians who were reputed to be the wisest. The Egyptians assembled, and the Eleans told them everything they were required to do in running the games. When they had explained it all, the Eleans said they had come to learn whether the Egyptians could devise anything more just.[61] 3 The Egyptians discussed the matter and then asked the Eleans whether their own citizens took part in the games. The Eleans said that anyone who wished, from Elis or from the rest of Greece alike, was allowed to compete. 4 The Egyptians said that by running the games this way they had missed justice entirely. There was no way, they said, that the Eleans would not favor their own citizen when he competed, and so wrong the foreigner. If they really wanted to run the games justly, and had come to Egypt for that reason, they should hold the games for foreign competitors only and allow no Elean to compete. That was the advice the Egyptians gave the Eleans.

APRIES AND AMASIS

Apries is overthrown by Amasis, the commoner king who befriends the Greeks.

2.161 Psammis reigned over Egypt for only six years. He made an expedition into Ethiopia and died soon afterward, and Apries son of Psammis succeeded him. 2 After his ancestor Psammetichus, Apries was the most prosperous of all the kings before

60 Branchidae, also called Didyma, was an oracle of Apollo near Miletus.
61 Elis, in the western Peloponnese, ran the Olympic Games.

him. He ruled for twenty-five years, and in that time he marched an army against Sidon and fought a sea battle with the king of Tyre. 3 But since things were bound to go badly for him, they did, and the occasion for it I will relate at greater length in my Libyan account, and only briefly here. 4 Apries sent an army against the Cyrenaeans and suffered a great disaster. The Egyptians blamed him for this and revolted from him. They believed that he had deliberately sent them into obvious ruin so that they would be destroyed, and he could rule the rest of the Egyptians more securely. Outraged at this, the men who had come home and the friends of those who had died rose in open revolt.[62]

2.162 When Apries learned of this, he sent Amasis to them to talk them out of it. Amasis came and was trying to stop the Egyptians from what they were doing, but as he was speaking, one of the Egyptians stood behind him and put a helmet on his head, saying as he did so that he was putting it on him to make him king. 2 And what was being done was by no means against his will, as he made plain: once the rebels had set him up as king of the Egyptians, he began preparing to march against Apries.[63] 3 When Apries learned this, he sent to Amasis a man of high standing among the Egyptians at his court, named Patarbemis, with orders to bring Amasis to him alive. When Patarbemis arrived and summoned Amasis, Amasis, who happened to be sitting on horseback, rose in the saddle and broke wind, and told him to take that back to Apries. 4 Even so, they say, Patarbemis insisted that he go to the king, since the king was sending for him. Amasis answered that he had long been preparing to do just that, and that Apries would have no reason to find fault with him: he would come himself, and bring others with him. 5 Patarbemis, they say, understood his intention from what he said, and seeing his preparations, he left in haste, wanting to let the king know as quickly as possible what was going on. When he reached Apries without bringing Amasis, Apries gave him no

62 Herodotus tells this story in Book 4 (4.159). Cyrene was a Greek colony on the coast of Libya, west of Egypt.
63 Apries ruled Egypt from about 589 to 570 BC.

hearing but in his fury ordered his ears and nose to be cut off. [6] The rest of the Egyptians, who still took Apries' side, saw the most respected man among them so shamefully mutilated. They waited no longer, but went over to the others and gave themselves up to Amasis.

2.163 When Apries learned this too, he armed his mercenaries and marched against the Egyptians. He had around him thirty thousand mercenaries, Carians and Ionians; and his palace was in the city of Sais, a large palace and well worth seeing. [2] So Apries' forces advanced against the Egyptians, and Amasis' forces against the foreigners. Both sides came to the city of Momemphis and were about to try their strength against each other.[64]

2.164 There are seven classes of Egyptians: some are called priests, others warriors, others cowherds, swineherds, traders, interpreters and pilots. These are the classes of Egyptians, and their names come from their occupations. [2] Their warriors are called Calasiries and Hermotybies, and they come from the following nomes, for all of Egypt is divided into nomes.

2.165 The nomes of the Hermotybies are these: the Busirite, the Saite, the Chemmite, the Papremite, the island called Prosopitis, and half of Natho. The Hermotybies come from these nomes, and at their most numerous they numbered one hundred and sixty thousand. None of them has learned any manual trade at all; they are set apart for war.

2.166 The Calasiries have these other nomes: the Theban, the Bubastite, the Aphthite, the Tanite, the Mendesian, the Sebennyte, the Athribite, the Pharbaethite, the Thmuite, the Onuphite, the Anytian and the Myecphorite; this last nome lies on an island opposite the city of Bubastis. [2] These are the nomes of the Calasiries, who at their most numerous numbered two hundred and fifty thousand men. They too are not allowed to practice any trade; they practice only the business of war, son taking it over from father.

2.167 Whether the Greeks learned this, too, from the Egyptians, I cannot judge with certainty. I see that the Thracians, Scythians, Persians, Lydians and nearly all non-Greeks hold those who learn trades, and their descendants, in lower esteem than the other citizens, and regard as noble those who are free of manual work, especially those set apart for war. 2 At any rate, all the Greeks have learned this, and the Lacedaemonians most of all. The Corinthians are the least contemptuous of craftsmen.

2.168 These were the privileges reserved for them alone of all the Egyptians apart from the priests: each man had twelve choice arourae of land, free of tax. The aroura is a square of a hundred Egyptian cubits on each side, and the Egyptian cubit happens to be equal to the Samian. 2 These were reserved for all of them; the following benefits they enjoyed in turn, never the same men. A thousand of the Calasiries and a thousand of the Hermotybies served for a year at a time as the king's bodyguard. These men were given, besides their land, the following every day: five minas' weight of baked bread for each man, two minas of beef, and four arysters of wine. These were given to whichever men were serving as bodyguard.[65]

2.169 When Apries with his mercenaries and Amasis with the whole Egyptian force met and reached the city of Momemphis, they joined battle. The foreign troops fought well, but they were far fewer in number, and for that reason they were defeated. 2 It is said that Apries believed that not even a god could put an end to his kingship, so securely established did he think himself. And yet he was defeated in that battle, taken alive, and brought to the city of Sais, to what had formerly been his own house but was by then the palace of Amasis. 3 There for a while he was kept in the palace, and Amasis treated him well. But in the end the Egyptians complained that he was doing wrong in keeping alive the man who was the bitterest enemy both to them and to himself, and so he handed Apries over to the Egyptians. They strangled him and then buried him in the tomb of his fathers. 4

64 Sais was the royal seat of this dynasty.
65 The aryster was a small liquid measure, a ladleful.

It is in the temple of Athena, very close to the shrine, on the left as you go in. The people of Sais buried all the kings who came from this nome inside the temple. [5] In fact the tomb of Amasis, too, though farther from the shrine than that of Apries and his forefathers, is also in the court of the temple: a great stone colonnade, adorned with pillars made to look like palm trees and with other costly work. Inside the colonnade stands a pair of doors, and within the doors is the burial chamber.

2.170 At Sais, too, in the temple of Athena, is the burial place of one whose name I do not think it pious to utter in such a connection. It lies behind the shrine, running along the whole back wall of Athena's temple. [2] In the sacred precinct stand great stone obelisks, and next to them is a lake, adorned with a stone border, well made all around, and in size, as it seemed to me, about equal to the one at Delos that is called the Round Lake.

2.171 On this lake they perform at night representations of his sufferings, which the Egyptians call mysteries. I know more about these matters, how each of them is done, but let my lips be sealed. [2] And about the rite of Demeter that the Greeks call the Thesmophoria, let my lips be sealed about this too, except for as much of it as may piously be told. [3] It was the daughters of Danaus who brought this rite out of Egypt and taught it to the Pelasgian women. Later, when the whole population of the Peloponnese was driven out by the Dorians, the rite died out, and only the Arcadians, the Peloponnesians who were left behind and not driven out, preserved it.[66]

2.172 With Apries brought down in this way, Amasis became king. He was from the Saite nome, and the town he came from is called Siuph. [2] At first the Egyptians looked down on Amasis and held him in no great regard, since he had formerly been a commoner and came from no distinguished family. But later Amasis won them over by wisdom, not by high-handedness. [3] Among countless other treasures he had a golden footbath, in which Amasis himself and all his dinner guests used to wash their feet on every occasion. He broke this up and made from it a statue of

66 The Thesmophoria was a festival of Demeter celebrated by women alone.

a god, and set it up in the most suitable place in the city; and the Egyptians kept going to the statue and worshipped it devoutly. [4] When Amasis learned what the townspeople were doing, he called the Egyptians together and revealed that the statue had been made from the footbath. Into it, he said, the Egyptians had formerly vomited and urinated and washed their feet, but now they worshipped it devoutly. [5] He went on to say that he himself had fared just like the footbath: if he had formerly been a commoner, now he was their king. And he told them to honor him and treat him with respect.

2.173 In this way he won the Egyptians over, so that they thought it right to serve him. The routine he kept was this: from dawn until the hour when the marketplace fills up, he eagerly dealt with whatever business was brought before him; after that he drank and made jokes at his drinking companions' expense, and was frivolous and playful. [2] His friends were troubled by this and admonished him, saying something like this: "My king, you are not conducting yourself properly in lowering yourself to such levity. You ought to sit in dignity on a dignified throne all day and attend to business. That way the Egyptians would know that they are ruled by a great man, and you would be better spoken of. As it is, what you are doing is not at all kingly." [3] He answered them like this: "People who own bows string them when they need to use them. If they were kept strung all the time, they'd break, and then they couldn't use them when they needed them. [4] It's the same with the way a man is made: if he wanted to be in earnest all the time and never let himself go for his share of play, before he knew it he would go mad or be struck senseless. I know this, so I give each its share." That was his answer to his friends.

2.174 It is said that Amasis, even when he was a private citizen, was fond of drinking and joking and not at all a serious man; and whenever his drinking and good living left him short of what he needed, he would go around stealing. Those who claimed he had their property would, when he denied it, take him to whatever oracle each of them had nearby. Many times he

was convicted by the oracles, and many times he was acquitted. [2] When he became king, this is what he did. Those gods who had acquitted him of being a thief—he took no care of their temples, gave nothing for their repair, and did not go there to sacrifice, since they were worthless and had lying oracles. But those who had convicted him of being a thief he cared for above all, since they were true gods and gave truthful oracles.

[2.175] For one thing, he built at Sais for Athena a marvelous gateway, far outdoing everyone in its height and size and in the size and quality of its stones. For another, he dedicated great colossal statues and huge man-headed sphinxes, and brought other stones of enormous size for repairs. [2] Some of these he brought from the quarries at Memphis, but the very largest from the city of Elephantine, which is a twenty days' voyage from Sais. [3] But what I marvel at not least but most of all is this: he brought from Elephantine a chamber made of a single stone. They spent three years bringing it, and two thousand men were assigned to haul it, all of them pilots. On the outside this chamber is twenty-one cubits long, fourteen wide and eight high. [4] These are the outside measurements of the single-stone chamber; on the inside, the length is eighteen cubits and a pygon ..., and the height five cubits. It lies by the entrance to the temple. [5] The reason it was not dragged inside the temple, they say, is this: as the chamber was being dragged along, its master builder groaned aloud, since a long time had passed and he was weary of the work. Amasis took this to heart as an omen and would not let it be dragged any farther. Some, however, say that a man was crushed to death by it, one of those levering it along, and that this was why it was not dragged in.[67]

[2.176] Amasis also dedicated in all the other notable temples works remarkable for their size. Among them is the colossus lying on its back in front of the temple of Hephaestus at Memphis, which is seventy-five feet long; on the same base stand two colossi of the same stone, each twenty feet tall, one on either side of the big one. [2] There is another stone colossus of the same

67 The pygon was a measure from the elbow to the knuckles, about 15 inches.

size at Sais, lying in the same way as the one at Memphis. It was Amasis, too, who built the temple of Isis at Memphis, a large temple and very well worth seeing.

2.177 It is said that in the reign of King Amasis Egypt was more prosperous than ever before, both in what the river gave the land and in what the land gave its people, and that there were then twenty thousand inhabited cities in it in all. 2 It was Amasis who established this law for the Egyptians: every Egyptian must declare each year to the governor of his nome how he made his living, and anyone who failed to do so, or to show that he lived an honest life, was to be punished with death. Solon the Athenian took this law from Egypt and established it for the Athenians, and they have kept it always, since it is a law beyond reproach.

2.178 Amasis became a friend of the Greeks. Among other favors he showed to some of them, he gave those who came to Egypt the city of Naucratis to live in; and to those who did not want to settle there but traded there by sea he gave land on which to set up altars and sacred precincts for their gods. 2 The largest of these precincts, which is also the most famous and the most used, is called the Hellenion, and it was founded jointly by these cities: of the Ionians, Chios, Teos, Phocaea and Clazomenae; of the Dorians, Rhodes, Cnidus, Halicarnassus and Phaselis; and of the Aeolians, Mytilene alone. 3 This precinct belongs to these cities, and it is they who provide the overseers of the trading port. Any other cities that lay claim to it are claiming something in which they have no share. Separately, the Aeginetans founded a precinct of Zeus on their own, the Samians another of Hera, and the Milesians one of Apollo.

2.179 In former times Naucratis was the only trading port in Egypt, and there was no other. If anyone came to any other mouth of the Nile, he had to swear that he had not come there willingly, and having sworn this, sail his ship on to the Canopic mouth. Or if he could not sail against contrary winds, he had to carry his cargo around the Delta in barges until he reached Naucratis. That was how highly Naucratis was privileged.

2.180 When the Amphictyons contracted to have the temple that now stands at Delphi built for three hundred talents (the one that had stood there before burned down by accident), it fell to the Delphians to provide a quarter of the cost. 2 So the Delphians went around the cities collecting gifts, and in doing so they brought back not the smallest share from Egypt: Amasis gave them a thousand talents of alum, and the Greeks living in Egypt twenty minas.[68]

2.181 Amasis made a pact of friendship and alliance with the Cyrenaeans. He also decided to take a wife from there, either because he wanted a Greek woman or simply for the sake of friendship with the Cyrenaeans. 2 He married, some say, a daughter of Battus, others say of Arcesilaus, and others of Critobulus, a respected citizen; her name was Ladice. Whenever Amasis went to bed with her, he was unable to have intercourse with her, though he managed it with his other wives. 3 When this had gone on for a long time, Amasis said to this Ladice, as she was called, "Woman, you have put a spell on me, and nothing can save you from dying the most miserable death of any woman."[69] 4 Ladice denied it, but Amasis was not softened at all. So she vowed silently to Aphrodite that if Amasis had intercourse with her that night—for that was the only remedy for her trouble—she would send a statue of her to Cyrene. Right after the vow, Amasis had intercourse with her. From then on, whenever Amasis came to her, he was able to, and after this he loved her dearly. 5 Ladice paid her vow to the goddess: she had a statue made and sent it to Cyrene, and it was still intact in my day, standing outside the city of the Cyrenaeans, facing outward. When Cambyses conquered Egypt and learned who this Ladice was, he sent her back unharmed to Cyrene.[70]

2.182 Amasis also sent offerings to the Greek world. To Cyrene he sent a gilded statue of Athena and a painted portrait of him-

68 The Amphictyons were the league of Greek peoples that administered Delphi, whose old temple burned in 548 BC.
69 Battus and Arcesilaus were names borne by the kings of Cyrene.
70 Cambyses son of Cyrus conquered Egypt in 525 BC, as Book 3 relates.

self; to Athena at Lindus, two stone statues and a remarkable linen corselet; and to Hera at Samos, two wooden images of himself, which still stood in the great temple, behind the doors, even in my day.[71] 2 His offerings to Samos he made because of the bond of guest-friendship between himself and Polycrates son of Aeaces. Those to Lindus he made not because of any guest-friendship, but because the temple of Athena at Lindus is said to have been founded by the daughters of Danaus, who put in there when they were fleeing from the sons of Aegyptus. These were the offerings of Amasis. He was also the first man to take Cyprus and subject it to paying tribute.[72]

71 Lindus is a city on Rhodes, with a famous temple of Athena.
72 Polycrates was the ruler of Samos whose story Herodotus tells in Book 3.

Book 3 (Thalia)

Cambyses conquers Egypt and goes mad; Polycrates of Samos; the false Smerdis; Darius becomes king.

CAMBYSES INVADES EGYPT

Cambyses marches on Egypt, guided across the desert by the deserter Phanes and helped by the Arabian king.

3.1 It was against this Amasis that Cambyses son of Cyrus marched, taking with him others of his subjects and also Greeks, both Ionians and Aeolians. His reason was this. Cambyses sent a herald to Egypt and asked Amasis for his daughter. He asked on the advice of an Egyptian, who did this out of a grudge against Amasis. When Cyrus had sent to Amasis asking for the best eye doctor in Egypt, Amasis had picked this man out of all the doctors in Egypt, torn him away from his wife and children and handed him over to the Persians.[1] 2 With this grievance, then, the Egyptian pressed his advice, urging Cambyses to ask Amasis for his daughter, so that Amasis would either give her and be grieved, or refuse and make an enemy of Cambyses. Amasis resented the power of the Persians and feared it, and he could neither give her nor refuse. He knew perfectly well that Cambyses meant to have her not as a wife but as a concubine. 3 Weighing all this, he did the following. There was a daughter of Apries, the previous king, very tall and beautiful, the only one of her house left alive, and her name was Nitetis. Amasis dressed this girl in fine clothes and gold and sent her off

1 Cambyses ruled Persia from 530 to 522 BC and invaded Egypt in 525 BC.

to the Persians as his own daughter.[2] [4] Some time later, when Cambyses greeted her by her father's name, the girl said to him, "King, Amasis has deceived you and you don't realize it. He dressed me up in finery and sent me to you, giving me as his own daughter. In truth I am the daughter of Apries, who was his master, and whom he rose up against with the Egyptians and murdered." [5] It was these words, and the grievance that arose from them, that brought Cambyses son of Cyrus against Egypt in a great rage.

3.2 That is what the Persians say. The Egyptians, though, claim Cambyses as one of their own, saying that he was born of this very daughter of Apries. It was Cyrus, they say, and not Cambyses, who sent to Amasis for his daughter. But in saying this they are wrong. [2] It cannot have escaped them (for if anyone knows Persian customs, the Egyptians do), first, that it is not the Persians' custom for an illegitimate son to become king while there is a legitimate one, and second, that Cambyses was the son of Cassandane, daughter of Pharnaspes, an Achaemenid, and not of the Egyptian woman. They are twisting the story in order to claim kinship with the house of Cyrus.[3]

3.3 So much for that. Another story is also told, though I do not find it convincing. One of the Persian women, it is said, came to visit Cyrus' wives, and when she saw the tall, handsome children standing beside Cassandane, she praised them lavishly, full of admiration. Then Cassandane, Cyrus' wife, said this: [2] "And yet, though I am the mother of such children, Cyrus treats me with contempt, while that woman he got from Egypt he holds in honor." She said this, the story goes, out of resentment against Nitetis, and the elder of her sons, Cambyses, said: [3] "Then, mother, when I'm a man, I'll turn Egypt upside down: I'll put its top at the bottom and its bottom at the top." He said this, according to the story, when he was about ten years old, and the women were amazed. And he remembered it, they say, so that

2 Apries was the king of Egypt whom Amasis overthrew around 570 BC (told in Book 2).

3 The Achaemenids were the Persian royal clan.

when he grew up and took the throne, he made his expedition against Egypt.

3.4 Something else also happened that contributed to this expedition. Among Amasis' mercenaries was a man who was by birth from Halicarnassus, named Phanes, both sound in judgment and brave in war. 2 This Phanes, who presumably had some grievance against Amasis, escaped from Egypt by ship, wanting to get a hearing with Cambyses.[4] Since he was a man of no small standing among the mercenaries and knew everything about Egypt very precisely, Amasis pursued him, eager to catch him. He pursued him by sending the most trusted of his eunuchs after him in a trireme. The eunuch caught him in Lycia, but having caught him he did not bring him back to Egypt, because Phanes outwitted him: 3 he got his guards drunk and made off to the Persians. Cambyses was eager to march against Egypt but at a loss about the route, how to get across the waterless desert. Phanes came to him and told him all about Amasis' affairs, and also explained the route. His advice was that Cambyses should send to the king of the Arabians and ask him to grant him safe passage.[5]

3.5 This is the only known way into Egypt. From Phoenicia to the borders of the city of Cadytis the land belongs to the Syrians who are called Palestinians. 2 From Cadytis, a city which in my opinion is not much smaller than Sardis, the trading towns on the coast as far as the city of Ienysus belong to the Arabian king. From Ienysus it is Syrian again as far as Lake Serbonis, beside which Mount Casius stretches down to the sea. 3 From Lake Serbonis, in which Typhon is said to be hidden, Egypt begins. The land between the city of Ienysus on the one side and Mount Casius and Lake Serbonis on the other is no small stretch, but about three days' journey, and it is terribly waterless.[6]

3.6 I am now going to describe something that few of those who sail to Egypt have noticed. Twice every year earthenware

4 Halicarnassus, a Greek city in south-western Asia Minor, was Herodotus' own birthplace.

5 A trireme was a fast warship with three banks of oars.

jars full of wine are brought into Egypt from all over Greece, and from Phoenicia besides, and yet you could not see, so to speak, a single empty wine jar anywhere. [2] Where on earth, someone might ask, do they all go? I will explain this too. Each headman must collect all the jars from his own town and bring them to Memphis, and the people of Memphis must fill them with water and carry them to these waterless parts of Syria. So the jars that keep arriving and are emptied in Egypt are carried off to Syria to join the old ones.

3.7 So it was the Persians who prepared this way into Egypt, stocking it with water in the way I have described, as soon as they had taken Egypt. [2] At that time, though, there was not yet any water ready. So Cambyses, having learned all this from his guest from Halicarnassus, sent messengers to the Arabian king and asked for safe passage, and he got it, giving and receiving pledges of good faith.

3.8 The Arabians respect pledges as much as any people in the world, and they make them in this way. When two men want to exchange pledges, a third man stands between them and with a sharp stone cuts the palms of the hands of those making the pledge, along the thumbs. Then he takes a tuft of wool from each man's cloak and smears the blood on seven stones lying between them, and as he does this he calls on Dionysus and Urania. [2] When he has finished doing this, the man who has given the pledge commends the stranger to his friends (or his fellow citizen, if the pledge is made with a fellow citizen), and the friends themselves consider it right to respect the pledge. [3] They believe in no gods except Dionysus and Urania, and they say that they cut their hair in the same way as Dionysus himself had his cut: they cut it round in a ring, shaving the temples. They call Dionysus Orotalt and Urania Alilat.[7]

3.9 So when the Arabian king had given his pledge to the messengers who had come from Cambyses, he devised this plan. He

6 Cadytis is probably Gaza.

7 Alilat is the Arabian goddess later known as al-Lat; the identity of Orotalt is uncertain.

filled camel-skins with water and loaded them onto all his living camels, and having done this he drove into the waterless desert and waited there for Cambyses' army. [2] That is the more credible of the stories; but since it is told, the less credible one must be told too. There is a great river in Arabia called the Corys, which flows out into the sea called the Red Sea. [3] From this river, it is said, the king of the Arabians had a pipe stitched together out of raw oxhides and other skins, long enough to reach the waterless desert, and brought the water through it; and in the desert he had great cisterns dug to receive the water and store it. [4] It is a twelve-day journey from the river to this desert. And he brought the water, they say, through three pipes to three different places.[8]

3.10 Psammenitus son of Amasis was encamped at the mouth of the Nile called the Pelusian, waiting for Cambyses. [2] For Cambyses did not find Amasis alive when he marched on Egypt. Amasis had died after reigning forty-four years, in which no great misfortune befell him. When he died he was embalmed and buried in the tomb in the sanctuary, which he had built himself. [3] While Psammenitus son of Amasis was king of Egypt, the Egyptians saw a very great portent: rain fell at Egyptian Thebes, which had never been rained on before, nor since, up to my time, as the Thebans themselves say. For in the upper parts of Egypt it never rains at all; but on that occasion rain fell at Thebes in a drizzle.[9]

3.11 When the Persians had crossed the waterless desert and taken up position near the Egyptians to engage them, the Egyptian king's mercenaries, who were Greeks and Carians, were angry with Phanes for bringing a foreign-speaking army against Egypt, and they devised the following against him. [2] Phanes had sons who had been left behind in Egypt. The mercenaries brought them to the camp, in sight of their father, set a mixing bowl between the two armies, and then led the boys up one by

8 For Herodotus the "Red Sea" includes the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.
9 The Pelusian mouth was the easternmost branch of the Nile delta, the first part of Egypt reached from Syria.

one and cut their throats over the bowl. [3] When they had gone through all the boys, they poured wine and water into the bowl, and only when all the mercenaries had drunk of the blood did they join battle. The fighting was fierce, and great numbers fell on both sides, until the Egyptians were routed.[10]

3.12 There I saw a great marvel, which I learned of from the local people. The bones of those who fell in this battle lay scattered about, each side apart (the bones of the Persians lay in one place, as they had been separated at the start, and those of the Egyptians in another). The skulls of the Persians are so weak that if you threw just a pebble at one you would pierce it, while those of the Egyptians are so tough that you could hardly crack one by striking it with a stone. [2] They told me the reason for this, and they easily convinced me: the Egyptians shave their heads starting in early childhood, and the bone thickens in the sun. [3] This same thing is also the reason why they do not go bald; you would see fewer bald men among the Egyptians than among any other people. [4] So this is why they have tough skulls. The reason the Persians have weak ones is this: they keep their heads in the shade from the start, wearing felt caps, their tiaras. That is how these things are. I also saw something similar at Papremis, among those who were killed with Achaemenes son of Darius by Inaros the Libyan.[11]

3.13 Once the Egyptians were routed in the battle, they fled in disorder. When they had been shut up in Memphis, Cambyses sent a ship from Mytilene up the river, carrying a Persian herald, to call on the Egyptians to come to terms. [2] But when they saw the ship come into Memphis, they poured out from the walls in a mass, destroyed the ship, tore the men limb from limb like butchers' meat and carried them inside the walls.[12] [3] After this the Egyptians were besieged and in time surrendered. The neighboring Libyans, frightened by what had happened in

10 The Carians, from south-western Asia Minor, often served as mercenaries in Egypt.
11 Inaros, a Libyan prince, led an Egyptian revolt against Persia around 460 BC. For Herodotus, Libya means all of Africa west of Egypt.
12 Mytilene was the chief Greek city of the island of Lesbos.

Egypt, gave themselves up without a fight, agreed to pay tribute and sent gifts. The Cyrenaeans and Barcaeans, as frightened as the Libyans, did the same. 4 Cambyses received the gifts that came from the Libyans graciously. But he found fault with those that came from the Cyrenaeans, in my opinion because they were small (the Cyrenaeans had sent five hundred minas of silver), and he grabbed them up by the handful and scattered them among his army with his own hand.[13]

THE GRIEF OF PSAMMENITUS

Cambyses tests the captured Egyptian king, who weeps for a beggared friend but not for his own children.

3.14 On the tenth day after he had taken the fortress at Memphis, Cambyses made the king of the Egyptians, Psammenitus, who had reigned six months, sit in the suburb to humiliate him. He made him sit there with other Egyptians and put his soul to the test by doing the following. 2 He dressed Psammenitus' daughter in a slave's clothing and sent her out with a pitcher to fetch water, and with her he sent other girls chosen from the daughters of the leading men, dressed like the king's daughter. 3 As the girls went past their fathers, crying out and weeping, all the other fathers cried out and wept in answer at the sight of their children so mistreated; but Psammenitus, seeing it coming and understanding, bowed his head to the ground. 4 When the water-carriers had gone past, Cambyses next sent Psammenitus' son past him with two thousand other Egyptians of the same age, with ropes tied around their necks and bits in their mouths. 5 They were being led out to pay the penalty for the Mytileneans who had died at Memphis with the ship. For the royal judges had ruled that for each man ten of the leading Egyptians should die in return. 6 When he saw them going past and realized that his son was being led to his death, while the other Egyptians sitting around him wept and lamented loudly, he did just what he had done over his daughter. 7 When these too had passed, it

13 A mina was a weight of silver of roughly a pound, equal to 100 drachmas.

happened that one of his drinking companions came past Psammenitus son of Amasis and the Egyptians sitting in the suburb. He was a man past his prime who had lost everything he had, had nothing but what a beggar has, and was begging from the soldiers. When Psammenitus saw him, he burst into loud weeping, called his friend by name and beat his head. [8] Now there were guards set over him, who reported to Cambyses everything he did at each procession. Cambyses was amazed at his behavior and sent a messenger to question him, saying this: [9] "Your master Cambyses asks you, Psammenitus, why, when you saw your daughter mistreated and your son going to his death, you neither cried out nor wept, yet you honored the beggar, who, as he learns from others, is nothing to you." That was the messenger's question, and Psammenitus answered as follows. [10] "Son of Cyrus, my own troubles were too great for weeping, but my friend's sorrow deserved tears: he has fallen from great wealth and happiness into beggary on the threshold of old age." When this answer was reported, they thought it well spoken; [11] [and] as the Egyptians tell it, Croesus wept (for he too, as it happened, had followed Cambyses to Egypt), and the Persians who were present wept. Some pity came over Cambyses himself, and he at once ordered them to save Psammenitus' son from among those being put to death, and to raise Psammenitus himself from the suburb and bring him to him.

3.15 Those who went for the son found him no longer alive; he had been the first to be cut down. But they raised Psammenitus himself and brought him to Cambyses. [2] There he lived from then on, suffering no violence. And if he had also had the sense not to meddle, he would have got Egypt back to govern, since the Persians are accustomed to honor the sons of kings. Even if the kings have rebelled against them, they still give the rule back to their sons. [3] One can judge from many other cases that this is their custom, among them Thannyras son of Inaros, who got back the rule his father had held, and Pausiris son of Amyrtaeus, who also got back his father's rule. And yet nobody ever did the Persians more harm than Inaros and Amyrtaeus. [4]

As it was, Psammenitus plotted mischief and got his reward. He was caught stirring the Egyptians to revolt, and when Cambyses found out, he drank bull's blood and died on the spot. That is how he died.[14]

3.16 From Memphis Cambyses went to the city of Sais, intending to do what he did in fact do. As soon as he entered Amasis' palace, he ordered Amasis' body to be carried out of its tomb, and when that was done, he ordered it to be whipped, to have its hair plucked out, to be stabbed with goads and to be abused in every other way. 2 When they had worn themselves out doing this (for the body, being embalmed, held out and did not fall apart at all), Cambyses ordered it burned, an impious order, for the Persians consider fire to be a god.[15] 3 Burning the dead is not customary in any way for either people: for the Persians for the reason I have given, since they say it is not right to give a human corpse to a god; and the Egyptians believe that fire is a living beast that devours everything it gets hold of, and that when it is full of food it dies together with what it is devouring. 4 It is not their custom at all to give the dead to beasts, and that is why they embalm them, so that the body will not lie there and be eaten by worms. So what Cambyses ordered was against the customs of both peoples. 5 Yet, so the Egyptians say, it was not Amasis who suffered this but some other Egyptian of the same age as Amasis, and in abusing him the Persians thought they were abusing Amasis. 6 For they say that Amasis learned from an oracle what was going to happen to him after his death, and so, to forestall what was coming, he buried this man, the one who was whipped, when he died, just inside the doors of his own tomb, and instructed his son to place his own body in the innermost recess of the tomb. 7 In my opinion these orders of Amasis concerning his burial and the man were never given at all; the Egyptians are merely dressing up the story to make it more impressive.

14 Amyrtaeus held out against the Persians in the marshes of the Nile delta during and after Inaros' revolt in the 450s BC.

15 Sais, in the western Nile delta, was the royal city of Amasis' dynasty.

CAMBYSES AND THE ETHIOPIANS

Cambyses sends spies to the long-lived Ethiopians, then marches against them unprepared, and his army starves.

3.17 After this Cambyses planned three expeditions: against the Carthaginians, against the Ammonians, and against the long-lived Ethiopians, who live in Libya by the southern sea. 2 On consideration he decided to send his navy against the Carthaginians and a detachment of his land army against the Ammonians. Against the Ethiopians he would send spies first, to see whether the Table of the Sun that is said to exist among these Ethiopians really exists, and besides that to spy out everything else; they were to bring gifts to the Ethiopians' king as a pretext.[16]

3.18 The Table of the Sun is said to be something like this. There is a meadow in the outskirts of the city full of boiled meat of every kind of four-footed animal. At night, it is said, whichever citizens are in office at the time make a point of putting the meat there, and by day anyone who wants to comes and feasts. The local people, according to the story, say that the earth itself produces these things each time.

3.19 Such, then, is said to be the so-called Table of the Sun. When Cambyses had decided to send the spies, he at once sent to the city of Elephantine for those of the Fish-eaters who knew the Ethiopian language. 2 While they were being fetched, he ordered his fleet to sail against Carthage. But the Phoenicians said they would not do it: they were bound by solemn oaths, and it would be impious for them to make war on their own children. With the Phoenicians unwilling, the rest of the fleet was no match for the enemy. 3 So in this way the Carthaginians escaped slavery to the Persians. Cambyses did not think it right to use force against the Phoenicians, because they had given themselves up to the Persians of their own accord and the whole

16 The Ammonians lived in the oasis of Siwa in the western desert, the site of the oracle of Ammon.

navy depended on them. The Cypriots too had given themselves up to the Persians and were taking part in the expedition against Egypt.[17]

3.20 When the Fish-eaters had come to Cambyses from Elephantine, he sent them to the Ethiopians. He instructed them what they were to say and had them carry gifts: a purple cloak, a twisted gold necklace, bracelets, an alabaster jar of perfume and a jar of palm wine. These Ethiopians, to whom Cambyses was sending them, are said to be the tallest and most beautiful of all people. 2 They are also said to have customs different from those of other peoples, and in particular this one concerning the kingship: whichever of the citizens they judge to be the tallest, and to have strength in proportion to his height, is the man they consider worthy to be king.

3.21 So when the Fish-eaters reached these people, they gave the gifts to their king and said this: "Cambyses, King of the Persians, wishes to become your friend and guest-friend. He has sent us with orders to speak with you, and he gives you these gifts, which are the things he himself most enjoys using." 2 But the Ethiopian realized that they had come as spies, and he said to them: "The King of the Persians hasn't sent you with gifts because he sets great store on becoming my guest-friend. Nor are you telling the truth, for you've come to spy on my realm. Nor is that man just. If he were just, he wouldn't have coveted any land but his own, and he wouldn't be leading into slavery people who have done him no wrong. Now give him this bow, and tell him these words:" 3 "The king of the Ethiopians advises the King of the Persians: when the Persians can draw bows of this size as easily as this, then let him march against the long-lived Ethiopians with an army that outnumbers them. Until then, let him be grateful to the gods that they don't put it into the minds of the sons of the Ethiopians to win other land in addition to their own."

3.22 With these words he unstrung the bow and handed it to the visitors. Then he took the purple cloak and asked what it was

and how it had been made. When the Fish-eaters told him the truth about the purple dye and the dyeing, he said that the people were deceitful, and so were their clothes. [2] Next he asked about the gold, the twisted necklace and the bracelets. When the Fish-eaters explained that they were ornaments, the king laughed; thinking they were fetters, he said that his people had stronger fetters than these. [3] Third, he asked about the perfume. When they told him how it was made and how it was rubbed on, he said the same thing he had said about the cloak. But when he came to the wine and learned how it was made, he was delighted beyond measure with the drink, and asked what the King ate and what was the longest a Persian lived. [4] They said that he ate bread, explaining what wheat is, and that eighty years was the longest full span of life set for a man. To this the Ethiopian replied that he was not at all surprised that people who ate dung lived only a few years. In fact, they would not be able to live even that long, he said, if they did not revive themselves with the drink—and he pointed out the wine to the Fish-eaters—for in this his own people were outdone by the Persians.

3.23 The Fish-eaters in turn asked the king about his people's lifespan and way of life. He said that most of them reached a hundred and twenty years, and some even more, and that their food was boiled meat and their drink milk. [2] When the spies expressed amazement at the number of years, he led them, so they reported, to a spring. Washing in it made them sleeker, as though it were oil, and it gave off a scent like violets. [3] The water of this spring, the spies said, was so light that nothing could float on it, neither wood nor anything lighter than wood: everything sank to the bottom. If this water really is as it is described, it would be because they use it for everything that they are so long-lived. [4] When they left the spring, they said, he took them to a prison for men, where all the prisoners were bound in fetters of gold. Among these Ethiopians bronze is the

17 Carthage was a colony of the Phoenician city of Tyre, hence the Phoenicians' refusal to attack their "children."

rarest and most valuable thing of all. After seeing the prison, they also saw what is called the Table of the Sun.

3.24 After this, last of all, they saw their coffins, which are said to be made of crystal in the following way. 2 When they have dried out the corpse, whether in the Egyptian manner or in some other way, they coat the whole of it with gypsum and decorate it with paint, making it as lifelike as they can. Then they set around it a hollow pillar made of crystal, which they dig up in large quantities and which is easy to work. 3 The corpse can be seen inside, in the middle of the pillar. It gives off no unpleasant smell and nothing else unseemly, and every part of it is as plainly visible as the dead body itself. 4 For a year the nearest relatives keep the pillar in their house, offering it the first portion of everything and bringing it sacrifices; after that they carry it out and set it up around the city.

3.25 When they had seen everything, the spies went back. As soon as they had made their report, Cambyses flew into a rage and marched against the Ethiopians. He gave no orders for any supply of food, and never stopped to consider that he was about to march to the ends of the earth. 2 Mad as he was and not in his right mind, he set out the moment he heard the Fish-eaters, ordering the Greeks who were with him to stay behind and taking his entire land army with him. 3 When on the march he reached Thebes, he detached about fifty thousand men from his army and ordered them to enslave the Ammonians and burn the oracle of Zeus, while he himself went on against the Ethiopians with the rest of the army. 4 But before the army had covered a fifth of the way, all the provisions they had were used up, and after the provisions the pack animals gave out too, since they were eaten. 5 Now if Cambyses had learned from this, changed his mind and led the army back, he would have been a wise man after all, despite his original mistake. As it was, he paid no heed and kept pressing forward. 6 As long as the soldiers could get anything from the land, they kept themselves alive by eating grass. But when they came to the sand, some of them did a terrible thing: they drew lots for one man in every ten and ate him.

7 When Cambyses learned of this, he was afraid they would start eating one another. He abandoned the expedition against the Ethiopians, marched back and reached Thebes, having lost many of his army. From Thebes he went down to Memphis and let the Greeks sail away.

3.26 That is how the expedition against the Ethiopians fared. As for the part of the army sent to march against the Ammonians, they set out from Thebes and marched with guides, and it is known that they reached the city of Oasis. This place is held by Samians said to belong to the Aeschrionian tribe, and lies seven days' journey from Thebes across the sand; in Greek it is called the Island of the Blessed. 2 So the army is said to have got this far. But from there on, nobody can say anything about them, except the Ammonians themselves and those who have heard it from them; for they never reached the Ammonians and never came back home.[18] 3 The Ammonians themselves tell it like this. When the army set out from this Oasis across the sand toward them and was somewhere about halfway between them and the Oasis, a strong and extraordinary south wind blew on them as they were eating their morning meal. It carried heaps of sand and buried them, and in this way they vanished. That is what the Ammonians say happened to this army.

CAMBYSES AND THE APIS BULL

Cambyses stabs the sacred Apis bull, goes mad, and kills his brother, his sister and others.

3.27 When Cambyses had arrived in Memphis, Apis appeared to the Egyptians—the god the Greeks call Epaphus. As soon as he had appeared, the Egyptians put on their finest clothes and held festivities. 2 When Cambyses saw the Egyptians doing this, he was quite certain that they were celebrating because he had fared badly, and he summoned the officials in charge of Memphis. When they came before him, he asked why the Egyptians had done nothing of the kind when he was in Memphis before,

18 Probably the oasis of Kharga in the Egyptian western desert.

but were doing it now, when he had come back having lost a large part of his army. 3 They told him that a god had appeared to them, one who was accustomed to appear only at long intervals, and that whenever he appeared, all the Egyptians rejoiced and held a festival. Hearing this, Cambyses said they were lying, and as liars he punished them with death.[19]

3.28 When he had killed them, he next summoned the priests before him. When the priests said the same thing, he said that if some tame god had come to the Egyptians, he would soon know about it. With that, he ordered the priests to bring Apis to him, and they went off to fetch him. 2 This Apis, or Epaphus, is a calf born of a cow that can never afterward conceive any other offspring. The Egyptians say that a light comes down from the sky upon the cow, and that from this she gives birth to Apis. 3 The calf called Apis has the following markings: it is black, with a white triangle on its forehead, the likeness of an eagle on its back, double hairs in its tail and a scarab beetle under its tongue.

3.29 When the priests brought Apis, Cambyses, being somewhat deranged, drew his dagger. He meant to strike Apis in the belly, but hit the thigh. Then he laughed and said to the priests: 2 "You wretches, is that what gods are like—made of blood and flesh, and able to feel iron? This god is worthy of the Egyptians, to be sure. But you won't make a laughingstock of me and get away with it." With these words he ordered those whose task it was to flog the priests, and to kill any other Egyptian they caught celebrating. 3 So the Egyptians' festival was broken up and the priests were punished, while Apis, wounded in the thigh, lay in the temple and wasted away. When he died of the wound, the priests buried him without Cambyses' knowledge.

3.30 Because of this wrong, the Egyptians say, Cambyses went mad at once, though even before this he had not been in his right mind. The first of his crimes was to do away with his brother Smerdis, son of the same father and mother. He had

19 Apis was the sacred bull of Memphis; the Greeks identified him with Epaphus, the son of Zeus and Io.

sent him back from Egypt to Persia out of jealousy, because Smerdis alone of the Persians had drawn the bow that the Fish-eaters brought from the Ethiopian, by as much as about two fingers' breadth, while none of the other Persians had been able to do it. [2] So after Smerdis had gone back to Persia, Cambyses had a vision in his sleep. He dreamed that a messenger came from Persia and reported that Smerdis was sitting on the royal throne and touching the sky with his head. [3] Fearing for himself because of this, in case his brother should kill him and rule in his place, he sent Prexaspes to Persia to kill him; Prexaspes was the Persian he trusted most. He went up to Susa and killed Smerdis—some say he took him out hunting, others that he led him down to the Red Sea and drowned him.

3.31 This, they say, was the first of Cambyses' crimes. The second was that he did away with his sister, who had come with him to Egypt. He was married to her, and she was his full sister. [2] He married her in this way—for before this the Persians had never been in the habit of marrying their sisters. Cambyses fell in love with one of his sisters, and then he wanted to marry her. Since he was planning to do something contrary to custom, he summoned the royal judges and asked whether there was any law that allowed a man who wished to marry his sister. [3] The royal judges are men chosen from among the Persians, who hold office until they die or are found guilty of some wrongdoing. They judge cases for the Persians and interpret the ancestral ordinances, and everything is referred to them. [4] So when Cambyses put his question, they gave him an answer that was both just and safe. They said they could find no law allowing a brother to marry his sister, but that they had found another law: the King of the Persians was allowed to do whatever he wished. [5] In this way they did not break the law out of fear of Cambyses; and so as not to be put to death themselves for upholding the law, they found another law to support a man who wanted to marry his sisters. [6] So at that time Cambyses married the woman he loved, but not long afterward he took another sister as well. It

was the younger of these, who had come with him to Egypt, whom he killed.

3.32 There are two stories about her death, as there are about Smerdis'. The Greeks say that Cambyses set a lion cub to fight a puppy, and that this wife of his was watching too. When the puppy was losing, another puppy, its brother, broke its leash and came to help it, and with two of them the puppies got the better of the cub. 2 Cambyses, they say, enjoyed the sight, but the woman sitting beside him wept. When Cambyses noticed this, he asked why she was crying, and she said that she had wept at seeing the puppy come to its brother's help, because she remembered Smerdis and knew there was no one to avenge him. 3 The Greeks say she was killed by Cambyses for this remark. The Egyptians, however, say that as they were sitting at table, the woman took a lettuce and stripped off its leaves, and asked her husband whether the lettuce was more beautiful stripped or with its leaves. He said with its leaves, and she said: 4 "Well, you once did just what I did to this lettuce: you stripped the house of Cyrus bare." In a rage, they say, he leapt on her while she was pregnant, and she miscarried and died.

3.33 These were the mad acts Cambyses committed against his own family, whether because of Apis or for some other reason, since many ills tend to befall human beings. Cambyses is said to have had a serious illness from birth, which some call the sacred disease. So it was not at all unlikely that, with his body suffering from a serious illness, his mind should not be sound either.[20]

3.34 And these were his mad acts against the other Persians. It is said that he spoke to Prexaspes, whom he honored above all and who carried his messages; Prexaspes' son was Cambyses' cupbearer, and that too was no small honor. This is what he is said to have said: 2 "Prexaspes, what sort of man do the Persians think I am? What do they say about me?" And Prexaspes said, "Master, in every other respect they praise you highly, but they say you're overly fond of wine." 3 So Prexaspes told him what the

20 The "sacred disease" was the Greek name for epilepsy.

Persians said, and Cambyses answered in a rage: "So now the Persians say that I'm given to wine, out of my mind, not in my senses! Then what they said before wasn't true either." [4] For earlier, as it turned out, when some Persians and Croesus were sitting in council with him, Cambyses had asked what sort of man they thought he was compared with his father Cyrus. They had answered that he was better than his father, since he held everything his father had and had added Egypt and the sea besides. [5] That is what the Persians said. But Croesus, who was present and was not pleased with their verdict, said this to Cambyses: "To me, son of Cyrus, you don't seem equal to your father; for you don't yet have a son like the one he left behind in you." Cambyses was delighted to hear this and praised Croesus' verdict.

3.35 Remembering this, then, he said angrily to Prexaspes, so the story goes: "Now find out for yourself whether the Persians are telling the truth, or whether they're the ones out of their minds for saying it. [2] If I shoot your son standing there in the doorway and hit him right in the heart, it will be plain that the Persians are talking nonsense. But if I miss, you may say that the Persians are telling the truth and that I'm not in my right mind." [3] With these words, they say, he drew his bow and shot the boy. When the boy fell, he ordered them to cut him open and examine the wound, and when the arrow was found lodged in the heart, he laughed and, overjoyed, said to the boy's father: [4] "Prexaspes, you can see clearly now that I'm not mad, and that it's the Persians who are out of their minds. Now tell me: whom have you ever seen, of all men, shoot so accurately?" Prexaspes, seeing that the man was not in his right mind and fearing for himself, said, "Master, I don't think even the god himself could shoot so well." [5] That is what he did on that occasion. On another, he seized twelve Persians of the highest rank on no charge worth mentioning and buried them alive, head downward.

3.36 When he did these things, Croesus the Lydian thought it right to admonish him, with these words: "King, don't give in to

your youth and your temper in everything; restrain yourself and keep yourself in check. It's a good thing to have forethought, and foresight is wise. But you are seizing men who are your own citizens on no charge worth mentioning and killing them, and you are killing boys. 2 If you do many things like this, be careful that the Persians don't revolt against you. Your father Cyrus gave me many instructions, telling me to admonish you and to suggest whatever I find to be good." So Croesus gave him this advice, showing his goodwill. But Cambyses answered as follows. 3 "So you dare to advise me too—you, who governed your own country so well, and gave my father such good advice when you urged him to cross the Araxes River and attack the Massagetae, though they were willing to cross over into our land! You ruined yourself by leading your own country badly, and you ruined Cyrus, who listened to you. But you won't get away with it, for I've long been wanting some pretext to lay hold of you." 4 With these words he took up his bow to shoot him, but Croesus jumped up and ran outside. Since he could not shoot him, Cambyses ordered his servants to seize him and kill him.[21] 5 The servants, who knew his ways, hid Croesus, reasoning like this: if Cambyses had a change of heart and looked for Croesus, they would produce him and be rewarded for saving his life; but if he had no change of heart and did not miss him, then they would make away with him. 6 Sure enough, Cambyses missed Croesus not long afterward, and when the servants learned this, they told him that Croesus was alive. Cambyses said that he was glad Croesus was alive, but that those who had saved him would not get away with it: he would put them to death. And that is what he did.

3.37 Many such mad acts he committed against the Persians and the allies while he stayed in Memphis, where he also opened ancient tombs and examined the dead. 2 In the same way he went into the temple of Hephaestus and mocked the statue at length. The statue of Hephaestus is very like the Phoenician

21 Croesus had advised Cyrus to cross the Araxes and fight the Massagetae in their own land, where Cyrus was killed (1.207–214).

Pataici, which the Phoenicians carry on the prows of their triremes. For anyone who has not seen these, I'll describe it this way: it is the image of a pygmy man. [3] He also entered the temple of the Cabeiri, which no one but the priest is allowed to enter. These statues he even burned, after mocking them a great deal. These too are like the statues of Hephaestus; they say they are his sons.

"CUSTOM IS KING OF ALL"

Herodotus argues that every people thinks its own customs best, citing Darius' test of Greeks and Indians.

3.38 So it is clear to me in every way that Cambyses was completely mad; otherwise he would never have set about mocking sacred things and established customs. If someone were to offer all mankind the choice of the finest customs out of all the customs there are, each people, after looking them over, would choose their own. That is how strongly each people believes its own customs to be by far the finest. [2] So it is not likely that anyone but a madman would make a joke of such things. That all men hold this belief about their customs can be judged from many other proofs, and in particular from this one. [3] During his reign Darius called together the Greeks who were at his court and asked them what price would make them willing to eat their fathers when they died. They said that nothing would make them do that. [4] Afterward Darius called in the Indians known as the Callatiae, who eat their parents, and asked them, while the Greeks were present and following what was said through an interpreter, what price would make them willing to burn their dead fathers on a fire. They cried out loudly and told him not to speak of such a thing. That is how these things are fixed by custom, and in my opinion Pindar was right when he wrote that custom is king of all.[22]

22 Pindar: the Theban lyric poet (c. 518–438 BC). The line comes from a poem now lost.

POLYCRATES AND THE RING

Polycrates of Samos throws away his treasured ring on Amasis' advice, but it returns in a fish.

3.39 While Cambyses was campaigning against Egypt, the Lacedaemonians also made an expedition against Samos and Polycrates son of Aeaces, who had risen up and seized Samos. 2 At first he divided the city into three … and gave shares to his brothers Pantagnotus and Syloson. Later he killed one of them, drove out the younger, Syloson, and held all of Samos. Once he held it, he made a pact of guest-friendship with Amasis king of Egypt, sending him gifts and receiving others from him in return.[23] 3 In a short time Polycrates' power grew rapidly and was talked about throughout Ionia and the rest of Greece. Wherever he decided to make war, everything went his way. He had acquired a hundred fifty-oared ships and a thousand archers, and he plundered and carried off from everyone, sparing no one. 4 He used to say that he would please a friend more by giving back what he had taken than by never taking it in the first place. He had captured many of the islands and many towns on the mainland as well. Among others, he defeated in a sea battle the Lesbians, who had come with their whole force to help the Milesians, and took them prisoner; it was they who, in chains, dug the whole ditch around the city wall of Samos.

3.40 Polycrates' great good fortune did not escape Amasis' notice; it was something that concerned him. As his good fortune grew greater still, Amasis wrote the following in a letter and sent it to Samos: "Amasis says this to Polycrates. 2 It is pleasant to hear that a friend and guest-friend is doing well. But your great good fortune does not please me, since I know that the divine is jealous. For myself, and for those I care about, I would somehow rather be fortunate in some things and stumble in others, and so pass my life with fortune alternating, than be for-

23 Lacedaemonians: the Spartans together with the communities of Laconia they ruled.

tunate in everything. [3] I have never yet heard tell of anyone who was fortunate in everything and did not in the end come to a bad end, destroyed root and branch. So take my advice and deal with your good fortune like this. [4] Think what you find you own that is worth the most, and whose loss would cause your soul the most pain, and throw it away so that it will never again come into human hands. And if after that your good fortune still does not alternate with misfortunes, remedy it in the way I have suggested."

3.41 When Polycrates had read this and grasped that Amasis' advice was good, he looked for the one treasure whose loss would most distress his soul, and in looking he found this. He had a seal ring that he wore, set in gold; the stone was an emerald, and it was the work of Theodorus son of Telecles, a Samian. [2] So, having decided to throw it away, he did the following. He manned a fifty-oared ship, went aboard, and ordered it to put out to sea. When he was far from the island, he took off the ring and, while all his shipmates watched, threw it into the sea. Having done this he sailed back, and when he reached his house he mourned his loss.[24]

3.42 Five or six days later, this is what happened to him. A fisherman caught a large, fine fish and thought it deserved to be given to Polycrates as a gift. He brought it to the palace doors and said that he wished to come into Polycrates' presence. When this was granted, he handed over the fish and said: [2] "King, when I caught this, I didn't think it right to take it to market, even though I live by the work of my hands. It seemed to me worthy of you and of your rule, so I've brought it and I'm giving it to you." Polycrates was pleased with these words and answered: "You've done very well, and you have my thanks twice over, for your words and for your gift. We invite you to dinner." [3] The fisherman went home very proud of this. But when the servants cut the fish open, they found Polycrates' ring inside its belly. [4] As soon as they saw it and took it out, they carried it to Polycrates in delight, and as they gave him the ring

24 Theodorus: a celebrated Samian artist and architect of the sixth century BC.

they told him how it had been found. It occurred to him that the thing was the work of the divine, and he wrote down in a letter everything he had done and what had befallen him. When he had written it, he sent it off to Egypt.

3.43 When Amasis read the letter that had come from Polycrates, he understood that it is impossible for one human being to rescue another from what is going to happen, and that Polycrates, who was fortunate in everything and even found what he threw away, was not going to come to a good end. 2 He sent a herald to Samos and declared that he was breaking off their guest-friendship. His reason was this: so that when some great and terrible calamity overtook Polycrates, he himself would not grieve in his soul as for a friend.

3.44 It was against this Polycrates, then, fortunate in everything, that the Lacedaemonians made war, at the invitation of those Samians who later founded Cydonia in Crete. Polycrates, without the Samians' knowledge, sent a herald to Cambyses son of Cyrus, who was gathering an army against Egypt, and asked him to send to him at Samos as well and request troops. 2 When Cambyses heard this, he gladly sent to Samos, asking Polycrates to send a naval force with him against Egypt. Polycrates picked out those citizens he most suspected of plotting revolt and sent them off in forty triremes, instructing Cambyses not to send them back.

3.45 Some say that the Samians sent off by Polycrates never reached Egypt: when they had got as far as Carpathus on their voyage, they talked it over among themselves and decided to sail no farther. Others say that they did reach Egypt, and that, being kept under guard there, they escaped. 2 As they were sailing back to Samos, Polycrates met them with ships and gave battle. The returning Samians won and landed on the island, but they were beaten in a battle on land there, and so they sailed to Lacedaemon.[25] 3 There are some who say that the men from Egypt defeated Polycrates, but in my opinion they are wrong. They would have had no need to call in the Lacedaemonians if

25 Carpathus: an island between Crete and Rhodes.

they had been able to bring Polycrates to terms by themselves. Besides, it does not stand to reason that a man who had hired mercenaries and archers of his own in great numbers should have been beaten by the returning Samians, who were few. [4] Polycrates had herded the children and wives of the citizens under his rule into the ship-sheds and kept them ready, so that if the citizens betrayed him to the returning exiles, he could burn them, ship-sheds and all.

3.46 When the Samians driven out by Polycrates reached Sparta, they came before the magistrates and made a long speech, as men in great need would. At this first hearing the magistrates answered that they had forgotten the beginning of what was said and could not understand the end. [2] After this the Samians came before them a second time. They said nothing else, but brought a sack and said that the sack needed barley meal. The magistrates answered that the word "sack" was superfluous; but they decided to help them all the same.

3.47 Then the Lacedaemonians made their preparations and marched against Samos. According to the Samians, they were repaying a kindness, because the Samians had earlier helped them with ships against the Messenians. According to the Lacedaemonians, though, they marched not so much to help the Samians who had asked them as because they wanted vengeance for the seizure of the mixing bowl they had been taking to Croesus, and of the breastplate that Amasis king of Egypt had sent them as a gift. [2] For the Samians had carried off the breastplate the year before the bowl. It was made of linen with many figures woven into it, and decorated with gold and with wool from trees. [3] What makes it worth marveling at is each thread of the breastplate: fine as it is, each one contains three hundred and sixty strands, all of them visible. There is another one like it, which Amasis dedicated to Athena at Lindus.[26]

26 "Wool from trees" is Herodotus' term for cotton. The seizure of the bowl is told in 1.70.

PERIANDER OF CORINTH

Periander's quarrel with his son Lycophron, who refuses to speak to the father who killed his mother.

3.48 The Corinthians too eagerly helped to bring about the expedition against Samos. They also had suffered an outrage at the hands of the Samians, a generation before this expedition, at about the same time as the seizure of the bowl. 2 Periander son of Cypselus had sent three hundred boys, sons of the leading men of Corcyra, to Alyattes at Sardis to be castrated. When the Corinthians who were taking the boys put in at Samos, the Samians learned why they were being taken to Sardis. First they told the boys to take hold of the temple of Artemis;[27] 3 then, since they would not stand by and let the suppliants be dragged from the temple, and the Corinthians were keeping the boys from food, the Samians instituted a festival, which they still celebrate in the same way today. When night came on, for as long as the boys remained suppliants, they set up dances of girls and young men, and as they did so they made it a custom to carry cakes of sesame and honey, so that the Corcyraean boys could snatch them and have something to eat. 4 This went on until the Corinthians guarding the boys gave up and left; and the Samians took the boys back to Corcyra.

3.49 Now if the Corinthians had been on friendly terms with the Corcyraeans after Periander's death, they would not have joined the expedition against Samos for this reason. As it is, ever since they founded the island they have been at odds with each other, though they are … to one another. 2 It was for these reasons, then, that the Corinthians bore a grudge against the Samians. Periander had picked out the sons of the leading Corcyraeans and sent them to Sardis to be castrated as an act of revenge, for the Corcyraeans had started it by doing a reckless and outrageous thing to him.

27 Periander: ruler of Corinth (c. 627–587 BC). Corcyra (modern Corfu) was a Corinthian colony.

3.50 After Periander had killed his wife Melissa, a further misfortune, of the following kind, befell him on top of the one that had already happened. He had two sons by Melissa, one seventeen years old and the other eighteen. 2 Their maternal grandfather Procles, who was tyrant of Epidaurus, sent for them and treated them with affection, as was natural, since they were his own daughter's children.[28] When he was sending them home, he said as he saw them off, 3 "Do you know, boys, who killed your mother?" The elder of the two took no notice of these words. But the younger, whose name was Lycophron, was so pained to hear them that when he got back to Corinth he would not greet his father, as his mother's murderer, nor talk with him when he spoke to him, nor give any answer when he asked questions. In the end Periander, in a rage, drove him out of the house.

3.51 Having driven him out, he asked the elder what their grandfather had talked to them about. The young man told him how kindly Procles had received them; but he did not remember the words Procles had said to them as he sent them off, because he had not taken them in. Periander insisted that Procles could not possibly have failed to suggest something to them, and he kept pressing him with questions. At last the young man remembered and told him that too. 2 Periander took this [too] to heart, and, wishing to show no softness, he sent a messenger to the people with whom his banished son was living and forbade them to take him into their house. 3 Whenever the boy, driven out, went to another house, he would be driven out of that one too, because Periander threatened those who took him in and ordered them to shut him out. Driven out again, he would go on to another of his friends' houses; and they, because he was Periander's son, took him in, frightened though they were.

3.52 In the end Periander issued a proclamation that whoever took him into his house or spoke with him would owe a sacred fine to Apollo, and he named the amount. 2 Because of this proclamation no one was willing to speak with him or take him into

28 Tyrant: a ruler who had seized sole power outside the traditional constitution, not necessarily a cruel one.

his house. Besides, the boy himself did not think it right to attempt what had been forbidden, but he held out and lay about in the colonnades. [3] On the fourth day Periander saw him, wasted from going without washing or food, and pitied him. His anger softened, and he went up to him and said: "My son, which is preferable: the life you are leading now, or to take over the tyranny and the good things I now have by being agreeable to your father? [4] You are my son and a prince of prosperous Corinth, and yet you have chosen a vagabond's life by opposing and raging at the one you should least of all treat so. If some misfortune has happened in our family that makes you suspicious of me, it has happened to me, and I have the greater share in it, inasmuch as I did it myself. [5] Now that you have learned how much better it is to be envied than pitied, and at the same time what comes of being angry with one's parents and one's betters, come back home." [6] With these words Periander tried to win him over. But the son gave his father no answer except to say that he now owed the god a sacred fine for having spoken with him. Then Periander, realizing that his son's trouble was beyond remedy and could not be overcome, sent him out of his sight, dispatching him by ship to Corcyra, for he ruled that island too. [7] Having sent him away, Periander made war on his father-in-law Procles as the man most to blame for his present troubles. He took Epidaurus, and he took Procles himself alive.

[3.53] As time went on, Periander grew old and became aware that he was no longer able to oversee and manage affairs. He sent to Corcyra and called Lycophron back to take over the tyranny, for he saw no ability in the elder of his sons, who seemed to him rather slow-witted. [2] But Lycophron did not even deign to answer the man who brought the message. Periander, still set on the young man, next sent to him his sister, Periander's own daughter, thinking that he would be most likely to listen to her. [3] When she arrived, she said: "My boy, would you rather the tyranny fell to others and your father's house were plundered than come back and have them yourself? Come home; stop punishing yourself. [4] Pride is a poor thing to own.

Don't cure one evil with another. Many people put fairness ahead of strict justice, and many before now, in seeking their mother's due, have lost their father's inheritance. Tyranny is a slippery thing; it has many lovers, and he is old now and past his prime. Don't give your own good things away to others." [5] So she said to him the most persuasive things, as her father had instructed her. But he answered that he would never come to Corinth as long as he heard that his father was alive. [6] When she reported this, Periander sent a herald a third time, offering to go to Corcyra himself, and he told Lycophron to come to Corinth and become his successor in the tyranny. [7] The son agreed to these terms, and Periander made ready to go to Corcyra and his son to Corinth. But when the Corcyraeans learned all the details, they killed the young man, so that Periander would not come to their country. It was for this that Periander took vengeance on the Corcyraeans.

3.54 When the Lacedaemonians arrived with a great force, they laid siege to Samos. They attacked the wall and got up onto the tower that stands by the sea in the suburb of the city, but then Polycrates himself came to the rescue with a large force and they were driven back. [2] At the upper tower, which stands on the ridge of the mountain, the mercenaries and many of the Samians themselves sallied out. They held off the Lacedaemonians for a short time and then fled back, and the Lacedaemonians pursued them and cut them down.

3.55 Now if all the Lacedaemonians there that day had been like Archias and Lycopes, Samos would have been taken. For Archias and Lycopes alone burst inside the wall together with the fleeing Samians, and, with their way back cut off, they died in the Samians' city. [2] I myself met at Pitane another Archias, third in descent from this Archias, the son of Samius son of Archias (Pitane was his district). He honored the Samians above all other foreigners, and he said that his father had been given the name Samius because his own father, Archias, had died at Samos after fighting more bravely than anyone. He said he

honored the Samians because they had given his grandfather a public funeral.[29]

3.56 When the Lacedaemonians had been besieging Samos for forty days and were getting nowhere, they went back to the Peloponnese. 2 There is a rather foolish story going around: it is said that Polycrates struck a large quantity of local coinage in lead, gilded it, and gave it to them, and that they accepted it and so went away. This was the first expedition that the Lacedaemonians, who are Dorians, made into Asia.

3.57 The Samians who had made war on Polycrates, when the Lacedaemonians were about to abandon them, sailed away themselves to Siphnos. 2 They needed money, and at that time the Siphnians were at the height of their prosperity and were the richest of the islanders, because they had gold and silver mines on their island. They were so rich that from a tenth of the wealth produced there a treasury was dedicated at Delphi that equals the richest; and they divided among themselves the wealth produced each year.[30]

3 So when they were building the treasury, they asked the oracle whether their present prosperity could last for a long time; and the Pythia gave them this answer: 4 But when the town hall in Siphnos turns white
and the marketplace white-browed, then there is need of a shrewd man
to beware of a wooden ambush and a red herald. At that time the Siphnians' marketplace and town hall were faced with Parian marble.[31]

3.58 They were unable to understand this oracle, either right then or when the Samians came. As soon as the Samians put in at Siphnos, they sent one of their ships carrying envoys to the city. 2 In the old days all ships were painted with red ochre, and this was what the Pythia had been warning the Siphnians about

29 Pitane: one of the villages that together made up the city of Sparta.
30 Siphnos: an island in the Cyclades. Remains of its treasury, a small marble building, can still be seen at Delphi.
31 The Pythia: Apollo's priestess at Delphi, who spoke the god's oracles.

when she told them to beware of the wooden ambush and the red herald. [3] So the messengers arrived and asked the Siphnians to lend them ten talents. When the Siphnians said they would not lend it, the Samians set about ravaging their lands. [4] The Siphnians, hearing of it, came out at once to defend them, engaged the Samians, and were beaten. Many of them were cut off from the town by the Samians, and afterward the Samians exacted a hundred talents from them.[32]

3.59 From the Hermionians they received the island of Hydrea, off the Peloponnese, in exchange for money, and they entrusted it to the Troezenians. They themselves founded Cydonia in Crete, although they had not sailed there for that purpose but to drive the Zacynthians out of the island. [2] They stayed there and prospered for five years, so much so that the sanctuaries now in Cydonia are their work [and the temple of Dictyna]. [3] But in the sixth year the Aeginetans, together with the Cretans, defeated them in a sea battle and enslaved them. They cut off the prows of their ships, which were shaped like boars, and dedicated them in the temple of Athena in Aegina. [4] The Aeginetans did this because they held a grudge against the Samians. The Samians had struck first: when Amphicrates was king in Samos, they had made war on Aegina, done the Aeginetans great harm, and suffered great harm from them in return. That was the cause.

3.60 I have spoken at greater length about the Samians because they have produced three of the greatest works in the whole Greek world. The first is a tunnel through a mountain a hundred and fifty fathoms high. It was begun from below and has an opening at each end. [2] The tunnel is seven stades long, and it is eight feet high and eight feet wide. Along its whole length a second channel has been dug, twenty cubits deep and three feet wide. Through it water from a great spring is carried in pipes and brought into the city.[33] [3] The architect of this tunnel was a Megarian, Eupalinus son of Naustrophus. That is one of the

32 Talent: a large unit of weight and money, roughly 57 pounds (26 kg) of silver.
33 A fathom is about 6 feet, a stade about 600 feet and a cubit about 18 inches. The tunnel of Eupalinus still survives on Samos.

three. The second is a breakwater in the sea around the harbor, as much as twenty fathoms deep, and the breakwater is more than two stades long. [4] Their third work is a temple, the largest of all the temples we know of. Its first architect was Rhoecus son of Phileas, a native of the island. It is because of these works that I have spoken at somewhat greater length about the Samians.[34]

THE FALSE SMERDIS

A Magus seizes the throne as Smerdis; Cambyses dies, and Otanes and six others kill the impostor.

3.61 While Cambyses son of Cyrus was lingering in Egypt and had gone out of his mind, two men rose up against him. They were brothers, and both were Magi. Cambyses had left one of them behind as steward of his household. It was this man who rose against him. He had learned that Smerdis' death was being kept secret, that few of the Persians knew of it, and that most of them believed Smerdis was alive.[35] [2] With this in mind he laid the following plan and made an attempt on the throne. He had a brother, the one I said rose up with him, who looked very much like Smerdis son of Cyrus, the brother whom Cambyses had killed. This man not only resembled Smerdis in appearance but also had the same name, Smerdis. [3] The Magus Patizeithes persuaded this man that he would manage everything for him, and he took him and seated him on the royal throne. After doing this he sent heralds everywhere, and to Egypt in particular, to proclaim to the army that from now on they were to obey Smerdis son of Cyrus, and not Cambyses.

3.62 So the other heralds made this proclamation, and so did the one assigned to Egypt. He found Cambyses and the army at Ecbatana in Syria, and he stood up in their midst and proclaimed the orders the Magus had given him. [2] When Cambyses heard this from the herald, he believed the man was telling the truth and that Prexaspes had betrayed him: Prexaspes, he

34 The temple is the great sanctuary of Hera on Samos.
35 The Magi were a hereditary priestly caste of the Medes.

thought, had been sent to kill Smerdis and had not done it. He looked at Prexaspes and said, "Prexaspes, is this how you carried out the task I gave you?"[36] 3 He replied, "Master, it isn't true that your brother Smerdis has risen against you. Nor will you have any quarrel with that man, great or small. I did what you ordered myself, and I buried him with my own hands. 4 If the dead rise up now, then you can expect Astyages the Mede to rise against you as well. But if things are as they were before, nothing new will ever spring up against you from him, at any rate. So now I think we should send after the herald and question him. Let's ask him who sent him here to tell us to obey King Smerdis."

3.63 Prexaspes' advice pleased Cambyses. The herald was pursued at once and brought back, and when he arrived Prexaspes asked him, "Fellow, you say you've come as a messenger from Smerdis son of Cyrus. Now tell the truth and you can go away unharmed. Did Smerdis himself appear before you and give you these orders, or was it one of his attendants?" 2 He said, "I haven't seen Smerdis son of Cyrus since King Cambyses marched off to Egypt. It was the Magus whom Cambyses appointed steward of his household who gave me these orders. He said that it was Smerdis son of Cyrus who commanded me to tell you this." 3 He told them this without adding any lie. Cambyses then said, "Prexaspes, you did what you were told, like a good man, and you are cleared of blame. But which of the Persians could it be who has risen against me and is laying claim to the name of Smerdis?" Prexaspes said, 4 "I think I understand what has happened, King. The men who have risen against you are the Magi: the one you left as steward of your household, Patizeithes, and his brother Smerdis."

3.64 When Cambyses heard the name of Smerdis, the truth of these words and of his dream struck him. In that dream he had seemed to hear someone tell him that Smerdis, seated on the royal throne, touched the sky with his head. 2 When he realized that he had destroyed his brother for nothing, he wept for Smerdis. After weeping, and lamenting bitterly over the whole dis-

36 This is not the Median capital Ecbatana but a town of the same name in Syria.

aster, he leaped onto his horse, intending to march to Susa against the Magus as fast as he could. [3] As he leaped onto his horse, the cap of his sword's scabbard fell off, and the bare blade struck his thigh. He was wounded in the same place where he himself had once struck the Egyptian god Apis. Since he believed the wound was mortal, Cambyses asked what the town was called, and they told him it was Ecbatana. [4] Long before, an oracle from the city of Buto had told him that he would end his life in Ecbatana. He supposed this meant he would die in old age in Ecbatana in Media, the seat of all his power. But the oracle, as it turned out, meant Ecbatana in Syria. [5] When he asked and learned the name of the town, the shock of the disaster brought on him by the Magus and of his wound brought him back to his senses. He understood the oracle and said, "Here Cambyses son of Cyrus is fated to die."

[3.65] That was all for the moment. But about twenty days later he summoned the most notable of the Persians who were with him and said to them, "Persians, it has come to this: I must reveal to you the thing I have kept more hidden than anything else. [2] When I was in Egypt I saw a vision in my sleep, and I wish I had never seen it. I dreamed that a messenger came from home and told me that Smerdis, seated on the royal throne, touched the sky with his head. [3] I was afraid that my brother would take my rule from me, and I acted with more haste than wisdom. It was never in human nature, as it turns out, to turn aside what is going to happen. And I, fool that I was, sent Prexaspes to Susa to kill Smerdis. Once that great evil had been done, I lived without fear. It never occurred to me that, with Smerdis out of the way, some other man might ever rise against me. [4] I misjudged everything that was going to happen. I have become my brother's murderer when there was no need, and I have been stripped of the kingdom all the same. The Smerdis whom the divine power showed me in the vision, rising against me, was the Magus. [5] That deed is done and it was mine, and you must no longer think of Smerdis son of Cyrus as alive. It is the Magi who hold the royal power over you: the one I left as steward of my

household, and his brother Smerdis. The man who above all should have avenged me for the shameful things I have suffered at the hands of the Magi has died an unholy death at the hands of his nearest kin. [6] Since he is gone, the next most necessary thing left for me to do, Persians, is to tell you what I want done as I come to the end of my life. So I call on the gods of the royal house and I lay this charge on all of you, and above all on those of the Achaemenids who are present. Do not allow the leadership to pass back to the Medes. If they have gained it by trickery, take it from them by trickery. If they have won it by some kind of force, recover it by force, with all your strength. [7] If you do this, may the earth bear you fruit, may your women and your flocks bear young, and may you be free for all time. But if you do not recover the rule, or do not even try, I pray that the opposite of all this befall you, and on top of that, that every Persian meet an end like mine." As he said this, Cambyses wept over everything he had done.

3.66 When the Persians saw the King weeping, they all tore the clothes they were wearing and gave themselves up to unrestrained lamentation. [2] After this the bone became gangrenous and the thigh quickly rotted, and this carried off Cambyses son of Cyrus. He had reigned seven years and five months in all, and he left no children at all, male or female. [3] The Persians who were there were very far from believing that the Magi held power. They assumed that Cambyses had said what he said about Smerdis' death as a slander, to turn the whole Persian people against him.

3.67 So they believed that it was Smerdis son of Cyrus who had become king. Prexaspes, too, denied fiercely that he had killed Smerdis, because now that Cambyses was dead it was not safe for him to say he had killed the son of Cyrus with his own hand. [2] So after Cambyses' death the Magus reigned without fear, passing himself off as his namesake Smerdis son of Cyrus. He reigned for the seven months that were still needed to make up Cambyses' eight full years. [3] During that time he did great favors for all his subjects, so that when he died everyone in Asia

missed him except the Persians themselves. The Magus sent word to every nation he ruled, proclaiming that they would be exempt from military service and tribute for three years.

3.68 He made this proclamation as soon as he came to power, but in the eighth month he was found out, in the following way. There was a man named Otanes, the son of Pharnaspes, who in birth and wealth was the equal of the foremost Persian. 2 This Otanes was the first to suspect that the Magus was not Smerdis son of Cyrus but the man he really was. He drew this conclusion because the man never went out of the citadel and never summoned any of the notable Persians into his presence. 3 Once he suspected him, this is what he did. Cambyses had married a daughter of Otanes named Phaedyme. The Magus now had this same woman, and he lived with her and with all of Cambyses' other wives. So Otanes sent to this daughter and asked her who the man was she slept with: Smerdis son of Cyrus, or someone else. 4 She sent back word that she did not know. She had never seen Smerdis son of Cyrus, she said, and she did not know who the man living with her was. Otanes sent a second time, saying, "If you don't know Smerdis son of Cyrus yourself, then ask Atossa who this man is that she and you are living with. She must surely know her own brother, at any rate." The daughter sent back this answer: 5 "I can't speak with Atossa, or see any of the other women who live here with me. As soon as this man, whoever he is, took over the kingship, he split us up and put each of us in a different place."[37]

3.69 As Otanes heard this, the matter became clearer to him. He sent a third message in to her, which said: 2 "Daughter, you are of noble birth, and you must take on whatever danger your father bids you face. If this man is not Smerdis son of Cyrus but the one I suspect, he must not get away unpunished for sleeping with you and holding the power of the Persians. He must pay the penalty. 3 So do this now. When he sleeps with you and you see that he is fast asleep, feel his ears. If he turns out to have ears, you can consider that you are living with Smerdis son of

37 Atossa was the daughter of Cyrus, sister and wife of Cambyses.

Cyrus. If he doesn't, you are living with Smerdis the Magus." [4] Phaedyme sent back word that she would be running a great risk if she did this. If he turned out to have no ears and caught her feeling for them, she knew very well that he would kill her. Nevertheless she would do it. [5] So she undertook to do this for her father. Now Cyrus son of Cambyses, during his reign, had cut off the ears of this Magus Smerdis for some offense, and no small one. [6] So this Phaedyme, the daughter of Otanes, carried out everything she had promised her father. When her turn came to go to the Magus (among the Persians the wives visit their husband in rotation), she went to him and slept with him, and when the Magus was sound asleep she felt for his ears. She discovered, with no difficulty at all, that the man had no ears. As soon as it was day, she sent word to her father and told him what had happened.

3.70 Otanes took aside Aspathines and Gobryas, who were among the foremost Persians and the men he could trust best, and told them the whole story. They too, as it turned out, had suspected that this was the case, and when Otanes laid the matter before them they accepted his account. [2] They decided that each of them should take as a partner the Persian he trusted most. So Otanes brought in Intaphernes, Gobryas brought in Megabyzus, and Aspathines brought in Hydarnes. [3] When there were six of them, Darius son of Hystaspes arrived at Susa from Persia, where his father was governor. When he arrived, the six Persians decided to take Darius in as a partner as well.

3.71 These seven met and exchanged pledges and views. When it came to Darius' turn to give his opinion, he said to them, [2] "I thought I was the only one who knew this, that it was the Magus who was king and that Smerdis son of Cyrus was dead. That is the very reason I've come in haste: to arrange the Magus' death. But since it has turned out that you know too, and not just I, I think we should act at once and not put it off. Delay would do us no good." [3] To this Otanes said, "Son of Hystaspes, you are the son of a good father, and you seem to be showing yourself no less a man than he is. But don't rush into this undertaking so

rashly. Approach it more prudently. We must be more in number before we make the attempt." [4] Darius answered, "Gentlemen, if you take the course Otanes has proposed, you can be sure that you will die the worst of deaths. Someone will report it to the Magus to win some private gain for himself. [5] Ideally you should have done this on your own. But since you decided to bring in more people and you confided in me, then either we act today, or I tell you this: if today goes by, no one will get in ahead of me as your accuser. I will denounce you to the Magus myself."

[3.72] Seeing Darius so eager, Otanes replied, "Since you're forcing us to hurry and won't allow any delay, come, explain yourself how we're to get into the palace and attack them. You know yourself, I suppose, if not from seeing it then from hearing about it, that there are guards posted all around. How are we going to get past them?" Darius answered: [2] "Otanes, there are many things that can't be made clear in words but can be made clear in action. There are other things that can be put into words, but nothing remarkable ever comes of them in action. You know that the guards posted there won't be at all hard to get past. [3] In the first place, given who we are, there isn't a man who won't let us through, partly out of respect for us, I imagine, and partly out of fear. In the second place, I myself have a perfectly plausible excuse for getting in: I'll say that I've just come from Persia and want to deliver a message to the King from my father. [4] Where a lie has to be told, let it be told. Those of us who lie and those of us who tell the truth are after the same thing. Liars lie when they expect to win something by persuading people with their lies, and truth-tellers tell the truth so as to draw some profit to themselves by it and to be trusted with more. So we practice different things, but we hold fast to the same goal. [5] If there were nothing to gain, the truth-teller would lie just as readily, and the liar would tell the truth. Now, any of the gatekeepers who lets us through willingly will be better off for it in time. Whoever tries to stand in our way, let him be shown on the spot to be an enemy, and then let's force our way in and get to work."

3.73 After this Gobryas spoke: "Friends, when will we ever have a finer chance to recover the rule, or, if we can't regain it, to die? Here we are, Persians, ruled by a Mede, a Magus, and one who has no ears at that! 2 Those of you who were with Cambyses in his illness surely remember what he called down on the Persians, as he was dying, if they did not try to win back the rule. We didn't believe it then; we thought Cambyses had said it as a slander. 3 So now I cast my vote that we obey Darius, and that we don't break up this meeting except to go straight for the Magus." So spoke Gobryas, and they all agreed.

3.74 While they were deliberating on this, something happened by coincidence. The Magi, taking counsel, decided to win Prexaspes over as a friend. He had suffered outrageous treatment from Cambyses, who had shot his son with an arrow and killed him. He alone knew of the death of Smerdis son of Cyrus, since he had killed him with his own hand. And besides, Prexaspes was held in the highest esteem among the Persians. 2 For these reasons they summoned him and tried to make him their friend. They bound him with pledges and oaths that he would keep to himself, and reveal to no one, the deception they had practiced on the Persians, and they promised to give him everything in vast abundance. 3 Prexaspes promised to do this, and once the Magi had won him over they made a second proposal. They said they would call all the Persians together beneath the palace wall, and they told him to climb a tower and announce that they were ruled by Smerdis son of Cyrus and by no one else. 4 They gave him these instructions because he was, as they saw it, the most trusted man among the Persians, and because he had often declared his opinion that Smerdis son of Cyrus was alive and had denied murdering him.

3.75 Prexaspes said he was ready to do this too. So the Magi called the Persians together, had him climb a tower, and told him to make a speech. But he deliberately forgot what they had asked of him. Beginning with Achaemenes, he traced Cyrus' ancestry on his father's side, and when he had come down to Cyrus himself, he ended by telling of all the good things Cyrus

had done for the Persians. [2] After going through all this, he revealed the truth. He said that he had kept it hidden before (since it was not safe for him to tell what had happened), but that now necessity compelled him to reveal it.[38] And he told them that he himself had killed Smerdis son of Cyrus, under compulsion from Cambyses, and that it was the Magi who were ruling. [3] Then he called down many curses on the Persians if they did not win back the rule and take vengeance on the Magi, and threw himself headfirst from the tower. So died Prexaspes, a man held in high esteem all his life.

3.76 The seven Persians, having resolved to attack the Magi at once and not put it off, set out after praying to the gods, knowing nothing of what had happened with Prexaspes. [2] They were halfway along the road when they learned what had become of Prexaspes. At that they stepped off the road and debated the matter again among themselves. Otanes and his party urged strongly that they postpone it and not attack while things were in turmoil; Darius and his party urged that they go at once, do what had been decided, and not put it off. [3] While they were pushing their arguments, seven pairs of hawks appeared, chasing two pairs of vultures, plucking and tearing at them. When the seven saw this, they all approved Darius' view, and then went on to the palace, emboldened by the birds.

3.77 When they reached the gates, things turned out much as Darius had expected. The guards, out of respect for men who were the leading Persians, and not suspecting that anything of the kind would come from them, let them pass, guided as they were by heaven, and no one even questioned them. [2] But when they had passed into the courtyard, they came upon the eunuchs who carried in messages. These asked them what they had come for, and as they questioned them they threatened the gatekeepers for letting them through, and tried to stop the seven when they wanted to go further. [3] The seven urged one another on, drew their daggers, stabbed those who were stopping them

38 Achaemenes was the legendary founder of the Persian royal house, the Achaemenids.

right there where they stood, and themselves ran for the men's hall.

3.78 As it happened, both the Magi were inside at that moment, discussing what had come of Prexaspes' action. When they saw the eunuchs in an uproar and shouting, they both ran back, and when they learned what was going on they turned to defend themselves. 2 One of them was quick to get his bow down; the other turned to his spear. Then they closed with one another. The one who had taken up the bow got no use from it, since his enemies were close and pressing hard on him; but the other defended himself with his spear, striking Aspathines in the thigh and Intaphernes in the eye. Intaphernes lost the eye from the wound, but he did not die. 3 So one of the Magi wounded these men. The other, since his bow was no use to him, fled into a bedchamber that opened off the men's hall, meaning to shut the doors on himself there; and two of the seven burst in with him, Darius and Gobryas. 4 Gobryas grappled with the Magus, while Darius stood over them at a loss, because it was dark, afraid he might strike Gobryas. 5 Seeing him standing there idle, Gobryas asked why he wasn't using his hand. He said, "I'm afraid of hitting you." Gobryas answered, "Drive your sword in, even if it goes through both of us." Darius obeyed, thrust in his dagger, and somehow hit the Magus.

3.79 Having killed the Magi and cut off their heads, they left their own wounded there, both because they were disabled and to guard the citadel, while five of them ran out with the Magi's heads, shouting and making a great din. They called on the other Persians, explaining what had happened and showing the heads, and at the same time they killed every Magus who crossed their path. 2 When the Persians learned from the seven what had been done and how the Magi had deceived them, they thought it right to do the same themselves; they drew their daggers and killed every Magus they could find. Had night not fallen and stopped them, they would not have left a single Magus alive. 3 The Persians observe this day in common more than any other, and on it they hold a great festival, which they

call the Magophonia. On that day no Magus may show himself in daylight; the Magi keep to their houses all day long.[39]

THE DEBATE ON GOVERNMENT

Otanes argues for rule by the people, Megabyzus for oligarchy, and Darius for monarchy, which wins.

3.80 When the turmoil had died down and five days had passed, those who had risen against the Magi deliberated about the whole state of affairs, and speeches were made that some Greeks find incredible—but they were made all the same. 2 Otanes urged that they place power in the hands of the Persians in common, saying: "In my view, no single one of us should be made monarch any more. It's neither pleasant nor good. You saw how far Cambyses' arrogance went, and you have had your share of the Magus' arrogance too. 3 How could monarchy be a well-ordered thing, when it lets a man do whatever he likes without being answerable to anyone? Even the best of all men, once set in that position, would be driven out of his usual way of thinking. Arrogance grows in him from the good things he has, and envy is planted in man from the beginning. 4 With these two he has every kind of vice: glutted with arrogance he does many reckless things, and others out of envy. And yet a tyrant ought to be free of envy, since he has every good thing. But toward his citizens he is the very opposite: he resents the best men for staying alive, delights in the worst of the townspeople, and no one is readier to listen to slander. 5 And he is the most inconsistent of all: if you admire him in moderation, he's offended that he isn't courted enough; if someone courts him lavishly, he's offended at him as a flatterer. But now I come to the most serious things. He overturns ancestral customs, rapes women, and puts men to death without trial. 6 Rule by the many, on the other hand, first of all has the finest name of all, equality before the law; and second, it does none of the things a monarch does. It fills offices by lot, holds officials accountable, and refers all decisions to the

39 Magophonia means "the slaying of the Magi."

community. So my proposal is that we give up monarchy and raise up the many; for in the many is everything."

3.81 That was the opinion Otanes put forward. Megabyzus urged that they entrust things to an oligarchy, saying: "What Otanes said about putting an end to tyranny, let it be said for me too. But in urging us to hand power to the many he has missed the best course. Nothing is more senseless or more given to outrage than a useless mob. 2 For men escaping the outrage of a tyrant to fall into the outrage of an unbridled people is utterly intolerable. Whatever the tyrant does, he does knowingly; the people cannot even know. How could anyone know who has never been taught and has never seen anything fine of his own? He rushes into affairs and drives them on without sense, like a river in flood. 3 So let those who wish the Persians ill make use of the people. As for us, let us choose a group of the best men and invest them with power. We ourselves will be among them, and it is likely that the best men will make the best decisions."

3.82 That was the opinion Megabyzus put forward. Third, Darius declared his opinion, saying: "To me, what Megabyzus said about the many seems right, but what he said about oligarchy does not. Three things are before us, and if each is taken at its best—the best popular government, the best oligarchy, and the best monarch—I say that the last far surpasses the others. 2 Nothing could prove better than one man, the best. With judgment like his, he would govern the many blamelessly, and plans against enemies would be best kept secret this way. 3 In an oligarchy, where many men practice excellence in public life, strong private enmities tend to arise. Each one wants to be at the top himself and to have his views prevail, so they come to bitter hatred of one another. From this come factions, and from factions bloodshed; and from bloodshed it ends in monarchy—and this shows how far monarchy is the best. 4 Again, when the people rule, it is impossible for corruption not to arise. And when corruption arises in public affairs, the corrupt do not become enemies but strong friends, for those who are damaging the common good put their heads together to do it. This goes on

until someone takes the lead of the people and puts a stop to such men. As a result this man is admired by the people, and being admired he turns out to be a monarch—so he too proves that monarchy is the strongest. [5] To sum it all up in a word: where did our freedom come from, and who gave it to us? The people, an oligarchy, or a monarch? My view, then, is that since we were freed by one man, we should preserve that kind of rule, and apart from that, that we should not abolish our ancestral laws, which are good. We would be no better off for it."

[3.83] These were the three opinions set before them, and four of the seven men sided with the last. When Otanes, who was eager to give the Persians equality before the law, was defeated, he spoke to them all openly as follows: [2] "Fellow conspirators, it's clear that one of us has to become king—whether chosen by lot, or by letting the Persian people pick whoever they want, or by some other means. I won't compete with you; I want neither to rule nor to be ruled. I withdraw from the contest for rule on this condition: that I shall not be ruled by any of you, neither I myself nor my descendants for all time." [3] When he had said this and the six agreed on these terms, he did not compete with them but stood aside. And to this day his house remains the only free one among the Persians, and submits to rule only as far as it wishes, though without transgressing the laws of the Persians.

[3.84] The rest of the seven deliberated how they might most justly appoint a king. They decided that if the kingship went to someone else among the seven, Otanes and his descendants for all time should receive, as special privileges, a suit of Median clothing every year and every gift that the Persians hold most precious. Their reason for deciding to give him these things was that he had been the first to plan the deed and had brought them together. [2] These were Otanes' special privileges. For all of them in common they decided that any of the seven who wished might enter the palace without being announced, unless the King happened to be sleeping with a woman, and that the King should not be allowed to marry outside the families of those who had joined in the revolt. [3] About the kingship they decided

this: they would ride out to the outskirts of the city, and whoever's horse neighed first at sunrise, once they were mounted, should have the kingship.

DARIUS BECOMES KING

Darius' groom makes his horse neigh first, and Darius becomes king and marries into Cyrus' family.

3.85 Darius had a groom, a clever man, whose name was Oebares. When they had parted, Darius said to him: "Oebares, we've decided to settle the kingship this way: whoever's horse neighs first at sunrise, once we're mounted, is to have the kingship. So now, if you have any cleverness, contrive a way for us to win this prize and not someone else." 2 Oebares answered: "Master, if this is what decides whether you're king or not, take heart and don't worry on that score: no one else will be king before you. I've got just the charm for it." Darius said, "If you have some trick like that, now's the time to work it out, not put it off, since our contest is tomorrow." 3 Hearing this, Oebares did the following. When night came, he took one of the mares, the one Darius' horse was most fond of, led her to the outskirts of the city, and tied her up. Then he brought Darius' horse there, led him round and round close to the mare, brushing against her, and finally let the stallion mount her.

3.86 As day was dawning, the six arrived on their horses as agreed. As they rode through the outskirts and came to the spot where the mare had been tied the night before, Darius' horse ran up and neighed. 2 At the very moment the horse did this, there came lightning out of a clear sky, and thunder. These signs, coming on top of it, confirmed Darius as if by some prearranged agreement; and the others leapt down from their horses and prostrated themselves before Darius.

3.87 Some say that Oebares contrived it this way; others tell it like this (for the Persians tell it both ways): that he rubbed his hand on the mare's genitals and kept it hidden in his trousers; and that as the horses were about to be let go at sunrise, this

Oebares pulled out his hand and held it to the nostrils of Darius' horse, which caught the scent, snorted and neighed.

3.88 So Darius son of Hystaspes was proclaimed King, and everyone in Asia was subject to him except the Arabians, since Cyrus had subdued them and after him Cambyses again. The Arabians never submitted to the Persians in slavery, but became their friends when they let Cambyses through to Egypt; for without the Arabians' consent the Persians could not have invaded Egypt. 2 Darius made his first marriages among the Persians: two daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Artystone. Atossa had previously been the wife of her brother Cambyses and then of the Magus; Artystone was a virgin. 3 He also married a daughter of Smerdis son of Cyrus, whose name was Parmys; and he took as well the daughter of Otanes, the one who had exposed the Magus. His power filled every quarter. First of all he had a stone relief made and set up; on it was the figure of a horseman, and he inscribed it with words that said: "Darius son of Hystaspes, by the excellence of his horse" (giving its name) "and of Oebares his groom, won the kingship of the Persians."

THE TRIBUTE OF THE EMPIRE

Darius divides the empire into twenty provinces and fixes the tribute each must pay.

3.89 When he had done this, he established twenty provinces among the Persians, which they themselves call satrapies. Having set up the provinces and appointed governors over them, he fixed the tribute each was to pay him, nation by nation. To each nation he attached its neighbors, and, passing over those close by, he assigned the more distant peoples, some to one province and some to another. 2 He divided up the provinces and the annual payment of tribute as follows. Those who paid in silver were instructed to pay by the Babylonian talent, and those who paid in gold by the Euboean. The Babylonian talent is equal to

seventy-eight Euboean minas.[40] [3] For in the reign of Cyrus, and again of Cambyses, nothing had been fixed about tribute; people brought gifts instead. Because of this imposition of tribute and other measures like it, the Persians say that Darius was a shopkeeper, Cambyses a master, and Cyrus a father: Darius because he made a petty trade of everything, Cambyses because he was harsh and uncaring, and Cyrus because he was gentle and contrived every good thing for them.

3.90 From the Ionians, the Magnesians in Asia, the Aeolians, Carians, Lycians, Milyans and Pamphylians (for he had assessed a single tribute on all of them) came four hundred talents of silver. This was the first province he established. From the Mysians, Lydians, Lasonians, Cabalians and Hytennians came five hundred talents: this was the second province. [2] From the Hellespontians on the right as one sails in, the Phrygians, the Thracians in Asia, the Paphlagonians, Mariandynians and Syrians, the tribute was three hundred and sixty talents: this was the third province. [3] From the Cilicians came three hundred and sixty white horses, one for each day, and five hundred talents of silver. Of this, a hundred and forty talents were spent on the cavalry guarding Cilicia, and the remaining three hundred and sixty went to Darius: this was the fourth province.

3.91 From the city of Posideium, which Amphilochus son of Amphiaraus founded on the border between the Cilicians and the Syrians, starting from there and running as far as Egypt—except for the territory of the Arabians, which was exempt from tribute—the tribute was three hundred and fifty talents. In this province are all of Phoenicia, the part of Syria called Palestine, and Cyprus: this was the fifth province. [2] From Egypt, the Libyans bordering on Egypt, and Cyrene and Barca (for these were assigned to the Egyptian province) came seven hundred talents, besides the silver that came from Lake Moeris, which was produced by its fish. [3] Apart from this silver and the grain [measured out in addition], seven hundred talents came in; for they

40 A satrapy was a province of the Persian empire, ruled by a governor called a satrap.

also measure out a hundred and twenty thousand measures of grain for the Persians quartered in the White Fort at Memphis and for their auxiliaries. This was the sixth province. [4] The Sattagydae, Gandarians, Dadicae and Aparytae, assessed together, paid a hundred and seventy talents: this was the seventh province. From Susa and the rest of the country of the Cissians, three hundred: this was the eighth province.

[3.92] From Babylon and the rest of Assyria came a thousand talents of silver and five hundred castrated boys: this was the ninth province. From Ecbatana and the rest of Media, the Paricanians and the Orthocorybantians, four hundred and fifty talents: this was the tenth province. [2] The Caspians, Pausicae, Pantimathi and Daritae, contributing together, paid two hundred talents: this was the eleventh province.

[3.93] From the Bactrians as far as the Aegli the tribute was three hundred and sixty talents: this was the twelfth province. From Pactyica, the Armenians and their neighbors as far as the Black Sea, four hundred talents: this was the thirteenth province. [2] From the Sagartians, Sarangians, Thamanaeans, Utians and Mycians, and those who live on the islands in the Red Sea where the King settles the people called "the Uprooted," from all these together came a tribute of six hundred talents: this was the fourteenth province. [3] The Sacae and Caspians paid two hundred and fifty talents: this was the fifteenth province. The Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians and Arians, three hundred talents: this was the sixteenth province.

[3.94] The Paricanians and the Ethiopians of Asia paid four hundred talents: this was the seventeenth province. The Matieni, Saspires and Alarodians were assessed at two hundred talents: this was the eighteenth province. [2] The Moschi, Tibareni, Macrones, Mossynoeci and Mares were ordered to pay three hundred talents: this was the nineteenth province. The Indians are by far the most numerous of all the peoples we know of, and they paid a tribute larger than all the others put together, three hundred and sixty talents of gold dust: this was the twentieth province.

3.95 Now the Babylonian silver, converted into Euboean talents, comes to nine thousand eight hundred and eighty talents. If gold is reckoned at thirteen times the value of silver, the gold dust is found to be worth four thousand six hundred and eighty Euboean talents. 2 So when all of this is added together, the total collected for Darius in yearly tribute came to fourteen thousand five hundred and sixty Euboean talents. Sums smaller than these I leave out and do not mention.[41]

3.96 This was the tribute that came in to Darius from Asia and from a few places in Libya. As time went on, however, more tribute came in from the islands as well, and from the peoples living in Europe as far as Thessaly. 2 The King stores this tribute in the following way. He melts it down and pours it into earthenware jars, and when the jar is full he strips away the clay. Then, whenever he needs money, he cuts off as much as he needs at the time.

3.97 These, then, were the provinces and the assessments of tribute. Persia is the only country I have not listed as paying tribute, for the Persians hold their land free of taxes. 2 The following peoples were assessed no tribute but brought gifts instead. First, the Ethiopians who border on Egypt, whom Cambyses subdued when he marched against the long-lived Ethiopians. They live around sacred Nysa and hold festivals for Dionysus [these Ethiopians and their neighbors use the same grain as the Callantian Indians, and they live in underground dwellings].[42] 3 Both these peoples together brought every other year, and still bring down to my own day, two choenixes of unrefined gold, two hundred logs of ebony, five Ethiopian boys and twenty large elephant tusks. 4 The Colchians also assessed themselves for a gift, and so did their neighbors as far as the Caucasus mountains (for Persian rule extends as far as this range, while the lands north of the Caucasus pay no heed to the Per-

41 The Babylonian talent was heavier than the Euboean standard familiar to Herodotus' Greek readers.

42 Nysa was the legendary place where Dionysus was raised; the Greeks located it in various distant lands.

sians at all). These peoples, then, still brought the gifts they had assessed themselves in my time, every four years: a hundred boys and a hundred girls. [5] The Arabians brought a thousand talents of frankincense every year. These were the gifts that these peoples brought the King over and above the tribute.[43]

INDIA AND THE GOLD-DIGGING ANTS

Herodotus describes the peoples of India and how they steal gold-bearing sand from giant ants.

3.98 The Indians get the great quantity of gold from which they bring the King the gold dust I mentioned in the following way. [2] The part of India toward the rising sun is sand. Of all the peoples we know, and about whom anything reliable is reported, the Indians live farthest toward the dawn and the sunrise of all the peoples in Asia; for the land east of the Indians is empty desert because of the sand. [3] There are many Indian peoples, and they do not speak the same language. Some of them are nomads and some are not. Some live in the marshes of the river and eat raw fish, which they catch from boats made of reed; each boat is made from a single joint of reed. [4] These Indians wear clothing made of rushes. When they have cut the rushes from the river and beaten them, they plait them like a mat and put them on like a breastplate.

3.99 Other Indians, living east of these, are nomads who eat raw meat. They are called Padaei, and they are said to have the following customs. Whenever one of their people falls sick, whether a woman or a man, if it is a man, the men who are his closest companions kill him, saying that if he wastes away with disease his flesh will be spoiled for them. He denies that he is ill, but they will not hear of it; they kill him and feast on him. [2] If a woman falls sick, the women closest to her do to her just what the men do. Anyone who reaches old age they sacrifice and feast on. But not many of them get that far, for before then they kill everyone who falls ill.

43 The choenix was a dry measure of roughly a liter (about a quart).

3.100 Other Indians have yet another way of life. They kill no living thing, sow nothing, have no custom of owning houses, and live on plants. They have a grain about the size of millet, in a husk, which springs up from the ground by itself; they gather it and boil it, husk and all, and eat it. Any of them who falls ill goes off into the wilderness and lies there, and no one gives any thought to him, whether he dies or lies sick.

3.101 All these Indians I have listed have intercourse in the open, like herd animals, and all have the same skin color, much like the Ethiopians. 2 The semen they ejaculate into the women is not white, as with other people, but black like their skin; the Ethiopians too ejaculate semen of this kind. These Indians live far away from the Persians, toward the south, and were never subject to King Darius.

3.102 Other Indians live next to the city of Caspatyrus and the Pactyic country, settled to the north of the rest of the Indians, and they have a way of life much like that of the Bactrians. These are the most warlike of the Indians, and it is they who are sent out for the gold, for in this region the land is desert because of the sand. 2 In this desert and sand there live ants that are smaller than dogs but bigger than foxes; some of them, caught there, are kept at the court of the King of the Persians. These ants make their homes underground and carry up the sand, in just the same way as the ants among the Greeks, and they are very like them in form too; and the sand they carry up has gold in it. 3 It is for this sand that the Indians set out into the desert. Each man harnesses three camels: a male on either side, pulling alongside on a trace, and a female in the middle. He rides the female himself, taking care to harness one that has been separated from the youngest possible foal. For their camels are no slower than horses, and besides are far better able to carry loads.

3.103 What a camel looks like I do not describe, since the Greeks know it already; but I will tell what they do not know about it. In its hind legs a camel has four thighs and four knees, and its genitals point back between its hind legs toward its tail.

3.104 With this method, then, and this kind of team, the Indians ride out for the gold, having worked out their timing so that they will be doing their plundering when the heat is at its fiercest; for in the heat the ants disappear underground. 2 For these people the sun is hottest in the morning, not at midday as it is for everyone else, but from sunrise until the hour when the market breaks up. During this time it burns far more fiercely than it does in Greece at midday, so much so that they are said to soak themselves in water then.[44] 3 At midday the sun burns other people and the Indians about equally. As the afternoon wears on, the sun is for them what the morning sun is for others, and from then on, as it goes down, it grows cooler and cooler, until at sunset it is very cold indeed.

3.105 When the Indians reach the place, carrying sacks, they fill them with the sand and ride back as fast as they can; for, as the Persians say, the ants at once sense them by smell and give chase. According to the Persians, nothing else can match them for speed, so that unless the Indians got a head start on the way while the ants were gathering, not one of them would get away alive. 2 The male camels, they say, are slower runners than the females, so they are cut loose as they begin to lag, though not both at once; while the females, remembering the young they left behind, never slacken at all. This, according to the Persians, is how the Indians get most of their gold; there is also other gold, scarcer, which is mined in the country.

3.106 The farthest parts of the inhabited world have somehow been allotted the finest things, just as Greece has been allotted by far the most finely tempered seasons. 2 For one thing, India is the farthest of the inhabited lands toward the east, as I said a little earlier. There the living creatures, four-footed and winged alike, are much bigger than in other places, except for the horses (these are outdone by the Median horses, the ones called Nesaean); and there is gold there in boundless quantity, some mined, some washed down by rivers, some plundered in the

44 The Greeks marked the late morning, around noon, as the time when the marketplace emptied.

way I have described. [3] And the wild trees there bear as their fruit a wool that surpasses the wool of sheep in beauty and quality; the Indians wear clothing made from these trees.

THE SPICES OF ARABIA

How the Arabians gather frankincense, cassia, cinnamon and ladanum, and what lies at the ends of the earth.

3.107 Toward the south, again, Arabia is the farthest of the inhabited lands. It is the only country of all where frankincense grows, and myrrh, cassia, cinnamon and ledanon. All of these except myrrh the Arabians get only with difficulty. [2] Frankincense they gather by burning styrax, which the Phoenicians export to the Greeks; they burn this to get it. For the trees that bear frankincense are guarded by winged snakes, small in size and of many colors, a great many of them around each tree. These are the same snakes that invade Egypt, and nothing drives them away from the trees except the smoke of styrax.[45]

3.108 The Arabians also say this: the whole earth would be full of these snakes if the same thing did not happen with them that I knew to happen with vipers. [2] And somehow the forethought of the divine, wise as one would expect it to be, has made all creatures that are timid and good to eat prolific, so that they are not eaten out of existence, while it has made those that are savage and harmful bear few young. [3] For instance, because the hare is hunted by every beast and bird and by man, it is extremely prolific. It is the only animal that conceives while already pregnant: in its womb some of its young are furred, some still bare, some just being formed, and some just being conceived. [4] So it is with the hare. But the lioness, the strongest and boldest of creatures, gives birth once in her life, to a single cub, for in giving birth she expels her womb along with the cub. The reason is this. When the cub inside its mother begins to stir, it tears at the womb with its claws, which are by far the sharpest

45 Styrax (storax) is an aromatic tree resin. Herodotus described the winged snakes' flights into Egypt earlier, at 2.75.

of any animal's; and as it grows it scratches its way much deeper in. By the time the birth is near, nothing of the womb is left intact at all.

3.109 In the same way, if vipers and the winged snakes of Arabia multiplied as freely as their nature allows, life would be impossible for human beings. As it is, when they couple in pairs and the male is in the act of emission, the female seizes him by the neck as he releases his seed, and clings on and does not let go until she has bitten clean through. 2 The male dies in the way I have described, and the female pays the male retribution for it, as follows. Avenging their father, the young, while still in her belly, eat their way through their mother, and once they have eaten through her womb they make their way out. 3 Other snakes, which are not harmful to humans, lay eggs and hatch a great number of young. Vipers are found all over the earth, but the winged snakes are concentrated in Arabia and are found nowhere else; that is why they seem so numerous.

3.110 This, then, is how the Arabians get frankincense; cassia they get as follows. They bind their whole body and face, all but the eyes themselves, in oxhides and other skins, and go out after the cassia. It grows in a shallow lake, and around the lake and in it there live, it seems, winged creatures very like bats, which screech terribly and fight fiercely in their own defense. The Arabians have to keep these away from their eyes while they cut the cassia.

3.111 Cinnamon they gather in a way still more remarkable. Where it grows and what land produces it they cannot say, except that some, arguing from likelihood, say it grows in the regions where Dionysus was raised. 2 They say that large birds carry these sticks, which we, having learned the word from the Phoenicians, call cinnamon. The birds, they say, carry them to nests stuck together out of mud on sheer cliffs, where no human can climb up. 3 To deal with this, they say, the Arabians have devised the following trick. They cut up the limbs of dead oxen and donkeys and other pack animals into the largest pieces they can, carry them to these places, set them down near the nests

and withdraw far away. The birds fly down and carry the limbs of the pack animals up to their nests, and the nests, unable to bear the weight, break and fall to the ground, where the men come up and collect the cinnamon. This, according to them, is how cinnamon is gathered and reaches other countries.

3.112 Ledanon, which the Arabians call ladanon, is more remarkable still. Though it comes from a most foul-smelling place, it is most fragrant: it is found in the beards of he-goats, forming there like gum from the brushwood. It is useful for many perfumes, and it is what the Arabians burn most as incense.[46]

3.113 Let that be enough said about spices; but the land of Arabia gives off a marvelously sweet scent. They also have two kinds of sheep worth wondering at, which are found nowhere else. One kind has long tails, no less than three cubits long; if these sheep were allowed to drag them behind, they would get sores from their tails rubbing along the ground. 2 As it is, every one of the shepherds knows enough carpentry to make little carts, which they fasten under the tails, tying each animal's tail onto a cart of its own. The other kind of sheep has broad tails, as much as a cubit wide.

3.114 To the southwest, toward the setting sun, lies Ethiopia, the farthest of the inhabited lands. It produces much gold, huge elephants, all kinds of wild trees, ebony, and men who are the tallest, the most handsome and the longest-lived of all.

3.115 These, then, are the farthest lands in Asia and in Libya. About the farthest lands of Europe toward the west I cannot speak with certainty. For my part I do not accept that there is a river called the Eridanus by non-Greeks, flowing into the northern sea, from which amber is said to come; nor do I know of any Tin Islands, from which our tin comes. 2 For one thing, the name Eridanus itself shows that it is Greek and not foreign, the invention of some poet. For another, though I have taken pains over the question, I have not been able to hear from anyone who had

46 Ladanum is a sticky resin from rockrose shrubs; it collects on the beards of goats that browse on them.

seen it with his own eyes that there is a sea on the far side of Europe. Still, our tin and our amber do come from the ends of the earth.[47]

3.116 In the north of Europe there is evidently by far the most gold. How it comes about, this too I cannot say for certain; but it is said that one-eyed men, the Arimaspians, steal it from under the griffins. 2 I do not believe this either, that men are born with one eye who are otherwise like other people in their nature. 3 At any rate, it seems that the outermost lands, which encircle the rest of the world and enclose it within them, have the things we think finest and rarest.

3.117 There is a plain in Asia enclosed on all sides by mountains, with five gorges through the mountains. This plain once belonged to the Chorasmians, lying as it does on the borders of the Chorasmians themselves, the Hyrcanians, the Parthians, the Sarangians and the Thamanaeans; but ever since the Persians came to power it has belonged to the King. 2 From this encircling range flows a great river, whose name is the Aces. Formerly this river was divided into five streams and watered the lands of the peoples I have named, being led to each of them through its own gorge. But since they came under the Persian, this is what has happened to them. 3 The King walled up the gorges in the mountains and set gates at each one. With the water shut off from its outlet, the plain within the mountains becomes a sea, since the river keeps flowing in and has no way out anywhere. 4 So those who used to use the water, now unable to use it, are in great hardship. In winter the god sends them rain as he does other people, but in summer, when they sow millet and sesame, they need the water. 5 So whenever no water is let through to them, they go to Persia, men and women alike, stand at the King's doors and cry out and howl; and the King orders the gates leading to those who need it most to be opened. 6 When their land has drunk its fill of water, these gates are shut, and he orders others to be opened for those of the rest who need it

47 The Greek name is *Kassiterides*, from *kassiteros*, "tin"; the Eridanus was a river of myth.

most. As I know from what I have heard, he exacts large sums of money for opening them, over and above the tribute.

THE WIFE OF INTAPHERNES

Darius condemns Intaphernes and his family, and his wife chooses to save her brother over husband and children.

3.118 So much for that. Of the seven men who rose against the Magus, one, Intaphernes, committed the following outrage and was put to death immediately after the rising. He wanted to enter the palace to do business with the King. And in fact the rule was that those who had risen against the Magus could go in to the King without being announced, unless the King happened to be in bed with a woman. 2 So Intaphernes saw no reason for anyone to announce him, but meant to go in because he was one of the seven. The gatekeeper and the messenger would not allow it, saying that the King was in bed with a woman. Intaphernes, thinking they were lying, did this: he drew his short sword and cut off their ears and noses, strung these on his horse's bridle, tied it around their necks and sent them away.

3.119 They showed themselves to the King and told him the reason they had been treated this way. Darius, afraid that the six had done this by common agreement, sent for each of them in turn and sounded out his views, to see whether he approved of what had been done. 2 When he was quite sure that Intaphernes had not done it in concert with them, he arrested Intaphernes himself, his sons and all his household, strongly suspecting that he and his kinsmen were plotting a rising against him; and having seized them he put them in chains to await execution. 3 Intaphernes' wife kept coming to the King's doors, weeping and lamenting; and by doing this over and over she moved Darius to pity her. He sent a messenger to tell her: "Woman, King Darius grants you the release of one of your imprisoned family, whichever of them all you wish." 4 She thought it over and answered: "If the King grants me the life of one, then out of them all I choose my brother." 5 When Darius heard this, he was

amazed at her answer and sent to say: "Woman, the King asks you what reasoning made you abandon your husband and children and choose that your brother should survive, when he is less closely related to you than your children and less dear to you than your husband." [6] She answered him as follows: "King, I could have another husband, if heaven willed it, and other children, if I lost these. But since my father and mother are no longer alive, there's no way I could ever have another brother. That was my reasoning when I said what I did." [7] Darius thought the woman had spoken well, and, pleased with her, he released to her the one she had begged for and the eldest of her sons as well; all the rest he put to death. So one of the seven perished almost at once, in the way I have described.[48]

THE DEATH OF POLYCRATES

The Persian governor Oroetes lures Polycrates to the mainland and kills him; Darius later has Oroetes killed.

3.120 It was at about the time of Cambyses' illness that the following happened. Oroetes, a Persian, had been appointed governor of Sardis by Cyrus. This man set his heart on an unholy deed. He had suffered no harm from Polycrates of Samos and heard no rash word from him, and had never even seen him. Yet he wanted to seize him and destroy him, and most people say it was for the following reason. [2] They say that Oroetes and another Persian named Mitrobates, governor of the province at Dascylium, were sitting at the King's gates, and their talk turned into a quarrel. As they were disputing about excellence, Mitrobates threw this in Oroetes' face: [3] "Do you count as a man? You never won for the King the island of Samos, lying right next to your province, and it's so easy to conquer that one of the locals rose up with fifteen hoplites, took it, and is now its tyrant!" [4] Some say that when Oroetes heard this, stung by the insult, he wanted not so much to punish the man who had said it as to des-

48 The same argument appears in Sophocles' *Antigone* (lines 905–912), staged at Athens around the time Herodotus was writing.

troy Polycrates by any means, since it was because of Polycrates that he had been insulted.[49]

3.121 But a smaller number say that Oroetes sent a herald to Samos to ask for something or other (what it was is not reported). Polycrates, they say, happened to be reclining in the men's hall, and Anacreon of Teos was with him. 2 And somehow, whether he was deliberately showing his contempt for Oroetes' affairs or whether it simply happened by chance, Polycrates behaved like this. Oroetes' herald came forward and addressed him, and Polycrates, who happened to be turned toward the wall, neither turned around nor gave any answer.[50]

3.122 These, then, are the two causes said to have brought about Polycrates' death. One may believe whichever of them one likes. At any rate, Oroetes, who was based at Magnesia, the city that lies above the river Maeander, sent Myrsus son of Gyges, a Lydian, to Samos with a message, for he had learned what Polycrates had in mind. 2 Polycrates is the first of the Greeks we know of who set out to rule the sea. I leave aside Minos of Cnossus, and anyone else who may have ruled the sea before him. But in what is called the age of men, Polycrates was the first, and he had high hopes of ruling Ionia and the islands.[51] 3 So when Oroetes learned that this was what he was planning, he sent him a message that said: "Oroetes says this to Polycrates. I hear that you are planning great undertakings, and that you don't have the money to match your ambitions. Do as I say, then, and you will set yourself up and save me too. King Cambyses is plotting my death, and I have clear reports of it. 4 So carry me away, together with my money. Keep part of it yourself, and let me keep the rest. With that money you will rule all Greece. And if you don't believe what I say about the money, send whoever happens to be your most trusted man, and I will show it to him."

3.123 When he heard this, Polycrates was delighted and agreed. And since he had a great craving for money, he first sent Mae-

49 Hoplites were heavily armed infantry.
50 Anacreon of Teos was a celebrated lyric poet who lived at Polycrates' court.

andrius son of Maeandrius, one of the citizens, who was his secretary, to look it over. Not long afterward this same man dedicated all the furnishings of Polycrates' men's hall, which were well worth seeing, to the temple of Hera. [2] When Oroetes learned that the inspector was expected, he did the following. He filled eight chests with stones, all but a very small space just below the rims, and laid gold on top of the stones. Then he tied up the chests and kept them ready. Maeandrius came, looked, and reported back to Polycrates.

[3.124] Polycrates set out to go there, though the seers strongly advised against it, and so did his friends. What is more, his daughter had a vision in a dream. She dreamed that her father was high up in the air, being washed by Zeus and anointed by the sun. [2] After this vision she tried everything to keep Polycrates from going abroad to Oroetes. Even as he was walking to his fifty-oared ship, she called out words of ill omen after him. He threatened her that if he came home safe she would remain unmarried for a long time. She prayed that it would come true, saying she would rather stay unmarried a long time than lose her father.

[3.125] But Polycrates ignored all advice and sailed to Oroetes. He took many of his companions with him, among them Democedes son of Calliphon, of Croton, a physician who practiced his art better than anyone of his time. [2] When he arrived at Magnesia, Polycrates was miserably put to death, in a way worthy neither of himself nor of his ambitions. For apart from those who became tyrants of Syracuse, not one of the other Greek tyrants deserves to be compared with Polycrates for magnificence.[52] [3] Oroetes killed him in a way not fit to be told, and then crucified his body. Of his followers, he let go all who were Samians, telling them they should be grateful to him for their freedom. Those of the followers who were foreigners or slaves he kept, treating them as captives. [4] And Polycrates, hanging there,

51 Minos was a legendary king of Crete. Herodotus sets him apart from the age of men, the period of recorded history.

52 Croton was a Greek city in southern Italy.

fulfilled his daughter's vision completely: he was washed by Zeus whenever it rained, and anointed by the sun as the moisture ran out of his body.

3.126 So Polycrates' many strokes of good fortune ended as Amasis, king of Egypt, had foretold. Not long afterward, vengeance for Polycrates caught up with Oroetes too. After the death of Cambyses and the reign of the Magi, Oroetes stayed on in Sardis and did nothing to help the Persians, who had been robbed of their rule by the Medes.[53] 2 In this time of confusion he killed Mitrobates, the governor from Dascylium, who had taunted him about Polycrates. He also killed Mitrobates' son Cranaspes, both of them men of note among the Persians. He committed all kinds of other outrages too. When a courier from Darius came to him with a message that was not to his liking, he had the man killed on his way back, setting men in ambush for him on the road. Once he had killed him, he made him vanish, horse and all.

3.127 When Darius had gained the throne, he wanted to punish Oroetes for all his crimes, and above all for Mitrobates and his son. It did not seem wise to send an army against him openly, since affairs were still in turmoil. Darius was also new to power, and he heard that Oroetes had great strength: a thousand Persians served as his bodyguard, and he held the provinces of Phrygia, Lydia and Ionia. 2 So, faced with this, Darius devised the following plan. He called together the most distinguished Persians and said to them: "Persians, which of you would undertake this for me and accomplish it by cleverness, not by force and numbers? Where cleverness is needed, force is no use. 3 So which of you would either bring me Oroetes alive or kill him? He has never yet done the Persians any good, and he has done them great harm. He has wiped out two of us, Mitrobates and his son, and he kills the men I send to summon him, showing an arrogance not to be endured. So before he does the Persians some still greater harm, we must stop him with death."

53 Amasis had warned Polycrates that unbroken good fortune provokes the jealousy of the gods (3.40–43).

3.128 This was Darius' question, and thirty men offered themselves, each wanting to do it himself. As they were contending, Darius stopped them and told them to draw lots. When they drew, the lot fell, out of them all, on Bagaeus son of Artontes. 2 Having won the lot, Bagaeus did this. He wrote out many letters dealing with many matters and put Darius' seal on them. Then he took them with him to Sardis. 3 When he arrived and came into Oroetes' presence, he unwrapped the letters one by one and gave them to the royal secretary to read out, since all governors have royal secretaries. Bagaeus was handing out the letters to test the bodyguards, to see whether they would accept a revolt against Oroetes. 4 He saw that they treated the letters with great reverence, and what was read out from them with even more. So he handed over another one, which contained these words: "Persians, King Darius forbids you to serve as Oroetes' bodyguard." When they heard this, they lowered their spears before him. 5 When Bagaeus saw them obeying the letter, he took courage and gave the secretary the last of the letters, in which was written: "King Darius commands the Persians in Sardis to kill Oroetes." As soon as the bodyguards heard this, they drew their short swords and killed him on the spot. That is how vengeance for Polycrates of Samos caught up with Oroetes the Persian.

DEMOCEDES THE PHYSICIAN

A Greek doctor cures Darius and escapes home; Darius then takes Samos for Syloson, Polycrates' brother.

3.129 Oroetes' property arrived and was carried up to Susa. Not long afterward it happened that King Darius, while out hunting, twisted his foot jumping down from his horse. 2 It was twisted rather badly, for the ankle bone was put out of its joint. He had already been in the habit of keeping about him those Egyptians reputed to be the foremost in medicine, and he called on them now. But by wrenching and forcing the foot they made the injury worse. 3 For seven days and seven nights Darius could not sleep for the pain. On the eighth day, when he was in a bad way,

someone who had heard earlier, while still at Sardis, of the skill of Democedes of Croton told Darius about him. Darius ordered the man brought to him as quickly as possible. They found him somewhere among Oroetes' captives, neglected, and brought him before them all, dragging fetters and dressed in rags.

3.130 When he had been set before them, Darius asked him whether he knew the art. He would not admit it, for he was afraid that if he revealed who he was he would be cut off from Greece forever. 2 But it was clear to Darius that he knew the art and was playing tricks, and he ordered the men who had brought him to bring whips and goads out before them. Only then did he reveal it. He said that he had no precise knowledge, but that from keeping company with a physician he had picked up a little of the art. 3 After that, when Darius put himself in his hands, Democedes used Greek remedies, applying gentle treatments after the violent ones. He got him to sleep, and in a short time he made him well, though Darius had given up hope of ever having a sound foot again. 4 After this Darius made him a present of two pairs of golden fetters. Democedes asked him whether he was deliberately doubling his misery as a reward for making him well. Darius was pleased by the remark and sent him to his wives. The eunuchs who brought him in told the women that this was the man who had given the King back his life. 5 Each of them dipped a bowl into a chest of gold and gave it to Democedes. The gift was so lavish that his servant, whose name was Sciton, followed behind, picking up the staters that fell from the bowls, and a great sum of gold was gathered for him.[54]

3.131 This is how Democedes had come from Croton and joined Polycrates. At Croton he was plagued by a father with a harsh temper. When he could no longer bear him, he left and went to Aegina. Once he had settled there, in his first year he outdid the other physicians, though he had no equipment and none of the instruments that belong to the art. 2 In his second year the Aeginetans hired him at public expense for a talent, in his third

54 Staters were gold coins.

year the Athenians hired him for a hundred minas, and in the fourth year Polycrates hired him for two talents. That is how he came to Samos, and it was not least because of this man that the physicians of Croton won their reputation. [3] This was the time when the physicians of Croton were said to be the best in Greece, with those of Cyrene second. At this same time the Argives were reputed to be the foremost of the Greeks in music.

[3.132] So at that time, having cured Darius in Susa, Democedes had a very large house and had become one of those who ate at the King's table. He had everything except one thing, going back to the Greeks. [2] The Egyptian physicians who had treated the King before were about to be impaled for being outdone by a Greek physician, and Democedes saved them by begging the King for their lives. He also rescued a seer from Elis who had followed Polycrates and been left neglected among the captives. Democedes was a very great figure at the King's court.

[3.133] A short time after this, something else happened. Atossa, daughter of Cyrus and wife of Darius, developed a growth on her breast, which later broke open and kept spreading. As long as it was small, she hid it and out of shame told no one. But when it became serious, she sent for Democedes and showed it to him. [2] He said he would make her well, but he made her swear that in return she would do him whatever favor he asked of her. He would ask, he said, for nothing that would bring her shame.

[3.134] So when, after this, his treatment had made her well, Atossa, coached by Democedes, put this proposal to Darius in bed: "King, you sit idle with all this power, winning no new nation and no new power for the Persians. [2] It's fitting for a man who is young and master of great wealth to be seen achieving something, so that the Persians may learn that they are ruled by a man. Doing this serves you in two ways: the Persians will know that their leader is a man, and they will be worn down by war instead of having the leisure to plot against you. [3] Now is when you could achieve some great deed, while you are still young. As the body grows, the mind grows with it; but as the

body ages, the mind ages with it and grows dull to everything." [4] She said this as she had been taught, and he answered: "Wife, you have spoken of everything I already mean to do. I have decided to bridge the way from this continent to the other and march against the Scythians. And this will be accomplished before long." Atossa said this: [5] "Look: leave off going against the Scythians for now. They will be yours whenever you like. Do this for me instead: march against Greece. From what I hear tell, I long to have Laconian maidservants, and Argive ones, and Attic and Corinthian ones. And you have the man best suited of all men to show you everything in Greece and guide you there: the man who healed your foot." [6] Darius answered: "Wife, since you think we should try Greece first, I think it better first to send Persian spies there, together with this man you mention. They will learn and see everything there and report it all to us. Then, with full knowledge, I will turn against them."

3.135 So he spoke, and no sooner said than done. As soon as day dawned, he summoned fifteen distinguished Persians and ordered them to follow Democedes and travel through the coastal regions of Greece. They were to make sure that Democedes did not escape them, and to bring him back at all costs. [2] Having given them these orders, he next summoned Democedes himself and asked him to guide the Persians through all Greece, show it to them, and come back. He told him to take all his household goods with him as gifts for his father and brothers, promising to give him many times as much in return. Besides that, he said, he would add to the gifts a merchant ship loaded with all sorts of good things, which would sail with him. [3] Darius, in my opinion, made him these promises without any deceitful intent. But Democedes was afraid that Darius was testing him, and so he did not eagerly accept everything offered. He said he would leave his own goods where they were, so that he would have them when he came back. He said he would accept, however, the merchant ship that Darius was promising as a gift for his brothers. Darius gave him the same orders as the others and sent them off to the sea.

3.136 These men went down to Phoenicia, and in Phoenicia to the city of Sidon. There they at once manned two triremes, and along with them a large cargo ship full of all kinds of good things. When everything was ready they sailed for Greece. They put in along its coasts, viewing them and writing down what they saw, until they had seen most of it and its famous places and arrived at Tarentum in Italy. 2 There, to oblige Democedes, Aristophilides, the king of the Tarentines, removed the steering oars from the Median ships and locked up the Persians themselves, on the pretext that they were spies. While this was happening to them, Democedes reached Croton. Once he had arrived in his own city, Aristophilides released the Persians and gave back what he had taken from their ships.[55]

3.137 Sailing from there in pursuit of Democedes, the Persians came to Croton. They found him in the marketplace and laid hands on him. 2 Some of the Crotonians, terrified of Persian power, were ready to give him up. But others seized hold of him in their turn and beat the Persians with their sticks, while the Persians protested: "Men of Croton, watch what you're doing! You're snatching away a runaway who belongs to the King. 3 How will King Darius be content to be insulted like this? How will things go well for you if you take him from us? What city will we march against before this one? What city will we try to enslave before yours?" 4 This did not persuade the Crotonians. Robbed of Democedes and of the cargo ship they had brought with them, the Persians sailed back to Asia. Deprived of their guide, they made no further attempt to reach the rest of Greece and learn about it. 5 As they were putting out to sea, however, Democedes gave them this much of a message: they were to tell Darius that Democedes was engaged to marry Milo's daughter. For the name of Milo the wrestler counted for a great deal with the King. In my opinion, it was for this reason that Democedes hurried on this marriage and paid a great deal of money for it:

55 "Median" here means Persian: the Greeks often called the Persians "Medes."

so that Darius would see that he was a man of standing in his own country too.[56]

3.138 After putting out from Croton, the Persians were wrecked with their ships on the coast of Iapygia. While they were living there as slaves, Gillus, a Tarentine exile, ransomed them and brought them back to King Darius. In return Darius was ready to give him whatever he himself wished. 2 Gillus first told him the story of his misfortune, and then chose to be restored to Tarentum. But so as not to throw Greece into turmoil, as would happen if a great expedition sailed to Italy on his account, he said it would be enough for him if the Cnidians alone brought him home. He thought his return was most likely to be achieved through them, since they were particular friends of the Tarentines.[57] 3 Darius promised and set about keeping his word. He sent a messenger to Cnidus and ordered the Cnidians to restore Gillus to Tarentum. The Cnidians obeyed Darius, but they could not persuade the Tarentines, and they were not strong enough to use force. 4 That is how these things were done. These were the first Persians to come from Asia to Greece, and this is how they came to be spies.

3.139 After this King Darius took Samos, the first of all the cities, Greek or non-Greek, that he captured. The reason was something like this. When Cambyses son of Cyrus was campaigning against Egypt, a good many Greeks came to Egypt. Some, as you would expect, came along with the army to trade; some came to see the country itself. Among them was Syloson son of Aeaces, the brother of Polycrates and an exile from Samos. 2 This Syloson had a stroke of good luck, which came about like this. He had put on a red cloak and was going about the marketplace in Memphis. Darius, who was then one of Cambyses' bodyguards and not yet a man of any great account, saw him, wanted the cloak, and went up and offered to buy it. 3 Syloson saw how

56 Milo of Croton was the most famous wrestler of the age, many times victor at Olympia.

57 Iapygia was the heel of Italy, in the southeast; Tarentum (modern Taranto) lay on its gulf.

badly Darius wanted the cloak and, by some divine stroke of fortune, said: "I won't sell this for any price. But I'll give it to you for nothing, if it really must be yours." Darius accepted gladly and took the garment.

3.140 Syloson knew he had lost it through his own simple good nature. But as time went on, Cambyses died, the seven rose against the Magus, and of the seven it was Darius who obtained the kingship. Syloson then learned that the kingship had passed to the very man to whom he had once given the garment in Egypt when he asked for it. So he went up to Susa, sat down at the entrance of the King's palace, and said that he was a benefactor of Darius. 2 The gatekeeper heard this and reported it to the King. Darius was astonished and said to him: "And which Greek is this benefactor I owe a debt of gratitude to, when I've only just come to power? Hardly any of them, if any, has come up here to us yet, and I can't think of anything I owe a Greek. Still, bring him in, so I can find out what he means by saying this." 3 The gatekeeper brought Syloson in, and when he stood before them, the interpreters asked him who he was and what he had done to call himself the King's benefactor. So Syloson told the whole story of the cloak, and said that he was the man who had given it. 4 Darius answered: "Noblest of men, so you're the one who gave me a gift when I had no power at all yet! It was small, I grant, but my gratitude is just as great as if I were given something great today. In return I'll give you gold and silver beyond counting, so that you may never regret doing a kindness to Darius son of Hystaspes." To this Syloson replied: 5 "Give me neither gold, King, nor silver. Recover my homeland, Samos, and give it back to me. Since my brother Polycrates was killed by Oroetes, a slave of ours has held it. Give it to me without bloodshed and without enslaving anyone."

3.141 On hearing this, Darius sent out an army under the command of Otanes, one of the seven, with instructions to carry out everything Syloson had asked for. Otanes went down to the coast and made the army ready.

3.142 Samos was then in the power of Maeandrius son of Maeandrius, who had been given the rule in trust by Polycrates. He wished to be the most just of men, but it was not granted him. 2 When the news of Polycrates' death reached him, this is what he did. First he set up an altar of Zeus the Liberator and marked out around it the sacred precinct that is now in the city's suburb. Then, when this was done, he called an assembly of all the citizens and spoke as follows: 3 "As you yourselves know, Polycrates' scepter and all his power have been entrusted to me, and it is now in my hands to rule over you. But what I criticize in my neighbor I will not do myself, as far as I can help it. I did not like Polycrates' lording it over men who were his equals, nor do I like it in anyone else who does such things. Now Polycrates has met his fate, and I am placing power in the hands of all and proclaiming equality before the law for you. 4 I do, however, claim these privileges for myself: that six talents be set aside for me from Polycrates' wealth, and in addition I choose for myself and my descendants forever the priesthood of Zeus the Liberator, since I myself founded his sanctuary and I am now bestowing freedom on you." 5 That was what he proclaimed to the Samians. But one of them stood up and said: "You aren't even fit to rule us, low-born menace that you are. You'd do better to see that you give an account of the money you've handled."

3.143 The man who said this was a person of standing among the citizens, named Telesarchus. Maeandrius realized that if he gave up power, someone else would set himself up as tyrant in his place, and so he no longer had any intention of giving it up. Instead he withdrew to the acropolis and sent for the citizens one by one, supposedly to give them an account of the money; then he arrested them and put them in chains. 2 So they were held in chains, and after this Maeandrius fell ill. His brother, whose name was Lycaretus, expected him to die, and to make it easier to take control of affairs in Samos he killed all the prisoners. For it seems they did not, after all, want to be free.

3.144 So when the Persians arrived at Samos bringing Syloson home, no one raised a hand against them. Maeandrius' partis-

ans, and Maeandrius himself, said they were ready to leave the island under a truce. Otanes agreed to these terms and made the truce, and the most important of the Persians had chairs set up facing the acropolis and sat there.

3.145 Maeandrius the tyrant had a brother who was rather unhinged, named Charilaus. He had committed some offense or other and was being kept in chains in a dungeon. Now, having heard what was going on, he peered out through the dungeon, and when he saw the Persians sitting there peacefully, he shouted and said he wanted to speak with Maeandrius. 2 Maeandrius heard him and ordered them to release him and bring him to him. As soon as he had been brought, Charilaus abused and reviled him and tried to persuade him to attack the Persians, saying something like this: "You worst of men! I'm your own brother and have done nothing to deserve chains, yet you chained me and thought me fit for the dungeon. But when you see the Persians throwing you out and making you homeless, you don't dare take revenge, though they're so easy to overpower. 3 If you're afraid of them, give me the mercenaries, and I'll make them pay for coming here. As for you, I'm ready to get you off the island."

3.146 That is what Charilaus said, and Maeandrius took up the proposal. In my opinion this was not because he had sunk to such folly as to think his own forces could overcome the King's, but rather because he begrudged Syloson getting the city intact without any effort. 2 By provoking the Persians he wanted to make Samos as weak as possible and hand it over in that state. He knew well that if the Persians suffered harm they would be all the more embittered against the Samians, and he knew too that he had a safe way off the island whenever he wished; for he had had a secret tunnel dug leading from the acropolis to the sea. 3 Maeandrius himself sailed away from Samos. Charilaus armed all the mercenaries, threw open the gates, and sent them out against the Persians, who were expecting nothing of the kind and thought everything had been settled. The mercenaries fell on them and began killing the Persians who were carried in

litters and were men of the highest rank. [4] While they were doing this, the rest of the Persian army came to the rescue, and the mercenaries, hard pressed, were driven back into the acropolis.

3.147 When Otanes the general saw what a heavy blow the Persians had suffered, he remembered the instructions Darius had given him when he sent him out—to kill none of the Samians and enslave none, and to hand the island over to Syloson unharmed—but he chose to forget them, and ordered his army to kill everyone they caught, man and child alike. [2] Then part of the army besieged the acropolis, while the rest killed everyone who got in their way, inside sanctuaries and out of them alike.

3.148 Maeandrius escaped from Samos and sailed to Lacedaemon. When he arrived there and had brought up the possessions he had taken with him when he left, this is what he did. He would set out cups of silver and gold, and his servants would polish them; and at that moment he would be in conversation with Cleomenes son of Anaxandridas, the king of Sparta, and would bring him to his house. Whenever Cleomenes saw the cups he was amazed and dazzled, and Maeandrius would tell him to take away as many of them as he liked. [2] Maeandrius said this two or three times, and Cleomenes proved the most upright of men. He did not think it right to accept what was offered, and realizing that Maeandrius would find support by giving gifts to other citizens, he went to the ephors and said it would be better for Sparta if the Samian visitor left the Peloponnese, so that he would not persuade him or any other Spartan to turn corrupt. The ephors listened to him and banished Maeandrius by proclamation.[58]

3.149 As for Samos, the Persians [swept it with a dragnet and] handed it over to Syloson empty of men. Later, however, the general Otanes also helped to resettle it, because of a vision he had in a dream and a disease that struck him in his genitals.[59]

58 The ephors were Sparta's five chief magistrates, elected annually.

59 To sweep an island with a dragnet meant to pass over it with a line of men holding hands, so as to catch the whole population.

THE REVOLT OF BABYLON: ZOPYRUS

Zopyrus mutilates himself, deserts to the besieged Babylonians, wins their trust, and betrays the city to Darius.

3.150 While the naval force had gone off to Samos, the Babylonians revolted, very thoroughly prepared. For the whole time that the Magus was ruling and the seven were rising against him, throughout that time and its confusion, they had been preparing for a siege. 2 And somehow they did this without being noticed. Once they had revolted openly, they did the following. Setting apart their mothers, each man also set apart one woman of his choosing from his own household; all the rest they gathered together and strangled. The one woman each man set apart was to make his bread. They strangled the others so that they would not use up their food.

3.151 When Darius learned of this, he gathered all his forces and marched against them. He advanced on Babylon and besieged it, but the Babylonians cared nothing for the siege. They would climb up onto the battlements of the wall and dance in mockery and jeer at Darius and his army, and one of them made this remark: 2 "Why are you sitting there, Persians? Why not go away? You'll take us when mules have foals." One of the Babylonians said this because he never expected a mule to have a foal.

3.152 A year and seven months had now passed, and Darius and his whole army were growing frustrated at being unable to take the Babylonians. And yet Darius had used every trick and every device against them. Even so he could not take them. He tried other tricks too, and in particular he tried the one by which Cyrus had taken them. But the Babylonians kept a terribly strict watch, and he could not take them.[60]

3.153 Then, in the twentieth month, Zopyrus son of Megabyzus —the Megabyzus who was one of the seven men who overthrew

60 Cyrus had taken Babylon by diverting the Euphrates and entering along the riverbed (1.191).

the Magus—this Zopyrus, son of Megabyzus, had the following portent happen to him: one of the mules that carried his grain had a foal. When this was reported to him, he would not believe it until he had seen the foal himself; then he forbade those who had seen it to tell anyone what had happened, and he thought the matter over. [2] In view of the words of the Babylonian who had said at the start that the wall would be taken when mules had foals—in view of that saying, it seemed to Zopyrus that Babylon could be taken. For it was with heaven's help, he thought, that the man had said it and that his own mule had foaled.

3.154 Since he believed that Babylon was now fated to be taken, he went to Darius and asked whether he set very great store by taking Babylon. Learning that he valued it highly, he considered a further question: how he himself could be the one to take it and the deed be his alone. For among the Persians good services are held in the very highest honor. [2] He could think of no other way to bring the city under his power than by mutilating himself and deserting to them. So, making light of it, he inflicted on himself an injury that could never be undone. He cut off his nose and ears, cropped his hair in a disfiguring way, flogged himself, and went to Darius.

3.155 Darius was deeply distressed to see a man of the highest distinction mutilated. He leapt up from his throne, cried out, and asked him who had mutilated him and for what. [2] Zopyrus said: "There's no such man, apart from you, with power enough to treat me like this. No stranger did it, King; I did it to myself, because I couldn't bear the Assyrians laughing at the Persians." [3] Darius answered: "You poor wretch! You've given the finest name to the most shameful deed, saying you did yourself this irreparable harm on account of the besieged. You fool, will the enemy surrender any faster because you've mutilated yourself? Weren't you out of your mind when you ruined yourself like this?"[61] [4] Zopyrus said: "If I'd told you what I was going to do, you wouldn't have let me. As it is, I did it on my own responsibility.

61 Herodotus counts the Babylonians as Assyrians.

So now, provided you do your part, we'll take Babylon. I'll desert to the wall just as I am and tell them I've suffered this at your hands. And I expect that once I've persuaded them it's true, I'll be given command of troops. [5] As for you: on the tenth day after the day I go inside the wall, take a thousand men from the part of your army whose loss will matter least and station them at what are called the gates of Semiramis. Then again, seven days after the tenth, station another two thousand for me at what are called the gates of the Ninevites. After the seventh day let twenty days go by, and then bring another four thousand and station them at what are called the gates of the Chaldaeans. Neither the earlier men nor these should have any weapons to defend themselves except daggers; let them keep those. [6] After the twentieth day, at once order the rest of the army to attack the wall all around, and station the Persians for me at what are called the gates of Belus and the Cissian gates. For I expect that once I've performed great deeds, the Babylonians will entrust everything to me, including the keys that work the gate bolts. From then on, it will be for me and the Persians to see to what must be done."[62]

3.156 After giving these instructions he went toward the gates, looking back over his shoulder as if he really were a deserter. The men posted on the towers at that point saw him, ran down, opened one leaf of the gate a little, and asked who he was and what he had come for. He told them that he was Zopyrus and that he was deserting to them. [2] When the gatekeepers heard this, they took him to the Babylonian authorities. Standing before them, he lamented his plight, saying that he had suffered at Darius' hands what he had in fact suffered at his own, and that he had suffered it because he had advised Darius to withdraw the army, since there seemed to be no way of taking the city. [3] "And now, Babylonians," he said, "I come to you as the greatest blessing for you, and the greatest harm for Darius, his army and the Persians. He won't get away with mutilating me

62 Belus is Bel ("Lord"), the title of Marduk, chief god of Babylon, whom Herodotus calls Zeus Belus.

like this. I know all the ins and outs of his plans." That was the sort of thing he said.

3.157 The Babylonians saw the most distinguished man among the Persians deprived of his nose and ears and smeared with blood and the marks of the whip. They were fully convinced that he was telling the truth and had come to be their ally, and they were ready to grant him whatever he asked; and what he asked for was troops. 2 Once he had got them, he did just as he had agreed with Darius. On the tenth day he led out the Babylonian force, surrounded the thousand men he had told Darius to station first, and slaughtered them. 3 When the Babylonians saw that his deeds matched his words, they were overjoyed and ready to serve him in everything. He let the agreed number of days pass, then again picked out a force of Babylonians, led them out, and slaughtered the two thousand of Darius' soldiers. 4 When the Babylonians saw this deed too, all of them had Zopyrus' name on their lips and sang his praises. Again he let the agreed days pass, led his men out to the place named in advance, surrounded the four thousand, and slaughtered them. When this too had been accomplished, Zopyrus was everything to the Babylonians, and they appointed him commander of their army and guardian of the wall.

3.158 When Darius made his attack all around the wall as agreed, then Zopyrus revealed the whole trick. While the Babylonians climbed up on the wall and fought off Darius' attacking army, Zopyrus threw open the Cissian gates and the gates of Belus and let the Persians inside the wall. 2 Those Babylonians who saw what had been done fled to the sanctuary of Zeus Belus; those who did not see it stayed each at his post, until they too learned that they had been betrayed.

3.159 That is how Babylon was taken for the second time. When Darius had mastered the Babylonians, he first pulled down their wall and tore away all the gates—when Cyrus had taken Babylon earlier, he had done neither of these things—and second, he impaled about three thousand of the leading men and gave the city back to the rest of the Babylonians to live in. 2 To make sure

the Babylonians would have wives and their line would continue, Darius took the following precaution—for, as I explained at the beginning, the Babylonians had strangled their own wives to save their food. He ordered the surrounding peoples to send women to Babylon, setting a number for each, so that in total fifty thousand women were gathered there. It is from these women that the present Babylonians are descended.

3.160 No Persian, in Darius' judgment, ever surpassed Zopyrus' good service, whether among those who came after him or those before, except Cyrus alone; for no Persian has ever yet thought himself fit to be compared with Cyrus. Darius is said often to have expressed this view: that he would rather have Zopyrus free of his disfigurement than gain twenty more Babylons on top of the one he had. 2 He honored him greatly. Every year he gave him the gifts most prized among the Persians, granted him Babylon to govern free of tribute for as long as he lived, and gave him many other things besides. This Zopyrus had a son, Megabyzus, who commanded the army in Egypt against the Athenians and their allies; and this Megabyzus had a son, Zopyrus, who deserted from the Persians to Athens.[63]

63 The Athenian expedition to Egypt, which Megabyzus crushed, took place around 460–454 BC.

Book 4 (Melpomene)

Darius invades Scythia; the Scythians and their neighbors; Libya and the founding of Cyrene.

DARIUS AGAINST THE SCYTHIANS

Darius plans to punish the Scythians, who once ruled Asia and came home to find their slaves in revolt.

4.1 After the capture of Babylon came Darius' own expedition against the Scythians. Asia was flourishing with men, and great revenues were coming in, so Darius wanted to punish the Scythians. They had been the first to do wrong, because they had invaded Media and defeated in battle those who opposed them. 2 For the Scythians, as I have said before, ruled upper Asia for twenty-eight years. They had invaded Asia in pursuit of the Cimmerians and put an end to the rule of the Medes, who ruled Asia before the Scythians came.[1] 3 The Scythians had been away for twenty-eight years. When they came home after so long a time, a struggle no smaller than the one against the Medes awaited them, because they found a sizeable army opposing them. While their husbands were away for so long, the Scythians' wives had been going to bed with the slaves.

4.2 The Scythians blind all their slaves, because of the milk they drink, which they get as follows. They take blowpipes made of bone, very like flutes, insert them into the mares' genitals and blow with their mouths, and while some blow, others milk. They say they do this for the following reason: when the mare is

1 The Scythians were nomadic horse-riding peoples of the steppes north of the Black Sea. Darius' campaign against them is usually dated to about 513 BC.

blown up her veins fill, and the udder is forced down. [2] When they have milked, they pour the milk into hollow wooden vessels, station the blind slaves all round the vessels, and so churn the milk. They skim off the part that rises to the top and consider it the more valuable, and the part that settles at the bottom less valuable than the other. That is why the Scythians blind everyone they capture. For they are not farmers but nomads.

4.3 So it was from these slaves and the women that a generation of young men grew up. When they learned of their own parentage, they set out to oppose the Scythians as they came back from the Medes. [2] First they cut off the land by digging a broad trench that stretched from the Tauric mountains to Lake Maeotis, at the point where it is widest. Then, when the Scythians tried to invade, they took up positions against them and fought.[2] [3] There were many battles, and the Scythians could gain no advantage by fighting, so one of them said this: "Look what we're doing, Scythians! We're fighting our own slaves. When we're killed, there are fewer of us, and when we kill them, we'll have fewer to rule from now on. [4] So my advice is this: let's put aside our spears and bows, and each man take his horse-whip and go right up to them. As long as they saw us carrying weapons, they thought they were our equals and born of equals. But when they see us holding whips instead of weapons, they'll realize they're our slaves, and once they've grasped that, they won't stand their ground."

4.4 When the Scythians heard this, they carried it out. The slaves were so astounded at what was happening that they forgot about fighting and ran. In this way the Scythians ruled Asia, and then, after being driven out again by the Medes, returned in this manner to their own land. These were the reasons why Darius wanted to punish them and gathered an army against them.

2 The Tauric mountains are those of the Crimea; Lake Maeotis is the Sea of Azov.

SCYTHIAN ORIGINS

Scythian and Greek accounts of the Scythians' origins, and what is known of the lands to the north.

4.5 According to the Scythians, their nation is the youngest of all, and it came into being like this. The first man to be born in this land, which was then uninhabited, was named Targitaus. The parents of this Targitaus, they say, were Zeus and a daughter of the river Borysthenes. I do not find what they say credible, but that is what they say. 2 Such, then, was Targitaus' descent, and he had three sons: Lipoxais, Arpoxais, and the youngest, Colaxais.[3] 3 In their reign, they say, golden objects fell from the sky into Scythian territory: a plow, a yoke, a battle-axe and a cup. The eldest saw them first and went closer, wanting to take them, but as he approached the gold began to burn. 4 When he had gone away, the second brother came up, and the gold did the same thing again. So the burning gold drove these two off. But when the third and youngest approached, the fire went out, and he carried the gold to his own home. The elder brothers recognized what this meant and handed over the whole kingship to the youngest.

4.6 From Lipoxais, they say, are descended the Scythians called the Auchatae clan; from Arpoxais, the middle brother, those called the Catiari and the Traspies; and from the youngest, the king, those called the Paralatae. 2 All of them together are called Scoloti, after their king. It was the Greeks who named them Scythians.

4.7 That is how the Scythians say they came into being. They say that the total number of years since then, from their first king Targitaus to Darius' crossing against them, is no more than a thousand, but exactly that many. The kings guard this sacred gold with the greatest care, and every year they approach it with great sacrifices to win its favor. 2 If the man who has charge of the sacred gold falls asleep in the open air during the festival,

3 The Borysthenes is the river Dnieper.

the Scythians say he will not live out the year. For this reason, they say, he is given as much land as he can ride around on horseback in a single day. Since the land was large, Colaxais set up three kingdoms for his sons, and made one of them the largest, the one in which the gold is kept. 3 As for the regions beyond, to the north of the country's farthest inhabitants, they say it is impossible to see any farther or to travel through, because of feathers pouring down. The earth and the air are full of feathers, and these are what shut off the view.

4.8 That is what the Scythians say about themselves and the land beyond them. The Greeks who live on the Black Sea tell it this way. Heracles, driving the cattle of Geryon, came to this land, which was then uninhabited and which the Scythians now occupy. 2 Geryon lived outside the Black Sea, on the island the Greeks call Erytheia, near Gadira, beyond the Pillars of Heracles on the Ocean. The Ocean, they say, begins where the sun rises and flows around the whole earth. They say so in words, but they do not prove it in fact. 3 From there, according to them, Heracles came to the land now called Scythia. Winter and frost overtook him, so he pulled his lion-skin over himself and fell asleep. Meanwhile his mares, unhitched from his chariot and grazing, vanished by some divine chance.[4]

4.9 When Heracles woke up, they say, he searched for them, and after going over the whole country he finally came to the land called Hylaea. There, in a cave, he found a creature half maiden and half viper, of double form: from the buttocks up she was a woman, and below she was a snake. 2 He looked at her in amazement and asked whether she had seen any mares straying anywhere. She said she had them herself and would not give them back to him until he slept with her. And Heracles slept with her for that price.[5] 3 She kept putting off returning the mares, because she wanted to be with Heracles for as long as possible, while he wanted to get them and leave. Finally she

4 Gadira is modern Cádiz in Spain; the Pillars of Heracles are the Strait of Gibraltar.

5 Hylaea ("the Woodland") was a wooded region near the mouth of the Dnieper.

gave them back and said: These mares came here, and I kept them safe for you, and you have paid me the reward for saving them, for I have three sons by you. [4] When they have grown up, tell me what I should do with them. Shall I settle them here, since I am the ruler of this land myself, or send them away to you? That was her question, and they say he answered her: [5] "When you see the boys grown to manhood, you won't go wrong if you do this. Whichever of them you see drawing this bow like this, and putting on this belt in this way, make him an inhabitant of this land. Whoever falls short in these tasks I'm setting, send him out of the country. If you do this, you'll be happy yourself, and you'll have done what I've told you."

4.10 So Heracles, they say, drew one of his bows (for until then he had carried two), showed her how to put on the belt, and handed over the bow and the belt, which had a golden cup at the end of its clasp. Once he had given them, he went away. When her sons were born and had grown to manhood, she first gave them names, calling one Agathyrsus, the next Gelonus, and the youngest Scythes. Then, remembering the instructions, she did as she had been told. [2] Two of her sons, Agathyrsus and Gelonus, were unable to accomplish the task set before them, and they left the country, driven out by their mother. But the youngest, Scythes, accomplished it and stayed in the land. [3] From Scythes son of Heracles are descended all the successive kings of the Scythians, and because of that cup the Scythians still wear cups hanging from their belts to this day. This was the only thing the mother contrived for Scythes. That is what the Greeks who live on the Black Sea say.

4.11 There is also another story, the one most commonly told and the one I myself incline toward, which goes like this. The nomadic Scythians living in Asia, hard pressed in war by the Massagetae, crossed the river Araxes and went off to the Cimmerian land (for the land the Scythians now occupy is said to have belonged to the Cimmerians long ago). [2] As the Scythians approached, the Cimmerians held a council, since a great army was coming against them. Their opinions were divided, both

strongly held, but the kings' the better of the two. The people's view was that the thing to do was to leave, and not run risks by staying for the sake of mere dust; the kings' view was to fight it out with the invaders for the land. [3] So, the story goes, the people would not listen to the kings, nor the kings to the people. The people decided to leave and hand over the land to the invaders without a fight. The kings, on the other hand, resolved to die and lie in their own land rather than flee with the people, considering how many good things they had enjoyed there and how many evils were likely to befall them if they fled their homeland. [4] Once they had made this decision, they split into two groups of equal size and fought each other. When all of them had died at each other's hands, the Cimmerian people buried them by the river Tyras (their tomb can still be seen), and after burying them they made their departure from the land. When the Scythians arrived, they took over a land that was empty.[6]

4.12 Even now there are Cimmerian walls in Scythia, and a Cimmerian ferry. There is also a region called Cimmeria, and a strait called the Cimmerian Bosporus. [2] It is clear, too, that the Cimmerians fled from the Scythians into Asia and settled the peninsula where the Greek city of Sinope now stands. And it is evident that the Scythians, pursuing them, invaded Median territory after losing their way. [3] For the Cimmerians kept fleeing along the coast, while the Scythians pursued with the Caucasus on their right until they turned inland on their route and invaded Median territory. This is the other account, told by Greeks and non-Greeks alike.[7]

4.13 Aristeas son of Caystrobius, a man of Proconnesus and a composer of epic verse, said that, possessed by Phoebus, he came to the Issedones. Beyond the Issedones, he said, live the Arimaspians, men with one eye, and beyond them the griffins that guard gold, and beyond those the Hyperboreans, whose ter-

6 The Tyras is the river Dniester.

7 The Cimmerian Bosporus is the Strait of Kerch, at the eastern end of the Crimea; Sinope lies on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

ritory reaches down to the sea. [2] According to him, all of these except the Hyperboreans, beginning with the Arimaspians, were constantly attacking their neighbors. The Issedones were pushed out of their land by the Arimaspians, the Scythians by the Issedones, and the Cimmerians, who lived by the southern sea, were hard pressed by the Scythians and abandoned their land. So he too does not agree with the Scythians about this land.[8]

4.14 I have said where Aristeas, the author of this account, came from. Now I will tell the story I heard about him in Proconnesus and Cyzicus. They say that Aristeas, who was inferior in birth to none of the citizens, went into a fuller's shop in Proconnesus and died there. The fuller locked up his workshop and went off to tell the dead man's relatives.[9] [2] The news that Aristeas was dead had already spread through the city when a man of Cyzicus, who had come from the town of Artace, disputed what people were saying. He claimed he had met Aristeas on his way to Cyzicus and had spoken with him. While he was insisting on this strenuously, the dead man's relatives arrived at the fuller's shop with what they needed to take up the body. [3] But when the room was opened, there was no sign of Aristeas, either dead or alive. Then, they say, in the seventh year afterward he appeared in Proconnesus and composed the verses that the Greeks now call the *Arimaspea*, and after composing them he vanished a second time.

4.15 That is what these cities say. But I know that the following happened to the Metapontines in Italy two hundred and forty years after Aristeas' second disappearance, as I discovered by putting together what I learned in Proconnesus and Metapontum. [2] The Metapontines say that Aristeas himself appeared in their country and told them to set up an altar to Apollo, and to stand beside it a statue bearing the name of Aristeas of Procon-

8 Proconnesus is an island in the Sea of Marmara, and "Phoebus" is Apollo. The Hyperboreans ("beyond the North Wind") were a legendary people of the far north.
9 Cyzicus was a Greek city on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara; a fuller cleaned and finished woolen cloth.

nesus. For he told them that theirs was the only land of the Italian Greeks to which Apollo had come, and that he himself, who was now Aristeas, had come with him; at that time, when he was following the god, he was a raven.[10] 3 After saying this he vanished. The Metapontines say they sent to Delphi and asked the god what the apparition of the man might mean. The Pythia told them to obey the apparition, because if they did, it would go better for them. They accepted this answer and carried it out. 4 And now a statue bearing the name of Aristeas stands right beside the image of Apollo, with laurel trees standing around it. The image is set up in the marketplace. So much for Aristeas.

4.16 As for the land this account has set out to describe, no one knows precisely what lies beyond it. I have not been able to learn about it from anyone who claims to know it as an eyewitness. Not even Aristeas, whom I mentioned a little earlier—not even he claimed, in the very verses he composed, to have gone farther than the Issedones. What lay beyond he reported from hearsay, saying that it was the Issedones who told him these things. 2 But everything that I have been able to learn accurately by hearsay, as far as my information reaches, will be told.

4.17 Starting from the trading post of the Borysthenites (which is the most central of all the coastal places in the whole of Scythia), the first people to live there are the Callippidae, who are Greek Scythians. Beyond them is another people, called the Alazones. These and the Callippidae follow the same customs as the Scythians in other respects, but they sow grain and eat it, and also onions, garlic, lentils and millet. 2 Beyond the Alazones live the Scythian plowmen, who sow grain not to eat but to sell. Farther on, beyond these, live the Neuri. North of the Neuri the land is empty of people, as far as we know.[11]

4.18 These are the peoples along the river Hypanis, west of the Borysthenes. Once you cross the Borysthenes, though, first, starting from the sea, comes Hylaea. Going inland from there

10 Metapontum was a Greek colony on the Gulf of Taranto in southern Italy.
11 The trading post of the Borysthenites was Olbia, a Greek colony near where the Bug and the Dnieper reach the sea.

live the farming Scythians, whom the Greeks living on the river Hypanis call Borysthenites, while calling themselves Olbiopolitans. [2] These farming Scythians occupy the land eastward for three days' journey, as far as a river called the Panticapes, and northward for eleven days' sail up the Borysthenes. Beyond them, from there on, is a vast empty land. [3] After the empty land live the Man-eaters, a distinct people and not Scythian at all. Beyond them the land is truly empty, with no nation of people at all, as far as we know.[12]

4.19 East of these farming Scythians, once you cross the river Panticapes, live the nomadic Scythians, who neither sow anything nor plow. This whole region is bare of trees, except for Hylaea. These nomads occupy land that extends eastward for fourteen days' journey, as far as the river Gerrhus.

4.20 Across the Gerrhus are the so-called Royal lands, and the Scythians there are the best and most numerous of all, and regard the other Scythians as their slaves. Their territory reaches southward to the Tauric land, and eastward to the trench dug by the sons of the blind slaves, and to the trading post on Lake Maeotis called Cremni; part of it reaches to the river Tanais. [2] North of the Royal Scythians live the Black Cloaks, another people and not Scythian. Beyond the Black Cloaks there are lakes, and the land is empty of people, as far as we know.[13]

4.21 Once you cross the river Tanais, the land is no longer Scythian. The first of the regions belongs to the Sauromatae, who start from the inmost corner of Lake Maeotis and occupy the land northward for fifteen days' journey, all of it bare of trees, both wild and cultivated. Above them, holding the second region, live the Budini, whose land is all thickly wooded with every kind of tree.[14]

4.22 North of the Budini there is first an empty land seven days' journey across. After the empty land, if you turn more toward

12 The Hypanis is the river now called the Southern Bug.
13 The Tanais is the river Don. The Black Cloaks are the Melanchlaeni of the Greek text.
14 The Sauromatae (Sarmatians) were nomads living east of the Don.

the east, live the Thyssagetae, a numerous and distinct people who live by hunting. [2] Next to them, in the same regions, live a people called the Iyrcae, who also live by hunting, in the following way. The hunter climbs a tree and lies in wait (trees grow thickly all over the country). Each man has a horse ready, trained to lie on its belly so as to keep low, and a dog. When he spots his quarry from the tree, he shoots, mounts his horse and gives chase, and the dog follows close behind. [3] Beyond these, if you turn toward the east, live other Scythians, who broke away from the Royal Scythians and so came to this region.

4.23 As far as the land of these Scythians, then, all the country I have described is flat and has deep soil; from there on it is stony and rough. [2] When you have crossed a long stretch of this rough country as well, you come to people living at the foot of high mountains. They are said to be bald from birth, all of them, men and women alike. They are snub-nosed and have large chins, they speak a language of their own, they wear Scythian clothing, and they live off trees. [3] The tree they live off is called the pontic tree, and it is roughly the size of a fig tree. It bears a fruit the size of a bean, with a stone inside. When this ripens, they strain it through cloths, and a thick black juice runs out of it; the name of this juice is aschy. They lick it up, and they drink it mixed with milk, and from the thickest part of the lees they make cakes, which they eat. [4] For they do not have many livestock, since the pastures there are poor. Each man lives under a tree. In winter he covers the tree with a thick white felt, and in summer he leaves it without the felt. [5] No one does these people any wrong, for they are said to be sacred, and they own no weapons of war. It is they who settle the disputes of their neighbors, and anyone who takes refuge with them when in flight is wronged by no one. Their name is the Argippaeans.

4.24 As far as these bald people, then, the country and the nations before them are very well known. Some Scythians travel to them, and it is not hard to get information from these, as also from the Greeks of the trading post of Borysthenes and the other trading posts on the Black Sea. The Scythians who go to them do

their business through seven interpreters and in seven languages.

4.25 So much, then, is known. But what lies beyond the bald people no one can say with certainty, for high, impassable mountains cut it off, and no one crosses them. These bald people say—though I do not believe them—that the mountains are inhabited by goat-footed men, and that beyond these there are other people who sleep for six months of the year. This I do not accept at all. 2 What lies to the east of the bald people is known for certain to be inhabited by the Issedones; but what lies beyond, to the north, of either the bald people or the Issedones, is not known, except for what these peoples themselves say.

4.26 The Issedones are said to have the following customs. When a man's father dies, all his relatives bring sheep. They sacrifice these and cut up the meat, and they also cut up their host's dead father; then they mix all the meat together and serve it as a feast. 2 His head they strip bare, clean out and gild, and after that they treat it as a sacred image, offering great sacrifices to it every year. A son does this for his father, just as the Greeks celebrate the Genesia. Otherwise these people too are said to be just, and their women have equal power with the men.[15]

4.27 These people too, then, are known. But as for what lies beyond them, it is the Issedones who say that there are one-eyed men and gold-guarding griffins there. The Scythians took the story from them and tell it, and the rest of us have adopted it from the Scythians; and we call these people by the Scythian name Arimaspians, for the Scythians call "one" *arima* and "eye" *spou*.

4.28 All the country I have described has winters so hard that for eight months of the year the frost is unbearable. During that time, if you pour out water you will not make mud, but if you light a fire you will. The sea freezes, and so does the whole Cimmerian Bosporus, and the Scythians who live inside the trench march out over the ice and drive their wagons across to the

15 The Genesia was a Greek festival held each year in honor of dead parents.

Sindi. [2] So for eight months it is winter without a break, and for the remaining four it is cold there too. This winter differs in character from the winters that occur in every other land. In the season when rain is usual, it rains hardly enough to mention, but in summer it never stops raining. [3] When thunder comes elsewhere, it does not come there, but in summer it is abundant; and if there is thunder in winter, it is marveled at as a portent. In the same way, if an earthquake happens in Scythia, whether in summer or in winter, it is considered a portent. [4] Horses endure this winter and bear it, but mules and donkeys cannot endure it at all. Elsewhere, by contrast, horses that stand in the frost get frostbite, while donkeys and mules endure it.

4.29 In my opinion it is also for this reason that the hornless breed of cattle there grows no horns. My view is supported by a line of Homer in the *Odyssey*, which runs: "and Libya, where the lambs grow horns quickly." This is rightly said: in hot places horns grow quickly, while in severe cold animals either grow no horns at all or barely grow them.

4.30 That, then, is what happens there because of the cold. But I wonder (for my account has gone looking for digressions from the start) why in the whole land of Elis no mules can be bred, though the country is not cold and there is no other obvious cause. The Eleans themselves say that it is because of some curse that no mules are born among them; [2] instead, when the time comes for the mares to conceive, they drive them out to their neighbors, and there, in the neighbors' land, they let the donkeys mount them until the mares are in foal. Then they drive them back.

4.31 As for the feathers which the Scythians say fill the air, so that they can neither see the farther parts of the continent nor travel through them, my opinion is this. In the regions beyond this country it is always snowing, though less in summer than in winter, as is natural. [2] Anyone who has seen thick snow falling close by knows what I mean, for snow looks like feathers; and because the winter is like this, the northern parts of this continent are uninhabited. So I think that the Scythians and their

neighbors call the snow feathers by way of comparison. That, then, is what is said about the most distant regions.

4.32 About the Hyperboreans, neither the Scythians nor any of the other peoples living in those parts say anything, unless perhaps the Issedones do. But in my opinion they say nothing either, or else the Scythians would tell of them too, as they tell of the one-eyed men. Hesiod, however, has spoken of the Hyperboreans, and so has Homer in the *Epigoni*—if Homer really did compose that poem.[16]

4.33 By far the most is told about them by the Delians. They say that sacred offerings wrapped in wheat straw are brought from the Hyperboreans to Scythia, and that from Scythia each neighboring people in turn receives them and carries them on, as far west as they go, to the Adriatic. 2 From there, they say, the offerings are sent on southward, and the first Greeks to receive them are the people of Dodona; from them they come down to the Malian Gulf and cross over to Euboea, where they are passed from city to city as far as Carystus. From there they skip Andros, since it is the Carystians who carry them to Tenos, and the Tenians to Delos.[17] 3 That, they say, is how these offerings reach Delos. But the first time, the Hyperboreans sent two girls to carry the offerings, whose names, according to the Delians, were Hyperoche and Laodice; and with them, for their safety, the Hyperboreans sent five of their citizens as escorts—the men who are now called the Perpherees and hold great honors in Delos. 4 But when those they had sent out did not come back, the Hyperboreans, they say, thought it a terrible thing if it should always be their lot to send people off and never get them back. So they carried the offerings, wrapped in wheat straw, to their borders and charged their neighbors to pass them on from their own land to another people. 5 And so, they say, the offerings reach Delos, passed along in this way. I myself know of a practice similar to these offerings: when the women of Thrace and

16 The *Epigoni* was an early epic about the sons of the Seven against Thebes.
17 Delos, a small island in the Aegean, was held sacred as the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

Paeonia sacrifice to Artemis the Queen, they never hold their offerings without wheat straw.

4.34 This, then, I know these women do. In honor of the maidens from the Hyperboreans who died in Delos, the girls and boys of Delos cut their hair. The girls, before their marriage, cut off a lock, wind it around a spindle and lay it on the tomb 2 (the tomb is on the left as you go into the temple of Artemis, and an olive tree grows on it); and the Delian boys wind some of their hair around a green shoot, and they too lay it on the tomb.

4.35 Such is the honor these maidens receive from the inhabitants of Delos. The same people say that Arge and Opis, who were also maidens from the Hyperboreans, came to Delos by way of these same peoples even before Hyperoche and Laodice. 2 Hyperoche and Laodice, they say, came bringing Eileithyia the tribute they had pledged in return for a quick childbirth; but Arge and Opis, they say, came together with the gods themselves, and were given other honors by the Delians:[18] 3 for the women, they say, collect gifts for them, calling out their names in the hymn that Olen, a man from Lycia, composed for them; and the islanders and Ionians learned from them to sing hymns to Opis and Arge, calling out their names and collecting gifts (this Olen, who came from Lycia, also composed the other ancient hymns that are sung in Delos); 4 and when the thigh bones are burned on the altar, the ashes are thrown onto the tomb of Opis and Arge and used up there. Their tomb is behind the temple of Artemis, facing east, very close to the banqueting hall of the Ceans.

THE MAP OF THE WORLD

Herodotus mocks round maps of the world and describes the shapes of Asia, Libya and Europe.

4.36 Let that be enough about the Hyperboreans. I will not tell the story of Abaris, who is said to have been a Hyperborean, and

18 Eileithyia was the goddess of childbirth; "the gods themselves" are Apollo and Artemis, whose birth on Delos she attended.

how he carried his arrow all over the world without eating anything. But if there are people who live beyond the north wind, there are also others who live beyond the south wind. [2] I laugh when I see that many people have by now drawn maps of the world, and not one of them has explained it sensibly. They draw Ocean flowing around the earth, which they make perfectly round, as if drawn with a compass, and they make Asia the same size as Europe. I will show in a few words how large each of them is and what shape each has on a map.

4.37 The Persians live in a land that reaches down to the southern sea, the one called the Red Sea. Above them, to the north, live the Medes; above the Medes, the Saspires; and above the Saspires, the Colchians, whose land reaches to the northern sea, into which the river Phasis flows. These four nations live from sea to sea.

4.38 From there, toward the west, two peninsulas stretch out from this region into the sea, and I will describe them. [2] The first peninsula, on its northern side, begins at the Phasis and stretches along the sea, beside the Black Sea and the Hellespont, as far as Sigeum in the Troad. On its southern side the same peninsula stretches along the sea from the Myriandic Gulf, which lies next to Phoenicia, as far as the Triopian headland. Thirty nations live on this peninsula.[19]

4.39 That is one of the peninsulas. The other begins from Persia and stretches along the Red Sea: first Persia, then, continuing from it, Assyria, and after Assyria, Arabia. It ends—though it does not really end, except by convention—at the Arabian Gulf, into which Darius brought a canal from the Nile. [2] From Persia to Phoenicia the land is broad and extensive; from Phoenicia onward this peninsula runs along this sea of ours, past Palestinian Syria and Egypt, where it ends. Only three nations live on it.[20]

4.40 These are the parts of Asia west of Persia. As for what lies beyond the Persians, Medes, Saspires and Colchians, toward the

19 This first "peninsula" is Asia Minor (modern Anatolia).
20 The Arabian Gulf is the modern Red Sea.

east and the rising sun: on one side the Red Sea runs along it, and to the north the Caspian Sea and the river Araxes, which flows toward the rising sun. [2] Asia is inhabited as far as India; beyond that, to the east, there is nothing but desert, and no one can say what it is like.

[4.41] Such is Asia, then, and so large. Libya lies on the second peninsula, for Libya begins directly from Egypt. Along Egypt this peninsula is narrow: from our sea to the Red Sea is a hundred thousand fathoms, which would make a thousand stades. But beyond this narrow part the peninsula called Libya is very broad.

THE VOYAGE AROUND LIBYA

Phoenicians sail around Libya, Darius explores the Indus, and Herodotus describes the great rivers of Scythia.

[4.42] So I wonder at those who have marked out the boundaries of Libya, Asia and Europe and divided them, for the differences between them are not small. In length Europe stretches along both the others, and in breadth, it seems to me, there is no comparison at all. [2] Libya shows itself to be surrounded by water, except for the part that borders on Asia. Necos, king of Egypt, was the first we know of to prove this. When he stopped digging the canal that runs from the Nile to the Arabian Gulf, he sent out Phoenicians in ships, with orders to sail back through the Pillars of Heracles until they reached the northern sea, and so to return to Egypt.[21] [3] So the Phoenicians set out from the Red Sea and sailed the southern sea. Whenever autumn came, they would put ashore and sow the land, wherever in Libya they happened to be on their voyage, and wait for the harvest. [4] Then, when they had reaped the grain, they would sail on. So after two years had passed, in the third year they rounded the Pillars of Heracles and came to Egypt. And they said something which I do

21 The "northern sea" here is the Mediterranean.

not believe, though perhaps someone else may: that as they sailed around Libya they had the sun on their right.[22]

4.43 That is how Libya first came to be known. After that, it is the Carthaginians who make the claim; for Sataspes son of Teaspis, an Achaemenid, did not sail around Libya, though he was sent for that very purpose. Afraid of the length of the voyage and the emptiness, he turned back and did not complete the task his mother had set him. 2 He had raped a young girl, a daughter of Zopyrus son of Megabyzus. When he was about to be impaled by King Xerxes for this offense, Sataspes' mother, who was Darius' sister, begged him off, saying that she herself would impose a greater punishment on him than Xerxes would: 3 he would be compelled to sail around Libya, until in sailing around it he reached the Arabian Gulf. Xerxes agreed on these terms, and Sataspes went to Egypt, got a ship and sailors from the Egyptians, and sailed toward the Pillars of Heracles. 4 He sailed out through them, rounded the headland of Libya called Soloeis, and sailed south. After crossing a great deal of sea over many months, since there was always more still to go, he turned around and sailed back to Egypt. 5 From there he went to King Xerxes and reported that at the farthest point of their voyage they had sailed past small people dressed in clothing made of palm, who, whenever he and his men put in with the ship, would abandon their towns and flee to the mountains. His men, he said, did them no harm when they went in, but only took food from them. 6 The reason he gave for not sailing all the way around Libya was that the ship could go no farther but was held fast. Xerxes did not believe he was telling the truth, and since he had not completed the task set him, he had him impaled, inflicting the original penalty. 7 A eunuch belonging to this Sataspes ran away to Samos with a great deal of money as soon as he heard that his master was dead; a Samian man seized the

22 Sailing west around southern Africa, south of the equator, the sun would in fact be on their right; this detail is often cited as evidence that the voyage really took place.

money. I know the man's name, but I am deliberately forgetting it.

4.44 Most of Asia was discovered by Darius. He wanted to know where the river Indus—the second of all rivers to have crocodiles—flows into the sea, and so he sent out in ships various men whom he trusted to tell the truth, among them Scylax, a man of Caryanda. 2 They set out from the city of Caspatyrus and the Pactyic country and sailed down the river toward the east and the sunrise until they reached the sea. Then, sailing west across the sea, in the thirtieth month they came to the place from which the king of Egypt sent out the Phoenicians I mentioned earlier to sail around Libya. 3 After these men had sailed around, Darius subdued the Indians and made use of this sea. In this way it was discovered that Asia too, except for the parts toward the rising sun, is otherwise like Libya.

4.45 As for Europe, no one clearly knows whether it is surrounded by water, either to the east or to the north; but it is known that in length it stretches along both the others. 2 Nor can I work out why the earth, which is one, has three names, all taken from women, or why the boundaries set for it are the Egyptian river Nile and the Colchian river Phasis (others say the Maeotic river Tanais and the Cimmerian Straits). Nor can I find out the names of those who drew the boundaries, or where they got the names they gave. 3 Libya, most Greeks say, takes its name from Libya, a woman native to the land, and Asia from the wife of Prometheus. But the Lydians claim this name for themselves, saying that Asia was called after Asies son of Cotys son of Manes, and not after Prometheus' wife Asia; from him, they say, the tribe in Sardis called Asias also takes its name. 4 As for Europe, no one at all knows whether it is surrounded by water, nor where it got this name, nor is it clear who gave it, unless we are to say that the land took its name from Europa of Tyre; in that case it was, it seems, nameless before, like the others. 5 But this Europa clearly came from Asia and never reached the land that the Greeks now call Europe; she only went from Phoenicia to Crete, and from

Crete to Lycia. Let that be enough on this subject. We will use the names that are customary.[23]

4.46 The Black Sea, the Euxine, against which Darius was marching, has the most ignorant peoples around it of any region, leaving aside the Scythians. We can point to no nation within the Black Sea that is known for wisdom, and we know of no learned man born there, except for the Scythian nation and Anacharsis.[24] 2 The Scythian race has worked out one thing, the most important of all human affairs, more cleverly than anyone we know of. Their other ways I do not admire. But this most important thing they have contrived so that no one who attacks them can get away, and no one can catch them if they do not want to be found. 3 They have built no cities and no walls. They all carry their houses with them and fight as mounted archers. They live not by plowing but from their herds, and their homes are on wagons. How could such people not be invincible and impossible even to engage?

4.47 They have worked this out because their land suits it and the rivers are their allies. The land is flat, grassy and well watered, and the rivers that flow through it are not much fewer than the canals in Egypt. 2 I will name those that are well known and navigable from the sea ... the Ister with its five mouths, and after it the Tyras, the Hypanis, the Borysthenes, the Panticapes, the Hypacyris, the Gerrhus and the Tanais. Their courses are as follows.[25]

4.48 The Ister, the greatest of all the rivers we know, always flows at the same level, summer and winter alike. It is the westernmost of the rivers in Scythia, and it has become the greatest in this way: many other rivers flow into it, 2 and those that make it great are these. Five flow through Scythian territory: the one the Scythians call Porata and the Greeks Pyretus, and the Tiarantus, the Ararus, the Naparis and the Ordessus. 3 The first

23 Europa was a Phoenician princess whom Zeus, in the form of a bull, carried off to Crete.
24 Anacharsis was a Scythian prince of the sixth century BC who traveled in Greece and was counted among the wise; Herodotus tells his story at 4.76.
25 The Ister is the Danube.

of these is a large river flowing to the east, and it joins its waters to the Ister. The second, the Tiarantus, lies farther west and is smaller. The Ararus, the Naparis and the Ordessus run between these two and flow into the Ister.

4.49 These are the native Scythian rivers that swell it. From the country of the Agathyrsi the river Maris flows down and joins the Ister. From the peaks of Haemus three other great rivers flow northward into it: the Atlas, the Auras and the Tibisis. Through Thrace and the land of the Thracian Crobyzi flow the Athrys, the Noes and the Artanes, which empty into the Ister. From the Paeonians and Mount Rhodope the river Cius cuts through the middle of Haemus and empties into it. 2 From Illyria the river Angrus flows northward into the Triballian plain and into the river Brongus, and the Brongus flows into the Ister. So the Ister takes in both, though both are large rivers. From the country above the Umbrians the river Carpis and another river, the Alpis, also flow northward and empty into it. 3 For the Ister runs right across Europe. It begins among the Celts, who after the Cynetes are the farthest west of all the peoples of Europe, and after crossing the whole of Europe it enters Scythia along its flank.

4.50 So the Ister becomes the greatest of rivers because these rivers I have listed, and many others, add their water to it. Compared on its own water alone, river against river, the Nile is greater in volume, since no river or spring flows into the Nile to add to it. 2 The Ister always flows at the same level in summer and winter for some such reason as this, in my opinion. In winter it is its natural size, or only a little larger, because that country gets very little rain in winter but has snow everywhere. 3 In summer the snow that fell in winter, which is abundant, melts and pours into the Ister from every side. This snow running into it swells the river, and so do the many violent rainstorms that come with it, since it rains there in summer. 4 The sun draws up more water to itself in summer than in winter, and by just that much more the water joining the Ister is greater in

summer than in winter. Set against each other, the two balance out, so that the river always appears to be the same.

4.51 The Ister, then, is one of the Scythians' rivers. After it comes the Tyras, which starts in the north. It begins in a great lake that marks the border between Scythia and the land of the Neuri. At its mouth live Greeks called Tyritae.

4.52 The third river, the Hypanis, starts in Scythia and flows out of a great lake around which wild white horses graze. This lake is rightly called the Mother of the Hypanis. 2 Rising from it, the Hypanis is shallow and its water sweet for a five days' voyage. From there to the sea, a voyage of four days, it is terribly bitter. 3 A bitter spring flows into it, so bitter that, small as it is, it taints the Hypanis, a river as great as few others. This spring lies on the border between the land of the plowing Scythians and that of the Alazones. The spring and the place it flows from are called Exampaeus in Scythian, and in Greek Sacred Ways. 4 The Tyras and the Hypanis bring their courses close together in the land of the Alazones. From there each turns away and flows on, and the space between them widens.

4.53 Fourth is the river Borysthenes. After the Ister it is the greatest of these, and in our judgment it is the most productive river, not only in Scythia but anywhere, except the Nile of Egypt, to which no other river can be compared. 2 Of the rest, though, the Borysthenes is the most productive. It provides the finest and richest pastures for livestock and by far the best fish, and the most of them. Its water is very pleasant to drink, and it runs clear among muddy rivers. The best crops grow along its banks, and where the land is not sown the grass grows very deep. 3 At its mouth vast amounts of salt form of their own accord. It provides large fish without spines, which they call antacaei, for salting, and many other things worth marveling at. 4 As far as the region of Gerrhus, a voyage of forty days, it is known to flow from the north. Above that, no one can say what peoples it flows through. It seems to flow through empty land down to the country of the farming Scythians, who live along it for a ten days' voyage. 5 This river and the Nile are the only ones whose sources

I cannot tell, and I think no Greek can either. As the Borysthenes nears the sea, the Hypanis joins it, flowing into the same marsh. [6] The land between these rivers, which juts out like a ship's beak, is called Hippolaus' Point, and a temple of Demeter has been built there. Beyond the temple, on the Hypanis, live the Borysthenites.

4.54 So much for these rivers. After them comes a fifth river, named the Panticapes. It too flows from the north and out of a lake, and the farming Scythians live in the land between it and the Borysthenes. It flows into the Hylaea and, after passing through it, joins the Borysthenes.

4.55 Sixth is the river Hypacyris. It rises in a lake, flows through the middle of the nomadic Scythians and reaches the sea near the city of Carcinitis, leaving on its right the Hylaea and the place called the Racecourse of Achilles.[26]

4.56 Seventh is the river Gerrhus. It branches off from the Borysthenes at the point up to which the Borysthenes is known. It branches off there and has the same name as the region itself, Gerrhus. On its way to the sea it marks the border between the land of the nomads and that of the Royal Scythians, and it empties into the Hypacyris.

4.57 Eighth is the river Tanais. Its upper course starts from a great lake, and it empties into a still greater lake called Maeotis, which marks the border between the Royal Scythians and the Sauromatae. Another river, named the Hyrgis, flows into this Tanais.

4.58 These, then, are the famous rivers the Scythians are supplied with. As for their livestock, the grass that grows in Scythia produces more bile than any grass we know of. You can tell that this is so by cutting the animals open.

26 The Racecourse of Achilles was a long, narrow sandspit on the northern coast of the Black Sea, associated with a cult of Achilles.

SCYTHIAN CUSTOMS

The Scythians' gods, sacrifices, warfare, divination, oaths and royal burials.

4.59 So the most important things are readily available to them. Their other customs are as follows. These are the only gods they worship: Hestia above all, then Zeus and Earth, whom they believe to be Zeus' wife, and after these Apollo, Heavenly Aphrodite, Heracles and Ares. All Scythians recognize these gods, and the so-called Royal Scythians sacrifice to Poseidon as well. 2 In Scythian, Hestia is called Tabiti, and Zeus is called Papaeus, a very apt name in my opinion. Earth is Api, Apollo Goetosyrus, Heavenly Aphrodite Argimpasa, and Poseidon Thagimasadas. It is not their custom to make images, altars or temples for any god except Ares. For him they do.[27]

4.60 All of them have the same way of sacrificing for all their rites, and it goes like this. The victim stands with its forefeet hobbled. The sacrificer stands behind the animal, pulls the end of the rope and throws it down. 2 As the victim falls he calls on the god to whom he is sacrificing. Then he throws a noose around its neck, puts a stick through it and twists it, and so strangles the animal. He lights no fire, makes no first offering and pours no libation. When he has strangled and skinned it, he sets about cooking it.

4.61 Since Scythia is terribly short of wood, they have found the following way to cook the meat. After skinning the victims, they strip the meat from the bones. Then, if they happen to have them, they put it into cauldrons of the local kind, which look very much like Lesbian mixing bowls except that they are much larger. They put the meat into these and cook it, burning the victims' bones underneath. If they have no cauldron at hand, they put all the meat into the victims' stomachs, add water, and burn the bones underneath. 2 The bones burn very well, and the

27 Herodotus apparently hears in "Papaeus" something like the Greek *pappas*, "father."

stomachs easily hold the meat once it has been stripped off the bones. So an ox cooks itself, and every other victim does the same. When the meat is cooked, the sacrificer cuts off the first portions of the meat and the entrails and throws them in front of him. They sacrifice other kinds of livestock too, and horses above all.

4.62 This is how they sacrifice to the other gods, and these are the animals they use. To Ares they sacrifice as follows. In every district of each of their realms there is a sanctuary of Ares, built like this. Bundles of brushwood are heaped up to make a pile about three stades long and three wide, though not as high. On top of it a flat square platform is made. Three of its sides are sheer, but on the fourth it can be climbed. 2 Every year they pile on a hundred and fifty wagonloads of brushwood, because the heap keeps sinking under the winter storms. On top of this structure each people sets up an ancient iron sword, and this is the image of Ares. To this sword they bring yearly sacrifices of sheep and horses, and they sacrifice even more to it than to the other gods. 3 Of the enemies they take alive, they sacrifice one man in every hundred. They do not do it the same way as with animals, but differently. They pour wine over the men's heads and cut their throats over a vessel. Then they carry the vessel up onto the pile of brushwood and pour the blood over the sword. 4 So they carry the blood up there. Down below, beside the sanctuary, they do this: they cut off the right arms of all the slaughtered men, shoulder and hand together, and throw them into the air. Then, when they have finished with the other victims, they go away. Each arm lies wherever it has fallen, and the body lies apart from it.

4.63 These, then, are the sacrifices established among them. They make no use of pigs at all, and will not even raise them anywhere in their country.

4.64 Their customs in war are as follows. When a Scythian kills his first man, he drinks some of his blood. He carries the heads of all the men he kills in battle to the king, for if he brings a head he gets a share of whatever plunder they take, and if he

does not, he gets none. [2] He skins the head like this. He cuts a circle around it at the ears, takes hold of the head and shakes it out of the skin. Then he scrapes the flesh off with an ox's rib and works the skin with his hands. When it is supple, he keeps it as a napkin, hanging it from the bridle of the horse he rides, and takes pride in it. Whoever has the most skin napkins is judged the best man. [3] Many of them also sew the skins together, like shepherds' coats, and make cloaks to wear. Many others skin the right hands of their dead enemies, nails and all, and make covers for their quivers. Human skin, it turns out, is thick and shiny, perhaps the shiniest and whitest of all skins. [4] Many of them even skin whole men, stretch the skins on wooden frames and carry them around on horseback.

4.65 These, then, are their customs. With the heads themselves, not all of them but those of their worst enemies, they do the following. Each man saws off everything below the eyebrows and cleans out the inside. If he is poor, he stretches only a piece of rawhide over the outside and uses it that way. If he is rich, he stretches the rawhide over it and also gilds the inside, and uses it as a drinking cup. [2] They do this with the heads of their own kin, too, if they have quarreled with one and a man has prevailed over his kinsman before the king. When guests he values come to visit, he brings out these heads and tells them how these men, his own kin, made war on him and how he defeated them. This is what they call courage.

4.66 Once every year each district governor mixes a bowl of wine in his own district, and those Scythians who have killed enemies drink from it. Those who have not done so do not taste this wine but sit apart in disgrace, and this is the greatest shame there is among them. Those who have killed a great many men are given two cups each and drink from both at once.

4.67 There are many diviners among the Scythians, and they divine with large numbers of willow rods, in this way. They bring large bundles of rods, lay them on the ground and untie them, and they prophesy as they set down each rod one by one. While they are still speaking, they gather the rods up again and

put them back together one by one. [2] This is their ancestral form of divination. The Enarees, the men-women, say that Aphrodite gave them their power of divination. They divine with the bark of the linden tree: a man splits the bark into three strips and prophesies while he plaits and unplaits them around his fingers.[28]

4.68 When the king of the Scythians falls ill, he sends for the three most respected diviners, who divine in the way I have described. What they say is usually this: that so-and-so has sworn falsely by the royal hearth, and they name whichever citizen they choose. [2] It is Scythian custom to swear by the royal hearth above all when they want to swear their most solemn oath. The man they say has sworn falsely is at once seized and brought before them. When he arrives, the diviners accuse him, saying their divination shows that he has sworn falsely by the royal hearth and that this is why the king is ill. He denies it, insists he swore no false oath, and protests indignantly. [3] When he denies it, the king sends for twice as many other diviners. If these too look into the divination and find him guilty of perjury, they cut off his head at once, and the first diviners share out his property by lot. [4] But if the diviners who have come in clear him, still more diviners come, and then more again. If the majority clear the man, the verdict is that the first diviners must be put to death themselves.

4.69 And they do put them to death, in this way. They fill a wagon with brushwood and yoke oxen to it. They fetter the diviners' feet, tie their hands behind their backs, gag them and wedge them in among the brushwood. Then they set it on fire, frighten the oxen and drive them off. [2] Many oxen are burned along with the diviners, but many get away scorched when the wagon pole has burned through. They burn diviners in the way I have described for other reasons too, calling them false diviners. [3] When the king puts men to death, he does not spare

28 The Enarees were Scythian diviners who adopted women's roles; at 1.105 Herodotus explains this as a punishment from the goddess for plundering her temple.

even their children. He kills all the males, but does no harm to the females.

4.70 This is how the Scythians make sworn agreements with whomever they make them. They pour wine into a large earthenware cup and mix into it the blood of the parties to the oath, pricking them with an awl or making a small cut in the body with a knife. Then they dip into the cup a short sword, arrows, a battle-axe and a javelin. When they have done this, they pray at length, and then the parties to the oath drink it off, together with the most distinguished of their followers.

4.71 The tombs of the kings are in the land of the Gerrhi, at the point up to which the Borysthenes is navigable. There, when their king dies, they dig a great square pit in the ground. When they have it ready, they take up the corpse. Its body has been coated with wax, and its belly slit open, cleaned out, filled with chopped galingale, incense, parsley seed and anise, and sewn up again. They carry it in a wagon to another people. [2] Those who receive the corpse when it is brought to them do the same as the Royal Scythians: they cut off a piece of their ear, shave their hair all round, make cuts around their arms, gash their foreheads and noses, and drive arrows through their left hands. [3] From there they carry the king's body in the wagon to another of the peoples they rule, and those they have visited before follow them. When they have carried the body round all of them, they are among the Gerrhi, who live farthest away of all the peoples they rule, and at the burial ground. [4] Then, when they have laid the body in the tomb on a bed of leaves, they plant spears on either side of the corpse, lay timbers across them, and then roof the whole thing over with wickerwork. In the open space left in the tomb they strangle and bury one of his concubines, and also his wine-pourer, his cook, his groom, his attendant and his messenger, along with horses, first-fruits of everything else, and gold cups; they use no silver or bronze at all. [5] When they have done this, they all heap up a great mound, vying with one another and doing their utmost to make it as large as possible.

4.72 When a year has come round, they do the following. They take the most suitable of the remaining servants (these are native-born Scythians, for the king's servants are whoever he himself orders to serve him; they have no servants bought with money), 2 and of these attendants they strangle fifty, along with fifty of the finest horses. They take out their bellies, clean them, fill them with chaff and sew them up. 3 They set half of a wheel, hollow side up, on two posts, and the other half of the wheel on two more posts, and they fix many of these in the ground in this way. Then they drive thick stakes lengthwise through the horses as far as their necks and mount them on the wheel-halves. 4 The front wheel-halves support the horses' shoulders, and the rear ones hold up their bellies by the thighs, while both pairs of legs hang in the air. They put bridles and bits on the horses, stretch the reins forward in front of them, and tie them to pegs. 5 Then they mount each of the fifty strangled young men on a horse. They mount them like this: they drive a straight stake up along the spine of each corpse as far as the neck. Part of this stake projects below, and they fix it into a socket in the other stake, the one that runs through the horse. Having set such horsemen in a circle around the tomb, they ride away.

4.73 That is how they bury their kings. As for other Scythians, when they die, their nearest relatives lay them in wagons and carry them round to their friends. Each of these receives the procession and gives the followers a feast, and he sets before the dead man a share of everything, just as he does for the others. Private persons are carried round like this for forty days and then buried. 2 After a burial the Scythians purify themselves in this way. They scrub and wash their heads; and for the body they do this. They set up three poles leaning against one another and stretch woolen felts around them, and when they have closed them up as tightly as possible, they throw red-hot stones into a trough placed in the middle of the poles and felts.

4.74 Hemp grows in their country. It is very like flax, except in thickness and height; in these the hemp far surpasses it. It grows both wild and from seed, and the Thracians even make

clothes from it that are very like linen ones. No one who was not thoroughly familiar with it could tell whether they were made of flax or of hemp, and someone who had never seen hemp would think the garment was linen.

4.75 So the Scythians take the seed of this hemp, creep in under the felts, and then throw the seed onto the stones glowing from the fire. As it is thrown on, it smolders and gives off so much vapor that no Greek steam bath could outdo it. 2 The Scythians, delighted with the steam bath, howl. This serves them instead of bathing, for they never wash their bodies with water at all. 3 Their women pour water on a rough stone and grind down on it wood of cypress, cedar and frankincense; then they smear this ground-up stuff, which is thick, all over their bodies and faces. This gives them a fragrant smell, and when they take off the plaster on the second day, they are clean and shining.

ANACHARSIS AND SCYLES

Two Scythians who adopted Greek ways, Anacharsis and King Scyles, are killed by their own people.

4.76 These people too shun foreign customs fiercely, those of any other people and above all those of the Greeks, as Anacharsis showed, and after him Scyles. 2 Anacharsis, first of all, had seen a great deal of the world and displayed great wisdom along the way, and was returning to the Scythians' country. Sailing through the Hellespont, he put in at Cyzicus. 3 He found the people of Cyzicus celebrating a festival for the Mother of the Gods with great magnificence, and he vowed to the Mother that, if he returned home safe and sound, he would sacrifice to her just as he saw the Cyzicenes doing and would hold an all-night festival.[29] 4 When he arrived in Scythia, he slipped away into the place called Hylaea (it lies beside the Racecourse of Achilles and happens to be full of trees of every kind). It was here that Anacharsis went, and there he performed the whole festival for the goddess, holding a hand-drum and with images tied all over

29 The Mother of the Gods is Cybele, a goddess of Phrygian origin.

him. [5] One of the Scythians noticed him doing this and reported it to King Saulius. The king came himself, and when he saw Anacharsis doing it, he shot him dead with an arrow. And even now, if anyone asks about Anacharsis, the Scythians say they do not know him, because he went abroad to Greece and took up foreign customs. [6] As I heard from Tymnes, the steward of Ariapeithes, Anacharsis was the paternal uncle of Idanthyrsus, king of the Scythians, and the son of Gnurus son of Lycus son of Spargapeithes. If, then, Anacharsis belonged to this house, let it be known that he died at his brother's hand; for Idanthyrsus was the son of Saulius, and Saulius was the man who killed Anacharsis.

4.77 Still, I have also heard another story, told by the Peloponnesians: that Anacharsis was sent abroad by the king of the Scythians and became a student of Greece, and that when he came back he told the man who had sent him that all Greeks were too busy for any kind of wisdom except the Lacedaemonians, who alone knew how to speak and listen with good sense. [2] But this story is a mere invention of the Greeks themselves; at any rate, the man was killed as I said before.

4.78 That, then, is how this man fared because of foreign customs and his dealings with Greeks. Very many years later Scyles son of Ariapeithes suffered something very similar. Ariapeithes, king of the Scythians, had Scyles among other sons. But Scyles was born of a woman from Istria, not a native at all, and this mother taught him the Greek language and Greek letters. [2] Some time later Ariapeithes was treacherously killed by Spargapeithes, king of the Agathyrsi, and Scyles took over both the kingship and his father's wife, whose name was Opoea. This Opoea was a Scythian, and Ariapeithes had a son by her, Oricus. [3] But as king of the Scythians Scyles was not at all content with the Scythian way of life. Because of the upbringing he had received, he was far more inclined to Greek ways, and he used to do this. Whenever he led the Scythian army to the city of the Borysthenites (these Borysthenites say they are Milesians)—whenever Scyles came to them, he would leave his army in the

outskirts, [4] and he himself, once he was inside the wall and had the gates shut, would take off his Scythian dress and put on Greek clothing. Dressed like this, he would go about the marketplace, with no bodyguards or anyone else following him; the gates were guarded, so that no Scythian would see him in this dress. In other respects too he followed the Greek way of life, and he sacrificed to the gods according to Greek custom. [5] When he had spent a month or more there, he would put on his Scythian dress and leave. He did this many times, and he even built himself a house in Borysthenes and married a local woman to live in it.

4.79 But since it was fated that things would go badly for him, it came about on the following occasion. He conceived a desire to be initiated into the rites of Dionysus Bacchius; and as he was about to undertake the initiation, a very great portent occurred. [2] He had in the city of the Borysthenites a large and costly house with walls around it, which I mentioned a little earlier; around it stood sphinxes and griffins of white stone. The god hurled a thunderbolt at it. The house burned to the ground, but Scyles went through with the initiation all the same. [3] The Scythians reproach the Greeks for their Bacchic reveling; they say it is not reasonable to invent a god who drives people mad. [4] When Scyles had been initiated into the rites of Bacchus, one of the Borysthenites slipped off to the Scythians and said: "You laugh at us, Scythians, because we revel in Bacchic rites and the god takes hold of us. Now this divine power has taken hold of your king too: he's reveling like a Bacchant and being driven mad by the god. If you don't believe me, follow me, and I'll show you." [5] The leading men of the Scythians followed him, and the Borysthenite took them up secretly and placed them on a tower. When Scyles went past with his band of revelers and the Scythians saw him in his Bacchic frenzy, they took it as a terrible disaster; they went out and told the whole army what they had seen.

4.80 After this, when Scyles was riding back to his own home, the Scythians set up his brother Octamasades, son of the daughter of Teres, as their leader and rose against Scyles. [2] When he

learned what was being done against him and the reason for it, he fled to Thrace. Hearing this, Octamasades marched against Thrace. When he reached the Ister, the Thracians came out to meet him; and as they were about to join battle, Sitalces sent a message to Octamasades, as follows: [3] "Why should we put each other to the test? You are my sister's son, and you have my brother. Give him back to me, and I'll hand over your Scyles to you. Let neither of us put an army at risk." [4] This was the offer Sitalces sent him by herald, for a brother of Sitalces had fled and was with Octamasades. Octamasades agreed; he handed over his own maternal uncle to Sitalces and received his brother Scyles. [5] Sitalces took his brother and led him away, but Octamasades cut off Scyles' head on the spot. That is how carefully the Scythians guard their own customs, and such are the penalties they impose on those who adopt foreign ones.

4.81 I was not able to learn the size of the Scythian population precisely, but I heard differing accounts of the number: that they are very numerous, and that they are few, counting only true Scythians. [2] This much, however, they showed me with my own eyes. Between the river Borysthenes and the Hypanis there is a region called Exampaeus. I mentioned it a little earlier, when I said that there is a spring of bitter water in it, whose outflow makes the Hypanis undrinkable. [3] In this region lies a bronze vessel six times the size of the mixing bowl at the mouth of the Black Sea that Pausanias son of Cleombrotus dedicated.[30] [4] For anyone who has not yet seen that bowl, I will make it clear this way: the bronze vessel in Scythia easily holds six hundred amphoras, and this Scythian vessel is six fingers thick. The local people said it was made from arrowheads. [5] Their king, whose name was Ariantas, wanted to know the number of the Scythians, they said, and ordered every Scythian to bring him one arrowhead from his arrow; whoever failed to bring one, he threatened with death. [6] So a huge quantity of arrowheads was brought, and he decided to make a memorial out of them and

30 Pausanias was the Spartan regent who led the Greeks to victory at Plataea in 479 BC.

leave it behind. From these, they said, he made this bronze vessel and dedicated it at this Exampaeus. That is what I heard about the number of the Scythians.[31]

4.82 This land has no marvels, except that its rivers are by far the largest and the most numerous. But whatever else worth wondering at it offers, besides the rivers and the size of its plain, will be told. They show a footprint of Heracles in a rock beside the river Tyras; it looks like a man's footprint, but it is two cubits long. That is how this is; now I will go back to the account I set out to tell at the beginning.

DARIUS BRIDGES THE BOSPORUS

Darius crosses into Europe, subdues the Getae, bridges the Ister, and leaves the Ionians to guard it.

4.83 While Darius was preparing for war against the Scythians and sending out messengers to order some to provide land forces, others ships, and others to bridge the Thracian Bosporus, Artabanus son of Hystaspes, Darius' brother, urged him by no means to march against the Scythians, explaining how impossible the Scythians were to get to grips with. 2 But since his good advice did not persuade him, he gave up; and Darius, when all his preparations were complete, marched his army out of Susa.

4.84 Then Oeobazus, a Persian, who had three sons all going on the campaign, begged Darius to let one be left behind for him. Darius said that since he was a friend and his request was modest, he would leave him all his sons. 2 Oeobazus was overjoyed, hoping his sons had been released from service. But Darius ordered those in charge of such matters to kill all of Oeobazus' sons.

4.85 So they were slaughtered and left lying on the spot. Darius, marching from Susa, reached the Bosporus in the territory of Chalcedon, where the bridge had been built. There he boarded a ship and sailed to the so-called Cyanean Rocks, which the

31 As a measure, the amphora held about 39 liters (some 10 gallons).

Greeks say used to be "wandering"; and sitting on a headland he gazed at the Black Sea, which is well worth seeing. [2] For of all seas it is by nature the most marvelous. Its length is eleven thousand one hundred stades, and its width, where it is widest, three thousand three hundred stades.[32] [3] The mouth of this sea is four stades wide. The length of the mouth—the neck called the Bosporus, where the bridge had been built—comes to about a hundred and twenty stades. The Bosporus extends as far as the Propontis; [4] and the Propontis, which is five hundred stades wide and fourteen hundred long, flows out into the Hellespont, which is seven stades at its narrowest and four hundred long. The Hellespont flows out into a wide expanse of sea called the Aegean.[33]

4.86 These measurements were made as follows. A ship generally covers about seventy thousand fathoms in a long day and sixty thousand by night. [2] Now from the mouth to Phasis (this is the longest stretch of the Black Sea) is a voyage of nine days and eight nights. That makes one million one hundred and ten thousand fathoms, and these fathoms make eleven thousand one hundred stades.[34] [3] From the Sindian territory to Themiscyra on the river Thermodon (this is where the Black Sea is widest) is a voyage of three days and two nights. That makes three hundred and thirty thousand fathoms, or three thousand three hundred stades. [4] This, then, is how I have measured this Black Sea, the Bosporus and the Hellespont, and they are by nature as I have described. This Black Sea also has a lake flowing out into it, not much smaller than itself, which is called Maeotis and the Mother of the Black Sea.

4.87 When Darius had viewed the Black Sea, he sailed back to the bridge, whose builder was Mandrocles of Samos. After viewing the Bosporus as well, he set up two pillars of white stone beside it, carving on one in Assyrian letters and on the other in

32 The Cyanean ("Dark Blue") Rocks were identified with the Clashing Rocks of the Argonaut legend.
33 The Propontis is the Sea of Marmara.
34 A hundred fathoms make one stade.

Greek the names of all the peoples he was leading; and he was leading all the peoples he ruled. They were counted at seven hundred thousand, cavalry included, not counting the fleet, and six hundred ships were assembled. [2] Later the Byzantines carried these pillars into their city and used them for the altar of Artemis Orthosia, all but one stone; that one was left beside the temple of Dionysus in Byzantium, covered with Assyrian writing. The spot on the Bosporus that King Darius bridged is, as I conclude from putting things together, midway between Byzantium and the temple at the mouth.

4.88 After this Darius, pleased with the bridge of boats, rewarded its builder, Mandrocles of Samos, with ten of everything. From these, as a first-fruits offering, Mandrocles had a painting made of the whole bridging of the Bosporus, with King Darius seated in a place of honor and his army crossing over; he had this painted and dedicated it in the temple of Hera, inscribing these lines: [2] Having bridged the fish-filled Bosporus,
Mandrocles dedicated
to Hera a memorial of his bridge of boats;
he won a crown for himself and glory for the Samians,
by accomplishing what King Darius had in mind.

4.89 These, then, were the memorials left by the man who bridged the strait. After rewarding Mandrocles, Darius crossed into Europe. He had ordered the Ionians to sail into the Black Sea as far as the river Ister, and once they reached the Ister, to bridge the river and wait for him there. The fleet was manned by Ionians, Aeolians and Greeks of the Hellespont. [2] The fleet sailed out between the Cyanean Rocks and headed straight for the Ister. It sailed upriver a two days' voyage from the sea and bridged the river's neck, where the mouths of the Ister divide. [3] Darius crossed the Bosporus by the bridge and marched through Thrace. When he reached the sources of the river Tearus, he camped there for three days.

4.90 The people who live around the Tearus say that it is the best of rivers for healing in general, and in particular for curing

scabies in men and horses. Its springs number thirty-eight, all flowing from the same rock. Some of them are cold and some hot. [2] The road to them is the same length from the town of Heraeum near Perinthus and from Apollonia on the Black Sea: two days' journey either way. This Tearus flows into the river Contadesdus, the Contadesdus into the Agrianes, the Agrianes into the Hebrus, and the Hebrus into the sea by the town of Aenus.

4.91 So when Darius reached this river and made camp, he was pleased with it and set up a pillar there too, inscribed with these words: [2] "The headwaters of the river Tearus give the best and finest water of all rivers. To them came, leading an army against the Scythians, the best and finest of all men, Darius son of Hystaspes, King of the Persians and of all the mainland." That is what was written there.

4.92 Setting out from there, Darius came to another river, called the Artescus, which flows through the land of the Odrysians. When he reached this river, he did the following. He marked out a place for the army and ordered every man to put one stone on this marked-out place as he passed by. When the army had done so, he marched it away, leaving great heaps of stones behind.

4.93 Before he reached the Ister, the first people he subdued were the Getae, who believe they are immortal. The Thracians who hold Salmydessus and live inland from the towns of Apollonia and Mesambria, known as the Cyrmianae and the Nipsaei, surrendered to Darius without a fight. The Getae, however, stubbornly resisted and were enslaved at once, although they are the bravest and most just of the Thracians.

4.94 Their belief in immortality is this. They hold that they do not die, and that a man who perishes goes to a divine being, Salmoxis. Some of them call this same being Gebeleizis. [2] Every four years they send one of their number, chosen by lot, as a messenger to Salmoxis, and they tell him what they need at that time. They send him like this. Some of them are posted holding three spears. Others take the man being sent to Salmoxis by his hands and feet, swing him and throw him up into the air onto the spear points. If he is pierced and dies, they believe the god is

favorable to them. [3] If he does not die, they blame the messenger himself, saying he is a bad man, and having blamed him, they send another. They give the messenger his instructions while he is still alive. [4] These same Thracians also shoot arrows up into the sky at thunder and lightning, threatening the god, since they believe there is no other god but their own.

[4.95] But according to what I learn from the Greeks who live on the Hellespont and the Black Sea, this Salmoxis was a man, and he was a slave on Samos, the slave of Pythagoras son of Mnesarchus. [2] After that, they say, he was freed and gained great wealth, and with it he went back to his own country. The Thracians lived a hard life and were rather simple-minded. This Salmoxis, however, knew the Ionian way of life and manners more sophisticated than those of the Thracians, since he had kept company with Greeks, and with Pythagoras, who was not the feeblest of Greek thinkers. [3] So, they say, he built a hall where he entertained and feasted the leading men among the citizens. There he taught them that neither he nor his guests nor their descendants after them would ever die, but would go to a place where they would live forever and have every good thing. [4] While he was doing all this and saying these things, he was having an underground chamber built. When the chamber was finished, he vanished from among the Thracians. He went down into the underground chamber and lived there for three years. [5] The Thracians missed him and mourned him as dead. In the fourth year he appeared to them again, and in this way they came to believe what Salmoxis had told them. That, they say, is what he did.

[4.96] For my part, I neither disbelieve this story about him and the underground chamber nor believe it very strongly. But I think this Salmoxis lived many years before Pythagoras. [2] Whether there was a man called Salmoxis or he is some native divinity of the Getae, so much for him. Such, then, are the customs of these people. When they had been subdued by the Persians, they followed along with the rest of the army.

4.97 When Darius and his land army reached the Ister and everyone had crossed, he ordered the Ionians to break up the bridge and follow him by land, together with the troops from the ships. 2 The Ionians were about to break it up and carry out his orders when Coes son of Erxander, general of the Mytilenaeans, spoke to Darius. He first asked whether the King would be willing to hear an opinion from someone who wanted to give one, and then said: 3 "King, you're about to march against a land where you won't find a single plowed field or inhabited town. So let this bridge stand where it is, and leave the men who built it to guard it. 4 Then if we find the Scythians and things go as we want, we have a way back. And even if we can't find them, at least our way back is safe. I've never yet been afraid that the Scythians would beat us in battle. My fear is rather that we won't be able to find them, and will come to grief wandering about. 5 Someone might say I'm saying this for my own sake, so that I can stay behind. But I'm putting before you, King, the advice I think best for you. As for me, I'll follow you; I won't be left behind." 6 Darius was very pleased with this advice and answered him: "My friend from Lesbos, when I'm safely back home, be sure to come and see me, so that I can repay your good advice with good deeds."

4.98 With these words he tied sixty knots in a leather strap. Then he called the tyrants of the Ionians to a meeting and said: 2 "Ionians, I withdraw the order I gave earlier about the bridge. Take this strap and do as follows. From the moment you see me set off against the Scythians, untie one knot each day. If I'm not back within that time, and the days of the knots run out, sail away to your own countries. 3 Until then, since I've changed my mind, guard the bridge, and do everything you can to keep it safe and guarded. If you do this, you'll be doing me a great favor." With these words Darius pressed on.[35]

4.99 Thrace juts out into the sea in front of Scythia. Where this land forms a gulf, Scythia begins, and the Ister flows into it, with its mouth facing the southeast wind. 2 Starting from the Ister, I

35 The Ionian cities were governed for Persia by tyrants.

will now describe the coast of Scythia proper, for the purpose of measuring it. Old Scythia begins at the Ister. It faces south, toward the south wind, and runs as far as the town called Carcinitis. [3] Beyond this town, the country along the same sea is mountainous and juts out into the Black Sea. The Taurian people live there, as far as the peninsula called the Rugged Peninsula, which runs down to the sea that lies toward the east wind. [4] For two of Scythia's boundaries run down to the sea, one to the south and one to the east, just as with Attica. The Taurians live in a part of Scythia much like this. It is as if some people other than the Athenians lived on the hill country of Sunium, the part that juts out farthest into the sea, from Thoricus to the deme of Anaphlystus. [5] I mean this as far as small things may be compared with great. That is what the Tauric land is like.[36] For anyone who has not sailed along this part of the coast of Attica, I'll explain it another way. It is as if some people other than the Iapygians cut off the headland of Iapygia, starting from the harbor of Brentesium and running as far as Taras, and lived on it. In naming these two, I am describing many other similar places that the Tauric land resembles.[37]

4.100 Beyond the Tauric land, Scythians live above the Taurians and along the eastern sea, west of the Cimmerian Bosporus and the Maeotian lake, as far as the river Tanais, which flows into the far corner of that lake. [2] So, going inland from the Ister toward the interior, Scythia is bounded first by the Agathyrsi, then by the Neuri, then by the Man-eaters, and last by the Black Cloaks.

4.101 So Scythia is a square, with two of its sides running down to the sea, and its extent inland is equal in every way to its extent along the coast. [2] From the Ister to the Borysthenes is ten days' journey, and from the Borysthenes to the Maeotian lake another ten. From the sea inland to the Black Cloaks, who live above the Scythians, is twenty days' journey. [3] I reckon a day's journey at two hundred stades. So Scythia would measure four

36 Sunium is the southern tip of Attica, the territory of Athens. Thoricus and Anaphlystus are local districts (demes) on its east and west coasts.
37 Brentesium and Taras are Brindisi and Taranto.

thousand stades across, and the same number of stades going straight inland. That, then, is the size of this land.

4.102 The Scythians reasoned that they could not drive off Darius' army in open battle by themselves, so they sent messengers to their neighbors. The kings of these peoples had in fact already met and were deliberating, since a great army was advancing on them. 2 The kings who met were those of the Taurians, the Agathyrsi, the Neuri, the Man-eaters, the Black Cloaks, the Geloni, the Budini and the Sauromatae.

4.103 Of these peoples, the Taurians have the following customs. They sacrifice to the Maiden any shipwrecked sailors, and any Greeks they capture when they put out to sea. They do it in this way. 2 After the opening rites, they strike the victim on the head with a club. Some say that they push the body down from the cliff (for the temple stands on a cliff) and fix the head on a stake. Others agree about the head, but say the body is not pushed from the cliff but buried in the earth. The Taurians themselves say that this goddess to whom they sacrifice is Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon.[38] 3 This is what they do with enemies they overpower. Each man cuts off a head and carries it home. Then he impales it on a long pole and sets it up high above his house, usually above the smoke-hole. They say these heads hang there as guardians of the whole household. They live by plunder and war.

4.104 The Agathyrsi live in the greatest luxury of all men and wear a great deal of gold. They share their women in common, so that they may all be brothers and, being all kin, may feel neither envy nor hatred toward one another. In their other customs they are close to the Thracians.

4.105 The Neuri follow Scythian customs. One generation before Darius' expedition, they were forced to abandon their entire country because of snakes. Their land produced many snakes, and still more came down on them from the wilderness to the north, until, hard pressed, they left their own land and

38 In Greek legend Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia at Aulis. In some versions Artemis rescued her and carried her off to the land of the Taurians.

settled among the Budini. These people may well be sorcerers. [2] For the Scythians, and the Greeks who live in Scythia, say that once a year every one of the Neuri turns into a wolf for a few days and then changes back again into his former shape. For my part, they do not convince me when they say this. But they say it all the same, and even swear to it.

4.106 The Man-eaters have the wildest ways of all people. They recognize no justice and follow no law. They are nomads and wear clothing like that of the Scythians, but they have a language of their own. Of all these peoples, they alone eat human flesh.

4.107 The Black Cloaks all wear black clothing, which is how they got their name. They follow Scythian customs.

4.108 The Budini are a great and numerous people, and all of them are strikingly blue-eyed and red-haired. In their country there is a city built of wood, called Gelonus. Each side of its wall is thirty stades long. The wall is high and made entirely of wood, and so are their houses and temples. [2] For there are temples of Greek gods there, furnished in the Greek manner with images, altars and shrines, all of wood. Every other year they hold a festival for Dionysus and celebrate his Bacchic rites. For the Geloni were originally Greeks, who left the trading posts and settled among the Budini. They speak a language that is partly Scythian and partly Greek.

4.109 The Budini do not speak the same language as the Geloni, nor is their way of life the same. The Budini are native to the land, they are nomads, and they are the only people there who eat lice. The Geloni farm the land, eat grain and keep gardens, and they are not at all like the Budini in appearance or coloring. Yet the Greeks call the Budini Geloni too, which is wrong. [2] Their whole country is thick with forests of every kind. In the densest forest there is a large, wide lake, with marsh and reeds around it. In it otters and beavers are caught, and other square-faced animals. Their pelts are sewn as borders onto cloaks, and their testicles are useful for curing disorders of the womb.

THE AMAZONS

Scythian youths win over the Amazons, and their descendants become the Sauromatae.

4.110 This is the story about the Sauromatae. It happened when the Greeks fought the Amazons. The Scythians call the Amazons Oiorpata, which in Greek means "man-killers," for they call a man *oior*, and *pata* means "to kill." The story goes that the Greeks won the battle on the Thermodon and sailed away, carrying in three ships as many Amazons as they had been able to take alive. Out at sea, the women attacked the men and cut them down.[39] 2 But, so the story goes, they knew nothing about ships and did not know how to use rudders, sails or oars. So after cutting down the men they drifted with the waves and the wind, and came to Cremni on the Maeotian lake. Cremni is in the land of the free Scythians. There the Amazons left the ships and made their way toward the inhabited country. The first thing they came upon was a herd of horses. They seized it, mounted the horses and began plundering the Scythians' land.

4.111 The Scythians could not make sense of what was happening. They did not recognize the women's language, their dress or their people, and they wondered where they had come from. They took them for men all of the same age, and fought a battle with them. After the battle the Scythians got possession of the dead, and in this way they learned that their enemies were women. 2 So they deliberated and decided not to kill any more of them on any account. Instead they would send their youngest men to them, judging the number to match that of the women. These young men were to camp near the women and do whatever they did. If the women pursued them, they were not to fight but to retreat; and when the women stopped, they were to come back and camp near them again. The Scythians made this plan because they wanted children to be born from these

39 The Thermodon is a river on the Black Sea coast of Asia Minor, the legendary home of the Amazons.

women. The young men were sent off and did as they had been told.

4.112 When the Amazons saw that the young men had not come to do them any harm, they left them alone. Every day the two camps drew closer to each other. Like the Amazons, the young men had nothing but their weapons and horses, and they lived the same life as the women, hunting and plundering.

4.113 Around midday the Amazons would do this. They scattered, one or two at a time, going far apart from one another to relieve themselves. The Scythians noticed this and did the same. And one of the young men approached one of the women while she was alone, 2 and the Amazon did not push him away but let him lie with her. She could not speak to him, since they did not understand each other's language. But with her hand she told him to come to the same place the next day and bring another man with him, signing that there should be two, and that she would bring another woman. 3 When the young man went back, he told the others about this. The next day he came to the place himself and brought another man, and he found the Amazon waiting there with a second woman. When the rest of the young men learned of this, they too tamed the rest of the Amazons.

4.114 After that they joined their camps and lived together, each man taking as his wife the woman he had first been with. The men could not learn the women's language, but the women picked up the men's. 2 When they could understand one another, the men said to the Amazons: "We have parents and we have property. So let's not live this kind of life any longer. Let's go back to our people and live among them. We'll have you as our wives, and no others." To this the women replied: 3 "We couldn't live with your women, because we and they don't have the same customs. We shoot arrows, throw javelins and ride horses, and we've never learned women's work. Your women do none of the things we've just listed. They do women's work and stay in their wagons, and they never go out hunting or anywhere else. 4 So we couldn't get along with them. But if you want to have us as your

wives and to be seen to do what's just, go to your parents and get your share of the property. Then let's go and live on our own." The young men were persuaded and did this.

4.115 When they had received the share of the property that fell to them and come back to the Amazons, the women said this to them: 2 "We are frightened and afraid at the thought of living in this land. We have robbed you of your fathers, and we have done your country a great deal of damage. 3 But since you think it right to have us as wives, do this together with us: come, let's move out of this land, cross the river Tanais and live there."

4.116 The young men agreed to this as well. They crossed the Tanais and journeyed toward the rising sun for three days from the Tanais, and for three days northward from Lake Maeotis. When they reached the region where they are settled now, they made their home there. 2 Ever since then the women of the Sauromatae have kept to their ancient way of life. They ride out on horseback to hunt, both with the men and without them, they go to war, and they wear the same clothing as the men.

4.117 The Sauromatae speak the Scythian language, but they have spoken it incorrectly from the beginning, because the Amazons never learned it properly. Their marriage customs are as follows. No girl marries until she has killed a man of the enemy, and some of them even die as old women before they marry, because they cannot fulfill the law.

THE SCYTHIAN CAMPAIGN

Most neighbors refuse to help; the Scythians retreat, wreck wells and pasture, and lead Darius on a long chase.

4.118 It was to the kings of these peoples I have listed, then, gathered together, that the Scythian messengers came. They explained that the Persian had subdued everything on the other continent, had bridged the neck of the Bosporus and had crossed over to this continent. Once across, he had subdued the Thracians and was now bridging the river Ister, because he wanted to bring all this land under his power as well. 2 "So don't

on any account sit on the sidelines and look on while we are destroyed. Let's be of one mind and go out to meet the invader together. If you won't do this, then we, under pressure, will either abandon our country or stay and come to terms with him. 3 What else can we do, if you aren't willing to help us? But it won't go any easier for you because of that. The Persian has come against you no less than against us, and once he has subdued us he won't be content to keep his hands off you. 4 We'll give you strong evidence for what we say. If the Persian were marching against us alone, wanting vengeance for the slavery we once imposed on them, he ought to have left all the others alone and come straight against our country. That way he would have made it clear to everyone that he was marching against the Scythians and not against the rest. 5 As it is, from the moment he crossed over to this continent he has been taming everyone who stands in his way. He holds the rest of the Thracians under his power, and now even the Getae, our neighbors."[40]

4.119 While the Scythians were delivering this message, the kings who had come from the various peoples deliberated, and their opinions were divided. The Gelonian, the Budinian and the Sauromatian kings agreed with one another and undertook to help the Scythians. But the kings of the Agathyrsi, the Neuri, the Man-eaters, the Black Cloaks and the Taurians gave the Scythians this answer: 2 "If you hadn't been the first to wrong the Persians and start the war, then you would seem to us to be in the right in asking what you are asking now, and we would have listened to you and joined you. 3 As it is, you invaded their land without us and ruled over the Persians for as long as the god granted you. Now the same god is rousing them, and they are paying you back in kind. 4 We did these men no wrong at all back then, and we won't be the first to try to wrong them now. If, however, he comes against our country too and starts doing us wrong, we won't put up with it either. But until we see that happen, we'll stay at home. We don't believe the Persians have come

40 The Scythians had once ruled Asia, including the Medes and Persians, for twenty-eight years (1.106, 4.1).

against us; they have come against those who were responsible for the wrong."

4.120 When the Scythians learned that this was the answer brought back, they decided not to fight any pitched battle in the open, since these peoples at least would not join them as allies. Instead they would retreat and ride off ahead of the enemy, filling in the wells and springs they passed and destroying the grass on the land. They divided themselves into two forces. 2 The Sauromatae were to join one of the divisions, the one ruled by Scopasis. If the Persian turned in that direction, these were to retreat ahead of him straight toward the river Tanais along Lake Maeotis, and when the Persian marched away, they were to come after him and pursue. This was one division of their kingdom, and it was assigned to the route just described. 3 The other two divisions of the kingdom, the great one ruled by Idanthyrsus and the third ruled by Taxacis, were to unite. With the Geloni and the Budini joining them, they too were to keep a day's march ahead of the Persians and draw them on, retreating and carrying out the plan. 4 First of all they were to lead them straight toward the lands of those who had refused their alliance, so as to drag these peoples into the war as well: if they would not take up the war against the Persians willingly, they would be forced into it against their will. After that they were to turn back to their own country and attack, if on deliberation that seemed best.

4.121 Having made these plans, the Scythians went out to meet Darius' army, sending the best of their horsemen ahead as an advance guard. They sent their wagons on ahead, all the wagons in which their children and women lived. They also sent all their livestock along with the wagons, keeping back only as much as they needed for food. They ordered the wagons to keep moving northward the whole time.

4.122 These, then, were being carried off ahead. When the Scythian advance guard found the Persians about three days' march from the Ister, they camped a day's march ahead of them and stripped bare everything that grew from the ground. 2 When

the Persians saw the Scythian cavalry appear, they followed their track as they kept withdrawing. Since they had made for one of the divisions, the Persians then pursued them eastward and straight toward the Tanais. [3] When the Scythians crossed the river Tanais, the Persians crossed after them and kept up the pursuit, until they had passed through the country of the Sauromatae and reached that of the Budini.

4.123 As long as the Persians were passing through Scythian and Sauromatian territory, they had nothing to damage, because the land was barren. But when they invaded the country of the Budini, they came upon the wooden wall there. The Budini had abandoned it and it had been emptied of everything, so they burned it. [2] After this they kept following the track onward until they passed through this country and reached the desert. This desert is inhabited by no people at all. It lies beyond the land of the Budini and is seven days' journey across. [3] Beyond the desert live the Thyssagetae. Four great rivers flow from their land through the country of the Maeetians and empty into the lake called Maeotis. Their names are the Lycus, the Oarus, the Tanais and the Syrgis.[41]

4.124 When Darius came to the desert, he halted his advance and settled his army by the river Oarus. Then he built eight large forts, equally distant from one another, about sixty stades apart at most. Their ruins were still intact in my day. [2] While he was busy with this, the Scythians he was pursuing went around by the north and turned back into Scythia. When they had vanished altogether and could no longer be seen, Darius left those forts half-built. He turned back himself and marched westward, thinking that these were all the Scythians there were and that they were fleeing west.

4.125 He drove his army on as fast as he could, and when he reached Scythia he came upon both Scythian divisions together. Having encountered them, he pursued them as they kept a day's march ahead of him. [2] Darius would not let up the pursuit, so the

41 The wooden wall surrounded Gelonus, the city in Budinian country that Herodotus described earlier (4.108).

Scythians, as planned, fled into the lands of those who had refused their alliance, first into the country of the Black Cloaks. [3] When Scythians and Persians alike had burst in and thrown these into turmoil, the Scythians led the way into the territory of the Man-eaters. When these too had been thrown into turmoil, they drew the enemy on into the land of the Neuri. While these too were in turmoil, the Scythians went on, still retreating, toward the Agathyrsi. [4] But the Agathyrsi saw their neighbors too fleeing from the Scythians in turmoil. Before the Scythians could invade, they sent a herald forbidding them to set foot across their borders, and warning that if they tried to invade, they would first have to fight it out with the Agathyrsi. [5] After giving this warning, the Agathyrsi rushed to their borders, intending to hold back the invaders. But when the Persians invaded along with the Scythians, the Black Cloaks, the Man-eaters and the Neuri did not turn to fight. They forgot their threats and kept fleeing northward into the desert in turmoil. [6] The Scythians no longer went toward the Agathyrsi, since these had forbidden it. Instead they led the Persians from the land of the Neuri into their own country.

4.126 Since this went on for a long time and showed no sign of stopping, Darius sent a horseman to Idanthyrsus, king of the Scythians, with this message: "You strange man, why do you keep running away, when you could do one of two things? If you think you're strong enough to stand up against my power, then stand still, stop wandering and fight. But if you admit you're the weaker, then in that case too stop running, bring your master gifts of earth and water, and come to talk."[42]

4.127 To this Idanthyrsus, king of the Scythians, replied: "This is how things stand with me, Persian. I have never yet fled from any man out of fear, and I'm not fleeing from you now. What I'm doing now is nothing new, either: it is what I'm used to doing in peacetime as well. [2] As for why I don't fight you at once, I'll explain that too. We have no towns and no planted land. If we had, we might meet you in battle sooner, for fear that they

42 Gifts of earth and water were the Persian token of submission to the King.

would be captured or ravaged. But if you really must come to that quickly, we do have the tombs of our fathers. [3] Go on, find them and try to wreck them, and then you'll know whether we'll fight you over the tombs or not. Until then, unless we see good reason, we won't engage you. [4] So much for fighting. As for masters, I recognize only Zeus, my ancestor, and Hestia, queen of the Scythians. Instead of gifts of earth and water I'll send you the kind of gifts you deserve to get. And as for your claim to be my master, I tell you: go and weep." That is the reply from the Scythians.[43]

4.128 So the herald went off to report this to Darius. When the Scythian kings heard the word "slavery," they were filled with rage. [2] They sent the division posted with the Sauromatae, commanded by Scopasis, to the Ionians who were guarding the bridge over the Ister, with orders to open talks with them. Those of them who remained decided to stop leading the Persians on and instead to attack them whenever they were out gathering food. So they watched for Darius' men as they gathered food, and carried out their plan. [3] The Scythian cavalry always routed the Persian cavalry. The Persian horsemen would flee and fall back on the infantry, and the infantry would come to their aid. Then the Scythians, having driven back the cavalry, would turn away for fear of the infantry. The Scythians made similar attacks at night as well.

4.129 What helped the Persians and hampered the Scythians in their attacks on Darius' camp was—and this is the most remarkable thing I have to tell—the braying of the donkeys and the look of the mules. [2] The land of Scythia produces neither donkeys nor mules, as I have already shown earlier, and because of the cold there is no donkey or mule anywhere in the whole of Scythia. So the donkeys, running riot, threw the Scythian cavalry into disorder. [3] Often, when they were charging the Persians, the horses would hear the donkeys bray in the middle of it all. Then they would be thrown into confusion and wheel around, and stand

43 Herodotus gives the Scythian names of these gods as Papaeus (Zeus) and Tabiti (Hestia) (4.59).

there amazed with their ears pricked up, since they had never heard such a sound before or seen such a creature.

4.130 These things, then, made some small difference in the war. Whenever the Scythians saw that the Persians were in disarray, they did the following, so that the Persians would stay longer in Scythia and, by staying, suffer from want of everything. They would leave some of their own livestock behind with the herdsmen and themselves ride off to another place. The Persians would come up and take the livestock, and having taken them they would be elated at what they had done.

THE SCYTHIAN GIFTS

The Scythians send a bird, a mouse, a frog and arrows; Darius retreats, and the Ionians keep the bridge.

4.131 This happened often, and in the end Darius found himself at a loss. The Scythian kings, learning of this, sent a herald to Darius bearing gifts: a bird, a mouse, a frog and five arrows. 2 The Persians asked the man who brought the gifts what they meant. He said his only orders were to hand them over and leave as quickly as possible. The Persians themselves, he told them, should work out what the gifts meant, if they were wise.

4.132 When they heard this, the Persians deliberated. Darius' opinion was that the Scythians were surrendering themselves to him, along with earth and water. He reasoned this way: a mouse lives in the earth and eats the same food as a man; a frog lives in water; a bird is very like a horse; and with the arrows they were handing over their fighting strength. 2 That was the opinion Darius put forward. But against it stood the opinion of Gobryas, one of the seven men who had overthrown the Magus. He reckoned that the gifts were saying: 3 "Unless you turn into birds and fly up into the sky, Persians, or turn into mice and sink down into the earth, or turn into frogs and leap into the lakes, you will never get home again, but will be shot down by these arrows."

4.133 That was how the Persians interpreted the gifts. Meanwhile the single Scythian division, which had first been posted to keep guard along Lake Maeotis and had now been sent to the Ister to talk with the Ionians, arrived at the bridge and said this: 2 "Men of Ionia, we have come to bring you freedom, if only you are willing to listen. We hear that Darius instructed you to guard the bridge for sixty days only, and to go off home if he had not appeared within that time. 3 Now then, if you do this, you will be free of blame in his eyes and free of blame in ours: stay for the appointed days, and after that go away." The Ionians promised to do this, and the Scythians hurried back as fast as they could.

4.134 After the gifts had come to Darius, the Scythians who had been left behind drew up their infantry and cavalry against the Persians, as if to join battle. As the Scythians stood in their ranks, a hare darted out into the space between the armies. As each group of them caught sight of the hare, they went chasing after it. The Scythians broke ranks in confusion and raised a shout, and Darius asked what the uproar among the enemy was. When he learned that they were chasing the hare, he said to the men he usually talked to about other matters: 2 "These men hold us in deep contempt, and now I think Gobryas was right about the Scythian gifts. Since I too now think it's so, we need good counsel on how to make our way back safely." To this Gobryas said: "King, I already had a fair idea from what I'd heard of how impossible these men are to get at, but I learned it better when I came here and saw them making sport of us. 3 So now I think that as soon as night falls we should light the fires as we usually do, trick the weakest of our soldiers into staying behind to face the hardships, tether all the donkeys, and get away. We must do this before the Scythians make straight for the Ister to break up the bridge, or the Ionians decide on something that could be our ruin."

4.135 That was Gobryas' advice. Then night came on, and Darius followed this plan. He left the exhausted men there in the camp, and those whose loss would matter least, and he tethered all the donkeys and left them too. 2 He left the donkeys and the weak

men of the army for these reasons. The donkeys were there to make their noise. The men were left because of their weakness, but under this pretext, evidently: that he himself was about to attack the Scythians with the fit part of the army, while they guarded the camp in the meantime. [3] After giving these instructions to those left behind and lighting the fires, Darius hurried toward the Ister as fast as he could. The donkeys, left without the crowd around them, now brayed much louder than ever. The Scythians heard the donkeys and fully believed that the Persians were still where they had been.

[4.136] When day came, the men left behind realized that Darius had betrayed them. They stretched out their hands to the Scythians and told them how things stood. As soon as the Scythians heard this, they gathered as fast as they could: the two divisions of the Scythians and the single one, together with the Sauromatae, the Budini and the Geloni. Then they pursued the Persians straight toward the Ister. [2] The Persian army was mostly infantry and did not know the roads, since there were no made roads. The Scythian army was cavalry and knew the shortcuts. So the two missed each other, and the Scythians reached the bridge far ahead of the Persians. [3] When they learned that the Persians had not yet arrived, they said to the Ionians, who were on their ships: "Ionians, the number of days you were given has run out, and you're doing wrong by staying here any longer. [4] Until now fear kept you here. Now break up the crossing as fast as you can and go home rejoicing in your freedom, with thanks to the gods and to the Scythians. As for the man who used to be your master, we'll deal with him so that he never makes war on anyone again."

[4.137] The Ionians debated this. Miltiades the Athenian was general and tyrant of the Chersonesites on the Hellespont, and his view was that they should do as the Scythians said and free Ionia. [2] Histiaeus of Miletus held the opposite view. He said that as things stood each of them was tyrant of his city thanks to Darius. If Darius' power were destroyed, he himself would no longer be able to rule the Milesians, and none of the others

would be able to rule anyone at all, because every one of the cities would rather be governed by the people than by a tyrant. [3] When Histiaeus put forward this view, they all went over to it at once, though before that they had been choosing Miltiades'.[44]

4.138 The men who cast the vote and were held in esteem by the King were these. From the Hellespont there were the tyrants Daphnis of Abydos, Hippoclus of Lampsacus, Herophantus of Parium, Metrodorus of Proconnesus, Aristagoras of Cyzicus and Ariston of Byzantium. [2] Those were the men from the Hellespont. From Ionia there were Strattis of Chios, Aeaces of Samos, Laodamas of Phocaea, and Histiaeus of Miletus, whose view, opposed to Miltiades', has been set out above. Of the Aeolians, the only man of note present was Aristagoras of Cyme.

4.139 So once they had chosen Histiaeus' view, they decided to add certain deeds and words to it. They would break up the part of the bridge on the Scythian side, but only as far as an arrow can reach. That way they would seem to be doing something while doing nothing, and the Scythians would not try to force their way across the Ister by the bridge. While breaking up the part of the bridge facing Scythia, they would tell the Scythians that they would do everything the Scythians wanted. [2] That is what they added to their decision. Then Histiaeus answered on behalf of them all: "Scythians, you've come with good news, and your haste is timely. What you've brought sets us on a good road, and on our side we're serving you as we should. As you see, we're breaking up the crossing, and we'll show every eagerness, because we want to be free. [3] While we break this up, it's time for you to seek out those men. When you find them, take vengeance on them, for us and for yourselves, as they deserve."

4.140 The Scythians trusted the Ionians a second time to be telling the truth and turned back to look for the Persians, but they missed the Persians' route entirely. The Scythians themselves were to blame for this, because they had destroyed the horses' pastures in that region and filled in the water sources. [2] If they had not done this, they could easily have found the Per-

44 This Miltiades later commanded the Athenians at Marathon.

sians, had they wished. As it was, they came to grief through the very plan they thought was their best. [3] So the Scythians searched for their enemies through the parts of their own country where there was fodder and water for the horses, thinking that the Persians too were escaping through country of that kind. The Persians, however, kept to the track they themselves had made before, and so they found the crossing, though only with difficulty. [4] They arrived at night and found the bridge broken up, and they fell into utter terror that the Ionians had deserted them.

4.141 Among Darius' men there was an Egyptian who had the loudest voice in the world. Darius ordered this man to stand on the bank of the Ister and call for Histiaeus of Miletus. He did so, and Histiaeus heard the very first call. He provided all the ships to ferry the army across and rejoined the bridge.

4.142 That is how the Persians escaped. The Scythians searched for them and missed them a second time. For this reason, regarded as free men, the Ionians are judged by the Scythians to be the most worthless and cowardly people in the world. Regarded as slaves, they are said to be captives who love their masters and never run away. These are the insults the Scythians have flung at the Ionians.

4.143 Darius marched through Thrace and came to Sestos in the Chersonese. From there he himself crossed with the ships to Asia, and he left Megabazus, a Persian, as general in Europe. Darius had once honored this man by saying the following among the Persians. [2] Darius was starting to eat pomegranates, and as soon as he had opened the first one, his brother Artabanus asked him what he would wish to have as many of as there were seeds in the pomegranate. Darius said he would rather have that many Megabazuses than have Greece subject to him. [3] He had honored him by saying this among the Persians, and now he left him behind as general, with eighty thousand men of his army.

4.144 This Megabazus said something that left an undying memory among the Hellespontines. [2] While he was in Byzan-

tium, he learned that the Chalcedonians had settled their land seventeen years before the Byzantines settled theirs. When he heard this, he said that the Chalcedonians must have been blind at the time. They would never have chosen the uglier site to settle when the finer one was available, unless they were blind. [3] So it was this Megabazus who was now left as general in the land of the Hellespontines, and he subdued those who were not siding with the Persians.[45]

THERA AND CYRENE

How Thera was settled, how Battus founded Cyrene, and the troubled reigns of his successors.

4.145 That is what he was doing. At this same time another great military expedition was being made against Libya. I will explain the reason for it, but first I must tell the following story. [2] The grandsons of the men who sailed in the Argo were driven out of Lemnos by the Pelasgians who had carried off the Athenian women from Brauron. After they were driven out, they sailed away to Lacedaemon, settled on Mount Taygetus and lit a fire. [3] When the Lacedaemonians saw it, they sent a messenger to find out who these people were and where they had come from. When the messenger asked, they told him that they were Minyans, sons of the heroes who sailed in the Argo, and that these heroes had put in at Lemnos and fathered them. [4] The Lacedaemonians heard this account of the Minyans' descent and sent a second time to ask what they wanted in coming into the country and lighting a fire. They said that they had been thrown out by the Pelasgians and had come to their fathers, since that was the most just course. They asked to live among them, sharing in their rights and receiving a portion of the land. [5] The Lacedaemonians were pleased to receive the Minyans on the terms they themselves asked for. What moved them most to do this was the voyage of the Tyndaridae in the Argo. So they received the Minyans, gave them a share of the land and distrib-

45 Chalcedon lay on the Asian shore of the Bosporus, opposite Byzantium.

uted them among their tribes. The Minyans married at once, and they gave the women they had brought from Lemnos in marriage to other men.[46]

4.146 Before much time had passed, the Minyans grew arrogant. They demanded a share of the kingship and did other impious things. 2 So the Lacedaemonians decided to kill them, and they seized them and threw them into prison. When the Lacedaemonians put people to death, they do it at night, never by day. 3 When they were about to execute them, the Minyans' wives asked to be allowed into the prison so that each could speak with her own husband. These women were citizens and daughters of the leading Spartans. The Lacedaemonians let them in, not expecting any trick from them. 4 Once inside, the women did this. They gave their husbands all the clothes they were wearing and put on the men's clothes themselves. The Minyans put on the women's clothes and walked out as women. Having escaped in this way, they settled once more on Taygetus.

4.147 At this same time Theras was setting out from Lacedaemon to found a colony. He was the son of Autesion, son of Tisamenus, son of Thersander, son of Polynices. 2 This Theras was a Cadmean by descent, and he was the maternal uncle of Aristodemus' sons, Eurysthenes and Procles. While these boys were still infants, Theras held the kingship in Sparta as regent. 3 But when his nephews had grown up and taken over the rule, Theras could not bear to be ruled by others after he had tasted rule himself. He said he would not stay in Lacedaemon but would sail away to his kinsmen.[47] 4 On the island now called Thera, which was formerly called Calliste, there lived descendants of Membliarus son of Poeciles, a Phoenician. Cadmus son of Agenor, while searching for Europa, had put in at the island now called Thera. Perhaps the land pleased him, or perhaps he had some other reason for wanting to do this, but he left some Phoenicians on the island, and among them Membliarus, one of

46 The Tyndaridae, Castor and Polydeuces (Pollux), were Spartan heroes who had sailed on the Argo.

47 Eurysthenes and Procles were twins, the ancestors of Sparta's two royal houses.

his own kinsmen. [5] These people had lived on the island then called Calliste for eight generations before Theras came from Lacedaemon.[48]

4.148 So it was to these people that Theras set out, with a band of people drawn from the tribes. He meant to live among them, not to drive them out in any way, but to claim them as close kin. [2] Meanwhile the Minyans had escaped from the prison and settled on Taygetus, and the Lacedaemonians were planning to destroy them. Theras begged for their lives so that there would be no bloodshed, and he himself undertook to lead them out of the country. [3] The Lacedaemonians agreed to this plan, and he sailed with three thirty-oared ships to the descendants of Membliarus. He took not all the Minyans with him, but only a few. [4] Most of them headed for the lands of the Paroreatae and the Caucones. They drove these peoples out of their country, divided themselves into six groups and then founded six towns there: Lepreum, Macistus, Phrixae, Pyrgus, Epium and Nudium. Most of these were sacked by the Eleans in my time. The island took its name from its founder, Theras.[49]

4.149 Theras' son refused to sail with him, so Theras said he would leave him behind as a sheep among wolves. Because of this remark the young man got the name Oeolycus, and somehow the name stuck. Oeolycus had a son, Aegeus, after whom the Aegidae, a great tribe in Sparta, are named. [2] The men of this tribe found that their children did not survive, so on the advice of an oracle they founded a shrine to the Furies of Laius and Oedipus. After that the children survived … the same thing happened on Thera to the descendants of these men.[50]

4.150 Up to this point in the story the Lacedaemonians and the Therans agree. From here on only the Therans say that it happened as follows. [2] Grinnus son of Aesanius, a descendant of

48 Thera is modern Santorini. Cadmus, legendary founder of Thebes, was searching for his sister Europa, whom Zeus had carried off.

49 The Paroreatae and Caucones lived in the western Peloponnese, between Elis and Messenia.

50 Oeolycus means "Sheep-wolf." The Furies (Erinyes) were avenging spirits; Laius and Oedipus, kings of Thebes, were ancestors of Theras.

this Theras and king of the island of Thera, came to Delphi bringing a hecatomb from his city. Some of his fellow citizens came with him, and among them was Battus son of Polymnestus, who belonged by descent to the Euphemidae, one of the Minyan families.[51] 3 Grinnus, the king of the Therans, consulted the oracle about other matters, but the Pythia's answer was that he should found a city in Libya. He replied: "My lord, I'm already too old and too heavy to go anywhere. Tell one of these younger men to do it." As he said this he pointed at Battus. 4 That was all for the time being. Afterward, once they had gone home, they paid no attention to the oracle. They did not know where in the world Libya was, and they did not dare send a colony off into the unknown.

4.151 For seven years after this no rain fell on Thera, and during that time every tree on the island except one withered. When the Therans consulted the oracle, the Pythia again brought up the colony in Libya. 2 Since they had no remedy for their trouble, they sent messengers to Crete to find out whether any Cretan or any foreigner living there had ever been to Libya. In the course of their wanderings around the island, the messengers also came to the town of Itanus. There they met a purple-fisher named Corobius, who said that the winds had once carried him off course to Libya, to an island off Libya called Platea.[52] 3 They paid him to come with them and brought him to Thera. From Thera a few men sailed out at first to scout. Corobius guided them to this island of Platea. They left him there with provisions for some months and sailed back as fast as they could to report to the Therans about the island.

4.152 They stayed away longer than the agreed time, and Corobius ran out of everything. After that a Samian ship sailing for Egypt, whose master was Colaeus, was driven off course to this same Platea. The Samians heard the whole story from Corobius and left him a year's provisions. 2 They themselves put out from the island and sailed on, eager to reach Egypt, but an

51 A hecatomb was a large sacrifice, originally of a hundred oxen.
52 A purple-fisher gathered the shellfish from which purple dye was made.

east wind carried them away. Since the wind did not let up, they passed through the Pillars of Heracles and came to Tartessus, under divine guidance.[53] 3 At that time this trading place was still untouched. So when these men got back home, they made the greatest profit from their cargo of any Greeks we know of for certain, except for Sostratus son of Laodamas, of Aegina, with whom no one else can compete. 4 The Samians set aside a tenth of their profits, six talents, and made a bronze vessel in the style of an Argive mixing bowl, with griffins' heads projecting all around it. They dedicated it in the temple of Hera, setting under it three colossal bronze figures, seven cubits tall, supporting it on their knees. 5 This deed first brought about the close friendship between the Samians on one side and the Cyrenaeans and Therans on the other.

4.153 The Therans who had left Corobius on the island reached Thera and reported that they had settled an island off Libya. The Therans decided to send men from all seven of their districts, taking one of every two brothers, chosen by lot. Battus was to be their leader and king. So they dispatched two fifty-oared ships to Platea.

4.154 That is the Therans' version. For the rest of the story the Therans and the Cyrenaeans agree, but on what concerns Battus the Cyrenaeans do not agree with the Therans at all. Their version is this. There is a city in Crete called Oaxus, where a man named Etearchus was king. He had a daughter, Phronime, whose mother was dead, and he took another wife. 2 Once the new wife had come into the house, she decided to be a stepmother to Phronime in fact as well as in name. She treated her badly and plotted every kind of harm against her. In the end she accused her of being unchaste and persuaded her husband that this was true. Won over by his wife, he plotted an impious deed against his daughter. 3 There was a Theran merchant named Themison at Oaxus. Etearchus entertained him as his guest and made him swear to do him whatever service he asked. Once he had made him swear, he brought his own daughter, handed her

53 Tartessus was a rich trading region in southern Spain.

over and told him to take her away and throw her into the sea. [4] Themison was furious at being tricked into the oath. He broke off their friendship as host and guest and then did this. He took the girl and sailed away. When he was out on the open sea, he discharged his oath to Etearchus by tying her with ropes and lowering her into the sea. Then he pulled her back up and went on to Thera.

4.155 There Polymnestus, a man of standing among the Therans, took Phronime and made her his concubine. In time a son was born to him who stammered and lisped. The Therans and Cyrenaeans say that he was given the name Battus, but in my opinion it was something else. [2] He was renamed Battus after he came to Libya, taking the name from the oracle given to him at Delphi and from the rank he held. For the Libyans call a king *battos*. That is why, I think, the Pythia used a Libyan word when she addressed him in her prophecy: she knew that he would be a king in Libya. [3] For when he had grown up, he went to Delphi about his voice, and when he asked his question, the Pythia gave him this answer: Battus, you came about your voice; but lord Phoebus Apollo / sends you to Libya, nurse of flocks, as a founder. This is as if she had said in Greek, "King, you came about your voice." [4] He answered: "My lord, I came to you to ask about my voice, and you give me other answers, impossible ones. You tell me to colonize Libya. With what power? With what force?" Saying this did not persuade her to give him any other answer. When she kept prophesying the same as before, Battus left her in mid-answer and went back to Thera.

4.156 After that, things kept going wrong for him and for the rest of the Therans. The Therans did not know the cause of their misfortunes, so they sent to Delphi about their present troubles. [2] The Pythia answered that they would fare better if they joined Battus in founding Cyrene in Libya. So the Therans sent Battus off with two fifty-oared ships. These men sailed to Libya, but since they did not know what else to do, they came back to Thera. [3] As they came in to land, the Therans pelted them and would not let them put ashore, but ordered them to sail back.

Forced to obey, they sailed back and settled an island lying off Libya, whose name, as I said earlier, is Platea. The island is said to be the same size as the present city of the Cyrenaeans.

4.157 They lived there for two years, but nothing went well for them. So they left one of their number behind, and all the rest sailed to Delphi. When they reached the oracle, they consulted it, saying that they were living in Libya and were no better off for living there. 2 In reply the Pythia gave them this answer: If you know Libya, nurse of flocks, better than I do, / you who have not been there better than I who have, I greatly admire your wisdom. When Battus and his men heard this, they sailed back again, for the god would not release them from the colony until they had reached Libya itself. 3 They came to the island, picked up the man they had left behind and settled a place on the Libyan mainland itself, opposite the island, called Aziris. Very beautiful wooded valleys enclose it on both sides, and a river flows along one side of it.[54]

4.158 They lived in this place for six years. In the seventh year the Libyans begged them to leave, promising to take them to a better place, and they agreed to abandon it. 2 The Libyans moved them from there and led them westward. So that the Greeks would not see the finest of the regions as they passed through it, they timed the hour of the day and led them past it by night. This region is called Irasa. 3 They brought them to a spring said to be Apollo's and said, "Greeks, this is a good place for you to live, because here the sky has a hole in it."[55]

4.159 During the lifetime of Battus the founder, who ruled for forty years, and of his son Arcesilaus, who ruled for sixteen, the Cyrenaeans living there were no more numerous than those who had first been sent out to the colony. 2 But under the third king, Battus called the Fortunate, the Pythia issued an oracle urging all Greeks to sail to Libya and settle there with the Cyrenaeans. The Cyrenaeans were inviting them with the promise of a

54 Platea and Aziris lay on the coast of what is now eastern Libya, near the Gulf of Bomba.

55 That is, rain falls plentifully here, in a land that is mostly dry.

distribution of land. [3] The oracle ran like this: Whoever comes to lovely Libya too late, / after the land has been shared out, I say he will one day regret it. [4] A great crowd gathered at Cyrene, and the neighboring Libyans and their king, whose name was Adicran, found themselves cut off from much of their land. Because they were being robbed of their territory and treated with outrage by the Cyrenaeans, they sent to Egypt and placed themselves in the hands of Apries, king of Egypt. [5] He gathered a large army of Egyptians and sent it against Cyrene. The Cyrenaeans marched out to the place called Irasa and the spring Theste, engaged the Egyptians and won the battle. [6] The Egyptians had never tested themselves against Greeks before and held them in contempt, and they were so thoroughly destroyed that only a few of them got home to Egypt. Because of this, and blaming Apries for it, the Egyptians revolted from him.

4.160 This Battus had a son, Arcesilaus. As soon as he became king he quarreled with his own brothers, until they left him and went off to another part of Libya. Taking counsel among themselves, they founded the city that was then and is still called Barca, and while they were founding it they persuaded the Libyans to revolt from the Cyrenaeans. [2] Afterward Arcesilaus marched against those same Libyans who had taken his brothers in and had revolted. The Libyans were afraid of him and fled to the Libyans in the east. [3] Arcesilaus followed them as they fled, until in his pursuit he reached Leucon in Libya, and there the Libyans decided to attack him. They engaged the Cyrenaeans and beat them so badly that seven thousand Cyrenaean hoplites fell there. [4] After this disaster Arcesilaus fell ill and took a medicine, and his brother Haliarchus strangled him. Haliarchus in turn was treacherously killed by Arcesilaus' wife, whose name was Eryxo.

4.161 Arcesilaus' son Battus succeeded to the kingship. He was lame and not sound on his feet. In view of the misfortune that had befallen them, the Cyrenaeans sent to Delphi to ask what arrangement would let them live in the best way. [2] The Pythia told them to bring in a reformer from Mantinea in Arcadia. So

the Cyrenaeans asked, and the Mantineans gave them the most highly regarded of their citizens, a man named Demonax. [3] When this man came to Cyrene and had learned how everything stood, he first divided the people into three tribes, arranging them like this: one division he made of the Therans and the perioeci, another of the Peloponnesians and Cretans, and a third of all the islanders. Second, he set aside for King Battus certain sacred precincts and priesthoods, and everything else the kings had held before he placed in the hands of the people.[56]

4.162 Under this Battus things remained that way, but under his son Arcesilaus there was great turmoil over the royal prerogatives. [2] Arcesilaus, son of Battus the Lame and Pheretime, said he would not put up with the arrangements of Demonax the Mantinean, and he demanded back the privileges of his ancestors. He stirred up faction over this, was defeated and fled to Samos, while his mother fled to Salamis in Cyprus. [3] At that time Salamis was ruled by Euelthon, who dedicated the censer at Delphi, a thing well worth seeing, which stands in the treasury of the Corinthians. Pheretime came to him and asked for an army to bring them back to Cyrene. [4] But Euelthon would give her anything rather than an army. She accepted what he gave and said that this was a fine thing too, but a finer one would be to give her the army she was asking for. [5] Since she said this at every gift, Euelthon finally sent her a present of a golden spindle and distaff, with wool on it as well. When Pheretime once again said the same words, Euelthon said that these were the gifts given to women, not an army.

4.163 Meanwhile Arcesilaus, who was in Samos, was gathering every man he could with the promise of a redistribution of land. When a large army had been gathered, Arcesilaus set out for Delphi to consult the oracle about his return. [2] The Pythia gave him this answer: [3] "For four Battuses and four Arcesilauses, eight generations of men, Loxias grants your family to be kings of Cyrene; more than this he advises you not even to attempt. As

56 Perioeci, "those dwelling around": the term for Sparta's subject communities, here the dependent neighbors of Cyrene, probably local Libyans.

for you, keep quiet once you have returned to your own land. If you find the kiln full of amphoras, do not bake the amphoras, but send them off with a fair wind. But if you do bake the kiln, do not go into the place surrounded by water; otherwise you will die, both you yourself and the finest bull." This is the answer the Pythia gave Arcesilaus.[57]

4.164 He took the men from Samos and returned to Cyrene. Once he had control of affairs he forgot the oracle and set about punishing his opponents for his exile. 2 Some of them left the country altogether; others Arcesilaus caught and sent to Cyprus to be put to death. These were driven off course to Cnidus, and the Cnidians rescued them and sent them to Thera. Some other Cyrenaeans took refuge in a great tower belonging to Aglomachus, a private citizen; Arcesilaus piled wood around it and set it on fire. 3 When the deed was done, he realized that this was what the oracle meant when the Pythia forbade him to bake the amphoras if he found them in the kiln. He kept away from the city of Cyrene of his own accord, fearing the death that had been foretold, and thinking that Cyrene was the place surrounded by water. 4 He had a wife who was his kinswoman, the daughter of the king of the Barcaeans, whose name was Alazeir. He went to this man, but some men of Barca and some of the exiles from Cyrene caught sight of him in the marketplace and killed him, and his father-in-law Alazeir too. So Arcesilaus, whether he mistook the oracle willingly or unwillingly, fulfilled his own fate.

4.165 His mother Pheretime, while Arcesilaus was living at Barca after bringing ruin on himself, herself held her son's privileges in Cyrene, managing everything else and taking her seat in the council. 2 But when she learned that her son had died at Barca, she fled to Egypt. She had in her favor the services Arcesilaus had rendered to Cambyses son of Cyrus: it was this Arcesilaus who had handed Cyrene over to Cambyses and agreed to pay tribute. 3 When she arrived in Egypt, Pheretime sat as a suppliant before Aryandes and asked him to avenge her,

57 Loxias is a title of Apollo, the god of the Delphic oracle.

giving as her reason that her son had died because of his collaboration with the Persians.

4.166 This Aryandes had been appointed governor of Egypt by Cambyses. Later on he was put to death for trying to make himself Darius' equal. He had learned, and seen for himself, that Darius wanted to leave as a memorial of himself something no other king had achieved, and he imitated him, until he got his reward for it. 2 Darius had refined gold to the greatest possible purity and struck coins from it; Aryandes, as ruler of Egypt, did the very same with silver, and even now the purest silver is the Aryandic. When Darius learned that he was doing this, he brought a different charge against him, that he was rebelling, and killed him.[58]

4.167 At the time, then, this Aryandes took pity on Pheretime and gave her the entire force from Egypt, both the army and the navy. He appointed Amasis, a man of the Maraphii, general of the army, and Badres, by descent one of the Pasargadae, general of the navy. 2 But before sending off the expedition, Aryandes sent a herald to Barca to ask who it was that had killed Arcesilaus. The Barcaeans all took responsibility for it themselves, since, they said, they had suffered much harm at his hands. On learning this Aryandes at last sent the army off with Pheretime.[59] 3 This charge, then, was the pretext for the expedition, but the army was sent, in my opinion, to subdue Libya. For there are many peoples of all kinds in Libya, and only a few of them were subjects of the King, while most of them cared nothing for Darius.

THE PEOPLES OF LIBYA

A survey of the peoples and animals of Libya, and the Persian siege and capture of Barca.

4.168 The Libyans live as follows. Starting from Egypt, the first Libyans settled are the Adyrmachidae, who follow Egyptian cus-

58 Darius' gold coin was the daric.

toms for the most part but wear the same kind of clothing as the other Libyans. Their women wear a bronze ring around each calf. They wear their hair long, and when each of them catches her own lice, she bites them back and then throws them away. [2] These are the only Libyans who do this, and the only ones who present to the king their girls who are about to marry; whichever one pleases the king is deflowered by him. These Adyrmachidae stretch from Egypt as far as the harbor called Plynus.

4.169 Next to them are the Giligamae, who occupy the country to the west as far as the island of Aphrodisias. In the stretch between lies the island of Platea, which the Cyrenaeans settled, and on the mainland are the harbor of Menelaus and Aziris, where the Cyrenaeans lived; and the silphium begins from there. [2] The silphium extends from the island of Platea to the mouth of the Syrtis. These people have customs much like the others'.[60]

4.170 West of the Giligamae are the Asbystae. They live inland of Cyrene. The Asbystae do not reach down to the sea, since the coast is occupied by the Cyrenaeans. They are not the least but the most given of all the Libyans to driving four-horse chariots, and they make a point of imitating most of the customs of the Cyrenaeans.

4.171 West of the Asbystae are the Auschisae. They live inland of Barca and reach down to the sea at Euesperides. In the middle of the Auschisae's country live the Bacales, a small people, who reach the sea at Taucheira, a city of Barcaean territory. They have the same customs as the people inland of Cyrene.

4.172 West of these Auschisae are the Nasamonians, a numerous people, who in summer leave their flocks by the sea and go up to the place called Augila to harvest the dates. The palms there grow many and luxuriant, and all of them bear fruit. When they

59 This Amasis is a Persian, not the Egyptian king; the Maraphii and the Pasargadae were Persian tribes, the Pasargadae the noblest.
60 Silphium was a wild plant prized as medicine and seasoning, the chief export of Cyrene; the Syrtis is the Gulf of Sidra.

catch locusts, they dry them in the sun, grind them up, and then sprinkle them on milk and drink it. [2] It is their custom for each man to have many wives, and they have intercourse with them in common, much as the Massagetae do: when a man sets up his staff in front of the dwelling, they have intercourse. When a Nasamonian man marries for the first time, the custom is that on the first night the bride goes round all the guests, having intercourse with each, and each man, when he has had intercourse with her, gives her a gift he has brought from home. [3] Their oaths and divination are like this. They swear by the men among them who are said to have been the most just and the best, laying their hands on their tombs. They divine by going to the graves of their ancestors, praying, and then lying down to sleep on them; whatever dream the man sees in his sleep, he acts on it. [4] Their pledges are like this: one man gives the other a drink from his hand and himself drinks from the other's. If they have no liquid, they take some dust from the ground and lick it.

4.173 Bordering on the Nasamonians are the Psylli. They perished entirely in the following way. The south wind blew on them and dried up their water tanks, and their whole country, which lies inside the Syrtis, was left without water. They took counsel and by common consent marched against the south wind (I am telling what the Libyans say), and when they were out in the sand, the south wind blew and buried them. Since they perished, the Nasamonians have held their country.

4.174 Inland from these, to the south, in the country of wild beasts, live the Garamantes, who avoid every human being and all company. They own no weapon of war of any kind, and they do not know how to defend themselves.[61]

4.175 These, then, live inland of the Nasamonians. Along the coast to the west come the Macae, who cut their hair in crests: they let the middle of the hair grow and shave both sides close to the skin. In war they carry the skins of ostriches as shields. [2] Through their country the river Cinyps flows from a hill called

61 These are not the great people of the same name in 4.183; some editors read another name here.

the Hill of the Graces and empties into the sea. This Hill of the Graces is thickly wooded, while the rest of Libya I have described so far is bare. From the sea to the hill is two hundred stades.

4.176 Next to these Macae are the Gindanes. Their women each wear many leather anklets, for the following reason, it is said: for every man who has had intercourse with her, a woman ties on an anklet, and the one who has the most is considered the best, as having been loved by the most men.

4.177 A headland that juts out into the sea from the country of these Gindanes is occupied by the Lotus-eaters, who live on nothing but the fruit of the lotus. The lotus fruit is about the size of a mastic berry, and in sweetness it is like the fruit of the date palm. The Lotus-eaters also make wine from this fruit.[62]

4.178 Along the coast next to the Lotus-eaters are the Machlyes. They too use the lotus, though less than those just mentioned. They reach down to a large river called the Triton, which empties into a large lake, Tritonis. In this lake there is an island named Phla. They say there is an oracle that the Lacedaemonians are to settle this island.

4.179 There is also this story that is told. When the Argo had been built for Jason under Mount Pelion, he put on board a hecatomb and, along with it, a bronze tripod, and set out to sail around the Peloponnese, meaning to reach Delphi. 2 As he was sailing off Malea, they say, a north wind caught him and carried him away toward Libya, and before he caught sight of land he found himself in the shallows of Lake Tritonis. As he was at a loss how to get out, the story goes, Triton appeared and told Jason to give him the tripod, saying that he would show them the passage and send them on their way unharmed.[63] 3 Jason agreed, and so, they say, Triton showed them the way out through the shallows and set the tripod in his own temple. Prophesying over the tripod, he revealed the whole matter to

62 In the *Odyssey* (Book 9) the Lotus-eaters' fruit makes Odysseus' men forget their homecoming; the plant described here is probably a jujube.
63 Jason led the Argonauts in search of the Golden Fleece; Triton was a sea god.

Jason's companions: when one of the descendants of the Argo's crew carried off the tripod, then it was wholly fated that a hundred Greek cities would be founded around Lake Tritonis. When the native Libyans heard this, they say, they hid the tripod.

4.180 Next to these Machlyes are the Auseans. They and the Machlyes live around Lake Tritonis, and the Triton forms the boundary between them. The Machlyes grow their hair long at the back of the head, the Auseans at the front. 2 At a yearly festival of Athena their maidens divide into two sides and fight each other with stones and sticks, saying that they are performing the ancestral rites for the native goddess, the one we call Athena. Maidens who die of their wounds they call false maidens. 3 Before they let them fight, they all do this together: each time, they take the most beautiful maiden, dress her in a Corinthian helmet and full Greek armor, set her on a chariot and drive her around the lake. 4 What they dressed the maidens in long ago, before Greeks settled near them, I cannot say, but my guess is that they were dressed in Egyptian armor; for I maintain that both the shield and the helmet came to the Greeks from Egypt. 5 They say that Athena is the daughter of Poseidon and Lake Tritonis, and that she had some grievance against her father and gave herself to Zeus, and Zeus made her his own daughter. That is what they say. They have intercourse with their women in common, not living together as couples but mating like cattle. 6 When a woman's child is well grown, the men gather together in the third month, and whichever of the men the child resembles is considered his son.

4.181 These, then, are the coastal nomadic Libyans I have described. Inland beyond them lies the Libya of wild beasts, and beyond the wild-beast country there runs a ridge of sand, stretching from Egyptian Thebes to the Pillars of Heracles. 2 Along this ridge, at intervals of about ten days' journey, there are lumps of salt in large crystals on hills, and at the top of each hill cold, sweet water shoots up from the middle of the salt. Around it live people, the last toward the desert and beyond the wild-beast country. First, ten days' journey from Thebes, are the

Ammonians, whose sanctuary derives from the Theban Zeus;[64] for at Thebes too, as I have said before, the image of Zeus has a ram's face. 3 They also happen to have another water, from a spring. It is lukewarm at dawn, cooler at the hour when the marketplace fills, and at midday it is very cold; 4 that is when they water their gardens. As the day declines it loses its coldness, until the sun sets and the water becomes lukewarm. Then it grows hotter and hotter as it approaches midnight, and at that hour it boils and bubbles up. Midnight passes, and it cools until dawn. This spring is called the Spring of the Sun.

4.182 After the Ammonians, another ten days' journey along the sand ridge, there is a hill of salt like the Ammonian one, and water, and people live around it. The name of this place is Augila. This is where the Nasamonians come to harvest the dates.

4.183 Ten days' journey further on from Augila there is another hill of salt, with water and many fruit-bearing date palms, just as at the others. People live there called the Garamantes, an exceedingly large nation, who sow their crops by spreading earth over the salt. 2 From here is the shortest route to the Lotus-eaters: it is a thirty days' journey from these people to them. Among the Garamantes, too, are found the cattle that graze walking backward. They graze backward for this reason: they have horns that curve forward. 3 That is why they back away as they graze, for they cannot move forward, since their horns would stick into the ground in front of them. In no other way do they differ from other cattle, except in this and in the thickness and toughness of their hide. 4 These Garamantes hunt the cave-dwelling Ethiopians with four-horse chariots, for the cave-dwelling Ethiopians are the fastest runners of all the peoples of whom we hear reports. The cave-dwellers eat snakes and lizards and other such reptiles. They speak a language like no other, but squeak like bats.

4.184 From the Garamantes, after another ten days' journey, there is another hill of salt, with water, and people live around it

64 Herodotus' "Theban Zeus" is the Egyptian god Amun.

called the Atarantes. They are the only people we know of who have no names: collectively they are called Atarantes, but no single one of them has a name of his own. [2] These people curse the sun when it is at its height, and heap every kind of abuse on it besides, because its burning wears them down, both the people themselves and their land. [3] Then, after another ten days, there is another hill of salt, with water, and people live around it. Next to this salt is a mountain called Atlas. It is narrow and round on all sides, and so high, it is said, that its peaks cannot be seen, for clouds never leave them, summer or winter. The local people say it is the pillar of the sky. [4] The people here took their name from this mountain: they are called Atlantes. They are said to eat nothing that has life and to have no dreams.

4.185 As far as these Atlantes I can list the names of those who live on the ridge, but beyond them I cannot. The ridge, at any rate, extends as far as the Pillars of Heracles and beyond them. [2] Along it, every ten days' journey, there is a salt mine with people living there. All of them have houses built of blocks of salt, for these parts of Libya are already without rain: if it rained, the walls, being made of salt, could not stand. [3] The salt dug there is both white and purple in color. Beyond the ridge, to the south and toward the interior of Libya, the country is desert, without water, without animals, without rain, without trees, and there is no moisture in it at all.

4.186 So from Egypt as far as Lake Tritonis the Libyans are nomads who eat meat and drink milk. They never taste the meat of cows, for the same reason the Egyptians do not, and they do not keep pigs. [2] Even the women of Cyrene think it wrong to eat cows, because of Isis in Egypt; they even keep fasts and festivals in her honor. The women of Barca abstain from pigs as well as cows.

4.187 That is how things stand there. West of Lake Tritonis the Libyans are no longer nomads. They do not follow the same customs, nor do they do anything to their children like what the nomads usually do. [2] For the nomadic Libyans (whether all of them, I cannot say with certainty, but many of them) do the fol-

lowing. When their children are four years old, they burn the veins on the crowns of their heads with greasy sheep's wool, and some of them burn the veins in the temples, so that phlegm running down from the head may never harm them for the rest of their lives. [3] They say this is why they are so very healthy. And in truth the Libyans are the healthiest of all the peoples we know of. Whether it is because of this, I cannot say with certainty, but the healthiest they certainly are. If the children have convulsions while they are being burned, a remedy has been found: they sprinkle them with he-goat's urine and so save them. I am telling what the Libyans themselves say.

4.188 The nomads' sacrifices are as follows. They cut off part of the animal's ear as a first offering and throw it over their dwelling; when they have done this, they twist back the animal's neck. They sacrifice only to the sun and the moon. All Libyans sacrifice to these, but those who live around Lake Tritonis sacrifice above all to Athena, and after her to Triton and Poseidon.

4.189 So it was from the Libyan women that the Greeks took the dress and the aegis of the statues of Athena. The Libyan women's dress is of leather, and the tassels hanging from their aegises are not snakes but leather thongs; apart from that, everything is arranged the same way. [2] What is more, the very name shows that the attire of the Palladia comes from Libya. Libyan women wear over their dress hairless goatskins, fringed and dyed with madder, and from these goatskins the Greeks made their word "aegis." [3] I also think the ritual cry of women at sacred rites first arose there, for Libyan women use it a great deal and do it beautifully. And the Greeks learned from the Libyans to yoke four horses together.[65]

4.190 The nomads bury their dead as the Greeks do, except the Nasamonians. These bury them sitting, and when a man is giving up his soul they take care to sit him up, so that he will not die lying on his back. Their dwellings are made of asphodel

65 In Greek art Athena wears the aegis, a goatskin cape fringed with snakes; Palladia are statues of Athena (Pallas). Herodotus links *aigis* with *aigeē*, "goatskin."

stalks woven around rushes, and they can be carried about. Such are the customs these people follow.

4.191 West of the river Triton, next to the Auseans, come Libyans who are farmers and who have the custom of owning houses. They are called the Maxyes. They let the hair grow on the right side of their heads and shave the left, and they paint their bodies with red ochre. They say they are descended from the men who came from Troy. 2 This country and the rest of Libya to the west are far more full of wild animals and far more wooded than the country of the nomads. 3 The eastern part of Libya, where the nomads live, is low-lying and sandy as far as the river Triton, but the farmers' country west of it is very mountainous, wooded and full of wild animals. 4 For in their land are the enormous snakes and the lions, the elephants and bears and asps, the horned asses, the dog-heads and the headless creatures with eyes in their chests (or so, at least, the Libyans say), the wild men and wild women, and a great many other creatures that are not made up.

4.192 Among the nomads there are none of these, but other animals, such as these: white-rumped antelopes, gazelles, bubales, and asses (not the horned kind but others that never drink, for they really do not drink), and oryxes, whose horns are used for the arms of the lyre (this animal is about the size of an ox), 2 and foxes, hyenas, porcupines, wild rams, dictyes, jackals, panthers, boryes, land crocodiles about three cubits long and very like lizards, ostriches, and small snakes each with one horn.[66] These animals are found there, as well as those found everywhere else, except the deer and the wild boar; there are no deer or wild boar in Libya at all. 3 There are three kinds of mice there: some called "two-footed," others *zegeries* (this word is Libyan, and in Greek means "hills"), and others "hedgehogs." There are also weasels living in the silphium, very like those of Tartessus. These, then, are the animals that the land of the nomadic Libyans has, as far as we were able to reach by inquiring as widely as we could.

66 The dictyes and boryes are animals that cannot now be identified.

4.193 Next to the Maxyes Libyans are the Zaueces, whose women drive the chariots in war.

4.194 Next to these are the Gyzantes. In their country bees make a great deal of honey, but much more still, it is said, is made by craftsmen. All these people, at any rate, paint themselves with red ochre and eat monkeys, which they have in abundance in their mountains.

4.195 Opposite these people, the Carthaginians say, lies an island called Cyrauis, two hundred stades long but narrow, which can be reached on foot from the mainland and is full of olive trees and vines. 2 On it, they say, there is a lake from which the local girls bring up gold dust out of the mud with birds' feathers smeared with pitch. Whether this is true I do not know; I write what is said. But anything may be so, since I myself have seen pitch being brought up out of a lake and water in Zacynthus.[67] 3 There are several lakes there, but the largest of them is seventy feet across in every direction and two fathoms deep. They let down into it a pole with a myrtle branch tied to the end, and then bring up pitch on the myrtle. It smells of asphalt but is otherwise better than the pitch of Pieria. They pour it into a pit dug near the lake, and when they have collected plenty, they pour it from the pit into the jars. 4 Whatever falls into the lake passes underground and reappears in the sea, which is about four stades from the lake. So in this way the reports from the island off Libya are also likely to be true.[68]

4.196 The Carthaginians tell this story too. There is a place in Libya, they say, with people living in it, beyond the Pillars of Heracles. When the Carthaginians come to these people and unload their cargo, they lay it out in a row along the beach, go back on board their ships and send up smoke. The local people, they say, see the smoke and come down to the sea; then they put down gold in exchange for the goods and withdraw some distance away from the goods. 2 The Carthaginians then come ashore and look, and if the gold seems to them a fair price for

67 Zacynthus is an island off the western Peloponnese.
68 Pieria, north of Mount Olympus, was famous for its pitch.

the goods, they take it and leave; but if it does not, they go back on board and sit there, and the natives come up and add more gold to what they have put down, until they satisfy them. Neither side, according to them, wrongs the other: [3] the Carthaginians do not touch the gold until it matches the value of their goods, and the natives do not touch the goods until the Carthaginians have taken the gold.

4.197 These are the Libyans we are able to name, and most of them cared nothing for the King of the Medes, either then or now. [2] I can say this much more about this country: four peoples inhabit it and no more, as far as we know. Two of these peoples are native and two are not. The Libyans and the Ethiopians are native, the former living in the north of Libya, the latter in the south; the Phoenicians and the Greeks are newcomers.[69]

4.198 In my opinion Libya is not so excellent in quality of soil that it can be compared with Asia or Europe, except for the Cinyps region alone; the land has the same name as the river. [2] This land is a match for the best of soils in bearing Demeter's grain, and is not at all like the rest of Libya. Its soil is black and it is well watered by springs; it has no fear of drought, nor is it harmed by drinking in too much rain, for this part of Libya does get rain. The yield of its crops reaches the same measure as in the land of Babylon. The land the Euesperitae inhabit is good too: [3] when it bears at its very best, it yields a hundredfold, but the land in Cinyps yields three-hundredfold.[70]

4.199 The country of Cyrene, too, which is the highest part of the region of Libya inhabited by the nomads, has three harvest seasons, which is remarkable. First the crops near the coast ripen for reaping and the grape harvest. When these have been brought in, the crops of the middle region above the coast, which they call "the hills," are ripe for gathering. [2] And when this middle crop has been brought in, the crop on the highest part of the land ripens and is ready, so that the first crop has

69 The Phoenicians of Libya include the Carthaginians.
70 The Cinyps is a river on the coast of what is now western Libya; the Euesperitae lived around Euesperides, modern Benghazi.

been drunk and eaten just as the last one comes in. Thus the harvest lasts eight months for the Cyrenaeans. But let this be enough said on these matters.

4.200 Now the Persians sent from Egypt by Aryandes to avenge Pheretime arrived at Barca and laid siege to the city, demanding that those responsible for the murder of Arcesilaus be handed over. But since the whole populace shared the responsibility, they would not accept the proposals. 2 So the Persians besieged Barca for nine months, digging underground tunnels leading to the wall and making vigorous assaults. The tunnels were discovered by a smith with a bronze-plated shield, who had this idea: carrying it around inside the wall, he held it against the ground of the city. 3 Everywhere else he held it, it made no sound, but where there was digging the bronze of the shield rang. The Barcaeans would then dig a countermine at that spot and kill the Persians who were tunneling. That was how this was discovered; and the Barcaeans beat back the assaults.

4.201 When a long time had passed and many had fallen on both sides, the Persians no fewer than the others, Amasis, the commander of the infantry, devised this plan. Realizing that the Barcaeans could not be taken by force but could be taken by trickery, he did the following. At night he dug a wide trench and laid flimsy planks across it, and on top of the planks he heaped soil, making it level with the rest of the ground. 2 At daybreak he invited the Barcaeans to talks. They were glad to listen, and in the end they agreed to come to terms. The agreement they made was something like this. Swearing oaths over the hidden trench, they agreed that as long as this ground stayed as it was, the oath would stand firm: the Barcaeans would promise to pay the King a fair tribute, and the Persians would make no further move against the Barcaeans. 3 After the oath the Barcaeans, trusting these terms, came out of the town themselves and let any of the enemy who wished come inside the wall, opening all the gates. The Persians broke down the hidden bridge and rushed inside the wall. Their reason for breaking down the bridge they had made was to keep their oath: they had sworn to the Barcaeans

that the oath would stand for all time, as long as the ground stayed as it then was; once they had broken it down, the oath no longer stood.

4.202 When the Persians had handed over to Pheretime the Barcaeans most responsible, she impaled them all around the wall. She cut off their wives' breasts and studded the wall with these too. 2 The rest of the Barcaeans she told the Persians to take as plunder, except for those who were Battiads and had no share in the murder; to these Pheretime entrusted the city.[71]

4.203 So the Persians enslaved the rest of the Barcaeans and went back. When they came to a halt at the city of Cyrene, the Cyrenaeans, to satisfy some oracle, let them pass through the town. 2 As the army was going through, Badres, the commander of the naval force, urged them to take the city, but Amasis, the commander of the infantry, would not allow it, for they had been sent, he said, against Barca alone of the Greek cities. When they had gone through and were encamped on the hill of Lycaean Zeus, they regretted not having taken Cyrene, and they tried to enter it a second time; but the Cyrenaeans would not let them. 3 Though no one was fighting them, panic seized the Persians, and they ran off about sixty stades before making camp. When the army had settled there, a messenger came from Aryandes recalling them. The Persians asked the Cyrenaeans for provisions for the road and got them, and taking these they set off for Egypt. 4 From there on Libyans took charge of them and, for the sake of their clothing and gear, killed any who were left behind and straggling, until they reached Egypt.

4.204 This Persian army reached as far into Libya as Euesperides. The Barcaeans they had enslaved they carried off from Egypt into the interior, to the King, and King Darius gave them a village in the land of Bactria to settle. They gave this village the name Barca, and it was still inhabited in my day, in Bactrian territory.[72]

71 The Battiads were the royal house of Cyrene, descended from its founder Battus.

72 Bactria lay in what is now northern Afghanistan.

4.205 Nor did Pheretime herself bring her life to a good end. As soon as she had taken vengeance on the Barcaeans and returned from Libya to Egypt, she died a terrible death: while still alive she seethed with worms. So it seems that vengeance that goes too far provokes the jealousy of the gods against human beings. Such, then, and so great was the vengeance that Pheretime, wife of Battus, took on the Barcaeans.

Book 5 (Terpsichore)

Persia in Thrace and Macedon; Athens frees itself from tyranny; the Ionian revolt begins.

PERSIA IN THRACE

Megabazus subdues Perinthus and Thrace; Herodotus describes Thracian customs, and the Paeonians are deported to Asia.

5.1 The Persians whom Darius had left behind in Europe, under the command of Megabazus, subdued the Perinthians first of all the Hellespontine peoples, because they refused to be Darius' subjects. The Perinthians had already been roughly handled by the Paeonians before this. 2 The god had told the Paeonians from the Strymon to march against the Perinthians. If the Perinthians, encamped opposite them, challenged them by shouting their name, they were to attack; if they did not call out to them, they were not to attack. The Paeonians did as they were told. The Perinthians encamped opposite them in the outskirts of their city, and there, after a challenge, a threefold single combat was fought between them: they matched man against man, horse against horse and dog against dog.[1] 3 The Perinthians won two of the three contests. As they were singing the paean in their joy, the Paeonians reasoned that this was exactly what the oracle had meant, and said to one another, I suppose, "Now the oracle must be coming true for us. Now it's our turn to act." So

1 Megabazus was the Persian general Darius left in Europe after his Scythian campaign. The Paeonians lived in the valley of the river Strymon, in what is now northern Greece and North Macedonia.

the Paeonians attacked the Perinthians while they were singing the paean. They won a great victory and left few of them alive.[2]

5.2 That is how things had gone earlier with the Paeonians. This time, though the Perinthians fought bravely for their freedom, the Persians and Megabazus overpowered them by sheer numbers. 2 Once Perinthus had been subdued, Megabazus marched his army through Thrace and brought every city and every people living there under the King. Those were Darius' orders to him: to conquer Thrace.

5.3 The Thracians are the largest nation in the world, after the Indians at least. If they were ruled by one man or could think alike, they would be invincible and by far the strongest of all nations, in my opinion. But there is no way or means that this could ever come about for them, and that is why they are weak. 2 They have many names, each according to its region, but they all follow very similar customs in every respect, except the Getae, the Trausi and those who live above the Crestonaeans.

5.4 I have already described the customs of the Getae, who believe they are immortal. The Trausi do everything else the same way as the other Thracians, but when a child is born among them and when someone dies, they do this. 2 The relatives sit around a newborn child and lament all the evils it must endure now that it has been born, recounting every suffering that human beings undergo. But they bury the dead in the earth with jokes and merriment, saying how many evils he has escaped and how complete his happiness now is.[3]

5.5 Those who live above the Crestonaeans do as follows. Each man has many wives. When a man dies, there is a great contest among his wives, and their friends compete fiercely over which of them was loved most by her husband. The one who is judged the winner and given the honor is praised by men and women alike. Then her nearest kinsman slaughters her over the grave, and after she has been slaughtered she is buried with her hus-

2 The paean was a song of victory with the cry "Ie Paian!", which sounds like the Paeonians' name. That is how the Perinthians "called them by name."
3 Herodotus describes the Getae and their god Salmoxis at 4.93–96.

band. The others take it as a great misfortune, for this is the greatest disgrace there can be for them.

5.6 The rest of the Thracians have this custom. They sell their children to be taken abroad. They do not watch over their unmarried girls, but let them have sex with any men they please. Their wives, though, they guard closely, and they buy their wives from the women's parents for large sums. 2 Being tattooed is considered a mark of noble birth, and being untattooed a mark of low birth. To be idle is the finest thing, and to work the land the most dishonorable; to live by war and plunder is the finest.

5.7 These are their most remarkable customs. The only gods they worship are Ares, Dionysus and Artemis. Their kings, however, unlike the rest of their citizens, worship Hermes above all the gods. They swear by him alone and say that they are descended from Hermes.

5.8 The funerals of their wealthy people are as follows. They lay out the body for three days, slaughter all kinds of sacrificial animals and feast, after first wailing for the dead. Then they bury him, either burning him first or simply putting him in the earth. After heaping up a mound they hold all kinds of contests, in which, as is fitting, the biggest prizes go to single combat. Those, then, are the funerals of the Thracians.

5.9 As for the region still further north of this country, no one can say precisely who the people living there are. The land beyond the Ister appears to be empty and endless. The only people I can learn of who live beyond the Ister are called the Sigynnae, and they wear Median dress. 2 I am told that their horses are shaggy all over, with hair five fingers deep, and small, snub-nosed and too weak to carry men, but very fast when yoked to chariots, so the natives drive chariots. Their borders reach almost to the Eneti on the Adriatic.[4] 3 They say they are colonists from the Medes. How they could have come to be colonists of the Medes I cannot work out, but anything can happen in the long course of time. At any rate, the Ligyes who live inland

4 The Ister is the Danube.

above Massalia use the word "sigynnae" for retail traders, and the Cyprians use it for spears.[5]

5.10 According to the Thracians, bees occupy the land beyond the Ister, and because of them it is impossible to go any further. When they say this, they do not seem to me to be saying anything likely, for these creatures are evidently sensitive to cold. It seems to me, rather, that the lands under the Bear are uninhabited because of the cold. That, then, is what is said about this country. Megabazus, at any rate, was making its coastal regions subject to the Persians.[6]

5.11 As soon as Darius had crossed the Hellespont and reached Sardis, he remembered the good service done him by Histiaeus of Miletus and the advice given him by Coes of Mytilene. He sent for them to come to Sardis and offered them a choice of reward. 2 Histiaeus was already tyrant of Miletus and wanted no further tyranny, so he asked for Myrcinus in the land of the Edonians, because he wanted to found a city there. That was what he chose. Coes, who was not a tyrant but an ordinary citizen, asked to be made tyrant of Mytilene.[7]

5.12 Once both had been given what they asked for, they went off to the places they had chosen. Darius, meanwhile, happened to see something that made him want to order Megabazus to conquer the Paeonians and remove them from Europe to Asia. There were two Paeonians, Pigres and Mantyes, who wanted to become tyrants of the Paeonians themselves. After Darius had crossed into Asia, they came to Sardis, bringing with them their sister, who was tall and beautiful. 2 They watched for a time when Darius was sitting in state in the outskirts of the Lydians' city, and then they did this. They dressed their sister as finely as they could and sent her to fetch water. She carried a pitcher on her head, led a horse by a rein over her arm, and spun flax as

5 The Ligyes are the Ligurians; Massalia is modern Marseille.
6 "Under the Bear" means the far north, beneath the constellation of the Great Bear.
7 Histiaeus had kept the Ionians guarding Darius' bridge over the Danube (4.137), and Coes had advised Darius to leave it standing (4.97). A "tyrant" was a ruler who had seized sole power, not necessarily a cruel one.

she went. [3] As the woman passed by, Darius took notice of her, for what she was doing was neither Persian nor Lydian, nor the custom of any people in Asia. Having taken notice, he sent some of his bodyguards with orders to watch what the woman would do with the horse. [4] They followed behind her. When she reached the river, she watered the horse. After watering it, she filled her pitcher and went back past him the same way, carrying the water on her head, leading the horse by the rein over her arm and turning her spindle.

5.13 Darius was amazed both at what he heard from his spies and at what he had seen himself, and he ordered her to be brought before him. When she was brought, her brothers were there too; they had been keeping watch on all this from not far off. When Darius asked where she came from, the young men said that they were Paeonians and that she was their sister. [2] He replied by asking who these Paeonians were, where on earth they lived and what they wanted in coming to Sardis. They explained that they had come to put themselves in his hands; that Paeonia, with its towns, lay on the river Strymon, and the Strymon was not far from the Hellespont; and that they were colonists of the Teucrians from Troy. [3] They told him all this point by point, and he asked whether all the women there were as hardworking as this. They eagerly said that this too was so; after all, the whole thing had been done for this very purpose.[8]

5.14 Darius then wrote a letter to Megabazus, whom he had left in Thrace as general, ordering him to remove the Paeonians from their homes and bring them to him, the men themselves along with their children and their wives. [2] At once a horseman galloped off to the Hellespont with the message. He crossed over and gave the letter to Megabazus, who read it, took guides from Thrace and marched against Paeonia.

5.15 When the Paeonians learned that the Persians were coming against them, they gathered together and marched out toward the sea, thinking that the Persians would try to invade from that side. [2] So the Paeonians stood ready to hold off Mega-

8 "Teucrians" is an old name for the Trojans.

bazus' army as it advanced. But the Persians learned that the Paeonians had gathered and were guarding the approach from the sea. With their guides, they took the upper road, slipped past the Paeonians unnoticed and fell on their towns, which were empty of men. Since the towns were empty, they took them easily. [3] When the Paeonians learned that their towns had been captured, they immediately scattered, each group going off to its own people, and surrendered to the Persians. And so, of the Paeonians, the Siriopaeonians, the Paeoplae and the peoples as far as Lake Prasias were removed from their homes and taken to Asia.

[5.16] But the peoples around Mount Pangaeum, the Doberes, the Agrianes and the Odomanti, and those of Lake Prasias itself, were not subdued by Megabazus at all. He did try to remove even the people who live in the lake. Their dwellings are like this. In the middle of the lake stands a platform fixed on tall piles, reached from the mainland by a single narrow bridge. [2] The piles that hold up the platform were originally set up, I suppose, by all the citizens together. Later they set them up under the following custom. The piles are brought from a mountain called Orbelus, and a man who marries sets three piles under the platform for each wife. And each man takes many wives. [3] They live like this. Each man owns a hut on the platform, where he lives, and a trapdoor through the platform leading down into the lake. They tie their small children by the foot with a cord, for fear they will roll off. [4] They give fish as fodder to their horses and pack animals. The fish are so plentiful that when a man opens his trapdoor and lets an empty basket down into the lake on a rope, he only has to wait a short time before he pulls it up full of fish. There are two kinds of fish, which they call papraces and tilones.

THE PERSIAN ENVOYS IN MACEDON

Persian envoys insult the Macedonian women at a feast, and young Alexander has them killed.

5.17 So the Paeonians who had been subdued were taken to Asia. Once Megabazus had subdued the Paeonians, he sent seven Persians as envoys to Macedonia, the most distinguished men in the army after himself. They were sent to Amyntas to demand earth and water for King Darius. 2 From Lake Prasias the way into Macedonia is very short. First, right next to the lake, there is the mine from which, at a later time, a talent of silver came in to Alexander every day. After the mine, you cross the mountain called Dysorum and you are in Macedonia.[9]

5.18 When these Persians who had been sent to Amyntas arrived, they came before him and demanded earth and water for King Darius. He gave them these and invited them to be his guests. He had a magnificent dinner prepared and received the Persians warmly. 2 When they had finished dinner and were drinking, the Persians said: "Macedonian, our host, we Persians have a custom: whenever we give a great dinner, we bring in our concubines and our wedded wives as well, to sit beside us. So, since you've received us so eagerly and are entertaining us so lavishly, and are giving King Darius earth and water, follow our custom." 3 To this Amyntas replied, "Persians, that isn't our custom. With us, men are kept apart from women. But since you're our masters and want this as well, you shall have this too." With that, Amyntas sent for the women. They came at his summons and sat down in a row facing the Persians. 4 Then the Persians, seeing that the women were beautiful, spoke to Amyntas. What had been done, they said, was not at all clever: it would have been better for the women not to have come at all than to come and, instead of sitting beside them, sit facing them and torment their eyes. 5 Under pressure, Amyntas told the women to sit

9 Giving earth and water was the token of submission to the Persian king. A talent was a large weight of silver, roughly 26 kg (57 lb).

beside them. As soon as the women obeyed, the Persians, who were very drunk, began fondling their breasts, and some, I suppose, even tried to kiss them.

5.19 Amyntas saw this and kept still, though he was indignant, because he was very afraid of the Persians. But Alexander son of Amyntas was there and saw it too, and being young and untouched by misfortune, he could no longer restrain himself at all. In his outrage he said to Amyntas: "Father, give in to your age. Go and rest, and don't keep on with the drinking. I'll stay here and see that our guests have everything they need."[10] 2 At this Amyntas, realizing that Alexander was about to do something rash, said: "Son, I can pretty well tell from what you say that you're on fire, and that you want to send me away so you can do something rash. So I ask you not to start anything against these men, or you'll be the ruin of us. Bear it, and watch what's being done. As for my leaving, I'll do as you say."

5.20 When Amyntas had made his request and gone, Alexander said to the Persians: "These women, my guests, are entirely at your disposal, whether you want to sleep with all of them or with as many of them as you like. 2 You can let us know about that yourselves. But for now, since it's nearly time for bed and I see you're well along in drink, let these women go and bathe, if you're willing, and when they've bathed, expect them back." 3 When he had said this, and the Persians had agreed, he sent the women out and off to the women's quarters. Then Alexander himself dressed beardless young men, as many as there were women, in the women's clothes, gave them daggers and brought them in. As he led them in, he said this to the Persians: 4 "Persians, it seems you've been treated to a feast complete in every way. Everything we had, and whatever more we could find to give you besides, is all yours. And on top of that we lavish on you the greatest gift of all, our own mothers and sisters, so that you may fully understand that we honor you as you deserve, and may report to the King who sent you that a Greek, the governor of the Macedonians, gave you a good welcome at both

10 This is Alexander I, later king of Macedon, who reappears in Books 8 and 9.

table and bed." [5] With these words Alexander seated a Macedonian man beside each Persian, as though he were a woman. And when the Persians tried to touch them, they killed them.

5.21 So these men perished by this fate, they and their attendants as well. For carriages, servants and all their great baggage had come with them, and all of it disappeared along with all of them. [2] Not long afterward the Persians made a great search for these men, but Alexander cleverly put a stop to it by giving a great deal of money and his own sister, whose name was Gygaea. He gave these to Bubares, a Persian who was the commander of those searching for the missing men, and so put a stop to it.

5.22 So the death of these Persians was covered up and never spoken of. That these descendants of Perdiccas are Greeks, as they themselves say, I happen to know myself, and I will show that they are Greeks later in my account. Besides, the Hellanodicae who run the games at Olympia decided that they are. [2] For when Alexander chose to compete and went down into the arena for that very purpose, the Greeks who were to race against him tried to keep him out, saying that the contest was for Greek competitors, not non-Greek ones. But once Alexander had proved that he was an Argive, he was judged to be a Greek, and he competed in the stade race and tied for first place.[11]

5.23 That, then, is more or less how these things happened. Megabazus, bringing the Paeonians with him, reached the Hellespont, crossed over from there and came to Sardis. By this time Histiaeus of Miletus was already building a wall around the place he had asked Darius for and been given as a reward for guarding the bridge of boats. This place, called Myrcinus, is beside the river Strymon. Megabazus had learned what Histiaeus was doing, and as soon as he reached Sardis with the Paeonians, he said this to Darius: [2] "King, what sort of thing have you done? You've let a formidable, clever Greek found a city in

11 Perdiccas founded the Macedonian royal house, whose Argive origin Herodotus tells at 8.137–139. The Hellanodicae ("judges of the Greeks") ran the Olympic games; the stade race was a sprint of one stade, about 600 feet.

Thrace, where there's plenty of shipbuilding timber, a great deal of wood for oars, and silver mines. A great crowd of people live round about, many of them Greek and many non-Greek, and once they have a leader they'll do whatever he tells them, day and night. [3] So stop this man from doing this, or you'll find yourself caught up in a war within your own realm. Send for him gently, and stop him. And once you have him in your hands, see to it that he never goes back to the Greeks."

[5.24] By saying this Megabazus easily persuaded Darius, since he clearly foresaw what was going to happen. Darius then sent a messenger to Myrcinus with this message: "Histiaeus, King Darius says this. Having thought it over, I find that there's no one more loyal than you to me and to my interests; and I know this from what you've done, not from what you've said. [2] So now, since I have great undertakings in mind, come to me without fail, so that I can share them with you." Histiaeus trusted these words, and he also thought it a great thing to become the King's counselor, so he came to Sardis. [3] When he arrived, Darius said this to him: "Histiaeus, this is why I sent for you. Ever since I came back from Scythia and you were out of my sight, there's been nothing I've wanted so much, and so soon, as to see you and have you come and talk with me. I've come to know that of all possessions the most precious is a friend who is both intelligent and loyal. I can testify that you have both qualities, because I've seen them for myself in my affairs. [4] So now that you've done well in coming, this is what I propose. Let Miletus go, and the city you've just founded in Thrace. Follow me to Susa and have whatever I have, sharing my table and my counsels."

[5.25] When he had said this, Darius appointed Artaphrenes, his brother by the same father, governor of Sardis, and rode off to Susa, taking Histiaeus with him. He had appointed Otanes general of the men of the coast. Otanes' father Sisamnes had been one of the royal judges, and because he took money to give an unjust verdict, King Cambyses cut his throat and flayed off all his skin. He cut the skin he had torn off into strips and stretched them across the seat on which Sisamnes used to sit when he

judged. [2] When he had strung the seat, Cambyses appointed as judge in place of Sisamnes, whom he had killed and flayed, Sisamnes' son, and told him to remember what seat he was sitting on when he judged.[12]

5.26 So this Otanes, the man who sat on that seat, now succeeded Megabazus in the command. He took Byzantium and Chalcedon, he took Antandrus in the Troad, he took Lamponium, and with ships he got from the Lesbians he took Lemnos and Imbros, both of which were still inhabited by Pelasgians at that time.[13]

5.27 The Lemnians fought well and defended themselves, but in time they were crushed. Over those of them who survived, the Persians set as governor Lycaretus, the brother of Maeandrius who had been king of Samos. [2] This Lycaretus died while ruling Lemnos. The reason was this: he was enslaving and subduing everyone, accusing some of having deserted the campaign against the Scythians, and others of having attacked Darius' army as it made its way back from Scythia.

THE IONIAN REVOLT BEGINS

A failed attack on Naxos and a message from Histiaeus lead Aristagoras to raise Ionia against Darius.

5.28 That was all he achieved as general. After this there was a short respite from troubles, and then troubles began for the Ionians a second time, coming from Naxos and Miletus. On the one hand Naxos surpassed the other islands in prosperity. On the other, at the same time, Miletus was at the very height of its own fortunes and was the pride of Ionia. Yet for two generations before this it had been sick with the most severe civil strife, until the Parians set it right; for the Milesians had chosen them out of all the Greeks to restore order.

12 This Otanes, son of Sisamnes, is a different man from the Otanes who helped overthrow the Magi.

13 Pelasgians: a people the Greeks believed had lived in Greece and the Aegean before the Greeks.

5.29 This is how the Parians reconciled them. When their best men arrived in Miletus, they saw that the Milesians' households had been terribly ruined, and they said they wished to go through the country. They did so, going through the whole territory of Miletus, and whenever they saw a well-worked farm in that devastated land, they wrote down the name of the farm's owner. 2 They rode through the whole country and found few such farms. As soon as they came back down to the city, they called an assembly and appointed the men whose farms they had found well worked to govern the city. They said they thought these men would look after the public affairs just as carefully as their own. As for the rest of the Milesians, who had been quarreling before, they ordered them to obey these men.

5.30 That, then, is how the Parians set the Milesians in order. But now this is how troubles began for Ionia from these two cities. Some of the wealthy men of Naxos were driven out by the people, and as exiles they came to Miletus. 2 The regent of Miletus at that time happened to be Aristagoras son of Molpagoras, the son-in-law and cousin of Histiaeus son of Lysagoras, whom Darius was keeping at Susa. Histiaeus was tyrant of Miletus, and he happened to be at Susa at the time when the Naxians came, who had once been his guest-friends. 3 When the Naxians arrived in Miletus, they asked Aristagoras whether he could somehow provide them with a force, so that they could return to their own country. He reckoned that if they were restored to their city through him, he would rule Naxos. Using their friendship with Histiaeus as a pretext, he made them this proposal: 4 "I can't promise to provide you myself with a force large enough to bring you back against the will of the Naxians who hold the city; I hear the Naxians have eight thousand shields and many warships. But I'll find a way, and make every effort. 5 This is my plan. Artaphrenes happens to be a friend of mine. Artaphrenes, you should know, is the son of Hystaspes and the brother of King Darius, and he rules all the coastal peoples of Asia, with a large army and many ships. So I think this man will do whatever we ask." 6 When they heard this, the Naxians left it to Aristagoras

to manage the matter as best he could. They told him to promise gifts, and the army's expenses, which they would pay themselves. They had high hopes that as soon as they appeared off Naxos the Naxians would do everything they ordered, and so too the other islanders. For none of these islands, the Cyclades, was yet under Darius.

5.31 Aristagoras came to Sardis and told Artaphrenes that Naxos was an island not large in size, but otherwise fine and fertile and close to Ionia, with much wealth and many slaves in it. "So make war on this land, and restore the exiles from it. 2 If you do, then first, I have large sums of money ready for you, apart from the costs of the army—it's only right that we who are bringing you there should provide those. Second, you'll win islands for the King: Naxos itself and the islands that depend on it, Paros and Andros and the rest of the so-called Cyclades. 3 Setting out from there you'll easily attack Euboea, a large and prosperous island, no smaller than Cyprus and very easy to take. A hundred ships are enough to subdue all of these." Artaphrenes answered him as follows: 4 "You're bringing good proposals to the King's house, and all your advice is sound, except for the number of ships. Instead of a hundred, you'll have two hundred ready at the start of spring. But the King himself must also approve this."

5.32 When Aristagoras heard this, he went back to Miletus overjoyed. Artaphrenes sent to Susa and reported what Aristagoras had said, and when Darius himself also approved, he made ready two hundred triremes and a very large host of Persians and other allies. As their general he appointed Megabates, a Persian of the Achaemenids, a cousin of himself and of Darius. It was this man's daughter that Pausanias the Lacedaemonian, son of Cleombrotus, later became engaged to—if the story is indeed true—when he had conceived a desire to become tyrant of Greece. Having appointed Megabates general, Artaphrenes sent the army off to Aristagoras.[14]

5.33 Megabates took Aristagoras on board at Miletus, along with the Ionian army and the Naxians, and set sail, ostensibly

14 Trireme: the standard warship of the time, rowed by three banks of oars.

for the Hellespont. But when he reached Chios, he put in with his ships at Caucasa, so that he could cross from there to Naxos with a north wind. [2] And since the Naxians were not fated to be destroyed by this expedition, the following thing happened. As Megabates was going round the watches on the ships, it happened that on a ship from Myndus no one was keeping watch. He was furious, and he ordered his bodyguards to find the captain of this ship, whose name was Scylax, and tie him up through one of the ship's lowest oar-ports, pushing him through it so that his head was outside and his body inside. [3] When Scylax had been tied up, someone reported to Aristagoras that Megabates had bound his guest-friend from Myndus and was treating him shamefully. Aristagoras went and pleaded with the Persian, and when he got nothing he asked for, he went and freed the man himself. When Megabates learned of this, he was extremely angry and raged at Aristagoras. [4] But Aristagoras said, "What business of yours are these matters? Didn't Artaphrenes send you to obey me and sail wherever I tell you? Why are you meddling?" That is what Aristagoras said. Megabates was enraged at this, and when night came he sent men in a boat to Naxos to tell the Naxians everything that was in store for them.

5.34 For the Naxians had not expected at all that this expedition would be aimed at them. Once they learned of it, however, they at once brought what was in the fields inside the walls, laid in food and drink for a siege, and strengthened their wall. [2] So they were preparing for war as if it were about to come upon them. When the others crossed with their ships from Chios to Naxos, they attacked a people who had fortified themselves, and besieged them for four months. [3] The money the Persians had brought with them was all spent, Aristagoras himself had spent a great deal besides, and the siege needed still more. So they built a fort for the Naxian exiles and went back to the mainland, faring badly.

5.35 Aristagoras could not fulfill his promise to Artaphrenes. At the same time he was being pressed to pay the army's expenses, and he was afraid, since the army had fared badly and he was on

bad terms with Megabates; he thought he would be stripped of his rule over Miletus. [2] Fearing all these things, he began to plan a revolt. For it also happened at that very time that the man with the tattooed head arrived from Histiaeus in Susa, with the message that Aristagoras should revolt from the King. [3] Histiaeus wanted to signal Aristagoras to revolt, but he had no other safe way of signaling, since the roads were guarded. So he shaved the head of the most trusted of his slaves, tattooed it, and waited for the hair to grow back. As soon as it had grown back, he sent him to Miletus, with no other instructions except that when he got to Miletus, he was to tell Aristagoras to shave off his hair and look at his head. The marks signaled, as I said before, revolt. [4] Histiaeus did this because he considered his detention at Susa a great misfortune. If there was a revolt, he had high hopes of being sent down to the coast; but if Miletus made no trouble, he reckoned he would never go back there again.

5.36 This was what Histiaeus had in mind when he sent the messenger, and for Aristagoras all these things happened to come together at the same time. So he took counsel with his partisans, setting out both his own opinion and the message that had come from Histiaeus. [2] All the rest gave the same opinion, urging revolt. But Hecataeus the prose-writer at first tried to dissuade them from taking up war against the King of the Persians, listing all the peoples Darius ruled and the extent of his power. When he could not persuade them, he advised them next to make themselves masters of the sea.[15] [3] He said that he could see no other way of achieving this, since he knew that the Milesians' power was weak. But if the treasures in the temple at Branchidae, which Croesus the Lydian had dedicated, were taken down, he had high hopes that they would gain mastery of the sea; in this way they themselves would have the money to use, and the enemy would not plunder it. [4] These treasures were very great, as I have shown in the first part of my account. This opinion did not prevail, but all the same they decided to revolt,

15 Hecataeus of Miletus wrote prose accounts of geography and legend; he was one of Herodotus' predecessors.

and that one of them should sail to Myus, to the army that had come back from Naxos and was there, and try to seize the generals who were on board the ships.[16]

5.37 Iatragoras was sent for this very purpose, and by a trick he seized Oliatus son of Ibanollis of Mylasa, Histiaeus son of Tymnes of Termera, Coes son of Erxander, to whom Darius had given Mytilene as a gift, Aristagoras son of Heraclides of Cyme, and a good many others. With that, Aristagoras was in open revolt, contriving every kind of harm against Darius. 2 First he gave up his tyranny—in name—and established equality before the law in Miletus, so that the Milesians would willingly join him in revolt. Then he did the same in the rest of Ionia. Some of the tyrants he drove out; and the tyrants he had seized from the ships that had sailed with him against Naxos he handed over to their cities, since he wanted to win their favor, delivering each one to the city he came from.

5.38 As soon as the Mytilenaeans received Coes, they led him out and stoned him to death; but the Cymaeans let their man go, and so did most of the others. 2 So tyrants were put down throughout the cities. When Aristagoras of Miletus had put down the tyrants, he told the people in each of the cities to appoint generals, and next he went himself as an envoy to Lacedaemon in a trireme; for he needed to find some powerful ally.

CLEOMENES AND DORIEUS

How Cleomenes became king of Sparta, and how his half-brother Dorieus left to found colonies and died.

5.39 At Sparta, Anaxandrides son of Leon was no longer alive and king; he had died, and Cleomenes son of Anaxandrides held the kingship, which he had got not by merit but by birth. Anaxandrides was married to his own sister's daughter, and though she was dear to him, they had no children. 2 That being so, the ephors summoned him and said: "Even if you aren't looking out for

16 Branchidae: the temple and oracle of Apollo at Didyma, near Miletus.

yourself, we can't stand by and let the line of Eurysthenes die out. So, since the wife you have doesn't bear you children, divorce her and marry another; by doing so you'll please the Spartans." He answered that he would do neither of these things. They were giving him bad advice, he said, in urging him to send away the wife he had, who had done him no wrong, and bring in another; and he would not obey them.[17]

5.40 At this the ephors and the elders took counsel together and put the following proposal to Anaxandrides: "Since we see you clinging to the wife you have, then do this instead, and don't oppose it, or the Spartans may decide on some other course regarding you. 2 We don't ask you to divorce the wife you have. Go on giving her everything you give her now, and bring in another wife besides her, to bear you children." When they put it in some such way, Anaxandrides agreed, and from then on he had two wives and kept two households, which was not at all the Spartan way.

5.41 Not much time had passed before the second wife gave birth to this Cleomenes. Just as she was presenting the Spartans with an heir to the throne, the first wife, who had been childless until then, somehow became pregnant at that very time—such was the coincidence. 2 She really was pregnant, but when the relatives of the second wife heard of it they made trouble, saying she was making an empty boast and meant to pass off someone else's child as her own. They made such an outcry that, when her time drew near, the ephors, who did not believe her, sat around the woman while she gave birth and watched her. 3 She bore Dorieus, then right after him Leonidas, and right after him Cleombrotus; though some say Cleombrotus and Leonidas were twins. But the woman who had borne Cleomenes, the second wife, who was the daughter of Prinetadas son of Demarmenus, never bore another child.

5.42 Cleomenes, so it is said, was not of sound mind and was close to madness, while Dorieus was the first of all the young

men of his age, and was quite sure that he would get the kingship by merit. [2] With this in mind, when Anaxandrides died and the Lacedaemonians, following their custom, made the eldest son, Cleomenes, king, Dorieus was indignant and thought it beneath him to be ruled by Cleomenes. So he asked the Spartans for a body of settlers and led them off to found a colony. He did not consult the oracle at Delphi about what land he should go to and settle, nor did he do any of the customary things;[18] in his resentment he set sail for Libya, guided by men from Thera. [3] When he reached Libya, he settled the finest spot in Libya, by the river Cinyps. In the third year he was driven out from there by the Macae, a Libyan people, and by the Carthaginians, and he came back to the Peloponnese.[19]

5.43 There Antichares, a man of Eleon, advised him on the basis of the oracles of Laius to found Heraclea in Sicily, saying that the whole land of Eryx belonged to the descendants of Heracles, since Heracles himself had won it. When he heard this, Dorieus went to Delphi to ask the oracle whether he would take the land he was setting out for; and the Pythia answered that he would. So Dorieus took the expedition he had led to Libya and sailed along the coast of Italy.[20]

5.44 At this time, according to the Sybarites, they and their king Telys were about to march against Croton, and the Crotoniats, in great fear, asked Dorieus to help them and got what they asked. So, they say, Dorieus marched with them against Sybaris and helped them take Sybaris. [2] That is what the Sybarites say Dorieus and those with him did. But the Crotoniats say that no foreigner helped them in their war against the Sybarites except Callias, a seer from Elis of the family of the Iamidae, and he alone; and this is how, according to them, it happened: he ran away from Telys the tyrant of the Sybarites and came over to

17 The ephors were five officials elected yearly at Sparta, with great power even over the kings. Sparta had two royal houses, and Eurysthenes was the founder of one of them.
18 Lacedaemonians: the Spartans and the communities they ruled.
19 Libya: for Herodotus, all of Africa west of Egypt.
20 The Pythia: Apollo's priestess at Delphi, who gave the oracle's answers.

them, because the sacrifices he was offering for the campaign against Croton did not turn out favorable.[21]

5.45 That is what they say. Each side offers the following evidence for its account. The Sybarites point to a sacred precinct and temple beside the dry bed of the Crathis. They say Dorieus founded it, after helping to take the city, for Athena surnamed Crathia. They also treat the death of Dorieus himself as their strongest evidence: he was destroyed, they say, because he acted against what the oracle had told him. If he had not done anything on the side, and had done only what he had been sent out to do, he would have taken the land of Eryx and held it once he had taken it, and neither he nor his army would have been destroyed. 2 The Crotoniats, for their part, point to the many choice plots of land in Crotoniat territory that were given to Callias of Elis, which Callias' descendants were still occupying in my own day, whereas nothing was given to Dorieus or to Dorieus' descendants. Yet if Dorieus really had taken part in the war against Sybaris, he would have been given many times as much as Callias. These, then, are the proofs that each side puts forward, and anyone may side with whichever of them he finds more convincing.

5.46 Other Spartans also sailed with Dorieus as co-founders: Thessalus, Paraebates, Celees and Euryleon. When they reached Sicily with the whole expedition, they were defeated in battle by the Phoenicians and the Egestaeans and killed. Of the co-founders, only Euryleon survived this disaster. 2 He gathered the survivors of the army and took Minoa, the colony of Selinus, and helped the Selinuntines free themselves from their monarch Peithagoras. But after he had overthrown Peithagoras, he made a bid for tyranny over Selinus himself, and ruled as monarch for only a short time. The Selinuntines rose up against him and killed him, even though he had taken refuge at the altar of Zeus of the Marketplace.

5.47 Philip son of Butacides, a man of Croton, also went with Dorieus and died with him. He had been engaged to the daugh-

ter of Telys of Sybaris and was banished from Croton. Cheated of the marriage, he sailed off to Cyrene. Setting out from there, he joined the expedition with a trireme of his own and a crew paid at his own expense. He was an Olympic victor and the handsomest Greek of his day. [2] Because of his beauty he received from the Egestaeans an honor that no one else has received: they set up a hero's shrine over his grave and propitiate him with sacrifices.

5.48 That, then, is how Dorieus met his end. If he had put up with being ruled by Cleomenes and stayed in Sparta, he would have become king of Lacedaemon. Cleomenes did not reign for very long; he died without a son, leaving only a daughter, whose name was Gorgo.

ARISTAGORAS AT SPARTA

Aristagoras shows Cleomenes a map of the world and asks for help, but fails; the Royal Road is described.

5.49 So it was while Cleomenes held power that Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, arrived in Sparta. According to the Lacedaemonians, he came to talk with him carrying a bronze tablet on which was engraved a map of the whole earth, with all the sea and all the rivers. [2] When they met to talk, Aristagoras said this to him: "Cleomenes, don't be surprised at how eager I've been to come here. The situation is this. That the sons of the Ionians should be slaves instead of free men is a disgrace and a very great grief to us ourselves, and, after us, to you more than anyone else, since you are the leaders of Greece. [3] So now, by the gods of the Greeks, rescue the Ionians, men of your own blood, from slavery. It's something you can easily achieve. The foreigners are not brave fighters, while you have reached the highest point of excellence in war. Their way of fighting is this: bows and a short spear. They go into battle wearing trousers, with turbans on their heads. [4] That's how easy they are to conquer. What's more,

21 Sybaris and Croton were neighboring Greek cities in southern Italy; the Iamidae were a family of hereditary seers at Olympia.

the people who live on that continent have more good things than all the rest of the world put together: gold, to begin with, then silver, bronze, embroidered clothing, beasts of burden and captives. All this could be yours, if you set your hearts on it. [5] They live next to one another, as I'll show you. Next to these Ionians here are these Lydians, who live in good land and have a great deal of silver." As he said this he pointed to the map of the earth that he had brought with him, engraved on the tablet. "Next to the Lydians," Aristagoras went on, "here are the Phrygians, to the east, who have more flocks than any people I know of, and the richest harvests. [6] Next to the Phrygians are the Cappadocians, whom we call Syrians. Bordering them are the Cilicians, who reach down to this sea here, in which this island, Cyprus, lies; they pay the King five hundred talents in tribute every year. Next to these Cilicians are these Armenians here, who also have many flocks, and next to the Armenians are the Matieni, who hold this territory. [7] Next to them is this land, Cissia, and in it, beside this river here, the Choaspes, lies this city, Susa, where the Great King lives and where his treasuries of money are. Take this city, and you can confidently challenge Zeus himself for wealth. [8] So must you really fight battles over land that isn't extensive and isn't even very good, and over narrow borders, against the Messenians, who are your equals in strength, and the Arcadians and the Argives, who have nothing to do with gold or silver—the kind of thing that can make a man eager to fight and die for it? When you have the chance to rule all of Asia with ease, will you choose anything else?" [9] That is what Aristagoras said, and Cleomenes answered: "My friend from Miletus, I'm putting off my answer to you until the third day."

[5.50] That was as far as they got that time. But when the day set for the answer came and they met at the agreed place, Cleomenes asked Aristagoras how many days' journey it was from the Ionian coast up to the King. [2] Aristagoras, who was clever in other ways and had been leading him on skillfully, slipped up here. If he wanted to bring the Spartans out into Asia, he should

not have told the truth; but he did, saying that the journey up took three months. Cleomenes cut off the rest of what Aristagoras had begun to say about the road and said: [3] "My friend from Miletus, leave Sparta before sunset. What you're telling the Lacedaemonians isn't at all to their liking, if you want to take them on a journey three months from the sea."

[5.51] With these words Cleomenes went home. Aristagoras took a suppliant's branch and went to Cleomenes' house. Once inside, as a suppliant, he asked Cleomenes to send the child away and hear him out; for Cleomenes' daughter, whose name was Gorgo, was standing beside him. She happened to be his only child, eight or nine years old. Cleomenes told him to say what he wanted and not to hold back on the child's account.[22] [2] At that Aristagoras began by promising him ten talents if he would do what he asked. When Cleomenes refused, Aristagoras kept raising his offer, until he had promised fifty talents, and the child cried out, "Father, the stranger will corrupt you if you don't leave him and go." [3] Cleomenes, pleased with the child's advice, went into another room, and Aristagoras left Sparta for good, with no further chance to explain about the journey up to the King.

[5.52] This is how things are with that road. All along it there are royal stations with excellent inns, and the whole road runs through inhabited and safe country. Through Lydia and Phrygia there are twenty stations along the way, a distance of ninety-four and a half parasangs. [2] After Phrygia comes the river Halys, where there are gates that you absolutely must pass through to cross the river, and a large guard post beside it. Once you have crossed into Cappadocia and travel through it as far as the Cilician border, there are twenty-eight stations and a hundred and four parasangs. At this border you will pass through two sets of gates and go by two guard posts.[23] [3] Once through these, as you

22 A suppliant carried an olive branch wound with wool, placing himself under the gods' protection while he made his plea.

23 The parasang was a Persian measure of distance; Herodotus reckons it at 30 stades, roughly 3.5 miles.

make your way through Cilicia, there are three stations and fifteen and a half parasangs. The border between Cilicia and Armenia is a navigable river called the Euphrates. In Armenia there are fifteen stations with lodgings and fifty-six and a half parasangs, and there is a guard post among them. [4] From Armenia, as you enter the land of Matiene, there are thirty-four stations and a hundred and thirty-seven parasangs. Four navigable rivers flow through this land, and you absolutely must cross them by ferry. The first is the Tigris; then a second and a third that go by the same name, though they are not the same river and do not flow from the same place. The first of these two flows from Armenia, the other from Matiene. [5] The fourth river is called the Gyndes, which Cyrus once divided into three hundred and sixty channels. [6] Going on from this land into Cissia there are eleven stations and forty-two and a half parasangs to the river Choaspes, which is also navigable; on it stands the city of Susa.

5.53 In all, there are a hundred and eleven stations. That is the number of stations with lodgings on the way up from Sardis to Susa. If the royal road has been correctly measured in parasangs, and the parasang equals thirty stades, as it in fact does, then from Sardis to the royal palace called the Memnonian is thirteen thousand five hundred stades, or four hundred and fifty parasangs. For those who cover a hundred and fifty stades each day, the journey takes exactly ninety days.

5.54 So Aristagoras of Miletus was right when he told Cleomenes the Lacedaemonian that the journey up to the King took three months. If anyone wants a still more precise figure, I will give that too: the road from Ephesus to Sardis must be added to this. [2] I say, then, that the total from the Greek sea to Susa (that is what is called the city of Memnon) is fourteen thousand and forty stades; for from Ephesus to Sardis is five hundred and forty stades, and so the three months' journey is lengthened by three days.

ATHENS FREED FROM THE TYRANTS

Hipparchus is murdered, and with Spartan help the Alcmaeonids drive Hippias and the Pisistratids from Athens.

5.55 Driven out of Sparta, Aristagoras went to Athens, which had been freed from its tyrants in the following way. Hipparchus son of Pisistratus, the brother of the tyrant Hippias, had seen a vision in a dream that pointed very clearly to what would happen to him. After that he was killed by Aristogeiton and Harmodius, whose family were originally Gephyraeans. Afterwards the Athenians lived under tyranny for four years, no less than before, and in fact even more harshly.[24]

5.56 The vision in Hipparchus' dream was this. On the night before the Panathenaea, Hipparchus dreamed that a tall, handsome man stood over him and spoke these riddling lines: "Endure, lion, the unendurable with an enduring heart; / no man who does wrong will escape retribution." 2 As soon as it was day, he was seen putting this before the dream-interpreters. But afterwards he dismissed the vision and led the procession, and in it he was killed.[25]

5.57 The Gephyraeans, to whom Hipparchus' murderers belonged, came originally from Eretria, according to their own account. But as I find on inquiry, they were Phoenicians, descended from the Phoenicians who came with Cadmus to the land now called Boeotia, and they lived in the district of Tanagra, which had been allotted to them. 2 The Cadmeans had first been driven out of there by the Argives, and then these Gephyraeans were driven out in their turn by the Boeotians and made their way to Athens. The Athenians received them as citizens on fixed terms, ordering them to keep away from a number of things that are not worth recording.[26]

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24 Harmodius and Aristogeiton killed Hipparchus in 514 BC and were later honored at Athens as the tyrant-slayers.

25 The Panathenaea was Athens' great festival of Athena, celebrated with a procession to the Acropolis.

26 In legend Cadmus was a Phoenician prince who founded Thebes in Boeotia.

5.58 These Phoenicians who came with Cadmus, among whom were the Gephyraeans, settled in this land and brought the Greeks many kinds of learning, and in particular the alphabet, which in my opinion the Greeks did not have before. At first they used the letters that all the Phoenicians use; but as time went on, they changed the shape of the letters along with their language. 2 At this time most of the places around them were inhabited by Greeks who were Ionians. They were taught the letters by the Phoenicians, changed the shape of a few of them and used them; and in using them they called them "Phoenician letters," as was only fair, since the Phoenicians had brought them into Greece. 3 The Ionians have also called papyrus rolls "skins" from ancient times, because once, when papyrus was scarce, they used goatskins and sheepskins; and even in my day many non-Greeks write on skins of this kind.

5.59 I myself have also seen Cadmean letters in the temple of Ismenian Apollo at Thebes in Boeotia, engraved on some tripods, and for the most part they are like Ionian letters. One of the tripods bears the inscription: "Amphitryon dedicated me from the spoils of the Teleboans." This would date from the time of Laius son of Labdacus, son of Polydorus, son of Cadmus.

5.60 A second tripod says, in hexameter verse: "Scaeus, victorious at boxing, to Apollo who shoots from afar, / dedicated me, a very beautiful offering for you." Scaeus would be the son of Hippocoon, if he really is the one who dedicated it and not someone else with the same name as Hippocoon's son, and he would date from the time of Oedipus son of Laius.

5.61 A third tripod also says, again in hexameter: "Laodamas himself, to keen-eyed Apollo, this tripod, / while he was monarch, dedicated, a very beautiful offering for you." 2 It was while this Laodamas son of Eteocles was monarch that the Cadmeans were driven out by the Argives and went to the Encheleis. The Gephyraeans were left behind, but later the Boeotians forced them to withdraw to Athens. They have shrines established in Athens in which the rest of the Athenians have no share, set

apart from the other shrines, and among them in particular the shrine and secret rites of Achaean Demeter.

5.62 I have now told of the vision in Hipparchus' dream, and where the Gephyraeans, to whom Hipparchus' murderers belonged, originally came from. Beyond this I must still take up again the story I set out to tell at the beginning: how the Athenians were freed from their tyrants. 2 Hippias was tyrant and was growing harsh toward the Athenians because of Hipparchus' death. The Alcmaeonids, an Athenian family exiled by the Pisistratids, had tried together with the other Athenian exiles to return by force, but without success; they failed badly in their attempt to come back and free Athens, after fortifying Leipsydrium above Paeonia. Then the Alcmaeonids, contriving every means against the Pisistratids, took a contract from the Amphictyons to build the temple at Delphi—the one that stands there now but did not yet exist then. 3 Being well supplied with money and men of distinction from of old, they finished the temple more beautifully than the plan required. In particular, though it had been agreed that they would build the temple of ordinary limestone, they made its front of Parian marble.[27]

5.63 Now, as the Athenians say, these men, while staying at Delphi, bribed the Pythia to tell any Spartans who came to consult the oracle, whether on a private mission or a public one, that they must free Athens. 2 Since the Lacedaemonians were always given the same pronouncement, they sent Anchimolius son of Aster, a distinguished citizen, with an army to drive the Pisistratids out of Athens, even though they were bound to them by the closest ties of guest-friendship; for they put the god's business ahead of men's. They sent this force by sea, in ships. 3 Anchimolius put in at Phalerum and landed his army, but the Pisistratids, who had learned of this in advance, called for help from Thessaly, since they had made an alliance with the Thessalians. At their request the Thessalians, by a common decision, sent a thousand cavalry and their king, Cineas of Conium. Once

27 The Amphictyons were a council of neighboring peoples that administered the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi.

they had these allies, the Pisistratids devised the following plan. [4] They cleared the plain of Phalerum, made the ground fit for cavalry and launched the horsemen against the enemy camp. The cavalry charged and killed many of the Lacedaemonians, Anchimolius among them, and penned the survivors in their ships. That is how the first expedition from Lacedaemon fared; and Anchimolius' tomb is in Attica, at Alopece, near the shrine of Heracles at Cynosarges.

5.64 Afterwards the Lacedaemonians fitted out a larger expedition and sent it against Athens, appointing King Cleomenes son of Anaxandrides as its general; this time they sent it not by sea but by land. [2] When they invaded Attica, the Thessalian cavalry was the first to engage them and was soon routed, losing more than forty men; the survivors went straight back to Thessaly just as they were. Cleomenes reached the city and, together with those Athenians who wanted to be free, besieged the tyrants, who were shut up inside the Pelasgian wall.[28]

5.65 And the Lacedaemonians would never have driven out the Pisistratids at all. They had no thought of maintaining a blockade, and the Pisistratids were well supplied with food and drink; after a siege of a few days they would have gone back to Sparta. As it was, a chance event turned up that was bad for one side and an ally to the other: the Pisistratids' children were captured while being smuggled out of the country to safety. [2] When this happened, all their affairs were thrown into confusion, and to get their children back they surrendered on the terms the Athenians wanted: that they would leave Attica within five days. [3] Afterwards they withdrew to Sigeum on the Scamander, having ruled the Athenians for thirty-six years. They too were originally Pylians and descendants of Neleus, of the same stock as Codrus and Melanthus, who had once come to Athens as immigrants and become kings of the Athenians. [4] It was with this in mind that Hippocrates gave his son the same name, Pisistratus, naming him after Nestor's son Pisistratus. [5] That is how the Athenians were rid of their tyrants. What they did or suffered after

28 The Pelasgian wall was the ancient fortification of the Athenian Acropolis.

they were freed that is worth telling, before Ionia revolted from Darius and Aristagoras of Miletus came to Athens asking them for help—this I will tell first.

CLEISTHENES' REFORMS

Cleisthenes reorganizes the Athenian tribes; Athens defeats Sparta, Boeotia and Chalcis, and Aegina attacks Athens.

5.66 Athens had been great even before, and now that it was rid of its tyrants it grew greater still. Two men held power there. One was Cleisthenes, an Alcmaeonid, the very man who is said to have won over the Pythia. The other was Isagoras son of Tisander, who came of a distinguished house, though I cannot say what its origins were; his kinsmen sacrifice to Carian Zeus. 2 These two fought each other for power, and Cleisthenes, getting the worst of it, took the people into partnership. After that he turned the Athenians, who had been in four tribes, into ten tribes. He did away with the names of Ion's sons Geleon, Aegicores, Argades and Hoples, and found names taken from other heroes, native ones, except for Ajax. Ajax he added, foreigner though he was, as a neighbor and ally.

5.67 In doing this, in my opinion, this Cleisthenes was imitating his mother's father, Cleisthenes the tyrant of Sicyon. That Cleisthenes, after making war on the Argives, first put a stop to the rhapsodes' competitions in Sicyon on account of the Homeric poems, because Argives and Argos are celebrated in nearly all of them. Second, there was, and still is, a hero-shrine of Adrastus son of Talaus in the very marketplace of Sicyon, and Cleisthenes wanted to drive Adrastus out of the country, since he was an Argive. 2 He went to Delphi and asked the oracle whether he should throw Adrastus out. The Pythia answered that Adrastus was king of the Sicyonians, while he was a stone-thrower. Since the god would not allow this, he went home and considered some device by which Adrastus would take himself off of his own accord. When he believed he had found one, he sent to Thebes in Boeotia and said he wanted to bring in Melanippus

son of Astacus, and the Thebans agreed. [3] Having brought Melanippus in, Cleisthenes assigned him a sacred precinct in the town hall itself and installed him there, in the most secure spot. Cleisthenes brought Melanippus in (for this too must be told) because he was Adrastus' bitterest enemy: Melanippus had killed Adrastus' brother Mecisteus and his son-in-law Tydeus.[29] [4] Once he had assigned him the precinct, he took Adrastus' sacrifices and festivals away from him and gave them to Melanippus. The Sicyonians had been accustomed to honor Adrastus very greatly, because this land had belonged to Polybus, and Adrastus was Polybus' daughter's son; Polybus died childless and left the kingship to Adrastus. [5] Among the other honors the Sicyonians paid Adrastus, they celebrated his sufferings with tragic choruses, honoring not Dionysus but Adrastus. Cleisthenes gave the choruses back to Dionysus and the rest of the sacrifice to Melanippus.

5.68 That is what he had done about Adrastus. As for the Dorian tribes, he changed their names to different ones, so that the Sicyonians and the Argives would not have the same tribes. And here he made the greatest mockery of the Sicyonians: in changing the names he named them after the pig and the ass, simply adding the endings—except for his own tribe, which he named after his own rule. These were called Archelaoi ("People-rulers"), and the others Hyatae ("Pig-men"), Oneatae ("Ass-men") and Choereatae ("Swine-men"). [2] The Sicyonians used these tribal names both while Cleisthenes ruled and for sixty years more after his death. Later, however, they talked the matter over and changed them to Hylleis, Pamphyli and Dymanatae, and added a fourth tribe, which they named after Adrastus' son Aegialeus, calling its members Aegialeis.

5.69 That is what Cleisthenes of Sicyon had done. Cleisthenes the Athenian was this Sicyonian's daughter's son and was named after him, and in my opinion he too looked down on the Ionians and imitated his namesake Cleisthenes, so that the Athenians

29 Melanippus was a Theban hero of the legendary war of the Seven against Thebes, which Adrastus led; Cleisthenes was bringing his cult to Sicyon.

would not have the same tribes as the Ionians. [2] For as soon as he had brought over to his side the Athenian people, who had previously been shut out of everything, he renamed the tribes and made more of them out of fewer. He created ten tribal heads instead of four, and distributed the demes among the tribes in ten groups. And having won over the people, he was far stronger than his rivals.[30]

5.70 Getting the worst of it in his turn, Isagoras devised this counter-move. He called in Cleomenes the Lacedaemonian, who had become his guest-friend at the time of the siege of the Pisistratids; Cleomenes was said to be visiting Isagoras' wife. [2] First Cleomenes sent a herald to Athens and set about expelling Cleisthenes, and many other Athenians with him, calling them "the accursed." He said this in his message on Isagoras' instructions. For the Alcmaeonids and their partisans were held guilty of that bloodshed, while Isagoras himself and his friends had no part in it.

5.71 This is how the accursed among the Athenians got their name. There was an Athenian called Cylon, an Olympic victor. He set his heart on a tyranny, gathered a band of men his own age, and tried to seize the Acropolis. When he could not gain control of it, he sat down as a suppliant at the statue. [2] The presidents of the naucraries, who governed Athens at that time, made them get up, guaranteeing them any penalty short of death; but the Alcmaeonids are charged with murdering them. This happened before the time of Pisistratus.[31]

5.72 When Cleomenes sent to demand the expulsion of Cleisthenes and the accursed, Cleisthenes himself slipped away. But afterward Cleomenes came to Athens all the same, with no great force, and on his arrival he drove out as accursed seven hundred Athenian households, whose names Isagoras had given him. Having done this, he next tried to dissolve the Council and to put the offices of state into the hands of three hundred of

30 The demes were the local districts, villages and city wards, of Attica.
31 The naucraries were early administrative divisions of Athens, each responsible for supplying a ship.

Isagoras' partisans. [2] But the Council resisted and refused to obey, and so Cleomenes, Isagoras and his partisans seized the Acropolis. The rest of the Athenians, united in purpose, besieged them for two days. On the third day all of them who were Lacedaemonians left the country under a truce. And so the ominous words spoken to Cleomenes came true. [3] For when he went up onto the Acropolis, intending to take possession of it, he went toward the inner shrine of the goddess to address her. But before he could pass through the doors, the priestess rose from her chair and said, "Stranger from Lacedaemon, go back, and do not enter the temple. It is not lawful for Dorians to come in here." He replied, "Woman, I'm not a Dorian, I'm an Achaean." [4] So, paying no heed to the omen, he made his attempt, and then he was thrown out again along with the Lacedaemonians. The others the Athenians put in chains to be executed, among them Timesitheus of Delphi, whose feats of strength and courage I could relate as very great.

5.73 So these men died in chains. After this the Athenians recalled Cleisthenes and the seven hundred households that Cleomenes had driven out, and sent envoys to Sardis, wanting to make an alliance with the Persians; for they knew that they had provoked the Lacedaemonians and Cleomenes into war with them. [2] When the envoys reached Sardis and delivered their instructions, Artaphrenes son of Hystaspes, the governor of Sardis, asked who these people were and where on earth they lived, that they wanted to become allies of the Persians. When the envoys had told him, he gave them his answer in brief: if the Athenians gave King Darius earth and water, he would make an alliance with them; if they did not, he told them to be gone. [3] The envoys, taking the responsibility on themselves because they wanted to make the alliance, said that they would give them. When they returned home they were severely blamed for it.

5.74 Cleomenes knew that he had been grossly insulted by the Athenians in word and deed, and he gathered an army from the whole Peloponnese without saying what he was gathering it for.

He wanted to take revenge on the Athenian people and to set up Isagoras as tyrant, for Isagoras had come out of the Acropolis with him. [2] So Cleomenes invaded with a large force as far as Eleusis, while the Boeotians, by arrangement, took Oenoe and Hysiae, the outermost demes of Attica, and the Chalcidians attacked from the other side and ravaged districts of Attica. The Athenians, though caught between two attacks, decided to deal with the Boeotians and Chalcidians later, and took up their position under arms facing the Peloponnesians at Eleusis.

5.75 As the armies were about to join battle, the Corinthians first, telling themselves that they were not acting justly, changed their minds and went off. Then Demaratus son of Ariston did the same; he too was a king of the Spartans, had led the army out of Lacedaemon together with Cleomenes, and had never before been at odds with him. [2] Because of this dissension a law was made at Sparta that both kings should not accompany the army when it marched out; until then both had gone. And since one of the kings was released from this duty, one of the Tyndaridae was also to be left behind; for before this both of them too had been called on to help and had gone with the army. [3] So now at Eleusis the rest of the allies, seeing that the Lacedaemonian kings were not in agreement and that the Corinthians had left their post, went off home themselves,[32]

5.76 this being the fourth time Dorians had come into Attica. Twice they invaded to make war, and twice for the good of the Athenian common people. The first time was when they also founded Megara (this expedition might rightly be dated to the reign of Codrus over Athens); the second and third times were when they set out from Sparta and came to drive out the Pisistratids; and the fourth was this time, when Cleomenes invaded at Eleusis at the head of the Peloponnesians. So this was the fourth time the Dorians invaded Athens.

5.77 Since this expedition had broken up so ingloriously, the Athenians, wanting revenge, first marched against the Chalcidi-

32 The Tyndaridae were the twin heroes Castor and Polydeuces, whose images went with the Spartan kings on campaign.

ans. The Boeotians came to the Chalcidians' aid at the Euripus. When the Athenians saw the Boeotians, they decided to attack them before the Chalcidians. [2] The Athenians engaged the Boeotians and won a great victory; they killed a very large number and took seven hundred prisoners. On the very same day the Athenians crossed over to Euboea and engaged the Chalcidians too, and having beaten them as well, they left four thousand settlers on allotments in the land of the horse-breeders. The horse-breeders was the name given to the wealthy men of Chalcis.[33]

[3] All of these that they took prisoner, together with the Boeotian prisoners, they kept under guard in fetters. In time they released them, setting their ransom at two minas a head. The fetters in which they had been bound they hung up on the Acropolis; they were still there in my time, hanging from walls scorched by the Mede's fire, opposite the hall that faces west. [4] They also dedicated a tenth of the ransom by having a bronze four-horse chariot made. It stands on the left as you first enter the gateway on the Acropolis, and it bears this inscription: Having subdued the tribes of the Boeotians and Chalcidians,

the sons of the Athenians, by deeds of war,
quenched their arrogance in a dark chain of iron;
from these, as a tenth, they set up these horses for Pallas.[34]

[5.78] So the Athenians grew in strength. And it is clear, not from one instance only but from every side, what a valuable thing the equal right to speak is. While the Athenians were ruled by tyrants, they were no better at war than any of their neighbors, but once rid of tyrants they became by far the first. This shows that while they were held down they shirked on purpose, since they

33 The Euripus is the narrow strait between Boeotia and the island of Euboea, on which Chalcis stands.

34 A mina was a sum of money worth 100 drachmas. "The Mede" is Xerxes' Persian army, which burned the Acropolis in 480 BC; Greeks often called the Persians "Medes."

were working for a master, but once they had been freed each one was eager to achieve things for himself.

5.79 That is what the Athenians were doing. After this the Thebans sent to the god, wanting to take revenge on the Athenians. The Pythia said that they would get no revenge by themselves alone, and told them to bring the matter before the "many-voiced" and ask the help of those nearest to them. 2 So when the envoys returned, the Thebans called an assembly and reported the oracle. When they heard that they were to ask the help of those nearest to them, they said, "Don't the Tanagraeans, the Coronaeans and the Thespians live nearest to us? And they always fight alongside us and eagerly share the burden of war. Why should we need to ask them? No, maybe this isn't what the oracle means."

5.80 While they were debating like this, someone at last understood and said, "I think I see what the oracle is trying to tell us. Asopus is said to have had two daughters, Thebe and Aegina. Since they were sisters, I think the god has told us to ask the Aeginetans to become our avengers." 2 And since no opinion seemed better than this one, they sent at once to the Aeginetans and asked them, appealing to them in accordance with the oracle to help them, as being their nearest. In answer to the request for help, the Aeginetans said they were sending the Aeacids with them.[35]

5.81 The Thebans tried their luck with the alliance of the Aeacids and were roughly handled by the Athenians. So they sent again, returning the Aeacids and asking for men instead. 2 The Aeginetans, elated by their great prosperity and remembering an old enmity they had with the Athenians, now, at the Thebans' request, began an undeclared war on the Athenians. 3 While the Athenians were pressing hard on the Boeotians, the Aeginetans sailed to Attica in warships and laid waste Phalerum and many demes along the rest of the coast, and by doing so they did the Athenians great harm.

35 The Aeacids were Aegina's heroes, Aeacus and his descendants; what was sent was presumably their images.

5.82 The enmity that the Aeginetans had long owed the Athenians began in this way. The land of the Epidaurians was yielding no crops. So the Epidaurians consulted the oracle at Delphi about this misfortune, and the Pythia told them to set up images of Damia and Auxesia, and said that if they did so things would go better for them. 2 The Epidaurians then asked whether they should make the images of bronze or of stone. The Pythia would allow neither, but told them to use the wood of the cultivated olive. So the Epidaurians asked the Athenians to let them cut an olive tree, believing theirs to be the most sacred. It is also said that at that time there were olive trees nowhere else on earth but at Athens.[36] 3 The Athenians said they would give it on condition that every year the Epidaurians would bring offerings to Athena Polias and to Erechtheus. The Epidaurians agreed to these terms and got what they had asked for; they made images from those olive trees and set them up. Their land bore crops, and they kept their agreement with the Athenians.

5.83 At this time, and before it, the Aeginetans were subject to the Epidaurians in other respects, and in particular they used to cross over to Epidaurus to give and receive justice in their lawsuits with one another. But from then on they built ships, grew arrogant, and revolted from the Epidaurians. 2 Being at odds with them, they did them damage, since they were masters of the sea, and among other things they stole these very images of Damia and Auxesia from them. They carried them off and set them up in the interior of their own land, at a place called Oea, roughly twenty stades from the city. 3 Having set them up in this place, they sought their favor with sacrifices and with choruses of women singing mockery, with ten men appointed as chorus-sponsors for each of the goddesses. The choruses abused no man, only the women of the place. The Epidaurians too had the same rites; and they also have rites that may not be spoken of.

5.84 Once these images had been stolen, the Epidaurians stopped keeping their agreement with the Athenians. The

36 Damia and Auxesia were goddesses of fertility and growth worshipped in the Peloponnese and on Aegina.

Athenians sent and expressed their anger to the Epidaurians, but the Epidaurians argued that they were doing no wrong. As long as they had the images in their country, they said, they had kept the agreement; since they had been deprived of them, it was not just for them to keep paying, and they told the Athenians to demand payment from the Aeginetans, who had the images. [2] At this the Athenians sent to Aegina and demanded the images back; but the Aeginetans said that they had no business with the Athenians.

[5.85] Now the Athenians say that after this demand some of their citizens were dispatched in a single trireme. They were sent by the state, and when they arrived at Aegina they tried to wrench the images off their pedestals, since they were made of Athenian wood, in order to carry them back home. [2] Unable to get control of them in this way, the Athenians say, they threw ropes around the images and began to drag them; and as they dragged, there came thunder, and with the thunder an earthquake. The crew of the trireme who were doing the dragging were driven out of their minds by these, and in that state they killed one another as if they were enemies, until only one of them all was left, and he made his way back to Phalerum.

[5.86] That is how the Athenians say it happened. The Aeginetans, however, say that the Athenians did not come with one ship. One ship, or a few more than one, they could easily have fought off, they say, even if they had happened to have no ships of their own. Instead, the Athenians sailed against their land with many ships, and the Aeginetans gave way to them and did not fight at sea. [2] But they cannot make clear whether they gave way because they recognized that they were weaker at sea, or because they intended to do the sort of thing they actually did. [3] According to the Aeginetans, since no one came out to fight them, the Athenians disembarked from their ships and turned to the images. Unable to wrench them off their pedestals, they then threw ropes around them and dragged them, until, as they were being dragged, both images did the same thing. What they say is not credible to me, though it may be to someone else: the

images fell on their knees before them, and have remained that way ever since. [4] That is what the Athenians did, they say. As for themselves, the Aeginetans say that when they learned the Athenians were about to march against them, they had the Argives ready. So when the Athenians landed on Aeginetan soil, the Argives came to help them. They crossed over secretly from Epidaurus to the island and fell on the Athenians, who had heard nothing of it beforehand, cutting them off from their ships; and at that very moment, the Aeginetans say, the thunder and the earthquake came upon the Athenians.

5.87 This is the account the Argives and the Aeginetans give, and the Athenians too agree that only one of their men came back safe to Attica. [2] The difference is that the Argives say this one man survived when they themselves destroyed the Athenian army, while the Athenians say the divine power destroyed it. Yet not even this one man survived, according to the Athenians, but he perished in the following way. He went back to Athens and reported the disaster. When the wives of the men who had gone on the expedition to Aegina heard it, they were outraged that he alone out of all of them had been saved. They surrounded the man and stabbed him with the brooches of their cloaks, each of them asking him where her own husband was. [3] So this man was killed in this way, they say, and to the Athenians the women's deed seemed even more terrible than the disaster. Having no other way to punish the women, they changed their dress to the Ionian; for until then the Athenian women had worn Dorian dress, very like the Corinthian. So they changed it to the linen tunic, so that they would have no use for brooches.[37]

5.88 To tell the truth, though, this dress was not originally Ionian but Carian, since in the old days all Greek women wore the same dress, the one we now call Dorian. [2] The Argives and the Aeginetans, they say, went further in response to all this. Each of them made it the custom to make brooch pins half as long again as the measure then in use, and for women to dedic-

37 Dorian women's dress was fastened at the shoulders with long pins; the Ionian linen tunic was sewn and needed none.

ate brooch pins above all else in the sanctuary of these goddesses. Nothing Attic, not even pottery, was to be brought into the sanctuary, and from then on it was to be the custom to drink there only from local pitchers.[38]

5.89 So from that time on, out of rivalry with the Athenians, the women of Argos and Aegina have worn brooch pins larger than before, and they still did so in my own day. The Athenians' enmity toward the Aeginetans began in the way I have described. At the time I am speaking of, when the Thebans called on them for help, the Aeginetans remembered what had happened over the statues and readily came to the aid of the Boeotians. 2 So the Aeginetans were ravaging the coastal parts of Attica. The Athenians were eager to march against them, but an oracle came from Delphi. It told them to hold off for thirty years from avenging the Aeginetans' wrong, and in the thirty-first year to dedicate a precinct to Aeacus and then begin the war against the Aeginetans; then things would go as they wished. But if they marched against them at once, they would suffer much and also inflict much in the meantime, though in the end they would subdue them. 3 When the Athenians heard this answer reported, they dedicated to Aeacus the precinct that now stands in the marketplace. But they could not bear to hear that they must hold off for thirty years after the outrageous treatment they had suffered at the hands of the Aeginetans.[39]

5.90 But while they were preparing their revenge, trouble stirred up by the Lacedaemonians got in their way. The Lacedaemonians had learned what the Alcmaeonids had contrived with the Pythia, and what the Pythia had contrived against themselves and the Pisistratids. They counted it a double misfortune: they had driven men who were their guest-friends out of their own country, and for doing so they had received no thanks at all from the Athenians. 2 On top of this they were urged on by the

38 "These goddesses" are Damia and Auxesia, whose statues the Aeginetans had taken from Epidaurus, the cause of the quarrel described in the preceding chapters.

39 Aeacus, son of Zeus and the nymph Aegina, was the legendary first king of the island and its chief hero.

oracles, which said that many outrageous things would befall them at the hands of the Athenians. They had known nothing of these before, but now they learned them in full when Cleomenes brought them to Sparta. Cleomenes had obtained the oracles from the Athenian acropolis. The Pisistratids had owned them before, and when they were driven out they left them in the temple, and Cleomenes took up what had been left behind.

5.91 Now the Lacedaemonians had got hold of the oracles, and they saw the Athenians growing in strength and in no way ready to obey them. They realized that if the people of Attica were free they would become a match for their own, but if they were held down by a tyranny they would be weak and ready to submit. Having grasped all this, they sent for Hippias son of Pisistratus from Sigeum on the Hellespont, where the Pisistratids take refuge. 2 When Hippias came at their summons, the Spartans also sent for envoys from their other allies and spoke to them as follows: "Allies, we acknowledge that we did not act rightly: we were carried away by counterfeit oracles and drove out of their country men who were our closest guest-friends and who undertook to keep Athens subject to us. Then, having done this, we handed the city over to an ungrateful people. Once it had been freed through us and raised its head, it threw out us and our king with outrageous insults, and now, swollen with pride, it keeps growing. Its neighbors the Boeotians and Chalcidians have learned this above all, and perhaps someone else too will learn it to his cost. 3 Since we made a mistake in doing what we did, we will now try to punish them, going there together with you. That is exactly why we sent for Hippias here, and for you from your cities: so that by common counsel and a common expedition we may bring him back to Athens and give back to him what we took away.

SOCLES ON TYRANNY: THE CYPSELIDS OF CORINTH

Sparta proposes restoring Hippias; the Corinthian Socles answers with the bloody history of Corinth's tyrants.

5.92 That is what they said, but most of the allies did not accept their proposal. The others kept quiet, but Socles of Corinth spoke as follows.

5.92a Surely now the sky will be below the earth and the earth up in the air above the sky, and men will have their pastures in the sea and fish where men had theirs before, when you, Lacedaemonians, are getting ready to abolish equality of power and bring tyrannies back into the cities. Nothing among men is more unjust than tyranny, nothing more murderous. 2 If you really think it a good thing for cities to be ruled by tyrants, then first set up a tyrant among yourselves, and after that seek to set them up for the rest. As it is, you yourselves have no experience of tyrants and take the most extreme care that this should never happen in Sparta, yet you abuse your allies with it. If you had experience of it, as we have, you would have better advice to offer about it than you do now.

5.92b The Corinthians had a constitution of this kind. There was an oligarchy, and these men, called the Bacchiadae, ruled the city; they gave their daughters in marriage and took wives only among themselves. Amphion, one of these men, had a daughter who was lame; her name was Labda. Since none of the Bacchiadae wanted to marry her, she was taken by Eetion son of Echecrates, who was from the village of Petra but was by descent a Lapith, one of the line of Caeneus.[40]

40 The Lapiths were a legendary people of Thessaly; Caeneus was one of their heroes.

[2] But he had no children, either by this wife or by any other. So he set off to Delphi to ask about offspring. As soon as he entered, the Pythia greeted him with these verses:

Eetion, no one honors you, though you are worthy of much honor.
Labda is with child, and will bear a rolling boulder; it will fall
on monarchs, and bring justice to Corinth. [3] This oracle given to Eetion was somehow reported to the Bacchiadae. An earlier oracle given to Corinth had been obscure to them, though it pointed to the same thing as Eetion's. It ran as follows: An eagle is with child among the rocks, and will bear a lion,
mighty and eating raw flesh; he will loosen the knees of many.
Consider this well now, Corinthians, you who dwell around fair
Peirene and lofty Corinth.[41]

5.92c This earlier oracle had been beyond the Bacchiadae's power to interpret. But now, when they learned of the one given to Eetion, they at once understood the earlier one too, since it agreed with Eetion's. Having understood this one as well, they kept quiet, intending to destroy the child Eetion was about to have. As soon as his wife gave birth, they sent ten of their own number to the village where Eetion lived, to kill the baby. [2] These men came to Petra, went into Eetion's courtyard and asked for the baby. Labda, knowing nothing of why they had come and thinking they were asking for it out of friendship for its father, brought it and put it in the hands of one of them. Now on the way they had agreed that whichever of them first took the baby would dash it to the ground. [3] So when Labda brought it and handed it over, by divine chance the baby smiled at the man who had taken it. He noticed this, and a kind of pity kept him

41 The oracles pun on names: "eagle" (aietos) echoes Eetion, and "rocks" (petrai) echoes Petra. Peirene was a famous spring at Corinth.

from killing it; moved by pity, he handed it to the second man, and he to the third. And so it was passed along through all ten of them, and none was willing to do the deed. [4] So they gave the baby back to its mother and went outside. Standing at the door, they started blaming one another, and above all the first one who had taken it, because he had not done what they had agreed. At length, after some time had passed, they decided to go back in, all of them, and all share in the murder.

5.92d But evils were destined to spring up for Corinth from Eetion's offspring. For Labda heard all this as she stood right by the door. Afraid that they would change their minds, take the baby a second time and kill it, she took it and hid it in the place that seemed to her least likely to be thought of, a chest. She knew that if they turned back and came to search, they would look everywhere, and that is just what happened. [2] They came and searched, and when the baby was nowhere to be seen, they decided to leave and tell those who had sent them that they had done everything they had been ordered to do. So they went away and said so.[42]

5.92e After this, Eetion's son grew up, and because he had escaped this danger by means of the chest, he was given the name Cypselus after it. When Cypselus had grown to manhood and consulted the oracle, he received an ambiguous answer at Delphi; trusting in it, he made his attempt on Corinth and took it. The oracle was this: [2]

Blessed is this man who comes down into my house,
Cypselus son of Eetion, king of famous Corinth,
he himself and his sons, but his sons' sons no more.

That was the oracle. And once Cypselus became tyrant, this is the sort of man he turned out to be: many of the Corinthians he banished, many he stripped of their property, and by far the most of all he deprived of their lives.

42 The Greek word for this chest is kypsele, the source of the name Cypselus explained in the next chapter.

5.92f He ruled for thirty years and wove his life to a good end, and his son Periander succeeded him in the tyranny. Now at first Periander was milder than his father, but after he had dealings through messengers with Thrasybulus, the tyrant of Miletus, he became far more murderous even than Cypselus. 2 He sent a herald to Thrasybulus to ask what was the safest way to arrange his affairs so as to govern the city best. Thrasybulus led the man who had come from Periander out of the town and went into a sown field. As he walked through the crop, he kept questioning the herald over and over about his journey from Corinth, and every time he saw an ear of grain standing out above the rest he cut it off and threw it away, until in this way he had destroyed the finest and tallest part of the crop. 3 Having gone right through the field, he sent the herald away without a word of advice. When the herald got back to Corinth, Periander was eager to hear the advice. But the herald said that Thrasybulus had given him none, and that he was amazed Periander had sent him to such a man, a madman who destroyed his own property; and he described what he had seen Thrasybulus do.

5.92g But Periander understood what had been done, and realized that Thrasybulus was advising him to kill the most outstanding of the townsmen. From then on he displayed every kind of wickedness toward his citizens. Whatever Cypselus had left undone in killing and banishing, Periander finished. And in a single day he stripped all the women of Corinth, on account of his own wife Melissa. 2 He had sent messengers to the Thesprotians, to the oracle of the dead on the river Acheron, about a deposit left with him by a guest-friend. Melissa appeared and said she would neither indicate nor tell in what place the deposit lay, for she was cold, she said, and naked:[43] the clothes he had buried with her were of no use to her, since they had not been burned. As proof that she was telling the truth, she said, Periander had put his loaves into a cold oven. 3 When this was reported back to Periander, the token convinced him, since he

43 At the Acheron in Thesprotia, in northwestern Greece, there was an oracle where the spirits of the dead were consulted.

had lain with Melissa when she was a corpse. Immediately after hearing the message he had it proclaimed that all the women of Corinth should go out to the temple of Hera. They went in their finest clothes, as if to a festival. He had his bodyguards posted in hiding, and he stripped them all alike, free women and maidservants; then he gathered the clothes into a pit and burned them, praying to Melissa. [4] When he had done this and sent a second time, Melissa's ghost told him the place where she had put the guest-friend's deposit. That, Lacedaemonians, is what tyranny is like, and those are the kinds of deeds it does. [5] We Corinthians were filled with great amazement the moment we saw you sending for Hippias, and now we are more amazed still to hear you say these things. We solemnly call on you, invoking the gods of Greece, not to set up tyrannies in the cities. If you will not stop, but try, against all justice, to bring Hippias back, know that the Corinthians, at least, do not agree with you."

5.93 That is what Socles, the envoy from Corinth, said. Hippias answered him, calling on the same gods he had invoked, that the Corinthians above all others would surely long for the Pisistratids when the appointed days came for them to be harassed by the Athenians. [2] Hippias answered this way because he knew the oracles more exactly than anyone. The rest of the allies had kept quiet until then, but once they heard Socles speak so freely, every one of them broke his silence and declared for the Corinthian's view, and they called on the Lacedaemonians not to make any revolutionary change in a Greek city.

5.94 So this plan was abandoned. As Hippias was sent away from there, Amyntas, king of the Macedonians, offered him Anthemus, and the Thessalians offered him Iolcus. He chose neither, but went back to Sigeum. Pisistratus had taken Sigeum from the Mytilenaeans by force of arms, and once he controlled it he made his illegitimate son Hegesistratus, born of an Argive woman, tyrant there. But Hegesistratus did not hold what he had received from Pisistratus without a fight. [2] For a long time the Mytilenaeans and the Athenians made war on each other, setting out from the town of Achilleum and from Sigeum. The

Mytilenaeans demanded the land back; the Athenians would not concede it, arguing that the Aeolians had no more claim to the land of Ilium than they themselves and all the other Greeks who had helped Menelaus avenge the abduction of Helen.[44]

5.95 In the course of their war all sorts of things happened in the battles. Among them was this: in one engagement, when the Athenians were winning, the poet Alcaeus fled and got away himself, but the Athenians took his arms and hung them up in the temple of Athena at Sigeum. 2 Alcaeus put this into a song and sent it to Mytilene, telling his friend Melanippus of his misfortune. The Mytilenaeans and Athenians were reconciled by Periander son of Cypselus, to whom they had submitted the dispute as arbitrator. His terms of settlement were that each side should keep what it held.[45]

5.96 That is how Sigeum came under Athenian rule. When Hippias came from Lacedaemon to Asia, he left nothing untried. He slandered the Athenians to Artaphrenes and did everything he could to bring Athens under himself and Darius. 2 While Hippias was doing this, the Athenians learned of it and sent envoys to Sardis, urging the Persians not to listen to Athenian exiles. But Artaphrenes told them that if they wanted to be safe, they must take Hippias back. The Athenians would not accept the terms when they were reported to them, and having refused them, they had decided to be openly at war with the Persians.

ARISTAGORAS AT ATHENS; SARDIS BURNED

Athens sends ships; the Ionians burn Sardis, Darius vows revenge, and the revolt spreads to Cyprus and Caria.

5.97 They held this view and had already been slandered to the Persians, and it was at this very moment that Aristagoras of Miletus, who had been driven out of Sparta by Cleomenes the Lacedaemonian, arrived at Athens; for this was the most powerful of the other cities. Coming before the people, Aristagoras

44 Ilium is Troy; Sigeum and Achilleum lay near it, at the mouth of the Hellespont.
45 Alcaeus of Mytilene, on Lesbos, was a lyric poet active around 600 BC.

said the same things he had said at Sparta about the good things in Asia and about the Persian way of war: that they used neither shield nor spear and would be easy to overcome. [2] He said this, and added that the Milesians were colonists of the Athenians, and that it was only right for the Athenians, with their great power, to rescue them. There was nothing he did not promise, so desperate was his need, until he won them over. It seems it is easier to mislead many people than one, seeing that he could not mislead Cleomenes the Lacedaemonian alone, but managed it with thirty thousand Athenians. [3] So the Athenians, won over, voted to send twenty ships to help the Ionians, appointing as their general Melanthius, a citizen highly regarded in every way. These ships were the beginning of troubles for Greeks and non-Greeks alike.

[5.98] Aristagoras sailed on ahead and reached Miletus. There he devised a plan from which no benefit was going to come to the Ionians—nor was that why he did it, but to vex King Darius. He sent a man to Phrygia, to the Paeonians who had been taken captive by Megabazus from the river Strymon and were living by themselves in a district and village of Phrygia. When the man reached the Paeonians, he said this: [2] "Paeonians, Aristagoras, tyrant of Miletus, has sent me to show you a way to safety, if you are willing to listen. All Ionia has now revolted from the King, and you have the chance to get safely home to your own land. As far as the sea, that is up to you; from there on, it will be our business."[46] [3] The Paeonians were delighted to hear this. Taking their children and wives, they fled to the sea, though some of them stayed where they were out of fear. When the Paeonians reached the sea, they crossed from there to Chios. [4] They were already on Chios when a large force of Persian cavalry arrived hard on their heels, pursuing them. Since the Persians had not caught them, they sent word across to Chios telling the Paeonians to come back. The Paeonians would not accept this. The Chians took them from Chios to Lesbos, and the Lesbians brought them to

46 The Paeonians, from the Strymon valley north of the Aegean, had been deported to Asia on Darius' orders (5.12–15).

Doriscus; from there they made their way on foot and reached Paeonia.

5.99 The Athenians arrived with twenty ships, bringing with them five triremes of the Eretrians. The Eretrians were not campaigning for the Athenians' sake but for the Milesians' own, paying back a debt they owed them: the Milesians had earlier helped the Eretrians fight their war against the Chalcidians, at the time when the Samians came to the aid of the Chalcidians against the Eretrians and Milesians. So when these had arrived and the other allies were there, Aristagoras launched an expedition against Sardis. 2 He did not go on the campaign himself but stayed in Miletus, and he appointed other Milesians as generals: his own brother Charopinus and another citizen, Hermophantus.

5.100 When the Ionians reached Ephesus with this expedition, they left their ships at Coresus in Ephesian territory and marched inland themselves in great force, with Ephesians as their guides. They went along the river Cayster, then crossed over Mount Tmolus, and when they arrived they took Sardis without meeting any resistance. They took all of it except the acropolis, which Artaphrenes himself was defending with a considerable force of men.

5.101 What stopped them from plundering the city once they had taken it was this. Most of the houses in Sardis were built of reed, and even the brick ones had reed roofs. One of the soldiers set fire to one of these houses, and at once the fire spread from house to house and swept through the whole town. 2 As the town burned, the Lydians and all the Persians who were in the city were cut off on every side, because the fire was consuming the outskirts. With no way out of the town, they streamed together into the marketplace and to the river Pactolus. This river carries gold dust down from Tmolus and flows right through the middle of their marketplace. It then empties into the river Hermus, and the Hermus empties into the sea. So the Lydians and the Persians gathered at this Pactolus and in the marketplace and were forced to defend themselves. 3 When the Ionians saw some of the

enemy defending themselves and others bearing down on them in great numbers, they took fright and withdrew to the mountain called Tmolus. From there, at nightfall, they made their way back to their ships.

5.102 So Sardis was burned, and with it the temple of Cybebe, a goddess of that country. The Persians later used this as their pretext for burning the temples of the Greeks in return. At the time, the Persians who held provinces on this side of the river Halys learned of all this in advance, gathered together and came to help the Lydians. 2 As it happened, they found that the Ionians were no longer in Sardis, but they followed their tracks and caught up with them at Ephesus. The Ionians drew up against them, but when the armies met they were badly beaten. 3 The Persians killed many of them, including men of note, among them Eualcides, the general of the Eretrians, who had won crowns at the games and had been much praised by Simonides of Ceos. Those who escaped the battle scattered to their various cities.[47]

5.103 That, then, was how they fought on that occasion. Afterward the Athenians abandoned the Ionians altogether. Aristagoras appealed to them again and again through messengers, but they said they would not help them. The Ionians, deprived of their alliance with the Athenians, went on preparing for the war against the King all the same, since that was where their actions against Darius had already left them. 2 They sailed into the Hellespont and brought Byzantium and all the other cities in that region under their control. Then they sailed out of the Hellespont and won over most of Caria as an ally. Even Caunus, which had earlier refused to join the alliance, came over to them at this point, after they had burned Sardis.

5.104 All the Cypriots joined them willingly except the people of Amathus. The Cypriots, too, revolted from the Medes, and this is how it came about. There was a man named Onesilus, the younger brother of Gorgus, king of the Salaminians, and son of Chersis son of Siromus son of Euelthon. 2 This man had often

47 Cybebe is Cybele, the great mother goddess of Anatolia.

urged Gorgus in the past to revolt from the King, and now, when he learned that the Ionians had revolted too, he pressed him very hard. When he could not persuade Gorgus, Onesilus waited until he had gone out of the town of Salamis, and then he and his partisans shut him out of the gates. 3 So Gorgus, deprived of his city, fled to the Medes. Onesilus ruled Salamis and tried to persuade all the Cypriots to join the revolt. He persuaded the rest, but the Amathusians refused to listen to him, so he settled down before their city and besieged it.[48]

5.105 So Onesilus was besieging Amathus. King Darius, meanwhile, was told that Sardis had been taken and burned by the Athenians and the Ionians, and that the leader of the alliance, the man who had woven the whole thing together, was Aristagoras of Miletus. It is said that when he learned this, he paid no attention to the Ionians, knowing very well that they at least would not get off unpunished for their revolt. Instead he first asked who the Athenians were. Then, when he had been told, he asked for his bow, took it, set an arrow to the string and shot it up toward the sky, and as he shot into the air he said, 2 "Zeus, grant that I may punish the Athenians!" After saying this, the story goes, he ordered one of his servants to say to him three times, every time his dinner was set before him, "Master, remember the Athenians."

5.106 After giving these orders, he summoned Histiaeus of Miletus into his presence. Darius had been keeping him at his court for a long time by then. He said, "Histiaeus, I hear that your deputy, the man you put in charge of Miletus, has started a revolution against me. He has brought men over from the other continent, and Ionians along with them, who will pay me the penalty for what they have done. He persuaded them to follow those others, and he has robbed me of Sardis. So tell me, how can you think this is acceptable? 2 And how could any of this have been done without your advice? Be careful that you don't find yourself to blame later on." 3 To this Histiaeus said, "King, what a thing to say! That I would plan something that was going

48 This Salamis is the city on Cyprus, not the island off Athens.

to bring you any trouble, great or small? What would I be after in doing it, and what would I be lacking? I have everything you have, and you consider me worthy to hear all your plans. [4] No, if my deputy is doing anything like what you've described, you can be sure he's done it on his own initiative. But I don't even accept the story in the first place, that the Milesians and my deputy are plotting any revolution against your interests. But if they really are doing something of the kind, and what you've heard is true, King, then understand what you've done by dragging me away from the sea. [5] It seems that once I was out of their sight, the Ionians did what they had long been eager to do. If I had been in Ionia, not one city would have stirred. So let me go to Ionia as fast as possible, so that I can put everything there back in order for you and hand over to you this deputy of Miletus who contrived it all. [6] And once I've done this as you'd wish, I swear by the royal gods that I won't take off the tunic I'm wearing when I go down to Ionia until I have made Sardinia, the largest of islands, pay you tribute."[49]

5.107 In saying this Histiaeus was deceiving him, but Darius believed him and let him go. He instructed him to come back to him at Susa once he had fulfilled his promises.

5.108 While the news about Sardis was traveling up to the King, while Darius did what he did with the bow and then talked with Histiaeus, and while Histiaeus, released by Darius, made his way down to the sea, during all this time the following was happening. Onesilus of Salamis was besieging the Amathusians when word reached him that a Persian named Artybius was expected in Cyprus, bringing a large Persian army by ship. [2] On learning this, Onesilus sent heralds around Ionia to call on the Ionians for help, and the Ionians, without deliberating long, came with a large fleet. So the Ionians arrived at Cyprus, and the Persians crossed over by ship from Cilicia and marched on Salamis by land. Meanwhile the Phoenicians sailed with the ships around the headland of Cyprus called the Keys.

49 The Greek is Sardo, the island of Sardinia, far to the west, not to be confused with the city of Sardis.

5.109 While this was going on, the tyrants of Cyprus called together the Ionian generals and said, "Ionians, we Cypriots give you the choice of which enemy you want to engage, the Persians or the Phoenicians. 2 If you want to take up position on land and try your strength against the Persians, it's time for you to get off your ships and form up on land, and for us to board your ships to fight the Phoenicians. If you would rather try your strength against the Phoenicians, then do so. Whichever of these you choose, you must act so that, as far as it depends on you, Ionia and Cyprus will both be free." 3 To this the Ionians replied, "The Ionian League sent us to guard the sea, not to hand our ships over to Cypriots and fight the Persians on land ourselves. So we will try to prove our worth in the post we were given. As for you, you must remember what you suffered as slaves of the Medes, and show yourselves brave men."

5.110 That was the Ionians' answer. Afterward, when the Persians had come into the plain of Salamis, the kings of the Cypriots drew up their forces. They set the rest of the Cypriots against the rest of the enemy's troops, but they picked out the best of the Salaminians and the Solians and posted them opposite the Persians. Onesilus, of his own choice, took his place opposite Artybius, the Persian general.

5.111 Artybius rode a horse that had been trained to rear up against a hoplite. Onesilus learned of this. He had a shield-bearer who was a Carian by birth, very highly regarded as a fighter and full of spirit besides, and he said to him, 2 "I hear that Artybius' horse rears up and kills whoever it's brought against with its hooves and its teeth. So think it over and tell me at once which one you want to watch for and strike, the horse or Artybius himself." 3 His attendant replied, "King, I'm ready to do both, or either one, and in any case whatever you command. But I'll tell you what seems to me best suited to your interests.[50] 4 I say that a king and a general should take on a king and a general. If you bring down a man who is a general, it's a great achievement for you. And second, if he brings you down—

50 Hoplites were heavily armed infantrymen who fought in close formation.

heaven forbid—then even death at the hands of a worthy opponent is only half the disaster. We servants should take on other servants, and the horse. Don't be at all afraid of its tricks. I promise you it will never again stand up against any man."

5.112 So he spoke, and immediately afterward the armies met on land and at sea. At sea the Ionians were at their very best that day and outfought the Phoenicians, and among them the Samians fought most bravely. On land, when the armies met, they closed and fought. 2 As for the two generals, this is what happened. When Artybius charged at Onesilus, mounted on his horse, Onesilus did as he had agreed with his shield-bearer and struck at Artybius himself as he came on. And when the horse brought its hooves down on Onesilus' shield, the Carian struck with a sickle and cut off the horse's feet.

5.113 So Artybius, the Persian general, fell right there together with his horse. While the rest were still fighting, Stesenor, the tyrant of Curium, turned traitor, taking a considerable force of men with him. These people of Curium are said to be colonists from Argos. As soon as the Curians deserted, the war chariots of the Salaminians did the same. With this, the Persians got the upper hand over the Cypriots. 2 The army was routed, and many fell, among them Onesilus son of Chersis, the very man who had brought about the Cypriot revolt, and the king of the Solians, Aristocyprus son of Philocyprus. This was the Philocyprus whom Solon the Athenian, when he came to Cyprus, praised in verse above all other tyrants.

5.114 Because Onesilus had besieged them, the Amathusians cut off his head, carried it to Amathus and hung it up over the gates. As the head hung there it became hollow, and a swarm of bees got into it and filled it with honeycomb. 2 When this happened, the Amathusians consulted an oracle about it. The oracle told them to take down the head and bury it, and to sacrifice to Onesilus every year as to a hero, and said that if they did this, things would go better for them.[51]

51 In Greek religion a "hero" was a dead man honored with sacrifices and cult, usually at his tomb.

5.115 The Amathusians did this, and they still do it in my own time. The Ionians who had fought the sea battle off Cyprus learned that Onesilus' cause was lost, that all the other Cypriot cities except Salamis were under siege, and that the Salaminians had handed Salamis over to Gorgus, their former king. As soon as they learned this, the Ionians sailed back to Ionia. 2 Of the cities in Cyprus, the one that held out longest under siege was Soli. The Persians took it in the fifth month by digging under its wall all around.

5.116 So the Cypriots, after one year of freedom, had been enslaved all over again. Daurises, who was married to a daughter of Darius, and Hymaees and Otanes, two other Persian generals who were also married to daughters of Darius, pursued the Ionians who had marched on Sardis and drove them back into their ships. Having won the battle, they then divided the cities among themselves and set about sacking them.

5.117 Daurises turned to the cities on the Hellespont and took Dardanus, and then Abydos, Percote, Lampsacus and Paesus. He took one of these a day. Then, as he was marching from Paesus against the city of Parium, news reached him that the Carians had made common cause with the Ionians and revolted from the Persians. So he turned back from the Hellespont and marched his army into Caria.

5.118 Somehow the Carians got news of this before Daurises arrived. When they heard it, they gathered at the place called the White Pillars, on the river Marsyas, which flows out of the Idrian country and empties into the Maeander. 2 When the Carians had assembled there, many plans were put forward. The best of them, in my opinion, was that of Pixodarus son of Mausolus, a man of Cindya, who was married to the daughter of Syennesis, king of the Cilicians. His proposal was that the Carians should cross the Maeander and fight with the river at their backs. That way, having nowhere to flee and being forced to stand their ground, they would fight even better than they naturally did. 3 This proposal did not prevail, however. Instead they decided that the Maeander should be at the Persians' backs

rather than their own, presumably so that if the Persians were put to flight and beaten in the battle, they would never get home but would be driven into the river.

5.119 Afterward the Persians arrived and crossed the Maeander, and the Carians engaged them there on the river Marsyas. They fought a hard battle that lasted a long time, but in the end they were beaten by sheer numbers. About two thousand Persians fell, and about ten thousand Carians. 2 Those of them who escaped were penned up at Labraunda, in the sanctuary of Zeus of Armies, a large and holy grove of plane trees. The Carians are the only people we know of who offer sacrifices to Zeus of Armies. Penned up there, they discussed how to save themselves: would they fare better by surrendering to the Persians, or by leaving Asia altogether?

5.120 While they were deliberating, the Milesians and their allies arrived to help them. At this the Carians gave up what they had been considering before and prepared to start the war all over again. They engaged the Persians as they advanced, fought, and were beaten even worse than before. Many fell on their side as a whole, but the Milesians were hit hardest.

5.121 After this blow the Carians recovered and fought again. They learned that the Persians were setting out to march against their cities, and they laid an ambush on the road at Pedasus. The Persians fell into it by night and were destroyed, together with their generals Daurises, Amorges and Sisimaces, and Myrsus son of Gyges died with them. The leader of this ambush was Heraclides son of Ibanollis, a man of Mylasa.

5.122 That, then, was how these Persians were destroyed. Hymaees, who was also one of those who had pursued the Ionians who marched on Sardis, turned toward the Propontis and took Cius in Mysia. 2 After capturing it, he learned that Daurises had left the Hellespont and was marching against Caria. So he left the Propontis and led his army to the Hellespont. There he subdued all the Aeolians who live in the territory of Ilium, and also the Gergithae, the remnant of the ancient Teucrians. While

he was subduing these peoples, Hymaees himself died of illness in the Troad.[52]

5.123 So he died in this way. Artaphrenes, the governor of Sardis, and Otanes, the third general, were assigned to campaign against Ionia and the neighboring region of Aeolis. In Ionia they took Clazomenae, and among the Aeolians they took Cyme.

5.124 As the cities were being taken, Aristagoras of Miletus showed that he was not a man of much courage. He had thrown Ionia into turmoil and stirred up great troubles, but when he saw this happening he began to plan his escape. Besides, it now seemed to him impossible to get the better of King Darius. 2 With this in mind he called his fellow partisans together and consulted them. He said it would be better for them to have some place of refuge ready in case they were driven out of Miletus. Should he lead them from there to found a colony in Sardinia, or to Myrcinus in the land of the Edonians, which Histiaeus had been fortifying after receiving it as a gift from Darius? That was the question Aristagoras put to them.

5.125 Hecataeus son of Hegesander, the prose writer, advised going to neither of these places. Instead, Aristagoras should build a fort on the island of Leros and lie low there if he were driven out of Miletus. Later, using it as a base, he could return to Miletus.

5.126 That was Hecataeus' advice, but Aristagoras himself was strongly inclined to go off to Myrcinus. So he entrusted Miletus to Pythagoras, a respected citizen, and he himself took everyone who wanted to come and sailed to Thrace, where he took possession of the territory he had set out for. 2 Using it as a base, he went on campaign, and there Aristagoras himself and his army were wiped out by the Thracians while he was besieging a town, even though the Thracians were willing to leave it under a truce.

52 The Propontis is the Sea of Marmara.

Book 6 (Erato)

The Ionian revolt is crushed; Sparta's kings; the first Persian invasion of Greece and the battle of Marathon.

6.1 So Aristagoras, after bringing Ionia to revolt, met his end in this way. Meanwhile Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus, whom Darius had let go, arrived at Sardis. When he came from Susa, Artaphrenes, the governor of Sardis, asked him why he thought the Ionians had revolted. Histiaeus said he did not know and professed amazement at what had happened, as though he knew nothing at all about the present situation. 2 But Artaphrenes saw that he was being devious, and since he knew the true story of the revolt, he said: "Here's how things stand in this business, Histiaeus: you stitched this shoe, and Aristagoras put it on."

6.2 That is what Artaphrenes said about the revolt. Histiaeus, afraid because Artaphrenes understood, ran off to the coast as soon as night fell. He had thoroughly deceived King Darius: he had undertaken to subdue Sardinia, the largest of islands, and instead he slipped into the leadership of the Ionians in their war against Darius. 2 When he crossed to Chios he was put in chains by the Chians, who suspected him of plotting some new move against them on Darius' behalf. But when the Chians learned the whole story, that he was an enemy of the King, they set him free.

6.3 Then the Ionians asked Histiaeus why he had urged Aristagoras so eagerly to revolt from the King and had brought such great harm on the Ionians. He did not reveal to them the real reason; instead he told them that King Darius had planned to uproot the Phoenicians and settle them in Ionia, and to settle the Ionians in Phoenicia, and that this was why he had sent his

message. The King had planned nothing of the sort; Histiaeus was trying to frighten the Ionians.

6.4 After this Histiaeus, using as his messenger Hermippus, a man of Atarneus, sent letters to the Persians at Sardis, as though they had already talked over a revolt with him. But Hermippus did not deliver them to the men he had been sent to; instead he took the letters and put them into the hands of Artaphrenes. 2 Artaphrenes, learning everything that was going on, told Hermippus to deliver Histiaeus' letters to the men he had been carrying them to, and to give him the replies that the Persians sent back to Histiaeus. When all this came to light, Artaphrenes put many of the Persians to death.

6.5 So there was turmoil at Sardis. Histiaeus, his hopes there dashed, was taken back to Miletus by the Chians, at his own request. But the Milesians, glad to be rid of Aristagoras as well, were in no way eager to take another tyrant into their country, now that they had tasted freedom. 2 And in fact, when Histiaeus tried to force his way back into Miletus by night, he was wounded in the thigh by one of the Milesians. Thrust out of his own city, he went back to Chios. From there, since he could not persuade the Chians to give him ships, he crossed to Mytilene and persuaded the Lesbians to give him ships. 3 They manned eight triremes and sailed with Histiaeus to Byzantium. There they took up their station and seized the ships sailing out of the Black Sea, except for those whose crews said they were ready to obey Histiaeus.

THE BATTLE OF LADE

The Ionian fleet gathers at Lade, but the Samians desert and the Persians win the sea battle.

6.6 That is what Histiaeus and the Mytilenaeans were doing. Against Miletus itself a large fleet and a large land army were expected. The Persian generals had joined forces into a single army and were marching on Miletus, treating the other towns as of less account. Of the fleet, the Phoenicians were the most

eager; the Cypriots, recently subdued, also took part in the expedition, as did the Cilicians and the Egyptians.

6.7 These, then, were marching against Miletus and the rest of Ionia. When the Ionians heard of it, they sent delegates of their own to the Panionium. When these arrived at that place and deliberated, they decided not to muster any land army to oppose the Persians: the Milesians were to defend their walls by themselves, while the Ionians were to man their fleet, leaving not a single ship behind, and once it was manned, to assemble as quickly as possible at Lade, to fight a sea battle in defense of Miletus. Lade is a small island lying off the city of Miletus.[1]

6.8 After this the Ionians arrived with their ships manned, and with them those of the Aeolians who live on Lesbos. They were drawn up as follows. The eastern wing was held by the Milesians themselves, who supplied eighty ships; next to them were the Prienians with twelve ships and the Myesians with three; next to the Myesians were the Teians with seventeen ships, and next to the Teians the Chians with a hundred. 2 Beside these were stationed the Erythraeans and the Phocaeans, the Erythraeans supplying eight ships and the Phocaeans three; next to the Phocaeans were the Lesbians with seventy ships; and last in line, holding the western wing, were the Samians with sixty ships. The total of all these came to three hundred and fifty-three triremes.

6.9 These were the Ionian ships; the foreign fleet numbered six hundred. When these too had arrived off Milesian territory and all their land army was there, the Persian generals, learning how many Ionian ships there were, grew afraid that they might not be able to defeat them. In that case they would be unable to take Miletus, since they would not be masters of the sea, and they would risk being punished by Darius. 2 With this in mind, they gathered the tyrants of the Ionians, who had been deposed from their rule by Aristagoras of Miletus and had fled to the Medes, and who happened at that time to be taking part in the campaign against Miletus. They called together those of these

1 The Panionium was the common sanctuary and meeting place of the Ionian cities, on the promontory of Mycale.

men who were present and said this to them: [3] "Men of Ionia, now is the time for each of you to show himself a benefactor of the King's house. Each of you must try to split his own citizens off from the rest of the alliance. Hold out this offer and promise: they will suffer nothing unpleasant because of the revolt; neither their temples nor their private property will be burned; and they will be treated no more harshly than they were before. [4] But if they won't do this and are set on fighting it out, then tell them this as a threat, and it is exactly what will happen to them: if they are beaten in battle, they will be enslaved; we will make their sons eunuchs and carry their daughters off to Bactra; and we will hand their land over to others."

6.10 That is what they said. The Ionian tyrants sent word by night, each to his own people. But the Ionians whom these messages reached stubbornly refused and would not accept the betrayal; and each group thought that the Persians were sending this message to them alone.

6.11 This happened as soon as the Persians had arrived at Miletus. Later, when the Ionians had assembled at Lade, meetings were held, and others no doubt addressed them too, among them the Phocaean general Dionysius, who spoke as follows: [2] "Our affairs stand on a razor's edge, men of Ionia: whether we are to be free or slaves—and runaway slaves at that. So now, if you are willing to accept hardship, you will have toil for the moment, but you'll be able to defeat your enemies and be free. But if you give way to softness and disorder, I have no hope at all that you will escape paying the King the penalty for your revolt. [3] So listen to me and put yourselves in my hands. If the gods deal fairly, I promise you that either the enemy won't engage us, or if they do, they'll be badly beaten."

6.12 When the Ionians heard this, they put themselves in Dionysius' hands. Every day he would take the ships out in column, to train the rowers by having the ships practice breaking through one another's line, and to get the marines under arms; for the rest of the day he kept the ships at anchor. So he kept the Ionians at work all day long. [2] For seven days they

obeyed him and did as they were told; but on the day after that, the Ionians, being unused to such labors and worn out by hardship and the sun, said to one another:[2] [3] "Which of the gods have we offended, to be suffering all this? We've lost our minds, sailed clean out of our wits, and handed ourselves over to a Phocaean braggart who supplies three ships. Now he's taken charge of us and is abusing us past all bearing. Many of us have already fallen sick, and many more can expect the same. Rather than these miseries, we'd be better off suffering anything else, and enduring the slavery to come, whatever it turns out to be, than being held in the one we have now. Come on, let's not obey him any longer." [4] That is what they said, and from then on no one was willing to obey. Instead, as if they were an army on land, they pitched tents on the island and stayed in the shade, and they refused to go aboard the ships or to train.

6.13 When the Samian generals learned what the Ionians were doing, they now accepted the proposal that Aeaces son of Syloson had been sending them earlier, at the Persians' bidding, asking them to abandon the Ionian alliance. The Samians accepted it because they saw that there was great disorder among the Ionians, and at the same time it was clear to them that it was impossible to overcome the King's power; for they knew well that even if they defeated the fleet Darius had there now, another five times as large would come against them. [2] So they seized on this pretext, and as soon as they saw that the Ionians refused to do their duty, they counted it a gain to save their own temples and property. Aeaces, from whom the Samians received the proposal, was the son of Syloson son of Aeaces; he had been tyrant of Samos and had been stripped of his rule by Aristagoras of Miletus, just like the other tyrants of Ionia.

6.14 So then, when the Phoenicians sailed against them, the Ionians too put out to meet them, with their ships in column. When they drew near and engaged each other, from that point on I cannot write with accuracy which of the Ionians proved

2 Breaking through the line (the *diekplous*) was a naval maneuver: rowing through the gaps in the enemy line in order to ram ships from the side or rear.

cowards and which brave men in this sea battle, for they blame one another. [2] It is said that the Samians then, in keeping with their agreement with Aeaces, hoisted their sails and left the line, sailing home to Samos, all except eleven ships. The captains of these stayed and fought, disobeying their generals. [3] For this deed the Samian state granted them the honor of having their names, with their fathers' names, inscribed on a pillar as men who had proved themselves brave, and this pillar stands in the marketplace. The Lesbians, seeing their neighbors in the line fleeing, did the same as the Samians, and so too did most of the Ionians.

6.15 Of those who stayed in the battle, the Chians were handled most roughly, since they performed brilliant deeds and did not deliberately hang back. They supplied, as was said before, a hundred ships, each carrying forty picked citizens as marines. [2] When they saw most of the allies betraying the cause, they thought it wrong to behave like the cowards among them. Instead, left alone with a few allies, they went on fighting, breaking through the enemy line, until, after capturing a good many enemy ships, they had lost most of their own.

6.16 The Chians fled to their own country with the ships that remained. Those Chians whose ships were disabled by damage fled, with the enemy in pursuit, to Mycale. There they ran their ships aground and abandoned them, and made their way on foot across the mainland. [2] When the Chians, on their way, entered the territory of Ephesus, they arrived there at night, while the women of the place were celebrating the Thesmophoria. The Ephesians, who had not heard beforehand what had happened to the Chians and saw an armed force invading their land, were quite convinced that they were bandits coming after the women; so they turned out in full force to defend them and killed the Chians.[3]

6.17 Such were the misfortunes that befell them. As for Dionysius the Phocaean, when he learned that the Ionian cause was lost, he captured three enemy ships and sailed away—no

3 The Thesmophoria was a festival of Demeter celebrated by women alone.

longer to Phocaea, since he knew well that it would be enslaved along with the rest of Ionia. Instead he sailed straight off, just as he was, to Phoenicia. There he sank some merchant ships, took a great deal of money, and sailed to Sicily; and using it as his base, he set himself up as a pirate, preying on no Greeks, but only on Carthaginians and Etruscans.

THE FALL OF MILETUS

Miletus is taken and enslaved, Histiaeus is captured and killed, and the Persians reconquer Ionia.

6.18 After defeating the Ionians in the sea battle, the Persians besieged Miletus by land and sea, undermining the walls and bringing up every kind of siege engine, and took it completely in the sixth year after the revolt of Aristagoras. They enslaved the city, so that its disaster matched the oracle that had been given about Miletus.

6.19 For when the Argives were consulting the oracle at Delphi about the safety of their own city, they were given an oracle that applied to both peoples: part of it concerned the Argives themselves, but the oracle added a further part about the Milesians. The part concerning the Argives [2] I will mention when I reach that point in my account; what it prophesied for the Milesians, who were not present, runs as follows: And then, Miletus,
contriver of wicked deeds,
you will become a feast and a splendid gift for many;
your wives will wash the feet of many long-haired men,
and others will tend our temple at Didyma.[4]

[3] All this came upon the Milesians when most of their men were killed by the Persians, who wear their hair long, their women and children were counted as slaves, and the sanctuary at Didyma, both the temple and the oracle, was plundered and

4 Didyma, near Miletus, was the site of a great temple and oracle of Apollo.

burned. I have often mentioned the treasures in this sanctuary elsewhere in my account.

6.20 The Milesians who had been taken alive were then brought to Susa. King Darius did them no further harm, but settled them on what is called the Red Sea, in the city of Ampe, past which the Tigris flows as it runs out into the sea. Of the Milesian territory, the Persians themselves kept the land around the city and the plain, and gave the hill country to the Carians of Pedasa to possess.[5]

6.21 When the Milesians suffered this at the hands of the Persians, the people of Sybaris, who had lost their city and were living in Laus and Scidrus, did not repay them in kind. For when Sybaris was taken by the Crotoniats, all the Milesians of grown age shaved their heads and went into deep mourning; for these two cities had been bound by closer ties of friendship than any others we know of. 2 The Athenians behaved quite differently. They made it plain that they were deeply grieved by the capture of Miletus, in many ways but especially in this: when Phrynichus wrote and produced a play, *The Capture of Miletus*, the whole theater burst into tears, and they fined him a thousand drachmas for reminding them of their own misfortunes, and ordered that no one should ever use that play again.[6]

6.22 So Miletus was emptied of Milesians. As for the Samians, those who had property were not at all pleased with what their generals had done in dealing with the Medes. Right after the sea battle they met and decided to sail off and found a colony before their tyrant Aeaces could arrive in the country, rather than stay and be slaves to the Medes and to Aeaces. 2 For at this very time the Zanclaeans of Sicily were sending messengers to Ionia, inviting the Ionians to the Fair Shore (Kale Akte), where they wanted to found a city of Ionians. This place called the Fair Shore belongs to the Sicels and lies on the side of Sicily that faces Tyrrhenia. In answer to their invitation, the Samians alone of

5 For Herodotus the "Red Sea" includes the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.
6 Phrynichus was an early Athenian tragic poet. The drachma was a silver coin, roughly a day's wage for a skilled worker in the later fifth century BC.

the Ionians set out, and with them those Milesians who had escaped. And in the course of this, something like the following happened.[7]

6.23 On their way to Sicily the Samians reached Locri Epizephyrii, at a time when the Zanclaeans, together with their king, whose name was Scythes, were besieging a town of the Sicels, wanting to capture it. 2 Learning of this, Anaxilaus, the tyrant of Rhegium, who was then at odds with the Zanclaeans, met with the Samians and persuaded them that they ought to forget about the Fair Shore, where they were sailing, and seize Zancle, which was empty of men. 3 The Samians did as he said and seized Zancle. Then the Zanclaeans, when they learned that their city was occupied, went to its rescue and called on Hippocrates, the tyrant of Gela, for he was their ally. 4 But when Hippocrates came with his army to help them, he put Scythes, the monarch of the Zanclaeans, in fetters for having lost the city, and sent him off with his brother Pythogenes to the town of Inycus; the rest of the Zanclaeans he betrayed, after conferring with the Samians and exchanging oaths with them. 5 The price the Samians had agreed to pay him was this: Hippocrates was to receive half of all the movable goods and slaves in the city, and everything in the countryside. 6 Most of the Zanclaeans he kept in chains for himself as slaves, but their three hundred leading men he handed over to the Samians to be put to death. The Samians, however, did not do it.

6.24 Scythes, the monarch of the Zanclaeans, escaped from Inycus to Himera, and from there went to Asia and up to King Darius. Darius regarded him as the most upright of all the men who had come up to him from Greece. 2 For he asked the King's leave to go to Sicily, and then came back again from Sicily to the King, and so it went until he died among the Persians in old age, a greatly blessed man. As for the Samians, having escaped the Medes, they had got hold of Zancle, a very beautiful city, without any effort.

7 Zancle, on the Sicilian side of the strait between Sicily and Italy, is the later Messina.

6.25 After the sea battle off Miletus, the Phoenicians, on the Persians' orders, brought Aeaces son of Syloson back to Samos, as a man who had been of great value to them and had done them great service. 2 And the Samians alone of those who had revolted from Darius had neither their city nor their temples burned, because their ships had deserted in the sea battle. Right after Miletus was taken, the Persians took possession of Caria, some of the cities submitting willingly, others being brought over by force.

6.26 That is how these things went. Histiaeus of Miletus was at Byzantium, seizing the Ionian merchant ships sailing out of the Black Sea, when news reached him of what had happened at Miletus. He handed over the affairs of the Hellespont to Bisaltes son of Apollophanes, of Abydos, and himself sailed with the Lesbians to Chios. When a Chian garrison would not let him in, he fought it at a place in Chian territory called Coela. 2 He killed many of them, and the rest of the Chians, badly weakened as they were by the sea battle, Histiaeus and his Lesbians overpowered, using Polichne in Chios as his base.

6.27 Somehow there are usually warning signs when great disasters are about to befall a city or a people; and indeed the Chians had great signs beforehand. 2 First, when they sent a chorus of a hundred young men to Delphi, only two of them came home; a plague seized the other ninety-eight and carried them off. Second, in the city at about the same time, shortly before the sea battle, the roof fell in on some boys who were being taught their letters, so that out of a hundred and twenty boys only one escaped. 3 These were the signs the god showed them in advance. After that the sea battle overtook the city and brought it to its knees, and on top of the sea battle came Histiaeus leading the Lesbians; and since the Chians had been badly weakened, he subdued them easily.

6.28 From there Histiaeus marched against Thasos with a large force of Ionians and Aeolians. While he was besieging Thasos, news reached him that the Phoenicians were sailing out from Miletus against the rest of Ionia. When he learned this he left

Thasos unsacked and hurried to Lesbos with his whole army. [2] From Lesbos, since his army was going hungry, he crossed over to the mainland, intending to reap the grain of Atarneus, both the grain there and the grain from the plain of the Caicus, which belongs to the Mysians. Now in those parts there happened to be Harpagus, a Persian, a general in command of a sizable army. He engaged Histiaeus when he landed, took Histiaeus himself alive and destroyed most of his army.[8]

6.29 This is how Histiaeus was taken alive. The Greeks fought the Persians at Malene in the territory of Atarneus, and for a long time they held their ground, but then the cavalry charged and fell on the Greeks. This was the cavalry's work. When the Greeks had been routed, Histiaeus, who hoped the King would not put him to death for his present offense, showed a love of life of this sort. [2] As he was fleeing, a Persian overtook him, and as the man caught him and was about to run him through, Histiaeus spoke out in Persian and revealed that he was Histiaeus of Miletus.

6.30 Now if, once taken alive, he had been brought to King Darius, he would have suffered no harm at all, in my opinion, and the King would have let him off the charge. As it was, for this very reason, and so that he would not escape and become great at the King's court again, Artaphrenes the governor of Sardis and Harpagus, who had captured him, impaled his body on the spot when he was brought to Sardis. His head they embalmed and carried up to King Darius at Susa. [2] When Darius learned of this, he blamed those who had done it for not bringing the man up to him alive, into his own presence. He ordered them to wash the head of Histiaeus, wrap it properly and bury it, as the head of a man who had been a great benefactor to himself and to the Persians.

6.31 That is how things turned out for Histiaeus. The Persian fleet, which had wintered near Miletus, put out again in the following year and easily took the islands lying off the mainland,

8 Not the Mede Harpagus of Book 1, Cyrus' general, but a later Persian commander of the same name.

Chios, Lesbos and Tenedos. Each time they captured one of the islands, the foreigners netted the inhabitants. [2] They net them in this way: the men link hands, each with the next, and stretch from the northern sea to the southern, and then they move across the whole island hunting the people out. They also took the Ionian cities on the mainland in the same way, except that they did not net the people, since that was not possible.

6.32 Then the Persian generals made good the threats they had made against the Ionians when the Ionians were encamped against them. Once they had mastered the cities, they picked out the best-looking boys and castrated them, making them eunuchs instead of leaving them whole, and they dragged off the most beautiful girls to the King. This is what they did, and they burned the cities, temples and all. So the Ionians were enslaved for the third time: first by the Lydians, and then twice in succession by the Persians.

6.33 On leaving Ionia the fleet took everything on the left as one sails into the Hellespont, for what lay on the right had already been made subject to the Persians themselves by land. The places of the Hellespont that lie in Europe are these: the Chersonese, which has many cities in it, Perinthus, the forts toward Thrace, Selymbria and Byzantium.[9] [2] The Byzantines, and the Calchedonians across the strait from them, did not even wait for the Phoenicians to sail against them. They abandoned their own land and went off into the Black Sea, and there they settled the city of Mesambria. The Phoenicians burned the places listed above and then turned against Proconnesus and Artace. These too they gave to the fire, and then they sailed back to the Chersonese to destroy the remaining cities, all those they had not razed when they had put in there before. [3] Against Cyzicus they did not sail at all, for the Cyzicenes had already made themselves subject to the King even before the Phoenicians sailed in, coming to terms with Oebares son of Megabazus, the governor at Dascyleium.

9 The Chersonese is the Gallipoli peninsula, on the European side of the Hellespont.

6.34 The Phoenicians subdued all the other cities of the Chersonese except Cardia. Until then their tyrant had been Miltiades son of Cimon son of Stesagoras. This rule had been won earlier by Miltiades son of Cypselus, in the following way. The Dolonci, a Thracian people, held this Chersonese. These Dolonci, hard pressed in a war with the Apsinthians, sent their kings to Delphi to consult the oracle about the war. 2 The Pythia answered that they should bring to their land as its founder whoever first invited them to his hospitality after they left the shrine. The Dolonci went along the Sacred Way through Phocis and Boeotia, and since no one invited them, they turned off toward Athens.

6.35 At that time Pisistratus held all power in Athens, but Miltiades son of Cypselus was a man of influence too. He came from a family that kept four-horse chariot teams; in its distant origins it descended from Aeacus and Aegina, but in more recent times it was Athenian, Philaeus son of Ajax having been the first of the family to become an Athenian. 2 This Miltiades was sitting in the porch of his house when he saw the Dolonci going by, wearing clothes that were not of the country and carrying spears. He called out to them, and when they came over he offered them lodging and hospitality. They accepted, and after he had entertained them they disclosed the whole oracle to him; and having disclosed it, they begged him to obey the god. 3 Miltiades was persuaded by their story the moment he heard it, since he resented Pisistratus' rule and wanted to be out of the way. He set off at once for Delphi, to ask the oracle whether he should do what the Dolonci were asking of him.

6.36 When the Pythia too told him to do it, then Miltiades son of Cypselus, who had earlier won at Olympia with a four-horse chariot, took with him every Athenian who wanted to join the expedition, sailed off with the Dolonci and took possession of the land; and those who had brought him there made him their tyrant. 2 First he walled off the isthmus of the Chersonese from the city of Cardia to Pactye, so that the Apsinthians could not invade the country and do them harm. The isthmus is thirty-six

stades across, and from this isthmus inward the Chersonese as a whole is four hundred and twenty stades long.

6.37 So after Miltiades had walled off the neck of the Chersonese and in this way pushed back the Apsinthians, the first of the others he made war on were the people of Lampsacus; and the Lampsacenes laid an ambush and took him alive. But Miltiades had come to stand high in the favor of Croesus the Lydian. When Croesus learned what had happened, he sent word ordering the Lampsacenes to release Miltiades; if they did not, he threatened to wipe them out like a pine. 2 The Lampsacenes went round and round in their talk over what Croesus' threat could mean—that he would wipe them out like a pine—until finally, with difficulty, one of the elders understood and told them the truth: of all trees, the pine alone sends up no shoot once it is cut down, but perishes utterly. So the Lampsacenes, in fear of Croesus, released Miltiades and let him go.

6.38 So he escaped thanks to Croesus. Later he died childless, handing over his rule and his property to Stesagoras, the son of Cimon, his brother by the same mother. Since his death the people of the Chersonese sacrifice to him as is customary for a founder, and they hold a contest of horse racing and athletics in which no Lampsacene is allowed to compete. 2 During the war with the Lampsacenes, Stesagoras too came to die childless. He was struck on the head with an axe in the town hall by a man who was a deserter in name, but in fact an enemy, and a rather hot-headed one.

6.39 When Stesagoras too had died in this way, the Pisistratids sent Miltiades son of Cimon, the brother of the dead Stesagoras, in a trireme to take charge of affairs in the Chersonese. They had treated him well in Athens too, as though, so they pretended, they had had no part in the death of his father Cimon; how that happened I will explain in another part of my account. 2 When Miltiades reached the Chersonese he stayed indoors, by way of honoring his brother Stesagoras, of course. When the people of the Chersonese learned of this, the leading men from all the cities everywhere gathered and came together in a body, meaning

to share his mourning, and he had them put in chains. So Miltiades held the Chersonese, keeping five hundred mercenaries, and he married Hegesipyle, the daughter of Olorus, king of the Thracians.

6.40 This Miltiades son of Cimon had only recently come to the Chersonese, but after his arrival other troubles overtook him, harder than those that had befallen him before. For in the third year before these events he had fled from the Scythians. The nomad Scythians, provoked by King Darius, had banded together and driven as far as this Chersonese. 2 Miltiades did not wait for their attack but fled the Chersonese, until the Scythians went away and the Dolonci brought him back again. These things had happened in the third year before the events that now pressed upon him.

6.41 Now, learning that the Phoenicians were at Tenedos, he loaded five triremes with the property he had at hand and sailed off for Athens. Setting out, as he did, from the city of Cardia, he sailed through the Black Gulf; and as he was passing along the Chersonese, the Phoenicians fell upon his ships. 2 Miltiades himself escaped to Imbros with four of the ships, but the Phoenicians pursued and caught the fifth. This ship happened to be commanded by Metiochus, the eldest of Miltiades' sons, whose mother was not the daughter of Olorus the Thracian but another woman. 3 The Phoenicians captured him along with the ship, and when they learned he was Miltiades' son, they took him up to the King, thinking they would earn great gratitude. For it was Miltiades who had declared his opinion among the Ionians, urging them to do as the Scythians said when the Scythians asked them to break up the bridge of boats and sail home to their own country. 4 But when the Phoenicians brought up Metiochus son of Miltiades, Darius did Metiochus no harm at all, and a great deal of good: he gave him a house, property and a Persian wife, by whom he had children who are counted as Per-

sians. Miltiades, for his part, made his way from Imbros to Athens.[10]

6.42 During this year nothing more came from the Persians tending toward hostility against the Ionians; instead, the following things happened that year that were very useful to the Ionians. Artaphrenes, the governor of Sardis, summoned envoys from the cities and compelled the Ionians to make agreements among themselves to settle disputes by law and not to plunder and raid one another. 2 This he compelled them to do. He also measured their lands in parasangs, which is what the Persians call a distance of thirty stades, and on the basis of this measurement he assessed the tribute of each. They have gone on paying it without change from that time continually down to my own day, as it was assessed by Artaphrenes; and it was assessed at roughly the same amount they had paid before. These measures, at least, made for peace among them.

MARDONIUS' EXPEDITION

Mardonius sets up democracies in Ionia, but his fleet is wrecked off Mount Athos.

6.43 At the start of spring, when the other generals had been dismissed by the King, Mardonius son of Gobryas came down to the coast, bringing with him a very large land army and a large fleet. He was young in years and had recently married King Darius' daughter Artozostra. 2 Leading this army, Mardonius came to Cilicia, and there he went aboard a ship himself and traveled with the rest of the fleet, while other commanders led the land army to the Hellespont. 3 When Mardonius, sailing along the coast of Asia, reached Ionia, he did something I will now relate as a very great wonder to those Greeks who refuse to believe that Otanes declared to the seven Persians his opinion that the Persians should be governed democratically: Mardonius deposed all the tyrants of the Ionians and set up demo-

10 During Darius' Scythian campaign (Book 4) the Ionians guarded his bridge of boats over the Danube.

cracies in the cities. [4] Having done this, he hurried on to the Hellespont. When a great mass of ships had been gathered, and a large land army too, they crossed the Hellespont in the ships and marched through Europe, and their march was against Eretria and Athens.[11]

6.44 These cities, then, were the pretext for the expedition; but they had in mind to subdue as many of the Greek cities as they could. With the fleet they subdued the Thasians, who did not even raise a hand against them, and with the land army they added the Macedonians to the slaves they already had, for all the peoples on the near side of the Macedonians had already been made subject to them. [2] From Thasos they crossed over and traveled close along the mainland as far as Acanthus, and setting out from Acanthus they tried to round Athos. But as they were sailing around it, a great north wind, too strong to cope with, fell upon them and mauled them very roughly, driving a great many of the ships onto Athos.[12] [3] It is said that three hundred ships were destroyed, and more than twenty thousand men. For since this sea around Athos is full of sea beasts, some were seized and killed by the beasts and others were dashed against the rocks; some of them did not know how to swim and died for that reason, and others died of cold.

6.45 So the fleet fared in this way. Meanwhile Mardonius and the land army, encamped in Macedonia, were attacked by night by the Brygi, a Thracian people. The Brygi killed many of them and wounded Mardonius himself. Yet they did not escape slavery at the hands of the Persians either, for Mardonius did not leave those regions until he had made them subject. [2] Once he had subdued them, however, he led his army back, since he had come to grief with the land army against the Brygi and badly with the fleet off Athos. So this expedition, having fought a disgraceful campaign, went back to Asia.

11 Herodotus refers to the debate of the seven Persian conspirators over the best form of government (3.80–82).

12 Athos is the mountainous easternmost peninsula of Chalcidice, in the northern Aegean.

6.46 In the second year after this, Darius first of all sent a messenger to the Thasians, who had been accused by their neighbors of plotting a revolt, and ordered them to pull down their wall and bring their ships to Abdera. 2 For the Thasians, having been besieged by Histiaeus of Miletus and having large revenues, had been using their money to build warships and to surround themselves with a stronger wall. Their revenue came from the mainland and from the mines. 3 From the gold mines of Scapte Hyle there came in eighty talents in a typical year, and from those on Thasos itself less than that, but still so much that the Thasians, who paid no tax on their produce, had a total revenue from the mainland and the mines of two hundred talents each year, and when the most came in, three hundred.

6.47 I have seen these mines myself, and by far the most remarkable of them were those discovered by the Phoenicians who settled this island with Thasos, the island that now takes its name from this Thasos the Phoenician. 2 These Phoenician mines are on Thasos between the places called Aenyra and Coenyra, opposite Samothrace: a great mountain turned upside down in the search. So much for that. The Thasians, at the King's command, pulled down their wall and brought all their ships to Abdera.

EARTH AND WATER

Darius demands earth and water from the Greeks; Aegina submits, and Cleomenes tries to punish it.

6.48 After this Darius sounded out the Greeks to learn what they had in mind, whether to make war on him or to surrender themselves. 2 So he sent heralds throughout Greece, assigning them to different places, with orders to demand earth and water for the King. These he sent to Greece; other heralds he sent around to his own tributary cities on the coast, ordering them to build warships and horse transports.

6.49 While these were making their preparations, many of the mainlanders gave the heralds who came to Greece what the Per-

sian demanded, as did all the islanders the heralds visited with their demand. The other islanders gave earth and water to Darius, and so in particular did the Aeginetans. [2] When they had done this, the Athenians at once came down on them hard, believing that the Aeginetans had given it with hostile intent against Athens, so as to march against them together with the Persian. They gladly seized on the pretext, and kept going to Sparta to accuse the Aeginetans of what they had done in betraying Greece.

6.50 In response to this accusation, Cleomenes son of Anaxandrides, who was king of the Spartans, crossed over to Aegina, wanting to arrest those Aeginetans most to blame. [2] But when he tried to arrest them, a number of Aeginetans opposed him, and among them most of all Crius son of Polycritus, who said he would not get away with carrying off a single Aeginetan. Cleomenes, he said, was doing this without the authority of the Spartan state, bribed by the Athenians; otherwise he would have come with the other king to make the arrest. [3] He said this at the prompting of a letter from Demaratus. As Cleomenes was being driven out of Aegina, he asked Crius what his name was, and Crius told him the truth. Then Cleomenes said to him, "Better plate your horns with bronze now, Ram, because you're going to run into great trouble."[13]

THE KINGS OF SPARTA

Herodotus explains the origin of Sparta's two royal houses and the privileges of their kings.

6.51 Meanwhile Demaratus son of Ariston, who had stayed behind in Sparta, was slandering Cleomenes. He too was a king of the Spartans, but of the lesser house. It was lesser in no other respect, since both houses descend from the same ancestor, but the house of Eurysthenes has somehow been held in greater honor by right of seniority.

6.52 The Lacedaemonians, disagreeing with every poet, say that it was Aristodemus himself, son of Aristomachus son of Cleodaeus son of Hyllus, who as king led them into the land they now possess, and not the sons of Aristodemus. 2 Not long afterwards, they say, Aristodemus' wife gave birth. Her name was Argeia, and they say she was the daughter of Autesion son of Tisamenus son of Thersander son of Polynices. She bore twins, and Aristodemus lived to see the children but then died of an illness. 3 The Lacedaemonians of that time, they say, resolved in accordance with their custom to make the elder of the children king. But they could not tell which of the two to choose, since the boys were alike and the same size. Unable to decide, or even before they tried, they asked the mother. 4 She said that she herself could not tell them apart either. She said this even though she knew perfectly well, because she wanted both of them, if possible, to become kings. So the Lacedaemonians were at a loss, and in their perplexity they sent to Delphi to ask what they should do about the matter. 5 The Pythia told them to regard both children as kings, but to honor the elder more. That was the Pythia's answer. But the Lacedaemonians were no less at a loss how to discover which of them was the elder, and a Messenian named Panites gave them a suggestion. 6 This Panites advised the Lacedaemonians to watch the mother and see which of the children she washed and fed first. If she was seen always to do it the same way, they would have everything they were seeking and wanted to find out. But if she wavered and did it now one way, now the other, it would be clear to them that she knew no more than they did, and they should try some other way. 7 So the Spartans, following the Messenian's advice, watched the mother of Aristodemus' sons and caught her always giving precedence to the same child, both at meals and at baths; she did not know why she was being watched. They took the child his mother favored, as being the firstborn, and brought him up at public expense. He was given the name Eurysthenes, and the other Procles. 8 When they grew to manhood, they say,

13 The name Crius means "ram" in Greek.

though they were brothers, they were at odds with each other their whole lives long, and their descendants have gone on the same way.

6.53 This is what the Lacedaemonians say, alone among the Greeks. But what I write now follows what the Greeks say: that these kings of the Dorians, back as far as Perseus son of Danaë, leaving the god out of it, are correctly listed by the Greeks and shown to be Greeks, for by that time they were already counted among the Greeks. 2 I said "as far as Perseus," and took it no further back, for this reason: no mortal father is attached to Perseus' name, as Amphitryon is to Heracles'. So I have reasoned correctly and spoken correctly in saying "as far as Perseus." But if one lists their forefathers further and further back from Danaë daughter of Acrisius, the leaders of the Dorians would turn out to be true-born Egyptians.[14]

6.54 That, then, is the genealogy as the Greeks give it. But according to the Persians' account, Perseus himself was an Assyrian who became a Greek, though his ancestors were not Greeks. As for the forefathers of Acrisius, they say these had no kinship with Perseus at all, but were, just as the Greeks say, Egyptians.

6.55 Let that be enough said about these matters. How it was that they, being Egyptians, came to hold the kingships of the Dorians, and by what achievements, I will pass over, since others have told of it. I will record what others have not taken up.

6.56 These are the privileges the Spartans have given their kings. Two priesthoods, of Zeus Lacedaemon and of Zeus of the Heavens. The right to make war on any country they choose, with no Spartan permitted to hinder them in this; anyone who does falls under a curse. On campaign the kings go out first and come back last, and a hundred picked men guard them in the field. On their expeditions they may use as many sheep as they wish, and they take the hides and the chines of all the animals sacrificed.

14 Perseus' father was said to be Zeus; Danaë's ancestry was traced to Danaus, who came to Greece from Egypt.

6.57 These are their privileges in war; in peace they have been granted the following. Whenever a public sacrifice is held, the kings sit down first at the feast, and the serving begins with them, each of them receiving double portions of everything compared with the other guests. The first libations are theirs, and the hides of the sacrificed animals. 2 On every new moon and on the seventh day of each month, each of them is given at public expense a full-grown victim to sacrifice at the temple of Apollo, a medimnus of barley meal and a Laconian quarter of wine, and at all the games they have seats of honor reserved for them. They also have the right to appoint as proxeni any citizens they wish, and each of them chooses two Pythians. The Pythians are envoys to Delphi, and they eat with the kings at public expense. 3 If the kings do not come to the dinner, two choenixes of barley meal and a cotyle of wine are sent to their houses for each of them; when they are present, they are given double of everything. They receive this same honor when private citizens invite them to dinner.[15] 4 The kings keep the oracles that are given, and the Pythians share the knowledge of them. The kings alone give judgment, and only in these cases: concerning an unmarried heiress, as to who has the right to marry her, if her father has not betrothed her; and concerning public roads. 5 And if anyone wishes to adopt a son, he must do so in the presence of the kings. They also sit in council with the elders, who number twenty-eight. If they do not come, the elders most closely related to them hold the kings' privileges, casting two votes and a third, their own.

6.58 These are the rights the Spartan state grants the kings while they live; at their deaths, it grants the following. Horsemen carry the news of what has happened throughout all of Laconia, and in the city women go about beating on a cauldron. When this happens, two free persons from each household, a man and a woman, are required to defile themselves in mourn-

15 A medimnus was a dry measure of about 50 liters, a choenix about a liter, a cotyle about a quarter liter. Proxeni were citizens who represented and looked after the people of another state.

ing, and heavy penalties are laid on those who fail to do it. [2] The Lacedaemonians' custom at the deaths of their kings is the same as that of the non-Greeks in Asia, for most non-Greeks follow the same custom at the deaths of their kings. When a king of the Lacedaemonians dies, a fixed number of the perioeci from all over Lacedaemon, apart from the Spartans, are compelled to come to the funeral.[16] [3] When these, together with the helots and the Spartans themselves, have gathered in one place, many thousands of them, women included, they beat their foreheads vigorously and keep up a tremendous wailing, declaring that whichever king has died most recently was the best of all. When one of the kings dies in war, they make an image of him and carry it out on a richly spread bier. After the burial, no market is held for ten days and no assembly meets for elections; they mourn for all those days.[17]

6.59 In another respect too they resemble the Persians. When a king dies and another king takes office, the one coming in releases any Spartan from whatever debt he owed to the king or to the state. Among the Persians, likewise, the newly installed King remits to all the cities the tribute still owed from before.

6.60 The Lacedaemonians also resemble the Egyptians in this: their heralds, pipers and cooks inherit their fathers' crafts, so that a piper is the son of a piper, a cook of a cook, and a herald of a herald. Others do not take up the work on the strength of a clear voice and shut them out; they carry it on as their fathers did.

DEMARATUS

Cleomenes has Demaratus deposed; Demaratus flees to Persia, Cleomenes dies mad, and Athens fights Aegina.

6.61 That is how these things are done. At the time we were speaking of, while Cleomenes was in Aegina working for the common

16 The perioeci ("dwellers around") were the free inhabitants of the outlying towns of Laconia, who lacked Spartan citizenship.

good of Greece, Demaratus slandered him, not so much out of concern for the Aeginetans as from jealousy and spite. When Cleomenes came back from Aegina, he set about deposing Demaratus from the kingship, and he found his way to attack him in the following matter. When Ariston was king in Sparta, he had married two wives but had no children. [2] Not admitting that he himself was the cause of this, he married a third wife, and this is how he married her. He had a friend among the Spartans, a man to whom Ariston was more attached than to any other citizen. This man happened to have a wife who was by far the most beautiful woman in Sparta, and what is more, she had become the most beautiful after being the ugliest. [3] For she had been plain to look at, and her nurse, seeing that she was the daughter of wealthy people and yet ill-favored, and seeing too that her parents regarded her looks as a calamity, took all this in and devised the following plan. Every day she carried the child to the shrine of Helen. This is in the place called Therapne, above the shrine of Phoebus. Whenever the nurse brought her there, she would stand her before the statue and beg the goddess to free the child of her ugliness. [4] One day, it is said, as the nurse was leaving the shrine, a woman appeared to her. Having appeared, she asked what she was carrying in her arms, and the nurse told her she was carrying a child. The woman told her to show it to her, but the nurse refused, saying that the parents had forbidden her to show it to anyone. The woman, however, insisted that she show it to her at all costs. [5] Seeing how much the woman wanted to look at it, the nurse finally showed her the child. The woman stroked the child's head and said that she would be the most beautiful of all the women in Sparta. And from that day, they say, her looks changed. When she reached the age for marriage, Agetus son of Alcides married her, this same friend of Ariston.

6.62 Now Ariston, as it turned out, was tormented by love for this woman, and so he contrived the following. He promised his

17 The helots were the unfree laborers, owned by the Spartan state, who worked the Spartans' land.

comrade, whose wife she was, to give him as a gift any one thing out of all his possessions that the man himself might choose, and he asked his comrade to give him a like gift in return. His comrade, having no fears about his wife, since he saw that Ariston too had a wife, agreed to this, and they bound themselves by oaths on these terms. [2] Afterwards Ariston himself gave the thing, whatever it was, that Agetus chose from among his treasures; then, seeking to carry off a like gift from him in turn, he tried to take away his comrade's wife. Agetus said he had agreed to anything but this alone. Compelled, however, by his oath and by the trick that had deceived him, he let Ariston take her away.

6.63 In this way Ariston brought home his third wife, having sent away his second. In a shorter time than usual, before she had completed the ten months, this woman gave birth to this very Demaratus. [2] One of his household servants brought him the news, as he sat in council with the ephors, that a son had been born to him. Knowing the time when he had taken the woman as his wife, and counting the months on his fingers, he declared on oath: "He can't be mine." The ephors heard this, but for the moment they made nothing of it. The boy grew up, and Ariston regretted what he had said, for he came to believe firmly that Demaratus was his son. [3] He gave him the name Demaratus for this reason: some time before these events the whole Spartan people had prayed that Ariston, a man held in higher esteem than any king who had ever reigned in Sparta, might have a son.[18]

6.64 That is why he was given the name Demaratus. As time went on, Ariston died and Demaratus held the kingship. But it was fated, it seems, that these things should come to light and bring about Demaratus' removal from the kingship, because of the … Demaratus had become bitterly at odds with Cleomenes, first earlier, when he led the army away from Eleusis, and then

18 The name Demaratus means "prayed for by the people."

again now, when Cleomenes had crossed over against those Aeginetans who had sided with the Persians.[19]

6.65 Eager for revenge, then, Cleomenes made an agreement with Leotychides son of Menares son of Agis, who was of the same house as Demaratus: if Cleomenes made him king in place of Demaratus, Leotychides would go with him against the Aeginetans. 2 Leotychides had become Demaratus' bitter enemy for the following reason. Leotychides had been betrothed to Percalus, daughter of Chilon son of Demarmenus, but Demaratus schemed to rob him of the marriage, getting in ahead of him by carrying off Percalus and taking her as his own wife. 3 That is how Leotychides' enmity toward Demaratus had come about. Now, at Cleomenes' urging, Leotychides swore an oath against Demaratus, declaring that he was not rightfully king of the Spartans, since he was not Ariston's son. After swearing it he prosecuted him, reviving the remark Ariston had made at the time when the servant brought him news that a son had been born, and he had counted the months and sworn that the boy was not his. 4 Seizing on this statement, Leotychides set out to prove that Demaratus was neither Ariston's son nor rightfully king of Sparta, and he called as witnesses those ephors who had happened to be sitting with Ariston at the time and had heard him say it.

6.66 In the end, since there were quarrels over these matters, the Spartans decided to ask the oracle at Delphi whether Demaratus was Ariston's son. 2 It was by Cleomenes' design that the question was referred to the Pythia, and he then won over Cobon son of Aristophantus, the most powerful man at Delphi, and Cobon persuaded Perialla the prophetess to say what Cleomenes wanted said. 3 So when the envoys put their question, the Pythia gave judgment that Demaratus was not Ariston's son. Later, however, all this came to light: Cobon was banished from Delphi, and Perialla the prophetess was stripped of her office.

6.67 That is how Demaratus came to be deposed from the kingship. He fled from Sparta to the Medes because of an insult,

which came about as follows. After he was deposed, Demaratus was elected to an office and held it. [2] It was the time of the Gymnopaidiai, and as Demaratus was watching, Leotychides, who by now had become king himself in his place, sent his attendant to ask Demaratus, in mockery and insult, what it was like to hold office after being king.[20] [3] Stung by the question, he replied that he himself had now tried both, while Leotychides had not, but that this question would be the beginning for the Lacedaemonians either of boundless misery or of boundless happiness. Having said this, he covered his head and left the theater for his own house. At once he made his preparations and sacrificed an ox to Zeus, and after the sacrifice he called his mother.

6.68 When his mother came, he put some of the entrails into her hands and implored her, saying: "Mother, I touch you as a suppliant and beg you, by all the gods and by this Zeus of the Courtyard here, to tell me the truth: who is my father, really? [2] Leotychides said, in the course of our quarrels, that you were already pregnant by your former husband when you came to Ariston. Others tell an even more foolish story: they say that you went to one of the servants, the donkey-keeper, and that I'm his son. [3] So I beseech you by the gods to tell me the truth. If you have done any of the things they say, you're not the only one who has done it; many women have. And there's a story going around all over Sparta that Ariston had no seed to father children; otherwise his earlier wives would have borne him children too."

6.69 That is what he said, and she answered him as follows. "My son, since you beseech me with prayers to tell the truth, the whole truth shall be told to you. When Ariston had brought me into his house, on the third night after the first a phantom came to me that looked like Ariston. It lay with me and then put on me the garlands it was wearing. [2] It went away, and after that Aris-

19 At Eleusis Demaratus had broken with Cleomenes during their joint invasion of Attica, and the army had dispersed (5.75).

20 The Gymnopaidiai was a Spartan summer festival with dances performed by naked boys and men.

ton came. When he saw me wearing garlands, he asked who had given them to me. I said he had, but he wouldn't accept it. I swore on oath that he was wrong to deny it, for only a little while before he'd come and lain with me and given me the garlands. [3] When Ariston saw me swearing to it, he understood that the thing was divine. For one thing, the garlands turned out to have come from the hero's shrine that stands by the courtyard gate, the one they call the shrine of Astrabacus; for another, the seers declared that it was this very hero who had come. [4] So now, my son, you have all that you want to know. Either you are the son of this hero, and Astrabacus the hero is your father, or Ariston is; for I conceived you on that night. As for the point your enemies attack you on most, saying that Ariston himself, when your birth was announced to him, declared in the hearing of many that you weren't his, 'for the time, the ten months, hadn't yet run out'—he let that remark fly out of ignorance of such matters. [5] Women give birth at nine months and at seven months, and not all of them go the full ten months; and I bore you, my son, at seven months. Not long afterwards Ariston himself recognized that he had blurted out that remark out of folly. Don't accept any other stories about your birth; you've heard the whole truth. And may their wives bear children to donkey-keepers—Leotychides' own wife, and the wives of those who say these things."

6.70 That is what she said. Having learned what he wanted to know, he took provisions for the journey and set out for Elis, saying for appearances' sake that he was going to Delphi to consult the oracle. But the Lacedaemonians suspected that Demaratus was trying to escape, and they went after him. [2] Somehow Demaratus managed to cross from Elis to Zacynthus ahead of them. The Lacedaemonians crossed after him, laid hands on him, and took his attendants away from him. Then, since the Zacynthians would not hand him over, he crossed from there to Asia, to King Darius. Darius received him magnificently and gave him land and cities. [3] That is how Demaratus came to Asia, after such a turn of fortune. He had won distinc-

tion among the Lacedaemonians in many ways, by his deeds and his counsel alike, and in particular he had won an Olympic victory in the four-horse chariot race and bestowed the honor on them, the only one of all the kings there have ever been in Sparta to do this.

6.71 Leotychides son of Menares succeeded to the kingship when Demaratus was deposed, and a son was born to him, Zeuxidamus, whom some of the Spartans called Cyniscus. This Zeuxidamus never became king of Sparta, for he died before Leotychides, leaving a son, Archidamus. 2 Having lost Zeuxidamus, Leotychides married a second wife, Eurydame, sister of Menius and daughter of Diactorides. By her he had no male child, but a daughter, Lampito, whom Leotychides gave in marriage to Archidamus son of Zeuxidamus.

6.72 But Leotychides did not grow old in Sparta either; he paid a penalty, of a kind, for what he did to Demaratus. He commanded a Lacedaemonian army in Thessaly, and when he could have brought the whole country under his control, he took a large bribe of silver. 2 Caught in the act there in the camp, sitting on a sleeve full of silver, he was brought to trial and fled from Sparta, and his house was razed to the ground. He fled to Tegea and died there.

6.73 That happened later. But at the time, once Cleomenes' scheme against Demaratus had gone his way, he at once took Leotychides with him and went against the Aeginetans, for he bore them a terrible grudge over the insult he had suffered. 2 So the Aeginetans, with both kings come against them, no longer saw fit to resist. The kings picked out the ten Aeginetans of greatest worth in wealth and birth and took them away, among them Crius son of Polycritus and Casambus son of Aristocrates, who held the most power. They brought them to Attica and deposited them for safekeeping with the Athenians, the Aeginetans' bitterest enemies.

6.74 After this it became known that Cleomenes had schemed against Demaratus, and he was seized by fear of the Spartans and slipped away to Thessaly. From there he went to Arcadia

and began stirring up revolution, uniting the Arcadians against Sparta. Among other oaths, he made them swear that they would follow him wherever he led. In particular, he was eager to bring the leading men of the Arcadians to the city of Nonacris and make them swear by the water of the Styx. [2] The Arcadians say that the water of the Styx is in this city, and it is something like this: a little water appears from a rock and drips into a hollow, and a circular wall of stones runs round the hollow. Nonacris, where this spring is, is a city of Arcadia near Pheneus.[21]

6.75 When the Lacedaemonians learned what Cleomenes was doing, they took fright and brought him back to Sparta to rule on the same terms as before. But as soon as he returned he was seized by madness, though even before he had been somewhat unbalanced: whenever he met any Spartan, he would jab his staff into the man's face. [2] Because he was doing this and had gone out of his mind, his relatives bound him in wooden stocks. Once bound, he saw that his guard had been left alone by the others, and he asked him for a knife. At first the guard refused to give it, and Cleomenes threatened what he would do to him later, until the guard, frightened by the threats (he was one of the helots), gave him a knife. [3] Cleomenes took the blade and began mutilating himself, starting from his shins. He sliced his flesh lengthwise and worked his way up from his shins to his thighs, and from his thighs to his hips and flanks, until he reached his belly; and cutting this into strips he died in this way. Most Greeks say this happened because he had persuaded the Pythia to say what she said about Demaratus; the Athenians alone say it was because he had invaded Eleusis and laid waste the precinct of the goddesses; and the Argives say it was because he had brought out of their sanctuary of Argus those Argives who had taken refuge there after the battle, cut them down, and then, treating the grove itself with contempt, set it on fire.[22]

6.76 For when Cleomenes consulted the oracle at Delphi, he was told that he would take Argos. He led the Spartans to the

21 The Styx was the river of the underworld, by which the gods swore their most binding oaths.

river Erasinus, which is said to flow from the Stymphalian lake: this lake, they say, empties into a hidden chasm and reappears in Argos, and from there on its water is called the Erasinus by the Argives. Having come to this river, then, Cleomenes sacrificed to it. [2] The omens were not at all favorable for his crossing, and he said that he admired the Erasinus for not betraying its citizens, but even so the Argives would not get off lightly. After this he withdrew and led his army down to Thyrea. There he sacrificed a bull to the sea and carried his men on ships to the territory of Tiryns and to Nauplia.

6.77 When the Argives heard of this, they hurried to the coast to defend it. When they were near Tiryns, at the place called Hesipeia, they left a narrow space between the armies and took up position facing the Lacedaemonians. There the Argives were not afraid of a battle in the open; what they feared was being taken by a trick. [2] For this was what the oracle pointed to that the Pythia had given jointly to them and to the Milesians, which ran as follows:

> But when the female conquers the male
> and drives him out, and wins glory among the Argives,
> then she will make many Argive women tear both their cheeks.
> So one day someone even among men yet to come will say:
> "The dread thrice-coiled serpent perished, subdued by the spear." [3] All these things coming together frightened the Argives. So in response they decided to make use of the enemy's herald, and having decided, they did as follows: whenever the Spartan herald signaled something to the Lacedaemonians, the Argives did exactly the same.

6.78 When Cleomenes learned that the Argives were doing whatever his herald signaled, he gave orders that when the herald signaled them to take their morning meal, they should instead take up their arms and advance on the Argives. [2] The Lacedaemonians carried this out. They fell upon the Argives as

22 Argus was the hero after whom the city of Argos was named.

they were taking their meal at the herald's signal, killed many of them, and surrounded a far greater number who had fled into the grove of Argus and kept them under guard.

6.79 Then Cleomenes did the following. He had some deserters with him, and learning the names from them, he sent a herald to call out by name the Argives shut up in the sanctuary, saying that he had received their ransom. Among the Peloponnesians the ransom is fixed at two minas, to be paid for each prisoner. So Cleomenes called out about fifty of the Argives, one by one, and killed them. 2 Somehow this went unnoticed by the rest inside the precinct: because the grove was dense, those inside could not see what was being done to those outside, until one of them climbed a tree and saw what was going on. After that they would no longer come out when called.

6.80 Then Cleomenes ordered every one of the helots to heap brushwood around the grove, and when they obeyed he set the grove on fire. When it was already burning, he asked one of the deserters which god the grove belonged to, and the man said it was Argus'. When he heard this, he groaned aloud and said, "Apollo, god of oracles, how badly you have deceived me, saying I would take Argos! I gather that the oracle has been fulfilled for me."

6.81 After this Cleomenes sent most of his army back to Sparta, while he himself took a thousand of his best men and went to the Heraeum to sacrifice. When he wanted to sacrifice on the altar, the priest forbade him, saying it was not lawful for a foreigner to sacrifice there. Cleomenes ordered the helots to drag the priest away from the altar and whip him, and offered the sacrifice himself. Having done this, he went back to Sparta.[23]

6.82 When he returned, his enemies brought him before the ephors, saying that he had taken bribes not to capture Argos when he could easily have captured it. Whether he was lying or telling the truth in his reply I cannot say for certain, but what he told them was this: when he had taken the sanctuary of Argus, it seemed to him that the god's oracle had been fulfilled. He there-

23 The Heraeum was the great sanctuary of Hera near Argos.

fore did not think it right to make an attempt on the city until he had consulted the sacrifices and learned whether the god was delivering it to him or standing in his way. [2] When he sought favorable omens in the Heraeum, he said, a flame of fire blazed out from the breast of the statue, and in this way he learned the truth of the matter, that he would not take Argos. If it had blazed from the statue's head, he would have taken the city from top to bottom; but since it blazed from the breast, everything the god wanted to happen had been done for him. In saying this he seemed to the Spartans to be speaking credibly and reasonably, and he was acquitted by a wide margin.

6.83 Argos was so bereft of men that their slaves took control of everything, ruling and administering, until the sons of those who had been killed grew up. These then won Argos back for themselves and drove the slaves out; and the slaves, driven out, took Tiryns by force. [2] For a time the two sides were on friendly terms, but then a seer named Cleander came to the slaves, a Phigalean from Arcadia by birth. He persuaded the slaves to attack their masters. From then on there was war between them for a long time, until at last the Argives with difficulty got the upper hand.

6.84 The Argives, then, say that this is why Cleomenes went mad and died miserably. But the Spartans themselves say that Cleomenes was not driven mad by any divine power; rather, from keeping company with Scythians he became a drinker of unmixed wine, and went mad from this. [2] The nomadic Scythians, according to them, had been eager to take vengeance on Darius ever since he invaded their country. They sent to Sparta to make an alliance and to agree that the Scythians themselves would try to invade Media by way of the river Phasis, while they urged the Spartans to set out from Ephesus, march inland, and then meet them at the same place.[24] [3] When the Scythians came for this purpose, they say, Cleomenes kept company with them too much, and by associating with them more than was proper

24 Greeks normally drank their wine mixed with water; drinking it unmixed was thought excessive and foreign.

he learned from them to drink wine unmixed; and it is from this, the Spartans believe, that he went mad. Ever since then, as they themselves say, whenever they want a stronger drink, they say, "Make it Scythian." That is what the Spartans say about Cleomenes. But in my opinion this was the retribution Cleomenes paid for what he did to Demaratus.

6.85 When the Aeginetans learned that Cleomenes was dead, they sent messengers to Sparta to denounce Leotychides over the hostages held at Athens. The Lacedaemonians convened a court and judged that the Aeginetans had been outrageously treated by Leotychides, and they sentenced him to be handed over and taken to Aegina in exchange for the men held at Athens. 2 When the Aeginetans were about to take Leotychides away, Theasides son of Leoprepes, a man of repute in Sparta, said to them, "What are you planning to do, men of Aegina? Take away the king of the Spartans, handed over by his own citizens? If the Spartans have made this decision now in anger, watch out that later, if you go through with this, they don't bring utter ruin on your land." 3 Hearing this, the Aeginetans refrained from taking him away, and came to this agreement instead: Leotychides would go with them to Athens and get the men returned to the Aeginetans.

6.86 When Leotychides arrived in Athens and demanded back what had been deposited there, the Athenians made excuses, not wanting to return the hostages. They said that two kings had deposited the men with them, and they did not think it right to return them to one without the other.

6.86a When the Athenians said they would not give them back, Leotychides said to them: "Athenians, do whichever you yourselves want. If you give them back, you do what is right in the gods' eyes; if you don't, you do the opposite. But I want to tell you what once happened in Sparta concerning a deposit. 2 We Spartans say that three generations before me there lived in Lacedaemon a man named Glaucus son of Epicydes. This man, we say, was outstanding in every respect, and in particular had the highest reputation for justice of anyone living in Lacedae-

mon at that time. [3] And we say that in the course of time the following happened to him. A man from Miletus came to Sparta and wanted to speak with him, and put his proposal like this: 'I am a Milesian, Glaucus, and I have come because I want to benefit from your justice. [4] Since there was much talk of your justice throughout the rest of Greece, and in Ionia too, I reflected that Ionia is always in danger while the Peloponnese is securely settled, and that one never sees wealth stay with the same people. [5] Considering and deliberating on all this, I decided to turn half of all my property into silver and deposit it with you, knowing well that it will be safe in your keeping. So please accept the money, and take these tokens and keep them safe; and whoever comes with them and asks for the money back, give it to him.'

[6.86b] That was what the stranger from Miletus said, and Glaucus accepted the deposit on the terms stated. A long time passed, and then the sons of the man who had deposited the money came to Sparta. They spoke with Glaucus, showed him the tokens and asked for the money back. [2] But he brushed them off, answering like this: 'I don't remember the matter, and nothing you say brings any of it back to me. Once I remember, I'm willing to do everything that is just: if I took it, to return it honestly, and if I never took it at all, I will deal with you according to the laws of the Greeks. So I'm putting off my decision on this until the fourth month from now.'

6.86c The Milesians went away in distress, as men robbed of their money, while Glaucus traveled to Delphi to consult the oracle. When he asked the oracle whether he should make the money his plunder by swearing an oath, the Pythia rebuked him with these verses: [2] 'Glaucus son of Epicydes, for the moment it is more profitable
to win by an oath and plunder the money.
Swear, since death awaits even the man who keeps his oath.
But Oath has a son, nameless, who has no hands
and no feet; yet swift he pursues, until he seizes
and destroys the whole family and the entire house.
The family of a man who keeps his oath fares better
hereafter.' When he heard this, Glaucus begged the god to pardon him for what he had said. But the Pythia said that testing the god and doing the deed came to the same thing.

6.86d So Glaucus sent for the Milesian strangers and gave them back the money. Now, Athenians, I will tell you why I set out to tell you this story. Today there is no descendant of Glaucus left, nor any household held to be Glaucus'; he has been utterly uprooted from Sparta. So good is it, when it comes to a deposit, not even to think of anything but giving it back when it is asked for."

6.87 Leotychides said this, and since even so the Athenians would not listen to him, he departed. The Aeginetans, before paying the penalty for the earlier wrongs they had arrogantly done the Athenians to please the Thebans, did the following. Blaming the Athenians and claiming that they themselves had been wronged, they prepared to take vengeance on them. The Athenians were holding a four-yearly festival at Sunium, so the Aeginetans lay in wait for the sacred ship and captured it, full of the leading men of Athens; and they took the men and put them in chains.[25]

25 The Aeginetans had raided the coast of Attica to help Thebes (5.81). The ship carried Athens' official delegation to the festival at Sunium, the southern tip of Attica.

6.88 After suffering this at the hands of the Aeginetans, the Athenians no longer held back from contriving every possible scheme against them. There was a man of repute in Aegina named Nicodromus son of Cnoethus. He bore the Aeginetans a grudge for his earlier banishment from the island, and learning now that the Athenians were set on doing the Aeginetans harm, he arranged with the Athenians to betray Aegina to them, telling them on what day he would make his attempt and on what day they would need to come to his aid.

6.89 After this, as he had agreed with the Athenians, Nicodromus seized what was called the Old City, but the Athenians did not arrive in time. They happened not to have ships fit to take on those of the Aeginetans, and while they were asking the Corinthians to lend them ships, the whole plan fell apart. The Corinthians, who at that time were the closest of friends with them, gave the Athenians twenty ships at their request, but gave them by selling them at five drachmas apiece, since their law did not allow them to make a gift of them. Taking these and their own ships, the Athenians manned seventy ships in all and sailed for Aegina, arriving one day later than the agreed date.[26]

6.90 When the Athenians failed to arrive at the appointed time, Nicodromus boarded a boat and escaped from Aegina. Other Aeginetans went with him, and the Athenians gave them Sunium to live in. Setting out from there, these men raided and plundered the Aeginetans on the island.

6.91 This, though, happened later. The wealthy men of Aegina got the better of the common people, who had risen against them along with Nicodromus, and having overpowered them they led them out to be put to death. From this a curse fell on them, which they could not expiate by sacrifice for all their efforts; they were driven out of the island before the goddess was appeased. 2 For they had taken seven hundred of the people alive and were leading them out to be put to death, when one of them escaped from his bonds and fled to the doorway of Demeter Thesmophoros, where he seized the door handles and

26 The price was a token one, to get around the law.

clung to them. When they could not tear him away by pulling, they cut off his hands and led him off like that; and those hands were left clinging fast to the door handles.[27]

6.92 That, then, is what the Aeginetans did to their own people. When the Athenians arrived, the Aeginetans fought a sea battle against them with seventy ships, and after being defeated in it they called on the same people as before, the Argives. But this time the Argives would not come to their aid. They had a grievance: Aeginetan ships, commandeered by Cleomenes, had put in to the Argive territory and their crews had landed with the Lacedaemonians; men from Sicyonian ships had also landed in this same invasion. 2 The Argives had imposed a fine of a thousand talents on them, five hundred on each. The Sicyonians admitted they had done wrong and agreed to pay a hundred talents and be let off the rest; but the Aeginetans would admit nothing and were rather more stubborn. For this reason, when they asked for help, no Argive came to their aid any longer on behalf of the state, but volunteers came, about a thousand of them. Their leader was a general named Eurybates, a man who had trained for the pentathlon. 3 Most of these never came home again but died at the hands of the Athenians on Aegina. The general Eurybates himself, fighting in single combat, killed three men in this way, but was killed by the fourth, Sophanes of Decelea.

6.93 The Aeginetans engaged the Athenians with their ships while they were in disorder and defeated them, capturing four of their ships with their crews.

DATIS AND ARTAPHRENES SAIL FOR GREECE

A new Persian fleet under Datis and Artaphrenes burns Naxos, spares Delos and destroys Eretria.

6.94 So the Athenians were caught up in a war with the Aeginetans. Meanwhile the Persian was going about his own business.

27 Thesmophoros ("Lawgiver") was a title of Demeter. The Athenians expelled the Aeginetans from their island in 431 BC.

His servant kept reminding him to remember the Athenians, the Pisistratids were constantly at his side slandering the Athenians, and at the same time Darius wanted to use this pretext to subdue those in Greece who had not given him earth and water. 2 He relieved Mardonius of his command, since he had fared badly on his expedition, and appointed other generals and sent them against Eretria and Athens: Datis, a Mede by birth, and Artaphrenes son of Artaphrenes, his own nephew. He sent them off with orders to enslave Athens and Eretria and bring the captives before him.[28]

6.95 These appointed generals traveled from the King with a large and well-equipped army of infantry. When they reached the Aleian plain in Cilicia and were encamped there, the whole fleet joined them, each people having supplied its assigned contingent; and the horse-transport ships also arrived, which Darius had ordered his tribute-paying subjects to get ready the year before. 2 They loaded the horses onto these, embarked the infantry on the ships, and sailed with six hundred triremes to Ionia. From there they did not keep their ships along the mainland, heading straight for the Hellespont and Thrace, but set out from Samos and made their voyage past Icaros and through the islands. In my opinion, this was chiefly because they feared the voyage around Athos, since the year before, when they took that route, they had come to grief badly. Besides, Naxos forced their hand, since it had not been taken before.[29]

6.96 When they had crossed the Icarian Sea and reached Naxos —for Naxos was the first place the Persians intended to attack, remembering what had happened before—the Naxians fled to the mountains and did not stand their ground. The Persians enslaved those of them they caught and set fire to both the temples and the city. Having done this, they put out to sea for the other islands.[30]

28 Darius had ordered a servant to tell him three times at every dinner, "Master, remember the Athenians" (5.105).
29 The year before, Mardonius' fleet had been wrecked off Mount Athos (6.44).
30 An earlier Persian expedition against Naxos, instigated by Aristagoras, had failed (5.30–35).

6.97 While they were doing this, the Delians also abandoned Delos and fled to Tenos. As the expedition sailed down toward the island, Datis went on ahead and would not let the ships anchor at Delos, but across the strait at Rhenaea. When he learned where the Delians were, he sent a herald to them with this message:[31] 2 "Holy men, why have you run away? You've judged me by intentions I don't have. I'm of that mind myself, and the King has given me these orders as well: to do no harm to the land where the two gods were born, neither to the land itself nor to the people who live there. So go back to your own homes now and live on your island." This was the message his herald took to the Delians. Afterward he heaped three hundred talents of frankincense on the altar and burned it as an offering.[32]

6.98 Having done this, Datis sailed with his army against Eretria first, taking Ionians and Aeolians along with him. After he had put out from there, Delos was shaken by an earthquake, as the Delians said—the first and last time it has been shaken up to my day. This, I suppose, was a portent by which the god revealed to men the evils that were to come. 2 For in the reigns of Darius son of Hystaspes, Xerxes son of Darius and Artaxerxes son of Xerxes, three generations in succession, more evils befell Greece than in the twenty generations before Darius. Some came upon her from the Persians, others from her own leading powers warring for supremacy.[33] 3 So it was nothing strange that Delos should be moved, though it had never been moved before. And in an oracle it was written about the island as follows: "I will move even Delos, unmoved though it is." In the Greek language these names mean: Darius, "Doer"; Xerxes, "Warrior"; Artaxerxes, "Great Warrior." That is what the Greeks would rightly call these kings in their own language.[34]

31 Delos, the sacred island of Apollo, lies in the Cyclades; Rhenaea is the island just west of it.

32 The two gods are Apollo and Artemis, born on Delos.

33 Artaxerxes I reigned 465–424 BC; the wars among the leading Greek states include those between Athens and Sparta, which broke out in 431 BC.

34 These etymologies are Herodotus' own and not accurate: in Old Persian, Darius means roughly "holder of the good" and Xerxes "ruler over heroes."

6.99 After the foreigners had set sail from Delos, they put in at the islands, and from there they took on troops and took the islanders' children as hostages. 2 Sailing around the islands, they put in at Carystus too. The Carystians would neither give them hostages nor agree to march against neighboring cities, meaning Eretria and Athens. So they besieged them and ravaged their land, until the Carystians too came over to the Persians' way of thinking.

6.100 When the Eretrians learned that the Persian expedition was sailing against them, they asked the Athenians to come to their aid. The Athenians did not refuse the help: they gave them as defenders the four thousand men who held allotments in the land of the horse-breeding Chalcidians. But the Eretrians, it turned out, had no sound plan. They had sent for the Athenians, yet they were of two minds. 2 Some of them were planning to abandon the city and take to the heights of Euboea, while others, expecting to win private profit from the Persian, were preparing to betray it.[35] 3 Aeschines son of Nothon, one of the leading men of Eretria, learned how both these schemes stood. He told the Athenians who had come the whole state of affairs, and he begged them to leave for their own country so that they would not perish along with the rest. The Athenians followed Aeschines' advice.

6.101 So they crossed over to Oropus and saved themselves. The Persians sailed on and brought their ships to land in Eretrian territory at Temenos, Choereae and Aegilia. Once they had taken these places, they immediately unloaded their horses and made ready to attack the enemy. 2 The Eretrians had no intention of going out and fighting. Their concern was whether they could somehow hold their walls, since the decision not to abandon the city had prevailed. A fierce assault was made on the wall, and for six days many fell on both sides. On the seventh, Euphorbus son of Alcimachus and Philagrus son of Cyneas, men of standing among the citizens, betrayed the city to the Persians. 3 The Per-

35 After defeating Chalcis on Euboea in 506 BC, Athens had settled citizens on allotments of Chalcidian land (5.77).

sians entered the city. They plundered the temples and burned them, in revenge for the temples burned at Sardis, and they enslaved the people, as Darius had ordered.[36]

MARATHON

Hippias guides the Persians to Marathon, where the Athenians take up position.

6.102 Having subdued Eretria, they waited a few days and then sailed for Attica, pressing hard and expecting to do to the Athenians exactly what they had done to the Eretrians. Marathon was the place in Attica best suited for cavalry and the nearest to Eretria, and so Hippias son of Pisistratus guided them there.[37]

6.103 When the Athenians learned of this, they too marched out to Marathon to defend the land. They were led by ten generals, the tenth of whom was Miltiades. His father, Cimon son of Stesagoras, had been driven into exile from Athens by Pisistratus son of Hippocrates. 2 While in exile, Cimon happened to win an Olympic victory with a four-horse chariot, and with this victory he carried off the same prize as his half-brother Miltiades, his mother's son. At the next Olympic Games he won with the same mares and let Pisistratus be proclaimed the victor. Having yielded the victory to him, he returned to his own property under a truce. 3 After he had won yet another Olympic victory with the same mares, he was killed by the sons of Pisistratus, when Pisistratus himself was no longer alive: they had men lie in wait for him by night near the prytaneum and kill him. Cimon is buried outside the city, beyond the road called Through-the-Hollow, and opposite him are buried these mares that won the three Olympic victories. 4 Other mares have already done this same thing—those of Evagoras the Laconian—

36 Sardis, the Persian capital in Asia Minor, had been burned in 498 BC by the rebel Ionians with Athenian and Eretrian help (5.101–102).

37 Hippias had ruled Athens after his father Pisistratus until he was expelled in 510 BC; he had since taken refuge with the Persians.

but none have done more. At that time the elder of Cimon's sons, Stesagoras, was being brought up by his uncle Miltiades in the Chersonese. The younger was with Cimon himself in Athens, and was named Miltiades after Miltiades, the founder of the Chersonese settlement.[38]

6.104 This, then, was the Miltiades who had now come from the Chersonese and, having escaped death twice, was a general of the Athenians. First, the Phoenicians who had chased him as far as Imbros were very eager to capture him and bring him up to the King. 2 Then, when he had escaped them, reached his own country and thought himself safe at last, his enemies were waiting for him there. They brought him to court and prosecuted him for his tyranny in the Chersonese. He was acquitted of this charge too, and so he was appointed general of the Athenians, elected by the people.

PHEIDIPPIDES

Pheidippides runs to Sparta for help and meets Pan on the way; the Spartans wait for the full moon.

6.105 First of all, while they were still in the city, the generals sent a herald to Sparta: Pheidippides, an Athenian, a day-runner by profession who trained for it. As Pheidippides himself said and reported to the Athenians, Pan came upon him on Mount Parthenium, above Tegea. 2 Pan, he said, called out Pheidippides' name and told him to ask the Athenians why they paid him no attention, though he was well disposed toward the Athenians, had already been useful to them on many occasions, and would be again. 3 Once their affairs had been settled well, the Athenians, believing this to be true, founded a sanctuary of Pan below the Acropolis, and ever since that message they have propitiated him with yearly sacrifices and a torch race.[39]

6.106 It was on this mission, sent by the generals—the time he said Pan appeared to him—that Pheidippides reached Sparta on

38 The prytaneum was Athens' town hall.

the second day after leaving Athens. He went before the authorities and said: [2] "Lacedaemonians, the Athenians ask you to come to their aid and not to stand by while the most ancient city among the Greeks falls into slavery at the hands of foreigners. Already Eretria has been enslaved, and Greece is weaker by one notable city." [3] So he delivered the message he had been given. The Lacedaemonians resolved to help the Athenians, but they could not do so immediately, since they did not want to break their law: it was the ninth day of the waxing month, and they said they would not march out on the ninth while the moon's circle was not full.

6.107 So they waited for the full moon. Meanwhile Hippias son of Pisistratus was guiding the foreigners to Marathon. The night before, he had seen a vision in his sleep: Hippias dreamed that he slept with his own mother. [2] From the dream he inferred that he would return to Athens, recover his rule and die an old man in his own country. That is what he inferred from the vision. Now, acting as guide, he first landed the captives from Eretria on the island belonging to the Styreans called Aeglea; then, as the ships put in at Marathon, he brought them to anchor, and he drew up the foreigners in order as they came ashore. [3] While he was seeing to this, he happened to sneeze and cough more violently than usual. Since he was an older man, most of his teeth were loose, and the force of the cough knocked one of them out. It fell into the sand, and he took great pains to find it. [4] When the tooth was nowhere to be seen, he groaned and said to those standing by him: "This land isn't ours, and we won't be able to bring it under our control. Whatever share of it I had, the tooth has."

6.108 So Hippias concluded that the vision had been fulfilled in this way. As the Athenians were drawn up in the sanctuary of Heracles, the Plataeans came to their aid in full force. The Plataeans had in fact put themselves in the Athenians' hands, and the Athenians had already taken on many labors on their

39 Day-runners were couriers who covered great distances on foot; Sparta is roughly 150 miles (240 km) from Athens.

behalf. This is how they had given themselves over. [2] Hard pressed by the Thebans, the Plataeans first offered themselves to Cleomenes son of Anaxandrides and the Lacedaemonians, who happened to be nearby. They would not accept, and told them: "We live too far away, and help like ours would be cold comfort to you: you could be enslaved many times over before any of us even heard about it. [3] We advise you to give yourselves to the Athenians: they're your neighbors, and no bad men at defending others." The Lacedaemonians gave this advice not so much out of goodwill toward the Plataeans as because they wanted the Athenians to be embroiled in troubles with the Boeotians. [4] So the Lacedaemonians advised the Plataeans, and the Plataeans did not distrust them: when the Athenians were sacrificing to the twelve gods, they sat at the altar as suppliants and gave themselves over. When the Thebans learned of this, they marched against the Plataeans, and the Athenians came to their aid. [5] As they were about to join battle, the Corinthians would not stand by. They happened to be there, and at the request of both sides they reconciled them and fixed the boundaries of the land on these terms: the Thebans were to leave alone those Boeotians who did not wish to be counted as Boeotians. Having made this decision, the Corinthians departed. But the Boeotians attacked the Athenians as they were leaving, and in the attack they were defeated. [6] The Athenians then went beyond the boundaries the Corinthians had set for the Plataeans, and made the Asopus itself the boundary between the Thebans and Plataea and Hysiae. So the Plataeans had given themselves to the Athenians in the way described, and now they came to Marathon to help.

6.109 The Athenian generals were divided in their opinions. Some would not let them engage, since they were too few, they said, to engage the army of the Medes; others, Miltiades among them, urged it. [2] They were divided, and the worse of the two opinions was prevailing. But there was an eleventh voter: the Athenian chosen by lot to be polemarch (for in the old days the Athenians gave the polemarch an equal vote with the generals),

and the polemarch at that time was Callimachus of Aphidnae. Miltiades went to him and said:[40] 3 "It's up to you now, Callimachus, either to enslave Athens or to make her free and leave behind, for as long as men live, a memorial such as not even Harmodius and Aristogeiton leave. Never since there were Athenians have they faced so great a danger as now. If they bow down to the Medes, it's already settled what they'll suffer once they're handed over to Hippias; but if this city survives, it can become the first of the Greek cities. 4 How this can happen, and how the deciding voice in these matters comes down to you, I'll now explain. We generals are ten, and our opinions are divided, some urging that we engage, others not. 5 If we don't engage, I expect some great dissension will fall on the Athenians and shake their resolve until they side with the Persians. But if we engage before any rot sets in among some of the Athenians, then, if the gods deal fairly, we can win the fight. 6 All this now turns on you and hangs on you. If you join my side, your country is free and your city the first in Greece; but if you choose the side of those who are eager to avoid battle, you'll have the opposite of all the good things I've listed."

6.110 With these words Miltiades won Callimachus over, and once the polemarch's vote was added, it was decided to engage. After that, the generals who had voted to engage each handed over to Miltiades his day of command as it came round. He accepted, but he did not engage until his own day of command arrived.

6.111 When it came round to him, the Athenians were drawn up for battle as follows. The right wing was led by the polemarch Callimachus, for the Athenian custom at that time was that the polemarch held the right wing. After him came the tribes, next to one another in the order of their numbering. Last, holding the left wing, were drawn up the Plataeans.[41] 2 [For] ever since this battle, when the Athenians offer sacrifices at the festivals

40 The polemarch ("war leader") was one of Athens' annual chief magistrates.
41 Athens' citizens were divided into ten tribes, each providing a regiment and electing a general.

held every four years, the Athenian herald prays for blessings on the Athenians and on the Plataeans together. [3] At the time, as the Athenians were being drawn up at Marathon, something like this happened. Their line was made equal in length to the Median line, and so its center was only a few ranks deep; there the line was weakest, while each wing was strong in numbers.

THE CHARGE AT MARATHON

The Athenians charge at a run, rout the Persians and hurry back to defend Athens.

6.112 When they had been drawn up and the sacrifices proved favorable, the Athenians, once they were let go, charged the foreigners at a run. The space between the two armies was no less than eight stades. [2] The Persians, seeing them coming on at a run, prepared to receive them. They thought the Athenians mad, and fatally mad at that, seeing that they were few and charging at a run, with neither cavalry nor archers. [3] That was what the foreigners imagined. But the Athenians, once they closed with the foreigners in a body, fought in a way worth telling. They were the first of all the Greeks we know of to charge the enemy at a run, and the first to stand the sight of Median dress and the men wearing it. Until then even hearing the name of the Medes struck fear into the Greeks.[42]

6.113 The fighting at Marathon went on for a long time. In the center of the line the foreigners were winning, where the Persians themselves and the Sacae were posted; there the foreigners won, broke through and pursued inland. But on each wing the Athenians and the Plataeans were winning. [2] Winning, they let the routed part of the foreigners flee, drew both wings together, and fought those who had broken through the center; and the Athenians won. They followed the fleeing Persians, cutting them down, until they reached the sea, where they called for fire and laid hold of the ships.[43]

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42 Eight stades is just under a mile.

43 The Sacae were a Scythian people of Central Asia.

6.114 In this struggle the polemarch was killed, after proving himself a brave man, and of the generals Stesilaus son of Thrasylaus died. Cynegeirus son of Euphorion also fell there: as he grabbed the stern ornament of a ship, his hand was cut off with an axe. And many other notable Athenians fell too.[44]

6.115 In this way the Athenians took seven of the ships. With the rest, the foreigners backed water and, after picking up the Eretrian captives from the island where they had left them, sailed round Sunium, hoping to reach the city before the Athenians. The charge went around among the Athenians that they had conceived this plan through a scheme of the Alcmaeonids: these, it was said, had made an arrangement with the Persians and held up a shield as a signal to them when they were already on board their ships.

6.116 So they sailed round Sunium. But the Athenians hurried back to defend the city as fast as their feet could carry them, and got there before the foreigners arrived. Coming from the sanctuary of Heracles at Marathon, they made camp in another sanctuary of Heracles, the one at Cynosarges. The foreigners rode at anchor off Phalerum, which was then the Athenians' harbor; after lying there for a while, they sailed back to Asia.

6.117 In this battle at Marathon about six thousand four hundred of the foreigners were killed, and one hundred and ninety-two Athenians. That was the number who fell on each side. 2 A marvel happened there. An Athenian, Epizelus son of Cuphagoras, was fighting in the thick of the battle and proving himself a brave man when he lost his sight, though he had been neither struck nor hit by a missile anywhere on his body; and from that time on he remained blind for the rest of his life. 3 I heard that he told a story about his misfortune something like this: he thought a huge hoplite stood against him, whose beard overshadowed his whole shield; this phantom passed him by and killed the man standing beside him. This, I learned, is what Epizelus said.

44 Cynegeirus was the brother of the playwright Aeschylus, who also fought at Marathon.

6.118 As Datis was making his way back to Asia with his army, when he had reached Mykonos, he saw a vision in his sleep. What the vision was is not told. But as soon as day dawned he had a search made of the ships, and finding a gilded statue of Apollo in a Phoenician ship, he asked where it had been plundered from. When he learned which temple it came from, he sailed in his own ship to Delos. 2 The Delians had by then returned to their island. He deposited the statue in the temple and instructed the Delians to take it back to Delium, which belongs to the Thebans and lies on the coast opposite Chalcis. 3 Having given these instructions, Datis sailed away. The Delians, however, did not take the statue back; twenty years later the Thebans themselves brought it to Delium at an oracle's command.

6.119 When Datis and Artaphrenes reached Asia, they brought the enslaved Eretrians up to Susa. Before the Eretrians were taken captive, King Darius had nursed a terrible anger against them, since the Eretrians had been the first to do wrong. 2 But when he saw them brought before him and in his power, he did them no further harm. Instead he settled them in the land of Cissia, at one of his royal stations called Ardericca, two hundred and ten stades from Susa and forty from the well that yields three different substances: they draw asphalt, salt and oil from it, in this way. 3 The liquid is drawn up with a swing-beam, which has half a skin tied to it in place of a bucket. A man dips this down, draws up the liquid and pours it into a tank; from there it is poured off into another, and it separates three ways. The asphalt and the salt solidify at once. The oil, which the Persians call "rhadinace," is black and gives off a heavy smell. 4 There King Darius settled the Eretrians, and they still occupied that land in my time, keeping their old language. That is what became of the Eretrians.

6.120 After the full moon two thousand Lacedaemonians came to Athens. They were in such haste to get there that they reached Attica on the third day after leaving Sparta. Though they arrived too late for the battle, they still longed to see the Medes; so they

went to Marathon and looked at them. Afterward they praised the Athenians and what they had done, and went back home.

THE ALCMAEONIDS AND THE SHIELD

Herodotus rejects the charge that the Alcmaeonids signaled to the Persians, and tells how the family grew rich.

6.121 I find it astonishing, and I do not accept the story, that the Alcmaeonids could ever have held up a shield to the Persians as a prearranged signal, wanting the Athenians to be under non-Greeks and under Hippias. They plainly hated tyrants as much as Callias son of Phaenippus, father of Hipponicus, did, or even more. 2 Callias alone of all the Athenians dared to buy Pisistratus' property whenever Pisistratus was driven out of Athens and the state put it up for auction, and he devised every other act of the bitterest hostility against him.

6.122 [This Callias deserves to be remembered by everyone, for many reasons. First, for what has already been said: he was a man of the highest order in freeing his country. Second, for what he did at Olympia. He won the horse race and came second in the four-horse chariot race, and he had already won at the Pythian games, and he became known to all the Greeks for his lavish spending.] 2 [Third, for the kind of man he proved to be toward his three daughters. When they reached the age for marriage, he gave them a most magnificent gift and granted their wishes: each of them could choose a husband for herself from among all the Athenians, and he gave her to that man.]

6.123 The Alcmaeonids hated tyrants just as much as he did, or no less. So I find it astonishing, and I do not accept the slander that they of all people held up the shield. They spent the whole time in exile from the tyrants, and it was through their contrivance that the Pisistratids gave up the tyranny. 2 So in my judgment it was they who freed Athens, far more than Harmodius and Aristogeiton did. Those two, by killing Hipparchus, only made the remaining Pisistratids more savage, and did nothing to stop the rest of them from ruling as tyrants. The Alcmae-

onids, by contrast, clearly did free the city, if it really was they who persuaded the Pythia to tell the Lacedaemonians to free Athens, as I have shown earlier.

6.124 But perhaps, someone might say, they had some grievance against the Athenian people and so betrayed their country. Yet there were no men more highly esteemed among the Athenians than they were, nor any more honored. 2 So reason does not allow that a shield was held up by them, of all people, for such a purpose. A shield was held up; that cannot be denied, for it happened. But who it was that held it up, I cannot say any further than this.

6.125 The Alcmaeonids had been distinguished in Athens even from early times, and from the time of Alcmaeon, and then again of Megacles, they became very distinguished indeed. 2 For one thing, when Lydians came from Sardis on Croesus' behalf to the oracle at Delphi, Alcmaeon son of Megacles assisted them and eagerly helped them. Croesus heard from the Lydians who visited the oracles that this man was doing him good service, and sent for him to come to Sardis. When he arrived, Croesus offered him as a gift as much gold as he could carry out on his own person in a single trip. 3 Alcmaeon, seeing what kind of gift it was, prepared for it as follows. He put on a large tunic, leaving a deep fold in it, pulled on the widest boots he could find, and went into the treasury to which they led him. 4 He fell upon a heap of gold dust. First he packed as much gold around his shins as his boots would hold; then he filled the whole fold of his tunic with gold, sprinkled the dust in the hair of his head, and took more into his mouth. He came out of the treasury barely able to drag his boots along, looking like anything rather than a human being, with his mouth stuffed and his whole body swollen out. 5 When Croesus saw him, he burst out laughing, and gave him all of it and another gift besides, worth no less. This is how the family became very rich, and this Alcmaeon, in this way, kept a team of four horses and won a victory at Olympia.

THE WOOING OF AGARISTE

Cleisthenes of Sicyon tests his daughter's suitors for a year, and Hippocleides dances away his bride.

6.126 In the following generation, Cleisthenes the tyrant of Sicyon raised the family higher still, so that it became much more famous among the Greeks than it had been before. Cleisthenes, son of Aristonymus son of Myron son of Andreas, had a daughter named Agariste. He wanted to find the best man in all Greece and give her to him as his wife. 2 So at the Olympic games, where he won the four-horse chariot race, Cleisthenes had a proclamation made: any Greek who thought himself worthy to become Cleisthenes' son-in-law should come to Sicyon by the sixtieth day or sooner, since Cleisthenes would settle the marriage within a year, counting from the sixtieth day. 3 Then all the Greeks who were proud of themselves and of their native lands came as suitors. Cleisthenes had a racetrack and a wrestling ground built for them, and kept them for this very purpose.[45]

6.127 From Italy came Smindyrides son of Hippocrates, of Sybaris, who carried luxury further than any other single man (Sybaris was then at the height of its prosperity), and from Siris came Damasus, son of Amyris who was called the Wise. 2 These came from Italy. From the Ionian Gulf came Amphimnestus son of Epistrophus, of Epidamnus; he was the one from the Ionian Gulf. From Aetolia came Males, the brother of Titormus—the Titormus who surpassed all the Greeks in strength and fled from human company to the remotest parts of Aetolia.[46] 3 From the Peloponnese came Leocedes, son of Pheidon the tyrant of Argos—the Pheidon who set up the system of measures for the Peloponnesians and committed the greatest outrage of any Greek, for he drove out the Elean officials in charge of the games and ran the contest at Olympia himself. His son came, and Amiantus son of Lycurgus, an Arcadian from Trapezus; and an Azanian

45 Sicyon was a city in the northern Peloponnese, west of Corinth.
46 The Ionian Gulf is the Adriatic Sea.

from the town of Paeus, Laphanes son of Euphorion, who, as the story goes in Arcadia, received the Dioscuri in his house and from then on kept open house for everyone; and Onomastus son of Agaeus, of Elis.[47] 4 These came from the Peloponnese itself. From Athens came Megacles, son of the Alcmaeon who had visited Croesus, and another, Hippocleides son of Tisander, who surpassed the Athenians in wealth and good looks. From Eretria, which was flourishing at that time, came Lysanias; he was the only one from Euboea. From Thessaly came Diactorides of Crannon, one of the Scopadae, and from the Molossians came Alcon.[48]

6.128 These, then, were the suitors. When they had arrived by the appointed day, Cleisthenes first asked each of them about his country and his family. Then he kept them for a year and tested their manly worth, their temper, their education and their manners. He spent time with each one individually and with all of them together, took the younger ones out to the gymnasiums, and, most important of all, tested them at the common table. For the whole time he kept them, he did all this and at the same time entertained them magnificently. 2 Of all the suitors, it seems, the ones who had come from Athens pleased him most, and of these he preferred Hippocleides son of Tisander, judging him so both for his manly worth and because he was related by ancestry to the Cypselids of Corinth.[49]

6.129 When the day arrived that had been fixed for the wedding feast and for Cleisthenes to announce whom he chose out of them all, Cleisthenes sacrificed a hundred oxen and feasted the suitors themselves and all the Sicyonians. 2 When dinner was over, the suitors competed in music and in speaking on a set topic before the company. As the drinking went on, Hippocleides, who was far outdoing the others, told the piper to play him a dance tune, and when the piper obeyed, he danced.

47 The Dioscuri were Castor and Polydeuces, the twin sons of Zeus.
48 The Scopadae were the ruling family of Crannon in Thessaly; the Molossians lived in Epirus, in northwestern Greece.
49 The Cypselids were the family of tyrants who ruled Corinth in the seventh and sixth centuries BC.

He danced, I suppose, very much to his own satisfaction; but Cleisthenes, watching the whole business, began to have his doubts. [3] After a while Hippocleides told someone to bring in a table. When the table came in, he first danced Laconian figures on it, then Attic ones, and thirdly he planted his head on the table and gesticulated with his legs. [4] During the first and second dances Cleisthenes, though he now loathed the thought of Hippocleides becoming his son-in-law because of his dancing and his shamelessness, restrained himself, not wanting to explode at him. But when he saw him gesticulating with his legs, he could no longer hold back and said, "Son of Tisander, you've danced away your marriage." Hippocleides answered, "Hippocleides doesn't care." That is where the saying comes from.

6.130 Cleisthenes called for silence and addressed them all: "Gentlemen, suitors of my daughter, I think well of all of you, and if it were possible I would gratify all of you, neither singling one of you out nor rejecting the rest. [2] But since it isn't possible, when deciding about a single girl, to do what all of you want, to those of you who are turned away from this marriage I give a talent of silver each as a gift, for your having thought it worthwhile to marry into my family and for your time away from home. To Megacles son of Alcmaeon I betroth my daughter Agariste, according to the laws of the Athenians." When Megacles declared that he accepted the betrothal, the marriage was settled for Cleisthenes.

6.131 So much for the judging of the suitors, and in this way the Alcmaeonids became famous throughout Greece. From this marriage was born the Cleisthenes who established the tribes and the democracy for the Athenians; he was named after his mother's father, the Sicyonian. [2] He was born to Megacles, and so was Hippocrates. Hippocrates had another Megacles and another Agariste, named after Agariste the daughter of Cleisthenes. She married Xanthippus son of Ariphron, and while she was pregnant she saw a vision in her sleep: she dreamed that

she gave birth to a lion. A few days later she bore Xanthippus a son, Pericles.[50]

MILTIADES AT PAROS

Miltiades fails at Paros and dies after his trial; Herodotus tells how he had taken Lemnos.

6.132 After the defeat inflicted at Marathon, Miltiades, who was already well regarded among the Athenians, rose still higher in their esteem. He asked the Athenians for seventy ships, an army and money, without telling them what country he meant to attack. He said only that he would make them rich if they followed him, for he would lead them to a land of such a kind that they would easily bring back gold in abundance. Saying such things, he asked for the ships, and the Athenians, carried away by this, handed them over.

6.133 Miltiades took the army and sailed against Paros, on the pretext that the Parians had struck first by sending triremes to Marathon along with the Persian. That was the excuse he gave; but he also had a grudge against the Parians because of Lysagoras son of Tisias, a Parian by birth, who had slandered him to Hydarnes the Persian. 2 When he reached his destination, Miltiades besieged the Parians with his army, as they were shut up inside their wall, and sent in a herald demanding a hundred talents. If they did not give it to him, he said, he would not take his army home until he had captured them. 3 The Parians did not even consider giving Miltiades any money; instead they worked out how to defend their city. Among other measures, wherever the wall was most open to attack at any point, they raised it by night to twice its former height.

6.134 Up to this point in the story all the Greeks agree; what happened next the Parians themselves tell as follows. When Miltiades was at a loss, they say, a captive woman came to speak with him. She was Parian by birth, her name was Timo, and she

50 The younger Cleisthenes reorganized the Athenian tribes and constitution in 508/7 BC; Pericles was the leading Athenian statesman of Herodotus' own day.

was an under-priestess of the gods of the underworld. She came into Miltiades' presence and advised him, if he set great store by taking Paros, to do whatever she suggested.[51] 2 After that, they say, she made her suggestion, and he went to the hill in front of the city and jumped over the fence around the sanctuary of Demeter Thesmophoros, since he could not open the doors. Having jumped over, he went toward the inner hall to do something inside—whether to disturb one of the things that must not be disturbed, or to do whatever it may have been. When he reached the doors, a sudden shudder came over him and he hurried back the way he had come, and as he jumped down from the wall he wrenched his thigh. Others say he hurt his knee.

6.135 So Miltiades sailed back home in a bad way, neither bringing money for the Athenians nor having won Paros for them, after besieging it for twenty-six days and ravaging the island. 2 When the Parians learned that Timo, the under-priestess of the gods, had guided Miltiades, they wanted to punish her for it, and as soon as they had respite from the siege they sent envoys to Delphi. They sent them to ask whether they should put to death the under-priestess of the gods, since she had shown the enemies of her country how to capture it and had revealed to Miltiades the sacred rites that must not be disclosed to the male sex. 3 The Pythia would not allow it. Timo, she said, was not to blame for this; rather, Miltiades was fated to come to a bad end, and Timo had appeared to him to guide him to his ruin.

6.136 That was the Pythia's answer to the Parians. When Miltiades returned from Paros, he was on everyone's lips in Athens, and above all on those of Xanthippus son of Ariphron, who brought him before the people on a capital charge and prosecuted him for deceiving the Athenians. 2 Miltiades was present but did not speak in his own defense, for he could not, since his thigh was festering. He lay before the court on a couch while his friends defended him, recalling at length the battle at Marathon and the capture of Lemnos—how he had taken Lemnos, punished the Pelasgians and handed the island over to the Atheni-

51 The gods of the underworld here are Demeter and her daughter Persephone.

ans. 3 The people came over to his side so far as to spare him the death penalty, but fined him fifty talents for his wrongdoing. After this Miltiades died when his thigh became gangrenous and rotted, and the fifty talents were paid by his son Cimon.

6.137 This is how Miltiades son of Cimon had taken Lemnos. The Pelasgians had been driven out of Attica by the Athenians—whether justly or unjustly I cannot say, beyond what is reported. Hecataeus son of Hegesander said in his history that it was unjustly. 2 According to him, the Athenians had given the Pelasgians the land below Hymettus, which belonged to them, to live in as payment for the wall that they had once built around the Acropolis. When the Athenians saw this land well farmed, which before had been poor and worthless, they were seized by envy and desire for it, and so they drove the Pelasgians out without putting forward any other pretext.[52] 3 But according to the Athenians themselves, they drove them out justly. After the Pelasgians had settled below Hymettus, they say, they used it as a base from which to commit the following wrongs. The Athenians' daughters and sons used to go regularly for water to the Nine Springs, since at that time neither they nor the other Greeks had household slaves yet. And whenever the girls came, the Pelasgians, out of arrogance and contempt, would assault them. Nor were they content with doing this; in the end, they say, they were caught in the act of plotting an attack.[53] 4 The Athenians, they say, proved so much better men than the Pelasgians that, although they could have killed them when they caught them plotting, they chose not to, but ordered them to leave the country. Having left in this way, the Pelasgians took possession of various places, among them Lemnos. That is what Hecataeus said; this is what the Athenians say.

6.138 These Pelasgians, then living on Lemnos, wanted revenge on the Athenians. They knew the Athenians' festivals well, so they got hold of fifty-oared ships and lay in ambush for the Athenian women while they were celebrating a festival of

52 Hymettus is the mountain just east of Athens.
53 The Nine Springs (Enneacrounos) was a fountain house in Athens.

Artemis at Brauron. They seized many of the women there, sailed off, took them to Lemnos and kept them as concubines. [2] When these women had borne many children, they taught their sons the Attic language and Athenian ways. These boys refused to mix with the sons of the Pelasgian women, and if any one of them was struck by one of the others, they all came to his aid and stood by one another. They even claimed the right to rule over the other boys, and they got much the better of them.[54] [3] When the Pelasgians learned of this, they talked it over among themselves, and as they deliberated, a terrible thought crept into their minds. If these boys were already resolved to help one another against the sons of their lawful wives, and were trying to rule over them from the start, what on earth would they do once they were grown men? [4] So they decided to kill the sons of the Attic women. They did this, and killed the boys' mothers as well. Because of this deed, and the earlier one when the women killed their own husbands along with Thoas, it has become customary throughout Greece to call all cruel deeds "Lemnian."[55]

6.139 But after the Pelasgians had killed their own sons and women, their land bore no crops, and their women and flocks no longer bore young as they had before. Hard pressed by famine and childlessness, they sent to Delphi to ask for some release from their present troubles. [2] The Pythia told them to pay the Athenians whatever penalty the Athenians themselves should decide. So the Pelasgians came to Athens and declared that they were willing to pay a penalty for all their wrongdoing. [3] The Athenians spread a couch in the prytaneum as finely as they could, set beside it a table loaded with every good thing, and told the Pelasgians to hand over their land to them in the same condition. [4] The Pelasgians answered, "When a ship sails with a north wind from your land to ours in a single day, then we'll

54 Brauron, on the east coast of Attica, had a sanctuary of Artemis with a festival in which Athenian women and girls took part.

55 In legend the women of Lemnos murdered the men of the island; Thoas was its king.

hand it over," knowing that this was impossible. For Attica lies far to the south of Lemnos.

6.140 That was how things stood then. But very many years later, when the Chersonese on the Hellespont came under Athenian control, Miltiades son of Cimon made the voyage by ship from Elaeus in the Chersonese to Lemnos while the Etesian winds were blowing steadily, and ordered the Pelasgians to leave the island, reminding them of the oracle, which the Pelasgians had never expected to be fulfilled against them. 2 The people of Hephaestia obeyed; but those of Myrina, who would not accept that the Chersonese was Attic soil, were besieged until they too surrendered. That is how the Athenians and Miltiades took possession of Lemnos.[56]

56 The Etesian winds are the steady north winds of the Aegean summer; Hephaestia and Myrina were the two cities of Lemnos.

Book 7 (Polymnia)

Xerxes marches on Greece with a vast army; the Greeks prepare; the stand at Thermopylae.

XERXES DECIDES ON WAR

Darius dies before he can punish Athens; Mardonius urges Xerxes to invade, and Artabanus argues against it.

7.1 The news of the battle fought at Marathon reached King Darius son of Hystaspes, who was already deeply angered with the Athenians because of their attack on Sardis. Now he grew far angrier still and was all the more eager to march against Greece. 2 At once he sent messengers around to the various cities with orders to prepare an army, and he required each of them to supply much more than before: ships, horses, grain and transport vessels. As these orders went around, Asia was in turmoil for three years, while the best men were enlisted for the campaign against Greece and made their preparations. 3 In the fourth year the Egyptians, who had been enslaved by Cambyses, revolted from the Persians. Then Darius was all the more eager to march against both.

7.2 As Darius was preparing to set out against Egypt and Athens, a great quarrel broke out among his sons over the leadership, since by Persian law he had to name a king before going on campaign. 2 Before he became king, Darius had had three sons by his first wife, a daughter of Gobryas, and after he became king, four more by Atossa daughter of Cyrus. Of the first group, Artobazanes was the eldest; of the later ones, Xerxes. Since they were not sons of the same mother, they were at odds. 3 Artobazanes argued that he was the eldest of all the offspring,

and that it was the custom among all mankind for the eldest to hold the rule. Xerxes argued that he was the son of Atossa daughter of Cyrus, and that it was Cyrus who had won the Persians their freedom.

7.3 Darius had not yet declared his decision when, at this very time, Demaratus son of Ariston happened to have come up to Susa. He had been stripped of the kingship at Sparta and had taken himself into exile from Lacedaemon. 2 When this man learned of the dispute between Darius' sons, he went to Xerxes, so the story goes, and advised him to add a further argument to what he was saying: that he had been born to Darius when Darius was already king and held power over the Persians, whereas Artobazanes had been born when Darius was still a private citizen;[1] 3 so it was neither reasonable nor just for anyone else to have the privilege ahead of him. After all, Demaratus said in his advice, even at Sparta the custom was that if some sons were born before their father became king, and another came late, born after he was king, the succession to the kingship went to the later-born. 4 Xerxes made use of Demaratus' advice, and Darius, recognizing that what he said was just, declared him king. In my opinion, Xerxes would have become king even without this advice, for Atossa held all the power.

7.4 Having declared Xerxes king of the Persians, Darius was eager to march. But in the year after this and the Egyptian revolt, while he was making his preparations, it so happened that Darius himself died, after a reign of thirty-six years in all. He never managed to punish either the rebellious Egyptians or the Athenians.

7.5 When Darius died, the kingship passed to his son Xerxes. Now Xerxes was at first not at all eager to march against Greece, and he set about gathering an army against Egypt. But Mardonius son of Gobryas was at his court and had more influence with him than any other Persian; he was Xerxes' cousin, the son of Darius' sister. He kept pressing an argument along these

1 Demaratus, one of Sparta's two kings, had been deposed through the intrigues of his fellow king Cleomenes around 491 BC (6.61–70).

lines: [2] "Master, it isn't reasonable that the Athenians, who have done the Persians so much harm, should not pay the penalty for what they've done. Still, for now you should see to the business you have in hand. But once you've tamed Egypt, which has grown so insolent, lead an army against Athens, so that you'll have a good name among men, and so that in future people will think twice before marching against your land." [3] This argument of his was one of vengeance; but he used to add a further point to it: that Europe was an exceedingly beautiful country, which bore every kind of cultivated tree, was of the highest excellence, and was fit for the King alone of mortals to possess.

[7.6] He said this because he was eager for new ventures and wanted to be governor of Greece himself. In time he worked on Xerxes and persuaded him to do it, for other things too came to his aid in persuading Xerxes. [2] On the one hand, messengers had come from Thessaly, from the Aleuadae, inviting the King to invade Greece and offering him every support; these Aleuadae were kings of Thessaly. On the other hand, those of the Pisistratids who had come up to Susa used the same arguments as the Aleuadae, and offered him something more besides. [3] They had come up bringing with them Onomacritus, an Athenian, an oracle-reciter who had arranged the oracles of Musaeus, having first made up their quarrel with him.[2] For Onomacritus had been banished from Athens by Hipparchus son of Pisistratus, after Lasus of Hermione caught him in the act of inserting into the writings of Musaeus an oracle that the islands lying off Lemnos would vanish into the sea. [4] That was why Hipparchus banished him, though before that he had been on the closest terms with him. Now he had come up with them, and whenever he came into the King's presence, the Pisistratids would speak of him in grand terms and he would recite from the oracles. If any of them portended a setback for the foreigner, he said nothing of those; instead he picked out the most favorable ones, telling how it was fated that the Hellespont should be bridged by a Per-

2 The Pisistratids, the family of the Athenian tyrant Pisistratus, had been expelled from Athens in 510 BC and had taken refuge with the Persians.

sian man and describing the march. [5] So he kept plying the King with his oracles, while the Pisistratids and the Aleuadae kept offering their opinions.[3]

7.7 Once Xerxes had been persuaded to march against Greece, he first, in the second year after Darius' death, made an expedition against the rebels. He subdued them and reduced all Egypt to a far harsher slavery than it had known under Darius, and then entrusted it to Achaemenes, his own brother and Darius' son. Some time later, while Achaemenes was governing Egypt, he was killed by Inaros son of Psammetichus, a Libyan.[4]

7.8 After the conquest of Egypt, when Xerxes was about to take the expedition against Athens in hand, he called a special assembly of the noblest Persians, to learn their opinions and to tell them all himself what he intended. When they had gathered, Xerxes spoke as follows.

7.8a "Persians, I will not be the first to introduce this custom among you; I have received it and will follow it. As I learn from our elders, we have never yet stayed still since we took over this supremacy from the Medes, when Cyrus overthrew Astyages. It is a god who leads us on this way, and as we follow, many of our undertakings turn out for the better. What Cyrus and Cambyses and my father Darius accomplished, and the nations they added, there is no need to tell you, since you know it well. [2] Ever since I took over this throne, I have been considering how I might not fall short of those who held this honor before me, and how I might add no less power to the Persians than they did. And as I consider it, I find that we stand to win glory, and a land no smaller or poorer than the one we now possess, but more fruitful, and at the same time vengeance and retribution. That is why I have now gathered you together: to lay before you what I have in mind to do."

7.8b "I intend to bridge the Hellespont and lead an army through Europe against Greece, so as to punish the Athenians

3 Musaeus was a legendary poet and seer whose oracles circulated in written collections.

4 Inaros led an Egyptian revolt against Persia around 460 BC, with Athenian help.

for all they have done to the Persians and to my father. 2 You saw how my father Darius too was set on marching against these men. But he is dead, and he never got the chance to take his revenge. So on his behalf and on behalf of the other Persians, I will not stop until I have taken Athens and burned it—since it was they who first did wrong to me and my father. 3 First they came to Sardis with Aristagoras of Miletus, our slave, and burned the groves and the temples. Second, what they did to us when we landed in their country, when Datis and Artaphrenes were in command—that, I take it, you all know."[5]

7.8c "For these reasons, then, I am resolved to march against them. And when I reckon it up, I find these advantages in it. If we subdue these men and their neighbors, who live in the land of Pelops the Phrygian, we will make the Persian land border on the sky of Zeus. 2 For the sun will look down on no land bordering ours: with you I will make them all one land, once I have passed through the whole of Europe. 3 I am told this is how things stand: once those I have mentioned are out of the way, there will be no city of men and no nation on earth left that will be able to meet us in battle. In this way both those who are guilty toward us and those who are innocent will bear the yoke of slavery.[6]

7.8d This is how you would please me: when I give you notice of the time you must come, every one of you must be there, and with a will. And whoever comes with the best-equipped army, I will give him the gifts that are considered most precious in our country. 2 This, then, is what must be done. But so that I don't seem to you to be deciding on my own, I put the matter before you all, and I invite any of you who wishes to state his opinion." With these words he stopped.

7.9 After him Mardonius spoke: "Master, you are the best not only of all the Persians who have ever lived but of all who ever

5 Aristagoras led the Ionian revolt against Persia, during which Athenian and Ionian troops burned Sardis in 498 BC (5.97–102). Datis and Artaphrenes commanded the Persian forces defeated at Marathon in 490 BC.

6 The land of Pelops is the Peloponnese ("island of Pelops"); Pelops was said to have come to Greece from Asia Minor.

will be. In everything else you've said, you have hit on what is best and truest, and you won't let the Ionians who live in Europe laugh at us, worthless as they are. 2 It would be a terrible thing indeed if we have subdued the Sacae and Indians and Ethiopians and Assyrians, and many other great nations, and hold them as slaves—though they had done the Persians no wrong, and we simply wanted to add to our power—and yet we don't punish the Greeks, who were the first to do us wrong."

7.9a "What would we be afraid of? What mass of numbers? What power of wealth? We know how they fight, and we know their power is weak. We have conquered their children, those who live in our land and are called Ionians, Aeolians and Dorians. 2 I have tested these men myself already, when I marched against them at your father's command. I advanced as far as Macedonia and fell only a little short of reaching Athens itself, and no one came out to meet me in battle.

7.9b And yet, as I'm told, the Greeks are in the habit of waging their wars in the most senseless way, out of wrongheadedness and stupidity. Once they've declared war on each other, they seek out the finest, most level piece of ground, go down to it and fight there—so that even the winners come away with heavy losses, and of the losers I needn't say a word, for they're utterly wiped out. 2 Since they all speak the same language, they ought to settle their differences through heralds and messengers, or by any means other than battle. And if they absolutely had to go to war with each other, they ought to find out where each side is hardest to defeat, and try their strength there. So the Greeks, with this poor way of doing things, didn't even get as far as thinking of fighting when I advanced as far as Macedonia.

7.9c So who, my King, is going to stand against you and offer war, when you bring the whole host of Asia and all its ships? In my view the Greeks have not risen to such a pitch of daring. But if I should turn out to be wrong in my judgment, and they were carried away by folly and came out to fight us, they would learn that we are the best soldiers in the world. Still, let nothing go

untried. Nothing happens of itself; everything people achieve usually comes from trying."

7.10 Having smoothed the way for Xerxes' opinion with these words, Mardonius stopped. The other Persians kept silent and did not dare to declare an opinion contrary to the one proposed, until Artabanus son of Hystaspes, who was Xerxes' uncle and relied on that very fact, spoke as follows.

7.10a "My King, if opposing opinions are not spoken, one cannot choose the better of them, but must go with the one that has been stated. If they are spoken, one can. It's like pure gold: we can't tell it on its own, but when we rub it against other gold we can tell which is better. 2 I told your father too, my brother Darius, not to march against the Scythians, men who have no city anywhere on earth. But he, hoping to subdue the nomad Scythians, wouldn't listen to me. He marched, and came back having lost many good men from his army. 3 And you, my King, are about to march against men far better than the Scythians, who are said to be the best both by sea and by land. It is right that I tell you what danger lies in this.

7.10b You say you will bridge the Hellespont and lead an army through Europe to Greece. Now suppose you happen to be defeated either on land or at sea, or even both. These men are said to be brave, and one can judge as much from the fact that so great an army, which came into Attica with Datis and Artaphrenes, was destroyed by the Athenians alone. 2 Granted, they didn't succeed on both fronts. But if they attack with their ships, win a sea battle, sail to the Hellespont and then break up the bridge—that, my King, is where the danger lies.

7.10c And I'm not working this out by any wisdom of my own. I'm thinking of the kind of disaster that once very nearly overtook us, when your father bridged the Thracian Bosporus, spanned the river Ister and crossed over against the Scythians. Then the Scythians tried every means of begging the Ionians, who had been entrusted with guarding the bridges over the Ister, to break up the crossing. 2 And at that time, if Histiaeus the tyrant of Miletus had gone along with the opinion of the other

tyrants instead of opposing it, the Persians' power would have been finished. It's a terrible thing even to hear it said, that all the King's power once hung on a single man.[7]

7.10d So don't choose to run into any such danger when there's no need for it; listen to me. For now, dismiss this assembly. Later, whenever you see fit, think it over by yourself and then announce what seems best to you. 2 For I find that good planning is the greatest gain. Even if something turns out against it, the plan was no less well made; it is fortune that has defeated it. Whereas the man who has planned badly, if fortune goes his way, has had a windfall—but his planning was no less bad.

7.10e You see how the god strikes with his thunderbolt the creatures that stand out above the rest and won't let them show off, while the small ones don't provoke him at all. And you see how it is always the largest buildings and the tallest trees that his bolts hit. For the god loves to cut down everything that stands out. In the same way a great army is destroyed by a small one, like this: when the god in his jealousy sends panic or thunder among them, and so they perish in a way unworthy of themselves. For the god allows no one but himself to think proud thoughts.

7.10f Rushing into anything breeds mistakes, and from mistakes great losses usually come. But in holding back there is good—even if it doesn't seem so at once, one will discover it in time.

7.10g That is my advice to you, my King. And you, Mardonius son of Gobryas, stop talking nonsense about the Greeks, who don't deserve to be spoken ill of. By slandering the Greeks you're egging the King on to march, and it's for this very purpose, it seems to me, that you're straining every nerve. Don't let it happen this way. 2 Slander is a most terrible thing. In it there are two who do wrong and one who is wronged. The slanderer does wrong by accusing a man who isn't present; the listener does wrong by being persuaded before he has learned the exact

7 The Ister is the Danube. A tyrant was a ruler who had seized sole power, not necessarily a cruel one.

truth; and the one who is absent from the conversation is wronged by both of them—slandered by the one, and thought a bad man by the other.

7.10h But if we really must march against these men, come then: let the King himself stay in the Persians' homeland, and let the two of us stake our children. You lead the army yourself, choosing whatever men you like and taking as large an army as you wish. 2 If things go for the King the way you say, let my sons be put to death, and me too along with them. But if they go the way I predict, let your sons suffer this, and you with them—if you come back home. 3 But if you won't undertake this, and you are going to lead an army against Greece regardless, then I tell you that some of those left behind here will hear that Mardonius has brought some great disaster on the Persians and is being torn apart by dogs and birds, somewhere in the land of the Athenians or else in that of the Lacedaemonians—if not even earlier, on the way—having learned what kind of men you are persuading the King to march against."[8]

7.11 That was what Artabanus said, and Xerxes, in a rage, replied: "Artabanus, you are my father's brother; that will save you from getting the reward your foolish words deserve. But since you are a coward with no spirit, I lay this disgrace on you: you shall not march with me against Greece, but stay here with the women. I will accomplish everything I said even without you. 2 May I not be the son of Darius son of Hystaspes, son of Arsames, son of Ariaramnes, son of Teispes, son of Cyrus, son of Cambyses, son of Teispes, son of Achaemenes, if I do not punish the Athenians! I know full well that if we keep quiet, they won't; they'll certainly march against our land, if we can judge from what they have already begun—they who burned Sardis and marched into Asia. 3 So neither side can draw back. The contest before us is to do or to suffer: either all this land will come under the Greeks, or all theirs under the Persians. In this enmity there is no middle ground. 4 So it is right that we, who suffered first, should now take our vengeance—so that I may also find out

8 Lacedaemonians: the Spartans and the communities they ruled.

this terrible thing I'm going to suffer by marching against these men: men whom even Pelops the Phrygian, a slave of my forefathers, subdued so thoroughly that to this day both the people themselves and their land are named after their conqueror."

XERXES' DREAMS

A dream twice orders Xerxes to march, and Artabanus, sleeping in the King's bed, sees it too.

7.12 So far the talk went. Afterward night came on, and Artabanus' opinion began to trouble Xerxes. Thinking it over in the night, he became quite convinced that marching against Greece was no business of his. With this new decision made, he fell asleep, and then, at some point in the night, he saw a vision of this kind, as the Persians tell it. Xerxes dreamed that a tall, handsome man stood over him and said, 2 "So you're changing your plans, Persian, and won't lead an army against Greece, after ordering the Persians to muster their troops? You're not doing well to change your mind, and there's no one here who will pardon you. No—take the road you decided on during the day."

7.13 When the man had said this, Xerxes dreamed that he flew away. When day dawned, Xerxes paid no attention to this dream. Instead he gathered the same Persians he had assembled before and said to them: 2 "Persians, forgive me for changing my plans so abruptly. I haven't yet reached the full height of my own judgment, and those who urge me to do that thing never leave me alone for a moment. When I heard Artabanus' opinion, my youth boiled over at once, so that I flung more unseemly words at an older man than I should have. But now I see he was right, and I will follow his opinion. 3 So, since I've changed my mind and will not march against Greece, be at ease."

7.14 When the Persians heard this, they were delighted and bowed down before him. But when night came, the same dream again stood over Xerxes as he slept and said: "Son of Darius, so you have openly renounced the expedition before the Persians, and made nothing of my words, as though you had heard them

from no one? Know this well: unless you lead your army out at once, this is what will spring up for you from it. Just as you became great and mighty in a short time, so you will quickly be brought low again."

7.15 Xerxes was terrified by the vision. He leapt up from his bed and sent a messenger to summon Artabanus, and when he arrived Xerxes said this to him: "Artabanus, in the moment I wasn't in my right mind when I spoke foolish words to you in return for good advice. 2 But not long afterward I changed my mind and saw that I ought to do what you had proposed. Yet though I want to, I can't do it. Ever since I turned and changed my mind, a dream keeps visiting me and appearing to me, and it in no way approves of my doing this. Just now it even threatened me before it went away. 3 So if it is a god who is sending it, and it is altogether his pleasure that an expedition be made against Greece, this same dream will fly to you as well and give you the same command it gives me. And I find that this would most likely happen if you took all my attire and put it on, then sat on my throne, and after that went to sleep in my bed."

7.16 That is what Xerxes said to him. Artabanus did not obey the first order, since he did not think himself worthy to sit on the royal throne; but at last, when he was being compelled, he said the following and then did as he was told.

7.16a "My King, I count it of equal worth to think well and to be willing to listen to someone who gives good advice. You have both these qualities, but the company of bad men trips you up—just as, they say, blasts of wind falling on the sea, the most useful of all things to mankind, do not allow it to follow its own nature. 2 As for me, being abused by you did not sting me with grief nearly so much as this: when two opinions were set before the Persians, one increasing arrogance, the other checking it and saying that it was a bad thing to teach the soul always to seek to have more than it has—when such opinions were set before you, you chose the one more dangerous for yourself and for the Persians.

7.16b Now, since you have turned to the better course, you say that as you give up the expedition against the Greeks a dream keeps visiting you, sent by some god, and will not let you abandon the expedition. 2 But these things are not divine either, my son. The dreams that wander into people's sleep are of the kind I will teach you, being many years older than you: the visions that most often wander through our dreams are the things a person has been thinking about during the day. And in the days before this we had this expedition very much in hand.

7.16c But if this is not what I explain it to be, but something that has a share in the divine, you have summed it all up yourself: then let it appear to me as well as to you and give me its orders. But it should be no more likely to appear to me if I'm wearing your clothes than if I'm wearing my own, nor any more if I'm resting in your bed than in mine—if it means to appear at all. 2 For whatever it is that appears to you in your sleep, it surely hasn't reached such a pitch of simplemindedness that it will see me and think I'm you, judging by your clothes. If it takes no account of me and doesn't see fit to appear to me, whether I wear my clothes or yours, and doesn't visit me, then we will have learned something. For if it really does keep coming back, I would say myself that it is divine. 3 But if you have decided that this is how it must be, and it can't be turned aside, and I must now sleep in your bed—very well: when I have done all this, let it appear to me too. Until then I will keep to my present opinion."

7.17 Having said this much, Artabanus did as he was told, expecting to show that Xerxes was talking nonsense. He put on Xerxes' clothes and sat on the royal throne, and when after that he went to bed, the same dream that had been visiting Xerxes came to him as he slept. It stood over Artabanus and said: 2 "So you are the one who is trying to dissuade Xerxes from marching against Greece, supposedly because you care for him? But neither in the future nor right now will you get away with trying to avert what must happen. As for Xerxes, what he must suffer if he disobeys has been made plain to the man himself."

7.18 Artabanus dreamed that the dream was making these threats and was about to burn out his eyes with hot irons. With a loud shout he leapt up, sat down beside Xerxes, and after telling him the whole vision he had seen in his sleep, he went on to say this: 2 "My King, I am a man who has already seen many great powers brought down by lesser ones, and so I would not let you give way to your youth in everything. I knew how bad it is to desire many things; I remembered how Cyrus' expedition against the Massagetae turned out, and I remembered Cambyses' against the Ethiopians too; and I myself marched with Darius against the Scythians. 3 Knowing all this, I held that if you stayed at peace all men would count you blessed. But since some impulse from heaven has arisen, and destruction sent by the gods, it seems, is overtaking the Greeks, I myself turn and change my opinion. Now tell the Persians what has been sent by the god, and order them to follow your earlier instructions for the preparations; and act in such a way that, since the god is granting this, nothing on your part is lacking." 4 When these words had been spoken, the two of them were elated by the vision, and as soon as day came Xerxes laid all this before the Persians; and Artabanus, who before had been the only one openly urging against the expedition, now openly urged it on.

7.19 After this, when Xerxes had set his heart on the expedition, a third vision came to him in his sleep. When the Magi heard it, they interpreted it as referring to the whole earth and meaning that all mankind would be his slaves. The vision was this: Xerxes dreamed that he was crowned with a shoot of olive, that branches from the olive covered the whole earth, and that afterward the crown lying around his head vanished. 2 When the Magi had interpreted it, every one of the Persians who had been assembled at once rode off to his own province and threw all his zeal into carrying out his orders, each wanting to win the prom-

ised gifts for himself; and in this way Xerxes gathered his army, searching out every region of the continent.[9]

THE GREAT ARMY

Xerxes gathers the greatest army ever known and has a canal dug through the Athos peninsula.

7.20 For from the conquest of Egypt he spent four full years preparing the army and what the army needed, and in the course of the fifth year he set out on campaign with an enormous host. 2 Of all the expeditions we know of, this was by far the greatest, so that none appeared anything beside it: not Darius' against the Scythians; nor the Scythian one, when the Scythians, pursuing the Cimmerians, invaded the land of the Medes and conquered and occupied nearly all of upper Asia, for which Darius later sought vengeance; nor, according to the stories, that of the sons of Atreus against Ilium; nor that of the Mysians and Teucrians before the Trojan War, who crossed into Europe at the Bosporus, subdued all the Thracians, came down to the Ionian Sea, and pushed south as far as the river Peneus.[10]

7.21 All these expeditions, and any others added to them, are not equal to this one alone. For what nation of Asia did Xerxes not lead against Greece? What water, when his army drank it, did not run dry, except the great rivers? 2 Some provided ships, some were posted to the infantry; some were assigned to supply cavalry, others horse-transports to sail with the army, others warships for the bridges, others food and ships.

7.22 First, because those who had sailed around Athos the first time had come to grief, preparations had been under way at Athos for about three years. Triremes lay at anchor at Elaeus in the Chersonese; setting out from there, men of every nation in the army dug under the lash, coming in relays; and the people

9 The Magi were a priestly caste of the Medes, consulted by Persian kings on dreams and omens.

10 The sons of Atreus are Agamemnon and Menelaus, who led the Greeks against Troy (Ilium); the Teucrians are the Trojans.

who lived around Athos dug as well.[11] [2] Bubares son of Megabazus and Artachaees son of Artaeus, both Persians, were in charge of the work. Athos is a great and famous mountain running down to the sea, and people live on it. Where the mountain ends on the mainland side it forms a peninsula, with an isthmus about twelve stades across; this is flat ground with low hills, from the sea of the Acanthians to the sea opposite Torone. [3] On this isthmus, where Athos ends, lies Sane, a Greek city. The cities beyond Sane but within Athos, which the Persian was then setting out to turn from mainland towns into island towns, are these: Dium, Olophyxus, Acrothoum, Thyssus, Cleonae.[12]

7.23 These are the cities that occupy Athos. The non-Greeks dug as follows, dividing the ground among themselves by nations. They drew a straight line near the city of Sane, and when the channel grew deep, some stood at the bottom and dug, others handed the soil as it was dug out to others standing above them on platforms, and these in turn received it and passed it on to others, until it reached those at the top; and these carried it off and threw it away. [2] For all of them except the Phoenicians, the sides of the cutting kept caving in and doubled their labor; since they made the opening at the top and at the bottom the same width, this was bound to happen to them. [3] The Phoenicians show their skill in their other works, and in this one especially. Taking the portion that fell to them by lot, they dug, making the upper opening of the channel twice as wide as the channel itself was to be, and narrowing it steadily as the work went on; so that at the bottom their work came out equal in width to the others'. [4] There is a meadow there, where they had a marketplace and a trading post; and a great deal of grain came to them from Asia, already ground.

7.24 As far as I can judge by inference, Xerxes ordered this digging out of pride, wishing to display his power and leave a memorial of himself. For though they could have hauled the

11 A trireme was the standard warship of the period, rowed by three banks of oars.

12 A stade is about 600 feet.

ships across the isthmus without any trouble, he ordered them to dig a channel for the sea, wide enough for two triremes to sail side by side under oars. The same men who had been assigned the digging were also ordered to bridge the river Strymon.

7.25 This, then, is what he was doing. He also had cables prepared for the bridges, of papyrus and of white flax, assigning the task to the Phoenicians and Egyptians, and he had provisions laid up for the army, so that neither the army nor the pack animals should go hungry on the march to Greece. 2 He found out about the places and ordered the stores laid up wherever was most convenient, having them brought from all over Asia in merchant ships and ferries, different supplies to different places. They brought most of it to the place in Thrace called White Headland; others, as they were assigned, brought it to Tyrodiza in the territory of Perinthus, to Doriscus, to Eion on the Strymon, and to Macedonia.

7.26 While these men were at work on their assigned labor, the whole land army had been assembled and was marching with Xerxes to Sardis, having set out from Critalla in Cappadocia; for that was where the entire army that was to go overland with Xerxes himself had been ordered to gather. 2 Which of the governors brought the best-equipped force and won the gifts the King had offered, I cannot say; for I do not know that they ever came to a judgment on the matter at all. 3 After crossing the river Halys they entered Phrygia, and marching through it they came to Celaenae, where the springs of the river Maeander rise, and of another river no smaller than the Maeander, whose name is Catarrhactes; it rises in the very marketplace of Celaenae and flows into the Maeander. In this city also hangs the skin of the Silenus Marsyas, which, according to the Phrygian story, was flayed off him by Apollo and hung up there.[13]

7.27 In this city Pythius son of Atys, a Lydian, was waiting for them, and he entertained the King's whole army, and Xerxes himself, with the most lavish hospitality, and declared that he

13 Marsyas, a satyr-like Silenus, was said to have challenged Apollo to a musical contest and lost.

wished to provide money for the war. [2] When Pythius offered money, Xerxes asked the Persians who were present who this Pythius was and how much wealth he had, to make such an offer. They said: "My King, this is the man who gave your father Darius the golden plane tree and the vine; and he is now the richest man we know of, after you."

7.28 Xerxes was surprised at the last thing they said, and he then asked Pythius himself how much wealth he had. Pythius said: "My King, I won't hide it from you or pretend not to know what I own; I know it, and I'll tell you exactly. [2] As soon as I learned that you were coming down to the Greek sea, I wanted to give you money for the war, so I looked into it, and when I reckoned it up I found I had two thousand talents of silver, and of gold four million daric staters, less seven thousand. [3] These I give to you. For myself, I have a sufficient living from my slaves and my lands."[14]

7.29 So he spoke, and Xerxes, pleased with what he said, replied: "My Lydian friend, since I left Persian territory I have met no man until now who was willing to set out hospitality for my army, or who came into my presence and offered of his own accord to contribute money to me for the war—except you. But you have entertained my army lavishly and are offering great sums of money. [2] In return for this, I give you these privileges. I make you my guest-friend, and I'll complete your four million staters by giving you the seven thousand from my own store, so that your four million won't be seven thousand short, but you'll have a round sum, made up by me. [3] Keep what you have acquired yourself, and be sure always to be the man you are now; for if you act like this, you will never regret it, either now or in time to come."[15]

7.30 Having said this and made it good, he continued his march onward. Passing a Phrygian town called Anaua and a lake from

14 A talent was a large weight of silver (about 57 pounds); the daric was the Persian royal gold coin.

15 Guest-friendship was a formal, lasting bond of mutual hospitality and obligation between men of different communities.

which salt is produced, he came to Colossae, a great city of Phrygia, where the river Lycus plunges into a chasm in the earth and disappears; then it reappears about five stades away, and it too flows into the Maeander. [2] Setting out from Colossae toward the borders of Phrygia and Lydia, the army came to the city of Cydrara, where a pillar fixed in the ground, set up by Croesus, marks the boundary with an inscription.

7.31 When he passed from Phrygia into Lydia, he came to where the road divides, the left fork leading toward Caria and the right to Sardis. Anyone taking the right road must cross the river Maeander and pass the city of Callatebus, where craftsmen make honey out of tamarisk and wheat. Taking this road, Xerxes found a plane tree which, for its beauty, he presented with ornaments of gold and placed in the care of one of the Immortals as its keeper; and on the next day he arrived at the city of the Lydians.[16]

7.32 On arriving at Sardis, he first sent heralds to Greece to demand earth and water and to give notice that they should prepare dinners for the King. He sent this demand for earth everywhere except to Athens and Lacedaemon. His reason for sending a second time for earth and water was this: those who had not given them before, when Darius sent, he was quite sure would give them now out of fear; and it was to find this out for certain that he sent.[17]

THE BRIDGES OVER THE HELLESPONT

A storm wrecks the bridges; Xerxes has the Hellespont whipped, and new bridges are built.

7.33 After this he made ready to march to Abydos. Meanwhile others were bridging the Hellespont from Asia to Europe. On the Chersonese of the Hellespont, between the city of Sestos and Madytus, there is a rugged headland running down to the sea opposite Abydos. It was here, not long afterward, when Xanthip-

16 The Immortals were the King's elite guard of ten thousand Persians.
17 Giving earth and water was the token of submission to the Persian King.

pus son of Ariphron was general, that the Athenians captured a Persian named Artayctes, governor of Sestos, and nailed him alive to a plank; he was the man who used to bring women into the sanctuary of Protesilaus at Elaeus and do unholy things there.[18]

7.34 So it was to this headland, starting from Abydos, that those who had been given the task built the bridges, the Phoenicians one with cables of white flax, the Egyptians the other with papyrus. It is seven stades from Abydos to the opposite shore. But when the strait had been bridged, a great storm came up, smashed it all to pieces, and broke it apart.

7.35 When Xerxes heard of it, he was furious, and he ordered that the Hellespont be given three hundred lashes with a whip and that a pair of fetters be lowered into the sea. I have even heard that he sent branders along with them to brand the Hellespont. 2 At any rate he ordered them, as they flogged it, to speak these un-Greek and presumptuous words: "You bitter water, your master imposes this punishment on you because you wronged him, though you had suffered no wrong from him. King Xerxes will cross you whether you like it or not. It's only right, it seems, that no one sacrifices to you, since you are a muddy and salty river." 3 So he ordered the sea punished in this way, and the heads of those in charge of bridging the Hellespont cut off.

7.36 Those to whom this thankless office had been assigned carried it out, and other master builders built the bridges. They built them like this. They lashed together fifty-oared ships and triremes, three hundred and sixty under the bridge on the side of the Black Sea and three hundred and fourteen under the other, set at an angle to the Black Sea and in line with the current of the Hellespont, to ease the strain on the cables. 2 When they had lashed them together, they let down very long anchors: on the one bridge toward the Black Sea, because of the winds blowing out from within it, and on the other toward the west

18 Protesilaus, honored with a shrine at Elaeus, was said to be the first Greek killed at Troy.

and the Aegean, because of the west and south winds. They left a gap in the line of fifty-oared ships and triremes for passing through, so that anyone who wished could sail in small boats into the Black Sea and out of it. 3 When they had done this, they stretched the cables taut from the land, twisting them with wooden windlasses. This time they did not keep the two kinds separate, but assigned to each bridge two cables of white flax and four of papyrus. The thickness and quality were the same, but the flax cables were proportionally heavier: a cubit of them weighed a talent.[19] 4 When the strait had been bridged, they sawed up logs, cut them to the width of the bridge, and laid them in order on top of the taut cables; and having laid them side by side, they then fastened them down again on top. 5 When they had done this, they brought on brushwood; when they had laid the brushwood in order, they brought earth on top of it; and when they had stamped down the earth, they ran a fence along both sides, so that the pack animals and the horses would not be frightened by looking out over the sea.

7.37 Word came that the work at the bridges and at Athos was finished. This included the breakwaters at the mouths of the canal, which had been built because of the surf so that the mouths of the cutting would not silt up, and the canal itself was reported to be completely finished. The army had wintered at Sardis, and now, fully prepared, it set out at the beginning of spring and marched for Abydos. 2 Just as it set out, the sun left its place in the sky and vanished, though there were no clouds and the sky was perfectly clear, and night came in place of day. When Xerxes saw and understood this, it troubled him, and he asked the Magi what the apparition was meant to portend. 3 They told him that the god was showing the Greeks in advance the eclipse of their cities. The sun, they said, was the Greeks' foreteller, and the moon was theirs. When Xerxes heard this he was overjoyed, and he pressed on with the march.

7.38 As he was leading the army out, Pythius the Lydian came to Xerxes. He was alarmed by the sign in the sky and

19 A cubit is about 18 inches.

emboldened by the gifts he had received, and he said: "Master, there's something I'd like to ask of you and receive. It happens to be a light thing for you to grant, but it would be a great thing for me." [2] Xerxes thought he would ask for anything rather than what he actually asked for. He said he would grant it and told him to say what he wanted. When Pythius heard this, he took courage and said: "Master, I happen to have five sons, and it has fallen to all of them to march with you against Greece. [3] My King, take pity on me, at the age I've reached, and release one of my sons from service, the eldest, so that he can look after me and my property. Take the other four with you, and may you accomplish what you have in mind and come home again."

7.39 Xerxes was furious and answered: "You wretch! I am marching against Greece in person and taking with me my sons and brothers and relatives and friends. And you dared to bring up a son of yours, when you are my slave and ought to have followed me with your whole household, your wife included? Know this well, then: a man's spirit lives in his ears. When it hears good things, it fills the body with delight, but when it hears the opposite, it swells with rage. [2] When you did me good service and promised more of the same, you could not boast that you had outdone the King in generosity. Now that you've turned to shamelessness, you won't get what you deserve, but less than you deserve. You and four of your sons are saved by the ties of hospitality between us. But you'll pay with the life of the one son you cling to most." [3] With that answer, he immediately ordered the men whose task this was to find the eldest of Pythius' sons and cut him in half. Then they were to lay out the two halves, one on the right of the road and the other on the left, and the army was to pass between them.

7.40 They did this, and then the army passed through. In front went the baggage carriers and the pack animals. After them came a mixed host of all sorts of peoples, jumbled together and not separated by nation. When more than half of it had passed, a gap was left, and these men did not come near the King. [2] Ahead of him went a thousand horsemen, picked from all the Persians.

Then came a thousand spearmen, also picked from all of them, holding their spears pointed down toward the ground. Then came ten sacred horses, called Nesaean, decked out as splendidly as possible. [3] The horses are called Nesaean for this reason. There is a great plain in Media called the Nesaean plain, and it is this plain that produces these big horses. [4] Behind these ten horses came the sacred chariot of Zeus, drawn by eight white horses. Behind the horses, in turn, a charioteer followed on foot, holding the reins, for no human being ever mounts that seat. Behind this came Xerxes himself, in a chariot drawn by Nesaean horses. Beside him stood his charioteer, whose name was Patiramphes, son of the Persian Otanes.[20]

7.41 That is how Xerxes rode out of Sardis, but whenever the fancy took him, he would switch from the chariot to a covered carriage. Behind him came a thousand spearmen, the best and noblest of the Persians, holding their spears in the usual way. Then came another thousand horsemen picked from the Persians, and after the cavalry, ten thousand men picked from the rest of the Persians. These were on foot. [2] A thousand of them had golden pomegranates on their spears in place of butt-spikes, and they enclosed the others on all sides. The nine thousand inside them had silver pomegranates. The men who pointed their spears to the ground also had golden pomegranates, and those who followed closest to Xerxes had golden apples. Behind the ten thousand came ten thousand Persian cavalry. After the cavalry there was a gap of as much as two stades, and then the rest of the mass followed, all jumbled together.

7.42 From Lydia the army made its way to the river Caicus and the land of Mysia. Setting out from the Caicus, with Mount Cane on its left, it went through Atarneus to the city of Carene. From there it marched through the plain of Thebe, passing the city of Adramyttium and Antandrus, the Pelasgian city. [2] Keeping Ida on its left hand, it went into the land of Ilium. First, while the army halted for the night at the foot of Ida, thunder and fiery whirlwinds fell on it and killed a good many men right there.

20 Herodotus' "Zeus" here is the supreme god of the Persians, Ahuramazda.

7.43 The army reached the river Scamander, the first river since they had set out from Sardis whose stream gave out and was not enough for the army and the animals to drink. When Xerxes arrived at this river, he went up to the Pergamum of Priam, because he wanted to see it. 2 When he had seen it and learned all about what had happened there, he sacrificed a thousand cattle to Athena of Ilium, and the Magi poured libations to the heroes. After they had done this, a panic fell on the camp in the night. At daybreak he marched on from there. He kept on his left the cities of Rhoeteum, Ophryneum and Dardanus, which borders Abydos, and on his right the Gergithae, who are Teucrians.[21]

XERXES AT ABYDOS

Xerxes reviews his forces, weeps at the shortness of life, and debates the risks with Artabanus.

7.44 When Xerxes was in the middle of Abydos, he wanted to see his whole army. A raised throne of white stone had been built for him beforehand on a hill there, expressly for this purpose; the people of Abydos had made it on the King's earlier orders. He took his seat there, looked down on the shore and viewed both the land army and the ships. As he watched, he was seized with a desire to see the ships race. The race took place and the Phoenicians of Sidon won, and he was delighted with the race and with his army.

7.45 He saw the whole Hellespont hidden by ships, and all the shores and the plains of Abydos full of men. Then Xerxes called himself blessed, and after that he wept.

7.46 Artabanus, his uncle, noticed this. He was the man who at the start had freely given his opinion, advising Xerxes not to march against Greece. Seeing Xerxes weep, he asked him: "My King, how very different from each other are what you're doing now and what you did a moment ago! You called yourself blessed, and now you're weeping." 2 Xerxes said: "Yes, because

21 The Pergamum was the citadel of Troy, the city of King Priam in Homer's *Iliad*.

as I was reckoning it up, pity came over me at how short the whole of human life is, if not one of all these men, many as they are, will still be alive a hundred years from now." Artabanus answered: "There are other things we suffer in the course of our lives that are more pitiable than that. [3] In a life as short as this, no man, either among these or among the rest, is born so happy that the wish to be dead rather than alive will not come to him many times, not just once. Misfortunes fall on us and diseases throw us into turmoil, and they make life seem long, short as it is. [4] So, since life is a misery, death has become man's most welcome refuge. And the god, who has given us a taste of how sweet life is, turns out to be jealous in that very gift."

7.47 Xerxes answered: "Artabanus, human life is just as you describe it. But let's stop talking about it, and let's not dwell on bad things when we have good business in hand. Tell me this instead. If the vision in the dream hadn't appeared to you so vividly, would you have kept your original opinion and refused to let me march against Greece, or would you have changed your mind? Come, tell me this truthfully." [2] He answered: "My King, may the vision that appeared in the dream turn out as we both wish. But even now I'm still full of fear and not myself. I weigh many things, and above all I see that the two greatest things of all are your worst enemies."

7.48 To this Xerxes replied: "My good man, what are these two things you say are my worst enemies? Do you find fault with the size of our land army, and does the Greek army look as if it will be many times larger than ours? Or is it that our navy will fall short of theirs? Or both together? If our forces seem to you to be lacking in this respect, we could raise another army as quickly as possible."

7.49 He answered: "My King, no one with any sense could find fault with this army or with the number of ships. But if you gather more, the two things I mean become far more hostile still. These two things are the land and the sea. [2] As far as I can judge, there is no harbor anywhere on the sea big enough to take in this fleet of yours if a storm comes up and be sure of keeping

the ships safe. And yet you need more than one such harbor. You need them all along the coast you're traveling by. [3] Since there are no harbors able to receive you, understand that circumstances rule men, not men circumstances. Now that I've told you one of the two things, I'll go on to the other. [4] The land turns hostile to you in this way. Even if nothing stands in your way, it grows more hostile the farther you advance, as you are always lured onward without noticing it, and men never have their fill of success. [5] I tell you, even if no one opposes you, the land will grow larger as time goes on, and it will breed famine. The best man is the one who is fearful while he makes his plans and reckons that anything at all may happen to him, but bold when it comes to action."

[7.50] Xerxes replies: "Artabanus, each of the points you make is reasonable. But don't fear everything, and don't weigh every possibility equally. If you chose to weigh everything equally in every matter as it comes up, you'd never do anything at all. It's better to be bold about everything and suffer half the dangers than to fear everything in advance and never suffer anything at all. [2] If you dispute everything that's said but can't show what's certain, you're bound to go just as wrong as the man who argued the opposite. On that score the two of you are even. But how can a human being know what's certain? I don't think he can at all. Gain generally comes to those who are willing to act. It is not much inclined to come to those who weigh everything and hang back. [3] You see how far the power of Persia has advanced. If the kings before me had held opinions like yours, or had held other opinions but kept advisers like you, you would never have seen it come this far. As it is, they took risk after risk and brought it to this point. Great things are usually won through great dangers. [4] So we are following their example. We're marching at the finest season of the year, and once we've conquered all of Europe we'll return home, without meeting famine anywhere or suffering anything else unpleasant. For one thing, we're carrying plenty of provisions of our own on the march. For another, whatever

land and people we come to, we'll have their grain. It's farmers we're marching against, not nomads."

7.51 After this Artabanus says: "My King, since you won't let us fear anything at all, then at least take my advice. When there are many matters to consider, one has to speak at greater length. Cyrus son of Cambyses subdued all of Ionia except the Athenians and made it pay tribute to the Persians. 2 I advise you on no account to lead these men against their fathers, since we can get the better of our enemies even without them. If they come with us, they must either be utterly unjust and help enslave their mother city, or utterly just and help to free it. 3 If they are utterly unjust, they bring us no great gain. But if they are utterly just, they can do your army great harm. So take to heart how well the old saying puts it: the whole end is not apparent at the beginning."[22]

7.52 Xerxes replies to this: "Artabanus, of all the opinions you've expressed, this is where you're most mistaken, in fearing that the Ionians will change sides. We have the strongest proof of their loyalty, and you can bear witness to it, along with the others who marched with Darius against the Scythians. The whole Persian army was in their hands to destroy or to save, and they showed justice and loyalty, and did nothing to harm us. 2 Besides, they've left their children, wives and property in our land, so we shouldn't even imagine that they'll attempt any revolt. So don't fear this either. Keep up your courage and safeguard my house and my tyranny, for to you alone of all men I entrust my scepter."[23]

7.53 Having said this, Xerxes sent Artabanus off to Susa. Next he summoned the most distinguished of the Persians, and when they had come he said to them: "Persians, I have gathered you here to ask this of you. Be brave men, and don't disgrace the deeds the Persians have done before, which are great and of

22 The Ionian Greeks of Asia regarded Athens as their mother city, and the Athenians were themselves Ionians.

23 On Darius' Scythian campaign (Book 4), the Ionians guarding his bridge over the Ister refused to destroy it.

great worth. Let each of us individually and all of us together be zealous, because the good we are striving for is common to all. [2] For this reason I urge you to throw yourselves into the war with all your strength. From what I hear, we are marching against brave men, and if we defeat them, no other army in the world will ever stand against us. Now let us cross over, once we have prayed to the gods to whom Persia's lot has fallen."

[7.54] That day they prepared for the crossing. On the next day they waited for the sun, because they wanted to see it rise. Meanwhile they burned all kinds of incense on the bridges and strewed the road with myrtle. [2] As the sun rose, Xerxes poured a libation from a golden bowl into the sea and prayed to the sun that no chance would befall him that would stop him from conquering Europe before he reached its farthest bounds. After praying he threw the bowl into the Hellespont, together with a golden mixing bowl and a Persian sword, the kind they call an akinakes. [3] I cannot say for certain whether he dropped these into the sea as an offering to the sun, or whether he regretted having whipped the Hellespont and was giving the sea these gifts to make amends.

[7.55] When he had done this, they began to cross. The infantry and all the cavalry crossed by one of the bridges, the one toward the Black Sea, and the pack animals and the servants crossed by the one toward the Aegean. [2] In front went the ten thousand Persians, all wearing garlands, and after them the mixed host of all sorts of peoples. These crossed on that day. On the next day the horsemen went first, along with the men who carried their spears pointed down, and these also wore garlands. [3] After them came the sacred horses and the sacred chariot, then Xerxes himself with the spearmen and the thousand horsemen, and after these the rest of the army. At the same time the ships put out for the opposite shore. I have also heard that the King crossed last of all.

[7.56] After Xerxes had crossed into Europe, he watched his army crossing under the whip. His army crossed in seven days and seven nights, without stopping at any time. [2] It is said that there,

when Xerxes had already crossed the Hellespont, a man from the Hellespont said: "Zeus, why have you taken the likeness of a Persian man and the name Xerxes instead of Zeus, and why do you want to lay Greece waste, bringing all mankind with you? You could have done this without them."

7.57 When they had all crossed and set out on the road, a great portent appeared to them. Xerxes took no account of it, though it was easy to interpret: a mare gave birth to a hare. Its meaning was easy to see. Xerxes was going to march his army against Greece with the greatest pride and splendor, but he would come back to the same place running for his life. There had also been another portent while he was at Sardis: 2 a mule gave birth to a mule with two sets of genitals, male and female, with the male above. He took no account of either portent and marched on, and the land army with him.

7.58 The fleet sailed out of the Hellespont and moved along the coast, going in the opposite direction from the land army. 2 It sailed westward, making for Cape Sarpedon, where it had been ordered to arrive and wait. The army on the mainland made its way east, toward the sunrise, through the Chersonese. It had the tomb of Helle, daughter of Athamas, on its right and the city of Cardia on its left, and it marched through the middle of a city whose name happens to be Agora.[24] 3 From there it rounded the gulf called Melas and the river Melas, which the gulf is named after. The river's stream did not hold out for the army on that occasion but ran dry. The army crossed this river and went west, passing the Aeolian city of Aenus and Lake Stentoris, until it came to Doriscus.

THE REVIEW AT DORISCUS

The army is counted at Doriscus, and Herodotus lists each nation, its equipment and its commanders.

7.59 Doriscus is a stretch of coast and a great plain in Thrace, and a great river, the Hebrus, flows through it. A royal fort had been

built there, the one called Doriscus, and Darius had kept a Persian garrison in it ever since the time he marched against the Scythians. [2] Xerxes thought the place suitable for drawing up and counting his army, and that is what he did. On Xerxes' orders the admirals brought all the ships that had arrived at Doriscus to the beach next to it. On this beach stand the Samothracian city of Sale and Zone, and at its end is the famous headland of Serrheum. In ancient times this region belonged to the Cicones. [3] They put in at this beach, hauled the ships ashore and let them dry out. Meanwhile, at Doriscus, Xerxes was counting his army.

7.60 I cannot say exactly how many men each nation contributed, since no one at all reports it. But the whole land army turned out to number one million seven hundred thousand. [2] They counted it this way. They gathered ten thousand men in one place, packed them together as tightly as they could, and drew a circle around them on the outside. When they had drawn the circle, they let the ten thousand go and built a wall of loose stones along it, reaching as high as a man's navel. [3] When they had built this, they brought others into the enclosure, and they went on until they had counted them all in this way. After counting them, they drew them up by nations.[25]

7.61 The peoples who served in the army were these. The Persians were equipped as follows. On their heads they wore what are called tiaras, soft felt caps. On their bodies they wore sleeved tunics of many colors, ... with iron scales that looked like the scales of a fish. On their legs they wore trousers, and instead of ordinary shields they carried wicker ones, with quivers hanging beneath them. They had short spears, large bows and arrows of reed, and also daggers that hung from the belt alongside the right thigh. [2] They provided as commander Otanes, father of Xerxes' wife Amestris. Long ago the Greeks called them

24 The Chersonese is the Gallipoli peninsula. In legend Helle fell from a flying golden ram into the strait named after her, the Hellespont.

25 Modern historians consider this figure impossibly high; most estimates of Xerxes' land army run to a few hundred thousand at most.

Cephenes, but they themselves and their neighbors called them Artaei. [3] When Perseus, son of Danaë and Zeus, came to Cepheus son of Belus and married his daughter Andromeda, a son was born to him, whom he named Perses, and he left this son behind there, since Cepheus happened to have no male offspring. It was from this Perses that the Persians took their name.

7.62 The Medes served equipped in this same way, for this equipment is Median, not Persian. The Medes provided as commander Tigranes, an Achaemenid. Long ago everyone called them Arians, but when Medea the Colchian came from Athens to these Arians, they too changed their name. That is what the Medes themselves say about themselves. [2] The Cissians served equipped like the Persians in every other way, but wore turbans instead of felt caps. The Cissians were commanded by Anaphes son of Otanes. The Hyrcanians were armed like the Persians. Their leader was Megapanus, the man who later governed Babylon.[26]

7.63 The Assyrians served wearing helmets on their heads, some of bronze and some plaited in a foreign fashion that is hard to describe. They had shields, spears and daggers much like the Egyptian ones, and also wooden clubs studded with iron, and linen corselets. The Greeks call these people Syrians, but non-Greeks called them Assyrians. The Chaldaeans were among them. Their commander was Otaspes son of Artachaees.

7.64 The Bactrians served wearing on their heads something very close to what the Medes wore. They carried native bows of reed and short spears. [2] The Sacae, who are Scythians, wore on their heads tall, stiff caps that tapered to a point, and were dressed in trousers. They carried native bows and daggers, and also battle-axes called *sagaris*. Though they were Scythians, they were called Amyrgian Sacae, for the Persians call all Scythians Sacae. The Bactrians and the Sacae were commanded by Hystaspes, son of Darius and of Atossa daughter of Cyrus.

7.65 The Indians wore clothing made from trees and carried bows of reed and arrows of reed tipped with iron. That was how

the Indians were equipped. They were assigned to serve under Pharnazathres son of Artabates.[27]

7.66 The Arians were equipped with Median bows, but otherwise like the Bactrians. The Arians were commanded by Sisamnes son of Hydarnes. The Parthians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, Gandarians and Dadicae served with the same equipment as the Bactrians. 2 Their commanders were these: Artabazus son of Pharnaces commanded the Parthians and Chorasmians, Azanes son of Artaeus the Sogdians, and Artyphius son of Artabanus the Gandarians and Dadicae.

7.67 The Caspians served wearing cloaks of skin and carrying native bows of reed and short swords. That was how they were equipped. Their leader was Ariomardus, the brother of Artyphius. The Sarangians stood out in dyed clothing. They wore boots reaching up to the knee and carried Median bows and spears. The Sarangians were commanded by Pherendates son of Megabazus. 2 The Pactyes wore cloaks of skin and carried native bows and daggers. The Pactyes provided as commander Artayntes son of Ithamitres.

7.68 The Utians, Mycians and Paricanians were equipped like the Pactyes. Their commanders were these: Arsamenes son of Darius commanded the Utians and Mycians, and Siromitres son of Oeobazus the Paricanians.

7.69 The Arabians wore long cloaks belted at the waist and carried long recurved bows on their right side. The Ethiopians were dressed in leopard skins and lion skins. They carried long bows made from the stems of palm leaves, no less than four cubits long, and small arrows of reed. These were tipped not with iron but with a sharpened stone, the kind they also use to carve seals. They also carried spears tipped with a gazelle's horn, sharpened like a spearhead, and knobbed clubs. When they went into battle they smeared half of their bodies with chalk and the other half

26 The Achaemenids were the Persian royal clan, to which Darius and Xerxes belonged.

27 Probably cotton, which Herodotus elsewhere describes as wool growing on trees.

with red ochre. [2] The Arabians and the Ethiopians who live beyond Egypt were commanded by Arsames, son of Darius and Artystone daughter of Cyrus. Artystone was the wife Darius loved most, and he had a statue of her made of beaten gold.

7.70 So Arsames commanded the Ethiopians from beyond Egypt and the Arabians. The Ethiopians from the east were posted with the Indians, since there were two kinds of Ethiopians serving. They did not differ at all in appearance from the others, only in their speech and their hair. The eastern Ethiopians have straight hair, while those from Libya have the most tightly curled hair of all people. [2] These Ethiopians from Asia were armed mostly like the Indians, but on their heads they wore the skin of horses' foreheads, flayed off with the ears and the mane still attached. The mane served as a crest, and they kept the horses' ears standing stiffly upright. For protection, instead of shields, they used the skins of cranes.[28]

7.71 The Libyans came wearing leather and used javelins hardened in the fire. They provided as commander Massages son of Oarizus.

7.72 The Paphlagonians served wearing plaited helmets on their heads. They carried small shields and spears of no great size, as well as javelins and daggers, and on their feet they wore native boots reaching to mid-shin. The Ligyes, Matieni, Mariandyni and Syrians served with the same equipment as the Paphlagonians. These Syrians are called Cappadocians by the Persians. [2] The Paphlagonians and Matieni were commanded by Dotus son of Megasidrus, and the Mariandyni, Ligyes and Syrians by Gobryas son of Darius and Artystone.

7.73 The Phrygians had equipment very close to the Paphlagonian, with only small differences. According to the Macedonians, the Phrygians were called Briges for as long as they lived in Europe as neighbors of the Macedonians. When they moved to Asia, they changed their name to Phrygians at the same time as they changed their country. The Armenians, who are colonists from Phrygia, were armed like the Phrygians. Both these

28 For Herodotus, Libya means all of Africa west of Egypt.

peoples were commanded by Artochmes, who was married to a daughter of Darius.

7.74 The Lydians had arms very close to those of the Greeks. Long ago the Lydians were called Maeonians, but they changed their name and took a new one from Lydus son of Atys. The Mysians wore native helmets on their heads, carried small shields and used javelins hardened in the fire. 2 They are colonists from Lydia and are called Olympieni after Mount Olympus. The Lydians and Mysians were commanded by Artaphrenes son of Artaphrenes, who had invaded at Marathon together with Datis.[29]

7.75 The Thracians served wearing fox-skin caps on their heads and tunics on their bodies, and over these they wrapped long cloaks of many colors. On their feet and shins they wore boots of fawnskin. They also carried javelins, light shields and small daggers. 2 When these people crossed into Asia they came to be called Bithynians. Before that, as they themselves say, they were called Strymonians, since they lived on the Strymon. They say they were driven from their homes by the Teucrians and the Mysians. The Thracians of Asia were commanded by Bassaces son of Artabanus.

7.76 ... they carried small shields of raw oxhide, and each man had two hunting spears of Lycian make. On their heads they wore bronze helmets, and on the helmets were an ox's ears and horns in bronze, with crests as well. Their shins were wrapped in strips of crimson cloth. Among these people there is an oracle of Ares.[30]

7.77 The Cabeleans, who are Maeonians and are called Lasonians, had the same equipment as the Cilicians. I will describe it when, going through the list, I come to the Cilician contingent. The Milyans had short spears and wore cloaks fastened with brooches. Some of them had Lycian bows, and on their heads

29 This is the Mysian Olympus in northwestern Asia Minor, not the mountain in Greece.

30 The name of this people has dropped out of the manuscripts.

they wore caps made of hide. All these were commanded by Badres son of Hystanes.

7.78 The Moschians wore wooden helmets on their heads and carried shields and small spears, though with long points. The Tibareni, Macrones and Mossynoeci served equipped like the Moschians. The commanders who marshaled them were these. Ariomardus, son of Darius and of Parmys daughter of Smerdis son of Cyrus, commanded the Moschians and Tibareni. Artayctes son of Cherasmis, who governed Sestos on the Hellespont, commanded the Macrones and Mossynoeci.

7.79 The Mares wore native plaited helmets on their heads and carried small leather shields and javelins. The Colchians wore wooden helmets on their heads and carried small shields of raw oxhide and short spears, as well as swords. The Mares and Colchians were commanded by Pharandates son of Teaspis. The Alarodians and Saspeires served armed like the Colchians. They were commanded by Masistius son of Siromitres.

7.80 The island peoples who came from the Red Sea had clothing and arms very close to those of the Medes. They came from the islands where the King settles those called the "Deported." These islanders were commanded by Mardontes son of Bagaeus, who was a general at Mycale the following year and died in the battle.[31]

7.81 These were the peoples who marched by land and were assigned to the infantry. This army was commanded by the men I have named. They were also the ones who marshaled and counted it and appointed commanders of a thousand and of ten thousand. The commanders of ten thousand appointed the commanders of a hundred and of ten. The units and the peoples had other officers as well.

7.82 These, then, were the commanders I have named. The generals over them and over the whole infantry were Mardonius son of Gobryas; Tritantaechmes son of the Artabanus who had advised against marching on Greece; Smerdomenes son of Otanes (both of these were sons of Darius' brothers, and so cous-

31 For Herodotus, the Red Sea includes the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

ins of Xerxes); Masistes son of Darius and Atossa; Gergis son of Ariazus; and Megabyzus son of Zopyrus.

7.83 These were the generals of the whole infantry except for the Ten Thousand. Those ten thousand picked Persians were commanded by Hydarnes son of Hydarnes. These Persians were called the Immortals for the following reason. If any of them dropped out of the number, whether death or sickness forced him out, another man had already been chosen in his place, so that they were never more than ten thousand and never fewer. 2 Of the whole army, the Persians made the most splendid show, and they were also the best fighters. Their equipment was as I have described, but on top of this they stood out for the great and lavish quantity of gold they wore. They brought covered carriages with them, and in these were their concubines and many well-equipped servants. Camels and pack animals carried their food, separate from that of the other soldiers.

7.84 These peoples serve as cavalry, though not all of them provided horsemen, only the following. The Persians were equipped in the same way as their infantry, except that some of them wore on their heads ornaments of hammered bronze and iron.

7.85 There is a nomadic people called the Sagartians, Persian by descent and in language. Their equipment is something between the Persian and the Pactyan. They provided eight thousand horsemen. It is not their custom to carry weapons of bronze or iron, except for daggers. Instead they use ropes plaited from leather thongs, 2 and they go to war trusting in these. This is how these men fight. When they engage the enemy, they throw their ropes, which have nooses at the end. Whatever a man catches, horse or man, he drags toward himself, and those caught in the coils are killed.

7.86 That is how these men fight, and they were posted with the Persians. The Medes had the same equipment as in the infantry, and so did the Cissians. The Indians were armed with the same equipment as in the infantry, but rode horses and drove chariots, which were drawn by horses and wild asses. The Bactrians

were equipped as in the infantry, and the Caspians likewise. [2] The Libyans too were equipped as in the infantry, and they all drove chariots as well. In the same way the Caspians and Paricanians were armed just as in the infantry. The Arabians had the same equipment as in the infantry, but they all rode camels that were no slower than horses.

7.87 These are the only peoples that serve as cavalry. The cavalry numbered eighty thousand, not counting the camels and the chariots. The rest of the horsemen were drawn up in their units, but the Arabians were posted last. Since horses cannot stand camels, the Arabians were placed at the rear so that the cavalry would not be frightened.

7.88 The cavalry commanders were Harmamithres and Tithaeus, sons of Datis. Their third fellow commander, Pharnuches, had been left behind sick at Sardis. As they were setting out from Sardis, he met with an unwelcome accident. While he was riding, a dog ran under his horse's feet. The horse had not seen it coming and took fright, reared up and threw Pharnuches. After his fall he vomited blood, and his illness turned into a wasting disease. [2] As for the horse, his servants did to it at once what he ordered. They led it to the place where it had thrown its master and cut off its legs at the knees. That is how Pharnuches came to be relieved of his command.

7.89 The triremes numbered one thousand two hundred and seven, and they were provided by the following. The Phoenicians, together with the Syrians of Palestine, provided three hundred. They were equipped as follows: on their heads they wore helmets made very much in the Greek style, and they wore linen corselets and carried rimless shields and javelins. [2] These Phoenicians, as they themselves say, lived long ago on the Red Sea. From there they crossed over, and they now live on the coast of Syria. This part of Syria, and the whole region as far as Egypt, is called Palestine. The Egyptians provided two hundred ships. [3] They wore woven helmets on their heads and carried hollow shields with broad rims, spears for fighting at sea and

large axes. Most of them wore corselets and carried large swords.

7.90 That was how these were equipped. The Cyprians provided a hundred and fifty ships and were equipped as follows. Their kings wore turbans wrapped around their heads, while the rest wore tunics. In other respects they were like Greeks. They are made up of the following peoples: some come from Salamis and Athens, some from Arcadia, some from Cythnus, some from Phoenicia and some from Ethiopia, as the Cyprians themselves say.

7.91 The Cilicians provided a hundred ships. They in turn wore native helmets on their heads, carried bucklers of raw oxhide instead of shields, and wore woolen tunics. Each man had two javelins and a sword made very much like the Egyptian swords. Long ago they were called Hypachaeans, but they took their name from Cilix son of Agenor, a Phoenician. The Pamphylians provided thirty ships and were equipped with Greek arms. These Pamphylians are descended from those who were scattered from Troy with Amphilochus and Calchas.

7.92 The Lycians provided fifty ships. They wore corselets and greaves and carried bows of cornel wood, unfeathered reed arrows and javelins. They had goatskins hanging about their shoulders, and on their heads they wore felt caps crowned with feathers. They also carried daggers and sickles. The Lycians came from Crete and were called Termilae, but they took their name from Lycus son of Pandion, an Athenian.

7.93 The Dorians from Asia provided thirty ships. They had Greek arms and were of Peloponnesian descent. The Carians provided seventy ships. They were equipped like Greeks in other respects, but they also carried sickles and daggers. What they were called earlier has been told in the first part of my account.

7.94 The Ionians provided a hundred ships, equipped like Greeks. For as long as the Ionians lived in the Peloponnese, in what is now called Achaea, before Danaus and Xuthus came to

the Peloponnese, they were called, as the Greeks say, Pelasgians of the Coast. They were named Ionians after Ion son of Xuthus.[32]

7.95 The islanders provided seventeen ships and were armed like Greeks. They too were a Pelasgian people. They were later called Ionian on the same grounds as the Ionians of the twelve cities, who came from Athens. The Aeolians provided sixty ships and were equipped like Greeks. According to the Greek account, they were called Pelasgians long ago. 2 As for the people of the Hellespont, the people of Abydos were the exception, since the King had ordered them to stay where they were and guard the bridges. The rest, who came from the Black Sea, provided a hundred ships and were equipped like Greeks. These are colonists of the Ionians and Dorians.

7.96 Persians, Medes and Sacae served as marines on all the ships. Of the whole fleet, the Phoenicians provided the best-sailing ships, and among the Phoenicians the Sidonians. Each contingent of these, and of those posted with the infantry, had native leaders over it. I do not mention them, since I am not compelled to for the purposes of my inquiry. 2 The leaders of each people were not worth mentioning, and each people had as many leaders as it had cities. They came along not as generals but like the rest of those serving, as slaves. The generals who held full power and commanded the various peoples, at least those of them who were Persians, I have already named.

7.97 The fleet was commanded by Ariabignes son of Darius, Prexaspes son of Aspathines, Megabazus son of Megabates and Achaemenes son of Darius. Ariabignes, son of Darius and the daughter of Gobryas, commanded the Ionian and Carian force. Achaemenes, Xerxes' full brother, commanded the Egyptians, and the other two commanded the rest of the force. Thirty-oared and fifty-oared ships, light boats and long horse-transports, all counted together, came to three thousand.

7.98 Apart from the generals, the most famous of those on board were these: from Sidon, Tetramnestus son of Anysus;

32 The Pelasgians were the people the Greeks believed had lived in Greece before them.

from Tyre, Matten son of Siromus; from Aradus, Merbalus son of Agbalus; from Cilicia, Syennesis son of Oromedon; from Lycia, Cyberniscus son of Sicas; from Cyprus, Gorgus son of Chersis and Timonax son of Timagoras; and from Caria, Histiaeus son of Tymnes, Pigres son of Hysseldomus, and Damasithymus son of Candaules.

7.99 I make no mention of the other commanders, since I am not obliged to. But I do mention Artemisia, a woman who marched against Greece and whom I find especially remarkable. Her husband had died and she held the tyranny herself. She had a son who was a young man, yet she went to war out of spirit and courage, though nothing compelled her to. 2 Her name, then, was Artemisia. She was the daughter of Lygdamis, of Halicarnassian descent on her father's side and Cretan on her mother's. She led the men of Halicarnassus, Cos, Nisyrus and Calydna, and provided five ships.[33] 3 Of the whole fleet, the ships she provided were the most renowned after those of the Sidonians, and of all the allies she gave the King the best advice. All the cities I have listed as under her leadership were, I can show, of Dorian stock: the Halicarnassians came from Troezen, the rest from Epidaurus. So much for the fleet.

7.100 Once the army had been counted and drawn up, Xerxes wanted to drive through it and see it for himself. Afterwards he did so. Driving in a chariot past each nation in turn, he asked questions, and his secretaries wrote down the answers, until he had gone from one end of the cavalry and the infantry to the other. 2 When he had done this and the ships had been dragged down to the sea, Xerxes moved from his chariot to a Sidonian ship. He sat under a golden canopy and sailed along past the prows of the ships, questioning each crew as he had questioned the army and having the answers written down. 3 The captains had taken their ships out about four plethra from the shore and held them there, all turned prow-on to the land in a single line,

33 Artemisia ruled Halicarnassus, Herodotus' own city.

with the marines armed as if for battle. Xerxes sailed between the prows and the beach and reviewed them.[34]

XERXES AND DEMARATUS

Demaratus tells a laughing Xerxes that the Spartans, whose master is law, will never yield.

7.101 When he had sailed past these too and gone ashore, he sent for Demaratus son of Ariston, who was marching with him against Greece. When Demaratus came, Xerxes asked him this: "Demaratus, it would please me now to ask you some things I want to know. You are a Greek, and from what I hear from you and from the other Greeks who come to talk with me, you are from a city that is neither the smallest nor the weakest. 2 So tell me this: will the Greeks stand their ground and raise their hands against me? In my view, even if all the Greeks and all the other peoples who live in the west were gathered together, they wouldn't be strong enough to withstand my attack, since they aren't united. 3 All the same, I'd like to hear what you have to say about them." That was his question, and Demaratus answered, "King, shall I tell you the truth, or what will please you?" Xerxes told him to tell the truth, saying he would think no less well of him than before.

7.102 When Demaratus heard this, he said: "King, you insist that I tell the whole truth and say nothing you could later catch me lying about. So here it is. Poverty has always been Greece's companion from birth, but excellence she has acquired, and it was won through wisdom and strong law. By means of it Greece keeps off both poverty and subjection to a master. 2 Now, I praise all the Greeks who live in those Dorian lands, but what I'm about to say applies not to all of them, only to the Lacedaemonians. First, there is no way they will ever accept terms from you that would bring slavery on Greece. Second, they will meet you in battle even if all the other Greeks take your side. 3 As for their numbers, don't ask how many of them there are, that they can

34 A plethron was about 100 feet, so the ships lay roughly 400 feet offshore.

do this. If a thousand of them happen to have marched out, those thousand will fight you, and so will any number, fewer than that or more."

7.103 Hearing this, Xerxes laughed and said, "Demaratus, what a thing to say, that a thousand men will fight an army this size! Come, tell me: you say you were king of these men yourself. So would you be willing to fight ten men here and now? Yet if your whole citizen body is as you describe it, you, as their king, ought by your own laws to take on twice as many. 2 For if each of them is a match for ten men of my army, I'd expect you to be a match for twenty, and then what you say would hold true. But if you and the Greeks who come to talk with me are men of just this kind and no bigger than you are, and you still boast like this, then watch that what you've said isn't empty bragging. 3 Come, let me look at it in every reasonable way. How could a thousand, or ten thousand, or even fifty thousand men stand up to an army this size, when they are all equally free and not ruled by one man? Why, if there are five thousand of them, there are more than a thousand of us to every one of them. 4 If they were ruled by one man, as we are, fear of him might make them better than their nature, and they might be driven by the whip against greater numbers though fewer themselves. But left free, they would do neither of these things. My own belief is that even if they were equal in numbers, the Greeks would have a hard time fighting the Persians alone. 5 No, what you speak of exists among us alone, and even with us it isn't common but rare. There are Persians among my spearmen who would be willing to fight three Greeks at once. You have no experience of these men, and so you talk a great deal of nonsense."

7.104 To this Demaratus said, "My King, I knew from the start that if I told you the truth you wouldn't like what I said. But since you forced me to tell you the plain truth, I told you how things stand with the Spartans. 2 And yet you know better than anyone how much I love them at present. They are the ones who stripped me of my office and my ancestral privileges and made me an exile without a city, while your father took me in and

gave me a livelihood and a house. It isn't likely, then, that a sensible man would reject kindness shown to him. He would cherish it above all. [3] I don't claim I could fight ten men, or two, and if it were up to me I wouldn't even fight one. But if I had to, or if some great cause urged me on, I'd most gladly fight one of those men who each claim to be a match for three Greeks. [4] So it is with the Lacedaemonians too. Fighting one by one they are as good as any men, and fighting together they are the best of all men. They are free, but not free in everything. They have a master over them, law, and they fear it far more than your people fear you. [5] At any rate, they do whatever it commands, and it always commands the same thing: never to flee from battle before any number of men, but to stay in their ranks and either win or die. If you think I'm talking nonsense in saying this, I'm willing to say nothing about anything else from now on. I spoke now only because I was made to. Still, I hope it all turns out as you wish, King."

7.105 That was his reply. Xerxes laughed it off and showed no anger at all, but dismissed him kindly. After this conversation Xerxes appointed Mascames son of Megadostes governor of this Doriscus, removing the man Darius had installed, and marched the army on through Thrace toward Greece.

7.106 The man he left behind, Mascames, proved himself such that Xerxes sent gifts to him alone, as the best of all the governors appointed by himself or by Darius. He sent them every year, and Artaxerxes son of Xerxes did the same for Mascames' descendants. Even before this expedition, governors had been installed everywhere in Thrace and on the Hellespont. [2] After the expedition, all of these, in Thrace and on the Hellespont, were driven out by the Greeks, except the one at Doriscus. No one has yet been able to drive out Mascames at Doriscus, though many have tried. That is why the gifts are always sent to him by whoever is king in Persia.[35]

7.107 Of those driven out by the Greeks, King Xerxes thought none a brave man except Boges, the governor of Eion. Him he

35 Artaxerxes I succeeded his father Xerxes and reigned 465–424 BC.

never stopped praising, and he held his surviving sons in Persia in the highest honor. Boges did indeed prove worthy of great praise. When he was besieged by the Athenians under Cimon son of Miltiades, he was offered the chance to leave under a truce and go home to Asia. He refused, so that the King would not think he had saved his life through cowardice, and held out to the very end.[36] 2 When there was no food left inside the walls, he built a great pyre, cut the throats of his children, his wife, his concubines and his servants, and threw them into the fire. Then he scattered all the gold and silver in the town from the wall into the Strymon, and having done this he threw himself into the fire. So it is that the Persians rightly praise him to this day.

7.108 Xerxes marched from Doriscus toward Greece, and forced every people he met in his path to join the expedition. For, as I have shown before, the whole country as far as Thessaly had been enslaved and was paying tribute to the King, conquered first by Megabazus and later by Mardonius. 2 On the march from Doriscus he first passed the Samothracian strongholds, the westernmost of which is a town called Mesambria. Next to it is Stryme, a town belonging to the Thasians, and between them flows the river Lisus. At that time it could not hold out in supplying water to Xerxes' army, but ran dry. 3 This land was once called Gallaice and is now called Briantice, but in strict justice it too belongs to the Cicones.[37]

7.109 Crossing the dried-up bed of the river Lisus, he passed these Greek cities: Maronea, Dicaea and Abdera. He went past these and past the well-known lakes near them: Ismaris, which lies between Maronea and Stryme, and by Dicaea the Bistonis, into which two rivers, the Travus and the Compsantus, empty their water. At Abdera Xerxes passed no well-known lake, but he did pass the river Nestus, which flows into the sea. 2 After these places he went on past the mainland towns. At one of them there happens to be a lake about thirty stades round, full of fish

36 Eion, at the mouth of the river Strymon, was taken by the Athenians under Cimon around 476 BC.

37 The Cicones were a Thracian people already known from Homer's *Odyssey*.

and very salty. The pack animals alone drank it dry. The name of this town is Pistyrus.

7.110 These coastal Greek cities he passed by, keeping them on his left. The Thracian tribes through whose land he marched were these: the Paeti, Cicones, Bistones, Sapaei, Dersaei, Edoni and Satrae. Those of them who lived by the sea followed in the ships. All those who lived inland, whom I have listed, were forced to follow on foot, except the Satrae.

7.111 The Satrae, as far as we know, have never yet been subject to anyone. Down to my time they alone of the Thracians have always remained free. They live on high mountains covered with every kind of forest and with snow, and they are superb fighters. 2 It is they who possess the oracle of Dionysus. This oracle is on the highest of their mountains. The Bessi, a clan of the Satrae, serve as the prophets of the shrine, and a priestess gives the oracles, as at Delphi, in no more elaborate a way.

7.112 Having passed the land just described, Xerxes next passed the strongholds of the Pierians, one of which is called Phagres and another Pergamus. Here he marched right past their walls, keeping on his right Mount Pangaeum, a large, high mountain with gold and silver mines in it. These are worked by the Pierians and Odomanti, and above all by the Satrae.

7.113 Passing the Paeonians who live north of Pangaeum, the Doberes and the Paeoplae, he went west until he came to the river Strymon and the city of Eion. Its governor was Boges, still alive at the time, whom I spoke about a little earlier. 2 The land around Mount Pangaeum is called Phyllis. It stretches west to the river Angites, which flows into the Strymon, and south to the Strymon itself. The Magi sacrificed white horses to this river, seeking good omens.

7.114 After performing this magic on the river, and many other rites besides, at Nine Ways in the land of the Edoni, they went on by the bridges, finding the Strymon already bridged. They learned that the place was called Nine Ways, and so they buried alive that number of boys and girls, children of the local people. 2 Burying people alive is a Persian custom. I am told that when

Amestris, Xerxes' wife, had grown old, she buried fourteen children of distinguished Persians on her own behalf, as a thank-offering to the god who is said to be beneath the earth.[38]

7.115 As the army marched on from the Strymon, it passed a stretch of shore toward the west on which lies the Greek city of Argilus. This region and the land above it are called Bisaltia. 2 From there, keeping the gulf off Posideion on its left, the army went through what is called the plain of Syleus, passing the Greek city of Stagirus, and came to Acanthus. It took along with it each of these nations and those living around Mount Pangaeum, as it had those I listed before. Those who lived by the sea served on the ships, and those who lived inland followed on foot. 3 The road by which King Xerxes led his army the Thracians neither plow up nor sow, and down to my time they have held it in great reverence.

7.116 When he reached Acanthus, Xerxes proclaimed the Acanthians his guest-friends, presented them with Median dress and praised them, because he saw that they were eager for the war and heard about the canal.[39]

7.117 While Xerxes was at Acanthus, it happened that Artachaees, who had been in charge of the canal, died of an illness. He was highly regarded by Xerxes and was an Achaemenid by birth. He was the tallest of the Persians, four fingers short of five royal cubits, and had the loudest voice in the world. Xerxes took his death as a great loss and gave him a magnificent funeral and burial, and the whole army heaped up his burial mound. 2 Following an oracle, the Acanthians sacrifice to this Artachaees as a hero, calling on him by name.[40]

7.118 So King Xerxes mourned the death of Artachaees. Meanwhile the Greeks who received the army and gave Xerxes dinner were reduced to utter ruin, so much so that they were driven from their homes. The Thasians, for instance, received Xerxes'

38 Nine Ways was the site where the Athenians later founded Amphipolis (437 BC).
39 The canal had been cut through the isthmus of the Athos peninsula, near Acanthus, to let the fleet avoid sailing around the headland (7.22–24).
40 The royal cubit was three fingers longer than the ordinary one (1.178), so Artachaees stood nearly eight feet tall.

army and gave it dinner on behalf of their cities on the mainland. Antipater son of Orges, a citizen as distinguished as any, who had been chosen for the task, showed that four hundred talents of silver had been spent on the dinner.

7.119 In much the same way, those in charge in the other cities also presented their accounts. For the dinner had been ordered long in advance and was taken very seriously, and this is roughly how it went. 2 First, as soon as they heard from the heralds who carried the orders around, the citizens of each city divided up the grain among themselves, and all of them spent many months making wheat flour and barley meal. Then they fattened livestock, seeking out the finest animals they could buy, and kept land birds and waterfowl in coops and ponds to entertain the army. Then they had cups and mixing bowls made of gold and silver, and everything else that is set on a table. 3 All this was prepared for the King himself and those who ate with him. For the rest of the army only provisions were ordered. Whenever the army arrived, a tent stood ready pitched, in which Xerxes himself would take his rest, while the rest of the army stayed in the open. 4 When dinnertime came, the hosts had all the work. The guests ate their fill and spent the night there, and the next day they would pull up the tent, take all the furnishings and march off with them, leaving nothing behind but carrying everything away.

7.120 It was on this occasion that Megacreon of Abdera made a well-turned remark. He advised the Abderites to go all together, men and women alike, to their temples and sit there as suppliants of the gods. They should beg the gods to keep off from them in future half of the evils that were coming, and give them great thanks for the past, because King Xerxes was not in the habit of taking food twice a day. 2 For if the Abderites had also been ordered to prepare a breakfast like the dinner, they would have had two choices: either not wait for Xerxes to arrive, or stay and be ground down worse than anyone on earth.

7.121 So the people, though hard pressed, still did what they were ordered. From Acanthus Xerxes sent the ships on ahead,

ordering the commanders of the fleet to wait for him at Therma, the Therma that lies on the Thermaic Gulf and gives the gulf its name. He learned that this was the shortest way.[41] [2] As far as Acanthus, the army had marched from Doriscus in this order. Xerxes had divided all his infantry into three divisions and ordered one of them to go along the coast together with the fleet. [3] This division was commanded by Mardonius and Masistes. Another third of the army was ordered to march inland, and it was commanded by Tritantaechmes and Gergis. The third division, with which Xerxes himself marched, went between the other two, and its generals were Smerdomenes and Megabyzus.

7.122 When Xerxes sent the fleet off, it sailed through the canal that had been dug at Athos, which runs through to the gulf on which the cities of Assa, Pilorus, Singus and Sarte lie. It took on troops from these cities too, and from there it sailed on, making for the Thermaic Gulf. Rounding Ampelus, the headland of Torone, it passed these Greek cities, from which it took on ships and troops: Torone, Galepsus, Sermyle, Mecyberna and Olynthus.

7.123 This region is called Sithonia. Xerxes' fleet cut straight across from Cape Ampelus to Cape Canastraeum, the point of Pallene that juts farthest out to sea. There it took on ships and troops from Potidaea, Aphytis, Neapolis, Aege, Therambo, Scione, Mende and Sane, the cities that occupy what is now called Pallene and was formerly called Phlegra. [2] Sailing along this coast too, it held its course for the place I mentioned. It also took on troops from the cities near Pallene that border the Thermaic Gulf, whose names are these: Lipaxus, Combreia, Aesa, Gigonus, Campsa, Smila and Aenea. The region of these cities is still called Crossaea today. [3] From Aenea, the city with which I ended my list, the fleet now sailed into the Thermaic Gulf itself and along the land of Mygdonia. It came to Therma, which I have mentioned, and to the cities of Sindus and Chalestra on the river Axius. This river divides Mygdonia from Bottiaeis, whose narrow coastal strip is held by the cities of Ichnae and Pella.

7.124 So the fleet stayed there, encamped around the river Axius, the city of Therma and the cities between them, waiting for the King. Meanwhile Xerxes and the land army marched from Acanthus, cutting straight across the interior, because he wanted to reach Therma. He marched through the lands of the Paeonians and the Crestonians to the river Echeidorus, which rises in the country of the Crestonians, flows through Mygdonia and comes out by the marsh beside the river Axius.

7.125 As he marched this way, lions attacked the camels carrying his provisions. The lions would come down at night, leaving their usual haunts, and they touched nothing else, neither pack animal nor man; they killed only the camels. I wonder what the reason was. What could it have been that compelled the lions to leave everything else alone and attack the camels, an animal they had never seen before and had no experience of?

7.126 In this region there are in fact many lions, and wild oxen too, whose enormous horns are the ones brought into Greece. The boundary of the lions' range is the river Nestus, which flows through Abdera, and the Achelous, which flows through Acarnania. Nowhere east of the Nestus, in all the rest of Europe in that direction, would you see a lion, nor anywhere west of the Achelous in the rest of the mainland. They are found only in the country between these rivers.

7.127 When Xerxes reached Therma, he halted his army there. Encamped, his army took up the whole coastal stretch from the city of Therma and Mygdonia as far as the rivers Lydias and Haliacmon, which form the boundary between Bottiaea and Macedonia and mingle their waters in a single channel. 2 So the foreign army was encamped in these places. Of the rivers I have listed, only the Echeidorus, which flows from the land of the Crestonians, could not supply the army with enough to drink; it ran dry.

7.128 From Therma Xerxes could see the mountains of Thessaly, Olympus and Ossa, which are of enormous height. He learned that between them there was a narrow gorge through which the

41 Therma stood on or near the site of later Thessalonica.

Peneus flows, and he heard that a road ran that way into Thessaly. He conceived a desire to sail there and look at the mouth of the Peneus, because he intended to take the upper road, through the Macedonians who live inland, as far as the Perrhaebians by the town of Gonnus; he had been told that this was the safest route. [2] Having conceived the desire, he acted on it. He went aboard a Sidonian ship, the one he always boarded whenever he wanted to do anything of the kind, and raised a signal for the rest of the fleet to put out to sea as well, leaving the land army where it was. When Xerxes arrived and saw the mouth of the Peneus, he was filled with great wonder. He called his guides and asked them whether it was possible to divert the river and lead it out to the sea by another way.

[7.129] Thessaly, the story goes, was in ancient times a lake, enclosed as it is on every side by very high mountains. On the east it is shut in by Mount Pelion and Ossa, whose foothills run into each other; on the north by Olympus; on the west by Pindus; and on the south, toward the south wind, by Othrys. In the middle of these mountains lies Thessaly, a hollow basin. [2] Many rivers pour into it, and five of them are especially notable: the Peneus, the Apidanus, the Onochonus, the Enipeus and the Pamisus. These gather into this plain from the mountains that enclose Thessaly, each under its own name, and they have their outlet to the sea through one gorge, and a narrow one at that, after first all mingling their waters together. [3] But as soon as they have joined, from that point on the Peneus prevails with its name and leaves the others nameless. In ancient times, it is said, when this gorge and outlet did not yet exist, these rivers, and Lake Boebeis besides, did not have the names they have now, but they flowed no less than they do now, and by flowing they turned all Thessaly into a sea. [4] The Thessalians themselves say that Poseidon made the gorge through which the Peneus flows, and what they say is reasonable. Anyone who believes that Poseidon shakes the earth, and that rifts made by earthquakes are this god's work, would say on seeing this that Poseidon had

made it. For the cleft between the mountains is, as it appears to me, the work of an earthquake.

7.130 When Xerxes asked whether the Peneus had another way out to the sea, the guides, who knew the place precisely, said, "King, this river has no other outlet that reaches the sea except this one, because all Thessaly is ringed with mountains." Xerxes is said to have replied, "The Thessalians are clever men. 2 So that is why they took precautions long ago and gave in, for this reason among others: the country they hold, it turns out, is easy to seize and quickly taken. All it would take is to let the river loose on their land, forcing it out of the gorge with a dam and diverting it from the channel it now flows in, and all of Thessaly, apart from the mountains, would be under water." 3 He said this with the sons of Aleuas in mind, because they, Thessalians, were the first of the Greeks to give themselves up to the King, and Xerxes supposed that they were offering him friendship on behalf of their whole people. Having said this and looked at the place, he sailed back to Therma.[42]

7.131 He spent many days around Pieria, because a third of his army was clearing a way through the Macedonian mountain so that the whole army could pass that way into the land of the Perrhaebians. Meanwhile the heralds who had been sent to Greece to demand earth had come back, some empty-handed, others bringing earth and water.

7.132 Among those who had given them were these: the Thessalians, Dolopes, Enienes, Perrhaebians, Locrians, Magnesians, Malians, the Achaeans of Phthiotis, and the Thebans and the rest of the Boeotians except the Thespians and the Plataeans. 2 Against these the Greeks who had taken up the war against the foreign invader swore an oath. The oath ran as follows: all who, being Greeks, had given themselves up to the Persian without being forced would, once the Greeks' own affairs were in good order, be tithed for the god at Delphi. That was the oath the Greeks swore.

7.133 Xerxes did not send heralds to Athens and Sparta to demand earth, and this is why. When Darius had earlier sent heralds for this very purpose, one people threw the men making the demand into the pit, the other into a well, and told them to fetch earth and water to the King from there. 2 That is why Xerxes did not send anyone to make the demand. What misfortune befell the Athenians for having treated the heralds this way I cannot say, except that their land and their city were laid waste; but I do not think that happened for this reason.[43]

7.134 On the Lacedaemonians, at any rate, there fell the wrath of Talthybius, Agamemnon's herald. In Sparta there is a shrine of Talthybius, and there are descendants of his, called the Talthybiadae, who have been granted all embassies from Sparta as their privilege. 2 After what had happened, the Spartans could not get good omens when they sacrificed, and this went on for a long time. The Lacedaemonians were distressed and felt it as a calamity. They held assemblies again and again and made a proclamation asking whether any Lacedaemonian was willing to die for Sparta. Sperthias son of Aneristus and Bulis son of Nicolaus, Spartans of good birth and among the foremost in wealth, volunteered to pay Xerxes the penalty for Darius' heralds who had been killed in Sparta. 3 So the Spartans sent them to the Medes to be put to death.[44]

7.135 The daring of these men deserves admiration, and so, besides, do the words that follow. On their way to Susa they came to Hydarnes. Hydarnes was a Persian by birth and general of the peoples along the coast of Asia. He offered them a guest's welcome and entertained them, and as their host he asked them: 2 "Men of Lacedaemon, why do you shy away from becoming the King's friends? You can see that the King knows how to honor good men, if you look at me and my position. So too with you: if you gave yourselves up to the King—since he already

42 The sons of Aleuas (the Aleuadae) were the ruling family of Larissa in Thessaly.
43 The pit (barathron) at Athens was a chasm into which condemned criminals were thrown.
44 Greeks often called the Persians "Medes."

thinks of you as good men—each of you could rule a part of Greece, by the King's gift." [3] To this they answered: "Hydarnes, the advice you give us doesn't come from equal experience. You give it having tried the one thing but not the other. You know well what it is to be a slave, but you have never yet tasted freedom, to know whether it is sweet or not. If you had tasted it, you would advise us to fight for it not with spears, but with axes too."

7.136 That was their answer to Hydarnes. From there they went up to Susa and came into the King's presence. First, when the bodyguards ordered them and tried to force them to fall down and bow before the King, they said they would never do it, not even if the guards pushed them down headfirst; it was not their custom to bow down to a human being, they said, and that was not what they had come for. When they had fought this off, they next said the following, or words to this effect: [2] "King of the Medes, the Lacedaemonians have sent us to pay the penalty in place of the heralds who were killed in Sparta." When they said this, Xerxes, with great magnanimity, said he would not behave like the Lacedaemonians. They, he said, had violated what all mankind holds sacred by killing heralds; but he himself would not do the very thing he reproached them for, nor would he free the Lacedaemonians from their guilt by killing these men in return.

7.137 So, after the Spartans had done this, the wrath of Talthybius ceased for the time being, even though Sperthias and Bulis came home to Sparta. But a long time afterward it was roused again during the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, as the Lacedaemonians say. This seems to me one of the most plainly divine things that ever happened. [2] That the wrath of Talthybius fell on envoys and did not cease until it had run its course was only what justice required. But that it fell, because of that wrath, on the sons of these very men who went up to the King—on Nicolaus son of Bulis and on Aneristus son of Sperthias, the man who captured Halieis, the settlers from Tiryns, by sailing in with a merchant ship full of men—this makes it clear to me that the thing was the work of the divine,

arising from the wrath.[45] 3 These two had been sent by the Lacedaemonians as envoys to Asia, but they were betrayed by Sitalces son of Teres, king of the Thracians, and by Nymphodorus son of Pytheas, a man of Abdera. They were captured at Bisanthe on the Hellespont, taken off to Attica, and put to death by the Athenians, and with them Aristeas son of Adeimantus, a Corinthian. These things happened many years after the King's expedition; I now return to my earlier account.

THE GREEKS PREPARE

Herodotus argues that the Athenians, by choosing to fight, were the saviors of Greece.

7.138 The King's expedition was in name directed against Athens, but it was aimed at all of Greece. The Greeks had known this long before, but they did not all take it the same way. 2 Those who had given earth and water to the Persian were confident that they would suffer nothing unpleasant at the hands of the foreigner. Those who had not were in great fear, since there were not enough ships in Greece to take on the invader, and most of the Greeks were unwilling to engage in the war and were eagerly siding with the Persians.

7.139 At this point I am compelled to declare an opinion that most people will resent; but since it seems to me to be true, I will not hold it back. 2 If the Athenians, terrified by the approaching danger, had abandoned their country, or had not abandoned it but stayed and surrendered to Xerxes, no one would have attempted to oppose the King at sea. And if no one had opposed Xerxes at sea, this is what would have happened on land. 3 Even if the Peloponnesians had thrown many walls across the Isthmus like layers of armor, the Lacedaemonians would have been betrayed by their allies—not willingly, but out of necessity, as their cities were taken one by one by the foreign fleet—and left alone; and left alone, after performing great

45 The Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC); the events described next took place in 430 BC.

deeds, they would have died nobly. [4] Either that would have been their fate, or before it came to that, seeing the other Greeks too siding with the Persians, they would have come to terms with Xerxes. And so either way Greece would have fallen under the Persians. For I cannot discover what use the walls built across the Isthmus would have been, with the King master of the sea. [5] As it is, anyone who called the Athenians the saviors of Greece would not miss the truth. Whichever side they turned to, that was the way the scale was bound to tip. They chose that Greece should survive free, and it was they themselves who roused all the rest of the Greek world that had not gone over to the Persians, and who, after the gods at least, drove back the King. [6] Not even the terrifying oracles that came from Delphi and threw them into fear persuaded them to abandon Greece; they stood their ground and had the courage to face the invader of their country.

THE WOODEN WALL

Delphi gives Athens two grim oracles, and Themistocles reads the "wooden wall" as the fleet.

7.140 The Athenians had sent envoys to Delphi and were ready to consult the oracle. When they had performed the customary rites around the sanctuary, entered the hall and taken their seats, the Pythia, whose name was Aristonice, gave them this oracle: [2] Wretched ones, why do you sit here? Flee to the ends of the earth, leaving
your homes and the high summits of your wheel-round city.
For neither does the head stay firm, nor the body,
nor the feet below, nor the hands, nor is anything of the middle
left; all is in a pitiful state. For it is torn down by
fire and sharp Ares, driving a Syrian-built chariot.[46]

46 The Pythia was Apollo's priestess at Delphi, through whom the god gave his oracles.

[3] Many other strongholds too he will destroy, not yours alone,
and many temples of the immortals he will give to raging fire.
They stand now, I think, streaming with sweat,
quaking with fear, and down from their topmost roofs
black blood pours, foreseeing the necessity of evil.
Go out of the inner shrine, both of you, and summon your courage to meet your troubles.

7.141 When the Athenian envoys heard this, they were in the deepest distress. As they were giving themselves up for lost because of the disaster that had been foretold, Timon son of Androbulus, a man of Delphi as highly regarded as anyone, advised them to take olive branches of supplication and go back a second time to consult the oracle as suppliants. [2] The Athenians did as he advised and said, "Lord, give us a better oracle about our country, out of respect for these suppliant branches we have come bearing for you. Otherwise we will not leave your inner shrine; we will stay right here until we die." When they said this, the prophetess gave them this second oracle:

[3] Pallas cannot appease Olympian Zeus,
though she pleads with many words and shrewd counsel.
But to you I will speak this word again, making it fast as adamant.
When all else is taken that the boundary of Cecrops
holds within it, and the hollow of holy Cithaeron,
far-seeing Zeus grants to the Trito-born a wooden wall
alone to remain unsacked, which will help you and your children. [4] Do not wait quietly for the horsemen and the great host of foot
coming on from the mainland, but withdraw,
turning your back; yet one day you will face them too.
Divine Salamis, you will destroy the children of women
either when Demeter is scattered or when she is gathered in.[47]

7.142 This oracle both was, and seemed to be, gentler than the first, so they wrote it down and set off for Athens. When the envoys had come back and reported it to the people, many different opinions were put forward by those trying to interpret the oracle, and these two above all stood opposed. Some of the older men said they thought the god had prophesied that the Acropolis would survive, because in ancient times the Athenians' Acropolis had been fenced with a thorn hedge. [2] These, then, inferred from the fence that it was the wooden wall. Others in turn said that the god meant the ships, and urged that they make these ready and let everything else go. But those who said the ships were the wooden wall were tripped up by the last two lines the Pythia had spoken: Divine Salamis, you will destroy the children of women / either when Demeter is scattered or when she is gathered in. [3] These verses threw into confusion the views of those who said the ships were the wooden wall, because the oracle-reciters took the lines to mean that the

47 "Trito-born" is a title of Athena (Pallas); Cecrops was a legendary king of Athens, so his "boundary" is Attica.

Athenians were destined to be defeated off Salamis if they prepared for a sea battle.

7.143 But there was a certain Athenian who had recently risen to the front rank; his name was Themistocles, and he was called the son of Neocles. This man said that the oracle-reciters were not interpreting it entirely correctly. His argument was this: if the verse had really been spoken about the Athenians, he did not think it would have been phrased so mildly. It would have said "Cruel Salamis" instead of "Divine Salamis," if indeed its inhabitants were going to die around it. 2 No, he said, if one understood it correctly, the god had spoken the oracle about the enemy, not about the Athenians. So he advised them to prepare for a sea battle, since the ships were the wooden wall. 3 When Themistocles set out his view in this way, the Athenians judged it preferable to that of the oracle-reciters, who would not let them prepare for a sea battle—who, in short, would not have them raise a hand in resistance at all, but would have them abandon Attica and settle in some other land.

7.144 Even before this, another opinion of Themistocles had prevailed at just the right moment. The Athenians had a great sum of money in their public treasury, which had come to them from the mines at Laurium, and they were about to share it out among themselves, ten drachmas a man. Themistocles then persuaded the Athenians to give up this distribution and use the money to build two hundred ships for the war—meaning the war against the Aeginetans.[48] 2 It was the outbreak of this war that saved Greece at that time, by compelling the Athenians to become seafarers. The ships were not used for the purpose they were built for, but in this way they were there for Greece when she needed them. So these ships, built in advance, were already at the Athenians' disposal, and more had to be built in addition. 3 After the oracle, in their deliberations they resolved to obey the god and meet the foreign invader of Greece with their ships, the

48 The silver mines at Laurium lay in southern Attica; a drachma was a silver coin, roughly a day's pay for a laborer.

whole people together, along with any other Greeks who were willing.

7.145 These, then, were the oracles the Athenians had received. When the Greeks throughout Greece who had the better cause at heart gathered in one place and exchanged words and pledges with one another, they decided in their deliberations, first of all, to end their feuds and the wars they were waging against each other. There were wars in progress between various of them, but the greatest was the one between the Athenians and the Aeginetans. 2 Then, learning that Xerxes was at Sardis with his army, they resolved to send spies to Asia to observe the King's affairs; to send messengers to Argos to conclude an alliance against the Persian; to send others to Sicily, to Gelon son of Deinomenes, and to Corcyra, to urge them to come to the aid of Greece; and others again to Crete. Their thought was that the Greek world might somehow become one, and that they might all join together and act in concert, since the dangers were coming on all Greeks alike. Gelon's power was said to be great, far greater than that of any Greek state.[49]

7.146 Once they had decided on this and settled their feuds, they first sent three men to Asia as spies. These men reached Sardis and studied the King's army, but they were found out. The generals of the land army had them interrogated under torture, and they were being led away to be put to death. 2 So they had been condemned to death. But when Xerxes heard of it, he disapproved of his generals' decision and sent some of his bodyguards, with orders to bring the spies to him if they found them still alive. 3 The bodyguards found them still living and brought them before the King. When he learned what they had come for, he ordered the bodyguards to take them around and show them the whole land army and the cavalry, and when they had looked their fill, to send them off unharmed to whatever country they wished.

7.147 He gave these orders and added the following reasoning. If the spies were put to death, he said, the Greeks would not

49 Gelon was the ruler of Syracuse, the most powerful Greek city in Sicily.

learn in advance that his forces were greater than words could tell, and losing three men would do the enemy no great harm. But if these men went home to Greece, he believed the Greeks would hear about his forces before the expedition reached them and would hand over their own freedom, and so there would be no need even to go to the trouble of marching against them. [2] This view of his was of a piece with another one. When Xerxes was at Abydos, he saw grain ships from the Black Sea sailing out through the Hellespont, bound for Aegina and the Peloponnese. When the men sitting beside him learned that the ships belonged to the enemy, they were ready to seize them and looked to the King for the moment he would give the order. [3] But Xerxes asked them where the ships were sailing. "To your enemies, master," they said, "carrying grain." He replied, "Aren't we sailing to the same place as they are, supplied with grain as well as everything else? So what wrong are they doing us by carrying food there for us?"

[7.148] So the spies, having seen everything in this way and been sent off, returned to Europe. After they had been sent, the Greeks who had sworn alliance against the Persian next sent envoys to Argos. [2] The Argives say that their part in events went like this. They learned right at the start, they say, of the forces the foreigner was stirring up against Greece. Having learned it, and realizing that the Greeks would try to bring them in against the Persian, they sent envoys to Delphi to ask the god what it would be best for them to do. For six thousand of them had recently been killed by the Lacedaemonians and Cleomenes son of Anaxandridas, and that, they say, was why they sent.[50]

50 Cleomenes' victory over Argos at Sepeia is told in Book 6.

[3] When they put their question, they say, the Pythia gave them this answer: Hated by your neighbors, dear to the immortal gods,
keep your spear drawn in and sit on guard,
and guard your head; the head will save the body. That, they say, is what the Pythia had prophesied earlier. Afterwards, when the envoys came to Argos, they went before the council and said what they had been instructed to say. [4] The council, according to the Argives, replied that the Argives were ready to do this, if they made a thirty years' peace with the Lacedaemonians and held command of half of the whole alliance. By rights, they said, the command ought to be theirs alone; but even so they would be content to command half.

7.149 That, they say, was the council's reply, even though the oracle forbade them to make the alliance with the Greeks. They were eager for a thirty years' truce, fearful of the oracle though they were, so that their sons might grow to manhood in those years. And they reasoned, they say, that without a truce, if another disaster struck them against the Persian on top of the one they had already suffered, they might be subject to the Lacedaemonians from then on. [2] The envoys from Sparta, they say, answered the council's words as follows. On the truce, they would refer it to their assembly; on the command, they had been instructed to give an answer, and they gave it: the Spartans had two kings, the Argives one. It was not possible to remove either of the Spartan kings from command, but nothing prevented the Argive king from having an equal vote with their two. [3] At that, the Argives say, they could not bear the Spartans' greed, and chose to be ruled by non-Greeks rather than give way at all to the Lacedaemonians. They told the envoys to leave Argive territory before sunset, or else they would be treated as enemies.

7.150 That is all the Argives themselves say on this matter. But there is another story told throughout Greece, that Xerxes sent a herald to Argos before he set out on his expedition against Greece. [2] When this herald arrived, it is said, he spoke as fol-

lows: “Men of Argos, King Xerxes says this to you. We believe that Perses, from whom we are descended, was the son of Perseus son of Danaë, born to him by Andromeda daughter of Cepheus. So we would be your descendants. It is not fitting, then, for us to march against our own ancestors, nor for you to help others and become our opponents. You should stay quietly at home.[51] If things go as I intend, there is no people I will hold in higher regard than you.” 3 When the Argives heard this, it is said, they took it seriously. At first they made no offer and no demand; but when the Greeks tried to bring them in, then, knowing that the Lacedaemonians would not share the command, they demanded a share of it, so as to have a pretext for staying quiet.

7.151 Some Greeks say that this story fits with another event that happened many years later. Envoys from Athens, Callias son of Hipponicus and those who had gone up with him, happened to be at Memnonian Susa on other business. At this same time the Argives too had sent envoys to Susa, to ask Artaxerxes son of Xerxes whether the friendship they had formed with Xerxes still held, as they wished, or whether he regarded them as enemies. King Artaxerxes, they say, replied that it most certainly held, and that he considered no city a closer friend than Argos.[52]

7.152 Now, whether Xerxes sent a herald to Argos with that message, and whether envoys from Argos went up to Susa and asked Artaxerxes about friendship, I cannot say for certain, and I offer no opinion on the matter other than the one the Argives themselves give. 2 But I do know this much: if all people brought their own troubles out into the open, wanting to exchange them with their neighbors’, each of them, after a close look at the troubles of those around him, would gladly carry back home the ones he had brought. 3 So the Argives, too, have not acted the most

51 Perseus was an Argive hero; the Greeks derived the name of the Persians from his son Perses.

52 Callias’ embassy to Artaxerxes is usually linked to the peace between Athens and Persia around the middle of the fifth century BC.

shamefully of all. For my part, I am obliged to report what is said, but I am certainly not obliged to believe it all, and let this statement hold for my whole account. For it is also said that it was the Argives who invited the Persian into Greece, since their war with the Lacedaemonians had gone badly for them and they wanted anything at all rather than their present misery.

7.153 So much for the Argives. Envoys from the allies had also come to Sicily to confer with Gelon, among them Syagrus from the Lacedaemonians. Gelon's ancestor, the one who settled at Gela, came from the island of Telos, which lies off Triopium; when Gela was founded by the Lindians from Rhodes and by Antiphemus, he did not stay behind. 2 In time his descendants became hierophants of the underworld goddesses and remained so continually, since Telines, one of their ancestors, had gained the office in the following way.[53] Some men of Gela, defeated in civil strife, had fled to the city of Mactorium, which lies inland from Gela. 3 Telines brought these men back to Gela, though he had no force of men, only the sacred objects of these goddesses. Where he got them, or whether he came by them himself, I cannot say. At any rate, relying on these he brought them back, on condition that his descendants should be hierophants of the goddesses. 4 This too is a wonder to me, given what I hear, that Telines accomplished so great a deed. I have always believed that deeds like this come not from just any man, but from a brave soul and manly strength. Yet the people of Sicily say he was the very opposite by nature, an unwarlike and rather soft man.

7.154 That is how he acquired this privilege. When Cleander son of Pantares died—he had been tyrant of Gela for seven years and was killed by Sabyllus, a man of Gela—Hippocrates, Cleander's brother, took over the monarchy. While Hippocrates held the tyranny, Gelon, the descendant of Telines the hierophant, along with many others including Aenesidemus son of Pataecus … who was a bodyguard of Hippocrates. 2 Not long afterwards he

53 The underworld deities are Demeter and Persephone; a hierophant was a priest who displayed sacred objects in their rites.

was appointed commander of all the cavalry for his excellence. For when Hippocrates besieged Callipolis, Naxos, Zancle and Leontini, and fought against the Syracusans and many of the non-Greeks as well, Gelon showed himself the most brilliant man in these wars. Of the cities I have named, none except Syracuse escaped slavery at the hands of Hippocrates. [3] The Syracusans, after their defeat in battle at the river Helorus, were rescued by the Corinthians and Corcyraeans, and these rescued them by arranging a settlement on these terms: the Syracusans were to hand Camarina over to Hippocrates. Camarina had belonged to the Syracusans from of old.

7.155 When Hippocrates, too, after being tyrant for as many years as his brother Cleander, met his death at the city of Hybla while campaigning against the Sicels, Gelon made a show of championing Hippocrates' sons, Eucleides and Cleander, when the citizens no longer wanted to be subjects. In fact, once he had defeated the people of Gela in battle, he ruled himself and deprived Hippocrates' sons of power. [2] After this windfall, the Syracusans called the landholders were driven out by the people and by their own slaves, who were called Cyllyrians. Gelon brought them back from the city of Casmene to Syracuse and took possession of that city too, for the Syracusan people handed over the city and themselves to Gelon as he approached.[54]

7.156 Once he had taken over Syracuse, he cared less about ruling Gela and entrusted it to his brother Hieron, while he strengthened Syracuse, and Syracuse was everything to him. [2] The city at once shot up and flourished. For one thing, he brought all the people of Camarina to Syracuse and made them citizens, and razed the town of Camarina; for another, he did the same with more than half the citizens of Gela as he had with the Camarinaeans. As for the Megarians in Sicily, when under siege they came to terms, he brought the wealthy among them, who had started the war against him and expected to be put to death for it, to Syracuse and made them citizens. But the common

54 The "landholders" (gamoroi) were the old landowning aristocracy of Syracuse.

people of Megara, who were not to blame for the war and expected no harm, he also brought to Syracuse and sold for export out of Sicily. [3] He did the same to the Euboeans in Sicily, separating them in the same way. He did this to both peoples because he considered the common people the most disagreeable of neighbors.

GELON OF SYRACUSE

Gelon offers great forces if he may command; the envoys refuse, and Corcyra and Crete hold back.

[7.157] That is how Gelon had become a great tyrant. Now, when the envoys of the Greeks arrived at Syracuse, they came to talk with him and said this: "The Lacedaemonians and their allies have sent us to bring you in on our side against the foreigner. You must surely have heard about the man who is invading Greece: a Persian is about to bridge the Hellespont, bring the whole army of the East out of Asia, and march against Greece. He makes a pretext of attacking Athens, but what he has in mind is to bring all Greece under his control. [2] You have attained great power, and as ruler of Sicily you hold no small share of Greece. So help those who are freeing Greece, and join in freeing it. For if all Greece is united, a great force is gathered, and we are a match for the invaders. But if some of us turn traitor and others refuse to help, and the sound part of Greece is small, then there is a real danger that all Greece will fall. [3] Don't imagine that if the Persian defeats us in battle and conquers us, he won't come to you too. Guard against that beforehand. By helping us you are protecting yourself. A well-planned undertaking generally tends to turn out well."

[7.158] That is what they said. Gelon came down hard on them, speaking like this: "Greeks, you have had the nerve to come here with a self-serving proposal, inviting me to join you as an ally against the foreigner. [2] But when I asked you earlier to join me in attacking a foreign army, when my quarrel with the Carthaginians had broken out, and urged you to avenge the killing of

Dorieus son of Anaxandridas by the Egestans, and offered to help free the trading ports from which you have drawn great benefits and profits, you came neither to help me nor to avenge the killing of Dorieus. As far as you were concerned, all this land would be in the hands of foreigners.[55] 3 But things turned out well for us, and for the better. Now that the war has come around and reached you, at last Gelon is remembered. 4 Though I met with contempt from you, I won't behave as you did. I am ready to help, and will provide two hundred triremes, twenty thousand hoplites, two thousand cavalry, two thousand archers, two thousand slingers and two thousand light-armed men to run alongside the horses. And I undertake to supply grain to the whole Greek army until we have fought the war to the end. 5 But I promise this on one condition: that I am to be general and leader of the Greeks against the foreigner. On any other terms I would neither come myself nor send others."[56]

7.159 When Syagrus heard this, he could not contain himself and said: "Agamemnon son of Pelops would groan aloud indeed if he heard that the Spartans had been stripped of command by Gelon and the Syracusans! Don't bring up this idea again, that we should hand the command over to you. If you want to help Greece, you'll be under the command of the Lacedaemonians. If you don't think it right to be commanded, then don't help at all."[57]

7.160 To this Gelon, seeing how hostile Syagrus' words were, set out his final proposal to them: "Spartan stranger, insults heaped on a man tend to stir up his anger. But for all the insolence you have shown in what you said, you won't make me behave unbecomingly in my reply. 2 Since you cling so tightly to the command, it's reasonable that I should cling to it even more than you, since I lead an army many times larger and many more ships. But since the proposal is so repugnant to you, we will give

55 Dorieus, a Spartan prince and half-brother of Cleomenes, was killed trying to found a colony in western Sicily (Book 5).
56 Hoplites were heavily armed infantry.
57 Syagrus echoes a line of Homer's *Iliad* (7.125), where the old king Peleus would "groan aloud" at the Greeks' cowardice.

up something of our original terms: suppose you command the land army and I the navy. Or, if you prefer to command at sea, I'm willing to take the land army. And you must either be satisfied with this or go away without allies like these."

7.161 That was Gelon's offer. But the Athenian envoy got in ahead of the Lacedaemonian one and answered him like this: "King of Syracuse, Greece did not send us to you because it needs a leader, but because it needs an army. You don't give any sign of sending an army unless you lead Greece; it's commanding it that you're eager for. 2 As long as you were asking to lead the whole Greek army, we Athenians were content to keep quiet, knowing that the Laconian would be quite able to answer for us both. But now that you are shut out of the whole and ask to command the navy, here is how things stand: even if the Laconian lets you command it, we will not. That command is ours, unless the Lacedaemonians themselves want it. If they want to lead, we don't oppose them; but we will allow no one else to command the fleet. 3 It would be for nothing that we possess the largest seafaring force of the Greeks if we, who are Athenians, yield the command to Syracusans. We are the most ancient people, and the only Greeks who have never moved from their land. One of us, the epic poet Homer said, was the best man who came to Troy at drawing up and marshaling an army. So it is no disgrace for us to say this."[58]

7.162 Gelon answered like this: "Athenian stranger, it seems you have the commanders but won't have anyone to command. Since you will concede nothing and want the whole, you had better lose no time getting back home and telling Greece that the spring has been taken out of its year." 2 This is what the saying means: clearly the spring is the finest part of the year, and his army the finest part of the Greek army. So he compared Greece deprived of alliance with him to a year with the spring taken out of it.

7.163 After these dealings with Gelon, the envoys of the Greeks sailed away. Gelon, for his part, feared that the Greeks would not

58 Homer's praise is of the Athenian leader Menestheus (*Iliad* 2.552–554).

be able to overcome the foreigner; but he thought it terrible and intolerable to go to the Peloponnese and be commanded by the Lacedaemonians when he was tyrant of Sicily. So he gave up on that course and took another. [2] As soon as he learned that the Persian had crossed the Hellespont, he sent Cadmus son of Scythes, a man from Cos, to Delphi with three fifty-oared ships, carrying a great deal of money and friendly messages. Cadmus was to watch which way the battle would fall: if the foreigner won, he was to give him the money, together with earth and water from the lands Gelon ruled; if the Greeks won, he was to bring it back.

7.164 This Cadmus had earlier inherited from his father the tyranny of Cos, firmly established. Of his own free will, with no danger threatening, but out of a sense of justice, he handed over power to the people of Cos in common and went off to Sicily, where with the Samians he took and settled the city of Zancle, which changed its name to Messene. [2] This was the Cadmus Gelon sent, a man who had come to Sicily in such a way, because of his justice, which Gelon knew of from other occasions as well. And on top of the other just deeds he had done, Cadmus left behind this one too, not the least of them. He had control of a great sum of money that Gelon had entrusted to him, and though he could have kept it, he would not. When the Greeks won the sea battle and Xerxes had marched away, he came back to Sicily bringing all the money with him.

7.165 The people who live in Sicily also tell this story: that even though he would have been under the command of the Lacedaemonians, Gelon would still have helped the Greeks, had not Terillus son of Crinippus, tyrant of Himera, who had been driven out of Himera by Theron son of Aenesidemus, monarch of Acragas, brought in at that very time three hundred thousand Phoenicians, Libyans, Iberians, Ligurians, Elisyci, Sardinians and Corsicans, with their general Hamilcar son of Hanno, king of the Carthaginians. Terillus had persuaded him through his own ties of guest-friendship with him, and above all through the eagerness of Anaxilaus son of Cretines, tyrant of Rhegium, who gave

his own children to Hamilcar as hostages and brought him against Sicily to help his father-in-law; for Anaxilaus was married to Terillus' daughter, whose name was Cydippe. And so, they say, since Gelon was unable to help the Greeks, he sent the money to Delphi.

7.166 They add this too: that it happened that on the same day Gelon and Theron defeated Hamilcar the Carthaginian in Sicily and the Greeks defeated the Persian at Salamis. Hamilcar, I am told, was a Carthaginian on his father's side and a Syracusan on his mother's, and had become king of the Carthaginians for his courage. When the battle was joined and he was beaten, he vanished; for he was never seen anywhere on earth, alive or dead, though Gelon went everywhere searching for him.[59]

7.167 The Carthaginians themselves tell the following story, and it is a plausible one. They say that the non-Greeks fought the Greeks in Sicily from dawn until late in the afternoon (for that is how long the battle is said to have dragged on), and all that time Hamilcar stayed in the camp, sacrificing and seeking good omens by burning whole bodies on a great pyre. When he saw his own men being routed, just as he happened to be pouring libations over the victims, he threw himself into the fire; and so, they say, he was burned up and vanished. 2 Whether Hamilcar vanished in this way, as the Phoenicians say, or in some other way, as the Carthaginians and Syracusans say, they sacrifice to him, and they have also set up monuments to him in all the cities of their colonies, the greatest of them in Carthage itself.

7.168 So much for Sicily. As for the Corcyraeans, this is the answer they gave the messengers, and this is what they did. The same men who had gone to Sicily invited them as well, and said the same things they had said to Gelon. The Corcyraeans promised on the spot to send a force and come to the defense, declaring that they could not stand by and watch Greece being destroyed: if it fell, they themselves would be nothing but slaves from the very first day; no, they must help it to the very best of their power. 2 That was their fair-seeming answer. But when the

59 This was the battle of Himera, in 480 BC.

time came to send help, they had other plans. They manned sixty ships, put to sea only after much delay, and reached the Peloponnese, where they lay at anchor off Pylos and Taenarum in Lacedaemonian territory. They, too, were waiting to see which way the war would fall. They had no hope that the Greeks would prevail, and thought that the Persian would win an overwhelming victory and rule all of Greece. [3] So they acted deliberately, in order to be able to say something like this to the Persian: "My King, when the Greeks tried to bring us into this war, we, who have no small force and could have supplied not the fewest ships but the most, after the Athenians at least, refused to oppose you or do anything to displease you." By saying this they hoped to come off better than the rest; and in my opinion that is just what would have happened. [4] For the Greeks, they had an excuse ready, and this is the one they actually used. When the Greeks blamed them for not coming to help, they said that they had manned sixty triremes but had been unable to round Cape Malea because of the Etesian winds; that was why they had not reached Salamis, and it was through no cowardice that they had missed the sea battle.

7.169 That is how the Corcyraeans put the Greeks off. The Cretans, when the Greeks appointed for this task invited them, did as follows. They sent envoys to the oracle at Delphi on behalf of all the Cretans together and asked the god whether it would be better for them to help Greece. [2] The Pythia answered: "Fools, you still complain of all the tears Minos sent you in his anger for the help you gave Menelaus: because they did not help him avenge his death at Camicus, while you helped them avenge the woman snatched from Sparta by a foreigner." When the Cretans heard the answer that was brought back, they held back from helping.

7.170 For it is said that Minos went to Sicania, now called Sicily, in search of Daedalus, and died a violent death there. In time, they say, the Cretans, urged on by a god, came with a great expedition to Sicania—all of them except the people of Polichne and Praesus—and for five years besieged the city of Camicus,

which in my time the people of Acragas inhabited. [2] In the end, unable either to take it or to stay on, since they were struggling with famine, they abandoned it and left. When they were off Iapygia on their voyage, a great storm caught them and drove them ashore. Their ships were smashed, and they could see no way of getting back to Crete, so, according to the story, they founded the city of Hyria there and stayed. They changed from Cretans into Messapian Iapygians, and from islanders into mainlanders.[60] [3] From Hyria, they say, they founded the other towns. Much later the Tarentines tried to uproot these towns and suffered a great disaster in doing so; this was the greatest slaughter of Greeks of all that we know of, both of the Tarentines themselves and of the men of Rhegium. These Rhegians had been compelled by Micythus son of Choerus to come and help the Tarentines, and three thousand of the citizens died in this way; of the Tarentines themselves no count was made. [4] Micythus, a household servant of Anaxilaus, had been left in charge of Rhegium; he is the man who was later driven out of Rhegium, settled in Tegea in Arcadia, and dedicated the many statues at Olympia.

7.171 But the affairs of Rhegium and Tarentum have been a digression from my account. Into Crete, now emptied of people, so the Praesians say, came other settlers, Greeks above all; and in the third generation after Minos' death came the Trojan War, in which, according to them, the Cretans proved by no means the worst of Menelaus' helpers. [2] In return for this, when they came home from Troy, famine and plague fell on them and on their flocks, until Crete was emptied a second time; and now, together with those who were left, it is a third population of Cretans that lives there. By reminding them of all this, the Pythia stopped them when they wanted to help the Greeks.

7.172 The Thessalians had sided with the Persians at first only under compulsion, as they showed, since they did not like what the Aleuadae were plotting. As soon as they learned that the Per-

60 Iapygia is the heel of Italy, roughly modern Apulia; the Messapians were one of its native peoples.

sian was about to cross into Europe, they sent messengers to the Isthmus. At the Isthmus the delegates of Greece were assembled, chosen from the cities that took the better view of Greece's cause. [2] When the Thessalian messengers came before them, they said: "Men of Greece, the pass of Olympus must be guarded, so that Thessaly and all of Greece may be sheltered from the war. We're ready to help guard it, but you must send a large army too; and if you don't, you can be sure we'll come to terms with the Persian. We're posted so far out in front of the rest of Greece, and we have no reason to die alone on your behalf. [3] If you're not willing to help, you can't bring any compulsion to bear on us; for compulsion has never yet proved stronger than inability. We'll try to find some way of saving ourselves."

7.173 That is what the Thessalians said. In response the Greeks decided to send an infantry force by sea to Thessaly to guard the pass. When the army had assembled, it sailed through the Euripus. On reaching Alus in Achaea it disembarked and marched into Thessaly, leaving the ships there, and came to Tempe, to the pass that leads from lower Macedonia into Thessaly along the river Peneus, between Mount Olympus and Ossa. [2] There the Greeks camped, about ten thousand hoplites gathered together, and the Thessalian cavalry joined them. The Lacedaemonians were commanded by Euaenetus son of Carenus, who had been chosen from among the polemarchs, though he was not of the royal family; the Athenians by Themistocles son of Neocles.[61] They stayed there only a few days. [3] For messengers came from Alexander son of Amyntas, the Macedonian, advising them to withdraw rather than stay in the pass and be trampled by the invading army, and they described the size of the army and of the fleet. When these men gave them this advice, they took it, since the advice seemed sound and the Macedonian was clearly well disposed toward them. [4] In my opinion, though, what persuaded them was fear, once they learned that there was another way into Thessaly, through upper Macedonia and the land of the

61 At Sparta the polemarchs were senior army officers ranking below the kings.

Perrhaebi near the town of Gonnus—the very way by which Xerxes' army did come in. So the Greeks went down to their ships and made their way back to the Isthmus.

7.174 Such was the expedition to Thessaly, made when the King was about to cross from Asia into Europe and was already at Abydos. The Thessalians, left without allies, now sided with the Persians wholeheartedly and with no more hesitation, so that in the course of events they proved most useful to the King.

THERMOPYLAE AND ARTEMISIUM

The Greeks decide to hold Thermopylae and Artemisium, and a storm wrecks much of the Persian fleet.

7.175 When the Greeks had returned to the Isthmus, they considered, in light of what Alexander had told them, how and in what places they would wage the war. The view that prevailed was to guard the pass at Thermopylae, since it was evidently narrower than the pass into Thessaly and at the same time closer to their own land. 2 As for the path by which the Greeks who fell at Thermopylae were overcome, they did not even know it existed until they reached Thermopylae and learned of it from the people of Trachis. So they decided to guard this pass and keep the foreigners from getting into Greece, while the fleet was to sail to Artemisium in the territory of Histiaea. These places are close enough together for each force to learn what was happening to the other, and the lie of the land is as follows.

7.176 First, Artemisium. From the broad Thracian sea the water narrows into the strait between the island of Sciathus and the mainland of Magnesia; and right after the strait comes the coast of Euboea called Artemisium, on which there is a sanctuary of Artemis. 2 The way into Greece through Trachis, for its part, is half a plethron wide at its narrowest. Yet this is not the narrowest point of the region; that is just in front of Thermopylae and just behind it. At Alpeni, which lies behind, there is room for only a single wagon track, and in front, at the river Phoenix near

the town of Anthela, again room for only a single wagon track.[62] [3] To the west of Thermopylae rises a mountain, impassable and sheer, high, stretching up toward Oeta; to the east of the road lie the sea and marshes. In this passage there are hot springs, which the local people call the Pots, and an altar of Heracles stands beside them. A wall had been built across this pass, and in the old days it had gates. [4] The Phocians had built the wall out of fear, when the Thessalians came from Thesprotia to settle the Aeolian land that they now possess. Because the Thessalians were trying to subdue them, the Phocians took this precaution; and at that time they also let the hot water run over the passage so that the ground would be cut up with gullies, trying every means to keep the Thessalians from invading their country. [5] Now the old wall had been built long ago, and most of it had by now fallen down with time; the Greeks rebuilt it and decided to keep the foreigners out of Greece at this point. There is a village very close to the road called Alpeni, and the Greeks reckoned on getting their provisions from it.

7.177 These places, then, seemed suitable to the Greeks. They had considered everything in advance and calculated that the foreigners would be able to make use neither of their numbers nor of their cavalry there, and so they decided to meet the invader of Greece at this point. When they learned that the Persian was in Pieria, they broke up from the Isthmus and set out, some of them by land to Thermopylae, the others by sea to Artemisium.

7.178 So the Greeks hurried to the defense, each to his assigned post. Meanwhile the Delphians, terrified for themselves and for Greece, consulted the god, and the answer they received was to pray to the winds, for these would be powerful allies to Greece. [2] Having received the oracle, the Delphians first passed on the answer they had been given to those Greeks who wished to be free, and by passing it on to them when they were in dreadful fear of the foreigner they earned their undying gratitude. After that the Delphians set up an altar to the winds at Thyia, where

62 A plethron was about 100 feet (30 m), so half a plethron is about 50 feet.

the precinct of Thyia daughter of Cephisus is, after whom the place is named, and they courted the winds with sacrifices.

7.179 So the Delphians, in accordance with the oracle, still propitiate the winds to this day. Xerxes' fleet, meanwhile, set out from the city of Therma and crossed with ten of its fastest ships straight for Sciathus, where three Greek ships, from Troezen, Aegina and Attica, were keeping watch ahead of the rest. When these sighted the foreign ships, they took to flight.

7.180 The foreigners gave chase and promptly captured the Troezenian ship, commanded by Prexinus. Then they took the finest-looking of its marines, led him to the ship's prow and cut his throat, making an omen of good fortune out of the first and finest of the Greeks they had captured. The name of the man sacrificed was Leon; perhaps his name also had something to do with it.[63]

7.181 The Aeginetan ship, captained by Asonides, gave them some trouble, because Pytheas son of Ischenous was serving aboard as a marine, a man who proved himself the bravest that day. When the ship was being taken, he held out fighting until he was hacked to pieces all over. 2 When he fell but did not die and was still breathing, the Persians serving as marines on the ships made it their highest concern to save him because of his excellence, treating his wounds with myrrh and binding them in bandages of fine linen; 3 and when they got back to their own camp they showed him off in admiration to the whole army and treated him well. The others they had captured on this ship they treated as captives.

7.182 So these two ships were taken. The third, captained by Phormus, an Athenian, ran aground in its flight at the mouth of the Peneus. The foreigners got possession of the hull but not of the men; for as soon as the Athenians had run the ship aground, they jumped out, made their way through Thessaly and got back to Athens.

7.183 The Greeks camped at Artemisium learned of this from fire signals from Sciathus. On learning of it they were terrified

63 Leon means "lion" in Greek.

and moved their anchorage from Artemisium to Chalcis, intending to guard the Euripus, and they left lookouts on the heights of Euboea. [2] Of the ten foreign ships, three ran onto the reef called the Ant, which lies between Sciathus and Magnesia. There the foreigners brought a stone pillar and set it on the reef. Then, once the obstacle in their way had been cleared, the rest set out from Therma themselves and sailed with the whole fleet, eleven days after the King had marched out of Therma. [3] It was Pammon of Scyros who had pointed out to them the reef, which lay right in the channel. Sailing all day, the foreigners reached Sepias in Magnesia and the beach between the town of Casthanaea and Cape Sepias.

7.184 Up to this place and Thermopylae the army had suffered no harm, and its numbers at that point were still, by my own reckoning, as follows. From the ships from Asia, which numbered one thousand two hundred and seven, the original complement drawn from the various peoples came to two hundred and forty-one thousand four hundred men, reckoning two hundred men to each ship. [2] On board these ships, in addition to each people's own marines, were thirty Persians, Medes and Sacae; this further body comes to thirty-six thousand two hundred and ten. [3] To this and the earlier number I will add the men from the fifty-oared ships, taking it that there were eighty men on each, whether in fact there were more or fewer. As I said earlier, three thousand of these vessels had been gathered; so the men in them would come to two hundred and forty thousand. [4] This, then, was the fleet from Asia, in all five hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred and ten. The infantry came to one million seven hundred thousand, and the cavalry to eighty thousand. To these I will further add the Arabians who drove the camels and the Libyans who drove the chariots, reckoning them at twenty thousand men. [5] So the numbers from the ships and the land army, added together, come to two million three hundred and seventeen thousand six hundred and ten. That is the force I have described as led out of Asia itself, not

counting the servants who followed it, the grain transports and the men who sailed in them.

7.185 To this whole total we must still add the army brought from Europe; here I can only give an estimate. The Greeks of Thrace and of the islands off Thrace supplied a hundred and twenty ships; from these ships come twenty-four thousand men. 2 As for the land army supplied by the Thracians, Paeonians, Eordi, Bottiaeans, the Chalcidian people, Brygi, Pierians, Macedonians, Perrhaebi, Enienes, Dolopes, Magnesians, Achaeans and all who live on the coast of Thrace, I think these peoples furnished three hundred thousand men. 3 These numbers, added to those from Asia, make a total of two million six hundred and forty-one thousand six hundred and ten fighting men.

7.186 With the fighting force this large, I think that the servants who followed it, together with the men in the grain boats and in all the other vessels sailing with the army, were not fewer than the fighting men but more. 2 But let me take them as equal to them, neither more nor less; being equal to the fighting force, they make up the same number again. So Xerxes son of Darius led five million two hundred and eighty-three thousand two hundred and twenty men as far as Sepias and Thermopylae.

7.187 That is the number of Xerxes' entire army. As for the women who baked the bread, the concubines and the eunuchs, no one could give an exact number; nor again for the draft animals and other beasts of burden and the Indian dogs that came along—no one could give their number either, there were so many. So it does not surprise me that the streams of some rivers ran dry; what surprises me more is how the food held out for so many tens of thousands. 2 For I find by my reckoning that if each man received a choenix of wheat a day and no more, a hundred and ten thousand three hundred and forty medimni would be used up every day; and I am not counting the women, the eunuchs, the draft animals and the dogs. Yet of all these count-

less thousands of men, not one was more worthy than Xerxes himself, for beauty and stature, to hold this power.[64]

7.188 When the fleet had set out and sailed and put in at the beach of Magnesia between the town of Casthanaea and Cape Sepias, the first ships were moored close to land and the others rode at anchor behind them; since the beach was not large, they lay at anchor in rows, eight ships deep, out toward the open sea. 2 So they spent that night. But at dawn, after clear and windless weather, the sea began to boil, and a great storm fell on them with a strong east wind, which the people living in that region call the Hellespontias. 3 Those of them who noticed the wind rising, and who were so placed at their moorings that they could, hauled their ships ashore ahead of the storm and survived, both they and their ships. But of the ships it caught afloat, it carried some to the place on Pelion called the Ovens, others onto the beach; some were wrecked on Sepias itself, others were thrown up at the town of Meliboea, others at Casthanaea. The storm was something beyond enduring.

7.189 There is a story that the Athenians called on Boreas because of an oracle. Another oracle had come to them, telling them to summon their son-in-law as an ally. According to the Greek account, Boreas has an Attic wife, Orithyia the daughter of Erechtheus. 2 Because of this marriage tie, so the report goes, the Athenians reckoned that Boreas was their son-in-law. They were lying at anchor at Chalcis in Euboea, and when they saw the storm rising, or even before that, they offered sacrifices and called on Boreas and Orithyia to help them and to destroy the foreign ships, as they had done before at Athos.[65] 3 Now whether it was for this reason that Boreas fell upon the foreigners as they lay at anchor, I cannot say. The Athenians, at any rate, say that Boreas had helped them before and that it was he who brought

64 A choenix was a daily ration of grain, about a quart (1 liter); a medimnus held 48 choenices, about 52 liters.

65 Boreas is the North Wind, who in legend carried off Orithyia, daughter of the early Athenian king Erechtheus.

all this about on that occasion too. When they went home, they founded a shrine to Boreas beside the river Ilissus.

7.190 In this disaster, those who give the lowest figure say that no fewer than four hundred ships were destroyed, along with countless men and an enormous quantity of goods. So this shipwreck proved hugely profitable to Ameinocles son of Cretines, a Magnesian who owned land around Sepias. Later on he picked up many gold cups that washed ashore, and many silver ones. He found Persian treasure chests, and he came into untold wealth besides. But though his finds made him very rich, he was not fortunate in other ways, for even he was grieved by a cruel misfortune: the killing of a child.

7.191 The grain transports and other vessels destroyed were beyond counting. So the commanders of the fleet, afraid that the Thessalians might attack them in their battered state, threw up a high barricade out of the wreckage. 2 For the storm lasted three days. In the end the Magi made it stop on the fourth day by offering victims and chanting spells to the wind, and by sacrificing to Thetis and the Nereids as well. Or else the wind died down of its own accord. They sacrificed to Thetis because they had heard the story from the Ionians that she had been carried off from this place by Peleus, and that the whole Sepias headland belonged to her and the other Nereids.[66]

7.192 So on the fourth day the wind had stopped. On the second day after the storm began, the lookouts ran down from the heights of Euboea and reported to the Greeks everything that had happened in the shipwreck. 2 When the Greeks heard this, they prayed to Poseidon the Savior and poured libations. Then they hurried back as fast as they could to Artemisium, expecting to face only a few ships.

7.193 So they came back a second time and lay at anchor off Artemisium, and from that time to this day they have used the title Savior for Poseidon. As for the foreigners, once the wind had dropped and the waves had calmed, they launched their

66 Thetis was a sea goddess, one of the Nereids, who was carried off by the mortal Peleus and became the mother of Achilles.

ships and sailed along the mainland. Rounding the headland of Magnesia, they sailed straight into the gulf that leads to Pagasae. [2] There is a place in this gulf of Magnesia where Heracles is said to have been left behind by Jason and his companions from the Argo. They had sent him to fetch water while they were sailing to Aea in Colchis for the fleece, since they meant to draw water there and then put out into the open sea. That is why the place came to be called Aphetae. It was here, then, that Xerxes' men made their anchorage.[67]

7.194 Fifteen of these ships happened to put out last, far behind the rest, and somehow caught sight of the Greek ships at Artemisium. The foreigners took them for their own and sailed right in among the enemy. Their commander was the governor of Cyme in Aeolis, Sandoces son of Thamasius. King Darius had once seized and crucified him when he was one of the royal judges, for the following reason: Sandoces had taken a bribe and given an unjust verdict. [2] But while he was hanging there, Darius reckoned up and found that his services to the royal house outweighed his offenses. Having found this, and recognizing that he himself had acted more hastily than wisely, he had him released. [3] So Sandoces escaped death at King Darius' hands and survived. But now, sailing in among the Greeks, he was not going to escape a second time. For when the Greeks saw them sailing toward them, they realized the mistake the enemy was making, put out against them and captured them easily.

7.195 On one of these ships Aridolis, tyrant of Alabanda in Caria, was captured. On another was the Paphian general Penthylus son of Demonous, who had brought twelve ships from Paphos. He had lost eleven of them in the storm off Sepias, and he was captured sailing toward Artemisium in the one that survived. The Greeks questioned these men about what they wanted to learn of Xerxes' forces, then sent them in chains to the Isthmus of Corinth.

7.196 So the foreign fleet arrived at Aphetae, all except the fifteen ships that I said Sandoces commanded. Xerxes and the land

67 The name Aphetae suggests the Greek verb for "let go" or "set off."

army had marched through Thessaly and Achaea and had entered the land of the Malians two days before. In Thessaly he had held a horse race to test his own horses against the Thessalian horses, since he had learned that these were the best among the Greeks, and the Greek horses were left far behind. Of the rivers in Thessaly, only the Onochonus failed to give enough water for the army to drink. Of the rivers flowing in Achaea, not even the largest of them, the Apidanus, held out, except barely.

7.197 When Xerxes came to Alus in Achaea, his guides, wanting to tell him everything, told him a local story about the sanctuary of Zeus Laphystius. They told how Athamas son of Aeolus had plotted the death of Phrixus with Ino, and how afterwards, on the command of an oracle, the Achaeans imposed the following ordeals on his descendants. 2 They order whoever is the eldest of this family to keep out of the "Leiton," and they themselves keep watch. The Achaeans call their town hall the "Leiton."[68] If he does go in, there is no way he can come out again except to be sacrificed. Further, many of those who were about to be sacrificed have already taken fright and run away to another country. When they came back after a time and were caught, they were sent into the town hall. The guides also explained how such a man is sacrificed: he is covered all over with wreaths and led out as though in a procession. 3 This is what happens to the descendants of Cytissorus son of Phrixus. On the command of an oracle, the Achaeans were making Athamas son of Aeolus a purification offering for their land and were about to sacrifice him. This Cytissorus came from Aea in Colchis and rescued him, and by doing so he brought the god's wrath on his own descendants. 4 When Xerxes heard this, he kept away from the grove when he came to it and ordered his whole army to do the same. He showed reverence both to the house of Athamas' descendants and to the sacred precinct.

7.198 So much for events in Thessaly and Achaea. From these lands he went on into Malis, along a gulf of the sea where the

68 In legend, Athamas and his second wife Ino plotted to have his son Phrixus sacrificed. Phrixus escaped to Colchis on a ram with a golden fleece.

tide ebbs and flows every day. Around this gulf there is a stretch of flat country, wide in some places and very narrow in others. Around this country high, impassable mountains, called the Trachinian Cliffs, enclose the whole land of Malis. [2] Now the first city on the gulf as you come from Achaea is Anticyra. Beside it the river Spercheius, which flows from the land of the Enienes, empties into the sea. About twenty stades from there is another river, named the Dyras, which according to the story rose up to help Heracles as he burned. Twenty stades further on there is yet another river, called the Melas.

7.199 The city of Trachis is five stades from this river Melas. Here, where Trachis is built, the whole region is at its widest between the mountains and the sea, for the plain covers twenty-two thousand plethra. In the mountain that encloses the land of Trachis there is a gorge to the south of the city, and through this gorge the river Asopus flows along the foot of the mountain.[69]

7.200 To the south of the Asopus there is another river, the Phoenix, which is not large. It flows from these mountains into the Asopus. At the Phoenix the way is narrowest, for only a single wagon road has been built there. From the river Phoenix it is fifteen stades to Thermopylae. [2] Between the river Phoenix and Thermopylae there is a village named Anthela, past which the Asopus flows and empties into the sea. Around the village there is a broad space, where there stands a sanctuary of Amphictyonid Demeter. There are seats for the Amphictyons there, and a sanctuary of Amphictyon himself.[70]

THERMOPYLAE

Leonidas and a small Greek force hold the pass for two days against Xerxes' attacks.

7.201 So King Xerxes was encamped in the Trachinian part of Malis, and the Greeks were encamped in the pass. Most Greeks

69 As a measure of area, a plethron was about 10,000 square feet.
70 The Amphictyons were a council of neighboring Greek peoples that met here and at Delphi. Amphictyon was its legendary founder.

call this place Thermopylae, but the people who live there and their neighbors call it Pylae. Both sides, then, were encamped in these places. He held everything to the north as far as Trachis, and they held everything toward the south on this side of the mainland.[71]

7.202 These were the Greeks who awaited the Persian in this place. There were three hundred Spartan hoplites, and a thousand men from Tegea and Mantinea, half from each. A hundred and twenty came from Orchomenus in Arcadia and a thousand from the rest of Arcadia, so that was how many Arcadians there were. Four hundred came from Corinth, two hundred from Phlius and eighty from Mycenae. These were the men from the Peloponnese. From Boeotia there were seven hundred Thespians and four hundred Thebans.

7.203 In addition, the Opuntian Locrians had been summoned with their full force, and a thousand Phocians. The Greeks themselves had called them in. Through messengers they told them that they had come as an advance guard for the rest, and that the remaining allies were expected any day. The sea, they said, was well guarded, watched by the Athenians, the Aeginetans and those assigned to the fleet, so there was nothing to fear. 2 For it was not a god who was invading Greece but a man. There was no mortal, nor would there ever be, who did not have misfortune mixed into his lot from birth, and the greatest men had the greatest misfortunes. So the invader too, being mortal, was bound to fall short of his high hopes. When the Locrians and Phocians heard this, they came to help at Trachis.

7.204 Each of these contingents had its own generals, city by city. But the one most admired, and the leader of the whole army, was the Lacedaemonian Leonidas son of Anaxandridas, son of Leon, son of Eurycratidas, son of Anaxander, son of Eurycrates, son of Polydorus, son of Alcamenes, son of Telecles, son of Archelaus, son of Hegesilaus, son of Doryssus, son of Leobotes, son of Echestratus, son of Agis, son of Eurysthenes, son of Aristodemus, son of Aristomachus, son of Cleodaeus, son of Hyl-

71 Thermopylae means "Hot Gates" (from its hot springs); Pylae means "Gates."

lus, son of Heracles. He had come to the kingship in Sparta unexpectedly.

7.205 Because he had two older brothers, Cleomenes and Dorieus, he had put the kingship out of his mind. But Cleomenes died without a male heir, and Dorieus was no longer alive either, since he too had died, in Sicily. So the kingship passed to Leonidas, and also because he had been born before Cleombrotus, who was the youngest son of Anaxandridas. Leonidas, moreover, was married to Cleomenes' daughter. 2 He now went to Thermopylae, having picked the regular three hundred, all of them men who had sons. On his way he also brought along the Thebans whom I mentioned when counting up the numbers. Their commander was Leontiades son of Eurymachus. 3 Leonidas made a point of taking these alone of all the Greeks because they had been strongly accused of siding with the Persians. So he called them to the war, wanting to know whether they would send men with him or openly refuse to join the Greek alliance. They sent men, though their sympathies lay elsewhere.

7.206 The Spartans sent Leonidas and his men ahead first so that the other allies would see them and join the campaign. Otherwise the allies too might side with the Persians if they learned that the Spartans were holding back. Afterwards, since the Carnea stood in their way, the Spartans meant to celebrate the festival, leave a garrison in Sparta, and then come quickly in full force to help. 2 The rest of the allies had the same sort of plan, because the Olympic festival happened to fall at the same time as these events. They did not expect the war at Thermopylae to be decided so quickly, so they sent only their advance guards.[72]

7.207 That was what they had planned to do. But the Greeks at Thermopylae, when the Persian drew near the pass, were terrified and debated whether to withdraw. The rest of the Peloponnesians were for going back to the Peloponnese and guarding the Isthmus. But the Phocians and Locrians were furious at this proposal, and Leonidas voted to stay where they were. He

72 The Carnea was a Spartan festival of Apollo, during which the Spartans would not march to war.

also voted to send messengers to the cities asking them to come and help, since they were too few to hold off the army of the Medes.

7.208 While they were debating this, Xerxes sent a mounted scout to see how many there were and what they were doing. While still in Thessaly, he had heard that a small army had gathered there, and that its leaders were Lacedaemonians, with Leonidas, a descendant of Heracles. 2 When the horseman rode up to the camp, he looked it over and observed it, though not the whole camp. The men posted inside the wall, which they had rebuilt and were guarding, could not be seen. But he took note of those outside, whose arms were lying in front of the wall. At that time it happened that the Lacedaemonians were the ones posted outside. 3 He saw some of the men exercising and others combing their hair. He was amazed as he watched this, and he took note of their numbers. Having learned everything accurately, he rode back undisturbed. No one pursued him, and they paid him no attention whatsoever. When he got back, he told Xerxes everything he had seen.

7.209 When Xerxes heard this, he could not grasp the truth: that they were preparing to die and to kill as many as they could. Since what they were doing struck him as laughable, he sent for Demaratus son of Ariston, who was in the camp. 2 When he came, Xerxes asked him about each of these things, wanting to understand what the Lacedaemonians were doing. Demaratus said, "You heard me speak about these men before, when we were setting out against Greece. When you heard me, you laughed at me for telling you how I saw these things turning out. Holding to the truth in your presence, King, is the hardest struggle I have. 3 Listen to me now as well. These men have come to fight us for the pass, and that's what they're preparing for. It is their custom: when they are about to risk their lives, that is when they dress their hair. 4 And know this. If you defeat these men and those who have stayed behind in Sparta, there's no other race of men that will stand up to you, King, and raise their hands against you. For you are now attacking the finest

kingdom and city among the Greeks, and the best men." [5] Xerxes found what he said utterly incredible, and he asked a second time how so few men could fight against his army. Demaratus said, "My King, treat me as a liar if this doesn't turn out the way I say."

7.210 By saying this he did not persuade Xerxes. Xerxes let four days go by, all the while expecting them to run away. On the fifth day they still had not left, and it seemed to him that they were staying out of shameless folly. In his anger he sent the Medes and Cissians against them, with orders to take them alive and bring them before him. [2] The Medes charged and fell upon the Greeks. Many of them fell, others pressed on in their place, and they were not beaten back, though they suffered terribly. They made it plain to everyone, and not least to the King himself, that he had many human beings but few men. The fighting went on all day.[73]

7.211 When the Medes had been roughly handled, they withdrew. The Persians then took their place and attacked, those whom the King called the Immortals, commanded by Hydarnes. These, at least, were supposed to finish the job easily. [2] But when they too engaged the Greeks, they did no better than the Median force and fared just the same. They were fighting in a narrow space, they used shorter spears than the Greeks, and they could not make use of their numbers. [3] The Lacedaemonians fought memorably. In many ways they showed that they were experts at fighting among men who were not. Whenever they turned their backs, for instance, they would pretend to flee all together. The foreigners, seeing them flee, would come after them with shouting and clatter. Then, just as they were being overtaken, the Lacedaemonians would turn to face the foreigners, and as they wheeled about they cut down Persians in countless numbers. A few of the Spartans themselves also fell there. The Persians tried attacking by divisions and in every way they could, but when they could gain no ground in the pass, they withdrew.

7.212 During these assaults, it is said, the King was watching and three times leapt up from his throne in fear for his army. That was how they fought on that day, and on the next the foreigners fared no better. Since the Greeks were few, the foreigners expected them to be crippled by wounds and no longer able to raise a hand against them, and so they attacked. 2 But the Greeks were drawn up by divisions and by peoples, and each fought in turn, except the Phocians. These had been posted on the mountain to guard the path. When the Persians found nothing different from what they had seen the day before, they withdrew.

EPHIALTES AND THE PATH

Ephialtes shows Xerxes the mountain path, and the Persians march around the Greek position by night.

7.213 The King was at a loss over how to deal with the situation. Then Ephialtes son of Eurydemus, a Malian, came to speak with him. Expecting some great reward from the King, he told him about the path that leads over the mountain to Thermopylae, and so he brought destruction on the Greeks who had stayed there. 2 Later, out of fear of the Lacedaemonians, he fled to Thessaly. While he was in exile, the Pylagori of the Amphictyons, when they gathered for the Pylaea, put a price on his head. Some time after that he went back to Anticyra and was killed by Athenades, a man of Trachis. 3 This Athenades killed Ephialtes for another reason, which I will explain later in my account, but the Lacedaemonians honored him for it all the same.[74]

7.214 That was how Ephialtes died, later on. There is another story told: that it was Onetes son of Phanagoras, a man of Carystus, and Corydallus of Anticyra who said these things to the King and guided the Persians around the mountain. I find it entirely unbelievable. 2 One must judge it by this, first: the

73 The Cissians came from the region around Susa.
74 The Pylaea was the Amphictyons' assembly at Pylae (Thermopylae); the Pylagori were the member states' delegates to it.

Pylagori of the Greeks put a price not on Onetes and Corydallus but on Ephialtes of Trachis, and they surely had found out the exact truth. Second, we know that Ephialtes went into exile on this charge. [3] It is true that Onetes might have known this path even though he was not a Malian, if he had spent much time in the country. But since it was Ephialtes who guided them around the mountain by the path, it is him I record as the guilty one.

7.215 Xerxes was pleased with what Ephialtes promised to accomplish, and in his delight he at once sent off Hydarnes and the men under Hydarnes' command. They set out from the camp at about the time the lamps are lit. This path had been discovered by the local Malians, and once they had found it they guided the Thessalians over it against the Phocians, at the time when the Phocians had walled off the pass and were sheltered from attack. So that is how long ago the path had been found out, and it had never done the Malians any good.

7.216 This is how the path runs. It begins at the river Asopus, which flows through the gorge, and the mountain and the path have the same name, Anopaea. This Anopaea runs along the ridge of the mountain and ends at Alpenus, the first town of Locris as you come from the Malians, by the rock called Melampygus and the Seats of the Cercopes, which is also where it is narrowest.[75]

7.217 Along this path, then, such as I have described it, the Persians crossed the Asopus and marched all night, with the mountains of the Oetaeans on their right and those of the Trachinians on their left. Dawn was breaking when they reached the summit of the mountain. [2] At this point on the mountain, as I have said before, a thousand Phocian hoplites were on guard, defending their own country and watching the path. The pass below was guarded by the troops I have mentioned; the path over the mountain the Phocians had volunteered to Leonidas to guard, and they were keeping watch on it.

7.218 This is how the Phocians found out that the Persians had come up. The Persians had made the climb unnoticed, because

the whole mountain was covered with oaks. There was no wind, and a great noise arose, as you would expect with leaves strewn underfoot. The Phocians jumped up and began putting on their armor, and at once the foreigners were upon them. [2] When they saw men arming themselves they were astonished, for they had expected no opposition at all, and they had run into an army. Then Hydarnes, afraid that the Phocians might be Lacedaemonians, asked Ephialtes what country the army came from. When he had learned the truth, he drew up the Persians for battle. [3] The Phocians, struck by a dense hail of arrows, fled to the peak of the mountain, convinced that it was against them that the Persians had set out in the first place, and they prepared to die. That was what they had in mind; but the Persians with Ephialtes and Hydarnes paid no attention to the Phocians and went down the mountain as fast as they could.

THE LAST STAND OF LEONIDAS

Leonidas sends the allies away and dies fighting with the Spartans and Thespians.

7.219 As for the Greeks at Thermopylae, first the seer Megistias, looking into the sacrifices, told them of the death that would come to them with the dawn. Then there were deserters who reported the Persians' march around the mountain. These brought word while it was still night; the third to bring it were the lookouts, who ran down from the heights just as day was breaking. [2] Then the Greeks held a council, and their opinions were divided: some would not hear of abandoning their post, while others argued against them. After this they parted. Some went away, scattering each to their own city, while others prepared to stay where they were with Leonidas.

7.220 It is also said that Leonidas himself sent them away, concerned that they should not be killed, but that for himself and the Spartans with him it was not fitting to abandon the post they

75 Melampygus ("Black-Bottom") was a nickname of Heracles; the Cercopes were mischievous creatures he was said to have punished.

had come to guard in the first place. [2] This is the view I hold most strongly: that Leonidas, when he saw that the allies were reluctant and unwilling to share the danger with him, told them to leave, but that it was not honorable for him to go. If he stayed, great glory would be left behind him, and Sparta's happiness would not be wiped out. [3] For when the Spartans consulted the oracle about this war right at the start, as it was breaking out, the Pythia had told them that either Lacedaemon would be laid waste by the foreigners or their king would die. She gave them this answer in hexameter verses, which went like this:

[4] As for you, dwellers in spacious Sparta,
either your great and glorious city, at the hands of the sons of Perseus,
is sacked, or, if not that, then for one of the race of Heracles
the land of Lacedaemon will mourn, a king who has perished.
For neither the might of bulls nor of lions will hold him back
face to face; for he has the might of Zeus. And I say he will not
be held back until he has torn one of these two utterly apart. It was with this in mind, I believe, and wanting to win glory for the Spartans alone, that Leonidas sent the allies away—rather than that those who left went off in such disorder because they disagreed.[76]

7.221 Another piece of evidence for this, and not the least, is the following. The seer who was accompanying this army, Megistias the Acarnanian, said to be descended from Melampus, told them from the sacrifices what was going to happen to them, and it is clear that Leonidas then sent him away too, so that he would not die with them. But though he was sent away, Megistias himself did not leave; instead he sent away his son, who was serving with him in the campaign and was his only child.[77]

76 The Greeks traced the Persians' name to the hero Perseus; the Spartan kings claimed descent from Heracles.
77 Melampus was a legendary seer, ancestor of a famous line of prophets.

7.222 So the allies who were sent away went off, obeying Leonidas, and only the Thespians and the Thebans stayed behind with the Lacedaemonians. Of these, the Thebans stayed against their will and unwillingly, since Leonidas kept them back, treating them as hostages. The Thespians stayed entirely of their own accord. They refused to go away and leave Leonidas and those with him; they stayed and died with them. Their commander was Demophilus son of Diadromes.

7.223 At sunrise Xerxes poured libations, then waited until about the time when the marketplace is full, and began his advance; for these were Ephialtes' instructions. The way down from the mountain is quicker, and the distance is much shorter than the way around and up. 2 So the foreigners with Xerxes advanced, and the Greeks with Leonidas, like men going out to their death, now went out much farther than at the beginning, into the wider part of the neck. For the wall was being held as a defense, and on the earlier days they had fought by going out only as far as the narrows.[78] 3 Now, as they met outside the narrows, the foreigners fell in great numbers; for behind them the officers of the units had whips and lashed every man, constantly driving them forward. Many of them were pushed into the sea and drowned, and far more were trampled alive by one another; nobody took any account of those who were dying. 4 For the Greeks, knowing that death was coming to them from those who were going around the mountain, showed against the foreigners all the strength they had, with no regard for their lives, in a frenzy.

7.224 By this time most of them had broken their spears, and they were cutting down the Persians with their swords. In this struggle Leonidas fell, having proved himself the best of men, and with him other Spartans of note. I have learned their names, as men who deserve to be remembered; indeed I have learned the names of all three hundred. 2 Many Persians fell there too, many of them notable, among them two sons of Darius, Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, born to Darius by Phratagune daughter

78 The time when the marketplace was full was mid-morning.

of Artanes. Artanes was the brother of King Darius and a son of Hystaspes son of Arsames; when he gave his daughter to Darius, he gave his whole estate with her, since she was his only child.

7.225 Two brothers of Xerxes fell there fighting. Over the body of Leonidas there was a great struggle between Persians and Lacedaemonians, until the Greeks by their excellence dragged it away, and they routed their enemies four times. This went on until the men with Ephialtes arrived. 2 When the Greeks learned that these had come, from then on the fight took a different turn. They withdrew back into the narrow part of the road, passed behind the wall, and took up a position on the hillock, all of them together in one body except the Thebans. The hillock is at the entrance to the pass, where the stone lion in honor of Leonidas now stands. 3 In this place they defended themselves with swords, those of them who still had any, and with their hands and teeth, until the foreigners buried them under missiles—some coming at them from the front and tearing down the wall that protected them, others coming around and surrounding them on every side.

7.226 Although the Lacedaemonians and Thespians showed themselves so brave, the bravest man of all is said to have been the Spartan Dieneces. They say he made this remark before they engaged the Medes, when he heard from one of the Trachinians that when the foreigners shot their arrows they hid the sun with the multitude of them, so vast were their numbers. 2 He was not at all daunted by this, they say, and, making light of the Medes' numbers, said that their Trachinian friend was bringing them nothing but good news: if the Medes hid the sun, then they would fight in the shade, not in the sun.

7.227 These and other sayings of the same kind, they say, Dieneces the Lacedaemonian left behind as his memorial. After him, the bravest are said to have been two Lacedaemonian brothers, Alpheus and Maron, sons of Orsiphantus. Among the Thespians, the one who won the greatest distinction was a man named Dithyrambus son of Harmatides.

THE EPITAPHS AT THERMOPYLAE

Epitaphs honor the dead, Xerxes mutilates Leonidas' body, and Demaratus' secret warning is told.

7.228 They were buried right where they fell, and over them, and over those who had died before the others were sent away by Leonidas, there is an inscription that reads:

Here once against three million fought
four thousand from the Peloponnese. [2] That is inscribed for all of them; for the Spartans alone there is this: Stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians that here
we lie, obedient to their words. [3] That is for the Lacedaemonians, and this for the seer: This is the monument of famous Megistias, whom once the Medes
killed when they had crossed the river Spercheius,
a seer who, knowing clearly the fates that were then coming upon him,
could not bring himself to desert the leader of Sparta. [4] It was the Amphictyons who honored them with these inscriptions and pillars, except for the seer's epitaph; that of the seer Megistias was inscribed by Simonides son of Leoprepes, because they were guest-friends.[79]

7.229 It is said that two of these three hundred, Eurytus and Aristodemus, could have chosen, if they had agreed together, either to get safely home to Sparta together—since Leonidas had dismissed them from the camp, and they were lying at Alpeni with a severe disease of the eyes—or, if they did not want to go home, to die with the others. Though they could have done either, they would not agree but held different views. Eurytus, so the story goes, when he learned that the Persians were coming around the mountain, asked for his armor, put it on, and ordered his helot to lead him to the fighting. When the helot had brought him there, he ran off and fled, while Eurytus plunged

79 Simonides of Ceos was the most celebrated poet of epitaphs in his day.

into the throng and was killed. Aristodemus lost heart and stayed behind. [2] Now if Aristodemus alone had been ill and come home to Sparta, or if they had both made the journey together, in my opinion the Spartans would not have been angry with them at all. As it was, since one of them died while the other, who had the same excuse, was unwilling to die, they could not help being very angry with Aristodemus.

7.230 Some say that Aristodemus got safely back to Sparta in this way and on such an excuse. Others say he had been sent from the camp as a messenger, and though he could have arrived in time for the battle, he chose not to, but lingered on the road and so survived, while his fellow messenger reached the battle and died.

7.231 When Aristodemus returned to Lacedaemon he met with reproach and dishonor. The dishonor he suffered was this: no Spartan would give him a light for his fire or speak to him. And the reproach was that he was called Aristodemus the Trembler. But at the battle of Plataea he made up for all the blame that had been laid on him.[80]

7.232 It is also said that another of these three hundred, named Pantites, survived because he had been sent as a messenger to Thessaly; when he returned to Sparta and found himself dishonored, he hanged himself.

7.233 The Thebans, whose commander was Leontiades, had fought against the King's army as long as they were with the Greeks, because necessity left them no choice. But when they saw that things were going the Persians' way, then, as the Greeks with Leonidas were hurrying to the hillock, they split off from them, held out their hands and went toward the foreigners. They said—and it was the truest thing they could have said—that they were on the Persian side, that they had been among the first to give earth and water to the King, that they had come to Thermopylae under compulsion, and that they bore no blame for the damage done to the King. [2] So by saying this they saved their lives; for they also had the Thessalians as witnesses to

80 The battle of Plataea (479 BC), described in Book 9.

what they said. Their luck did not hold in everything, however. When the foreigners took hold of them as they came, they killed some even as they approached, and on Xerxes' orders they branded most of them with the royal marks, beginning with their general Leontiades. His son Eurymachus was later killed by the Plataeans, when he had led four hundred Thebans and seized the city of Plataea.[81]

7.234 That is how the Greeks at Thermopylae fought. Xerxes summoned Demaratus and began questioning him like this: "Demaratus, you're a good man. My proof is the truth of what you said: everything you told me has turned out just so. Now tell me, how many Lacedaemonians are left, and how many of them are such warriors as these—or are they all like this?" 2 He said, "My King, the Lacedaemonians as a whole are very numerous and have many cities. But you'll learn what you want to know. In Lacedaemon there is the city of Sparta, with about eight thousand men, and all of them are like those who fought here. The other Lacedaemonians aren't their equals, but they're good men." 3 To this Xerxes said, "Demaratus, how can we get the better of these men with the least trouble? Come, explain it to me; you know the ins and outs of their plans, since you were their king."

7.235 He replied, "My King, if you're seriously asking my advice, it's only right that I tell you what is best. Suppose you were to send three hundred ships of your fleet against the land of Laconia. 2 There's an island lying off its coast called Cythera. Chilon, the wisest man we have ever had, said it would be a greater gain for the Spartans if it were sunk beneath the sea than if it stood above it, because he was always expecting something to come from it like what I'm describing to you. Not that he foresaw your expedition—he feared any expedition by anyone alike.[82] 3 Let your men use that island as a base and keep the Lacedaemonians in fear. With a war of their own on their doorstep, you'll have nothing to fear from them coming to the aid of the rest of

81 This Theban attack on Plataea in 431 BC opened the Peloponnesian War.
82 Chilon was a sixth-century BC Spartan ephor, counted among the Seven Sages.

Greece while your army is conquering it. And once the rest of Greece is enslaved, Laconia is left alone and weak. [4] But if you don't do this, here's what you must expect. There's a narrow isthmus in the Peloponnese; in that place, with all the Peloponnesians sworn together against you, expect other battles, harder than the ones that have been fought. If you do what I say, though, both this isthmus and the cities will come over to you without a fight."

[7.236] After him spoke Achaemenes, Xerxes' brother and commander of the fleet, who happened to be present at the conversation and was afraid Xerxes might be persuaded to do this. "My King, I see you're listening to the advice of a man who begrudges you your success, or is even betraying your cause. That's just the way Greeks like to behave: they envy good fortune and hate whoever is stronger. [2] If, on top of our present misfortunes, with four hundred ships wrecked, you send off another three hundred from the camp to sail around the Peloponnese, your enemies become a match for you; but if the fleet stays together, it's hard for them to handle, and they won't be a match for you at all. The whole fleet will support the army, and the army the fleet, as they advance together; if you split them up, you'll be no use to them, and they'll be no use to you. [3] My view is that you should set your own affairs in good order and not think about the enemy's—where they'll make their stand in the war, what they'll do, how many of them there are. They're quite capable of looking after themselves, and we likewise of looking after ourselves. If the Lacedaemonians come out to fight the Persians, they won't heal the wound they've already suffered."

[7.237] Xerxes answered as follows: "Achaemenes, I think you're right, and I'll do this. Demaratus is telling me what he expects is best for me, but his judgment falls short of yours. [2] For I certainly won't accept that he isn't well disposed toward my cause. I judge this both from what he said before and from the plain facts. A citizen envies a fellow citizen's success and is his enemy without saying so, and if a fellow citizen asks his advice, he won't suggest what he thinks is best—unless he has gone far in

excellence, and such men are rare. [3] But a guest-friend is the most well disposed of all men toward a guest-friend's success, and if he's asked for advice, he'll give the best he can. So I order everyone from now on to refrain from speaking ill of Demaratus, since he is my guest-friend."

[7.238] Having said this, Xerxes went through the dead, and having heard that Leonidas had been king and general of the Lacedaemonians, he ordered them to cut off his head and fix it on a stake. [2] It is clear to me from many other proofs, and not least from this one, that King Xerxes was more furious with Leonidas while he lived than with any other man; otherwise he would never have violated custom like this against his corpse, since of all the peoples I know, the Persians are the most accustomed to honor men who are brave in war. So those who had been given the order carried it out.

[7.239] I will go back now to the point in my account where I left off earlier. The Lacedaemonians were the first to learn that the King was preparing an expedition against Greece, and that is why they sent to the oracle at Delphi, where they received the answer I told of a little earlier. They learned of it in a remarkable way. [2] Demaratus son of Ariston, who had fled into exile among the Medes, was not, as I believe—and probability is on my side—well disposed toward the Lacedaemonians; one is free to guess whether he did this out of goodwill or out of malicious glee. When Xerxes resolved to march against Greece, Demaratus, who was at Susa and heard of it, wanted to inform the Lacedaemonians. [3] He had no other way of letting them know, since there was a danger of his being caught, so he devised the following: he took a folding writing tablet, scraped off its wax, and then wrote the King's intentions on the wood of the tablet. When he had done this, he melted the wax back over the writing, so that the tablet would travel blank and cause no trouble with the guards on the roads. [4] When it arrived in Lacedaemon, the Lacedaemonians could not make anything of it, until, as I am told, Gorgo, daughter of Cleomenes and wife of Leonidas, worked it out for herself and advised them to scrape off the wax, telling them

they would find writing on the wood. They did as she said, found the writing and read it, and then sent word to the rest of the Greeks. That, at any rate, is how it is said to have happened.

Book 8 (Urania)

The sea fight at Artemisium; Athens taken; the battle of Salamis; Xerxes retreats.

ARTEMISIUM

The Greek fleet gathers at Artemisium; Themistocles bribes the commanders to stay, and three days of sea fighting follow.

8.1 The Greeks assigned to the fleet were these. The Athenians provided a hundred and twenty-seven ships. The Plataeans had no experience of seafaring, but out of their excellence and eagerness they helped the Athenians man the ships. The Corinthians provided forty ships and the Megarians twenty. 2 The Chalcidians manned twenty, with the Athenians providing the ships; the Aeginetans provided eighteen, the Sicyonians twelve, the Lacedaemonians ten, the Epidaurians eight, the Eretrians seven, the Troezenians five, the Styrians two, and the Ceans two ships and two fifty-oared ships. The Opuntian Locrians also came to their aid with seven fifty-oared ships.[1]

8.2 These, then, were the ones who served at Artemisium, and I have also said how many ships each of them provided. Not counting the fifty-oared ships, the number of ships gathered at Artemisium was two hundred and seventy-one. 2 The Spartans provided the general who held supreme command, Eurybiades son of Euryclides. The allies had declared that unless the Lac-

1 Lacedaemonians: the Spartans together with the communities of Laconia that they ruled.

onian was in command they would not follow Athenian leadership, but would break up the expedition that was being formed.[2]

8.3 At the very beginning, even before they sent to Sicily to seek an alliance, there had been talk that the command at sea ought to be entrusted to the Athenians. But when the allies opposed this, the Athenians gave way. They thought it of great importance that Greece should survive, and they understood that if they quarreled over the leadership, Greece would be destroyed. In this they judged rightly, for civil strife is as much worse than a war fought with one mind as war is worse than peace. 2 Since they understood exactly this, they did not resist but gave way—though only for as long as they badly needed the others, as they showed. For once they had driven the Persian back and the struggle was being fought over his own territory, they used the outrage of Pausanias as a pretext and took the leadership away from the Lacedaemonians. But that happened later.[3]

8.4 At the time, though, these Greeks who had come to Artemisium saw a great number of ships brought to land at Aphetae and the whole place full of troops. Since the foreigners' strength was turning out far beyond anything they had expected, they took fright and began planning to flee from Artemisium back into the interior of Greece. 2 When the Euboeans learned that they were planning this, they begged Eurybiades to wait a short time, until they could get their children and household slaves to safety. When they could not persuade him, they went over to the Athenian general, Themistocles, and persuaded him for a fee of thirty talents to have the fleet stay and fight its sea battle in front of Euboea.[4]

8.5 Themistocles got the Greeks to stay in this way. He gave Eurybiades a share of this money, five talents, supposedly as a

2 Artemisium: the northern tip of Euboea, where the Greek fleet held its position while Leonidas held the pass of Thermopylae on the mainland opposite.
3 Pausanias, the Spartan regent who commanded the Greeks at Plataea in 479 BC. His high-handed conduct afterward led the allies to turn to Athens for leadership.
4 A talent was a large weight of silver (about 26 kg, or 57 lb), worth 6,000 drachmas.

gift from his own pocket. Once Eurybiades had been won over, Adeimantus son of Ocytus, the Corinthian general, was the only one of the rest still balking. He said he would sail away from Artemisium and not stay. So Themistocles swore an oath and said to him: [2] "No, you won't desert us. I'll give you bigger gifts than the King of the Medes would send you for abandoning your allies."[5] While he was saying this, he sent three talents of silver to Adeimantus' ship. [3] So these men had all been won over by gifts, and the Euboeans had got what they wanted. Themistocles himself made a profit, for he kept the rest without anyone knowing. Those who received a share of this money believed it had come from Athens for this purpose.

[8.6] So they stayed at Euboea and fought at sea, and it happened like this. The foreigners had arrived at Aphetae in the early afternoon. They had already heard that a few Greek ships were stationed around Artemisium, and now that they saw them for themselves, they were eager to attack in the hope of capturing them. [2] They did not think it wise to sail straight at them yet, for this reason: they feared the Greeks would see them coming and take to flight, and that night would cover them as they fled. In that case the Greeks would, of course, get clean away, whereas by the foreigners' reckoning not even a fire-bearer was to escape alive.[6]

[8.7] In view of this, they devised the following plan. They separated two hundred of their ships from the rest and sent them around outside Sciathus, so that the enemy would not see them as they sailed around Euboea, past Caphereus and around Geraestus to the Euripus. The aim was to trap the Greeks: one force would arrive that way and block their route of retreat, while the rest would follow up and attack from the front. [2] Having made this plan, they sent off the ships assigned to the task. They did not intend to attack the Greeks that day themselves, nor before

5 Greeks often called the Persians "Medes," after the related people who had ruled the region before them.

6 The fire-bearer carried the sacred fire for an army's sacrifices and was traditionally spared in battle; "not even a fire-bearer" meant not a single man.

the ships sailing around gave the agreed signal that they had arrived. So they sent these ships around, and meanwhile took a count of the remaining ships at Aphetae.[7]

8.8 While they were counting the ships, there was in this camp a man named Scyllias of Scione, the best diver of his day. In the shipwreck off Pelion he had saved a great deal of property for the Persians, and had also got a great deal for himself. This Scyllias, it turns out, had intended even before this to desert to the Greeks, but he had never had the chance he had then.[8] 2 By what means he made his way from there to the Greeks I cannot say for certain, and I wonder whether the stories told about it are true. For it is said that he dove into the sea at Aphetae and did not come up until he reached Artemisium, having covered something like eighty stades through the sea. 3 Other things are said about this man as well, some of which look like lies, though some are true. On this matter, however, let me state my opinion: he came to Artemisium in a boat. When he arrived, he at once told the generals how the shipwreck had happened, and about the ships sent around Euboea.[9]

8.9 When the Greeks heard this, they held a discussion among themselves. Many opinions were voiced, but the view that prevailed was to stay where they were that day and camp there, and then, once midnight had passed, to set out and meet the ships sailing around. After this, since no one sailed against them, they waited until late afternoon and then sailed out against the foreigners themselves, wanting to test them in fighting and in the breakthrough maneuver.[10]

8.10 Xerxes' other troops and his generals saw them sailing against them with a few ships, and put it down to sheer madness. They put out to sea themselves, expecting to capture them easily. That was a very reasonable expectation: they could see

7 The Euripus: the narrow strait between Euboea and the mainland.
8 Off Pelion, a mountain on the coast of Magnesia, a storm had wrecked many of the Persian ships a few days earlier (7.188–191).
9 A stade was about 600 feet (some 180 m); eighty stades is roughly nine miles.
10 The breakthrough (diekplous) was a tactic in which ships rowed through gaps in the enemy line to ram them from the side or rear.

that the Greeks' ships were few, while their own were many times as numerous and sailed better. Full of contempt for the Greeks, they began to encircle them, enclosing them in the middle. 2 Those of the Ionians who were well disposed toward the Greeks were serving unwillingly. They were greatly distressed to see the Greeks surrounded, sure that not one of them would get home, so weak did the Greek position appear to them. 3 But those who were actually pleased at what was happening competed to be the first to capture an Attic ship and get gifts from the King, for throughout the camps the Athenians were the ones most talked about.

8.11 When the signal was given to the Greeks, they first turned their prows toward the foreigners and drew their sterns together in the center. Then, at the second signal, they set to work, though they were hemmed into a small space and fighting prow to prow. 2 There they captured thirty of the foreigners' ships, and also Philaon son of Chersis, brother of Gorgus king of Salamis, a man of note in the camp. The first of the Greeks to take an enemy ship was an Athenian, Lycomedes son of Aeschraeus, and he received the prize for valor.[11] 3 They fought this sea battle with neither side gaining the upper hand, until night came on and separated them. The Greeks sailed back to Artemisium and the foreigners to Aphetae, after a fight that had gone very differently from what they had expected. In this sea battle Antidorus of Lemnos, alone of the Greeks serving with the King, deserted to the Greeks, and for this deed the Athenians gave him land on Salamis.

8.12 When night had fallen, though it was the middle of summer, a tremendous rain came down all through the night, with violent thunder from Pelion. The corpses and the wreckage drifted toward Aphetae, where they tangled around the ships' prows and fouled the blades of the oars. 2 When the soldiers there heard this, they were seized with fear. They fully expected to perish, so great were the evils they had come to. For before they had even caught their breath after the shipwreck and the storm

11 This Salamis is the city on Cyprus, not the island off Attica.

off Pelion, a hard-fought sea battle had followed, and after the sea battle a furious downpour, powerful torrents rushing into the sea, and violent thunder.

8.13 Such was the night for these men. But for those of them assigned to sail around Euboea, that same night was wilder still, all the more so because it caught them out on the open sea, and their end was a grim one. The storm and the rain came upon them as they were sailing off the Hollows of Euboea. Driven by the wind and not knowing where they were being carried, they were dashed against the rocks. All this was being done by the god so that the Persian force would be made equal to the Greek and not much larger.[12]

8.14 These men, then, were being destroyed around the Hollows of Euboea. The foreigners at Aphetae were glad when day dawned. They kept their ships where they were, and after faring so badly they were content to stay quiet for the present. The Greeks, meanwhile, were reinforced by fifty-three Attic ships. 2 Their arrival heartened the Greeks, and so did news that came at the same time: all the foreigners sailing around Euboea had been destroyed by the storm. Waiting for the same hour as before, they sailed out and fell upon some Cilician ships. They destroyed these, and when night came on they sailed back to Artemisium.

8.15 On the third day the foreigners' generals no longer waited for the Greeks to start the fighting. They thought it outrageous that so few ships should be doing them such damage, and they feared what Xerxes would do. So they urged their men on and put out to sea around midday. It so happened that these sea battles and the land battles at Thermopylae took place on the same days. 2 For those at sea the whole struggle was over the Euripus, just as for Leonidas' men it was to guard the pass. The Greeks urged each other not to let the foreigners into Greece; the others urged each other to destroy the Greek force and take control of the strait. When Xerxes' ships had drawn up and were

12 The Hollows of Euboea: a dangerous, harborless stretch of the Euboean coast, probably in the south of the island.

sailing forward, the Greeks stayed where they were near Artemisium. The foreigners formed their ships into a crescent and began to encircle them, to trap them.

8.16 Then the Greeks sailed out against them and engaged. In this sea battle the two sides were about evenly matched. 2 Xerxes' fleet was its own undoing because of its size and numbers, as the ships fell into confusion and ran into one another. Still, it held its ground and did not give way, for they thought it a terrible thing to be put to flight by a few ships. 3 Many Greek ships were destroyed, and many men, but far more of the foreigners' ships and men. After fighting in this way, the two sides drew apart.

8.17 In this sea battle the Egyptians fought best among Xerxes' forces. Among their other great deeds, they captured five Greek ships, crews and all. Of the Greeks on this day the Athenians fought best, and among the Athenians Clinias son of Alcibiades, who served at his own expense with two hundred men and a ship of his own.[13]

8.18 When they parted, both sides gladly hurried to their anchorages. When the Greeks had disengaged and come away from the battle, they were in control of the dead and the wreckage. But they had been roughly handled, the Athenians not least, half of whose ships were damaged, and so they began planning to retreat into the interior of Greece.

8.19 Themistocles reckoned that if the Ionian and Carian peoples could be split off from the foreign army, the Greeks might be able to overcome the rest. The Euboeans were driving their flocks down to the sea there, and Themistocles gathered the generals and told them he thought he had a scheme by which he hoped to detach the best of the King's allies. 2 That much he revealed. As for their present situation, he said this is what they must do. They should slaughter as many of the Euboean flocks as they liked, since it was better for their own army to have them than the enemy. He also advised each of

13 Clinias was the father of the Alcibiades who became prominent in the Peloponnesian War.

them to tell his own men to light fires. The timing of their departure would be his concern, so that they would get back to Greece unharmed. They agreed to do this, and at once lit fires and set about the flocks.

8.20 The Euboeans had dismissed the oracle of Bacis as meaningless. They had neither moved anything out to safety nor brought in supplies, as people do when war is coming, and so they had brought their affairs to ruin. 2 For on this matter the oracle of Bacis runs as follows: Take heed, when a man of foreign speech casts a yoke onto the sea / of papyrus, to keep the bleating goats away from Euboea. Since they had paid no attention to these verses, in the evils then present and those still to come they now found themselves facing disaster of the gravest kind.[14]

8.21 While they were doing this, the lookout from Trachis arrived. There was a lookout at Artemisium, Polyas, a native of Anticyra, who had been given orders to keep a rowing boat ready and signal to those at Thermopylae if the fleet met with disaster. In the same way an Athenian, Abronichus son of Lysicles, was with Leonidas, ready to bring word to those at Artemisium in a thirty-oared ship if anything untoward happened to the land army. 2 This Abronichus, then, arrived and told them what had happened to Leonidas and his army. When they learned this, they no longer put off their withdrawal, but departed in the order in which each had been stationed, the Corinthians first and the Athenians last.

8.22 Themistocles picked out the best-sailing Athenian ships and went around the places where there was drinking water, cutting messages into the rocks. The Ionians read them when they came to Artemisium the next day. The messages said this: "Men of Ionia, you are doing wrong in making war on your fathers and helping to enslave Greece. 2 The best course is to come over to our side. If you can't do that, then even now at least

14 Bacis was a legendary Boeotian seer whose oracles circulated in collections. The "yoke of papyrus" is Xerxes' bridge over the Hellespont, which was cabled with papyrus.

stand aside and keep out of the fight against us, and ask the Carians to do the same as you. If neither of these is possible, and you're yoked under a compulsion too strong to break free of, then in action, when we engage, fight badly on purpose. Remember that you are descended from us, and that it was because of you that our quarrel with the foreigner first began." [3] In my opinion Themistocles wrote this with both outcomes in mind. If the messages escaped the King's notice, they might make the Ionians change sides and come over to the Greeks. If they were reported to Xerxes and used against the Ionians, they would make him distrust them, and he would keep them out of the sea battles.[15]

8.23 That is what Themistocles inscribed. Immediately after this, a man from Histiaea came to the foreigners by boat and reported the Greeks' flight from Artemisium. They did not believe him, so they kept the messenger under guard and sent fast ships ahead to scout. When these reported the truth, the whole fleet sailed together to Artemisium as the sun's light was spreading. They waited there until midday and then sailed on to Histiaea. On arrival they took the Histiaeans' city and overran all the coastal villages of the region of Ellopia, which is the territory of Histiaea.

8.24 While they were there, Xerxes made his arrangements concerning the dead and sent a herald to the fleet. The arrangements he had made beforehand were these. His own army's dead at Thermopylae numbered as many as twenty thousand. He left about a thousand of them and buried the rest in trenches he had dug, throwing leaves over them and heaping earth on top, so that the men of the fleet would not see them. [2] When the herald had crossed over to Histiaea, he called an assembly of the whole camp and said this: "Allies, King Xerxes permits any of you who wishes to leave his post and come and see how he fights against those fools who expected to overcome the King's power."

15 Athens had sent ships to support the Ionians' revolt against Persia in 499 BC, which provoked Darius' expedition against Athens.

8.25 After this announcement, nothing was scarcer than boats, so many men wanted to see. They crossed over and went around looking at the dead. They all believed that those lying there were all Lacedaemonians and Thespians, though they were seeing the helots too. 2 Nor did what Xerxes had done with his own dead escape those who had crossed over; in fact it was laughable. On one side a thousand dead could be seen lying about, while the others all lay together, gathered in one place, four thousand of them. 3 That day they spent sightseeing. On the next, the men went back to their ships at Histiaea, while Xerxes and his men set out on the march.

8.26 A few men came to them as deserters from Arcadia, in need of a livelihood and wanting employment. The Persians brought them into the King's presence and asked them what the Greeks were doing; one man, ahead of all the rest, did the questioning. 2 They told them that the Greeks were celebrating the Olympic festival and watching athletic and equestrian contests. He then asked what prize was set for them to compete for, and they said it was the crown of olive that is awarded. At this Tigranes son of Artabanus voiced a most noble thought, and earned a charge of cowardice from the King.[16] 3 When he learned that the prize was a crown and not money, he could not keep silent but said in front of everyone, "Ah, Mardonius, what kind of men have you brought us to fight? They compete not for money but for excellence!" That is what he said.

8.27 In the meantime, immediately after the disaster at Thermopylae, the Thessalians sent a herald to the Phocians. They had always held a grudge against them, and all the more so since their own latest defeat. 2 Not many years before this expedition of the King, the Thessalians and their allies had invaded Phocis in full force, and had been defeated by the Phocians and roughly handled. 3 The Phocians had been shut up on Parnassus, with the seer Tellias of Elis among them, and this Tellias devised the following trick for them. He covered six hundred of the best

16 The Olympic games were held every four years at Olympia in honor of Zeus; the victors' only prize was a wreath of wild olive.

Phocian men with chalk, both the men themselves and their armor, and attacked the Thessalians by night, telling his men to kill anyone they saw who was not whitened. [4] The Thessalian sentries were the first to see them, and they took fright, thinking it was some other kind of prodigy. After the sentries the army itself panicked, so badly that the Phocians took possession of four thousand dead and their shields. Of these shields they dedicated half at Abae and half at Delphi. [5] The tenth part of the spoils from this battle went to make the great statues that stand around the tripod in front of the temple at Delphi, and others like them are dedicated at Abae.[17]

8.28 That, then, is what the Phocians did to the Thessalian infantry when it was besieging them. And when the Thessalian cavalry invaded their country, they did it irreparable damage. At the pass near Hyampolis they dug a large trench and set empty wine jars in it. Then they carried earth over it, made it look like the rest of the ground, and waited for the Thessalians to invade. The Thessalians charged in, expecting to sweep the Phocians away, and fell into the jars. There their horses' legs were broken.

8.29 Holding a grudge against the Phocians for both these things, the Thessalians sent a herald with this message: "Phocians, it's time you admitted at last that you are not our equals. [2] Before, among the Greeks, for as long as we were content with that side, we always had the better of you. And now we have so much influence with the foreigner that it's in our power to have you stripped of your land and enslaved as well. Still, although we hold all the power, we bear you no grudge. Let us have fifty talents of silver in return, and we promise to turn aside what is coming against your country."

8.30 That was the Thessalians' offer. For the Phocians were the only people in that region who were not siding with the Persians, and, as I find when I weigh the evidence, for no other reason than their hatred of the Thessalians. [2] If the Thessalians had been supporting the Greek cause, in my opinion, the Phocians would have sided with the Persians. When the Thessalians

17 Abae was a town in Phocis with a famous oracle of Apollo.

made this offer, the Phocians said they would not give the money. They could side with the Persians just as well as the Thessalians could, if they chose to do so. But they would never willingly be traitors to Greece.

8.31 When this answer was brought back, the Thessalians, furious with the Phocians, became guides on the road for the foreign army. From the territory of Trachis they invaded Doris. A narrow tongue of Dorian land stretches out there, roughly thirty stades wide, lying between Malis and Phocis; in ancient times it was called Dryopis. This land is the mother country of the Dorians in the Peloponnese. When the foreigners invaded this land of Doris, they did it no damage, because its people were siding with the Persians and the Thessalians did not want it harmed.

8.32 When they invaded Phocis from Doris, they did not catch the Phocians themselves. Some of the Phocians had climbed up to the heights of Parnassus. The summit of Parnassus that stands by itself near the town of Neon, called Tithorea, is well suited to hold a crowd, and it was there that they carried their belongings and climbed up themselves. 2 But most of them had moved off to the Ozolian Locrians, to the town of Amphissa, which lies above the Crisaean plain. The foreigners overran the whole of Phocis, since the Thessalians were leading the army that way, and everything they reached they burned and laid waste, setting fire to both towns and sanctuaries.

8.33 Marching this way along the river Cephisus, they ravaged everything. They burned the town of Drymus, and Charadra, Erochus, Tethronium, Amphicaea, Neon, Pedieis, Triteis, Elatea, Hyampolis, Parapotamii and Abae. At Abae there was a rich sanctuary of Apollo, furnished with treasuries and many offerings; there was an oracle there then, as there still is now. This sanctuary too they plundered and burned. They pursued and caught some of the Phocians near the mountains, and some women died after being raped by great numbers of them.

8.34 Passing by Parapotamii, the foreigners came to Panopeus. From there their army separated and split into two. The largest and strongest part of the army marched with Xerxes himself

toward Athens and invaded Boeotia, the land of the Orchomenians. The whole population of Boeotia was siding with the Persians, and their towns were kept safe by Macedonians, sent by Alexander and posted in each of them. They kept them safe for this purpose: to make it clear to Xerxes that the Boeotians were on the side of the Medes.[18]

8.35 These foreigners, then, turned that way. Others of them set out with guides for the sanctuary at Delphi, keeping Parnassus on their right. These too devastated every part of Phocis they reached: they burned the town of the Panopeans, and those of the Daulians and the Aeolidae. 2 They had split off from the rest of the army and gone this way for one reason: to plunder the sanctuary at Delphi and present its treasures to King Xerxes. Xerxes, as I learn, knew everything of note in the sanctuary better than what he had left in his own palace, since many people were always talking about it, and above all about the offerings of Croesus son of Alyattes.

8.36 When the Delphians learned this, they were utterly terrified. In their great fear they consulted the oracle about the sacred treasures, asking whether they should bury them in the ground or carry them away to another country. But the god would not let them be moved, saying that he was able to protect his own property himself. 2 On hearing this, the Delphians turned their thoughts to themselves. They sent their children and women across the gulf to Achaea. Most of the men climbed up to the peaks of Parnassus and carried their belongings into the Corycian cave, while others slipped away to Amphissa in Locris. So all the Delphians abandoned the town, except sixty men and the prophet.[19]

8.37 When the foreigners were drawing near and could see the sanctuary, the prophet, whose name was Aceratus, saw lying in front of the temple some sacred arms that had been brought out from the inner chamber—arms which it was unlawful for any

18 Alexander I, king of Macedon, was then a vassal of Persia.
19 The prophet was the Delphic official who presided over consultations of the oracle.

human being to touch. [2] He went to tell the Delphians who had stayed about the portent. But when the foreigners, hurrying on, reached the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, portents even greater than the earlier one befell them. That one too is a great marvel, that weapons of war should appear of their own accord lying outside the temple; but the things that happened next are more worthy of wonder than any other apparitions.[20] [3] Just as the foreigners in their advance reached the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, thunderbolts fell on them from the sky, and two peaks broke off from Parnassus and came crashing down on them with a great roar, striking down a good many of them. And from the sanctuary of Pronaia came shouting and a war cry.

8.38 With all these things happening at once, panic had seized the foreigners. When the Delphians learned that they were fleeing, they came down on them and killed a good number. The survivors fled straight for Boeotia. Those of the foreigners who got back said, as I learn, that they had seen other divine signs besides these: two hoplites, taller than human stature, had followed them, killing and chasing them.[21]

8.39 These two, the Delphians say, were local heroes, Phylacus and Autonous, whose precincts are near the sanctuary: Phylacus' beside the road itself, above the sanctuary of Pronaia, and Autonous' near the Castalian spring, below the peak of Hyampeia. [2] The rocks that fell from Parnassus were still intact even in my day, lying in the precinct of Athena Pronaia, where they crashed down after hurtling through the foreigners. Such, then, was the departure of these men from the sanctuary.

THE GREEKS GATHER AT SALAMIS

The fleet moves to Salamis, the Athenians evacuate Attica, and the allies debate where to fight.

8.40 The Greek fleet, at the request of the Athenians, put in at Salamis from Artemisium. The Athenians had asked them to put in

20 Athena Pronaia ("before the temple") had a sanctuary just below Apollo's at Delphi.

at Salamis for this reason: so that they could get their children and women out of Attica, and also deliberate on what they should do. In the circumstances they found themselves in, they intended to take counsel, since their expectations had been disappointed. [2] They had expected to find the Peloponnesians out in full force in Boeotia, waiting for the foreigner. Instead they found nothing of the kind, and learned that the Peloponnesians were building a wall across the Isthmus, caring most of all that the Peloponnese should survive, guarding it, and letting the rest go. When they learned this, they asked the others to put in at Salamis.

8.41 The others put in at Salamis, but the Athenians at their own land. After arriving they made a proclamation that every Athenian should save his children and household in whatever way he could. Most then sent them to Troezen, some to Aegina, and some to Salamis. [2] They were in a hurry to get them to safety because they wanted to obey the oracle, and not least for another reason as well. The Athenians say that a great snake lives in the sanctuary as guardian of the Acropolis. They say this, and what is more, they set out monthly offerings for it as though it really exists; the monthly offering is a honey cake. [3] This honey cake, which had always been eaten in the past, was now left untouched. When the priestess made this known, the Athenians were all the more ready and eager to leave the city, believing that the goddess too had abandoned the Acropolis. When they had got everything to safety, they sailed to the camp.

8.42 When the ships from Artemisium had put in at Salamis, the rest of the Greek fleet heard of it and streamed in to join them from Troezen, since orders had been given in advance to gather at Pogon, the harbor of Troezen. Many more ships gathered than had fought at Artemisium, and from more cities. [2] The admiral was the same as at Artemisium, Eurybiades son of Euryclides, a Spartan, though not of the royal family. But it was the Athenians who provided by far the most ships, and the best sailers.

21 Hoplites were heavily armed infantrymen.

8.43 These were the contingents. From the Peloponnese came the Lacedaemonians, providing sixteen ships, and the Corinthians, providing the same complement as at Artemisium. The Sicyonians provided fifteen ships, the Epidaurians ten, the Troezenians five and the Hermionians three. All of these except the Hermionians are of Dorian and Macednian stock, who last set out from Erineus, Pindus and Dryopis. The Hermionians are Dryopians, driven out by Heracles and the Malians from the land now called Doris.

8.44 These, then, were the Peloponnesians who took part. Of those from the mainland beyond, the Athenians provided a hundred and eighty ships, more than any of the others, and manned them alone. For at Salamis the Plataeans did not fight alongside the Athenians, for the following reason. When the Greeks were withdrawing from Artemisium and had reached Chalcis, the Plataeans landed on the opposite shore, in Boeotia, and set about removing their households. So they were left behind while saving them. 2 When the Pelasgians held what is now called Greece, the Athenians were Pelasgians and were named Cranaans. Under King Cecrops they were called Cecropidae; when Erechtheus succeeded to the rule they were renamed Athenians; and when Ion son of Xuthus became their commander, they were called Ionians after him.[22]

8.45 The Megarians provided the same complement as at Artemisium. The Ambraciots came to help with seven ships, and the Leucadians with three; these are a Dorian people from Corinth.

8.46 Of the islanders, the Aeginetans provided thirty. They had other ships manned as well, but with those they guarded their own land; at Salamis they fought with the thirty best sailers. The Aeginetans are Dorians from Epidaurus; 2 the island was formerly called Oenone. After the Aeginetans came the Chalcidians with the twenty ships they had at Artemisium, and the Eretrians with their seven; these are Ionians. Then came the Ceans with the same ships as before, an Ionian people from Athens. 3

22 At Artemisium the Plataeans had helped crew the Athenian ships.

The Naxians provided four. Their fellow citizens had sent them to join the Medes, as the other islanders had done, but they ignored their orders and came over to the Greeks at the urging of Democritus, a man of standing among the citizens and at that time a trierarch. The Naxians are Ionians descended from Athens. 4 The Styrians provided the same ships as at Artemisium, and the Cythnians one ship and a fifty-oared ship; both of these peoples are Dryopians. The Seriphians, Siphnians and Melians also took part, for they alone of the islanders had not given earth and water to the foreigner.[23]

8.47 All of these who took part live on this side of the Thesprotians and the river Acheron; for the Thesprotians border on the Ambraciots and Leucadians, who came from the farthest regions. Of those who live beyond them, the Crotoniates were the only ones who came to the aid of Greece in her danger, with one ship, commanded by Phayllus, who had three times been victor at the Pythian games. The Crotoniates are Achaeans by descent.[24]

8.48 All the others provided triremes, but the Melians, Siphnians and Seriphians provided fifty-oared ships. The Melians, who are of Lacedaemonian descent, provided two; the Siphnians and Seriphians, who are Ionians from Athens, one each. The total number of ships, apart from the fifty-oared ones, came to three hundred and seventy-eight.[25]

8.49 When the generals from the cities just named had gathered at Salamis, they held a council. Eurybiades proposed that anyone who wished should give his view on where, among the places still under their control, he thought it best to fight a sea battle. Attica had already been given up, and it was about the rest that he put the question. 2 Most of the speakers' views came to the same thing: to sail to the Isthmus and fight in front of the Peloponnese. They added this argument: if they were defeated

23 A trierarch commanded a trireme, the standard three-banked warship. Giving "earth and water" signified submission to the Persian king.
24 Croton was a Greek city in southern Italy.
25 The contingents Herodotus lists actually add up to 366 triremes; the discrepancy has never been satisfactorily explained.

in the sea battle, then at Salamis they would be besieged on an island, where no help would reach them, whereas at the Isthmus they could escape to their own people.

8.50 While the Peloponnesian generals were making these arguments, an Athenian arrived with the news that the foreigner had come into Attica and was setting the whole of it on fire. 2 For the army that had turned through Boeotia with Xerxes had burned the town of the Thespians, who had abandoned it for the Peloponnese, and that of the Plataeans likewise, and had come to Athens and was ravaging everything there. He burned Thespiae and Plataea after learning from the Thebans that they were not siding with the Persians.

ATHENS TAKEN

Xerxes captures the Acropolis, kills its last defenders and burns the temples.

8.51 From the crossing of the Hellespont, where the foreigners began their march, after spending one month there while they crossed into Europe, they reached Attica in a further three months, when Calliades was archon at Athens. 2 They took the city deserted, and found a few Athenians in the sanctuary, temple stewards and poor people, who had barricaded the Acropolis with doors and timbers and were fighting off the attackers. They had not left for Salamis partly because of their poverty, and also because they thought they had worked out the oracle the Pythia had given them, that the wooden wall would never be taken. This, they thought, was the refuge the oracle meant, and not the ships.[26]

8.52 The Persians took up position on the hill opposite the Acropolis, which the Athenians call the Areopagus, and conducted the siege like this: they wrapped tow around their arrows, set it alight, and shot them at the barricade. Even so the besieged Athenians kept defending themselves, though they had

26 The archon gave his name to the Athenian year (Calliades: 480/479 BC). The Pythia was Apollo's priestess at Delphi.

come to the last extremity and their barricade had failed them. [2] Nor would they listen when the Pisistratids brought proposals for terms. They kept defending themselves, devising various countermeasures, and in particular, whenever the foreigners approached the gates, they rolled boulders down on them, so that for a long time Xerxes was at a loss, unable to take them.[27]

8.53 In time, though, a way out of their difficulty appeared for the foreigners, since according to the oracle all of Attica on the mainland had to fall under the Persians. In front of the Acropolis, but behind the gates and the path up, there was a place where no one stood guard and where no one would ever have expected any human being to climb. There, by the sanctuary of Aglaurus, daughter of Cecrops, some men climbed up, sheer though the spot was. [2] When the Athenians saw them up on the Acropolis, some threw themselves down from the wall and perished, while others took refuge in the inner chamber. The Persians who had climbed up first turned to the gates, opened them, and slaughtered the suppliants. When they had laid them all low, they plundered the sanctuary and set fire to the whole Acropolis.

8.54 Now that he held Athens completely, Xerxes sent a mounted messenger to Susa to tell Artabanus of their present success. On the second day after sending the herald, he called together the Athenian exiles who were accompanying him and told them to go up to the Acropolis and offer sacrifices in their own way. He gave this order either because he had seen some vision in a dream, or because the burning of the sanctuary weighed on his conscience. The Athenian exiles did as they were told.

8.55 I will explain why I have mentioned this. On this Acropolis there is a temple of Erechtheus, who is said to have been born from the earth, and in it there are an olive tree and a pool of sea water. According to the Athenians, Poseidon and Athena set these there as tokens when they contended for the land. This

27 The Pisistratids were the family of Pisistratus, who had ruled Athens as tyrant (a ruler who seized sole power, not necessarily cruel); exiled, they had joined Xerxes.

olive tree happened to be burned by the foreigners along with the rest of the sanctuary. But on the second day after the burning, when the Athenians who had been ordered by the King to sacrifice went up to the sanctuary, they saw a shoot about a cubit long that had sprung up from the stump. That is what they reported.[28]

THEMISTOCLES KEEPS THE FLEET AT SALAMIS

The allies vote to retreat to the Isthmus, but Themistocles persuades Eurybiades to fight at Salamis.

8.56 When the Greeks at Salamis heard how matters stood with the Athenian Acropolis, they were thrown into such an uproar that some of the generals did not even wait for the question before them to be decided, but rushed to their ships and hoisted sail to flee. Those of them who remained resolved to fight in front of the Isthmus. Night was coming on, and they broke up from the council and went aboard their ships.

8.57 Then, when Themistocles got to his ship, Mnesiphilus, an Athenian, asked him what they had decided. When he learned from him that it had been resolved to take the ships to the Isthmus and fight in front of the Peloponnese, he said, 2 "So if they take the ships away from Salamis, you won't be fighting for any homeland anymore. They'll each head off to their own cities, and neither Eurybiades nor anyone else alive will be able to hold them back and keep the force from scattering. Greece will be lost through bad counsel. If there's any way at all, go and try to overturn what's been decided—see if you can somehow persuade Eurybiades to change his mind and stay here."

8.58 Themistocles liked this advice very much, and without answering a word he went to Eurybiades' ship. When he got there he said he wanted to discuss a matter of common concern with him. Eurybiades told him to come aboard and say whatever he wished. 2 Then Themistocles sat down beside him and went through everything he had heard from Mnesiphilus,

28 A cubit was about 18 inches (45 cm).

passing it off as his own and adding much more, until his pleading persuaded Eurybiades to leave the ship and gather the generals to the council.

8.59 When they had gathered, and before Eurybiades could put forward the matter for which he had called the generals together, Themistocles spoke at length, like a man who badly wanted something. While he was speaking, the Corinthian general Adeimantus son of Ocytus said, "Themistocles, at the games those who start before the signal get whipped." Themistocles, defending himself, replied, "Yes, but those who get left behind don't win the crown."

8.60 This time he answered the Corinthian mildly. To Eurybiades he said nothing yet of what he had said before, that if they set sail from Salamis they would scatter and run. With the allies present, it would have done him no credit to accuse them. Instead he took up a different argument, speaking as follows.

8.60a "It is in your power now to save Greece, if you take my advice and stay here to fight the sea battle, and do not listen to these men and move the ships back to the Isthmus. Hear both plans and weigh them against each other. If you engage at the Isthmus, you will be fighting in open water, which is the worst thing for us, since our ships are heavier and fewer in number. Besides that, you will lose Salamis, Megara and Aegina, even if we succeed in everything else. Their land army will also follow along with their fleet, and so you yourself will lead them to the Peloponnese and put the whole of Greece in danger."

8.60b "But if you do what I say, you will find these advantages in it. First, if we engage in a narrow space with few ships against many, we shall win a great victory, provided the war turns out as is likely. Fighting at sea in a narrow space is in our favor, and in open water in theirs. Next, Salamis survives, where we have put our children and wives for safety. And there is this too in it, which is what all of you care about most: by staying here you will be fighting for the Peloponnese just as much as you would at the Isthmus, and if you are sensible, you will not lead them to the Peloponnese."

8.60c "And if what I hope for comes to pass and we win with our ships, the foreigners will not come against you at the Isthmus, nor advance any farther than Attica. They will go away in disorder, and we shall gain by the survival of Megara, Aegina and Salamis, where we also have an oracle that we shall overcome our enemies. When people make reasonable plans, things for the most part tend to turn out reasonably. When their plans are unreasonable, not even the god is willing to go along with human designs."

8.61 While Themistocles was saying this, Adeimantus the Corinthian attacked him again. He told the man with no country to be silent, and would not let Eurybiades put a motion to the vote for a man without a city; Themistocles, he said, should produce a city before contributing his opinions. He threw this at him because Athens had been taken and was occupied. 2 At that Themistocles said many harsh things about him and the Corinthians, and made it clear in his speech that the Athenians had a city and a land greater than theirs, as long as they had two hundred fully manned ships; for none of the Greeks would be able to beat them off if they attacked.

8.62 Having made this point, he turned to Eurybiades and spoke more forcefully. "If you stay here, then by staying you will prove yourself a brave man. If not, you will bring Greece to ruin, since our whole strength in this war lies in the ships. Take my advice. 2 If you don't do this, we will take our households just as we are and move to Siris in Italy, which has been ours from of old, and the oracles say it must be settled by us. And you, left without allies like us, will remember my words."[29]

8.63 As Themistocles said this, Eurybiades began to change his mind. In my opinion, he changed his mind chiefly because he was afraid the Athenians would abandon them if he took the ships to the Isthmus; for if the Athenians left, the rest would no longer be a match for the enemy. So he chose this plan: to stay there and fight it out at sea.

8.64 So the men at Salamis, after this skirmish of words, prepared to fight at sea where they were, since Eurybiades had decided so. Day came, and at sunrise there was an earthquake on land and sea. 2 They decided to pray to the gods and call on the Aeacids as allies. And as they decided, so they did: after praying to all the gods, they called on Ajax and Telamon right there from Salamis, and sent a ship to Aegina for Aeacus and the other Aeacids.[30]

8.65 Dicaeus son of Theocydes, an Athenian exile who had won a name among the Medes at this time, said that when Attica, emptied of Athenians, was being ravaged by Xerxes' land army, he happened to be with Demaratus the Lacedaemonian in the Thriasian plain. He said he saw a cloud of dust coming from Eleusis, such as about thirty thousand men might raise, and they wondered what people could be raising the dust. Suddenly he heard a voice, and the voice seemed to him to be the mystic cry "Iacchus." 2 Demaratus, he said, knew nothing of the rites performed at Eleusis, and asked him what this sound was.[31] He himself, he said, replied, "Demaratus, there's no way some great disaster won't fall on the King's army. This much is plain: since Attica is deserted, this voice is divine, and it is coming from Eleusis to help the Athenians and their allies. 3 If it comes down on the Peloponnese, the King himself and his army on the mainland will be in danger; if it turns toward the ships at Salamis, the King will risk losing his fleet. 4 The Athenians hold this festival every year for the Mother and the Maiden, and any Athenian or other Greek who wishes is initiated; and the voice you hear is the 'Iacchus' they cry out at this festival."[32] To this, he said, Demaratus replied, "Be quiet, and don't tell this story to anyone else. 5 If these words are reported to the King, you'll lose your

29 Siris was a Greek city on the Gulf of Taranto in southern Italy.
30 Aeacus, legendary king of Aegina, and his descendants the heroes Telamon and Ajax (linked with Salamis) were worshipped as protectors.
31 The cry "Iacchus" was raised in the procession of the Eleusinian Mysteries, held near Athens.
32 The Mother and the Maiden are Demeter and her daughter Persephone, the goddesses of the Mysteries.

head, and neither I nor any other man alive will be able to save you. Keep still; the gods will look after this army." [6] That, he said, was Demaratus' advice; and out of the dust and the voice came a cloud, which rose into the air and was carried toward Salamis, to the camp of the Greeks. In this way, he said, they understood that Xerxes' fleet was going to be destroyed. That is what Dicaeus son of Theocydes said, appealing to Demaratus and others as witnesses.

8.66 Those assigned to Xerxes' fleet, after viewing the Laconian disaster from Trachis, crossed over to Histiaea, waited three days and then sailed through the Euripus, and in another three days they were at Phalerum. In my opinion, they were no fewer in number when they invaded Athens, arriving both by land and by sea, than when they had reached Sepias and Thermopylae.[33] [2] For against those of them who were lost in the storm, and those killed at Thermopylae and in the sea battles off Artemisium, I set these, who at that time were not yet following the King: the Malians, Dorians, Locrians and Boeotians, who followed in full force except for the Thespians and Plataeans; and besides them the Carystians, Andrians, Tenians and all the rest of the islanders, except the five cities whose names I mentioned earlier. For the farther the Persian advanced into Greece, the more peoples followed him.

8.67 So all these reached Athens except the Parians (the Parians had stayed behind at Cythnus, waiting to see how the war would turn out). When the rest had come to Phalerum, Xerxes himself went down to the ships, wanting to meet them and learn the opinions of those who sailed with him. [2] When he arrived and took the seat of honor, the tyrants of the various peoples and the commanders from the ships came at his summons and sat according to the rank the King had given each: first the king of Sidon, then the king of Tyre, then the rest. When they were seated in order, one after another, Xerxes sent Mardonius to ask each of them, as a test, whether he should fight at sea.

33 The "Laconian disaster" is the Spartan dead at Thermopylae, which Xerxes had invited the men of his fleet to come and see.

8.68 Mardonius went round asking, beginning with the Sidonian. The others all gave the same opinion, urging him to fight at sea, but Artemisia said this:[34]

8.68a "Tell the King for me, Mardonius, that I say this—I, who was not the worst in the sea battles off Euboea, nor the least in what I achieved. Master, it is right for me to declare my real opinion, what I actually think best for your interests. And so I tell you this: spare your ships and do not fight at sea. Their men are as much stronger than yours at sea as men are than women. 2 Why must you at all costs run the risk of sea battles? Don't you hold Athens, for whose sake you set out on this campaign, and don't you hold the rest of Greece? No one stands in your way; those who opposed you came off as they deserved."

8.68b "I will tell you how I think your enemies' affairs will turn out. If you do not rush into a sea battle, but keep your ships here close to land, either staying where you are or even advancing into the Peloponnese, then, master, you will easily accomplish what you came here intending. 2 The Greeks are not able to hold out against you for long; you will scatter them, and they will flee each to their own cities. They have no food on this island, as I hear, and if you march your land army against the Peloponnese, it is not likely that those of them who come from there will sit still, nor will they care about fighting at sea for Athens.

8.68c But if you rush into a battle at once, I fear that the fleet, if it is beaten, will bring the land army to harm as well. And besides, my King, take this to heart too: good men tend to have bad slaves, and bad men good ones. You are the best of all men, and you have bad slaves, those counted as your allies—Egyptians, Cypriots, Cilicians and Pamphylians—who are of no use at all."

8.69 When she said this to Mardonius, those who were friendly to Artemisia were distressed at her words, thinking she would suffer some harm at the King's hands for opposing a sea battle. But those who resented and envied her, because she was

34 Artemisia ruled Halicarnassus, Herodotus' own city, and commanded its ships in Xerxes' fleet.

honored among the foremost of all the allies, were delighted with her answer, thinking it would be the end of her. [2] When the opinions were reported to Xerxes, however, he was very pleased with Artemisia's view; he had thought her a woman of worth even before, and now he praised her much more. Nevertheless, he ordered them to follow the majority. His judgment was that off Euboea they had deliberately fought badly because he was not there, whereas now he himself was ready to watch them fight.

8.70 When the order to put to sea was given, they took the ships out toward Salamis and drew up in line at their leisure. That day there was not time enough left to fight, for night came on, and they prepared for the next day. [2] The Greeks were gripped by fear and dread, the Peloponnesians not least. They dreaded that they were sitting at Salamis about to fight for the land of the Athenians, and that if defeated they would be cut off on an island and besieged, leaving their own land unguarded; and that very night the foreigners' land army was marching on the Peloponnese.

8.71 And yet every possible measure had been taken to stop the foreigners from invading by land. As soon as the Peloponnesians learned that Leonidas and his men had died at Thermopylae, they hurried together from their cities and took up position at the Isthmus, with Cleombrotus son of Anaxandridas, Leonidas' brother, as their commander. [2] Encamped at the Isthmus, they blocked the Scironian road, and after that, as they decided in council, they built a wall across the Isthmus. Since there were many tens of thousands of them and every man was at work, the job went forward: stones, bricks, timber and baskets full of sand were carried in, and those who had come to help never rested from their work, night or day.[35]

8.72 The Greeks who had come in full force to help at the Isthmus were these: the Lacedaemonians, all the Arcadians, the Eleans, Corinthians, Epidaurians, Phliasians, Troezenians and

35 The Scironian road was the narrow cliff road along the coast from Megara to the Isthmus.

Hermionians. These were the ones who came to help, deeply alarmed for Greece in its danger; the other Peloponnesians did not care at all. The Olympic and Carnean festivals were by now over.[36]

8.73 Seven peoples live in the Peloponnese. Two of them are native to the land and are settled now in the same place where they lived of old: the Arcadians and the Cynurians. One people, the Achaeans, has never left the Peloponnese, but it has left its own country and lives in another's. 2 The remaining four of the seven are immigrants: the Dorians, Aetolians, Dryopes and Lemnians. The Dorians have many famous cities; the Aetolians only Elis; the Dryopes Hermione and Asine, the one near Cardamyle in Laconia; and the Lemnians all the Paroreatae. 3 The Cynurians, who are native, seem to be the only Ionians, but they have become Dorian through being ruled by the Argives and through the passage of time; they are the Orneates and the perioeci. Of these seven peoples, the remaining cities, apart from those I have listed, stayed neutral; and if I may speak freely, by staying neutral they were siding with the Persians.[37]

8.74 So the men at the Isthmus were engaged in this great labor, since they were now running a race with everything at stake and did not expect to distinguish themselves with the ships. Those at Salamis, though they heard about it, were still alarmed, fearing not so much for themselves as for the Peloponnese. 2 For a while they talked quietly, man standing beside man, marveling at Eurybiades' folly; but at last it broke out into the open. A meeting was held and much was said on the same points: some said they ought to sail away to the Peloponnese and risk everything for it, rather than stay and fight for a land already won by the spear, while the Athenians, Aeginetans and Megarians said they should stay where they were and defend themselves.

36 The festivals had been the excuse earlier for sending only a small force to Thermopylae.

37 Perioeci ("dwellers around") were free communities subject to a dominant city —here, to Argos.

THEMISTOCLES' MESSAGE

Themistocles secretly tells the Persians the Greeks are about to flee, and their fleet closes the strait by night.

8.75 Then Themistocles, outvoted by the Peloponnesians, slipped out of the meeting unnoticed and, once outside, sent a man in a boat to the camp of the Medes, instructing him what to say. His name was Sicinnus, and he was a household servant of Themistocles and the tutor of his children. After these events Themistocles made him a Thespian, when the Thespians were admitting new citizens, and a wealthy man. 2 He came in the boat on that occasion and said this to the commanders of the foreigners: "The general of the Athenians has sent me without the other Greeks knowing (for he is actually on the King's side, and would rather see your cause prevail than the Greeks') to tell you that the Greeks are terrified and planning to run away. Now you have the chance to achieve the finest deed of all, if you don't stand by and let them escape. 3 They are not of one mind with each other, and they will not stand up to you; you will see them fighting at sea among themselves, those on your side against those who are not."

8.76 Having delivered this message, he took himself off. The commanders believed what they had been told. First they landed many Persians on the islet of Psyttaleia, which lies between Salamis and the mainland; then, when midnight came, they put out with their western wing, circling round toward Salamis, and those stationed around Ceos and Cynosura put out too, and they held the whole strait as far as Munychia with their ships.[38] 2 They put the ships out for this reason: so that the Greeks could not even escape, but would be trapped at Salamis and pay the penalty for the fighting at Artemisium. They landed Persians on the islet called Psyttaleia for this reason: when the sea battle took place, men and wrecks would be carried there

38 Ceos and Cynosura here are probably points near Salamis, not the island of Ceos; Munychia is the hill above the harbors of Piraeus.

more than anywhere else (for the island lay right in the path of the coming battle), so that they could save their own men and kill the enemy. [3] They did this in silence, so that their opponents would not find out. So they spent the night making these preparations, without any sleep.

8.77 I cannot claim that oracles are not true, and when I look at events like these I have no wish to try to discredit them when they speak clearly: But when the holy shore of Artemis of the golden sword
they bridge with ships, and sea-washed Cynosura,
in mad hope, having sacked shining Athens,
divine Justice will quench mighty Excess, the son of Outrage,
raging terribly, thinking to swallow everything. [2] For bronze will clash with bronze, and Ares with blood
will redden the sea. Then the day of Greece's freedom
far-seeing Zeus, son of Cronus, will bring, and lady Victory.
When Bacis speaks like this, and so clearly, I neither dare to contradict oracles myself nor accept contradiction from others.

8.78 Among the generals at Salamis there was a great jostling of words. They did not yet know that the foreigners were surrounding them with their ships, but supposed they were still in the position where they had seen them drawn up during the day.

8.79 While the generals were in conference, Aristides son of Lysimachus crossed over from Aegina. He was an Athenian, but had been ostracized by the people; from what I learn of his character, I have come to believe that he was the best and most just man in Athens. [2] This man stood at the entrance of the council and called Themistocles out. Themistocles was no friend of his, but his bitterest enemy; yet in view of the magnitude of the present troubles, Aristides put that out of mind and called him out, wanting to speak with him. He had heard beforehand that the Peloponnesians were eager to take the ships to the Isth-

mus.[39] 3 When Themistocles came out to him, Aristides said this: "We ought to be rivals, at any other time and especially now, over which of us will do more good for our country. 4 I tell you that it makes no difference whether the Peloponnesians say much or little about sailing away from here. I've seen it with my own eyes, and I tell you that now, even if the Corinthians and Eurybiades himself want to, they won't be able to sail out: we're surrounded by the enemy on all sides. Go in and tell them this." Themistocles answered as follows.

8.80 "Your advice is very good, and so is your news. What I wanted to happen, you've come and seen with your own eyes. You should know that what the Medes are doing is my doing. Since the Greeks weren't willing to take a stand and fight of their own accord, they had to be brought to it against their will. But since you've come with good news, tell them yourself. 2 If I say it, they'll think I've made it up, and I won't persuade them; they'll think the foreigners aren't doing this. Go in and tell them yourself how things stand. When you've told them, if they believe you, so much the better; and if they don't, it will make no difference to us. They won't be able to run away any more, if we're surrounded on every side, as you say."

8.81 Then Aristides came forward and spoke. He said that he had come from Aegina and had only barely sailed out, slipping past the blockading ships, for the whole Greek camp was surrounded by Xerxes' ships. He advised them to get ready to defend themselves. Having said this he withdrew, and once again a dispute broke out among them, for most of the generals did not believe the report.

8.82 While they were still disbelieving, a trireme manned by Tenians arrived, deserting from the enemy. Its commander was a man named Panaetius son of Sosimenes, and it was this ship that brought them the whole truth. For this deed the Tenians were inscribed at Delphi on the tripod, among those who had brought down the foreigner. 2 With this ship that deserted to

39 Ostracism was a vote by which the Athenians could send a leading citizen into exile for ten years.

Salamis, and the Lemnian ship that had deserted earlier at Artemisium, the Greek fleet was brought up to the full number of three hundred and eighty ships; until then it had been two ships short of that number.[40]

THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS

The Greeks attack at dawn, and the Persian ships, crowded in the narrows, are destroyed.

8.83 Since the Greeks found what the Tenians said believable, they prepared to fight at sea. Dawn was breaking. They held an assembly of the marines, and Themistocles addressed them, speaking better than anyone. His whole speech set the better against the worse in everything that belongs to human nature and the human condition. 2 He urged them to choose the better of these, wound up his speech, and ordered them to board the ships. They were boarding when the trireme from Aegina arrived, the one that had gone abroad for the Aeacidae.[41]

8.84 Then the Greeks put out with all their ships, and as they were putting out the foreigners at once bore down on them. The rest of the Greeks began backing water and were running their ships aground. But Ameinias of Pallene, an Athenian, darted out ahead and rammed a ship. His ship became locked with it and they could not get clear, and so the others came to help Ameinias and joined battle. 2 That is how the Athenians say the sea battle began. The Aeginetans say that it was the ship that had gone to Aegina for the Aeacidae that started it. This too is said: that the apparition of a woman appeared to them and urged them on, so loudly that the whole Greek fleet heard her, after first reproaching them with these words: "Madmen, how much longer are you going to back water?"

8.85 Facing the Athenians were drawn up the Phoenicians, who held the wing toward Eleusis and the west, and facing the

40 The tripod was the gold tripod set on a bronze serpent column, dedicated at Delphi after the war and inscribed with the names of the Greek states that fought.

Lacedaemonians were the Ionians, who held the wing toward the east and the Piraeus. A few of these Ionians, though, deliberately fought badly, as Themistocles had urged them to, but most did not. [2] I could list the names of many trireme captains who captured Greek ships, but I will make use of none of them except Theomestor son of Androdamas and Phylacus son of Histiaeus, both Samians. [3] I mention these alone for this reason: because of this deed Theomestor became tyrant of Samos, installed by the Persians, and Phylacus was recorded as a Benefactor of the King and given a great deal of land. The King's Benefactors are called *orosangae* in Persian.

8.86 So it went with these men. But most of the ships at Salamis were being wrecked, some destroyed by the Athenians and some by the Aeginetans. Since the Greeks were fighting in good order and keeping their line, while the foreigners were no longer in formation and were doing nothing with any sense, the outcome was bound to be just what it turned out to be. And yet on that day the foreigners were, and proved themselves, far better than they had been off Euboea. Every man was eager and afraid of Xerxes, and each one thought the King was watching him.

ARTEMISIA

Artemisia escapes by ramming a friendly ship, and Xerxes watching thinks she has sunk an enemy.

8.87 As for some of the others, I cannot say precisely how each of them, foreigners or Greeks, fought. But in Artemisia's case the following happened, and from it she won still greater esteem with the King. [2] When the King's side had fallen into great confusion, at that moment Artemisia's ship was being chased by an Attic ship. She could not escape, for in front of her were other friendly ships, and her own happened to be nearest the enemy. So she decided to do something that also turned out to her

41 The Aeacidae were Aeacus and his descendants, heroes of Aegina, whose aid the Greeks had sent a ship to bring (8.64).

advantage. With the Attic ship chasing her, she charged at full speed and rammed a friendly ship, manned by Calyndians and carrying the king of the Calyndians himself, Damasithymus.[42] 3 Whether she had had some quarrel with him while they were still at the Hellespont, I really cannot say, nor whether she did it on purpose or whether the Calyndian ship just happened to fall in her way by chance. 4 But when she rammed and sank it, her good luck won her a double benefit. For the captain of the Attic ship, when he saw her ramming a ship with a foreign crew, supposed that Artemisia's ship was either Greek or a deserter from the foreigners fighting on the Greek side, and he turned away and went after others.

8.88 That was one result: she got away and was not destroyed. The other was that, by doing harm, she won from it the very highest esteem with Xerxes. 2 For it is said that the King, as he watched, noticed the ship ramming, and one of those beside him said, "Master, do you see how well Artemisia is fighting? She's sunk an enemy ship!" He asked whether it was really Artemisia's work, and they said it was, since they clearly recognized the emblem on her ship; and they assumed the ship that had been destroyed was an enemy. 3 For everything else, as I have said, turned out to her good fortune, including the fact that no one from the Calyndian ship survived to accuse her. Xerxes is said to have replied to what he was told: "My men have become women, and my women men." That is what they say Xerxes said.

8.89 In this struggle the general Ariabignes son of Darius, Xerxes' brother, was killed, and many other famous men of the Persians, the Medes and the other allies, and a few Greeks as well. For since the Greeks knew how to swim, those whose ships were destroyed and who did not die in hand-to-hand fighting swam across to Salamis. 2 But most of the foreigners drowned in the sea because they could not swim. It was when the front ships turned to flee that most of them were destroyed: those stationed behind, trying to get through to the front with their ships so that

42 Calynda was a town in Caria.

they too might display some deed to the King, ran foul of their own ships as they fled.

8.90 Something else happened in this confusion. Some of the Phoenicians whose ships had been destroyed came to the King and slandered the Ionians, saying that the ships had been lost because of them, since they had turned traitor. As it turned out, the Ionian generals were not put to death, and the Phoenicians who slandered them got a reward of this kind. 2 While they were still saying this, a Samothracian ship rammed an Attic ship. The Attic ship was sinking when an Aeginetan ship bore down and sank the Samothracians' ship. But the Samothracians, being javelin-men, hurled their javelins at the marines on the ship that had sunk them, swept them off, boarded it and took it. 3 This is what saved the Ionians. For when Xerxes saw them achieve a great feat, he turned on the Phoenicians, as a man in deep distress, ready to blame everyone, and ordered their heads cut off, so that, having been cowards themselves, they would not slander better men. 4 Whenever Xerxes, seated at the foot of the hill opposite Salamis called Aegaleos, saw one of his own men perform some feat in the battle, he would ask who had done it, and his scribes would write down the trireme captain's name, with his father's name and his city. Contributing somewhat to this disaster of the Phoenicians, too, was Ariaramnes, a Persian who was present and was a friend of the Ionians. So these men turned on the Phoenicians.

8.91 When the foreigners had turned to flight and were sailing out toward Phalerum, the Aeginetans, lying in wait in the strait, performed deeds worth recording. For the Athenians, in the confusion, were wrecking both the ships that resisted and those that fled, and the Aeginetans were wrecking those that sailed out; and whenever any escaped the Athenians, they ran headlong into the Aeginetans.[43]

8.92 There two ships happened to meet: Themistocles' ship, which was chasing a ship, and that of Polycritus son of Crius, an

43 Phalerum, on the open bay east of the strait, was Athens' old harbor and the base of the Persian fleet.

Aeginetan, which had just rammed a Sidonian ship. This Sidonian was the very ship that had captured the Aeginetan guard ship off Sciathus, on which Pytheas son of Ischenous was sailing. Though he had been hacked all over, the Persians had kept him on their ship, out of admiration for his courage; and now the Sidonian ship, carrying him around with its Persians, was captured, so that in this way Pytheas got home safely to Aegina. 2 When Polycritus caught sight of the Attic ship, he recognized it by the flagship's emblem, and shouting to Themistocles he taunted him, throwing in his face the charge of the Aeginetans' collaboration with the Persians. That was the jibe Polycritus hurled at Themistocles while ramming a ship. The foreigners whose ships survived fled and reached Phalerum, under the protection of the land army.[44]

8.93 In this sea battle the Greeks who won the highest reputation were the Aeginetans, and after them the Athenians. Among individuals, it was Polycritus of Aegina and two Athenians, Eumenes of Anagyrus and Ameinias of Pallene, the one who also chased Artemisia. If he had known that Artemisia was sailing in that ship, he would not have stopped until he had either taken her or been taken himself. 2 For the Athenian trireme captains had been given orders about her, and a prize of ten thousand drachmas had been offered besides to whoever took her alive; they thought it an outrage that a woman should make war on Athens. She, as I said before, escaped; and the others whose ships had survived were also at Phalerum.[45]

8.94 As for Adeimantus, the Corinthian general, the Athenians say that right at the start, as the ships were closing, he panicked in terror, hoisted his sails and fled; and that when the Corinthians saw their flagship fleeing, they went off the same way. 2 But as they fled and were off the temple of Athena Sciras on Salamis, they say, a light boat met them, sent by the gods. No one

44 Athens had accused Aegina of siding with Persia in 491 BC, and Polycritus' father Crius was among the hostages then taken (6.49–50, 6.73); Pytheas' capture is told at 7.181.

45 A drachma was a silver coin, around a day's wage for a skilled worker; ten thousand drachmas was well over a talent and a half.

appeared to have sent it, and it came up to the Corinthians, who knew nothing of what was happening in the fleet. Here is why the Athenians infer that the thing was divine: when the boat came near the ships, those on board said this: [3] "Adeimantus, you've turned your ships around and rushed off in flight, betraying the Greeks; but they are actually winning, as completely as they prayed to overcome their enemies." When they said this, Adeimantus did not believe them, so they said further that they were ready to be taken as hostages and put to death if the Greeks were not seen to be winning. [4] And so, the story goes, he turned his ship around, he and the others, and reached the fleet when it was all over. That is the story the Athenians tell about the Corinthians. The Corinthians themselves, however, do not agree; they consider that they were among the foremost in the sea battle, and the rest of Greece bears witness for them.

8.95 Aristides son of Lysimachus, the Athenian whom I mentioned a little earlier as the best of men, did this in the confusion around Salamis. He took many of the hoplites who were stationed along the shore of Salamis, Athenians by birth, and led them across and landed them on the island of Psyttaleia; and they slaughtered all the Persians on that islet.[46]

8.96 When the sea battle had broken off, the Greeks towed to Salamis whatever wrecks still happened to be in those waters and stood ready for another sea battle, expecting that the King would still use the ships he had left. [2] But many of the wrecks were caught by a west wind and carried to the shore of Attica called Colias. So the oracle was fulfilled: all the rest of what Bacis and Musaeus had said about this sea battle, and in particular, concerning the wrecks washed up there, what had been said many years earlier in an oracle by Lysistratus, an Athenian oracle-reciter, which had escaped the notice of all the Greeks:

46 Psyttaleia is a small island at the mouth of the Salamis strait, where Xerxes had landed troops before the battle.

"The women of Colias will roast with oars." But this was to happen after the King had marched away.[47]

XERXES RETREATS

Mardonius stays with a picked army while Xerxes hurries back to Asia and his fleet sails home.

8.97 When Xerxes realized the disaster that had happened, he was afraid that one of the Ionians might suggest to the Greeks, or that they might think of it themselves, to sail to the Hellespont and break up the bridges, and that he would be cut off in Europe and in danger of perishing. So he began to plan flight. But wishing to make this plain neither to the Greeks nor to his own people, he tried to build a causeway across to Salamis, and he lashed together Phoenician cargo ships to serve both as a pontoon bridge and as a wall, and he made ready for war as if he meant to fight another sea battle. 2 Seeing him do this, everyone else was quite sure that he had set his whole mind on staying and carrying on the war. But none of it escaped Mardonius, who knew his way of thinking better than anyone.

8.98 While doing this, Xerxes also sent a messenger to Persia to announce the misfortune that had befallen them. There is nothing mortal that travels faster than these messengers, so cleverly have the Persians devised the system. They say that however many days the whole journey takes, so many horses and men are posted along the way, one horse and one man assigned to each day's journey; and neither snow nor rain nor heat nor night keeps them from completing the stage set before each of them at the greatest possible speed. 2 The first rider hands on his instructions to the second, and the second to the third; and from there the message passes on from one to the next, handed along, just like the torch race the Greeks hold in honor of Hephaestus.

47 Musaeus, like Bacis, was a legendary seer whose oracles circulated in collections. The oracle plays on the wreckage serving as firewood for cooking.

The Persians call this relay of horses the *angareion*, the royal courier system.[48]

8.99 The first message to reach Susa, that Xerxes held Athens, so delighted the Persians who had been left behind that they strewed all the roads with myrtle, burned incense, and gave themselves up to sacrifices and feasting. 2 But the second message, coming on top of it, threw them into such dismay that they all tore their tunics and raised an endless shouting and wailing, laying the blame on Mardonius. The Persians did this not so much out of grief for the ships as out of fear for Xerxes himself.

8.100 This went on among the Persians the whole time in between, until Xerxes himself arrived and put a stop to it. Mardonius, meanwhile, saw that Xerxes was taking the sea battle as a great disaster, and suspected that he was planning to flee from Athens. He reflected that he would pay the penalty for having persuaded the King to march against Greece, and that it would be better for him to take the risk once more and either conquer Greece or end his life nobly, having staked it on great things; though his judgment leaned more toward conquering Greece. Having reckoned all this, he put the following proposal to him. 2 "Master, don't grieve, and don't treat what has happened as any great disaster. The contest that decides everything for us isn't one of timbers, but of men and horses. None of these people, who think they've already achieved everything, will get off their ships and try to stand against you, and no one from this mainland will either; and those who did stand against us have paid the penalty. 3 So, if you think fit, let's attack the Peloponnese at once; or if you think fit to hold back, that's possible too. Don't lose heart. There's no way out for the Greeks: they will have to render an account for what they've done, now and before, and become your slaves. This is what you should do, above all. But if you've decided to march off yourself and lead the army away, I have another plan for that case too. 4 Don't, my King, let the Persians become a laughingstock to the Greeks. None of your affairs

48 The torch race was a relay run at Athens in which teams passed a lit torch from runner to runner.

has been damaged through the Persians, and you can't name a place where we proved cowards. If Phoenicians and Egyptians and Cypriots and Cilicians proved cowards, this disaster has nothing to do with the Persians. [5] So, since it isn't the Persians who are to blame, take my advice. If you've decided not to stay, march off to your own home and take most of the army with you; and it will be up to me to hand Greece over to you enslaved, once I've picked out three hundred thousand men of the army."

8.101 When Xerxes heard this he was glad and pleased, as far as one can be after misfortune, and he told Mardonius that he would consider the matter and answer which of the two he would do. As he was deliberating with those Persians he had summoned, he decided to send for Artemisia as well, to take her advice, since earlier she alone had plainly understood what ought to be done. [2] When Artemisia arrived, Xerxes sent away everyone else, both the Persian counselors and the bodyguards, and said: "Mardonius urges me to stay here and attack the Peloponnese. He says that the Persians and the land army are in no way to blame for the disaster, and would welcome a chance to show what they can do. [3] So he urges me either to do this, or else he himself is willing to pick out three hundred thousand men from the army and hand Greece over to me enslaved, while he urges me to march off with the rest of the army to my own home. [4] Now you gave me good advice about the sea battle that has just been fought, when you urged me not to fight it; so advise me now too which of these I should do to have chosen well."

8.102 That was the advice he asked of her, and she said: "My King, it's hard, when one is asked for advice, to hit on the best thing to say. But in the present circumstances I think you should march back yourself, and leave Mardonius here with the troops he wants, if he is willing and undertakes to do this. [2] For if he subdues what he says he means to, and his plans succeed as he describes, the achievement is yours, master, since it was your slaves who accomplished it. And if things turn out contrary to Mardonius' expectation, it will be no great disaster, as long as

you survive and the affairs of your house are safe. [3] For if you and your house survive, the Greeks will have to run many races, many times, for their own lives. As for Mardonius, if anything happens to him, it's of no account; nor will the Greeks have won anything by winning, if all they've done is kill a slave of yours. And you will march off having burned Athens, which was the purpose of your expedition."

8.103 Xerxes was pleased with this advice, for she happened to say exactly what he himself had in mind. In my opinion he would not have stayed even if every man and every woman had advised him to stay, so terrified was he. He praised Artemisia and sent her off to Ephesus, taking his sons with her; for some of his illegitimate sons had come with him.

8.104 He sent with the boys, as their guardian, Hermotimus, a Pedasian by birth, who held first place among the King's eunuchs. [The Pedasians live inland from Halicarnassus. In this Pedasa something of the following kind happens: whenever some misfortune is about to befall all the neighbors who live around this city within a certain time, the priestess of Athena there grows a great beard. This has already happened to them twice.]

8.105 [It was from these Pedasians that Hermotimus came.] Of all the people we know of, he took the greatest vengeance for a wrong done to him. He had been captured by enemies and was being sold when Panionius, a man of Chios, bought him. Panionius made his living by the most unholy trade. Whenever he got hold of boys who had grown good-looking, he would castrate them, take them to Sardis and Ephesus, and sell them for large sums. [2] Among non-Greeks, eunuchs are valued more highly than uncastrated men because they are thought entirely trustworthy. Panionius had castrated many others, since this was how he made his living, and among them was this boy. But Hermotimus was not unlucky in everything. He was sent from Sardis to the King along with other gifts, and as time went on he came to be the most honored of all the eunuchs at Xerxes' court.

8.106 When the King was at Sardis and setting the Persian army in motion against Athens, Hermotimus went down on some business to the part of Mysia called Atarneus, which the Chians occupy, and there he found Panionius. 2 He recognized him and spoke to him at length and in a friendly way. First he listed all the good things he himself had because of him. Then he promised him in return all the good he would do him if he brought his household and came to live there. Panionius gladly accepted the offer and brought his children and his wife.[49] 3 Once Hermotimus had him in his power, household and all, he said this: "Of all men who have ever lived, you have made your living by the most unholy trade. What harm had I or any of my ancestors ever done to you or any of yours, that you made me nothing instead of a man? You thought the gods wouldn't notice what you were plotting back then. But the gods follow a just law, and for your unholy deeds they have brought you into my hands. So you will have no complaint about the punishment you're going to get from me." 4 After he had reproached him like this, Panionius' sons were brought before him, and Panionius was forced to cut off the genitals of his own sons, all four of them. He was forced to do it, and he did. When he had done it, his sons were forced to do the same to him. That is how vengeance, and Hermotimus, caught up with Panionius.

8.107 When Xerxes had entrusted his sons to Artemisia to take to Ephesus, he called Mardonius and told him to pick whichever troops he wanted from the army, and to try to make his deeds match his words. That was as far as things went that day. During the night, on the King's orders, the commanders took the ships from Phalerum back to the Hellespont, each as fast as he could, to guard the bridges for the King's crossing. 2 As the foreign fleet sailed near Zoster, where thin headlands jut out from the mainland, they took the headlands for ships and fled a long way. In time they realized that they were headlands and not ships, and they regrouped and went on their way.[50]

49 Atarneus lay on the mainland of Asia Minor, opposite Lesbos.
50 Zoster is a cape on the west coast of Attica, south of Athens.

8.108 When day came, the Greeks saw the land army staying where it was and expected the ships to be near Phalerum too. They thought there would be a sea battle and prepared to defend themselves. When they learned that the ships had gone, they immediately decided to give chase. They pursued as far as Andros without catching sight of Xerxes' fleet, and when they reached Andros they held a council. 2 Themistocles proposed that they turn through the islands, chase the ships, and sail straight to the Hellespont to break the bridges. Eurybiades put forward the opposite view. If they broke the bridges, he said, they would be doing Greece the greatest harm of all. 3 For if the Persian were forced to stay in Europe, he said, he would try not to sit still. If he did sit still, he could make no headway, no way home would open up for him, and his army would die of hunger. But if he went on the attack and set to work, everything in Europe could come over to him, city by city and nation by nation, either by being conquered or by coming to terms before that. And they would always have the Greeks' yearly harvest to feed on. 4 In fact, he thought, now that the Persian had been beaten in the sea battle, he would not stay in Europe. So they should let him flee until he reached his own land, and from then on, he urged, they should fight for possession of that land. The generals of the other Peloponnesians held this view too.

8.109 When Themistocles realized that he would not persuade most of them to sail to the Hellespont, he changed course and turned to the Athenians. They were the angriest that the enemy had escaped, and they were eager to sail to the Hellespont even on their own if the others refused. He said this to them: 2 "I have seen it happen many times myself, and heard of it far more often: men who are beaten and driven into a corner fight back and make up for their earlier failure. We have had a stroke of luck: we have saved ourselves and Greece and driven back so great a cloud of men. So let's not pursue men who are running away. 3 It was not we who did this but the gods and heroes, who begrudged that one man should be king of both Asia and Europe, and an unholy and reckless man at that. He treated sac-

red things and ordinary things alike, burning and throwing down the statues of the gods. He even had the sea whipped and fetters let down into it. [4] For the present, though, it's best for us to stay in Greece and look after ourselves and our households. Now that we've driven the foreigner out completely, let each man rebuild his house and attend to his sowing. And with the spring let's sail to the Hellespont and Ionia." [5] He said this to build up credit with the Persian, so that he would have a refuge if he ever got into trouble with the Athenians. And that is exactly what happened.[51]

8.110 In saying this Themistocles was deceiving them, but the Athenians did as he said. He had been thought wise before, and he had now shown himself to be truly wise and shrewd in counsel, so they were ready to follow his advice in everything. [2] As soon as they had been won over, Themistocles sent off some men in a boat, men he trusted to keep silent even under any torture about the message he told them to give the King. Among them, once again, was his servant Sicinnus. When they reached Attica, the others stayed with the boat, and Sicinnus went up to Xerxes and said this: [3] "Themistocles son of Neocles, general of the Athenians and the best and wisest man among all the allies, has sent me to tell you that Themistocles the Athenian, wishing to do you a service, has held back the Greeks, who wanted to pursue your ships and break the bridges on the Hellespont. Now you can make your way home at your leisure." After delivering this message, they sailed back.

8.111 Once the Greeks had decided against pursuing the foreign ships any further or sailing to the Hellespont to break the crossing, they laid siege to Andros, intending to take it. [2] The Andrians were the first of the islanders to refuse when Themistocles demanded money. He put it to them that the Athenians had come with two great gods on their side, Persuasion and Compulsion, so they absolutely had to pay. They answered that it was no wonder Athens was great and prosperous, blessed as it was with

51 Themistocles was later ostracized and condemned at Athens, and ended his life in Persian service.

useful gods. [3] The Andrians, by contrast, were as poor in land as anyone could be, and two useless gods never left their island but always loved to stay there: Poverty and Helplessness. Since the Andrians were in the keeping of these gods, they said, they would not pay; the power of the Athenians would never be stronger than their own lack of it.

8.112 So the Andrians, having given this answer and refused the money, were besieged. Themistocles never stopped trying to get more. He sent threatening messages to the other islands demanding money, using the same messengers he had sent to the King. If they did not pay what was demanded, he said, he would bring the Greek forces against them, besiege them and take them. [2] By saying this he collected large sums from the Carystians and the Parians. They had heard that Andros was being besieged for siding with the Persians and that Themistocles was held in the highest regard of all the generals, and in their fear they sent money. Whether any other islanders also paid, I cannot say, but I think some others did too, not just these. [3] The Carystians, however, got no respite from trouble by it. The Parians bought Themistocles off with money and escaped the attack. So Themistocles, using Andros as his base, got money from the islanders without the other generals knowing.[52]

8.113 Xerxes and his army waited a few days after the sea battle and then marched off into Boeotia by the same road. Mardonius had decided to escort the King; he also thought it too late in the year for fighting, and better to winter in Thessaly and then attack the Peloponnese in the spring. [2] When they reached Thessaly, Mardonius made his selection. First he took all the Persians called the Immortals, except their general Hydarnes, who said he would not leave the King. Then, from the rest of the Persians, he took the men in breastplates and the thousand horse, and also the Medes, the Sacae, the Bactrians and the Indians, both infantry and the rest of the cavalry.[53] [3] These nations he took whole. From the other allies he picked out a few at a time,

52 Carystus is a city at the southern end of Euboea; Paros is one of the Cyclades.
53 The Sacae were a Scythian people of Central Asia.

choosing men of fine physique or men who he knew had done something worthwhile. The largest single nation he took was the Persians, men who wore neck-rings and bracelets, and after them the Medes. These were no fewer in number than the Persians, but weaker in strength. In all, including the cavalry, they came to three hundred thousand.

8.114 Meanwhile, while Mardonius was sorting out the army and Xerxes was in Thessaly, an oracle had come from Delphi to the Lacedaemonians, telling them to demand satisfaction from Xerxes for the killing of Leonidas and to accept whatever he offered. The Spartans sent a herald with all speed. He found the whole army still in Thessaly, came before Xerxes and said this: 2 "King of the Medes, the Lacedaemonians and the Heraclids of Sparta demand satisfaction from you for murder, because you killed their king as he was defending Greece." Xerxes laughed and said nothing for a long time. Then, since Mardonius happened to be standing beside him, he pointed at him and said, "Then Mardonius here will give them the satisfaction they deserve."[54]

8.115 The herald took this answer and left. Xerxes left Mardonius in Thessaly and himself made all speed for the Hellespont. He reached the crossing in forty-five days, bringing back practically none of his army, one might say. 2 Wherever they went, whatever people they came among, they seized their crops and ate them. If they found no crops, they ate the grass growing from the ground, stripped the bark from the trees and plucked off the leaves and devoured them, from cultivated and wild trees alike, leaving nothing. Hunger drove them to it. 3 Plague and dysentery also struck the army on the way and destroyed it. Those who fell sick he left behind, ordering the cities he passed through at each stage to care for them and feed them: some in Thessaly, some at Siris in Paeonia, and some in Macedonia. 4 It was there that he had left the sacred chariot of Zeus on his march against Greece, and on his way back he did not get it back. The Paeonians had given it to the Thracians, and when

54 The Spartan kings claimed descent from Heracles, hence "Heraclids."

Xerxes asked for it they said the mares had been carried off while grazing by the upper Thracians who live around the sources of the Strymon.

8.116 It was there too that the king of the Bisaltae and of the Crestonian land, a Thracian, did an extraordinary thing. He declared that he himself would never willingly be Xerxes' slave, and went off up into the Rhodope mountains, and he forbade his sons to join the march against Greece. 2 They paid no attention, or else they simply had a wish to see the war, and marched with the Persian. When they all came back unharmed, six of them, their father gouged out their eyes for this.

8.117 That was the reward they received. When the Persians had made their way out of Thrace to the crossing, they hurried over the Hellespont to Abydos in their ships, for they found the bridges no longer stretched across but broken up by a storm. 2 Held up there, they got more food than they had on the march. They gorged themselves without restraint, and with that and the change of water many of the surviving army died. The rest arrived at Sardis with Xerxes.

8.118 There is also another story told, as follows. When Xerxes, marching away from Athens, reached Eion on the Strymon, he traveled no further by land, but entrusted the army to Hydarnes to take to the Hellespont, while he himself boarded a Phoenician ship and sailed for Asia. 2 During the voyage, the story goes, he was caught by the Strymon wind, which blows hard and raises heavy seas. The ship was overloaded, since there were many Persians traveling with Xerxes on deck, and so was all the more storm-tossed. At that point the King panicked and shouted to the helmsman, asking whether there was any way they could be saved, 3 and the helmsman said, "Master, there is none, unless we get rid of these many passengers." When Xerxes heard this, it is said, he replied, "Persians, now let each of you show how much he cares for his King. My safety, it seems, is in your hands." 4 At these words, according to the story, they bowed down before him and leapt into the sea, and the ship, lightened, came safe to Asia. As soon as Xerxes landed, he did this: because

the helmsman had saved the King's life, he presented him with a gold crown, and because he had caused the death of many Persians, he cut off his head.

8.119 That is the other story told about Xerxes' return, but I do not believe it at all, either in other respects or in this disaster of the Persians. If the helmsman really did say this to Xerxes, I do not think one opinion in ten thousand would deny that the King would have done this: he would have sent the men on deck, who were Persians and leading Persians at that, down into the hold, and thrown overboard an equal number of the rowers, who were Phoenicians. No, as I have said already, he returned to Asia by road with the rest of the army.

8.120 Here is strong evidence of this too. Xerxes is known to have come to Abdera on his way back, made a pact of guest-friendship with its people, and given them a gold akinakes and a gold-spangled tiara. And according to the Abderites themselves —though I do not find what they say at all believable—it was there that he first loosened his belt on his flight back from Athens, feeling he was now safe. Abdera lies nearer the Hellespont than the Strymon and Eion, where they say he boarded the ship.[55]

8.121 When the Greeks proved unable to take Andros, they turned on Carystus, laid waste its land and went back to Salamis. First they set aside first-fruits for the gods, including three Phoenician triremes. One was to be dedicated at the Isthmus, and it was still there in my time; another at Sunium; and the third to Ajax, right there on Salamis. 2 After that they divided the spoils and sent the first-fruits to Delphi. From these a statue was made, twelve cubits tall, holding a ship's figurehead in its hand. It stands in the same place as the golden statue of Alexander of Macedon.

8.122 When the Greeks had sent the first-fruits to Delphi, they asked the god jointly whether the first-fruits he had received were complete and to his liking. He said he had them from the

55 An akinakes was a Persian short sword; guest-friendship was a formal, hereditary bond of hospitality.

other Greeks, but not from the Aeginetans, and demanded from them the prize for valor in the sea battle at Salamis. When the Aeginetans heard this, they dedicated golden stars, three of them, which stand on a bronze mast in the corner, very close to Croesus' mixing bowl.

8.123 After dividing the spoils, the Greeks sailed to the Isthmus to award a prize to the Greek who had shown himself most deserving in this war. 2 When the generals arrived there, they cast their votes at the altar of Poseidon, choosing a first and a second out of them all. Each of them voted for himself, each believing he had been the best, but for second place most of them agreed on Themistocles. So each of them had a single vote, while Themistocles far outstripped them in votes for second place.

8.124 Out of jealousy the Greeks refused to settle the matter, and they all sailed home without a decision. Even so, Themistocles was talked about and reputed throughout Greece to be by far the wisest of the Greeks. 2 Since, though he had won, he had not been honored by those who fought at Salamis, he went straight afterward to Lacedaemon, wanting to be honored. The Lacedaemonians gave him a fine welcome and great honors. They gave the prize for valor ... to Eurybiades, a crown of olive, and the prize for wisdom and cleverness to Themistocles, he too a crown of olive. They also presented him with the finest chariot in Sparta. 3 After much praise, three hundred picked Spartans, the ones called the Knights, escorted him on his way as far as the border with Tegea. He is the only man of all we know whom the Spartans have ever escorted like this.[56]

8.125 When he got back to Athens from Lacedaemon, Timodemus of Aphidnae, one of Themistocles' enemies but otherwise not a man of any note, went mad with jealousy and abused Themistocles. He threw his visit to Lacedaemon in his face, saying that he owed the honors he had from the Lacedaemonians to Athens, not to himself. 2 When Timodemus would not stop say-

56 The "Knights" were a select corps of three hundred young Spartans who served as the kings' guard, despite the name fighting on foot.

ing this, Themistocles said, "Here's how it is: if I were from Belbina, I wouldn't have been honored like this by the Spartans—and neither would you, my man, though you are an Athenian." That was the end of that.[57]

8.126 Artabazus son of Pharnaces, a man already distinguished among the Persians and even more so after Plataea, escorted the King as far as the crossing with sixty thousand men from the army Mardonius had picked. 2 When the King was in Asia and Artabazus, on his way back, was near Pallene, he found the Potidaeans in revolt. Since Mardonius was wintering in Thessaly and Macedonia and was in no hurry for him to rejoin the rest of the army, he thought it right to enslave them. 3 For once the King had marched past and the Persian fleet had fled from Salamis and gone, the Potidaeans had openly revolted from the foreigners, and so had the others who lived on Pallene.[58]

8.127 So Artabazus laid siege to Potidaea. Suspecting that the Olynthians too were revolting from the King, he besieged their city as well. It was held by Bottiaeans, who had been driven out of the region of the Thermaic Gulf by the Macedonians. When he had taken the city by siege, he led the inhabitants out to a lake and slaughtered them. He handed the city over to Critobulus of Torone and the Chalcidian people to govern, and that is how the Chalcidians came to hold Olynthus.

8.128 Once he had captured Olynthus, Artabazus turned his full attention to Potidaea. While he was pressing the siege hard, Timoxenus, the general of the Scionaeans, eagerly agreed to betray the city to him. How it all began I cannot say, since nothing is told about it. In the end, though, this is what happened. Whenever Timoxenus had written a letter he wanted to send to Artabazus, or Artabazus one to Timoxenus, they would wrap the letter around the notched end of an arrow, put the feathers over it, and shoot it to an agreed spot. 2 But Timoxenus was found out betraying Potidaea. Artabazus, shooting at the agreed spot,

57 Belbina is a tiny, insignificant island off the southern tip of Attica.
58 Pallene is the westernmost of the three peninsulas of Chalcidice; Potidaea stands at its neck.

missed it and hit a man of Potidaea in the shoulder. A crowd ran around the wounded man, as tends to happen in war. They at once took the arrow, and when they noticed the letter they carried it to the generals. Allied troops from the rest of Pallene were there too. [3] The generals read the letter and learned who was responsible for the betrayal. But they decided not to crush Timoxenus with a charge of treason, for the sake of the city of Scione, so that the Scionaeans would not be regarded as traitors for all time to come.

[8.129] That was how he was found out. When Artabazus had been besieging the city for three months, there was a great ebb of the sea, lasting a long time. Seeing that the sea had turned into shallows, the foreigners set out to make their way across into Pallene. [2] They had covered two parts of the way, with three still remaining that they had to cross to be inside Pallene, when a great flood tide came in. According to the local people, there had never been one so high, though floods happen often. Those of them who could not swim were drowned, and those who could were killed by the Potidaeans, who sailed out at them in boats. [3] The Potidaeans say that the cause of the ebb, the flood and the Persians' disaster was this: the very Persians who were destroyed by the sea had committed sacrilege against the temple and the statue of Poseidon in the city's outskirts. In giving this as the cause, they are right, in my opinion. Artabazus led the survivors away to Mardonius in Thessaly. That is how the men who had escorted the King fared.

[8.130] As for what was left of Xerxes' fleet: after its flight from Salamis it reached Asia and ferried the King and the army across from the Chersonese to Abydos, and then it wintered at Cyme. At the first light of spring it gathered early at Samos, where some of the ships had also wintered. Most of the marines on board were Persians and Medes. [2] The generals who came to command them were Mardontes son of Bagaeus and Artayntes son of Artachaees. Sharing the command with them was Ithamitres, Artayntes' nephew, whom Artayntes had added as a colleague. Because they had suffered a heavy blow, they did not

advance any farther west, nor did anyone force them to. Instead they sat at Samos, keeping watch on Ionia so that it would not revolt. They had three hundred ships, the Ionian ones included. [3] Nor did they expect the Greeks to come to Ionia. They thought the Greeks would be content to guard their own country, judging from the fact that the Greeks had not pursued them when they fled from Salamis but had been glad to get away. At sea, then, they had been beaten in spirit, but on land they thought Mardonius would be far stronger. [4] While they were at Samos, they were considering whether they could do the enemy some harm, and at the same time listening out for how Mardonius' affairs would turn out.

8.131 The Greeks, for their part, were stirred into action by the coming of spring and by Mardonius' presence in Thessaly. Their land army was not yet assembling, but the fleet, a hundred and ten ships, came to Aegina. [2] Its general and admiral was Leotychides son of Menares son of Hegesilaus son of Hippocratides son of Leotychides son of Anaxilaus son of Archidemus son of Anaxandrides son of Theopompus son of Nicander son of Charilaus son of Eunomus son of Polydectes son of Prytanis son of Euryphon son of Procles son of Aristodemus son of Aristomachus son of Cleodaeus son of Hyllus son of Heracles. He belonged to the other royal house. [3] All of these, except the seven named first after Leotychides, had been kings of Sparta. The Athenians' general was Xanthippus son of Ariphron.[59]

8.132 When all the ships had arrived at Aegina, messengers from the Ionians came to the Greek camp. A little before this they had also gone to Sparta and begged the Lacedaemonians to free Ionia. [2] One of them was Herodotus son of Basileides. These men had formed a faction among themselves and plotted to kill Strattis, the tyrant of Chios. At first there were seven of them. But their plot was discovered when one of the conspirators revealed the attempt, and so the remaining six slipped away from Chios. They went to Sparta, and now to Aegina, begging

59 Sparta had two kings at a time, from two royal houses. Leotychides belonged to the house descended from Procles, not the house of Leonidas.

the Greeks to sail across to Ionia. The Greeks brought them, with difficulty, as far as Delos.[60] 3 Everything beyond that frightened the Greeks. They had no experience of those parts, the whole region seemed to them full of troops, and in their minds Samos was as far away as the Pillars of Heracles. So it happened that the foreigners, terrified, did not dare to sail farther west than Samos, and the Greeks, though the Chians were asking them to, did not dare to go farther east than Delos. In this way fear kept guard over the space between them.[61]

8.133 So the Greeks sailed to Delos, while Mardonius was wintering in Thessaly. With Thessaly as his base, he sent a man from Europus named Mys around the oracles. He told him to go and consult every oracle that they could put to the test. What he wanted to learn from the oracles when he gave these instructions I cannot say, since nothing is told about it. My own view is that he sent to ask about his present affairs and nothing else.[62]

8.134 This Mys is known to have gone to Lebadea, where he paid a local man to go down to Trophonius, and to the oracle at Abae in Phocis. When he first came to Thebes, he consulted Ismenian Apollo, who can be consulted there through sacrifices, as at Olympia. He also paid a foreigner, not a Theban, to sleep in the shrine of Amphiaraus. 2 No Theban is allowed to seek prophecy there, and this is why. Amphiaraus, speaking through oracles, told the Thebans to choose one of two things, whichever they preferred: to use him as a prophet or as an ally, and to give up the other. They chose to have him as their ally. That is why no Theban may sleep in the shrine there.[63]

8.135 The Thebans tell of something that happened then which I find a very great marvel. They say that Mys of Europus, in his tour of all the oracles, came also to the sacred precinct of Ptoan

60 This Herodotus is a Chian, not the historian.
61 The Pillars of Heracles are the Strait of Gibraltar, for the Greeks the western edge of the known world.
62 Europus was a town in Caria, in southwest Asia Minor.
63 At Trophonius' oracle the consultant went down into an underground chamber. At Amphiaraus' shrine he slept in the sanctuary and received an answer in a dream.

Apollo. This shrine is called the Ptoum. It belongs to the Thebans and lies above Lake Copais, on a mountain very close to the town of Acraephia. [2] When this Mys, as he was called, entered the shrine, they say, three citizens chosen by the community followed him to write down whatever the god would prophesy. At once the chief prophet gave an oracle in a non-Greek language. [3] The Thebans with him were astonished to hear a foreign language instead of Greek and did not know what to do. But Mys of Europus snatched the tablet they had brought, wrote on it what the prophet was saying, and said that he was speaking Carian. Having written it down, he went off back to Thessaly.

ALEXANDER OF MACEDON AT ATHENS

Mardonius sends Alexander of Macedon to offer the Athenians generous terms if they change sides.

8.136 Mardonius read whatever it was the oracles said, and after this he sent a messenger to Athens: Alexander son of Amyntas, a Macedonian. He chose him partly because the Persians were related to him by marriage. Alexander's sister Gygaea, daughter of Amyntas, had married Bubares, a Persian, and borne him Amyntas, the one in Asia, named after his mother's father. The King gave this Amyntas Alabanda, a large city in Phrygia, to govern. Mardonius also sent Alexander because he had learned that Alexander was a proxenos and benefactor of the Athenians. [2] He thought this was the best way to win the Athenians over. He heard that they were a numerous and brave people, and he knew that the Athenians more than anyone had brought about the disasters the Persians had suffered at sea.[64] [3] If they joined him, he hoped to gain control of the sea easily, as would indeed have happened. On land he thought he was far stronger. And so he reckoned that he would get the better of the Greeks. Perhaps,

64 A proxenos was a citizen of one state who looked after the interests of another state's citizens. "Benefactor" was an honorary title Athens gave to those who had helped it.

too, the oracles had foretold this to him and advised him to make the Athenians his ally, and he sent his messenger in obedience to them.

8.137 This Alexander's ancestor in the seventh generation was Perdiccas, who won the tyranny over the Macedonians in the following way. Three brothers descended from Temenus, Gauanes, Aeropus and Perdiccas, fled from Argos to the Illyrians. From Illyria they crossed over into upper Macedonia and came to the town of Lebaea.[65] 2 There they served the king for wages, one tending horses, another cattle, and the youngest, Perdiccas, the smaller livestock. The king's wife baked their bread herself, for in the old days even the ruling houses of men were poor in money, not just the people. 3 Whenever she baked, the loaf of the hired boy Perdiccas grew to twice its size. Since the same thing happened every time, she told her husband. When he heard it, it struck him at once that this was a portent and meant something great. He summoned the hired men and ordered them to leave his land. 4 They said they had a right to be paid their wages before they left. At this the king, hearing about wages, and with the sun shining down into the house through the smoke-hole, said, his wits led astray by a god, "Here are the wages you deserve, and I'm paying them to you," and pointed to the sunlight. 5 Gauanes and Aeropus, the older ones, stood dumbfounded when they heard this. But the boy, who happened to have a knife, said, "We accept what you give, king." With the knife he traced a line around the sunlight on the floor of the house. Then he scooped the sunlight three times into the fold of his garment and went away, he and his brothers with him.

8.138 So they went away. Then one of the men sitting with the king pointed out to him what sort of thing the boy had done, and that the youngest of them had taken what was given with a purpose in mind. When the king heard this, he grew angry and sent horsemen after them to kill them. Now in that country there is a river to which the descendants of these men from Argos sacri-

65 Temenus was a descendant of Heracles and legendary founder of the royal line of Argos.

fice as their savior. [2] After the Temenids had crossed it, it rose so high that the horsemen could not get across. The brothers came to another part of Macedonia and settled near the gardens said to be those of Midas son of Gordias. Roses grow there of their own accord, each with sixty petals and a fragrance surpassing all others. [3] It was in these gardens, too, that Silenus was caught, as the Macedonians say. Above the gardens rises a mountain called Bermius, impassable in winter. Once they held this land, they set out from it and conquered the rest of Macedonia as well.[66]

8.139 From this Perdiccas Alexander was descended as follows. Alexander was the son of Amyntas, Amyntas of Alcetes. Alcetes' father was Aeropus, and his was Philip. Philip's was Argaeus, and his was Perdiccas, who won the rule.

8.140a That, then, was the descent of Alexander son of Amyntas. When he came to Athens, sent by Mardonius, he spoke as follows: "Men of Athens, these are Mardonius' words. A message has come to me from the King, saying: 'I forgive the Athenians all the wrongs they have done me. [2] Now, Mardonius, do this: give them back their land, and let them choose other land besides, whatever they wish, and live under their own laws. And if they are willing to come to terms with me, rebuild all their temples that I burned.' Now that these orders have come, I must carry them out, unless the obstacle comes from your side. [3] And I say this to you: why are you mad enough to make war on the King? You could never overcome him, and you can't hold out against him forever. You have seen the size of Xerxes' expedition and what it did, and you're hearing too of the force I now have with me. So even if you get the better of us and win, which you have no hope of doing if you have any sense, another force many times as large will come. [4] So don't try to match yourselves against the King, only to lose your land and be forever running for your lives. Make peace instead. You have the finest opportun-

66 Midas was a legendary king of Phrygia. Silenus, an old companion of Dionysus, was said to have been captured by him.

ity to make peace, since the King is inclined that way. Be free, and make an alliance with us without fraud or deceit.

8.140b This, Athenians, is what Mardonius told me to say to you. As for my own goodwill toward you, I'll say nothing, since you wouldn't be learning of it now for the first time. But I add my own plea that you do as Mardonius says. 2 I can see that you won't be able to keep up a war with Xerxes forever. If I saw that you could, I would never have come to you with a message like this. The King's power is more than human, and his arm reaches very far. 3 So if you don't come to terms at once, when they are offering you generous terms to agree on, I fear for you. Of all the allies, you live most directly in the path of the war. You will always be the ones destroyed, and you alone, since the land you hold has been singled out as the battleground between the armies. 4 So do as he says. It's worth a great deal to you that the Great King forgives your wrongs and wants to be the friend of you alone among the Greeks."

8.141 That is what Alexander said. The Lacedaemonians had heard that Alexander had come to Athens to bring the Athenians to terms with the foreigner. They remembered the oracles that said they and the rest of the Dorians were fated to be driven out of the Peloponnese by the Medes and the Athenians. They were very much afraid that the Athenians would come to terms with the Persian, and they decided at once to send envoys. 2 And it so happened that both delegations were brought before the assembly at the same time. The Athenians had held off and waited, knowing well that the Lacedaemonians would learn that a messenger had come from the foreigner to make an agreement, and that once they learned it they would send envoys in haste. So they did it on purpose, to show the Lacedaemonians where they stood.

8.142 When Alexander had finished speaking, the envoys from Sparta spoke in their turn: "The Lacedaemonians sent us to ask you not to make any revolutionary change in Greek affairs and not to accept proposals from the foreigner. 2 That would be neither just in any way nor honorable, for any other Greeks, and

least of all for you, for many reasons. You stirred up this war, against our wishes. The contest was over your territory to begin with, and now it extends to all of Greece. [3] Apart from all this, it would be utterly intolerable for the Athenians to become the cause of slavery for the Greeks, when you have always been seen, from long ago, to have set many people free. We do feel for you in your hardship, both because you have now lost two harvests and because your homes have been in ruins for a long time. [4] To make up for this, the Lacedaemonians and their allies promise to provide for your women and all the members of your households who are of no use in war, for as long as this war lasts. And don't let Alexander the Macedonian win you over by smoothing out Mardonius' words. [5] He has to do this: a tyrant himself, he works hand in hand with a tyrant. But you must not, if you have any sense, since you know that with non-Greeks there is nothing trustworthy or true." That is what the envoys said.

ATHENS' ANSWER

The Athenians refuse, saying they will never betray the Greeks, who share blood, language, gods and customs.

8.143 The Athenians gave Alexander this answer: "We know well enough ourselves that the Mede's power is many times greater than ours, so there's no need to throw that in our faces. All the same, in our love of freedom we will defend ourselves as best we can. Don't try to persuade us to come to terms with the foreigner. We will not be persuaded. [2] Now go and tell Mardonius that this is what the Athenians say: as long as the sun travels the same path it travels now, we will never come to terms with Xerxes. We will go out to defend ourselves against him, trusting in the gods and the heroes as our allies, whose shrines and statues he burned without any regard for them. [3] And from now on, don't appear before the Athenians with proposals like these, and don't urge us to do unholy things while you think you're doing us a service. We don't want you to suffer anything unpleasant at

the hands of the Athenians, since you are our proxenos and friend."

8.144 That was their answer to Alexander. To the envoys from Sparta they said this: "That the Lacedaemonians should fear we might come to terms with the foreigner was only human. But it's shameful of you to be afraid, when you know the Athenians' spirit so well. There is not so much gold anywhere on earth, nor any land so far surpassing others in beauty and excellence, that we would accept it as payment for siding with the Persians and enslaving Greece. 2 There are many great reasons that would prevent us from doing this, even if we wanted to. First and greatest, the statues and dwellings of the gods, burned and reduced to rubble. We are bound to avenge them to the utmost rather than come to terms with the man who did it. Second, there is the Greek world: we are of one blood and one language, we have shrines of the gods and sacrifices in common, and our ways of life are alike. It would not be right for the Athenians to betray all this. 3 Know this, then, if you didn't know it before: as long as a single Athenian is left alive, we will never come to terms with Xerxes. We do appreciate the forethought you have shown for us, in seeing how our homes have been ruined and offering to provide for our households. 4 You have done everything kindness requires. But we will hold out as best we can, without being a burden to you. Now, since this is how things stand, send out an army as quickly as possible. 5 As we reckon it, the foreigner will invade our land before long, as soon as he hears the message that we will do nothing of what he asked of us. So before he reaches Attica, now is the time for us to march out first to Boeotia." With this answer from the Athenians, the envoys went back to Sparta.

Book 9 (Calliope)

The battle of Plataea; the victory at Mycale; the Greeks take Sestos.

MARDONIUS RETAKES ATHENS

Mardonius occupies Athens a second time, then withdraws to Boeotia as the Spartans finally march out.

9.1 When Alexander came back and reported to Mardonius what the Athenians had said, Mardonius set out from Thessaly and led his army in haste against Athens. Wherever he came, he took the people of that place along with him. The leaders of Thessaly felt no regret at all for what they had done before. Instead they urged the Persian on all the more, and Thorax of Larissa, who had helped escort Xerxes in his flight, now openly gave Mardonius passage into Greece.

9.2 When the army on its march reached Boeotia, the Thebans tried to hold Mardonius there. They advised him, saying that there was no place better suited for a camp than that one. They would not let him go any farther, but urged him to stay where he was and arrange to subdue the whole of Greece without a battle. 2 For if the Greeks were of one mind, as they had been before, it would be hard even for all mankind to overcome them by force. "But if you do what we advise," they said, "you will have all their strong plans in your hands without any trouble. 3 Send money to the men who hold power in the cities. By sending it you will split Greece apart, and after that, with the help of your partisans, you will easily subdue those who are not on your side."

9.3 That was their advice, but he would not listen. A fierce longing had seeped into him to take Athens a second time. This

was partly out of obstinacy, and partly because he thought he would signal to the King at Sardis by beacon fires across the islands that he held Athens. [2] But even then, when he came into Attica, he did not find the Athenians there. He learned that most of them were on Salamis and on the ships, and he took the city empty. The King's capture of it had come ten months before this later invasion by Mardonius.

9.4 When Mardonius was in Athens, he sent Murychides, a man from the Hellespont, to Salamis with the same proposals that Alexander the Macedonian had carried across to the Athenians. [2] He sent them this second time even though he knew in advance that the Athenians' intentions were not friendly. He hoped that they would give up their obstinacy, now that the land of Attica had been taken by the spear and was in his power.

9.5 That was why he sent Murychides to Salamis. Murychides came before the Council and delivered Mardonius' message. One of the councilors, Lycides, gave his opinion that it seemed better to accept the proposal Murychides was putting to them and bring it before the people. [2] He declared this opinion, whether because he had taken money from Mardonius or because he actually approved of it. The Athenians, both those in the Council and those outside, were outraged the moment they heard it. They surrounded Lycides and stoned him to death, but they sent Murychides the Hellespontine away unharmed.[1] [3] When there was an uproar on Salamis over Lycides, the Athenian women learned what was happening. Passing the word from woman to woman and bringing one another along, they went of their own accord to Lycides' house and stoned his wife and his children to death.

9.6 This is how the Athenians had crossed over to Salamis. As long as they expected an army to come from the Peloponnese to help them, they stayed in Attica. But the Peloponnesians kept delaying and moving slowly, and the invader was reported to be already in Boeotia. Then they removed all their property and

1 The Council (boulē) was the Athenian Council of Five Hundred, which prepared business for the assembly of the people.

crossed over to Salamis themselves. They also sent envoys to Lacedaemon. The envoys were to reproach the Lacedaemonians for having stood by while the foreign army invaded Attica, instead of going with the Athenians to meet it in Boeotia. They were also to remind them of everything the Persian had promised to give the Athenians if they changed sides, and to warn them that if they did not come to the Athenians' aid, the Athenians too would find some way out.[2]

9.7 The Lacedaemonians, it so happened, were holding a festival at that time, the Hyacinthia, and they considered nothing more important than fulfilling their duties to the god. At the same time the wall they were building across the Isthmus was already getting its battlements. When the envoys from Athens reached Lacedaemon, bringing envoys from Megara and Plataea with them, they went before the ephors and said this:[3]

9.7a "The Athenians have sent us to tell you this. The King of the Medes is offering, first, to give our land back to us. Second, he is willing to make us his allies on fair and equal terms, without trickery or deceit. He is also willing to give us other land besides our own, whatever land we choose. 2 But we revered Zeus of the Greeks and thought it a terrible thing to betray Greece, so we did not agree. We refused, even though we are wronged by the Greeks and betrayed by them, and even though we know that it pays better to come to terms with the Persian than to make war on him. Nor will we come to terms with him of our own free will. So our dealings with the Greeks are honest and unalloyed, like true coin.[4]

9.7b But you were in utter terror back then that we would come to terms with the Persian. Now you have learned clearly what our spirit is, that we will never betray Greece, and the wall you are building across the Isthmus is complete. So you take no account of the Athenians at all. You agreed with us to face the

2 The Lacedaemonians were the Spartans together with the communities they ruled in Laconia and Messenia.
3 The Hyacinthia was a Spartan festival of Apollo and Hyacinthus. The ephors were five magistrates elected yearly, who held great power at Sparta.
4 Greeks often called the Persians "Medes."

Persian in Boeotia, and you have betrayed us, and you stood by while the foreign army invaded Attica first. [2] For the present, then, the Athenians are angry with you, since you have not acted as you should. But now they ask you to send out an army with us as quickly as possible, so that we can meet the foreign army in Attica. Since we have missed our chance in Boeotia, the best place to fight in our own land is the Thriasian plain."[5]

9.8 When the ephors heard this, they put off answering until the next day, and on the next day until the day after. They kept this up for ten days, putting it off from one day to the next. All this time the Peloponnesians were all building the wall across the Isthmus with great eagerness, [2] and it was nearly finished. I cannot say why the Lacedaemonians were so eager that the Athenians should not side with the Persians when Alexander of Macedon came to Athens, while now they did not care at all. Perhaps it was that the Isthmus was now walled, and they thought they no longer needed the Athenians in any way. When Alexander came to Attica, the wall was not yet finished, and they were working on it in great fear of the Persians.

9.9 In the end the Spartans gave their answer and marched out in the following way. On the day before the final hearing was to take place, Chileus, a man of Tegea who had more influence in Lacedaemon than any other foreigner, learned from the ephors everything the Athenians had said. When Chileus heard it, he spoke to them as follows. [2] "This is how things stand, ephors. If the Athenians are not our friends but allies of the foreigner, then however strong the wall across the Isthmus may be, great gates stand wide open for the Persian into the Peloponnese. Listen to them, before the Athenians decide on something else that will bring Greece to ruin."[6]

9.10 That was his advice to them. They took it to heart at once. Without telling the envoys who had come from the cities anything, they sent out five thousand Spartans while it was still night, assigning seven helots to each man, and ordered

5 The Thriasian plain lies around Eleusis, west of Athens.
6 Tegea was a city in Arcadia, just north of Laconia.

Pausanias son of Cleombrotus to lead them. [2] The command properly belonged to Pleistarchus son of Leonidas, but he was still a boy, and Pausanias was his guardian and cousin.[7] Cleombrotus, Pausanias' father and son of Anaxandridas, was no longer alive. He had led back from the Isthmus the army that had built the wall, and he died not long afterward. [3] Cleombrotus had led the army back from the Isthmus for this reason: as he was sacrificing for success against the Persian, the sun grew dark in the sky. Pausanias chose as his colleague Euryanax son of Dorieus, a man of the same family.[8]

9.11 So these men had marched out of Sparta with Pausanias. When day came, the envoys, who knew nothing about the march, went to the ephors, intending to leave and go home, each to his own city. They came before them and said this: "You Lacedaemonians stay right here, celebrating the Hyacinthia and amusing yourselves, and you have betrayed your allies. The Athenians, wronged by you and with no allies, will make peace with the Persian on whatever terms they can. [2] And once we have made peace, we will clearly become the King's allies, and we will march with the Persians against whatever land they lead us to. Then you will learn what comes of it for you." As the envoys said this, the ephors declared on oath that they believed their men were already at Orestheum, marching against the strangers, for that is what they called the non-Greeks. [3] The envoys, not knowing, asked what they meant, and by asking they learned the whole truth. They were astonished and set off after the army at full speed. With them went five thousand picked hoplites from the Lacedaemonian perioeci, who did the very same.[9]

9.12 So they were hurrying to the Isthmus. As soon as the Argives learned that Pausanias and his men had marched out of Sparta, they found the best of their day-runners and sent him as

7 The helots were a subject population who worked the land for the Spartans as serfs.
8 This was probably the partial eclipse of the sun on 2 October 480 BC.
9 The perioeci ("dwellers around") were free but non-citizen inhabitants of Laconia, subject to Sparta. Hoplites were heavily armed infantrymen.

a herald to Attica. They had earlier promised Mardonius that they would stop the Spartans from marching out. [2] When the herald reached Athens he said this: "Mardonius, the Argives have sent me to tell you that the young men have marched out of Lacedaemon, and that the Argives are not able to stop them from marching out. Make your plans wisely in the light of this."

[9.13] Having said this, he went back. When Mardonius heard it, he was no longer at all eager to stay in Attica. Before he learned this he had held back, wanting to know what the Athenians would do. He neither harmed nor ravaged Attica, since he kept hoping that they would come to terms with him. [2] But when he could not persuade them and learned the whole story, he withdrew before Pausanias and his men reached the Isthmus. First he burned Athens, and knocked down and leveled whatever was still standing of the walls, the houses or the temples. [3] He marched out for these reasons. The land of Attica was not suited to cavalry, and if he were defeated in battle, there was no way of retreat except through narrow passes, where a few men could stop his army. So he decided to fall back to Thebes and fight near a friendly city, in country suited to cavalry.

[9.14] So Mardonius was withdrawing. When he was already on the road, news came that another army, an advance force of a thousand Lacedaemonians, had come to Megara. Learning this, he considered how he might capture these men first. He turned his army around and led it toward Megara, and his cavalry rode ahead and overran the land of Megara. This was the farthest point in Europe toward the setting sun that this Persian army reached.

[9.15] After this, news came to Mardonius that the Greeks were gathered in force at the Isthmus. So he marched back by way of Decelea. The Boeotarchs had sent for the neighbors of the Asopians, and these men guided him along the road to Sphendaleae and from there to Tanagra. [2] He camped for the night at Tanagra, and the next day turned toward Scolus and was in Theban territ-

ory.[10] There, although the Thebans were on the Persian side, he stripped their land of its trees. He did this not out of any hostility toward them, but because he was under great necessity to make a fortification for his army, a place of refuge in case the battle did not go as he wished. 3 His camp began at Erythrae, ran past Hysiae and stretched into the territory of Plataea, drawn up along the Asopus River. He did not make the wall that long, however, but about ten stades on each side.[11]

THE BANQUET AT THEBES

At a Theban feast a Persian guest weeps, foreseeing that few of the army will survive.

9.16 While the foreigners were busy with this work, Attaginus son of Phrynon, a Theban, made lavish preparations and invited Mardonius himself and fifty of the most distinguished Persians to a feast of hospitality. They accepted the invitation and came. The dinner was held in Thebes. What follows I heard from Thersander, a man of Orchomenus who was among the most distinguished men there. Thersander said that he too had been invited by Attaginus to this dinner, along with fifty Thebans. The two groups were not seated apart; instead a Persian and a Theban shared each couch. 2 When dinner was over and they were drinking, the Persian who shared his couch, who spoke Greek, asked him where he was from, and Thersander answered that he was from Orchomenus. The Persian then said, according to Thersander, "Since you have now shared my table and my libations, I want to leave you something to remember my judgment by, so that you may be forewarned and able to plan for your own good. 3 You see these Persians feasting here, and the army we left encamped by the river? Of all these, after a short time has passed, you will see only a few left alive." As he said this, Thersander said, the Persian shed many tears. 4 Thersander

10 The Boeotarchs were the chief magistrates of the Boeotian league of cities, led by Thebes.

11 A stade was about 600 feet (roughly 180 meters).

was amazed at his words and said to him, "Then shouldn't you tell this to Mardonius and to the Persians who are held in honor next to him?" The other answered, "Stranger, what must come from the god no human being can turn aside, since no one is willing to believe even those who speak the truth. [5] Many of us Persians know this, but we follow, bound by necessity. This is the most hateful pain there is among human beings: to understand much and have power over nothing." This is what I heard from Thersander of Orchomenus, and this besides: that he told people about it at once, before the battle at Plataea took place.

9.17 While Mardonius was encamped in Boeotia, all the Greeks living in that region who were siding with the Persians supplied troops and had joined in the invasion of Athens. Only the Phocians had not joined in the invasion (they too were strongly on the Persian side), not willingly but under compulsion. [2] Not many days after the arrival at Thebes, a thousand of their hoplites came, led by Harmocydes, the most respected of their citizens. When these too had arrived at Thebes, Mardonius sent horsemen and ordered them to take up a position by themselves on the plain. [3] When they had done this, the whole cavalry suddenly appeared. After this a rumor ran through the Greek army that was with the Medes that Mardonius was going to have the Phocians shot down with javelins, and the same rumor ran among the Phocians themselves. [4] Then their general Harmocydes encouraged them with words like these: "Phocians, it's plain that these people intend to hand us over to certain death. I suspect the Thessalians have slandered us. Now each and every one of you must prove himself a brave man. It is better to end our lives doing something and defending ourselves than to give ourselves up to be destroyed in the most shameful way. Let them learn that they are non-Greeks who have plotted the murder of Greek men."

9.18 That was his exhortation. The horsemen surrounded them and rode at them as if to destroy them. They drew back their weapons as if to throw them, and perhaps someone actually threw. The Phocians stood facing them on every side, closing

ranks and packing themselves together as tightly as they could. At that the horsemen wheeled around and rode back. [2] I cannot say for certain which it was. Perhaps they came to destroy the Phocians at the Thessalians' request, but when they saw them turn to defend themselves, they rode back for fear of being wounded themselves, since that was what Mardonius had ordered them to do. Or perhaps he wanted to test whether the Phocians had any courage in them. [3] When the horsemen had ridden back, Mardonius sent a herald, who said this: "Take heart, Phocians. You have shown yourselves to be brave men, not what I was told you were. Now carry on this war with spirit, for you will not outdo either me or the King in kindness." That is how matters went with the Phocians.

THE ROAD TO PLATAEA

The Greeks take position near Plataea, kill the Persian cavalry commander Masistius, and wait for favorable omens.

9.19 When the Lacedaemonians reached the Isthmus, they encamped there. Those of the other Peloponnesians who favored the better cause heard of this, and some of them also saw the Spartans marching out. They did not think it right to stay behind when the Lacedaemonians took the field. [2] So when the sacrifices proved favorable, they all marched from the Isthmus and came to Eleusis. There too they sacrificed, and when the omens were favorable they went on, and the Athenians with them, who had crossed over from Salamis and joined them at Eleusis. [3] When they reached Erythrae in Boeotia, they learned that the foreign army was encamped on the Asopus. Taking note of this, they drew up facing it on the foothills of Cithaeron.

9.20 When the Greeks did not come down into the plain, Mardonius sent his whole cavalry against them. Its commander was Masistius, a man highly regarded among the Persians, whom the Greeks call Macistius. He rode a Nesaean horse with a golden bridle, splendidly adorned in other ways too. The horsemen rode up to the Greeks and attacked them squadron by squadron.

In their attacks they did great harm, and they called the Greeks women.[12]

9.21 As it happened, the Megarians had been posted at the most vulnerable point of the whole position, where the cavalry could most easily approach. So, hard pressed by the cavalry's attacks, the Megarians sent a herald to the Greek generals. When the herald came to them he said this: 2 "The Megarians say: 'Allies, we are not able to withstand the Persian cavalry alone, holding the position where we were first posted. So far we have held out by perseverance and courage, hard pressed though we are. And now, if you do not send others to relieve us at our post, know that we will abandon it.'" 3 So he delivered this message to them. Pausanias then sounded out the Greeks to see whether any others would volunteer to go to that position and take the Megarians' place. When the others were unwilling, the Athenians undertook it: the three hundred picked men of the Athenians, commanded by Olympiodorus son of Lampon.

9.22 These were the men who took on the task. They were also the ones who had been posted at Erythrae in front of the rest of the Greeks present, and they had taken the archers along with them. They fought for some time, and the battle ended like this. As the cavalry attacked in squadrons, Masistius' horse, which was out ahead of the others, was hit in the flank by an arrow. In pain, it reared up and threw Masistius. 2 As he fell, the Athenians were on him at once. They seized his horse and killed him as he defended himself, though at first they could not manage it, because of the way he was equipped. Underneath he wore a golden breastplate of scales, and over the breastplate he had put on a purple tunic.[13] They struck at the breastplate but achieved nothing, until someone realized what was happening and stabbed him in the eye. Only then did he fall and die. 3 Somehow all this escaped the notice of the other horsemen. They had not seen him fall from his horse or die, and because they were with-

12 Nesaean horses, bred on a plain in Media, were the most prized horses in the Persian empire.

13 Erythrae: a small town in Boeotia at the foot of Mount Cithaeron, near Plataea.

drawing and wheeling round, they did not realize what had happened. But once they had halted, they missed him at once, because there was no one giving them orders. When they learned what had happened, they urged one another on and all drove their horses forward to recover the body.

9.23 When the Athenians saw that the horsemen were no longer charging in squadrons but all together, they shouted to the rest of the army for help. While the whole infantry was coming to their aid, a fierce fight broke out over the body. 2 As long as the three hundred were on their own, they were getting much the worse of it and were giving up the body. But when the main force came to their aid, the horsemen no longer held their ground, and they did not manage to recover the body. Instead, they lost other horsemen as well as him. So they drew back about two stades and discussed what they ought to do. Since they had no commander, they decided to ride back to Mardonius.

9.24 When the cavalry reached the camp, the whole army and Mardonius mourned Masistius very greatly. They shaved their own heads and the manes of their horses and pack animals, and lamented without end. The sound filled all Boeotia, for the man who had died was, after Mardonius at least, the most highly regarded among the Persians and by the King.

9.25 So the foreigners honored the dead Masistius after their own fashion. The Greeks had withstood the cavalry's attack and driven it back, and they took heart far more than before. First they put the body on a cart and carried it along the lines. The body was worth seeing for its size and its beauty, and that was exactly why they did this. Men kept leaving their ranks and coming to look at Masistius. 2 After this they decided to move down to Plataea. The country around Plataea seemed much better suited for a camp than the country around Erythrae, for other reasons and because it was better watered. They decided they should go to this area and to the spring of Gargaphia there, and make camp in their assigned positions. 3 So they took up their arms and went along the foothills of Cithaeron, past Hysiae, into

the territory of Plataea. On arriving there they formed up by nations near the spring of Gargaphia and the precinct of the hero Androcrates, across low hills and level ground.[14]

9.26 There, while the line was being arranged, the Tegeans and the Athenians jostled each other with many words. Each side claimed the right to hold the other wing, and each cited deeds both recent and old. The Tegeans spoke as follows. 2 "All the allies have always judged us worthy of this position. That has been so in every joint expedition the Peloponnesians have ever made, in old times and recent ones, ever since the Heraclidae tried to return to the Peloponnese after the death of Eurystheus. 3 We won it then because of the following event.[15] Together with the Achaeans and the Ionians who were then in the Peloponnese, we marched out to the Isthmus and took up position facing those who were trying to return. At that point, so the story goes, Hyllus declared that the two armies ought not to risk everything by engaging each other. Instead, the Peloponnesian army should choose whichever of their own men they judged the best, and that man should fight him in single combat on agreed terms. 4 The Peloponnesians decided this should be done, and they swore an oath on these terms. If Hyllus defeated the Peloponnesians' leader, the Heraclidae would return to their ancestral lands. If he was defeated, the Heraclidae would instead depart, lead their army away, and not seek to return to the Peloponnese for a hundred years.[16] 5 Out of all the allies, Echemus son of Aeropus son of Phegeus, who was our general and our king, volunteered and was chosen. He fought the single combat and killed Hyllus. Because of this deed, the Peloponnesians of that time granted us other great privileges as well, which we still hold. Among them is the right always to lead the other wing whenever a joint expedition takes place. 6 Now, Lacedaemonians, we don't dispute anything with you. We give

14 Cithaeron: the mountain range between Attica and Boeotia.
15 In legend the Heraclidae, descendants of Heracles, were driven from the Peloponnese by Eurystheus, king of Mycenae, and later returned to conquer it.
16 Hyllus: a son of Heracles and leader of the Heraclidae.

you the choice of whichever wing you wish to command, and we yield it to you. But we say that leading the other wing falls to us, just as it did in the past. And apart from the deed we've just described, we have a better claim than the Athenians to hold this position. [7] We've fought many contests against you, men of Sparta, and fought them well, and many against others too. So it is right for us to hold the other wing rather than the Athenians. They have done no deeds like ours, either recent or old."

[9.27] That is what the Tegeans said, and the Athenians answered as follows. "We know that this gathering was assembled to fight the foreigner, not to make speeches. But since the man from Tegea has proposed that each side recite the good deeds, old and new, it has done in all of time, we have no choice but to show you why it is our inherited right, as men who have always been brave, to hold first place rather than the Arcadians. [2] Take the Heraclidae, whose leader these men say they killed at the Isthmus. Earlier, they had been driven away by all the Greeks they came to as they fled slavery under the Mycenaeans. We alone took them in. We put down the outrage of Eurystheus, and together with the Heraclidae we defeated in battle the people who then held the Peloponnese. [3] Take also the Argives who marched with Polynices against Thebes. When they had ended their lives and were lying unburied, we say that we marched against the Cadmeans, recovered the bodies, and buried them in our own land at Eleusis. [4] We also have a fine deed to our credit against the Amazons, who once came from the river Thermodon and invaded Attica. And in the labors at Troy we were second to none. But there's no advantage in recalling these things. Those who were brave then might be worse now, and those who were poor fighters then might be better now. [5] So, enough of old deeds.[17] We have done many fine deeds, as many as any other Greeks. But even if we had nothing else to show, the deed at Marathon alone would make us worthy of this privilege, and of others besides. We alone of the Greeks fought the Persian single-

17 In legend Polynices led an Argive army, the Seven against Thebes, against his brother. "Cadmeans" is an old name for the Thebans.

handed. We took on so great a task, came through it, and defeated forty-six nations. [6] Don't we deserve to hold this position for that deed alone? But at a moment like this it isn't right to quarrel over position. So we're ready to obey you, Lacedaemonians, wherever you think it best for us to stand and whomever you want us to face. Wherever we're posted, we'll try to be brave. Lead on, knowing that we'll obey."

9.28 That was their reply. The whole army of the Lacedaemonians shouted that the Athenians had a better claim to hold the wing than the Arcadians. So the Athenians got it and prevailed over the Tegeans. [2] After this, the Greeks who kept arriving and those who had come at the start were drawn up as follows. The right wing was held by ten thousand Lacedaemonians. Five thousand of these were Spartans, and they were guarded by thirty-five thousand light-armed helots, seven posted around each man. [3] The Spartans chose the Tegeans to stand next to them, both to honor them and for their excellence. There were fifteen hundred Tegean hoplites. After them stood five thousand Corinthians, who asked Pausanias to let the three hundred Potidaeans from Pallene who were present stand beside them, and he agreed. [4] Next to these stood six hundred Arcadians from Orchomenus, and next to them three thousand Sicyonians. Next came eight hundred Epidaurians. Beside them were posted a thousand Troezenians. Next to the Troezenians were two hundred Lepreans, then four hundred men from Mycenae and Tiryns, and next to them a thousand Phliasians. Beside these stood three hundred Hermionians. [5] Next to the Hermionians stood six hundred Eretrians and Styrians, then four hundred Chalcidians, then five hundred Ambraciots. After them stood eight hundred Leucadians and Anactorians, and next to them two hundred Paleans from Cephallenia. [6] After these were posted five hundred Aeginetans. Beside them were posted three thousand Megarians, and next to them six hundred Plataeans. Last—and first—were the Athenians, eight thousand of them, holding the left wing. Their general was Aristides son of Lysimachus.

9.29 All these, except the seven posted around each Spartan, were hoplites, and their total number was thirty-eight thousand seven hundred. That was the full count of hoplites gathered against the foreigner. The light-armed troops numbered as follows. In the Spartan contingent there were thirty-five thousand men, since there were seven around each man, and every one of them was equipped for war. 2 The light-armed troops of the rest of the Lacedaemonians and Greeks, one for each man, numbered thirty-four thousand five hundred.

9.30 So the light-armed fighting men numbered sixty-nine thousand five hundred in all. The entire Greek force gathered at Plataea, hoplites and light-armed fighting men together, came to one thousand eight hundred men short of a hundred and ten thousand. With the Thespians who were there, the hundred and ten thousand was made up. The surviving Thespians were also in the camp, about eighteen hundred of them, but they did not have heavy armor either. These, then, were drawn up and encamped on the Asopus.[18]

9.31 When the foreign army with Mardonius had finished mourning Masistius, they learned that the Greeks were at Plataea, and they too came to the Asopus, which flows there. When they arrived, Mardonius drew them up facing the Greeks as follows. Opposite the Lacedaemonians he placed the Persians. 2 Because the Persians far outnumbered them, they were drawn up in more ranks and stretched far enough to face the Tegeans as well. He arranged them this way: he picked out all the strongest part of them and posted it opposite the Lacedaemonians, and set the weaker part alongside to face the Tegeans. He did this on the advice and instruction of the Thebans. 3 Next to the Persians he posted the Medes, who faced the Corinthians, Potidaeans, Orchomenians and Sicyonians. Next to the Medes he posted the Bactrians, who faced the Epidaurians, Troezenians, Lepreans, Tirynthians, Mycenaeans and Phliasians. 4 After the Bactrians he placed the Indians, who faced the Hermionians,

18 Thespiae, a town in Boeotia, had lost its whole contingent at Thermopylae, and Xerxes had burned the town.

Eretrians, Styrians and Chalcidians. Next to the Indians he posted the Sacae, who faced the Ambraciots, Anactorians, Leucadians, Paleans and Aeginetans.[19] 5 Next to the Sacae, facing the Athenians, Plataeans and Megarians, he posted the Boeotians, Locrians, Malians and Thessalians, and the thousand Phocians. Not all the Phocians had sided with the Persians. Some of them had been penned in around Parnassus and were supporting the Greek cause. From there they made raids and plundered both Mardonius' army and the Greeks who were with him. He also posted the Macedonians and the peoples living around Thessaly opposite the Athenians.

9.32 These are the greatest of the nations Mardonius drew up, the ones that were most conspicuous and of most account. But men of other nations were mixed in among them as well: Phrygians, Thracians, Mysians, Paeonians and the rest. Among them too were Ethiopians, and the Egyptians called Hermotybies and Calasiries, who carry swords and are the only fighting men among the Egyptians.[20] 2 Mardonius had taken these men off the ships while he was still at Phalerum, for they were serving as marines. The Egyptians had not been assigned to the land army that came with Xerxes to Athens. The non-Greeks numbered three hundred thousand, as has been shown before. As for Mardonius' Greek allies, nobody knows their number, because they were not counted. But to make a guess, I estimate that about fifty thousand were gathered. These troops drawn up in the line were infantry. The cavalry was posted separately.[21]

9.33 When everyone had been drawn up by nations and by divisions, both sides offered sacrifice on the following day. For the Greeks, the man who sacrificed was Tisamenus son of Antiochus, since he was the seer who accompanied this army. He was from Elis and of the clan of the Iamidae [a Clytiad], and the Lacedaemonians had made him one of their own people. 2 When

19 Sacae: a Scythian people of Central Asia.
20 The Hermotybies and Calasiries were the two hereditary warrior classes of Egypt, described by Herodotus in Book 2.
21 Phalerum: the old harbor of Athens.

Tisamenus consulted the oracle at Delphi about having children, the Pythia answered that he would win the five greatest contests. He missed the meaning of the oracle and took up athletics, thinking he would win athletic contests. Training for the pentathlon, he came within one wrestling bout of an Olympic victory, in a contest against Hieronymus of Andros.[22] 3 But the Lacedaemonians realized that Tisamenus' oracle referred not to athletic contests but to contests of war. So they offered him payment and tried to persuade him to become a leader in their wars together with their kings, who were descended from Heracles. 4 Tisamenus saw how much the Spartans wanted to make him their friend, and once he realized this he raised his price. He let them know that he would do it if they made him a citizen of theirs with a share in everything, but not for any other payment. 5 When the Spartans heard this, they were at first outraged and dropped their request entirely. But in the end, with the great fear of this Persian army hanging over them, they went back to him and agreed. Seeing that they had changed their minds, he said that even this was no longer enough for him. His brother Hegias must also become a Spartan, on the same terms as he himself.

9.34 In saying this he was imitating Melampus, so far as one can compare a man asking for a kingship with a man asking for citizenship. Melampus too was approached when the women in Argos had gone mad. The Argives tried to hire him from Pylos to cure their women of the disease, and he demanded half the kingship as his fee. 2 The Argives would not put up with this and went away. But when more of their women went mad, they accepted Melampus' terms and came back to give him what he had asked. Then, seeing that they had changed their minds, he reached for more. Unless they also gave his brother Bias a third of the kingship, he said, he would not do what they wanted. The Argives were driven into a corner and agreed to this too.[23]

22 The Pythia was Apollo's priestess at Delphi. The Iamidae were a hereditary family of seers at Olympia in Elis.

23 Melampus: a legendary seer and healer.

9.35 So too the Spartans, who needed Tisamenus desperately, gave in to him completely. When the Spartans had conceded this point as well, Tisamenus of Elis became a Spartan, and as their seer he helped them win the five greatest contests. These two were the only men in the world whom the Spartans ever made their citizens. 2 The five contests were these. The first was this one at Plataea. Next came the battle at Tegea against the Tegeans and Argives, then the one at Dipaea against all the Arcadians except the Mantineans, and next the one against the Messenians at Ithome. The last was the battle at Tanagra against the Athenians and Argives, and this was the last of the five contests to be won.[24]

9.36 It was this Tisamenus, then, brought along by the Spartans, who was now acting as seer for the Greeks in the territory of Plataea. For the Greeks the sacrifices were favorable if they stayed on the defensive, but not if they crossed the Asopus and started the battle.

9.37 Mardonius was eager to start the battle, but the sacrifices were not favorable for that. For him too they were favorable if he stayed on the defensive. He also used Greek sacrifices, and his seer was Hegesistratus, a man of Elis and the most distinguished of the Telliadae. Some time before these events the Spartans had caught this man and put him in bonds to be executed, because they had suffered many outrageous injuries from him. 2 Trapped in this plight, running a race for his life and facing much suffering before his death, he did something beyond words. He was held fast in wooden stocks bound with iron. Somehow a piece of iron had been brought in, and he got hold of it. At once he devised the bravest deed of any we know of. He measured how the rest of his foot could be got out, and cut off the front part of his own foot. 3 When he had done this, since guards were watching him, he dug through the wall and escaped to Tegea. He traveled by night, and by day he slipped into the woods and rested there. The Lacedaemonians searched for him

24 The later four battles were fought in the decades after 479 BC; Tanagra was fought in 457 BC.

in full force, but he reached Tegea on the third night. They were left in great amazement at his daring, seeing half of his foot lying there and yet unable to find him. [4] So at that time he escaped the Lacedaemonians and took refuge in Tegea, which was not on good terms with the Lacedaemonians at that time. When he had recovered and had a wooden foot made for himself, he became an open enemy of the Lacedaemonians. But in the end the hatred he had formed for the Lacedaemonians did him no good. They caught him while he was working as a seer on Zacynthus, and he was put to death.

9.38 Hegesistratus' death, however, came after the events at Plataea. At this time, on the Asopus, he had been hired by Mardonius for no small sum. He was sacrificing eagerly, both out of his hatred for the Lacedaemonians and for profit. [2] But the sacrifices gave no favorable sign for fighting, either for the Persians themselves or for the Greeks who were with them, who had a seer of their own, Hippomachus of Leucas. Meanwhile the Greeks kept streaming in and growing more numerous. So Timagenidas son of Herpys, a Theban, advised Mardonius to guard the passes of Cithaeron. The Greeks, he said, were streaming in continually every day, and he would cut off many of them.

9.39 Eight days had already passed with the two armies encamped facing each other when he gave Mardonius this advice. Mardonius saw that it was good advice, and when night fell he sent his cavalry to the passes of Cithaeron that lead toward Plataea, which the Boeotians call the Three Heads and the Athenians the Oak Heads. The horsemen did not go out for nothing. [2] Just as it was coming down into the plain, they caught a train of five hundred pack animals bringing food from the Peloponnese to the camp, together with the men who were following the teams. Once they had taken this prey, the Persians slaughtered without mercy, sparing neither beast nor man. When they had had their fill of killing, they rounded up the rest and drove them off to Mardonius and the camp.

9.40 After this exploit they spent another two days, neither side wanting to begin the battle. The foreigners advanced as far as

the Asopus to test the Greeks, but neither side crossed. Mardonius' cavalry, though, kept pressing the Greeks and harassing them. The Thebans, who were siding wholeheartedly with the Persians, pursued the war eagerly and kept leading the way right up to the point of fighting. From there the Persians and Medes took over, and it was they above all who showed their excellence.

9.41 For ten days, then, nothing more than this happened. But on the eleventh day since they had taken up position facing each other at Plataea, the Greeks had grown much more numerous and Mardonius was thoroughly vexed at the delay. Then Mardonius son of Gobryas and Artabazus son of Pharnaces, one of the few Persians held in high esteem by Xerxes, conferred together. 2 In their deliberations these were the opinions put forward. Artabazus' view was that they ought to break camp as quickly as possible and take the whole army to the walled town of the Thebans. Plenty of grain had been brought in there for them, he said, and fodder for the pack animals, and they could sit there at their ease and get the business done by doing the following: 3 they had a great deal of gold, both coined and uncoined, and a great deal of silver and drinking cups. They should spare none of it but send it around to the Greeks, above all to the leading men in the cities, and the Greeks would quickly surrender their freedom. They should not run the risk of another battle. 4 The Thebans held the same view as he did, on the grounds that he too had some foreknowledge. Mardonius' opinion was more forceful, more headstrong, and in no way yielding. He thought their army much stronger than the Greek one, and that they should engage as quickly as possible and not stand by while still more men gathered than had gathered already. They should let Hegesistratus' sacrifices be and not try to force them, but follow the Persian custom and engage.

9.42 When he argued this way, no one spoke against him, so his opinion prevailed; for it was he, not Artabazus, who held command of the army from the King. So he summoned the commanders of the divisions and the generals of the Greeks who

were with him, and asked whether they knew any prophecy saying that the Persians would be destroyed in Greece. [2] The men summoned kept silent, some because they did not know the oracles, others because they knew them but did not think it safe to speak. So Mardonius himself said, "Well, since you either know nothing or don't dare to say, I'll tell you myself, since I know it well: [3] there is a prophecy that the Persians are fated to come to Greece and plunder the sanctuary at Delphi, and after the plundering all perish. Now we know exactly that, so we will neither march against this sanctuary nor try to plunder it, and for that reason we will not perish. [4] So those of you who happen to be well disposed toward the Persians, be glad on this account, since we shall overcome the Greeks." After saying this, he next gave orders to get everything ready and in good order, since battle would be joined at daybreak the next day.

9.43 As for this oracle, which Mardonius said referred to the Persians, I know that it was composed about the Illyrians and the army of the Encheleis, not about the Persians. But as for the verses Bacis composed about this battle, [2] "the gathering of Greeks by the Thermodon and the grassy Asopus,
and the cry of foreign tongues,
where many will fall, ahead of their lot and doom,
of the bow-bearing Medes, when the fated day arrives"—
these, and others like them by Musaeus, I know refer to the Persians. The river Thermodon flows between Tanagra and Glisas.[25]

9.44 After the questioning about the oracles and Mardonius' exhortation, night came on and the watches were posted. When the night was far advanced, and all seemed quiet throughout the camps and the men were mostly asleep, Alexander son of Amyntas, a general and king of the Macedonians, rode up to the Athenian sentries and asked to speak with their generals. [2] Most

25 Bacis and Musaeus were legendary seers whose collections of oracles circulated widely in Greece.

of the sentries stayed where they were, but some ran to the generals. When they got there, they told them that a man had come on horseback from the camp of the Medes. He would disclose nothing else, they said, but named the generals and said he wanted to speak with them.

9.45 When the generals heard this, they at once followed the men to the sentry posts, and when they arrived Alexander spoke as follows: "Men of Athens, I'm entrusting these words to you for safekeeping, and I bind you to secrecy: tell no one but Pausanias, or you'll be my ruin. I wouldn't be speaking at all if I didn't care deeply for the whole of Greece. 2 I'm a Greek myself by ancient descent, and I wouldn't want to see Greece enslaved instead of free. So I tell you this: Mardonius and his army can't get the sacrifices to come out the way they want. Otherwise you'd have been fighting long ago. Now he has decided to let the sacrifices go and to attack at first light; he's afraid, I suspect, that more of you will gather. Be ready for that. But if Mardonius does put off the attack and doesn't make it, hold out and stay where you are, since they have only a few days' food left. 3 If this war ends as you'd wish, someone must remember me too and see to my freedom, since for the sake of the Greeks I've done something this reckless out of goodwill, wanting to show you what Mardonius has in mind, so that the foreigners don't fall on you suddenly while you're not yet expecting them. I am Alexander the Macedonian." With that he rode back to the camp and his own post.

9.46 The Athenian generals went to the right wing and told Pausanias what they had heard from Alexander. This news made him afraid of the Persians, and he said: 2 "Since the battle is coming at dawn, you Athenians should take position facing the Persians, and we facing the Boeotians and the Greeks posted opposite you. Here's why: you know the Medes and how they fight, because you fought them at Marathon, but we have no experience or knowledge of these men. Not one Spartan has ever tested himself against the Medes. Boeotians and Thessalians, though, we do have experience of. 3 So you should take up

your arms and move to this wing, and we'll go to the left." To this the Athenians replied: "We ourselves had it in mind from the very beginning, ever since we saw the Persians being posted opposite you, to propose exactly what you've now put forward first. But we were afraid the proposal might not please you. Since you've raised it yourselves, we're glad to hear it and ready to do it."

9.47 Since this satisfied both sides, they began exchanging positions just as dawn was breaking. The Boeotians noticed what was happening and reported it to Mardonius. When he heard it, he at once tried to shift his own lines too, bringing the Persians over opposite the Lacedaemonians. When Pausanias learned that this was happening, he realized that he had not escaped notice and led the Spartans back to the right wing; and Mardonius likewise moved back to the left.

9.48 When they had returned to their original positions, Mardonius sent a herald to the Spartans with this message: "Lacedaemonians, the people here say you are the best of men. They marvel that you never run from war or leave your post, but stand fast and either destroy your enemies or are destroyed yourselves. 2 None of that, it turns out, was true. Before we even met and came to blows, we saw you running away and leaving your post, making the Athenians take the first test of us and posting yourselves opposite our slaves. 3 These are not at all the deeds of brave men. We were very badly mistaken in you. Going by your reputation, we expected you to send us a herald with a challenge, wanting to fight the Persians alone. We were ready to do that, but we found you saying nothing of the kind—cowering instead. So now, since you didn't start this proposal, we will. 4 Why don't we fight, you on behalf of the Greeks, since you are reputed to be the best, and we on behalf of the non-Greeks, equal numbers against equal numbers? If it's thought right that the others should fight too, then let them fight afterward. But if it isn't, and we alone are thought enough, then we'll fight it out to the end, and whichever of us wins, let that side count as the victor for the whole army."

9.49 After saying this, the herald waited a while, and when no one gave him any answer he went back and reported to Mardonius what had happened. Mardonius was overjoyed, and, elated by this hollow victory, he sent his cavalry against the Greeks. 2 The horsemen rode in and did damage to the whole Greek army with their javelins and arrows, since they were mounted archers and hard to come to grips with. They also fouled and blocked up the spring of Gargaphia, from which the whole Greek army drew its water. 3 Only the Lacedaemonians were posted by the spring. For the other Greeks the spring was some way off, depending on where each contingent happened to be posted, and the Asopus was close. But since they were kept away from the Asopus, they would go to the spring instead; they could not fetch water from the river because of the horsemen and their arrows.

9.50 With things in this state, since the army had been cut off from water and was being harassed by the cavalry, the Greek generals gathered to discuss these and other matters, going to Pausanias on the right wing. For bad as this was, other things troubled them more. They had no food left, and their attendants, who had been sent off to the Peloponnese to bring in provisions, had been cut off by the cavalry and could not get to the camp.

9.51 In their deliberations the generals decided that if the Persians let that day go by without engaging, they would move to the Island. This lies ten stades from the Asopus and the spring of Gargaphia, where they were then encamped, in front of the town of Plataea. 2 It is an island on dry land, in this sense: the river splits as it flows down from Cithaeron into the plain, its channels about three stades apart, and then joins again into one. The river's name is Oeroë, 3 and the local people say she is a daughter of Asopus. It was to this place, then, that they decided to move, so that they would have plenty of water to use and the horsemen would not harm them as they did while the two armies faced each other directly. They decided to move at the second watch of the night, so that the Persians would not see them setting out and the horsemen would not follow and harass

them. [4] Once they had reached this place, around which Oeroë, daughter of Asopus, divides as she flows from Cithaeron, they decided to send half the army that night to Cithaeron to bring back the attendants who had gone for the food, since they were cut off on Cithaeron.

9.52 Having made these decisions, they spent that whole day under relentless pressure from the cavalry. But when the day was ending and the horsemen had stopped, and night had come and the hour agreed for their departure had arrived, most of them set off and left—with no intention, though, of going to the place agreed. Once they were on the move, they gladly fled from the cavalry toward the town of Plataea, and in their flight they came to the Heraeum. This lies in front of the town of Plataea, twenty stades from the spring of Gargaphia. When they got there, they grounded their arms in front of the temple.[26]

AMOMPHARETUS

In a night withdrawal, a Spartan captain refuses to retreat, and dawn finds the Greek army divided.

9.53 So these men encamped around the Heraeum. Pausanias, seeing them leaving the camp, ordered the Lacedaemonians too to take up their arms and follow the others who were moving off, supposing that they were going to the place agreed. [2] At this point all the other commanders were ready to obey Pausanias, but Amompharetus son of Poliades, captain of the Pitanate company, said that he would not run from the strangers or willingly bring disgrace on Sparta. He was astonished at what he saw being done, since he had not been present at the earlier discussion.[27] [3] Pausanias and Euryanax thought it bad that he would not obey them, but still worse, since he refused, to abandon the Pitanate company. They were afraid that if they left it behind to carry out what they had agreed with the other Greeks, Amom-

26 The Heraeum was a sanctuary of Hera.

27 Pitana was one of the villages that made up the city of Sparta; the company was named after it.

pharetus himself and his men would be left behind and destroyed. [4] With this in mind they kept the Laconian army where it was and tried to persuade him that he should not act this way.

9.54 While they were pleading with Amompharetus, who alone of the Lacedaemonians and Tegeans was being left behind, the Athenians did as follows. They kept still where they had been posted, knowing the Lacedaemonian temperament: they think one thing and say another. [2] When the army began to move, they sent one of their horsemen to see whether the Spartans were attempting to march or whether they had no intention of leaving at all, and to ask Pausanias what they should do.

9.55 When the herald reached the Lacedaemonians, he saw them drawn up in their place and their leaders fallen into a quarrel. For although Euryanax and Pausanias kept urging Amompharetus not to run the risk of staying there, his men alone of the Lacedaemonians, they could not persuade him at all. In the end they had come to an open quarrel, just as the Athenian herald arrived and stood beside them. [2] In the middle of the quarrel Amompharetus picked up a rock with both hands, set it down at Pausanias' feet, and said that with this pebble he was casting his vote not to run from the strangers—meaning the non-Greeks. Pausanias called him a madman out of his senses. Then, when the Athenian herald asked the question he had been told to ask, Pausanias told him to report how things stood with them, and asked the Athenians to come over and join them and to do as they did about the retreat.[28]

9.56 So the herald went back to the Athenians. When dawn found the Spartans still arguing among themselves, Pausanias, who had held back all this time, and who did not think Amompharetus would stay behind if the rest of the Lacedaemonians marched off—as in fact happened—gave the signal and led all the rest away across the hills; the Tegeans followed too. [2] The Athenians, drawn up in order, went the opposite way from the Lacedaemonians. The Lacedaemonians kept to the ridges and

28 Greeks voted by casting pebbles, so Amompharetus' rock is an outsized ballot.

the foothills of Cithaeron for fear of the cavalry, while the Athenians turned downward into the plain.

9.57 Amompharetus at first never believed that Pausanias would dare to leave them, and he insisted that they stay where they were and not abandon their post. But when Pausanias' men moved on ahead, he concluded that they were truly leaving him, so he had his company take up their arms and led them at a walk toward the main body. 2 That force, after going about ten stades, was waiting for Amompharetus' company, halted by the river Moloeis at a place called Argiopius, where there is also a sanctuary of Eleusinian Demeter. It waited for this reason: if Amompharetus and his company did not leave the place where they had been posted but stayed there, it could go back to help them. 3 Amompharetus' men were just joining them when the whole foreign cavalry came pressing at them. The horsemen were doing what they always did, and when they saw empty the place where the Greeks had been posted on the previous days, they kept riding forward, and as soon as they caught up they fell upon them.

9.58 When Mardonius learned that the Greeks had gone off during the night and saw the place deserted, he summoned Thorax of Larissa and his brothers Eurypylus and Thrasydeius and said: 2 "Sons of Aleuas, what will you say now, when you see this place deserted? You, their neighbors, kept saying that the Lacedaemonians don't run from battle but are the foremost men in war. Yet earlier you saw them shifting from their post, and now we can all see that they ran off during the night just past. Now that they had to settle things in battle against those who are truly the best of men, they have shown that they are nobodies, who were making a show among Greeks who are nobodies too.[29] 3 For my part, I was quite ready to forgive you, since you had no experience of the Persians and were praising men you knew something about. But I was even more amazed at Artabazus, that he should be afraid of the Lacedaemonians and, in his fear, should put forward the most cowardly of opinions: that we ought to break

29 The Aleuadae, the leading family of Larissa in Thessaly, had sided with Xerxes.

camp and go to the town of Thebes, to be besieged there. The King will hear about that opinion from me. [4] But that will be discussed elsewhere. Right now we mustn't let them get away with this. We must pursue them until we catch them and they pay us the penalty for everything they have done to the Persians."

THE BATTLE OF PLATAEA

Mardonius attacks the separated Spartans and Tegeans, who rout the Persians and kill Mardonius.

9.59 With these words he led the Persians at a run across the Asopus, on the track of the Greeks, as though they really were running away. He made for the Lacedaemonians and Tegeans alone, because the Athenians had turned off into the plain and the hills hid them from his view. [2] When the commanders of the remaining foreign divisions saw the Persians set off in pursuit of the Greeks, they all at once raised their standards and gave chase, each as fast as his legs would carry him, in no order at all and in no formation.

9.60 These came on with shouting, in a mob, as if to snatch up the Greeks then and there. Pausanias, since the cavalry was pressing him hard, sent a horseman to the Athenians with this message: "Men of Athens, with the greatest of contests before us, whether Greece is to be free or enslaved, we Lacedaemonians and you Athenians have been betrayed by our allies, who ran off during the night just past. [2] So what we must do from here on has been decided for us: we must defend ourselves as best we can and protect one another. If the cavalry had attacked you first, it would have been our duty, ours and that of the Tegeans who are with us and are not betraying Greece, to come to your help. But as it is, since its whole force has come at us, it is right for you to come to the aid of the division that is under the heaviest pressure. [3] And if something has happened to you yourselves that makes it impossible to help, then do us the favor of sending us your archers. We know that you have been by far

the most zealous of all in this present war, so we know you'll listen to this request too."

9.61 When the Athenians heard this, they set out to help and to give all the support they could. But while they were already on the march they were attacked by the Greeks on the King's side who had been posted opposite them, so that they could no longer go to help; the force bearing down on them was giving them trouble. 2 So the Lacedaemonians and Tegeans were left on their own. Counting the light-armed troops, the Lacedaemonians numbered fifty thousand and the Tegeans three thousand (the Tegeans never separated themselves from the Lacedaemonians). They began to sacrifice, intending to engage Mardonius and the army facing them. 3 But the sacrifices did not turn out favorable for them, and meanwhile many of them were falling and far more being wounded. The Persians had set up their wicker shields as a barricade and were letting fly their arrows in great numbers and unsparingly. So, with the Spartans hard pressed and the sacrifices not coming out right, Pausanias looked toward the temple of Hera at Plataea and called on the goddess, praying that they might in no way be cheated of their hope.

9.62 While he was still in the middle of this prayer, the Tegeans rose up first, ahead of the rest, and advanced against the foreigners; and immediately after Pausanias' prayer the sacrifices of the Lacedaemonians turned out favorable. When at last that happened, they too advanced against the Persians, and the Persians, dropping their bows, came to meet them. 2 First there was a fight around the wicker shields. When these had been knocked down, a fierce battle followed right beside the sanctuary of Demeter, and it went on for a long time, until it came to close-quarters shoving; for the foreigners kept seizing the spears and breaking them. 3 In spirit and strength the Persians were not inferior, but they had no armor, and besides they were untrained and no match for their opponents in skill. Dashing out ahead singly or in tens, or clustering together in larger and

smaller groups, they would throw themselves on the Spartans and be cut down.

9.63 Where Mardonius himself happened to be, fighting from a white horse with the thousand best picked men of the Persians around him, there they also pressed their opponents hardest. As long as Mardonius was alive, they held out, defending themselves and bringing down many of the Lacedaemonians. 2 But when Mardonius died and the troops ranged around him, the strongest part of the army, had fallen, then at last the others too turned and gave way before the Lacedaemonians. What hurt them most was their clothing, which had no armor to it: they were unprotected men fighting against hoplites.

9.64 Then the satisfaction for Leonidas was paid to the Spartans by Mardonius, as the oracle had said, and Pausanias son of Cleombrotus son of Anaxandridas won the finest victory of all that we know of. 2 The names of his more distant ancestors have been given in the account of Leonidas, since they happen to be the same for both. Mardonius was killed by Aeimnestus, a man of note in Sparta. Long afterward, after the Persian Wars, this Aeimnestus, with three hundred men, fought at Stenyclerus against the whole Messenian people, when there was a war, and was killed himself together with the three hundred.[30]

9.65 At Plataea the Persians, once routed by the Lacedaemonians, fled in no order to their own camp and to the wooden fortification they had built in Theban territory. 2 It amazes me that, although the fighting was beside the grove of Demeter, not a single Persian was seen to have entered the sacred precinct or to have died inside it, while most of them fell around the sanctuary on unconsecrated ground. My opinion, if one should hold opinions about divine matters at all, is that the goddess herself would not receive them, because they had burned her temple, the shrine at Eleusis.[31]

30 Delphi had told the Spartans to demand satisfaction from Xerxes for the death of Leonidas; Xerxes had mockingly pointed to Mardonius (8.114).

31 Eleusis, near Athens, was Demeter's chief sanctuary; the Persians had burned it in 480 BC.

9.66 So far the battle went. Artabazus son of Pharnaces had been displeased right from the start, when Mardonius was left behind by the King, and now, though he had protested a great deal and tried to prevent an engagement, he had achieved nothing. So, being displeased with what Mardonius was doing, he himself acted as follows. 2 He had under his command a force that was no small one, as many as forty thousand men around him. When the engagement began, knowing full well how the battle was going to turn out, he led these men in good order, having instructed them all to go together wherever he led them, at whatever speed they saw him going. 3 After giving these orders he led out his army, supposedly to battle. But as he went ahead on the road he saw the Persians already in flight. At that he no longer led his men in the same order, but took off at a run as fast as he could, fleeing neither to the wooden fortification nor to the walls of Thebes but to Phocis, because he wanted to reach the Hellespont as quickly as possible.

9.67 So these men turned that way. Of the other Greeks on the King's side, who were deliberately fighting badly, the Boeotians fought the Athenians for quite a long time. Those of the Thebans who sided with the Persians showed no little zeal, fighting hard and not holding back, so much so that three hundred of their foremost and best men fell there at the hands of the Athenians. When these too were routed, they fled to Thebes—not the way the Persians fled, and the whole mob of the other allies, who fled without having fought it out with anyone or done anything worth showing.

9.68 To me this makes it clear that the whole fortunes of the foreign side hung on the Persians, if even then those men fled before they had so much as come to grips with the enemy, simply because they saw the Persians fleeing too. So everyone fled except the cavalry, the Boeotian as well as the rest. That much help, at least, the cavalry gave the fugitives: it kept always closest to the enemy and screened its friends from the Greeks as they fled.

9.69 The victors followed, pursuing and slaughtering Xerxes' men. In the midst of this rout, word reached the other Greeks, who were posted around the temple of Hera and had stayed out of the battle, that a battle had been fought and that Pausanias' men were winning. When they heard this, they set off without forming any order: those around the Corinthians went along the foothills and the hillocks by the road leading straight up to the sanctuary of Demeter, and those around the Megarians and Phliasians went across the plain by the smoothest of the roads. 2 When the Megarians and Phliasians got near the enemy, the Theban horsemen, commanded by Asopodorus son of Timander, caught sight of them hurrying along in no order and drove their horses at them. They fell on them, cut down six hundred, and chased the rest and drove them headlong onto Cithaeron.

9.70 These men perished without any glory. The Persians and the rest of the mob, once they had taken refuge in the wooden fortification, managed to get up onto the towers before the Lacedaemonians arrived, and once up there they strengthened the wall as best they could. When the Lacedaemonians came up, a fairly vigorous fight for the wall began. 2 As long as the Athenians were not there, the defenders held them off and had much the better of the Lacedaemonians, since the Lacedaemonians did not know how to fight against walls. But when the Athenians came up, then the fight for the wall became fierce and went on for a long time. In the end, through excellence and persistence, the Athenians got up onto the wall and breached it, and through the breach the Greeks poured in. 3 The first to enter the fortification were the Tegeans, and it was they who plundered Mardonius' tent, taking among other things the manger for his horses, which was made entirely of bronze and well worth seeing. This manger of Mardonius' the Tegeans dedicated in the temple of Athena Alea; everything else they had taken they brought into the common store for the Greeks. 4 Once the wall had fallen, the foreigners no longer formed any compact body, nor did any of them think of resisting; they ran about frantically,

like the terrified men they were, so many tens of thousands of them penned in a small space. [5] The Greeks were able to kill so freely that, of an army of three hundred thousand, less the forty thousand with whom Artabazus fled, not even three thousand of the rest survived. Of the Lacedaemonians from Sparta, ninety-one in all died in the battle; of the Tegeans, sixteen; of the Athenians, fifty-two.

9.71 On the foreign side, the best fighting on foot was done by the Persian infantry, on horseback by the cavalry of the Sacae, and among individual men, it is said, by Mardonius. Among the Greeks, though the Tegeans and Athenians fought well, the Lacedaemonians surpassed them in excellence. [2] I have nothing else to show this by (since all of these defeated the enemy opposite them) except that the Lacedaemonians met the strongest part of the enemy and overcame it. And by far the best man, in our judgment, was Aristodemus, who had been the only one of the three hundred to come back alive from Thermopylae and had been living in disgrace and dishonor. After him the bravest were Posidonius, Philocyon, and Amompharetus the Spartan. [3] Yet when there was a discussion of which of them had been the best, the Spartans who were present judged that Aristodemus, who plainly wanted to die because of the charge hanging over him, had done great deeds in a frenzy, leaving his place in the line, whereas Posidonius had proved a brave man without wanting to die; to that extent, they said, he was the better. [4] But they may also have said this out of envy. All those I have listed, except Aristodemus, were honored among those who died in this battle; Aristodemus, because he wanted to die for the reason already given, was not honored.

9.72 These were the most famous of those at Plataea. For Callicrates died outside the battle. He was the handsomest man who came to the camp of the Greeks of that time, not only of the Lacedaemonians themselves but of the other Greeks too. While Pausanias was sacrificing, Callicrates was sitting at his post in the line when he was wounded in the side by an arrow. [2] So while the others fought, he was carried out of the line, dying a

hard death, and he said to Arimnestus, a Plataean, that he did not mind dying for Greece; what he minded was that he had not used his arm, and had done no deed worthy of himself, though he had longed to do one.

9.73 Among the Athenians, the man said to have won distinction was Sophanes son of Eutychides, from the deme of Decelea —the Deceleans who once did a deed that has been useful for all time, as the Athenians themselves say. 2 Long ago, when the Tyndaridae invaded Attica with a large army to recover Helen and were turning people out of their villages because they did not know where Helen had been hidden away, then, they say, the Deceleans (or, according to others, Decelus himself, angered at Theseus' outrage and fearing for the whole land of Athens) explained the whole matter to them and guided them to Aphidnae, which Titacus, a native of the place, betrayed to the Tyndaridae.[32] 3 Because of this deed, the Deceleans have had, and still have to this day, exemption from dues at Sparta and seats of honor in front. So much so that even in the war fought many years after these events between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians, when the Lacedaemonians were ravaging the rest of Attica, they kept away from Decelea.[33]

9.74 Sophanes was from this deme, and he was the bravest of the Athenians on that occasion. Two different stories are told about him. One is that he wore an iron anchor fastened by a bronze chain to the belt of his breastplate, and whenever he came up close to the enemy he would throw it down, so that the enemy, charging out of their ranks, could not shift him from his position; and when the enemy took to flight, his practice was to pick up the anchor and pursue them that way. 2 That is how the one story goes. The other, which disputes the first, is that he bore an anchor as an emblem on his shield, which he kept con-

32 The Tyndaridae, Castor and Polydeuces, were Helen's brothers; Theseus had carried her off and hidden her at Aphidnae. A deme was a village or district of Attica.

33 The Peloponnesian War, which began in 431 BC.

stantly whirling around and never held still, and that it was not an iron anchor fastened to his breastplate.

9.75 Sophanes performed another brilliant deed as well: when the Athenians were besieging Aegina, he accepted a challenge and killed Eurybates the Argive, a pentathlete. Some time after these events, Sophanes himself, after proving a brave man, met his death while serving as general of the Athenians together with Leagrus son of Glaucon: he was killed by the Edonians at Datum, fighting over the gold mines.[34]

AFTER THE BATTLE

A captive woman from Cos is rescued, Pausanias refuses to mutilate Mardonius' body, and the spoils are divided.

9.76 When the foreigners had been laid low by the Greeks at Plataea, a woman came over to the Greeks of her own accord. She was a concubine of Pharandates son of Teaspis, a Persian, and when she learned that the Persians had been destroyed and the Greeks had won, she decked herself and her maids with a great deal of gold and in the finest clothes they had, got down from her covered carriage, and went toward the Lacedaemonians, who were still busy with the slaughter. Seeing Pausanias directing all of it, and already knowing his name and his country well, since she had often heard them, she recognized him, clasped his knees, and spoke as follows. 2 "King of Sparta, save me, your suppliant, from slavery as a captive. You have already helped me this far by destroying these men, who have no regard for divine powers or for gods. I am from Cos by birth, the daughter of Hegetorides son of Antagoras. The Persian seized me by force on Cos and kept me." He answered her as follows: 3 "Take heart, woman, both as a suppliant and also if, besides that, you are telling the truth and really are the daughter of Hegetorides of Cos, who is my closest guest-friend of all who live in those parts." Having said this, he entrusted her for the time being to

34 The Edonians were a Thracian people; Datum lay on the north Aegean coast near the gold mines of Mount Pangaeum.

the ephors who were present, and later sent her to Aegina, where she herself wanted to go.

9.77 After the woman's arrival, the Mantineans came immediately afterward, when it was all over. When they learned that they had come too late for the battle, they were deeply distressed and said they deserved to be punished. 2 On learning that the Medes with Artabazus were in flight, they set out to pursue them as far as Thessaly, but the Lacedaemonians would not let them pursue fugitives. When they returned to their own country, they banished the leaders of their army from the land. 3 After the Mantineans came the Eleans, and they went away just as distressed as the Mantineans; and these too, once they had gone home, banished their leaders. So much for the Mantineans and the Eleans.

9.78 At Plataea, in the camp of the Aeginetans, was Lampon son of Pytheas, one of the leading men of Aegina. He hurried to Pausanias with a most unholy proposal, and when he arrived he said eagerly: 2 "Son of Cleombrotus, you have done a deed of extraordinary greatness and glory, and heaven has granted you, as the savior of Greece, to win the greatest fame of any Greek we know of. Now do what remains to be done after this, so that your reputation may be greater still, and so that in future any non-Greek will beware of starting reckless outrages against the Greeks. 3 When Leonidas died at Thermopylae, Mardonius and Xerxes cut off his head and stuck it on a stake. If you pay Mardonius back in kind, you'll be praised first by all the Spartans and then by the rest of the Greeks as well; for by impaling Mardonius you'll have taken vengeance for your uncle Leonidas."

9.79 He said this thinking he was doing Pausanias a favor, but Pausanias answered him as follows: "My friend from Aegina, I appreciate your goodwill and your forethought, but you've missed the mark of sound judgment. You've lifted me up high, my country and my deed with me, and then thrown it all down to nothing by advising me to mutilate a corpse and telling me that if I do it, my reputation will be better. That sort of thing suits non-Greeks better than Greeks, 2 and even in them we find

it offensive. For my part, if that's the price, I'd rather not please the Aeginetans or anyone else who likes such things. It's enough for me to please the Spartans by doing what is holy and saying what is holy too. As for Leonidas, whom you urge me to avenge, I say he has been amply avenged: he and the others who died at Thermopylae have been honored by the countless souls of these men here. As for you, don't come to me again with a proposal like this, or give me such advice; and be grateful that you're going away unharmed."

9.80 When he heard this, Lampon went away. Pausanias made a proclamation that no one was to touch the plunder, and ordered the helots to gather the valuables together. They spread out through the camp and found tents fitted out with gold and silver, couches plated with gold and silver, golden mixing bowls, libation bowls and other drinking cups. 2 On the wagons they found sacks, which turned out to contain cauldrons of gold and silver; and from the bodies lying there they stripped bracelets, torques and short swords, which were of gold—no account at all was taken of the embroidered clothing. 3 At that point the helots stole a great deal and sold it to the Aeginetans, though they also handed over a great deal—whatever they could not hide. This was the origin of the great fortunes of the Aeginetans, who bought the gold from the helots as if, so they made out, it were bronze.

9.81 They gathered the valuables together and set aside a tenth for the god at Delphi, from which the golden tripod was dedicated that stands on the three-headed bronze serpent, right next to the altar. They set aside a tenth for the god at Olympia as well, from which they dedicated a bronze Zeus ten cubits high, and for the god at the Isthmus, from which a bronze Poseidon seven cubits high was made. Having set these aside, they divided the rest, and each took what they deserved: the Persians' concubines, the gold and silver, and the other valuables and the pack animals.[35] 2 What special prizes were given to those who had

35 A cubit is about a foot and a half. The bronze serpent column still stands in Istanbul.

been bravest at Plataea, no one says, though I think they too were given some. For Pausanias, ten of everything was set aside and given to him—women, horses, talents, camels—and likewise of all the other goods.[36]

PAUSANIAS' TWO DINNERS

Pausanias contrasts a Persian banquet with a Spartan meal; the Greeks bury their dead and punish Thebes.

9.82 It is also said that the following happened. When Xerxes fled from Greece, he left his own equipment to Mardonius. So when Pausanias saw Mardonius' quarters, furnished with gold and silver and embroidered hangings, he ordered the bakers and the cooks to prepare dinner just as they used to for Mardonius. 2 They did as they were told. Pausanias saw the couches of gold and silver, richly spread, the tables of gold and silver and the magnificent preparations for the meal, and he was astonished at the good things set before him. As a joke, he ordered his own servants to prepare a Laconian dinner.[37] 3 When the meal was ready and the difference between the two was very great, Pausanias laughed and sent for the generals of the Greeks. When they had assembled, he pointed to each of the two dinners and said, "Men of Greece, this is why I have brought you together. I wanted to show you the folly of this leader of the Medes. He lives like this, and he came to us, who live so wretchedly, to take away what we have." This, it is said, is what Pausanias said to the generals of the Greeks.

9.83 Later on, however, many of the Plataeans also found chests of gold and silver and other valuables. 2 Later still, after the flesh had fallen away from the dead bodies, the following also came to light (the Plataeans were collecting the bones in one place). A skull was found that had no suture at all but was made of a single bone. A jaw also turned up whose upper part had all its teeth, front teeth and molars alike, grown together out of a

36 A talent was a large weight of silver, about 57 pounds (26 kg).
37 Laconian means Spartan; Spartan meals were proverbially plain.

single bone. And the bones of a man five cubits tall came to light.[38]

9.84 Mardonius' body had disappeared by the day after the battle. I cannot say for certain who removed it, but I have heard that many people of every kind buried Mardonius, and I know that many received large gifts from Artontes, Mardonius' son, for this deed. 2 Which of them it was, though, who took away and buried Mardonius' body, I cannot find out for certain. Dionysophanes, a man of Ephesus, is also reported to have buried Mardonius. At any rate, that is how he came to be buried.

9.85 When the Greeks at Plataea had divided the spoils, each contingent buried its own dead separately. The Lacedaemonians made three graves. In one they buried the irens, among whom were Posidonius, Amompharetus, Philocyon and Callicrates. 2 So in one of the graves lay the irens, in the second the other Spartans and in the third the helots. That is how the Lacedaemonians buried their dead. The Tegeans buried all theirs together in a grave of their own, the Athenians likewise buried theirs together, and so did the Megarians and Phliasians with their men killed by the cavalry.[39] 3 The graves of all these peoples were full. As for all the other graves that are to be seen at Plataea, I am told that the various peoples, ashamed of having been absent from the battle, each heaped up empty mounds for the sake of later generations. There is even a so-called grave of the Aeginetans there, which I hear was heaped up ten years after these events, at the Aeginetans' request, by Cleades son of Autodicus, a Plataean, who was their proxenos.[40]

9.86 When the Greeks had buried their dead at Plataea, they at once held a council and decided to march against Thebes and demand the surrender of those who had sided with the Persians, first among them Timagenidas and Attaginus, who were among the very foremost leaders. If the Thebans would not hand them

38 Five cubits is roughly 7½ feet.

39 *Irens* seems to be the Spartan term for young men of a certain age-group (some manuscripts read "priests").

40 A proxenus was a citizen who represented and looked after the interests of another city in his own.

over, they would not withdraw from the city until they had taken it. [2] Having decided this, they arrived on the eleventh day after the battle and laid siege to the Thebans, ordering them to hand the men over. When the Thebans refused, they ravaged their land and attacked the wall.

9.87 Since they kept up the damage, on the twentieth day Timagenidas said this to the Thebans: "Men of Thebes, the Greeks have resolved not to raise the siege until they take Thebes or you hand us over to them. So let the land of Boeotia suffer no more on our account. [2] If it's money they want, and their demand for us is just a pretext, let's give them money from the public treasury, for we sided with the Persians together with the whole community, not on our own. But if it really is us they want, and that is why they're besieging the city, we will present ourselves to stand trial." He seemed to speak very well and to the point, and the Thebans at once sent a herald to Pausanias saying they were willing to hand the men over.

9.88 When they had come to terms on this basis, Attaginus slipped away from the town. His sons were brought away, but Pausanias acquitted them, saying that children shared no guilt in collaboration with the Persians. The other men whom the Thebans handed over expected to get a trial, and were confident, of course, that they could buy their way out. But when Pausanias took them over, suspecting exactly this, he dismissed the whole allied army, took the men to Corinth and put them to death. That is what happened at Plataea and Thebes.

9.89 Meanwhile Artabazus son of Pharnaces, fleeing from Plataea, was by now well on his way. When he reached the Thessalians, they invited him to a feast of hospitality and asked about the rest of the army, knowing nothing of what had happened at Plataea. [2] Artabazus realized that if he chose to tell them the whole truth about the fighting, he himself would be in danger of being killed, along with the army he had with him, for he thought that everyone would attack him on learning what had happened. With this in mind, he disclosed nothing to the Phocians, and to the Thessalians he said this: [3] "Men of Thessaly,

as you see, I'm hurrying to Thrace as fast as I can march, and I'm in haste, because I've been sent from the camp with these men on a particular errand. Mardonius himself and his army are expected; he is marching close on my heels. Entertain him and show him your good will. You won't regret it in the long run." 4 With these words he hurriedly marched his army off through Thessaly and Macedonia straight for Thrace, in a genuine hurry, cutting across the inland route. He reached Byzantium, though he left behind many of his army along the way, cut down by the Thracians or overcome by hunger and exhaustion. From Byzantium he crossed over by boat. That is how he made his way back to Asia.

MYCALE

The Greek fleet crosses to Asia and defeats the Persians at Mycale on the same day as Plataea.

9.90 On the very same day as the defeat at Plataea, it so happened that another defeat took place, at Mycale in Ionia. The Greeks who had come with the fleet under Leotychides the Lacedaemonian were stationed at Delos, and messengers came to them there from Samos: Lampon son of Thrasycles, Athenagoras son of Archestratides and Hegesistratus son of Aristagoras. The Samians had sent them without the knowledge of the Persians or of the tyrant Theomestor son of Androdamas, whom the Persians had set up as tyrant of Samos.[41] 2 When they came before the generals, Hegesistratus made a long speech with every kind of argument. If the Ionians merely saw them, he said, they would revolt from the Persians, and the foreigners would not stand their ground; and if they did stand their ground, the Greeks would never find another such prize. Calling on the gods they shared, he urged them to rescue Greeks from slavery and drive back the foreign enemy. 3 It would be easy for them, he said, because the foreigners' ships sailed badly and were no

41 Mycale is a mountainous promontory on the coast of Asia Minor opposite Samos. A tyrant was a ruler who had seized sole power, not necessarily a cruel one.

match for theirs. And if the Greeks had any suspicion that the envoys were luring them on with some trick, they themselves were ready to be taken aboard the Greeks' ships as hostages.

9.91 As the Samian visitor went on pleading at length, Leotychides asked him—whether he wanted to know for the sake of an omen, or by chance, through the doing of a god—"Samian friend, what is your name?" "Hegesistratus," he said. 2 Leotychides cut off whatever else Hegesistratus had been about to say and replied, "I accept the omen of Hegesistratus, my Samian friend. Now see to it that before you sail away, you and these men with you give us a pledge that the Samians will be eager allies to us."[42]

9.92 Even as he said this, he set the business in motion: the Samians at once gave pledges and swore oaths of alliance with the Greeks. 2 When this was done, the others sailed away, for Leotychides told Hegesistratus to sail with the Greeks, since he took his name as an omen.

9.93 The Greeks waited that day, and on the next they sacrificed and obtained favorable omens. Their seer was Deiphonus son of Evenius, a man of Apollonia—the Apollonia on the Ionian Gulf. Something like the following once happened to his father Evenius. In this Apollonia there are sheep sacred to the Sun. By day they graze beside the river Chon, which flows from Mount Lacmon through the territory of Apollonia to the sea near the harbor of Oricus. By night they are guarded by men chosen from among the citizens most distinguished for wealth and birth, each serving for a year, for the Apollonians set great store by these sheep because of some oracle. They are penned at night in a cave far from the town.[43] 2 At that time this Evenius had been chosen and was standing guard there. Once he fell asleep on watch, and wolves got into the cave and killed about sixty of the sheep. When he found out, he kept quiet and told no one, intending to buy others and put them in their place. 3 But what

42 The name Hegesistratus means "leader of the army."
43 The Ionian Gulf is the Adriatic; this Apollonia lay on the coast of modern Albania.

had happened did not escape the Apollonians. When they learned of it, they brought him to trial and condemned him to lose his sight for having fallen asleep on watch. After they had blinded Evenius, their sheep immediately stopped bearing young and the land stopped yielding its crops as before. [4] Oracles were given to them both at Dodona and at Delphi when they asked the prophets the cause of their present trouble. The prophets told them that they had wronged Evenius, the guardian of the sacred sheep, by depriving him of his sight. It was the gods themselves who had set the wolves on, they said, and they would not stop avenging him until the Apollonians paid him whatever amends for what they had done he himself chose and thought just. Once this was done, the gods themselves would give Evenius a gift that would make many people call him blessed for having it.[44]

9.94 These were the oracles given to them. The Apollonians kept them secret and charged some of the citizens with carrying the matter through. These men did it as follows. Evenius was sitting on a bench, and they came and sat down beside him and talked of other things, until they came round to sympathizing with his misfortune. Leading him on in this way, they asked what amends he would choose if the Apollonians were willing to undertake to make amends for what they had done. [2] Not having heard the oracle, he made his choice. If someone gave him fields —and he named two citizens whom he knew to own the two finest estates in Apollonia—and on top of that a house, the one he knew to be the finest in the town, then, he said, once he had these, he would bear no more anger in the future, and this would be satisfaction enough for him. [3] When he had said this, the men sitting beside him took him up: "Evenius, these are the amends the Apollonians are paying you for blinding you, in accordance with the oracles they have received." At this he was indignant, since he now learned the whole story and realized he had been tricked. But they bought the property from its owners

44 Dodona, in Epirus in northwestern Greece, was an ancient oracle of Zeus.

and gave him what he had chosen. Immediately afterward he had an inborn gift of prophecy, so that he even became famous.

9.95 It was Deiphonus, the son of this Evenius, who had been brought by the Corinthians and was serving as seer to the army. But I have also heard that Deiphonus traded on Evenius' name and took on work all over Greece, though he was not Evenius' son.

9.96 When the sacrifices proved favorable for the Greeks, they put out with their ships from Delos for Samos. When they reached Calamisa in Samian territory, they anchored there by the temple of Hera in that place and prepared for a sea battle. But when the Persians learned that the Greeks were sailing against them, they too put out, heading for the mainland with the rest of their ships, having let the Phoenician ships sail away. For on deliberation they had decided not to fight a sea battle, 2 since they did not think they were a match for the Greeks. They sailed off to the mainland so as to be under the protection of their own land army, which was at Mycale. This force had been left behind by the rest of the army on Xerxes' orders and was guarding Ionia. It numbered sixty thousand, and its commander was Tigranes, who surpassed all the Persians in beauty and stature. 3 The commanders of the fleet had decided to take refuge with this army, haul their ships up on land and build a wall around them, as a defense for the ships and a refuge for themselves.

9.97 Having decided this, they put to sea. Passing the temple of the Revered Goddesses at Mycale, they came to Gaeson and Scolopoeis, where there is a temple of Eleusinian Demeter, founded by Philistus son of Pasicles when he followed Neleus son of Codrus to found Miletus. There they hauled up their ships and built a wall of stones and timber around them, cutting down orchard trees for it, and drove stakes in all around the wall. They were prepared either to be besieged or to win, for they had made their preparations with both outcomes in mind.[45]

9.98 When the Greeks learned that the foreigners had gone off to the mainland, they were annoyed that they had escaped, and they were at a loss what to do: whether to go back home or to sail on to the Hellespont. In the end they decided to do neither, but to sail to the mainland. 2 So they prepared for a sea battle, with boarding ladders and everything else they needed, and sailed for Mycale. When they came near the camp and no one appeared to be putting out against them, but they saw ships hauled up inside the wall and a large land army drawn up along the beach, then first of all Leotychides sailed along the shore in his ship, keeping as close in as he could, and had a herald make this proclamation to the Ionians: 3 "Men of Ionia, those of you who can hear me, take note of what I say, for the Persians won't understand a word of what I'm telling you. When we join battle, each of you must remember freedom first of all, and after that the password, 'Hebe.' And let any of you who did not hear this learn it from one who did." 4 The intent of this move was the same as that of Themistocles at Artemisium: either the words would escape the foreigners and win over the Ionians, or, if they were afterward reported to the foreigners, they would make them distrust the Greeks.[46]

9.99 After Leotychides had given this advice, the Greeks next did this: they brought their ships to shore and disembarked on the beach. While they were forming up, the Persians, seeing the Greeks preparing for battle and seeing that they had appealed to the Ionians, first suspected the Samians of being on the Greeks' side and took away their weapons. 2 For when Athenian prisoners had arrived on the foreigners' ships—men left behind in Attica whom Xerxes' troops had captured—the Samians had ransomed them all and sent them back to Athens with provisions for the journey. This above all was why they were under suspicion: they had ransomed five hundred of Xerxes' enemies. 3 Second, they assigned the Milesians to guard the paths leading

45 The "Revered Goddesses" (*Potniai*) are Demeter and her daughter Persephone.
46 Hebe is the goddess of youth. At Artemisium Themistocles had cut messages to the Ionians in the rocks at watering places (8.22).

to the heights of Mycale, supposedly because they knew the country best. Their real reason for doing this was to keep them out of the camp. In this way the Persians took precautions against those Ionians whom they suspected of being likely to start some revolt if they got the chance. They themselves set up their wicker shields close together to serve as a barricade.

9.100 When the Greeks had made their preparations, they advanced against the foreign army. As they went, a rumor flew through the whole camp, and a herald's staff was seen lying at the edge of the surf. The rumor that went through them was that the Greeks had defeated Mardonius' army in battle in Boeotia. 2 There are many signs that make plain the hand of the divine in events. So it was then: on the same day as the defeat at Plataea and the one about to take place at Mycale, a rumor reached the Greeks there, so that the army grew far more confident and more eager to face danger.

9.101 There was another coincidence as well: there were precincts of Eleusinian Demeter beside both battlefields. At Plataea the battle was fought right beside the temple of Demeter, as I said earlier, and at Mycale it was going to be the same. 2 The rumor that had reached them, that the Greeks with Pausanias had won a victory, turned out to be true. The battle at Plataea took place while it was still early in the day, and the one at Mycale in the late afternoon. That they happened on the same day of the same month became clear to them when they looked into it not long afterward. 3 Before the rumor arrived, they had been afraid, not so much for themselves as for the Greeks, that Greece might come to grief at the hands of Mardonius. But once this report flew to them, they advanced with still more vigor and speed. So the Greeks and the foreigners hurried into battle, for the islands and the Hellespont lay before them as prizes.

9.102 The Athenians and those posted next to them, up to about half the line, had a route along the beach and over level ground. The Lacedaemonians and those posted in line after them had to go through a ravine and over hills. While the Lacedaemonians were still making their way around, the troops on the other

wing were already fighting. [2] So long as the Persians' wicker shields stayed upright, they defended themselves and held their own in the battle. But then the army of the Athenians and those next to them, wanting the achievement to be their own and not the Lacedaemonians', urged one another on and set to work with greater determination, and from that point the situation changed. [3] They pushed through the shields and charged in a body into the Persians. The Persians met the charge and held them off for a good while, but in the end they fled to the wall. The Athenians, Corinthians, Sicyonians and Troezenians (that was the order in which they were posted) followed close behind and burst into the wall along with them. Once the wall too had been taken, the foreigners no longer turned to resist, and all of them except the Persians rushed to flee. [4] The Persians, forming small groups, fought against the Greeks who kept streaming into the wall. Of the Persian commanders, two escaped and two died: Artayntes and Ithamitres, who commanded the fleet, escaped, while Mardontes and Tigranes, the commander of the land army, died fighting.

9.103 While the Persians were still fighting, the Lacedaemonians and those with them arrived and helped finish off what remained. Many of the Greeks themselves fell there too, among them Sicyonians, including their general Perilaus. [2] As for the Samians, who were serving in the Median camp and had been disarmed: as soon as they saw the battle beginning to turn, right at the start, they did all they could, wanting to help the Greeks. And when the other Ionians saw that the Samians had led the way, they too revolted from the Persians and attacked the foreigners.

9.104 The Milesians had been ordered by the Persians to guard the paths, for the Persians' own safety: if anything like what actually happened should overtake them, they would have guides to bring them safely to the peaks of Mycale. The Milesians were posted to this task for that reason, and also so that they would not be in the camp and start some uprising. But they did the exact opposite of what they had been ordered. They

led the fleeing Persians by other paths, which brought them straight to the enemy, and in the end the Milesians themselves became their bitterest enemies and killed them. So it was that Ionia revolted from the Persians for the second time.

9.105 In this battle the Athenians fought best of the Greeks, and of the Athenians, Hermolycus son of Euthoenus, a man who had trained in the pancratium. Later, during a war between the Athenians and the Carystians, it was this Hermolycus' lot to die in battle at Cyrnus in Carystian territory, and he lies buried at Geraestus. After the Athenians, the Corinthians, Troezenians and Sicyonians fought best.[47]

9.106 When the Greeks had cut down most of the foreigners, some as they fought and some as they fled, they first brought the plunder out onto the beach and then set fire to the ships and the whole wall; they also found some chests of money. Having burned the wall and the ships, they sailed away. 2 When they reached Samos, the Greeks discussed evacuating Ionia, and where, in the parts of Greece under their own control, they ought to settle the Ionians, leaving Ionia to the foreigners. For it seemed impossible to them to stand guard over the Ionians for all time; and if they did not stand guard, they had no hope that the Ionians would escape unpunished by the Persians. 3 On this, the Peloponnesians in authority proposed to remove the Greek peoples who had sided with the Persians from their trading ports and give their land to the Ionians to live in. But the Athenians did not think Ionia should be evacuated at all, nor that the Peloponnesians should be deliberating about Athenian colonies. Since the Athenians opposed it vigorously, the Peloponnesians gave way. 4 And so they took the Samians, Chians, Lesbians and the other islanders who happened to be campaigning with the Greeks into the alliance, binding them with pledges and oaths to remain loyal and not to desert. Having bound them by oaths, they sailed off to break up the bridges, for they thought they

47 The pancratium was a combat sport combining boxing and wrestling.

would find them still stretched across. So they sailed for the Hellespont.[48]

9.107 The foreigners who had escaped and been penned up on the heights of Mycale, not many in number, made their way to Sardis. As they went along the road, Masistes son of Darius, who had been present at the disaster, heaped abuse on the general Artayntes, saying among other things that he was worse than a woman for commanding as he had, and that he deserved every punishment for having harmed the King's house. Among the Persians, to be called worse than a woman is the greatest insult. 2 After hearing a great deal of this, Artayntes, enraged, drew his short sword on Masistes, meaning to kill him. As he rushed at him, Xenagoras son of Praxilaus, a man of Halicarnassus, who was standing behind Artayntes, saw him, seized him round the waist, lifted him up and dashed him to the ground; meanwhile Masistes' bodyguards stepped in front of their master. 3 Xenagoras did this to earn the gratitude of Masistes himself and of Xerxes, by saving Xerxes' brother; and for this deed Xenagoras was made ruler of all Cilicia, by the King's gift. Nothing more than this happened as they went along the road, and they arrived in Sardis.

XERXES AND THE WIFE OF MASISTES

Xerxes' love for his brother's wife and her daughter ends in mutilation, revolt and murder.

9.108 Now the King happened to be in Sardis, and had been from the time he arrived there in flight from Athens after his defeat in the sea battle. While he was in Sardis then, he fell in love with Masistes' wife, who was also there. He sent messages to her but could not win her over, and he would not use force, out of regard for his brother Masistes. The same thing gave the woman confidence too, for she knew well that force would not be used on her. So Xerxes, shut out from every other means, arranged this marriage for his son Darius with the daughter of this

48 The Athenians claimed to be the mother-city of the Ionian Greeks.

woman and Masistes, thinking he would be more likely to get her if he did this. [2] After arranging the betrothal and performing the customary rites, he rode off to Susa. When he got there and had brought the woman into his own house for Darius, he lost his desire for Masistes' wife. Changing course, he fell in love with Darius' wife, Masistes' daughter, and won her. The name of this woman was Artaynte.

9.109 As time went on, it came to light in the following way. Amestris, Xerxes' wife, wove a large, many-colored robe, well worth seeing, and gave it to Xerxes. He was delighted with it, put it on and went to Artaynte. [2] Being delighted with her too, he told her to ask for whatever she wanted in return for the favors she had done him: she would get anything she asked for. Since she and all her house were fated to come to a bad end, she answered Xerxes, "Will you give me whatever I ask you for?" He, thinking she would ask for anything but what she did, promised and swore an oath. Once he had sworn, she boldly asked for the robe. [3] Xerxes tried every way to avoid giving it, for no other reason than fear of Amestris: she had already guessed what was going on, and he was afraid she would now catch him at it this way. Instead he offered Artaynte cities, gold beyond measure, and an army that no one but she would command. An army is a thoroughly Persian gift. But since he could not persuade her, he gave her the robe. She was overjoyed with the gift and wore it and showed it off.

9.110 Amestris learned that she had it. Once she knew what was going on, she bore no grudge against this woman; instead, supposing that her mother was responsible and was behind it all, she plotted the destruction of Masistes' wife. [2] She waited until her husband Xerxes was giving the royal banquet. This banquet is held once a year, on the King's birthday. The name of this banquet in Persian is *tykta*, which in the Greek language is *teleion*, "complete." On that occasion alone the King anoints his head, and he gives gifts to the Persians. Having waited for this day, Amestris asked Xerxes to have Masistes' wife given to her. [3] He thought it a terrible and monstrous thing, first to hand over his

brother's wife, and second because she was innocent of this whole affair; for he understood why Amestris was asking.

9.111 In the end, though, with Amestris insisting, and compelled by the custom—among them, no one who makes a request may be refused while the royal banquet is being held—he very reluctantly nodded his assent. He handed the woman over and did as follows: he told Amestris to do what she liked with her, and he himself sent for his brother and said this: 2 "Masistes, you're a son of Darius and my brother, and on top of that you're a good man. Don't go on living with the wife you live with now. In her place I'm giving you my own daughter. Live with her. As for the wife you have now, don't keep her—it isn't my pleasure." 3 Masistes, astonished at what was said, replied: "Master, what a useless thing to say to me! You tell me to send away a wife by whom I have young sons and daughters—one of whom you yourself took as a wife for your own son—and who happens to be very much to my liking, and you tell me to send her away and marry your daughter? 4 King, I count it a great honor to be thought worthy of your daughter, but I will do neither of these things. Please don't force me into something like this. Another husband will turn up for your daughter who's no worse than I am; and let me go on living with my own wife." 5 That was how he answered, and Xerxes said in anger: "Very well, Masistes, this is how things stand: I won't give you my daughter to marry, and you won't live with that woman any longer either—so that you learn to accept what you're given." When Masistes heard this, he went out, saying only, "Master, you haven't destroyed me yet."

9.112 Meanwhile, during the time Xerxes was talking with his brother, Amestris sent for Xerxes' bodyguards and mutilated Masistes' wife. She cut off her breasts and threw them to dogs, cut off her nose, ears and lips, cut out her tongue, and sent her home mutilated.

9.113 Masistes, who had not yet heard anything of this but expected that some harm had come to him, rushed home at a run. When he saw his wife maimed, he immediately consulted

with his children and set out for Bactra with his own sons and, I suppose, some others as well, intending to make the province of Bactria revolt and do the King the greatest possible harm. 2 And that, in my opinion, is just what would have happened, if he had managed to reach the Bactrians and the Sacae in time; for they were fond of him, and he was governor of the Bactrians.[49] But Xerxes learned what he was doing, sent an army after him, and killed him on the road, along with his sons and his troops. That is the story of Xerxes' love and Masistes' death.

SESTOS

The Athenians besiege Sestos on the Hellespont and execute the governor Artayctes.

9.114 The Greeks who had set out from Mycale for the Hellespont first anchored off Lectum, held up by winds. From there they came to Abydos and found the bridges broken up—the bridges they had expected to find still stretched across, and which were not the least reason for their coming to the Hellespont. 2 The Peloponnesians with Leotychides decided to sail back to Greece, but the Athenians and their general Xanthippus decided to stay there and make an attempt on the Chersonese. So the Peloponnesians sailed away, while the Athenians crossed from Abydos to the Chersonese and laid siege to Sestos.[50]

9.115 When people heard that the Greeks had arrived at the Hellespont, they gathered at this Sestos, since it was the strongest fortress in that region. They came from the other towns round about, and in particular from the city of Cardia came Oeobazus, a Persian, who had brought the cables from the bridges there. The town was held by Aeolians native to the place, but Persians were there with them, and a large crowd of their other allies.

9.116 The tyrant of this province was Xerxes' governor Artayctes, a Persian, and a formidable and wicked man, who

49 Bactra lay in what is now northern Afghanistan.

had deceived the King himself on his march against Athens by stealing the treasures of Protesilaus son of Iphiclus from Elaeus. [2] For at Elaeus in the Chersonese there is the tomb of Protesilaus, with a sacred precinct around it. There was much wealth there—gold and silver bowls, bronze, clothing and other offerings—and Artayctes plundered it with the King's permission. He had tricked Xerxes by saying something like this: [3] "Master, there's a house here belonging to a Greek who made war on your land and got what he deserved: he died. Give me this man's house, so that people will learn not to make war on your land."[51] By saying this he was sure to persuade Xerxes easily to give him a man's house, since Xerxes suspected nothing of what he had in mind. When he said that Protesilaus had made war on the King's land, he meant this: the Persians consider all Asia to belong to them and to whoever is king at the time. Once the gift was made, he carried the treasures off from Elaeus to Sestos, and he sowed and farmed the sacred precinct; and whenever he came to Elaeus, he had sex with women in the inner sanctuary. Now he was being besieged by the Athenians, neither prepared for a siege nor expecting the Greeks; they had fallen upon him somehow before he could get away.

9.117 When autumn came on during the siege, the Athenians grew impatient at being away from their own country and unable to take the fortress, and they asked their generals to lead them back home. The generals refused to do so until they had either taken it or been recalled by the Athenian state. So the men put up with things as they were.

9.118 Those inside the wall had by now reached the utmost misery, so much so that they boiled the straps of their beds and ate them. When they no longer had even these, the Persians, Artayctes and Oeobazus slipped away under cover of night, climbing down at the back of the wall, where the enemy were fewest. [2] When day came, the people of the Chersonese signaled

50 The Chersonese is the Gallipoli peninsula, on the European side of the Hellespont.

51 In legend Protesilaus was the first Greek killed at Troy, as he leapt ashore.

to the Athenians from the towers what had happened and opened the gates. Most of the Athenians gave chase, while the rest occupied the town.

9.119 Oeobazus escaped into Thrace, but the Apsinthian Thracians caught him and sacrificed him in their own fashion to Pleistorus, a local god; those with him they killed in another way. 2 Artayctes and his party had started their flight later, and were overtaken a little beyond Aegospotami. They defended themselves for a good while, and some were killed and others taken alive. The Greeks bound them and brought them to Sestos, and with them Artayctes, in chains, and his son.

9.120 The people of the Chersonese say that one of the guards was roasting salt fish when a portent like this happened to him: the salt fish lying on the fire jumped and writhed just like freshly caught fish. 2 The others crowded around in amazement, but when Artayctes saw the portent, he called the man who was roasting the fish and said, "Athenian stranger, don't be afraid of this portent. It hasn't appeared for you. Protesilaus of Elaeus is showing me that even though he's dead and dried like salt fish, he has power from the gods to take vengeance on the man who wrongs him.[52] 3 So now I'm willing to impose this penalty on myself: in return for the treasures I took from the shrine, I'll pay the god a hundred talents; and in return for myself and my son I'll pay the Athenians two hundred talents, if I'm spared." 4 With these promises he could not persuade the general Xanthippus. For the people of Elaeus, seeking vengeance for Protesilaus, demanded that he be put to death, and the general's own mind inclined that way too. They took him to the headland where Xerxes had bridged the strait (others say to the hill above the town of Madytus), nailed him to planks and hung him up; and they stoned his son to death before Artayctes' eyes.

9.121 After doing this they sailed back to Greece, taking with them, among other goods, the cables of the bridges, to dedicate them in the temples. And in that year nothing more happened than this.

52 The Greek word for salt fish, *tarichos*, was also used of an embalmed corpse.

CYRUS' ADVICE

Cyrus warns that soft lands breed soft men, and the Persians choose to rule from a harsh land.

9.122 This Artayctes who was hung up had an ancestor, Artembares, who put forward to the Persians a proposal which they took up and brought to Cyrus. It went like this: 2 "Since Zeus grants dominion to the Persians, and among men to you, Cyrus, now that you have overthrown Astyages, come: the land we possess is small, and rugged too, so let's leave it and take another, better one. There are many near our borders and many farther off; if we take one of these, we'll be more admired by more people. It's only fitting for men who rule to do such things. When will there ever be a finer opportunity than now, when we rule many peoples and all of Asia?" 3 Cyrus heard this and, unimpressed by the proposal, told them to go ahead—but with this advice: they should get ready, he told them, to be no longer rulers but ruled. Soft lands, he said, tend to breed soft men; for one and the same land cannot grow wonderful crops and also men who are good at war. 4 So the Persians acknowledged he was right and went away, beaten in judgment by Cyrus; and they chose to live in a harsh land and rule, rather than sow a plain and be slaves to others.