

**XERXES FLOGS THE HELLESPONT:
HERODOTUS' HISTORIES, BOOK VII, Chapters 32-38**

Translated by Alfred Denis Godley

32 Having arrived in Sardis, he first sent heralds to Hellas to demand earth and water and command the preparation of meals for the king; to all other places he sent to demand earth, only neither to Athens nor to Lacedaemon. The reason of his sending for earth and water the second time was this — he fully believed that as many as had formerly not given it to Darius' messengers, would now be compelled to give by fear; and he sent because he desired to know this of a surety.

33 After this he prepared to march to Abydos; and meanwhile his men were bridging the Hellespont from Asia to Europe. On the Chersonese, which is by the Hellespont, there is between the town of Sestus and Madytus a broad headland running out into the sea over against Abydos; it was here that not long after this the Athenians with Xanthippus son of Aripbron for general took Artayctes a Persian, who was governor of Sestus, and crucified him alive; he had even been wont to bring women into the temple of Protesilaus at Elaeus and do impious deeds there.

34 Beginning then from Abydos they whose business it was made bridges across to that headland, the Phoenicians one of flaxen cables, and the Egyptians the second, which was of papyrus. From Abydos to the opposite shore it is a distance of seven furlongs. But no sooner had the strait been bridged than a great storm swept down and brake and scattered all that work.

35 When Xerxes heard of that, he was very angry, and gave command that the Hellespont be scourged with three hundred lashes, and a pair of fetters be thrown into the sea; nay, I have heard ere now that he sent branders with the rest to brand the Hellespont. This is certain, that he charged them while they scourged to utter words outlandish and presumptuous: "Thou bitter water," they should say, "our master thus punishes thee, because thou didst him wrong albeit he had done thee none. Yea, Xerxes the king will pass over thee, whether thou wilt or no; it is but just that no man offers thee sacrifice, for thou art a turbid and briny river." Thus he commanded that the sea should be punished, and that they who had been overseers of the bridging of the Hellespont should be beheaded.

36 So this was done by those who were appointed to that thankless honour; and new masters of their craft set about making the bridges. The manner of their doing it was as I will show. That they might lighten the strain of the cables, they laid fifty-oared ships and triremes alongside of each other, three hundred and sixty to bear the bridge that was nearest to the Euxine sea, and three hundred and fourteen to bear the other; all lay obliquely to the line of the Pontus and parallel with the current of the Hellespont. Having so laid the ships alongside they let down very great anchors, both from the end of the ship nearest the Pontus to hold fast against the winds blowing from within that sea, and from the other end, towards the west and the Aegean, to hold against the west and south winds. Moreover they left for passage an opening in the line of fifty-oared ships and triremes, that so he that would might be able to voyage to the Pontus, or out of it. Having so done, they stretched the cables from the land, twisting them taut with wooden windlasses; and they did not as before keep the two kinds apart, but assigned for each bridge two cables of flax and four of papyrus. All these were of the same thickness and fair appearance, but the flaxen were heavier in their

proportion, a cubit thereof weighing a talent. When the strait was thus bridged, they sawed balks of wood to a length equal to the breadth of the floating supports, and laid them in order on the taut cables, and having set them alongside they then made them fast. This done, they heaped brushwood on to the bridge, and when this was all laid in order they heaped earth on it and stamped it down; then they made a fence on either side, lest the beasts of burden and horses should be affrighted by the sight of the sea below them.

**THE NAVAL BATTLE OF SALAMIS:
HERODOTUS' HISTORIES, BOOK VIII, CHAPTERS 83-96**

83 ... The Greeks, believing at last the tale of the Tenians, made ready for battle. It was now earliest dawn, and they called the fighting men to an assembly, wherein Themistocles made an harangue in which he excelled all others; the tenor of his words was to array all the good in man's nature and estate against the evil; and having exhorted them to choose the better, he made an end of speaking and bade them embark. Even as they so did, came the trireme from Aegina which had been sent away for the Sons of Aeacus.

84 With that the Greeks stood out to sea in full force, and as they stood out the foreigners straightway fell upon them. The rest of the Greeks began to back water and beach their ships; but Aminias of Pallene, an Athenian, pushed out to the front and charged a ship; which being entangled with his, and the two not able to be parted, the others did now come to Aminias' aid and joined battle. This is the Athenian story of the beginning of the fight; but the Aeginetans say that the ship which began it was that one which had been sent away to Aegina for the Sons of Aeacus. This story also is told, — that they saw the vision of a woman, who cried commands loud enough for all the Greek fleet to hear, uttering first this reproach, "Sirs, what madness is this? how long will you still be backing water?"

85 The **Phoenicians** (for they had the western wing, towards Eleusis) were arrayed opposite to the Athenians, and to the Lacedaemonians the Ionians, on the eastern wing, nearest to Piraeus. Yet but few of them fought slackly, as Themistocles had bidden them, and the more part did not so. Many names I could record of ships' captains that took Greek ships; but I will speak of none save Theomestor son of Androdamas and Phylacus son of Histiaeus, **Samians** both; and I make mention of these alone, because Theomestor was for this feat of arms made by the Persians despot of Samos, and Phylacus was recorded among the king's benefactors and given much land. These benefactors of the king are called in the Persian language, orosangae.

86 Thus it was with these two; but the great multitude of the ships were shattered at Salamis, some destroyed by the Athenians and some by the Aeginetans. For since the Greeks fought orderly and in array, but the foreigners were by now disordered and did nought of set purpose, it was but reason that they should come to such an end as befel them. Yet on that day they were and approved themselves by far better men than off Euboea; all were zealous, and feared Xerxes, each man thinking that the king's eye was on him.

87 Now as touching some of the others I cannot with exactness say how they fought severally, foreigners or Greeks; but what befel Artemisia made her to be esteemed by the king even more than before. The king's side being now in dire confusion, Artemisia's ship was at this time being pursued by a ship of Attica; and she could not escape, for other friendly ships were in her way, and it chanced that she was the nearest to the enemy; wherefore she resolved that she would do that which afterwards tended to her advantage, and as she fled pursued by the Athenian she charged a friendly ship that bore men of Calyndus and the king himself of that place, Damasithymus. It may be that she had had some quarrel with him while they were still at the Hellespont, but if her deed was done of set purpose, or if the Calyndian met her by crossing her path at haphazard, I cannot say. But having charged and sunk the ship, she had the good luck to work for herself a double advantage. For when the Attic captain saw her charge a ship of foreigners, he supposed that Artemisia's ship was Greek or a deserter from the foreigners fighting for the Greeks, and he turned aside to deal with others.

88 By this happy chance it came about that she escaped and avoided destruction; and moreover the upshot was that the very harm which she had done won her great favour in Xerxes' eyes. For the king (it is said) saw her charge the ship as he viewed the battle, and one of the bystanders said, "Sire, see you Artemisia, how well she fights, and how she has sunk an enemy ship?" Xerxes then asking if it were truly Artemisia that had done the deed, they affirmed it, knowing well the ensign of his ship; and they supposed that the ship she had sunk was an enemy; for the luckiest chance of all which had (as I have said) befallen her was, that not one from the Calyndian ship was saved alive to be her accuser. Hearing what they told him, Xerxes is reported to have said "My men have become women, and my women men"; such, they say, were his words.

89 In that hard fighting Xerxes' brother the admiral Ariabignes, son of **Darius**, was slain, and withal many other Persians and **Medes** and allies of renown, and some Greeks, but few; for since they could swim, they who lost their ships, yet were not slain in hand-to-hand fight, swam across to Salamis; but the greater part of the foreigners were drowned in the sea, not being able to swim. When the foremost ships were turned to flight, it was then that the most of them were destroyed; for the men of the rearmost ranks, pressing forward in their ships that they too might display their valour to the king, ran foul of their friends' ships that were in flight.

90 It happened also amid this disorder that certain Phoenicians whose ships had been destroyed came to the king and accused the Ionians of treason, saying that it was by their doing that the ships had been lost; the end of which matter was, that the Ionian captains were not put to death, and those Phoenicians who accused them were rewarded as I will show. While they yet spoke as aforesaid, a Samothracian ship charged an Attic; and while the Attic ship was sinking, a ship of Aegina bore down and sank the Samothracian; but the Samothracians, being javelin throwers, swept the fighting men with a shower of javelins off from the ship that had sunk theirs, and boarded and seized her themselves. Thereby the Ionians were saved; for when Xerxes saw this great feat of their arms, he turned on the Phoenicians (being moved to blame all in the bitterness of his heart) and commanded that their heads be cut off, that so they might not accuse better men, being themselves cowards. For whenever Xerxes, from his seat under the hill over against Salamis called Aegaleos, saw any feat achieved by his own men in the battle, he inquired who was the doer of it, and his scribes wrote down the names of the ship's captain and his father and his city. Moreover it tended somewhat to the doom of the Phoenicians that Ariaramnes, a Persian, was there, who was a friend of the Ionians. So Xerxes' men dealt with the Phoenicians.

91 The foreigners being routed and striving to win out to Phalerum, the Aeginetans lay in wait for them in the passage and then achieved notable deeds; for the Athenians amid the disorder made havoc of all ships that would resist or fly, and so did the Aeginetans with those that were sailing out of the strait; and all that escaped from the Athenians fell in their course among the Aeginetans.

92 Two ships met there, Themistocles' ship pursuing another, and one that bore Polycritus son of Crius of Aegina; this latter had charged a Sidonian, the same which had taken the Aeginetan p91 ship that watched off Sciathus, wherein was Pytheas son of Ischenous, that Pytheas whom when gashed with wounds the Persians kept aboard their ship and made much of for his valour; this Sidonian ship was carrying Pytheas among the Persians when she was now taken, so that thereby he came safe back to Aegina. When Polycritus saw the Attic ship, he knew it by seeing the admiral's ship's ensign, and cried out to Themistocles with bitter taunt and reproach as to the friendship of Aegina with the Persians. Such taunts did Polycritus hurl at Themistocles, after that he had charged an enemy ship. As for the foreigners whose ships were yet undestroyed, they fled to Phalerum and took refuge with the land army.

93 In that sea-fight the nations that won most renown were the Aeginetans, and next to them the Athenians; among men the most renowned were Polycritus of Aegina and two Athenians, Eumenes of Anagyrus and Aminias of Pallene, he who pursued after Artemisia. Had he known that she was in that ship, he had never been stayed ere he took hers or lost his own; such was the bidding given to the Athenian captain, and there was a prize withal of ten thousand drachmae for whoever should take her alive; for there was great wrath that a woman should come to attack Athens. She, then, escaped as I have already said; and the rest also whose ships were undestroyed were at Phalerum.

94 As for the Corinthian admiral Adimantus, the Athenians say that at the very moment when the ships joined battle he was struck with terror and panic, and hoisting his sails fled away; and when the Corinthians saw their admiral's ship fleeing they were off and away likewise. But when (so the story goes) they came in their flight near that part of Salamis where is the temple of Athene Sciras, there by heaven's providence a boat met them which none was known to have sent, nor had the Corinthians, ere it drew nigh to them, known aught of the doings of the fleet; and this is how they infer heaven's hand in the matter: when the boat came nigh the ships, those that were in it cried, "Adimantus, you have turned back with your ships in flight, and betrayed the Greeks; but even now they are winning the day as fully as they ever prayed that they might vanquish their enemies." Thus they spoke, and when Adimantus would not believe they said further that they were ready to be taken for hostages and slain if the Greeks were not victorious for all to see. Thereupon Adimantus and the rest did turn their ships about and came to the fleet when all was now over and done. Thus the Athenians report of the Corinthians; but the Corinthians deny it, and hold that they were among the foremost in the battle; and all Hellas bears them witness likewise.

95 But Aristides son of Lysimachus, that Athenian of whose great merit I have lately made mention, did in this rout at Salamis as I will show: taking many of the Athenian men-at-arms who stood arrayed on the shores of Salamis, he carried them across to the island Psyttalea, and they slaughtered all the Persians who were on that islet.

96 The sea-fight being broken off, the Greeks towed to Salamis all the wrecks that were still afloat in those waters, and held themselves ready for another battle, thinking that the king would yet again use his ships that were left. But many of the wrecks were caught by a west wind and carried to the strand in Attica called Colias; so that not only was the rest of the prophecy fulfilled which had been uttered by Bacis and Musaeus concerning that sea-fight, but also that which had been prophesied many years ago by an Athenian oracle-monger named Lysistratus, about the wrecks that were here cast ashore (the import of which prophecy no Greek had noted):

"Also the Colian dames shall roast their barley with oar-blades."

But this was to happen after the king's departure.