



Persian Wars: Issues of leadership and unity

The combined Greek fleet at Artemision

- ▶ The Greeks appointed to serve in the fleet were these: the **Athenians furnished a hundred and twenty-seven ships**; the Plataeans manned these ships with the Athenians, not that they had any knowledge of seamanship, but because of mere valor and zeal. The Corinthians furnished **forty** ships and the Megarians **twenty**; [2] the Chalcidians manned **twenty**, the Athenians furnishing the ships; the Aeginetans **eighteen**, the Sicyonians **twelve**, the Lacedaemonians **ten**, the Epidaurians **eight**, the Eretrians **seven**, the Troezenians **five**, the Styrians **two**, and the Ceans **two**, and two fifty-oared barks; the Opuntian Locrians brought seven fifty-oared barks to their aid. Hdt. 8.1

Athenian ambition

- ▶ In the first days, before the sending to Sicily for alliance, there **had been talk of entrusting the command at sea to the Athenians**. However, when **the allies resisted, the Athenians waived their claim**, considering the safety of Hellas of prime importance and seeing that if they quarrelled over the leadership, Hellas must perish. In this they judged rightly, for civil strife is as much worse than united war as war is worse than peace. [2] Knowing that, they gave ground and waived their claim, **but only so long as they had great need of the others**. This is clear, **for when they had driven the Persian back and the battle was no longer for their territory but for his, they made a pretext of Pausanias' highhandedness and took the command away from the Lacedaemonians**. All that, however, took place later. Hdt. 8.3

Each on his own?

- ▶ When Themistocles returned to his ship, Mnesiphilus, an Athenian, asked him what had been decided. Learning from him that **they had resolved to sail to the Isthmus** and fight for the Peloponnese, he said, [2] “If they depart from Salamis, **you will no longer be fighting for one country. Each will make his way to his own city**, and neither Eurybiades nor any other man will be able to keep them from disbanding the army. **Hellas will be destroyed by bad planning.** If there is any way at all that you could persuade Eurybiades to change his decision and remain here, go try to undo this resolution.” Hdt. 8.57

Same as before?

- ▶ **The Spartans sent the men with Leonidas on ahead so that the rest of the allies would see them and march, instead of medizing like the others if they learned that the Spartans were delaying.** At present the Carneia was in their way, but once they had completed the festival, they intended to leave a garrison at Sparta and march out in full force with all speed. [2] The rest of the allies planned to do likewise, for the Olympiad coincided with these events. They accordingly sent their advance guard, not expecting the war at Thermopylae to be decided so quickly. Hdt. 7.206

A man with no polis?

- ▶ As Themistocles said this, Adeimantus the Corinthian attacked him again, **advising that a man without a city should keep quiet and that Eurybiades should not ask the vote of a man without a city.** He advised Themistocles to contribute his opinion when he provided a city—attacking him in this way because Athens was captured and occupied. [2] This time Themistocles said many things against him and the Corinthians, **declaring that so long as they had two hundred manned ships, the Athenians had both a city and a land greater than theirs, and that none of the Hellenes could repel them if they attacked.** Hdt. 8.61

Threats and power

- ▶ Next he turned his argument to Eurybiades, saying more vehemently than before, “If you remain here, you will be an noble man. If not, you will ruin Hellas. All our strength for war is in our ships, so listen to me. [2] **If you do not do this, we will immediately gather up our households and travel to Siris in Italy, which has been ours since ancient times, and the prophecies say we must found a colony there.** You will remember these words when you are without such allies.” **63.**
- ▶ When Themistocles said this, **Eurybiades changed his mind.** I think he did so chiefly out of fear that the Athenians might desert them if they set sail for the Isthmus. If the Athenians left, the rest would be no match for the enemy, so he made the choice to remain there and fight. Hdt 8.62-3

Help from the West?

- ▶ Read the text on the handout
 - ▶ Who is Gelon and why is he important?
 - ▶ Why do the Spartans and Athenians not want to give him leadership?
 - ▶ What does this mean for our understanding of the Hellenic League?