

THE GREEK AND PERSIAN WARS 500-323 BC



JACK CASSIN-SCOTT

EDITOR: MARTIN WINDROW

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69

THE GREEK AND PERSIAN WARS 500-323_{BC}

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The Greek and Persian Wars 500-323 B.C.

The Ionian Revolt

The years 500-323 B.C. were a period of intense military activity in the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor. The combatants, whether they were involved in petty inter-state conflicts or the oppressive warmongering and imperialism of the Persians and Macedonians, found the fortunes of war erratic and victory often ephemeral.

In the early fifth century B.C. after the fall of the Lydian Empire, the Persian wars began as an ideological conflict, fought between a tyrannical mighty empire and a proud democratic freedom-loving people. The immediate cause was the revolt of the Greek cities in Ionia, along the central coast

of western Asia Minor, under the leadership of Aristagoras. An urgent appeal for aid was answered by both Athens and the small city state of Eretria on the island of Euboea; Athens supplied twenty-five ships. Sparta, the greatest military power within the Hellenic world, had no great liking for distant expeditions and, lacking any great knowledge of events outside her own European Greece, refused help. In the spring of 498 B.C. the Ionian forces, strengthened by the contingents from the other cities, advanced from Ephesus towards Sardis, which they captured and destroyed. For some reason the Athenian contingent was then ordered

1. Relief showing the archer-bodyguard of Darius, the 'Immortals'. These splendid figures were made in colourful glazed bricks and decorated the walls of the Palace of Susa. (The Persepolis)





2. Detail from an Attic marble relief, showing an Athenian hoplite complete with round shield (*aspis*), Doric style helmet, body and leg armour and the long-shafted spear. (National Museum, Athens)

home, but this initial success opened the way for further thrusts all along the coast, spreading the revolt to the cities of the Hellespont, Caria and, finally to the Greek towns of Cyprus.

The Persians reviewed this rebellion with some alarm. The court of Susa saw immediately that, if successful, it would have a drastic effect on the authority of the empire. The 'Great King' Darius realized the skill and strength of the rebels only too well, as they were part of his empire's military forces, and he considered that his most useful course of action was to adopt a naval expedition as the pivot of his campaign; a strike by his ships combined with the landing of troops would prove the crucial factor in turning back the flood of revolt.

Hastily assembled royal contingents from the satrapies of Asia Minor were rushed, first to contain the Ionian infantry, and then to move forward taking the offensive. The Ionians gave way and

made a strategic withdrawal from Sardis, retreating to Ephesus where, after a short fierce battle, they were defeated and forced to capitulate. A Phoenician naval squadron under Persian command was ordered to Cyprus. The tactical intentions were the destruction of the Greek fleet and the landing of an occupation force. The Greek fleet gave a good account of itself, inflicting great damage on the Persian ships, but things went badly for the insurgent Hellenic land forces and Cyprus fell once again under Persian rule. After this the revolt lost most of its impetus.

A year later, the Persian armies, taking full advantage of the declining revolutionary spirit, recaptured the towns and cities on the Hellespont and in Aeolia. Caria, however, offered great resistance, and after two bloody and costly battles the Persians were repulsed. But the Ionian Fleet was defeated off the island of Lade, and, with the fall of the Ionian city of Miletus in 494 B.C., the revolt was over.

Marathon

After the Ionian revolt, the invasion of the Greek mainland became inevitable. In the spring of 492 B.C. Darius sent a probing expeditionary force through the Hellespont; this consisted of a large fleet supported by a well provided army, under the command of Mardonius, his son-in-law. On the borders of Macedonia the troops had to sustain a violent assault by a Thracian tribe and Mardonius was wounded. At the same time this fleet ran into a severe storm whilst rounding the dangerous peninsula of Mount Athos, and half of the ships were either driven ashore or wrecked. Though some authority had been re-established, Mardonius withdrew and returned to Persia where he was temporarily relieved of his command.

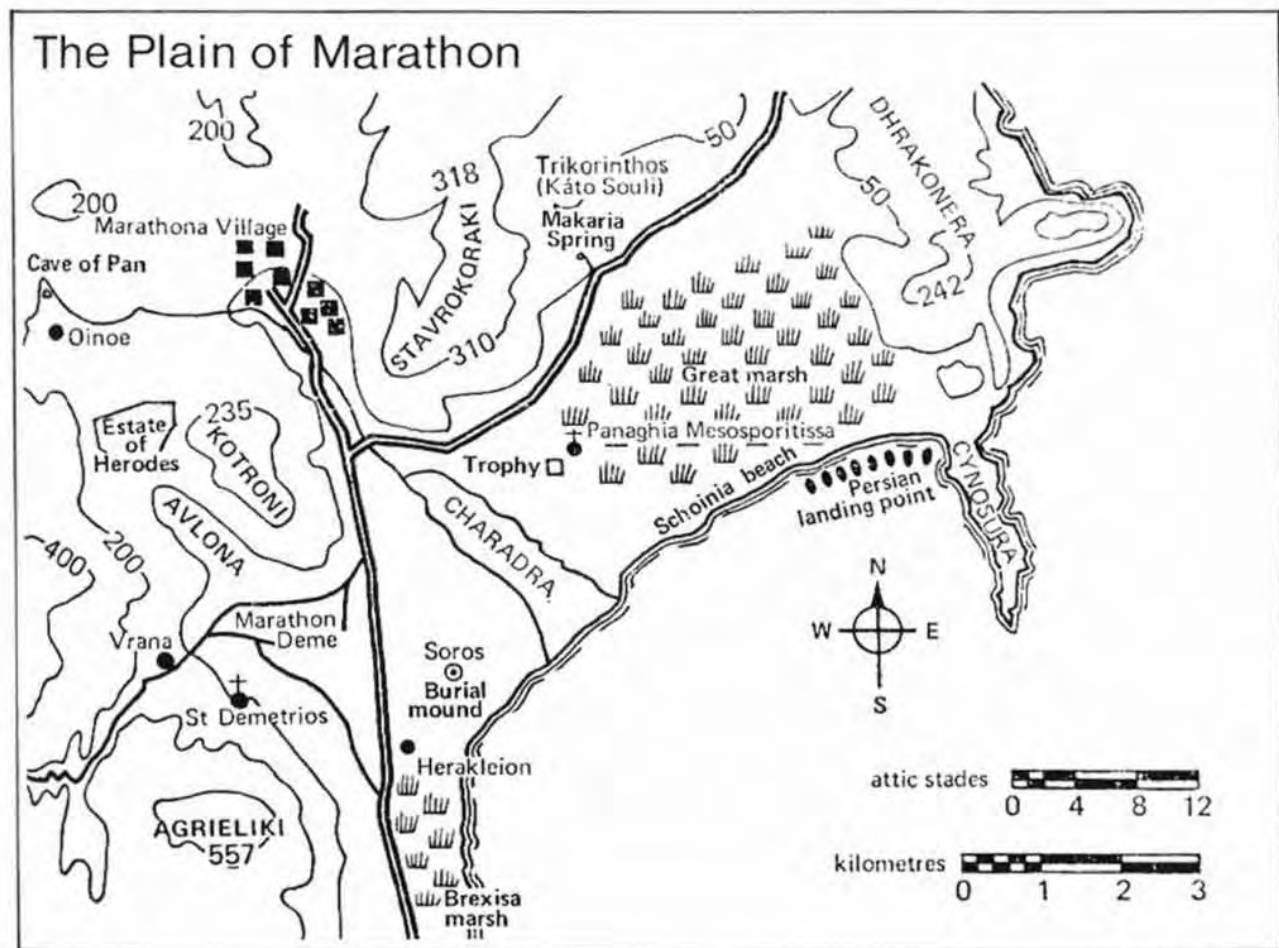
Spring 491 B.C. saw a flurry of envoys from Darius, testing the morale of the Greek states. His request 'demanding earth and water for vassalage' was accepted by many states from the north Aegean to the Dardanelles, but Athens and Sparta refused. With so many states in his power Darius felt ready to attack.

One year later, in the spring of 490 B.C., a large

newly-built fleet and a large army assembled near Tarsus on the Cilician coast opposite Cyprus. This force was under the joint command of Artaphernes (Darius' nephew) and Datis (a Median nobleman), who took with them the exiled Athenian quisling Hippias as their guide. Their orders were to destroy the enemy forces on the mainland of Greece and to pillage and destroy the ports and then the cities of Athens and Eretria, for their part in the revolt. The operation proceeded along the southern shores of Asia Minor, then westwards from Ionia. The fleet moved through the Cyclades reaching Naxos, which had survived earlier attacks but was now assaulted and sacked. Having secured the first objective, command of the Cyclades and the Aegean Sea, the Persians pushed forward with their invasion. The fleet advanced from island to island, commandeering troops and hostages. Resistance was encountered at Carystus, the most southerly

town of Euboea, but, with a force of some 25,000 fighting men against them and their crops destroyed, the Carystians soon capitulated. Persian troops disembarked on Euboea and laid siege to Eretria which resisted for a week. Taking full advantage of a betrayal from inside the city, the Persians captured and pillaged without mercy. A quick thrust across the short crossing brought the Persian army onto the shores of Attica.

Hippias, as the Persian military adviser, recommended the Bay of Marathon as the best place for disembarkation. It was an ideal harbourage, a long firm, flat plain between the mountains and the sea, protected from the north and east winds, and within easy reach of Athens, which lay some 38 kilometres to the north-east, through the Hymettus-Pentele Pass. The sandy beach could accommodate the 600 ships, which required some five kilometres. Furthermore, the open plain of



Marathon offered the right conditions for the Persian cavalry, against which the Athenian infantry would be ineffective.

The invasion fleet beached on the sandy shore, hauled up the ships and disembarked the horses. The site chosen was to the north-east of the bay between the marshes and in the protection of the promontory, called Cynosura, on the landward side. The camp was situated near the Makaria spring which provided good grazing for the horses and a plentiful supply of water.

In Athens the situation was very different from that which had prevailed in the days of Hippias. In power now was an elected commander-in-chief

called a *polemarch* and new military leaders (*strategoi*) of the Republic who were determined to maintain the independence of Athens; the commander-in-chief was Callimachus of Aphidna and the overall planner and strategist was Miltiades (although he also served as one of the ten divisional commanders).

Flaring beacons warned the Athenians that the Persian invasion troops had landed. The news was taken by a fast runner to Sparta; the Spartans, although sympathetic, announced that their religious conscience forbade their troops from entering into the field of battle until after the full moon. As it was 5 August, this meant a wait of six to seven days before the arrival of reinforcements. Another request to Plataea, a small Boeotian town which lay to the north of Attica, was answered with a

3. Detail from an amphora showing a mounted warrior in full armour, accompanied by his servant. (National Museum, Naples)



volunteer force of several hundred men. Miltiades gave the first instruction for battle, 'contain the invading forces on the beaches and resist an advance on Athens'. Within a few hours of the alarm, some 10,000 heavily armed infantrymen, mainly hoplites, were on the march to the plain of Marathon through the Hymettus-Pentele gap.

The Athenians took up their position at the southern end of the plain with Mount Agrieliki on their left flank and the sea to the right; the Brexisa marsh lay slightly to the rear. The coastal road to Athens was now effectively sealed. Trees were cut down and man-hauled into defensive positions with the branches facing the Persian lines, a precaution against the Persian cavalry. From 7 to 11 August the front lines remained static, five kilometres apart, neither side willing to make the first move. The Athenians were loath to commit their troops to battle, as the advantage lay with the Persians in an open-plain conflict. Against the superior Persian force of cavalry and archers, the Athenians had only infantrymen.

The Persians remained immobile because they had no wish to engage their own weak and inferior infantry against the Greek hoplites in their prepared position; they were also hoping for a signal from Hippias' friends within Athens itself. But the stalemate could not last indefinitely and Datis finally put his own battle plans into action. Under cover of darkness on the night of 11/12 August he re-embarked most of the cavalry as well as his task force and, slipping out, sailed for Phaleron Bay leaving behind Artaphernes with a holding force facing the Athenians. The departure of Datis did not go unnoticed and Miltiades' scouts were quick to inform him of the fact. The Athenian commanders were summoned and Miltiades outlined the only possible chance of a Greek victory: the Persians could not possibly reach Phaleron by sea in less than ten hours; beaching and disembarking would take a few more hours, by which time it would be late afternoon or early evening; in the immediate vicinity, on the plain of Marathon, Artaphernes had lost a large part of the cavalry and troops, but would still have his archers. The question was whether the Athenians should risk an engagement with the Persian forces; if they did, and defeated them, there was still time to double back for the defence of Athens. It was 5.30 a.m., so

the engagement must be fought and won in three hours. Time was short and the order to attack was given.

The Athenian troops were drawn up in the battle order Miltiades had planned. The commander-in-chief, Callimachus commanded the right flank, and the left flank was held by the Plataeans. The centre, which was to take the brunt of the first onslaught, was under the joint command of Themistocles and Aristides. The Athenian tactic was to weaken the centre by widening the space between each man and to reduce the ranks to four instead of the usual eight. The chance of a breakthrough was a calculated risk. The main strength was massed on the flanks which it was

4. Detail from a bas-relief in the south portico of the treasury of the palace showing Darius I, 521-480 B.C. (The Persepolis)



hoped would complete an encircling movement.

The Persian forces were deployed as Miltiades anticipated: the centre was staffed with the crack troops and the flanks were held by inferior battalions drawn from the conscripts of the empire. The risks for the Athenians were great, however;

5. Detail from a piece of red-figure Attic bowl (5th century B.C.), showing an Athenian hoplite warrior attacking a Persian standard-bearer. (Louvre, Paris)

their strength was a little over half that of the Persian centre, and the open ground to be covered put the Greeks at the mercy of the elite Persian archers.

At about 6 a.m. on 12 August the distance between the two armies was approximately one and a half kilometres; the trumpet sounded the command and the Athenian ranks moved forward. The advance started briskly, developed into a trot, then



broke into the double as they rushed the last 140 metres to avoid the hail of arrows. The Persian royal contingents put up a strong resistance, the centre standing its ground, forcing the Athenian hoplites back. Meanwhile, on either flank the Athenians with their strong concentration of troops carried all before them and put the Persian flanks to flight, many retreating to the Great Marsh where they drowned. Others retreated along the shore to the waiting ships in the lee of the promontory. With the Persian flanks in complete disarray, the Athenian and Plataean flankers disengaged the pursuit according to plan. Regrouping, they returned to the scene of the battle where the remaining Persians were outflanked in a double pincer movement. The retreating Persians fought their way back in the direction of their ships along the narrow gap between the marshes and the beach. They were closely pursued by the Athenians, who were determined to destroy the enemy forces and fleet. The failure of the Persians to envisage such a contingency was quite astonishing, especially as the obvious Athenian preparations can hardly have escaped their notice.

By 9 a.m. on 12 August the surviving Persian royal troops and the ships of the Marathon task force were out at sea and heading for Phaleron. In the final count of casualties the Persians had lost 6,400 men and an unrecorded number of prisoners and wounded along with seven ships. The Athenians suffered surprisingly few casualties with only 192 dead, including their commander-in-chief Callimachus.

In order to complete his overall strategic plan, Miltiades had to demand from his men one more Herculean endeavour, the march back to Athens, 'as fast as their feet could carry them'. Commander Aristides and one division were left behind to guard the prisoners of war and captured equipment. The return of the Athenian army, quick in comparison with the slower naval squadrons of Datis, had to take full advantage of surprise if Miltiades' plan was to take effect. When the Persian invasion task force arrived, the Athenians were already in their defensive positions at Cynosarges, south of the city and facing the sea. And, when Datis arrived in Phaleron Bay, he found the city well defended. Attempts to land would have been useless so he anchored and awaited Artaphernes'

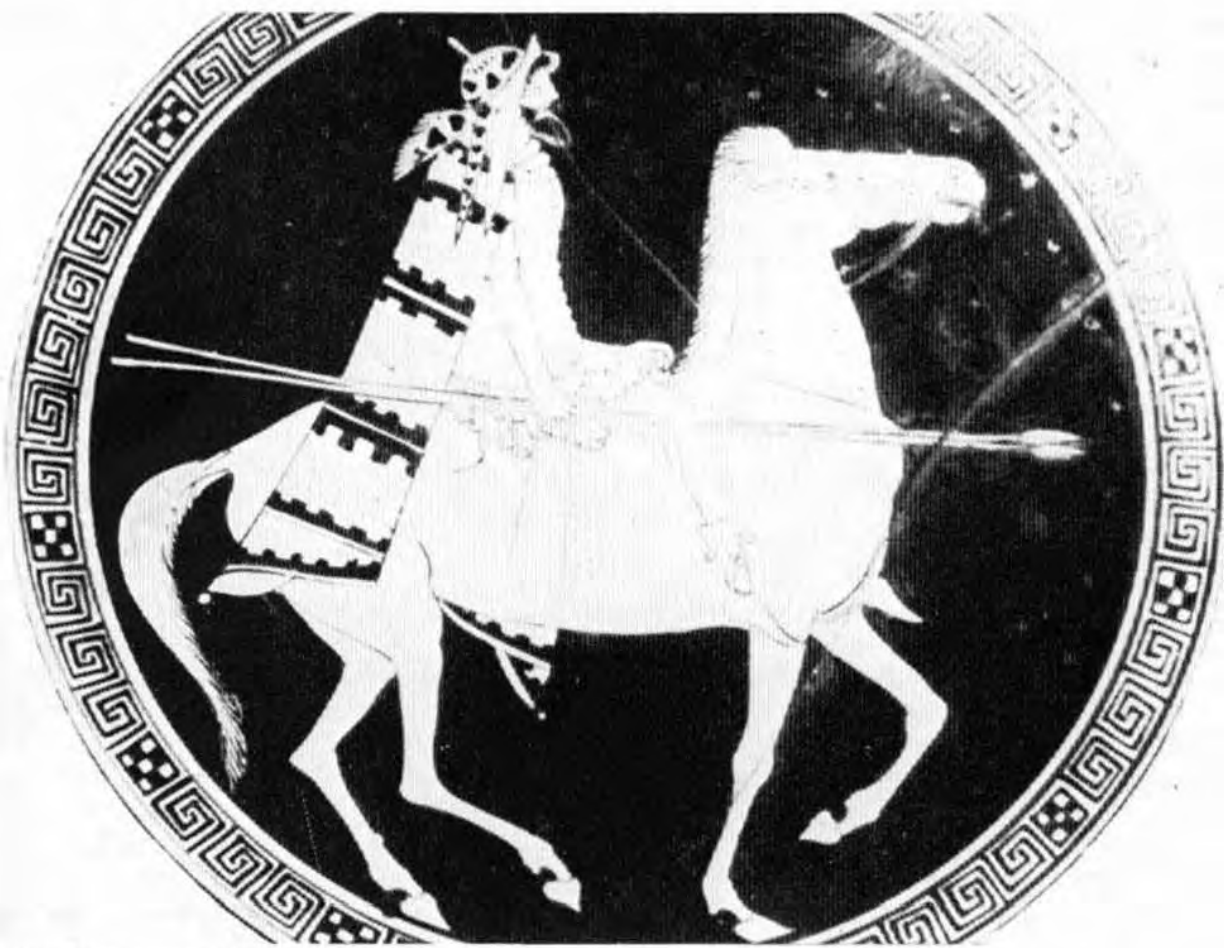


6. Pieces of lead shot which were used as missiles with the aid of a leather sling. The sling was swung round, and after some turns a wider sweep was accomplished and one end of the leather sling was released, hurling the lead shot away with great momentum. The shot was often inscribed with messages. (British Museum, London)

detachment. Their arrival in a depleted and battered condition left only one course for the Persian invasion force, a strategic withdrawal, back to Asia.

Marathon had proved that the heavy troops of the hoplite infantry could compete successfully against superiority of numbers, particularly when their opponents were only lightly armed, but the Greek victory should not be overestimated. The Persian losses were easily borne by so large a force and served only to emphasize the need for a properly prepared expedition if Greece was to be subjugated. That the Persians would return was inevitable, and it was clearly essential for the Greeks to realize that, despite the glory of Marathon, they had done little more than buy time in which to prepare themselves for the resumption of the conflict.

In 489 B.C. Miltiades, commanding the Athenian fleet, attempted to regain control of those Aegean islands which had capitulated to the Persians, but his naval force was insufficient to accomplish this task and his blockade of Paros failed—a defeat which led to his imprisonment at Athens, where he died soon after of a wound received at Paros. The Athenians next tried to obtain mastery of the Saronic Gulf by overpower-



7. Detail from a vase painting showing an Athenian horseman, 475 B.C. The horse is without saddle or stirrups but with full head harness. The horseman wears a long, highly-patterned, stiff cloak and carries the short javelins. (Villa Giulia, Rome)

Thermopylae

ing the pro-Persian island of Aegina whose raiders continually ravaged the shores of Attica. This too was a failure and it became obvious that the Athenian fleet could offer little protection against a hostile sea power.

The vacancy created by the fall of Miltiades was filled by Themistocles, who fully appreciated the need for a strong naval force; the discovery of new silver deposits in the Laurion mining district placed surplus capital at the disposal of the Assembly and enabled the Athenians, persuaded by Themistocles, to commence a shipbuilding programme intended to produce two hundred new triremes for the Athenian fleet.

By this time Greece had received alarming reports of extensive Persian invasion preparations, rumours propagated by Darius' son, Xerxes, the new Persian king, who appreciated the psychological effect of such stories, perhaps hoping thereby to induce some areas of Greece to capitulate without a fight.

To facilitate the movement of his army into Greece, Xerxes had ordered the bridging of the Hellespont, a magnificent achievement on the part of his engineers who used over six hundred ships to construct two huge pontoon bridges. In order to avoid risking his fleet around the dangerous cape of Mount Athos he had a canal dug across the isthmus, and traces of this canal can still be identified.

Xerxes demanded contingents from every satrapy of the Persian Empire and the response enabled him to amass an imposing force. By 481 B.C. he had

set up his headquarters at Sardes in Lydia and sent out to all the Greek states except Athens and Sparta for the earth and water of submission. The size of the Persian army has been a question of dispute and conjecture ever since Herodotus' original figure, grossly exaggerated, of over two million combatants. More realistic latter-day commentators estimate Xerxes' force at some 150,000 combatants, approximately half of which are thought to have been Persian troops, and it included the best cavalry available from the Mediterranean area. His fleet, said by Herodotus to number about 1,200 vessels, many of which were small transports, boasted a contingent of skilled Phoenician seamen and forces from Egypt, Caria and Ionia. Since an army of such a size could not hope to live off so arid a land as Greece it needed to be provisioned from the sea as it proceeded around the shores of the Thracian sea and into central Greece. The fleet would also provide a military back-up whenever necessary.

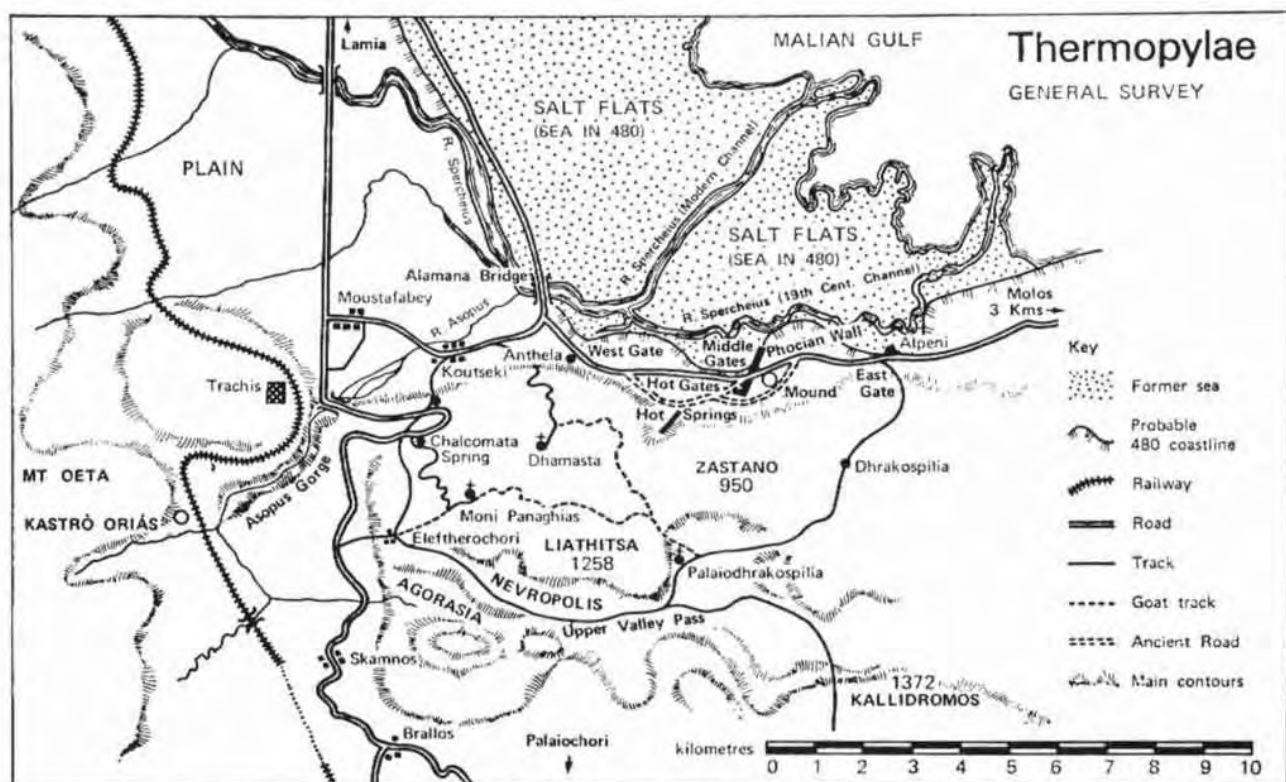
Xerxes clearly intended the subjugation of the whole of Greece if possible for he had committed an enormous number of troops and had made extensive preparations, including an agreement with the

Carthaginians who were to pin down the western Greeks of Sicily whilst Xerxes attacked from the east.

By the spring of 480 B.C. the huge army had crossed the Hellespont where it was joined by the fleet, and was making its way, in three separate columns, towards Thessaly, preceded by alarming rumours that it was drinking the rivers dry.

Meanwhile, the Greeks, in the autumn of 481 B.C., summoned to the Isthmus of Corinth representatives of all those states which had not already submitted to Persia, and an alliance, led by Athens and Sparta, was formed. However, a sudden blow was dealt to Greek resolution by the voice of the Delphic oracle, which predicted disaster for the Greeks and advised the Athenians in particular to flee for their lives. The oracle claimed that the only hope lay in a wooden wall, and although this presumably indicated the wooden defences of the Acropolis, it was interpreted by Themistocles to mean the Greek fleet.

On the question of strategy, opinion at the Isthmian conference was divided. The Spartans and their Peloponnesian neighbours held tenaciously to the view that the main defence should





8. Detail from a relief on a Greek gravestone, Attic late 5th century B.C.; this depicts a struggle between Athenian and Spartan warriors during the Peloponnesian war. (Metropolitan Museum of Art, U.S.A.)

be at the Isthmus of Corinth—the gateway to the Peloponnese. This plan however had drawbacks, principally that it would leave the Persians free to establish themselves in northern and central Greece, also that the Isthmus could be outflanked by sea and its defenders caught between two forces. If the plan was adopted Athens would be left to the ravages of the Persians, and, understandably, this was an unpopular idea with the Athenians. Consequently it was agreed that an attempt should be made to hold the Persians in Thessaly; because of the inferiority of Greek numbers, however, this would only be possible if the narrow passes were defended. At the request of the Thessalians, an initial force of 10,000 hoplites in two divisions—one Spartan under Evacnetus and the other Athenian under Themistocles—were transported by ship to Halus whence they marched to the Vale of Tempe in northern Thessaly. But, on arrival, Evacnetus found that there were more passes than he could reasonably hope to hold, and, much to the discouragement of the Greeks, the army retreated to the Isthmus.

The Council at Corinth now decided to attempt a defence in the area of central Greece to the west of

the Euboean Channel, a position favourable to the Greeks because it comprised narrow, easily defensible passes for the army and because any outflanking movement by the Persian fleet would take it into the Euboean Channel where its size would be a disadvantage. If the land force could hold out against Xerxes' army long enough to induce such a move by the Persian fleet, the Greeks might inflict upon the latter a defeat sufficient to prevent its attacking the Isthmus by sea. Given a little extra time by Xerxes, who had moved his army on a ten-day detour of Mount Olympus, the Greeks therefore resolved to stand at Thermopylae, supported by their fleet in the Malian Gulf. The Greek army, led by Leonidas, king of Sparta, consisted of 7,000 to 8,000 hoplites and light troops, some of whom were Boeotians of dubious loyalty, and included the 300-strong Spartan royal bodyguard. Under the effective control of the Athenian Themistocles, the Greek fleet, comprising 300 triremes, 147 of which were from Athens, was moored in the bay of Artemision, north of Euboea.

It has been suggested that the Persian plan was to arrive simultaneously at Thermopylae and the northern end of the Euboean Channel whilst a Phoenician naval squadron was to enter the channel from the south and trap the Greek fleet, but the Persian fleet was still at its base at Therma when Xerxes' advance forces met the Greek hoplites defending Thermopylae. On hearing this news the Persian king ordered his fleet to proceed to Euboea, but it was caught in a storm off the east coast of Magnesia and lost, according to Herodotus, 400 warships. The Phoenician squadron was also routed by the gale, enabling 53 Greek ships guarding the channel at Chalcis to head back towards the main fleet at Artemision.

Determined to take advantage of the Persian disorder Themistocles persuaded the Greeks to attack. The engagement which followed was inconclusive, but it became clear that the superior mobility of the Greek triremes was causing problems for the larger Persian forces. The following day, the Persians mounted an offensive but again the outcome was indecisive, and despite heavy losses on both sides, the Greeks managed to hold the enemy back, preventing it from supporting the army at Thermopylae.

Whilst the fleets were thus engaged at Arte-

mision, the Persians had been attempting to break through the pass at Thermopylae. The pass consisted, at this time, of three narrow defiles or 'gates' of which the central one was Thermopylae proper. The two other gates, the West, lying a little east of the mouth of the Asopus river, and the East, near the town of Alpeni, were situated equidistantly on either side of the Middle Gate. South of the pass lay the escarpment of Mount Oeta, and through this terrain ran a track which extended from the East gate to the Asopus Gorge. By means of this track the pass at Thermopylae could be outflanked from either direction. Leonidas chose to occupy the Middle Gate, where the pass was probably only four metres wide. A few men would be able to hold such a position, although the Greeks intended to send reinforcements to aid Leonidas' small band. To protect himself from being outflanked to the south, Leonidas posted 1,000 Phocian troops, all the men he could spare, to guard the track through the escarpment, and then settled down to await Xerxes' arrival.

On reaching the Malian plain, Xerxes waited for four days, hoping, according to Herodotus, that his vast army would frighten the Greeks into flight, but some recent historians think it more probable that

he was awaiting a Persian naval victory at Artemision before engaging the Greek hoplites. On the fifth day, however, he attacked the Middle Gate and was repulsed by the heavily armoured Greeks, who were superior in respect of training and equipment and against whom his light troops had little effect. This tactic was repeated the next day with the same result, and Xerxes realized that some other way of breaking the Greek position would have to be found, for, with his navy trapped at Artemision, he was without supplies.

The problem was suddenly resolved by one Ephialtes who informed Xerxes of the existence of the path which the Phocians were guarding. Acting as a guide, Ephialtes led a contingent of the 'Immortals' (royal bodyguard) along the track in an attempt to attack Leonidas' position from the rear. The Phocian guard was routed and news soon reached Leonidas of the imminent danger. Opinions differ as to what occurred next, but it is fairly clear that the forces from central Greece moved back towards the East Gate leaving Leonidas and

9. A detail from a large mosaic showing the struggle between Darius in a chariot and Alexander and his troops. The detail of the Persian soldier's dress shows the high loose head covering which also concealed the lower part of the face. (National Museum, Naples)



his Peloponnesians at the mercy of the Persians. It has been suggested that the Spartan king, retaining the Spartans, Thebans and Thespians, either directed a strategic withdrawal of his troops from an obviously hopeless position or sent men back to the East Gate to try to prevent the Persian 'Immortals' emerging from the mouth of the path. More cynical commentators believe that all, except the Peloponnesians and a handful of other troops, fled for their lives. It was now only a matter of time

10. Detail from an amphora painting, showing a Thessalian horseman. The unusual headgear was called a sun-hat because of its distinctive wide brim and small crown. He wore a short patterned cloak and carried javelins, and he rode without saddle or stirrups.

before a Persian victory, and Leonidas, scorning surrender, made a last stand on a small hill east of the Middle Gate; he managed to send word of the disaster to the fleet at Artemision. The Spartans soon fell to the sheer weight of the Persian numbers; reputedly, only the Thebans asked for quarter. On hearing of the fall of Thermopylae the Greek fleet, in a hopeless position now that it was no longer supporting a land force, disengaged from the enemy at night and headed south towards the Saronic Gulf, where it moored finally off Salamis.

The whole of Attica now lay open to the invader and the Persians moved into Boeotia, setting up



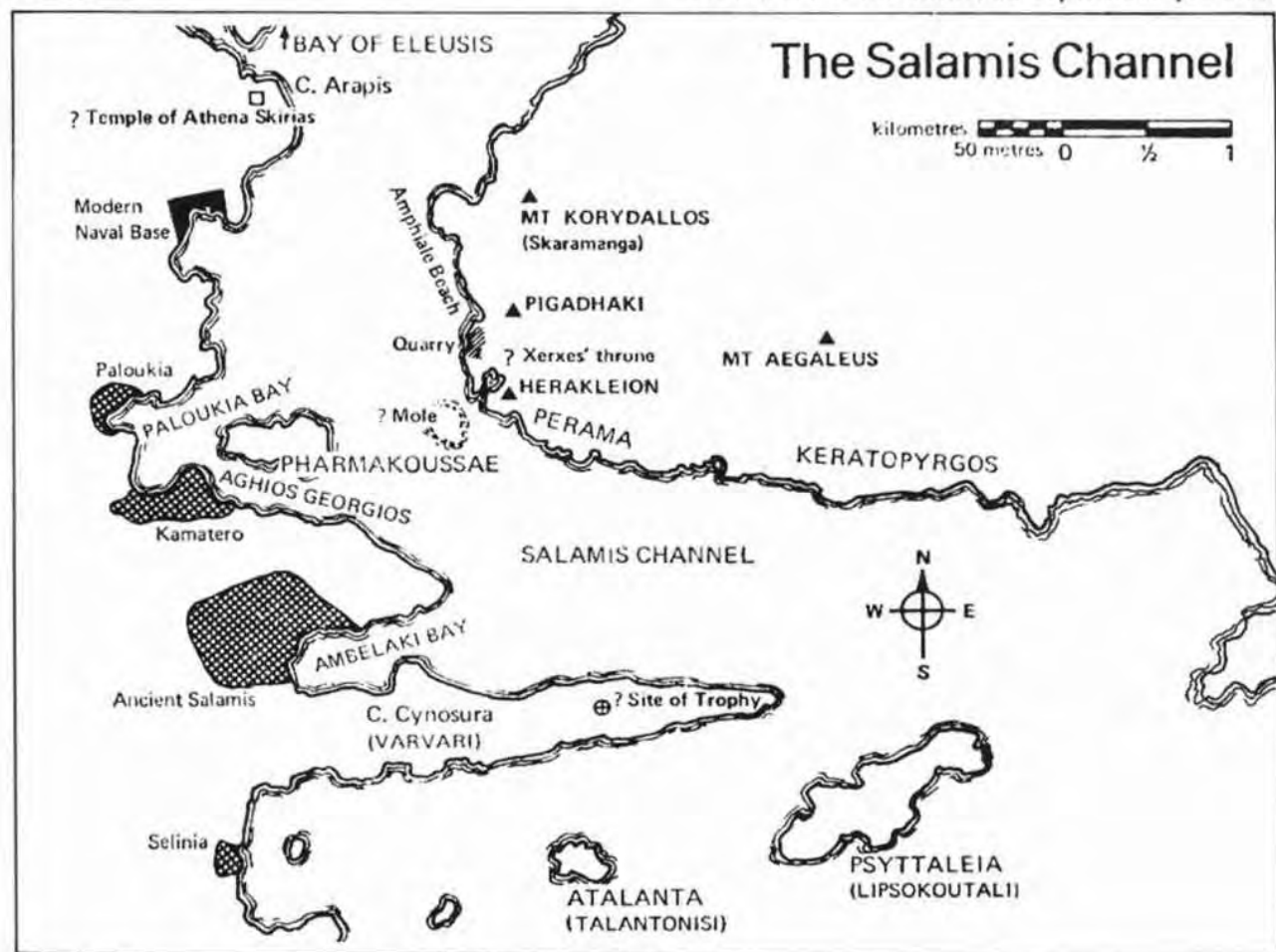
their headquarters at Thebes. The Athenians, seeing their city powerless against Xerxes' forces, evacuated the non-combatant population to Aegina, Troezen and Salamis whilst the able-bodied men went aboard the ships to await the next conflict. A few put their faith in a defence of Athens and remained in the stockaded Acropolis. The Spartans, meanwhile, had built a fortification across the Isthmus of Corinth and the Greek army now concentrated on the defence which had, all along, most appealed to the Peloponnesians.

Salamis

Xerxes had no trouble in annihilating the defenders of the Acropolis and pillaging Athens, and brought his fleet into the Saronic Gulf to a mooring at Phaleron. Whilst the Greek fleet remained undefeated, there was no possibility of Persian mastery of Greece; sooner or later a naval engagement was inevitable.

Themistocles was strongly in favour of an early engagement, preferably on Greek terms, but, as usual, Greek leadership was divided, some still preferring a consolidated defence of the Isthmus. However, the size of the Athenian contribution to the fleet enabled Themistocles to force a decision by threatening a withdrawal of the Athenians if battle was not offered in the Straits of Salamis. This position was favourable to the Greeks because of the tactical disadvantage which the Persian numbers would experience there. At Artemision the Persian fleet had been able to deploy itself with relative ease, but there would be considerable restrictions on manoeuvres in the narrow straits north of Salamis. Themistocles had, of course, still to induce Xerxes to offer battle, and, faced with the wavering morale of his men, he is said to have enticed the Persian commander with a false message suggesting that the Greeks, dejected and irresolute, would offer little or no resistance.

On the eve of the battle, 22 September 480 B.C.,





11. Detail from a Greek vase painting 450 B.C., showing an archer stringing his bow.

the Greek fleet lay between the north coast of the island of Salamis and the coast of Attica north-west of Piraeus. The Persians had drawn up facing north in a line, three deep, from the Cynosura promontory on Salamis to Piraeus. The channel between Salamis and Megara, through which the Greek position could be reached from the west, was left unguarded by Themistocles, possibly to tempt Xerxes to employ the same tactic as had initially been adopted at Artemision—to divide his force and trap the Greek fleet in the hope of capturing it intact. This Xerxes did, sending his Egyptian contingent around the south coast of Salamis to seal the western channel. The Greeks were apparently still arguing when they received news of the Persian moves, and they realized that there was no other course open to them but to fight. Accordingly, the Greek fleet drew up in battle formation facing Heracleion on the shore of Attica. They had at their disposal about 300 vessels, the Athenians taking the left wing and the Aeginetans the right. By the morning of the battle the Persians had deployed, with their right wing held by the skilful Phoenicians and the Ionian ships (once more under Persian rule) on the left. Whilst still manoeuvring into position, the Persians were rowed upon by the Greeks who began to force the leading Persian ships back upon their fellows, causing disorder in the overcrowded Persian formation. This was followed by an Athenian flank attack on the Phoenician ships, which were pushed back into their own



12. Miltiades, the Greek commander who was responsible for the Greek victory at Marathon.

centre and onto the coast of Attica. An eventual encircling movement behind the Persian centre proved decisive, and the Ionian Greeks, their resistance broken, retreated. Xerxes' naval force suffered heavy losses—according to Herodotus, 200 ships—and headed back to Phaleron whence it returned eventually to the Hellespont. Faced now with the impossible task of provisioning a huge army from such a depleted fleet, Xerxes had no option but to withdraw the bulk of his forces.

The Persians had been defeated by a combination of superior Greek tactics and their own ineptitude in failing to appreciate that sheer weight of numbers was insufficient to carry the day against forces which, although smaller, were of higher quality. The fight for independence was a powerful motivation for the Greeks, and the undisputed victory at Salamis boosted their morale and reputation at the expense of Xerxes' mighty war machine.

Unaware of Xerxes' intentions, the Greeks delayed before setting out in pursuit of the

retreating Persian fleet but eventually followed it as far as the island of Andros where they held a council of war. Themistocles favoured sailing at once for the Hellespont and destroying Xerxes' way back across the bridges, thus trapping him without supplies; but others felt that this would mean the pillaging of Greece by a large and starving army, and the plan was dropped.

A great deal of prestige had been lost by Xerxes at Salamis and he had to consider carefully the implications of withdrawal. Loss of face might inspire revolt on the western border of his empire as it had already done in Thrace and Macedonia, and he decided to maintain the threat to Greece by leaving part of his army in Thessaly, Thrace and Macedonia, under Mardonius and Artabazus, while taking the rest back with him over the Hellespont to reassert control on the eastern Aegean coast, whither he sent his fleet for the same purpose. Mardonius was left in Thessaly with

13. Detail from a relief showing the head of a Greek warrior in a Boeotian-type helmet. (The Alexander Sarcophagus, Istanbul Museum)





14. Figures from a relief showing a struggle between Macedonian and Persian warriors. These figures were carved on the famous Alexander Sarcophagus by order of the king of Sidon, Abdalonymus, who secured his throne through the influence of Alexander. (The Alexander Sarcophagus, Istanbul Museum)

sufficient forces to renew the offensive at his discretion. His army consisted of 12,000 cavalry and about 50,000 infantry of whom some were contingents from central and northern Greece. Included in this force, which was a continual threat to Greek independence, were the Immortals and the Guard Cavalry.

Plataea and Mycale

An attempt to woo the Athenians and their valuable fleet into a treaty with the Persians met with failure, and Mardonius, hoping to threaten them into submission, marched on Athens. This provoked the Athenians into an agreement with Sparta to mount an immediate offensive upon the invader. Besides, Xerxes might at any time send a refurbished fleet to assist Mardonius; the Greeks could not afford to hesitate for too long.

As the Spartans moved up through the Corinthian isthmus in 479 B.C., Mardonius fired

Athens and retired to Boeotia where the terrain was admirably suited to his cavalry, assembling his forces opposite Mount Citherae on the Asopus plain between Thebes and Plataea. By felling a number of trees in the area he created still further advantage for his cavalry, and was waiting at the ready when the 35,000-strong Greek hoplite force, commanded by the Spartan Pausanias, moved over Mount Citherae and camped near Plataea on the slopes overlooking the plain.

Mardonius commenced hostilities by sending his cavalry against the Greeks, who were positioned on ground unsuitable for a cavalry action. Predictably, the Persians were forced to retreat, but it has been proposed that the loss of his cavalry was a price Mardonius was prepared to pay in order to lure the Greeks into a more open position on the plain. This is indeed what happened, for Pausanias led his men onto the plain and stationed them between Plataea and the Asopus, a little south of the river. The Spartan hoplites took the right flank, the Athenians the left, with the remainder of the allies occupying the centre. On seeing this, Mardonius drew up his forces facing them, on the other side of the river, and in this position the two armies waited, so Herodotus says, for eight days. Each commander may have been waiting for the other to make the first move, both appreciating the strength of a massed hoplite defence. However, Persian raids in the mountains behind the Greek lines seriously threatened Pausanias' supplies, a situation which the stationary Greek forces on the plain could in no way alleviate. After a period of sporadic skirmishes between the two forces, Mardonius decided to commit himself and attacked with his cavalry, whose missiles pinned down the luckless Greeks.

Continued pressure from the Persian cavalry succeeded in preventing the Greek left and centre from using the waters of the Asopus, compelling them to rely on the Gargaphia spring which lay behind the Spartans and from which these latter had been drawing their supplies. Unfortunately for Pausanias the Persians managed somehow to outflank or push back the Spartans and render the spring unusable, thus leaving the Greeks without water. Furthermore, the Greek supply routes through Mount Citherae had been besieged. It was now clear that Mardonius was content to pursue a policy of attrition which might well succeed if

Pausanias did not manage to re-establish his lines of communication and hence the provisioning of his army.

The Spartan commander was faced with a hazardous retreat into Mount Citherae to hold the main passes, a manoeuvre hindered by the poor spirit in which some of the allied Greeks received orders from a commander who was not of their own city-state. It seems that Pausanias proposed to withdraw the Spartans, who lay on the Greek right wing, to Mount Citherae in order to re-open the supply lines, whilst the allied forces in the Greek centre were to retreat south toward Plataea. Last to move would be the Athenians, who were to proceed south-eastwards across the path recently taken by the allies and position themselves as the new Greek centre.

Several factors complicated this manoeuvre. The attempt was severely handicapped by darkness, and it is believed by some that the Athenians refused to obey Pausanias' order to withdraw, leaving themselves cut off from the rest of the army which proceeded as planned towards Mount Citherae. Although the allied Greeks seem to have moved back successfully to Plataea, dissension in the Spartan ranks delayed the Greek right flank

and the manoeuvre was not executed until day-break.

Mardonius' cavalry were sent to harass the Spartans until the infantry could be brought to engage them, and, directing the Boeotians on the Persian right to attack the exposed Athenians, he mobilized the bulk of his army against the Greek right. Realizing that his Spartans would have to bear the brunt of the Persian attack, Pausanias sent to the embattled Athenians for assistance, but the Greek centre was by now pinned down and could not respond.

When the Persian infantry was upon the Spartans, Pausanias decided to take advantage of the congested Persian numbers and launch a counter-attack with his hoplites. There followed a fierce battle which remained undecided until Mardonius himself fell and his men fled. The Athenians meanwhile had managed to rout the Boeotians and the Greek forces went on to capture and destroy the Persian camp.

Following up their victory, the Greeks besieged Thebes, which capitulated after twenty days and handed over to Pausanias, and thereby to their

15. Detail from an early bas-relief showing Arabs mounted on a camel being attacked by Assyrians, 7th century B.C. (Palace of Assurbanipal, Nineveh)





16. Detail from the 'Gigantomachia' frieze, showing the Greek hoplite shield formation. (Siphnian Treasury, Delphi)

deaths, those leaders who were sympathetic to the Persian cause. By this time the Persians were making their way back to the Hellespont, having withdrawn a substantial part of their army, under Artabazus, from the field at Plataea.

During the summer of 479 B.C. a message was received from the Ionian Greeks which suggested that if they were given the support of a fleet they would revolt against the Persians. Commanded by the Spartan king, Leotychidas, the Greek fleet left Delos for Samos, off the eastern Aegean coast, and moved from there to Mycale in Ionia where Xerxes had amassed a large army to maintain a surveillance of the Ionian Greeks. Leotychidas' forces landed near Mycale and successfully assaulted the Persian position; the Persian ships, which had been beached for safety, were destroyed.

Having thus immobilized Persian sea power the Greeks effectively protected themselves against further invasion from Asia and were now sole masters of the Aegean. The victory at Mycale, facilitated by the Ionian Greeks who deserted the Persians as soon as the battle commenced, led to uprisings throughout the Ionian coastal area and the expulsion of Persian tyrants and garrisons.

The Greeks moved next against Sestos in order to wrest the Hellespont from the Persians and to destroy the gateway into Greek territory. Led by Xanthippus, the Athenians besieged Sestos and the city fell at last in the spring of 478 B.C., though

hostilities did not cease immediately, and for many years afterwards Persian troops remained in Thrace. The conflict ended finally, it is believed, with a treaty dating from 449-48 B.C., the Peace of Callias.

After the victories at Plataea and Mycale an allied Greek fleet under Pausanias set about driving the Persians out of the Carian islands, Cyprus and the Hellespont. Pausanias, however, proved to be a tyrannical commander, whose ways were unpopular with the non-Peloponnesian contingents of the fleet; eventually, after an Ionian mutiny following the taking of Byzantium, he was recalled by the Spartans, who pulled out of the venture altogether.

The Peloponnesian War

The Athenians now settled down to consider the future of the Aegean states and their own relations with the Peloponnesians. The Persians might one day return to Greece to renew the conflict, and the Greeks wished, moreover, to retain control of the eastern Aegean coast from which the recent invasion had come. The Spartans, who had always been reluctant to join offensives, were clearly not interested in further expeditions against the Persians and were unresponsive to Athenian initiatives in this direction; no doubt they watched with concern as the Athenians hastened to fortify their city, which had twice been ravaged during the war with Persia. Work was also started to make Piraeus into a well-protected naval base.

Athens, determined to maintain the pressure against the Persians, sought alliances with sympathetic states, and in the winter of 478-77 B.C. the Delian-Attic Maritime league was formed. Over 100 states joined with Athens in an alliance apparently intended to be a permanent union. The headquarters were situated on Delos, where representatives met and the treasury was founded. Larger states supplied ships to augment the Athenian fleet whilst the smaller ones contributed financial support assessed by Aristides, the treasurer. Apart from binding the League together on a sure economic footing, this practice placed large sums of money under Athenian control. The League operated effectively in harassing the



- 1 Persian standard-bearer
- 2 Persian Immortal spearman
- 3 Persian archer

Arab camel cavalry





- 1 Greek light infantry (gymnet)
- 2 Greek heavy infantry (hoplite)
- 3 Greek slinger



Persian cavalry



- 1 Greek hoplite
- 2 Greek archer
- 3 Cretan archer



- 1 Phrygian heavy-infantry mercenary
- 2 Persian spearman
- 3 Persian officer



- 1 Greek cavalryman
- 2 Thessalian cavalryman
- 3 Armoured infantry hoplite

Greek armoured infantry



Persians, but it slowly became clear that the Athenians did not consider it to be a democratic alliance of free states. Some time during the period 470–69 B.C., Naxos terminated its alliance with the League. It was immediately besieged and forced to capitulate; Athens, it seemed, would not tolerate insubordination from her ‘allies’. At about the same time Carystus and the surrounding land in southern Euboea was forcibly annexed by the League for the sake of consolidating its territories. The implications were obvious—Athens was transforming the League into an empire. The forces available to the League were considerable. In 468 B.C. it dealt a decisive blow to the Persians who were launching a new fleet, comprising 200 ships, from their Phoenician shipyards. War between Sparta and Athens gradually became inevitable, for the Athenians had

17. Greek warrior with Doric-type helmet and the *aspis* round shield. The long-shafted spear is missing. (Aphaia Temple, Aegina)



A

B



C



D

18. A. Persian helmet, probably worn at Marathon 490 B.C. B. Thracian helmet 5th century B.C. C. Boeotian helmet, possibly worn by Alexander's soldiers 3rd century B.C. D. Greek helmet 500–300 B.C.

made alliances with Thessaly and Megara and with Argos, a powerful Peloponnesian rival of the Spartans. As relations worsened with Aegina and Corinth, who were jealous of the trading potential of Piraeus, by now the chief Greek port, tension in the Peloponnese rapidly became acute.

The prominent figure in Athenian politics at this time was Pericles, who was determined to unite the whole of Greece under Athenian religious leadership. In 457 B.C., he completed the fortification of Piraeus and linked it to Athens with a walled corridor about seven kilometres wide, and his command was to see the city reach the height of its imperialist aspirations.

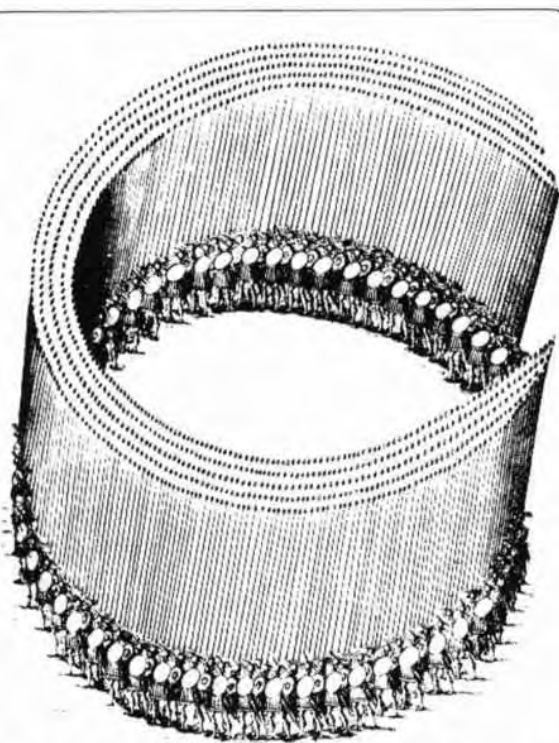
Athenian expansionist policy had become so obvious that Sparta sent an 11,000-strong army to Boeotia to persuade its inhabitants to join the Peloponnesian League and resist Athens, and this force defeated an Athenian army at Tanagra, east of Thebes; but it then withdrew to the Isthmus leaving the Boeotians at the mercy of the Athenians, who took control of the whole area, except Thebes itself, two months later. Eventually a five-year peace treaty was negotiated between the Athenians and the Peloponnesian League in 452 B.C., but it was not until 445 B.C. that a definitive

truce, intended to last for thirty years, was agreed upon by Athens and Sparta. The two states could, however, find no mutually acceptable terms which would be likely to form a lasting peace, and the treaty fell prey to the conflict of interests which characterized relations between Athens and Sparta.

19. Detail from a 5th-century B.C. painted vase, showing a variety of weapons and clothing. (Louvre, Paris)

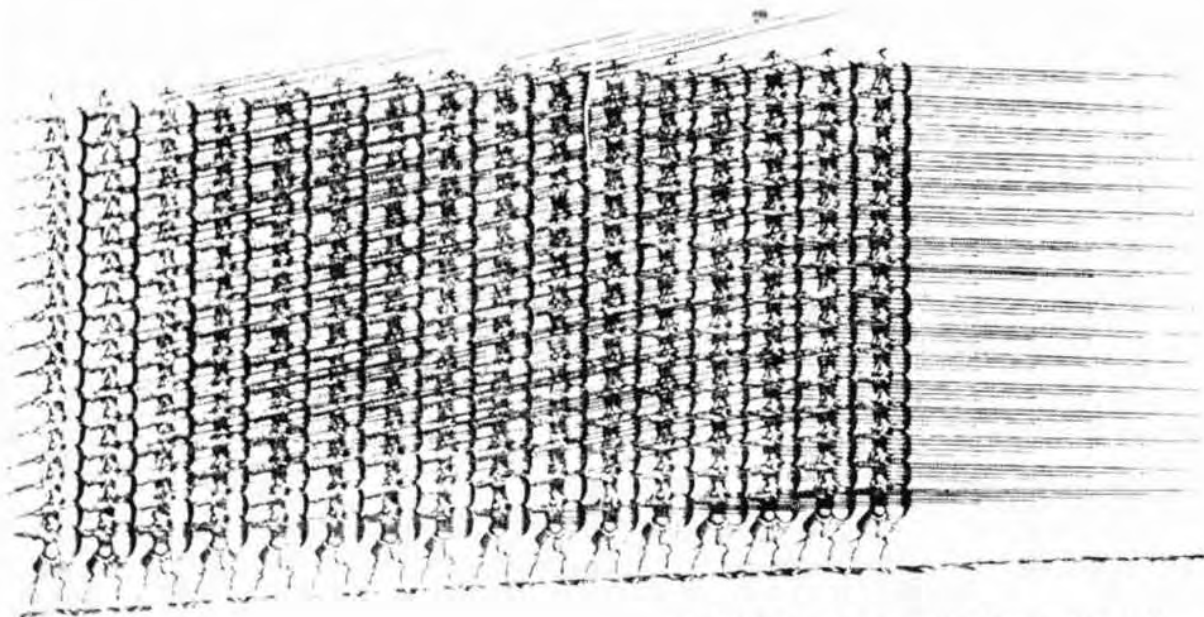
Pericles died in 429 B.C. and the new leader, Cleon, who was vigorously anti-Peloponnesian in his attitude, turned his attention to Sicily. He hoped to sever the links between Syracuse and the Peloponnesians, for the Syracusans had a substantial fleet which could be a threat to the Athenians. The war proved inconclusive for both Athens and Sparta, but in 425 B.C. an expedition to





20. A 16th-century engraving of a Macedonian phalanx carrying the long 'sarissa' lances. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Sicily turned the scales in favour of the Athenians. Forty ships under Eurymedon and Sophocles were sent to reinforce troops already in Sicily. Travelling with them was Demosthenes who, although holding no command, was empowered to use the fleet as he saw fit. When Eurymedon and Sophocles received news that sixty Peloponnesian ships had arrived at Corcyra off the west coast of Epirus they decided to hasten straightaway to meet the enemy, despite their inferiority of numbers. Opposing this, Demosthenes made the apparently extraordinary proposition that the fleet should instead put in at the headland of Pylos on the west coast of Messenia, along which they were at that time sailing. Demosthenes' plan was to fortify and hold Pylos, but the two admirals were unimpressed and were only persuaded to go along with the idea when a storm compelled them to shelter in Navarino Bay, protected by the Pylos peninsula and the island of Sphacteria. Walls were constructed to the south-east and south-west of Pylos, and also to the north where it was connected by a sand bar to the mainland. Demosthenes, with five ships and 1,000 hoplites and light troops, was left to garrison the headland.



21. A 17th-century engraving showing the phalanx. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Meanwhile, the main body of the fleet made for Corcyra once more. Demosthenes' plan was to instigate and support revolt in Messenia, and the Spartan response was swift. The bulk of the Peloponnesian army withdrew from Attica, which had once again been occupied, and marched directly to Pylos. The squadron at Corcyra was instructed to sail immediately for the same spot. Demosthenes, faced with the prospect of attack from land and sea, requested immediate aid from the Athenian fleet, now at Zacynthus.

The Spartans prepared to attack the garrison at Pylos, preferably before the return of the Athenian fleet, but found that the only practicable approaches were at those points already fortified by Demosthenes. Hoping to prevent Athenian use of the island of Sphacteria, the Spartans landed there a garrison of 420 heavily armed men, of whom a little under a half were true 'Spartiates', crack Spartan troops. The attack on Pylos was particularly difficult because of its strength as a fortification, and the Spartans were continually aware of the possibility of attack from the Athenian fleet through the southern entrance to the bay, which it was impossible to blockade successfully.

For the defence of his position Demosthenes posted the greater part of his force at the landward fortifications whilst he himself headed a small body of hoplites to fight off assault by sea. The landward defences were, as the Spartans discovered, impossible to breach, and they had no more success when they tried to run their ships over the rocky approach to the beach at the south-west corner of the headland. After a day of furious fighting the Peloponnesians withdrew to await the arrival of materials for the building of siege engines.

Soon after the lull in the fighting, the Athenian ships, now numbering fifty, arrived and inspected the situation. Seeing no opportunity either to enter the bay, which was occupied by the Spartan fleet, or to make a landing at Pylos (there would have been no room for so many vessels) they retired north to the island of Prote.

Early next morning the Spartans were putting to sea, after having beached their ships for the night, when the Athenians rushed in upon them; the Spartan ships were pushed back to the shore and, eventually, the Athenians succeeded in capturing five vessels and complete command of the bay,

blockading Sphacteria and its Spartan garrison. The Spartans, reluctant to lose the troops on Sphacteria, negotiated a truce for the purpose of peace negotiations in Athens. Under the terms of this truce the Peloponnesian ships were given into Athenian custody and the Athenians were to supervise the sending of supplies to Sphacteria. When, however, the peace talks failed and the truce was ended, the Athenians, claiming that the terms of the armistice had been violated, refused to hand back the Spartan ships, and blockaded Sphacteria once more. The expectation was that the garrison on Sphacteria would be starved into surrender, but Spartan patriots managed to run small supply ships ashore on the seaward side of Sphacteria, when strong winds kept the Athenians inside the bay, and after several weeks it was evident that the garrison would not starve.

Demosthenes was making plans for an assault on Sphacteria when Cleon appeared, having boasted to the Assembly in Athens that he could take the island in twenty days. An initial assault was made with 800 hoplites at the southern end of the island and a Spartan outpost held by thirty men was overpowered; 10,000 more men followed, mostly light troops including about 800 archers who had a considerable advantage over heavily armed hoplites in the rocky terrain. Demosthenes' tactic was to form up the hoplites facing the Spartans but to retreat when battle was offered, leaving the Spartans prey to the large numbers of light troops posted around their flanks and rear who assailed them with missiles from a distance. Worn down by this tactic and unable to make a successful counter-attack, those Spartans who had not fallen retreated in their traditionally disciplined fashion to the fort at the northern end of the island, where they ranged themselves in a semi-circle to face the enemy. At the summit of a hill, their flanks protected, the defenders held their own until a group of lightly armed men, commanded by a Messenian captain, came up over the hill and fell upon them from the rear. Now that victory was assured, the Athenians held off, proposing to the Spartans that they surrender. After much discussion the remaining 292 men, 120 of them Spartiates, gave themselves up and were taken to Athens.

Despite the brilliance of Demosthenes' tactics in refusing to employ his hoplites in a situation where

light troops could be used so much more effectively, it was Cleon who, on returning to Athens, took the praise for so prestigious a victory, and it seemed that the fortunes of the warmongers in Athenian politics were in the ascendant. But, two years later, Cleon died in the rout of the Athenian army at Amphipolis, and a fifty-year peace treaty was negotiated which called for Athens to hand back those cities she had annexed during the war, along with the prisoners from Sphacteria. In return, she regained nearly all the territories she had possessed at the commencement of hostilities. And so the war, which had been so acutely expensive in both human and economic terms, led only to a resumption of the status quo, as far as Athens and Sparta were concerned. But Corinth, Boeotia and Megara were so dissatisfied that the reopening of hostilities was inevitable.

Several former Spartan allies, Argos, Corinth, Mantinea and Elis, formed an alliance independently of the Lacedaemonians and negotiated a treaty with the Athenians in 420 B.C. under the aegis of a new and influential Athenian *strategos*, Alcibiades. This state of affairs was shortlived for, after a Spartan victory at Mantinea in 418 B.C., the Peloponnesian states rejoined the Spartan camp and Lacedaemonian supremacy over the Peloponnese was once more established.

Under Alcibiades the Athenian quest for mastery of the Greek world found new inspiration and the Assembly, despite the opposition of Alcibiades' fellow *strategos* Nicias, ratified an ambitious scheme to conquer Sicily, in particular the port of Syracuse. An impressive force was mustered comprising 5,000 hoplites, 1,300 lightly armed troops and a fleet of 134 triremes with a complement of about 20,000 men. In addition to this there were large numbers of supply ships and attendant vessels. Although the land force was relatively small, the supremacy of her fleet over any Syracusan opposition gave Athens hope for victory in Sicily. The expedition was led by Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus; but not long after arrival in Sicily, Alcibiades was recalled to face political charges, and chose instead to escape to the Peloponnese. Lamachus favoured a swift attack on Syracuse, but Nicias wasted time in futile exercises and the Syracusans took the opportunity to organize their defences and send for help to Corinth and Sparta.

In the spring of 414 B.C. an Athenian assault gained possession of the plateau of Epipolae, which commanded the city from the west, and they began building a wall running north to south over the plateau in an attempt to cut Syracuse off from the rest of Sicily. The Syracusan opposition was unable to prevent this and the situation was becoming desperate, when the Corinthian fleet arrived, backed up by a hastily raised army of 2,000 hoplites and light troops led by Cylippus. This army managed to seize the northern part of Epipolae and to construct a counter wall westwards across the plateau, frustrating the Athenians and cutting their land communications. This forced the Athenians to send for reinforcements, which were dispatched under the command of Demosthenes and Eurymedon. Upon his arrival, Demosthenes decided that an immediate attack offered the best chance of success. He made a night attack on Epipolae but was unsuccessful and therefore decided that withdrawal was the wisest course. Delayed by Nicias' indecision, the Athenian fleet was suddenly blockaded by the Syracusans in the Great Harbour and, despite a valiant attempt to smash their way through to freedom, the army was forced to make a landward retreat towards Catania, north of Syracuse. They marched in a hollow square, protected around the outside by heavy infantry. Faulty communications led to the separation of the leading division, under Nicias, from the rear, led by Demosthenes, and the force was soon overtaken and massacred by the Syracusan army. Nicias and Demosthenes were executed and the 7,000 survivors were imprisoned in the stone quarries of Syracuse, where they suffered terrible privations in the merciless climate.

The Syracusan disaster was an immense setback to Athenian imperialism and her enemies were quick to take advantage of the situation. Several states revolted, and Sparta began refurbishing her fleet with 100 new ships. Besides these developments within Greece itself, the Persians, on the other side of the Aegean, renewed their interest in the Ionian Greek states.

Alcibiades, who had left just before the fateful events at Syracuse, was at this time busying himself with political machinations involving Athens, Sparta and the satrap of Lydia, Tissaphernes. Putting himself at the disposal of the Athenians,

Alcibiades helped them to regain the Hellespont and the Bosphorus but, after the defeat of an Athenian fleet at Notium in 406 B.C., he was replaced by Conon. Hearing that the Spartan fleet under Lysander was attempting to disrupt Athenian Pontic trade and had besieged Lampsacus in

the Hellespont, Conon took 180 ships and offered battle at Aegospotami.

The day after he arrived Conon rowed up towards the Spartan fleet at Lampsacus only to find that Lysander refused to engage, and so the Athenians returned to Aegospotami, pursued by Spartan reconnaissance ships. For a further four days this exercise was repeated; the next day, the Athenians, returning from yet another unsuccessful

22. Detail of a vase painting, showing an archer wearing a Phrygian cap, 515 B.C. These archers were used by Alexander in 330 B.C.



challenge, put ashore in the bay of Aegospotami to collect supplies. Apprised of this by his scouts, Lysander launched a surprise attack and captured all but nine of the Athenian ships, massacring over 3,000 men. Conon escaped with eight ships to Cyprus, and a solitary dispatch boat made its way back to Athens with news of the disaster.

The Spartans followed up this virtual annihilation of the Athenian fleet by besieging Athens with the Peloponnesian army, and, blockaded from the sea by the victorious Lysander, Athens was obliged to negotiate a settlement. The Spartans, in a position to demand almost any terms, insisted that the Long Walls and fortifications be pulled down, all foreign possessions given up, and Athenian control confined to Attica and Salamis.

Sparta, hitherto the champion of individual state autonomy in Greece and the enemy of Athenian imperialism, now revealed the very attitudes against which she had ostensibly fought. The oligarchic governments she attempted to impose upon subject states proved unpopular, and Sparta had considerable trouble maintaining her leadership in Greek politics.

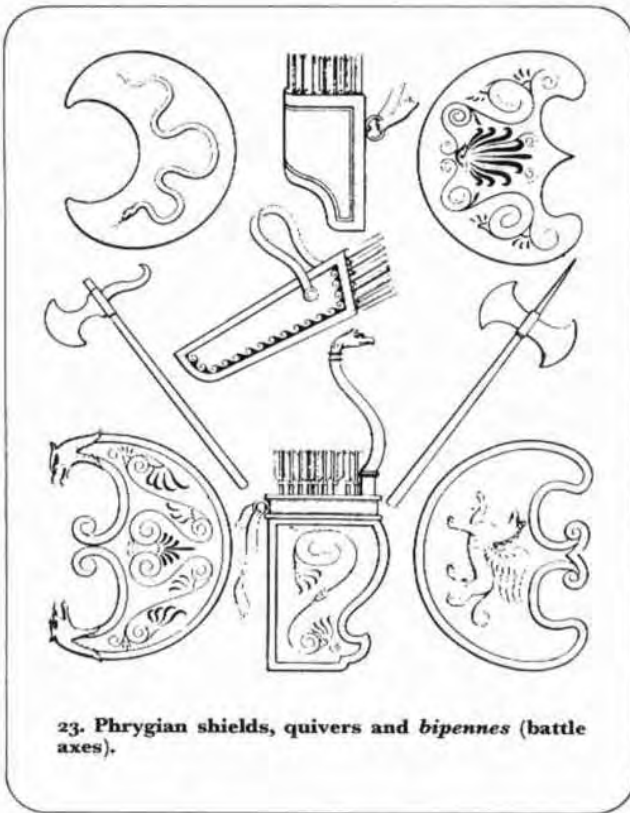
At the end of the Peloponnesian war the city militias which, during the years of conflict, had been almost permanently mobilized, were disbanded. Large numbers of experienced soldiers were thus seeking employment of some kind, and, capitalizing on their capacity as fighting men, they hired themselves out to anyone who would pay well for their services. In 401 B.C. an opportunity arose for many mercenaries to take up arms again in the pay of Cyrus, younger brother of the Persian king Artaxerxes. Intending to overthrow his brother, Cyrus induced the cities of Ionia to revolt against the satrap Tissaphernes, and mustered an infantry force of 40,000 (10,000 of whom were mercenary hoplites) together with about 3,000 cavalry. Included in this force were 700 hoplites sent by Sparta, well aware that she was in debt to Cyrus for aid he had supplied during the Peloponnesian war.

After marching 2,400 kilometres, Cyrus confronted Artaxerxes' army at Cunaxa, north of Babylon. Artaxerxes' army was probably half as strong again as Cyrus' army and was equipped with the scythed chariots upon which the Persians relied to break up the enemy's formation. Cyrus' troops allowed the Persian chariots and cavalry to pass

through their ranks relatively harmlessly and then advanced on the Persians, many of whom fled immediately. Cyrus' cavalry then charged, but in an attempt to reach his brother in order to kill him personally Cyrus was separated from the support of his army and lost his life.

The conclusion of the battle left both Greeks and Persians unsure of what to do next. Despite their victory, the Greeks were faced with attempting a withdrawal with many hostile Persians still in the area. The Persians, for their part, were loath to engage the Greeks but keen to be rid of them. They offered to escort them out of the country and back to Greece, but soon after the march started the Greek generals were lured away from the army and put to death and the retreating soldiers were then attacked. Quick to defend themselves, they grouped in a box formation with hoplites round the outside and, keeping the Persian cavalry and light troops at bay with slingers, the Greeks, who had maintained good order and quickly elected new *strategoi*, managed to reach Trapezos on the Black Sea. This extraordinary retreat well illustrated the ingenuity of Greek soldiers in maximizing their strength in the face of far superior numbers.

With Cyrus dead, Tissaphernes attempted to re-establish his rule in Ionia, and the Greek cities there appealed to Sparta for protection. A fleet commanded by Pisander was sent to their aid but at the battle of Cnidus in 394 B.C. it clashed with a Persian force under Conon, the Athenian commander who had escaped at Aegospotami and had had a change of heart. The Spartans lost fifty triremes, and all hope of naval supremacy in the Aegean. Taking advantage of this defeat, the Greek city states banded together in revolt. Supported by the Persians, Thebes, Athens, Corinth and Argos rebelled, and although they were defeated by the Spartans near Corinth in July 394 B.C., they entered upon the Corinthian war, during which some notable successes were scored against the Spartans by the allied generals. Eventual stalemate led to Persian-inspired peace proposals which demanded the forfeit of Asiatic Greek cities to the Persians, and re-established Spartan leadership in Greece. It was not long before the inevitable rebellion came. This time the centre was Thebes, fortunate in her military commander Epaminondas, who is said to have introduced into Greek



23. Phrygian shields, quivers and *bipennes* (battle axes).

warfare the successful use of a tactic against the renowned Spartan hoplites.

In a valley near Leuctra in Boeotia, a Spartan force thought to number approximately 10,000, of whom 1,000 were cavalry, met Epaminondas whose army was of a similar size and constitution. The Spartans took up their traditional formation, with the best troops on the right wing, and the rest of their infantry spread out, twelve deep, in a relatively straight line. Epaminondas posted his Theban infantry, fifty deep, on the left of his force opposite the crack Spartan troops, and had the remainder of his men set obliquely back towards his right wing. The cavalry of both sides, stationed ahead of the infantry, engaged first, and the Spartans were decisively defeated; whilst still in disarray, the Spartans were hit by the massed strength of the hoplites on the Theban left and were unable to resist. The Spartans lost over 1,000 men, 400 of whom were Spartiates, a terrible blow to a state whose forces had never before been defeated in pitched battle. It was now the turn of Thebes to dominate, just as Sparta and Athens had once done, but this served only to unite the city states of

the old Peloponnesian League against her, leading to a confrontation of the Theban and allied armies at Mantinea. Both forces were over 20,000 strong and Epaminondas' tactics were the same as they had been at Leuctra. The massed Thebans broke their opponents' right wing, but Epaminondas was killed, and without his genius the Theban army failed to push home for a decisive result. After that, Theban power failed, and the city states, squabbling over political control, little suspected the radical changes which lay in the near future.

Alexander the Great

On the death of his brother Perdiccas in 359 B.C. Philip II of Macedonia, then aged twenty-three, seized the throne. During his reign he created a unified national army such as had never been seen by the volatile alliances of Greek states. In the first two years of his rule he succeeded in redefining the boundaries of the fragmented kingdom he had inherited, and spreading his interests farther afield towards Pangaeus, Thrace and Chalcidice.

Although reluctant at first to interfere in the affairs of other Greek states, Philip was forced in 354 B.C. to take action against Phocian interference in Thessaly, which lay immediately to the south of his own lands. Defeating the Phocian army near Pherae in 352 B.C., he moved on against Phocis itself, but arriving at Thermopylae he found the Phocian army supported by 5,000 Athenian hoplites and decided that it would be prudent to withdraw. Philip was anxious to avoid conflict with Athens, the foremost naval power in Greece, but Macedonian policy was by now arousing concern in the Greek states. Athens however, keenly aware of her current weaknesses, was happy to accept peace proposals concluded in 346 B.C. which received Philip into the Delphic Amphictyony; this was a federation of Greek states, and it is at about this time that Philip developed ideas not only of extending Macedonian hegemony over the whole of Greece but of uniting the Greek states and carrying the war against the Persians. Despite setbacks at Perinthus and Byzantium in an attempt to take control of the trade routes of the Hellespont, Philip moved south once more and in 339 B.C., bypassed Thermopylae and occupied Elathia. Athens and

Thebes formed an alliance against him and, raising a force of over 40,000 men, they met Philip at Chaeronea in 338 B.C. Philip, with 30,000 infantry and 3,000 cavalry, entrusted to the cavalry on his left wing, who were led by his son Alexander, the task of breaking the Theban phalanx. This they duly did, whilst Philip's right wing made a tactical retreat to draw the Athenians on and break the Greek line. The plan was successful, and the Athenians, trapped between Philip and Alexander's victorious cavalry, were severely defeated. Appreciating the senselessness of annihilating those soldiers he hoped soon to command himself, Philip allowed the allies to escape.

This victory effectively established Philip's leadership of the Hellenes, and having secured Corinth, he summoned to the city delegates from the Greek states and proposed the formation of a defensive-offensive league under Macedonian military command. The Greeks were forced to accept.

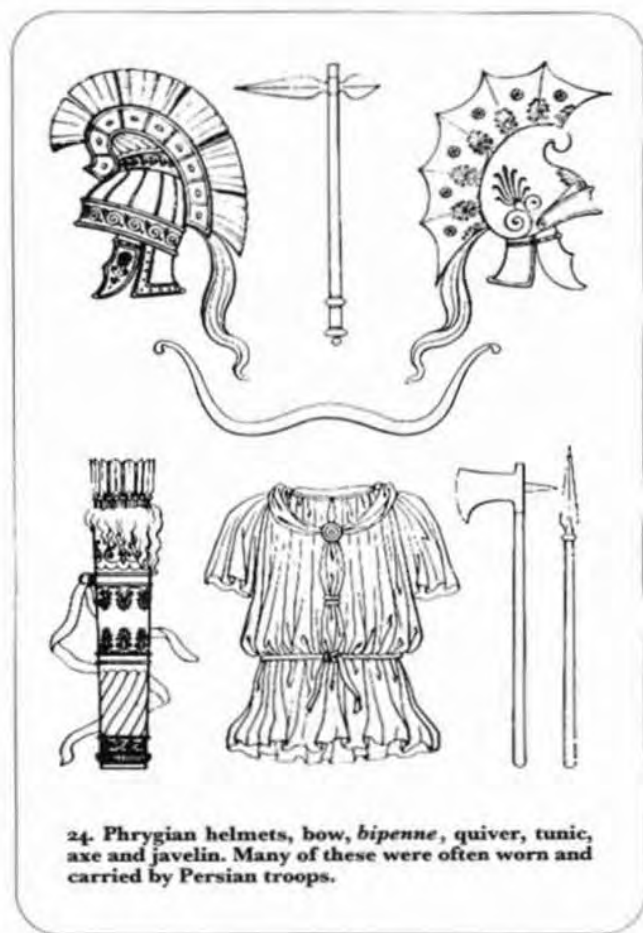
Philip's aim was to lead an expedition into Asia against the Persians whose perpetual interference in Greek affairs represented a threat to Macedonian hegemony. In 336 B.C. he sent 10,000 men under Parmenio to establish a foothold beyond the Hellespont in Bithynia and the Troad whilst he himself assembled the main invasion force. Philip was, however, destined never to realize his ambition personally, for in the autumn of 336 B.C., at his daughter's wedding in Pella, he was assassinated, and it was left to his son, Alexander, to make sure that the federation did not degenerate once more into a cluster of bickering rivals.

Philip's death was followed by revolt among the city-states, and only after Alexander had swiftly suppressed rebellion in Thebes and destroyed the city did the Greeks realize that the new ruler could retain as strong a hold as his father had over insurgent member-states of the confederacy. There had been implications of Persian bribery in the revolt, and it was obvious to Alexander that his father's plan must be implemented if Greek unity was to be maintained. Leaving a small force of 9,000 men and a few horse to keep order in Greece, Alexander left Pella for Sestos, and in spring 334 B.C. brought his army into Troas.

The Persian forces under the recently enthroned Darius III were composed, as usual, of a vast conglomeration of troops of different nationalities

who were never welded into a single, well organized fighting body. The best troops, Greek mercenaries and Persian cavalry, often found themselves under the higher command of relatively incompetent satraps who lacked the ability to make the best use of them.

Alexander's force of approximately 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry had a core of 12,000 Macedonian foot and 1,800 first-rate Macedonian cavalry, but included, along with 5,000 mercenaries, 7,000 infantry and 600 horse from the Greek states. Questions of strategy lay entirely with the Macedonian high command, and a system was devised whereby reinforcements were brought periodically from Greece to keep the army up to strength. The Macedonians' chief weakness was their fleet, which comprised only 160 triremes. The advance force under Parmenio had been suffering severely at the hands of Memnon of Rhodes, and the satraps of the neighbouring regions, on hearing of Alexander's arrival, joined Memnon in the Troad.



24. Phrygian helmets, bow, bipenne, quiver, tunic, axe and javelin. Many of these were often worn and carried by Persian troops.

Under the command of Aristes, satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, they discussed their strategy; Memnon's sound advice was to retreat, destroying the land as they went, and then to carry the war into Greece, leaving the beleaguered Alexander in a hostile wasteland; but this plan was rejected by the satraps, who favoured an immediate conflict, apparently placing their confidence in the advantage they had over Alexander in their choice of terrain. Positioned on the eastern bank of the river Granicus (which was in the area of the Dardanelles), they could force Alexander to attempt a precarious crossing which would break his formation and hinder the effective use of cavalry. Although the Persian infantry was no match for that of the Macedonians, Aristes was relying on his superior numbers of cavalry—over 15,000—to counter any Macedonian attack.

On reaching the battle-ground Alexander's staff saw clearly the dangers of a direct advance across the river, and so, overnight, they moved downstream, fording the river at dawn. By the time the Persian cavalry, summoned by scouts, had arrived at Alexander's crossing point, the Macedonian phalanx had formed up and Alexander's cavalry charged, forcing a Persian retreat.

The ground on the eastern side of the Granicus gave the Macedonian cavalry the chance to exercise its skill to the full, and as soon as the Persians advanced on his position Alexander moved his right wing cavalry against them. Moving first towards the Persian left, he suddenly bore round and forced his wedge formation into the Persian centre. The enemy replied with a similar charge against the Macedonian centre, but left their infantry an easy target for the Macedonian phalanx. A further cavalry charge, this time by Parmenio on the Macedonian right wing, put the Persians to flight, leaving only a pocket of resistance from Memnon's Greek mercenaries, soon overcome by the triumphant Alexander. The defeat cost Aristes 2,500 cavalry, and dispelled any illusions Darius might have had about the gravity of the Macedonian threat.

Many cities in Asia Minor submitted without trouble to Alexander, but he met with some resistance, particularly at Miletus and Halicarnassus. After a short siege Miletus was occupied, but Halicarnassus, defended by the experienced



25. Greek warrior in helmet of the Doric style, shield and short sword.

Memnon who had escaped at Granicus, proved intransigent; Alexander left a detachment of 3,000 foot and 200 horse to besiege the port, and headed on round the Lycian coast, aiming eventually to occupy all the ports of the eastern Mediterranean, thus rendering the Persian fleet inoperative. By October 333 B.C. he had arrived at Tarsus in Cilicia whence he moved around the coast of Syria to Myriandrus, only to hear that Darius' forces had manoeuvred into position behind him, at Issus, on the northern bank of the river Pinarus. His lines of supply and communication cut, Alexander was forced to turn about and fight. His exhausted troops marched back towards the Pinarus where the Persians, having once again chosen their position with care, awaited them. Darius was protecting his weak Asiatic infantry with Greek mercenaries, who, along with the 2,000 first class Persian troops of the Royal Bodyguard, and the lightly-armed Cardaces, made up the Persian front line. As Alexander approached, Darius moved his

main cavalry force onto his right wing near the sea shore. Parmenio and Alexander led the left and right wing cavalry respectively, the phalanx taking up the centre.

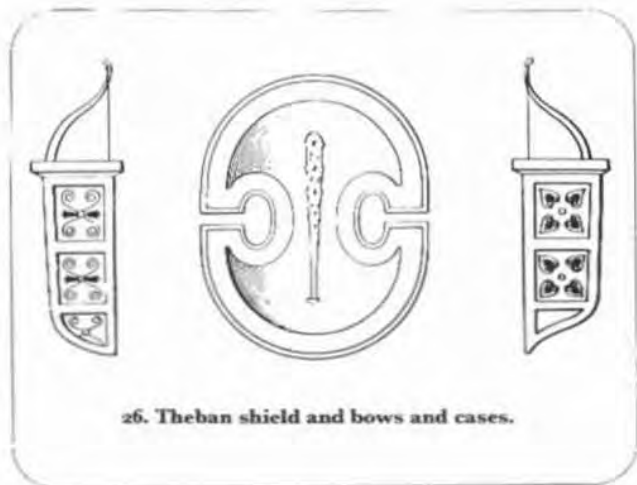
As soon as the first volley of arrows had been loosed by the Persian archers, Alexander led the Companion Cavalry in a brilliant charge which shattered Darius' right wing. However, this created a gap to the right of the struggling Macedonian phalanx and into this gap Darius's Greek mercenaries poured, battling furiously with Alexander's centre. Alexander's main concern now was either to capture Darius or to kill him, hoping to remove, along with the Great King, any further united opposition within the Persian Empire. Darius, seeing the danger, fled the battlefield, although he apparently wounded Alexander who almost took him in a direct charge.

Before he could pursue, Alexander had first to make sure of his victory; he turned his right wing against the Persian centre. The mercenaries were shattered and their predicament caused the cavalry on their right to follow Darius in flight. The Macedonians followed and the Persians were routed. Alexander was now free to pursue the Great King himself, but Darius had made good his escape. Over 10,000 Greek mercenaries successfully retreated, to offer their services in the next conflict, which was inevitable as long as Darius remained overlord of the Persian Empire.

Alexander pushed on down the Syrian coast, taking all the Persian naval bases and thereby obtaining complete control in the eastern Mediterranean. A detour was made into Egypt, but by the summer of 331 B.C. Alexander had led his army back northwards through Syria to Thapsacus on the Euphrates, en route for Babylon, the economic centre of the Empire. Meanwhile, Darius, thinking that Alexander would head down the Euphrates, prepared for a repeat of Artaxerxes' defeat at Cunaxa which lay a little north of Babylon. The astute Macedonian leader was not, however, to be drawn into this trap, and having crossed the River Euphrates struck out north towards Carrhae. Darius was forced to change his plans and he took his forces to Arbela, hoping to meet Alexander at the Tigris. By September he found that Alexander was heading still further north and decided to engage him at Guagamela, where there was a plain

which, suitably levelled, would be admirable terrain for his cavalry and chariots.

After allowing his army several days' rest, Alexander, who had heard from captured scouts of Darius' final plan, reached the battlefield and saw to his horror that Darius' forces were considerably stronger than he had believed. The Great King was relying on a strongly armed cavalry of 34,000 to form his front line; the Macedonian cavalry would be outnumbered by almost five to one. On 29 September Alexander reconnoitred the plain and retired to his tent to develop his strategy.



26. Theban shield and bows and cases.

The battle order of Alexander's army was drawn up next day in much the same way as it had been at Granicus and Issus, but with the wings strengthened and angled back from the main force. Behind a cavalry screen on the right wing, he placed a powerful mercenary force, whilst the remainder of the mercenaries and the League infantry protected the rear. The left wing was, as usual, under the command of Parmenio. Alexander planned to use the fortified wings of his army to draw the Persian strength onto his flanks and then to make a decisive charge into the Persian centre where Darius himself was positioned. As the two armies approached each other, Alexander's men drifted over towards the rough ground on Darius' left and this manoeuvre forced the Persians to take the initiative. Bessus, leading the Persian left-wing cavalry, engaged the Macedonians, but found that he needed continual reinforcements to counteract the large numbers of men Alexander was pushing out to resist him. On the Macedonian left flank



27. Greek warrior drawn from a bronze in a Florentine gallery.

Parmenio was just managing to hold off Mazeus and the Persian right wing cavalry. As soon as the Persians were fully occupied on both his flanks Alexander led a furious charge, in the proved wedge formation, directly into the Persian centre, and succeeded in putting Darius to flight. Bessus, now cut off from Darius and fearing that Alexander's wedge might turn upon his cavalry, began to retreat. Once it became clear that Darius had fled, Mazeus too withdrew from the struggle and the Persian front line rapidly disintegrated. Reports of the losses at Guagamela were inconsistent, and there are no reliable figures on which to base an estimate. Alexander immediately set off after Darius, only to find that he had once more disappeared. However, Alexander had less cause to worry now that the defeat at Guagamela had destroyed the Great King's credibility.

Alexander marched on to Babylon, and took it

easily because the walls had been allowed to crumble away; from there he moved eastwards through Susa, Persepolis and Pasgarda, then north-west to Ecbatana. Darius still eluded him, and when, a few days later, Alexander finally caught up with him, he had been murdered by Bessus, who no doubt felt that Darius' failure at Guagamela was too much to bear.

Assuming the title of King of Kings, Alexander marched to the eastern satrapies to consolidate his new empire, establishing forts for the defence of his north-eastern frontier before turning south into India. He crossed the Indus and arrived in 326 B.C. at Hydaspes (Jhelum). Alexander had hoped to ford the river Jhelum at Haranpur but arriving at the crossing found Porus, an Indian king, waiting on the opposite bank with a formidable force including archers, chariots and, most terrifying of all, elephants. Crossing the rain-swollen river at this point was, of course, out of the question, and so Alexander planned to deceive Porus into holding his position whilst the main Macedonian force was transported upstream to cross the river further east at Jalapur. Leaving a force under the command of Craterus at Haranpur to trick Porus into believing that the army was delaying there, Alexander moved a force of 5,000 horse and 10,000 foot upstream and began to transport it across to the south bank. News of this manoeuvre reached Porus while there was still time for him to counter it, and he realized that his wisest move was to engage Alexander as soon as possible, preferably before the Macedonians re-formed on the southern bank. Leaving a small force to hold Craterus off, he went upstream to meet Alexander with an army estimated at about 22,000, including 2,000 cavalry and 130 elephants.

Porus drew up his battle line, about six kilometres long, on a flat sandy plain, east of the crossing at Haranpur. The bulk of his troops were infantry but on each wing he posted his cavalry, screened by war chariots. When the two armies met, Alexander sent two divisions of cavalry, out of sight, around the Indian right wing. His hope was that upon seeing the depleted main Macedonian cavalry, Porus would launch against it both wings of his own cavalry, in an attempt to wipe it out and gain a swift victory. Alexander's assumption was correct; as the right wing of the Indian cavalry charged,

Alexander's reserve force took them from the rear. With the Indian horse trapped, Alexander ordered the phalanx and Guards Brigade to advance, and the battle was soon won.

The march into India continued, Alexander planning to reach the Ganges and then the coast. However, his men, veterans of an arduous and lengthy campaign, found their morale broken by the unbearable monsoon climate and they refused to go further. Alexander had no option but to make the journey homeward. He constructed a fleet on the Jhelum and followed the river to the mouth of the Indus, where, having established a naval station at Pattala (Hyderabad), he divided his army into two sections and made his way back to Susa, which he reached in the spring of 324 B.C. A year later he moved to Babylon, his chosen capital, and began to plan various explorations of his empire. Alexander himself never implemented these projects, for he fell ill with malaria, and on 10 June 323 B.C., he died leaving his empire to be fought over by the strongest of his generals.

In the years after his death the memory of Alexander merged with romantic tales of superhuman valour giving rise to the myth which represents him as a demi-god, pursuing a vision of world unity. A closer look at Alexander's history may suggest a rather different story, but even today his military prowess and indisputably brilliant generalship remain his most enduring monument.



28. Greek warrior, drawn from a Sicilian vase.

was a bow and quiver of arrows. Traditionally the Persians and the Medes served mainly as archers.

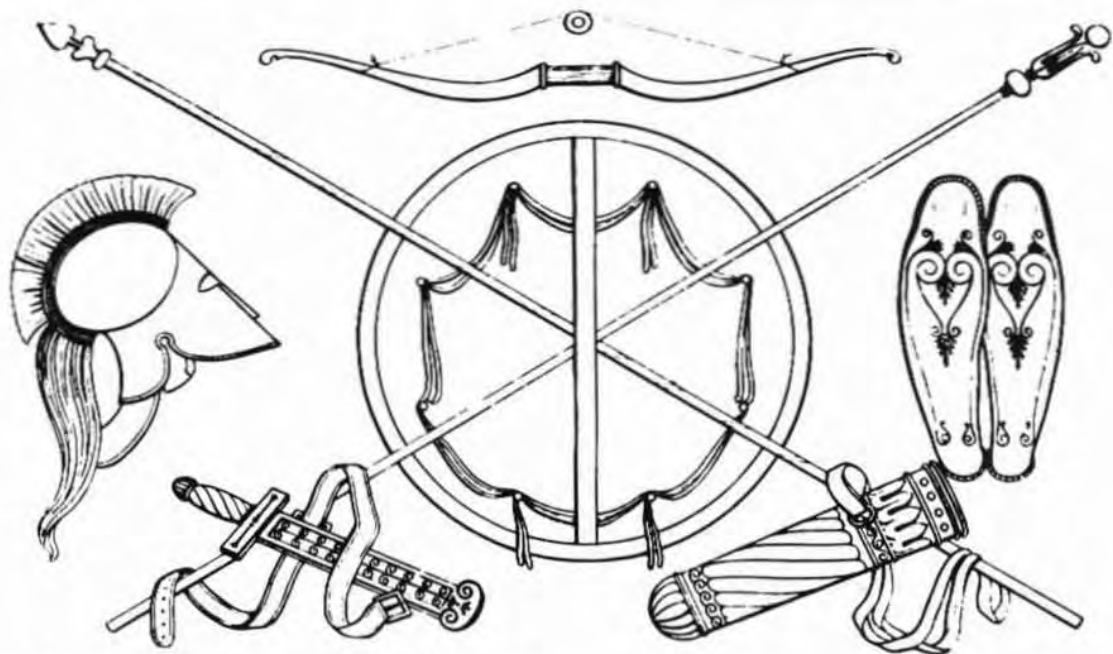
The Plates

A1 Persian standard-bearer

This standard-bearer, taken from a painting on a Greek vase, wears the traditional wolf-skin head-dress over the head and shoulders as a distinction of rank. The colourful, patterned, tunic and trousers made the standard-bearer easy to recognize in battle. The 'uniform' followed the Median style with close-fitting tunic and narrow sleeves, tight at the wrist; under the plain short skirt, the close-fitting trousers also fitted tightly at the ankle. No shield was carried as both hands were required to raise the standard, but slung from the left shoulder

A2 Persian Immortal spearman

From information shown in colourful glazed-brick reliefs in the ruins of Persepolis the Immortal spearman is depicted here in the dress of the king's bodyguard; they were the elite corps of the king's bodyguard and army, and they were called 'Immortals' because their numbers were never allowed to fall below 10,000, with the possible addition of some infantry and cavalry. They wore the Persian style of long-skirted, loose-fitting tunic with the wide flowing sleeves. The skirt was hitched up in front with a fringed waist sash. It is possible that a close-fitting under-tunic was worn with narrow sleeves fitting tightly at the wrist (these can be seen emerging from the wide sleeve). The tunic



29. Greek armour, showing an early shield from the inside, helmet, greaves, sword, bow, quiver and herald staffs.

was colourfully decorated with floral or geometric designs. The hair and beard were plaited in the Persian fashion, and encircling the head was a broad twisted cord fillet. He carried the main Persian weapons, a spear and bow with quiver. Both the bow and the ornate quiver were hung from the left shoulder and the long, 2¼-metre spear with the pomegranate butt spike was carried in the right hand. For the officers, the butt spike was gilt and for the men it was in silver. On active service the Median style dress would probably have been worn.

A3 Persian archer

The Median-style dress for an archer was a long tunic coming to the knee, with the tight-fitting sleeves to the wrist. Under the tunic trousers were worn. A coloured sash was wound round the waist, knotted in the centre and the ends allowed to hang down in front; the feet were covered with light slippers. The hair and beard were decorated with plaits and dressed in the Persian style, and a brimless high 'bowler type' hat was worn. A shaped quiver, which also carried the bow, was carried over the left shoulder, and in the right hand was a typical spear.

B Arab camel cavalry

The bas-relief work in the ruins of the Palace of Assurbanipal at Nineveh shows details of the camel-riding Arabs. The Assyrians had almost destroyed the desert nomads to which these camel riders belonged and had thereby opened the way for the Persian attack and invasion of their country.

The Persians further developed the camel cavalry corps for their own use and the first-known successful operation was against the Babylonian, Croesus, in 547 B.C. and later against the desert nomads of Syria and Arabia. The camel corps was often a two-man unit of cavalry, being used as lightly-armed mounted bowmen. Mobility and manoeuvrability seem to have been the strong points of this arm of the Persian cavalry and they were probably used for skirmishing and for pursuing the retreating enemy.

C1 Greek light infantry (*gymnet*)

These soldiers were used as *psiloi*, which was a title given to the light infantry skirmishers. Their main task was to open the conflict by harassing the enemy in short swift attacks with the cavalry on their flanks. The hoplite phalanxes, holding the

central position, would charge the enemy after several attacks by the *psiloi*.

This *gymnet* soldier (the name means naked) was armed with the simplest weapons, a sword (*machaira*) and a javelin or club. The briefest of clothing, usually a *chiton* turned down and fastened at the waist, which left his arms completely free, and movement unimpaired. He made an excellent skirmisher for the type of warfare which was carried out in this period.

C2 Greek heavy infantry (*hoplite*)

The massed formation of hoplites was a most formidable tactic, their harsh discipline and fanatical refusal to yield ground making them ideal soldiers. The heavy bell-shaped cuirass so popular in the classical period was now giving way to a composite flexible leather-backed corselet which was covered with small over-lapping metal plates. Over this body-piece were two shoulder-pieces, which were secured at the back, and then pulled over the shoulders and laced at the front. This corselet was worn over the simple *chiton* which came down to the middle of the thigh. The body, from the waist down, was protected, as were sometimes the shoulders, by strips of leather known as *pteruges* (feathers) usually weighted with a small metal plate.

The large round shield, which was called an *aspis*, was peculiar to the hoplites; it was designed so that the support arm band and the hand grip positioned the shield to protect half of the holder and half of the hoplite on his left. This made the solid formation for which they were renowned. The shield-boss was often shaped like the head of an animal and painted. The shins and lower legs were protected by bronze greaves, with the feet often bare. As all hoplites had to find their own equipment there were various styles, and the helmet was no exception. The hoplite illustrated wears a Doric-style helmet, which was completely closed except for two small openings for the eyes, and ornamented with a large horsehair crest fixed to the top of the helmet, with a feather on each side.

The short, thrusting, straight sword was for fighting at close quarters; for the formation charge the long-shafted spear was used. Until the time of Alexander, the hoplites often wore their hair long,



30 Greek trumpeter with shield (*aspis*), from which hung a painted leg protector, from a vase painting.

which could be a disadvantage in close-quarter fighting.

C3 Greek slinger

Similar to the *gymnets*, the slingers were also light infantry skirmishers (*psiloi*). They wore a simple *chiton* with no armour other than the small round shield (*pelte*). Apart from the sling their only weapons would be perhaps a small knife or dagger carried from a shoulder sling on the left side. The sling made from leather could be a most effective and dangerous weapon in the right hands; missiles were either stones or small lead pieces, sometimes messages were carved on the missiles, for use in siege warfare. It was said that the finest slingers in the Greek army came from the island of Rhodes.

D Persian cavalryman

When describing the Persian army of this period with its heterogeneous appearance it must be borne in mind that, despite archaeological discoveries and Greek writers such as Herodotus and Xenophon, the dress is mostly reconstruction and open

to dispute, especially as the Persians went unchronicled by their own people. This cavalryman is carrying a shield; opinion is divided about whether or not shields were carried. The horse is without armour for, although there were cavalry units which were partially armoured, this was not a widespread practice.

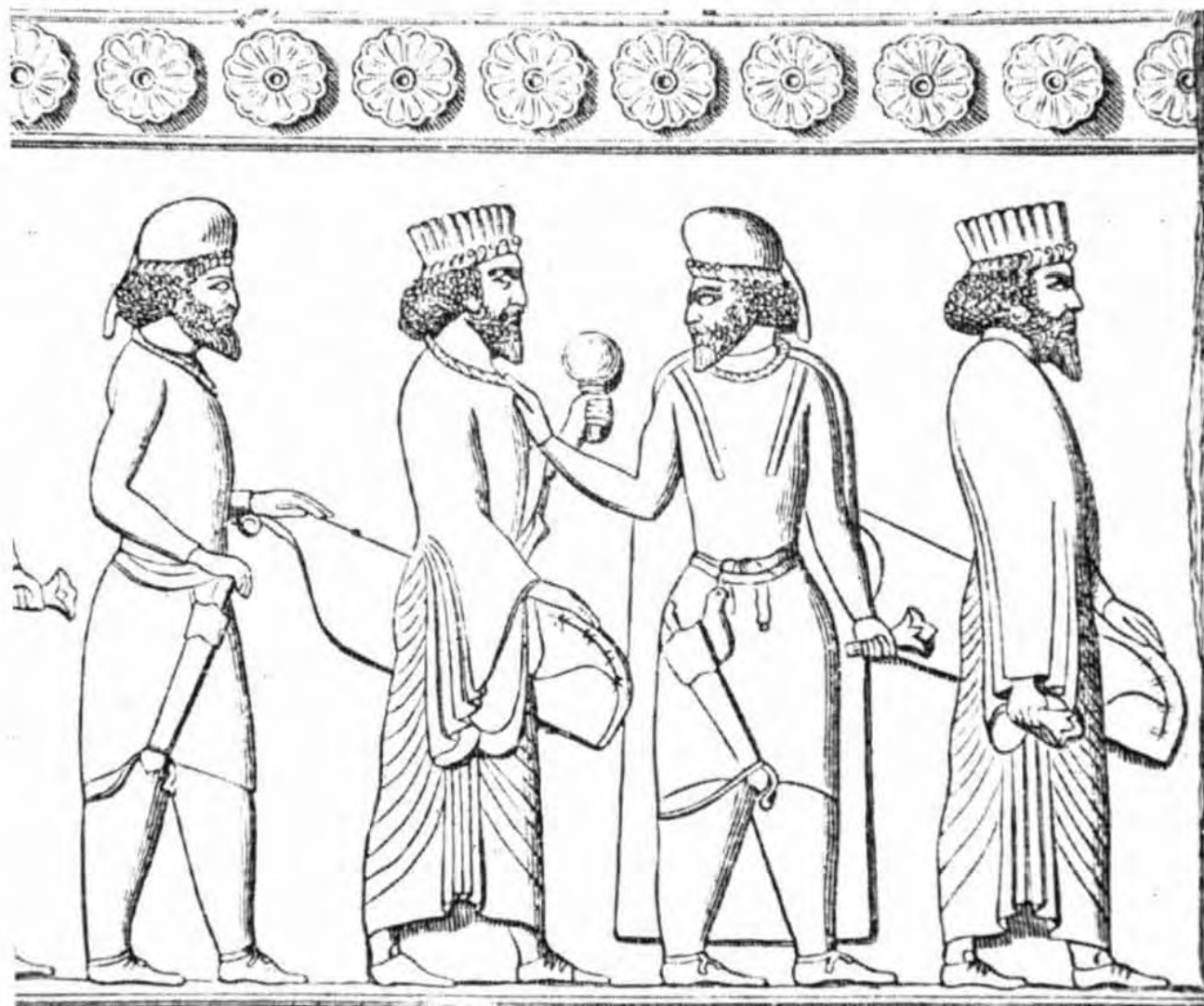
During combat the Persian army wore Median dress, which was more practical for horse-back riding and campaigning, and which was usually brightly coloured. A very ornate and elaborate bronze helmet was worn which had a horse-hair crest on the top and a trailing tail at the base of the helmet. His quilted linen cuirass, possibly with metal shoulder pieces, had the advantage of being

light in weight and very functional. The weapons were javelins or spears or bows and arrows. The mounts used by both Greeks and Persians were well-bred horses of about fourteen to fifteen hands and were typical of the countries surrounding the Mediterranean at this period. The Persian cavalry used bridles that were very much the same as modern ones. There was no saddle and no stirrups; the cavalryman's only comfort was a saddle cloth which was secured by a girth to the horse.

E1 Greek hoplite

The appearance of these heavily-armoured hoplites varied from city state to city state only by the various emblems and blazons painted on the shield faces and armour. Although constantly at war with each other, they joined forces to combat the Persian

31. Persian soldiers in a procession, drawn from ruins at Persepolis.



invasions in 490 and 480 B.C. The basic dress was the corselet with the two shoulder pieces, the lower part of the body being covered by the leather strips (*pteruges*). The shield was round and measured about one metre or more in diameter; often this had large bosses on the front in the form of animal heads and were used in close-quarter fighting to push against the enemy and crush him. The Corinthian-type helmet was made in one piece with a large coloured horsehair crest. Painted bronze greaves were worn as leg protectors. The short thrusting sword was carried hanging from a leather strap over the right shoulder. A long spear was often used which had a head at either end; when the shaft was broken the weapon could be reversed and the fight continued.

E2 Greek archer

The Greeks were not renowned for their prowess as archers, compared with the Persians, although some sources state that the Athenians did maintain a regiment of archers during the Persian wars. This reconstruction is from a statue dated c. 480 B.C. and shows an archer in action. He wore a lion-skin head-covering, and a leather corselet with shoulder pieces over the traditional *chiton* tunic. From the waist hung the leather *pteruges*. Over his shoulder hung the quiver which was usually very ornately decorated. He squatted so as to be in the best firing position. They were used in the phalanx among the hoplites and, in the *psiloi*, as light infantry.

E3 Cretan archer

These archers were mercenaries and, apart from the Scythian archers, were the only troops to be hired by the Athenians as regular light infantry. They were employed in the same capacity as slingers and other light troops, either as *psiloi* or positioned among the hoplite heavy infantry. Their distinctive characteristic was the red *chiton* tunic. They wore no body armour and their only protection was the small round bronze shield (*pelta*). As well as bow and quiver of arrows it is possible that they also carried javelins.

F1 Phrygian heavy-infantry mercenary

These tough mercenaries came from the north of Asia Minor and served both Greek and Persian masters. Their tunics were colourful and their body



32. Greek soldiers returning from battle, carving from the commemoration marble of Salamis. (Piraeus Museum)

armour was made from leather with metal reinforcements. Under the leather armour the arms and legs were covered with a highly-coloured thick, woven material, which was close-fitting and was tight at the wrists and ankles. The head was covered by a metal helmet which came in various forms; the one here has movable cheek-pieces, which are shown turned up. Weapons consisted of spear, sword or axe (*bipennes*). A special feature was the crescent-shaped shield which enabled the soldier to get very close to the cavalryman.

F2 Persian spearman

This is in all probability a Persian spearman, but as



33. Crown Prince Xerxes, detail from the Treasury Frieze at Persepolis. (National Museum, Athens)



34. A Greek hoplite without a shield, detail from a relief. (National Museum, Athens)

all troops of the Persian army wore the Median-style clothes on campaign it may be a little difficult to distinguish the regular troops from the elite 'Immortals'. The colourful tunic came to mid-thigh or slightly lower; trousers were worn under the tunic and fitted very closely to the leg and ankle. Various sources state that armour was worn but, as there is no evidence of this, it must be assumed that it was worn under the tunic, a common practice in warmer climates. The head was covered by a loose cloth which framed the face,

often concealing the lower jaw. The high crown was usually a sign of rank. Equipment was the standard shield, quiver and bow and the long spear.

F3 Persian officer

Persian officers wore a quilted type armour over the clothing, as the Persians and Medes were used as lightly-armed mounted archers. Officers wore the Median-type campaign dress with the knee-length tunic, and trousers. The quilted armour came to waist and a sash encircled the waist. A short broad-

sword, similar to the Greek one was used, mainly for thrusting, this was supported in a scabbard which hung from a leather sling from the left shoulder. A turban covered the head and a cloak, which was very useful on campaign, was often worn.

G1 Greek cavalryman

With all the trappings of the hoplite, the heavy cavalryman was able to fulfil the roles of infantryman and horseman. Often these elite cavalrymen cum hoplites would ride to the site of the battle then dismount and fight on foot. The equipment and arms were the same as those of a hoplite with the exception of the shield; a cavalryman never carried one. The type of helmet worn by this cavalryman was known as 'Attic', after the Goddess Athene. As all the equipment was purchased by the soldiers themselves, there was very little uniformity.

G2 Thessalian cavalryman

One of the most popular figures taken from Greek vase painting is the unusual figure of the Thessalian horseman. These cavalrymen came from the plains of Thessaly in the north of Greece, and were mercenaries. This typical Thessalian wears the *chiton* turned down to the waist and, over his shoulders, a stiff brightly-coloured cloak. His distinctive Thessalian hat was often called a sun-hat because of its very wide brim and small crown. As all horsemen of that period did, he rode without saddle or stirrups, only a small *ephippion* or saddlecloth was sometimes placed on the horse's back. The horse was the usual small Mediterranean type, extensively used by the cavalry at this time. Spears or javelins were carried.

G3 Armoured infantry hoplite

Though the appearance of the hoplites varied with

the personal taste of the individual the basic equipment prevailed, the metal or leather based corselet over the *chiton*, shown here, with the addition of a cloak. The large round shield (*aspis*) had a blazon painted on, with a small canopy attached to guard the legs from sword or spear thrusts. Bronze greaves were worn. On the head was the Ionic helmet which had a fixed nose-piece and two hinged cheek-pieces; the fixed crest was a coloured horsetail.

H1, H2, H3 Greek armoured infantry

These soldiers came from the Greek city states of Athens, Sparta, Thebes or Corinth. Although there was deep enmity between them they rallied together when the Persians invaded. At the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., with the phalanx of the Athenian hoplites, they defeated the Persian archers who were acclaimed as the best in the world. At the battle of Thermopylae 300 Spartan (H2) hoplites held out for three days against a force 100 times greater in number, until all were killed. The hoplite's main equipment remained the cuirass or corselet which covered the upper part of the body, made of metal or some flexible material onto which metal strips were attached. The shield had a metal arm-loop inside, at the centre, through which the left arm was pushed up to the elbow, and a metal handle near the rim. Helmets were usually one of three types: Doric, completely closed with slots for the eyes, Corinthian, made in one piece with fixed nose and cheek-pieces, or Ionic, with movable cheek pieces. These helmets nearly always had crests, though later ones were worn without crests. Metal greaves, sandals and boots were worn. The long spears were not thrown, but were used as thrusting weapons, either from above to the neck, or from below to the point under the cuirass. The short sword or dagger was used as a thrusting rather than a cutting weapon.

Légendes

1 Un relief qui montre un garde du corps-archer de Darius. 2 Un Hoplite Athénien avec un bouclier rond et un casque Dorique. 3 Détail d'une amphore montrant un guerrier et son domestique. 4 Détail d'un bas-relief de Darius I à Persepolis. 5 Détail d'un Attique du 5ème siècle montrant un Hoplite Grecque qui attaque un Persa, le porteur de drapeau. 6 Morceaux de plomb qui étaient utilisés comme projectiles avec un fronde en cuir. 7 Une peinture d'un cavalier Athénien sur un vase, 475 B.C. 8 Guerriers Athéniens et Spartes pendant la guerre Peloponésienne, d'une tombe Attique du 5ème siècle B.C. 9 Détail d'une mosaïque où l'on voit Darius et Alexandre. 10 Cavalier Thessalie, d'une amphore.

11 Un archer courbant son arc, d'un vase Grecque, 450 B.C. 12 Miltiades, le commandant Grecque responsable de la victoire de Marathon. 13 Tête d'un guerrier Grecque portant un casque Boète. 14 Relief d'Alexandre Sarcophagus dépeignant la lutte entre les guerriers Macédoniens et Perses. 15 Bas-relief du 7ème siècle, montrant les Assyriens qui attaquent les Arabes montés à chameau. 16 Détail d'une frise de 'Gigantomachia', montrant une formation de bouclier hoplite Grecque. 17 Guerrier Grecque avec casque Dorique et bouclier rond. 18 (A) Casque Persa, 490 B.C. (B) Casque Thracien du 5ème siècle B.C. (C) Casque Boète du 5ème siècle, B.C. (D) Casque Grecque, 500-300 B.C. 19 Détail d'un vase datant du 5ème siècle montrant une variété d'armes et d'habits. 20 Une gravure du 16ème siècle montrant une phalange Macédonienne qui porte de longues lances 'Sarissa'.

21 Gravure d'un phalanx datant du 17^{ème} siècle. **22** Archer portant un bon et Phrygien, vase 515 B.C. Ces archers étaient utilisés par Alexandre en 330 B.C. **23** Boucliers Phrygiens, carquois et bipennes. **24** Casques Phrygiens, arc, bipenne, carquois, tunique, hache et javeline beaucoup de ces armes étaient servis par les troupes Perses. **25** Guerrier Grecque portant un casque Dorique, avec un bouclier et une épée courte. **26** Bouclier Thebien avec arc et carquois. **27** Guerrier Grecque dessiné d'un bronze qui est au Musée de Florence. **28** Guerrier Grecque dessiné d'un vase Sicilien. **29** Armure Grecque. **30** Un homme Grecque qui joue de la trompette. **31** Soldats Perses, dessinés des ruines de Persepolis. **32** Soldats Grecques revenant de la bataille, gravure de Salamis en marbre pour commémoration. **33** Xerxes, Prince Royal de la frise de la trésorerie de Persepolis. **34** Hoplite Grecque.

Notes sur les planches en couleur

A1 Le Porteur de drapeau perse porte une coiffure en peau de loup de la tête jusqu'aux épaules pour distinguer son rang; il ne porte pas de bouclier car il a besoin de ses deux mains pour élever le drapeau. **A2** Lancier perse 'Immortel' habillé en garde du corps du roi; ils étaient appelés ainsi car ils n'avaient pas le droit de diminuer en nombre, moins de 10.000. **A3** Archer perse portant un habit Median.

B Cavalerie d'Arabes sur des chameaux, pris d'un bas-relief dans le Palais d'Assurbanipal à Nineveh. Les Assyriens avaient presque détruit les Nomades du désert à qui appartenait les monteurs de chameau, et avait donc ouvert la voie pour que les Perses puissent envahir leur pays.

C1 Gymnet, légère infanterie Grecque, dont le but principal était de commencer le conflit en harcelant l'ennemi. **C2** Hoplite, infanterie Grecque avec bouclier inventée de telle façon à ce que celui qui le porte puisse se protéger en même temps que l'homme de son côté gauche; les Hoplites étaient renommés pour cette solide formation. **C3** Asiloï, frondeur Grecque; son fronde était fabriqué en cuir et les projectiles consistaient de pierres ou de petits morceaux de plomb que l'on taille souvent avec des messages.

D Un cavalier perse portant une cuirasse doublée de toile, peut-être avec des pièces de métal pour les épaules, et un casque en bronze avec une crête de poils de cheval et une queue traînante. Il porte un bouclier, bien que l'on dit que ça ne se portait pas à ce moment là. Quelques chevaux portaient des armures légères mais ceci n'était pas courant; on n'utilisait pas de selle ou d'étriers, mais la bride est semblable à celui qu'on utilise maintenant.

E1 Cet Hoplite Grecque porte un casque du type Corinthien, qui était fait en un morceau avec encolure de cheval large et colorée. Une longue lance avait deux points de chaque côté de sorte que si la flèche se rompait l'arme pourrait être renversée et servir de l'autre côté. **E2** Bien que les Grecques n'étaient pas renommés pour leurs archers, il paraît qu'ils avaient maintenue un régiment d'archers durant les guerres Perses. **E3** Archer Crète. A part les Scythiens, ceux-ci étaient les seules troupes qui furent louées par les Athéniens comme légère infanterie régulière.

F1 L'infanterie mercenaire Phrygienne qui fut utilisée par les maîtres Grecques et Perses; le bouclier en forme de croissant permettait au soldat de s'approcher au cavalier. **F2** Lancier perse dont l'habit genre médiéval est difficile à reconnaître à côté des soldats de l'unité élite, eux aussi portaient un habit median quand ils faisaient la campagne. **F3** Officier perse avec armure feutrée et manteau utile pendant la campagne.

G1 Cavalier Grecque, qui est souvent à cheval en allant au combat et ensuite se met à pied pour affronter l'ennemi; son équipement est le même que celui de l'Hoplite, bien qu'il ne porte pas de bouclier. **G2** Cavalier Thessalien qui était originaire des plaines au nord de la Grèce et qui était probablement un mercenaire; il portait un manteau rigide et coloré et un chapeau de soleil. **G3** Infanterie Hoplite armée portant un casque Ionique avec morceaux garnis de charnières pour les joues; le baldequin qui pend de son bouclier protège ses jambes des coups d'épée ou de lance.

H1, H2, H3 Hoplites des cités Grecques d'Athènes, Thèbes et Corinthe portant trois types de casques; Dorique, dont la casquette recouvrait le visage avec des fentes pour les yeux, Corinthin, casquette en un morceau avec un nez fixe et des pièces pour les joues, et Ionique avec morceaux mobiles pour les joues. Les longues lances étaient jetées par coups plutôt que lancées.

Überschrift

1 Ein Relief der Arcieren-Leibgarde von Darius. **2** Athenischer Hoplite mit rundem Schild und dorischem Helm. **3** Detail einer Amphora mit Krieger und Diener. **4** Detail eines Bas-reliefs in Persepolis; gezeigt wird Darius I. **5** Detail einer Schale aus Attika, 5. Jahrhundert. Ein griechische Hoplite greift einen persischen Standartenträger an. **6** Bleistücke die von einer ledernen Schleuder, geworfen worden waren. **7** Athenischer Reiter; von einer Vasengemälde, 475 v. Chr. **8** Krieger von Athen und Sparta während den peloponnesischen Kriegen. Nach einem athenischen Grabstein, spät 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. **9** Detail eines Mosaikbildes mit Darius und Alexander. **10** Reiter aus Thessalien, nach einem Amphoragemälde.

11 Ein Bogenschütze spannt seine Waffe; nach einer griechischen Vase, 450 v. Chr. **12** Miltiades, griechische Befehlshaber während dem Sieg zu Marathon. **13** Griechischer Kriegerkopf mit 'Boetian' Helm. **14** Relief von Alexanders Sarkophag einem Kampf zwischen mazedonischen und persischen Krieger darstellend. **15** Bas-relief aus dem 7. Jahrhundert, Assyrier greifen Araber (auf einen Kamele beritten) an. **16** Detail der 'Gigantomachia'-Frieses mit griechischer Hoplite-Schild-Formation. **17** Griechischer Krieger mit dorischen Helm und rundem Schild. **18** (a) Persischer Helm, 490 v. Chr. (b) Thrakischer Helm, 5. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (c) Boötischer Helm; 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (d) Griechischer Helm, 500-300 v. Chr. **19** Detail einer Vase aus dem 5. Jahrhundert (v. Chr.) mit verschiedenen Waffen und Bekleidungsstücke. **20** Ein Stich aus dem 16. Jahrhundert; einer mazedonischen Phalanx mit den langen 'Sarissa-Lanzen'.

21 Stich einer Phalanx aus dem 17. Jahrhundert. **22** Ein Bogenschütze mit phrygischer Mütze; nach einer Vase, 515 v. Chr. Alexander setzte diese Krieger 330 v. Chr. ein. **23** Phrygische Schilder, Köcher und Bipenne. **24** Phrygische Helme, Bogen, Bipenne, Köcher, Hemd, Axt und Warfspeer. Persische truppen benutzten viele dieser Gegenstände. **25** Griechischer Krieger mit dorischen Helm, Schild und kurzem Schwert. **26** Thebanischer Schild mit Bogen und Köcher. **27** Griechischer Krieger; nach einem Plastik in einer Kunsthalle in Florenz. **28** Griechischer Krieger; nach einer Vase aus Sizilien. **29** Griechischer Harnisch. **30** Griechischer Trompeter, mit einem Schild davon hing eine gestrichene Beinschutz herab.

31 Persische Soldaten nach einer Darstellung in den Ruinen zu Persepolis. **32** Griechische Soldaten auf dem Rückkehr nach einer Schlacht. Nach einem Marmor-Denkmal in Salamis. **33** Kronprinz Xerxes; nach dem Schatzkammer-Fries; Persepolis. **34** Griechischer Hoplite.

Farbtafeln

A1 Dieser persische Standartenträger trägt als Dienstgradabzeichen einen Wollpelz über Kopf und Schultern. Er hat keinen Schild da er die Standarte mit beiden Händen tragen muss. **A2** Persischer 'Unsterblicher' Lanzenträger in der Tracht der königlichen Leibgarde. Die hiesigen 'unsterblichen' da sie an der Zahl nie unter 10.000 herabzusinken erlaubt wurden. **A3** Persischer Bogenschütze in medischer Tracht.

B Arabische Kamelreiter; nach einem Bas-relief im Palast zu Assurbanipal, Nineveh. Die Assyrier hatten die Stämme dieser kamelreitenden Wüstenkrieger beinahe ausgerottet und so den Weg für die persischen Einmärsch in ihrem Land eröffnet.

C1 Gymnet, griechische Leichten-Infanterie-Plänker. Ihre Aufgabe war es, die Schlacht durch beunruhigen des Feindes zu eröffnen. **C2** Hoplite; griechische schweren Infanterie mit seinem Schild, dass so gestaltet war, dass er sowohl den Träger selbst als auch den links stehenden Mann halb decken konnte. So bildete man die feste Formation für welche die Hoplites so berühmt waren. **C3** Asiloï; griechischer Steinschleuderer. Seine Steinschleuder war aus Leder, die Munition war entweder Steine oder Bleistücke die oft Inschriften trugen.

D Persischer Kavallerist mit wattierte Leinen-Kürass. Die Schulterstücke waren vielleicht aus Metall. Der merkwürdige bronzene Helm hat einen Rosshaarkamm mit herabhängendem Hinterteil. Er hat einen Schild obwohl nach einigen Quellen keine Schilder tragen wurden. Manche Pferde waren mit leichtem Harnisch ausgerüstet aber diese Sitte war nicht üblich. Sättel und Steigbügel waren nicht in Gebrauch aber das Kopfstück scheint sehr modern zu sein.

E1 Dieser griechische Hoplite trägt einen korinthischen Helm, dass aus einem Stück gefertigt wurde. Er hatte einen grosse, gefärbte Rosshaarkamm. Die lange Lanze hatte Spitzen zu beiden Enden; wieder eingesetzt werden. **E2** Die Griechen waren nicht für ihre Bogenschütze so berühmt wie Persen, trotzdem aber, unterhielten sie angeblich ein Regiment dieser Krieger während den Persen-Kriegen. **E3** Kretischer Bogenschütze. Ausser die Scythier waren die Kreter die einzigen als reguläre Leichte-Infanterie von den Athenen unterhaltenen Mittruppen.

F1 Phrygische Söldner von der schweren Infanterie. Sie dienten sowohl unter griechischen als auch persischen Fahnen. Der Halbmondschild ermöglichte es den Soldat sehr nah an den Kavallerist heranzukommen. **F2** Persische Lanzenträger in medischer Tracht. Sie waren schwer von den Elitetruppen, die auch solche Tracht im Felde trugen zu unterscheiden. **F3** Persischer Offizier mit wattierte Harnisch und einem Umhang, dass im Felde äusserst nutzbar war.

G1 Griechischer Kavallerist. Es war üblich im Kampfe abzusetzen und den Kampf zu Fuss fortzusetzen. Er wurde als Hoplite (aber ohne Schild) ausgerüstet. **G2** Thessalischer Kavallerist. Diese Krieger stammten aus Nordgriechenland und waren vermutlich Söldner. **G3** Hoplite, gepanzerte Infanterie mit ionischem Helm (die beweglichen Backenstücke beachten!). Vom Schilde hängt einen 'Vorhang', als Beinschutz gegen Schwerthieben und Lanzenstiche gedacht, herunter.

H Hopliten der griechischen Stadt-Staaten Athen, Sparta, Thebes oder Korinthe. Sie tragen drei Helmtypen: dorische-voll eingeschlossen mit Angenschlitzen; korinthische-aus einem Stück und mit fixierten Nasen-und Backenstücke gefertigt; ionische-mit beweglichen Backenstücke. Die lange Lanzen wurden nicht geworfen sondern als Stichwaffen benutzt.

Continued from back cover

- 160 Nap's Guard Infantry (2)
- 44 Nap's German Axes (1)
- 43 Nap's German Axes (2)
- 90 Nap's German Axes (3)
- 106 Nap's German Axes (4)
- 122 Nap's German Axes (5)
- 199 Nap's Specialist Troops
- 211 Nap's Overseas Army
- 227 Nap's Sea Soldiers
- 88 Nap's Italian Troops
- 176 Austrian Army (1): Infantry
- 181 Austrian Army (2): Cavalry
- 223 Austrian Specialist Troops
- 152 Prussian Line Infantry
- 149 Prussian Light Infantry
- 192 Prussian Reserve & Irregulars
- 162 Prussian Cavalry 1792-1807
- 172 Prussian Cavalry 1807-15
- 185 Russian Army (1): Infantry
- 189 Russian Army (2): Cavalry
- 84 Wellington's Generals
- 114 Wellington's Infantry (1)
- 119 Wellington's Infantry (2)
- 253 Wellington's Highlanders
- 126 Wellington's Light Cavalry
- 130 Wellington's Heavy Cavalry
- 204 Wellington's Specialist Troops
- 167 Brunswick Troops 1809-5
- 98 Dutch-Belgian Troops
- 206 Hanoverian Army 1792-1816
- 226 The American War 1812-14
- 96 Artillery Equipments
- 77 Flags of the Nap Wars (1)
- 78 Flags of the Nap Wars (2)
- 115 Flags of the Nap Wars (3)
- 19TH CENTURY**
- 232 Bolivian and San Martín
- 281 US Dragoons 1833-35
- 173 Alamo & Texan War 1835-6
- 56 Mexican-American War 1846-8
- 272 The Mexican Adventure 1861-67
- 63 American Indian Wars 1860-90
- 170 American Civil War Armies
- (1): Confederate
- 177 (2): Union
- 179 (3): Staff, Specialists, Maritime
- 190 (4): State Troops
- 207 (5): Volunteer Militia
- 37 Army of Northern Virginia
- 38 Army of the Potomac
- 252 Flags of the American Civil War
- (1): Confederate
- 258 (2): Union
- 265 (3): State & Volunteer
- 163 American Plains Indians
- 186 The Apaches
- 168 US Cavalry 1850-90
- 275 The Japanese Rebellion 1851-66
- 241 Russian Army of the Crimean War
- 193 British Army on Campaign
- (1): 1816-1853
- 196 (2): The Crimea 1854-56
- 198 (3): 1857-81
- 201 (4): 1882-1907
- 212 Victoria's Enemies
- (1): Southern Africa
- 215 (2): Northern Africa
- 219 (3): India
- 224 (4): Asia
- 249 Canadian Campaigns 1860-70
- 67 The Indian Mutiny
- 268 British Troops in the Indian Mutiny 1857-59
- 91 Bengal Cavalry Regiments
- 92 Indian Infantry Regiments
- 233 French Army 1870-71 (1)
- 237 French Army 1870-71 (2)
- 277 The Russo-Turkish War 1877
- 57 The Zulu War

- 59 Sudan Campaigns 1881-98
- 230 US Army 1890-1900
- 95 The Boxer Rebellion

THE WORLD WARS

- 80 The German Army 1914-18
- 81 The British Army 1914-18
- 245 British Territorial Units 1914-18
- 269 The Ottoman Army 1914-18
- 208 Lawrence and the Arab Revolt
- 182 British Battle Organisation
- (1) 1914-18
- 187 (2) 1939-45
- 74 The Spanish Civil War
- 117 The Polish Army 1939-45
- 112 British Battle Dress 1937-6
- 120 Allied Commanders of WW2
- 225 The Royal Air Force
- 70 US Army 1941-45
- 216 The Red Army 1941-45
- 246 The Romanian Army
- 220 The SA 1921-45
- 24 The Panzer Divisions
- 266 The Allgemeine SS
- 34 The Waffen SS
- 229 Luftwaffe Field Divisions
- 124 German Commanders of WW2
- 213 German MP Units
- 139 German Airborne Troops
- 131 Germany's Eastern Front Allies
- 103 Germany's Spanish Volunteers
- 147 Wehrmacht Foreign Volunteers
- 254 Wehrmacht Auxiliary Forces
- 238 Allied Foreign Volunteers
- 142 Partisan Warfare 1941-45
- 169 Resistance Warfare 1940-45
- 282 Axis Forces in Yugoslavia 1941-45
- 270 Flags of the Third Reich
- (1) Wehrmacht
- 274 (2) Waffen-SS
- 278 (3) Party & Police Units

MODERN WARFARE

- 132 Malayan Campaign 1948-60
- 174 The Korean War 1950-53
- 116 The Special Air Service
- 156 The Royal Marines 1956-84
- 133 Battle for the Falklands
- (1): Land Forces
- 134 (2): Naval Forces
- 135 (3): Air Forces
- 250 Argentine Forces in the Falklands
- 127 Israeli Army 1948-73
- 128 Arab Armies (1): 1948-73
- 194 Arab Armies (2): 1973-88
- 165 Armies of Lebanon 1962-84
- 104 Vietnam War Armies 1962-75
- 143 Vietnam War Armies (2)
- 209 War in Cambodia 1970-75
- 217 War in Laos 1960-75
- 183 Modern African Wars
- (1): Rhodesia 1965-80
- 202 (2): Angola & Mozambique
- 242 (3): South-West Africa
- 159 Grenada 1983
- 178 Russia's War in Afghanistan
- 221 Central American Wars

GENERAL

- 65 The Royal Navy
- 107 British Infantry, Equipped (1)
- 108 British Infantry, Equipped (2)
- 138 British Cavalry, Equipped
- 72 The Northwest Frontier
- 214 US Infantry, Equipped
- 205 US Army Combat, Equipped
- 234 German Combat, Equipped
- 157 Flak Jackets
- 123 Australian Army 1899-1975
- 164 Canadian Army at War
- 161 Spanish Foreign Legion
- 197 Royal Canadian Mounted Police

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THE ANCIENT WORLD

- 218 Ancient Chinese Armies
- 109 Ancient Middle East
- 137 The Scythians 700-300 B.C.
- 69 Greek & Persian Wars 500-323 B.C.
- 148 Army of Alexander the Great
- 121 Carthaginian Wars
- 46 Roman Army:
 - (1): Caesar-Trajan
 - (2): Hadrian-Constantine
- 129 Rome's Enemies:
 - (1): Germanics & Dacians
 - (2): Gallic & British Celts
 - (3): Parthians & Sassanids
 - (4): Spain 218 B.C.-19 B.C.
 - (5): The Desert Frontier

THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

- 247 Romano-Byzantine Armies 4th-9th C.
- 154 Arthur & Anglo-Saxon Wars
- 255 Armies of the Muslim Conquest
- 125 Armies of Islam, 7th-11th C.
- 150 The Age of Charlemagne
- 89 Byzantine Armies 886-1118
- 85 Saxon, Viking & Norman
- 231 French Medieval Armies 1000-1300
- 75 Armies of the Crusades
- 171 Saladin & the Saracens
- 155 Knights of Christ
- 200 El Cid & Reconquista 1050-1492
- 105 The Mongols
- 222 The Age of Tamerlane

- 251 Medieval Chinese Armies
- 50 Medieval European Armies
- 151 Scots & Welsh Wars
- 94 The Swiss 1300-1500
- 136 Italian Armies 1300-1500
- 166 German Armies 1300-1500
- 195 Hungary & E. Europe 1000-1568
- 259 The Mamluks 1250-1517
- 140 Ottoman Turks 1300-1774
- 210 Venetian Empire 1200-1670
- 111 Armies of Crécy and Poitiers
- 144 Medieval Burgundy 1364-1477
- 113 Armies of Agincourt
- 145 Wars of the Roses
- 99 Medieval Hierarchy

16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

- 256 The Irish Wars 1485-1603
- 191 Henry VIII's Army
- 38 The Landsknechts
- 101 The Conquistadores
- 263 Mughal India 1504-1761
- 235 Gustavus Adolphus (1): Infantry
- 262 Gustavus Adolphus (2): Cavalry
- 14 English Civil War Armies
- 110 New Model Army 1645-60
- 203 Louis XIV's Army
- 267 The British Army 1660-1704
- 97 Marlborough's Army
- 86 Samuraï Armies 1550-1615
- 184 Polish Armies 1569-1696 (1)
- 188 Polish Armies 1569-1696 (2)

18TH CENTURY

- 261 18th Century Highlanders
- 260 Peter the Great's Army (1): Infantry
- 264 Peter the Great's Army (2): Cavalry
- 118 Jacobite Rebellions
- 236 Frederick the Great (1)
- 240 Frederick the Great (2)
- 248 Frederick the Great (3)
- 271 Austrian Army 1740-80 (1)
- 276 Austrian Army 1740-80 (2)
- 280 Austrian Army 1740-80 (3)
- 48 Wolfe's Army
- 228 American Woodland Indians
- 39 British Army in N. America
- 244 French in Amer. War Ind.
- 273 General Washington's Army (1): 1775-1778

NAPOLEONIC PERIOD

- 257 Napoleon's Campaigns in Italy
- 79 Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign
- 87 Napoleon's Marshals
- 64 Nap's Cuirassiers & Carabiniers
- 55 Nap's Dragoons & Lancers
- 68 Nap's Line Chasseurs
- 76 Nap's Hussars
- 83 Nap's Guard Cavalry
- 141 Nap's Line Infantry
- 146 Nap's Light Infantry
- 153 Nap's Guard Infantry (1)

Title list continued on inside back cover

Please note that for space reasons abbreviated titles are given above; when ordering, please quote the title number, e.g. 'W3 Viking Hersir', etc.

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