

# THE GRECO-PERSIAN

WARS  
*500 - 450 BCE*



# Who was Herodotus?

**Herodotus (c. 484 – 425/413 BCE)** was a traveler and writer who invented the field of study known today as **‘history’**.

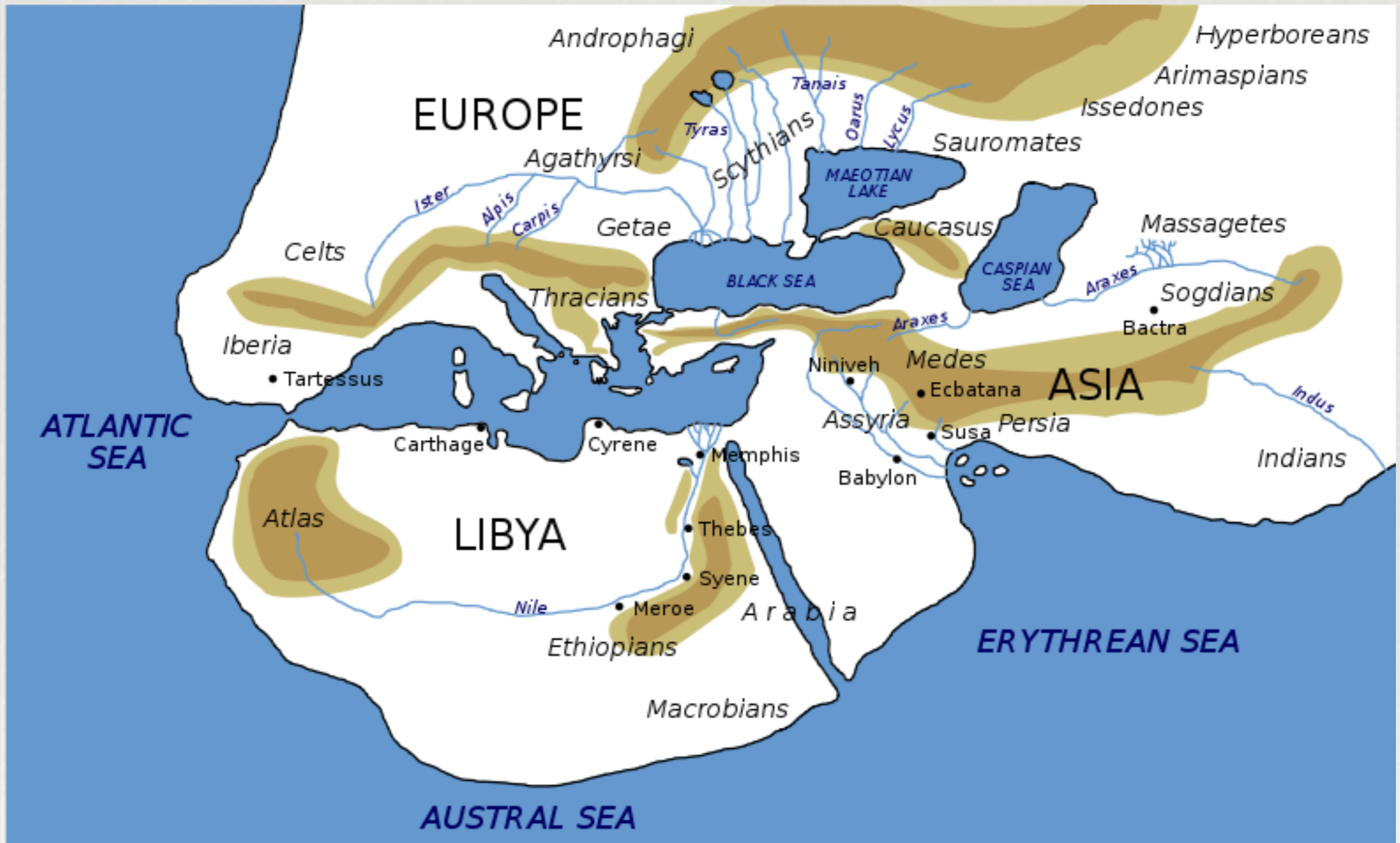
He was called **‘The Father of History’** by the Roman writer and orator, **Cicero**, for his famous work *The Histories*. He also wrote *A History of the Persian Wars*.

Herodotus has also been called **“The Father of Lies”** by critics who believe his stories are wildly inaccurate. Serious criticism of his work has to do with the **credibility** of the accounts of his travels.



Relief of Herodotus by Jean-Guillaume Moitte (1806), Louvre, Paris

# Welcome to the world of Herodotus:



# Persian Empire vs. Greece



# TIMELINE of GRECO-PERSIAN WARS



499 BCE

*Ionian Revolt* against Persia begins.

492 BCE

*Darius I* of Persia invades Greece.

11 Sep 490 BCE

A combined force of Greek hoplites defeat the Persians at *Marathon*.

Jul 480 BCE

*Xerxes I* makes extensive preparations to invade mainland Greece by building depots, canals and a boat bridge across the *Hellespont*.

Aug 480 BCE

Battle of *Thermopylae*. 300 Spartans under *King Leonidas* and other Greek allies hold back *Xerxes I* for three days but are defeated.

September 480 BCE

Greek victory against the Persians at the battle of *Salamis*.

479 BCE

*Xerxes'* Persian forces are defeated by Greek forces at *Plataea* effectively ending Persia's ambitions in Greece.

449 BCE - 448 BCE

*Peace* between Greece and Persia.

# Did the Trojan War take place around or during the Greco-Persian Wars?

WAR	TIMESPAN	NOTES
<b>Trojan War</b>	ca. 1194 - 1240 BCE Trojan War is <b>MYTH</b>	Homer wrote about this war in the epic poem, <i>Iliad</i>
<b>Dark Ages: 1200s - 700s BCE</b>		
<b>Archaic Period: 700s - 500s BCE</b>		
<b>Greco-Persian Wars</b>	499 BCE - 450 BCE	Greeks are victorious over Persian forces

# **PHASE I: IONIAN REVOLT**

- Asiatic Ionian Greeks rebelled against Persia. They were joined by the Dorian, Aeolian, and Carian.

- Persia ruled Greece since Cyrus the Great's conquest in 546 BCE followed by: **Cambyes II [530-522], Darius I [522-486], Xerxes I [486-465], Artaxerxes I [465-424], Darius II [423-404]**).

- Too little is known about the details of Persian rule in Anatolia during the period 546-500 to say definitely that it was not oppressive, but, Miletus, the center of the revolt, was flourishing in 500.



# PHASE II: MARATHON

[September 490 BCE]

## GREEK CITY-STATES VS. PERSIAN EMPIRE

*Persian naval ships*



*Persian archers*



*Greek hoplite*

Approximately 10,000 strong  
Greek hoplites prepared for a short-range battle



phalanx:  
a body of troops  
moving in  
close formation



*Persian 'axe man' cavalry*

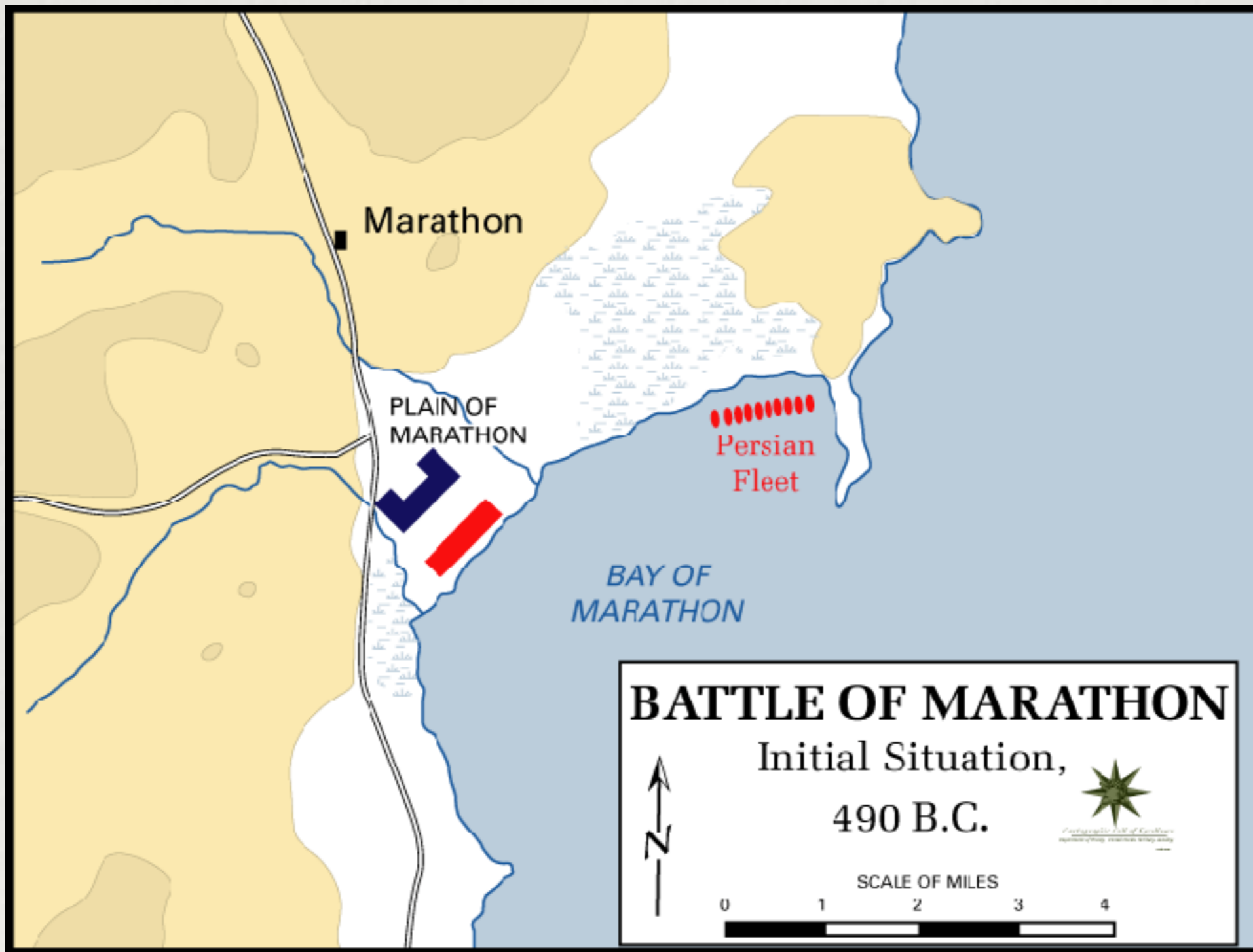
Approximately 26,000 strong  
+ 100,000 armed sailors/oarsmen

Persian Immortals, archers,  
and cavalry prepared for  
a long-range battle



# PHASE II: MARATHON

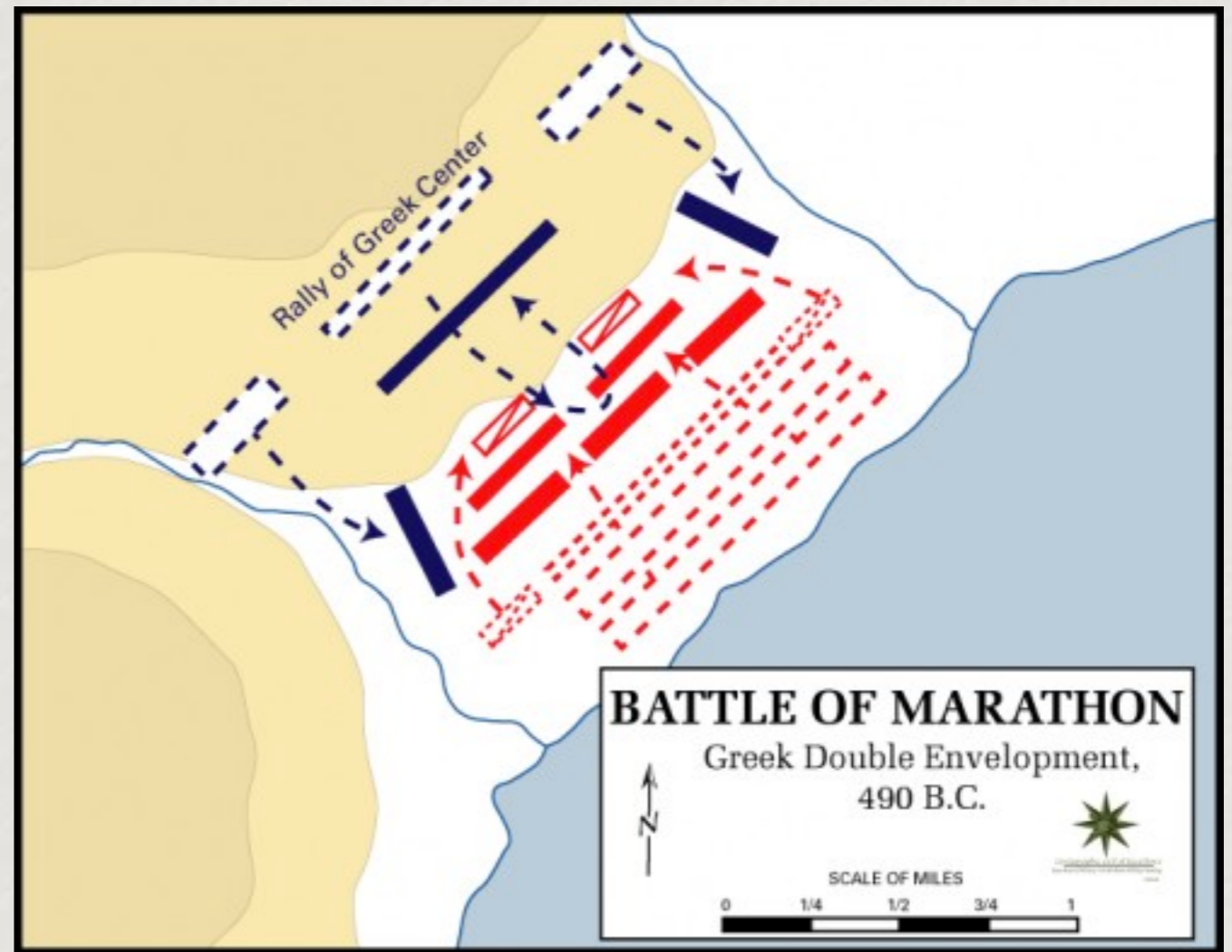
*[September 490 BCE]*



# PHASE II: MARATHON

*[September 490 BCE]*

- Between **Greeks** and the invading forces of **Persian King Darius**
- **Greeks** surrounded **Persian** forces.
- **Greek casualties:**  
1-3,000 dead
- **Persian casualties:**  
4-5,000 dead
- **Greek** victory would go down in history as the moment the **Greek city-states** showed the world their courage and won the fight for their liberty.



*Marathon was the first time that Persia became beatable. The battle would be represented in Greek art (literature, sculpture, architecture, and pottery) as a crucial and defining moment in the history of Greece.*

*source: <http://www.ancient.eu/marathon/>*

# PHASE II: MARATHON

*[September 490 BCE]*

When the Persian army landed at Marathon in 490 BC, the Athenians chose **Pheidippides**, their best runner, to send word to other Greeks of the invasion.

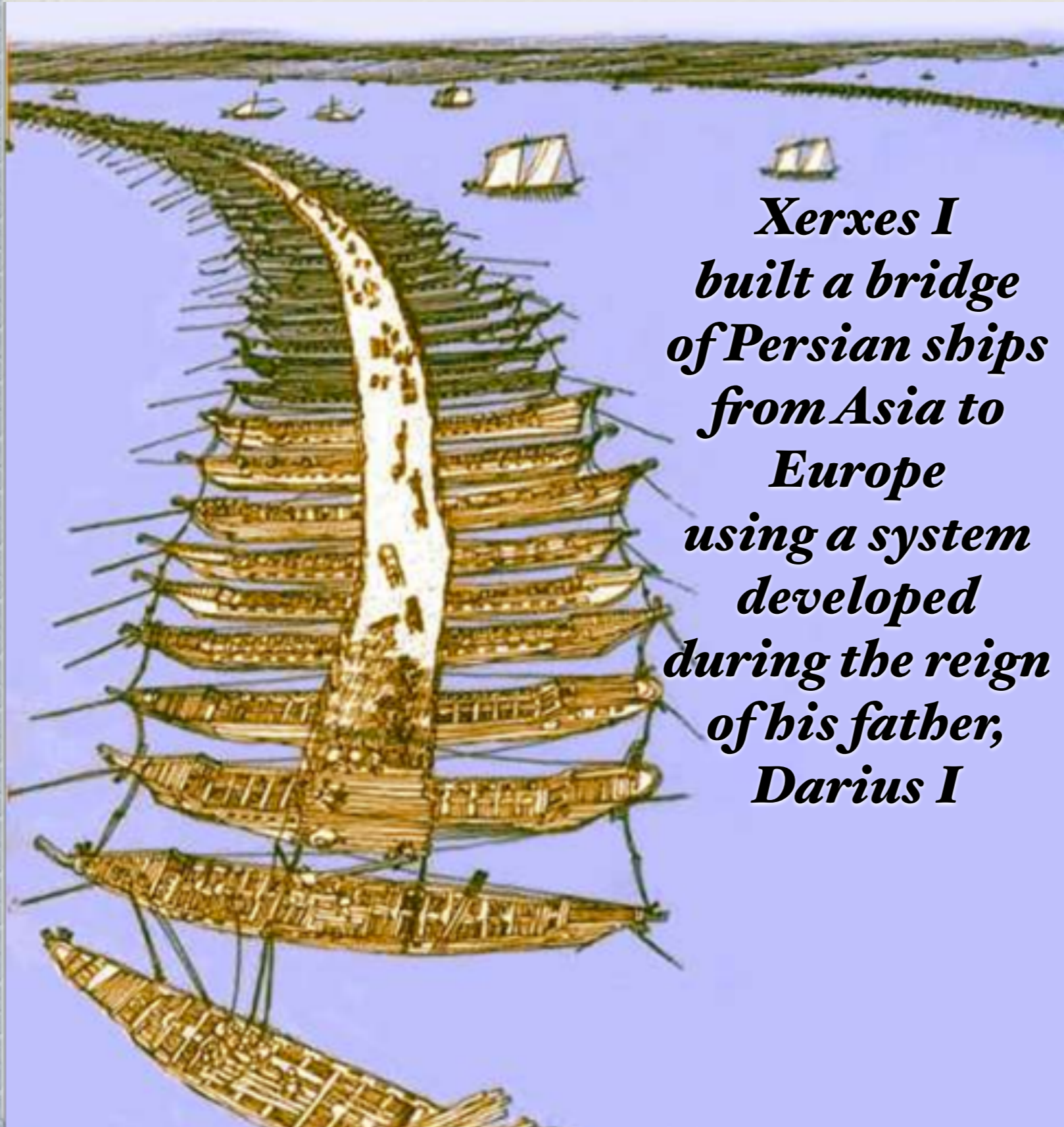


*statue of **Pheidippides** along  
Marathon Road in modern day Greece*

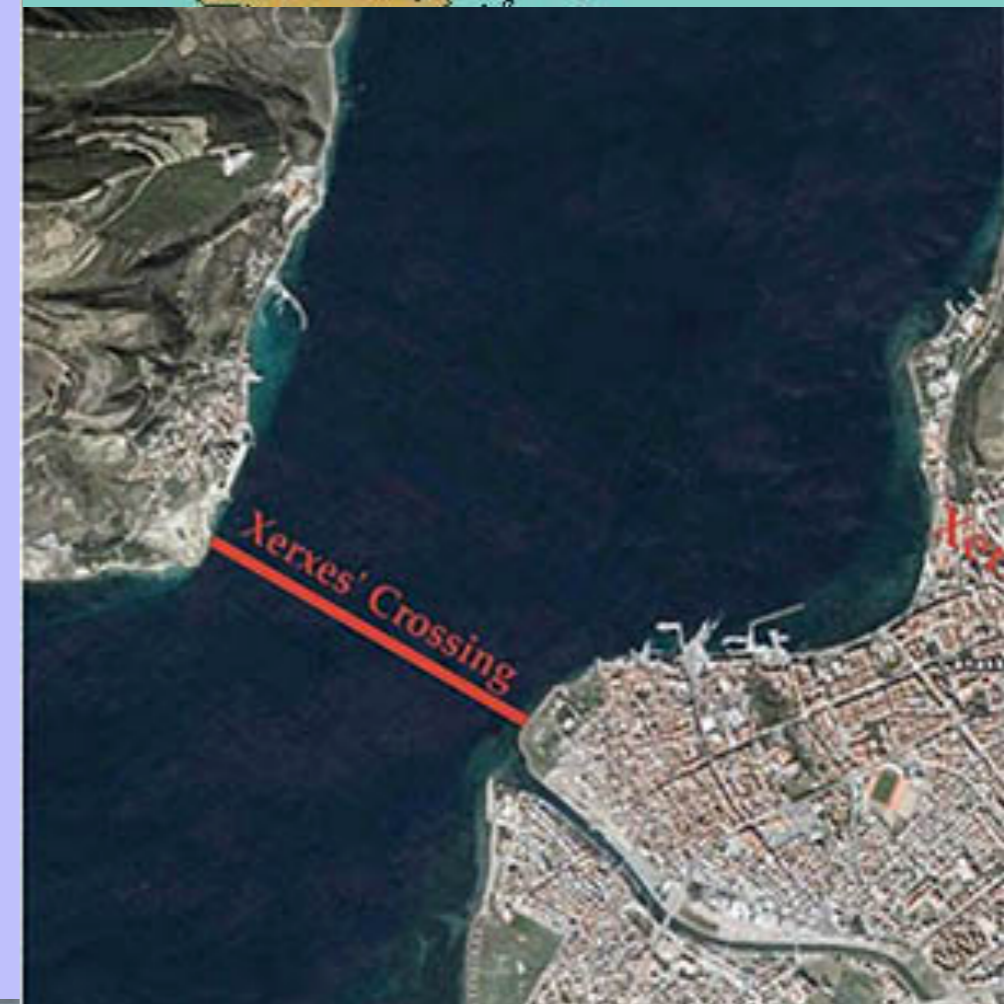
Although probably the greatest runner of ancient Greece, it was **NOT Pheidippides** who ran what we call a *marathon*. The modern sport of marathon running comes from another runner's return from the battle. He ran the 26 miles to give news of the victory before collapsing and dying  
...or so the story goes.

# PHASE III: HELLESPONT

[August 480 BCE]



*Xerxes I  
built a bridge  
of Persian ships  
from Asia to  
Europe  
using a system  
developed  
during the reign  
of his father,  
Darius I*



# PHASE IV: THERMOPYLAE

*[August 480 BCE]*



- The **Greek** victory at **Marathon** kept **Persians** out of Greece for 10 years.
- **Darius I's** successor, **Xerxes I**, was determined to conquer **Greece**. He returned with ~200,000 men.
- The **Greeks** had to stop **Xerxes I**. If they failed, **Persian** forces would reach destroy **Athens**.
- The **Greek Spartan, King Leonidas**, led 300 of his men (+6,000 **allies**) to **Thermopylae**, the "hot gates"
- **Persians** won, but the sacrifice of **Leonidas** and his men remains one of the greatest war stories of all time.

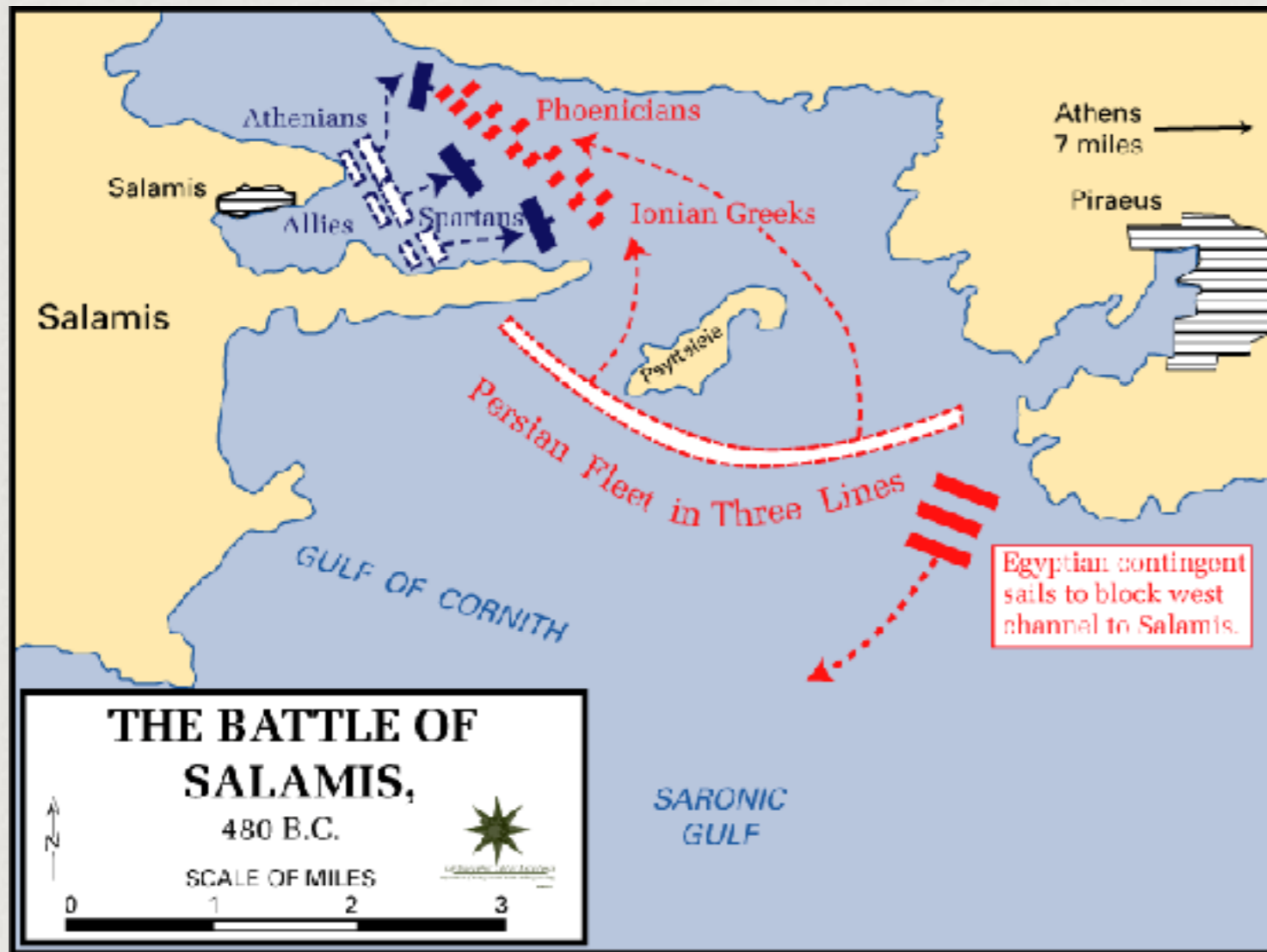


# PHASE IV: THERMOPYLAE

[August 480 BCE]



# PHASE V: SALAMIS [480 BCE]



The Greek commander, **Themistocles**, lured the Persian fleet into the narrow waters of the strait at **Salamis**, where the Persian ships had difficulty maneuvering.

The Greek **triremes** attacked furiously, ramming or sinking many Persian vessels.

The Greeks sank ~300 Persian vessels while losing only ~40 of their own.

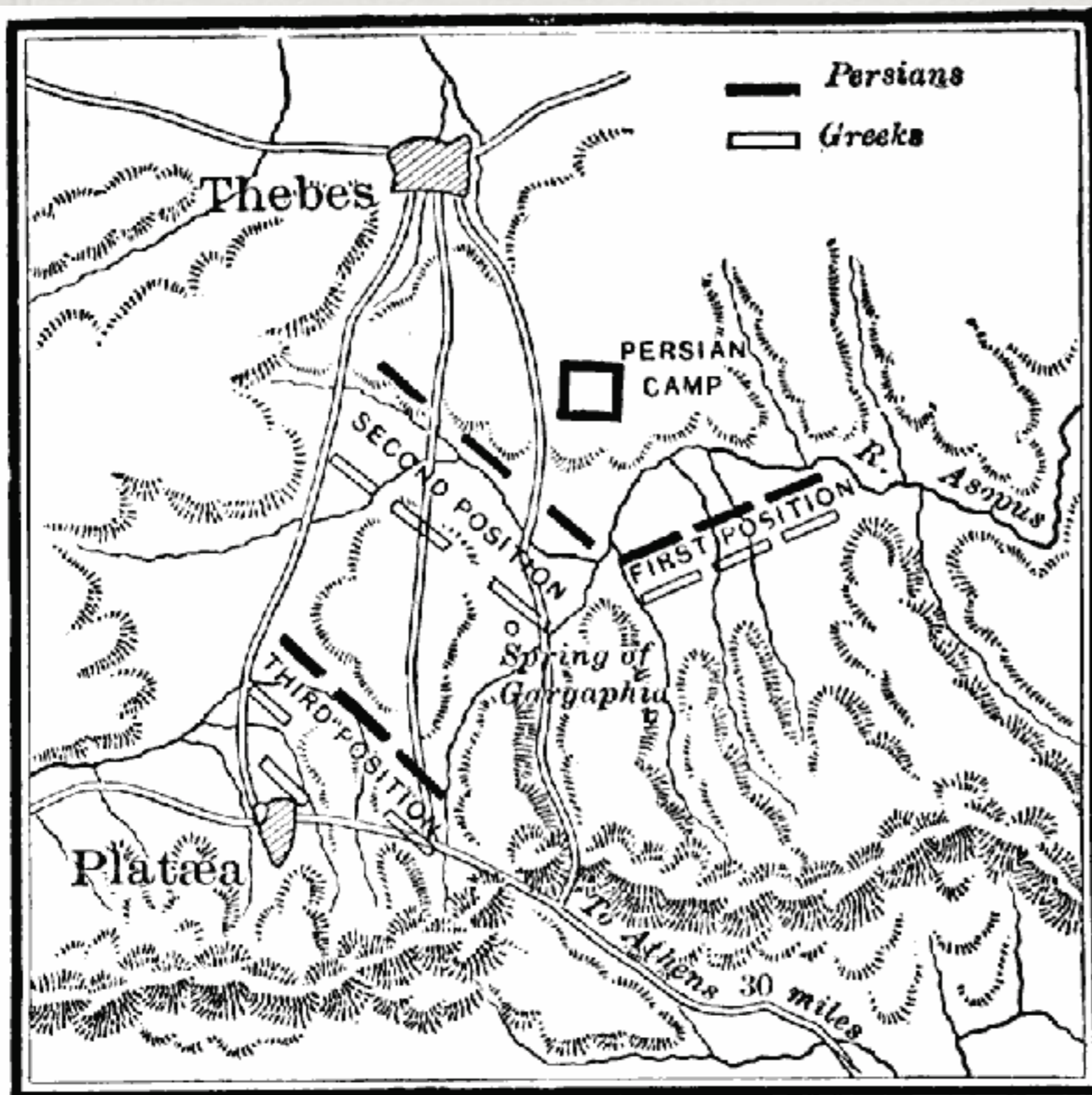
The Persian fleet scattered and Xerxes had to postpone his conquest for a year. This delay gave Greek city-states time to unite against him. The **Battle of Salamis** was *the first great naval battle recorded in history.*

# PHASE V: SALAMIS [480 BCE]





## PHASE VI: PLATAEA [479 BCE]



**Mardonius**, a satrap, occupied **Athens** until he received word that **Spartans** were advancing.

Both sides brought massive armies. Nearly every city in **Greece** sent support: 60,000 hoplites + 40,000 infantry = **100,000 total**

**Herodotus** claims the **Persian** forces numbered **1.7 million** (an exaggeration). In reality the **Persians** probably numbered around **100,000**.

**Plataea** was a series of battles. Persians were successful at first, but when **Mardonius** died leading a **cavalry** charge, the tide changed and most of the Persian force was annihilated.

# THE GRECO-PERSIAN WARS IN SUMMARY:

	<b>I Marathon</b>	<b>II Thermopylae</b>	<b>III Salamis</b>	<b>IV Plataea</b>
<b>DATES</b>	<b>Aug/Sep 490 BCE</b>	<b>Aug/Sep 480 BCE</b>	<b>Sep 480 BCE</b>	<b>Aug 479 BCE</b>
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>Marathon, Greece</b>	<b>Thermopylae, Greece</b>	<b>The Straits of Salamis, Greece</b>	<b>Plataea, Greece</b>
<b>PLAYERS</b>	<b>Darius I vs. Greek city-states</b>	<b>Xerxes I vs. Leonidas and allies</b>	<b>Persian fleet vs. Greek fleet</b>	<b>Xerxes I vs. Greek city-states</b>
<b>RESULT</b>	<b>Greek Victory</b>	<b>Persian Victory</b>	<b>Greek Victory</b>	<b>Greek Victory</b>