HERODOTUS AND MARATHON

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Herodotus had has own priorities when he wrote his account of
Marathon. "Everyone knows that Herodotus' narrative of Marathon will
not do," began A.W. Gomme, in an essay published more than thirty years
ago, from which I have shamelessly borrowed my title.[1] But it is our
earliest and best account, and its point of view is more remarkable than
most moderns have noticed. By the time Herodotus published his *Histories*
in the early years of the Archidamian War,[2] Marathon had become the touch-
stone of Athenian patriotism, and the fundament (or at least a good part
of it) of her claim to be the saviour of Greece, as Herodotus himself
acknowledged in the speech that he gave the Athenians at Plataea, where
they claimed the honour of the left wing.[3] There, at Marathon, they had
stood alone against Persia and defeated forty-six nations! Yet, in
Herodotus' account, what seems to have been most significant -- signifi-
cant enough, at least, to deserve remark -- was that at Marathon, for
the first, Greeks charged on the double and first dared to look without
fear upon men in Persian dress (Hdt. 6.112.3). At Marathon, Persian
expansionism reached its tide-mark.

In fact, if we look at the structure of the *Histories*, it appears
that Marathon, which for us is the opening battle of the Persian Wars,
was, for Herodotus, simply the concluding act of the Ionian Revolt. From
the start of the *Histories* up to the Scythian Expedition of Darius, he

dealt with Asiatic imperialism, with many geographical and ethnological
excursuses. With the Scythian Expedition, Persia's imperial drive
brought her into Europe. In its initial stages, this expedition presents
parallels with Xerxes' invasion: Artabanus advises against both, and both
kings are terrible in their anger against faint-hearted subjects,
Oeobazus and Pythius respectively, each of whom asks to have one of his
sons excused from military service (Hdt. 4.83-84; 7.10; 7.39-40). It
also introduces us to Miltiades at the Danube bridge, urging the Ionians
to make a strike for freedom, and it is the end of Miltiades that concludes
the story of Marathon.

From Darius' Scythian Expedition, Herodotus proceeds with many digres-
sions -- though now they are more historical than geographic -- to the
failed revolt of Ionia, Aristagoras' quest for help, and the ships sent
by Athens and Eretria, which were the beginnings of evil (Hdt. 5.97.3).
The story moves on to the battle of Lade where the disunited, irresolute
Ionians were defeated by a Persian fleet of six hundred ships, then to
the fall of Miletus, and Mardonius' expedition which, Herodotus (6.43.4)
claims, was aimed at Athens and Eretria. And finally, he reaches
Marathon, where Greeks for the first, face the _terribiltà_ of Persian
imperialism and surmount it. "For up until then," wrote Herodotus (6.112.
3), "even the name of the Persians was a fearful thing for the Greeks to
hear."[4]

The defeated Persian fleet returned to Asia and death soon removed
Darius from the stage. The story of Xerxes' expedition starts with a new,
more developed introduction. Marathon was only a preliminary episode
that ended the Ionian Revolt with graphic proof that the Persians were
not invulnerable.

Herodotus' narrative has suffered from being put into what he deemed
to be its historical context, but it is, nevertheless, our earliest and
best account, and any effort to reconstruct the battle must start with it.
The Persian commanders were Datis, a Mede, whose two sons, Harmamithras
and Tithaeus, commanded Xerxes' cavalry ten years later (Hdt. 7.88.1)[5],
and Darius' nephew, Artaphernes, the son of the satrap of Sardis during the
Ionian Revolt. Their fleet, which included horse-transports, made an
unhurried voyage across the Aegean to Euboea, taking time to sack Naxos,
reassure the Delians, and accept submission and contributions from other
islanders. When they reached Carystus, they met resistance, and had to

lay siege to it until the Carystians gave way. Then they sailed on to
Aliveriou Bay, some ten to fifteen miles east of Eretria,[6] where they
disembarked their men and horses. The Eretrians resolved to stand siege,
and did so for six days until two Eretrian δόκιμοι, Euphorbos and
Philagros, betrayed the town. The Persians sacked Eretria's temples in
revenge for the burning of the temples of Sardis, and enslaved the
Eretrians. Then, after waiting a few days, they sailed for Marathon,
hoping to repeat their exploit at Eretria. The whole trip from Samos to
Marathon can hardly have taken much less than a month.[7]

Marathon was near Eretria, and it was a good place for horses: the
verb Herodotus uses, ἐνιππεῦσαι, is taken to mean "good for cavalry
manoeuvring," which Marathon may have been in relation to the rest of
Attica, an area notoriously bad for it (Hdt. 9.13.3; Thuc. 7.27.5); but
it might also mean "good for maintaining cavalry." But the real reason
why the Persians made for Marathon Herodotus mentions last: Hippias led
them there (Hdt. 6.102; 6.107.1). They had brought Hippias with them,
apparently with the intention of re-establishing his tyranny and putting
Athens on the same basis as the Ionian cities, as a vassal state,[8] and
probably they assumed that Hippias had an influential body of supporters
in Athens. Hippias, with the zeal of an exile, no doubt had promoted
the view that his supporters would be willing collaborators. But, since
Hippias was the Persian guide and advisor, it is fair to look at his
record as a strategist. Marathon was not as near to Eretria as Oropos,
which might have recommended itself to the Persians if they had been
planning a lightning strike against Athens. But Hippias had set out from
Eretria and landed at Marathon once before.

After Pisistratus was expelled from his tyranny a second time by an
alliance of Megacles and Lycurgus, he went to Eretria where he held a
family council, and it was the young Hippias who argued for an attempt to
recover the tyranny (Hdt. 1.61-64).[9] A decade or more passed, and then
the Pisistratids crossed from Eretria and landed at Marathon. There they
encamped while their supporters joined them, and their opponents in
Athens made no move until the Pisistratids advanced from Marathon. The
decisive battle was fought at Pallene.

We get another glimpse of Hippias' talents in 511 B.C. (Hdt. 5.63).
Anchimolius landed a force at Phaleron. The Pisistratids, who had
equipped themselves with a thousand Thessalian horsemen, cleared the plain

of Phaleron to make it suitable for cavalry action and launched an attack
on the Spartan camp. The Spartan force was cut to pieces. There was
probably an element of surprise in their attack, but the fate of
Anchimolius demonstrates that cavalry, skilfully used on suitable terrain,
could be deadly.[10]

When the Athenians learned "these things," that is, the Persian
approach to Marathon, or perhaps their actual disembarkation, they went
to Marathon led by their ten generals, of whom Miltiades was the tenth
(Hdt. 6.103.1). Before they left Athens -- but after the news of Eretria's
fall had reached them -- they had sent Philippides to Sparta to ask Sparta
for help, but the Spartans replied that it was still the ninth of the
month, and they could not march out unless the moon was full.[11] The
Athenians at Marathon encamped in the *temenos* of the Herakleion, and
there the Plataeans joined them with their full army.

The ten generals were evenly split. Half, led by Miltiades, wanted
to fight, and the other half did not. They were not, it seems, for re-
treating to Athens, even if that were practicable, but simply for delaying
battle, and so Herodotus can write that the stalemate meant that the
worse policy was prevailing (6.109.2). Then Miltiades turned to the pole-
march, Callimachus. The whole episode -- even the words with which
Miltiades began his approach to the polemarch -- is closely parallel to
Themistocles' appeal to Eurybiades before Salamis.[12] On Callimachus'
decision hung the fate of Athens, to say nothing of the liberty of the
Greeks! The tradition that Miltiades was the moving spirit behind the
battle was solidly based; there was a document extant in the fourth
century that purported to be the decree Miltiades had carried in the
assembly directing the army to march out to Marathon.[13] But is the
debate on the battlefield itself historical as Herodotus reports it?
Probably not. It is an artistic device that heightens the drama by
making the fate of Greece hang on the choice of one man of no great im-
portance, who was "chosen by the bean"!

Callimachus made a choice that was vindicated by history, and the
generals who supported Miltiades turned over their days of command to
him, but even so he delayed until his own day. Then, without waiting any
longer for the Spartans, he attacked, using a novel and risky tactic.
He made his battle line equal in length to the Persian line, which he
must have seen in formation, presumably as it advanced across the plain,

and measured with an experienced eye. To achieve this, he thinned the ranks in the centre, but maintained the depth of his wings.[14] His plan was to hold the strong Persian centre long enough for his left and right wings, eight ranks deep, to crash into the weaker Persian wings, rout them, and then wheel around on to the flanks of the Persian centre. The tactician who conceived this plan was familiar with the Persian practice of placing their commander with the best troops in the centre of the battle line,[15] and Miltiades, who had fought alongside the Persians in the past, was just such a man.

For the tactic to work as planned, it was advisable for the Greeks to hit the Persian line with some momentum, and Herodotus writes that they charged δρόμῳ.[16] The Persians, Herodotus indicates, prepared to receive the charge, and were surprised to see the hoplite line advancing without the support of cavalry or archers. This is generally taken to mean that the Persians themselves did have cavalry and archers, whereas the Greeks had neither,[17] but the literal meaning of what Herodotus wrote is that the Persians did not see any cavalry or archers on the Greek side. The battle went on for a long time, but eventually the Greek centre broke and fled inland.[18] Tactics of the sort that Athenians used called for their centre to pin the Persians opposite them long enough for their wings to defeat the Persian wings, and if the Greek centre had broken too soon, while the battle on the wings was still being hotly contested, it is hard to understand how the Greeks could have avoided defeat. Marathon was a close-fought thing. The victory should not make us forget the terrible risk which the Athenians took, which they could have avoided to a great extent simply by waiting for the Spartans to arrive.

Athenian tradition insisted that the Athenians -- specifically Miltiades -- chose the day of battle, and one might suppose that this was also a Philaid family tradition. Herodotus implies a personal motive for Miltiades' choice: a disinclination to share the glory of victory. Personal motives should not be disregarded in ancient battles, or in modern ones, for that matter, but in this case Herodotus seems to have misunderstood the constitutional situation. It was the polemarch who commanded the right wing, and if it was within the power of the Greeks to choose the day of battle, the polemarch must have had a voice. The tactics of Marathon may belong to Miltiades, and he may have been the

moving spirit behind the decision not to stand siege in the city as
Eretria had attempted,[19] but the choice of the day could not have been
decided by his personal whim. There must have been other solid reasons
for it as well.

The Persian army fled, the wings first, followed by those troops
in the centre that got away. The painting of Marathon in the *Stoa*
Poikile showed a disordered rout[20] with the Persians crowding each other
into the Great Marsh. The ships, which had perhaps been lying at anchor,[21]
sheltered by the rocky promontory of Cynosoura, pulled into the shore
to pick up the fugitives. At this point, Herodotus' description takes
on Homeric overtones, but in fact the Athenians captured no more than
seven ships. The fleet paused to pick up the Eretrian prisoners, who had
been deposited at Aigilia, and probably reached Phaleron the next day.[22]
They found the Athenians already there, with their camp at the Herakleion
in Cynosarges. Herodotus implies that the Persians hoped to get to
Phaleron before the Athenian army could return from Marathon, but that
was surely a forlorn hope, and in any case, they had had to lose time
picking up the Eretrian prisoners. Their tactics must still have been
guided by the belief that there were Pisistratid supporters inside the
city still willing to collaborate if they could make contact with them.
The fleet rode off Phaleron for a short while -- probably overnight --
and then sailed for home. Two thousand Spartans (a large force, if it
is compared with the number sent to Tempe or Thermopylae in 480 B.C.)
set out for Athens immediately after the full moon removed the religious
ban and arrived in three days: if the full moon was that of September 9th,
they arrived on September 12th.[23]

The shield signal is introduced with an element of doubt. Herodotus
(6.124.2) asserts that there was one, and that in Athens the blame fell
upon the Alkmaeonidai, for it was alleged that the Persians sailed to
Phaleron because of a pre-arranged signal made to them with a shield
after they were embarked. Almost certainly the reason why the fleet
sailed to Phaleron was the hope that it might still make contact with the
collaborators, and signalling with σύστημα (a shield might do very well:
Lysander used one at the battle of Aegospotami[24]) was established
military practice.[25] However, the flashing shield of Marathon that
signalled from Mt. Penteli or the slopes of Agrieliki is a modern myth,
and involves optical difficulties.[26] Scouts operating by day

(ἡμεροσκόποι) raised σύστημα from positions where they could be seen by the naked eye, and over long distances they used relays; they did not rely on flashing objects. The signal was made from some point visible to the Persian fleet, and though we can only speculate where the signaller stood, the best guess may be upon some half-ruined wall in the deme of Marathon. Likewise, we can only speculate whether the signaller was the last of a relay or a solitary collaborator willing to take a risk, and in any case, the Persians might have chosen to sail to Phaleron without the benefit of the signal. However, we should take Herodotus at his word. The tradition that he reported left no doubt that there was a signal, and the fleet *did* sail to Phaleron in the hope that traitors in Athens might still be able to betray the city.[27]

So much for Herodotus' account of Marathon, and, as Gomme observed, it "will not do." However, the flaws are sins of omission. There is no reason to think that he entirely misunderstood the Persian tactics, and we can make some inferences from what he does report which have a claim to truth. First: on the aim of the Persian strategy. This used to concern an older generation of scholars, whose speculations led to theories far removed from Herodotus' account.[28] It seems likely that the aged Hippias was trying to repeat a strategy that had served the Pisistratids well in 546 B.C. At that time, Pisistratus' supporters in Attica had joined him at Marathon, and his foes failed to march out to meet him until he advanced towards the city. Hippias and Datis hoped that history would repeat itself, at least to the extent that some supporters would join them at Marathon, and the stories in Plato and Diodorus[29] about Datis' message to the Athenians demanding surrender, or laying claim to Athens on the ground of his descent from Medos, Medea's son, and even the tradition about his bad Greek that turns up in Aristophanes[30] within the lifespan of veterans of the battle, may derive from an actual proclamation that Datis made. The proclamation would have gone at least to the tetrapolis of Marathon, Trikorynthos, Oinoe, and Probalinthos. The strategy of working with collaborators was one that Persia had used with skill in the past: at the battle of Lade, where Datis was perhaps admiral of the Persian fleet, it had been used with success (Hdt. 6.109.5), and the Athenians were aware of the danger. But apparently the Pisistratid supporters hesitated.

The second inference concerns what the Persian movements were on the day of the battle when Miltiades chose to attack. If the Athenians could draw up their battle line to equal the length of the Persian line, they must have already known its length![31] Whether the Persians expected to be attacked or not, on the day of battle they must have been moving in formation towards the Greek position. However, that brings us to the next vexed question: the topography of the plain.

Topography of Marathon

The plain of Marathon has changed greatly since 490 B.C., but thanks to recent research [32] the main points are now identified with some certainty. In 490, the Charadra, which used to have a good flow of water before the building of the Marathon Dam, flowed along the foothills of Stavrokoraki into the "Great Marsh." Its course must have run a short distance north of the Mesoporitissa chapel, and neither the Persian nor the Greek army had to cross it.[33] The small marsh of Brexisa, between Mt. Agrieliki and the sea, now partially drained, did not exist.[34] The deme of Marathon can be put at Plasi, as Pritchett suggested in 1969,[35] where the Charadra, following its modern course, cuts through the plain to the sea. The "Miltiades monument"[36] stood near the Mesoporitissa chapel, fairly close to the "Great Marsh," or marshy lake, which it must have been in 490 B.C.; in 1884-85 von Eschenberg, while making a survey of the plain, reported the discovery of a great mass of bones lying in disorder in the area of this same chapel and extending east as far as the marsh.[37] These may have been the mortal remains of Datis' army, for Pausanias[38] reports that the Athenians buried them, but he could not find their grave.

The *Soros* no doubt marks the place where the Greeks and Persians joined battle, but we have no grounds for insisting that it marked the very spot where the Greek centre broke, nor even that it marked the battle site with mathematical exactitude.[39] In the early nineteenth century, E.D. Clarke and Leake both saw a small tomb a little to the north of the *Soros*, and this has a greater claim to be the tomb of the Plataeans than the tumulus discovered in 1970 by the ephor E. Mastrokostas and excavated by Marinatos.[40] The precinct of Herakles, where the Athenians camped, cannot have been at Vrana, close to the chapel of St Demetrios, where Soteriades located it, but north of the Brexisa swamp,

at the foot of Agrieliki,[41] and in the area of the same swamp, we must place the deme of Probalinthos.[42] There was no pass of Thermopylae between Marathon and Athens, as Whatley[43] observed in a shrewd demolition of the theories of Munro, Grundy, and their followers; but the point is not as well taken as it seems to be. If the Persians were to march along the road to Athens, they had to neutralize Probalinthos and protect themselves against an attack from the Athenians at the Herakleion. More-over, time was against them. Hippias, who was still this side of senility, knew the significance of the full moon, and the Persians, who knew what had happened to their heralds in Sparta the year before, cannot have been under illusions about Sparta's attitude. It was the Athenians who would gain by delaying battle, and the Persians who would lose.

The Persian anchorage was off the Schinia in the lee of Cynosoura,[44] but the shoreline seems to have altered to some extent since 490 B.C. Themelis places the fifth-century beach slightly less than a mile (1,500 metres) north of its modern counterpart.[45] Here is an area of some uncertainty, which means that we cannot be sure exactly where the Persian army bivouacked; probably it was close to the anchorage of the fleet and hence to the south and south-east of the marshy lake. However, it is still true that, to reach the *Soros* on the day of battle, the Persians had to advance at least two miles and probably more, skirting the deme of Marathon, which may have partially hidden them from view until they got past it. The distance between the Herakleion at the foot of Agrieliki and the Soros is less than half that distance. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that whether the Persians expected the Greeks to attack or not, they were advancing in battle order towards the Greek camp before Miltiades launched his charge.

Some of the Persians who fled were driven into the marshy lake. When due allowance is made for the alteration of the shoreline, the Homeric struggle at the ships probably took place not far south of the Mesoporitissa chapel, and the Persians who were pushed into the lake were fugitives who had somehow got separated from their fellows. It may have been in that general area, where von Eschenberg found human remains, that the Athenians dumped the Persian dead into a common grave, and it may have been there that they suffered their heaviest casualties.[46]

The Problem of the Cavalry

There can be no doubt that the Persian expeditionary force included cavalry, for it included horse-transports, but after the horses were disembarked on Euboea we hear no more of them (Hdt. 6.58.2; 6.95; 6.101.1). Marathon was suitable for horses, and the Persians were surprised to see the Athenians attack without the support of cavalry and archers, which is taken to imply that they themselves had both (Hdt. 6.102; 6.112.2).[47] But nothing is said of the part they took in the battle.

Later tradition had no doubts about their presence on the battle-field. Nepos numbered them at 10,000. Diodorus mentions 850 horse-transports. Pausanias wrote that a man who stood by the Miltiades monument at night might still hear the neighing of horses.[48] The picture of Marathon painted c. 460 B.C. in the *Stoa Poikile* apparently included horses in the battle, for the Brescia sarcophagus fragment which derives from it shows a horse in the struggle by the ships[49] and the south frieze of the Nike temple which may also derive from it, shows hoplites fighting mounted Persians.[50] Finally, Pliny states that alfalfa was introduced from Media to Greece "per bella Persarum quae Darius intulit,"[51] and alfalfa was the fodder of choice for horses.[52] The quality of the evidence varies, but it all points to the presence of cavalry.

The problem is to assign it a role. Nepos gives a morsel of information which has been heavily interpreted. He tells how the Athenians made camp at Marathon, and then continues: "Then, the next day, he drew up his battle line at the foot of the mountain in a place which was not very open and joined battle (for there were trees scattered about in many places) with this strategy in mind: that his forces would be protected by the high hills, and the cavalry of the enemy would be prevented by a forested area (an area of trees) from surrounding them with their great numbers."[53] The Latin of this passage has taxed the ingenuity of scholars who have used it to show that Miltiades made a stockade or an *abattis* of felled trees (*tractus* can mean "hauling" as well as "tract," and might refer to logs being dragged into position),[54] but on the face of it, it appears that Nepos believed that the Persians would use enveloping tactics with their cavalry as Hannibal did at Cannae, and Miltiades countered by drawing up his line in a lightly-treed area where his rear was protected by high hills. However, Nepos was anachronistic; in 490 B.C., Hannibal's cavalry tactics lay far off in the future.

A second morsel of information comes from the Byzantine encyclopae-
dia, the *Suda*, put together by a group of scholars, perhaps in the reign
of John Tzimisces (967-76). Some of its sources, such as the text and
scholia of Aristophanes, are easy to trace, but the source for the entry
χωρὶς ἱππεῖς is unknown.[55] Moreover, the translation is full of difficul-
ties, partly because the Greek is Attic written by Byzantine scholars for
whom the meaning of some of the words may have changed. The following
is an attempt:

> "The horses are apart (*or* are away). When Datis invaded
> Attica, men say that the Ionians, when he had withdrawn (*or*
> gone away), came up inland to a wooded area (*or* climbed trees)[56]
> and told (*or* signalled to) the Athenians that their horses were
> apart (*or* away *or* brigaded by themselves *or possibly* off on a
> separate mission.) And Miltiades who took notice of their
> departure (*or* understood what they were up to) thus attacked
> and won a victory. Whence the aphorism is said of those who
> break up (*or* destroy) battle order (*or* an army detachment,
> *or possibly even* an army)."

The aphorism appears in no earlier collection, and whatever its
source it surfaces first in the *Suda*.

The value of the *Suda* entry is that it provides what Herodotus'
account lacks: a rational motive for Miltiades' attack before the
Spartan arrival. The Ionians serving in the Persian fleet gave Miltiades
word that the cavalry was engaged in some manoeuvre that would take them
away from the main force.[57] But the mention of the Ionians should make
us wary. This entry derives from an Ionian tradition which gives the
Ionians a share in the glory of Marathon. It is probably based on a
legend which, in turn, may have been based on some action, authentic or
not, that was reported in one of the lost *Persika*. We can only con-
jecture what the legend was, but the later tradition we have about
Marathon preserves bits and pieces of a great many legends,[58] and we can
patch one together that might serve as an example. For instance, perhaps
Datis broke off a parley with the Athenians (did he use the occasion to
display his bad Greek, and lay claim to Attica as the descendant of
Medos?)[59] and departed for his own camp. The Ionians got word to
Miltiades that the Persians would attack, and the first sign of their

advance would be a squadron of cavalry sent in advance of the main army
to neutralize Probalinthos and secure the road between Mt. Agrieliki and
the sea. Using cavalry to "dog" the enemy in advance of the infantry
was a tactic familiar to the Byzantine world of the tenth century, and
this was only a variation of it.[60]

Using the information the Ionians gave him to advantage, Miltiades
drew up his line in the trees around the Herakleion and, when the Persian
foot had advanced as close as eight stades, launched an attack on it with
all the speed he could muster. The cavalry got back in time to take part
in the battle but not to alter its outcome. Thus Miltiades destroyed the
Persion τάξις at Marathon, and so the saying χωρὶς ἱππεῖς was attached to
tactics that destroyed battle formations of infantry.

This legend, or something like it, may have given rise to the
aphorism that the *Suda* reports, but it has no claim to be historical.
The Byzantines, like ourselves, and like the Persians in Datis' army who
saw the hoplite line bearing down on them, must have wondered how an
infantry force could defeat a superior force supported by cavalry.[61]
The legend explained the difficulty. But the difficulty has been in part
created by our own preconceived opinions about the Persian cavalry and
how it fought. It was not necessarily posted on the flanks where it might
have saved the Persian wings from defeat; at Cunaxa in 401 B.C.,
Artaxerxes II had six thousand horse stationed in the centre in front of
his own position, Tissaphernes' horse on the left, and apparently none
on the right.[62] Nor were the cavalry simply mounted archers who rose up
to the enemy, shot, and then wheeled. The cavalry in Xerxes' army had
the same armour as the infantry, except for the Sagartians, who fought
with bronze daggers and lassoes (Hdt. 7.84-85). They could, like the
cavalrymen in archaic Greece, give their mounts to their squires and
fight on foot: a useful adaptability if their mounts were killed in
battle. They had bows, but they could fight with other weapons; on a
sarcophagus from Clazomenae now in the British Museum[63] they are shown
charging Greek hoplites with cutlasses. Persian armour was light;
cavalrymen wore characteristic bonnets with loose flaps instead of
helmets, and cuirasses of mail looking like fish scales (Hdt. 7.61.1).[64]
Contingents of heavily-armoured horse do not appear in the Persian army
until the time of Darius III, as far as we know[65] although this was a
type of cavalry that was being developed by the Massagetae around the

Aral Sea as early as the sixth century,[66] and the mail worn by Masistius
at Plataea was perhaps an early example of this, for he could be killed
only by a blow in the eye (Hdt. 9.22.2).[67] But he seems to have been an
isolated example. It would appear that, in hand-to-hand combat with
hoplites, the latter had the advantage, for the horseman had neither
stirrups nor a true saddle,[68] but much depended on how well his animal
was schooled. Persian cavalry horses were trained to do the levade[69]
and attack with their hoofs; Herodotus tells the story of one mount
belonging to the Persian commander on Cyprus during the Ionian Revolt,
Artybius, that had been trained not merely to rear and strike out with
its hoofs but to attack with its teeth as well (Hdt. 5.110-112). It was
a difficult manoeuvre for a foot soldier to counter single-handed, and
Artybius was brought down by a hoplite and his squire working as a team:
one attacked the rider and the other the horse. We cannot contest the
argument that the Persians had nothing to match a hoplite phalanx fight-
ing in deep formation,[70] but if the hoplite line fell into disorder, their
cavalry could be effective against it.

If Datis and Artaphernes had had a substantial number of cavalry
covering their flanks, they might have countered Miltiades' tactics
effectively. However, first, we cannot be sure where the Persians placed
their cavalry or how they used them, and second, we cannot assume that
they had a substantial number, as should be clear from what follows.

Darius' orders for mustering the invasion fleet specified νέας
τὲ μακρὰς καὶ ἱππαγωγὰ πλοῖα: the former were triremes, whereas it appears
that the latter were not (Hdt. 6.48.2). We encounter this specialized
type of vessel again in Xerxes' fleet, where they are called "small horse-
carrying boats" (Hdt. 7.97).[71] The adjective is of some importance, for
it makes it clear that these were not the sort of transports that Athens
used in the Peloponnesian War, which carried thirty horses each and were
an adaptation of the trireme design, with sixty rowers.[72] Horses were
not an easy cargo. The knights in Aristophanes[73] who praise their beasts
for leaping on board their transports, helping out with the oars, and
making do with crabs for food rather than alfalfa, are exaggerating the
virtues of good cavalry mounts. Horses, if they are not prone to colic,
can subsist on strange and inadequate diets for short periods, and, on
campaigns, often did, but as the cavalryman in Aesop's *Fables*[74] discovered,
a horse that is fed only roughage without a supplement of barley will

become too weak to perform its duties. However, we should not exaggerate
the fragility of the ancient horse. The mounts the Persians used[75] were
genetically much closer to steppe ponies than to English thoroughbreds,
and could survive on diets that would shock any modern veterinarian.
Nevertheless, bringing a large force to Marathon would have posed daunting
logistical problems. The transports were small ships carrying perhaps
four or five beasts each, and though the voyage from Samos to Euboea
need not have been particularly arduous, for the horses may have been
unloaded for exercise on some of the islands which Datis touched, yet
the provision of fodder and water must have been difficult. It is not
realistic to think that Datis had a large cavalry unit at his disposal.
For a force of 1,000 horse,[76] some two hundred transports or more would
have been necessary. The number is too high. Datis probably had no more
than two hundred horse on the day of battle, and even that estimate may
be too generous.

In any reconstruction of the battle, therefore, we can count on two
conclusions which, if not proved, are at least highly probable. The
first is that the Persian cavalry was not posted on the wings though
some part of it, at least, could have been posted in the centre, to pro-
tect the position of the commanding general. The second is that its
number was small. Two hundred is a guess, but it is a reasonable one.

The Battle

It is hard to propose any reconstruction of Marathon that is original.
Yet perhaps that is not a fault, for some of the most original theories
that have been proposed in the past have been fascinating fictions,
floating on air without solid evidence to support them. We must start
with Herodotus, for though he may have not assigned the battle the impor-
tance that later Athenians tradition did, or that we do, what he says is
probably accurate as far as it goes. The fact that it is so little
contaminated by legend is a point in its favour. The value of the legends
is more difficult to assess. The arrival of the Spartans the day after
the battle, which Plato reports,[77] is probably a case of dramatic fore-
shortening, and the number given by later tradition for the size of the
Greek army is reckoned on a rough count of 1,000 hoplites per tribe,[78]
but the legend that gave rise to the aphorism χωρὶς ἱππεῖς may be based

upon an event that Athens considered of no importance, but that Ionian
tradition cherished. No reconstruction should make it the cornerstone
of the edifice, but it should, at least, explain it.

A reconstruction must also account for the movements of the Persian
army on the day of battle, for it appears that, before the Greeks launched
their onslaught, the Persians had advanced south, skirting the deme of
Marathon which may have partially hidden their movements from the Greeks
until they got past it. Miltiades had to see their battle line first before
he could draw up his own to match its length. The Persians may have been
surprised at the hoplite charge, but they were in battle order none the
less. What was their objective? From the direction of their march, we
can infer that they were prepared to offer battle if necessary, but if
the Athenians declined, then they intended to secure Probalinthos, move
along the road between Mt. Agrieliki and the sea, and do what the
Pisistratids had done in 546 B.C.: advance upon Athens.

The Persians, guided by the aged Hippias, landed at Marathon with
the reasonable hope that history would repeat itself. Hippias was reliving
his youth. We can conjecture that Datis and Hippias sent out proclamations
at least to the Tetrapolis of Marathon and perhaps further afield, and
probably they did more than that: Marathon and Trikorynthos at least may
have been sacked. The cavalry must have been very useful at this stage
of the campaign. But the Persians allowed the Athenian army to camp at
the Herakleion where it commanded the road between Mt. Agrieliki and the
sea, and offered some protection to Probalinthos. As time went on, they
must have regretted their error, for there was no other practicable road
for them to take to Athens. The response of the Pisistratid supporters
was disappointing. Probably Hippias had exaggerated the degree of his
support; probably, too, many whose sympathies lay with the Pisistratids
were nevertheless loyal Athenians and not ready to medize. Moreover,
Datis and Artaphernes must have known the significance of the full moon
and guessed that the Spartans would come to help as soon as they were
free of their taboo. That information Hippias was qualified to supply.
The Persians were confident, but they preferred to fight their enemies
separately, and they determined to force a decision before the Spartans
arrived.

On the day of battle, they moved from their bivouac south and east
of the "Great Marsh," past the dene of Marathon, and made for the road

between Agrieliki and the sea. I would conjecture -- if the *Suda's* evidence is worth anything -- that they sent most of their cavalry ahead to neutralize Probalinthos and scout the road to Athens, and that it got temporarily out of touch with the main army, as it advanced across the plain, until close to the *Soros*, it encountered the Athenian charge. The story that the *Suda* tells may be based upon an actual event: perhaps some time before the Persians began their advance, a few Ionians serving in the Persian fleet got word of the Persian intentions to the Athenians, pointing out that the first indication of the Persian offensive would be a flying squadron of cavalry riding forward to secure the road between Mt. Agrieliki and the sea. The information gave Miltiades extra time to draw up his line in the sparsely-wooded area around the Herakleion, and Ionian tradition remembered the courage of these brave spies. But Athens had its own quota of legends about Marathon, and quickly forgot.

The Athenians may have had contingency plans in case they were forced to fight before Spartan help arrived, but what happened on the battle-field cannot have been planned in advance. Miltiades' tactics were novel and risky, and they nearly failed; in fact, they must have failed if the Athenian centre had been unable to pin the Persians and Sakae opposite them long enough for the wings to rout the wings of Datis' army. More-over, if our conjecture is right that Datis sent a flying squadron of cavalry in advance of his main force, then the Athenians were taking a double risk: they had to ignore the cavalry and count on it failing to rejoin the main army in time to give it any significant help. The battle was long and hard-fought, and in the end the Greek centre broke, but not before the wings, eight ranks deep, had time to rout the Persian wings and swing in upon the elite troops of the Persian centre before its pursuit had gone very far ἐς τὴν μεσογαίαν. If the slaves who were buried at Marathon took part in the battle, their post was behind the hoplite line, and their weapons, we must suspect, were the javelin and the bow,[79] though it was the hoplite charge that counted, and it was only the hoplites that the Persians saw bearing down upon them. Later tradition treated Marathon as a hoplite battle.

The Persians made a last stand towards the south end of the "Great Marsh" where their ships drew in close to the shore to embark the army. This is the stage of the battle shown on the Brescia sarcophagus, where two ships appear in the right background, and in the left, a horse. The

cavalry had by now rejoined the main army, but they were too few and too late to affect the outcome. It was here that the Persians suffered most of their casualties, possibly because faint-hearted captains pulled away before their ships were fully loaded. In any case, only seven ships were captured, but 6,400 men lost their lives.[80]

The Persian voyage to Phaleron need not surprise us. Datis and Artaphernes had to report a defeat to the Great King, and it would go better for them if they could make it clear that they had left nothing untried. But a signal with a raised shield was made to them from some point on the shore; probably they spotted it, and probably it came from a Pisistratid supporter. As for his identity, Herodotus himself said the last word. By the time he received the traditions about it, its political significance far outweighed any strategic importance that it ever had. The Persian fleet rode at anchor off Phaleron through the night, but they waited in vain, and in the morning, sailed away.[81]

NOTES

[1] "Herodotus and Marathon," *Phoenix* 6 (1952) 77-83.

[2] For Herodotus' publication date, see my "Herodotus' Publication Date," *Athenaeum*, N.S. 67 (1979) 145-49; also my *Herodotus* (Boston 1983) 15-18.

[3] Hdt. 9.27.5 (hereafter cited internally); cf. Thuc. 1.73.4; Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.2.11. The best examination of the traditions about Marathon is still that of R.W. Macan, Herodotus, *The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Books*, II (London 1895) 149-248.

[4] Cf. J. Arthur Munro, "Some Observations on the Persian Wars," *JHS* 19 (1899) 185-97, esp. p. 186: his remark that in Persian eyes, Marathon was "merely the completion of the pacification of Ionia"; also Henry Wood, *The Histories of Herodotus. An Analysis of the Formal*

Structure (The Hague/Paris, 1972) 135-49: "The final tally of the entire
Marathon logos is to set Athens' victory in the context of Greek dis-
unity. . . ."

[5] Datis had probably been the Persian admiral at the battle of Lade:
A.R. Burn, *Persia and the Greeks: The Defence of the West, c. 546-478 B.C.*
(London 1962) 210-11.

[6] W.P. Wallace, *Hesperia* 16 (1947) 130-33.

[7] Fritz Schachermeyer, "Marathon und die Persische Politik," *Hist.
Zeit.* 172 (1951) 1-35, esp. pp. 3-4.

[8] Tyranny should have been absent in Ionia at this time, if we accept
Mardonius' reform reported at Hdt. 6.43.3. However, whatever Mardonius
did, it did not mean any ideological shift on the part of the Persians:
cf. J.A.S. Evans, "The Settlement of Artaphrenes," *CP* 71 (1976) 344-49;
cf. id., *Herodotus* (at n. 2) 91.

[9] Hippias was old enough for his opinions to carry weight in a family
council; yet, if he were twenty years old at the time, he would have
been more than eighty-six in 490 B.C. W.W. How and J. Wells, *A Com-
mentary on Herodotus,* II (Oxford 1928) 358-59, argue that Hippias could
not have hoped that history would repeat itself in 490 B.C. However,
Hippias was a very old man who had not been in Athens for two decades,
and was no doubt the prey of wishful thinking; he cannot have been an
accurate guide for the Athenian reaction to the landing in Marathon.

[10] It is generally assumed, I think rightly, that ancient cavalry was
completely outmatched by hoplites fighting in formation: cf. C. Hignett,
Xerxes' Invasion of Greece (Oxford 1963) 69; Gordon Shrimpton, "The
Persian Cavalry at Marathon," *Phoenix* 34 (1980) 20; W. Kendrick Pritchett,
"Plataea," *AJPh* 100 (1979) 151-52. However, cavalry and hoplites do
appear in battle on Greek vases, most notably on a black-figure Attic cup
belonging to the third quarter of the sixth century, now in Berlin, where
light cavalry whose dress is Athenian are shown charging a hoplite phalanx.
See P.A.L. Greenhalgh, *Early Greek Warfare* (Cambridge 1973) 123 (fig.
56), 135.

[11] This statement has been used to date the battle to the Spartan
month of Karneios (= Athenian *Metageitnion*: Plut. *Nik.* 28.1) on the
assumption that this prohibition applied only to the month of the Karneian
festival, and hence by assuming an eight-year cycle for the Athenian
calendar, we arrive at September: W.K. Pritchett, *The Greek State at War,*

I (Berkeley 1974) 116-24; cf. Eduard Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums,*
III (Stuttgart 1901) 334; Macan (at n. 3) 220-21. Herodotus nowhere
mentions the Karneian festival, and ten years later Leonidas led his force
to Thermopylae about the time of the Karneia: Hignett (at n. 10) 63-64.
However, the tradition that the Spartan delay was caused by the moon was
generally accepted: cf. Aristophanes, *Archarnians* 83-84 and scholia,
though Plato, *Laws* 698E would indicate that it was not the only one.
Burn (at n. 5) 240-41 argues that the Karneian moon of 490 B.C. could
have been that of August 11th, and it may be worth noting that at
Carystus, the Persians τὴν γῆν σφέων ἔκειρον, (6.99.2), which implies
destruction of crops, and such a tactic would have been more effective
in July, when probably there were still some crops unharvested on Euboea.

[12] Evans (at n. 2) 71.

[13] Arist. *Rhetorica* iii. 10; 1411a10. Cf. Ch. Habicht, "Falsche
Urkunden zur Geschichte Athens im Zeitalter der Perserkriege," *Hermes*
89 (1961) 1-35, esp. pp. 17-20; cf. N.G.L. Hammond "The Campaign and the
Battle of Marathon," *JHS* 88 (1968) 34. Nepos, *Miltiades* 4.5,
mentions no decree, but does record that Miltiades was responsible
for the decision not to stand siege, and the fact that, in 489 B.C.,
the Athenians entrusted him with seventy ships for a campaign, though
he declined to reveal its destination (Hdt. 6. 132), indicates that
they saw him as the author of the victory.

[14] Therefore the wings probably had eight ranks of hoplites : cf.
Hignett (at n. 10) 57-58; Pritchett (at n. 11) 137. J.H. Schreiner,
"The Battles of 490 B.C.," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological
Society* 196 (N.S. 16) (1970) 97-112, esp. p. 106, noted before I did that
the Persians must have formed their line before Miltiades could draw up
his.

[15] Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.7.2.

[16] I suspect that the charge at Marathon was very like that which so
terrified Epyaxa (Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.2.17) when Cyrus' hoplites staged
it as a parade-ground manoeuvre. However, δρόμῳ can in other contexts
mean simply "at quick pace": e.g., Hdt. 9.59.2; Thuc. 1.63.1: cf. Ph-E.
Legrand, *Hérodote, Histoires,* 5-6 (Paris 1946) ad loc.; Shrimpton (at
n. 10) 27, no. 16. W.W. How, "On the Meaning of βάδην and δρόμῳ," *CQ* 13
(1919) 40-42, argues that δρόμῳ is about twice the ordinary marching
pace. At the battle of Cunaxa in 401 B.C., the phalanx broke into a run

spontaneously as it advanced: Xenophon, *Anab.* 1.8.18. The charge at
Marathon made the hoplites a less easy target for the Persian archers
(cf. How and Wells [at n. 9] 112), but it was primarily a shock tactic.
How far the hoplites could maintain a run without becoming exhausted is
a separate question. At Olympia, the race in armour took place over two
stades, and competitors wore helmet, shield, and greaves, but the greaves
and helmets were subsequently discarded: Pausanias, 6.10.4. Even though
the course was one quarter the length of the run at Marathon, it seems
that the physical effort was too great. Probably, therefore, the
Athenians broke into a run only as they approached the Persian line.

[17] Cf. W. Kendrick Pritchett, *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography,*
Pt. 1, (Berkeley 1965) 93. Later tradition, however, presented Marathon
as "une bataille d'hoplites à l'état pur": cf. Pierre Vidal-Naquet,
"La Tradition de l'Hoplite Athenien," in J.-P. Vernant, ed., *Problèmes
de la guerre en Grèce ancienne* (Paris-La Haye 1968) 161-81, and it may be
that we infer too much.

[18] The words ἐς τὴν μεσόγαιαν give little indication of the exact
direction of flight. They indicate that the Athenians were not pushed
towards the sea.

[19] The state of Athens' fortification walls may also have influenced
the decision. The evidence for the existence of these rests upon Hdt.
9.13.2; and Thuc. 1.89.3, and 1.93.2. There is no archeological
evidence. E. Vanderpool, "The Date of the Pre-Persian City Walls of
Athens," ΦΟΡΟΣ. *Tribute to Benjamin Dean Merritt*, ed. D.W. Bradeen and
M.F. McGregor (Locust Valley, N.Y. 1974) 156-60, conjectures that they
were built by 566 B.C., but how defensible they were by 490 is another
question. However, the memory of Pisistratus' landing in 546 B.C.
probably influenced the Athenians' decision to march out promptly to
Marathon.

[20] Paus. 1.15.4.

[21] Macan (at n. 3) 150.

[22] Cf. A. Trevor Hodge, "Marathon: The Persians' Voyage," *TAPA* 105
(1975) 155-73, reckons the duration of the voyage at 30-45 hours. Aigilia
(or Aigleia), probably modern Styra island (W.P. Wallace, "The Demes of
Eretria," *Hesperia* 16 [1947] 132, n. 41), forced a detour from the most
direct route to Phaleron. Possibly the Persian fleet divided and a squad-
ron sailed directly for Sounion, but we have no ancient evidence for such
a manoeuvre.

[23] Hammond (at n. 13) 13-57, esp. n. 121.

[24] Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2. 27.

[25] Aeneas Tacticus, 6. Anne-Marie Bon, *Enée le Tacticien: Poliorcétique* (Paris 1967) 120-21, mentions raising a polished shield or sheet of metal capable of reflecting the sun. However, it appears from Aeneas that it was the sheet of metal itself and not the flash from it that should be visible.

[26] Cf. A. Trevor Hodge and Luis A. Losada, "The Time of the Shield Signal at Marathon," *AJA* 74 (1970) 31-36. If we can take the evidence of Aristophanes *Wasps*, 1085 seriously, it was already evening when the Persian ships pulled away from Marathon. Was there enough light to flash a shield, however well-polished?

[27] Cf. D. Gillis, *Collaboration With the Persians, Historia Einzelschr.* 34 (1979) 50: "It is odd that Herodotus never accuses the Athenian followers of Hippias of having given the shield signal." Yet the argument that he puts forward to prove the innocence of the Alkmaeonids is that they had always been enemies of the Pisistratids! By inference, Pisistratid leanings and medism went hand-in-hand in 490 B.C. It is, however, worth noting that in Herodotus' excursus on the shield signal, no mention is made of the Hipparchus who was ostracized in 488/7 B.C., presumably for Pisistratid sympathies. Hipparchus was archon in 496/5 B.C., and probably fought at Marathon, as pointed out by Ernst Badian, "Archons and Strategoi," *Antichthon* 5 (1971) 11. Apparently, when Herodotus was collecting his material on Marathon, he encountered no tradition that connected Hipparchus with any treasonable act.

[28] E.g., J. Arthur Munro, *JHS* (1899) 185-97; id., *CAH* 4 (1926) 229-52; G.B. Grundy, *The Great Persian War and its Preliminaries* (London 1901) 183-90; cf. N. Whatley, "Reconstructing Marathon and Other Ancient Battles," *JHS* 84 (1964) 119-39.

[29] Plato, *Laws* (689 C-D); Diodorus, 10.27.

[30] *Peace*, 289 and Scholia; *Suda*, s.v. Δᾶτις; cf. A.E. Raubitschek, "Das Datislied," *Charites. Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. K. Schauenberg (Bonn 1957) 234-42.

[31] I cannot follow the argument of G. Shrimpton (at n. 10) 24-28 that Miltiades had prepared his tactics in advance and that no motive is needed for the attack other than his "bold opportunism." His tactics were dangerous, and his fellow generals and the polemarch must have

accepted them out of necessity and desperation. Miltiades was in no
position to impose his will upon his fellow generals.

[32] J.A.G. van der Veer, "The Battle of Marathon: A Topographical
Survey," *Mnemosyne,* ser. 4, 35 (1982) 290-321; P. Themelis, "Μαραθῶν.
Τὰ πρόσφατα ἀρχαιολογικὰ εὑρήματα σὲ σχέση μὲ τὴ μάχη." *Archaeologikon
Deltion* 29.1 (1974) 226-44; Sp. Marinatos, "From the Silent Earth," *AAA*
3 (1970) 61-68; id., "Further News from Marathon," *AAA* 3 (1970) 153-66,
349-66; E. Vanderpool, "A Monument to the Battle of Marathon," *Hesperia*
35 (1966) 93-106; id., "The Deme of Marathon and the *Herakleion,*"
AJA 70 (1966) 319-23; W. Kendrick Pritchett, "The Deme of Marathon:
Von Eschenberg's Evidence," *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography,* Pt. 2,
(Berkeley 1960) 1-11; id., *Marathon* (Berkeley 1960); A.R. Burn, "Thermopylai
Revisited and Some Topographical Notes on Marathon and Plataiai,"
Festschrift Schachermeyer, ed. K. Kinzl (Berlin/New York 1977) 89-105.

[33] Themelis (at n. 32) 229-32; Pritchett, *Marathon* (at n. 32) 156-57.

[34] Pritchett, *Marathon* (at n. 32) 152-53.

[35] Marinatos (at n. 32) 153-66, 349; Themelis (at n. 32) 233-39. Van
der Veer (at n. 32) 296 expresses reservations.

[36] Apostolius, 13.27; Pausanias, 1.32.3.

[37] Vanderpool (at n. 32) 101, n. 15; cf. Themelis (at n. 32) 232.

[38] 1.32.4

[39] A.R. Burn (at n. 5) 254; id., "Hammond on Marathon: a few notes,"
JHS 89 (1969) 118-20.

[40] (At n. 32) 153-66; cf. Themelis (at n. 32) 298; Van der Veer (at
n. 32) 302.

[41] Vanderpool (at n. 32) 319-23; Themelis (at n. 32) 235. This is
the area where Meyer (at n. 11) 329 argued that the Herakleion's site was.
The shrine may have been surrounded by a grove of trees: cf. Schreiner's
argument (at n. 14) 106 that the "grove" of Marathon which witnessed
Aeschylus' valour in his epitaph was the grove of trees that surrounded
the precinct.

[42] Themelis (at n. 32) 297-98.

[43] (At n. 28) 138.

[44] Pritchett, *Marathon* (at n. 32) 157-59; cf. Wallace E. McLeod, *AJA*
65 (1961) 403.

[45] Themelis (at n. 32) 232.

[46] It seems unnecessary to think that Pausanias misinterpreted the

[57] Shrimpton's theory (at n. 10) 37 that the cavalry simply broke form-
ation and fled would imply that the authors of this aphorism utterly
misunderstood their source. How could the Ionians signal the news that
the cavalry would flee in advance of the battle?

[58] Macan (at n. 3) 149-248.

[59] Diodorus, 10.27; cf. Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Theseus as Son
and Stepson, BICS,* Suppl. 40 (1979) 51-56, argues that the myth of Theseus
expelling Medea from Athens received a reworking after the Persian Wars.

[60] Arnold Toynbee, *Constantine Porphyrogenitus and His World* (Oxford
1973) 311-14.

[61] Cf. Procopius, *BG* I 27.27-28, on the superiority of the mounted bow-
man over both the infantryman and the cavalryman armed with spear and
sword.

[62] Xenophon, *Anabasis.* 1.7.11; 8.9.

[63] Greenhalgh (at n. 10) 143-44, and fig. 77.

[64] Cf. How and Wells (at n. 9) 151-52; Anne Bovon, "La Representation
des Guerrières Perses et la Notion de Barbare dans la 1re Moitié du Ve
siècle," *BCH* 87 (1963) 579-602. Xenophon, *Anabasis,* 1, 8.8, says that
the Persian cavalry generally had their heads unprotected, though Cyrus'
cavalry (but not Cyrus himself) wore helmets.

[65] Toynbee (at n. 60) 311, n. 6.

[66] Lynn White, Jr., *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford
1962) 8.

[67] Why Masistius should have been so invulnerable is mysterious, for
a cuirass under his tunic would not protect his head. It is quite possible
that he was wearing cataphract armour, which some Persians may have
borrowed from the Massagetae.

[68] For the lack of stirrup: Paul Vigneron, *Le Cheval dans l'Antiquité
Gréco-Romaine* I (Nancy 1968) 238-39. For saddle cloths: J.K. Anderson,
Ancient Greek Horsemanship (Berkeley 1961) 146 and pl. 29.

[69] I.e., the horse is trained to rear to protect his rider with his
body. It is now one of the figures of classical dressage. The horsemen
on the west frieze of the Parthenon are shown doing the levade, in this
case on parade, and on the south frieze of the Nike temple, Persian
cavalrymen use the levade against hoplites: John Travlos, *Pictorial
Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (London 1971) 155, fig. 209.

[70] Cf. A.M. Snodgrass, *Arms and Armour of the Greeks* (London 1967)
101-103.

painting of Marathon in the *Stoa Poikile* as argued by V. Massara, *AC* 47
(1978) 41-72, who claims that it shows the Persians driven into the sea,
not the marshy lake.

[47] The lack of Athenian archers, if historical, is surprising.
Pausanias (1.32.3) indicates that slaves fought at Marathon; what were
their weapons? Cf. James A. Notopoulos, "The Slaves at the Battle of
Marathon," *AJPh* 62 (1941) 352-54. Meyer (at n. 11) 359-60 conjectured
that Athens organized a corps of archers only after Marathon.

[48] Nepos, *Miltiades* 4.1; Diodorus, 11.3.9; Pausanias, 1.32.3.

[49] E. Vanderpool (at n. 32) 105, n. 26 and pl. 35.

[50] E.B. Harrison, "The South Frieze of the Nike Temple and the Marathon
Painting in the Painted Stoa," *AJA* 76 (1972) 353-78. It is perhaps more
likely that the Athenians would glorify Marathon rather than Plataea, but
the question of the identification of the battle is open. It is, at
least, not an Amazonomachy: M. Robertson, *A History of Greek Art*, I
(Cambridge 1975) 348.

[51] *NH* 18.23.

[52] Aristophanes, *Knights*, 606.

[53] "deinde postero die sub montis radicibus acie regione instructa
non apertissuma proelium commiserunt (namque arbores multis locis erant
rarae) hoc consilio, ut et montium altitudine tegerentur et arborum
tractu equitatus hostium impediretur ne multitudine clauderentur."
Miltiades 5.3, ed. Peter K. Marshall (Leipzig 1977).

[54] Hammond (at n. 23) 39; Burn (at n. 5) 247-48, n. 23; Hignett (at
n. 10) 65, n. 2.

[55] The aphorism has been filtered through the paroemiographic tradition,
but its ultimate source is uncertain. Schachermeyer (at n. 7) 21-25
suggests Ionic logographical writings, possibly Dionysius of Miletus, but
does not rule out an *Atthis*. Otto Crusius, *Rheinisches Museum für
Philologie* 40 (1885) 316-20, followed by Hammond (at n. 13) 532 argues
for the Atthidographer Demon. Schreiner (at n. 14) 98 argues for
Philochorus.

[56] I want to thank Angeliki Laiou, Ihor Sevčenko, and Speros Vryonis
for their assistance on this point. All agree that, on philological
grounds, there is nothing to choose between "climbing trees" and "going
inland to a wooded area." Note that the *Suda* does not say that the horses
were withdrawn, much less withdrawn by sea.

[71] Following the reading πλοῖα σμικρά. Herodotus groups the horse transports among the three thousand small craft in Xerxes' fleet.

[72] J.S. Morrison and R.T. Williams, *Greek Oared Ships, 900-322 B.C.* (Cambridge 1968) 248; Lionel Casson, *Ships and Seamanship in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1971) 93-94. Casson dates the introduction of the thirty-horse transport to 430 B.C.

[73] *Knights*, 595-610.

[74] *Fabulae*, ed. Emile Chambry (Paris 1926) no. 143. The soldier gave his horse in wartime a ration of barley, but only ἄχυρον which would have had the nutritional value of bran, in peacetime. Horses on campaign were also fed hay, or let out to graze, but if the latter, they would have to be guarded by combatant troops. It was safer to hobble or corral the horses and bring fodder to them, though carrying any great amount of fodder on pack-animals was self-defeating, for they consumed it themselves. However, the horse transports probably carried hay as part of their cargo, and if Pliny's evidence can be taken to mean that alfalfa was introduced into Greece from Media at this time, it was probably the result of acci-dental seeding from hay brought to Marathon for the horses. However, grooms could also cut grass or leafy boughs from the surrounding country-side to feed their horses, and this fodder, brought to horses that are stabled or hobbled, was called χιλός. When Darius retreated from Scythia (Hdt. 4.140.3) the Scyths thought, wrongly, that he would go through country where there was χιλός and water, which indicates that, in enemy country, grooms did not allow their horses to graze freely. For the Persian custom of hobbling horses: Xenophon, *Anabasis*, 4.3.35. It is possible that one of the attractions of Marathon was that in late summer, when pasture is scarce in Attica, grass might still have been growing in and around the marshy lake that could be cut for fodder.

[75] If their weight averaged 1,000 lbs., 6.8 lbs. of total digestible nutrients per horse per day would have been needed, and for this, 4.92 lbs. barley and 6.29 lbs. dried grass would do. This calculation is based on J.T. Abrams, "The nutrition and feeding of horses," in M. Horace Hayes, ed. *Veterinary Notes for Horse Owners* (16th ed., New York 1968) 621-37. However, one must not assume that horses on campaign were fed ideal diets.

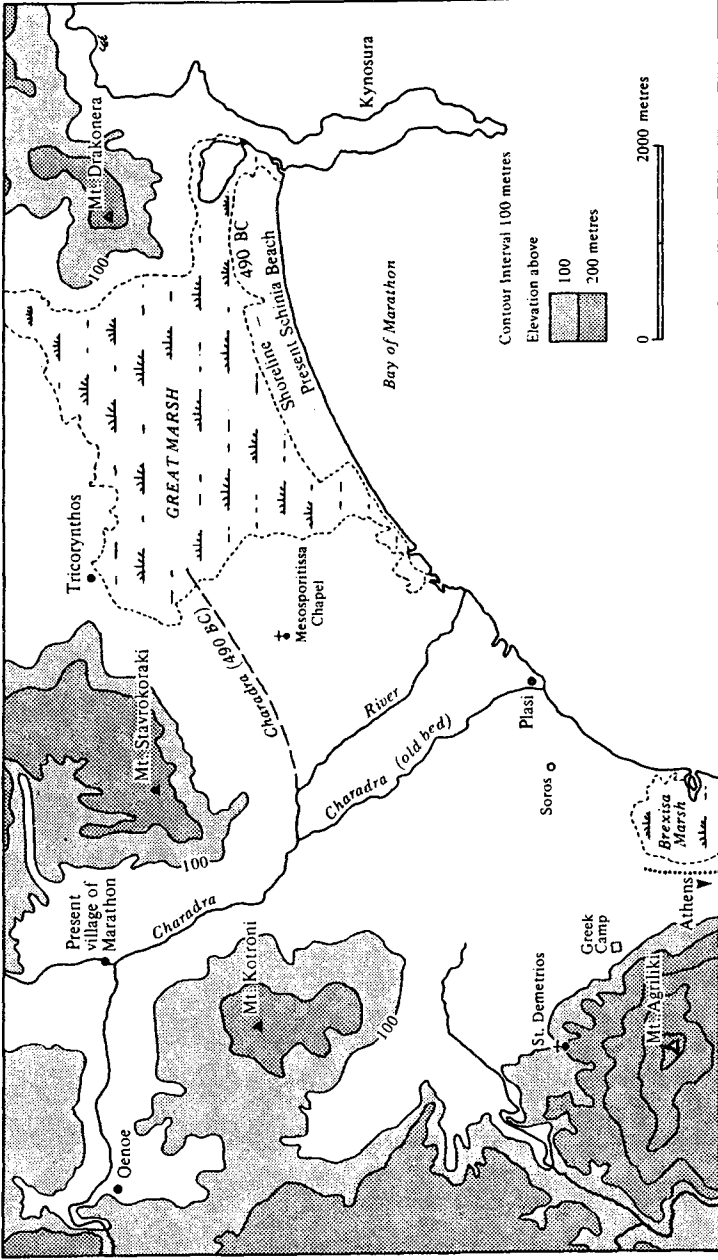[76] Hammond's estimate (at n. 23) 39, n. 114.

[77] *Menexenus*, 240C; *Laws*, 698E.

[78] Meyer (at n. 11) 329.

[79] Snodgrass (at n. 70) 79-84.

[80] Xenophon *Anabasis*, 3.2.12 tells how the Athenians vowed a goat
to Artemis for every Persian killed and paid the vow at the rate of 500
per year; this may be taken as evidence that the Athenians counted the
Persian dead and had an exact number. For skepticism, see Harry C. Avery,
"The Number of Persian Dead at Marathon," *Historia* 22 (1973) 757.

[81] If the fleet did not leave Marathon until the late afternoon of
the day of battle (cf. Aristophanes, *Wasps,* 1085), they must have sailed
all night around Sounion, and reached Phaleron no earlier than the even-
ing of the next day before the Spartan arrival. This implies ideal sailing
conditions for the voyage around Sounion: cf. note 22.