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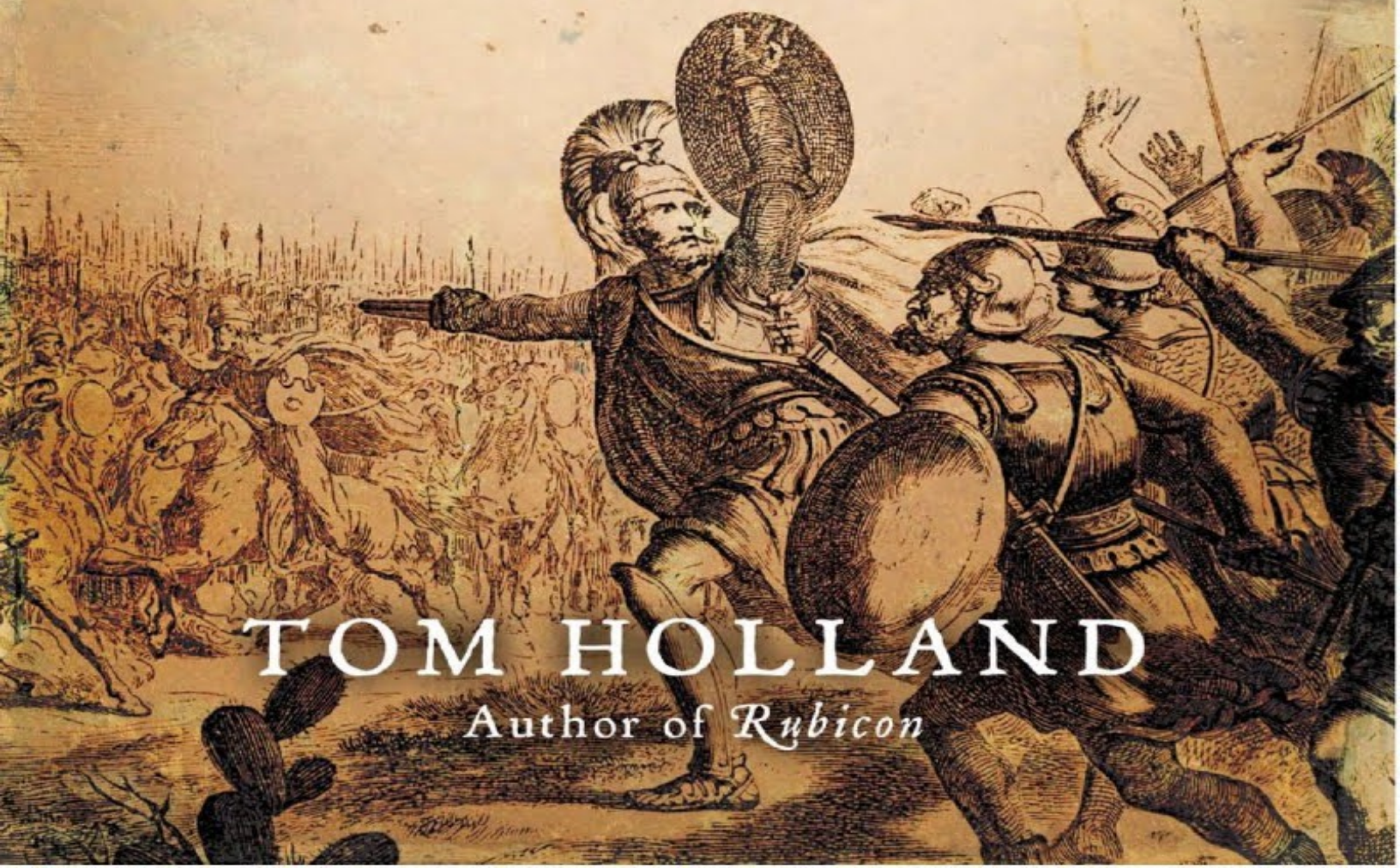
PERSIAN FIRE

The First World Empire *and the* Battle for the West



TOM HOLLAND

Author of *Rubicon*

PERSIAN FIRE

The First World Empire and the Battle for the West

Tom Holland

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For Jamie and Caroline

Listen now to a further point: no mortal thing
Has a beginning, nor does it end in death and obliteration;
There is only a mixing and then a separating of what was mixed,
But by mortal men these processes are named “beginnings.”

Empedocles

Acknowledgments

I have been wanting to write a book on the Persian Wars since I was very young, and I owe an immense debt of gratitude to all those who have given me the opportunity to devote three years of my life to its study. To Patrick Walsh, best of friends and agents. To my editors, Richard Beswick and Steve Guise. To Gerry Howard, Dan Israel, Ricardo Artola and Joan Eloi Roca Martinez, for all their encouragement from abroad. To Louise Allen-Jones and Elizabeth van Lear, for their support from nearer home. To Amélie Kuhrt and Paul Cartledge, for sharing their incomparable scholarship so generously, and saving me from more errors than I care to count. To the staff of the library of the Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, for their perfect blend of efficiency and courtesy. To Maike Bohn, for going out with Michael Cullen, and thereby introducing me to a travel writer with a limitless knowledge of Greece. To Philip, Francis and Barbaro Noel-Baker, for happy months in Euboea. To Jonathan Tite, for arranging a perfect day on a motorboat around Salamis. To Nick and Sarah Longman, for their hospitality in Athens. To my father, for his companionship on expeditions over Thermopylae. To Michael Lowry and Deniz Gurtin, for their hospitality in Bodrum. To Elahe Tabari, for her help at Persepolis. To Audrey and Becky Gordon, for everything they have done to keep the enemies of good art from the hall. To Caroline and Jamie Muir, without whose friendship, support and good humor I would still be writing this book, and to whom it is dedicated. To my beloved family, Sadie, Katy and Eliza, for enduring my long stretches of scholastic seclusion with such forbearance, and for touring dusty ruins across Greece, Iran and Turkey with such jollity, and giving me some of the happiest times of my life. οὐ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ γε κρεῖσσον καὶ ἄρειον

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Note on Proper Names

In the interests of accessibility, it has been my policy throughout this book to use the familiar Latinate form of a proper name rather than the Greek or Persian original: Darius, for instance, rather than Dareios or Daryush.

Preface

In the summer of 2001 a friend of mine was appointed the head of a school history department. Among the many decisions he had to take before the start of the new term in September, one was particularly pressing. For as long as anyone could remember, students in their final year had been obliged to study a special paper devoted to the rise of Hitler. Now, with my friend's promotion, the winds of change were set to blow. Hitler, he suggested to his new colleagues, should be toppled and replaced with a very different topic of study: the Crusades. Howls of anguish greeted this radical proposal. What, my friend's colleagues demanded, was the point of studying a period so alien and remote from contemporary concerns? When my friend countered by suggesting that history students might benefit from studying a topic that did not relate exclusively to twentieth-century dictators, the indignation only swelled. Totalitarianism, the other teachers argued, was a living theme, in a way that the Crusades could never be. The hatreds of Islam and Christendom, of East and West – where was the possible relevance in these?

The answer, of course, came a few weeks later, on September 11, when nineteen hijackers incinerated themselves and thousands of others in the cause of some decidedly medieval grievances. The Crusades, in the opinion of Osama bin Laden at any rate, had never ended. "It should not be hidden from you," he had warned the Muslim world back in 1996, "that the people of Islam have always suffered from aggression, iniquity and injustice imposed on them by the Zionist–Crusaders alliance."[1] Menacingly proficient at exploiting the modern world of air flight and mass communications he may be, but bin Laden has long interpreted the present

in the light of the Middle Ages. In his manifestos, past and present tend to merge as though one: blood-curdling abuse of the crimes of America or Israel will mingle with demands for the restoration of Muslim rule to Spain or of the medieval Caliphate. No wonder that when President Bush chose in an unguarded moment to describe his administration's war on terrorism as a "crusade" his advisers begged him never to use the fateful word again.

That an American president might be less *au fait* with the subtleties of medieval history than a Saudi fanatic is hardly surprising, of course. "Why do they hate us?" In the days and weeks that followed September 11, President Bush was not the only one to wrestle with that question. Newspapers everywhere were filled with pundits attempting to explain Muslim resentment of the West, whether by tracing its origins back to the vagaries of recent American foreign policy, or further, to the carve-up of the Middle East by the European colonial powers, or even—following the bin Laden analysis back to its starting point—to the Crusades themselves. Here, in the notion that the first great crisis of the twenty-first century could possibly have emerged from a swirl of confused and ancient hatreds, lay a pointed irony. Globalization was supposed to have brought about the end of history, yet it appeared instead to be rousing any number of unwelcome phantoms from their ancestral resting places. For decades, the East against which the West had defined itself was communist; nowadays, as it always used to be, long before the Russian Revolution, it is Islamic. The war in Iraq; the rise of anti-immigrant, and specifically anti-Muslim, feeling across Europe; the question of whether Turkey should be allowed into the EU; all these have combined with the attacks of September 11 to foster an agonized consciousness of the fault-line that divides the Christian West from the Islamic East.

That civilizations are doomed to clash in the new century, as both al-Qaeda terrorists and Harvard academics have variously argued, remains, as yet, a controversial thesis. What cannot be disputed, however, is the degree to which different cultures, in Europe and the Muslim world at any rate, are currently being obliged to examine the very foundations of their identities. "The difference of East and West," thought Edward Gibbon, "is arbitrary and shifts round the globe."[2] Yet that it exists—that East is East, and West

is West—is easily history's most abiding assumption. Older by far than the Crusades, older than Islam, older than Christianity, its pedigree is so venerable that it reaches back almost two and a half thousand years. "Why do they hate us?" It was with this question that history itself was born—for it was in the conflict between East and West that the world's first historian, back in the fifth century BC, discovered his life-work's theme.

His name was Herodotus. As a Greek from what is now the Turkish resort of Bodrum, but was then known as Halicarnassus, he had grown up on the very margin of Asia. Why, he wondered, did the peoples of East and West find it so hard to live in peace? The answer appeared, superficially, a simple one. Asiatics, Herodotus reported, saw Europe as a place irreconcilably alien. "And so it is they believe that Greeks will always be their enemies."[3] But why this fracture had opened in the first place was, Herodotus acknowledged, a puzzle. Perhaps the kidnapping of a princess or two by Greek pirates had been to blame? Or the burning of Troy? "That, at any rate, is what many nations of Asia argue—but who can say for sure if they are right?"[4] As Herodotus well knew, the world was an infinite place, and one man's truth might easily be another's lie. Yet if the origins of the conflict between East and West appeared lost in myth, then not so its effects. These had been made all too recently and tragically clear. Difference had bred suspicion—and suspicion had bred war.

Indeed, a war like no other. In 480 BC, some forty years before Herodotus began his history, Xerxes, the King of Persia, had led an invasion of Greece. Military adventures of this kind had long been a specialization of the Persians. For decades, victory—rapid, spectacular victory—had appeared to be their birthright. Their aura of invincibility reflected the unprecedented scale and speed of their conquests. Once, they had been nothing, just an obscure mountain tribe confined to the plains and mountains of what is now southern Iran. Then, in the space of a single generation, they had swept across the Middle East, shattering ancient kingdoms, storming famous cities, amassing an empire which stretched from India to the shores of the Aegean. As a result of those conquests, Xerxes had ruled as the most powerful man on the planet. The resources available to him were so stupefying as to appear virtually limitless. Europe

was not to witness another invasion force to rival his until 1944, and the summer of D-Day.

Set against this unprecedented juggernaut, the Greeks had appeared few in numbers and hopelessly divided. Greece itself was little more than a geographical expression: not a country but a patchwork of quarrelsome and often violently chauvinistic city-states. True, the Greeks regarded themselves as a single people, united by language, religion and custom; but what the various cities often seemed to have most in common was an addiction to fighting one another. The Persians, during the early years of their rise to power, had found it a simple matter to subdue the Greeks who lived in what is now western Turkey—including those of Herodotus' home town—and absorb them into their empire. Even the two principal powers of mainland Greece, the nascent democracy of Athens and the sternly militarized state of Sparta, had seemed ill equipped to put up a more effective fight. With the Persian king resolved to pacify once and for all the fractious and peculiar people on the western fringe of his great empire, the result had looked to be a foregone conclusion.

Yet, astonishingly, against the largest expeditionary force ever assembled, the mainland Greeks had managed to hold out. The invaders had been turned back. Greece had remained free. The story of how they had taken on a superpower and defeated it appeared to the Greeks themselves the most extraordinary of all time. How precisely had they done it? And why? And what had caused the invasion to be launched against them in the first place? Questions such as these, not lacking in urgency even four decades later, prompted Herodotus into a wholly novel style of investigation. For the first time, a chronicler set himself to trace the origins of a conflict not to a past so remote as to be utterly fabulous, nor to the whims and wishes of some god, nor to a people's claim to a manifest destiny, but rather to explanations that he could verify personally. Committed to transcribing only living informants or eyewitness accounts, Herodotus toured the world—the first anthropologist, the first investigative reporter, the first foreign correspondent.[5] The fruit of his tireless curiosity was not merely a narrative, but a sweeping analysis of an entire age: capacious, various, tolerant. Herodotus himself described what he had

engaged in as "inquiries"—"*historia.*" "And I set them down here," he declared, in the first sentence of the first work of history ever written, "so that the memory of the past may be preserved by recording the extraordinary deeds of Greek and foreigner alike—and above all, to show how it was that they came to go to war."[6]

Historians always like to argue for the significance of their material, of course. In Herodotus' case, his claims have had two and a half millennia to be put to the test. During that time, their founding presumption—that the great war between Greek and Persian was of an unexampled momentousness—has been resoundingly affirmed. John Stuart Mill claimed that "the battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings."[7] Hegel, in the more expansive tones that one would expect of a German philosopher, declared that "the interest of the whole world's history hung trembling in the balance."[8] And so it surely did. Any account of odds heroically defied is exciting—but how much more tense it becomes when the odds are incalculably, incomparably high. There was much more at stake during the course of the Persian attempts to subdue the Greek mainland than the independence of what Xerxes had regarded as a ragbag of terrorist states. As subjects of a foreign king, the Athenians would never have had the opportunity to develop their unique democratic culture. Much that made Greek civilization distinctive would have been aborted. The legacy inherited by Rome and passed on to modern Europe would have been immeasurably impoverished. Not only would the West have lost its first struggle for independence and survival, but it is unlikely, had the Greeks succumbed to Xerxes' invasion, that there would ever have been such an entity as "the West" at all.

No wonder, then, that the story of the Persian Wars should serve as the founding myth of European civilization; as the archetype of the triumph of freedom over slavery, and of rugged civic virtue over enervated despotism. Certainly, as the word "Christendom" began to lose its resonance in the aftermath of the Reformation, so the heroics of Marathon and Salamis began to strike many idealists as an altogether more edifying exemplification of Western virtues than the Crusades. More principled, after

all, to defend than to invade; better to fight for liberty than in the cause of fanaticism. One episode above all, the doomed defense of the pass of Thermopylae by a tiny Greek holding force—"four thousand against three million,"[9] as Herodotus had it—took on the particular force of myth. Teeming hordes of Asiatics, driven forward into battle by the whip; a Spartan king, Leonidas, resolved to do or die; an exemplary death, as he and three hundred of his countrymen were wiped out making a suicidal last stand:[*1] the story had it all. As early as the sixteenth century AD, the great French essayist Michel de Montaigne could argue that although other battles fought by the Greeks were "the fairest sister-victories which the Sun has ever seen, yet they would never dare to compare their combined glory with the glorious defeat of King Leonidas and his men at the defile of Thermopylae."[10] Two and a half centuries later, Lord Byron, appalled that the Greece of his own day should be languishing as a province under the rule of the Turkish Sultan, knew exactly where to look in the history books to find the most heart-swelling call to arms.

Earth! render back from out thy breast

A remnant of our Spartan dead!

Of the three hundred grant but three,

To make a new Thermopylae![11]

Putting his money where his mouth was, Byron would subsequently emulate the example of Leonidas by dying in the glorious cause of Greek liberty himself. The glamour of his end, the first true celebrity death of the modern age, only added to the luster of Leonidas, and helped ensure that Thermopylae, for generations afterward, would serve as the model of a martyrdom for liberty. Why, the novelist William Golding asked himself

during a visit to the pass in the early 1960s, did he feel so oddly stirred, despite the fact that Sparta herself had been such a "dull, cruel city"?

> It is not just that the human spirit reacts directly and beyond all arguments to a story of sacrifice and courage, as a wine glass must vibrate to the sound of the violin. It is also because, way back and at the hundredth remove, that company stood in the right line of history. A little of Leonidas lies in the fact that I can go where I like and write what I like. He contributed to set us free.[12]

Moving words, and true—and yet it is sobering to reflect that Golding's encomium might well have served to enthuse Adolf Hitler. To the Nazis, as it had been to Montaigne, Thermopylae was easily the most glorious episode in Greek history. The three hundred who defended the pass were regarded by Hitler as representatives of a true master race, one bred and raised for war, and so authentically Nordic that even the Spartans' broth, according to one of the Führer's more speculative pronouncements, derived from Schleswig-Holstein. In January 1943, with the Battle of Stalingrad at its height, Hitler explicitly compared the German 6th Army to the Spartan three hundred—and later, when its general surrendered, raged that the heroism of his soldiers had been "nullified by one single characterless weakling."[13] Denied a Leonidas, Hitler fumed, the Wehrmacht had been frustrated of a perfect chance to make its own new Thermopylae.

That the Nazis—as much as Montaigne, Byron or Golding—could feel such a passionate sense of identification with the example of the three hundred suggests that any portrayal of the Spartans as defenders of liberty does not perhaps tell the whole story. As is so often the case, the truth is both messier and more intriguing than the myth. Had Xerxes succeeded in conquering Greece, and occupying Sparta, then it would indeed have spelled the end of that proud city's freedom—for all the Persian king's subjects were ranked as his slaves. Yet even slavery can be a matter of degree: what would have been regarded as a fate worse than death by the Spartans themselves might well have proved a blessed relief to their

neighbors. Sparta's greatness, as Hitler was well aware, rested upon the merciless exploitation of her neighbors, a demonstration of how to treat *Untermenschen* that the Nazis would brutally emulate in Poland and occupied Russia. The Persian monarchy, brilliantly subtle in the exploitation of its subjects' rivalries, would certainly have granted, with an imperious show of graciousness, emancipation and patronage to Sparta's neighbors. To people who had suffered under Spartan oppression for generations, Xerxes' rule might almost have felt like liberty.

A momentous, indeed a history-shaping paradox: that annexation by a foreign power might perhaps, under certain circumstances, be welcomed. Xerxes was certainly, as the Greeks accused him of being, a despot, an Iranian who ruled as heir to the millennia-old traditions of ancient Iraq, of Akkad, Assyria and Babylon, kingdoms that had always taken it for granted that a monarch should rule and conquer as a strong man. Mercilessness and repression: these had invariably been the keynotes of the Iraqi imperial style. The empire of the Persians, however, although certainly founded amid "the tearing down of walls, the tumult of cavalry charges, and the overthrow of cities,"[14] had also, as it expanded, developed a subtler response to the challenges of dominion. By guaranteeing peace and order to the dutifully submissive, and by giving a masterly demonstration of how best to divide and rule, a succession of Persian kings had won for themselves and their people the largest empire ever seen. Indeed, it was their epochal achievement to demonstrate to future ages the very possibility of a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, world-spanning state. As such, the influence of their example on the grand sweep of history would be infinitely more long term than the aberrant and fleeting experiment that was the democracy of Athens. The political model established by the Persian kings would inspire empire after empire, even into the Muslim era: the caliphs, would-be rulers of the world, were precisely echoing, albeit in piously Islamic idiom, the pretensions of Xerxes. Indeed, in a sense, the political model established by the ancient monarchy of Persia was one that would persist in the Middle East until 1922, and the deposition of the last ruling caliph, the Turkish Sultan.[*2] It is the stated goal of Osama bin Laden, of course, to see the Caliphate resurrected to its prerogative of global rule.

Granted, the influence of ancient Persia, certainly in comparison with that of Greece, has always been indirect, occluded, underground. In 1891, a young British Member of Parliament, George Nathaniel Curzon, visited the site of Xerxes' palace, which had been left charred and abandoned since being torched, 150 years after Thermopylae, by a vengeful Alexander the Great. "To us," Curzon wrote, in soaring Byronic mode, "it is instinct with the solemn lesson of the ages; it takes its place in the chapter of things that have ceased to be; and its mute stones find a voice, and address us with the ineffable pathos of ruin."[15] Seven years later, the by-now Baron Curzon of Kedleston was appointed Viceroy of India. As such, he ruled as the heir of the Mughals—who had themselves been proud to wear the title, not of kings, but of viceroys to the kings of Persia. The British Raj, governed by the products of self-consciously Spartan boarding schools, was also thoroughly imbued with "that picturesque wealth of pomp and circumstance which the East alone can give"[16]—and which ultimately derived from the vanished flummery of Xerxes' palaces. It might have flattered the British Empire to imagine itself the heir of Athens; but it owed a certain debt of obligation to the mortal enemy of Athens, too.

Persia was Persia, in other words, and Greece was Greece—and sometimes the twain did meet. They might have been combatants in the primal clash of civilizations, but the ripples of their influence, spilling out across the millennia to the present day, can sometimes serve to complicate the division between East and West rather than to clarify it. Had the Athenians lost the Battle of Marathon, and suffered the obliteration of their city, for instance, then there would have been no Plato—and without Plato, and the colossal shadow he cast on all subsequent theologies, it is unlikely that there would have been an Islam to inspire bin Laden. Conversely, when President Bush speaks of "an axis of evil," his vision of a world divided between rival forces of light and darkness is one that derives ultimately from Zoroaster, the ancient prophet of Iran. Although the defeat of Xerxes was certainly decisive in giving to the Greeks, and therefore to all Europeans, a sense of their own distinctiveness, the impact of Persia and Greece upon history cannot entirely be confined within rigid notions of East and West. Monotheism and the notion of a universal state, democracy and

totalitarianism: all can trace their origins back to the period of the Persian Wars. Justifiably it has been described as the axis of world history.

And yet, by and large, how little it is read about today. Peter Green, whose wonderful book *The Year of Salamis*, published over thirty years ago, was the last full-length account written for a non-academic audience, marveled, in his customarily witty fashion, at the shortage of overviews of the subject.

> Bearing in mind the fact that the Greek victory in the Persian Wars is routinely described as a fundamental turning point in European history (advocates of this view don't quite argue that today, had things gone the other way, mosques and minarets would dominate Europe, but you can sense the unspoken thought in the air), this omission seems all the more inexplicable.[17]

Perhaps Green has not been to Rotterdam or Malmö recently; and yet the fact that nowadays mosques and minarets are to be seen even in Athens, long the only EU capital without a Muslim place of worship, hardly detracts from the sense of perplexity he is expressing. If anything it gives it added force. The Persian Wars may be ancient history, but they are also, in a way that they never were during the twentieth century, contemporary history, too.

What Green describes as inexplicable, however, is not entirely so. For all its momentousness, its sweep, and its drama, the story of the Persian Wars is not an easy one to piece together. The indisputable truth that they were the first conflict in history that we can reconstruct in detail does not mean that Herodotus tells us everything about them; far from it, regrettably. Yes, historians can attempt to cover some of the gaps by stitching together shreds and patches garnered from other classical authors; but this is a repair job to be attempted only with the utmost caution. Many sources derive from centuries—even millennia—after the events that they are purporting to describe, while many were written not as "inquiries" but as poetry or drama. Iris Murdoch, in her novel *The Nice and the Good*, observed of early

Greek history that it "sets a special challenge to the disciplined mind. It is a game with very few pieces, where the skill of the player lies in complicating the rules."[18] Historians of archaic Greece, who rarely feature in novels, love to quote this passage: for the task that they have set themselves, to reconstruct a vanished world from often meager scraps of evidence, does indeed resemble, at a certain level, a game. We can never know for sure what happened at a battle such as Salamis, when the sources on which any interpretation must depend manage to be simultaneously contradictory and full of holes: one might as well look to complete a half-broken Rubik's Cube. No matter how often the facts are studied, twisted, and rearranged, it is impossible to square them all; a definitive solution can never be found. Yet even Salamis, notoriously hard to make sense of though it is, can appear prodigally rich in detail in comparison with, say, the early history of Sparta. That particular topic, one eminent scholar has baldly confessed, "is a puzzle to challenge the best of thinkers."[19] A second has described it as requiring "intellectual gymnastics."[20] A third, even more up front, simply titled a book *The Spartan Mirage*.[21]

But at least the sources for Greek history, no matter how patchy, derive from the Greeks themselves. The Persians, with one key exception, did not write anything at all that we can identify as an account of real events. Tablets inscribed by imperial bureaucrats do survive, together with royal proclamations chiseled on palace walls, and, of course, the ruins of the astounding palaces themselves. Otherwise, if we are going to attempt to make any sense of the Persians and their empire, we must rely, to an alarming degree, upon the writings of others. These, coming as they do mainly from the Greeks—a people variously invaded, occupied and pillaged by the imperial armies—tend not to be wildly keen on giving a balanced portrait of the Persian character and achievement. Herodotus, ever curious, ever open-minded, is the exception that proves the rule. "*Philobarbaros*"—"barbarian lover"—one indignant patriot labeled him:[22] the closest to the phrase "bleeding-heart liberal" that ancient Greek approached. Yet even Herodotus, writing about remote and peculiar peoples whose languages he did not speak, has to be excused the occasional inaccuracy, the occasional prejudice, the occasional tendency to treat early

Persian history as a fairy tale. None of which does much to make the modern historian's task any easier.

Three obvious responses to the challenge present themselves. The first is to accept Greek prejudices at face value, and portray the Persians as effete cowards who somehow, inexplicably, conquered the world. The second is to condemn everything that the Greeks wrote about Persia as an expression of racism, Eurocentrism, and a whole host of other thought crimes to boot. The third, and most productive, is to explore the degree to which Greek misinterpretations of their great enemy reflected the truth, however distorted, of how the Persians lived and saw their world. It is this approach that has been adopted by a formidable band of scholars over the past thirty years, and the results have been spectacular: a whole empire brought back to life, redeemed out of oblivion, rendered so solid that it has become, in the words of one historian, "something you can stub your toe on."[23] As a display of resurrectionism, it is worthy to stand beside the opening of Tutankhamen's tomb.

And yet the Persians remain shrouded in obscurity. Perhaps this is hardly surprising. There have been no golden death masks to give a face to their rediscovery—only scholarly tomes and journals. The study of Persia, even more than that of Greece, depends on the minutest sifting of the available evidence, the closest analysis of the sources, the most delicate weighing of inferences and alternatives. This is a field in which almost every detail can be debated, and certain themes—the religion of the Persian kings, most notoriously—are bogs so treacherous that even the most eminent scholars have been known to blanch at the prospect of venturing into them.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread; but I hope, even so, that my attempt to build a bridge between the worlds of academic and general readership does not end up appearing as vainglorious as did the two-mile pontoon which Xerxes built from Asia to Europe, to the horrified derision of the Greeks. Readers should certainly be warned that many of the details out of which this book's narrative has been constructed are ambiguous and ferociously disputed—and that the sudden appearance of a number in the

text, hovering like a fly over a dunghill, generally indicates that qualification is being offered in an endnote. Yet while it is true that we can never definitively reconstruct a period so remote from ourselves, even more striking than our ignorance, perhaps, is the fact that the attempt can be made at all. I have sought with this book to provide something more than merely a narrative, for it has been my ambition, following in the footsteps of Herodotus himself, to paint a panorama of the entire world that went to war —East as well as West. The reader will be taken to Assyria, Persia and Babylon before Greece; will read of the rise of the first global monarchy before that of Spartan militarism or the democracy of Athens; and only halfway through the book will embark on the account of the Persian Wars themselves. That a story traditionally told from one side may now be glimpsed, albeit opaquely, from the other as well, is justification enough, I hope, for attempting to piece together, out of the many scattered and ambiguous fragments of evidence, a new account of those wars, of why they were fought, and by whom. It is, after all, an epic as powerful and extraordinary as any to be found in ancient literature; and one that is, despite all the many imponderables, not myth but the very stuff of history.


The Persian Empire
SCYTHIA
CASPIAN SEA
Danube
BLACK SEA
THRACE
ARMENIA
Hellespont
Halys
PHRYGIA
LYDIA
Sardis
IONIA
CILICIA
ROYAL ROAD
Miletus
Halicarnassus
CARIA
Euphrates
Syrian Gates
ASSYRIA
MEDIA
ZAGROS MOUNTAINS
Ecbatana
Bisitun
SYRIA
MESOPOTAMIA
CYPRUS
Sidon
PHOENICIA
BABYLONIA
Susa
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Tyre
Babylon
ELAM
Tigris
JUDAEA
Jerusalem
Pelusium
Nile
EGYPT
ARABIA
RED SEA


ARAL SEA
Jaxartes
Cyropolis
SOGDIANA
HINDU KUSH
GANDHARA
KHORASAN HIGHWAY
BACTRIA
ARACHOSIA
Indus
PERSIA
Pasargadae
Persepolis
CARMANIA
INDIA
PERSIAN GULF
N
1000 meters
0
500 km
0
250 miles


Greece and the Aegean
MACEDONIA
Myrcinus
Mt. Athos
Mt. Olympus
TEMPE
AEGEAN SEA
MAGNESIA
THESSALY
Sciathos
EUBOEA
MOUNT OETA
Thermopylae
DORIS
Delphi
MOUNT PARNASSUS
Chalcis
Eretria
BOEOTIA
Thebes
Plataea
ATTICA
Megara
Athens
Corinth
Salamis
PELOPONNESE
Olympia
Argos
Aegina
Tegea
Troezen
MESSENIA
Sparta
LACEDAEMON
N
1000 meters
0
100 km
0
50 miles


THRACE
CHERSONESE
Abydos
Hellespont
Troy
AEGEAN SEA
Phocaea
Sardis
LYDIA
Samos
IONIA
Miletus
Delos
CARIA
Naxos
Halicarnassus