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**False Refuge: Fortifications and the Transfer of Power from Persia to Athens in Herodotus'**

A *teichos* in Herodotus provides less protection than a flimsy *chiton*. In the *Histories*, fortifications fail a disproportionate amount of the time. This paper will show that Herodotus employs this artificial presentation of fortifications for two purposes. First, he favorably compares the aggressive Athenian strategy to the defensive Spartan strategy during the war. Second, he traces the fall of Persia and the concomitant rise of Athens through each one's facility with sieges or reliance upon fortifications for protection.

Herodotus regards defensive strategies as flawed. Siege operations against fortified positions enjoy a remarkable 85% success rate in the *Histories*. Thucydides, however, presents a different view of fortifications. Sieges in his history succeed at a significantly lower rate, even for the proficient Athenians. Herodotus presents the Persians as even more skilled, defeating fortifications nearly 100% of the time. This disparity implies conscious manipulation of the presentation of fortifications and their underlying significance.

Throughout his work, Herodotus inverts the recognized connotation of fortifications with security to underscore his claim at 7.139 that Greek victory depended upon Athenian initiative, not Spartan passivity. Herodotus makes this point in the wake of a nearly unblemished record of successful Persian sieges. Their ability to capture fortified positions is presented as superior to the ability of non-Persians. The historian blames their only clear failure prior to 480, the siege of Naxos, on the treachery of the Persian commander Megabates. This Persian proficiency peaks in the invasion of Greece in 480, which Herodotus marks by the circumvention or defeat of various fortified positions, culminating in the successful siege of the Acropolis.

The historian represents the two Greek strategies by the Spartan fortification at the Isthmus and the Athenian fleet. After 7.139 the Isthmus appears almost exclusively in the context of defensive fortification. The desire to withdraw to the Isthmus and fight a defensive campaign dominates Spartan thinking. Not even the capture of the fortified Acropolis, occurring amid the debate at Salamis, convinces the Spartans of the vulnerability of fortifications. In contrast the Athenians desire to use their fleet offensively. After Salamis, Herodotus reifies the superiority of the Athenian strategy with the placement of a captured Phoenician trireme at the Isthmus.

After Salamis, Persian infallibility against fortifications shifts to the Athenians. The invaders begin to rely upon field fortifications, building a *krêsphugeton* at both Plataea and Mycale (9.15.2 & 96.3). These walls, built chiefly of wood, serve as counterpoints to the Athenian wooden wall on the Acropolis which the Athenians also viewed a *krêsphugeton* (8.51.2). A siege of the Persian fortified encampments follows each battle. In both encounters the Athenians play a key role in piercing the Persian defenses. Athens fully assumes the Persian mantle, displaying the skill and stamina needed to conduct a protracted siege, when it successfully captures Sestos.

Herodotus' constant presentation of successful sieges undermines the connotation of fortifications as secure. He employs this new meaning first to elevate the Athenian contribution to the defense of Greece and to mark the rise of Athens after Salamis