

Primary Source Activity

The logo for 'networks' features the word 'networks' in a bold, lowercase sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic consisting of several thin, intersecting lines that form a starburst or network pattern.

The Ancient Greeks

Lesson 3 *Greece and Persia*

Herodotus's Account of the Battle of Salamis

In the 400s B.C. the Persians attempted to conquer Greece. The struggle known as the Persian Wars lasted 20 years. The Greek city-states united to fight the Persians. The Persians united their allies such as the Egyptians and Cyprians to fight against the Greeks. A Greek historian named Herodotus recorded the events. He wrote about Artemisia, the ruler of Halicarnassus (located in today's Turkey), which was part of the Persian Empire. She was a feared warrior and the Greeks offered a reward for capturing her. She was never captured, however. In the naval battle of Salamis she brought five ships to add to the Persian fleet to fight against the Greeks. She is also known for giving Persian King Xerxes advice when he assembled the leaders of his fleet to discuss fighting the Greeks. According to Herodotus, Artemisia "gave to Xerxes sounder counsel [better advice] than any of his other allies."

Directions Read the following description of Queen Artemisia by the Greek historian Herodotus.

Excerpt 1

"I must speak of a certain leader named Artemisia, whose participation in the attack upon Hellas [Greece], notwithstanding that she was a woman, moves my special wonder. She had obtained the sovereign [supreme] power after the death of her husband; and, though she had now a son grown up, yet her brave spirit and manly daring [boldness] sent her forth to the war, when no need required her to adventure."

Now read the advice that Queen Artemisia gave to King Xerxes about fighting the Greeks on land rather than on sea, as recorded by Herodotus.

Primary Source Activity *Cont.*



The Ancient Greeks

Excerpt 2

"Spare your ships, and do not risk a battle; for these people are as much superior to your people in seamanship, as men to women. What so great need is there for you to incur [bring upon yourself] hazard at sea? Are you not master of Athens, for which you did undertake your expedition? Is not Hellas [Greece] subject to you? Not a soul now resists your advance. They who once resisted, were handled even as they deserved. Now learn how I expect that affairs will go with your adversaries [enemies]. If you are not over-hasty to engage with them by sea, but will keep your fleet near the land, then whether you stay as you are, or march forward towards the Peloponnesos, you will easily accomplish all for which you are come here. The Hellenes [Greeks] cannot hold out against you very long; you will soon part them asunder [break into parts], and scatter them to their several homes. In the island where they lie, I hear they have no food in store; nor is it likely, if your land force begins its march towards the Peloponnesos, that they will remain quietly where they are—at least such as come from that region. Of a surety they will not greatly trouble themselves to give battle on behalf of the Athenians. On the other hand, if you are hasty to fight, I tremble lest the defeat of your sea force bring harm likewise to your land army. This, too, you should remember, O king; good masters are apt to have bad servants, and bad masters good ones. Now, as you are the best of men, your servants must needs be a sorry set. These Egyptians, Cyprians, Cilicians, and Pamphylians, who are counted in the number of your subject-allies, of how little service are they to you!"

Analyzing Primary Sources

Directions Answer the following questions.

1. Identifying Was Artemisia an ally of the Persians or the Greeks in the war between Greek city-states and Persia?

2. Identifying Points of View What does Herodotus think of the advice Artemisia gave to King Xerxes?

Primary Source Activity *Cont.*



The Ancient Greeks

3. Finding the Main Idea What advice does Artemisia give King Xerxes?

4. Explaining What does Artemisia say about the Hellenes' supplies to convince King Xerxes to fight on land?

Critical Thinking

5. Analyzing Primary Sources What did Herodotus think of Artemisia?
