The Persian Wars

The Limits of Empire
And the Birth of a Greek World View
Median Empire

- **Cyaxares:**
  - Attacks Lydia in 590 BC.
  - On 28 May 585 BC. the war ends.

- **Astyages (585-550 BC.)**
  - Married Aryenis in 585 BC.
  - Gave Mandane to Cambyses I before 580 BC.
  - Deserted by his troops and defeated by his grandson, Cyrus, in 550 BC.
Cyrus the Great

- King of Anshan in 560 BC.
- Attacked Media in 550 BC.
- Defeated Croesus of Lydia in 547/6 BC.
- Defeated Babylon in 539 BC.
- Died in 530 BC. attacking the Massagetae
Cambyses

- King of Babylon by 27 March, 538 BC.
- Great King in Sept, 530.
- Invaded Egypt in 525.
- Cambyses was “not in his right mind, but mad” (Hdt.3.25).
- Died accidentally in 522 BC.
- Succeeded by Smerdis, March 522
- Smerdis killed September 522 BC
Darius I

- Two years of rebellions: consolidated power by 520 BC.
- Reorganization into 20 satrapies
- Invaded Scythia via Europe in 513
- Satrapy in Europe, Skudra (Thrace)
- Construction of Persepolis
- 507: Accepted ‘Earth and Water’ from Athens.
Persia in the Aegean
The Ionian Revolt

- Aristagoras, Tyrant of Cyzicus and Miletus
  - Convinced Persians to invade Naxos
  - Four month siege failed in 499
  - Aristagoras and Histiaeus launch revolt of the Ionians
Ionian Revolt

- Cleomenes refused to participate
- Athens contributed 20 ships
  - “Perhaps it is easier to fool a crowd...” (Hdt. V.97).
  - Sardis sacked, the temple of Cybele burned.
  - Ionian army defeated near Ephesus
  - Athenian aid withdrawn
  - Aristagoras killed in Thrace
Persian Response

- 498
  - Took Byzantium, Chalcedon, the Troad, Lamponium, Lemnos and Imbros
  - Defeated the Ionian army at Ephesus
  - Took Clazomenae and Cyme

- 497–494
  - Besieged Miletus and campaigned in that area

- 494 BC.
  - The Battle of Lade
  - The fall of Miletus
Mardonius

- Son of Gobryas,
  - Nephew and son in law of Darius
- 492:
  - Replaced Otanes as Commander of the Coast
  - Assembled a fleet in Cilicia
  - Army mustered in Sardis
  - Crossed the Hellespont
  - Subdued Macedonia
Mardonius’ Failure

- Fleet destroyed rounding Athos
- Mardonius defeated by the Brygi
- Most of the army wasted away
- Removed from his command in 491
  - Replaced by Datis
  - But... he was a close friend to Xerxes.
Datis the Mede

- **491**
  - Made Commander of the Coast
  - Enlisted Hippias as guide.

- **490**
  - Musterd in Cilicia and crossed the Aegean via the Cyclades Islands
    - Rhodes - Samos - Naxos - Delos
  - Captured Euboea from Carystos to Eretria
Miltiades son of Cimon

- Tyrant of the Chersonese
  - Subject to Darius
  - At the bridge over the Ister in 513
  - Fled the Chersonese in 496

- Marathon: Sept. 490 BC.
  - Miltiades elected 10th. General
  - Advocated a quick attack
  - The run under the arrows
Marathon Satellite i
Marathon ii
Tomb of the Fallen
The Marathon Run

- **Plutarch**
  - Pheidippides ran the 22 miles
- **Herodotus**
  - No mention
- **Modern:**
  - Introduced at the first Olympic Games of the Modern Era, Athens, 1896.
  - 42.195 k./ 26 miles 385 yards
  - 1908 London Olympics
Xerxes

- 489-7: Darius prepares for a third invasion
- 487: Egyptian Revolt
- 486: Darius dies in November.
- 485: Xerxes Recovers Egypt.
- 484-2
  - Canal cut across Athos
  - Revolt in Babylon delays preparations
Really Big Numbers

- **481**
  - Mustered the army in Cappadocia
  - Moved to Sardis by the fall.

- **480**
  - Marched to Abydos and crossed the Hellespont
  - Army counted at Doriscus (1,700,000)
  - Marched in 3 columns to Therma
  - Fleet to Artemisium, Army to Thermopylae
Greek Response

- **Allied fleet:**
  - 271 ships
  - 127 Athenian
  - Battle of Artemisium

- **Land forces:**
  - The Tempe Pass
  - The Isthmus of Corinth
  - Thermopylae
Leonidas

- King of Sparta 490 - 480 BC.
  - Delphic oracle

- The 300
  - Men with sons
  - Greek allies ordered to withdraw.
  - 19 – 20 August, 480 BC.
  - “We will fight in the shade!”
  - Stranger, go tell the Lacedaemonians that here we lay, obedient to their command.
Themistocles of Athens

- Archon in 493 BC.
  - Used the Laurium surplus to build a fleet
  - Initiated the walls around the Piraeus
- Artemisium (late August, 480)
  - Commanded the 127 Athenian ships
  - Eurybiades of Sparta admiral of the fleet
  - Persian fleet reduced by about $1/3$
Xerxes in Athens

- Thermopylae to Attica
  - Xerxes marched through Trachis, Doris, then Phocis.
  - At Panopea the army split:
    - 4000 troops went to Delphi
    - The main army sacked Thespia and Plataea
- Athens
  - Themistocles had convinced the Athenians to move to Salamis
  - Persians besieged the priests on the Acropolis
  - The fleet moved to Phalerum
In the Saronic Gulf
The Battle of Salamis

• Themistocles:
  – Salamis and Megara need to be held to protect the Isthmus
  – Threatened to pull out the Athenian ships
  – Warned Xerxes of the plan to withdraw

• The Battle:
  – The Persians surround the Island
  – The Greeks fought in the narrow channels

• Xerxes withdraws
  – 300,000 left under Mardonius
Trireme
Plataea

• Mardonius:
  – Led the Persian forces to Thebes in summer 479 BC.
  – Occupied Athens in July (city abandoned again)
  – Moved to Thebes to draw the Greeks onto the plains.

• Pausanias & Aristides
  – Withdrawal to Plataea
  – Spartans caught on the plain.
  – Persians forced inside the walls
  – Athenians take the walls
Mycale

- Persian fleet docked at Samos in spring 479
- Greek fleet, under Leutychides, docked at Delos.
  - Sailed to Samos in July of 479 BC.
- Persians withdrew to fortify Mycale.
- Greek fleet pursued.
  - Made a beachhead.
  - Defeated the Persians, burned the fleet