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H. Awdry

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CRITICISM OF GRUNDY'S PLATÆA. BY H. AWDRY.

WHILE in Greece during the past spring, I procured from Mr. G. B. Grundy his extremely able survey and account of the battle of Plataea,* and after reading it I spent every minute of time that I could spare on the ground, with his map. This time unfortunately only amounted to two hours, 5 to 7 P.M., on the first day, and seven hours, 5 A.M. to 12 noon, on the second, including a visit to the site of Plataea itself, wherein I had the company of Dr. Merentites,† of Kriekouki, who had most kindly given me hospitality for the night, and his son. Moreover, as the previous day had been a regular downpour, the ground was in its very heaviest condition, and locomotion was by no means rapid. I cannot, therefore, presume to offer any local criticism which is worth considering as against Mr. Grundy's opinion; but I made certain notes at the time, including a strategical criticism of a general character, and have been asked to publish them in this journal.

1. Mr. Grundy's identification of the *νησος* seems to me most happy—is it presumptuous to say *certain*?—while the former *νησος* as viewed from the site of Plataea, for I had not time to reach it, appears to violate every principle of general strategy and local tactics. It would seem that in selecting their site for the *νησος*, Vischer and Leake must have been regarding the town of Plataea as the Greek base; to that indeed the Greeks would be drawing nearer, though the short stretch of flat country between was far more dangerous in the face of such cavalry as that of Mardonius than the longer stretch of a rougher character that intervened while they were in their former position. But their true base was the passes of Mount Cithæron where their convoys were shut up; and from this base they would be separating themselves. As viewed from Plataea Leake's *νησος* has no local features at all that could suggest it to the Greeks as a defence against cavalry; and a retirement to this spot would have been a spirited advance from the frying-pan to the fire, from hunger to famine.

On the other hand Mr. Grundy's *νησος* is a conspicuous and rugged piece of ground with a high mound rising upon it likely to make it a landmark with a special name; a perfect defence against cavalry; and tactically exactly where it was wanted, being connected with Cithæron

* John Murray, London.

† Mr. Grundy calls him Dr. Merethides in error.

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and covering the mouths of two of the passes, of which one was the pass to Megara, the shortest route to their next lines of defence on the Isthmus of Corinth.

2. The one difficulty in the reconciliation of Mr. Grundy's *νήσος* with Herodotus, is its distance from the Asopus, which is stated by Herodotus to have been ten stades, whereas the main or Thespian Asopus is nearer thirty than ten. Leake's *νήσος* is nearer, but even this is about fifteen stades from the main stream. Mr. Grundy explains this by supposing that Herodotus is using the name Asopus in error for the first tributary of the Asopus (marked A1 in his map), a stream which is in sight from the town of Platæa while the main Asopus is not in sight except when in flood. All this is the case; but such a traveller as Herodotus, whose headquarters were probably for many years at Athens, and whose route for his, no doubt, numerous journeys from Athens to Northern Greece would lie through Thebes, must surely have travelled not only by the direct Dryoscephalæ route, but also by the Platæa-Thebes road. In that case he must have crossed the Thespian Asopus above its junction with A1, and must have known of its existence.

This does not, however, seem a fatal or even an important objection. All the brooks cannot have names, and what more natural than to use the same name both of the main river and of its first tributary when both are mere brooks? This could be paralleled a hundred times over. Herodotus may, therefore, not in error but on purpose, be calling A1 the Asopus.

But for my own part I should be inclined to extend this principle further and understand the Greek text a little differently. Herodotus in the passage from ix. 50, quoted at length by Mr. Grundy on page 23, uses these words in his location of the *νήσος*: *ἡ δὲ ἐστὶ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀσωποῦ καὶ τῆς κρήνης τῆς Γαργαφίης, ἐπ' ἣ ἐστρατοπεδεύοντο τότε, δέκα σταδίου ἀπέχουσα*. Surely the absence of *τε* after *Ἀσωποῦ* suggests (though of course it does not render such an interpretation necessary), that Herodotus is by a kind of hendiadys quite in his manner speaking of the Asopus and the spring of Gargaphia as the same place; and says: "The Asopus and its spring Gargaphia," *i.e.*, the spring Gargaphia which belongs to the Asopus. The streams around the *νήσος* belonged to the Oeroe.

In any case the passage forms no objection to Mr. Grundy's identification of the *νησος*.

3. Mr. Grundy doubtless rightly agrees with Leake in removing Gargaphia from its traditional site at Apotripi to the group of springs about 1,100 yards E.S.E. To this an objection presented itself on the spot, which he has since then to some extent removed in conversation. Herodotus says that the whole army (when in its second position) was prevented by the attacks of the cavalry from watering at the Asopus and was compelled to water at Gargaphia. Now if the left was beyond the Plataea-Thebes road and was resting on the main Asopus it would appear that to reach Gargaphia it would have to pass Apotripi, which must therefore have been available. But Mr. Grundy considers that at this time the Greek army was in his *third phase* of the second position and had withdrawn from the whole plain, including the part beyond the Plataea-Thebes road, to the slopes of the Asopus ridge; so that, though it was lying on the ridge close in front of Apotripi, the Persian cavalry occupying the plain in its rear prevented it from watering there. This explanation seems certainly possible, and receives countenance from the fact that the Persian cavalry did succeed in choking up Gargaphia, a point they could not well have reached by any other route than the very gently sloping valley which leads from Apotripi to Gargaphia. They therefore must at least temporarily have been in possession of this whole valley and have held the entire ground in rear of the Greek army. But it is at least remarkable that no mention whatever is made by Herodotus of so important a spring as Apotripi, which certainly at the time I saw it was flowing stronger and with much better water than Gargaphia; and I am not quite clear in my own mind that Herodotus knew the details of the ground at this point and was aware that there were *two* large springs. If he was not, the Greeks may have been watering at both.

At any rate we get a very vivid notion of the straits to which the Greek army were reduced when we realise that the Persian cavalry were riding at will *close along the whole rear of their line from left to right*, and choking the spring even at the extreme right; while they were also holding the mouths of the passes of Cithæron, one and a half miles in the rear, so that the convoys could not debouch into the plain. Can it be supposed that any general (even Cæsar, the most audacious

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general in history) would under these circumstances have contemplated such a movement into the plain as Leake's theory of the *νήσος* implies? And Pausanias certainly was not a Cæsar in audacity.

4. But leaving local details, I cannot but think that on the point of general strategy Mr. Grundy is mistaken. He says, on p. 22, "May it not have been the intention of Pausanias to strike a blow at Thebes itself, the base of the Persian operations? Surely the Greeks were on the offensive, as is proved by the very fact of their moving into Bœotia after Mardonius' retirement from Attica." Now, in regard to this statement, I contend—i. That Mr. Grundy is making an anachronism, and transferring Athenian strategy to the period of Spartan command; ii. That the offensive operation of an attack on Thebes would have been not merely mistaken but absolutely ruinous.

i. (a.) The strategy at Platæa was a mere repetition of that of the previous year. On the approach of Xerxes in B.C. 480, the Greeks had settled upon two lines of defence, viz., Tempe, and behind that, Thermopylæ. Tempe proved untenable, as the route by Gonnus, equally short and actually adopted by Xerxes, would take the defenders in rear. Thessaly had to be sacrificed, and thereby fell into the hands of the Persians, to whom the Thessalians became very useful allies, and so Thermopylæ was adopted; and Leonidas fought a defensive battle at the most forward available point. Similarly they would now save Megara for Greece by adopting the line of Cithæron; and if Mardonius attempted to turn them by way of Attica, they had a shorter line than he had to retire on their next position.

(b.) Again, there are two considerations that make it appear probable that not only Pausanias, but no other Spartan general in history, with the possible exception of Brasidas, could have so shaken himself free of Spartan methods and prejudices as to devise such a scheme as is here attributed to Pausanias. The Spartans were notoriously weak at sieges, and after the victory at Platæa itself they were baffled by the Persians' wooden camp till the Athenians arrived and took it. And if we are to transfer to the times of the Persian Wars the account which Xenophon* (Hellen. vi. iv. 11) gives of the system on which the

* Xen. Hellen. vi., iv., 11. Τοῖς δὲ Λακεδαιμονίοις κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον πονηρότατον ἦν τὸ ἱππικόν, ἔτρεφον μὲν γὰρ τοὺς ἵππους οἱ πλουσιώτατοι, ἐπεὶ δὲ φρουρὰ φανθείη, τότε ἤκεν ὁ συντεταγμένος, λαβὼν δ' ἂν τὸν ἵππον καὶ ὅπλα ὅποια δοθείη αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ παραχρῆμα ἂν ἐστρατ-

Spartan cavalry was organized at the time of the Theban Wars, and the estimation in which it was held, (and in so stereotyped a state as Sparta there is every reason to suppose it had not changed much), the Spartan cavalry was absolutely beneath contempt. Yet an attack on Thebes must rely for its success mainly on siege-warfare and cavalry. Pausanias, it is true, had plenty of other allies; but national prejudice would be very strong with him against originating a scheme that depended on Sparta's weakest points.

(c.) Moreover, a comparison of Athenian and Spartan methods throughout this war will bring into prominence the essential difference between the two, the enterprise of the one and the striking timidity of the other. In B.C. 500 the Spartans refused help to the Ionians in their revolt; the Athenians gave it and were present at the burning of Sardis, perhaps the boldest offensive operation of the whole war. To Marathon the Spartans sent little help and arrived too late; the Athenians fought an offensive battle and won. At Artemisium the Spartan generalship was not merely defensive, but pusillanimous. Eurybiades actually retreated once to Chalcis, leaving Xerxes at liberty to land troops in rear of Thermopylæ; and he contemplated it a second time. It was Themistocles, the Athenian, to whom the Eubœans had recourse as the only man likely to save them. Themistocles was mean enough to take bribes from them for his services, but it was he who brought Eurybiades up to the scratch.

This he did again at Salamis, where it was only by means of a feignedly treasonable message that Xerxes was tempted to force Eurybiades and the Greeks into the bold tactics wherein Themistocles saw the only hope of Greece lay.

In the battle of Salamis itself it was Aristides who carried Athenian hoplites over to Psyttalea, and annihilated the picked Persian troops which had been landed there. Plutarch (*Arist.* ix.)* puts this early enough in the action to have been of service in saving the Greeks and destroying the Persians, who were driven ashore there; Herodotus

εύετο, τῶν δ' αὖ στρατιωτῶν οἱ τοῖς σώμασιν ἀδυνατώτατοι καὶ ἥκιστα φιλότιμοι ἐπὶ τῶν ἵππων ἦσαν. In spite of the words κατ' ἐκείνον τὸν χρόνον, I cannot recall any noteworthy deed of the Spartan cavalry at any time.

* Plutarch, *Aristides* ix. (after describing the capture) τὴν δὲ νησίδα τοῖς ὅπλοις πανταχόθεν ὁ Ἀριστίδης περιστρίψας ἐφῆδρυνε τοῖς ἐκφερομένοις πρὸς αὐτήν, ὥς μήτε τῶν φίλων τινὰ διαφθαρῆναι μήτε τῶν πολεμίων διαφυγεῖν.

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(viii. 95)* merely places it “during the confusion of the battle”; but at any rate it was a very bold offensive movement which immensely struck the Greeks at the time—for every account mentions it—and it was performed by the Athenians.

When Mardonius' mission to tempt the Athenians to his side in 479 failed, the Spartans sent no help to prevent Attica being again invaded; and it was only under threats that they came to Platæa.

In the operations at Platæa we have three examples of the unenterprising character of Pausanias himself. In the first position it was the Athenians, not the Spartans, who volunteered to save the Megarians when harassed by the Persian cavalry, and who killed Masistius; it was the left wing of the army, where the Athenians stood, that was the post of danger in the second position; and, according to Herodotus, when the right seemed likely to become the post of danger, Pausanias changed places with the Athenians, the reason given being that the Athenians had had experience at Marathon of the Persian mode of fighting—want of enterprise pure and simple. I do not, however, wish to lay any stress on this event, which is so astounding that it is almost impossible to believe it was anything but some manœuvre misunderstood by Herodotus' informant; and if Amompharetus resisted the movement to the Island as running away from the foreigner, what would he have said with regard to resigning the post of honour on such grounds? Thirdly, after the Persians were routed and their camp taken, Pausanias refused the request of the Mantineans to be allowed to pursue Artabazus. Such was Spartan command on land.

But while this was going on in Bœotia, Athenian tactics were beginning to prevail at sea, where they had preponderating numbers. The fleet under Leotychidas had remained at Delos, where it was useless, till at last the Samians invited and, with difficulty, persuaded it to move to Samos. When the Greek fleet reached Samos the Persians, conscious of their inferiority by sea, retired to the mainland, and drew their fleet ashore under the protection of the land army at Mycale. A second discussion now arose as to whether the Greek fleet should not sail back again to Delos, or to the Hellespont; but bolder counsels prevailed, and they followed the Persians to the mainland and disembarked. In the battle that ensued, the Athenians, who had easier

* Herod. viii. 95, ἐν τῇ θορύβῳ τούτῃ τῷ περὶ Σαλαμίνα γενομένῃ.

ground to cross, got to work so zealously that the battle was over and the camp taken before the Spartans came up. Ionia now revolted; and when the fleet returned to Samos a further remarkable discussion arose (Herodotus ix. 106),* wherein the Spartans were for removing the Ionians to Greece, because they thought it impossible to protect them in Asia; but the Athenians would not hear of such timidity. With the help of this passage we may fairly read between the lines and conclude whose was the hesitation first to move from Delos, and then to attack at Mycale; and whose influence it was that brought these events about.

After this the fleet sails to the Hellespont, and finds the bridge broken down; and as by this event the defence of Greece against Persia was complete, Leotychidas, with the Peloponnesians, at once sailed home, while Xanthippus and the Athenians stayed and carried on offensive operations against Sestus.

Finally, under the Athenian hegemony the war became wholly offensive, and the Persians were attacked as far as Lycia, Cyprus, and Egypt; while the Lacedæmonians retired altogether from the contest.

Indeed, in the whole war it would be difficult, in spite of their dogged courage and tenacity at Thermopylæ and Plataea, to find a single instance in which the Spartans showed even decent enterprise. Are we to suppose that Pausanias's strategy at Plataea was the one exception? And if it be objected that Plutarch's account implies that Aristides had much more to do with the strategy there than appears in Herodotus, yet both Plutarch's authority is slight, and it was not likely that Pausanias would have given way to Aristides on a cardinal point, where the Spartan numbers preponderated to the extent of 45,000 as against 8,000 Athenians.

ii. But though disagreeing as to the nature of their plan, I certainly hold with Mr. Grundy that the Greek generals at Plataea were not devoid of military skill.

Defensive strategy on Pausanias' part appears to me to have been eminently suitable to the circumstances, while an attack on Thebes would have been foolhardy in the extreme. The Greeks were fighting in the most forward position available, in front of the three passes of Mount Cithæron; their present position covered Megara and

* Herod. ix. 106, ἀπικόμενοι . . . Πελοποννήσιοι.

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its plain. Behind them there lay two other positions ready fortified, viz., (1) the point a mile or two behind Megara, where Mount Geranea stretches all across the isthmus, and the enemy must either traverse the high and difficult pass between its summits or the road along the face of the Scironian Cliffs overhanging the Saronic Gulf, which road had been blocked up (Herod. viii. 71);* and (2) the position 4 miles east of Corinth, where the isthmus narrows to $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in breadth, and their wall, begun the year before, had just been completed (Herod. viii. 71; ix. 8).† Being masters of the sea they were absolutely secure in either of these positions, but meanwhile they had better strike a blow for Megara. They were risking nothing; the enemy's cavalry could not pursue them through the mountains in case of defeat; and if Mardonius tried to turn them by way of Phyle or Decelea, they held a much shorter line than he to their next position.

Again, as they were fighting in their own country time was on the side of the Greeks; their forces were daily increasing‡ (Herod. ix. 41), Mardonius' would naturally tend to diminish. Already some of the Medizing Greeks were cold§ (Herod. ix. 17, 44-5, 67), and daily they must find the invader more of a burden.

But the chief objection to offensive warfare was that the advance to Thebes must be made over eight miles of excellent cavalry ground. Not only was the Persian cavalry their strongest arm, but they had in addition the cavalry of Thessaly and Bœotia, the two best in Greece. The Greeks would have to meet the enemy under every possible disadvantage, viz., to attack a great walled town, defended by an enemy three times their number, and provided with a splendid cavalry with which they could not hope to cope. To get provisions at all they must send huge escorts for their convoys at fearful risks across this

* Herod. viii. 71. *ἰζόμενοι δὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσθμῷ, καὶ συγχώσαντες τὴν Σκιρωνίδα ὁδὸν μετὰ τοῦτο ὡς σφί ἰδοῦσε βουλευμένοισι, οἰκοδόμουν διὰ τοῦ Ἰσθμοῦ τείχος.* This was before the battle of Salamis.

† Herod. viii. 71, above; also ix. 8. *ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τῷ χρόνῳ τὸν Ἰσθμὸν ἐτείχεον σπουδῇν ἔχοντες πολλὴν πάντες Πελοποννήσιοι, καὶ σφί ἦν πρὸς τέλος.* This was while Mardonius was in Attica in 479.

‡ Herod. ix. 41, *ὡς δὲ ἐνδεκάτῃ ἐγεγόνει ἡμέρῃ ἀντικατημένοισι ἐν Πλαταιῇσι, οἳ τε δὴ Ἕλληνες πολλῶν πλεῖνες ἐγεγονέσαν κ.τ.λ.* *Ibid.* μήτε περιωρᾶν συλλεγομένους ἐτι πλεῖνας τῶν συλλελεγμένων.

§ Herod. ix. 17, *μοῦνοι δὲ Φωκῆες down to ὑπ' ἀναγκῆς.* Also the nocturnal visit of Alexander of Macedon to the Greek camp, ix. 44-5. Also during the battle of Plataea, Herod. ix. 67, *τῶν ἐξ ἁλλων Ἑλλήνων τῶν μετὰ βασιλέος ἐθελοκακίωντων κ.τ.λ.*

plain. The siege of Thebes would probably take a long time; and when it was captured the enemy had many other towns in Bœotia to fall back upon, and this terrible escort work must still go on.

Surely this was a risk that no general, Spartan or otherwise, could ever have dreamed of running, unless he despised the enemy's horse; and that Pausanias did not do so at the time the scheme must have been devised is proved by the fact that his first position was on the slope of the mountain and not in the plain.

I think, therefore, that on grounds, (1), of the normal strategy in this war, (2), of Spartan character, (3), of sound generalship, the theory of offensive warfare at Plataea must be rejected.

In conclusion I would urge all those who have not yet read Mr. Grundy's pamphlet on Plataea to lose no time in making acquaintance with this admirable work. The maps of the ground in the present histories are extremely faulty. For instance, Grote and Oman, and all the current histories of Greece at which I have looked, place a *mountain* north of Plataea on the ground marked by Mr. Grundy as "flat plain, without determinable slope."

For facility of use Mr. Grundy's book would gain if he had indicated in some way upon his map what he considered the different positions of the armies to be. In ground so complicated I found this very hard to follow.