Some Observations on the Persian Wars

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Source: *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 19 (1899), pp. 185-197

Published by: [The Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies](#)

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PERSIAN WARS.

1.—THE CAMPAIGN OF MARATHON.

IT may seem bold to re-open the question (or questions) of the campaign of Marathon so soon after the publication of the monumental chapters of Busolt, of Hauvette, of Macan.¹ But the labours of these scholars at once invite and facilitate farther discussion. They focus many scattered arguments, contribute new suggestions, put the humbler student abreast of recent researches, and show him where his own conclusions differ from accepted views. How much I owe to them will be obvious without particular references.

The theory here put forward, although independently reached, is not altogether new—perhaps no theory of Marathon could be—but I was not aware, until it was written, how closely certain of its main features had been anticipated by Busolt in a work published twenty years ago (*Die Lakedaimonier* pp. 355–369). That eminent historian has, however, since then twice changed his views, so that it may be useful to recall his readers to what I still consider to be his best solution of the problem. Perhaps the discussions of the interval have reinforced it in some respects. On one important point I find myself in agreement with Professor J. B. Bury's article on the Battle of Marathon in the *Classical Review*, March 1896, and even where we disagree, we must often have asked much the same questions.

What was the aim of the Persian expedition, the commission of Datis and Artaphrenes? Was it to punish the Athenians and Eretrians for their share in the burning of Sardis? Was it to restore Hippias to his tyranny as a Persian vassal? Was it a deliberate move in that 'forward' policy which had already carried the empire to the frontier of Thessaly and now threatened to swallow up the Greek peninsula? Support can be drawn from Herodotus, and elsewhere, for each and all of these views. They are not mutually exclusive, but probably the two former are too narrow, and the last too wide. Whatever was the scope and purpose of the mission of the heralds—a question which bristles with difficulties—we shall probably be safe in limiting the immediate object of this particular campaign to the subjugation of the free Ionians.² And here arises the inevitable suspicion that to Persian eyes, and

¹ Busolt, *Griechische Geschichte*, Bd. II.², 1895. Hauvette, *Hérodote*, 1894. Macan, *Herodotus*, Books IV., V., VI., 1895, especially

Appendix X.

² Carystus, like Virgil's Mantua, was unfortunate in its neighbourhood.

possibly in veritable fact, although we cannot expect our authorities to admit or recognize it, the expedition was merely the completion of the 'pacification' of Ionia. Artaphrenes must have regarded Athens as a revolted subject, and he had reason.¹ Is it impossible that the Persian empire may once have formally extended across the Aegean and included Athens and Eretria? But apart from all dangerous speculations, we are probably justified on any hypothesis in assuming that the proximate aim of the expedition was the reduction of the Ionians of Europe. This was the pressing need, for the Persian government must have seen that the Ionians in Asia would never be pacified so long as their brethren across the water were independent. And this was surely a sufficient task for one campaign. Athens was the goal and the limit of the expedition.

Why, then, after the surrender of Carystus, did not Datis and Artaphrenes steer direct for the bay of Phalerum? Why, if they preferred to land at Marathon, did they sail straight past it to Eretria? Was it simply a methodic system of conquest that deflected them? Having once touched Euboea, did they feel bound to complete the subjugation of the island before moving any farther westwards, just as they had deviated from their course to secure Naxos and Paros on their flank? Had Eretrian (and Chalcidian?) exiles, perhaps Gongylus, something to say in the matter? Did the superstitions of Hippias, who had once before returned from Eretria, here shape the Persian strategy? Was there not yet another, more cogent, reason? Eretria was an easier prey than Athens, smaller, less capable of resistance, and (if we may trust Herodotus) already betrayed. The Persian leaders wished to bring to bear on waverers and recalcitrants in Athens the moral effect of the fate of Eretria.

Eretria taken, the next object of attack was Athens. The Persians, Herodotus tells us, after waiting a few days sailed for Attica, *κατέργοντές τε πολλὸν καὶ δοκέοντες ταῦτ' αὐτοὺς Ἀθηναίους ποιήσιν τὰ καὶ τοὺς Ἐρετριέας ἐποίησαν*. These words, whatever their exact meaning, are obviously added for rhetorical effect, to point the contrast between expectation and performance, perhaps also between Athens and Eretria. At best they can express no more than an inference from the general situation, and have no historical weight. The attempt to extract from them a plan of campaign seems to me illegitimate and futile. In their most natural interpretation they would mean that the Persians expected to burn Athens and enslave the population. To this interpretation I would adhere, although the guidance of Hippias is sufficient refutation of the statement.

Whatever the Persians expected, their objective was Athens. Why then do they take so extraordinary a course to get there? Why burden themselves with a toilsome march of some five and twenty miles through the enemy's country, when their fleet might have put them at once within striking distance of the city? Herodotus tells us that Marathon recommended itself to Hippias as being a place suited to the action of cavalry and

¹ Herodotus, v. 73.

quite near to Eretria. We need not press the superlatives, or make Herodotus responsible for the assertion that no place in Attica was better suited or nearer—enough that Marathon possessed both these advantages in a very high degree. But can they be said to have been advantages? What use do the Persians make of their cavalry? Was not the plain of Athens much better suited for its action? How can nearness to Eretria be an advantage, when it implies a corresponding remoteness from Athens? One advantage the Persian cavalry did enjoy at Marathon—pasturage. But if that were an inducement, they must have contemplated a prolonged stay, and Herodotus recognizes no such intention. His reasons seem to be mere inference, to account for the fact that they did land at Marathon, and possibly influenced by memories of Pisistratus' landing and the Pisistratid reliance on cavalry.

It is scarcely credible that the Persians were afraid of the Athenians, that they doubted their own power to force a landing on the shore of the Saronic gulf. There can have been no insuperable difficulty in effecting a disembarkation at some point on so extensive a coast from so numerous a fleet. The advantage of an unopposed landing may have counted for something, but it can not have been the sole reason for putting in at Marathon.

Modern historians have added two more reasons, to which too much importance has been allowed. These reasons have a certain plausibility, some real relevancy, but they do not in themselves amount to an adequate cause. In the first place it is urged that the Pisistratidae had strong local influence in the neighbourhood of Marathon. Was it so specially strong just there? Philaidæ, the home of the Pisistratid family, lay farther south, about half way between Marathon and Sunium. But Marathon was in the Diacria, the country of the Pisistratid faction? On the contrary it seems to have formed part of the Paralic *trittys* of the tribe Aeantis.¹ It remains true, however, that the Diacria was not accessible by sea, and Marathon was the most convenient port for it as a whole. The second reason assigned is the superstition or instinct of Hippias, which led him to follow the omen or precedent of his former return from Eretria *via* Marathon. But the circumstances were very different. To land at Marathon was the obvious and even necessary course for Pisistratus, but Hippias had neither the same need nor the same prospect of success by that route. Pisistratus had no overwhelming fleet and formidable army to back him; Hippias had both. Pisistratus was looked upon as a mere adventurer, and his landing was at first ignored; Hippias led an invading host which could not be concealed or disregarded.

¹ I assume the identity of the Diacria with ἡ μεσόγειος χώρα of the Aristotelian *Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία*. Their identity seems to be clearly implied, and to be historically necessary. It is not inconsistent with Hesychius' rough description: ἡ χώρα Διακρία, ἡ ἀπὸ Πάρνηθος ἕως Βραυρῶνος. The Diacria would be a horse-shoe shaped district round the three land sides of

the central plain. The name was obviously given from the point of view of Athens; it signifies the country beyond the hills, *i.e.* the ridges of Parnes, Pentelicus, and Hymettus. The only precise and positive definition of the three divisions, the Plain, the Shore, and the Trans- or Ultra-montane, is given by the distribution of the *trittyes*.

Pisistratus quietly collected his adherents, matured his plans, and moved upon Athens. Surely Hippias was not so simple as to imagine that *that* history would repeat itself, that the Athenians had forgotten that lesson!

Is it not much more likely that he calculated on their remembering it, and made a feint of following in his father's steps with the deliberate purpose of misleading them? Probably Miltiades' decree, to go forth and meet the invader, was already carried, and known to Hippias. Certainly, with the example of Eretria before their eyes, with the consciousness of treachery in their midst, the Athenian patriots were not likely to elect to stand a siege. At all events Hippias made no movement towards Athens. The Persians must have reached Marathon at least twelve hours, more probably eighteen or twenty-four, before the Athenians. The polemarch and his staff could not have guessed where the landing would take place. The news that the enemy's fleet had put into Marathon had to reach them, they had to assemble their army, and march out. If the Persians landed at day-break, the Athenians would deserve great credit if they arrived at sunset. The Persian generals had quite time enough to send an advanced guard to occupy the passes. They apparently waited patiently for the Athenians to come up. There is not a hint that they intended to march on Athens. Why should they, when they might have sailed? Once more, why should they have landed at Marathon at all? Why, but to bring the Athenians there? As Mr. Bury puts it, 'the purpose clearly was to lure the Athenian forces to Marathon.'

But why lure the Athenian forces to Marathon? Was it in order to fight them there? Was it the object of the Persian generals to bring about a battle in the open, on ground favourable to themselves, and so finish the campaign at a blow, and 'avoid a wearisome siege'?¹ Athens, denuded of the best and loyalest part of her defenders, was not likely to offer any serious resistance. She would capitulate and receive back Hippias. Did the Persians in fact choose the plain of Marathon for their battle-field, and practically challenge the Athenians to fight them there? Was it, in Mr. Macan's words, 'to have been a case of the spider and the fly'?

No doubt a pitched battle was one way, perhaps the quickest way, of finishing the campaign. Yet I cannot persuade myself that this interpretation of the Persian strategy is very plausible. In the first place, it does not give any point to the choice of Marathon of all places. Marathon was rather a remote corner of Attica to select, and was not by any means an *ideal* site for the Persian tactics. If Hippias and his friends were convinced that the Athenians would accept their challenge, they might have found much better battle-fields much nearer to Athens. But, secondly, is it credible that the Persians expected the Athenian commander, or commanders, to risk a pitched battle against their own greatly superior forces on their own ground? Herodotus may be drawing on imagination (his own or

¹ 'Of the Acropolis,' adds Mr. Bury. But I am not yet convinced that Athens was without walls.

another's) when he depicts their confidence on leaving Eretria, and their astonishment at the temerity of the Athenian charge. But surely his inference, although dramatic in motive, is justified by all probability. We have no trustworthy record of the Persian land force, but on a very low computation it must have outnumbered the Athenian by something like two to one,¹ and the cavalry only increased the disparity. A pitched battle on open ground must have appeared to the Persians highly improbable. Thirdly, was it even the most desirable solution? We need not suppose that even Datis and Artaphrenes positively lusted for a big slaughter, which must fall on both sides, and Hippias, in the interests of his future despotism, had every motive to adhere to the traditional clemency of his family's policy. If Hippias could be reinstated without the pitched battle, we may reasonably assume that this was the preferable alternative. Lastly, the Persian leaders must very soon have discovered that the Athenians did not intend to accept their challenge. If their sole object in landing at Marathon had been to fight there, we should have expected them, when the enemy declined the trial, either to take the offensive against his position (which, although a strong one, was open to attack from two sides at once), or else to sail away and renew the attempt on some other field. Instead of adopting either of these courses, they wait on at Marathon, day after day, apparently in complete tranquillity!²

If Hippias' purpose in luring the Athenians to Marathon was not to fight them there, what else can it have been? Obviously it must have been to get them well away from Athens. This answer, by the way, does full justice to the remoteness of Marathon. But why get them away from Athens? Presumably that he might gain possession of the city in their absence. How was this object to be effected?

In the first place the Athenian army had to be detained at Marathon. Plainly it could not withdraw unmolested so long as the Persians were there in sufficient force. So long as the whole Persian army remained at Marathon the Athenians were not likely either to attack or to attempt to make off. They had no obvious motive to do either, and both would involve grave risk to their army and to the state. But if the Persians moved off towards Athens, whether by land or by sea, they at once gave the Athenians both a motive and an opportunity for attacking their rearguard, and also set them

¹ The Athenians, with the Plataeans, and probably a few thousand light-armed *thetes* or 'δρεῖλοι,' may have numbered about 15,000. Herodotus gives the Persians 600 ships besides the horse-transporters. Busolt allows 50,000 as a probable estimate for their army. Perhaps we may reckon the Persian loss at Marathon (6,400) at about one-third of the troops engaged, for the wings were not pursued, whereas the centre must have been almost annihilated. This calculation would put the combatants at about 20,000. If half the army was engaged

(see below), the whole force would be about 40,000. Even 30,000 might be enough for our theory. Attempts to reduce the number of the Persians are generally based on the assumption that their whole army fought at Marathon.

² From the movements of Philippiades and the Spartans it appears that the Athenians must have faced the Persians at Marathon for at least seven days. They would reach Marathon on the 8th of the (lunar) month at the latest, and the battle was fought on the 16th at the earliest.

free to return to defend or save their city. If they went by sea, the embarkation of their last divisions was difficult, and the Athenians would reach Athens by road before they could arrive there round Cape Sunium. If they went by land (*i.e.* by the coast road, which alone was open to them), they had to be prepared for an attack in rear or flank from the Athenian position in the valley of Avlona, and the Athenians would reach Athens either on their heels by the same road, or simultaneously by the hill road.

But here the Persian superiority of force comes into account. Half or two-thirds of the army might stay at Marathon to guard the Athenians there, the other half or third might be sent to Athens, and alone be sufficient to deal with the garrison. The Athenians on the other hand could not afford to divide their army. They needed their whole force to meet either half of the enemy.

We may reasonably conclude that this was the plan which the Persian leaders had projected. One of the two generals was to stay at Marathon, the other, doubtless with Hippias, was to lead his division to Athens.¹ The Athenians might attack the division left behind, or might attempt to escape by the upper road. But no doubt the force which was to be left was held sufficient to give a good account of them if they ventured out of their fastness whether to advance or retreat. In the latter case it would only be necessary to delay their march by harassing attacks until the other division was in position. But both Hippias and Miltiades must have known perfectly well that if the Athenians went back otherwise than victorious the fate of their city was sealed.

Clearly the crisis of the campaign was bound to come when the two Persian divisions parted company. The Athenians must act then, and act quickly. But the initiative lay with the Persians. It was their action which determined that of the Athenians. But what determined *theirs*? in other words, why was the crisis delayed? The answer to this question brings us in view of certain considerations, which we have so far left out of sight, but which really governed the whole scheme of the campaign.

There is abundant evidence that Athens was undermined by intrigue and conspiracy, and that Hippias had a secret understanding with a powerful party in the city. He could reckon not only on his own family connections and some old adherents, but also on the Alcmaeonidae, into whose party most of his former political followers had been absorbed by the seductive concessions of Cleisthenes. The Alcmaeonidae had driven out Hippias, just as they had driven out his father before him. But just as they had once also restored Pisistratus, so they might likewise bring back Hippias. Herodotus' apology

¹ Probably Datis was to stay and Artaphrenes to go. In the first place Artaphrenes was the higher in rank, and would naturally undertake the more responsible and glorious task of receiving the submission of Athens. Secondly Pausanias seems to imply that Artaphrenes was in command of the cavalry (see below). Thirdly

the prominence of Datis in the tradition indicates that it was he, and not Artaphrenes, who was vanquished at Marathon. The Parian Chronicle names only Artaphrenes, but probably as supreme commander-in-chief of the expedition.

for them is very damning. Qui s' excuse, s' accuse. Nobody else seems ever to have been blamed for the raising of the shield. Nobody's views are better represented in Herodotus. Can we doubt that he gives us their own defence? It reappears in the mouth of Alcibiades at Sparta (Thuc. vi. 89). What is the value of that plea of 'not guilty'? It conveniently ignores the Alcmaeonid relations with the tyrants Cleisthenes of Sicyon and Pisistratus, and with the barbarians, the kings of Lydia and of Persia. Who was responsible for the alliance with Persia, the earth and water given to Artaphrenes at Sardis? When was that submission repudiated? Who recalled the twenty ships from Ionia, and punished the plain speaking of Phrynichus? It can hardly be denied that the Alcmaeonidae in their struggles with the Eupatrids of the Plain leaned to Persia, while their rivals relied on Sparta, and perhaps formally enrolled Athens in the Spartan alliance. When Cleomenes expelled the Pisistratidae, he doubtless imagined that he was setting up an oligarchy, but he soon discovered his mistake, and turned from Cleisthenes to Isagoras. As then Cleisthenes opposed a Persian alliance to Isagoras and Cleomenes, so now on the eve of Marathon we find the Alcmaeonidae and Persia leagued against Miltiades and the Spartans. It was not without reason that Aristophanes and those who felt with him looked back on the battle of Marathon as a victory, not only of Athens over the Mede, but also of aristocracy over democracy. It is strange that the Medism of the Alcmaeonidae has ever been doubted. It is confirmed by the dark words of Pindar, by the ostracism of Megacles son of Hippocrates; and can we be sure that their connection Xanthippus and their ally Aristides were utterly *ἀπὸθεν τῆς τυραννίδος*? At all events Themistocles, looking before and after, recalls them on most favourable terms *διὰ τὴν Ξέρξου στρατείαν*, Aristides from *Aegina*, Xanthippus from—where? Was it somewhere *outside* Geraestus and Scyllaeum?

There was a good opportunity for Hippias. Miltiades had come back to Athens, and been recognized as the champion of the aristocratic and anti-Persian party. There had been a trial of strength. 'His enemies' had accused him for 'his tyranny in the Chersonese.' He had won, they had lost; he was in power, they were not. He had the support of Sparta. What could they expect but expulsion, and the undoing of the political work of Cleisthenes? Was it not better to come to terms with Hippias and make a formal submission to the Great King? We must not judge their conduct by the later Greek standard. Neither tyranny nor Medism meant as yet all that they meant to Herodotus. The age of the tyrants was scarcely over. The memories of the 'principate' of Pisistratus were not odious to the *δῆμος*, for whom he had been the executor of Solon's reforms. Greek cities lived and thrived under the easy yoke of the King. The Ionic revolt was the work of the aristocracies of merchant princes, not of the populace. The feeling against Medism and Barbarism was largely the creation of the wars that were yet to be fought, and the literature that was yet to be written.

These considerations may help to explain much in the history of the campaign. The understanding between the Alcmaeonidae and the Persians

is expressly attested, all the better because Herodotus is reluctant to admit it. Given its full weight, it clears up the strategy on both sides. Let Miltiades be got out of the way, and his rivals would bring about a revolution. Let them have time and opportunity to work their plans, and they would admit Hippias to the city, without bloodshed, as soon as he presented himself. When all was prepared the signal would flash forth to the Persian tents. On the other part we may recognise the prudence of Miltiades. Conscious of the treachery within the walls, with the example of Eretria before his eyes, could he venture to stand a siege? Could he hesitate to march to meet the invader, to press for a battle? *Ἦν μὲν νυν μὴ συμβάλωμεν ἐλπομαί τινα στάσιν μεγάλην διασείσειν ἐμπεσοῦσαν τὰ Ἀθηναίων φρονήματα ὥστε μηδίσαι· ἦν δὲ συμβάλωμεν πρὶν τι καὶ σαθρὸν Ἀθηναίων μετεξετέροισι ἐγγενέσθαι, θεῶν τὰ ἴσα νεμόντων οἰοί τε εἰμὲν περιγενέσθαι τῇ συμβολῇ.* But in attacking a superior force 'the half is better than the whole.' Miltiades doubtless knew what was going on, and foresaw what would happen. The traitors would not declare themselves before the Persians appeared. The opportunity for attack was bound to come when the enemy's forces separated, but the day and the hour would be determined, not *by*, but *for* the Athenians. The battle must be fought, and they must be ready for it. Meanwhile they had time to consider their plan of attack, and every day that passed was a gain, for it brought nearer the full moon that would set the Spartans free. So the waiting game suited both sides best. The Athenian general awaited the separation of the Persian forces, the Persians awaited the signal.

Two criticisms will have occurred to every reader. In the first place, Herodotus says not a word of a division of the Persian forces, but simply lets the day of Miltiades' *prytany* bring on the battle. The delay is thus explained, and the occasion of the engagement determined, merely by the rotation of precedence among the generals. This account is open to grave objections, and has been set aside by almost all recent historians. Can we believe that Miltiades, after so earnestly insisting on the necessity of fighting, postponed the battle on no other grounds than a point of etiquette? Can we believe that the dawn of a certain day was in itself a sufficient reason for so momentous and responsible an action? Was there no strategical motive to determine the sudden change from defence to offence? Can we, lastly, believe that Herodotus has rightly represented the official position of Miltiades? Is there not serious anachronism in his conception of the relation between the generals and the Polemarch? and may not the rotation of the presidency be at least erroneously interpreted? There seems in fact to be some lack of lucidity, if not positive mystification, in Herodotus' account. The suspicion naturally arises that some essential features of the story have been suppressed, and then afterthought, perhaps only half-conscious, has striven to cover the gap by spreading out other facts, by substituting conjectural motives, by reconstructing, and by readjusting the historical data to the impression produced by the mutilation. Mr. Macan has vindicated the claims of the neglected Callimachus. We would not dispute the pre-

ponderant importance of Miltiades, but surely there is an evident wish to find for him some constitutional position to legitimize his real authority. The suggestion lies near at hand that the *prytany* of Miltiades has proved equally useful to cover the omission of the true reason for the attack, the division of the Persian forces. Herodotus obviously has no clear idea of the strategy at all. Our hypothesis has been framed to explain the difficulties in his narrative, and interpret better what he does tell us. Granting our general conception of the campaign, it may safely be said that if any feature was more likely than another to drop out of the Athenian tradition, it was precisely the division of the Persian army. A vestige of it may perhaps be detected in the numbers given by Nepos. But the national vanity was not likely to insist upon the point. Patriotism and Alcmaeonid influence would combine to omit or veil it. May not the obscurity of Herodotus be due mainly to this reticence in his sources? It is at all events clear that he has not supplied us with any adequate reason for the Athenian attack. It is also extremely improbable that the Athenian commander attacked the whole Persian army in the open plain. If he was so rash, why did he not attack sooner? if he waited so long, why did he not wait longer? It was his obvious policy to delay until the Spartans came to his aid. We want some pressing motive or some good opportunity to account for the attack. We find both in the division of the Persian forces preparatory to a move on Athens.

The second criticism that will have suggested itself is this. We have supposed that the Persians were waiting for the signal from their friends in Athens, and the Athenians were waiting for the Persians to move. But according to the express statement of Herodotus the shield was raised when the Persians were already in their ships, that is to say, as Herodotus believes,¹ after the battle was over and the vanquished barbarians were re-embarked. Either, therefore, the Athenians did not wait for the division of the Persian forces to deliver their attack, or the Persians did not wait for the signal to divide their forces. This is a valid objection, but we may cheerfully accept the second alternative if we can show good reason why the Persians should have so far departed from the programme as to anticipate the signal. It might be conjectured that they had notice from Athens that the conspiracy was nearly ripe for execution and they must 'stand by' ready for immediate action. But it is much more likely that the plot hung fire, and the Persian leaders, fearing the imminent arrival of the Spartans, determined to make their attempt on the city without delay. What their partizans were about, or what caused the delay, of course we do not know. There would be influential persons to win over, officers and guards

¹ It is perhaps possible that Herodotus was misled or misunderstood his information. The signal might be put after the embarkation of *half* the Persian army for Phalerum (assuming that that was the plan contemplated). To Herodotus' informant the words *ἐὸςσι ἥδη ἐν τῇσι νηυσὶ* might have meant 'when that half

was aboard and ready to sail.' To Herodotus, who had no notion of any division, they could only mean 'after the battle and the embarkation of the survivors.' But this refinement is not necessary and makes no difference to the alternatives.

to seduce, important posts to occupy, and no doubt Miltiades' friends were not passive in their opposition. But at all events the expected advent of the Spartans set a limit to the possibility of delay, and supplies an adequate answer to the objection. Adopting this solution, we may say that the landing at Marathon, the delay there, the division of the Persian forces, and the signal of the shield, are all to be explained by the understanding between the Persians and the Alcmaeonid party at Athens, but that the order of the last two items in the programme was in fact reversed by the military necessity of anticipating the arrival of the Spartans. If the Spartans went straight to Athens, they would prevent the surrender of the city, if they were diverted to Marathon, they would redress the balance of force between the Athenian army and the Persian contingent to be left there.

If, then, the Persians did divide their forces into two brigades, one to stay at Marathon and the other to go to Athens, by what route did they intend to send the latter, by land or sea? The hostile armies confronted one another for at least a week. Obviously the whole Persian force must have been disembarked, especially the cavalry.¹ But whereas the Athenian position seems to be fairly established in the valley of Avlona, we have no certain evidence of the position of the Persians. Herodotus does not mention a camp, although on other occasions he is careful on this point. Probably there was none. Pausanias was shown the 'stone mangers of the horses of Artaphernes, and marks of his tent on the rocks.' They were *ὑπὲρ τὴν λίμνην*, possibly (it has been suggested) at a point on Stavrokoraki above the village of Kato Suli. It is thereabouts, near the spring Macaria and the great marsh, that water and fodder seem to be best and most abundant. The Charadra would form a natural entrenchment, and the promontory of Kynosura a breakwater for the ships riding at anchor. But while those who know the ground generally encamp the Persians in this neighbourhood, it is too hastily assumed that the whole Persian army was stationed north of the Charadra. A position to the south of it, between the Charadra and the little marsh, was obviously better for guarding the Athenians. Probably from the first advent of the enemy, certainly in preparation for any move on Athens, the Persians must have occupied the southern part of the plain, which commanded the coast road. They must have done so, if only to detain the Athenians, much more if they proposed to send part of their own forces to Athens. We cannot suppose that the one brigade would have sailed away and left the other cooped up beyond the Charadra, and cut off by the position of the Athenians from the use of the land communications with Athens. If the land route were preferred, the necessity was doubled, for the Athenian position had also to be masked in order to secure the right flank of the marching column.² On either hypothesis the occupation of the southern part of the plain is necessary, and the

¹ The cavalry may after all have had a good deal to do with the choice of Marathon as a landing point. It is one of the few places in Attica where there is pasture to be found in the

autumn.

² This point has not escaped Mr. Macan's reviewer in the *Athenaeum*, Dec. 21st, 1895, and Mr. Bury.

occurrence of the battle where the tumulus fixes it sufficiently explained. But the hypothesis of the land march involves us in difficulties which are avoided by the other. If the brigade destined for Athens got safely through the pass, what became of it afterwards? how was it re-embarked? why did not it, rather than the fleet, make a dash for the city? If the Athenians delivered their attack while it was filing past, why do not the cavalry appear in the battle? why was the loss so small on both sides? how was the Persian embarkation effected? is it likely that the Athenians attacked so long as the two brigades were both still on the plain? So acutely have these difficulties been felt by some historians, that, while clinging to the idea of the march by land, they have supposed that the cavalry (as Curtius suggested), and possibly some of the infantry, were embarked already, and prepared to accompany the march on shipboard (so far as the routes lay together). But obviously, if *any* part of the Persian army was to go by land, it would have been the cavalry. The road to Athens presents no difficulty to cavalry. Pisistratus took his Eretrian chivalry with him. It is easier to ride to Athens than to walk, it is harder to embark cavalry than infantry. Mr. Bury cannot be allowed to smuggle the cavalry on board under cover of the remark that 'on the march to Athens it would have been a useless encumbrance.' We cannot accept *both* the embarkation of the cavalry *and* the march. But inasmuch as the embarkation of the cavalry is one of the most plausible suggestions ever made about the battle, and not without positive evidence,¹ this incompatibility constitutes yet another objection to the hypothesis of the march by land.

If, on the contrary, we suppose that the brigade for Athens, including the cavalry, was already embarked and under way when the Athenians assumed the offensive, we avoid all the most serious difficulties. The motive and opportunity for the Athenian attack become plain and adequate, the victory less surprising, the absence of cavalry natural, the losses better proportioned, and the embarkation of the Persians easier. The cavalry may well have been already shipped off for service in the plain of Athens. Hippias would remember that cavalry was sometimes useful against the Spartans (Hdt. v. 63). It had at all events been of no service at Marathon, and could neither get at the Athenians nor pursue them over the hills. We may also surmise that the fodder of the plain was by this time exhausted. If a reason for the choice of the sea route is needed, beyond its ease and security, one may be found in the political sympathies of Phalerum, the stronghold of Alcmaeonid influence. The Persians were sure of finding a friendly base of operations close to the city. This consideration was all the more important in their uncertainty as to the success of the conspiracy.

Once the Persians were divided, half of them safely stowed away on the ships and under sail for Phalerum, the opportunity for the Athenian attack had come. The charge must have been carefully meditated. Whatever may have been the pace of it, we may probably accept the view which sees in the

¹ Mr. Macan very justly vindicates the value of Suidas on the *χωρισμὸς* of the cavalry.

Athenian formation something more than a makeshift to spread out an inferior number so as to equal the length of the Persian line of battle.¹ As usual it is rather the soldier's than the general's account which has survived in the tradition. Nevertheless the victory was not instantaneous, there was a stubborn struggle, *χρόνος ἐγένετο πολλός*. As to the duration denoted by *πολλός* opinions differ. Probably most men would find an hour's hand to hand tussle ample, and the small Athenian loss points to a short estimate. The time might be measured in minutes and still be long under the conditions. But it is likely that there was some breathing space between the rout of the Persian wings and the crushing of their centre. The wings made good their escape unpursued. Few of the centre, which had advanced 'inland' after the Athenians, can have got on board. The fact that no more than seven ships were taken may only mean that the seamen did not wait long for the fugitives. It was at this point that according to Herodotus the belated signal of the shield was raised.

The remainder of the Persian fleet made off after the squadron which had already *ex hypothesi* sailed. The Athenians returned to Athens 'as fast as their feet could carry them,' at all events in plenty of time to witness the futile demonstration of the enemy off Phalerum. There could be no question of betrayal now. Even without the return of the army and the arrival of the Spartans, the victory must have entirely changed the tone of the populace and the aspect of the situation. Miltiades had won again.

In our view the battle of Marathon was not 'primarily a general's battle' because it was even more primarily a statesman's battle. Miltiades may or may not have had the handling of the army in the field, but the contest was between him and Hippias, rather than between Callimachus and Datis and Artaphrenes. So far his pre-eminence in the tradition seems to be justified.

It may be useful to recapitulate the main points in our interpretation of the campaign. The expedition of Datis and Artaphrenes was formally the last step in the suppression of the Ionic revolt, although it was also far more than that. The subjugation of the islands was systematically carried through, but there was a special motive for taking Eretria before Athens. The political situation at Athens was an acute crisis in a long standing struggle, and presented a very favourable opportunity to Hippias. The plan of campaign was governed by an arrangement between Hippias and the Alcmaeonidae. The purpose of the landing at Marathon was to remove Miltiades and the bulk of the armed garrison from Athens, and keep them out of the way while the *coup d'état* was prepared. Part of the Persian force was to be shipped to Phalerum, and admitted to Athens when the revolution was proclaimed. Obstacles must have been encountered by the conspirators the plot hung fire. At last the impending arrival of the Spartans forced the Persians to make the attempt before the signal. The Athenian commander

¹ The Persians, be it noted by the way, array. They were not taken off their guard, appear to have been quite ready and in orderly

delivered his attack as soon as the Persian forces were sufficiently separated. The victory at Marathon frustrated the invasion as much by its moral effect at Athens as by its military consequences. Miltiades was justly regarded as the hero of the campaign.

The theory here put forward does not contradict any well accredited fact in the evidence, nor invoke imaginary causes. It explains on one consistent hypothesis the landing at Marathon, the delay there, the Athenian attack, the absence of the Persian cavalry, the embarkation of the vanquished, the signal of the shield, and the prominence of Miltiades.

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