

0. REVENGING MARATHON - Story Preface

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Pheidippides (also called Philippides) was a professional runner who reportedly delivered the news of Athens' great victory over the Persians, at Marathon, to the Athenians. Then he died. But ... there is more to his story than that run.

Ten years had passed since a smaller army of Athenians defeated the Persians at Marathon. Remember the story? Outnumbered during the late summer of 490 BCE, the Greeks fought with courage and resolve.

After the battle - according to legend - a messenger ran the entire distance from Marathon to Athens. After he reported an Athenian victory, it is said the runner dropped dead of exhaustion.

Marathon was much more than a victory. It showed the Persians could be defeated. But Xerxes, who was crown prince in 490, was the Great King in 480. He planned to finish what his father, Darius I, had started: to subjugate the Greek city-states, including Athens and Sparta.

Ordering his troops to construct a "boat bridge" - so the army, and all of its supplies and supporting personnel, could cross the waters of the Hellespont (now known as the Dardanelles) on foot - Xerxes set out to defeat the Greek city-states. Who could resist such a formidable ruler?

The Great King was on the move. But his would-be Greek subjects were experiencing life under a new political reality. Democracy was in its formative years and, if the Greeks became part of the Persian empire, they would lose their ability to be free. Not just unable to govern themselves, free Greeks would then become Persian subjects.

The early years of democracy, of course, were set against a background of slavery, even in Greece. Spartans, for example, had their own slaves - called Helots. And women, especially in Athens, had unequal rights. But if the Persian army were to rout the Greek city-states, the concept of democracy - where people have the right to govern themselves - would be replaced with subservience to the Persian ruler.

Xerxes wanted to avenge his empire's loss at Marathon. The Greeks had defeated the Persian army once before. Could they do so again?

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/REVENGING-MARATHON-300-Battle-of-Thermopylae)

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See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/REVENGING-MARATHON-300-Battle-of-Thermopylae)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/REVENGING-MARATHON-300-Battle-of-Thermopylae>

Questions 2 Ponder

How Does Self-Government Compare to Domination by a Ruler?

At the time of the battle of Thermopylae, Greeks were beginning their experiment with "self rule" while Persians were living under the domination of their Rulers, such as Xerxes.

What does it mean when "people have the right to govern themselves?" What does it mean to be subservient to a ruler?

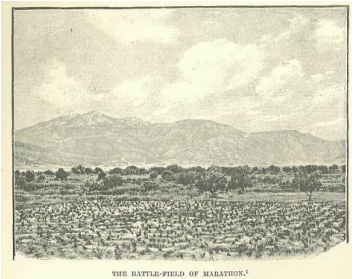
Which of those two forms of government would you prefer? Why?

How Can We Respond If Our Freedom Is Threatened?

The Greeks, who were enjoying their developing form of democracy, did not want to replace whatever freedoms they had with living under the dictates of a ruler.

If your freedom were threatened, how would you resist if you were not part of an army (like the Greeks against Xerxes)?

Media Stream

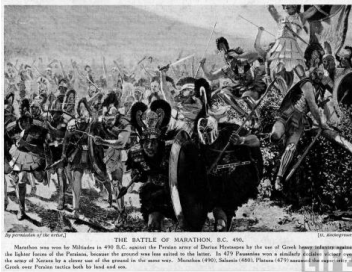


Battle Field at Marathon

Image online, courtesy gutenberg.org website.

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Battle of Marathon - Greeks Defeat the Persians

Image online, courtesy Time Magazine's web site.

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Athens - View of the Ancient City

Image online, courtesy the sikyon.com website.

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Plain of Marathon

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Xerxes and His Place in the Achaemenid Dynasty

Image online, courtesy the Boise State University website.

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300 - Xerxes, Great King of the Persians

Image online courtesy thelatinlibrary.com website.

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300 - Xerxes and the Boat Bridge

Image online, courtesy the Utah State University website.

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Sparta - Home of King Leonidas

Image online, courtesy Wikimapia.org website.

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300 - Crossing the Waters of the Hellespont

Image online, courtesy EDSITEment! (via National Endowment for the Humanities website).

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The Hellespont

Image online, courtesy the ancientstandard.com website.

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Hellespont - An Aerial View of the Dardanelles

Image online, courtesy NASA.

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Strait of Dardanelles

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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300 - Immortals Cross the Water on Foot

Image online, courtesy the [Heritage History](#) website.

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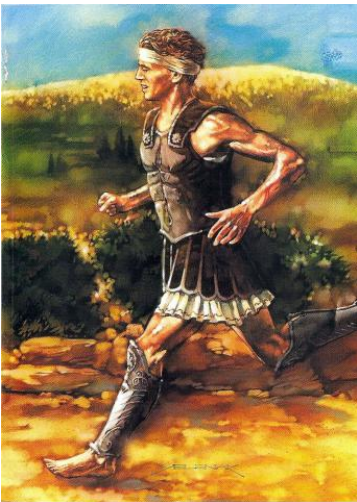
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/300-Immortals-Cross-the-Water-on-Foot>



The Persian Empire

Image online, courtesy [Central Oregon Community College](#) website.

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