## REVENGING MARATHON



0. REVENGING MARATHON - Story Preface

#### 1. REVENGING MARATHON

- 2. SPARTA
- 3. LIFE IN SPARTA
- 4. LEONIDAS
- 5. GORGO
- 6. XERXES and the IMMORTALS
- 7. THERMOPYLAE
- 8. BATTLE at the HOT GATES
- 9. EPHIALTES THE TRAITOR
- 10. THEMISTOCLES against XERXES
- 11. GREEKS DEFEAT the PERSIANS



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 <u>more to his story</u> than that run.

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

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

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

Ordering his troops to construct a "boat bridge" - so the army, and all of its supplies and supporting personnel, could <u>cross the waters</u> of <u>the Hellespont</u> (now known as the <u>Dardanelles</u>) on <u>foot</u> - Xerxes <u>set out</u> 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 <u>democracy</u>, 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

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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 gutenburg.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

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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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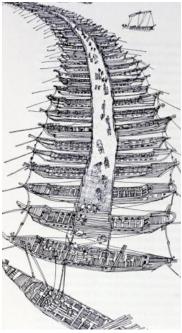


# 300 - Xerxes, Great King of the Persians

Image online courtesy the latin library.com website.

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# 300 - Xerxes and the Boat Bridge

Image online, courtesy the <u>Utah State University</u> website.

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## Sparta - Home of King Leonidas

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## 300 - Crossing the Waters of the Hellespont

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# The Hellespont

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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

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## The Persian Empire

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