

# The End of the *Histories* Presentation

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## 1. Hdt. Mycale 9.90–105 (trans. Godley, 1920)

90. Now on the same day when the Persians were so stricken at Plataea, it so happened that they suffered a similar fate at Mykale in Ionia. When the Greeks who had come in their ships with Leutyichides the Lacedaemonian were encamped at Delos, certain messengers came to them there from Samos, Lampon of Thrasykles, Athenagoras son of Archestratides, and Hegesistratus son of Aristagoras. The Samians had sent these, keeping their despatch secret from the Persians and the tyrant Theomestor son of Androdamas, whom the Persians had made tyrant of Samos. [2] When they came before the generals, Hegesistratus spoke long and vehemently: “If the Ionians but see you,” he said, “they will revolt from the Persians, and the barbarians will not remain; but if they do remain, you will have such a prey as never again. “He begged them in the name of the gods of their common worship to deliver Greeks from slavery and drive the barbarian away. [3] That, he said, would be an easy matter for them, “for the Persian ships are unseaworthy and no match for yours; and if you have any suspicion that we may be tempting you deceitfully, we are ready to be taken in your ships as hostages.”

91. As the Samian stranger was pleading so earnestly, Leutyichides asked him (whether it was that he desired to know for the sake of a presage, or through some happy chance of a god), “Samian stranger, what is your name?” “Hegesistratus,” he replied. [2] Then Leutyichides cut short whatever else Hegesistratus had begun to say, and cried: “I accept the omen of your name, Samian stranger; now see to it that before you sail from here you and those who are with you pledge that the Samians will be our zealous allies.”

92. He said this and added deed to word. For straightway the Samians bound themselves by pledge and oath to alliance with the Greeks. [2] This done, the rest sailed away, but Leutyichides bade Hegesistratus to sail with the Greeks because of the good omen of his name. The Greeks waited through that day, and on the next they sought and received favorable augury; their diviner was Deiphonus son of Evenius, a man of that Apollonia which is in the Ionian gulf. This man's father Evenius had once fared as I will now relate.

93. There is at Apollonia a certain flock sacred to the Sun, which in the daytime is pastured beside the river Chon, which flows from the mountain called Lacmon through the lands of Apollonia and empties into the sea by the harbor of Oricum. By night, those townsmen who are most notable for wealth or lineage are chosen to watch it, each man serving for a year, for the people of Apollonia set great store by this flock, being so taught by a certain oracle. It is kept in a cave far distant from the town. [2] Now at the time of which I speak, Evenius was the chosen watchman. But one night he fell asleep, and wolves, coming past his guard into the cave, killed about sixty of the flock. When Evenius was aware of it, he held his peace and told no man, intending to restore what was lost by buying others. [3] This matter was not, however, hidden from the people of Apollonia, and when it came to their knowledge they brought him to judgment and condemned him to lose his eyesight for sleeping at his watch. So they blinded Evenius, but from the day of their so doing their flocks bore no offspring, nor did their land yield fruit as before. [4] Furthermore, a declaration was given to them at Dodona and Delphi, when

they inquired of the prophets what might be the cause of their present ill: the gods told them by their prophets that they had done unjustly in blinding Evenius, the guardian of the sacred flock, “for we ourselves” (they said) “sent those wolves, and we will not cease from avenging him until you make him such restitution for what you did as he himself chooses and approves; when that is fully done, we ourselves will give Evenius such a gift as will make many men consider him happy.”

94. This was the oracle given to the people of Apollonia. They kept it secret and charged certain of their townsmen to carry the business through; they acted as I will now show. Coming and sitting down by Evenius at the place where he sat, they spoke of other matters, till at last they fell to commiserating his misfortune. Guiding the conversation in this way, they asked him what compensation he would choose, if the people of Apollonia should promise to requite him for what they had done. [2] He, knowing nothing of the oracle, said he would choose for a gift the lands of certain named townsmen whom he thought to have the two fairest estates in Apollonia, and a house besides which he knew to be the fairest in the town; let him (he said) have possession of these, and he would lay aside his anger, and be satisfied with that by way of restitution. [3] So he said this, and those who were sitting beside him said in reply: “Evenius, the people of Apollonia hereby make you that restitution for the loss of your sight, obeying the oracle given to them.” At that he was very angry, for he learned through this the whole story and saw that they had cheated him. They did, however, buy from the possessors and give him what he had chosen, and from that day he had a natural gift of divination, through which he won fame.

95. Deiphonus, the son of this Evenius, had been brought by the Corinthians, and was the army's prophet. But I have heard it said before now, that Deiphonus was not the son of Evenius, but made a wrongful use of that name and worked for wages up and down Hellas.

96. Having won favorable omens, the Greeks put out to sea from Delos for Samos. When they were now near Calamisa in the Samian territory, they anchored there near the temple of Hera which is in those parts, and prepared for a sea-fight. The Persians, learning of their approach, also put out to sea and made for the mainland with all their ships save the Phoenicians, whom they sent sailing away. It was determined by them in council that they would not do battle by sea, [2] for they thought themselves overmatched; the reason of their making for the mainland was that they might be under the shelter of their army at Mykale, which had been left by Xerxes' command behind the rest of his host to hold Ionia. There were sixty thousand men in it, and Tigranes, the noblest and tallest man in Persia, was their general. [3] It was the design of the Persian admirals to flee to the shelter of that army, and there to beach their ships and build a fence round them which should be a protection for the ship and a refuge for themselves.

97. With this design they put to sea. So when they came past the temple of the Goddesses at Mykale to the Gaeson and Scolopois, where there is a temple of Eleusinian Demeter (which was built by Philistus son of Pasicles when he went with Nileus son of Codrus to the founding of Miletus), they beached their ships and fenced them round with stones and the trunks of orchard trees which they cut down; they drove in stakes around the fence and prepared for siege or victory, making ready, after consideration, for either event.

98. When the Greeks learned that the barbarians had gone off to the mainland, they were not all pleased that their enemy had escaped them, and did not know whether to return back or set sail for the Hellespont. At last they resolved that they would do neither, but sail to the mainland. [2] Equipping themselves for this with gangways and everything else necessary for a sea-fight, they held their course for Mykale. When they approached the camp, no one put out to meet them.

Seeing the ships beached within the wall and a great host of men drawn up in array along the strand, Leutychides first sailed along in his ship, keeping as near to the shore as he could, and made this proclamation to the Ionians by the voice of a herald: [3] "Men of Ionia, you who hear us, understand what I say, for by no means will the Persians understand anything I charge you with when we join battle; first of all it is right for each man to remember his freedom and next the battle-cry 'Hebe': and let him who hears me tell him who has not heard it." [4] The purpose of this act was the same as Themistocles' purpose at Artemisium; either the message would be unknown to the barbarians and would prevail with the Ionians, or if it were thereafter reported to the barbarians, it would cause them to mistrust their Greek allies.

99. After this counsel of Leutychides, the Greeks brought their ships to land and disembarked on the beach, where they formed a battle column. But the Persians, seeing the Greeks prepare for battle and exhort the Ionians, first of all took away the Samians' armor, suspecting that they would aid the Greeks; [2] for indeed when the barbarian's ships brought certain Athenian captives, who had been left in Attica and taken by Xerxes' army, the Samians had set them all free and sent them away to Athens with provisions for the journey; for this reason in particular they were held suspect, as having set free five hundred souls of Xerxes' enemies. [3] Furthermore, they appointed the Milesians to guard the passes leading to the heights of Mykale, alleging that they were best acquainted with the country. Their true reason, however, for so doing was that the Milesians should be separate from the rest of their army. In such a manner the Persians safeguarded themselves from those Ionians who (they supposed) might turn against them if opportunity were given for themselves: they set their shields close to make a barricade.

100. The Greeks, having made all their preparations advanced their line against the barbarians. As they went, a rumor spread through the army, and a herald's wand was seen lying by the water-line. The rumor that ran was to the effect that the Greeks were victors over Mardonius' army at a battle in Boeotia. [2] Now there are many clear indications of the divine ordering of things, seeing that a message, which greatly heartened the army and made it ready to face danger, arrived amongst the Greeks the very day on which the Persians' disaster at Plataea and that other which was to befall them at Mykale took place.

101. Moreover, there was the additional coincidence, that there were precincts of Eleusinian Demeter on both battlefields; for at Plataea the fight was near the temple of Demeter, as I have already said, and so it was to be at Mykale also. [2] It happened that the rumor of a victory won by the Greeks with Pausanias was true, for the defeat at Plataea happened while it was yet early in the day, and the defeat of Mykale in the afternoon. That the two fell on the same day of the same month was proven to the Greeks when they examined the matter not long afterwards. [3] Now before this rumor came they had been faint-hearted, fearing less for themselves than for the Greeks with Pausanias, that Hellas should stumble over Mardonius. But when the report sped among them, they grew stronger and swifter in their onset. So Greeks and barbarians alike were eager for battle, seeing that the islands and the Hellespont were the prizes of victory.

102. As for the Athenians and those whose place was nearest them, that is, for about half of the line, their way lay over the beach and level ground; for the Lacedaemonians and those that were next to them, their way lay through a ravine and among hills. While the Lacedaemonians were making a circuit, those others on the other wing were already fighting. [2] As long as the Persians' shields stood upright, they defended themselves and held their own in the battle, but when the Athenians and their neighbors in the line passed the word and went more zealously to work, that they and not the Lacedaemonians might win the victory, immediately the face of the fight changed. [3] Breaking down the shields they charged all together into the midst of the

Persians, who received the onset and stood their ground for a long time, but at last fled within their wall. The Athenians and Corinthians and Sicyonians and Troezenians, who were next to each other in the line, followed close after and rushed in together. But when the walled place had been razed, the barbarians made no further defense, but took to flight, all save the Persians, [4] who gathered into bands of a few men and fought with whatever Greeks came rushing within the walls. Of the Persian leaders two escaped by flight and two were killed; Artayntes and Ithanitres, who were admirals of the fleet, escaped; Mardontes and Tigranes, the general of the land army, were killed fighting.

103. While the Persians still fought, the Lacedaemonians and their comrades came up and finished what was left of the business. The Greeks too lost many men there, notably the men of Sicyon and their general Perilaus. [2] As for the Samians who served in the Median army and had been disarmed, they, seeing from the first that victory hung in the balance, did what they could in their desire to aid the Greeks. When the other Ionians saw the Samians set the example, they also abandoned the Persians and attacked the foreigners.

104. The Persians had for their own safety appointed the Milesians to watch the passes, so that if anything should happen to the Persian army such as did happen to it, they might have guides to bring them safely to the heights of Mykale. This was the task to which the Milesians were appointed for the reason mentioned above and so that they might not be present with the army and so turn against it. They acted wholly contrary to the charge laid upon them; they misguided the fleeing Persians by ways that led them among their enemies, and at last they themselves became their worst enemies and killed them. In this way Ionia revolted for the second time from the Persians.

105. In that battle those of the Greeks who fought best were the Athenians, and the Athenian who fought best was one who practised the pancratium, Hermolycus son of Euthoenus. This Hermolycus on a later day met his death in a battle at Cynrus in Carystus during a war between the Athenians and Carystians, and lay dead on Geraestus. Those who fought best after the Athenians were the men of Corinth and Troezen and Sicyon.

## **2. Hdt. Masistes 9.107–113**

107. The few barbarians who escaped were driven to the heights of Mykale, and made their way from there to Sardis. While they were making their way along the road, Masistes son of Darius, who happened to have been present at the Persian disaster, reviled the admiral Artayntes very bitterly, telling him (with much beside) that such generalship as his proved him worse than a woman, and that no punishment was too severe for the harm he had done the king's estate. Now it is the greatest of all taunts in Persia to be called worse than a woman. [2] These many insults angered Artayntes so much that he drew his sword upon Masistes to kill him, but Xenagoras son of Praxilaus of Halicarnassus, who stood behind Artayntes himself saw him run at Masistes, and caught him round the middle and lifted and hurled him to the ground. In the meantime Masistes' guards had also come between them. [3] By doing so Xenagoras won the gratitude of Masistes himself and Xerxes, for saving the king's brother. For this deed he was made ruler of all Cilicia by the king's gift. Then they went on their way without anything further happening and came to Sardis.

108. Now it happened that the king had been at Sardis ever since he came there in flight from Athens after his overthrow in the sea-fight. Being then at Sardis he became enamored of Masistes' wife, who was also there. But as all his messages could not bring her to yield to him, and he would not force her to his will, out of regard for his brother Masistes (which indeed

counted with the woman also, for she knew well that no force would be used against her), Xerxes found no other way to accomplish his purpose than that he should make a marriage between his own son Darius and the daughter of this woman and Masistes, for he thought that by doing so he would be most likely to win her. [2] So he betrothed them with all due ceremony and rode away to Susa. But when he had come and had taken Darius' bride into his house, he thought no more of Masistes' wife, but changed his mind and wooed and won this girl Artaynte, Darius' wife and Masistes' daughter.

109. As time went on, however, the truth came to light, and in such manner as I will show.

Xerxes' wife, Amestris, wove and gave to him a great gaily-colored mantle, marvellous to see. Xerxes was pleased with it, and went to Artaynte wearing it. [2] Being pleased with her too, he asked her what she wanted in return for her favors, for he would deny nothing at her asking.

Thereupon—for she and all her house were doomed to evil—she said to Xerxes, “Will you give me whatever I ask of you?” He promised this, supposing that she would ask anything but that; when he had sworn, she asked boldly for his mantle. [3] Xerxes tried to refuse her, for no reason except that he feared that Amestris might have clear proof of his doing what she already guessed. He accordingly offered her cities instead and gold in abundance and an army for none but herself to command. Armies are the most suitable of gifts in Persia. But as he could not move her, he gave her the mantle; and she, rejoicing greatly in the gift, went flaunting her finery. 110.

Amestris heard that she had the mantle, but when she learned the truth, it was not the girl with whom she was angry. She supposed rather that the girl's mother was guilty and that this was her doing, and so it was Masistes' wife whom she plotted to destroy. [2] She waited therefore till Xerxes her husband should be giving his royal feast. This banquet is served once a year, on the king's birthday; the Persian name for it is “tukta,” which is in the Greek language “perfect.” On that day (and none other) the king anoints his head and makes gifts to the Persians. Waiting for that day, Amestris then asked of Xerxes that Masistes' wife should be given to her. [3] Xerxes considered it a terrible and wicked act to give up his brother's wife, and that too when she was innocent of the deed; for he knew the purpose of the request.

111. Nevertheless, since Amestris was insistent and the law compelled him (for at this royal banquet in Persia every request must of necessity be granted), he unwillingly consented, and delivered the woman to Amestris. Then, bidding her do what she wanted, he sent for his brother and spoke as follows: [2] “Masistes, you are Darius' son and my brother, and a good man; hear me then. You must no longer live with her who is now your wife. I give you my daughter in her place. Take her for your own, but do away with the wife that you have, for it is not my will that you should have her.” [3] At that Masistes was amazed; “Sire,” he said, “what is this evil command that you lay upon me, telling me to deal with my wife in this way? I have by her young sons and daughters, of whom you have taken a wife for your own son, and I am very content with her herself. Yet you are asking me to get rid of my wife and wed your daughter? [4] Truly, O king, I consider it a great honor to be accounted worthy of your daughter, but I will do neither the one nor the other. No, rather, do not force me to consent to such a desire. You will find another husband for your daughter as good as I, but permit me to keep my own wife.” [5] This was Masistes' response, but Xerxes was very angry and said: “You have come to this pass, Masistes. I will give you no daughter of mine as a wife, nor will you any longer live with her whom you now have. In this way you will learn to accept that which is offered you.” Hearing that, Masistes said “No, sire, you have not destroyed me yet!” and so departed.

112. In the meantime, while Xerxes talked with his brother, Amestris sent for Xerxes' guards and treated Masistes' wife very cruelly; she cut off the woman's breasts and threw them to dogs, and

her nose and ears and lips also, and cut out her tongue. Then she sent her home after she had undergone this dreadful ordeal.

113. Knowing nothing of this as yet, but fearing evil, Masistes ran home. Seeing what had been done to his wife, he immediately took counsel with his children and set out for Bactra with his own sons (and others too), intending to raise the province of Bactra in revolt and do the king the greatest of harm. [2] This he would have done, to my thinking, had he escaped to the country of the Bactrians and Sacae. They were fond of him, and he was viceroy over the Bactrians. But it was of no use, for Xerxes learned what he intended and sent against him an army which killed him on his way, and his sons and his army. Such is the story of Xerxes' love and Masistes' death.

### **3. Hdt. Seige of Sestus 9.114–121**

114. The Greeks who had set out from Mykale for the Hellespont first anchored off Lectum having been stopped by contrary winds, and came from there to Abydos, where they found the bridges broken which they thought would still be in place; these were in fact the chief cause of their coming to the Hellespont. [2] The Peloponnesians then who were with Leutyichides decided to sail away to Hellas, but the Athenians, with Xanthippus their general, that they would remain there and attack the Chersonesus. So the rest sailed away, but the Athenians crossed over to the Chersonesus and laid siege to Sestus.

115. Now when the Persians heard that the Greeks were at the Hellespont, they had come in from the neighboring towns and assembled at this same Sestus, seeing that it was the strongest walled place in that region. Among them there was a Persian named Oeobazus from Cardia, and he had carried the equipment of the bridges there. Sestus was held by the Aeolians of the country, but with him were Persians and a great multitude of their allies.

116. This province was ruled by Xerxes' viceroy Artayctes, a cunning man and a wicked one; witness the deceit that he practised on the king in his march to Athens, how he stole away from Elaeus the treasure of Protesilaus son of Iphiclus. [2] This was the way of it; there is at Elaeus in the Chersonesus the tomb of Protesilaus, and a precinct around it, which contained much treasure: vessels of gold and silver, bronze, clothing, and other dedications; all of which Artayctes carried off by the king's gift. [3] "Sire," he said deceitfully to Xerxes, "there is here the house of a certain Greek, who met a just death for invading your territory with an army; give me this man's house, so that all may be taught not to invade your territory." One would think that this plea would easily persuade Xerxes to give him a man's house, since the latter had no suspicion of Artayctes' meaning. His reason for saying that Protesilaus had invaded the king's territory was that the Persians believe all Asia to belong to themselves and whoever is their king. So when the treasure was given to him, he carried it away from Elaeus to Sestus, and planted and farmed the precinct. He would also come from Elaeus and have intercourse with women in the shrine. Now, when the Athenians laid siege to him, he had made no preparation for it; he did not think that the Greeks would come, and he had no way of escaping from their attack.

117. Since the siege continued into the late autumn, the Athenians grew weary of their absence from home and their lack of success at taking the fortress. They accordingly entreated their generals to lead them away again, but the generals refused to do that till they should take the place or be recalled by the Athenian state. At that the men endured their plight patiently.

118. But those who were within the walls were by now reduced to the last extremity, so much so that they boiled the thongs of their beds for food. At last, however, even these failed them, and Artayctes and Oeobazus and all the Persians made their way down from the back part of the fortress, where the fewest of their enemies were, and fled at nightfall. [2] When morning came,

the people of the Chersonese signified from their towers to the Athenians what had happened, and opened their gates. The greater part of the Athenians then went in pursuit, while the rest stayed to hold the town.

119. As Oeobazus was making his escape into Thrace, the Apsinthians of that country caught and sacrificed him in their customary manner to Plistorus the god of their land; as for his companions, they did away with them by other means. [2] Artayctes and his company had begun their flight later, and were overtaken a little way beyond the Goat's Rivers, where after they had defended themselves a long time, some of them were killed and the rest taken alive. The Greeks bound them and carried them to Sestus, and together with them Artayctes and his son also in bonds.

120. It is related by the people of the Chersonese that a marvellous thing happened one of those who guarded Artayctes. He was frying dried fish, and these as they lay over the fire began to leap and writhe as though they had just been caught. [2] The rest gathered around, amazed at the sight, but when Artayctes saw this strange thing, he called the one who was frying the fish and said to him: "Athenian, do not be afraid of this portent, for it is not to you that it has been sent; it is to me that Protesilaus of Elaeus is trying to signify that although he is dead and dry, he has power given him by the god to take vengeance on me, the one who wronged him. [3] Now therefore I offer a ransom, the sum of one hundred talents to the god for the treasure that I took from his temple. I will also pay to the Athenians two hundred talents for myself and my son, if they spare us." [4] But Xanthippus the general was unmoved by this promise, for the people of Elaeus desired that Artayctes should be put to death in revenge for Protesilaus, and the general himself was so inclined. So they carried Artayctes away to the headland where Xerxes had bridged the strait (or, by another story, to the hill above the town of Madytus), and there nailed him to boards and hanged him. As for his son, they stoned him to death before his father's eyes.

121. This done, they sailed away to Hellas, carrying with them the cables of the bridges to be dedicated in their temples, and all sorts of things in addition. This, then, is all that was done in this year.

#### **4. Hdt. 9.122**

This Artayctes who was crucified was the grandson of that Artembares who instructed the Persians in a design which they took from him and laid before Cyrus; this was its purport: [2] "Seeing that Zeus grants lordship to the Persian people, and to you, Cyrus, among them, let us, after reducing Astyages, depart from the little and rugged land which we possess and occupy one that is better. There are many such lands on our borders, and many further distant. If we take one of these, we will all have more reasons for renown. It is only reasonable that a ruling people should act in this way, for when will we have a better opportunity than now, when we are lords of so many men and of all Asia?" [3] Cyrus heard them, and found nothing to marvel at in their design; "Go ahead and do this," he said; "but if you do so, be prepared no longer to be rulers but rather subjects. Soft lands breed soft men; wondrous fruits of the earth and valiant warriors grow not from the same soil." [4] The Persians now realized that Cyrus reasoned better than they, and they departed, choosing rather to be rulers on a barren mountain side than dwelling in tilled valleys to be slaves to others.

## **5. Erasmus and Plutarch. An excerpt from the 1523 edition of the *Adages* (a collection of proverbs with discussion) of the Dutch humanist Erasmus:**

‘καὶ τῶν φυτῶν τὰ σπέρματα καὶ τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ βίοι ταῖς χώραις συνεξομοιοῦνται, “Both the seeds of plants and the lifestyles of humans match their habitat”. This is also included in the *Collections* of Greek proverbs. Otherwise I would not have included it. For my part I think that it originates in an apophthegm that Plutarch mentions. Just as grain degenerates into a different strain in some fields, because of the fault of the soil, so the natural disposition of humans varies according to the region in which they live. Mountain people are generally rough and cruel. Those who live by the sea are usually larcenous and pitiless. Plain-dwellers are gentle and kind. Herodotus, at the end of his final book, quite clearly states that this saying originated in a reply given by Cyrus to the Persians. After they had acquired their empire, the Persians asked to be moved from the wild region in which they were then living to a more pleasant and more fruitful one. Cyrus granted their request, but he warned them to prepare after that to be slaves instead of rulers: “Soft men spring from soft lands. For the same land cannot produce both rich harvests and outstanding warriors.”’

Erasmus alludes to Plutarch’s *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* (first century AD):

‘When the Persians wished to acquire a level and tractable land in place of their own, which was mountainous and rugged, Cyrus would not allow them to do so, saying that both the seeds of plants and the lives of men are bound to be like the land of their origin.’