

The Battle of Thermopylae

to accompany Wheelock Chapter 5

Exercitus Persicōrum terram Graecam oppugnābat. Xerxēs, filius Dārēi et rēx Persicōrum, cōnsilium habēbat et superāre Graecōs et occupāre patriam. Xerxēs iubēbat multōs Persicōs intrāre terram Graecam, sed Graecī Portās Calidās habēbant. Exercitus Persicōrum intrāre terram Graecam propter Graecōs nōn potuit.

Persicus Lacedaemonium in viā vidēbat. “Exercitus noster est magnus,” Persicus inquit, “et propter numerum sagittārum nostrārum caelum nōn vidēbitis!” Tum Lacedaemonius respondēbat: “In umbrā, igitur, pugnābimus!” Et Leōnidās, rēx Lacedaemoniōrum, exclāmābat: “Pugnāte cum animīs, Lacedaemoniī; hodiē apud umbrās fortasse cēnābimus!”

Trēs diēs paucī Lacedaemoniī multōs Persicōs pugnābant. Arma Graecōrum bona, sed arma Persicōrum mala sunt. Graecī et longās hastās et magna scūta habent. Scūta Persicōrum sunt vīmeneā et infirma. Graecī igitur multōs necābant; dēnique autem Persicī Graecōs propter numerum superābant. Glōria Lacedaemoniōrum vēra et magna est.

Only three hundred Spartan warriors fought against many thousands of Persians at the Hot Gates. Because of their sacrifice, the rest of Greece was given time to prepare for and ultimately defeat the invading Persian army. Herodotus writes that the following epitaph was erected for the Spartans killed at Thermopylae:

*O traveller, go tell the Spartans at home
that here we lie, obedient to their commands.*

exercitus, army

Persicus, -ī, a Persian man

terra, -ae, land

Graecus, -a, -um, Greek

oppugnō, **oppugnāre** (1), attack

Dārēus, -ī

rēx, **rēgis**, 3rd decl., king, ruler

occupō, **occupāre** (1), usurp, occupy

iubeō, **iubēre**, **iussī**, **iussum**, bid, order, command

intrō, **intrāre** (1), enter, go into

calidus, -a, -um, hot, warm

Portās Calidās = Thermopylae, in NE Greece

possum, **posse**, **potuī**, to be able. (**potuit** = was not able)

Lacedaemonius, -ī, a Spartan man

inquit, says

sagitta, -ae, f., arrow

umbra, -ae, f., shade, shadow; *sometimes*, a ghost

pugnō, **pugnāre** (1), to fight

exclāmō, **exclāmāre** (1), to exclaim, shout

cum + ABL, with

apud + ACC, among

fortasse, adv., perhaps

trēs diēs, for three days

arma, **armōrum**, n., arms, weapons

hasta, -ae, spear

scūtum, -ī, shield

vīmeneus, -a, -um, made of wicker

infirmus, -a, -um, weak, breakable

necō, **necāre** (1), to kill, to slay

dēnique, finally

autem, however