



The Persian Invasions of Greece

Dr. Arthur Keaveney

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In 490 BC Darius I, Great King of Persia and the most powerful man in the world, led a massive invasion army to punish the interference of some minor states on the western borders of his huge empire. The main enemy was Athens. The resultant Battle of Marathon was a disaster for Darius and one of the most famous victories for the underdog in all military history. The Persians were forced to withdraw and plot an even bigger expedition to conquer Athens and the whole of Greece once and for all. The second invasion came ten years later, under Darius' successor, Xerxes. This led to the legendary last stand of the Spartan King Leonidas at Thermopylae, the sacking of Athens and the famous naval clash at Salamis, which saved Greece. The following year, 479 BC saw the remaining Persian forces driven from mainland Greece at the epic, yet strangely less-famous Battle of Plataea, one of the largest pitched battles of the Classical Greek world. Dr Arthur Keaveney, an expert on Achaemenid Persia, re-examines these momentous, epoch-defining events from both Greek and Persian perspective to give a full and balanced account based on the most recent research.

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