

Battle of Salamis 480 BC

Greeks

Athens 150
Aegina 30
Megara 20
Corinth 40
Peloponnese 50
Others 20

Persians

Fleets
Phoenicia 100-120
Egypt 75-90
Ionian Greeks 100
Cyprus 50
Lycia 20
Caria 25
Cilicia 30
Others 50

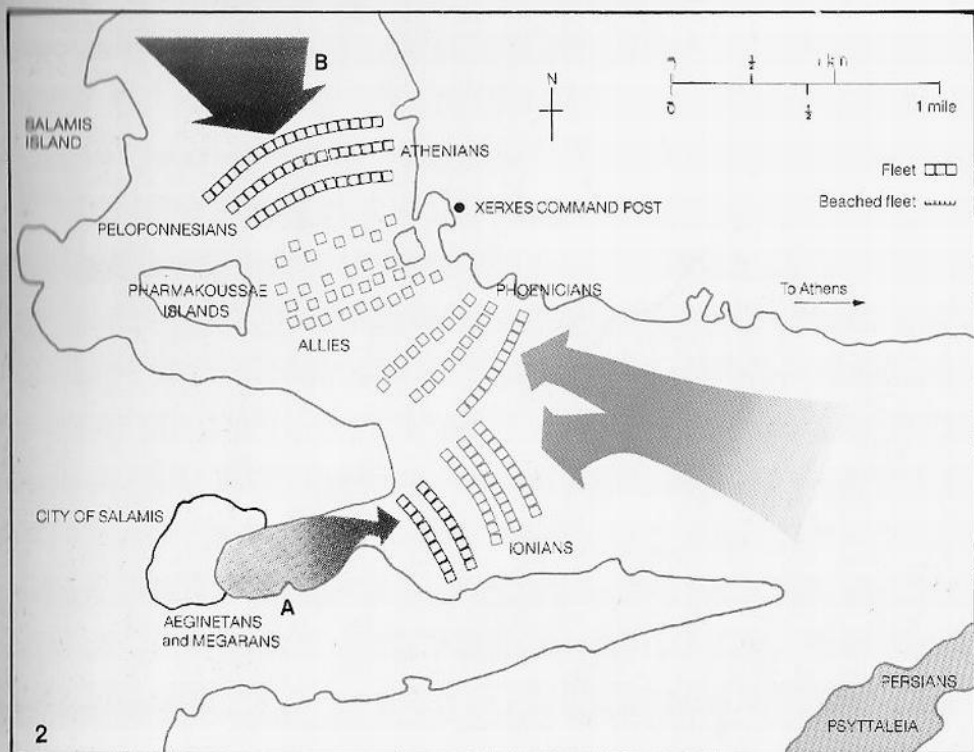
1 The Greek High Command sends a false message to Xerxes that the Greek fleet intends to flee to the Isthmus of Corinth and join the army. Believing this, Xerxes sends his Egyptian squadron to block the Megarian channel (A) and puts his fleet on either side of Psyttaleia to await the attempted Greek escape. The fleet waits all night in vain.

To further the ruse, the Greek fleet puts to sea at dawn and heads north (B). The Corinthian squadron, with some others, leads off under sail (which would be carried in flight but not normally in battle), with the object of defending the Megarian channel and the Greek rear from Egyptian attack. Xerxes orders his fleet to advance up channel (C).

2 The Aeginetans and Megarians advance from their ambush in Ambelaki bay (A) and engage the Ionians. Meanwhile the rest of the fleet back water, luring the Persians on until, crowded and disordered by the narrowing channel, they come up between the Pharmakoussae islands. The Greeks attack (B).

The Phoenician admiral is an early casualty. Leaderless, the Phoenician squadron attempts to back off into more open water, causing confusion as more Persian ships advance. It is morning and the confusion is worsened by a freshening southerly wind. The taller top-heavy Phoenician galleys begin to fall foul of one another (they carried a raised fighting bridge and more marines than Greek vessels). The Phoenicians break and flee, and following the enemy ships down channel, the Athenians attack the Ionians from behind in a classic pincer movement. The Persian fleet is driven back past Psyttaleia and the garrison on the island is destroyed by marines from the Greek fleet. Meanwhile the Corinthians have held off the Egyptians.

The Persians have lost 200 triremes; the Greeks 40.



480

Xerxes leads grand army and naval armada into Greece

Greeks fight delaying naval action at Artemisium (north Euboea)

Spartans with other Greeks under Leonidas are annihilated in heroic defence of Thermopylae

Persians pass southwards and seize Athens

Athenians evacuate Persians of Salamis

481

Xerxes prepares for invasion of Greece

The Greek city states form a defensive alliance

Xerxes by diplomacy conciliates northern and central Greece

Sicilian Greeks dominated by Gelon of Syracuse do not collaborate

483

The Athenians, on Themistocles' advice, exploit the Laurium silver-mines to build a fleet