

Herodotus' Last Word on Themistocles

Passage 1: Herodotus 8.125, tr. Purvis modified

When Themistocles had left the Spartans and arrived back at Athens, an Athenian named Timodemus of the deme Aphidna, who was an enemy of Themistocles but otherwise not a prominent man, rebuked him out of insane jealousy about his trip to Sparta, asserting that he had won honors from the Spartans because of Athens and not because of himself. Timodemus continued to say this without cease until Themistocles retorted, 'The fact is that if I were from Belbina, I would not have been honored this way by the Spartans, but neither would you, my friend, even though you are an Athenian.'

ὡς δὲ ἐκ τῆς Λακεδαιμόνος ἀπῆκετο ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας, ἐνθαῦτα Τιμόδημος Ἀφιδναῖος, τῶν ἐχθρῶν μὲν τῶν Θεμιστοκλέος ἐὼν, ἄλλως δὲ οὐ τῶν ἐπιφανέων ἀνδρῶν, φθόνῳ καταμαργέων ἐνεΐκειε τὸν Θεμιστοκλέα, τὴν ἐς Λακεδαιμόνα ἄπιξιν προφέρων, ὡς διὰ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἔχει τὰ γέρεα τὰ παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίων, ἀλλ' οὐ δι' ἐωυτόν. ὁ δὲ, ἐπεῖτε οὐκ ἐπαύετο λέγων ταῦτα ὁ Τιμόδημος, εἶπε· Οὕτω ἔχει τοι· οὐτ' ἂν ἐγὼ ἐὼν Βελβινίτης ἐτιμήθην οὕτω πρὸς Σπαρτιητέων, οὐτ' ἂν σύ, ὦνθρωπε, ἐὼν Ἀθηναῖος.

Passage 2: Herodotus 8.109.5, tr. Purvis

Now the reason Themistocles said this was in order to secure a reserve of credit with the King, so that in case he were to suffer some calamity at the hands of the Athenians, he would have a refuge to run to, which of course is exactly what did happen.

ταῦτα ἔλεγε ἀποθήκην μέλλων ποιήσεσθαι ἐς τὸν Πέρσην, ἵνα ἦν ἄρα τί μιν καταλαμβάνη πρὸς Ἀθηναίων πάθος, ἔχη ἀποστροφὴν· τὰ περ ὧν καὶ ἐγένετο.

Passage 3: Herodotus 8.110.3, tr. Purvis modified

I have been sent by Themistocles, son of Neocles, the commander of the Athenians and the best and wisest man of all the allies, to convey this message to you: "Themistocles the Athenian wishes to do you a favor, and has held back the Greeks from pursuing your fleet and breaking apart the bridges at the Hellespont, since that is what they wanted to do. So now go on your way and be at ease."

Ἔπεμψε με Θεμιστοκλέης ὁ Νεοκλέος, στρατηγὸς μὲν Ἀθηναίων, ἀνὴρ δὲ τῶν συμμάχων πάντων ἄριστος καὶ σοφώτατος, φράσοντά μοι ὅτι Θεμιστοκλέης ὁ Ἀθηναῖος σοὶ βουλόμενος ὑποργεῖν ἔσχε τοὺς Ἕλληνας τὰς νέας βουλομένους διώκειν καὶ τὰς ἐν Ἑλλησπόντῳ γεφύρας λύειν. καὶ νῦν κατ' ἡσυχίην πολλὴν κομίζεο.

Passage 4: Herodotus 8.112.2, tr. Purvis

He (Themistocles) collected large sums of money from the Carystians and the Parians, who had heard both that Andros was being besieged because it had medized, and that Themistocles was the most highly reputed of all the commanders; so they sent the money out of fear.

συνέλεγε χρήματα μεγάλα παρὰ Καρυστίων τε καὶ Παρίων, οἱ πυνθανόμενοι τὴν τε Ἄνδρον ὡς πολιορκέοιτο διότι ἐμήδισε, καὶ Θεμιστοκλέα ὡς εἶη ἐν αἴνῃ μεγίστη τῶν στρατηγῶν, δέισαντες ταῦτα ἔπεμπον χρήματα.

Passage 5: Herodotus 8.124.2, tr. Purvis modified

But because he (Themistocles) received no prize for his victory from those who had fought at Salamis, he went straight to Sparta, wishing to be rewarded there.

ὅτι δὲ νικῶν οὐκ ἐτιμήθη πρὸς τῶν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι ναυμαχησάντων, αὐτίκα μετὰ ταῦτα ἐς Λακεδαίμονα ἀπίκητο θέλων τιμηθῆναι.

Passage 6: Plat. Rep. 329e-330a, tr. Emlyn-Jones and Preddy

But Themistocles' retort is particularly apt here: in reply to the man from Seriphos who became abusive and told him that he owed his fame not to his own merits but to his city, Themistocles said that he would not himself have become famous if he were a Seriphian, and nor would the other if he were an Athenian.

ἀλλὰ τὸ τοῦ Θεμιστοκλέους εἶ ἔχει, ὅς τῳ Σεριφίῳ λοιδορουμένῳ καὶ λέγοντι ὅτι οὐ δι' αὐτὸν ἀλλὰ διὰ τὴν πόλιν εὐδοκμοῖ, ἀπεκρίνατο ὅτι οὔτ' ἂν αὐτὸς Σεριφίος ὢν ὀνομαστὸς ἐγένετο οὔτ' ἐκεῖνος Ἀθηναῖος.

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