

**UNCOVERING THE SPARTANS SUICIDE
MISSION ON STEVEN PRESSFIELD'S *GATES OF
FIRE***

THESIS



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ABSTRACT

Chandra, A.B. (2021). *Uncovering the Spartans Suicide Mission on Steven Pressfield's Gates Of Fire*. English Department, Faculty Arts and Humanities. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisor: Dr. Abu Fanani, S.S., M.Pd

Keywords: mimetic, greco-persian wars, sparta, suicide mission

This study focuses on the historical events that appear in the novel *Gates of Fire*, especially on the battle of Thermopylae. The novel *Gates of Fire* by Steven Pressfield is a novel that tells about the desperate action of the Spartans and the Greeks in repelling the massive Persian invasion. Spartan's story is told in heroic narration from its ancient sources and contains a myth within it. This novel also applied a similar approach to retelling about Spartans with the battle of Thermopylae and its 300 Spartans become key aspects within it. Because of it, this made the novel bring the misconception about the actual event of the Greco-Persian Wars. Thus, this study tends to understand how this novel is reflecting the real event and also understanding about the 300 Spartans and their sacrifice.

In order to understand what really happens in the event, this study needs to see the novel through its reference and needs to apply the theory of mimetic. The researcher also uses the qualitative method to analyze and explain its finding in the process.

As a result, the novel gives detail on the Greco-Persian war's events and covering a major battle in the battle of Thermopylae and the famous 300 Spartans. The novel also tell other battle such as the Sea Battle of Artemisium and Salamis, the Sack of Athens, and the Battle of Plataea. Moreover, this research also found that in the real event, Spartan's suicidal mission that writes in the novel is initially not a suicidal mission, and it is only Spartan's political movement to understand his ally and foe. However, the battle end quicker than anticipated. This loss then shocked the Spartans in their homeland.

ABSTRAK

Chandra, A.B. (2021). *Mengungkap Misi Bunuh Diri Sparta di Novel Gates of Fire Karya Steven Pressfield*. Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab&Humaniora. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: Dr. Abu Fanani, S.S., M.Pd

Kata kunci: mimetik, perang yunani-persia, sparta, misi bunuh diri

Studi ini berfokus pada melihat peristiwa sejarah yang muncul di Novel *Gates of Fire* khususnya pertempuran Thermopylae. Novel *Gates of Fire* Karya Steven Pressfield adalah novel yang membahas tentang Perjuangan bangsa Sparta dan Yunani yang sangat putus asa dalam menghadapi invasi besar-besaran Kekaisaran Persia. Dari sumber kuno, kisah ini diceritakan dalam narasi heroik dan mengandung Mitos di dalamnya. Novel ini juga menerapkan pendekatan serupa untuk menceritakan kembali tentang Spartan dengan pertempuran Thermopylae dan 300 Spartannya menjadi aspek kunci di dalamnya. Karena itu, novel ini membawa kembali kesalahpahaman tentang peristiwa sebenarnya dari Perang tersebut. Karena penelitian ini akan fokus untuk mempelajari bagaimana novel ini merefleksikan kejadian nyatanya dan tentunya mempelajari tentang 300 Spartans dan pengorbanannya

Untuk memahami apa yang sebenarnya terjadi dalam peristiwa tersebut, penelitian ini perlu mengaplikasikan teori Mimetik untuk melihat novel melalui apa yang dirujuk. Juga dalam prosesnya, Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk menganalisa dan menjelaskan hasilnya.

Hasilnya, novel ini juga memberi gambaran rinci tentang Peperangan Yunani-Persian dengan mencakup beberapa pertempuran besar seperti Pertempuran Thermopylae dan 300 Spartans, Pertempuran Laut Artemisium dan Salamis, Pembumi hangusan kota Athens, dan sampai pada yang terakhir di pertempuran Plataea. Lalu, untuk misi bunuh diri pasukan Sparta, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pada kejadian aslinya, mungkin awalnya tak ada maksud untuk melakukan misi bunuh diri, Pengiriman Pasukan itu mungkin saja hanya langkah Politik yang dilakukan oleh Sparta untuk mempelajari kawan dan lawannya. Tapi pada akhirnya, Pertempuran berakhir lebih cepat menewaskan seluruh pasukan yang dikirim dan membuat pihak Sparta kaget akan kekalahannya.

TABLE OF CONTENT

inside Cover Page.....	i
Declaration Sheet	ii
Approval Sheet.....	iii
Examiner Sheet	iv
Acknowledgment	vi
Abstract	vii
Abstrak	viii
Table Of Content.....	ix
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of Problem.....	4
1.3 Significance of the study	5
1.4 Scope and Limitation	5
1.5 Definition of Key term.....	5
1.6 Research Method.....	6
1.6.1 Data Source	6
1.6.1.1 Primary Data Source	6
1.6.1.2 Secondary Data Source	6
1.6.2 Data Collection and Analysis.....	6
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Theoretical Framework	8
2.1.1 Mimetic Theory.....	8
2.2. Previous Studies.....	10
CHAPTER 3 ANALYSIS.....	13
3.1 The Greco-Persian wars	13
3.1.1 Reason behind this war	13
3.1.1.1 To expand the Empire Influence	14
3.1.1.2 To Punish Athens for their support in the Ionian Revolt and the loss from the battle of Marathon	16

The story of *Gates of fire* itself tells about the Greco-Persian wars or precisely tells about the battle of Thermopylae. This battle is where the famous 300 Spartans and Greek city alliance warriors stand against the massive Persian army. As according to Litcharts (n.d, para. 1) The story itself is transcribed by the Persian historian named Gobartes as a request from king Xerxes. It is transcribed from the wounded Sparta soldier named Xeones. Transcribing process starts from the journey of the life of Xeones. Start from his training under Spartan culture until they meet after the battle of Thermopylae. After completing the transcribing process, the story continues until the battle of Plataea and the defeat of the Persian army in Greece.

The novel *Gates of Fire* uses a historical event as the main event and Makes it imitating actual events. These works apply the themes of Greco-Persian wars as

To understand 300 Spartans with their suicide mission and the Spartan effort to fight against the Persian Empire. The researcher applies mimetics to look upon what the works are imitating. As Abrams (1999, p. 51) in his framework of Mimetic criticism also says that literature is an imitation of the real world itself and its human life. This theory will be applied to understanding the Novel *Gates*

The researcher is interested in the historical event in the novel. Resulting in this question below:

1. How was the Greco-Persian war reflected in the novel *Gates of Fire*?
2. Why did the Spartans only send small forces into a suicide mission?

1.3 Significance of the study

In doing this study, the researcher hopes that this research will give the reader a clear overview of the historical context that appears in the novel. Then, for the academic community and the researcher himself, this study aims to increase knowledge in utilizing the theory when there is a difference between the context and the novel.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The analysis will focus on the events in the novel *Gates of Fire*. The data is collected through narration and dialogue within the novel. The focus is such the preparation of the war, the reason why the war could happen, then the course war between the Greek army against the Persian army until then the aftermath of the war.

1.5 Definition of Key term

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1.5.1 History | : A record of the past |
| 1.5.2 Greco-Persian Wars | : The war between ancient Greek and Persian Achaemenid Empire. |
| 1.5.3 <i>Gates of Fire</i> | : Novel about the Spartans and their war against the Persian Empire. |
| 1.5.4 Sparta | : One of the dominant city-states in Ancient Greek |
| 1.5.5 Suicide Mission | : The mission that sacrifices all who involved |

1.6.1 Data Source

The data source is divided into two types, the primary data source and the secondary data source.

1.6.1.1 Primary Data Source

1.6.1.2 Secondary Data Source

1.6.2 Data Collection and Analysis

[illegible]

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Mimetic Theory

Coyle et al. (1993, p. 15) say that since classical times, literature has a special and important relationship with the world and trigger the creation of the theory of mimetic that foregrounding the notion of "imitation" of a world. This statement gives an overview that the world has an impact on literature as its source of knowledge.

[illegible]

Wellek and Warren (1956, p. 89) say that literature is imitating the life, and life is a social reality. Even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world would be an imitation of literature, this could be understood that literature could become a representation of real life. It can be a representation of certain events that ever happen. Alternatively, literature can become a personal representation.

In conclusion, This theory sees literature as a representation of the real world. Its representation is not only the surface shapes of the world but also from its inner form. This relation with the world-made literature could help the reader reconstruct its atmospheres, such as setting, plot, and character. As for Pressfield, *Gates of Fire* is reconstructing the set of ancient greek alongside the event of

2.2. Previous Studies

First, Bridges, Hall, Rhodes (2007), in their book entitled Cultural Response to the Persian wars, in chapter 17 they criticize the novel *Gates of Fire*. With the title "The guts and the Glory: Pressfield's Spartans at the Gates of Fire," They criticize soldier's perspectives of war that appear in the novel. They focus on how the feel of war as a soldier, the fear of war, the reconstruction within the battlefield as a soldier's point of view, and other aspects of war are similar to the modern era. They also argued that it could be because of the writer's experience as a former US soldier even Pressfield himself did not say that. They also said about the difference between the novel *Gates of Fire* with other historical novels about the Persian wars. They argue that instead of describing the Greek as a hero or with the Glorious view as other novels, Pressfield tends to write the cruelty of Sparta military tradition and the fear of war.

The second is French (2004). French research focuses on the heroic values, the horror of war, and the several issues related to the military, such as the soldier's morale, military leadership, and else. French also found that the novel relates to Pressfield's experience as a former US soldier.

First, Unlike Bridges, Hall, and Rhodes (2007), and French (2004) studies that focus on the soldier perspective. Bridges, Hall, Rhodes (2007) focus on the individual experience within the battlefield as a soldier or French (2004), which focuses on the military hierarchy similar to modern times. This research will focus on the whole historical event rather than the soldier's feelings in the text.

Also, this study tends to understand that the description within the novel is influenced not only by the author's experience as Bridges, Hall, and Rhodes (2007), and French (2004) found but also by the history of the Greco-Persian war that is used in the novel.

[illegible]

3.1 The Greco-Persian wars

For first, the discussion starts with the Greco-Persian Wars. Start from the reason behind this war, introduce the Greek and Persian Empires and the battle during the wars such as Thermopylae, Battle of Artemisium, Sack of Athens, Battle of Salamis, and last, the Battle of Plataea.

Before going into the battles that occur in this war, it is good to first discuss the reason behind this invasion. The reason why the vast large Persian Empire is doing an expedition toward Greece.

In history, the war between the Persian Achaemenid Empire under King Xerxes against Ancient Greek occurs in 480 BC. As fields (2007, p. 11) say, the Persian empire launch an invasion in 480 BC, and its Preparation needs at least

In the aftermath of the revolt, Scott (1977, p. 4) says that the revolt ended after the Ionian inhabitants lost their revolutionary spirit with their last battle on the island of Lade. Moreover, Souza (2003, p. 17) says that the end of the rebellion is a disaster after the Persian army successfully defeated the rebels' forces in a decisive battle. The inhabitants were enslaved as a punishment. With these clashes against one of the cities in the Greek mainland, King Darius used it as an excuse to intervene in the Greek world. With the conflict started in this event, the reason for the invasion could be predicted as follows:

3.1.1.1 To expand the Empire Influence

Firstly, the reason for the Persian Empire wage war on the Greeks is to expand its influence and territory. A common reason for a nation or an Empire doing an invasion is to expand its influence/territory. As a great nation, Persian Empire is also doing this. Souza (2003, p. 30) says that King Darius began to send his emissary to many states in the Greek world after the Ionian revolt, demanding their submission. Many of these states agree to submit, but among

Our embassy learned upon its return to the mainland, from simultaneous missions dispatched to Crete, Cos, Chios, Lesbos, Samos, Naxos, Imbros, Samothrace, Thasos, Skyros, Mykonos, Paros, Tenos and Lemnos. Even Delos, birthplace of Apollo himself, had offered tokens of submission to the Persian (Pressfield 1998, p.43)

Moreover, the Kingdom of Macedonia is a kingdom whose territory is on the Greek world's borders. The empire also submits to the Persians long before others Greek agree to submit. "Macedonia under Alexander the Great had long since offered tokens of submission." (Pressfield 1998, p.127). With the Macedonians surrender, the way to the Greeks is now open for the Empire to

However, many states agree to submit, and many reject the Persian demand. "Of all the mighty cities of Greece, only Sparta, Athens and Corinth held fast." (Pressfield 1998, p.127). Several Major Greek Power who refuse the demand is Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. However, those refusals did not make the empire give up on conquering through delegation.

Secondly, the other reason for the Persian Empire doing this invasion is to punish Athens for what they do in the Ionian Revolt and the battle of Marathon. In the historical record, Souza (2003, p. 13) says that Athenians and Eretria are helping the Ionians during the Ionian revolt, which is a dominion of the Persian Achaemenid Empire under King Darius. This action could be an excuse for the Persians to intervene in Greek political intrigue.

In the novel, it is only told the result of the Ionian revolt. It ends with rebel losses, and after the empire defeats the Rebel forces, King Darius is also mustering an army for an expedition toward the Greeks. However, King Darius died before launching another invasion and bringing hope for the Greeks that the invasion would be canceled with such told in the novel.

"Tomorrow we will burn Athens, which was the goal of your father, Darius, and your own and the reason you have assembled this magnificent army and navy and have toiled and struggled for so long and overcome so many obstacles." (Pressfield 1998, p.149)

nations and cultures in it. Under King Darius, the empire uses the satrap-system (Governor). This satrap is established in each nation within the empire. The satrap is responsible for governing their nation, which is called satrapies. Satrap also has the responsibility to provide the empire with annual taxes and troops. Moreover, Souza (2003, p. 41) also supplemented the detail with the Greek states in Ionia who are previously alongside Athens rebelling against the empire and demanded to provide the Persians their men to supplement the army.

Thus, for the number of the soldier, many modern scholars argued the two million number. Many argued that those number is exaggerated and provides a more reasonable sum of number.

First is Souza (2003, p. 41). He hypothesizes that if the number of Persian Soldiers is around two million men, the total number of people who join the expedition could be around four million and seven hundred thousand men, a number that impossible to believe. He suggests that the exact number of the Persian Army comprises around one to two hundred thousand men.

In addition, Scott (1977, p. 12) says that the number of Persian troops is exaggerated. He suggests the number offered by later-day commentators is more realistic, around one hundred and fifty thousand combatants or soldiers.

Matthew and Trundle (2013, p. 60) also agree that the number of Persian Army is exaggerated. However, they give a slightly different number of the soldier in Persian ranks. They suggest that the number of combatants who join Persian ranks is around three to four hundred thousand men. However, they say that this number is also massive at that time.

Green (1998, p. 63) also gives details for the Persian army. Because it is

Moreover, Green (1998, p. 63) mentions several details of the equipment

The novel also explains this equipment. The first is Median Infantry.

[illegible]

defender. The Greeks things that it is for skirmisher equipment. The equipment that no match to their Greek foe.

The Greeks could not distinguish among Persians, Medes, Assyrians, Babylonians, Arabians, Phrygians, Karians, Armenians, Cissians, Cappadocians, Paphlagonians, Bactrians nor any of the other five score Asiatic nations save the Ionian Hellenes and Lydians, the Indians and Ethiopians and Egyptians who stood out by their distinctive arms and armor. (Pressfield 1998, p.188)

However, the Greek sees their enemy as similar to one and another. The

defender sees their enemy are lighter rather than their Greek counterparts. They cannot distinguish every one of their enemies. They only see them as a light soldier who usually works as a skirmisher soldier. They even say that their enemy has distinctive arms and equipment.

Among those units, the Persian army has its most devastating unit, The Immortal Kings House guard army, whose number is no more than ten thousand. "The Immortals, all knew, derived their name from the custom of the Persians that replaced at once each royal guardsman who died or retired, thus keeping the number of Xerxes' finest always at ten thousand." (Pressfield 1998, p.209). It says that their number never less nor more than ten thousand even if one of them died or retired, these fallen units will be replaced immediately by a new one. These units are also shown in the novel, and their first performance is on the first day battle of the battle of hot gates.

The novel is also explaining about the equipment that immortal units use. This unit wears silk protected with a coat of fish scales mail. "They wore sleeved tunics of silk, purple rimmed with scarlet, protected by a sleeveless coat of mail in the shape of fish scales, and trousers atop calfheight doeskin boots." (Pressfield

1998, p.209). Their weapon is a bow, comprised of a scimitar, and a short Persian lance with the shield is a standard shield similar to Medes.

In historical records, there are many explanations for the equipment of the Persian soldier. It is similar to the explanation in the novel. Most of the soldiers were light infantry, but the elite class soldier such as the immortal is well equipped.

First, Mathew & Trundle (2013, p. 56) say that there is more unit that the equipment is far less proper than their Medes comrades. They give an example of the Ethiopian Contingent that only use bow and stone arrow as their weapon. They also only wear animal skins. Others, such as Lybian Contingent, only use a sharpened stick as their weapon and only wear a leather loincloth. They also say that many Persian Soldiers are only equipped with bow and arrow or only swords, clubs, and spears that have a shorter reach than the Greek soldier.

Green (1998, p. 60) explains the Immortal unit, about their number that kept in ten thousand, even if they fall in the battle or retire. He said that the Persians already have a reserve of the immortal unit that can immediately replace those who have fallen to keep ten thousand. Indeed, the Immortal who goes into the war is always ten thousand, but it could be more than ten thousand Immortal with its reserve.

Mathew & Trundle (2013, p. 55) also gave a similar description of the equipment of Persian Immortals. They said that Immortal units carry a shield made from woven wicker. They are also equipped with a short spear called "*Paltron*,"

This phenomenon is usual among the ancient military. It is recorded in

Such that, as Souza (2003, p. 41) suggest before. Suppose each soldier

Thus, Besides gathering massive land forces. In the novel, King Xerxes

The history records a different opinion among modern scholars about the

[illegible]

Slight different from Scott, Souza (2003, p. 41) argues that Herodotus says the number of vessels is around one thousand and two hundred seven warships supported by three thousand transport vessels are still reasonable. Souza still hard to believe the number of the oarsman whom Herodotus said is about two hundred and fifty thousand men.

In the novel itself, it is not clear how the exact plan of the invasion, but what is shown is that the Empire land forces march inland by Hellespont and overshadowed by the naval forces that arrive before the battle of the hot gates starts. "The Persian myriads stood now in Europe. They had bridged the Hellespont and traversed all of Thrace" (Pressfield 1998, p.129). With the use of Hellespont, the Persian army marches forward through Thrace, then Macedonia, and the Greek territory. This could be the same route that the first invasion would take before ambushed by the Thracian Rebels.

In the historical record, modern scholar gives similar explanation with the novel. For example, Souza (2003, p. 50) illustrated the route taken by the Persian Forces to advance toward Greek. From his illustration, it seems that the Persian forces are choosing a coastal route for their path. This coastal path also has advantages for the Persian forces. With its road near the sea or a coastal route, the Massive land forces could still easily gain contact with the fleet forces alongside their supply transported by transport ship.

Scott (1977, p. 11) says that this crossing happens in 480 B.C. The army is crossing the Hellespont, the imperial fleet then following after that. The land forces itself is divided into three separate columns and March toward Thessaly.

Matthew and Trundle (2013, p. 62) say that to Crossing the Hellespont. The Persian army builds two pontoon bridges. Each bridge is estimated over two Kilometers long. Also, to ensure that the army is safe, the king prepares for his fleet, such as searching a safe passage and gathering an Intel.

Moreover, Souza (2003, p. 43) says that to make these pontoon bridges, the king orders his men to link hundreds of warships using heavy cables. Wooden planks were put above it to become a foothold for soldier crossing and a fence on each side to prevent the animal from falling to the sea.

Then, Souza (2003, p. 43) also adds that King Xerxes construct a complex structure of supply depot and defense along the way. He also maintains a safe passage route for his Persian fleet. This preparation is meant to prevent the same failure from the first invasion that the army is defeated because of ambush and prevent any Greek raiding party from attacking.

After discussing Persian Preparation, now, the discussion continues to the Greeks. Start from characteristics and habits, their war equipment, and lastly, their defense plan.

First of all, according to the historical record, the Spartans are not the only nation that lives in the Greek world. Greek world is comprised of various city-states that are fighting each other. As Hanson (1999, p. 48) says, the Greek civilization is estimated to have nearly one thousand independent communities scattered from southern Italy to the Black sea at around 700 to 400 B.C. Every city has its independent government, and every city is allying, fights, and even betrays each other.

That same prytaniarch, Onaximandros, had two fine spans of oxen, got from the Kerionians, whose countryside our forces allied with the Argives and Eleuthrians had plundered ruthlessly three years running, burning a hundred farms and killing over seventy men. (Pressfield 1998, p.20)

As an example of the city allying and attacking each other, it writes that Xeones hometown aligns itself with Argos and Eleuthria. They launch an attack on Kerionia for three years, plundering its countryside, burn a hundred farms,

3.1.3.2 Defense Plan

However, that alliance explanation is slightly different from the novel. The novel writes an interesting event about the creation of a Greek alliance.

It says that to unite Greeks under one banner coalition to fight against the

[illegible]

Then, continue to the Persian invasion. The history recording that the meeting is held in Corinth to discuss the defense plan. As Scott (1977, p. 11) says in 481, a year before the Persian invasion. Member of allies attains a meeting at the isthmus-Corinth. The meeting's purpose is to discuss the strategy to defend against massive Persian forces.

[illegible]

thousand men march towards Tempe. The novel also writes that the Greek forces should send an army to Tempe in Thessaly to build a defensive line.

However, the novel says that the site is undefendable, "But the site, when the army got there, proved undefendable." (Pressfield 1998, p.129). Force the allies' forces of ten thousand soldiers to retreat to Isthmus without doing anything and abandoning Thessaly. Later, Thessaly has no other choice but to submit to the empire.

Here was the word: Four morai, five thousand men, would be mobilized for Thermopylae. The column, reinforced by four perioikic regiments and packing squires and armed helots two to a man, would march out as soon as the Karneia, the festival of Apollo which prohibited taking up arms, expired. (Pressfield 1998, p.131)

As the first plan failed, allied forces rearranging their plan and resulting in a new defense plan. That plan is massing twenty thousand men to defend the hot gates accompanied by a servant. Five thousand will act as a vanguard, and the other fifteen thousand will be stationed on the second and third line.

Moreover, it also says that thirty to fifty thousand men stay behind as the reserve forces behind this line. The naval forces that gathered are around one hundred and twenty ships. All of this army are dispatches after the festival of Apollo's end.

The novel also says that choosing the hot gates is because it is terrain, a narrow passage. "That is why we chose this site. The enemy can get no more than a dozen men at a time through the Narrows and mass no more than a thousand before the Wall." (Pressfield 1998, p.174) This terrain is expected to penetrate the Persian advantages in number, which outnumber the Greeks. Moreover, the narrow passage of Thermopylae could penetrate the Persian

cavalry unit, which will prevent them from maneuvering the Greeks by flanking their position because of the narrow passage.

Modern studies also agree that using narrow passages is the Greek grand defense plan to face the Persian Empire. As Souza (2003, p. 49) says, the Alliance later choose the hot gates of Thermopylae as its defensive line. Making Hot gates as their defensive line is because of its narrow passage, and it becomes the only route that possible for the Persian army to move from Thessaly into central Greek.

Thus, the novel says that the small group of the army will dispatch first to defend the Gates before the Persians come. "Three hundred," he volunteered. "All Peers. All sires." (Pressfield 1998, p.131) This where the famous three hundred picked soldier takes place. The word "All Peers. All Sires" signifies the soldier who has a living son to inherit the family lines, a unit whose mission is a suicide mission that, in this case, to defend the gates with all costs, stand and die. Three hundred Sparta march to the gates as a suicide unit.

The novel also says that those three hundred are carrying a mission. The mission of three hundred Spartans is to "stand and die" is strengthened by the following line. "No main-force army would be dispatched to Thermopylae; that tale was for public consumption only, to shore up the allies' confidence and put iron in their backbones." (Pressfield 1998, p.132) It says that all of the massive number stated earlier is only for propaganda, to encourage their allies to join them in the war. The soldier who marches to the hot gates is not more than three hundred Spartans.

There is also an explanation in the historical record about the helot. As sacks (2005, p. 150) says, helot is noncitizen, not a slave but a community of conquered people, still having their customs and language, providing their conqueror community with supply. If the Spartans send most of its soldier, it will give helot a chance to incite revolt against its master citizen.

Thus in the novel, the process of Spartans marching towards the Hot Gates of Thermopylae, they gain many reinforcements. That reinforcement arrives from allies city-states for The three hundred Sparta, doubling their numbers. The reinforcement comes from Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenos, Arkadia, Corinth, Philius, Mycenae, Thespieae, Opountian, and Lokris. They are strengthening their marching line. The number varies from different city-states, and In total, the number of soldiers who march first on Thermopylae should be around five thousand soldiers. The number of the Greek Vanguard army is only four thousand soldiers.

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Mathew and Trundle (2013, p. 139) argued that the defense of the hot gates never seen as a suicide mission. Its narrow passage is the grand strategy of the Greek defenders. They say that the objective is to hold the passage as long as possible until the reinforcement came. Tempe's defense is canceled due to the terrain undefendable, and there is possible to be outflanked. Different to Tempe, the hot gates of Thermopylae and strait of Artemisium are suitable for their defense line due to the narrow passage that can disable Persian number, and there are seen no possible passage to encircle them make it defendable as long as possible.

The Battle of Thermopylae lasts for three days, with the Preparation before the battle is around one to two weeks. This topic then will be divided into several discussions. That is the casus belli & reason behind this war, Persian Preparation, Greek Preparation before the battle, and the Day of Battle.

First of all, the Greeks chose the hot gates of Thermopylae as their defensive line. This line of defense is part of their grand strategy to use the narrow passage to disable the enemy's superior number (Mathew and Trundle, 2013, p. 139). Besides, choosing Thermopylae as the battlefield is to hold the Persian army as long as possible until the reinforcement comes.

When the Three Hundred—now reinforced by five hundred heavy infantry from Tegea and a matching number from Mantinea, along with two thousand combined from Orchomenos and the rest of Arkadia, Corinth, Phlius and Mycenae, plus seven hundred from Thespieae and four hundred from Thebes—arrived at Opountian Lokris, ten miles from the Hot Gates, there to be joined by a thousand heavy infantry from Phokis and Lokris. (Pressfield 1998, p.165)

Thus in the novel, many soldiers from various city-states reinforced the

three hundred Sparta. The reinforcement comes from Tegea, Mantinea, Orchomenos, Arkadia, Corinth, Philius, Mycenae, Thespieae, Opountian, and Lokris. They are strengthening their marching line. The number varies from different city-states, and in total, the number of soldiers who march first on Thermopylae should be around five thousand soldiers. But previously, the number of the Greek Vanguard army is only four thousand soldiers.

About the number of a vanguard that sends to the hot gates, different soldiers from the novel and modern scholar provide. Souza (2003, p. 49) suggests the Greek's number is around eight thousand hoplites. The Spartans are city-states that sending their army and allies forces to come from many states.

Scott (1977, p. 12) also says that the Greek forces who march to the hot gates of Thermopylae are about seven to eight thousand hoplites. He also includes three hundred Spartan Guards in his explanation.

Hanson (1999, p. 96) giving a slight difference in the number of Greek forces sent to the Thermopylae. The Greek forces led by the King Leonidas of Sparta comprise less than seven thousand men.

Green (1998, p. 111) gives a smaller number of the Greek forces. The Greek forces comprise the three hundred Spartan and Acadia Peasants, who are

There is an interesting thing about the Greek alliance at this event. They all say that the Boeotians intend to submit to the Persians from the beginning. However, they still send over four hundred of their men to hold the gates alongside Greek Allies forces. It seems that they only surrender when the Persians arrive at their gates.

At the same time, the king also sends a raiding party toward the countryside to gather a supply, and this movement objective is not to let the enemy use resource which can found in the countryside. "Before the allied camps were even staked out, the king dispatched raiding parties into the country of Trachis, immediately north of the Gates." (Pressfield 1998, p.167) This raiding party is also acting as a reconnaissance party to locate the enemy location.

[illegible]

foe plainly now, they reported, from the shoulder of the mountain,
two miles or less down the trail. (Pressfield 1998, p.171)
This raiding party proves effective. The first raiding party successfully

locates their enemy location, at least the enemy's first unit. Fortunately, this raiding party retreats to Leonidas' position on the gates before the enemy catches them. They report to Leonidas that they see that the enemy is only two miles far from their location.

After this first encounter from the raiding party, the first enemy contingent is coming. "Within minutes of the sighting of the enemy forerunners, Leonidas had the entire Spartan contingent on its feet and armed," (Pressfield 1998, p.173). This arrival makes the Greek worker halt their work and retreat behind the Wall. King Leonidas orders every single force to marshaled and ready to battle when needed.

After the first enemy army arrives at the hot gates, at least one or two days, the Persian army is coming with its full strength, pouring the valley with its massive number. "The day passed, and another. Now the main-force units of the foe began streaming in. The plain commenced to fill with the enemy."

(Pressfield 1998, p.173) This time, the allies witness with their bare eye the full forces of their enemy.

I anticipate action neither tonight nor tomorrow, nor even the day after. The Persian needs time to marshal his men, and the more myriads he is burdened with, the longer this will take (Pressfield 1998, p.175)

Moreover, after their first arrival, the army still needs several more days until they are fully prepared to battle. After observing his enemy, this statement

Those courses of the event are similar to the history. After the Greek first arrival, they rebuild the wall and send a scouting party to reconcile enemy units. According to Souza (2003, p. 51), when the Greek arrives at the gates. The first thing that they do is rebuild the ancient Wall of Phokis. In this event, the Greeks also found a secret passage of the Anopaia Path and dispatched Phokian hoplites to defend the area.

Souza (2003, p. 51) explains that the Persian army is large. Because of that, from the arrival of his first army until all of his army arrives and is assembled, it is need several days and many preparations.

However, Scott (1977, p. 13) gives a slightly different statement about the arrival of the Persian army. He says, upon the arrival of the Imperial army. Xerxes orders his army to encamp for several days in front of his foe. He is waiting for his naval force's breakthrough and lowering his enemy morale.

The emissary states the message that If the Greek surrender, especially the Spartans. King Xerxes promise them that he would place them in an honorable

He'll tell you the same, brother," Dienekes declared. "And in far cruder language," put in another Spartan among the crowd. Tommie waited for the laughter to subside. "May I hear this response, then, from the king's own lips?" "He'd have us whipped, Tommie," Dienekes put in with a smile (Pressfield 1998, p.183)

With king Leonidas's action to urge the Greek headquarter to send a reinforcement. It is difficult to imagine that the defender intends to stand and die to the last man. This famous objective of the suicide mission is doubtful because if they march to hold the gates as a suicide mission, then requesting reinforcement will destroy their plan and become an act of wasting manpower.

Thus, After the messenger or the ambassador fails to make the defender surrender, the first-day battle is started in the novel. "These were granted first position and now, on the morning of the fifth day, stood formed in their ranks" (Pressfield 1998, p.188). The battle is occurring on the fifth day after both armies

The Spartans otherwise are placed at the second line of battle.

Lastly, the rest of the Greek army is placed in the third line, their last defense position. "Behind these every other allied contingent was likewise drawn up, all in full panoplia." (Pressfield 1998, p.189). Even this third army is acting as a reserve unit. Leonidas orders them to stand ready whenever they called up to the frontline changing with their comrades.

Proceeded to their enemy, The Persians. The first contingent who attack the Greeks is the Medes. “There, just after dawn, the lookouts had espied the Medians assembling. Their numbers were about four thousand” (Pressfield 1998, p.189). The Medes are the second-best infantry within the Persian ranks. The Medes infantry comprises four thousand men pouring the valley.

Simultaneously, the Medes also launch a series of devastating volley towards the Greek line. “At once a thousand Median archers elevated their bows.” (Pressfield 1998, p.192). This volley passes through their Medes infantry comrades and hits the Greek lines.

These second-best units, as expected, is no match for their Greek foe. “The Medes’ armament was that of skirmishers, of lightly armed warriors of the plains,

Nevertheless, how the way they can defeat Greek is not by the quality of the soldier, but by the numbers or quantity. “But the Medes’ capacity for reinforcement seemed limitless; above the fray, one could glimpse the next thousand reinforcements thundering into the Narrows like a flood” (Pressfield 1998, p.195). The Medes keep pouring the battlefield. Their numbers are so many. The reinforcement seems never-ending, and this never-ending reinforcement makes the allies' forces exhausted because of slaying many of Medes.

Back at the Greek lines, their first lines, the Thespieae grown exhausted, the second line comprises Spartan, Philiasians, and Mycenaeans march forward. Thespieae Ally. "The Spartans came in frontally, eight deep, at a double file interval, allowing the Thespaian rearmen to withdraw between their files, one rank at a time" (Pressfield 1998, p.194). This rotation is the Greek tactic. Creating three lines of defense so if the frontline is grown exhausted, the second line could provide back up to retreat and replace them and so on. This tactic should work because considering the terrain is a Narrow pass and

Moreover, on the Greek side, the men who still can fight are only three thousand men. “More to the point, their numbers were ten thousand, while the Greeks had fewer than three thousand still fit to fight.” (Pressfield 1998, p.209). It looks like the last waves of the day is the hardest wave that the Greek encounter during the first day of the battle.

After the first day of battle, at night on the Persian camp, King Xerxes acknowledge the other passage to pass the gates. “that is, who the traitor was of the Trachinian natives who came forward to inform His Majesty’s commanders of the existence of the mountain track by which the Hot Gates could be encircled” (Pressfield 1998, p.228). This passage is a mountain track that could end on the back of the gates, possibly encircling the Greek defender. This passage information comes to king Xerxes from a traitor of native Trachinian. After receiving the information about the secret mountain track, the king ordered captain Hydranes and his elite Immortal to oversee the location.

Scott (1977, p. 13) suggests that the Persians are ready to commit an attack

Matthew and Trundle (2013, p. 79) gives a brief explanation about the first

In Souza's (2003, p. 54) explanation, King Xerxes sending twenty

[illegible]

is only Medes, and then when the Medes rank broke, the king orders his elite Immortal troop to take the battle, and yet also, these immortals are pushed back by the Spartans. He also says that during the battle, the Greeks regularly rotated the position of their forces to ensure that they always have a fresh army during the battle.

Previously, the first encounter between the Greek and Persian Immortal occurs in the third wave of the first day. In Hanson's (1999, p. 96) description, the first encounter between the Greek and Persian Immortal is happening on the second day of battle, not on the first day of battle. However, in his explanation, the Immortal is no match against their enemy heavy infantry.

Green (1998, p. 137) argues that on the second day of battle. The condition of the Greek defender is similar to the previous day. They still use the tactics from the first day which is the rotation between every line. They still free to rotate their men change exhaust unit with the fresh one.

On the other hand, Green (1998, p. 137) also gives detail about the condition of the Persian army during the second day. He says that the king chooses contingent who have valor and bravery. Many contingents are launching an attack but still cannot break through the enemy lines of defense. Even the king orders his men in the back to kill every soldier who broke and retreats. Matthew and Trundle (2013, p. 79) also say that the second-day attacker is the chosen man from the many states which criteria are the contingent who famous for their valor and bravery.

Thus, Scott (1977, p. 13) also agreed that the second day of the battle is only repeating the losses on the Persian side. He says that the Persian tactics are the same by sending waves by waves to the Greek line of defense and resulting in the same aftermath as the previous day, only stockpiling the corpse in front of the gates.

One witnessed again and again in the battles of the second day a Hellenic warrior fight for two hours straight, retire for ten minutes, without taking food and gulping only a cupped handful of water, then return to the fray for another two-hour round. (Pressfield 1998, p.229)

Moving to the second day of battle. In the novel, the second day of battle is a hard battle. Not like their first-day battle, they are not given time for a rest in the second-day battle. The novel says that the Greek allies only have a short interval to take a break in their rotation. The novel also says that they will battle for two hours straight and then take a break for ten minutes before moving forward and going to battle again.

On the other hand, the Persians also intensify their tactics, or at least different from the previous day that only sends three contingent. “All day His Majesty’s champions came on, advancing in wave after wave with no interval to distinguish between nations or contingents. The rotation of forces which the allies had employed on the first day became impossible.” (Pressfield 1998, p.230). On the second day, the Persians send many contingents, waves by waves from many nations that the Persian Brought to attack the Greek defender. These tactics are effective in facing their foe. These ruthless tactics make the Greeks have no chance to relieve themselves. The Greek has no chance to use rotation tactics like the previous day. This makes the Greeks have no time to rest their men.

On the second day, the battle is last until the night came. “Night had nearly

When the night finally comes, only a few men could still fight. “Only the

However, Spartans is also a human, their mighty forces also burden with

[illegible]

Suddenly, King Leonidas, with his last effort, rallying his army, encouraging them with his word. “Zeus Savior!” the king’s voice rose into the thunder. “Hellas and freedom!” He cried the paean and rushed forward upon the foe. Fresh courage flooded the allies’ hearts; they roared into the counterattack” (Pressfield 1998, p.232). He cried and encouraging his comrades. Then, his call is successful with their last effort. Every Greek man who defends the gates are rallying and launching a counterattack to their enemy, crushing them and ending the second day of battle.

For the night march, Scott (1977, p. 13) explains that the traitor who informs the Persian about the secret pass is appeared on the second night, not on the first night. Green (1998, p. 137) also confirms that the traitor appeared to king Xerxes's presence on the second night after the battle to informing about the other route that can be used to encircle the Greek defender in the hot gates.

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Both Green (1998, p. 137) & Souza (2003, p. 55) explain that the Immortal is passing the Anopaia path on the night. On their way, they encounter the Greek defender, a thousand Phokian. The Phokian who know the Persians are coming, assembling themselves and taunting the Persians to attack them on their favorable position. But the Persians did not take the bait, ignoring them and pass through the path.

Upon hearing the word that Anopaia path has fallen, King Leonidas order all of the defenders to withdraw from the battlefield, leaving only the Spartans acting as a rearguard. “But Leonidas is withdrawing the allies. They’re all pulling out, everyone but the Spartans.” (Pressfield 1998, p.255). This decision later makes the famous inspiration about three hundred Sparta and their allies that stand and die to cover their comrades.

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abiding and dying with the Spartans. There were about two hundred of them.” (Pressfield 1998, p.258). The Thespaians disagree with those decisions and choose to stand and die along with their Spartans comrades. The total of Thespaians unit is around two hundred men.

All Greek contingent withdraw before the enemy could fully encircle the gates, Except Spartans and his Thespaian allies who refuse to retreat. “There remained just over two hundred Peers and freedmen of Lakedaemon.” (Pressfield 1998, p.258). This makes the remains on the gates, or the rearguard is around four hundred men. Peers mean a pair of a soldier. A warrior and his squire.

In the third day of battle, the Immortal assembled their formation on the battlefield's backline and prepared to encircle the Greek forces at the gates. "The Ten Thousand had been spotted; they had completed their all-night encirclement and stood now in full force six miles in the Hellenes' rear." (Pressfield 1998, p.258). The Immortal launching a night march through Anopaia's path and arrives behind the gates before dawn.

“Our allied brothers are on the road to home now.” The king gestured down the track, the road that ran to southern Greece and safety. “We must cover their withdrawal; otherwise the enemy’s cavalry will roll unimpeded through these Gates and ride our comrades down before they’ve gotten ten miles. If we can hold a few hours more, our brothers will be safe.” (Pressfield 1998, p.258)

In their last stand before facing the enemy, King Leonidas deliver his last speech. He says about their sacrifice, why they must stand and die as a rearguard. King Leonidas says that to protect their comrades from the enemy cavalry. There must be a contingent left behind and hold the gates as long as possible until their allies could retreat safely. The task that order every man to stand and die.

and seven hundred Thespaian stand with them. Later, the battle is told fiercely and bloody with its losses on the Persian side are around twenty thousand men and all of the Greek rearguard slaughtered.

Hanson (1999, p. 96) also says that all Greek forces leave Spartan, Boeotian, and Thespians left behind as a rearguard on the third day. At least three hundred Spartans defend the gates, but the number of Boeotian and Thespians is unknown.

For the course of the battle on the third day, Matthew and Trundle (2013, p. 79) and Green (1998, p. 139) agreed that the Greek rearguard, after his allies leaving the battlefield, is rushing toward the Persian's main camp. The third day's battle seems to happen near the Persian's main camp. However, the fate of the rearguard seems unchallenged. They are all outnumbered during the war and slaughtered, leaving none to survive.

Also, Green (1998, p. 112) explains that the fall of Thermopylae is unexpected. All of the allies members did not expect that the hot gates of Thermopylae fall within three days. Nobody expects this fall of the gates. He argues that this fall of the hot gates becomes the allies' blunder.

3.1.5 Battle of Artemisium

The Fleet battle of Artemisium also occurs on the same day as the battle of Thermopylae. This event also will be divided into the event before the battle and the battle day.

Thus, before the first day of battle on Thermopylae, disaster came from the Persian fleet. “More heartening news had come in from the fleet. A storm, unseasonably spawned this prior night, had wrecked two hundred of the enemy’s warships on the far shore of Euboea” (Pressfield 1998, p.233). A storm struck the Persian fleet and destroyed two hundred ships. This happens on the shore of Euboea, a disastrous event before they meet their enemy on the fleet battle of Artemisium.

On the other hand, the Greek fleet is only around one hundred and twenty ships ready to defend the strait of Artemisium. Seals its sea route, mirroring and forces at the Thermopylae and defend them from sea attacks that could their land forces and defeat them.

For naval battle, there is no many differentiate between the description on historical record and the novel. First, Green (1998, p. 109) says that the fleet is

Like Green, Souza (2003, p. 53) explains that the Greek warship is around two hundred and seventy-one warships. He also says that the Persian fleet is around one thousand and two hundred ships, making it slower in a process rather than their Greek foe. Moreover, Souza (2003, p. 53) explains that before their clash on Artemisium, several encounters of skirmish battle from both sides in the sea resulted in both Greek and Persian capturing each other's ship. This capture makes the Persians aware of their foe's number and position and later influence the course of the battle. This makes the Greeks know that there is a detachment unit of around two hundred warships trying to encircle them from the Boeotia coastline. But unfortunately for the Persians, before the Persian fleet arrives at the strait of Artemisium, Souza (2003, p. 53) says that a storm occurs and strikes the Persian fleet, sinking many and slowing their preparation.

3.1.5.2 Battle day

In the history, After a short encounter on the last event, the fleet battle is broke on the same day as the battle of Thermopylae. Souza (2003, p. 54) say that when the Greek fleet is sallying out to attack the enemy, the Persians begin to attack the Greeks on Thermopylae. This battle is one of the keys to winning the entire battle. On the Greek side, this holding of Artemisium is mean to defend their land forces from outflanked by the sea. Like the Persians, this battle is mean to break the strait and assist their land forces from the flank.

Unfortunately, in this novel, the naval battle is less told than its land battle.

On the first day of battle, Souza (2003, p. 54) explains that the Greek fleet is sallying out from their defensive line and directly confronting the Persian fleet. Despite outnumbered, he says the Greek fleet performing splendidly with the result of holding the first day's battle and capturing thirty Persian vessels in the process. A storm strikes the Persian two hundred units on the Boeotian coastline in other locations and wipes them up.

Thus, Shepherd (2010, p. 56) details the first-day battle of Artemisium. On the first day, the battle starts in the evening with the Greek fleet as the attacker. They are sallying out from their defensive position. In the aftermath, night separates both forces to retreat, and the Greeks manage to capture thirty vessels.

On the second day, Shepherd (2010, p. 57) says that reinforcement comes for the Greek fleet, fifty-three ships arrive. The second day's battle also uses the same tactics as the first day did. The Greeks are attacking in the evening and

retreating when the night comes. However, only minor skirmishers happen on this second day from both sides.

As for the third day, Shepherd (2010, 61) describe that this day's battle is full-fleet action. The battle is on a Greek favor which they success draw his enemy into the location that number has no meaning. Making the fleet battle into hand-to-hand deck fighting. On this third day also, a word about the fall of Thermopylae reach the Greek fleet in the evening, and this makes the fleet have no other choice except retreating to salamis leaving central Greek occupied by their foe. During their retreat, the Athenian applied the Scorched earth policy to prevent Persian forces from obtaining a supply.

There is a slight difference between the explanation above and in the novel. In the novel, the direct battle is occurring on the second day. “The allies had engaged the Persian fleet this day, inconclusively, but without buckling. Our ships must hold the straits or Xerxes could land his army in the defenders’ rear and cut them off” (Pressfield 1998, p.213). Both fleets are engaging, attacking each other. Despite their numerical disadvantages, the Greek fleet success holds the strait of Artemisium with Mirroring Greek tactics on the land battle.

Both armies engaging with the ancient-style naval battle. “Beneath the bluffs of Artemisium the navies hammered each other, driving bronze ram against sheathed timber as their brothers contended steel against steel upon land” (Pressfield 1998, p.233). Both fleets are hammering each other, crashing their ships, and board the men for hand-to-hand combat in the ship. This style of battle is common around ancient time.

Upon the fall of Thermopylae, there is no point in defending the strait of Artemisium. Because of that, at the same time, the fleet is also retreating after hearing his land forces retreating. “The sea elements withdrew around Euboea and Cape Sounion to unite with the main body of the Hellenic fleet at Athens and Salamis in the Gulf of Saronika.” (Pressfield 1998, p.54). Leaving the strait and move back to the salamis reunite with its remain fleet forces.

The defense of Thermopylae has fallen, the novel says that both land and forces now retreating, the city is abandoned, leaving the Persians to occupy and plundering Central Greece. The only defense line left is only on the Isthmus of Corinth. All Greek now retreat to those locations.

The Hellenic land forces retreated south toward the Isthmus of Corinth, across which they and the armies now massing from the other Greek cities, including the forces of Sparta under a full call-up, were constructing a wall to defend the Peloponnese (Pressfield 1998, p.54)

Like writes before, the novel also says after the defender of the hot gates is

Thus, according to Scott (1977, p 18), the Persians are now moving smoothly to Attica, establishing headquarter in Thebes, subjugating and plundering the countryside in their way. On the other hand, the city of Athens is abandoned, and their citizen decides to evacuate to Aegia, Troezen, and Salamis. Only a few remain to defend the city of Athens, but their resistance is futile.

Then, Shepherd (2010, 62) also says that after the Persian Vanguard arrives in the city of Athens. A few men only defend the city of Athens. They hold a defense in Acropolis. However, this defense attempt is futile because the Persian easily defeat those defenders. Soon after Acropolis falls, the Persian burn Athens and state that Athens is the last city burned in this war.

After capturing Attika, the Imperial fleet found the city is abandoned, and the inhabitant is evacuating to Salamis. In its real event, Sack (2005, p. 298) says that after knowing Athens is abandoned, the Persian fleet marches to the Saronic gulf, which is close to the enemy location at salamis, then a clash between both fleets on the island of Salamis is inevitable.

in the Straits of Salamis, off Athens, that catastrophe which sent to their deaths so many valiant sons of the East and, by its consequences for the supply and support of the army, doomed the entire campaign to disaster (Pressfield 1998, p.272)

In the novel, the war between the Greek League and Persian Achaemenid Empire did not end in the battle of Salamis. It continue until its massive battle at

Plataea. “At last in the spring His Majesty’s land forces faced the Hellenes in battle upon that plain adjacent to the Greek city of Plataea” (Pressfield 1998, p.280). In the following spring, both sides meet in a plain near the city of Plataea. This time, the one who broke the stalemate is the Greek forces. They launch a counterattack toward their foe with its major clash on Plataea.

In the novel, the remainder of Persian forces under general Mardonius are around three hundred thousand men. “Across from the 300,000 of Persia, Media, Bactria, India, the Sacae and the Hellenes conscripted under His Majesty’s banner stood 100,000 free Greeks” (Pressfield 1998, p.280). In opposite, the Greeks are only around one hundred thousand men. This number may be the maximum limit the Greeks could afford.

With the difference in number is not much as before, Greek forces fought well. “The courage of the men of Persia once again proved no match for the valor and magnificent discipline of these warriors of Lakedaemon fighting to preserve their nation’s freedom.” (Pressfield 1998, p.280). It is told that, despite their superior number, the Persians still having trouble facing the Greeks in an open battle, the quality of Persian soldier proven has no match against the Greek.

The battle ended with the fall of General Mardonius, and this war ended with the Greeks out as victors. “The general Mardonius had perished in the battle at Plataea, and the captain Orontes as well.” (Pressfield 1998, p.282). Persian forces entirely retreated from the Greek land in the aftermath, leaving them alone with their freedom.

In the aftermath of the war, Souza (2003, p. 70) says that remain forty thousand Persian are retreating from Greek and this ending Persian hegemony over the Greeks. Moreover, the allies also punish Boeotian, who deserted the Allies a year before, executing their traitorous aristocrat.

3.2 Fates of 300 Spartans

Thus, the novel says that the small group of the army will dispatch first to defend the Gates before the Persians come. “Three hundred,” he volunteered. “All Peers. All sires.” (Pressfield 1998, p.131) This where the famous three hundred picked soldier takes place. The word “All Peers. All Sires” signifies the

soldier who has a living son to inherit the family lines, a unit whose mission is a suicide mission that, in this case, to defend the gates with all costs, stand and die. Three hundred Sparta march to the gates as a suicide unit.

The novel also says that those three hundred are carrying a mission. The mission of three hundred Spartans is to “stand and die” is strengthened by the following line. “No main-force army would be dispatched to Thermopylae; that tale was for public consumption only, to shore up the allies’ confidence and put iron in their backbones.” (Pressfield 1998, p.132) It says that all of the massive number stated earlier is only for propaganda, to encourage their allies to join them in the war. The soldier who marches to the hot gates is not more than three hundred Spartans.

Then in the novel, there is a consideration for sending only three hundred men into the battle. That is the helot, “The last thing Sparta needed at this desperate hour was trouble at home with the helots” (Pressfield 1998, p.131) Those helots could incite rebellion in Sparta hearthland anytime.

There is also an explanation in the historical record about the helot. As Sacks (2005, p. 150) says, helot is noncitizen, not a slave but a community of conquered people, still having their customs and language, providing their conqueror community with supply. If the Spartans send most of its soldier, it will give helot a chance to incite revolt against its master citizen. Sack (2005, p. 150) also says that the Spartan army is always campaigning near their home because of fear about helot rebellion. He also says that Spartans' fear of rebelling is that the helot population outnumber their Spartan master.

Thus not only helot, according to history, but the other reason why Sparta cannot mobilize a larger army is also because of the religious festival. As Souza (2003, p. 49) says, sending small forces to defend the gates is because the Greeks still hold a festival that prohibits them from going to war. That event makes the Greeks paralyzed and could only send small forces immediately.

Moreover, Green (1998, p. 111) agreed that the vanguard mission is to the hot gates to hold the enemy as long as possible until the festival over and the army could fully assemble. However, Green (1998, p. 112) argued that the excuse of the festival is only a reason to delay massing a larger army for several days to see which city-states came to help the Spartans. He also says that this action is typical of the Spartans. They are always over-cautions and conservatism, making them slow on to react to every struggle situation.

Not only because the Spartans are over-cautions and conservatism, Green (1998, p. 158) also adds another reason why the Spartans only send their 300 soldiers and propose the Isthmus of Corinth as the defensive line is the helot. The fear of helot will incite a rebellion when most of their soldiers fight against the Persians.

Mathew and Trundle (2013, p. 139) argued that the defense of the hot gates never seen as a suicide mission. Its narrow passage is the grand strategy of the Greek defenders. They say that the objective is to hold the passage as long as possible until the reinforcement came.

In the novel, there is one interesting event related to the Spartans: the negotiation before the clash on the first day of battle. “The sun was full up now;

scores of allied infantrymen stood watching upon the Wall. Forward advanced the Persian embassy” (Pressfield 1998, p.182). It says that before the battle, Persian forces are still sending an embassy to demand the Greeks to surrender. As writes in the novel, the ambassador comes from the Egyptian contingent, an expert for dealing with Greek men. At this point, the Persian demand that the Greeks submit to the Persian domination.

if the Spartans will yield now and surrender their arms, none will exceed them in honor beneath the king's banner. No Persian foot will tread the soil of Lakedaemon now or forever, this His Majesty swears. Your country will be granted dominion over all Greece. Your forces will take their place as the foremost unit in His Majesty's army, with all the fortune and glory such prominence commands. (Pressfield 1998, p.183)

The emissary states the message that If the Greek surrender, especially the Spartans. King Xerxes promise them that he would place them in an honorable place. In the king's expedition, the Spartans' position will be on the vanguard, giving them every honor they can get on the battlefield. Moreover, the king also grants everything they desire to surrender to the Persians. A generous offer actually, profitable one for the Greek. The offers could imply how desperate the Persians did not want to fight the Spartans.

He'll tell you the same, brother," Dienekes declared. "And in far cruder language," put in another Spartan among the crowd. Tommie waited for the laughter to subside. "May I hear this response, then, from the king's own lips?" "He'd have us whipped, Tommie," Dienekes put in with a smile (Pressfield 1998, p.183)

But still, even with those such generous offers. The Spartans did not want to yield to the Persian hegemony. This message only arrived at the Spartan soldier. The soldier prohibits the messenger from meeting with their king to save the

messenger's life from the king's rage. They say that even the messenger meets king Leonidas. The king's answer is not different from his subordinate even worsen.

There is one part of the event that did not say in the novel. In the historical records, According to Green (1998, p. 127), King Xerxes sends his embassy demanding the Greeks to surrender before the battle begins. However, the Greeks refuse that demand. Also, at this time, King Leonidas send a messenger to the Greek heartland requesting reinforcement. This encounter is recorded in the Deodorus version of the Persian Wars.

With king Leonidas's action to urge the Greek headquarter to send a reinforcement. It is difficult to imagine that the defender's first intention is to stand and die to the last man. The decision to stand and die occurs because of the situation on the third day of battle. That situation forces them to retreat and task a small group of the army to act as rearguard.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This chapter will contain the conclusion from the analysis result in the previous chapter. It will recapitulate the outcome of the analysis briefly.

4.1 Conclusion

First of all, it is indeed that the novel reflecting the historical event in the story. The novel represents the Battle that happens during the Greco-Persian Wars, which is the Battle of Thermopylae, Sea Battle of Artemisium, Sea Battle of Salamis, and last is the Battle of Plataea. It also covers the defender plan in repelling Persian Invasion, which is utilizing the narrow passage as its battleground. According to historical sources, this plan is used in most battles during the Greco-Persian wars except for several minor clashes and one major Battle at Plataea.

More surprisingly, the novel also reflecting the socio-political condition in that era. As narrated by Xeones, the Ancient Greek world is comprised of various independent city-states that have their own political intrigues. As told, this made them accustomed to war with each other. Even backstabbing is common among them.

Then, for the matter of sending small forces to defend the hot gates of Thermopylae. The novel says that this army mission is to stand and die to the last man, sacrificing themselves for the save of Greeks. However, according to the historical sources, this action seems to come from the distrust among the fellow

Greeks. The distrust is triggered because the Ancient Greek world is at war with each other until the declaration of war arrives from the Persian Empire.

Moreover, it seems that there is no intention for three hundred Sparta to doing a suicide mission. The researcher's references say that sending small troops is a delaying action from the Spartans, observing the situation and seeing which city-states will come and fight with them before sending a larger army. However, this small army falls faster than expected, shock the entire coalition, especially the Spartans.

Lastly, the text seems still following the ancient source that has spread widely in reflecting its historical context. This made the sources that the researcher is looking at seem challenging to the text. As a result, there is much difference between the text and the references that the researcher has prepared before. That is understandable because, as mentioned before that the “history” repeatedly changes throughout time.

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