

# MYTHOS



## BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAS



# BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

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# BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAΣ

*An epic Mythos adventure for 3 – 5 Veteran heroes.*

## BACKGROUND

In a distant, possible future, it's the year 1077 AF. After more than a thousand years, the Heavenly Contest ended without a winner. Zeus resides on the throne of Olympus, but during the extenuating struggle, the gods lost much of their power and influence over the Cosmos and humans. People now rely on philosophy and reason, deserting the temples. Demigods are no longer born and less heroic deeds are regularly performed to please the gods. While the Olympians are looking for a way to regain their former influence over the Cosmos, a new rising god from the east threatens the safety of Hellas and wishes to destroy the twelve Olympians. Ahura Mazda, god of the Persians, challenges Zeus while inciting his followers to conquer the Cosmos to become its only ruler. King Xerxes, son of Darius, leads a huge army against Hellas while Ahura Mazda fights with his Daevas against the Olympians.

The gods are in dire need of heroes, but in the present times no one is able to withstand such a mighty threat. After a long and controversial council, the Olympians resolve to ask some heroes from the past for help. They will lead the Hellenes against the Persians and help them regain their former glory and power amongst the population.

## TIMELINE

### 1076 AF – LATE WINTER

The army of Xerxes, from the faraway Persia, is due to enter Hellas. Some of its heralds request an audience in the major city-state to ask for their unconditional surrender, asking them to symbolically offer land and water. Some cities surrender, others reject the proposal. Athenians despise the idea of kneeling before Xerxes and openly oppose the Persians. Leonidas, king of Sparta, when facing the claim for surrender, aware of Athenian behavior, orders the ambassadors be thrown in a huge well mocking them this way, "Water and land? Over there you can help yourself!"

This act is a clear violation of the sacred rules of hospitality and makes Zeus furious. He decrees that Leonidas and Sparta are to be destroyed and their memory banned forever, due to this act of brutal and irreverent insolence.

### 1077 AF – SPRING

The City-States which didn't surrender to the will of Xerxes create a Council of Defense and ally their forces against the Persians. The pass of Thermopylae is chosen as the first bulwark of defense against the advancing enemy. Leonidas becomes aware of a tragic prophecy weighing over him, "The fury of Zeus will overwhelm Sparta and all of Hellas unless the blood of the Descendant of Heracles is sacrificed." (After the Royal House of Heracles conquered Sparta centuries before, every Spartan king boasted about being a descendent of Heracles.) Defying the will of the gods, Leonidas chooses to ignore the prophecy and devises a military plan to stop the Persian invasion.

### 1077 AF – END OF SUMMER

Leonidas, with his 300 elite troops and 700 soldiers, marches towards Thermopylae where he will meet hoplites from other cities. They plan to lead a force of no more than 7,000 men against Xerxes force of over 500,000 barbarian soldiers.

## PROLOGUE

*Seven of them had arrived. Seven monsters with human faces; seven barbarians; seven Persian; emissaries of the so-called “great king Xerxes” who, it is said, makes the others call him King of the Kings and is worshipped as a deity on earth. We welcomed them out of the walls. We could not let them cross the sacred gates of Sparta.*

*They were almost funny in their appearance, covered by long drapes, woven with unknown cloth, and richly embroidered, certainly more apt to adorn a woman rather than a man. And their scent; being covered up with disgusting scented essences, it was hard to get close to them. Oh, yes. Barbarians, filthy and inhuman beings, yet educated. At least two of them knew the Hellenic language and even with a weird accent they could be understood.*

*We waited for the king of Sparta, Leonidas, to arrive. A deep silence fell on the way.*

*We went on keeping an eye on that small group on the back of weird horses not living in our areas.*

*And then the King came, the heir of the ancient hero Heracles, the lord of Sparta, Leonidas. No other contrast could have been greater than what our eyes saw. Like day and night; on one side a group of flabby and smelling men with a sinister smile on their face, on the other side the hard body and the austerity of our King, a prototype of virility and martial virtues.*

*The ambassadors greeted our lord respectfully, still with such ambiguity as if they were greeting somebody who was not really superior to them for his stature or category. They were bringing a promise of peace on behalf of their lord Xerxes, who asked for “water and land” as distinguishing marks of his universal authority, offered peace in exchange for this submission. They also spoke about their god, Ahura Mazda, whose power they held in highest esteem. Fools! Only the weak souls cling to the idea of needing a god to protect us.*

*Leonidas listened to them seriously and thoughtfully. Maybe he wanted to understand what kind of people these men from the East were, being so different from us. He invited them under a tent to better understand their offer. They repeated each single word they said before, like trained parrots. Leonidas understood he was not facing free men, able to think and act by themselves, but they were “tools” trained by an alien will, beasts trained for an aim. Oh yes, they were certainly educated, useful and precious, even rare; still, in his eyes they were animals, not humans. They lacked free will and couldn’t think with their own minds, being their god’s puppets.*

*That is the difference between Hellen sons and Persians; between Heracles descendants and slaves.*

*It was then that the King ordered us something which scared me in that moment: throw the opponents where they could find what they were looking for, water and land, to bring to their king. Throw them into the cleft in the north of Sparta along the slope where shepherds usually grazed the sheep.*

*I saw a deep hatred more against what those men were than what they represented in Leonidas's eyes while carrying out that command.*

*In ancient times, such defiance against the sacred hospitality laws would have angered Zeus. But those days are no more. Nobody heeds the soothsayers anymore and nobody cares about the gods. We have our free will and thanks to that we will overcome the Persians, no matter how many of them will come.*

## THE HOOK

Each PC is visited during his sleep by his patron deity (or by Hermes if he has none) who enrolls him for a very important mission to be fulfilled in a distant future: defending the Hellas from a barbarian army and standing as a shining example of the power of the gods. When they awake, they find themselves near Leonidas's army camp. The soothsayer Hippocrates, an officer, approaches them and fills them in with all necessary details. He has been told by Hermes about their mission and addresses them as the "Godsend Ones". The PCs realize they actually are in a distant future where only a few people like Hippocrates worship the Olympians while the vast majority follow different philosophies and rely on self-confidence. Hippocrates then introduces them to King Leonidas who reluctantly enrolls them amongst his ranks. The next destination of the army will be Thermopylae, where Leonidas is sure to block the Persian invasion.

## 1077 AF, ΣΕΠΤΕΜΒΕΡ

### 16TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, AFTERNOON – DEPARTURE

*You march in a single queue. Wearing your armor, you march. For the safety of Hellas, you march. Some of your comrades are from Delphi, others from Athens, others from Sparta, some from Thebes. Leonidas, king of Sparta, is leading seven thousand soldiers from every place in Hellas. Your ranks are closed, your glance is resolute, and your heart is ready to defend your homeland from the relapsed enemy. You, seven thousands hoplites, the best of the army of Hellas, will stop the coming of the barbarians at Thermopylae, while the Athenian fleet will deal with the Persian ships. This night you will reach the narrow pass where the imposing amount of barbarians cannot do anything against your impenetrable formation. Tomorrow morning, the Persian barbarians will repent bitterly for not having remained at home.*

*While Helios rises in the sky on his Sun Cart run by Apollo and far away you can see the sacred Delphi, lying on the Sacred Mount Parnassus, an officer running from the backlines elbows his way through. You recognize him; it is Hippocrates from Delphi, one of the oldest members of your expedition.*

*Hippocrates reaches for Leonidas leading the army and tells him, panting, "Supreme king, Delphi is in one hour marching distance. As I told you this morning, the divine Apollo appeared in my dreams advising me to go to the Pythia and follow her directions, so that Hellen descendants can triumph over the eastern barbarians."*

*Leonidas doesn't even stop and goes on walking towards the North, followed by the rest of the army.*

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*"I beg you, supreme king", insists Hippocrates. "For the sake of Gods and Hellas, lead us to Delphi and consult the oracle, for the benefit of Hellen's offspring!"*

*Leonidas stops. His glance is severe and his voice is terrible, "Gods? I don't care about them! We will crush those barbarians thanks to our military training and to our smart tactics. We don't need the gods' help anymore; we only need the strength and courage of our men!"*

*Hippocrates turns more serious: "Your bravery and devotion is worth admiring, supreme king. Yet, I beg you, allow us consult the oracle. I feel it will be a great help to us."*

*Leonidas, assuming a less severe expression, answers, "More than once you have seen the truth, but I cannot risk the success of this expedition. If you insist, I could allow those people you call "Godsend Ones" to rush to Delphi and report the Pythia's response."*

The king makes a signal to the line of soldiers to continue north. The Hot Gates are still far away; there is no time to waste.

Hippocrates, following king Leonidas's order, tells the PCs to go to Delphi and consult the Pythia, as Apollo has told him, and follow the god's instructions. They should arrive at the Sanctuary after four hours of walking. (Thermopylae is about 25 miles from Delphi, which should take about eight hours with a forced march due to the uneven ground.)



## OMENS

*You take the road leading east towards Mount Parnassus and Delphi, the bellybutton of the Cosmos. By this time you can no longer see the line of soldiers led by Leonidas. Your sight runs towards the temple of Apollo of Delphi, which is getting more visible, but still very far away.*

*Before you get far, you find two massive birds facing each other, six feet from the ground. On the left is a huge eagle – proud and imposing, contrasting against a light blue sky. On the right is an incredible bird with a golden plumage and orange nuances, shrouded by an aura of flames which seems not to burn it.*

*The two birds are facing each other, hitting each other with their beaks and talons, unconcerned by your presence.*

On the road to Delphi, the PCs find a huge eagle fiercely fighting a flaming bird (the PCs have most likely never seen a Phoenix), hitting each other with their beaks and talons. This is clearly a divine omen.

PCs with Knowledge (Olympian Religion) can interpret the omen with a successful roll. They realize this fight is actually between the Royal Eagle of Zeus and the Phoenix of Ahura Mazda, supreme Persian deity. If nobody has Knowledge (Olympian Religion), they remain clueless.

The two wonderful birds only care about fighting each other and even if the PCs enter the fight, they are simply ignored. If the PCs successfully attack one of the birds, the omen ends. If they help the Eagle, Zeus becomes Favored toward them while Ahura Mazda becomes Disfavored toward them and confers a (-1) penalties to all rolls made while in Persian lands. Should they help the Phoenix instead, Zeus becomes Disfavored toward them all and Ahura Mazda becomes Favored, granting them a +1 bonus to all rolls made while on Persian lands. Should the PCs decide not to intervene, they still become Disfavored by Zeus, but nothing else.

### SECOND OMEN

The air chills and the sun goes backwards to the east. It is dawn, and before the PCs' eyes a huge red banner flies. After a moment, the sun reaches its zenith and a golden banner flies in front of them. Eventually, the second omen ends and the sun travels back to its normal place in the sky. With a successful Knowledge (Olympian Religion) roll, the omen is read as: red is Helios' banner at dawn, golden at noon.

### THIRD OMEN

Once again, something weird happens. The PCs find themselves in a great banquet hall, where many people are toasting, mixing red wine with ashes taken from the bonfire. They wish each other a great afterlife and drink the mixture. Eventually, the third omen ends and the PCs return to their mountain path. With a successful Knowledge (Olympian Religion) roll, the omen is read as: toasting with ashes will bring a glorious afterlife.

### FOURTH OMEN

A deep thunder shakes the heaven. Zeus, in all his might, shines from a white cloud and points out in the distance Delphi's temple. In a blink of an eye, everything is back to normal. With a successful Knowledge (Olympian Religion) roll, the omen is read as: Zeus will show the way from above.

### FIFTH OMEN

The PCs find themselves in a great crowded stadium where a naked athlete faces a mighty bull. The bull rushes him but the athlete seizes its horns and leaps over the fierce beast. With a successful Knowledge (Olympian Religion) roll, the omen is read as: focusing on the horns is the right way to overcome the bull.

When all five omens end, the PCs find themselves near Delphi. Time seems to have passed very quickly; a new day rises, and Delphi is very close.

### 17TH DAY, MORNING - THE RESPONSE

After a long line, ablutions and every kind of purification, the PCs are finally allowed to consult the Pythia. The oracle reveals that, "The battle will be lost because Zeus is furious and therefore Leonidas will be betrayed by one of his followers who will sell himself to the Persian army. Zeus will punish him for having infringed the sacred hospitality rules with the Persians."

The PCs know they cannot waste any time making further investigations, except for asking the oracle who the traitor is. (If they don't, leave them in the oracle room for a while to discuss their opinions.) After a while Apollo talks, by means of the Pythia, asking them for a favor (see **Mission on the Parnassus**) before revealing the name of the traitor.

If the PCs wish to have a good reading of the omens they previously witnessed, the Pythia gladly helps for an extra donation for each interpretation.

A lot of merchants have stores around the temple. Whatever the PCs might need is available for sale. This would be a great place to buy some wine, if they don't have some already.



## 17TH DAY, AFTERNOON – MISSION ON THE PARNASSUS

The Pythia, following Apollo's direction, asks the PCs to wipe out the fierce fire bird of prey. The bird and a group of Persians have been infesting the peak of Mount Parnassus for some days, disturbing Apollo and the Muses. As usual, the Pythia closes her oracle with an enigmatic sentence, "Only the Vine can soothe the burning anger of your enemy."

After a hard climb, the PCs meet a group of Persian soldiers who order them to go away. If they decide to continue, the fight cannot be avoided.

### ➤ Common Soldiers (4)

Once the PCs have passed the soldiers, they close-in on a small altar with a bronze cup on the top, near which two Persian priests are going to sacrifice a young Hellenic boy to the Phoenix that the PCs previously met. (This is considered "Persian land" for the any bonuses or curses from Ahura Mazda's divine attitude.) If during their first meeting the PCs actually helped the Phoenix, it is not immediately aggressive and can be negotiated with. Otherwise, the Phoenix attacks as the priests flee.

### ➤ Phoenix

#### DEALING WITH THE PHOENIX

The Phoenix can be quite difficult without knowing how to properly deal with it. A successful Knowledge (Legends and Lore) roll reveals the key in defeating the Phoenix lies in its ashes. It's no use trying to scatter them, they eventually gather again and explode in due time. To prevent this, they can be stored in a divine item (such as a divine cup or a divine pouch) to be used later or an adequate amount of liquid can be poured on them to prevent the Phoenix from rising again. With the latter method, the ashes lose their unique properties in 1d6 minutes.

If the PCs don't figure out how to deal with the Phoenix, allow a Common Knowledge roll with a (-2) penalty the third time the Phoenix rises. Should they fail, the roll can be repeated every time the Phoenix rises with a cumulative +1 bonus for each subsequent rebirth. A success reveals the true meaning of the Pythia's last sentence, realizing they should drown the ashes in liquid (1 gallon at least) to prevail. (Keep track of the number of times the Phoenix is reborn.)

If the PCs drink the ashes (as the Third Omen stated) they will be disgusted, but granted a lesser version of the Phoenix's Resurrection ability once – upon becoming Incapacitated in battle, they will be reborn and fully healed in 1d4 rounds. This can only be used once and the PCs are unaware of this incredible gift unless they use an appropriate Power or Divine Edge. If not properly stored, the ashes lose this ability.

The young boy doomed to be sacrificed is revealed as Apollo. Thanking the PCs for their devotion, he states that, "The traitor among Leonidas's ranks is Ephialtes, who has already left the Hellenic camp. He will be received by Xerxes tomorrow at midday. His information will turn the tide of the battle against the Hellenes, who will be surrounded and slaughtered. If you want to save Hellas, you'd better stop him before he reveals precious details to Xerxes." The young boy disappears, leaving the PCs alone. Apollo's divine attitude towards them increases one level.

## 17TH DAY, EVENING - WHAT NOW?

The PCs don't have much time if they want to prevent Ephialtes from meeting with Xerxes. (It's about 8:00 PM.) A Survival or Tracking roll reveals a narrow and winding mountain path, leading from the Parnassus directly to the Persian camp. If they leave immediately, they would arrive before dawn, fatigued from the strenuous journey (gaining one level of Fatigue).

If they fail the roll, or decide to rest in Delphi before leaving, they waste precious time but won't be fatigued.

## 18TH DAY, DAWN, MORNING OR AFTERNOON - APPROACHING THE PERSIAN CAMP

The PCs reach the Persian camp, approaching from its western wall, finding it in utter confusion (Persians have suffered heavy losses during their battle against Leonidas's army and are in a foul mood). As they approach, a group of soldiers moves to occupy the road behind them. Even as they search for cover, there is no escape.

The Persian camp has two large, overly defended gates: one on the East side (towards Thermopylae) and one on the West. It is full of tents and enemies, but where is Ephialtes? The only distinguishable tents that don't appear to be simple dormitories are those with a colored flag on the top of them: blue, golden, green, black, red, white, and one with a huge standard. According to their previous choices, Ephialtes can be found outside or inside the camp. Choose an event path to take according to the following descriptions and the decisions made by the PCs:

- The Phoenix resurrected up to three times; the PCs took an immediate departure via the mountain path; Ephialtes is positioned outside the camp; Ephialtes is being escorted by four Persian soldiers. Move to **Event A**.
- The Phoenix resurrected up to three times; the PCs did not take an immediate departure via the mountain path; Ephialtes is positioned inside the Persian camp, tent three; Ephialtes is being escorted by two Persian soldiers. Move to **Event B**.
- The Phoenix resurrected more than three times; the PCs took an immediate departure via the mountain path; Ephialtes is positioned inside the Persian camp, tent six; Ephialtes is being escorted by four immortals. Move to **Event C**.
- The Phoenix resurrected more than three times; the PCs did not take an immediate departure via the mountain path; Ephialtes is positioned inside the Persian camp, tent six; Ephialtes is being escorted by four immortals. Move to **Event C**.

**GM's Note:** *If the PCs try to look for Xerxes, they don't find him anywhere in the camp. He is temporarily elsewhere (nobody knows exactly where) and Ahura Mazda protects him from being detected by any Divine Edge or Mystery Cult Power.*

**EVENT A**

The PCs reach the camp at dawn. After looking around, they find a small group coming from the East. It is Ephialtes, with his hands tied, and four Persian soldiers. The camp is in utter confusion, included the sentries, and nobody appears to have noticed the PCs or the group coming from East.

- Ephialtes
- Common Soldiers (4)

At this point, the PCs could kill Ephialtes, persuade him to cooperate, or any other possible option. Unless they make much noise or confusion, no one in the camp pays them any attention. Once they have dealt with Ephialtes, proceed to **No Exit**.

Should they choose to instead watch and wait, they witness the guards bringing Ephialtes to tent three with the red flag. At this point, they have to go into the camp; proceed to **Event B**.

**EVENT B**

The PCs arrive reach the camp when the sun is already high. Ephialtes is inside the camp, in tent three with the red flag. If they don't know that (because they didn't witness **Event A**), it's possible to guess where Ephialtes is by solving the **Second Omen** or using an applicable Divine Edge or Mystery Cult Power. Otherwise, they are clueless.

Tent three is defended by two Persian soldiers, but the PCs must first enter the camp and reach it (see **Entrance**). Once they kill Ephialtes or convince him to cooperate, they have to go back the same way and face the same problems. When they finally make it out of the camp, proceed to **No Exit**.

- Ephialtes
- Common Soldiers (2)

**EVENT C**

The PCs reach the camp at midday. Ephialtes has just talked to Xerxes, who left him in the Harem (tent six with the golden flag). The PCs can guess this by solving the **Second Omen** or using some Divine Edge or Mystery Cult Power.

The Harem is defended by four Immortals, but the PCs must first enter the camp and reach it (see **Entrance**). Once they kill Ephialtes or convince him to cooperate, they have to go back the same way and face the same problems. When they finally make it out of the camp, proceed to **No Exit**.

- Ephialtes
- Immortals (4)

**ABOUT EPHIALTES**

Ephialtes is a Hellenic hoplite who was visited by Ahura Mazda during his sleep. The foreign god promised him infinite wealth and power if he would betray his comrades and allow the Persians to crush Leonidas's army. Should the PCs talk to him, he acts like a Persian, telling them that Ahura Mazda is the most powerful of all gods and Hellas is doomed to bow before the Persian power.



## PERSIAN CAMP

### ENTRANCE

The stockade surrounding the camp is more than 20 ft. high and adorned with huge pictures of animals: a very long snake, a huge bull, and a giant scorpion. Some small sighting towers interrupt the stockade every 40 yards. A Notice roll reveals four archers [Common Soldier (Archer)] on every tower and Persian soldiers (five per PC) at each gate.

Attempting to climb a tower is a bad idea; the archers can easily hit them and alert the camp. (Alarm Level (AL) reaches 5, see further). Waiting for night to come is not ideal as there's little time left.

The easiest entry into the camp is a secret passage dug by Persian deserters under the stockade, beneath the picture of the bull. If the PCs solved the **Fifth Omen**, a simple Notice roll reveals it. Otherwise, they need to use Divine Edges, Mystery cult Powers, or get a raise on a Notice roll. (Inside the camp is considered Persian land when considering bonuses or penalties from Ahura Mazda.)

### ALARM

If the PCs get inside without being noticed, the Alarm Level (AL) of the camp is 0. Every conflict the PCs engage in, or every noisy action, increases the AL by 1. When the AL reaches 5 the alarm is sounded. The camp is fully aware of the PCs and they are chased.

The PCs have 15 rounds to exit the camp before being unavoidably surrounded by 300 Immortals and 2,000 Persian soldiers. During the 15 rounds, the PCs can finish their fight, but reinforcements will begin to arrive and give chase. If they manage to exit the camp in time, nobody runs after them, but they have to wait for at least one hour until the situation "calms down" and the AL drops back to 0.

### MOVING AROUND

The PCs find the camp in utter confusion; everyone ignores them if they behave properly. However, moving around without being noticed is not so easy. The PCs can freely move around the whole camp, but face two **Encounters** on every route. For example, if they move from the Stockade to tent seven or from tent seven to one.

### ENCOUNTERS

Encounters inside the camp do not have to be combat; they are simply the PCs encountering Persians who are already inside the camp. Combat can be avoided with a Stealth or Persuasion roll, or allow the PCs to get creative. Roll a d10 and consult the table below:

Dice Roll	Encounter Type
1-2	2 Immortals
3-5	2 Persian soldiers (Common Soldiers)
6-8	4 Persian soldiers (Common Soldiers)
9-10	4 Immortals

If the PCs waste time inside the camp, roll for an encounter every two minutes.

## TENTS

If the PCs enter any non-numbered tent, according to the map, each one serves as a dormitory where it's possible to meet 1d4 Persian soldiers. The GM decides their reactions.

**Tent 1, Weapon Depot, Green Flag:** Defended by four Immortals, it contains many Persian weapons and armor suits. Apart from the Immortals outside, nobody is inside.

**Tent 2, Persian Ambassador, Huge Flag:** Defended by two Persian soldiers, the PCs find a heavily wounded Persian ambassador who lost his right arm during the battles, being treated by a surgeon. None of them knows about Ephialtes and they do not oppose any resistance. If the PCs leave them alive, they raise the AL to 5. If the PCs are convincing enough, the surgeon cures them with exotic herbs and magical ointments (having the same effect as a successful Healing roll). For each PC healed, roll on the **Encounters** table as someone enters the tent.

**Tent 3, Prison, Red Flag:** Defended by two Persian soldiers, if the PCs enter the camp before midday, they find Ephialtes inside with heavy chains holding him prisoner. Unless they use an appropriate Power or Divine Edge, the PCs cannot be sure whether Ephialtes already talked to Xerxes or not. (He hasn't yet, but Ephialtes tells them what he considers to be more convenient for him.) If the PCs find a good way to persuade him, Ephialtes changes his mind and asks to go back with them to the Hellenic camp. Ephialtes is unable to oppose any physical resistance (unless they set him free from the chains) and as soon as he has the opportunity, without risking his life, raises the AL to 5. If the PCS enter at midday or later, it's empty.



**Tent 4, Accountant, White Flag:** Defended by four Immortals, the PCs find a fat and filthy Persian busy with the accountancy recordings. The tent is full of amphorae and trunks overflowing with treasures and gems. The accountant is frightened, but friendly. He doesn't know anything about Ephialtes and tries to save his own life in every possible way, offering considerable treasures to each PC (up to 10,000 Golden Drachmas). As soon as he has the chance to do flee without risking his life, he raises the AL to 5. Every 2 minutes, an encounter happens as someone enters the tent.

**Tent 5, Imperial Archive, Blue Flag:** Defended by two Persian soldiers, the PCs find five quiet old scribes intent on copying and deciphering parchments of every kind. None of them knows anything about Ephialtes and they don't look like Persians. If the PCs spend some time with them, they find out the scribes are slaves from foreign cultures (Egyptian, Babylonian, Arabian). The PCs are overwhelmed with questions on Hellenic culture. They are very educated, but don't have any useful information for the PCs' mission. None of them is interested in who will win this war and they don't raise the alert if the PCs leave them alive and behave friendly.

**Tent 6, Harem, Golden Flag:** Defended by four Immortals, the PCs hear flutes and tambourines from inside while lascivious shadows gleam through. If the PCs enter before midday, they find about fifty people engaging in sexual acts. (The participants may belong to any sex, race, and culture the GM wants.) The incense in the air and the sound of flutes makes the atmosphere dream-like and surreal.



Unless the PCs draw attention with rude and noisy manners, nobody pays them much attention. If the PCs openly attack the participants, the AL is raised to 5. Nobody knows about Ephialtes and PCs are constantly invited to join the party, attempting to undress them. If the PCs are undressed and join the party, or after spending two minutes inside the tent, an encounter happens as someone enters the tent.

If the PCs enter at midday or later, they also find Ephialtes. They must persuade him to not raise the alarm. If unsuccessful, he raises the AL to 5.

**Tent 7, Tools Depot, Black Flag:** Defended by two Persian soldiers, the PCs find a multitude of carpentry tools, wood boards, nails, and ropes. No one is inside.

## 18TH DAY, MORNING OR AFTERNOON - NO EXIT

The PCs find that there's no easy way back to their headquarters. The road they came from is defended by the recently arrived Persian auxiliary troops (about 100 immortals and 1,000 Common soldiers). All the other passes leading towards the Hot Gates are defended in the same way.

If Ephialtes is with them, and he's willing to help, he shows the PCs a hidden path that would have allowed the Persians to surround the Hellenes. Using that, they can get back to the Hellenic camp. (It doesn't matter if Ephialtes actually revealed the passage to Xerxes or not, the path isn't guarded.)

If the PCs solved the **Fourth Omen**, a Notice roll reveals a shining eagle in the sky who leads them to the hidden passage. If they didn't solve it, they need a raise on a Notice roll or an appropriate Power or Edge to find it.

The Notice roll can be repeated every two minutes, but the PCs will have to face an **Encounter**. After four encounters, the giant eagle they met at the beginning of the adventure appears and leads them to the path back to the Hellenic camp.

## 18TH DAY, NIGHT - THE KING IS DEAD

When the PCs arrive back at the Hellenic camp, they realize King Leonidas died while battling valiantly against Zoroaster, a Persian general who possesses tremendous powers bestowed by his god Ahura Mazda. Although defeated, the Hellenes barely managed to hold back the Persian tide, but desperation and grief rule the camp and everyone begins to think that resistance is futile. Many soldiers wish to return home and think Hellas is doomed. Without a strong leader, the army will probably be disbanded at dawn. The PCs can take control of the situation, lead the Hellenes to victory, and show them the power of the gods. (If they don't realize this by themselves, one of their patron deities shows up and incites them to 'ride the tiger'.)

Inciting the Hellenes to fight again and defend Hellas under the protection of the Olympian gods requires a Social Conflict using Knowledge (Battle). The shocked troops, who think resistance is futile, are represented by Lysimachus with Knowledge (Battle) d6. The Hellenes are very pragmatic nowadays and don't believe in the power of the gods like they used to.

If Ephialtes told Xerxes about the hidden passage, the PCs suffer a (-2) penalty as it's obvious they became surrounded. However, if the PCs can make an appropriate show of the powers bestowed by the gods, they can gain a +1 bonus. The outcome of the Social Conflict is determined as follows:

Margin of Victory	Outcome
Lose	Nobody heeds the PCs' words, choosing to leave with Lysimachus before dawn. Only 300 Spartans, now led by Delius, remain to fulfill the last order of their king to not retreat.
1-2	The PCs persuade about 2,000 soldiers with a winning military strategy, although their not convinced about possible help from the Olympians. The remaining soldiers leave with Lysimachus before dawn. The PCs command the army.
3-4	The PCs persuade about 4,000 soldiers to remain and that the gods favor their victory. They begin making sacrifices to appease the gods while the remaining soldiers leave with Lysimachus before dawn. The PCs command the army.
5+	The entire army of 5,000 men is invigorated by the PCs words. They hail the PCs as saviors to the army, make sacrifices to appease the gods, and appoint the PCs as generals.

Whatever the outcome, the remaining Hellenes hold a war council to decide their strategy.

## 19TH DAY, THE FINAL BATTLE

At the break of dawn, the remaining Hellenic forces face the huge Persian army in a Mass Battle. If the PCs don't wish to partake, they can leave before dawn by following Lysimachus. Their patron deity takes them back to the past the night after, blaming them for failing the mission and Despising them. Should they choose to stay, they get ready for the ensuing mass battle.

The Persian army is led by Xerxes (Knowledge (Battle) d8, Spirit d8, and the following Edges: Command, Command Presence, Fervor, Leader of Men.) His army has about 300,000 remaining soldiers. If Xerxes doesn't know about the hidden path, his army suffers a major terrain disadvantage (-3) and only 5,000 men can enter the pass at the same time to partake in the ensuing mass battle. If, on the contrary, he knows about it, the disadvantage goes to the Hellenic troops and Xerxes can deploy his full army in the battle. They also have light archer support (+1) and General Zoroaster, who was bestowed Divine Powers from Ahura Mazda (+1).

The Hellenes can deploy from 300 to 5,000 soldiers (depending on how many remain) and their leader could be Delius (Knowledge (Battle) d6, Spirit d8, Edges: Command, Fervor) or one of the PCs. Every PC actively partaking in the battle grants a +1 because of their Divine Edges or Powers. They are also free to form strategies to provide the Hellenes with further advantages. While the two armies clash, Zeus and Ahura Mazda fight in the background, creating a true epic scenario.

## ΣΠΙΔΙΝΓΣ

*Battle of Thermopylae* can end in different ways, depending on whether the Hellenes (against all odds) win the battle or not and, more importantly, whether the PCs manage to relight a strong faith in the Olympian Gods with their epic behavior. A couple of possibilities are listed below, but the GM is free to modify them or create his own.

### STARRY TRIUMPH

Against all odds, the Hellenes prevail and win the Thermopylae battle under the PCs' leadership and with the Olympians supporting them. The Persians are forced to fall back and eventually go back to their far homeland.

The PCs' names shall be written in history as the saviors of Hellas. People regain faith in the Olympians and once again flock to the temples. Their patron deities (as well as Zeus) now Love them, if not already.

The PCs are flooded with money, honors, marriage proposals with noble women, and every possible and imaginable honor. But one day, they mysteriously disappear as their patron deities send them back to the past where they belong (people strongly believe that they were taken directly to Olympus).

A new constellation appears in the sky: the Godsend Ones.

### EXTREME SACRIFICE

The PCs fight bravely during the battle, but eventually die. All Hellenes are deeply struck by their heroic behavior and regain their faith in the Olympians. Thanks to the Olympian support, the Hellenes either win the battle at Thermopylae or eventually win the final battle against the Persians one year later at Plataea.

As for the PCs, anyone who succeeds in Thanatos' Judgment is taken back to the past and his patron deity and Zeus will Love him. It's as if nothing happened at all, but in the faraway future the PCs' names will be forever remembered in the days to come as the Godsend Ones.

### UTTER DEFEAT

Despite all efforts, the Persians mercilessly slaughter the PCs along with their soldier comrades. The Persians advance towards the Peloponnese and Hellas trembles in fear. The PCs were unable to raise among the Hellenes a new faith in the Olympians, who are now forced to find another solution to avoid total annihilation.

The GM decides which PC can undergo Thanatos' Judgment and those who pass find themselves back in the past but their patron deity now Despises them for failing such an important mission.

## ADVERSARIS

### EPHIALTES



**Attr:** Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (3)

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Healing d4, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Edges:** Hoplite

**Armor:** Bronze panoply [Corinthian helmet, peturgis, bronze cuirass, bronze greaves]  
(All +3), tower shield (+2 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged attacks)

**Weapons:** Spear (Str+d6), short sword (Str+d6)

### IMMORTAL – PERSIAN ELITE SOLDIER



**Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Notice d6(+2), Shooting d6, Throwing d6

**Edges:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes

**Armor:** Leather cuirass (Torso +2), round shield (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged attacks)

**Weapons:** Long sword (Str+d8), spear (Str+d6)

### PHOENIX



**Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

**Pace:** 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

**Skills:** Fighting d8, Notice d8, Stealth d6

**Weapons:** Fiery beak or talon (Str+d6; if hits, 50% chance to catch fire)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Explosive Resurrection:** When a Phoenix dies, it immediately turns into an ash mound. If the ashes are not collected or drown in a liquid, a Phoenix explodes from it 1d4 minutes after its death, dealing 2d4 fire damage in a 20 ft. radius. At the same time, the Phoenix resurrects fully healed.
- **Flight:** Phoenixes have a Flying Pace of 8 in. and a Climb 3.

**ZOROASTER - DIVINE PERSIAN GENERAL**

**Attr:** Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

**Charisma:** 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 12 (4)

**Skills:** Fighting d10, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Throwing d10

**Edges:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Command, Command Presence, Counterattack, Fervor, Frenzy, Leader of Men, Seasoned Hoplite

**Armor:** Panoply [Persian helmet, peturgis, bronze doubled and fitted cuirass with Mark of Ahura Mazda (+1), greaves] (All +3), round shield with Mark of the Phoenix (+1 Parry, +2 Armor vs. ranged attacks), bracers

**Weapons:** Long sword (Str+d8), spear (Str+d6)

**Special Abilities:**

- **Divine Entourage (Ahura Mazda):** +1 bonus to Strength; Strength Favored Rolls.
- **Mark of the Phoenix:** Anyone looking at the armor in sunlight must make a successful Spirit roll to avoid being bedazzled for 1 round, during which they suffer a (-2) penalty to all attack rolls.
- **Mark of Ahura Mazda:** Gold detail work enhances the armor. The wearer gains a +1 bonus to all Intimidation and Charisma rolls while on the battlefield.

