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Paul Cartledge, *Thermopylae: The Battle That Changed the World*. Woodstock & New York, NY: Overlook Press, 2006. Pp. xxxvii, 313. ISBN 978-1-58567-566-1.

Review by Donald Lateiner, Ohio Wesleyan University (dglatein@owu.edu)

Cartledge, Professor of Greek History at Cambridge University, presents the battle of Thermopylae sandwiched between a portrait of the combatants' nations and the Afterlife of this one battle in the Wars between the Aggressive Empire of the Persians and the (few resistant) Disunited City-States of Hellas. It intends to engage a popular audience; footnotes and discussion of the many problems are few. There is no thesis to sustain. Professional *auctoritas* carries laypersons through the narrative. No innovation in method, viewpoint (the Opuntian Locrians', say), or evidence interferes with a clearly told foundational story to cheer remaining adherents of Western Civilization in a dark culture-clashing era.

Cartledge has written useful detailed studies on many aspects of Laconian society and economy. His books appear in two classes. First, from his dissertation (Oxford 1975) onward, he has produced specialized studies of Laconians—the unique and peculiar populations of ancient Lakedaimon, a polis and its nearby but vast conquered territories (including Messenia) popularly known as “Sparta.” Therein dwelt full Spartiates, Helots (indigenes, believed racially distinct, who were tied to the land and without rights), and the *perioikoi* or “dwellers around”—a peculiar class of farmers and soldiers freer than slaves but far below the rank of citizens). Second, he has published for a public interested in history, e.g., *The Greeks: Crucible of Civilization* (NY: TV Books, 2002—a book connected to a BBC television series) and a biography of Alexander. It is difficult to write one book to satisfy both scholarly colleagues and popular audiences who learn history from the History Channel.

The name Thermopylae excites the pulse of all students of military history. This strategic location was in 480 BCE a narrow pass (15 yards?) between rock cliffs and the sea, but one notoriously capable of being turned by an enemy accessing a nearby mountain pass (cf. Hdt. 7.216). It was the site of several recorded “turnings” in antiquity after the strange one described in this volume (the Gauls in 279, the Romans under Cato the Elder in 191, etc.).

The substantial force of the suicidal but strategic Spartan mission with allies (7,000 men in all) stopped King Xerxes' summer and autumn invasion of Greece for seven days. The bold and unexpected non-surrender committed various mainland poleis to battle and set an undeniable example of courage for cities still wavering—most had already indicated submission to the imperial oriental juggernaut (whose forces included numerous eastern and northern Greeks). Soon after, their political steadfastness unto death produced Simonides' most famous epigram (153, a feeble translation). Then, centuries long after, that epigram served as grist for one of Cicero's poetic attempts. Long after that, the Napoleonic artist Jacques-Louis David made the Laconian preparations for death the subject of a curi-

ously erotic painting.<sup>1</sup> The momentary victory and defeat in the north gave the Hellenes time to rally more local support in the south (even if “delaying action” was not the intent)<sup>2</sup> and to show that a small defense force of Greeks could halt and flummox, not to mention gouge out the elite of, a very much larger Persian army. All they needed, it seems, to hold the pass were the lethal hoplite weapons of offense and defense, the best infantry training in the world, and a position dug into a good, defensible spot. Not much later that year, in late autumn 480, off the island of Salamis near the Saronic Gulf harbor of the Peiraeus, the significantly outnumbered Hellenic fleet, positioned in a convenient strait by the Attic strategist Themistokles, would replicate that careful identification of a defensible position in a naval conflict.

Herodotos, whose prose few authors have ever surpassed, tells both these heroic stories. Nothing in his *Histories* is more epic, Homeric, and heroic than his account of this brief holding action at Thermopylae. This disciplined last stand, principally designed and then mythicized by a notably self-important and self-serving community, quickly became *the* Panhellenic moment of pride. It retained that position fifty years later when Herodotos collected accounts (but from whom, who would know?) and visited the monuments. The defeat at Thermopylae trumped the previous victory at Marathon for the Greeks, excepting always the Athenians and their doughty Plataian allies who fought there. Herodotos presents the Spartan glorified version complete with oracles, seers, and ascertained self-sacrifice. The act of the 300 Spartiate contingent obliterates in this ancient account the equal bravery of others. From Herodotos’ facts, we excavate 700 stubborn Thespians (their entire hoplite force) who refused to go home, untold Helots (cf. 8.25) and *perioikoi* who had to remain, perhaps 80 Mykenaians (cf. Pausanias 10.20.2), and even the 400 Thebans who stayed. These men, more likely in these parlous circumstances drawn from the anti-Persian “loyalists” than medizers staying under compulsion (Hdt. 7.222), have had their reputations successfully blackened—despite Plutarch’s energetic defense (*The Malice of Herodotos* 31–33).

Herodotos is no dependable Laconophile, or at least an often skeptical one, but in his account the Spartiates get nearly all the heroic credit for this avant-garde shared achievement.<sup>3</sup> Herodotos’ dramatic narrative has the defects of having no written accounts to lean on, of his age’s deficiencies in civic and personal records, of the weaknesses of ancient

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 180 for the 1814 painting in grey tones, but cyber-readers might prefer the colorful: <cgfa.dotsrc.org/jdavid/p-jdavid18.htm>. Frank Miller and Lynn Varley’s *300*, in the bibliography (289), offers a compelling graphic novel loosely based on Herodotos. The comic book is soon (March 2007) to be a minor motion picture with ugly, grotesque, and obese enemies assaulting the buff and freedom-loving Spartans. The website does not mention Herodotos <300themovie.warnerbros.com>.

<sup>2</sup> The Peloponnesians early and late naturally preferred to hold the line nearer to home at the Isthmus of Korinth (7.139, 207; 8.40, etc). Herodotos and his Athenian sources repeatedly expose the selfish unwisdom of this ally-shedding policy. The Spartans claimed before and after the fight at Thermopylae that reinforcements of the forerunners (*prodromoi*) would have come “any day”—but none did. The Laconian Karneian festival, the Peloponnesian Olympic Games, the celerity of the outcome at the Hot Gates (7.206) forestalled what probably was never going to happen to strengthen a position so far to the north. Cartledge does not mention this less admirable version and other compromises.

<sup>3</sup> The Laconian “dwellers round” have fallen out of his narrative, more so than the Helots who remain in the report along with contingents from allied cities (Orkhomenians, Troizenians, etc.). But Herodotos’ own numbers (approx. 7,000 Hellenes) demand the perioecic presence at Thermopylae. Cartledge pays proper tribute to the Thespians.

military narratives in general—which are often long on speeches and short on details and statistics of engagement. “There was no Herodotos before Herodotos,” as Arnaldo Momigliano aphoristically wrote.

The nature of hoplite warfare remains a notorious black hole or scholarly snake pit in modern historiography.<sup>4</sup> The Spartans trained the best hoplites, but this battle was not a typical open-field, fixed line, hoplite engagement. Although Herodotos reports an example of the hoplite battle-line shove (7.225; cf. p. 145), neither this nor the reported feigned retreats and turnabouts are likely to have occurred in the very narrow quarters. Military history, including tactics, numbers, and logistics, we can summarize, is not Herodotos’ strongest suit, so Cartledge’s book has certain *a priori* justifications. As in his amazingly recent *Alexander the Great* (Woodstock & New York, NY: Overlook Pr, 2004), he has chosen a subject for reconsideration where many gaps exist in the historical record. Unlike in that book, however, here his story competes with one of history’s greatest narrative prose-writers.<sup>5</sup> This raises the question whether the modern author will step back to allow his only dependable ancient source to present the original, unimprovable version. His accounts of the heterogeneous wealth of the Achaemenid Empire, the bizarre organization of Spartan lives, and the modern legends related to the ancient battle are cogent and “readable.”

The book begins with a useful timeline, an Achaemenid Royal Persian stemma, and six maps, five of which unfortunately do not indicate elevations. The sixth, of the west end of the Malian Gulf, indicates incomprehensibly land “contours.” Three Appendixes puzzle the reader. One translates Herodotos’ colorful and controversial Persian “Muster Lists” for the campaign of 480 BCE. But why translate this passage and not others? Another describes the extant ancient sources. It justly praises the historical value of Herodotos, despite referring to his Homeric “blatantly fictitious” stories (220). Cartledge concludes, however, as he must: “we either write a history of Thermopylae with him, or we do not write one at all” (222). Since he has written such an account, we conclude that he respects his source. (See below for the third Appendix.)

Cartledge offers nine chapters and an epilogue. The first eighty pages consider the worlds the antagonists lived in: four chapters survey the ancient southern Euro-Asian continent, the Persian Empire, the Hellenic city-states, and the unique Spartans, haughty, relentless, and ruthless, as the chapter epigraph describes them. He might have extended his account of Sparta and its eighty small towns, given his unique expertise and his book’s focus on the Spartiates at Thermopylae. He alleges that the Spartans would only murder Helots with impunity if they rebelled, but this contradicts Thoukydides’ chilling account (4.80) of their killing thousands in the later fifth century whose only crime was to think they had served Lakedaimon well. Their sorry fate was unknown despite Thoukydides’ best efforts at investigation. No reader of this *Review*, including me, would last long among the soldier class or want to dally in their daily drills and gruff messes.

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<sup>4</sup> Hans van Wees, *Greek Warfare: Myths and Realities* (London: Duckworth, 2004), crosses swords with the recent *communis opinio* expressed by, e.g., V.D. Hanson, ed., *Hoplites: The Classical Greek Battle Experience* (London & NY: Routledge, 1991) on this and many other points concerning Hellenic heavy infantry.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander dreamed of a Homer but failed to find either a poet or a historian equal to his achievements.

The next three chapters replay Book 7 of Herodotos' *Histories*. These three chapters of *Thermopylae* are entitled "Thermopylae," of which one actually describes the eponymous battle of Thermopylae. The Spartans headed the ad hoc Hellenic coalition, because of both their leadership role in the Peloponnesian League (which furnished half the states in the coalition, as the mutilated Delphic Serpent Column still attests), and their acknowledged military prowess. Cartledge argues that Thermopylae had several quasi-religious advantages for its choice as the point of resistance. Mount Oita nearby was the Spartan-beloved Akhaian Herakles' site of suicide by immolation and nearby Doris was the mythistorical Dorian homeland. More speculatively, nearby, to the west of Thermopylae, anxious hierophants of Delphi were not propitious to forces counseling resistance to the Great King, but King Leonidas,<sup>6</sup> may have coaxed out an oracle demanding the leadership and sacrifice of a king, namely himself.

Since the Spartiate element of the force was chosen on the basis of having existing male issue as well as being young and fit, Cartledge reasonably concludes that they already knew that they constituted a "suicide squad" (130). He compares these soon-to-be-dead Spartiates to Japanese *kamikaze* pilots and the Samurai's *bushido* code of honor. He explains Spartan warriors' long hair as a function of the inversion at Sparta of many Hellenic customs. Cartledge's account of the battle is flat, but all would concede that none can compete with the deft Ionic touch of Herodotos' presentation. Hellenic morale received a remarkable jolt from these Hellenes' contribution. Cartledge cuts away from the seamless story, right after the battle, cuts from the closely coordinated naval campaign at Artemision and the consequences for the war, constrained as he is by his title's remit.

The final two chapters discuss the Thermopylae (read Spartan) legend in the ancient and post-ancient worlds. The photographs of places and things are welcome additions. Cartledge retells the complicated disgrace of the Spartiate Aristodamos, the "trembler," afflicted by a severe eye-inflammation. Leonidas ordered both him and another sufferer among his 300 to return home, and home he went (alone, or with his Helot; Hdt. 7.229–32).<sup>7</sup> His dismissed fellow trooper, Eurytos, stayed to fight on, even though blind (his Helot rationally departing), and so sealed Aristodamos' unpleasant fate on his return home in a closed and unforgiving society. The Spartans blackballed the survivor (no talk, no shared fire). In his imposed isolation, he went berserk the next year against the Persian foes in the battle of Plataiai and died bravely. Aristodamos distinguished himself for battle valor at Plataiai, but, as Cartledge neatly explains, "for the wrong reason, with the wrong motivation, at the wrong time and in the wrong way" (159). Thus, he did not gain the official Spartan commendation for battle excellence (*aristeia*).

The chapter on Thermopylae from the Renaissance to our day pauses to quote and discuss, among others, Montaigne, Fénelon, J.-L. David's painting, Cavafy's caustic, deflationary "Thermopylae," and Housman's jaunty, celebratory "The Oracles." The use and abuse of Sparta by Hitler's Nazis offers bemusement—although the Spartans might puzzle

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<sup>6</sup> The little known martyr-warrior was half-brother and son-in-law to ex-King Kleomenes, and his successor. A fascinating footnote (128) suggests that Leonidas might have helped engineer Kleomenes' downfall.

<sup>7</sup> Cartledge wrongly accuses Aristodamos of not following orders, but Eurytos was the one who disobeyed his reasonable commander and Spartan king. Herodotos did not admire this sort of bravery. See on this passage, D. Lateiner, "The Style of Herodotos," *Classical World* 95 (2002) 363–71.

equally at democratic ideologues claiming their heritage descends from Spartan “freedom fighters.” The epilogue is insufficiently cautious. Cartledge claims for the extended and never fully ended wars against Persia an “eventual total Greek victory.” He states that this suicidal stand showed that “the Persians should and could usefully be resisted” (204). The “should” cannot hold. All Greeks (including the Helots but somehow not inhabitants of Anatolia or the Punjab) somehow have a “birthright of freedom” (207), but Cartledge points to the (once again) pious oppressors as “our Spartan ancestors.”

The Spartan’s totalitarian and racist ideal is not one that inhabitants of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic democratic cities of the United Kingdom, the United States, or France can or wish to endorse. Cartledge distinguishes the Spartans from Persians as men “not compelled by sheer terror” and avers that their society—once, of course, we remove infanticide and Helot-unfreeness (perhaps add women’s lack of political participation, soul-destroying psychological abuse of the disinclined, general dearth of non-religious spiritual nourishment, etc., etc.)—“might not be the worst place on earth to find ourselves” (211). A qualified, litotic Amen.

We surmise the intended audience from page one: it is up-to-date, recognizing the Bushian phrase “shock and awe” from the war in Iraq; it is post-modern and deconstructive, appreciating the view that the “Spartans’ (de)feat was absolutely crucial”; and it relishes Britannic meiosis and litotes,<sup>8</sup> admiring the description of the motley Hellenic detachments sent to hold the pass as “a smallish Greek force of some seven thousand or so.” Both the “some” and the “or so” seem redundant; the “smallish” might well be replaced by “largish,” given the size of most Greek field armies and the reported and geo-archaeologically reconstructed dimensions of the pass in 480. Could King Leonidas have done more with these original thousands than he did with his “dead-ender” few hundreds? Indeed, he probably sent the others away—“quislings” and dubious slackers, impressed hostages, and supernumeraries, since some men’s lives did not need to be sacrificed—because they would interfere with what the “token if elite force” (7) might accomplish. Trivial errors sometimes result from hasty writing,<sup>9</sup> such as the Achaemenid survey placing Iran to the west of Iraq (19–20), but I am worried more by Cartledge’s relapse into conventional, knee-jerk expressions such as the Greeks who “first felt the lash of the Persian whip” (16). The following phrase baffles me: “what the Greeks rather hopefully called ‘India’” (17).<sup>10</sup> Should they have been more familiar with what the British imperial designation included? When Cartledge claims, “the encounter at Thermopylae was only a matter of time” (17), he fudges a major problem that all historians face and falls into the circular trap of believing

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<sup>8</sup> The Athenians’ empire brought “not entirely unfounded” accusations of exploitation and repression (11) for the simpler phrase “perfectly accurate”; Kroisos’ taxing demands of the Greeks were “not ... massively burdensome” (22); “the Spartans ... were by no means entirely friends to freedom” (65); or “The Athenians themselves ... not unnaturally agreed wholeheartedly” with Herodotos (166). In addition to Briticisms, the colloquial tone starts to grate: “voted with their feet” (7: untrue), Persian autocrats as “pretty tolerant rulers,” Themistokles’ “smashing victory,” “street cred.” Sarcasm of a conversational type may be misunderstood: we learn that the Greeks did not consider forced participation in the Persian Empire “wholly and purely a blessing” (8).

<sup>9</sup> All historians have published erroneous details. We fault only the publisher for the fact that every chapter in the table of contents after chapter I is systematically short by two pages, reading, e.g., 29 for 31.

<sup>10</sup> While the Greeks referred to *Indi* and *Indikoi*, there is no word “India” in ancient Greek. Perhaps I missed a joke.

that the war was inevitable because—because it happened. We need to know why this war or any other, this empire or that imperial thrust, was inevitable. Herodotos wants to know, as he tells us *ab initio*, why and how conflicts begin, and (we can surmise from other narratives of his) why sometimes they do not. Readers need to know when and what it was that made this campaign and conflict inevitable—if indeed it ever was. Others argue that it was more thaumatic—miraculous, improbable, or at least unexpected—than inevitable.

Cartledge presents some fine analyses and analogies: he compares Leotykhidas' foolish proposal of trans-Aegean population exchanges and transfers to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne (11). He elegantly describes King Demaratos' dubious regal situation: "there was a question-mark over his legitimacy that Cleomenes was eventually to turn into a full stop" (67). An armed Aphrodite, however, is not unique to Sparta (79), and not surprising, considering her many connections with Near Eastern battle-goddesses, viz. Ishtar and As-tarte. Demaratos stole Leotykhidas' fiancée Perkalos—not the other way around (83; see Hdt. 6.65). I would not say that the Athenians "resorted frequently to ... ostracism" (86), since only about fifteen men in all were ostracized in the institution's only century. These careless errors mar the uplifting entertainment.

Cartledge believes that Herodotos "would always automatically plump for the theological rather than the humanistic or secular explanation" (221). At this point, he cites Herodotos' multiple accounts of the horrible (self-slicing) apparent suicide of the captured renegade Machiavellian Spartan, King Kleomenes (6.75, 84). In these very passages, however, Herodotos rejects a variety of theological, ahistorical "explanations"—the majority Hellene explanation (penalty for Delphic bribery), the Athenian (penalty for devastating Demeter's shrine at Eleusis), the Argive (penalty for sacrilegious slaying of prisoners and firing a sacred grove), and the down-home Spartan propaganda (not divine madness at all, but just severe alcoholism). He prefers his own explanation of *tisis*, "retribution" for fraud and revolution in fixing the deposition (by oracular ukase) of his rival Demaratos. Such *tisis*, or "evening out of disequilibrium," although conceivably divine, usually is not so in Herodotos' view of the mechanisms of mundane life, the sequences that he chose to call "history."<sup>11</sup>

The third Appendix reprints a lecture delivered in Athens.<sup>12</sup> Cartledge again describes Herodotos as conventional in his piety. He unexpectedly thinks Herodotos to be an untyp-

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<sup>11</sup> See my *Historical Method of Herodotus* (Toronto: U Toronto Pr, 1989) 141–3 and 191–205 for Herodotean explanations. Cartledge endorses the regrettable *communis opinio* in seeing Herodotos as "conventionally pious in the normal and normative ancient Greek terms of his time" (246; the first two words of the phrase are repeated in many chapters). Aside from the impenetrable meaninglessness of this alleged homogeneity (think of Herodotos' contemporaries in medical research and philosophical thought, the "Hippocratics," Sokrates, Kritias, Thoukydides, Euripides, et al.); this churchgoing preconception leads him into unnecessary paradoxes concerning Herodotos' openness towards other men's views of gods and human rituals that please or appease them. The Spartans also are labeled "exceptionally pious," although, one may add, especially when it fit their interests. More importantly, the reader needs some thick description of the ancient manifestations of this primitive religiosity, apparently alien to both this author and reviewer. We agree, however, in seeing *limit* as the ancient historian's "master-trope" (244), and this is not by nature a theological concept.

<sup>12</sup> Cartledge arouses colleagues' admiration since the *demos* of Sparta has enrolled him as an honorary citizen to honor his substantial research on that tidy, modern community. My own relevant *in situ* experience includes only falling off a wall and twisting my ankle in Lakonia in 1969. Across the Aegean, I tried to rent a room in 1988 at the Herodotus Hotel in Bodrum, ancient Halikarnassos, but no bed was available—no *philoxenia* for me.

ical Greek in *not* taking “delight in war for war’s sake.” He nevertheless praises his “immense act of interpretative charity” (250) in recognizing that non-Greek or barbarian practices and beliefs, religious (e.g., Hdt. 3.38 on burials) and secular, might be as moral and ethical, as intelligent and efficacious, as those of the Greeks. Herodotos, of course, not only believes this, but he rubs in the face of his Hellenic audiences Hellenic myth, cult, and other borrowings from the Egyptian and other cultures, as well as needling his countrymen for native Greek contradictions and inefficiencies. His relativism in method and his pluralism in ethics (247) oppose him to the fundamentalism found in many parts of the world today (and to the “conventional pieties” of then and now, I add). By “fundamentalism,” Cartledge understands those zealots who think truth is one and theirs, and feel the need and/or willingness to inflict it on others.

How often does the world need to retrace a superb narrative—absent new sources? For the analysis of a society such as Sparta’s, or an empire such as Xerxes’, or a temple frieze such as the Parthenon’s, new evidence such as inscriptions, papyri, topographical identifications, and sculptural fragments demand a new analysis or synthesis. This justification does not apply to the book under review. Its author, like Herodotos, offers the Spartocentric spin. Cartledge courteously acknowledges the skill and thoroughness shown by predecessors,<sup>13</sup> but never really explains the need that he hopes to fill or the previous historiographical misapprehension that he hopes to rectify.

The title is a current publishers’ gimmick: focus on one moment of a rather long conflict (504–479, expandable on both ends), then explain the odd civilizations involved and the run-up to your event. Barry Strauss offers another recent entry exemplifying this anti-*longue durée* marketing gambit: *Salamis: The Greatest Naval Battle of the Ancient World* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2004). Roman historians, at least, would contest this claim. J.S. Mill<sup>14</sup> tendentiously claimed that the “battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings,” but (A) he was referring to “decisive for England” and (B) he was not selling books. Come to think of it, battles have often changed the world, shaken communities with crisis, a fact which explains in part our inter-

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<sup>13</sup> He praises, among books written not primarily for scholarly audiences, A.R. Burn’s *Persia and the Greeks* (1962; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Stanford: Stanford U Pr, 1984) offering forty-five pages on this campaign, and Peter Green’s lively, polyonymous *The Greco-Persian Wars* (Berkeley: U Cal Pr, 1996), a (slight) revision of his *Xerxes at Salamis* (1970; UK edition entitled *The Year of Salamis*), with about thirty-five pages. More recently, George Cawkwell’s *The Greek Wars: The Failure of Persia* (NY: Oxford U Pr, 2005) proclaims a less Hellenocentric point of view, and it certainly is less Herodotolatric than some volumes, but not as much as it wishes, given the dearth of any competing, much less Persian, accounts. J.F. Lazenby’s *The Defence of Greece, 490–479 BC* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1993) combines accessibility with detailed consideration of contentious issues. G. B. Grundy’s extremely thoughtful *The Great Persian War* (1901; rpt. NY: AMS Pr, 1969), with watercolors by Edward Lear, and W.K. Pritchett’s *Studies in Ancient Greek Topography* I and IV (Berkeley: U Cal Pr, 1965, 1982) exhibit the significant benefits of detailed topographical survey and repeated autopsy in the area. The audience that calls itself “history buffs” may prefer the indefatigable Ernle Bradford’s *Thermopylae: The Battle for the West* (1980; rpt. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2004), a volume that Cartledge either does not know or oddly disdains to include in the bibliography (itself a word misspelled in headers on 267 and 269).

<sup>14</sup> I mistakenly credited this remark (“Introduction” to Macaulay’s translation of Herodotus, *The Histories* [NY: Barnes & Noble, 2004], xxvii) to Sir Edward Creasy, *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of The World* (London 1851), who indeed begins with Marathon, and ends with Waterloo. Mill, the philosopher of human freedom, made this assertion while reviewing an early volume of his former friend and colleague George Grote’s radically new and vast *History of Greece*, 12 vols. (London 1846–56). Mill might have regarded Thermopylae as a replay of Marathon’s outnumbered Attic defenders with less liberty-loving Laconian protagonists.

est in legalized mass homicide, so perhaps Cartledge's title is less pretentious than it sounds. It depends what the "the" in "the battle" part of the title means. I worry when an author tells me "it is simply too good a story not to retell," even if he candidly acknowledges his ancient predecessor's "brilliant narrative and analytical gifts" (59). Perhaps others will similarly rewrite Gibbon and even Shakespeare. Putting down this uninspired and somewhat hasty version, we may supplement Momigliano: "There was no Herodotos *after* Herodotos."

This *Thermopylae* succeeds as a responsible, attention-grabbing narrative of an unexpectedly significant battle. It fails to explain the Spartans' "double game" (Grundy, p. 275) in sending so few Spartiates and to relate the clash better than, or differently from, its predecessors. It does not justify its title any more than Herodotos already had by his account, since there already the battle is become the legend. This book obscures this point by its chapter divisions. Cartledge the honorary Spartan admits (12) that the brutal exploitation of the Helots "must forever tarnish their [the Spartiates'] halo." Wonderful as the corporation of obedient Spartan soldiers was, never, not even in Plato's phantastic make-believe constitutions, do we find the class of organized killers and terrorizers wearing halos. The suggested thought-picture, that Leonidas' tired men, knowing their certain fate, spent their remaining hours not in combing their splendid locks, but in polishing their halos, has an awful<sup>15</sup> attraction.

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<sup>15</sup> The first paragraph of the prologue explains this delicate word's true import. We find the sloppier sense of the word later, e.g., 131: "an awful lot of sense."