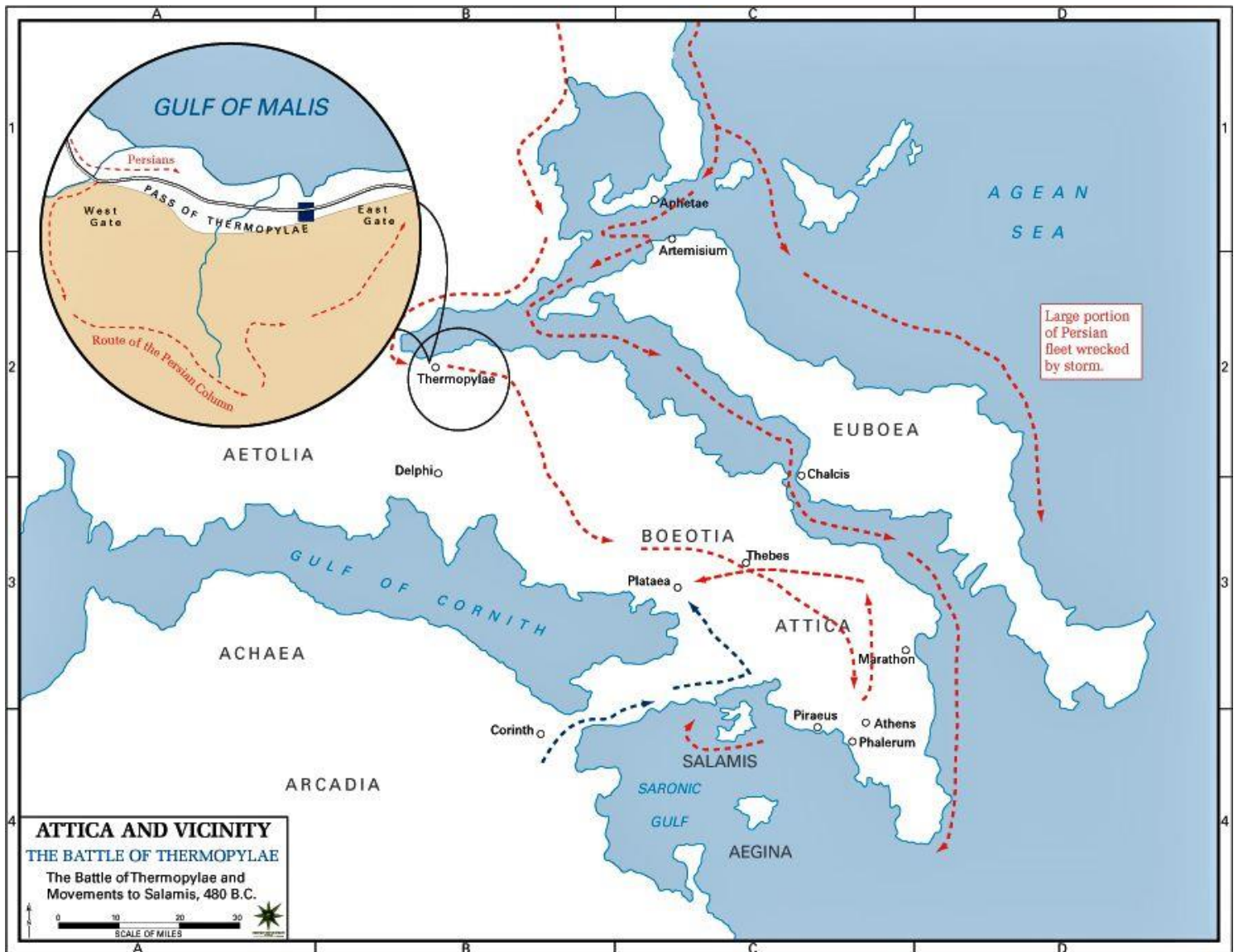


**Battle of Thermopylae**, (480 bce), battle in central Greece at the mountain pass of Thermopylae during the Persian Wars. The Greek forces, mostly Spartan, were led by Leonidas. After three days of holding their own against the Persian king Xerxes I and his vast southward-advancing army, the Greeks were betrayed, and the Persians were able to outflank them. Sending the main army in retreat, Leonidas and a small contingent remained behind to resist the advance...



The primary source for the Greco-Persian Wars is the Greek historian Herodotus.

Archaeological evidence, such as the Serpent Column (now in the Hippodrome of Constantinople), also supports some of Herodotus' specific claims. George B. Grundy was the first modern historian to do a thorough topographical survey of the narrow pass at Thermopylae, and to the extent that modern accounts of the battle differ from Herodotus' they usually follow Grundy's. For example, the military strategist Sir Basil Henry Liddell Hart defers to Grundy. Grundy also explored Plataea and wrote a treatise on that battle.

On the Battle of Thermopylae itself, two principal sources, Herodotus' and Simonides' accounts, survive. In fact, Herodotus' account of the battle, in Book VII of his Histories, is such an important source that Paul Cartledge wrote: "we either write a history of Thermopylae with [Herodotus], or not at all".

Herodotus (c. 484 – c. 425 bce) was an ancient Greek historian who was born in Halicarnassus in the Persian Empire (modern-day Bodrum, Turkey). He is known for having written the book *The Histories*, a detailed record of his "inquiry" on the origins of the Greco-Persian Wars.