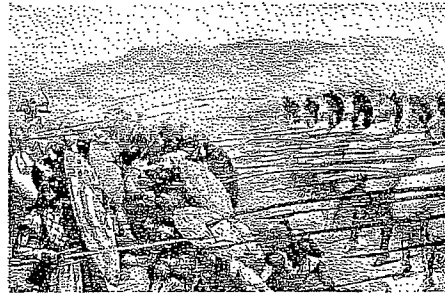
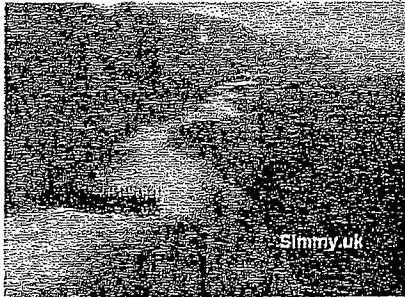
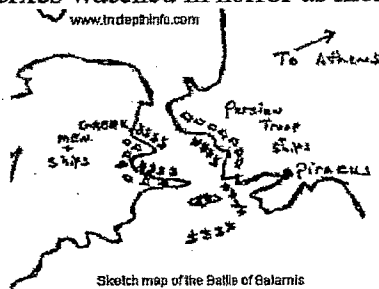


the Persian army for as long as they could. In the end, Xerxes had lost so many men that he decided to pull his forces back and finish the remaining Spartans with arrows. The Spartan's valiant sacrifice- all were killed including King Leonidas- made a great impression on all the Greeks. The battle delayed the Persian army long enough for the Greeks to finish their religious festival, gather the rest of their armies together, and give Athens time to launch a decisive naval strike at the Battle of Salamis.

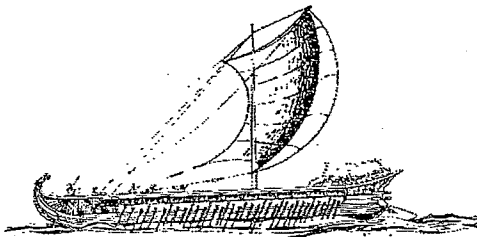


The Battle of Salamis

As the Battle of Thermopylae raged on, the Athenians debated how best to defend their city. Themistocles, an Athenian leader, convinced them to evacuate the city of Athens and fight at sea. Under commander Themistocles they positioned their fleet in a narrow channel near the island of Salamis. After setting fire to Athens, Xerxes sent his warships to block both ends of the channel. However, the channel was very narrow, and the Persian ships had difficulty turning. The smaller and more maneuverable Greek ships were armed with battering rams and attacked the Persian ships, puncturing their hulls. Xerxes watched in horror as more than one-third of his fleet sank.



Trireme



Battle of Plataea

In 479 BC, the Greeks assembled a huge army from all over Greece and marched out of the Peloponnesus. The Persians built a fortified camp near Plataea. The Greeks, however, refused to be drawn out of their advantageous position, resulting in a stalemate for 11 days. On the twelfth day the Greeks attempted a retreat after their supply lines were disrupted, and the Greek battle-line broke apart. Thinking the Greeks were in full retreat, the Persian commander Mardonius ordered his forces to attack them. Seeing the attack, the Greeks stopped their partial retreat and rushed in to help each other and defeat the Persians. The destruction of this army (along with the destruction of the remnants of the Persian navy in another battle that same day) decisively ended the Persian invasions of Greece.