**Herodotus, *The History.* Translated by George Rawlinson in 1885.**

Herodotus (484-425 BCE), is known as the “Father of History”. Herodotus is one of the primary sources for information on ancient lands and peoples in Greece and the Persian Empire. Herodotus’’ Histories is one of the few surviving accounts of the Greek city-states who dared to stand against the mighty Persian Empire. This passage is a report from one of the greatest battle stands in history, the Battle of Thermopylae.

201. King Xerxes pitched his camp in the region of Malis called Trachinia, while on their side the Greeks occupied the straits. These straits the Greeks in general call Thermopylae (the Hot Gates); but the natives, and those who dwell in the neighbourhood, call them Pylae (the Gate). Here then the two armies took their stand; the one master of all the region lying north of Trachis, the other of the country extending southward of that place to the verge of the continent.

Why did King Xerxes order his soldiers to capture and bring back the Greeks alive?

Why were the Straits of Thermopylae called “the gates”?

**Skipped sections 202-209**

Then Xerxes, to whom what Demaratus said seemed altogether to surpass belief, asked further, "how it was possible for so small an army to contend with his?"

What is so hard for King Xerxes to believe?

"O king!" Demaratus answered, "let me be treated as a liar, if matters fall not out as I say."

210. But Xerxes was not persuaded any the more. Four whole days he suffered to go by, expecting that the Greeks would run away. When, however, he found on the fifth that they were not gone, thinking that their firm stand was mere impudence and recklessness, he grew wroth, and sent against them the Medes and Cissians, with orders to take them alive and bring them into his presence. Then the Medes rushed forward and charged the Greeks, but fell in vast numbers: others however took the places of the slain, and would not be beaten off, though they suffered terrible losses. In this way it became clear to all, and especially to the king, that though he had plenty of combatants, he had but very few warriors. The struggle, however, continued during the whole day.

Why did King Xerxes feel that the Spartans were reckless?

211. Then the Medes, having met so rough a reception, withdrew from the fight; and their place was taken by the band of Persians under Hydarnes, whom the king called his "Immortals: " they, it was thought, would soon finish the business. But when they joined battle with the Greeks, 'twas with no better success than the Median detachment - things went much as before - the two armies fighting in a narrow space, and the barbarians using shorter spears than the Greeks, and having no advantage from their numbers. The Lacedaemonians fought in a way worthy of note, and showed themselves far more skilful in fight than their adversaries, often turning their backs, and making as though they were all flying away, on which the barbarians would rush after them with much noise and shouting, when the Spartans at their approach would wheel round and face their pursuers, in this way destroying vast numbers of the enemy. Some Spartans likewise fell in these encounters, but only a very few. At last the Persians, finding that all their efforts to gain the pass availed nothing, and that, whether they attacked by divisions or in any other way, it was to no purpose, withdrew to their own quarters.

Why would the Spartans turn their back on the Persians?

Why did King Xerxes call this group of soldiers the “immortals”?

Why did King Xerxes feel that he had few warriors?