

The oldest complete work to survive in Classical Attic Greek is also the oldest surviving complete script of a play in the world. *Persians* by Aeschylus was originally performed in 472 BCE. This tragedy dramatizes what it was like for Persian royalty to receive news of their defeats by the Greeks. This reading comes from a gripping report by a Persian messenger, who narrates the Battle of Salamis in 479 BCE, the decisive naval victory for the Greeks. Although written as if told by a Persian, Aeschylus himself had fought at this battle, so it seems that this is a rare first-hand account of one of the turning points in world history. The scene begins at dawn:

καὶ νύξ ἐχώρει, κού μάλ' Ἑλλήνων στρατὸς  
κρυφαῖον ἔκπλουν οὐδαμῆι καθίστατο·  
ἐπεὶ γε μέντοι λευκόπωλος ἡμέρα πᾶσαν  
κατέσχε γαῖαν εὐφεγγῆς ἰδεῖν, πρῶτον  
μὲν ἠχῆι κέλαδος Ἑλλήνων πάρα  
μολπηδὸν εὐφήμησεν, ὄρθιον δ' ἅμα  
ἀντηγάλαξε νησιώτιδος πέτρας  
ἠχώ, φόβος δὲ πᾶσι βαρβάροις παρῆν  
γνώμης ἀποσφαλεῖσιν· οὐ γὰρ ὡς φυγῆ  
παιᾶν' ἐφύμνουν σεμνὸν Ἑλληνας τότε,  
ἀλλ' ἐς μάχην ὀρμῶντες εὐψύχῳ θράσει.  
σάλπιγξ δ' αὐτῆι πάντ' ἐκεῖν' ἐπέφλεγεν·  
εὐθύς δὲ κώπης ῥοθιάδος ξυνεμβολῆ  
ἔπαισαν ἄλμην βρύχιον ἐκ κελεύματος.  
θοῶς δὲ πάντες ἦσαν ἐκφανεῖς ἰδεῖν·  
τὸ δεξιὸν μὲν πρῶτον εὐτάκτως κέρας  
ἠγεῖτο κόσμῳ, δεύτερον δ' ὁ πᾶς στόλος  
ἐπεξεχώρει, καὶ παρῆν ὁμοῦ κλύειν  
πολλὴν βοήν· ὦ παιῖδες Ἑλλήνων, ἴτε  
ἐλευθεροῦτε πατρίδ', ἐλευθεροῦτε δὲ  
παιῖδας γυναῖκας θεῶν τε πατρῶων ἔδη  
θήκας τε προγόνων· νῦν, ὑπὲρ πάντων, ἀγών.  
καὶ μὴν παρ' ἡμῶν Περσίδος γλώσσης ῥόθος  
ὑπηντίαζε, κούκέτ' ἦν μέλλειν ἀκμή.

ἀκμή -ῆς ἢ peak, point, climax  
 ἄλμη -ης ἢ seawater  
 ἀνταλαλάζω shout back  
 ἀποσφάλλω stagger away from (+ gen.)  
 ἀυτή -ῆς ἢ shout, battle cry  
 βοή -ῆς ἢ shout, cry  
 βρύχιος -α -ον bellowing  
 γαῖα -ας ἢ earth  
 δεξιός -ά -όν right  
 ἔδος -ους τό seat, foundation  
 ἐκπλους -οῦς ὁ launch, a sailing out  
 ἐκφανής -ές visible  
 ἐλευθερόω free  
 ἐπεκχωρέω advance next  
 ἐπιφλέγω inflame  
 εὐτάκτος -ον well-ordered, orderly  
 εὐφεγγής -ές very bright  
 εὐφημέω make a righteous sound  
 εὐψυχος -ον spirited  
 ἐφυμνέω sing a hymn  
 ἡγέομαι lead  
 ἡχώ -οῦς ἢ echo  
 θήκη -ης ἢ case, tomb  
 θοός -ά -όν quick  
 θράσος -ους τό boldness  
 καὶ μὴν *this phrase introduces a new topic in conversation*  
 κατα-έχω hold down, spread around  
 κέλαδος -ου ὁ noise  
 κέλευμα -ατος τό call

κέρας -ατος τό horn, wing  
 κλύω hear  
 κούκέτ' = καὶ οὐκέτι  
 κρυφαῖος -α -ον hidden  
 κώπη -ης ἢ handle (of an oar)  
 λευκόπωλος -ον white-horsed  
 μολπηδόν like a song  
 νησιώτης -δος ἢ islander  
 ξυνεμβολή -ῆς ἢ simultaneous throwing in  
 ὁμοῦ in the same place  
 παιάν -ἄνος ὁ paean, a victory song to a god  
 ὄρθιος -α -ον straight up  
 ὀρμάω hurry  
 οὐδαμῆ nowhere, no way  
 παίω strike  
 πάρα *As the accent indicates, this preposition takes a preceding object.*  
 πατρῶος -α -ον father's, hereditary  
 Περσικός -σίς -ικόν Persian  
 πρόγονος -ου ὁ ancestor  
 ῥόθιος -ιάδος -ον rushing sound  
 ῥόθος -ου ὁ a rushing sound  
 σάλπιγξ -ιγγος ἢ trumpet  
 σεμνός -ή -όν sacred  
 στόλος -ου ὁ expedition, army  
 στρατός -οῦ ὁ army  
 ὑπαντιάζω encounter  
 φυγῆ in hasty retreat  
 χωρέω move