

THE INVASION ENDS

In 479BC, the Greeks amassed an enormous army, led by the Spartan general Pausanias, and defeated the Persians on land at a place called Plataea. Meanwhile, Greek forces attacked and burned the entire Persian fleet while it was moored at Mycale, off the coast of Asia Minor. The Persian invasion was finally over.

MEETING ON DELOS

Most Greeks believed it was only a matter of time before the Persians struck again - and they wanted to be ready for an attack. In 478BC, representatives from Athens and allied states gathered together on the Aegean island of Delos to discuss the problem. There they formed the Delian League, an alliance against any future Persian aggression. Members promised ships and money, to defend each other's territories in times of war.

Map showing Delos and the Delian League



This painting of one of the Persian elite warriors, known as the Immortals, is taken from the palace at Susa, Persia.



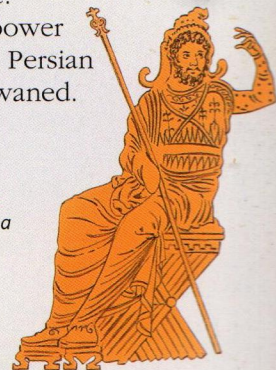
WAR IS OVER

After this, the Greeks and the Persians continued to squabble over various territories in the Mediterranean. Egypt, Cyprus and Ionia all became battlegrounds in the struggle between the two powers. Then, in 449BC, the Greeks and the Persians made peace at last.

PERSIA FALLS

By this time, however, the Persian empire was already sliding into decline. King Xerxes had been murdered in 465BC, and his successors were weak, making the empire unstable. Greek power grew as Persian power waned.

King Xerxes taken from a Greek vase dated 330BC



By 330BC, the once all-powerful Persian empire had been overrun by the next great conqueror of the ancient world - Alexander the Great, the King of Macedonia (see pages 242-243).