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MOLON LABE: THE GRECO-PERSIAN WARS
BACKGROUND GUIDE
TRITONMUN XXVII APRIL 27TH–28TH, 2024

MODEL UNITED NATIONS AT UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

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HEAD CHAIR LETTER

Greetings, fellow Hellenes!

My name is Yoyo Yang, and I am excited to be your Head Chair for the duration of conferences we will conduct throughout the Greco-Persian war. Outside of the Grecian council we have all found ourselves situated in, I am also a Political Science major with a concentration in International Relations, and this is my seventh year being involved—and making chaotic memories—in Model United Nations. In my free time, I enjoy ice skating, reading, 3D designing unconventional objects (such as a baguette guillotine), learning about art and music history, listening to a diverse spread of music (according to Spotify wrapped, I listened to 71 genres in 2023), as well as trying new things. As a committee, thus, I am more than excited to see the novel paths that you will take in regards to the current Greco-Persian conflict at hand, leading us to victory, doom, or a new empire.

Although our committee will begin alongside the Ionian revolt, there is no guarantee that the history that you know will play out exactly as-is in committee. Nevertheless, as politicians and military strategists with the gods at your back, I am urging you all to immerse yourselves in learning about the progression of wartime events, so you can make strategically sound (or absolutely bizarre) decisions and unfold the series of events that await. Utilize this committee as a way to unleash your raw inner passions as you practice speech-making, directive-writing, and people-negotiating skills. Play your cards to the advantage of all the Hellenes, or solely to yourself. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach me at luy008@ucsd.edu.

After all, the future of Greece is now rested upon your hands.

Best of luck,

Yoyo Yang

VICE CHAIR LETTER

Salvete Delegates!

My name is Paige Collier, and I will be your Vice Chair for Molon Labe! I am a second year student in Eleanor Roosevelt College majoring in Classical Studies, so I study Latin and Greek language. I also study Marine Sciences at Scripps Institute of Oceanography. In my free time, I love reading (mostly fantasy/dystopian), swimming (pool or ocean), surfing (learning to shortboard currently!), scuba diving (free diving, too), and all marine things. Originally I am from the East Bay Area and have been in MUN for 5 years now, starting in my sophomore year of high school. I am currently on UCSD's travel team and MUN exec board, and this will be my second time vice chairing for TritonMUN, and I have loved every second of my collegiate MUN experience!

As someone who studies Latin and Greek language and history, this committee covers topics that I have explored extensively. I encourage you to study up on your history, mythology, and do some extra research into the characters you will be working with. The deeper you dive, the more you will get from this committee. That being said, this committee may not play out the way that history does (we encourage creativity!). Because I love the mythology, the classics, and the history behind this committee, and I am so excited to see what direction all of you will take with it. If you have any questions about resources or simply want to chat about anything classics, college, or MUN, my email is pcollier@ucsd.edu. I look forward to hearing from you! Good luck delegates, and I can't wait to see what you guys have prepared for this committee.

Bona fortuna,

Paige Collier

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

TRITONMUN POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

- Position Papers are due on **April 19 at 11:59pm.**
 - Requests for extensions must be sent by the advisor to TritonMUN by **April 12.**
- Position Papers must be submitted to the **Google Form** linked here:
 - <https://forms.gle/aAsXEQrSxrbPTxDX6>
- Format
 - For committees with one topic there should be two pages for the topic with an additional page for citations, for a total of 3 pages.
 - Papers should be single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font and include no pictures.
 - At the top of each paper, include your country/person, name, committee, and topic.
 - Required* Sections: Each of these sections should be clearly labeled
 - Background
 - Past Actions by the Committee (if applicable)
 - Position of your Country/Person
 - Possible Solutions

*Some committees may ask for different formatting or an alternative to a position paper altogether, this will be clearly noted in the background guide for that committee

COMMITTEE POLICIES

First things first, this is a **no-tech committee** (after all, there was no internet back in Greece during 500-400 BCE). In other words, delegates will not be allowed to utilize their electronic devices at any time. Thus, if there is any research or documents needed by the delegate for the committee, make sure to print it out beforehand. Below is a recommended list of things to be printed out by a delegate:

- Background guide (to annotate)
- Position paper (to remind delegates of their arc as well as the general committee background shortened)
- Excerpts from research (could be utilized to make speech hooks and/or be more on policy)

Secondly, although this is a historical committee which follows historical events, history will only be set in stone until the Ionian Revolt. While there will be a general strong push towards the framework of historical events through the progression of the war, **some historical events may be out of order, or changed, as a result of the delegates' actions.** Furthermore, the committee will permit the **involvement of fictional elements**, especially in the sense of deities and general mythology to stimulate further creativity in the delegates' crisis arcs. Deities, however, will not be generally usable for a personal gain, but more for a committee-wide endeavor.

Thirdly, special ROP will take place twice in committee. A period of the committee will be dedicated to a committee-specific ROP, specifically an election for generals regarding the upcoming war. The ROP will be provided in-committee, once war is evident. The second special ROP involved is a timed crisis, where the entirety of the committee must submit one singular directive underneath a specified time restraint.

Lastly, delegates are more than welcome to bring personal props to add flair to their character. However, props must not be utilized to harm other delegates and must adhere to wider conference policies.

KEY TERMS

1. **Ionian Revolt (499–494 BCE):** Ionian Greek city-states in Asia Minor rebelled against Persian rule, seeking independence. The revolt was ultimately suppressed by the Persians.
 2. **First Persian Invasion (492–490 BCE):** King Darius I of Persia sought revenge for the Ionian Revolt. Persian forces captured Eretria but were defeated by the Athenians at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE.
 3. **Interwar Period (490–480 BCE):** A period of relative peace with sporadic conflicts and diplomatic maneuvering.
 4. **Second Persian Invasion (480–479 BCE):** After the Persian King Darius I's death, his son Xerxes I sought to fulfill his father's goal of expanding the Persian Empire by invading Greece. Xerxes assembled a massive army and navy, launching the second Persian invasion in 480 BCE.
 - a. **Battle of Thermopylae (480 BCE):** A small Greek force, including the 300 Spartans, delayed the Persian advance at the narrow pass of Thermopylae.
 - b. **Battle of Artemisium (480 BCE):** Simultaneous naval battles off the coast of Artemisium between Greek and Persian fleets.
 - c. **Battle of Salamis (480 BCE):** The Greek navy, led by Themistocles, achieved a decisive victory over the larger Persian fleet, changing the course of the war.
 - d. **Battle of Plataea (479 BCE):** A land battle where Greek forces, led by the Spartans, decisively defeated the Persians.
 5. **Battle of Mycale (479 BCE):** A naval battle where the Greeks, mainly Athenians, defeated the Persian fleet near the coast of Asia Minor.
 6. **Treaty of Callias (449 BCE):** A peace treaty between Athens and Persia, marking the official end of hostilities and recognizing the independence of Greek city-states in Asia Minor.
 7. **Polis:** An ancient Greek city-state. At the prime of Greece, there were an estimated number of 1,000 poleis.
 8. **Satrapy:** A province within the ancient Persian Empire, led by a satrap (governor) appointed by the King.
 9. **Lycurgan Constitution:** A set of rules utilized to outline the training timeline of Spartans from their youth to adulthood. This includes the *agoge*, or the training itself.
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MOLON LABE: THE GRECO-PERSIAN WAR



(Source: Unknown)

Listed below is a chronicle of events and background information on the committee's context and is the main contingent of debate throughout the committee. However, further and deeper research outside of the background guide—demonstrated in the written position paper as well as speeches—is highly smiled upon

CONTEXT

In 559 BCE, Cyrus II, the Persian king, established the Achaemenid dynasty. This marked the start of Persian territorial conquest, creating an empire that spanned from the Aegean Sea to the Indus River. Following the defeat of King Croesus of Lydia in 546 BCE, the prowess of Greek poleis, located on the Asian coast, were almost decimated. The Greeks, although resentful, did almost nothing at this time other than lodging diplomatic protests in Sparta.

The reign of Cyrus was succeeded by Darius, who planned on conquering Europe by building a pontoon bridge across the Bosphorus, the strait that connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara. Deploying Greek contingents within the Persian navy to build the bridge, the Persians proceeded to advance into the Scythian territory. While the Greek commanders underneath the Persian navy received requests from the Synthians to cut the bridge over the Danube, they remained loyal to the Persians and rejected the Synthians. Nevertheless, some

Greek states next to Hellespont and Bosphorus rose in protest due to Darius's endeavors. As a result, the Greek rebels were punished by the Persians and the establishment of a satrapy in southern Thrace cut the Scythians off from their Spartan allies. The Persian navy then weakened Imbros and Lemnos, and made preparations to attack Naxos, the strongest island within the Cyclades, a large group of islands, possibly intending to pave the way for a Grecian invasion.



(Source: Encyclopædia Britannica)

The Ionian Revolt

The Ionian Revolt, which took place from 499 BCE to 494 BCE, was a significant event that immediately preceded the Greco-Persian Wars. It involved the Greek city-states of Ionia, located in Asia Minor, rebelling against Persian rule. Herodotus discusses the causes and events of the Ionian Revolt, attributing the uprising to both the oppressive rule of the Persian satrap Aristagoras and the desire for freedom among the Ionian Greeks (Herodotus, "Histories" book 5). The revolt initially saw some success, including the capture and burning of the city of Sardis. However, it ultimately faced suppression by the Persians, with assistance from the tyrant Histiaeus and the city of Miletus. The Ionian Revolt set the stage for the broader Greco-Persian Wars, as the Greeks in mainland Greece became involved in the conflict to support their Ionian brethren.

First Invasion

The first invasion of the Greco-Persian War occurred in 490 BCE when the Persian Empire, led by King Darius I, sought to expand its influence by conquering Greece. The pivotal Battle of Marathon took place during this invasion, where a smaller Athenian force successfully repelled the larger Persian army. According to historian Herodotus, the Athenians displayed strategic brilliance and cohesion in their victory at Marathon (Herodotus, "Histories,"

6.102-117). The successful defense at Marathon inspired a sense of Greek unity and resilience against external threats. Additionally, it set the stage for the later conflicts, including the more famous battles at Thermopylae and Salamis, ultimately shaping the course of Western history.



(Artist: John Steeple Davis)

Second Invasion

Following the fall of Thermopylae, the Greeks, particularly the Athenians, adopted a defensive strategy. The Greek navy, under the leadership of Themistocles, lured the Persian fleet into the narrow straits near the island of Salamis. The Battle of Salamis took place in these congested waters. Themistocles devised a brilliant strategy to take advantage of the Greek navy's maneuverability in the confined space. The Greeks, with a smaller fleet, could outmaneuver the larger but less agile Persian fleet. The Greeks achieved a decisive victory at Salamis. The maneuverability of the Greek triremes played a crucial role, as they could navigate more efficiently in the narrow waters. The Greeks inflicted heavy losses on the Persian fleet, disrupting Xerxes' naval supremacy. The Battle of Salamis marked a turning point in the war. It not only preserved Greek naval dominance but also forced Xerxes to reconsider his plans. The defeat at Salamis significantly weakened the Persian forces, altering the course of the conflict (Herotodus, "Histories" 8.40-96).



(Source: The World of Wonder)

Outcome of the War

The outcome of the Greco-Persian War was a victory for the Greek city-states, marking a turning point in the conflict between the Greek world and the Persian Empire. The pivotal battles of Marathon (490 BCE), Salamis (480 BCE), and Plataea (479 BCE) contributed to the defeat of Persian forces. The significance of this victory lies in the preservation of Greek autonomy and the defense of democratic ideals against the expansionist ambitions of the Persian Empire. The Greco-Persian Wars became a symbol of Greek resilience, with the defense at Marathon inspiring a collective sense of national identity. Furthermore, the wars laid the foundation for the emergence of the Athenian Empire and contributed to the development of Western political thought. The lasting impact of these events is evident in the cultural and historical legacy they left on Western civilization (Herodotus, “Histories,” books 6-9).

CULTURES AND TRADITIONS AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN

Religion and Mythology

Religion and mythology held a central position in the cultural and spiritual fabric of ancient Greece, permeating every aspect of society from civic rituals to artistic expressions. The ancient Greeks worshiped a pantheon of gods and goddesses, each embodying different aspects of the human experience. At the zenith of this divine hierarchy was Zeus, the king of the gods, who ruled from Mount Olympus. Other prominent deities included Athena, goddess of wisdom; Apollo, associated with the arts and the sun; and Poseidon, god of the sea. The mythology of

ancient Greece was intricately woven into the daily lives of its people, shaping their understanding of the world and human nature. Epic poems such as Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," as well as Hesiod's "Theogony", served as foundational texts, recounting the tales of gods, heroes, and the creation of the cosmos. These myths not only explained natural phenomena but also provided moral lessons, exploring themes of hubris, fate, and the consequences of mortal actions. Rituals and festivals dedicated to the gods were integral to Greek religious practices. Cities had their own patron deities, and festivals like the Olympic Games were not only athletic competitions but also religious celebrations honoring Zeus. The Oracle at Delphi, a sacred site dedicated to Apollo, held immense influence, with seekers consulting the priestess for guidance on important decisions (Pallardy).



(Source: Pergamon Altar)

In ancient Persia, religion played a pivotal role in shaping the cultural and spiritual landscape, with Zoroastrianism emerging as the dominant faith. Founded by the prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra) around the 6th or 7th century BCE, Zoroastrianism introduced monotheistic principles, centered around the worship of the supreme deity Ahura Mazda. This religion emphasized the cosmic struggle between Ahura Mazda, the embodiment of truth and order, and Angra Mainyu (Ahriman), the force of falsehood and chaos.

Zoroastrian beliefs were codified in the Avesta, the sacred text of the faith. The Gathas, hymns attributed to Zoroaster, contained key ethical teachings and outlined the fundamental tenets of Zoroastrianism. Central to the religion was the concept of cosmic dualism, portraying the ongoing battle between good and evil, light and darkness. Fire was a sacred element in

Zoroastrian worship, symbolizing the divine presence and purity. Temples known as fire temples became places of religious gathering and rituals. The Magi, a priestly class, played a crucial role in maintaining sacred fires and conducting religious ceremonies.

Zoroastrianism influenced various aspects of Persian society, including governance and ethical conduct. The idea of divine judgment, the afterlife, and the eventual triumph of good over evil were key components of this faith. While Persian religion was anchored in Zoroastrianism, the region was also characterized by cultural diversity, and various local traditions and beliefs coexisted. The Achaemenid rulers, for instance, demonstrated a policy of religious tolerance, allowing subjects to practice their own faiths (Duchesne-Guillemin).



(Source: Lamassus from the citadel of Sargon II)

Economics and Trade

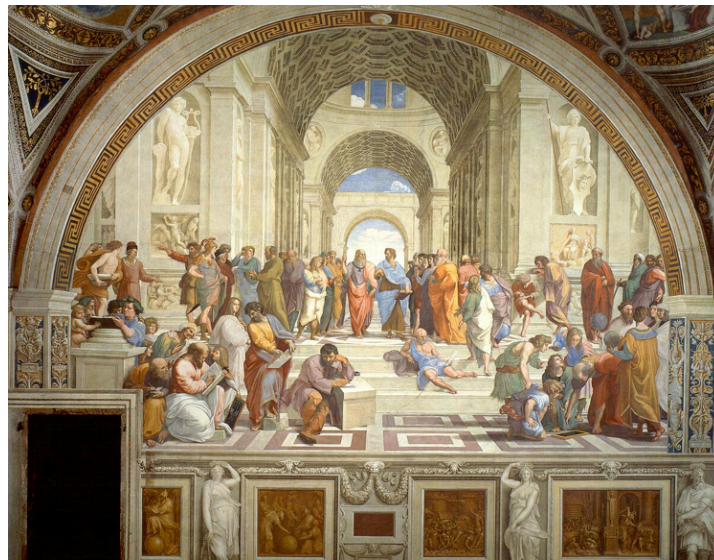
Maritime trade was the dominant source of imports and exports within the ancient Grecian world. Specifically, the Greeks conducted trade in craftsmanship, general commerce, as well as agriculture (due to the region's poor quality soil). However, Greece's location in the Mediterranean provided them with access to a few of Egypt's crucial trade routes and seaports, alleviating the limited crop production in the region. The Greek coinage system during the period was the drachma.

Underneath the Achaemenid empire, trade routes reaching a length of 2,500 kilometers connected distant lands with one another, providing a rapid 15-day transportation time to the most remote corners. Given the far reaches and diversity of peoples, thus, tariffs became one of

the empire's primary places of income, followed by tribute and agriculture. The Persian coinage system during the period was the daric.

Culture and Customs

Ancient Greece thrived on a rich tradition of oral storytelling. The Greeks placed a high value on oratory skills, and public speaking was integral to civic life. Greek society was divided into distinct classes. At the top were the aristocrats or land-owning elites, followed by the middle-class citizens, and then the lower-class individuals, including slaves. Citizenship rights were often exclusive, and participation in politics was a defining feature of the privileged citizenry. For centuries, ancient Greece has been renowned for its contributions to democratic governance. City-states like Athens implemented democratic systems, where eligible citizens participated in decision-making. Political engagement, public debates, and civic duties were highly esteemed. Greek culture celebrated the ideals of beauty, wisdom, and virtue. The Olympic Games, held in honor of Zeus, showcased physical prowess and athletic excellence. Philosophy, with luminaries like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, explored the nature of existence and moral philosophy. The arts, including drama and sculpture, flourished as expressions of Greek creativity.



(Artist: Raphael)

Persia, with a diverse cultural landscape, had oral traditions that emphasized storytelling and folklore. While Zoroastrianism had sacred texts like the *Avesta*, oral transmission of cultural

narratives played a crucial role in preserving traditions. Persian society under the Achaemenid Empire featured a hierarchical structure. The king, known as the "Great King," held a central role, surrounded by nobles and administrators. The common populace, engaged in agriculture and craftsmanship, formed the base of the social pyramid. The Persian Empire, known for its vast territorial expanse, employed a system of governance that included satraps (provincial governors) overseeing regions. While the king's authority was absolute, a degree of administrative decentralization allowed local cultures and traditions to persist. Zoroastrianism greatly influenced Persian cultural norms, emphasizing the values of truth, justice, and righteousness. Respect for elders, hospitality, and loyalty were integral to Persian ethos. The empire showcased architectural marvels like Persepolis, reflecting grandeur and artistic achievements (Kitto).



(Source: Unknown)

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What faults did the Greeks make during the Greco-Persian war? How could that be avoided? What faults did the Persians make to result in their defeat? How could that be exploited?
 2. What were some actions and policies done by the Greek city-states during the time period? How could that be applied to align with your character's arc?
 3. What would your character's opinions be towards the events that happened throughout the war? If they could have changed the flow of events, what would they have done instead?
 4. Which characters would your character ally with? Which ones might they oppose?
 5. Which renowned people, outside of the committee, might your character have had ties with? Consider writing to them as a point of contact in communiques (aka personal directives).
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SUGGESTED FURTHER RESEARCH & PRIMARY SOURCES

For suggested readings, if you are interested in a primary source that reports the historical happenings of the Greek tradition, *Histories* by Herodotus is a very reliable source. Herodotus, hailing from the Greek city of Halicarnassus within the Persian Empire and later becoming a citizen of Thurii in modern Calabria, Italy, was a notable Greek historian and geographer. His renowned work, *Histories*, provides a comprehensive narrative of the Greco-Persian Wars.

If you are interested in a primary source detailing the family tree and origin of all of the Greek gods, Hesiod's *Theogony* is the source for you. *Theogony* is a poem written by the ancient Greek poet Hesiod, and is good for any reference to mythology or theology of Greek antiquity. It is a significant work in Greek mythology, providing an account of the origin and genealogy of the gods. In *Theogony*, Hesiod describes the creation of the universe, the birth of the gods, and the succession of divine rulers.

If learning about the rise and fall of Greek city-states, in addition to the key terms and intricacies of the time period, sound like something of your interest, *The Greeks* by Kitto is another helpful source to read from to learn more about the history of these ancient peoples.

More sources that would be helpful for thoroughness include *History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides. Although Thucydides primarily focuses on the Peloponnesian War, his work provides insights into the political and military strategies of ancient Greece. Thucydides is known for his analytical approach and critical examination of historical events. Additionally, Aeschylus, a Greek playwright, wrote the tragedy *Persians*, which offers a dramatic portrayal of the Persian perspective on their defeat in the Battle of Salamis. While it is a work of literature, it provides a unique cultural and emotional perspective. Lastly, Plutarch's *Lives*, his biographical works, particularly those of Themistocles and Aristides, offer details about key figures involved in the Greco-Persian Wars. Plutarch's *Lives* provides character sketches and anecdotes that contribute to a deeper understanding of the historical figures.

CHARACTERS



(Source: Unknown)

Attached below is a list of characters present in the committee. Each delegate will have distinct powers and interests. Further research into the character's background is strongly encouraged, and an additional document with confidential character assets will be provided on the first day of conference.

Themistocles: As a non-aristocratic Athenian politician, the charismatic and outspoken Themistocles is very much supported by the common people but is generally at odds with the upper class. Elected the archon soon after the Ionian revolt, he consistently advocated for a strong Athenian navy.

Miltiades: As an Athenian General at the Battle of Marathon, Miltiades the Younger comes from an Athenian aristocratic family known for their Olympic chariot racing skills. Currently, he is the ruler of Chersonese and is wedded to Hegesipyle, daughter of King Olorus of Thrace.

Callias II: Callias II is an Athenian statesman, soldier, and diplomat who always had a way with words. Born to a wealthy family that provided slaves to the state-owned silver mine of Laurion, Callias is coined as one of the richest men of Athens.

Cimon: Cimon is an Athenian general (strategos) and politician. He is also the son of Miltiades. With a reputation of being blunt, dissolute, unrefined, and a fine drinker, he is commonly compared by the Athenian public to be more analogous to a Spartan than an Athenian.

Cleisthenes: As the head of the powerful Alcmaeonid clan and known as “the father of Athenian democracy,” Cleisthenes is an Athenian lawgiver accredited with setting Athens on a democratic

footing. He also increased the power of the Athenian citizens' assembly and reduced the power of nobles.

Pausanias: Pausanias the Regent is a Spartan leader of the Hellenic League's combined land forces, and is born into the royal Agiads lineage. As the nephew of Leonidas I, he is also a motivated learner of the ways of war through the agoge system during his youth. He is also experienced in politics, having served as regent of Sparta for a short duration.

Leonidas I: Leonidas is a Spartan general and half-brother of Cleomenes known for his bravery and valence in battle as well as his pride and confidence on the home front. According to the conversations heard on the Grecian front, he also has an extremely cocky personality. Leonidas is, additionally, a leader of the combined Greek forces.

Eurybiades: Eurybiades is a Spartan commander well-versed in the ways of naval warfare, following in the footsteps of his father. Eurybiades is slightly on the edge regarding Athen's recent amassing of power. He is adept at strategy games and military tactics but excels when provided with monetary funds from others to support his actions.

Cleomenes: Cleomenes I is one of the kings of Sparta from the Agiad family, ruling alongside Demaratus of the Eurypontid dynasty. A remarkably skilled politician, but often quick to anger in his private life, he has played a vital role in organizing the Greek resistance to Persian rule.

Demaratus: Demaratus of the Eurypontid family is one of the kings of Sparta, sharing power with Cleomenes I of the Agiad family. Although the growing Persian influence poses a threat to his rule, Demaratus has shown some reluctance to engage the Persian army in full-scale warfare.

Dienekes: Dienekes is a highly regarded commander of the Spartan forces, serving under Leonidas I. In addition to his leadership qualities and fighting prowess, he is well-known for his witty remarks in the heat of battle. *[Note for delegate: Dienekes has a limited amount of historical records, so creating an arc inferred from his allies' policies is permitted]*

Artemisia: Artemisia I of Caria is the Queen of the Greek city-state Halicarnassus. Known for her brilliant strategic mind and naval specialization, her city-state is stuck between its loyalty to the other Greek city-states and its proximity to the Persian Empire.

Inaros II: Inaros II is a Libyan king in control of territory around Libya, the western border of Egypt. Although his territory is currently controlled by the Persians, he has begun to lead a revolt against the current satrapy.

Dorkis: Dorkis was a Spartan general sent to Byzantium to help aid in war preparation and strategizing. He has also taken the role of a high-ranking messenger, always ready to transmit reliable information. *[Note for delegate: Dorkis has a limited amount of historical records, so creating an arc inferred from his allies' policies is permitted]*

Alexander I: Alexander I is the king of Macedonia, whose territory is currently under Persian occupation. However, his true loyalties lie with the Greek city-states, and he has secretly been providing the coalition with supplies and intelligence about the Persian army.



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