

facing a consolidated Assyrian Empire, and a life and death struggle between the two was imminent. Spheres of influence were being contended for and alliances sought by both, especially with the Greek peoples and potentates, whose military and naval power, particularly the latter, was considerable. Cyrus and Cambyses in Persia and Amasis in Egypt were the monarchs of the respective nations at the Pythagorean period, and Polykrates was the ruler of Samos, between whom and Amasis there was a close and apparently a personal friendship. A map of the Levant, extended to include Italy, will show the important position of this island at a time when the mariner's compass was not in use and vessels crept along the shores, guided by such sailing directions as we find in the Odyssey.

Samos is one of the loveliest islands of the beautiful *Ægean*, only a mile from the Asiatic coast, some forty-five miles south from Smyrna. It is thirty miles in length by eight or ten in breadth, and as a mountain of nearly 5,000 feet slopes upwards from a fertile plain, it is well watered and highly productive. Its exports now reach a million dollars of annual value.¹

This was not, let me incidentally mention, the Samos mentioned in the *Iliad* (Bk. II, v. 634) as sending to the Trojan war part of the small contingent of a dozen ships commanded by Ulysses. We hear of it, however, in historic times as one of the most powerful members of the Ionic Confederacy, and we know that its people were among the first to turn their attention to naval affairs. Colæus, the Samian, was the first Greek to sail out into the Atlantic, and the islanders founded numerous colonies in the comparatively barbarian lands of Thrace, Italy and Sicily. The little state reached its highest development under Polykrates. One may wonder if Mnesarchus engraved the gem for Polykrates about which Herodotus tells his well-known story. The tyrant (or perpetual president) had been so wonderfully fortunate that, as he told Amasis, he distrusted his luck, and was advised to throw his most highly prized possession into the sea. He cast his ring into the waves, which was returned to him in a fish

¹ Mr. Victor Bérard (*Revue des Religions*, vol. 39) gives an interesting account of the names of the *Ægean* Islands. Samos, once called Same, is thought to be named from the Phœnician Sama, a height. One of its early names was *Μελάμφυλος*, darkly shaded; another was *Δρίονσσα*, from its oak forests. By the Carians it was called *Παρθενία*, the Virgin Isle, and still another Phœnician name was *Ἰνύρατος*. Still another appellation was *Ἀνθεμῖς*, in allusion to the flower plain which faced the narrow strait between it and Asia Minor, which was the channel through which all vessels plying between Egypt and the Hellespont had to pass. Its position for strategic purposes was therefore unrivalled, and pirates found the situation suitable whenever the naval policing of the Levant was lax.