

The Founding Story of Salamis

Teucer announces, "Despair in no way, tomorrow we will set out upon the vast ocean [for a new homeland in Cyprus]."

At the end of the Trojan War, Teucer returned to his home island of Salamis (an island near Greece) carrying news of his brother, Ajax's, death to his father, King Telamon. The king cursed Teucer for not preventing his brother's death nor did he avenge his brother's death on Odysseus. King Telamon had mistakenly thought that Teucer had abandoned Ajax in his moment of need because he had his eye on the throne and future kingdom of Salamis. It was on this reasoning that King Telamon made his decision to banish Teucer from his island homeland of Salamis. Humiliated and dejected, Teucer sails away with his soldiers in search of Cyprus in hopes of making this island their new home. On the way, Teucer's ship is blown off course. After several days of being lost in the Mediterranean Sea, Teucer lands on the shores of Egypt. He had heard that the famous prophetess Theonoe lived in Egypt. She had been born with the gift of divine knowledge of all things present and to come. He decides to go ashore to seek out an oracle or revelation from Theonoe. If he spoke with Theonoe, Teucer had confidence he would know the correct course to take to get to Cyprus. He says:

"The reason of my coming to this royal palace was a wish to see the famous prophetess Theonoe. I wish to ask how I shall steer a favorable course to the sea-girt shores of Cyprus; for there Apollo hath declared my home shall be, giving to it the name of Salamis." Teucer – son of King Telamon

Instead of finding Theonoe, he stumbles into a beautiful woman, Helen. She says to him, "Who are you and where are you going?" Teucer responds by telling her about his participation in the battle of Troy and that he has been exiled from his birthplace, the island of Salamis by his father King Telamon. Teucer also tells her that he had been

sailing to Cyprus to make a new home but has lost his way. He says he is looking for Theonoe to learn from her the quickest course to Cyprus. Helen replies that Cyprus is easy to find but he should leave Egypt soon before the king of the land, son of Proteus, finds him there. The king kills all Greeks who approach the shores of Egypt. Helen tells Teucer the way to Cyprus and Teucer safely leaves Egypt bound for his new home. After he arrives in Cyprus, Teucer founds a new Salamis, the city of Salamis, which he names in honor of his birthplace. Salamis was the capital of Cyprus until the Romans conquered Cyprus. Salamis was eventually destroyed by earthquakes sometime around 332 A.D. – 342 A.D.

Story Location Clue: The ruins of Salamis are located on the eastern coast of Cyprus. It is located 5 miles northeast of Famagusta at the base of the Karpas Peninsula.