

ARMIES AND NAVIES

The Battle of Mantinea (362)

Introduction

- The second Battle of Mantinea (362 BCE) was fought between the Spartans and their allies vs. the Thebans and their allies. The main source is Xenophon's *Hellenika*.
- What we will be doing now is go through Xenophon's description with a fine-toothed comb.

Basics

- Before close reading any battle account, you need to do some preliminary research:
 - Who is the author? What are their credentials in terms of warfare knowledge?
 - Where did the battle take place? What was the terrain?
 - How long were the armies already on the field, or on campaign?

7.5.19

Xenophon and
the Thebans?

Common or
uncommon?

- "Now the fact that **Epaminondas** himself entertained such thoughts, **seems to me** to be in no wise remarkable, — for such thoughts are natural to ambitious men; but that he had brought his army to such a point **that the troops flinched from no toil**, whether by night or by day, and shrank from no peril, and although **the provisions they had were scanty**, were nevertheless willing to be obedient, this seems to me to **be more remarkable**. "

Long on
campaign?

Xenophon's
experience

WHY?

7.5.20

- For at the time when he gave them the last order to make ready, saying that there would be a battle, the horsemen **eagerly whitened their helmets** at his command, the hoplites of the Arcadians **painted clubs upon their shields, as though they were Thebans**, and all alike sharpened their spears and daggers and **burnished their shields**.

7.5.21

- But when he had led them forth, thus made ready, it is worth while again to note what he did. In the first place, as was natural, **he formed them in line of battle**. And by doing this he seemed to make it clear that he was preparing for an engagement; but when his army had been drawn up as he wished it to be, **he did not advance by the shortest route towards the enemy**, but led the way towards the mountains which lie to the westward and over against Tegea, **so that he gave the enemy the impression that he would not join battle on that day**.

7.5.22 (I)

- For as soon as he had arrived at the mountain, and when his battle line had been extended to its full length, he grounded arms at the foot of the heights, so that he seemed like one who was encamping. And by so doing he caused among most of the enemy a relaxation of their mental readiness for fighting, and likewise a relaxation of their readiness as regards their array for battle.

7.5.22 (II)

- It was not until he had moved along successive companies to the wing where he was stationed, and had wheeled them into line thus strengthening the mass formation of this wing, that he gave the order to take up arms and led the advance; and his troops followed. Now as soon as the enemy saw them unexpectedly approaching, no one among them was able to keep quiet, but some began running to their posts, others forming into line, others bridling horses, and others putting on breast-plates, while all were like men who were about to suffer, rather than to inflict, harm.

7.5.23

- Meanwhile Epaminondas led forward **his army** **prow on, like a trireme**, believing that if he could strike **and cut through anywhere**, he would destroy the entire army of his adversaries. For he was preparing **to make the contest with the strongest part of his force**, and the **weakest part he had stationed far back**, knowing that if defeated it would cause discouragement to the troops who were with him and give courage to the enemy.

7.5.23-4

- Again, while the enemy had formed their horsemen like a phalanx of hoplites, — six deep and without intermingled foot soldiers, Epaminondas on the other hand had made a strong column of his cavalry, also, and had mingled foot soldiers among them, believing that when he cut through the enemy's cavalry, he would have defeated the entire opposing army; for it is very hard to find men who will stand firm when they see any of their own side in flight. And in order to prevent the Athenians on the left wing from coming to the aid of those who were posted next to them, he stationed both horsemen and hoplites upon some hills over against them, desiring to create in them the fear that if they proceeded to give aid, these troops would fall upon them from behind.

7.5.24-5

- Thus, then, he made his attack, and he was not disappointed of his hope; for by gaining the mastery at the point where he struck, **he caused the entire army of his adversaries to flee.** [25] When, however, **he had himself fallen, those who were left proved unable to take full advantage thereafter even of the victory;** but although the opposing phalanx had fled before them, their hoplites did not kill a single man or advance beyond the spot where the collision had taken place; and although the cavalry also had fled before them, **their cavalry in like manner did not pursue and kill either horsemen or hoplites,** but slipped back timorously, like beaten men, through the lines of the flying enemy.

7.5.26-7

- Furthermore, while the intermingled footmen and the peltasts, who had shared in the victory of the cavalry, did make their way like victors to the region of the enemy's left wing, most of them were there slain by the Athenians. When these things had taken place, the opposite of what all men believed would happen was brought to pass. For since well-nigh all the people of Greece had come together and formed themselves in opposing lines, there was no one who did not suppose that if a battle were fought, those who proved victorious would be the rulers and those who were defeated would be their subjects; but the deity so ordered it that both parties set up a trophy as though victorious and neither tried to hinder those who set them up, that both gave back the dead under a truce as though victorious, and both received back their dead under a truce as though defeated, and that while each party claimed to be victorious, [27] neither was found to be any better off, as regards either additional territory, or city, or sway, than before the battle took place; but there was even more confusion and disorder in Greece after the battle than before.