

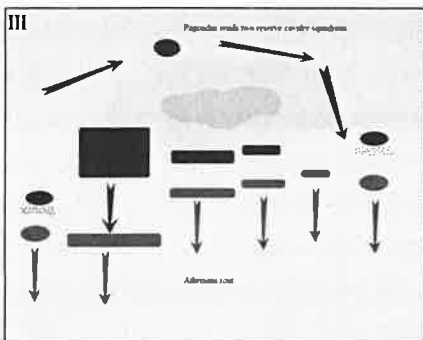
The Battle of Delion 424BCE

The Battle of Delion took place in November of 424BCE. Hippocrates was returning for Boetia but they already had knowledge of the Athenians attacking and so had an army ready. Hippocrates and the Athenian troops were therefore caught off guard by the Boetian armies. Thucydides suggested that they crashed into one another on the run and pushed against each other, shields in hand, for the brutal battle. The Theban armies were 25 deep, with the Athenians only being 8 (Oxford University Press, 2001, Hornblower). The Athenians had 7000 hoplites which were matched by the Boetians having 7000 hoplites, 1000 cavalry and 10000 light troops. This resulted in the Athenians being massively outnumbered and they lost 1000 men which was equivalent to 1/7 of their entire force.

"Demosthenes, taking the larger part of the army, invaded Boetia, but finding the Boeotians already informed of the betrayal he withdrew without accomplishing anything; Hippocrates led the popular levy of the Athenians against Delium, seized the place, and threw a wall about it before the approach of the Boeotians" (Diod 12. 69). This suggests that the Boetians wanted to establish democracies and they discussed this with Hippocrates and Demosthenes. They said

they would give them the Boetian cities which would enable them to have a fresh start. This quote from Diodorus suggests that Demosthenes travelled too early and the allying Spartans gave the Boetians a heads up that the Athenians were going to attack. This meant that the Boetians could be prepared for the assault. Demosthenes was outnumbered and had to withdraw his troops to maintain his army to same extent.

Figure 1: The Battle of Delium (Image from: <https://alchetron.com/Battle-of-Delium#demo>)



Hippocrates arrived and started to fortify the temple in Boetia which was completed in 5 days. The Boetians gathered troops to reattack but realised that the Athenians were heading back to Athens and so retracted until Pagondas, one of the Theban generals to attack because he knew that they would return. They used Delium as a base for further invasions. Both surrounded the hilly area and so they couldn't see each other until they physically came in contact. When they came back around the Athenians mistook themselves for the Peloponnesians and so ended up killing themselves.

Bibliography:

Diodorus Siculus. Diodorus of Sicily in Twelve Volumes C. H. Oldfather (trans). 1989. London: Harvard University Press.

You have made an effort.

To improve

- ① Read more ancient sources. Why are you ignoring Thucydides?
- ② Research more carefully to avoid mistakes. You have completely misunderstood this event.
- ③ Engage more with modern scholarship