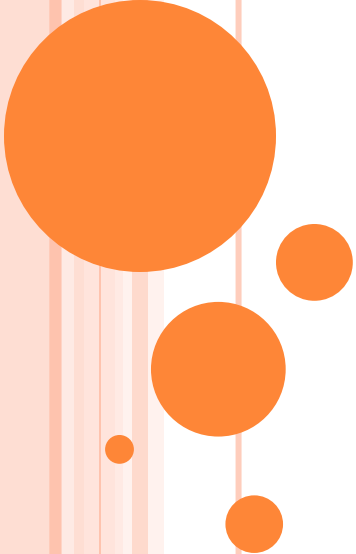




SPARTA: AN EXTRAORDINARY CITY

Lecture 15: Agesilaos

THE AFTERMATH OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

- In 404, Sparta had an empire on land and sea.
- It was the most powerful polis in the Greek world.
- It had an understanding with Persia and its support in Greece and the Aegean.



TIMELINE

End of the
Peloponnesian
War, 404

Beginning of
Corinthian
War, 395



DIVISIONS IN THE PELOPONNESIAN LEAGUE

- In 404, Thebes and Corinth wanted Athens to be destroyed
- The Spartans did not destroy Athens but imposed an oligarchy
 - the 30 Tyrants
- This was the first major problem in the Peloponnesian League after the victory of Aigospotamoi.



THE 30, ATHENS, ARGOS, MEGARA AND THEBES

So, then, Theramenes died; but the Thirty, thinking that now they could play the tyrant without fear, issued a proclamation forbidding those who were outside the roll to enter the city and evicted them from their estates, in order that they themselves and their friends might have these people's lands. **And when they fled to Piraeus, they drove many of them away from there also, and filled both Megara and Thebes with the refugees.**

Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.4.1



THE 30, ATHENS, ARGOS, MEGARA AND THEBES

The Lacedaemonians, seeing the city of the Athenians abased in power and having no desire that the Athenians should ever gain strength, were delighted and made their attitude clear; for they voted that the Athenian exiles should be delivered up to the Thirty from all over Greece and that anyone who attempted to prevent this should be liable to a fine of five talents. Though this decree was shocking, all the rest of the cities, dismayed at the power of the Spartans, obeyed it, **with the exception of the Argives who, hating as they did the cruelty of the Lacedaemonians** and pitying the hard lot of the unfortunate, were the first to receive the exiles in a spirit of humanity. **Also the Thebans voted that anyone who witnessed an exile being led off and did not render him all aid within his power should be subject to a fine.**

Diodoros 14.6



MERCY OR ANTI-SPARTAN FEELING

- Argos was an old enemy of Sparta and would not hesitate to undermine any Spartan supremacy.
- Megara and Thebes were members of the Peloponnesian League.
- Thebes had urged for the destruction of Athens but during the regime of the 30 Tyrants provided help to the Athenian democrats.



THE THEBAN POLICY

- The Theban policy towards Athens is one of the earliest signs of Theban ambition towards hegemony.
- Initially, Thebes advocated the destruction of Athens, probably with the view to robbing Sparta of an important and powerful ally in central Greece.
- By helping the Athenian democrats, Thebes achieved a similar target, since the democrats, if in power, would not blindly follow the directives of Sparta.



DISAFFECTION IN THE LEAGUE

And all the allies likewise followed with him, excepting the Boeotians and the Corinthians; and the plea of these was that they did not think they would be true to their oaths if they took the field against the Athenians when the latter were doing nothing in violation of the treaty; in fact, however, they acted as they did because they supposed that the Lacedaemonians wanted to make the territory of the Athenians their own sure possession.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.4.30



DISAFFECTION IN THE LEAGUE

Now the Lacedaemonians were glad to seize a pretext for undertaking a campaign against the Thebans, for they had long been angry with them both on account of their claiming Apollo's tenth at Decelea and their refusing to follow them against Piraeus. Furthermore, they charged them with persuading the Corinthians likewise not to join in that campaign.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.5.5



DISAFFECTION IN THE LEAGUE

- The Corinthians and Boiotians, led by the Thebans, refused to help Sparta support the 30 Tyrants militarily.
- That was a blow to Sparta from some of its most important allies; it eventually became part of Spartan accusation of Thebes as a traitorous ally.
- Corinth by trying to limit Spartan power in Athens safeguarded its position as prime maritime power in the Peloponnese and the Peloponnesian League.



THE SITUATION IN ASIA MINOR

- Lysander had established a number of decarchies in Asia Minor and the eastern Aegean islands.
- By 403-2, a lot of these decarchies had been abolished.



THE ASIA MINOR DECARCHIES AND INTERNAL SPARTAN CONFLICTS

...but, in addition, he wanted to make the expedition with Agesilaus on his own account also, in order that with the aid of Agesilaus he might re-establish the decarchies which had been set up by him in the cities, **but had been overthrown through the ephors**, who had issued a proclamation restoring to the cities their ancient form of government.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.4.2



THE ASIA MINOR DECARCHIES AND INTERNAL SPARTAN CONFLICTS

- Clearly by 402, Spartan policy towards the allies had changed.
- The democracy had been restored in Athens and most of the decarchies in Asia Minor had been abolished.
- This is directly related to the strained relations between Lysander and king Pausanias, since their internal struggle for power in Sparta was translated in different policies towards the allies.
- In 402, Pausanias held the upper hand and the decarchies had been abolished, but the propaganda damage had already been done in the allies' view of Sparta as an imperial power.



CYRUS, THE SPARTANS AND PERSIA

So ended the civil strife at Athens. Shortly after this Cyrus sent messengers to Lacedaemon and asked that the Lacedaemonians should show themselves as good friends to him as he was to them in the war against the Athenians. And the ephors, thinking that what he said was fair, sent instructions to Samius, at that time their admiral, to hold himself under Cyrus' orders, in case he had any request to make. And in fact Samius did zealously just what Cyrus asked of him: he sailed round to Cilicia at the head of his fleet, in company with the fleet of Cyrus, and made it impossible for Syennesis, the ruler of Cilicia, to oppose Cyrus by land in his march against the Persian king.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.1.1



THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

490 B.C.

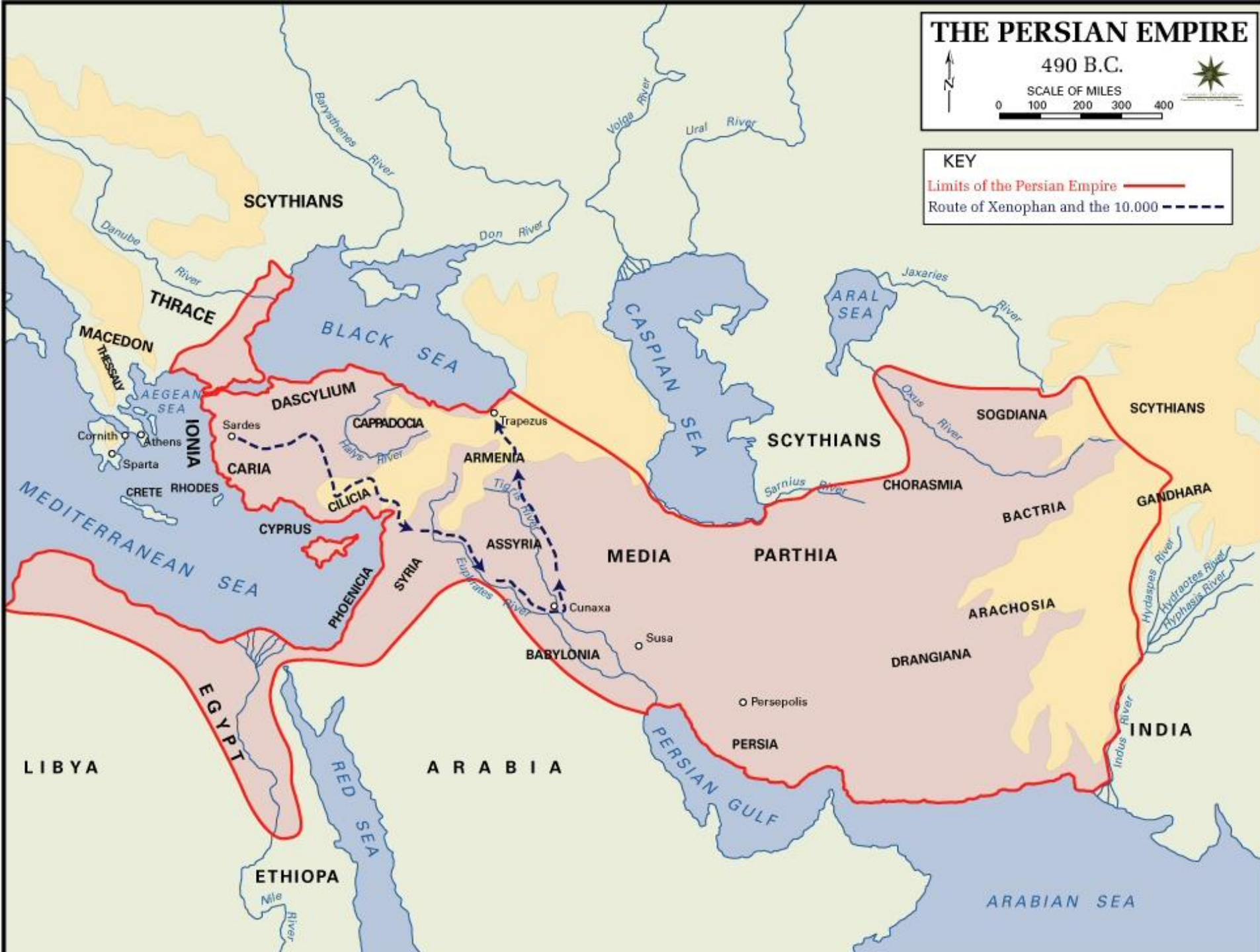
SCALE OF MILES

0 100 200 300 400

KEY

Limits of the Persian Empire ———

Route of Xenophon and the 10,000 - - - -



SPARTA AND PERSIA

- Sparta by providing help to Cyrus in his rebellion against his brother Artaxerxes effectively came into direct conflict with Persia.
- With the defeat of Cyrus, Spartan credibility in the Persian court had been lost.
- Like the Athenians in the 410s had lost the King's support by supporting Amorges' rebellion, Sparta lost Persian support by supporting Cyrus.



SPARTA IN CENTRAL AND NORTHERN GREECE

- Sparta in the years after 404 started a campaign of domination in central and northern Greece.
- Lysander established an oligarchy in Thasos, campaigned in Thrace and besieged Aphytis in the Chalcidice.
- The Spartans tried to help the Thessalians against Macedon.
- A Spartan garrison was established at Pharsalos in Thessaly.
- The Spartans put down a stasis in Herakleia Trachinia.



SPARTA'S GREEK POLICY

- Sparta effectively had the Peloponnese under its dominion.
- By targeting Thessaly and northern Greece it was trying to replace Athens as main imperial power in the region but unlike Athens it wanted access to the interior as well as the seaboard.
- Coupled with Spartan domination of Asia Minor the situation was grave for any polis in central Greece and the Peloponnese that wanted a measure of independence.



SPARTA, CORINTH AND THE WEST

- After the defeat of the Athenians, the Greeks of Sicily had an even greater threat to fight against, Carthage.
- In the course of the rebuilding after the Athenian invasion and the beginnings of Carthaginian aggression, Dionysius I became tyrant of Syracuse with Spartan support.
- Syracuse was a Corinthian colony with close relations with its mother-city. The Spartan intervention in Syracuse was a direct hit on Corinthian interests.
- Sparta by supporting Dionysius in Syracuse managed not only to get his naval support in the Aegean but also to cultivate a close relationship with one of the great military powers in the Greek world.



THE OFFENSIVE AGAINST PERSIA

- In 400 Thibron was sent to help the Ionian cities against Tissaphernes, satrap of Lydia.
- In 399, Derkyllidas replaced Thibron but concentrated on the satrapy of Hellespontine Phrygia. Hellespontine Phrygia was very important if one wanted to control the Hellespont and, thus, traffic between the Aegean and the Black Sea.



THE PERSIAN REACTION: CONON AND ATHENS

Pharnabazus, after the truce had been made with the Lacedaemonians, went back to the King and **won him over to the plan of preparing a fleet and appointing Conon the Athenian as its admiral**; for Conon was experienced in the encounters of war and especially in combat with the present enemy, and although he excelled in warfare, he was at the time in Cyprus at the court of Evagoras the king. After the King had been persuaded, Pharnabazus took five hundred talents of silver and prepared to fit out a naval force. Sailing across to Cyprus, he ordered the kings there **to make ready a hundred triremes and then, after discussions with Conon about the command of the fleet, he appointed him supreme commander at sea, giving indications in the name of the King of great hopes Conon might entertain. Conon, in the hope not only that he would recover the leadership in Greece for his native country if the Lacedaemonians were subdued in war but also that he would himself win great renown, accepted the command.**

Diodoros 14.39



THE PERSIAN OFFENSIVE

- The Persian King after being betrayed by Sparta (Sparta had not only attacked Persian interests in Asia Minor but also had supported Cyrus in his bid for the Persian throne) utilised Sparta's recent enemy, Athens.
- Athens still does not have much of a fleet but Konon will become the most powerful figure in Athenian politics in the 390s.



THE SPARTAN ANSWER: AGESILAOS

Now while the Lacedaemonians were in a state of great excitement, and were gathering together their allies and taking counsel as to what they should do, Lysander, thinking that the Greeks would be far superior on the sea, and reflecting that the land force which went up country with Cyrus had returned safely, persuaded Agesilaus to promise, in case the Lacedaemonians would give him thirty Spartiatae, two thousand emancipated Helots, and a contingent of six thousand of the allies, to make an expedition to Asia. Such were the motives which actuated Lysander, but, in addition, he wanted to make the expedition with Agesilaus on his own account also, in order that with the aid of Agesilaus he might re-establish the decarchies which had been set up by him in the cities, but had been overthrown through the ephors, who had issued a proclamation restoring to the cities their ancient form of government.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.4.2



THE SPARTAN ANSWER

- With renewed Persian aggression, Sparta stepped up its offensive.
- The new king, Agesilaos, was sent to Asia Minor with troops in order to fight against Persia and with the express aim of “liberating the Greeks”.
- Remember that these are the same Greeks that Sparta had given up to Persia for Persian support in the Peloponnesian War and had later suffered Lysander’s decarchies.



THE SACRIFICE AT AULIS

When he had reached Aulis, however, the Boeotarchs, on learning that he was sacrificing, sent horsemen and bade him discontinue his sacrificing, and they threw from the altar the victims which they found already offered. Then Agesilaus, calling the gods to witness, and full of anger, embarked upon his trireme and sailed away. And when he arrived at Gerastus and had collected there as large a part of his army as he could, he directed his course to Ephesus.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.4.4



THE POINT OF THE BOIOTARCHS

- By sacrificing at Aulis, Agesilaos made an important propaganda point, since Aulis was where Agamemnon had sacrificed before setting out in the Trojan War.
- The Thebans stopped the sacrifice as a protest against Spartan imperialistic ambitions.



AGESILAOS AND SHADOW DIPLOMACY

When he reached Ephesus, Tissaphernes at once sent and asked him with what intent he had come. And he answered: **“That the cities in Asia shall be autonomous, as are those in our part of Greece.”** In reply to this Tissaphernes said: **“Then if you are willing to make a truce until I can send to the King, I think you could accomplish this object and, if you should so desire, sail back home.”** “Indeed I should so desire,” said he, “if I could but think that I was not being deceived by you.” “But,” said he, “it is possible for you to receive a guarantee on this point, that in very truth and without guile, if you follow this course, we will do no harm to any part of your domain during the truce.” After this agreement had been reached, Tissaphernes made oath to the commissioners who were sent to him, Herippidas, Dercylidas, and Megillus, that in very truth and without guile he would negotiate the peace, and they in turn made oath on behalf of Agesilaus to Tissaphernes that in very truth, if he did this, Agesilaus would steadfastly observe the truce. **Now Tissaphernes straightway violated the oaths which he had sworn; for instead of keeping peace he sent to the King for a large army in addition to that which he had before. But Agesilaus, though he was aware of this, nevertheless continued to abide by the truce.**

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.4.5-6



INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY

- Agesilaos did not try to convince Tissaphernes to restore liberty to the Greek cities of Asia Minor.
- On the contrary, Agesilaos tried to revert to the *status quo* in 404, when the cities were autonomous allies of Sparta but under Persian domination.
- In other words, that both Sparta and Persia had a say in the cities and Sparta could establish pro-Spartan governments in them.



THE BATTLE OF SARDIS, 395

- Agesilaos defeated the Persians in the battle of Sardis, which resulted in Persia agreeing to the autonomy of the Asia Minor Greeks on the condition that Agesilaos leaves Asia Minor.
- Agesilaos did not agree to the Persian terms.
- At the same time, Rhodes, an important maritime city in the southeast Aegean, revolted from Sparta and sided with Persia.
- The position of Rhodes is important, since it shows that while Sparta was winning on land, on sea the islanders saw the Persian fleet as more powerful.



SPARTAN AGGRESSION IN GREECE

Now the Lacedaemonians were glad to seize a pretext for undertaking a campaign against the Thebans, for they had long been angry with them both on account of their claiming Apollo's tenth at Decelea and their refusing to follow them against Piraeus. Furthermore, they charged them with persuading the Corinthians likewise not to join in that campaign. Again, they recalled that they had refused to permit Agesilaus to sacrifice at Aulis and had cast from the altar the victims already offered, and that they also would not join Agesilaus for the campaign in Asia. They also reasoned that it was a favourable time to lead forth an army against the Thebans and put a stop to their insolent behaviour toward them; for matters in Asia were in an excellent condition for them, Agesilaus being victorious, and in Greece there was no other war to hinder them.

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.5.5



ANTI-SPARTAN ALLIANCE AND PERSIAN MONEY

- The Spartan aggression against Thebes was immediately answered by an anti-Spartan alliance between Thebes, Athens and a number of other central Greek poleis.
- The alliance was probably financed by the Persian king in an effort to make the Spartan offensive in Asia Minor stop.



THE BATTLE OF KNIDOS, 394

- The Persian fleet led by Konon the Athenian defeated the Spartan and allied fleet at Knidos.
- This was the first major blow to Sparta, since the battle of Arginoussai in the Peloponnesian War.
- Due to the anti-Spartan alliance in Greece, Agesilaos was forced to return to the mainland and Spartan interests in the Aegean and Asia Minor were safeguarded only by the fleet.
- With the defeat at Knidos, Sparta loses a great part of its power.



THE BATTLE OF CORONEA, 394

- In the Greek front, Sparta won the hoplite battle of Coronea in Boiotia against the anti-Spartan alliance but the victory was not conclusive.
- With Corinth in alliance with Argos, a defeat in the east and problems at home (the Kinadon affair) and no decisive victory in Greece, Sparta had to sue for peace.



THE TRUCE TERMS

When they had reached their destination, Antalcidas said to Tiribazus that he had come desiring peace between his state and the King, and, furthermore, just such a peace as the King had wished for. For the Lacedaemonians, he said, **urged no claim against the King to the Greek cities in Asia and they were content that all the islands and the Greek cities in general should be independent.** “And yet,” he said, “if we are ready to agree to such conditions, why should the King be at war with us or be spending money? Indeed, if such terms were made, **we could not take the field against the King, either; the Athenians could not unless we assumed the leadership, and we could not if the cities were independent.**”

Xenophon *Hellenika* 3.8.14



PERSIA, ATHENS AND THE FAILED PEACE

- The Persian King, Artaxerxes, refused to agree to the Spartan peace proposal after almost a year of negotiation. The main reason for Artaxerxes' refusal was his suspicion of Sparta.
- At the same time, the Athenians, nominally at the time allies of Persia, supported the revolt of Cyprus from Persia. Thus, the Persians now had reason to distrust both major Greek powers in Asia Minor.



PERSIA AGAINST ATHENS

- With Athenian support to Evagoras in Cyprus and a series of anti-Persian raids by Thrasybulus in Asia Minor, the Persian king decided to take the offensive against Athens.
- With Athens as the enemy, the logical ally for Persia was Sparta.
- Thus Persia supported the Spartan fleet in the Aegean, which eventually took control of the Hellespont and thus the Athenian grain supply.



THE KING'S PEACE, 387/6

“King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia should belong to him, as well as Clazomenae and Cyprus among the islands, and that the other Greek cities, both small and great, should be left autonomous, except Lemnos, Imbros, and Scyros; and these should belong, as of old, to the Athenians. But whichever of the two parties does not accept this peace, upon them I will make war, in company with those who desire this arrangement, both by land and by sea, with ships and with money.”

Xenophon *Hellenika* 5.1.31



SPARTA AND THE KING'S PEACE

- Sparta won in the King's Peace.
- The Autonomy clause of the Peace meant that no empire or hegemony could be created by Athens or any other polis.
- Further, Sparta now, as effective Representative of the King in Greece, had a free rein to discipline its recalcitrant allies (Corinth, Thebes).



FOLLOW-UP READING

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