

= Corinthian War =

The Corinthian War was an ancient Greek conflict lasting from 395 BC until 387 BC , pitting Sparta against a coalition of four allied states , Thebes , Athens , Corinth , and Argos , who were initially backed by Persia . The immediate cause of the war was a local conflict in northwest Greece in which both Thebes and Sparta intervened . The deeper cause was hostility towards Sparta provoked by that city 's " expansionism in Asia Minor , central and northern Greece and even the west " .

The war was fought on two fronts , on land near Corinth (hence the name) and Thebes and at sea in the Aegean . On land , the Spartans achieved several early successes in major battles , but were unable to capitalize on their advantage , and the fighting soon became stalemated . At sea , the Spartan fleet was decisively defeated by a Persian fleet early in the war , an event that effectively ended Sparta 's attempts to become a naval power . Taking advantage of this fact , Athens launched several naval campaigns in the later years of the war , recapturing a number of islands that had been part of the original Athenian Empire during the 5th century BC .

Alarmed by these Athenian successes , the Persians stopped backing the allies and began supporting Sparta . This defection forced the allies to seek peace . The Peace of Antalcidas , commonly known as the King 's Peace , was signed in 387 BC , ending the war . This treaty declared that Persia would control all of Ionia , and that all other Greek cities would be independent . Sparta was to be the guardian of the peace , with the power to enforce its clauses . The effects of the war , therefore , were to establish Persia 's ability to interfere successfully in Greek politics and to affirm Sparta 's hegemonic position in the Greek political system .

= = Events leading to the war = =

In the Peloponnesian War , which had ended in 404 BC , Sparta had enjoyed the support of nearly every mainland Greek state and the Persian Empire , and in the months and years following that war , a number of the island states of the Aegean had come under its control . This solid base of support , however , was fragmented in the years following the war . Despite the collaborative nature of the victory , Sparta alone received the plunder taken from the defeated states and the tribute payments from the former Athenian Empire . Sparta 's allies were further alienated when , in 402 BC , Sparta attacked and subdued Elis , a member of the Peloponnesian League that had angered the Spartans during the course of the Peloponnesian War . Corinth and Thebes refused to send troops to assist Sparta in its campaign against Elis .

Thebes , Corinth and Athens also refused to participate in a Spartan expedition to Ionia in 398 BC , with the Thebans going so far as to disrupt a sacrifice that the Spartan king Agesilaus attempted to perform in their territory before his departure . Despite the absence of these states , Agesilaus campaigned effectively against the Persians in Lydia , advancing as far inland as Sardis . The satrap Tissaphernes was executed for his failure to contain Agesilaus , and his replacement , Tithraustes , bribed the Spartans to move north , into the satrapy of Pharnabazus . Agesilaus did so , but simultaneously began preparing a sizable navy .

Unable to defeat Agesilaus ' army , Pharnabazus decided to force Agesilaus to withdraw by stirring up trouble on the Greek mainland . He dispatched Timocrates of Rhodes , an Asiatic Greek , to distribute ten thousand gold darics in the major cities of the mainland and incite them to act against Sparta . Timocrates visited Athens , Thebes , Corinth , and Argos , and succeeded in persuading powerful factions in each of those states to pursue an anti @-@ Spartan policy . The Thebans , who had previously demonstrated their antipathy towards Sparta , undertook to bring about a war .

= = Early events (395 BC) = =

= = = Initial fighting = = =

Xenophon claims that , unwilling to challenge Sparta directly , the Thebans instead chose to precipitate a war by encouraging their allies , the Locrians , to collect taxes from territory claimed by both Locris and Phocis . In response , the Phocians invaded Locris , and ransacked Locrian territory . The Locrians appealed to Thebes for assistance , and the Thebans invaded Phocian territory ; the Phocians , in turn , appealed to their ally , Sparta , and the Spartans , pleased to have a pretext to discipline the Thebans , ordered general mobilization . A Theban embassy was dispatched to Athens to request support ; the Athenians voted to assist Thebes , and a perpetual alliance was concluded between Athens and the Boeotian confederacy .

The Spartan plan called for two armies , one under Lysander and the other under Pausanias , to rendezvous at and attack the Boeotian city of Haliartus . Lysander , arriving before Pausanias , successfully persuaded the city of Orchomenus to revolt from the Boeotian confederacy , and advanced to Haliartus with his troops and a force of Orchomenians . There , he was killed in the Battle of Haliartus after bringing his force too near the walls of the city ; the battle ended inconclusively , with the Spartans suffering early losses but then defeating a group of Thebans who pursued the Spartans onto rough terrain where they were at a disadvantage . Pausanias , arriving a day later , took back the bodies of the Spartan dead under a truce , and returned to Sparta . There , he was put on trial for his life for failing to arrive and support Lysander at the designated time . He fled to Tegea before he could be convicted .

= = = Alliance against Sparta expands = = =

In the wake of these events , both the Spartans and their opponents prepared for more serious fighting to come . In late 395 BC , Corinth and Argos entered the war as co @-@ belligerents with Athens and Thebes . A council was formed at Corinth to manage the affairs of this alliance . The allies then sent emissaries to a number of smaller states and received the support of many of them .

Alarmed by these developments , the Spartans prepared to send out an army against this new alliance , and sent a messenger to Agesilaus ordering him to return to Greece . The orders were a disappointment to Agesilaus , who had looked forward to further successful campaigning . It is said he wryly observed , but for ten thousand Persian " archers " , he would have vanquished all Asia . Thus , he turned back with his troops , crossing the Hellespont and marched west through Thrace .

= = War on land and sea (394 BC) = =

= = = Nemea = = =

After a brief engagement between Thebes and Phocis , in which Thebes was victorious , the allies gathered a large army at Corinth . A sizable force was sent out from Sparta to challenge this force . The forces met at the dry bed of the Nemea River , in Corinthian territory , where the Spartans won a decisive victory . As often happened in hoplite battles , the right flank of each army was victorious , with the Spartans defeating the Athenians while the Thebans , Argives , and Corinthians defeated the various Peloponnesians opposite them ; the Spartans then attacked and killed a number of Argives , Corinthians , and Thebans as these troops returned from pursuing the defeated Peloponnesians . The coalition army lost 2 @,@ 800 men , while the Spartans and their allies lost only 1 @,@ 100 .

= = = Cnidus = = =

The next major action of the war took place at sea , where both the Persians and the Spartans had assembled large fleets during Agesilaus 's campaign in Asia . By levying ships from the Aegean states under his control , Agesilaus had raised a force of 120 triremes , which he placed under the command of his brother @-@ in @-@ law Peisander , who had never held a command of this

nature before . The Persians , meanwhile , had already assembled a joint Phoenician , Cilician , and Cypriot fleet , under the command of the experienced Athenian admiral Conon , which had seized Rhodes in 396 BC . These two fleets met off the point of Cnidus in 394 BC . The Spartans fought determinedly , particularly in the vicinity of Peisander 's ship , but were eventually overwhelmed ; large numbers of ships were sunk or captured , and the Spartan fleet was essentially wiped from the sea . Following this victory , Conon and Pharnabazus sailed along the coast of Ionia , expelling Spartan governors and garrisons from the cities , although they failed to reduce the Spartan bases at Abydos and Sestos under the command of Dercylidas .

= = = Coronea = = =

By this time , Agesilaus 's army , after brushing off attacks from the Thessalians during its march through that country , had arrived in Boeotia , where it was met by an army gathered from the various states of the anti @-@ Spartan alliance . Agesilaus 's force from Asia , composed largely of emancipated helots and mercenary veterans of the Ten Thousand , was augmented by half a Spartan regiment from Orchomenus , and another half a regiment that had been transported across the Gulf of Corinth . These armies met each other at Coronea , in Theban territory ; as at Nemea , both right wings were victorious , with the Thebans breaking through while the rest of the allies were defeated . Seeing that the rest of their force had been defeated , the Thebans formed up to break back through to their camp . Agesilaus met their force head on , and in the struggle that followed a number of Thebans were killed before the remainder were able to force their way through and rejoin their allies . After this victory , Agesilaus sailed with his army across the Gulf of Corinth and returned to Sparta .

= = Later events (393 ? 388 BC) = =

The events of 394 BC left the Spartans with the upper hand on land , but weak at sea . The coalition states had been unable to defeat the Spartan phalanx in the field , but had kept their alliance strong and prevented the Spartans from moving at will through central Greece . The Spartans would continue to attempt , over the next several years , to knock either Corinth or Argos out of the war ; the anti @-@ Spartan allies , meanwhile , sought to preserve their united front against Sparta , while Athens and Thebes took advantage of Sparta 's preoccupation to enhance their own power in areas they had traditionally dominated .

= = = Persian assistance , rebuilding at Athens , civil strife at Corinth = = =

In 393 BC , Conon and Pharnabazus sailed to mainland Greece , where they raided the coast of Laconia and seized the island of Cythera , where they left a garrison and an Athenian governor . They then sailed to Corinth , where they distributed money and urged the members of the council to show the Persian king that they were trustworthy . Pharnabazus then dispatched Conon with substantial funds and a large part of the fleet to Attica , where he joined in the rebuilding of the long walls from Athens to Piraeus , a project that had been initiated by Thrasybulus in 394 BC . With the assistance of the rowers of the fleet , and the workers paid for by the Persian money , the construction was soon completed . Athens quickly took advantage of its possession of walls and a fleet to seize the islands of Scyros , Imbros , and Lemnos , on which it established cleruchies (citizen colonies) .

At about this time , civil strife broke out in Corinth between the democratic party and the oligarchic party . The democrats , supported by the Argives , launched an attack on their opponents , and the oligarchs were driven from the city . These exiles went to the Spartans , based at this time at Sicyon , for support , while the Athenians and Boeotians came up to support the democrats . In a night attack , the Spartans and exiles succeeded in seizing Lechaëum , Corinth 's port on the Gulf of Corinth , and defeated the army that came out to challenge them the next day . The anti @-@ Spartan allies then attempted to invest Lechaëum , but the Spartans launched an attack and drove

them off .

= = = Peace conferences break down = = =

In 392 BC , the Spartans dispatched an ambassador , Antalcidas , to the satrap Tiribazus , hoping to turn the Persians against the allies by informing them of Conon 's use of the Persian fleet to begin rebuilding the Athenian empire . The Athenians learned of this , and sent Conon and several others to present their case to the Persians ; they also notified their allies , and Argos , Corinth , and Thebes dispatched embassies to Tiribazus . At the conference that resulted , the Spartans proposed a peace based on the independence of all states ; this was rejected by the allies , as Athens wished to hold the gains it had made in the Aegean , Thebes wished to keep its control over the Boeotian league , and Argos already had designs on assimilating Corinth into its state . The conference thus failed , but Tiribazus , alarmed by Conon 's actions , arrested him , and secretly provided the Spartans with money to equip a fleet . Although Conon quickly escaped , he died soon afterward . A second peace conference was held at Sparta in the same year , but the proposals made there were again rejected by the allies , both because of the implications of the autonomy principle and because the Athenians were outraged that the terms proposed would have involved abandoning the Ionian Greeks to Persia .

In the wake of the unsuccessful conference in Persia , Tiribazus returned to Susa to report on events , and a new general , Struthas , was sent out to take command . Struthas pursued an anti @-@ Spartan policy , prompting the Spartans to order their commander in the region , Thibron , to attack him . Thibron successfully ravaged Persian territory for a time , but was killed along with a number of his men when Struthas ambushed one of his poorly organized raiding parties . Thibron was later replaced by Diphridas , who raided more successfully , securing a number of small successes and even capturing Struthas 's son @-@ in @-@ law , but never achieved any dramatic results .

= = = Lechaeum and the seizure of Corinth = = =

At Corinth , the democratic party continued to hold the city proper , while the exiles and their Spartan supporters held Lechaeum , from where they raided the Corinthian countryside . In 391 BC , Agesilaus campaigned in the area , successfully seizing several fortified points , along with a large amount of prisoners and booty . While Agesilaus was in camp preparing to sell off his spoils , the Athenian general Iphicrates , with a force composed almost entirely of light troops and peltasts (javelin throwers) , won a decisive victory against the Spartan regiment that had been stationed at Lechaeum in the Battle of Lechaeum . During the battle , Iphicrates took advantage of the Spartans ' lack of peltasts to repeatedly harass the regiment with hit @-@ and @-@ run attacks , wearing the Spartans down until they broke and ran , at which point a number of them were slaughtered . Agesilaus returned home shortly after these events , but Iphicrates continued to campaign around Corinth , recapturing many of the strong points which the Spartans had previously taken , although he was unable to retake Lechaeum . He also campaigned against Phlius and Arcadia , decisively defeating the Phliasians and plundering the territory of the Arcadians when they refused to engage his troops .

After this victory , an Argive army came to Corinth , and , seizing the acropolis , effected the merger of Argos and Corinth . The border stones between Argos and Corinth were torn down , and the citizen bodies of the two cities were merged .

= = = Later land campaigns = = =

After Iphicrates 's victories near Corinth , no more major land campaigns were conducted in that region . Campaigning continued in the Peloponnese and the northwest . Agesilaus had campaigned successfully in Argive territory in 391 BC , and he launched two more major expeditions before the end of the war . In the first of these , in 389 BC , a Spartan expeditionary force crossed the Gulf of

Corinth to attack Acarnania , an ally of the anti @-@ Spartan coalition . After initial difficulties in coming to grips with the Acarnanians , who kept to the mountains and avoided engaging him directly , Agesilaus was eventually able to draw them into a pitched battle , in which the Acarnanians were routed and lost a number of men . He then sailed home across the Gulf . The next year , the Acarnanians made peace with the Spartans to avoid further invasions .

In 388 BC , Agesipolis led a Spartan army against Argos . Since no Argive army challenged him , he plundered the countryside for a time , and then , after receiving several unfavorable omens , returned home .

= = = Later campaigns in the Aegean = = =

After their defeat at Cnidus , the Spartans began to rebuild a fleet , and , in fighting with Corinth , had regained control of the Gulf of Corinth by 392 BC . Following the failure of the peace conferences of 392 BC , the Spartans sent a small fleet , under the commander Ecdicus , to the Aegean with orders to assist oligarchs exiled from Rhodes . Ecdicus arrived at Rhodes to find the democrats fully in control , and in possession of more ships than him , and thus waited at Cnidus . The Spartans then dispatched their fleet from the Gulf of Corinth , under Teleutias , to assist . After picking up more ships at Samos , Teleutias took command at Cnidus and commenced operations against Rhodes .

Alarmed by this Spartan naval resurgence , the Athenians sent out a fleet of 40 triremes under Thrasybulus . He , judging that he could accomplish more by campaigning where the Spartan fleet was not than by challenging it directly , sailed to the Hellespont . Once there , he won over several major states to the Athenian side and placed a duty on ships sailing past Byzantium , restoring a source of revenue that the Athenians had relied on in the late Peloponnesian War . He then sailed to Lesbos , where , with the support of the Mytileneans , he defeated the Spartan forces on the island and won over a number of cities . While still on Lesbos , however , Thrasybulus was killed by raiders from the city of Aspendus .

After this , the Spartans sent out a new commander , Anaxibius , to Abydos . For a time , he enjoyed a number of successes against Pharnabazus , and seized a number of Athenian merchant ships . Worried that Thrasybulus 's accomplishments were being undermined , the Athenians sent Iphicrates to the region to confront Anaxibius . For a time , the two forces merely raided each other 's territory , but eventually Iphicrates succeeded in guessing where Anaxibius would bring his troops on a return march from a campaign against Antandrus , and ambushed the Spartan force . When Anaxibius and his men , who were strung out in the line of march , had entered the rough , mountainous terrain in which Iphicrates and his men were waiting , the Athenians emerged and ambushed them , killing Anaxibius and many others .

= = = Aegina and Piraeus = = =

In 389 BC , the Athenians attacked the island of Aegina , off the coast of Attica . The Spartans soon drove off the Athenian fleet , but the Athenians continued their land assault . Under Antalcidas ' command , the Spartan fleet sailed east to Rhodes but it was eventually blockaded at Abydos by the regional Athenian commanders . The Athenians on Aegina , meanwhile , soon found themselves under attack , and withdrew after several months .

Shortly thereafter , the Spartan fleet under Gorgopas ambushed the Athenian fleet near Athens , capturing several ships . The Athenians responded with an ambush of their own ; Chabrias , on his way to Cyprus , landed his troops on Aegina and laid an ambush for the Aeginetans and their Spartan allies , killing a number of them including Gorgopas .

The Spartans then sent Teleutias to Aegina to command the fleet there . Noticing that the Athenians had relaxed their guard after Chabrias 's victory , he launched a raid on Piraeus , seizing numerous merchant ships .

= = Peace of Antalcidas (387 BC) = =

Antalcidas , meanwhile , had entered into negotiations with Tiribazus , and reached an agreement under which the Persians would enter into the war on the Spartan side if the allies refused to make peace . It appears that the Persians , unnerved by certain of Athens ' actions , including supporting king Evagoras of Cyprus and Akoris of Egypt , both of whom were at war with Persia , had decided that their policy of weakening Sparta by supporting its enemies was no longer useful . After escaping from the blockade at Abydos , Antalcidas attacked and defeated a small Athenian force , then united his fleet with a supporting fleet sent from Syracuse . With this force , which was soon further augmented with ships supplied by the satraps of the region , he sailed to the Hellespont , where he could cut off the trade routes that brought grain to Athens . The Athenians , mindful of their similar defeat in the Peloponnesian War less than two decades before , were ready to make peace .

In this climate , when Tiribazus called a peace conference in late 387 BC , the major parties of the war were ready to discuss terms . The basic outline of the treaty was laid out by a decree from the Persian king Artaxerxes :

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 independent , 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 .

In a general peace conference at Sparta , the Spartans , with their authority enhanced by the threat of Persian intervention , secured the acquiescence of all the major states of Greece to these terms . The agreement eventually produced was commonly known as the King 's Peace , reflecting the Persian influence the treaty showed . This treaty marked the first attempt at a Common Peace in Greek history ; under the treaty , all cities were to be independent , a clause that would be enforced by the Spartans as guardians of the peace . Under threat of Spartan intervention , Thebes disbanded its league , and Argos and Corinth ended their experiment in shared government ; Corinth , deprived of its strong ally , was incorporated back into Sparta 's Peloponnesian League . After 8 years of fighting , the Corinthian war was at an end .

= = Aftermath = =

In the years following the signing of the peace , the two states responsible for its structure , Persia and Sparta , took full advantage of the gains they had made . Persia , freed of both Athenian and Spartan interference in its Asian provinces , consolidated its hold over the eastern Aegean and captured both Egypt and Cyprus by 380 BC . Sparta , meanwhile , in its newly formalized position atop the Greek political system , took advantage of the autonomy clause of the peace to break up any coalition that it perceived as a threat . Disloyal allies were sharply punished ? Mantinea , for instance , was broken up into five component villages . With Agesilaus at the head of the state , advocating for an aggressive policy , the Spartans campaigned from the Peloponnese to the distant Chalcidic peninsula . Their dominance over mainland Greece would last another sixteen years before being shattered at Leuctra .

The war also marked the beginning of Athens ' resurgence as a power in the Greek world . With their walls and their fleet restored , the Athenians were in position to turn their eyes overseas . By the middle of the 4th century , they had assembled an organization of Aegean states commonly known as the Second Athenian Empire , regaining at least parts of what they had lost with their defeat in 404 BC .

The freedom of the Ionian Greeks had been a rallying cry since the beginning of the 5th century , but after the Corinthian War , the mainland states made no further attempts to interfere with Persia 's control of the region . After over a century of disruption and struggle , Persia at last ruled Ionia without disruption or intervention for over 50 years , until the time of Alexander the Great .