

THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL ROLE OF THE ALLIES OF  
SPARTA IN THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

BY

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## OUTLINE

This documentation examines the role of the allies of Sparta, in mainland Greece during the Peloponnesian war. The whole study is divided into six chapters, each one analyzes the contribution of a state or a group of states to the war.

The first chapter deals with the relationship of Corinth with Sparta and Athens during the Pentecontaetia, the importance of trade in the west in close connection with her colonies, the Athenian intervention in the region, the role of Corinth just before the eruption of the war, and finally her military, economic and political contribution during the years of the war.

The second chapter concerns the Confederacy of Boeotia, her political system, her relations with Athens and Sparta during the years that preceded the war, the role of Thebes in Boeotia during the war, as well as the military and political input of the Confederacy during the conflict.

The third chapter discusses the city of Megara, its relations with Athens and Sparta during the Pentecontaetia, the Megarian Decree, and the role and contribution of Megara during the Peloponnesian war.

The fourth chapter deals with the cities of Western Greece, which were allies of Sparta during the war, their relations with Sparta and other members of the alliance (e.g. Corinth), and their role and policies during the years of the war.

Chapter five is about the cities of Arcadia during the war, their attitude towards Sparta before and during the war, and finally their contribution.

Chapter six examines the involvement of Argos in the war and the role that it played especially during the years that followed the Peace of Nicias. Although Argos was not a member of the Peloponnesian League, I preferred to include it in the present work, for it gave me the opportunity to make a clearer analysis on the diplomacy that followed the Peace of Nicias, in which many states took part.

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## PREFACE

The Peloponnesian war (431-404) was a conflict between the two major leagues in Greece, at that time. The Delian league in which Athens was holding the dominant position, and the Peloponnesian alliance in which Sparta was the hegemon.

The Delian league consisted of most of the Aegean islands and many of the coastal cities of Asia minor. Consequently Athens' power was based on her navy which was necessary for her in order to keep her alliance under control.

On the other hand Sparta was the leader of a powerful coalition which was composed of most of the Peloponnesian states, Boeotia, many of the islands of the Ionian, as well as of many states of the Western Greece.

Although Athens had the absolute control over the members of her alliance - who had to pay a tribute to - the Peloponnesian alliance did not work that way. The allies of Sparta were free and independent states and they did not pay any tribute to the dominant city of their coalition, Sparta. This means that the allies of Sparta had the freedom to follow an independent foreign policy. As we can see in many cases the allies of Sparta acted with their own free will without even consulting Sparta. (e.g. The Epidamnian affair or the Potidaean affair for Corinth, the Heracleia affair for Boeotia, etc.). In the Peloponnesian league every member of the alliance had the right to disagree with Sparta, and on the other hand every ally was free to bring an affair to Sparta for discussion, or to ask the alliance - as a whole - to take further measures if it was required. Naturally those states which



were more powerful than the others, and consequently more useful allies to Sparta, could have more influence on the Spartan assembly and play an important role for the Peloponnesian alliance as a whole. Such states were Corinth, Boeotia, and in some extent† Megara. Those cities were important for Sparta either for their wealth, their military strength, or their geographical position, so we have to assume that Sparta needed them in order to maintain her position in Peloponnesus. All of these cities were at odds with Athens during the years that preceded the war, each one for her own reasons, so consequently they were in favour of war, which could stop the ambitious Athenians from damaging them. On the other hand there were some other members of the Peloponnesian alliance which were in favour of a war, for they could have the opportunity to use their allies in order to fulfil their own plans.

The purpose of the present work is to give an analysis of the contribution of the allies of Sparta during the Peloponnesian war. I believe that the allies of Sparta played an important role in the Peloponnesian war and that we can have a better understanding of the whole struggle if we examine closer the relations of these states with Athens, during the years that preceded the war, as well as their military, economic, or political contribution during the years of the conflict. Such an examination could help us understand to what extent† Sparta was influenced by her allies to move to war against Athens, and on the other hand could give us a clearer comprehension of the reasons that urged some of the allies of Sparta to follow a certain policy towards Athens. I have tried to give a detailed analysis of the military contribution of each state during the years of the war as well as their internal affairs, their political situation, their economy, and in some cases their system of government, and the different problems they were facing in order to explain their role and their contribution during the Peloponnesian war as well as the reasons that forced them to follow their policies.

# Chapter I

## CORINTH

## I. CORINTH

### **The Naval Power of Peloponnesus**

Corinth was one of the most important allies of Sparta during the Peloponnesian war. Her wealth, her fleet, and her diplomacy made the Peloponnesian state one of the protagonists of the war. Corinth's source of power was her navy and commerce. Since the 6th century B.C., Corinth had developed a powerful fleet and acted as a naval power.

Sparta's alliance with Corinth originates during the 6th century and according to Herodotus, (iii. 48-1 ), Sparta and Corinth cooperated for the first time, during the year 525/4 when a Corinthian army joined a Spartan expedition against Polycrates of Samos.

Sparta, at the end of the 6th century, was trying to impose her hegemony and her political views not only in Peloponnesus but also outside of the isthmus. These ambitions of Sparta gradually turned to become a threat for the Corinthians, who probably wanted to share with the Lacedaemonians the role of the hegemon over the other Greek city states. At this time Athens had not yet built her powerful fleet and Corinth was one of the few sea powers in Greece. "In the last decade, perhaps the last two decades, of the sixth century Corinth was much exercised over the danger of too great an extension of Spartan influence. When the two states made their original alliance it was an equal one; but Sparta's numerous allies now gave her a pre-eminence which caused concern at Corinth. The procedure adopted by the Spartans when they proposed the restoration of Hippias demonstrates that Corinth achieved considerable success in limiting Spartan power." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 249).

The relations between Sparta and Corinth did not change until the end of the Persian wars. After the defeat of the Persians, Greece realised that Athens and

Sparta were going to struggle over the hegemony of all Greece. Corinth's alternative was to join one of them. The Athenian fleet gave no chance to Corinthian hopes for a naval superiority.

As I mentioned above, the whole power of Corinth was based in her fleet, and her trade was the major source of her wealth. Corinth had turned her attention to the Adriatic coasts and to the Ionian sea rather than the busy Aegean.

By the end of the eighth century Corinth had established two important colonies in the west. One was Corcyra and the other was Syracuse. Both of them were of great importance to Corinth because of their geographical position. Especially Corcyra, which was sited in a key location for the voyage to Italy, very soon became a necessity to Corinth. Other important colonies of the Corinthians were Anactorium, Leucas, Apollonia, Epidamnus, Potidaea, Sollium, Molycreium, and Ambracia.

Anactorium and Leukas were founded by the Corinthians during the seventh century B. C, but there was a large Corcyraean population in both cities. According to Thucydides Anactorium was a common colony between Corcyra and Corinth, (i. 55. 1), and during the fifth century both Corinth and Corcyra had equal rights on the city of Leukas after a decision of Themistocles who acted as arbitrator in a dispute between the two cities. (Plut. Them. 24. 1).

Around 627 both Epidamnus and Potidaea were founded. "The sites of some colonies have encouraged the belief that commercial considerations were involved. Ambracia stands near the end of the most important land route northwards to Epirus, and Leukas was in a useful position to exploit trade with Macedonia. Anactorium, on this view, will have been intended to secure for Ambracia the entry

of her Gulf; while Epidamnus and Apollonia each stood at the Western end of a not unimportant route inland." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 216). According to Salmon, Ambracia was very attractive to the new settlers because of her fertile soil, in contrast with Leucas which did not have this advantage.

The close relations of Corinth with her colonies can be deduced by an examination of the coins of those cities. "The coins of Ambracia, Leukas, and Anactorium do not merely bear a Corinthian type; they are as near as possible identical with the coins of Corinth." (Graham. *Colony and mother city in Ancient Greece*, p. 125). We can say that the colonies of Leukas, Anactorium and Ambracia, were somehow dependent on Corinth, and the clearest evidence for that is their coinage, which had the Corinthian weight standards and pattern.

Most of the Corinthian colonies participated in the Persian wars and sent forces to help Greece and their mother city. According to Herodotus, Ambracia sent seven ships to Salamis and Leukas three. (Hdt. viii. 45). In the battle of Plataea Potidaea sent three hundred hoplites, Ambracia five hundred, Leukas and Anactorium eight hundred. (Hdt. ix. 28).

Between 480-435 Corinth secured a real control in the N. W. "... and that control depended, not on inherited relations from the time of the foundation of the colonies, but on continued political and military activity." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 279). During these years Corinth maintained a close relationship with most of her colonies with the exception of Corcyra. Although Corinth's colonies followed their own foreign policy from time to time, and, as Graham points out, they had a separate existence from the mother city, Corinth managed to have a political supremacy over them. Potidaea, for example, received each year ten magistrates (ἐπιστημιοῦργοις) who held important positions in the city and played an

important role in Potidaea's political life. It is very possible that Corinth sent these magistrates to Potidaea when the city joined the Athenian League and this alliance made Corinth anxious to keep her influence in this remote colony.

The Corinthian influence over the colonies and her efforts for a control of the Ionian made Corcyra build a large fleet in order to keep the Corinthians away from her. Although Corcyra herself was a colony of Corinth, her geographical position and her commerce made the island wealthy enough to seek independence and to become an opponent of Corinth in the area of Adriatic. "Corcyra had other colonies or shares in colonies, in the Greek north west. She shared with Corinth in the colonies of Anactorium, Apollonia, and Leukas, and we have reason to think that she made an effort to maintain her influence in them during the fifth century." (Kagan. *The outbreak of the Peloponnesian war*, p. 208). Corinth on the other hand, could not accept these Corcyraean tendencies and the rivalry of the two cities over the control of the Ionian; and N. W Greece became more fearful after 480. Of course the "terrain" of the clashes between Corcyra and Corinth were the colonies, which suffered a lot because of the two opponents.

Leucas which was considered as a joint colony between Corcyra and Corinth, became a "Corinthian" city by 435 when the Corinthians managed to eliminate any Corcyraean influence in the island. At Anactorium the Corcyraean element was so powerful that it forced the Corinthians to capture the city by treachery in 433. (Thuc. i. 55). Eight years later the city was recaptured from the Athenians with the help of the Corcyraean population which had remained at the city. (Thuc. iv. 49).

During the second half of the fifth century the Corcyraean power and wealth became a threat to the Corinthians who saw their hegemony and thalassocracy over the Ionian to be in danger. The Epidamnian affair gave Corinth the unique

opportunity to eliminate Corcyra's power and to regain her supremacy over N. W Greece.

Before I go on with the dispute over Epidamnus I would like to give a summary of Corinth's actions during the "First Peloponnesian War" in order to explain Corinth's attitude and policy towards Athens. According to Thucydides it was the alliance between Megara and Athens in 461/0 that became the first cause of the Corinthian hatred against the Athenians. (Thuc. i. 103. 4). During these years the situation in Greece had started to change and Athens was beginning to build her Empire. Athens' relations with Sparta were at odds and a war was ready to erupt at any time. "There was little that Athens could do to harm Sparta directly, as the rest of the century shows; Corinth may well have feared (perhaps justly) that Athens had determined to harm Sparta through her allies, even before the Megarians made their appeal. The Megarian alliance must have seemed all too clear a confirmation of Corinth's fears." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 261-2).

The reason for the conclusion of this alliance, between Megara and Athens, was a territorial dispute between the Megarians and the Corinthians. Gomme was right to suggest that Corinth risked the stability of the Peloponnesian league and the peace of Greece, rather than give up her claim to the land at the borders with Megara. (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, i. 104. 1). But on the other hand it was Athens who took the initiative to build the Long Walls at Megara and by this action she provoked the Corinthians. After all it was not the Corinthians who brought the Athenians into Peloponnesus, but the Megarians, who preferred to abandon the Peloponnesian league and to call Athens for help. According to Ste.Croix: "We cannot doubt that Sparta regarded herself as being at war with Athens from the time that Megara deserted the Peloponnesian league and entered into alliance with Athens." (De.Ste.Croix. *Origins of the Peloponnesian war*, p. 188).

But on this point one question arises: Why did the Spartans and especially the Corinthians let the Athenians complete the Long Walls from the city of Megara to the harbour of Nisaea, and did not do anything to stop them? When a similar incident happened in 419, when an Athenian force under Alcibiades tried to build a fort at Rhium, the Corinthians responded immediately and finally managed to destroy the fort. (Thuc. v. 52). Why did they not do the same thing in 461/0? We know that Megara was of great importance to the Peloponnesians because of her geographical position, and of course the construction of the Long Walls should have troubled not only Corinth, but also Sparta, as well as many other States in Peloponnesus. The only possible explanation for this question is that Corinth and Sparta were not willing to risk a major war with Athens, and preferred to let Megara abandon their alliance than to come in an open conflict with Athens. On ~~Moreover~~ <sup>still</sup> ~~Sparta~~ was occupied with the helot revolt and naturally could not prevent the Athenians from constructing the Long Walls. But although the Peloponnesians did not respond to this Athenian action, they did not manage to prevent the war, for the Athenians took the initiative and made the first assault of the First Peloponnesian war when they attacked the city of Halieis. Although the Athenian force was defeated by the forces of the Corinthians and the Epidaurians, Athens did not retire. The assault at Halieis was followed by a sea battle in Cecryphaleia, (Thuc. i. 105), and this time it was Athens who came victorious out of the clash. Although Thucydides does not give any details about the Peloponnesian ships that took part in the battle we cannot doubt that there ~~were~~ at least some Corinthian ships present in the Peloponnesian fleet, if not many. After their victory at Cecryphaleia, the Athenians turned to Aegina, and in the sea-battle that followed Athens defeated for a second time the Peloponnesian fleet, which suffered heavy losses. The Athenians managed to capture seventy ships, (Thuc. i. 105. 2), and we can assume that many of these ships belonged to Corinth.



The Peloponnesian counter-attack came immediately after the sea-battle of Aegina, when the Corinthians and their allies invaded the Megarid, thinking that the Athenians were not in a position to prevent them, because a large Athenian force was in Egypt, and the fleet was in Aegina. (Thuc. i. 105. 3). The Corinthians who had underestimated the Athenian power were defeated by a force composed of the youngest and oldest Athenian hoplites. When the Corinthian hoplites returned home the elder citizens of Corinth insulted them for their retreat and finally persuaded them to return into the battle-field. The result of this action was the complete defeat of the Corinthian contingent which suffered heavy losses. (Thuc. i. 105. 2-106).

When all these operations came to an end the Peloponnesians realised that they had been quite unsuccessful, for Megara and Aegina remained under Athenian rule, and they had lost too many ships and hoplites. According to Salmon: "The Spartans are not mentioned by Thucydides in any of these actions, and that must mean that they took no part in them; the Corinthians probably undertook temporary and informal responsibility for the co-ordination of Peloponnesian action... The reason for the Spartan failure to participate in an invasion of the Megarid, which must have been planned in advance, can only have been that they believed<sup>it</sup> to have so small a chance of success that they refused to sanction it - or that they had for the time being abandoned the war effort altogether because Athenian tenure of the Megarid precluded the use of their only weapon, invasion of Attica. Thucydides' description of the invading force as "Corinthians with their allies", (i. 105. 3), implies that it was under Corinthian command; it seems that Corinth rejected Spartan faint-heartedness and organised an invasion with as many willing allies as she could find." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 264).

During the year 458 a Peloponnesian army composed of 11,500 hoplites moved to

Doris in order to confront the Phokians who had invaded the traditional mother-city of Lacedaemonians. On their way home, the Peloponnesians found that an Athenian-allied army of 14,000 men strong, tried to block their way. At the battle which followed in Tanagra of Boeotia, the Peloponnesians came out victorious although they had suffered heavy losses. (Thuc. i. 107-108). Sixty two days later an Athenian army attacked Boeotia, and defeated her army at Oenophyta, marking with their victory a short period of control over the Boeotian cities. (Thuc. i. 107). The Peloponnesian league lost Aegina in 457, and during the same year the Corinthians lost Chalcis, and the Athenians concluded their operations with a victory over the Sicyonians. (Thuc. i. 108. 5).

During the year 451/0 the Athenians and the Peloponnesians signed the Five Years Truce, (Thuc. i. 112. 1), and probably during the same year Argos signed a Peace Treaty with Sparta. During 447/6 the Athenians lost control of Boeotia as a result of their defeat at Coroneia. (Thuc. i. 113). This defeat was followed by the revolts of Euboea and Megara, (Thuc. i. 114), and, although Pericles managed to regain the control of Euboea, the revolution of the Megarians - who acted with the help of the Corinthians, Sicyonians, and Epidaurians, was successful. In the meantime the Peloponnesians moved their army against Attica but finally stopped at Eleusis after ravaging her territory. (Thuc. i. 114). The result of all these actions was the conclusion of the Thirty Years Peace which marked the end of the first Peloponnesian war.

In 440 Samos revolted from Athens and the Spartans found the opportunity to interfere in Athenian affairs. They called for a meeting of the members of the Peloponnesian alliance and proposed to help the Samians, but they failed to do so because of the opposition of the Corinthians. (Thuc. i. 40). According to Salmon: "This evidence illuminates Corinthian policy throughout the Pentecontaetia; it proves

that Corinth was willing, other things being equal, to tolerate Athenian domination of the Aegean. Nothing else can explain her failure to take advantage of an opportunity that was most unlikely to recur." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 281).

In 436/5 the city of Epidamnus which was suffering from political stasis asked Corcyra for help but Corcyra refused the request, (Thuc. i. 24), and the Epidamnians turned to the Corinthians who found the case as a perfect opportunity to gain control over Epidamnus. Epidamnus was considered as a common colony between Corcyra and Corinth, and this share gave the Corinthians the right to offer their help to the colony. It is also probable that the Corinthians were aware that a major war in Greece was inevitable, so they wanted to take advantage of the situation by increasing their influence and power in the area of the Ionian and by this way creating a balance over the Athenian superiority in the Aegean sea.

According to Gomme: "It is to be noted that Thucydides, who in his introduction is careful to stress political and economic motives, should here mention only sentimental ones. One naturally suspects an economic motive, such as rivalry in the Adriatic trade, as well as a purely political one - Corinth making another attempt to establish her power in the Southern Adriatic and to secure her connections with the west. Not that a series of pinpricks, a constant provoking of touchy sensibilities, may not be a cause of greater quarrels; and in the course of previous conflicts, (cf. 13. 4), Kerkyra had been conquered by Periandros, who sent his son to rule it in his name - ... Corinthian economic interests in the west were important. Corinth had "imparted the use of her standard of weight to her colonies. .. and to the Achaean cities of Magna Graecia" and her money was the principal medium of exchange all along the ~~coasts~~ of the Corinthian Gulf and in Italy and Sicily, where the largest hoards of her coins have been brought to light." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, i. 25. 3, p. 159). In the meantime the Corinthians were at odds with the

Corcyraeans because they had shown ἀσέβεια to their μητρόπολις. According to Thucydides the Corcyraeans acted this way because they were powerful, rich, and they had a strong fleet. (In the beginning of the war the Corcyraeans had almost 120 triremes). (Thuc. i. 25).

There is no doubt that the ἀσέβεια of the Corcyraeans annoyed the Corinthians who could see that behind this lack of respect was the growing power of the dangerous Corcyraeans as well as their desire to play a role in the Ionian. The first action of the Corinthians was to reorganize the old colony of Epidamnus. In order to succeed<sup>in</sup> that, Corinth sent a unit of Ambraciots, Leucadians and Corinthians to Epidamnus and invited everyone who wanted to go there as ἄποικος. (Thuc. i. 26. 1). Kagan in the "Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War" is speaking of land redistribution and is probably right, for Thucydides says that the Corinthians sent new colonists with an equal share, and they declared their city as the metropolis of the colony. (Thuc. i. '27).

The Corcyraeans who reacted immediately sent 25 ships to Epidamnus asking the Epidamnians to expel the soldiers and the new settlers, and to give permission to the oligarchs - who were exiled as a result of the political conflicts in the city - to return to Epidamnus. The Epidamnians refused the Corcyraean claims and the Corcyraeans started the siege of the city. When the Corinthians learnt about the siege of Epidamnus they responded immediately and started to organise their own army. The Corinthian allies which contributed to the common fleet were: The Megarians with eight ships, the Paleis of Cephallenia with four ships, the Epidaurians with five ships, the Hermionians with one ship, the Troizenians with two ships, the Leukadians with ten ships, and the Ambraciotes with eight ships. The Phleasians and the Thebans sent only money, and the Eleans money and empty vessels as well. Corinth herself sent thirty ships, and three thousand hoplites.

(Thuc. i. 27).

As we can see from Thucydides' narrative the Spartans were not present in the catalogue of the cities who contributed to the Corinthian allied forces. The Spartans did not assist Corinth, although the presence of even a small contingent of hoplites and helots could have a positive moral effect on the Corinthian army, and show Sparta's support for this expedition. It is very probable that the Spartans did not wish to participate in an operation which could bring Athens in the scene and cause a conflict between them and the Athenians. Another explanation is that the Lacedaemonians did not consider the Corinthian intervention in Epidamnus as a matter of the Peloponnesian league. After all the Corinthians had a powerful fleet, a strong economy, many allies who could support them, and friendly colonies in the region. Sparta's policy was to avoid such troubles and the last thing that the Lacedaemonians wanted was to come to a war against Corcyra because of Corinth's ambitions.

When the Corcyraeans were informed about the Corinthian preparations they sent an embassy to Corinth demanding that the Corinthians should withdraw their garrison as well as their soldiers from the city and at the same time to stop the military preparations. On the other hand they offered to the Corinthians the solution of *ῥήτρα*, but Corinth refused all the Corcyraean proposals and when the negotiations ended, both cities started immediate preparations for war. (Thuc. i. 28-29. 1). According to Thucydides the Corcyraean ambassadors to Corinth were escorted by Sicyonian and Spartan ambassadors who had come to Corinth in order to give a peaceful solution. (Thuc. i. 28. 1). This action of the Lacedaemonians shows not only their will to remain neutral, but also their desire to maintain peace in the region of the Adriatic, and the only way to succeed<sup>in</sup> that was to persuade Corinth to accept a peaceful solution.

Finally the Corinthians who had seen the war as a perfect opportunity to finish with Corcyra once and for all finally rejected all the proposals for a peaceful solution and moved against Corcyra.

The result of the Corinthian expedition, during the summer of 435 was the defeat of the Corinthian-allied fleet at the sea-battle of Action or Leukimme. The Peloponnesians lost fifteen ships in the sea-battle, but even worse for them, Epidamnus surrendered to the enemy during the same day. After the battle, the Corcyraeans who had now the control of the Ionian sea, sailed against Leukas, a settlement of the Corinthians, and burnt the harbour of the Elians at Cyllene as a means of revenge, due to their cooperation with Corinth. (More details about the Corcyraean raids in the chapter about Western Greece).

The Corinthians of course were not willing to permit the Corcyraeans to have the control of the Adriatic and in 434 "they established posts for naval and land forces, ἐπὶ Ἀκτίῳ καὶ περὶ τὸ χειμέριον τῆς Θεεπρωτίδος, in order to protect Leukas and other friendly states from raids by the Corcyraean squadrons..." (Hammond: *"Naval operations in the South Channel of Corcyra 435-433 B.C."*, J.H.S., 1945, p. 28). (See also the chapter about Western Greece).

During the two years that followed the sea-battle of Leukimme, Corinth did not stop the preparations for a second and more successful attack against Corcyra. The Corcyraeans who were alarmed by these preparations sent delegates to Athens in order to become members of the Delian league (June 433). The Corcyraeans who were not members in any alliance had realised now that only Athens with her powerful fleet could offer them some help against the Corinthians. On the other hand, the Corinthians, who were always afraid of an Athenian intervention in the Ionian Sea, sent their own ambassadors to Attica in order to prevent the

Corcyraeans from getting help from Athens. (Thuc. i. 31). Thucydides in i. 32-36 gives us the main points of the speech of the Corcyraeans who asked to be accepted in the Athenian alliance:

- 1) Corcyra had a powerful fleet which could be added to the Athenian fleet.
- 2) The Corcyraeans did not have any doubt that a major war was going to erupt between Athens, Sparta and their allies. According to them the Corinthians, who had great influence on Sparta and the rest of the Peloponnesian states, had started already preparations for an attack against Corcyra and possibly Athens.
- 3) It was Corinth who rejected the propositions for a peaceful solution on the Epidamnian affair.
- 4) It was a right of every neutral state to choose her own allies, and Corcyra preferred Athens to Sparta.
- 5) If the Athenians refused the Corcyraean claim then sooner or later Corcyra would become an ally of Sparta.
- 6) Corcyra held a key position in the Ionian<sup>Sea</sup>, very useful for anyone who wanted to have an access to Sicily or Southern Italy.

This last point was of great importance for the ambitious Athenians who were always thinking to broaden their Empire to the West.

When the Corinthian ambassadors came in front of the Athenians they tried to reject the Corcyraean points with the following arguments:

- 1) The Corcyraeans refused to help Epidamnus and this refusal gave the Corinthians the right to intervene.
- 2) The Corcyraeans were showing disrespect towards their metropolis, Corinth.
- 3) If Athens was going to accept Corcyra as a member of her alliance then Corinth should consider Athens as an enemy.
- 4) According to the Corinthians the acceptance of the Corcyraeans as allies of the Delian league was against the Thirty Years Peace, because according to the treaty every neutral city was free to choose her allies during times of peace, and not during times of war; and Corcyra had come to Athens in a time of war.
- 5) The Corinthians reminded the Athenians<sup>of</sup> the case of Samos when Corinth disagreed with some of her Peloponnesian allies and supported Athens.
- 6) Finally the Corinthians asked the Athenians to "pay an old debt" and reminded them<sup>of</sup> the time that Corinth had lent 20 ships to<sup>the Athenians when they</sup> were at war with Aegina. (Thuc. i. 37-43).

The final decision of the Athenians was based on<sup>the</sup> city's interests and economy. Corcyra had made a very attractive proposition to the Athenians who were willing to see the Corcyraean fleet to be added to their own, and finally a defensive alliance was signed between Athens and Corcyra. According to Thucydides<sup>(i.44)</sup> the reasons for conclusion of this alliance between Athens and Corcyra were the following:

- 1) The Athenians considered a great war against Sparta as inevitable.



2) Athens did not wish to abandon the powerful Corcyraean fleet to the hands of the Peloponnesians.

3) Athens' plan was to eliminate the Peloponnesian sea-power. We have to remember that the Peloponnesians were somehow powerful only in the Ionian Sea, and by signing an alliance with Corcyra Athens could intervene any time in a Peloponnesian "territory".

4) The geographical position of Corcyra was of great importance for the Athenians who were always interested in Sicily and Italy. Gomme points out that: ..."imports from the west were valuable not only to Athens, but to the Peloponnese, which was not self supporting, and that in the event of war it would be to the Athenian interest to control this trade, and in peace it was a natural imperial interest." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, i. 44. 3, p. 177). When the Corinthian ambassadors left Athens, the Athenians sent ten ships in order to help Corcyra with the order "not to make the first attack against the Corinthians", because they did not want to break the Thirty Years Peace.

According to Gomme: "The date (of the commission of the small fleet) was on or shortly after the 13th day of the first prytany of 433-432 B. C. For we have the record of the money paid for the expedition." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, i. 45. 1, p. 177).

After this, the Peloponnesian fleet sailed against Corcyra for a second time in a two years period, and was composed of 90 Corinthian ships, 10 ships from Elis, 12 ships from Megara, 10 ships from Leukas, 27 ships from Ambracia, and 1 ship from Anactorium. (Thuc. i. 46). The Corcyraeans put against them 110 ships. The 10 Athenian ships probably sailed behind the Corcyraean fleet. The sea-battle took place near the island of Sybota. According to Thucydides the two fleets

started the battle in the old way, (the Athenians who were using more modern techniques and manoeuvres did not take part during the first phase of the battle because of the order they had from Athens) and the two opponents had put into their ships archers and hoplites. Soon the right wing of the Peloponnesians was defeated by twenty Corcyraean ships and fled away, but the left wing of the Peloponnesians, which was composed of the Corinthians defeated the Corcyraean ships who were in front of them. After that, it was the time of the Athenians to take part in the battle, but it was too late and at the end the Corinthians came victorious out of the conflict. Many of the Corcyraean ships had been destroyed by the Corinthian allied fleet which, after the battle, returned to the harbour of Sybota and started the preparations for an immediate second attack. Suddenly an Athenian squadron of 20 ships appeared on the horizon and the Peloponnesian leaders preferred to avoid any conflicts against an unknown number of ships, for they could not distinguish the exact number of the enemys' ships, (Thuc. i. 47-51), and sailed back home. Finally the two opponents claimed that they were victorious. For me it is exactly the opposite. Both of them were losers. The Corinthians had failed to punish Corcyra, to take complete control of the Ionian<sup>sea</sup> and lost 30 ships; the Corcyraeans, on the other hand, suffered heavy losses - they lost almost 70 ships - and 250 Corcyraeans were imprisoned by the Corinthians. Thucydides' account on the events of Epidamnus gives the impression that it was Corinth who caused the whole war in the Ionian, and of course by this action she bear a major responsibility for the greater Peloponnesian war that followed. But in 435 Corinth was not at odds with Athens but with Corcyra. Until 433 - when Athens signed the alliance with Corcyra -<sup>who</sup> had not any reason to force Sparta to take any measures against Athens. As long as she could defend her interests without the help of the Peloponnesian alliance, Corinth was not willing to cause a major war. Of course the Corinthians knew that an intervention of the Athenians in the Ionian<sup>sea</sup> and an alliance between Corcyra and Athens could mean the end of

their ambitions for the control of the Adriatic sea and coasts, and naturally the only alternative solution for the Corinthians was to bring the Spartan military machine into the scene. It is very easy to blame the Corinthians as the instigators of the Peloponnesian war, for according to Thucydides the dispute over Epidamnus, together with the Potidaean affair were the main causes of the war. Of course these two cases were some of the causes of the war, but we have to accept that Corinth acted the way she acted in order to protect her interests from the ambitious Corcyraeans and we have to keep in mind that it was not Corinth who brought the Athenians into the Ionian but Corcyra. We have also to remember that Corcyra was aware of the dangers of the Athenian intervention in the area, but it was the Corcyraeans who preferred to risk a major war in Greece in order to succeed in her plans.

The affair of Epidamnus and the war in the Ionian damaged the relations between Athens and Corinth, who then had to face the thalassocracy of Athens.

Only a few months later, both cities were to confront each other, for one more time, over the control of the city of Potidaea in Macedonia.

After the battle of Sybota, the Athenians who had suspected that the Corinthians were looking for a revenge, demanded from the people of Potidaea in Chalcidice the destruction of a part of the Walls, the giving of hostages to Athens, and the sending back home of the Corinthian magistrates. As I mentioned before, Potidaea was a Corinthian colony, but she was a member of the Delian league as well. Naturally the Athenians suspected that the Corinthians could instigate a revolution in the city with the help of Perdikkas, King of Macedonia.

During this time, Perdikkas was at war against his brothers, Derdas and Philippos,

who had asked Athens for help. The Athenians made an alliance with Derdas and Philippos and Perdikkas turned to the Lacedaemonians and the Corinthians for support. Perdikkas' plan was to damage the Athenians, and the best way he could do that was to help Potidaea to revolt from Athens, and the Corinthians were of course the best allies he could choose in order to succeed in that. In the meantime he tried to persuade some other cities of Chalcidice to revolt from Athens. (Thuc. i. 56).

"Perdikkas had set himself two modest aims: First, to maintain his own rule in Macedonia, and second, to protect the territorial integrity of his country. When threatened by Athens in 432, he sought protection from Sparta and Corinth; and when some years later Spartan influence seemed more menacing, he attached himself again to Athens, only to ally himself once more with Sparta a couple of years later. His dealings make clear his fear for the survival of <sup>the</sup> Macedonian Kingdom, should a major southern Greek power establish itself firmly on his frontiers. It is characteristic of him that his policy was a tactical steering through the shoals of the conflicting interests of Athens and Sparta. In this way Perdikkas became notorious for his unreliability and his disloyalty to allies.<sup>7</sup> (Errington. *A history of Macedonia*, p. 18).

Perdikkas did not change this policy throughout his reign and he tried to succeed in his plans by changing sides several times and trying to choose always the allies which could serve best his country.

"Fundamentally, however, Macedonia needed neither Athens nor Sparta, and when their dispute posed a threat to Macedonia, which had become involved in the war through Athenian actions, not through its own, then no treaty partner could reasonably blame Perdikkas for acting in his own interest, as indeed did Athens and

Sparta themselves." (Errington. *A history of Macedonia*, p. 18ff).

Soon, the Athenians understood what Perdikkas had in mind, and for this reason - as well because of the Corinthian threat - they had taken the above mentioned measures against Potidaea.

The Potidaeans sent ambassadors immediately to Athens asking the Athenians not to take any severe measures against them. In the meantime they sent another embassy to Sparta, which was joined by Corinthian ambassadors as well, asking the Lacedaemonians to send troops to their city. (Thuc. i. 58. 1).

Although the Potidaean embassy to Athens failed to change the minds of the Athenians, the Spartans promised to invade Attica in a case of a military conflict between Athens and Potidaea.

These Lacedaemonian promises had given to the Potidaeans the confidence and the high morale they needed in order to revolt from Athens. The first action of the Potidaeans was to conclude an alliance with Bottiaea and Chalcidice, and when they succeeded in that they revolted from the Athenians. In the meantime Perdikkas persuaded <sup>some of</sup> the Chalcidiceans to destroy their coastal cities and to withdraw into the inland city of Olynthus.

When the Athenians arrived at Potidaea, they found out that the city had already revolted and that their troops were not sufficient for a siege, so they decided to turn against Perdikkas and united their army with the forces of Perdikkas' brothers. (Thuc. i. 59).

When the Corinthians realised that they were going to lose Potidaea they decided

to retaliate. They gathered a force of mercenaries (because they knew that any use of Corinthian troops could be characterised as a violation of the Thirty Years Peace) which numbered 1,600 hoplites and 400 light-armed troops and sent it to Potidaea under the leadership of Aristeus who was a friend of the Potidaeans. These troops arrived at Chalcidice 40 days after the revolt of Potidaea. (Thuc. i. 60).

The response of the Athenians to this Corinthian action came almost immediately. A force of 2,000 hoplites sailed from Athens to Potidaea in a fleet of 40 ships. For the Athenians the loss of Potidaea was more important than the war against Perdikkas, and although they were successful in their first operations the Athenians found it necessary to sign a peace treaty and to conclude an alliance with Perdikkas in order to save Potidaea. Thucydides calls the alliance between Athens and Perdikkas " *ὑποταξίαν ἀναγκασίαν* ", (Thuc. i. 61. 3), for Potidaea was already in a great danger because Aristeus and his troops were already into the city. But almost immediately Perdikkas changed his mind again, and joined once more the Potidaean and Peloponnesian forces. (Thuc. i. 62). The Athenians started the siege of the city after they came victorious out of the first battle between the two armies. (Thuc. i. 63).

The relations between Athens and Corinth had turned from bad to worse. The Corinthians were accusing the Athenians for the siege of a city in which there was a Peloponnesian army, and the Athenians were accusing the Corinthians for the support they provided to a city which had revolted from Athens. (Thuc. i. 66).

The next action of the Corinthians was to call a meeting of the Peloponnesian alliance in Sparta, in order to persuade their allies to take drastic action against the Athenians who had violated the Thirty Years Peace.

At this conference the Corinthians accused not only the Athenians, for the violation of the Thirty Years Peace, but also the Spartans who were not willing to take any measures against the ambitious and powerful Athenians. (Thuc. i. 68-70). According to the Corinthians the Athenian power and wealth finally ~~had become~~ a threat not only to the Peloponnesian alliance but also to the rest of Hellenic World, and the only way to stop Athens was to confront them united under the leadership of the Spartans who had to act as the liberators of all Greece.

The following conclusions emerge from the speech of the Corinthians: 1. Their relations with Sparta must be very close, and these friendly relations gave the right to the Corinthian ambassadors to criticise and blame the Spartan policy. 2. Sparta should change her policy towards Athens if she wanted to remain hegemon of Peloponnesus. 3. Corinth "represented" at this conference her other allies of the Peloponnesian league, and showed the fear of these states towards the rising power of Athens. (Thuc. i. 68-71).

The Athenians, who had sent their own delegates to the conference, tried to persuade the Spartans to remain calm and not to take any action against them. (Thuc. i. 72-73). King Archidamus of Sparta, who was aware of the danger of any drastic Peloponnesian action, shared the same views with the Athenians and tried to make the rest of the Peloponnesians think of the results of any extreme actions, but the Lacedaemonian ephor Sthenelaidas expressed more radical views and managed to persuade the Spartans to vote against Athens. (Thuc. i. 80-87).

During the same year (432) a second congress was held in Sparta by the members of the Peloponnesian alliance. Here the Corinthians were the protagonists again, and the most important points of their speech are the following: 1. The cities on the inland area of Peloponnesus had to cooperate with the coastal cities, because they were going to depend on them for their supplies in a time of war. 2. They

repeated for one more time Athens' treatment towards Corinth, a member of the Peloponnesian league. 3. They referred to the building of a new fleet which could be compared with the Athenian navy, and could bring the end of the Athenian supremacy at sea. This was, of course, just a Corinthian propaganda which was aimed to persuade her allies not to be afraid of the Athenian naval forces. 5. They proposed the fortification of some positions in Attica, and their use by the Peloponnesians, and they introduced their plan to win Athens' allies over to their side, something which could mean the end of the Athenian Empire. (Thuc. i. 119-125).

We can see that, according to Thucydides, Sparta was afraid of the growing Athenian Empire, and the increase of Athens' power finally became a threat to the Lacedaemonians. (Thuc. i. 24).

Corinth, on the other hand, was one of the many Greek states which was treated badly by the Athenians, with the difference that she was an important member of a powerful alliance; and had ambitions and plans which were damaged by the Athenians. We have to remember that Corinth was not an ordinary ally of the Spartans. She was a rich city, with the most powerful navy in the Peloponnese, and held a very important geographical position, facing both the Aegean sea, and the Adriatic.

"In the first debate at Sparta the Corinthians allow one sentence (68. 4) to Corcyra and Potidaea, and devote almost all their speech to the danger caused by Athens' expansion. The Athenian envoys (72-78) and Archidamus (79-85) refer very briefly to the αἰτίαι and discuss them not at all. Sthenelaidas (86) refers to them when he says that Sparta must stand by her allies, but he echoes the <sup>πρόφασις</sup> at the close (86. 5) when he urges that Athens must not be allowed to increase her



power." (Andrewes: *"Thucydides on the causes of the war."*, C.Q.liii, 1959, p. 225). For the Corinthians the αἰτίαι of a conflict between Athens and herself were of course the intervention of the Athenians in the Corcyraean affair, and the siege of Potidaea, an important Corinthian colony. But these αἰτίαι were not enough to make Sparta take any drastic measures against Athens, and to bring the whole Peloponnesian alliance into a war against the powerful Athenian Empire. Corinth knew that the Spartans needed something more than these αἰτίαι in order to move their army against Athens. They were also aware of the fact that the Lacedaemonians were suspicious over the growing power of Athens who turned to become a threat for the rest of Greece. When they decided to present their case at the conference of Sparta they gave emphasis to the following point: That Athens threatened not only the other Greeks, but also the members of the Peloponnesian alliance, and the best example to prove that was the Athenian behaviour towards them. The cases of Potidaea and Corcyra were the best proof that the Athenians had become dangerous.

On the other hand Sparta knew that Corinth had great importance for their alliance, and they did not want to lose her. Corinth used that as political blackmail in order to press the Spartans. During the first conference at Sparta the Corinthian ambassadors said clearly to the Lacedaemonians that they were ready to abandon the Peloponnesian alliance and to seek for other allies, if Sparta continued not to pay any attention to their complaints and refused to take any measures against Athens. (Thuc. i. 71). Thucydides does not tell us with whom the Corinthians could conclude an alliance, but it is probable that they meant Argos, a traditional enemy of Sparta, who was always looking for the opportunity to take over the hegemony of the Peloponnese. Such an alliance with Argos could mean the end of the Spartan power, and the Lacedaemonians were completely aware of that.

No one denies that Corinth used Sparta, and the Peloponnesian alliance, in order to succeed in her plans, but we cannot blame the Corinthians for doing so. Athens, with her imperialistic policy, damaged seriously the Corinthian ambitions and forced Corinth to take measures against her. (For the chronology of the events of Epidamnus and Potidaea see Gomme, *H.C.T.*, vol. 1, pp. 424-25).

The Archidamian war started in the spring of 431 when a Theban force attacked the small city of Plataea. (Thuc. ii. 2-6). After this event the Lacedaemonians who were afraid of the Athenian supremacy at sea, asked their allied states in Sicily to prepare 200 ships, so that the total number of the Peloponnesian fleet was to increase to 500 ships. (Thuc. ii. 7-8).

Gomme says about the number of the ships: "We cannot imagine that the western states would think of sending even 200 ships and scarcely that the Peloponnesians would ask for as many (they sent 22 in 413); and there were nothing like 300 in commission among the latter. In 432 the Corinthians and their allies who include nearly every state that could provide ships for the Peloponnesian league, mustered 150, in a great effort. In ii. 66. 1 we hear of a fleet of 100 ships; in iii. 16. 3 of 40; and in viii. 3. 2, from all the cities of the alliances 100 were ordered." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, ii.7-2).

According to Salmon: "Corinth's main contribution (in the Archidamian war) was at sea: She led the Peloponnesian effort. Thucydides does not give figures which enable us to calculate the proportion of Corinthian to other ships in the Peloponnesian fleets; but Corinth is named first in the list of Spartan allies at ii. 9. 3, and she probably provided something like half the total. Her colonies of Leukas and Ambracia doubtless took the contribution of Corinth and her colonies together to well over a half." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 306). Although the

Corinthians provided the "back bone" of the Peloponnesian fleet they did not prove very efficient against the more skilful Athenians, even in cases where they outnumbered heavily the Athenian ships. The Corinthians, who were still fighting with the old sea-battle methods, proved to be inferior than their opponents during the whole Archidamian war.

"Whatever we make of the speech by Thucydides, the naval actions undertaken by the Corinthians during the war demonstrate that they were over-optimistic: they had to learn their almost total incapacity by bitter experience." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 307).

Athens' first action during the first year of the war was the periplous of the Peloponnesus, which aimed to damage the Peloponnesian States, but without taking too many risks. (Thuc. ii. 23). The first cities which were captured by the Athenians were the tiny Sollium, which belonged to the Corinthians, and Astacus. (Thuc. ii. 30). Astacus' tyrant, Euarchos, who was expelled by the Athenians, managed to persuade the Corinthians to put him back in power. The Corinthian force which was sent was composed of 40 ships and 1,500 hoplites, and did not have any difficulties to regain Astacus. But the Corinthians were not successful when they tried to capture some other parts of the Acarnanian coast, and they were defeated in Cephallenia as well. (Thuc. ii. 33).

From these operations, we can see that Corinth reacted vigorously in order to repair the damage that was done by the Athenian periplous, but most of her operations were unsuccessful. During the summer of 430 a Peloponnesian fleet of 100 ships, under the commands of the Spartan Knemus attacked Zacynthus, and ravaged the land, but finally the Peloponnesians failed to bring the island into their alliance. (Thuc. ii. 66).

The Athenians, who were aware of the importance of the Corinthian Gulf to the Peloponnesians, sent during the winter of the same year a squadron of 20 ships under Phormio, to Naupactus in order to check the entrance of the Corinthian Gulf. (Thuc. ii. 69).

During the same year, the besieged city of Potidaea finally surrendered to the Athenians, proving that the Corinthians were incapable of confronting the Athenians especially during these first two years of the war.

In 429, the Corinthians supported Knemus in his expedition in Acarnania after an Ambracian request for help. The Ambraciotes who wanted to capture the whole of Acarnania persuaded the Spartans to send land and sea forces for help. They believed that they could capture not only the whole <sup>of</sup> Acarnania, but also Zacynthus, Kephallenia, and even Naupactus. The Corinthians who wanted to help their settlers - the Ambrakiotes - supported the plan and decided to send a squadron to take part in the operation, but their force was not ready yet, when the rest of the Peloponnesian fleet was waiting at Leukas. Finally the expedition started without the Corinthians and the Sicyonians - who were not ready ~~either~~ - but proved to be very unsuccessful for the Peloponnesians, and their army returned home. (Thuc. ii. 80-82). (For the expedition of Knemus see also the chapter about Western Greece).

When the Corinthian fleet completed its preparations and came out to join the allied force, <sup>it</sup> faced the Athenian squadron of Phormio, which was stationed in Naupactus. At the sea-battle that followed, Corinth was defeated by the smaller fleet of Athens and suffered heavy casualties (12 out of the 47 Corinthian and allied ships were captured by the Athenians). (Thuc. ii. 83-84).

After their defeat, the Corinthians who had now joined the rest of the Peloponnesian fleet, started immediate preparations for another sea-battle, thinking that it was a great opportunity for them to clear the Corinthian Gulf from the annoying Athenian squadron, for they knew that Phormio was badly outnumbered by the Peloponnesians. In the meantime, the Athenians decided to send some reinforcements to Phormio, but their forces did not manage to be in Naupactus on time. <sup>However,</sup> the sea-battle proved to be a disaster for the Peloponnesians, whose fleet of 77 ships was defeated by 20 Athenian triremes. (Thuc. ii. 85-92). The victory of the Athenians, which showed for one more time their superiority in naval skills, disappointed the Corinthians who had miscalculated the real power of the Athenians at sea.

During the next year (428), the Lesbians asked the Lacedaemonians to accept them as a member of the Peloponnesian League, although Lesbos was a member of the Athenian alliance as well. This revolt of Lesbos was supported by the Boeotians, and finally the rest of the Peloponnesian allies accepted Lesbos into their League, (Thuc. iii. 2-15), and decided that they should send a force to Lesbos for support. This force was sent to the island during the next summer (427), but never managed to help the Lesbians, who could not resist the Athenians any more and surrendered. (Thuc. iii. 27-29). "Naval incompetence proved a serious impediment to the Spartan war effort... when the revolt of Lesbos offered the opportunity to attack Athens where she had most to lose, in the Aegean; Corinth was unable to help Sparta to exploit it. Geographical factors made it difficult for the Peloponnesians to operate in the Aegean. Of Sparta's naval allies only Corinth and Megara had ports facing east. Even the Corinthian vessels which went to help Lesbos in 427 sailed from Lechaeum round the Peloponnese, not from Cenchreae (iii, 29, 1), and the forty ships from the Megarian docks at Nisaea which were used in the abortive attempt on the Peiraeus had been out of use for so long that they were no longer

serviceable." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 311). During the same year the city of Plataea surrendered to the Peloponnesians after four years of resistance, (Thuc. iii. 52), and a civil war broke out in Corcyra. (Thuc. iii. 69).

Corinth, which never forgot the Corcyraeans and was always looking to take control of the Adriatic by eliminating Corcyra's power, found a perfect opportunity to succeed with her plans during 427.

"Ever since the battle of Sybota Corinth had held 250 Corcyraean captives... these prisoners were now sent back to Corcyra, ostensibly after payment of a large ransom, but in fact with the intention of handing the city over to Corinth." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 313). After a debate in their assembly, the Corcyraeans - under the influence of the Pro-Corinthians - decided to remain an ally of Athens and at the same time a friend of the Peloponnesians. (Thuc. iii. 70). According to Salmon: "This was hardly logical; but it proved that Corcyra felt that she still needed the Athenian protection against Corinth. Corcyra felt no special friendship for Athens: her only recorded action during the war so far was to send fifty ships to help the First Athenian Periplous in 431." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 313).

According to Salmon, the Corcyraeans wanted to turn neutral again - as they have done before 435 - but this time it was very difficult, if not impossible, to do that because of the Corinthian threat in the area.

The Corinthians sent to Corcyra their own Ambassadors in order to support their Corcyraean friends, but the Pro-Athenian party managed not only to defend its policy successfully, but also to impose a heavy fine on five of its opponents. (Thuc. iii. 70. 3). As a result of this debate, the five Corcyraeans who were

supported by Corinth used the force of arms against the council, and killed 50 councillors with the help of their friends and supporters. But this "coup d'état" of the Pro-Corinthians did not solve any of the problems, but on the contrary, it was the beginning of a horrible civil war which ravaged Corcyra for a long time.

Very soon the Pro-Corinthians (or the Oligarchs), who were also supported by a Peloponnesian squadron, were defeated, (Thuc. iii. 76-80), and although many of them were slaughtered, the rest managed to escape to the mountains which became their basis for a guerilla war against their opponents. (Thuc. iii. 81-85). According to Salmon: "The nature of the Corinthian scheme is clear enough. Two main weapons were to be used by the Corinthian ex-prisoners: fear of enslavement to Athens, and oligarchic revolution, which was to be supported by a Peloponnesian fleet. It is naive to suppose that the oligarchic revolution was not part of the initial plan merely because the first actions were directed towards abrogation of the alliance with Athens; there would have been no hope of success if revolutionary intentions had been open from the start." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 314).

If the oligarchs, who were supported by Corinth, managed to take over the control of the city then the Corinthians could very easily take the control of the Ionian sea offering for exchange their support to the Oligarchic government of the city.

On the other hand, Sparta did not seem very cooperative with the Corinthians in the case of the Corcyraean civil war, and their presence in the area was more symbolical than essential. For Sparta, Corcyra's civil war was not a matter which concerned the whole Peloponnesian alliance although it was of vital importance for Corinth. It is probable that Sparta could see that the success of the "coup d'état" could open Corinth's way to the west, but after all this served only the Corinthians in an area of no strategic importance for Sparta.

The whole operations in Corcyra lasted until 425 when the oligarchs were finally eliminated completely. (Thuc. iv. 46-48). During the year 426 Demosthenes with the help of the Acarnanians, the Zacynthians, the Cephallenians, and the Corcyraeans was going to attack Leucas but changing his original plan the Athenian general turned against Aetolia after the strong insistence of the Messenians. (Thuc. iii. 94-98). By this action Demosthenes lost the support of the Corcyraeans and the Acarnanians, who were in favour of an attack against Leukas, and finally was defeated by the Aetolians. Before the Athenian attack, the Aetolians had sent for help to Corinth and to Sparta and the Spartans decided to send an army, composed of different Peloponnesian contingents, under the leadership of Eurylochus. (Thuc. iii. 100-102).

Eurylochus and his force were not successful on this expedition, and on their way back Eurylochus - under the influence of the Ambraciotes - decided to make an assault against the Amphilochian Argos, (Thuc. iii. 105-114), but his forces were badly defeated by Demosthenes and the Amphilochians, and the whole expedition turned<sup>out</sup> to be a disaster for the city of Ambracia. The army of Ambracia was destroyed almost completely, and the city herself could be overtaken easily by the Athenians who were ready to make an assault. It was their enemies, the Acarnanians, who saved the Ambraciotes because they were afraid that the Athenians could be proved worse neighbours than the defeated Ambraciotes. (More details about this expedition of Eurylochus on the chapter about Western Greece).

"This is good (if superfluous) evidence of Athenian relations with Acarnania and Amphilochia: It was merely an alliance of convenience, encouraged by common resistance to Corinthian efforts to secure control of the north-west. In the case of minor sites, it was useful for Athens to give them to the Acarnanians, for her interest was essentially to deny them to Corinth. But Ambracia was neither



Acarnanian nor Amphilochean territory, and Athens might wish to hold such an important site for herself; to help Athens to take it would be to encourage too positive an Athenian interest." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 317ff).

During 425 the greatest part of the Corinthian fleet was engaged at Pylos, and finally was destroyed, (Thuc. iv. 11-24), or captured by the Athenians. (Thuc. iv. 23); proving for one more time the Corinthian inability to confront Athens at sea.

During the same year the Athenians under the leadership of Nicias, attacked Corinth with a fleet of 80 ships, 2,000 hoplites and 200 cavalry, with the help of contingents from Miletus, Andros and Carystos. The Athenians chose the region of Solygeia to land, and by this way they surprised the Corinthians who had gathered their army in the area of Isthmus after they had received a warning from Argos. When the Corinthians realised what the Athenian plan was, they divided their army into three parts, in order to avoid any other surprises, and after an obstinate battle they managed to make the Athenians withdraw. The Athenians, after their retreat, sailed during the same day to Crommyon and after ravaging its territory they left for Epidaurus. (Thuc. iv. 42-45). During the year 423/22 Corinth signed, together with Sparta and the other Peloponnesian allies, the One Year Truce.

"Corinth's part in the Archidamian war was thus merely to suffer; as between Corinth and Athens the war was an almost unbroken series of Athenian successes, especially in the north west. It was her special claim to influence in this region which had <sup>forced</sup> Corinth to fight, but the war had all but eradicated her strength here, and meanwhile her naval credentials had been exposed for the anachronism they were... The Athenian intention according to Thucydides was to "prevent the import of corn (from Sicily) to the Peloponnese, and to make a preliminary survey to see whether it might be possible to bring affairs in Sicily under their control." (iii. 86.

4). Corinth, one of the major Peloponnesian importers of Sicilian corn, was one of the main targets, as she was of the blockade at Naupactus but Athenian hopes were not fulfilled, and the Peloponnesian corn supply was probably little, if at all, affected." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 320).

It is very probable that the naval incompetence of the Corinthians - which caused many failures to the Peloponnesians - affected the relations between Sparta and Corinth, especially for two reasons. Corinth had almost promised an easy victory to her allies in order to persuade them to take arms against Athens, <sup>(Thuc. i.120.4)</sup> but she failed to keep that promise, and even worse the Corinthians had the major responsibility for the Spartan failure and humiliation in Sphacteria. However, the Spartans did not show their anger straight away, but we can see the Lacedaemonian dissatisfaction towards the Corinthians when the Peace Treaty of Nicias was signed in 421. (Thuc. v. 18-19).

"Of all Sparta's allies Corinth was least satisfied with the peace. None of the grievances that had led the Corinthians to push the Spartans toward war in 431 had been removed. Potidaea was firmly in Athenian hands, its citizens, descendants of Corinthian colonists, driven from their homes and scattered. The island of Corcyra remained allied to Athens, and Megara was intimidated by the Athenian garrison at Nisaea. Corinth, moreover, had suffered territorial losses in the northwest. Sollium and Anactorium remained in hostile hands, and Corinthian influence throughout the entire region had been destroyed. Only the destruction of Athenian power would enable Corinth to achieve the restoration of her former position, so the Corinthians rejected the Peace and sought to disrupt the diplomatic situation that emerged from it." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 24).

The renewal of the war against Athens was the only solution for the Corinthians who worked hard in the field of diplomacy during 421-420. In order to succeed in that, Corinth who was not satisfied at all with the Peace of Nicias, turned to Argos and asked for an alliance. "What motivated the Corinthians to suggest such unusual arrangements? The exigencies of diplomacy do not provide an adequate explanation. Surely Corinth did not wish to keep her plans secret from the other Greek states to which she immediately repaired in the hope of persuading them to join in the projected coalition. Nor did she make any attempt to hide her negotiations from Sparta for the Spartans were immediately aware of what had occurred. If Corinth wanted to form a new alliance why did she not announce her plans openly before the Argive people." (Kagan: *"Corinthian Diplomacy after the Peace of Nicias."*, A.J.Ph., 81, 1960). According to Kagan there were two political powers in Corinth since the 6th century. The Oligarchs (merchants, manufacturers) and the Aristocrats (great landowners). The Aristocrats always supported the Spartans who could provide security to their land. Although the political situation in Corinth during 421 was stable and these two political powers co-existed in harmony, the Treaty of Nicias changed some things.

The Oligarchs who had suffered a lot from the Athenians decided that the only way to avoid economic destruction was to renew the war against Athens at the expense of Sparta. Of course the Aristocrats who supported Sparta for their own reasons could not accept that, and for this reason they simply chose to keep the negotiations secret at least in the beginning.

"When Corinth formally entered the Argive coalition the Chalcidians, bitter enemies of Athens, joined at the same moment (31,6) and whenever the Chalcidians are mentioned by Thucydides in this period, they appear in close association with the Corinthians (30,2; 35,3; 38,1,4) who evidently represented themselves as champions

of a people betrayed by Sparta and likely soon to be subjected to Athenian attacks." (Westlake: *"Corinth and the Argive Coalition."*, A.J.Ph., 1940, p. 417). (More details about the Corinthian Diplomacy that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias in the chapter about Argos).

Corinthian Foreign policy and diplomacy during 421/0 can be characterised as successful, for the Corinthians were the ones who brought Sparta back to the offensive, and their intrigues and negotiations with Sparta and other cities made the Lacedaemonians understand that their hegemony was in question, and that their own existence was threatened by an alliance which could unite the Peloponnesians to an enemy front. We can speak of another "political blackmail" of Corinth towards Sparta, which finally made the Spartans renew the war.

During the year 420/419 Corinth abandoned her alliance with Argos, Elis, and Mantinea, and turned again to Sparta. (Thuc. v. 48). Now the situation has changed for one more time. Sparta and Athens were again at odds and the renewal of the war was just a matter of time. The Corinthians who knew that, joined Sparta and her allies for one more time against Athens. "After her brief and foolish flirtation with Argos, Corinth settled down to play, in the land warfare generated by the quadruple alliance, the same insignificant role that she had played in the last years of the Archidamian war; Thucydides rarely thinks her part worth mention." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 329).

During the next year (419) Alcibiades with a small Athenian force tried to build a fort in Achaia in order to take control of the Corinthian Gulf, but the Corinthians with the help of the Sikyonians managed to stop him. (Thuc. v. 52). (For more details about this expedition of Alcibiades see the chapter about Western Greece).

Although Alcibiades had failed in Achaea, his campaign in Peloponnesus was not over yet. The Argives - who were influenced by Alcibiades - started preparations to attack Epidaurus during the same year. The plan of Alcibiades was to keep Corinth quiet and to provide a shorter route between Argos and Athens, the capture of Epidaurus could offer him both. (Thuc. v. 53).

"The campaigns in Achaea and Epidaurus were two aspects of a plan meant to threaten and isolate Corinth. The alliance with Patrae made it easier to interfere with Corinth's trade and communications with the Western colonies. If Epidaurus fell, the psychological impact on Corinth would be great. Even though Epidaurus was not well situated for launching an attack on Corinth, its fall would threaten the Corinthians with attack from two sides and demonstrate that Argos and Athens were willing and able to attack and defeat the Peloponnesians states allied to Sparta. The next time, with Epidaurus safely in hand, the Argives might march against Corinth by the Nemea road while the Athenians landed on the Corinthian coast, as Nicias had done in 425. The allies may have hoped that such a threat would force the Corinthians out of their alliance with Sparta." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 83).

After many delays the Spartans managed to send a garrison of three hundred hoplites to Epidaurus, during the winter of 419. This force came to Epidaurus by sea, and it is very probable that the Corinthians provided the vessels for the expedition. (Thuc. v. 52-56).

During the next years the Lacedaemonians decided to take more drastic measures in order to save Epidaurus. A huge army gathered under the leadership of King Agis in order to crush the Argive coalition. Thucydides describes this Peloponnesian force as the most splendid army that was ever gathered by Greeks.

(Thuc. v. 60). The Corinthian contingent which followed the allied army numbered two thousand hoplites, a considerable force which shows Corinth's desire for the destruction of the Argive power and the renewal of the war against Athens. Unfortunately for the Peloponnesians, this great army had to return home without having the opportunity to attack the enemy, for King Agis decided to conclude a truce with the Argives, without consulting his allies first. For this action Agis was condemned not only by the Spartans, who had lost the opportunity for a complete destruction of the Argive army, but also by his allies as well, who were ignored by the Spartan King. (Thuc. v. 57-60).

Corinth did not take part in the battle of Mantinea that followed during the same year and the reason for this absence was that the Corinthians did not have the time to prepare their forces, for the Spartans moved suddenly against Argos. (Thuc. v. 64-7). The Spartans who came victorious out of this battle regained the control of Peloponnesus and imposed an oligarchy in Argos. (For more details about the victory of the Lacedaemonians, and the events that followed, see the chapter about Argos).

During the years 417-415 Sparta invaded the Argolid twice with all her allies except Corinth. (Thuc. v. 83 and vi. 7). "The reason for Corinth's refusal can only be the subject of conjecture. Probably Corinth believed that the Mantinea campaign and the subsequent treaty with democratic Argos had settled Peloponnesians affairs sufficiently to enable Sparta to resume vigorously the offensive war against Athens; she therefore resented diversions in support of Argive oligarchs." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 330). According to Kagan: "Under the Oligarchs, however, Argos had been and always would be merely a Spartan satellite, for given their inadequate political base the oligarchs must rely on Spartan support. With the Argive threat removed, Sparta's fear and hence her need of Corinth, would

diminish as a result Corinth would be less able to manipulate the Peloponnesian league for its own purposes." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 142).

When the Athenians invaded Sicily in 415 the Syracusans sent for help to Sparta and of course to Corinth who was their mother-city. (Thuc. vi. 73). The Corinthians responded immediately to the Syracusan request, for they were anxious to do anything which could harm the Athenians, and agreed not only to send help to Sicily but also to try to persuade the Spartans to join them. (Thuc. vi. 88. 7-8). In the people's assembly that followed in Sparta, the Syracusans, the Corinthians and Alcibiades - who had abandoned Athens after he was accused of impiety - managed to persuade the Spartans to send the necessary help to Sicily in order to help the Syracusans and their allies. (Thuc. vi. 89-93). The Lacedaemonians decided to send help to Sicily under the generalship of Gylippus, and in the meantime they were planning to fortify Deceleia - in Attica - in order to keep the Athenians busy in their own territory. In the meantime Gylippus asked the Corinthians to send at once warships to Sicily and to prepare the rest of their fleet in order to sail to Sicily. (Thuc. vi. 93).

During the next Summer (414) Gylippus sailed to Sicily having under his orders two Corinthian and two Spartan ships. (Thuc. vi. 104). In the meantime eight more Corinthian vessels were at Leucas, waiting for two Leucadian and three Ambracian ships to join them. (Thuc. vi. 104). Although Gylippus had been persuaded, by false reports, that it was impossible to save Sicily for the Athenians had surrounded the city, he decided to try save Italy, and for this reason he sailed immediately with four ships in order to see what he could do in order to succeed in that.

When Gylippus arrived in Sicily he discovered that the reports he had received were false and that Syracuse was not lost yet. (Thuc. vii. 1). In the meantime the Syracusans, who were ready to finish the war with Athens, changed their plans after the arrival of the Corinthian Gongylus who brought them the news that the reinforcements were on their way to Sicily. (Thuc. vii. 2). The situation now had changed, and the Syracusan army came out of the city in order to meet Gylippus and the reinforcements. Gylippus' first action was to prevent the Athenians from surrounding completely the city of Syracuse, and he was successful in that although he lost the first battle. (Thuc. vii. 3-6). In the meantime the twelve remaining ships of the Peloponnesians arrived in Sicily, and their crews helped the Syracusans to build the rest of their protective Walls. (Thuc. vii. 7). Gylippus, who could see now that the Athenians could be defeated in Sicily, decided to send a word to the Peloponnesians asking for more reinforcements. (Thuc. vii. 7). In the meantime the Syracusans started to prepare their own fleet. Now the Athenians were on the defensive and the change of the situation forced Nicias to ask for more reinforcements from Athens. (Thuc. vii. 8). When the Corinthians and the Spartans received the news from Gylippus' envoys they decided to send more forces to Syracuse. (Thuc. vii. 17). The Corinthians used merchant ships to carry the hoplite forces to Sicily, and the Spartans did the same. In the meantime Corinth prepared twenty five warships in order to attack the Athenian squadron in Naupactus and by this way to protect the merchant vessels which were going to sail to Sicily. (Thuc. vii. 17).

During the next spring (413-412) the Lacedaemonian army invaded Attika under the leadership of Agis, and ravaged the land for one more time. But this time the Peloponnesians did not withdraw as they had done during the previous invasions, instead they build a fort at Deceleia which was sited in an important strategic position between Boeotia and Attica. (Thuc. vii. 19). This fort could provide



asylum to the slaves who could escape from Athens, and on the other hand it was a continuous threat to the Athenians whose land was now systematically ravaged by the Peloponnesians.

In the meantime the Spartan ships sailed to Sicily with 600 hoplites and after a while a Corinthian force of 500 hoplites followed them. Part of the Corinthian army was coming from Corinth herself, and the rest were mercenaries from Arcadia. The Corinthian plan had worked perfectly for the twenty five ships which sailed near Naupactus kept the Athenians quiet and gave time to the reinforcements to sail away. (Thuc. vii. 19). During the same time the Athenians sent an additional force of 65 ships and 1,200 hoplites to Sicily as reinforcements after an appeal of Nicias. (Thuc. vii. 20).

Meanwhile the Corinthian force of the twenty five ships in Naupactus gave a sea-battle against the Athenian squadron. Both the opponents claimed the victory, for the Athenians managed to sink three enemy ships, and the Corinthians because they disabled seven Athenian triremes with the use of a new technical device: They had strengthened their prows, and by this way they rammed the enemy ships more easily. (Thuc. vii. 34).

Meanwhile the Athenians back home faced serious problems because of the fort of Deceleia; they had lost twenty thousand slaves, their land was completely ravaged and for the first time since the beginning of the war they faced serious economic problems. (Thuc. vii. 27-28). In the meantime Nicias had lost the fortifications of Plemmyrium, (Thuc. vii), and new reinforcements, composed of 1,500 hoplites, from different cities of Sicily arrived in Syracuse. (Thuc. vii. 32). But worst of all, the Athenians had lost the sea-battle of the Great Harbour, in which the Corinthians had the opportunity to test, to a greater extent, their new

technical device. The Syracusan and allied ships, having their prows strengthened, defeated the Athenians after damaging many of the enemy ships. (Thuc. vii. 36-41). Although reinforcements arrived from Athens, under the commands of general Demosthenes, the Athenians failed to capture Epipolae, (Thuc. vii. 43-45), after suffering many casualties. Finally the Athenian fleet was defeated in two consecutive sea-battles, (Thuc. vii. 51-54 and vii. 70-71), and their admirable fleet was destroyed almost completely.

After these consecutive defeats the Athenians decided to withdraw immediately, but during the retreat their army was destroyed by the Sicilians and their allies, while their generals were put to death, on the advice of the Corinthians who either hated Nicias or were afraid of him. (Thuc. vii. 86).

Although Corinth had sent a force to Sicily in order to help the Syracusans, "the victory was almost exclusively Syracusan. The main Corinthian contribution was less tangible: encouragement and technical experience; the effects of these factors were of varying strength. It was after representations from Corinth had been joined by Syracuse and Alcibiades in begging Sparta to act. and in any case Sparta probably needed little persuasion beyond that provided by the events themselves." (Salmon. *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 335).

We also have to remember that Corinth managed to prevent the Athenian fleet at Naupactus from attacking the Peloponnesian reinforcements who were sailing to Sicily. This action together with the technical advice they gave to the Syracusans, were the most important Corinthian contributions in the Sicilian war.

Unfortunately we do not have enough evidence for a detailed account of the Corinthian contribution during the last phase of the war.

Athens did not attack Corinth during the last stage of the war (413-404), but despite their problems the Athenians managed to maintain a small squadron in Naupactus in order to "keep an eye" on any Peloponnesian movement in the area. The Peloponnesian strategy during this period was to support the revolts of the states which were allies to Athens, and by this way to challenge Athens in her Aegean territory.

Sparta and her allies were now more confident for their own fleet and - why not? - their sea-power. After all they had proved that they could face with success any Athenian fleet, as the war of Sicily proved, and with the support of their Sicilian allies they had the opportunity to destroy the Athenian "armada".

The Lacedaemonians asked their allies to build more ships, and Corinth built fifteen new triremes in order to contribute to the common fleet. (Thuc. viii. 3).

During the year 412/11 the Peloponnesians decided to move to their first serious action in the Aegean. The island of Chios was going to revolt from Athens and the Spartans with their allies decided to send a force there in order to support them. (Thuc. viii. 7-8). The Corinthian delay - because of the Isthmian Games - gave the time to the Athenians to prepare themselves and finally the 21 Peloponnesian ships were defeated by the 37 Athenian, in Speiraeum of Corinthia. (Thuc. viii. 10-11). This defeat disappointed the Spartans and their allies, for it proved that Athens still had the "upper hand" in the Aegean, and although their fleet and their skills at sea had been improved since the beginning of the war, they could not confront the Athenians very easily. (Thuc. viii. 11).

Alcibiades - who was now in Sparta as an advisor of the Peloponnesians - supported for one more time the mission of a fleet in Ionia in order to help Chios.

(Thuc. viii. 12). At the end five Lacedaemonian ships sailed to the Aegean under the leadership of Chalcideus. In the meantime the Peloponnesian ships, which were on their way back home from Sicily, found themselves under an Athenian attack. Fortunately for them they managed to escape after losing only one ship, while the rest sailed to the friendly harbour of Corinth. (Thuc. viii. 13).

When the Athenians were informed about the plan of the Peloponnesians to help Chios they decided to reduce the number of the ships which were blockading the Peloponnesian fleet at Speiraeum in order to send a force against the Spartans who were sailing to Chios. (Thuc. viii. 15), and by this action they gave the Peloponnesians the opportunity to break the blockade and to return with their ships back to Corinth. (Thuc. viii. 20).

According to Salmon, Corinth with the addition of the fifteen new ships she was ordered to build, could dispose a total number of fifty ships, ..."but it is unlikely that Corinth and her Adriatic colonies provided even a third of the Peloponnesian fleets, much less the half that they had contributed in the Archidamian war." (Salmon, *Wealthy Corinth*, p. 338).

Unfortunately we do not have any details of the Corinthian reductions in the number of the ships she contributed in the Ionian war, but it is possible that Corinth was not so enthusiastic any more to confront the Athenians. According to Salmon, Corinth's hatred towards Athens had its origins at the Corcyraean affair, and of course at the expansionistic policy that Pericles and his followers adopted.

Since 413 Athens abandoned her plans for the control of the Adriatic Sea and after her defeat at Sicily, the only thing that Athens could do was to secure the Aegean and to keep her allies. Corinth could see that there was not any Athenian threat

in the region any more, and it is very probable that this fact changed the minds of the Corinthians who decided now not to take many chances and risk ships and crews in the last phase of the war.

In 404 Athens collapsed completely. After suffering heavy losses the Athenians decided to surrender to the Lacedaemonians under very hard conditions. Xenophon, (Hell. ii. 2. 19), says that the Corinthians and the Thebans (together with other cities) asked the Spartans to destroy Athens completely; but Sparta denied this claim, by giving the excuse that Athens had served well Greece at the past, and she did not deserve this punishment. Sparta's plans were to use Athens for her own benefits and the Lacedaemonians preferred to control the political scene of the city, instead of destroying her.

There are two possible explanations for the Corinthian attitude towards the defeated Athens in 404.

The first one is that Corinth had suffered too much in the past thirty years because of the Athenians, and now at the end of this costly war it was time to take her revenge. It is also probable that Corinth was still afraid of the Athenians, for she knew them too well, and the Corinthians might have remembered the years that followed the Persian Wars, when the Athenians built an Empire out of the ashes that the Persians had left when they retreated. For them, the Athenians were too dangerous even when they were defeated, and Corinth was not willing to give them another chance.

The second explanation is that the Corinthians preferred to destroy the city of Athens than to give the Spartans the chance to exploit her. Although there is no evidence of this explanation, it is very probable that the Corinthians could see a

new Empire coming out of this war, but under the leadership of Sparta this time. Corinth was one of the most important (if not the most important) allies of Sparta during the Peloponnesian war. Corinth did not act out of friendship or loyalty, for she had to lose too much if the Athenians managed to impose their Empire in the rest of the Greek world.

Corinth hated the Athenians because Athens was a major threat in an area of vital importance for the Corinthians. The alliance of Athens with Corcyra, the policy of Pericles in the west, and the Athenian expansionistic plans made Athens a hated enemy for Corinth.

The Corinthians used all their means in order to defeat the Athenians. Their wealth, their ships, their army, and above all their diplomacy, which proved to be the most powerful weapon of Corinth. This diplomacy of Corinth turned the whole situation that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias, and brought Sparta and her allies back to the offensive.

During the years of the war Corinth supported Sparta enthusiastically - except in the short period that followed the Peace of Nicias - and contributed too much for the benefit of the alliance, but everything she did, she did it for herself. This was not a characteristic of Corinth alone, but almost every city which belonged to the Peloponnesian alliance acted in the same way. The common enemy was Athens, and for them Sparta was the only state which was able to stand against the Athenian rising power which represented the threat.

## Chapter II

# THE BOEOTIAN FEDERATION

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## II. THE BOEOTIAN FEDERATION

According to Thucydides, (i. 2), Boeotia was among the richest areas in Greece because of her very fertile soil. Later on, Boeotia's wealth grew more as a result of her geographical position, and her access to the Aegean and the Adriatic sea.

According to Gomme: "... Boeotia was unique among the Greek lands in having a coast well provided with harbours and fronting three seas, open to the west, the North, and the East, to Italy, to Sicily, and Carthage, to Macedonia and the Euxine, and to Egypt, Cyprus, and the islands;" (Gomme. *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, p. 17).

The most powerful and wealthy city of Boeotia was Thebes which managed to be the dominant power in the region from archaic times to the times of the Macedonian rule over Greece.

"... All the legends of the Boeotian towns suggest that in early times the influence of Thebes spread over the whole of the interior of Eastern Boeotia but that it stopped short of the coast; and similarly, that Orchomenus ruled over the Western plain, but not over the coast towns at its extremities. Theban legend can be traced, that is, in Plataea and Tanagra in the south, at Mykalessos, Harma, Glisas, at Thespiiai and the Sphinx mountain in the West." (Gomme. *Essays in Greek History and Literature*, p. 39).

"Thebes was among the palace sites of Mycenaean Greece, a city whose past is related in the ivories, seals, linear B inscriptions and jewellery of the museum in Thebes, as well as the mythological traditions which were given new life in the plays of the Athenian tragedians... By the sixth century, however, Thebes appears to have become the predominant power in a loose federation of Boeotian cities, and to have also become involved in political manoeuvrings beyond the borders of



Boeotia." (Demand. *Thebes in the fifth century*, p. 17).

This confederacy of the Boeotians made its earliest appearance during the last quarter of the sixth century when Thebes forced the Plataeans to join the Federation. (Thuc. iii. 61. 2; Hdt. vi. 108).

After the Persian wars the Boeotians and especially the Thebans suffered from the invasions of the Greek allies, as a result of their friendly relations with the enemy. It is very probable that the first Boeotian Federation was dissolved during the years that followed the Persian Wars or, according to Demand, Thebes lost her hegemony over the rest <sup>of the</sup> Boeotian cities, and it was Tanagra which emerged for a short period as the most powerful city in the region. "In the post-war period, the coinage suggests <sup>that Tanagra</sup> was making a bid for control of the Boeotians. Theban coins from the period are few, suggesting a period of economic slow down as well as a slackening of Theban predominance in Boeotia. Tanagran coins are more plentiful, and some bear a "B", "B - O", or "B - OI", which has been interpreted to imply that Tanagra made a counter claim to Boeotian leadership during the relative eclipse of Thebes. If this was the case, in 470 we may get a glimpse of Thebes trying to whittle away the influence of Tanagra by this service to the people of Delion." (Demand. *Thebes in the fifth century*, p. 27). According to Buck: "The argument is that the Federal coins, that is, those with both shield and inscription, were issued at various times by Tanagra in the name of all the Boeotians. Therefore at certain times, though not all times during this twenty-year period (to explain the occasional presence of local Tanagran issues), Tanagra must have claimed the hegemony of Boeotia... However, since Thebes had clearly slipped from any pre-eminent position by 460, one could position on the basis of the coins an uneasy hegemony sporadically exercised by Tanagra, with Thebes attempting to get it back from time to time, but not being quite strong enough to do so. (Buck. *A History of Boeotia*, p. 141-142).

According to Kraay: "Following the Medism of most of the Boeotian League in 480 Boeotia appears to be in eclipse in the following decades both politically and economically. Little coinage can be attributed to these years, and what there is has an unusual character. A number of staters, all bearing the usual shield on the obverse, have as reverse either the mill-sail used early in the century as a four spoke wheel; the legends refer either to Tanagra alone (T or TA) or to Tanagra in conjunction with the Boeotians as a whole (BOI). These unusual issues have been plausibly regarded as evidence that during the years of Theban eclipse Tanagra aspired to the hegemony of "Boeotia", perhaps with Athenian encouragement." (Kraay. *Archaic and classical Greek coins*, p. 110ff).

During the year 457 an hoplite battle between the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians took place in the region of Tanagra. According to Thucydides, (i. 107-108), the Lacedaemonians had defeated the Phocians who had invaded Doris, the traditional mother land of the Spartans. The forces from Peloponnesus were composed of 1,500 Lacedaemonian hoplites and 10,000 allied troops. On their way back home the Peloponnesians found themselves against the Athenian forces who denied them access to their cities. An Athenian fleet was ready to prevent their return by sea, and Athenian garrisons guarded the passages on the Gerania mountain, so the Peloponnesians decided to stay for a while in Boeotia in order to find a safe way for their return. In the meantime, some Athenian oligarchs came to the Spartans and sought their help in order to take power in Athens.

When the Athenian allied forces, composed of 14,000 men, came to confront the Peloponnesian army in the region of Tanagra they were defeated and returned home after suffering heavy losses. We do not have enough evidence for the Boeotian contribution to the Spartan invasion at Doris and to the battle of Tanagra. Thucydides implies that the army was composed mainly of Peloponnesians (Thuc.

i. 107. 1) and Diodorus express the same opinion though more clearly (Diod. xi. 79. 5). One thing is certain about Boeotia during this period: that she was suffering from political stasis. (Thuc. iii. 62. 5 and iv. 92. 6). It is very possible that only a few states cooperated with the Spartans, for according to Diodorus Thebes became a member of the Peloponnesian league after the campaign of the Lacedaemonians at Phokis. (Diod. xi. 81). Sixty two days after the battle of Tanagra, the Athenian force invaded Boeotia and defeated her army in the battle of Oenophyta. As a result of this battle the territories of Boeotia and Phokis were occupied by Athens, and the Walls of Tanagra were destroyed. (Thuc. i. 108).

According to Diodorus, after the Peloponnesian victory at Tanagra, a Theban embassy visited Sparta asking the Lacedaemonians to support them in order to make Thebes the hegemon of Boeotia for one more time. (Diod. xi. 81). On the other hand, Thebes promised to Sparta her assistance in any future invasion against Athens. Such a promise was not ignored by the Spartans who started their cooperation with the Thebans by helping them to rebuild the Great Walls of their city. Unfortunately Diodorus does not give any further details about this Lacedaemonian contingent which was sent to Thebes; such as if it took part at the battle of Oenophyta or not. According to Thucydides, (iii. 62), there were political problems in Boeotia which caused the defeat of the Boeotians by the Athenians at Oenophyta. As the Boeotarch Pagondas pointed out in his speech before the battle of Delium, (Thuc. iv. 92), the Boeotian state was not united and was suffering from civil wars. "Usually the word Stasis means quarrels between rival candidates for the Hegemony. The disputes could equally well be between oligarchs and democrats, pro-Athenians and pro-Spartans or varying mixture of these." (Buck. *Boeotia*, p. 147).

According to Thucydides, (i. 111), the Athenians sent some troops to help Orestes

the son of the King of Thessaly. Together with the Athenians some Phokaeans and some Boeotians took part in the expedition. It is very probable that the Boeotians were forced by the Athenians to join them, for the Boeotian cavalry was considered among the best in Greece, together with the cavalry forces of Thessaly and Athens, and the Athenians could use it in order to minimise the losses of their own cavalry force. On the other hand these Boeotians and Phokians who joined the Athenians in this expedition could be the friends of democracy and of course of Athens in both states and took part in the expedition in order to get more support from Athens.

For ten years (457-447) the Athenians controlled Boeotia, but in 447 Athens was suffering from widespread unrest within its empire. This is reflected in the tribute list for that year, which is the shortest list of the series except for the first year, and which records that many States made only partial payments. (Demand. *Thebes in the fifth century*, p. 35). During the same year some Boeotian exiles - probably oligarchs who opposed the Athenian policies - managed to occupy the cities of Orchomenus and Chaeronia. The Athenians responded, and a force of 1,000 troops under the leadership of Tolmides moved to Boeotia in order to stop the unrest. The city of Chaeronia was easily captured by the Athenian army who set a garrison to protect the city. On their way home the Athenian forces were attacked and defeated by the Orchomenian exiles, who acted in cooperation with some exiles from Euboea and Locris. As a result of the Boeotian victory over the Athenian army, a peace treaty was signed and according to her terms, Athens evacuated the territory of Boeotia, giving an end to the Athenian occupation of the region. (Thuc. i. 113)

Thucydides does not say if the Athenians tried to occupy or even attack Orchomenus after they had captured Chaeronia. Tolmides, the Athenian army leader started this expedition in order to destroy the "revolutioners". Why did he stop at

Chaeronia and did not move against Orchomenus? Of course the expedition was not complete when he decided to return to Athens. Even if he had not been attacked by the "Orchomenians", he could not be characterised as a winner as long as he had left Orchomenus unoccupied. According to Plutarch, (Per. 18. 2), Pericles opposed this ill-prepared expedition of Tolmides against Boeotia. It is possible that Tolmides decided not to attack Orchomenus, for his troops were not well prepared and sufficient for such a conflict and he preferred to secure Chaeronia at first, leaving a garrison there, and then to return home, in order to start preparations for the second and final assault over Boeotia.

After their victory over the Athenians the Boeotian exiles returned to their cities and the old regime was re-established. Athens decided to sign a Peace treaty with Boeotia instead of launching another attack. "The Athenians, however, were still dangerous. Their army could march into Boeotia as soon as it was ready. The Athenians had won many victories over the Boeotians, and the prospect of facing them must have been daunting to the Boeotian leaders. The Athenians could rally their friends, especially the Plataeans and the Thespians. On the other hand, from the Athenian point of view it might be a bloody and expensive business; there were the isolated garrisons and the prisoners to consider as well. The Euboeans were restless, and with Boeotian help might very well succeed in breaking loose from Athens. The Spartans were threatening. Obviously there were ample reasons on both sides to negotiate..." (Buck. *Boeotia*, p. 153). After the defeat and retreat of the Athenians, Boeotia re-established her federal government and her political system was working as the following:

Citizenship and of course the right to vote depended on a property qualification. (Hell. Ox. vi. 2). All those who acquired a sufficient property most probably composed the hoplite and cavalry forces. On the other hand, we have to assume

that all those who composed the light-armed troops did not have the right to vote. During the Athenian campaign in Delium, the Boeotian army was composed by 10,000 light-armed troops, 7,000 hoplites and a cavalry force of more than 1,000 men was present in the operations as well. (Thuc. iv. 93). From the comparison of the forces given in this account we have to assume that the majority of the total population at Boeotia did not have the right to vote and to act as active citizens. From the number of the cavalry force we can also see that there was a significant part of the Boeotian population who lived in wealth and prosperity and this part composed the aristocratic fraction in Boeotia. "Under this system the passive or disfranchised citizens differed from foreigners in that they possessed the civil rights of citizens, and to conclude legal marriages with citizens. For them to become active citizens no enfranchisement was needed. All that was needed was the acquisition of sufficient property." (Larsen. *Greek Federal States*, p. 33-34).

The active citizens of each city were divided into four councils. Each of the four voted separately and a unanimous agreement of all four<sup>was</sup> required for taking any measures. According to Larsen: Since the members of all four belonged to the same social class, this meant little and disagreement between them must have been very rare." (Larsen. *Greek Federal States*, p. 34). The federal government of Boeotia was divided into eleven units. In some cases some smaller towns<sup>were</sup> incorporated into big cities and shared with them the same representatives. Each of these eleven units supplied one Boeotarch and sixty Councillors. The eleven Boeotarchs together with the body of the council composed the chief organs of the Boeotian Federal Government. (Hell. Ox. vi. 2-3). "Like the city councils, the federal council too was divided into four sections, which must have taken turns about conducting routine business and submitting its important findings to the other three. This federal council or councils had 'complete final authority' and there was no longer a federal assembly." (Larsen. *Greek Federal States*, p. 35). It is obvious that in such

a political system the city which controlled more units controlled the political life of the whole Boeotia. For the organisation of the army, each division had to provide about one thousand hoplites and one hundred cavalry. (Hell. Ox. xvi. 4). The federal council's meetings were held in Thebes.

During 435 the Thebans supported the Corinthian operations against Corcyra because of the Epidamnian affair. According to Thucydides, (i. 27), Thebes provided money to Corinth but the Thebans preferred not to send any hoplite forces.

In 431 a force of 300 or more Thebans attacked the small city of Plataea, under the commands of two Boeotarchs. The Thebans were invited by a Plataean party which wanted to take control of the city. According to Thucydides the Thebans were aware of the forthcoming war so they found the opportunity to acquire control over Plataea. The plot was well organised and when the Theban contingent arrived at Plataea found the gates of the city open and no guards at the Walls. When the people of the city gathered in the market place the Thebans invited everyone to join them instead of giving the power straightaway to the faction that had invited them. But very soon the people realised that the Theban force was not of great importance, for in the beginning they had miscalculated them, and finally decided to attack the invaders. (Thuc. ii. 2-3). The Plataean counter attack took by surprise the Thebans who suddenly found themselves in a very difficult situation. During this ferocious conflict many of the Thebans were slaughtered in their efforts to escape from the town. When the Thebans decided to surrender only 180 of them were still alive. According to Thucydides the Theban force which entered the city was just the advance guard of the entire Theban army which was following them. But the stormy night had prevented the main body of the Thebans in arriving at Plataea on time. The only thing that the Thebans could do in the situation was to seize as hostages the Plataean farmers who were still out of the Walls of the city,

(Thuc. ii. 4-5), but finally the Plataeans managed to save their fellow citizens and killed in cold blood the 180 Theban captives. (Thuc. ii. 5). Immediately after the incident Athens sent guards to Plataea and helped the city to get prepared for a siege. (Thuc. ii. 6). "The attack of Plataea had clearly broken the peace, and when word of it reached the Peloponnese the Spartans ordered their allies to send two-thirds of their fighting force to gather at the isthmus of Corinth for the invasion of Attica." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 48).

This night of 431 marked the beginning of the inevitable war, and during the twenty seven years that followed, the Greek world was shocked by a devastating clash. But why was it Thebes which opened the hostilities? The Thebans probably tried to take advantage of the situation. They were aware that their allies were going to invade the territory of Attica during the summer and they were thinking that Athens could not retaliate very easily against them, in the case that they had managed to capture Plataea, for very soon the Peloponnesian army was going to invade the Athenian land. On the other hand Plataea's geographical position, between Athens and Boeotia, was of great importance for the Thebans, who knew that they could not start any military operations against Athens leaving the enemy city of Plataea behind them. We also have to remember that Thebes <sup>had</sup> always wanted to take control of Plataea, for her own political reasons (to increase her power into the federal council), since 519 when Plataea became an ally of Athens. For all these reasons the capture of Plataea before the beginning of the operations was considered as necessary from the Theban point of view.

The Boeotians entered the Peloponnesian war with a defeat but there was a long way in front of them for the next twenty seven years. During the first invasion of Attica Boeotia sent a contingent of hoplites, (Thuc. ii. 18), and a cavalry force, (Thuc. ii. 22), to join the army of the allies. Archidamos, the commander of the



Peloponnesian army chose the Oinoe route, sited between Athens and Boeotia, in order to enter the Attican territory, because he wanted to get in touch with the Boeotians first. The Boeotians sent a part of their army together with Archidamus and with the rest of their forces attacked Plataea devastating her country side and starting preparations for a siege. (Thuc. ii. 12). According to Gomme, (*H.C.T.*, ii. 102), the Boeotians did not necessarily send the two thirds of their hoplite forces to the campaign against Attica, as the other allies did, for they could make an agreement to send less forces since they had to send an army to Plataea as well.

Thucydides does not give any information about the Boeotian contribution during the second year of the war, but it is probable that the Boeotians sent a contingent to join the Peloponnesian allies when they invaded Attica in 430.

During 429 the Peloponnesian army turned against Plataea and invaded her territory instead of invading the Attican land because of the plague in Athens. (Thuc. ii. 71). The Plataeans tried unsuccessfully to persuade Archidamos to leave them in peace, for according to them Plataea was not an enemy of Sparta, and it was Thebes which had caused the whole affair. After long negotiations the Peloponnesian army started the siege of Plataea. (Thuc. ii. 71-74). Although the Peloponnesians tried many different methods in order to capture the city, their efforts proved unsuccessful and finally they returned home leaving behind them a force sufficient enough to keep the Plataeans busy. (Thuc. ii. 75-78). The attack on Plataea was merely a plan of the Thebans who wanted to take revenge for their hoplites who were slaughtered by the Plataeans. On the other hand, the Lacedaemonians were aware of the strategic importance of Plataea, and for them the small city could become their target after they had to avoid the Attican territory because of the plague. Kagan gives another reason: "... The Spartans accepted the Theban proposal... because of the need to placate the Thebans. In the Spartan

alliance, the leader could not dictate to the other members. A state like Thebes was largely independent and could not be counted upon to obey Spartan orders or execute Spartan policy unless it wanted to. The attack on Plataea may have been the price Sparta paid for continued Theban support." (Kagan. *The Archidamian war*, p. 103).

In the year 428 the Boeotians were involved in the plans of the Mytileneans for an uprising against Athens. (Thuc. iii. 2). According to Thucydides the Mytileneans were of the same origin with the Boeotians (Aeolians). The Mytilenean embassy came to the Peloponnesian allies after a Boeotian invitation and asked them for their assistance. (Thuc. iii. 13). Finally Lesbos was accepted as a member of the Peloponnesian alliance and the Lacedaemonians decided to invade Attica immediately in order to keep the Athenians busy, and give the time to Lesbos to prepare her revolt. Unfortunately the Peloponnesian plan failed and Mytilene finally surrendered to Athens during 427/6. (Thuc. iii. 27). During the same year (428) half of the Plataeans who were surrounded in the city by the Peloponnesian forces, managed to escape to Athens in an effort to avoid the destruction which was coming. (Thuc. iii. 20-24).

The next year the Plataean and Athenian soldiers who were in Plataea were forced to surrender to the Lacedaemonians. Five judges arrived from Sparta to Plataea in order to give a trial to the prisoners. The Plataeans after a long apology, in which they blamed Thebes for their situation, appealed for mercy. (Thuc. iii. 53-60). The Thebans who were afraid that the speech of the Plataeans might soften the Spartans gave their own speech in which they analyzed the whole situation and gave the reasons for the hatred against Plataea. In the meantime they asked for a revenge for the massacre of their soldiers who had surrendered to the Plataeans after their unsuccessful attempt to capture the city that night of spring 431. After all Thebes

was an ally of Sparta and Plataea was the enemy, so for them the Spartans should punish Plataea in the name of this alliance. It was this point that probably persuaded the Spartans to punish the Plataeans, for the Spartans knew that the Boeotians were a powerful and valuable ally. As a result, two hundred Plataeans and twenty five Athenians were executed by the Peloponnesians, the women were sold as slaves, and the city of Plataea was given, for one year, to some exiled Megarians, before its final destruction the year after. As for the Plataean land, it was given to some Theban citizens for a period of ten years. (Thuc. iii. 60-68).

Thus the small city of Plataea was finally destroyed for the sake of the Thebans who were always at odds with the Plataeans. Sparta's decision to execute the prisoners and to surrender the territory of Plataea to Thebes can be characterised as necessary, for they preferred to have Boeotia in their alliance despite the expenses. During the years of the war Sparta was claiming the role of liberator of all Greece. This action, of the slaughter of the Plataeans, certainly damaged her image, but it was necessary for the good of the whole Peloponnesian alliance.

During the same year an earthquake damaged Orchomenus and other Boeotian cities, (Thuc. iii. 87), and the Athenians ravaged the territory of Tanagra. Although the army of Tanagra came out of the city to stop the invader, it was not successful and the Athenians defeated the troops of Tanagra in the conflict that followed. (Thuc. iii. 91).

During the year 426 the Athenian general Nicias sailed to the territory of Oropus with a squadron of sixty ships and having under his orders two thousand hoplites. From there he marched at once to Tanagra which came under assault for a second time in two consecutive years. The next day the full Athenian army came to meet Nicias in Tanagra. The Spartans and their allies were not present in Attica this year, for many earthquakes in Peloponnesus had stopped their preparations for the annual

invasion of Attica. After ravaging the Tanagraean territory for a day, the Athenian army won a victory against the forces from Tanagra which came out of their city together with some Theban reinforcements in order to confront them. (Thuc. iii. 91). This sudden Athenian attack against Tanagra was probably a part of a greater plan: During the same time with the invasion at Tanagra Demosthenes, the Athenian general had come out with a bold effort which could turn Boeotia into Athenian hands. Demosthenes believed that he could easily approach Boeotia marching through the enemy territory of Aetolia, but his plan finally did not work, for his army was massacred by the Aetolians. (Thuc. iii. 94-98). It is very probable that the sudden Athenian invasion at Tanagra was just a counter attack which could draw the attention of the Boeotians away from Demosthenes' actions in Aetolia, but unfortunately for the Athenians, Demosthenes was not successful so they withdrew their forces, losing the chance to bring the war into the Boeotian territory.

In 424 the Athenian army made a surprise attack on Megarid. The Athenian expedition gave the Boeotians the chance to help their allies, for the loss of Megara could isolate Boeotia from Peloponnesus. The Boeotian army had already arrived in full force at Plataea when a message from Brasidas assured them that there was no need to come to Megara with the whole of their army, and finally 2,200 Boeotian hoplites and 600 horsemen joined the Peloponnesian forces at Megara. At the end, the Athenians retreated avoiding a pitched battle, although some Boeotian horsemen lost their lives in Megara, after a few clashes with the Athenian cavalry which suffered some losses as well. (Thuc. iv. 72-73).

During the same summer the Athenians planned a triple thrust in Boeotia. "The fact that Megara had not fallen, however, did not deter Demosthenes and Hippocrates from attempting to remove Boeotia from the war." (Kagan. *The Archidamian war*, p. 279). According to Thucydides there was a party in Boeotia

which wanted to change the political situation in several states in Boeotia. (Thuc. iv. 76). They were most probably Democrats who were seeking help from Athens in order to change the political scene. We have to remember that a few cities of the Confederation did not like the growing Theban power. Such cities like Thespieae, Orchomenus, Chaeronia could have a strong democratic element, although many of the democrats were living in exile. According to the plan some Boeotian democrats were going to surrender Siphae - a small town in the region of Thespieae - to the Athenians. In the meantime some exiles from Orchomenus were planning to surrender Chaeronia, a subordinate town to Orchomenus. On the other hand the Athenian forces were preparing to attack Delium which was sited in the region of Tanagra (opposite to Euboea). The purpose of the Athenians was to capture these three points (Siphae - Chaeronia - Delium) in order to use them for further military operations in Boeotia, and to create political unrest as well. The key for the success of these two expeditions was the perfect timing. Hippocrates was going to march against Delium while Demosthenes had to capture Siphae. Demosthenes sailed with

forty ships to Naupactus and from there he moved against Siphae after taking with him some Athenian allies who had come from these places to help them. (Thuc. iv. 76-77). Unfortunately for the Athenians the surprise attack in Siphae was not successful, for the plot had been revealed to the Boeotians. Either Hippocrates did not make the counter attack on time, or Demosthenes was too early, so the Boeotians found the opportunity to protect and secure their cities. (Thuc. iv. 89). Later on Hippocrates marched against Delium with a big army. According to Kagan: "... An army that was large by Athenian standards: about 7,000 hoplites, and a great mass of others, well over 10,000 metics and foreign allies as well as Athenians, who were largely unarmed and were meant only to help build a fortification at Delium quickly." (Kagan. *The Archidamian war*, p. 281ff). When Hippocrates completed the fortification at Delium he left a garrison at the fort and sent the rest of the army back to Athens. (Thuc. iv. 90). It is obvious that

Hippocrates did not know<sup>that</sup> the operation of Demosthenes in the west was not successful. In the meantime the Boeotian army was gathering at Tanagra. Although nine out of the eleven Boeotarchs did not want to give a pitched battle against the Athenians, the Boeotarchs of Thebes, Pagondas and Ariantides, finally persuaded them to fight. (Thuc. iv. 91). We do not know if it was the rhetorical speech of Pagondas<sup>of the</sup> which persuaded the rest Boeotarchs or the fact that he was the Boeotarch of the most powerful city of the Boeotian league, Thebes. The fact is that the Boeotian army moved against the Athenians and prepared for a battle. When Hippocrates - who was still at Delium - heard about the Boeotian intentions, he immediately left Delium in order to lead his army to the battle. The whole army of the Boeotians consisted of 7,000 hoplites, 10,000 or more light armed troops, 1,000 cavalry and 500 peltasts. The right flank of the Boeotian formation was held by the Thebans, who had put their forces in an unusual deep formation, which can be characterised as the "forefather" of the phalanx which was used later on by the Thebans at Leuctra. The centre of the Boeotian army was occupied by forces from Haliar tus, Coronea, Copaeæ and other small cities, while the left flank was held by the Thespians, the Tanagraeans and the Orchomenians. The two flanks were covered by the light armed troops and the cavalry.

On the other hand, the Athenian army which was almost equal to the Boeotian force was formed in the usual eight men deep phalanx. Although the light armed troops of the Athenians were more than those of the enemy their presence in the conflict did not help the Athenians, for the majority of these masses was unarmed. (Thuc. iv. 93). When the battle started the left wing and the centre of the Boeotian formation suffered a lot as a result of the Athenian pressure, but on the right wing the Theban phalanx managed to stop the Athenians. At this crucial point of the battle the Boeotarch Pagondas came out with a bold movement. He sent two cavalry contingents to attack the winning right flank of the opponent, and he instructed

them to ride around the foot of the hill which was behind them, in order to take the Athenian hoplites by surprise. In the meantime the defeated left wing of his army had started to move towards the winning Theban flank seeking protection. The sudden attack of the Boeotian cavalry created confusion among the Athenians who took the Boeotian horsemen as the advance guard of an unknown army which was approaching to assist the Boeotian forces. As a result of this surprise attack, the Athenians broke their formation and fled in panic towards Oropus, Delium or Parnes under the pressure of the Boeotian and Locrian cavalry forces which slaughtered many of them. (Thuc. iv. 96).

After the battle, the Boeotians put a guard to the dead of the enemy, and sent a herald to the Athenians asking them to surrender Delium to the Boeotian forces in order to take back to Athens their fallen fellow citizens. The Athenians refused the proposal and the Boeotian army had to start the siege of the fort which finally fell to their hands after 17 days of strong resistance. Two hundred Athenians were captured in the fort of Delium by the Boeotians, although the majority of the Athenian guard managed to escape. (Thuc. iv. 100). "Of all the land battles of the great war none, except possibly that of Mantinea six years later, can compete with the Battle of Delium in interest. Two of the leading military powers of Greece were marched together in straight forward pitched fighting. In recent years Athens had defeated Thebes and Thebes Athens. Now the matter was put beyond dispute. No Athenian army ever dared to cross the border to invade Boeotia again, and the Boeotians ravaged Attica whenever and wherever they pleased. 'The strategy of offence against Boeotia' was indeed at the end." (Henderson. *The Great War*, p. 239).

During the next year (423) the Thebans destroyed the wall of Thespieae. They had in mind to do this before the battle of Delium but after their victory this operation

was easier for them. Thespieae, which was very weak after the loss of her best soldiers at the battle of Delium, was accused by Thebes as a friend of the Athenians and finally her Walls were destroyed by the Thebans. (Thuc. iv. 133). This action gave the Thebans the political control of two new districts in the confederacy. By this way Thebes increased her number of her Boeotarchs from four to six. (After the fall of Plataea two more districts were controlled by Thebes). Of course the destruction of the Thespian Walls gave Thebes the absolute majority into the federal council and of course absolute powers over all the matters of the Boeotian confederacy. It is true that the city of Thespieae had never been a close friend of Thebes and that her relations with Athens were always good.

During 422 the Boeotians captured Panactum, an Athenian fort at the borders of Attica, by treachery. (Thuc. v. 3). The Boeotian tactics were to harm the Athenians when they found the opportunity, and throughout the whole war these tactics had been proved more than successful.

During 421, after ten consecutive years of war, Athens and Sparta decided to give an end to the fights, and concluded the Peace Treaty of Nicias. Boeotia together with Corinth, Elis and Megara refused to sign the Peace Treaty, for each one of these cities had her own reasons for the renewal of the war against Athens. (Thuc. v. 17. 2). Thucydides' narrative implies that the Boeotians rejected the Peace because they did<sup>not</sup> want to restore Panactum to Athens as ~~they~~ had to do according to the terms of the treaty. (Thuc. v. 17. 8). According to Kagan (*Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 23), Thebes had gained too much power since 431 and the end of the war could threaten her supremacy over the rest of Boeotia. We have to remember that Thebes' political power had been increased since the beginning of the war. The population of the city was almost doubled soon after 431, for the citizens of many unwallled cities had settled in Thebes seeking



protection, (Hell. ox. xvii. 3), and after the fall of Plataea Thebes' votes in the Boeotian council had been increased from two to four. (Hell. ox. vii. 3). When the Walls of Thespieae were destroyed by the Thebans in 423, this number increased from four to six, giving the majority, of the Boeotian council, to the Thebans. We also have to remember that Thebes' prestige and power had been increased after the battle of Delium which proved to be the "golden opportunity" for the Thebans to increase their power inside Boeotia. For the Thebans, the conclusion of the Peace Treaty could threaten their political control over the other Boeotian cities, since Athens, free now from the war, could very easily intervene with the Boeotian politics, and create political unrest in the region. We know that there was a democratic element in many cities of Boeotia and with the support of Athens, Thebes could be in serious trouble. According to Kagan: "The democratic and separatist forces in the Boeotian cities could surely seek help from the Athenians, who might be glad to assist them in hopes of restoring the control over Boeotia which they had exercised between the battles of Oenophyta and Coronea. So frightened were the Thebans that, even while rejecting the Peace of Nicias, they negotiated an unusual, if not unique, truce with the Athenians whereby the original cessation of hostilities was for ten days; after that, termination by either side would require ten days notice. Such fears, along with great ambitions, made the Thebans hope for the renewal of a war that would lead to the defeat of Athens and the destruction of its power." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 24). When Sparta realised that it was not possible for her to change the decision of those states which had refused to conclude the Peace Treaty, <sup>she</sup> turned to Athens and concluded an alliance with her, for the Spartans could see that their hegemony over the rest of Peloponnesus was in question, especially after the refusal of the Argives to renew their treaty. The Lacedaemonians knew that a Peace Treaty with Athens could isolate the ambitious Argives, and on the other hand, to press those of the allies which refused to cooperate. (Thuc. v. 22). Meanwhile Boeotia had

signed a Peace Treaty with Athens under a ten days basis.

During the next year (421/0) Corinth and Argos concluded an alliance together with Mantinea and Elis. Although Boeotia and Megara were asked to join them they preferred to stay aloof, for - according to Thucydides - it was <sup>disadvantageous</sup> for them to make an alliance with a democratic state like Argos. (Thuc. v. 31). The Thebans, and the other oligarchic states in Boeotia preferred to conclude a separate alliance with Sparta - like the one the Lacedaemonians had signed with Athens earlier on - than to risk their own political stability seeking for new friends in a crucial period.

Although the Corinthians tried one more time to persuade the Boeotians to change their minds and join them in the new league, Boeotia refused to do so and ignored Corinth's appeal for breaking her ten days truce with Athens. (Thuc. v. 32). Meanwhile the Spartans failed to restore Amphipolis to Athens, but they promised the Athenians to persuade the Boeotians to give back Panactum and to return the Athenian prisoners they held after the battle of Delium. (Thuc. v. 35). In return they asked the Athenians to leave Pylos, or to remove the Messenians and the Helots who were there. Finally Athens agreed with the terms and removed the Messenians and Helots to the island of Cephallenia. During the winter of the same year new ephors were put in office and some of them were against the Peace Treaty. (Thuc. v. 36. 1). Thucydides names two of them, Cleobulus and Xenares, who were looking to find a way in order to break the treaty. The two ephors, who were acting privately, proposed to the Boeotian and Corinthian ambassadors, who were in Sparta at the time, to conclude an alliance with Argos, at first, and then to try bring Argos to the Peloponnesian league. The Boeotians were also asked by the Spartan ephors, to restore Panactum to Athens in order to help Sparta regain Pylos. (Thuc. v. 36). The two ephors who were aware of Boeotia's and Corinth's

desires for the renewal of the war made this appeal in order to bring Sparta in a better position in order to reopen hostilities against Athens. On their way home the ambassadors of Boeotia and Corinth were stopped by two magistrates from Argos who had come to meet Boeotians in order to persuade them to join their alliance. The Boeotians who liked the proposal, for it was the same with the one that was made by the two Spartan ephors, agreed with the Argives to bring the matter to the Boeotian Federation. (Thuc. v. 37). According to Kagan the Argives' proposal was not related with the appeal of the Spartan ephors, and it was probable that Argos had no intentions to join Sparta in a common alliance. "They appear still to have been aiming at a new Peloponnesian alignment by which they and their allies could more effectively challenge Spartan leadership. The ambiguous language about the Spartans and other unnamed enemies or allies may have been meant merely to sugarcoat a rather bitter pill; such language committed Argos to nothing." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 53).

Although the Boeotian ambassadors were interested in the Argive proposal, the Federal Council rejected the alliance, for they considered this alliance as an action against Sparta (Thuc. v. 38) and they did not move to any further negotiations with the Argives. In the meantime the Spartans who were anxious to get Pylos back repeated to the Boeotians their appeal for the restoration of Panactum to Athens. The Boeotians agreed to the Spartan appeal under the condition that Sparta and Boeotia should sign a separate treaty, similar to the one that the Spartans and Athenians had concluded earlier on. This offer was probably made by the pro-war faction of Boeotia which was aiming to the renewal of the war. Although the Spartans knew that a separate treaty with Boeotia could harm their relations with Athens, they preferred to accept the Boeotian proposal - which had the support of the Lacedaemonian pro-war party - and to conclude the separate treaty. (Thuc. v. 39). According to Kagan: "The Boeotians welcomed the treaty as a step in

breaking up the alliance between Sparta and Athens, but there is yet another reason why the Boeotians were willing to reverse their policy: they meant to deceive the Spartan allies." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 57).

When the Boeotians concluded the alliance with Sparta they decided that they no longer needed Panactum and during the next year (419) they demolished the fort without the knowledge of the Spartans. (Thuc. v. 42). "This act not only deprived Athens of a valuable border fort, but also had distinct political advantages: it was certain to put further strain on the Athenian alliance with Sparta and the Peace of Nicias." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 57).

When the Spartan ambassadors arrived to Boeotia they found the fort completely destroyed. However they escorted the Athenian prisoners back to their city, and announced <sup>to</sup> the Athenians the destruction of the fort. (Thuc. v. 42). The whole incident damaged the fragile relations between Sparta and Athens, for the Athenians had the impression that Sparta betrayed them by ~~refusing~~ to follow the terms of the treaty for one more time. It is very possible that the pro-war party of Xenares and Cleobulus was aware of the destruction of the fort, and that the friends of war at Sparta supported the Boeotian action, but I doubt that the majority of the Spartans shared the same opinion. I think that the friends of peace at Sparta were aware of the Athenian mistrust towards the Lacedaemonian actions, and for them the destruction of Panactum was just another threat to the peace. The destruction of the fort panicked the Argives who assumed that the Athenians were aware of the alliance between Boeotia and Sparta and they were in agreement with Boeotia in the case of Panactum. This assumption made the Argives believe that <sup>they</sup> had been betrayed and found themselves alienated, and from the military point of view, badly outnumbered by a powerful coalition composed by Sparta and the rest of the Peloponnesian cities, and of course ~~Boeotia~~ Boeotia. (Thuc. v. 40). The

Argives decided to react immediately and suddenly they became too eager to sign an alliance with Sparta, although they knew that this action could bring an end to their ambition to gain the control of Peloponnesus. Fortunately for them the truth was revealed soon, and finally Argos concluded an alliance with Athens. (Thuc. v. 47).

During the winter of the same year the Spartan colony of Heraclea found herself in a difficult position after an attack by her neighbours. (Thuc. v. 51). According to Diodorus, (xii. 77. 4), the people of the city asked the Thebans for help, and finally one thousand Theban hoplites arrived at Heraclea and joined her forces. During the following spring the Thebans dismissed the Spartan governor of the city on the ground of bad administration. (Thuc. v. 52). According to Thucydides, the Boeotians claimed that they took this measure in order to prevent Athens from occupying the territory, which was already under threat. Although this explanation seems possible, I believe that it does not reflect the whole truth, for the Boeotians acted in this way in order to fulfil their own plans. Since the battle of Delium the confidence, and strength of the Thebans had been increased. We have to remember that Thebes and Boeotia in general were among the less affected regions in Greece during the whole Archidamian war, and naturally the power of the Boeotians and especially the Thebans had grown. The growing power of Thebes is reflected in the actions of the spring 419. Thebes turned<sup>out</sup> to be a power strong enough to follow an expansionistic policy outside of the Boeotian borders, choosing as a first target a city<sup>which</sup> belonged to Sparta. It is probable that the Thebans wanted to show their dissatisfaction, with the conclusion of the Peace of Nicias, and the situation at Heraclea helped Thebes to intervene, in a Lacedaemonian territory and to demonstrate her displeasure for one more time. Whatever the reason was, the Theban intervention must have damaged the relations of Thebes with Sparta, for the Spartans lost one more territory and it was Boeotia, a member of the Peloponnesian

league which won it.

During the summer of the year 418 the Lacedaemonians decided to help Epidaurus which was under an attack from Argos. The alliance of Argos with other Peloponnesian states had finally become a real threat to the Lacedaemonian supremacy over Peloponnesus, and the fall of Epidaurus could damage seriously the Spartan prestige in Peloponnesus, and put her hegemony under question. (Thuc. v. 57). More than a half of the Greek army which was <sup>new</sup> gathered to attack Argos had come from Boeotia. The Boeotians contributed five thousand hoplites, five thousand light armed troops as well as one thousand cavalry and mounted infantry to an army which was numbered twenty thousand troops. Thucydides describes the Peloponnesian force as the "most splendid army ever gathered in Greece", (v. 60), and it was composed by the elite troops of each state which contributed to it.

But the huge Boeotian contribution raises one question: Why did the Boeotians send such a splendid army to an allied expedition against the much weaker Argive alliance? According to Thucydides the Peloponnesian force was so large that it could defeat easily the army of the Argive coalition. (Thuc. v. 60). It is possible that although the Boeotians did not have to send such a force, they decided to do so in order to calm the Spartans after the Heraclea affair. As we have seen, the Theban intervention in a territory of the Lacedaemonians must have caused some tension to the relations of the two states, and the Spartan expedition against Argos gave the Thebans the chance to strengthen the ties with Sparta for one more time. On the other hand the Boeotians had the opportunity to make a demonstration of their power, not only to their enemies but also to their allies, and to remind them that it was the same force which defeated and humiliated the Athenians just a few years ago at Delium.

Although Agis, the Spartan king, had under his orders the finest army of Greece, he did not take advantage of this unique opportunity and preferred to withdraw his forces after he concluded a four months truce with two magistrates from Argos. (More details about Agis expedition against Argos in chapter 4: Argos). For this action Agis was condemned back in Sparta, and for the first time in Spartan history ten counsellors were appointed as "advisors" to the king in any future expedition. (Thuc. v. 63).

During the same summer the Spartan army, under king Agis, finally crushed the alliance of Argos in the battle of Mantinea. (Thuc. v. 65-75). Although the Lacedaemonians had asked their northern allies to send help, Corinth, Boeotia, Phocis and Locris did not manage to be present at Mantinea, for according to Thucydides they did not have enough time to mobilise their army because the Spartans had moved unexpectedly against the Argive alliance. (Thuc. v. 64). In the battle of Mantinea the Spartan army won a great victory giving an end to any Argive ambitions for the hegemony of Peloponnesus.

During the year 415/4 a huge Athenian-allied army attacked Sicily under the leadership of Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus, all generals of Athens. (Thuc. vi. 30). The war had now entered a new phase.

During the same year the Lacedaemonians and their allies decided to build a fort in Deceleia - in the borders between Attica and Boeotia - ~~on the~~ advice of Alcibiades. The accusations of Alcibiades' opponents, after the destructions of the Hermae turned the prominent Athenian general into an ally and advisor of the Spartans and her allies. The Athenian general, who was aware of the importance of a fort inside the Athenian territory, gave the initiative to the Lacedaemonians to resume the war following a strictly offensive tactic. (Thuc. vi. 89-92).

During the next year the Thebans managed to suppress a democratic revolt in Thespieae proving for one more time their desires to remain the unchallenged hegemon in Boeotia. (Thuc. vi. 95).

During the year 413/2 the Lacedaemonians and their allies invaded Attica for one more time, under the commands of king Agis. This time the Peloponnesian army did not withdraw after they had finished ravaging the Attican countryside, but instead the Spartans remained there fortifying Deceleia. (Thuc. vii. 19). The fortification of Deceleia put the Peloponnesians into offensive and troubled the Athenians who had now to face the enemy inside their own territory. According to Thucydides the fort of Deceleia played a major role to Athens' final defeat, for the countryside of Attica suffered a lot from the continuous raids of the Peloponnesians, and more than twenty thousand slaves found asylum at Deceleia during the last years of the war. On the other hand the fort cut Athens completely from her allies, and soon the Athenians found themselves in the position to use their ships in order to import all the necessary things to survive. According to Thucydides, (vii. 27-28), the city of Athens had turned to a big fort and the great walls of the city were guarded day and night by soldiers.

The Boeotians who had assisted Sparta in the fortification of Deceleia made a great profit from the continuous raids over Attica, and we have to assume that most of the slaves and spoils would have been carried to the nearby cities of Boeotia. (Hell. ox. xvii. 4), (See also: Henderson. *The Great War between Athens and Sparta*, p. 242).

During the same year a Boeotian contingent of three hundred hoplites was sent to Sicily to help Syracuse, under the commands of two Thebans and a Thespian. (Thuc. vii. 19), (Diod. xiii. 7. 7). It was the same contingent that took part in the



battle of Epipolae and brought defeat on the Athenian army, winning a decisive victory. (Thuc. vii. 43).

During the same year the Thebans went to the rescue of Mycalessos after a sudden attack of Thracian mercenaries who were on their way home. The Thracians had come to Athens in order to serve with the reinforcements which had been sent to Sicily, but they arrived too late, and the Athenians who could not afford to pay these troops, decided to send them back to Thrace. The Athenian commander Dieitrephes who escorted them used the Thracians in order to damage the enemy territory, and after a short raid in the area of Tanagra the barbarian force retreated to Chalcis. During the next day they crossed Euripus for one more time and attacked the town of Mycalessos. The Thracian force had enough time to destroy the small town and to slaughter most of its population before a rescue force from Thebes arrived on the scene. The Theban contingent succeeded in pursuing the Thracians and in killing almost 250 of them, but for Mycalessos it was too late, for the town suffered almost a complete destruction. (Thuc. vii. 27-30).

During the same year (413/2) Euboea decided to revolt from Athens and become ally of the Peloponnesians. After the Athenian destruction in Sicily the situation turned in favour of the Peloponnesians and their allies. Athens was exhausted by the continuous war, her economy was almost ruined, and worst of all the operations of the war were not taking place in Sicily any more, but out of the city of Athens herself. Under these circumstances, most of the Athenian allies were more willing than ever to revolt, (Thuc. viii. 1-2), and Euboea and Lesbos were the first cities which took the initiative and came to Sparta asking for help. The Boeotians helped Lesbos to win the support of Agis who promised to send twenty ships to the island, ten from Lacedaemon and ten from Boeotia. (Thuc. viii. 5). In the meantime Sparta decided to increase the Peloponnesian fleet and for this reason asked her allies to

build a new fleet, and Boeotia contributed twenty five ships. (Thuc. viii. 3).

During the next year (412/1) the Boeotians captured by treachery the Athenian fort of Oropus. The Boeotians were assisted by some Eretrians as well by some people from Oropus itself, who were aiming to bring Euboea into revolt. (Thuc. viii. 60). "Oropus' strategic position in the hands of the enemy seriously threatened Euboea's continuous possession of the Athenians. The conquest of Oropus immediately encouraged some Eretrians to pursue plans for a rebellion of the kind that had already been alive on Euboea the previous year and to seek the support of the Spartan fleet at Rhodes." (Kagan. *The fall of the Athenian Empire*, p. 95). Later on, the same year, the fort of Deceleia provided refuge to the oligarchs who had been overthrown from Athens after the failure of their coup. One of the oligarchs, Aristarchus, managed to deceive the Athenian soldiers of the Oenoe fort and persuaded them to surrender the fort to the Boeotians, making them believe that a treaty had been concluded and according to its terms the fort should be controlled by the Boeotians. (Thuc. viii. 98).

During the year 411/0 the Boeotians assisted the Euboeans to revolt from Athens and a Boeotian contingent helped the Euboeans to build a <sup>causeway</sup> across the Euripus channel. By this way Euboea passed completely out of the Athenian control, for her isolation from mainland Greece was now over and help from the nearby Boeotians could very easily reach Euboea whenever it was needed. (Diod. xiii. 47). Although Athens had sent a force under Theramenes in order to prevent the construction of the bridge, the Boeotian forces did not give him the chance to stop the work and Theramenes withdrew his forces and preferred to ravage the coasts of Euboea and Boeotia.

During the year 409/8 Boeotian troops, under the command of the Theban

Coeratadas took part in the defence of Byzantium together with troops from Megara and Sparta. The Athenians managed to capture the city by treachery and the Peloponnesian forces which defended the city suffered many casualties. (Xen. Hell. 1. 3. 14-22), (Diod. xiii. 66-67). Coeratadas himself was captured by the Athenians but he escaped later on. During the same year the Boeotians contributed a cavalry force of nine hundred men strong to Agis' attack against Athens. (Diod. xiii. 72. 3-9).

At the sea battle of Arginusae in 406 the Boeotian squadron, under the leadership of the Theban Thrasondas held the left wing of the Spartan allied fleet.<sup>(Diod. 13. 98. 4)</sup> Two years later the Athenians finally surrendered to Sparta and her allies, after suffering heavy casualties.

According to Xenophon, Thebes and Corinth wanted to destroy the city of Athens and to execute or to sell as slaves its population. (Xen. Hell. 2. 2. 19). "In particular the Thebans had demonstrated ambitions of their own, some times in conflict with Spartan interests. They might be glad to see Athens destroyed and Attica depopulated, for they as powerful neighbours, could exploit the opportunity, expand into the deserted territory, and increase their own power. Perhaps, as time passed, the Spartans might see that they would not be well served by such an outcome and offer terms more to the liking of the Athenians. (Kagan. *The fall of the Athenian Empire*, p. 399).

During the years of the war the power and wealth of Thebes had grown, especially after the capture of Plataea and other Boeotian towns. As we have seen before, Thebes managed to gain the control of the political life of all Boeotia and no other Boeotian city could confront her. The destruction of Plataea, the victory at the battle of Delium, and the Theban intervention at Heraclea, gave Thebes the ability to

follow an ambitious policy which expanded beyond the borders of Boeotia. It was the Theban power which made the Spartans deny her appeal for the destruction of Athens. Boeotia and especially Thebes were among the few cities which gained much from the war. The Athenian threat was finally eliminated, the wealth of Thebes had grown, as well her political influence and of course ambitions. Thebes came out of this war as a major power in the whole<sup>of</sup> Greece and the Thebans made an independent claim to victory in the war by the claim of the tithe belonging to Apollo at Deceleia. (Xen. Hell. 3. 5. 5), (Plut. "Lys.", 27). "Such a claim was clearly not without justification in the light of the Theban contribution to the defeat of Athens, but the claim nevertheless angered the Spartans. It was a sign of things to come. Thebes had already shown a potential for independent and even anti-Lacedaemonian action during the Peace of Nicias, and this potential was to become actualised in the years immediately following the conclusion of the war." (Demand. *Thebes in the Fifth Century*, p.44).

## Chapter III

# MEGARA

### III. MEGARA

The ancient city of Megara was situated between Athens and Corinth and used to be the gate to mainland Greece and the Peloponnese. Megara was surrounded from the North West by the mountains of Pateras and Kithaeron, the Saronic gulf which was in the Eastern side opened<sup>to</sup> them the sea route to the Aegean and Asia Minor. The harbours of Megara were Nisaea and Pagae. (Thuc. i. 103).

It was the geographic location of Megara which played the most important role in the history of the city, as I believe, and not her power as a city state nor her alliances with powerful protector states. Megara's geographic position was at the same time enviable and dangerous, for the city held such an important key position.

Megara was not a rich city concerning its agricultural products, and its inhabitants did not expect wealth to come from the cultivation of the land. Isocrates (8. 117) and Strabo (ix. 19) said that the soil of the Megarid was very poor and that it was not easily cultivated. "The Megarian territory may have approached 700 square kilometres, making Megara one of the smallest of mainland states. Probably no more than one fifth of this area, under 100 square kilometres, was of much use to the Megarians. The rest was too rugged for systematic economic development or permanent settlement..." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 22). Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* (521 and 761) and in *Peace* (500 ff) is suggesting some clues for the cultivating power of the Megarians. Garlic and onion were the main export crops of the city. Although olives and olive oil were also part of their produce, I do not think that these products were of export - at least to Athens - since the olive oil is a common product in the whole of Greece. Furthermore, Aristophanes in the *Acharnians* (520, 760-1) informs us that they also exported salt.

Under these circumstances Megara should have turned their attention some where else if they wanted to prosper. During the second half of the eighth century Corinth

challenged Megara over territorial disputes and even threatened Megara's existence as an independent state. "The Megarians succeeded in averting complete absorption by Corinth, but lost a large and irretrievable proportion of their domain. Relations between the two states were poisoned for centuries to come." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 60). It is probable that it was this conflict with Corinth that forced the Megarians to unite in one city and to abandon the Dorian comae system, or even forced them to colonize, due to the constant threat. Around 730 Megara Hyblaea were settled by Megarians and one hundred years later Selinous was founded (Thuc. vi. 4. 1-2; Diod. iv. 78; Strabo. vi. 267). "From Sicily came grain and cheese, and from the forests of South Italy wood." (Highbarger. *The History and Civilization of Ancient Megara*, p. 104). Megara lost control of the West as a result of the Lelantine war. (see also: Highbarger. *The History and Civilization of Ancient Megara*, p. 108-109) (Hdt. v. 77; vi. 100). "The immediate effect of the war upon Megara very probably was to stop the expansion in Sicily and turn her attention to the east where her ally Miletus was already active." (Highbarger. *The History and Civilization of Ancient Megara*, p. 109). Around the mid 7th the Megarians had managed to settle in a great line of colonies in the areas of Propontis and the Black sea. Chalcedon was founded around 690-675, (Thuc. iv. 75; Hdt. iv. 144), and then Selymbria followed, Byzantium (Hdt. iv. 144; Strabo. vii. 319), and Chersonesus. "From this region the Greek world received its food supply and raw materials of manufacture as well as slaves. Hence came grain, fish, flax, hemp and timber. At all times that the city which controlled the gates to the Euxine held the greatest commercial importance in Greece. And the most important of these gates was guarded by Byzantium." (Highbarger. *The History and Civilization of Ancient Megara*, p. 111). All these colonies of Megara were of great importance for they changed the economy of the city from an agrarian one to one based on commerce. Since economic prosperity could not come from agriculture, because Megarid is a mountainous territory, the Megarians had to find another way to improve their economy. The colonies had

been settled in areas with very fertile soil and they possessed key positions for trade. So the Megarians were preoccupied with commerce and at the same time they improved their ship building. Gradually, after Corinth, Megara improved her fleet, and became one of the naval powers of the Peloponnese.

Sparta's fears of a helot revolt forced her to seek alliances in the Peloponnese and around the 6th century she began to conclude a series of alliances, starting with Tegea. (see also: Kagan. *The outbreak of the Peloponnesian war*, pp. 9-30; De.Ste.Croix. *O.P.W.*, pp. 96-124). On the other hand this series of alliances gave Sparta the chance to isolate her enemy city, Argos, and most importantly to obtain the power to interfere in the interior affairs of her allies. Sparta's alliance with Megara should have taken place around the end of the 6th century but "cannot be explicitly confirmed until the period of Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 481." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 143).

The Persian expansionistic plans, at the end of the 6th century, must have damaged Megara, at least indirectly, for her most important eastern colonies were in danger. Around 520 Chalcedon passed into Persian hands (Hdt. iv. 85) and Byzantium as well had friendly relations with Persia. (Hdt. iv. 138). During the spring of 493 the Persians conquered the whole of Propontis. Selymbria, Byzantium and Chalcedon were burnt, while their inhabitants deserted them seeking safety. (Hdt. vi. 33). During the times of the Persian invasion in mainland Greece, Megara cooperated with the other Greek cities, and a Megarian squadron of twenty triremes took part in the sea-battle of Artemisium (Hdt. viii. 1), as well as in the sea-battle of Salamis. (Hdt. viii. 45). During the Plataea campaign in 479 Megara sent three thousand hoplites<sup>(Hdt. ix. 28-6)</sup>, a number which seems exaggerated, (Munro: "*The Campaign of Plataea*", J.H.S., 24 (1904), p. 152), and according to Herodotus the Megarian losses were almost six hundred men. (Hdt. ix. 70. 3). During the years



that followed the Persian wars, Megara allied with both cities, Athens and Sparta. Unfortunately for the Megarians, their geographic position and key location, between the two major powers in the Greek world, as well as their naval power, gave them little hope to follow a policy of neutrality towards Athens or Sparta, for the two states were aware of the importance of Megara. Immediately after the end of the Persian invasion, Athens emerged as a superpower, with the most powerful navy among the other Greek states. The efforts of the Greeks in 479 for the freeing of the Ionian cities from the Persians did not leave the Megarians indifferent, since their interests were lay in these colonies. When the Spartan king Pausanias returned home, as a result of his friendly relations with Persia, the Athenians took over the leadership of the Greek forces and set the foundations for the Delian league. Athens finally managed to free the Ionian cities among which were the Megarian colonies which joined later on the Delian League. In the meantime Megara was again under the Corinthian pressure due to territorial disputes. At that time Sparta was preoccupied with the revolt of the helots (around 464), and Megara's only alternative solution was to turn to Athens and conclude an alliance with her (462/1). (Thuc. i. 103). As a result of this alliance Athens got control of Pagae and Nisaea, and Athenian hoplites were put there to guard them. "Megara's commercial ties to Athens may also have increased during this period, since it is likely that all traffic with the Peloponnese was cut off by the state of belligerency between Megara and Corinth." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 185). Since Athens controlled the Aegean, Megara's prosperity should<sup>have been</sup> increased, and the Megarians had the opportunity to take advantage of their commercial fleet. The markets of the Aegean and the coastal cities of Asia Minor were under the Athenian protection and control, a fact which gave the Megarians the chance to increase their trade.

During the summer of 459 the Corinthians attacked <sup>the</sup> Megarid thinking that the Athenians were not in a position to assist the Megarians, for they were already

occupied in Egypt and in Aegina as well. Unfortunately for the Corinthians, their calculations were not correct because the Athenians, using their reserve forces, defeated them after a forceful battle, and forced them to retreat. (Thuc. i. 105. 3-106. 2).

According to Legon (*Megara*, p.189), Megara was of great importance to Athens for the Athenians wanted Megara to survive as a base behind enemy lines in a case of a war. For this reason the Athenians tried to safeguard the city of Megara with Long Walls which connected the port, Nisaea, with the Metropolis. "A strongly walled town with a secure water supply could hold out against superior forces for as long as its food reserves lasted, usually one to two years, unless betrayed from within. But if the besieged town could maintain access to the sea, it could, in theory resist a land attack as long as it had money or friends enough to keep fresh supplies arriving by ship." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 188). Under this Athenian policy, we can assume that Megara depended a lot on Athens, since Athens controlled the city's harbour, and offered protection to the Megarians.

When in 457 the Spartans launched an expedition in order to support Doris which was under pressure from Locris, the Athenians tried to block their way back home. A battle at Tanagra in Boeotia followed and finally the Lacedaemonians and their allies came out victorious. (Thuc. i. 107-108). On their way back home, the Spartan-allied force marched into the Megarian territory and ravaged the Megarid. (Thuc. i. 108). The Megarians did not come out of their Walls to defend their land, for the Peloponnesian army could not be confronted by the Megarian hoplite force, and the only thing the Megarians could do at that moment was to seek protection behind their defensive Walls. Assistance from Athens could not come since the Athenians had already been defeated in the battle of Tanagra, and the Megarians were left alone to watch the destruction of their land by the

Peloponnesian army. "Perhaps the beginnings of disillusionment with the Athenian alliance should be dated from this point." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 191).

During 446 the island of Euboea revolted from the Delian league. Pericles, who was in command of the Athenian force which was sent to Euboea, had just arrived in the island when he received the news that Megara had revolted and the Peloponnesians were going to invade Attica. In the meantime the Athenian garrison at Megara had been slaughtered by the Megarians with the help of some Corinthians, Sikyonians and Epidaurians. (Thuc. i. 114). Pericles withdrew his army from Euboea immediately and turned to Athens. The Peloponnesians invaded Attica, but they did not advance further than Thria in Eleusis, and finally returned home after ravaging the Eleusinian territory. Although the Athenians still had under control the two Megarian ports, Nisaea and Pagae, the revolt of the Megarians was successful, and during the same year, Athens concluded the Thirty Years Peace with Sparta. (Thuc. i. 115). "The Athenians seem to have realised that their mainland policy had been a failure, and they were prepared to surrender their remaining footholds in the Peloponnese to secure peace." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 199). According to the terms of the peace, Athens restored Nisaea and Pagae to Megara, giving the Megarians the opportunity to restore their harbours which had been under Athenian control for many years.

During the years that followed the Persian wars, Megara based her economic prosperity on commerce, and especially after 462/1, when the Megarians concluded an alliance with Athens, trade should be the most important source of wealth for Megara. The continuous conflicts with Corinth must have affected the Megarian agriculture and the sea became the only alternative solution for the Megarians. Together with Corinth, Megara should be a naval power of great importance for the Peloponnesians. "Megara had more extensive commercial and political contacts in

the east than any other Peloponnesian ally, and the Megarian fleet had become the largest squadron available to the Spartans in the Aegean." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 200). The Megarian Decree which <sup>was</sup> imposed on Megara by Athens was a severe blow to the Megarian economy. The Megarian Decree followed the battle at Sybota in 433. According to Thucydides (i. 46-48) the Megarians sent twelve ships to assist the Corinthian expedition against Corcyra. The Corinthian and their allies were not successful, for they did not manage to defeat completely the Corcyraean/Athenian fleet which opposed them, and the Megarian squadron suffered heavy casualties. Sometime after the battle of Sybota and before the congress of the Peloponnesian alliance in Sparta during 432 (Thuc. i. 67. 4), the Athenians passed a decree against Megara. According to Thucydides (i. 67. 4) the Megarians complained that they were excluded from all harbours within the Athenian empire, as well from the Athenian market, something which was against the Thirty Years Peace. This Megarian complaint came together with the Corinthian appeal to take measures against Athens, and was made during the congress of the Peloponnesian alliance in Sparta. Of course the decision of the Athenians, to impose this kind of "blockade" on the Megarians, can be seen only as an action of punishment or revenge. The question which arises here is what caused the Athenian anger which brought such a problem to Megara. As we have seen already, Athens' relations with Megara should be at odds since 446, when the Megarians revolted from Athens. During the years that followed Megara's revolt, the Megarians had assisted Corinth during her war with Corcyra (Thuc. i. 27; i. 46), and they had probably played a role in the revolt of Byzantium in 440. (see also: Legon. *Megara*, p. 201). It is very probable that the Athenians did not like the actions of Megara, but according to Thucydides these were not the reasons which caused the Megarian decree. According to Thucydides the Megarians were charged by the Athenians with the cultivation of a part of the sacred land in Eleusis, an action which could be characterised as sacrilege. Moreover, the Megarians were receiving the run away slaves of the

Athenians, giving them asylum. (Thuc. i. 139). Both of these reasons were serious enough to make the Athenians react the way they reacted. The decree <sup>must have been</sup> of great importance for the Megarians, and the Peloponnesians in general, because according to Thucydides (i. 139) the Spartan Embassy which was sent to Athens in 432 asked the Athenians to raise the siege of Potidaea, to leave Aegina independent, and declared most especially and distinctly of all that there would be no war if they rescinded the decree respecting the Megarians, in which it had been declared that they should not use the ports in the Athenian Empire, or the Attic Market. But the Athenians were neither disposed to obey them upon the other points nor to rescind the decree as they charged the Megarians with the cultivation of sacred land of Eleusis and with receiving the run away slaves. According to Thucydides (i. 139. 4) there were some Athenians who were willing to withdraw the decree in order to avoid the war, but it was Pericles who finally persuaded them not to do so. For Pericles the Megarian decree was not a cause for war (i. 140) and Athens would allow the Megarians to use the ports and the Market if the Lacedaemonians abstained from expelling foreigners. (Thuc. i. 144). According to De.Ste.Croix (*O.P.W.*, p.252-254) the Decree applied to the Megarians (and not to Megara) and it excluded them, not from the whole of the Athenian Empire or even the whole of Attica, but specifically from the Athenian Agora and from the harbours of the Empire. So, according to De.Ste.Croix: 1. The decree was imposed only upon the Megarian citizens, and not on all the inhabitants of Megara. Consequently, there should be merchants at Megara who continued having commercial relations with Athens. 2. The decree was referring to the Athenian Agora only and not any other markets in Attica, including Piraeus market, and 3. The decree was not referring to the markets of any other cities, which were members of the Athenian alliance, but just to their ports. Consequently the Megarians could have retained their trade with these cities, if they could find a way to reach their markets. So, the reasons for imposing this decree were by no means

economic , but even more, not political, and the only aim of the decree was the humiliation of the Megarians. According to these points, the Megarians were not blamed seriously from the economic aspect of the decree, but they were simply ridiculed, and had a good lesson about the Athenian power. Yet the conclusion De Ste Croix drew about the Megarian violation of the "sacred land" is not at all persuasive. According to De.Ste.Croix, the Megarian decree was the "punishment" which Athens imposed on Megara for the impiety in cultivating a part of the sacred land. It is a fact that the Athenians paid much attention to religious matters, but I do not think that they could have taken such a measure against another city just for religious reasons. On the other hand, the impiety of the Megarians could be a very good excuse for the "punishment" of Megara. This excuse could hide very well the real motives of the decree, either economic, political or military. Now, concerning the rules imposed by the decree, I cannot understand why<sup>De Ste</sup> Croix puts Piraeus out of the Athenian control, insisting that the Megarians could use the market of Piraeus, and of course the harbour as well setting that way Piraeus out of the Athenian domination an interpretation which opposes Thucydides account (i. 67), who clearly says that the decree excluded the Megarians from all the harbours of the Athenian domination. (De.Ste.Croix. *O.P.W.*, p. 285ff). It is difficult to understand why Athens closed to the Megarians all the other ports, which belonged to her domination, except Piraeus. It sounds rather unbelievable, but the way<sup>De Ste</sup> Croix puts it, it seems that Athens was punishing all her other allies, by not being able to trade with Megara, whereas Athens had allowed the Megarians to use both the harbour and the market of Piraeus. De.Ste.Croix makes a distinction between the Agora and the commercial market of Athens insisting that the Megarians could use the commercial market, for the decree which was imposed on them did not aim to harm the Megarian economy, but its purpose was just to humiliate Megara. Again here I find myself with disagreement with De.Ste.Croix's interpretation, for as Legon points out: "Yet even if we concede these points, exclusion from the civic agora

would have placed Megarian traders outside the protection of Athenian law, making it hazardous, if not impossible, for them to do business in Athens." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 214). According to De.Ste.Croix, exclusion from the harbours of the Athenian Empire did not mean exclusion from the markets of these places, something which means that the Megarians were allowed to use these markets, providing that they could reach them. But the question which arises here, is how they were going to reach the markets of these states, which most of them were islands, without being able to use their ports? Athens had built a maritime empire, and of course the use of the harbours was essential for anyone who wanted to have a contact with the cities which were under Athenian dominion. It is rather difficult to believe that the Megarians could still reach these cities by using their shores, and carrying all their products to their markets. We also have to remember that most of the Aegean islands have rocky shores and only very few natural harbours exist there. So we have to assume that exclusion from the harbours of these cities meant exclusion from the cities themselves.

Except Thucydides, we have two more sources referring to the Megarian decree. One is Aristophanes, and the other is Plutarch. Although Aristophanes can be considered as a source for the Megarian decree, he cannot be trusted as much as Thucydides, concerning the political implications he makes in his *Acharnians* and his *Peace*. According to Aristophanes, the reason of the Megarian decree was the abduction of two harlots from the house of Aspasia by some Megarians. (*Achar.* 514-529). For Aristophanes this was the reason of the Megarian decree and the cause for the whole Peloponnesian war. Of course this is comic fantasy of Aristophanes who makes a comic parallelism with the cause of the Trojan war (see also: MacDowell. *"The Nature of Aristophanes' Akharnians"*, Greece and Rome, xxx (1983), p. 151), or he is just sarcastic against Pericles who led them to war. According to Aristophanes (*Achar.* 530-539), Pericles acting on Aspasia's behalf

proposed the decree, excluding the Megarians from the harbours of the Athenian Empire, and from the Agora. Then the Megarians and the Spartans came several times to Athens asking the Athenians to rescind the decree, and when the Athenians refused, the war broke out. This interpretation of Aristophanes comes in contradiction with Thucydides' interpretation concerning the causes of the war. According to Thucydides the true cause of the war was the fear of the Spartans of the growth of the Athenian power. "But Dikaiopolis too says something which is not very different from that. In 540 he points out that the incidents which he has been describing may be thought an adequate reason for fighting; but he goes on to say that, if the Athenians had had similar provocation, if some Spartan had taken not some slaves, nor all the produce imported from some ally, but merely one little dog from Seriphos (one of the least important places in the Athenian Empire), the Athenians would have reacted with even more military and naval fuss. That is as much as to say that the reason for the Spartans' declaration of war was really that they were sensitive to Athenian encroachment on their own sphere of influence." (MacDowell. *"The Nature of Aristophanes' Akharnians"*, Greece and Rome, xxx (1983), p. 154). Finally Plutarch's account of the Megarian decree is almost the same as Thucydides' account, with the difference that the Athenians banned the Megarians not only from the Athenian Agora but also from all the other markets of the Athenian Empire. (Plut. Per. 29). According to Plutarch it was the violation of the sacred land which caused the decree. (Per. 30). In my opinion the Athenians and especially Pericles knew that the war was inevitable. Pericles' strategy just before the eruption of the war was the weakening of the Peloponnesians, by damaging their trade and of course their economy. Sparta like many other of the Peloponnesian allies did not have a strong fleet and consequently Corinth together with Megara were the two most important naval states in Peloponnesus. Corinth's naval power had been crippled after her defeat at Sybota, and the Corinthian trade, which was practised in the West, should have been damaged, when Athens had



started to intervene in the Ionian after she concluded an alliance with Corcyra. On the other hand the Megarians had their losses in the sea-battle of Sybota, but their commerce to the East had remained intact. Naturally the next target of the Athenians were the Megarians. By weakening the Megarian trade, the Athenians could damage the whole Peloponnesian alliance. The decree which was imposed upon Megara could serve the Athenian aims very well, and the violation of the sacred land, together with the accusation of providing asylum to run away slaves were the best excuses for the imposition of the decree. Athens had many reasons to impose this decree upon the Megarians: 1. Economic: By imposing this decree the Athenians damaged the Megarian trade and ~~E~~economy, and consequently the economy of many other Peloponnesian states. 2. Political: Pericles probably believed that by imposing the decree upon the Megarians he could press them to leave the Peloponnesian league and turn for one more time to the Athenian alliance. If this happened it could be a good propaganda for the rest<sup>of the</sup> cities who were allies of Sparta. On the other hand an alliance with Megara just before the eruption of the war not only weakened the Peloponnesians, but also secured the territory of Attica from any invasion of the Peloponnesians, and isolated the Boeotians from Peloponnesus cutting off one of their two ways which they could use in order to come in contact with the rest of their allies. 3. Religious: The violation of the sacred land was a reason that made Athens impose the decree but not the only one. Finally we have to remember that Athens was willing to punish Megara who abandoned the Delian league and turned to the Peloponnesian alliance, and helped Corinth in the affair of Corcyra. (for more information about the Megarian decree, see also: Kagan. *O.P.W.*; Legon. *Megara*; Highbarger. *Megara*; De.Ste.Croix. *O.P.W.*; Connor. *Phoenix*, 28 (1973); Hammond. *E.H.R.*, 88 (1973); Forrest. *Times Literary Supplement*, 72 (1973); Fornara. *J.H.S.*, 91 (1971); Wick. *L'Antique Classique*, 46 (1977) e t c).

During the summer of 431 the Spartan king Archidamos invaded Attica with a Lacedaemonian and allied army. The Athenians did not try to resist this huge Peloponnesian army which was numbered, according to Plutarch (Per. 33. 4), almost 60,000 men, and they waited until the enemy returned to its base. When the summer ended and the forces of the Peloponnesian alliance left Attica, the Athenians invaded the Megarid under the command of the general Pericles, using their whole army, which numbered almost 13,000 hoplites, and a great number of light armed troops. The Megarian territory was devastated, and the Athenian invasions continued twice a year until the Athenian army captured Nisaea in 424. (Thuc. ii. 31, iv. 64) The Megarians were not able to resist the invasion, for the Athenians greatly outnumbered them, and their allies could not help them because they had already returned home. Until 424 Megara became, for the Athenians, the most easily reached target among the other members of the Peloponnesian alliance. The Megarians were very close to Athens, and of course they could not expect any assistance from their allies, for the Athenians could very easily attack Megarid and then return home before the Megarian allies even had the time even to prepare their army.

The Megarians who suffered a lot from these annual invasions of the Athenians, soon found themselves in a very difficult position from economic point of view. Aristophanes gives a general idea of the situation that existed in Megara during the war in his *Acharniæns* and *Peace*. Especially in the *Acharniæns* (753-763) he seems to be trying to encourage the Athenians making jokes about the sufferings of the Megarians. "Megara had become for him the most dramatic illustration of the suffering the war brought to Greece. He personifies her abasement in the figure of a desperate Megarian farmer (denied even the dignity of a name), who tries to sell his daughters to Dicaeopolis, disguised as pigs, so that both he and they can avert starvation." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 231). According to Aristophanes the Megarians

were starving, because of the annual invasions of the Athenians, and there was nothing which could save them from this difficult position. Of course we can see some comic exaggeration on this scene, but on the other hand we can have an idea of Megara's economic situation during the first years of the war. The conditions in Megara had gone from bad to worse. If the Megarian decree had crippled their economy, the annual invasions of the Athenians should have devastated them. The Megarians could not cultivate their land any more, and of course food supplies ~~had to~~ imported from Corinth or Boeotia. In Aristophanes' *Peace* (481-83) which was presented around 421, the situation is exactly the same. The Megarians were starving to death and their condition was worse than ever. "It was, after all, proof that the Athenians had been able to inflict worse hardship on at least one of their enemies than they themselves had suffered. At the same time, Aristophanes hoped that the pathetic condition of the Megarians would provide an example of the extremes to which the war had been carried, perhaps helping to soften his countrymen's attitude toward peace. The plays were more successful as comedy, however, than, as political propaganda, and they did not alter Athens' policy toward Megara in any measurable way." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 232). But Megara was not suffering only from the invasions of the Athenians but also from the naval blockade which was imposed by Athens. In (ii. 93) Thucydides says that the Athenians used Budorum in the island of Salamis in order to control Nisaea and to prevent the Megarians from reaching the sea. We do not know exactly when the Athenians started to use Budorum as a base in order to control the Megarians, but this measure must have taken place around 431-430. According to Legon: "...it can only have resulted in the further drastic reduction of Megara's capacity to import food and other supplies by sea. It is true that Pagae on the opposite coast was still in Megarian hands, but ships embarking from it were restricted to the eastern end of the Corinthian Gulf by the Athenian blockading force at Naupactus. Thus Megara was isolated from the grain rich cities of Magna Graecia as effectively, as from the

Black Sea communities." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 229-230). So we have to assume that the Megarians were dependent on the Corinthian and Boeotian assistance concerning their food supplies.

The invasions in Megarid as well as the naval blockade must have put the Megarians in a very bad position, which forced them to propose to their allies a bold and ambitious plan which could give an end to the war. The Megarian plan was to launch a sudden attack against Piraeus, and by this way to have the opportunity to capture the harbour of the Athenians in one night (Thuc. ii. 93-94). The Athenians did not pay much attention to Piraeus for they could not imagine that somebody could dare to attack their harbour especially the Peloponnesians who had been defeated in two consecutive sea-battles during the same summer of 429. (Thuc. ii. 83-92). Moreover, it was almost winter and the usually windy Saronic Gulf offered them protection. But the Lacedaemonians had already decided to take the chance and to sail against Piraeus. The Peloponnesians used 40 vessels which were at the harbour of Nisaea. According to Legon: "At no other time are more than twenty Megarian warships attested. In fact, the 8,000 men it would have taken to man forty triremes was probably greater than the entire free adult male population of the state, and Thucydides' account makes it clear that rowers from other Peloponnesian states had to be brought in as crews for these vessels. One possible explanation of this puzzle is that the Megarians attempted to float ships that had long since been taken out of service - not only their active fleet, but retired hulls as well. A more plausible explanation is that ships of other Peloponnesian states were stationed or quartered at Nisaea. Such warships might have been used at some stage to convoy supplies to Megara, past the Athenian blockade." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 234-235).

According to Thucydides this bold Megarian plan failed for three reasons: 1. The

Peloponnesians were afraid because their ships had not been afloat for a very long time, probably because of the Athenian blockade. 2. They considered finally the whole operation as too risky. 3. They were hindered by the winds.

I believe that those difficulties made unsuccessful the whole plan, but in my opinion there are some points which need more explanation. First of all, the plan of the Peloponnesians was to sail during the night because they were afraid of the Athenian guard in Budorum. If we suppose that the original plan of the Peloponnesian was to launch a surprise attack on Piraeus, then their vessels had to get around Budorum and to sail South, and then to turn North. This operation was very difficult for the following reasons. 1. They had to sail very fast as long as it was still night. 2. Their vessels were not too safe, and 3. the opposite wind made the sails useless. The winds in the Southern and Eastern sides of Salamis are usually very strong - even today the modern small vessels have difficulties passing these points - and there are also many dangerous streams in the Southern point of the island as well as in the North coast. I believe that the ships of the Peloponnesians which had not been used for a long period of time, could not sail very fast and finally the whole operation became dangerous. The only alternative solution for the Peloponnesians was to turn back and then to sail north passing between Nisaea and Budorum, and trying to attack Piraeus, making the round of the island on the west side. But this was not possible, for the night could not cover them any more and of course it was not possible to pass the narrow straits of the northern coast of the island, where the Porthmeion was during the day light. The only target they could reach without facing serious problems was Budorum. So, finally, the Peloponnesian squadron made a surprise attack on the Athenian fort, and after they captured the guards and the three Athenian triremes which <sup>were</sup> stationed there, they devastated Salamis. With the first light of the day the Athenians came out with their fleet, but it was too late, for the Peloponnesians had already left the island.

Two years later - summer of 427 - the Athenians managed to capture the island of Minoa under the commands of general Nicias. Minoa was facing the harbour of Nisaea and was separated from the mainland by marshy ground. (For the topography of Minoa see: Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iii. 51. 4). The Athenians wanted to control Nisaea from a point which was closer to Megara than Budorum, and aimed to cut off completely the Megarians from the Aegean. (Thuc. iii. 51). Although there was a Megarian garrison on Minoa, Nicias did not have any difficulty in capturing the isle. The loss of the Minoa created a lot of troubles for the Megarians. A democratic revolution must have occurred by this summer, and although there is no evidence of any participation of the Athenians, it is very possible that it was related with the capture of Minoa by Nicias. According to Legon: "Megara's deeper crisis had brought her to the point of revolution by 427, and the loss of Minoa may have been the last straw for those who regarded the oligarchs' policy as bankrupt." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 235). Thucydides (iii. 68) says that the Spartans, after they had captured the city of Plataea during the same summer (427), gave permission to some Megarians who were loyal to them to inhabit the city for one year, for they had been exiled from Megara after a stasis which had erupted there. These Megarian exiles probably moved to Pagae later on, before the second stasis of the oligarchs in 424. So we see that these "loyal to Lacedaemonians" Megarians were oligarchs who were exiled for political reasons. I agree with Legon when he is saying that the Spartans offered them temporary refuge. This would place the revolution in close proximity to the fall of Minoa, but we will probably never know which event helped to trigger the other." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 236). In the *Acharnians* (755) we read: "When I was leaving there, the men who are Probouloi for the city were trying to find the quickest way of getting us to ruin." (Translation by MacDowell). The word Probouloi means that the Megarians were using a kind of Boule of the Athenian type. According to Legon: "We ought to assume at least that Thucydides' description of the regime as a democracy meant

that the Megarian assembly was more active than it had been during the centuries of oligarchy." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 237). This coup had not changed the policy of Megara towards Athens and of course the Megarians did not abandon the Peloponnesian alliance.

During the summer of 425 the Spartans suffered a terrible disaster in Pylos, and they proposed to the Athenians to end the war and conclude a peace treaty. The Athenians, and especially Cleon the leader of demos at the time, wanted among other things, to receive Nisaea and Pagae, territories which, according to the previous treaty, (Thirty Years Peace Treaty), belonged to Athens. (Thuc. iv. 21). The Lacedaemonians, who did not reject the Athenian claims, asked the Athenians to discuss the matter in private, and not in the assembly, for they did not want to be exposed to their allies. (Thuc. iv. 22). Finally Cleon persuaded the people to reject this proposal, and the negotiations for the treaty failed. The point here is that the Spartans were ready to accept the Athenian terms and to give them Pagae and Nisaea (and of course the opportunity to close Megara from all sides), in order to get back their soldiers who had been captured in Sphacteria. The Spartans could very easily sacrifice the interests of the Megarians, who were completely ignorant of the negotiations, in order to succeed in their own plans.

The situation in Megara remained the same until the summer of 424. During this summer the Megarians faced serious problems, not only because of the twice-yearly Athenian invasions, but also because of the attacks of the political exiles (oligarchs) who were using Pagae as their base and ravaging the countryside. (Thuc. iv. 66). According to Gomme: "...There were exiles at Pagai; these latter were very likely the same men as had been given the right to live at Plataia for one year, in 427." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iv. 66. 1). The democrats of the city who could not defend their city to this "counter attack" of the oligarchs started to think that

they could permit the exiles to return to the city, so they could have to face only one enemy. "The democratic leaders found themselves in an extremely awkward and dangerous position. Their state was a democracy whose survival<sup>was</sup> dependent on the firm support of oligarchic allies, and especially of Sparta, Corinth, and Thebes. These allies were needed to defend Megara against Athens, the champion of popular government in Greece, and also against her own oligarchic exiles, with whom they were in open sympathy. Megara was caught up in a contradiction. She would either fall prey to Athens, because she was too weak to continue resistance, or, if the Peloponnesians kept her defences propped up, she would soon be compelled to take back the oligarchs, and might well lose her democratic regime and sacrifice its leaders before long." (Legon: *"Megara and Mytilene"*, Phoenix, 22 (1986), p. 216). The democrats who knew that the return of the exiles could start a civil strife, preferred to ask the assistance of the Athenians, instead of giving the exiles the chance to create political unrest to the city. (Thuc. iv. 66). As a result a secret agreement was made between the Megarian democrats and the Athenian generals Demosthenes and Hippocrates, in order to surrender the city to the Athenians. According to Legon, the leaders of the Megarian democracy had to resort to treachery in order to achieve their ends, for they did not believe that the demos would approve an alliance with Athens under any circumstances. That is why they did not openly propose a change of alliance to the Megarian demos. (For a detailed analysis of this argument see Legon: *"Megara and Mytilene"*, Phoenix, 22 (1986), p. 221). "These observations cast a new light on what might otherwise appear as treasonable or subversive activity on the part of eminent politicians, democrats and oligarchs, in the smaller poleis. In reality, in the cases treated above, and in numerous other instances, such apparent deviousness was the only course of action open to political factions with even legitimate aspirations. (Legon: *"Megara and Mytilene"*, Phoenix, 22 (1986), p. 223). Losada rejects this hypothesis of Legon on the basis of two reasons: First, there is no evidence in Thucydides which



supports it, and second, "regardless of why the demos would not support the prostatai, the fact remains that they did not, and, on Legon's argument, this in turn forced the prostatai to commit treason. We would agree that the loss of the support of the demos was the main incident in the political situation which caused the prostatai to turn to treason; but we also note that Legon's hypothetical explanation of the demos' failure to support the prostatai has an important bearing on any assessment of the motives of the prostatai. On his argument, the prostatai, in betraying the city, were defending the best interests of the demos which did not understand that the survival of the democracy was at stake." (Lozada. *The fifth column in the Peloponnesian war*, p. 53). Of course as Lozada points out their action does not appear as treasonous but it *was* treason. On the other hand I agree with Legon's point that "neither more or less reason to condemn the behaviour of the democrats in this period than that of the oligarchs. Both factions were powerfully influenced by considerations of self interest - that is, their desires to prosper and rule, or at least survive - but both would also have claimed with some sincerity to have had the best interests of Megara at heart. Seldom do men see any clear distinction between their own welfare and the general good. Each faction would have believed that Megara's security was best served by the political ties that favoured their personal interests as well." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 242). Gomme supports that: "The majority (of the Megarians) were not fanatical and were more patriotic than loyal to party, anxious to preserve their independence of both Athens and their Peloponnesian neighbours... the extremists of both sides were unscrupulous, particularly the oligarchs, and it was they who came to the front." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iv. 66. 1). For me the democrats did not propose to the demos their plans for two more reasons: 1. They were afraid of the presence of the Peloponnesian garrison in Nisaea and in Long Walls. According to Thucydides, (iv. 66. 3), the Peloponnesians alone guarded Nisaea because they were afraid, or they did not trust the Megarians. It is probable that they had put these troops in Nisaea

after the stasis of the democrats in 427. 2. The democrats were probably afraid of the strong oligarchic element which had remained in the city. As we will see the oligarchs opposed the democrats when the latter tried to persuade the people to open the gates and to permit the Athenian force to enter the city

The plan of the democrats was the following: At first the Athenians were going to capture the Long Walls as well as the harbour of Nisaea. Then the conspirators were going to surrender the city to an Athenian command of Demosthenes. (Thuc. iv. 66. 3). The first part of the plan was successful and the Athenians did not face serious problems when they attacked Nisaea and the Walls. The Peloponnesian garrison was eliminated and its Spartan leader surrendered. (Thuc. iv. 67-69). But the second part of their plan failed as the oligarchs of Megara opposed the democrats who were ready to surrender the city to the Athenians. (Thuc. iv. 68. 5-6). Of course the oligarchs could not expect, at this moment, that they were able to save finally their city for they were not expecting any help from their allies. I suppose that the Spartan leader of the Peloponnesian garrison in Nisaea must have thought the same thing and decided to surrender and not to fight. But help from the Peloponnesians was not far away. The Spartan commander Brasidas was in Sicyon or Corinth trying to gather an army for his expedition in Chalcidice when he received the news of the Athenian effort to capture Megara. Brasidas reacted immediately and moved to Megarid with an army of almost 4,000 men strong. In the meantime he sent a word to Boeotians asking them to bring an army and meet him at Tripodiscus, in Megarid. (Thuc. iv. 70). The Boeotians had intended to assist Megara even before they were summoned by Brasidas, for they had considered that the loss of Megara could trouble them as well, (see also the chapter about Boeotia), and they had moved their whole army already to Plataea; but when the messenger of Brasidas met them they decided to send forward a force of 2,200 hoplites and 600 cavalry, and allowed the rest of their forces to return home. (Thuc.

iv. 72). The Athenians, who were not aware of Brasidas' expedition in Chalcidice, were very surprised when they learnt that a Peloponnesian army, which outnumbered them, was marching against them. But before Brasidas moved his whole army to Megarid he went first to the city of Megara with a force of 300 men in an effort to persuade the Megarians to accept him and his army into the city. (Thuc. iv. 70). The Megarians refused admission, for the two parties in the city were both afraid that the oligarchs were going to bring back their exiled friends from Pagae, and of course this was an immediate threat to them, and the oligarchs were afraid that a civil war was going to erupt because of this fear of the democrats. (Thuc. iv. 70-71). Finally the next morning the two armies faced each other but no battle was fought for both the opponents did not want to risk a conflict. Brasidas took advantage of it, and he considered himself as a winner, as the Athenian army withdrew into the port of Nisaea. (Thuc. iv. 72-73). According to Kagan; "Thucydides tells us that he (Brasidas) thought he had a superior position from which to fight; if they refused he would have achieved his purpose, the defence of Megara without a battle. These calculations were reasonable, yet Brasidas' behaviour is surprising. Here seemed to be the moment the Spartans had hoped for since the start of the war: a Peloponnesian army facing the Athenians with prospect of a pitched battle between hoplite phalanxes. Why, then, did the boldest of Spartan generals hold back? Some scholars have suggested that his restraint is evidence of Sparta's continued lack of self-confidence after its recent defeats, and they blame him for not making an attack... The explanation of Thucydides is perfectly sound. Additionally, the Athenian army was arrayed just outside a fortified place. If Brasidas had attacked it and gained the advantage the Athenians could have taken refuge in Nisaea and suffered few losses. On the other hand, the Athenians might win which would be disastrous for Sparta." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 277). We also have to remember that Brasidas was making preparations for an ambitious expedition in Chalcidice. I believe that the Spartan

commander would like to keep his forces intact and to avoid taking any risks that could damage his plans.

After the Athenian retreat the Megarian oligarchs considered Brasidas as a winner and they received him and his army into the city. (Thuc. iv. 73). Consequently, the oligarchs who had been exiled returned to Megara, and the democrats who took part in the conspiracy fled secretly. Although the exiled oligarchs had sworn oaths to respect their opponents and not to take any revenge, when they came into office again, they selected about a hundred of their enemies, and executed them. (Thuc. iv. 74. 1). As for the democrats who left the city, some of them took part in the Sicilian expedition, fighting as light armed troops along with the Athenians. (Thuc. vi. 43; vii. 57).

During the same summer of 424 the Megarians sent a contingent to Boeotia in order to assist the Boeotians in the battle of Delium but unfortunately Thucydides does not give any additional information about this Megarian force. (Thuc. iv. 100. 1).

During the winter of the same year the Megarians captured and destroyed the Long Walls which connected the Metropolis with Nisaea. (Thuc. iv. 109. 1). According to Legon: "Thucydides gives no hint that the Athenians put up any serious resistance to this move, and it seems reasonable that they were content to see it take place. Since they had lost hope of capturing Megara by force in the immediate future, the Long Walls were as much menace to their troops at Nisaea as they were to the Megarians, for they could provide cover for a surprise attack at either end. With the Long Walls demolished a no man's land was created between Nisaea and Megara, and this situation remained essentially unchanged for about fifteen years." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 247). After the successful campaign of Brasidas in Chalcidice

and the surrender of Amphipolis to the Peloponnesian army in 423 the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians concluded an armistice for one year. (Thuc. iv. 117. 1). The Lacedaemonians who were anxious to take back their soldiers who were imprisoned in Athens after their defeat in Sphacteria, agreed among other things that the situation on Megara should remain the same, which means that the Athenians kept Nisaea and Minoa, and neither side should communicate with the other. (Thuc. iv. 118. 4). The Megarians did not oppose this article for they had the opportunity to recover from the continuous war and to start rebuilding their ruined economy. Of course they could not use their harbour <sup>on the</sup> Saronic gulf but on the other hand their countryside had been saved, at least for one year.

The armistice of 423 was followed by the Peace Treaty of Nicias which was signed between the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians. Although, according to the terms of the treaty, each one should return whatever <sup>they</sup> had captured by the force of arms, the Athenians refused to give back Nisaea (Thucydides does not mention Minoa) for, as they ~~claimed~~ <sup>claimed</sup>, the harbour was surrendered to them, and was not captured by arms. (Thuc. v. 17. 2). The point here is that the Lacedaemonians did not oppose this Athenian claim and did not pay any attention to Megara's interests; and finally allowed Athens to keep Nisaea - although, as Gomme points out, (*H.C.T.*, v. 17. 2), "the surrender of Nisaea was the action of Peloponnesian troops rather than of the Megarians". Finally Athens and Sparta concluded the Peace Treaty of Nicias with Athens, although Megara together with Corinth, Boeotia and Elis rejected it.

The end of the Archidamian war found the Megarians suffering greatly, as a result of the continuous Athenian raids in Megarid, the naval blockade, and the political stasis which shaken the city for several years. On the other hand Sparta had agreed with Athens to leave the harbour of Nisaea in Athenian hands for at least thirty

years, according to the terms of the treaty. Although Sparta tried to persuade Boeotia, Corinth, Elis and Megara to accept the peace treaty, these states finally rejected it and as a result the Lacedaemonians concluded an alliance with Athens which aimed to put pressure on those cities who had rejected the treaty. (Thuc. v. 22. 2-24). Although Megara was unhappy with the terms of the treaty, she preferred not to take part in the new coalition which was formed by the states of Corinth, Argos, Mantinea and Elis. (A detailed analysis of this coalition and of the diplomacy of this period follows in the chapter about Argos). Megara together with Boeotia remained quiet for they preferred not to cooperate with a democratic state like Argos. (Thuc. v. 31. 6). "Here, if any further evidence is needed, we see clearly the connection between the Megarian oligarchs' self interest and their foreign ties. Despite Sparta's adoption of a policy that spelled severe economic hardship for Megara, the oligarchs contented themselves with a half-hearted protest and shrank from any foreign connection that might have improved Megara's position while jeopardising their own. Sparta could hardly have expected her oligarchic friends in Megara to do more if they were to retain any vestige of respect among their fellow Megarians." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 251). During 421/0 a defensive alliance was concluded between Megara, Boeotia, Corinth and the cities of Thrace and it probably aimed to work as a counterbalance to the alliance between Athens and Sparta. (Thuc. v. 38. 1). Furthermore these states were planning to conclude an alliance with Argos as well, but finally the whole plan was abandoned, for in reality none of them was willing to leave Sparta and turn to the democracy of Argos for support. When the war recommenced Megara joined Sparta for one more time, as well as her other Peloponnesian allies. (Thuc. v. 58. 4; 59. 2; 60. 3). During the years that followed, until the end of the war, Athens stopped her invasions in Megarid for the war now had been transferred into the Aegean sea, and Athens was not on the offensive any more. Around 409 the Megarians attacked and recaptured Nisaea, with the help of some forces from Sparta or Sicily. (Diod. xiii. 65. 1).

Unfortunately Diodorus does not give many details about the whole operation, and we cannot be sure about the date nor the number of the forces who assisted the Megarians. The Athenians responded to this Megarian attack, and a cavalry force of 400 men invaded Megarid and defeated the Megarian-allied force who came out to confront them. Although the Athenians were winners in this battle they did not manage to recapture Nisaea, but they inflicted many casualties to the Megarians and they probably devastated Megaris. (Diod. xiii. 65. 1-2). "Since the Megarid had probably been spared for the greater part of the decade, there was quite a lot of damage to be inflicted. This may account for the Megarians' uncharacteristic and futile effort to resist the invasion. This failure was both an indication of Megarian weakness and a sharp setback to her hopes of recovery, since it led to the further depletion of her manpower and resources." (Legon. *Megara*, p. 254).

Although the Megarians managed to recapture Nisaea, their sea power had been destroyed. Megara contributed only one ship to the Peloponnesian fleet during 412 (Thuc. viii. 33. 1), and her contribution did not increase after 409 when Nisaea was recaptured.

During 412 the Megarian Helixus commanded a Peloponnesian squadron of ten ships, according to *Thucydides* viii. 80, and succeeded to raise a revolt in Byzantium. When the war ended with the complete defeat of the Athenians, the Megarians did not follow the line of the Boeotians and the Corinthians who wanted Athens to be destroyed completely, although the Megarid had been devastated for many years, the Megarian economy had been destroyed, and the people of Megara had suffered heavy losses during the 27 years of the war.

I believe that Megara did not have any desire to take part in the war but they were just victims of the circumstances. The Megarians did not have any concrete ideology

towards this war. The conflicts between Sparta and Athens did not touch them. They did not care who was going to be the winner, but on the other hand they could not remain neutral. Their geographical position and their conflicts with Corinth did not allow that. It was a necessity for Megara to join one of the two superpowers in Greece. That is why they left the Peloponnesian league and took part in the Delian league when the Athenians had the power to protect them. When the Athenians proved unable to assist them and the Peloponnesian forces devastated Megarid after the expedition at Locris, the Megarians turned again to the Spartans, hoping that there was not going to be a war. Unfortunately for them their hopes had not come true, and the war devastated their land, their economy and many Megarians lost their lives trying to protect their city.



## Chapter IV

### WESTERN GREECE

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#### IV. WESTERN GREECE

##### **The Cities of Western Greece During The Peloponnesian War**

Anactorium, Ambracia, Astacus, Leucas, Elis, Locris, Phokis, Cephallenia and Achaea, were the cities of Western and Central Greece who were allies of the Spartans during the Peloponnesian war.

Although all of them cooperated with the Peloponnesian alliance, only a few of them played an important role during the years of the war.

The cities of Anactorium, Leucas, Astacus, and Ambracia were colonies of Corinth and they were very important for the Corinthian trade and access into the Ionian sea. They cooperated with the Spartans in the war only because they were of vital importance for Corinth. Especially Ambracia, which was the greatest Greek city of North Western Greece, fought against the Athenians in order to fulfil her own plans.

Elis and Achaea, although they were Peloponnesian states, did not show great enthusiasm to fight against the Athenian league and Elis tried to abandon Sparta after the treaty of Nicias. Achaea remained neutral during the first years of the war and even when she decided to fight did not offer too much to the Peloponnesians. The Locrians and the Phokians proved to be more cooperative allies especially to the Boeotians, and were among the cities who accepted the troubled treaty of Nicias.

Among the most powerful cities of North Western Greece was Ambracia. The people of Ambracia were Dorians and the city itself was a colony of Corinth. At the peak of its strength Ambracia could use no less than five thousand hoplites and a fleet of 27 ships. According to Thucydides the Ambraciotes were the "  $\mu\alpha\chi\epsilon\mu\acute{\omega}\tau\alpha\tau\omicron\iota\ \tau\omega\nu\ \pi\epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\iota\nu\alpha\ \tau\alpha$ ", (Thuc. iii. 108), and of course their military strength  $\chi\omega\rho\acute{\iota}\alpha$

made them the most useful allies of Corinth in the region. To the strength of Ambracia we have to add their allies, the barbarian Chaones who were an Epirote tribe. But at the eastern end of the gulf of Ambracia ..."there were at least two fortified cities hostile to Corinth and Ambracia: Olpae, the Acarnanian 'thing' and Amphilochian Argos, which, though largely hellenized by the Corinthian colonies which had been its neighbours for centuries, was on bad terms with them." (Beaumont: *"Corinth, Ambracia, Apollonia"*, J.H.S., 72, 1952, p. 62).

The first attempt of the Ambraciotes to take control of Amphilochia was made sometime after the Trojan war, and Thucydides gives no date for it. The founder of Amphilochian Argos was Amphilochus an Argive who had fought at the Trojan war. The Amphilochian Argos soon became the biggest and the most powerful city of the Amphilochian region, but after a few generations the Amphilochians faced troubles, probably because of their barbarian neighbours, and invited the Ambraciotes to settle at the city with them. The Ambraciotes "hellenized" the Argives but later on they drove away the original inhabitants of the city and kept it for themselves. The Athenians came with a squadron of thirty ships under the general Phormio in order to help the Argives, captured the city by storm and then enslaved the Ambraciotes of Argos. After this an alliance was concluded between the Athenians and the Amphilochian Argives. "It has been generally said that this incident must be dated after 440, to explain the decision of the Corinthians in the Samian crisis and before 435 after which year Thucydides' account of the events in the north-west which led to the war is alleged to be exhaustive." (Beaumont: *"Corinth, Ambracia, Apollonia"*, J.H.S., 72, 1952, p. 62).

According to Beaumont: "The help which the Athenians sent to the Amphilochians and the alliance which they concluded with them at the same time, show the awakening interest of Athens in the north-west. This alliance may have been

concluded in the hope of blocking the overland route, though there were no doubt other motives; a desire to break Ambracia, which must be ranked as only just not a great power, accounts for a great deal. But that the land route was the most important single interest which Athens had in Acarnania is indicated by the Attention which was paid to Oeniadae, a city which so far as is known, did not furnish contingents to Corinthian fleets or armies. The taking of Oeniadae cannot have been an end to itself; and it is unthinkable that in the critical year 454, when he abandoned the attempt to cut Corinth off from Sparta and sailed to Acarnania Pericles was engaged in an operation of minor importance." (Beaumont: "*Corinth, Ambracia, Apollonia*", J.H.S., 72, p. 63).

For Corinth the city of Ambracia - as well as her other colonies in the Ionian - was of vital importance. These cities were necessary to the Corinthian trade to the west because they could be used as naval bases, for triremes or merchant ships, to make the difficult trip to Sicily and southern Italy or could prevent raids of Corcyra in the Ionian, especially after 435. During the first half of the fifth century an argument over Leucas took place between Corinth and Corcyra and it was Themistocles who gave a solution to the dispute. He decided that Leucas was to be considered as a colony common to Corcyra and Corinth, and that Corinth should pay<sup>20</sup> talents to the Corcyraeans. Of course this decision was in favour of Corcyra which after this declared Themistocles as her benefactor. (Plut. Them. 24. 1; Thuc. i. 136. 1). Anactorium as well was a common colony of Corinth and Corcyra, (Thuc. i. 55. 1) and "...like Leukas, Anactorium used Corinthian coins engraved with its own initial. This appears to suggest that the city had initially been a Corinthian colony... There can, in any case be no doubt that there was a Corcyraean population of strength in Anactorium at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war. We have seen that Thucydides considered it common to Corinth and Corcyra, and its actions in the succeeding years make it clear why he thought so. At the battle of Sybota in

433, the nearby states of Ambracia and Leucas supplied a total of thirty-seven ships, while Anactorium was a lesser naval state than the others, the degree of disparity remains surprising. When Thucydides lists the states who supplied ships to each side at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, Leucas and Ambracia are named, but Anactorium is missing." (Kagan. *The outbreak of the Peloponnesian war*, pp. 217-218).

This fact probably shows that at those times (433) there was political unrest in the city of Anactorium and that there was a pro-Corcyraean "party" who did not want a further intervention in the war between Corcyra and Corinth. The fact that Anactorium was captured through trickery by the Corinthians in 433 shows that during this year it was the pro-Corinthian party who had the control of the city. However, later on the friends of Corcyra managed to surrender the city to the Athenians and their Acarnanian friends by treachery in 425, and the city was inhabited by Acarnanians (Thuc. iv. 49). The enmity between Corinth and Corcyra over the control of the Ionian became more serious during the second half of the sixth century and led to the conflict for Epidamnus. We can see that Corinth used all its power in order to side with all these cities and prevent Corcyra from using them, and even an open war against Corcyra could not prevent her from doing so.

Sometime before 435/4 a civil strife broke out in the city of Epidamnus which was a common colony of Corcyra and Corinth. As a result of this struggle the oligarchs of the city were exiled, and cooperated with the barbarian neighbouring tribes of Epidamnus. During the year 435 the Epidamnians sent an embassy to Corcyra for help in order to take the city under their own sphere of influence and at the same time to damage Corcyra which was a threat for them in the region. (Thuc. i. 24-26), (see also the chapter about Corinth).

Very soon a garrison was sent to Epidamnus by Corinth, Ambracia and Leucas. Furthermore the Corinthians decided to send new settlers to the city who could have an equal share with the colonists. This was a provocative action towards Corcyra which realised that she could lose her rights over Epidamnus. Corcyra responded immediately and sent out of the city the garrison and the new settlers. The Epidamnians refused and the Corcyraeans sent forty ships and with their Illyrian allies besieged the city. (Thuc. i. 26).

After that the Corinthians started preparations for a war. Their aims were to prevent Corcyra from taking over Epidamnus and on the other hand to create a new colony on a new basis. In order to succeed in this they proclaimed that anyone who wished could take part in the new colonization of Epidamnus having an equal share with the old settlers. Meanwhile Corinth started the military preparations for the expedition and asked for the help of her allies. The Megarians provided eight ships, Cephallenia four, Epidamnus five, Hermione one, Troezen two, Leucas ten, Ambracia eight ships, Thebes and Phlius sent money and Elis also sent money as well as empty vessels which could be used as cargo ships. The Corinthians themselves sent thirty ships and three thousand hoplites. (Thuc. i. 27). The diplomatic solution that Corcyra offered to Corinth did not improve the situation, for Corinth hoped that she could destroy the ambitious Corcyraeans with the support of her allies. (Thuc. i. 28). When the preparations were completed, Corinth declared war on Corcyra. At the naval battle which followed in Actium, the Corcyraeans defeated the Corinthian allied force and destroyed fifteen ships of the enemy fleet. During the same day of the sea battle Epidamnus surrendered and the new settlers of the city were sold as slaves. (Thuc. i. 29). After that victory the Corcyraeans found the opportunity to attack those cities who were allies of Corinth and fought against them. They destroyed part of the countryside of Leucas, burnt Cyllene the harbour of the Eleans and during the summer they damaged many of

the Corinthian allies in the Ionian. At the end of the summer the Corinthians responded to the Corcyraean raids and sent a force which established forts in Actium and Cheimerion of Thesprotis in order to protect their allies. (Thuc. i. 30).

"The post of Actium could check raids on Ambracia, Anactorion and Leucas or further south; that at Cheimerion opposite cape Leukimme must have been intended to report Corcyraean movements though the channel and to harass Corcyraean raiders either sailing thence or returning." (Hammond: *Naval operations in the South Channel of Corcyra 435-436 B.C.*, J.H.S., 1945, p. 28). The Corinthians, after their defeat at Leukimme, did not quit their claims over the control of Ionian but during the next two years that followed they started preparations for a larger new fleet which would be able to punish Corcyra. New vessels were built and mercenaries from Peloponnesus and the rest of Greece gathered in Corinth in order to serve in the ships. These Corinthian preparations made Corcyra quite anxious and afraid. The Corcyraeans turned to Athens for help and in the summer of 433 ambassadors from Corinth and Corcyra presented their case to the Athenian people. (Thuc. i. 31). The speech of the Corinthian ambassadors shows that Corinth simply could not let Corcyra play the role of the superpower in the Ionian. Corinth needed her colonies and allies there in order to have an easy access to the trade route with the west. On the other hand Athens' desire was to cut off this access and the only way to succeed<sup>in</sup> this was to make an alliance with Corcyra. Pericles could see that a major war in Greece was inevitable. He had realised that Corinth was a powerful city and an ally of Sparta and the cities of the Ionian were necessary for her in order to keep her power and wealth. As a result a defensive alliance was concluded between Athens and Corcyra during the year 433. (Thuc. i. 44). The Corinthians now had to fight against the two naval superpowers of Greece. Immediately after the meeting of Athens the Athenians sent a squadron of ten ships to Corcyra for help and very soon a Corinthian allied fleet of one hundred ships

followed them. Ninety of these ships were Corinthian, ten had come from Elis, twelve from Megara, ten from Leucas, twenty seven from Ambracia, and one from Anactorium. (Thuc. i. 46). The fact that Ambracia sent twenty seven ships (probably her whole fleet), shows her friendly relations with Corinth and her will to support her mother city, even when the Ambraciotes knew that they were going to risk their fleet and their city because from that moment they had added Athens to their enemies. At the naval battle which followed at Sybota both sides claimed the victory. Although the Corinthian fleet managed to destroy seventy ships of the enemy her original wish to destroy the Corcyraean power was not fulfilled. The fact that the Corinthians did not defeat Corcyra completely showed that the Ionian was not a Corinthian "lake" and Athens with Corcyra could still cooperate in the future in order to damage the Corinthian power. From the narrative of Thucydides on the battle we can see that although the ships from Corinth were victorious their allies and especially Megara and Ambracia suffered heavy losses from the Corcyraeans and they were defeated. (Thuc. i. 49).

In two years time, after the battle of Sybota, a great war was going to erupt over Greece. The Athenian empire was a threat for Corinth, Thebes, Megara and Sparta. It was time for the Peloponnesian league to counterattack. Thucydides gives a catalogue of the cities who took up arms against Athens. Among them was Achaëa, Elis, Phokis, Locris, Ambracia, Leucas and Anactorium. Elis, Ambracia, Leukas and Pellinè in Achaëa could provide ships in addition to their land forces and Phokis along with Locris provided cavalry, another important factor in Greek warfare. (Thuc. ii. 9). During the first year of the war Athens sent a fleet of one hundred ships along with fifty Corcyraeans in order to ravage the Peloponnesian territories. This was the answer of Pericles to the invasion by the Spartans of the territory of Athens. The Athenians attacked Methone in Laconia and after their unsuccessful invasion there, they chose Pheia in Elis as their next target. For two days they



ravaged the countryside and when the native army came out along with an elite force of three hundred men from Elis to stop them, it was defeated by the Athenians and their allies. At the same time a Messenian force had managed to capture the harbour of Pheia. But the main army of the Eleans was on its way to Pheia, so the Athenians realised that it was not ~~advisable~~ to ~~risk~~ an hoplite battle against an unknown number of enemies and to take the chance in enemy territory; so after taking the Messenians to their ships they sailed away from Elis. (Thuc. ii. 25). The combined attack of the Athenians and the Messenians was not successful but of course made the Eleans feel anxious and insecure for their land. During the same time as the attack of the Athenian fleet at Peloponnesus another Athenian squadron of thirty ships sailed from Piraeus to Euboea in order to protect the island from a possible attack by Locris. The Athenians did not hesitate to ravage some coastal territories of Locris, they captured the city of Thronium and took its inhabitants for hostages. When the Locrian army came out to defend its country it was defeated in an hoplite battle and left Thronium in Athenian hands. It was the second time that the Locrians had lost control of a part of their territory because of the Athenians. The first time was at 457 when the Athenians took over the whole of Locris, Phokis, as well as Boeotia when they defeated the Boeotian army at Oenophyta, (Thuc. i. 108), and controlled almost all the central Greece. The Locrians became independent again in 446 when an Athenian army under Tolmides was defeated and suffered heavy loses as a result of an attack by exiled Boeotians, Locrians and Euboeans at Coroneia. After this battle the Athenians abandoned every plan of creating a strong hegemony in mainland Greece. (Thuc. i. 113). During the summer of the second year of the war the Ambraciotes and their allies, Chaones, made another attempt to capture Amphilochian Argos but they were not successful. (Thuc. ii. 68). This attack made the Athenians more cautious, so they sent during next winter a squadron of twenty ships under Phormio to watch over the Corinthian gulf, and of course to take care of any further attempts of the

Peloponnesians in the Ionian. Phormio made Naupactus his naval base in order to block the entrance of the Corinthian gulf. From then on it was too difficult for Corinth to have an easy access to her allies like Ambracia, and the only way for the Peloponnesians was to use the land route every time they wanted to send an army to Ambracia or their other allies at the region.

But the Ambraciotes did not quit from the idea of capturing Acarnania and in order to succeed<sup>in</sup> this they decided to ask Sparta for help. During the year 429 the Ambraciotes managed to persuade the Lacedaemonians to support them for an expedition against Acarnania. (Thuc. ii. 80. 1). "Their motives were selfish, they wanted to expel Athenian influence from the region and conquer it for themselves. But they presented the idea to the Spartans as part of a grand strategy to prevent from troubling the Peloponnesus. Acarnania would fall easily, then Zacynthus and Cephallenia, perhaps even Naupactus." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 107). The Lacedaemonians accepted the plan and immediately started the preparations for the expedition. The Peloponnesians saw in this plan the perfect opportunity to regain control of the Ionian. A land force under a Spartan general in friendly territory could succeed in defeating the barbarians of the region, and the small Athenian squadron of twenty ships which was stationed at Naupactus could not prevent a large Peloponnesian fleet from sailing into Ambracia. Although the Corinthians were anxious to take part in the expedition they failed to meet the allied forces of Leucas, Ambracia and Anactorium. In the meantime Knemus the Spartan admiral arrived at Leucas and did not spend any time waiting for the delayed Corinthians and Sikyonians. The army of Knemus was composed of troops from Ambracia, Leucas, Anactorium and a Peloponnesian force of one thousand hoplites. In addition a large barbarian army had come in order to support Corinth and Ambracia. This barbarian army numbered one thousand troops, and another force was expected to arrive from Macedonia, but came too late. The Acarnanians could not oppose this

army alone and appealed to Phormio for help. Phormio, who knew that the Corinthian fleet and the Sikyonians had not joined their allies yet, expected them to come out of the Corinthian gulf any time. The plan of Phormio was to cut the Peloponnesian forces in half and it was the only thing that he could do under the circumstances. In the meantime Knemus was marching at the Acarnanian territory and chose Stratus as his first target. The Peloponnesian and allied army was divided into three phalanxes. Two of these phalanxes were composed of Greek hoplites and the third one only by barbarians. This third phalanx caused trouble among the whole army because the barbarians thought that they could capture Stratus alone and by storm and attacked the city without waiting for the support of the Greeks. The result of this unreasonable action was the complete defeat of the barbarian phalanx which suffered heavy losses, especially the Chaonians who had inspired the "plan". The situation now had become dangerous for the Ambraciotes and the Peloponnesians and Knemus who did not dare to attack the Acarnanians returned to Peloponnesus. (Thuc. ii. 80-82).

Almost the same day as the battle of Stratus, the delayed Corinthians who were supposed to come to Acarnania to help Knemus were defeated by the Athenian squadron of Phormio at the entrance of the gulf of Patrae. (Thuc. ii. 83-84). The first effort of the Peloponnesians to confront the Athenians at sea was more than unsuccessful. Corinth had now realised that a larger fleet was needed in order to destroy even a small squadron of twenty Athenian ships, and her next step was to prepare this fleet. The Peloponnesians were ready to take their revenge and in order to succeed this they gathered a powerful fleet of seventy seven ships at Cyllene the harbour of Elis. The naval battle which followed at Rhium proved to be a disaster and a humiliation of the Peloponnesians. The Athenian squadron defeated the Peloponnesian fleet which fled to Panormus. (Thuc. ii. 85-92). "The significance of Phormio's victory was great. The Athenians had successfully defended their vital

base at Naupactus, thereby making it possible to take swift action in Acarnania and the other western regions and helping to foil the ambitious Peloponnesian plan in that quarter. Even more important perhaps, was the effect on morale. The Athenians were convinced more than ever of their superiority at sea. So were their enemies and subjects. Spartan's undertaking naval campaigns would be more timid; ...The best way to appreciate the importance of Phormio's victory is to imagine the consequences of defeat. Athens would have lost Naupactus, her position in the west, her chance to damage the commerce of Corinth and other Peloponnesian states trading with the west." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 115).

During the next year the Athenians sent another squadron of thirty ships in order to ravage the coasts of Laconia. Asopius the son of Phormio who was in charge of the expedition decided to attack Leucas with twelve ships, but his army was defeated and he was killed by the Leucadians and the Peloponnesian garrison (probably Corinthian), which was stationed at Nericus. (Thuc. iii. 7).

Although the Athenians were defeated in this expedition, they did not forget the importance of Leucas and decided to take another chance two years later (426). This time it was general Demosthenes who commanded a force of thirty Athenian ships, fifteen ships from Corcyra and units from Acarnania, Zacynthus and Cephallenia. The Athenians ravaged for a while the country side of the city of Leucas, but although they had the opportunity to capture the city itself Demosthenes agreed with the Messenians of Naupactus to use the allied force against the Aetolians. (Thuc. iii. 94). The plan was very ambitious and for Demosthenes it was more important to secure Naupactus and to bring the Aetolians to the Athenian alliance than to capture Leucas, so he abandoned the siege of the city and disappointed the Acarnanians who wanted to see Leucas in Athenian hands in order to get rid of a dangerous enemy.

The expedition of Demosthenes against the Aetolians was unsuccessful and his army suffered heavy losses. Demosthenes did not have the courage to return to Athens and he returned to Naupactus. On the other hand the Aetolians sent envoys to Sparta and Corinth in order to help them to take revenge upon Naupactus which had proposed the expedition. (Thuc. iii. 100). The Lacedaemonians sent a force of three thousand allied troops under the commands of Eurylochus. The Peloponnesian army failed to capture Naupactus by storm, and Eurylochus instead of trying to besiege the city changed the original plan and decided to attack Amphilochian Argos. (Thuc. iii. 102). "Eurylochus' behaviour was curiously like that of Demosthenes at Leucas earlier in the summer. Instead of engaging in a difficult tedious, expensive and possibly unsuccessful siege, he was lured by the promises of other allies to undertake a different mission. The Ambraciots, excited by the presence of a large friendly army in unfamiliar regions, wanted it used against their local enemies. They urged an assault upon Amphilochian Argos, their main enemy, and upon all of Amphilochia and Acarnania as well." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 210). The Ambraciotes who wanted to take advantage of the presence of the Peloponnesian army in the region presented the plan as a unique opportunity to the Lacedaemonians who wanted to bring the cities of mainland Greece into the Peloponnesian alliance. (Thuc. iii. 102). For one more time Ambracia used her Peloponnesian friends in order to fulfil her own selfish interests. According to the plan the Ambraciotes were going to send an army into Amphilochia in order to make the first assault and then Eurylochus was going to join them with the Peloponnesian forces. During the winter of the same year, the Ambraciotes invaded the Amphilochian territory with a force of three thousand hoplites and captured Olpae a fort near the sea. The distance between Olpae and Amphilochian Argos was twenty five  $\epsilon\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\alpha$ . When the Acarnanians heard the news, they sent a force to protect Argos and in addition they put some troops near Amphilochia to watch over the region in case the Peloponnesian army under Eurylochus decided to unite with

the Ambraciotes. In the meantime, they appealed for help from the Athenian squadron, of twenty ships, which was sailing around Peloponnesus, and asked Demosthenes, who was in Naupactus, to take the command of their troops.

At the same time the Ambraciotes who were at Olpae sent a messenger to Ambracia and asked the rest of their army to come as reinforcements, because they were afraid that Eurylochos and his forces could be cut off by the Acarnanians at Crenae (Thuc. iii. 105), but their fears did not come true, for Eurylochos managed to join them after a difficult journey in Acarnania, and when the two armies united they encamped at Metropolis. Demosthenes arrived after a while at Argos bringing with him a small force of two hundred Messenians and sixty Athenian archers. The Athenian ships had blockaded the city of Olpae and the Acarnanians and Amphilochians of Argos started the preparations for a battle with Demosthenes as a general commander of their army. The first action of Demosthenes was to move his army close to Olpae where he made his camp. For five days the two armies did not attack and during the sixth day they arrayed in battle order. When Demosthenes realised that the Peloponnesian army outnumbered his troops, he put an ambush of four hundred hoplites in a road covered with bushes, in order to avoid a possible outflank of his army and gave them the orders to attack the enemy at the most crucial moment of the battle. When the battle started, the left wing of the Peloponnesian allied army, which was composed by the Peloponnesians, outflanked the right wing of its enemy, as Demosthenes expected. It was the moment for the four hundred Acarnanians to rise up from their ambush and to win an unexpected victory. The phalanx of the Peloponnesians broke in two parts. The left wing which was attacked by the four hundred of the ambush started to retreat when panic spread into its lines. In the meantime the victorious right wing, which was composed by the most able warriors of the region, the Ambraciotes, returned from the pursuit of its enemies and surprisingly the soldiers

saw their left wing to retreat in a great hurry towards Olpae. The Ambraciotes followed them under the pressure of the victorious Acarnanians, and with great difficulty they managed to find protection at the fort of Olpae. The army of Eurylochus suffered heavy losses because its hoplites retreated in a hurry and without keeping their battle order and of course under the spread of panic. The exceptions were the Mantineians who managed to retreat in close ranks. (Thuc. iii. 106-108). Henderson describes the situation in which the Ambraciotes and allies found themselves after their defeat: "When evening came, the defeated Peloponnesian and Ambraciot army found itself cooped up with Olpae's Walls, a victorious army outside and the enemy fleet riding the waters of the gulf just beneath, while among their dead on the battlefield lay Eurylochus himself and Macarius, one of the other two Spartan generals. Demosthenes had won a most notable victory over superior numbers by the tactical device of the ambush, at the cost of but 300 slain. And he held the enemy's southern army in the hollow of his hand." (Henderson. *The Great war between Athens and Sparta*, p. 158). The next day Menedaeus, the Spartan commander, could not find a solution to his problems. Although he knew that reinforcements from Ambracia were on their way, he decided to abandon the Ambraciotes and to save only the Peloponnesian forces. In order to succeed in that he secretly made a truce with Demosthenes, which covered only the Mantineians and the most important of the Peloponnesians. (Thuc. iii. 109). Demosthenes agreed with the proposals of Menedaeus because he wanted to cut off the Ambraciotes from the allied army, and most of all he wanted to discredit the Lacedaemonians to the peoples of mainland Greece, for their treacherous action. (Thuc. iii. 109). On the other hand Demosthenes knew that reinforcements from Ambracia were going to arrive any moment and it was a good opportunity for him to get rid of the Peloponnesian forces before the final clash. Demosthenes' plan to stop the reinforcements from Ambracia was to set up ambushes in different parts of the road following the same stratagem which gave him the victory at the battle

of Olpae. (Thuc. iii. 110). In the meantime the Mantineians and the most notable Peloponnesians pretending to gather herbs started to move away from the fort and the rest of the army. When the Ambraciotes and the rest of the Peloponnesians realised that they were leaving, they run away from the fort and followed them. But the Acarnanian soldiers, who did not know about the secret treaty, attacked not only the Ambraciotes, but also the Peloponnesians who were covered by the truce. When the situation became more clear they let the Peloponnesians leave and started to kill the Ambraciotes who lost almost two hundred hoplites before they found refuge at the friendly city of Agraea. "Demosthenes' stroke was a masterpiece in policy. Who in Ambracia would ever wish to look upon a Peloponnesian again after this display of what Thucydides himself moved slightly for once, calls selfish treachery? The Spartan reputation at the entire district was dead." (Henderson. *The Great war between Athens and Sparta*, p. 160).

In the meantime the reinforcements from Ambracia arrived at Idomene north of Olpae. The territory was consisted of two hills, the lower of which was occupied by the Ambraciotes and the higher by the forces which Demosthenes had sent to ambush the enemy. Demosthenes divided his army in two parts, and marched at night in order to surround the enemy. Just before dawn he decided to attack the Ambraciotes who were still asleep. In the slaughter that followed the confused Ambraciotes suffered great loses. They had the disadvantages of their heavy armours and they had to fight against light armed troops in an unfriendly and rough territory. Some of them run to the sea in order to get killed by the Athenian sailors and not by the Amphilochians who were the worst enemies. Finally, only few of them survived and returned to Ambracia. (Thuc. iii. 112).

This was the end of the expedition of Ambraciotes against Argos of Amphilochia, which turned<sup>out</sup> to be their worst disaster. Thucydides refuses to give the exact number



of the Ambraciotes who were killed in this expedition because it was too hard to believe the Ambraciot loses in comparison with the size of their city, (Thuc. iii. 113) and he adds that this was the greatest disaster that a single city had suffered in a few days' time, during the whole war. Demosthenes after the battle of Idomene wanted to complete his victory by making an attack at the defendless city of Ambracia but the Acarnanians and the Amphilochians did not let him because they realised that the Athenians would be more difficult neighbours that they defeated and outnumbered Ambraciotes. (Thuc. iii. 113).

When the Athenian forces returned home the Amphilochians and the Ambraciotes signed a peace treaty of "one hundred years" which had defensive character. (Thuc. iii. 114). When the Corinthians realised that their colony and ally was now helpless and almost destroyed, they sent a garrison of three hundred hoplites to help the Ambraciotes. For one more time the Athenians and their allies prevented the Peloponnesians from gaining control of the North Western Greece, and continued to block the Ionian sea with their navy. The whole campaign proved to be a total disaster for Ambracia which not only suffered heavy casualties but also was abandoned by her Peloponnesian allies except Corinth, whose interest on Ambracia was more than vital. This was the last time that Ambracia played a role in the Peloponnesian war, a city which once was a powerful ally for her friends and a continuous threat to her enemies, had now turned to be incapable of defending even her own territory. We cannot blame the Spartans nor the Athenians for the fate of Ambracia, because the only people responsible for the destruction of the city were the Ambraciotes themselves, and their continuous hostile policy towards the Amphilochian Argos.

During the year 425 the Athenian garrison of Naupactus joined the Athenian troops and attacked the city of Anactorium, another Corinthian colony. The city fell by

treachery and the Acarnanians colonised her, after they expelled the Corinthians. (Thuc. iv. 49). It is very possible that the traitors belonged to an anti-Corinthian party which probably was composed of the remaining Corcyraeans at the city. We have to remember that Anactorium was a mixed colony of Corinth and Corcyra (Thuc. i. 55), and it was the pro-Corinthians who turned their city to Corinth during 433. "The loss of Anactorium was keenly felt by the Corinthians for communication with Apollonia was made more difficult and their waning prestige in an important region was further reduced." (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 256).

According to Thucydides the only contribution of Locris in an hoplite battle during the Archidamian war was a small cavalry force that the Locrians sent to the battle of Delium in 424. Although this force did not arrive on time for the battle it took part in the pursuit of the retreating Athenians and in the slaughter that followed. (Thuc. iv. 96).

During the next year Athens and Sparta concluded a one year truce. (Thuc. iv. 117). In 423 Athens after the defeat of Delium was more willing to come into negotiations with Sparta. Sparta on the other hand had suffered a humiliating defeat at Sphacteria which led to the captivity of a Spartan force and could see that Athens and her power were stronger than they expected. Among other things "...The Peloponnesians promise that access to the shrine (of Apollo at Delphi) shall be free and undisturbed; they cannot, however, themselves promise that the journey by the sacred way will be safeguarded, so they add that they will do their best to persuade the Boeotians and Phokians to grant safe conduct, or perhaps we should say to reopen the road. Boeotia and Phokis were clearly only not now represented in Athens, but had taken no part in the negotiations for this truce - had presumably refused." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iv. 118. 1). It is very probable that the Phokians did not agree with the terms of the truce but Thucydides does not give the reasons for

them not doing so.

A year later Athens had lost Amphipolis, and Cleon, who was always against a peaceful solution, was dead. The Spartans were anxious to get back the prisoners of Sphacteria and both sides could see that it was the time to give peace a chance. In March of 421 a peace treaty was concluded between Sparta and Athens. (Thuc. v. 14-15). But, although the Lacedaemonians were anxious to sign the treaty, some of their allies disagreed with her terms and refused to swear the oath. (Thuc. v. 17). The cities of Boeotia, Corinth, Elis and Megara rejected the negotiations each for their own reasons, but Sparta did not pay any attention to them and finally concluded the peace treaty which was going to bring an end to this devastating war. (Thuc. v. 18-20). When the Spartans saw that it was not possible to persuade these cities to accept the treaty they concluded an alliance with Athens which was going to last for fifty years. Another reason for doing so was the continuous threat of Argos which refused to renew her own peace treaty with Sparta. (Thuc. v. 22). But very soon the Lacedaemonians found themselves in a very difficult situation. Corinth one of their most faithful allies was ready to abandon them and join the Argive-Mantineian alliance. (Thuc. v. 30). For Corinth the terms of the treaty were completely unacceptable, for they had lost control of Solium and Anactorium, and they always wanted the renewal of the war against the Athenians who turned to be major threat to their economy and trade. During the year 420 Corinth joined the Argive alliance and the next city which followed her was Elis.

Elis was a democracy, but her social system was constituted like an oligarchy. (Arist. Pol. 1306a 14-19) Elis was on bad terms with Sparta for a dispute over the city of Lepreum. Some time before the Peloponnesian war Lepreum had been in a difficult situation because of a war with some other Arcadian tribes and asked Elis for help, with the promise to give up half of its territory with the conditional annual

payment of one talant to Elis. The Lepreans paid the tax every year, but when the Peloponnesian war started, they used it as an excuse to stop paying the tribute. When the Eleans used force against them, they turned to Sparta for help. Sparta offered to act as an arbitrator between the two cities, but the Eleans who knew that the Lacedaemonians had friendly relations with the Lepreans did not accept this solution and started to ravage the Leprean territory. The Lacedaemonians now decided that Lepreum should remain independent and that the Eleans were unjust, so they sent a garrison to the city for protection. The Eleans who considered Lepreum as a part of their territory claimed that the presence of the Spartan garrison at the city was an act of violence. (Thuc. v. 31). According to Seager: "Elis, as far as is known, suffered no disadvantage from any particular clause of the peace. Her objection was no doubt to the ending of the war on any terms, since peace would leave Sparta free to turn her attention to her squabble with Elis over Lepreum. Her advantage would best be served by a renewal of the war or some other development that would keep Sparta occupied..." (Seager: *"After the peace of Nicias: Diplomacy and Policy 421-416 B.C."*, C.Q., xxvi, 1976, p. 250). According to the Eleans it was Sparta who violated the Peace of Nicias when they sent a force to Lepreum because according to the treaty each city should have the same territory that <sup>they had</sup> had before the war and according to the Eleans half of the Leprean territory belonged to them. (Thuc. v. 31). Of course this was the excuse of the Eleans but in reality their problem was the ending of the war.

After Elis the cities of Corinth and her allies in Chalcidice joined the coalition, but Boeotia and Megara despite their attitude towards the treaty refused to abandon Sparta and her alliance. (Thuc. v. 31).

We can say that the diplomacy of Corinth that followed the Peace of Nicias was partly successful for she managed almost to unite the cities who were at odds with

Sparta in a separate league and by this action she tried to "blackmail" the Lacedaemonians in order to continue the war against Athens. But the blow to the Corinthian-Argive plans came when they turned to Tegea in order to join them in their alliance. The Tegeans refused and Corinth turned again to Boeotia who refused for a second time to leave Sparta. (Thuc. v. 32). During the same year Phokis and Locris found themselves against each other in a short war but Thucydides does not give any details about the event. (Thuc. v. 32). In the meantime Sparta decided to take action against those cities which abandoned her and her first target was Mantinea. The Lacedaemonian army under Pleistoanax invaded Parassia, which was a subordinate of Mantinea, ravaged her territory, destroyed the Mantineian fort at the region and gave to the Parassians their independence. (Thuc. v. 33). Their next step was to turn against Elis. They sent a garrison to settle Lepreum although they had declared that the city should be independent. "These actions lent security to Sparta's frontiers and the helot country and must have increased her reputation even as they diminished that of the Argive coalition." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 46). During the same year (420), Alcibiades who wanted the renewal of the war, for his personal reasons, persuaded the Athenians to conclude an alliance with the Argive coalition. Ambassadors from Argos, Elis and Mantinea arrived in Athens to take part in the negotiations. Sparta who was aware of the danger sent her own ambassadors to prevent the Athenians from concluding this alliance, but Alcibiades tricked them, and turned the meeting to a personal victory. Although Nicias tried hard to change the mind of the Athenians, Athens finally joined the Argive coalition. (Thuc. v. 43-47). When the new alliance was concluded Corinth turned again to Sparta and abandoned the newly formed league. (Thuc. v. 48). The last thing that the Corinthians wanted was an alliance with Athens, for the renewal of the war was their primary aim. "Sparta and Athens were at odds, the war party was in charge at Sparta, the war seemed about to resume. We need ask only why the Corinthians continued to hold to the

defensive alliance they had made with Argos, Elis and Mantinea. Caution may provide part of the answer; the instability of Spartan politics might require further manoeuvres. Beyond that, the Corinthians ambiguous position in respect to the Peloponnesian democracies might allow them to intervene at some crucial moment in the future." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 74).

The first action of the new alliance against Sparta took place during the Olympic Games of 420. The Eleans did not permit Sparta to take part in the Games because of the case of Lepreum. According to them Sparta had violated the sacred truce when<sup>she</sup> sent a garrison ~~to~~ Lepreum and attacked the fort of Phycus.

Of course the Spartans denied that they had violated the truce, and claimed that they had sent their troops before the truce. "The rights and wrongs of the complaint are not totally clear<sup>not do they seem important. The Eleans</sup> intended to use the Olympic Games to achieve their political ends. The Olympic court, composed of Eleans, found against Sparta and imposed a fine." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 75). The Lacedaemonians refused to pay the fine or to restore Lepreum to Elis and as a result they were banned from the Games and the sacrifices.

"The Eleans would have dared none of these highly provocative actions without outside support. As it was, they were afraid the Spartans would force their way in by arms. They guarded the sanctuary with their own armed troops aided by a thousand men each from Argos and Mantinea. In addition, Athens sent a troop of cavalry which took up a position at Harpine, not far from Olympia." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 75). But the Spartans were not willing to take any actions at the time. Although the Lacedaemonian Lichas, who was an important person in Sparta was beaten and humiliated by the games' attendants for a provocative action during the games the Lacedaemonian army did not attack.

(Thuc. v. 49-50). After the games the Argives made an effort to persuade the Corinthians to their alliance, but this time Corinth refused.

During the next year (419) Alcibiades brought a small Athenian force into Peloponnesus in order to persuade the Achaeans to join their alliance. He made an alliance with Patrae in Achaea, and tried to built a fort at Rhium in order to get full control of the Corinthian gulf. (Thuc. v. 52. 2). Of course the Corinthians responded immediately to Alcibiades' actions and destroyed the fort, but Alcibiades' mission was successful. He managed to bring the neutral Patrae under Athenian control, and in doing this, to isolate more the Corinthians, but above all he damaged for one more time the Spartan prestige in the region. On the other hand he could isolate completely Corinth and control the entrance of the Corinthian gulf. If he managed to built the fort at Rhium. "...it was a grandiose scheme for an Athenian general at the head of a mainly Peloponnesian army to march through the Peloponnese, cocking a snook at Sparta when her reputation was at its lowest. Its daring, such as it was, its theatricality, and its small practical value, were alike characteristic of Alcibiades." (Gomme, Andrewes, Dover. *H.C.T.*, v. 52. 2). The end of the Argive alliance came with the battle of Mantinea a year later (418). The Spartans won a decisive victory and regained the control of Peloponnesus as well as their lost prestige. Elis' forces did not participate in this battle, for she had withdrawn her three thousand hoplites when her allies decided to attack Tegea instead of Lepreum, which was the target of Elis and the Elean selfish interests were one of the factors that gave the victory to the Spartans, whose army of course outnumbered the enemy forces. (Thuc. v. 62). After its defeat at Mantinea the Argive alliance collapsed. Argos signed a Peace Treaty with Sparta (Thuc. v. 78), and Mantinea followed her. (Thuc. v. 81). During the next year (417) the Lacedaemonians who controlled now the whole of Peloponnesus arranged the matters of Achaea according to their own interests and brought the state to the

Peloponnesian League. (Thuc. v. 81).

The cities of Western Greece did not make any important contributions to help Sparta during the Peloponnesian war. Locris and Phokis almost did not participate in the war - with the exception of the fifteen ships that they sent together into Ionia during 413. (Thuc. v. 111. 3). Ambracia was almost destroyed by the Acarnanians and the Athenians after her unsuccessful expedition against Amphilochean Argos at 426. The once powerful city managed to send only two ships to Sicily in 414 (Thuc. vi. 104), and none to the Ionian in 413.

Elis, who was interested only in her own claims, not only abandoned the Spartans but she also caused a serious blow to the Argive league when she withdrew her forces from Tegea. Leucas' only contribution was her geographical location, and a limited number of ships. The Leucadians sent a squadron of ten ships to Sicily (Thuc. vi. 104), but Thucydides does not mention them in the catalogue of the cities who sent ships in the final stage of the war in Ionia. Although some of these cities could play an important role in the war, and offer great help to the Peloponnesian League, almost all of them decided not to do so and preferred to be just observers, or to use their alliance with Sparta for their own benefits.



## Chapter V

# THE ARCADIAN STATES

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## V. THE ARCADIAN STATES

### **The Arcadian States During The Peloponnesian War**

The role of Arcadia during the years of the war does not seem very important. Officially the Arcadian states were allies of Sparta but their support to the Lacedaemonians during the Peloponnesian war was not great. The Peace Treaty of Nicias brought a lot of changes in Greece but especially in Peloponnesus, Sparta faced the danger of losing her hegemony over her allies. Argos tried to become a third power in Greece and to take with it some of the most important Arcadian states. It seems that the Arcadian cities were not so happy with their Spartan friends and it seems that they cooperated with them only because of fear and not of friendship.

I believe that, if we examine the political history of Arcadia during the years that followed the Persian wars and the Pentecontaetia we will see what was the true relationship between Sparta and Arcadia, why Arcadia cooperated with the Spartans in the Peloponnesian war, and why the Arcadians were at odds with Sparta.

Cleomenes king of Sparta was exiled from his city in 491, he found an "asylum" in Arcadia and tried to unite the Arcadian states into one steady league in order to attack Sparta to take his revenge. (Hdt. vi. 74-75). The Spartans, when they realised that Cleomenes' policy could create them serious problems, called him back and gave him the title of the king for one more time. Of course this is a minor incident but it helps us to understand some things: First that the Arcadians were not united in the beginning of the fifth century, and this helped the Spartans to control them easily. (see also: Larsen. *Greek Federal States*, p. 181). Second, the Spartans knew that the unification of the Arcadians was a serious threat and Cleomenes as a king of the Spartans was aware of that. This is why he chose the Arcadians in order to "blackmail" his fellow citizens. Third, an Arcadian league

hostile to Sparta, with the help of Argos and Elis could easily isolate the Lacedaemonians from the rest of Greece, and provide "asylum" to the helots who could escape from Sparta. So we can see that the Spartans had serious reasons to keep the Arcadians constitutionally divided. In 480 during the second invasion of the Persians in Greece, the Arcadians sent a sum of 2,120 hoplites and in the gathering of the Peloponnesian forces which followed later on in the isthmus of Corinth they sent all their troops. But although they were very cooperative with the other Greeks, they did not act as a league. According to Herodotus in (ix. 77) the Mantineans arrived too late in the battlefield of Plataea because they had stayed in the isthmus, the Tegeans and the Orchomenians fought against the Persians (especially the Tegeans who fought very bravely; Herodotus describes in ix. 26 the dispute between the Tegeans and the Athenians on the matter of who was going to keep the one flank of the Greek army, something which shows the power of the Tegeans and their loyalty to the Spartans). According to Andrewes: "Two contingents arrived late for the battle of Plataea, those of Mantinea and Elis. Both showed great distress, the Mantineans pursued Artabazos as far as the Spartans would let them, both states exiled their generals when their armies returned. (Hdt. ix. 77). The battle of Plataea was not a sudden affair, and the abstention of these two cities must be taken as deliberate, a sign of very serious disaffection at a critical moment. We do not know what particular grounds they had for refusing Sparta's lead, other than were miscalculation of the outcome, but Pausanias' victory brought them to heel, just as Agis' victory at Mantinea in 418 ended another period of disaffection..." (Andrewes: *"Sparta and Arcadia in the early fifth century"*, *Phoenix*, 6, 1952). From these we can see that: 1. The Arcadian city states were not united to a league, so they did not follow the same policy and tactics during the Persian wars. 2. That Sparta had very friendly relations with Tegea, although these relations did not last for too long.

"In the years following the Persian wars the main known events are the victories which Sparta won over the Tegeans and the Argives at Tegea, and over all the Arcadians except Mantinea at Dipaea. It appears that Tegea passed from friendship with Sparta in 478 to determined and continuing hostility, though we do not know why. There is no evidence of Mantinean hostility to Sparta in these years. The Mantineans certainly chose initially not to follow Sparta's march across the isthmus in 479, but that was not an act of hostility, and in any case the Mantineans changed their mind... It is certain that Mantinea helped Sparta during the Messenian revolt and was the only Arcadian state not to oppose Sparta at Dipaea. For the attitudes of other Arcadian states before Dipaea we have no evidence... Finally we simply do not know what part, if any, Themistocles played in Arcadian politics during his stay in Argos." (Roy: *"An Arcadian League in the early fifth century B.C."*, Phoenix, 26, 1972, p. 338). So we have Mantinea friendly with Sparta during the third Messenian war, (Hdt. ix. 35; Xen. Hell. v. 2. 3). Tegea friendly with Sparta in 479, hostile in the battles of Tegea and Dipaea. Orchomenus friendly with Sparta in 479, hostile at Dipaea. All other cities hostile to Sparta at Dipaea. "It is highly unlikely that Tegea, Orchomenus, and Mantinea acted as members of an Arcadian league in 479, or that Tegea was united with other Arcadian states when it fought Sparta with only Argive support at Tegea, or that Mantinea was united with other Arcadian states at the time of the Messenian revolt and Dipaea." (Roy: *"An Arcadian League in the early fifth century B.C."*, Phoenix, 26, 1972, pp. 338-339). We do not know many things about the Arcadian states and other cities except that Cleitor had offered to Olympia some gifts from wars won over other small states or communities. The same happened with the states of Psophis, Gortyna (at Delphi) and Caphyae (at Delphi as well). So we notice a series of wars in the region during the period 500-450, not major wars, or even wars as such, but some form of local conflicts. This is the chronology of the events according to Andrewes: (*"Sparta and Arcadia"*, Phoenix, 6, 1952, p. 5).

"ca 490	Cleomenes in Arcadia.
before 480	Tegea loyal, Elis and Mantinea late for Plataeα
480 (late)	Pausanias' first recall, trial and acquittal.
478/7 (winter)	Leotychidas in Thessaly, his trial and exile.
478/7	Sparta abandons naval hegemony and the Persian war.
ca 472	Themistocles in Argos, Pausanias' final disgrace and death.
471/0	600 πολίτες (and democracy?) at Elis (and about the same time at Mantinea?) Themistocles driven from Argos.
468/7	Pindar's sixth Olympian.
465 (early)	Battle of Tegea.
465	Earthquake at Sparta, Messenian revolt.
465/4	Argos attacks Mycenae. Battles at Dipaieis (?) isthmus."

Forrest believes in the existence of an Arcadian league and gives his own order of events. According to him: "There are four units to be considered in the northern Peloponnese during this period, Elis, an Arcadian league probably dominated by Tegea, Mantinea, and Argos." (Forrest: *"Themistocles and Argos"*, C.Q, 54, 1960, p. 229).

Forrest's order of events:

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| by c. 470 | Formation of anti-Spartan, democratic league in the northern Peloponnese, including Argos (with Kleonai), Arcadia (with both Tegea and Mantinea), and Elis. |
| c. 469    | First operations of the league: attack on Mycenai and battle of Tegea.  |
| c. 468    | Change in Argos (and perhaps at the same time in Mantinea).   |
| c. 466    | Revolt of Tiryns with Arcadian support against Argos.   |
| 465/64    | Helot revolt; battle of Dipaea against depleted anti-Spartan league; capture of Mycenai; capture of Tiryns by Argos.  |

According to Forrest, Mantinea was a member of the league but Mantinea, if not

friendly with Sparta, certainly did not come into conflict with her at the battles of Tegea and Dipaea. The fact that the united armies of all Arcadian cities (except Mantinea) opposed Sparta in Dipaea does not prove the existence of a democratic league or a kind of a confederacy at the same period. There is no evidence for this, especially when in this period we do not have the dominant power in Arcadia which could unite all the states of the region into a league. Tegea or Mantinea did not prove so powerful and definitely did not have the strength and means to unite the Arcadians. I believe that in order to have had a league or a confederacy in a region we need to have a major power which could unite or lead the states; but in the case of Arcadia we do not have any. The existence of the Arcadicon coinage during the period of the Pentecontaetia gives us some information about the political situation in the region but it does not solve the problem of the existence or not of an Arcadian league, although in some cases a common coinage indicates some federal structure. Three different mints with the inscription ΑΡΚΑΔΙΚΟΝ struck in Arcadia during a period of seventy years (490-420), mints A, B, and C. According to Roy these mints had a political character and purpose but they did not suggest the existence of an Arcadian league. "We can accept however that mint A began to strike c. 490; that mints B and C joined it not long after the Persian wars; that A and B ceased striking c. 460; and that C continued to strike until c. 420. In that case, as Williams argues, A began coining about the time Cleomenes was in Arcadia (491); and A and B may well have ceased striking in the aftermath of the battle of Dipaea, at which Sparta defeated all the Arcadians except Mantinea. If so, mint C was most probably Mantinea, not hostile to Sparta at the time of Dipaea and so likely to retain privileges which other Arcadians lost; and moreover as Williams suggests, the end of mint C, dated approximately to 420, could well follow Mantinea's defeat by Sparta in 418. Mint C can<sup>be</sup> identified with some probability as Mantinea. The identity of the other two mints remains, however, quite uncertain." (Roy: *"An Arcadian League in the early fifth century B.C."*, Phoenix,

26, 1972, p. 335). (see also: Kraay. *Archaic and Classical Greek coins*, p. 98). The fact that mint C continued to strike although mints A+B had ceased, probably reflects the political differences and arguments between the major cities in Arcadia and the probability that mint C did not represent the whole<sup>of</sup> Arcadia although it had the inscription **ΑΡΚΑΔΙΚΟΝ**. If we suppose that mint C was Mantinea, then we have to take under consideration Sparta's influence in the region, for Mantinea was the only Arcadian city which was friendly to Sparta around 460, and we can assume that Sparta stopped the strike of mints A+B. During 465/4 (battle of Dipaea) we have three mints: A+B and mint C which probably is Mantinea. If Mantinea represents mint C then mint A+B were struck by an anti-Spartan front which wanted to present itself as a confederacy in Arcadia. On the other hand, Mantinea (mint C) had the Spartan support and wanted to present herself as the dominant city in the region. The fact that we have two coinages with the same inscription at the same time shows that there were more than one states which claimed that they could unite the Arcadians, under a confederacy, so presumably we do not have an Arcadian league united under the same "constitution" and policies. According to Roy: "But awareness of common nationality as Arcadians need not have led the Arcadians to common political action, still less to a federal organisation. The problem is whether such an organisation arose. Cleomenes did not complete his proposed unification of Arcadia, and for the following years from 491 to 480 we have no evidence. We can however be reasonably sure that from 480 to the battle of Dipaea all Arcadia was never united. Moreover the later stages of the Arcadicon coinage itself, when two mints closed and only the third continued, suggest disagreement within Arcadia." (Roy: *"An Arcadian League in the early fifth century B.C."*, Phoenix, 26, 1972, p. 340).

According to Head: "The extensive series of coins bearing the inscription ranging from circa B.C. 490-417 proves most satisfactorily that the Arcadians, in

spite of their continual dissensions, maintained from first to last something more than a mere tradition of unity, for this coinage, although not politically a federal currency like that of the later Achaean league, shows that the independent Arcadian towns and villages held fast to the religious bond which brought them together from time to time to celebrate in common their national festivals *Arcadica*." (Head. *Historia Numorum*, p. 444). If this hypothesis is correct then we assume that Arcadia was not a confederacy during the fifth century, or at least it was not united politically and constitutionally. Comparing the Arcadian states with the Boeotian federation which constituted a typical example of a federal state we see that:

1. Arcadia was not united under a constitution and a federal government like the Boeotian cities. 2. In the Boeotian federation, there was always a city which held the dominant position (e.g. Thebes), controlled the political life of the whole federation, and in a few words patroned the whole league. In Arcadia this dominant power never existed. 3. The Boeotian confederacy had a federal army, in which every city had its share. In Arcadia every city had her own army, and in many cases they operated independently of each other. (e.g. Persian wars; battle of Mantinea in 418 etc.). Considering all these I doubt that during the fifth century, Arcadia was united under a confederacy, although we have a series of coins with the inscription **ΑΡΚΑΔΙΚΟΝ**. These coins do not suggest a political organisation, and do not prove the existence of a federal organisation. The coinage suggests: A) A religious organisation or, B) a period of rivalries between the Arcadian cities, in which every city was striking her own mint, aiming to present herself as the patron of the whole Arcadia.

Thucydides does not clearly say if Arcadia was an ally of Sparta during the Archidamian war but we assume that the Arcadians fought several times together with the Lacedaemonians. During 426 the Mantinians sent a contingent to assist Eurylochus on his campaign against the Acarnania. Unfortunately, Thucydides does



not give any details about the number of this Mantineian force, and the only thing we know about them is that they fought bravely and were the only soldiers who maintained their order during the moment of the defeat of the whole Peloponnesian allied army, and managed to retreat as a disciplined force. (Thuc. iii. 108). During the year 430 the Spartans sent an embassy to the king of Persia asking for an army or money. Sitalces king of Thrace, at those times, who had very friendly relations with Athens arrested them. Among the other ambassadors of the Peloponnesians Timagoras of Tegea was arrested. Thucydides says that from these ambassadors only Pollis from Argos joined the Peloponnesian embassy without having any instruction and authority from his city. So we have to assume that Tegea had officially sent Timagoras to Persia giving him specific instructions and acting as a full ally of Sparta. (Thuc. ii. 67). Although Tegea and Mantinea acted as allies of Sparta during the Archidamian war, during the year 423/22 they fought against each other in Laodiceion of Orestias. The battle took place after the one year truce that Athens and Sparta had signed the same year. (Thuc. iv. 134). According to Gomme: "They do indeed take advantage of the truce from the major war (in which they were allies) to have a war of their own. Each city had allies in this battle, and one may surmise with Graves that it was they on each side who were driven back and suffered heavy loss; and since both cities claimed the victory and set up a trophy and sent spoils to Delphi, they were happy. It is almost a parody of the foreign policy of the small autonomous city." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iv. 134). It is very probable that the Tegeans were afraid of the growth of the Mantineian power and moved against them in order to stop the Mantineian expansion in the region. (Kagan. *The Archidamian War*, p. 334). Although the battle ended in a draw, the Tegeans managed to encamp on the field and to erect a trophy, while the Mantineians retreated to Bucolion. In the year 421 the Athenians and Spartans signed the Peace Treaty of Nicias which ended the ten year Archidamian war. The Lacedaemonians tried unsuccessfully during the same year to renew their peace

treaty with Argos. When they realised that the Argives were trying to challenge their hegemony in Peloponnesus, they reacted vigorously and concluded an alliance with Athens in order to isolate the ambitious Argives. As a reaction Argos starts negotiations with Corinth (who was against the peace treaty, and the Spartan Athenian alliance) in order to form their own alliance and league. Mantinea was the first of the Peloponnesian cities who became an ally of Argos because during the Archidamian war they had captured a fort in the region of Cypselos in Parrasia (Thuc. v. 29) which belonged to the Lacedaemonians. The Mantineians knowing that Sparta was going to recapture Cypselos when they ended the war with Athens, tried to cooperate with another Peloponnesian city who had the means and the power to protect them, and an alliance with Argos was the best solution to their problems. During the same year the Corinthians tried to persuade Tegea to take part in their alliance but the Tegeans refused probably because of their hostility with Mantinea. The Lacedaemonians, when they realised that their hegemony in Peloponnesus was in danger, responded immediately (something which was very unusual for them) and moved with all their forces against the fort<sup>of Cypselos. The Mantineians had given the Fort</sup> to the Argives in order to defend it and with their own army they tried to confront the Lacedaemonians in Parrasia. The Spartans finally defeated the Mantineian army and they destroyed the fort. (Thuc. v. 33) This was the first victory of the Spartans against the Argive alliance, after the end of the Archidamian war. The most strange thing in this story is that Mantinea, although she was an ally of the Lacedaemonians during the Archidamian war, created troubles to Sparta by occupying a territory which was claimed by Sparta. The occupation of this territory took place during the Archidamian war at a time that Sparta and Mantinea fought united against the Athenians. So we can see Mantinea's intention to gain superiority over the other Arcadian cities even during the Peloponnesian war. On the other hand we can see that Sparta did not pay any attention to the Arcadian affairs, but she waited until the Archidamian war came to an end. The next year (420-419) Argos with the help of Alcibiades signed an

alliance with Athens. The Mantineians joined the Argive mission to Athens and probably took part in the negotiations. Finally Argos and Mantinea became allies of Athens. (Thuc. v. 43-48). A peace treaty and an alliance were concluded for one hundred years between Athens, Argos, Mantinea and Elis. This peace treaty covered also the allies of these states. This article was very strange because according to its second part (that the alliance covered also the allies of these states who agreed to it) Sparta as an ally of Athens (according to the alliance that they had signed the previous year) was an ally of Argos, Elis and Mantinea. The Athenians, although they had an alliance with Sparta, at those times were influenced by the clever policy and tricks of Alcibiades and tried to use Mantinea and Argos as the front line which could protect them from the Lacedaemonians. (Thuc. v. 47). During the Olympic Games that took place the same year, the new alliance took its first measure against the Lacedaemonians. The Spartans were excluded from the games, because they refused to pay a fine to Elis, and the Elians feared that the Lacedaemonians were going to use force against them, so they asked their allies to provide them with forces in case they had to defend themselves. Argos and Mantinea<sup>both</sup> sent one thousand hoplites and Athens a small cavalry force, but nothing happened finally. (Thuc. v. 50). Two years later a huge expeditionary force from Sparta moved against Argos under the commands of king Agis. Thucydides said that the Lacedaemonians managed to gather the biggest and finest Greek army. Among the other cities Tegea took part in the campaign, along with all the other Arcadian states except Mantinea who sent her troops to help the Argives. (Thuc. v. 57-58). The battle never took place, probably because Agis preferred diplomacy than conflict at the last minute, although the Lacedaemonians and their allied army had surrounded the Argives. As a result a truce concluded between Argos and Sparta and the Lacedaemonian army returned home. (Thuc. v. 58-60). Alcibiades who arrived in Argos immediately after the conclusion of the truce persuaded the Argives to start the hostilities for one more time. The Argive army invaded

Orchomenus and forced its people to join their alliance. Thucydides says that some Arcadian hostages were kept in Orchomenus, and probably these prisoners were Mantineian democrats who were put there by the Spartans after their conflict in 421/20. (Thuc. v. 61). After the capture of Orchomenus the Argive alliance turned against Tegea, something which was proposed by the Mantineians. This decision made the Eleans withdraw their forces because their allies did not pay any attention to their interest which was the capture of Lepreum. (Thuc. v. 62). Tegea asked for immediate help from the Lacedaemonians, and the whole Spartan army moved against Argos and Mantinea for one more time. At the same time the other Arcadian cities gathered their forces in order to join Agis and his army. The two armies met in Alesion near Mantinea. The Spartan army fought without its allies and won a victory which proved that they had the finest army in Greece, and ended the dispute over the hegemony of Peloponnesus. (Thuc. v. 65-75). Many of the Mantineians died in this battle and Argos was forced to conclude a peace treaty and alliance with Sparta. (Thuc. v. 76-80). The new Peloponnesian alliance came to an end, Mantinea joined for one more time the Spartan alliance and renounced her hegemony over the other smaller Arcadian cities. (Thuc. v. 81).

From then on we assume that the Arcadian states cooperated with Sparta and assisted the Peloponnesian alliance during the last stage of the war. According to Thucydides<sup>(viii 3)</sup> the Arcadians, together with the Pellenians, and the Sicyonians built ten ships in order to contribute to the large fleet which was going to take part in the operations in the Aegean, during the Ionia war. Although the Arcadian states assisted Sparta during the Peloponnesian war, they did not offer their best to the Peloponnesian alliance. The continuous enmity between Tegea and Mantinea, the ambitions of Mantinea and her expansionistic policy, together with the Argive threat troubled the Lacedaemonians for years, and damaged the whole Peloponnesian alliance. This lack of unity between the Arcadian states was the most important

reason for Arcadia's behaviour during the Peloponnesian war, for if a confederacy had existed then the Arcadians could have followed the same policies and consequently could have offered more to both the allies and the Lacedaemonians.

## Chapter VI

### ARGOS

## VI. ARGOS

### **Argos and the Peace Treaty of Nicias**

Although Argos was not an ally of Sparta during the Peloponnesian war, its policy over Lacedaemon and other Peloponnesian states like Arcadia, Corinth and Elis, and its intention of becoming the "hegemon" of the Peloponnesians and a major power in Greece changed the course of the Peloponnesian war and troubled not only the Spartans but also the Athenians and other Greek states.

The Argive diplomacy dominated Greek politics during the years that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias and proved that Sparta had to fight a difficult struggle in order to regain her control over Peloponnesus. Before I continue with the analysis of the Argive diplomacy and politics which followed the Nicias' Peace Treaty I will give a summary of the history of Argos during the fifth century. In 494 Cleomenes king of Sparta destroyed the Argive army at Sepeia. (Hdt. 6. 77-81). Although Cleomenes defeated the Argives he did not manage to capture the city of Argos and for this reason he was criticized later on by the Lacedaemonians. The free male population of Argos was reduced after this battle, and the slaves took in their hands the public offices and the government of the city, but later on the power returned to the next Argive generation of free citizens. Aristotle says that the Argives had given the power not only to the slaves but also to the most capable perioikoi. (Pol. e'. 3, 7). The disaster at the battle of Sepeia was not as serious as the Argives later pretended, for only a few years later a thousand Argives fought in Aegina and most of them died there. (Hdt. vi. 92. 2-3). We do not know if these Argives were sent officially by the government of Argos or if simply they were mercenaries. "But it was serious enough to disrupt the Argive constitution at the time and to give them for years to come a plausible excuse for military inactivity." (Forrest: *"Themistocles and Argos"*, C.Q, 1960). Cleomenes had killed during the battle of Sepeia most of the Argive democrats.

Argos did not send any troops to help the other Greek cities during the Persian wars. Herodotus gives three variations of the story concerning the attitude of the Argives during the second Persian invasion in Greece. The first story of Herodotus says that Argos asked from the Spartans half of their command over the other Greek cities. According to the Argives, Argos had the right to be hegemon of all the Greek cities, but in the case of the Persian wars it could give a half of its hegemony to the Lacedaemonians. We will see that this belief and claim of the Argives continued to exist and trouble the rest of Greece until the battle of Mantinea (418-417). If this claim of 480's was true then Argos does not seem to suffer a lot from the loss of its men in the battle of Sepeia. Otherwise how could a city which had suffered so much after a single battle in 494 and lost one thousand more men in Aegina in 490 now ask for the command of the whole Greek army?

According to the second story, Xerxes sent delegates to Argos asking the Argives to remain neutral in the forthcoming war and not to assist the other Greeks. (Hdt. vii. 150-151). It seems strange that Xerxes did not ask the Argives to make a military contribution to his army or to create unrest into Peloponnesus. Such an Argive assistance could harm the Peloponnesians themselves, the backbone of the Greek alliance.

The third variation is the most incredible one. According to this story the Argives had invited the Persians to come to Greece in order to regain the control over Peloponnesus and to eliminate the Spartan power. (Hdt. vii. 152). The first version of the story seems the most plausible and it seems that Argos found the opportunity to ask for its own benefits rather than admit inferiority to Sparta.

Until the beginning of the Peloponnesian war Argos did not follow a constant



policy towards the other states of Peloponnesus but was always more hostile to Sparta and friendly to Athens. According to Kelly "As a minor state in a world dominated by two major powers, Athens and Sparta, Argos was not always in a position to determine unilaterally the nature of its foreign policy. To a large extent, policy was shaped by events over which the Argives had little or no control." (Kelly: *"Argive foreign policy in the fifth century B.C."*, Classical Philology, 69, 1974, p. 81).

Probably Argos did not have the power or the influence over the other Peloponnesian states during these years, but its main policy always remained unchanged and this policy was to regain its hegemony over Peloponnesus and to eliminate the Spartan superpower. This policy of the Argives led to the events that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias, which brought unrest and wars all over Peloponnesus.

Argos itself remained neutral during the Peloponnesian war but many of the states of the Argolid cooperated with Sparta and sent troops to several Peloponnesian operations; especially Hermione, Epidaurus, and Troizen.

During the year 462 Athens signed an alliance with Argos because Sparta rejected the Athenian help during the Helot revolt. (Thuc. i. 102). According to Gomme: " ΤΟΤΣ ΕΚΕΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΛΕΜΙΟΙΣ this phrase suggests that Argos was actually at war with Sparta at the time. It would be curious to speculate how different the course of Greek history might have been, if Athens and Argos had now vigorously combined to help the revolted Messenians against Sparta." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, i. 102).

Although Argos succeeded in joining the Athenian alliance in 462, its efforts to unite all Arcadia into one alliance against Sparta failed, (Hdt. iv. 35; Diod. xi. 65)

even if some of the Arcadian states were hostile to Sparta at those times. (see also the chapter about the Arcadian states.) Probably during the year 451 a truce was signed between Sparta and Argos. (Thuc. v. 14).

Gomme says about Argos during the Pentecontaetia. "The dates for the important events in the Peloponnese at this time - the recovery of Argos and her conquest of Mykenai and Tiryns, the synoecism of Elis, and the struggle of Sparta for the hegemony ending in her victories, at Tegea and Dipaea - are quite uncertain. Diodorus puts the synoecism in 471-470 and the conquest of Mykenai in 468-467; and for all we know to the contrary these dates may be right... we may be sure that the condemnation of Pausanias and of Leotychidas (and the latter's residence after exile in Tegea), and the intrigues of Themistocles when living at Argos (Thuc. i. 135), weakened the position of Sparta, and that she with difficulty won back the hegemony; but this only gives us vague indications of date. It perhaps suggests that 468-466 is more likely than 473-471; if so, the Helot revolt did not begin in 468, for Sparta did not win these victories while it was at its height." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, Vol 1, pp. 408-409).

During the second year of the Peloponnesian war the Athenians invaded Peloponnesus with one hundred and fifty ships. They attacked Epidaurus, Halias, Troizen, and Hermione. (Thuc. ii. 56). According to Gomme Epidaurus was: "...the strongest city in the Argolid peninsula after Argos itself; generally at enmity with Argos, and so friendly to Sparta. Its capture by Perikles would not only have been important in itself, as a severe blow to Peloponnesian confidence, but would have provided a way of direct access to Argos, neutral, but at odds generally with the Peloponnese dominated by Sparta." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, ii. 56).

A very strange incident happened in 429/8. A Peloponnesian envoy was sent to the

king of Persia asking for help against Athens. Among the ambassadors was the Argive Pollis who joined the other Peloponnesians without having any authority from Argos. The envoy was arrested by the king of Thrace Sitalces who was friend of Athens. (Thuc. ii. 67). The Argive Pollis obviously belonged to the oligarchic party which always was pro Spartan for its own political benefit. The fact that the Peloponnesians took with them the Argive shows two things. 1. That there were secret negotiations between Sparta and Argive oligarchs (as it proved later on, after the battle of Mantinea) with the intention to impose oligarchy in Argos and make the Argives to join the Spartan alliance. 2. That Argos had always close relations with Persia and an Argive delegater was treated as a friend by the king.

During the year 425-424 the Athenians started preparations to attack Corinth. The Corinthians were informed of the forthcoming invasion by some Argives. (Thuc. iv. 42). This event proves that the Argive oligarchs were working not only for Sparta but also for her allies and tried to help them in every way. The Athenians attacked Corinth and at the same time they invaded Troizen, Halieis, and Epidaurus. (Thuc. iv. 45). According to Gomme: "It would have made a considerable difference to the Athenian position, and to that of Argos and removed a most obstinate enemy. But Epidaurus resisted all attacks." (Gomme. *H.C.T.*, iv. 45).

#### The Peace Treaty of Nicias

During the Year 422-421 the truce between Argos and Sparta ended. The Lacedaemonians were anxious to renew this truce for two reasons: 1. They were holding Cynouria, and did not want to give it back to Argos. 2. They were afraid that the Argives were going to turn against them and of course an Argos friendly to the Athenians was a continuous threat not only to them but also to the rest of their allies in Peloponnese. (Thuc. v. 14). In the meantime in March of 421 after ten years of continuous war Sparta and Athens signed the Peace Treaty of Nicias.

Sparta especially wanted very much this Peace in order to recover from her latest misfortunes (Sphacteria - Pylos) and to restore her reputation in Greece. "No amount of relief and rejoining by the Spartan and Athenian signers of the Peace Treaty of Nicias could conceal its deficiencies. The very ratification of the peace revealed its tenuous and unsatisfactory character, for the Boeotians, Eleians, and Megarians rejected the treaty and refused to swear the oaths. (Thuc. v. 17. 2)." (Kagan. *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian expedition*, p. 19). On the other hand the Lacedaemonians realised that the Argives did not intend to renew their truce and for these reasons an alliance<sup>was</sup> signed between Athens and Sparta. (Thuc. v. 22). With this alliance the Spartans isolated the states who refused to participate in the peace.

After the conclusion of the alliance, Corinth, who always wanted the renewal of the war against Athens, sent envoys to Argos in order to form an alliance. This newly formed alliance between Corinth and Argos aimed to unify the Peloponnesian states as a strong alliance able to challenge the Spartan hegemony in Peloponnesus. The real motives of the Corinthians were: 1. To continue the war against Athens in order to get back Anactorium and Solium. 2. To threaten Sparta with the creation of a new league at Peloponnesus.

"What had brought these states together, each having little in common with the other, some even traditionally hostile, was a common belief in the desirability of creating a third force in the Hellenic world... The goal of Argive policy from time immemorial had been the hegemony of the Peloponnese. She had lost this hegemony to Sparta in the sixth century and had been forced thereafter to accept a subordinate position. The situation in 421 seemed a golden opportunity for revenge. Sparta was weakened by the strain of the Archidamian war and the defection of her chief ally, Corinth. Moreover, as Thucydides makes clear, the

Argives were moved by the fact that their truce with Sparta was about to expire, for they saw that war was inevitable and at the same time τῆς Πελοποννήσου ἡ γύβεθαι Argos, therefore, expected that the coalition would be directed against Sparta and hoped to use Corinth for its own purposes." (Kagan: *"Corinthian diplomacy after the Peace Treaty of Nicias"*, A.J.Ph., 1960). According to Kagan, the tactics of Corinth were aimed to substitute Sparta with Argos, over the hegemony of the Peloponnesian alliance. Argos of course was in favour of this alliance and the Argives agreed to start negotiations with other Greek states. (Thuc. v. 27-29). It was vital for the alliance to persuade Megara, Boeotia, and the Arcadian states to take part in the league. Mantinea was the first city who agreed to join in the new coalition. The Lacedaemonians sent an envoy to Corinth in order to persuade the Corinthians not to form a new alliance, but the Corinthians refused. (Thuc. v. 30). Elis joined the new coalition because of the dispute that she had with Sparta over the territory of Lepreum. In the meantime Corinth signed the treaty with Argos as well with the states of Chalcidice. Boeotia and Megara refused to join the league. (Thuc. v. 31). Unfortunately for the Argives and their allies, another important state, Tegea, refused to join them. "Tegea was of strategic importance and an essential link in the chain of states with whose aid they hoped to isolate Sparta. As the war later proved by the operation of 418, Tegeate fidelity would enable the Spartans to take the offensive against Mantinea and Argos." (Westlake: *"Corinth and the Argive Coalition."*, A.J.Ph., 1940, p. 417).

The response of the Lacedaemonians to all these came almost immediately. The Spartan army attacked Parrasia in Arcadia, defeated the Mantineian army and destroyed the fort that the Mantineians had built there. (Thuc. v. 33).

After this, Cleoboulos and Xenares two newly elected Spartan ephors, who were against the Peace Treaty of Nicias, persuaded the Boeotians and the Corinthian

envoys who were in Sparta at the time, to go into Argos to conclude an alliance with the Argives and then to persuade them to join the Peloponnesian league. (Thuc. v. 36). From this we can see how much the Spartans wanted an alliance with Argos. They were ready to abandon their alliance with Athens in order to make Argos to join their own league. Of course this diplomatic trick of the Spartans shows that there was always a door open for the Lacedaemonians into Argos, as long as their oligarchic friends there wanted to cooperate with them. In this case the oligarchs were well informed of Sparta's plan and two Argive magistrates met the Boeotian and Corinthian envoys out of Argos and proposed to the Boeotians to join the newly formed alliance. The Boeotians accepted the proposal and they promised the Argives that they were going to send delegates to Argos to discuss about it. (Thuc. v. 37).

During the next year (420-419) Boeotia and Sparta concluded an alliance, so the Argives assumed that this alliance was a part of a plan which wanted Athens to ask Sparta for the conclusion of a Peace Treaty in order to avoid isolation. During the same year negotiations started between Argos and Sparta for the conclusion of the Peace. (Thuc. v. 40-41). Unfortunately for the Spartans this treaty was never concluded, for Alcibiades persuaded the Athenians to make an alliance with Argos, and of course, when the Argives realised that the Athenians did not know anything about the alliance of Sparta with Boeotia, <sup>they</sup> turned to Athens concluding an alliance. Very soon Mantinea and Elis joined the Athenian - Argive coalition. Alcibiades had proved that he was a successful politician and diplomat who succeeded in isolating Sparta in the Peloponnesus. Thucydides in (v. 44) gives the reason that forced Argos to conclude an alliance with Athens: 1. Argos was a democratic state like Athens. 2. Athens was always friendly towards Argos. 3. Athens was a great power at sea, so Argos could easily avoid any isolation if the Athenian triremes continued to control the Aegean sea. 4. Athens could offer military assistance to

Argos in a case of war against Sparta.

Although Corinth was an ally of Argos, she refused to take part in the alliance with Athens, and turned once again to the Spartan coalition.

The first operation of the newly formed alliance took place the year 419-418. Athens and Argos tried to persuade Epidaurus to join their league. The Athenians believed that if Epidaurus concluded a treaty with them then Corinth could be isolated and remain neutral, and on the other hand the Athenian army could have an easy access to the island of Aegina. Epidaurus refused the Argive offer and Argos invaded the region of Epidauria in an effort to capture the city. Sparta's help to Epidauria arrived as always late, but Argos succeeded only in devastating a part of the Epidaurian country side. Although the war lasted for the whole winter no major battle took place. (Thuc. v. 53-56).

During the next year (418-417) the whole Spartan army, followed by forces from Tegea, marched against Argos. Sparta had realised that it was time for action since her hegemony over Peloponnesus was in danger. Corinth sent two thousand hoplites, Boeotia five thousand hoplites, five hundred cavalry, and a force of 500 light infantry, Phlius contributed all her forces. (Thuc. v. 57). A huge army was under the commands of king Agis who led his forces out of Argos using some clever military manoeuvres. Mantinea had sent help to the Argives, and Elis contributed 3,000 hoplites, but the Athenian cavalry had not arrived yet when the Lacedaemonian army surrounded the army of Argos. (Thuc. v. 58-60). "The Argives were arrayed to meet him and all was in readiness for a great conflict; the armies had all but made contact when a remarkable event took place. Two Argives, Thrasyllus, one of the five strategoi, and Alkephron, proxenos of the Spartans, came forward to Agis asking him to avoid battle. They offered, as

Thucydides tells us, to put to arbitration any grievances the Spartans might have against them and to make a treaty as well. Agis accepted the offer, struck a four month's truce with the Argives, and led his army homeward. The battle never took place." (Kagan: *"Argive Politics and Policy after the Peace of Nicias"*, Classical Philology, 1962, p. 209).

The most plausible explanation for this incident is that the Argive generals tried to avoid the battle for political reasons. The Argive oligarchs were always pro Spartans and they knew that they could gain control over Argos' politics only with the help of the Lacedaemonians. Avoiding this battle they were hoping that they could manage to persuade the people of Argos that they had saved the Argive army from destruction, as it was surrounded by the Peloponnesian forces. But this trick did not work and the Argive people blamed the two generals for the truce.

This truce did not last for long because Alcibiades who had come into Argos persuaded the Argives to renew their hostilities against the Lacedaemonians and their allies. (Thuc. v. 61).

The first operation of the allies was against Orchomenus. The Arcadian city was captured easily and joined the alliance. (Thuc. v. 61). After the capture of Orchomenus the alliance invaded Tegea after a proposal of Mantinea, but this attack made Elis to withdraw her forces because the allies did not follow her proposal, to attack Lepreum. (Thuc. v. 62).

At the same time Sparta was gathering her army in order to respond to Tegea's appeal for help. (Thuc. v. 63-64). The battle of Mantinea which followed proved Sparta's superiority on land and restored her name throughout Greece. Agis with the Lacedaemonian and the Arcadian army won a decisive victory of major



importance and destroyed in one day Argos' ambitions and beliefs for an hegemony over Peloponnesus. The Argive army proved not strong enough to defeat the Spartan phalanxes, and the alliance was finally defeated. (Thuc. v. 65-75).

As a result of this battle Sparta and Argos signed a peace treaty and an alliance for fifty years. (Thuc. v. 76-80). At last Sparta had made Argos join the Peloponnesian league. After the Spartan victory at Mantinea the Argive oligarchs took the control over Argos and the same happened to Sikyon. (Thuc. v. 81). The one thousand aristocrats who were the elite corps of Argos were used by the Oligarchs in order to impose their own policy upon Argos. The secret negotiations between the Argive oligarchs and the Spartans at last proved successful, but unfortunately for the Lacedaemonians, the oligarchic government of Argos did not last for a long time. The next year (417-416) the Argive democrats overthrew the oligarchs and turned the city for one more time to Athens. The Argive people started to build Long Walls in an effort to protect the city from the Spartan invasions, but Sparta attacked Argos for one more time and destroyed its Long Walls. (Thuc. v. 83).

Argos played a very important role during the years that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias, for it became the city which could unite the Peloponnesian states under one alliance and be, therefore, strong enough to challenge the Spartan superiority in the region. Unfortunately for the Argives their ambitions never came true, for in reality Corinth, the most important member of this alliance, did not want to abandon Sparta. Corinth used Argos and the whole of the alliance in order to blackmail Sparta to renew the war with Athens. On the other hand the Argives believed that, with the help of Corinth and other states of Peloponnesus, they could gain the hegemony of Peloponnesus. They were wrong, for their real role was to create the impression that they were able to confront Sparta. By this way Sparta

was going to realise that her hegemony could be in question and that decisive actions would have to be taken if she wanted to restore her prestige and influence over Peloponnesus. The Argives on the other hand, coming unharmed out of the Archidamian war <sup>were</sup> anxious to play a role in Peloponnesus since they believed Sparta had come out of the war weaker than ever. The Corinthians, who were fully aware of the Argive ambitions, decided to use Argos in order to press Sparta. They persuaded Argos to create an alliance with other cities of Peloponnesus, and to challenge Sparta. When the democracy of Argos concluded an alliance with Athens, Corinth turned away and finally the Athenians, together with the Argives, and the other members of their alliance, were defeated in the battle of Mantinea. This Spartan victory marked the success of the Corinthian odds again, the Treaty of Nicias was not going to last very long, and the Peloponnesian alliance was ready to renew the military operations against Athens.

Argos had no place in this plan. The Argives finally were abandoned by the most powerful member of the alliance, Corinth, and were defeated in a single battle. It is very probable that the oligarchs of Argos played their role in the whole story, cooperating with Sparta or Corinth. Whatever the truth was, Mantinea and Elis finally forgot all their ambitions and <sup>re-</sup>joined Sparta in the Peloponnesian alliance, and Argos abandoned its plans for an hegemony over Peloponnesus.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Peloponnesian war ended in 404 with the complete defeat of the Athenians and the capture of their city. Although Thebes and Corinth demanded that Athens should be destroyed, the Spartans who had the final word, decided that a city like Athens, once friendly and cooperative, should not be wasted. According to the Lacedaemonian terms Athens had to pull down her Long Walls and to surrender her fleet (or what was left from her fleet) except twelve ships. After 27 years of consecutive war at last the Athenian Empire collapsed. Sparta and her allies finally won the costly war which ravaged Greece for so long a time. No city alone bears the full responsibility for the opening of the war, for each one was trying to serve its own interests during very unstable times.

After the Persian wars Athens changed rapidly to a powerful, rich and imperialistic state whose aim was to become the greatest power in Mediterranean. (Thuc. vi. 90).

The power and ambitions of the Athenians gradually became a threat for the allies of Sparta, and finally alarmed the Lacedaemonians themselves who saw their hegemony to be in danger.

It is true that it was the allies of Sparta, and especially Corinth who wanted to take drastic measures against Athens in order to stop her expansion.

Corinth, like many other states who belonged to the Peloponnesian alliance, had realised that she was not safe at all because of Athens' policies and tactics, and that the only and final means to resist the Athenian storm was a major war in Greece. Sparta, on the other hand, was not so willing to follow her allies in any actions that could risk her power, and the stability in the Peloponnesus in general, so she preferred not to take part in any operations that could damage her relations with

Athens like the Corcyraean and the Potidaean affairs.

It is clear from Thucydides' narrative that, although Sparta was annoyed by Athens' actions, her decision to declare war against Athens came after the continuous demands of her allies who wanted Sparta to act as the liberators of the whole of Greece from the ambitious Athenians.

During the 27 years of the war, Sparta had been proved several times unwilling to follow her allies' desires and plans and in some cases - like the period that followed the Peace Treaty of Nicias - secret negotiations, and diplomacy had to be used in order to bring Sparta back to the offensive.

Of course no one can support the view that Sparta had no responsibility for the Peloponnesian war, but I think that we should accept that Sparta was forced, in a way, to take action against Athens, for the Athenians did not threaten Sparta herself, but some of her allies who finally brought the issue to the Peloponnesian League. Sparta took the decision to attack Athens only when she saw that her most important allies were ready to abandon her in order to find another state which could offer them protection, and the fact that the Lacedaemonian hegemony over Peloponnesus was at risk finally persuaded the Spartans to take arms against Athens and only then Sparta decided to stop the Athenians. Sparta's allies, on the other hand, who could feel the Athenian danger, had realised that they should take their measures in order to protect their interests. Corinth saw her plans for hegemony over the Ionian <sup>being</sup> destroyed because of Athens' interference in the region, Megara had to face economic destruction because of Athens' embargo, and Boeotia became one of the most bitter enemies of Athens after her defeat at Oenophyta in 457. According to them Athens should be stopped as soon as possible before it was too late, and the only way to succeed in that was to move their alliance against

Athens.

We can not say that all the allies of Sparta offered their best during the whole Peloponnesian war, for the war lasted for a very long period and most of the members (if not all) of the Peloponnesian alliance faced many problems (political, economic, etc.), during its twenty seven years.

For some cities - like Megara, Ambracia, Potidaea, or Melos - the war proved to be a destruction, for they suffered a lot basically because they had miscalculated the real Athenian power.

Some other allies of Sparta - like Corinth, were more lucky for they managed finally to eliminate the Athenian threat, but on the other hand the destructive war brought an end to any ambitious plans they might have, for becoming major powers, before 431. Thebes was the city who gained <sup>most</sup> from the war, for she had strengthened her political power inside Boeotia, and finally became the most dominant city in the region.

I am not sure that the allies of Sparta would have been very willing to confront Athens, if they had known that the war was going to last for so long. The Peace Treaty of Nicias - which actually marked only a very short period of true peace - seems like the only chance the two opponents had to stop the war before it was too late. This chance was lost mostly because of the Corinthians, who found themselves among the losers of the treaty, after ten years of continuous fighting, although they were the ones who believed in a quick and easy victory in 431.

Athens on the other hand, proved to be a very difficult opponent for her resistance lasted for 27 consecutive years, and even during this period the Athenians never

abandoned their expansionistic plans which finally brought destruction to the city. If the Athenians had not decided to attack Sicily, then the war could have ended in a different way, for Sparta and her allies were not able to harm Athens seriously in mainland Greece and especially in the Aegean Sea. During the final stage of the war in Ionia Sparta's allies were exhausted from the continuous clashes, and even the enthusiastic Corinthians or the aggressive Boeotians decided to stay back and wait for Athens' end to come. Although the members of the Peloponnesian alliance came victoriously out of the Peloponnesian war, it was Sparta alone that gained much from this victory, for she replaced Athens in the role of the hegemon of Greece, and she continued Athens' expansionistic policy to the East. Sparta's allies exhausted by the misfortunes of such a devastating war finally realised that, although they tried hard to avoid the Athenian threat, their victory did not change many things in the Greek world, and several years later most of them had to face the Spartan phalanxes in their struggle against the new hegemon of Greece.

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