ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Authoring : *Kitsos Dimitrios*
Translation : *Βελέντζας Γεώργιος*
For citation : *Kitsos Dimitrios , "Army of Agesilaos", Encyclopaedia of the Hellenic World, Asia Minor*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=10630>

Summary :

During his campaign in Asia, Agesilaos commanded a motley and multiethnic, yet battle-worthy, army numbering between 15,000 and 20,000 men. The original lack of cavalry was successfully dealt with by recruiting new men and allying with Asian rulers, although the shortage in siege engines and naval forces proved a serious impediment that prevented the achievement of permanent results.

Date

396-394 BC

Geographical Location

Ionia-Phrygia-Lydia-Paphlagonia

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1. The Command in 396/395 BC

Between the spring of 396 and the spring of 394 BC, Agesilaos II campaigned to Asia against the Persians in order to liberate the Greek cities. He was the supreme commander throughout the campaign and was accompanied by a council of 30 Spartans under Lysander. This corps was a sort of a general staff and served an annual term, assuming both military and diplomatic duties.[1]

2. The Army in 396/395 BC

Agesilaos landed on Ephesus with 8000 men. The 2000 of them were first-rate former helots (*neodamodeis*) serving as hoplites, and the other 6000 were Peloponnesian allies.[2] An expeditionary corps under the Spartans Thibron at first and Dercylidas later, which included 1000 neodamodeis, 4000 Peloponnesians, 2000 Asian Greeks, 300 Athenian cavalry and an unknown number of mercenaries (5000?) from the Ten Thousand had been stationed in Asia Minor in the last three years. When Agesilaos arrived, Dercylidas had a force of 7000-8000 men of unknown origins,[3] which was incorporated into Agesilaos' army, thus increasing the number of men to at least 15,000. Agesilaos summoned all Asian Greeks who were to follow him to gather at Ephesus,[4] his point of departure. The vast majority of the army were infantrymen. There were very few horsemen, greatly inferior to their Persian counterparts.[5] On realizing the importance of cavalry, Agesilaos asked from the rich Greeks of the Asia Minor coastal cities who raised horses to serve him as cavarly units or hire substitutes. In this way he formed a battle-worthy semi-professional cavalry. At the same period, 200 Persian horsemen under the renegade Spithridates joined his army. Hoplites, peltastai (light-infantry units), archers and cavarly started training hard in Ephesus.[6]

3. The Command in 395/394 BC

In the spring of 395 BC the 30 members of the council retired and were replaced by new members under Herippidas. Agesilaos appointed the Scythian as commander of the neodamodeis, Herippidas of the mercenaries, Mygdon of the allies and Xenocles and someone else of the cavalry, which indicates that the number of horsemen was increased. In the summer, Agesilaos was also ordered to assume command of the navy and, therefore, appointed Peisander in charge of the fleet.[7]

4. The Army in 395/394 BC

Following Agesilaos' orders the island and coastal cities started to build ships.[8] Although such an action had been necessary, it was decided rather late.[9] After marching to Phrygia Major in the autumn, Agesilaos allied with the Paphlagonian ruler and was reinforced with 1000 horsemen and 2000 peltastai, whose defection at some subsequent moment was a heavy blow for Agesilaos. When he was recalled to Greece, Agesilaos left 4000 men in Asia.[10]

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5. Evaluation

Agesilaos' army was followed by a huge mob starving for loot. The campaign in Phrygia demonstrated the lack of siege equipment, as proved by the fact that Agesilaos failed to capture fortified positions like Gordium.[11]

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1. Xen., *Ages*. 7 and *Hell*. 3.4.2, 3.4.20, 4.1.5-6, 11.13; Plut., *Ages*. 6.4-5; Diod. Sic. 14.79.1; Cartledge, P., *Agesilaos* (London 1987), pp. 212-213.

2. Xen., *Ages*. 7 and *Hell*. 3.4.2; Plut., *Ages*. 6.4-5; Diod. Sic. 14.79.1.

3. Xen., *Hell*. 3.1.4-6 and 1.28; Diod. Sic. 14.36.1-2, 14.39.5-6; Cartledge, P., *Agesilaos* (London 1987), p. 210.

4. Xen., *Hell*. 3.4.11.

5. Also proven during the cavalry battle in Hellespontic Phrygia: Xen., *Hell*. 3.4.13-14.

6. Xen., *Ages*. 24-26 and *Hell*. 3.4.10, 3.4.15-17; Plut., *Ages*. 8.3, 9.5-6.

7. Xen., *Ages*. 36 and *Hell*. 3.4.20, 3.4.27-29; Plut., *Ages*. 10.9-11.

8. Xen., *Hell*. 3.4.28-29.

9. Xen., *Ages*. 6-7 and *Hell*. 3.4.1-2; Plut., *Ages*. 6.1-3.

10. Xen., *Hell*. 4.1.3-2.5; Plut., *Ages*. 11.3-4.

11. Diod. Sic. 14.79.2-3; Xen., *Hell*. 3.4.22; *Hell. Ox*. 12.7, 21.16, 22.17.

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Plutarch, *Agesilaus*.