



Sparta At War: Strategy, Tactics and Campaigns, 950-362 BC

Scott Rusch

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During the eighth century BC, Sparta became one of the leading cities of ancient Greece, conquering the southern Peloponnese, and from the mid-sixth century BC until the mid-fourth, Sparta became a military power of recognized importance. For almost two centuries the massed Spartan army remained unbeaten in the field. Spartan officers also commanded with great success armies of mercenaries or coalition allies, as well as fleets of war galleys.

Although it is the stand of the Three Hundred at Thermopylae that has earned Sparta undying fame, it was her victories over both Persian invaders and the armies and navies of Greek rivals that upheld her position of leadership in Greece. Even a steady decline in Spartiate numbers, aggravated by a terrible earthquake in 464 BC, failed to end Spartan dominance. Only when the Thebans learned how to defeat the massed Spartan army in pitched battle was Sparta toppled from her position of primacy.

Scott Rusch examines what is known of the history of Sparta, from the settlement of the city to her defeat at Theban hands, focusing upon military campaigns and the strategic circumstances that drove them. Rusch offers fresh perspectives on important questions of Spartan history, and illuminate some of antiquity's most notable campaigns.

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