



# Breaking the Spartans: Epaminondas, Pelopidas, and the Brief Glory of Thebes

*Murray K. Dahm*

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## **Breaking the Spartans: Epaminondas, Pelopidas, and the Brief Glory of Thebes** Murray K. Dahm **How two ancient generals shattered the supremacy of Sparta**

This is a dual biography of the two brilliant leaders who enabled Thebes to end the supremacy of a once-invincible Sparta and briefly replace her as the preeminent city of Greece.

In 379 BC both men were pivotal in the Theban revolt, Pelopidas personally killing one of the Spartan garrison commanders in a daring coup. In the ensuing war, the two often held simultaneous political and military commands, forming an effective team while pursuing an amicable rivalry. Under their inspired leadership, and thanks to significant tactical innovations, Theban armies enjoyed a run of successes, most notably at Tegyra (375 BC), Leuctra (371 BC)—the Spartans' first clear defeat in full-scale battle for generations—and Second Mantinea (362 BC).

Unfortunately, Epaminondas was killed in the hour of victory at Second Mantinea and Theban hegemony did not long survive him (Pelopidas having already died in battle in 365 BC), a fact which only adds emphasis to their personal contribution. Murray K Dahm skillfully relates the significant, dramatic and exciting story of these two neglected geniuses.

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