



## Περίληψη :

The Spartan Thibron was sent to Asia Minor in 400 BC as a commander of the army in the war against the Persians for the independence of the Greek cities. Initially he had only a few successes in Lydia and Aeolis. He was recalled in 399 BC and was exiled. However, in 391 BC he was once again appointed military governor of the Greek troops in Asia. His insufficiency led to his death.

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Γέννησης

2nd half of the 5th century BC, Sparta

## Τόπος και Χρόνος Θανάτου

Summer 391 BC, the Meander valley

## Κύρια Ιδιότητα

General

## 1. Biography

There is no information available about the life and activities of the Spartan Thibron<sup>1</sup> prior to 400 BC. In that year, [Sparta](#) assumed the responsibility of protecting the Greek cities of Asia Minor and in autumn Thibron was appointed commander of an expeditionary force of 1,000 former helots. In Corinth, he raised a substantial army with allied reinforces and he arrived in Asia with another 4,000 Peloponnesian soldiers and 300 Athenian *hippeis* (cavalry).

In [Ephesus](#) he enrolled 2,000 Greeks from different cities and launched his campaign in the mainland.<sup>2</sup> Thibron occupied the unfortified city of [Magnesia ad Meandrum](#) but he failed to seize the fortified [Tralleis](#). He returned to Magnesia and transferred the inhabitants to a nearby mountain for security reasons. After having plundered hostile areas, he withdrew to Ephesus, thus avoiding a fight with the mighty cavalry of the [satrap](#) Tissaphernes.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 399 BC Thibron accepted the remaining [Ten Thousand](#) in his army.<sup>4</sup> Following [Pergamon](#), the cities of [Aeolis](#) Theuthrania, Alisarna, Gambriion, Paleogambriion, Myrina and Gryneion surrendered to Thibron, whereas some other weak cities were captured by assault.

Nevertheless, Egyptian Larissa resisted for a long time and Thibron received orders from the Ephors to raise the siege and invade [Caria](#). While he was preparing in Ephesus, he was replaced by [Dercylidas](#), before completing his office, because he was accused by the Greeks of Asia Minor of allowing his troops to plunder their regions. Upon his return to Sparta he was tried and exiled.<sup>5</sup>

In 391 BC Thibron was appointed commander of the Greek forces in Asia Minor once again. He conquered the cities of Ephesus, [Priene](#), Leucophrys and Achilleion and then he used them as a base for plundering the Meander valley. He had 8,000 men under his command but apparently he neglected his duties as the troops attacked poorly organized and impetuously. The satrap Struthas took advantage of this situation and sent cavalry against Thibron's army, who were unable to fight back as they rushed unorganized. Struthas attacked with the main body of his army and he killed Thibron and a large number of soldiers.<sup>6</sup>

According to Aristotle, a certain Thibron was the author of a work praising the Spartan system of government.<sup>7</sup> However, the identification with the same person seems improbable.

## 2. Evaluation

[Xenophon](#) describes Thibron as a charming and hedonist man, but mainly as a frivolous and insufficient general. However, these characteristics are attributed due to personal empathy.<sup>8</sup> However, the combination of that reference with information provided by



secondary sources and the analyses of the events indicate that Thibron was not an able military man whatsoever.<sup>9</sup>

1. Plu., *Art.* 20.3.
2. D.S. 14.36.1-2; X., *HG* 3.1.4-5. See the photo gallery for a multimedia map showing Thibron's route.
3. D.S. 14.36.2-3.
4. D.S. 14.37.4; X., *An.* 7.8.24 and *HG* 3.1.6-9; Polyæn. 2.19.
5. The Ten Thousand were responsible for the lack of discipline and looting: X., *HG* 3.2.6-7. Reference for failed administration in D.S. 14.38.2.
6. X., *HG* 4.8.17-19; D.S. 14.99.1-3. The incident took place in the second phase of Thibron's administration, cf. Polyæn. 6.10. The reference of Isoc. *Pan.* 144, about the success of the campaigns in Lydia is purely rhetoric exaggeration.
7. Arist. *Pol.* 1333b.18-20.
8. Additional negative comments on Thibron in X., *HG* 3.1.10, 3.2.1, 3.2.7, 4.8.22. The conflict between Xenophon and Thibron probably occurred while Xenophon was commanding the Ten Thousand.
9. Detailed analysis in Westlake, H.D., 'Spartan Intervention in Asia, 400-397 BC', *Historia* 35 (1986), pp. 410-413.

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	Fox, L.R. (ed.), <i>The Long March, Xenophon and the Ten Thousand</i> , New Haven – London 2004
	Krentz P., "Xenophon and Diodoros on the Battle of Abydos", <i>AHB</i> , 3, 1989, 10-14
	Westlake H.D., "Spartan Intervention in Asia, 400-397 B.C.", <i>Historia</i> , 35, 1986, 408-426

#### Δικτυογραφία :

	Xenophon , Hellenica <a href="http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Texts/Xenophon/Hellenica/Hellenica3.html">http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Texts/Xenophon/Hellenica/Hellenica3.html</a>
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#### Γλωσσάριο :

	satrap, the The title designated a representative of the Persian king, and was widely used in the Persian language. In ancient writers the term usually designates an official of the Persian empire who assumes highest political and military power within the limits of his <i>satrapia</i> , the division under his command. Alexander the Great introduced the institution to the administrative organisation of his empire in the East.
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In the Roman empire, the office of the satrap was hereditary for Armenian nobles who administered an Armenian klima (=canton, a historic-geographical unit); in the case of the Armenian territories inside the Roman Empire, the satrap yielded limited power under the suzerainty of the Roman emperor.

## Πηγές

Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*.

Xenophon, *Hellenica*.

Polyaenus, *Stratagemms*.