

Democracy and Imperialism

Democracy as a factor in the decline of Athens and the decline of Democracy

Athens in the fourth century

Democracy made ideologically generated, and often hypocritical, foreign policy more popular and more democratic. In the fourth century, Athens had acquired much of its wealth, power & naval control, 50 years of naval supremacy in the Aegean (480-430).

Key questions

- How did Athens respond to the rise of Philip of Macedonia?
- When did Athenian democracy end?
- Did democracy have a place in a Hellenist world?

The nine lives of Athenian democracy

- Democracy had, however, had a long history of struggle over its form, legitimacy and status.
- Democracy in oligarchic times or in non-democratic times, Athens never gave up its reputation.
- Many of its crises are a reflection of tensions of democracy in a city with a vast, oligarchic democracy system in a world of oligarchy.

Athens vs. Macedonia: the short version

The rise of Macedonia under Philip II (359-336) led to a series of wars with Athens. The final result was the submission of Athens to Philip in 338 BC.



Athens divided

Demosthenes' oration against Philip (341-340) led to a split in Athenian opinion. Some supported the war, while others favored peace. This division weakened Athens' ability to respond to Philip's aggression.

The results with orators

The results with orators were mixed. While some orators like Demosthenes were effective, others were not. This led to a general decline in the quality of Athenian oratory.



An uneven fight

The fight between Athens and Macedonia was uneven. Macedonia had a superior military and a more unified leadership, while Athens was divided and less prepared for a conventional war.

Democracy as a disadvantage!

Democracy was a disadvantage for Athens in the fourth century. It led to a lack of unity and a slower decision-making process, which was a liability in a time of crisis.

The ruling elite

The ruling elite in Athens was a small group of wealthy citizens. They often had different interests than the general population, which led to a disconnect between the government and the people.

Submission to Philip

In 338 BC, Athens was forced to submit to Philip II of Macedonia. This marked the end of Athenian independence and the beginning of Macedonian rule over Greece.

Athens' response

Athens' response to Philip's aggression was weak. The city failed to form a strong coalition with other Greek states, which allowed Philip to defeat them at Chaeronea.

The triumph of Macedonia

The triumph of Macedonia over Greece was a significant event in history. It marked the end of the classical Greek world and the beginning of the Hellenistic era.

The battle of Chaeronea, 338

The battle of Chaeronea was a decisive battle between the Macedonian army and a coalition of Greek states. The Macedonians won, leading to the submission of Athens to Philip II.



Athens under Macedonian control

Under Macedonian control, Athens lost its political independence. However, it retained some cultural and economic freedom, which allowed it to continue to flourish as a center of learning and art.

Demosthenes' oration against Philip

Demosthenes' oration against Philip was a powerful speech that criticized Philip's aggression and called for a united front against him. It is considered one of the greatest speeches in ancient Greek history.

Demosthenes' oration against Philip (341-340)

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Term 2, Lecture 6

The Defeat of Athens and the Abolition of Democracy

Athens in the fourth century

Democracy: stable, ideologically entrenched, confident

Imperialism: resurgent despite new geopolitical realities

Despite defeat in the Social War, Athens had regained much of its wealth, status & naval power; 50+ years of naval supremacy in the Aegean (376-322)

Key questions

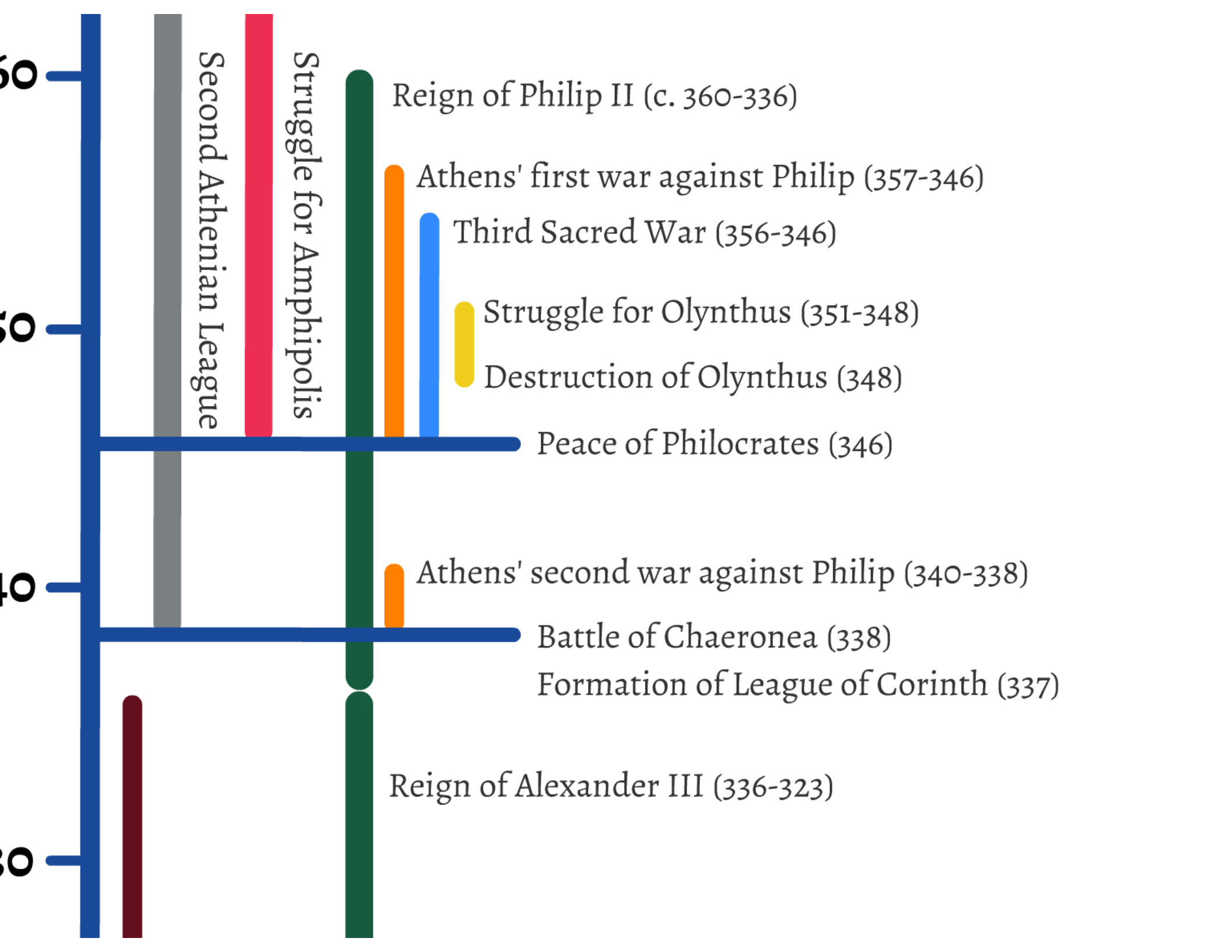
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The nine lives of Athenian democracy

Athens vs. Macedon: the short version

We went to war in the first place over **the question of Amphipolis**. In the course of the war our general succeeded in losing seventy-five allied cities, which Timotheus, the son of Conon, had won over and made members of the *synedrion*...

Aeschines 2.70



Athens divided

Pro-war faction (Hyperides, Demosthenes 'the Philip-hater'): we must stop the conqueror while we still can

Anti-war faction (Aeschines, Demades, Phocion, Isocrates): we must stay out of his way to preserve ourselves

A man who once ranged himself with those who distrusted Philip (...) and then became a deserter and a traitor and suddenly appeared as Philip's champion — does he not deserve a hundred deaths?

Demosthenes 19.302

And when the orator Demosthenes said to him, 'The Athenians will kill you, Phocion, if they become enraged,' Phocion replied, 'but they will kill you, if they become wise.'

Plutarch, *Life of Phocion* 9.5

The trouble with orators

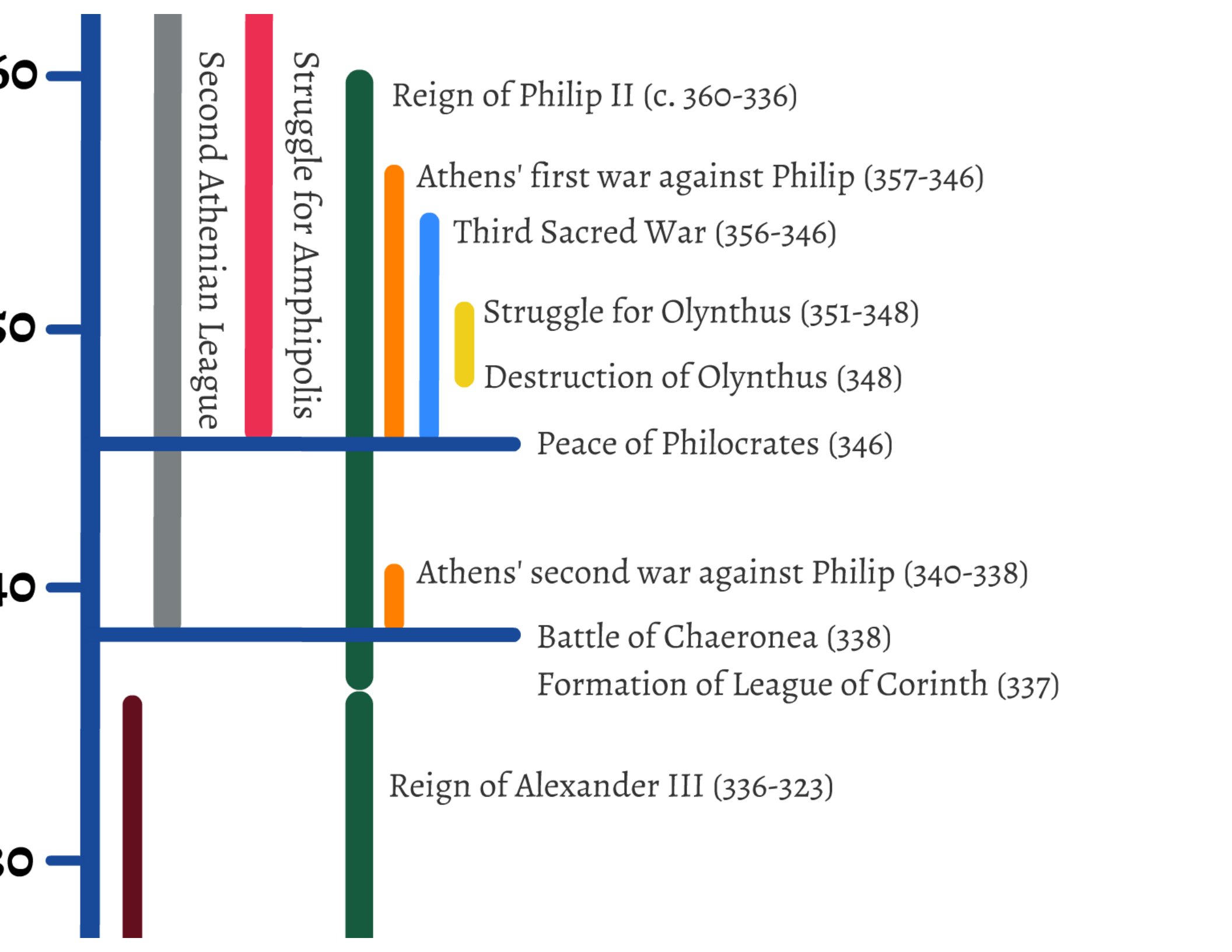
Is not Philip our enemy? And in possession of our property? And a barbarian? Is any description too bad for him?

Demosthenes 3.16

A man of the blood of Hellas, of ripe experience in warfare, acting in the cause of freedom...

Isocrates 5.139





The final escalation

- 341/0: Philip moves against Perinthus and Byzantium. Athens declares war



An uneven fight

- 357/6: Philip expands mines at Crenides, renamed Philippi. Revenue of more than 1000 talents from mining alone (note Athenian empire: 460, later 600, finally c. 1500 talents)
- 353: Philip proclaimed *tagos* of Thessaly
- 347: Philip seizes Phocis, takes control of Delphi, hosts Pythian Games
- 346-342: Philip pacifies Thrace





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Democracy as a disadvantage?

For I need not tell you that Philip owes his successes to nothing in the world more than to his being the first in the field. For the man who always keeps a standing army by him, and who knows beforehand what he wants to do, is ready in an instant for anyone that he chooses to attack, while it is only after we have heard of something happening that we begin to bustle about and make our preparations.

Demosthenes 8.11

He was the despotic ruler of his adherents: and in war that is the most important of all advantages. Secondly, they had their weapons constantly in their hands. Then, he was well provided with money: he did whatever he chose, without giving notice by publishing decrees, or deliberating in public, without fear of prosecution by informers or indictment for illegal measures. He was responsible to nobody: he was the absolute autocrat, commander, and master of everybody and everything.

Demosthenes 18.235

'I will not suffer my people to perish, even if they wish it.'

Plutarch, *Life of Phocion* 17.1

The rallying cry

'Therefore be it resolved by the Council and People of Athens, after offering prayers and sacrifices to the gods and heroes who guard the city and country of the Athenians, and after taking into consideration their ancestors' merits, in that they ranked the preservation of the **freedom of the Greeks** (*eleutheria tôn Hellenôn*) above the claims of their own state...'

(...)

Of this disgraceful and notorious conspiracy, of this evil, or rather, men of Athens, if I am to speak without trifling, this **betrayal of the freedom of the Greeks**, you—thanks to my policy—are guiltless in the eyes of the world.

Demosthenes 18.184, 297

The battle of Chaeronea, 338

Both sides were keen for the battle, high-spirited and eager, and were well matched in courage, but the king had the advantage in numbers and in generalship. (...) On the Athenian side, the best of their generals were dead.

Diodorus 16.86.6

- Philip stages feigned retreat, rallying and striking Athenians in disorderly pursuit
- Alexander, aged 18, breaks through and annihilates Theban elite troops
- 1000 Athenians dead; 2000 captured



Athens' response

'You were general, Lysicles. A thousand citizens have perished and two thousand were taken captive. A trophy stands over your city's defeat, and all of Greece is enslaved. All of this happened under your leadership and command, and yet you dare to live and to look on the sun and even to intrude into the market, a living monument of our country's shame and disgrace.'

Lycurgus' indictment of Lysicles (Diod. 16.88.2)

- General Lysicles executed
- Demosthenes gives funeral oration (!)
- Desperate proposals to enfranchise metics and free slaves for war
- Emergency fund used to repair and improve city walls

The triumph of Macedon

- Coalition surrenders; rest of Greece (except Sparta) yields to Philip
- Thebes garrisoned; Boeotian League dissolved
- Athens spared, but Second Athenian League dissolved
- Formation of League of Corinth



Submission to Philip

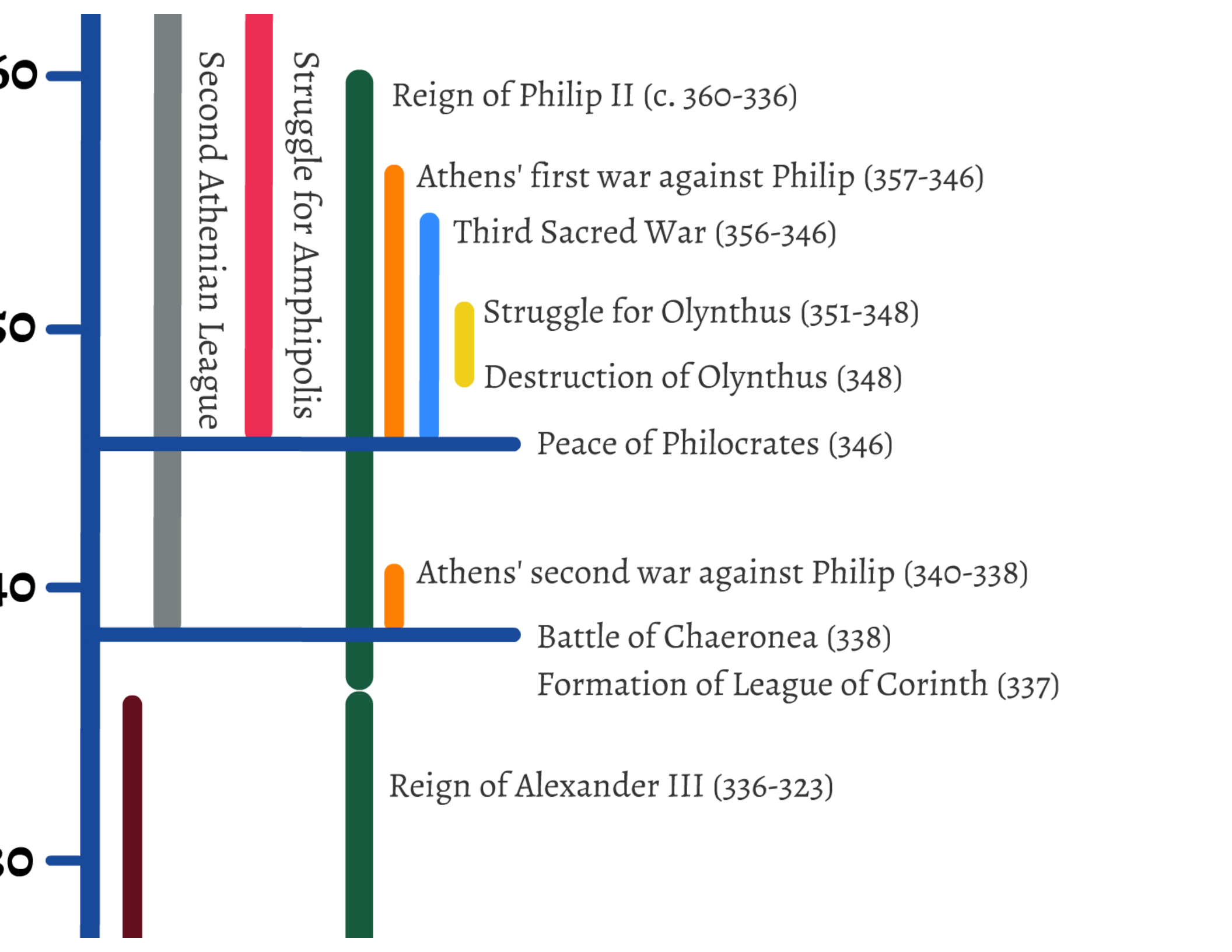
I shall abide [by the Peace?] and I shall not break the treaty which... [with Philip?], nor shall I bear weapons with hostile intent against any of those who abide by the oaths, whether by land or sea;

and I shall not capture either city or fort or harbour, with intent to war, of any of those who share in the Peace, neither by trick nor strategem;

and I shall not overthrow the kingdom of Philip and his descendants, or the constitutions existing in each place when they swore the oaths about the Peace;

and I myself will do nothing contrary to this [treaty], nor shall I empower anyone else...

RO 76, lines 3-16



The 'Age of Lycurgus' (336-324)

- Peace: Phocion and Demades keep Athens out of Theban rebellion (335) and Agis' rebellion (331)
- Treasurer Lycurgus reforms Athenian finances; tax revenue increased to 1200 talents
- Building programme: Panathenaic stadium, new theatre of Dionysus, new Pnyx, new shipsheds, Aristotle's Lyceum
- Daily wages double by end of 4th century
- Reform of *ephebeia* into mandatory military training programme for all citizens

330

320

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Death of Alexander (323)

Lamian War (323-322)

Athens leads grand alliance for 'freedom of t

Fleet defeated at Amorgos; army defeated at

Antipater abolishes democracy (322)

Demands of Antipater (Plut. *Phoc.* 27.3):

- Surrender Demosthenes & Hyperides
- Accept garrison in Piraeus
- Pay indemnity to cover cost of war
- Return to 'Solonic' constitution

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Athens under Macedonian control

322-318: oligarchy led by Phocion & Demades. Property requirement for citizenship: 2000 drachmai. 12,000 citizens lose franchise

318/7: rebellion upon death of Antipater; Phocion executed; democracy restored

317: Cassander installs Demetrius of Phaleron. Property requirement to hold office: 1000 drachmai

Athens under Demetrius of Phaleron (317-307)

And some say that [the Athenians] were actually best governed at that time, during the ten years when Cassander reigned over the Macedonians. (...) For he placed over the citizens Demetrius of Phaleron, one of the disciples of Theophrastus the philosopher, who not only did not destroy the democracy but even improved it.

Strabo 9.1.20

During the period which followed the Lamian war and the battle at Crannon, their government had been administered, nominally as an oligarchy, but really as a monarchy, owing to the great influence of the Phalerean.

Plutarch, *Life of Demetrius* 10.2

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Demetrius deposes Demetrius

314, 311: Antigonus One-Eye tries to win allies by promising 'freedom of the Greeks'

307: Antigonus sends his son Demetrius the Besieger to give the Athenians back 'their ancestral constitution'

The Athenians, Stratocles writing the decree, voted to set up golden statues of Antigonus and Demetrius in a chariot near the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, to give them both honorary crowns at a cost of two hundred talents, to consecrate an altar to them and call it the altar of the Saviours, to add to them two more, Demetrias and Antigonis, to hold annual games in their honour, to have a procession and a sacrifice, and to weave their portraits in the peplos of Athena.

Are we there yet?

301: Athens renounces supremacy of Demetrius

300: Lachares seizes tyranny with help from Cassander

296-5: Demetrius besieges and recaptures Athens; installs garrison in city and

287/6: Athens revolts against Demetrius under Olympiodorus and Callias

268-262: Chremonidean War against Antigonos II. Athens defeated and made Macedonian vassal (262-229)

229: Death of Demetrius II; peaceful revolt restores Athenian democracy

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The nine lives of Athenian democracy

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- Overextended, outmatched Athens forced to accept rise of new hegemonic power & subordinate status
- Democratic slogans continue to mobilise strong resistance; Athens never gives up its aspirations
- Hellenistic rulers are indifferent to systems of government, care only about allegiance; democracy survives in a world of kings