



Historically Speaking

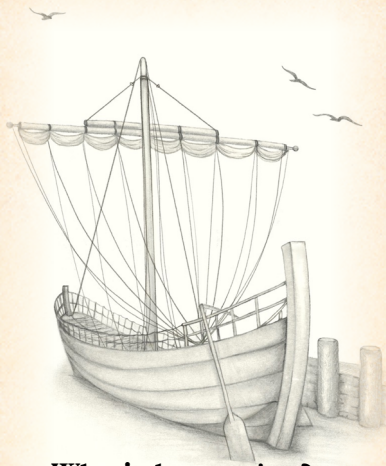
Volume 3, Number 8 August 2024

Corinth

The remains of the ancient Corinth lie about 50 miles west of Athens, at the eastern end of the Gulf of Corinth. The ancient city grew up at the base of the citadel of the Acrocorinthus—a Gibraltar-like eminence rising 1,886 feet above sea level. The Acrocorinthus lies about 1.5 miles south of the Isthmus of Corinth, which connects the Peloponnese with central Greece and which also separates the Saronic and Corinthian gulfs from each other. The citadel of the Acrocorinthus rises precipitously above the old city and commands the land route into the Peloponnese, a circumstance that gave Corinth great strategic and commercial importance in ancient times. The city's history is obscure until the early 8th century BCE, when the city-state of Corinth began to develop as a commercial centre. Corinth's political influence was increased through territorial expansion in the vicinity, and by the late 8th century it had secured control of the isthmus. The Corinthians established colonies at Corcyra and Syracuse, which would later assure them a dominant position in trade with the western Mediterranean.

The chief source of Corinth's wealth remained its possession of the isthmus, which controlled not only the land traffic between Attica and the Peloponnese but also the traffic between the Aegean and Ionian seas. Corinth eventually had harbours on both, the Corinthian and Saronic gulfs that flanked it, Lechaenum on the Gulf of Corinth and Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf.

In about 550 BCE an oligarchical government embarked on a major building program for the city. In the second half of the 6th century, however, Corinth was outstripped by Athens in both seamanship and commerce, and it was often the bitter commercial rivalry between Corinth and Athens that was to generate crises in Greek politics over the next 200 years.



What's happening?

I had the great pleasure of meeting with the writer that helped us get our critique group up and running. Megan taught in the Central Valley School District at both Central Valley High School and University High School. She has been writing screen plays for years now. Kristi made the original connection with Megan to set up a meeting where we could glean as much as possible from this experienced writer. She had been out of the area for a time and recently returned. I gave her a copy of *...to teach*, which let her see what the group has accomplished.

Ouranian Publishing of Spokane
304 N. Adams Rd.
Spokane Valley, WA 99216-2062
(509) 710-7185
website: ouranianpublishing.com



Historically Speaking

Volume 3, Number 8 August 2024

Commerce -From an early time the commercial element in Corinth was stronger than elsewhere in Greece. This situation was only natural, given the city's location at the crossroads of land and sea routes. The historian Thucydides wrote that "Corinth was an emporium from most ancient times. At first it collected tolls from trade moving by land from and into the Peloponnese, then from trade by sea. Another ancient author says that Corinth became wealthy because of its ports of trade. It had two harbors, one on the Aegean Sea and facing Asia, the other on the Corinthian Gulf looking toward western Italy. The income generated in the harbors was of two kinds. The first type consisted of the tolls and duties imposed upon maritime and land traffic moving across the land bridge. Masters of cargo vessels preferred the transshipment from one side of the Isthmus to the other as opposed to the dangerous rounding of the southern tip of the Peloponnese. The other kind of revenue came from the trade that Corinth carried on in her own right in her harbors. Corinthian pottery was exported widely: it has been found in some quantity on sites in Italy and Sicily, where Corinth established its only significant colony, Syracuse. At the end of the sixth century Corinthian pottery began to be displaced in the markets by pots made in Athens. Nonetheless, Corinth continued to be a lively manufacturing sector, and although few if any ancient states survived from manufacture alone, the city must have derived at least a part of its revenues from making and exporting commodities.



Here is an Ancient Greek Vase, an Amphora seated with 3 handles, designed in Corinthian art.

Isthmia - Another source of income, perhaps as productive as trade, was the festival held every two years in honor of Poseidon on the Isthmus of Corinth. Recent archaeological research has established that the cult of Poseidon began during the transition from the Bronze Age (3000-1100 b.c.e.) to the Iron Age (1100-700 b.c.e.), while the Isthmia (the site of the sanctuary of Poseidon) was a center of production of terracotta ware as early as 800 b.c.e. From an early date the Isthmian Games attracted athletes, spectators, and pilgrims from all parts of the Greek world; by the beginning of the fifth century the festival had become popular, offering not only sport spectacles, but also such entertainment as plays, concerts, dance performances, and literary recitals in prose and verse. Audiences and spectators spent generously while attending the Games; money was also spent by the performing artists, while the official delegations of various states enriched the sanctuary of Poseidon with the valuable gifts that they dedicated to the god. Visits to nearby Corinth by many in the large crowds gathered at the Isthmia added to Corinth's revenues.

Corinth is a significant place in these books.

