**Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* (Penguin Classics) (ISBN-13: 978-0140440393)**

* 1.23; 1.33; 1.35; 1.40–41; 1.44; 1.55–58; 1.60–61; 1.66–69; 1.75–77; 1.86–88; 1.89–118; 1.121–122; 1.139–140
* 2.8; 2.11; 2.13; 2.63; 2.65
* 4.19–20; 4.40–41; 4.50; 4.80–81; 4.108; 4.117
* 5.13–18; 5.25–26; 5.43
* 6.8; 6.12–13; 6.15; 6.24; 6.31; 6.82–83; 6.89–91
* 7.18; 7.27–28
* 8.2; 8.6; 8.9; 8.17–18; 8.29; 8.37; 8.52; 8.87

**Thucydides, 1.23 (p.48-49) (introduction)**

The greatest war in the past was the Persian War; yet in this war the decision was reached quickly as a result of two naval battles and two battles on land. The Peloponnesian War, on the other hand, not only lasted for a long time, but throughout its course brought with it unprecedented suffering for Hellas. Never before had so many cities been captured and devastated, whether be foreign armies or by Hellenic powers themselves (some of these cities after capture, were resettled with new inhabitants); never had there been so many exiles; never such loss of life – both in the actual warfare and in internal revolutions. Old stories of past prodigies, which had not found much confirmation in recent experience, now became credible. Wide areas, for instance, were affected by violent earthquakes; there were more frequent eclipses of the sun than had ever been recorded before; in various parts of the country there were extensive droughts followed by famine; and there was the plague which did more harm and destroyed more life than almost any other single factor. All these calamities fell together upon the Hellenes after the outbreak of war.

War began when the Athenians and the Peloponnesians broke the Thirty Years Truce which had been made after the capture of Euboea. As to the reasons why they broke the truce, I propose first to give an account of the cause of complaint which they had against each other and of the specific instances where their interests clashed: this is in order that there should be no doubt in anyone’s mind about what led to this great war falling upon the Hellenes. But the real reason for the war in, in my opinion, most likely to be disguised by such an argument. What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta. As for the reasons for breaking the truce and declaring war which were openly expressed by each side, they are as follows.

*Peloponnesian War, Overview, causes*

**Thucydides, 1.33 (p.55-56) (The dispute over Corcyra 433)**

‘If you grant our request, you will find that in many ways it was a good thing that we made it at this particular time. First of all you will not be helping aggressors, but people who are the victims of aggression. Secondly, we are now in extreme peril, and if you welcome our alliance at this moment you will win our undying gratitude. And then, we are, after you, the greatest naval power in Hellas. You would have paid a lot of money and still have been very grateful to have us on your side. It is not, then, an extraordinary stroke of good luck for you (and one which will cause heart-burning among your enemies) to have us coming over voluntarily into your camp, giving ourselves up to you without involving you in any dangers or any expense? It is a situation where we, whom you are helping, will be grateful to you, the world in general will admire you for your generosity, and you yourselves will be stronger than you were before. There is scarcely a case in history where all these advantages have been available at the same time, nor has it often happened before that a power looking for an alliance can say to those whose help it asks that it can give as much honour and as much security as it will receive.

‘In case of war we should obviously be useful to you, but some of you may think that there is no immediate danger of war. Those who think along those lines are deceiving themselves; they do not see the facts that Sparta is frightened of you and wants war, that Corinth is your enemy and is also influential at Sparta. Corinth has attacked us first in order to attack you afterwards. She has no wish to make enemies of us both at once and find us standing together against her. What she wants is to get an initial advantage over you in one of two ways – either by destroying our power or by forcing us to use it in her interests. But it is our policy to be one move ahead, which is why we want you to accept the alliance which we offer. It is better to have the initiative in these matters – to take our own measures first, rather then be forced to counter the intrigues that are made against us by others.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Athenian alliance Corcyra*

**Thucydides, 1.35 (p.56-57) (The dispute over Corcyra 433)**

‘It is not a breach of your treaty with Sparta if you receive us into your alliance. We are neutrals, and it is expressly written down in your treaty that any Hellenic state which is in this condition is free to ally itself with whichever side it chooses. What is really monstrous is a situation where Corinth can find sailors for her ships both from her own allies and from the rest of Hellas, including in particular your own subjects, while we are shut off from a perfectly legitimate alliance, and indeed from getting help from anywhere: and then, on top of that, they will actually accuse you of behaving illegally if you grant our request. In fact it is we who shall have fare greater reasons to complain of you if you are not willing to help us; you will be rejecting us, who are no enemies of yours, in the hour of our peril, and as for the others, who are enemies of yours and are also the aggressors, you will not only be doing nothing to stop them, but will actually be allowing them to build up their strength from the resources of your own empire. Is this right? Surely if you ought either to stop them from engaging troops from your own subjects, or else to give us, too, whatever assistance you think proper. Best of all would be for you to receive us in open alliance and help us in that way.

‘We have already suggested that such a course would be very much in your own interests. Perhaps the greatest advantage to you is that you can entirely depend on us because your enemies are the same as ours, and strong ones, too, quite capable of doing damage to those who revolt from them. And then it is quite a different matter for you if you reject alliance with a naval power than if you do the same thing with a land power. Your aim, no doubt, should be, if it were possible, to prevent anyone else having a navy at all: the next best thing is to have on your side the strongest navy that there is.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Athenian alliance Corcyra*

**Thucydides, 1.40-141 (p.59-61) (The dispute over Corcyra 433)**

‘We have shown, I think, that we have good reason for complaint, and that the conduct of Corcyra has been both violent and grasping. Next we should like you to understand that it would not be right or just for you to receive them as allies. Though there may be a clause in the treaty stating that any city not included in the original agreement is free to join whichever side it likes, this cannot refer to cases where the object of joining an alliance is to injure other powers; it cannot refer to a case where a city is only looking for security because it is in revolt, and where the result of accepting its alliance, if one looks at the matter dispassionately, will be, not peace, but war. And this is what may well happen to you, if you will not take our advice. You would not only be helping them, but making war on us, who are bound to you by treaty. If you join them in attacking us, we shall be forced to defend ourselves against you as well as against them.

‘The right course, surely, is either for you to preserve a strict neutrality or else to join us against them. At least you have treaty obligations towards Corinth, whereas you have never even had a peace treaty with Corcyra. What you ought not to do is to establish a precedent by which a power may receive into its alliance the revolted subjects of another power. At the time when Samos revolted from you and when the Peloponnesian states were divided on the question whether to help them or not, we were not one of those who voted against you; on the contrary, we openly opposed the others and said that every power should have the right to control its own allies. Now, if you are going to welcome and assist people who have done wrong to us, you will find just as many of your own people coming over to our side and you will be establishing a precedent that is likely to harm you even more than us. All this we have a perfect right to claim from you by Hellenic law and custom. We should like also to give you some advice and to mention that we have some title to your gratitude. We are not enemies who are going to attack you, and we are not on such friendly terms that such services are quite normal/ We say, therefore, that the time has come for you to repay us for what we did for you in the past.

‘You were short of warships when you were fighting Aegina, just before the Persian invasion. Corinth then gave you twenty ships. As a result of this act of kindness you were able to conquer Aegina, and as a result of our other good turn to you, when we prevented the Peloponnesian states from helping Samos, you were able to punish that island. And these acts of ours were done at critical periods, periods when people are very apt to turn upon their enemies and disregard every other consideration except victory. At such times people regard even former enemies as their friends, so long as they are on their side, and even genuine friends as their enemies, if they stand in their way; in fact their over-mastering desire for victory makes them neglect their own best interests.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Athenian alliance Corcyra, Corinth*

**Thucydides, 1.44 (p.62) (The dispute over Corcyra 433)**

This was the speech of the Corinthian delegation. The Athenians, after listening to both sides, discussed the matter at two assemblies. At the first of these, opinion seemed to incline in favour of the Corinthian arguments, but at the second there was a change, and they decided on entering into some kind of alliance with Corcyra. This was not to be a total alliance involving the two parties in any war which either of them might have on hand; for the Athenians realized that if Corcyra required them to join in an attack on Corinth, that would constitute a breach of their treaty with the Peloponnese. Instead the alliance was to be of a defensive character and would only operate if Athens or Corcyra or any of their allies were attached from outside.

The general belief was that, whatever happened, war with the Peloponnese was bound to come. Athens had no wish to see the strong navy of Corcyra pass into the hands of Corinth. At the same time she was not averse from letting the two Powers weaken each other by fighting together; since in this way, if war did come, Athens herself would be stronger in relation to Corinth and to the other naval powers. Then, too, it was a fact that Corcyra lay very conveniently on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Athenian alliance with Corcyra, Corinth*

**Thucydides, 1.55-58 (p.67-69) (The dispute over Corcyra 433)**

On their voyage home the Corinthians took Anactorium, at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf. It was a place in which both Corinth and Corcyra had rights and it was given up to the Corinthians by treachery. Before sailing home the Corinthians put settlers of their own into Anactorium. They sold 800 of the Corcyraean prisoners who were slaves, and they kept in captivity 250 whom they treated with great consideration, hoping that a time would come when they would return and win over the island to Corinth. Most of them were in fact people of great power and influence in Corcyra.

So Corcyra remained undefeated in her war with Corinth and the Athenian fleet left the island. But this gave Corinth her first cause for war against Athens, the reason being that Athens had fought against her with Corcyra although peace treaty was still in force.

*(The Dispute over Potidaea 432)*

Almost immediately afterwards it happened that there was another dispute between Athens and the Peloponnese. This also contributed to the breaking out of war. It concerned the people of Potidaea who live on the Isthmus of Pallene, and who, though colonists of Corinth, were allies of Athens in the tribute-paying class. Corinth was searching for means of retaliation against Athens, and Athens has no illusions about the hatred felt for her by Corinth. She therefore made the following demands of Potidaea: they were to pull down the fortifications looking towards Pallene, to send hostages to Athens, to banish their Corinthian magistrates, and in future not to receive those who were sent out annually from Corinth to replace them. These demands were made because Athens feared that, under the influence of Perdiccas and of the Corinthians, Potidaea might be induced to revolt and might draw into their revolt the other allied cities in the Thracian area. It was directly after the sea battle off Corcyra that the Athenians took these precautions with regard to Potidaea. Corinth was now quite openly hostile, and though Perdiccas, the son of Alexander and King of Macedonia, had in the past been a fiend and an ally, he had now been made into an enemy. This had come about because the Athenians had entered into an alliance with his brother Philip and with Derdas, who had joined forces together against Perdiccas. Perdiccas was alarmed by these moves and not only sent his agents to Sparta in order to try to involve Athens in a war with the Peloponnese, but also was approaching Corinth in order to get support for a revolt in Potidaea. He was also in communication with the Chalcidians in Thrace and with the Bottiaeans, and was urging them to revolt at the same time. All these places bordered on his own country, and his idea was that if he had them as his allies, their support would make his own military position easier.

The Athenians knew what he was doing and wished to anticipate the revolt of these cities. They were just on the point of sending out to Macedonia a force of thirty ships and 1,000 hoplites under the command of Archestratus, the son of Lycomedes, with other commanders. Now, these officers were instructed to take hostages from the Potidaeans, to destroy the fortification, and to keep a close watch on the neighbouring cities so as to prevent any movement of revolt.

Meanwhile the Potidaeans had sent representatives to Athens in the hope of persuading the Athenians not to make any alterations in the existing state of affairs. They also sent representatives with the Corinthians to Sparta in order to win support there in case it should be necessary. After long negotiations at Athens nothing valuable was achieved; in spite of all their efforts, the fleet for Macedonia was ordered to sail against them too. The Spartan authorities, however, promised to invade Attica if the Athenians attacked Potidaea. This, then, seemed to the Potidaeans to be the moment: they made common cause with the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans and revolted from Athens.

Perdiccas, at this point, persuaded the Chalcidians to pull down and abandon their cities on the coast and to settle inland at Olynthus, making that into one big city. To those who left their homes in this way he offered the use for the duration of the war with Athens of some of his own territory in Mygdonia round lake Bolbe. The Chalcidians therefore, after destroying their cities, settled inland and prepared for war.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Macedonia*

**Thucydides, 1.60-61 (p.69-70) (The dispute over Potidaea 432)**

Now that Potidaea had revolted and the thirty Athenian ships were off the coast of Macedonia, the Corinthians feared that the place might be lost and regarded its safety as their own responsibility. They therefore sent out a force of volunteers from Corinth itself and of mercenaries from the rest of the Peloponnese. Altogether this force amounted to 1,600 hoplites and 400 light troops. It was under the command of Aristeus, the son of Adeimantus, who had always been a staunch friend to the people of Poitidaea. And it was largely because of his personal popularity that most of the Corinthian volunteers joined the expedition. This expedition reached Thrace forty days after the revolt of Potidaea.

The Athenians had also received the news immediately after the revolt of the cities. They heard, too, of the reinforcements under Aristeus, and they sent out against the places in revolt an army of 2,000 citizen hoplites and a fleet of forty ships. This force was commanded by Callias, the son of Calliades , with four other commanders. First they arrived in Macedonia, where they found that the original force of 1,00o had just captured Therme and were now besieging Pydna. They therefore joined in the operation against Pydna. The siege lasted for a time, but finally they came to an agreement with Perdiccas and made an alliance with him. They were forced into doing this by the need to hurry on with the campaign at Potidaea and by the arrival there of Aristeus.

Leaving Macedonia, then, they came to Beroea and from there went on to Strepsa. After making an unsuccessful attempt at capturing the place, they marched on by land to Potidaea. They had 3,000 hoplites of their own, apart from a large force of allies and 600 Macedonian cavalry from the army of Philip and Pausanias. The seventy ships sailed with them along the coast. Proceeding by short marches, they reached Gigonus on the third day and camped there.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Macedonia, Potidaea rebellion*

**Thucydides, 1.66-69 (p.72-75) (The debate at Sparta and the declaration of war 432)**

Both the Athenians and the Peloponnesians had already grounds of complaint against each other. The grievance of Corinth was that the Athenians were besieging her own colony of Potidaea with Corinthians and other Peloponnesians in the place: Athens on the other hand, had her own grievances against the Peloponnesians; that had supported the revolt of a city which was in alliance with her and which paid her tribute, and they had openly joined the Potidaeans in fighting against her. In spite of this, the truce was still in force and war had not yet broken out. What had been done so far had been done on the private initiative of Corinth.

Now, however, Corinth brought matters into the open. Potidaea was under blockade, some of her own citizens were inside, and she feared that the place might be lost. She therefore immediately urged the allies to send delegates to Sparta. There her own delegates violently attacked the Athenians for having broken the truce and committed acts of aggression against the Peloponnese. The people of Aegina were on her side. Out of fear of Athens they had not sent a formal delegation, but behind the scenes they played a considerable part in fomenting war, saying that they had not been given the independence promised to them by treaty. The Spartans also issued an invitation to their own allies and to anyone else who claimed to have suffered from Athenian aggression. They then held their usual assembly, and gave an opportunity there for delegates to express their views. Many came forward with various complaints. In particular the delegates from Megara, after mentioning a number of other grievances, pointed out that, contrary to the terms of the treaty, they were excluded from al ports in the Athenian empire and from the market of Athens itself. The Corinthians were the last to come forward to speak, having allowed the previous speakers to do their part in hardening Spartan opinion against Athens. The Corinthian speech was as follows:

‘Spartans, what makes you somewhat reluctant to listen to us others, if we have ideas to put forward, is the great trust and confidence which you have in your own constitution and in your own way of life. This is a quality which certainly makes you moderate in your judgements; it is also, perhaps, responsible for a kind of ignorance which you show when you are dealing with foreign affairs. Many times before now we have told you what we were likely to suffer from Athens, and on each occasion, instead of taking to heart what we were telling you, you chose instead to suspect our motives and to consider that we were speaking only about our own grievances. The result has been that you did not call together this meeting of our allies before the damage was done; you waited until now, when we are actually suffering from it. And of all these allies, we have perhaps the best right to speak now, since we have the most serious complaints to make. We have to complain of Athens for her insolent aggression and of Sparta for her neglect of our advice.

‘If there were anything doubtful or obscure about this aggression on the whole of Hellas, our task would have been to try to put the fact before you and show you something that you did not know. As it is, long speeches are unnecessary. You can see yourselves how Athens has deprived some states of their freedom and is scheming to do the same for others, especially among our own allies, and that she herself has for a long time been preparing for the eventuality of war. Why otherwise should she have forcibly taken over from us the control of Corcyra? Why is she besieging Potidaea? Potidaea is the best possible base for any campaign in Thrace, and Corcyra might have contributed a very large fleet to the Peloponnesian League.

‘And it is you who are responsible for all this. It was you who in the first place allowed the Athenians to fortify their city and build the Long Walls after the Persian War. Since then and up to the present day you have withheld freedom not only from those who have been enslaved by Athens but even from your own allies. When one is deprived of one’s liberty one is right in blaming not so much the man who put the fetters on as the one who had the power to prevent him, but did not use it – especially when such a one rejoices in the glorious reputation of having been the liberator of Hellas.

‘Evan at this stage it has not been easy to arrange this meeting, and even at this meeting there are no definite proposals. Why are we still considering whether aggression has taken place instead of how we can resist it? Men who are capable of real action first make their plans and then go forward without hesitation while their enemies have still not made up their minds. As for the Athenians, we know their methods and how they gradually encroach upon their neighbours. Now they are proceeding slowly because they think that your insensitiveness to the situation enables them to go on their way unnoticed; you will find that they will develop their full strength once they realize that you do see what is happening and are still doing nothing to prevent it.

‘You Spartans are the only people in Hellas who wait calmly on events, relying for your defence not on action but on making people think that you will act. You alone do nothing in the early stages to prevent an enemy’s expansion; you wait until your enemy has doubled his strength. Certainly you used to have the reputation of being safe and sure enough: now one wonders whether this reputation is deserved. The Persians, as we know ourselves, came from the ends of the earth and got as far as the Peloponnese before you were able to put a proper force into the field to meet them. The Athenians, unlike the Persians, live close to you, yet still you do not appear to notice them; instead of going out to meet them, you prefer to stand still and wait till you are attacked, thus hazarding everything by fighting with opponents who have grown far stronger than they were originally.

‘In fact you know that the chief reason for the failure of the Persian invasion was the mistaken policy of the Persians themselves; and you know, too, that there have been many occasions when, if we managed to stand up to Athenian aggression, it was more because of Athenian mistakes than because of any help we got from you. Indeed, we can think of instances already where those who have relied on you and remained unprepared have been ruined by the confidence they placed in you.

‘We should not like any of you to think that we are thinking in an unfriendly spirit. We are only remonstrating with you, as is natural when one’s friends are making mistakes. Real accusations must be kept for one’s enemies who have actually done one harm.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Sparta, Athenian expansion*

**Thucydides, 1.75-77 (p.79-81) (The debate at Sparta and the declaration of war 432)**

‘Surely, Spartans, the courage, the resolution, and the ability which we showed then ought not to be repaid by such immoderate hostility from the Hellenes – especially so far as our empire is concerned. We did not gain this empire by force. It came to us at a time when you were unwilling to fight on to the end against the Persians. At this time our allies came to us of their own accord and begged to lead them. It was the actual course of events which first compelled us to increase our power to its present extent: fear of Persia was its chief motive, though afterwards we thought, too, of our own honour and our own interest. Finally there came a time when we were surrounded by enemies, when we had already crushed some revolts, when you had lost the friendly feelings that you used to have for us and had turned against us and begun to arouse our suspicion: at this point it was clearly no longer safe for us to risk letting our empire go, especially as any allies that left us would go over to you. And when tremendous dangers are involved no one can be blamed for looking to his own interest.

‘Certainly you Spartans, in your leadership of the Peloponnese, have arranged the affairs of the various states so as to suit yourselves. And if, in the years of which we were speaking, you had gone on taking an active part in the war and had become unpopular, as we did, in the course of exercising your leadership; we have little doubt that you would have been just as hard upon your allies as we were, and that you would have been forced either to govern strongly or to endanger your own security.

‘So it is with us. We have done nothing extraordinary, nothing to contrary to human nature in accepting an empire when it was offered to us and then in refusing to give it up. Three very powerful motives prevent us from doing so – security, honour, and self-interest. And we were not the first to act in this way. Far from it. It has always been a rule that the weak should be subject to the strong; and besides, we consider that we are worthy of our power. Up till the present moment you, too, used to think that we were; but now, after calculating your own interest, you are beginning to talk in terms of right and wrong. Considerations of this kind have never yet turned people aside from the opportunities of aggrandizement offered by superior strength. Those who really deserve praise are the people who, while human enough to enjoy power, nevertheless pay more attention to justice than they are compelled to do by their situation. Certainly we think that if anyone else was in our position it would soon be evident whether we act with moderation or not. Yet, unreasonably enough, our very consideration for others has brought us more blame than praise. For example, in law-suits with our allies arising out of contracts we have put ourselves at a disadvantage, and when we arrange to have such cases tried by impartial courts in Athens, people merely say that we are overfond of going to law. No one bothers to inquire why this reproach is not made against other imperial Powers, who treat their subjects much more harshly than we do: the fact being, of course, that where force can be used there is no need to bring in the law. Our subjects, on the other hand, are used to being treated as equals; consequently, when they are disappointed in what they think right and suffer even the smallest disadvantage because of a judgement in our courts or because of the power that our empire gives us, they cease to feel grateful to us for all the advantages which we have left to them: indeed, they feel more bitterly over this slight disparity than they would feel if we from the first, had set the law aside and had openly enriched ourselves at their expense. Under those conditions they would certainly not have disputed the fact that the weak must give in to the strong. People, in fact, seem to feel more strongly about their legal wrongs than about the wrongs inflicted on them by violence. In the first case they think that they are being outdone by an equal, in the second case that they are being compelled by a superior. Certainly they put up with much worse sufferings than these when they were under the Persians, but now they think that our government is oppressive. That is natural enough, perhaps, since subject peoples always find the present time most hard to bear. But on one point we are quite certain: if you were to destroy us and to take over our empire, you would soon lose all the goodwill which you have gained because of others being afraid of us – that is, if you are going to stick to those principles of behaviour which you showed before, in the short time when you led Hellas against the Persians. Your own regulated ways of life do not mix well with the ways of others. Also it is a fact that when one of you goes abroad he follows neither his own rules nor those of the rest of Hellas.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Sparta, Athenian expansion*

**Thucydides, 1.86-88 (p.86-87) (The debate at Sparta and the declaration of war 432)**

‘I do not understand these long speeches which the Athenians make. Thought they said a great deal in praise of themselves, they made no attempt to contradict the fact that they are acting aggressively against our allies and against the Peloponnese. And surely, if it is the fact that they had a good record in the past against the Persians and now have a bad record as regards us, then they deserve to pay double for it, since, though they were once good, they have now turned out bad. We are the same then and now, and if we are sensible, we shall not allow any aggression against our allies and shall not wait before coming to their help. They are no longer waiting before being ill treated. Others may have a lot of money and ships and horses, but we have good allies, and we ought not to betray them to the Athenians. And this is not a matter to be settled by law-suits and by words: it is not because of words that our own interests are suffering. Instead we should come the help of our allies quickly and with all our might. And let no one try to tell us that when we are being attacked we should sit down and discuss matters; these long discussions are rather for those who are meditating aggression themselves. Therefore, Spartans, cast your votes for the honour of Sparta and for war! Do not allow the Athenians to grow still stronger! Do not entirely betray your allies! Instead let us, with the help of heaven, go forward to meet the aggressor!’

After this speech he himself, in his capacity as ephor, put the question to the Spartan assembly. They make their decision by acclamation, not by voting, and Sthenelaidas said at first that he could not decide on which side the acclamations were the louder. This was because he wanted to make them show their opinions openly and so make them all the more enthusiastic for war. He therefore said: ‘Spartans, those of you who think that the treaty has been broken and that the Athenians are aggressors, get up and stand on one side. Those who do not think so, stand on the other side,’ and he pointed out to them where they were to stand. They then rose to their feet and separated into two divisions. The great majority were of the opinion that the treaty had been broken.

They then summoned their allies to the assembly and told them that they had decided that the Athens was acting aggressively, but that they wanted to have all their allies with them when then put the vote, so that, if they decided to make war, it should be done on the basis of a unanimous decision.

Afterwards the allied delegates, having got their own way, returned home. Later the Athenian representatives, when they had finished the business for which they had come, also returned. This decision of the assembly that the treaty had been broken took place in the fourteenth year of the thirty years’ truce which was made after the affair of Euboea. The Spartans voted that the treaty had been broken and that war should be declared not so much because they were influenced by the speeches of their allies as because they were afraid of the further growth of Athenian power, seeing as they did, that already the greater part of Hellas was under the control of Athens.

*Peloponnesian War, causes, Spartan declaration of war*

**Thucydides, 1.89-118 (p.87-103) (The Pentecontaetia 479-435)**

The following is an account of how Athens came to be in the position to gain such strength.

After the Persians had retreated from Europe, defeated by the Hellenes on sea and land, and after those of them who had fled be sea to Mycale had been destroyed, the Spartan king Leotychides, who had commanded the Hellenes at Mycale, returned home, taking with him the allies from the Peloponnese. The Athenians, however, with the allies from Ionia and the Hellespont who had already revolted from the king of Persia, stayed behind and besieged the city of Sestos, which was occupied by the Persians. They spent the winter there and finally took the place after the Persians had evacuated it. They then sailed out of the Hellespont and dispersed to their own cities.

Meanwhile the Athenian people, as soon as their land was free from foreign occupation, began to bring back their children and wives and what property they had left from the places where they had hidden them away. They also started on the rebuilding of their city and their fortifications; for only small portions of their surrounding wall were still standing, and most of their houses were in ruins, the few remaining ones being those in which important Persian officers had had their quarters.

When the Spartans heard of what was going on they sent an embassy to Athens. This was partly because they themselves did not like the idea of Athens or any other city being fortified, but chiefly because they were urged on by their allies, who were alarmed both by the sudden growth of Athenian sea-power and by the daring the Athenians had shown in the war against the Persians. The Spartans proposed that not only should Athens refrain from building her own fortifications, but that she should join them in pulling down all the fortifications which still existed in cities outside the Peloponnese. In making this suggestion to the Athenians they concealed their real meaning and their real fears; the idea was, they said, that if there was another Persian invasion, the Persians would have no strong base from which to operate, such as they had in Thebes; and that the Peloponnese was capable of serving the needs of everyone, both as a place of refuge and as a place from which to attack.

After this speech from the Spartans, the Athenians, on the advice of Themistocles, immediately sent them away with the reply that they would send an embassy to discuss the points that had been raised. Themistocles then proposed that they should send him to Sparta at once, but should not for the time being send the other delegates elected to go with him; instead they should wait until they had built their fortifications high enough to be able to be defended. Meanwhile the whole population of the city was to work at building the walls; no private house or public building which might be of any use to the work was to be spared, but must in every case be demolished.

So Themistocles set off, leaving these instructions behind him and indicating that he himself would arrange everything else that needed arranging in Sparta. When he arrived there he did not approach the Spartan government, but kept on putting things off on various excuses. If anyone in authority asked him why he did not come before the Assembly, he replied that he was waiting for his colleagues, that they had not been able to leave Athens because of urgent business, but that he expected them to come soon and was surprised that they had not arrived already. The Spartans believed what Themistocles said because of the respect in which they held him; but as other people kept on arriving, all positively asserting that the fortifications were being built and had already reached a certain height, they did not see how they could reject such information. Themistocles, realizing this, told them that instead of being led astray by rumours they ought to send some reliable people of their own who could go and see for themselves and come back with a correct report. This the Spartans did, and Themistocles sent secretly to Athens, telling the Athenians to keep the Spartan envoys there, to avoid, if possible, putting them under open constraint but not to let them go until he and his colleagues had got back. For his fellow delegates – Abronichus, the son of Lysicles, and Aristides, the son of Lysimachus – had now arrived, and had told him that the fortifications were now sufficiently advanced. Themistocles therefore was afraid that the Spartans might now refuse to let them go, once they received accurate information about what had happened.

The Athenians followed this instruction and detained the Spartan delegates. Themistocles approached the Spartan authorities and at last spoke to them openly. He said that Athens was now fortified, and fortified sufficiently well to be able to protect her people: that if the Spartans or their allies wanted to send embassies to Athens on any subject, they should in future go there prepared to recognize that the Athenians were capable of making up their own minds both about their own interests and about the interest of the rest of Hellas. He pointed out that when the Athenians decided to abandon their city and take to their ships; it was not in consultation with Sparta that they were adopting that daring resolution, and that whenever they had joined in counsel with the Spartans it was clear that no one else had offered better advice. And now they thought it better that their city should be fortified; it was better for their own citizens and also would be an advantage to the whole alliance; for it was only on the basis of equal strength that equal and fair discussions on the common interest could be held. This meant that no city in the alliance should be fortified or else that wat the Athenians had done should be approved.

After listening to this, the Spartans showed no open signs of displeasure towards Athens. The fact was that their original embassy to the Athenian people had not stated any intention to prevent the action but had only appeared to offer advice. Also this was a time when Sparta was particularly friendly to Athens, because of the courage displayed by Athens against the Persians. All the same the Spartans had not got their way and secretly they felt aggrieved because of it. The delegates from both states returned home without making any complaints.

In this way the Athenians fortified their city in a very short time. Even today one can see that the building was done in a hurry. The foundations are made of different sorts of stone, sometimes not shaped so as for it, but laid down just as each was brought up at the time; there are many pillars taken from tombs and fragments of sculpture mixed in with the rest. For the city boundaries were extended on all sides, and so in their haste they used everything that came to hand, sparing nothing.

Themistocles, also persuaded them to complete the walls of Piraeus, which had been begun previously during his year of office as archon. He liked the position of the place, with its three natural harbours, and he considered that if the Athenians became a sea-faring people they would have every advantage in adding to their power. Indeed it was he who first ventured to tell the Athenians that their future was on the sea. Thus he at once began to join in laying the foundations of their empire.

In breadth the wall was built according to his specifications, just as one can see it today around Piraeus. There was room for two wagons to pass each other with their stones for the building, and the space in between the outer surfaces was not filled in with rubble or clay; instead large blocks of stone were cut and fitted together, with clamps of iron and lead on the outside. The height of the finished wall was about half what he planned. With these great and thick walls he intended to repulse all enemy attacks, and he considered that they could be perfectly well defended by a few troops of inferior quality, so that the rest would be able to serve in the navy. It was particularly on the navy that his thoughts were concentrated. He realized, I imagine, that it was easier for a Persian force to approach Athens by sea than by land, and in his view Piraeus was a more valuable place than the main city of Athens. Indeed, the advice that he constantly gave to the Athenians was that if ever they should be hard pressed on land they should go down to Piraeus, take to their ships, and defy all comers.

It was in this way, directly after the Persian withdrawal, that the Athenians fortified their city and generally strengthened their position.

Soon afterwards Pausanias, the son of Cleombrotus, was sent out from Sparta in command of the Hellenic forces. He had from him twenty ships from the Peloponnese; The Athenians joined his force with thirty ships and there were a number more from other allies. They went first to Cyprus and won over most of the island; later they went against Byzantium, which was in Persian occupation, and, still under the command of Pausanias, forced the place to surrender. But Pausanias had already begun to reveal the arrogance of his nature, and was becoming unpopular with the Hellenes, particularly so with the Ionians and those who had just recently been liberated from Persian domination. These states approached the Athenians, asking them, since they were their own kinsmen, to take them under their protection and, if Pausanias acted in a dictatorial manner, not to allow it. These approaches were welcomed by the Athenians, who made up their minds to put a check on Pausanias and to arrange matters generally in a way that would best suit their own interests.

Meanwhile the Spartans recalled Pausanias to face a court of inquiry in connection with various reports that they had received. Serious charges had been made against him by Hellenes arriving at Sparta: instead of acting as commander-in-chief, he appeared to be trying to set himself up as a dictator. It happened that he was recalled just at the time when, because of his unpopularity, the allies, apart from the soldiers from the Peloponnese, had gone over to the side of the Athenians.

At Sparta Pausanias was condemned for various acts of injustice against individuals, but he was acquitted on all the main counts: one of the most serious charges was that he was collaborating with the Persians, and there seemed to be very good evidence for this. Instead of sending him out again as commander-in-chief, they sent Dorcis and other officers with quite a small force. But by this time the allies were no longer willing to accept them as supreme commanders. Realizing this, the Spartans went back, and afterwards Sparta sent out no other commanders. They feared that when their officers went overseas they would be corrupted, as they had seen happen in the case of Pausanias, and at the same time they no longer wanted to be burdened with the war against Persia. They regarded the Athenians as being perfectly capable of exercising the command and as being also at that time friendly to themselves.

So Athens took over the leadership, and the allies, because of their dislike of Pausanias, were glad to see her do so. Next the Athenians assessed the various contributions to be made for the war against Persia, and decided which states should furnish money and which states should send ships – the object being to compensate themselves for their losses by ravaging the territory of the King of Persia. At this time the officials known as ‘Hellenic Treasurers’ were first appointed by the Athenians. These officials received the tribute, which was the name given to the contributions in money. The original sum fixed for the tribute was 460 talents. The treasury of the league was at Delos, and representative meetings were held in the temple there.

The leadership of the Athenians began with allies who were originally independent states and reached their decision in general congress. I shall now describe the use they made of it, both in war and in the management of the League, during the period from the end of the Persian until the beginning of the Peloponnesian War. Some of these actions were against the Persians, some against their own allies when they revolted, some against the Peloponnesian Powers with whom on various occasions they became involved. I am giving this account and making this digression from my main narrative because this is a period that has not been dealt with by previous writers, whose subjects have been either Hellenic history before the Persian War or else the Persian Wars themselves.

The only one of them who has touched upon this period is Hellanicus, in his *Attic History*, but he has not given much space to the subject and he is inaccurate in his dates. At the same time the history of these years will show how the Athenian Empire came into being.

The first action of the Athenians was the siege of Eion, a town on the Strymon occupied by the Persians. Under the command of Cimon, the son of Miltiades, they captured this place and made slaves of the inhabitants. Then they turned to the island of Scyros in the Aegean, which was populated by the Dolopians. They enslaved the inhabitants and colonized the island themselves. Next there was a war with the Carystians, who were not supported by the rest of Euboea. In the end Carystus surrendered on terms. After that Naxos left the League and the Athenians made war on the place. After a siege Naxos was forced back to allegiance. This was the first case when the original constitution of the League was broken and an allied city lost its independence, and the process was continued in the cases of the other allies as various circumstances arose. The chief reasons for these revolts were failures to produce the right amount of tribute or the right number of ships, and sometimes a refusal to produce any ships at all. For the Athenians insisted on obligations being exactly met., and made themselves unpopular by bringing the severest pressure to bear on allies who were not used to make sacrifices and did not want to make them. In other ways, too, the Athenians as rulers were no longer popular as they used to be: they bore more than their fair shar of the actual fighting, but this made it all the easier for them to force back into the alliance any state that wanted to leave it. For this position it was the allies themselves who were to blame. Because of this reluctance of theirs to face military service, most of them, to avoid serving abroad, had assessments made by which, instead of producing ships, they were to pay a corresponding sum of money. The result was that the Athenian navy grew strong at their expense, and when they revolted they always found themselves inadequately armed and inexperienced in war.

Next came the battles of the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia, fought on land and on sea by the Athenians and their allies against the Persians. In both battles, the Athenians won the victory on the same ay under the command of Cimon, the son of Miltiades, and they captured or destroyed the entire Phoenician fleet of 200 triremes.

Some time later occurred the revolt of Thasos. This was caused by a dispute over the markets on the mainland opposite in Thrace, and over the mine under the control of the Thasians. The Athenians sailed to Thasos with their fleet, won a naval engagement, and landed on the island. About the same time they sent out to the river Strymon 10,000 colonists from their own citizens and from allied states to settle in the place then known as Nine Wyas, but now called Amphipolis. They occupied Nine Ways, driving out the Edonians who held the place but when they advanced farther into the interior of Thrace their force was cut to pieces at the Edoninan town of Drabescus by a combined army of Thracians, who regarded the founding of a colony at Nine Ways as an act of hostility against themselves.

Meanwhile the people of Thasos, who had been defeated in battle and were now besieged, appealed to Sparta and urged her to come to their help by invading Attica. The Spartans, without informing Athens of their intentions, promised to do so, and would have done so if they had not been prevented by the earthquake which happened then and by the simultaneous revolt and secession to Ithome of the helots and of some of the perioeci, the Thuriats and the Aethaeans. The helots were mostly descendants of the ancient Messenians, who had been enslaved in the famous war. Thus they all came to be called Messenians. So Sparta had a war on her hands against the rebels in Ithome, and the Thasians, in the third year of the siege, had to accept the Athenian terms: their walls were demolished and their navy surrendered; they were ordered to pay an indemnity immediately and to pay tribute in future; they surrendered their rights on the mainland and also the mine there.

And now the Spartans, finding that their war in Ithome showed no signs of ending, appealed for help to their allies, including Athens, and the Athenians came to Sparta with considerable force under the command of Cimon. The chief reason that they asked for Athenian help was that the Athenians had the reputation of being good at siege operations, and, after a long siege, it became clear to the Spartans that they themselves lacked experience in this department of warfare; for otherwise they would have succeeded in taking the place by assault. This expedition was the occasion for the first open quarrel between Athens and Sparta. The Spartans failing to capture Ithome by assault, grew afraid of the enterprise and the unorthodoxy of the Athenians; they reflected, too, that they were of different nationality and feared that, if they stayed in the Peloponnese, they might listen to the people of Ithome and become the sponsors of some revolutionary policy. So, while keeping the rest of their allies, they sent the Athenians home again, not saying openly what their suspicions were, but merely declaring that they had no further need of Athenian help. The Athenians, however, realized that they were not being sent away for any such honourable reason as this, and saw that in fact they had become in some way suspect. They were deeply offended, considering that this was not the sort of treatment they deserved from Sparta, and, as soon as they had returned, they denounced the original treaty of alliance which had been made against the Persians and allied themselves with Sparta’s enemy, Argos. At the same time both Argos and Athens made an alliance on exactly the same terms with the Thessalians.

Meanwhile the rebels in Ithome after ten years’ fighting were unable to hold out longer, and came to terms with Sparta, the terms being that they should have safe conduct to leave the Peloponnese and should never set foot in it again: if any of them were caught there in the future, he should be the slave of whoever caught him. There was also an oracle from Delphi which the Spartans had and which instructed them to let go the suppliant of Zeus at Ithome. So they left the country with their wives and children, and the Athenians, because of the ill feeling against Sparta which had already developed, received the exiles and settled them in the town of Naupactus, which they had recently taken from the Ozolian Locrians.

At this time Megara also joined the Athenian alliance, abandoning her alliance with Sparta because the Corinthians were attacking her in a war concerning the frontier boundaries. This the Athenians held Megara and Pegae, and built for the Megarians their long walls from the city to Nisea, garrisoning them with Athenian troops. It was chiefly because of this that the Corinthians began to conceive such a bitter hatred for Athens.

About this time Inaros, the son of Psammetichus, a Libyan and the King of the Libyans bordering on Egypt, starting out from Marea, the town south of Pharos, organized the revolt of nearly the whole of Egypt from the Persian King Artaxerxes. After taking over power himself he called in the Athenians to help him. The Athenians happened to be engaged in a campaign against Cyprus with 200 ships of their own and of their allies; they abandoned this campaign, came to Egypt, and sailed from the sea up the Nile. They gained control of the river and of two-thirds of Memphis, and then attempted to subdue the remaining third, which was called the White Castle and inside which were the Persians and Medes who had escaped and those of the Egyptians who had not joined the revolt.

At this time, too, the Athenians sent out a fleet and made a landing at Haliae. Here they were engaged by a force of Corinthians and Epidaurians, and the Corinthians were victorious. Later there was a sea battle of Cecryphalia between the Athenians and Peloponnesian fleets, and the Athenians were victorious.

After this was war broke out between Athens and Aegina, and there was a big battle at sea off Aegina between the Athenians and the Aeginetans, with the support of allies on both sides. The battle was won by the Athenians, who captured seventy enemy ships. They then landed on Aegina and started to besiege the place, under the command of Leocrates, the son of Stroebus. At this point the Peloponnesians, wishing to relieve Aegina, made a landing in the island with 300 hoplites who had previously been serving with the Corinthians and Epidaurians. At the same time the Corinthians and their allies seized the heights of Geraneia and moved down into the Megarid, believing that that it would be impossible for the Athenians to come to the relief of Megara, since they had two large forces already serving abroad in Aegina and in Egypt; and, they thought, if Athens did manage to relieve Megara, she would have to withdraw her troops from Aegina. The Athenians, however, did nothing of the kind. They raised in the city a force out of the old men and the very young who had been left behind and marched to Megara under the command of Myronides. Here an indecisive battle was fought between them and the Corinthians, and when the battel was broken off, each side considered that had had the advantage. However, after the Corinthians had withdrawn, the Athenians, who had in fact done best in the fighting, set up a trophy. About twelve days later the Corinthians, who had had to suffer the taunts of the older people in their own city, made their preparations, marched out, and put up a trophy of their own to prove that the victory had been theirs. The Athenians came out against them from Megara, overwhelmed the contingent that was setting up the trophy, and then engaged and defeated the rest of their enemy. As the defeated Corinthians were retreating, quite a large section of their army, coming under severe pressure and being uncertain of its route, plunged into an enclosure on someone’s estate which had a deep ditch all round it so that there was no way out. Seeing what had happened, the Athenians closed up the main entrance with their hoplites and, surrounding the rest of the enclosure with light-armed troops, stoned to death all who were inside. This was a very severe blow to the Corinthians. The main body of their army fell back to Corinth.

At about this time the Athenians began to build their two long walls down to the sea, one to Phalerum and one to Piraeus. And at the same time the Phocians started a campaign against Doris, the original homeland of the Spartans, containing the towns of Boeum, Cytinium, and Erineum. When they had captured one of these places the Spartans came to the assistance of the Dorians with a force of 1,500 hoplites of their own and 10,000 of their allies. This force was commanded by Nicomedes, the son of Cleombrotus, acting as deputy for the Spartan king Pleistoanax, who was still udner age. The Spartans compelled the Phocians to come to terms and to give back the town which they had taken. They then began to think of their return journey. If they went by sea across the Gulf of Crisa, the Athenians would be able to sail up with their fleet and stop them; nor did the route across Geraneia appear to be a safe one, since the Athenians held Megara and Pegae. The passes over Geraneai are difficult ones and were always guarded by the Athenians; moreover, on this occasion the Spartans had information that the Athenians had every intention of preventing them from taking this route. It seemed best, therefore, to stay in Boeotia and wait and see what the safest line of march would be. In this course they were also influenced by the fact that there was a party in Athens who were secretly negotiating with them in hope of putting an end to democratic government and preventing the building of the Long Walls.

The Athenians marched out against them with their whole army, supported by 1,000 troops from Argos and by contingents from their other allies, making up altogether a force of 14,000 men. They made this attack partly because they thought that the Spartans were in difficulties about their way back, and partly because they had some suspicions of the plot to overthrow the democracy.

The battle was fought at Tanagra in Boeotia, and, after great losses on both sides, the Spartans and their allies were victorious. The Spartans then marched down into the Megarid, and, after cutting down some of the plantations of trees, returned home through Geraneia and past the Isthmus. The Athenians, on the sixty-second day after the battle, marched in Boeotia under the command of Myronides. They defeated the Boeotians in battle at Oenophyta and conquered the whole of Boeotia and Phocis. They pulled down the fortifications of Tanagra and took as hostages a hundred of the richest people among the Opuntian Locrians. Meanwhile they finished the building of their own Long Walls. Shortly afterwards Aegina surrendered, and was forced to destroy her fortifications, to hand over her fleet, and to agree to pay tribute in the future. Then, too, the Athenians, under the command of Tolmides, the son of Tolmaeus, sailed round the Peloponnese, burnt the Spartan dockyards, captured the Corinthian city of Chalcis, and, after making a landing at Sicyon, defeated the Sicyonians in battle.

Meanwhile the Athenians and allied force in Egypt was still engaged, and suffered all the chances and changes of war. At first the Athenians were masters of Egypt, and the King of Persia sent to Sparta a Persian named Megabazus with money to bribe the Spartans to invade Attica and so force the Athenians to recall their fleet from Egypt. These negotiations, however, were unsuccessful, and as the money was being spent without any results, Megabazus and what remained of it were recalled to Asia. The King then sent out to Egypt another Persian, Megabazus, the son of Zopyrus, with a large army. He arrived by land, defeated the Egyptians and their allies in battle, and drove the Hellenes out of Memphis. In the end he penned them up on the island of Prosopitis and besieged them there for eighteen months. Finally he drained the channels round the island by diverting the water elsewhere. The ships were thus left high and dry; most of the island was connected to the mainland, and he captured it by marching across on foot. So, after six years of war, the great venture of the Hellenes came to nothing. Out of the whole great force a few managed to make their way through Libya and find safety in Cyrene, but nearly all were destroyed. Egypt once more passed into the control of the King of Persia, except that Amyrtaeus, the King in the marshes, still kept his independence. Because of the size of the marshes it was impossible to capture him: also the Egyptians who live in the marshes are the most warlike of their race. Inaros, the King of the Libyans, who had been the person responsible for the Egyptian revolt, was betrayed to the Persians and crucified. Meanwhile, fifty triremes from Athens and the rest of the League had sailed out to relieve the forces in Egypt. They put in at the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, having no idea of what had happened. Here they were under attack from the land by the Persian army and from the sea by the Phoenician fleet. Most of the ships were lost, though a few managed to escape. This was the end of the great expedition against Egypt made by the Athenians and their allies.

Meanwhile Orestes, the son of the King of Thessaly Echecratides, was exiled from his country and persuaded the Athenians to restore him. The Athenians took with them a force of Boeotians and Phocians who were now their allies and marched to Pharsalus in Thessaly. Here they dominated the country – though without being able to go far from their camp, being prevented by the Thessalian cavalry – but they failed to capture the town or to secure any other of the objects of the expedition, and they returned home again with Orestes, not having achieved any results.

Shortly afterwards a force of 1,000 Athenians embarked at Pegae (which was now in Athenian control) and sailed along the coast to Sicyon. This force was under the command of Pericles, the son of Xanthippus. They made a landing at Sicyon and defeated in battle he troops who opposed them. Immediately afterwards they took with them the Achaeans, sailed across the gulf, and made an attack on the Acarnanian town of Oeniadae. They besieged this place but failed to capture it. They then returned home.

Three years later a five years’ truce was made between Athens and the Peloponnese. Having no Hellenic war on their hands, the Athenians under the command of Cimon, made an expedition against Cyprus with 200 ships of their own and of their allies. Sixty of these were detached to go to Egypt at the request of Amyrtaeus, the King in the marshes; with the rest they laid siege to Citium. Cimon’s death, however, and also a shortage pf provisions made them leave Citium. Then they were sailing off Salamis in Cyprus, they fought both by land and sea with an army and a fleet of Phoenicians, Cyprians, and Cilicians. They were victorious in both battles, and then went home together with the sixty ships which had returned from Egypt.

After this the Spartans engaged in a campaign known as the sacred war. They took over the temple at Delphia and give it back to the Delphians. As soon as they had retired, the Athenians marched out, took the temple back again, and gave it back to the Phocians.

Some time after this the exiled party among the Boeotians gained possession of Orchomenus, Chaeronea, and some other Boeotian towns. The Athenians, under the command of Tolmides, the son of Tolmaeus, marched against these enemy strongholds with a force of 1,000 of their own hoplites and contingents from their allies. They captured Chaeronea, made slaves of the inhabitants, and left a garrison in the town before retiring. On their way back they were attacked at Coronea by the Boeotian exiles from Orchomenus supported by Locrians, by exiles from Euboea, and by others who shared their political views. The force defeated the Athenians, killing some of them and taking others alive. The Athenians then made a treaty by which they got back their prisoners at the price of evacuating the whole of Boeotia. The exiled party among the Boeotians came back into power and the other states also regained their independence.

Not long after this, Euboea revolted from Athens. Pericles had already crossed over to the island with an Athenian army when he received the news that Megara had revolted, that the Peloponnesians were on the point of invading Attica, and that the Megarians had destroyed the Athenian garrison except for a few who had managed to escape to Nisaea; in making this revolt Megara had called in the aid of Corinth, Sicyon, and Epidaurus. Pericles hurriedly brought the army back from Euboea, and soon afterwards the Peloponnesians, under the command of the Spartan King Pleistoanax, the son of Pausanias, invaded Attica, laying waste the country as far as Eleusis and Thria. Then, without advancing any further, they returned home.

The Athenians, under the command of Pericles, crossed over again in Euboea and subdued the whole island. Its future status was defined by the peace terms, except in the case of Hestiaea, where they drove out the inhabitants and occupied their land themselves.

Soon after they had returned from Euboea the Athenians made a thirty years’ truce with Sparta and her allies: Athens gave up Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaea – all places which they had seized from the Peloponnesians.

In the sixth year of the truce war broke out between Samos and Miletus over the question of Priene. After having the worst of the fighting the Milesians came to Athens and lodged violent protests against the Samians. Their cause was supported by various private individuals from Samos itself who wished to set up there a different from of government. So the Athenians sailed to Samos with forty ships and established a democracy there. They took fifty boys and fifty men as hostage and kept them in Lemnos. Then, leaving a garrison behind in Samos, they returned home. However, some of the Samians, instead of staying on the island, had fled to the mainland. These entered into communications with the leading oligarchs still in the city and also made an alliance with Pissuthnes, the son of Hystaspes, who at the time was the Persian Governor at Sardis. They raised a force of about 700 mercenaries, and passed over into Samos under cover of night. First they made an attack on the democratic party and imprisoned most of the leaders; then they rescued their hostages from Lemnos and declared themselves independent. They handed over to Pissuthnes the troops in the Athenian garrison and the Athenian officials who had been left in Samos, and at once made preparations for an attack on Miletus. At the same time Byzantium joined them in revolting from Athens.

When the Athenians heard of this they sailed against Samos with a fleet of sixty ships. Sixteen of these were not brought into action: some had been sent to Caria to watch the movements of the Phoenician fleet; others had gone to Chios and Lesbos with orders to send reinforcements. The remaining forty-four, under the command of Pericles and nine other commanders, fought, off the island of Tragia, with a Samian fleet of seventy ships which was returning from Miletus and included twenty transports. The result was a victory for the Athenians.

Later they were reinforced by forty ships from Athens and twenty-five from Chios and Lesbos. Having landed on the island and established their superiority with their ground forces, they built three walls to blockade the city, which was already blockaded from the sea. Pericles then took sixty ships from the fleet anchored off Samos and sailed away at full speed for Caunus and Caria, since news had arrived that the Phoenician fleet was on its way against them. Stesagoras and others, with five ships, had actually left Samos and gone to enlist the aid of the Phoenicians. During Pericles’ absence the Samians put out to sea in a surprise attack; they sell upon the Athenian camp, which had not been fortified, destroyed the ships that were posted to keep a look-out, and defeated in battle the other ships that were launched to meet them. So for about fourteen days they controlled the sea round their island and were free to bring in or take out what they wanted. But when Pericles returned they were once more under naval blockade. Later the Athenian fleet was reinforced from Athens with forty ships under the command of Thucydides, Hagnon, and Phormio, and twenty more under the command of Tlepolemus and Anticles; also thirty ships from Chios and Lesbos. The Samians made a brief effort at resistance by sea, but were unable to hold their own and were forced to accept terms of surrender after a nine months’ siege: they pulled down their walls, gave hostages, handed over their fleet, and agreed to pay reparations in instalments at regular intervals. Byzantium also agreed to return to its status of a subject city.

*The Allied Congress at Sparta*

It was only a few years later that there took place the events already described – the affair of Corcyra, the affair of Potidaea, and the other occurrences which served as causes for the war between Athens and Sparta. The actions of the Hellenes against each other and against foreign Powers which I have just related all took place in a period of about fifty years between the retreat of Xerxes and the beginning of this present war. In these years the Athenians made their empire more and more strong, and greatly added to their own power at home. The Spartans, though they saw what was happening, did little or nothing to prevent it, and for most of the time remained inactive, being traditionally slow to go to war, unless they were forced into it, and also being prevented from taking action by wars in their own territory. So finally the point was reached when Athenian strength attained a peak plain for all to see and the Athenians began to encroach upon Sparta’s allies. It was at this point that Sparta felt the position to be no longer tolerable and decided by starting this present war to employ all her energies in attacking and, if possible, destroying the power of Athens.

Though the Spartans had already decided that the truce had been broken by Athenian aggression, they also sent to Delphi to inquire from the god whether it would be wise for them to go to war. It is said that the god replied that if they fought with all their might, victory would be theirs and that he himself would be on their side, whether they invoked him or not.

*Peloponnesian War, growth of Athenian Empire, Spartan declaration of war*

**Thucydides, 1.121-122 (p.105-107) (The Allied Congress at Sparta 432)**

‘Now, on this present occasion it is because we are the victims of aggression and because we have adequate reason that we are going to war; and once we have made ourselves secure from the Athenians we shall at the proper time return to peace. There are many reasons why victory should be ours. First, we are superior in numbers and in military experience; secondly, one and all and all together we obey the orders we receive. As for sea-power, in which they are strong, we shall build ours up both from the existing resources of our alliance and also form the funds in Olympia and in Delphi. If we borrow money from there we shall be able to attract the foreign sailors in the Athenian navy by offering higher rates of pay. For the power of Athens rests on mercenaries rather than on her own citizens; we, on the other hand, are less likely to be affected in this way, since our strength is in men rather in money. The chances are that, if they once lose a battle at sea, it will be all over with them. And supposing they do manage to hold out, then that will give us more time in which to improve our own naval tactics, and once our skill is on level with theirs, there can be little doubt our superiority so far as courage is concerned. They cannot acquire by education the good qualities that are ours by nature; we, on the other hand, by taking pains can abolish the advantage they hold over us in point of skill. It will require money to carry out these projects, and we will contribute money. What an appalling thing to imagine that, while their allies never stop bringing in contributions to maintain their own slavery, we, whose aims are vengeance and survival, should hesitate to incur expense in order to prevent this very money that we are saving from being taken from us by the Athenians and then used to make us suffer!

‘There are also other ways open to us for carrying on the war. We can foster revolts among their allies – and this is the best means of depriving them of the revenues on which their strength depends. Or we can build fortified positions in their country. And there will be other ways and means which no one can foresee at the present, since war is certainly not one of those things which follow a fixed pattern; instead it usually makes its own conditions in which one has to adapt oneself to changing situations. So, when one enters upon a war, one will be all the safer for keeping one’s self-possession: the side that gets over-excited about it is the most likely side to make mistakes.

‘And here is another point to consider. If this was merely a question of boundary disputes between equals and affecting individual states separately, the situation would not be so serious; as it is, we have Athens to fight, and Athens is so much stronger than any single state in our alliance that she is capable of standing up to all of us together. So unless we go to war with her not only in full force but also with every city and every nationality inspired by the same purpose, she will find us divided and will easily subdue us. And let us be sure that defeat, terrible as it may sound, could mean nothing else but total slavery. To the Peloponnese the very mention of such a possibility is shameful, or that so many cities should suffer the oppression of one. If that were to happen, people would say either that we deserved our sufferings or that we were putting up with them through cowardice and showing ourselves inferior to our fathers; for they brought freedom to the whole of Hellas, while we not only failed to safeguard our own freedom, but also allowed a dictator state to be set up in Hellas, although in individual states we made it a principle to put down despots. Such a policy, in our view, cannot be held to be exempt from three of the greatest mistakes that can be made – lack of intelligence, lack of resolution, or lack of responsibility. Nor do we imagine that you can escape these imputations by claiming that you feel superior to your enemies. This feeling of superiority has done much harm before now; indeed, from the number of cases where it proved disastrous it has come to be known as something quite different – not superiority, but plain stupidity.

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan tactics and aims*

**Thucydides, 1.139-140 (p.118-119) (The Spartan Ultimatum and Pericles’ reply 432-1)**

The first embassy of the Spartans was as I have described: they demanded that those under the curse should be driven out, and they received a counter demand from Athens in the same terms. Later they sent another embassy to demand that Athens should abandon the siege of Potidaea and should give Aegina her independence. But the chief point and the one that they made most clear, was that war could be avoided if Athens would revoke the Megarian decree which excluded the Megarians from all ports in the Athenian Empire and from the market in Attica itself.

The Athenians would not give in on the first points, nor would they revoke the decree. They accused Megara of cultivating land that did not belong to them, and of giving shelter to slaves who had escaped from Athens.

Finally an embassy arrived with the Spartan ultimatum. The Spartan representatives were Ramphias, Melesippus, and Agesander. They made no reference to any of the usual subjects that had been spoken of before, but simply said: ‘Sparta wants peace. Peace is still possible if you will give the Hellenes their freedom.’

The Athenians then held an assembly in order to debate the matter, and decided to look into the hole question once and for all and then to give Sparta her answer. Many speakers came forward and opinions were expressed on both sides, some maintaining that war was necessary and others saying that the Megarian decree should be revoked and should not be allowed to stand in the way of peace. Among the speakers was Pericles, the son of Xanthippus, the leading man of his time among the Athenians and the most powerful both in action and in debate. His advice was as follows:

‘Athenians,’ he said, ‘my views are the same as ever: I am against making any concessions to the Peloponnesians, even though I am aware that the enthusiastic state of mind in which people are persuaded to enter upon a war is not retained when it comes to action, and that peoples’ minds are altered by the course of events. Nevertheless I see that on this occasion I must give you exactly the same advice as I have given in the past, and I call upon those of you who are persuaded by my words to give your full support to these resolutions which we are making altogether, and to abide by them even if in some respect or other we find ourselves in difficulty; for, unless you do, you will be able to claim no credit for intelligence when things go well with us. There is often no more logic in the course of events than there is in the plans of men, and this is usually why we blame our luck when things happen in ways that we did not expect.

‘It was evident before that Sparta was plotting against us, and now it is even more evident. It is laid down in the treaty that differences between us should be settled by arbitration, and that, pending arbitration, each side should keep what it has. The Spartans have never once asked for arbitration, nor have they accepted our offers to submit to it. They prefer to settle their complaints by war rather than by peaceful negotiations, and now they come her not even making protests, but trying to give us orders. They tell us to abandon our siege of Potidaea, to give Aegina her independence and to revoke the Megarian decree. And finally they come to us with a proclamation that we must give the Hellenes their freedom.

‘Let none of you think that we should be going to war for a trifle if we refuse to revoke the Megarian decree. It is a point they make much of, and say that war need not take place if we revoke this decree; but, if we do go to war, let there be no kind of suspicion in your hearts that the war was over a small matter. For you this trifle is both the assurance and the proof of your determination. If you give in, you will immediately be confronted with some greater demand, since they will think that you only gave way on this point through fear. But if you take a firm stand you will make it clear to them that they have to treat you properly as equals.

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan Ultimatum and Athenian response, Pericles*

**Thucydides, 2.8 (p.128-129) (Outbreak of War 431)**

Nothing in their designs was on a small or mean scale: both sides put everything into their war effort. This was natural enough. At the beginning of an undertaking the enthusiasm is always greatest and at that time both in the Peloponnese and in Athens there were great numbers of young men who had never been in a war and were consequently far from unwilling to join in this one. Meanwhile all the rest of Hellas hung poised on the event, as the two leading cities came together in conflict. There were all kinds of prophecies and all kinds of oracular utterances being made both in the cities that were about to go to war and in other places as well. Then, too there was an earthquake in Delos just before this time – a thing that had never happened before in the memory of the Hellenes. This was said and thought to be a sign of impending events; and if anything else of the same kind happened to occur, its meaning was always carefully examined.

People’s feelings were generally very much on the side of the Spartans, especially as they proclaimed that their aim was the liberation of Hellas. States and individuals were enthusiastic to support them in every possible way, both in speech and action, and everyone thought that unless he took a personal share in things the whole effort was being handicapped. So bitter was the general feeling against Athens, whether from those who wished to escape from her rule or from those who feared that they would come under it.

*Peloponnesian War, Outbreak of War, Anti-Athenian feeling*

**Thucydides, 2.11 (p.130-131) (Outbreak of War 431)**

‘Peloponnesians and allies, our fathers have engaged in many campaigns both in and outside the Peloponnese and the elder men in this army of ours are not inexperienced in war. Yet we have never marched out in greater strength than now. And, just as we are in greater numbers and in better spirit than ever before, do the city against which we are moving is at the height of her power. We must not, then, fall short of our fathers’ standards, nor fail to live up to our own reputations. For the whole of Hellas is eagerly watching this action of ours, and, because of the general hatred against Athens, wishing us success in our undertakings. Therefore, even though it may seem that we are invading in tremendous force and that there is little risk of our enemy coming out to meet us in battle, this must not be made an excuse for relaxing our precautions while we are on the march: officers and soldiers of every individual state should constantly be prepared to find their own particular positions threatened. There is much that is unpredictable in war, and attacks are usually made as the result of a sudden impulse. Very often, too, a numerically inferior force, fearing for its own safety, has beaten off the superior numbers of an enemy who, through over-confidence, has relaxed his precautions. Certainly one ought to march forward confidently in an enemy country but one should also take practical measures based on the idea of security. In this way armies are likely to be most courageous in attack and most reliable in defence.

‘And the city against which we are marching is very far from being incapable of defending herself. She is extraordinarily well equipped in every respect, so that we ought to consider it very likely that they will come and meet us in battle; and that, if they have not yet set out against us before we are there, they will do so when they see us in their own country laying waste and destroying their property. People grow angry when they suffer things that they are quite unused to suffer and when these things go on actually in front of their own eyes. They do not wait to think, but plunge into action on the spur of their impulse. And the Athenians are especially likely to act in this way, since they think that they have a right to supremacy and are much more used to invading and destroying other people’s land than seeing this happening to their own land. Remember, then, that you are marching against a very great city. Think, too, of the glory, or, if events turn out differently, the shame which you will bring to your ancestors and to yourselves, and, with all this in mind, follow your leaders, paying strictest attention to discipline and to security, giving prompt obedience to the orders which you receive. The best and safest thing of all is when a large force is so well disciplined that it seems to be acting like one man.’

*Peloponnesian War, Outbreak of War, Spartan view of Athens*

**Thucydides, 2.13 (p.132-133) (Outbreak of War 431)**

While the Peloponnesians were either still mustering at the isthmus or on their march before the invasion of Attica, Pericles, the son of Xanthippus, one of the ten Athenian generals, realizing that the invasion was coming, suspected that Archidamus, who happened to be a friend of his, might possibly pass by his estates and leave them undamaged. This might be either from a personal wish to do him a favour, or as the result of instructions given by the Spartans in order to stir up prejudice against him, just as it had been because of him that they had previously made the proclamation about driving out the curse. He therefore came forward first and made a statement to the Athenians in the assembly, saying that, though Archidamus was his friend, this fact was certainly not going to be harmful to Athenian interests, and, in case the enemy should not lay waste his estates and houses, like those of other people, he proposed to give them up and make them public property, so that no one should have any suspicion against him on their account. Then, with regard to the present situation, he gave just the same advice as he had given before. This was that they were to prepare for war and bring into the city their property in the country. They were not to go out and offer battle, but were to come inside the city and guard it. Their navy, in which their strength lay, was to be brought to the highest state of efficiency, and their allies were to be handled firmly, since, he said, the strength of Athens came from the money paid in tribute by her allies, and victory in war depended on a combination of intelligent resolution and financial resources. Here Pericles encouraged confidence, pointing out that, apart from all other sources of revenue, the average yearly contribution from the allies to Athens amounted to 600 talents, then there still remained in the Acropolis a sum of 6,000 talents of coined silver. This reserve fund at its maximum, had been 9,700 talents. It had been drawn on to pay for the Propylaea and other public buildings, and for Potidaea. In addition to this there was the uncoined gold and silver in offerings made either by individuals or by the state; there were the sacred vessels and furniture used in the precessions and in the games; there were the spoils taken from the Persians and other resources of one kind or another, all of which would amount to no less than 500 talents. To this he added the money in the other temples which might be used and which came to a considerable sum, and said that, if they were ever really reduced to absolute extremities, they could even use the gold on the statue of Athene herself. There was, he informed them, a weight of forty talents of pure gold on this statue, all of which was removable. But he pointed out that if they did use this gold for their own preservation they must restore it again afterwards in the same or in a greater quantity.

Thus he reassured them about their financial positions. As for their army, they had 13,000 hoplites in addition to the 16,000 others who were in various garrisons and those engaged in the actual defence of the city. This was the number originally detailed for defence in case of invasion, and the force was drawn from the eldest and the youngest of the citizens in the army together with the resident aliens who were qualified as hoplites. The wall of Phalerum ran for four miles from the sea to the city circuit; and nearly five miles of the wall surrounding the city was guarded, though part of it (the section between the Long Walls and the wall of Phalerum) was left without a guard. Then there were the four and a half miles of the Long Walls to Piraeus, the outer one of which was garrisoned. Then, too, there were seven and a half miles of fortifications surrounding Piraeus and Munychia, half of which distance was guarded. There were also 1,200 cavalry, including mounted bowmen; 1,600 unmounted bowmen, and 300 triremes ready for active service. This was an accurate, or perhaps a conservative, estimate of the resources in each department available to Athens at the time when the Peloponnesian invasion was expected and at the beginning of the war. Pericles also used his usual arguments to show that they should feel confident of final victory.

*Peloponnesian War, Outbreak of War, Athens’ resources*

**Thucydides, 2.63 (p.161) (The Policy of Pericles 430)**

‘Then it is right and proper for you to support the imperial dignity of Athens. This is something in which you all take pride, and you cannot continue to enjoy the privileges unless you also shoulder the burdens of empire. And do no imagine that what we are fighting for is simply the question of freedom or slavery: there is also involved the loss of our empire and the dangers arising from the hatred which we have incurred in administering it. Nor is it any longer possible for you to give up this empire, though there may be some people who in a mood of sudden panic and in a spirit of political apathy actually think that this would be a fine and noble thing to do. Your empire is now like a tyranny: it may have been wrong to take it; it is certainly dangerous to let it go. And the kind of people who talk of doing so and persuade other to adopt their point of view would very soon bring a state to ruin, and would still do so even if they lived by themselves in isolation. For those who are politically apathetic can only survive if they are supported by people who are capable of taking action. They are quite valueless in a city which control an empire, though they would be safe slaves in a city that was controlled by others.

*Peloponnesian War, Outbreak of War, Pericles, Opposition to War in Athens*

**Thucydides, 2.65 (p.163-164) (The Policy of Pericles 430)**

In this way Pericles attempted to stop the Athenians from being angry with him and to guide their thoughts in a direction away from their immediate sufferings. So far as public policy was concerned, they accepted his arguments, sending no more embassies to Sparta and showing an increased energy in carrying on the war; yet as private individuals they still felt the weight of their misfortunes. The mass of the people had had little enough to start with and had now been deprived of even that; the richer classes had lost their fine estates with their rich ad well-equipped houses in the country, and, which was the worst thing of all, they were at war instead of living in peace. In fact, the general ill feeling against Pericles persisted, and was not satisfied until they had condemned him to pay a fine. Not long afterwards, however, as is the way with crowds, they re-elected him to the generalship and put all their affairs into his hands. By that time people felt their own private sufferings rather less acutely and, so far as the general needs to the state were concerned, they regarded Pericles as the best man they had. Indeed, during the whole period of peace-time when Pericles was the head of affairs the state was wisely led and firmly guarded, and it was under him that Athens was at her greatest. And when the war broke out, here, too, he appears to have accurately estimated what the power of Athens was. He survived the outbreak of war by two years and six months, and after his death, his foresight with regard to the war became even more evident. For Pericles had said that Athens would be victorious if she bided her time and took care of her navy, if she avoided trying to add to the empire during the course of the war, and if she did nothing to risk the safety of the city itself. But his successors did the exact opposite, and in other matters which apparently had no connection with the war private ambition and private profit led to policies which were bad both for the Athenians themselves and for their allies. Such policies, when successful, only brought credit and advantage to individuals, and when they failed, the whole war potential of the state was impaired. The reason for this was that Pericles, because of his position, his intelligence, and his known integrity, could respect the liberty of the people and at the same time hold them in check. It was he who led them, rather than they who led him, and, since he never sought power from any wrong motive, he was under no necessity of flattering them: in fact he was so highly respected that he was able to speak angrily to them and to contradict them. Certainly when he saw that they were going too far in a mood of over-confidence, he would bring back to them a sense of their dangers; and when they were discouraged for no good reason he would restore their confidence. So, in what was nominally a democracy, power was really in the hands of the first citizen. But his successors, who were more on a level with each other and each of whom aimed at occupying the first place, adopted methods of demagogy which resulted in their losing control over the actual conduct of affairs. Such a policy, in a great city with an empire to govern, naturally led to a number of mistakes, amongst which was the Sicilian expedition, though in this case the mistake was not so much an error of judgement with regard to the opposition to be expected as a failure on the part of those who were at home to give proper support to their forces overseas. Because they were so busy with their own personal intrigues for securing the leadership of the people, they allowed this expedition to lose its impetus, and by quarrelling among themselves began to bring confusion into the policy of the state. And yet, after losing most of their fleet and all the other forces in Sicily, with revolutions already breaking out in Athens, they nonetheless held out for eight years against their original enemies, who were no reinforced by the Sicilians, against their own allies, most of which had revolted, and against Cyrus, son of the King of Persia, who later joined the other side and provided the Peloponnesians with money for their fleet. And in the end it was only because they had destroyed themselves by their own internal strife that finally they were forced to surrender. So overwhelmingly great were the resources which Pericles had in mind at the time when he prophesied and easy victory for Athens over the Peloponnesians alone.

*Peloponnesian War,Pericles, Opposition to War in Athens, reasons for defeat*

**Thucydides, 4.19-20 (p.275-276) (Athenian Success at Pylos 425)**

‘Sparta calls upon you to make a treaty to end the war. She offers you peace, alliance, friendly and neighbourly relations. In return she asks for the men on the island, thinking it better for both sides that the affair should not proceed to the bitter end – whether, by some stroke of luck, the men should manage to force an escape, or else be subdued by your blockade and fall still further into your power. In our view, where great hatreds exist, no lasting settlement can be made in a spirit of revenge, when one side gets the better of things in war and forces its opponents to swear to carry out the terms of an unequal treaty; what will make the settlement lasting is when the party that has it is in his power to act like this takes instead a more reasonable point of view, overcomes his adversary in generosity, and makes peace on more moderate terms than his enemy expected. IN such a case, so far from wanting to get his own back for the violence that has been done to him, the enemy is already under an obligation to pay back good for good, and so is the more ready, from a sense of honour, to abide by the terms that have been made. And men are more inclined to act in this way towards their greatest enemies than towards people with whom they have only minor differences. Then, too, when others are willing to make concessions it is natural for one to give way gladly oneself, just as it is natural, if one meets with an attitude of arrogance, to face things out to the end, even against one’s better judgement.

‘As for Sparta and Athens, if ever there was a good time for making peace it is now, before some irredeemable event overtakes us, something that would force us into an unending hatred of you, personal as well as political, and would deprive you of the hope of what we are offering you at this moment. Now is the time for us to be reconciled, while the final issue is still undecided, while you have won glory and can have our friendship as well, and we, before any shameful thing has taken place, can, in our present distress, accept a reasonable statement. Let us choose for ourselves peace instead of war, and give to the Hellenes a respite from their sufferings. For this they will think that it is you rather than we whom they have to thank. As for the war in which they are engaged, they are not certain who began it; but peace now depends chiefly upon you, and if peace is made, it is to you that their gratitude will go. By accepting our proposal you can have the firm friendship of Sparta, a friendship which is not extorted from her but which is offered to you freely and which you will oblige her by accepting. Think also of the advantages which can reasonably be expected to follow. For if we, Athens and Sparta, stand together, you can be sure that the rest of Hellas, in its inferior position, will show us every possible mark of honour.’

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan offer of Peace Treaty*

**Thucydides, 4.40-41 (p.289-290) (Final victory at Pylos 425)**

This event caused much more surprise among the Hellenes than anything else that happened in the war. The general impression had been that the Spartans would never surrender their arms whether because of hunger or any other form of compulsion; instead they would keep them to the last and die fighting best they could. It was hard to believe that those who had surrendered were the same sort of people as those who had fallen. Indeed, there was an occasion afterwards when an Athenian ally in order to insult one of the prisoners from the island asked him whether it was the ones who had fallen who were the real Spartans. The reply was that ‘spindles (by which he meant arrows) would be worth a great deal if they could pick out brave men from cowards’, a remark which was intended to show that the ones who died were simply the ones who came in the way of the stones and the arrows.

When the prisoners had been brought to Athens, the Athenians decided to keep them in prison until a settlement was arrived at, but that, if the Peloponnesians invaded Attica before then, they would take the men out and kill them. Pylos was firmly garrisoned, and the Messenians from Naupactus sent some of their best troops back there to what was in fact their old country, since Pylos was in what used to be Messenia. The troops carried out raids into Laconia and, helped by the fact that they spoke the same dialect as the inhabitants, did a lot of damage. The Spartans had had no previous experience of this type of guerrilla warfare and, as the helots began to desert, they feared the spread of revolution in their country and became exceedingly uneasy about it. Though they did not want to reveal this to the Athenians, they still sent representatives to Athens and tried to get back Pylos and the prisoners. The Athenians, however, were aiming at gaining still more and, though frequent representations were made to them, they sent every Spartan representative back empty-handed. This completes the account of what happened at Pylos.

*Peloponnesian War, Athenian victory at Pylos*

**Thucydides, 4.50 (p.294-295) (Further Athenian Successes 425-4)**

In the following winter Aristides, the son of Archippus, one of the commanders of the Athenian ships which were sent out to collect money from the allies, captured at Eion, on the Strymon, a Persian called Artaphernes, who was on his way to Sparta from the King of Persia. He was taken to Athens and there the Athenians had his dispatches translated from the Assyrian characters and read them. A number of subjects were mentioned, but the main point for the Spartans was this – that the King, did not understand what they wanted, since the many ambassadors who had come to him all said different things: if, therefore, they had any definite proposals to make, they were to send him some delegates with this Persian. Afterwards the Athenians sent Artaphernes back in a trireme to Ephesus and sent some ambassadors with him. There, however, they heard that Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, had just died (his death took place just about this time), and they returned home.

*Peloponnesian War, Persian support for Sparta*

**Thucydides, 4.80-81 (p.313-314) (Brasidas in Thrace 424)**

For now that the Athenians were making their attacks on the Peloponnese, and particularly on the actual territory of Sparta, the Spartans thought that the best way of diverting these attacks would be to give Athens, too, the same kind of trouble by sending an army to her allies, particularly as these allies were prepared to supply the army and were asking for it in order to be able to revolt. The Spartans were also glad to have a good excuse for sending some of their helots out of the country, since in the present state of affairs, with Pylos in enemy hands, they feared a revolution. In fact they were so frightened of their unyielding character and of their numbers that they had had recourse to the following plan. (Spartan policy with regard to the helots had always been based almost entirely on the idea of security.) They made a proclamation to the effect that the helots should choose out of their own number those who claimed to have done the best service to Sparta on the battlefield, implying that they would be given their freedom. This was, however, a test conducted in the belief that the ones who showed the most spirit and came forward first to claim their freedom would be the ones most likely to turn against Sparta. So about 2,000 were selected, who put garlands on their heads and went round the temples under the impression that they were being made free men. Soon afterwards, however, did away with them, and no one ever knew exactly how each one of them was killed.

Now, on this present occasion, the Spartans were glad to send out 700 as hoplites to serve with Brasidas. The rest of his army were mercenaries whom he had raised from the Peloponnese. Brasidas himself was sent out by the Spartans largely because it was his own wish, though the Chalcidians were also eager to have him, a man who in Sparta itself had a great reputation for energy in every direction and who on his foreign service had shown himself to be so valuable to his country. And on this occasion it was his upright and moderate conduct towards the cities which caused most of them to revolt and enabled him to take others by treachery, so that when Sparta wanted to make peace (as she did in the end) she was in the position of having places to offer in exchange for those held by Athens, and in the meantime the Peloponnese was relieved of much of the burden of the war. Then, too, in the later period of the war, after the Sicilian expedition, the chief factor in creating a pro-Spartan feeling among the allies of Athens was the gallantry of Brasidas and the wisdom which he showed at this time – qualities which some knew from experience of them and others assumed because they had been told of them. He was the first to be sent out in this way, and by the excellent reputation which he won for himself on all sides he left behind a rooted conviction that the rest also were like him.

*Peloponnesian War, Sparta, Brasidas, Spartan Victory*

**Thucydides, 4.108 (p.329-330) (Brasidas Captures Amphipolis 424/3)**

The capture of Amphipolis caused great alarm at Athens. The place was not only useful because it supplied timber for ship building and brought in revenue; there was also the fact that, although the Spartans, provided they got an escort from the Thessalians, could reach the allies of Athens up to the line of the Strymon, they could not go any further so long as they did not control the bridge, since there was a great lake formed by the river above the town and in the direction of Eion they were exposed to the blockade of Athenian triremes. Now, however, these difficulties appeared to have been removed. The Athenians also feared that their allies would revolt, since Brasidas was behaving with great moderation and was constantly declaring wherever he went that his mission was the liberation of Hellas. The cities subject to Athens, when they heard of the capture of Amphipolis, of the terms being offered, and of the considerate behaviour of Brasidas himself, eagerly embraced the idea of change, made overtures to him, begging him to march into their territory, and vied with each other in being the first to revolt. Indeed, they fancied that this was a perfectly safe thing to do, though, as was proved later on, the power of Athens was as great as had been their mistake in underestimating it. As it was, their judgement was based more on wishful thinking than on a sound calculation of probabilities; for the usual thing among men is that when they want something they will, without any reflection, leave that to hope, while they will employ the full force of reason in rejecting what they find unpalatable. Then too there was the fact that the Athenians had just been defeated in Boeotia, and there was the untrue, but attractive, statement of Brasidas that at Nisaea the Athenians had not dared to engage even the army that he had there himself. All this produced a feeling of confidence and a belief that no steps would be taken by Athens to secure her interests. But what most of all made them ready to undertake all kinds of risks was the pleasurable excitement of the moment, and the fact that it looked for the first time as though they were going to find the Spartans acting with real energy.

All this did not escape the notice of the Athenians, who, so far as was possible at such short notice and in winter, sent garrisons to the various cities. Brasidas sent messengers to Sparta asking for another army to be sent out to him, and meanwhile began to arrange for the building of triremes on the Strymon. The Spartans, however, did nothing for him, partly because their leading men were jealous of him, partly because what they really wanted was to recover the prisoners made on the island and to end the war.

*Peloponnesian War, Sparta, Brasidas, Athenian allies*

**Thucydides, 4.117 (p.334-335) (Armistice between Athens and Sparta 423)**

In the spring before the next summer the Spartans and the Athenians made an armistice for one year. The Athenians calculated that in this way Brasidas would not be able to win over any more of their dependencies before they had had time to take measures for their security; they might then, if it suited them, extend the agreement. The Spartan correctly estimated these Athenian apprehensions and thought that, once Athens had had respite from hardship and toil, she would be all the more ready to come to a general agreement by giving back the prisoners and making peace for a longer period. They were particularly anxious to get back the men while the successes of Brasidas still continued. And they thought that they were in the position to claim that, if Brasidas won more victories and made up all the ground lost to the Athenians, even though they might be deprived of the men captured at Sphacteria, they would still be able to fight it out on equal terms with a good prospect of final victory. Sparta and her allies therefore made an armistice on the following terms:

*Peloponnesian War, Armistice*

**Thucydides, 5.13-18 (p.356-360) (Peace of Nicias 422-1)**

At the very beginning of winter, Ramphias and his forced advanced to Pierium in Thessaly. The Thessalians, however, were unwilling to let them go farther; Brasidas, for whom they were bringing reinforcements, was dead; so they turned back home, thinking that the time for action had passed now that the Athenians had been defeated and had gone away, and that they themselves were not capable of carrying out the plans which Brasidas had had in mind. But their main reason for returning was that they knew at the time when they set out that Spartan opinion was, in fact, in favour of peace.

Indeed, what now took place was that, after the battle of Amphipolis and the withdrawal of Ramphias from Thessaly, neither side went on with the war. Instead they began to think how to make peace. The Athenians had suffered a serious blow at Delium and another one soon afterwards at Amphipolis; they no longer possessed the same confidence in their strength which had induced them to reject previous offers of peace, in the belief that their good fortune at that time would carry them through to final victory. They were also apprehensive about the allies, fearing that they might be encouraged by these defeats to revolt on a more serious scale, and they regretted that they had not seized upon the excellent opportunity of making peace after Pylos. The Spartans on their side had found that the war had gone very differently from what they had imagined when they believed that they could destroy the power of Athens in a few years simply by laying waste to her land. The disaster suffered on the island was something which had never been known before in Sparta; her territory was being raided from Pylos and from Cythera; the helots were deserting, and there was always the fear that even those who remained loyal might gain confidence from the others and take advantage of the situation to make revolution, as they had done in the past. It happened, too, that the thirty years’ truce between Sparta and Argos was on the point of expiring; the Argives refused to renew it unless Cynuria was given back to them, and it seemed impossible to fight Athens and Argos at once. They also suspected that some of the states in the Peloponnese had the intention of going over to Argos, as indeed they did.

Both sides, therefore, had cogent reasons for making peace, the Spartans, perhaps, most of all, since they were extremely anxious to get back the men who had been captured on the island. Among these men were Spartans of the officer class, important people themselves and related to members of the government. Sparta had begun to negotiate directly after their capture, but the Athenians were doing so well that they would not listen to any reasonable proposals. After the defeat of Delium, however, the Spartans, realizing that Athens would now be more inclined to come to terms, immediately concluded the armistice for one year, in which it was provided that meetings should take place to see whether this period could be extended. Now Athens had suffered another defeat at Amphipolis, and Cleon and Brasidas were dead – the two people who on each side had been most opposed to peace, Brasidas because of the success and honour which had come to him through war, Cleon because he thought that in time of peace and quiet people would be more likely to notice his evil doings and less likely to believe his slander of others. This was the moment, then, when even greater efforts to secure peace were made by the two statesmen who had the best claims to influence in each city, the Spartan King Pleistoanax, the son of Pausanias, and Nicias, the son of Niceratus, who had done better in his military commands than anyone else of his time. So now, while still untouched by misfortune and still held in honour, Nicias wished to rest upon his laurels, to find an immediate release from toil and trouble both for himself and for his fellow citizens, and to leave behind him the name of one whose service to the state had been successful from the start to finish. He thought that these ends were to be achieved by avoiding all risks and by trusting oneself as little as possible to fortune, and that risks could be avoided only in peace. As for Pleistoanax, he was being attacked by his enemies in connection with his restoration; whenever anything went wrong, they invariably brought his name forward in an attempt to convince the Spartans that what had happened was due to this illegal restoration of his. The charge made against him was that he and his brother Aristocles had bribed the priestess at Delphi to give oracles to the Spartan delegations which had come on various official visits, commanding them to bring home from abroad the seed of the demigod son of Zeus, or else they would have to plough with a ploughshare of silver. He was exiled beacause he was supposed to have been bribed to retreat from Attica, and, because of his fear of the Spartans, he had built half of his house inside the grounds of the temple of Zeus. So in the end, according to his accusers, he had induced the Spartans in the nineteenth year of his exile to Lycaeum to bring him back with the same dances and sacrifices as they had used originally in the institution of their kings at the time of the foundation of Sparta. He was naturally distressed by these accusations and he thought that in peacetime disasters would not occur; also that, once the Spartans got back their prisoners, his enemies would have no bases from which to attack him, whereas during a state of war those in the highest position must necessarily get blamed for every misfortune that took place. He was therefore extremely anxious to come to terms with Athens.

Discussions went on throughout the winter, and as spring drew near there were threats from Sparta of another invasion; orders were sent round to the cities to prepare for building permanent fortifications in Attica – all this in order to make the Athenians more inclined to accept the terms offered. During the discussions various claims were put forward by each side, and in the end it was agreed that peace should be made on the basis of each party’s giving back what it had acquired during the war, except that Athens was to retain Nisaea. (When Athens had put in a claim for Plataea, the Thebans replied that they had not taken the place by force, but held it as the result of an agreement reached freely, and with no element of treachery, with the citizens. The Athenians pointed out that the same held good of their occupation of Nisaea.) Once this point was reached the Spartans called a meeting of their allies, all of whom voted in favour of peace except for the Boeotians, the Corinthians, the Eleans, and the Megarians, who were opposed to what was being done. The treaty was then concluded and peace was made between Athens and Sparta, each side swearing to the following provisions:

‘The Athenians, the Spartans and their allies made a treaty and swore to it, city by city, as follows:

‘With regard to the Panhellenic temple, everyone who wishes, according to the customs of his country, to sacrifice in them, to travel to them, to consult the oracles, or to attend the games shall be guaranteed security in doing so, both by sea and by land. At Delphi the consecrated ground and the temple of Apollo and the Delphians themselves shall be governed by their own laws, taxed by their own state, and judged by their own judges, both the people and the territory, according to the custom of the place.

‘The treaty is to be in force between the Athenians, with their allies, and the Spartans, with their allies, for fifty years without fraud or damage by land or sea.

‘It shall not be lawful to take up arms with intent to do injury either for the Spartans and their allies against the Athenians and their allies, or for the Athenians and their allies against the Spartans and their allies, in any way or by any means whatever. If any dispute should arise between them, they are to deal with it by law and by oath, as may be agreed between them.

‘The Spartans and their allies are to give back Amphipolis to the Athenians. In the case of all cities given back by the Spartans to the Athenians, the inhabitants shall have the right to go where they please taking their property with them.

‘These cities are to pay the tribute fixed by Aristides and are to be independent. So long as they pay the tribute, it shall not be lawful for the Athenians or their allies to take up arms against these cities, once the treaty has been made. The cities referred to are Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Scolus, Olynthus, and Spartolus. These cities are to be allied neither to Sparta nor to Athens. If, however, the Athenians persuade the cities to do so, it shall be lawful for the Athenians to make them their allies, provided that the cities themselves are willing.

‘The Mecybernaeans, the Sanaeans, and Singaeans shall inhabit their own cities, as shall the Olynthians and Acanthians. The Spartans and their allies shall give back Panactum to the Athenians. The Athenians shall give back Coryphasium, Cythera, Methana, Ptelium, and Atalanta to the Spartans; also all Spartans who are in prison in Athens or in any other prison in the Athenian dominions.

‘The Athenians shall let go the Peloponnesians besieged in Scione and all others in Scione who are allies of Sparta, and those whom Brasidas sent in there, and any other allies of Sparta who are in prison in Athens or in any other prison in the Athenian dominions. The Spartans and their allies shall in the same way give back all Athenians or allies of Athens whom they have in their hands. With regard to Scione, Torone, Sermyle and any other cities in Athenian hands, the Athenians may act as they think fit.

‘The Athenians shall take an oath to the Spartans and their allies, city by city. The oath taken shall be the most binding one that exists in each city, and seventeen representatives on each side are to swear it. The words of the oath shall be these: “ I shall abide by the terms of this treaty honestly and sincerely.” In the same way the Spartans and their allies shall take an oath to the Athenians. This oath is to be renewed annually by both sides. Pillars are to be set up at Olympia, Pythia, the Isthmus, in the Acropolis at Athens, and in the temple at Amyclae in Lacedaemon.

‘If any point connected with any subject at all has been overlooked, alterations may be made, without any breach of oath, by mutual agreement and on due consideration by the two parties, the Athenians and the Spartans.

*Peloponnesian War, Peace of Nicias, peace terms*

**Thucydides, 5.25-26 (p.363-364) (Negotiations with Argos 421)**

After the peace treaty and the alliance between Sparta and Athens, made after the ten years’ war, when Pleistolas was ephor in Sparta and Alcaeus archon in Athens, there was peace so far as those who had accepted the terms were concerned. But Corinth and various other cities in the Peloponnese were trying to upset the agreement, and Sparta found herself immediately in fresh trouble with her allies. Then, too, as time went on the Spartans also lost confidence of the Athenians because they failed to carry out some of the terms of the treaty. It is true that for six years and ten months they refrained from invading each other’s territory; abroad, however, the truce was never properly in force, and each side did the other a great deal of harm, until finally they were forced to break the treaty made after ten years, and once more declare war openly upon each other.

The history of this period also has been written by the same Thucydides, an Athenian, keeping to the order of events as they happened by summers and winters, down to the time when the Spartans and their allies put an end to the empire of Athens and occupied the Long Walls and Piraeus. By then the war had lasted altogether twenty-seven years. And it would certainly be an error of judgement to consider the interval of the agreement as anything else except a period of war. One has only to look over the facts to see that it is hardly possible to use the word ‘peace’ of a situation in which neither side gave back or received what had been promised; and apart from this there were breaches of the treaty on both sides in connection with the Mantinean and Epidaurian wars, and in other respects, too; the allies in the Thracian area continued hostile as before; and the Boeotians were in a state of truce which had to be renewed every ten days. So, if one puts together the first ten years’ war, the uneasy truce which followed it, and the subsequent war, one will find, reckoning by summers and winters, that my estimate of the number of years is correct within a few days – also that, for those who put their faith in oracles, here is one solitary instance of their having been proved accurate. I myself remember that all the time from the beginning to the end of the war it was being put about by many people that the war would last for thrice nine years. I lived through the whole of it, being of an age to understand what was happening, and I put my mind to the subject so as to get an accurate view of it. It happened, too, that I was banished from my country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis; I saw what was being done on both sides, particularly on the Peloponnesian side, because of my exile, and this leisure gave me rather exceptional facilities for looking into things. I shall now, therefore, go on to describe the disputes that took place after the ten years’ war, the breach of the treaty, and the warfare which came afterwards.

*Peloponnesian War, Peace of Nicias, end of the peace, overview of the war, Thucydides*

**Thucydides, 5.43 (p.375) (Alliance between Athens and Argos 420)**

Now that relations between Athens and Sparta had taken this turn for the worse, the party in Athens also which wanted to put an end to the peace began to make itself felt immediately. The leader of this group was Alcibiades, the son of Clinias, a man who was still young in years (or would have been thought so in any other city in Hellas), but who had reached a position of importance owing to the respect in which his family was held. He was genuinely convinced that the best thing for Athens was an alliance with Argos – though it is true also that considerations of his own dignity affected his opposition to the peace with Sparta. He did not like the fact that the Spartans had negotiated the treaty through Nicias and Laches, paying no attention to him because of his youth; nor had they treated him with the respect he thought due to the fact that in the past his family had looked after Spartan interests in Athens – a post which his grandfather had given up, but which he himself wanted to take up again, as he had shown by his attentions to the prisoners captured on the island. He considered therefore that in every direction he was receiving less than his due, and from the first he had opposed peace, saying that the Spartans could not be relied upon, and that their only object in making the treaty was to be able in this way first to crush Argos and afterwards isolate Athens and attack her. Now, with relations strained as they were, he at once sent a personal message to the Argives, urging them to come as quickly as possible to Athens with the Mantineans and the Eleans and to make proposals for an alliance; this, he said, was the right moment for doing so, and he would do everything he could to help.

*Peloponnesian War, Resumption of fighting, Alcibiades, Athens and Argos*

**Thucydides, 6.8 (p.414) (Launching of the Sicilian Expedition 415)**

At the beginning of spring next year the Athenian delegation came back from Sicily. They were accompanied by the Egestaeans, who brought sixty talents of uncoined silver – a month’s pay for sixty ships, which was the number they were going to ask the Athenians to send them.

The Athenians held an assembly and listened to what the Egestaeans and their own delegation had to say. The report was encouraging, but untrue, particularly on the question of the money which was said to be available in large quantities in the treasury and in the temples. So they voted in favour of sending sixty ships to Sicily and appointed as commanders with full powers Alcibiades, the son of Clinias, Nicias, the son of Niceratus, and Lamachus, the son of Xenophanes, who were instructed to help the Egestaeans against the Selinuntines, to re-establish Leontini also, if things went well with them in the war, and in general to make the kind of provisions for Sicily which might to seem to them most in accordance with Athenian interests.

Five days later another assembly was held to discuss the quickest means of getting the ships ready to sail and to vote any additional supplies that the general might need for the expedition. Nicias had not wanted to be chosen for the command; his view was that the city was making a mistake and, on a slight pretext which looked reasonable, was in fact aiming at conquering the whole of Sicily – a very considerable undertaking indeed. He therefore came forward to speak in the hope of making the Athenians change their minds. The advice he gave was as follows:

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, beginnings*

**Thucydides, 6.12-13 (p.417-418) (Launching of the Sicilian Expedition 415)**

‘We should also remember that it is only recently that we have had a little respite from a great plague and from the war, and so are beginning to make good our losses in men and money. The right thing is that we should spend our new gains at home and on ourselves instead of on these exiles who are begging for assistance and whose interest is to tell lies and make us believe them, who have nothing to contribute themselves except speeches, who leave all the danger to others and, if they are successful, will not be properly grateful, while if they fail in any way they will involve their friends in their ruin.

‘No doubt there is someone sitting here who is delighted at having been chosen for the command and who, entirely for his own selfish reasons, will urge you to make the expedition – and all the more so because he is still too young for his post. He wants to be admired for the horses he keeps, and because these things are expensive, he hopes to make some profit out of his appointment. Beware of him, too, and do not give him the chance of endangering the state in order to live a brilliant life of his own. Remember that with such people maladministration of public affairs goes with personal extravagance; remember, too, that this is an important matter, and not the sort of thing that can be decided upon and acted upon by a young man in a hurry.

‘It is with real alarm that I see this young man’s party sitting at his side in this assembly all called in to support him, and I, on my side, call for the support of the older men among you. If any one of you is sitting next to one of his supporters, do not allow yourself to be brow-beaten or be frightened of being called a coward if you do not vote for war. Do not, like them, indulge in hopeless passions for what is not there. Remember that success comes from foresight and not much is ever gained simply by wishing for it. Our country is now on the verge of the greatest danger she has ever known. Think of her, hold up your hands against this proposal, and vote in favour of leaving the Sicilians alone to enjoy their own country and manage their own affairs within the boundaries (perfectly satisfactory to us) which now divide us from them – the Ionian sea, for the voyage along the coast, and the Sicilian sea, for the direct voyage. And let the Egestaeans, in particular, be told that, just as they started their war with the Selinuntines without consulting Athens, so they must themselves be responsible for making peace.; and in the future we are not making allies, as we have done in the past, of the kind of people who have to be helped by us in their misfortunes, but who can do nothing for us when we need help from them.

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Nicias speech against, criticism of Alcibiades*

**Thucydides, 6.15 (p.418-19) (Launching of the Sicilian Expedition 415)**

After this speech of Nicias most of the Athenians who came forward to speak were in favour of making the expedition and not going back on the decision which had already been passed, though a few spoke on the other side. The most ardent supporter of the expedition was Alcibiades, the son of Clinias. He wanted to oppose Nicias, with whom he had never seen eye to eye in politics and who had just now made a personal attack on him in his speech. Stronger motives still were his desire to hold the command and his hopes that it would be through him that Sicily and Carthage would be conquered – success which would at the same time bring him personally both wealth and honour. For he was very much in the public eye, and his enthusiasm for horse-breeding and other extravagances went beyond what his fortune could supply. This, in fact, later on had much to do with the downfall of the city of Athens. For most people became frightened at a quality in him which was beyond the normal and showed itself both in the lawlessness of his private life and habits and in the spirit in which he acted on all occasions. They thought that he was aiming at becoming a dictator, and so they turned against him. Although in a public capacity his conduct of the war was excellent, his way of life made him objectionable to everyone as a person; thus they entrusted their affairs to other hands, and before long ruined the city.

On this occasion Alcibiades came forward and gave the following advice to the Athenians:

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Alcibiades*

**Thucydides, 6.24 (p.425) (Launching of the Sicilian Expedition 415)**

In making this speech Nicias thought that either the Athenians would be put off by the scale of the armament required, or, if was forced to make the expedition, he would in this way sail as safely as possible.

The Athenians, however, far from losing their appetite for the voyage because of the difficulties in preparing for it, became more enthusiastic about it than ever, and just the opposite of what Nicias took place. His advice was regarded as excellent, and it was now thought that the expedition was an absolute safe thing. There was a passion for the enterprise which affected everyone alike. The older men thought that they would either conquer the places against which they were sailing or, in any case, with such a large force, could come to no harm; the young had a longing for the sights and experiences of distant places, and were confident that they would return safely; the general masses and the average soldier himself saw the prospect of getting pay for the time being and of adding to the empire so as to secure permanent paid employment in future. The result of this excessive enthusiasm of the majority was that they few who actually were opposed to the expedition were afraid of being thought unpatriotic if they voted against it, and therefore kept quiet.

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Alcibiades, public support*

**Thucydides, 6.31 (p.428-429) (Launching of the Sicilian Expedition 415)**

At this moment when they were really on the point of parting from each other with all the risks ahead, the danger of the situation came more home to them than it had at the time when they voted for the expedition. Nevertheless they were heartened with the strength that had and with the sight of the quantities of every kind of armament displayed before their eyes. As for the foreigners and the rest of the crowd, they came merely to see the show and to admire the incredible ambition of the thing.

Certainly this expedition that first set sail was by a long way the most costly and the finest looking force of Hellenic troops that up to that time had ever come from a single city. In number of ships and hoplites it was no greater than the force which Pericles took to Epidaurus and the same force which went against Potidaea with Hagnon, which consisted of 4,000 Athenian hoplites, 300 cavalry, and 100 triremes, with the addition of 50 more ships from Lesbos and Chios and many allied troops as well. That force, however, went only on a short voyage and was equipped in the ordinary way., whereas this expedition was planned with a view to its being away for a long time and was equipped for both kinds of fighting, whichever should be required, both with warships and with round troops. The fleet was in a high state of efficiency and had cost a lot of money to both the captains and the State. Every sailor received a drachma a day from the Treasury, which also provided empty ships (sixty fighting ships and forty for the transport of hoplites) all manned by the best crews available. The captains, too, offered extra pay, in addition to that provided by the State to the *thranitae* and the rest of the crews, and they went to great expense om figure-heads and general fittings, every one of them being as anxious as possible that his own ship should stand out from the rest for its fine looks and for its speed. As for the land forces, they had been chosen from the best men who were liable for calling-up, and there had been much rivalry and much pains spent by everyone on his armour and personal equipment. It therefore that there was not only all this competition among the Athenians themselves, each with regard to his own particular piece of responsibility, but to rest of Hellas it looked more like a demonstration of the power and the greatness of Athens than an expeditionary force setting out against the enemy. It would have been found that a grand total of many talents of money were being taken out of the city, if one reckoned up the sums spent by the State and the private expense of those who were serving – a total which would include what the State had already spent and what was being sent out in the hands of the generals, what individuals had spent on equipment, what the captains had spent and were still to spend on their ships; and in addition to all of this there would have to be included the money for private expenses which everyone was likely to have taken with him over and above his pay from the State on an expedition which was to last for a long time, and also what the soldiers or traders took with them for purpose of exchange. And what made this expedition so famous was not only its astonishing daring and the brilliant show it made, but also it great preponderance of strength over against whom it set out, and the fact that this voyage, the longest ever made by an expedition from Athens, was being undertaken with hopes for the future which, when compared with the present position, were of the most far-reaching kind.

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Size and Cost*

**Thucydides, 6.82-83 (p.460-462) (The Debate at Camarina 415/4)**

‘The reason we came here was to renew the former alliance, but now, after this attack from the Syracusan, I am forced to speak about our empire and the good reasons we have for holding it. As a matter of fact the Syracusan representative himself put forward the best piece of evidence on this point when he said that the Ionians are always the enemies of the Dorians. This is quite true. Now, we are Ionians and the Peloponnesians are Dorians; they are more numerous than we are and they live close to us. We therefore looked about for the best means of preserving our independence, and after the Persian war, by which time we had built our navy, we broke free from the Spartan empire and from Spartan leadership. They had no more right to give us orders than we had to give orders to them, except that at the time they were stronger. We ourselves were appointed to the leadership of those who had previously been under the King of Persia, and we continue to manage their affairs. Our view is that in this way we are least likely to fall under the domination of the Peloponnesians, since we have the power to defend ourselves, nor, if one considers the real facts of the situation, do we think that we have done anything wrong in subjugating the Ionians and the islanders, who according to the Syracusans, are our oppressed kinsmen. The fact is that these kinsmen joined the Persians in attacking their mother country – namely, Athens – and, unlike us, when we abandoned our city, did not have the courage to revolt, which would have meant losing their property. Instead of this they chose to be slaves themselves and wanted to make us slaves too.

‘We therefor deserve the empire which we have, partly because we supplied to the cause of Hellas the largest fleet and a courage that never looked back, while these subjects of our harmed us by being just as ready to act in the service of Persia, partly because we wanted to have the strength to hold our own in relation to the Peloponnesians. We are not making any dramatic statements such as that we have a right to rule because single-handed we overthrew the foreign invader, or that the risks we took were for the liberty of these subjects of ours any more than for the liberty of everyone, ourselves included; no one can be blamed for looking after his own safety in his own way. So now it is for our own security that we are in Sicily, and we see that here your interests are the same as ours. This we can prove from what the Syracusans are saying against us and from the suspicions of us which you yourselves, in your rather over-anxious mood, no doubt entertain; because we know that when people are frightened and suspicions, they enjoy for the moment an argument that fits in with their feeling, but in the end, when it comes to the point, they act in accordance with their interests.

‘We have told you that it is because of fear that we hold our empire in Hellas, and it is also because of fear that we have come here to settle matters for our own security, together with our friends; not to enslave anybody, but rather to prevent anybody from being enslaved.

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Athenian Justification*

**Thucydides, 6.89-91 (p.466-469) (Alcibiades in Sparta 415/4)**

‘The first thing I must do is to deal with the prejudice which you feel against me, so that you may listen to matters of common interest without being biased by any suspicion of me personally. My ancestors used to hold the position of official representatives for Sparta in Athens; because of some misunderstanding they gave up this position, but I myself took it up again and put my services at your disposal, particularly with regard to the losses which you sustained at Pylos. I remained anxious to help you throughout, but when you made peace with Athens you negotiated through my personal enemies, thus putting them in a stronger position and discrediting me. You have no right therefore to blame me for the injuries you suffered when I turned to Mantinea and to Argos and opposed you in various other ways. And if in those days when you were actually suffering any of you were unreasonably angry with me, the time has now come for you to look at the matter in its true light and to change your views. Or if anyone thought the worse of me because I was rather on the side of the people, here again he should see that this was no good reason for being against me. My family has always been opposed to dictators; democracy is the name given to any force that opposes absolute power; and so we have continued to act as the leaders of the common people. Besides, since democracy was the form of government in Athens, it was necessary in most respects to conform to the conditions that prevailed. However in the face of the prevailing political indiscipline, we tried to be more reasonable. There have been people in the past, just as there are now, who used to try to lead the masses into evil ways. It is people of this sort who have banished me. But we were leaders of the State as a whole, and our principles were that we should all join together in preserving the form of government which had been handed down to us under which the city was most great and most free. As for democracy, those of us with any sense at all knew what that meant, and I just as much as any. Indeed, I am well equipped to make an attack on it; but nothing new can be said of a system which is generally recognized as absurd. As for changing the system, that appeared to us as unsafe while you were engaged in war with us.

‘So much for things which have created prejudice against me. I now want you to listen to what I have to say on the subject which you are to discuss – a subject on which I am perhaps peculiarly well qualified to speak. We sailed to Sicily to conquer first, if possible, the Sicilians, and after them the Hellenes in Italy; next we intended to attack the Carthaginian empire and Carthage herself. Finally, if all or most of these plans were successful, we were going to make our assault on the Peloponnese, bringing with us all the additional Hellenic forces which we should have acquired in the west and hiring as mercenaries great numbers of native troops – Iberians and others who are now recognized as being the best fighting material to be found in those parts. In addition to our existing fleet we should have built many more triremes, since Italy is rich in timber, and with all of them we should have blockaded the coast of the Peloponnese, while at the same time our army would be operating on land against your cities, taking some by assault and others by siege. In this way we hoped that the war would easily be brought to a successful conclusion and after that we should be masters of the entire Hellenic world. As for money and provisions, there could be no fear of them running short, since sufficient supplies were to be provided by our new conquests in the west without touching our revenues here in Hellas.

‘You have now heard from the man who knows most about it what were in fact the objects of the present expedition; and the generals who are left will, if they can, continue just the same carry out these plans. What you must now realize is that, unless you help her, Sicily will be lost. The Sicilians lack the experience which Athens has, but might even now survive if they all united together. The Syracusans themselves, however, whose total force has already been defeated in one battle and who are at the same time blockaded by sea, will not be able to hold out against the Athenian forces now in Sicily. And if Syracuse falls, all Sicily falls with it, and Italy soon afterwards. It would not then be long before you were confronted with the dangers which I have just told you threatened you from the west. So do not imagine that it is only the question of Sicily that is under discussion; it will be the question of the Peloponnese unless you quickly take the following measures: you must send out to Sicily a force of troops that are able to row the ships themselves and to take the field as hoplites as soon as they land ; and – what I consider even more useful than the troops – you must send out as commander a regular Spartan officer to organize the troops that are there already and to force into the service those who are shirking their duty. This is the way to put fresh heart into your friends and make the waverers less frightened of joining in. Then, too, the war in Hellas must be carried on more openly This will have the effect of stiffening Syracusan resistance, when they see that you are taking an interest in them, and will make it harder for the Athenians to reinforce their army in Sicily. And you must fortify Decelea in Attica; it is the thing of which the Athenians have always been most frightened, and they think that of all the adversities of the war this is the only one that they have not experienced. The surest way of harming an enemy is to find out certainly what form of attack he is most frightened of and then to employ it against him. He is likely to know himself more accurately than anyone else where his danger lies, and that is why he is frightened. As for what you will gain and what you will force Athens to lose if you fortify Decelea, I shall merely summarize the most important points, omitting many others. Most of the property in the area will come into your hands, some by capture, some without your having to move a finger. Athens will immediately be deprived of her revenues from the silver mines at Laurium and from what she gets at present from the land and from the law-courts. Most important of all, she will lose her tribute from the allies, since they will pay it in much less regularly and will be cease to be overawed by Athens herself once they see that you are now really making war seriously.

*Peloponnesian War, Sicilian Expedition, Arguments for Spartan intervention, Alcibiades*

**Thucydides, 7.18 (p.487-488) (Letter of Nicias 414/3)**

The Spartans also prepared to invade Attica, as they had already decided to do and as they had been asked to do by the Syracusans and Corinthians, who, when they heard that Athens was sending reinforcements to Sicily, hoped that this would be stopped by an invasion. Alcibiades, too, was constantly urging them to fortify Decelea and to carry on the war with vigour. But what chiefly encouraged the Spartans to act with energy was their belief that Athens, with two wars on her hands – one against them and one against the Sicilians – would be now easier to crush. There was also the fact the Spartans considered that Athens had been the first to break the peace treaty. In the first war they thought that the fault had been more on their side, partly because the Thebans had entered Plataea in peace time and partly because, in spite of the provisions in the previous treaty that there should be no recourse to arms if arbitration was offered, they themselves had not accepted the Athenian offer of arbitration. They therefore thought that there was some justice in the misfortunes they had suffered and took to heart the disaster of Pylos and their other defeats. But now, in addition to the constant raids from Pylos, the Athenians had come out with thirty ships from Argos and laid waste part of Epidaurus and Prasiae and other places; also whenever any dispute arose on doubtful points in the treaty, it was Sparta who had offered to submit to arbitration and Athens who had refused the offer. It was now Athens therefore, the Spartans thought, who was in in the wrong through having committed exactly the same fault as theirs had been before, and they went into the war with enthusiasm. This winter they sent round to their allies for supplies of iron and got ready all the other materials for building fortifications. At the same time they organized a force of their own and conscripted other forces from the rest of the Peloponnese to be sent out in merchant ships to the help of their allies in Sicily. So the winter ended, and the eighteenth year of this war recorded by Thucydides.

*Peloponnesian War, Second Spartan invasion of Attica*

**Thucydides, 7.27-28 (p.493-495) (Fortification of Decelea 413)**

In this same summer there arrived in Athens 1,300 peltasts from the Dii, one of the Thracian tribes who are armed with short swords. They were meant to have sailed to Sicily with Demosthenes, and, as they had arrived too late for this, the Athenians resolved to send them back to Thrace, where they came from, since it seemed too expensive – each man was paid a drachma a day – to retain their services for dealing with the attacks made on them from Decelea.

The position was that, ever since Decelea had been first fortified by the whole of the invading army during the summer and had then been used as a hostile post against the country, with garrisons from the various cities relieving each other at fixed intervals, Athens had suffered a great deal. Indeed, the occupation of Decelea, resulting, as it did, in so much devastation of property and loss of manpower, was one of the chief reasons for the decline of Athenian power. The previous invasions had not lasted for long and had not prevented the Athenians from enjoying the use of their land for the rest of the time; now, however, the enemy were on top of them throughout the year; sometimes there were extra troops sent in to invade the country; sometimes it was only the normal garrison overrunning the land and making raids to secure supplies; and the Spartan King Agis was there in person, treating the whole operation as a major campaign. The Athenians therefore suffered great losses. They were deprived of the whole of their country, more than 20,000 slaves, the majority of whom were skilled workmen, deserted, and all the sheep and farm animals were lost. As the cavalry rode out to Decelea every day to make attacks on the enemy or to patrol the country, the horses were lamed on the rough ground and by the continuous hard work to which they were put, or else were wounded by the enemy. Then the supplies of food from Euboea, which previously had been brought in by the quicker route overland from Oropus through Decelea, now, at great expense, had to go by sea round Sunium. Every single thing that the city needed had to be imported, so that instead of a city it became a fortress. By day detachments took it in turn to mount guard on the battlements, by night all except the cavalry were on duty, some at the various armed posts and others on the walls. So, summer and winter, there was no end to their hardships. What wore them down more than anything else was the fact that they had two wars on their hands at once, and indeed they had got themselves into such a state of obstinate resolution that no one would have believed it possible if he had been told of it before it actually happened. For it was incredible that, besieged by the Peloponnesians who were based on a fortress in Attica, they should not only leave Sicily, but actually stay on and lay siege in just the same way to Syracuse, a city which was in itself as big as Athens, and should give the Hellenic world such an astonishing demonstration of their power and of their daring; how astonishing can be seen from the fact that at the beginning of the war some thought that, if the Peloponnesians invaded Attica, Athens might survive for a year, and while others put the figure at two or three years, no one imagined she could last for more than that; yet now, in the seventeenth year after the first invasion, having suffered every kind of hardship already in the war, here were the Athenians going out to Sicily and taking upon themselves another war on the same scale as that which they had been waging all this time with the Peloponnesians.

For all these reasons – the great damage done by the occupation of Decelea and the other heavy expenses which fell upon them – the Athenians were becoming embarrassed financially, and it was about this time that they imposed upon their subjects, a tax of five per cent on all imports and exports by sea, thinking that this would bring in more money. Expenditure was not the same as it had been, but had grown bigger as the war grew bigger, while revenue was declining.

*Peloponnesian War, Impact of Spartan invasion Decelea, Athenian strategy*

**Thucydides, 8.2 (p.539) (Alarm at Athens 413/2)**

Next winter the whole of Hella, after the great disaster in Sicily, turned immediately against Athens. Those who had not been allied to either side thought that, even though they were not asked, they ought not to keep out of the war any longer and should go against the Athenians of their own accord, since the Athenians, in the view of each state, would have gone against them, if they had been successful in Sicily, and at the same time they thought that the war would soon be over and that they would gain credit for taking part in it. And those who were allies of Sparta were all the more eager than ever to be freed quickly from all the sufferings they had endured so long. In particular the subjects of Athens were all ready to revolt; indeed they were more ready than able, since they were incapable of taking a dispassionate view of things, and would not admit the possibility that Athens might survive the coming summer. In Sparta all this produced a mood of confidence, and what was even more encouraging was the probability that in the spring they would be joined by their allies from Sicily in great force and now with the additional advantage of the navy which they had had to build. And, so with good reasons for confidence in every direction, the Spartans determined to throw themselves into the war without any reservations, calculating that, when once it was successfully over, they would be free for the future from the kind of danger which might have beset them if Athens had added the resources of Sicily to her own, and that, when the power of Athens had been destroyed, they themselves would be left secure in the leadership of all Hellas.

*Peloponnesian War, Athenian defeat, Athenian allies deserting*

**Thucydides, 8.6 (p.541-542) (Beginning of Persian Intervention 411)**

Thus the Chians and Tissaphernes were acting together for the same object. And about the same time there arrived at Sparta, Calligeitus, the son of Laophon, a Megarian, and Timagoras, the son of Athenagoras, a Cyzicene, both exiles from their own cities, living at the court of Pharnabazus, the son of Pharnaces. They had been sent by Pharnabazus to try to get a fleet to operate in the Hellespont, so that he might do himself just what Tissaphernes wanted to do – that is to say, procure the tribute by getting the cities in his province to revolt from the Athenians, and gain the credit for bringing the Spartans into alliance with the King.

Each of the two parties – that of Pharnabazus and that of Tissaphernes – was trying to make its own separate arrangements, and so there was much canvassing in Sparta about whether a fleet and army should be sent first to Ionia and Chios or to the Hellespont. The Spartans, however, were very much on the side of the Chians and of Tissaphernes, who were also supported by Alcibiades who was a family friend of Endius, one of the ephors, and on very good terms with him. It was because of this family connection that his house adopted its Laconic name; ‘Alcibiades’, in fact, was used as a surname by Endius. Nevertheless the Spartans first sent Phrynis, one of the perioeci, to Chios to find out whether they had as many ships as they said and whether the city was in other respects as strong as it had been made out to be. Phrynis came back with the news that all this was just as they had been told, and they then immediately made an alliance with the Chians and the Erythraeans and voted to send them forty ships, assuming there to be already sixty ships available on the spot, according to what the Chians had said. Their first intention was to send ten of these ships themselves, with their admiral Melanchridas they sent Chalcideus, and instead of the ten ships they only equipped five in Laconia. So the winter ended the nineteenth year of this war recorded by Thucydides.

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan action in Ionia, Persian intervention*

**Thucydides, 8.9 (p.543) (Beginning of Persian Intervention 411)**

They were now anxious to start the voyage, but it was the date of the Isthmian festival, and the Corinthians were reluctant to sail with them until they had celebrated it. Agis was quite prepared to make the expedition his own personal responsibility, so that the Corinthians would not be in the position of breaking the Isthmian truce, but the Corinthians would not agree to this and matters were held up. During this time the Athenians began to realize what was happening in Chios and sent Aristocrates, one of their generals, there and confronted the Chians with the evidence. When they denied it, the Athenians ordered them to show their good faith by sending ships to join their fleet, and the Chians sent seven. The reason why these ships were sent was because the general mass pf the people at Chios knew nothing of the negotiations, and the oligarchical party were not yet ready to have the people against them until they had something solid to depend upon, and, because of the delay that had taken place, they were no longer expecting the Peloponnesians to arrive.

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan action in Ionia, Persian intervention*

**Thucydides, 8.17-18 (p.547) (Beginning of Persian Intervention 411)**

Chalcideus and Alcibiades had driven Strombichides into Samos. Then, after arming the crews of the ships from the Peloponnese and leaving the at Chios, they recruited rowers from Chios to take their place and, manning twenty other ships as well, set sail for Miletus to start a revolt there. Alcibiades, who was on good terms with the leading people in Miletus, wanted to bring the city over before the ships from the Peloponnese arrived and so, by organizing revolt in as many cities as possible with the aid of the Chian forces and of Chalcideus, gain all the credit for the Chians and for himself and Chalcideus and, as he promised, Endius, who had sent the expedition out. So for most of their voyage they escaped observation and started the revolt in Miletus, arriving there a little before Strombichides and Thrasicles, who had just come from Athens with twelve ships and who had joined in the pursuit. The Athenians sailed up close on their heels with nineteen ships and, as the people of Miletus would not receive them, took up their position at Lade, the island off Miletus. Directly after the revolt of Miletus the first alliance between the King of Persia and the Spartans was concluded by Tissaphernes and Chalcideus. It was as follows:

‘The Spartans and their allies made a treaty of alliance with the King and Tissaphernes on the following terms:

‘All the territory and all the cities held now by the King or held in the past by the King’s ancestors shall be the King’s. As for the money and everything else which has been coming in to the Athenians from their cities, the King and the Spartans and their allies shall co-operate in preventing the Athenians form receiving the money or anything else.

‘The war with Athens shall be carried on jointly by the King and the Spartans and their allies. It shall not be permitted to bring the war with the Athenians to an end unless both parties are agreed, the King on his side, and the Spartans and their allies on their side. Any people who revolt from the King shall be regarded as enemies by the Spartans and their allies; and any people who revolt from the Spartans and their allies shall, in the same way, be regarded as enemies to the King.’

*Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades, Spartan-Persian Alliance*

**Thucydides, 8.29 (p.554) (Beginning of Persian Intervention 411)**

Next winter when Tissaphernes had seen to the garrisoning of Iasus he went on to Miletus, and, as he had promised at Sparta, gave a month’s pay to all the ships at the rate of an Attic drachma a day for each man. He proposed paying only three obols for the future, until he had consulted the King, but would, he said, pay the full drachma if that was the King’s wish. Hermocrates, the Syracusan commander, protested against this; no stand was made about the pay by Therimenes, who was not an admiral, and was merely sailing with the fleet to hand it over to Astyochus. An agreement was reached by which an extra sum equal to five ships’ pay was to be given, in addition to the three obols a day for each man. For fifty-five ships Tissaphernes was paying thirty talents a month, and to the rest, above that number, the payment was in the same proportion.

*Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades, Spartan-Persian Alliance, Persian Money*

**Thucydides, 8.37 (p.557-558) (Beginning of Persian Intervention 411)**

‘An agreement made between the Spartans and the allies with King Darius and the sons of the King and with Tissaphernes for a treaty of friendship on the following terms:

‘Neither the Spartans nor the allies of the Spartans shall make war against or do any damage to the country or the cities which now belong to King Darius or did belong to his father or to his ancestors.

‘No tribute shall be taken from these cities either by the Spartans or by the allies of the Spartans.

‘Neither King Darius nor any of the subjects of the King shall make war against or do any damage to the Spartans or to the allies. If the Spartans or their allies should need help from the King, or if the King should need help from the Spartans or their allies, it shall be right and proper to take whatever steps are decided upon between the two parties. Both parties shall make war jointly against the Athenians and their allies; and if peace is made, both parties shall make peace jointly.

‘All troops that are in the King’s country, by the King’s request, shall have their expenses paid by the King.

‘If any of the states who have made this agreement with the King shall attack the King’s country, the others shall take all practicable measures to stop them and defend the King. If anyone in the King’s country or in the countries under the King’s control shall attack the country of the Spartans or their allies, the King shall take all practicable measures to stop this and to defend the Spartans and their allies.’

*Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades, Spartan-Persian Alliance*

**Thucydides, 8.52 (p.568) (The Oligarchic Coup 411)**

After this Alcibiades went on with his attempts to persuade Tissaphernes to become the friend of the Athenians. Tissaphernes himself was afraid of the Peloponnesians because they had more ships on the spot than the Athenians; on the other hand, he was still willing to be won over, if he could see his way to it, particularly now that he was aware of the disagreement expressed by the Peloponnesians at Cnidus about the Treaty of Therimenes. The quarrel about this had taken place already, since at this time the Peloponnesians where in Rhodes. On this subject the argument used earlier by Alcibiades, about the Peloponnesians liberating all the cities, had been proven right by the statement made by Lichas to the effect that it was intolerable for any agreement to stand under which the King was to rule over all the states that had ever been ruled over in the past by himself or by his fathers. Alcibiades, therefore, with so much to gain or lose by his efforts, was constantly in touch with Tissaphernes, and did everything he could to bring him round.

*Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades, Spartan-Persian Alliance, Division*

**Thucydides, 8.87 (p.589-590) (The Oligarchic Coup 411)**

In the same summer Tissaphernes made ready to go to Aspendus to fetch the Phoenician fleet, and invited Lichas to accompany him. This was just at the time when, because of his general behaviour, and particularly because of the recall of Alcibiades, he was most unpopular with the Peloponnesians, who thought that he was now quite openly collaborating with the Athenians, and Tissaphernes wanted, or make it look as though he wanted, to clear himself of these suspicions. He said that he would leave behind his deputy Tamos with instructions to provide pay for the forces during his absence. Different explanations are given, and it is not easy to be sure what his intention was in going to Aspendus and then, when he got their, in not bringing back the ships. It is certain that 147 Phoenician ships came as far as Aspendus; various conjectures have been made to account for their not coming on from there. According to one view he went away in accordance with his original plan of wearing down the Peloponnesian forces; and certainly Tamos, whose job it was, paid them worse instead of better. Others say that his purpose in bringing the Phoenicians to Aspendus was to make money out of the crews, whom he never intended to employ in any case, and who would pay to be discharged. Another theory is that it was because of the attacks being made against him in Sparta, and that he wanted to have it said that he was not in the wrong, but had actually set out to fetch a fleet which really did have it full complement of men. I myself feel quite sure that his motives in not bringing up the fleet were to wear down the Hellenic forces and to keep matters in suspense; their efficiency was being impaired during all the time he took going down to Aspendus and waiting about there; and he was keeping the two sides evenly balanced, by not committing himself to either side and so giving it the advantage. Certainly his intervention, so long as there was nothing irresolute about it, could, if had really wanted it, have put an end to the war. By bringing up the fleet he would in all probability have given victory to the Spartans who already faced the Athenians with a naval force that was equal to theirs rather than inferior. Then there is a most convincing piece of evidence in the excuse he gave for not bringing the ships. What he said was that fewer ships had been collected than the King had ordered; but in that case he could surely have gained all the more credit by not spending much of the King’s money and by using smaller means to effect the same result.

However, whatever is real intentions were, Tissaphernes went to Aspendus and met the Phoenicians; and the Peloponnesians sent out at his request, supposedly to fetch the fleet, a Spartan called Philip with two triremes.

*Peloponnesian War, Spartan-Persian Alliance, Division*