

**Ancient History**

**Period Study: Relations Between Greek States and Between Greek and Non-Greek States, 492-404 BC**

**The *Pentecontaetia***

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

This hand out is designed to be used alongside your **Topic 2: Greece in Conflict 479-446 BC** booklet



**NAME:**

**The *Pentecontaetia***

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The *Pentecontaetia* is the name given to the period of Greek history between the defeat of the Persian invasion 479 and the start of direct conflict between Athens and Sparta in 432 BC. The term was used by **Thucydides** and referred to his account of this period in his work *History of the Peloponnesian War*. *Pentecontaetia* itself means ‘the account of the fifty years’ although it would actually cover slightly less than 50 years. This period saw the rapid growth in Athenian power after the defeat of Persia in 479 as Athens built an alliance called the **Delian League** which would come increasingly to look like an Athenian empire. Athenian power would peak around 450 BC as the destructive **Peloponnesian Wars** began and ultimately destroyed Athenian power.

The whole of the *Pentecontaetia* is a prescribed source that you will need to be able to use as evidence in the exam. We will look at specific sections in the topic 2 booklet but you will need to read and analyse the *Pentecontaetia* before we do this in class. To help you start to read the source, go to the website at the top of the page and summarise (in your own words) the three phases of the *Pentecontaetia* (this is about a third of the way down the article).

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| **First Phase** | **Dates:** |
| **Summary:** | |

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| **Second Phase** | **Dates:** |
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| **Third Phase** | **Dates:** |
| **Summary:** | |

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

[89] 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.

[90] 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. [91] 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.

[92] 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.

[93] 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 hast 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.

[94] 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. [95] 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.

[96] 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.

[97] 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.

[98] 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. [99] 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 share 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.

[100] 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 say 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.

[101] 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.

[102] 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.

[103] 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.

[104] 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.

[105] 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. [106] 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.

[107] 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 under 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.

[108] 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.

[109] 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. [110] 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.

[111] 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 the 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.

[112] 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.

[113] 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.

[114] 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.

[115] 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.

[116] 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. [117] 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*

[118] 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.

**Questions**

1. Briefly explain in your own words how the walls around Athens came to be built
2. What evidence is there that Athens’ walls gave the city (and Themistocles in particular) greater confidence?
3. Why was the decision also made to build walls to and around Piraeus (Athens’ main port)?
4. Who was Pausanias and why was he an unpopular figure with the other members of the Hellenic League?
5. How did the Athenians come to take over leadership of the Hellenic League? (known after this point as the Delian League)
6. Where was the treasury of the Delian League located and why do you think this was?
7. Why does Thucydides say that he wants to give an account of the actions of the Delian League?
8. Who lead the military operations of the Delian League at its start?
9. What happened to the Islands of Naxos and what does this tell you about the nature of the Delian League?
10. What prevented the Spartans from invading Attica when they were asked to by the people of Thasos? Can you find the date of this event (not in the text)
11. Why did the Spartans ask the Athenians for support only to send them back home?
12. Why did the Corinthians “begin to conceive such a bitter hatred for Athens”?
13. Who appeared to be in the stronger position, Athens or Corinth?
14. What took place at Tanagra and why was this such a significant moment?
15. What did the Athenians go on to capture shortly after the Battle of Tanagra?
16. How successful was the Athenian attempt to take over Egypt?
17. Why did the Athenians have to sign a treaty which forced them to evacuate the entire region of Boeotia?
18. Which city-state switched sides (again) and revolted against the Athenians?
19. How did Athens respond to war between the Greek city states of Samos and Miletus (both parts of the Delian League)?
20. The growth in Athenian power during the period of the *Pentecontaetia* would be a major cause of the approaching war between Athens and Sparta, does Thucydides appear to hold Athens or Sparta more responsible for this?