

# ANCIENT GREECE



**SAMUEL CAVNOUDIAS**  
**JOSHUA McDERMOTT**  
**DIANA MILLAR**  
**NICHOLAS VLAHOGIANNIS**

**HTV**

First published 2018 by:

**HTAV**  
PUBLISHING

History Teachers' Association of Victoria  
Suite 105  
134–136 Cambridge Street  
Collingwood VIC 3066  
Australia

Phone 03 9417 3422  
Fax 03 9419 4713  
Web [www.htav.asn.au](http://www.htav.asn.au)

Chapter 1 © Diana Millar 2018  
Chapter 2 © Samuel Cavnoudias 2018  
Chapters 3 and 4, In Focus © Joshua McDermott 2018  
Chapters 5 and 6 © Nicholas Vlahogiannis 2018

*Ancient Greece*  
by Samuel Cavnoudias, Joshua McDermott,  
Diana Millar, Nicholas Vlahogiannis.

ISBN 978 0 9875294 7 3 (print)  
ISBN 978 1 875585 33 5 (ebook)

Publisher: Georgina Argus  
Editor: Philip Bryan  
Typesetting and design: Sally Bond

Series design by: Kim Ferguson  
[www.kimferguson.com.au](http://www.kimferguson.com.au)

Printed by: Print Impressions  
[www.printimpressions.com.au](http://www.printimpressions.com.au)

Cover image: MidoSemsem/Shutterstock.com

*The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the HTAV. While reasonable checks have been made to ensure the accuracy of statements and advice, no responsibility can be accepted for errors or omissions, however caused. No responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of material in this publication is accepted by the authors or the HTAV.*



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

**Reproduction and communication for educational purposes:**

This publication is protected by the Australian Copyright Act 1968 (the Act). The Act allows a maximum of one chapter or 10 per cent of the pages of this publication, whichever is the greater, to be reproduced and/or communicated by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) under the Act. For details of the CAL licence for educational institutions contact:

Copyright Agency Limited  
Level 11, 66 Goulburn Street,  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Telephone: (02) 9394 7600 | Facsimile: (02) 9394 7601 |  
Email: [info@copyright.com.au](mailto:info@copyright.com.au)

**Reproduction and communication for other purposes:**

Except as permitted under the Act (for example: a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review) no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the History Teachers' Association of Victoria. All inquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.

*Every effort has been made to trace and acknowledge copyright. However, should any infringement have occurred, the publishers offer their apologies and invite the copyright owners to contact them.*

# CONTENTS

About the Authors.....	IX
Historical Understanding.....	IX
Using this Book.....	X
Acknowledgements .....	XII

## A

### LIVING IN ANCIENT GREECE (800–454 BCE)..... 1

Timeline.....	2
Overview .....	6

### CHAPTER 1: THE ARCHAIC AGE IN GREECE ..... 10

Overview .....	12
<i>Map: Greece</i> .....	12
The Geography of Ancient Greece.....	14
Climate.....	15
Greece in the Bronze Age and the Dark Age .....	15
Influence of the Middle East on Greece .....	16
The Polis.....	17
<i>Map: Ancient Greece Topography</i> .....	18
Social Groups in the Polis.....	20
The Role of Men.....	20
The Role of Women .....	21
Economic Features of the Polis .....	23
Methods of Agricultural Production .....	23
Trade Around the Mediterranean.....	24
Naucratis.....	25
<i>Map: Location of Naucratis</i> .....	25
Social and Economic Changes .....	26
Tyrannies.....	27
How Tyrants Gained Power .....	28
How Tyrants Ruled .....	28
How Tyrants Lost Power .....	29
Oligarchies .....	30
Colonisation .....	31
<i>Map: Greek and Phoenician Colonies</i> .....	32
<i>Historical Significance: Results of Colonisation</i> .....	33
Slavery.....	34
Spartan Helots .....	35
Conclusion.....	36

Periander, The Tyrant of Corinth



### CHAPTER 2: VALOUR, DUTY, SACRIFICE: SPARTA ..... 38

Overview .....	40
Introduction .....	42
<i>Map: Location of Sparta</i> .....	42



First Messenian War (734–724 BCE) ..... 43

Second Messenian War (685–668 BCE) ..... 43

The Great Rhetra and Spartan Government ..... 44

*Historical Significance: Results of the Messenian Wars* ..... 44

*Feature: The Legend of Lycurgus* ..... 45

*Historical Significance: The New Spartan Government* ..... 46

The Kings ..... 46

The Gerousia ..... 47

The Ephors ..... 48

The Apella: The Spartan Assembly ..... 50

Sparta: Monarchy, Democracy or Oligarchy? ..... 51

The Social Structure of Sparta ..... 52

Spartiates ..... 53

    The *Syssition* ..... 54

The Perioikoi ..... 55

The Helots ..... 55

    The Repression of the Helots ..... 56

    The Helots and the Spartan Campaign of Terror ..... 57

Early Life and Education ..... 58

    The Agoge ..... 58

    Adolescent Education ..... 60

    Military Service ..... 62

Spartan Warfare ..... 63

    The Spartan Hoplites ..... 63

Girls and Women ..... 64

    Marriage and Family Life ..... 65

*Historical Significance: The Reforms of Lycurgus* ..... 67

The Spartan Economy ..... 67

    Commerce, Trade and Wealth ..... 68

    Taxation ..... 69

*Feature: Attitude to Wealth* ..... 70

*Feature: Conflicting Perspectives on the Spartan Economy* ..... 71

    Perioikoi and Industry ..... 71

    Land ..... 72

    Economic Inequality ..... 73

    Economics and Lycurgus' 'Perfect State' ..... 75

Religion ..... 76

Conclusion ..... 78

**CHAPTER 3: REVOLUTION, DEMOCRACY, DEBATE: ATHENS ..... 80**

Overview ..... 82

Before Archons and Tyrants ..... 84

    Land and Coin ..... 84

*Map: Location of Athens* ..... 84

    Draconian Laws ..... 85

    Solon the Law-Giver ..... 86

*Feature: Solon's Constitution* ..... 87

*Historical Significance: Solon and His Reforms* ..... 88

    Enlightened Tyrants ..... 88

    Peisistratus: Tyrant or Champion of the Poor? ..... 89

        Peisistratus' Reign ..... 89

*Feature: Trade: The Athenian Wares* ..... 91

    Tyrants: Kings or Demagogues? ..... 92

    From Tyranny to Revolution ..... 92

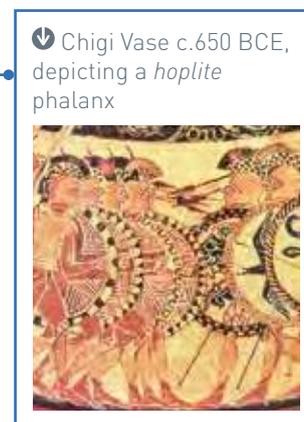
    The Athenian Revolution ..... 93

Blood in the Agora .....	93
Tyrannicide: Harmodius and Aristogeiton .....	94
Chaos and Disorder .....	95
Isagoras vs the Common People .....	95
<i>Feature: Ancient Perspectives</i>	
— <i>Democracy Led by Cleisthenes or the People?</i> .....	97
Cleisthenes' Reforms .....	98
Tribe and Class Redefined .....	98
The Boule .....	99
The Ecclesia .....	100
The Court System: Dicasteria and Heliaia .....	100
Areopagus .....	100
<i>Feature: Ancient Perspectives on Democracy: Equality or Chaos?</i> .....	101
Democracy Tested and Radicalised .....	102
'When the Poor Win': Themistocles and Aristides .....	103
Cimon the Conservative General and Ephialtes the Radical .....	104
Class and Gender in the Democratic Polis .....	105
Women .....	105
A Woman's Position in Law .....	105
Marriage and Married Life .....	106
Movement of Women .....	106
Avenues of Influence: Religion and Festivals .....	107
Foreign Women, Courtesans and Prostitutes .....	108
<i>Feature: Aspasia of Miletus</i> .....	109
Slaves .....	110
Metics .....	111
Pericles and the 'Golden Age of Greece' .....	112
<i>Map: Athens' Long Walls (400s BCE)</i> .....	113
<i>Feature: Pericles' Building Program</i> .....	114
Freedom of Speech .....	115
Theatre .....	115
Comedy as a Social Criticism .....	117
Conclusion .....	118



**CHAPTER 4: THE GRECO-PERSIAN WARS..... 120**

Overview .....	122
From Heroes to Hoplites .....	124
Understanding the Old Ways: Ritualised Heroic Warfare .....	125
The Hoplite Revolution .....	126
Causes for Change .....	126
<i>Feature: Hoplite Combat</i> .....	127
<i>Historical Significance: The Hoplite Revolution</i> .....	128
Persia: The World's First Superpower .....	129
<i>Map: The Persian Empire (500 BCE)</i> .....	129
Origins .....	129
Political Structure .....	129
The Royal Persian Road .....	130
The Persian Army: Maintaining Order and Expanding the Empire .....	130
Cavalry .....	130
Archers .....	131
Infantry .....	131
The 'Immortals' .....	131
Navy .....	132
The Ionian Connection: Trade and War .....	132
<i>Map: Ionia (c.550 BCE)</i> .....	132



↓ Burial mound at Marathon



↓ Leonidas at Thermopylae



The Ionian Revolt (499–494 BCE) .....	133
The Attack on Sardis (498 BCE) .....	134
Battle of Ephesus (498 BCE) .....	134
The Revolt Spreads ... and Recedes (498–494 BCE) .....	135
Aftermath .....	135
The Social and Cultural Impact of the Ionian Revolt .....	135
Ionian Attitudes .....	135
Persian Attitudes .....	135
Athenian Attitudes .....	136
Marathon: From Crisis to Legend .....	136
The Persians are Coming .....	136
The Battle of Marathon (490 BCE) .....	138
<i>Map: Battle of Marathon: Miltiades' Pincer Manoeuvre</i> .....	138
<i>Historical Significance: Impact on Identity: The Marathon Legacy</i> .....	140
The Second Greco-Persian War (480–479 BCE) .....	142
Persian War Preparations .....	142
War Logistics .....	142
<i>Map: The Path of Xerxes' Army</i> .....	143
<i>Historical Significance: The Pontoon Bridge from Asia to Europe</i> .....	143
<i>Feature: The Persian Army: Crunching the Numbers</i> .....	144
Greek War Preparations .....	145
Religious Preparation: Consulting the Oracles .....	146
Thermopylae and Artemisium (August 480 BCE) .....	146
<i>Historical Significance:</i>	
<i>'The Three Hundred': Spartan Legend and Identity</i> .....	147
Cultural Impact: Changing Notions of the Greek 'Hero' .....	147
Artemisium and the Meltemi Winds .....	148
The 'Wooden Wall' .....	148
The Battle of Salamis (September 480 BCE) .....	149
<i>Map: Battle of Salamis</i> .....	150
Aftermath: A New Strategy .....	150
The Final Confrontation (August 479 BCE) .....	151
Waiting .....	151
The Battle of Plataea (479 BCE): A Close-Quarter Melee .....	152
Naval Pursuit: Battle of Mycale .....	152
Greece Vindicated: Identity Forged in Victory .....	153
<i>Feature: The Delian League: Alliance or Empire?</i> .....	154
<i>Feature: A Democratic Hegemon?</i> .....	156
Conclusion .....	158

**B**

**THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR (460–404 BCE) ..... 161**

Timeline .....	162
Overview .....	164

**CHAPTER 5: THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF ATHENS AND SPARTA ..... 168**

Overview .....	170
<i>Map: Peloponnesian and Delian Leagues (c.447 BCE)</i> .....	170
Delian League to Athenian Empire .....	172
<i>Historical Significance: Battle of Eurymedon (c.466 BCE)</i> .....	172

The First Peloponnesian War (460–445 BCE) .....	173
Causes of the First Peloponnesian War: Megara and Corinth.....	173
<i>Map: Athens, Megara and the Peloponnese</i> .....	174
<i>Feature: The Athenian Long Walls</i> .....	175
<i>Historical Significance: Megara</i> .....	176
The Five Years' Peace (451–446 BCE) .....	176
The Thirty Years' Peace .....	177
Tensions in the Delian League: the Revolt of Samos .....	178
Origins of the Second Peloponnesian War.....	179
Corcyra .....	179
Potidaea .....	180
Megara .....	182
<i>Feature: Megarian Decree: Historical Interpretations</i> .....	183
Athens and Sparta Respond .....	184
Was War Inevitable?.....	186
Conclusion.....	188

Pericles' Funeral Oration

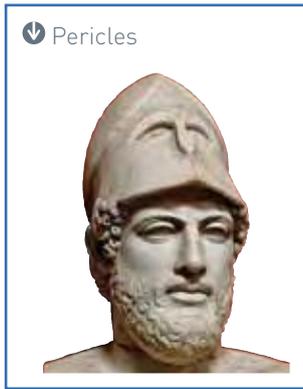


## CHAPTER 6: THE SECOND PELOPONNESIAN WAR ..... 190

Overview .....	192
<i>Map: Second Peloponnesian War</i> .....	193
Introduction .....	194
The Archidamian War (431–421 BCE) .....	195
Athenian and Spartan Battle Strategies.....	195
The Great Plague .....	197
Pericles Dismissed .....	198
Athens after Pericles .....	198
Allies in Revolt: Mytilene.....	199
Spartan Disaster at Pylos .....	202
<i>Historical Significance: Pylos</i> .....	202
Spartan Strategies: Brasidas in Northern Greece .....	203
<i>Map: Northern Greece</i> .....	205
The Peace of Nicias (421–414 BCE): A Fragile Peace.....	206
Interwar Years: Recriminations and Retaliations.....	206
The Sicilian Expedition (415–413 BCE) .....	209
<i>Map: The Sicilian Expedition (415–413 BCE)</i> .....	209
Athens and Sicily.....	210
<i>Feature: The Sicilian Debate</i> .....	211
Religious Scandals.....	214
War in Sicily.....	215
Athenian Panic and Military Disaster .....	216
<i>Map: Syracusan and Athenian Defence Walls (413 BCE)</i> .....	216
Impact on Athens .....	220
Decelean or Ionian War (414–404 BCE) .....	221
The Ionian Theatre of War.....	223
<i>Map: Western Asia Minor</i> .....	223
Alcibiades Again.....	224
Persia and Sparta Unite.....	225
<i>Map: The Hellespont</i> .....	226
Athenian Success.....	227
<i>Historical Significance: Victory at Cynossema</i> .....	229
Enter Lysander.....	229
The Battle at Arginusae (406 BCE) .....	230
Aegospotami: The Final Battle (405 BCE) .....	231
Conclusion.....	234

The Sicilian Expedition





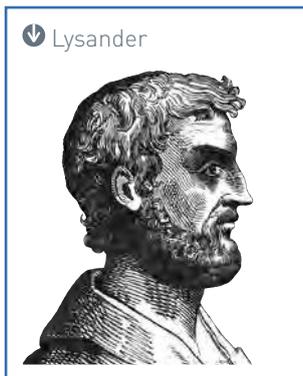
**IN FOCUS: PERICLES (495–429 BCE) ..... 236**

Family and Childhood..... 236  
 Politics and Theatre ..... 236  
 The Political Firebrand ..... 237  
 The Wars of the 450s..... 238  
 Economic Policy ..... 238  
 Getting at Pericles ..... 239  
 The Building Program..... 240  
 Pericles, Democracy and Leadership..... 241  
 Athens the Island: Wartime Speeches ..... 242  
 Death and Legacy..... 243  
 Conclusion..... 243



**IN FOCUS: ALCIBIADES (451–404 BCE) ..... 244**

Alcibiades' Childhood..... 244  
 Alcibiades the Beautiful Youth..... 245  
 The Orator and Politician ..... 246  
 The Disastrous Sicilian Campaign..... 246  
 Sparta's Man? ..... 247  
 Oligarchic Connections ..... 248  
 Political Demise and Death ..... 249  
*Historical Significance: The Legacy of Alcibiades*..... 250  
 Conclusion..... 251



**IN FOCUS: LYSANDER (d. 395 BCE) ..... 252**

Lysander in his Youth..... 252  
 The Unspartan Spartan..... 253  
 Notium (406 BCE): The Athenian Fleet Can be Defeated ..... 254  
 Sparta's Loss..... 254  
 The Battle of Aegospotami (405 BCE)..... 255  
 Athens Must Be Destroyed?..... 256  
 Lysander the Liberator?..... 258  
 Victory, War and Death..... 258  
 Death in Battle (395 BCE) ..... 258  
 Conclusion..... 259

**C**

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ..... 261**

Glossary ..... 262  
 Who's Who..... 265  
 Endnotes ..... 269  
 Index..... 275

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

---

## **SAMUEL CAVNOUDIAS**

Samuel Cavnoudias is a long-time senior teacher of History and has developed curriculum for both Classical Studies and Ancient History courses. Sam's expertise is ancient Athenian and Spartan life and culture, and he has also developed material on modern Revolutions history.

## **DIANA MILLAR**

Diana Millar is a former Head of History and teacher of Classical Civilisation and History at Korowa Anglican Girls' School in Melbourne. Since retiring, she has written *Windows into History* (Macmillan, 2005), four chapters of *History 7: The Ancient World* (Macmillan, 2012) and a chapter of *Ancient Rome* (HTAV, 2017). Diana has written scripts on ancient history for ABC Radio, articles for the journals *Agora* and *Iris*, and set and marked senior Classical Studies exams.

*Diana wishes to thank her friend, Graham Dudley, for fact-checking and proofreading her chapter manuscript.*

## **JOSHUA McDERMOTT**

Joshua McDermott has been a senior History teacher at Parade College Melbourne, and the Head of History at St Thomas More Language College in London. He has a Master of Arts in Ancient History from Macquarie University and is currently pursuing further postgraduate studies in Classical and Hellenistic Greek History.

## **NICHOLAS VLAHOIANNIS**

Dr Nicholas Vlahogiannis was a Senior Fellow in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne. He has taught Ancient History and Classical Studies at the University of Melbourne and the University of Surrey (UK) and was a Visiting Research Fellow at King's College London. He currently teaches Classical Studies at Melbourne Girls Grammar. Nick's principal research interest is ancient history, but he has also published on Australian and modern Balkan history.

# HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING

---

The study of Ancient History at the senior level is guided by historical thinking concepts developed by Seixas, van Drie and van Boxtel, Levesque and others.

Historical knowledge comprises both **substantive knowledge**, which refers to historical content or subject matter (i.e. what happened in the past?) and **procedural knowledge**, which refers to the process or skills involved in understanding that subject matter (i.e. what do the sources of evidence say and what should I conclude from them?). Together, substantive and procedural knowledge give students the depth of understanding required to excel in history.

Historical inquiry begins with **historical questions**. Students ask and are asked substantial questions about people and events from the past, including their **historical significance**, both at the time and later. Students assess **continuity and change** and the different types of change that occurred. They examine the relationship between **cause and consequence** and consider the **ethical dimensions** of history. As they do this, students should be aware that they bring a twenty-first-century perspective to their studies and that their values and beliefs are not necessarily the same as those who lived in the past.

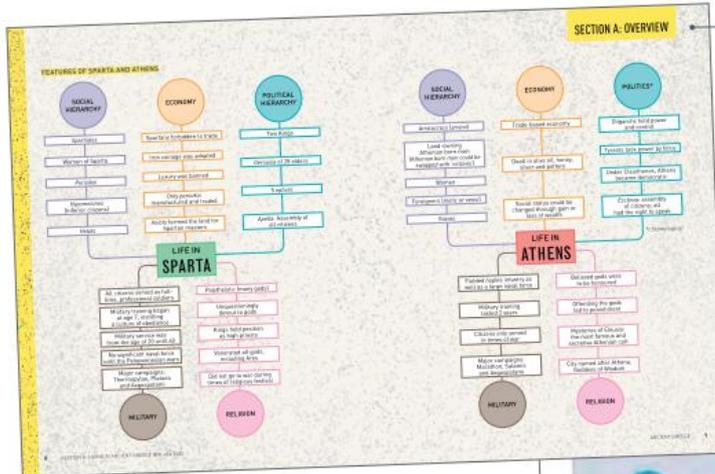
The key part of historical thinking and practice is **using sources as evidence**—both primary and secondary—to reach conclusions and **construct arguments**. Generally speaking, primary sources indicate the **historical perspectives** or viewpoints of people at the time, while secondary sources indicate the **historical interpretations** of historians or commentators who are looking back at past events.

Historical perspectives are a reminder that people rarely share the same experience or opinions at a given point in history, while historical interpretations show how historians have different views on the importance or meaning of past events. Understanding these contrasting experiences and viewpoints is an important part of appreciating the complexity and contestability of history – one should approach the evidence with an open mind and 'listen' to what a source is communicating before forming a conclusion.

In this book we have included many activities designed to develop and enhance students' substantive and procedural knowledge in history. But above all, we hope students will get swept up by the events of ancient Greece as it is story-telling that lies at the heart of history.

# USING THIS BOOK

## TEXTBOOK FEATURES



**OVERVIEW** spread for each section and chapter, summarising key information

**EXAM PREPARATION** questions

Activities focusing on **HISTORICAL SKILLS**

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE** boxes indicating how events changed history

Colourful **MAPS** and **DIAGRAMS**

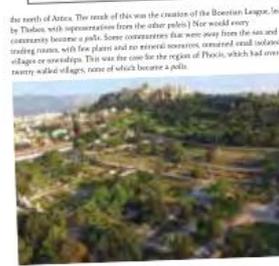
**GLOSSARY TERMS** indicated in chapter text

Sparta had neither an acropolis nor an agora. It had no need of walls as its warriors could be called, and no need of an agora, as it ignored trade in the Classical period.

A polis was its citizens. An ancient historian Thucydides put it: "Before that time cities and not walls or ships with no town inside them." So it was the male citizens of Athens who made up the polis, rather than the physical city. The Spartan polis or Spartaian—despite living in five separate walled villages on the fertile Laconian plain rather than in a city—was formed a polis.

The size of each polis varied, depending on the size of the plain on which it was situated or the strength of one of the cities. It was only the large polis like Sparta, Corinth and Athens that played a significant role in Greek history.

During the Classical Age, Athens gradually extended its control over the nearby Attic region, the area known as Attica. But an important city would polis in the surrounding region known as Attica. But an important city might not be strong enough to overcome its neighbours. The city of Thebes, for instance, was unable to dominate the Spartans or the poleis of Boeotia, an area to



**SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

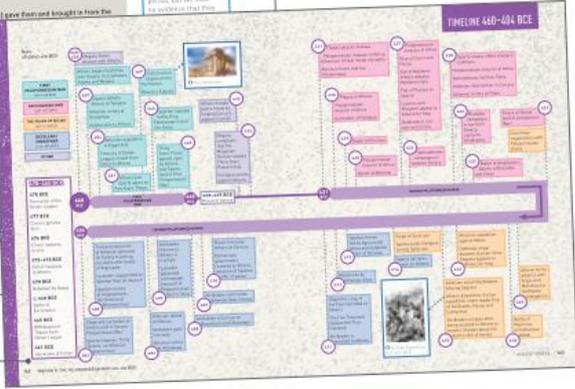
Using Source 1.07 and your own knowledge:

1. Why was it hard for people who lived in Attica to unite?
2. How were the people of Attica getting together?
3. What changes did Theseus bring in?
4. After considering further evidence, in your response, use your own knowledge.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING** questions throughout (levelled for different student abilities)

**SOURCES AS EVIDENCE** tasks for using primary and secondary sources (written and visual)

Colourful **TIMELINES**



**WEB RESOURCES** identified by different icons in the margins.



Weblink



Video



Audio



Interactive



Activity  
sheet /  
More info



Quiz

To access these and other web resources on ancient Greece and historical thinking skills:



**ALSO AVAILABLE  
IN THIS SERIES:**



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## IMAGE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

NB: l=left, r=right, t=top, b=bottom, c=centre

p.1: MidoSemsem/Shutterstock.com; p.IV(t): Panos Karas/Shutterstock.com; p.IV(b): Everett Historical/Shutterstock.com; p.VI(t): Oleg Znamenskiy/Shutterstock.com; p.VII(t): Georgios Kollidas/Shutterstock.com; p.VII(b): Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.VIII(b): iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.VIII(c): By Bija (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>) from Flickr; p.2: Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.4(t): Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.4(b): Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.6(b): sianstock/Shutterstock.com; p.6(t): Millionstock/Shutterstock.com; p.7: By Odyssees [Own work] [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.7: Vatican Museums [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.11: Digalakis Photography/Shutterstock.com; p.12(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.12: Anilah/Shutterstock.com; p.13(b): Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cngcoins.com>; p.14: By Kim Bach (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kimbach/3227358611/>) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.15: RnDmS/Shutterstock.com; p.16: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York/The Bothmer Purchase Fund and Louis V. Bell Fund, 1997; p.17: By Picture: Marcus Cyron (Picture: Marcus Cyron) [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.18(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.19: Aerial-motion/Shutterstock.com; p.20: Amazonaws.com; p.21: American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations; p.22: North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy Stock Photo; p.23: © Trustees of the British Museum; "p.24(b): Mask bead (Janus type) 6th century BCE-5th century BCE, 6th century BCE-5th century BCE, glass, 2.9 x 1.3 cm diameter, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne , Purchased through The Art Foundation of Victoria with the assistance of Waltons Limited, Fellow, 1991;" p.24(t): Florilegius / Alamy Stock Photo; p.25(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.26: World History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.28(b): Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cngcoins.com> [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.28(t): iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.29(t): Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.31(b): John Copland/Shutterstock.com; p.31(t): By Tomisti [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.32(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.33: By PHGCOM [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.34: By Aleksandr Zykov from Russia [Archaeological museum, Athens] [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; "p.36: Greece, Chalkis / Italy The Inscriptions Painter (attributed to) Psykter amphora (Chalkidian black-figure ware) 540 BCE earthenware (a-b) 60.2 x 37.1 x 34.9 cm (overall) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Felton Bequest, 1956 [1643.a-b-D4] ;" p.39: Spartan Army, Howat, Andrew [20th Century] / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images; p.40: Renata Sedmakova/Shutterstock.com; p.42(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.42: DreamArt123/Shutterstock.com;

p.43: Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.45: Renata Sedmakova/Shutterstock.com; p.47: Panos Karas/Shutterstock.com; p.49: Falkenstein Heinz-Dieter / Alamy Stock Photo; p.51: TasfotoNL/Shutterstock.com; p.52: Ruben Hopmans; p.56: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.58(b): Lanmas / Alamy Stock Photo; p.58(t): Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.61: Peter Horree / Alamy Stock Photo; p.62: National Geographic Creative / Alamy Stock Photo; p.68: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.69(b): anna42f/Shutterstock.com; p.69(c): Anatolir/Shutterstock.com; p.69(cr): anna42f/Shutterstock.com; p.69(t): K N/Shutterstock.com; p.69(tr): Leremy/Shutterstock.com; p.76(b): EyeSeeMicrostock/Shutterstock.com; p.76(cb): Gilmanshin/Shutterstock.com; p.76(ct): kostasgr/Shutterstock.com; p.76(t): IMG Stock Studio/Shutterstock.com; p.77: Dancers during the Karneia, detail (ceramic), Greek / Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Canada / Bridgeman Images; p.81: ariy/Shutterstock.com; p.82: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.83(b): By Sailko [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.83(t): By Sailko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.84(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.85: INTERFOTO / Alamy Stock Photo; p.86: Everett Historical/Shutterstock.com; p.87: By Sailko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.89(b): By Exekias [CC BY 2.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.89(t): INTERFOTO / Alamy Stock Photo; p.91(b): iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.93: Joshua McDermott; p.94: PRISMA ARCHIVO / Alamy Stock Photo; p.96: adam eastland / Alamy Stock Photo; p.98: Sally Bond; p.99: iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.103(b): By Юрий Педаченко [Own work] [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.103(c): By Sailko [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.103(t): By Qwqchris [Own work] [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.104: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.109(b): Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.110: By Stefano Bolognini [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>), from Wikimedia Commons; p.112: Jojo Youssef/Shutterstock.com; p.113(b): Brigida Soriano/Shutterstock.com; p.113(map): Sally Bond; p.114(b): British Museum [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>) or CC BY-SA 4.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), via Wikimedia Commons; p.114(t): anyaianova/Shutterstock.com; p.115: American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations; p.116: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.121: Battle of Salamis, Howat, Andrew [20th Century] / Private Collection / © Look and Learn / Bridgeman Images; p.122: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.126: Walters Art Museum [Public domain, CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.129(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.131: MuseoPics - Paul Williams / Alamy Stock Photo;

p.132(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.134: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.136: By Ελληνικά: Άγνωστος/Français : Coupe attribuée au Peintre de Triptolème. (National Museums Scotland) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons; p.138(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.139: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.140(b): By Oren Rozen (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.140(t): Oleg Znamenskiy/Shutterstock.com; p.142: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.143(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.147: iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.150(map): Sally Bond; p.152: North Wind Picture Archives / Alamy Stock Photo; p.154: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.155: Epigraphical Museum [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.157: The Granger Collection / Alamy Stock Photo; p.158: PRISMA ARCHIVO / Alamy Stock Photo; p.162: anyaivanova/Shutterstock.com; p.163: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.164(br): iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.164(l): Jojo Youssef/Shutterstock.com; p.165: By user:shakko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.166(b): Wellcome Collection; p.166(t): World History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.167(b): Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.167(t): iStock.com/Nastasic; p.169: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.170(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.174(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.175(b): iStock.com/duncan1890; p.175(map): Sally Bond; p.176: EQRoy / Alamy Stock Photo; p.178: Takis Bks/Shutterstock.com; p.181: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.182: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.185: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.187: Georgios Kollidas/Shutterstock.com; p.188: De Luan / Alamy Stock Photo; p.191: iStock.com/Nastasic; p.193(map): Ruben Hopmans; p.197: World History Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.198(b): Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.198(t): Science History Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.199: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.204: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.205(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.208: Ioannis Houvardas [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.209(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.210(b): Michele Ponzio / Shutterstock.com; p.214: I, QuartierLatin1968 [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.216(map): Sally Bond; p.217: Ivy Close Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.218: Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Photo; p.219: Diego Barucco / Alamy Stock Photo; p.223(map): Ruben Hopmans/Sally Bond; p.225(b): By dynamosquito (Flickr: Drachma Darius II (Persis)) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.225(t): Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. <http://www.cngcoins.com> [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.226(map): Sally Bond; p.227: iStock.com/ZU\_09;

p.229: Chronicle / Alamy Stock Photo; p.231: eFesenko / Shutterstock.com; p.234: iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.237: Georgios Kollidas/Shutterstock.com; p.239: Art Collection 2 / Alamy Stock Photo; p.242: The Granger Collection / Alamy Stock Photo; p.243: Science History Images / Alamy Stock Photo; p.244: By Bija (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>) from Flickr; p.245(r): Lanmas / Alamy Stock Photo; p.247: I, QuartierLatin1968 [GFDL (<http://www.gnu.org/copyleft/fdl.html>), CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>) or CC BY-SA 2.5 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.5/>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.253: iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.255: Classic Image / Alamy Stock Photo; p.265(b): iStock.com/ZU\_09; p.266(c): itechno/Shutterstock.com; p.266(t): TasfotoNL/Shutterstock.com; p.266(b): Renata Sedmakova/Shutterstock.com; p.267(b): By Odyssees (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons; p.267(c): Jojo Youssef/Shutterstock.com; p.268(b): By user:shakko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.268(c): By Sailko [CC BY 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons; p.268(t): By Sailko [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons.

#### TEXT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

pp.97, 101, 130, 137, 144, 145, 146, 148, 151:  
© 2007 Robert B. Strassler. Reproduced by permission of Quercus Editions Limited.

pp.85, 86, 109, 149, 239, 243, 253, 254, 256, 258:  
*The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives* by Plutarch, translated with an introduction by Ian Scott-Kilvert (Penguin Classics, 1960). Copyright © Ian Scott-Kilvert, 1960. Reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd.

pp.180, 181, 186, 200, 208, 212, 218, 228, 233:  
Reproduced with permission of Curtis Brown Group Ltd, London on behalf of The Beneficiaries of the Estate of Rex Warner. Copyright © Rex Warner 1954

pp.50, 51, 57, 60, 66: © Paul Cartledge, 2001, *Spartan Reflections*, Bristol Classical Press, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

#### HTAV ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HTAV would like to thank the authors, Philip Bryan, Dr. Andrew Connor, Dr. Christopher Gribbin, Dr. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides, Ruben Hopmans, Ingrid Purnell, Shivaun Plozza, Catherine Kiss, Kim Ferguson, Trevor O'Connell, Dr. Deb Hull and the HTAV Board and staff.



# LIVING IN ANCIENT GREECE

(800–454 BCE)

- What was it like to live in ancient Greece?
- What were the social, political and economic features of life in ancient Greece?
- What were the causes and consequences of the conflict between Greece and Persia?

Note: all dates are BCE

KEY:

- ATHENS**
- SPARTA**
- GRECO-PERSIAN WARS**
- OTHER**

**2900–800 BCE**

**2900–1050 BCE**  
The Bronze Age in Greece

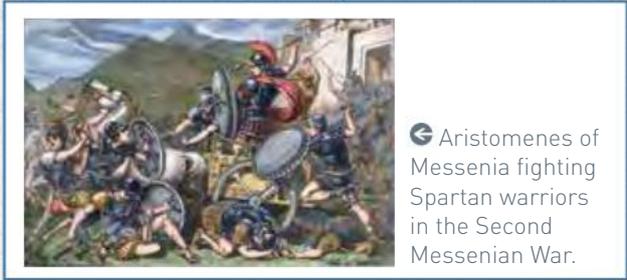
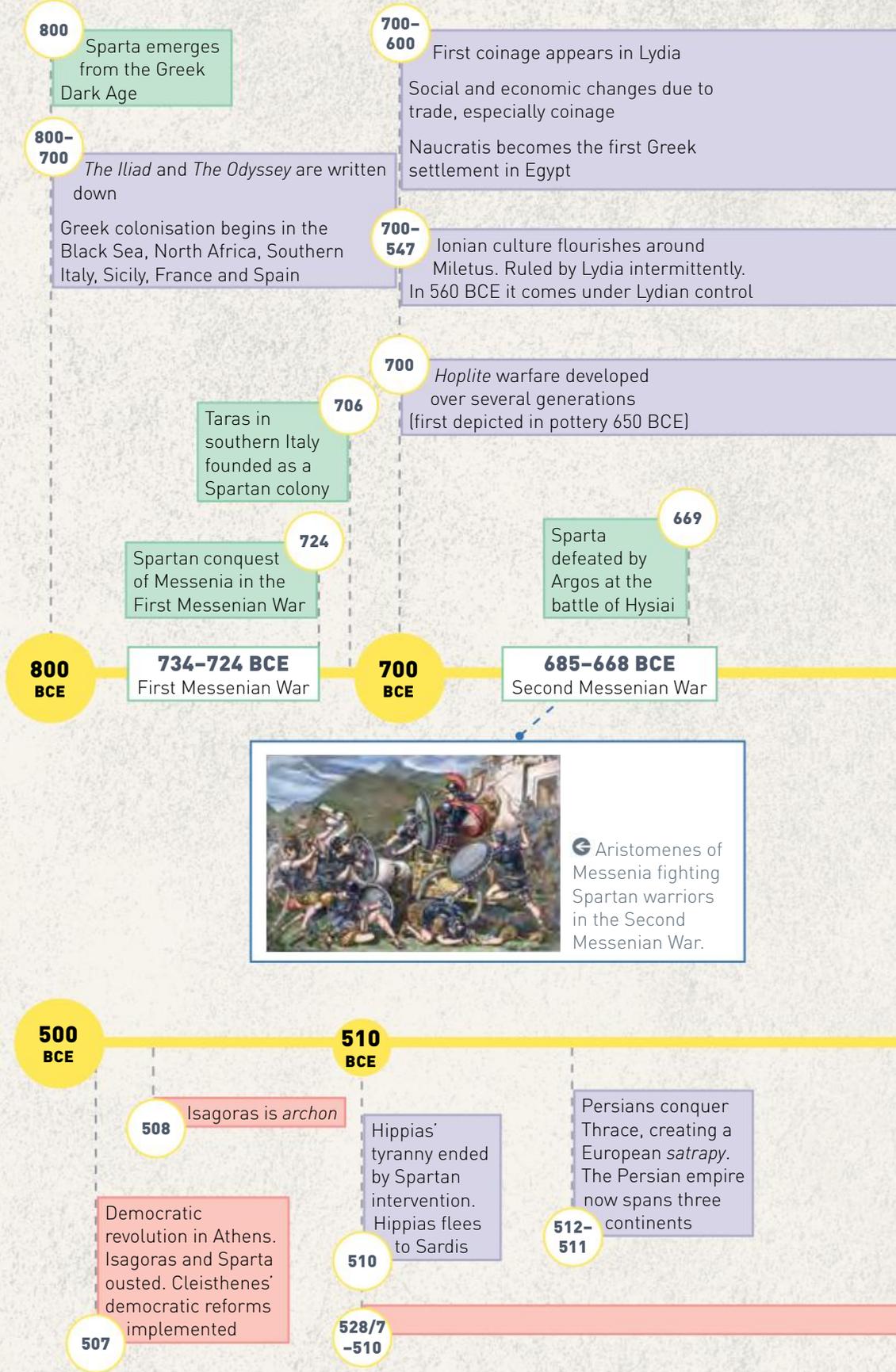
**c. 1600 BCE**  
Start of Mycenaean Greece

**c. 1100 BCE**  
Mycenaean civilisation is extinguished. Historians don't know what brought about the end, but invasions (by Dorian tribes or others) or internal conflicts may have played a part

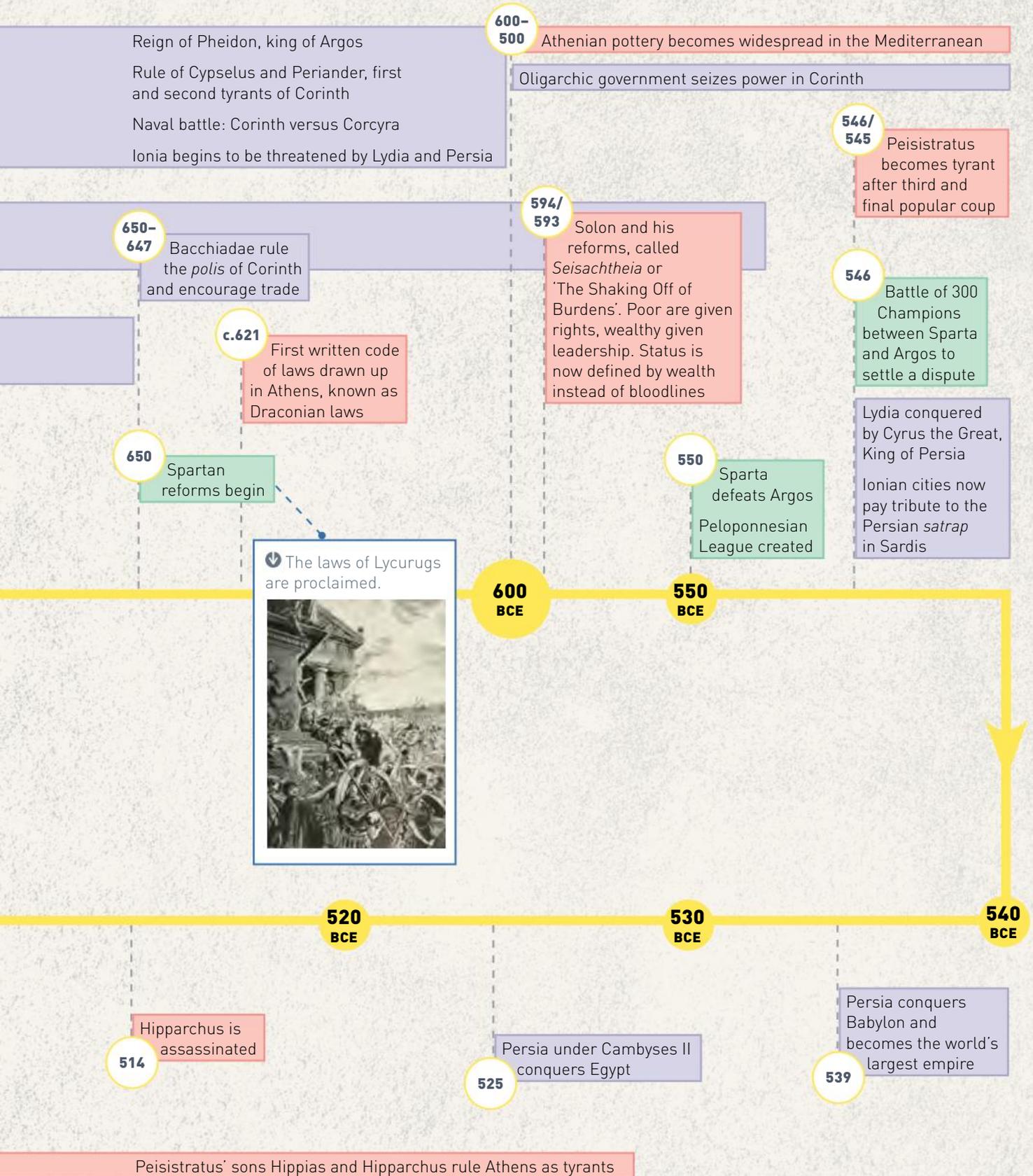
**1100–750 BCE**  
Referred to as the Greek Dark Age because there is no written record from this period. Writing disappeared with the decline of Mycenaean civilisation

**c. 1000–750 BCE**  
First *poleis* appear in Ionia

**c. 850 BCE**  
Development of the Greek alphabet, adapted from the Phoenician alphabet



# TIMELINE 800–454 BCE



499

Aristagoras of Miletus leads revolt against Persia; gains Athenian and Eretrian support  
First Greco-Persian War begins under Darius I

492

Persians control the northern Aegean Sea with Macedonia submitting. Persian fleet destroyed off coast of Mt Athos by a storm

Persian and Athenian soldiers fight at Marathon in 490 BCE.



498

Sardis besieged. The temple of Sardis is burned by the Ionians, Athenians and Eretrians

Battle of Ephesus. Greeks defeated by Persians. Athenians flee and sever association with Ionian revolt

494

Battle of Lade. Ionian Greeks defeated by Persians in naval battle. Miletus sacked

490

Battle of Marathon. Shock Athenian victory against larger Persian army ending the First Greco-Persian War

Sparta does not assist Athens because of religious restrictions

499-494 BCE  
Ionian revolt

499-490 BCE  
First Greco-Persian War

500 BCE

490 BCE

### AFTER 454 BCE

#### c. 449 BCE

The Peace of Callias. Athens and Persia come to terms and establish spheres of influence. Athenian empire consolidated in 440s. Revolts at Naxos and Samos crushed

#### 431 BCE

Peloponnesian wars break out between Athens and Sparta

Cimon is ostracised by democratic vote, 461 BCE.



454 BCE

450s-430s BCE

The Age of Pericles

459-454

Athenian campaign in Egypt ends in disaster. Hundreds of *triremes* and thousands of sailors lost. Treasury moved from Delos to Athens in 454 BCE

460 BCE

Cimon (conservative) ostracised

461

Ephialtes (radical) assassinated

460s

# TIMELINE 800–454 BCE

486

Egyptian revolt against Persia. King Darius dies and Xerxes assumes the Persian throne

480

Xerxes invades Greece

(August) Battle of Artemisium and the Battle of Thermopylae. Spartan-led force defeated by Persian army. Athenian-led force engage in inconclusive battle with Persian navy. Persian fleet devastated by storms

479

Battle of Plataea and Battle of Mycale. Spartan-led Greek army defeats the Persians under General Mardonius. Greek navy pursue Persians and defeat them at Mycale, in Ionia

Spartan-led coalition expels the Persian forces from Greece

478

Delian League established 'for eternity'. It is a defensive alliance to fund a naval force to deter further Persian attacks. Sparta opts out. Athens dominates the league

483/  
482

Rich vein of silver discovered at Laurion, near Athens

Themistocles persuades Assembly to build 200 triremes

(September) Battle of Salamis. Greek naval victory against larger Persian fleet

480  
BCE

480–479 BCE

Second Greco–Persian War

➔ *The Greek Victory of Salamis* by William Kaulbach, 19th century.



470  
BCE

464

Earthquake in Sparta devastates the city

c.466

Battle of Eurymedon: Delian fleet surprises and destroys the Persian fleet off southern Asia Minor. Athenian naval policy increasingly confident and aggressive

Democracy radicalised by Ephialtes and Pericles

## SOURCES OF EVIDENCE ON GREECE (800–454 BCE)

Historical evidence is drawn from a range of primary sources and historical interpretations.

### Primary Sources

In ancient history, primary sources of evidence are generally gleaned from buildings, artworks, objects and documents created at the time. See examples throughout this book.

### Historical Interpretations

Generally speaking, historical interpretations refer to historians' accounts of a period. They should not be confused with historical perspectives, which refer to the views of people who lived at the time and are generally found in primary sources.

Note: Some historians lived in ancient times but wrote about events well after they occurred, making it difficult to decide if they are primary or secondary sources. Generally, such historians are treated as primary sources if they are the main source of information on that particular event, i.e. other sources are not available.

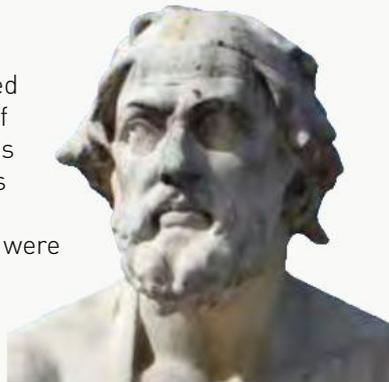


## ANCIENT HISTORIANS AND WRITERS

### THUCYDIDES

460–c. 400 BCE

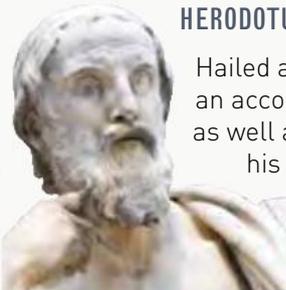
An Athenian general, Thucydides documented nearly three decades of conflict between Athens and Sparta. Despite his connection to Athens, his notes and remarks were kept with a level of impartiality unseen by many in the ancient world.



### THUCYDIDES ON SPARTA AND ATHENS

'... the Lacedaemonians [Spartans] proved the most convenient people in the world for the Athenians to be at war with. The wide difference between the two characters, the slowness and want of energy of the Lacedaemonians as contrasted with the dash and enterprise of their opponents, proved of the greatest service, especially to a maritime empire like Athens. Indeed this was shown by the Syracusans, who were most like the Athenians in character, and also most successful in combating them.'

*History of the Peloponnesian War 8.96.5.*



### HERODOTUS c. 484–c. 420 BCE

Hailed as the 'father of history', Herodotus provides an account of ancient Greece through his own travels as well as eye-witness accounts. His pivotal piece is his narration of the Greco-Persian wars where he applauds Sparta's efforts. Despite his love of the Spartans, Herodotus was also a great admirer of contemporary Athens, in particular its extraordinary sense of political freedom.

### HERODOTUS ON ATHENS

'So the Athenians grew in power and proved, not in one respect only but in all, that equality is a good thing. ... once they got rid of their tyrants, they were by far the best of all.'

*Histories 5.78.1.*

## SECTION A: OVERVIEW

### XENOPHON

c. 430-c. 354 BCE

Born an aristocratic Athenian citizen, Xenophon left Athens for Sparta. He admired the Spartans, and his eye-witness accounts offer a unique perspective on their constitution. He was branded 'Laconophile'—friend of the Spartans. Xenophon was a student of the philosopher Socrates.



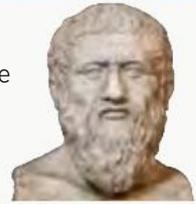
#### XENOPHON ON SPARTA

'... Sparta, though among the most thinly populated of states, was evidently the most powerful and most celebrated city in Greece ... I fell to wondering how this could have happened. But when I considered the institutions of the Spartans, I wondered no longer.'

*Constitution of the Lacedaemonians 1.1.*

### PLATO c. 428-c. 347 BCE

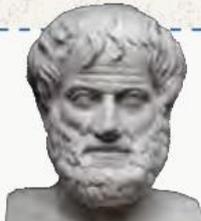
The Athenian Plato admired what the Spartans had achieved, especially compared to the corruption that had befallen the Athenian democracy and led to the death of his mentor, Socrates. He saw Sparta as a successful practice of *eunomia*—good government and law, while he saw Athenian democracy, when left unchecked, as a path towards subjugation and tyranny of the majority.



#### PLATO ON ATHENS

'As I observed these incidents and the men engaged in public affairs, the laws too and the customs, the more closely I examined them and the farther I advanced in life, the more difficult it seemed to me to handle public affairs aright. ... The result was that, though at first I had been full of a strong impulse towards political life, as I looked at the course of affairs and saw them being swept in all directions by contending currents, my head finally began to swim ... Finally, it became clear to me, with regard to all existing communities, that they were one and all misgoverned.'

*Letter 7 (although the authenticity is in question).*



### ARISTOTLE

384-322 BCE

Aristotle lived in Athens for over 20 years. Despite being Plato's pupil, he did not share his mentor's perspective on Sparta. He was critical of the Spartan way of life, particularly the emancipation of their women, while praising Athens for its good democratic government.

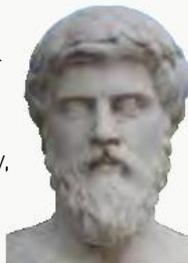
#### ARISTOTLE ON SPARTA

'So long as they were at war ... their power was preserved, but when they had attained empire they fell, for of the arts of peace they knew nothing, and had never engaged in any employment higher than war.'

*Politics 2.9:1271b*

### PLUTARCH c. 46-c. 120 CE

Plutarch was a Greek biographer who wrote about famous figures 500 years after the height of Athenian and Spartan supremacy, drawing on and incorporating a number of earlier sources. His writings on Athens chronicle in incredible detail the physical and philosophical accomplishments of the city and its people, while his works on Sparta are perhaps the single greatest wealth of primary material on the makeup of the Spartan state.



#### PLUTARCH ON ATHENS

'[Pericles] made the city, great as it was when he took it, the greatest and richest of all cities, and grew to be superior in power to kings and tyrants.'

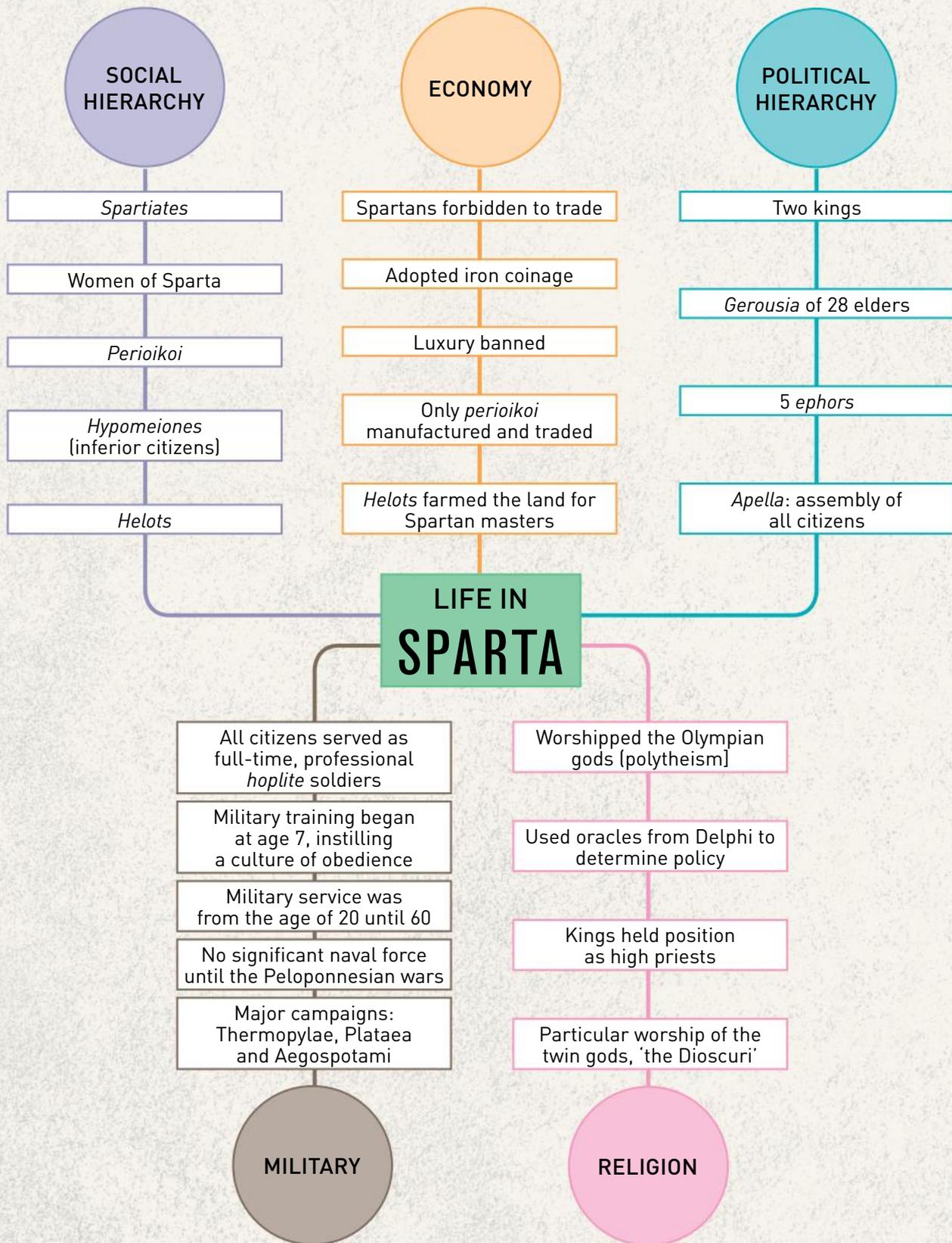
*Life of Pericles 15.5.*

#### PLUTARCH ON SPARTA

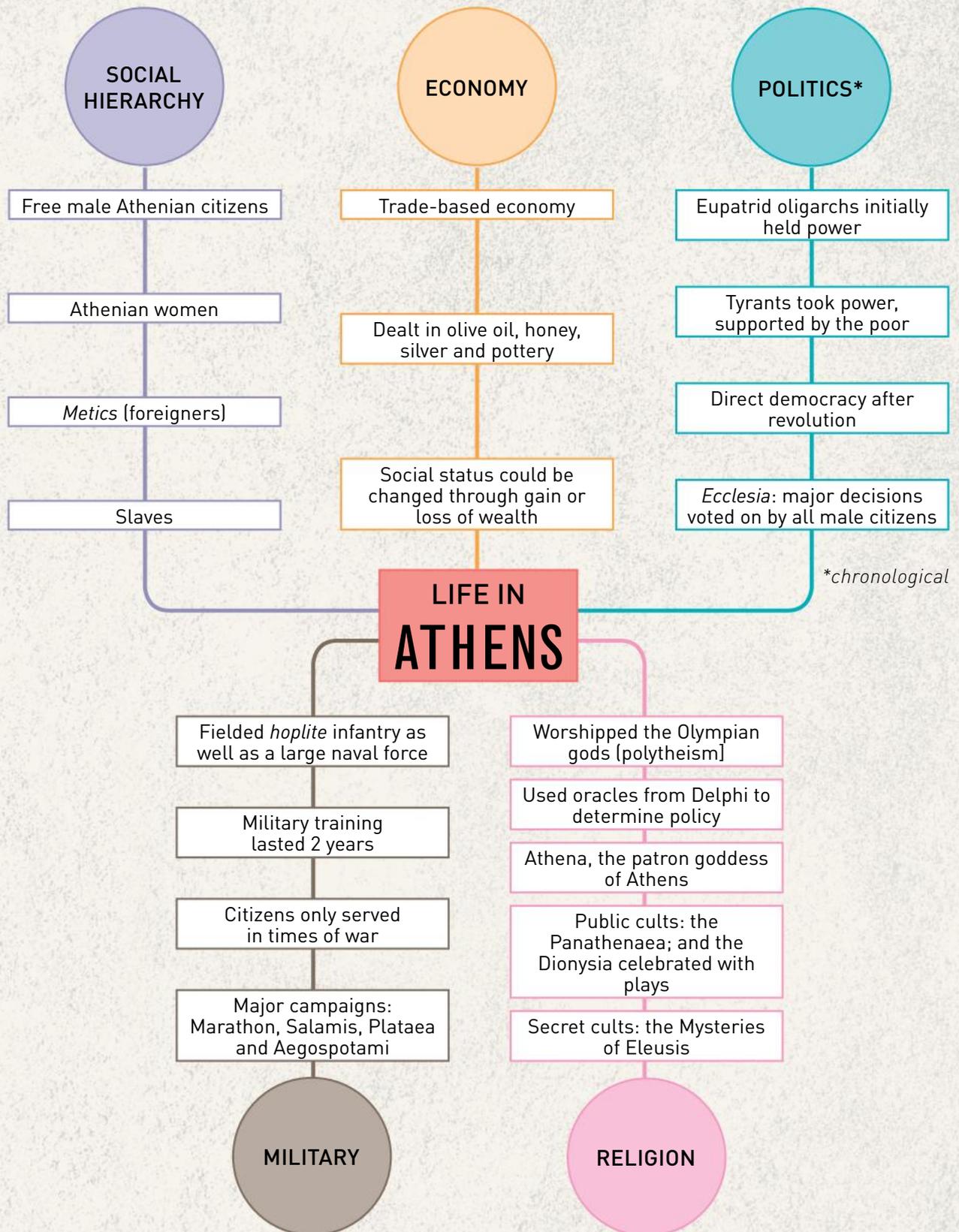
'As long as [Sparta] adhered to the laws of Lycurgus and remained true to its oaths, it held the first place in Greece for good government and good repute over a period of five hundred years.'

*Ancient Customs of the Spartans 239f.*

## FEATURES OF SPARTA AND ATHENS



# SECTION A: OVERVIEW



CHAPTER

# 1

## THE ARCHAIC AGE IN GREECE

'Thus many years passed by and many difficulties were encountered before Hellas [Greece] could enjoy any peace or stability, and before the period of shifting populations ended. Then came the period of colonization. ... The old form of government was hereditary monarchy with established rights and limitations; but as Hellas became more powerful and as the importance of acquiring money became more and more evident, tyrannies were established in nearly all the cities.'

THUCYDIDES'





Greek temples to Hera, Poseidonia (Paestum).

# OVERVIEW

## GEOGRAPHY

Greece (or Hellas) was divided geographically by mountains, sea, and fertile plains on which developed city-states called *poleis*. Coastal *poleis* became trading and colonising states. Each *polis* had its own political form, economy and culture, but Greeks came together at religious festivals.



## SOCIETY

Society in Athens was divided into land-owning aristocrats, well-off farmers, poor farmers (*thetes*), free born craftsmen, foreign immigrants and slaves. The political, religious and social roles available to women in Greek societies were severely limited.



**GREEK DARK AGE**

(c. 1100–750 BCE)

Bronze Age civilisation in Greece collapsed due to drought, earthquakes, fires, broken trade links, heavy population loss, the disappearance of writing and craft skills, and the end of palace-run economies.

**POLITICS**

After the invention of coinage, greedy landowners grew crops for trade that used less labour, which created unemployment.

*Thetes* who couldn't afford to pay rent lost their land and were enslaved, some being sold overseas. Younger sons of landowners who could not inherit land, wealth or political positions grew increasingly restless. At the same time, some people grew rich from trade, challenging the power of the traditional elite. In this context of social changes, certain individuals seized power and ruled as tyrants, getting rid of their aristocratic government forever.

**KEY EVENTS**

**c. 1000–750 BCE**

First *poleis* appear in Ionia

**c. 850 BCE**

Development of the Greek alphabet

**800–700 BCE**

Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are written down

Greek colonisation begins in the Black Sea, North Africa, Southern Italy, Sicily, France and Spain

**c. 700 BCE**

*Hoplite* warfare develops over several generations

**700–600 BCE**

First coinage appears in Lydia

Naucratis becomes the Greek trading post in Egypt

Reign of Pheidon, king of Argos

Rule of Cypselus and Periander, first and second tyrants of Corinth

First naval battle: Corinth versus Corcyra

**700–547 BCE**

Ionian culture flourishes around Miletus

In 560 BCE Ionia comes under Lydian control



**PHEIDON OF ARGOS**

Pheidon was king of Argos, and Greece's first tyrant in the seventh century. *Tyrant* meant that Pheidon seized absolute power, not that his rule was harsh.

**COLONISATION**

One solution for unemployment, land loss and restive younger sons was the Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean, the Hellespont and the Black Sea. Colonisation spread Greek cultural ideas over the Mediterranean and influenced, in particular, Etruria and Rome.

**SLAVERY**

Slaves, brought from the colonies and elsewhere, could be purchased in slave markets for use in homes, farming, construction,



manufacturing and mining.

Slaves working in a mine. Corinthian terracotta plaque painting, 5th century BCE.

**EXTERNAL INFLUENCES**

Knowledge of arts and science gained from Phoenicians, Egyptians and others stimulated the Archaic period. The Greek alphabet was developed from the Phoenician alphabet, enabling writing, and coinage was adopted from the Lydians.



# THE GEOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT GREECE

BURN: 'The great factor which made for continued disunity ... was the nature of the country.'

## ➔ SOURCE 1.01

Ruins of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece.



GREEK MYTHOLOGY



GREEK GODS AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES



Greece is situated in the eastern Mediterranean between Italy and Asia Minor. It is an unusual country, consisting of numerous islands and a long peninsula jutting out into the Mediterranean Sea. Ancient Greece also included the coastline of Asia Minor, as well as settlements around both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Geographically, Greece is fragmented by sea and mountains. In ancient times, this led to the establishment of hundreds of communities scattered over small areas of fertile plains. Water for crops was in short supply; there was no great river to unite the country, or to provide irrigation or transport. As a result, the sea influenced the development of each *city-state*. The sea cut into the landscape, creating sheltered bays for ships. The northeast winds of Greece, and the islands positioned like stepping stones to the east, encouraged early migration and trade to the coast of Asia Minor.

Thick forests originally covered the Greek hillsides, so wood was the main building material used for houses, the first temples and for boats. So much wood was used that the hills and mountains of Greece became bare and eroded. Further damage was caused by the sheep and goats that were kept for producing wool, milk and cheese. From the eighth century onwards, wracked by soil erosion and confined by sea, mountains and jealous neighbours, Greek city-states that were unable to expand at home started to colonise the Mediterranean Sea.

By the end of the fourth century BCE, there were about 1100 Greek city-states sprinkled across the Mediterranean and along the coastline of the Black Sea.<sup>2</sup>

Despite inter-state rivalry—caused in part by the fragmented landscape—the Greeks had a sense of being one people. They shared religious beliefs, which revolved around the gods of Mount Olympus and a common fund of myths. When the Olympic Games and other festivals for all Greeks were founded, the citizens of the various city-states, despite their rivalry, began to call themselves *Hellenes*. The famous Greek poet Homer first used *Hellenes* to describe the inhabitants of a particular territory in Thessaly; it eventually came to be used to describe all Greeks. Hence the area inhabited by *Hellenes* was called *Hellas*, as it is today. The word 'Greece' is Latin, based on the name the Romans gave to Greece: *Graecia*.



THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY: MAP TASK

## TERMINOLOGY

Throughout your studies of ancient Greece you will come across different ways of spelling various Greek words and names.

The Greek alphabet has letters we don't use in English, so when words are transliterated from Greek, different translators might use different spellings.

For instance, you might read Pericles or Perikles, but these both come from the Greek word Περικλῆς.



GREEK NAMES IN ENGLISH: MORE INFO

## CLIMATE

The long, hot, dry summers enabled ancient Greeks to spend much of the year outdoors. The great Greek religious festivals—which involved athletics, chariot racing and theatre—were all held outdoors. Athenians met on a small hill called the Pnyx to make political decisions. In the open-air market place (known as the *agora*), Athenians argued about the latest political and philosophical ideas. The climate was not the sole cause of Greek civilisation—but it certainly stimulated it.

However, the hot summers had a downside. No work could be done on the farms from July to September—which was one of the possible causes of social unrest. And, as the *hoplite* warriors were also farmers, the long summers were the best time to wage wars.

## GREECE IN THE BRONZE AGE AND THE DARK AGE

THUCYDIDES: ‘... many difficulties were encountered before Hellas could enjoy any peace or stability.’

The Bronze Age civilisation in Crete, called ‘Minoan’ after a legendary king of Crete, began about 3500 BCE. The Minoan civilisation developed writing, as well as elegant palaces and paved roads. Minoan Crete was devastated by a volcanic eruption on the island of Thera (now Santorini) around 1650–1600 BCE.<sup>3</sup> The Mycenaean civilisation arose on mainland Greece around 1600 BCE and appears to have invaded Crete approximately two hundred years later. Legends about Achilles and the feuds of Agamemnon, Menelaus and the Trojans—likely inspired by the memory of the Mycenaeans and their great palace centres—provided the inspiration and material for the famous Greek poet Homer, as well as for later Greek (and Roman) art and literature.

In the early twelfth century BCE, the Bronze Age civilisations of Greece and the Middle East were devastated by a series of events. Crop failure created widespread famine. Fires and a series of earthquakes from 1225 to 1175 BCE destroyed towns and palaces. Broken trade links affected Greece in particular, as it relied on imported tin to create bronze tools and weapons. Palace economies like Mycenae slowly decayed, with Mycenae finally abandoned between 1130 and 1120 BCE. Kings and palaces were gradually replaced by small villages dominated by chieftains.<sup>4</sup> According to Greek legend, *Dorians* entered Greece, taking advantage of the lack of organisation and forcing the inhabitants to flee to other areas of Greece, as well as to the islands of the Aegean, to Cyprus and to the coast of Asia Minor.<sup>5</sup> One group of Dorians camped on the plain of Laconia, creating the settlement that later became Sparta.



## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why wasn't ancient Greece united as a country?
2. What helped to bring the Greeks together as a people?
3. In what ways did geography and climate influence the development of Greece?



THE TROJAN WAR: MYTH OR HISTORY?



BRONZE AGE APOCALYPSE



DEBATES ABOUT THE DORIAN INVASION

### ▼ SOURCE 1.02

The Lion Gate at Mycenae, guarding the entrance to the main citadel.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What two civilisations existed in Greece before the Dark Age?
2. What events devastated the Bronze Age civilisations of Greece?
3. List all the evidence that proves Greece went through a Dark Age.

The collapse of Mycenaean Greece led to what is known as the *Greek 'Dark Age'*—which means that archaeologists have found few written records from this era. As a consequence, our understanding of this period relies on archaeological finds. All over Greece in the Dark Age there were signs of 'depopulation, isolation, metal-shortages, architectural and artistic impoverishment, sharp regional disparities.'<sup>6</sup> Archaeologists estimate that there were 320 occupied sites in Greece in the thirteenth century BCE, but only about forty occupied sites in the tenth century BCE.<sup>7</sup>

What life was like in the Greek Dark Age can be studied in the remains of villages such as Nichoria, near the Mycenaean city of Pylos. When Pylos was destroyed, some of its people fled to Nichoria up in the hills. There they formed a village of about forty families living in small thatched mud huts. They lived off the land, hunting deer and gathering what they could. Despite being only two kilometres from the sea, there are no fishbones in the remains of the village, suggesting that the people of Nichoria avoided the coast. Nichoria, like so many Dark Age emergency settlements, was abandoned in about 800 BCE and never became a city-state.<sup>8</sup>

## INFLUENCE OF THE MIDDLE EAST ON GREECE

THUCYDIDES: 'The period of shifting populations ended.'

Greece gradually emerged from the Dark Age to again play a large part in the trade and culture of the Mediterranean. Trade brought the Greeks into contact with older civilisations, which stimulated their culture and helped to define their 'Greekness'. In Greece a new form of organisation—the *polis*, or city-state—emerged, agriculture and trade began, and pottery, especially in Athens and Corinth, was made in new shapes designed for export.

The first true city-states appeared in the eighth century BCE in Ionia on the coast of Asia Minor. Whereas the city-states on the Greek mainland were built on or around a hilltop to make them easy to defend, the Ionian cities had walls to protect the inhabitants from possible attack by the *barbaroi* (non-Greeks—the name derived from the 'incomprehensible babble' of their foreign language).<sup>9</sup>

But those same *barbaroi*, who came from the great civilisations of Egypt, Phoenicia and Babylonia, influenced the Greeks' economies and ideas. Middle Eastern myths were incorporated into the Greek tradition and motifs from Middle Eastern art appear in Greek art, especially vase decoration.

Through their trade contacts with the Phoenicians, the Greeks re-learned the art of writing. The Phoenicians had created an alphabet based on Egyptian script that could be easily used to record traded goods. The Greeks modified the Phoenician alphabet to

### ▼ SOURCE 1.03

This *dinos* (a bowl that held diluted wine), is decorated with panthers, sphinxes, goats and lions—an example of Middle Eastern influences on Greek art.



represent the sounds of their own language. Instead of lists of goods, the first two full Greek scripts that archaeologists have found are lines of poetry—one of them a satire of Homer’s poetry written on a cup from about 740 BCE, found at Pitheculasae (an island near Naples).

A significant change for Greeks was the switch from bronze tools to iron tools, which was also influenced by the Middle East and by Egypt—where both iron objects and bronze objects were being made in about 1200 BCE. The advantage of iron was that iron ore was available throughout the Mediterranean and was easy to extract from the earth, while the supply of tin (needed to make bronze) was more remote. The Mycenaean warriors of the previous era—with their chariots and bronze weapons—were aristocrats who fought duels against other aristocrats. The new iron weapons were cheaper to make and were to be used effectively in massed combat by a new group of state-trained farmer-warriors: the *hoplites*.

Another innovation, which had an even greater impact on trade, was coinage. Coins were invented in Lydia, just inland from the Ionian cities. Up till then, payment had been in the form of exchange of objects or lumps of valuable metal. In the late seventh century BCE, King Alyattes of Lydia issued an official currency of eight different sizes and weights, decorated on one side with a symbolic picture of his city, Sardis. The Lydian coins were made from electrum—a mixture of gold and silver. Alyattes’ son Croesus changed the currency into gold and silver coins, with the silver being smaller and of less worth. The Greeks eagerly took up the idea, and stamped silver coins based on a unit of weight called a *drachm* with their own city design.



#### ↑ SOURCE 1.04

The Cup of Nestor from Pitheculasae. The inscription is one of the oldest known examples of writing in the Greek alphabet.



THE GREEK ALPHABET: MORE INFO

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the major difference between the cities on the mainland and those in Ionia?
2. In what ways did eastern civilisations influence Greek culture?
3. What did the Phoenicians give the Greeks, and what did the Greeks add that made all the difference?

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. What three remarkable innovations occurred in the late Dark Age?
2. How important were these inventions to the people at the time?
3. To what extent were people’s lives changed?
4. Can the consequences still be felt today? In what ways?
5. Which of the three innovations is the most historically significant? Give your reasons.

ACTIVITY

## THE POLIS

ARISTOTLE: ‘Man is by nature an animal intended to live in a polis.’

Many of the settlements on mainland Greece, the islands and Asia Minor developed into independent city-states (or *poleis*—the plural of *polis*). Each *polis* had its own form of society, economy, political system, religious cults, code of law, customs, culture, currency and armed forces. Many had their own hilltop enclosure called an *acropolis*. Below the *acropolis* was the *agora*, a public square used both for exchange of goods and meetings.



POWER AND THE POLIS

A *polis* was its citizens. As the Athenian general Nicias in Thucydides put it, 'Reflect that you yourselves, wherever you settle down, are a city already ... It is men who make the city and not walls or ships with no men inside them.'<sup>10</sup> So it was the male citizens of Athens who made up the *polis*, rather than the physical city. The *Spartan* men or *Spartiates*—despite living in five separate unwallled villages on the north Laconian plain rather than in a city—still formed a *polis*.

The size of each *polis* varied, depending on the size of the plain on which it was situated or the strength of one of the cities. It was only the large *poleis* like Sparta, Corinth and Athens that played a significant role in Greek history.

During the Greek Dark Age, Athens gradually extended its control over the twelve small *poleis* in the surrounding region known as Attica. But an important city might not be strong enough to overcome its neighbours. (The city of Thebes, for instance, was unable to dominate the fourteen or so *poleis* of Boeotia, an area to the north of Attica. The result of this was the creation of the Boeotian League, led by Thebes, with representatives from the other *poleis*.) Nor would every community become a *polis*. Some communities that were away from the sea and

**SOURCE 1.05**

ANCIENT GREECE  
TOPOGRAPHY



trading routes, with few plains and no mineral resources, remained small isolated villages or townships. This was the case for the region of Phocis, which had over twenty walled villages, none of which became a *polis*.



### 🔍 SOURCE 1.06

Modern-day view of the acropolis at Athens, showing the *agora* below it.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the *agora* used for?
2. How many *poleis* were originally in Attica?
3. Why did some areas of Greece never have *poleis*?

ACTIVITY

### DID YOU KNOW?

According to legend, Cecrops and Theseus were kings of Athens. There probably were kings in the Mycenaean period, but we have no evidence that they united Attica. Theseus does not become significant in texts or artworks as the king who unifies Attica until the fifth century BCE.

### ATTICA UNIFIED BY THESEUS, ACCORDING TO ATHENIAN LEGEND

From the time of Cecrops and the first kings down to the time of Theseus the inhabitants of Attica had always lived in independent cities, each with its own town hall and its own government. Only in times of danger did they meet together and consult the King at Athens; for the rest of the time each state looked after its own affairs and made its own decisions. ... But when Theseus became King he showed himself as intelligent as he was powerful. In his reorganisation of the country one of the most important things he did was to abolish the separate councils and governments of the small cities and to bring them all together into the present city of Athens, making one deliberative assembly and one seat of government for all. ... Theseus compelled them to have only one centre for their political life — namely, Athens — and, as they all became Athenian citizens, it was a great city that Theseus handed down to those who came after him.

### 🔍 SOURCE 1.07

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.15, trans. Rex Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), 134–5.*

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 1.07 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How were the people of Attica governed before the time of Theseus?
2. What changes did Theseus bring in?
3. After conducting further research, evaluate the significance of Theseus in the unification of Attica. In your response, use your own knowledge and other evidence.

ACTIVITY

## SOCIAL GROUPS IN THE POLIS

### THE ROLE OF MEN

CALLINUS: 'It is a high thing, a bright honour, for a man to do battle with the enemy for the sake of his children, and for his land.'

#### ➔ SOURCE 1.08

An ancient Greek vase depicting a warrior taking leave of his wife.



The main role for a Greek male throughout most of his life was to be a warrior; in Sparta it was for his whole life. Athens in the Classical Period (fifth and fourth centuries BCE) had compulsory military service for men between the ages of eighteen and fifty-nine, and even foreigners living there permanently had to serve in the army or navy when required. With battle being 'a bright honour', as Callinus puts it, many Greek poets sang about war and the glory won by individuals in battle. These poets included Homer in the eighth century BCE, and Callinus and Tyrtaeus in the seventh century BCE.

The second role for most Greek males was as *kyrios*—head of the household (or *oikos*) in which he lived. The size of the household depended on the role its *kyrios* played in society. Above the *oikos* was the village (or *deme*) where the *kyrios* met with fellow heads of families to consult on any village business. To be a *citizen* in Athens the *kyrios* had to belong to a brotherhood (or *phratry*), which was a subdivision of a tribe (or *phyle*).

The nobles (*aristoi*) made up the government in most early Greek *poleis*. Roles carried out by aristocrats during the Archaic Age (roughly 800–500 BCE) included:

- governing a *polis* as part of a council
- acting as judges in their local area
- serving as commanders during war
- supervising work on their own estates.

Farmers formed the largest group in *polis* society—and they were the backbone of the economy. According to the poet Hesiod, writing in the eighth century BCE, the farmer's role was to plough, plant and harvest crops. That was in addition to tending goats for milk and cheese, baking bread, making wine, producing the clothes he had to wear and creating the tools he had to use. From the eighth century BCE onwards, farmers who could afford horses became *hippeis* (horsemen or knights) and formed the cavalry; those who could afford a sword and shield became armoured foot soldiers, known as *hoplites* (or *zeugitae*).

There were also hired labourers called *thetes*, who received food and accommodation in return for ploughing, bringing in the harvest or threshing the grain. However, it was only temporary work, and winter or mid-summer meant that *thetes* had no work and nowhere to live. In the seventh century BCE, *thetes* began to move into cities to find work in the new industries that were starting up, as well as joining colonising expeditions.

A group of free men performed necessary tasks in society, one being that of herald. Heralds summoned citizens to the assembly and handed their staff to each speaker in turn. Other free men were *demiourgoi* or craftsmen such as potters, metal workers and builders. Craftsmen made all manner of objects, which they then sold—or had their *slaves* sell—in the *agora*. In the *agora* in Athens, archaeologists have found silver coins with the head of Athena and her owl, loom weights, bronze mirrors, wooden combs, perfume bottles—and even a sixth century BCE potty chair for a one-year-old child.

Foreign settlers in a *polis* were called *metics* ('those living around'). The tombstones of *metics* show that at first they came from other regions of Greece, but over time their numbers were added to by freed slaves and non-Greeks. *Metics* became the major producers of goods for export and ran Athenian commerce. They were legally and financially equal to Athenian citizens and could take part in the life of the community and fight for Athens in the army and navy. There were, however, restrictions: each *metic* had to have a sponsor and had to pay an annual tax of 12 *drachmas*. *Metics* were not allowed to take part in the assembly or play any political role, and they could not marry citizens or own houses or land.



#### SOURCE 1.09

Objects that have been discovered by archaeologists in the *agora* in Athens. The bowl on the bottom is stamped with a double-bodied owl and the head of Athena.

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What two main roles did Greek men have?
2. Why did poor farmers move to the cities in the seventh century BCE?
3. Why were *demiourgoi* and *metics* so important, particularly in Athens?

ACTIVITY

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN

**SEMONIDES:** 'For women are the biggest single bad thing Zeus has made for us; a ball-and-chain.'

In most *poleis* the wife ran the household. The Greek word for 'household management' is *oikonomia* (from which we get our word *economics*). Wives looked after their children, made clothes, instructed the slaves in the preparation of food, sent their daughters to collect water, and controlled the family finances. Some tasks, such as making clothes, could take days. First, the grease had to be washed out of the wool, then the burrs had to be picked out and the knots prised apart; then the wool had to be carded and rolled into a ball before it was spun and woven into cloth for each member of the family, and for the slaves.<sup>11</sup> The full-time work of women and their slave assistants meant that men who lived in the city had the time to perform their democratic duties.

The *kyrios* held dinner parties (called *symposia*) in a special room at the front of the house, where the *kyrios* and his friends were entertained by flute girls and courtesans. Meanwhile, the wife of the *kyrios* who, with the help of her slaves, had prepared the meal, was not allowed to attend.

### ➔ SOURCE 1.10

Women in ancient Greece occupied their time with sewing, spinning and other household chores.



In Athens, upper- and middle-class women generally stayed indoors, with a few exceptions. They could leave the house to visit the cemetery and make offerings, or to attend religious festivals. An Athenian woman had no political rights and could not own property, and in legal cases she was represented in court by her husband or other male relative. However, a woman's bloodline was important, as only the son of an Athenian-born woman could be a citizen (after 451 BCE).



### THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT ATHENS

The majority of women in Greece—those from the lower classes of society—were free to leave the house. They were farmers' wives who worked hard outside at harvest time and whenever they were required to lend a hand. In Athens, poor women and the wives of *metics* ran market stalls in the *agora*. As Spartan men lived in the mess hall (or *syssition*), their wives had to run the farm, supervise the activities of the *helots* (or serfs), look after the children and make sure the monthly allowance of food was sent to the *syssition* (see page 54). Spartan women, like all Greek women, had no political rights, but had more freedom of movement than Athenian women.

### ➔ SOURCE 1.11

Homer, *The Odyssey* 1.356-359,  
trans. Richmond Lattimore  
(New York: Harper and Row,  
1967), 36.

#### TELEMACHUS SPEAKING TO HIS MOTHER QUEEN PENELOPE

Go therefore back in the house, and take up your own work,  
the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaidens  
ply their work also; but the men must see to discussion,  
all men, but I most of all. For mine is the power in this household.

Unlike other women in Greece, priestesses were as respected as their male counterparts. While priests served male gods, priestesses served goddesses. The priestess of Athena Polias, the chief goddess of Athens, always came from the same noble family and was regarded as the most important religious figure in Athens.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. What tasks did women perform in the home?
2. When were upper-class women allowed out?
3. Which women were kept in the home and which women were allowed to leave?

**BELIEFS AND VALUES**

1. Why would Telemachus believe he has 'the power in the household' (Source 1.11), rather than his mother Queen Penelope?
2. How is this belief confirmed in Nicias' statement that 'it is the men who make the city'?
3. Why might women not be valued in a warrior society, even being seen as 'a ball-and-chain'?

**ECONOMIC FEATURES OF THE POLIS**

HESIOD: 'Riches and flocks of sheep go to those who work.'

The economic future of each *polis* depended on its location. In the case of Sparta, agriculture formed its basic economy rather than trade, because the Spartan villages were inland from the port, which was difficult to reach. The *polis* of Corinth had ready access to both the Aegean and Adriatic seas, but was sited on a plain too narrow for successful agriculture. Because of its location, Corinth became an early trader and established colonies in the Mediterranean—notably the colony of Syracuse in Sicily in 733 BCE. Because Athens was situated on fertile plains that could feed a large population, it had no immediate need to found colonies. However, being on a long peninsula with plenty of natural harbours led to Athens becoming actively involved in trade from the sixth century BCE onwards.

**METHODS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION**

In most *poleis*, farmers were self-sufficient, producing food for their family's use. The crops grown on the plain, which was the most fertile area, were cereals like barley and wheat. Ploughing the fields and sowing the grain was done every autumn. The farmer harnessed an ox to a 'scratch-plough' that scratched the ground, producing a thin furrow. A mattock and hoe were then used to break up the clods of earth before seed was planted in the furrows. Grain was harvested with scythes in midsummer the following year, threshed using animals to trample the grain and winnowed by tossing the crushed grain into the air from baskets: the grain, being heavier, fell back into the basket, and the chaff drifted down onto the stone floor and was used to fertilise the fields.

Closer to the house the farmers planted pulses like broadbeans, chickpeas and lentils, as well as cucumbers, onions and garlic. Their fruit trees produced apples, pears, pomegranates, almonds, walnuts and figs.

On slopes with thinner soil the farmers planted olive trees and grapevines, which they sometimes twined around the trees. Grapes were gathered in late summer and were spread out in the sun for ten days, covered for five, then tipped into a large tub before the farmer and his friends jumped up and down on the grapes to squeeze out the juice. The juice was then put into jars and by winter it had become wine.



**SOURCE 1.12**

Black-figure neck *amphora* (Greek jar) from 520 BCE, showing an olive harvest. The vase was made in Attica but found in an Etruscan tomb in Italy.

## OLIVE TREES



### 📌 SOURCE 1.13

Winners at Olympic Games were crowned with a wreath of olive leaves.

Olive trees take twenty years to produce fruit—and then only every second year. Olives ripen erratically, so farmers had to visit all of their trees on a regular basis in the harvesting season. Olives were a vital ingredient in daily life in ancient Greece: olive oil was used for cooking, for cleaning the skin, as medicine, and for lighting in clay lamps; the leftovers from the olive pressing provided starter fuel for fires. The winners at Olympic Games were crowned with an olive leaf wreath, and at the Panathenaic Games in Athens the winners were awarded an *amphora* (jar) full of olive oil.

Olive oil was stored in clay pots. Athenian pots were made from clay from the River Cephissus, and often decorated with paintings.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why was olive oil so valuable?
2. Why were Corinth and Athens involved in trade but not Sparta?
3. Which crops were harder to grow: cereals or olives? Explain your answer.

## TRADE AROUND THE MEDITERRANEAN

XENOPHON: ‘...all cities welcome as friends those who import things.’

During the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, Greeks began trading again with other cities around the Mediterranean. But how do we know where the Greeks traded, what *polis* they came from and the dates they traded? When archaeologists explore ancient sites, they often find pieces of broken pottery, which they call ‘pot sherds’. If a pot sherd is large enough, archaeologists can work out when and where a pot was made by examining its style, shape and colours, and finding the origin of its clay.

The first trading ships to arrive in Greece were Phoenician, as described in Homer’s *Odyssey* (Source 1.15). During the ninth and eighth centuries BCE, the Phoenicians dominated Mediterranean trade, founding cities like Carthage and establishing trading posts as far west as the Atlantic coast of Spain.



### ➔ SOURCE 1.14

A Phoenician glass bead. It is just 1.3 cm by 2.9 cm in size.

Once Greek ships began trading around the Mediterranean, they encountered Phoenicians in trading posts like Al Mina (now Turkey) in Asia Minor or further afield at Pithecusae (near Italy). At the trading post (or *emporion*), the Greeks exchanged their wine and olive oil for metals such as gold, silver, iron, copper and tin—and they learnt skills such as writing.

DESCRIPTION OF PHOENICIAN MERCHANTS IN *THE ODYSSEY*

... [when I was a child] there came some cunning traders from Phoenicia (for the Phoenicians are great mariners) in a ship which they had freighted with trinkets of all kinds. There happened to be a Phoenician woman in my father's house, very tall and comely, and an excellent servant; these scoundrels got hold of her one day when she was washing near their ship, seduced her [and offered to take her back to Phoenicia] ...

[She agreed and said,] 'I will bring as much gold as I can lay my hands on, and there is something else also that I can do towards paying my fare. I am nurse to the son of the good man of the house, a funny little fellow just able to run about. I will carry him off in your ship, and you will get a great deal of wealth for him if you take him and sell him in foreign parts.'

... The Phoenicians stayed a whole year till they had loaded their ship with much precious merchandise, and then, when they had got freight enough, they sent to tell the woman. ... she took me by the hand and led me out of the house. ... I followed her, for I knew no better.

## SOURCE 1.15

Homer, *The Odyssey* 15.415–470, trans. Samuel Butler, revised by Timothy Power and Gregory Nagy (original text: London: A. C. Fifield, 1900; revised: <http://data.perseus.org/citations/urn:cts:greekLit:tlg0012.tlg002.perseus-eng2:15>)



GUIDE TO HOMER'S ODYSSEY

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Source 1.15 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. This part of *The Odyssey* is spoken by Eumaeus, Odysseus' swineherd, a slave who has been bought by Odysseus' father Laertes. Explain what is happening to him in this passage.
2. What does Eumaeus think about Phoenician traders? Select words from the source to support your answer.
3. Why might he have this perspective?

ACTIVITY

## NAUCRATIS

In the seventh century BCE, Greek soldiers who had fought for Egypt as mercenaries were given land there, and they established the *emporion* Naucratis. Naucratis was near the capital Sais, and on a branch of the Nile River that was deep enough for seagoing ships. Naucratis was not a *polis* but a trading post. The city contained 16 000 inhabitants, with a mix of Greek and Egyptian sailors, travellers, architects and mercenaries.

Unlike Al Mina and Pithecusae, Naucratis had several Greek temples, which suggests that it was a permanent Greek settlement. The Greeks held communal ritual meals and worshipped 'the gods of the Hellenes', in a temple called the *Hellenion*—which was possibly the first use of a communal Hellenic identity.<sup>12</sup> Greeks from nine different *poleis* lived and worked in Naucratis. The *emporion*, also known by the Egyptian name Nokradj, had an Egyptian resident section with several Egyptian temples.<sup>13</sup>

The soldiers and Greek sailors in the Egyptian fleet would have been happy to receive the plentiful Greek wine and olive oil imported into Naucratis. In return for



NAUCRATIS: GREEKS IN EGYPT

## SOURCE 1.16

NAUCRATIS IN EGYPT



## DID YOU KNOW?

The Greek soldiers named the pyramids after a favourite bun, *pyramidos*, and left graffiti with their names on one of the statues of Ramses II at Abu Simbel in Egypt. So the Greeks left a permanent mark on Egypt as well!

### ➔ SOURCE 1.17

Plate with a seated sphinx from Naucratis, Egypt, sixth century BCE.



## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How do historians know which *poleis* traded goods with Egypt through Naucratis?
2. Why is Naucratis important for European culture?
3. In what ways does the Hellenion symbolise the difference between Naucratis and most Greek *poleis*?

timber and iron, the Greeks bought papyrus, linen, scarab seals and natron (a product used in embalming). Grain was exported from Egypt to Greece, although this time the Greeks paid with silver coins rather than exchanging goods. Hoards of coins from this era tell archaeologists that all the main *poleis* traded with Egypt, including Corinth and Athens.

Through trade, Egypt left a permanent mark on Greek culture—and thus on European culture. From the Egyptians, Greeks picked up new ideas in mathematics, medicine, sculpture, art and architecture. Naucratis attracted visitors like Solon, the philosopher and scientist Thales, the poet Alcaeus, the historian Herodotus and even the philosopher Plato. In the sixth century BCE, Greeks began to build stone temples in Greece, and started to make statues based on Egyptian sculpture, showing people with one foot forward, their hands clenched by the sides and their eyes large and staring.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGES

THUCYDIDES: ‘... as the power of Hellas grew, and the acquisition of wealth became more an object, the revenues of the states increasing, tyrannies were by their means established almost everywhere and Hellas began to fit out fleets and apply herself more closely to the sea.’<sup>14</sup>

Social and economic changes were occurring in many areas of Greece in the seventh century BCE. Some of these changes were happening due to the arrival of coinage, which made the exchange of goods and the acquisition of wealth easier for the landowning class and entrepreneurs. Because trade was a way to make money, landowners were exporting so much grain that Greek people were starving. Some wealthy aristocrats changed from growing cereal crops to growing olives and wine for export, so they did not need as many labourers. More and more *thetes* were unable to find work, and moved to the city in search of jobs, joining the increasing mob of restless, unemployed urban poor.

Younger sons of aristocrats and well-off farmers’ sons—who had been unable to inherit land—were now earning money through trade, but not gaining any status. Despite being wealthier than many nobles—and despite being able to afford to buy land—they were not part of the social and political establishment. However, they

were wealthy enough to buy armour—and thus became the backbone of the army, its *hoplites*. If they fought for the state, they argued, they should also be its citizens.

Poorer farmers, too, were becoming unhappy about their treatment by the aristocrats (or *aristoi*). If there was a series of bad harvests, a farmer might find that he had no food for his family as his harvest was already fully promised as payment for seed he had sown. All he could offer was himself and his children in exchange for loans. If he was unlucky, and was unable to repay the loans, he could be sold overseas as a slave or be forced to work as a serf on the creditor's land.

These social and economic changes caused two things: tyranny and land hunger, which led to Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean.

### THE POWER OF MONEY

For the multitude of mankind there is only one virtue:  
Money. And there was no good found in anything else ...  
Money, and nothing but Money, holds all the power in the world.

### AT THE SLAVE MARKET

... I brought back  
a throng of those who had been sold, some by due law,  
though others wrongly; some by hardship pressed to escape  
the debts they owed; ...  
while those in the country had the shame of slavery  
upon them, and they served their masters' moods in fear.

### SOURCE 1.18

*Theognis of Megara in Greek  
Lyrics, trans. Richmond  
Lattimore (Chicago: University  
of Chicago Press, 1960), 30.*

### SOURCE 1.19

*Solon in Greek Lyrics, trans.  
Richmond Lattimore (Chicago:  
University of Chicago Press,  
1960), 22.*

### CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

1. What caused the changes to society in Greece in the late seventh century BCE?
2. Is Theognis (Source 1.18) right to blame money alone for society's problems, or are there other causes?
3. What were the consequences of those changes and which groups in society were most affected?
4. According to Solon (Source 1.19), what did he do to help those people?
5. Draw a concept map with money at its centre as the cause and arrows indicating the consequences of the arrival of coinage in Greece.

## TYRANNIES

THUCYDIDES: '... tyrannies were established in nearly all the cities.'

In the seventh century BCE, a new political force arose that seemed to speak for all these disadvantaged people. It was rule by a *tyrant* (or *tyrannos*), and it was given the name *tyranny*. We tend to think of tyrants as cruel people, but in ancient Greece a tyrant was a ruler who took power rather than inherited it and who used his power without legal restraint. The Greek word *tyrannos* initially meant 'sole ruler'.<sup>15</sup>

The first tyrant came to power in Greece in the seventh century BCE (although ancient historians quibble about the date). That tyrant was Pheidon, king of Argos. Pheidon was eager to expand Argos and make it more powerful, so he assumed total power. He was so successful that he expanded the territory of Argos and even defeated Sparta.

Some *poleis* tried to prevent tyrannies by appointing a law-giver—such as Solon in Athens—to serve as a mediator, to restore the rights of the poor and to write down laws so that nobles made consistent judgements in legal matters. Other *poleis* appointed arbitrators to reconcile the classes.

### ➔ SOURCE 1.20

Solon establishes the laws of Athens.



## HOW TYRANTS GAINED POWER

Some of the tyrants were men of vision. One of the best examples is Cypselus of Corinth.



TYRANNY IN  
ANCIENT GREECE

Corinth was an aristocracy dominated by the males of one clan, the *Bacchiadae*, who intermarried and prevented other nobles from ruling. The rise of a wealthy trading class led to dissatisfaction with the Bacchiadae, creating the conditions for the rise of a tyrant. Cypselus' mother was a Bacchiad but his father was not—and because he was only half-Bacchiad, he was not accepted into the inner circle. In 655 BCE, with the backing of merchants and seamen, Cypselus overthrew the Bacchiadae.

## HOW TYRANTS RULED

Cypselus became sole ruler. He was popular with the people and could safely walk the streets without a bodyguard. He developed Corinth's economy and established more colonies to the west. Silver coins stamped with the symbol of Corinth—Pegasus, the flying horse—have been found in large quantities in Sicily and southern Italy, providing proof of Corinth's widespread trade.



### ➔ SOURCE 1.21

A Corinthian coin depicting Pegasus, c.400–375 BCE.

Because of its location, Corinth was a maritime power. It was the first *polis* to build an oar-powered warship called a *trireme*.

After Cypselus' death in 625 BCE, his son Periander ruled for about forty years. Unlike his father, Periander was ruthless. He had a personal bodyguard and banned leisure activities unless they were under his control. One of his statements sums up his rule: 'Punish not only those who are doing wrong, but those who are likely to'.<sup>16</sup>

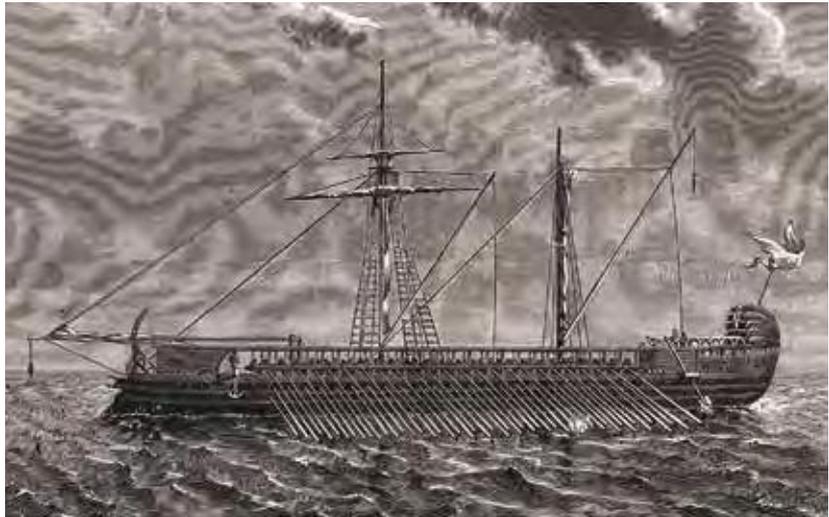
However, under Periander's stern rule, art and architecture flourished.

Periander built a road over the narrowest part of Corinth's isthmus and had a wheeled trolley (called a *diolkos*) made so that ships could be dragged over the isthmus. The slipway shortened the journey between the eastern and western seas and meant that ships no longer had to voyage around the Peloponnese. Periander also established the Isthmian Games—one of the four great Greek sporting and religious festivals.

Other tyrants also did a great deal for their *polis*, encouraging economic and cultural development. A notable example is Peisistratus in Athens who encouraged the immigration of foreigners (*metics*) with money. The craftsmen who made pottery, and those entrepreneurs who organised trade, did well under Peisistratus as Athens changed from a purely agricultural society to one which grew items for trade, and exported them in pottery made by the craftsmen.<sup>17</sup>

## HOW TYRANTS LOST POWER

The tyranny in Corinth collapsed soon after Periander's death, mainly due to family squabbles. A nephew succeeded Periander but he did not last long. In other *poleis*, most tyrants' sons lost power too; it was rare for more than one generation to rule. After Periander's death, the tyranny was overthrown and an *oligarchy* restored. However, each tyrant created the opportunity for a more flexible and open political situation than had existed before their reign.



### ↑ SOURCE 1.22

A *trireme*, an ancient ship.



MOVING SHIPS  
OVER LAND

### ↻ SOURCE 1.23

*Periander, The Tyrant of Corinth* by Paulus Moreelse.



## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How and why did tyrants gain power in Corinth?
2. What did the tyrants do to improve Corinth?
3. Why did tyrannies not last long? What was their long-term effect on politics?

## OLIGARCHIES

ARISTOTLE: 'Oligarchy is ... the sovereignty of a small number ... directed to the interest of the well-to-do.'

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the basic requirement of an oligarchy?
2. What are the other requirements?
3. Do you consider that Sparta was an oligarchy? Explain your answer.

Oligarchy means 'the rule of the few'—and an oligarchy often followed the fall of a tyrant. In most oligarchies, citizenship was based on wealth, either from trade (as was the case for many Corinthians), or from owning land. After the fall of the tyrants in Corinth in 585 BCE, the *aristoi* created an oligarchy, which included representatives from all the nobles—and not just the Bacchiads. Corinth now had a council of eighty members, ten from each tribe and an inner cabinet of eight. This was a more inclusive structure than before Cypselus became tyrant—but citizenship still depended on wealth.

Oligarchies varied from *polis* to *polis*. The oligarchy of Sparta, for example, was different to the oligarchy of Corinth.

In Sparta, the oligarchy was based on birth rather than wealth. You had to be a *Spartiate* to 'belong'—that is, you had to be a descendant of particular families. The elders formed a council of twenty-eight (or thirty including the two kings) called the *gerousia*. Members of the *gerousia* had to be aged over sixty and were elected for life. By the middle of the sixth century, all the *Spartiates* were given some say in their government through the annual election of five magistrates (or *ephors*).<sup>18</sup> The election of *ephors* was open to all *Spartiates*.

Massalia (modern Marseilles) was at first governed only by the descendants of the original settlers—Ionian Greeks from Phocaea (now in Turkey) in Asia Minor. Massalia had a council of 600 called the *timouchi*. Members of the *timouchi* were appointed for life from families that had citizens going back three generations—but only men with children were admitted. The *timouchi* selected fifteen magistrates to serve as a committee to manage day-to-day affairs, with three of those magistrates having executive powers. Massalia was a stable oligarchy, as it was still in existence in Roman times.

### SOURCE 1.24

*Theognis in Greek Lyrics,*  
trans. Richmond Lattimore  
(Chicago: University of Chicago  
Press, 1960), 27.

#### GOVERNMENT BY, WITH AND FOR MONEY

Never yet, my Kyrnos, was a city destroyed by its nobles,  
but only after base men take to disorderly ways,  
and debauch their own people and give rights to the unrighteous  
for the sake of their own money and power; and when this is so,  
hold no hope for such a city to remain unshaken  
for long, although for the time it rides on a tranquil keel,  
not when such activities have tempted the base men  
and private advantage comes with public disaster. For this  
breeds civil discord and men's blood shed by their fellow-citizens,  
and monarchies. But pray that our city may never be such.

### ACTIVITY

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Source 1.24 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What does the poet Theognis see as wrong in other Greek cities?
2. What sort of government do you think is in place in his city? Give evidence to support your answer.
3. What does the poet Theognis fear will happen?
4. What class in society does the poet come from? Give evidence to support your answer.

## COLONISATION

THUCYDIDES: 'Then came the period of colonisation.'

Each *polis* had a different reason for founding a colony or *apoikia* (meaning a 'settlement far from home'). In the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE, colonisation was seen as a solution for a variety of Greek social and political problems.

Each expedition was organised by an individual *polis*, not by Greece as a whole. A *polis* sometimes invited adventurous or land-deprived Greeks from other *poleis* to join their citizens to make up the number of people needed for an *apoikia*. But before dispatching any colonists, the *polis* would appoint a founder (or *oikist*) and send them to the **Oracle at Delphi**. People from all over the Mediterranean would come to Delphi to ask the oracle questions, such as 'Where is a good place to start an *apoikia*?' The priests would then interpret the answer from the priestess (or *pythia*), often by using information they had learnt from other visitors to Delphi.

The leaders of a departing group of colonists were often the restless younger sons of aristocrats, nobles such as the Euboean horse-raisers, who founded settlements in the western Mediterranean. However, once the colonists had left their original *polis*—despite retaining religious and other ties to the mother city (or *metropolis*)—they were no longer its citizens.

Eighty-one *poleis* became mother cities—these were not all from the Greek homeland, as sometimes the colonies themselves founded other cities.<sup>19</sup> Ionian cities in particular were enthusiastic colonisers, as from the seventh century onwards their existence and the control of their land beyond the city were threatened by the rise of first Lydia and then Persia. The *polis* Miletus founded at least seventy colonies on fertile land around the Black Sea. The Phocaeans preferred to flee rather than submit to the Persians, and founded Massalia (Marseilles).

Corinth established colonies because it lacked fertile farmland—but it also selected locations that would help its trading interests. Corinth had at least seven colonies, the most important one being Syracuse, which was settled in 733 BCE on the best harbour in Sicily—as recommended by the Oracle at Delphi.

The volcanic island of Thera (Santorini) suffered a severe drought, so the government decreed that one son from each family either had to leave or be killed. Following the advice of the Oracle at Delphi, the colonists went to the coast of North Africa. After some years spent on an island offshore, the settlers eventually landed and founded the city of Cyrene (now in Libya) on a plateau just inland from the sea, with so much fertile land that they were later able to invite other Greeks to settle there.



### 🔍 SOURCE 1.25

A shallow bowl showing Apollo holding his lyre and pouring *libations* (a drink offered to a deity), while a crow or a raven watches from a perch. The *kylix* is from a tomb in Delphi, 480–470 BCE.

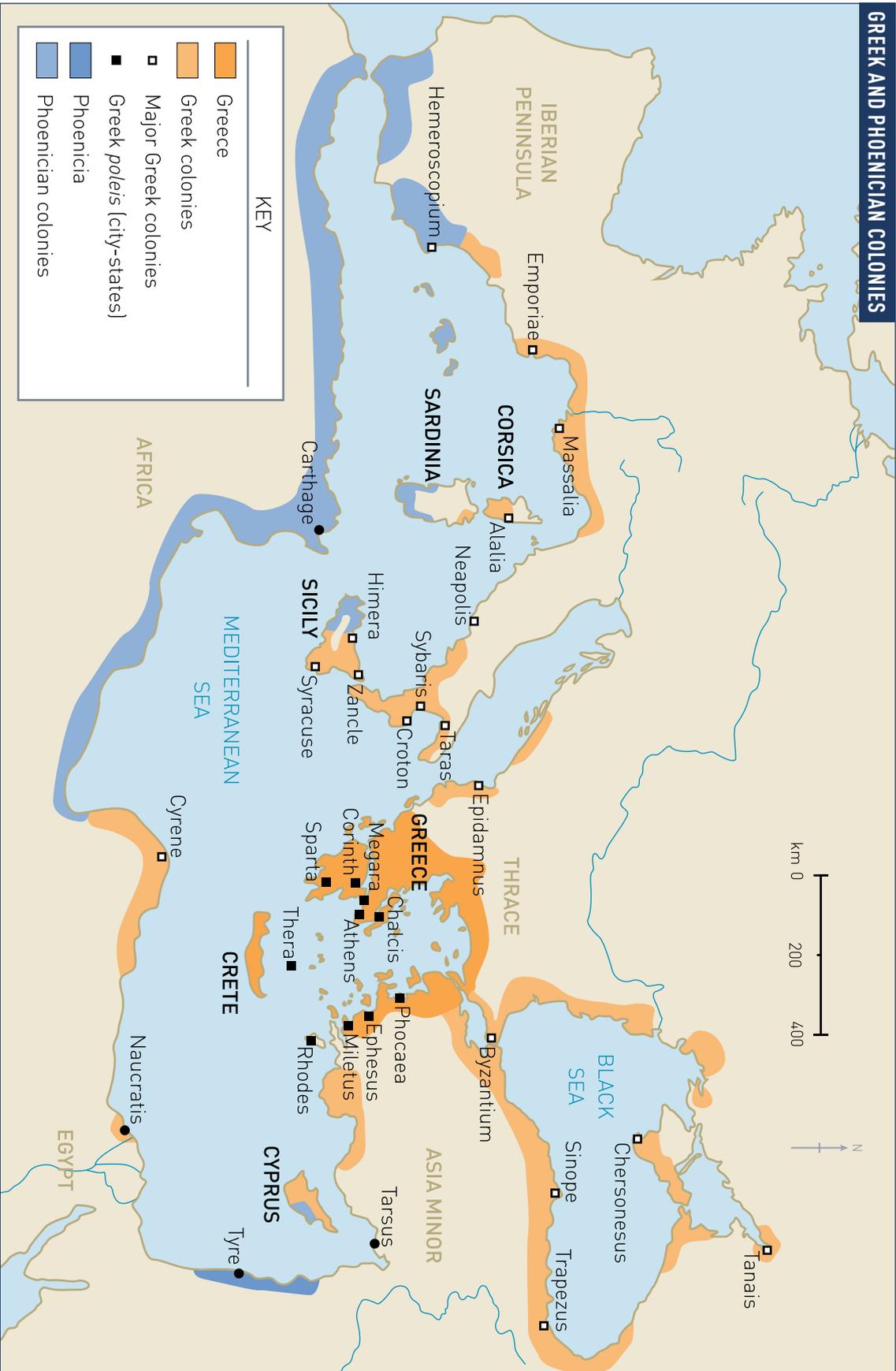
### 🔍 SOURCE 1.26

The ruins of Cyrene in modern-day Libya.



**SOURCE 1.27**

**GREEK AND PHOENICIAN COLONIES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN**



Although Sparta annexed the neighbouring region, *Messenia*, to solve its shortage of land, the *polis* did found one colony, *Taras* (Tarentum), in southern Italy.

During the war with Messenia—which lasted nineteen years—many *Spartiates* were killed. Because of the shortage of men, Spartan women could have ‘temporary’ relationships with non-Spartans, but any children produced were called *Partheniai*, meaning ‘sons of unmarried mothers’, and were not allowed to become citizens or own land. The *Partheniai* became angry at their lack of rights, and revolted. The leader of the revolt, Phalanthus, was sent to Delphi to find out what to do and was told to found a colony at Taras. Taras became a *democracy* in the fifth century, but kept Spartan religious cults and burial customs.

The colonies of Athens were different to the colonies of any other *polis*. Apart from those in Thrace and the Black Sea area, most Athenian colonies were founded in the fifth century as military colonies (or *cleruchies*). *Cleruchies* were strategically placed colonies that were fully controlled by Athens, where poor people could own enough land to become *hoplites*, retain their Athenian citizenship and protect Athens’ growing fleet and empire. Historians are unsure how many Athenians lived on the *cleruchies* and how many stayed in Athens, using the land rent from their *cleruchy* to raise enough money to become *hoplites*.<sup>20</sup>



GREEK ART IN THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

### SOURCE 1.28

Showing the Greek influence in the area, this silver coin (c.375–200 BCE) depicts a Greek goddess from Massalia.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### RESULTS OF COLONISATION

For the mother city, the results of colonisation were immediate: reduced population at home, a new place to send manufactured products, and a new source of food. For Corinth, the trade in Corinthian pottery rapidly expanded from its colonies in Italy to other societies, making Corinth wealthy. Because of Greek trading links with Etruria and the fledgling city of Rome, Italy was influenced by the Greek alphabet, as well as by Greek cultural ideas and artistic skills. Greek pottery from the eighth century BCE has been found in Rome’s first marketplace, the *Forum Boarium*. Greek artefacts have even been found as far north as the Loire Valley in France.

The Greeks had an impact on the lives of local people when they established colonies. For instance, Greeks planted fruit trees and grapevines in the Crimea, and gave the Italians and Massalians cuttings of olive trees and grapevines—which is the origin of many famous wines. ‘From the people of Marseilles, therefore, the Gauls learned a more civilized way of life, their former barbarity being laid aside or softened ... it was not Greece which seemed to have immigrated into Gaul, but Gaul that seemed to have been transplanted into Greece.’<sup>21</sup>

Where the Greeks settled, cities, economic growth and wealth grew—but also degradation of the natural environment. Land was cleared for cultivation, forests were cut down for timber exports, roads were built through pristine landscapes, canals and cemeteries constructed, quarries were dug for marble and for other stone to build walls, and mines explored for gold, silver and copper: the usual effects of ‘civilisation’.<sup>22</sup>

Colonisation often involved the displacement of the original inhabitants, with the native people forced to move, killed, enslaved or taken to become ‘wives’ of the colonists. Another barely mentioned result of colonisation was the increase in the number of slaves sent to Greece to be sold in markets in places like Byzantium and Athens.



COLONISATION: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why and in what ways was Corinth a typical founder of colonies, and how were Sparta and Athens atypical?
2. What did the Oracle at Delphi do to encourage colonisation? Why might the oracle want to do that?
3. List all the causes of colonisation.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. What were the positive effects of colonisation?
2. What were the negative effects?
3. To what extent were people's lives changed in Greece and in the colonised areas?
4. How long lasting were the effects of Greek colonisation?
5. Can the consequences of Greek colonisation still be felt today? Provide some examples.
6. Draw a diagram (such as a concept map) to show the historical significance of Greek colonisation, both positive and negative.



↑ **SOURCE 1.29**

The tombstone of Hegeso, 410–400 BCE, showing her being attended by her slave.

## SLAVERY

ARISTOTLE: 'The slave is an animate piece of property.'

With no vacuum cleaners, washing machines or dishwashers, and no shops from which to buy clothes, the slaves of ancient Greece were 'animate' machines used in the *oikonomia* to help the housewife with cooking and making clothes. Female slaves would collect water from the nearest fountain. Male slaves would accompany the husband when he shopped, so they could carry the goods home for him while he wandered off to talk to friends. A slave also carted armour and weapons for his master when he marched off to war. The female slaves kept the wife company when the *kyrios* was away fighting or performing his democratic duties. There were no machines on farms so slaves were 'animate' machines there too, but many farmers were too poor to buy them. If the farmer did own a slave, the slave would work beside his master. Slaves similarly worked beside masters in manufacturing.

Slaves were imported from colonies near Southern Russia on the Black Sea, or from Thrace, or from Asia Minor where there was a roaring slave market on the island of Chios. Most slaves in Athens were bought in the *agora*, the sale being encouraged by the state as a way of raising taxes. Greeks also acquired slaves through kidnapping (like the case of Eumaios in Source 1.15), and many were prisoners of war, which was just as common

in the fifth century as in the time of Homer. Some poor families left unwanted children on doorsteps in the hope that they would at least survive, even if it were as a slave.

Slaves in 'factories' produced goods such as pottery, fine cloth, vessels made from metal and furniture that could be exchanged for grain from colonies in Cyrene, Sicily and southern Italy. In some cases, slaves in small workshops worked side-by-side with their masters, who may even be freed slaves. Some slaves were hired out by their masters to work in the construction industry and were paid the same wages as other workers—but the money went to their owners.

Colonisation occurred just as Greeks began to create coins, which were by far the easiest way to purchase goods. Therefore where the slaves were needed most, and were most often replaced, was in the silver mines at *Laurion*, where a rich vein of silver was discovered in 483 BCE. Poor Athenians also worked in the mines, but the majority of workers were slaves. The mines were stuffy, hot, dusty and dark—and the death rates were high. Archaeologists have found that the silver must have been extracted by child labour—only children could have crawled along the narrow corridors. Adult slaves crushed the ore by hand and milled, washed and smelted the ore, which was taken to Athens to be converted into silver coins.<sup>23</sup> Although the state owned the mines, it leased them out to wealthy individuals. The slave owners either used their own slaves to work the mines or leased them to contractors. The contractors fed and clothed the slaves and replaced any casualties.<sup>24</sup>

The Athenian state also owned slaves. The most prominent were 300 Scythian archers who acted as police since Athenians refused to arrest or jail their fellow citizens.<sup>25</sup> Educated public slaves checked the weights of coins, looked after public records and accounts, and assisted various magistrates.

The Laws of Gortyn in Crete in the mid fifth century gave slaves certain rights, even a payment for injury. The slave might be manumitted on the owner's death or they could buy their freedom, especially if they worked in a trade. Athenian ships were not rowed by galley slaves, but by citizens and *metics*. The first slave rebellion historians know of was on the island of Chios, but that occurred much later, in the third century BCE.

## SPARTAN HELOTS

The *helots* were state-owned slaves in Laconia and Messenia. Some historians have estimated that there were seven *helots* to each Spartan. The *helots* worked the land for the Spartans, handed over half the produce and were not allowed to leave that land. In time of war some would be forced to go with their master. The *helots* were treated brutally by the Spartans and revolted against them several times.

### INTO SLAVERY

As a woman weeps, lying over the body  
of her dear husband, who fell fighting for her city and people  
as he tried to beat off the pitiless day from city and children;  
she sees him dying and gasping for breath, and winding her body  
about him she cries high and shrill, while the men behind her,  
hitting her with their spear butts on the back and the shoulders,  
force her up and lead her away into slavery, to have  
hard work and sorrow, and her cheeks are wracked with pitiful weeping.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 1.30 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What type of source is it?
2. Who wrote the source?
3. What has happened to the city and to the warrior?
4. What does the future hold for the woman?

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why might Athenian women have a completely different attitude towards their slaves than the men did?
2. What did the slave do that made his master think he was just 'an animate piece of property'?
3. Which was worse: to be a *helot* or to work in the mines? Give your reasons.

### SOURCE 1.30

Homer, *The Odyssey* 8.523-530,  
trans. Richmond Lattimore  
(New York: Harper and Row,  
1967).

## ACTIVITY

# CONCLUSION



Out of the chaos of the Greek Dark Age sprang the ideas and organisation of Classical Greece. Trade began and influenced agriculture, the Greek alphabet appeared, villages came together to form a *polis*. *Poleis* began with the cities in Ionia, which were stimulated by the earlier civilisations of Babylonia and Egypt to create great epic and lyric poetry and scientific ideas. Over time each *polis* developed its own form of government and unique culture.

As the population increased, Greek colonies spread all over the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. The colonies provided food for the mother state and protected the trade routes. In Greece, trade

and manufacturing opportunities expanded and the *poleis* grew wealthy on the proceeds. In turn, the Greeks influenced other cultures, particularly those in the West to whom they gave the alphabet and literature, architecture and art.

By the sixth century BCE the citizens of many *poleis* had enough leisure time to vote, fight, create beautiful works of art and architecture, write poetry and choral songs, and discuss scientific and philosophic ideas—everything we call Greek civilisation. But that leisure was provided by poor workers, women, *metics*, serfs and slaves who were the ones who kept the economy going.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

'The growth of Greek society in the Archaic Age could not have happened without the input of people from other places.'

- As a class, create a concept map or table outlining the importance of trade, colonisation and foreign slaves.
- Can you find any evidence in this chapter for Greek institutions that also contributed to the growth of Greek societies in the Archaic Age?

## EXAM PREPARATION

1. Outline the reasons for Greek colonisation of the Mediterranean Sea.
2. Explain the ways in which colonisation changed Greece and other Mediterranean countries.
3. Evaluate the significance of women and slaves in Greek society.

## ESSAY

Write an essay of 400–600 words on one of the following topics. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- Discuss the effects the invention and use of coinage had on Greek society and politics.
- 'Greek civilisation would not have been so great without the work of women, slaves and serfs.' Discuss.
- 'Without the disruption of tyranny, Greek society, politics and culture would have stagnated.' Discuss.

## EXTENSION

- Choose two out of the following *poleis* to investigate: Argos, Byzantium, Cumae, Eretria, Miletus, Mytilene, Syracuse or Thebes. Find out where they were situated in Greece or the Mediterranean, when and who founded them, their economy, if they were a colony, if they founded colonies, their form of government and any changes to that over time.
- Hold a class debate with female students defending the male roles in the *polis* and male students defending the female roles. After the debate, discuss and compare ancient Greek and contemporary Australian beliefs and values.

## TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 1

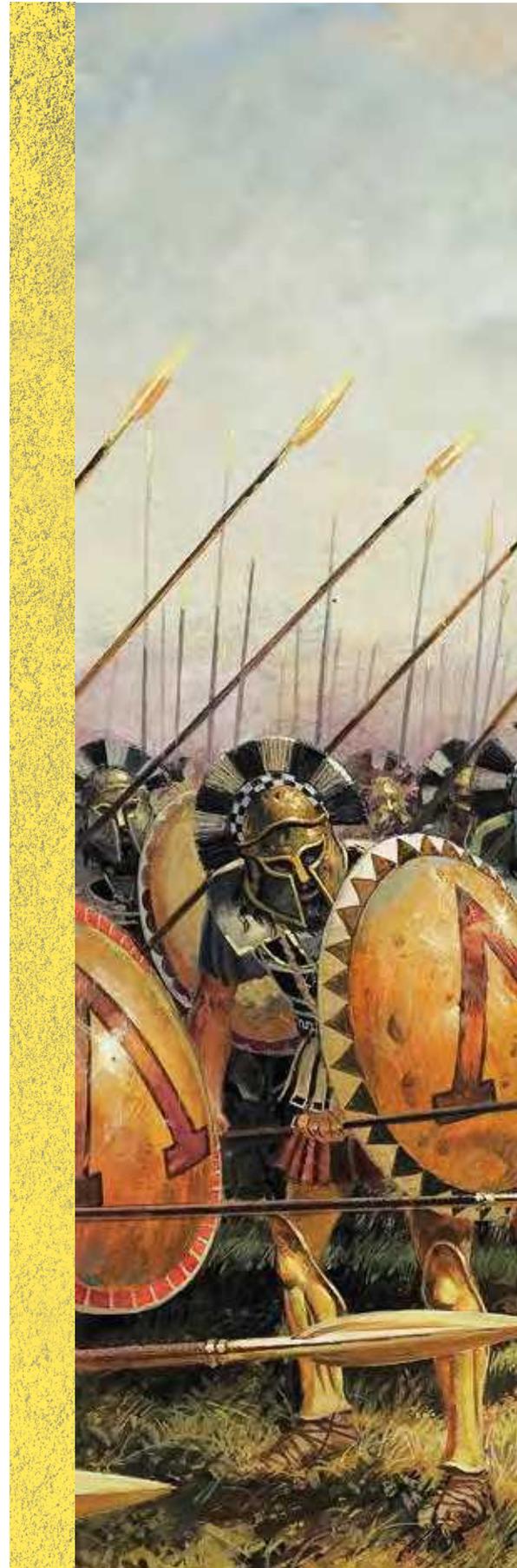
CHAPTER

# 2

## VALOUR, DUTY, SACRIFICE: SPARTA

'In Sparta are to be found those who are most enslaved  
and those who are the most free.'

CRITIAS OF ATHENS





Spartan infantry in a formation called a phalanx.

# OVERVIEW

## KEY EVENTS

### 800 BCE

Sparta emerges from the Greek Dark Age

### 743–724 BCE

Spartan conquest of Messenia in the First Messenian War

### 706 BCE

Taras in southern Italy founded as a Spartan colony

### 685–668 BCE

Second Messenian War

### 669 BCE

Sparta defeated by Argos at the battle of Hysiai

### c. 650 BCE

Reforms of Spartan society begin

### 550 BCE

Sparta defeats Argos  
Peloponnesian League created

### 510 BCE

Sparta becomes a force for expelling tyranny in Greece  
Hippias' tyranny ended by Spartan intervention

### 464 BCE

Earthquake in Sparta devastates the city

## KEY POINTS

- At the end of the Dark Age, the Spartan *polis* emerged from the union of a few small villages in the Eurotas valley.
- Owing to a shortage of land for its citizens, Sparta waged war on its neighbour Messenia to expand its territory.
- The suppression of the Messenians led to a volatile slave population that threatened Sparta's way of life, making the need for reform urgent.
- A new constitution was put in place to ensure Sparta could protect itself from this new threat, as well as from tyranny.
- Sweeping reforms were made that transformed Sparta into a powerful military state that soon came to dominate the Peloponnese.



## LYCURGUS

Legendary reformer of ancient Sparta. According to the legend, Lycurgus went to receive guidance from the Oracle at Delphi, and then instituted the *Great Rhetra* (Spartan constitution) that turned Sparta into a militaristic society built around the *hoplite* class of citizen. Lycurgus was believed to have remodelled nearly every aspect of Spartan society—politics, social dynamics, the economy and trade—in an effort to create the perfect state.



## TYRTAEUS

A Greek lyric poet who lived most of his life in Sparta, and wrote in the mid 600s BCE. He wrote poems promoting Spartan values, especially military discipline and dedication to the state.

## ORACLE AT DELPHI

A prophet of the ancient world. The oracle was a priestess known as the *Pythia*, who was based in Delphi, on Mt Parnassus. The oracle provided divine messages from Apollo to travellers seeking guidance.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

	DEMOCRACY	OLIGARCHY	TYRANNY	MONARCHY
DEFINITION	Power vested in the hands of all citizens of the <i>polis</i>	Power vested in the hands of a few individuals	A system under the control of a non-hereditary ruler unrestricted by any laws or constitution	A system under the control of a king
CHARACTERISTICS	<p>Citizens of the <i>polis</i> all share equal rights in the political sphere</p> <p>Economic or social disadvantage is limited as a factor in disqualifying political rights</p> <p>All citizens are equal before the law (people can't escape prosecution or punishment based on birth)</p> <p>Most magistrates are selected by lot</p>	<p>A small, powerful and wealthy aristocratic class</p> <p>Most citizens barred from inclusion in government</p>	<p>One individual exercises complete authority over all aspects of everyday life without constraint</p> <p>While sometimes perceived as exhibiting violent behaviour, tyrants in ancient Greece were not always cruel. They also marked an important departure from hereditary kingship</p>	<p>Hereditary rule passing from father to son</p> <p>Family dynasties claim power through association with a key mythological figure</p>
FAMOUS INDIVIDUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleisthenes of Athens</li> <li>• Pericles of Athens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Oligarchy of 400' of Athens</li> <li>• Leontiades of Thebes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dionysius I of Syracuse</li> <li>• Peisistratus of Athens</li> <li>• Pheidon of Argos</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philip II of Macedonia</li> <li>• Alexander of Macedonia</li> <li>• Leonidas of Sparta</li> </ul>



**KING LEONIDAS I**

Arguably the most famous King of Sparta. Leonidas commanded Spartan forces at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, leading a mission to delay the Persian assault. He came to symbolise Spartan ideals of valour, duty and sacrifice.



📌 *Leonidas at Thermopylae* by Jacques Louis David, 1814.

# INTRODUCTION

EXILED SPARTAN KING DEMARATUS TO XERXES I OF PERSIA: 'So is it with the Lacedaemonians, fighting singly they are as brave as any man living, and together they are the best warriors on earth. They are free, yet not wholly free: the law is their master, whom they fear much more than your men fear you. They do whatever it bids; and its bidding is always the same, that they must never flee from the battle before any multitude of men, but must abide at their post and there conquer or die.'<sup>1</sup>

## SOURCE 2.01

### LOCATION OF SPARTA



According to the ancient myths, Sparta was founded in pre-history by Lacedaemon, the son of Zeus and Taygete. Lacedaemon named the region *Lacedaemonia* after himself—although we know it as Laconia, and its people as Laconians. Historically, the *polis* of Sparta was founded in 950 BCE during the Greek Dark Age, after the migration of the Dorians into southern Greece.

The Sparta that emerged in 800 BCE would have been very different from the military camp the city became in the sixth and fifth centuries. Surrounded by mountains, the Spartan *polis* was formed from five villages in the Eurotas Valley in central Laconia. Sparta's population was restricted by its limited farmland—it never had more than 9000 full citizens in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, and was down to barely 1000 citizens by the fourth century BCE.

The Eurotas Valley supplied the Spartans with all the farmland they needed to develop and thrive. Open farmland produced wheat, barley, olives and grapes—however, the foundation of Spartan society rested on the backs of its slave population. At every point in its history, Sparta possessed a population of slaves (or *helots*) that outnumbered the Spartans. As the Spartan population shrank in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, this ratio would increase.



HISTORIAN  
HODKINSON ON  
FINDING EVIDENCE



## SOURCE 2.02

Ruins of Ancient Sparta.

## FIRST MESSENIAN WAR (734–724 BCE)

TYRTAEUS: 'To conquer her they fought full nineteen years steadfastly ever, with endurance in their hearts, those spearman of our fathers' fathers' time, and in the twentieth the foe took flight, and left their fertile farms among Ithome's heights.'

By the mid-eighth century Sparta required more land to satisfy the needs of its growing population. With the exception of Taras in southern Italy, settled in 706 BCE, Sparta did not seek overseas colonial expansion for its population. Rather, it turned its attention westward over Mt Taygetus, to Messenia and its thriving open countryside.

In 743 BCE the Spartans waged war against the Messenian people. The conflict dragged on until the Messenian fortress at Ithome was captured by the Spartan army nearly two decades later. The Messenians were reduced to *helots* under Spartan dominion. They lost all their rights, as well as their freedom of movement, and were forced to pledge half their annual harvest to the Spartan state. Sparta had won what it needed most—farmland for its people.

## SECOND MESSENIAN WAR (685–668 BCE)

HELENA SCHRADER: 'Arguably, nothing was more important to the evolution of Sparta into a city-state with a highly unusual and unique constitution than the Spartan conquest of Messenia.'

The peace between Sparta and its *helot* population did not last. Forty years later, in 685 BCE, the *helots* of Sparta rose up in rebellion, aided by the people of Argos in the north-eastern Peloponnese, who were long-time enemies of the Spartans. In an attempt to overthrow their masters, the *helot* population invaded Laconia and managed to hold back the Spartans for over thirteen years. But in 668 BCE the Messenians were once again defeated and forced into servitude. Apart from some coastal communities and a few interior regions, all of Messenia was under Spartan dominion for the next three hundred years.



### SOURCE 2.03

An artist's impression of Aristomenes of Messenia fighting Spartan warriors in the Second Messenian War.

# THE GREAT RHETRA AND SPARTAN GOVERNMENT

TYRTAEUS: 'Having listened to Phoebus they brought home from Delphi, prophecies of the god and words that will come true'<sup>2</sup>

Around 650 BCE a fundamental reorganisation of Spartan life took place in the form of the *Great Rhetra*. The *rhetra*, meaning 'oracle' or 'proclamation' was the first and greatest in a series of laws designed to 'create order by means of reform' and transform Sparta into a new kind of political community.<sup>3</sup> This new *constitution* completely reorganised the state to become something completely new in the ancient world.<sup>4</sup> It combined all the elements of governance existing in Greece at the time and sought to produce the perfect political system free from tyranny. The *rhetra* sought to create *eunomia*, a state governed under 'good laws and government' by limiting the power of the kings, empowering the common citizen, and establishing a powerful council of city elders. However, the cost of the *rhetra* was the complete personal freedom of all of Sparta's citizens. After the laws came into effect, every citizen was bound by them from the cradle to the grave.

Diodorus, an historian from the Greek colonies in Sicily, provides a detailed portion of this oracle given to the people of Sparta.



THE SPARTAN  
CONSTITUTION

## ➔ SOURCE 2.04

*Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History 7.12.6 trans. C. H. Oldfather (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1989).*

### DIODORUS ON THE GREAT RHETRA

Council is to begin with the divinely honoured kings, who have the lovely city of Sparta in their care, and with the Ancient Elders. Then the men of the people, responding in turn to straight rhetra must say what is noble and do all that is just.

Diodorus' extract reveals three main separate elements to this new political system: the kings, the city elders and the citizens of Sparta itself.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Outline the reasons why the Messenian wars were fought.
2. Explain how the campaigns both profited and endangered the Spartan people.
3. Analyse what the Spartans realised about their own society after the Messenian campaigns.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### RESULTS OF THE MESSENIAN WARS AND THE NEED FOR REFORM

The Spartans learned many harsh lessons from their wars with Messenia. Their need for more land required the annexation of territory that could only be achieved with a powerful army. However, once the campaign was over, the Spartans realised that the hostile *helot* population could only be countered by a professional standing army. This was a new concept for the ancient Greeks, who mobilised troops infrequently and then demobilised them after battles were won.

One theory on the causes of the changes in Sparta is that acquiring new territory from Messenia revealed deep imbalances within Sparta. New farmland was provided only to veterans of the Messenian conflict, which led to inequalities among the Spartan population.<sup>5</sup> This inequality led to the rise of a wealthy class of merchants in the city who wielded disproportionate political influence over their countrymen.

According to this theory, a drastic revolution was needed to save and protect the city. With this in mind, the Spartan *polis* began to implement reforms, in the process transforming Spartan society into something unique in the ancient world.

## THE LEGEND OF LYCURGUS

THE ORACLE AT DELPHI: 'Beloved of the Gods, and rather God than man.'<sup>6</sup>

Modern historians generally believe that reforms that transformed Spartan society into a military state were introduced over a number of centuries. However, the ancient Greeks attributed the changes to the legendary figure of Lycurgus. Many stories were associated with Lycurgus in antiquity. Plutarch noted that:

'nothing can be said [about him] which is not disputed, since indeed there are different accounts of his birth, his travels, his death, and, above all, of his work as lawmaker and statesman; and there is least agreement among historians as to the times in which the man lived.'<sup>7</sup>

According to legend, Lycurgus travelled across Greece as far as Crete and Ionia to observe the finest political systems of his day, selecting elements he liked in a bid to create the perfect constitution for Sparta. He determined that a complete revolution was required. Lycurgus travelled to the Oracle at Delphi. After consulting the oracle, he received the 'Great Rhetra'—a proclamation to make Sparta's constitution the greatest in the world.

Lycurgus was said to have then returned to Sparta and remodelled nearly every aspect of Spartan society. Politics, social dynamics, the economy and trade were all restructured to create the perfect state composed of perfect citizens. He sought *eunomia* for Sparta: the application of good laws and the establishment of justice as a virtue of everyday life.

Lycurgus made the Spartans swear an oath that they would not alter his laws until he returned from consulting the Oracle at Delphi. After the oracle confirmed the excellence of his reforms, Lycurgus resolved not to return to Sparta and, in an effort to best serve the state, took his own life to ensure that his laws would remain unchanged forever.

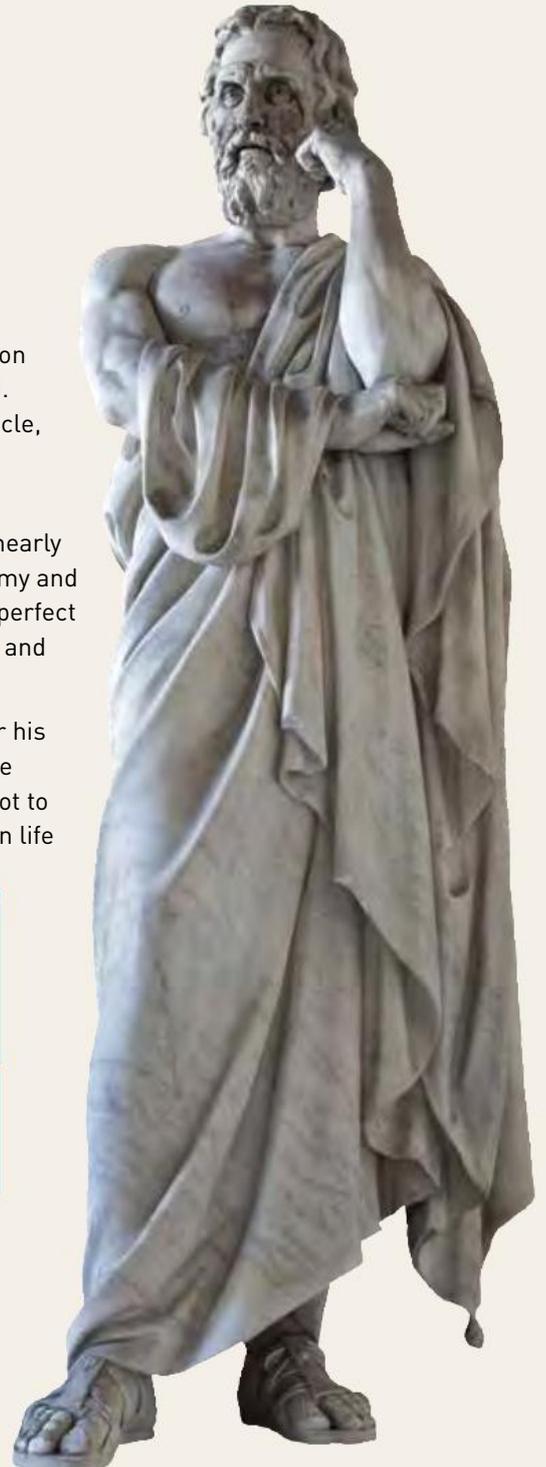
### BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. Explain what Lycurgus supposedly hoped to achieve with his reforms.
2. Why might the ancient Spartans have attributed all of their reforms to this legendary figure?
3. How might the legend have made Spartans more likely to support the laws?

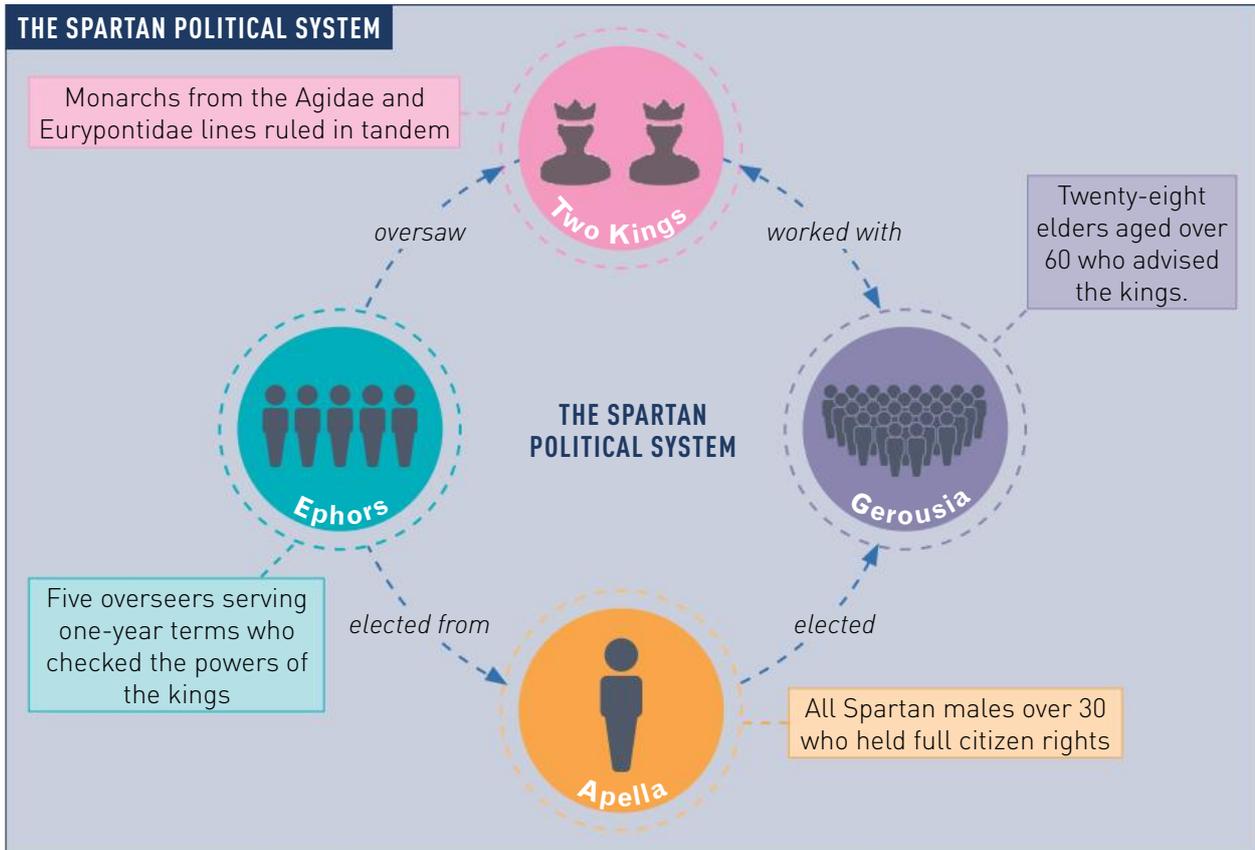
### ACTIVITY

### ➔ SOURCE 2.05

The changes that transformed Sparta into an unparalleled military state were attributed by the ancient Greeks to the legendary figure of Lycurgus.



## THE SPARTAN POLITICAL SYSTEM



## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### THE NEW SPARTAN GOVERNMENT

The new Spartan government adopted a 'suitable alternative model' to that of the other city-states in Greece. Instead of choosing between a monarchy, an oligarchy or a democracy, Sparta adopted parts of all of them. The laws kept both Spartan kings as the heads of state, but introduced a council of elders, known as the *gerousia*, to guide and advise them. In addition, an assembly comprised of all Spartan citizens established a democratic element in the Spartan constitution. All these measures formed a new social contract between the kings, the aristocracy and the citizenry, designed to stave off both anarchy and tyranny, as no one political faction could function without the support of the others.

## THE KINGS

XENOPHON: 'He ordained that the King shall offer all the public sacrifices on behalf of the state, in virtue of his divine descent, and that, whatever may be the destination to which the state sends out an army, he shall be its leader.'<sup>8</sup>

The Spartan system of governance was the opposite of political tradition elsewhere in Greece.<sup>9</sup> While other city-states overthrew monarchic rule, the Spartans embraced it, retaining their unique system of dual-kingship, called a *dyarchy*. The *dyarchs* (dual-rulers) were both the sons of rival families. In practical terms, the presence of the *Agidae* and *Eurypontidae* line of kings was a safeguard against oppressive monarchism, as one ruler's power would always be checked by the other.



SPARTAN KINGS:  
RESEARCH



The changes instituted under Spartan law limited the power of the kings domestically but gave them many new roles to fulfil.

The kings lost much of their law-making power. They now shared this authority with a council of city elders, the Spartan assembly of citizens and the *ephorate* (see page 48). Their judicial power was also limited but they were the ultimate authority over civil issues regarding the adoption of children, marriage of an heiress without a father, and all matters concerning Sparta's public roads.

The kings were also the supreme commanders-in-chief of the Spartan army. They alone had the right to wage war on any other state, although they did require the approval of the Spartan people. The kings were expected to lead the Spartan army into combat and fight on the frontlines. Despite the limitations on their power during peacetime, the kings were the highest authority over life and death during a military campaign. After 507 BCE only one king at a time was allowed to lead the army, so if he fell Sparta would still have one adult male sovereign.

### SOURCE 2.06

A modern statue of Leonidas, the legendary ancient Spartan warrior king.

### DID YOU KNOW?

A Spartan king was succeeded by the first son born after his coronation. If a son was born to the man before he became king, that child was passed over in favour of the child born during his reign.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. In what ways was the power of the Spartan kings limited?
2. What power were the kings still left with after the reforms?
3. What were the key roles and responsibilities of the Spartan kings?

### EXTENSION

1. Why do you believe Sparta retained their monarchs when most other Greek states overthrew them?
2. What do you think separated the new Spartan kings from monarchs elsewhere in the ancient world?
3. Evaluate, using evidence, the advantages and disadvantages of dual-kingship.

### ACTIVITY

## THE GEROUSIA

PLUTARCH: 'Only in Sparta does it pay to grow old.'<sup>10</sup>

According to the Great Rhetra, the supreme powers of the Spartan kings were checked by a council of seniors known as the *gerousia*. Stemming from the ancient Greek word for 'elder', this council of 30 was composed of 28 male citizens over sixty years of age and the two Spartan kings. Its role was to advise the kings on matters of national urgency and prepare business to be presented to the citizenry when they assembled in congress. It also acted as the supreme criminal judges of the city, trying cases of murder and treason. No potential law could be brought before the people without the approval of the *gerousia*—which shows the enormous power it had.



GEROUSIA  
ELECTIONS:  
MORE INFO

Theoretically, any Spartan male could hold a position on this council, but it was more likely that these posts were held by only the most prominent Spartan families; the office of *gerousia* was for life. The vote of the *gerousia* was equal to that of the kings in matters of the highest importance, such as issues of war and rebellion. It also possessed the power to veto the decisions of the citizen assembly if it believed that the decisions were a threat to the laws of Sparta.

### ➔ SOURCE 2.07

Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 5.6, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914).

#### PLUTARCH ON THE *GEROUSIA*

Among the many innovations which Lycurgus made, the first and most important was his institution of a senate, or Council of Elders, which, as Plato says, by being blended with the 'feverish' government of the kings, and by having an equal vote with them in matters of the highest importance, brought safety and due moderation into counsels of state. For before this the civil polity was veering and unsteady, inclining at one time to follow the kings towards tyranny, and at another to follow the multitude towards democracy; but now, by making the power of the senate a sort of ballast for the ship of state and putting her on a steady keel, it achieved the safest and the most orderly arrangement, since the twenty-eight senators always took the side of the kings when it was a question of curbing democracy, and, on the other hand, always strengthened the people to withstand the encroachments of tyranny.

### ➔ SOURCE 2.08

Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1271a, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1944).

#### ARISTOTLE ON THE *GEROUSIA*

Again, the procedure in the election of the Elders as a mode of selection is not only childish, but it is wrong that one who is to be the holder of this honourable office should canvass for it, for the man worthy of the office ought to hold it whether he wants to or not. But as it is the lawgiver clearly does the same here as in the rest of the constitution: he makes the citizens ambitious and has used this for the election of the Elders, for nobody would ask for office if he were not ambitious; yet surely ambition and love of money are the motives that bring about almost the greatest part of the voluntary wrongdoing that takes place among mankind.

## ACTIVITY

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Sources 2.07 and 2.08 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Outline the reasons why Plutarch praises Lycurgus' *gerousia*.
2. Explain why Aristotle condemned the *gerousia*.
3. Evaluate the view that the *gerousia* acted as a force against tyranny in Sparta. Use evidence to support your response.

## THE EPHORS

PLATO: 'As a remedy he introduced the authority of the Elders and of the Ephors to serve as a bond of safety for the kingly power; and because of this they have been kept safe and glorious all these generations since law became supreme.'<sup>11</sup>

While the Great Rhetra brought reform to the Spartan state, further change occurred in the mid-seventh century BCE when King Theopompus introduced five magistrates called *ephors* (literally 'those who oversee') to the Spartan political system.<sup>12</sup> The *ephorate* became the physical embodiment of the people's power

over their own government and the ultimate check on the power of the Spartan kings. These five Spartan *ephors*, each representing one of Sparta's original five villages, were the definitive overseers of all civil proceedings, deferring only to the *gerousia* on specific matters of legislative importance. The *ephors* were elected annually. They were chosen from the entire body of citizens—meaning that every male Spartan citizen had a chance to directly participate in the administration of their city.

The roles of the *ephors* were quite diverse. They were expected to:

- oversee the affairs of state
- call the meetings of the *apella* (the Spartan assembly)
- supervise the rulings of the kings and check their power if they exceeded their authority
- arrest the kings if they committed a crime against the Spartan constitution
- act as judges over civil legal cases as the supreme public court of Sparta
- direct and administer the *agoge*, Sparta's youth education and training program
- annually declare war on the *helot* population
- ensure the maintenance of strict order and discipline of the Spartan state
- join a king during a military campaign to ensure they did not abuse their power while abroad.

The *ephors* protected the people from the oppression of the monarchs. Every month the kings swore an oath that they would observe the laws of the state, and the *ephors* would swear that the kings could retain their power over the people without restriction—as long as they held true to their word. If a Spartan king was seen to be breaking this oath, a 'grand jury' of *ephors* and the *gerousia* would meet to determine if the king should still be permitted to rule.



**SOURCE 2.09**

The five *ephors*.

## ➔ SOURCE 2.10

*Xenophon, Constitution of the Lacedaemonians 15.6, trans. E. C. Marchant, G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925).*

### XENOPHON, THE OATH OF THE KINGS AND *EPHORS*

All rise from their seats when the King appears; only the Ephors do not rise from their official chairs. And they exchange oaths monthly, the Ephors on behalf of the state, the King for himself. And this is the King's oath: 'I will reign according to the established laws of the state.' And this is the oath of the state: 'While you abide by your oath, we will keep the kingship unshaken.'

## ➔ SOURCE 2.11

*Aristotle, Politics 2.1270b, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1944).*

### ARISTOTLE ON THE *EPHORS*

Moreover the regulations for the Ephorate are also bad. For this office has absolute control over their most important affairs, but the Ephors are appointed from the entire people, so that quite poor men often happen to get into the office, who owing to their poverty are to be easily bought ... for certain Ephors were corrupted with money and so far as lay in their power ruined the whole state. And because the office was too powerful, and equal to a tyranny, the kings also were compelled to cultivate popular favour, so that in this way too the constitution was jointly injured ... Also the mode of life of the Ephors is not in conformity with the aim of the state, for it is itself too luxurious, whereas in the case of the other citizens the prescribed life goes too far in the direction of harshness, so that they are unable to endure it, and secretly desert the law and enjoy the pleasures of the body.

## ➔ SOURCE 2.12

*Paul Cartledge, Spartan Reflections (California: University of California Press, 2001), 36.*

### HISTORIAN CARTLEDGE ON THE REPRESENTATION OF THE *EPHORATE*

The Ephors, on the other hand, though elected from all the damos (voting population), were certainly in no sense popular representatives. Rather, on attaining a position of collective eminence, the Ephorate fitted smoothly into the oligarchic hierarchy, satisfying the need for relatively youthful and dynamic executive, while its individual members were prevented by their annual tenure of office from attaining a dangerously large amount of personal power.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 2.10–2.12 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Outline the main responsibilities of the *ephors* according to Xenophon.
2. Explain why Aristotle and Cartledge disapprove of the *ephorate*.
3. Evaluate the impact of the *ephorate* on Spartan government. Use evidence to support your response.

## THE APELLA: THE SPARTAN ASSEMBLY

**TYRTAEUS:** 'After [the kings and elders] ... the commoners shall make response to direct proposals with conscientious speech and all just consequence, making no twisted plans against our realm; and commoner's majority shall win the day.'

The *apella* was the general assembly of all Spartan males over the age of thirty who had full citizenship rights. This body was officially summoned by the *ephors* every month to vote on matters of importance, such as issues of peace and war, the election of *ephors*, membership of the *gerousia* and even succession of the king. Sparta's reformed political system was 'based on strong elements of institutional civic equality'<sup>13</sup> as no full Spartan citizen was excluded from the *apella*. The Great Rhetra dictated that 'to the people shall belong the power' and this was very apparent in Sparta, as the law instilled in every man a fundamental decision-making role within the assembly.<sup>14</sup>

Thus social stability rested on the consensus of the people, as the vote of the assembly could not be countered or amended by the kings or the *gerousia* once it had passed.<sup>15</sup>

However, despite its power, the *apella* was still a passive body. It could not initiate debate or legislation, only deal with matters presented to it by the *gerousia*, and even then it could not alter or amend the law, only agree or disagree with a course of action. Plutarch stated that if the assembly was seen to be perverting the laws it could be restricted by the *gerousia* and the meeting would be dissolved, 'but if the people should adopt a distorted motion, the senators and kings shall have power of adjournment.'<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the potential for corruption from the elders or kings, there was still a significant check in place against tyranny—as no major change in law could be passed without the approval of the *apella*.

### THE SPARTAN POLITICAL AND JUDICIAL ASSEMBLIES

It is extremely doubtful whether there was ever much debate in the Spartan Assembly ... voting was conducted according to an archaic procedure, by 'shouting and not by ballot'. In other words, the Spartans did not recognise the principle of 'one man one vote', according to which everyone counts for one and no one for more than one. Moreover, as already noted, the methods of electing Ephors and Gerontes [Gerousia] were dismissed by Aristotle as 'childish', presumably because they were so easily manipulated. ... It cannot be stressed too much that there was no popular judiciary in Sparta.

### SOURCE 2.13

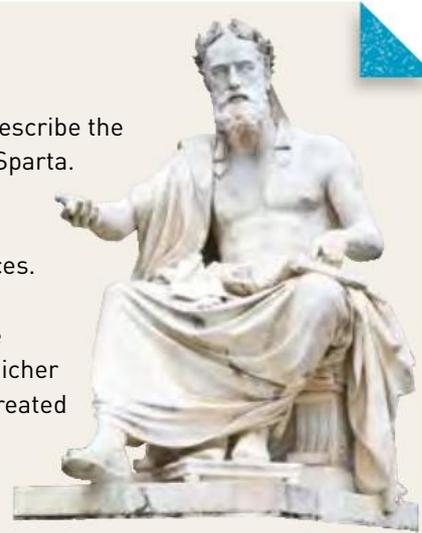
Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 51–52.

### THE SPARTAN 'MIRAGE'

In the 1930s François Ollier coined the term the 'Spartan mirage'<sup>17</sup> to describe the way writers during the late Classical and Hellenistic periods idealised Sparta. Ollier argued that individuals such as Xenophon, Plato and Plutarch had helped to construct a romantic version of the Spartan state, which then influenced modern scholarship about the city and its many practices. Following Sparta's decline in the fourth century BCE, the more positive traditions and institutions of the *polis* were greatly publicised, while the problems were systematically overlooked. Despite historians such as Richer questioning the accepted version of events, arguing that the ancients created a 'distorted history on the Spartans'<sup>18</sup>, many modern writers continue to present Sparta as a model city-state.

### SOURCE 2.14

The writer Xenophon.



## SPARTA: MONARCHY, DEMOCRACY OR OLIGARCHY?

Sparta was an 'abnormal *polis*'<sup>19</sup> in many ways. A casual observer would witness its kings at the head of an army and declare the state a monarchy, but as these monarchs needed the permission of their people to go to war it would signify the very principle of a democracy. However, the need for the *gerousia* to present the matter to the people in an open assembly still clearly gives the impression of an oligarchy. The reforms of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE revolutionised Spartan society, creating an avenue for democracy and a bastion against tyranny, while still holding true to more archaic concepts of monarchism and aristocratic rule.



POLITICAL REFORMS: ESSAY

Despite possessing some similar traits to other city-states, Sparta's constitution was unique in the ancient world, leading to both the animosity and admiration of the other Greeks.<sup>20</sup>

ACTIVITY

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Choose one of the following Spartan political groups and complete the tasks below:

- the kings
  - the *gerousia*
  - the *ephors*
  - the *apella*.
1. Collect three quotes under 100 words from a mixture of ancient and modern historians on your chosen group.
  2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of these interpretations? What evidence do they rely on? What information do they omit?
  3. Present a five-minute talk to your class that summarises the main historical interpretations of your chosen political group. End your presentation with a summary of your own views on the matter. Remember to cite evidence throughout.

## THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF SPARTA

### HIERARCHY OF SPARTAN SOCIETY



HYPOMEIONES —  
SPARTAN INFERIORS:  
MORE INFO

In the ninth century BCE, Spartans were largely dedicated to their own family (or *oikos*). Tribal and clan loyalties saw Sparta fragmented into five territorial villages (or *obai*). This led to great disunity, as each citizen sought to surpass their neighbour in power, influence and wealth. However, by the seventh century BCE Spartan society was radically reshaped into three main social classes:

- *Spartiates* (full citizens)
- *perioikoi* (second-class citizens)
- *helots* (slaves).

Significant social reform focused all aspects of Spartan life on the development of a military *polis*. While other Greek states focused on accumulating wealth and trade, Sparta's only trade was war.

## SPARTIATES

**FRAGMENT OF AN OLD GREEK STORY:** 'It seems all of Greece knows what is the right thing to do, but it is only the Spartans that do anything about it.'

*Spartiates* were male citizens over the age of thirty, and they were considered to be the only 'true' Spartans. They were the frontline of Sparta's army—and were considered symbolically to be the walls of the city. They held full political rights under Spartan law, possessing the power (or *kratos*) to sit and vote in the Spartan assembly and to join the *gerousia* after their military service ended at the age of sixty. Interestingly, although *Spartiates* exercised immense political freedom, they were socially and economically restricted. For example, in an effort to protect Sparta from attack—both internal and external—Spartan laws dictated that *Spartiates* were forbidden to engage in agriculture, trade or any other professional work: their sole occupation was to serve in the Spartan army.

According to Plutarch, Lycurgus divided Laconia into 30 000 fields (*kleroi*, or *kleros* in singular) and the area around Sparta into another 9000 *kleroi*—one for each *Spartiate* at the time.<sup>21</sup> This equal distribution of land was done to avoid the discontent that had followed the earlier annexation of Messenian territory. All agricultural work on the *kleroi* was completed by *helots*. Despite controlling a large degree of property, *Spartiates* did not truly 'own' their own produce—or even their *helots*. They were merely the 'caretakers' of these resources for the state. Trade and commerce were actively discouraged, and farming for profit was forbidden.

Life for a *Spartiate* was organised similar to that of an ant colony or a bee hive.<sup>22</sup> Devoting their lives to civic and military affairs, nobody was allowed to live as they pleased.<sup>23</sup> *Spartiates* even needed the permission of their commanding officers to leave the city. When finished with their daily tasks, *Spartiates* were expected to supervise the young in their training or to learn something from their own elders. Every aspect of life was predetermined for *Spartiates* and everyone knew their place.<sup>24</sup> Life was one of public service, civic morality, patriotism, and devotion to the collective and to the laws of Sparta.<sup>25</sup> The life of a *Spartiate* was simple—they served their city and protected its laws.



SPARTIATES:  
EXTENSION



THE NATURE  
OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN SPARTA

### DID YOU KNOW?

*Spartiates* were all considered to be equal. This belief became so ingrained that they referred to themselves as *homoioi*, meaning 'those who are alike'.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Outline the major requirements for being considered a citizen of Sparta.
2. What were the duties and responsibilities of *Spartiates*?
3. Explain why the *Spartiates* consider themselves as equals.

ACTIVITY

### DID YOU KNOW?

No recipe has survived for *melas zomas*, the Spartan black broth, although the main ingredients are known to be pigs' legs, guts, blood and vinegar. According to legend, the King of Sybaris, a city in southern Italy infamous for excess and gluttony, hired a Spartan chef to prepare this meal for him. Upon ingesting it he remarked, 'Now I know why the Spartans do not fear death', suggesting that it was preferable to die than to consume *melas zomas*.

## THE SYSSITION

Every *Spartiate* was considered equal to his fellow citizen and many reforms were put in place to reinforce this sense of equality. The laws stated that all *Spartiates* were to live and eat in a common mess hall (or *syssition*; the plural is *syssitia*). Part dinner hall, part barracks, each *syssition* held about fifteen *Spartiates*.<sup>26</sup> The *syssitia* were central to the daily lives of *Spartiates* as they spent more time in these *syssitia* than with their own families. *Spartiates* between the ages of twenty and thirty were quartered in these barracks, treating their bunk mates as a 'substitute family.'<sup>27</sup> Even at the age of thirty, when a *Spartiate* had access to his own land and a home to sleep in, he usually spent his evenings in the *syssition* rather than with his own wife and children.

*Syssitia* were introduced in Sparta to prevent lethargy and overindulgence. Instead of eating at home served by servants, becoming 'fat like an animal and useless to the state',<sup>28</sup> *Spartiates* were required to join their comrades every night for the evening meal where they would eat plain dishes such as the infamous *melas zomas* or 'black broth'.

Emphasising the equality within the brotherhood, no *Spartiate* was excused from the *syssitia's* evening meal, not even the kings. Only those sacrificing or hunting were forgiven—and even then a portion of the hunt had to be delivered to the *syssition* in compensation for their absence. Each *Spartiate* was expected to pay a *syssition* fee. If a Spartan could not pay the fee—in a move that Aristotle criticised as a 'perversion of the original purpose of the reforms'<sup>29</sup>—he lost his full rights and privileges as a citizen of Sparta until he could afford to pay it again.

## PLEDGING MEMBERSHIP TO A SYSSITION

At age twenty, young men finishing from the *agoge* (see page 58) and guided by their *eirenes* (older mentors), pledged themselves for membership to these fraternities.<sup>30</sup> The selection process was simple and democratic; however, just one rejection was enough to ensure that the member would not be able to join.<sup>31</sup> Inclusion was everything, as not being selected to join a *syssition*—or being expelled from one—was a punishment equal to being ostracised and expelled from Sparta itself.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Outline what *syssitia* attempted to eliminate from Spartan society.
2. Explain what kind of society the *syssitia* aimed to create in Sparta.
3. What is the justification for Spartans requiring a unanimous vote to accept an initiate into a *syssition*?

#### ESSAY

- 'The *syssitia* increased the social cohesiveness of the Spartan state as a whole.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? Use evidence to support your response.
- Discuss why the *syssition* was so important to the Spartan way of life. Use evidence to support your response.

## THE PERIOIKOI

PLUTARCH: 'Once few, if any, Spartiates practised a manual craft, the commercial and economic role of the *perioikoi* must have become a very important one.'

The *perioikoi* or 'those who dwell around' were people living in Laconia who had no formal political rights within the Spartan state. *Perioikoi* had many personal and religious freedoms within their own communities. Typically farmers and merchants, *perioikoi* were able to engage in ventures such as trade and agriculture that *Spartiates* were barred from, but they had no right to vote in the *apella*. They served as auxiliaries in the Spartan army, and fought alongside the Spartans during both the Persian and Peloponnesian conflicts.<sup>32</sup> They also built and manned the ships that made up the small Spartan fleet.

*Perioikoi* villages were scattered around the central *polis* of Sparta and operated with autonomy, but with the understanding that they were to follow Spartan rule. The *Spartiates* and *perioikoi* depended on each other; the *Spartiates* provided peace and protection, and the *perioikoi* provided industrial production to feed the Spartan war machine. Despite Xenophon depicting the *perioikoi* as agitators against Spartan rule,<sup>33</sup> it has generally been accepted that these 'fringe dwellers' served Sparta loyally throughout the centuries.<sup>34</sup>

## THE HELOTS

TYRTAEUS: 'Like asses exhausted under great loads, they bring their masters full half the fruit their ploughed land produced.'

The *helots* were the lowest level of Spartan society—a heavily repressed and marginalised slave class. While many *helots* were conquered people from surrounding territory to the north and south of Sparta, the majority of them were the descendants of the people captured during the campaigns against Messenia in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE.

The purpose of this sub-class was to live and work for the continuation of Spartan life. The *helots* had little personal freedom and—unlike slaves elsewhere in Greece—were considered the property of the state, and could not be sold or released except by the Spartan assembly.

Spartan society was built on the backs of the *helots*, who served as the state's agricultural labourers and household servants.<sup>35</sup> They were integral to the Spartan economy, as fully half the entire crop of a *helot* farmer was turned over to the master to feed the master's family and to supply the *syssitia*.<sup>36</sup> The rest of the crop was retained by the *helot*, allowing them to profit from their work and to ensure that their families were fed. Being defined as communal property, corporal punishment of *helots* was unusual, as it was considered to be damaging state resources. *Helots* also retained some social privileges, including marriage rights, and they were able to raise their own families with minimal interference by their Spartan masters.

*Helots* provided the state with a continuous free workforce, also serving as wet nurses, attendants on military campaigns, light infantrymen—and later, as the *Spartiate* population contracted, as *hoplites*.<sup>37</sup> At the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, there were six *helots* for every *Spartiate*, serving as camp servants, attendants, slingers and javelin throwers. Bravery and loyalty to Sparta at times of

## ACTIVITY

### CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

There were many revolts by the *helots* against the Spartans during the Classical Age (500–323 BCE). Choose and research one revolt that occurred, and prepare a short presentation summarising its cause, course and consequences.

### EXTENSION

Split your page into two columns. Under the headings 'Spartans' and 'Helots', list how each group was reliant on the other. Underneath, evaluate the extent to which the Spartans and *helots* depended on each other.

### 📌 SOURCE 2.15

The *helots* were beaten by the Spartans once a year to remind them they were slaves.



war could also be rewarded with freedom, leading to the creation of 'new men' (or *neodamodeis*)—freed *helots* who took their place as second-class citizens among the *perioikoi*. Sexual relationships between *Spartiates* and their *helots* were not uncommon; however, any resulting illegitimate children (known as *mothones*) were considered free, but could not become full citizens or vote in the assembly.

## THE REPRESSION OF THE HELOTS

The *helots* were the very foundation of Sparta's wealth and gave *Spartiates* the freedom to be full-time warriors. However, the relationship between the *helots* and their masters was always at boiling point. The Spartans went to war against many different city-states—but their own *helots* would always be their greatest enemies.

Thucydides remarked that the Spartans lived in constant fear of internal revolution.<sup>38</sup> This was because the *helots* were the single largest threat to the Spartan way of life. They were easily the largest class of people living within the Spartan state.

This constant fear of rebellion forced the Spartans to employ extreme measures to ensure the continuation of their way of life. They forced *helots* to wear caps made from dog skins and clothes made from animal skins to distinguish them from the rest of the population. Furthermore, *helots* had no freedom of movement without the permission of the state or their masters. And regardless of how submissive or obedient they were, *helots* were ritually beaten once a year to remind them of their place in society.

Aristotle claimed that life for the *helots* was like that of an enemy sitting constantly in wait for the disasters of Sparta.<sup>39</sup> In the sixth century BCE, a special group, the *krypteia*, was formed to terrorise and repress the *helots* and discourage any organised resistance against the state. Some historians liken the role of the *krypteia* to a Spartan secret police. In a rite of passage, members of the *krypteia* were sent out at night to the countryside with nothing but a cloak and a dagger, with orders to kill any *helots* they found to be acting suspiciously or who might pose a threat to Sparta.

## THE SPARTAN EARTHQUAKE AND HELOT REVOLT

In 464 BCE a massive earthquake rocked the Eurotas Valley. Plutarch regarded it as the greatest yet recorded, killing up to 20 000 Spartans. Sparta's *helots* chose this time to revolt against their weakened masters. Despite Sparta's military prowess, the sheer scale of the revolt and the depletion of Spartiates led the *gerousia* to appeal not once, but twice, to their rival Athens for assistance in quelling the revolt.

In 462 BCE, four thousand Athenian *hoplites* under Cimon were sent to assist the Spartans. However, Sparta—fearing that the democratically-minded revolutionary Athenians would be persuaded to switch sides and aid the *helots*—changed their mind and ordered the Athenians to leave. Athens used this insult as an excuse to renounce their formal alliance with Sparta, and tensions between the two city-states would eventually lead to the Peloponnesian War.

The *helot* revolt was subdued after over a decade of fighting. The *helots* that resisted until the end were allowed to leave the Peloponnese under a truce influenced by the Oracle at Delphi. In response to the revolt, the *krypteia* was intensified to ensure such a rebellion never transpired again.

## THE HELOTS AND THE SPARTAN CAMPAIGN OF TERROR

The Spartans were in a precarious position. If they treated their *helots* too strictly, they would become hostile; if they gave them too much freedom, the *helots* would forget their subservient position.<sup>40</sup> To make sure that *helots* never forgot their place, the Spartan state implemented radical policies to keep them submissive and compliant.

Legally, *helots* were held as perpetual enemies of Sparta. Every year the *ephors* would declare war on the *helots* on behalf of the state, to ensure that any murder would be sanctioned and not result in any blood-guilt. These state-sanctioned murders occurred on a 'more or less continual basis'<sup>41</sup> and could be carried out by any Spartan against any *helot*, not just the *helots* that farmed their *kleros*.

The most horrific example of the terrorising of *helots* came during the Peloponnesian War. In 431 BCE, 2000 *helots* who had come to Sparta's aid against Athens were rewarded with olive garlands—a symbol of their emancipation from slavery. They were then led in a procession to a temple outside Sparta—and killed.<sup>42</sup> No justification was made to explain this slaughter.

### HELOTS

The Spartans slaves ... were not chattel slaves but belonged to a category rather unhelpfully called 'between free and slave'...The essential point is that these *helots* as they were known, were not heterogeneous, polyglot 'barbarians' (non-Greeks) bought and sold on the open market, who formed the bulk of the slave populations of most Greek states. The *helots* were in fact themselves Greeks, compelled under pain of instant death to work the lands once owned by their ancestors whom the Spartans had conquered and enslaved.

### SOURCE 2.16

Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 24.

## CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Outline the ways *helots* were both a benefit and a danger to the Spartan state.
2. How did the Spartans distinguish themselves from the *helots*?
3. What did the Spartans do to ensure that their *helots* could not rise up against them?

# EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

PLATO: 'Education makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship, and teaches him how rightly to rule and how to obey.'

Education was at the heart of Spartan ideology.<sup>43</sup> Its aim was to promote military fitness and skill in both its men and women, and to instil obedience to the city-state.<sup>44</sup> While the formal compulsory program for Spartan boys and girls began at the age of seven, the real training began at birth.

When a child was born, its father would take it to a public meeting-house (or *lesche*), where a group of Spartan elders would examine the child for any imperfections or defects. If the child was healthy, it would be returned to the care of the father and mother to be reared for the next seven years. But if the child was deemed ill or imperfect, it would be left at a chasm at the foot of Mt Taygetus to die from exposure.

The Spartans viewed anything less than perfect health as 'weakness'. They believed that 'if nature had not well-prepared a child with health and strength at birth, then it was of no advantage to itself or the state in life.'<sup>45</sup>

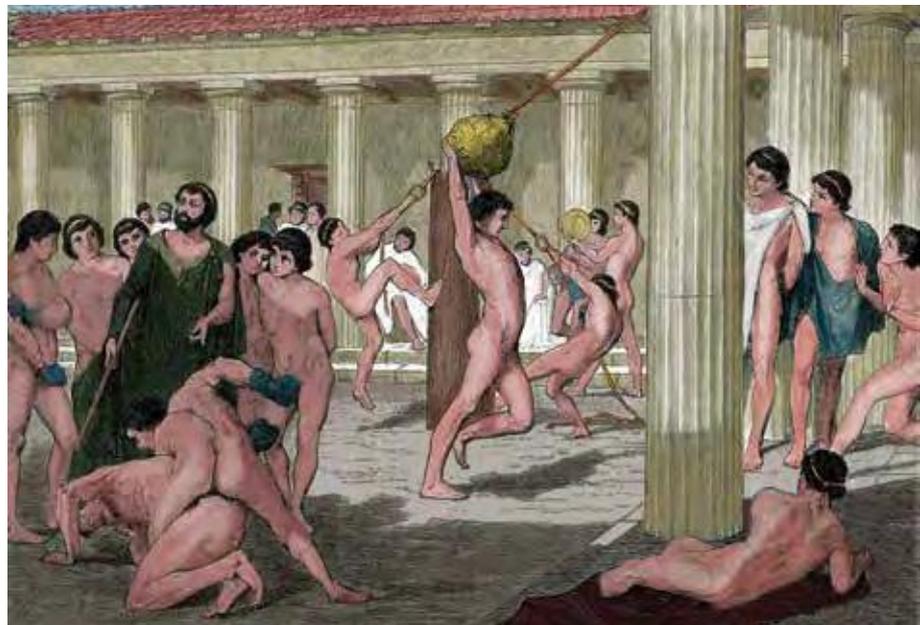


## ➔ SOURCE 2.17

State officials examined all newborns in Sparta. If considered weak or deficient, the infants were put outdoors to perish.

## THE AGOGE

PLUTARCH: 'Their whole education was aimed at developing smart obedience, perseverance under stress and victory in battle.'



## ➔ SOURCE 2.18

Male Spartan citizens training in the *agoge*.



SPARTAN MILITARY TRAINING

Acceptance within Spartan society was not based on property or blood, but on graduated degrees of initiation, all beginning with the *agoge*.<sup>46</sup> This institution, designed to turn children into warriors and instil obedience, loyalty and camaraderie was 'obligatory and identical'<sup>47</sup> for all male Spartan children, with only the heirs of the two kings being exempt.

Boys were raised by their mothers until the age of seven, when they joined this military training program designed to teach them to bear hardship, endure pain, learn discipline and become fiercely devoted to the state. Children were enrolled with a pack of boys of a similar age and subjected to a harsh ever-increasing exercise regimen. Boys were forced to sleep rough on a simple bed of reeds and were provided with only one garment to wear, even in wintertime.<sup>48</sup> They went about barefoot, had their heads shaved, and bathed infrequently in the belief that it toughened their skin. Boys were taught to read and write, but only enough so that they would be able to send and receive military orders when they joined the army. Education on written language was nominal to the point where historian Cartledge remarked that the Spartans were almost 'hostile to intellectual culture'.<sup>49</sup>

The rest of their formal education was in discipline, battle and the endurance of hardship. Children were routinely beaten to develop a tolerance to pain and to 'instil in them modesty, humility and obedience'.<sup>50</sup> Once a year they were brought to the Temple of Artemis where their courage was tested by an intense flogging. Those who withstood the whipping without a sound were praised and many stories developed of Spartan boys who allowed themselves to be whipped to death, such as their eagerness not to reveal weakness of any kind.

Boys were also routinely underfed, forcing them to live off the land and to steal to survive. This developed in them stealth and resourcefulness, skills needed for life as a Spartan warrior.<sup>51</sup> If they were discovered stealing, boys were punished viciously—not for the theft, but for being caught.

#### HISTORIAN HODKINSON ON BREAKING FAMILY BONDS

At Sparta the upbringing was compulsory and uniform for every boy—with the exception of the immediate heirs to the dual kingship. Its duration was determined by state provision and control of its content was vested in a public official, the *paidonomos* ... Family interests were explicitly obstructed. Even in public the possibility of an exclusive relationship between father and son was prevented: all citizens, regardless of wealth, were given common authority over the boys and youths. The poorest citizen therefore had, in theory, the right of authority over boys from the wealthiest families; the sons of these families were not privileged with a lighter discipline.

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 2.19 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What does Hodkinson suggest is the primary purpose of the *agoge* in Sparta?
2. Outline who was excused from the *agoge*. Why do you think this would be the case?
3. Using this extract and your own knowledge, explain how this education program could be considered a great equaliser of Spartan society.

#### ACTIVITY

##### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who took part in the *agoge* and at what age did it begin?
2. Why were children treated poorly during the *agoge*?
3. What was the aim of the *agoge*?

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The most famous story to come from the *agoge* was one of a Spartan boy who had stolen a fox and hidden it under his cloak. According to Plutarch, the fox began to scratch at his side, but when confronted by the authorities he was so determined not to be caught that he stood and let the fox tear out his insides rather than reveal his theft. Only when he fell dead to the ground were the men around him aware of what happened.

#### SOURCE 2.19

Stephen Hodkinson, Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta (London: The Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 214–215.

#### ACTIVITY

## ADOLESCENT EDUCATION

From the age of twelve to the age of twenty, the *agoge* began ‘domesticating’ the young men and reintroducing them back into traditional Spartan society. Youths now grew their hair as a symbol of maturity. Soldiers in the army wore their hair long and always took pains to keep it combed, even during wartime. A Spartan in his twenties, known as an *eirene*, would become a mentor to the teenager, further educating the young man and advising him on how to act within Spartan society. Sometimes this relationship became homosexual. Young men were taught how to behave, and to act with temperance and restraint. Modesty was prized and became a characteristic feature of Spartan behaviour as students sought to act their best to avoid shaming their mentors.<sup>52</sup> In terms of their verbal culture, adolescents were to speak only when spoken to and to answer questions using the fewest words possible, creating what has become known as ‘laconic’ speech.

### ➔ SOURCE 2.20

Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 87.



#### SPARTAN EDUCATION

### MENTORING THE YOUNG

The older partner was supposed therefore to serve for the junior partner as a kind of substitute father and more generally as a role-model, the ideally courageous, resolute and loyal warrior, a paragon of what the Spartans called *andragathia* or ‘manly virtue’. One anecdote ... brings about this special educational significance of the pairing relationship particularly neatly. In one of the gruelling physical contests that were the *de rigeur* [required action] for the adolescents a youth reportedly made the mistake of crying out in pain; but in contrast to the situation when one of the younger boys was caught in the act of stealing, it was not the clamant youth himself who was punished—but rather his older mentor, for having failed to inspire in his charge a properly Spartan *karteria* (endurance) and *enkrateia* (self-control).

## LACONIC RESPONSES

According to Thucydides, the Spartans believed that overly wordy exchanges hindered action.<sup>53</sup> They did their best to keep their verbal responses short and let their achievements speak for themselves, prizing ‘substance over mere form’.<sup>54</sup> The laconic speech that developed was very curt compared to the more philosophic and verbose speech of the Athenians, and is considered to have created an almost religious aversion to wordiness in the Spartan people.<sup>55</sup>

Below are some of the more famous recorded laconic ‘deadly shots’<sup>56</sup>:

- An Athenian once asked how far Sparta’s boundaries stretched. King Agesilaus replied, *‘As far as our spears can reach.’*
- An orator once declared that the Laconians had no learning. King Pleistoanax responded, *‘True, we are the only Hellenes who have not learned any of your evil lessons.’*
- Once a Spartan emissary was asked how many Spartans there were. His response was simply, *‘Enough.’*
- Philip II of Macedon, father to Alexander the Great, once sent a message to Sparta stating, ‘If I enter Laconia, I will raze Sparta to the ground’. The Spartans responded with a single word: *‘If.’*



#### LACONIC RESPONSES



#### SOURCE 2.21

*Young Spartans Exercising*  
by Edgar Degas, 1860.  
The girls are urging the  
boys to wrestle.

### SPARTAN EDUCATION AND THE LOGIC OF INVERSION

The *agoge* was a tumultuous time in the life of a Spartan child. Jean Ducat remarked that the Spartan program followed a 'logic of inversion' where young men were subjected to trials that were 'counter-images of what adult life would become'. First a child was isolated and segregated, then was brought back and forced to assimilate and reintegrate into society. Theft was considered common practice during the *agoge*, yet was illegal as an adult because everything was supplied by the *syssition* and the state. As initiates, children were ritualistically beaten, but later were treated with great respect by their peers. The aim of this process, according to Ducat, was to highlight to those within the *agoge* how *not* to act as an adult by enforcing that experience as a child.<sup>57</sup>

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What is laconic speech and why was it valued by the Spartans?
2. Outline the virtues emphasised during a Spartan adolescent's education.
3. Explain why children and adolescents in Sparta were educated in such a rigorous manner. Use evidence to support your response.

#### RESEARCH

Research the *Gymnopaedia* festival. Prepare a short speech to the class about the different aspects of this festival and why the Spartans held this celebration every summer.



## MEET THE SPARTANS

# MILITARY SERVICE

At the age of twenty Spartans left the *agoge* behind and entered military service. At this time men were deemed to have matured physically: they could now serve in the army, but could not fight in the frontline until the age of twenty-three. They were eligible to join a *syssition* but until the age of thirty they could not vote in the *apella* or set up their own household. As part of their continued training, they also took their place as an *eirene* and were given their own charge of boys to instruct.

### ▼ SOURCE 2.22

Leonidas bids farewell to allies before the Battle of Thermopylae.



This period in a Spartan's life was one of brutal competition with his peers. Young men competed to join the best *syssitia*, to be given the oldest charges to train, and to prove their martial skill over one another. The very best of this age group were selected to be the king's 300 *hippeis* (horsemen). The most famous group of *hippeis* was that of King Leonidas and his 300 Spartans, who fought at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. For Spartan men, this time of their lives cemented the most important values of the state: communal living, military fitness and strength, strict education of the young and constant competition. These values were essential for developing the social cohesion and competitive solidarity upon which the Spartan military depended.<sup>58</sup>

## STAGES OF A SPARTAN BOY'S EDUCATION AND TRAINING

AGE  
7-11

### PAIDES

Boy taken from his mother. Boys wore a single short tunic and had their heads shaved. Life was harsh, with no luxuries such as bathing. Children were kept in packs to break family ties and routinely starved so they would scrounge and steal for food.

AGE  
12-19

### PAIDISKOI

Young men were domesticated and brought back into society. Only one cloak was provided per year. Pride in their Spartan descent, discipline and military fitness were cultivated by an older mentoring *eirene*. Laconic speech was encouraged.

AGE  
20-29

### HEBONTES

Active military service. Men fought in the army, although not on the frontlines until the age of 23. They constantly competed against one another, the best serving in the king's personal bodyguard of 300. Men were encouraged to marry, but had to wait until the age of 30 to receive full citizenship rights.

## SPARTAN WARFARE

TYRTAEUS: 'Let each man bear his shield straight toward the fore-fighters, regarding his own life as hateful and holding the dark spirits of death as dear as the radiance of the sun.'

In 668 BCE, the Spartans were defeated by the Argives at the battle of Hysiai. This setback showed the need to reform the structure and operation of the Spartan military. Until this point, the Spartan army was comprised of well-equipped aristocrats who fought on horseback with commoners who battled as poorly trained and armed infantry units covering their flanks. The Spartans learned from their battle with Argos that undisciplined military units fighting separately were less effective than a single force of well-trained infantry fighting in a coordinated effort. By the end of the seventh century BCE, military reforms disbanded the city's cavalry forces and trained soldiers to work together more effectively.

### THE SPARTAN HOPLITES

LYCURGUS: 'A city is well-fortified which has a wall of men instead of bricks.'

All male citizens from the age of twenty to sixty fought as *hoplite* soldiers in the Spartan army. The standard, state-supplied equipment for every soldier included a *xiphos* (short sword), an eight-foot long spear, plus a helmet, breastplate, thrusting skirt and heavy greaves. However it was the one-metre diameter, seven and a half kilogram *hoplon* that was the defining characteristic of the *hoplite* warrior. Traditionally made out of wood plated with bronze, this concave shield protected infantry from thigh to neck.

Each *hoplite* held the shield in their left hand, protecting half their torso and half the torso of the soldier to their left. It was therefore critical to the safety of the unit that each soldier maintain his position and move in a coordinated way.

The nature of their military training and discipline made Spartan *hoplites* nearly invincible when facing the enemy in attack—and almost useless when their back was turned in retreat, discouraging the practice.

In their time, the Spartans became the single most efficient fighting force in Greece.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Spartan warriors wore cloaks dyed blood red to symbolise their equality and uniformity, but also to camouflage any injuries they may suffer in battle. This way their enemies never saw them bleed.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Spartans who lost their helmet or breastplate were not punished, but those who returned without their shields were shamed and dishonoured. This was because the helmet and breastplate were for individual protection, but the shield protected all the men on the frontline, and Sparta itself.



KEY SPARTAN BATTLES: MORE INFO

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The Spartan exercise program during peacetime was very exhausting, lasting many hours every day. However, while on campaign, Sparta's commanders relaxed the amount of exercise soldiers had to complete, so soldiers found going to war less exhausting than training for it.

#### 📖 SOURCE 2.23

Spartan *hoplite*.

## GIRLS AND WOMEN

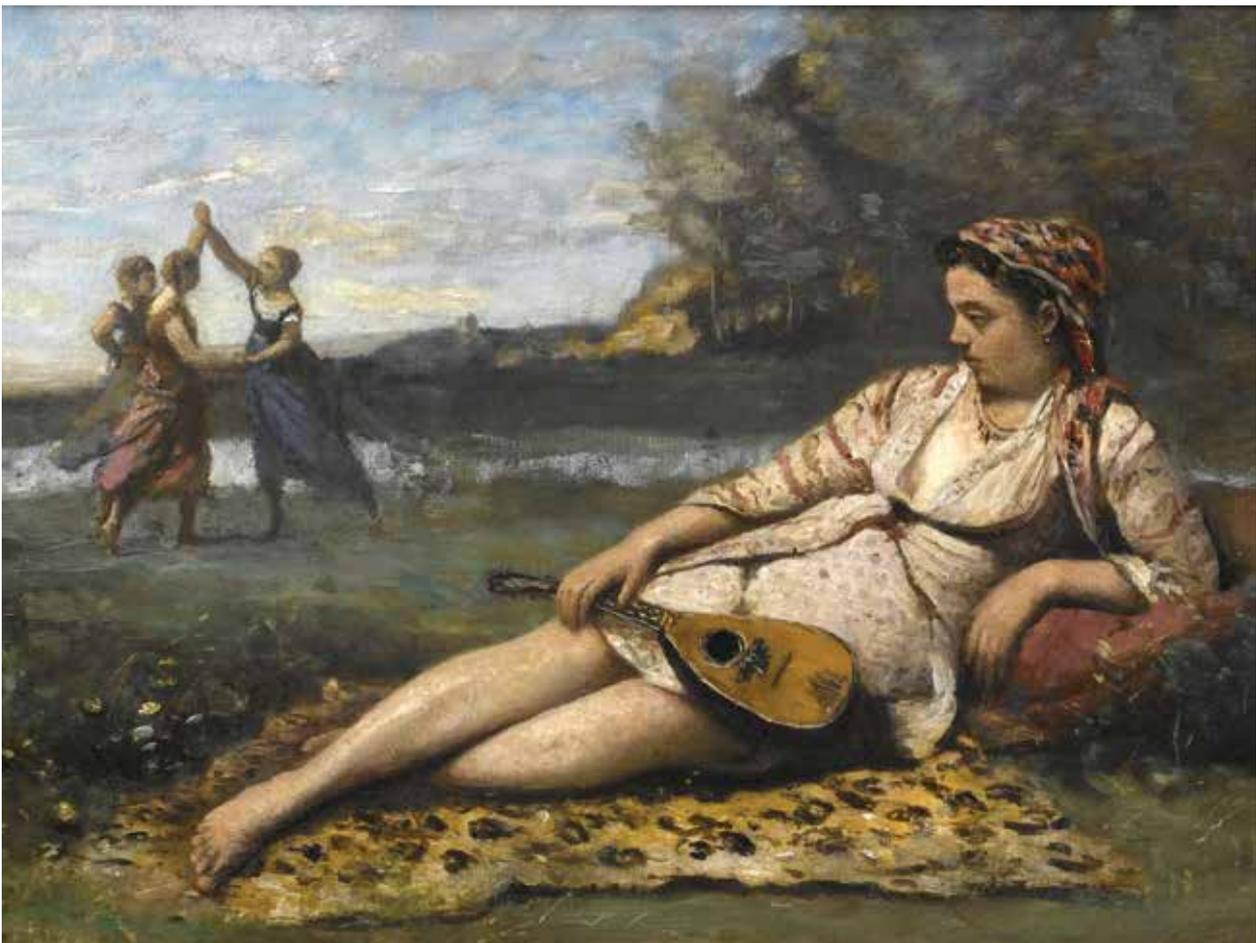
PLATO: 'Women abstain from wool-work, but weave themselves instead a life that is not trivial at all nor useless, but arduous.'

Nowhere else in ancient Greece did girls and women within a citizen population enjoy more rights and suffer fewer restrictions than in Sparta. Spartan women possessed some degree of freedom of speech and took part in important decision-making made by the state.<sup>59</sup> The law dictated that female infants and children were to be provided with the same amount of food as their male counterparts and, like boys, the state dictated that all girls received compulsory public education when they reached their seventh birthday. This included the study of poetry, history, drama, art, music and even some reading and writing, placing Spartan women in a more educated position than most other young women in Greece.

Spartan girls were expected to be fit and healthy, and frequently engaged in physical competitions of their own to promote athleticism and to prepare them for their later role as women and mothers.<sup>60</sup> At times they trained naked, or wore a short tunic that was considered quite immodest outside of Sparta.<sup>61</sup> Girls regularly engaged in foot races, wrestling and throwing the discus and javelin, similar exercises to those carried out by boys their age. Frequently their training took place in front of men, indicating that the stigma associated with women in public did not exist to the same degree within Sparta as it did elsewhere in Greece.

### ▼ SOURCE 2.24

*Young Women of Sparta*  
by Camille Corot, from  
about 1870.



The major test for girls occurred when they turned eighteen years old. They were submitted to a citizenship test and had to prove their worth to the state through a series of physical and mental examinations. If they passed, they were given their citizenship; if they failed they became *perioikoi*. The education of Spartan girls was aimed at:

- raising women who would adhere to the ideals of the state
- producing mothers who would give birth to physically healthy children.

## MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

**GORG0, QUEEN OF SPARTA:** ‘When asked by an Athenian woman, “Why is it you Spartan women are the only ones who rule over your men?” Gorgo replied: “Because we are the only women who give birth to real men.”’<sup>62</sup>

Women played an important role in Spartan society. Despite being more empowered than their Athenian counterparts, to the point where historian Brown remarks that ‘it was at Sparta that women had freedom and dignity’,<sup>63</sup> Spartan women were just as duty-bound as their men to the needs of their city, being expected to bear as many healthy children as they could for the state.<sup>64</sup> Somewhat contradictory to this position, women’s sexual development was not rushed in Sparta as it was in other Greek *poleis*. Spartan law forbade the marriage of girls until they were ‘old enough to enjoy the sexual experience.’<sup>65</sup> Most girls were also wed in their late teenage years as opposed to their early-to-mid teens elsewhere in Greece. Furthermore, the age difference between married Spartan men and women was much lower than in other cities—on average, men were only about five years older than their wives.

Even after marriage, a Spartan wife remained with her family until her husband turned thirty. After that she would renounce her old paternal family and become integrated with her husband’s family.<sup>66</sup> However, as men spent most of their time in the *syssition*, this resulted in women becoming the ‘matriarchs of the household’,<sup>67</sup> taking charge of the *kleros* and the *helots* that worked it, which gave them some measure of control over the agricultural system of the state itself. According to Aristotle, Spartan women controlled 40 per cent of the land in Sparta thanks to this unique social practice.<sup>68</sup> The elevated status of Spartan women in terms of land ownership and household control led many to believe that Sparta’s womenfolk ‘exhibited an extraordinary degree of economic activity and personal independence’.<sup>69</sup>

However, women could never escape their ‘primary importance as producers of children’, which was so important to Sparta’s survival. Measures were put in place to make sure that women and men fulfilled their responsibilities to the state.<sup>70</sup> Unmarried men in Sparta were subjected to public humiliation, and women did not stay unmarried for long. Prostitution was openly banned, yet the sharing of wives was not uncommon. If a Spartan could not conceive a child because of his age or inability, his wife could be instructed to bear a child from another, younger man. Women within Sparta had a reputation for chastity, but were expected to follow orders if the state chose a sexual partner for them for the direct purpose of producing strong offspring. Despite this intense focus on compelling women to produce as many healthy children as possible, the declining number of *Spartiates*, from 9000 in 640 BCE to less than 1000 in 330 BCE, suggests that this process was not very effective and, according to Aristotle, counterproductive.<sup>71</sup>



GORG0, QUEEN OF SPARTA: MORE INFO

### DID YOU KNOW?

A Spartan king was subject to the same laws and customs as his subjects. King Archidamus was reprimanded and fined by the *ephors* for marrying a small wife because the people believed she would give birth to ‘small princes’.



SPARTAN FAMILY LIFE: EXTENSION



WOMEN AND GIRLS IN OTHER CITY-STATES: RESEARCH

### DID YOU KNOW?

Spartans buried their dead, but only men who fell in battle and women who died in childbirth were given tombstones inscribed with their names. Such was the reverence provided to women as child-bearers in Sparta.

## SOURCE 2.25

Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 84.

### HISTORIAN CARTLEDGE ON BREAKING THE FAMILY UNIT

Indeed, right from his birth ... the Spartan state had intervened in a boy's life-trajectory at the expense of parental initiative and control. For it was not the boy's father who, as in other Greek states, decided the matter of private business whether he was fit to be reared: that was the task of the elders. If the tribal elders' decision was negative, the infant's fate was to be hurled, as an unperson, a non-entity ... into the mountain chasm known euphemistically as the 'Deposits'. That though, was just the first of an endless series of official measures illustrating another general feature of Spartan social organisation, namely the concerted and determined effort to minimise the importance of the family—or, to be more accurate, family life—and to emphasise rather the cardinal and overriding significance of communal ties.

## SOURCE 2.26

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Government of Poland*, trans. Willmore Kendall (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1985).

### ROUSSEAU ON THE SPIRIT OF ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS

He [Lycurgus] fixed upon [the Spartans] a yoke of iron, the like of which no other people has ever born; but he tied them to that yoke, made them, so to speak, one with it, by filling up every moment of their lives. He saw to it that the image of the fatherland was constantly before their eyes—in their laws, in their games, in their homes, in their mating, in their feasts. He saw to it that they never had an instant of free time that they could call their own. And out of this ceaseless constraint, made noble by the purpose it served, was born that burning love of country which was always the strongest—or rather the only—passion of the Spartans, and which transformed them into beings more than merely human. Sparta, to be sure, was only a city; but the sheer force of its legislation made it lawgiver and capital to all of Greece and caused the Persian empire to tremble.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 2.25 and 2.26 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. When did the Spartan state first interfere in family life?
2. How important were a child's parents in the raising of their offspring?
3. What happened to children who were not 'fit to be reared'?
4. What does Cartledge consider to be primary feature of the Spartan social organisation?
5. According to Rousseau, how were Spartans tied to their homeland?
6. Using the sources and your own knowledge, explain the purpose and end result of the 'ceaseless constraint' imposed upon the Spartans.
7. Using the sources provided and your own knowledge, evaluate the extent to which Sparta could be considered a typical Greek *polis*.

### BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. What similarities existed in the education of both boys and girls?
2. In what ways did their educations differ?
3. What was considered the chief role of women in Sparta?
4. How did the Spartan state encourage women to achieve this aim?
5. Even after they married, men still spent a majority of their time in the *syssition* instead of with their families. Why was this the case?

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

## THE REFORMS OF LYCURGUS

The social reforms attributed to Lycurgus fundamentally altered the structure of Spartan society. Not only were the old family and clan ties abandoned and new social classes established, but now every citizen had strict duties to fulfil: men to become warriors, women to provide children for Sparta's future armies.

Vast networks of *perioikoi* and *helots* were established to support the lives of the Spartans so they could carry out their civic responsibilities more easily. However, the *helot* population would soon become overbearing, and devastate the Spartan state in numerous revolts over the centuries. In response, Sparta's education system and military reforms created Greece's first disciplined and professional standing army, allowing Sparta to keep the *helots* under control—and to dominate the Peloponnese.

## COMPARATIVE TASK

Create a table like the one below and fill in the missing information.

	SPARTAN MEN	SPARTAN WOMEN	PERIOIKOI	HELOTS	CHILDREN
Defining characteristics					
Main duties and responsibilities					
How they were treated by the state					
Where they generally resided					
Quotations by ancient thinkers concerning this group					
Quotations by modern writers concerning this group					

ACTIVITY

## ESSAY

Write an essay on the following topic. Your essay should be approximately 800 words long and include an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion:

'The reforms implemented in Sparta created a society more egalitarian and free than any other in the Greek world.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment? Use evidence including historical interpretations to support your response.

## THE SPARTAN ECONOMY

PROVERB BY DIODORUS: 'Greed will destroy Sparta, but nothing else.'

The major reforms Sparta put in place in the seventh and sixth centuries BCE sought to create an egalitarian state free of avarice, greed and materialism. However, these reforms required the complete rejection of the old Spartan economic system. The new laws imposed commercial isolation on the Spartans, seeking to remove them from the race to acquire material wealth—a problem that was seen to plague other Greek city-states. The Spartans' status as equals, as *homoioi*, now extended to the economic sphere as well as the social and

political spheres. Industry, craft and trade for the state would be taken up by the surrounding *perioikoi*, as agricultural production remained the role of the ever-increasing *helot* population.

## COMMERCE, TRADE AND WEALTH

In 724 BCE, at the end of the First Messenian War, Sparta annexed neighbouring Messenia and doubled the scale of its agricultural production. The acquisition of this surplus land countered the expansion of rival states such as Athens and allowed Sparta to be a self-sufficient agricultural state without the need for foreign trade.

### ➔ SOURCE 2.27

*Spartiates* had to eat all meals together in public mess-halls. The public tables were furnished simply and everyone ate the same food.



By about 650 BCE, Spartans had become only ‘craftsmen of military affairs’<sup>72</sup> as engaging in any trade or craft for the purpose of making money was now illegal. To facilitate these financial prohibitions—and to defend the ideological conservatism of the Spartans—all foreigners were expelled from Sparta, thus limiting access to potential trading partners. However, despite Plutarch’s claim that no merchant-seamen brought freight into Sparta’s harbours, trade was still carried out by *perioikoi* at the Spartan port of Gytheion.<sup>73</sup> The central Spartan *polis* was devoid of all non-essential service industries. There were no freelance artisans, poets or foreign tutors, prostitution was banned, and the only metalworkers that existed were *perioikoi* who smithed with tin, copper, bronze and iron for the Spartan army.

In an effort to further discourage trade between Sparta and the outside world, some ancient sources tell us that the Spartans abandoned the simple coinage that had been in use and introduced in its place a new currency of heavy iron bars. These bars, ‘large of weight and small of value’<sup>74</sup> that ‘would fill a large space and need a wagon to draw it’<sup>75</sup> were used to discourage any outsider from attempting to trade with the Spartans. It became almost impossible to accumulate wealth. Even if a Spartan managed to engage in blackmarket trade, he would find it too difficult to store, transport or spend any of his money because of its size and weight.

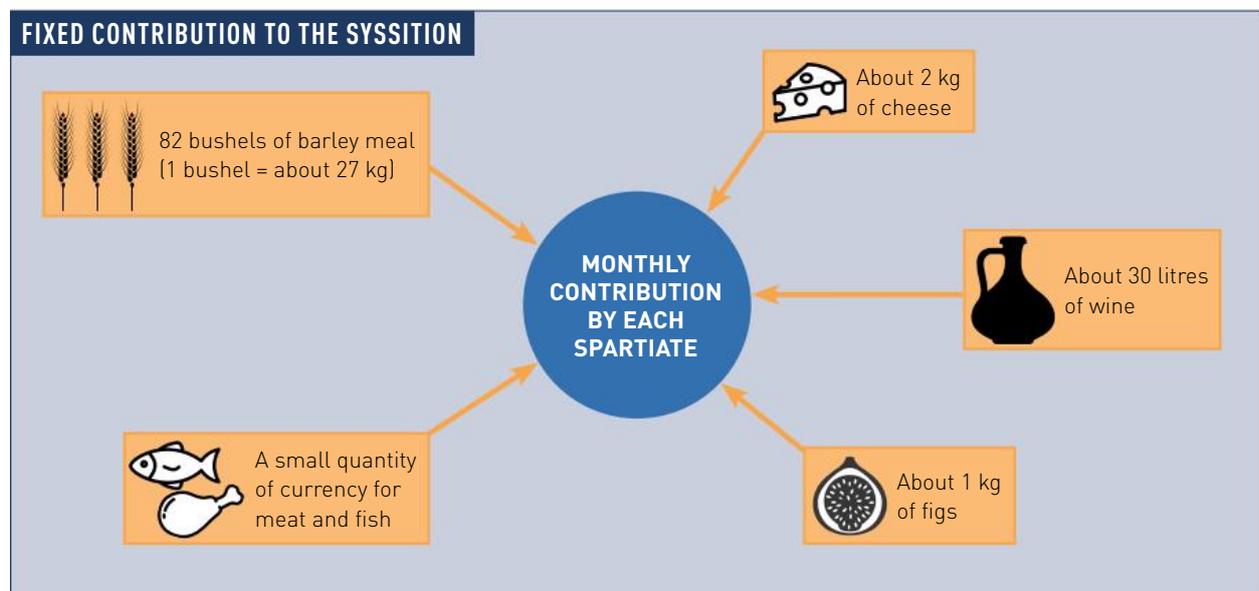
## PERSPECTIVES ON IRON MONEY

Whether or not the Spartans actually possessed and used unwieldy iron bars as an official currency has been hotly debated. Despite Xenophon and Plutarch's insistence that Sparta had no need for a system of coins,<sup>76</sup> iron currency has been labelled by Hodkinson as a 'post-hoc construction'<sup>77</sup> made up to explain the reason for Sparta's decline in later centuries, just as Cartledge dismissed its use as an 'invented tradition'.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, while Hooker agrees with the ancients, claiming that the iron currency was the only one tolerated in Sparta,<sup>79</sup> he is refuted by Michell and Cawkwell who remark that the notion of money ever being forbidden is an absolute 'fairy tale'<sup>80</sup> and that the Spartans must have always had some form of coinage acceptable to the rest of the Greeks.<sup>81</sup>

## TAXATION

Despite their alleged deviation from a formal system of currency, taxation still existed within Sparta, although at a lesser rate than other Greek city-states. There was no need for large state revenue as public expenses in Sparta were quite low.<sup>82</sup> Public buildings were simple, the army requisitioned most of what they required while on campaign, and there was no specialised police force. The only real public expenses to the state were the king's mess duties and sacrificial offerings, which were supplied by the *perioikoi*. Regular direct taxation of citizens and their property was regarded as an 'intolerable mark of degradation and tyranny',<sup>83</sup> which the Spartans greatly opposed. While a father of four sons was exempt from all duties,<sup>84</sup> all other Spartiates had to:

- provide food for their sons during their passage through the *agoge*
- contribute a levy of foodstuffs to the state while Sparta was at war
- pay monthly fees to retain membership to their *sysstion*.



## ATTITUDE TO WEALTH

Lycurgus was said to have not only changed Spartan laws relating to wealth—but also to have changed the mindset of his people. The *agoge* and its uniform education of children was an ‘important institutional constraint on the influence of wealth’<sup>85</sup> as it ensured that all Spartan children, regardless of affluence or aristocratic background, shared and came to value the same austere upbringing. Spartan culture discouraged the explicit ways in which the rich in other Greek city-states displayed their wealth—extravagant houses, jewellery, clothes and furniture were forbidden. Furthermore, any Spartan who engaged in foreign trade, bribery or embezzlement lost his citizenship and was expelled from the city. Despite the efforts made to prohibit extravagance and trade, Finley has argued that this never completely eliminated the desire for wealth in Sparta.<sup>86</sup> There are scattered examples of Spartans who broke these laws, most ending in disaster and ruin.

### ➔ SOURCE 2.28

*Plutarch, Lycurgus*  
13.3–4, trans. Bernadotte  
Perrin (Cambridge:  
Harvard University  
Press; London: William  
Heinemann Ltd., 1914).

### PLUTARCH ON THE DECREE AGAINST LUXURY

Another [rhethra] was directed against extravagance, ordaining that every house should have its roof fashioned by the axe, and its doors by the saw only, and by no other tool. For, as in later times Epaminondas is reported to have said at his own table, that such a meal did not comport with treachery, so Lycurgus was the first to see clearly that such a house does not comport with luxury and extravagance. Nor is any man so vulgar and senseless as to introduce into a simple and common house silver-footed couches, purple coverlets, gold drinking-cups, and all the extravagance which goes along with these, but one must of necessity adapt and proportion his couch to his house, his coverlets to his couch, and to this the rest of his supplies and equipment.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What was the only craft Spartans were permitted to carry out? Who took up responsibility for all the rest?
2. Outline three ways that rich people displayed their wealth in other Greek cities, which were discouraged in Sparta.
3. How did the Spartans feel about direct taxation? What duties were they still expected to pay and who was exempt from this responsibility?

### SUMMARY

The Spartans implemented strict economic policies to ensure that their citizens would retain their position as equals. Write a 250-word report summarising at least three of these policies and the impact they had on the Spartan population.

### EXTENSION

1. Explain how economic policy brought about social reform in Sparta.
2. How were Spartans able to give up nearly every form of economic trade and production without their *polis* collapsing?
3. How might Sparta’s economic practices affect other Greek cities inside the Peloponnese and in the rest of Greece?

## CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES ON THE SPARTAN ECONOMY

The Spartan attitude to commerce, wealth and trade led to much controversy among the historians of the ancient world.

### PLATO ON SPARTAN WEALTH

For in this respect you have only to look at the wealth of the Spartans, and you will perceive that our riches here are far inferior to theirs. Think of all the land that they have both in their own and in the Messenian country: not one of our estates could compete with theirs in extent and excellence, nor again in ownership of slaves, and especially of those of the helot class, nor yet of horses, nor of all the flocks and herds that graze in Messene. However, I pass over all these things: but there is more gold and silver privately held in Lacedaemon than in the whole of Greece; for during many generations treasure has been passing in to them from every part of Greece, and often from the barbarians also, but not passing out to anyone ... so that one can be pretty sure that those people are the richest of the Greeks in gold and silver, and that among themselves the richest is the king; for the largest and most numerous receipts of the kind are those of the kings and besides there is the levy of the royal tribute in no slight amount, which the Spartans pay to their kings.

### SOURCE 2.29

*Plato, Alcibiades*  
1.122e–123b, trans.  
Bernadotte Perrin  
(Cambridge: Harvard  
University Press;  
London: William  
Heinemann Ltd.,  
1916).

### ARISTOTLE ON SPARTAN FINANCE

The public finance of Sparta is badly regulated: when compelled to carry on wars on a large scale she has nothing in the state treasury, and the Spartiates pay war taxes badly because, as most of the land is owned by them, they do not scrutinize each other's contributions. And the lawgiver has achieved the opposite result to what is advantageous—he has made the state poor and the individual citizen covetous.

### SOURCE 2.30

*Aristotle, Politics*  
2.1271b, trans. H.  
Rackham (Cambridge:  
Harvard University  
Press; London:  
William Heinemann  
Ltd., 1944).

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Sources 2.29 and 2.30 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Outline Plato's views on the wealth contained in Sparta.
2. What does Aristotle have to say about Spartan finances and financial practice?
3. Explain why the two accounts might differ so radically.
4. Evaluate the extent to which Sparta was a poor city-state. Use evidence to support your response.

ACTIVITY

## PERIOIKOI AND INDUSTRY

Economic development and industrial production in Sparta was rich and versatile before the reforms as Laconian pottery and ivory work were exported all across the Mediterranean.<sup>87</sup> Archaeological remains of drinking cups (*kylikes*), mixing bowls (*krateres*) and oil flasks (*aryballoi*) have been found as far away as Samos, Taras and Cyrenaica. However, by the end of the seventh century BCE this flow of commerce stagnated as a 'formal prohibition'<sup>88</sup> forbade Spartans to toil on anything but the battlefield, leaving all other industrial activity to the *perioikoi*. Sparta's neighbours quickly monopolised the production and trade of all goods in Laconia; they supplied armour to the army, built the ships used to transport goods and soldiers, and maintained the small Spartan navy.<sup>89</sup> Foreign merchandise such

### DID YOU KNOW?

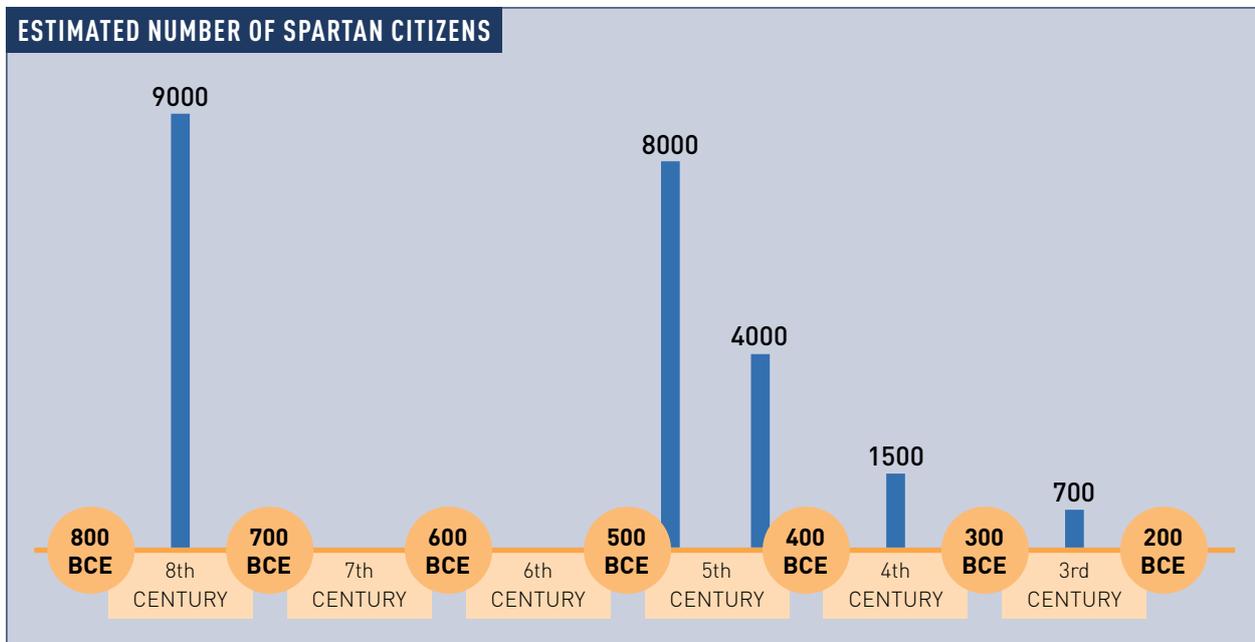
The Spartans aversion to excess became so well known that decking a room out in a 'Spartan' style is still recognised today as one that is plain and devoid of luxury.

as fine cloth and artistic pottery was banned in Sparta, and the few commercial goods found in the city were all simple, functional and plain. Cups and pots were constructed to serve a practical purpose and were not decorated—unlike those found in Athens or Thebes. The Spartans preferred their goods devoid of unnecessary embellishment, as it freed their artisans from useless tasks, while they saw the 'beauty of workmanship not in its pointless exterior, but in the object's constant and necessary use'.<sup>90</sup>

## LAND

Lycurgus was said to have completely redistributed Sparta's land. Overall, 9000 lots (or *kleroi*) were provided to the *Spartiates* and 30 000 more to the *perioikoi*. Thanks to this redistribution, even the poorest citizen of Sparta was lifted above a subsistence lifestyle, and now possessed more land than the poorest citizens in other *poleis*.<sup>91</sup> The foundation of the Spartan economy shifted away from industry and commerce and now rested on these *kleroi* (singular: *kleros*) and the *helots* who worked them. *Helot* families worked Spartan farmland to produce the quota needed by their master for membership to his *syssition*. Each plot was evenly measured to produce 100 *medimnoi*—about thirty tonnes of wheat.

Land-holdings were private, but each plot was indivisible under Spartan law; property could not be split or sold, only inherited. Both sons and daughters could inherit from their parents, with girls usually obtaining a half portion of what their brothers received.<sup>92</sup> If a family had no sons, the eldest daughter inherited all the land and held ownership of it until it passed to the next male heir. Due to these issues with land—and despite the state's constant encouragement to produce offspring—some Spartan families raised only a few children in order to limit the risk of their sons not being able to own enough property to pay their *syssition* fees. This practice, in addition to the Spartan practice of leaving weak babies outside to die, their relatively late marriage age, brutal training methods and the constant military campaigning from the sixth to fourth centuries BCE, led to the dwindling of the Spartan population across the centuries.



## DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ON SPARTAN LAND REFORM

### PLUTARCH ON LAND REFORM

A second, and a very bold political measure of Lycurgus, is his redistribution of the land. For there was a dreadful inequality in this regard, the city was heavily burdened with indigent and helpless people, and wealth was wholly concentrated in the hands of a few. Determined, therefore, to banish insolence and envy and crime and luxury, and those yet more deep-seated and afflictive diseases of the state, poverty and wealth, he persuaded his fellow-citizens to make one parcel of all their territory and divide it up anew, and to live with one another on a basis of entire uniformity and equality in the means of subsistence, seeking pre-eminence through virtue alone, assured that there was no other difference or inequality between man and man than that which was established by blame for base actions and praise for good ones.

### SOURCE 2.31

*Plutarch, Lycurgus 8.1, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914).*

### ARISTOTLE ON LAND REFORM

The mention of avarice [greed] naturally suggests a criticism on the inequality of property. While some of the Spartan citizenry have quite small properties, others have very large ones; hence the land has passed into the hands of a few. And this is due also to faulty laws; for, although the legislator rightly holds up to shame the sale or purchase of an inheritance, he allows anybody who likes to give or bequeath it. Yet both practices lead to the same result. And nearly two-fifths of the whole country is held by women; this is owing to the number of heiresses and to the large dowries which are customary. It would surely have been better to have given no dowries at all, or, if any, but small or moderate ones. As the law now stands, a man may bestow his heiress on any one whom he pleases, and, if he dies intestate, the privilege of giving her away descends to his heir. Hence, although the country is able to maintain 1500 cavalry and 30000 hoplites, the whole number of Spartan citizens fell below 1000. The result proves the faulty nature of their laws respecting property; for the city sank under a single defeat; the want of men was their ruin.

### SOURCE 2.32

*Aristotle, Politics 2.6.10–13, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1944).*

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Sources 2.31 and 2.32 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What is Plutarch's attitude towards the land reform policies implemented by Lycurgus?
2. For what reasons does Aristotle criticise the distribution of property in Sparta?
3. Which argument do you think is more convincing? Why?
4. Evaluate the extent to which land ownership was fair and equal among the citizens of Sparta. Use the sources, differing historical interpretations and your own evidence to support your response.

ACTIVITY

## ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Despite the ideological and material equality of the reforms of the seventh century BCE, by the fifth century BCE Spartan citizens still differed by birth, age and attainment.<sup>93</sup> There were still considerable differences in wealth among the populace and the fairness they advocated was more propaganda than reality.<sup>94</sup> Due to the city's complex system of inheritance, some Spartan men and women controlled more than one *kleros*.

Also, while Spartans could not share or divide a single parcel of land, some first-born sons still inherited their parents' holdings even after receiving an allocation of land from the state. If a *Spartiate* had no children when he died, his wife retained control of his land. When she remarried, the new family could then have access to even more *kleroi*. Millender claims that in this way women became a 'valuable commodity'; at times marriages became tactical in order to increase the size of landholdings.<sup>95</sup> By the end of the fifth century BCE, the transmission of private estates culminated in a growing aristocratic class of citizens, in direct opposition to the ideals of the *polis*.<sup>96</sup>

This ever-growing divide in Sparta created many social and economic problems, undermining the city's atmosphere of equality and classlessness. In times of drought and flood, some *Spartiates* could not keep up with payments to their *syssition*. These men lost their citizenship, becoming 'inferiors' (or *hypomeiones*) with no political rights. Until they married a prosperous heiress or found the wealth to once again pay their *syssition* fees, they were stripped of their right to take part in the assembly or to have their vote counted.

Strategic marriages became a method to multiply landholdings and amass greater fortunes. This led to the creation of a wealthier class of Spartan citizen—a far cry from the original *rhētra*, which sought to homogenise the Spartan citizenry.



#### THE 'LAWS OF LYCURGUS' AND SPARTAN SUCCESS

#### ➔ SOURCE 2.33

Stephen Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* (London: The Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 104.

#### HISTORIAN HODKINSON ON WEALTH INEQUALITY AMONG SPARTIATES

Certainly, there were major changes in the distribution of land ... Although there was never the wholesale redistribution of land described in Plutarch's [Lycurgus], there must at some point in the seventh or sixth centuries have been some significant allocation of land, possibly in the newly-acquired territory [Messenia], to poorer citizens, in order to sustain them viably as full-time hoplite warriors who did not support themselves by working for their own living. Although there was never a system of equal *kleroi*—at least before the third-century revolution—and there were always some wealthy families, the overall distribution of land was surely more evenly spread at the start ... than at the end. The decline of Spartiate citizen numbers in the fifth and fourth centuries was surely grounded in increasing inequalities of wealth. Aristotle seems to imply as much in his comment and 'the land has fallen into the hands of the few'.

#### ➔ SOURCE 2.34

Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 5.20, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854).

#### PHYLARCHUS, QUOTED IN ATHENAEUS

[Over time, the Spartans gave up] assembling for the *syssitia*, according to the custom of their country, and whenever they met, after having had a few things brought round, for the sake of a seeming compliance with the law, other things were then prepared; couches furnished in a very expensive way and of exceeding size and all differing from one another in their adornment; so that some of the strangers who were invited used to be afraid to put their elbows on the pillows; and those who formerly used to rest on a bare bench during the whole banquet, perhaps once leaning on their elbows for a few minutes, had now come to such a pitch of luxury as I have spoken of, and to a serving up of many cups of wine, and of all sorts of food procured from all countries and dressed in every kind of luxurious way; and besides that, they had come to use foreign perfumes, and also foreign wines and sweetmeats.

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Using Sources 2.33 and 2.34 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What does Hodkinson suggest about this distribution of land in Sparta? How does this compare with what Lycurgus was said to have established?
2. In what ways is Phylarchus critical of the Spartans? What customs does he identify them breaking?
3. Explain the relationship between Spartan citizenship and economic position.
4. Evaluate the extent to which the reforms to the Spartan economy achieved their aims. Use the sources, differing historical interpretations and your own evidence to support your response.

## ECONOMICS AND LYCURGUS' 'PERFECT STATE'

Lycurgus had supposedly sought to create the perfect state populated by the perfect citizenry. However, by the fifth century BCE, Lycurgus' dream of a perfect Spartan utopia was still out of reach, partly due to the laws on land allocation and inheritance. The unforgiving *syssition* regulations also produced a growing class of *hypomeiones* who would find it increasingly difficult to regain their citizenship because of the embargo on trade.

## SUMMARY

Construct a table similar to this, summarising the key details for each of the following areas of the Spartan economic system.

	KEY DETAILS	ANCIENT PERSPECTIVES	MODERN PERSPECTIVES
Taxation			
Commerce and trade			
Coinage			
Land			
Inheritance			

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Imagine you are a Spartan man, woman, *perioikoi* or *helot*. Write a speech outlining your thoughts about the reforms to the economy as if they have just been implemented. Include as much factual material as you can in your account.

## ESSAY

Write an essay on the following topic. Your essay should be approximately 800 words long and include an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion:

'The economic reforms implemented in Sparta sought freedom from materialism and financial equality between all citizens. They succeeded as much as they failed.' To what extent do you agree with this assessment? Use evidence including historical interpretations to support your response.



## RELIGION

Spartans were a deeply religious people who worshipped many gods, a doctrine known as *polytheism*. The gods revered by the Spartans were the same as those worshipped by other Greeks, and included:

- Zeus—the king of all the Greek gods
- Athena—the goddess of wisdom and strategy
- Apollo—the god of music and prophecy
- Ares—the god of war.



Spartans would not go to war without the blessing of the gods, nor engage in any major conflict without first consulting their oracles to ensure divine favour. The kings of Sparta were the high priests of the city and held many religious obligations, such as sacrificing a goat on the eve of every battle.



## RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

### THE HYACINTHIA

The *Hyacinthia* was a major Spartan festival that celebrated Hyacinthos and the god Apollo. According to myth, Apollo loved the young man Hyacinthos, but accidentally killed him with the throw of a discus. Apollo did not allow Hades, the god of the underworld, to take Hyacinthos. Instead Apollo grew a flower from the young man's blood—the flower we now call a hyacinth.

As the hyacinth is a plant that renews itself each year, the *Hyacinthia* represented the Spartan's belief in honouring the fallen, the celebration of life and the cycle of death and rebirth. The first day of the *Hyacinthia* mourned the passing of the youth with a ban on merriment, the eating of bread and cakes, and a day of ritual grieving. The second and third days of *Hyacinthia* were then a celebration of his life and rebirth. In the spirit of friendship that accompanied the *Hyacinthia*, *helots* and foreigners could also take part in the celebration as, according to Athenaeus, the Spartans 'treat not only their countrymen, but any foreigners who happen by'.<sup>97</sup>



### THE CARNEIA

The *Carneia* was a festival held to honour Apollo Carneus—god of flocks, harvest and vintage. The *Carneia* ran for nine days, from the seventh to fifteenth of *Carneios* (August). The myth tells the story of the ancient seer Carneus who was killed by a descendent of Heracles, the ancestor of the Spartans. The festival of the *Carneia* was penance to alleviate the blood-guilt of this act and to ward off the Furies—the Greek goddesses of punishment and vengeance.



THE CARNEIA:  
MORE INFO

### SOURCE 2.35

From top to bottom: Zeus, Athena, Apollo, Ares.

A sacred truce (or *hieromenia*) was declared during all major religious festivals, suspending all military campaigning. These truces impacted on Sparta's ability as a military force, as they delayed Spartan assistance of the Athenians at Marathon in 490 BCE and may have been a reason for the token force of Spartans under Leonidas at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What role did oracles play in determining Spartan warfare?
2. In what other ways did religion impact on Sparta's military activities?
3. Was religion a way in which the Spartans were similar to other Greeks?

ACTIVITY



### SOURCE 2.36

Dancers during a festival.



# CONCLUSION

While many of the growing Greek *poleis* in the Archaic Age were focusing on colonisation in other areas of the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the Spartans instead turned on their fellow-Greeks. The neighbouring Messenians were conquered by the Spartans in the eighth century BCE. Their land was redistributed among the Spartans and the people were reduced to *helots*.

Starting in the seventh century BCE, a number of radical reforms to Spartan society were implemented. A political system developed that balanced power between two kings, a council of elders and a politically active citizenry with some democratic powers. Five *ephors* were elected annually to oversee the system and could even check the power of the kings.

The Spartan war machine became the focus of society at the expense of all else. Wealth-seeking was discouraged and *Spartiates* were expected to devote their lives to military service. A strict education program from the age of seven taught boys to be soldiers and indoctrinated them to uphold the values of the state without question. From the age of twenty to sixty, Spartan men were expected to serve in the what became Greece's first standing army.

To enable the *Spartiates* to focus on warfare, the Spartans relied on the *helots* and *periokoi*. The *helots* farmed the land on behalf of the *Spartiates* and supported them on military campaigns. The *helots* had little freedom and were treated brutally by the Spartans, leading to several revolts. The Spartans took a variety of measures to regularly remind the *helots* of their status in an effort to make them subservient. The *periokoi* fulfilled important roles such as manufacturing, trade and agriculture. In contrast to the *helots*, they were free, though they did not have political rights.

Women and young girls in Sparta enjoyed relatively more freedom than in other Greek *poleis*, and were expected to be fit, healthy and educated. However, their primary role was always to produce healthy children for Sparta's army.

The end result of these reforms was that Sparta became one of the most powerful states in ancient Greece, with an effective army that was feared by other Greeks.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Either in pairs or as a small group, give a five-minute presentation on one or more of the social groups listed below. Explain how they would have been affected by the social, economic and political reforms that were made to Sparta.

- The kings
- *Gerousia*
- *Ephors*
- Spartan citizens
- Spartan women
- *Perioikoi*
- *Helots*
- *Hypomeiones*
- *Mothones*
- *Neodamodeis*.



SPARTA: KEY TERMS



KEY EVENTS:  
EVALUATING SIGNIFICANCE

## EXAM PREPARATION

Explain the consequences of the following events:

- The wars against Messenia
- The *helot* revolts
- Land reforms
- The festival of the *Carneia*.

## ESSAY

Write an essay of 400–600 words on one of the following topics. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- In Sparta, women were more emancipated and empowered than anywhere else in Greece.
- Sparta boasted over 9000 free citizens, but in reality, nobody was truly free.
- It was the *perioikoi* who truly profited from the Spartan reforms.
- Spartan educational practices were brutal, yet ultimately effective.
- The social policies geared to develop and protect its citizens would lead to the downfall of Sparta itself.
- Despite what Spartans wanted to believe, democracy in Sparta did not exist.
- Create a historical question of your own about Sparta in the Classical Age.

## TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER

# 3

## REVOLUTION, DEMOCRACY, DEBATE: ATHENS

'... instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all.'

PERICLES





The Theatre of Dionysus, Athens.

# OVERVIEW

## KEY EVENTS

### c. 621/20 BCE

First written code of laws, known as Draconian laws, drawn up in Athens

### 594/3 BCE

Solon and his reforms, called *Seisachtheia* or 'The Shaking Off of Burdens'. Poor are given rights, wealthy given leadership. Status is now defined by wealth instead of bloodlines

### 546/5 BCE

Peisistratus becomes tyrant after third and final popular coup

Peisistratus' sons Hippias and Hipparchus rule Athens as tyrants

### 510 BCE

Hippias' tyranny ended by Spartan intervention. Hippias flees to Sardis

### 508 BCE

Isagoras is *archon*

### 507 BCE

Democratic revolution in Athens. Isagoras and Sparta ousted. Cleisthenes' democratic reforms implemented

### 460s BCE

Democracy radicalised by Ephialtes and Pericles

### 461 BCE

Cimon (conservative) ostracised. Ephialtes (radical) assassinated

### 450s–30s BCE

The age of Pericles

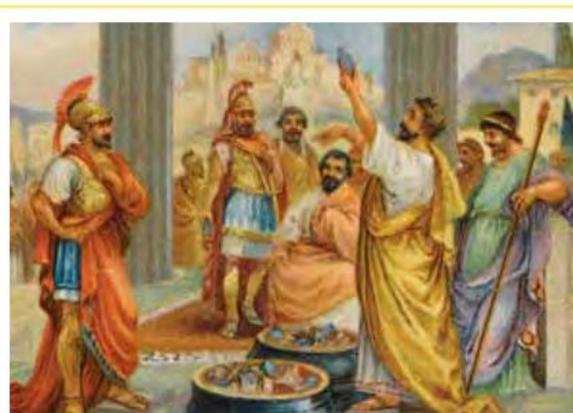
## KEY POINTS

- In the early Archaic Age, Athens was a middle-ranking power and a cultural backwater. Cultural developments were taking place in Ionia, while Sparta had a military and political leadership.
- Athens caught up in the sixth century BCE, establishing trade and cultural contacts with Ionia, and developing laws.
- Athens developed a patriotic and democratic identity, which was heightened and radicalised by the war with Persia.
- Not all voices were heard in the democracy. Women, foreigners and slaves had very different experiences to those of free men.
- Fuelled by wealth gained through the Delian League, the age of Pericles was a time of cultural, artistic and intellectual development.



## CLEISTHENES

Athenian leader who transformed Solon's constitution into a democracy.

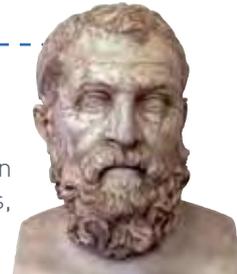


↑ Cimon is ostracised by democratic vote, 461 BCE.



**SOLON**

Known as 'Solon the Law-giver'. Solon drafted a new code of law that laid the foundations for democracy by organising Athenian citizens into four property classes, thus breaking the monopoly of the noble families.



**KEY CONCEPTS**

	PRE-SOLON OLIGARCHY OF EUPATRIDS UNTIL 590s BCE	PEISTRATID TYRANNY 546-510 BCE	RADICAL DEMOCRACY 509 BCE ONWARDS
CHARACTERISTICS	Government consists of close-knit aristocratic families who elect the <i>archon</i> No uniform laws before Draco's code and Solon's constitution	A populist tyrant with far-reaching powers	Major decisions made by vote of all male citizens Positions of power elected or appointed by lot
IMPACT ON CULTURE	Reinforces the oral tradition of heroes Inward-looking Rich and poor sharply divided by culture and law Solon's reforms challenge Eupatrid rule	Trade opens up Athens to Ionian influences in fashion, art and architecture People dress to show their wealth Huge buildings emphasise Peisistratid power Theatre is a formal, structured religious spectacle	The power of language to persuade. Rhetoric and the development of sophism Freedom of expression leads to an artistic explosion in theatre, architecture and sculpture
CONTINUITY	Eupatrid families maintain influence right through to democratic period Religious practice Consultation of the Oracle at Delphi	Athens opens up through trade The poor gain a political voice	Women remain without a voice in the public sphere Slavery



**CIMON**

Athenian general and conservative politician. Cimon supported the traditions of Solon, defending the older institutions from radical democratic reform.



**THEMISTOCLES**

Athenian statesman and general. He organised the development of Piraeus as Athens' harbour and naval base.



# BEFORE ARCHONS AND TYRANTS

**SOLON:** 'But quieten the strong spirit in your hearts  
You who have pushed through to glut yourselves with many good things,  
And in moderation lay aside your ambitious thoughts.  
We shall not allow you to proceed like this.'<sup>1</sup>

Athens of the Greek Dark Age (1100–800 BCE) was a regional power with a moderate degree of influence. It had a glorious past, filled with legendary heroes such as Theseus—slayer of the Minotaur—and Menestheus—the legendary king featured in Homer's *Iliad*. Yet Athens had been hit hard by the economic and political upheavals of the Dark Age and was slow to recover. Many *poleis*, such as Sparta, underwent political transformations, but Athens clung to its traditional oligarchy. However, trade in the Archaic Age (800–500 BCE) brought both goods and new ideas, along with simmering tensions within the *polis* between the elite, who wished to preserve tradition, and those who pushed for change.

## LAND AND COIN

In 650 BCE Athens was a cultural backwater compared to many parts of the Greek world.<sup>2</sup> It was ruled by the *Eupatrid* families. *Eupatrid* meant 'of good father', and referred to the aristocratic ruling families such as the Alcmaeonids, the Peisistratids, the Philaids and the Boutads.

The people of Athens were sharply divided by social class. The *Eupatrid* families and other wealthy people from the fertile plains were called *Plainsmen* (or *Peidieis*); while the poorer people from the arid hills were called *Hillsmen* (or *Hyperakrioi* or *Diakrioi*). These Hillsmen were chained by debt as they worked the land of the elite *Eupatrid* families. Legal disputes were settled by aristocrats. Needless to say, this situation favoured the Plainsmen more than the Hillsmen.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, women of all classes in Athens had less of a voice than almost anywhere else in Greece.

A council of aristocrats, called the *Areopagus*, emerged with important powers in Athens, including the right to try certain cases.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.01

#### LOCATION OF ATHENS

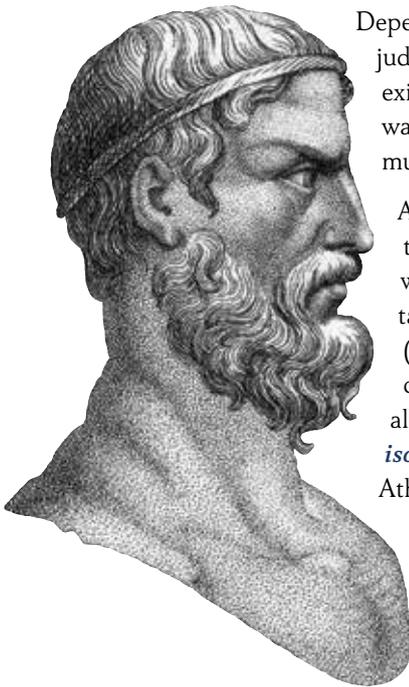


As Athens grew, this traditional structure started to cause resentment. The seventh century BCE had seen the development of a new form of power—the power of wealthy merchants. Men from the shore—*Shoresmen* (or *Paralioi*)—imported luxuries such as cloth and jewellery from Ionia and beyond. While the great families may have looked down upon this ‘new money’, the wealthy merchants were gaining influence through a new form of power from Lydia and Ionia: coins. Coins were a new invention—they were small, transferrable, and valued everywhere.

As the influence of the Shoresmen expanded, tensions grew in Athens. The council of elders supported the interests of their own class, and their interpretations of law were skewed to support the elite *Eupatrid* families. A compromise needed to be found to accommodate the Shoresmen.

## DRACONIAN LAWS

In about 621 BCE came the first sign that things were changing in Athens, when laws were formed that proscribed uniform rules and punishments across the city—regardless of an individual’s class or family.



For centuries, the punishments had been inconsistent. Depending on the accused man’s relationship with the judge, his punishment might be harsh or lenient—exile, execution or blood money.<sup>4</sup> (Blood money was compensation paid to the family of a murdered person.)

A magistrate (or *archon*) named Draco changed this system of punishment. Draco established written laws carved into wooden tablets. These tablets were made public, creating laws that were (in theory) consistent and beyond bribery and corruption. Draco’s laws established the idea that all people were equal in the eyes of the law (called *isonomia*). This idea gained in significance for Athens in the centuries to follow.

However, Draco was also known for the harshness of the punishments he created for people who breached his laws. His written laws may have been fair in one sense, but they were certainly not loved by the people.

### LAWS THAT WERE ‘DRACONIAN’

Under the Draconian code almost any kind of offence was liable to the death penalty, so that even those convicted of idleness were executed, and those who stole fruit or vegetables suffered the same punishment as those who committed sacrilege or murder. This is the reason why, in later times, Demades became famous for his remark that Draco’s code was written not in ink but in blood. Draco himself, when he was once asked why he had decreed the death penalty for the great majority of offences, replied that he considered the minor ones deserved it, and so for the major ones no heavier punishment was left.

### SOURCE 3.02

Engraving of Draco, the first person to establish written laws in ancient Athens, 621 BCE.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 3.03 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What were the punishments under Draco’s law for theft and murder?
2. Why was this code said to be written ‘in blood’?
3. What was Draco’s belief that underpinned these punishments?
4. In what ways could Draco’s laws and punishments be considered fair when compared to the previous system?

### SOURCE 3.03

*Plutarch, Solon 17, in The Rise and fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).*

## SOLON THE LAW-GIVER

### ➔ SOURCE 3.04

Solon the law-giver.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

According to Herodotus, Solon travelled to Lydia, where he met King Croesus, the richest of men. Croesus showed Solon his piles of gold, and asked him who was the happiest of men—presuming Solon would name him.

However, Solon named ordinary people who had died after full lives and glorious deaths as the happiest of men. He warned Croesus that fortune was fickle, and only once a man had died could he say that he had been happy.



Athens in 600 BCE was at a low ebb. Unlike other Greek cities, it had no colonies. Its one attempt at expansion was a war with Megara over the nearby island of Salamis. The Athenian *hoplites* were soundly beaten and humiliated by the Megarians, and were now licking their wounds.

The city was seething. The impoverished Hillsmen were becoming further indebted to the Plainsmen in an unregulated economy. Meanwhile, the Plainsmen were disgruntled with the growing power of the Shoresmen. In turn, the

Shoresmen wanted a more moderate form of government that would be good for business.<sup>5</sup> The *polis* was divided by wealth, ideology and region.<sup>6</sup>

Enter Solon, the law-giver. He was a *Eupatrid* of the Plains—but a very unusual one. Solon was not only a politician; he was also a poet and a philosopher. He was of noble birth and—initially at least—was supported by the ruling families. He had also dabbled in trade and understood the need for modernisation, something the Shoresmen could appreciate. When Solon was appointed *archon* in 594/3 BCE, he freed the Hillsmen from all debt owed to the Plainsmen, thus gaining their favour. These reforms became Solon's legacy to Athens.

Solon implemented a range of economic and political reforms. Politically, he expanded the number of free male citizens (*politeia*) given a voice—but the wealthy were given the most power. Economically, Solon placed controls and limits on trade and released the poor from all debts. These transformations became legendary in the memory of future generations of men, who called these reforms 'The Shaking Off of Burdens'.<sup>7</sup> In Source 3.05 Solon grapples with the difficulties of being a leader.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.05

Plutarch, *Solon 18*, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).

#### SOLON'S BALANCING ACT

To the mass of the people I gave the power they needed,  
Neither degrading them, nor giving them too much rein:  
For those who already possessed great power and wealth  
I saw to it that their interests were not harmed.  
I stood guard with a broad shield before both parties  
And prevented either from triumphing unjustly.

## SOLON'S CONSTITUTION

Solon's constitution was not democratic—but it did make the class system less rigid. Wealth became the basis of class, rather than *Eupatrid* ancestry. No longer could you be from a family that was 'born to rule'. Your class was proven by your wealth. Solon redefined the class structure, the political structure and made a series of economic reforms. These reforms are outlined below.

### SOLON'S REFORMS

#### CLASS STRUCTURE

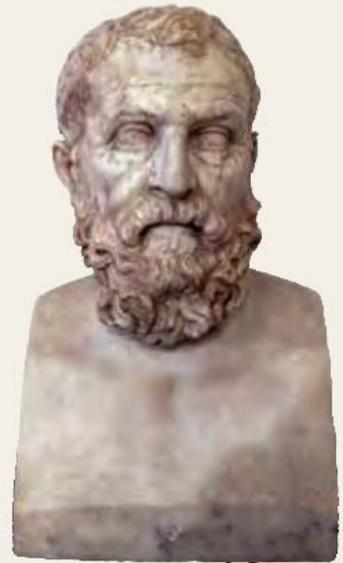
- *Pentacosiomedimni* ('500 bushel men')—These men could produce or present 18 000 kg of dried goods per year (1 bushel equalled roughly 27 kg). Only these men could attain roles of leadership, and have the possibility of becoming *archons* and generals.
- *Hippeis*—These were a cavalry class; a small group of men who could afford to keep and train a horse for battle.
- *Zeugitae*—These were land-owning farmers who could afford at least two oxen or equivalent. They were the *hoplite* class of landowners.
- *Thetes*—These were landless labourers—the poor majority.

#### SOLON'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE

- *Areopagus*—The council of elders was maintained. It consisted of men who had been *archons*, all of whom were *pentacosiomedimni*. This council had extensive powers in establishing laws and in investigating and judging serious crimes.
- *Boule* (Council of the 400)—This second council was called the 'second anchor'.<sup>8</sup> It was created by Solon and included male citizens representing the top three classes—all of which were land-owning classes. They were to run the daily affairs of the city.
- *Ecclesia* (General Assembly): The *ecclesia* was extended to all land-owning male citizens, although historians debate whether the landless *thetes* were included, as the ancient sources are vague on this point.<sup>9</sup> The *ecclesia* had little power at this stage compared to the *boule* and *Areopagus*. The few matters they did vote on seem to have been more or less decided by the higher assemblies beforehand.

#### ECONOMIC REFORMS

- '*The Shaking Off of Burdens*'—The debts that poor people owed to rich people were abolished. This allowed people who were previously in debt to earn money again.
- *Standardisation*—Weights were standardised to match nearby *poleis*. This would improve the Athenian economy, and encourage commercial activity.<sup>10</sup>
- *Citizenship*—Possibly granted full citizenship to valuable foreigners (or *metics*), such as craftsmen and merchants.<sup>11</sup>
- *Controls to limit free trade*—A ban was placed on the export of 'products of the soil' to prevent famine. The exception was olive oil, which was a significant export product.<sup>12</sup> Athenian oil was of superior quality and in high demand elsewhere as a 'semi-luxury' product.<sup>13</sup>



#### ▶ SOURCE 3.06

Solon.



THE REFORMS  
OF SOLON

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### SOLON AND HIS REFORMS

To later Athenians, Solon was seen as the pre-eminent law-maker. However, Solon's legendary status makes it difficult to distinguish between his actual reforms and the reforms that tradition (seen, for example, in Plutarch and Aristotle) have falsely ascribed to him.<sup>14</sup>

However, these reforms were an important turning point:

- The wealthy, although still ruling, could no longer exploit the very poor. Tenant-landholders were now free men.
- All free men now had a role in government—even if it was limited.
- Class was now more fluid, as it was determined by wealth rather than family bloodlines.
- Economic reforms were in place that encouraged trade, while limiting exploitation and destitution.

Although not a democracy, the inclusion of 'the people' in government—even if limited—furthered the value of *isonomia* (equality before the law) first seen with Draco's code. Equality before the law was now being extended into a more shared form of government. Later, this growing concept of *isonomia* was considered to be the basis for the movement towards democracy. Solon would become a hero for democrats in the centuries to follow.<sup>15</sup>

Solon's reforms provided immediate relief for the poor, but they failed to address the economic and political imbalance between the rich and the poor in Athens. The Hillsmen and the landless *thetes* still struggled under Solon's constitution—and they would soon support another radical change in Athens' political structure.



### ↑ SOURCE 3.07

Solon reforming the laws of Athens.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How were Draco's laws different to those that came before?
2. In three paragraphs, explain how each group (Plainsmen, Shoresmen and Hillsmen) would be affected by Solon's political and economic reforms.
3. In Source 3.05, Solon claims he prevented rich and poor from 'triumphing unjustly'. Do you think his reforms achieve this? Use examples from pages 86–88 to support your answer.

## ENLIGHTENED TYRANTS

Following Solon's reforms, life for the poor was still harsh. Although released from financial servitude, the poor earned little money in an economically depressed region, and in a lean year faced the possibility of starvation. The wealthy owned the best farmland, and ruled, as they always had—but now they ruled through money

instead of kinship ties. The *Areopagus* and the *boule* were now filled with Shoresmen as well as *Eupatrid* Plainsmen, but together they were still an elite minority.

So when word spread that Peisistratus, the great general who had finally taken Salamis from the hated Megarians, was looking for the support of the Hillsmen to push the Plainsmen and Shoresmen from power, the Hillsmen were willing allies. With their help, Peisistratus would become tyrant, officially keeping Solon's laws, but really maintaining power through popular support in the *agora* and intimidation of the *Areopagus* and *boule*.<sup>16</sup>

## PEISISTRATUS: TYRANT OR CHAMPION OF THE POOR?



### SOURCE 3.08

*Peisistratus Making Himself Tyrant of Athens*, copper engraving.

### SOURCE 3.09

A silver coin minted under the Peisistratid dynasty (about 515 BCE). Images of Athena and the owl are strongly associated with Athens.



The ancient idea of a tyrant was a popular dictator, who was usually supported by the poor against the wealthy oligarchies of the elite. Peisistratus fitted this mould. He was hugely popular among the majority of Athenians: the poor. With their support—and the support of unrepresented foreigners—he managed to gain power in a short-lived coup in the 560s BCE.<sup>17</sup> Peisistratus was ousted by the powerful Boutad and Alcmaeonid families, but regained power in about 546 BCE with the help of his many supporters.<sup>18</sup>

He maintained power for life, before passing it onto his sons, Hippias and Hipparchus.

## PEISISTRATUS' REIGN

Herodotus describes Peisistratus' tyranny as 'moderate and good.'<sup>19</sup> Always the eminent politician, Peisistratus spent a lot of time touring the Hills region to see to the needs of the poor—and, importantly, to be publicly seen doing this.<sup>20</sup> These decades were a time of public works, trade and the establishment of important religious festivals.



### 📌 SOURCE 3.10

Athenian ceramic *amphora* depicting a Dionysian scene, c.500 BCE.

Peisistratus' rule was known for the following achievements.

- **Ceramics:** The Attic ceramic style was developed and was in demand abroad. Athens became the leading producer of ceramics in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>21</sup>
- **The Dionysia:** A harvest festival held in Athens, from around 534 BCE during the rule of Peisistratus. The Dionysia featured an elaborate procession, sacrifices, and theatrical performances. Thespis was the first actor to win the festival (from whom we get the word *thespian*). Thespis was awarded a goat in honour of Dionysus.
- **Panathenaic Games:** These games were established or embellished during the 560s BCE, but it is unclear whether they were established under Peisistratus or a rival family.<sup>22</sup> Athletics in Athens was now a central religious and social activity among the wealthy, as it was in other Greek *poleis*.
- **Temple and public building construction:** The public building program is the most archaeologically obvious legacy of the rule of Peisistratus. The Acropolis had traditionally been unassuming compared to the more lavish temples constructed in Ionia. But Athenians adopted the trend for grander temples, most probably as self-promotion for the wealthy families, and particularly for the Peisistratids. From the 560s BCE onwards, construction at the Acropolis was continuous. The Altar of the Twelve Gods and the first of the law courts were built. A massive Temple to Zeus was still unfinished when the dynasty was toppled in 510 BCE.

### 📌 SOURCE 3.11

Marble relief depicting a race in the Panathenaic Games in which an armed warrior leapt on and off a moving chariot. From the fourth century BCE.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Which group supported the tyrant Peisistratus?
2. Produce a mind-map outlining the economic and cultural causes and effects of the Peisistratus dynasty.
3. Explain how the artistic and cultural developments under Peisistratus could be used by the tyrant for political purposes.



## TRADE: THE ATHENIAN WARES

During the Peisistratid dynasty, the balance of trade in Athens improved. The Athenians had a new product that was in demand—Attic ceramics.

### CERAMICS

Pottery from Attica had previously been copied from Corinthian or Ionian styles and techniques. However, during the Peisistratid dynasty it was Attica that began to lead the way in pottery design. The black-figure style reached new levels of complexity, while innovations in production led to the striking red-figure design, which allowed for the production of more complex and vivid images. Such ceramics were in demand, and were exported in significant quantities.

### IMPORTS

#### GRAIN

Athens' growing population was increasingly dependent on grain imported from the north coast of the Black Sea. Athenian ceramic sherds found in modern-day Ukraine suggest that the mutual trade was significant. This development of regular trade meant that Athens was more entwined with the eastern Greek *poleis*, and the Athenians were being exposed to new ideas and trends.

#### FASHION

Wealthy people were eager to show off their sophistication by adopting elaborate Ionian styles from the eastern *poleis*. Unlike the basic woollen Doric tunic (or *chiton*), the Ionic *chiton* was made of lighter linen, sometimes even silk. They were dyed in bright colours and embroidered with lavish designs. The *himation*, an Ionic shawl, was to become an 'indispensable' accompaniment to the *chiton* for any woman of style.<sup>23</sup>



**SOURCE 3.14**

Ionian fashions imported to Athens, c.550 BCE.



**SOURCE 3.12**

Red-Figure vase by Andocides, c.520 BCE.

**SOURCE 3.13**

Detail from a red-figure vase, c.400 BCE.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Greeks wore a woollen cloak called a *himation* that was made at home by the women of the household. Most people had few garments, and there was a widespread fear of bandits who would steal *himatia* from unsuspecting travellers. For many people, this simple *himation* was one of their most valuable possessions.

## TYRANTS: KINGS OR DEMAGOGUES?

At first glance, the tyrant Peisistratus would appear to be a king under another name. Like a king, he had unlimited tenure and extensive powers beyond the constitution of Solon. But unlike a king, a tyrant needed to maintain popular support.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.15

Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West* (London: Little Brown Publishing, 2005), 114.

#### HISTORIAN HOLLAND ON TYRANTS

... A Greek tyrant, almost by definition, had to have the popular touch, since otherwise he could not hope to cling to power for long. Trumpets, slogans and public works: such were the enthusiasm he would invariably parade. He would also be expected to provide, to a people that might have been racked by faction-fighting for decades, the stamps of firm government—at the very least ... Naturally, in exchange for granting his fellow citizens the blessings of order and prosperity, a tyrant could be expected to make a few demands of his own. He might require that certain illegal measures, certain regrettable precautions, be overlooked: bodyguards, for instance; controls on free speech; the occasional midnight knocking on the door.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.16

Andrew Burn, *Pericles and Athens* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 27.

#### HISTORIAN BURN ON PEISISTRATUS

In fact, [Peisistratus], like many other 'tyrants' of his age, was one of the greatest developers of the city's economic life, and by breaking the old aristocracy played an essential part in making possible the constitution that was to come.

### ACTIVITY

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Sources 3.15 and 3.16 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What were the achievements of Peisistratus' rule?
2. How might these successes have helped him to maintain power?
3. What was the difference, in the eyes of historians, between a king and a tyrant? Why are these distinctions important?
4. Look closely at Holland's explanation of a tyrant's reign (Source 3.15). What constitutional rights does he suggest are sacrificed in exchange for the benefits of being ruled by a tyrant like Peisistratus?
5. Consider Burn's view of Peisistratus' rule (Source 3.16). Why might the economic and cultural developments of Peisistratus' rule pave the way for further constitutional change in the years to come?

## FROM TYRANNY TO REVOLUTION

Athens continued to develop its reputation for significant religious festivals and fine exports under the joint rule of Peisistratus' sons, Hippias and Hipparchus. Like their father, they constructed grand temples and monuments and the economy flourished. Yet their rule, unlike their father's, was not a peaceful one.

We have little information about their rule prior to 515 BCE. Thucydides described the brothers as being neither loved nor overly disliked by the Athenians.<sup>24</sup> According to Herodotus, it was Hipparchus' personal life, rather than the brothers' leadership, that would ultimately end their period of rule.<sup>25</sup>

## HISTORIAN THORLEY ON HIPPIAS AND HIPPARCHUS

Under [Peisistratus] Athens was both prosperous and politically stable ... Unfortunately his sons were not of the same calibre. When he died in 527 [BCE] the elder son Hippias stepped into his father's role, aided by his younger brothers Hipparkhos and Thettalos, both of whom spent most of their times as rich playboys.

## SOURCE 3.17

*John Thorley, Athenian Democracy (Oxford: Routledge, 1996), 19.*

## THE ATHENIAN REVOLUTION

HERODOTUS: '... the Athenians, while ruled by tyrants, were no better than any of the peoples living around them, but once they got rid of their tyrants, they became by far the best of all.'

The transition from tyranny to democracy occurred rapidly in Athens. There is evidence of a sudden and substantial change in the political structure from the 510s to 500s BCE.

### BLOOD IN THE AGORA

The Panathenaic festival of 514 BCE seemed like any other. The procession would be an opportunity to see celebrities in all their colour and splendour.

A respectable veiled lady, usually kept at home, had an excuse to be out among the festivities, listening to pipers, sampling meats, watching acrobats and performers of all sorts, perhaps discreetly drinking wine in honour of the god. If she were lucky, she may get a glimpse of the great tyrants, Hippias and Hipparchus, with their entourage of gentlemen and hangers-on.



But this year, the festivities were shattered. Among the push of the crowd there were screams, Hipparchus had fallen and two well-dressed men with bloody knives were fleeing the scene. Hippias' bodyguards pursued the murderers and cut them down.

Later, the gossip in the *agora* was about a high-profile love triangle. Hipparchus had been killed by his lover. But the assassination that so many Athenians had seen would go far beyond celebrity scandal—it would lead to revolution.

## SOURCE 3.18

The ancient *agora* at Athens.

## TYRANNICIDE: HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGEITON

As the story comes down to us, Hipparchus the tyrant was infatuated with Harmodius, a man in ‘the flower of youthful beauty’.<sup>26</sup> But Harmodius was in love

with Aristogeiton—a man of middle rank and status—and he kept rejecting Hipparchus’ advances.

Jilted, Hipparchus publicly humiliated Harmodius’ sister and then insulted Harmodius. Aristogeiton and Harmodius plotted their revenge. After a failed scheme with conspirators, the two men rushed Hipparchus, stabbing him repeatedly in full view of the crowd. They were quickly cut down by Hippias’ bodyguards.<sup>27</sup>

After Hipparchus’ assassination, Hippias became paranoid. He created a harsher regime, silencing the *Areopagus* and *boule* with fear and ‘putting to death many citizens’.<sup>28</sup> People who questioned him would disappear in the middle of the night. In this climate of fear and paranoia, the people of Athens re-imagined the roles of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. They were no longer seen as assassins carrying out a personal vendetta—they were celebrated as courageous tyrant-killers, standing up against an oppressive regime. The legend of Aristogeiton and Harmodius would become the start of a revolution.



### 📌 SOURCE 3.19

The assassination of Hipparchus.

### ➡ SOURCE 3.20

*Athenaeus, The Deipnosophists 15.50, in Charles Fornara, Translated Documents of Greece and Rome: Archaic Times to the End of The Peloponnesian War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 39.*

### ATHENIAN DRINKING SONG OF HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGEITON

I'll wreath my sword in myrtle bough,  
The sword that laid the tyrant low,  
When patriots, burning to be free,  
To Athens gave equality.

Harmodius, hail! though reft of breath,  
Thou ne'er shalt feel the stroke of death,  
The happy heroes' isles shall be  
The bright abode allotted thee.

I'll wreath the sword in myrtle bough,  
The sword that laid Hipparchus low,  
When at Minerva's [Athena's] adverse fane  
He knelt, and never rose again.

As the grumbling turned to talk of revolution, all eyes turned to the wealthy Alcmaeonid family to fund a coup. The Alcmaeonids had been exiled by Hippias after Hipparchus' assassination, and had garnered support from Sparta, which was willing to send in their *hoplites* to overthrow Hippias' increasingly brutal rule.

Sparta saw intervening in the affairs of smaller *poleis* as its right and responsibility, especially when it came to combating tyranny, something it had abolished many years before. Probably hoping that he could turn Athens into a client-state, King Cleomenes of Sparta led his force of *hoplites*, along with the exiled Alcmaeonid family, to Attica to liberate Athens from Hippias.<sup>29</sup>

Many Athenians supported the Spartan intervention and, under humiliating terms, Hippias and the Peisistratids fled Attica. Swearing vengeance, Hippias went east, seeking help from Persia. The Persian governor at Sardis commanded Athens to take Hippias back, but Athens publicly refused, making an enemy of the great empire.<sup>30</sup>

## CHAOS AND DISORDER

In 509/8 BCE, Athens was still in turmoil with no clear leader. Two different factions competed for power: one faction was led by Cleisthenes; the other was led by Isagoras.

The *boule* was divided, with some members of the council supporting the returning Alcmaeonids, led by Cleisthenes, hopeful that Solon's constitution would be reinvigorated. The elected *archon* could again become a genuine position of leadership.

But a greater number of those in the *boule* supported Isagoras, who was 'a friend to the tyrants'<sup>31</sup> and had Spartan connections.<sup>32</sup> They called for another tyranny, like that of Peisistratus, to end the chaos and division that had consumed Athens. Isagoras outmanoeuvred Cleisthenes, gaining an overwhelming majority of support in both councils, and became *archon* in 508/7 BCE.<sup>33</sup>

Cleisthenes, facing political irrelevancy, invited the 'common people' into his party.<sup>34</sup> This was an unprecedented move. The ordinary people had little representation in the *boule* and none in the *Areopagus*, so such a move would not technically grant Cleisthenes any more power. But Cleisthenes knew it would provide a different form of power. He became known as the 'champion of the masses.'<sup>35</sup> Suddenly, ordinary citizens were expressing their love for Cleisthenes in the *agora*—and it was Isagoras who 'fell behind in power'.<sup>36</sup>

To break the impasse, Isagoras invited the Spartans to sort out the mess. He believed that with Spartan muscle, the conservative order would be reasserted—with Isagoras and his aristocratic supporters left in charge.

## ISAGORAS VS THE COMMON PEOPLE

Isagoras claimed he was inviting the Spartans to rid Athens of a 'curse'. This was a veiled reference to the Alcmaeonid family to which Cleisthenes belonged, which had been banished decades ago for sacrilege, spilling blood in a temple.<sup>37</sup> Cleisthenes and his most vocal supporters had already fled when the Spartan *hoplites* arrived, accompanied by Isagoras.

In short order, Isagoras expelled 700 households belonging to his political opponents, under the pretext of ridding the city of the curse. The protests had melted away. Order, it seemed, was restored.

Isagoras then turned his attention to the *boule*, which he intended to replace with his own Council of 300. The *boule*, many of whom had initially supported

Isagoras, resisted this attack on the constitution, and barred the doors to the chamber—the *boule* would not be forcibly dissolved.

This act of resistance gave heart to Cleisthenes' supporters in the streets. In an unprecedented move, 'the common people' (or *demos*) mobbed Isagoras and the heavily armed Spartan soldiers.<sup>38</sup> Isagoras and the Spartans scrambled to a defensive position in the Acropolis, and held out against the *demos* for two days and nights. On the third day, a truce was made—Isagoras and the Spartans could leave and Cleisthenes and the 700 families would return. A popular uprising had ousted a would-be tyrant.

Cleisthenes, with the backing of what was now a party of the *demos*, overhauled the constitution, providing a voice to his power-base: the lower classes. This new system undermined the power of the Eupatrids almost entirely, providing ordinary citizens with a range of influences, from appointing positions of office to directly making decisions of state. Whether driven by idealism or political expediency, these reforms came to be known as *democratia*—the rule of the people.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Giant statues of the popular tyrant-killing lovers Harmodius and Aristogeiton were erected in the *agora*, but no public statue was ever erected for Cleisthenes.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.21

Sculpture depicting Harmodius (right) and Aristogeiton (left). A second century BCE Roman copy of Greek original.

### ACTIVITY

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. List in point form the key events of the Athenian Revolution (c. 515–507 BCE).
2. Why were the actions of the following groups and individuals significant in creating the revolution?
  - Harmodius and Aristogeiton
  - Cleisthenes
  - 'The common people' (*demos*)
  - The *boule*
  - Isagoras
  - Sparta.

## ANCIENT PERSPECTIVES—DEMOCRACY LED BY CLEISTHENES OR THE PEOPLE?

Even ancient authors Aristotle and Herodotus don't quite agree on who led the push to oust Isagoras. Was it Cleisthenes? Or was it the *demos*? Read the following sources carefully and note the differences.

### ARISTOTLE

As Cleisthenes was getting the worst of the party struggle, he attached the people to his following, by proposing to give political power to the masses. Isagoras then fell behind in power, so he called back [the Spartan King] Cleomenes, with whom he had a tie of hospitality, and since it appeared that the Alcmaeonids were among those who were under a curse, persuaded Cleomenes to join him in driving out the accursed. Cleisthenes withdrew; and Cleomenes came with a few men and solemnly expelled seven hundred Athenian households. After doing this he tried to dissolve the council [*boule*] and make Isagoras and three hundred of his friends masters of the city. However, the council resisted and the common people gathered in force; the supporters of Cleomenes and Isagoras fled to the Acropolis; the people settled down and besieged them for two days, but on the third made a truce to release Cleomenes and all the men with him, and recalled Cleisthenes and the other exiles. Thus the people obtained control of affairs, and Cleisthenes became leader and champion of the people.

### 📖 SOURCE 3.22

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution 20.4–4*, trans. Peter Rhodes (London: Penguin, 1984).

### HERODOTUS

Although Athens had been a great city before, it became even greater once rid of its tyrants. There were at that time two powerful men in Athens: Kleisthenes, an Alcmaeonid who was said to have bribed the Phythia [the Oracle at Delphi], and Isagoras son of Teisandros, a man from a distinguished house. ... These two men competed for power, and when Kleisthenes found that he was facing defeat, he enlisted the common people into his association of supporters ... For though the Athenian people had previously been spurned by their politicians, he now brought them into his own faction and increased the numbers of their tribes and gave them new names. ... By adding the people to his side, he gained the upper hand by far over his political opponents.

### 📖 SOURCE 3.23

Herodotus, *The Histories 5.66 and 5.69* in Robert Strassler (ed), *The Landmark Herodotus* (London: Quercus, 2008).

Some historians have considered these accounts problematic, noting that 'the people' appear to have acted, at times, independently of Cleisthenes.

### HISTORIAN OBER

... though Cleisthenes is indeed a very important player in Athens' revolutionary drama, the key role was played by the *demos*. And thus, *demokratia* was not a gift from a benevolent elite and a passive *demos*, but was the product of a collective decision, action and self-definition on the part of the *demos* itself.

... it appears that a spontaneous insurrection against Isagoras and the Spartans followed in the wake of Cleomenes' attempt to abolish the *boule* and his occupation of the Acropolis. Without the uprising, the Cleisthenic reforms would have remained empty words: proposals or enactments voided by the efficient use of force by an outside power.

### 📖 SOURCE 3.24

Josiah Ober, *The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 B.C.E.: Violence, Authority, and the Origins of Democracy* in *Athenian Democracy*, ed. Peter Rhodes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Using Sources 3.22 to 3.24 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Who do Aristotle (Source 3.22) and Herodotus (Source 3.23) consider to be the most significant players in the revolution?
2. Who does historian Ober (Source 3.24) consider to be the most significant group in sparking the revolution?
3. Looking at Aristotle's account (Source 3.22), and your own response to Question 1, identify what evidence Ober (Source 3.24) might have to support his perspective.

## GLEISTHENES' REFORMS

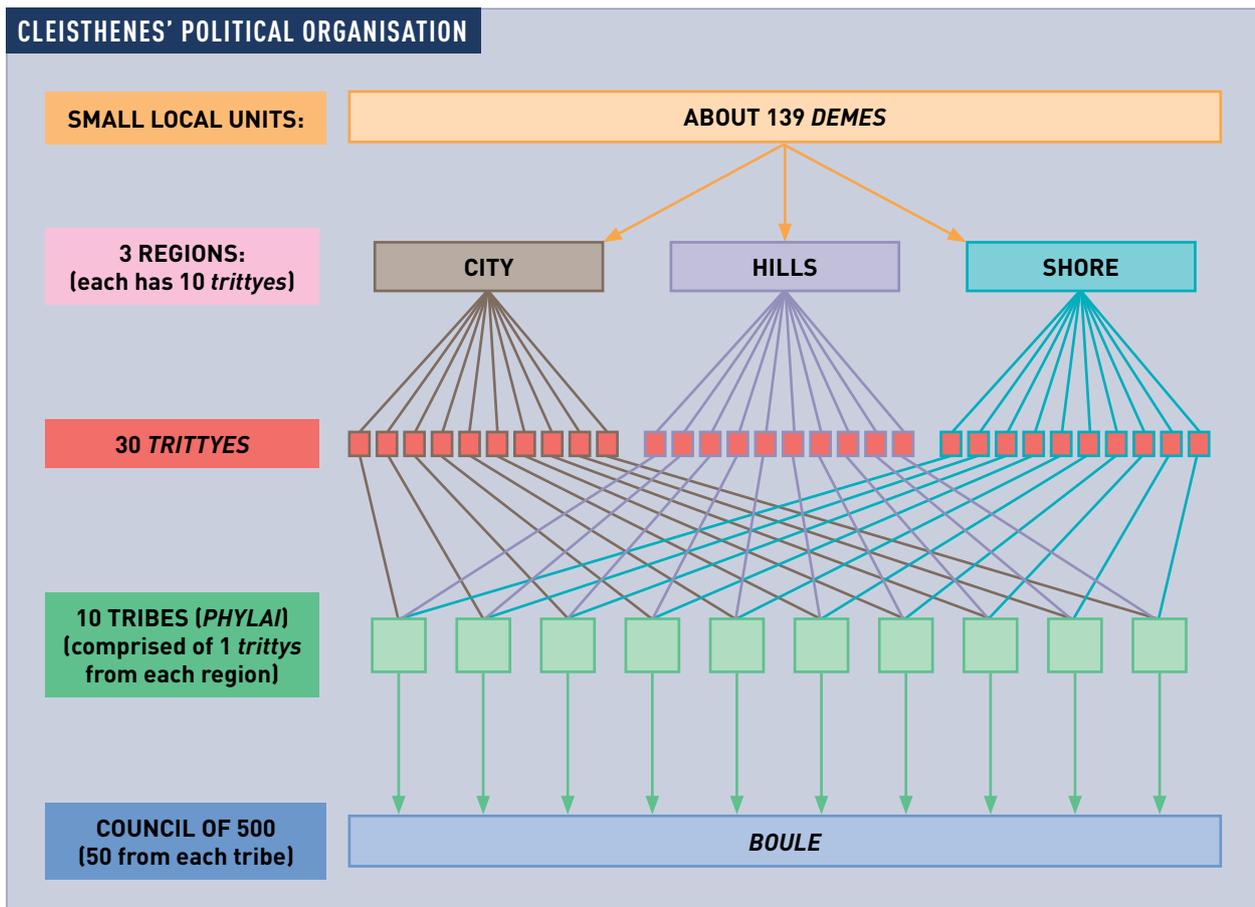
The reforms of Cleisthenes turned Athens into a democracy.<sup>39</sup> The old factions of family and tribe were replaced with new political structures. A man's identity would now be as a citizen, defined by his relationship to the *polis*, rather than to his family or tribe.

### TRIBE AND CLASS REDEFINED

As outlined earlier, the Athenians defined themselves as belonging to one of three factions: Plainsmen (wealthy landowners), Shoresmen (merchants), and Hillsmen (rural poor). Athenians were further divided into four hereditary tribes (or *phylai*). These factions were deeply entrenched, and Cleisthenes seems to have viewed them as the cause of division and instability in Athens.

His solution was radical: replace these factions and tribes with new mixed allegiances. Citizenship was no longer defined by a person's family. Instead, all free male Athenians were to sign up to their local neighbourhood (or *deme*). Listing people according to their *deme* was a completely new way to define a citizen.

Each *deme* now belonged to one of ten new 'tribes' or *phylai*. These new *phylai* were deliberately mixed; a *deme* of the Shore would now be part of the same *phylai* as a *deme* from the Plains and a *deme* from the Hills. It was hoped that a person's loyalty now belonged to all fellow Athenian citizens, rather than to a particular class or faction.



Cleisthenes used these new mixed *phylai* to build political institutions that were more democratic. All citizens would now be involved in the election of members of the *boule*, and would participate directly in the general assembly (*ecclesia*) and the courts (the *dicasteria* and *heliaia*). Suddenly, a citizen's participation in government was not just a right, but a duty.

## THE BOULE



### SOURCE 3.25

A meeting of the 'old' *boule* in 594 BCE.



CITIZEN ROLES IN  
THE ATHENIAN  
DEMOCRACY

## THE BOULE

### OLD *BOULE* UNDER SOLON: 'COUNCIL OF 400'

Solon's old *boule* was dominated by the wealthy.

- 400 *pentacosiomedimnoi*
- 100 from each of the old 4 tribes (or *phylai*)
- Members elected by wealth
- Election of the nine *archons*
- Elders from the *boule* elected to the *Areopagus*

### NEW *BOULE* UNDER CLEISTHENES: 'COUNCIL OF 500'

Cleisthenes' *boule* was elected by lot, and had a wider cross-section of the Athenian community.

- 500 citizens from all landed classes. (It is unclear if landless *thetes* were excluded)
- 50 members from each new *phylai*. (This was called a *prytany*)
- Elected randomly by lot
- Prepared business for the *ecclesia*
- One year service, 2 years maximum in a lifetime
- Each *prytany* to run the *boule* for 1 month. Rotation throughout the year

## THE ECCLESIA

The assembly (or *ecclesia*) of Solon had been open to all free male citizens but its role was limited. Under Cleisthenes, this was radically transformed. Thousands of citizens now gathered to hear arguments and to vote directly on weighty matters of state, such as taxation, *ostracism* and even decisions of war and foreign policy. If the *boule* set the agenda, it was the *ecclesia* that made the decisions.

Cleisthenes' *ecclesia* had the following features:

- thousands of people attended
- there were no political parties—the *ecclesia* voted directly on the *boule's* proposals
- the *ecclesia* appointed magistrates
- juries for court trials were chosen by lot from the *ecclesia*.

Each proposal had public speakers (or *rhetors*) arguing for or against the motion. This meant that the power to persuade became increasingly significant in Athenian public life. After both sides were heard, all citizens present voted.

## THE COURT SYSTEM: DICASTERIA AND HELIAIA

The courts (or *dicasteria*) and high courts (or *heliaia*) were a way for the *demos* to judge legal cases. The idea was to bring a significant portion of the people in to act as jurors: the *heliaia* had a pool of 6000 jurors, chosen by lot. According to Aristotle, a trial had several components.

- The guilt of the accused was debated, with the prosecutors and defendants each given time (limited by water-clocks) to make their case.
- The voting system was anonymous. Jurors made one real vote and one 'dummy' vote. From a distance, it was impossible to tell which way a juror voted.<sup>40</sup>
- The votes were counted with the help of a counting board, which piled the ballots up evenly. The greatest number of ballots decided the verdict.
- If found guilty, the process was repeated to decide a penalty, with the defendant and the prosecutor each giving a recommended punishment, to be decided by anonymous ballot.



TRIAL BY JURY  
OF PEERS:  
MORE INFO

## AREOPAGUS

The once powerful council of elders (or *Areopagus*) was diminished, and its role after Cleisthenes' reforms is unclear. It still investigated serious crimes, and possibly had other functions. It remained a bastion for conservative politicians in the decades to follow.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Under Cleisthenes' reforms, what was the purpose of mixing the tribes (*phylai*)?
2. Identify the changes to the *boule* and courts that could be seen as democratic.
3. Explain why the *ecclesia*, *dicasteria* and *heliaia* were environments that fostered public speaking and debate.

## ANCIENT PERSPECTIVES ON DEMOCRACY: EQUALITY OR CHAOS?

Plato was part of an educated elite and wary of democracy. His *Republic* considers the founding of an ideal state. Democracy is compared to other forms of government.

### PLATO'S *THE REPUBLIC*

'And a democracy, I suppose, comes into being when the poor, winning the victory, put to death some of the other party, drive out others, and grant the rest of the citizens an equal share in both citizenship and offices—and for the most part these offices are assigned by lot.' 'Why, yes,' he said, 'that is the constitution of democracy alike whether it is established by force of arms or by terrorism resulting in the withdrawal of one of the parties.'

... 'To begin with, are they not free? and is not the city chock-full of liberty and freedom of speech? and has not every man licence to do as he likes?' 'So it is said,' he replied. 'And where there is such licence, it is obvious that everyone would arrange a plan for leading his own life in the way that pleases him.'

.... 'And the tolerance of democracy, its superiority to all our meticulous requirements, its disdain for our solemn pronouncements made when we were founding our city, that except in the case of transcendent natural gifts no one could ever become a good man unless from childhood his play and all his pursuits were concerned with things fair and good—how superbly it tramples under foot all such ideals, caring nothing from what practices and way of life a man turns to politics, but honoring him if only he says that he loves the people!' 'It is a noble polity, indeed!' he said. 'These and qualities akin to these democracy would exhibit, and it would, it seems, be a delightful form of government, anarchic and motley, assigning a kind of equality indiscriminately to equals and unequals alike!' 'Yes,' he said, 'everybody knows that.'

Herodotus, in contrast, saw liberty and *isonomia* as ideals of good governance, contrasting Sparta with the Athenian democracy.

### HERODOTUS ON ATHENIANS

So the Athenians had increased in strength, which demonstrates that an equal voice in government has beneficial impact not merely in one way, but in every way: the Athenians, while ruled by tyrants, were no better in war than any of the peoples living around them, but once they were rid of tyrants, they became by far the best of all. Thus it is clear that they were deliberately slack while repressed, since they were working for a master, but that after they were freed, they became ardently devoted to working hard so as to win achievements for themselves as individuals.

### SOURCE 3.26

Plato, *The Republic* 8.557a–558c, trans. Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969).

### SOURCE 3.27

Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.78 in Robert Strassler (ed), *The Landmark Herodotus* (London: Quercus, 2008).

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Using Sources 3.26 and 3.27 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. According to Plato (Source 3.26), what are the effects of democracy on the public interest?
2. Select at least two quotes from Source 3.26 that are critical of democracy. In your own words, explain the reasoning behind each.
3. In what ways does Herodotus (Source 3.27) consider democracy a patriotic value?
4. Compare and contrast the attitudes of the two sources towards individualism. Use evidence to support your response.

## DEMOCRACY TESTED AND RADICALISED

Democratic government in Athens had little time to find its feet before its existence was challenged. The new-found loyalty to citizenship instead of tribe was soon to be tested on the battlefield. Isagoras, who had been expelled along with the Spartan *hoplites*, went back to Sparta and told them about his humiliation at the hands of the Athenians. The Spartan king, Cleomenes, called on Sparta's allies to join his own *hoplites* in a punitive expedition against Athens.

Unaware of the radical nature of Cleisthenes' reforms—and fuelled by Isagoras' tales of chaos and mob-rule in the city—in 507/6 BCE the Spartans marched on Athens to restore order. However, they were met by Cleisthenes' new army on the road to Athens, prepared to resist Sparta and her allies.

Each new division of Cleisthenes' army had supplied their own *hoplites* and cavalry, and their *hippeis* and *zeugitae* were now part of a single tribe, commanded by a general who was also one of their own.<sup>41</sup> Far from being an unruly mob, this army was evidently organised and united—and Sparta's allies refused to engage the Athenian *phalanx*. With their allies melting away, the Spartans reluctantly withdrew.

But the military conflicts were not yet over for the fledgling democracy. According to Herodotus, Sparta's Boeotian and Chalcidian allies had pillaged the borderlands of Attica during their bungled campaign against Athens. The Athenian army wanted vengeance, and in 506 BCE they responded with punitive expeditions against them, 'slaughtering vast numbers'.<sup>42</sup> With the spoils of war, they built a horse monument to give thanks.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.28

'Epigrams Celebrating an Athenian Victory over Boeotia and Chalcis ... About 506 B.C.' in Charles Fornara, Translated Documents of Greece and Rome: Archaic Times to the End of The Peloponnesian War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

#### ATHENIAN INSCRIPTION ON MONUMENT TO VICTORY OVER BOEOTIANS AND CHALCIDIANS

[When they] crushed [the people of Boeotia and Chalcis,]  
The sons of the Athenians, by deeds [in battle]  
[In dismal chains of iron] quelled [their pride]  
From whom these horses, as a tithe, [they dedicated to Pallas Athena]

After staring down the Spartans, the citizens of Athens became more assertive in both their internal politics and their foreign policy.

The *ecclesia* and the *boule* showed animosity towards tyranny, and this sense of empowerment led them to support the Ionian Greeks against Persia. They involved themselves in the Ionian revolt (see Chapter 4), supporting the Ionian *poleis* against the Persian Empire. The first of the Greco–Persian wars that followed culminated in victory over Persia at Marathon (see page 136). Following this legendary victory, proponents of democracy in Athens pushed for an increasingly radical democracy.<sup>43</sup>

The radical democracy viewed the appointment of major roles by a random lottery to be more democratic than voting. Voting meant that the wealthy who could afford publicity would have an unfair advantage. From 487 BCE, the supreme *archon* would be appointed by lot, leaving the leadership of the city up to chance—a truly radical form of democracy.<sup>44</sup>

One unintended consequence of this was that the *archon* lost prestige and significance as a role and people sought power through other roles. One of these was the position of general (or *strategos*), to which ten men were elected by the people each year.

## OSTRACISM

An *ostrakon* was a sherd of cheap pottery, and it loaned its name to *ostracism*, which was effectively a vote to banish the most unpopular citizen. It was first used in 487 BCE.

Each year, the *ecclesia* would decide whether to ostracise one of several major political leaders. The ostracised individual would be banished from Attica for ten years (although he was allowed to keep his possessions and citizenship).

When an ostracism vote took place, the *agora* was sealed, and each citizen would write on an *ostrakon* the name of the person they wanted ostracised. Magistrates would preside over the counting of *ostraca*. The man who received the most votes was ostracised. There was no case to plead, no defence—ostracism was not seen as a punishment but as a way to diffuse political tensions.

The ostracisms of the 480s BCE showed that the citizens were increasingly hostile to any individual with too much popularity and influence. Some of the most important politicians of the age were ostracised—including radical politicians such as Themistocles, and conservative politicians such as Aristides and Cimon—because the *demos* was fearful of popular individuals who might use their popularity to become tyrants.



### ↑ SOURCE 3.29

*Ostraca* of Aristides (top) and Cimon (bottom).

## ‘WHEN THE POOR WIN’: THEMISTOCLES AND ARISTIDES

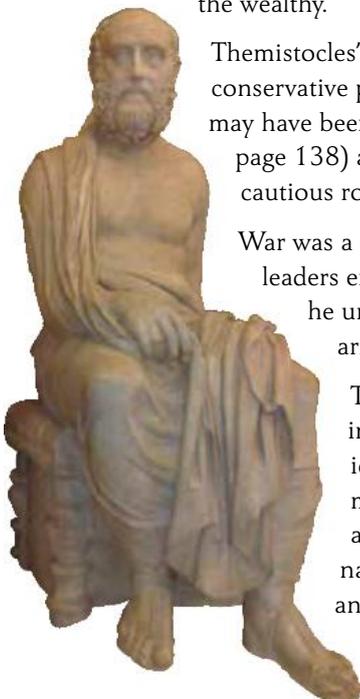
This radicalised political environment produced a new kind of politician, one that responded to ordinary people. Themistocles was such a politician. Opposed to him was Aristides ‘the Just’, a man cut from a more traditional cloth.

Themistocles was of ‘lowly birth’; he came to prominence in the 490s BCE by attacking the wealthy aristocracy and garnering support among the poor. Plutarch says that Themistocles ‘knew every one of the citizens by name’<sup>45</sup> and it was this familiarity that fuelled his popularity—along with his outspoken attacks on the wealthy.

Themistocles’ natural opponent was ‘Aristides the Just’, a conservative politician celebrated by Herodotus and Plato. Aristides may have been a successful *strategos* in the Battle of Marathon (see page 138) and was elected *archon* in 489/488 BCE. He took a cautious road to internal reform and foreign policy.

War was a constant threat for the ancient Greeks and both leaders encouraged preparedness. When Aristides was *archon* he urged the *ecclesia* to prepare for war by training and arming *hoplites* for the return of the Persians.

Themistocles urged that preparing for war should involve developing a navy rather than an army. The idea of a navy appealed to Themistocles’ supporters—many of whom were far too poor to purchase armour and play a major role as *hoplites*. But as oarsmen in a navy they would gain prestige as equals—because rich and poor people had the same equipment to pull an oar.



### ↑ SOURCE 3.30

Themistocles.

### ↑ SOURCE 3.31

Aristides.



OSTRACISM IN  
ANCIENT GREECE

In 483 BCE, a rich vein of silver was found in Laurion (in southern Attica), and the Athenians debated furiously what to do with their new-found wealth. Themistocles persuaded the citizens not to divide the silver equally, but to instead spend it on a shipbuilding program.

The economy and industry of Athens was now focused on developing a navy: shipwrights, labourers, craftsmen, engineers, officer and sailors were now paid full-time by the state—using silver from Laurion. The people were firmly behind Themistocles' boatbuilding plan, and the cautious aristocrat Aristides was ostracised the following year.

By 480 BCE, the Athenians had a navy of about 200 *triremes*, probably more than the combined naval strength of all other Greek *poleis*. It would play a pivotal role in defeating the Persians in the Second Greco–Persian War (480–479 BCE).

## CIMON THE CONSERVATIVE GENERAL AND EPHIALTES THE RADICAL

In the 470s and 460s BCE, Athens was the rising power of the Aegean, having been a key player in defeating the Persians and founding an alliance of Greek city-states, called the *Delian League* (see page 154). Fuelled by tribute payments from its allies, Athens—under the conservative general Cimon—crushed the remnants of the Persian fleet in 467/6 BCE.

At home, Cimon's military glory translated into political influence. With Themistocles ostracised in 472 BCE, the radicals lacked a champion who could compete with Cimon's prestige. Cimon protected the *Areopagus* and the aristocrats from what he saw as the excesses of an increasingly radical democracy. He wanted to bolster those parts of Solon's constitution that had not yet been democratised—especially the conservative *Areopagus*, so that it could limit the power of the *boule* and *ecclesia*.

### 📌 SOURCE 3.32

Cimon is ostracised by democratic vote, 461 BCE.



Athens' favourite general, Cimon, was required abroad, and his absence gave new champions of the *demos*, Ephialtes and Pericles, opportunity to make speeches in the *ecclesia* attacking the conservatives.

Cimon was a great admirer of Sparta, and he led an expedition to help Sparta suppress the *helot* revolt in 464 BCE. The campaign was not a clear success, and Ephialtes seized on the disaster. Cimon was no longer the military hero and was ostracised in 461 BCE. The space was clear for further radical democratic reforms, implemented by Ephialtes and the young Pericles.

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. What are two changes that suggest democracy radicalised in the 480s BCE?
2. What key event had occurred between Athens and Persia at this time?
3. Define ostracism. What was its purpose and who was targeted? What does this suggest about Athenian attitudes at the time?

**EXTENSION**

Write a paragraph on the following figures, outlining their lives and explaining their policies:

- Themistocles
- Cimon
- 'Aristides the Just'
- Ephialtes.

## CLASS AND GENDER IN THE DEMOCRATIC POLIS

**MEDEA:** 'Men say that we live a life free from danger at home while they fight with the spear. How wrong they are! I would rather stand three times with a shield in battle than give birth once.'

Athens was an ancient democracy, but it was not a universal democracy in the modern sense of the term. Entire groups of society were excluded from the democratic process.

### WOMEN

The evidence about how much freedom Athenian women had is unclear and often contradictory. Certainly Athenian women were excluded from public positions, and their primary roles seem to have been confined to the private home and managing the household. Although an Athenian woman was a citizen of the *polis*, the restrictions placed upon her were many.

Yet women were not always hidden. Respectable women had prominent roles in religious festivals and cults. Women depicted in plays from ancient Athens (albeit by male actors) are rarely quiet and submissive. These contradictions suggest that the role of women in Athenian society was a complex one.



HOW RESTRICTED WERE THE WOMEN OF ANCIENT ATHENS?

### A WOMAN'S POSITION IN LAW

A woman's role was that of an *aste* (a woman of the city) with certain civil and religious rights, unlike a man, who was known as a *politis*—a full citizen who could share judicial functions and hold office.<sup>46</sup>

Women were placed under legal restrictions. They:

- could not vote in ostracisms or the *ecclesia*
- could not hold any civic or military positions
- could not enter into legal contracts without the permission of their master or guardian (*kyrios*)
- could not buy property—but they could inherit and receive a dowry.

## MARRIAGE AND MARRIED LIFE

On her wedding day, an Athenian woman was transferred from her father's household (or *oikos*) to her new husband's *oikos*, a transaction in which she had little say. Women were understood as essentially weak and in need of protection, being moved from one household to another by men.<sup>47</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 3.33

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.45.2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

#### PERICLES ON THE VIRTUES OF WOMEN

... if I must say anything on the subject of female excellence to those of you who will now be in widowhood, it will be all comprised in this brief exhortation. Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men whether for good or for bad.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Examine Source 3.33 and respond to the following:

1. What does this passage say about the status of women in ancient Athens?
2. Why might Pericles think it better for a woman not be talked about at all rather than to have good things said about her?

### ⬇ SOURCE 3.34

Women, shown on a Attic red-figure vase from about 430 BCE.

Women spent much time at home. Here, wealthy women would oversee the house-slaves, while the poor women would attend to their own household chores.

Women of all classes learned the skills of spinning, weaving and embroidery, as the making of fine clothes was associated with virtue. Mothers and older

sisters would teach children religious tradition, history and basic literacy and numeracy.<sup>48</sup> Plato considered this education fundamental, as the place where children learned their values was at 'the mother's knee.'<sup>49</sup>



#### MOVEMENT OF WOMEN

Poorer women, ironically, had more liberty than wealthy women. Poor women had no slaves, so they were required to go about town to gather water, shop for groceries and work. This independence was seen as unfortunate, a sign that a woman lacked the slaves to do such chores for her.

## AVENUES OF INFLUENCE: RELIGION AND FESTIVALS

The women of Athens played important roles in religious practice. Women were the centre of funeral processions, both as public mourners and in performing rites for the dead.<sup>50</sup>

The priestesses assumed vital roles in Greek religion. The word of Apollo at Delphi was probably communicated through the wailing trances of the priestess, then interpreted by the priests.

Religious processions provided another space where respectable women could be seen in public. In the Panathenaic procession at the the culmination of the Panathenaic Games, maiden weavers carried a finely woven outer garment (called a *peplos*) to offer to the goddess Athena.



Some religious practices were for women only. The Festival of Thesmophoria, in celebration of the goddess Demeter, lasted for three days and all public activity in the *agora* was suspended for the duration. The rites were a well-kept mystery—and are still unknown to historians. Men were forbidden to join or even witness these sacred rites.

### SOURCE 3.35

A frieze from the Parthenon, possibly depicting maiden weavers bringing the *peplos* for Athena.

### BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. What were the roles for women:
  - in the *oikos*?
  - in religious ceremonies?
2. Why were the experiences of poor and wealthy women so different?
3. How was a woman's role in public life curtailed?
4. Why might religious duties provide freedoms for women?

### ACTIVITY

Men's anxieties about these rites reveals much about attitudes towards women in Athenian society.

In Euripides' tragedy *The Bacchae*, a man who spies on the secret women's business is discovered and almost torn limb from limb, while the young women, the *maenads* ('raving ones'), are in a violent, ecstatic frenzy, infused with the power of their wild god, Dionysus.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.36

Euripides, *The Bacchae* 734–764, in *The Complete Euripides, Volume 4*, trans. Reginald Gibbons and Charles Segal (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Examine Sources 3.33, 3.36 and 3.37 and respond to the following:

1. In Source 3.36, Euripides' description of women in the cult, the Bacchae, are fanciful. What do they reveal about male anxieties regarding women-only cults?
2. Aristophanes, a comic playwright, is critical of depictions of women in tragedies, such as those created by Euripides. How does he blame their depiction on stage for the mistreatment of women at home? Use quotes from Source 3.37 in your response.
3. After reading Sources 3.33, 3.36 and 3.37, why do you think some men in Athens might have seen women's cults as dangerous?

### ➔ SOURCE 3.37

Aristophanes, *Women at Thesmophoria Festival* 390–415 in *Aristophanes: The Complete Plays*, trans. Paul Roche, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

### THE BACCHAE

Messenger: ... We ran from them—to escape being torn  
Apart by the maenads. But with their bare hands,  
not with weapons of iron, then they began  
To attack the grazing herds. You would have seen  
One woman by herself with just her hands  
Pulling in two a big young heifer that  
Had swelling udders and was bellowing,  
And meanwhile others were dismembering  
The full-grown cattle, flaying them to shreds ...  
On towns in Mount Kithairon's foothills they fell  
Like enemies and plundered ...  
The women, hurling thyrsos [wands] with their hands,  
Dealt those people many wounds, and made  
Them turn their backs and run. Women defeated  
The men—and not without some god.

Aristophanes is critical of such depictions. In his comedy, *Women at the Thesmophoria Festival*, he lampoons Euripides as fearful, having been threatened with death by the women at the Thesmophoria festival. To Aristophanes, such a threat of violence against Euripides is merited. One of the women at the festival criticises the portrayal of women in Euripides' tragedies.

### ARISTOPHANES ON THE PORTRAYAL AND TREATMENT OF WOMEN

First Woman: ... you've been besmirched by Euripides, the son  
Of that cabbage-seller, who's subjected you  
To a whole litany of slanders. What mud and mire  
Has he not plunged us in? Wherever there's a theatre,  
Audience, tragic actors, and choruses  
Has he not slammed us with his vilifications,  
Making out we're cock-teasers, procuresses,  
Whiners, traitors, gossips, lost in machinations,  
Essentially sick, and mankind's greatest curse?  
So, of course, men come home from the theatre  
And immediately start casting suspicious eyes at us,  
And looking in cupboards for a hidden lover.  
... And if that were not enough, it is because of this man  
Our rooms are made impregnable with locks and bolts,  
And trained Molossian hounds are reared to keep away  
A lad who's ripe for a bit of fun.

## FOREIGN WOMEN, COURTESANS AND PROSTITUTES

Prostitution was forbidden for Athenian citizens, both male and female, however brothels with foreign women were a regulated business in Athens. These women had very different experiences. Many ordinary prostitutes were slaves, and faced horrendous conditions. However, there also existed a group of free foreign women who became courtesans (or *hetairai*) for the elite. These *hetairai* sometimes gained significant positions of influence, as the example of Aspasia reveals.



## ASPASIA OF MILETUS

Aspasia was a wealthy woman from Miletus. She ran a brothel for *hetairai* that was frequented by the elite men of Athens. These included statesmen such as Pericles. Pericles soon became her long-term partner, and they had a son together.

Plato portrays Aspasia as a wit, a philosopher and a gifted teacher. In Plato's *Menexenus*, Socrates says he was taught the art of public speaking by Aspasia, as was Pericles.

### PLATO ON ASPASIA

Socrates: ... she who is my instructor is by no means weak in the art of rhetoric; on the contrary, she has turned out many fine orators, and amongst them one who surpassed all other Greeks, Pericles ... So it is not surprising that a man who is trained like me should be clever at speaking.

Plato goes on to attribute Pericles' famous funeral oration to his partner and teacher, Aspasia.<sup>51</sup> Plutarch, writing centuries later, was critical of Aspasia. Yet he too acknowledged her intellect, charm and political wisdom.

### PLUTARCH ON ASPASIA

... the extraordinary art or power this woman exercised, which enabled her to captivate the leading statesmen of the day and even provided philosophers with a theme for prolonged and elevated discussions ... In the same fashion Pericles, too, according to some writers, was attracted to Aspasia mainly because of her rare political wisdom. Socrates visited her from time to time with his disciples and some of his close friends brought their wives to listen to her conversation, even though she carried on a trade that was anything but respectable, since it consisted of keeping a house of young courtesans.

An Athenian woman would not be permitted to have such a role in society, yet as an educated foreigner, Aspasia was exempt from many restrictions.



### SOURCE 3.38

Aspasia of Miletus.

### SOURCE 3.39

Plato, *Menexenus* 235e-236a, in Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9 trans by W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925).

### SOURCE 3.40

Plutarch, *Pericles* 24 in *The Rise and fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, (London: Penguin Books, 1960).



ASPASIA OF MILETUS

### SOURCE 3.41

Pericles pleading for Aspasia, after she was accused of corrupting the women of Athens in order to satisfy Pericles' perversions.

## SLAVES

In the busy *agora* of Athens, about half of the people buying, selling and crafting were slaves. There was no visible way to distinguish slaves from anyone else, as democratic Athenians dressed alike regardless of their class. Yet these slaves mingling with the citizens were objects that could be bought, used and sold. Slavery was a fundamental and essential part of the Athenian economy.

Slaves were usually civilians that had been captured in war and then sold at a slave market into a life of unpaid servitude. Estimates of the number of Athenian slaves in the fifth century vary wildly, but most historians estimate that they probably made up between 15 and 40 per cent of the population of Athens, somewhere between 37 000 and 100 000 people.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike slavery in the modern era, some slaves in ancient Greece could earn money, with a fortunate few managing to buy their own freedom from their masters. There were two types of slaves:

- **Private slaves** were often house servants, attending to the needs of their masters. Duties varied dramatically. Depending on the needs and wants of the master, a slave could attend to domestic duties, assist with the master's work, or, if well-educated, could work as a tutor or accountant for his master. It was usually these more educated slaves who won their freedom.
- **State slaves** were unfortunate people who could be seen working on the great architectural projects of Athens or in other tasks that involved hard physical labour. The worst destination for a slave was to be sent to the Laurion silver mines, where most slave-miners died. There were tens of thousands of slave-miners in the Athenian empire at its height.<sup>53</sup>



### ➔ SOURCE 3.42

Detail on a drinking cup by Brygos showing a drunk master vomiting while a slave holds his head.

Although there was a legal distinction between a freeman and a slave, some historians suggest that the distinction might not have been so clear-cut in daily life. Historian Vlassopoulos argues that many private slaves would be doing daily tasks for their master that were identical to freemen, such as shopkeeping or purchasing goods. This gave an opportunity for some slaves to avoid detection and escape.<sup>54</sup>

A conservative oligarch, nicknamed by modern scholars ‘The Old Oligarch’ (his real identity is lost), complained in a pamphlet about the conditions of slaves in Athens.

#### ATHENIAN SLAVES HAVE IT TOO GOOD

Now among the slaves and metics [foreigners] at Athens there is the greatest uncontrolled wantonness; you can't hit them there, and a slave will not stand aside for you. I shall point out why this is their native practice: if it were customary for a slave ... to be struck by one who is free, you would often hit an Athenian citizen by mistake on the assumption that he was a slave. For the people there are no better dressed than the slaves and metics, nor are they any more handsome.

#### SOURCE 3.43

*Pseudo-Xenophon ('The Old Oligarch'), Constitution of the Athenians 1.10, trans. Edgar Marchant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).*

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 3.43 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What is revealed about the usual treatment of both slaves and *metics* in this account?
2. Why does Pseudo-Xenophon need to refrain from striking slaves in Athens?
3. Explain how a historian might use this source to argue that:
  - Athenian clothing was egalitarian, reflecting the values of the city
  - it was usual to treat slaves poorly
  - some slaves lived well.

ACTIVITY

## METICS

To be a foreigner (or *metic*) in Athens was to be in an ambiguous position. Unlike many *poleis*, the Athenian government encouraged foreign merchants because they brought goods to trade and coins to spend.<sup>55</sup>

However, *metics* were not necessarily made welcome by the Athenian public and the rights of a *metic* were limited by law. A *metic* could trade and live in the city, and was required to pay tax. However, they could not participate in politics nor buy property in Attica.

In Euripides' play *Ion*, a young temple attendant in Delphi is invited to live in Athens. His response reveals much about the life of a *metic* in Athens.

#### A CHARACTER OF EURIPIDES ON THE POSITION OF METICS

Ion: ... They say Athenians are Earth's children,  
all native to their place. I'd be twice afflicted,  
the bastard son of a foreign king. Powerless,  
I'd be a cipher. But if I joined political life  
Try to be someone, the weak and the poor would hate me.  
Capable men who, keeping their own counsel,  
avoid political life, would take me  
for a fool who speaks too quickly  
in a city filled with fear.  
... A foreigner, coming to a pure city,  
might call himself a citizen and think  
he belongs. But his tongue's a slave.  
He doesn't have the right to speak his mind.

#### SOURCE 3.44

*Euripides, Ion 588-675, in The Complete Euripides Volume 3, trans. William Di Piero (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).*

## CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

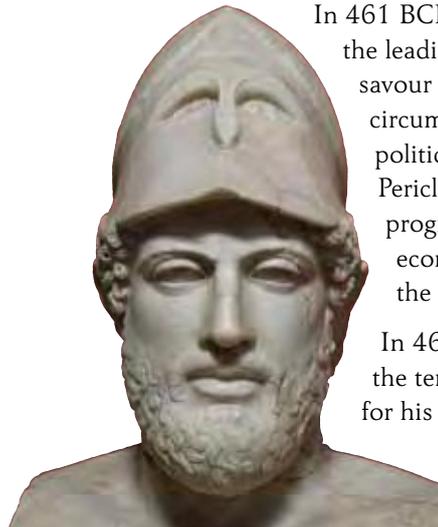
1. What were the different types of slaves in Athens, and how different were their experiences—both daily experiences and over the course of their lives?
2. What were *metics*, and why were they in Athens?
3. What were the legal limitations imposed on *metics* by the *polis*?

## EXTENSION

- Consider the role of women, *metics* and slaves in democratic Athens. Write a paragraph on each, explaining how their roles differed and in what ways their roles challenge our modern notions of a democratic society.
- Consider Aspasia. How do her dual roles of woman and *metic* allow her a level of freedom and political power that other women in Athens do not have?

## PERICLES AND THE 'GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE'

PLUTARCH: 'He made the city, great as it was when he took it, the greatest and richest of all cities, and grew to be superior in power to kings and tyrants.'<sup>56</sup>



## SOURCE 3.45

Pericles.

In 461 BCE, Cimon was ostracised. However, the leading radical Ephialtes had little time to savour his triumph—he was murdered in hazy circumstances, in what many suspected to be a political assassination. However, his protégé, Pericles, continued Ephialtes' democratic program—and ushered in an era of Athenian economic, military and cultural dominance in the Greek world.

In 461/60 BCE, Pericles was elected as one of the ten generals (or *strategoi*). He was renowned for his oratory skills and his incorruptibility, making him popular with the people despite his aristocratic background. As portrayed by ancient historian Thucydides and the biographer

Plutarch, Pericles was not a populist, as he often persuaded people to agree with his point of view rather than following popular opinion.

## SOURCE 3.46

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.65, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

## THUCYDIDES ON PERICLES' RULE

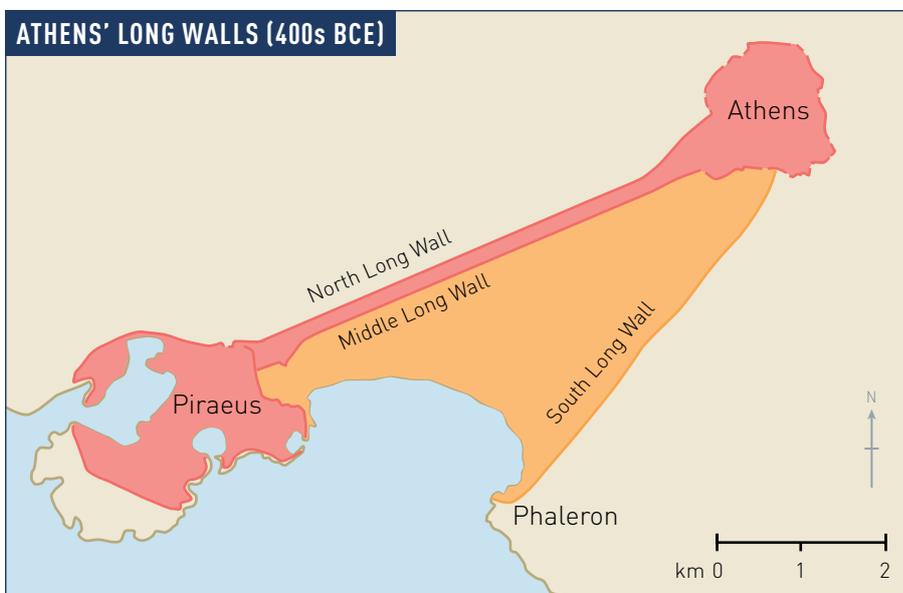
Pericles indeed, by his rank, ability, and known integrity, was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude—in short, to lead them instead of being led by them; for as he never sought power by improper means, he was never compelled to flatter them, but, on the contrary, enjoyed so high an estimation that he could afford to anger them by contradiction. Whenever he saw them unseasonably and insolently elated, he would with a word reduce them to alarm; on the other hand, if they fell victim to a panic, he could at once restore them to confidence. In short, what was nominally a democracy was becoming in his hands government by the first citizen.

As a *strategos*, Pericles had immediate military concerns—Athens and her allies (the Delian League) were plunging into war with the Spartan-dominated *Peloponnesian League*. It soon became clear that Athens' strength lay in fighting at sea with its citizens at the oars, rather than fighting on land against Sparta's fearsome *hoplites*.



ATHENIAN LEADERS:  
RESEARCH

Pericles decided to play to Athens' strengths as a naval power. Athens was located on a peninsula, rather than an island, which left it vulnerable to attack by land forces. To counter this, Pericles finished building a series of defensive walls (called the *Long Walls*) between Athens and its ports, Piraeus and Phaleron—a project originally begun by Cimon. The Long Walls effectively cut off Athens and Piraeus from the Attic mainland, like an island. This massive building project would make Athens a true maritime power, supplied and protected by its navy. If under attack by land forces, Athens would now be able to hold out by receiving supplies by ship.



### SOURCE 3.47

ATHENS' SEAWARD  
GAZE: THE  
LONG WALLS

This seaward focus reflected Athens' military and economic policy under Pericles, as both policies were entwined. Athens' grain supplies came mainly from the Black Sea coast (especially the area of modern-day Ukraine), and were traded for ceramics and olive oil. To ensure this trade, Athens needed to maintain its military domination of the Aegean Sea through its leadership of the anti-Persian Delian League. As long as Athens kept its naval supremacy, its allies were obliged to continue paying financial tributes. The *polis* of Athens grew rich very quickly.

Athens was now a booming military and economic power, filled with optimism. The charred remains of the Acropolis had been left untouched since the Persian invasion, but were now about to be replaced by grand marble buildings. These buildings became symbolic of Athenian power and ideals.



### SOURCE 3.48

Pericles orating with  
the Parthenon in the  
background.

## PERICLES' BUILDING PROGRAM

PLUTARCH: 'So then the works arose, no less towering in their grandeur than inimitable in the grace of their outlines ...'<sup>57</sup>

In the 440s and 430s BCE, with Athens swimming in revenue, the Acropolis would have seemed to be permanently under construction. Labourers, both slaves and *thetes*, were hauling great slabs of marble to the Acropolis in the centre of town. Some of the finest minds of the eastern Mediterranean were brought in to design and implement Pericles' vision for transforming the Acropolis. Architects, mathematicians, engineers, sculptors and artists would have been frantically working away amid the dust of construction. Unlike the old acropolis, whose massive buildings had reflected the might of the Peisistratid dynasty, Athens' new buildings were to reflect the city's wealth *and* its democratic values.



### THE PARTHENON (447–438 BCE)

The new Parthenon was to be a temple to the goddess Pallas Athena, as well as a symbol of harmony and elegance. The temple was a mix of the old and new—simple, powerful Doric architecture at its core, blended with some Ionic elements.<sup>58</sup>

The building itself has no straight lines, its columns and floor are slightly curved to create a greater sense of straightness when looked at from the ground. Its columns also bulge as if compressed by the weight they are holding up. The building has a 9:4 ratio, governing its plan and elevation throughout.

The building is richly decorated with sculptures, including in the metopes, in the pediments and a frieze on top of the walls inside the columns.

**The Parthenon frieze:** This continuous relief sculpture depicts ordinary Athenians in a Panathenaic procession around the building. Women and men, elders, and cavalry—bringing precious goods and animals for sacrifice—all move towards the Olympian gods, who are seated. This reaches its pinnacle in the 'peplos' scene, in which, like in the Panathenaea festival, Athena is offered a beautiful garment by mortals.

**The metopes:** These relief sculptures depict gods defeating giants, and people in combat with centaurs, men fighting, Amazons and depictions of the Trojan War.

**The pediment:** The two triangular spaces on the east and west sides to the temple are filled with sculptures depicting Athena's birth on one side and her contest with Poseidon on the other (in which she defeated him and became patron of Athens).<sup>59</sup>

The inner sanctum held a giant statue of Athena made of ivory and gold, carrying a two-metre statue of the goddess Nike (Victory) in her hand. The other room of the inner sanctum housed the treasury of the Athenian-led Delian League. The treasury had been moved in 454 BCE from the sacred island of Delos to the

Acropolis, under Pericles' instruction. The treasury contained a vast sum, more than 6000 talents in the 430s BCE, with a further 600 talents coming in each year as financial tribute from their allies, as well as spoils kept from victories over the Persians.<sup>60</sup>

Thucydides, comparing the Acropolis favourably with Sparta, speculated that if someone in the future were to see the ruins of Athens, they would 'make her power to have been twice as great as it is'.<sup>61</sup>

#### ↑ SOURCE 3.49

The Parthenon.



THE PARTHENON

#### ↓ SOURCE 3.50

The 'peplos scene' on the eastern frieze of the Parthenon, showing mortals offering gifts to Athena.



## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Why was the Acropolis being renovated? How were the new buildings to be different to the old ones?
2. What architectural features of the Parthenon suggest order and harmony? Why do you think this was significant?
3. Consider the stories depicted on the frieze, metopes and pediments of the Parthenon. Why do you think each was chosen? What does each suggest about the ways in which Athenians saw themselves?
4. Why do you think the statue of Athena in the Parthenon held Nike in her hand? What is the political message behind this?
5. The treasury for the Delian League was housed in the Parthenon from 454 BCE. What does this suggest about Athens' role in the league?

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH

In the *ecclesia*, an Athenian citizen would have heard things said that would be unthinkable under a tyranny or under the rule of an elite (oligarchy). Any citizen could stand up and denounce Cimon, Pericles or any other general, he could question their integrity, or their motives, even imply that they were traitors.

This freedom of speech, while certainly not absolute, had an impact on Athens that went well beyond the *ecclesia*, the *boule* and the *dicasteria*. The democratic culture was a social as well as a political phenomenon. Public speakers in the *agora* and the theatre also contributed to a public space full of opinions previously kept private.<sup>62</sup>

## THEATRE

Drama was a formal affair in the era of the Peisistratid dynasty. It had been developed from religious poems that were presented by a single performer. Later, a chorus was included, and, by the fifth century, dramas were being performed with several characters in addition to the chorus. These plays were steeped in tradition, reliving the stories of gods and ancient heroes.

But as the democracy developed, so did the style and content of theatre. Being a spectator at the Theatre of Dionysus involved participation. It held 17 000 spectators, all of them cheering and booing as part of the experience. If a production was offensive or the acting particularly bad, citizens would hurl abuse at those on stage. The Athenian audience's response could be seen as the measure of the *demos'* attitude more broadly. Phrynichus upset the young democracy in about 490 BCE with his tragedy, *The Capture of Miletus*, which told how Athens had abandoned its ally to the Persians. It explored the theme of betrayal, bringing audiences to tears.<sup>63</sup> In 472 BCE, Aeschylus hit a more popular note with his play *The Persians*, which contemplated the dangers of *hubris* (excessive pride or overconfidence) and the failure of the Persian invasion of Greece.

Although some explored contemporary events, most tragedies were still set in the semi-mythological past. However, their characters were often used to explore contemporary issues and concerns, and even to attack public figures.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ATHENIAN



## SOURCE 3.51

Athenian theatre mask of 'leading slave' from the Hellenistic Period ca. 250 BCE. Masks were used in the theatre to amplify voice and expression for the large audiences.

In Sophocles' *Antigone*, King Creon refuses to give his treacherous nephew a traditional burial. When his niece, Antigone, defies him and buries her brother in keeping with traditional laws, she is condemned to death by Creon for violating his orders. To some of Sophocles' audience, this tragedy was about the tyranny of those in power, and the nobility of those who resist tyrants. For others, it may have been about the need to conserve traditional laws. These were contemporary concerns expressed through ancient legends performed on stage.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.52

*Sophocles, Antigone 746–751, 788–796 in Sophocles: The Three Theban Plays, trans. Robert Fagles, (London: Penguin Books, 1982).*

#### SOPHOCLES' *ANTIGONE* (442/1 BCE)

Creon: But whoever steps out of line, violates the laws or presumes to hand out orders to his superiors, he'll win no praise from me. But the man the city places in authority, his orders must be obeyed, large and small, right and wrong.

...  
Haemon: The man in the street, you know, dreads your glance he'd never say anything displeasing to your face.  
... Now don't, please, be quite so single-minded, self-involved, or assume that the world is wrong and you are right. whoever thinks that he alone possess intelligence, the gift of eloquence, he and no-one else, and character too ... such men, I tell you, spread them open—you will find them empty. it's no disgrace for a man, even a wise man, to learn many things and not be too rigid.



### 📍 SOURCE 3.54

Antigone disregards King Creon's order and buries her brother, sprinkling dust over his body in a symbolic burial. Painting by Victor Robertson.

The *hubris* of King Creon is shown as he insists on enforcing his own laws and ignoring the advice of others. As a tragic result, his niece Antigone commits suicide. To the democratic Athenian audience, the message of this drama was clear: the rule of a tyrant leads to destruction. Sophocles' *Antigone* may be read as a criticism of leaders who crave too much power.

### ➔ SOURCE 3.53

*Simon Goldhill, 'Greek Drama and Political Theory' in The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought, ed. Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 83.*

#### HISTORIAN GOLDHILL ON CREON

[Creon acts with] the assertiveness of a (stage) tyrant, figure dependent solely on his own judgement, who cannot be bound, as all democratic authority is, by the will of the people; who regards the city as his own.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 3.52 and 3.53 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How does Creon explain the role of king and subject? Provide evidence.
2. What is Haemon's criticism of Creon? How does this reflect democratic values?
3. Explain how the political system embodied by Creon contrasts with that of democratic Athens.

## COMEDY AS A SOCIAL CRITICISM

The public discourse of theatre was also used to satirise public figures, institutions—and even the culture of persuasive public speaking (*sophistry*) and argument.<sup>64</sup> ‘The Old Oligarch’, a member of the elite who was hostile to Athenian democracy, explained the appeal of such theatre.

### PSEUDO-XENOPHON ON THE POPULARITY OF COMEDIES

They do not permit the [ordinary] people to be ill spoken of in comedy, so that they may not have a bad reputation; but if anyone wants to attack private persons, they bid him do so, knowing perfectly well that the person so treated in comedy does not, for the most part, come from the populace and mass of people but is a person of either wealth, high birth, or influence.

### SOURCE 3.55

*Pseudo-Xenophon* (‘The Old Oligarch’), *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.18, trans. Edgar Marchant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 3.55 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. According to ‘The Old Oligarch’, who is targeted in comedies? Why?
2. How can comedy be understood as part of Athens’ democratic culture?

ACTIVITY

Many historians look closely at the works of Aristophanes to find social values in his comedies. His attacks on sophistry, for example, are sometimes understood as an attack on Pericles, who was very good at persuading crowds.<sup>65</sup> With Aristophanes, the power of sophistry can be used to make a wrong seem right. In his comedy *The Clouds*, sophistry is personified in two characters, as ‘Mr Good Reason’ argues with ‘Mr Bad Reason.’

### ARISTOPHANES’ *THE CLOUDS* (423 BCE)

Mr Good Reason: You’ll flatten me? Who d’you think yourself to be?  
 Mr Bad Reason: Reason.  
 Mr Good Reason: Bad reason.  
 Mr Bad Reason: Even so, I’ll demolish you, better than me though you think you are.  
 Mr Good Reason: By a trick, no doubt.  
 Mr Bad Reason: By original thought.  
 Mr Good Reason: Quite in fashion, I see: thanks to those nitwits here.  
 Mr Bad Reason: Not nitwits at all. Damned intelligent folk.  
 Mr Good Reason: Even so, I’ll finish you off in a stroke.  
 Mr Bad Reason: Really? Pray how?  
 Mr Good Reason: The plea of justice shall be my stake.  
 Mr Bad Reason: And I’ll refute you and turn you on your head.  
 Don’t you know that Justice is dead?

### SOURCE 3.56

*Aristophanes, The Clouds 890-902* in *Aristophanes: The Complete Plays*, trans. Paul Roche (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).



REBUILDING  
ANCIENT ATHENS

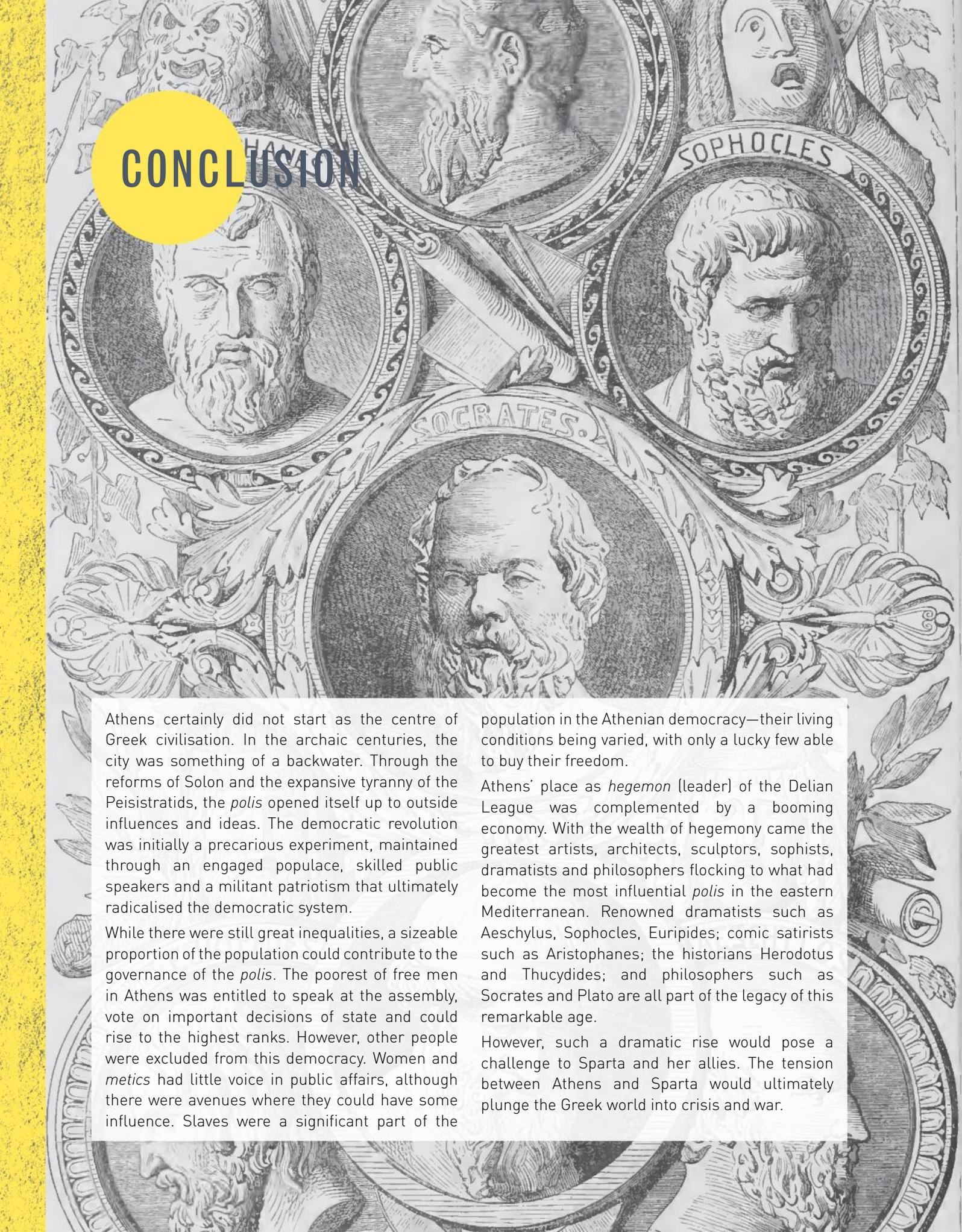
Aristophanes is publicly mocking sophists and elite public speakers who can sway a crowd to a worse course of action. The Athenians evidently laughed publicly at elements of their democracy.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 3.56 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What does Mr Good Reason plan to use to win the argument?
2. Mr Bad Reason symbolises sophists. In what way is Aristophanes critical of them?
3. Why might Aristophanes be suggesting that Sophists are a threat to ‘justice’?

ACTIVITY



## CONCLUSION

Athens certainly did not start as the centre of Greek civilisation. In the archaic centuries, the city was something of a backwater. Through the reforms of Solon and the expansive tyranny of the Peisistratids, the *polis* opened itself up to outside influences and ideas. The democratic revolution was initially a precarious experiment, maintained through an engaged populace, skilled public speakers and a militant patriotism that ultimately radicalised the democratic system.

While there were still great inequalities, a sizeable proportion of the population could contribute to the governance of the *polis*. The poorest of free men in Athens was entitled to speak at the assembly, vote on important decisions of state and could rise to the highest ranks. However, other people were excluded from this democracy. Women and *metics* had little voice in public affairs, although there were avenues where they could have some influence. Slaves were a significant part of the

population in the Athenian democracy—their living conditions being varied, with only a lucky few able to buy their freedom.

Athens' place as *hegemon* (leader) of the Delian League was complemented by a booming economy. With the wealth of hegemony came the greatest artists, architects, sculptors, sophists, dramatists and philosophers flocking to what had become the most influential *polis* in the eastern Mediterranean. Renowned dramatists such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides; comic satirists such as Aristophanes; the historians Herodotus and Thucydides; and philosophers such as Socrates and Plato are all part of the legacy of this remarkable age.

However, such a dramatic rise would pose a challenge to Sparta and her allies. The tension between Athens and Sparta would ultimately plunge the Greek world into crisis and war.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

Produce a timeline of democracy, either in your workbook or by using an appropriate app. It should include in different colours:

- key players, such as Peisistratus and Pericles
- significant changes in the constitution
- significant external events, such as formation of the Delian League
- economic significance of the events listed above
- several significant cultural events, including theatre, speeches and architecture.



ATHENS: KEY TERMS



KEY EVENTS:  
EVALUATING  
SIGNIFICANCE

## EXAM PREPARATION

1. To what extent can the Athenian democracy be traced back to the reforms of Draco and Solon?
2. Outline the cultural and economic developments in Athens under the tyranny of Peisistratus and his sons.
3. Explain how Cleisthenes' reforms prevented the establishment of another tyranny.
4. Explain how democracy became radicalised in the decades following Cleisthenes' reforms.

## ESSAY

Write an essay of 400–600 words on one of the following topics. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- Discuss the significance of Cleisthenes' reforms in changing Athenian society.
- 'Women had little voice under Athenian democracy.' Discuss.
- Democracy and freedom of expression provided the fertile ground for the cultural explosion of the fifth century BCE. To what extent can this assertion be justified?

## EXTENSION

Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution* is one of the most important literary sources we have for tracing the changes in the Athenian constitution from oligarchy to tyranny to an increasingly radical democracy. From your library or online, access a copy of Aristotle's *Athenian Constitution*. Read the chapters from Solon to Pericles (Chapters 5–27).

1. Identify the key changes in the constitution in the times of Solon, Cleisthenes and Pericles.
2. How does Aristotle explain the cause and effect of changes in these three periods? Provide quotes as evidence.
3. Is Aristotle supportive of these changes? Provide quotes as evidence to prove your case.

## TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 3

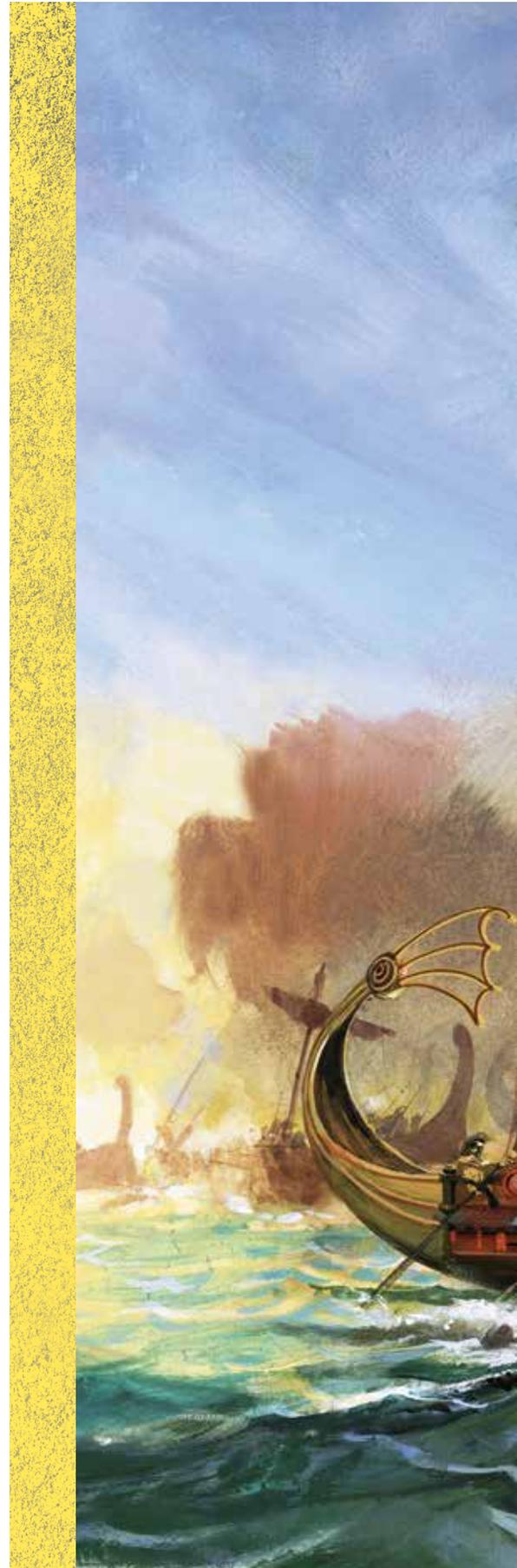
CHAPTER

# 4

## THE GRECO–PERSIAN WARS

‘No one could be so foolish as to prefer war to peace: in peace sons bury their fathers; in war fathers bury their sons. Surely this all happened by divine will’.

KING CROESUS OF LYDIA





Battle of Salamis by Andrew Howat, 20th century.

# OVERVIEW



## IONIANS

Ionians developed many of the key philosophical and artistic movements we associate with classical Greece. They were the first Greeks to come into conflict with the Persians.

### KEY EVENTS

#### c. 700 BCE

Hoplite warfare developed over several generations

#### 700–547 BCE

Ionian culture flourishes around Miletus. In 560 BCE it comes under Lydian control

#### 546 BCE

Lydia conquered by Persia  
Ionian cities now pay tribute to the Persian *satrap* in Sardis

#### 539 BCE

Persia conquers Babylon and becomes the world's largest empire

#### 525 BCE

Persia conquers Egypt

#### 512–511 BCE

Persians conquer Thrace. The Persian Empire now spans three continents

#### 499–494 BCE

Ionian revolt

#### 499 BCE

First Greco-Persian War begins

#### 498 BCE

Sardis besieged

Battle of Ephesus. Greeks defeated by Persians



#### 490 BCE

Battle of Marathon. Shock Athenian victory ends First Greco-Persian War

#### 486 BCE

Egyptian revolt against Persia. Xerxes assumes the Persian throne

#### 480 BCE

Xerxes invades Greece; Second Greco-Persian War begins

#### August 480 BCE

Battles of Artemisium and Thermopylae. Spartan-led force defeated. Persian fleet devastated by storms

#### September 480 BCE

Battle of Salamis. Greek naval victory

#### 479 BCE

Battles of Plataea and Mycale. Persians defeated; Spartan-led coalition expels Persian forces from Greece

#### 478 BCE

Delian League established as defensive alliance to deter further Persian attacks. Sparta opts out. Athens dominates the league

#### c. 466 BCE

Battle of Eurymedon. Delian League fleet destroys Persian fleet off southern Asia Minor.

#### c. 449 BCE

The Peace of Callias. Athens and Persia establish spheres of influence



**KEY POINTS**

- The *hoplite* revolution allowed Greeks to challenge larger forces, providing they fought on suitably narrow ground.
- The Persian Empire was the most sophisticated and largest empire in the world. The Greco-Persian wars, understood by the Greeks to be epic in scale, were likely seen by Persia as campaigning at the edge of their much larger world.
- The Greco-Persian wars halted the Persian Empire’s expansion and established Athens as a pre-eminent Greek *polis*. The Greek victory became legendary, shaping Greek identity as ‘free’ men in opposition to Persian ‘slavery’.
- Naval power was in ascendency. A maritime power was increasingly understood by the Greeks as a means to control both geopolitical and commercial affairs.



**PERSIANS**

Persia was a superpower of the ancient world. Persians adopted local knowledge, notably engineering (from Media) and naval mastery (from Phoenicia), rather than forcing conquered peoples to be like them.



**ATHENIANS**

Along with Sparta, Athens was one of the leading Greek powers involved in the defeat of Persia. The economic, political and military expansion that followed the Persian defeat resulted in the ‘Golden Age’ of classical Greece.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

	IONIA	PERSIA	ATHENS	SPARTA
BACKGROUND	Greek-speaking peoples in Asia Minor under Lydian then Persian rule	A huge empire Conquered the area from India to Ionia	A middle power before democracy New democracy aids Ionia in failed revolt	Hegemon in Peloponnese Fiercely independent
AUTONOMIA AND IMPERIALISM	<i>Autonomia</i> (autonomy) of Greek <i>poleis</i> a core value	Empire as natural and orderly Submission to Persian king required	<i>Autonomia</i> equated with democracy and Greek values Athens’ Delian League becomes an empire	Hegemon but not an empire <i>Autonomia</i> and isolation as interrelated values?
TRADE AND EXCHANGE	Ionian trade with East: an exchange of goods and ideas Adopts coinage from Lydia Develops Ionian philosophy, fashion and architecture	A multicultural empire Extensive road network promotes trade and exchange of information	Athens develops extensive maritime trade network Athenian empire: trade and tribute depend on naval supremacy	Limited trade Resistant to external influences, including coinage
IMPACT OF WAR	Failed revolution against Persia Conscripts in Persian navy Later, members of Delian League, paying financial tributes to Athens	Expanded rapidly using cavalry and archers Weight of numbers used in most Greek campaigns Conquest of Greece unsuccessful. Empire stops expanding	Marathon identity: freedom won through war Navy central to Athenian strategy Athens’ power expands and challenges Spartan hegemony	Hegemony challenged by Athenians Strength from professional, standing <i>hoplite</i> army Retreat into Peloponnese

# FROM HEROES TO HOPLITES

TYRTAEUS: 'Do not fear the enemy's numbers, or flinch, but every man must take his shield towards the front—most fighting.'<sup>1</sup>



The nature of warfare changed significantly from the time of Homeric legends to that of classical Greece. The movement away from more ritualised warfare of elites into more organised warfare on a mass scale was both the cause and product of dramatic changes in Greek society and culture.

Some of these social and cultural changes are outlined below.

## ↑ SOURCE 4.01

*The Greek Victory of Salamis*  
by William Kaulbach,  
nineteenth century.



## THE GREEK TRIREME

- **Wealthy landowners:** In the eighth to sixth centuries BCE, a larger class of wealthy landowners became significant because they could afford to buy armour. Called *hoplites*, these heavily armoured Greek soldiers would fight in organised formations that required a different approach towards combat.
- **Warships:** Sea-faring *poleis* such as Athens built navies of warships called *triremes*, with oars manned by ordinary citizens. The rise of this 'sailor rabble' was a key military force in the fifth century BCE and further democratised warfare.
- **Trade:** Increased trade with the east—Lydia, Phoenicia and Persia—helped to drive technological development and increase prosperity.
- **Foreign interference:** The *poleis* of Ionia came under Lydian rule, then under Persian rule. The Ionians resisted foreign political interference and started a rebellion that drew Athens and Sparta into war against Persia. These conflicts are known to historians as the Greco–Persian wars.
- **The Persian Empire:** Many Greek *poleis* were united by the threat of the Persian Empire. Victory over the Persians helped to form a new and distinct Greek identity.

War shaped and was shaped by the changing nature of society in ancient Greece. In the early legends of Homer's *Iliad*, war is the concern of a small aristocratic warrior-elite, whose personal disputes were supposed to have triggered the Trojan War.

Because of economic and political upheaval, this style of warfare was about to change.

## UNDERSTANDING THE OLD WAYS: RITUALISED HEROIC WARFARE

War was at the heart of male Greek identity. A man's character was believed to be shown on the battlefield, where skill, cowardice or bravery were on display.<sup>2</sup> Originally, the Greek soldier aspired to be like the heroes of Homer who, as wealthy aristocrats, rode out to the battlefield on chariots before taunting and singling each other out for one-on-one combat. These horsemen (*hippeis*) were from elite families within each city.

In *The Iliad*, young Paris attempts to live up to such an ideal.

### ARISTOCRATIC HEROES: PARIS CALLS OUT MENELAUS

Paris stepped out in front of the Trojan army,  
a leopard skin on his shoulders and a curved bow  
and a sword; and shaking two bronze-tipped spears, he challenged  
the best and the bravest of the Achaeans [Greeks] to come  
out from the crowd and face him in single combat.  
Lord Menelaus caught sight of him as he strutted,  
and as a hungry lion is filled with joy [so was Menelaus]  
... And he leapt to the ground from his chariot, in full armour.



### SOURCE 4.02

Homer, *The Iliad* 3.14–26, trans.  
Stephen Mitchell (London:  
Orion Publishing, 2011).

### SOURCE 4.03

An Attic red-figure vase  
from about 450 BCE with  
a scene from *The Iliad*,  
depicting Paris fleeing  
from Menelaus.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 4.02 and 4.03 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Describe how the aristocratic warrior, Paris, is dressed and armed in Source 4.02.
2. How does Homer describe the behaviour of the two aristocrats? What does this suggest about their roles in both armies?
3. Next to the warriors stand the goddesses Aphrodite and Artemis. What does this suggest regarding the significance of this battle between Paris and Menelaus?
4. How might the outcome of this fight affect the morale of the two armies?

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Describe the equipment and resources needed by the aristocratic warriors.
2. Outline the way these warriors approached battle.
3. Explain how the ritualised forms of combat might affect the outcome of a battle.

Homer's *Iliad* reveals the ideal of early Greek warfare: single combat between heroes of the warrior class. Although the ordinary soldiers were important in battle, it was the aristocrats who had access to scarce weapons such as swords and javelins, which were passed on through ceremonial gift-giving between lords, forming ties between the great families.<sup>3</sup>

The fighting between these aristocrats was ritualised: the two dismounted and exchanged insults before swords were drawn. The combat was quick and decisive—the victor leaving the corpse of the loser for his attendants to gather. The Homeric epics suggest that such skirmishes could decide the outcome of the war, although this might reflect the ideals of Homer's audience, rather than reality.<sup>4</sup>

## THE HOPLITE REVOLUTION

In the Archaic Period (800–500 BCE), a new style of fighting emerged—the *hoplite* phalanx, in which heavily armoured foot-soldiers would fight in synchronised units. *Hoplite* combat emphasised discipline and group cohesion rather than individual heroics. How and when this shift occurred is debated, but it seems that economic and political developments away from the battlefield may well have driven this change.

## CAUSES FOR CHANGE

### TRADE

In the eighth century BCE, trade played a significant part in enabling the new style of warfare. Ships from newly formed colonies as far away as Spain and the Black Sea returned to their mother cities packed with goods that had been rare in previous generations. Phoenician merchants would bring goods from even further away, such as tin from Britain, and dyes and spices from Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> All of this trade was lubricated by the new Lydian invention: coins.

Although most tenant farmers could only dream of handling a silver coin, trade gave the expanding class of landowners (or *zeugitae*) enough coin to purchase expensive bronze armour.<sup>6</sup> Suddenly, the armour of aristocratic heroes was available to a larger class of citizens. These larger groups would develop methods of fighting that would suit larger groups—the *hoplite* phalanx.



### SOURCE 4.04

A bronze Corinthian helmet, seventh century BCE. The *hoplite* wearing this helmet would have had difficulty fighting alone, as he would have been unable to hear and barely able to see. Keeping in formation was vital for success.

### POLITICAL UPHEAVAL

The political upheavals of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE led to the rise of popular tyrants and coincided with the decline of aristocratic hero worship. In the seventh century BCE, the warrior graves that boasted of the heroic deeds of the aristocrats disappeared almost entirely.<sup>7</sup> Instead, arms and armour are found more broadly distributed, being dedicated to the gods at local shrines, rather than in the graves of individuals. In an age where the common people (*demos*) were increasingly wresting power away from the aristocratic elite, the style of fighting increasingly depended on *zeugitae* who would work together in combat.

## HOPLITE COMBAT

*Hoplite* fighting involved rows of heavily armoured foot-soldiers linking shields to create a phalanx, their spears held forward in a thrusting position. The first recorded evidence of *hoplite* combat is in a battle between Eretria and Chalcis in Euboea, around 700 BCE. The contemporary poet Archilochus speaks of the 'woeful work of the sword',<sup>8</sup> as the battle was won by infantrymen wearing heavy armour.<sup>9</sup> By the mid-seventh century BCE, this new style of fighting was being exported—Egyptians and Babylonians were hiring Greek *hoplites* to defeat their enemies.<sup>10</sup>

### ALL FOR ONE: THE HOPLITE PHALANX IN BATTLE

A *hoplite* was heavily armoured, wearing:

- a bronze helmet
- a heavy bronze 'bell' cuirass for the chest, back and torso
- a semicircular belly-guard
- bronze shin protectors (greaves) for the legs
- an extremely large (1-metre wide) shield.

The heavy armour could only be donned with assistance.<sup>11</sup> The shield, called a *hoplon* or *aspis*, was fundamental to the new military formation.<sup>12</sup>

The *hoplite* army stood close to each other in a tight formation called a phalanx. Each soldier overlapped his shield with the shield of the man next to him, so the impact of any blow was shared and dispersed.<sup>13</sup>

In such a formation, the *hoplites* would slowly march against the enemy, forcing them into each other or out of the battlefield.

The shield-wall could be raised to create effective cover from arrows and other projectiles. Rather than being thrown, the spears were used for thrusting, with several lines of spears reaching out in front of the row of shields. The ranks behind pushed steadily forward, grinding the enemy down.



#### 📍 SOURCE 4.05

*Hoplite* soldiers in full armour.



#### THE HOPLITE PHALANX

#### 📍 SOURCE 4.06

Victor Hanson, *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (London: Cassell Publishing, 1999), 51.

#### PHALANX IN COMBAT

There were few feints, reserves, encircling manoeuvres, or sophisticated tactics of any kind before the latter fifth century—just the frightful knowledge that a man must plough through the spears across the plain.

### HOPLITE VALUES

*Hoplite* warfare was slow and steady, requiring a degree of synchronisation never seen before on a battlefield. It required discipline—with no room for heroism or cowardice.<sup>14</sup> A group of citizens bound together with ideals of *isonomia* (equality before the law) were ideal for this style of warfare. After all, each man's spear arm was dependent on the shield of the man to his right, so no man was more significant than any other.

#### SPARTAN POET TYRTAEUS DESCRIBING AN EARLY PHALANX

Do not fear the enemy's numbers, or flinch, but every man must take his shield towards the front-most fighting ... setting foot to foot, shield to shield, crest to crest, helm to helm, and chest to chest, he must fight his man with sword or spear in hand.

#### 📍 SOURCE 4.07

Tyrtaeus, *Fragments 11.1–38* in Louis Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).

## PICK YOUR BATTLES

Although battles were often fought on plains, the *hoplite* phalanx was better suited to fighting in narrow quarters with its flanks protected by cliffs, marshland or sea. To be surrounded by a swifter enemy could prove fatal. When the conditions were right and the battleground well chosen, the phalanx was effective against much larger forces. However, our evidence for the efficiency of phalanx battle comes from ancient sources that tended to idealise strategy. Modern historians Goldsworthy and Rawlings argue that phalanxes may have 'quickly denigrated from ... rectangular formations into bloody, ragged, amorphous mobs'.<sup>15</sup>

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Describe a phalanx.
2. Why was the location of the battle important for an effective *hoplite* phalanx?
3. How would a phalanx be effective against:
  - archers and sling-throwers?
  - horse-drawn chariots and cavalry?
  - less organised foot-soldiers on the battlefield?

#### BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. What personal qualities were important in the *hoplites* that made up the phalanx?
2. How were these qualities different to those of the aristocratic warriors depicted in Sources 4.02 and 4.03?
3. How might phalanx warfare have encouraged a sense of equality before the law (*isonomia*) among the soldiers?
4. Could phalanx warfare have had an impact on the political thinking of Greek *poleis*? Explain your answer.

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



#### THE HOPLITE REVOLUTION

The hoplite phalanx revolutionised ancient Greek warfare, proving that it could overcome much larger forces. Armies would now require training and discipline, with individual acts of heroism becoming a liability.

It also affected the social and political structures of Greek city-states. Many historians argue that citizen-soldiers returned from the battlefield as equals—as defenders of the *polis*. They then demanded an equal say in the *polis* they defended. This is what is *sometimes* called 'the hoplite revolution'.

#### ← SOURCE 4.08

This vase from about 650 BCE is the oldest known visual representation of a *hoplite* phalanx.

# PERSIA: THE WORLD'S FIRST SUPERPOWER

HERODOTUS: '[The Persians believe that] a man's worth is demonstrated first of all by his valor in battle, but next to that, by fathering many sons ... They believe that there is strength in numbers.'

## SOURCE 4.09

The Persian Empire stretched from India to Africa to Europe, a 'multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, world-spanning state'.<sup>16</sup>

## THE PERSIAN EMPIRE, 500 BCE



## ORIGINS

In the space of two decades, the Persians had built the largest empire the world had yet seen. Led by Cyrus the Great, the Persians overthrew the Medes in 550 BCE and established the Achaemenid dynasty. Cyrus conquered Lydia in 546 BCE, and then turned his attention southwards and conquered Babylonia in 539 BCE.



ANCIENT PERSIA  
SUMMARISED

## POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The Persians promoted their rule as just and divinely sanctioned by the gods. The Persian king assumed the title of 'King of Kings', providing peace and stability to those he ruled over. The Persians were tolerant of local cultural and religious differences in the regions they had conquered, but still insisted on the absolute power of Cyrus—the 'King of the four corners of the earth'.<sup>17</sup>

The Persian Empire consisted of provinces (or *satrapies*). Cyrus II delegated power to obedient governors (*satraps*) to rule over each *satrapy*. Each *satrapy* had to pay taxes and provide soldiers in exchange for the empire's protection and access to the Persian trade network. The *satrap* would appoint leaders from the local population to carry out his orders in each city. In the Greek cities, this would be a local tyrant who, although Greek, was essentially following orders given by the Persian *satrap*.

## THE ROYAL PERSIAN ROAD

The Persian Empire was criss-crossed by a network of roads spanning all the way from Sardis in the west to India in the east. Messages were carried by a relay system, with fresh horsemen and horses waiting at designated posts. A message from Ionia could reach Persia in as little as two weeks. This road network was also used for trade, civil supplies and military movements.

### ➔ SOURCE 4.10

*Herodotus, The Histories*  
8.98 in Robert Strassler (ed),  
The Landmark Herodotus  
(London: Quercus, 2008).

#### HERODOTUS ON THE PERSIAN RELAY SYSTEM

There is nothing that travels faster, and yet is mortal, than these couriers; the Persians invented this system, which works as follows. It is said that there are as many horses and men posted at intervals as there are days required for the entire journey, so that one horse and one man are assigned to each day. And neither snow nor rain nor heat nor dark of night keeps them from completing their appointed course as swiftly as possible.

The Jewish scriptures provide further insight into this system in the Book of Esther (from about 450 BCE).

### ➔ SOURCE 4.11

*Book of Esther 3:13–15, Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version, Anglicized Version*  
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

#### THE BOOK OF ESTHER

Letters were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces ... a copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province by proclamation, calling on all peoples to be ready for that day. The couriers went quickly by order of the king and the decree was issued in the citadel of Susa.

## THE PERSIAN ARMY: MAINTAINING ORDER AND EXPANDING THE EMPIRE

This emphasis on cavalry is an important contrast to the Greek style of warfare.

### CAVALRY

The success of Persian military campaigns was because of the speed and tactical flexibility of their many horsemen, who could out-maneuvre and surround enemy foot-soldiers. Horses were expensive to maintain and were not common in other mass armies. Persians also used camel cavalry in arid conditions.

### ➔ SOURCE 4.12

*Herodotus, The Histories*  
1.136.2 in Robert Strassler (ed),  
The Landmark Herodotus  
(London: Quercus, 2008).

#### HERODOTUS ON PRIORITIES IN PERSIAN MILITARY CULTURE

From the age of five to the age of twenty, they teach their sons just three things: to ride horses, to shoot the bow and to speak the truth.

## HISTORIAN MUNRO ON PERSIAN CAVALRY

... superb cavalry which fought at close quarters with lance or scimitar and at a distance with javelins or bows and arrows, moreover, the cavalymen wore protective armour, their war-horses being stronger and faster than Greek horses.

## ARCHERS

Persian archers used bows made from horn and recurved wood: in today's terms they would be called 'composite technology'. The archer-cavalry used new mobile tactics, riding into range and firing before pretending to retreat.<sup>18</sup> Special archer divisions on foot were developed; they created intense bombardment by releasing their arrows at the same time—'whenever they shot their arrows, the sun was blocked by their number.'<sup>19</sup>

## INFANTRY

Despite the fame of its cavalry and archers, the bulk of the Persian army was made up of hundreds of thousands of conscripted infantry from different regions of the empire who had been forced into the army. They were valued more for their sheer weight in numbers than for their military skill. The loyalty of these conscripts was variable. Significantly, the Greek-speaking conscripts switched sides or fled during significant battles in the Greco–Persian wars.

## THE 'IMMORTALS'

The 'Immortals' was an elite division of 10 000 infantry, equipped with scale-mail armour, lances and bows. They were feared for their skill and discipline. While effective in the open landscape of western Asia, their relatively light equipment was ill-suited to the tight phalanx battles that awaited them in the narrow mountain passes of Greece.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The Immortals weren't actually immortal, but each time one member died or was killed in battle, he was immediately replaced so that the force never went below 10 000 men.



## SOURCE 4.13

J.A.R. Munro, *The Deliverance of Greece* in Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. IV, *The Persian Empire and The West*, eds. John Bury et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press Cambridge, 1926), 510.



HERODOTUS ON THE 'IMMORTALS'

## SOURCE 4.14

Persian soldiers in Darius' palace at Susa. Note their short spears and composite bows.



**SOURCE 4.15**

Phoenician merchants and traders.

**NAVY**

The Persian Empire contained the finest sailors in the world—the Phoenicians. The Phoenicians were the pre-eminent sea-power in the Mediterranean in the sixth century BCE, and they were the Greeks’ trading partners and seafaring rivals. It may have been in the interest of some Phoenician merchant-princes in Sidon and Tyre to see their Greek rivals defeated.

The Cyprians and Egyptians also had naval capabilities similar to those of the Greeks. However, like that of the Ionian conscripts, the loyalty of the Cyprians and Egyptians to the Persian Empire was suspect. This became a key factor in their naval battles with the Greeks.

**ACTIVITY**

**CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

1. Describe the political structure of the Persian Empire. What beliefs supported this structure?
2. What were the functions of the Persian road network? How would such a network help to maintain the authority of the king over such a vast empire?
3. How might the multicultural nature of the Persian Empire both help and hinder Cyrus II when he was assembling an army and navy for a military campaign?

**THE IONIAN CONNECTION: TRADE AND WAR**



By the seventh century BCE, the Ionian cities were the most prosperous and developed of all Greek *poleis*. They were traders who paid financial tribute to the wealthy and lenient Lydian empire. In exchange, the Lydian king provided protection, leaving the Ionian Greeks to get on with developing some of the foundations of Greek civilisation: Ionic architecture, science, pre-Socratic philosophy and engineering all developed here, in contact with the many cultures of the East.<sup>20</sup>

**SOURCE 4.16**

IONIA, C.550 BCE

In 546 BCE, the Lydians were conquered by the Persians. Lydia—and by extension, Ionia—was now just a province (or *satrapy*) at the western edge of the world's largest empire.

The Ionians had grown accustomed to the easy rule of the Lydians, and found Persian rule difficult. The Persians expected significantly more control in the administration of the Ionian *poleis*, appointing new local tyrants who would follow Persian policies.<sup>21</sup> However, in exchange for tax and levies upon soldiers, the Ionian *poleis* received the king's peace and access to trade with regions far beyond the Greek world.

Some Ionians benefited from Persian rule, as trade was not hindered, and they now had better access to exotic goods from Egypt, Babylon and India. But other Ionians resented Persian rule. Their Greek value of *isonomia* (equality before the law) had been undermined. Another Greek value, *autonomia* (the *polis*' independence), was also being eroded by Persian rule.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What aspects of Greek civilisation were developed in Ionia?
2. What was the political position of the Ionian states in the sixth century BCE?
3. How was the earlier Lydian rule different from Persian rule?

### ACTIVITY

#### DID YOU KNOW?

According to Herodotus, King Croesus of Lydia was told by the Oracle at Delphi that if he invaded Persia, he would 'destroy a great empire'. Croesus thought this was a good omen and invaded Persia. The Persians responded by invading Lydia, conquering it and all its Ionian territories. Too late, Croesus realised that he had misunderstood the oracle—the empire that he destroyed was his own.

## THE IONIAN REVOLT (499–494 BCE)

**ARISTAGORAS:** 'So now—by the gods of the Hellenes—come rescue the Ionians from slavery; they are the same blood as you, after all.'

For the cultured Greek of 510 BCE, Miletus was the centre of the world. With its four great harbours bustling with trade from distant lands, its economy and culture were flourishing. While mainland Greece squabbled, Miletus, as the largest of the Ionian *poleis*, continued to grow.

Miletus was the trading centre where east and west met. In the *agora* could be found perfumes and dyes from Egypt, vases from Athens, and amulets, jewellery and silk from countries with strange, exotic names.

The wealthy elite of Miletus were eager for these Persian luxuries. Under the Persian-backed safety of the local tyrant, Histiaeus, they continued to make a profit. When the elite were not trading, they were developing progressive philosophy (known as the Milesian School). They discussed questions such as: What was the nature of the universe? Could natural forces, instead of the gods, explain the universe? How could this be demonstrated through observation and logic?

But for ordinary Ionians, philosophy was a luxury. They could not afford the expensive Persian luxuries, much less have time to contemplate the nature of the universe. While many other Greek communities had overthrown their tyrants, the Milesian Greeks were ruled by a tyrant who did not even defend their *autonomia*. To some people, these tyrants were little better than Persian puppets. By 500 BCE, these revolutionary grumblings grew louder.<sup>22</sup>

In 499 BCE, while the tyrant Histiaeus attended the Persian court, his nephew Aristagoras (who was also his son-in-law) led a failed campaign to conquer the Greek island of Naxos. Following this debacle—and afraid that his position as tyrant would be taken from him—he took the only other option he thought available: he led a revolution.

Overnight, Aristagoras rebranded himself, supporting the Milesians wanting to regain their *autonomia*. He declared Miletus an independent democracy. The other Ionian states quickly followed, overthrowing their tyrants and declaring that they too were democratic Greek states, independent of Persia.<sup>23</sup>

For a successful rebellion, the Ionians would need to go on the offensive, eliminating the threat from Sardis (Lydia) and beyond—and for that they needed powerful allies. Aristagoras travelled to Sparta, ‘the leaders of Hellas’,<sup>24</sup> to persuade them to help, but the Spartans refused to get involved in their quarrel, unimpressed by stories of Persian gold.

Aristagoras then asked the new democracy, Athens, for assistance. Athens resented Persian influence in the affairs of their Ionian kin, and the assembly (or *boule*) was persuaded to send aid for the Ionian revolt. Twenty ships packed with *hoplites* were sent. Nearby Eretria also sent five ships to the revolt. Herodotus marks this with foreboding: ‘These ships turned out to be the beginning of evils for both Hellenes and barbarians’.<sup>25</sup>

## THE ATTACK ON SARDIS (498 BCE)



Aristagoras’ campaign was initially a success. Meeting up with Ionian forces, this expeditionary force of heavily armoured *hoplites* marched overland to Sardis, the capital of the *satrapy*. The *satrap* Artaphernes and his forces escaped to the acropolis and bunkered down for a siege, waiting for a relief force from Persia. Meanwhile, the Athenians, Eretrians and Ionians, unable to storm the acropolis, vented their anger on the city, burning it down. The great fire consumed the holy temple of the native goddess, which was reduced to ash. Whether deliberate or accidental, this sacrilege would not be forgotten. To the Persians, this was not only an attack on the city, but on the gods themselves.

When he heard about the destruction of the temple of the goddess, Persian king Darius I was infuriated. The gods, who he believed had placed the world into his care, had been attacked by the sacrilegious Greeks. But how could the Ionians alone have razed Sardis? The answer was that they had help from Athens and Eretria, from beyond the civilised borders of the Persian Empire. According to Herodotus, Darius I appointed a servant to remind him of this three times a day: ‘My lord, remember the Athenians’.<sup>26</sup>

### SOURCE 4.17

The burning of Sardis during the Ionian Revolt of 498 BCE.

## BATTLE OF EPHEBUS (498 BCE)

The Greeks left Sardis in ruins, marching back to the coast in jubilation. However, they had little understanding of how great a power Persia was. The Persian response was swift: a relief force caught up with the Greeks before they reached the coast, meeting the *hoplites* at the coastal city of Ephesus.

The *hoplites* were caught in the open by the Persians, then surrounded and defeated. The few surviving Athenians and Eretrians ran to their ships and hauled themselves out to sea, leaving the Ionians to their fate. The Ionian revolution, as far as Athens and Eretria were concerned, was over.

## THE REVOLT SPREADS ... AND RECEDES (498–494 BCE)

Despite being defeated at Ephesus, the revolt against Persian rule spread further. Fellow Greek-speakers in the Hellespont and Cyprus, as well as their non-Greek neighbours in Caria, revolted against Persian rule.

The Persian response was systematic—isolating and crushing the revolts one by one. Darius I reasoned that if he could keep them divided, the city-states that were revolting could be managed easily enough. The cities in the Hellespont were isolated and suppressed. South, in Caria, his forces met resistance, but this too was soon quashed.

At the battle of Lade in 494 BCE, Miletus was abandoned by its remaining allies, and defeated. The city was sacked, and its population sold into slavery. Persia had unequivocally quashed the Ionian revolt and reasserted its imperial order in the region.

## AFTERMATH

To further consolidate their victory over the Ionians, in 492 BCE a fleet of several hundred Persian ships under the general Mardonius was sent to reinforce control of Thrace, and to gain the submission of Macedonia. Whether it was also an expedition to punish Athens and Eretria, as Herodotus claims, is unclear.<sup>27</sup> But at the jutting peninsula of Mount Athos, disaster struck. Storms tore apart the fleet, killing thousands of men, few knowing how to swim.<sup>28</sup> Persia had gained new territories in northern Greece, but the Athenians and Eretrians were, as yet, unpunished.

## THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT OF THE IONIAN REVOLT

### IONIAN ATTITUDES

Persian king Darius I was lenient—but pragmatic. Ionians were allowed limited local democracy, but not independence: the King of Kings would be the final judge in all disputes.<sup>29</sup> From a Persian perspective, this was considered generous. For Ionian Greeks it was a humiliation—their sense of *autonomia* had been ignored.

The Greek peoples of the eastern *poleis*—from Ionia up to the Hellespont—were not just passive subjects of the Persian Empire. Many were conscripted into the Persian army and navy for the later invasions of mainland Greece. The loyalty of such soldiers and sailors was dubious—just how loyal would they be when fighting against fellow Greeks?

### PERSIAN ATTITUDES

The seeds of the greater Greco–Persian wars were sown in the Ionian revolt. The desecration of the temple at Sardis was yet to be avenged, and Darius was known to take religion very seriously, viewing himself as protector of divine order on earth. Strategically, the Persians could not allow outsiders to raid with impunity. For both reasons, Athens and Eretria were to be made examples of.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What were the responses of Sparta and Athens to the Ionian appeal for aid?
2. Why do you think the two *poleis* responded differently?
3. What did the Greeks do in Sardis? Why was it significant?

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. Consider the perspectives of the Ionian Greeks, the Athenians and the Persians. How might each group justify its actions during the Ionian revolt?
2. Herodotus said that the sending of Athenian ships had been ‘the beginning of evils for both Hellenes and barbarians.’ Is this a fair explanation for the causes of the conflict? Provide examples from pages 133–135 to support your answer.

## ATHENIAN ATTITUDES

For Athens, the defeat was followed by a less adventurous foreign policy. When their *hoplites* returned after defeat at the battle of Ephesus, Athens sent no more ships to help their Ionian cousins. The following years would necessarily be more defensive in nature, the diplomatic alliances with other *poleis*—especially Sparta—were shored up and their soldiers prepared for the Persian invasion that was to follow. The democratic assembly (*ecclesia*) had evidently decided it would not submit to the Persian king—instead preparing to defend itself.

## MARATHON: FROM CRISIS TO LEGEND



### SOURCE 4.18

Marathon remembered. A red-figure vase from the fifth century BCE showing a Greco-Persian duel.

Persian king Darius I wanted vengeance on those Greeks outside his empire who had supported the Ionian revolt and were involved in burning the temple at Sardis. As was usual in Persian diplomacy, heralds were sent ahead to numerous Greek *poleis* on the mainland before the beginning of a Persian campaign in 492 BCE. The ultimatum they brought with them was stark: submit to Persia through a gesture, the offering of earth and water, or face the wrath of the ‘King of the World’.<sup>30</sup> In this way, Greek *poleis* on the mainland were forced to take sides—submitting to Persian rule or being considered an enemy to the great empire.

Thebes and many other *poleis* submitted to Persian rule. Athens’ rejection of the offer was emphatic—the Persian messenger was executed. Sparta, which until now had stayed clear of conflict, was insulted by the Persian demand for submission—the herald was thrown down a well to drown in the water he had demanded.<sup>31</sup>

This violation of the ancient diplomatic convention of a messenger’s safety was itself sacrilege, another proof to Darius that he was dealing with savages.<sup>32</sup>

However, a storm struck the Persian fleet at the dangerous coast of Mt Athos in northern Greece, delaying any plans for vengeance. The campaign against Athens and Sparta would be delayed, providing time for the mainland Greeks to prepare as best they could.

## THE PERSIANS ARE COMING ...

In 490 BCE, tens of thousands of soldiers in the Persian expedition boarded a flotilla of 600 *triremes* and numerous horse transports on the Ionian coast of Asia Minor.<sup>33</sup> To avoid the treacherous weather of the northern coast of Greece, their fleet would island-hop directly across the central Aegean Sea, bringing Naxos to heel before attacking Eretria and Athens. According to Herodotus, the old Athenian tyrant Hippias travelled with the Persians as an adviser.

The admiral of the expedition force, Datis the Mede, chose to attack the smaller city-state of Eretria first, besieging the walled *polis*. Eretria was sacked, its temple targeted.

## ERETRIA SACKED

After entering the city, the Persians plundered and set fire to the sanctuaries, exacting vengeance for the sanctuaries burned down in Sardis, and as Darius had instructed, they enslaved the people.

The Persians then sailed south for Attica. Hippias' advice to the Persians was that such an army with cavalry could best disembark at the wide beach and plain of Marathon and then march overland, burning the Attic countryside as they went.

The Athenians, still fretting about open battle against such a force, sent an appeal to Sparta for help. They sent their best runner, Philippedes, to Sparta, a distance of about 225 kilometres. Without rest or sleep, he reached Sparta the very next day, asking them for help. But the Spartans were observing the religious festival *Carneia* and refused to mobilise until the full moon,<sup>34</sup> as they would not fight during religious festivals. Without the gods on their side, a Greek army could not, after all, expect victory. Philippedes ran back to Athens with the grim news.

The ten Athenian *strategoï* were divided about what to do. Should they fortify the city walls and bunker down for a defensive siege, as Eretria had done? Or should they meet the Persians in battle? Caught in a tie, they appealed to Callimachus, the commander-in-chief, to be the tie-breaker. One of the *strategoï*, Miltiades, urged him to fight. Callimachus was persuaded by Miltiades' appeals to patriotism and liberty—the Persians had to be met in battle if Athens was to stand a hope of survival.

## MILTIADES' MARATHON SPEECH

Miltiades said to Kallimachos, 'It is now up to you, [Callimachus], whether you will reduce Athens to slavery or ensure its freedom and thus leave to all posterity a memorial for yourself which will exceed even that of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. For from the time Athenians first came into existence up until the present, this is the greatest danger they have ever confronted. If they bow down before the Medes [Persians], it is clear from our past experience what they will suffer ... but if this city prevails, it can become the first among all Greek cities ... If we fail to fight now, I expect that intense factional strife will fall upon the Athenians and shake their resolve so violently that they will medize [submit to the Persians]. But if we join battle before any rot can infect some of the Athenians, then, as long as the gods grant both sides equal treatment, we can prevail in this engagement. All this is now in your hands and depends on you. If you add your vote to my proposal, your ancestral land can be free and your city the first of Greek cities.'

## SOURCE 4.19

Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.101 in Robert Strassler (ed), *The Landmark Herodotus* (London: Quercus, 2008).

## DID YOU KNOW?

It was the Greek army, not the athlete Philippedes, who fast-marched from Marathon to Athens—the 42-kilometre distance that we now call a 'marathon'. In a later legend, Philippedes runs ahead to bring the news of victory to Athens and dies of exhaustion at the end—but no mention of this is made in the earliest historical accounts.

## SOURCE 4.20

Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.109 in Robert Strassler (ed), *The Landmark Herodotus* (London: Quercus, 2008).

## SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 4.19 and 4.20 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

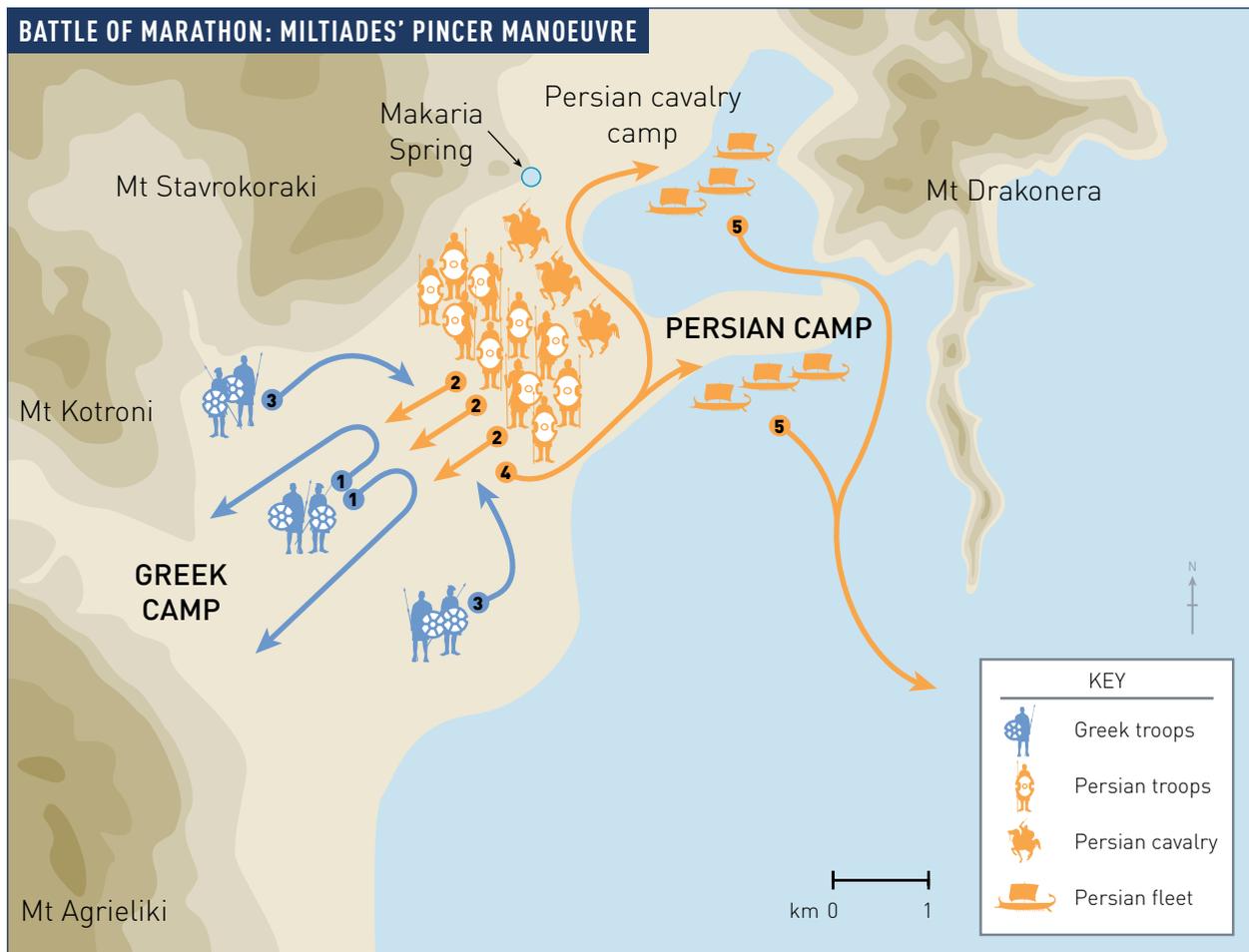
1. What reasons might some of the *strategoï* have for surrender?
2. What reasons does Miltiades provide for the Athenians to fight?
3. Why does Miltiades argue that victory in battle is necessary for freedom?
4. Why does Miltiades refer to the tyrant-killers Harmodius and Aristogeiton?

## CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Describe the different responses of the Greek *poleis* to the Persian demand for submission.
2. Why was Sparta slow to respond to Athenian calls for help?
3. What values are revealed by Sparta and Athens in their response to the imminent Persian threat?

## THE BATTLE OF MARATHON (490 BCE)

PAUSANIAS: 'This is the victory of which I am of opinion the Athenians were proudest ...'<sup>35</sup>



### SOURCE 4.21

#### BATTLE OF MARATHON: MILTIADES' PINCER MANOEUVRE

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The pincer manoeuvre performed by the Athenians at Marathon is the first recorded such manoeuvre in military history. It is still studied in military academies today.

The Athenian army marched more than forty kilometres in a single day and night to meet the Persians and hold them at the small coastal town of Marathon, preventing them from fanning out and pillaging the Attic countryside. Arriving at Marathon exhausted, they were met by their allies: 800 Plataean *hoplites*. This was a meagre force against the tens of thousands of Persians, Medes, Scythians, Egyptians, Ionian Greeks and their horses that were disembarking on the wide beach.

Athens and Plataea had just over 10 000 exhausted men, facing well over twice that number of Persians. The Athenian forces arranged a phalanx on the hill about three kilometres from the coast near Marathon.

Each camp waited on the other to make the first move. The Greeks were loath to leave their strong position on the hill and were, in any case, waiting for the Spartan reinforcements to arrive. The Persians, with a numerical superiority of over two to one, also hesitated—their troops, and especially their cavalry, could only be used effectively on the wide plain.

On the tenth morning, possibly under pressure from Persian archers, or perhaps at seeing the cavalry unprepared for combat, the Athenian general Miltiades

ordered the centre to charge and engage the Persians. According to Herodotus, the Persians were unprepared for this audacious move, and they over-extended their own front line in response, pushing the Athenian charge back up the hill.<sup>36</sup> The Greek flanks then crushed the Persians in a *pincer manoeuvre*.<sup>37</sup> The confused and demoralised Persian army fell back on itself, retreating to their ships. They fled so quickly that they abandoned the valuables of the Persian generals. These were later used by the Athenians in offerings to the gods at Delphi.<sup>38</sup>

But the Persian fleet did not flee homewards. Instead they sailed around the Attic peninsula—towards the Athenian port of Piraeus, which was now undefended. Despite their exhaustion, the Athenians retraced their steps—in a march that must have been more of a long-distance run—throughout the night to meet the Persian fleet once more. When the Persians arrived at the Attic coast, they were again greeted by the glint of the shields of Athenian *hoplites*. Rather than fight, they withdrew, calling off the invasion.

With a seemingly miraculous victory, followed by a desperate run from coast to coast, the Athenians had done the unthinkable. The Persians had been defeated in battle and the western expansion of the Persian Empire had—for now—been halted by a small army of mainly Athenian *hoplites*.



THE BATTLE OF MARATHON

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Summarise the events of the Battle of Marathon in four to six dot points.
2. What are two ways in which the victory at Marathon was seen as significant to the Athenians?

ACTIVITY

### SOURCE 4.22

Persian and Athenian soldiers fight at Marathon in 490 BCE.





## MARATHON LEGACY: SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

### ➔ SOURCE 4.23

*Paul Cartledge, After Thermopylae (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).*

### ➔ SOURCE 4.24

*Charles Freeman, The Greek Achievement (New York: Viking, Penguin Group, 1999), 175.*

### ➔ SOURCE 4.25

*Jim Lacey, The First Clash: The Miraculous Greek Victory at Marathon and its Impact on Western Civilization (New York: Bantam Books, 2011).*

### ➔ SOURCE 4.26

Helmet found at Olympia inscribed with 'Miltiades'.

### ➔ SOURCE 4.27

The burial mound at Marathon for 192 Athenian dead.



### ➔ SOURCE 4.28

*Aeschylus' epitaph fragment in Stanley Hochman, McGraw Hill Encyclopaedia of World Drama: An International Reference Work in Five Volumes, Vol. 1, (New York: McGraw Hill Publishing, 1972), 11.*

## IMPACT ON IDENTITY: THE MARATHON LEGACY

The Battle of Marathon became an instant legend: the victory of a smaller, elite force of *hoplites*, Athenian free men, over what they saw as the tyrannical Persians. For Athens, it not only affirmed the *polis'* independence and liberty, but also became treated by later generations as a heroic affirmation of military prowess celebrated in art and theatre.

### HISTORIAN CARTLEDGE ON THE MARATHON LEGACY

The Athenian dead were treated as heroes—not merely in our generic sense of that word, but in the very specific cultural, that is religious, sense of the word 'Hero'. They were all buried together under a massive mound of earth and worshipped thereafter as semi-divine, more than merely mortal beings, functioning thereby as talismans and protectors of Athenians present and to come.

### HISTORIAN FREEMAN ON THE MARATHON LEGACY

Tradition relates that the death toll at Marathon was 6400 Persians and only 192 Athenians, most of them lost in the struggle in the center. It was a stunning achievement, transcending the most epic of heroic legends. No single event was ever to exercise such grip on the imagination of Athens.

### HISTORIAN LACEY ON THE MARATHON LEGACY

In the decades after the battle, no Greek doubted its importance. In Athens itself there was a cult of Marathon, and the men who fought that day were honored until their death. They were the equivalent of Athens's 'greatest generation'.

The victory was memorialised with religious dedications by the Athenians at Delphi, using the valuables and gold abandoned by the fleeing Persians. According to Pausanias, the Athenians built a treasury at the Temple of Apollo funded entirely by the spoils of the Battle of Marathon. To give thanks, Miltiades offered his helmet to the gods at Olympia (see Source 4.26).

Those *hoplites* who had fought at Marathon became the 'Marathon generation': brave, fearless and disciplined men who had won Athens its freedom.

The epitaph for Aeschylus, the famous playwright who died in peaceful old age, is revealing. There is no mention of his award-winning dramas, but instead he reminds us of his participation in the Battle of Marathon (see Source 4.28).



### AESCHYLUS' EPITAPH

Beneath this stone lies Aeschylus, son of Euphorion, the Athenian, who perished in the wheat-bearing land of Gela; of his noble prowess Marathon can speak, or the long-haired Persian, who knows it well.

## THE MARATHON LEGEND IN LATER ART AND THEATRE

The victory of Marathon was celebrated in Athenian art by a later generation. The battle was the subject of one of the great paintings (about 460 BCE) in the Stoa Poikile alongside depictions of the Trojan War and legendary battles between Theseus and his Athenians against the Amazons.<sup>39</sup> [Source 4.29.]



BATTLE OF MARATHON PAINTING ENLARGED



### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 4.29 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How can you distinguish between Persian and Greek figures? Consider dress, weaponry and their actions within the painting.
2. Greek gods are depicted in the upper half of the painting. Explain the significance of this.
3. The Marathon painting is one of four paintings in the Stoa, two of which were ancient legendary battles against Amazons and Trojans. How might historians use this context to explain the significance of the Battle of Marathon in informing Athenian identity?

ACTIVITY

### ↑ SOURCE 4.29

A nineteenth-century reconstruction of the Stoa Poikile painting of the Battle of Marathon. Note the presence of gods and mortals.

A less idealistic view of the 'Marathon generation' was presented by the comic playwright Aristophanes in 425 BCE, sixty-five years after the Battle of Marathon. In this comic play, the young playwright Aristophanes argues for peace and an end to the Peloponnesian War, despite the older generation wanting war [Source 4.30].

## ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY VINDICATED AND RADICALISED

Herodotus emphasises the democratic nature of the Athenian army, both in its leadership and its formation. One of the elected generals, Miltiades, had to persuade the others to take action (see Source 4.20). The soldiers too had fought grouped by the new mixed tribes created by Cleisthenes' democratic revolution. The force that had stood up to the Persians was a radically democratic one.

In the hard years to follow, Athens intended to follow the Marathon tradition: negotiation with Persia was not an option. Language changed: to call someone a 'mediser' (meaning 'pro-Persian') no longer meant that they were considered cultured and sophisticated—it now meant that the person was suspected of being treacherous and of having anti-democratic sympathies. Those ostracised were often accused of having 'medising' tendencies.

### ↓ SOURCE 4.30

*Aristophanes, Archarnians 179–186 in Aristophanes: The Complete Plays, trans. Paul Roche (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).*

### ARISTOPHANES' ARCHARNIANS

Amphitheus: I was hurrying back here with a load of truces,  
When some Archarnian veterans got to hear of it.  
They're tough old blighters:  
Hard as oak or maple—they fought at Marathon.  
They started shouting: 'Traitor, you dare bring treaties  
When our vines are being hacked to pieces?'  
That's when I bolted,  
And they came after me—yelling.  
Dicaeopolis: Let them yell ... You've got the pledges [of peace]?  
Amphitheus: I have indeed.

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. What is Aristophanes' interpretation of the Marathon generation in Source 4.30?
2. How does this interpretation contrast with Source 4.29?

ACTIVITY

# THE SECOND GRECO–PERSIAN WAR (480–479 BCE)

**XERXES (IN HERODOTUS):** ‘It is my intent to bridge the Hellespont and lead my army through Europe to Hellas, so I may punish the Athenians for what they have done to the Persians and to my father.’<sup>40</sup>

The sleight against Persia at Marathon was not forgotten, but Darius I had more pressing concerns when Egypt, the bread-basket of the empire, revolted in 486 BCE. While on campaign, Darius died.

Before his death, Darius had appointed one of his sons, Xerxes I, as his successor. Xerxes was quick to assert his authority, crushing revolts in Egypt and in Babylon in 486–485 BCE. Athens and Sparta, both condemned in Persian eyes, had gained some precious breathing space.<sup>41</sup> Once Xerxes had asserted his authority over the empire as Darius’ successor, his eyes turned westwards, towards Greece.

## PERSIAN WAR PREPARATIONS

The Second Greco–Persian war was on a scale that dwarfed the first. The campaign was to be colossal, consisting of two elements: a naval fleet of over 1000 warships and a large army that marched from Asia Minor to the Greek mainland. The size of the army is disputed—most modern historians estimate a force of 200 000 men, while ancient sources claimed it was an army of two million.

## WAR LOGISTICS

Moving a large army such a great distance presented its own logistical problems, notably crossing the Hellespont, and getting the navy around the Mt Athos Peninsula without losing any ships.

- **Bridging the Hellespont:**

The army was too big to take by boat. Instead, ships were tied together to form a pontoon bridge so that Persia’s massive army and supplies

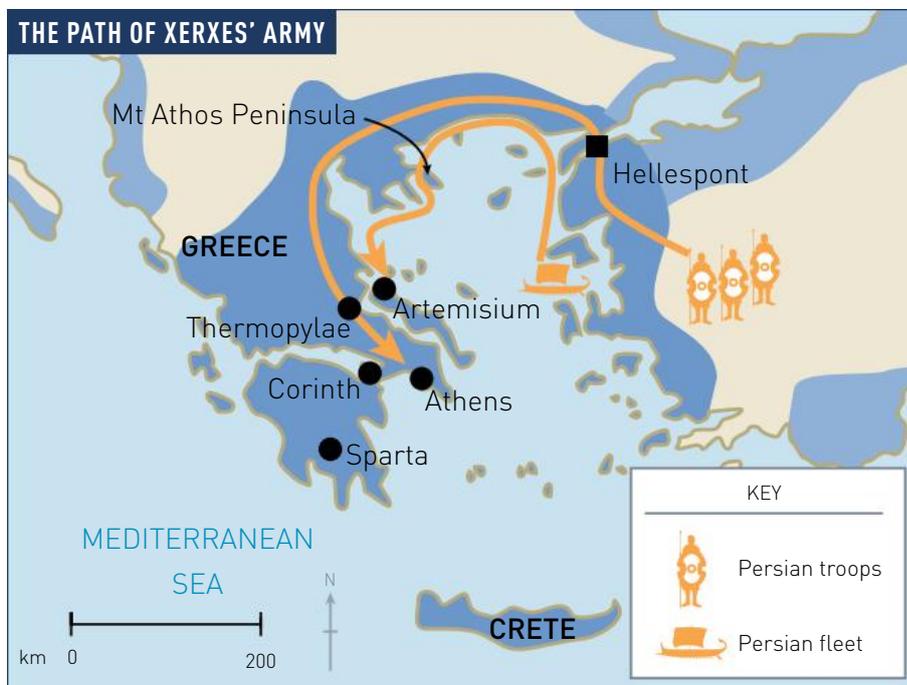
could be marched across the Hellespont (now known as the Dardanelles)—a narrow body of water between Asia Minor and the European mainland. They would then slowly move across Thrace and Macedonia into the Greek Peninsula. It was an engineering marvel that horrified the Greeks.



### SOURCE 4.31

Sailors building a pontoon bridge across the Hellespont for Xerxes.

- **Construction of the canal across the Mt Athos Peninsula:** Xerxes' campaign required close coordination between the army and navy. The fleet was to sail alongside the coast to maintain communications and supplies for the army. However, the treacherous coast around the Mt Athos Peninsula made such a route dangerous. In a spectacular engineering feat, Xerxes ordered a canal to be dug across the peninsula before his fleet arrived. According to Herodotus, this work took three years to complete. When the bulk of his army finally marched, it would continue to be supported by the fleet, which could now sail *through* the treacherous peninsula rather than around it.
- **Diplomacy:** The approach of Xerxes' assembled force inspired awe and fear in the northern Greek *poleis*. Northern Greek states such as the Chalcidians and the Macedonians submitted to Persian rule, securing the way for the Persian advance.



**SOURCE 4.32**

THE PATH OF XERXES' ARMY



XERXES LEADING HIS ARMY TO GREECE

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

**THE PONTOON BRIDGE FROM ASIA TO EUROPE**

Xerxes' pontoon bridge of 674 ships spanned the Hellespont from Abydos to Sestos (see map on page 226), over which his massive army of infantry, cavalry and archers crossed.

Ancient Greek sources mocked Xerxes' bridge as an act of *hubris*—an arrogant folly that challenged the gods' order, insulting Poseidon, god of the sea.<sup>42</sup> According to Herodotus, when Xerxes' first bridge collapsed, the sea and the bridge were given 300 lashes by Xerxes, who considered himself its 'master'.

Xerxes' completed bridge was an engineering marvel. To construct it, ships were used as sleepers, with huge cables tied to them, each cable stretching from shore to shore, tightened by a giant winch on either side. Planks, then rushes and soil were laid down on these cables, forming a bridge across the waters of the Hellespont. The bridge was also walled, for safety and to keep horses and livestock calm, hiding the waves below.

Once constructed over the Hellespont, the pontoon bridge allowed the Persians to move an army of hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their supplies into Europe by foot.

Xerxes' pontoon bridge is admired by military historians. Pontoon bridges are still used by modern armies, as they are more secure and efficient than a flotilla of ships—especially in bad weather.

# THE PERSIAN ARMY: CRUNCHING THE NUMBERS

## THE LAND ARMY

The Greek Historian, Diodorus Siculus, provides the following account of the Persian army.

### ➔ SOURCE 4.33

*Diodorus Siculus*, The Library of History Vol. 4 11.5.2-3, trans. Charles Oldfather (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1946).

#### DIODORUS COUNTS THE PERSIAN ARMY

Consequently, having joined to his forces the armament there, he summoned his allies from Europe, a little less than two hundred thousand men; so that he now possessed in all not less than one million soldiers exclusive of the naval contingent. And the sum total of the masses who served on the ships of war and who transported the food and general equipment was not less than that of those we have mentioned, so that the account usually given of the multitude of the men gathered together by Xerxes need cause no amazement; for men say that the unfailling rivers ran dry because of the unending stream of the multitude, and that the seas were hidden by the sails of the ships. However this may be, the greatest forces of which any historical record has been left were those which accompanied Xerxes.

Herodotus went to some lengths to explain how the force could be counted.

### ➔ SOURCE 4.34

*Herodotus*, The Histories 7.60 in Robert Strassler (ed), The Landmark Herodotus (London: Quercus, 2008).

#### HERODOTUS COUNTS THE PERSIAN ARMY

Now I cannot say for certain how many men each contingent contributed to the total number, since nobody can report that, but the number of troops in the whole land army added together was found to be 1 700 000. This is how they managed to count them. They gathered groups of 10 000 men together at one spot, packed them in as closely as they could, and then drew a circle around them from the outside. After delineating the circle and dismissing those 10 000, they erected a dry wall on the edge of the circle high enough to reach a man's navel. When that was done, they had others go into the enclosure they had built, until they had counted them all in this manner. After the count had been completed, the army was drawn up into units according to their various nationalities.

Herodotus goes on to detail contingents, among them: Medes, Bactrians, Arians, Arabs, Ethiopians and Persians with bows and spears, chariots, camels and cavalry.<sup>43</sup> These figures do not include the auxiliaries and the supply train. When these are included, Herodotus' figure doubles.

However, modern historians have dismissed such numbers as exaggerations. Green, Grant, Cartledge and Burn all estimate an army of approximately 200 000 men.<sup>44</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 4.35

*Paul Cartledge*, After Thermopylae (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 108-109.

#### HISTORIAN CARTLEDGE ON HERODOTUS' NUMBERS

I dare venture with some confidence that there is not a single professional historian today who believes in the accuracy of Herodotus's reported figures ... However, any serious reduction would have the effect of putting the Greek coalition's achievement in a somewhat different light, and that, I suspect, is one of the major reasons why Herodotus was so keen to maximise the enemy numbers.

## THE NAVY

The flotilla was equally large, a mixture of warships and supply ships.

### HERODOTUS ON THE NAVY

The total number of triremes came to 1207 ... The total number of triaconters, pentaconters, light boats and horse transport boats came to 3000.

### DIODORUS ON THE NAVY

... he [Xerxes] made ready more than twelve hundred warships.

### SOURCE 4.36

*Herodotus, The Histories 7.87, 7.97 in Robert Strassler (ed), The Landmark Herodotus (London: Quercus, 2008).*

### SOURCE 4.37

*Diodorus Siculus, The Library of History Vol. 4 11.2.1, trans. Charles Oldfather (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1946).*

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Using Sources 4.33–4.37 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Consider Diodorus' account in Source 4.33. What allegedly happened to the rivers in the lands through which Xerxes' army marched? How does this support his head-count?
2. Consider Herodotus' account in Source 4.34. What process does he claim was in place to count numbers? Why do you think he feels the need to explain this?
3. Why do you think that the Greek historians would exaggerate the numbers in Xerxes' army?
4. What reasons do modern historians have to question the figures of Herodotus and Diodorus?
5. What methods could modern historians use to create a more plausible estimate of the size of Xerxes' army?
6. Consider Herodotus' account of the naval flotilla (Source 4.36). His figure is exact. Does this make it reliable? Explain why or why not.

ACTIVITY

## GREEK WAR PREPARATIONS

As part of their war preparations, the Persians had sent heralds to every *polis* inviting them to surrender by giving offerings of 'earth and water'—tokens of submission to Persia.

While some northern Greek *poleis* surrendered, the Spartans led the resistance.<sup>45</sup> In Autumn 481 BCE, Sparta, Athens and members of thirty-one *poleis* met at the Isthmus of Corinth and formed an alliance to fight the Persians. This alliance is known by historians as 'the Hellenic League'. To the members of the league, their motivation for war was clear: they were fighting for *autonomia* and freedom from Persian slavery.<sup>46</sup>

But the Hellenic League was divided on strategy. Sparta wanted to fight on land in a narrow pass, such as Mount Olympus or Thermopylae, to reduce the advantage the Persians had in troop numbers. If that failed, they could always pull back to the Isthmus of Corinth. Athens disagreed, urging a naval battle instead. If the Persian navy could be defeated, the army would be starved of supplies and forced to retreat. In the end, they attempted both strategies.



MORE INFO: GREEK PERSPECTIVES—ACTS OF HUBRIS?

## THEMISTOCLES' STRATEGY

During the 480s BCE, Themistocles persuaded his fellow Athenians to put the money from the newly discovered silver vein at Laurion into the construction of a fleet of *triremes*.

The Persian army was several times greater than the combined Greek army, yet its fleet was manned by Phoenicians, Egyptians and Ionian Greeks, whose loyalty was suspect. It was hoped that if the Persian navy could be defeated, the Persian army would be unable to feed itself—and would need to withdraw.

## RELIGIOUS PREPARATION: CONSULTING THE ORACLES

As the Persian forces approached, both the Spartans and Athenians, among other *poleis*, sought guidance from the sacred Oracle at Delphi. Herodotus records the oracle's predictions as having been made at the time, although many scholars consider these prophecies to have been altered afterwards to suit the events they predicted. Some scholars suggest that the predictions were shaped by political, rather than divine, inspiration.<sup>47</sup> The oracle's predictions were usually cryptic, their meaning subject to interpretation.

### SOURCE 4.38

Herodotus, *The Histories*  
7.140 in Robert Strassler (ed),  
*The Landmark Herodotus*  
(London: Quercus, 2008).

### FIRST DELPHIC ORACLE FOR ATHENS

Why sit so idle, you poor wretched men? To the ends of the land you should flee.  
Leave your homes, leave the heights of your circular fortress,  
For neither the head nor the body remains in its place,  
Nor the feet underneath, nor the hands nor the middle  
Is left as it was, but now all is obscure. For casting it down  
Is fire and Ares [the god of war] so sharp on the heels of a  
Syrian chariot  
And he will destroy many cities, and not yours alone ...

According to Herodotus, the first oracles for Athens seemed to be dire, urging them to flee (see Source 4.38), whilst Sparta was told they would lose either a king or their city would be destroyed by the Persians. The oracle seemed to provide little in the way of comfort.

Despite supposedly receiving these prophecies, the Athenians and Spartans carried on with their plans, agreeing on a

compromise strategy. The Spartans would meet the Persian army at Thermopylae, a narrow pass. Spartan king Leonidas would send up the advance force of *hoplites*, a meagre force of about 6000, to hold the pass. Reinforcements, Leonidas was promised, were to come in the days to follow. At the same time, the Athenian-led navy of 271 *triremes* would confront the Persian navy nearby, at the narrow strait

of Artemisium. Here, it was thought, the numerical strength of the Persians could be minimised.

## MARATHON MEN VS. SAILOR-RABBLE

The divergence in strategy between Athens and Sparta reflected their increasingly different politics and culture. In Athens, the divergence reflected a class divide. In the fifth century BCE, only the upper classes could afford the armour of a *hoplite* soldier. However, Themistocles' naval strategy was popular with the majority, who were poor. No special equipment was needed to row a *trireme*, just free citizens sitting side by side, working together. To radical democrats, the navy was the future.

## THERMOPYLAE AND ARTEMISIUM (AUGUST 480 BCE)

The Hot Gates of Thermopylae—named after the nearby hot sulfur springs—were ideal for *hoplite* combat: the pass was less than twenty metres wide in places, and flanked on one side by cliffs and the other side by the sea. Leonidas' phalanx of 6000

blocked the pass that the Persian army would be funnelled into. In the crush, it was hoped, the sheer weight of Persian numbers would be a disadvantage, the surge from behind forcing the more lightly armoured Persian frontline onto the Spartans' spears.

For two days, the discipline of Leonidas' phalanx held, while they awaited reinforcements from Sparta and her allies. The Persian forces, including the elite Immortals, were ill-equipped for these conditions, their lighter armour and shorter spears designed for flanking the enemy. Their cavalry-archers had little room for their rolling formations.

After two days of failed charges against the disciplined Greek phalanx, Persian troops found an alternative route—a mountain track around the pass.<sup>48</sup> A smaller division was sent across this mountain track in a move designed to surround Leonidas' force.

The news reached Leonidas on the morning of the third day. After some furious debate, Leonidas remained with 300 Spartan elite, some *helots*, plus 700 Thespian and 400 Theban allies to hold the pass. The others retreated. Those who stayed were all killed in heavy fighting, in what would later be seen as the heroic last stand of 'the Three Hundred'.

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### 'THE THREE HUNDRED': SPARTAN LEGEND AND IDENTITY

The defeat at Thermopylae became a Spartan legend. For Greeks of all cities, it confirmed that a handful of Greek *hoplites* was a match for the largest of armies.

'The Three Hundred' were seen to showcase the Spartan ideal, as seen in their stoic response to certain death: "When an ally complained that "Because of the arrows of the barbarians it is impossible to see the sun," a Spartan *hoplite* called Dieneses responded, "Won't it be nice, then, if we shall have shade in which to fight them?"<sup>49</sup>

## CULTURAL IMPACT: CHANGING NOTIONS OF THE GREEK 'HERO'

### STRATEGY

In a strategic sense, the battle was a failure for the Greeks. The naval battle of Artemisium (see page 148) was undermined because the land routes were not defended. There was nothing to stop the Persians from now invading Boeotia and Attica. It is unclear why reinforcements were not sent. Was it a religious delay from Sparta, like at Marathon? Or was it a pragmatic decision to save troops for the next anticipated battle at the Isthmus of Corinth?

### ▼ SOURCE 4.39

Greek army holding off the Persian invasion at the pass of Thermopylae, 480 BCE.

### CULTURAL IMPACT

Later, after the Persians were ultimately defeated, Thermopylae became a Greek byword for a kind of heroism particular to defensive *hoplite* combat: Leonidas' men were fearless, selfless, disciplined and stoic.

Historian Ioannis Ziogas contrasts the values of a Spartan *hoplite* to that of a Homeric hero. Years later, an unusual epitaph was placed at the pass of Thermopylae. (See Sources 4.40 and 4.41 on page 148.)



## ➔ SOURCE 4.40

Ioannis Ziogas, 'Sparse Spartan Verse: Filling Gaps in the Thermopylae Epigram', *Ramus* vol. 43 no. 2 (2014): 11.

## ➔ SOURCE 4.41

Ioannis Ziogas, 'Sparse Spartan Verse: Filling Gaps in the Thermopylae Epigram', *Ramus* vol. 43 no. 2 (2014): 2.

### CHANGING IDEAS OF HEROISM

...[it is] quite unlike that of Homeric heroes since the Spartans do not seek individual excellence.

### EPITAPH FOR THE 300

Stranger, tell the Lacedaemonians [Spartans] that we lie here, trusting their words.

[Translation notes: 'words' is alternatively translated as 'orders' or 'laws', 'trusting' as 'obeyed'.]

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 4.40 and 4.41 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Compare the heroism of Leonidas' men with that of the Homeric heroes outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Why might the change in combat tactics over the centuries demand a different understanding of 'heroism' for the Greeks?
2. How does the Spartan verse in Source 4.40 reveal the heroic qualities needed for *hoplite* combat?
3. The epitaph for 'the Three Hundred' (Source 4.41) can be translated into English in several different ways. If we substitute *words* for *laws* or *orders*, how does this alter our understanding of the epitaph?



MORE INFO:  
NAVAL CAPABILITIES

## ARTEMISIUM AND THE MELTEMI WINDS

A few days prior to the Battle of Thermopylae, Themistocles had beached his fleet of 271 *triremes* at the narrow strait of Artemisium, preparing to engage with a massive Persian fleet of more than twice that number.<sup>50</sup> The Greeks were helped by the *Meltemi* winds that sprang up—hundreds of Persian ships were dashed against the shore or sunk, while the Greek ships were safely beached.<sup>51</sup> Herodotus later saw this as a fulfilment of a Delphic oracle: 'Pray to the winds, because they would prove to be great allies of Hellas'.<sup>52</sup>

When the Persian and Athenian fleets did finally engage with each other, the battle was inconclusive. When news of the defeat at Thermopylae reached the Greek fleet, they had little choice but to retreat and sail back to Athens. Now nothing stood between Athens and the Persian army.

## THE 'WOODEN WALL'

In the weeks before the battle at Artemisium, the Athenians again sought the wisdom of the Oracle at Delphi, as they were unhappy with earlier prophecies urging them to flee. Herodotus tells us that the oracle provided this riddle.

## ➔ SOURCE 4.42

Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.141.3–4 in Robert Strassler (ed), *The Landmark Herodotus* (London: Quercus, 2008).

### ANOTHER ORACLE FOR ATHENS

... But a wall made of wood does farsighted Zeus to Tritogenes [Athena] grant  
Alone and unravaged, to help you and your children.  
Do not await peacefully the horse and the foot,  
The army gigantic that comes from the mainland;  
Withdraw, turn your backs, though someday you still will meet face to face.  
O Salamis Divine, the children of women you will yet destroy  
While Demeter [the goddess of grain] is scattered or while she is gathered.

But what was this ‘wall made of wood’ that was apparently their only hope? Some argued that it was the wall that protected the sacred Acropolis, and that the Athenians should withdraw there to resist a siege. Surely Athena would not abandon them there?

Themistocles had been arguing for evacuation: ‘Salamis Divine’, a large island off the coast, was the place to meet the Persians. The ‘wooden wall’ that would protect them was not the wall around the Acropolis, but their ships. When Athena’s sacred snake in the Acropolis conveniently went missing, this proved his case: Athena had left the city and so should they. The general assembly voted for evacuation. Families were taken to the island of Aegina and beyond to Troezen in the Peloponnese, while the men went to Salamis. Pets and the elderly were left behind. This was a trauma still remembered years later.

#### PLUTARCH: LOYAL DOGS

... Most pathetic of all were the old men, who were left behind because of their years, and the domestic animals, too, who chose this moment to show heart-rending affection and ran along howling piteously by the side of their masters as they went on board. The story has come down to us of the dog which belonged to Xanthippus, Pericles’ father, and which could not bear to be separated from him, and so leaped into the sea, swam across the straits alongside his master’s trireme, and was washed ashore at Salamis, where it fainted and died on the spot. Its tomb, they say, is the place which is named the Dog’s mound.

#### SOURCE 4.43

*Plutarch, Themistocles 10 in The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).*

#### BELIEFS AND VALUES

1. Consider the role of the Oracle at Delphi in Herodotus’ account of the battle of Artemisium and the evacuation of Athens.
  - What does this suggest about the role of the gods and fate in Greek thinking?
  - Why might Athenians have believed the Oracle at Delphi was referring to the ‘wooden wall’ that surrounded the Acropolis?
  - Themistocles argued that the ‘wooden wall’ meant the ships of the Athenian navy. What evidence is there that the oracle is urging flight?
2. These oracles are presented to us through Herodotus, who was writing several decades after the event. How does this affect our understanding of the oracle? What do the references to the oracle suggest about Herodotus’ beliefs?
3. Consider Source 4.43. What traumas are explored in Plutarch’s account of the evacuation? Why do you think this is included in his account?

ACTIVITY

## THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS (SEPTEMBER 480 BCE)

With reinforcements arriving from the Peloponnese, an allied Greek fleet of over 300 *triremes* gathered in the straits dividing Salamis from Attica. The generals camped at Salamis, arguing about what to do.

Themistocles’ plan was to lure the large Persian fleet into narrow waters, where the weight of their own numbers would cripple them. The Persian fleet waited, while the Persian soldiers ravaged Attica. The blaze of the Acropolis at Athens could be seen from Salamis, her sacred temples burning. The Persians had had their revenge for the sacking of Sardis, with Athens now in flames.

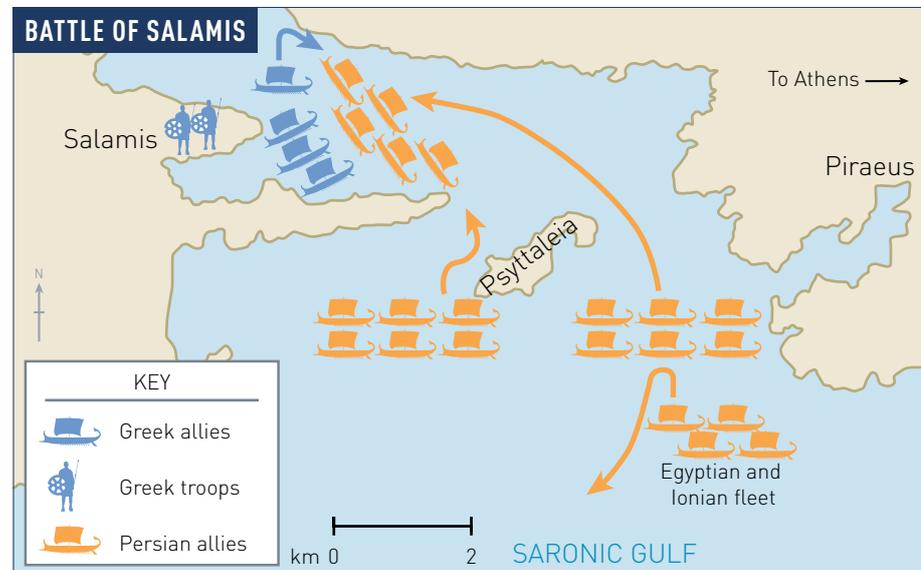


THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS

According to Herodotus, the Persians were tricked into engaging the Greek fleet through treachery—a Greek messenger bearing the false news that the Greeks were fleeing.<sup>53</sup> Some Greek ships ‘back watered’, feigning retreat, luring the Persian frontlines into the strait, leaving the ships’ sides exposed. Maintaining formation, the Greek fleet, waiting at a right angle to the Persian ships, rammed them on cue. Some Persian ships, now surrounded, panicked. Other Persian ships pulled out of the strait, retreating through lines of their own advancing ships, destroying the formations and creating chaos. Persian ships were colliding and sinking each other. Those Persian sailors who made it to the shores of Salamis were put to the sword by Athenian soldiers, hungry for vengeance. The suspect loyalty of the Ionian Greeks and Egyptians to the Persian cause contributed to the flight, as these conscripts were eager to flee to their homelands. The day was miraculously won by the smaller mainland Greek force.

**SOURCE 4.44**

**BATTLE OF SALAMIS**



**AFTERMATH: A NEW STRATEGY**

The Persian defeat at Salamis demonstrated that numbers alone could not guarantee victory. Persian naval supremacy was now in question, and supplies to their hundreds of thousands of troops could not be guaranteed. Xerxes withdrew most of his army, and they returned the way they had come.

His general, Mardonius, was left with a leaner force of handpicked cavalry, archers and ‘Immortals’. This more sustainable and professional force was intended to defeat the Greeks where the larger force had failed.

While the Athenian fleet might now have the upper hand over the Persians in the Aegean Sea, harrying Xerxes’ ships back to Asia, the Athenian people were refugees, mostly huddled in Salamis (as well as in Troezen in the Peloponnese). The Spartans were building a fortified wall across the Isthmus of Corinth and preparing for a siege.

Having learned the lessons of Thermopylae, Mardonius was not about to engage the Greeks on the narrow isthmus. The general knew he needed to draw the Greek *hoplites* out to battle on the wide plains of Boeotia. It was there, he hoped, that his cavalry and archers could surround and annihilate the Greeks.

## THE FINAL CONFRONTATION (AUGUST 479 BCE)

### WAITING

For six months, the Peloponnesians, secure behind their wall on the isthmus, did not come out to fight. Mardonius again occupied Athens, burned the fields of Attica and razed Boeotian towns, such as Plataea, to the ground. The Athenians, impotent to stop them, watched from the island of Salamis. Sparta urged them not to surrender, but some were toying with the idea. According to Herodotus, it was fear that Athens would surrender that persuaded Sparta to come out from behind its wall.

#### A MAN FROM TEGEA TO THE SPARTAN EPHORS: PATRIOTIC ATHENIANS?

If the Athenians are not united with us, but become allies of the barbarian instead, then no matter how strong a wall is extended across the Isthmus, there will be gates flung wide open for the Persian to enter the Peloponnese. So take heed before the Athenians decide to do something to bring disaster to Hellas.

However, the modern historian Holland doubts that the Athenians of 479 BCE would have surrendered, as their democracy had transformed them.

#### HISTORIAN HOLLAND

A sense of the preciousness of freedom, instilled in the Athenian people by their thirty year experiment that was their democracy, and by the experience of having fought to defend it against the most terrifying odds imaginable, had left the Assembly unwilling now to barter for peace.

For whatever reason, in the summer of 479 BCE, the Spartans marched. With them came their Peloponnesian allies and the now homeless Athenians in the largest *hoplite* army that had ever been assembled. Herodotus counts Greek forces at 110 000, a mixture of 38 700 *hoplites* plus light auxiliary troops. They were to face a force of 350 000 Persian soldiers, 50 000 of which were Greek conscripts fighting for Persia.<sup>54</sup>

#### GREEK OATH PRIOR TO BATTLE

I shall fight to the death, I shall put freedom before life, I shall not desert colonel or captain alive or dead, I shall carry out the generals' commands, and I shall bury my comrades-in-arms where they fall and leave none unburied.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 4.45–4.47 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Consider Herodotus' account of a speech among the Peloponnesians (Source 4.45). What reasons might the Athenians have to surrender?
2. Why does modern historian Tom Holland (Source 4.46) consider the Athenians unlikely to surrender? Do you agree? Justify your answer with evidence.
3. Look carefully at the Greek Oath (Source 4.47). Identify three values of a hoplite soldier that are enshrined in this oath.

#### 🔍 SOURCE 4.45

*Herodotus, The Histories 9.9 in Robert Strassler (ed), The Landmark Herodotus (London: Quercus, 2008).*

#### 🔍 SOURCE 4.46

*Tom Holland, Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West (London: Little Brown Publishing, 2005), 337.*

#### 🔍 SOURCE 4.47

*Inscription no. 204, 23ff in A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C. second edition, trans. M.N. Tod (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948).*

## THE BATTLE OF PLATAEA (479 BCE): A CLOSE-QUARTER MELEE



### ↑ SOURCE 4.48

Nineteenth-century illustration of the Battle of Plataea.

Mardonius was waiting for the allied forces by the Asopus River near the town of Plataea, the only decent water in a wide plain ideal for Persian cavalry. His troops outnumbered the Greeks by at least two to one.<sup>55</sup> He had a fortified wooden palisade set up in the plain. The Greeks, after being funnelled through a narrow pass near the charred remains of Plataea, lined up on the dry, waterless Asopus ridge. The scrubby ridge was not ideal, the

Athenians on the left flank, the Spartans on the right, with a saddle dipping in the middle.

The Persian cavalry archers, probably attempting to goad the Greeks into action, were sent by Mardonius on aggressive sorties in the Persian style to draw the Greeks out, but the Greeks were unmoved, refusing to break from their phalanx.

In the evening, Herodotus says that the Greeks feigned flight,<sup>56</sup> but Hammond and Holland both argue that the retreat was a real one: the Greeks, unlike the Persians, were desperately short of water.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of the motive, the Persians broke rank and pursued them into the foothills—a fatal error.

The battle became increasingly confused in the darkness, soldiers caught in close-quarter fighting, the formations losing all structure. After hours of battle, the Persians were at first pushed and then routed by a Spartan-led counter strike, with thousands dying, too lightly armed and ill-equipped for immobile, close-quarter combat against heavily armoured *hoplites*.<sup>58</sup>

Many Persians fled north on the road to Thessaly, while others were killed and taken prisoner on the plain. The Persian army—overwhelming in scale a year before—now consisted of just 3000 prisoners. The colossal Persian army had been decisively defeated.<sup>59</sup>

## NAVAL PURSUIT: BATTLE OF MYCALE

Herodotus claims that it was on the same day as the battle at Plataea that the Greek naval fleet, pursuing the remnants of the Persian fleet, caught up with them at Mycale in Ionia.<sup>60</sup>

The battle was brief, with the Ionian conscripts switching sides mid-battle. Amid panic and confusion, the Persians were defeated, thousands being put to the sword while others fled.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The ancient Greeks considered the Persians to be decadent and effeminate. Proof of this was that Persians wore trousers, something no manly Greek would ever do. In Herodotus, a character trying to gain support for a war against Persia says: 'Since they fight with bows and spears, wearing trousers ... they are easily subdued.'

## GREECE VINDICATED: IDENTITY FORGED IN VICTORY

The Greeks had done the unthinkable—they had fought for independence against the Persian Empire and won. Over the following years, the conflict became idealised: in their own eyes, they were free men who had fought against Persian enslavement.

As a product of these victories, the idea developed in the Greek psyche that the Persians were both weak and tyrannical, excessive and inconsistent, which was the opposite of everything the Greeks believed themselves to be.



HOW DID THE GREEKS WIN?

### HISTORIAN HOLLAND ON THE GREEK VIEW OF PERSIANS

The notion of the barbarian's decadence, which would have struck everyone as preposterous before Marathon, now began to be regarded by most Greeks as a simple fact ... Everything about Xerxes' invasion which had struck the Greeks as so terrifying at the time—the teeming numbers of the Great King's hordes, the limitless resources at his fingertips, the wealth, the show, the spectacle, the extravagance of his train—all, in hindsight, appeared merely to have marked him out as effete.

### SOURCE 4.49

*Tom Holland, Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West (London: Little Brown Publishing, 2005), 359.*

The Greeks developed a stronger sense of themselves, and a clear contrast between Greeks and 'barbarians' began to form.

### HISTORIAN GREEN ON THE PANHELLENIC IDEAL

Common resistance and sacrifice in the face of a profoundly alien invader had begun, however slowly and imperfectly, to forge a sense of what afterwards became known as the Panhellenic ideal, of an identifiable and unique Greek spirit ... This was perhaps the best and most lasting legacy of the Persian wars.

### SOURCE 4.50

*Peter Green, The Greco-Persian Wars (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1996), 284.*

The Athenians were the people most devastated by the war but the most triumphant in victory. Although the city was in ruins, Athens emerged as a powerful *polis* that would soon challenge Sparta.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What tactics helped the Greeks win the Battle of Salamis?
2. How did the Persians change strategy when preparing for the Battle of Plataea? Why?
3. What elements helped assure Greek victory at the Battle of Plataea?

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Why would the Battle of Salamis be particularly significant for the Athenians?

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. According to Tom Holland (Source 4.49), how did these victories change Greek attitudes to the Persians?
2. According to Peter Green (Source 4.50), how did the Greco-Persian wars change Greek attitudes about themselves?
3. To what extent do you think these developing views of the Greeks about themselves and the Persians are fair? Justify your answer.

## THE DELIAN LEAGUE: ALLIANCE OR EMPIRE?

**AMBASSADORS FROM MYTILENE:** ‘... we did not become allies of the Athenians for the subjugation of the Hellenes, but allies of the Hellenes for their liberation from the Mede [Persians]; and as long as the Athenians led us fairly we followed them loyally; but when we saw them relax their hostility to the Mede, to try to compass the subjection of the allies, then our apprehensions began.’<sup>61</sup>

### TERMINOLOGY

The term ‘Delian League’ was not used by the Greeks, who referred instead to ‘Athens and her allies’. ‘Delian League’ was coined by historians.

Similarly, ‘Athenian empire’ is a modern term used by historians to describe the later decades of the Delian League but was not actually used by the ancient Greeks.

Despite their resounding victories, the Greek generals were not complacent. It was clear that a lone Greek *polis* could not defend itself from the threat of Persian invasion. The Ionians asked for continuing protection, but the pre-eminent power, Sparta, offered them only transportation to the Peloponnesian mainland.<sup>62</sup> In contrast, the rising naval power, Athens, in 478 BCE assumed leadership of a new anti-Persian alliance—the Delian League. The differing attitudes of Sparta and Athens would define Greek geopolitics for the next century. Sparta was established, conservative and inward-looking, essentially unchanged by the Greco–Persian wars. In comparison, Athens was a rising power, confident and expanding in its influence.

The Delian League, established at the island of Delos in 478 BCE, consisted of scores of small islands and coastal *poleis*, along with a few larger powers—the largest of which was Athens. Each *polis* swore eternal support for the others.

The members of the Delian League all contributed towards a shared naval fleet that would defend them from the perceived threat of Persia. Each *polis* could either supply ships for the navy or pay a financial tribute to Athens towards maintaining the fleet.<sup>63</sup>

In the following decades, the Athenian-led Delian League successfully expelled the Persian fleet from the Aegean Sea. Athens grew in political influence, and the funding it received from its allies for the construction of the navy became a permanent feature of the Athenian economy. The Delian League would ultimately make Athens rich—money originally intended for operating the fleet was later used to fortify and beautify the *polis*.

### ▶ THE DELIAN LEAGUE

### ➔ SOURCE 4.51

A list of members of the Delian League and offerings that were made to the goddess Athena from the tribute they paid to Athens.



## MELOS

Athens' attitude as leader of the Delian League can be seen in its interactions with Melos. Melos is an island in the Aegean Sea that chose not to join the Delian League and wanted to remain neutral during the Peloponnesian Wars. However, the Athenians wanted Melos to be in the league and so decided to bring it in by force. An Athenian attack in 426 BCE was repelled by the Melians. A second attack was launched in 416 BCE. When the army arrived, Athenian envoys were sent to convince the Melians to submit to Athens. Some of what the envoys said has been reproduced in Source 4.53 below.

The Melians refused to submit. Ultimately, the Athenian forces defeated the Melians. The men were then killed, the women and children were sold into slavery, and an Athenian *cleruchy* was established on the island.



### SOURCE 4.52

The Greek fleet of the Delian League.

### THE ATHENIANS' DIALOGUE WITH THE PEOPLE OF MELOS

Athenians: ... the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept. ... So far as right and wrong are concerned they think there is no difference between the two, that those who still preserve their independence do so because they are strong, and that if we fail to attack them it is because we are afraid. So that by conquering you we shall increase not only the size but the security of our empire. We rule the sea and you are islanders, and weaker islanders too than the others; it is therefore particularly important that you should not escape. ... We are more concerned about islanders like yourselves, who are still unsubdued, or subjects who have already become embittered by the constraints which our empire imposes on them. These are the people who are most likely to act in a reckless manner and bring themselves and us, too, into the most obvious danger ... Our opinion of the gods and our knowledge of men lead us to conclude that it is a general and necessary law of nature to rule whatever we can.

### SOURCE 4.53

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 5.89, 97, 99, 105.1, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).*

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 4.53 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Summarise the key points made by the Athenians.
2. This dialogue between the representatives of Athens and Melos is regarded as reflecting the hard-line expansionist policies of Athens. What are the key points that support this view?
3. Is this attitude seen in any other actions of the Athenians at this time?

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why was the Delian League established?
2. How did the league benefit Athens?
3. What can we learn about Athens from the way they treated the Melians?

## A DEMOCRATIC HEGEMON?

As *hegemon* (leader), Athens was often the arbitrator of disputes within the Delian League. Athenian support for democracy is evident in the way it adjudicated disputes between allies. The Athenians supported popular democratic movements and revolutions against oligarchs within the Delian League, keeping oligarchies in check. For example, Athens' intervention to support democratic Miletus gave the smaller state power when engaged in dispute with her larger neighbour, the oligarchy of Samos.<sup>64</sup>

However, if a member of the League wanted to leave the alliance, Athens refused to allow it. Military forces were sent against any members that tried to leave, forcing them to rejoin and often punishing them harshly.

To the Athenians, their rule was justified. The vast majority of the naval fleet was Athenian-made and manned. In exchange for protection, Athens expected loyalty. They also saw themselves as custodians of democracy. Yet to many smaller states, Athenian domination of the league signalled an end for Greek *autonomia* and freedom. These contradictions were as apparent then as they are now. Can a democracy rule an empire?

### PERSPECTIVES: ANCIENT AND MODERN

According to Thucydides, in 432 BCE Sparta accused Athens of behaving like an empire, dominating the Delian League and undermining the *autonomia* of other member states.

#### ➔ SOURCE 4.54

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.76.2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

#### THUCYDIDES: ATHENIANS JUSTIFYING EMPIRE

It follows that it was not a very wonderful action, or contrary to the common practice of mankind, if we did accept an empire that was offered to us, and refused to give it up under the pressure of three of the strongest motives, fear, honor, and interest. And it was not we who set the example, for it has always been the law that the weaker should be subject to the stronger. Besides, we believed ourselves to be worthy of our position.

The pro-Athenian historian, de Ste. Croix, supports the Athenian use of force to maintain tribute payments from smaller *poleis*, suggesting that the peace with Persia could only last as long as they 'maintain[ed] forces visibly sufficient to preserve it ... to keep up the navy and, therefore, the tribute'.<sup>65</sup> To de Ste Croix, the Athenians were acting in a responsible manner, rather than an imperial manner.

#### ➔ SOURCE 4.55

Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, The Origins of the Peloponnesian War (London: Duckworth, 1972), 44.

#### HISTORIAN DE STE CROIX ON IMPERIALISM

Imperialism is not a pleasant thing. But I suggest that many humble men among the allies had good reason to fear their own oligarchs ... far more than they did the Athenians, whose deeply rooted belief in democracy and equality before the law made them concerned in principle to protect the mass of the people, however much they might on occasion have sacrificed these principles to their own greed or desire for power or security.

However, some historians see Athens' harsh responses to members wanting to leave the Delian League as reflecting a change in Athens' role—the Delian League shifts from being an alliance to something more coercive. They argue that Athens began to behave like a *hegemon*, undermining the liberty of other *poleis*.<sup>66</sup>

#### PERICLES' FUNERAL ORATION

In generosity we are equally singular, acquiring our friends by conferring not by receiving favours. ... And it is only the Athenians who, fearless of consequences, confer their benefits not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality. In short, I say that as a city we are the school of Hellas ...

#### ↑ SOURCE 4.56

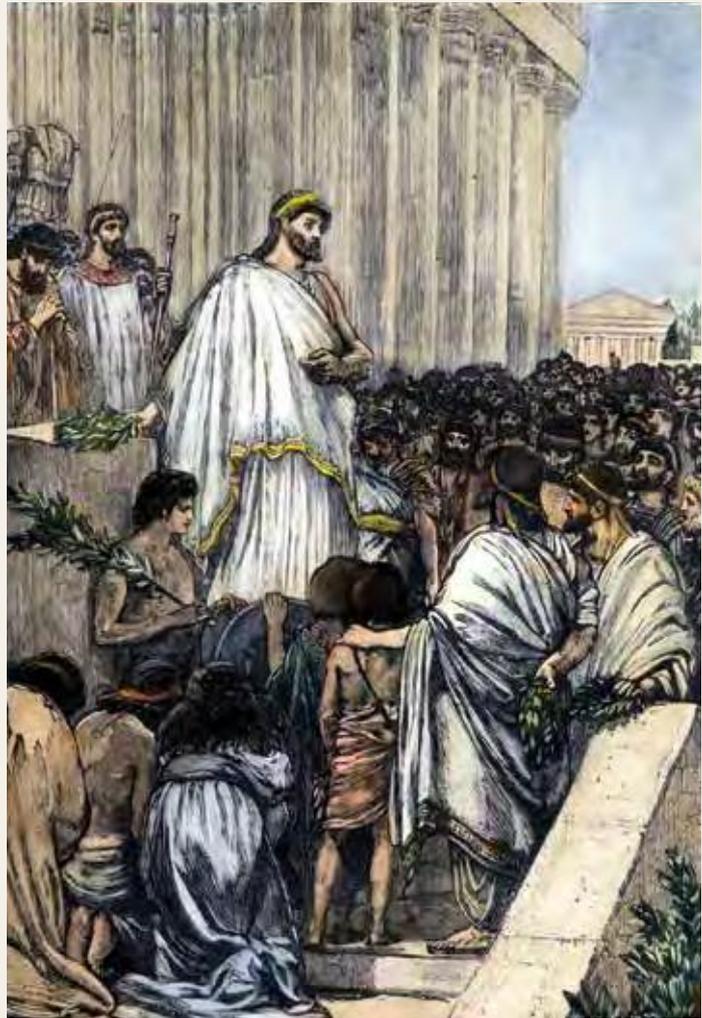
*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.40-41, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

#### SAMIAN FRAGMENT FOLLOWING THE FAILED REVOLT AGAINST ATHENS IN 440 BCE

[The boule of Samos] will not rebel against the People of the Athenians either by word or deed ... and shall be loyal to the People of Athens.

#### ↑ SOURCE 4.57

*'Fragment of Athenian Treaty with Samos 440/39 BC' No. 115 in Translated Documents of Greece and Rome: Archaic times to the end of the Peloponnesian War, trans. Charles Fornara (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 129.*



#### ↑ SOURCE 4.58

Pericles giving his famous 'funeral oration' at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War.

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 4.54–4.57 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Identify three justifications by the Athenians for Athenian imperialism (Source 4.54).
2. Why, according to Source 4.54, might Athens' critics at the time have considered this a challenge to *autonomia*?
3. In Source 4.55, how does de Ste Croix justify Athenian imperialism?
4. De Ste Croix refers to times the Athenians may have 'sacrificed these principles' of democracy and equality. Provide two examples of this.
5. Explain the context for the treaty (Source 4.57).
6. What does Source 4.56 reveal about Athenian views of the Delian League in 440 BCE?



## CONCLUSION

Warfare in Greece was the product and cause of great change. As access to weapons and armour became more widespread, the *hoplite* rose to prominence. *Hoplites* needed to work as a group to be effective on the battlefield, requiring a different attitude to warriors in centuries past. In the navy, all men were equal, and well-disciplined rowing by ordinary citizens led to the successes of the Greek *triremes*.

The Greco-Persian wars were only of moderate significance to the Persian Empire, but of great importance to the Greek *poleis*. For some, the failure of the Persian invasions showed the will of the gods. But in the following decades, the Greek people came to see their victories as Greek qualities overcoming the failings of 'barbarian' Persians. The Greeks saw themselves as free peoples who united to resist the enslaved forces of Persia.

Another direct result of the Greco-Persian wars was the rise of Athens. The Athenian hegemony that grew out of victory over Persia produced a dynamic and creative culture. The stories of the Marathon generation, the 'Three Hundred' of Thermopylae and the 'sailor-rabble' of Salamis would be transformed into legends. The political values of *isonomia* and democracy were cemented in the classical Athenian identity and seemingly vindicated on the battlefield.

However, Athenian ascendancy created tensions. Many of the smaller *poleis* saw the Delian League as coercive and imperial, rather than an alliance of equals. Sparta saw the expansion of Athenian influence as a threat. The same military prowess that had united Sparta and Athens against the Persian invasions would soon be turned against one another.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Create a flow-chart of cause and effect for the First and the Second Greco-Persian wars. Consider elements such as trade, political developments and identity.



GRECO-PERSIAN  
WARS: CAUSE AND  
EFFECT FLOW CHART

2. Make a list of the primary sources in this chapter. Investigate the context for each. Who wrote them, and what biases might they have had?
3. What role did religion play in ancient motivations and understandings of war? Provide examples from this chapter.

## ESSAY

Write an essay of 400 to 600 words on one of the following topics. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- To what extent can the Greco-Persian wars be understood as driven by conflicting values?
- The consequences of the Greco-Persian wars were not simply geopolitical in nature. Discuss.
- Changes in Greek warfare were mainly a product of the broadening of the political classes in the *poleis*. Explain your answer.
- The Athenian empire defended some Greek values while undermining others. Do you agree?

## EXAM PREPARATION

1. Outline the developments in Greek warfare from Archaic to Classical times.
2. Explain the role religion played in ancient motivations and understandings of war.
3. Explain the impact that war had on Greek culture.

## EXTENSION

1. Read Aeschylus' tragedy *The Persians* and respond to the following:
  - Select a range of quotes that demonstrate how Aeschylus and his audience viewed themselves and the Persians. Consider hubris/fate; submission; freedom/slavery; democracy/tyranny.
  - Explain the context for Aeschylus' play.
  - What was Aeschylus' message to his audience?
  - In what ways is studying Aeschylus' *The Persians* useful for historians?
2. Read Book 1 of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* and respond to the following:
  - What role does politics play in the causes of war?
  - What role do the gods play?
  - How is this different to the causes given by Herodotus in this chapter?

## TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 4





SECTION  
B

# THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

(460–404 BCE)

- What were the causes of war?
- How did key individuals contribute to this event?
- How might we judge the historical significance of this crisis and the people involved?

Note:  
all dates are BCE

KEY:

**FIRST PELOPONNESIAN WAR**  
(460–445 BCE)

**ARCHIDAMIAN WAR**  
(431–421 BCE)

**THE PEACE OF NICIAS**  
(421–414 BCE)

**DECELEAN / IONIAN WAR**  
(414–404 BCE)

**OTHER**



The Parthenon

**478–460 BCE**

**478 BCE**

Formation of the Delian League

**477 BCE**

Cimon captures Eion

**476 BCE**

Cimon captures Scyros

**473–472 BCE**

Fall of Carystus to Athens

**470 BCE**

Rebellion by Naxos

**c. 466 BCE**

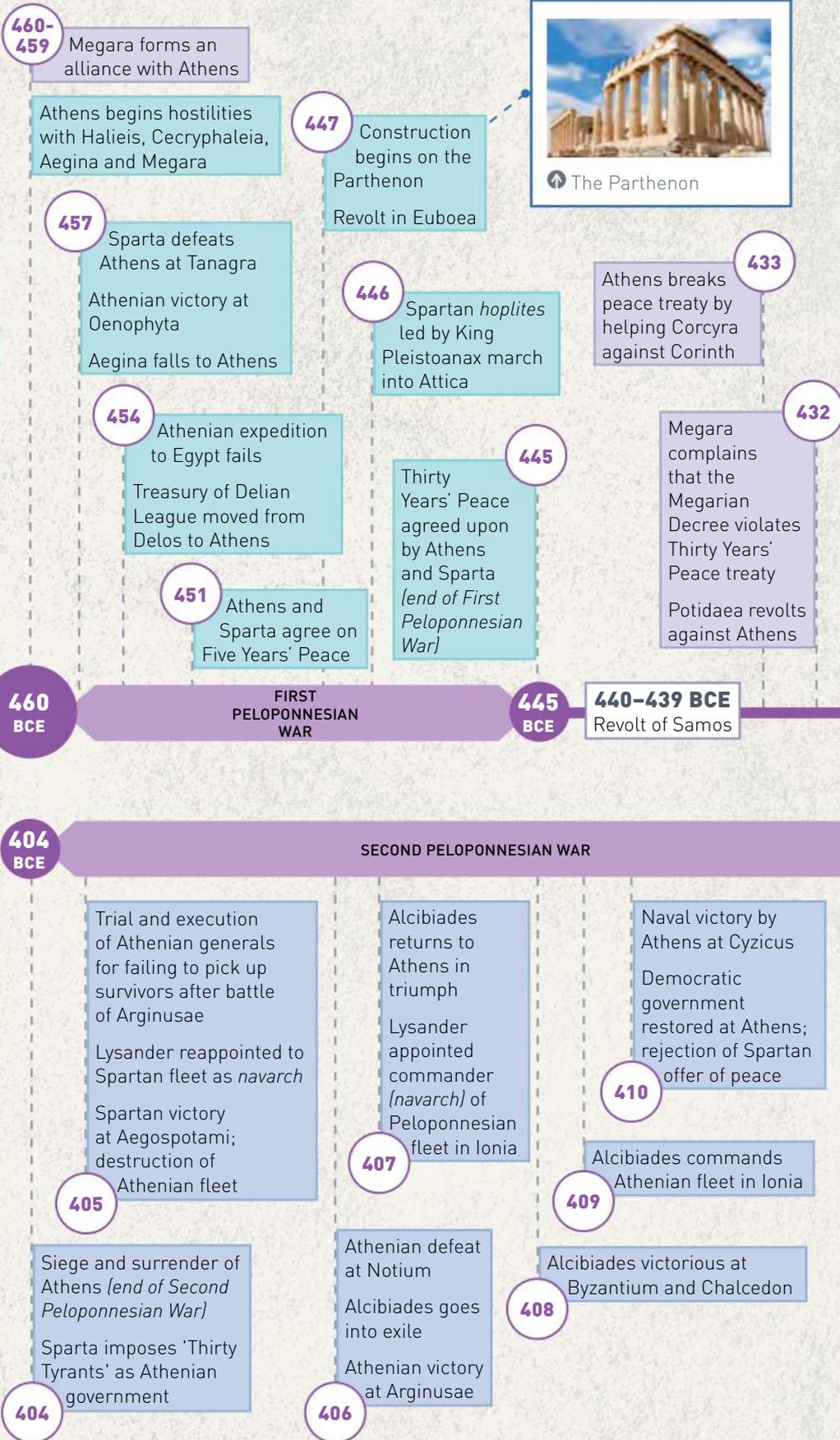
Battle of Eurymedon

**465 BCE**

Withdrawal of Thasos from Delian League

**461 BCE**

Ostracism of Cimon



# TIMELINE 460–404 BCE

431

Thebes attacks Plataea  
Peloponnesian invasion of Attica;  
Athenians retreat inside city walls  
Athenian fleets raid the Peloponnese

427

Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Rise of Cleon and Nicias  
Fall of Mytilene;  
Athens debates Mytilene's fate  
Fall of Plataea to Sparta  
Leontini and Rhegium appeal to Athens for help  
Outbreak of civil war on Corcyra

425

Sparta makes offers of peace to Athens  
Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Demosthenes fortifies Pylos  
Athenian intervention in Corcyra  
Athenian victory at Pylos

430

Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Plague in Athens  
Surrender of Potidaea

429

Death of Pericles

428

Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Revolt of Mytilene

426

Demosthenes campaigns in western Greece

424

Brasidas campaigns in northern Greece, captures Amphipolis

421

Peace of Nicias  
(end of Archidamian War)

Corinthian negotiations with Peloponnesian states

422

Battle of Amphipolis; deaths of Brasidas and Cleon

431  
BCE

## SECOND PELOPONNESIAN WAR

413

Spartan forces led by Agis invade Attica and establish fort at Decelea

414

Siege of Syracuse  
Sparta sends Gylippus to help Syracuse

Sparta declares war on Athens

416

Athenian expedition against Melos  
Outbreak of war between Sicilian cities: Segesta appeals to Athens for help

412

Rebellions by Athenian allies

411

Oligarchic coup of the Four Hundred at Athens  
The Five Thousand replace the Four Hundred  
Alcibiades is recalled to Athens



↑ Sicilian Expedition, 415–413 BCE

415

Athenian Assembly debates helping Segesta  
Athens dispatches Sicilian expedition under leadership of Alcibiades, Nicias and Lamachus  
Alcibiades escapes after being recalled to Athens to answer charges about the destruction of herms

418

Battle of Mantinea and Athenian defeat

420

Athens forms alliance with Argos and Mantinea (at Alcibiades' instigation)

## THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR: 7 THINGS TO KNOW

The invasion by Persian forces in 480 BCE united many of the city-states of mainland Greece against a common enemy—but it also laid the seeds for a political and military rivalry between Sparta and Athens that would span the rest of that century and run into the next.

- 1 The First Peloponnesian War mainly pitted Athens against Corinth, with Sparta a reluctant participant on the sidelines.
- 2 The rivalry between Athens and Sparta finally erupted into the Second Peloponnesian War, which lasted twenty-seven years.
- 3 The Second Peloponnesian War is traditionally divided into two periods of hostilities, separated by an uneasy truce: the Archidamian War (431–421 BCE), the Peace of Nicias (421–414 BCE), and the Ionian War (414–404 BCE).
- 4 Across the whole period of war, Athens relied primarily on its naval strength and Sparta on its *hoplites*, until the last phase when Persia supplied Sparta with the funds to maintain a large navy.
- 5 The rivalry between Athens and Sparta during the Second Peloponnesian War spanned the Mediterranean. It involved city-states on mainland Greece, the Greek colonies of southern Italy and Sicily, and the Greek city-states of coastal Asia Minor (which were under Persian control). It also drew in non-Greek powers and communities, the native peoples of Sicily, the kings of Macedonia and—in the latter years of the war—help from King Darius of Persia.
- 6 It was a war that was voted upon and fought primarily by the populaces of the city-states—that is, citizens who voted on questions of war or peace.
- 7 Although the Peloponnesian conflict ended in 404 BCE, the rivalry between Athens and Sparta for leadership of the Greek world would continue until 371 BCE, when Thebes defeated Sparta at Leuctra.



### KEY INDIVIDUALS

#### PERICLES (495–429 BCE)

**Who:** Athenian politician and military leader

**Role/impact:** under his leadership, Athens became the most powerful city-state in Greece. He transformed the Delian League into an empire, and oversaw the building program that exhibited the glory of Athens. It has been argued that his death in 429 BCE changed the course of the Peloponnesian War.

**Quote:** 'The first citizen of Athens' (*Thucydides*)



#### ALCIBIADES (451–404 BCE)

**Who:** Athenian politician and military leader

**Role/impact:** changed allegiances repeatedly, first working for Athens, then Sparta, then fleeing to Persia, before working for Athens once more. He promoted daring and aggressive policies, such as the disastrous Sicilian expedition for Athens and encouraging Sparta to challenge Athens in naval warfare.

**Quote:** 'They love him. But then again they hate him. And then again, they want him back.' (*Aristophanes*)



#### LYSANDER (C. 454–395 BCE)

**Who:** Spartan politician and military leader

**Role/impact:** his success in diplomacy (forging an alliance with Persia), and maritime warfare (defeating the Athenians in several important sea battles) contributed significantly to the war's outcome. He spared Athens and established a Spartan hegemony.

**Quote:** '... one of the first Greeks seriously to challenge the boundary between men and gods.' (*P. J. Rhodes*)



### ACTIVITY

#### KEY INDIVIDUALS

After reading about the Peloponnesian War, compare the successes and failures of these key individuals. Who had the greatest impact on the outcome of the War? Why? Support your contention with evidence.

The ancient Athenian historian Thucydides is the principal historian for the period. His political and military narrative traces the Pentecontaetia (478–431 BCE), the First Peloponnesian War (460–446 BCE), the Thirty Years Truce between Athens and Sparta and their respective alliances (446–431 BCE) and most of the Second Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE).

### THUCYDIDES AND THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR



THUCYDIDES  
(C. 460–  
C. 400 BCE)

Thucydides argued that the Second Peloponnesian War had far greater impact than the Persian Wars because Athens and Sparta were both at their peak militarily—and because this conflict was the worst the Greek world had ever endured, bringing with it unprecedented grief.

Not much is known about Thucydides. He was possibly related to the families of heroic Athenian general Miltiades, and also to Cimon, the key conservative politician of Athens during the 450s BCE. Thucydides contracted the plague sometime between 430 and 427 BCE and survived. As a commander at Thasos, Thucydides was exiled for failing to successfully defend Amphipolis. It is believed he lived until about 400 BCE—but his *History* ends in mid-sentence in 411 BCE. The remaining years of the war were recorded by the historian Xenophon.



MODERN HISTORIANS  
DISCUSS THUCYDIDES

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

### THUCYDIDES, *HISTORY OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR*

Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote the history of the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, beginning at the moment that it broke out, and believing that it would be a great war, and more worthy of relation than any that had preceded it. ... The preparations of both the combatants were in every department in the last state of perfection; and he could see the rest of the Hellenic race taking sides in the quarrel; those who delayed doing so at once having it in contemplation. Indeed this was the greatest movement yet known in history, not only of the Hellenes, but of a large part of the barbarian world—I had almost said of mankind. For though the events of remote antiquity, and even those that more immediately precede the war, could not from lapse of time be clearly ascertained, yet the evidences which an inquiry carried as far back as was practicable leads me to trust, all point to the conclusion that there was nothing on a great scale, either in war or in other matters.

### SOURCE 1

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.1, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910).*

ACTIVITY

Examine Source 1 and respond to the following:

1. Why does Thucydides think the Peloponnesian War was worth writing about? Summarise in dot points.
2. Research Thucydides. What qualities does he claim to have introduced to the writing of history?
3. What other qualities can you suggest are needed by an historian to write history?
4. What kind of difficulties might we encounter when we read historians from the past?
5. How might these types of problems have affected Thucydides' account?

## KEY TURNING POINTS

### When did it happen?

The plague broke out in Athens in 430 BCE and lasted four years.

### Where did it happen?

The crowded streets of Athens.

### What happened?

Virulent epidemic brought to Greece by ship from Asia Minor and North Africa. Spread through Athenian population with ferocity—most of the population were infected.

### Who was involved?

The Athenian population. Pericles was a notable victim.

### Why did it happen?

The Athenian strategy to abandon its fields and bring all population inside the walls of the city meant that possibly 300 000 people (citizens, *metics* and slaves) crowded the streets of Athens and the space between the Long Walls. This congestion of people and the unsanitary conditions fuelled the epidemic.

### Why was it significant?

Approximately 25 per cent of the population died. This had a severe impact on the war effort, both militarily and socially, and took Athens more than a decade to recover from. Pericles' death brought a change in the Athenian leadership and therefore a change in war strategy.

430  
BCE

## THE PLAGUE



ARCHIDAMIAN  
WAR  
(431–421 BCE)

### Where did it happen?

Amphipolis, a city in Thrace, on the Strymon River.

### Why did it happen?

The location of Amphipolis was critical to Athens because of its need to maintain grain supplies from the Black Sea region.

### Who was involved?

Cleon of Athens; Brasidas, Spartan general.

### What happened?

In 424 BCE the city fell to Brasidas, following his strategy to turn Thrace against Athens. In 423 BCE Cleon led Athenian forces to recapture the city. Following a pitched battle, the Athenians were defeated, while both Brasidas and Cleon were killed in the fighting.

### Why was it significant?

Besides pressure on the Athenian food supply, the deaths of both Cleon and Brasidas sapped energy for war from Athens and Sparta, opening the way for Nicias to negotiate peace.

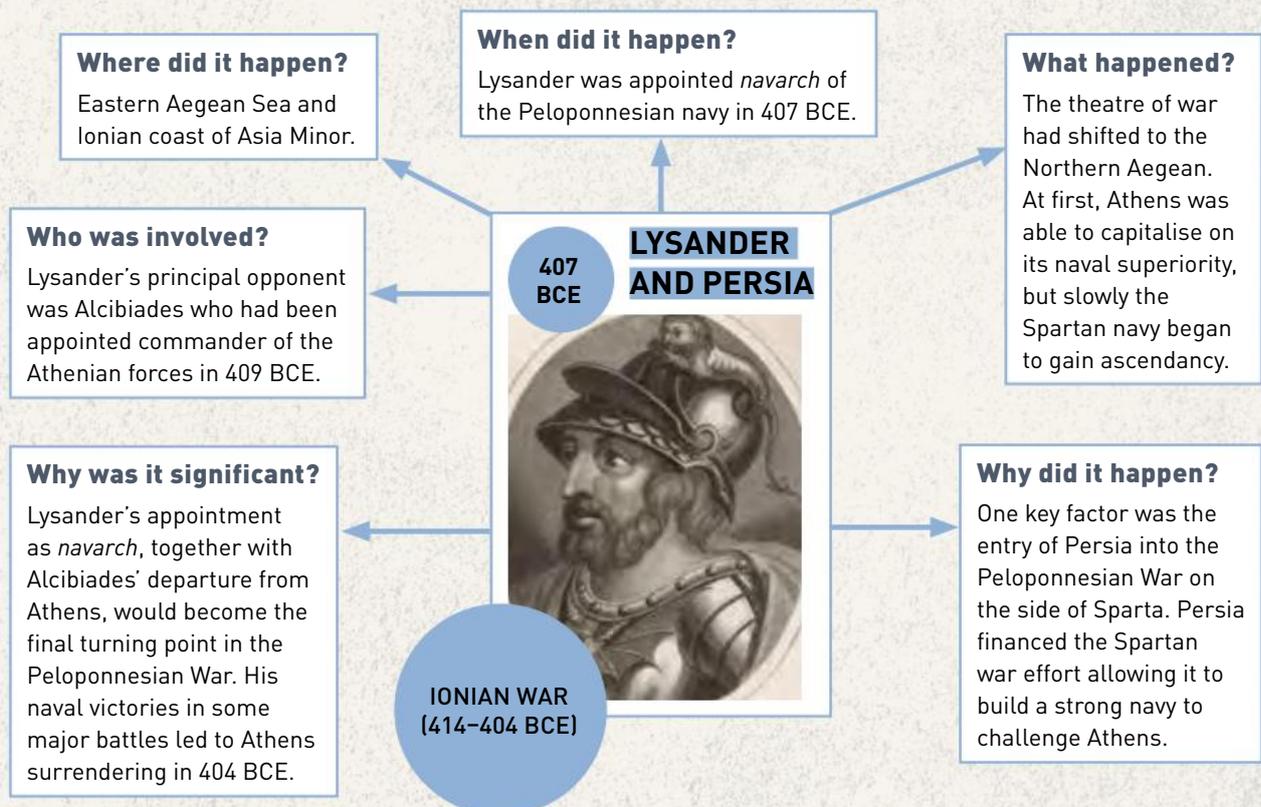
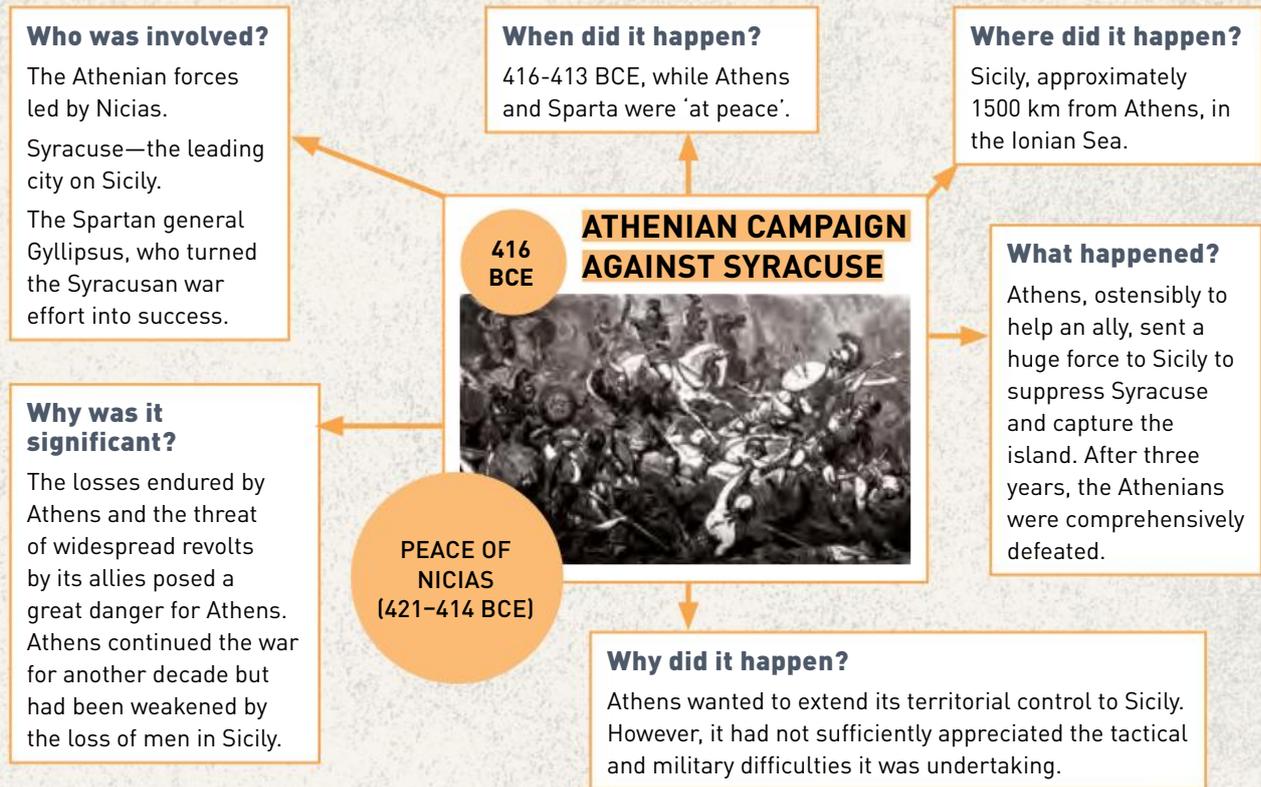
422  
BCE

## BATTLE OF AMPHIPOLIS



PEACE OF  
NICIAS  
(421–414 BCE)

## SECTION B: OVERVIEW



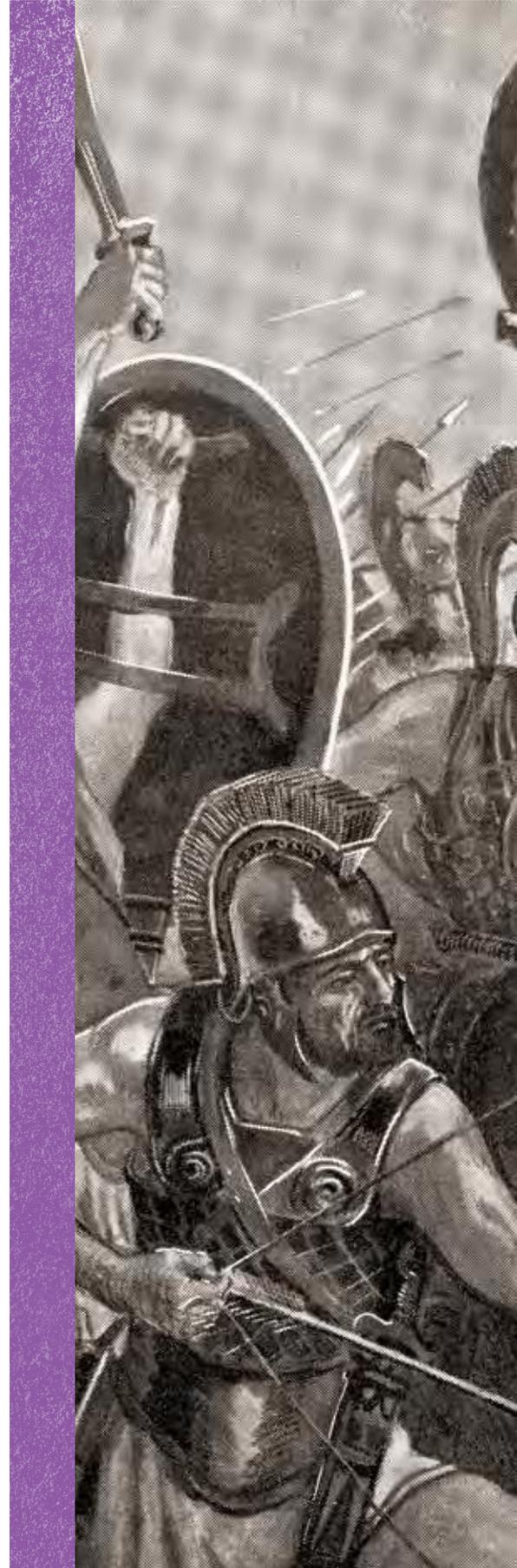
CHAPTER

# 5

## THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF ATHENS AND SPARTA

'Athenians', Spartans', and Syracusans' fear and resistance to each other drove their distinct modes of state formation ever faster, and the conflicts between these three formative states caught up other smaller cities in similar processes of transformation. The process came to a head in the Peloponnesian War (or Athenian War, as Spartans and Syracusans must have called it) of 431–404 BCE.'

IAN MORRIS'



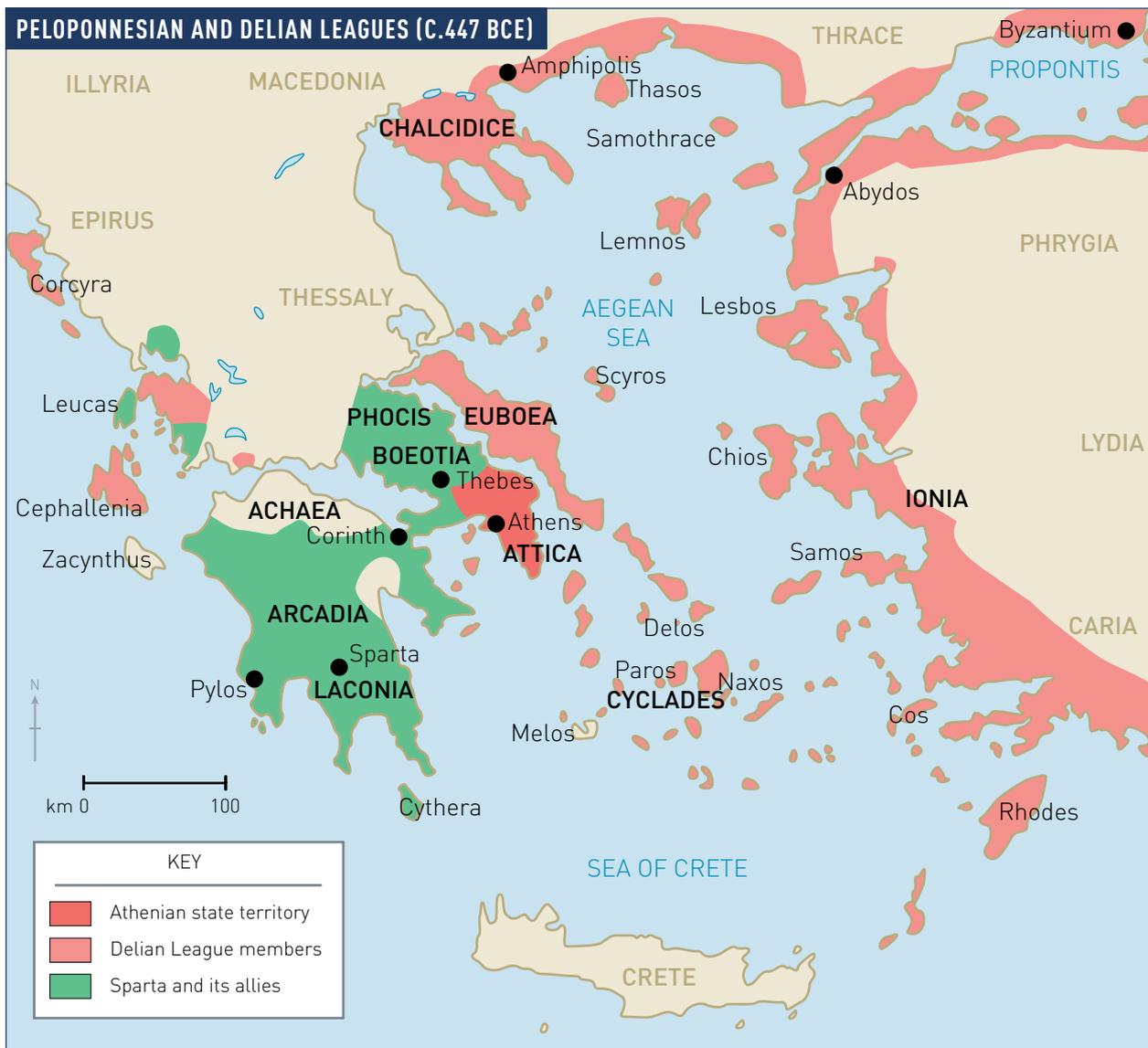


The battle of Tanagra in 457 BCE, fought between Athens and Sparta.

# OVERVIEW

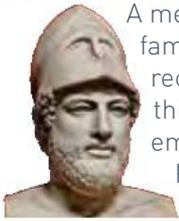
## KEY POINTS

- Between the end of the Greco–Persian wars and the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War, Athens transformed the Delian League into an empire that it used to strengthen its political, military and economic power.
- Both Cimon and Pericles used aggressive foreign policies to bolster Athens' power and status.
- Sparta was a reluctant participant in the First Peloponnesian War.
- A key reason for the Second Peloponnesian War was that Sparta was afraid of Athens' expanding empire and influence.





**PERICLES**



A member of the influential Alcmaeonid family. Was elected *strategos* (general) a record fifteen times 443–429 BCE. During this period, Pericles expanded the Athenian empire and led Athens into the Second Peloponnesian War. A victim of the plague, he died in 429 BCE.

**COMPARING ATHENS AND SPARTA**

ATHENS		SPARTA
<p><b>Democratic constitution</b></p> <p>The Athenian government was based on the <i>boule</i> (council or senate) with 50 representatives from each of Athens' 10 tribes, and the <i>ecclesia</i> (assembly), which was open to every male citizen over the age of 21.</p>	<b>POLITICAL SYSTEM</b>	<p><b>Mixed constitution</b></p> <p>Sparta's political system comprised elements of monarchy (2 kings), aristocracy (the council of 28 elders elected for life) and democracy (the 5 annually elected <i>ephors</i> and the assembly of all Spartan males over the age of 30 years).</p>
<p>The Athenian hinterland is called Attica and was approximately 1000 square kilometres. In mid 5th century BCE, the estimated military strength of Athens numbered about 50 000 men. The overall population of Athens numbered about 200 000.</p>	<b>LAND AND POPULATION SIZE</b>	<p>Sparta's territories spread across Laconia and neighbouring Messenia. According to Herodotus, on the eve of the battle of Plataea, Sparta had 8000 military personnel available. The overall population probably numbered over 100 000.</p>
<p>Athens was visually dominated by the Acropolis and the iconic religious buildings. However, in the mid 5th century BCE, none were standing, following the destruction of Athens by the Persians in 480 BCE.</p>	<b>PHYSICAL APPEARANCE</b>	<p>Thucydides famously describes Sparta as a collection of villages and that a visitor could never assess the strength of Sparta just by its appearance.</p>
<p><b>Outward looking</b></p> <p>Pericles described Athenian society as an education to Greece; it was cosmopolitan because of its trading networks.</p>	<b>CULTURAL VALUES</b>	<p><b>Insular</b></p> <p>Spartan militarist society was conservative in nature, and geographically landlocked. It looked inward and did not welcome visitors.</p>

**KEY EVENTS**

**460 BCE**

Outbreak of First Peloponnesian War

**460/459 BCE**

Athens begins hostilities with Halieis, Cecryphaleia, Aegina and Megara

**457 BCE**

Sparta defeats Athens at Tanagra

Athenian victory at Oenophyta

Aegina falls to Athens

**454 BCE**

Athenian expedition to Egypt fails

**454 BCE**

Treasury of Delian League moved from Delos to Athens

**451 BCE**

Athens and Sparta agree on Five Years' Peace

**447 BCE**

Construction begins on the Parthenon

**447 BCE**

Revolt in Euboea

**446 BCE**

Spartan *hoplites* march into Attica

**446/5 BCE**

Thirty Years' Peace agreed upon by Athens and Sparta (end of First Peloponnesian War)

Revolt of Samos

**440/39 BCE**

Athens breaks peace treaty by helping Corcyra against Corinth

**433 BCE**

Megara complains that the Megarian Decree violates Thirty Years' Peace treaty

**432 BCE**

Potidaea revolts against Athens

# DELIAN LEAGUE TO ATHENIAN EMPIRE



THE FIRST  
PELOPONNESIAN  
WAR



THE PENTECONTAETIA

## DID YOU KNOW?

Cimon's close relationship with Sparta brought about his political demise. In 464 BCE an earthquake rocked Sparta, and led to a rebellion by Sparta's *helots*. In response to Sparta's cry for help, Cimon led an army of 4000 Athenian *hoplites* to Sparta. However, while the Spartans allowed forces from other cities to stay and help, they sent the Athenians home—afraid the Athenians would be persuaded to change sides and aid the *helots*. Offended by the perceived humiliation, the Athenians turned against Sparta and anyone thought to be pro-Spartan. Cimon was ostracised the next year.

**THUCYDIDES:** 'In these years the Athenians made their empire more and more strong and greatly added to their own power at home.'<sup>2</sup>

The years following the defeat of the Persians at Plataea (479 BCE) shaped the course of Greek history, particularly for Athens, which repositioned itself as the leading city-state in Greece. Even though Athens and Sparta had united to defeat Persia, there was little affinity between them.<sup>3</sup>

After the victory at Plataea, Sparta withdrew from leadership of Greece, as it was more concerned with controlling the *helots* at home than building an empire. Sparta's sphere of influence—known as the Peloponnesian League—was composed of smaller allies that Sparta had defeated and imposed treaty conditions upon, as well as larger states such as Corinth and Thebes that made their own decisions and with whom Sparta cooperated. Sparta's allies were politically like-minded oligarchic governments and—unlike Athens—there is no evidence that Sparta established garrisons to maintain control or impose financial tributes.<sup>4</sup>

Athens, in contrast, used its position as head of the Delian League to push for a maritime empire. After Themistocles was ostracised (late 470s BCE) and Aristides died (467 BCE), Cimon became the preeminent politician in Athens.

Cimon capitalised on his position and expanded Athenian power in the Aegean. He conquered Eion on the River Strymon (near the border between Macedonia and Thrace), the island of Scyros and the Euboean city of Carystus. He subdued Naxos when it tried to leave the league in 467 BCE, reducing it to a tributary state (providing money rather than ships)—the first tributary state in a long list to come. Cimon also inflicted major blows on Persia by liberating the Greek cities on the Carian and Lycian coasts and destroying the Persian fleet in Asia Minor in about 466 BCE. Over the next few years, Cimon solidified these gains by adding the Thracian Chersonese and Thasos to the Delian League, thereby setting out a policy of using force to compel reluctant allies into subjugation.

The Delian League began in 478 BCE as a voluntary organisation of allies. Some members contributed money and others ships to sustain the campaign against Persia. Over time, though, the league became a means to Athenian hegemonic domination. Membership ceased to be voluntary, Athens became increasingly dominant and more members became tributary states rather than supplying ships.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### BATTLE OF EURYMEDON (C.466 BCE)

In the early 470s and 460s BCE, Cimon was commanding an aggressive military campaign against Persia. In about 466 BCE he won a pivotal land and sea battle over Persian forces at the mouth of the River Eurymedon on the coast of Pamphylia. Cimon commanded some 200 ships, most of which were contributed by members of the Delian League.

The booty from the battle was used to construct the southern wall of the Acropolis. The victory is considered the Persians' last chance to regain military power in the Aegean and was instrumental in helping Cimon establish a probable peace treaty. The 'peace' also left some members of the Delian League wondering if—now that Persia had been defeated—they needed to continue a defensive alliance with Athens.

However, Cimon's run of success ended in 461 BCE when he was ostracised. He was accused of being a friend of the Spartans and an enemy of the people of Athens. The accusations against Cimon had been brought by Pericles, who—with Cimon ousted and Ephialtes assassinated—assumed political dominance in Athens. Under Pericles, Athenian aggression continued. New alliances were established with Thessaly and Argos, and Athens also seized Naupactus. Naupactus was a significant addition to the Athenian empire. It was located on the western entrance to the Corinthian Gulf, and it gave Athens control of sea traffic in and out of the gulf—including that of its trading rival, Corinth. When Athens settled *helots* who had been expelled from Sparta at Naupactus, it further increased tensions.<sup>5</sup>



HISTORIAN KAGAN:  
THE ATHENIAN  
EMPIRE

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Sparta form the Peloponnesian League?
2. What measures did Cimon and Pericles take to strengthen Athens' control of the Delian League?
3. To what extent did Athens and Sparta control their leagues differently?

### CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

Investigate each of the following instances of Athenian expansionism, then answer the questions below: Aegina, Carystus, Eion, Erythrae, Megara, Naxos, Scyros, Thasos:

1. When did it occur?
2. Who was the Athenian in charge?
3. What led to the Athenian action?
4. Was Athens in the right?
5. What were the consequences for the city?

### BELIEFS AND VALUES

Research and compile a chart comparing the Delian League and the Peloponnesian League. Consider:

- who the members were
- when and why they joined their league
- what conditions and obligations they faced
- what advantages and disadvantages they received.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Delian League was divided into five administrative regions: Ionia, the Hellespont, Thrace, Caria and the Islands. At its peak, the league had more than 300 member states. We know the names and the financial tribute each ally paid through the Athenian Tribute Lists (see Source 4.51).

ACTIVITY

## THE FIRST PELOPONNESIAN WAR (460–445 BCE)

TERRY BUCKLEY: 'Unlike the Peloponnesian War of 431, which the Spartans waged with all their strength, the First Peloponnesian War was essentially between Sparta's allies and the Athenians.'<sup>6</sup>

### CAUSES OF THE FIRST PELOPONNESIAN WAR: MEGARA AND CORINTH

A key factor leading up to the outbreak of the First Peloponnesian War was the escalating hostility between Athens and Corinth, which was Sparta's key ally.

ACTIVITY

### KEY CONCEPTS

In small groups, investigate the meanings of *hegemony* and *imperialism*. Explain which term best suits Athens' control of its allies.

In about 461 BCE, Corinth encroached on the territory of Megara—its neighbour, and fellow member of the Peloponnesian League. In retaliation, Megara left the Peloponnesian League and put itself under the protection of Athens.

Athens then helped Megara build Long Walls between the city and its port, Nisaea, and stationed a garrison there. At the same time, Athens also took control of Pagae on the other side of Megara, securing access to both sides of the Corinthian isthmus—and inciting deep resentment from the Corinthians.<sup>7</sup> Athens was not acting out of goodwill, particularly as relations between Corinth and Athens had been harmonious for some centuries, with Megara a common irritant.<sup>8</sup> However, Athens feared a Spartan attack—and Megara would provide an obstacle to any land invasion.<sup>9</sup>

#### ➔ SOURCE 5.01

### ATHENS, MEGARA AND THE PELOPONNESE



#### DID YOU KNOW?

As Athens took control of the Delian League, they established military colonies on land confiscated from allies that had rebelled. These military colonies were called *cleruchies*, and Athenian citizens were encouraged to settle on them. The *cleruchies* were a method of relieving population pressure in Athens, as well as maintaining order. In the 440s BCE, Chersonese, Naxos, Andros and Lemnos (among others) were all *cleruchies*.

According to Thucydides, the first action in the lead-up to the war was in 460 BCE when the Athenians made a failed assault on Halieis, which was defended by Corinth, Epidaurus and Sicyon. The Athenians then landed on Cecryphaleia, near the island of Aegina. Both actions were on the east coast of the Peloponnese and signalled Athens' growing interest in the region.

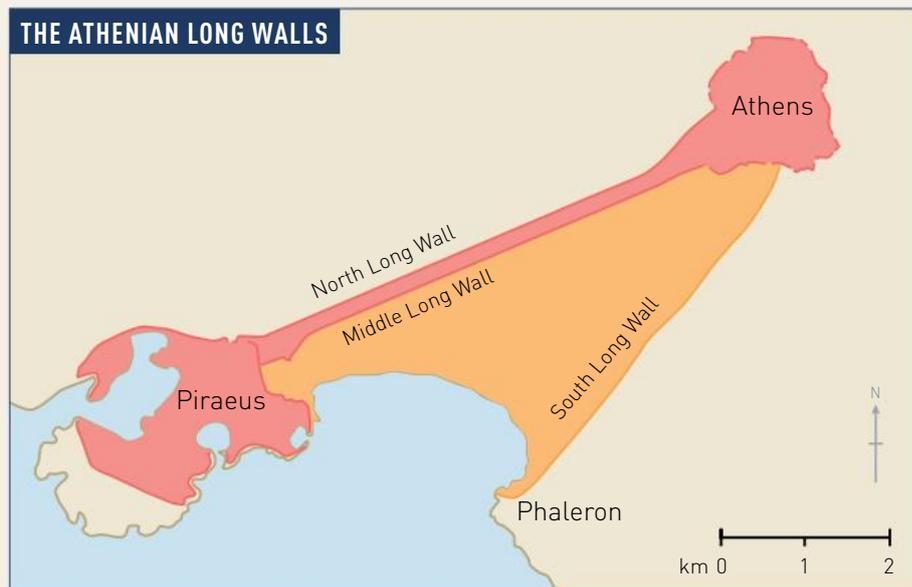
Concerned about its own fate, the island of Aegina joined forces with the Peloponnesian League to launch a naval attack on Athens. The defeat was decisive, with seventy Peloponnesian ships sunk or captured, leaving the way open for Athens to invade Aegina. Defeated, Aegina was incorporated into the Delian League and made to pay an annual tribute of thirty talents.

Meanwhile, the Corinthians—wrongly believing that the Athenians would be unable to help Megara because of their military involvement at Aegina and in Egypt—attacked Megara. The two battles that followed left the Corinthians seriously wounded, and served notice of the kind of atrocities that would mark the Peloponnesian Wars, when Athenian troops stoned to death a large contingent of Corinthians who had become trapped in a gully.<sup>10</sup>

The animosity between Athens and Corinth dragged other allies into the dispute.

## THE ATHENIAN LONG WALLS

Between 461 BCE and 456 BCE, Athens erected two walls roughly six kilometres long, connecting Athens and its two ports: the north wall to Piraeus and the south wall to Phaleron. In about 445 BCE another wall was built parallel to the north wall, creating two corridors. This meant that if either of the outer walls were breached, the other would still provide a secure connection between the city and the port. The walls were dismantled by Sparta in 404 BCE, then rebuilt in the 390s BCE.



### SOURCE 5.02

#### THE LONG WALLS

### THUCYDIDES ON THE LONG WALLS

The Phaleric wall ran for four miles, before it joined that round the city; and of this last nearly five had a guard, although part of it was left without one, [namely] that between the Long Wall and the Phaleric. Then there were the Long Walls to Piraeus, a distance of some four miles and a half, the outer of which was manned. Lastly, the circumference of Piraeus with Munychia was nearly seven miles and a half; only half of this, however, was guarded.

### SOURCE 5.03

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.13.7, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*



### SOURCE 5.04

The first Long Walls were built to connect Athens and its ports.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

### MEGARA

Megara was situated on the isthmus between Athens and Corinth, on an important land route between the Peloponnese and the mainland. Megara had been a member of the Peloponnesian League since 500 BCE, but defected to Athens in about 460 BCE seeking protection from Corinth. In 446 BCE, Megara rejoined the Peloponnesian League—thus giving Sparta land access to Attica.



### ↑ SOURCE 5.05

The Isthmus of Corinth today.

The first open hostilities between Athens and Sparta occurred in 458/7 BCE, when Sparta helped its kinsmen in Boeotia who were under attack from Phocis, an ally of Athens. Furthermore, there were rumours that Sparta planned to overthrow the democratic government of Athens. An Athenian army of 14 000 men met the Spartans at Tanagra, on the plain of Asopus—but were soundly defeated. However, the Athenians regrouped and overran the region, and held it until the battle of Coronea in 447 BCE, when Athens was forced to surrender its control of the whole region.

The First Peloponnesian War was essentially one battle that Sparta was reluctantly drawn into by the actions of its ally, Corinth, and its tense relations with Athens.<sup>11</sup>

## THE FIVE YEARS' PEACE (451–446 BCE)

In about 451 BCE, Athens and Sparta agreed on a five-year peace. Although the truce was soon under threat, with both sides contravening the arrangements, it somehow remained intact. In 449 BCE, Sparta took control of the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi away from the Phocaeans and gave it back to the Delphians (only for Athens to retake the sanctuary in 447 BCE and give control back to the Phocaeans).<sup>12</sup>

Emboldened by the Boeotian success at Coronea, Euboea and Megara revolted against Athens in 446 BCE. Megara, having requested help from Corinth, Sicyon and Epidaurus, killed most of the Athenians posted to the garrison there—probably to win back the trust of Corinth and Sparta.<sup>13</sup> At about the same time, Spartans under their king Pleistoanax briefly invaded Attica and then returned to Sparta.

Now unhindered, Pericles increased the tempo of his expansionist policy, and sailed to Euboea with a huge force of fifty ships and 5000 *hoplites*. He subdued the revolt at Euboea, expelled the elite of Chalcis, and placed Athenian colonists there, effectively turning Euboea into a garrison. According to Plutarch, Pericles' actions in Euboea were intended to show Athens' strength to its remaining allies, as the Euboeans had captured an Athenian ship and killed the whole crew.<sup>14</sup> The survival of the 'Chalcis Decree' provides information about the extent of control

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did Athens help Megara?
2. Explain how Corinth hoped to benefit from war with Athens.
3. To what extent was the Five Years' Peace threatened by the activities of Athens and Sparta?

Athens imposed, emphasising the importance of Chalcis to Athens. While the Athenians pledged not to destroy the city or expel its citizens, Chalcidian men of fighting age were required to swear unconditional loyalty to Athens.<sup>15</sup>

### THE CHALCIS DECREE

I will not revolt from the people of Athens by any means or device whatsoever, neither in word or in deed, nor will I obey anyone who does revolt, and if anyone revolts I will denounce him to the Athenians, and ... I will be the best and fairest ally I am able to be and will help and defend the Athenian people, in the event of anyone wronging the Athenians people, and I will obey the Athenian people.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 5.06 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What terms did Athens impose on Chalcis?
2. What does this reveal about the extent of Athens' control over its allies?

ACTIVITY

### SOURCE 5.06

*Cited in Terry Buckley, Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC: A Source-based Approach, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2010), 191.*



THE CHALCIS DECREE

## THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE

**N.G.L. HAMMOND:** 'In effect the Greek states returned to the balance of power between two groups, headed by Athens and Sparta, which had existed before they adopted a veiled hostility in 461.'<sup>16</sup>

Having resolved the crisis at Euboea—and after fifteen years where neither side could land a decisive blow—Athens and Sparta negotiated the Thirty Years' Peace treaty in the winter of 446/5 BCE.

The terms of the treaty revealed each side's grievances. Athens' surrender of the Peloponnesian territories it had captured—namely Nisaea, Pagae, Troezen and Achaia—showed how Athens had been trying to expand its territory; Sparta's recognition of the Athenian empire showed Sparta's anxiety for its own sphere of influence.

Although the peace treaty bound Sparta, Athens and all their allies, an additional clause prevented allies from changing sides. This highlights another factor that would continue to bring trouble—the jockeying by individual city-states for an advantageous position with Athens or Sparta. The treaty gave the key players an opportunity to compromise by acknowledging the political status quo and giving them the space to attend to their own concerns.

Sparta was not in a financial position to undertake war against the wealthy and increasingly powerful Athens—but Pericles was very interested in expanding Athens' power.

Over the next fifteen years, Athens and Sparta, among other things, had to make sure that they kept their allies satisfied. Athens continued to increase its control of the northern Aegean, with a colony at Brea in Thrace in 445 BCE and Amphipolis in 437 BCE. Aware of the importance of maintaining vital grain supplies, in about 436 BCE Pericles and a large fleet sailed into the Black Sea to develop links with the Greek cities there.<sup>17</sup>



ATHENS AND ITS ALLIES



DELIAN LEAGUE AND PERICLES

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What were the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace?
2. Why were the allies unhappy with the terms of the treaty?
3. Why did Athens concentrate its activities in the Black Sea region?

## TENSIONS IN THE DELIAN LEAGUE: THE REVOLT OF SAMOS

In around 441 BCE hostilities broke out between the island of Samos and the Ionian city of Miletus over control of Priene, a small coastal city near Miletus. This would serve as one of the greatest challenges to Athenian expansionist interests before the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War. Both Samos and Miletus were founding members of the Delian League—but Samos was still independent and controlled its own navy, whereas Miletus, after numerous revolts, had lost both its freedom and its navy. Facing certain disaster, Miletus sent envoys to Athens asking for help.

### ➔ SOURCE 5.07

Remains of the ancient sanctuary of the goddess Hera, Samos.



According to Plutarch, Pericles wanted to send an expeditionary fleet to Samos because the Samians had refused to stop their actions against Miletus or arbitrate—and also because Athens could not tolerate defiance by a strong power,<sup>18</sup> as Samos was one of the three fully independent members of the Delian League at that time. Athens had grown increasingly reliant on the economic and military benefits it drew from the Delian League, and it could not afford to have defiant allies.

### DID YOU KNOW?

In his lost *Histories*, Samian tyrant Duris (c.340–280) describes the torture and brutal deaths of Samian naval officers at the hands of Pericles. Plutarch dismisses the account as a crude attempt to blacken the reputation of Athens. Such outbreaks of barbarity were not uncommon, but the charges against Pericles are generally dismissed as anti-Athenian bias propagated by the Samian elite. However, such stories point to the degree of animosity felt by both sides.

The fleet sent from Athens, led by Pericles, quickly took control, placed a garrison on Samos, took hostages and replaced the Samian oligarchy with a puppet democratic government (which was now a common feature in cities controlled by Athens).

Fighting stopped, briefly, once the Athenians had taken over. But after Pericles left the island, the Samians revolted, aided by 700 mercenaries sent by the Lydian *satrap* Pissuthnes. The Athenian garrison was captured and the Samian oligarchs restored to power.

News of the rebellion spread quickly, and Byzantium, located on the Hellespont to the north, also rebelled against Athens. Surprisingly, Corinthian envoys spoke *against* Peloponnesian intervention at Samos, arguing that Athens was not breaking the terms of the treaty, but was simply attending to its affairs and controlling its allies, as agreed by the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty.

The Athenian campaign to suppress Samos took more than a year—including a siege that lasted nine months—and was enormously costly: for the first time, Athens borrowed from its temple funds to finance the war, indicating the importance of keeping control over its allies. To punish the Samians, Pericles demolished the walls of the city, imposed a heavy fine of 1400 talents to cover the Athenian expenditure, and confiscated its fleet.

## ORIGINS OF THE SECOND PELOPONNESIAN WAR

DIODORUS SICULUS: 'the Athenians no longer treated their allies equitably, as they had done earlier, but were subjecting them to a rule as harsh as it was arrogant. In consequence, most of the allies, unable to tolerate their severity, were discussing the idea of revolt with one another; while some of them in defiance of the general congress [of the Delian League] were acting as though they were independent.'<sup>19</sup>

While the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty had calmed Athenian–Spartan anxieties, they pushed the rest of the Greek world to choose between them, with the mainland largely supporting Sparta, and the city-states of the Aegean and Ionia falling in behind Athens. It would be Corinthian interests in Corcyra, Potidaea and Megara that would trigger the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War.

### CORCYRA

The first provocation for warfare took place in Corcyra (modern Corfu), a large Ionian island off the northwest coast of Greece.

Founded by Corinth in about 734 BCE on the sea-route to the Greek cities of southern Italy and Sicily, Corcyra was critical for travel and safe east–west trading. In turn, Corcyra founded the city of Epidamnus, further north on the Adriatic coast.

In 435 BCE, civil war broke out at Epidamnus. The supporters of the aristocratic party were driven out of Epidamnus; they then joined up with local tribes and attacked the city. When the democrats holding Epidamnus asked for help, Corcyra claimed neutrality. But Corinth immediately dispatched an army to help the besieged city on the grounds that they had co-founded the colony.

The historic hatred that existed between Corinth and Corcyra further complicated the conflict. The Corinthians felt that the Corcyrans did not accord them the appropriate respect, having denied them the 'usual rights and honours at public festivals or allow[ing] them the correct facilities for making sacrifices.'<sup>20</sup> More significantly, Corinth resented the wealth and military power Corcyra had acquired through its location on the sea-route to southern Italy. By supporting Epidamnus, Corinth could also move into the Corcyran sphere of influence in the northern Adriatic and cement its interest in the region.<sup>21</sup>

The ensuing diplomatic and military manoeuvrings quickly descended into a naval confrontation between Corcyra and Corinth, the first of which Corcyra won at Leucimne in 435 BCE. Now in control of the northern Ionian Sea, Corcyra could attack Corinthian interests. In retaliation, between 435 BCE and 433 BCE Corinth strengthened its fleet with the intention of attacking Corcyra, forcing the latter to appeal for help to Athens.

For Athens, the decision to help Corcyra rested on the military and commercial benefit it would accrue—as well as the opportunity to control the Corcyran navy. If Athens had rejected Corcyra's request for help, Corcyra may have been defeated by Corinth and become a potential threat to Athens. Another factor was probably the alliances Athens had renewed with Rhegium and Leontini in 433/2 BCE to ensure a clear passage to Italy.<sup>22</sup> Athens' solution was a defensive alliance to protect Corcyra should it be attacked. Athens sent ten ships to bolster the



COLONIES AND  
MOTHER-CITIES

Corcyran navy, with strict instructions not to engage in hostilities with Corinth—unless the Corinthians tried to land on Corcyra.

Unable to find a solution, a major naval battle between Corcyra and Corinth and its allies took place off the islands of Sybota, while the Athenian fleet stood by observing. Corinth had the upper hand after the first day, but the arrival the next day of another twenty Athenian ships alarmed Corinth into ceasing hostilities, with both sides claiming victory. Its fleet scattered, Corinth declared the Thirty Years' Peace broken: in siding with Corcyra, it argued, Athens had violated the treaty's terms not to engage in hostilities with a member of the Peloponnesian League.

However, much to Corinth's annoyance, Sparta still refused to be drawn into the conflict.<sup>23</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 5.08

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.44–45.1, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).*

#### DEBATES CONCERNING CORCYRA

The Athenians after listening to both sides, discussed the matter at two assemblies. At the first of these, opinions 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 Peloponnesians. Instead the alliance was to be of a defensive character and would only operate if Athens or Corcyra or any of their allies were attacked from outside.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 5.08 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What kind of alliance did Athens establish with Corcyra?
2. To what extent does this source suggest that Athens wanted to go to war?
3. Write a paragraph explaining who gained and who lost from the situation at Corcyra.

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did Corinth and Corcyra not get along?
2. Why did Athens agree to support Corcyra?
3. To what extent did the actions of Corinth reflect their foreign policy since the end of the Greco-Persian wars in 479 BCE?

## POTIDAEA

The second provocation for warfare took place at Potidaea, a town in the Chalcidice near Macedonia.

Even before the dust had settled at Corcyra—and angry that Sparta would not break its diplomatic relations with Athens—Corinth went out on its own and supported Potidaea, another of its colonies, in a revolt from Athens.

As a tribute-paying ally, Potidaea was annoyed that Athens had doubled its annual tribute to fifteen talents. However, it was not just about the financial tribute.

Athens had also insisted that Potidaea:

- demolish its fortifications
- send hostages to Athens

- banish Corinthian magistrates stationed at Potidaea
- refuse future appointments of Corinthian magistrates.

The Athenians realised the hatred that Corinth had towards them and feared that Corinth would incite Potidaea and other allies to revolt. Athens' deteriorating relations with Perdiccas of Macedonia—a former ally who was now inciting trouble in the Athenian sphere of interest near Potidaea—compounded their concern.

The military conflict that followed could be attributed to misunderstandings on all sides: Potidaea, Sparta, Athens and Corinth. Buoyed by a Spartan promise that it would protect them against any Athenian aggression, Potidaea supported Perdiccas in his anti-Athenian activities. The arrival of thirty Athenian ships, sent to fight Perdiccas in Macedonia, caused Corinth to dispatch a large reinforcement to Potidaea.

It took two further contingencies of Athenian naval and *hoplite* forces and a siege that lasted two years before Potidaea finally fell and was razed in 430 BCE. That three Athenian contingents, comprising over seventy ships, were dispatched to Potidaea emphasises how important the region was to Athens.

Athens had to subdue Potidaea or face the prospect of a wave of anticipated revolts from its empire. At the same time, Sparta had to decide between declaring war on Athens or the prospect of losing the support of Corinth.



#### SOURCE 5.09

The siege of Potidaea by Athenians, 432 BCE.

#### PROBLEMS AT POTIDAEA

Almost immediately [after the incident in Corcyra] ... there was another dispute between Athens and the Peloponnese. This also contributed to the breaking out of the war. It concerned the people of Potidaea ... 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 had no illusions about the hatred 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 the 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 the 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.

#### SOURCE 5.10

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.56–57.1, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).*

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 5.10 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. According to the source, what demands did Athens make on Potidaea?
2. Why, in your view, did Athens reject the Potidaean request to withdraw the demands?
3. Write an extended response investigating the degree to which Athens was right to fear widespread revolts from its allies in the Delian League.

## MEGARA

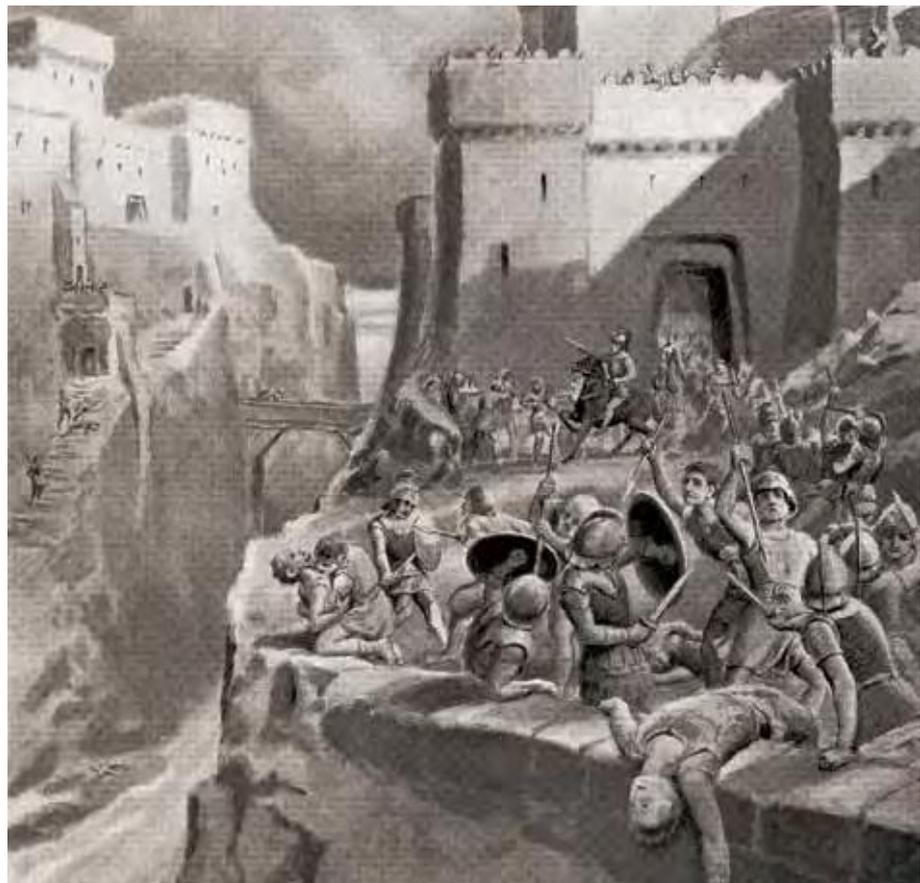
The third provocation for warfare was the so-called Megarian Decree in about 432 BCE, and it was the most serious of the provocations.<sup>24</sup> The decree banned Megara from free trade in the harbours and marketplaces of the Athenian sphere of influence—and it was the first time this type of embargo was implemented.<sup>25</sup> While we are not able to precisely date the decree, it relates closely to the events at Potidaea, and can be seen as one of the measures Pericles was advocating in anticipation of war (another measure being the reorganisation of state finances to divert excess funds into the maintenance of the navy and city walls).

Ancient historian Plutarch blames Pericles' opposition to rescinding the Megarian Decree as the principle cause for the outbreak of war. Plutarch dismissed Athenian complaints that Megara had used sacred land belonging to Athens, had encroached onto Athenian borderlands, and had harboured slaves—pointing instead to personal grudges against Megara.<sup>26</sup> Rather, Pericles' motives were punitive, and to show that Athens had the naval capacity to 'close the seas'.<sup>27</sup>

Athens and Megara had been at odds since 447 BCE, when an Athenian garrison placed at Megara had been murdered. Now, Megara made the relationship worse by sending eight ships to help Corinth at Leucimne and Sybota,<sup>28</sup> as well as allegedly killing the Athenian emissary to Megara—which caused irreconcilable differences between the cities.<sup>29</sup> Athens wanted to use the example of Megara to deter other allies from becoming involved in the conflict.<sup>30</sup> In Plutarch's opinion, while the reasons for imposing the decree are not easily discernible, everyone agreed that Pericles opposed revoking it.<sup>31</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 5.11

The revolt of Megara against Athens, 446 BCE.



## MEGARIAN DECREE: HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The Megarian Decree was issued by Athens in 432 BCE to block Megara from trading with Athens and in the Athenian sphere of influence. References to it are scattered among several sources, some of which are provided below. While Thucydides did not treat the decree as a reason for the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War, it is a contentious issue among modern scholars.

### ARISTOPHANES, *THE ARCHARNIANS*

Well, pretty soon the Megarians were starving by slow degrees, and not unnaturally they asked their allies the Spartans to try and get the decree reversed ... They asked us, more than one, but we refused and so the shields began to clash.

### PLUTARCH ON PERICLES

The real reasons which caused the decree to be passed are extremely hard to discover, but all writers agree in blaming Pericles for the fact that it was not revoked. Some of them, however, say that his firm stand on this point was based on the highest motives combined with a shrewd appreciation of where Athens' best interests lay ... But there are others who consider that he defied the Spartans out of an aggressive arrogance and a desire to demonstrate his own strength.

### PERICLES' SPEECH TO THE ATHENIAN ASSEMBLY

Now it was clear before that [Sparta] entertained designs against us; it is still more clear now. The treaty provides that we shall mutually submit our differences to legal settlement, and that we shall meanwhile each keep what we have. ... They order us to raise the siege of Potidaea, to let Aegina be independent, to revoke the Megara decree; and they conclude with an ultimatum warning us to leave the Hellenes independent. I hope that you will none of you think that we shall be going to war for a trifle if we refuse to revoke the Megara decree, which appears in front of their complaints, and the revocation of which is to save us from war, or let any feeling of self-reproach linger in your minds, as if you went to war for slight cause.

### HISTORIAN MEIGGS ON THE MEGARIAN DECREE

The Megarian Decree violated the spirit rather than the letter of the peace. It was an extreme demonstration of Athenian imperialism for, while it was a harsh blow against Megara, it also ignored the economic interests of the allies.

### 📖 SOURCE 5.12

*Aristophanes, The Acharnians*  
535–539, trans. Alan H.  
Sommerstein (Penguin Books,  
1973).

### 📖 SOURCE 5.13

*Plutarch, Life of Pericles, 29.4;*  
31.1–2, in *The Rise and Fall of*  
*Athens*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert  
(New York: Penguin Books,  
1960).

### 📖 SOURCE 5.14

*Thucydides, History of the*  
*Peloponnesian War* 1.140.4,  
trans. Richard Crawley  
(London: J.M. Dent & Sons;  
New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.,  
1914).

### 📖 SOURCE 5.15

*Russell Meiggs, The Athenian*  
*Empire* (Oxford, Clarendon  
Press, 1975), 203.

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

1. What does Aristophanes (Source 5.12) say is the effect of the decree?
2. What does Plutarch (Source 5.13) think are the reasons for the decree?
3. Is there any evidence in the speech by Pericles (Source 5.14) that counters the idea that the Athenians used the decree to declare war?
4. Thucydides does not consider the Megarian Decree as an important cause of the Second Peloponnesian War. Having read the accounts above, what case would you make?
5. Compare your conclusions with Russel Meiggs (Source 5.15) and other historians who have written on the subject.

## ATHENS AND SPARTA RESPOND

Bombarded by complaints from its allies—especially Corinth—and concerned that its leadership of the Peloponnesian League could be challenged, Sparta called a meeting of the Spartan assembly in 432 BCE, and invited all states with grievances to attend.

Thucydides records that many men spoke before the Corinthian representatives took the floor. In the first of four set speeches, the Corinthians:

- condemned Athenian expansionism
- charged Sparta with allowing Athenian power to grow
- threatened to abandon the Peloponnesian League unless Sparta declared war.<sup>32</sup>

The Athenian response, according to Thucydides, was delivered by a delegation that just happened to be in Sparta. While pointing out that Athens was not inclined towards war, the Athenians robustly justified the Athenian position. Beginning with a lesson from recent history, the Athenian spokesmen:

- reminded the Spartans that the Athenians had built their empire with willing allies
- pointed out that any empire—Athenian or Spartan—required certain types of behaviour to ensure the control of recalcitrant allies
- reiterated that if Sparta had any problems it should agree to arbitration with Athens.

The Athenian envoys finished with a threat that should Sparta declare war, Athens would match them at every turn.

Whether the threat was a deliberate provocation—or just diplomatic gamesmanship—is debatable. According to modern historian Donald Kagan, Pericles' ploy depended heavily on his good friend Archidamus, the senior Spartan king—whom Thucydides describes as intelligent and moderate<sup>33</sup>—successfully persuading the Spartan assembly to find a peaceful solution.<sup>34</sup>

Debated behind closed doors, the Spartan response focused on the speeches of Archidamus and the *ephor* Sthenelaidas, who represented the pro-war faction in Sparta. Archidamus urged caution. He pointed out that the Athenians—with their city walls, financial strength and naval power—were in a strong position and that Sparta was not prepared for a drawn-out war. Archidamus recommended that Sparta should negotiate, arbitrate and stall the Athenians for a few years, while strengthening their alliances and building up financial and naval resources to prepare for a war that might persist for generations.

However, Archidamus was vehemently challenged by the belligerent leader of the pro-war faction at Sparta, who accused him of being weak and pro-Athenian. Sthenelaidas urged the Spartans to defend their city's honour. His message was clear: Athenian aggression was obvious, and words and lawsuits were a waste of time that betrayed Sparta's allies. The only viable course of action was to help their allies immediately and forcefully. The decisive vote by the Spartan assembly was grounded as much on Sthenelaidas' powers of persuasion, and on what the modern historian Victor Hanson terms 'the burden of past glory',<sup>35</sup>

as on Thucydides' repeated observation that Sparta's fear of Athens' growing power made war inevitable.<sup>36</sup>

Having decided on war, Sparta called a second conference of Sparta's allies in August 432 BCE, inviting Corinth and other allies. On this occasion, Thucydides only records the speech of the Corinthians, who again argued their cause and urged a united front. The allies who attended voted for war. But the warnings of Archidamus still hung in the air, and the delegates—conscious

they were not ready for a protracted war against the most powerful city-state in Greece—decided to make preparations as quickly as possible. Thucydides informs us it would take another year before Attica was invaded by Spartan *hoplites*.

In the ensuing year, Sparta sent three missions to Athens, ostensibly to negotiate a resolution, although Thucydides' sceptical observation that it was a ploy for having a good reason to wage war if Athenians ignored them, suggests some caution.

The first mission, according to Thucydides and Plutarch, aimed to isolate Pericles politically by demanding he be expelled in order to expiate an old curse of his family.<sup>37</sup>

The second mission demanded that Athens end its siege of Potidaea, free Aegina and revoke the Megarian Decree.

The third mission was a blunt ultimatum. Sparta wanted peace. To ensure this, Sparta requested that Athens give the Greeks back their autonomy. That is, Sparta wanted the demolition of the Athenian empire—a situation that left Athens without any room to manoeuvre.<sup>38</sup>

The Athenian response was not immediate. As Thucydides tells us, the demand was intensely debated in the assembly. Many aired their views for and against the prospect of war, including Pericles. Pericles pointed out that Sparta was:

- refusing to change its views
- plotting against Athens
- refusing to arbitrate, despite the terms of their truce
- making unreasonable demands regarding Corcyra, Potidaea and Megara.

Then Pericles detailed the Athenian strengths and—refusing to be bullied—outlined his confidence for a successful military outcome.



#### SOURCE 5.16

The Peloponnesian states meet at Sparta in 432 BCE.

As the modern historian Donald Kagan points out, Pericles was arguing from a position of confidence and strength.<sup>39</sup> The Athenian treasury had over 6000 talents in reserve;<sup>40</sup> the walls surrounding Athens and linking it to Piraeus could not be breached; and the Athenian fleet could not be challenged as it criss-crossed the Aegean or transported Black Sea grain to Athens unchecked. These were perfect platforms for the cautious defensive—offensive military strategy he would adopt.

### ➔ SOURCE 5.17

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.71.4–6, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).*

#### VIEWS OF THE CORINTHIANS TO THE SPARTANS

Your inactivity has done harm enough. Now, let there be an end to it. Give your allies, and especially Potidaea, the help you promised and invade Attica at once. Do not let your friends and kinsmen fall into the hands of the bitter enemies. Do not force the rest of us in despair to join a different alliance. If we did so, no-one could rightly blame us—neither the gods who witnessed the oaths nor any man capable of appreciating our situation. The people who break the treaty of alliance are the ones who fail to give the help they swore to give, not those who have to look elsewhere because they have been left in the lurch. But if you will only make up your minds to act, we will stand by you.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 5.17 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What grievances were aired by the Corinthians? And what was the threat they made?
2. Investigate to what degree Corinth represented other Spartan allies.
3. Why was it in Corinth's interest that war be declared against Athens?

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What complaints did the Spartan allies make against Athens?
2. In your view, did the Athenians adequately address these concerns?
3. Write an extended response evaluating Sparta's desire to declare war on Athens.

## WAS WAR INEVITABLE?

War broke out in 431 BCE, when Thebes attacked Plataea, an Athenian ally, clearly breaching the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty. The Athenians, the Spartans and their allies prepared for war.

However, historians are divided about the extent to which Athens and Sparta wanted war, and who was the primary instigator. Much depends on their interpretations of Thucydides and how they assess his accuracy.<sup>41</sup>

Historians who accuse Sparta of starting the war argue that:

- Athens had been careful not to break the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty, and although Athenian actions may have been provocative, they still remained inside the conditions of the treaty<sup>42</sup>
- there is no evidence of a 'peace' camp in Sparta
- that Sparta's pro-war faction wanted to destroy Athens and its empire, which it feared.

Indeed, it is argued that Thucydides was right that war was inevitable—mainly because of Sparta's paranoia, militarism and conservatism.<sup>43</sup>



THE CAUSES  
OF WAR

Historians who accuse Athens of starting the war point out that:

- Thucydides was biased, as he favoured Athens and dishonestly played down Athenian responsibility<sup>44</sup>
- Sparta's repeated attempts to negotiate with Athens suggest that it was looking for a solution that would both solve the problem and satisfy Corinth
- Pericles was unwilling to negotiate.<sup>45</sup>

The middle ground argues the inevitability of war. Although both sides were claiming right on their side, each was pursuing political hegemony that would have come to a crux, whether in 431 BCE or at some later point.<sup>46</sup> None of the major cities necessarily planned for war, but each of them—Athens, Sparta and Corinth—contributed to the problem, without making an effort to stop it.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, the 'dynamism and expansive imperialism' of Athens,<sup>48</sup> which embodied Athenian cultural ideology, was too much of a hindrance to Sparta. However, according to Thucydides, although most Greek cities favoured Sparta over Athens, the Athenian allies did not trust Sparta's declared intention to liberate Greece.<sup>49</sup>

#### ATHENIAN AND SPARTAN READINESS FOR WAR

The impression that emerges from the Pentecontaetia [the 50-year period between the defeat of the Persians at Plataea and the start of the Peloponnesian War] is the restless energy of the Athenians, their refusal to be stymied, their ability to come out of every setback with even greater vigor than before ... The Spartans, by contrast, seem to have indecisive leadership and to be without a clear direction for growth. They distrust boldness and innovation.

#### SOURCE 5.18

W. Robert Connor, *Thucydides*  
(Princeton: Princeton University  
Press, 1984), 45–46.

#### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Using Source 5.18 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

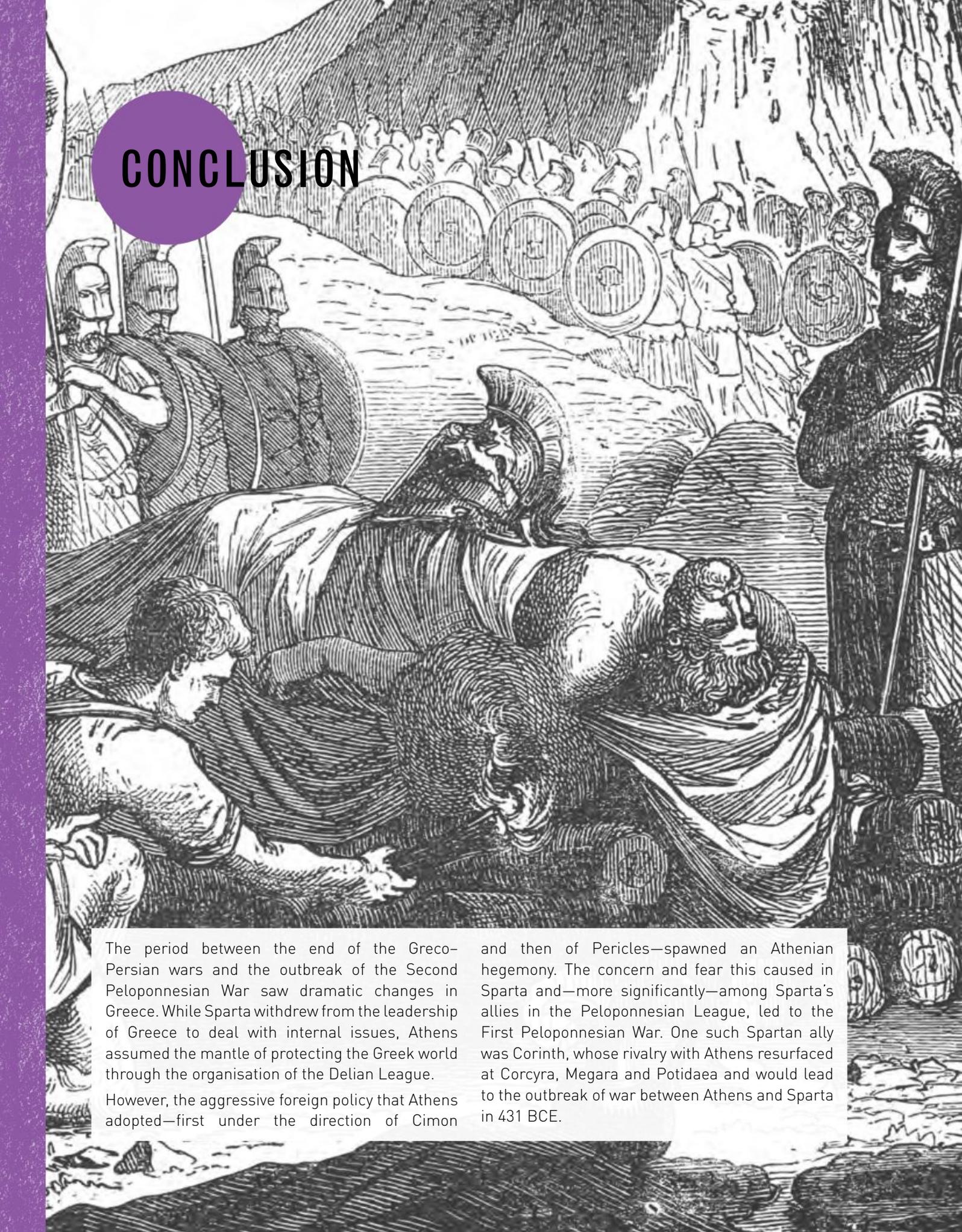
1. How does modern historian Robert Connor characterise the differences between Athens and Sparta?
2. What historical evidence would you provide to support Connor's observations?
3. In one paragraph, assess whether this is an adequate explanation for the state of affairs in 432/1 BCE.

ACTIVITY



#### SOURCE 5.19

Pericles' Funeral Oration, a famous speech given at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War as part of the annual public funeral for the war dead.



## CONCLUSION

The period between the end of the Greco-Persian wars and the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War saw dramatic changes in Greece. While Sparta withdrew from the leadership of Greece to deal with internal issues, Athens assumed the mantle of protecting the Greek world through the organisation of the Delian League.

However, the aggressive foreign policy that Athens adopted—first under the direction of Cimon

and then of Pericles—spawned an Athenian hegemony. The concern and fear this caused in Sparta and—more significantly—among Sparta's allies in the Peloponnesian League, led to the First Peloponnesian War. One such Spartan ally was Corinth, whose rivalry with Athens resurfaced at Corcyra, Megara and Potidaea and would lead to the outbreak of war between Athens and Sparta in 431 BCE.

**CHAPTER REVIEW**

1. List three reasons Athens became so powerful between 478 and 431 BCE.
2. Write a paragraph evaluating the significance of the First Peloponnesian War to Athens and Sparta.
3. In dot points, list why Potidaea, Corcyra and the Megarian Decree were instrumental in contributing to the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War. Can you identify any recurring patterns in the behaviour of Potidaea, Corcyra and Megara?

**EXTENSION**

Using this chapter and other sources, in groups of pro-war and anti-war factions in Sparta, research and debate the case for declaring war on Athens.

**EXAM PREPARATION**

In sixty minutes, write an essay on one of the topics below. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- Discuss how the Delian League was transformed into an Athenian empire.
- 'The war between Athens and Sparta was a war of choice rather than necessity.' Discuss.
- Discuss factors from the First Peloponnesian War that led to the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War.

**TEST**

QUIZ – CHAPTER 5

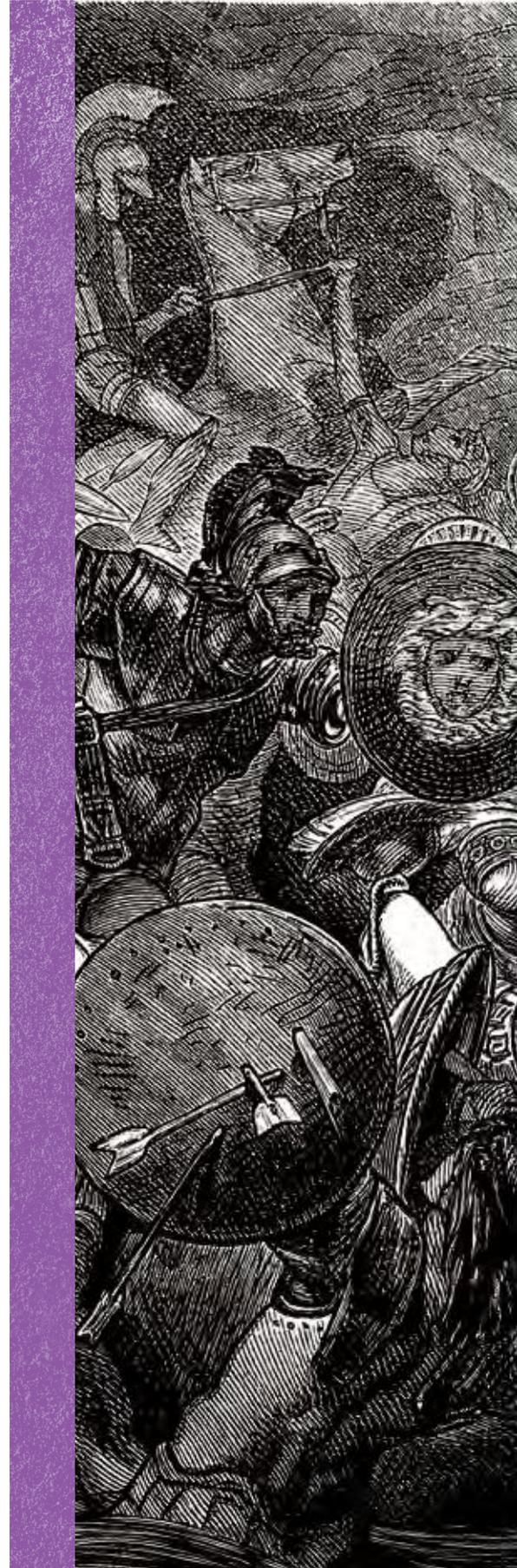
CHAPTER

# 6

## THE SECOND PELOPONNESIAN WAR

'This was the greatest disturbance in the history of the Hellenes, affecting also a large part of the non-Hellenic world, and indeed, I might almost say, the whole of mankind.'

THUCYDIDES'





Syracusan cavalry killing Athenian soldiers in Sicily, 415 BCE, during the Second Peloponnesian War.

# OVERVIEW

## ATHENS

Sought to keep its empire intact, as it was the source of Athens' revenue and power.

## SPARTA

Proclaiming itself the 'liberator of Greece', sought to dismantle the Athenian empire.

## ATHENS

Disastrous naval expedition against Syracuse in 415–413 BCE, known as the Sicilian Expedition.

## SPARTA

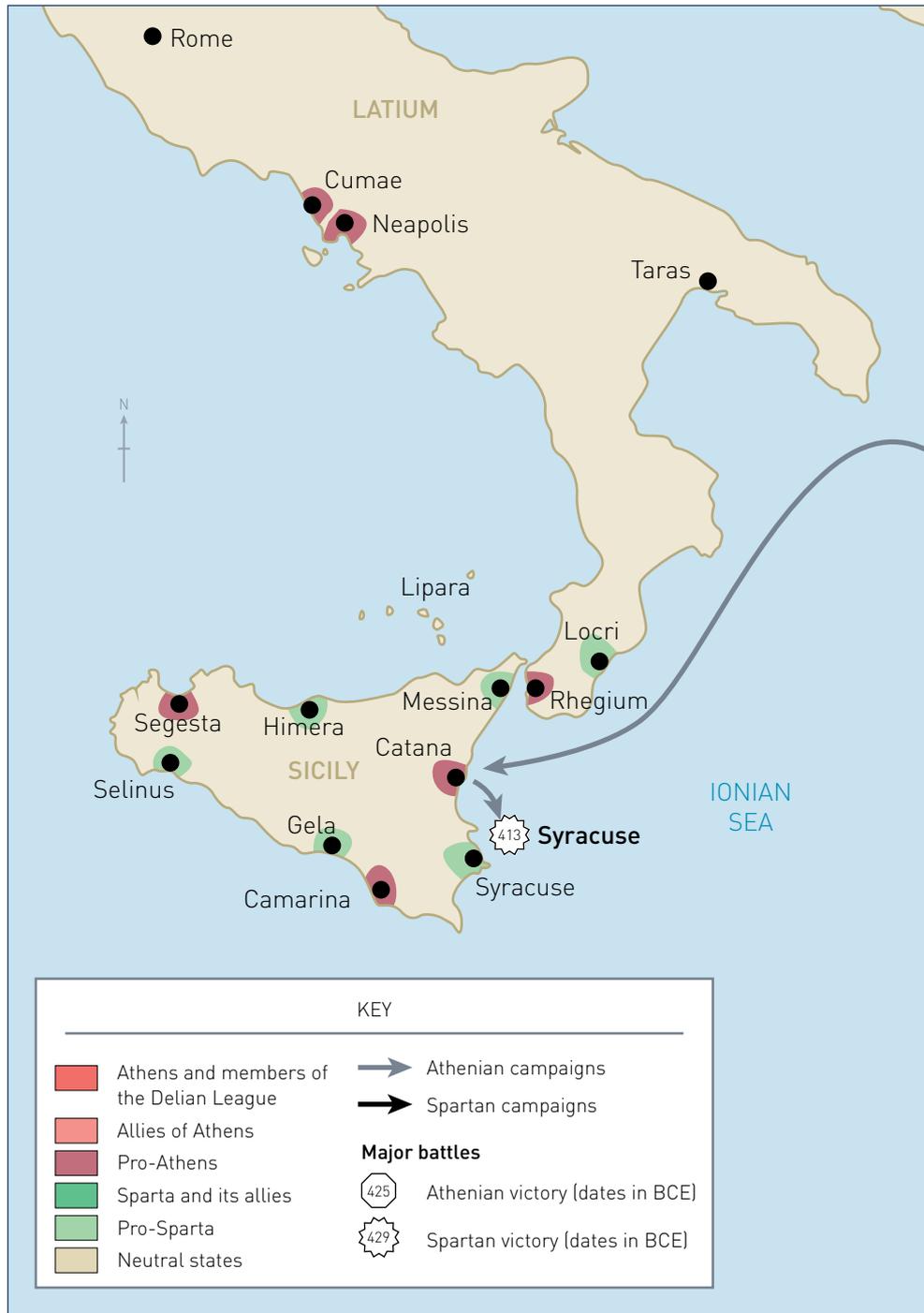
The alliance between Sparta and Persia contributed to the defeat of Athens.

## SPARTA

Relied on its *hoplites* to attack the Athenians on land.

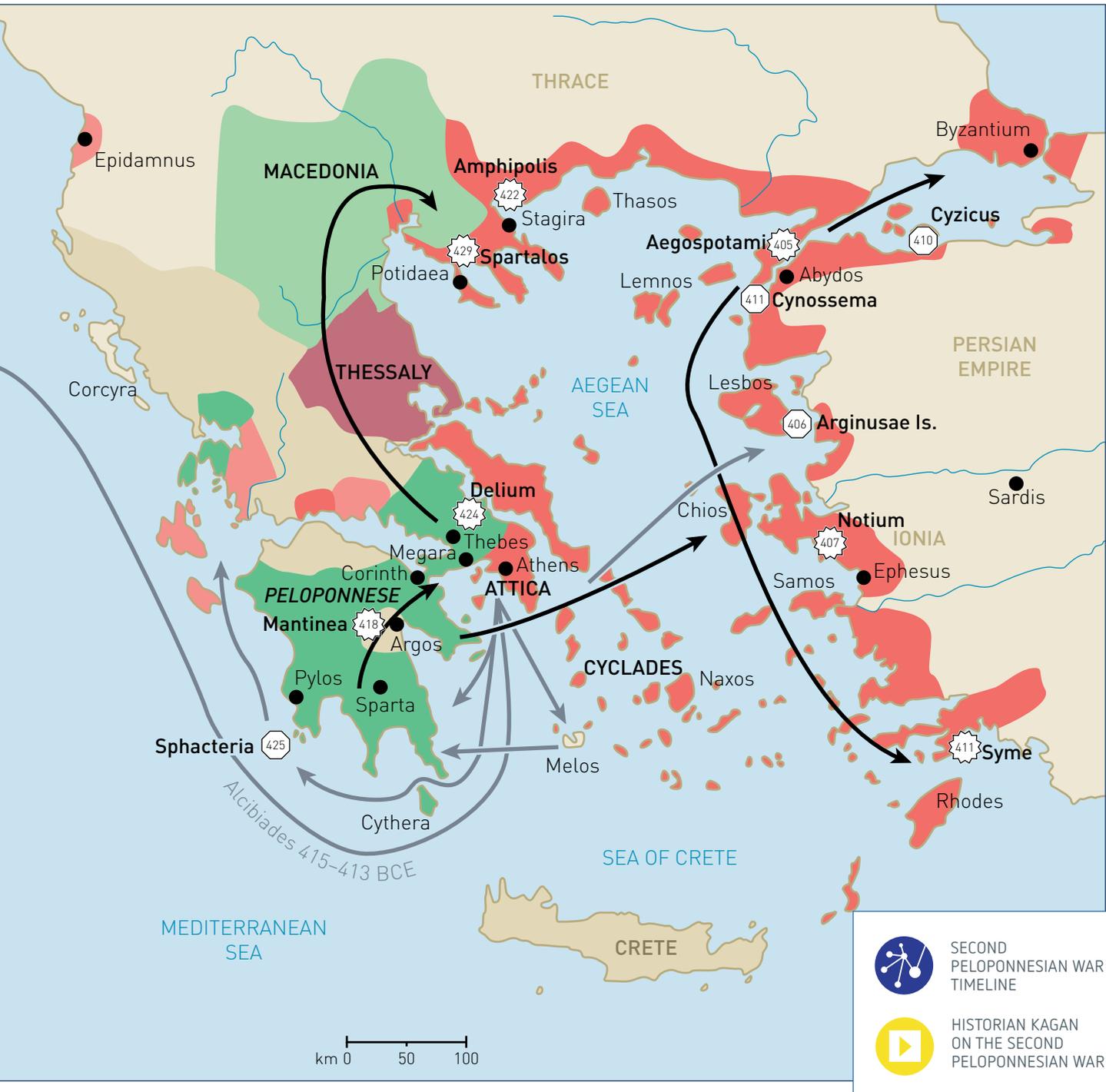
## ATHENS

Relied on its Long Walls to defend the city, and on its huge navy to attack and weaken the Spartan coalition.



**KEY POINTS**

- The Second Peloponnesian War lasted twenty-seven years (431–404 BCE) and can be divided into two periods: the Archidamian War (431–421 BCE) and the Ionian or Decelean War (414–404 BCE).
- Athens and Sparta adopted strategies based on their strengths.
- During the Archidamian War, each side tried to wear out the other.
- Both Athenian and Spartan allies regularly abandoned allegiances and changed sides, depending on the strength and allegiance of the political factions within a city.



# INTRODUCTION

PERICLES: 'If they invade our country by land, we will invade theirs by sea, and it will turn out that the destruction of a part of the Peloponnesians will be worse for them than the destruction of the whole of Attica for us.'<sup>2</sup>

When the Second Peloponnesian War finally broke out, the general expectation was that Athens could hold out for a couple of years at most. Instead, the conflict between Athens, Sparta and their respective allies lasted twenty-seven years—from 431 BCE to 404 BCE.

The war between Athens and Sparta was shaped by the power base of each city-state: Athens with its naval supremacy versus Sparta with its feared infantry. Athens, led by Pericles, adopted a defensive strategy that would lead to 'ultimate victory'<sup>3</sup>, relying on its navy to attack its enemies and using its Long Walls to defend it against attack. This strategy was augmented by offensive strikes against the Peloponnesians whenever the opportunity arose. The plague that broke out in 430 BCE had an unprecedented impact on the Athenian war effort—including the death of Pericles in 429 BCE. While Thucydides is critical of the leaders who succeeded Pericles—notably Cleon—for deviating from Pericles' strategy, Athens managed to hang on until the Peace of Nicias in 421 BCE.

In contrast, Sparta went to war proclaiming itself 'liberator of Greece', intent on destroying the feared Athenian empire. However, the Spartan strategy of annual invasions of Attica—while managing Corinth and other troublesome allies—could not penetrate Athens' defences, creating a stalemate.

## ➔ SOURCE 6.01

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 1.141.2–6, 143.3, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

### PERICLES' APPEAL FOR WAR

As to the war and the resources of either party, a detailed comparison will not show you the inferiority of Athens. Personally engaged in the cultivation of their land, without funds either private or public, the Peloponnesians are also without experience in long wars across sea, from the strict limit which poverty imposes on their attacks upon each other. Powers of this description are quite incapable of often manning a fleet or often sending out an army: they cannot afford the absence from their homes, the expenditure from their own funds; and besides, they have not command of the sea. ... In a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies may be able to defy all Hellas, but they are incapacitated from carrying on a war against a power different in character from their own. ... This, I think, is a tolerably fair account of the position of the Peloponnesians; that of Athens is free from the defects that I have criticized in them, and has other advantages of its own, which they can show nothing to equal. If they march against our country we will sail against theirs, and it will then be found that the desolation of the whole of Attica is not the same as that of even a fraction of Peloponnesians ...

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.01 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. According to Pericles, what advantages did Athens have over Sparta in 431 BCE?
2. In your opinion, were Athens and Sparta ready to go to war?

# THE ARCHIDAMIAN WAR (431–421 BCE)



LECTURE: THE ARCHIDAMIAN WAR

**MELESIPPUS, A SPARTAN MESSENGER:** 'This day will be the beginning of great misfortunes to Hellas.'<sup>4</sup>

The first phase of the Peloponnesian War was the Archidamian War, which broke out in 431 BCE—just fourteen years into the Thirty Years' Peace treaty between Athens and Sparta agreed upon in 446/5 BCE.

A force of 300 Thebans stormed Plataea in the dead of night—after Plataeans in favour of oligarchy opened the city gates to them. The Theban attack was a legacy of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty and the dissatisfaction of the allies of Sparta and Athens. The Thebans were angry that:

- they were defeated by Athens in the First Peloponnesian War
- Athens had imposed democratic governments in the Boeotian cities.<sup>5</sup>

However, a counter-attack by the citizens of Plataea defeated the Theban intruders. The 180 Thebans who survived the fighting surrendered—only to be killed by the Plataeans. Athenian forces arrived too late to help but placed a garrison at Plataea, fully aware that the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace treaty had been broken.

Athens and Sparta prepared for war. Both contemplated sending envoys to Persia and other barbarian leaders for support. Sparta ordered its allies in Sicily and Italy to contribute to its navy with the intention of increasing the fleet to 500 ships. Athens firmed its dealings with its allies and sent envoys to the islands off the west coast of Greece (Corcyra, Cephallenia and Zacynthus) as well as cities in Acarnania, in preparation for attacking the Peloponnese.

Meanwhile, news that war was imminent sent waves of enthusiasm through the cities of Greece. According to Thucydides, most Greek cities sided with Sparta, excited that the Spartans were going to liberate Greece, whereas the Athenians were feared and resented because they kept trying to expand their empire.<sup>6</sup>

## ATHENIAN AND SPARTAN BATTLE STRATEGIES

**THUCYDIDES:** 'In this affair of Plataea the treaty had quite obviously been broken, and now the Athenians made ready for war, as did the Spartans and their allies ...'<sup>7</sup>

Immediately after the Theban assault on Plataea, the Spartans issued orders for their allies to assemble at the Isthmus of Corinth, ready to invade Attica. Sparta's allies

### TIMELINE: THE ARCHIDAMIAN WAR (431–421 BCE)

431  
BCE

Thebes attacks Plataea  
Peloponnesian invasion of Attica;  
Athenians retreat inside city walls  
Athenian fleet raids Peloponnese

430  
BCE

Plague in Athens  
Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Surrender of Potidaea

429  
BCE

Death of Pericles

428  
BCE

Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Revolt of Mytilene

427  
BCE

Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Rise of Cleon and Nicias in Athens  
Fall of Mytilene; Athens debates Mytilene's fate  
Fall of Plataea to Sparta  
Leontini and Rhegium appeal to Athens for help  
Outbreak of civil war on Corcyra

426  
BCE

Athenian general Demosthenes campaigns in western Greece

425  
BCE

Sparta makes offers of peace to Athens  
Peloponnesian invasion of Attica  
Demosthenes fortifies Pylos  
Athenian intervention in Corcyra  
Athenian victory at Pylos

424  
BCE

Spartan general Brasidas campaigns in northern Greece, captures Amphipolis

422  
BCE

Battle of Amphipolis; deaths of Brasidas and Cleon

421  
BCE

Peace of Nicias

## DID YOU KNOW?

During the Archidamian War, the annual Spartan invasion of Attica usually lasted about forty days before the Spartans returned home.

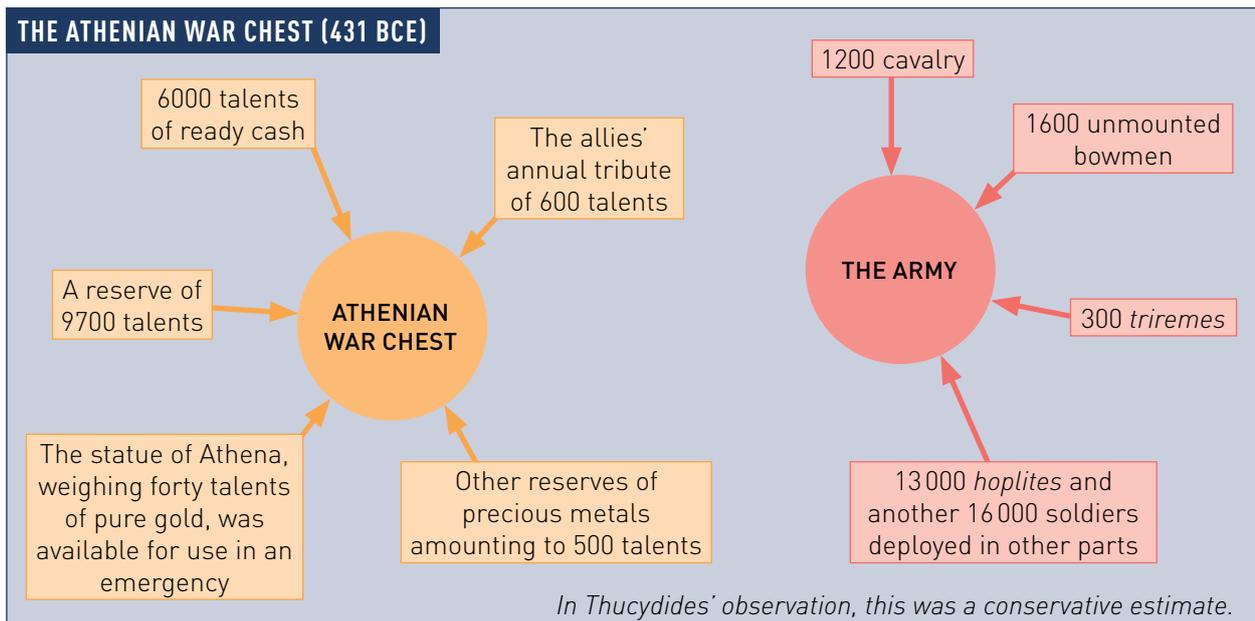
were under the command of King Archidamus of Sparta. Archidamus spoke to the massed Spartan and Peloponnesian forces, outlining the task ahead and urging caution. Then Archidamus dispatched an envoy to Athens, hoping that impending war would cause the Athenians to seek terms.

However, the Spartan offer was rejected because Pericles had convinced the Athenian Assembly to pass a resolution that no Spartan envoys would be received once they had mobilised their troops.

So, some eighty days after the Theban attack on Plataea, Archidamus led his army—two-thirds of the Peloponnesian war machine—into Attica. Their first encounter was a failed attempt to besiege the garrison of Oenoe, on the border between Attica and Boeotia. From there, the Spartan army ravaged the countryside around Eleusis and the *demes* around Athens.

Although Archidamus' first campaign was heavily criticised by the pro-war faction in Sparta, it was intended to provoke young Athenians to come out and face the Spartans. The plan might have worked, because the people of Attica, watching their houses and crops burn, turned on Pericles, blaming his leadership for their predicament. But the Athenians held fast and finally the Spartans returned home.

Meanwhile, the Athenians waited inside their walls. Pericles reiterated the strength of the Athenian position, emphasised the significance of his tactics and boosted their confidence by listing Athens' military resources and finances, predicting victory. The following diagram outlines the contents of the Athenian war chest.



Pericles managed to avoid criticism of his leadership by postponing all political gatherings. He dispatched a fleet of 100 ships and 1000 *hoplites* to destroy crops and cause general mayhem on the Peloponnesian coastline—showing that Athens dominated the seas. Alliances with Thrace and Macedonia followed, reinforcing Athenian interests in the region. Wanting to deny the Peloponnesians a springboard near Athens, Pericles ordered the people of Aegina to leave their own island. Pericles established an Athenian *cleruchy* on Aegina, then led a major assault on Megara. His counter-strategy displayed Athens' naval superiority, secured further alliances, and strengthened Athens' territorial position.

Thus, the first year of fighting passed into the second. Archidamus again returned to Attica to devastate the Attic plain. This time—although the devastation was more widespread than the first invasion—the forty-day campaign was cut short when Spartans heard about the plague in Athens.

Athens, too, replicated the first year of the war. Pericles led a massive expedition to the Peloponnese, hoping that it would lead to the Spartans requesting peace. Another Athenian fleet sailed to Thrace to engage the Chalcidians and reinforce the siege of Potidaea. However, the additional manpower had little impact, because the plague that had broken out in Athens had also taken hold among Athenian forces at Potidaea. Potidaea finally surrendered after being under siege for two and a half years, at a cost of 2000 talents and many men. The starving Potidaeans had resorted to cannibalism in an attempt to survive.

## THE GREAT PLAGUE

THUCYDIDES: ‘... people in good health were all of a sudden attacked by violent heats in the head, and redness and inflammation in the eyes, the inward parts, such as the throat or tongue, becoming bloody and emitting an unnatural and fetid breath ...’<sup>8</sup>

However, the outbreak of plague in Athens almost rendered the Spartan invasion trivial. Plague broke out in 430 BCE, the second year of war. With much of the population of Attica jammed inside the Long Walls, the plague raced through the populace. Thucydides, who famously contracted the plague and survived, described the symptoms as bewildering in their unpredictable impact, as the disease worked through the body, attacking and closing down life organs.

Opinion at the time determined that the plague had originated in Ethiopia, had spread to Egypt and Libya and into parts of the Persian Empire, and entered Greece through Piraeus. Some also accused the Spartans of poisoning the wells, suggested by some scholars as an act of bioterrorism.<sup>9</sup>

Working from the symptoms described by Thucydides, medical historians have speculated on what the plague of 430 BCE might have been. Possibilities include bubonic plague, typhoid, typhus, smallpox and measles.<sup>10</sup>

According to Thucydides, approximately one-third of the populace of Athens died. Among the dead were 4400 *hoplites* and 300 cavalry, and the disease sickened many more. The impact of the plague would be felt for some time, especially the loss of manpower for the military. Thucydides outlines the despair, helplessness and hopelessness many felt watching their loved ones ‘dying like sheep’. More telling was the effect of the plague on society in general, with:

- a decline in civic responsibility
- an increase in lawlessness
- a loss of religious faith.



ATHENIAN VS  
SPARTAN STRENGTHS

### DID YOU KNOW?

Thucydides used some of the medical terminology that was evolving to describe the plague symptoms. However, his deeper interest was the religious, moral and social impact the plague was having on Athenian society.

### SOURCE 6.02

A healing god worshipped in a bid to fight the plague in Athens.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What factors influenced the military strategies of Athens and Sparta?
2. What impact did the plague have on Athens' war effort?
3. How realistic were the strategies of Athens and Sparta?



THE PLAGUE  
IN ATHENS



**DID YOU KNOW?**

In 2010, scientists from the University of Athens reconstructed the skull of a young girl believed to have died during the plague. You can read her story and see what she is believed to have looked like at the 'Myrtis: Face to Face with the Past' website.



MYRTIS:  
FACE TO FACE  
WITH THE PAST

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did the Athenians turn on Pericles?
2. How did the leadership of Athens change after the death of Pericles?
3. In your opinion, was Thucydides right to label Cleon a 'demagogue'?

### ➔ SOURCE 6.04

Nicias.

## PERICLES DISMISSED

The Athenians turned on Pericles, blaming him for the situation in Athens and also for the destruction of their farms. At the same time, Pericles was charged and fined for allegedly embezzling public funds, and dismissed from office. He died from the plague the following year. Meanwhile, Athens tried unsuccessfully to find peace terms with Sparta. Modern historian Donald Kagan hypothesises that Sparta's terms would have echoed those bandied around before the outbreak of war: that Athens withdraw from Potidaea, restore autonomy to Aegina, rescind the Megarian Decree, and dissolve its empire.<sup>11</sup>

The next year, 429 BCE, was the third year of the war. Sparta changed tactics. Worried

### 📌 SOURCE 6.03

Pericles dies from the Plague.

by the plague, the Spartans attacked Plataea rather than return to Attica. The conflict in Plataea had started in 431 BCE. Now in 428/7 BCE, despite an earlier Spartan declaration that Plataea would remain autonomous, King Archidamus of Sparta besieged the city.<sup>12</sup>

## ATHENS AFTER PERICLES

The death of Pericles in 429 BCE—and the aftermath of the plague that continued until 427 BCE—left Athens in the hands of Nicias and Cleon.

Nicias was a politician and soldier renowned for his religious outlook, political caution and military conservatism. Cleon was labelled by Thucydides as a 'demagogue' who played to the mob and replaced Pericles' cautious expansionism with aggressive militarism. Thucydides perhaps shared this attitude with other conservative commentators of the era, who disdained Cleon because he was not of the landed nobility.<sup>13</sup> Historian Sarah Ferrario instead argues that Thucydides used Pericles as the standard by which his successors were judged—and Cleon had no hope of being considered worthy.<sup>14</sup> Cleon, who had been active in politics since the 430s BCE, quickly established himself as the outspoken leader of the aggressive pro-war faction in Athens,<sup>15</sup> whereas Nicias is identified with the moderate faction, even though he too was a new man. Historian Kagan observes that until 425 BCE, both Cleon and Nicias advocated aggressive militaristic policies in the hope of keeping the Athenian empire intact and ending the war successfully.<sup>16</sup>



## ALLIES IN REVOLT: MYTILENE

The first major test Athens faced after the death of Pericles was the outbreak of revolts on Lesbos in 428 BCE. Lesbos, one of only two allies that did not pay tribute, had wanted to break away from Athens for some time, while Mytilene—the capital and port—was trying to take control of the whole island, helped by Sparta and Boeotia. Athens tried unsuccessfully to get Mytilene to change its plan.

Despite still suffering from the plague, Athens sent forty ships to Mytilene, with instructions to secure the surrender of Mytilene and its navy, or make war.

Mytilene called for negotiations, and delegations were sent to Athens and Sparta. Sparta invited delegates to Olympia to address the whole Peloponnesian League. The Mytilenean argument presented to the allies was that:

- their treaty with Athens was to defend Greece from Persian subjugation—not to help Athens become the subjugator
- their relationship with Athens was based on fear rather than friendship
- their motive was to help liberate Greece
- Athens was exhausted by the plague and from the enormous cost of war
- Athens' forces were divided and thus more vulnerable to attack by Sparta
- exploiting Athens' weaknesses would encourage more of their allies to revolt too, which would lead to Athens' demise.

The arguments won over Sparta and allies. They voted to bring Lesbos into the Peloponnesian League and to invade Attica. They started to mass troops at the Isthmus of Corinth to prepare for a land and sea attack on Athens. However, as Thucydides notes, the Spartan enthusiasm and energy was not matched by its allies, who were tired of war and preferred to harvest their grain.

News of the meeting—and the reasons behind Mytilene's argument—was met with a show of strength by Athens. The 100 *triremes* dispatched to the isthmus and the fleet of thirty ships laying waste to territory near Sparta convinced the Spartan commanders to abandon their plans and return home. This 'bold display of confidence and capability'<sup>17</sup> echoes Thucydides' observation that Athens had 250 ships on active service that summer.

The naval blockade and siege of Lesbos and Mytilene would last another year, until Mytilene surrendered to the Athenian commander Paches in 427 BCE. In an effort to improve on the terms of the treaty offered by Paches, Mytilene sent a delegation to Athens to plead their case. One thousand Mytilenean prisoners who had instigated the revolt were also sent. Their reception by the Athenian Assembly was brutal: immediate execution. Death, too, was ordered for the entire adult male population of Mytilene, and slavery for the women and children—actions that became a particular phenomenon of the Peloponnesian War.<sup>18</sup>



ASKING HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

### ▼ SOURCE 6.05

The Mytilenean Debate, 427 BCE.



Thucydides explains that Athenian anger and desire for revenge became greater when they realised the revolt had been long in the planning, and had been committed by a privileged ‘subject state’. Nevertheless, a night’s sleep calmed down some of the tension and next day a second assembly again debated the fate of Mytilene (see Sources 6.06 and 6.07).

### ➔ SOURCE 6.06

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 3.37.2, 39.7, 40.1–3, 7, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

#### CLEON’S ARGUMENT

What you do not realize is that your empire is a tyranny exercised over subjects who do not like it and who are always plotting against you; you will not make them obey you by injuring your own interests in order to do them a favour; your leadership depends on superior strength and not on any goodwill of theirs ... Now think of your allies. If you are going to give the same punishment to those who are forced to revolt by your enemies and those who do so of their own accord, can you not see that they will revolt upon the slightest pretext, when success means freedom and failure brings no very dreadful consequences? ... Let there be no hope, therefore, held out to the Mytileneans that we, either as a result of good speech or a large bribe, are likely to forgive them on the grounds that it is only human to make mistakes ... To feel pity, to be carried away by the pleasure of hearing a clever argument, to listen to the claims of decency are three things against the interests of an imperial power. As for compassion, it is proper to feel it in the case of people who are like ourselves and who will pity us in their turn, not in the case of those who, so far from having the same feeling towards us, must always and inevitably be our enemies. ... Punish them as they deserve, and make an example of them to your other allies, plainly showing that revolt will be punished with death.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.07

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 3.42.1, 44.1–2, 46.2, 5, 6, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

#### DIODOTUS’ ARGUMENT

Haste and anger are, to my mind, the two greatest obstacles to wise counsel—haste, that usually goes with folly, anger, that is the mark of primitive and narrow minds ... If we are sensible people, we shall see that the question is not so much whether they are guilty as whether we are making the right decision for ourselves. ... this is not a law-court, where we have to consider what is fit and just; it is a political assembly, and the question is how Mytilene can be most useful to Athens. ... Consider this now: at the moment, if a city has revolted and realizes that the revolt cannot succeed, it will come to terms while it is still capable of paying an indemnity and continuing to pay tribute afterwards. But if Cleon’s method is adopted, can you not see that every city will not only make much more careful preparations for revolt, but will also hold out against siege to the very end, since to surrender early or late means just the same thing?... we should recognize that the proper basis of our security is in good administration rather than in the fear of legal penalties.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 6.06 and 6.07 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Summarise the debate between Cleon and Diodotus about the fate of Mytilene in 427 BCE.
2. Who makes the better case for Athens’ safety: Cleon or Diodotus?
3. Is Cleon’s argument a justification for Athenian expansionism?

Thucydides’ account of the speeches by Cleon and Diodotus over the fate of Mytilene conveys the feeling that the Athenians had gone too far in punishing the guilty and the innocent alike. While Diodotus succeeds in persuading the Athenians to reject Cleon’s motion to kill the prisoners, and positions Athenian

policy ideologically on the side of democracies against oligarchies,<sup>19</sup> they both essentially argue for the expediency of an empire.

The difference lies in the process of establishing an empire rather than the outcome—whether it suited Athens to rule with deterrence or moderation. Cleon’s argument rests on the need to use Mytilene as an example to deter other allies from rebelling—that terror was a necessary weapon of imperial power. Diodotus countered that extreme punishment is not in itself deterrence, and killing the instigators of the revolt as well as the broader populace would not help Athens in the longer term.<sup>20</sup>

The speeches have also been the focus of intense analysis by historians, who see them as an assessment of Athenian imperial policy after the death of Pericles. Historian Marc Cogan suggests that this was a deliberate and consistent imperial policy, in contrast to the previous policy of dealing with allies and revolts on an individual basis.<sup>21</sup>

#### HISTORIAN COGAN

The revolt of Mytilene had consequences beyond the immediate military situation. It was instrumental in generating an Athenian response that radically altered the shape of the war as the Athenians fought it, and stands then, at the beginning of a significantly different phase of the Peloponnesian War ... From this moment, all Athenian alliances were with democracies or democratic factions alone, and all captures of cities by the Athenians involved a change in the form of government ... In addition to influencing the nature of alliances, the introduction of ideology also changed the character of the conflict, for the proclamation at Athens of an ideological justification for friendship and military aid created the opportunity for an expansion of the war in new directions.

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.08 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What change of policy does Cogan identify as an Athenian reaction to the revolt of Mytilene?
2. Do the extracts from the speeches of Cleon and Diodotus support Cogan’s hypothesis?
3. Using your own knowledge and information provided by other historians, identify some instances after 447 BCE where this policy was exercised by Athens.

Meanwhile, Sparta was also becoming more violent. In the same summer of 427 BCE, Plataea capitulated after a two-year siege. Five judges sent from Sparta asked each of the Plataeans how they had helped Sparta and her allies. In the debate that followed, speakers from Plataea and then Thebes argued for leniency and punishment, respectively. Whether Sparta ever intended to consider the Plataeans’ arguments is doubtful. As Thucydides notes, it was entirely out of Spartan self-interest—to keep the Thebans on side—that the 200 Plataean and twenty-five Athenian men were executed, the women sold into slavery, the city razed, and the land leased to Theban farmers. That Thucydides deliberately contrasted the Athenian debate over Mytilene and the debate at Plataea highlights the different behaviour of Athens and Sparta towards cities that had surrendered—and also that both cities had failed to help their allies.<sup>22</sup>

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Ancient Greece was a land of city-states with small parcels of territorial land. When cities were captured, the territory was seldom ‘occupied’ by the conquering force, although a garrison would be stationed there if the location was strategic. More often, the city would be turned over to the internal political faction that was aligned with the victor. At its most brutal, the men were massacred, the women and children enslaved, and the city destroyed.

#### SOURCE 6.08

Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides’ History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 50, 62, 63.

#### ACTIVITY

#### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Mytilene justify its revolt from Athens?
2. How serious was the revolt to Athens? Use evidence to support your view.
3. How prevalent were revolts against Athens during the Archidamian War? What impact did it have on the Athenian war effort?

## SPARTAN DISASTER AT PYLOS

In 425 BCE, Athens sent forty ships to Sicily to assist Athenian allies against Syracuse, as well as to help their allies at Corcyra who were under threat from a Peloponnesian fleet.

A storm forced the Athenian fleet to take shelter at Pylos, a safe harbour off the western coast of Messenia. Seizing the opportunity, Demosthenes—previously disgraced after a failed expedition into Aetolia—built an Athenian fort there, only seventy-five kilometres from Sparta.

Sparta was alarmed at having an Athenian outpost nearby—as it would attract disaffected *helots*. Sparta withdrew its army from Attica and instead dispatched 420 *hoplites* and a body of *helots* to Pylos. The Spartans occupied the narrow island of Sphacteria, near Pylos. The following day-long battle and naval engagements left the Spartans badly bruised and their men stranded on the island. An armistice to allow provisions to be provided to the Spartan soldiers was arranged while envoys travelled to Athens to discuss terms to cease hostilities.

According to Thucydides, the Spartan representations to the Athenian Assembly:

- advised Athenians not to overestimate the strength of their position
- suggested the Athenians negotiate for peace.

The Spartan position was based on the assumption that earlier Athenian requests for peace—which the Spartans had rejected—would now work to the Spartans' advantage, and that Athens would welcome the opportunity to stop the fighting.

However, the Spartans had not anticipated that Cleon would make excessive demands and refuse to negotiate. Athens was in a strong position militarily and financially. It had increased the tribute paid by allies, and the defeat of the Peloponnesian fleet removed any threat on Athenian territories from the sea.<sup>23</sup>

The siege of Sphacteria took seventy-two days. Athens kept the Spartan forces trapped on the island, relying on the lack of provisions and successful military skirmishes to wear down the Spartan contingent. Finally, the Athenian commanders, Cleon and Demosthenes, invited the last remaining Spartan commander, Styphon, to surrender. According to Thucydides, the surrender caused more amazement among the Greeks than any other event during the Archidamian War.

In total, 292 of the 420 *hoplites* that had landed on Sphacteria were taken to Athens as hostages. Of the hostages, 120 were *Spartiates*—members of the Spartan officer class. The *Spartiates* were held as ransom under the threat of death should the Peloponnesians invade Attica.<sup>24</sup>

### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

#### PYLOS

The significance of Pylos is not that Athens won—but that Sparta surrendered. This was the first time that Spartans had surrendered, and it shook the foundations of Spartan military ideology. Athens had the opportunity—which they did not take—to force victory by inciting a *helot* revolution in Sparta, which the Spartans clearly feared. Athenian self-confidence grew after the victory at Pylos, leading them to exceed their capabilities.



### ← SOURCE 6.09

The Spartan commander Brasidas, bombarded by Athenians defending the fortress of Pylos.

## SPARTAN STRATEGIES: BRASIDAS IN NORTHERN GREECE

One of the Spartan generals injured at Sphacteria was Brasidas. In 424 BCE, after Sphacteria, Brasidas played a critical role in a change of Spartan strategy when he was sent to Thrace. The aim was to establish a Spartan presence in an area that was strategically critical to the Athenians—and distract Athens from attacking the Peloponnese. Thrace was an area rich in timber, gold and silver; all items vital for Athens. Thrace was also ideally placed to control sea traffic in the Hellespont and in the Black Sea—which was the source of Athens' grain supply.<sup>25</sup>

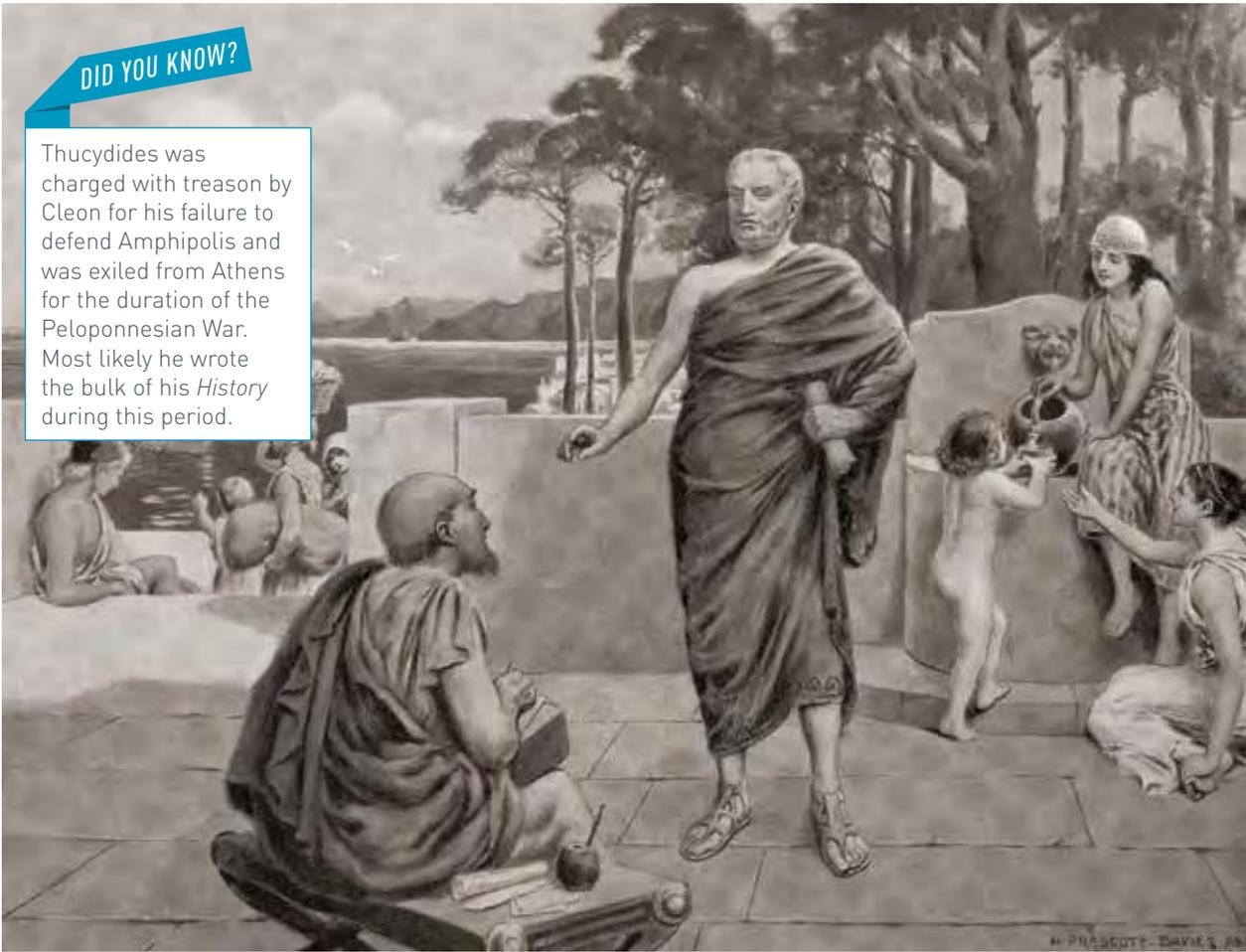
Brasidas' fair treatment of the local peoples—and the belief that he was a model of Spartan behaviour—persuaded numerous northern cities to defect from Athens. His diplomatic skills were at the fore in numerous instances during the time he spent in northern Greece and Thrace. Militarily, Brasidas' biggest success was the capture of Amphipolis—an Athenian colony on the river Strymon—which fell in the winter of 424/3 BCE. Brasidas besieged the city in a surprise attack, after he and his troops had marched through the night in bad weather. The Athenian commander of the city was Thucydides who, together with his fleet of seven *triremes*, was at nearby Thasos.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Spartan government feared the *helots* because they outnumbered the *Spartiates*. As a consequence, the Spartan government regularly sanctioned indiscriminate killings to cull *helot* numbers and incite fear.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Thucydides was charged with treason by Cleon for his failure to defend Amphipolis and was exiled from Athens for the duration of the Peloponnesian War. Most likely he wrote the bulk of his *History* during this period.



### ↑ SOURCE 6.10

Thucydides in exile, blamed for the loss of Amphipolis.

Again, it was Brasidas' diplomacy that persuaded Amphipolis to surrender. He proposed moderate terms, inviting those citizens of Amphipolis who wished to stay to do so without recrimination, and safe passage for those who wished to leave.

Other cities followed suit and abandoned their alliance with Athens. Reasons for defecting to Sparta varied. Some cities were:

- induced by Brasidas' moderation
- driven by the belief that Athens was weakened after its military losses in Boeotia
- caught up in the general excitement of Brasidas' bravado.

However, instead of supporting Brasidas by allowing him to capitalise on his triumphs or sending the reinforcements he requested, the Spartan leadership ignored him. Some were jealous of his successes, while the moderates concentrated on negotiating the release of the Sphacteria prisoners and ending the war.

Not one to sit around, Brasidas marched into the region of Acte in Chalcidice where many of the small towns welcomed him. He then captured the city of Torone.

In the spring of 423 BCE, Sparta and Athens agreed on a year-long armistice. Athens hoped it would win time to counter Brasidas' influence in Thrace, while Sparta believed Athens would feel pressured by Brasidas' successes and offer long-

term peace, which would include the return of the Sphacteria prisoners. The terms of the armistice were that:

- each side would hold its own territory at the time of the signing of the armistice
- there would be no acts of aggression
- Sparta and its allies were banned from sailing in ships of war
- heralds and embassies could move safely in carrying out their duties
- all claims or issues would be settled by law or arbitration.

However, neither side worked hard to maintain the spirit of the armistice. Brasidas continued his diplomatic offensive, winning over Scione, a city in Pallene, which acclaimed him 'liberator' and adorned him with garlands and a gold crown, while Mende, also in Pallene, revolted against Athens.

In the following year, 422 BCE, the Athenians sent Cleon with a large force into Thrace, where he captured Torone and advanced on Amphipolis. Sparta won this battle, but both Cleon and Brasidas died in the fighting. Brasidas was honoured as a hero with a state funeral, public games and annual offerings, and was proclaimed founder of Amphipolis, while the Athenian survivors returned to Athens, leaving behind more than 600 dead.<sup>26</sup>

#### KEY INDIVIDUALS: CLEON

1. Use your dictionary to look up the definitions of *demagogue* and *statesman*.
2. Research Cleon, using sources such as Thucydides, Aristophanes, Aristotle and Plutarch.
3. In your opinion, which category does Cleon fit into: demagogue or statesman?
4. Why is the historical tradition hostile towards Cleon?

ACTIVITY



#### SOURCE 6.11

NORTHERN GREECE

# THE PEACE OF NICIAS (421–414 BCE): A FRAGILE PEACE

RUSSELL MEIGGS: 'In the spring of 421 peace was made. It was soon found that the Peace of Nicias had settled nothing.'<sup>27</sup>

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Brasidas' activities and policies reflect Spartan foreign policy?
2. What were the conditions that persuaded Athens and Sparta to agree on peace in 421 BCE?
3. In your opinion, how would the peace have helped or hindered the war efforts of Athens and Sparta?

### EXTENSION

The historian Terry Buckley writes, 'The Spartans had "lost" the Archidamian War and needed peace in 421 more than the Athenians'. Research and write an essay discussing this proposition.

With Brasidas and Cleon both dead—and Cleon described by Plutarch as one of 'the greatest obstacles to peace'—peace factions on both sides wanted the fighting to stop and Nicias made every effort to bring that about.<sup>28</sup> His reputation for fair dealing, and for being moderate, made him a popular negotiator with Sparta, who had appreciated his treatment of the prisoners on Sphacteria. In Athens, Nicias' peace effort was supported primarily by the landowners and elder Athenians who wanted to stop the annual destruction of their fields. Militarily, Athens had suffered serious blows in the last year, such as the loss of Amphipolis. Athens was concerned that more of their allies might rebel, believing Athens was too weak to prevent their rebellion. More importantly, Athenians' confidence that they could hold the Aegean was waning.

The Spartans, too, had compelling reasons to prefer peace. Their strategy to compel the Athenians into surrender by laying Attica to waste had been unsuccessful. The losses at Pylos and elsewhere meant further disruption to their agriculture, while Sparta's perpetual fear of its *helots* continued unabated. Also playing on Spartan minds was the realisation that a second front could open up when the Thirty Years' Peace treaty with Argos expired, as well as the fate of the Sphacteria prisoners—which was keeping Sparta in check.

The terms were fixed by Nicias and the Spartan king Pleistoanax, the two most influential leaders in their respective cities. The treaty encompassed the leading cities and their allies, and was intended to last fifty years. Under the terms of the Peace of Nicias:

- travel without hindrance to worship at all Panhellenic sanctuaries would be permitted
- Delphi was declared autonomous
- all disputes between Athens and Sparta would be settled according to law
- both sides would surrender their territorial gains
- both sides would return prisoners of war.

On the surface, the terms of the treaty seem straightforward, although historian Simon Hornblower describes it as an Athenian victory. Despite losing approximately thirty per cent of its population and spending most of its treasury, Athens still retained an intact empire.<sup>29</sup>

## INTERWAR YEARS: RECRIMINATIONS AND RETALIATIONS

LAWRENCE A. TRITLE: 'The Athenian–Spartan agreement to a separate defensive treaty only increased anxieties, as the two 'superpowers' appeared to be looking after their own interests as they denied the other Greek states similar arrangements.'<sup>30</sup>

The Peace of Nicias was ratified in spring 421 BCE, and was meant to last for fifty years. However, both Athens and Sparta faced difficulty keeping the peace for ten years, and it was officially broken in 414 BCE.

The Peace of Nicias was an agreement signed by Athens and Sparta—but it also encumbered their respective allies. Thucydides points out that there was peace among those states that had accepted the terms. But those states that did *not* accept the terms—Corinth, and other Peloponnesian allies—worked to disrupt the treaty, putting stress on Sparta. In a scenario of conflicting interests, the Greek states started to manipulate the best situation for themselves.

Within two years of the truce, Athens and Sparta were in direct conflict, as neither side fully complied with the terms nor ceased hostilities.

The terms agreed to by Athens and Sparta supported the political and military status quo at the outbreak of the Archidamian War, giving the leading states authority to deal with ‘difficult’ allies. Athens lost little time in dispatching a contingent of *hoplites* to Scione to punish the city for defecting to Brasidas—and Athens was particularly irate that it had happened during the truce.

Scione fell quickly: the men were killed, the women and children were sold into slavery, and the land was distributed among Plataeans. Sparta dealt in a similar manner with outstanding issues in the Peloponnese, notably Mantinea and Elis which, while having enjoyed long relations with Sparta, had been defying Spartan leadership by occupying surrounding territories.

Satisfying the disaffected allies was complex, particularly for Sparta. Sparta’s allies Corinth, Megara, Boeotia and Elis had refused to sign the treaty and wanted it dissolved.<sup>31</sup> Each city-state had valid complaints:

- Corinth had lost territory, particularly its control of Potidaea.
- Megara had lost its port Nisaea and access to trade in the Aegean Sea.
- Boeotia was instructed to surrender the frontier fortifications at Panactum—giving Athens easy access to its lands.

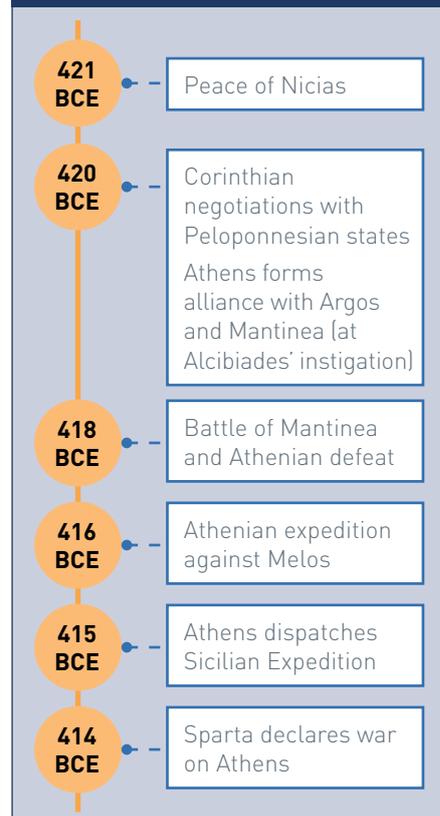
As soon as the treaty was arranged, Corinth began working to break it, exploiting the dissatisfaction of the other Peloponnesian allies, as well as the ambitions of Argos. Argos was neutral during the Archidamian War, and emerged after the war financially and militarily unscathed. Argos realised that Spartan popularity among the Peloponnesian allies was at its lowest point—and that Argos itself could become the leading *polis* in the Peloponnese.

When Corinthian envoys approached Argos with complaints against Sparta, Argos was on the verge of not renewing the Thirty Years’ Peace treaty it had signed in 451/450 BCE.<sup>32</sup> Anticipating that Sparta would react with hostility, the Argive leadership appointed a committee to form a new defensive alliance, confident that more cities would join because of their loathing of Sparta.

Two other Peloponnesian city-states—Mantinea and Elis—moved to join the new alliance with Corinth and Argos. Members of the new alliance resented that only Athens and Sparta could alter the terms of the treaty—and they grew anxious that Sparta and Athens would unite to subjugate the Peloponnese.

Meanwhile, relations between Athens and Sparta somehow continued to hold, despite neither party fully honouring the treaty. The Spartan general Clearidas (who had succeeded Brasidas as commander of troops) still held on to

#### TIMELINE: THE PEACE OF NICIAS AND THE INTERWAR YEARS (421–414 BCE)



Amphipolis, complaining that the Chalcidians would not cooperate; and Athens held onto Pylos.

The respective political and military strengths and weaknesses of Sparta and Athens were significant factors. Athens had two advantages over Sparta, as:

- they still had the Spartan hostages from Sphacteria
- there was a growing possibility that Argos would side with Athens against Sparta.

But on the downside, Athens:

- had suffered several setbacks in the past year, such as the defeat at Amphipolis in 422 BCE.

As an act of good faith, Athens returned the hostages of Sphacteria to Sparta. However, this gesture of peace ran parallel with a re-surfacing imperialistic policy in Athens, incited by Alcibiades and Hyperbolus,<sup>33</sup> which led to the Athenians forging a military alliance with Argos, a humiliating loss at Mantinea, and the needless destruction of Melos.<sup>34</sup> Melos was a minor island state in the Aegean that had remained neutral—despite its historical links with Sparta. Athens decided that it was not comfortable with Melos being independent and demanded it join the Athenian empire. This suggests that Athens was anxious about its ability to control its allies and empire. According to Daniel Garst, Athens did not fear powers that were equal to them—namely Sparta—but instead feared the small, insignificant states.<sup>35</sup>

Such actions prepared the seeds for the eventual resumption of hostilities in 414 BCE.

## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What were the problems facing Athens and Sparta in 421 BCE?
2. Why did Argos become involved in the conflict?
3. Does Corinth deserve any blame for causing political unrest between 421 and 414 BCE?

### ➔ SOURCE 6.12

Built in Piraeus in the 1980s, *Olympias* is a reconstruction of an ancient Athenian *trireme*. Sea trials demonstrated that ancient historians such as Thucydides had not exaggerated the capabilities of the *triremes*.



# THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION (415–413 BCE)

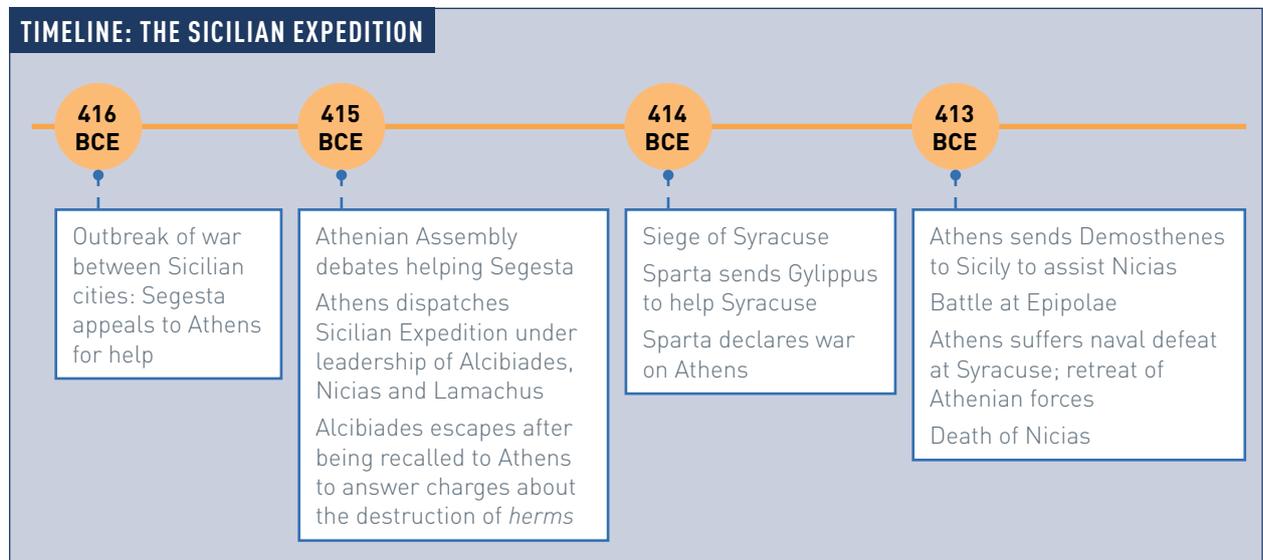
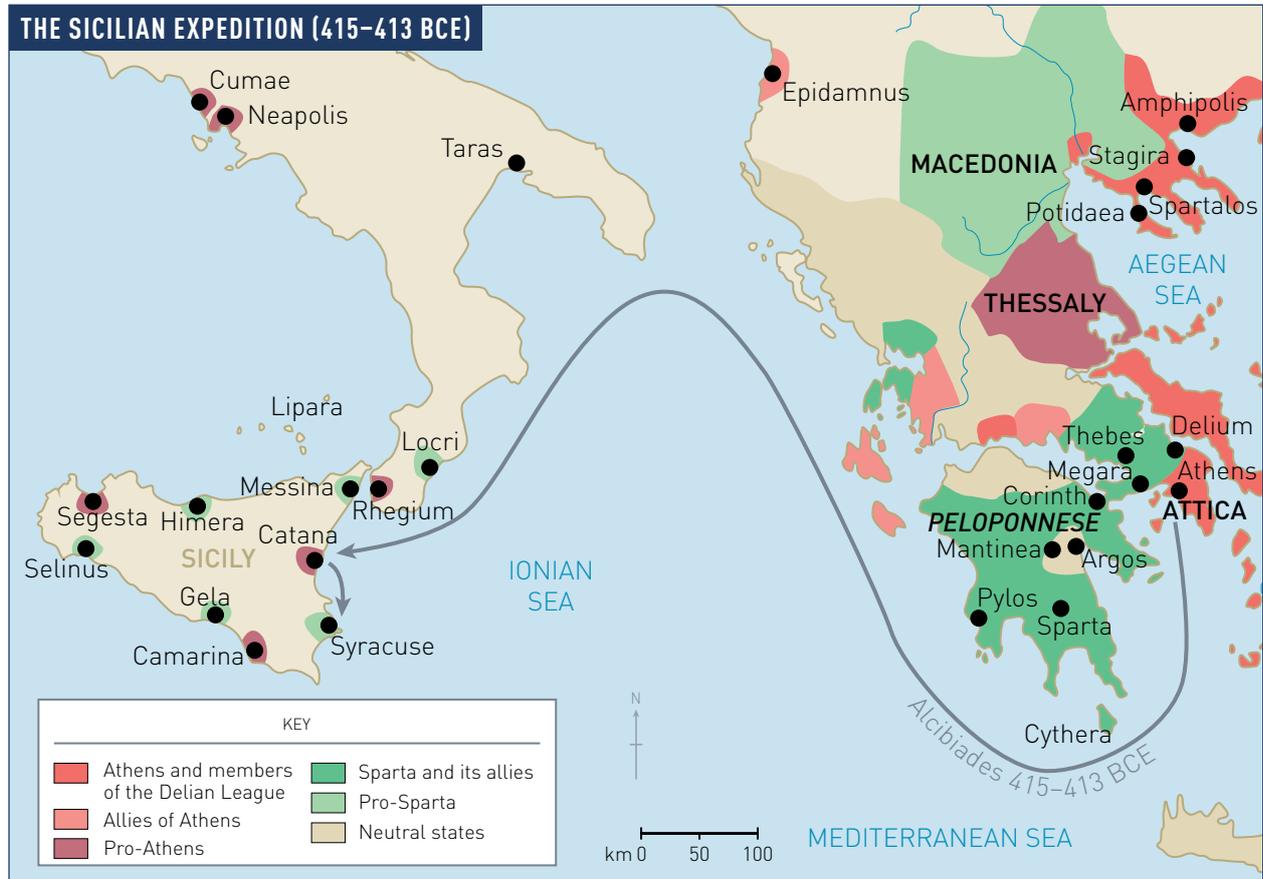


LECTURE:  
SICILIAN EXPEDITION

DIODORUS: 'It was, [Nicias] argued, out of the question for them at one and the same time to carry on a war against the Lacedaemonians and to send a major expeditionary force overseas; and so long as they remained incapable of winning supremacy over the Greeks, it was a vain hope to suppose that they would be able to subjugate the largest island in the inhabited world.'<sup>36</sup>

**SOURCE 6.13**

SICILIAN EXPEDITION



## ATHENS AND SICILY

Historians disagree about whether Athens had a long-term interest in Sicily,<sup>37</sup> but it is likely that Sicily was a topic of discussion in the Assembly both as a trading partner and as a source of food.

In 427 BCE, war broke out on Sicily between the city-states of Leontini and Syracuse. Most of Sicily's cities sided with Syracuse, leaving only Camarina and Naxos supporting Leontini. Leontini, calling on an 'ancient' alliance,<sup>38</sup> sought urgent help from Athens.

Athens responded by sending twenty ships to stop Syracuse gaining control of Sicily—and to also 'survey' the possibilities of taking control of Sicily. However, the brief Athenian presence on Sicily deteriorated into open and protracted hostilities. The Sicilian city of Messina—which had been under Athenian control—revolted from Athens and helped the Syracusans attack Rhegium (the 'toe' of Italy), aiming to seize control of the Straits of Messina.

A year later, a second Athenian expedition was dispatched, confident that the forty ships would be able to end the conflict quickly. However, Hermocrates of Syracuse called a conference at Gela in 424 BCE to establish a truce. This stalled the Athenian involvement and the Athenians returned home without any real resolution.

Although the fighting had stopped, tensions between Leontini and Syracuse soon continued. A pro-Syracuse faction at Leontini drove the pro-Athenian elements from the city, forcing them to resettle wherever they could.

In 422 BCE, Athens sent Phaeax as ambassador to Italy and Sicily with just two ships: regrouping the dissatisfied Leontini democrats, and organising a military counter-attack on Syracuse. Phaeax won over Camarina, but abandoned his mission after being rebuffed by Gela. On his way back to Athens he tried to enlist allies in Italy, winning the support of Locri, which had previously been antagonistic towards Athens.

While a seemingly insignificant episode, modern historian Hornblower considers the mission of Phaeax in 422 BCE to be preparation for the main Sicilian expedition of 415 BCE—as it reemphasises Athenian interests in the west.<sup>39</sup>



### ↑ SOURCE 6.14

Hermocrates.



### ➔ SOURCE 6.15

The ancient Greek theatre of Syracuse, first built in the 5th century BCE.

## THE SICILIAN DEBATE

In winter 416/5 BCE, envoys from Segesta addressed the Athenian Assembly seeking help to fend off territorial threats by its neighbour Selinus—an ally of Syracuse. An Athenian delegation sent to investigate the situation returned in spring 415 BCE with sixty talents of silver as part payment to cover the cost of an Athenian expedition, as well as promises of further wealth. Unencumbered by any military problems in Greece, particularly with Sparta,<sup>40</sup> and seduced by the possibility of more wealth, the Athenian Assembly promptly voted to support their ally and appointed Nicias, Alcibiades and Lamachus as commanders, all with equal authority.<sup>41</sup>

Five days later, the Assembly reconvened to prepare for the campaign. On this occasion, Thucydides relates the speeches of the two principal speakers, Nicias and Alcibiades.<sup>42</sup> Nicias, who opposed the campaign, spoke first. Nicias:

- warned against invading a land about which they knew so little
- stressed that Athens would be exposed to danger if the campaign failed and Syracuse and the other Sicilian Greek cities sided with Sparta.

In response, Alcibiades:

- emphasised the possibilities the enterprise promised
- dismissed suggestions that Sparta posed a danger to Athens as they still did not have a navy
- focused on the need for an empire to grow, partly in order to support its allies.

Nicias' second speech, was intended to counter Alcibiades' claims that Sicily was weak and politically divided. He exaggerated the military and economic cost of the campaign in the hope of frightening the Assembly. Instead, his disagreement was taken as sound advice—and the Assembly voted to follow his advice in full, leading to a much larger campaign. As historian Kagan notes, Nicias' oppositional speech turned a moderate campaign to help an ally into a massive but disastrous enterprise.



### SOURCE 6.16

Alcibiades.

### HISTORIAN KAGAN

What moved the Athenians from a cautious and limited venture to a bold and unlimited commitment was the assurance they had received from a pious, fortunate, and cautious Nicias. Such assurances from such a source swept all before it, kindling new ambitions and heightening those which had already been voiced. Without Nicias' intervention there would have been an Athenian expedition against Sicily in 415, but there would not have been a disaster.

### SOURCE 6.17

Donald Kagan, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 191.

## THE SPEECHES OF NICIAS AND ALCIBIADES

### NICIAS' SPEECH

... the Sicilians, even if conquered, are too far off and too numerous to be ruled without difficulty ... it is folly to go against men who could not be kept under even if conquered, while failure would leave us in a very different position from that which we occupied before the enterprise. The [Sicilians], again, to take them as they are at present, in the event of a Syracusan conquest ... would to my thinking be even less dangerous to us than before.

### SOURCE 6.18

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.11.1–2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

## ➔ SOURCE 6.19

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.18.2–3, 5, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

### ALCIBIADES' SPEECH

... if one were to remain inactive or go in for racial distinctions when it is a question of giving assistance, we should add very little to our empire and should be more likely to risk losing it altogether. One does not only defend oneself against a superior power when one is attacked; one takes measures in advance to prevent the attack materializing. And it is not possible for us to calculate, like housekeepers, exactly how much empire we want to have. The fact is that we have reached a stage where we are forced to plan new conquests and forced to hold on to what we have got, because there is a danger that we ourselves may fall under the power of others unless others are in our power ... Our security is guaranteed by our navy, so that we can either stay there, if things go well, or come back again; for we will have naval superiority over all the Sicilians put together.

## ➔ SOURCE 6.20

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.23.1, 4, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

### NICIAS' SECOND SPEECH

... we must leave Athens with a force that is not only a match for their forces ... but actually much superior to them in every direction; and even so we will find it hard enough to conquer the enemy and come off safely ourselves ... This I believe is the best way to guarantee the general interest of the city and safety of those who are going to serve in the campaign. If anyone thinks differently, I invite him to take the command instead of me.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 6.18–6.20 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What are the key points raised by Nicias and Alcibiades?
2. Who has the stronger argument? Why?

## ➔ SOURCE 6.21

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.15.2–4, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

### THUCYDIDES' ASSESSMENT OF ALCIBIADES

Stronger motives still were [Alcibiades'] desire to hold the command and his hopes that it would be through him that Sicily and Carthage would be conquered—successes that would at the same time bring him personally both wealth and honour ... most people were frightened at a quality in him which was beyond the normal and showed itself both in the lawlessness of his public life and habits and in the spirit in which he acted on all occasions. They thought that he was aiming at becoming a dictator ... 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.

## INTERPRETING THE SPEECHES OF NICIAS AND ALCIBIADES

One factor that can distort any interpretation of the speeches of Nicias and Alcibiades is Thucydides' uncomplimentary assessment of Alcibiades' divisive personality and expansionist policies. Thucydides believed that Alcibiades had an ulterior aim to capture Sicily and Carthage.

Another factor that can shape our understanding is how Thucydides constructs the debate. In his analysis of speeches in Thucydides and their role in the narrative, Hans-Peter Stahl argues that Thucydides favours Nicias over Alcibiades, and shares all of Nicias' misgivings about the expedition.<sup>43</sup>

## HISTORIAN STAHL

To the attentive reader the realities of Sicily as outlined in Nicias' speeches are present throughout.

Historian Tim Rood also emphasises the importance of the speeches in understanding Thucydides' methodology and how it colours the narrative. Thucydides gives Nicias more prominence through the selective use of the speeches (noting that no speeches were recorded from the first assembly when the decision to invade Sicily was made), and that the speeches pre-empt the narrative that follows in Books Six and Seven—namely the Syracusan military capacity, the behaviour of Sicilian cities, the supply of food and resources. The speeches can also be seen as a way to emphasise one of Thucydides' key themes: the importance of foresight.<sup>44</sup>

## HISTORIAN ROOD

Through Nicias' rhetoric, Thucydides suggests that the Athenian defeat in Sicily foreshadows the defeat of Athens as a whole ... This is the culmination of a theme running through the narrative of the expedition.

In contrast, historian Donald Kagan evaluates Alcibiades' arguments as better founded than those of Nicias. He agrees with Alcibiades' assessment of the political instability of Sicily and the idea that the Athenian empire could not remain dormant. Kagan also points out that the impetus came from Sicily and that the size of the Athenian fleet—the same number of ships as were dispatched in 424 BCE (sixty ships)—is evidence that Athens was not planning an occupation of Sicily. Rather, he contends, the Athenians continued their policy to block Syracuse's expanding military reach on the island. The planned surprise attack on Syracuse, the use of mercenaries and the offer by Segesta to bear the cost of the campaign, suggested that the expedition would not be harmful to Athens. Nor would Athens have been as ignorant of Sicily as suggested in Nicias' speech, because envoys were sent to investigate Segesta's claims. However, the envoys were deceived by the Segestans.<sup>45</sup>

## HISTORIAN KAGAN ON THE DEBATE

Alcibiades' account of Sicilian affairs, though one-sided and exaggerated, was not entirely wrong.

## SOURCE 6.22

*Hans-Peter Stahl, 'Speeches' in Thucydides: Man's Place in History (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2003), 354.*

## SOURCE 6.23

*Tim Rood, Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 197.*

## SOURCE 6.24

*Donald Kagan, A New History of the Peloponnesian War (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 182.*

## SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 6.21–6.24 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How does Thucydides characterise Alcibiades?
2. How do the assessments of secondary sources quoted earlier compare with Thucydides' assessment of Alcibiades' abilities?
3. In your opinion, to what degree was Thucydides right to focus on Alcibiades' personal habits?
4. How does that relate to his very last statement (Source 6.21), that turning on Alcibiades 'ruined the city'?

To what degree the Athenians intended an aggressive policy has been the focus of much debate. The appointment of three commanders would suggest mixed motives.<sup>46</sup> The debate reported by Thucydides encapsulates the mood in Athens in 415 BCE, with Nicias and Alcibiades representing the demographic, political and militaristic divide. It also stresses Athens' readiness to engage in a major conflict with an enemy in another area of the Mediterranean and shows their depth of resources—both militarily and emotionally.

Athens had regrouped after the plague. That the Athenian Assembly readily adopted Nicias' advice—rather than balk at the enormity of the exercise—adds fuel to Thucydides' observation that the Athenian people had become enamoured with Alcibiades' promises of great wealth and new lands.<sup>47</sup> Plutarch confirms the mood, describing how Athenians young and old were taken with the idea of a greater empire in Sicily and North Africa, even drawing maps in the sand.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.25

*Plutarch, Life of Alcibiades 17.3, in The Rise and Fall of Athens, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York: Penguin Books, 1960).*

#### PLUTARCH ON ALCIBIADES

He succeeded at once in capturing the imagination of the young men with these prospects, while their seniors too, could be heard enlarging on the wonders of the expedition.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did Athens become involved in the affairs of Sicily?
2. How do the accounts of the debates of Nicias and Alcibiades shape your understanding of Athenian motives?
3. Looking back over Athenian involvement in Sicilian affairs, what would you say were the Athenians' true motives for undertaking the Sicilian expedition in 415 BCE?

## RELIGIOUS SCANDALS

However, shortly before the expedition was to depart, Athens was rocked by a scandal. The Athenians awoke one morning to discover that their *herms* had been damaged. *Herms* were stone pillars that stood in public spaces; each *herm* had a sculpted erect penis and a carved head. *Herms* were considered to protect against bad luck, so many Athenians felt that their destruction was a bad omen for the expedition. This became a very serious matter for the Athenians.

In the efforts to discover who was responsible for the damage to the *herms*, stories emerged about Alcibiades and his friends taking part in sacrilegious activities. Some people suggested that these activities may have been connected with the mutilation of the *herms*. The accusations against Alcibiades were believed by many because of his reputation for depravity—but no trial was conducted and Alcibiades was sent away with the fleet.

After the fleet's departure, investigations continued. A number of men were charged with the mutilation of the *herms* and executed. Accusations against Alcibiades remained



### ➔ SOURCE 6.26

*Herms* stood in public spaces of Athens. This *Herm* is a Roman work after the Greek original of the 5th century BCE.

and concerns grew that his activities were part of a conspiracy to overthrow the democracy. Charges were made against Alcibiades, and the *trireme Salaminia* was sent after the fleet to order Alcibiades to return to Athens and face the charges.

Alcibiades' political opponents exploited the defacing of the *herms* and the accusations of sacrilegious activities to bring about his downfall.<sup>48</sup> More significant was the impact this decision had on the war effort. When Alcibiades was eventually withdrawn, the command was left in the hands of Nicias, who did not want the war to proceed. In addition, Alcibiades himself defected to Sparta, where he helped them against Athens.

## WAR IN SICILY

When the fleet prepared to leave Piraeus in 415 BCE, virtually the whole Athenian population collected to see it depart. Thucydides describes the hopes and fears that families, friends and spectators felt for those leaving, gladdened only by the size of the expedition. He describes the force as the costliest and the finest-looking fleet ever—and intended to make a statement of power.

The Athenian expeditionary force numbered 134 *triremes*, 5100 *hoplites* and 1300 light troops, accompanied by 130 support craft carrying supplies and support personnel.<sup>49</sup> However, the welcome they anticipated did not eventuate. Italian cities closed their harbours to the fleet and denied it provisions. Nicias proposed they settle the difference between Segesta and Selinus and then circumnavigate the island to show off Athenian power before sailing home. Alcibiades (who had not yet been given the order to return to Athens) recommended sending envoys to all the Sicilian cities, inviting them to defect to Athens. Lamachus urged an immediate and surprise attack on Syracuse, with the hope they would precipitate a revolt among the Sicilians. Alcibiades prevailed, but his first attempt at diplomatic negotiations with Messina failed.

Despite the strength of the force, the first season in Sicily was not particularly productive for Athens. By winter, Alcibiades had been recalled, leaving Lamachus and Nicias to prepare for the forthcoming war season by sailing along the Sicilian coast, laying waste to the countryside and destroying crops. Alcibiades' predictions that the cities of Sicily would flock to the Athenians did not eventuate, and only Naxos and Catana proved reliable allies.

One significant early success was Athens' first military encounter with Syracuse. But instead of pressing their advantage and attacking the city, the Athenian fleet withdrew and returned to Catana. According to Thucydides' analysis, the Athenians feared the Syracusan cavalry<sup>50</sup> and felt unprepared, aware that they still needed to win over allies and organise supplies of grain for the winter and spring. In essence, Nicias was wasting time while Syracuse was building its military resistance.

Meanwhile Alcibiades, rather than returning to Athens to face his accusers, defected to Sparta, where he advised the Spartans to adopt a three-pronged attack on Athens that involved:

- dispatching a Spartan general to take control of the war in Sicily
- increasing military activity in Greece so that Athens would be unable to support the Sicilian expedition
- establishing a fort at Decelea, in Attica.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Athens had two high-speed *triremes*, the *Salaminia* and the *Paralus*, which they used for urgent missions. The *Salaminia* was a sacred *trireme*, and was also used to take envoys to the Oracle at Delphi.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Sicily and southern Italy were colonised by Greek settlers from c.775 BCE onwards. Settlement was initially to open trading links with the Etruscans of central Italy, and later for land.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The major strength of Syracuse was a 1200-strong cavalry, whereas the Athenian cavalry was almost non-existent—and remained so even after Athens sent a mounted force in response to Nicias' request.

## ATHENIAN PANIC AND MILITARY DISASTER

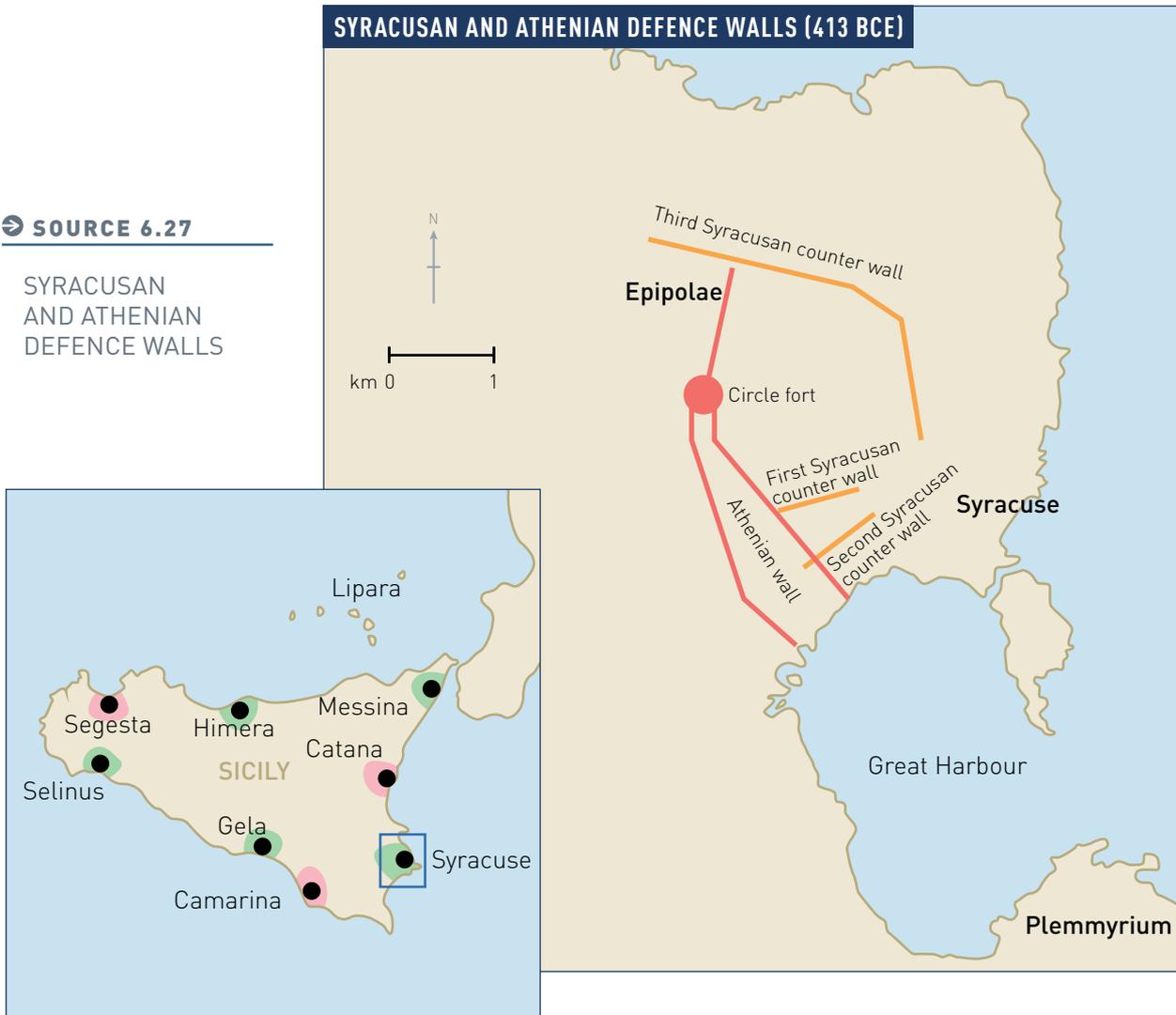
Athens should have been in an unassailable naval position. However, they lost their advantage in summer 414 BCE with the arrival of the Spartan general Gylippus, who had been sent to Syracuse on the advice of Alcibiades.

With the coming of spring 413 BCE, the Athenians besieged Syracuse and started building a blockading wall that was to extend to the fortifications at Epipolae—a high point that overlooked the city and the bay. Both the Athenians and the Syracusans were trying to seize control of the fortifications there. After numerous military encounters, the Syracusans opened discussions with Nicias about surrendering.<sup>51</sup>

The arrival of Gylippus marked a turning point in the Sicilian war. News of Gylippus' imminent arrival had reached Syracuse when its demoralised rulers were contemplating ending the war, and the news restored their confidence. Gylippus revitalised the Syracusan war effort. His drives to recruit reinforcements had most of Sicily helping Syracuse by the time of the Great Harbour battle. His military acumen helped hold and extend the walls of Epipolae, and he was instrumental in seizing the Athenian-built fortresses at Plemmyrium.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.27

#### SYRACUSAN AND ATHENIAN DEFENCE WALLS



The loss of Plemmyrium was a major blow to Athenian forces, as they lost their grain supplies and *trireme*-repairing equipment, along with control of the harbour. According to Thucydides, the loss of Plemmyrium was the ‘chief reason for the deterioration’ of the Athenian army,<sup>52</sup> and subsequent decline in morale. Gylippus anticipated that a telling victory against Athens needed to take place at sea, and he encouraged the Syracusans to build their fleet and develop naval skills in preparation for battle.<sup>53</sup>

Nicias believed that his forces were now in a vulnerable position and asked the Athenians to either recall them or send reinforcements. Athens responded by sending another seventy-three *triremes* and 5000 *hoplites* under the command of Demosthenes. In the meantime, Nicias forged alliances with the native Sicels, who were able to prevent some of the other Greek *poleis* from sending troops to help the Syracusans.

The arrival of Demosthenes seemed like a tactical masterstroke. The number of reinforcements demoralised Syracuse, which was something Demosthenes wanted to exploit. He launched a surprise assault on Epipolae. However, the initial success of the Athenian forces ultimately collapsed. Thucydides graphically captures the confusion, disorder and terror that engulfed the night battle (Source 6.29).



#### 📌 SOURCE 6.28

Athenians battle Sicilians in the Sicilian Expedition.

#### 📖 SOURCE 6.29

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 7.44.1, 44.6–7, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

#### THUCYDIDES ON THE NIGHT BATTLE

The Athenians now fell into great disorder and perplexity ... what hurt them as much, or indeed more than anything else, was the singing of the paeon [song of triumph or thanks], from the perplexity which it caused by being nearly the same on either side ... [the Dorians fighting with the Athenians] struck terror into the Athenians whenever they raised their paeon, no less than did the enemy. Thus, after being once thrown into disorder, they ended by coming into collision with each other in many parts of the field, friends with friends, and citizens with citizens, and not only terrified one another, but even came to blows and could only be parted with difficulty. In the pursuit many perished by throwing themselves down the cliffs, the way down from Epipolae being narrow ...

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.29 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How does Thucydides describe the behaviour of the Athenians?
2. In your opinion, what does this extract tell us about the morale of the Athenians?

ACTIVITY

### ▼ SOURCE 6.30

The naval battle in the Great Harbour of Syracuse.



Demosthenes' preferred strategy was to withdraw with the army intact after Epipolae. However, this was initially opposed by Nicias. The resulting delay in the Athenians' departure allowed time for reinforcements for the Syracusans to arrive. The Syracusans blockaded the Athenians in the harbour, forcing them into

two momentous naval battles. The first, which pitched seventy-six Syracusan ships against eighty-six Athenian ships, gave the islanders an enormous confidence boost, and they now proclaimed they were fighting for the 'liberty of Greece'.

The second was the Great Harbour battle. The Athenians committed all 110 *triremes* and their full whole force of sailors and marines, under the command of Demosthenes,

Menander and Euthydemus, while Nicias commanded the infantry that was lined along the shore. Thucydides describes the emotions of both sides fluctuating between horror, anxiety, hope, despair, inconclusiveness—until the final moment when the Syracusans gain the ascendancy. His most astute observation is how the tactical roles were reversed, with the Syracusans becoming the naval power and the Athenians resorting to land warfare from the decks of ships.

### ACTIVITY

#### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.31 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Who were Athens' allies?
2. Who were Athens' unsupportive allies (subject states)?
3. Who were the independent allies that supported Athens because of their treaty?
4. Who were the non-Greeks who also joined Athens?
5. What does this suggest about Athenian preparations for the war?

#### THUCYDIDES ON THE GREAT HARBOUR BATTLE

No doubt the sum total of the forces enrolled in this war under Athens and Sparta was greater, but otherwise there had certainly never been so many peoples gathered together in front of a single city. The following were the states on the two sides, for and against Sicily, who came and fought at Syracuse to help either in the conquest or the defence of the island. They stood together not because of any moral principle or racial connection; it was rather because of the various circumstances of interest or compulsion in each particular case. The Athenians themselves, being Ionians, came of their own free will against the Dorian Syracusans, and with them came their colonists ... some came as subjects of the Athenians, others as independent allies, others as mercenaries ... the Cephallenians and Zacynthians joined the expedition as independent powers, though in fact, with Athens in command of the seas, their position as islanders left them little freedom of choice. The Corcyraeans were not only Dorians, but actually Corinthians ... [and] were acting of their own free will because of their hatred of Corinth. The rest of the expedition served more on a voluntary basis. It was not so much because of the alliance as because of hatred for the Spartans, and the prospect of making quick personal profit for themselves ...

### ▲ SOURCE 6.31

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 7.56.4–57, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

The magnitude of the defeat—the ships and men lost on that day—had a catastrophic impact on the Athenians. Although still a massive force—and still larger than the Syracuse force—their morale was totally spent, which reduced their capacity to resist adversity. More so, the naval defeat was compounded by their lack of allies, their strategic miscalculations and shortages of money and supplies.<sup>54</sup> The Athenians:

- neglected their dead and wounded—which went against the Athenian tradition of burying their war dead
- refused Demosthenes' command to regroup and board the ships—which still numbered sixty
- delayed their departure—which allowed Syracuse to gain the tactical advantage.

The end came quickly at the River Assinarus. Beaten, exhausted, and under relentless attack from Syracusan forces for eight days as they retreated east to Catana, the Athenians surrendered. In total, only about 7000 of 40 000 men survived the ordeal, but they went on to face eight months of brutal imprisonment in the Syracusan stone quarries, where many more died.



The Athenian generals Demosthenes and Nicias—despite the protestations of Gylippus, who had hoped to take them back to Sparta as war trophies—were executed by the Syracusans.

#### THUCYDIDES ON THE BATTLE AT RIVER ASSINARUS

[Once the Athenians reached the river] they rushed in, and all order was at an end, each man wanting to cross first, and the attacks of the enemy making it difficult to cross at all; forced to huddle together, they fell against and trod down one another, some dying immediately upon the javelins, others getting entangled together and stumbling ... without being able to rise again.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Some of Thucydides' greatest and most atmospheric passages of writing narrate the worst battles and experiences of the Sicilian expedition, particularly Epipolae, the Great Harbour and River Assinarus, where he uses the senses to convey the horrors of war.

#### 📖 SOURCE 6.32

The stone quarries in Syracuse, where Athenian soldiers were kept prisoner.

#### 📖 SOURCE 6.33

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 7.84.2–3, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).



### WAS THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION A BAD IDEA?

In a rare but moving tribute, Thucydides describes Nicias as a man driven by his attention to a virtuous life. Nicias does not fare well in the Sicilian Expedition in the assessment of some modern scholars—with much of the disaster linked to his conservatism and self-interest. He had always opposed the campaign and his strategies were too cautious and subject to his religious traditionalism—such as delaying his departure for one month after the defeat at Epipolae because of a moon eclipse, losing the opportunity to escape with his army intact.

Also, Nicias’ fear of political persecution in Athens should he make a wrong decision stifled his actions. In one letter Nicias positions himself as ‘caretaker’ of Athenian interests in Sicily—that is, he didn’t make decisions, his role was to carry out decisions made by the Assembly. In this sense, the Athenian Assembly must also bear responsibility for the failure of the Sicilian War. Athens’ passion for growth and wealth was driven by emotion and greed, rather than following a sound strategy provided by a strong leader.<sup>55</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 6.34

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 7.86.5, trans. Rex Warner (Toronto: Penguin, 1954).

#### THUCYDIDES ON NICIAS

... a man who, of all the Hellenes in my time, least deserved to come to a miserable end, since the whole of his life had been devoted to the study and practice of virtue.

### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What impact did religious controversies have on the Athenian war effort?
2. Why was it a problem having three commanders for the Sicilian Expedition?
3. Could Alcibiades have won the Sicilian campaign? Use evidence from wider reading to support your response.

#### CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE

Write an essay discussing the three main factors that contributed to the Athenian disaster in Sicily.

### SICILY: THE NUMBERS

**134 triremes**  
(approx. **22 780 rowers**)  
& **5000 hoplites** arrive  
in Sicily (415 BCE)

**73 triremes**  
(approx. **12 400 rowers**)  
& **5000 hoplites** arrive  
in Sicily (413 BCE)

**40 000 Athenians** hold  
out on land,  
against relentless  
Syracusan attacks,  
for 8 days

‘[The Athenians] were  
utterly and at all points  
defeated ... Fleet and army  
perished from the face of the  
earth; nothing was saved, and  
of the many who went forth  
few returned home.’

**110 Athenian ships**  
participate in the  
Great Harbour battle,  
**50 are lost** (413 BCE)

Eventually only **7000 Athenians survive**,  
but they are imprisoned in Syracusan stone  
quarries for 8 months, where many more die

### IMPACT ON ATHENS

Thucydides relates how Athens received the news of defeat in Sicily with disbelief, shock, anger, fear—and then resolve. The catastrophe was so great that Thucydides marvelled at the Athenians’ ability to hold out against Sparta for another ten years. Modern historians Meiggs and Hornblower argue that it is wrong to assume the Sicilian calamity ‘fatally’ weakened Athens. Even Thucydides’ description of ‘total annihilation’ at the end of Book 7 of his history of the war is replaced with reference to Athenian ‘resilience’ at the beginning of Book 8.<sup>56</sup>

## DECELEAN OR IONIAN WAR (414–404 BCE)

F.S. NAIDEN: ‘... during the final phase of the Peloponnesian War of 431 to 404 BCE, the Spartans surpassed the Athenians in naval performance.’<sup>57</sup>



NAVAL HISTORY:  
THE DECELEAN WAR

The last decades of the Second Peloponnesian War were ignited by the actions of Athens supporting Argos, and by the chaos of Sicily.

Sparta had begun preparing to recommence hostilities against Athens even before the battle at Epipolae. Sparta was spurred on by the Syracusans and Corinthians who needed to distract Athens from sending reinforcements to Sicily—and by Alcibiades’ advice to fortify Decelea. The Spartans were aware the Athenians were in difficulties in Sicily—and wanted to increase pressure on them by opening a second front.

Thus, in early spring 413 BCE, the Spartan king Agis resumed attacks on Attica and established a garrison at the fortress overlooking Decelea, some twenty kilometres from Athens. The fort at Decelea represented a change in Spartan strategy. A Spartan presence threatening Athens was now constant—rather than the annual raids it had conducted through most of the Archidamian War. The impact was immediate. The presence of an enemy garrison forced Athens into a state of heightened military alert day and night. Property was destroyed and livestock was lost, while regular Spartan patrols prevented the Athenians from accessing their lands. Supplies from Euboea that had previously been brought overland now came by a circuitous sea trip around Cape Sunium. Twenty thousand ‘skilled’ slaves deserted to join the Spartans, many presumably from the Laurion silver mines, which the Athenians could no longer work.<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile, news of the defeat in Sicily filtered into Athens. As the reality sank in, the Athenians turned on the politicians who had encouraged the expedition, and the soothsayers (people who predict the future) who had predicted a great victory. Fear of what might now happen compounded their dread about: the catastrophic loss of men and ships; the money wasted and the now depleted treasury; and the possible retaliatory attack by their enemies, probably aided by disaffected allies keen to capitalise on the Athenians’ state of weakness.

### TIMELINE: DECELEAN OR IONIAN WAR (414–404 BCE)

414  
BCE

Sparta declares war on Athens

413  
BCE

Spartan forces led by Agis invade Attica and establish a fort at Decelea

412  
BCE

Rebellions by Athenian allies

411  
BCE

Oligarchic coup of the Four Hundred at Athens

The Five Thousand replace the Four Hundred

Alcibiades is recalled to Athens

410  
BCE

Naval victory by Athens at Cyzicus

Democratic government restored at Athens; rejection of Spartan offer of peace

409  
BCE

Alcibiades commands Athenian fleet in Ionia

408  
BCE

Alcibiades victorious at Byzantium and Chalcedon

407  
BCE

Alcibiades returns to Athens in triumph

Lysander appointed commander of the Peloponnesian fleet in Ionia

406  
BCE

Athenian defeat at Notium

Alcibiades goes into exile

405  
BCE

Athenian victory at Arginusae; trial and execution of Athenian generals for failing to pick up survivors after battle

Lysander reappointed to Spartan fleet as *navarch*

Spartan victory at Aegospotami; destruction of Athenian fleet

404  
BCE

Siege and surrender of Athens

Sparta imposes ‘Thirty Tyrants’ as Athenian government

**SOURCE 6.35**

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 8.2.1–2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

**THUCYDIDES, AFTER THE DEFEAT IN SICILY**

The winter ensuing saw all Hellas stirring under the impression of the great Athenian disaster in Sicily. Neutrals now felt that even if uninvited they ought no longer to stand aloof from the war, but should volunteer to march against the Athenians ... Meanwhile the allies of the [Spartans] felt all more anxious than ever to see a speedy end to their heavy labours. But above all, the subjects of the Athenians showed a readiness to revolt ...

**ACTIVITY**  
**SOURCES AS EVIDENCE**

Using Source 6.35 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Why would Athens' allies be tempted to revolt?
2. What could Athens offer the allies to motivate them to stay within the alliance?
3. To what degree did Athens benefit or suffer from the Sicilian Expedition?

However, driven by desperation and necessity, the Athenians dug in and refused to consider defeat. Their program of actions, as listed by Thucydides, highlights the problems that Athens faced. These actions are summarised in the following table.

THE ATHENIANS' PROGRAM OF ACTIONS	
PROBLEM	ACTION BY ATHENS
LOST SHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replenish timber supplies for shipbuilding (probably from Macedonia)</li> </ul>
NEAR EMPTY TREASURY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revenue-raising: change tribute collection from individual assessment of each city to a five per cent levy on all goods imported and exported by sea</li> <li>• Cost-cutting</li> </ul>
ALLIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain careful checks on allies to impede any revolts</li> </ul>
PROTECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fortify the base at Sunium to protect ships coming around the cape</li> <li>• Abandon the fort in Laconia</li> </ul>
LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint ten commissioners to act as advisers (<i>probouloi</i>) on current affairs</li> </ul>

According to Thucydides, the despair felt in Athens was matched by elation across Greece,<sup>59</sup> and this was a mood that spelled trouble for Athens, because

- city-states that had been neutral, but were now taking up arms against Athens
- Sparta's allies could not wait to get their revenge
- Athens' allies saw their opportunity to break free, as they doubted Athens would survive the year.<sup>60</sup>

Also, Sparta's aims, with the confidence of an imminent victory, seem to have shifted, with Thucydides noting a desire to assume leadership in Greece.<sup>61</sup> Immediately that winter, Spartan king Agis, the leader of the Spartan pro-war faction,<sup>62</sup> set out from Decelea into central Greece to collect money and build a fleet, mount punitive expeditions, try to retake Heraclea and reopen the land

route to Thrace and Chalcidice. And, aware of Sparta's principal weakness, he requisitioned 100 ships from these allies.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, although hostilities continued on the mainland, the significant theatre of war was now among the Asiatic Greek cities around the Ionian coast and in the Hellespont.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did the Athenian people react to the news from Sicily?
2. How did mainland Greece receive the news?
3. How did each side adjust its military strategies to take advantage of the victory (Sparta), or recover from the defeat (Athens)?

ACTIVITY

## THE IONIAN THEATRE OF WAR



### SOURCE 6.36

WESTERN ASIA MINOR

As the dust from Sicily settled, some of Athens' allies were keen to break away, and sent secret representations to Sparta seeking help—in a sense generating the impetus for war. However, as historian H.D. Westlake shows, any new alliance was complicated because of the interests of the different parties involved, which included:

- Sparta and its allies
- Alcibiades (who was aligned with the Spartans)
- Persian *satraps* Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus.<sup>64</sup>

If Sparta was to strike a telling blow against Athens, it required the Athenian tribute states to break away and leave Athens defenceless and with reduced revenue. The appeals from the eastern Greek *poleis* were too tempting to ignore.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.37

H.D. Westlake, 'Ionians in the Ionian War', *Classical Quarterly* 29.1 (1979), 43.

#### HISTORIAN WESTLAKE ON THE IONIAN CITIES

At the outset enthusiasm for revolt was widespread, and several cities collaborated eagerly with the Peloponnesians and with one another. Soon, however a reaction set in: they were disheartened both by the resilience of the Athenians and by the failure of the Peloponnesian expeditionary force to bring the war rapidly to an end, thereby securing genuine independence for them.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.37 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What did the Ionian cities hope to gain by rebelling from Athens?
2. How widespread was the disaffection with Athens?
3. To what degree did the Ionian cities benefit from the Ionian War?

The first Athenian allies to make entreaties to Sparta were Chios, Lesbos and Cyzicus. The key decision facing Sparta was where to focus its energies. Chios offered a navy that Sparta could utilise. Given the Spartan lack of ships, experienced naval commanders and resources to maintain crews,<sup>65</sup> the Peloponnesian alliance chose to support Chios. From there, with the use of the Chian navy, they could proceed to Lesbos and then into the Hellespont.<sup>66</sup> The Spartans agreed to send forty ships to Chios to join with the Chian navy. However, despite the sixty ships of the Chian fleet being ready, the Peloponnesians waited, first because of an earthquake and then because of the Isthmian festival.

Finally, a fleet of twenty-one ships was dispatched, only to be destroyed after an encounter with an Athenian fleet at Speiraeum, near Epidaurus. This first 'official' military encounter in the Ionian War disheartened the Spartans, who considered recalling all their fleets—but were persuaded to continue by Alcibiades.

## ALCIBIADES AGAIN

After he had evaded the Athenian authorities in 415 BCE, Alcibiades worked hard to win the trust of the Spartan decision-makers, largely through his relationship with the *ephor* Endius—with the ostensible aim of bringing about the defeat of the Athenians. Taking advantage of the uncertainty after the defeat of the Spartan fleet at Speiraeum, in 412 BCE Alcibiades persuaded the Spartans to let him accompany the Peloponnesian fleet to Chios, where he worked with the oligarchic faction to persuade the Chians to defect to the Peloponnesian League.

Alcibiades's success at Chios was followed by more success as former Athenian allies followed Chios. Erythrae and Clazomenae joined willingly, and more *poleis* would follow in southern Ionia and Caria.<sup>67</sup> Another important victory was the defection of Athens' long-time ally Miletus, in 412 BCE. Here, the 'usual' trend of oligarchic factions inciting rebellion was replaced by a democratic faction rejecting Athens.<sup>68</sup> A force of Athenians and Argives sought to recapture Miletus for the Athenian empire. The battle that ensued at Miletus was hard fought, with the Athenians claiming victory—before withdrawing to Samos when they heard that another Peloponnesian fleet was on its way.



ALCIBIADES: PATRIOT OR OPPORTUNIST?

The encounter at Miletus illustrates the nature of the fighting in Ionia and the Aegean Sea. After Miletus declared independence from Athens and welcomed Peloponnesian assistance, it fell again to the Athenians, before being recovered yet again by the Spartan coalition.

In essence, the decade was packed with significant and insignificant sea battles, small fleets from both sides patrolling the seas, making assaults, taking cities and leaving sympathetic governments in place before moving on. Everything was in a state of flux, as cities, more interested in self-preservation than diplomatic or political intricacies, changed allegiances depending on which fleet was in the vicinity.<sup>69</sup> Battles and skirmishes were a regular occurrence, many happening on the spur of the moment, as one fleet happened upon another.

As much as Sparta was prosecuting war against Athens, this phase of the war would not have been easy for Sparta to conduct or maintain. It lacked ships and experienced naval commanders, and had only very limited resources with which to maintain crews.<sup>70</sup> Sparta was far from gaining military ascendancy, even with Athens in a weakened state.

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did the main focus of the fighting shift to Ionia?
2. Why couldn't Sparta take advantage of Athens' 'weakened state' and finish off the war?
3. What impact did Alcibiades have on the Spartan war effort?

### ACTIVITY

## PERSIA AND SPARTA UNITE

Meanwhile, Alcibiades, who was now based at Chios, met with Tissaphernes, the *satrap* of Caria, to facilitate an alliance between Sparta and Persia.<sup>71</sup>

Relations between Greece and Persia had generally been peaceful since the end of the Greco–Persian War in 449 BCE. When the Archidamian War had broken out in 431 BCE, both Athens and Sparta had approached Persia for financial assistance.

In 412 BCE, following diplomatic efforts from both sides, Persia's new king Darius II chose to help Sparta ahead of Athens. Persia was keen to regain control of western Asia Minor, but Athenian interests and connections were a major obstacle. Instead of confronting Athens alone, it seemed more effective to support Sparta.



### ↑ SOURCE 6.39

Coin showing the Persian king Darius II.

The Spartans, pressed by Alcibiades' insistence, aligned themselves with the Persian *satrap* Tissaphernes. However, this would not prove a fruitful relationship. It took three sets of negotiations in 412–411 BCE for the Persians and Spartans to establish their respective positions.<sup>72</sup>

In return for support, the Spartans were compelled to give up their position as liberators. The initial agreement recognised all territories and cities ever



### 📍 SOURCE 6.38

Coin showing the Persian *satrap* Tissaphernes.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Darius II's opposition to Athens has been variously explained. Darius wanted to:

- exploit Athens' weak state after their defeat in Sicily
- re-establish past territorial interests on the west coast of Asia Minor
- punish Athens for supporting the rebel Amorges, who had led a revolt against the Persian king.

controlled by the Persians—which included Ionia as well as northern and central Greece—as rightfully Persian. These terms were subsequently watered down, but Sparta still remained bound to helping Persia control the Asiatic Greek *poleis*, even though the treaty now referred to *territories* rather than *cities*.

Despite his successes in Ionia, the Peloponnesians were suspicious of Alcibiades' motives and his interference in Spartan affairs. This, combined with personal animosity between Alcibiades and King Agis, led to instructions that he be put to death.

Alcibiades promptly switched his allegiance to Tissaphernes and began working to turn Persia against the Peloponnesian alliance by advising the Persians to reduce the sailors' salary and refuse financial assistance to allies.

Alcibiades also outlined the policy that Tissaphernes would adopt for the duration of his command in Ionia—to let Athens and Sparta wear each other out. Then Persia could step in to help Athens because, as an expansionist power, Athens would be more sympathetic to Persian interests than Sparta, whose declared aim was the liberation of the Greek states. According to Thucydides, Alcibiades was considering returning to Athens—and having Tissaphernes as an ally would be a useful bargaining lever.

Alcibiades' shift to Athens was not long in coming, and he was able to manipulate events in Ionia to his advantage. The mood in Athens was changing, following the Sicilian disaster, dissatisfaction with the democratic government and exasperation with the course of the war in Ionia.

After Chios defected to Sparta in summer 412 BCE, the last of Athens' key allies in Ionia was Samos. But then an uprising in Samos saw a democratic faction round up and murder 200 prominent citizens, exile another 400, and establish a democratic government.

Among those exiled from Samos were men who had links with the anti-democratic movement in Athens. Alcibiades approached the exiled Samians and used his association with Tissaphernes as a lure—promising to give Persian support to Athens against Sparta. However, Alcibiades had one proviso—that an oligarchy replace the democratic government in Athens.

A delegation of Athenians travelled from Samos to Athens and, using argument, bribery and violence, won popular support for a change of government in June 411 BCE. This was a political coup that Alcibiades to some degree precipitated.<sup>73</sup> The government became known as the *Four Hundred*.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Samos was the main Athenian base in Ionia, with a massed fleet of seventy-four ships and 15 000 men.

### SOURCE 6.40

#### THE HELLESPONT



Meanwhile Alcibiades returned to Samos and won over the army, which elected him general. According to Thucydides, it was in this role that Alcibiades gave Athens his greatest service. Delegates from the Four Hundred addressed the Samian army, hoping to win its support. Instead, the army erupted into near revolt, with calls to sail to Athens and restore the democracy. Alcibiades, conscious that if the fleet left Samos, it would expose the Hellespont and Ionia to the Peloponnesians, persuaded the army to stand down by demanding the tyrants be ousted from office.

Unsuccessful in garnering support among the soldiers on Samos, the Four Hundred approached Agis and then the Spartan government to negotiate peace, with no success. Unable to fulfil their political promises nor bring peace with Sparta, the Four Hundred were overthrown in September 411 BCE and replaced by a moderate, broader-based government called the *Five Thousand*—a more democratic government, which Thucydides would describe as the best of his time.

One of the decisions of the Five Thousand was to recall Alcibiades from exile. However, the government of the Five Thousand did not last long, with the full democracy being restored in 410 BCE.



#### SOURCE 6.41

Alcibiades makes his victorious return to Athens, 407 BCE.

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What assistance did Persia provide to Sparta? What did Persia hope to gain by helping Sparta?
2. What adjustments did Sparta have to make to its policies to gain Persian support?
3. Do you agree with Thucydides that this was Alcibiades' finest hour? Support your response with evidence.

#### ACTIVITY

## ATHENIAN SUCCESS

PLUTARCH: 'But the return of Alcibiades from exile and his resumption of the command quite transformed the situation and made the Athenian fleet once more a match for its opponents.'<sup>74</sup>

Major naval victories soon followed at Cynossema and Cyzicus.

At the battle of Cynossema in 411 BCE, ships from both sides had collected on opposite sides of the strait, with eighty-six Peloponnesian ships at Abydos and seventy-six Athenian ships at Sestos. The Spartan admiral Mindarus wanted to outflank the Athenian line with his extra ships, and this caused both sides to extend their fleets over long lines. Although the move was successfully countered by Athens, it left their centre exposed, and the Peloponnesians forced the Athenians onto the shore. However, the Peloponnesian fleet then became disordered, allowing the Athenians to ultimately turn a certain Peloponnesian victory into a chaotic defeat. In the end, the Athenians lost fifteen of their ships, but managed to capture twenty-one from the Peloponnesians to replace them.



THE THEATRES  
OF WAR

## ➔ SOURCE 6.42

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 8.105.2–3–106.1–2, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

### THUCYDIDES ON THE BATTLE AT CYNOSSEMA

... the Peloponnesians in the confidence of their victory began to scatter in pursuit of individual ships and, over a considerable part of their line, to fall into disorder. Seeing this, Thrasybulus, and his men, instead of continuing to extend their line, turned about immediately and went into action against the enemy ships, which were bearing down on them. After routing these, they fell upon that part of the Peloponnesian fleet which had been victorious, driving down upon them in their disorganized state and putting most of them to flight without any resistance being offered. ... The Peloponnesians were routed ... Though the Athenians captured only a few ships. ... nevertheless nothing could have been better for them at this time than the winning of this naval victory ... now they got rid of their feelings of inferiority and ceased to believe that the enemy was worth anything at sea.

## ➔ SOURCE 6.43

*Diodorus*, Persian Wars to the Fall of Athens 13.40, trans. Peter Green (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

### DIODORUS ON THE BATTLE AT CYNOSSEMA

Though the Peloponnesians held the advantage in the number of their ships and the fighting spirit of their marines, the professional skill of the Athenian steersmen rendered that advantage ineffectual. Whenever the Peloponnesian vessels charged swiftly en masse with the intention of ramming, [the steersmen] would maneuver their own ships so cleverly that [their opponents] could make contact with them at no other spot, but were forced to meet them head-on, ram against ram. As a result of this, Mindarus seeing that the rams, for all their striking power, were achieving nothing, ordered his ships to engage in small groups or individually. But this tactic likewise failed to neutralize the skill of the Athenian steersmen ... Both sides were in hot competition ... [with] neither side being able to gain victory ... [when] there appeared, rounding a promontory, twenty-five ships dispatched to the Athenians from their allies. The Peloponnesians, in some alarm, retreated towards Abydos, with the Athenians hard on their heels in hot pursuit.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 6.42–6.43 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What do Thucydides and Diodorus consider the main factor in the Athenians winning the battle? How similar are their explanations?
2. Why does Thucydides attribute so much significance to this victory? How had the Athenian war effort been faring until this point?
3. Investigate both Thucydides and Diodorus. Whose account do you think would be more accurate?

Summoning more ships, Mindarus again confronted the Athenians near Abydos. The Athenians, reinforced by the arrival of Alcibiades with a squadron of ships from Samos, again overwhelmed the Peloponnesians, capturing thirty ships.<sup>75</sup> However, the Athenians were forced to disperse and collect funds and reinforcements, thus losing their advantage to strike a telling blow.

Despite the setback, Mindarus immediately attacked and stormed Cyzicus. However, an Athenian attack would see the Athenians regain the city after a concerted battle on land and sea. This action included three Athenian generals—Thrasybulus, Theramenes and Alcibiades—and a combined force of eighty-six ships—and ended with the Athenians as victors and the Peloponnesian forces in mad retreat.<sup>76</sup>

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE****VICTORY AT CYNOSSEMA**

With three significant victories, the Athenians seemed to be on the ascendancy, giving them hope that the war would turn out well. In particular, the victory at Cynossema was a great morale booster. It saved Athens—with no further resources to rebuild their navy or stop defections by dissatisfied subject states, a defeat would have probably marked the end of their war effort. Abydos and Cyzicus gave them control of the Hellespont, thereby restoring their access to food supplies from the Black Sea region, as well as providing Athens with an avenue for collecting a ten per cent tax from sea trade into the Black Sea from its custom station at Chrysopolis, near Byzantium. Equally significant was the impact on the Spartan command, poignantly captured in an intercepted dispatch to Sparta advising the *ephors* of the last disaster. It read: ‘Ships lost: Mindarus dead: men starving: do not know what to do’.<sup>77</sup> The Peloponnesians had lost over 135 ships in a few months and its presence in the Aegean Sea was seriously diminished.<sup>78</sup>

After the destruction of the Peloponnesian fleet, Sparta sent the *ephor* Endius to offer peace terms to Athens. However, influenced by ‘warmongers’ and ‘profiteers’, the Athenians rejected the offer.

Keen to secure their hold on the Hellespont, the Athenians pressed their advantage. Thrasyllus, who had arrived from Athens with 5000 light-armed infantry, had some initial success—but his ambitious assault on Ephesus in the summer of 409 BCE was a catastrophe.

More significant were the Alcibiades-led captures of Chalcedon and Byzantium.<sup>79</sup> Alcibiades had been elected as a general in 408 BCE. Noticeably, after the Athenian capture of Byzantium, none of the Byzantines were punished in any way—as also had occurred on Alcibiades’ instruction at Selymbria—which was a new and conscious Athenian tactic to win over recalcitrant allies.

**ENTER LYSANDER**

Meanwhile the Spartans were becoming increasingly frustrated by the Persian *satrap* Tissaphernes. In 408 BCE, the Spartans decided to bypass Tissaphernes and send their ambassadors directly to the Persian king, Darius II, who appointed the prince Cyrus to oversee the Ionian region.

In 407 BCE, the Spartans appointed Lysander as *navarch* (commander), replacing Mindarus—and Athens’ run of success was over.

Lysander’s first success in the Ionian region was winning the support of Cyrus. Cyrus ignored Tissaphernes’ policy of letting Athens and Sparta weaken each other, and gave Lysander funds to rebuild the Peloponnesian fleet. This Lysander proceeded to do, using Ephesus as his base.

Alcibiades’ naval exploits in the two years after the ousting of the Four Hundred—along with political canvassing by his allies in Athens—had increased his popularity. In October 408 BCE, with his position in Athens seemingly secure, Alcibiades

**SOURCE 6.44**

Lysander.



## ACTIVITY

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why would the victory at Cynossema boost Athenian confidence?
2. Why didn't the Athenians accept Sparta's peace offer after Cynossema? In your opinion, was that a wise decision?
3. Why was the battle of Notium significant to the Athenian war effort?

### DID YOU KNOW?

Spartan law did not permit repeat appointments of naval command. The appointment was for one year, and it could not be the same person two years in a row.

led 100 ships to Andros. According to Plutarch, his failure to capture the city would lead to his demise. Taken in by Alcibiades' reputation, the Athenians expected him to perform miracles.

In 406 BCE, eager to engage Lysander, Alcibiades brought his fleet to Ephesus. He anchored at Notium, south of Ephesus, and sailed to meet Athenian general Thrasybulus at Phocaea, leaving his inexperienced pilot Antiochus in command of the fleet—with strict orders not to engage in battle. Eager for fame, Antiochus ignored his instructions. Taunting Lysander with only ten ships, he was quickly overrun—his ship was sunk and he was killed, and the remainder of the fleet was strewn into disarray. In total, Athens lost twenty-two ships. Hearing the news, Alcibiades raced back to Notium, but Lysander refused to engage in another battle, forcing Alcibiades to return to Samos.

Notium was an insignificant battle, but the consequences were immense, made all the worse by Alcibiades' botched assault on Cymae in an attempt to raise money from an Athenian ally. The news of the defeat brought about the discrediting of Alcibiades. He was charged with:

- neglecting his duty
- leaving his command to incompetents
- abusing his authority
- liking drinking and sexual debauchery too much
- having pro-Spartan and pro-Persian sympathies
- harbouring ambitions to seize control of the region once the war was over.

Faced with these charges, the Assembly withdrew Alcibiades' command and appointed Conon to take command of Alcibiades' fleet. Alcibiades—out of favour with his soldiers, and realising his position in Athens was becoming increasingly untenable—fled to a stronghold in Thrace.

## THE BATTLE AT ARGINUSAE (406 BCE)

In 406 BCE, the small Arginusae islands, between Lesbos and the coast of Ionia, were the scene of the penultimate sea battle between the Athenian and Peloponnesian fleets. The Peloponnesian ships were commanded by Lysander's replacement, Callicratidas. In what Diodorus describes as the largest sea battle fought by Greeks against Greeks, 120 Peloponnesian ships faced 150 Athenian ships, which were arranged in two lines to prevent the Peloponnesians breaking through.

The Athenians were successful in the ensuing battle—the Peloponnesians lost seventy-seven ships, including that carrying Callicratidas, while the Athenians lost twenty-five ships. In the aftermath, the coast from Cymae to Phocaea was awash with corpses and wreckage. The task of rescuing Athenian survivors and the bodies of the dead fell to the commanders Theramenes and Thrasybulus, but violent storms prevented them from completing their task.

Buoyed by their success, the Athenians again rejected Sparta's offer of a peace truce—and another opportunity to stop the war was lost.

## AEGOSPOTAMI: THE FINAL BATTLE (405 BCE)

The end came abruptly for Athens. Despite their run of naval victories—and even though they had been fighting the war with minimal finances for the past decade—the Athenians had no contingency plans for disaster, nor for the unexpected.

The Greek cultural and religious custom of burying the dead would lay the groundwork for Athens' final defeat. On their return to Athens after Arginusae, Theramenes, Thrasybulus and the other commanders were put on trial for failing to rescue and recover their sailors. Six of the eight commanders were executed, including Thrasybulus, and their property confiscated by the state. Besides venting political venom, Athens lost the services of experienced commanders; as historian Kagan notes, the new appointments to command the fleet—none with discernible leadership qualities—would have been sapped of confidence<sup>80</sup> and were certainly no match for Lysander.

Lysander had been appointed 'unofficial commander' of the Ionian front following Callicratidas' death at Arginusae. He immediately began the task of refitting a new navy, aided by Cyrus. Not confident that his navy was strong enough to take on the Athenians in open combat, Lysander adopted the strategy of harassing, biding his time, and conducting sneak attacks on Aegina, Salamis and Attica.

Realising that the Athenians had left the Hellespont undefended, Lysander launched an attack on Lampsacus in 405 BCE. Lampsacus was strategically located near the entrance of the Hellespont—and Lysander was aiming to cut off Athens' food source from the Black Sea region.

Learning the news, the Athenian generals anchored on the opposite shore, at Aegospotami, a small town at the mouth of a local river. As Alcibiades would tell the generals when he arrived a few days later, their choice of camp was poor: there was no natural harbour, and the nearest town for the supplies needed to feed the men on the 180 ships was about twenty kilometres away.

The Athenian strategy was to send out daily sorties to entice Lysander into battle—which Lysander avoided, unless it could be done on his own terms. This daily routine was running down the Athenians' rations, which could not be replenished from the local area. Alcibiades' proposed strategy of a land and sea operation in combination with Thracian king Medocus was rejected. Meanwhile, funds to pay the sailors were running out, causing many to defect to the Peloponnesians when Cyrus increased the rowers' salary.

After four days, the Athenian troops were at the point of starvation. On the fifth day, Philocles, who was general that day, attempted to force the situation by sailing out with thirty ships. However, Lysander had been informed of the Athenian plan by defectors. In a counter-manoeuve, Lysander's *hoplites* attacked the Athenian camp over land, while he charged his ships across the straits directly at the bulk of the beached Athenian navy. The surprise action left the Athenian camp overwhelmed. Inexperienced commanders, poor discipline, unpreparedness and panicked flight resulted in ships destroyed, many dead, and over 3000 prisoners—all of whom were executed. Conon escaped with eight *triremes*, leaving behind what remained of the entire Athenian fleet in Ionia. With one extraordinary feat, Lysander effectively ended the war.

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Athenians rotated 'leadership' between the ten *strategoí* (generals) daily. Each general represented one of the ten *phylai* (tribes) to ensure equal participation and authority among the generals.

### SOURCE 6.45

Ruined columns of Spartan monument commemorating their victory at Aegospotami.



### ➔ SOURCE 6.46

*Plutarch, Life of Lysander*  
11.6–7, in *The Rise and Fall of*  
*Athens*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert  
(New York: Penguin Books,  
1960).

### PLUTARCH ON LYSANDER

After plundering the Athenian camp and taking their ships in tow, he sailed back to Lampsacus, accompanied by the triumphal music of flutes and hymns of victory. He had performed a prodigious exploit with the minimum of effort. In the space of a single hour he had put an end to a war which for its length and for the variety of its incidents and the uncertainty of its fortunes, eclipsed any that had gone before. The various conflicts and issues at stake had taken on innumerable different forms and witnessed many changes of circumstances, and the war had cost Greece more generals than all her previous contests put together, yet now it was concluded by the foresight and skill of one man. For this reason some people believe that the gods must certainly have taken a hand in the result.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.47

*Xenophon, Hellenica 2.2.3*,  
trans. Carleton L. Brownson  
(Cambridge, MA: Harvard  
University Press; London:  
William Heinemann, 1918,  
1921).

### ATHENIAN REACTION TO AEGOSPOTAMI

It was at night that the Paralus arrived at Athens with tidings of the disaster, and a sound of wailing ran from Piraeus through the Long Walls to the city, one man passing on the news to another; and during that night no one slept, all mourning, not for the lost alone, but far more for their own selves, thinking that they would suffer such treatment as they had visited upon the Melians ... and upon the Histiaeans and Scionaeans and Toroneans and Aeginetans and many other Greek peoples.

The news hit Athens hard, but the final capitulation of Athens took some months. By March 404 BCE, besieged by the armies of both Agis and Pausanias, and with a naval blockade preventing supplies getting through, Athens was forced to negotiate peace.

The terms imposed by Sparta were not as harsh as the Athenians might have anticipated. Lysander resisted pressure from Corinth and Thebes to destroy the city and annihilate the people of Athens. Instead, the Long Walls and the fortifications protecting Piraeus were dismantled, all but twelve warships were surrendered, garrisons were removed from all cities, and a 'puppet' oligarchic government, later known as 'the Thirty Tyrants' was installed, with a Spartan garrison to protect them.

### ➔ SOURCE 6.48

Following the Athenian surrender in 404 BCE, the Spartans made the Athenians raze the walls of Piraeus and the Long Walls that connected Athens and Piraeus.



## THUCYDIDES ON WHY SPARTA WON THE WAR

And yet, after losing most of their fleet and all the other forces in Sicily, with revolutions already breaking out in Athens, they [the Athenians] none the less held out for eight years against their original enemies, who were now 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.

## SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 6.49 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What are the key points Thucydides makes?
2. Are his explanations adequate?
3. Are there any factors that he should have included?

ACTIVITY

## HISTORIAN LAZENBY ON WHY SPARTA DESERVED TO WIN THE WAR

Militarily speaking, the Spartans deserved to win the war. Since, when it broke out, they were dominant on land, the Athenians at sea, if either was to win a meaningful victory, it had to be on the others' element. But whereas the Spartans learned how to do it, the Athenians never really did. In general, too, the Spartans prosecuted the war with more vigour, despite what Thucydides sometimes alleges.

## HISTORIAN HANSON ON WHY ATHENS LOST THE WAR

It was the belief of Thucydides that if democracies brought multifaceted advantages to war, their raucous assemblies, constant second-guessing, grandstanding, and hypercriticism severely hampered military operations. Only a towering figure such as Pericles could rein in the raw emotions unleashed in open forums and, as first citizen, by sheer power of his moral authority run the country and still take full advantage of democratic dynamism. Whether that pessimism of the historian was warranted or fair to democracy, it was certainly clear that Sparta had more patience with an occasionally lax Brasidas, Agis, or Lysander than Athens ever did with its own generals.

## SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Sources 6.50–6.51 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How does Source 6.50 (Lazenby) explain the outcome of the war?
2. Does Source 6.51 (Hanson) agree?
3. How do the different explanations shape your understanding of what caused the defeat of Athens?

## HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

Read Sources 6.50 and 6.51. As a class, debate the following: 'To what degree do the questions asked by historians influence the writing of history?'

## CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Create a concept map or diagram showing the causes of the Archidamian War and Decelean War. How do they differ?

## SOURCE 6.49

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.65.12–13, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).

## DID YOU KNOW?

While Thucydides' narrative ends in 411 BCE, it is thought that he lived until c.400 BCE. The observation above was inserted into his description of events in 432/1 BCE, looking ahead to the end of war.

## SOURCE 6.50

*John F. Lazenby*, Peloponnesian War: A Military Study (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 251.

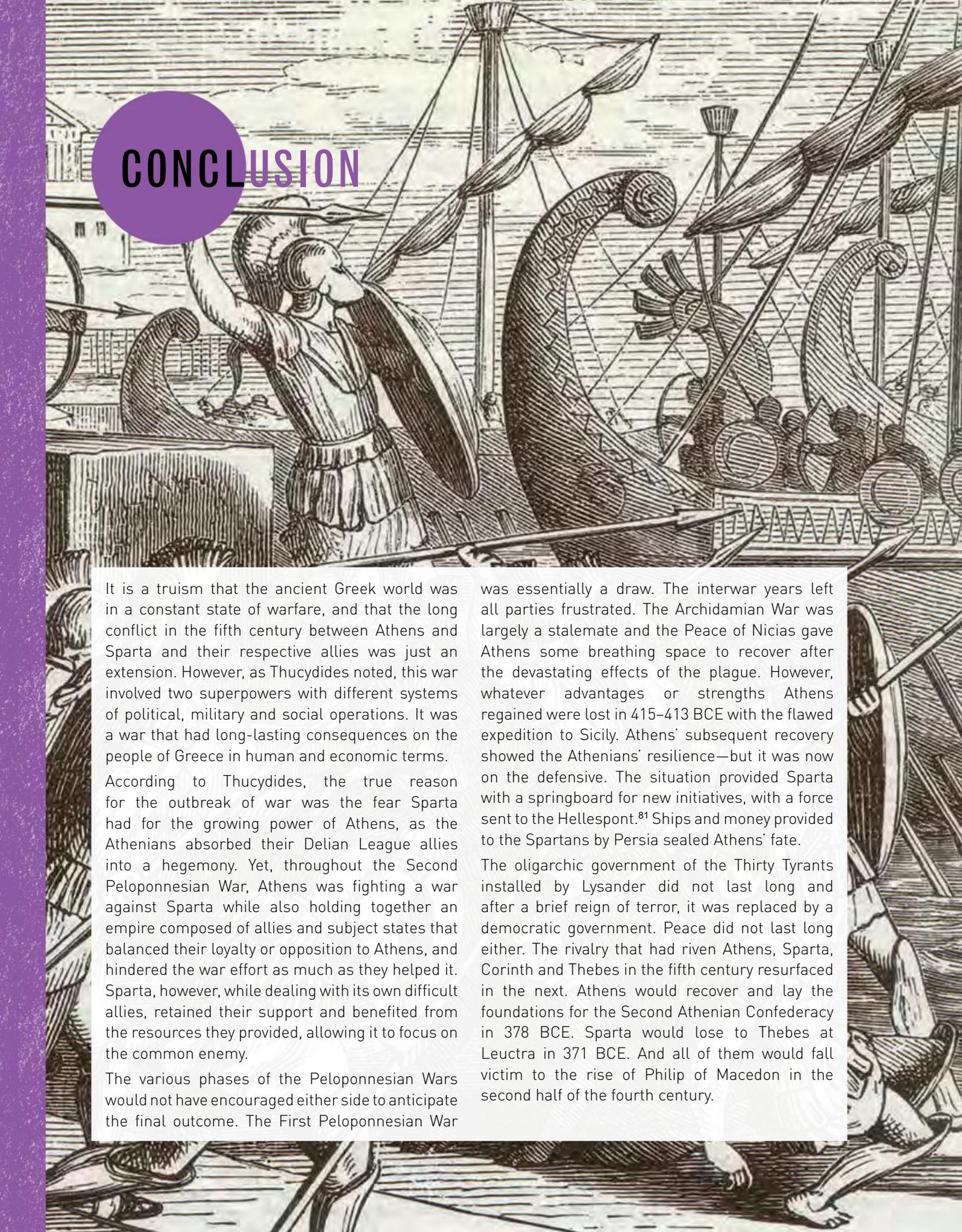
## SOURCE 6.51

*Victor Davis Hanson*, 'Why did Athens Lose?', in National Review, 11 November 2005., <https://www.nationalreview.com/2005/11/why-did-athens-lose-victor-davis-hanson/>



WHY DID ATHENS LOSE?

ACTIVITY



# CONCLUSION

It is a truism that the ancient Greek world was in a constant state of warfare, and that the long conflict in the fifth century between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies was just an extension. However, as Thucydides noted, this war involved two superpowers with different systems of political, military and social operations. It was a war that had long-lasting consequences on the people of Greece in human and economic terms.

According to Thucydides, the true reason for the outbreak of war was the fear Sparta had for the growing power of Athens, as the Athenians absorbed their Delian League allies into a hegemony. Yet, throughout the Second Peloponnesian War, Athens was fighting a war against Sparta while also holding together an empire composed of allies and subject states that balanced their loyalty or opposition to Athens, and hindered the war effort as much as they helped it. Sparta, however, while dealing with its own difficult allies, retained their support and benefited from the resources they provided, allowing it to focus on the common enemy.

The various phases of the Peloponnesian Wars would not have encouraged either side to anticipate the final outcome. The First Peloponnesian War

was essentially a draw. The interwar years left all parties frustrated. The Archidamian War was largely a stalemate and the Peace of Nicias gave Athens some breathing space to recover after the devastating effects of the plague. However, whatever advantages or strengths Athens regained were lost in 415–413 BCE with the flawed expedition to Sicily. Athens' subsequent recovery showed the Athenians' resilience—but it was now on the defensive. The situation provided Sparta with a springboard for new initiatives, with a force sent to the Hellespont.<sup>81</sup> Ships and money provided to the Spartans by Persia sealed Athens' fate.

The oligarchic government of the Thirty Tyrants installed by Lysander did not last long and after a brief reign of terror, it was replaced by a democratic government. Peace did not last long either. The rivalry that had riven Athens, Sparta, Corinth and Thebes in the fifth century resurfaced in the next. Athens would recover and lay the foundations for the Second Athenian Confederacy in 378 BCE. Sparta would lose to Thebes at Leuctra in 371 BCE. And all of them would fall victim to the rise of Philip of Macedon in the second half of the fourth century.

## CHAPTER REVIEW

1. Identify the three phases of the Second Peloponnesian War.
2. List three key features that shaped each of the phases.
3. Using information presented in this chapter, write a paragraph in response to the following questions:
  - How efficient were the military strategies of Athens and Sparta in the Archidamian War?
  - To what extent did the Plague hurt the Athenian war effort?
  - Was the Peace of Nicias doomed to fail?
  - Was Athens right to invade Sicily?
  - Did Alcibiades help or hinder the Ionian War?
  - Why did Athens ultimately lose the war?

## EXTENSION

Using this chapter and other sources, in groups of pro-Nicias and pro-Alcibiades supporters, research and debate the case for declaring war on Syracuse.

## EXAM PREPARATION

In sixty minutes, write an essay on one of the topics below. Support your argument with evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations.

- 'The plague of 430 BCE was the key reason for Athens' defeat in the Peloponnesian War.' Discuss.
- Discuss the role of Alcibiades in the Peloponnesian War.
- 'Sparta won the Peloponnesian War by learning from their enemy—Athens.' Discuss.

## TEST



QUIZ – CHAPTER 6

## IN FOCUS

‘We are the school of Hellas.’

PERICLES<sup>1</sup>



### 📍 SOURCE 1

Pericles.

### DID YOU KNOW?

According to historical sources, Pericles was born with an abnormally long head that made him look a bit like a lion. He was self-conscious about the shape of his head and apparently wore a helmet high on his head (as shown in the image above) to disguise it.

# PERICLES (495–429 BCE)

## KEY POINTS

- Pericles was a radical democrat and patriot
- He was renowned for his oratory powers, appealing to reason and to his audience’s higher nature
- Pericles was re-elected fifteen years running, and oversaw the ‘Golden Age’ of Athens, a time of great building, art, oratory and theatre
- His military strategy centred on the navy.

Pericles is remembered as a statesman of Athens, a supporter of both democracy and empire. His contemporaries called him the ‘Olympian’, suggesting he was powerful but also—like the gods—aloof. He was ‘respected and trusted like no other’, being repeatedly elected as general on a yearly basis from 445–430 BCE.<sup>2</sup> Pericles has become a symbol of the Athenian ‘Golden Age’, an era that was created in part by his visions. Pericles’ character traits have become synonymous with the classical Athenian man—a logical and eloquent speaker, a determined soldier, and a lover of art.

## FAMILY AND CHILDHOOD

Pericles came from a powerful political family. His mother Agariste belonged to the aristocratic family of the Alcmaeonids, and his father Xanthippus was an eminent politician and naval commander. As a boy, Pericles was tutored by the sophist and musician Damon, a man from a less aristocratic background who may well have helped shape Pericles’ radical views and taught him how to engage and persuade a crowd—skills that saved him several times in his political career.<sup>3</sup> The philosophers Anaxagoras and Zeno instructed Pericles in philosophy, mathematics and the natural sciences, shaping his rational, philosophical approach to domestic politics and foreign policy.<sup>4</sup>

Pericles grew up during a critical phase of the Persian wars—Xerxes’ invasion of Athens. Too young to fight, Pericles would have been part of the evacuation of Athens as the Persians marched south. He returned to the charred ruins of his city in 479 BCE, after the Persians had been repelled.

## POLITICS AND THEATRE

Pericles’ first step into the public arena was through sponsoring a play—which was one of the things wealthy Athenians were expected to do. He was the patron of Aeschylus’ *The Persians* (Aeschylus’ only historical tragedy—all others are inspired by mythological episodes), which was performed at the Great Dionysia festival in

472 BCE. It was a huge success, the crowd enjoying remembering Persia's woes at Salamis (Source 2).

### AESCHYLUS' *THE PERSIANS*

#### **Persian Messenger to the Persian Queen:**

At once, on a word of command, they all pulled their oars together, struck the deep sea-water and made it roar—and then suddenly they were all there in plain sight. First there was the right wing, leading the way with good order and discipline, and then the whole fleet coming on behind, and from all of them together one could hear a great cry: 'Come on, sons of the Greeks, for the freedom of your homeland, for the freedom of your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods, and the tombs of your ancestors! Now all is at stake!' ...

... the Greek ships, with careful coordination, surrounded them [Persian ships] completely and went on striking them... the Eastern armada was being rowed away in disorderly flight.

### SOURCE 2

Aeschylus, *The Persians*  
3.96–422, trans.  
A. H. Sommerstein  
(Cambridge, MA and  
London: Harvard  
University Press,  
2008).

This was rousing theatre for an audience that had lived through the bloodshed. By sponsoring the drama, Pericles tied his own name to the values exhibited in the play, in which democracy fights for *autonomia* (self-determination) against the Persian Empire.

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 2 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Outline which historical event is being depicted in this scene.
2. What important Athenian values are being expressed in this passage? Provide evidence.
3. Explain why Pericles, as a young politician, may have wanted to be associated with this play.

### ACTIVITY

## THE POLITICAL FIREBRAND

With his name now known, in the 460s BCE Pericles pursued a political career and joined the radical faction of the polity, led by Ephialtes. Ephialtes challenged the power of the *Areopagus* (council of elders), which was a bastion for the more conservative oligarchs, or 'aristocrats'—arguing that power should lie in the people's *ecclesia* (assembly) and *boule* (council).

Cimon, the successful and popular commander, protected the *Areopagus* and presented himself as the defender of Solon's traditions. Plutarch said Cimon 'succeeded in arresting and even reducing the encroachments of the people on the prerogatives of the Aristocracy.'<sup>5</sup>



## ACTIVITY

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. What institutions did Ephialtes, Cimon and Pericles support?
2. What does this reveal in terms of their different political perspectives?

However, as the 460s BCE progressed, Cimon's glory as a *navarch* was no longer enough for the increasingly radical *demos*. In rousing speeches, Ephialtes and his protégé Pericles urged the *ecclesia* to take the power from the older institutions. Plutarch states that the people 'took control of the courts of justice and transformed the city into a thorough-going democracy with the help of Pericles.'<sup>6</sup>

In 461 BCE, Ephialtes was assassinated—possibly by his political opponents.<sup>7</sup> Soon after, Cimon was ostracised after Pericles painted him as a pro-Spartan—and Pericles was left as the most powerful politician in Athens. He urged the Assembly to build Long Walls that could be used to seal off Athens from the rest of the mainland if there were an invasion, providing unlimited access to the harbour at Piraeus (and therefore fresh supplies from overseas), and making Athens impregnable. Pericles believed the future of warfare was at sea.

## THE WARS OF THE 450s

The 450s BCE brought war to the Athenians, against the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League, and against the Persians.

Elected as one of the ten *stratego*i (military generals), Pericles was deeply involved in the First Peloponnesian War (460–445 BCE). He led some early campaigns against Corinth, with mixed results. At sea, however, the Athenians were the superior force.

In 449 BCE, the Greco–Persian Wars formally ended with the Peace of Callias. The Athenian empire would dominate the Aegean Sea and most of the coast of Asia Minor, while Cyprus and Egypt were to remain under Persian control.<sup>8</sup>

In 446/5 BCE, the Thirty Years' Peace treaty was confirmed with Sparta. It was in these following years of peace that Pericles dominated Athenian politics, being re-elected as one of the *stratego*i for fifteen consecutive years.

## ECONOMIC POLICY

Athens under Pericles could not feed itself. The expanding city had long ago required more food than the Attic farmland provided. The Peace of Callias meant that trade with Egypt was now severely limited, and food imported from Sicily, southern Italy and the west could not meet the needs of the Athenian people. Wheat had to come from the rich plains of modern-day Ukraine. To guarantee the trade route, Athenian colonies were expanded at the Hellespont, at the entrance to the Black Sea, and the Athenian navy was kept there. In 437 BCE, Pericles personally led a campaign to the Black Sea to secure supplies of grain, iron, magnetite ore and slaves.<sup>9</sup>

Under Pericles' leadership, Athens' Delian League allies continued to be forced to pay financial tribute. Now that peace with Persia was assured, many of the allies resented this imposition. Nevertheless, the tributes flooded the Athenian coffers and provided employment for many Athenians. Public works served both cultural and economic purposes as Athens funded the employment of thousands of craftsmen, masons and skilled labourers to beautify the *polis*.

## PERICLES 'THE OLYMPIAN'

Pericles was renowned for his hard work and his skills of oratory, which seemed to reflect the best of Athenian values. Plutarch describes his calm and moderate tone, reflecting a rational and assured frame of mind.

### PLUTARCH ON PERICLES

... not only a dignity of spirit and a nobility of utterance which was entirely free from the vulgar and unscrupulous buffooneries of mob-oratory, but also a composure of countenance that never dissolved into laughter, a serenity in his movements and in the graceful arrangements of his dress which nothing could disturb while speaking, a firm and evenly modulated voice, and other characteristics of the same kind which deeply impressed his audience.

### SOURCE 3

*Plutarch, Pericles 5.1 in The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).*

Pericles' eloquence gave him remarkable sway over the Athenian public, who were clearly persuaded by his speeches. Modern historian Michael Grant suggests that the Athenians were 'abnormally susceptible to oratory',<sup>10</sup> the radical democracy providing an unprecedented space for persuasive public speaking.

However, Pericles was indirectly mocked for being too perfect, too aloof, and too powerful. The term 'Olympian' was used, likening him to the greatest of gods. After he sponsored the building of the Odeon, the comic poet Cratinus said of him: 'Here comes Pericles, our onion-headed Zeus, with a hat the size of a concert-hall on his head.'<sup>11</sup> For a democratic man to be likened to Zeus was an insult towards the gods, suggesting *hubris* (excessive pride).

### DID YOU KNOW?

Pericles and Aspasia's son, Pericles the Younger, was denied Athenian citizenship because of a law that Pericles himself had passed years before his son was born. Under the Athenian Citizenship Law of 451 BCE, only someone with an Athenian mother *and* father could be a citizen.

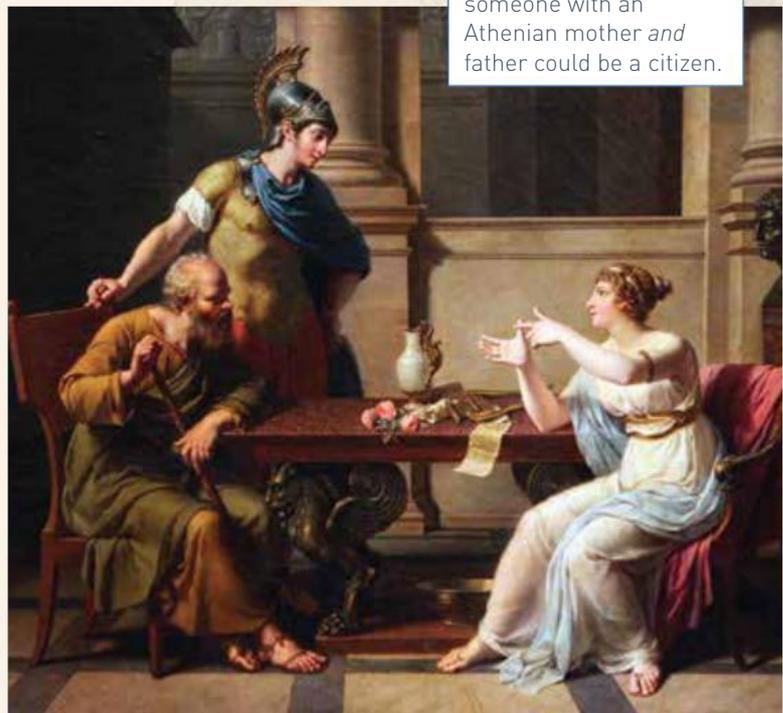
## GETTING AT PERICLES

Pericles' foes were unable to find anything they could use against him, so they targeted his friends and family instead. The philosopher Anaxagoras—Pericles' friend and mentor—was charged with impiety and sentenced to death. His old friend Damon was ostracised, probably in the late 440s BCE.

His partner Aspasia became a target for slander. She was a foreigner from Miletus who lived in Athens as a *metic* and cohabited with Pericles as his concubine (Athenian law prohibited them from getting legally married) after he divorced his first wife. Aspasia was educated and outspoken (Socrates was her philosophical sparring partner) and being a foreigner freed her from the constraints of typical Athenian wives. Her relationship with Pericles was frequently attacked by comedy writers who hoped that some of the mud that was slung at her would stick to him.

### SOURCE 4

Socrates and Aspasia debating.



## THE BUILDING PROGRAM

Athens' coffers were full of financial tributes from its allies. The Delian League treasury had been moved to Athens to keep it safe from Persians, and Pericles now proposed using the treasury to fund a building program. Masons, sculptors, painters and smiths would all be given useful employment. They would start with the sacred Acropolis.

### ➔ SOURCE 5

A nineteenth-century portrayal of the Acropolis after Pericles' building program.



Opponents of the building program argued that the funds should be used only for defence. But Pericles defended the program. He claimed that Athens was indeed successfully defending its allies—and any surplus was theirs to spend as they pleased. This view was popular with the *demos*, as it provided employment for the glory of Athens.<sup>12</sup>

The building program developed at a rapid pace. The Parthenon, a temple to the city's patron goddess Athena, was constructed in little over over a decade (447–432 BCE). It was to become a lasting symbol of Athens' greatness.

### ➔ SOURCE 6

*Plutarch, Pericles 13.1–3, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916).*

#### PLUTARCH ON THE BUILDING PROGRAM

So then the works arose, no less towering in their grandeur than inimitable in the grace of their outlines. ... they were created in a short time for all time.

#### ACTIVITY

#### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What policies did Pericles implement to secure Athenian food supplies?
2. Identify the ways in which people close to Pericles were targeted by his political enemies.
3. Outline the significance of the building program.

## PERICLES, DEMOCRACY AND LEADERSHIP

Pericles was an eloquent and persuasive public speaker, appealing to logic and justice in his addresses to the Assembly. According to Thucydides, Pericles' popularity was tentative—the public would sometimes be furious at him, until he would win them over again.



DEMOCRACY UNDER PERICLES

### THUCYDIDES ON PERICLES' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DEMOS

Not long [after fining him], according to the way of the multitude, they again elected him general and committed all their affairs to his hands, having now become less sensitive to their private and domestic afflictions, and understanding that he was the best man of all for the public necessities.

According to Thucydides, Pericles had qualities that made the public trust and respect him, even though they did not always share his views.

### THUCYDIDES ON PERICLES' RHETORICAL SKILLS

Pericles, indeed, by his rank, ability, and known integrity, was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude—in short, to lead them instead of being led by them; for as he never sought power by improper means, he was never compelled to flatter them, but, on the contrary, enjoyed so very high estimation that he could afford to anger them by contradiction. Whenever he saw them unseasonably and insolently elated, he would with a word reduce them to alarm; on the other hand, if they fell victims to panic, he could at once restore them to confidence. In short, what was nominally a democracy became in his hands government by the first citizen.

For modern historian S.B. Ferrario, the Pericles described by Thucydides can only be understood as a force opposing Athenian democracy.

### HISTORIAN FERRARIO ON PERICLES

He is depicted here as not merely as the leader of his people, but as the sole instigator of their foreign policy; he does not collaborate with his citizen group, but instead imposes his own will upon them. In short, Pericles' capacity for historical agency is presented as a limiting factor upon the demos' access to it.

And yet, modern historians de Ste. Croix, Burn and Hammond counter that Pericles did not have such a hold on the people, as he had to persuade them every time to follow his policies, many of which—such as his naval strategy—were initially unpopular.

### HISTORIAN HAMMOND ON PERICLES

The Athenians who watched their property being destroyed in Attica were filled with detestation of his strategy. Upholders of Athens' military tradition disliked the tacit admission that her army was no match for the invaders. ... It was this reaction to his strategy which first split people radically; it was to keep them divided until the Peace of Nicias.

To these historians, Pericles had to fight for his popularity with the majority, and he certainly wasn't universally admired.<sup>13</sup>

### SOURCE 7

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.65, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

### SOURCE 8

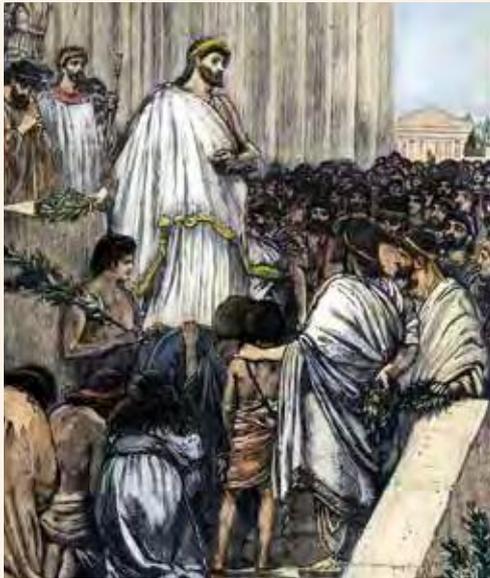
*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.65.8–9, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

### SOURCE 9

S.B. Ferrario, Historical Agency and the 'Great Man' in Classical Greece (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 106.

### SOURCE 10

N.G.L. Hammond, The Classical Age of Greece (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 141.



## ATHENS THE ISLAND: WARTIME SPEECHES

Pericles only lived to see the first years of the Peloponnesian War. His strategy focused on the navy and required the public to overcome their aversion to sitting within their walls while Attica burned. His speeches needed to appeal to reason and calm, urging the *demos* to look to the big picture. Once young men started to die during the campaign, his public speaking was vital in persuading the Assembly to stick to his strategy.

War speeches help historians gain insight into how a group of people likes to see itself, as the commander appeals to a people's pride and patriotism. Pericles was an astute politician and public speaker who appealed to his audience's identity as democratic Athenians. In 431 BCE he gave a speech at a public funeral for all those who had died in the first year of war; it is known as the Funeral Oration.



PERICLES' FUNERAL ORATION

### ↑ SOURCE 11

Pericles giving his famous 'funeral oration' at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War.

### ➔ SOURCE 12

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 2.37–41, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 12 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. What is the value of the Athenian constitution as shown in Source 12?
2. According to Pericles, what characteristics does Athens encourage in its citizens?
3. Why might these characteristics be valuable to the state?
4. How does Athens view its position in relation to other Greek city-states? Provide evidence.

### PART OF PERICLES' FUNERAL ORATION

Our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states; we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves. Its administration favours the many instead of the few; this is why it is called a democracy. If we look to the laws, they afford equal justice to all in their private differences; if no social standing, advancement in public life falls to reputation for capacity, class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way ...

We cultivate refinement without extravagance and knowledge without effeminacy; wealth we employ more for use than for show, and place the real disgrace of poverty not in owning to the fact but in declining the struggle against it. Our public men have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to, and our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters; for, unlike any other nation, regarding him who takes no part in these duties not as unambitious but as useless, we Athenians are able to judge at all events if we cannot originate, and, instead of looking on discussion as a stumbling-block in the way of action, we think it an indispensable preliminary to any wise action at all. ...

In short, I say that as a city we are the school of Hellas, while I doubt if the world can produce a man who, where he has only himself to depend upon, is equal to so many emergencies, and graced by so happy a versatility, as the Athenian. And that this is no mere boast thrown out for the occasion, but plain matter of fact, the power of the state acquired by these habits proves. For Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule. Rather, the admiration of the present and succeeding ages will be ours, since we have not left our power without witness, but have shown it by mighty proofs; and far from needing a Homer for our panegyrist [eulogist], or other of his craft whose verses might charm for the moment only for the impression which they gave to melt at the touch of fact, we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us. Such is the Athens for which these men, in the assertion of their resolve not to lose her, nobly fought and died; and well may every one of their survivors be ready to suffer in her cause.

## DEATH AND LEGACY

Pericles died in 429 BCE, with Athens headed deeper into a protracted war with Sparta. His final year had seen Athens ravaged by plague, with his sister and many friends dying from it. Pericles too, caught the plague and seemed to recover, but the following months saw him decline in health. He died, surrounded by friends.

### PLUTARCH ON PERICLES' LEGACY

After his death, the course of events soon brought home Pericles' worth to the Athenians and made them sharply conscious of his loss. Those who in his lifetime had resented his power and felt that it overshadowed them turned to other orators and popular leaders as soon as he was out of the way, only to find themselves compelled to admit that no man for all his majesty was ever more moderate, or, when clemency was called for, better able to maintain his dignity.

Thucydides, who was an admirer of Pericles, noted a change in policy after Pericles' death. According to the ancient historian, later politicians were not as moderate, divided between those who sought peace, such as Nicias, and those who chose an aggressive policy, like the younger Alcibiades.

## CONCLUSION

Pericles' name has become synonymous with classical Athens. Starting as a young radical and developing into a master statesman, Pericles' career was one of the most significant of the age.

In Pericles, Athenians saw what they liked best in themselves. His admirers—such as Thucydides—presented him as calm and logical, not given to excessive passions. He was a solid *strategos* and a lavish patron of the arts. He spoke eloquently when speaking publicly, without resorting to cheap populism. Most significantly, he was seen as public-spirited, sacrificing his own interests for the state and it was perhaps this apparent selflessness that allowed him to maintain such influence in a democracy that was ready to ostracise any politician who rose too high.



### ↶ SOURCE 13

*Plutarch, Pericles 39.4, in The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).*

### ↷ SOURCE 14

The death of Pericles.



THE LEGACY OF PERICLES



QUIZ – PERICLES

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. What particular qualities did Pericles have as a public speaker?
2. Why was Pericles' Funeral Oration significant?
3. When and how did Pericles die?

### KEY INDIVIDUALS: PERICLES

1. Draw a timeline of Pericles' life, marking key events for Athens and his political career and personal life.
2. Create a flow-chart entitled 'Influences: Pericles'. On the left-hand side, identify individuals or factors that influenced him, and on the right-hand side identify significant individuals or groups he affected.
3. Using the sources in this chapter, produce a four-paragraph essay in response to the following statement: 'Pericles' policies were a reflection of the Athenian people's will.' To what extent do you agree?

# ALCIBIADES (451–404 BCE)

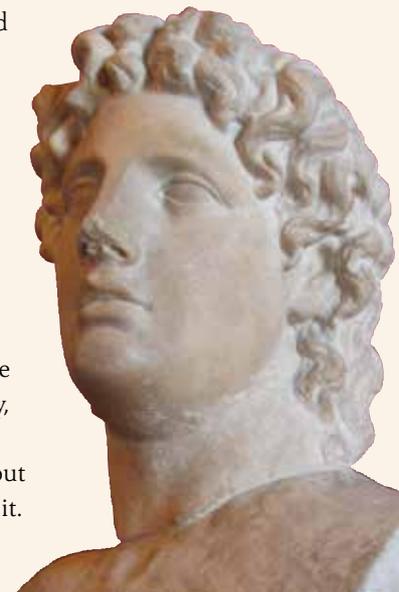
In the midst of this display of statesmanship, eloquence, cleverness, and exalted ambition, Alcibiades lived a life of prodigious luxury, drunkenness, debauchery and insolence. **]**

PLUTARCH<sup>1</sup>

## KEY POINTS

- Alcibiades had a privileged upbringing. At a young age he showed intelligence, arrogance and charm in excess
- He was loved for his brilliance as a general—but hated for his private excesses
- An Athenian who switched sides, Alcibiades worked for Athens, then Sparta, then Persia, before working for Athens once more
- His success challenged Athens' ideals of democracy and moderation.

Alcibiades, the brilliant *strategos* (general) and playboy of Athens, challenges simplistic stereotypes of Athenian democratic culture. Educated and aristocratic, he managed to charm crowds with his words and then alienate them with his actions. Rather than stand for specific ideals, or for the state, he was a morally flexible individual, able to seduce a Spartan queen as easily as a crowded Athenian Assembly. Alcibiades was aggressive and tough, while also being delicate and vain. His beauty was marred by his vanity, his intelligence matched by his impulsivity. He personified ancient Greek brilliance without the moderation that was supposed to temper it. Needless to say, it is difficult to separate the true Alcibiades from the legend.



## ➔ SOURCE 1

Alcibiades: playboy and general. A bust from the fourth century BCE.

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to Plutarch, Alcibiades once punched a teacher. The teenage Alcibiades asked the teacher for a volume of Homer to read. When the teacher said he had none of Homer's works, Alcibiades punched him and stormed off. After all, he reasoned, decent teachers would always have Homer in their library.

## ALCIBIADES' CHILDHOOD

Alcibiades was born into privilege in about 451 BCE. His father died in Boeotia in 447 BCE, and Alcibiades became a ward of the statesman Pericles, to whom he was related. Although he received the best education, Alcibiades lacked restraint.

Alcibiades had a desire to win and was willing to break rules to do so: in a wrestling match as a boy, Alcibiades bit his opponent's arm so hard that the other boy surrendered, complaining that he bit like a woman. 'No, like a Lion' was Alcibiades' reply.<sup>2</sup> Alcibiades liked breaking the rules, casting himself as a lion let loose in the city—which was an analogy later used by his political opponents.

Another time Alcibiades was playing dice with a group of children when one die fell onto the street in the path of a heavy wagon. Rather than see it crushed, Alcibiades demanded the driver stop. When the driver ignored him, Alcibiades leapt in front of the wagon, daring the wagon driver to run over him. The driver pulled up his cart in time, rather than trample the young aristocrat.

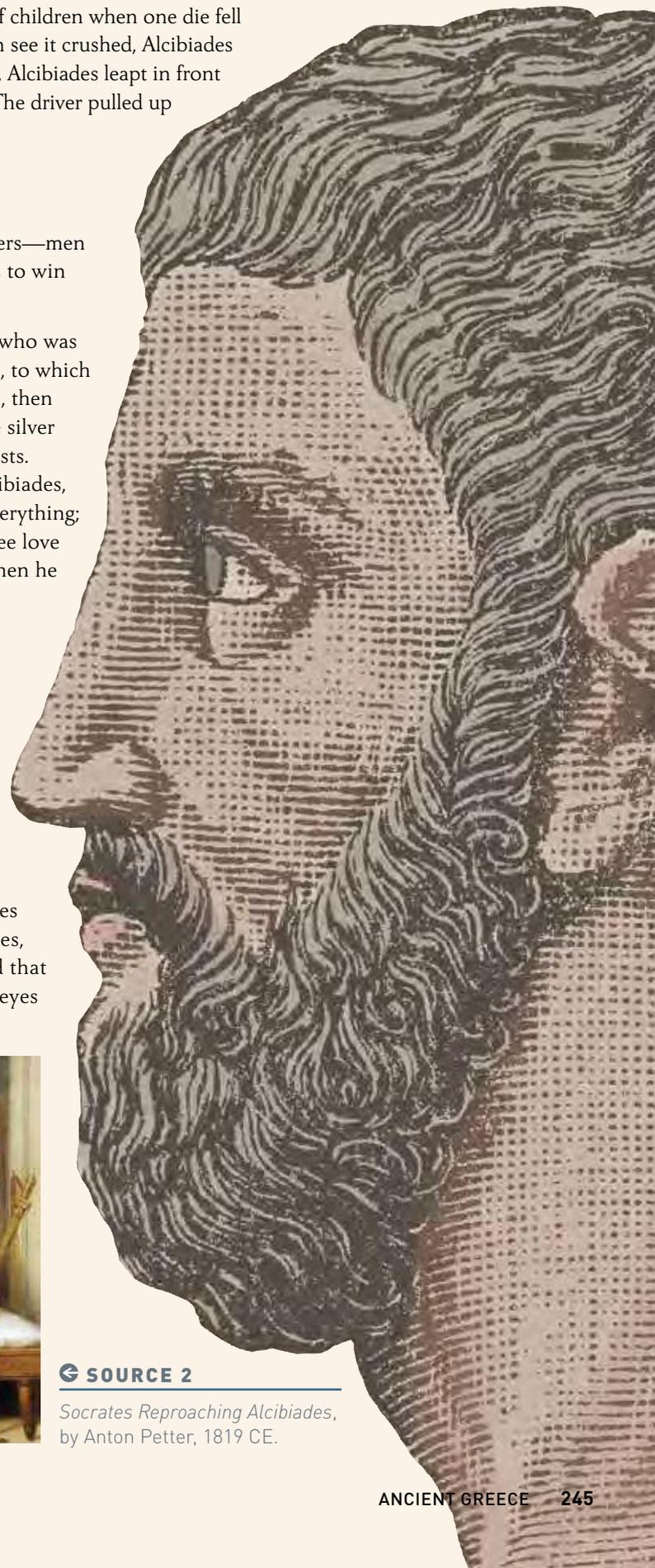
## ALCIBIADES THE BEAUTIFUL YOUTH

Alcibiades' beauty and charm gave him power over others—men and women swooned, often making fools of themselves to win his affection.

Plutarch tells an anecdote about a man named Anytus, who was infatuated with Alcibiades. Anytus hosted a symposium, to which Alcibiades was invited. Alcibiades refused the invitation, then turned up late, his slaves stripping the house of half the silver dishes, before leaving without chatting to the other guests. The guests were outraged, but Anytus, smitten with Alcibiades, defended his behaviour, saying 'He could have taken everything; but at least he has left us half.'<sup>3</sup> Alcibiades was said to see love like a fight or wrestling match—he was only content when he had floored his opponent.<sup>4</sup>

Socrates provided an important contrast to Alcibiades' many admirers. He confronted Alcibiades' decadence with philosophical discourse. For Alcibiades, Socrates becomes a counterpoint to a life of hedonism and indulgence. Socrates argued that intellect was 'gold' compared to the 'bronze' that was beauty, reducing a drunken Alcibiades to tears.<sup>5</sup>

Alcibiades' excesses were not limited to his personal life. As a wealthy aristocrat, the Olympic Games gave him the opportunity to win glory for himself. Alcibiades sponsored an unprecedented seven chariots in the races, winning first, second and fourth prize. He later argued that this personal glory made Athens look powerful in the eyes of its enemies.<sup>6</sup>



### 🔍 SOURCE 2

*Socrates Reproaching Alcibiades*,  
by Anton Petter, 1819 CE.

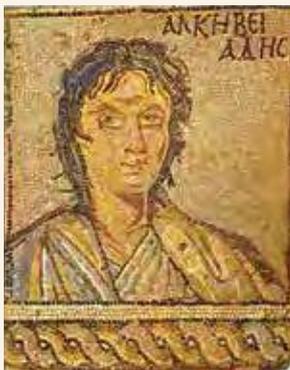
He married Hipparete, who Plutarch describes as kind. However, she tried to sue for divorce after Alcibiades had had many affairs. When appearing before the magistrate, Alcibiades seized Hipparete and physically carried her through the *agora* back to his house, no one daring to challenge him, despite her protests. Given the status of women, his actions were not against Athenian law, but were still considered scandalous. Hipparete died soon after, while Alcibiades was on a trip abroad.<sup>7</sup>

To both Plato and Plutarch, the young Alcibiades represents the universal struggle within human nature, between the shallow and the deep, the impulsive passions and contemplative intellect. It was a concern that reflected the wider Athenian society, trying to find the balance between grandeur and democracy, passion and reason.

To historian Victoria Wohl, Alcibiades represents a disruptive force, the tyrant challenging the *isonomia* of the democracy, or the young with too much power over the old.<sup>8</sup>

## THE ORATOR AND POLITICIAN

Alcibiades fought bravely in a number of campaigns during the Peloponnesian War. His valour on the battlefield and his rhetorical skill made him a powerful force in the Assembly during the 420s BCE.



### ↑ SOURCE 3

A Roman-era mosaic of Alcibiades, found at Sparta.

By the late 420s BCE, the older generals of Athens, such as Nicias, were looking for a negotiated peace with Sparta. The Peace of Nicias in 421 BCE allowed Sparta to keep its dominance of the Peloponnese and Athens to keep its empire of the sea, and for peace to be restored. But Alcibiades loathed the Peace of Nicias. After all, Athens had Sparta on the ropes, so why declare peace now?<sup>9</sup> Alcibiades helped to sabotage the Peace of Nicias by encouraging Athens to become allied with Sparta's enemy, Argos. Plutarch claimed this was because Alcibiades was jealous of Nicias, while Thucydides argues that it was part of a broader aggressive foreign policy<sup>10</sup>—that breaking the peace by joining with Argos would create an unstoppable anti-Spartan alliance.<sup>11</sup> In 420 BCE, Alcibiades was elected *strategos*, and led Athenian and Argive forces in the Battle of Mantinea in 418 BCE, deep in the Peloponnese. They were defeated by Sparta and its allies.

Nicias and Alcibiades were both up for ostracism, but they combined forces, creating a smear-campaign against a minor politician named Hyperbolus. With their combined influence, Nicias and Alcibiades persuaded the Athenian Assembly to ostracise Hyperbolus instead. The ostracism—which was the pride of the democratic constitution—had been exploited by the powerful.

## THE DISASTROUS SICILIAN CAMPAIGN

Alcibiades was the main supporter of the Sicilian campaign of 415–413 BCE in a bid to subdue neutral Syracuse, while Nicias cautioned against such military adventurism. Alcibiades challenged Nicias' assertion that the elderly—in this case, Nicias—should be obeyed because of their wisdom.

### ➔ SOURCE 4

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.18.6, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

### ALCIBIADES ARGUES FOR THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

... neither youth nor old age can do anything the one without the other, but that levity, sobriety, and deliberate judgement are strongest when united and that, by sinking into inaction, the city, like everything else, will wear itself out, and its skill in everything decay; while each fresh struggle will give it fresh experience, and make it more used to defend itself not in word but in deed.

The people, swayed by Alcibiades, voted for the invasion of Sicily, which was a military, economic and political disaster. The entire expeditionary force was ultimately lost.

## THE HERMS SCANDAL

One morning, not long before the Sicilian expedition departed, citizens of Athens woke to find the *herms*—sacred boundary statues of protection found throughout the city—destroyed.

According to Plutarch, this ‘deeply disturbed many people, who normally pay little attention to such things’.<sup>12</sup> Athenians were upset and spooked, as this was surely a bad omen.

Rumour spread that Alcibiades and his young aristocratic friends were responsible for the destruction and other acts of sacrilege in a drunken revel.<sup>13</sup> In the eyes of his opponents, the destruction was a sign of Alcibiades’ contempt for democratic society and for Athens’ religious traditions.

### THUCYDIDES ON THE HERMS SCANDAL

... [opponents of Alcibiades] loudly proclaimed that the affair of the mysteries and the mutilation of the Hermae were part and parcel of a scheme to overthrow the democracy, and that nothing of all this had been done without Alcibiades; the proofs alleged being the general and undemocratic license of his life and habits.

### SOURCE 5

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.28.2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*



### SOURCE 6

A Roman copy of a Greek *herm*.

Although other people were found to be responsible for the mutilation of the *herms*, more evidence emerged about Alcibiades being involved in other sacrilegious activities, which was a concern to some Athenians.

## SPARTA'S MAN?

The Athenians recalled Alcibiades from Sicily to stand trial for sacrilege, but he escaped on the way back and sought refuge in Sparta, where he offered his services as a military commander. Athens sentenced Alcibiades to death *in absentia*.

Sparta received him. When speaking to the Spartan council, Alcibiades seduced his audience with astonishing dexterity, distancing himself from the Athenians and claiming a special authority:

### ALCIBIADES' SPEECH IN SPARTA

As for democracy, the men of sense among us knew what it was, and I perhaps as well as any, as I have more to complain of it; but there is nothing new to be said for a patent absurdity—meanwhile we did not think it safe to alter it under the pressure of your hostility. ...

For myself, therefore, [Spartans], I beg you to use me without scruple for danger and trouble of every kind, and to remember the argument in every one's mouth, that if I did you great harm as an enemy, I could likewise do you good service as a friend, inasmuch as I know the plans of the Athenians, while I only guessed yours.

### SOURCE 7

*Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.92.5, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).*

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 7 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. How does Alcibiades describe democracy?
2. Why, according to Alcibiades, might he be useful to the Spartans?
3. Can we infer much about Alcibiades' beliefs or personality from this extract? Why or why not?

The Spartans evidently took the advice of Alcibiades:

- They fortified and manned a fort at Decelea, on an important trade route in northern Attica. The Athenians now had to man their walls all year round, effectively fighting on a second front.
- Skilled Spartan officers were sent to Sicily to train the locals. Now the Athenians would have to fight well-trained troops in the Spartan style. The Athenians in Sicily were utterly routed.
- They pursued economic warfare by attempting to sever Athenian supply routes. This policy ultimately won them the war, long after Alcibiades had left Sparta.
- Alcibiades' charm helped develop relations with the Persians, who bankrolled the new Spartan navy following the treaties of 412 and 411 BCE.

Despite his usefulness as a commander, Alcibiades' impulsivity, lust and beauty created complications. He seduced Timaea, the wife of Spartan king Agis. Timaea had a child while Agis was away for ten months—and it was an open secret that Alcibiades was the father.

While Alcibiades was out on campaign in Ionia, the Spartan council of *ephors* called for his death. He was now wanted in both Sparta and Athens. Without missing a beat, Alcibiades turned to Persia, seeking sanctuary in exchange for inside knowledge. His advice to the Persians was to give Sparta aid—but not too much—so that both Athens and Sparta wore each other down.

## 📖 SOURCE 8

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 8.53.1, trans. Richard Crawley [London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914].

### CHOOSING SIDES

... if Alcibiades were recalled and the democratic constitution changed, they could have the [Persian] King as their ally, and would be able to overcome the Peloponnesians.

## OLIGARCHIC CONNECTIONS

In 412 BCE, Athens was desperate, and the Assembly was quarrelling over what to do. Their army had been lost in Sicily, a new one needed to be trained, while their empire spanning the Aegean Sea was wavering, with too many allies revolting from their rule.

Meanwhile, Alcibiades had plans to return to Athens. His supporters in the Assembly gave an ultimatum to the exhausted and pessimistic Athenian *ecclesia*.

There were protests: some argued against the return of Alcibiades on the grounds of democracy, others recalled the religious scandals—but these protests were overruled by a desperate and pragmatic *ecclesia*. The war was now hopeless, with the Peloponnesians winning on both land and sea. Perhaps the political and military genius of Alcibiades, despite his many flaws, was all that could save them.

The feelings of the Athenian Assembly are acknowledged in Aristophanes' comic play, *The Frogs*, in which Dionysus discusses the attitude of the Athenians towards Alcibiades.

## 📖 SOURCE 9

Aristophanes, *The Frogs* 1445–1461, in Aristophanes: *The Wasps/The Poet and the Women/The Frogs*, trans. D. Barrett, [Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1964].

### ATHENIANS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ALCIBIADES

**Dionysus:** ... They love him. But then again they hate him. And then again, they want him back. But you tell me what you think, both of you.

**Euripides:** Quickness and brains are what we seek, I know:  
He's quick—to harm, but when we need him, slow;  
Brilliant enough to plan his own escape,  
But useless when the City's in a scrape.

**Dionysus:** That's neat. I like that. Very good. And Aeschylus, what's your opinion?

**Aeschylus:** It's not very wise for city states  
To rear a lion's whelp within their gates:  
But should they do so, they will find it pays  
To learn to tolerate its little ways.

The short-lived oligarchy of the Four Hundred was established, but Alcibiades was not brought home. Instead, he was reappointed as an Athenian general, and was involved in a number of victories for the Athenian fleet, notably:

- the battle of Abydos in 411 BCE—in which his arrival averted defeat
- the battle of Cyzicus in 410 BCE—where the Spartan fleet was decimated
- the siege of Selymbria—where he negotiated a surrender
- the siege of Byzantium in 408 BCE—where he persuaded the city's citizens to betray the Spartan garrison and hand the city over.<sup>14</sup>

While Alcibiades was winning glory for them on the seas, Athens reinstated its democracy. In 407 BCE, he returned to applause, all charges were dropped and, instead, honours bestowed upon him. His image had been restored as a hero of Athens, the city desperately hoping that this brilliant general, if given unprecedented powers, could win the war.

### ALCIBIADES' HOMECOMING

At last they crowned him with crowns of gold, and elected him general with sole powers by land and sea.

### SOURCE 10

*Plutarch, Alcibiades 33, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916).*

## POLITICAL DEMISE AND DEATH

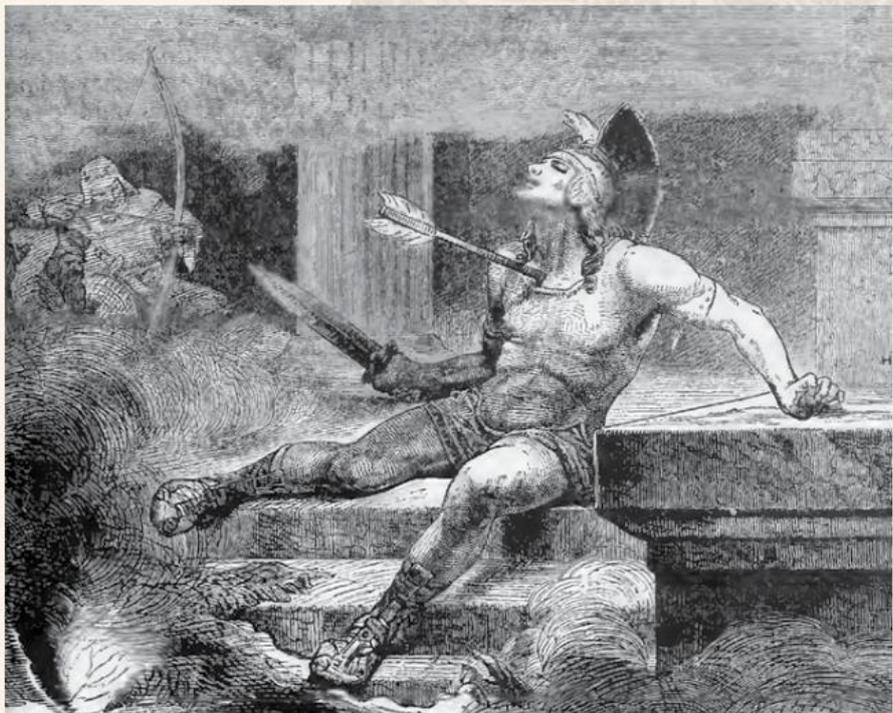
But Alcibiades' popularity was precarious. On campaign once more, he led the Athenian fleet to confront Sparta at sea. At the battle of Notium in 406 BCE, Alcibiades left his fleet under the command of his pilot while he went in search of money to pay his sailors—and the consequent Athenian defeat left his reputation irretrievably damaged.

No longer in a position to command at the decisive Battle of Aegospotami in 405 BCE, Alcibiades' advice was ignored by the Athenian generals who, Xenophon implies, enjoyed his downfall.<sup>15</sup>

Alcibiades died in 404 BCE in a village in Phrygia—a powerful aristocrat laid low. Plutarch has him living in a village with his girlfriend, Timandra, when a group of men came to kill him. Some say they were assassins sent by Lysander; others say they were Timandra's brothers. Either way, they did not dare confront him directly, instead setting his house on fire while he slept. He came out, sword in hand, only to be shot with arrows and struck with javelins from a distance. Timandra wrapped her lover's body in her own clothes and wept.<sup>16</sup>

### SOURCE 11

The death of Alcibiades.



## THE LEGACY OF ALCIBIADES

Alcibiades was a polarising figure to the ancients, and he is still a polarising figure to historians. He was clearly a skilled military commander, had a flamboyant private life and changed sides three times during the Peloponnesian War. It is also agreed that he was seen as handsome and as a charismatic public speaker.

From a political and military perspective, Thucydides and Xenophon disagree on Alcibiades' character and his use in the war. Our first source is Thucydides, who was writing at the time.

### ➔ SOURCE 12

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 6.15.4, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

#### THUCYDIDES ON ALCIBIADES

Alarmed at the greatness of the license in his own life and habits, and of the ambition which he showed in all things [what]soever that he undertook, the mass of the people marked him as a pretender to the tyranny, and became his enemies; and although publicly his conduct of the war was as good as could be desired, individually, his habits gave offense to every one, and caused them to commit affairs to other hands, and thus before long to ruin the city.

Our second source is Xenophon, a soldier and historian writing in the decades after the end of the Peloponnesian War, who had quite a different view.

### ➔ SOURCE 13

*Xenophon*, Hellenica 1.4.13, in *Xenophon: A History of My Times*, trans. Rex Warner (Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1966).

#### XENOPHON ON ALCIBIADES

He, it was said, was the best citizen they had got and he alone had been banished not because he deserved it but because of the intrigues of people who were inferior to him in power, who lacked his abilities to speak and whose only political principle was their own self-interest. Alcibiades, on the other hand, was always doing good to the state as a whole, and he used both his private resources and the resources of the public to that end.

Alcibiades' personal qualities and private life have come under intense scrutiny both from ancient sources and modern historians.

For Plato, Alcibiades represented the tragedy of human imperfection, that even a brilliant mind could be undermined by lowly qualities such as lust, drunkenness, *hubris* and vanity. He was a failed pupil of Socrates, who had tried to appeal to Alcibiades' intellect.

Plutarch's characterisation of Alcibiades informs much of our understanding. He is interested in how personality drives action. Alcibiades' negative traits, according to Plutarch were impulsivity, arrogance, vanity and drunkenness; his positive traits were quick wit, bravery, confidence and charisma.

Historian P.J. Rhodes is sympathetic to Alcibiades, portraying him as a dynamic and successful politician rather than a would-be tyrant, and pointing out that his 'selfish and ostentatious ways' cannot be separated from his daring and popular military policies, his optimism and his infectious confidence.

### HISTORIAN RHODES ON ALCIBIADES

Characteristics which enabled him to charm some aroused suspicion and jealousy in others, and the accusation of aiming at tyranny was probably deployed especially by other politicians who found themselves less popular than he was. He was loyal to Athens when loyalty to Athens could be combined with success for himself, and no doubt would have preferred being successful in Athens to being successful somewhere else, but enjoyment and success for himself were what counted most.

### SOURCE 14

P.J. Rhodes, *Alcibiades: Playboy, General and Traitor* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 105–106.

Alcibiades challenged the Athenian democracy, which was supposed to be hostile to the arrogant. During the war, Athens surrendered these values—and chose a brilliant general over his more democratic rivals.

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

Using Sources 12 to 14 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. According to Thucydides (Source 12), how did the people view Alcibiades, and why?
2. Look carefully at Xenophon (Source 13) and Thucydides' (Source 12) accounts of Alcibiades' reputation. How do they differ? Why do you think this is?
3. When was Alcibiades loyal to Athens, according to Rhodes (Source 14)? Find examples from this chapter that could support Rhodes' argument.

ACTIVITY

## CONCLUSION

In Thucydides' and Plutarch's portrayals of Alcibiades, we see the difficulties Athenians had within their own society. The democratic *polis* encouraged greatness—as long as it was directed towards the wellbeing of the people. Athens' political tradition encouraged eloquence, but what if those who were eloquent were also self-serving and lacking in moral integrity? The figure of Alcibiades personifies the very real anxieties of the Athenian people.



ALCIBIADES: VICTIM OR OPPORTUNIST?



QUIZ – ALCIBIADES

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

1. Why did the Spartans accept Alcibiades switching sides?
2. Explain how the Spartans benefitted from Alcibiades' support.
3. What happened when Alcibiades returned to Athens in 407 BCE? Why did the Athenians respond this way?

### KEY INDIVIDUALS: ALCIBIADES

Examine each time Alcibiades changed sides in the war and complete a table similar to this:

WHEN	WHAT HAPPENED	PUSH FACTORS <i>(reasons Alcibiades was obliged to leave one side)</i>	PULL FACTORS <i>(reasons Alcibiades was attracted to the other side)</i>

ACTIVITY

## IN FOCUS

# LYSANDER (d. 395 BCE)

‘ ... a man of such great power, who was in a sense the master of all Greece ’

PLUTARCH<sup>1</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Athenians believed that Spartan leaders were easily corrupted. Despite (or perhaps because of) the harsh rigours of a Spartan upbringing, Spartan generals were notoriously corruptible and often bribed. One of Lysander's outstanding qualities was that he seems not to have been seduced by the luxuries of the outside world.

### ➔ SOURCE 1

*Plutarch, Lysander 2.2–4, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916).*

## KEY POINTS

- Lysander used his affability to secure and extend Persian funding for Sparta's fleet
- He was Sparta's first skilled *navarch*, defeating Athens at sea
- A divine cult was established in his name and sacrifices were made in his honour.

There are few individuals who can be seen to change the outcome of a war. Lysander was not like the Spartan commanders who had come before him; he was flexible enough to make diplomatic ties with the Persians, whose funding of the Spartan cause helped turn the tide of war. Unlike other Spartan commanders, he was not corrupted by the gold of foreigners; instead, he used it to the state's advantage. He also proved that he was a skilled commander, defeating the Athenians at their own game of maritime warfare. He had foresight and the ability to adapt to changing conditions. This can be seen in the way Athenians were spared annihilation after their defeat so that they could provide a counterweight to other *poleis*; and in the way the short-lived Spartan hegemony was abandoned when it proved untenable. He was also accorded the extraordinary honour of being worshipped as divine.

## LYSANDER IN HIS YOUTH

Lysander's family, although not royalty, traced their ancestry to the mythical Heracles, something that was not unusual among the upper classes in Sparta. However, Plutarch says Lysander was raised in poverty, which may help to explain Lysander's ability to keep his pride in check for political gain.

### PLUTARCH ON LYSANDER

[Lysander] seems to have been naturally subservient to men of power and influence, beyond what was usual in a Spartan, and content to endure an arrogant authority for the sake of gaining his ends, a trait which some hold to be no small part of political ability.

Some historians, such as Michael Grant, doubt whether Lysander was really poor—perhaps Plutarch gave Lysander a poor childhood in his biography in order to explain why he could swallow his pride and show deference to powerful allies when needed, qualities that were unusual among traditional Spartan leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Like other Spartans, Lysander had a harsh training, learning to renounce pleasures and luxuries—instead, becoming competitive for the sake of honour. He evidently climbed the ranks, identified as someone who was not only a good soldier but also an astute leader of men, becoming a *navarch* (admiral) of the Spartan fleet in 408/7 BCE.

## THE UNSPARTAN SPARTAN

By 408/7 BCE, Athens was on the rebound, recovering from its disastrous Sicilian expedition (415–413 BCE) and the revolts of many of its allies in the same years. In 411 BCE, Athens had won a much-needed naval victory at the battle of Cynossema, defeating the Spartan fleet that had been paid for by Persia under the Persian-Spartan treaties of 412–411 BCE. This victory effectively kept the supply routes open for Athens. This was followed by another Athenian victory at the battle of Cyzicus (410 BCE), where another Spartan fleet, again funded by the Persians, was defeated. The Spartans offered a peace treaty, but the Athenians—confident once more—rejected the offer.

When Lysander was appointed commander of the Peloponnesian fleet, he looked to improve relations with Sparta's Persian allies. Both Athens and Sparta had tried to make alliances with the Persians, whose financial and military strength, if fully implemented, could determine the outcome of the war. Sparta had difficulty fostering good relations with the Persians, despite a shared animosity towards Athens. The Persians expected their allies to prostrate themselves at the feet of the king, or his *satrap*, to prove their submission to Persia—which was something that proud Spartans refused to do.

However, Lysander had no qualms in following the Persian custom and developed a friendship with Persian *satrap* Cyrus the Younger. This relationship would change the outcome of the war.

According to Plutarch, in return for such deference, and as a token of his friendship, Cyrus made Lysander an offer.

### PLUTARCH ON LYSANDER AND CYRUS

When the Spartan commander was about to leave, Cyrus gave a banquet for him and insisted that Lysander should accept a token of his friendship: he could ask whatever he pleased and nothing would be refused him. Lysander answered: 'Since you are so kind to me, Cyrus, I beg of you to increase my sailors pay by an obol, and give them four a day instead of three.'

Cyrus was delighted with his public spirit and presented him with ten thousand darics [Persian gold coins], out of which Lysander raised his seamen's pay by an obol [Greek silver coin]. In a short while he had earned such prestige by this action that he all but emptied the Athenians' ships.

#### SOURCE 2

*Plutarch, Lysander 4–5, in The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).*



Lysander was apparently delighted with Cyrus' gift. He increased his sailors' pay, which boosted their morale and caused many Athenian sailors to defect and join the growing Spartan fleet.<sup>3</sup>

The relationship between Lysander and Cyrus was not one-sided. In exchange for continuing support, Lysander reiterated the promises of the treaties of 412–411 BCE, acknowledging Persian claims over cities in Asia Minor—Caria, and the Greek cities of Ionia—once the war with Athens had been won.

Some would later see the pragmatism of this deal as treachery—the Greek cities in Asia Minor were being sold out so that Lysander could win his war. Still, without Persian support, the war could not be won. It was an unlikely bargain, achieved only through Lysander's relationship with the *satrap* and his strategic pragmatism.<sup>4</sup>

### ➔ SOURCE 3

*Thucydides*, History of the Peloponnesian War 8.58.2, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J.M. Dent & Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914).

#### THUCYDIDES ON THE TERMS AGREED IN 411 BCE

The country of the King in Asia shall be the King's, and the king shall treat his own country as he pleases.

## NOTIUM (406 BCE): THE ATHENIAN FLEET CAN BE DEFEATED

Lysander faced the Athenian fleet at the battle of Notium in 406 BCE. Alcibiades had left his fleet under the command of his pilot while he went in search of money to pay his sailors—and Lysander sank the Athenian ships without breaking formation.<sup>5</sup> With Alcibiades' deputy killed in the skirmish, the rattled Athenians fled. Lysander had boldly confronted the Athenians at sea.

## SPARTA'S LOSS

In keeping with the Spartan constitution, Lysander's term as *navarch* was for one year only, after which the title passed to Callicratidas. This law was aimed at stopping any one man from gaining too much power—but it also meant that Sparta lost her most skilled diplomat and commanding officer.

It was Lysander's absence that demonstrated his importance to the Persians. Callicratidas needed to continue receiving Persian funding for the war effort, but he was thwarted by his cultural rigidity.

### ➔ SOURCE 4

*Plutarch*, Lysander 6.4, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).

#### CALLICRATIDAS' PROBLEMS WITH PERSIA

He regarded any form of defeat, so long as it was at the hands of the Greeks, as more honourable than being obliged to flatter and dance attendance on the barbarians, who had nothing to recommend them but their gold.

## ACTIVITY

### SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

Using Source 4 and your own knowledge, respond to the following:

1. Describe Callicratidas' attitudes towards Persian protocol.
2. What other traditional Spartan attitudes can you identify in Source 4?
3. Using evidence from Source 4 and your wider knowledge, explain the challenges for Spartans in maintaining these attitudes in the final decade of the Peloponnesian War (413–404 BCE).

In Callicratidas, the old diplomatic difficulties became apparent. Under his command, Persian funding of the war effort declined. Sparta lost a close-fought naval conflict against Athens at the battle of Arginusae (406 BCE), in which Callicratidas died. There were calls from Sparta and from its Aegean allies, supported by Cyrus, that Lysander be restored to command.

Lysander was appointed second-in-command to the new *navarch*, Aracus, although everyone knew that it was really Lysander who would make the decisions. The great commander and skilled diplomat was back in charge.

## THE BATTLE OF AEGOSPOTAMI (405 BCE)

Cyrus funded Lysander's fleet, which now numbered 180 *triremes*.

In 405 BCE, the Spartans planned to block Athens' grain supplies from the Black Sea. Not confident that his navy was strong enough to take on the Athenians in open combat, Lysander adopted the strategy of harassing, biding his time, and conducting sneak attacks on Aegina, Salamis and Attica.

Lysander's tactics drew the Athenian fleet away from the Hellespont and the entrance to the Black Sea. Aware the Hellespont was undefended, Lysander set up the blockade as intended.

The Athenians rushed to meet Lysander's fleet at Aegospotami, a small harbour on the Hellespont. The Athenians set up camp on the other side of the strait at Lampsacus, a barren stretch of beach with little food or water, and prepared for the showdown.

Each day for four days the Athenians sailed out into the strait, goading the Peloponnesians and trying to draw them into battle, but Lysander resisted the taunts. Instead, he had his scouts spy on the Athenians. They found that each day, after returning to beach their ships, the sailors would walk for hours to find water, far from their ships.

On the fifth day, the Athenians again goaded Lysander's fleet, which refused to rise to the bait. Afterwards they returned, beached their ships and, as on the other



### SOURCE 5

Illustration showing the Battle of Aegospotami.

days, set out to collect food and water. The Athenians returned to find plumes of smoke and their unmanned ships on fire. Lysander had struck, and the Athenians, without ships, fled. About 3000 prisoners were taken, and it was decided that the Athenians should be executed.<sup>6</sup>

With the careful patience for which Spartans were renowned, and some distinctly un-Spartan diplomacy, Lysander had achieved the unthinkable. Naval supremacy was now Sparta's, and Athens could be starved into submission.

## ➔ SOURCE 6

Plutarch, Lysander 11.6–7, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).

### PLUTARCH ON LYSANDER'S SIGNIFICANCE

In the space of a single hour he had put an end to a war which, for its length and for the variety of its incidents and the uncertainty of its fortunes, eclipsed any that had gone before ... it was concluded by the foresight and skill of one man.

## ATHENS MUST BE DESTROYED?

With Athens now being denied food, Lysander increased the pressure on the once confident *polis*. He declared that any Athenians found outside Athens would be put to death, causing a massive influx of refugees into the city. It would only be a matter of time before they were starved into surrender.<sup>7</sup>

But the Athenians held out, terrified of the fate that awaited them. The Athenians had a reputation for killing the civilians of the cities they conquered.<sup>8</sup> Understandably, they expected similar treatment from Lysander.<sup>9</sup> They sent a negotiator, Theramenes, to plead their case to Lysander.

The Theban and Corinthian allies of Sparta argued that the Athenians deserved the same punishment they had meted out to others—and that the city should be destroyed, and turned into a pasture for sheep.<sup>10</sup>

However, Lysander resisted such calls, moved, according to Plutarch, by the lines from Euripides' *Electra* sung at a banquet: such a cultured city as Athens should not be destroyed.<sup>11</sup> Historians have attributed Lysander's decision to more immediate geopolitical concerns. Historian Donald Kagan argues that Athens was kept intact to counter the growing power of Sparta's ally and rival, Thebes.

## ➔ SOURCE 7

Donald Kagan, *The Fall of the Athenian Empire* (*Ithaca, N.Y.*: Cornell University Press, 1987), 405.

### HISTORIAN KAGAN ON THE FALL OF THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

It was not difficult, however, to make the case that the destruction of Athens would be advantageous not to Sparta but to Thebes and that Thebes was becoming a rival more than an ally ... During the Decelean War [last years of the Peloponnesian War] they gained the lion's share of the material benefits from ravaging the Attic countryside. At the end they were even bold enough to demand a tenth of the booty taken ...

Rather than being moved by sentimentality, such geopolitical concerns are perhaps more in keeping with Lysander's pragmatic views. With their lives assured, the Athenians surrendered, agreeing to:

- destroy their protective Long Walls
- surrender all but twelve of their remaining ships
- abandon their colonies
- recall exiles
- submit to Spartan hegemony and control of their government.

The terms were agreed upon, with Lysander's forces arriving to enforce the terms. Thirty Athenian oligarchs were selected to create a pro-Spartan constitution. These oligarchs were labelled the 'Thirty Tyrants'.

#### XENOPHON ON LYSANDER'S ARRIVAL IN ATHENS

Lysander sailed into Piraeus, the exiles returned, and the walls were pulled down among scenes of great enthusiasm and to the music of flute girls. It was thought that this day was the beginning of freedom for Greece.

#### SOURCE 8

*Xenophon, Hellenica 2.2.23, in Xenophon: A History of My Times, trans. Rex Warner (Hammondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1966).*

### CULTIVATION OF THE RULER-CULT

Lysander's triumphs in diplomacy and in war were not just celebrated in Sparta. Lysander seems to have been working on self-promotion, the most obvious example being a colossal statue of himself at Delphi, being crowned by Poseidon. This was a monument not fit for a mortal man, reflecting a distinctly un-Spartan *hubris*.<sup>12</sup>

According to Duris of Samos, the Samians replaced the worship of Hera with worship of Lysander. A cult developed on Samos based around Lysander, although whether this was while he was still alive or not is debated by historians.<sup>13</sup>

#### HISTORIAN KENNELL ON LYSANDER THE GOD

The grateful Samian Oligarchs renamed their major religious festival the Heraia Lysandreia in his honor, sacrificing and singing paeans to him as if to a god.

#### SOURCE 9

*Nigel M. Kennell, Spartans: A New History (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 130.*

The Lysandreia Games were perhaps the most lavish aspect of the cult. Games had always been for the exclusive celebration of gods. Was Lysander now a god? The Samians appeared to think so.

This evidence of divine ruler-worship, of treating a ruler like a god, was unheard of in classical Athens, with its values of *isonomia* and its hostility towards those displaying *hubris*. Historian P.J. Rhodes reminds us that this behaviour was new.

#### HISTORIAN RHODES ON LYSANDER THE GOD

In Samos, games named after him and other honours make him one of the first Greeks seriously to challenge the boundary between men and gods.

#### SOURCE 10

*P. J. Rhodes, A History of the Classical Greek World (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 159–60.*

In the century to follow, Phillip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great would both develop the ruler-cult, a religious practice that would dominate the Hellenistic Age, with rulers developing increasingly lavish cults dedicated to their worship.

## LYSANDER THE LIBERATOR?

In the months after the defeat at Aegospotami, Athens' allies abandoned the Athenian cause, many joyously overthrowing what they saw as Athenian oppression.<sup>14</sup> But any notion of liberation was short-lived. Lysander abolished local constitutions, especially democratic ones, replacing them with narrow oligarchies. These were made up of powerful local magistrates who were to be part of a *decarchy* (council of ten). Each *decarchy* was under a *harmost* (governor) that was a Spartan overseer. Neither role was accountable to the people, Xenophon calling it 'tyrant rule.'<sup>15</sup> Although these liberated cities and islands were not required to pay tribute to Sparta, their local laws and customs had been lost.

### ➔ SOURCE 11

Plutarch, Lysander 13.5, in  
The Rise and Fall of Athens:  
Nine Greek Lives, trans. Ian  
Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin  
Books, 1960).

#### PLUTARCH ON THE REFORMS

The truth was that the taste was harsh and bitter from the very beginning, since Lysander not only refused to allow the people to be masters of their own affairs, but actually delivered the cities into the hands of the most aggressive and fanatical members of the oligarchic faction.

These reforms were met with protest and riots by the *demos* in many *poleis*, who were unwilling to give up their democratic institutions.

Lysander's *decarchies* were an affront to democrats and to the people's sense of *autonomia*. The goodwill many *poleis* felt towards Sparta after being liberated from Athenian rule was stamped under heel.

## VICTORY, WAR AND DEATH

Lysander was sent on campaign by the Spartan kings, who were wary of his power. He supported Cyrus in an unsuccessful campaign to take the Persian throne from his brother Artaxerxes, sending 10 000 *hoplites* to fight as mercenaries in Persia in 401 BCE. The defeat of the Spartans and their struggle to return home was recorded by one of the soldiers, turned historian—Xenophon.

Lysander had also misjudged Athens. Far from providing a counterweight to Thebes, in 395 BCE Athens and Thebes joined forces in an anti-Spartan coalition. When Spartans had to return to the mainland to defend their mother-city, many states further afield wasted no time in throwing off Lysander's imposed oligarchic constitutions. The Spartan hegemony quickly unravelled.<sup>16</sup>

## DEATH IN BATTLE (395 BCE)

The anti-Spartan alliance of Thebes, Corinth and Athens in 395 BCE was a threat to Sparta's hegemony—and to its survival as a city. Out of jealousy, the Spartan king Agesilaus had given Lysander a lowly commanding rank, and sent him to do battle with Thebes. In a planned pincer manoeuvre, another commander, Pausanias, was supposed to attack from the south. When Pausanias was slow in coming, Lysander led his forces in to assault the city, but was killed by Theban troops.<sup>17</sup>

When Pausanias finally arrived, the Thebans brought him the great commander's body and a truce was arranged. Lysander, it seems, was mortal after all.<sup>18</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Lysander's role in the final years of the Peloponnesian War helped shape its outcome. The Persians could have been long-time allies with the Spartans, but Spartan pride and idealism made it impossible. Lysander demonstrated a cultural awareness and pragmatism that forged an alliance between Sparta and Persia, sealing Athens' fate. Of course, Lysander's flexibility can also be seen as a form of treachery; his critics accuse him of selling out the Greeks of Asia Minor because of his deal with the hated Persians.

But Lysander was successful in more than diplomacy. He was the first Spartan *navarch* to master maritime warfare, successfully beating the Athenians at their own game. He delivered a bold, aggressive policy that had dramatic consequences—by denying Athens a reliable supply of grain, Athens' days were numbered.

Lysander's startling success also had cultural ramifications. The Greeks were in crisis, questioning their values. The leader-worship of Lysander showed that a great leader no longer needed humility, as Phillip of Macedon and his son Alexander would later prove.



### SOURCE 12

*Lysander has the Walls of Athens Demolished.*



THE IMPORTANCE OF LYSANDER



QUIZ – LYSANDER

### CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

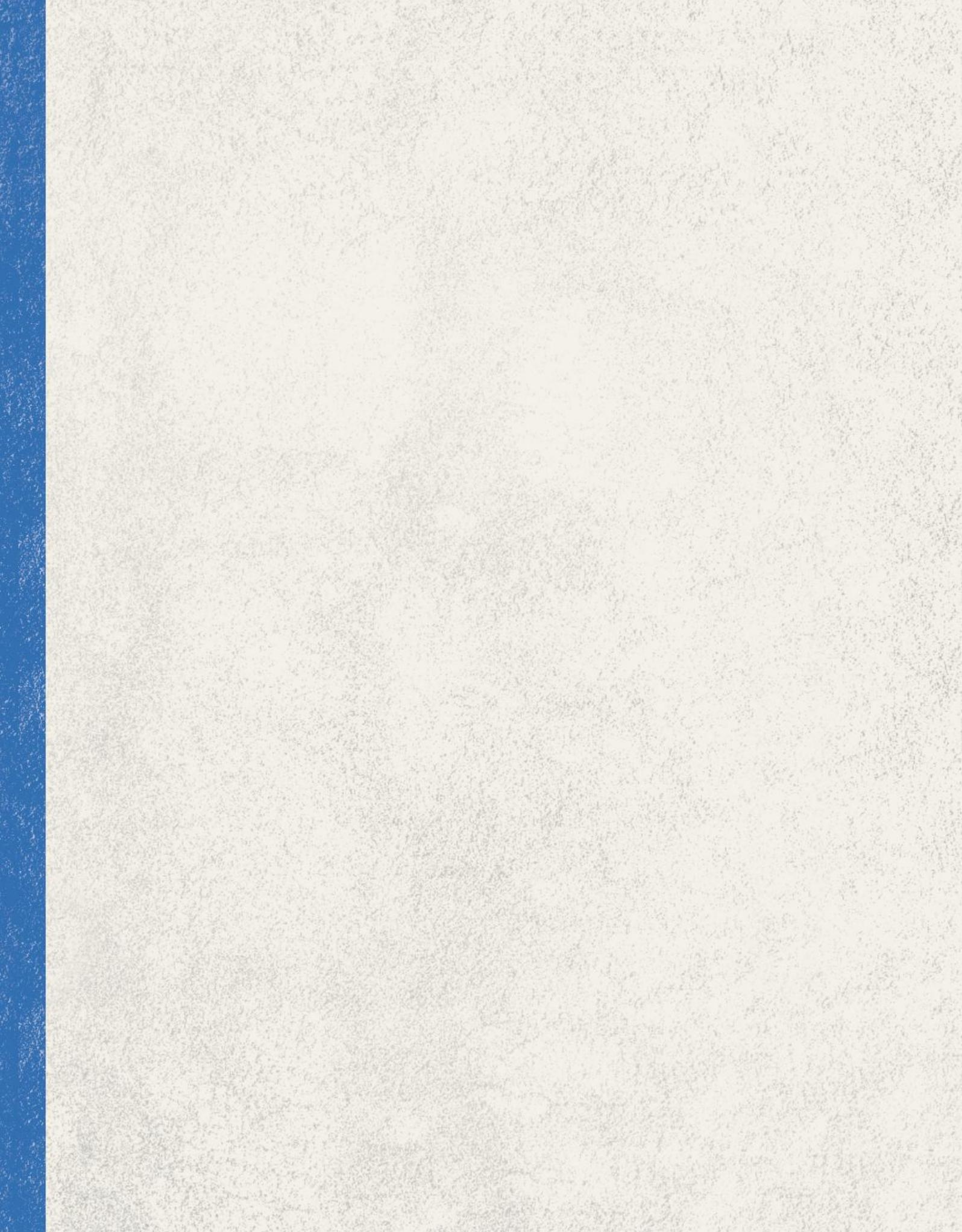
1. Why was Lysander's relationship with Cyrus the Younger important? Provide details.
2. How were Lysander's military strategy in the war, and his tactics in battles effective?
3. In what ways was Lysander given unusual honours for a classical Greek leader?

### KEY INDIVIDUALS: LYSANDER

Reviewing your notes from Chapters 2 and 4, make a list of values Spartans traditionally considered important in a Spartan general, providing examples from these chapters.

On the opposite side of the page, make a list of the values demonstrated by Lysander.

Identify which values overlap and which are opposed to each other.





# ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

- Glossary
- Who's Who
- Endnotes
- Index

# GLOSSARY

---

## A

### ACROPOLIS

A citadel on a rocky outcrop, from the Greek meaning 'high city'. The best known acropolis is in Athens.

### AGIDAE

The name of one of the two royal families of Sparta.

### AGOGÉ

An education and training program for Spartan boys. It began at the age of seven and ended at twenty when the man entered military school.

### AGORA

Civic and commercial centre of a Greek city.

### AMPHORA

Large jar for olive oil or wine.

### APELLA

Name for the assembly of citizens in Sparta.

### APOIKIA

Colony founded by an individual *polis*.

### ARCHON

Chief magistrate; official leader of Athens. Originally a lifetime appointment, it later became annual.

### AREOPAGUS

Council of elders. Originally held a number of powers that were later reduced to conducting trials for significant crimes.

### ARISTOI

Greek word for nobles.

### AUTONOMIA

The right of a *polis* to make and follow its own laws; self-determination.

## B

### BACCHIADAE

Ruling clan of Corinth. After the period of tyranny, the Bacchidae were forced to admit all other aristocratic families to the government, thus forming an oligarchy.

### BARBAROI

Foreigners who did not speak Greek or conform to Greek customs. Singular is *barbaros*.

### BOULE

A city council; the number of councillors varied depending on the era.

## C

### CITIZEN

In Athens and Sparta, a citizen was a free, native-born male. Citizens had to serve in the military—in Sparta from age 7 onwards, and in Athens from ages 18-59.

### CITY-STATE

An independent state comprising a city and the surrounding geographical area that it controlled. In ancient Greece a city-state was called a *polis*.

### CLERUCHIES

Settlements of Athenian citizens on captured territory. Singular is *cleruchy*.

### CONSTITUTION

A system of laws that governs how a state is to operate. It details the powers and limitations of the government.

## D

### DELIAN LEAGUE

A group of Greek city-states that teamed up to fight against the Persians. Gradually, the allies came under the leadership of Athens.

### DEME

A local neighbourhood or subdivision of land in Attica.

### DEMIOURGOI

Craftsmen such as metal-workers and potters.

### DEMOCRACY

Rule of the *demos* (people). Male citizens vote on all major matters in an assembly. Usually hostile to any individual with too much influence.

### DEMOS

The ordinary or common people of ancient Greece.

### DORIANS

A subgroup of the Greeks speaking a distinct dialect. The Greeks believed that the Dorians had arrived in Greece during the Greek Dark Age.

### DRACHMA

Greek silver coin based on a unit of weight called a *drachm*.

### DYARCHY

A form of government where two people rule jointly. From the Greek meaning 'double-rule'.

## E

### ECCLESIA

The General Assembly. Open to all adult male citizens in democratic *poleis* such as Athens. Voted on all major decisions.

### EIREN

A 20-year-old graduate of the *agoge* who took charge over a group of Spartan youths. The plural is *eirenes*.

### EMPORION

A trading post, such as Naucratis in Egypt.

### EPHOR

One of five senior magistrates that upheld the laws of Sparta.

### EUNOMIA

A phrase meaning 'good order'; laws or way of life. Commonly applied to Sparta and its constitution.

**EUPATRID**

Meaning 'of good father'; referred to the aristocratic ruling families of Athens and Attica. Plural is *Eupatridae*.

**EURYPONTIDAE**

The name of one of the two royal families of Sparta.

**G****GEROUSIA**

A council of twenty-eight men aged over sixty and the Spartan kings that was part of the Spartan political system.

**GREAT RHETRA**

A proclamation believed to have been received by Lygurgus from the Oracle at Delphi, containing the Spartan constitution.

**GREEK DARK AGE**

Era between the Bronze Age and the Archaic Period, from which we have few written records, c. 1100 BCE–800 BCE.

**H****HEGEMON**

The supreme leader. Also the military leader of a league.

**HEGEMONY**

From the Greek meaning 'dominance over'; describes the dominance of one city-state over others.

**HELLAS**

Greek word for the Greek mainland and islands.

**HELLENES**

Name that Greeks used to refer to themselves.

**HELLENION**

Temple in the Greek city of Naucratis, in Egypt.

**HELOTS**

A slave class of captive agricultural labourers and servants in Sparta. *Helots* were owned by the state and were not allowed to leave the land on which they worked.

**HETAIRA**

A well-educated 'courtesan'. Plural is *hetairai*.

**HILLSMEN (HYPERAKRIOI)**

Poor people from the arid hills of Athens.

**HIPPEIS**

Horsemen or knights; farmers who could afford horses and formed the cavalry in the army.

**HOMOIOI**

Word used in Sparta to refer to people of equal status, meaning 'those who are alike'. It was the Spartan word for *Spartiate*.

**HOPLITE**

A heavily armed foot soldier, who carried a large bronze shield called a *hoplon* or *aspis*. *Hoplites* fought in a formation called a phalanx.

**HUBRIS**

Originally meant 'use of violence in order to humiliate'. Later came to mean excessive pride and ambition that deserved punishment by the gods. In Hellenic religion, men displaying *hubris* were struck down by the goddess Nemesis.

**HYPOMEIONES**

Spartan word for 'inferiors'. Citizens who had lost their citizenship for failing to meet their obligations.

**I****ISONOMIA**

Equality before the law.

**K****KLEROS**

An allotment of land provided to each *Spartiate* when he became a full citizen at 30. These estates were indivisible and could not be sold. Plural is *kleroi*.

**KRYPTeia**

A force of young Spartans that waged war on *helots*. They routinely murdered *helots* perceived to be threats to the state.

**KYRIOS**

The male master of the household; the lord and master.

**L****LACEDAEMONIA**

Sparta and immediate surrounding territory. Also known as Laconia.

**LACEDAEMONIANS**

Another name for the people of Sparta. Latinised to *Laconians* by the Romans.

**LAURIION**

Silver mines near Athens, mainly worked by slaves.

**LESCHE**

A public meeting-house.

**LONG WALLS**

Fortified walls connecting Athens with its harbours.

**M****MESSENIA**

A region in the southwest of the Peloponnese.

**METIC**

A foreign settler in a *polis*, with limited rights.

**METROPOLIS**

The 'mother city' of a colony.

**N****NAVARCH**

Admiral of a fleet.

**O****OBAI**

The five original villages that made up Sparta.

**OIKIST**

The founder of a colony.

**OIKONOMIA**

Management of a household or family. This was usually a wife's responsibility, but very wealthy families sometimes employed a steward.

**OIKOS**

Dwelling place or household.

**OLIGARCHY**

Literally the 'rule of the few'. A political system where power is in the hands of a minority of citizens.

**ORACLE AT DELPHI**

At the temple of Apollo (the god of prophecy) in Delphi, the Pythia (or priestess) was supposed to speak Apollo's words as an oracle while she was in a trance.

**OSTRACISM**

Method of temporarily banishing someone who was seen as too powerful in a democracy; the ostracised citizen had to stay away for ten years.

**P****PELOPONNESIAN LEAGUE**

An alliance of mainland states under the leadership of Sparta.

**PERIOIKOI**

Non-citizens who lacked full rights, literally 'dwellers around Sparta'. *Perioikoi* engaged in industry and agriculture for the Spartans.

**PENTECONTAETIA**

Period of almost fifty years (478–431 BCE) between the end of the Greco–Persian wars and the outbreak of the Second Peloponnesian War.

**PHALANX**

An arrangement of *hoplites*, in which troops are densely packed with overlapping shields and generally move as a unit.

**PHRATRY**

Brotherhood. A subdivision of a tribe.

**PHYLAI**

Tribes of Athens and Attica; singular is *phyle*.

**PINCER MANOEUVRE**

When two divisions surround either side of the enemy's flanks and close in, like a crab's pincer.

**PLAINSMEN (PEDIEIS)**

Wealthy people from the fertile plains of Athens.

**POLIS**

Ancient Greek city-state. Plural is *poleis*.

**PROBOULOI**

Athenian term for men appointed to provide advice and guidance on matters of state after the failed Sicilian expedition. Singular is *proboulos*.

**S****SATRAP**

Governor of a Persian province, known as a *satrapy*. The Persian Empire was divided into many *satrapies*.

**SHORESMEN (PARALIOI)**

Athenian merchants who lived on the coast and imported luxury goods.

**SLAVES**

People owned by someone else. Slaves had no freedom and were bought and sold to work for others.

**SPARTAN**

An inhabitant of Sparta (but not necessarily a citizen).

**SPARTIATE**

An adult male citizen of Sparta aged over thirty who served in the army and exercised full voting power in the state assembly; a *homoioi*.

**STRATEGOS**

A military general who was elected annually. Plural is *strategoí*.

**SYMPOSIA**

Gatherings for Greek males of the highest social class. They would drink wine and be entertained by musicians or courtesans. Singular is *symposium*.

**SYSSITION**

Common mess halls where Spartans took their meals. They also functioned as army barracks where Spartan men lived. Plural is *syssitia*.

**T****TARAS**

A Spartan colony in southern Italy; called Tarentum by the Romans, today known as Taranto.

**THE FIVE THOUSAND**

An oligarchy that replaced the Four Hundred in 411–410 BCE before democracy was restored.

**THE FOUR HUNDRED**

An oligarchic group of politicians who temporarily overthrew the democracy of Athens in 411 BCE.

**THETES**

Hired labourers who worked on farms. From the seventh century onwards, many were forced to move into cities like Athens to look for work.

**TIMOUCHI**

Council of six hundred in Massalia (Marseilles) who were descended from original settlers and who served for life.

**TRIREME**

A warship with three banks of oars, totalling thirty, and a bronze-sheathed ram on the front. In Greece it was manned by citizens and *metics*, not slaves.

**TYRANNY**

A system under the control of a mostly non-hereditary ruler who is not restricted by a constitution or any laws.

**TYRANT**

A sole ruler who exercises personal and political power without legal restraint.

**Z****ZEUGITAE**

A social class based on property; *zeugitae* were farmers who could afford armour and also served in the army as *hoplites*.

# WHO'S WHO

## **ALCIBIADES (450–404 BCE)**

A charismatic Athenian general and divisive politician who was responsible for instigating the Sicilian expedition. During the Decelean War, he defected to Sparta, then back to Athens, before fleeing to Thrace.

## **ARCHIDAMUS II (?–427 BCE)**

Spartan king from the Eurypontid house who inherited his throne from his grandfather, Leotychides. In 464 BCE he defended Sparta from the Messenian *helots* who revolted after a terrible earthquake. He led the invasion of Attica during the Archidamian War (431–421 BCE). Reigned 469–427 BCE.

## **ARISTOTLE (384–322 BCE)**

Aristotle was born in Macedonia in northern Greece. He moved to Athens in 367 BCE and joined the Academy of Plato where he stayed for the next twenty years, until the death of Plato. Long considered one of the greatest intellects of Western History, he was a philosopher and scientist whose concepts are still the basis of Western thinking today. He invented the discipline of logic.

## **ARISTIDES (C. 520–C. 467 BCE)**

Aristides was a successful Athenian *strategos* in the battle of Marathon and was elected *archon* in 489/8 BCE. He was known as 'Aristides the Just' and praised by Herodotus and Plato.

## **ASPASIA (C. 470–400 BCE)**

A wealthy woman from Miletus, Aspasia was acclaimed for her intellect. She ran a brothel frequented by the elite men of Athens, such as Pericles, who became her long-term partner. They had a son together.

## **BRASIDAS (?–422 BCE)**

A successful Spartan general. He died defending Amphipolis in 422 BCE.

## **CALLINUS (C. 7TH CENTURY BCE)**

Greek poet whose surviving fragments of poetry urged young men to go to war to defend their country.

## **CIMON (C. 505–450 BCE)**

Athenian general and conservative politician. Cimon supported the traditions of Solon, defending the older institutions from radical democratic reform. He did much to establish and maintain Athenian authority in the Delian League. He routed the Persian fleet at the Battle of Eurymedon (466 BCE). In c. 462 BCE he helped Sparta to suppress the *helots*, and was ostracised the next year.

## **CLEISTHENES (C. 570–508 BCE)**

Athenian leader in the late 500s BCE. He transformed Solon's constitution into a democracy.

## **CLEON (?–422 BCE)**

Athenian general who abandoned Pericles' policy of relying on the Athenian navy and pursued an aggressive foreign policy. His greatest military success was the capture of the Spartan *hoplites* at Sphacteria. Died in battle at Amphipolis in 422 BCE.

Alcibiades



Aspasia

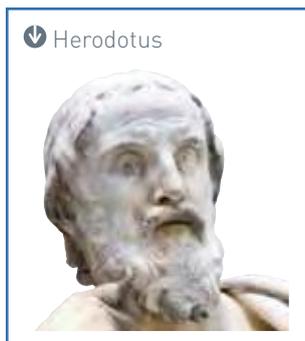


Cimon



### **CYPSELUS (?–625 BCE)**

The first tyrant of Corinth, who reigned c. 655–625 BCE. He was popular with his people, developed Corinth's economy and established more colonies to the west. He was succeeded by his son, Periander.



### **DARIUS I (C. 550–486 BCE)**

Persian King who came into power in 522 BCE. To extend his empire, and to retaliate against Athens' support of the Ionian revolt, he ordered the first invasion of mainland Greece during the Greco–Persian Wars. Darius died in 486 BCE, leaving his son Xerxes to lead the second invasion of Greece.

### **GYLIPPUS (5TH CENTURY BCE)**

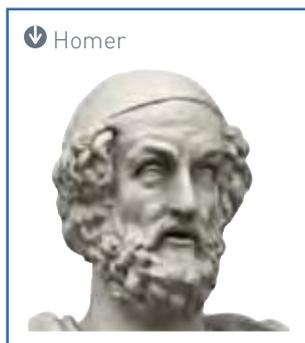
Spartan general who was sent to help Syracuse against Athens during the Peloponnesian War.

### **HERODOTUS (C. 484–C. 420 BCE)**

A Greek researcher and writer who is often called the first 'historian'. His only known work is *The Histories*, a long narrative on the origins of and conduct the Greco-Persian wars.

### **HIPPIAS (?–490 BCE)**

After the death of his father, Peisistratus, Hippias became tyrant of Athens along with his brother, ruling from 527 to 510 BCE. His brother Hipparchus was assassinated, turning Hippias into a cruel and repressive leader.



### **HESIOD (C. 700 BCE)**

One of the earliest Greek poets, from about 700 BCE. Two of his works have survived: *Theogony*, about the origins of the gods, and *Works and Days*, about living a life of honest work.

### **HOMER (8TH CENTURY BCE)**

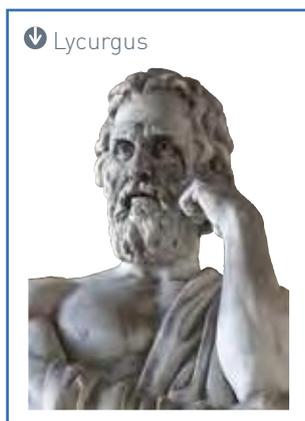
Legendary poet to whom the Greeks ascribed *The Iliad*, an epic poem about the Trojan War, and *The Odyssey*, about Odysseus' journey home after the Trojan War.

### **IONIANS**

Greek-speaking people who lived on the west coast of Asia Minor and nearby islands, and considered themselves to have ancestral ties to Athenians and Eretrians. Ionians developed many of the key philosophical and artistic movements we associate with classical Greece. They came under Lydian rule, and then Persian rule, and their Greek values of *isonomia* and *autonomia* became a key trigger for the Greco–Persian wars.

### **ISAGORAS (C. LATE 6TH CENTURY BCE)**

An Athenian aristocrat who became *archon* in 508/7 BCE, ousting Cleisthenes. But after the *demoi* (common people) revolted, Isagoras' supporters were executed and Cleisthenes returned to power. Isagoras was allowed to escape.



### **KING LEONIDAS I (540–480 BCE)**

Arguably the most famous King of Sparta. Leonidas commanded Spartan forces at the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BCE, leading a mission with 300 men to delay the Persian assault. He came to symbolise Spartan ideals of valour, duty and sacrifice.

### **LYCURGUS (UNKOWN)**

Legendary reformer of ancient Sparta. According to the stories of the Greeks, Lycurgus went to Delphi to receive guidance from the Oracle, who provided the *Great Rhetra* (Spartan constitution) that turned Sparta into a militaristic society built around the *hoplite* class of citizen. Lycurgus was believed to have remodelled nearly every aspect of Spartan society—politics, social dynamics, the economy and trade—in an effort to create the perfect state.

**LYSANDER (?–395 BCE)**

Spartan admiral during the Ionian campaign. He was placed in command of the Spartan fleet in the Hellespont. Successfully engaged Persia's help to build up the navy, and won major naval battles against Athens, which led to Athenian surrender and the end of the Second Peloponnesian War.

**NICIAS (470–413 BCE)**

Athenian military commander. Nicias was the main opponent of Cleon and Alcibiades. He brokered the Peace of Nicias, which bears his name, with Sparta in 421 BCE. Later appointed co-leader of the Sicilian expedition with Alcibiades and Lamachus. Executed by Syracusans in 413 BCE.

Nicias

**PEISISTRATUS (C. 600 BCE–527 BCE)**

Became known as a military general after taking Salamis from Megara in 565 BCE. Popular with the poor, he became a tyrant of Athens. After a period of exile, he maintained power for life, and passed it to his sons—Hippias and Hipparchus.

**PERIANDER (?–C. 585 BCE)**

Son of Cypselus and second tyrant of Corinth. He was a ruthless ruler who banned all leisure activities except those under his control. Despite this, under his rule, art and architecture flourished in Corinth. He built a slipway over the Isthmus which allowed ships to bypass the dangerous southern Peloponnese, and founded the Isthmian Games, the fourth important games.

**PERICLES (C. 495–429 BCE)**

A member of influential Athenian Alcmaeonid family. Was elected *strategos* (general) a record fifteen times 443–429 BCE. During this period, Pericles expanded the Athenian empire and lead Athens into the Second Peloponnesian War. A victim of the plague, he died in 429 BCE.

Pericles

**PERSIANS**

A superpower of the ancient world. Rather than forcing conquered peoples to be like them, Persians adopted local knowledge into their empire and used it in their campaigns, notably engineering (from Media) and naval mastery (from Phoenicia). Persians were relatively tolerant of local customs, but required absolute submission to the Persian king, who they believed was divinely appointed. Greeks under Persian rule found it harsh and disempowering.

**PHEIDON OF ARGOS (C. 7TH CENTURY BCE)**

King of Argos, and also Greece's first tyrant in the seventh century. (*Tyrant* meant that Pheidon seized absolute power, not that his rule was harsh.) He assumed total power over Argos and successfully expanded its territory.

**PHOENICIANS**

Seafaring traders who lived on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean (now Lebanon). They established a trading network around the Mediterranean.

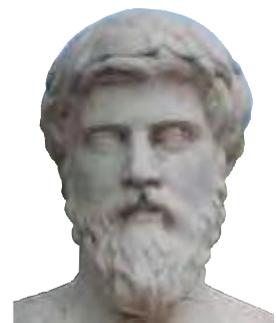
**PLATO (C. 428–C. 347 BCE)**

An ancient Greek philosopher who was a student of Socrates, and in turn, the teacher of Aristotle. He was the founder of The Academy in Athens, a school of philosophy and other mathematical and scientific ideas.

**PLUTARCH (C.46–C.120 CE)**

Greek biographer who wrote on Lycurgus, Solon, Pericles, Alcibiades, Lysander, Cimon, Nicias and others.

Plutarch



↓ Solon



**SEMONIDES (C. 556–C. 468 BCE)**

Greek poet, firstly in the court of the Peisistratids, tyrants of Athens and then in the fledgling democracy. He was the winner of a competition to compose the elegiac verses commemorating the fallen of the Battle of Marathon (490 BCE) and composed further poems celebrating Greek victories in the Greco-Persian wars.

**SOCRATES (C. 470–399 BCE)**

Famous Greek philosopher who had a significant impact on both ancient and modern philosophy. He never actually wrote anything himself but influenced other philosophers and thinkers through conversations and questioning. Today, this practice is called the Socratic method which uses questions and answers to stimulate critical thinking.

• - - - **SOLON (C. 638–C. 559 BCE)**

Known as ‘Solon the Lawgiver’. Solon drafted a new code of law that laid the foundations for democracy by organising Athenian citizens into four property classes, thus breaking the monopoly of the noble families. He was also a poet and a philosopher.

↓ Themistocles



**THALES OF MILETUS (C. 643–C. 546 BCE)**

The first known Greek scientist (or natural philosopher). Lived in the Ionian *polis* of Miletus. Established the study of astronomy and geometry and was said to have predicted a solar eclipse in 585 BCE.

• - - - **THEMISTOCLES (C. 524–459 BCE)**

Athenian statesman and general. He organised the development of Piraeus as Athens’ harbour and naval base. In 480 BCE he was the commander of the Greek fleet at the Battle at Salamis. He was ostracised in 472 or 471 BCE.

**THEOGNIS OF MEGARA (6TH CENTURY BCE)**

A lyric poet who lived in Megara in the sixth century and wrote about his life and times.

**THESEUS (DATES UNKNOWN)**

Legendary Greek hero who defeated the Cretan minotaur, and became King of Athens after the death of his father, King Aegeus. Theseus was believed to have united Attica into a single city-state, Athens, and extended its territory as far as the Isthmus of Corinth.

↓ Thucydides



• - - - **THUCYDIDES (C. 460–C. 400 BCE)**

Athenian historian who lived in the mid to late fifth century BCE. His history of the Peloponnesian War is the first recorded analysis of not only the politics of a nation at war, but of a nation’s morality.

**TYRTAEUS (C. MID 7TH CENTURY BCE)**

A Greek lyric poet who lived most of his life in Sparta, and wrote in the mid 600s BCE. He wrote poems promoting Spartan values, especially military discipline and dedication to the state.

**XENOPHON (C. 430–C. 350 BCE)**

A Greek historian and philosopher whose many historical and philosophical works describe the era of late Classical Greece. He was one of the many admirers of Socrates, and wrote about him after his death.

**XERXES (C. 519–465 BCE)**

Son and successor of Persian king Darius I. Led the second Persian invasion of mainland Greece, bridging the Hellespont. After the battle of Salamis, he was forced to retreat with most of his army, and the Persians were eventually defeated.

# ENDNOTES

## SECTION A: LIVING IN ANCIENT GREECE

### CHAPTER 1

- 1 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.12–13, trans. Rex Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954), 43.
- 2 Josiah Ober, *The Rise and Fall of Classical Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 6.
- 3 Eric H. Cline, *1177 B.C.: The Year Civilization Collapsed* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 93.
- 4 Cline, *1177 B.C.*, 130–131, 141.
- 5 Carol G. Thomas and Craig Conant, *Citadel to City-state* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1999), 42–43.
- 6 A.M. Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 402.
- 7 Snodgrass, *The Dark Age of Greece*, 364.
- 8 Thomas and Conant, *Citadel to City-State*, 32ff, 61.
- 9 Thomas Harrison, 'Foreigners' in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*, ed. Nigel Guy Wilson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 303.
- 10 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 7.77, 529–530.
- 11 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, trans. Alan K. Sommerstein (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), 204.
- 12 British Museum, 'The rediscovery of Naukratis: 19th and early 20th century excavations' (research project), [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research\\_projects/all\\_current\\_projects/naukratis\\_the\\_greeks\\_in\\_egypt/the\\_rediscovery\\_of\\_naukratis.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/all_current_projects/naukratis_the_greeks_in_egypt/the_rediscovery_of_naukratis.aspx)
- 13 Alexandra Villing, 'Naukratis: a city and trading port in Egypt' in *Naukratis: Greeks in Egypt* (British Museum Online Research Catalogue), [https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/online\\_research\\_catalogues/ng/naukratis\\_greeks\\_in\\_egypt/introduction/naukratis\\_a\\_city\\_and\\_port.aspx](https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/online_research_catalogues/ng/naukratis_greeks_in_egypt/introduction/naukratis_a_city_and_port.aspx)
- 14 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 1.1.13, trans. Richard Crawley (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910).
- 15 Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). Liddell and Scott claim it was first used of monarchs in Ionia. Then it was used interchangeably with *Basileus* or *king* by Herodotus. The idea of absolute ruler was first applied to gods like Zeus. It tends not to be used as our idea of tyrant regularly until Aristotle. See also Finley Hooper, *Greek Realities* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978), 79.
- 16 A. R. Burn, *The Lyric Age of Greece* (London: Edward Arnold, 1960), 192.
- 17 A. French, *The Growth of the Athenian Economy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 43–46.
- 18 H. Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 118ff.
- 19 Ober, *The Rise and Fall of Classical Greece*, 41.
- 20 A. H. M. Jones, *Athenian Democracy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), 175–6.
- 21 M. Junianus Justinus, *Epitome of Pompeius Trogus' 'Philippic Histories'* 43.4, [http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/justinus\\_07\\_books41to44.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/justinus_07_books41to44.htm)
- 22 Diamandis Triantaphyllos, 'The Landscape in Aegean Thrace Before and After the Greek Colonisation', *Symposium on Greek Colonisation across the Mediterranean*, 25–28 March 2007 (Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge).
- 23 A. French, *The Growth of the Athenian Economy*, 78.
- 24 Jones, *Athenian Democracy*, 14.
- 25 Aeschines, *On the Embassy* 2.173, trans. Charles Darwin Adams (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1919), <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Aeschin.+2.173&redirect=true>
- 15 van Wees, 'Tyrtaeus Eunomia: Nothing to do with the Great Rhetra', 24.
- 16 Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 43.
- 17 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 6.4.
- 18 François Ollier, *Le Mirage Spartiate* (Paris: de Boccard, 1933).
- 19 Nicholas Richer, 'Aidos at Sparta' trans. Emma Stafford in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 91.
- 20 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 177.
- 21 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 33.
- 22 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 8.3.
- 23 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 1.25–3.
- 24 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 4.
- 25 Henk Singor, 'Admission to the Syssitia in Fifth Century Sparta' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 74.
- 26 Cartledge, 'The Socratics' Sparta and Rousseau's', 325.
- 27 Singor, 'Admission to the Syssitia in Fifth Century Sparta', 72; Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 12.1.
- 28 Singor, 'Admission to the Syssitia in Fifth Century Sparta', 73.
- 29 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 10.1.
- 30 Aristotle, *Politics* 1269a–1271a.
- 31 Singor, 'Admission to the Syssitia in Fifth Century Sparta', 76.
- 32 While voting in the *syssitia* undoubtedly occurred, Singor has remarked that it took place not for the inclusion of the young, but for the rejection of the unwanted.
- 33 Graham Shipley, 'Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours: a Century of Reassessment', *Hermathena*, no. 181 (2006): 68.
- 34 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.3.4–7, trans. Carleton L. Brownson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918 (vol. 1) / 1921 (vol. 2)).
- 35 Shipley, 'Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours', 68.
- 36 Figueira, 'The Evolution of the Messenian Identity', 211.
- 37 Paul Cartledge, *Ancient Greece: A History in Eleven Cities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- 38 Moses Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 64.
- 39 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 4.55.
- 40 Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1269a.
- 41 Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1269b.
- 42 Nigel Kennell, *Spartans: A New History* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 84.
- 43 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 4.26.5–6.
- 44 Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', 43.
- 45 Hodkinson, 'An Agonistic Culture', 163.
- 46 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 16.1.
- 47 Norman Brown, *Love's Body* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1966), 13.
- 48 Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', 53.

### CHAPTER 2

- 1 Herodotus, *Histories* 7.104.4–5, trans. A. D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).
- 2 Tyrtaeus, *Eunomia*, in Hans van Wees, 'Tyrtaeus Eunomia: Nothing to do with the Great Rhetra' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Hodkinson and Anton Powell (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 1999).
- 3 van Wees, 'Tyrtaeus Eunomia: Nothing to do with the Great Rhetra', 24.
- 4 Michael Poliakoff, *Combat Sports in the Ancient World* (London: New Haven Press, 1987), 101.
- 5 Stephen Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta* (London: The Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 2.
- 6 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 5.3, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914).
- 7 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 1.1.
- 8 Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (California: University of California Press, 2001), 15.
- 9 Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 15.2, trans. E. C. Marchant, G. W. Bowersock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925).
- 10 Stephen Hodkinson, 'An Agonistic Culture' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Stephen Hodkinson and Anton Powell (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 1999), 168.
- 11 Plutarch, 'Sayings of the Spartans' in *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931).
- 12 Plato, *Letters* 8.354b, trans. R.G. Bury (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1966).
- 13 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 33.
- 14 Kurt Raaflaub, 'Equalities and Inequalities in Athenian Democracy', in *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies, Ancient and Modern*, ed. Josiah Ober & Charles Hedrick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 153.

- 49 Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', 45.
- 50 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 322.
- 51 Noreen Humble, 'Sophrosyne and the Spartans in Xenophon' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 341.
- 52 Nigel Kennell, *The Gymnasium of Virtue: Education & Culture in Ancient Sparta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 122.
- 53 Richer, 'Aidos at Sparta', 99.
- 54 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War* 2.40.2.
- 55 Cartledge, 'The Socratics' Sparta and Rousseau's', 315.
- 56 Ephraim David, 'Sparta's Kosmos of Silence' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 117.
- 57 Plato, *Protagoras* 342e, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1967).
- 58 Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', 60.
- 59 Hodkinson, 'An Agonistic Culture', 149.
- 60 Metaxia Papapostolou et al., 'Rites of Passage and Their Role in the Socialization of the Spartan Youth', *SMJ*, vol. 6 no. 1 (2010): 49.
- 61 Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan Education in the Classical Period', 58.
- 62 Plutarch, *Lycurgus*.14.4.
- 63 Plutarch, 'Apophthegmata Laconica' 3.5 in *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931).
- 64 Brown, *Love's Body*, 13.
- 65 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 84.
- 66 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 15.3.
- 67 Richer, 'Aidos at Sparta', 96.
- 68 Brown, *Love's Body*, 13.
- 69 Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1270a.
- 70 Ellen Millender, 'Athenian Ideology and the Empowered Spartan Woman' in *Sparta: New Perspectives*, eds. Hodkinson and Powell, 363.
- 71 Millender, 'Athenian Ideology and the Empowered Spartan Woman', 366.
- 72 Aristotle, *Politics* 1270b.
- 73 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 182.
- 74 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 9.3.
- 75 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 19.1.
- 76 Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 7.5.
- 77 Xenophon, *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians* 7.3.
- 78 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 154.
- 79 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 178.
- 80 James Hooker, *The Ancient Spartans* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1980), 134.
- 81 Humphrey Michell, *Sparta* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 303.
- 82 George Cawkwell, 'The Decline of Sparta', *Classical Quarterly* vol. 33 no. 2 (1983), 396.
- 83 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 187.
- 84 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 188.
- 85 Aristotle, *Politics* 2.1270b.
- 86 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 214.
- 87 Moses Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), 168.
- 88 Nafissi, 'From Sparta to Taras', 246.
- 89 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 178.
- 90 Shipley, 'Sparta and its Perioikic Neighbours', 69.
- 91 Plutarch, *Lycurgus* 9.3.
- 92 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 210–211.
- 93 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 100.
- 94 Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, 74.
- 95 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 65.
- 96 Millender, 'Athenian Ideology and the Empowered Spartan Woman', 371.
- 97 Hodkinson, *Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta*, 66.
- 98 Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.138, trans. C. D. Yonge (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854).

### CHAPTER 3

- 1 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 5.3, trans. Peter Rhodes (London: Penguin, 1984).
- 2 Tom Holland, *Persian Fire* (London: Brown Publishing, 2005), 102; Peter John Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World* (Chichester: Blackwell, 2006), 35.
- 3 John Fine, *The Ancient Greeks: A Critical History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), 210; Andrew Lintott, *Violence, Civil Strife and Revolution in the Classical City 750 – 330 BC* (New York: Routledge, 1982), 48.
- 4 Michael Gagarin, *Writing Greek Law* (Cambridge/ New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 32, 36.
- 5 Plutarch, *Solon* 16.1-2, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960); Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 5.1.
- 6 Charles Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), 88.
- 7 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 6.1.
- 8 Plutarch, *Solon* 19.
- 9 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 1.45, trans. R.D. Hicks (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).
- 10 Joseph Milne, 'The Economic Policy of Solon,' *Hesperia* 14 (1945): 2312; Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 10.12; Plutarch, *Solon* 15.
- 11 Plutarch, *Solon* 24.
- 12 Plutarch, *Solon* 24.
- 13 Paul Millett, 'The Economy' in *Short Oxford History of Europe: Classical Greece*, ed. Robin Osborne (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 27; Plutarch, *Solon* 24.
- 14 Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making* (London: Routledge, 1996), 220-225.
- 15 John Lewis, *Solon the Thinker* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 45.
- 16 Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution*, 115-116.
- 17 Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.59.4-6; Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 14.1-3; Plutarch, *Solon* 30.
- 18 Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.59-61; Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 14.1-3; Plutarch, *Solon* 30.1-2.
- 19 Herodotus, *The Histories* 1.59.
- 20 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 16.
- 21 Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World*, 5; Peter Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 25.
- 22 Holland, *Persian Fire*, 116.
- 23 Marybelle Bigelow, *Fashion in History: Western Dress, Prehistoric to Present* (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1970), 56; Herbert Norris, *Costume and Fashion Volume 1: The Evolution of European Dress through Earlier Ages* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1924), 34.
- 24 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.54.5-6, in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).
- 25 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.54-58.
- 26 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.54-58.
- 27 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.55-6.69; Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.55; Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 18.
- 28 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.59.2.
- 29 Josiah Ober, 'The Athenian Revolution of 508/7 B.C.E.: Violence, Authority, and the Origins of Democracy' in *Athenian Democracy*, ed. Peter Rhodes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 266; Holland, *Persian Fire*, 130.
- 30 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.96-7.
- 31 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 20.1.
- 32 Ober, 'The Athenian Revolution', 265.
- 33 Although accepted by many scholars, McCarger argues that this was a different Isagoras. An issue of mistaken identity; see David McCarger, 'Isagoras and Isagoras' in *Phoenix*, vol. 28, no. 3 (1974), 281.
- 34 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.66.
- 35 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 21.1.
- 36 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 20.2.
- 37 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 20.1.
- 38 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 20.3; Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.72.
- 39 Henry Theodore Wade-Gery, 'Studies in the Structure of Attic Society: II. The Laws of Kleisthenes', *Classical Quarterly* 24 (1933): 17-29; David McCarger, 'Isagoras and Isagoras', 392.
- 40 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 68.2-5.
- 41 Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 22.
- 42 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.77.
- 43 George Forrest, 'Greece: The History of the Archaic Period' in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 41.
- 44 Nicholas Hammond, *The Classical Age of Greece* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1975), 105.
- 45 Plutarch, *Themistocles* 5 in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 46 Barbara Levick, 'Women and Law' in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, ed. Sharon James & Sheila Dillon (Chichester: Blackwell, 2012), 98.
- 47 Mary Lefkowitz, *Women in Greek Myth* (London: Duckworth & Co, 1986), 133-134.
- 48 Helen McClees, *The Daily Life of the Greeks and Romans as illustrated by the Classical Collections in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1924), 38.
- 49 Plato, *Laws X* 887d, trans. Shorey, Paul (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).

- 50 Plutarch, *Pericles* 28 in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 51 Plato, *Menexenus* 236b, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes, Vol. 9*, trans. by W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925).
- 52 Paul Cartledge, 'Classical Athens' in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 1, The Ancient Mediterranean World*, eds. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp.49–50.
- 53 Millett, 'The Economy', 36.
- 54 Kostas Vlassopoulos, 'Slavery, freedom and citizenship in classical Athens: beyond a legalistic approach', *European Review of History—Revue européenne d'histoire* 16, no. 3 (2009): 348; Finley, *The Ancient Economy*, 62.
- 55 John Davies, 'Athenian Citizenship: The Descent Group and the Alternatives' in *Athenian Democracy*, ed. Peter Rhodes, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988) 34–35; Plutarch, *Solon*, 24.
- 56 Plutarch, *Pericles* 15.5, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1916).
- 57 Plutarch, *Pericles* 13.1.
- 58 John Pedley, *Greek Art and Archaeology* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1993), 148.
- 59 Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.24.5, trans. W.H.S. Jones and H.A. Ormerod (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918).
- 60 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.13.3–4; Loren Samons, *Empire of the Owl: Athenian Imperial Finance*, (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2000), 150.
- 61 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.10.
- 62 Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 127.
- 63 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.21.2.
- 64 The American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 'Theater', *Athenian Agora Excavations*, <http://www.agathe.gr/democracy/theater.html>
- 65 Alan Sommerstein, 'The Politics of Greek Comedy' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Comedy*, ed. Martin Revermann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 293.
- CHAPTER 4**
- 1 Tyrtaeus, *Fragments* 11.1–38 in Louis Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007).
- 2 Victor Hanson, *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks* (London: Cassell Publishing, 1999), 18.
- 3 Michael Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 6.
- 4 Louis Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 36–38; David Tandy, *Warriors into Traders: The Power of the Market in Early Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 171–174.
- 5 Tandy, *Warriors into Traders*, 117, 120, 230.
- 6 W. Kendrick Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices Part 1* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 31; Nicholas Hammond, *A History of Greece to 322 BCE* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 110–111.
- 7 Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War*, 46.
- 8 Archilochus, CURFRAG.tlg-0232.3 in *Elegy and Iambus*, Volume II, trans. John Edmonds (London: William Heinemann, 1931).
- 9 Hanson, *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks*, 35–38.
- 10 Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War*, 43–44; Herodotus, *The Histories* 2.152–4.
- 11 Everson, *Warfare in Ancient Greece*, 89.
- 12 Tim Everson, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: Arms and Armour from the Heroes of Homer to Alexander the Great* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 73–98.
- 13 Hanson, *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks*, 59.
- 14 Hanson, *The Wars of the Ancient Greeks*, 57.
- 15 Louis Rawlings, *The Ancient Greeks at War*, 95; see also Adrian Goldsworthy 'The othismos, myths and heresies: the nature of hoplite battle', *War in History*, vol. 4 no. 1 (1997), 1–26.
- 16 Tom Holland, *Persian Fire: The First World Empire and the Battle for the West* (London: Little Brown Publishing, 2005), xx–xxi.
- 17 An inscription of Darius at Persepolis in Pierre Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander: a History of the Persian Empire*, trans. Peter Daniels (Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 2002), 44.
- 18 Dennis Fink, *The Battle of Marathon in Scholarship: Research, Theories and Controversies* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2014), 27.
- 19 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.226.
- 20 George Forrest, 'Greece: The History of the Archaic Period' in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffen and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 36.
- 21 Forrest, 'Greece: The History of the Archaic Period', 37.
- 22 Jim Lacey, *The First Clash: The Miraculous Greek Victory at Marathon and its Impact on Western Civilization* (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 100.
- 23 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.37.
- 24 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.49.
- 25 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.97.
- 26 Herodotus, *The Histories* 5.105.
- 27 Arthur Keaveney, *The Persian Invasion of Greece* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2011), 22.
- 28 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.44.1.
- 29 Keaveney, *The Persian Invasions of Greece*, 22.
- 30 Darius' Inscription at Persepolis in Briant, *From Cyrus to Alexander*, 44.
- 31 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.133.
- 32 Keaveney, *The Persian Invasions of Greece*, 26.
- 33 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.95; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 4.25.5.
- 34 Pritchett, *Ancient Greek Military Practices Part 1*, 116–20.
- 35 Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.14, trans. W.H.S. Jones, Litt.D., and H.A. Ormerod (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918).
- 36 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.112.
- 37 Herodotus, *The Histories* 6.113.
- 38 Jon Mikalson, *Herodotus and Religion in the Persian Wars* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 34.
- 39 R.K. Sinclair, *Democracy and Participation in Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5.
- 40 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.8B.1, trans. A.D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920).
- 41 Keaveney, *The Persian Invasions of Greece*, 35.
- 42 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.34–5.
- 43 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.60–7–8.7.
- 44 Paul Cartledge, *After Thermopylae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 108; Michael Grant, *The Classical Greeks* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 10; Andrew Burn, *Persia and the Greeks* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1962), 326–328; Peter Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1996), 58–59.
- 45 Grant, *The Classical Greeks*, 10.
- 46 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.9.1–2.
- 47 Peter Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, 66; Tom Holland, *Persian Fire*, 74, 95.
- 48 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.213.
- 49 Plutarch, 'Apophthegmata Laconica' 51 in *Moralia*, trans. Frank Cole Babbitt (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931).
- 50 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.89. Modern Historians consider 600–800 ships at Artemisium to be a more realistic figure than the 1207 triremes proposed by Herodotus. See Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, 60–61.
- 51 Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, 135–136.
- 52 Herodotus, *The Histories* 7.178.
- 53 Herodotus, *The Histories* 8.75–6; Holland, *Persian Fire*, 312.
- 54 Herodotus, *The Histories* 9.2832.
- 55 Historians consider Herodotus' ratio of 3:1 to be inflated. Herodotus, *The Histories* 9.32; Green, *The Greco-Persian Wars*, 249; Holland, *Persian Fire*, 344; Nicholas Hammond, *The Classical Age of Greece* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975), 87.
- 56 Herodotus, *The Histories* 9.58–9.
- 57 Hammond, *The Classical Age of Greece*, 88; Holland, *Persian Fire*, 346–9.
- 58 Herodotus, *The Histories* 9.62.
- 59 Herodotus, *The Histories* 9.70.
- 60 As implausible as this sounds, both Green and Holland argues this was indeed possible, using the Persians own light-beacon communication against them, sending news to the Asian coast in a matter of hours to synchronise the attacks. Holland, *Persian Fire*, 357; Green, *Greco-Persian Wars*, 281.
- 61 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.96, in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 478.
- 62 Peter Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World 478–323 BC* (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 17–18.
- 63 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.96; Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 311.
- 64 Ronald Legon, 'Samos in the Delian League,' *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* vol. 21, no. 2 (1972), 148.
- 65 de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*, 312.
- 66 John Bury & Russell Meiggs, *History of Greece* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1952), 211; Simon Hornblower, & Antony Spawforth, *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 211.

## SECTION B: THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

### CHAPTER 5

- 1 Ian Morris, 'The Greater Athenian State', in Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, *The Dynamics of Ancient Empires: State Power from Assyria to Byzantium* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 102–103.
- 2 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.118.2, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).
- 3 Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 2005), 19.
- 4 Sarah Bolmarich, 'Thucydides 1.19.1 and the Peloponnesian League', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005) 5–34.
- 5 See Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 1, Books I–III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 160–161, on the date of Naupactus and the settlement of the *helots*.
- 6 Terry Buckley, *Aspects of Greek History 750–323 BC: A Source-Based Approach* (London: Routledge, 1996), 237.
- 7 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 162.
- 8 Simon Hornblower, *The Greek World, 479–323 BC* (London: Methuen, 1983), 16, 38–39.
- 9 Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), 111.
- 10 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.105–106.
- 11 Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 11.50, in *The Persian Wars to the Fall of Athens: Books 11–14.34* (480–401 BCE), trans. Peter Green (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), records that in c.475 Sparta was already regretting withdrawing from its position of strength, thereby allowing Athens' power to grow, to the point its leaders considered declaring war on Athens. This, however, is largely dismissed by scholars, Matthew Dillon and Lynda Garland, *Ancient Greece: Social and Historical Documents from Archaic Times to the Death of Socrates* (London: Routledge, 1994), 224–225.
- 12 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.112.5; Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 181–183.
- 13 James McDonald, 'Supplementing Thucydides' Account of the Megarian Decree', in *Electronic Antiquity* vol. 2 issue 3 (October 1994), <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/EIAnt/V2N3/mcdonald.html>.
- 14 Plutarch, *Pericles* 23 in *The Rise and Fall of Athens*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York: Penguin Books, 1960); see also Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.114.
- 15 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 178–181; Charles W. Fornara (ed. and trans.), *Archaic Inscriptions to the End of the Peloponnesian War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 110–112. An interesting study of Athens' relations with its allies and their status is Sean Ryan Jensen, *Rethinking Athenian Imperialism: Sub-hegemony in the Delian League*, PhD Dissertation, State University of New York, 2010, <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/27299/>, who argues that there were two levels of hegemony; the Athenian that stretched throughout the Aegean and Ionia and sub-hegemonies controlled by larger states, such as Thasos and Rhodes, that controlled their own local geographic–commercial hegemonies.
- 16 N.G.L. Hammond, *A History of Greece to 322 B.C.* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959), 309.
- 17 Donald Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 2012), 18–19; Ryan K. Balot, *Greed and Injustice in Classical Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 157: by the beginning of the Second Peloponnesian War, imperialism was an established aspect of the Athenian character.
- 18 Plutarch, *Pericles* 24; 25.1.
- 19 Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 11.70.3–4; see also Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.98–99.
- 20 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.25.4.
- 21 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.25–26; Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 25; Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 27.
- 22 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 67.
- 23 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.55; Lawrence A. Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 27.
- 24 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.139.1.
- 25 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.67.4; 144.2; Plutarch, *Pericles* 29; Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 39.
- 26 Plutarch, *Pericles* 30–31.
- 27 Moses Finley, 'The Fifth-Century Athenian Empire: A Balance Sheet', in P.D.A. Garnsey and C.R. Whittaker (eds), *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 120. G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 225–231, argued that the Megarian Decree was not a trade embargo; however, this suggestion has not won wide support. See Brian McDonald, 'The Megarian Decree', *Historia* 32.4 (1983), 385–410 and Philip A. Stadter, 'Plutarch, Charinus and the Megarian Decree', *Greek, Rome and Byzantine Studies*, 25 (1984) 351–372.
- 28 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.27.2.
- 29 Plutarch, *Pericles* 30.
- 30 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 39. On Athens' intervention in Aegina, see George Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (London: Routledge, 1997), 28–9: Athens had not increased tribute or intimidated Aegina or Megara in 432. See also, McDonald, 'Supplementing Thucydides' Account of the Megarian Decree'.
- 31 Plutarch, *Pericles* 31.1, 29.5. Scholars are critical of Thucydides for not showing an interest in economic factors. On Thucydides' 'disinterest' in the issue, see Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 214–215.
- 32 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.66–71; See Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 107–108, on the construction of and problems with the speeches.
- 33 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.79.
- 34 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.72–88; Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 43–44.
- 35 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.86; Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, 16.
- 36 Eric Robinson, 'Thucydides on the Causes and Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War', in Sara Forsdyke, Edith Foster and Ryan Balot (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Thucydides* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) examines the distinction between 'purest' causes and alleged ones; Lawrence A. Tritle, 'Thucydides and Power Politics', in Antonios Rengakos and Antonis Tsakmakis (eds), *Brill's Companion to Thucydides* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 474–479, discusses the political climate leading up to the outbreak of war.
- 37 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.126.1; Plutarch, *Pericles*, 33.
- 38 Robinson, 'Thucydides on the Causes and Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War', 122.
- 39 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 49.
- 40 Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, 16–17: on the Athenian treasury, which was completely exhausted at the end of the war.
- 41 Unsurprisingly, Thucydides the historian and his account of the Peloponnesian Wars are probably the most studied topics in ancient historiography. Any attempt to do justice to that scholarship here is meaningless. On Thucydides, see the survey of key literature by Carolyn J. Dewald, *Thucydides' War Narrative: A Structural Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 1–20.
- 42 P.J. Rhodes, 'Thucydides on the Cause of the Peloponnesian War', *Hermes* 115 (1987), 154–65.
- 43 de Ste Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War*.
- 44 Ernst Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea: Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 125–162; 223–236.
- 45 Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War*, 35–36, counterargues that Sparta was not interested in negotiations.
- 46 Joseph Vogt, 'The Portrait of Pericles in Thucydides', in Jeffery S. Rusten, *Thucydides* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 221–224; Giovanni Parmegiani, 'The Causes of the Peloponnesian War: Ephorus, Thucydides and their Critics', in *Between Thucydides and Polybius: The Golden Age of Greek Historiography*, Hellenic Studies Series 64 (Washington, DC, and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), <http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/5843>
- 47 Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969).
- 48 Victor Ehrenberg, *From Solon to Socrates: Greek History and Civilisation During the Sixth and Fifth Centuries B.C.* (London: Methuen, 1968), 257–259.
- 49 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 306.

## CHAPTER 6

- 1 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.1.2, trans. Rex Warner with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972).
- 2 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.143.4.
- 3 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.144.1.
- 4 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.12.3.
- 5 Donald Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), 64.
- 6 On Thucydides' authorial statements, see: Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, Books I–III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 245–247. On the propaganda value of the Spartan slogan 'Liberator of Greece' see J.T. Hooker, 'Spartan Propaganda' in Anton Powell (ed), *Classical Sparta: Techniques Behind Her Success* (London: Routledge, 1988), 122–141. On 'fear' as a theme in Thucydides, see William Desmond, 'Lessons of Fear: A Reading of Thucydides', *Classical Philology* 101 (2006), 359–379.
- 7 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.7.1.
- 8 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.49.2.
- 9 Manolis J. Papagrigorakis, P.N. Synodinos, A. Stathi, C.L. Skevaki and L. Zachariodou, 'The Plague of Athens: an Ancient Act of Bioterrorism', *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism* 11.3 (2013), 228–229.
- 10 Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 2, Books IV–V.24 (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996), 316–319, reviews the literature. More recently, B.A. Cunha, 'The Cause of the Plague of Athens: Plague, Typhoid, Typhus, Smallpox or Measles?', *Infectious Diseases Clinic of North America* 18 (2004), 29–43; and R.J. Littman, 'The Plague of Athens: Epidemiology and Paleopathology', *Mount Sinai Journal of Medicine* 76.5 (2009), 456–467.
- 11 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 80–81.
- 12 On the 'legal' issues confronting Archidamus, see Ernst Badian, *From Plataea to Potidaea: Studies in the History and Historiography of the Pentecontaetia* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993), 109–124.
- 13 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 2, 340, 346–347, on the controversy of Thucydides' editorialisation. On conservative assessments of Cleon, see, W. Robert Connor, *The New Politicians of the Fifth-Century Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).
- 14 Sarah Brown Ferrario, *Historical Agency and the 'Great Man' in Classical Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 110–112.
- 15 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 2, 347.
- 16 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 99–100.
- 17 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 103.
- 18 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 418.
- 19 Marc Cogan, *The Human Thing: The Speeches and Principles of Thucydides' History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), 64–65.
- 20 Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1975), 380–382
- 21 Cogan, *The Human Thing*, 51–52; Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 1, 420–421.
- 22 Mary P. Nichols, *Thucydides and the Pursuit of Freedom* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015), 53–54, 74–77; for analysis of the Mytilene (54–65) and Plataea (68–74) debates.
- 23 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 155
- 24 Lawrence A. Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 92–93, on the impact of the war on Spartan manpower.
- 25 See George Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* (London: Routledge, 1997), 23.
- 26 Mike Robert, *Two Deaths at Amphipolis: Cleon vs Brasidas in the Peloponnesian War* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen and Sword Books Ltd, 2015).
- 27 Russell Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).
- 28 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.13.2.
- 29 Simon Hornblower, *The Greek World, 479–323 BC* (London: Methuen, 1983), 138; J.E. Lendon, *Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 371.
- 30 Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 121.
- 31 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 2, 469.
- 32 Robert A. Bauslaugh, *The Concept of Neutrality in Classical Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 110–111; Richard A. Tomlinson, *Argos and the Argolid: From the Bronze Age to the Roman Occupation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972).
- 33 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 343.
- 34 P.J. Rhodes, *Alcibiades: Athenian Playboy, General and Traitor* (Barnsley, South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 34–38; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.116.3–4.
- 35 Daniel Garst, 'Thucydides and Neorealism', *International Studies Quarterly* 33.1 (1989), 15.
- 36 Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 12.83.6, in *The Persian Wars to the Fall of Athens: Books 11–14.34 (480–401 BCE)*, trans. Peter Green (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).
- 37 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 345–346: Thucydides is ambiguous about the long-term Athenian policy on Sicily; cf Simon Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, Books 5.25–8.109 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 10–11, who traces Athens' long interest in Sicily.
- 38 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.86.3; also see Charles W. Fornara (ed. and trans.), *Archaic Inscriptions to the End of the Peloponnesian War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 137–139, for treaties with Rhegium and Leontini dated to c. 433/2.
- 39 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 2, 429–435.
- 40 Victor Davis Hanson, *A War Like No Other: How the Athenians and Spartans Fought the Peloponnesian War* (New York: Random House, 2005), 204.
- 41 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 316–319.
- 42 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 312, argues that Thucydides' account of the three speeches is important because they reflect the 'mood' of the Athenian Assembly as well as the working of Athenian democracy. See pages 312–314 for epigraphic evidence that supports Thucydides; and 320ff for an analysis of the three speeches.
- 43 'Speeches and the Course of Events in Book Six and Seven of Thucydides', in Rusten, *Thucydides*, 341–358 (originally published in 1973).
- 44 Tim Rood, *Thucydides: Narrative and Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 159–182.
- 45 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 159ff.
- 46 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 250: both Nicias and Alcibiades wanted the leadership but neither had the 'full' qualities—essentially complementing each other.
- 47 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.24; Jacqueline de Romilly, *Thucydides and Athenian Imperialism*, trans. Philip Thody (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963), 203: Alcibiades took the Athenian people only in the direction in which they want to go. Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War*, 76, notes that Thucydides attributes the desire to make Sicily part of Athenian empire to Alcibiades. Desmond, 'Lessons of Fear', 365ff, observes that 'desire' overtook 'fear', which proved catastrophic.
- 48 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 367–368, argues that the attention attributed to this incident indicates how important Thucydides thought it was to the war.
- 49 Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 148.
- 50 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 1061–1066, provides a detailed analysis of the Athenian manpower devoted to Sicily in 415–413.
- 51 Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, 211, claims that the 1200 Syracusan horsemen were a major strength for Syracuse, whereas Athenian cavalry was almost non-existent and remained so even after Athens sent a mounted force in response to Nicias' request.
- 52 Cawkwell, *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War*, 83, contends that had Alcibiades still been in command, Syracuse would have made peace at this point, and the Sicilian Expedition would have been a success.
- 53 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 7.4.6.
- 54 Tritle, *A New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 153, regards the arrival of Gylippus as a great morale booster; while Hanson, *A War Like No Other*, 213–214, assesses Nicias as a 'dallier'.
- 55 Lee L. Brice, 'The Athenian Expedition to Sicily', in Brain Campbell and Lawrence A. Tritle (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Warfare in the Classical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 569–641.
- 56 Josiah Ober, 'Thucydides on Athens' Democratic Advantages in the Archidamian War', in *War, Democracy and Culture in Classical Greece*, ed. David M. Pritchard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 71–72; Ferrario, *Historical Agency and the 'Great Man' in Classical Greece*, 124ff.
- 57 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 1061–1066, assesses the cost of Sicily to Athens.
- 58 'Spartan Naval Performance in the Decelean War, 413–404 BCE', *Journal of Military History* 73.3 (2009), 729.

- 59 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 299.
- 60 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 8.2.1; see Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 753, on 'palpable' similarity of language here and Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.8. Hornblower, *The Greek World, 479–323 BC*, 143–144, and Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 351, both emphasise that the hyperbolic description of Thucydides' introduction to the Ionian war is not evident by the narrative of Book 8.
- 61 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 754 on the eros (passion) of the Athenian populace.
- 62 Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 755–756, considers whether this shift of attitude was what Spartans told Thucydides or whether the historian surmised this for himself.
- 63 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 331.
- 64 See Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides* vol. 3, 757, on the numbers of ships to be contributed by the various allies.
- 65 W.D. Westlake, 'Ionians in the Ionian War', in *Classical Quarterly* 29.1 (1979) 9–44.
- 66 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 351–352.
- 67 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 8.2.2; On the use of navy, see Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 359.
- 68 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 338.
- 69 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 367.
- 70 Westlake, 'Ionians in the Ionian War', 25–35.
- 71 Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire*, 351–352.
- 72 W.D. Westlake, 'Tissaphernes in Thucydides' in *Studies in Thucydides and Greek History* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989), 166–180 (originally published in *Classical Quarterly*, 1985), argues that Thucydides' uneven treatment of Tissaphernes was due to Book 8 being left unrevised.
- 73 The three 'treaties': 8.18 (Tissaphernes and Chalcideus); 8.37 (Tissaphernes and Therimenes); 8.43: intervention of Lichas; 8.58 (Tissaphernes and unnamed Spartan envoys). On the number of treaties, see Woodhead, *Thucydides*, 138–9, and Rhodes, *Alcibiades*, 63.
- 74 C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), 268–284.
- 75 Plutarch, *Lysander* 3.1, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 76 H.D. Westlake, 'Abydos and Byzantium: the Sources of Two Episodes in the Ionian War', in *Studies in Thucydides and Greek History* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1989), 224–238 (originally published Museum Helveticum, 1985), assesses the differing historical accounts of Xenophon, Diodorus and Plutarch.
- 77 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 408–414, merits Thrasylbulus with this victory, as well as those at Cynossema and Abydos.
- 78 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 28.6, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (New York: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 79 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 417.
- 80 Our principal texts regularly conflict in aspects of detail. For example, Diodorus has Theramenes besieging Byzantium, whereas Xenophon and Plutarch cite Alcibiades.

- 81 Kagan, *New History of the Peloponnesian War*, 466.
- 82 John F. Lazenby, *Peloponnesian War: A Military Study* (London & New York: Routledge, 2004), 254.

### IN FOCUS: PERICLES

- 1 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.41, in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).
- 2 A.R. Burn, *Pericles and Athens* (London: Hodder, 1948), 21.
- 3 Plutarch, *Pericles* 4, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 4 Plato, *Alcibiades I* 118b–c in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 8, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1955); Plutarch, *Pericles* 6.1–3.
- 5 Plutarch, *Cimon* 15.1, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 6 A.J. Podlecki, *Pericles and His Circle* (London: Routledge, 1998), 46; Charles W. Fornara and Loren J. Samons, *Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991) 24–28; P.J. Rhodes, *A History of the Classical Greek World* (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 40–41; Plutarch, *Cimon* 15.2; Plutarch, *Pericles* 9.3.
- 7 Plutarch, *Pericles* 10.6.
- 8 P.J. Rhodes, *Alcibiades: Playboy, General and Traitor* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 6. Rhodes, and many historians, considers this de facto rather than official peace, mythologised a century on to contrast it with Sparta's shameful Peace with Persia.
- 9 Burn, *Pericles and Athens*, 128.
- 10 Michael Grant, *The Classical Greeks* (London: Phoenix Press, 1989), 64.
- 11 Cratinos, *Fragment in The Oxford Book of Greek Verse*, chosen by Gilbert Murray et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), 298.
- 12 Plutarch, *Pericles* 12.
- 13 Geoffrey de Ste. Croix, *The Origins of the Peloponnesian War* (London: Duckworth, 1972), 73, 76–77; N. G. L. Hammond, *The Classical Age of Greece* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975), 141; Burn, *Pericles and Athens*, 199.

### IN FOCUS: ALCIBIADES

- 1 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 16.1, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 2 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 2.2.
- 3 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 4.5.
- 4 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 6.2.
- 5 Plato, *Symposium* 219a, in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, vol. 9, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925); Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 6.1.
- 6 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.16 in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).
- 7 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 8.
- 8 V. Wohl, 'The Eros of Alcibiades' in *Classical Antiquity* 18.2 (1999), 368–370.

- 9 P.J. Rhodes, *Alcibiades: Playboy, General and Traitor* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword Military, 2011), 30–31; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.43.
- 10 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 14.2; Plutarch, *Nicias* 10 in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960); Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.43.
- 11 Rhodes, *Alcibiades*, 31.
- 12 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 18.
- 13 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 19; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 6.28.1–2.
- 14 Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History* 13.66.6, trans. Charles Oldfather (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1946).
- 15 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.1.26, in *Xenophon in Seven Volumes, 1 and 2*, trans. Carleton L. Brownson (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918/1921); Diodorus Siculus, *Library* 13.105.3–4.
- 16 Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 33.

### IN FOCUS: LYSANDER

- 1 Plutarch, *Lysander* 16, in *The Rise and Fall of Athens: Nine Greek Lives*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert (London: Penguin Books, 1960).
- 2 Michael Grant, *The Classical Greeks* (London: Phoenix Press, 1989), 164.
- 3 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 5.4, in *Xenophon in Seven Volumes, 1 and 2*, trans. Carleton L. Brownson (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918/1921).
- 4 Lawrence A. Tritle, *The Greek World in the Fourth Century: From the Fall of the Athenian Empire to the Successors of Alexander* (London: Routledge, 1997), 109.
- 5 George Forrest, 'Greece: The History of the Archaic Period' in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, ed. John Boardman, Jasper Griffin and Oswyn Murray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 119–120.
- 6 S. M. Rusch, *Sparta at War: Strategy, Tactics and Campaigns 950–362 BC* (Barnsley: Frontline Books, 2011), 146; Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.1.32.
- 7 Plutarch, *Lysander* 13.
- 8 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 3.37–3.49, 4.116.3–4, in *The Landmark Thucydides*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008).
- 9 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.23.
- 10 Plutarch, *Lysander* 15.2.
- 11 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.19–20; Plutarch, *Lysander* 15.
- 12 S. B. Ferrario, *Historical Agency and the 'Great Man' in Classical Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 197.
- 13 G. Heyman, *The Power of Sacrifice: Roman and Christian Discourses in Conflict* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 61.
- 14 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.2.6.
- 15 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.5.13
- 16 Tritle, *The Greek World in the Fourth Century*, 113–114.
- 17 Nigel M. Kennell, *Spartans: A New History* (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 133.
- 18 Xenophon, *Hellenica* 3.5.9–25; Plutarch, *Lysander* 27–30.

# INDEX

## A

- acropolis* 17  
Acropolis of Athens 19, 90, 113, 114, 240  
Aegina 174, 185, 196, 198, 231  
Aegospotami, Battle of 231–2, 249, 255–7  
Aeschylus 140  
    *The Persians* 115, 236–7  
Agariste 236  
Agis 221, 222–3, 226, 227, 232, 248  
*agoge* 58–61, 70  
*agora* 17, 19, 21, 22, 34, 93  
agriculture  
    Greek influence on in colonies 33  
    and *hoplites* 15, 17, 20, 27, 33  
    impacted by social and economic changes 26–7  
    importance of 20  
    methods 23–4  
    slave labour 34  
    Sparta 42, 53, 55, 65, 68, 72, 206  
Alcibiades  
    Decelean War 221, 223–31  
    overview of life 164, 244–51  
    and Peace of Nicias 208  
    Sicilian Expedition 211–15, 216  
Alcmaeonid family 84, 89, 95, 97, 236  
alphabet (Greek) 16–17, 33  
Alyattes 17  
Amphipolis 203–4, 205, 206, 208  
*amphora* 23, 24, 90  
Anaxagoras 236, 239  
Antiochus 230  
Anytus 245  
*apella* 50–1, 55, 62  
*apoikia* 31. *see also* colonisation  
Apollo 14, 76, 107  
Apollo Carneus 76–7, 137  
Archaic Age, timeline and overview 2–5, 12–13  
archers (Persian) 35, 131  
Archidamian War 195–205, 207  
Archidamus 184, 185, 195–7, 198  
Archilochus 20  
*archon* 85, 95, 102  
*Areopagus*  
    and Athenian democracy 89, 94, 95, 100, 104, 237  
    laws and punishment 84, 85  
    Solon's reforms 87  
Ares 76  
Arginusae, Battle of 230, 255

- Argos  
    conflicts with Sparta 43, 63  
    and Peace of Nicias 206, 207, 208, 246  
    Peloponnesian wars 173, 215, 221  
    tyranny 27  
Aristagoras 134  
Aristides 103–4  
aristocrats (*aristoi*) 20, 26–7, 31  
    Athens (*Eupatridae*) 84, 85, 95, 96, 103, 104, 125–6  
    Corinth 28, 30  
    Mycenae 17  
    Sparta 63, 74  
Aristogeiton 94, 96  
Aristomenes 43  
Aristophanes  
    *Archarnians* 141, 183  
    *The Clouds* 117  
    *The Frogs* 248  
    *Women at the Thesmaphoria Festival* 108  
Aristotle 7  
Artaphernes 134  
Artesium, Battle of 147, 148  
Aspasia 109, 239  
Assinarus River, Battle of 219  
*aste* 105  
Athena 22, 76, 107, 149, 240  
'Athenian empire', use of term 154  
Athens  
    ancient sources on 6, 7  
    aristocrats 84, 85, 95, 96, 103, 104, 125–6  
    class and gender in democratic polis 105–12  
    class structure 84–5  
    colonies 33  
    Delian League 113, 114, 154–6, 172–3, 174, 177–8, 240  
    Draconian laws 85, 88  
    economy and trade 23, 91, 113, 124, 126, 238  
    Greco-Persian wars 124–8, 134–5, 136–41, 145–6, 148–9, 151–3  
    life in 9  
    Pericles and Golden Age 112–17, 236  
    revolution and democracy 82–3, 93–105, 141, 156  
    slavery 34  
    Solon's reforms 34, 83, 86–8, 89, 95, 99, 100, 104, 237  
    tyranny 88–92  
    warfare 87, 102, 103–4, 113, 124–8  
    *see also* First Peloponnesian War;  
    Second Peloponnesian War

- Athos, Mount 134, 143  
Attica  
    Athens as sole city 84  
    Greco-Persian wars 149, 151  
    *poleis* 18–19  
    pottery 91  
    Second Peloponnesian War 196, 197, 199, 202, 206, 231  
*autonomia* 133, 134, 145, 156

## B

- Bacchiadae 28  
*barbaroi* 16  
Boeotia 18–19, 102, 151, 176, 195, 199, 207, 217  
*boule* 87, 89, 94, 95, 96, 99, 100, 102, 104, 237  
Boutad family 84, 89  
Brasidas 203–5, 207  
Bronze Age 15, 17  
building programs in Athens 90, 114, 240  
Byzantium 178, 229

## C

- Callias, Peace of 238  
Callicratidas 230, 231, 254–5  
Callimachus 137  
Camarina, Sicily 210  
Caria 135, 224, 225, 254  
*Carneia* 76–7, 137  
Catana, Sicily 215  
cavalries (Persian) 130–1  
Cecrops 19  
ceramics (pottery) 16, 29, 33, 90, 91, 113  
Chalcedon 229  
Chalcidians  
    Euboea 102, 127, 176, 197  
    Northern Greece 143, 208  
Chalcis Decree 177  
Chios 34, 35, 224, 225, 226  
*chiton* 91  
Cimon 83, 103, 104, 113, 172–3, 237–8  
city-states (*polis*; pl. *poleis*) 16, 17–26  
Clearidas 207–8  
Cleisthenes 82, 95–100, 102  
Cleomones 95, 97, 102  
Cleon 194, 198, 200–1, 202, 204, 205, 206  
*cleruchies* 33, 174, 196  
climate of Greece 15  
clothing 91, 106  
coinage 17, 26, 28, 35, 69, 85, 89, 126  
colonisation 14, 31–4  
Conon 230, 231

Corcyra 179–80, 202, 215  
 Corinth  
   colonies 31, 33  
   economy and trade 23  
   First Peloponnesian War 173–6  
   Isthmus of 145, 150, 174, 195, 199  
   Peloponnesian League 172  
   Second Peloponnesian War 179–81,  
   182, 184, 185, 186, 187, 207, 221,  
   232, 258  
   and Thirty Years' Peace treaty 178  
   tyranny and oligarchy 28–30  
 Coronea, Battle of 176  
 courtesans 22, 108–9  
 court system (*dicasteria* and *heliaia*) 99,  
 100  
 craftsmen 21, 29  
 Creon 116  
 Crete 15, 35  
 Croesus 86  
 Cynossema, Battle of 227–8, 229, 253  
 Cyprus 132, 135  
 Cypselus 28–9  
 Cyrene 31  
 Cyrus II (Cyrus the Great) 129–30  
 Cyrus the Younger 229, 231, 253–4, 255,  
 258  
 Cyzicus 224, 227, 228, 229, 253

## D

Damon 236, 239  
 Darius I 134, 135, 136, 142  
 Darius II 225, 229  
 Dark Age 16, 18, 84  
 Datis the Mede 136  
 Deceleian (Ionian) War 221–33  
*decharchies* 258  
 Delian League 113, 114, 154–6, 172–3,  
 174, 178, 240  
 Delphic Oracle (*Pythia*) 31, 33, 40, 45,  
 107, 146, 148–9, 215  
*deme* 20, 98  
 Demeter 107  
*demiourgoi* 21  
 democracy (*demokratia*)  
   Athenian revolution and 82–3,  
   93–105, 141, 156  
   definition and characteristics 41, 96  
   Sparta 51  
*demos* 96, 100, 103, 104, 126, 238, 240,  
 241, 242  
 Demosthenes 202, 217, 218, 219  
*dicasteria* 99, 100  
 Diodotus 200–1  
*diolkos* 29  
 Dionysia festival 90, 236  
 Dorians 15, 42, 46  
*drachm* 17  
 Draconian laws 85, 88  
*dyarchy* 46

## E

*ecclesia* 87, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 115,  
 136, 237, 238, 248  
 economy and trade 24–35  
   Athens 23, 91, 113, 124, 126, 238  
   Corinth 23  
   Ionia 84, 85, 132–3  
   Sparta 23, 67–75  
 education in Sparta 58–62, 64–5, 70  
 Egypt 17, 25–6, 132  
*eirene* 60, 62  
 Elis 207  
*emporion* 24–6  
 Endius 224, 229  
 Ephesus 134–5, 229, 230  
 Ephialtes 104, 112, 237, 238  
*ephors* 30, 47, 48–50, 57  
 Epidamnus 179  
 Epilolae, Sicily 216, 217  
 Eretria 127, 134–5, 136–7  
 Euboea 127, 176, 221  
   *see also under* Chalcidians  
*eunomia* 44, 45  
*Eupatridae* (Athenian/Attican aristocrats)  
 84, 85, 95, 96, 103, 104, 125–5  
 Euripides  
   *The Bacchae* 107–8  
   *Ion* 111  
 Eurymedon, Battle of 172

## F

family life in Sparta 65  
 farming *see* agriculture  
 fashion and clothing 91, 106  
 First Peloponnesian War  
   events of 173–6  
   overview 164–7, 170–1  
   and Pericles 164, 171, 173, 176, 238  
   Thirty Years' Peace treaty 177–8, 180,  
   186, 195, 206, 207, 238  
   timeline 162–3  
 Five Thousand 227  
 Four Hundred 226, 227, 249  
 freedom of speech 115  
 free men 21

## G

Gela, Sicily 210  
 geography of Greece 14–15  
*gerousia* 30, 47–8, 49, 51, 53  
 girls (Spartan) 64–5, 74  
 gods and goddesses 14, 22  
   *see also individual gods and goddesses,*  
   *e.g. Athena*  
 Golden Age (Age of Pericles) 112–17,  
 236  
 Gortyn code 35  
 grain  
   cultivation of 21, 23  
   importance of supply 26, 34, 91, 113,  
   177, 186, 203, 215, 217, 255

Great Harbour, Battle of 218–19  
 Great Rhethra 40, 44–52  
 Greco-Persian wars  
   Athens and Attica 124–8, 134–5,  
   136–41, 145–6, 148–9, 151–3  
   Battle of Marathon 136–41  
   Ionian revolt 31, 95, 102, 124,  
   133–6  
   overview 122–3  
   and Persian Empire 129–36  
   Second (480–479 BCE) 142–57  
 Gylippus 216–17, 219  
*gynaecium* 106

## H

Harmodius 94, 96  
*heliaia* 99, 100  
*Hellas* 14  
*Hellenes* 14, 25  
 Hellenic League 145  
 Hellespont 135, 142, 203, 223, 224,  
 227, 229, 231  
*helots*  
   Messenia 35, 202  
   revolts 43–4, 45, 57, 67, 104, 172,  
   173, 206  
   role and conditions of 22, 35, 42, 65,  
   68, 72, 76  
   and social structure of Sparta 53,  
   55–7  
 Hera, temple to 11  
 heralds 21  
 Hermes 214  
 Hermocrates 210  
*herms* scandal 214–15, 247, 248  
 Herodotus 6, 26  
*hetairai* (courtesans) 22, 108–9  
*hieromenia* 77  
 Hillsmen 84, 86, 89, 98  
*himation* (pl. *himatia*) 91  
 Hipparchus 89, 92–5  
 Hipparete 246  
*hippeis* 20, 62, 87, 102, 124  
 Hippias 89, 92–5, 136, 137  
 Histiaeus 133, 134  
 historians and writers (ancient) 6–7  
 historical interpretations 7  
 Homer 15, 17, 20, 244  
   *The Iliad* 84, 90, 124–6  
   *The Odyssey* 24, 25, 90  
*homoioi* 53, 67  
*hoplites* (*zeugitai*)  
   and agriculture 15, 17, 20, 27, 33  
   Athenian 87, 102, 124, 126–8  
   phalanx 126, 127, 128  
   revolution 126–8  
   Second Greco-Persian War 151  
   Spartan 55, 63, 95, 102, 202  
*hoplon* 63, 127  
*Hyacinthia* 76  
 Hyperbolus 208, 246  
*hypomeiones* 74, 75

- I**
- Immortals (Persian) 131, 147  
 infantries (Persian) 131  
 Ionia  
   Battle of Mycale 152  
   colonies 31  
   influence of Middle East on 16  
   Miletus 133–4, 135, 136, 156, 177–8, 224–5  
   revolt 31, 95, 102, 124, 133–6  
   Second Peloponnesian War 179–80, 195, 254  
   slavery 34  
   trade 84, 85, 132–3  
 Ionian (Decelean) War 221–33  
 iron money 69  
 iron tools 17  
 Isagoras 95–7, 102  
*isonomia* 85, 88, 127, 133  
 Isthmian Games 29  
 Italy and Second Peloponnesian War 209–20, 246–7
- K**
- kings (Spartan) 46–7, 49–50, 51  
*kleros* (pl. *kleroi*) 53, 65, 72, 73–4  
*krypteia* 57  
*kyrios* 20, 21–2, 34
- L**
- labourers 20–1, 26  
 Lacedaemon 42  
 Laconia 15, 18, 35, 42, 43, 53, 55, 63, 71  
   *see also* Sparta  
 laconic speech 60  
 Lamachus 211, 215  
*lambda* 63  
 land reform in Sparta 72–3  
 Laurion silver mines 35, 104, 110, 221  
 Leonidas I 41, 62, 77, 146–7  
 Leontini, Sicily 179, 210  
 Lesbos 199–201, 224  
*lesche* 58  
 Long Walls 113, 174, 175, 194, 232, 238  
 Lycurgus 40, 45–6, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 75, 78  
 Lydia 17, 31, 85, 129, 132–3, 178  
 Lysander 164, 229–30, 231–2, 252–9  
 Lysandrea Games 257
- M**
- Mantineia 207, 208, 246  
 manufacturing and slavery 34  
 Marathon, Battle of 136–41  
 Mardonius 135, 150, 151, 152  
 marriage 65, 74, 106  
 Massalia 30, 31, 33  
 medisers 141  
 Megara 86, 174, 176, 182–3, 196, 207  
 Megarian Decree 182, 183, 185, 198  
*melas zomas* 54  
 Melos 208  
*Meltemi* winds 148  
 Mende 205  
 Messenia 33, 35, 43–4, 55, 202  
 Messina, Sicily 210, 215  
*metics* 21, 22, 29, 34, 35, 111  
 Middle East influence on Greece 16–17, 25–6  
 Milesian School 133  
 Miletus 133–4, 135, 136, 156, 178, 224–5  
 military service and warfare  
   Athens 87, 102, 103–4, 113, 124–8  
   Sparta 20, 47, 53, 55, 62–3, 68, 95, 102, 202  
   *see also* *hoplites* (*zeugitae*)  
 Miltiades 137–9, 140, 141  
 Mindarus 227, 228, 229  
 Minoan civilisation 15  
 monarchies 41, 51  
*mothones* 56  
 Mycale, Battle of 152  
 Mycenaean civilisation 15–16, 17  
 mythology 14  
 Mytilene, Lesbos 199–201
- N**
- Naucratis, Egypt 25–6  
 Naupactus 173  
 naval capabilities  
   Athenian 103–4, 113, 124  
   Persian Empire 132  
 Naxos 134, 136, 172, 174, 210, 215  
*neodamodeis* 56  
 Nestor, Cup of 17  
 Nichoria 16  
 Nicias 194, 198, 206–8, 211–20, 246  
 Notium, Battle of 230, 249, 254
- O**
- obai* 53  
*oikist* 31  
*oikonomia* 21, 34  
*oikos* 20, 53, 106  
 oligarchies 30, 41, 51, 156, 226, 232, 248–9, 257, 258  
 olive oil 23, 24, 113  
 Ollier, Francois 51  
 Olympic Games 14, 24, 245  
 Oracle at Delphi (*Pythia*) 31, 33, 40, 45, 107, 146, 148–9, 215  
*ostraca* 103  
 ostracism 103–4, 141, 172, 173, 246
- P**
- Paches 199  
 Panathenaic Games 24, 90, 93, 107  
*Partheniai* 33  
 Parthenon 114, 240  
 Pausanias 232, 258  
 Peace of Callias 238  
 Peace of Nicias 194, 206–8, 246  
 Peisistratus 29, 84, 89–92  
 Peloponnesian League 113, 172, 174, 180, 184, 199  
 Peloponnesian wars *see* First Peloponnesian War; Second Peloponnesian War  
*Pentacosiomedimni* 87  
*peplos* 107  
 Perdiccas 181  
 Periander 29  
 Pericles  
   and Aeschylus' *The Persians* 236–7  
   Alcibiades adopted by 244  
   and Aspasia 109  
   as champion of *demoi* 104  
   death 194, 198, 243  
   dismissal of 198  
   family and childhood 236  
   and Golden Age 112–17, 236  
   oratory skills 157, 187, 239, 242  
   role and impact of 164, 171, 173, 176–8, 182–6, 194, 196–7, 237–43  
   Pericles the Younger 239  
   *perioikoi* 53, 55, 56, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71–2  
   Persia and Second Peloponnesian War 225–7, 248, 252, 253–5, 258–9  
   *see also* Greco-Persian wars  
   Persian army 130–2, 144–5  
   Phaeax 210  
   Phalanthus 33  
   Pheidon 27  
   Philippides 137  
   Philocles 231  
   Phocaea 31, 176, 230  
   Phocis 19, 176  
   Phoenicians 16, 24–5, 32, 126, 132  
   *phratry* 20  
   Phrynichus, *The Capture of Miletus* 115  
   *phyle* (pl. *phylai*) 20, 98–9  
   pincer manoeuvre 138–9  
   plague of 430 BCE 194, 197, 198, 199, 243  
   Plainsmen 84, 86, 89, 98  
   Plataea 152, 186, 195, 198, 201, 207  
   Plato 6, 26, 51, 109  
   Pleistoanax 206  
   Plemmyrium, Sicily 216–17  
   Plutarch 7, 51  
   policing by Scythian archers 35  
   *polis* (pl. *poleis*) 16, 17–26  
   *politis* 105  
   polytheism 76  
   pontoon bridges 143  
   Potidaea 180–1, 185, 197, 198, 207  
   pot sherds 24  
   pottery (ceramics) 16, 29, 33, 90, 91, 113  
   priests and priestesses 22, 76  
   *see also* Delphic Oracle (*Pythia*)  
   primary sources 7  
   private slaves 110  
   prostitution 108–9, 239

Pylos 16, 202–3, 206, 208  
pyramids 26  
*Pythia* (Oracle at Delphi) 31, 33, 40, 45,  
107, 146, 148–9, 215

## R

religious beliefs and practices 14, 15, 22,  
76–7, 90, 107–8, 146  
Rhegium, Italy 179  
*rhetors* 100  
*rhetra* 44  
Royal Persian Road 130  
ruler-cults 257

## S

*Salamina* (*trireme*) 215  
Salamis 121, 124, 149–50, 231  
Samos 156, 157, 178, 224, 226–7, 228,  
257  
Sardis, Lydia 134, 136  
satirical comedies 117  
*satrapies* 130  
*satraps* 130  
Scione 205, 207  
Scythian archers 35  
Second Peloponnesian War  
  Archidamian War 195–205, 207  
  Decelean (Ionian) War 221–33  
  origins of 179–87  
  overview 192–3  
  Peace of Nicias 194, 206–8, 246  
  and Persia 225–7, 248, 252, 253–4,  
  258–9  
  Sicilian Expedition 209–20, 246–7  
Segesta, Sicily 211, 212, 215  
Selinus, Sicily 211, 215  
serfs 22, 27  
Shoresmen 85, 86, 89, 98  
Sicilian Debate 211–14  
Sicilian Expedition 209–20, 246–7  
*sigma* 178  
silver mining 35, 104, 110, 221  
slaves 27, 33–5, 110–11  
  *see also helots*  
social changes of Archaic Age 26–35, 124  
Socrates 109, 239, 245, 250  
solar eclipses 16  
Solon  
  reforms 34, 83, 86–8, 89, 95, 99,  
  100, 104, 237  
  travels 26  
sophistry 117  
Sophocles, *Antigone* 116  
Sparta  
  agriculture 42, 53, 55, 65, 68, 72,  
  206  
  and Alcibiades 247–8  
  ancient sources on 6, 7  
  aristocrats 63, 74  
  and Athenian democracy 95–6, 102,  
  113  
  colonies 33

  and Delian League 154, 156, 172  
  early life and education in 58–62,  
  64–5, 70  
  earthquake 57  
  economy and trade 23, 67–75  
  founding of 42  
  girls and women 64–5  
  Great Rhetra and government of 40,  
  44–52  
  Greco-Persian wars 136, 137, 145–7,  
  150, 151–3  
  life in 8  
  marriage and family life 65  
  Messenian wars 43–4  
  military service and warfare 20, 47,  
  53, 55, 62–3, 68, 95, 102, 202  
  mixed constitution of 51–2  
  oligarchy 30  
  overview 40–1  
  as a *polis* 18  
  religion 76–7  
  social structure 52–7  
  *see also* First Peloponnesian  
  War; *helots*; Laconia; Second  
  Peloponnesian War  
Spartan mirage 51  
*Spartiates* 18, 30, 33, 53–4, 55, 56, 65,  
69, 72, 74, 202  
Speiraeum, Battle of 224  
Sphacteria 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 208  
state slaves 110  
Sthenelaidas 184  
*strategos* (pl. *strategoí*) 102  
Styphon 202  
*symposia* 21–2  
Syracuse, Sicily 23, 31, 202, 210,  
215–20, 221  
*syssition* (pl. *syssitia*) 22, 54, 55, 62, 72,  
74, 75

## T

Tanagra, Battle of 169, 176  
Taras 33, 43  
taxation in Sparta 69  
Thales 26  
theatre 115–17, 141  
Theatre of Dionysus 81, 115  
Thebes 18–19, 136, 172, 186, 195, 201,  
232, 258  
Themistocles 83, 103–4, 146, 148, 149  
Theopompus 48  
Thera 15, 31  
Theramenes 228, 230, 231  
Thermopylae, Battle of 41, 55, 62, 77,  
146–7  
Theseus 19  
Thesmophoria festival 107  
Thespis 90  
*thetes* 20–1, 26, 87  
Thirty Tyrants 232, 257  
Thirty Years' Peace treaty 177–8, 180,  
186, 195, 206, 207, 238  
Thrace 174, 196, 203, 204, 205

Thrasylbulus 228, 229, 230, 231  
Three Hundred 147  
Thucydides 6, 165, 186–7, 197, 203–4,  
212–14  
Timaea 248  
*timouchi* 30  
Tissaphernes 223, 225, 226, 229  
Torone 204, 205  
trade *see* economy and trade  
tribes 20, 98–9  
*triremes* 29, 104, 124, 146, 215  
tyrannies 27–9, 41, 88–92  
Tyrtaeus 40

## W

warfare *see hoplites (zeugitae)*; military  
  service and warfare  
warships (*triremes*) 29, 104, 124, 146,  
215  
wealth in Sparta 68–9, 70, 71, 73–4  
women 21–3, 64–5, 74, 84, 105–9  
'wooden wall' 148–9  
writing skills 16–17, 24  
writings of ancient historians 6–7

## X

Xanthippus 236  
Xenophon 6, 51  
Xerxes I 142–3, 150, 236  
*xiphos* 63

## Z

Zeno 236  
*zeugitae see hoplites (zeugitae)*  
Zeus 11, 76