



SPARTA



THE LACEDAEMONIAN AND THEIR ALLIES

AGENDA

Developing a comprehensive strategy to establish Lacedaemonian hegemony in the Oikoumene.

FREEZE DATE

25th Mounichion,
Year of the Archon
Glaucippus

Chairpersons' Address

"Blood For the Blood God"

-TechnoBlade.

When we, the Chairpersons of the Lacedemonian Alliance, started with the groundwork for this committee, what kept motivating us was a sense of Wonder. A sense of wonder that kept us asking, "What If?". What If we could challenge what had been systemically accepted and in trend, and twist and turn that around? What If we could dare to dream, and What If destiny was our own to carve?

There were several reasons for us, two fanboys of strategy, choosing the Spartan faction of the Joint Crisis Committee. Ranging from the practical heroism of the Spartans on the Battlefield, to the unshakeable Spartan Spirit and zeal off the field that, even in life, would inspire us to charge Headfirst into the fray of the day, the more we read about these Ancient Greek warriors, the more we learnt of their Boldness, Bravery and Brilliance.

Finding ourselves increasingly caught up with the pressure of class 12, and a host of school events, it was clear that organising X-MUN would not be easy-but, remembering the Lacedemonian Alliance, their decisive victories, and their rise to power, we were certain that we would do our very best to conceive a committee that would make its mark on the circuit.

Not only because of what it deals with, but because, we trust that such a display of planned and well-reasoned diplomatic prowess would go on to teach us, and indeed all those who would be engaged in JCC-2 of XMUN 2026-that would span three days immortalised in the most dynamic,heated and passionate of Committees.

**Wishing you all the best,
Debayan Pathak and Abhirup Sen,
Co-Chairpersons,
The Lacedaemonians and their Allies,
lacedaemonianjcc2.xmun26@gmail.com
XMUN 2026.**

Letter of Invitation

Dated : 25th Mounichion, Year of the Archon Glaucippus

To whom this summons is delivered,

By decree of Sparta and under the stern witness of the gods, your presence is commanded on the morning of 25th Mounichion, Year of the Archon Glaucippus at the appointed council chamber. This is no ceremony of courtesy, nor an idle gathering of warriors with empty hands and louder voices. The hour is sharpened by war, and Sparta does not call lightly.

You are among those judged fit to stand at this table because the city requires not comfort, but resolve; not ornament, but strength. In this matter, there is no room for hesitation, vanity, or weakness. The enemy across the water grows restless, proud, and unchecked. Athens still dares to breathe defiance where it should have learned silence. Their walls remain, their fleet still stirs the sea, and their tongue has not yet been broken. That is why you are summoned.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to stand in counsel for Sparta and secure the downfall of Athenian influence before it spreads further across Hellas. You are to deliberate upon strategy, strengthen the Peloponnesian cause, expose weakness where it hides, and ensure that Spartan authority is neither challenged nor diminished. Every word spoken within those walls must carry the discipline of a spear thrust and the weight of Spartan law.

As always, should you fail in this duty, fall in service, or betray the confidence placed upon you, Sparta shall not speak your name before the assembly. The State endures beyond the man. This summons shall be sealed upon reading. Let no unworthy eye fall upon its contents.

The burden before us concerns the security of Sparta, the endurance of her allies, and the shaping of the war that has not yet yielded its final answer. Reports will be laid before you. Oaths will be tested. Counsel will be demanded without softness and received without deceit. Each man present must come prepared to speak plainly and to think as a Spartan should: in discipline, in steel, and in the long shadow of victory.

This council is not convened for display. It is convened for decision. What is spoken there may determine the march of armies, the fate of cities, and the balance between Spartan endurance and Athenian arrogance. To attend is to bear responsibility. To fail in attendance is to place personal silence above the fate of the state, and Sparta remembers such failure.

Bring with you whatever knowledge, judgment, and fortitude you possess. Bring no theatrics. Bring no delay. Bring the hard truth, even if it cuts. The city that raised you has no use for fragile loyalty.

Let the line between Sparta and Athens be made clear in this chamber as it has been upon the field: one stands with discipline, the other with pride; one endures, the other strains; one waits with patience, the other bleeds by overreach. In such an age, only the severe survive.

Arrive as commanded. Speak as sworn. Stand as Sparta demands.

For honor. For order. For Sparta.

**Oracle of Delphi, Sybil,
The Lacedaemonians and their Allies.**

Committee Overview

*Freeze Date: 25th Mounichion, Years of the Archon
Glaucippus*

Long before the Oikoumene developed legal literature to govern its hallowed expanses, it was governed by sheer power - a power of cataclysmic magnitudes which disheveled the very firmament of the world and shaped it into a hegemony.

Amidst the myopic view of the Oikoumene in Peloponnese, hidden adders wait their chance to strike down the mighty empires and lay siege to the remnants of the shadows of past glory. Hence, amidst the mayhem of politicking chaos, the Athenian Empire must defend its paramountcy throughout the illuminated abysses of the ephemeral world of 410BCE.

The best delegate of this committee shall not be someone who merely pens down fantasy novels into communiques but someone who truly understands the magnanimity of negotiations. Resolution of conflicts in a world not yet hindered through the vicy grips of forced legal nuances must be explored through the utmost proliferation of logical diplomatic dialogue and military dominance. The best delegate of this committee shall be someone who might reach the closest realisation of transforming the worst of enemies into the best of allies through sheer dominance and lobbying.

Events

Second Persian Invasion of Greece

Towards the end of the Greco-Persian War, around 480 BCE, the King of the Medes (Persians), Xerxes I, launched a land invasion into mainland Greece in order to subjugate the mainland city-states. He sent his force across the Aegean Sea. Xerxes I wanted to solidify Persian control in the Ionian coast (modern-day Anatolian coast), which traditionally had Greek settlers.

In the Battle of Thermopylae, the Persians seized the evacuated city of Athens, which they used as a base to launch further attacks into mainland Greece and the Peloponnese.

However, towards the end of the invasion, the Persians were defeated in the Battles of Salamis and Plataea, which freed Athens and Attica from Persian control.

The Greek alliance also annihilated the Persian fleet in the Battle of Mycale and expelled all the Persian forces from mainland Greece in 479 BCE.

- Establishment of the 'Delian League'

Cause for the Formation

The decisive defeats of the Persians at Plataea and Mycale in 479 BC removed the immediate threat to the Greek mainland, but the wider Aegean was still in a state of constant change. The allied Hellenic forces launched a series of counter-offensive naval expeditions to secure Greek interests in the Ionian coast.

At first, Sparta, the recognised leader of the anti-Persian alliance, was the commander of this coalition, and sent Pausanias, of the Agiad royal family, as regent for the young king Pleistarchos.

They operated to retake Cyprus before turning north to lay siege to and capture Byzantium. This crucial victory secured control over the Bosphorus, effectively opening the Black Sea grain routes that were essential for the economic survival of mainland states like Athens.

After Byzantium, the Lacedaemonians were eager to end their involvement in the war. The Spartans greatly feared the rise of the Athenians as a challenge to their power. Additionally, the Spartans were of the view that, with the liberation of mainland Greece and the major Greek cities of Asia Minor, the war's purpose had already been achieved. Xanthippus, the Athenian commander after the battle of Mycale, opposed this completely and called for the liberation of all Ionian states, which were traditionally Athenian allies. This created an ideological rift and led to increasing tensions between the Lacedaemonians and their Greek allied forces (Athenians and newly liberated Ionians).

The catalyst for the Athenians' rise to power was the misconduct of Pausanias. Pausanias was considerably violent, and he frequently associated himself with the Medes (Persians) by dressing in a Persian style and eating Persian food. He was disliked by the Greeks, particularly by the Ionians and the newly liberated populations. These resorted to the Athenians and requested them as their kinsmen to become their leaders, and to stop any attempt at violence on the part of Pausanias.

Thus, Athens got the upper hand on the alliance of the Hellenes.

- Formation of the Treasurers for Hellas (Delian League)

By 478 BCE, the Athenians created the office of “Treasurers for Hellas”. These officers received the tribute from the members of the ‘Delian League’. The tribute was first fixed at four hundred and sixty talents. The common treasury was at Delos, and the congresses were held in the temple. The ‘Delian League’ originally consisted of independent allies who acted on the resolutions of a common congress. The primary purpose of undertakings in war against the Medes, against their own rebel allies, and against the Peloponnesian powers, which would come in contact with them on various occasions.

By 454 BCE, Athens moved the treasury of the Delian League from the Island of Delos to the Parthenon in Athens. The Athenians used the funds of the Delian League in order to fund their own navy and various other expenses. The ‘Delian League’ gradually gained the character of the Athenian Empire as it grew increasingly prone to Athenian influence and hegemony. The Delian League gradually emerged as a counter to the Peloponessian League, which was under Sparta.

- Early Expansion of the Athenians and War Against Persia

The Athenians led a series of campaigns under the Delian League. They captured Eion (on the river Strymon) from the Medes and enslaved the population. These campaigns were primarily led by Cimon, son of Militades, who was an Athenian strategos (general). He played a major role in the expansion of the Delian League.

Next, the Athenians captured and colonised Scyros, an island in the Aegean. They colonised it themselves (colonising was the practice of sending in one's own settlers to control a place).

They also laid siege to Carystus (a Greek polis rather close to Athens, in Euboea) and captured it.

- Revolt of Naxos

Just during this time, Naxos, an island close to the Hellenic mainland, attempted to leave the Athenian confederacy (the Delian League). The Athenians laid siege to Naxos and forced it to return to the Delian League.

This was the first of many revolts that the Delian League would face. Most of the allies paid tribute to the League instead of supplying ships, and as a result, they neither had a well-maintained navy nor had the combat experience needed to fight Athens's dominant navy. Athens was very severe and exacting when it came to extracting tribute, and as a result, it constantly faced revolts.

- Battle of Eurymedon (Around 469 BCE)

Around 469 BCE, the Battle of Eurymedon was fought between the Athenian alliance and the Persians in the vicinity of the mouth of the River Eurymedon.

The Persians, in response to their defeat in the Battles of Mycale and Plataea, started gathering a large army and a navy near Eurymedon.

Cimon, the Athenian strategos, launched an attack on the ships assembling there and the 200 Phoenician vessels (under the Medes) were destroyed or taken. The army assembling there was routed, and the Athenians won a victory both at land and at sea.

Following the Battle of Eurymedon, the Medes (Persians) adopted a passive role in the politics of the Hellas (Greeks).

This defeat led to the fall of Persian influence along the Ionian coast, and following this, most of the city-states along the Ionian coast (particularly in Caria) acceded to the Delian League.

- Expedition to the Egyptian Satrapy (460 - 454 BCE)

Inaros, son of Psammetichus, a Libyan king of the Libyans on the Egyptian border, caused a revolt of almost the whole of Egypt from King Artaxerxes and, placing himself at its head, invited the Athenians to his assistance.

Abandoning a Cyprian expedition upon which they happened to be engaged with two hundred ships of their own and their allies, the Athenians arrived in Egypt and sailed from the sea into the Nile, and making themselves masters of the river and two-thirds of Memphis. They then launched an attack on the remaining portion of the Nile. Within it were Persians and Medes who had taken refuge there, and Egyptians who had not joined the rebellion.

However, the King of the Persians sent Megabyzus, a Persian, to Egypt with a large army to crush the Athenians and the revolt under Inaros. Arriving by land, he defeated the Egyptians and their allies in a battle and drove the Hellenes out of Memphis.

Inaros, the leader of the Egyptian revolt, was betrayed, taken, and crucified. Meanwhile, a relieving squadron of fifty vessels had sailed from Athens and the rest of the confederacy for Egypt. Attacked by the troops and from the sea by the Phoenician navy, most of the ships were destroyed.

The Athenian expedition ultimately led to failure and was a constant drain on Athenian resources during the First Peloponnesian War.

First Peloponnesian War

- **Catalyst for the War - The Thasian Expedition and the Helot Revolt**

The Thasians defected from Athens in 465 BCE because of a dispute about markets on the opposite coast of Thrace and a few mines there.

Sailing with a fleet to Thasos, the Athenians defeated them at sea and landed on the island. About the same time, they sent ten thousand settlers of their own citizens and the allies to settle at the place called Ennea Hodoi or Nine Ways, now Amphipolis. They succeeded in gaining possession of Ennea Hodoi from the Edonians, but on advancing into the interior of Thrace were cut off in Drabescus, a town of the Edonians, by the assembled Thracians, who regarded the settlement of the place Ennea Hodoi as an act of hostility. The Thasians, after being defeated, appealed to the Lacedaemonians for help. They requested the Lacedaemonians (Spartans) to invade Attica (the farmland and breadbasket of Athens) in order to draw Athenian forces away from Thasos.

Without informing the Athenians, the Lacedaemonians secretly promised the Thasians that they would invade Attica.

However, the Lacedaemonians failed to do so because of a major earthquake and a revolt of their slave population (the Helots), which occurred in rapid succession in 464 BCE. By the third year of the siege of Thasos (462 BCE), the Thasians surrendered and tore down their walls. They agreed to pay tribute to the Athenians and were subjugated.

- **Helot Revolt and Start of Conflict**

Several Spartan slaves, Helots, along with Messenians, had revolted from the control of their masters and had captured the region of Ithome in 464 BCE. They had taken advantage of the devastating earthquake to fortify Ithome. They were using it as a stronghold against Sparta.

The Lacedaemonians appealed to the Athenians for help, who were still technically their allies.

However, when help arrived from Athens, the Lacedaemonians, apprehensive of the Athenians, refused to let them help. They feared that the Athenians would use the political instability of the Helot revolt to promote political change and support the rebels. This resulted in the first open quarrel between the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians. The Athenians were deeply offended by the Spartans' lack of trust in them.

The Athenians, once they returned, broke off the alliance which had been made against the Medes and allied themselves with Sparta's enemy Argos. They also took the same oath and allied themselves with the Thessalians.

Alliance with Megara

Meanwhile, around 455 BCE, the rebels in Ithome, unable to resist for 10 long years, surrendered to Lacedaemon; the conditions being that they should depart from Peloponnese under safely without harm, and should never set foot in it again: anyone who might hereafter be found there was to be the slave of his captor.

So they went forth and were received by the Athenians, who were also against the Lacedaemonians. The Athenians relocated the Messenians to Naupactus. At this time, Megara joined the Athenian confederacy because of a territorial dispute it had with Athens.

The Athenians occupied Megara and Pegae, and built walls from Megara to Nisaea (the Megarian port), in which they placed an Athenian garrison.

As a result of this, the Corinthians deeply hated the Athenians.

- Conflicts with Corinth and Epidauras

In 459 BCE, the Athenians landed at Haliae.

Corinthian forces, reinforced by Epidaurus, reacted quickly to the Athenian naval landing and met them at a moment of maximum vulnerability. Instead of allowing the Athenians to exploit their naval strength, the Corinthians forced a land engagement, likely catching them as they were still disembarking or forming ranks, and then deployed their disciplined hoplite phalanx on firm ground, where

cohesion and timing were crucial, delivering a sharp, well-coordinated attack that the partially organised Athenians could not withstand, ultimately driving them back to their ship. The Corinthians won a decisive victory.

After the setback at Haliae, the Athenians soon encountered the Peloponnesian fleet off Cecruphalia (a small island in the Saronic Gulf), where they got the upper hand through their superior naval skill.

The fleet was able to out-sail and disorder the less experienced Peloponnesian contingents, largely composed of ships from Corinth and its allies, who, despite Corinth's respectable naval tradition, could not match the cohesion and tactical precision of the Athenians in open-water combat. As a result, the Athenians secured a clear victory, reasserting their maritime dominance in the early phase of the Peloponnesian War and offsetting their earlier defeat on land.

- Conflict with Aegina

Subsequently, war broke out between Aegina and Athens around 459 BCE, and there was a great battle at sea off Aegina between the Athenians and Aeginetans, each being backed by their allies; in which victory was with the Athenians, who took seventy of the enemy's ships, and landed in the country and started a siege under the command of Leocrates, son of Stroebeus.

Upon this, the Peloponnesians, wanting to aid the Aeginetans, threw into Aegina a force of three hundred heavy infantry. Meanwhile, the Corinthians and their allies occupied the heights of Geraneia and marched down into the Megarid, in the belief that, with a large force absent in Aegina and Egypt, Athens would be unable to help the Megarians without raising the siege of Aegina.

But the Athenians, instead of moving the army of Aegina, raised a force of the old and young men that had been left in the city, and marched into the Megarid under the command of Myronides.

The Athenians had an advantage, and on the departure of the Corinthians set up a trophy. The Corinthians made their preparations, and about twelve days after came and set up their trophy as victors. Sailing out from Megara, the Athenians cut off the party that was employed in erecting the trophy and engaged and defeated the rest. In the retreat of the vanquished army, a considerable division, pressed by the pursuers and mistaking the road, dashed into a field on some private property, with a deep trench all round it, and no way out. Being acquainted with the place, the Athenians covered their front with heavy infantry and, placing the light troops round in a circle, stoned all who had gone in. Corinth here suffered a severe blow. The bulk of her army continued its retreat home.

The Boeotian Battles

- **The Battle of Tanagra**

Around 457 BCE, the Phocians made an expedition against Doris, the old home of the Lacedaemonians, containing the towns of Boeum, Kitinium, and Erineum.

They had taken one of these towns when the Lacedaemonians under Nicomedes, son of Cleombrotus, commanding for King Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias, who was still a minor, came to the aid of the Dorians with fifteen hundred heavy infantry of their own, and ten thousand of their allies.

After compelling the Phocians to restore the town on conditions, they began their retreat.

The Lacedaemonian resolved to remain in Boeotia and to consider which would be the safest line of march. They also had another reason for this resolution. Secret encouragement had been given them by a party in Athens, who hoped to put an end to the reign of democracy and the building of the Long Walls.

Meanwhile, the Athenians marched against them with a huge army and a thousand Argives and the respective contingents of the rest of their allies. Altogether, they were fourteen thousand strong.

Some cavalry also joined the Athenians from their Thessalian allies, but these went over to the Lacedaemonians during the battle.

The battle was fought at Tanagra in Boeotia. After heavy losses on both sides, victory was declared for the Lacedaemonians and their allies.

- Battle of Oenophyta

The Athenians marched into Boeotia under the command of Myronides, defeated the Boeotians in battle at Oenophyta, and became masters of Boeotia and Phocis. They dismantled the walls of the Tanagraeans, took a hundred of the richest men of the Opuntian Locrians as hostages, and finished their own long walls. This was followed by the surrender of the Aeginetans to Athens on conditions; they pulled down their walls, gave up their ships, and agreed to pay tribute in future. The Athenians sailed round Peloponnese under Tolmides, son of Tolmaeus, burnt the arsenal of Lacedaemon, took Chalcis, a town of the Corinthians, and in a descent upon Sicyon defeated the Sicyonians in battle.

- Expedition to Thessaly

Around the time when the war was being fought in Boeotia, Orestes, son of Echeocratidas, the Thessalian king, being an exile from Thessaly, persuaded the Athenians to restore him. The Athenians marched to Pharsalus in Thessaly. They became masters of the country, though only in the immediate vicinity of the camp; beyond which they could not go for fear of the Thessalian cavalry. But they failed to take the city or to attain any of the other objects of their expedition, and returned home with Orestes without having achieved their main goals.

The Evacuation of Boeotia

Shortly after the failure of the Thessalian Expedition, the Athenians marched against Orchomenus, Chaeronea, and some other places in Boeotia, which were in the hands of the Boeotian exiles.

The forces consisted of a thousand Athenian heavy infantry and the allied contingents, under the command of Tolmides, son of Tolmaeus.

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The forces consisted of a thousand Athenian heavy infantry and the allied contingents, under the command of Tolmides, son of Tolmaeus. They took Chaeronea and, upon enslaving the population, started their return.

On their road, they were attacked at Coronea by the Boeotian exiles from Orchomenus, with some Locrians and Euboean exiles. The Athenians evacuated all Boeotia by a treaty providing for the recovery of the men. The exiled Boeotians returned and regained their independence, free from Athenian control.

- Revolts of Euboea and Megara

Following the evacuation of Boeotia, Euboea declared its independence and rebelled against the Athenians. The famous and rising Athenian general, Pericles, had already crossed over to the island of Euboea when the Athenians discovered that Megara had defected to the Spartans and had rejoined them as allies

The Athenian garrison had been cut off by the Megarians, with the exception of a few who had taken refuge in Nisaea. The Megarians had introduced the Corinthians, Sicyonians, and Epidaurians into the town before they had revolted. Pericles brought his army back from Euboea to defend Athens.

After this, the Peloponnesians marched into Attica, under King Pleistoanax, as far as Eleusis and Thrius. They ravaged the country up to a certain point and returned home.

- The Thirty Years Peace

In 445 BCE, the Athenians made a truce with the Lacedaemonians and their allies for thirty years, giving up the posts which they occupied in the Peloponnese.

The Athenians had lost most of their gains in central Greece (Boeotia and Megara), and the Spartans had invaded and almost reached the city of Athens itself. Considering its desperate situation, the Athenians agreed to a truce with the Lacedaemonians.

According to the Peace, Athens was forced to give up all possessions in the Peloponnese, which included the Megarian ports of Nisaea and Pagae with Troezen and Achaea in Argolis, but the Spartans agreed to allow the Athenians to keep Naupactus.

It also ruled out armed conflict between Sparta and Athens. Neutral poleis could join either side, Sparta or Athens, which implies that there was a formalised list of allies for each side. Athens and Sparta would keep all other territories pending arbitration.

It also recognised both the Peloponnesian League under Sparta and the Delian League under Athens as legitimate, a boost for Athens and its newly-formed empire in the Aegean.

The Thirty Years' Peace (which had been proposed for a time period of thirty years) between the Athenians and the Spartans lasted for precisely 14 years.

The Second Peloponnesian War

Timeline

- Causes for Failure of Thirty Years' Peace (435–431 BC)
 - 435 BC: Corcyra–Corinth conflict over Epidamnus begins.
 - 435/434 BC: Corcyraeans defeat Corinthians at Leukimme.
 - 434 BC: Athens allies with Corcyra; Battle of Sybota (Athens aids Corcyra).
 - 433/432 BC: Athens renews alliances with Rhegium and Leontini (Sicily).
 - 432 BC: Revolt of Potidaea (Corinthian colony in the Delian League); Athens issues Megarian Decree (economic sanctions); 87th Olympic Games; Meton improves the Athenian calendar; Peloponnesian League conference in Sparta votes for war.
 - 432/431 BC: Siege of Potidaea begins.
- Archidamian War (431–421 BCE)
 - 431 BCE: Theban attack on Plataea (March); formal outbreak of war; first Spartan invasion of Attica (under Archidamus II); continued siege of Potidaea; Euripides' *Medea* performed; Pericles' Funeral Oration (winter).
 - 430 BCE: Second Spartan invasion of Attica; plague erupts in Athens (kills ~1/3 of population, including many soldiers); Pericles fails at Epidaurus; Pericles deposed and fined (later re-elected); Spartan embassy to Persia fails.
 - 429 BCE: Fall of Potidaea; siege of Plataea begins; plague continues; Athenian victories under Phormio in the Corinthian Gulf (Naupactus); death of Pericles; Sitalces of Thrace invades Macedonia.
 - 428 BCE: Third Spartan invasion of Attica; revolt of Mytilene (Lesbos); Euripides' *Hippolytus*; death of Anaxagoras; birth of Plato.

- 427 BCE: Fourth Spartan invasion; fall of Mytilene (harsh Athenian debate; only ringleaders executed); fall of Plataea (survivors executed); civil war/stasis in Corcyra (pro-Athenian democrats massacre oligarchs); first Athenian expedition to Sicily; death of Archidamus II (Agis II too young for command).
- 426 BCE: Demosthenes campaigns in western Greece; Cleon triples tribute from Delian League allies; Athenians purify Delos; Battle of Olpae.
- 425 BCE: Fifth Spartan invasion of Attica; Demosthenes fortifies Pylos; Athenians under Cleon capture 292 Spartan hoplites at Sphacteria (major blow to Spartan prestige); destruction of Corcyraean oligarchs.
- 424 BCE: Congress at Gela (Sicilian peace); Athenian failures at Megara and heavy defeat by Thebans at Delium; Brasidas captures Amphipolis (Thrace); historian Thucydides exiled; Brasidas takes Torone.
- 423 BCE: One-year armistice; Brasidas fails at Potidaea.
- 422 BCE: Armistice ends; Cleon recovers Torone but is killed (along with Brasidas) at Amphipolis.
- 421 BCE: Peace of Nicias (50-year treaty); Aristophanes' *Peace* performed. The Athenians capture Scione.
- Peace of Nicias / Argive War / Unstable Peace (421–415 BCE)
- 420 BCE: Alliance of Argos, Elis, and Athens; Alcibiades wins chariot prizes at 9th Olympics; cult of Asclepius introduced in Athens. The alliance, however, was defeated in the battle of Mantinea.
- 419 BCE: War between Argos and Epidaurus; Spartan King Agis II hesitates to intervene.
- 418 BCE: Spartans under Agis II decisively defeat the Argive–Athenian coalition at Mantinea (restores Spartan Peloponnesian dominance).

- 417 BCE: Oligarchic coup in Argos (short-lived); ostracism of Hyperbolus (Athenian politician).
- 416 BCE: Athens attacks neutral Melos (massacre of men, enslavement of women/children); 91st Olympic Games.
- Sicilian Expedition (415–413 BCE)
- 415 BCE: Mutilation of the Herms (religious scandal in Athens); Alcibiades accused and recalled (flees to Sparta); massive Athenian fleet (~100 triremes, 5,000+ troops) sails for Sicily under Nicias, Alcibiades (initially), and Lamachus; Euripides' Trojan Women.
- 414 BCE: Siege of Syracuse begins; Spartan general Gylippus arrives with reinforcements; Aristophanes' Birds.
- 413 BCE: Demosthenes arrives with reinforcements; naval battles in Syracuse harbour; destruction of the Athenian force (Nicias and Demosthenes executed); Spartan King Agis II fortifies Decelea (north of Athens), beginning the Decelean War phase; Mycalessus sacked.
- Decelean / Ionian War (413-410 BCE (present date)).
- 412 BCE: Widespread revolts of Athenian allies in Ionia; Alcibiades advises Spartans; Athenians besiege Chios; first Spartan–Persian treaty (Tissaphernes).
- 411 BCE: Second and third Spartan–Persian treaties; oligarchic coup in Athens (the Four Hundred); counter-coup restores moderate democracy (the Five Thousand); Athenian naval victories at Cynossema and Abydos; end of Thucydides' history.
- 410 BCE: Athenian victory at Cyzicus (Alcibiades returns to command); Spartan peace offer refused; full democracy restored in Athens.

Causes

- Dispute Over Epidamnus (435 BCE)

The city of Epidamnus stands on the right of the entrance of the Ionic Gulf. Its vicinity is inhabited by the Taulantians, an Illyrian people. Epidamnus is a colony from Corcyra, which itself is a colony of Corinth.

In Epidamnus, in 435 BCE, the democratic faction of the people expelled the oligarchs. The exiled oligarchic party joined the barbarians and proceeded to plunder those in the city by sea and land.

The democrats, finding themselves in a difficult situation, appealed to their mother colony, Corcyra, for help. However, the Corcyraeans denied the democratic petitioners' help. So they went to Delphi and inquired whether they should take help from Corinth, which was the mother city of Corcyra itself.

Then, the Epidamnians (democrats) went to Corinth and delivered over the colony in obedience to the commands of the oracle. The Corinthians consented to help the Epidamnians. Believing the colony to belong as much to themselves as to the Corcyraeans, they felt it to be their duty to undertake their protection. Besides, they hated the Corcyraeans for their contempt.

A force of Ambraciots, Leucadians, and Corinthians was dispatched. They marched by land to Apollonia, a Corinthian colony, the route by sea being avoided from fear of Corcyraean interruption. Epidamnus surrendered to the Corinthian force. Corcyraeans sailed with 25 ships and went to Epidamnus and confronted them, ordering them to return the Epidamnian aristocrats and to relieve Corinthian garrisons.

When the Epidamnians refused to accept the Corcyraeans, the Corcyraeans commenced operations against them with a fleet of forty sail. They took with them the exiles, with a view to their restoration, and also secured the services of the Illyrians.

Forty Corcyraean ships (with another forty besieging Epidamnus) clashed against 75 Corinthian ships in the Battle of Leukimme. The Corcyraeans won a decisive victory in this battle.

At this point, the three major naval powers in the Peloponnesian War were Athens, Corcyra and Corinth.

- Defection of Corcyra and Battle of Sybota (433 BCE)

Corcyra and Corinth both sent embassies to Athens. Corcyra essentially wanted to join the Athenian alliance, as they themselves had the second strongest navy. Corinth warned the Athenians not to take Corcyra into their alliance.

With these views, Athens **received Corcyra** into alliance and, on the departure of the Corinthians not long afterwards, sent ten ships to their assistance.

The alliance was purely defensive, and hence it did not violate the terms of the Thirty Years' Peace.

Corinthians completed their preparations and sailed for Corcyra with a hundred and fifty ships. Of these, Elis furnished ten, Megara twelve, Leucas ten, Ambracia twenty-seven, Anactorium one, and Corinth itself provided ninety ships.

The next day, the thirty Athenian vessels put out to sea, accompanied by all the Corcyraean ships that were seaworthy, and sailed to the harbour at Sybota, where the Corinthians lay, to see if they would engage.

In the aftermath of the Battle of Sybota, the Corinthians retreated upon seeing Athenian reinforcements arrive. Both sides put up trophies (symbols of their victory in a battle) and left.

The alliance with Corcyra brought Athens into an indirect conflict with the Corinthians, who were staunch members of the Peloponnesian League. Although it did not result in the outbreak of war, it led to escalated tensions and ideological differences between the Peloponnesian League and the Athenians.

- Dispute Over Potidaea (432 BCE)

The Potidaeans, who inhabit the isthmus of Pallene, were a Corinthian colony, but tributary allies of Athens and the Delian League. They were ordered by the Athenians to raze the wall looking towards Pallene, to give hostages, to dismiss the Corinthian magistrates, and in future not to receive the Corinthians.

This was done in response to the fresh hostilities with the Corinthians (after the Defection of Corcyra). Also, the Athenians had made enemies with the Macedonian King, Perdiccas II. The Athenians feared that the Corinthians, along with the Macedonians, would encourage a revolt in Potidaea. Potidaea was an important settlement along the Thracian coast, and a revolt in Potidaea might encourage other states along the Thracian coast to revolt as well.

The Athenians sourced a lot of their timber (needed for shipbuilding) and silver from that region.

Upon receiving these demands, the Potidaeans sent envoys to Athens to persuade them to take no new steps in their matters, and they also went to the Corinthians to secure support in case of an Athenian attack.

The Potidaeans failed to dissuade the Athenians from intervening, but the Lacedaemonians promised them support. As a result, the Potidaeans revolted and joined the independent league of the Chalcidians and the Boettians.

Perdiccas II, king of the Macedonians, convinced the Chalcidians to settle inland at Olynthus and to fortify that city.

The Corinthians sent volunteers from Corinth, and mercenaries from the rest of Peloponnese, which numbered sixteen hundred heavy infantry in all, and four hundred light troops.

The Athenians also immediately received the news of the revolt of the cities. On being informed that Aristeus and his reinforcements were on their way, they sent two thousand heavy infantry of their own citizens and forty ships against the places in revolt, under the command of Callias, son of Calliades, and four colleagues.

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Aristeus planned to launch an attack on the Athenians from two sides, using Perdiccas's Macedonian cavalry - once the Athenians would attack Potidaea, they would use reinforcements in the fortified Olynthus to attack them from behind.

However, the Athenians deployed the cavalry support they had received from the Macedonian Phillip (who opposed Perdiccas II), in order to deal with troops stationed at Olynthus.

On victory speedily declaring for the Athenians and the signals being taken down, the Potidaeans retired back within the wall, and the Macedonians returned to the Athenians.

Thus, there were no cavalry present on either side. After the battle, the Athenians set up a trophy and gave back their dead to the Potidæans under truce. The Potidæans and their allies had close upon three hundred killed; the Athenians a hundred and fifty of their own citizens, and Callias, their general.

The Athenians raised walls along the Isthmus, effectively blockading the entire city of Potidaea. Additionally, the Athenians sent 1600 heavy infantry under Phormio, another rising Athenian strategos, to Potidaea. The city of Potidaea was completely cut off by both land and sea, and the Athenians started starving them.

By the winter of 429 BCE, the Potidæans found themselves unable to hold out against their besiegers. The frequent Lacedaemonian attacks on Attica were unable to shift the pressure from the Athenian offence to defence.

The Potidæans agreed to surrender to the Athenian generals at that time (Xenophon, Hestiodorus and Phanomachus). The terms of the surrender were considerable lenient because the Athenians did not want to fund the costly siege any longer.

The Potidæans were allowed to evacuate the town safely along with a few possessions. They were allowed to settle wherever they wanted in the Chalcidice. The Athenians gained complete control over the city of Potidaea, which they settled and colonised with their own people.

- Lacedaemonian Conflict with Plataea and Outbreak of Archidamian War (431 BCE)

The Thirty Years' Peace between the Athenians and the Spartans had lasted for precisely 14 years. The peace had already been threatened by the Epidamnian Dispute, Megarian Decree and Dispute over Potidaea, but the final nail in the coffin was the attack on Plataea.

Plataea, in central Greece, was allied with Athens. In 431 BCE, Theban forces a little over three hundred strong, under the command of Boeotarchs (Pythangelus, son of Phyleides, and Diemporus, son of Onetorides), made an armed entry into Plataea, a town of Boeotia, in alliance with Athens.

The Thebans were the representatives of the Boeotian League, and they invited the Plataeans to rejoin the Boeotian League, which was under them (Thebans).

During the negotiations, the Plataeans discovered the numbers of the Thebans and decided that they could easily attack and overpower them. The Plataeans citizens overpowered and killed most of the Theban heralds.

The Plataeans sent a messenger to Athens, gave back the dead to the Thebans under a truce, and started fortifying their city.

The Athenians, upon learning about the affair, instantly seized all the Boeotians in Attica and sent a herald to the Plataeans to forbid them from harming their prisoners. However, by the time the herald was sent out, the Plataeans had already killed the prisoners. As a result of this, the Thirty Years' Truce was broken by an overt act of war.

Athens at once prepared for war, as did also Lacedaemon and its allies. They resolved to send embassies to the King of the Persians and to such other of the barbarian powers as either party could look to for assistance, and tried to ally themselves with the independent states at home.

Lacedaemon, in addition to the existing marine, gave orders to the states that had allied with the Peloponnesian League in Italy and Sicily to build vessels up to a grand total of five hundred, the quota of each city being determined by its size, and also to provide a specified sum of money. Till these were ready, they were to remain neutral and to admit Athenian ships into their harbours for trade.

Athens reviewed the existing confederacy and sent embassies to Corcyra, Cephallenia, Acarnania, and Zacynthus.

The Lacedaemonians laid siege to Plataea in 429 BCE by surrounding Plataea with a mound and using various siege techniques in order to attack the city. The Peloponnesians left a portion of their forces on the spot, dismissing the rest, and built a wall surrounding the town.

They left men enough to man half the wall, the rest being manned by the Boeotians. Drawing off their army, they dispersed to their several cities. The Plataeans, in response, dispatched a herald reminding the Spartans of the glorious deeds the Plataeans performed during the Greco-Persian War and of the oath the Spartans swore to protect them and keep them independent and reminding the Spartans that in 479 BC, Pausanias, the Spartan general, had decreed that Plataea was on holy ground and it should never be attacked.

However, when the Plataeans refused to leave the Athenian confederacy, the Peloponnesians carried out the siege. In 427 BCE, the remaining 200 citizens of Plataea (the rest had been extracted by Athens) were held on trial by the Lacedaemonians and they were killed. The Lacedaemonians also razed and destroyed the entire town of Plataea.

- Archidamnian Phase (431 - 421 BCE)

The Archidamnian War (431 BCE - 421 BCE) is the phase of the Second Peloponnesian War that directly preceded the the Peace of Nicias (420 BCE). It is named after the Lacedaemonian King Archidamnus, who primarily carried out the war against Athens.

The major battles/offensives carried out during the Archidamnian War were:

- First Spartan invasion of Attica (431 BCE)

King Archidamus first sent off Melesippus, a Spartan, to Athens, in case Athens would be more inclined to submit on seeing the Peloponnesians actually on the march.

But the Athenians did not admit the herald into the city or to their assembly, as Pericles (the popular statesman and strategos) had already supported and passed a motion against admitting Lacedaemonian heralds or embassies.

Meanwhile, the Lacedaemonians under King Archidamnus kept advancing. They stopped briefly at Oenoe in order to besiege the town, but they failed to take Oenoe. When Archidamnus heard that the Athenians had not responded to their herald, he immediately decided to launch an attack into Attica. The Attica served as a very important breadbasket for Athens, and most of its crops were grown in Attica. The Lacedaemonians hoped to force the Athenians to surrender by invading Attica.

Encamping in Eleusis and the Thriasian plain, they began ravaging Attica. They then advanced, keeping Mount Aegaleus on their right, through Cropia, until they reached Acharnae, the largest of the Athenian demes or townships.

The Athenians hoped that the Lacedaemonians would not advance beyond Eleusis and Thrysia as Pleistonoax himself had not advanced beyond Thryia fourteen years ago (before the Thirty Years' Peace).

The Peloponnesians, as the Athenians did not come out to engage them, broke up from Acharnae and ravaged some of the demes between Mount Parnes and Brilessus.

This armament weighed anchor and started on its cruise, and the Peloponnesians, after remaining in Attica as long as their provisions lasted, retired through Boeotia by a different road to that by which they had entered. As they passed Oropus, they ravaged the territory of Graea, which is held by the Oropians from Athens, and reaching Peloponnese, broke up to their respective cities.

Following this, the Lacedaemonians regularly pillaged and ravaged Attica every year, in order to weaken Athenian forces from 431 BCE to 421 BCE.

- The Plague (430 BCE)

The Plague started in the parts of Ethiopia above Egypt, and then reached into Egypt, Libya and most of the Persian Empire. Suddenly falling upon Athens, it first spread to the population in Piraeus and afterwards appeared in the upper city of Athens itself, when the deaths became much more frequent.

The Plague served as a severe strain on Athenian manpower as it disproportionately affected the Athenians (who had a naval empire) more than the Lacdaemonians. The plague killed around one-third of the entire population in Athens and in 429 BCE, it killed Pericles.

Due to the reduced manpower, the Athenian conquests were slowed down and hindered. The plague even reached the Athenian forces which were besieging Potidaea, where they lost a lot of their troops and had to agree to lenient terms of Potidaean surrender.

- Alliance with Thrace and Arcanania (430 BCE)

During the same summer Nymphodorus, son of Pythes, an Abderite, whose sister Sitalces (of the Odrysian Empire) had married, was made their proxenus by the Athenians and sent to Athens. They had considered him their enemy; but he had great influence with Sitalces, and they wished the prince of the Odrysians to become their ally.

Nymphodorus concluded the alliance with Sitalces and made his son Sadocus an Athenian citizen, and promised to finish the war in Thrace by persuading Sitalces to send the Athenians a force of Thracian horse and targeteers.

He also reconciled them with Perdiccas, and induced them to restore Therme to him upon which Perdiccas at once joined the Athenians and Phormio in an expedition against the Chalcidians. Thus Sitalces, son of Teres, King of the Thracians, and Perdiccas, son of Alexander and the King of the Macedonians, became allies of Athens.

The Athenians also managed to bring Cellaphenia and Acarnania into their control and influence. The Corinthians attempted to free Acarnania

- Naval Victories Under Phormio (429 BCE)

Phormio was an Athenian general (strategos) in charge of a naval blockade at Rhium and Naupactus, which were strategic chokepoints for Corinthian trade in the Gulf of Corinth

The Athenians were using Cellaphenia, Zakynthos as well as Naupactus (which had been settled with the Helots) as bases for projecting Athenian power and dominance into western Greece.

In response to this, Ambraciots and Chaonians persuaded the Peloponnesian alliance to launch an attack into Acarnania. They were hoping that if a combined movement were made by land and sea, the coast Acarnanians would be unable to march, and the conquest of Zacynthus and Cephallenia would follow the fall of Acarnania.

Thus, the Athenians would not be able to utilise their naval supremacy in Western Greece. They also hoped that they would be able to take Naupactus and secure Corinthian trade routes.

The Lacedaemonians accordingly at once sent off a few vessels with Cnemus, who was still high admiral, and the heavy infantry on board. Sacking the open village of Limnaea, they advanced to Stratus, the Acarnanian capital.

Meanwhile, the naval force of the Spartans, which was supposed to keep the coastal Acarnians from joining the fight in the interior, was compelled to fight Phormio and about 20 naval vessels near Rhium (in a narrow strait).

Phormio engaged with 47 vessels (mainly Corinthian) by slowly encircling them and using natural condition (wind from the gulf) to his advantage as the Spartan small crafts collided with each other and went afoul.

As a result, the Spartan expedition to Acarnania was a disaster.

The Peloponnesians sent another expedition which managed to destroy most of the Athenian fleet in the narrow strait of Rhium besides 11 ships. However, due to the carelessness of the force after the victory, they were caught off guard and chased away, six ships being destroyed. One of the three Spartan generals, Timocrates, killed himself.

- Mytilenean Revolt (428 - 427 BCE)

In 428 BCE, all of Lesbos, except for the city of Methymna, revolted from the Athenians. The Methymnians, and some Athenian loyalists in Mytilene itself, who were proxeni (representatives of a city in Athens) of Athens, informed the Athenians that the Mitylenians were forcibly uniting the island under their sovereignty.

They also informed the Athenians that the Mytileneans were collaborating with the Boeotians and the Peloponnesians. At this time, Athens was suffering from the plague and the Athenians knew that they could not afford to lose Lesbos, one of their greatest strongholds, as it would spark a revolt throughout the Aegean.

When an embassy which the Athenians sent failed to persuade the Mytileneans to give up the union, they became alarmed, and resolved to strike the first blow.

After the failed negotiations, hostilities were at once begun by the Mytileneans and the rest of Lesbos, with the exception of the Methymnians, who came to the aid of the Athenians with the Imbrians and Lemnians and some few of the other allies. The Mytileneans made a sortie with all their forces against the Athenian camp.

A battle ensued, in which the Mytileneans gained a slight advantage, but retired because they were waiting for Peloponnesian aid.

At this time Athens possessed the largest fleet it ever had 250 vessels with 100 guarding Attica and Euboea and the rest 150 cruising around the Peloponnesse.

In the summer of 427 BCE, the Peloponnesians sent off the forty-two ships for Mitylene, under Alcidas, their high admiral, and themselves and their allies invaded Attica, their object being to distract the Athenians by a double movement, and thus to make it less easy for them to act against the fleet sailing to Mitylene. The commander in this invasion was Cleomenes, in the place of King Pausanias, son of Pleistoanax, his nephew, who was still a minor.

Before the Peloponnesian fleet could arrive, the Mylitateans surrendered to the Athenians and admitted them into their town. The Peloponnesian fleet fled in retreat upon realising that Miletus had fallen to the Athenians.

Paches, the Athenian general, destroyed Pyrrha and Eresus and upon finding the Lacedaemonian, Salaethus, hiding in the town, sent him off to Athens, along with some Mytileneans who had started the revolt.

The Athenians also demolished the walls of the Mytileneans, and took possession of their ships. Afterwards tribute was not imposed upon the Lesbians (people of Lesbos).

After a harsh debate on whether to punish the entire population or just execute the ringleaders of the revolt, the Athenians decided to just execute the ringleaders of the revolt.

- First Sicilian Intervention

The primary Athenian allies in Sicily were the cities of Rhegium and Leontini.

The Athenians had sent several ships to the under the command of Laches and Charoeades to Sicily in order to counter the expanding influence of Syracuse, which was a Lacedaemonian ally.

The Athenians in Sicily and the Rhegians, with thirty ships, made an expedition against the islands of Aeolus. These islands lie off the coast of the Sicels and Messinese, and were allies of the Syracusans. The Athenians laid waste their land, and as the inhabitants did not submit, sailed back to Rhegium.

The death of the Athenian general Charoeades, killed by the Syracusans in battle, left Laches in the sole command of the fleet.

Laches directed the ships against the allies against Mylae, which was a place belonging to the Messinese. Two Messinese battalions in garrison at Mylae laid an ambush for the party landing from the ships, but were routed with great slaughter by the Athenians and their allies.

The Athenians defeated the Messinese and captured Mylae.

The following winter, the Athenians in Sicily with their Hellenic allies marched against the Sicel town Inessa, the acropolis of which was held by the Syracusans, and after attacking it without being able to take it, retired. In the retreat, the allies retreating after the Athenians were attacked by the Syracusans from the fort, and a large part of their army routed with great slaughter.

In 425 BCE, ten Syracusan and ten Locrian vessels sailed to Messina, in Sicily. When the ships arrived, Messina revolted from the Athenians. The Locrians also invaded the Athenian ally, Rhegium, and incapacitated the city. This prevented the Rhegians from intervening in Messina.

Immediately after this, the Sicilians reinforced Messina and carried on operations from there in order to attack Rhegium. The Locrians had a deep enmity towards them and wanted to defeat them at all costs.

The Syracusans also wished to try attacking via sea, seeing that the Athenians had only a few ships actually at Rhegium, and hearing that the main fleet destined to join them was engaged in blockading the island of Pylos.

The Syracusans and their allies fought with the Athenians in the straits between Messina and Syracuse. The Syracusans put out with rather more than thirty ships against sixteen Athenian and eight Rhegian vessels. Defeated by the Athenians, they hastily set off and retreated.

The Athenians sailed to Camarina while the Messinese attacked Naxos (in Sicily). However, the people of Naxos believing that the Athenians would come to their support, attacked and routed the Messinese, killing a thousand of them. The Messinese were forced to retreat.

Simultaneously, the Leontines and their allies, with the Athenians, turned their arms against the now weakened Messina, and attacked, the Athenians with their ships on the side of the harbour, and the land forces on that of the town.

The Messinese, however, coordinated with Demoteles and some Locrians who had been left to garrison the city. The Messinese suddenly attacked and routed most of the Leontine army, killing a great number.

Upon seeing the Leontine retreat, the Athenians landed from their ships, and falling on the Messinese in disorder chased them back into the town. The Athenians set up a trophy and retired to Rhegium.

In 424 BCE, the Sicilians concluded their war in an armistice at the Peace of Gela.

All the Sicilians came to an understanding among themselves to end the war, each keeping what they had (the Camarinaeans took Morgantina at a price fixed to be paid to the Syracusans) and the allies of the Athenians called the officers in command, and told them that they were going to make peace and that they would be included in the treaty.

The generals assenting, the peace was concluded, and the Athenian fleet afterwards sailed away from Sicily.

Upon the arrival of the generals at Athens, the Athenians banished Pythodorus and Sophocles, and fined Eurymedon for allegedly having taken bribes to depart when they might have subdued Sicily.

- Campaigns in Western Greece (426 BCE).

Demosthenes had been persuaded by the Messenians to attack the Aetolians, as he already had a large army assembled.

The Aetolian nation, although numerous and warlike, yet dwelt in unwallled villages scattered far apart, and had nothing but light armour, and according to the Messenians, the Athenians could easily defeat them.

Demosthenes agreed to this plan not just because the Messenians were his allies but also because the fall of the Aetolians would allow him to launch an expedition against the Boeotians using the route of by the route of Ozolian Locris to Kytinium in Doris.

He accordingly weighed from Leucas, against the wish of the Acarnanians, and with his whole armament sailed along the coast. Demosthenes led the forces consisting of the Cephallenians, the Messenians, and Zacynthians, and three hundred Athenian marines from his own ships (the fifteen Corcyraean vessels having departed), started on his expedition against the Aetolians.

The first day he took Potidania, the next Krokyle, and the third Tichium, where he halted and sent back the booty to Eupalium in Locris.

Meanwhile, the Aetolians had been aware of his planned invasion, and as soon as the army invaded their country came up in great force with all their tribes.

The Messenians urges Demosthenes to continue his expedition but his forces were outmatched and defeated by the Aetolian light armed forces, who were armed with javelins.

Many of the allies were killed, and about one hundred and twenty Athenian heavy infantry. Among the slain was also Procles, the colleague of Demosthenes. Meanwhile the Athenians took up their dead under truce from the Aetolians, and retired to Naupactus, and from there they went in their ships to Athens.

Demosthenes stayed behind in Naupactus and in the neighbourhood as he was afraid to face the Athenians after the disaster and the destruction of the Aetolian Expedition.

The Aetolians, who before the Athenian expedition had sent an embassy to Corinth and Lacedaemon, obtained an army from the Lacedaemonians in order to invade and pester the region near Naupactus.

The Lacedaemonians accordingly sent off towards autumn three thousand heavy infantry of the allies, five hundred of whom were from Heraclea, the newly founded city in Trachis, under the command of Eurylochus, a Spartan, accompanied by Macarius and Menedaius, also Spartans.

- Battle of Olpae (426 BCE).

The Ambraciots, as they had promised Eurylochus when they borrowed his army, marched out against the Amphilochian Argos with three thousand heavy infantry, and invading the Argive territory occupied Olpae, a stronghold on a hill near the sea.

The Amphilocian Argos had been fortified by the Acarnanians before this, and the Ambraciots wanted to use this as a point to project their power as it was a stronghold near the sea.

Meanwhile Eurylochus and his Peloponnesians, learning that the Ambraciots at Olpae had arrived, joined the Ambraciots at Olpae.

Following this, the Athenians in twenty ships came into the Ambracian Gulf to support the Argives, with Demosthenes and two hundred Messenian heavy infantry, and sixty Athenian archers.

While the fleet off Olpae blockaded the hill from the sea, the Acarnanians and a few of the Amphilochians, most of whom were kept back by force by the Ambraciots, had already arrived at Argos, and were preparing to fight the Peloponnesian alliance.

Demosthenes launched an attack while being on the right wing with the Messenians and a few Athenians, while the rest of the line was made up of the different divisions of the Acarnanians, and of the Amphilochian carters.

The Peloponnesian Alliance and the Ambraciots were defeated completely and routed. Eurylochus and Macarius, the Peloponnesian generals, were killed.

The next day, Menedaius, the sole Peloponnesian general, started negotiating with the Athenian generals in order to reclaim their dead and retreat from Amphilocia.

- Fortification of Pylos and Battle of Sphacteria (425 BCE)

In 425 BCE, due to a conflict in Corcyra between the oligarchs and the democrats, the Athenians sent out several ships under the command of Demosthenes, Eurymedon and Sophocles.

Demosthenes forced the expedition to land at Pylos (in the Peloponnese and about 45 kilometres away from Sparta) and urged them to fortify Pylos as they had plenty of resources in the region.

The Peloponnesians, who had invaded Attica under King Agis II, decided to retreat back to the Peloponnese upon hearing about the fortification of Pylos. Pylos was part of the Messenian territory, and as a result, the Spartans feared another Messenian revolt.

Sixty Peloponnesian ships were sent for from Corcyra and these ships passed by Zacynthus undetected. They reached the Athenian fortifications in Pylos.

Before the Peloponnesian fleet sailed in, Demosthenes sent out two ships to inform Eurymedon and the Athenians on board the fleet at Zacynthus of the danger of Pylos and to summon them to his assistance.

The Lacedaemonians prepared to assault the Athenians at Pylos by land and sea, hoping to capture it with ease. Meanwhile, as they expected the Athenian ships to arrive from Zacynthus, they blocked up the entrances of the harbour to prevent their being able to anchor inside it.

They used the island at Sphacteria to fortify themselves and launch attacks on the Athenians. Sphacteria was extremely close to Pylos and from Sphacteria, a blockade of Pylos could be easily conducted.

Meanwhile, Demosthenes drew up all of his galleys near the fortifications and armed the sailors with poorly and hastily made shields. He took sixty armed infantry and most of his archers to the weakest part of his fortifications, where he believed the Lacedaemonians would land.

Thrasymelidas, son of Cratesicles, a Spartan, who made his attack just where Demosthenes expected. The Athenians were able to defend themselves on both sides, from the land and sea.

Brasidas, who was the captain of a galley, proved himself to be very capable. However, whenever the Peloponnesian forces attempted to land, they were pushed back by the onslaught of arrows and the infantry.

At this moment the Athenian fleet from Zacynthus arrived, consisting fifty sail, having been reinforced by some of the ships on guard at Naupactus and by four Chian vessels. The Athenians now had both well guarded fortifications as well as an advantage at sea.

The Athenians attacked the Peloponnesian fleet, forcing it to flee. They managed to capture and batter a lot of the ships which were still in the shallows. The Lacedaemonian ground forces attempted to intervene, but they were cut off completely from their navy and surrounded at sea.

The Athenians won the battle and the Lacedaemonians agreed to a temporary armistice with the Athenians in Pylos. A agreement was concluded where the Lacedaemonian soldiers would be held by the Athenians in Pylos and Sparta would send them food. No Spartan ships were to approach Pylos.

The Athenians, however, having the men on the island, thought that further negotiations would be on their terms.

Foremost to encourage them in this policy was Cleon, son of Cleaenetus, a popular leader of the time and very powerful with the multitude, who persuaded them to answer with unrealistic demands.

The Athenians demanded the surrender of all men on the island and Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaia (which they possessed before the Thirty Years' Peace). In return the Lacedaemonians would get their men back.

However, the Lacedaemonians did not agree to these terms completely. The Athenians launched another attack on the Peloponnesian fortification, violating the first agreement.

The Athenians cruised round the island all day with two ships going different ways and they reinforced the blockade at Pylos with more ships which now numbered 70.

At this time, Cleon was sent out instead of Nicias in order to lead the forces and capture the Lacedaemonians troops in Pylos because the blockade had gone on for too long. Cleon was a popular demagogue who made unrealistic claims that he would capture the Lacedaemonians alive within 20 days.

Cleon was sent out with Demosthenes and upon reaching Sphacteria, they armed every single one of their men and stationed them along the heights of the island. From there, the Athenians planned on attacking and capturing the Lacedaemonian outpost.

The main body of Lacedaemonian troops on the island, under Epitadas, were unable to engage with the brunt of the Athenian forces as they refused to meet the Lacedaemonians in combat at that point.

The Lacedaemonians, after losing both their first and second in command, agreed to surrender all their troops and hoplites to the Athenians. This was the first time the Lacedaemonians surrendered to the Athenians and was perceived as dishonourable by the people back in Sparta.

The Athenians kept them as prisoners of war for future agreements.

- Battle of Delium (424 BCE)

Demosthenes and Hippocrates, the Athenian generals, decided to plan an attack on Boeotia from two directions simultaneously.

Hippocrates had received secret news from Boeotia that some of the rebellious factions were planning a democratic revolt and he wanted to use this to his advantage in order to subdue the Boeotians and bring them under Athenian control and influence. Ptoeodorus, a Theban exile, was the chief proponent of this democratic conspiracy.

Demosthenes, arrived at Naupactus with forty ships immediately after the return from the Megarid. Some Phocians also were in the plot, Chaeronea being the frontier town of Boeotia and close to Phanotis in Phocia.

Meanwhile the Athenians were to seize Delium, the sanctuary of Apollo. The Athenian attack on Boeotia and the democratic uprising in Boeotia were to take place simultaneously upon a decided date so the Boeotians would be torn apart by internal strife and external attacks.

Hippocrates with a force raised at home awaited the proper moment to take the field against the Boeotians. Meanwhile, Demosthenes went on with the forty ships to Naupactus, to raise in those parts an army of Acarnanians and of the other allies.

In 424 BCE, the two generals planned their coordinated attack from two sides in tandem with the democratic revolt in Boeotia.

A mistake was made in the days on which they were each to start. Demosthenes left before Hippocrates but failed to effect the revolt as he was betrayed by a Phocian.

Hippocrates not being yet there to make his diversion the pro - democracy conspirators, informed of the mistake, did not venture on any movement in the towns.

Soon after, Hippocrates arrived at his destination after the Boeotians had already come back from Siphae (defeating Demosthenes), and encamping his army, he began to fortify Delium.

During the days thus employed, the Boeotians were mustering at Tanagra, and by the time that they had come in from all the towns, they found the Athenians already on their way home from Siphae. The Boeotian planned an attack on Delium, which Hippocrates had fortified.

The Athenian forces, confused by the sudden appearance of cavalry thought that they were being attacked by another army and they fell back immediately. nearly one thousand Athenians, including Hippocrates the general, besides a great number of light troops and camp followers had been killed.

Demosthenes used the Acarnanian troops he had gathered and conducted an attack on the Sicyonians

- Battle of Amphipolis (424 BCE - 422 BCE)

In 424 BCE, the independent Chalcidian towns in Thrace requested the Lacedaemonians for help. They feared that the Athenians would soon launch a conquest against them and desired Lacedaemonian support and help.

Brasidas, the Lacedaemonian general, raced through Thessaly in order to prevent detection and reached Perdiccas II (King of the Macedonians) and the Chalcidians.

The Lacedaemonians wanted to divert the Athenians from offense to defense in order to prevent further Athenians attacks on Laconia (the homeland of the Lacedaemonians).

Meanwhile his arrival in the Thracian country no sooner became known to the Athenians. They declared war against Perdiccas, whom they regarded as the person behind the revolt and broke off the alliance mediated by Nymphodorus of Abdera.

Brasidas marched with the Chalcidians against Acanthus, a colony of the Andrians. Brasidas convinces the Acanthians to revolt from Athenian control as he was a remarkable orator. Shortly after this, Stagirus, an Acanthian colony, also revolted from Athenian control.

That winter, Brasidas, with his allies in Thrace, marched against Amphipolis, the Athenian colony on the river Strymon. Brasidas had the support of a rebellious faction in Amphipolis who planned to overthrow the Athenian supporters. He overran the countryside and waited outside Amphipolis for his supporters to give a sign.

The popular pro - Athenian party managed to prevent the gates from being thrown open and Eucles, the Amphipolitan general contacted Thucydides, the Athenian general (strategos) who was stationed in Thasos.

Meanwhile Brasidas, afraid of ships coming from Thasos, and learning that Thucydides possessed the right of working the gold mines in that part of Thrace decided to act in haste.

He hastened to gain the town, if possible, before the people of Amphipolis would be inspired by his arrival to hold out. He offered moderate terms of surrender, proclaiming that any of the Amphipolitans and Athenians who chose, might continue to enjoy their property with full rights of citizenship.

After this Thucydides put all in order at Eion to secure it against any present or future attack of Brasidas. Eion served as an important landing point in the Thracian coast for ships arriving from Athens. However, in the meantime, the Amphipolitans admitted Brasidas into their town due to the lenient terms.

In 423 BCE, the Lacedaemonians and Athenians made an armistice for a year. The Athenians thought that they would thus have full leisure to take their precautions before Brasidas could procure the revolt of any more of their towns and secure a longer peace, if required. The Lacedaemonians also hoped that the Athenians, after getting a slight respite from war, would be open to permanent peace. However, during the armistice, Scione and Mede revolted. They allied with Brasidas who accepted them without scruple.

On his return from Macedonia to Torone, Brasidas found the Athenians had taken Mende, and remained where he was. He kept a watch over Torone to prevent the Athenians from reclaiming it as well.

Simultaneously, the Athenians launched an expedition to retake Scione and they also discovered that Perdiccas, the Macedonian king, was willing to make peace with them and wanted to back out of the Peloponnesian confederacy.

The next summer (422 BCE) the truce for a year ended. Cleon convinced the Athenians to let him set sail for the towns in the coast of Thrace with twelve hundred heavy infantry, three hundred horses from Athens, a large force of the allies, and thirty ships.

Pasitelidas, the Lacedaemonian commander hurried to repel the Athenian assault. However, he found himself surrounded by the ships that had been sent round sailing into the harbour, Pasitelidas began to be afraid that he might be taken prisoner, and so abandoned the outwork and ran into the town. The Lacedaemonian and Toronean soldiers were killed and Pasitelidas was captured alive.

Cleon, who left on his voyage from Torone to Amphipolis, made Eion his base, and after an unsuccessful assault upon the Andrian colony of Stagirus, took Galepsus, a colony of Thasos, by storm.

Brasidas on his part took up a position of observation upon Cerdylum, a place situated in the Argilian country on high ground across the river, not far from Amphipolis, and commanding a view on all sides, and thus made it impossible for Cleon's army to move.

Brasidas himself prepared for the attack, and placed the rest with Clearidas at the Thracian gates to support him. Cleon spotted Brasidas and his men preparing and was able to observe the exact numbers of the troops. Cleon ordered an immediate retreat but the command came too late.

Brasidas and his men led a charge and routed the Athenian forces. Cleon managed to flee but he was killed in the retreat. Simultaneously, an Athenian soldier, by sheer luck, managed to wound and kill Brasidas.

The Athenians expedition to retake Amphipolis had been completely routed. Although they had reclaimed several important towns and cities, they ultimately failed to retake Amphipolis. Brasidas was declared to be a hero by the Amphipolitans who declared their independence. This cut off Athens from their primary source of lumber and silver (in Thrace).

- Peace of Nicias (421 BCE)

After the death of both Cleon and Brasidas, who were the only people opposed to peace and strongly supported the war, both the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians wanted peace. A treaty was concluded between Pleistoanax, son of Pausanias, king of Lacedaemon and Nicias, son of Niceratus (who was an Athenian general).

The Lacedaemonians summoned their allies, and all voting for peace except the Boeotians, Corinthians, Eleans, and Megarians, who did not approve of these proceedings, they concluded the treaty and made peace, each of the contracting parties swearing to the following articles:

1. Touching the national temples, there shall be a free passage by land and by sea to all who wish it, to sacrifice, travel, consult, and attend the oracle or games, according to the customs of their countries.

2. The temple and shrine of Apollo at Delphi and the Delphians shall be governed by their own laws, taxed by their own state, and judged by their own judges, the land and the people, according to the custom of their country.

3. The treaty shall be binding for fifty years upon the Athenians and the allies of the Athenians, and upon the Lacedaemonians and the allies of the Lacedaemonians, without fraud or hurt by land or by sea.

4. It shall not be lawful to take up arms, with intent to do hurt, either for the Lacedaemonians and their allies against the Athenians and their allies, or for the Athenians and their allies against the Lacedaemonians and their allies, in any way or means whatsoever. But should any difference arise between them they are to have recourse to law and oaths, according as may be agreed between the parties.

5. The Lacedaemonians and their allies shall give back Amphipolis to the Athenians. Nevertheless, in the case of cities given up by the Lacedaemonians to the Athenians, the inhabitants shall be allowed to go where they please and to take their property with them: and the cities shall be independent, paying only the tribute of Aristides.

And it shall not be lawful for the Athenians or their allies to carry on war against them after the treaty has been concluded, so long as the tribute is paid.

The cities referred to are Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Scolus, Olynthus, and Spartolus. These cities shall be neutral, allies neither of the Lacedaemonians nor of the Athenians: but if the cities consent, it shall be lawful for the Athenians to make them their allies, provided always that the cities wish it.

The Mecybernaeans, Sanaeans, and Singaeans shall inhabit their own cities, as also the Olynthians and Acanthians: but the Lacedaemonians and their allies shall give back Panactum to the Athenians.

6. The Athenians shall give back Coryphasium, Cythera, Methana, Lacedaemonians that are in the prison at Athens or elsewhere in the Athenian dominions, and shall let go the Peloponnesians besieged in Scione, and all others in Scione that are allies of the Lacedaemonians, and all whom Brasidas sent in there, and any others of the allies of the Lacedaemonians that may be in the prison at Athens or elsewhere in the Athenian dominions.

7. The Lacedaemonians and their allies shall in like manner give back any of the Athenians or their allies that they may have in their hands.

8. In the case of Scione, Torone, and Sermylum, and any other cities that the Athenians may have, the Athenians may adopt such measures as they please.

9. The Athenians shall take an oath to the Lacedaemonians and their allies, city by city. Every man shall swear by the most binding oath of his country, seventeen from each city.

The oath shall be as follows;

“I will abide by this agreement and treaty honestly and without deceit.” In the same way an oath shall be taken by the Lacedaemonians and their allies to the Athenians: and the oath shall be renewed annually by both parties. Pillars shall be erected at Olympia, Pythia, the Isthmus, at Athens in the Acropolis, and at Lacedaemon in the temple at Amyclae.

10. If anything be forgotten, whatever it be, and on whatever point, it shall be consistent with their oath for both parties, the Athenians and Lacedaemonians, to alter it, according to their discretion.

- Argive War and Unstable Peace

After the Peace of Nicias and the alliance between Athens and Sparta, open fighting between the two powers came to an end for a time. Even so, the peace was weak from the beginning. Several Peloponnesian states, especially Corinth, strongly disliked the agreement and believed that Sparta had betrayed its allies by making peace with Athens.

Sparta also failed to carry out some important parts of the treaty, including the return of certain cities such as Amphipolis. Because of this, distrust slowly grew in Athens. Although neither side invaded the other's territory for six years and ten months, both continued to weaken each other through diplomacy, alliances, and smaller regional conflicts.

As a result, Corinth secretly approached Argos and encouraged it to organize resistance against Sparta. Argos accepted the proposal eagerly. Its truce with Sparta was close to ending, and Sparta's reputation had been weakened by years of war and military setbacks. Argos hoped to use the situation to increase its own influence and possibly become the leading power in the Peloponnese.

The Argives created a new alliance system and invited independent Greek states to join them. Twelve representatives were chosen to negotiate alliances. The first major state to join Argos was Mantinea.

During the war Mantinea had expanded its influence in Arcadia and feared that Sparta, now free from war with Athens, would try to limit its power. Because of this, Mantinea preferred alliance with Argos, Sparta's long-time rival.

One clause in the Peace of Nicias caused particular concern among the Greek states. Sparta and Athens had agreed that they could change parts of the treaty without consulting their allies. Many states feared this meant the two strongest powers might cooperate against the independence of smaller cities. This fear pushed several states closer to Argos.

Sparta soon realized that Corinth was encouraging resistance throughout the Peloponnese. Spartan ambassadors went to Corinth and accused it of violating its oaths by refusing to support the treaty. Corinth defended itself carefully and claimed that it still had obligations to its allies in Thrace.

It also argued that religious duties prevented it from fully accepting the treaty. Not long afterward, Elis joined the alliance with Argos. Elis had become hostile to Sparta because of a dispute over Lepreum.

The Eleans believed Sparta had interfered unfairly in their affairs and protected Lepreum against them. As a result, Corinth, Elis, Mantinea, and Argos gradually formed a strong anti-Spartan coalition.

At the same time, Athens continued its military activities elsewhere. The Athenians captured Scione, killed the adult men, enslaved the women and children, and handed the land over to the Plataeans. Athens also restored the people of Delos to their island after previously removing them.

These actions showed that Athens remained active and powerful despite the peace. Corinth and Argos then attempted to persuade Tegea to abandon Sparta and join their alliance.

However, Tegea refused to oppose Sparta. This failure reduced Corinth's confidence because Tegea was one of Sparta's most important allies in the Peloponnese.

Meanwhile, Sparta marched into Arcadia under King Pleistoanax against the Parrhasians, who were subjects of Mantinea. The Spartans destroyed the fortress of Cypsela and restored independence to the Parrhasians. This campaign showed that Sparta still intended to maintain its authority in the region.

Although peace officially continued, distrust between Athens and Sparta steadily increased. Sparta had promised to restore Amphipolis and other cities but failed to do so. Athens therefore began to suspect Spartan dishonesty. Sparta, meanwhile, complained that Athens still controlled Pylos and other positions threatening Spartan territory.

The situation became worse when new ephors hostile to the treaty came to power in Sparta. Secret diplomacy followed. Certain Spartan leaders encouraged Boeotia and Corinth to cooperate with Argos. Sparta hoped that improving relations with Argos would isolate Athens and strengthen Spartan influence once again.

Boeotia, Corinth, Megara, and some Thracian allies discussed creating a defensive alliance, but the Boeotian councils rejected the idea because they feared offending Sparta. As a result, the negotiations collapsed and uncertainty spread among the anti-Spartan states.

When Argos learned that Sparta and Boeotia had formed a separate alliance, the Argives feared isolation. They worried that Athens might also cooperate secretly with Sparta. Because of this, Argos sent envoys to Sparta to negotiate peace and protect itself from being surrounded by enemies.

At roughly the same time, Spartan ambassadors returned Athenian prisoners and announced that Panactum, a disputed fortress, had been destroyed by the Boeotians.

Athens reacted angrily because Sparta had promised to restore Panactum intact. The Athenians were also upset that Sparta had made a separate alliance with Boeotia despite earlier promises.

This crisis strengthened anti-Spartan feeling in Athens, especially under Alcibiades. Young, ambitious, and strongly opposed to the treaty, Alcibiades partly resented Sparta because the Spartans had ignored him during earlier negotiations and dealt mainly with Nicias.

Alcibiades secretly invited ambassadors from Argos, Mantinea, and Elis to Athens. Once they realized that Athens was genuinely hostile toward Sparta, they abandoned negotiations with Sparta and turned toward Athens instead.

Sparta then sent ambassadors to Athens asking for the return of Pylos in exchange for Panactum. Alcibiades cleverly trapped the Spartan envoys by persuading them privately not to admit publicly that they had full negotiating powers.

When they later denied this before the Athenian assembly, the Athenians became suspicious and angry. Alcibiades used the situation to damage Spartan credibility and increase support for alliance with Argos.

Nicias still argued for caution. He believed peace benefited Athens because Sparta remained weakened after the war. Nicias persuaded the Athenians to send another embassy to Sparta demanding the restoration of Amphipolis and Panactum intact and asking Sparta to abandon its alliance with Boeotia.

The negotiations failed completely. Sparta refused to give up the Boeotian alliance. Although the peace oaths were formally renewed, none of the major disagreements were solved. Athens therefore formed a new alliance with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis. The agreement was both defensive and offensive and was intended to last one hundred years.

Even after this, the Peace of Nicias was not officially cancelled. Corinth also refused to join the new alliance fully and instead remained cautious while observing developments.

Tensions rose further during the Olympic Games. The Eleans excluded the Spartans and imposed heavy fines on them for violating the sacred truce during military operations near Lepreum. Sparta protested, arguing that the truce had not officially begun when the troops moved, but the Eleans refused to change their decision.

Fearing that Sparta might force its way into the games, Elis stationed guards and received support from Argive, Mantinean, and Athenian troops. Although many expected violence, the Spartans stayed away peacefully.

Later that summer Alcibiades entered the Peloponnese with Athenian troops and allied forces. He strengthened Athenian influence and built closer relations with anti-Spartan states.

War soon broke out between Argos and Epidaurus. Officially the dispute concerned offerings owed to the temple of Apollo Pythaeus, but the real issue was strategic. Argos and Alcibiades hoped to gain control of Epidaurus and weaken Spartan influence further.

At the same time Sparta mobilized under King Agis II and marched toward Leuctra. However, unfavorable religious omens caused the Spartans to abandon the campaign. The Argives then invaded and plundered Epidaurian territory.

A peace conference at Mantinea achieved nothing, and fighting soon resumed. The Argives attacked Epidaurus again. Sparta marched out once more but again turned back because the omens were unfavorable. Athens also sent troops under Alcibiades to support Argos, though no major battle took place.

During the following winter Sparta secretly sent three hundred soldiers by sea into Epidaurus. The Argives became angry with Athens for allowing enemy troops to pass despite their alliance obligations. Influenced by Alcibiades, Athens responded by sending helots and Messenian raiders from Cephallenia to Pylos so they could attack Spartan territory.

Small-scale fighting continued between Argos and Epidaurus through raids and ambushes, but no decisive battle occurred. At the end of winter the Argives attempted to capture Epidaurus using scaling ladders, hoping to take the city by surprise, but the attack failed.

By the next summer Sparta realized that its position in the Peloponnese was becoming dangerous. Several allies were unhappy, Argos was growing stronger, and Spartan authority appeared to be weakening. Sparta therefore gathered a massive army under King Agis II. The force included Spartans, helots, Tegeans, Arcadians, Corinthians, Boeotians, and many other allies.

This campaign showed Sparta's determination to restore its power, stop the spread of Argive influence, and reassert control over the Peloponnese.

The period after the Peace of Nicias did not bring real stability to Greece. Although Sparta and Athens had officially agreed to peace, distrust remained strong, and fighting continued indirectly through alliances, diplomacy, and local conflicts. In the Peloponnese, tension steadily increased between Sparta and a growing alliance that included Argos, Mantinea, Elis, and eventually Athens. These tensions finally led to the Battle of Mantinea, one of the most important land battles of the Peloponnesian War.

The Argives had known for some time that the Spartans were preparing for military action. However, they waited before marching out because they wanted to observe Spartan movements carefully. When King Agis of Sparta moved toward Phlius to unite with allied forces, the Argives finally decided to act. They were reinforced by the Mantineans, other Arcadian allies, and three thousand Elean heavy infantry. The two sides first encountered each other near Methydrium in Arcadia. Both armies occupied strong hill positions and prepared for battle.

Before fighting could begin, Agis avoided confrontation by secretly withdrawing his army during the night. By the next morning he had successfully joined the rest of the Spartan allies at Phlius. When the Argives discovered this, they marched back toward Argos and positioned themselves on the Nemean road, expecting the Spartans to descend through that route into the Argive plain.

Agis, however, chose a different strategy. Instead of using the expected road, he divided the allied forces and used several difficult routes. The Spartans, Arcadians, and Epidaurians descended directly into the plain of Argos. The Corinthians, Pellenians, and Phliasians marched along another steep road, while the Boeotians, Megarians, and Sicyonians moved toward Nemea to threaten the rear of the Argive army if necessary.

Once these movements were complete, Agis began ravaging the Argive countryside around Saminthus and nearby districts.

The Argives quickly moved down from Nemea after hearing that their land was being destroyed. During their march they briefly clashed with Corinthian and Phliasian troops, causing small losses on both sides. Meanwhile the Boeotians and their allies arrived at Nemea only to discover that the Argives had already left their position.

At this moment the Argives suddenly found themselves in a dangerous situation. Spartan and allied forces had surrounded them from several directions. Their route back to Argos was threatened, enemy troops controlled nearby roads, and the Athenian cavalry had not yet arrived to support them. Even so, most of the Argive alliance believed the battlefield favored them because the fighting would occur close to their own city.

Just before the battle began, two men from the Argive side, Thrasyllus and Alciphron, approached Agis to negotiate. They proposed that disputes between Sparta and Argos should be settled through arbitration rather than battle and suggested that peace could still be maintained. Agis accepted these proposals and granted a four-month truce without consulting most of his officers or allies. He then withdrew the Spartan army.

This decision caused anger on both sides. Many Spartans believed Agis had wasted a perfect chance to destroy the enemy while it was trapped and surrounded. The coalition gathered by Sparta was extremely large and included Spartans, Arcadians, Boeotians, Corinthians, Sicyonians, Pellonians, Phliasians, and Megarians. Many considered it one of the strongest Greek armies assembled during the war.

The Argives were equally furious because the truce had been accepted without the approval of the people. They believed they had lost an excellent opportunity to defeat Sparta near the walls of Argos with strong allied support beside them. In their anger they attempted to stone Thrasyllus. He escaped only by taking refuge at an altar, although his property was confiscated.

The coalition marched against Orchomenos in Arcadia, where Spartan hostages were being kept. After a siege the city surrendered. Orchomenos agreed to join the alliance, provide hostages to the Mantineans, and release the hostages placed there by Sparta.

After this victory the allies debated their next target. Elis wanted to attack Lepreum, while Mantinea favored an attack on Tegea. Argos and Athens supported Mantinea, which angered the Eleans so much that they withdrew from the campaign.

At Sparta, Agis faced heavy criticism because of the earlier truce. Some Spartans even proposed destroying his house and imposing a massive fine. Agis persuaded them to spare him by promising success in future operations. Still, Sparta reduced his authority by assigning ten Spartan advisers to supervise his military decisions.

Soon afterward Sparta received urgent news from Tegea. Pro-Spartan supporters there warned that the city might defect to the Argive alliance unless help arrived quickly. Sparta immediately responded with a major mobilization. Spartans, helots, and allied Arcadians marched toward Tegea, while messengers summoned additional support from Corinth, Boeotia, Phocis, and Locris.

The Spartan army then entered Mantinean territory and began plundering the countryside near the temple of Heracles. The Argives and their allies occupied a strong hill position and prepared for battle. Agis initially advanced against them but changed his mind after an older Spartan warned him not to repeat earlier mistakes through reckless action.

Instead of attacking directly, Agis adopted another strategy. He redirected watercourses into Mantinean territory, hoping to force the enemy to abandon the hills in order to protect their land from flooding and destruction. The plan worked. The Argive troops became frustrated with their own commanders, accusing them of allowing the Spartans to escape repeatedly without resistance. Eventually the allied army descended into the plain and prepared for battle there.

The following day the Battle of Mantinea took place. The Spartans were briefly surprised when they encountered the allied army fully formed and ready for combat. Agis quickly organized his troops according to the Spartan military system, where commands moved rapidly through a strict chain of officers.

The Spartan left wing contained the Sciritae and the veterans who had served under Brasidas in Thrace. Spartan hoplites formed the center, while the Tegeans occupied the right wing. Cavalry protected both flanks.

The allied army was arranged differently. The Mantineans held the right wing because the battle was taking place in their territory. Next came other Arcadian allies, followed by the elite thousand Argive troops who had received special state training. Behind them stood the rest of the Argive infantry, smaller allied contingents, and finally the Athenians with their cavalry on the far left.

Before the battle both armies received encouragement from their commanders. The Mantineans were reminded that they were fighting for their independence. The Argives hoped to restore their old influence in the Peloponnese and punish Sparta for past wrongs. The Athenians were told that victory would strengthen their empire and protect Attica from future invasions. The Spartans relied less on speeches and more on discipline, training, and military tradition.

When the battle began, the Argive alliance advanced quickly and aggressively. The Spartans moved more slowly and in careful formation to the sound of flute music, which helped maintain order among the ranks.

Just before the armies clashed, Agis attempted a difficult maneuver to prevent his left wing from being outflanked. However, confusion and delayed movements created a dangerous gap in the Spartan line. The Mantineans and the elite Argive troops exploited this weakness. They broke through the Spartan left wing and drove some Spartan forces back toward their baggage train.

Despite this setback, the Spartan center and right wing fought with remarkable discipline. The elite Spartan guard around Agis attacked the Argive center and routed the Argive, Cleonaeans, Orneans, and Athenian troops facing them. Many soldiers fled almost immediately.

The battle soon turned decisively in Sparta's favor. The allied army split apart, and the Athenians escaped only because their cavalry protected the retreat. Once Agis reinforced the weakened Spartan left, the Mantineans and elite Argive troops were also forced to withdraw.

The Battle of Mantinea became one of Sparta's greatest victories during the Peloponnesian War. Around seven hundred Argives and their allies were killed, including many men from Cleonae and Orneae. The Mantineans lost about two hundred soldiers, while the Athenians and Aeginetans lost another two hundred, including both Athenian generals. Spartan losses were much lower and were estimated at around three hundred men.

The victory restored Spartan prestige throughout Greece. Earlier criticism of Spartan weakness and hesitation disappeared after Mantinea, where Sparta once again demonstrated its military discipline and strength in open battle.

Even after the battle, however, conflict continued across the Peloponnese. Epidaurus attacked Argive territory, while Athenian and Elean reinforcements helped strengthen defenses around Epidaurus. During the following winter Sparta reopened negotiations with Argos. Political divisions inside Argos allowed pro-Spartan groups to gain influence, especially after the defeat at Mantinea weakened confidence in the democratic leadership.

Eventually Argos accepted Spartan peace proposals. The agreement required Argos to restore prisoners, withdraw from Epidaurus, and recognize the independence of Peloponnesian cities. Soon afterward Argos abandoned its alliance with Athens, Mantinea, and Elis and entered into a formal fifty-year alliance with Sparta.

This diplomatic shift changed the balance of power in the Peloponnese. Mantinea, now isolated, also made peace with Sparta and surrendered control over nearby towns. Sparta and Argos together supported oligarchic governments in several cities, including Sicyon and even Argos itself.

However, political stability did not last long. Democratic supporters in Argos eventually rose against the oligarchic government during the Gymnopaedic festival at Sparta. After fighting inside the city, the democratic faction regained control, killing some opponents and driving others into exile.

Fearful of future Spartan attacks, the Argives renewed their alliance with Athens and began constructing long walls connecting the city to the sea. These walls would allow supplies to reach Argos even during a land blockade. Athens actively supported the project by sending workers and craftsmen.

Sparta later marched against Argos once again, destroyed the unfinished walls, captured the town of Hysiae, and killed its free inhabitants. In response the Argives attacked Phlius because it had sheltered Argive exiles. At the same time Athens turned against Perdiccas of Macedonia for supporting Sparta and violating earlier agreements with Athens. Macedonian territory was blockaded, and Perdiccas was officially declared an enemy of Athens.

By the end of the fifteenth year of the Peloponnesian War, Greece remained deeply divided. Alliances continued to shift, democracy and oligarchy struggled for control in many cities, and despite temporary treaties, the larger conflict between Sparta and Athens continued to shape the Greek world.

Sicilian Expedition

The story of the Sicilian Expedition begins in the winter of 416–415 BCE, when ambassadors from the Sicilian city of Segesta arrived in Athens pleading for military assistance against their rival, Selinus, which was backed by the powerful city of Syracuse. The Segestans cleverly deceived the Athenians by pulling off a massive optical illusion, showing off lavish gold and silver vessels in their temples and banquets that were actually borrowed or largely hollow, convincing Athens that the island was overflowing with wealth to fund a war. Stirred by the prospect of easy riches and an expanded empire, the Athenian assembly eagerly called a meeting to debate whether they should launch a major naval expedition to the west.

During this historic assembly, a profound clash of political philosophy and human psychology took place between two prominent Athenian leaders. Nicias, an older and highly cautious general, spoke first and warned the citizens that they were being lured into a dangerous trap, arguing that Athens had barely recovered from the devastation of the plague and previous fighting with Sparta. He stressed that conquering a massive, distant island like Sicily was an impossible task, and that even if they won, the cost of governing it from across the sea would bleed the city dry. In response, the young, dashing, and aggressively ambitious Alcibiades took the stage, firing up the younger generation with intoxicating rhetoric about eternal imperial expansion, claiming that the Sicilian populations were a disorganized, fractured rabble that would collapse at the mere sight of an Athenian fleet.

Seeing that the crowd was completely won over by Alcibiades' enthusiasm, Nicias tried a desperate political maneuver to scare the assembly out of voting for the war by claiming that it would require an absurdly massive, ridiculously expensive armada of ships, hoplites, and supplies to even stand a chance. To his horror, the strategy backfired spectacularly; instead of backing down, the Athenians grew even more ecstatic, believing that such a colossal force made victory a mathematical certainty, and they voted on the spot to give Nicias exactly what he asked for, placing him, Alcibiades, and a veteran general named Lamachus in joint command.

Just as the massive fleet was preparing to set sail from the port of Piraeus, Athens was suddenly plunged into an intense religious panic that completely destabilized the city's morale. In a single night, unknown vandals mutilated almost all the Hermae sacred stone pillars featuring the bust of the god Hermes that stood outside Athenian homes and temples as guardians of public safety. In the paranoid atmosphere that followed, political enemies seized the opportunity to accuse Alcibiades not only of this sacrilege, but also of hosting drunken parodies of the sacred Eleusinian Mysteries in private homes. Alcibiades begged for an immediate trial to clear his name before sailing, but his rivals slyly insisted that the fleet depart immediately, planning to wait until he was thousands of miles away from his loyal political supporters before officially recalling him to face a death sentence.

The armada finally launched in a grand and terrifying display of naval supremacy, but as soon as the generals reached southern Italy, they discovered the bitter truth that the Segestans had lied and there was no money to pay for the campaign. The three commanders split heavily on what to do next: Nicias wanted to do a quick flyby, settle the immediate dispute, and sail home with dignity intact; Lamachus wanted to launch an immediate, surprise shock-attack on Syracuse while they were still totally unprepared and terrified; and Alcibiades advocated for a slower diplomatic approach to win over local Sicilian allies first. Alcibiades' strategy won out, but shortly after they began negotiating, the official state galley arrived from Athens to arrest him for the religious crimes, prompting him to pretend to comply but escape during the journey home, defecting straight to Sparta where he gave his former enemies the exact blueprints to defeat Athens.

Back in Sicily, the Athenian campaign began to stall as Nicias and Lamachus won a minor tactical battle but failed to press their advantage, choosing to retreat into winter quarters and giving Syracuse precious time to send urgent pleas for help to Sparta and Corinth. Advised by the traitorous Alcibiades, the Spartans sent a highly capable, iron-willed general named Gylippus to take control of the Syracusan defense, while simultaneously establishing a permanent military fort at Decelea right next to Athens to choke off the Athenian agricultural economy at home. By 414 BCE, the Athenians returned to Syracuse and launched a brilliant engineering assault, successfully building a massive circumvallation wall designed to completely seal Syracuse off by land, while their fleet blockaded the city by sea.

The siege quickly devolved into a brutal war of engineering as the Syracusans scrambled to build cross-walls to disrupt the Athenian lines, leading to intense, chaotic skirmishes in the marshes outside the city. During one of these frantic battles, the aggressive Athenian general Lamachus was killed in action, leaving Nicias in absolute control of the expedition despite the fact that he was suffering from a debilitating kidney disease and had opposed the invasion from day one. Just as Syracuse was on the verge of starvation and Nicias was growing dangerously complacent, the Spartan general Gylippus arrived with reinforcements, instantly revitalizing the demoralized Syracusans, seizing key high ground, and successfully completing a counter-wall that permanently smashed the Athenian hope of

blocking the city. Realizing that the tables had turned and that his rotting ships and sick, demoralized troops were now effectively the ones being besieged, Nicias sent a desperate, brutally honest letter to the Athenian assembly begging them to either recall the expedition immediately or send a second army just as large as the first. Driven by pure hubris, Athens refused to let Nicias quit and instead sent a massive relief armada led by Demosthenes, the city's most brilliant and daring military tactician. Upon sailing into the harbor in 413 BCE, Demosthenes recognized that slow delays would mean death, so he immediately ordered a high-stakes, massive night assault on the cliffs of Epipolae to tear down the Syracusan cross-walls and regain control of the siege.

The night attack started successfully but quickly devolved into a legendary nightmare of friendly fire and terrain confusion under the dim light of a midnight moon. Athenian soldiers, unable to distinguish friend from foe in the shadows, began attacking each other, while the disciplined Spartan and Syracusan forces used their localized knowledge to systematically ambush and butcher the panicked invaders, driving thousands of fleeing Athenians off the steep cliffs to their deaths. Seeing that all hope of winning the war was lost, Demosthenes strongly urged an immediate, secret evacuation by sea while they still had functional ships, and Nicias finally agreed to pack up the camp and slip away under the cover of darkness.

Just as the ships were loaded and ready to slip out of the harbor, a total lunar eclipse occurred, triggering deep superstitious terror in the severely ill Nicias, who consulted local soothsayers and stubbornly declared that the entire army must wait exactly twenty-seven days before attempting to leave. This astronomical delay gave the Syracusans plenty of time to discover the Athenian plan, prompt an aggressive naval response, and physically block the narrow mouth of the Great Harbor by chaining merchant ships and boats together, completely trapping the Athenian fleet inside. The trapped armadas fought a monstrous, claustrophobic naval battle inside the cramped harbor where over two hundred ships smashed into one another in a chaotic demolition derby of splintering wood and hand-to-hand combat. From the shores, the helpless Athenian infantry watched the slaughter in absolute agony, swaying and crying out as their navy was systematically pulverized and sunk before their eyes.

With their fleet entirely destroyed and no way out by sea, the remaining 40,000 Athenian and allied soldiers were forced to abandon their camp, leaving their dead unburied and their screaming, wounded comrades begging for mercy as they began a desperate retreat on foot into the rugged, hostile interior of Sicily. Harassed relentlessly from all sides by Syracusan cavalry and javelin throwers, starved of food, and driven mad by an oppressive heatwave, the collapsing army eventually fractured into two separate groups. Demosthenes' rear column fell behind, became trapped inside a walled olive grove, and was forced to surrender under a hail of missiles, while Nicias' forward column made a frantic, chaotic rush for the Assinarus River to find water.

The final horror of the expedition took place at the river banks, where the heavily dehydrated Athenian soldiers completely lost all military discipline, trampling one another and rushing into the water to drink even as Syracusan troops slaughtered them from the cliffs above. The desperate men kept drinking the water even as it filled with mud and turned thick with the blood of their friends, until Nicias finally threw himself at the feet of Gylippus and surrendered his remaining men to stop the butchery. Both Nicias and Demosthenes were promptly executed by the Syracusans against the explicit wishes of Gylippus, and the surviving 7,000 prisoners of war were thrown into the deep, brutal stone quarries of Syracuse, where they were left to slowly rot and die of exposure, starvation, and disease amidst a mounting pile of corpses, marking the complete and total annihilation of the golden age of Athens.

Ionian War

The Ionian Revolt began in 499 BCE in the Greek-speaking cities of Ionia along the western coast of Anatolia. Cities like Miletus and Ephesus were wealthy and actively engaged in trade across the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean. Many of them experienced periods of independence or loose control from regional powers before Persian rule. This changed when the Persian Empire, led by Cyrus the Great, conquered Lydia in the mid-6th century BCE, bringing Ionia into the Achaemenid system of provinces. After that, Persian officials managed taxation and administration, while local cities kept some internal customs.

Although the Persians did not try to erase Greek culture, their political system sparked growing resentment. One controversial aspect was the appointment of local tyrants-rulers backed by Persia to govern individual cities. These men helped collect tribute and maintain order, but they were often disliked in Greek political culture, where civic participation and autonomy were becoming more important.

The immediate cause of the revolt was Aristagoras of Miletus. After a failed Persian-supported military campaign against Naxos, he feared losing his position and facing punishment from Persian authorities. To protect himself, he urged the Ionian cities to rise up, dismiss the Persian-supported tyrants, and reject imperial control. The revolt spread quickly, with several cities overthrowing their rulers and trying out different local forms of government, though there was no unified leadership.

Looking for help, Aristagoras first approached Sparta, but they refused, deeming the situation too distant and risky. He then sought assistance from Athens and Eretria, both of which agreed to provide limited support. Athens sent about twenty triremes, while Eretria contributed a small force. While this may seem modest, it marked the first direct involvement of mainland Greek cities in conflict with the Persian Empire.

With this support, the rebels attacked Sardis, an important Persian administrative center. They captured the lower city, but the Persian citadel held strong. During the fighting, parts of the city accidentally caught fire, an event that would later have serious consequences. The Greeks soon retreated and were defeated at Ephesus by Persian forces, after which the Athenian and Eretrian troops withdrew completely.

Around the same time, uprisings broke out in other areas. Cyprus, led by Onesilus, successfully rebelled for a while but was eventually crushed by a major Persian counterattack in a hard-fought conflict that included naval battles near Salamis in Cyprus.

Caria also joined the rebellion early, achieving some initial success through guerrilla-style resistance, but it too was gradually overtaken by Persian forces. These events were not later additions but part of the early, widespread outbreak of the revolt across the region.

Despite early momentum, the revolt weakened under Persian pressure. The turning point came in 494 BCE at the Battle of Lade, near Miletus. The Ionian Greeks gathered a naval force, but their unity broke down at a critical moment. Several groups withdrew, and the Persian fleet, heavily supported by Phoenician ships, took advantage of this collapse. The result was a decisive Persian victory that destroyed the Ionian navy.

Soon after, Miletus was besieged and captured. The city faced harsh punishment: many men were killed, and women and children were enslaved or relocated within the Persian Empire. As one of the most significant cultural centers in the Greek world, its fall sent shockwaves throughout Greece. By around 493 BCE, Persian control over Ionia was fully restored.

Although the revolt failed, it had lasting effects. Darius I of Persia held Athens and Eretria responsible for the burning of Sardis and began planning retaliation. This decision eventually contributed to the wider Greco-Persian Wars, which started in the early 5th century BCE and culminated in major battles like Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea.

In the following years, Persia tightened its grip on Asia Minor, strengthening the provincial system and stabilizing tribute collection. The Greek cities of Ionia remained culturally Greek but were firmly integrated into the empire.

Meanwhile, mainland Greece took a different direction. Athens gradually expanded its democratic system, while Sparta kept its oligarchic and militarized structure. After the Persian Wars, Athens led the Delian League, which began as a defensive alliance against Persia. Over time, however, it evolved into an Athenian empire, as member states were increasingly required to pay tribute or provide ships.

This growing Athenian power contributed to rising tensions with Sparta, leading to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BCE. Early in the conflict, Athens relied heavily on its navy, while Sparta excelled on land. Eventually, Sparta recognized its need for a fleet and sought financial support from Persia. Persian satraps like Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus provided funding at different times, although Persian policy often shifted based on which Greek side best suited its interests.

Control of the Hellespont became crucial because it was Athens' main route for importing grain from the Black Sea. Both sides focused on key cities in the region, including Byzantium and Abydos, since control of these locations could directly threaten Athens' survival.

In 411 BCE, Athens faced a political crisis when an oligarchic coup replaced democracy with the rule of the Four Hundred. However, the Athenian navy stationed abroad rejected this change and continued to support democratic leadership, creating a split between the city and its fleet.

Around this time, Alcibiades, a controversial Athenian leader who had shifted between Athenian, Spartan, and Persian connections, returned to influence Athenian naval operations. His contributions helped reorganize parts of the fleet in the eastern Aegean, but his position remained unstable due to his political past.

By 410 BCE, the focus of the war shifted sharply to the Hellespont. The Spartan commander Mindarus, backed financially by Persia, established a fleet near Cyzicus in the Sea of Marmara, posing a threat to Athens' grain supply route.

The Athenians, led by Alcibiades along with Thrasybulus and Theramenes, planned a coordinated trap. Using deception, they lured the Spartan fleet away from its base, then cut off its retreat while another force attacked Spartan troops on land. Isolated and unable to regroup, the Spartan forces were destroyed.

I. Political and Military Organization

Leadership Structure and Executive Command

The Peloponnesian League was not a centralized empire but a hegemonic coalition built around Sparta's dual kingship and oligarchic institutions. While allied cities retained internal autonomy, they were bound by sworn oaths to follow Sparta in war and peace, effectively granting Lacedaemon the right of strategic initiative. Within Sparta, foreign and military policy flowed through a narrow decision-making core: the Gerousia (council of elders), the five annually elected Ephors, and the Apella (citizens' assembly), all of which constrained and directed the two kings who held nominal supreme command.

Operational leadership in the field was entrusted to kings or to specially appointed commanders (strategoi or nauarchoi in naval contexts), whose authority drew legitimacy from Spartan institutions but whose mandates were shaped by elite factional politics. Key decisions—whether to invade Attica, fortify Decelea, or accept Persian subsidies—reflected a continuous negotiation between conservative land-focused interests and more adventurous elements willing to expand Spartan power beyond the Peloponnese.

Military Administration, Leagues, and Hegemonic Control

Sparta's transformation from regional hegemon to pan-Hellenic war leader rested on a web of bilateral alliances that coalesced into the Peloponnesian League, dominated by core partners such as Corinth, Megara, Elis, and later Boeotia under Theban leadership. Unlike the tribute-taking Athenian empire, Sparta relied on compulsory allied contingents rather than a standing imperial tax; each city provided hoplites, cavalry, ships, or funds according to treaties and periodic League congress decisions.

Control was maintained less through permanent garrisons and more through political leverage: support for oligarchic factions, diplomatic pressure, and the threat of Spartan intervention against recalcitrant allies or neutral states. When necessary, Sparta installed sympathetic regimes—most notoriously later in the war with “decarchies” and harmosts—but even before 410 BCE, Spartan officers and advisors appeared in allied poleis to coordinate operations and shape internal politics, as seen in Boeotia, Chalcidice, and Ionian cities that defected from Athens.

II. Naval Forces

Triremes, Warships, and Emerging Naval Infrastructure

Traditionally a land power, Sparta entered the Peloponnesian War with negligible naval infrastructure and depended heavily on Corinthian, Megarian, and allied ships for early sea operations. The standard warship on the Peloponnesian side was still the trireme, structurally similar to Athenian vessels—three banks of oars, bronze ram, light construction—but Peloponnesian fleets initially lacked the same depth of rowing expertise and maintenance facilities.

This asymmetry forced Sparta to seek external naval resources. Persian gold under satraps like Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus financed large-scale shipbuilding in Ionian and Asian ports, allowing the Peloponnesian League to commission and crew fleets that could contest Athenian thalassocracy. By 410 BCE, Spartans depended on allied and subject harbors like Corinth, Chios, Miletus, and bases in the Hellespont to sustain their new maritime arm.

Naval Doctrine and Counter-Sea Strategy

Spartan naval doctrine evolved reactively, shaped by the need to break Athenian sea control rather than to build an oceanic empire. Early Peloponnesian fleets fought conservatively, favoring close combat and boarding tactics that neutralized Athenian maneuver advantages and played to the strength of Peloponnesian hoplites stationed aboard. As the war progressed and experienced commanders such as Mindarus and Lysander emerged, Peloponnesian strategy shifted toward aggressive disruption of Athenian supply routes, especially the grain lines through the Hellespont and Bosphorus.

Sea control, for Sparta, was not an end in itself but a lever to strangle Athenian logistics and morale. Blockading key chokepoints, seizing forward bases in the Aegean and Asia Minor, and coordinating with Persian land forces became the core of Peloponnesian naval operations in the Ionian phase of the war.

Naval Tactics and Fleet Formations

Initially outclassed in complex maneuvers such as diekplous and periplous, Peloponnesian commanders often adopted compact formations designed to withstand Athenian ramming attacks. Fleets were drawn up in dense lines or defensive circles to limit exposure of flanks and sterns, relying on numerical mass and disciplined hoplite contingents to turn engagements into boarding fights where Spartan-led troops excelled.

However, exposure to prolonged campaigning and defector expertise from Athenian crews gradually professionalized Peloponnesian seamanship. By the time of the battles in the Hellespontine waters (Cynossema, Abydos, Cyzicus), Peloponnesian admirals could coordinate large fleets, execute more flexible deployments, and exploit terrain such as narrow straits or tricky currents, even if pure maneuver warfare at sea remained more of an Athenian specialty.

Naval Logistics – Ports, Dockyards, and Supply

Because Lacedaemon lacked a deep natural harbor comparable to Piraeus, naval logistics depended on allied and foreign bases. Corinthian ports provided initial staging grounds, while later the focus shifted east to Ionian and Hellespontine harbors where Persian-backed shipyards, arsenals, and supply depots emerged. These locations furnished timber, rigging, and pay channeled through Persian satrapal administrations, effectively externalizing much of Sparta's naval overhead.

Operationally, Peloponnesian triremes faced the same constraints as Athenian ones: limited onboard storage forced nightly beaching for provisioning, water, and rest. This requirement made control of coastal sites and island anchorages crucial. Spartan admirals therefore prioritized securing friendly littoral points, especially near strategic narrows like the Hellespont, to sustain continuous pressure on Athenian maritime lifelines.

III. Infantry and Land Forces

Spartan Hoplite Infantry: Equipment and Tactical Doctrine

The backbone of Peloponnesian military power remained the Spartan hoplite. Trained from youth under the agoge system, Spartiates fought as heavily armored infantry in dense phalanx formations, wielding thrusting spears, large shields, and protective cuirasses and helmets comparable to those of other Greek heavy infantry, but with far superior collective discipline and tactical cohesion. The reputation of the Spartan line—steady under pressure and lethal in close combat—formed the psychological core of Peloponnesian deterrence.

Sparta organized its citizen hoplites into regimental units (*morae*), each commanded by a polemarch and subdivided into smaller tactical groupings, allowing for more flexible deployment than many allied contingents. On open, level ground, the Spartan phalanx could outmaneuver and outfight opponents by controlled wheeling, echelon advances, and coordinated reserve use, though, like all heavy infantry, it remained vulnerable in broken terrain, to flanking attacks, and to sustained missile harassment.

Allied Infantry, Light Troops, and Cavalry

The Peloponnesian League's land strength extended far beyond Spartan citizens. *Perioikoi* (free non-citizen inhabitants of Laconia) and allies supplied large numbers of hoplites, often matching or surpassing Spartiate numbers in the field, as seen in invasions of Attica and campaigns in central Greece. Boeotian contingents in particular developed their own formidable phalanx traditions, giving the League depth and redundancy in heavy infantry.

Light infantry (*psiloi*, peltasts, archers) were initially undervalued by Sparta but became increasingly important as the war moved into rougher terrain and distant theaters. Thucydidean episodes such as Sphacteria and the operations in western Greece demonstrated how agile missile troops could erode hoplite formations; Peloponnesian commanders began to incorporate more skirmishers from allied regions skilled in javelin, sling, and bow. Spartan cavalry remained numerically small and tactically limited, mostly used for reconnaissance and pursuit, but allied cities with stronger equestrian traditions could contribute mounted forces when needed.

IV. Amphibious and Expeditionary Warfare

Sparta a quintessential land power, nonetheless adapted to expeditionary and amphibious operations as the conflict lengthened. Early in the war, amphibious capacity was modest, focused on coastal raids in Attica and limited landings elsewhere, but access to allied fleets allowed combined land-sea actions, such as those in the Corinthian Gulf and along western Greek coasts.

As Persian-funded fleets grew, Spartan admirals could move hoplite units rapidly across the Aegean, supporting revolts in Ionian cities and striking at Athenian-controlled islands. Expeditionary forces established fortified positions in enemy-aligned territories—mirroring Athenian *epiteichismos*—most dramatically with the permanent fort at Decelea in Attica, which, though not amphibious, functioned as a forward occupation base to drain Athenian manpower and resources year after year.

V. Recruitment and Manpower

Citizen Forces, Helots, and Social Structure

Sparta's manpower system was defined by a rigid social hierarchy. Full Spartan citizens (*Spartiates*) formed the elite hoplite core, but their numbers were limited and had been declining even before the war. Below them stood the *perioikoi*, free but non-citizen communities obligated to provide soldiers and economic support, and, at the bottom, the helots—state-owned serfs whose agricultural labor sustained the Spartan war machine.

Prolonged campaigning created acute manpower pressures. To field larger armies and garrison distant posts, Sparta increasingly armed helots under special conditions, sometimes granting them freedom in exchange for service, as with the so-called *neodamodeis* (new citizens) who emerged during the war. This strategy widened the pool of available troops but also heightened internal security concerns, since a large, armed servile population posed a latent threat to Spartan stability.

Allied Contributions and Foreign Specialists

The Peloponnesian League's comparative advantage lay in the breadth of its alliance network. Corinth, Megara, Boeotia, and other states sent sizable hoplite, light infantry, and naval contingents, distributing the burdens of war across the coalition. As the struggle shifted eastward, Ionian, Dorian, and other defecting communities provided additional ships, crews, and local knowledge that were indispensable in contesting Athenian power in Asia Minor and the Hellespont.

Persian subsidies introduced another layer of foreign manpower and expertise. While Sparta did not rely on mercenary rowers and soldiers to the same extent as Athens, Persian funding allowed Peloponnesian commanders to hire experienced seamen and support staff in eastern waters, accelerating the professionalization of their naval arm without transforming Sparta itself into a mercenary-based military society.

VI. Garrisons, Hegemonic Outposts, and Occupation

Spartan control mechanisms favored targeted garrisons and political supervision over widespread colonization. Where strategic necessity demanded, Sparta installed harmosts—military governors—supported by garrisons in key allied or subject cities, ensuring loyalty and rapid response capability. Even before 410 BCE, such arrangements appeared in parts of the Peloponnese, central Greece, and later in Ionian cities that shifted into the Peloponnesian orbit.

The fortification of Decelea in Attica stands as the clearest example of Spartan occupation strategy during the war. By maintaining a permanent stronghold deep in enemy territory, manned by rotating contingents of Spartans and allies, Lacedaemon transformed Attica into a continuous battlefield, disrupting agriculture, encouraging slave flight, and forcing Athens to divert precious resources to counter a land threat on its doorstep.

VII. Military Economy and Logistics

Sparta's traditional economic model—agrarian, conservative, and reliant on helot labor—was ill-suited to a long, resource-intensive war against a monetized naval empire. For the first decade, Peloponnesian campaigns followed a low-cost pattern: seasonal invasions of Attica and land operations funded largely through allied contributions and existing agrarian surpluses. However, the expansion of naval warfare and distant theaters imposed new financial demands that the Spartan domestic system could not easily meet.

The solution was external financing. Persian satraps, seeking to weaken Athens and reclaim Ionian Greek cities, supplied substantial funds for shipbuilding, pay, and supplies, effectively underwriting the Peloponnesian fleet. Timber and naval materials came from allied regions with access to forests and maritime resources of Corinth, Peloponnesian hinterlands, and eastern Greek territories while the logistical backbone of land armies remained grounded in helot agriculture and allied provisioning.

This hybrid model made Sparta strategically powerful but also intertwined its war effort with Persian interests and the reliability of allies.

VIII. Communications and Intelligence

Lacedaemonian communications reflected a preference for secrecy, brevity, and personal networks. Spartan commanders and ephors relied heavily on trusted heralds, messengers, and proxenoi (local patrons of Spartan interests) embedded in key cities to transmit diplomatic instructions and gather intelligence on shifting political currents. The aura of Spartan austerity extended to communication style: short, laconic messages concealed complex strategic calculations behind minimal wording.

Operationally, the growth of the Peloponnesian fleet required more systematic signaling at sea and along coasts. Fleets and coastal outposts used visual signals—fires, smoke, and prearranged signs—to coordinate movements and relay news of Athenian activity, particularly in the critical waters of the Hellespont and Ionian coast.

Allied and Persian informants in ports such as Ephesus, Miletus, and the Hellespontine cities broadened Spartan awareness of trade flows, naval deployments, and local revolts, allowing more targeted interventions against Athenian power.

IX. Commanders and Leadership

The Peloponnesian war effort was shaped by a series of Spartan and allied leaders whose decisions altered the strategic balance.

- Archidamus II: The early-war king who, despite recognizing Athens' resilience, led repeated invasions of Attica, favoring a cautious, attritional land strategy over risky sieges or naval expansion. His approach sought to exploit Spartan strengths while avoiding overextension.
- Brasidas: The most innovative early Spartan commander, he led daring overland expeditions into northern Greece, detaching key Athenian allies such as Amphipolis through a mix of rapid movement, negotiation, and targeted force. Brasidas' campaigns demonstrated that Sparta could project power far beyond the Peloponnese when guided by flexible leadership.
- Agis II: Central in mid-war operations, Agis commanded land forces in Attica and central Greece and supervised the occupation at Decelea. His tenure illustrates the increasing willingness of Sparta to maintain long-term forward positions rather than rely solely on seasonal invasions.
- Mindarus: A pivotal naval commander in the Ionian and Hellespontine theaters, he led efforts to break Athenian sea control but suffered decisive defeat at Cyzicus in 410 BCE, where his fleet was destroyed and he himself was killed. This loss temporarily reversed Spartan gains and underscored the risks of large-scale naval engagement.

- Lysander: Rising to prominence in the late 410s, Lysander combined military skill with political acumen, cultivating close ties with Persian princes and building a professionalized fleet. Although his ultimate decisive victories lay just beyond the 410 BCE freeze date, his methods such as reliance on Persian pay, building personal loyalty among crews, and installing friendly regimes were already reshaping Spartan strategy.

X. Military Situation by 410 BCE

By 410 BCE, the Peloponnesian League had fundamentally altered the strategic landscape but faced a severe setback. The defeat at Cyzicus temporarily destroyed the main Peloponnesian fleet in the Hellespont, restoring Athenian confidence and reopening the vital grain route from the Black Sea.

Yet, beneath this tactical reversal, the structural balance continued to tilt against Athens: Sparta retained control of Decelea, enjoyed broad allied support, and still had access to Persian financial resources for rebuilding fleets.

Sparta and its allies had succeeded in transforming a regional hoplite coalition into a flexible, multi-theater war machine capable of challenging the first maritime empire in history. However, the Peloponnesian system rested on fragile pillars of helot labor, allied cohesion, and Persian subsidy.

Any JCC delegate sitting in a Spartan council in 410 BCE must therefore weigh an unusual combination of strengths like a fearsome land army, a rapidly maturing navy, and deep alliance networks against chronic vulnerabilities in manpower, finance, and internal security.

The Maritime Political Economy of the Laacedimonians and their allies. The Peloponnesian League did not begin as a maritime empire but as a hegemonic land coalition anchored in Spartan hoplite supremacy and helot agriculture. Yet the long war with Athens forced Lacedaemon and its allies to improvise a maritime political economy to break Athenian sea control without transforming themselves into a copy of the Athenian thalassocracy.

After the Persian Wars, Sparta remained deliberately cautious about overseas commitments, preferring to guarantee security through land campaigns and a web of alliances across the Peloponnese and central Greece.

The Peloponnesian League rested on reciprocal oaths: allies promised to “have the same friends and enemies” as Sparta, contributing troops and ships rather than paying regular tribute, thereby keeping the coalition structurally different from the Athenian tribute empire.

When the Peloponnesian War shifted decisively to the sea, especially after the Archidamian phase. Sparta had to bolt a naval-financial framework onto an agrarian-oligarchic core, turning to Persia and naval allies to fund and crew fleets that could threaten the crucial Athenian grain routes.

Because Sparta itself lacked coinage resources, silver mines, and a major commercial harbor, its strategy centered on weaponizing *disruption* rather than building an integrated maritime economy: occupying Attica at Decelea, encouraging revolts among Athenian allies, and partnering with Persian satraps to undermine the financial foundations of Athenian power.

The result by 410 BCE was a hybrid system: a land-based hegemon experimenting uneasily with Persian-funded naval warfare, while still grounded in the exploitation of helot labor and the compulsory contributions of allied states.

The Financial Architecture of the Peloponnesian League

- The Mechanics of Allied Contributions

Unlike the Delian League's fixed *phoros*, the Peloponnesian League extracted resources primarily in kind: hoplites, cavalry, light troops, and ships supplied by member states when Sparta declared war or called out the League. Corinth, Megara, Elis, and Boeotia were especially important, furnishing fleets and large infantry contingents that allowed Sparta to project power beyond Laconia without building a monetized imperial bureaucracy.

Financial flows were episodic and campaign-based. When wars were decided at land, the costs could be carried by agrarian surpluses and short campaigning seasons; invasions of Attica, for instance, relied on allied contingents sustaining themselves from home agriculture and plunder rather than on a standing payroll. The shift to naval warfare in the Ionian phase changed this calculus: maintaining rowers and fleets demanded regular pay in coined silver, which Sparta's internal system could not supply. This structural weakness drove Lacedaemon to secure external subsidies, above all from Persia.

- Persian Subsidies and the Emergence of Naval Pay

The decisive innovation in Spartan war finance was the alliance with Persian satraps such as Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus, who were eager to weaken Athens and reclaim control over the Ionian Greek cities. Treaties between Sparta and Persia pledged that the Great King would finance Peloponnesian fleets operating in Asia Minor and the Hellespont, providing pay for rowers and funds for ship construction in return for Spartan recognition of Persian authority over Asiatic Greeks.

These subsidies allowed Spartan admirals like Mindarus and, increasingly after 410, Lysander, to offer competitive wages to seamen, directly challenging Athens in the labor market for experienced rowers. Unlike the Athenians, Spartan institutions did not create a permanent central treasury for naval finance; instead, admirals negotiated directly with satraps, stored funds at regional bases, and distributed pay through their own networks, giving individual commanders enormous influence over fleet loyalty and operations.

This personalization of finance made Spartan naval power both flexible and fragile, highly dependent on the diplomatic skill and reliability of particular leaders.

- Imperial Administration, Currency, and Legal Control

Sparta never imposed a single currency standard across the Greek world, nor did it close allied mints or enforce a monetary monopoly like the Athenian Coinage Decree. At home, Spartans notoriously distrusted coin wealth, using cumbersome iron bars as nominal currency and banning gold and silver from domestic use, even as their commanders relied on foreign coin outside Laconia. In the wider League, cities retained their own coinage and weights; control was exerted through political oversight, garrisons, and treaty obligations rather than financial integration.

Legal centralization also remained limited. Allied states were not universally compelled to try commercial disputes in Spartan courts. Instead, Sparta exercised authority through *ad hoc* arbitration, the presence of Spartan commissioners or harmosts, and the implicit threat that resisting Spartan decisions could bring armed intervention. In areas where Sparta later established more direct dominance—especially after major victories—Spartan-appointed boards and governors constrained local autonomy, but in 410 BCE the system was still a patchwork of strong hegemonic influence rather than a codified imperial legal order.

- Trade, Infrastructure, and Strategic Materials

Sparta's core economy remained land-based, sustained by helot agriculture in Laconia and Messenia, with far less dependence on maritime trade than Athens. Grain, wine, and oil from helot-worked estates supported the citizen body and allowed Spartiates to train as full-time soldiers without direct economic labor, while perioikic communities handled much of the craft production and local commerce. The Peloponnesian League as a whole, however, encompassed critical commercial nodes:

Corinthian ports on the Isthmus, Megara's access to both the Corinthian and Saronic Gulfs, and later, key Ionian and Hellespontine cities that defected from Athens.

Strategic materials for war were drawn from this broader coalition. Timber came from allied or friendly regions with forest resources, including parts of the Peloponnese and, crucially, shipbuilding centers in Asia Minor funded by Persia. Metals, sailcloth, and naval equipment were increasingly sourced through eastern allies and satrapal territories, where Persian administrators could mobilize local suppliers and artisans to equip Peloponnesian fleets. Rather than building a single centralized military-industrial port like Piraeus, Spartan strategy relied on a constellation of regional bases of Corinthian harbors, Ionian docks, and Hellespontine shipyards, each serving as a node in a loosely coordinated maritime network.

- Extraction, Coercion, and the Economics of Rebellion

The Peloponnesian League's power did not rest on systematic tribute extraction but on the threat and use of force to keep allies aligned and to detach cities from the Athenian empire. When Sparta intervened, it typically backed oligarchic factions, promising internal autonomy and "freedom" from Athenian rule in exchange for military support, harbor access, and participation in campaigns. Cities that shifted into the Spartan camp during the Ionian phase were Chios, Miletus, and others often accepted Spartan oversight, garrisons, and naval bases as the price of liberation from Athenian *phoros*.

Coercion took the form of *harmosts* with garrisons and the restructuring of local governments. Although the most systematic imposition of "decarchies" and tighter control came slightly after 410 BCE, the pattern was already visible: Spartan officers using military presence and the fear of intervention to keep cities loyal and to extract logistical support. Exacting direct economic penalties like confiscations, forced contributions, or enforced provisioning was usually tied to specific campaigns rather than built into a standing tribute system, making Spartan exactions more irregular but often severe in moments of crisis.

- The Wartime Economy and the Strategy of Decelea

The occupation of Decelea in Attica from 413 BCE was the single most consequential Spartan economic move of the war. By fortifying a permanent base deep in Athenian territory, Sparta shut down Attic agriculture, severed land communications, and critically disrupted the Laurion silver mines, which had underwritten much of Athens' maritime economy. Helot-like slave laborers from the mines and workshops fled in large numbers, further weakening Athenian productive capacity and forcing Athens into total dependence on imported grain through the Piraeus.

From Sparta's perspective, Decelea was relatively cheap to maintain: rotating contingents of Spartans and allies garrisoned the fort, supplied from the Peloponnese and Attic plunder, while inflicting continuous economic attrition on the enemy.

This strategy aligned with Sparta's strengths of land forces, patience, and the ability to live off enemy territory while complementing the emergent naval pressure in the Hellespont. As the war dragged on, however, the need to keep forces in Attica, to send armies to distant theaters like Chalcidice and Asia Minor, and to crew new fleets intensified manpower and coordination strains across the League.

- Labor, Class Dynamics, and Social Strain

Spartan war-making was inseparable from its internal social order. At the top stood a shrinking corps of full citizen hoplites, whose education through the *agoge* prepared them for lifelong military service but whose numbers were already declining due to casualties and property concentration. Beneath them, perioikoi communities contributed additional hoplites and craftsmen, while helots worked the land under harsh conditions, collectively bearing the economic weight of Spartan campaigns.

Prolonged warfare forced Sparta to experiment with its own social boundaries. To meet manpower needs, helots were sometimes armed and promised emancipation in exchange for service, creating groups like the neodamodeis, who altered the traditional citizen-helot divide. This brought short-term military gains but heightened fears of revolt, since every expansion of helot military experience potentially undermined the internal equilibrium of Spartan society. Meanwhile, Persian subsidies and contact with monetized economies exposed Spartan leaders to wealth and personal patronage networks, subtly eroding the old ideal of austere equality among Spartiates and empowering ambitious figures such as Lysander who could control access to pay and prizes.

Economic Situation in 410 BCE

By 410 BCE, the Peloponnesian coalition occupied a paradoxical position. On land, Spartan power remained formidable: Decelea still strangled Attica, helot agriculture continued to support the citizen body, and the Peloponnesian League's hoplite resources were intact. At sea, however, Mindarus' crushing defeat and death at Cyzicus left the main Peloponnesian fleet destroyed and temporarily ceded control of the Hellespont back to Athens, reopening the Black Sea grain route and allowing the Athenians to impose new tolls and indemnities on regional trade.

Financially, Sparta itself did not face the same immediate bankruptcy risks as Athens, because it had never carried the overhead of a permanent navy or a large paid urban populace. Yet its naval project now depended even more heavily on Persian gold and on the willingness of allies to keep supplying ships and men after a catastrophic defeat.

Persian satraps still had strong incentives to continue supporting Sparta, and rising leaders like Lysander were already cultivating deeper ties and rebuilding fleets in eastern ports, but the setback at Cyzicus exposed just how vulnerable the new Spartan maritime system was to a single decisive loss.

From the perspective of a Spartan council in 410 BCE, the strategic question was not whether the League still had resources. It clearly did but whether it could reconstitute naval power fast enough, with Persian backing and allied endurance, to finish strangling the Athenian empire before internal social and political strains made the long war untenable.

Relations with City States

Athens

Sparta's rivalry with Athens defined the politics of the Greek world in the 5th century BCE. As leader of the Peloponnesian League, Sparta stood at the head of a loose alliance of mostly oligarchic, land-based states that valued discipline, hierarchy, and limited external change.

After the Persian Wars, Sparta accepted that Athens would dominate at sea for a time, but it viewed the rapid fortification of Athens, the construction of the Long Walls, and the conversion of the Delian League into an empire as a direct threat to the traditional balance of power.

Spartans feared that if Athenian naval and financial power kept growing, no mainland state would be able to resist Athenian interference. The disputes over Corinthian interests at Corcyra and Epidamnus, and the economic strangling of Megara, convinced Sparta that Athenian expansion would not stop on its own.

When war began in 431 BCE, Sparta followed a strategy of annual invasions of Attica, relying on hoplite superiority to devastate Athenian farmland and force a decisive land battle. Athens refused that trap and fought as a naval power. By 410 BCE, Sparta had adapted: it still held Decelea in Attica, but it had also turned toward Persia for money to build and pay fleets in the eastern Aegean, transforming the war into a struggle over sea control and alliances rather than just hoplites and walls.

Corinth

Corinth was Sparta's most important naval and commercial partner. Controlling the narrow isthmus between northern and southern Greece, it guarded key land routes and dominated traffic between the Aegean and western Greek world. Corinth's merchant fleet and warships made it a natural rival to Athens in trade, colonies, and influence in the western seas, especially around Corcyra and the Adriatic.

Corinth pushed Sparta toward war after Athens intervened at Corcyra and in the crisis over Epidamnus, seeing Athenian actions as intrusions into its colonial sphere. During the Peloponnesian War, Corinth supplied ships, sailors, and commanders to the League, fought major naval actions in the Corinthian Gulf and beyond, and helped stir revolts among Athenian subjects in the north and east. Yet the long conflict strained Corinth's resources.

By 410 BCE, Corinth remained firmly in Sparta's camp, but its navy had suffered losses, and it increasingly had to cooperate with Persian-backed Spartan admirals operating in distant theaters such as Ionia and the Hellespont.

Thebes

Thebes was Sparta's strongest land ally on the Greek mainland outside the Peloponnese. As leader of the Boeotian League, it controlled the region directly north of Attica and commanded the main overland approaches into Athenian territory.

Politically oligarchic and hostile to Athenian democracy, Thebes had long-standing grievances rooted in earlier Athenian attempts to dominate Boeotia, which had been beaten back.

Thebans pressed for harsh measures against Athens even before war began and urged the destruction of the city after the outbreak of hostilities. Throughout the war, Theban hoplites marched with Spartan-led forces into Attica and fought in central Greek campaigns, giving the Peloponnesian coalition depth and manpower. Thebes also played a central role in operations against Plataea, an Athenian ally on its frontier, showing its determination to remove Athenian influence from Boeotia.

Megara

Megara sat between Attica and the Peloponnese, making it one of the most strategically sensitive city-states in Greece. Its territory controlled the key land corridor between Athens and the Peloponnese and had ports on both the Saronic and Corinthian Gulfs. Megara's defection from Athens' friendship and alignment with Sparta was accelerated by the Megarian Decree, through which Athens barred Megarian merchants from Athenian markets and allied harbors, inflicting serious economic damage.

Once inside the Spartan orbit, Megara's territory became a forward base of operations. Spartan and allied forces could stage invasions of Attica from Megarian land, and the port of Nisaea offered an important position for watching and contesting Athenian movements along the Saronic coast. Megara could not match Athens in scale or resources, but its location multiplied Spartan options in both land and naval strategy. By 410 BCE, it remained a loyal, if vulnerable, Peloponnesian ally, functioning as a vital buffer on Athens' western flank and a reminder of the economic pressure Athens could bring to bear on smaller neighbors.

Argos

Argos was Sparta's traditional rival in the Peloponnese and never fully accepted subordinate status within a Spartan-led league. Its history of conflict with Sparta over regional leadership made it unwilling to join the Peloponnesian League, and for much of the 5th century it hovered between hostility to Sparta and cautious engagement with Athens.

For Sparta, Argos represented a potential threat close to home: if Athens could secure a solid alliance with Argos, Spartan hegemony in the Peloponnese would be undermined. This drove Sparta to monitor Argive politics closely, intervene diplomatically, and sometimes accept limited arrangements to keep Argos neutral rather than openly hostile. Over the course of the war, Argos occasionally cooperated with Athens but avoided deep commitments, preferring to protect its independence. By 410 BCE, Argos remained outside the core Spartan bloc but was not a reliable Athenian partner either its shifting stance was a strategic variable both coalitions had to factor into their calculations.

Elis

Elis, controlling the region around Olympia in the western Peloponnese, was a member of the Peloponnesian League and an important ally for Sparta in the early and middle phases of the war. Its territory offered access to the western seas and routes toward the Ionian coastline, and its participation lent religious prestige to the coalition, given its control of the Olympic sanctuary. However, Elis pursued its own interests and had frictions with other Peloponnesian states, including disputes over territories and influence within the League.

These tensions did not yet break the alliance by 410 BCE, but they foreshadowed later conflicts. For Sparta, Elis was both a partner and a management problem—useful for manpower and legitimacy, yet occasionally resistant to being treated as a subordinate.

Corcyra

Corcyra (modern Corfu) was not a stable Spartan ally, but its position and fleet made it critical to the rivalry. Before the war, Corcyra was one of the largest naval powers in Greece, and the dispute between Corcyra and Corinth over Epidamnus became a major diplomatic flashpoint when Athens chose to support Corcyra. Corinth interpreted that move as a direct challenge, and its outrage pushed Sparta closer to war.

During the conflict, Corcyra remained formally aligned with Athens, but its internal politics were marked by severe civil strife between democratic and oligarchic factions, with Spartan and Corinthian sympathizers backing oligarchs. For Sparta and Corinth, undermining Athenian control of Corcyra was strategically attractive: the island's fleet and position on routes to the western Greek world could seriously affect trade and naval movements. By 410 BCE, Corcyra had endured bloody internal conflict, and while it was not a Spartan possession, it was a contested space where Peloponnesian diplomacy and covert support to oligarchs aimed to erode Athenian influence.

Chios

Chios was originally a privileged member of the Athenian-led Delian League, contributing ships instead of tribute and enjoying considerable autonomy, but by the late stages of the war it had become one of the most important allies of Sparta. Following Athens' setback in Sicily, Chios revolted in 412 BCE and entered into alliance with Sparta, lured by promises of autonomy and supported by Peloponnesian fleets and Persian gold.

For Sparta, Chios provided a major naval and logistical base on the eastern Aegean routes and a symbol that even the most favored Athenian allies could be detached. Chian ships and resources strengthened Peloponnesian operations along the Ionian and Anatolian coasts, while the island's defection encouraged further revolts among Athenian subjects. By 410 BCE, Chios remained a cornerstone of the Spartan-Persian system in Ionia, complicating any Athenian attempt to restore full control over the eastern sea-lanes.

Miletus

Miletus was a prestigious and wealthy Ionian city that had once been part of the Athenian tribute system, but its revolt in 412 BCE and subsequent alignment with Sparta and Persia turned it into a central hub of the anti-Athenian coalition in Asia Minor. The city's harbor and location on the Ionian coast gave Sparta a powerful forward base for fleets, recruitment, and diplomacy.

Spartan commanders and Persian satraps used Miletus to coordinate joint operations, build and repair ships, and project power across Ionia and the Hellespont. The loss of Miletus weakened Athens' financial and strategic grip on the east and signaled to other cities that Athenian naval supremacy could be challenged. By 410 BCE, Miletus was firmly in the Spartan-Persian camp and one of the main anchors of their maritime strategy against Athens.

Ephesus

Ephesus, a major port and religious center on the Anatolian coast, drifted out of Athenian control as Spartan and Persian influence grew after the Sicilian disaster. Persian satraps and Spartan envoys converged on the city, which offered harbors, supply lines, and access to the Anatolian interior, making it an ideal staging area for naval operations.

While Ephesus did not necessarily present itself as a formal Spartan subject, in practice it functioned as part of the Spartan–Persian strategic network. Fleets could winter or assemble there, and the city's economic and logistical resources sustained the growing Peloponnesian naval presence in the east. By 410 BCE, its practical alignment lay with Sparta's cause, helping to undermine Athenian communications and secure the Anatolian coast for anti-Athenian operations.

Rhodes

Rhodes, a wealthy and naval-capable island in the southeastern Aegean, initially belonged to the Athenian alliance system but began to move away from Athens after 413 BCE. Its strategic position, controlling routes between the eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean, made it a highly valuable prize in the struggle for sea power.

Encouraged by Spartan diplomacy and backed by Persian money, Rhodes defected from Athens and joined the anti-Athenian side. For Sparta and Persia, Rhodes offered both shipbuilding capacity and a forward base close to key sea-lanes and to Asia Minor. Its change of allegiance eroded Athenian naval reach in the southeast and strengthened the broader Spartan naval coalition. By 410 BCE, Rhodes' cooperation enhanced the Peloponnesian ability to threaten Athenian movements across the eastern Mediterranean.

Byzantium

Byzantium guarded the Bosphorus, the narrow strait connecting the Aegean and Black Seas, and thus controlled the grain flow from the Pontic region that fed Athens. For Sparta, prying Byzantium away from Athens was a strategic priority: if the Bosphorus could be closed, Athenian food supplies would be at risk.

As the war shifted to the Hellespont and Propontis, Spartan and allied forces worked with local elites to bring Byzantium over to their side, exploiting Athenian setbacks and promising autonomy. Control of Byzantium and nearby cities allowed Spartan fleets to threaten or interrupt Athenian grain convoys.

Athenian victories in 410 BCE, including at Cyzicus, temporarily restored their grip on the region, but from the Spartan perspective Byzantium remained a critical objective and a focal point for future operations, precisely because of its decisive influence on Athenian survival.

Persia (The King and the Satraps)

Although not a Greek “state,” the Persian King and his western satraps became indispensable partners for Sparta once the war turned decisively maritime. Persian officials in Asia Minor saw an opportunity: by financing Spartan fleets and supporting revolts among Athenian subjects, they could weaken Athens and recover control over Ionian Greek cities lost after the Persian Wars.

Spartan envoys and admirals, first cautious, then more assertive, negotiated treaties granting Persia political authority over Asiatic Greeks in exchange for subsidies.

Persian gold paid rowers, built ships, and allowed Spartan commanders to compete with Athens in hiring experienced seamen. By 410 BCE, the Spartan–Persian relationship was central to the war’s eastern theater: it gave Sparta the resources it had never possessed on its own, while tying its strategy to Persian interests and to the personal connections of figures like Lysander and the satraps.

Sparta and Western Greece (Acarmania, Ambracia, and the Corinthian Gulf)

In western Greece, Sparta's influence was mediated largely through Peloponnesian allies such as Corinth and Ambracia rather than direct Spartan control. Thucydides presents Acarnania and allied communities around the Ambracian Gulf as persistent obstacles to Peloponnesian designs: they often sided with Athens, limiting Spartan and Corinthian advances in the region. Campaigns there, including those around Olpae and the Ambracian Gulf show how Spartan-aligned forces struggled against local geography and Athenian–Acarnanian cooperation.

Sparta itself did not invest heavily in building a durable network in western Greece; instead, it supported allied initiatives, sent commanders, and tried to counter Athenian positions such as Naupactus, which threatened Peloponnesian shipping. Western Greece remained a secondary theater where Sparta's aim was less to dominate than to deny Athens secure bases and easy access to the Ionian Sea. By 410 BCE, Spartan influence was present but uneven, reliant on local oligarchies and Corinthian energy rather than a coherent Lacedaemonian strategy.

Sparta and the Western Mediterranean (Sicily and Italy)

Thucydides shows that Sparta's involvement in Sicily and southern Italy was initially indirect, expressed through encouragement and limited support to Syracuse and other Dorian cities opposed to Athenian expansion. When Athens launched the Sicilian Expedition, Spartan agents and advisors, most notably Gylippus were eventually sent to stiffen Syracusan resistance and coordinate a land strategy against the Athenian siege.

Rhegium and other Italian cities appear in Thucydides mainly through the Athenian lens, but from a Spartan perspective their caution worked to Lacedaemonian advantage: their reluctance to commit fully to Athens limited Athenian logistical depth in the west. Carthage remains only a background factor in Thucydides, yet its power in western Sicily helped ensure that no single Greek state could easily dominate the entire island, indirectly complicating Athenian hopes for a quick, decisive victory. By 410 BCE, Sparta had turned the western theater from a potential Athenian springboard into a graveyard of Athenian resources, without needing to build its own empire there.

Sparta and Macedonia

Macedonia under Perdiccas II occupies in Thucydides a role of shifting, opportunistic partner, alternating between Athens and Sparta as circumstances changed. For Sparta, Macedon's main value lay in its location and its ability to stir trouble along the northern frontiers of Athenian influence, particularly in Chalcidice and around Amphipolis. When Spartan operations moved north under Brasidas, Macedonian cooperation though unreliable opened routes and provided a base for campaigning against Athenian allies.

Sparta never fully trusted Macedonian kings, nor tried to integrate Macedonia into a stable alliance framework. Instead, it accepted the fluidity of Macedonian politics and used it when possible to weaken Athens and encourage northern revolts. Timber and other resources from the Macedonian hinterland were strategically important, but Sparta tended to let Athens, not itself, negotiate long-term supply arrangements there. By 410 BCE, Macedon remained a useful but unpredictable piece in the wider game, more a spoiler against Athenian plans than a firm Spartan client.

Sparta and the Persian Empire

The most consequential "foreign" relationship for Sparta in Thucydides is with Persia, especially its western satraps. As the war shifted eastward, Sparta recognized that to match Athenian naval power it needed coin, not just hoplites, and Persia had the wealth to pay for fleets and crews in Ionia and the Hellespont. Spartan envoys concluded treaties in which the King's authority over the Asiatic Greek cities was acknowledged in return for financial support and naval cooperation.

Persian satraps like Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus used Sparta as an instrument to undermine Athens while pursuing their own interests, alternating between support and delay to keep both Greek coalitions weak. For Sparta, this relationship meant access to regular pay for sailors, shipbuilding subsidies, and safe bases along the Anatolian coast; for Persia, it meant a chance to reclaim influence lost after the Persian Wars. By 410 BCE, the Spartan–Persian connection was central to Peloponnesian strategy in the east, but it also committed Sparta to accepting a Persian role in Greek affairs it had previously resisted.

Sparta and the Black Sea Grain Route

Thucydides makes clear that control of the Hellespont and Bosphorus was vital because it governed access to northern grain supplies that kept Athens fed. Although Sparta did not have a direct political relationship with distant states like the Bosporan Kingdom, its strategy aimed to cut Athens off from them by seizing or influencing the straits and nearby cities such as Byzantium and those in the Hellespont.

By working with local elites and Persian-backed naval forces, Spartan commanders tried to interdict Athenian grain convoys and encourage defections along these routes. Athenian victories like Cyzicus in 410 BCE temporarily reversed these efforts, but from the Lacedaemonian perspective, success in the northern waterways would have turned Athens' distant trade links—Bosporan grain among them—into a pressure point rather than a lifeline. Thus, even without direct contact, Sparta shaped the conditions under which those foreign grain suppliers could matter to Athens at all.

Sparta and “Internal” Rivals (Helots and Messenia as a Strategic Factor)

For Sparta, the most dangerous “foreign” population was within its own borders: the helots, especially the Messenians, whose hostility and potential for revolt constantly influenced Spartan decisions. Thucydides notes that major campaigns were weighed against the risk of leaving Laconia and Messenia exposed, since any prolonged absence of Spartan forces might encourage uprisings.

Athenian control of places like Naupactus, populated with hostile Messenian exiles, added an external dimension to this internal threat. From such bases, enemies of Sparta could raid or encourage unrest. The Spartan leadership therefore had to balance operations abroad with constant attention to domestic security, treating helot populations and their expatriate communities almost as a foreign enemy that could erupt behind their lines. By 410 BCE, this structural vulnerability still constrained how boldly Sparta could exploit even its growing network of external allies.

Paperwork Guide

Position Paper ;

Every committee will have position papers which are documents meant to highlight a delegate's understanding of his/her allotments policy regarding a particular agenda. It consists of three fundamental parts:

1. Statement of the Problem
2. Policy Pertaining to the Agenda
3. Sample Position Papers for and for Cabinet allotments may be accessed here.

[Sample Position Paper.pdf](#)

Communiqué :

Communiqués are messages from usually an allotment to another country, organisation, person or group of people. Communiqués can be bilateral (between two countries) or multilateral. They are meant to facilitate dialogue with relevant actors in a crisis so that delegates can take action to resolve the various crises presented to them in committee. A communiqué needs to be well worded, sufficiently detailed and most importantly realistic enough. Delegates are to keep in mind that the Executive Board has absolute discretion with regards to ratifying and reading out any Communiqué submitted by a delegate as an update to the committee. Communiqués can either be either public or private.

A sample Private Communiqué may be accessed here:

[Sample Communiqué.pdf](#),

and a sample Public Communiqué may be accessed here:

[Public Comm.pdf](#).

Directive:

A Directive is a document that mandates an official series of measures. Unlike a Resolution in a typical MUN committee, a Directive is more straightforward, less formal, and intended for use multiple times throughout the conference, not just at the end of discussions. A thoroughly detailed and well-considered Directive will maximise the impact of your actions, whether positive or negative. Directives must be written in a clear and concise format. These directives are essential for addressing the immediate crises the committee will encounter during the conference. A sample Private Directive may be accessed here:

[Sample Directive.pdf](#)

Working Paper:

Delegates may propose working papers for committee consideration. Working Papers are intended to aid the committee in its discussion and formulation of resolutions and need not be written in resolution format. Working Papers require the approval of the EB to be copied and distributed. They are concise and an abridged form of the resolution.

Working papers represent the first step in the process of resolution writing. The wonderful thing about working papers is that unlike other formal documents in a MUN, they are absolutely informal. They do require signatories but have no absolute format, and can be about anything under your topic area. A sample working paper may be accessed here:

[Sample Working Paper.pdf](#)

Defection Paper:

Defection papers are the committee specific special paperwork whereby the delegates shall coordinate across the two JCCs to culminate in mutually cooperated covert endeavours where they shall engage in backdoor negotiations resulting in exchange of confidential information between the delegates/group of delegates from the two JCCS and/or engage in actions fulfilling their own hidden agenda which may or may not align with the common good of their own committee or Peloponnese for that matter.

The format for the defection paper may be accessed here:

[Sample Defection Paper.pdf](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further queries, kindly contact the JCC2 Lacedaemonian Empire Executive Board at **lacedaemonianjcc2.xmun26@gmail.com** or contact:

Chairperson:

Debayan Pathak

+91 62912 88391

pathakdebayan255@gmail.com

Chairperson:

Abhirup Sen

+91 98312 12909

senabhirup2009@gmail.com

Director:

Atmadeep Sur

+91 98754 77484

xaverianatma@gmail.com

Rapporteur:

Saahil Juthani

+91 62901 07378

juthani.saahil2020@gmail.com