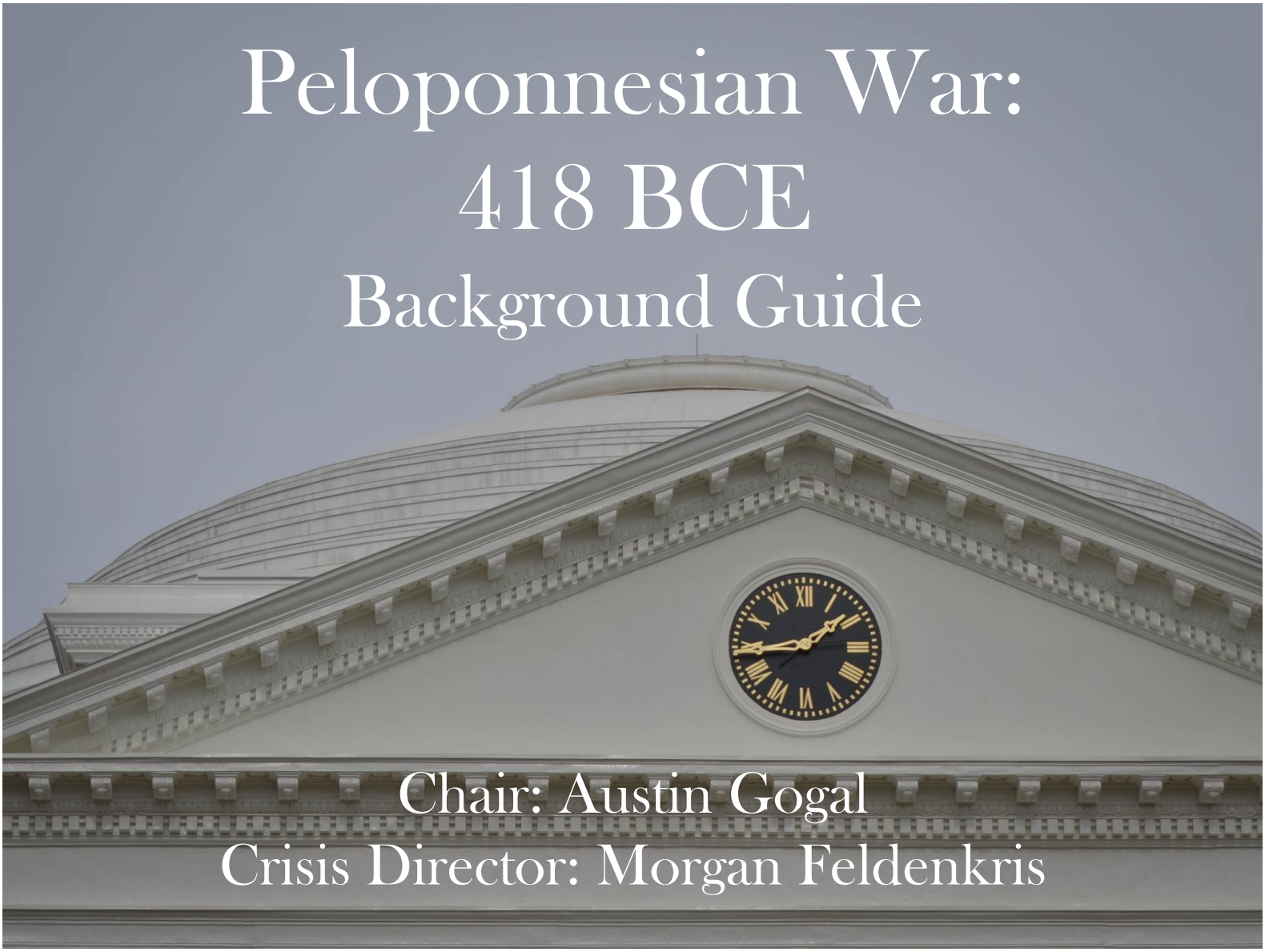
VICS XXI

Peloponnesian War: 418 BCE

Background Guide



Chair: Austin Gogal
Crisis Director: Morgan Feldenkris

Dear Delegates,

It is an honor to invite you to the 21st Virginia International Crisis Simulation, the University of Virginia's annual collegiate Model United Nations conference. VICS XXI will be held at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville from March 31 to April 3, 2016.

VICS offers nineteen innovative and interactive crisis committees, both historical and contemporary. We are committed to expanding the scope of what a crisis committee can do. As I write this letter in early November, our chairs are crafting their committees around topics ranging from the Space Race of the 1950s to a Summit of the American Gun Lobby. We are committed to expanding the scope of what a crisis committee can do, especially in our famous ad-hoc, the Secretary General's Good Offices, and in our pilot ad-hoc, the Directors General's Good Offices.

I can think of no better setting for the conference than the Grounds of the University of Virginia. VICS provides you with opportunities to interact with the University's rich history and with the many resources it has to offer. For example, on Friday morning, VICS encourages delegates to explore Charlottesville. VICS offers a series of tours of the city's attractions. These events extend discussion outside of committee and they give you the chance to meet members of the International Relations Organization and of the university community.

We also invite you to explore Charlottesville, one of the country's most exciting college towns. VICS hosts four social events in the city, which take you beyond a typical Model UN experience and provide opportunities to get to know delegates outside of committee.

I look forward to welcoming you to the University of Virginia and Charlottesville in March. If you have any questions, please reach out to me or the Chargé d'Affaires, Leah Day, at vics.charge@gmail.com or by phone at (703) 344-4275.

Sincerely,
Michael Treves
Secretary General
VICS XXI

Dear Delegates,

It is our honor to welcome you to Virginia International Crisis Simulation in its 21st year. While there are twenty fantastic committees the International Relations Organization of UVA has put together, if you have been chosen for the Peloponnesian War committee, then you are in for an incredibly fun experience! We are so excited to see what you bring to the table in committee and cannot wait to get a look at how Greece differs by the end of our last session.

First, some introductions are necessary. I'm Austin Gogal, your chair and a second year studying History and Economics, while working towards a Master of Teaching degree in the Curry School of Education. I was born in Falls Church City and love to compete in Model UN, having been an active member of George Mason High School's MUN team and currently serving as the Secretary of IRO at UVA. For other activities, I spend my time working with the Diversity Initiatives Committee of StudCo and am an active participant in Greek Life. Last semester I was enrolled in a history course entitled Ancient Greece, which gave me a passion for this historical time period and place.

Your crisis director will be Morgan Feldenkris. I am a first year hailing from Clifton, VA in Northern Virginia and could not be more thrilled to be placed in charge of disrupting the plans of this committee. I am looking to eventually double major in Foreign Affairs and History and am involved in Roosevelt Society and student radio outside of Model UN. Personally, I would like to seriously commend all delegates on their endeavor to comprehend the complexities and gaps of Ancient Greek history. Like Austin, I also took the Ancient Greece history course, so I understand the difficulties inherent in the subject; but I hope it fascinates you as much as it does for me!

The most crucial aspect of the interworking among delegates is a strong understanding of Ancient Greek political culture. This committee will be one quite dependent upon utilizing your own wits and knowledge not only just to position your city into a place of power in the League, but to advance personal interests as well. As you will come to understand in your research and perusing this Background Guide, the Greeks were intently focused upon timē (roughly translated to honor), both for themselves and their polis (city-state). Always remember that what you are debating for is the survival of the Peloponnesian League, your polis' place within it, and your personal honor as a Greek leader. After all, if you do not accomplish illustrious deeds, how will future generations remember your greatness?

Should you have any questions about the background guide or the committee in general please do not hesitate to email the Chair (asg7ef@virginia.edu), or Crisis Director (mgf8zg@virginia.edu), or the Director General for this committee, Carter Bakkum (vics.directorgeneral@gmail.com).

Sincerely,
Austin Gogal and Morgan Feldenkris

Homer and Greek Values

Beginning in 1150 BCE the complex and powerful civilization known as Mycenaean Greece saw a sharp decline into the Greek Dark Ages. For centuries, Greece did not achieve power or complexity rivalling the Mycenaean Age, but in the span of time legends and lore from this near-mythical era of power lived on. Homer's epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, were finalized in the late 8th Century BCE and outlined for Greek society those values which were to be praised. Set in the Mycenaean Era, Homer's world delineated for Greeks the *aretai* that were to be prized in society. *Aretai* are talents or qualities gifted to mortals by the gods in order to show their *timē* (honor), such as fierceness in battle, *metis* (cunning), and *sophrosyne* (self-discipline).[1] Over the centuries the importance of *aretai* oscillate and shift in comparison to one another, but Homer's works continue to frame one to better understand the intensely competitive nature shared by all Greeks. These Panhellenic values that draw Greeks together, while fostering a competitive spirit that simultaneously continues to pit them against one another. The culture surrounding *timē* in Homer's works, set at the collapse of Mycenaean Greece, is not too dissimilar to the habitus in late 5th Century BCE. Greeks of this time still enact these Homeric *aretai*, trying to demonstrate their abilities in battle and refusing to allow themselves or their *polis* (city-state) to loose *timē*. Continuing into the Peloponnesian War, the individual leaders and generals across the Greek world are shaped by societal values and thus place *timē* above all.

[1] The Illiad, Homer

Polis Culture

Emerging in the 8th century, the *polis* came into being as the standard governance in Greek society, essentially these were a city and its adjacent territories together making up its own independent political unit. Each *polis* had its own mythical history which bound its people together indelibly, and likewise separated them from not only foreign peoples but other Greeks as well. Sparta, for example, claims descent from the mythical hero Heracles. These foundational myths cause the peoples of Greece to be separated by bloodline. However, though each city-state has myths of this type, the extent to which their xenophobia affects their domestic and foreign policy varies immensely from *polis* to *polis*. Additionally, this xenophobia had class distinctions as well, with the aristocrats often branching out to make connections across the Greek world while the lower classes stayed within their *polis* only.

Gods, Oracles, and Counsel

Though each *polis* had its own patron God, the worship of all Gods was not only encouraged but necessary to avoid *miasma* (citywide curse) upon the people of the city. Methods of worship typically involved sacrifice of animal life, although gifts of gold and wealth were also quite common, failure to worship properly or irreverent actions were typically met with plague and strife. As well as rituals within the *polis* itself, Panhellenic rituals, the most famous of which being the games held at Olympia, allowed for individuals to gain status within their own *polis* as great athletes, earn their *polis* timē through their success, and increase their Panhellenic recognition. The role of the Gods was not only in superstition and competition however, but also in guiding mortal action

through divine will by speaking through the Oracle at Delphi, beginning in the 8th Century BCE. The Shrine at Delphi was inhabited by the *Pythia* (lead priestess) chosen by Apollo. The Oracle's words were typically cryptic, and thus required the interpretation of highly educated men. Though the prophecies were subject to interpretation, many *poleis*, especially Sparta, have never deviated from the observance of her counsel nor failed to take heed her warnings. For example, just prior to the outbreak of the Persian Wars, two Spartan Kings held a distinct loathing for one another, with Demaratus "maligning [Cleomenes]… from jealousy and malice" (6.60).[2] Cleomenes, fearful for his own Kingship, thus devised a plot to demonstrate Demaratus' illegitimate birth. Knowing the seriousness with which Spartans took the Oracle's warnings, Cleomenes persuaded the Pythia to proclaim Demaratus' illegitimacy, and thus successfully deposed Demaratus of his kingship. However, once "Cleomenes' evil plot against Demaratus became known" (6.74), Cleomenes fled from Sparta, fearing retribution. Although Sparta eventually allowed him to rule again, he became "stricken by madness" (6.75) and ultimately went on to gruesomely maul himself to death.[3] In this fairly recent occurrence, one can see the disastrous effects of *hubris*, as well as the power of the oracle and religion on Spartan society in particular.

The Rise of Sparta

The Area of Laconia has always been a region rich with culture, and a pinnacle of Greek excellence under the rule of the Lacedaemonian peoples, first through mercantile

[2] Herodotus 6.60-6.75
[3] Herodotus 6.60-6.75

and artistic expression, and then radically altered to a society of militaristic discipline and intense *philopatris* (love for *polis*). The legend holds that the Dorian peoples and the descendants of Heracles together gained control of the region of Laconia c. 950 BCE, establishing two royal houses from the Heraclid twins; the Agiads and the Eurypontids, who reigned together over the Spartan people.[4] Laconia is one of the great agricultural regions in an otherwise mountainous and rugged Peloponnesian landscape, and this element, combined with the Lacedaemonians subjugation of the other Greek tribes in their region into *Helots* (slaves), allowed Sparta as a *polis* to flourish in the 8th and early 7th centuries BCE. As Sparta grew in wealth however, so its internal problems grew as well. The ever rising Helot populations swelled to outnumber their wealthy and brutal masters by a ratio of 20:1, and greed thrived in the vast amounts of wealth and power available to the leaders of the Spartan state and thus caused great instability in the governmental structure. The Spartan state barreled towards collapse with internal strife affecting every aspect of life; reform was essential, yet it was not until Lycurgus, austere and incorruptible, inherited the throne in the 7th century that changes to attack the roots of corruption and fear of Helot uprisings were instituted.

Lycurgus and the Great Rhetra

Lycurgus, the brother of a Spartan King, developed for Sparta in the 8th Century one of the most radical political systems conceived in the diverse world of Greek poleis. This change would be in the form of the current Spartan constitution, the "Great Rhetra" given divine authority by the Oracle at Delphi "as a constitution which should be the

[4] Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2004)

best in the world".[5] These changes not only instituted the widely-known system of training near-flawless Spartan soldiers, but also instituted many other drastic economic and social reforms as well. One such provision is the establishment of a "senate of thirty members" called the *Gerousia*, which, along with the two kings, could "introduce and rescind measures; but the [Lacedaemonian] people must have the deciding voice and the power". The people however were not permitted to introduce their own measures, and "if the people should adopt a distorted motion, the senators and kings shall have power of adjournment" or to dissolve the assembly and nullify the measure.[6] This separation of powers ensured that in time "the Spartan kings did not experience the fate which the [...] Argives inflicted upon their kings" who acted unilaterally and without temperament.[7] In an economically radical move, Lycurgus provided allotments of fertile land to all Spartan families and abolished currency, so as to devote society to military prowess instead of economic strength. Finally, Lycurgus implemented the "institution of common messes, so that [the Lacedaemonians] might eat with one another in companies, of common and specified foods", in effect attacking the ability of the rich to enjoy more plentiful harvests and intentional separation from their countrymen that was prevalent in poleis.[8] These economic reforms addressed inequality to the extent of alleviating tensions and corruption, but a clear oligarchic system existed amongst the Ephors and Kings. Likewise the militaristic focus was necessitated in order to maintain control of the ever growing Helot population, but revolts remained common throughout the entirety of Spartan existence.

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[5] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus
[6] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus
[7] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus
[8] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus

Spartan Military

The Spartan Military differed immensely from other Greek Poleis, not so starkly in regard to tactics, but in discipline, training and organization. The dominant military unit throughout Greece was the Hoplite, typically a middle-class man who bought his own armor and answered the call to defend the *polis* when necessary. These levies therefore were usually poorly trained; a huge contrast with Spartan military training, a system where the boys would be enrolled in barracks by age seven and then live and train in their barracks until age 30. Once they left the barracks, they continued to hunt and train, remaining a full soldier until age 60. The education of Spartan youth was overseen by the *Ephors*. The Spartans encouraged the Homeric *aretai* of *sophrosyne* (self-discipline) to the best of their ability, receiving an iconic reputation as being the most disciplined and steadfast soldiers in all of Greece. The organization of the Spartan military command also differed from that of other Poleis, adopting a policy of single-command under one of their two kings, while the other governed at home. This as was opposed to the military boards of generals common in other *poleis*. Sparta also appointed admirals called *Navarchs*, who enjoyed the same military discretion and authority at sea as the Kings did on land, yet were limited to one year-long term. Though for many centuries, Sparta's naval power was relatively insignificant in comparison to that of its ally Corinth and adversary Athens.[9]

[9] Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2004)

A Brief History of Conquests of the Peloponnese

Poleis exerted their dominance and extended their power in various ways, choosing between military conquest and colonization as the primary methods of increasing their influence and prominence in early Greek society. By 550 BCE Sparta had conquered the neighboring *polis* of Messenia, the other great farming territory in the Peloponnese, subjugating its people into helotry.[10] The Spartans had continued to conquer its neighbors, but due to an already near unmanageable Helot population, elected to gain deference from the *polis*' they conquered, and the promise of military support from these states instead of enslavement. Argos remained the only *polis* in the Peloponnese that refused to recognize Spartan authority at any point, due to a fierce dislike of the Spartans and envy of their preeminence in Greek politics. Other *Poleis*, such as Athens and Corinth extended their influence by a different means, colonization. Greek colonies would be typically founded by one or more disaffected individuals from a given *polis*, retaining loyalty to their mother *polis*, which in turn would often supply and trade with the fledgling colony until it became relatively self-sufficient. Colonies were settled all over, ranging from Syracuse in Sicily, to Cyrene in Libya, to Corcyra on an island in the Adriatic. These typically paid homage and respected their mother and grandmother colonies, following in their footsteps for foreign policies.

[10] Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2004)

The Delian League, Athenian Democracy and Instability

The militaristic aspects of the Persian War (492 – 479 BCE), although fascinating can be best related to the Peloponnesian War by a summary of the conclusion of the conflict. The Spartans had been given total military authority of both the armies and navies of the Greeks, which included all the Peloponnesian and Athenian forces. Both the Athenians and the Spartans had their great moments of glory, with the Spartans proudly boasting the heroism of their dead king Leonidas and his royal guard of 300 Spartan oligarchs at the defense of the pass of Thermopylae in 480 BCE. The Athenians could equally claim just as much credit, given the decisive victory of the Greek navy, composed primarily of Athenian ships and rowers, over the Persians at the Battle of Salamis in 479 BCE. Yet it was at the Battle of Plataea, in the Spring of 479 BCE that the united Greek forces confronted the Persian army and drove them out. This defeat was seen with uncertainty, however, as many in Greece foresaw another Persian incursion on the way. Instantly following the expulsion of the Persian Empire, Sparta began to advocate for the destruction of all walls in the Peloponnese, so they could not be utilized by the Persians in the event of another invasion. The Athenians saw the Spartan suggestion as an affront to their independence, and so rebuilt their walls in secret before Sparta could stop them. Athens, emboldened by its newfound power in shipbuilding and naval experience, created its own confederation: The Delian League. This naval league was based upon the principles of mutual protection and exacting revenge on Persia. The League began by receiving support from Athens and Lesbos in the form of ships, and monetary tribute from many small island Poleis as well as Athens' historical Ionian colonies. Over time however, the tyranny of Athens became more and more apparent as

the Athenian government forced the *polis* of Carystus in southern Euboea to join the league in 476 BCE. When Naxos tried to leave the League, the Athenians refused to allow them to do so and ordered the *polis* to begin paying tribute in money rather than ships, despite that it had been optional up to this point. Cimon, the primary admiral and the leading politician of Athens at the time, was pro-Laconian and sought to keep the peace with Sparta despite Athens' recent grabs for power. However, following a humiliating rejection by the Spartan King upon leading the Athenian forces to the aid of Sparta in quelling a Helot rebellion in 461 BCE, Cimon was deposed via ostracism. The powers thus crept closer to war.

Pericles and War

Out of the ashes of peace rose Pericles, an Athenian demagogue who fueled xenophobic sentiments through passing a controversial citizenship law that rescinded granting citizenship to children not completely purely Athenian. He also spurred conflict by allying with Argos and poaching the mercantile *polis* of Megara from the Peloponnesian League to the Delian League in 459 BCE. The Athenians then not only repelled a Corinthian Invasion, but also completed the Long Walls project, linking the walls of the city of Athens itself to the coast thereby making it impossible to starve out the city by land alone. In 456 BCE the Athenians had conquered nearly all of Boeotia with the exception of Thebes, yet their empire grew sparse and weak as the Athenians suffered Persian invasion from the East in addition to overreaching imperialism in the West. Cimon returned from exile in 451 BCE, and signed treaties guaranteeing a 30 Years Peace between Sparta and Argos and a five-year truce between Sparta and Athens.

Eventually by 445 BCE, the Thebans led a campaign that reclaimed Boeotia and established their own Boeotian League, the Megarans had become disenchanted with the Athenian tyranny and switched back to the Peloponnesian League and as a result, that year Sparta and Athens signed an optimistically named Thirty Year's Peace treaty which would fall apart almost instantaneously.

Roots of the Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War has its roots within the structure of poleis established in the early Archaic Period, in the Homeric valuing of timē, and in the political fallout of the Persian War for the Greeks. Thucydides, the Athenian general responsible for almost all information that has come down to us from this period, clearly delineates that what made the Peloponnesian War inevitable was, "The growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta"[11]. Indeed, Sparta, the historic hegemon of the Greek world in the 5th Century found itself no longer fully in control. However, this loss of control can be said to have been felt as much, if not more, by Sparta's most powerful allies: Corinth, Thebes, and Megara.

As elaborated upon in the last section of the historical background, the 430's BCE saw a continual effort on the part of Athens to whittle away at the terms of the 30 Year's Peace established at the closing of the First Peloponnesian War. Now, scholars have debated for millennia about Athens' true motivations for continuing to harass the Peloponnesian League at Corcyra, Potidaea, and Megara, but what is undoubtable is the

[11] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner (London: Penguin Group, 1954), 1.23.

enormous pressure on Sparta in 431 to realize their grievances through war. This first part of the war, the ten years stretching until the 421 Peace of Nicias, is commonly known as the Archidamian War after Archidamus, the Agiad Spartan King until 426[12]. The earliest sections of the Archidamian War is marked by an inefficient and largely ineffective back-and-forth strategy of both combatants, wherein a Spartan land incursion into Attica was irrevocably met with an Athenian naval incursion into Laconia[13].

Athens: Plague and Pericles

This decade's warfare was not only defined by these trade-offs of invasion and subsequent escape by both, but indeed the Archidamian War saw some of the most dramatic and devastating events to come out of the entire period. Athens in particular is important to look upon in this first stage of the war to understand its motivations and tactics later on. Less than a year from the start of the conflict, Athens was hit by a plague of which, "there was no record of… being so virulent anywhere else or causing so many deaths as it did in Athens"[14]. The plague was likely caused by the Athenian leader Pericles' wartime strategy: to gather all Athenians of city and country into the Long Walls of Athens to provide defense from Sparta and dissuade any hope of Spartan victory[15]. Thus, the centerpiece of the Delian League was rapidly losing morale when the

[12] Donald Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 125.
[13] Scott M. Rusch, *Sparta at War: Strategy, Tactics, and Campaigns, 550-362 BC*, (London: Frontline Books, 2011), 84.
[14] Thucydides, *History*, 2.47.
[15] William O. Chittick and Annette Freyberg-Inan, "'Chiefly for Fear, Next for Honour, and Lastly for Profit': An Analysis of Foreign Policy Motivation in the Peloponnesian War," *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 1 (2001): 80.

war barely had started. Oftentimes, a loss of morale breeds desperation and this was exhibited at Athens both within and without the city walls. Thucydides, reporting from firsthand experience, writes that the plague resulted in, "a state of unprecedented lawlessness" and that, "What was both honourable and valuable was the pleasure of the moment"[16]. This attitude expressed itself in foreign policy once Pericles died of the plague he helped create in 429. Athens' democracy thus began to spiral into a situation wherein the whims of the people controlled the war; and the Periclean strategy of attempting to wait out the Spartans was no longer the favorable position among the Athenians.

Foreign Policies and Mytilene

After the plague and Pericles' death, Athens' foreign policy became aggressive towards both rebelling allies and the Peloponnesian League itself. Thucydides describes that the politicians post-Pericles were, "more equal with one another"[17], and thus these demagogues vied for the support of Athenians with flashier military victories and fulfilling of their want for justice. One such example is the Lesbian Conspiracy of 428, wherein the oligarchs of the island's primary city of Mytilene announced to the Peloponnesian League of their intentions to rebel against the Athenian Empire at that year's Olympic Games. After a long and eventually successful siege at Mytilene, unhampered by the Spartan navy due to its failure to mobilize its hesitant allies in aiding the rebels, Athens opted to leave the fate of Mytilene up to debate. In a display of

[16] Thucydides, *History*, 2.53.
[17] Thucydides, *History*, 2.65.

growing Athenian brutality, initially the Assembly voted to kill all the men of Mytilene and in the words of the demagogue Cleon, "'Punish them as they deserve, and make an example of them to your other allies'"[18]. After this decree, the Assembly reconvened and eventually relented to the side of peace; Athens sent ships to catch the ones initially sent with new instructions to kill only the rebelling oligarchs of Mytilene. Two themes emerge from the Mytilenean Revolt and Debate: Sparta's grip on its allies' support was weakening and Athens' far-reaching hawkish foreign policy was now reigning.

Indeed, the general disorganization of Sparta's Peloponnesian League is increasingly apparent as the Archidamian War raged on, both Sparta's hold on its allies and on its own citizens. Thucydides reports that in Sparta's decision to help Mytilene revolt, "they showed great energy, but the other allies were slow in coming in, since they were busy in harvesting their corn and tired of military service"[19]. The fundamental disconnect of Sparta with its allies differed greatly in structure with Athens' Delian League. The Peloponnesian League held Sparta as hegemon, but its members such as Corinth and Thebes were eminently powerful in ways Sparta could not be (e.g. navy, geography, and money). Thus, unlike the Delian League, which functioned as an Athenian Empire with Athens as the sole hegemon and power holder, the Peloponnesian League ironically was the more democratic of the two[20].

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[18] Thucydides, *History*, 3.40.
[19] Thucydides, *History*, 3.15.
[20] Sarah B. Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece: A Political, Social, and Cultural History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 174.

Pylos and Sphacteria

The latter half of the decade, after years of plague and rebellions, saw some triumphs for Athens. The main crux of the Peace of Nicias comes down to a tradeoff between Athens and Sparta of their most valuable possessions: Spartan warriors for Athenian cities. Athens in this war can credit its principal strategic victory to the general Demosthenes, who opted to go against the other Athenian generals in their decision to sail to Corcyra. Instead, the general docked his ships on the rocky coast of Pylos on the Western edge of Spartan-controlled and helot-populated Messenia[21]. Once he had amassed the support of the Athenian troops and ex-helots from the Athenian settlement of Naupactus, Demosthenes set about building a large fort with enormous defensive potential due to its status as a "natural stronghold"[22]. The most preeminent Spartan fear in the fort's establishment was Athenian military presence directly within helot territory, indeed potentially creating a natural stronghold for both Athens and a new helot revolt. The Spartan leadership was alarmed by this development, but the absence of King Agis II still intent on the "tradeoff warfare" and invading Attica, meant they could do naught but stay put, lest their generals and warriors be killed by the newly empowered helots[23].

Demosthenes effectively created a silent stranglehold on the center of Spartan society, the helots, making any move Sparta undertook internationally have enormous and immediate domestic consequences. Once the Spartan navy sailed to Pylos to destroy the new fortification, they set about reinforcing the island of Sphacteria right off the

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[21] Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, 138
[22] Thucydides, *History*, 4.4
[23] Robert B. Strassler, "The Opening of the Pylos Campaign," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 113, doi: 10.2307/631735.

coast with 420 Spartiate warriors, to negate the possibility of Athens using the island as another layer of defense. In the naval battle that followed, Sparta's navy was soundly defeated and thus they were forced to renounce any plans of a rescue attempt for those now stranded on Sphacteria. In a culturally stunning move, instead of fight off Athenian troops to the last man as in the Battle at Thermopylae, the 420 Spartans on Sphacteria did something no Spartan had yet done: surrender[24]. Not only was this an immense military defeat for Sparta, whose population was dwindling dangerously low already[25], but this also, "caused much more surprise among the Hellenes than anything else that happened in the war"[26]. From then on, the military resolve and timē of Sparta could be nothing but questioned in its integrity. Athens garnered for itself the key in the game that was the road to peace, but the advent of new Spartan strategies in the North whittled away the newly gained confidence.

Brasidas and Amphipolis

Brasidas appears in Thucydides' writings as a force of nature: charismatic, dominant, and strategic. Indeed, perhaps these qualities displayed themselves too much for Sparta's liking post-Sphacteria, where caution was paramount, indicated by them sending in other generals to oversee his actions[27]. The Thracian campaign he waged on the borderlands of the Greek world was exceedingly timely for his own personal glory, but was risky considering the Athenian general Nicias' recent forced surrenders of the

[24] Rusch, *Sparta at War,* 93.
[25] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece*, 168.
[26] Thucydides, *History*, 4.38.
[27] H.D. Westlake, "Thucydides, Brasidas, and Clearidas," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 21, no. 4 (1980): 334.

island polis of Kythira and historical polis of Thyrea[28]. At the Battle of Amphipolis in 422, the Athenian general Cleon tried to retake the recently lost colony, but was hit by a surprise attack by Brasidas' troops and died while attempting to flee (according to the noted dislike of Cleon, Thucydides)[29]. The ambitious general Brasidas won the battle, but he too met death on the battlefield. Once Brasidas died, the extent of the split in political orientation towards the war within Sparta became clear. His successor as general of the Northern forces, Clearidas, as well as his remaining troops, "must have felt aggrieved that Sparta had granted them so little support and did not appear to be appreciative of their achievement in defeating the Athenians"[30]. The Battle of Amphipolis left a situation in which, "The two people who on each side has been most opposed to peace" were left dead of their own militaristic ambition, opening the way for negotiations to open between the Spartan and Athenian governments[31].

Peace of Nicias

The Archidamian War thus came to a close with the Battle of Amphipolis, a conclusion that in effect symbolically and literally killed the military spirit of the leading poleis of the war. The Peace was only able to be established, not just due to the deaths of Cleon and Brasidas, but most crucially because, "The Spartans… were extremely anxious to get back the men who had been captured on the island" and "Athens has suffered another defeat at Amphipolis"[32]. The peace terms can be said to be decidedly pro-

[28] Rusch, *Sparta at War*, 97.
[29] Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, 186.
[30] Westlake, "Thucydides, Brasidas, and Clearidas", 336.
[31] Thucydides, *History*, 5.16.
[32] Thucydides, *History*, 5.15-5.16.

Athens, due most likely the King Pleistoanax's continual striving for any peace negotiation and the desperate situation concerning returning those who had surrendered at Sphacteria[33]. Of course, however, the fundamental reasoning behind the Peloponnesian War was unsolved; Athens remained in control of a domineering naval empire that pushed into the "security, prosperity, and community" of nearly every major polis of the Peloponnesian League[34]. Indeed, locked inside the psyche of Athens as a polis was still the viewpoint it expressed to Sparta a decade earlier, that by this point in their history, "it was clearly no longer safe for us to risk letting our empire go"[35]. Though the primary attitude of Athens at the time may have been that of peace, seen especially in the surviving plays of the day and choosing the peaceful Nicias as their representative, their unique position as head of an empire had imbued imperialist tendencies that could not be shook with a few defeats[36].

Another undeniable underlying area of tension unrepresented in the formalized Peace of Nicias were the viewpoints of Sparta's allies. Besides the establishment of the fort at Pylos, the vast majority of Athenian military engagements in the war were against Corinth, Thebes, Megara, and other smaller Peloponnesian poleis. Indeed, the Peace was staunchly opposed by these three major poleis, with none even agreeing to sign it unless Athens was more harshly punished for its crimes[37]. Fundamentally, the peace fulfilled the goals of Athens in going to war, maintaining its empire, while denying to Sparta's angered and honor-besmirched allies the fulfillment of their goal, the regaining

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[33] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece*, 328 - 331.
[34] Chittick and Freyberg-Inan, *Foreign Policy Motivation in the Peloponnesian War*, 70.
[35] Thucydides, *History*, 1.75.
[36] Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War*, 190 - 191.
[37] Pomeroy et al., *Ancient Greece*, 332.

of security for the members of the Peloponnesian League[38]. Thus, Greece was left in a state of what Thucydides considers an "uneasy truce", describing harshly that, "it is hardly possible to use the word 'peace' of a situation in which neither side gave back or received what had been promised"[39].

Athens and Argos

Though no major conflicts pitting Athens against Sparta had occurred from the establishment of the Peace in 421 to the start of 418, the rumblings of new alliances and tensions erupting were audible for all to hear. The most clearly dangerous of these to the Peloponnesian League was the reappearance of Sparta's historical enemy, Argos, to the forefront of potential battle. As previously discussed, Argos and Sparta operated in continuous cycles of peace and very brief war, with the former trying to wrest power from the latter and gain hegemony over the Peloponnese. With their treaty now expired, right on the eve of the Peace, Argos was easily manipulated by an infuriated and humiliated Corinth to steadily begin building an alliance that would once-and-for-all take the Peloponnese from Sparta and its new ally Athens[40]. This plot fell through, as did countless others in all poleis in the three first years of the Peace of Nicias to secure better positioning in the nigh-inevitable upcoming continuation of the war. The formalization of the final alliance of Argos, with Athens, was completed in 420 by the charismatic and warlike descendent of Pericles, the Athenian general Alcibiades. By 419, the Peloponnesian-aligned city of Epidaurus was taken by Argos, in a clearly Athenian-

[38] Ronald P. Legon, "The Peace of Nicias," *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 4 (1969): 324.
[39] Thucydides, *History*, 5.26.
[40] Kagan, *The Peloponnesian War, 200*

connected display of force to Sparta and Corinth. After a disastrous and enormous battle for all sides was averted through personal diplomacy, "both sides thought of the victory they had 'lost', not of the danger they had escaped"[41]. Thus in a case lost honor and strategic necessity, the poleis of the Greek world are positioned at each other's throats on the eve of 418 BCE and each individual Greek leader seeks to assert dominance and win glory.

Questions to Consider

1. What factors drive Sparta's continued involvement in the Peloponnesian War, and what effect does this have on individuals in their tightly structured society?
2. Athens has to some extent proven its commitment to the war effort, coming out of the plague even more ruthless than before. What can be done by the peace-preferring voices of the Peloponnesian League to counteract arguments from allies that stem from this fact?
3. How can Sparta prove itself a strong hegemon of the Peloponnesian League, even with its attitudes toward peace negotiations and its denigration of its own cultural values by freely readmitting the disgraced surrendering Spartiates back into society?
4. Corinth, Thebes, and Megara face a more eminent threat to their danger from Athens than Sparta due strictly to geographic factors. Why is it that these powers continue to hold up the Spartan-led Peloponnesian League?

[41] Rusch, *Sparta at War*, 105 - 107.

5. The Northern reaches of the Greek World, Macedon and Thrace, have become of increasing importance to the continuation and growth of the Athenian Empire. However, are these territories worth fighting for by the members of the Peloponnesian League?
6. Does the price of Persian participation on the side of Sparta, namely the retaking of Ionian coast cities, prohibit aligning with the enormously monetarily powerful empire? Where does ethnocentrism and national historical narrative play into this decision?
7. What role, if any, do Homeric values of timē and personal revenge play in the debates of the Peloponnesian League and the positions held by individual representatives?

Additional Resources

- Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*
    - Available online in many translations
- Herodotus *The Histories*
    - Available online in many translations
- Plutarch's Greek and Roman Lives
    - Detailed biographies as well as incredible descriptions of reforms and classical society
- Livius.org
    - Comprehensive encyclopedia of ancient history
- Journal of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies
    - Free, online access to Duke's journal of classical studies
    - Offers many free PDF's for research
- Perseus Digital Library
    - Enormous library of digitized and translated works from Ancient Greece
- Pleiades - The Stoa Consortium
    - Geographical aid for the entirety of the Ancient Greek World
- Princeton Encyclopedia of Ancient Sites

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