The Peloponnesian War II
The Peace of Nicias to the Fall of Athens
Peace of Nicias, 421:

• Athens:
  • Loss at Amphipolis
  • Loss at Delium
  • Plataea
  • Fear of revolt

• Sparta:
  • End of truce with Argos
  • Athenians at Naupactus, Pylos and Cythera
  • Corcyra allied with Athens
  • Helot revolt
The Argive Alliance

• Battle of Mantinea
• July of 418 BC
Melian Dialogue: Thuc. v 84-116

• 416/5
• Athens attacks and sacks Melos:
  • “The powerful exact what they can, while the weak yield what they must” (Thuc.5.89).
• Thucydides, an aristocrat, worked “to reconcile the naked pursuit of interest with the soothing fictions of the archaic Greek elite” (Crane 1998: 22).
Sicily, 415

• Nicias’ 2nd Blunder:
  • “armament that sailed for Sicily was the costliest and most splendid, belonging to a single city, that had ever up to that time set sail” (Thuc. 6.31.1).
• Lamachus, Alcibiades and Nicias, the “three idiots” (Aristophanes Ach. 598)
• 60 ships made ready in 416/5
Defamation:

• **June of 415:**
  • Three *strategoi* addressing the assembly...
  • News brought of the defamation

• **Alcibiades ordered to sail with the fleet**

• **Trials held in his absence:**
  • Recalled in winter of 415/4
  • Flees to Sparta
The Mysteries and the Herms

• Hermes:
  • God of roads, traffic, messengers and markets

• Herm:
  • Originally a cairn demarcating property
  • Carved Herms originated in Athens (Hdt. ii.51)
  • Associated with the Cult of Demeter and Core
Herms
Sicily
Sicily: 415 - 14

• Lamachus
  • Killed in the summer of 414

• Nicias
  • Failed to take Syracuse
  • Asked for more troops

• Sparta sends Gylippus to Syracuse
Sicily: 413

• Demosthenes sent with a relief force
  • Lost a naval battle in the Great Harbour

• Nicias
  • Lunar eclipse, 27 August 413
  • Delayed retreat
  • Forced to retreat overland

• Demosthenes and Nicias both executed
Between 415 and 413 BC, Athens lost over 20,000 men in Sicily, including all of the generals. It caused Sparta to renew the war, and brought Syracusan naval expertise to the Aegean.
Alcibiades at Sparta

- Advised Spartan war strategy:
  - Send aid to Syracuse
  - Attack and occupy Decelea
  - Strip Athens of her allies
- Adopted Spartan habits
- Seduced Timaea, Agis’ wife
Agis at Deceleia

• 413:
  • Agis takes and fortifies Deceleia
  • Interrupt supplies from Euboea
  • Cut off allies from Thessaly

• 412:
  • Gains Malian Gulf states
  • Accepts envoys from Euboea and Lesbos
  • Athenian fleet defeated at Oropus
Decelea
Ionian War
The Ionian War

- **412:**
  - Athens bases navy on Samos (104 ships)
  - Recovery of Miletus fails
  - Rhodes and Cnidos revolt
  - Chios and Lesbos subdued

- **Athens:**
  - Threatened from all sides
  - Bankrupt
Alcibiades the chameleon:

• Alcibiades condemned in Sparta
• Seeks refuge with fleet on Samos
  • Alcibiades... “had been forced by his enemies to give proof of his own valour at the expense of his fatherland” (Diod. xiii 41.5).

• Alcibiades’ Promise:
  • Overthrow the Demos and I will bring Tissaphernes.
The Revolution of 411

- To what extend does fear precipitate irrational decisions?
- For fear they would lose the war, the Athenians voted the democracy out of existence.
  - Late May 411 BC.
- A council of 400 aristocrats assumed power.
  - Their secret policy was surrender to Sparta.
Eetioneia:

- The Four Hundred begin construction of a fort at Eetioneia
- Theramenes breaks away from the 400
- ... leads a force to destroy the fort
- Peloponnesian fleet turns away
Eetioneia
Samos

• The fleet:
  • Led by Thrasybulus and Thrasylus, opposes the 400
  • Elect Alcibiades strategos to defend democracy!

• Stasis:
  • Thrasybulus ready to sail against Athens!
  • Alcibiades: self interest cloaked in reason
Failure of the Four Hundred

• Athenian loss at Oropus
• Revolt of Euboea
• Sparta...
  • “the most convenient people in the world for the Athenians to make war upon” (Thuc. viii 96.5)
• The Four Hundred deposed
• The Five Thousand given power (late 411)
  • The oligarchs flee to Decelea
Athens Recovers: 411-10

- Battle of Cynossema
  - Athenian fleet defeats Spartan fleet
- Thucydides stops writing
- Battle of Abydus
  - Athenian victory with Alcibiades supporting
- Battle of Cyzicus (early 410)
  - Alcibiades victorious over Spartans
  - Spartans seek peace terms
Arginusae

- 408/7
  - Alcibiades pardoned and elected general
  - Early losses and legal action force him into exile again
- Lysander – Spartan commander
- Conon becomes commander of Athenian forces
- 406
  - Conon besieged in the harbor of Mytilene
- Battle of Arginusae
  - Sparta sues for peace – rejected.
Arginusae
Aegospotami

• 405 BC
• Lysander attacking Lampsacus
• Athens with 180 ships
  • Put in at Aegospotami
  • 170 ships captured on the beach

• “When the Athenians heard... they abandoned the policy of control of the sea...” (Diod. xiii 107.1)
Aegospotami
Fall of Athens

• Winter of 405/4:
  • Sparta blockades Athenian harbours
  • Spartan army surrounds the walls of Athens

• Athens capitulates in Spring 404 BC
  • Disband the empire,
  • Tear down the Long Walls
  • Own no more than 12 warships
  • Disband the democracy