The Peloponnesian War
Hope and Fear

“The truest explanation... the growth of Athens to greatness and Spartan fear” (Thuc. i.23.5)

“The majority of the Hellenes were angry with the Athenians, some wishing to be delivered from their control, others fearful of falling under it” (Thuc. ii. 8.4)
Corcyra
434 -33

- Epidamnus
  - Colony of Corinth
  - Seeks colony status from Corcyra
- Corinth threatens war
- Corcyra appeals to Athens
  - Adds naval strength to Athens
  - Strategic position
- Athens agrees and sends 20 ships
Potidaea

- Athenian tribute state
- Corinthian Colony
- Athens:
  - Feared that Corinth would use Potidaea to retaliate.
  - Feared the involvement of Perdiccas of Macedon
  - Ordered Potidaea to expel the Corinthians
  - Potidaea rises in revolt.
The Megarian Decree

- **Megara** a member of the Peloponnesian League since 445 BC
- **Megarian Decree (before 435?)**
  - Megarians may not use Athenian harbours or markets.
  - Pericles issued the decree to incite war
  - (Diod. xii 40.6; Aristophanes *Peace* 603-11)
Megarian Decree
Corinth

- Main instigator in the Peloponnesian League
- Athenian interference a breach of the treaty
- Corinth demands that the League respond
  - Athenian treatment of subject states
  - Megarian Decree
  - Corcyra
  - Potidaea
“And the war began when the Athenians and Peloponnesians broke the Thirty Years Truce...” (Thuc. i.23.4)

March 5/6th, 431 BC

Thebes attempts to take Plataea by force.

“... the treaty had been broken by an overt act” (Thuc. ii. 7.1)
Archidamus’ Strategy

- “they will take the field against us... when they see us destroying their property” (Thuc. ii 11.6)
- “...to provoke rather than to ruin the Athenians” (Hanson, 2006: 53)
- Olive trees and barley crops:
  - Hanson 1998: et al., ad nauseum
  - 431 – 421: Spartans in Attica less than 150 days (Hanson, 2006: 57)
Pericles’ Strategy

- Withdraw inside the walls
- Do not engage in hoplite battle
- When Archidamus sees he cannot win, he will stop
  - Planning not to loose is not the same as planning to win:
  - Pericles “never really had any clear strategy for how to mount an offensive...” (Hanson, 2006: 20).
Thucydides “seldom makes tactical or strategic connections between nearly simultaneous operations. It is not because he is ignorant of the main plot of the war but, rather, because there often was none” (Hanson, 2006: 31).
Early Manoeuvres
SIDE, TOP AND SECTION VIEWS of *Olympias* are shown in these scale drawings. The 170 rowers were arranged in three files on each side: 31 in the top bank and 27 in each of the two lower banks. The six files are arranged in a V shape, with the lowest bank farthest inboard and the top one farthest outboard. The pivots for the topmost oars were placed on outriggers. The seats of the rowers in the top and bottom files were angled a few degrees inboard, so that all the oar tips were evenly spaced.
Plague

- Spring 430:
  - Archidamus invades Attica again
  - Plague arrives in Athens
    - 1/3 (?) of the population dies
    - Pericles’ sons by his first wife die
The Fog of War

- The plague at Athens
  - Above all else, plan to change plans
  - Had the plague not hit, the Spartans would have admitted defeat after that first year (Plut. Per. 34).
- Expedition to Epidaurus
- Plague spread to Potidaea
Pericles

- Dies of the Plague
- September of 429 BC.
- His successors:
- “...fell the victims of their own intestine disorders” (Thuc. ii.64)
The New Leadership

- **Nicias**
  - Leader of the Oligarchic Faction
  - Shy, nervous, easily intimidated, so cautious it might have been cowardice

- **Cleon**
  - Leader of the Demos
  - Bold to the point of foolishness
  - First real demagogue
Mytilene

- Summer of 428
- Lesbos rises in revolt
- “We became allies, however, not to the Athenians for the enslavement of the Hellenes, but to the Hellenes for their emancipation from the Persians.” (Thuc. iii.10.2-3)
Cleon

- Leader of the Demos
- All male citizens of Mytilene put to death (Thuc. iii.36.2-6)
- Diodotus:
  - Surrender under terms
- “in no hurry on so horrible a business” (Thuc. iii. 49.4)
Politics in Sparta

Agiad House

Leonidas (490 - 80) Cleombrotus (480-79)

Pausanias (479 - 66)

Pleistoanax (458-08) Lampido = Archidamus (468 -26)

Pausanias (408-394) Agis (426-398)

Eurypontid House

Leutychides (491-68)

Zeuxidamus

Lampido = Archidamus (468 -26)

Agis (426-398)
425:
- 80 Athenian ships/ 40 Spartan ships heading for Sicily
- Demosthenes lands at Pylos
- Spartans take Sphacteria - 420 hoplites

Hammer and Anvil:
- Athenians besiege Sphacteria
- Light armed troops
Pylos and Sphacteria
Spartan Response

- Any Helot who could prove leadership and service to his country could come forward and be given his freedom.
- 2000 did so
- They were marched off and executed
  (Thuc. iv.80; Plut. Lycurgus 28.3)
Nicias’ 1st Blunder

Cleon:
- Critical of the generals at Pylos
- Boasted he could win in 20 days

Nicias
- Resigned his office

Cleon
- Humiliated Sparta and Nicias
Amphipolis

- 424:
  - Brasidas takes Amphipolis
  - Thucydides' failure

- 422:
  - Cleon and Brasidas killed at Amphipolis

- 421:
  - The Peace of Nicias
Peace:

- Athens:
  - Loss at Amphipolis
  - Loss at Delium
  - Fear of revolt

- Sparta:
  - End of truce with Argos
  - Athenians at Pylos and Cythera
  - Helot revolt
Alcibiades:

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Megacles (ii) = Agariste
     / \                             / \                         / \   / \
Cleisthenes  Hippocrates  Euryptolemus  Miltiades
     \   /       \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \
Xanthippus = Agariste  Megacles  Isodice = Cimon
      \   /       \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \   /   \\
       Pericles  Deinomache
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Alcibiades
Alcibiades

- Born in 450 BC. To Cleinias and Dinomache
  - Cleinias killed in the battle of Coronea in 447 BC.
- Alcibiades was raised by Pericles.
- A student and close friend of Socrates.
- Served at Potidæa in 432 and Delium in 424
  - At Potidæa Alcibiades was saved by Socrates.
  - At Delium he returned the favour.
The Argive Alliance

- Battle of Mantinea
- July of 418 BC
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
Sicily, 415

Nicias' 2\textsuperscript{nd} 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
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
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
Sicily: 415 - 14

- Lamachus
  - Killed in the summer of 414
- Nicias
  - Failed to take Syracuse
  - Asked for more troops
- Sparta sends Gylippus to Syracuse
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
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
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
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.
Four Factions:

- **Radical Democrats**
  - Maintain constitutional status quo
- **Moderate Democrats**
  - Democracy but with more safeguards
- **Moderate Oligarchs**
  - Rule of 5000
- **Radical Oligarchs**
  - Rule of 400
Radical Democrats

- Had supported the Sicilian Expedition
- Supported the War with Sparta
- Power based on the voting rights and service in the fleet of the thetes

Samos
- 104 ships
- 18,000 rowers
- 3000 hoplites
Moderate Democrats

- **Hoplite Class**
  - Suffered heavily at Delium, Mantinea and Sicily
- **Power based on wealth and military**
- **Land owners**
  - Suffered from Spartan invasions of Attica
- **Cleruchs**
  - Suffered from loss of subject states
Oligarchs

- Blamed the Demos for Sicily
- **Moderate:**
  - Only hoplite class with full voting rights
  - Government of 5000 based on wealth
- **Radical:**
  - Suffering from liturgies and trierarchies
  - Government of the wealthiest only
  - Peace with Sparta at any cost
Revolution of 411:

- Alcibiades wins the “trierarchs and most powerful men” on Samos (Thuc. viii. 47.2)
- Peisander sent to Athens
- Organized through the hetaireiai
- Jan - Feb 411: Androcles murdered
- May 411: Ecclesia votes itself out of existence
- Government of 5000, council of 400
The Four Hundred

- Peisander, Antiphon, Theramenes
- Boule replaced by force
- Four Hundred take direct control
- List of 5000 never completed
- Peace offered to Agis
- Refuse to recall Alcibiades
Eetioneia:

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

- The fleet:
  - Led by Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus, 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 (May 410)**
  - Alcibiades victorious over Spartans
  - Spartans seek peace terms
Sources:

- Xenophon
  - *Hellenica / Oeconomicus / Memorabilia*
- Diodorus Siculus
  - *Bibliotheca Book xiii - xiv*
- Plutarch
  - *Lives*
- Aristotle
  - *Athenaios Politaea*
- Theopompus
  - *Hellenica (non extant)*
405 BC

Lysander attacking Lampsacus

Conon and Philocles with 180 ships
- Put in at Aegospotami
- Caught on the beach - 170 ships captured

Lysander attacks Samos
- “When the Athenians heard... they abandoned the policy of control of the sea...” (Diod. xiii 107.1)
Agis and Pausanias invade Attica
- The Peloponnesian army before the walls of Athens
Lysander blockades Athens by sea
- Over 200 ships
Athens capitulates in April, 404 BC
Peace Terms:

Theramenes leads delegation to Sparta

- Corinth and Thebes advocate destruction of Athens
- Athenians ordered to pull down the long walls.
- All but 12 ships surrendered
- Democracy dissolved
- Restoration of the old constitution