

431-421 – Battle of Megara

The battle of Megara was fought between Athens and Megara, an ally of Sparta, in 424 BCE. Megara was in the country of Megarid, which lay between Greece and the Peloponnese.



Figure 1; Map of Greek Polies. (Image from: <https://historianerdicus.wordpress.com/2013/01/27/the-causes-of-the-peloponnesian-war-the-megarian-decrees/>)

The battle took place in the first decade in Peloponnesian War and during the Archidamian phase (Wick T.E, Wick T.T., 1979, p. 1-14). The information on the affairs of Megara in the fifth century are incomplete. The information regarding her internal politics and whether Megara was a democracy or an oligarchy during this period (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225).

It is thought that Megara was most likely to be an oligarchy as she had a presence among the Peloponnesian League. However, Megara severed her ties with the League in order to form an alliance with Athens. This was to protect and safeguard their interests and from Corinth (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225). Megara was under Athenian control. (Wick T.E, Wick T.T., 1979, p. 1-14).

Not long after the Megarians rejoined the Peloponnesian League after butchering the Athenians in their territory. The motive behind this is unclear (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225). There is a suggestion that the Athenians became very oppressive or the reason behind the attack was due to the dramatic shift of Megara's radical change in domestic politics (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225).

After this Megara was excluded from any Athenian trade etc. There was a huge outbreak of hostility between Sparta and Athens, Megara become one of the main battle grounds (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225). The hostile forces cut off Megara's links with many including Boeotia which led to her increasing isolation (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225).

Brasidas during an assault. (Image from: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brasidas>)

In 427 BCE Megara submitted to the Spartans and Thebans. This made Megara a ally of Sparta and under her control. As allies Sparta, Corinth and Thebes needed to protect and defend Megara from Athens. (Phoenix. 1968, p. 200-225). The switching of alliances continued constantly as Megara was suppressed continuously. When Brasidas came to Megara he demanded their alliance and submission. Megara was now, once again, in an awkward position between Sparta and Athens. (Phoenix. 1968, p. 218).

Brasidas outmaneuvered the Athenian force and took Megara. Many fled Nisaea and supported the Athenians later in the war (Phoenix. 1968, p. 218-220). The battle began when Brasidas came with a larger army than the Athenians. The war between Athens and Sparta in Megara came to an end when Athens, finally took the long walls of Megara (Phoenix. 1968, p. 221). However, Megara was still a part of the Peloponnesian League so, when the Peloponnesian army came to Megara, both the remaining Spartans and Athenian armies and her allies fled from Megara.

