

431-421 – Rule of Archidamus II

Archidamus II was the Spartan King from 469-427 BCE. He was a member of one of the royal families in Sparta, Eurypontid (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly). His grandfather was Leotychidas II, whom he succeeded (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly). He reigned for forty years and married twice (Hornblower S and Spawforth T. 2003).

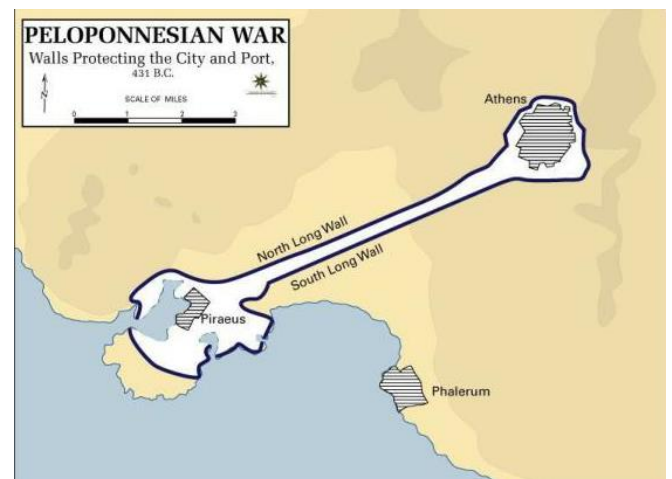


*Figure 1; Map of territories of ancient Sparta.
(Image from; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sparta>).*

He first distinguished himself during the great earthquake of 464 BCE (Eidinow E. 2012). This in turn created a colossal revolt of helots, which was assisted by communities of perioikoi in Messeni (Eidinow E. 2012). He successfully defended Sparta against an attack by the Helots (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly).

Archidamus II led an attack, with allied forces, on Attica on three different occasions, 431, 430 and 428 BCE (Hornblower S and Spawforth T. 2003). Before the Peloponnesian War broke out, he appeared in Spartan domestic debates (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly). He warned against the rash decision to go to war with Athens. He failed in convincing the Spartan Assembly (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly). In 432 BCE, Sparta went to war with Athens (Hornblower S and Spawforth T. 2003). He advanced into Attica on three separate occasions; in 431, 430 and 428 BCE.

*Figure 2; 432-431 BCE, Sparta attacks Attica.
(Image from; <https://www.slideserve.com/marika/athens-and-sparta-in-435>).*



Archidamus II died probably in 427 and most definitely before the summer of 426 BCE. This is known as Archidamus II's son Agis II succeeded to the Spartan throne in 426 BCE (Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, History Article).

The first phase of the Peloponnesian War was named after Archidamus II (Archidamian War), although he had already died in 427 BCE (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly). In Sparta he was deemed as a contemplative man, who "apparently knew how to fit into the Spartan cosmos" (Welwei K.W. Article 1. Brill's New Pauly).

Bibliography

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Welwei K.W. Spartan King (475-427 BC). Article 1 on Brill's New Pauly.