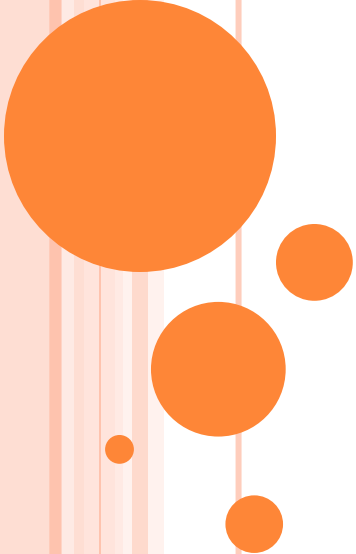




# SPARTA: AN EXTRAORDINARY CITY

Lecture 13: Persia

# PEACE?

The war had then lasted for twenty-seven years in all. Only a mistaken judgment can object to including the interval of treaty in the war. Looked at by the light of facts it cannot, it will be found, be rationally considered a state of peace, where neither party either gave or got back all that they had agreed, apart from the violations of it which occurred on both sides in the Mantinean and Epidaurian wars and other instances, and the fact that the allies in the direction of Thrace were in as open hostility as ever, while the Boeotians had only a truce renewed every ten days. So that the first ten years' war, the treacherous armistice that followed it, and the subsequent war will, calculating by the seasons, be found to make up the number of years which I have mentioned, with the difference of a few days, and to afford an instance of faith in oracles being for once justified by the event. I certainly all along remember from the beginning to the end of the war its being commonly declared that it would last thrice nine years.

Thucydides 5.26



## AFTERMATH OF THE PEACE OF NIKIAS

- The Peace of Nikias was not uniformly accepted by the Peloponnesian League.
- Corinth and Boiotia refused to sign the treaty, thus openly defying Sparta.
- Sparta had to worry about Argos as well, since the 50-year Truce with Argos ended in 421.



# THE NEW ATHENIAN POLICY

Upon receiving this message and discovering that the Athenians, far from being privy to the Boeotian alliance, were involved in a serious quarrel with the Lacedaemonians, **the Argives paid no further attention to the embassy which they had just sent to Lacedaemon on the subject of the treaty, and began to incline rather towards the Athenians,** reflecting that, in the event of war, they would thus have on their side a city that was not only an ancient ally of Argos, but a sister democracy and very powerful at sea. **They accordingly at once sent ambassadors to Athens to treat for an alliance, accompanied by others from Elis and Mantinea. At the same time arrived in haste from Lacedaemon** an embassy consisting of persons reputed well disposed towards the Athenians-- Philocharidas, Leon, and Endius, for fear that the Athenians in their irritation might conclude alliance with the Argives, and also to ask back Pylos in exchange for Panactum, and in defence of the alliance with the Boeotians to plead that it had not been made to hurt the Athenians.

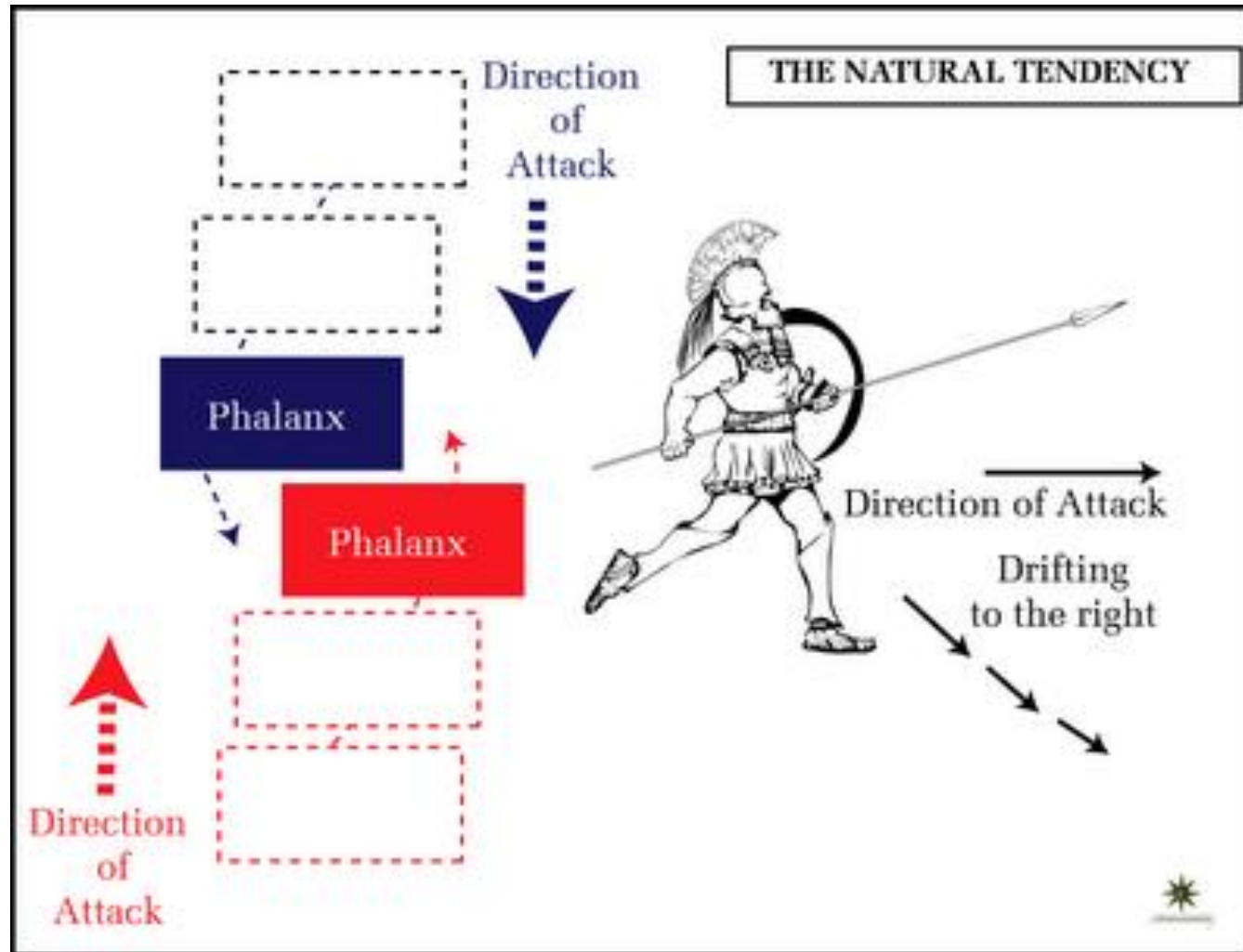
Thucydides 5.44



# THE ARGIVE ALLIANCE



# THE BATTLE OF MANTINEIA 418 BCE



# THE BATTLE OF MANTINEIA 418 BCE

Such was the battle, as nearly as possible as I have described it; the greatest that had occurred for a very long while among the Hellenes, and joined by the most considerable states. The Lacedaemonians took up a position in front of the enemy's dead, and immediately set up a trophy and stripped the slain; they took up their own dead and carried them back to Tegea, where they buried them, and restored those of the enemy under truce. The Argives, Orneans, and Cleonaeans had seven hundred killed; the Mantineans two hundred, and the Athenians and Aeginetans also two hundred, with both their generals. On the side of the Lacedaemonians, the allies did not suffer any loss worth speaking of: as to the Lacedaemonians themselves it was difficult to learn the truth; it is said, however, that there were slain about three hundred of them....The imputations cast upon them by the Hellenes at the time, whether of cowardice on account of the disaster in the island, or of mismanagement and slowness generally, were all wiped out by this single action: fortune, it was thought, might have humbled them, but the men themselves were the same as ever.

Thucydides 5.74-5



# THE BATTLE OF MANTINEIA

- The Battle of Mantineia in 418 BCE showed clearly that while the Athenian-Argive alliance was strong politically, on the military front Sparta was stronger.
- The new Athenian policy of dominating the Peloponnese had backfired.
- Interestingly, the main proponent of the philo-Argive policy, Alkibiades, did not suffer adversely from Mantineia but the failure of the policy may be the political background to the ostracism of Hyperbolos.



# AFTERMATH

- Perdiccas of Macedon friendly to Sparta
- Renewed alliance with Olynthus
- Argos withdraws from Epidaurus
- Mantinea comes to terms with Sparta (30 year truce)
- Sparta established an oligarchy in Sicyon
- Pro-Spartan oligarchy in Argos
- Dissident Helots back in Pylos and make a raid in 416



# THE ADVENT OF PERSIA

- Until this point, Persia had not become involved in the Peloponnesian War, especially since the fighting concentrated in Greece not Asia Minor.
- The Athenians however decided to help Amorges, a rebel satrap, against the Persian king.
- The Athenian intervention brought Persia back into Greek politics.



# THE MELIAN AFFAIR

The Athenians also made an expedition against the isle of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian vessels, sixteen hundred heavy infantry, three hundred archers, and twenty mounted archers from Athens, and about fifteen hundred heavy infantry from the allies and the islanders. The Melians are a colony of Lacedaemon that would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders, and at first remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using violence and plundering their territory, assumed an attitude of open hostility. Cleomedes, son of Lycomedes, and Tisias, son of Tisimachus, the generals, encamping in their territory with the above armament, before doing any harm to their land, sent envoys to negotiate. These the Melians did not bring before the people, but bade them state the object of their mission to the magistrates and the few; upon which the Athenian envoys spoke as follows:

Thucydides 5.84



# THE MELIAN AFFAIR

## **Athenian envoys:**

‘For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretences—either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us—and make a long speech which would not be believed; and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join the Lacedaemonians, although their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both; since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.’

Thucydides 5.89



## THE MELIAN AFFAIR

About the same time the Melians again took another part of the Athenian lines which were but feebly garrisoned. Reinforcements afterwards arriving from Athens in consequence, under the command of Philocrates, son of Demeas, the siege was now pressed vigorously; and some treachery taking place inside, the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, **who put to death all the grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves,** and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves.

Thucydides 5.116



# THE MELIAN AFFAIR

- In 416 BCE, Athens attacked Melos, one of the remaining Cycladic islands not in the Delian League.
- Melos was a “Spartan” colony in tradition and had managed to avoid a direct confrontation with Athens until then.
- The Melian Debate is one of the most celebrated passages in Thucydides (it is an actual dialogue), as it is a major real criticism and defence of imperialism.
- The destruction of Melos is one of the most horrific episodes of the Peloponnesian War and created a very bad climate against Athens.



# THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

- In 415 BCE, the Athenians decided to make an expedition to Sicily with the express aim of conquering the island.
- The expedition included more than 150 ships and thousands of troops, mainly Athenians but also allied.
- The Expedition lasted 2 years and ended in defeat for the Athenians, who lost all of the fleet and troops sent to Sicily.



# ALKIBIADES

- Alkibiades was an Alkmaionid, a member of the liturgical class in Athens, an Olympic victor and a relative of Perikles.
- After the Peace of Nikias, he became one of the most influential political figures in Athens.
- Alkibiades was the main force behind the Argive alliance and the Sicilian Expedition.
- He was accused of profaning the Mysteries and was condemned to death in absentia when he was in Sicily.
- Instead of returning to Athens for trial, he switched sides and went to Sparta.



## ALKIBIADES' ADVICE TO THE SPARTANS

None need therefore fancy that Sicily only is in question; Peloponnese will be so also, unless you speedily do as I tell you, **and send on board ship to Syracuse troops that shall be able to row their ships themselves, and serve as heavy infantry the moment that they land;** and what I consider even more important than the troops, a Spartan as commanding officer to discipline the forces already on foot and to compel recusants to serve. The friends that you have already will thus become more confident, and the waverers will be encouraged to join you. **Meanwhile you must carry on the war here more openly,** that the Syracusans seeing that you do not forget them, may put heart into their resistance, and that the Athenians may be less able to reinforce their armament.

Thucydides 6.91



## ALKIBIADES' ADVICE TO THE SPARTANS

**You must fortify Decelea in Attica, the blow of which the Athenians are always most afraid and the only one that they** think they have not experienced in the present war; the surest method of harming an enemy being to find out what he most fears, and to choose this means of attacking him, since every one naturally knows best his own weak points and fears accordingly. The fortification in question, while it benefits you, will create difficulties for your adversaries, of which I shall pass over many, and shall only mention the chief. Whatever property there is in the country will most of it become yours, either by capture or surrender; and the Athenians will at once be deprived of their revenues from the silver mines at Laurium, of their present gains from their land and from the law courts, and above all of the revenue from their allies, which will be paid less regularly, as they lose their awe of Athens, and see you addressing yourselves with vigour to the war.

Thucydides 6.91



## ALKIBIADES' PLAN

- The plan proposed by Alkibiades to the Spartans changed the course of the Peloponnesian War.
- The Spartans sent Gylippos to Sicily, started taking a more active role in the Aegean and, more importantly, fortified Dekeleia in Attika.



# SPARTA AND THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

- The Peloponnesians, mainly the Corinthians, had very close relationships with the Greeks of south Italy and Sicily.
- The Spartans did not send an expeditionary force against the Athenians in Sicily because they were still under compulsion from the Peace of Nikias.
- Gylippos, however, was an experienced military commander and had personal ties to the area.



# SPARTA AND THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

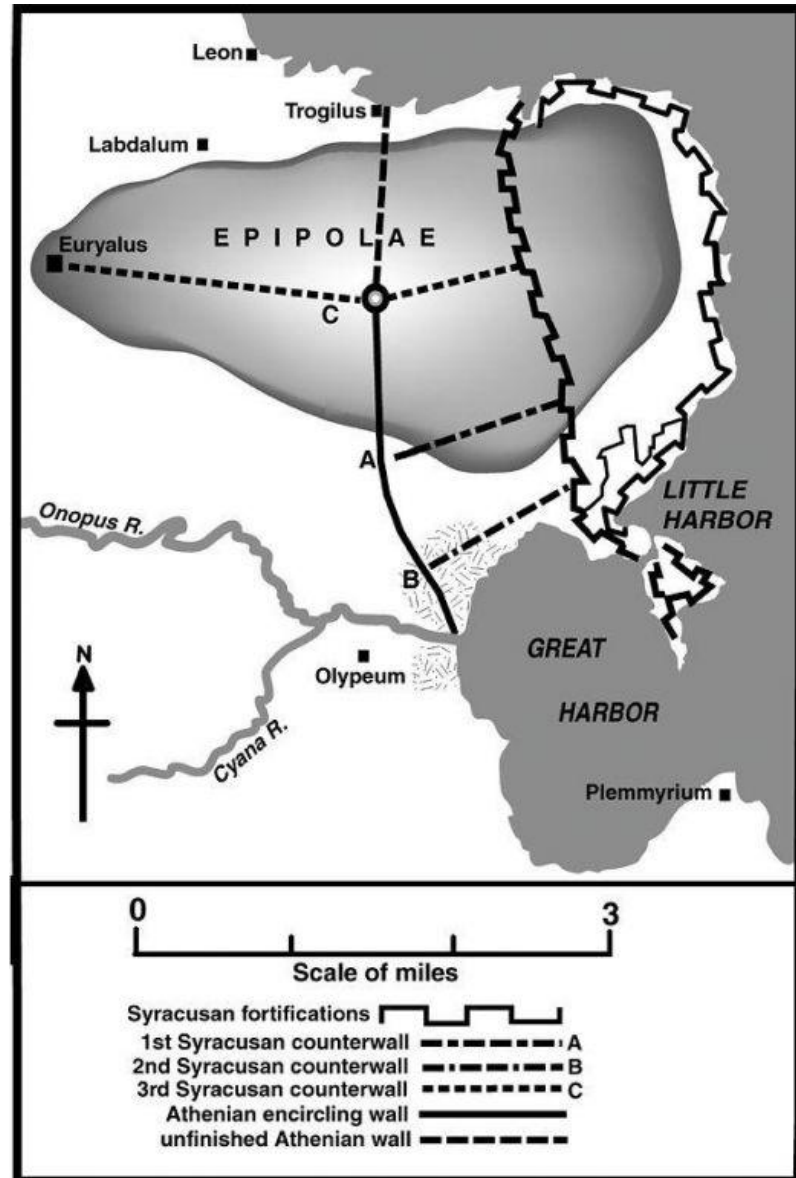
Meanwhile the Lacedaemonian, Gylippus, and the ships from Corinth were now off Leucas, intent upon going with all haste to the relief of Sicily. The reports that reached them being of an alarming kind, and all agreeing in the falsehood that Syracuse was already completely invested, Gylippus abandoned all hope of Sicily, and wishing to save Italy, rapidly crossed the Ionian Sea to Tarentum with the Corinthian, Pythen, two Laconian, and two Corinthian vessels, leaving the Corinthians to follow him after manning, in addition to their own ten, two Leucadian and two Ambraciot ships. **From Tarentum Gylippus first went on an embassy to Thurii, and claimed anew the rights of citizenship which his father had enjoyed;** failing to bring over the townspeople, he weighed anchor and coasted along Italy. Opposite the Terinaean gulf he was caught by the wind which blows violently and steadily from the north in that quarter, and was carried out to sea; and after experiencing very rough weather, remade Tarentum, where he hauled ashore and refitted such of his ships as had suffered most from the tempest. **Nicias heard of his approach, but, like the Thurians, despised the scanty number of his ships, and set down piracy as the only probable object of the voyage, and so took no precautions for the present.**

Thucydides 6.104



# WALLS AND COUNTER-WALLS

- Athenians build walls to cut off Syracuse from the sea
- Syracuse builds counter-walls to prevent this
- Gylippus in 2 battles succeeds in blocking the Athenians from extending the wall to the sea



# THUCYDIDES' JUDGEMENT

- The failure of the expedition:  
‘involved not so much an error of judgment about the people against whom it was sent as the failure by those who sent out the expedition to make the right decisions in support of the men who had gone. Instead, through the accusations made against individuals in the struggle for political supremacy, they made the expeditionary force less effective’.

Thucydides 2.65.11



# DEKELEIA

In the first days of the spring following, at an earlier period than usual, the Lacedaemonians and their allies invaded Attica, under the command of Agis, son of Archidamus, king of the Lacedaemonians. They began by devastating the parts bordering upon the plain, and next proceeded to fortify Decelea, dividing the work among the different cities. Decelea is about thirteen or fourteen miles from the city of Athens, and the same distance or not much further from Boeotia; and the fort was meant to annoy the plain and the richest parts of the country, being in sight of Athens.

## Thucydides 7.19



# THE EFFECT OF THE FORTIFICATION OF DEKELEIA

Since Decelea had been first fortified by the whole Peloponnesian army during this summer, and then occupied for the annoyance of the country by the garrisons from the cities relieving each other at stated intervals, **it had been doing great mischief to the Athenians; in fact this occupation, by the destruction of property and loss of men which resulted from it, was one of the principal causes of their ruin. ...They were deprived of their whole country: more than twenty thousand slaves had deserted, a great part of them artisans, and all their sheep and beasts of burden were lost; and as the cavalry rode out daily upon excursions to Decelea and to guard the country, their horses were either lamed by being constantly worked upon rocky ground, or wounded by the enemy. Besides, the transport of provisions from Euboea, which had before been carried on so much more quickly over land by Decelea from Oropus, was now effected at great cost by sea round Sunium; everything the city required had to be imported from abroad, and instead of a city it became a fortress.**

Thucydides 7.27-8



# THE EFFECT OF THE FORTIFICATION OF DEKELEIA

Summer and winter the Athenians were worn out by having to keep guard on the fortifications, during the day by turns, by night all together, the cavalry excepted, at the different military posts or upon the wall. ...These causes, the great losses from Decelea, and the other heavy charges that fell upon them, **produced their financial embarrassment; and it was at this time that they imposed upon their subjects, instead of the tribute, the tax of a twentieth upon all imports and exports by sea,** which they thought would bring them in more money; their expenditure being now not the same as at first, but having grown with the war while their revenues decayed.

Thucydides 7.27-8



# THE EFFECT OF DEKELEIA

- The permanent enemy presence in Attika created problems in the adequate supply of Athens.
- There was considerable destruction of property.
- The Athenians had to stay within the walls throughout the year.



# THE EFFECTS OF THE SICILIAN DISASTER

Already distressed at all points and in all quarters, after what had now happened, they were seized by a fear and consternation quite without example. **It was grievous enough for the state and for every man in his proper person to lose so many heavy infantry, cavalry, and able-bodied troops, and to see none left to replace them; but when they saw, also, that they had not sufficient ships in their docks, or money in the treasury, or crews for the ships, they began to despair of salvation. They thought that their enemies in Sicily would immediately sail with their fleet against Piraeus, inflamed by so signal a victory; while their adversaries at home, redoubling all their preparations, would vigorously attack them by sea and land at once, aided by their own revolted confederates.**

Thucydides 8.1



## THE EFFECTS OF THE SICILIAN DISASTER

Nevertheless, with such means as they had, it was determined to resist to the last, and to provide timber and money, and to equip a fleet as they best could, to take steps to secure their confederates and above all Euboea, to reform things in the city upon a more economical footing, and to elect a board of elders to advise upon the state of affairs as occasion should arise. In short, as is the way of a democracy, in the panic of the moment they were ready to be as prudent as possible.

Thucydides 8.1



# THE NAVAL QUESTION

- After the Sicilian Disaster, the Athenians ended up with only a fraction of their fleet operational and able to sail (mainly due to personnel losses).
- This gave the opportunity to the Peloponnesians to fight the Athenians at sea at an equal footing.
- Further, a large number of Athenian allies revolted at the same time.



# SPARTAN STRATEGY OPTIONS

- Aegean Strategy:
  - Support of Chios
  - Influence of Alcibiades
- Hellespontine Strategy
  - Blockade the Hellespont
  - Control Athens grain supply



## FOLLOW-UP READING

- Plutarch *Life of Lysander*
- Xenophon *Hellenika* Book 1
- Andrewes, A. “Notion and Kyzikos: The Sources Compared” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 102, (1982), pp. 15-25

