

CLAH4005 Defenders, Conquerors, Vanquished

Lecture 8: *The Peloponnesian War*

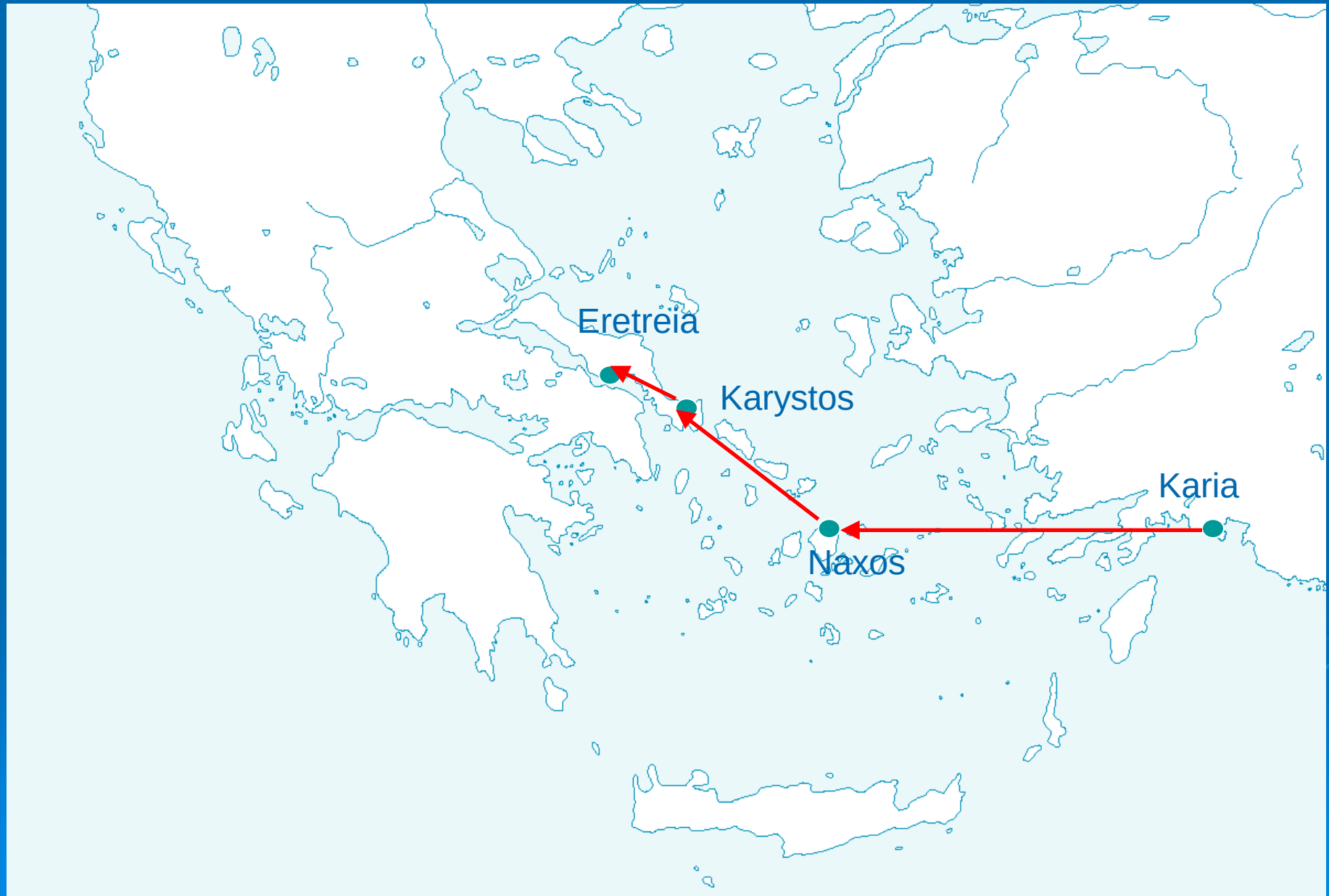
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Why was the Suppression of Naxos allowed by the allies?

- When Athens suppressed Naxos, the allies were still powerful enough to object, yet they did not.
- Naxos had been used in the first Persian War as a staging area for attacking mainland Greece. It was a necessary member of the League in order to stop any new Persian attack.

The Route of the Persian Fleet in the Marathon campaign



Why leave the Delian League?

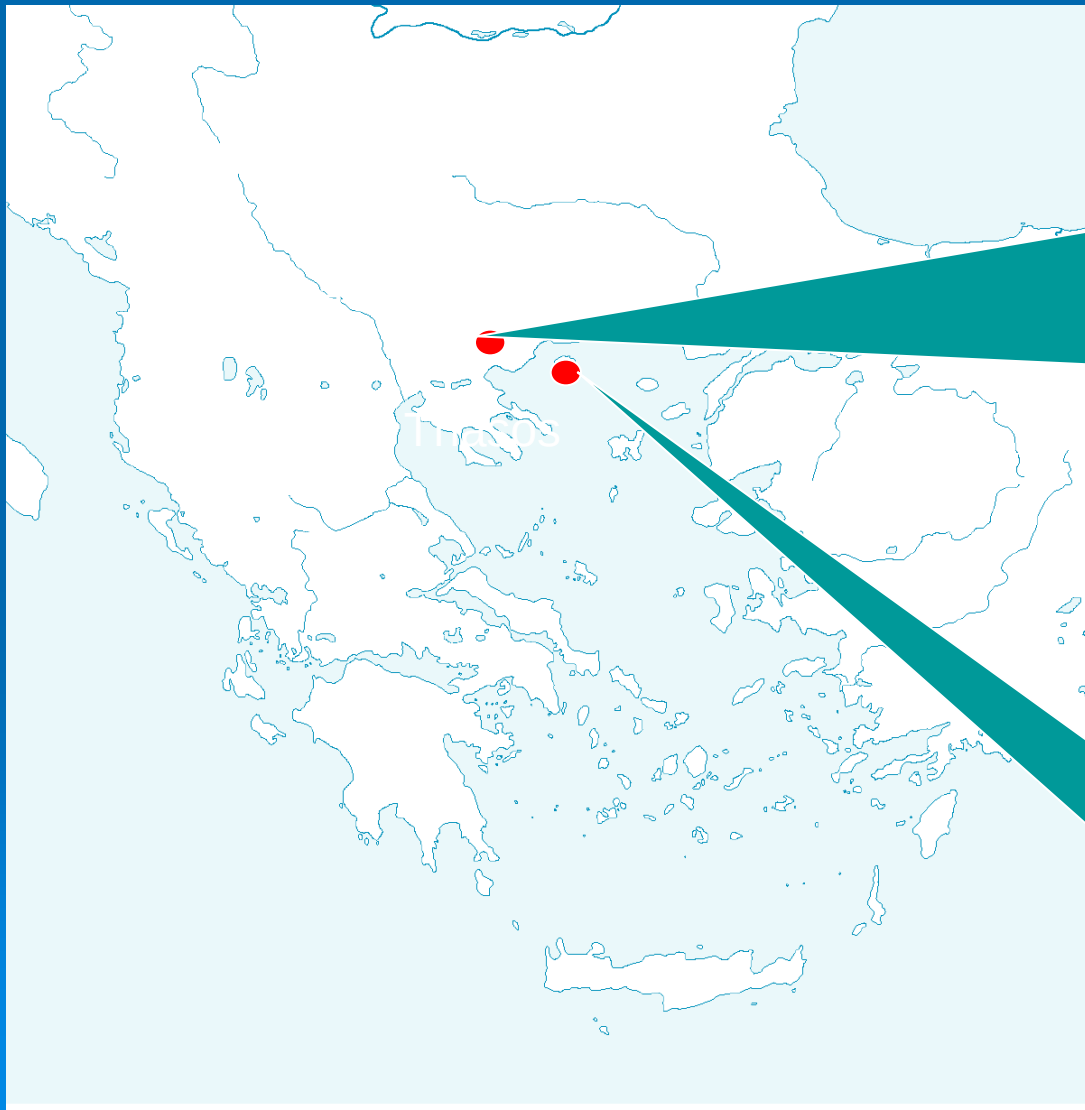
- Of all the causes of defection, that connected with arrears of tribute and vessels, and with failure of service, was the chief; for the Athenians were very severe and exacting, and made themselves offensive by applying the screw of necessity to men who were not used to and in fact not disposed for any continuous labour. [2] In some other respects the Athenians were not the old popular rulers they had been at first; and if they had more than their fair share of service, it was correspondingly easy for them to reduce any that tried to leave the confederacy. [3] For this the allies had themselves to blame; the wish to get off service making most of them arrange to pay their share of the expense in money instead of in ships, and so to avoid having to leave their homes. Thus while Athens was increasing her navy with the funds which they contributed, a revolt always found them without resources or experience for war. Thucydides 1.99

Victory at Eurymedon

- Next we come to the actions by land and by sea at the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia, between the Athenians with their allies, and the Medes, when the Athenians won both battles on the same day under the conduct of Cimon, son of Miltiades, and captured and destroyed the whole Phoenician fleet, consisting of two hundred vessels. Thucydides 1.100.1

The Thasian Revolt

- Some time afterwards occurred the defection of the Thasians, caused by disagreements about the marts on the opposite coast of Thrace, and about the mine in their possession. Sailing with a fleet to Thasos, the Athenians defeated them at sea and effected a landing on the island. [3] About the same time they sent ten thousand settlers of their own citizens and the allies to settle the place then called Ennea Hodoi or Nine Ways, now Amphipolis. They succeeded in gaining possession of Ennea Hodoi from the Edonians, but on advancing into the interior of Thrace were cut off in Drabescus, a town of the Edonians, by the assembled Thracians, who regarded the settlement of the place Ennea Hodoi as an act of hostility. Thucydides 1.100-2-3



Hennea Hodoi, the later Amphipolis, was a very important site with access to the mines of the Pangaion and Lake Prasias, as well as considerable timber reserves. The colony at Hennea Hodoi failed.

Thasos revolted from the League when the Athenians tried to take away its dependencies and mines on the mainland

Imperialism and the Thasian Revolt

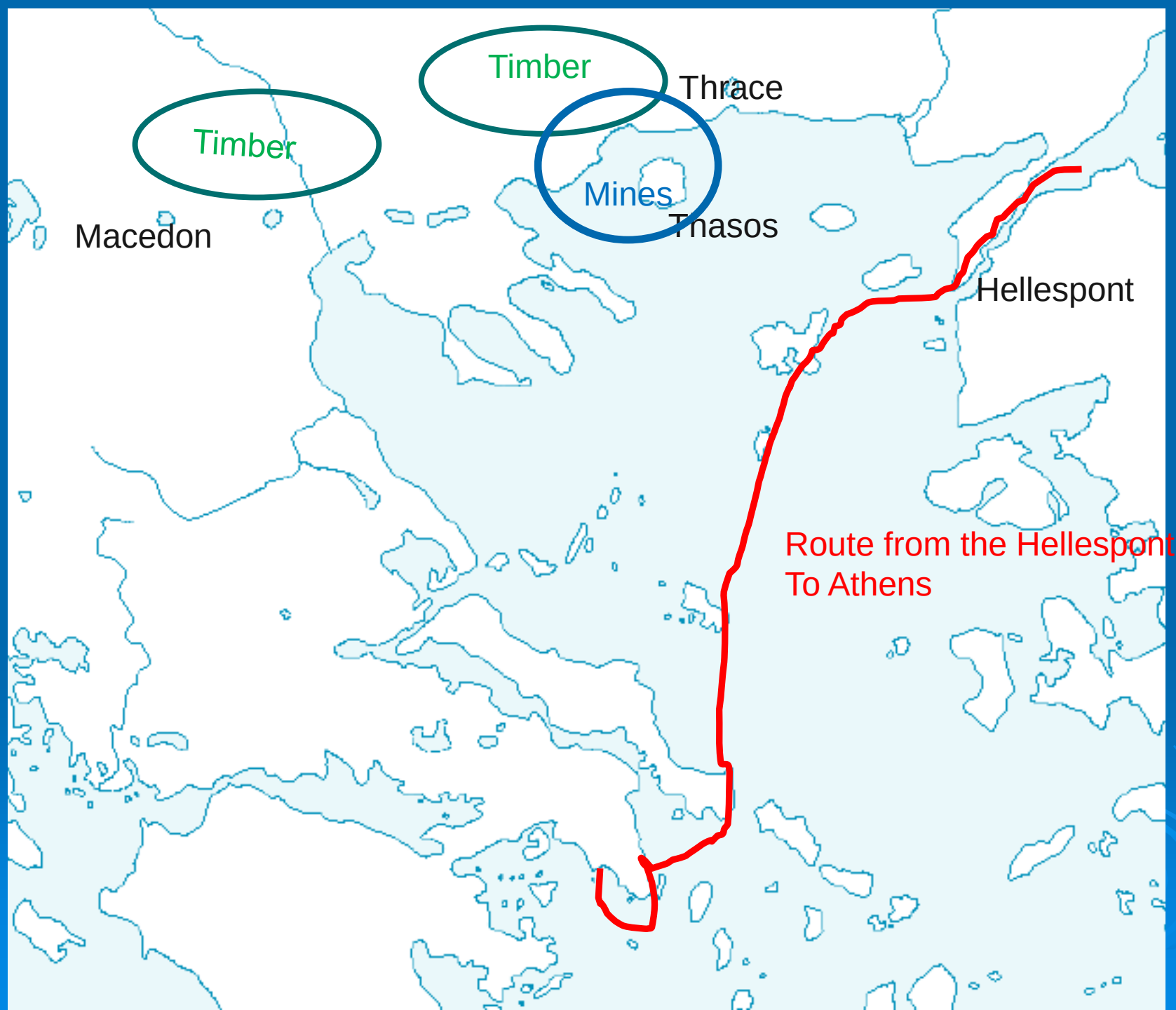
- Thasos did not seek to leave the Delian League.
- On the contrary, Athens was asserting its control over northern Greece.
- Thasos was the most powerful polis in the area and one of the richest in Greece due to the mines on the island and on its peraia.

What is the peraia?

- The peraia is a part of the mainland that an island polis controls.
- Most Greek island poleis that were near a mainland had peraiai, such as Thasos, Chios, Mytilene, Samos, Kos and Rhodes.

Why attack Thasos?

- The attack on Thasos was not random but is connected with the Athenian effort to colonise Hennea Hodoi, the later Amphipolis, at the same time.
- The Strymon area was a very rich area in resources. It had gold and silver mines and access to vast reserves of shipbuilding timber.
- If Athens had dominion over the Strymon area then it became more powerful than before and had access to the necessary materials for building up and maintaining its fleet.



A Spartan failure and the great weakness

- Meanwhile the Thasians being defeated in the field and suffering siege, appealed to Lacedaemon, and desired her to assist them by an invasion of Attica. [2] Without informing Athens she promised and intended to do so, but was prevented by the occurrence of the earthquake, accompanied by the secession of the Helots and the Thuriats and Aethaeans of the Perioeci to Ithome. Most of the Helots were the descendants of the old Messenians that were enslaved in the famous war; and so all of them came to be called Messenians.
Thucydides 1.101

Athens against Sparta

- The Lacedaemonians meanwhile finding the war against the rebels in Ithome likely to last, invoked the aid of their allies, and especially of the Athenians, who came in some force under the command of Cimon. [2] The reason for this pressing summons lay in their reputed skill in siege operations; a long siege had taught the Lacedaemonians their own deficiency in this art, else they would have taken the place by assault. [3] The first open quarrel between the Lacedaemonians and Athenians arose out of this expedition. The Lacedaemonians, when assault failed to take the place, apprehensive of the enterprising and revolutionary character of the Athenians, and further looking upon them as of alien extraction, began to fear that if they remained, they might be tempted by the besieged in Ithome to attempt some political changes. They accordingly dismissed them alone of the allies, without declaring their suspicions, but merely saying that they had now no need of them. [4] **But the Athenians, aware that their dismissal did not proceed from the more honorable reason of the two, but from suspicions which had been conceived, went away deeply offended, and conscious of having done nothing to merit such treatment from the Lacedaemonians; and the instant that they returned home they broke off the alliance which had been made against the Mede, and allied themselves with Sparta's enemy Argos; each of the contracting parties taking the same oaths and making the same alliance with the Thessalians.** Thucydides 1.102

Athens encroaching on Spartan territory

- The Athenians received another addition to their confederacy in the Megarians; who left the Lacedaemonian alliance, annoyed by a war about boundaries forced on them by Corinth. The Athenians occupied Megara and Pegae, and built the Megarians their long walls from the city to Nisaea, in which they placed an Athenian garrison. This was the principal cause of the Corinthians conceiving such a deadly hatred against Athens. Thucydides 1.103



Why is the defection of Megara important?

- Megara is the gateway to the Peloponnese.
- Also it means that Athens is starting to have ambitions on mainland Greece, until then a Spartan prerogative.
- The uneasy balance of Athens commanding the sea while Sparta commanded the land was broken.

The Egyptian Expedition

- Athens meanwhile did not stop its campaigns against Persia.
- After an expedition against Cyprus, Athens allied itself with the Egyptian rebels sending a fleet to help them fight against Persia.
- The fleet was defeated in 454 BCE.

Moving the Treasury

- The defeat of the Athenian and allied fleet in Egypt in 454 BCE was the perfect excuse for Athens to gain greater power within the League.
- Until 454 BCE, the treasury of the Delian League was housed in Delos and was under the control of the League council.
- In 454 BCE, the treasury was moved from Delos to Athens and came under the control of the Athenians.
- Athens now had even more funds and this time it could use them whichever way she wished, even against the allies.

The First Peloponnesian War

- Simultaneous with the Egyptian Expedition, the Athenians were in open war with the Peloponnesian War, headed initially by Corinth and then by Sparta herself.
- Initially, the Athenians were successful in taking over Boiotia and Aigina.
- When the Spartans entered the fray, the tide of the war turned.
- By 446, Euboia and Megara had revolted from Athens and Athens had to come to terms with Sparta.



The Thirty Years Truce

- The truce between Athens and Sparta was a return to the old boundaries.
- Sparta got the mainland and Athens got the north, the islands and Asia Minor.
- However, the truce also recognised Athens' power over its allies, thus hobbling any Spartan intervention in case of allied revolt.

The Truest Cause

- Old stories of occurrences handed down by tradition, but scantily confirmed by experience, suddenly ceased to be incredible; there were earthquakes of unparalleled extent and violence; eclipses of the sun occurred with a frequency unrecorded in previous history; there were great droughts in sundry places and consequent famines, and that most calamitous and awfully fatal visitation, the plague. All this came upon them with the late war, [4] which was begun by the Athenians and Peloponnesians by the dissolution of the thirty years' truce made after the conquest of Euboea. [5] To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of their grounds of complaint and points of difference, that no one may ever have to ask the immediate cause which plunged the Hellenes into a war of such magnitude. [6] **The real cause I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Lacedaemon, made war inevitable.** Thucydides 1.23

Questions?



Follow-Up Reading

- Cawkwell, George *Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War* London, New York Taylor & Francis Routledge, 1997. Chapter 2, p.20-39. Available from NetLibrary: www.netlibrary.com
- The Follow-up Reading is also on Moodle