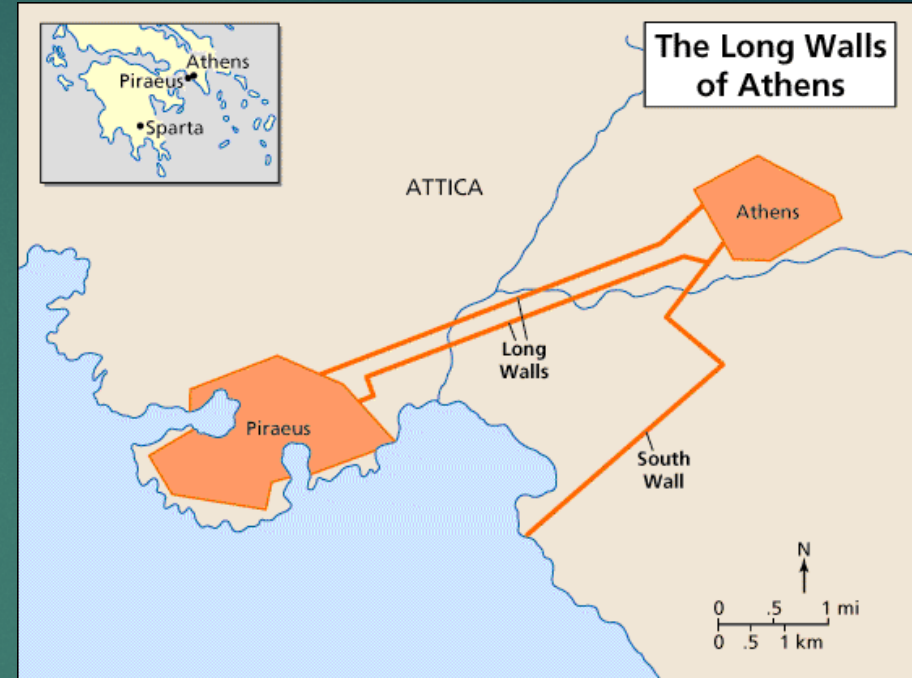


Periklean strategy

The Periklean Strategy

- ▶ While the Peloponnesians were still mustering at the Isthmus, or on the march before they invaded Attica, Pericles, son of Xanthippus, one of the ten generals of the Athenians, finding that the invasion was to take place, conceived the idea that ... He also gave the citizens some advice on their present affairs in the same strain as before. **They were to prepare for the war, and to carry in their property from the country. They were not to go out to battle, but to come into the city and guard it, and get ready their fleet, in which their real strength lay. They were also to keep a tight rein on their allies--the strength of Athens being derived from the money brought in by their payments, and success in war depending principally upon conduct and capital.** Thucydides 2.13



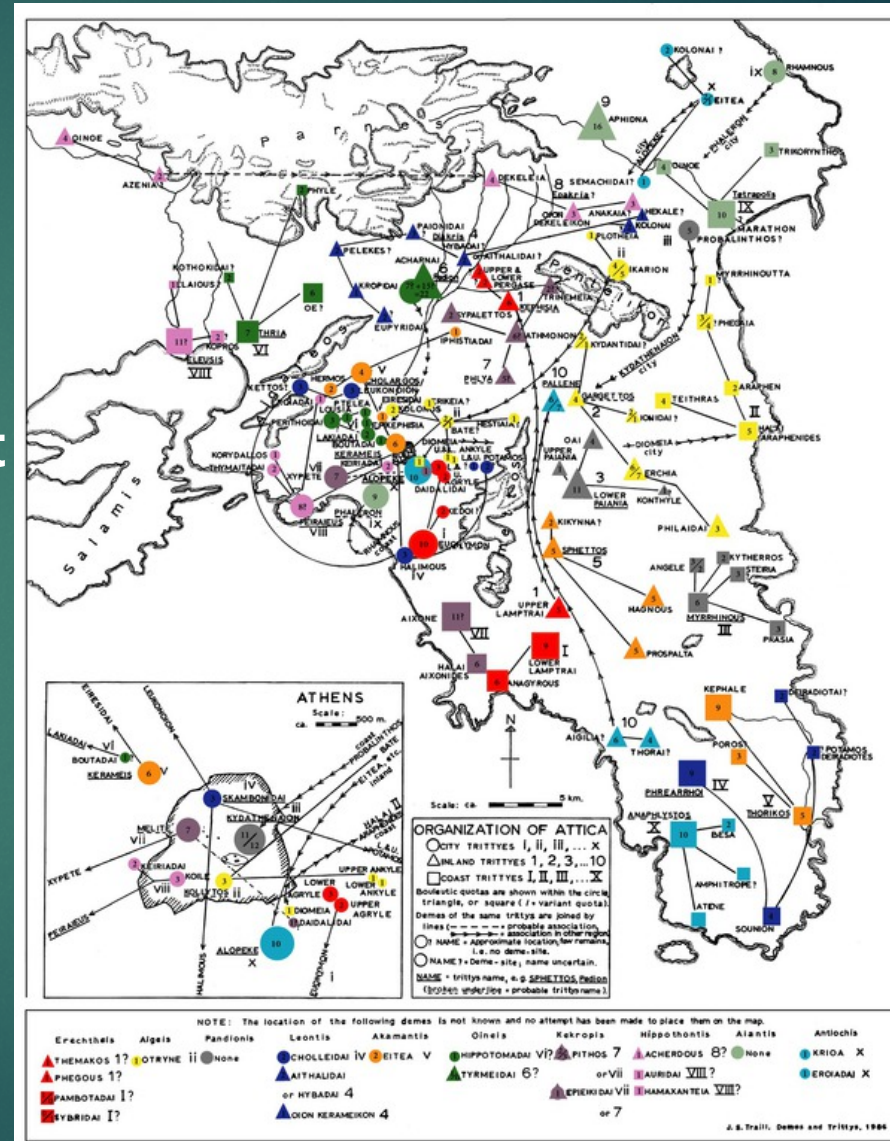
The basis of the strategy

- ▶ Apart from other sources of income, an **average revenue of six hundred talents of silver was drawn from the tribute of the allies**; and there were still **six thousand talents of coined silver** in the Acropolis...[4] This did not include the **uncoined gold and silver in public and private offerings**, the sacred vessels for the processions and games, the Median spoils, and similar resources to the amount of five hundred talents. [5] To this he added the treasures of the other temples... Nay, if they were ever absolutely driven to it, they might take even the gold ornaments of Athena herself; for the statue contained **forty talents of pure gold** and it was all removable. ... Then they had an army of **thirteen thousand heavy infantry**, besides **sixteen thousand more in the garrisons** and on home duty at Athens. Pericles also showed them that they had **twelve hundred horse** including mounted archers, with **sixteen hundred archers** unmounted, and **three hundred galleys fit for service**.
Thucydides 2.13



A Change for the Athenians

- The Athenians listened to his advice, and began to carry in their wives and children from the country, and all their household furniture, even to the woodwork of their houses which they took down. Their sheep and cattle they sent over to Euboea and the adjacent islands. [2] But they found it hard to move, as most of them had been always used to live in the country. ... XVI. The Athenians thus long lived scattered over Attica in independent townships. ... [2] Deep was their trouble and discontent at abandoning their houses and the hereditary temples of the ancient constitution, and at having to change their habits of life and to bid farewell to what each regarded as his native city. Thucydides 2.14&2.16



The Consequence of the Periklean Strategy: The Plague

- ▶ Such was the funeral that took place during this winter, with which the first year of the war came to an end. [2] **In the first days of summer the Lacedaemonians and their allies, with two-thirds of their forces as before, invaded Attica**, under the command of Archidamus, son of Zeuxidamus, king of Lacedaemon, and sat down and laid waste the country. [3] **Not many days after their arrival in Attica the plague first began to show itself among the Athenians.** It was said that it had broken out in many places previously in the neighborhood of Lemnos and elsewhere; **but a pestilence of such extent and mortality was nowhere remembered.** [4] Neither were the physicians at first of any service, ignorant as they were of the proper way to treat it, but they died themselves the most thickly, as they visited the sick most often; nor did any human art succeed any better. Supplications in the temples, divinations, and so forth were found equally futile, till the overwhelming nature of the disaster at last put a stop to them altogether. Thucydides 2.47

The Death of Perikles

- ▶ Such were the arguments by which Pericles tried to cure the Athenians of their anger against him and to divert their thoughts from their immediate afflictions. [2] As a community he succeeded in convincing them; they not only gave up all idea of sending to Lacedaemon, but applied themselves with increased energy to the war; still as private individuals they could not help smarting under their sufferings, the common people having been deprived of the little that they ever possessed, while the higher orders had lost fine properties with costly establishments and buildings in the country, and, worst of all, had war instead of peace. [3] In fact, the public feeling against him did not subside until he had been fined. [4] Not long afterwards, however, according to the way of the multitude, they again elected him general and committed all their affairs to his hands, having now become less sensitive to their private and domestic afflictions, and understanding that he was the best man of all for the public necessities. ... **He told them to wait quietly, to pay attention to their marine, to attempt no new conquests, and to expose** the city to no hazards during the war, and doing this, promised them a favorable result. What they did was the very contrary, allowing private ambitions and private interests, in matters apparently quite foreign to the war, to lead them into projects unjust both to themselves and to their allies--projects whose success would only conduce to the honor and advantage of private persons, and whose failure entailed certain disaster on the country in the war. **In short, what was nominally a democracy became in his hands government by the first citizen.** Thucydides 2.65.1-9



The Demagogues and Thucydides

- ▶ With his successors it was different. More on a level with one another, and each grasping at supremacy, **they ended by committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whims of the multitude.** [11] This, as might have been expected in a great and sovereign state, produced a host of blunders, and amongst them the Sicilian expedition; ..., by which they not only paralyzed operations in the field, but also first introduced civil discord at home. [12] Yet after losing most of their fleet besides other forces in Sicily, and with faction already dominant in the city, they could still for three years make head against their original adversaries, joined not only by the Sicilians, but also by their own allies nearly all in revolt, and at last by the king's son, Cyrus, who furnished the funds for the Peloponnesian navy. Nor did they finally succumb till they fell the victims of their own intestine disorders. [13] **So superfluously abundant were the resources from which the genius of Pericles foresaw an easy triumph in the war over the unaided forces of the Peloponnesians.** Thucydides 2.65.10-3

The need for peace

- ▶ The Prytanes even do not come; they will be late, but when they come they will push and fight each other for a seat in the front row. **They will never trouble themselves with the question of peace.** Oh! Athens! Athens! As for myself, I do not fail to come here before all the rest, and now, finding myself alone, I groan, yawn, stretch, break wind, and know not what to do; I make sketches in the dust, pull out my loose hairs, muse, think of my fields, **long for peace, curse town life and regret my dear country home, which never told me to 'buy fuel, vinegar or oil'; there the word 'buy,' which cuts me in two, was unknown; I harvested everything at will.** Therefore I have come to the assembly fully prepared to bawl, interrupt and abuse the speakers, if they talk of anything but peace. Aristophanes *Acharnians* 30-40.

Decelea and the collapse of the Periklean strategy

