The Peloponnesian War

THUCYDIDES

The Peloponnesian War

Ἱστορίαι

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



FORAGE
forage.com

The Peloponnesian War · Thucydides

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited. Reading edition, Forage, October 2026. forage.com/thucydides/peloponnesian-war

Greek text: Henry Stuart Jones (1867–1939), *Thucydidis Historiae*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898; vol. 2 2nd ed. 1902), read from the Internet Archive scans of the original printing (vol. 1 (archive.org/details/thucydidishistor01thuc), vol. 2 (archive.org/details/thucydidishistor02thuc); public domain). The text was transcribed by OCR, and every doubtful place (about 3,400) was proofread against the page images, with an independent second reading of every correction. This is Jones's original text, not the 1942 revision by J. E. Powell. Jones's critical apparatus is omitted. Square brackets mark words he regarded as spurious, angle brackets mark his additions, and daggers mark corrupt passages. English: translated from the Greek with AI (Claude), then edited for accuracy and consistency. Not reviewed by a human specialist. Free to reuse under CC BY-SA 4.0. The small numbers set in the text are the standard book and chapter references.

The original text is in the public domain. This translation is free to share and adapt under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0): creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0

Set in Source Serif 4.

CONTENTS

Introduction xi

Book 1 1

The Archaeology 1
Agamemnon and the Trojan War 5
Navies, tyrants and the Persian threat 9
Thucydides' method 13
The truest cause 15
Epidamnus and Corcyra 16
The Corcyraeans at Athens 20
The Corinthian reply 24
The battle of Sybota 28
The revolt of Potidaea 34
The Corinthians at Sparta 39
The Athenians at Sparta 44
Archidamus and Sthenelaidas 48
The rise of Athens 53
Athens takes the lead 56
From league to empire 58
Egypt and the land empire 61
The Thirty Years' Peace 66
The Corinthians' second speech 69
The curse of Cylon 74
Pausanias and Themistocles 75
The flight of Themistocles 80
Pericles' first speech 84

Book 2 91

The attack on Plataea 91
Preparations and alliances 95
Archidamus addresses the army 97

Pericles' strategy and Athens' resources 99
The first invasion of Attica 103
The first year's campaigns 107
Pericles' Funeral Oration 111
The plague 119
Pericles' last speech 126
Pericles' death 130
Potidaea surrenders 135
Archidamus at Plataea 136
The siege of Plataea 138
Spartolus and Stratus 141
Phormio's first sea victory 145
Speeches before the second sea battle 147
Phormio's second sea victory 151
The raid on the Piraeus 153
Sitalces invades Macedonia 154

Book 3 163
The revolt of Mytilene 163
The Mytileneans at Olympia 166
The escape from Plataea 172
Mytilene surrenders 176
The Mytilenean Debate 181
Cleon's speech 182
Diodotus' speech 186
The second trireme 191
The fall of Plataea 193
The Plataeans' plea 194
The Thebans' reply 199
The verdict on Plataea 204
Civil war at Corcyra 205
The massacre at Corcyra 208
Thucydides on civil strife 211
Athens in Sicily and the plague's return 214
Sparta founds Heraclea 218
Demosthenes in Aetolia 219

The attack on Naupactus 223
The purification of Delos 225
Olpae and Idomene 226

Book 4 235
Messana goes over to Syracuse 235
Pylos 236
Demosthenes' speech at Pylos 240
The Spartan envoys' speech 244
Cleon rejects peace 247
Sphacteria 250
Cleon takes the command 252
The battle on Sphacteria 255
The surrender shocks Greece 260
Nicias in Corinthian territory 261
The end of the Corcyraean exiles 263
The capture of Cythera 267
The conference at Gela 270
The plot to betray Megara 274
Brasidas saves Megara 278
The Boeotian plot 281
Brasidas marches through Thessaly 283
Sparta and the helots 284
Brasidas at Acanthus 287
Delium 290
Pagondas' speech to the Boeotians 291
The battle of Delium 294
The dispute over the dead 295
The fall of Delium 297
Amphipolis 299
Athens fears for its allies 302
Brasidas takes Torone 304
The one-year truce 307
Scione and Mende revolt 309
The retreat from Lyncus 312
The Athenians recover Mende 316

Book 5 321
Cleon sails for Thrace 321
Cleon and Brasidas at Amphipolis 324
Both sides turn to peace 329
The Peace of Nicias 332
Thucydides' second preface 338
The Argive league 339
The ephors' intrigue 345
Alcibiades and the Argive alliance 350
Sparta barred from Olympia 355
Standoff on the Argive plain 360
Mantinea 363
Argos changes sides 371
The Melian Dialogue 375
The fate of Melos 382

Book 6 385
The Sicilian Expedition 385
The Greek colonies in Sicily 387
The debate on Sicily 390
Alcibiades' speech 395
Nicias' second speech 399
The Herms 402
The fleet sails 404
Hermocrates warns Syracuse 406
Athenagoras replies 410
The Egestaean deception 415
Harmodius and Aristogeiton 419
Alcibiades flees 423
The battle by the Olympieum 426
Hermocrates rallies Syracuse 431
The debate at Camarina 433
Euphemus replies 437
Alcibiades at Sparta 443
Sparta sends Gylippus 446

The siege of Syracuse 448
The death of Lamachus 452

Book 7 455
Gylippus 455
Nicias' letter 460
Athens sends reinforcements 463
The fort at Decelea 465
The fall of Plemmyrium 466
The massacre at Mycalessus 472
Demosthenes on the way 474
The battle off Erineus 476
Syracuse wins at sea 477
Demosthenes arrives 481
Stay or go 485
The eclipse 488
Defeat in the harbor 489
The forces on each side 492
Nicias' speech to the fleet 495
Gylippus' speech 498
The battle in the Great Harbor 500
Hermocrates' trick 504
The retreat 506
Nicias' speech on the march 507
The march south 509
Demosthenes surrenders 511
The Assinarus 513
The fate of the prisoners 514

Book 8 517
Athens after the disaster 517
The Persian satraps 520
Chios revolts 524
The first treaty with Persia 527
The battle at Miletus 531
The second treaty 538

Alcibiades and Tissaphernes 543
The plot at Samos 545
Peisander at Athens 549
The third treaty 552
The Four Hundred 554
Democracy holds at Samos 561
Alcibiades returns to the fleet 566
The Phoenician fleet 571
The oligarchy divides 572
The Eetionea wall falls 575
Euboea lost 578
The Five Thousand 580
Mindarus sails for the Hellespont 581
Cynossema 584

INTRODUCTION

"Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote up the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians." So begins the first great work of political history. Thucydides served as an Athenian general in the war, was exiled after failing to save the city of Amphipolis in 424 BC, and spent twenty years gathering evidence from both sides. He meant his book to be "a possession for all time": an account so exact that readers could recognize the same patterns whenever human nature repeats them.

The war, fought from 431 to 404 BC, set Athens and its maritime empire against Sparta and its allies, and Thucydides believed it was the greatest upheaval Greece had ever known. Its truest cause, he argues, was Athenian power and the fear it aroused in Sparta. His narrative is famous for its speeches, in which statesmen argue over power and justice: Pericles' Funeral Oration for the Athenian dead, the debate over whether to massacre the people of Mytilene, and the Melian Dialogue, where Athenian envoys tell a small island that "the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must." Between them come the plague at Athens, the savage civil war at Corcyra, and the disastrous Athenian expedition to Sicily.

The *History* breaks off in mid-sentence in the winter of 411 BC, seven years before the war ended; Thucydides probably died before he could finish it. The Greek text here is the Oxford edition of Henry Stuart Jones (1898–1902), with his own spellings, such as ξυν- for συν-, which follow the Attic Greek of Thucydides' day.

Book 1

The causes of the war
Early Greece (the "Archaeology"), Thucydides' method, the quarrels over Corcyra and Potidaea, the debates at Sparta, the rise of Athenian power, and Pericles' first speech.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY

Thucydides introduces the war as the greatest upheaval yet and surveys early Greece to show why.

1.1 Thucydides, an Athenian, wrote up the war between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians, how they fought against each other. He began as soon as it broke out, expecting that it would be a great war and more worth recording than any that had gone before. He based this judgment on two things. Both sides went into it at the height of their strength and fully prepared in every respect, and he saw the rest of the Greek world taking sides with one or the other, some at once, others intending to. For this was the greatest upheaval that ever came upon the Greeks and upon part of the non-Greek world, and indeed, one might say, upon most of mankind. As for the events before it, and those still further back, it was impossible to discover them clearly because of the great lapse of time. But from the evidence that I find I can trust when I look back as far as possible, I believe they were not great, either in their wars or in other respects. 1.2 For it is evident that the country now called Hellas was not settled securely in the old days. Instead, there were migrations in earlier times, and each people readily abandoned its own land whenever it was pressed by some others who were always more numerous. There was no trade, and they did not mix with one another

without fear, either by land or by sea. Each people worked its own land only enough to live on. They had no surplus of wealth and did not plant orchards, since it was uncertain when someone else would come and take it from them, especially as they had no walls. And since they thought they could get their necessary daily food anywhere, they moved away without difficulty. For this reason they were strong neither in the size of their cities nor in their other resources. It was the best land that always saw the most changes of inhabitants: what is now called Thessaly, Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese except Arcadia, and the most fertile parts of the rest of the country. For the quality of the land allowed some people to acquire greater power, and this bred civil strife, which ruined them. At the same time they were more exposed to the designs of outsiders. Attica, at any rate, was free from civil strife for the longest time because of the poverty of its soil, and it was always inhabited by the same people. Here is no small proof of my argument that it was because of the migrations that the rest of Greece did not grow in the same way. The most powerful of those driven out of the rest of Greece by war or civil strife withdrew to the Athenians, as a place of safety. By becoming citizens they made the city still greater in population from very early times, so that later, since Attica was not large enough, the Athenians even sent out colonies to Ionia.[1]

1.3 The following also shows me the weakness of the ancients as clearly as anything. Before the Trojan War, Greece evidently undertook nothing in common. In fact I think that the country as a whole did not yet even have this name. Before Hellen son of Deucalion, the name did not exist at all. The various peoples, the Pelasgian most widely, gave their own names to the regions they lived in. But when Hellen and his sons grew powerful in Phthiotis and were called in by other cities to help them, these peoples, one by one, came through this association to be called Hellenes more and more. Even so, it was a long time before the

1 Ionia: the central west coast of Asia Minor and its offshore islands, settled by Greeks who spoke the Ionic dialect.

name [was able] to prevail among them all.[2] Homer is the best evidence of this. Though he lived long after even the Trojan War, he nowhere uses the name for them all, nor for anyone except the followers of Achilles from Phthiotis, who were in fact the first Hellenes. In his poems he calls them Danaans, Argives and Achaeans. Nor, for that matter, does he speak of "non-Greeks," because, as I think, the Greeks had not yet been set apart under a single name as their counterpart. In any case, those who came to be called Hellenes, first city by city, wherever they understood one another's speech, and later all together, did nothing collectively before the Trojan War, because of their weakness and their lack of contact with one another. And even this expedition they undertook together only once they had come to make greater use of the sea.

1.4 Minos is the earliest of those known to us by tradition who acquired a navy. He controlled most of what is now the Greek sea and ruled the Cyclades, and he was the first to found settlements on most of them. He drove out the Carians and installed his own sons as governors. Naturally, he also cleared piracy from the sea as far as he could, so that more revenue would come to him.[3] 1.5 For in early times, once they began to cross to one another by ship more often, the Greeks turned to piracy, and so did those non-Greeks who lived on the coasts of the mainland or held islands. They were led by men of no small power, who sought profit for themselves and a living for the poor. They would fall on cities that were unwalled and made up of scattered villages and plunder them, and they got most of their living this way. The practice did not yet carry any shame. Rather, it brought a certain glory. This is shown even now by some of the mainland peoples, among whom it is a mark of distinction to do it well. It is also shown by the old poets, in whose works people everywhere ask those who put in by sea whether

2 Hellen, son of Deucalion (the survivor of the great flood in Greek myth), was the legendary ancestor of the Hellenes, as the Greeks call themselves. Phthiotis is a district of southern Thessaly.

3 Minos: legendary king of Crete. The Cyclades are the island group of the central Aegean; the Carians were a people of southwestern Asia Minor.

they are pirates. This implies that those who were asked did not think the work beneath them, and that those who were concerned to know did not reproach them for it. They also plundered one another on land. To this day much of Greece lives in the old way: around the Ozolian Locrians, the Aetolians, the Acarnanians and that part of the mainland. And the habit of carrying weapons has survived among these mainland peoples from the old piracy.[4] 1.6 For all Greece used to carry weapons, because their homes were unprotected and travel between them was unsafe, and going about armed became part of their daily life, as it is for the non-Greeks. The fact that these parts of Greece still live this way is a sign of habits that were once common to all.

The Athenians were among the first to lay aside their weapons and to change to a more relaxed and luxurious way of life. It is not long, in fact, since the older men of their wealthy class, in their love of refinement, stopped wearing linen tunics and tying their hair up in a knot fastened with golden cicadas. From them this fashion spread to the older men of the Ionians, because of their kinship, and prevailed there for a long time. The Spartans, by contrast, were the first to adopt a modest style of dress, in the present fashion, and among them those with greater wealth came, in other ways too, to live most nearly on equal terms with the many. The Spartans were also the first to strip naked, undressing in public and rubbing themselves with oil when they exercised. In the old days, even at the Olympic Games, athletes competed with loincloths around their genitals, and it is not many years since this stopped. Even now, among some non-Greeks, especially those in Asia, prizes are offered for boxing and wrestling, and they compete in loincloths. And one could point to many other ways in which the early Greek world lived like the non-Greek world of today.

1.7 Of the cities, those founded most recently, when sailing had become easier and they had more surplus wealth, were built

4 The Ozolian Locrians, Aetolians and Acarnanians lived in west-central Greece, north of the Gulf of Corinth.

with walls right on the shore and occupied isthmuses, both for trade and for strength against their various neighbors. The old cities, on the other hand, because piracy held on for a long time, were built rather away from the sea, both on the islands and on the mainland. (For the pirates plundered one another and also all others who lived down by the coast without being seafarers.) And to this day these cities still lie inland. 1.8 The islanders, who were Carians and Phoenicians, were no less pirates; for it was these peoples who settled most of the islands. Here is the proof. When Delos was purified by the Athenians during this war, and all the graves of the dead on the island were removed, over half were found to be Carians. They were recognized by the kind of arms buried with them and by the way of burial that the Carians still use today.[5] Once the navy of Minos was established, people could sail to one another more easily. For he drove the evildoers out of the islands, at the same time as he settled most of them. Those who lived by the sea now applied themselves more to acquiring wealth and lived more securely, and some even built walls around themselves, as they were growing richer than before. In their desire for gain the weaker were willing to submit to servitude under the stronger, while the more powerful, who had surplus resources, made the smaller cities their subjects. It was when they had gone further along this path that, at a later time, they made their expedition against Troy.

AGAMEMNON AND THE TROJAN WAR

The expedition against Troy was the first common Greek undertaking, and smaller than the poets claim.

1.9 And it seems to me that Agamemnon was able to gather the expedition because he surpassed the men of his time in power, and not so much because he was leading Helen's suitors, who were bound by their oaths to Tyndareus. Those Peloponnesians who have received the clearest accounts handed down from

5 Delos, the island sacred to Apollo, was purified by the Athenians in 426 BC; Thucydides describes this in Book 3.

earlier generations say the following. Pelops first gained power through the great wealth he brought with him from Asia to a people without resources, and so, newcomer though he was, he gave his name to the country. Later still greater power fell to his descendants. Eurystheus was killed in Attica by the Heraclids. Atreus was his mother's brother, and when Eurystheus set out on his campaign he entrusted[6] Mycenae and the rule to Atreus, as his kinsman (Atreus, they say, happened to be in exile from his father because of the death of Chrysippus). When Eurystheus did not come back, the Mycenaeans, out of fear of the Heraclids, wanted Atreus as king; he also seemed a capable man and had won the favor of the people of Mycenae and of all whom Eurystheus ruled. So Atreus took over the kingship, and the descendants of Pelops became greater than those of Perseus. All this, I think, Agamemnon inherited. And since he had [also] become stronger at sea than the others, he gathered the expedition and carried it out not so much through goodwill as through fear.[7] For it is clear that he arrived with the most ships himself and supplied ships to the Arcadians as well, as Homer has shown, if his evidence is enough for anyone. And in the passage about the handing down of the scepter, Homer has said that Agamemnon was "lord of many islands and of all Argos." Now as a mainlander he could not have ruled islands beyond the neighboring ones, and these would not be many, unless he had some sort of navy. And it is from this expedition that we must infer what the earlier ones were like.[8]

1.10 The fact that Mycenae was small, or that any town of that time now seems insignificant, would be no exact evidence for anyone who wished to doubt that the expedition was as great as the poets have said and as tradition holds. Suppose the city of

6 In legend, Helen's suitors swore to her father Tyndareus to defend whichever of them won her. The Peloponnese means "island of Pelops"; the Heraclids were the descendants of Heracles.

7 Atreus was said to have killed his half-brother Chrysippus. The Perseids, descendants of Perseus, were the line of Eurystheus.

8 The quotation is from *Iliad* 2.108, where Agamemnon receives his ancestral scepter; "Argos" there means his realm on the mainland.

the Spartans were deserted, and only its temples and the foundations of its buildings were left. I think that, after a long time had passed, later generations would find it very hard to believe that its power matched its fame. And yet the Spartans occupy two-fifths of the Peloponnese and lead the whole of it, as well as many allies outside it. Still, since their city is not concentrated in one place and has no costly temples and buildings, but is made up of villages in the old Greek way, it would seem rather inferior. If the Athenians, on the other hand, suffered the same fate, their power would be guessed from the visible appearance of the city to be twice what it is. So it is not reasonable to doubt the tradition, or to look at the appearance of cities rather than their power. We should rather believe that that expedition was the greatest of all before it, but fell short of those of our own day —if here too we should put any trust in Homer's poetry. As a poet, he is likely to have embellished it on the side of greatness, and yet even so it appears rather modest. For he has made it twelve hundred ships, the Boeotian ships carrying a hundred and twenty men each and those of Philoctetes fifty. By this he indicates, I think, the largest and the smallest; at any rate, he did not mention the size of any others in the Catalogue of Ships.[9] That the men rowed for themselves and that all of them were fighters he has shown in the case of Philoctetes' ships, for he has made all the oarsmen archers. Nor is it likely that many passengers sailed with them apart from the kings and those highest in command. This is all the more so since they were about to cross the open sea with the equipment of war, and in boats that were not decked, but fitted out rather in the old pirate fashion. So if one takes the mean between the largest and the smallest ships, it is clear that not many came, considering that they were sent jointly from the whole of Greece.

1.11 The reason was not so much a shortage of men as a lack of money. Because of the difficulty of supplies they brought a smaller army, only as large as they expected could live off the land

9 The Catalogue of Ships is the list of the Greek contingents in *Iliad* 2; Philoctetes led a contingent from Thessaly.

while fighting. When they arrived, they won a battle. (That is plain, for otherwise they could not have built the wall around their camp.) Even then, however, they evidently did not use their whole force, but turned to farming the Chersonese and to plundering, because of the difficulty of supplies. This is the main reason the Trojans, with the Greeks scattered, held out by force for those ten years: they were always a match for whatever part was left behind.[10] But if they had come with a surplus of supplies, and had kept together and carried on the war without a break, without plundering and farming, they would easily have won in battle and taken the city. After all, even when they were not together, but only the part of them present at any given time, they held their own. And if they had sat down to a siege they would have taken Troy in less time and with less trouble. But because of the lack of money, the undertakings before this were weak, and even this one, though more famous than any before it, proves in fact to have fallen short of its reputation and of the account of it that now prevails because of the poets. 1.12 For even after the Trojan War Greece was still subject to migrations and resettlement, so that it could not be at peace and grow. The return of the Greeks from Ilium, which took a long time, brought about many changes, and civil strife broke out widely in the cities, and those driven out by it founded new cities. The present-day Boeotians, driven out of Arne by the Thessalians in the sixtieth year after the capture of Ilium, settled the land now called Boeotia, which was formerly called Cadmeis. (A portion of them had been living in this land earlier, and it was from these that the Boeotians who went to Ilium came.) And in the eightieth year the Dorians, together with the Heraclids, took possession of the Peloponnese. Only with difficulty, and after a long time, did Greece settle down securely and stop being uprooted, and then it sent out colonies. The Athenians founded the settlements of the Ionians and most of those of the islanders, while the Peloponnesians founded most of the settlements in

10 The Chersonese here is the Thracian Chersonese (the Gallipoli peninsula), across the Hellespont from Troy.

Italy and Sicily and some places in the rest of Greece. All these were founded after the Trojan War.[11]

NAVIES, TYRANTS AND THE PERSIAN THREAT

Corinth, Ionia and others build navies; tyrants and the Persian conquest hold Greece back.

1.13 As Greece grew more powerful and went on acquiring wealth even more than before, tyrannies were established in most of the cities, as revenues increased. (Before this there had been hereditary kingships with fixed privileges.) Greece began to fit out navies, and the Greeks applied themselves more to the sea. The Corinthians are said to have been the first to handle ships in a way closest to the present one, and the first triremes in Greece are said to have been built at Corinth. It also appears that Ameinocles, a Corinthian shipbuilder, built four ships for the Samians; and it is about three hundred years before the end of this war that Ameinocles went to the Samians.[12] The earliest sea battle we know of was fought between the Corinthians and the Corcyraeans, and this too was about two hundred and sixty years before the same date. For the Corinthians, since their city lay on the Isthmus, always had a trading center. In the old days the Greeks, both those inside the Peloponnese and those outside it, dealt with each other more by land than by sea, and so they passed through Corinthian territory. The Corinthians were therefore powerful in wealth, as the old poets also show, for they called the place "wealthy."[13] And when the Greeks began to take more to the sea, the Corinthians acquired ships and put down piracy, and by providing a market on both routes, by land and by sea, they made their city powerful through its revenues. Later the Ionians built a large navy, in the time of Cyrus, the first king of the Persians, and Cambyses his son; and fighting against

11 Arne was in Thessaly; Cadmeis is named after Cadmus, the legendary founder of Thebes.
12 The trireme, a warship with three banks of oars, was the standard warship of this war. The war ended in 404 BC, which places Ameinocles about 704 BC.
13 That is, about 664 BC. Homer calls Corinth "wealthy" (*Iliad* 2.570).

Cyrus they controlled the sea along their own coast for a time. Polycrates, tyrant of Samos in the time of Cambyses, was strong at sea and made a number of the islands his subjects; he also captured Rheneia and dedicated it to Delian Apollo. And the Phocaeans, while they were founding Massalia, defeated the Carthaginians in a sea battle.[14] 1.14 For these were the most powerful of the navies. But even these, though they came many generations after the Trojan War, evidently had few triremes and were still made up of penteconters and long boats, like the earlier navies. Shortly before the Persian Wars and the death of Darius, who was king of the Persians after Cambyses, the tyrants in Sicily and the Corcyraeans acquired triremes in large numbers. These were the last navies worth mentioning to be established in Greece before Xerxes' expedition. For the Aeginetans and the Athenians, and whatever others had any, possessed small navies, made up mostly of penteconters. It was only recently that Themistocles persuaded the Athenians, when they were at war with the Aeginetans and the Persian invasion was also expected, to build the ships with which they actually fought at sea; and even these did not yet have decks running their full length.[15]

1.15 Such, then, were the navies of the Greeks, both the ancient ones and those of later times. Even so, those who devoted themselves to them gained no small strength, both in revenue and in rule over others. For they sailed against the islands and subdued them, especially those people whose land was not sufficient. On land, however, no war arose from which any real power was gained. All the wars there were, were fought by each people against its own neighbors, and the Greeks did not go on expeditions far from their own land to conquer others. For subject peoples had not joined together around the greatest cities, nor did the cities themselves make joint expeditions on equal terms;

14 Polycrates ruled Samos about 535–522 BC; Rheneia is the island beside Delos. The Phocaeans, from Ionia, founded Massalia (modern Marseille) about 600 BC.
15 Penteconters were fifty-oared galleys, lighter than triremes. Themistocles' new fleet fought the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC.

rather, they fought one another separately, neighbor against neighbor. It was above all in the war fought long ago between the Chalcidians and the Eretrians that the rest of the Greek world also divided into alliances with one side or the other.[16] 1.16 Various obstacles also arose in various places to prevent different peoples from growing. In the case of the Ionians, when their affairs had advanced to greatness, Cyrus and the Persian kingdom overthrew Croesus and everything between the river Halys and the sea, then marched against them and enslaved the cities on the mainland. Later Darius, with the strength of the Phoenician fleet, enslaved the islands as well.[17] 1.17 As for the tyrants in the Greek cities, they looked ahead only to their own interests, both to their personal safety and to the increase of their own house, and they governed their cities with security foremost, as far as they possibly could. No achievement worth mentioning was accomplished by them, except perhaps against their own neighbors; only the tyrants in Sicily advanced very far in power. Thus Greece was held back on every side for a long time, so that it accomplished nothing notable in common, and its individual cities lacked enterprise.

1.18 The tyrants of Athens, and those of the rest of Greece, which had been ruled by tyrants for a long time, even before Athens was, were finally put down by the Spartans: most of them, and the last of them, except for those in Sicily. (After its settlement by the Dorians who live there now, Sparta suffered from civil strife for longer than any place we know. Yet from the very earliest times it had good laws and was never ruled by tyrants. It is about four hundred years, and a little more, down to the end of this war, that the Spartans have had the same constitution, and being powerful for that reason they also settled the affairs of other cities.) Not many years after the tyrants had been put down throughout Greece, the battle of Marathon was fought

16 Probably the Lelantine War between the two chief cities of Euboea, Chalcis and Eretria, fought around 700 BC.

17 Croesus, king of Lydia, was overthrown by Cyrus about 546 BC; the river Halys in central Asia Minor had marked the eastern border of his kingdom.

between the Persians and the Athenians.[18] In the tenth year after it the Persians came once more with their great armada to enslave Greece. With great danger hanging over them, the Spartans took the lead of the Greeks who joined in the war, since they were foremost in power. As the Persians advanced, the Athenians resolved to abandon their city. They packed up their belongings, went on board their ships, and became a seafaring people. Together the Greeks drove off the Persians. But not long afterward they split apart: both the Greeks who had revolted from the King and those who had fought in the war together sided some with the Athenians and some with the Spartans.[19] For these two had shown themselves the greatest in power: the one was strong on land, the other at sea. For a short time the alliance in arms held together. Then the Spartans and the Athenians fell out and made war on each other, each with their allies, and any of the other Greeks who had a quarrel anywhere now went over to one side or the other. So from the Persian Wars down to this war, now making truces, now fighting, either with each other or with their own allies when these revolted, they brought their military forces to a fine state of readiness and grew more experienced, because they did their training in the midst of real dangers. 1.19 The Spartans led their allies without making them pay tribute. Instead they took care that the allies were governed by oligarchies, in a way that suited the Spartans alone. The Athenians, in the course of time, took over the ships of the allied cities, except for those of Chios and Lesbos, and assessed all the rest for payments of money. And so, for this war, their own separate forces became greater than they had ever been when they flourished at their strongest with the alliance still intact.

18 The battle of Marathon, in which the Athenians defeated a Persian landing force, was fought in 490 BC.

19 This was Xerxes' invasion of 480 BC; "the King" is the king of Persia.

THUCYDIDES' METHOD

On the difficulty of finding the truth, the speeches and the facts: "a possession for all time."

1.20 Such, then, is what I found about ancient times, though it is hard to trust every piece of evidence in turn. For people accept reports of past events from one another equally without testing them, even when the events concern their own country. The Athenian public, for instance, believe that Hipparchus was tyrant when he was killed by Harmodius and Aristogeiton. They do not know that it was Hippias who ruled, as the eldest of Peisistratus' sons, and that Hipparchus and Thessalus were his brothers. On that very day, at the last moment, Harmodius and Aristogeiton suspected that one of their fellow conspirators had informed Hippias of something, so they kept away from him, believing he had been warned in advance. But they wanted to do something and take the risk before they were arrested, and when they came upon Hipparchus near the place called the Leocorion, as he was organizing the Panathenaic procession, they killed him.[20] There are many other things, too, which still exist even now and have not been forgotten through the passage of time, about which the rest of the Greeks also hold mistaken beliefs. They think, for example, that each of the Spartan kings casts not one vote but two, and that the Spartans have a "Pitanate company," which never existed at all. So little trouble do most people take in searching for the truth, and so readily do they turn to whatever lies ready to hand.[21] 1.21 Still, on the evidence I have given, no one would go wrong in thinking that things were very much as I have described them. He should not put more trust in what the poets have sung about them, embellishing them to make them greater, or in what the prose chron-

20 The Panathenaea was Athens' great festival of Athena; the Leocorion was a shrine in the Agora. The killing took place in 514 BC.

21 Pitana was one of the villages that made up Sparta; both beliefs are found in Herodotus.

iclers have composed to be more appealing to their hearers than true. Such matters cannot be checked, and most of them have, over time, passed beyond belief into the realm of legend. He should rather consider that these things have been established from the clearest indications, sufficiently so, given that they are ancient. People always judge the war they are fighting to be the greatest while they are in it, and once it is over they admire ancient events more. Even so, this war will show itself, to those who examine it on the basis of the actual events, to have been greater than those that came before it.

1.22 As for what was said in speeches by each side, either when they were about to go to war or when they were already in it, it was hard to remember precisely the words that were spoken, both for me with what I heard myself and for those who reported to me from elsewhere. So the speeches are given as each speaker seemed to me most likely to have said what the occasion required, while I kept as closely as possible to the overall sense of what was actually said. As for the deeds done in the war, I did not see fit to write them down on information from anyone I happened to come across, nor as they seemed to me to have happened. I have gone through both the events at which I was present myself and those I learned of from others, with as much accuracy as possible in each case. The facts were found out with great labor, because those who were present at each event did not give the same account of the same things, but spoke according to their sympathies for one side or the other, or according to their memory. When it is heard read aloud, its lack of the legendary may perhaps make it seem less pleasing. But it will be enough if it is judged useful by those who want to see clearly what happened, and what, human nature being what it is, will happen again at some time in the same or a similar way. It has been composed as a possession for all time rather than a prize composition to be heard for the moment.

THE TRUEST CAUSE

The growth of Athenian power and the fear it caused in Sparta made the war inevitable.

1.23 Of earlier actions the greatest was the Persian War, and even that reached a quick decision in two sea battles and two land battles. This war, by contrast, went on to a great length, and it so happened that sufferings came upon Greece during it such as never before in an equal span of time. Never were so many cities captured and left desolate, some by non-Greeks, some by the Greeks themselves fighting one another (some even changed their inhabitants when they were taken). Never were so many people driven into exile, nor was there so much killing, some in the war itself, some through civil strife.[22] Things that had been told by hearsay before, but more rarely confirmed in fact, ceased to be incredible. There were earthquakes, which affected the largest part of the earth at once and were also the most violent; eclipses of the sun, which occurred more frequently than is remembered from earlier times; great droughts in some places, and famines resulting from them; and, not least harmful, the plague, which destroyed a part of the population. All these things came upon them together with this war. The Athenians and the Peloponnesians began it by breaking the Thirty Years' Peace that they had made after the capture of Euboea. As to why they broke it, I have first written out the grievances and disputes, so that no one may ever have to ask what started so great a war among the Greeks. The truest cause, though the least spoken of, I consider to have been that the Athenians, by growing great and frightening the Spartans, forced them into war. But the grievances openly stated on each side, on the grounds of which they broke the treaty and went to war, were as follows.[23]

22 The sea battles were Artemisium and Salamis (480 BC), the land battles Thermopylae (480 BC) and Plataea (479 BC).

23 The peace was concluded in 446 BC, after the Athenians had put down a revolt in Euboea.

EPIDAMNUS AND CORCYRA

A quarrel over a remote colony draws Corinth and Corcyra into war, and Athens into the quarrel.

1.24 Epidamnus is a city on the right as you sail into the Ionian Gulf. Its neighbors are the Taulantians, a non-Greek Illyrian people. The Corcyraeans founded it as a colony, but its founder was Phalius son of Eratocleides, a Corinthian of the line of Heracles, who was invited from the mother city in keeping with the ancient custom. Some Corinthians and others of Dorian stock also joined in the settlement. As time went on, the city of the Epidamnians became powerful and populous. But after many years of civil strife among themselves, so it is said, they were ruined in a war with the neighboring non-Greeks and lost much of their power.[24] Finally, just before this war, their people drove out the powerful. These returned with the non-Greeks and plundered those in the city by land and sea. Hard pressed, the Epidamnians in the city sent envoys to Corcyra as their mother city. They begged the Corcyraeans not to stand by and watch them being destroyed, but to reconcile the exiles with them and put an end to the war with the non-Greeks. They made these requests sitting as suppliants in the temple of Hera. But the Corcyraeans did not accept their supplication and sent them away with nothing accomplished.[25]

1.25 When the Epidamnians realized that there was no help for them from Corcyra, they were at a loss how to deal with their situation. They sent to Delphi and asked the god whether they should hand over their city to the Corinthians as its founders and try to get some help from them. The god answered that they should hand it over and make the Corinthians their leaders. So the Epidamnians went to Corinth and, in accordance with the

24 Epidamnus (modern Durrës in Albania) lay on the Adriatic, which Thucydides calls the Ionian Gulf. Corcyra (Corfu) was itself a colony of Corinth.
25 Suppliants seated in a sanctuary, here the temple of Hera at Corcyra, were under the god's protection.

oracle, handed over the colony. They pointed out that their founder had come from Corinth and made the oracle known, and they begged the Corinthians not to stand by and watch them being destroyed, but to come to their defense.[26] The Corinthians undertook to help them, both on grounds of justice, since they considered the colony no less theirs than the Corcyraeans', and at the same time out of hatred for the Corcyraeans, who neglected them even though they were Corinth's colonists. For the Corcyraeans did not grant them the customary privileges at the common festivals, nor give a Corinthian the first share at their sacrifices, as the other colonies did. Instead they looked down on them. At that time the Corcyraeans were a match in wealth for the richest of the Greeks and stronger in military resources. They prided themselves on being, at times, far superior at sea, and on the fame for seafaring of the Phaeacians, who had lived in Corcyra before them (which was all the more reason for them to keep fitting out their navy, and they were far from weak: they had a hundred and twenty triremes when they began the war)—[27] 1.26 with grievances, then, on all these counts, the Corinthians gladly sent the help to Epidamnus. They invited anyone who wished to go as a settler, and sent a garrison of Ambraciots, Leucadians and their own men. These went by land to Apollonia, a Corinthian colony, for fear that the Corcyraeans might stop them if they crossed by sea.

When the Corcyraeans learned that the settlers and the garrison had arrived at Epidamnus and that the colony had been given to the Corinthians, they were angry. They sailed at once with twenty-five ships, and later with a second fleet, and insultingly ordered the Epidamnians to take back the exiles and to send away the garrison and the settlers the Corinthians had sent. (The Epidamnian exiles had come to Corcyra, pointing to the tombs there and to their kinship, and holding out that kinship they begged to be restored.) The Epidamnians would not

26 Delphi was the seat of the oracle of Apollo, the god meant here.
27 The Phaeacians are the legendary seafaring people of Homer's *Odyssey*, whose island was identified with Corcyra.

listen to any of this, so the Corcyraeans moved against them with forty ships, together with the exiles, intending to restore them, and taking the Illyrians along as well. They sat down before the city and proclaimed that any Epidamnian who wished, and the foreigners, could leave unharmed; otherwise they would treat them as enemies. When they did not comply, the Corcyraeans (the place is an isthmus) laid siege to the city. 1.27 The Corinthians, for their part, when messengers came to them from Epidamnus to say that it was under siege, prepared an expedition. At the same time they proclaimed a colony to Epidamnus, on terms of full equality, for anyone who wished to go; and if anyone did not want to sail at once but wished to have a share in the colony, he could stay behind by depositing fifty Corinthian drachmas. Many sailed, and many paid the money. They also asked the Megarians to escort them with ships, in case the Corcyraeans should try to prevent them from sailing. The Megarians got ready to sail with them with eight ships, and the Paleans of Cephallenia with four. They also asked the Epidaurians, who provided five; the Hermionians provided one, the Troezenians two, the Leucadians ten, and the Ambraciots eight. They asked the Thebans and the Phliasians for money, and the Eleans for unmanned ships and money. Of the Corinthians' own forces, thirty ships and three thousand hoplites were made ready.[28]

1.28 When the Corcyraeans learned of these preparations, they went to Corinth with Spartan and Sicyonian envoys whom they had brought with them, and demanded that the Corinthians withdraw the garrison and the settlers at Epidamnus, since they had no claim to Epidamnus. If the Corinthians laid any claim to it, the Corcyraeans were willing to submit the matter to arbitration in the Peloponnese, before cities that both sides agreed on, and whichever side the colony was judged to belong to should have it. They were also willing to refer the matter to the oracle at Delphi. But they warned them not to make war. Otherwise,

28 The drachma was the standard silver coin; hoplites were heavily armed infantry, the core of a Greek army.

they said, they too would be forced by the Corinthians' violence to make friends they did not want, other than their present ones, in order to get help. The Corinthians replied that if the Corcyraeans withdrew their ships and the non-Greeks from Epidamnus, they would consider the matter; but until then it was not right for the Epidamnians to be besieged while they themselves went to arbitration. The Corcyraeans countered that they would do this if the Corinthians also withdrew their people from Epidamnus. They were also ready, they said, for both sides to stay where they were and make a truce until the case was decided. 1.29 The Corinthians would listen to none of this. When their ships were manned and their allies had arrived, they first sent ahead a herald to declare war on the Corcyraeans. Then they set out with seventy-five ships and two thousand hoplites and sailed for Epidamnus to make war on the Corcyraeans. The ships were commanded by Aristeus son of Pellichus, Callicrates son of Callias and Timanor son of Timanthes, and the infantry by Archetimus son of Eurytimus and Isarchidas son of Isarchus. When they reached Actium in the territory of Anactorium, where the temple of Apollo stands at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, the Corcyraeans sent a herald ahead to them in a light boat to forbid them to sail against Corcyra. At the same time they manned their ships, bracing the old ones to make them seaworthy and refitting the rest. The herald brought back no peaceful answer from the Corinthians, and the Corcyraean ships were now manned, eighty in number (forty were besieging Epidamnus). So the Corcyraeans put out to meet the enemy, drew up their line and fought a sea battle. They won decisively and destroyed fifteen of the Corinthian ships. On the same day it also happened that their forces besieging Epidamnus brought it to surrender on terms: the newcomers were to be sold, and the Corinthians kept in chains until some other decision was made.[29] 1.30 After the sea battle the Corcyraeans set up a trophy on Leucimme, a headland of Corcyra. They put to death the other prisoners they had taken, but kept the Corinthians in

29 This sea battle was fought in 435 BC.

chains. Later, after the Corinthians and their allies had gone back home, defeated at sea, the Corcyraeans were masters of the whole sea in those parts. They sailed to Leucas, the Corinthian colony, and ravaged its land, and they burned Cyllene, the harbor town of the Eleans, because the Eleans had provided ships and money to the Corinthians.[30] For most of the time after the sea battle they controlled the sea, sailing against the Corinthians' allies and doing them damage. This went on until, as the summer came round, the Corinthians sent ships and an army, since their allies were suffering, and encamped at Actium and around Cheimerium in Thesprotis, to protect Leucas and the other cities that were friendly to them. The Corcyraeans set up a camp facing them at Leucimme, with ships and infantry. Neither side sailed against the other. They sat facing each other for this summer, and when winter had already come, both withdrew home.

THE CORCYRAEANS AT ATHENS

Corcyraean envoys ask Athens for an alliance, arguing that their navy will be decisive in the coming war.

1.31 For the whole year after the sea battle, and the year after that, the Corinthians, furious about the war with the Corcyraeans, built ships and prepared as strong a fleet as they could, collecting rowers from the Peloponnese itself and from the rest of Greece and winning them over with pay. The Corcyraeans learned of their preparations and were afraid. They were not bound by treaty to any of the Greeks, and had not had themselves enrolled in either the Athenian or the Spartan treaty, so they decided to go to the Athenians, become their allies, and try to get some help from them. When the Corinthians learned of this, they too came to Athens on an embassy, so that the Athenian navy might not be added to the Corcyraean one and prevent them from settling the war as they wished. When an

30 A trophy was a monument of captured arms set up on the battlefield to mark a victory.

assembly had been convened, the two sides presented opposing cases, and the Corcyraeans spoke as follows:[31]

1.32 "Athenians, when people come to their neighbors to ask for help, as we do now, without being owed it for some great service or an existing alliance, it is right that they should first explain, if possible, that what they ask is to the advantage of those they ask, or failing that, at least that it does them no harm; and next, that they will show lasting gratitude. If they can make none of this clear, they should not be angry if they fail. The Corcyraeans have sent us in the confidence that, along with our request for an alliance, we can also give you firm assurances on these points. But it so happens that one and the same policy has made our appeal to you look unreasonable, given our present need, and has worked against our own interests at the present moment. For we, who have never before been anyone's allies by choice, now come to ask others for this, and at the same time this very policy has left us isolated in our present war with the Corinthians. What once seemed our good sense, refusing to share dangers in someone else's alliance at the discretion of a neighbor, has now turned out to look like folly and weakness. In the sea battle that took place, we did beat back the Corinthians on our own. But now they have set out against us with greater forces from the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece, and we see that we cannot prevail with our own strength alone. The danger, too, is great if we fall under their power. So necessity compels us to ask for help from you and from anyone else. And we deserve forgiveness if we now dare to act against our former policy of staying out of affairs, not out of any baseness but rather through an error of judgment.

1.33 "If you agree, our need will turn out to be a fortunate occurrence for you in many respects. First, you will be giving your help to people who are being wronged, not to people who are harming others. Second, by taking in people whose very survival is at stake, you will lay up a favor with the most lasting record of gratitude possible. And we possess the largest navy

31 This debate before the Athenian assembly took place in 433 BC.

apart from your own. Consider: what good fortune could be rarer, or more painful to your enemies, than this? The power you would have paid a great deal of money and goodwill to add to your own is here, offering itself unasked, without danger or expense. It brings you, besides, a name for excellence in the eyes of most people, gratitude from those you will defend, and strength for yourselves. In all history few have had all these advantages at once, and few who seek an alliance come to those they appeal to offering security and distinction no less than they will receive. As for the war, the very thing that would make us useful, if any of you thinks it will not happen, his judgment is mistaken. He does not see that the Spartans, out of fear of you, are eager for war, and that the Corinthians, who have influence with them and are your enemies, are trying to seize us first as a step toward attacking you. They want to keep us from standing together against them in our common hostility, and to make sure they do not miss getting ahead in one of two ways: either by crippling us or by strengthening themselves. Our task, in turn, is to strike first, we by offering the alliance and you by accepting it, and to plot against them before they plot against us, rather than countering their plots.

1.34 "If they say that it is not just for you to receive their colonists, let them learn that every colony honors its mother city when it is well treated, but becomes estranged when it is wronged. Colonists are not sent out to be the slaves of those left behind, but to be their equals. And it is clear that the Corinthians were in the wrong. When they were invited to submit the dispute over Epidamnus to arbitration, they chose to pursue their complaints by war rather than on fair terms. Let what they are doing to us, their own kin, serve as some evidence for you, so that you are not led astray by their deceit and do not grant their requests when they make them openly. For the man who has the fewest regrets from obliging his opponents is the one who will remain safest. 1.35 Nor will you be breaking your treaty with the Spartans by receiving us, since we are allies of neither side. For it is stated in the treaty that any Greek city that is allied

to no one may join whichever side it pleases. And it would be outrageous if these people are to be free to man their ships from members of the treaty, and from the rest of Greece as well, and not least from your own subjects, while they shut us out from the alliance that lies open to us and from any help from anywhere else—and then call it a crime if you grant what we ask. We shall have far more ground for complaint against you if we fail to persuade you. You will be turning away us, who are in danger and are not your enemies; and as for these men, who are your enemies and on the attack, you will not only fail to stop them but will even stand by while they draw strength from your own empire. That is not just. You should either stop them, too, from hiring mercenaries from your domain, or send us help as well, on whatever terms you are persuaded to; best of all, you should accept us openly and help us. As we suggested at the outset, the advantages we can point to are many. The greatest is that we have the same enemies, which is the clearest guarantee there is, and these enemies are not weak but quite capable of harming those who desert them. Besides, when the alliance offered is a naval one and not one on land, rejecting it is not the same thing. Your aim should be, if you can, to let no one else possess ships at all; failing that, to have the strongest naval power as your friend.

1.36 "And if anyone thinks that what we say is advantageous but fears that by being persuaded he will break the treaty, let him recognize this. His fear, if it has strength behind it, will frighten his opponents more; but his confidence, if he refuses us, will rest on weakness and will be less alarming to enemies who are strong. Let him recognize, too, that what he is deciding now concerns Athens no less than Corcyra, and that he is not making the best provision for Athens when, looking only to the present, he hesitates—with a war coming and all but upon us—to take on a place whose friendship or enmity carries the most momentous consequences. For it lies well on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily, so that it can keep a fleet from coming from there to join the Peloponnesians, and can escort a fleet from here to that

region; and in other respects too it is extremely advantageous. To sum up as briefly as possible, both as a whole and point by point, here is why you should not abandon us. There are three navies worth mentioning among the Greeks: yours, ours, and the Corinthians'. If you allow two of these to combine, and the Corinthians get hold of us first, you will be fighting at sea against the Corcyraeans and the Peloponnesians together; if you accept us, you will be able to contend with them with your fleet enlarged by our ships." That is what the Corcyraeans said. After them the Corinthians spoke as follows:

THE CORINTHIAN REPLY

The Corinthians accuse Corcyra of injustice and warn Athens not to break the treaty by accepting it.

1.37 "These Corcyraeans have made their speech not only about your accepting them but also to argue that we are the wrongdoers and that they are being attacked without good reason. We too, therefore, must first deal with both these points before going on to the rest of our argument, so that you may know in advance, and more securely, what we are asking of you, and may reject their request on reasoned grounds.

"They say that it is out of prudence that they have never yet accepted an alliance with anyone. But they adopted this policy for the sake of wrongdoing, not out of excellence: they wanted no ally to witness their crimes, and no one whose presence, if they called him in, would make them ashamed. Their city, too, with its self-sufficient position, makes them judges in their own case of any harm they do to others, rather than having such matters settled by agreements. For they seldom sail out to their neighbors, but very often receive others who are forced to put in at their port. And this fine-sounding policy of making no treaties is a screen they have put up, not to avoid joining others in wrongdoing, but so that they can do wrong on their own—so that wherever they are stronger they can use force, wherever they go unnoticed they can take more than their share, and

whenever they gain something they need feel no shame. And yet if they were the good men they claim to be, the less exposed they were to their neighbors, the more clearly they could have displayed their excellence by offering and accepting fair settlements. 1.38 But they are not like that, either toward others or toward us. Though they are our colonists, they have held aloof from us the whole time, and now they are at war with us, saying that they were not sent out to be mistreated. We, for our part, say that we did not found the colony to be insulted by them, but to be their leaders and to receive the respect that is fitting. Our other colonies, at any rate, honor us, and no one holds us in greater affection than our colonists. And clearly, if we please the majority, it could not be right that these alone are displeased with us, nor would we be making this extraordinary expedition against them unless we had been extraordinarily wronged. Even if we were in the wrong, it would have been fine for them to give way to our anger, and shameful for us to use force against their moderation. But in their arrogance and the license that wealth gives them they have committed many offenses against us, and above all over Epidamnus, which was ours. When it was in distress they laid no claim to it; but when we came to its aid, they seized it by force and hold it now.

1.39 "And of course they say that they were willing earlier to submit to arbitration. But it is not the party that has the upper hand and makes the offer from a position of safety who should be thought to be saying anything of substance; it is the party that puts deeds and words alike on an equal footing before the contest begins. These men offered their fine-sounding arbitration not before besieging the place, but only when they concluded that we would not stand by and let it happen. And they have come here not only having done wrong there themselves, but now asking you to be, not their allies, but their accomplices in wrongdoing, and to accept them while they are at odds with us. They ought to have approached you when they were most secure—not now, when we have been wronged and they are in danger, and when you, who had no share in their power then,

are to give them a share of your help now, and, having had no part in their offenses, are to bear an equal share of the blame from us. Only those who shared their power long ago should share in the consequences too.

1.40 "We have shown, then, that we ourselves come with proper grievances and that these men are violent and grasping. You must now learn that you cannot justly receive them. For although the treaty states that any of the cities not listed in it may join whichever side it wishes, that provision is not for those who join in order to harm others. It is for a city that needs security without depriving another of its allegiance, and one that will not bring war instead of peace to those who receive it—if they are prudent. Yet that is what will happen to you now if you do not listen to us. You would become not only their helpers but our enemies instead of our treaty partners. For if you go with them, we shall have to defend ourselves against them, and you will not be left out of it. And yet the just course for you is, ideally, to stand aside from both of us; failing that, to do the opposite and join us against them. You are bound by treaty to the Corinthians, after all, whereas with the Corcyraeans you have never had so much as a truce. And you should not establish the principle that those who revolt from one side are to be received by the other. When the Samians revolted, we did not cast our vote against you, though the rest of the Peloponnesians were divided on whether to help them; we argued openly that each side should be free to punish its own allies. If you are going to receive wrongdoers and help them, it will become clear that just as many of your allies will come over to us, and you will be establishing a principle that tells against yourselves rather than against us.[32]

1.41 "These, then, are the claims of right we have against you, and they are sufficient by the customs of the Greeks. But we also have an appeal to make, and a claim on your gratitude, which we say ought to be repaid to us now; for we are not enemies, so as to harm you, nor again such friends as to make constant use

32 Samos revolted from Athens in 440 BC and was subdued after a long siege.

of you. Once, before the Persian Wars, when you were short of warships for your war against the Aeginetans, you received twenty ships from the Corinthians. That good service, together with the one regarding the Samians—when it was because of us that the Peloponnesians did not help them—gave you victory over the Aeginetans and the punishment of the Samians. And both came at moments of the kind when men, setting out against their own enemies, care nothing for anything except victory. They regard anyone who helps them as a friend, even if he was an enemy before, and anyone who opposes them as an enemy, even if he happens to be a friend; indeed, they will even neglect their own affairs for the sake of winning the immediate contest.

1.42 "Bear this in mind. Let any younger man who learns it from an older one consider it right to repay us in kind, and let him not think that, though what we say is just, his advantage lies elsewhere if there is to be war. For advantage most often follows where one makes the fewest mistakes. And the future war, which the Corcyraeans are using to frighten you into doing wrong, still lies in obscurity. It is not worth being carried away by it to bring on yourselves an enmity with the Corinthians that is already plain and no longer in prospect. The prudent course is rather to remove some of the suspicion that has existed for some time because of the Megarians—for a last favor that comes at the right moment, even if it is smaller, can cancel a larger grievance. Nor should you let yourselves be drawn in because they are offering you a great naval alliance. Not wronging one's equals is a more secure source of power than gaining an advantage through danger, carried away by what looks obvious at the moment.[33] 1.43 We ourselves have now landed in the very situation we spoke of at Sparta, when we said that each side should punish its own allies, and we now claim the same treatment from you in return: having benefited from our vote, do not harm us with yours. Repay like with like, recognizing that this is pre-

33 Megara had left the Spartan alliance for Athens around 460 BC, which caused bitter hostility between Corinth and Athens.

cisely the moment when the one who helps is the truest friend and the one who opposes is the worst enemy. Do not receive these Corcyraeans as allies against our will, and do not help them in their wrongdoing. If you do this, you will be acting as you should and making the best decision for yourselves."

THE BATTLE OF SYBOTA

Athens makes a defensive alliance with Corcyra, and Athenian ships fight Corinth in a great sea battle.

1.44 That, then, is what the Corinthians said. The Athenians heard both sides and held two meetings of the assembly. At the first they were no less receptive to the Corinthians' arguments, but on the following day they changed their minds. They decided not to make a full alliance with the Corcyraeans, which would mean having the same enemies and friends—for if the Corcyraeans then told them to sail with them against Corinth, their treaty with the Peloponnesians would be broken. Instead they made a defensive alliance, to help each other if anyone attacked Corcyra or Athens or their allies. For they thought that the war with the Peloponnesians would come anyway, and they did not want to give up Corcyra, with so large a navy, to the Corinthians. They wanted rather to wear the two down against each other as much as possible, so that, if it came to it, they would go to war against the Corinthians and the other naval powers when these were weaker. At the same time, the island seemed to them well placed on the coastal route to Italy and Sicily.

1.45 With this in mind the Athenians accepted the Corcyraeans, and not long after the Corinthians had left they sent ten ships to help them. Their commanders were Lacedaemonius son of Cimon, Diotimus son of Strombichus, and Proteas son of Epicles. They instructed them not to fight the Corinthians at sea unless the Corinthians sailed against Corcyra and were about to land there or on any part of its territory; in that case they were to stop them as best they could. They gave these instructions so

as not to break the treaty.[34] 1.46 The ships arrived at Corcyra. The Corinthians, once their preparations were complete, sailed against Corcyra with a hundred and fifty ships. Of these, ten were from Elis, twelve from Megara, ten from Leucas, twenty-seven from Ambracia, one from Anactorium, and ninety from Corinth itself. Each city's contingent had its own generals; the Corinthian commander was Xenocleides son of Euthycles, with four colleagues. Sailing from Leucas, they reached the mainland opposite Corcyra and anchored at Cheimerium in the territory of Thesprotia. It is a harbor, and above it, some way from the sea, in the Elaeatis district of Thesprotia, lies the city of Ephyra. Near it the Acherusian Lake flows out into the sea; the river Acheron, which runs through Thesprotia, empties into this lake and gives it its name. The river Thyamis also flows there, forming the boundary between Thesprotia and Cestrine, and between these two rivers juts out the headland of Cheimerium. Here, then, the Corinthians anchored off the mainland and made camp. 1.47 When the Corcyraeans learned that they were sailing toward them, they manned a hundred and ten ships under the command of Miciades, Aesimides and Eurybatus, and camped on one of the islands called Sybota; the ten Attic ships were there as well. Their land forces were on the headland of Leucimme, together with a thousand hoplites from Zacynthus who had come to their aid. The Corinthians, too, had many non-Greeks on the mainland who had come to support them; for the mainlanders in that region have always been their friends.

1.48 When the Corinthians were ready, they took three days' provisions and put out from Cheimerium by night, prepared for a sea battle. At dawn, as they sailed, they caught sight of the Corcyraean ships out at sea and sailing toward them. As soon as the two sides saw each other, they drew up in opposing lines. The Attic ships were on the Corcyraean right wing; the Corcyraeans themselves held the rest of the line, having formed their ships into three divisions, each commanded by one of the three gener-

34 Lacedaemonius ("Spartan") was an Athenian, son of the statesman Cimon, who named him in honor of Sparta.

als. That was how the Corcyraeans were drawn up. On the Corinthian side, the Megarian and Ambraciot ships held the right wing, and the other allies were in the center, each contingent in its own place. The Corinthians themselves held the left wing with their fastest ships, facing the Athenians and the Corcyraean right. [1.49] When the signals had been raised on both sides, they closed and began the battle. Both sides had many hoplites on their decks, and many archers and javelin-throwers, for they were still equipped in the old way, without much skill. The battle was hard-fought, though not correspondingly skillful; it was more like a battle on land. For whenever they came alongside one another, they could not easily get clear again because of the number and crowding of the ships, and they relied for victory rather more on the hoplites on deck, who stood and fought while the ships stayed motionless. There was no breaking through the enemy line; they fought with fury and brute strength rather than with skill. Everywhere, then, there was great uproar, and the battle was a confused one. The Attic ships would come up to support the Corcyraeans wherever they were hard pressed and so frightened the enemy, but they did not begin any fighting, because their commanders were afraid of the Athenians' instructions. The Corinthian right wing suffered most. The Corcyraeans, with twenty ships, routed it, chased the ships, scattered, to the mainland, sailed right up to their camp, landed, burned the abandoned tents and plundered their belongings. In this part of the battle, then, the Corinthians and their allies were beaten and the Corcyraeans had the upper hand. But where the Corinthians themselves were, on the left, they were winning decisively, since the Corcyraeans, whose numbers had been smaller to begin with, were without the twenty ships that had gone off in pursuit. The Athenians, seeing the Corcyraeans hard pressed, now began to help them more freely, though at first they held back from ramming anyone. But when the rout was plainly under way and the Corinthians were pressing hard, then at last everyone set to work, and no distinc-

tion was made any longer; things came to such a pass that the Corinthians and the Athenians attacked each other.

1.50 Once the rout had taken place, the Corinthians did not take the hulls of the ships they had disabled in tow. Instead they turned on the men, sailing through the lines to kill rather than to take prisoners. Because they had not noticed that their own right wing had been beaten, they killed their own friends without realizing it. Both sides had many ships, spread over a wide stretch of sea, and once they had closed with each other it was not easy to tell who was winning and who was losing. In number of ships, this was the greatest sea battle of Greeks against Greeks that had ever been fought up to that time. When the Corinthians had chased the Corcyraeans to land, they turned to the wrecks and to their own dead. They recovered most of them and brought them in to Sybota, where the land army of their non-Greek allies had come to support them. (Sybota is a deserted harbor in Thesprotia.) After doing this they regrouped and sailed against the Corcyraeans again. The Corcyraeans put out against them with their seaworthy ships and whatever others they had left, together with the Attic ships, because they were afraid the enemy would try to land on their territory. It was already late, and the paean for the attack had been sung, when the Corinthians suddenly began backing water: they had caught sight of twenty Athenian ships sailing up. The Athenians had sent these out after the ten as reinforcements. They feared what did in fact happen, that the Corcyraeans would be defeated and their own ten ships would be too few to defend them.[35] 1.51 The Corinthians saw these ships first and suspected that they came from Athens and that there were more of them than they could see, so they began to withdraw. The Corcyraeans could not see the ships, which were approaching from a direction more hidden from them, and they were puzzled to see the Corinthians backing water. Then some of them caught sight of the ships and said that there were ships over there sailing up. At that point they too withdrew, since it was already get-

35 The paean was a hymn sung in chorus by Greek troops as they went into battle.

ting dark, and the Corinthians turned about and broke off the engagement. So the two sides separated, and the sea battle ended at nightfall. The Corcyraeans were encamped at Leucimme. These twenty ships from Athens, commanded by Glaucon son of Leagrus and Andocides son of Leogoras, made their way through the corpses and the wrecks and sailed into the camp not long after they had been sighted. Because it was night, the Corcyraeans were afraid they were enemy ships, but then they recognized them, and the ships came to anchor.[36]

1.52 The next day the thirty Attic ships put out, together with as many of the Corcyraean ships as were seaworthy. They sailed against the harbor at Sybota, where the Corinthians lay at anchor, to find out whether they would fight. The Corinthians moved their ships off the shore and drew them up in line on the open water, but kept still. They had no intention of starting a battle of their own accord, because they saw that fresh ships had arrived from Athens and that they themselves faced many difficulties: they had to guard the prisoners they had on board, and they had no means of repairing their ships in a deserted place. They were thinking more about the voyage home and how they would get back. They feared that the Athenians would consider the treaty broken, since the two sides had come to blows, and would not let them sail away. 1.53 So they decided to put some men into a small boat and send them to the Athenians, without a herald's staff, to sound them out. They sent the men, who spoke as follows: "You are doing wrong, men of Athens, by starting a war and breaking the treaty. We are punishing our enemies, and you stand in our way and take up arms against us. If you intend to prevent us from sailing against Corcyra, or anywhere else we may wish to go, and you are breaking the treaty, then seize us here first and treat us as enemies."[37] That was what they said. All of the Corcyraean camp that heard it immediately shouted to seize the men and kill them. The Athenians, however,

36 The Greek text is uncertain here.

37 A herald's staff marked an envoy sent to an enemy. Going without one avoided formally admitting that a state of war existed.

answered as follows: "We are not starting a war, men of the Peloponnese, nor are we breaking the treaty. We have come to help the Corcyraeans here, who are our allies. If you wish to sail anywhere else, we will not stop you. But if you sail against Corcyra or any of its territory, we will not stand by, as far as it is in our power."

1.54 When the Athenians had given this answer, the Corinthians prepared for the voyage home and set up a trophy at the Sybota on the mainland. The Corcyraeans took up the wrecks and the dead that had been carried toward them by the current and by a wind that rose in the night and scattered them everywhere. They then set up a rival trophy at the Sybota on the island, claiming to have won.[38] Each side claimed the victory on the following reasoning. The Corinthians set up a trophy because they had been winning the sea battle until nightfall, so that they had brought in the most wrecks and dead. They also held no fewer than a thousand men as prisoners and had sunk about seventy ships. The Corcyraeans had destroyed about thirty ships, and after the Athenians came they had recovered the wrecks and dead on their side. On the previous day the Corinthians had backed water and retreated before them on seeing the Attic ships, and after the Athenians came the Corinthians had not sailed out from Sybota to meet them. For these reasons the Corcyraeans set up a trophy. 1.55 In this way each side claimed to have won. On their way home the Corinthians took Anactorium, which lies at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, by a trick. The place had been held jointly by the Corcyraeans and themselves. They settled Corinthian colonists there and went back home. Of their Corcyraean prisoners, they sold the eight hundred who were slaves. The other two hundred and fifty they kept in custody and treated with great attention, so that these men might win Corcyra over to them when they returned. Most of them, as it happened, were among the most powerful men in the city. So Corcyra came through the war with the Corinthians,

38 Sybota is the name both of the harbor on the mainland and of the small islands lying just off it.

and the Athenian ships left it. This was the first grievance the Corinthians had for going to war with the Athenians: that the Athenians had fought at sea against them alongside the Corcyraeans while the treaty was in force.

THE REVOLT OF POTIDAEA

Athens' demands drive Potidaea to revolt; a Corinthian force arrives, and Athens besieges the city.

1.56 Immediately after this, the following further disputes arose between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians that led toward war. The Corinthians were working out how to take revenge on the Athenians, and the Athenians suspected their hostility. So they gave orders to the Potidaeans, who live on the isthmus of Pallene and are colonists of the Corinthians but were tribute-paying allies of Athens. The Potidaeans were to pull down their wall on the Pallene side and give hostages. They were also to send away their epidemiurgi and in future not to accept the ones the Corinthians sent each year. The Athenians feared that the Potidaeans would revolt at the urging of Perdiccas and the Corinthians, and would draw the other allies in the Thracian region into revolt with them.[39] 1.57 The Athenians began making these preparations regarding the Potidaeans immediately after the sea battle at Corcyra. The Corinthians were by now openly hostile, and Perdiccas son of Alexander, king of the Macedonians, had become an enemy, though he had previously been an ally and a friend. He had become an enemy because the Athenians had made an alliance with his brother Philip and with Derdas, who were jointly opposing him. In his fear he sent to Sparta and worked to bring about a war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians. He was also trying to win over the Corinthians, with a view to bringing about the revolt of Potidaea; and he made approaches to the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans in the Thracian region to join in the revolt. He thought that if he had

39 The epidemiurgi were magistrates whom Corinth sent each year to its colony Potidaea.

these places, which bordered his own, as allies, it would be easier to fight the war with their help. The Athenians learned of this and wanted to forestall the revolt of the cities. They happened to be sending thirty ships and a thousand hoplites against Perdiccas' territory, under the command of Archestratus son of Lycomedes and ten other generals. So they instructed the commanders of the ships to take hostages from the Potidaeans and pull down the wall, and to keep watch over the neighboring cities so that they would not revolt.[40]

1.58 The Potidaeans sent envoys to the Athenians, to see whether they could persuade them not to take any new measures against them. But they also went to Sparta with the Corinthians [and worked] to get help ready in case it was needed. After long negotiations they had obtained nothing satisfactory from Athens. On the contrary, the ships meant for Macedonia were sailing against them just the same. Meanwhile the Spartan authorities promised them that if the Athenians moved against Potidaea, they would invade Attica. So at this moment the Potidaeans revolted, together with the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans, after swearing an alliance in common. Perdiccas also persuaded the Chalcidians to abandon and pull down their cities on the coast and move inland to Olynthus, making it a single strong city. To those who left he gave part of his own territory of Mygdonia, around Lake Bolbe, to live on for as long as the war against the Athenians lasted. So they moved inland, demolishing their cities, and prepared for war; 1.59 while the thirty Athenian ships arrived in the Thracian region and found Potidaea and the other places already in revolt. The generals thought it impossible, with the force they had, to fight both Perdiccas and the places that had joined the revolt. So they turned to Macedonia, which was what they had been sent out for in the first place. They established themselves there and made war alongside Philip and the brothers of Derdas, who had invaded from the interior with an army. 1.60 Meanwhile the Corinthians grew alarmed. Potidaea was in revolt and the Attic ships were off

40 The Greek text is uncertain here; the number "ten" is probably corrupt.

Macedonia, so they feared for the place and regarded the danger as their own. They sent volunteers from Corinth together with men from the rest of the Peloponnese whom they had persuaded with pay, sixteen hundred hoplites in all and four hundred light troops. Their general was Aristeus son of Adeimantus. It was not least out of friendship for him that most of the soldiers from Corinth went with him as volunteers, for he had always been on good terms with the Potidaeans. They arrived in the Thracian region on the fortieth day after Potidaea revolted.

1.61 The news that the cities had revolted reached the Athenians at once. When they learned that Aristeus' force was also on its way, they sent two thousand of their own hoplites and forty ships against the places in revolt, with Callias son of Calliades and four others as generals. When they arrived in Macedonia, they first found that the earlier thousand had just taken Therme and were besieging Pydna. They too sat down before Pydna and besieged it. But since Potidaea and Aristeus' arrival were pressing them, they then made an agreement with Perdiccas, an alliance forced on them by necessity, and withdrew from Macedonia. They went to Beroea, and from there toward Strepsa. They first made an attempt on that place, and when they failed to take it they marched overland toward Potidaea. They had three thousand of their own hoplites, many allies besides, and six hundred Macedonian cavalry, those serving with Philip and Pausanias; at the same time seventy ships sailed along the coast beside them. Advancing by short stages, they reached Gigonus on the third day and pitched camp.

1.62 The Potidaeans and the Peloponnesians with Aristeus were waiting for the Athenians, encamped on the isthmus on the Olynthus side, and they had set up a market outside the city. The allies had chosen Aristeus as general of all the infantry and Perdiccas of the cavalry. Perdiccas had immediately broken with the Athenians again and was fighting on the side of the Potidaeans, having appointed Iolaus as commander in his place. Aristeus' plan was this. He would keep the army that was with him on the isthmus and watch for the Athenians in case they

advanced. The Chalcidians, the allies from outside the isthmus and the two hundred cavalry from Perdiccas would stay in Olynthus. When the Athenians moved against Aristeus' force, these would come to help from behind and catch the enemy between the two forces. Callias, the Athenian general, and his colleagues for their part sent the Macedonian cavalry and a few of the allies toward Olynthus, to prevent the men there from coming to help. They themselves broke camp and advanced on Potidaea. When they reached the isthmus and saw the enemy preparing for battle, they too took up position facing them, and not long afterward the two sides engaged. Aristeus' own wing, together with the picked men of the Corinthians and the others who were with him, routed the troops opposite them and went on in pursuit for a long way. But the rest of the army of the Potidaeans and Peloponnesians was beaten by the Athenians and fled inside the city wall.

1.63 As Aristeus came back from the pursuit, he saw that the rest of the army had been defeated. He was at a loss which way to risk going, toward Olynthus or into Potidaea. In the end he decided to draw his men together into the tightest possible formation and force his way into Potidaea at a run. He got past along the breakwater, through the sea, under fire and with difficulty, losing a few men but saving most of them. Olynthus is about sixty stades away and in plain view. When the battle began and the signals were raised, the relief force there that was meant to help the Potidaeans advanced a short way to give help, and the Macedonian cavalry drew up opposite them to stop them. But the Athenian victory came quickly and the signals were taken down, so the relief force went back again inside its wall, and the Macedonians rejoined the Athenians. So neither side had cavalry in the battle. After the battle the Athenians set up a trophy and gave the dead back to the Potidaeans under a truce. Of the Potidaeans and their allies a little under three hundred died. Of the Athenians themselves a hundred and fifty died,

and Callias the general.[41] 1.64 The Athenians at once built a wall cutting off the city's [wall] on the isthmus side, and garrisoned it. The side facing Pallene was left unwalled. They did not think they had enough men both to garrison the isthmus and to cross over to Pallene and build a wall there. They were afraid that if they divided their forces, the Potidaeans and their allies would attack them. When the Athenians in the city learned that Pallene was unwalled, some time later they sent sixteen hundred of their own hoplites, with Phormio son of Asopius as general. He arrived in Pallene and, using Aphytis as his base, brought the army up to Potidaea. He advanced slowly, ravaging the land as he went, and when no one came out to fight he walled off the [wall] on the Pallene side. And so Potidaea was now closely besieged on both sides, and from the sea as well, by ships blockading it at the same time. 1.65 Once the city had been walled off, Aristeus had no hope of rescue unless help came from the Peloponnese or something else unexpected happened. He advised that everyone except five hundred men should wait for a favorable wind and sail out, so that the food would last longer, and he himself was willing to be one of those who stayed. When he failed to persuade them, he wanted to prepare the next steps and to make things outside as favorable as possible, so he slipped out by sea without being seen by the Athenian guard. He stayed among the Chalcidians and helped them in the war. In particular, he laid an ambush near the city of the Sermylians and killed many of them. He also negotiated with the Peloponnese to find some way of getting help. After the walling-off of Potidaea, Phormio, with his sixteen hundred men, ravaged Chalcidice and the territory of the Bottiaeans and also took a few small towns.

1.66 These were the grievances that the Athenians and the Peloponnesians already had against each other. The Corinthians complained that the Athenians were besieging Potidaea, their own colony, with Corinthian and Peloponnesian men inside it.

41 A stade was about 600 feet (roughly 185 meters), so sixty stades is about seven miles.

The Athenians complained against the Peloponnesians that they had brought a city that was an ally of Athens and paid it tribute into revolt, and that they had come and fought openly against them alongside the Potidaeans. Still, the war itself had not yet broken out, and there was as yet only a suspension of hostilities, because the Corinthians had done these things on their own account. 1.67 With Potidaea under siege, however, the Corinthians did not keep quiet, since they had men inside and also feared for the place. They at once called the allies to Sparta, went there themselves and loudly denounced the Athenians for having broken the treaty and for wronging the Peloponnese. The Aeginetans did not openly send envoys, because they were afraid of the Athenians. But in secret they were among the foremost in urging on the war with the Corinthians, saying that they were not autonomous as the treaty provided.[42] The Spartans also invited any of the allies, or anyone else, who said they had been wronged in any way by the Athenians. They held their usual assembly of their own citizens and invited the complainants to speak. Various others came forward and made their complaints, each in turn. Among them were the Megarians, who set out a good many other grievances. Above all, they complained that they were excluded from the harbors in the Athenian empire and from the Attic market, contrary to the treaty. The Corinthians came forward last, having first let the others stir up the Spartans, and spoke as follows:[43]

THE CORINTHIANS AT SPARTA

The Corinthians contrast restless, daring Athenians with slow, cautious Spartans.

1.68 "Spartans, your trust in your own constitution and in the way you live among yourselves makes you more distrustful of the

42 Aegina, an island close to Athens in the Saronic Gulf, had been forced into the Athenian alliance as a tribute-paying member in the 450s BC.
43 The Megarians are referring to the so-called Megarian Decree, an Athenian measure barring them from these harbors and markets.

rest of us when we tell you something. This trust gives you your moderation, but it also leaves you more ignorant in dealing with affairs abroad. We often warned you of the harm we were going to suffer from the Athenians. Yet each time, instead of learning about the matters we were explaining, you suspected the speakers of talking for the sake of their own private quarrels. That is why you have summoned these allies here not before we suffered, but now that we are already in the thick of it. Among them it is especially fitting for us to speak, since we have the greatest complaints: we are being treated with insolence by the Athenians and neglected by you.

"If the Athenians were wronging Greece somewhere out of sight, you would need further instruction, as people who did not know. As it is, why should we make a long speech? You can see that they have already enslaved some, that they are plotting against others, not least against our allies, and that they have long been prepared in advance, in case they should ever go to war. Otherwise they would not have taken Corcyra from under us and held it by force against us, nor would they be besieging Potidaea. Potidaea is the most strategic place for operations in the Thracian region, while Corcyra would have given the Peloponnesians a very large navy. 1.69 And you are to blame for this. First you allowed them to fortify their city after the Persian Wars, and later to build the Long Walls. Ever since then, right up to now, you have been depriving of their freedom not only those whom the Athenians have enslaved, but now your own allies as well. For it is not the one who enslaves who truly does it, but the one who could stop it and stands by. That is all the more true if he claims a reputation for excellence as the liberator of Greece. Now at last we have come together, and only with difficulty, and even now not with any clear purpose.[44] The question ought no longer to be whether we are being wronged, but how we are to defend ourselves. Those who act have already made their plans, and they move without delay against people who have not yet

44 The Long Walls joined Athens to its harbor at the Piraeus, so that the city could not be cut off from the sea by a land siege.

made up their minds. We know the road the Athenians take, and that they encroach on their neighbors little by little. While they think your obtuseness lets them go unnoticed, they are less bold. But once they realize that you know and are letting it happen, they will press hard. For you alone of the Greeks, Spartans, keep quiet. You defend yourselves against an enemy not with your strength but with your delays. You alone break up your enemies' growth not when it is beginning but when it has doubled. And yet you used to be called safe and steady. With you, it turns out, the word outstripped the deed. We ourselves know that the Persians came from the ends of the earth to the Peloponnese before any forces of yours went out to meet them as they should have. And now you look on while the Athenians, who are not far away as the Persians were but close at hand, do as they please. Instead of attacking them yourselves, you prefer to defend yourselves when they attack, and to fight against men far more powerful than you and leave the outcome to chance. Yet you know that the Persians failed mostly through their own fault, and that against the Athenians themselves we have often prevailed more through their own mistakes than through any help from you. The hopes you held out have already ruined some who trusted them and were caught unprepared. And let none of you think that we say this out of hostility rather than by way of reproach. Reproach is for friends who make mistakes; accusation is for enemies who have done wrong.

1.70 "Besides, we think that we, if anyone, have a right to find fault with our neighbors, especially when the stakes are so great. You, at least, do not seem to us to perceive them, nor ever to have reckoned up what kind of people the Athenians are whom you will have to fight, or how far, how utterly, they differ from you. They are innovators, quick both to conceive plans and to carry out in action whatever they decide. You are given to preserving what you have, devising nothing new, and in action not even accomplishing what is necessary. Again, they are daring beyond their strength, take risks beyond their judgment, and stay hopeful in the face of danger. Your way is to act short of

your strength, to distrust even what your judgment is sure of, and to think you will never be delivered from your dangers. What is more, they are unhesitating where you are dilatory, and always abroad where you are the greatest stay-at-homes. They think that by going away they may gain something, while you think that by going out you may damage even what you already have. When they defeat their enemies, they push on as far as possible; when they are beaten, they fall back as little as possible. Moreover, they spend their bodies in the city's service as though those bodies belonged to someone else, but use their minds, when it comes to doing something for it, as their very own. Whatever they have planned and not followed through, they reckon a loss of what was already theirs. Whatever they go after and win, they count as a small achievement compared with what is to come. And if they fail in some attempt, they form fresh hopes and so make good the loss. For they alone possess what they have conceived in the very moment of hoping for it, so swiftly do they set about whatever they decide. At all this they toil, with labor and danger, their whole lives long. They enjoy least what they have, because they are always acquiring more. For them a holiday is nothing but doing what needs to be done, and they think untroubled quiet no less a misfortune than laborious business. In short, if anyone said that they were born neither to have any rest themselves nor to let anyone else have any, he would be right.

1.71 "Yet with such a city ranged against you, Spartans, you go on delaying. You do not believe that quiet lasts longest for those who use their forces justly but make it plain by their resolve that they will not put up with being wronged. Instead you base your fair dealing on not giving offense to others and not coming to harm yourselves in self-defense. You would scarcely succeed in this even if you lived next to a city like your own. As things are, as we have just shown, your ways are old-fashioned compared with theirs. And necessarily, as in a craft, the new always prevails. For a city at peace, unchanging customs are best; but those who are forced to face many challenges need a great deal

of inventiveness as well. That is why the Athenians, with their wide experience, have been made new far more than you have. So let your slowness end here. Now come to the help of the Potidaeans and the rest, as you undertook to do, by invading Attica at once. Otherwise you will abandon men who are your friends and kin to their bitterest enemies, and drive the rest of us in despair to seek some other alliance. In doing so we would commit no wrong, either before the gods by whom we swore or before men who see what is happening. It is not those who turn to others because they have been left alone who break a treaty, but those who fail to help the people they have sworn to support. If you are willing to show zeal, we will stay. It would be impious for us to change sides, and we would not find others more familiar to us. In view of this, deliberate well, and try to lead a Peloponnese no smaller than the one your fathers handed down to you."

1.72 Such was the Corinthians' speech. Now it happened that an Athenian embassy was already at Sparta on other business. When they heard of the speeches, they decided that they ought to appear before the Spartans. They meant not to make any defense against the charges the cities were bringing, but to show, on the question as a whole, that the Spartans should not decide in haste but should take more time to consider. At the same time they wanted to make clear how great their own city's power was, reminding the older men of what they knew and explaining to the younger what they had not experienced. They believed that their words would incline the Spartans toward keeping quiet rather than toward war. So they approached the Spartans and said that they too wished to address their assembly, if nothing prevented it. The Spartans invited them to come forward, and the Athenians came forward and spoke as follows:

THE ATHENIANS AT SPARTA

Athenian envoys defend their empire: fear, honor and self-interest made them keep it.

1.73 "Our embassy did not come here to argue with your allies but on the business our city sent us about. However, we perceive that there is no small outcry against us. So we have come forward, not to answer the charges of the cities, since you are not judges before whom either we or they would be pleading, but so that you may not be too easily persuaded by your allies and make a worse decision on matters of great importance. At the same time we wish to show, regarding the whole case that has been made against us, that we hold what we have acquired not unreasonably, and that our city deserves to be taken into account.

"What need is there to speak of the very distant past, for which the witness is stories heard rather than the eyes of those who will listen? But the Persian Wars, and everything you yourselves know of, we must speak of, even if it is rather tiresome to hear us forever bringing them up. When we did those deeds, the risk was run for a benefit in which you had your share of the deed. Let us not be robbed of all share in the word, if that is of any use. What we say will be meant not so much as a plea for indulgence as evidence, a demonstration of what kind of city you will find yourselves fighting if you decide badly. We say that at Marathon we alone stood in the front line of danger against the Persians. When they came the second time, we were not strong enough to defend ourselves on land, so we embarked on our ships with our whole people and fought alongside the others at Salamis. That is what prevented them from sailing against the Peloponnese city by city and laying it waste, since you would have been unable to help one another against a large fleet. The strongest proof of this was given by the Persian king himself. Once he was defeated at sea, he withdrew in haste with the greater part of his army, because his power was no longer

what it had been.[45] 1.74 Such was the outcome, and it was made plain that the fate of the Greeks rested on their ships. To this we contributed the three most useful things: the largest number of ships, the most intelligent general, and the most unflinching zeal. Of the four hundred ships, ours were a little less than two-thirds. Our commander was Themistocles, the man chiefly responsible for fighting in the narrows, which most clearly saved the situation; and for this you yourselves honored him above any other foreigner who has visited you. And we showed a zeal far more daring than anyone's. When no one came to help us by land, and all the rest up to our borders were already enslaved, we resolved to abandon our city and let our property be destroyed. Even so we would not desert the common cause of the allies who remained, or scatter and become useless to them. Instead we embarked on our ships and faced the danger, and we did not resent it that you had not come to our aid first. So we say that we did you no less good than we received. You came to help from cities that were still inhabited, and with a view to living in them in the future, because you were afraid for yourselves rather than for us. At any rate, while we were still unharmed, you did not appear. We set out from a city that no longer existed and ran risks for one whose survival rested on a slender hope, and so we played our part in saving both you and ourselves. If we had gone over to the Persians earlier out of fear for our land, as others did, or if afterward we had not dared to embark on our ships, believing ourselves ruined, there would have been no point in your fighting at sea, since you had too few ships. Things would have gone smoothly for him, just as he wanted.

1.75 "Do we deserve, Spartans, after the zeal we showed then and the intelligence of our judgment, to be resented so excessively by the Greeks for the empire we hold? We did not even acquire this empire by force. You were unwilling to stay on and deal with what remained of the Persian forces, and the allies came to us and themselves asked us to become their leaders.

45 The Athenians defeated the first Persian invasion at Marathon in 490 BC. Xerxes' fleet was defeated in the strait of Salamis, off Attica, in 480 BC.

From the very nature of the thing we were compelled at first to advance our empire to its present extent: chiefly out of fear, then for honor as well, and later for advantage too. Once we were hated by most of them, some had already revolted and been subdued, and you were no longer friendly to us as before but suspicious and at odds with us, it no longer seemed safe to let it go and run the risk. For those who defected would have gone over to you. And no one can be resented for securing his self-interest when the greatest dangers are at stake. 1.76 You, at any rate, Spartans, lead the cities of the Peloponnese after arranging their affairs to suit your own advantage. If you had stayed on throughout that time and become hated in your leadership, as we did, we are sure you would have become no less oppressive to the allies, and would have been forced either to rule them with a firm hand or to put yourselves in danger. So we too have done nothing remarkable or contrary to human ways if we accepted an empire when it was offered and then refused to give it up, overcome by the three most powerful motives: honor, fear and advantage. Nor were we the first to begin this. It has always been established that the weaker are held down by the stronger. We also thought ourselves worthy of it, and you thought so too, until now, when you calculate your interests and resort to the argument from justice. Yet no one has ever put that argument first and turned aside from taking more when he had the chance to gain something by strength. Those deserve praise who give way to human nature so far as to rule over others, yet prove more just than their power would allow. At any rate, we think that if others took our place, they would show very clearly whether we are moderate. But in our case even our fairness has, unreasonably, brought us disrepute rather than praise.

1.77 "We accept a disadvantage in lawsuits under our agreements with the allies, and we have such cases tried in our own courts under impartial laws, and still we are thought to be fond of litigation. None of them asks why those who hold an empire elsewhere, and are less moderate toward their subjects than we are, are not reproached for this. The reason is that those who are

free to use force have no need of lawsuits besides. But our allies are used to dealing with us on equal terms. If they are worsted in anything contrary to what they think right, whether by a decision of ours or by the power our empire gives us, they feel no gratitude for not being deprived of the greater part. They take the lesser loss harder than if we had set the law aside from the start and openly taken advantage of them. In that case not even they would have disputed that the weaker must give way to the stronger.[46] People, it seems, are angered more by being wronged than by being coerced. The one feels like being cheated by an equal, the other like being compelled by a superior. At any rate, under the Persians they endured worse treatment than this, yet our empire is thought harsh. That is natural, for the present is always oppressive to subjects. As for you, if you overthrew us and ruled in our place, you would soon lose the goodwill you have gained through fear of us, if you mean to behave now as you showed you would during your brief leadership against the Persians. For the customs you keep among yourselves do not mix with those of others. And besides, each of you, when he goes abroad, follows neither these nor the customs the rest of Greece observes.

1.78 "So deliberate slowly, for this is no small matter, and do not let other people's opinions and grievances persuade you to take on a burden that will be your own. Before you are in it, recognize how great the unpredictability of war is. When a war drags on, it usually comes down to chance, which neither of us controls, and how it will turn out is a risk run in the dark. When men go to war, they set their hands to deeds first, which they should do later, and only when they are already suffering do they turn to words. We have not yet fallen into any such error ourselves, nor do we see you in it. So we tell you, while good counsel is still a free choice for both of us, not to break the treaty or transgress your oaths, but to settle our differences by

46 Disputes arising from contracts between Athenians and allied citizens were settled under treaty arrangements, and many allied cases had to be heard in Athenian courts.

arbitration as the agreement provides. Otherwise, calling to witness the gods by whom we swore, we will try to defend ourselves against you as the ones who began the war, in whatever way you lead."

1.79 That was the Athenians' speech. When the Spartans had heard both the allies' charges against the Athenians and what the Athenians had to say, they asked everyone to withdraw and deliberated by themselves about the situation. The opinions of the majority tended to the same conclusion: that the Athenians were already in the wrong and that war must be made quickly. But Archidamus their king, a man reputed to be both intelligent and prudent, came forward and spoke as follows:[47]

ARCHIDAMUS AND STHENELAIDAS

The Spartan king urges caution; the ephor demands war, and the Spartans vote that the treaty is broken.

1.80 "I myself have experience of many wars already, Spartans, and I see that those of you who are my age have it too. So none of us is likely to long for this business out of inexperience, as most people might, or because he thinks it good and safe. You would find that this war you are now deliberating about would be no small one, if you considered it soberly. Against the Peloponnesians and our neighbors our strength is of the same kind as theirs, and we can move swiftly against each point. But these are men whose land is far away, who are, moreover, most experienced at sea and excellently equipped in every other respect. They have wealth, private and public, ships, horses, arms, and a population larger than in any other single Greek territory, and on top of that they have many allies paying tribute. How can we lightly take up war against them, and on what can we rely to rush into it unprepared? On our ships? But there we are weaker. And if we train and prepare to match them, it will take time. On our money, then? But there we fall even further short. We have

47 Sparta had two kings at a time. Archidamus II reigned from about 469 BC; the first ten years of the war are often called the Archidamian War after him.

none in the public treasury, and we do not readily contribute it from our private means. 1.81 Perhaps someone might take heart from the fact that we surpass them in arms and in numbers, so that we can invade and ravage their land. But they have plenty of other land that they rule, and they will bring in what they need by sea. If, on the other hand, we try to make their allies revolt, we will have to support them with ships as well, since most of them are islanders. So what kind of war will ours be? Unless we either defeat them at sea or take away the revenues from which they maintain their navy, we will get the worst of it. And then we cannot even make peace honorably, especially if we are thought to have started the quarrel. Let us not, above all, be carried away by the hope that the war will soon be over if we ravage their land. I fear rather that we may leave it to our children as well, so unlikely is it that the Athenians, with their pride, will become slaves to their land or be cowed by war like men without experience.

1.82 "Not that I am telling you to be so unfeeling as to let them harm our allies and fail to catch them in their plotting. Rather, do not take up arms yet. Send envoys and lodge complaints, without threatening war too openly or suggesting that we will give in. Meanwhile let us get our own forces ready by winning over allies, both Greek and non-Greek, wherever we can gain any strength in ships or money. It is no cause for resentment when people who, like us, are the targets of Athenian plotting save themselves by enlisting not only Greeks but non-Greeks as well. At the same time let us draw on our own resources. If they listen to anything our envoys say, that is best. If not, then after two or three years have passed we will march against them, better protected by then, if we so decide. Perhaps, when they see our preparations, and our words giving signals to match, they would be more inclined to yield, since their land would still be unravaged and they would be deliberating about goods they still have and that have not yet been destroyed. Do not think of their land as anything but a hostage in our hands, all the more valuable the better it is cultivated. We should spare it as long as pos-

sible, and not drive them to desperation and so make them harder to subdue. If we rush in unprepared, spurred on by the allies' grievances, and ravage it, consider whether we will not bring greater disgrace and greater difficulty on the Peloponnese. Grievances, whether of cities or of individuals, can be settled. But when all of us together have taken up a war for the sake of particular interests, a war whose course no one can know, it is not easy to end it honorably.

1.83 "And let no one think it cowardice that many of us do not hurry to attack a single city. They too have allies, no fewer than ours, who pay them money; and war is a matter not so much of arms as of money, which is what makes arms effective, especially when a land power is fighting a sea power. So let us first provide ourselves with money, and not be carried away beforehand by our allies' speeches. Since it is we who will bear most of the responsibility for the outcome, whichever way it turns out, let us also be the ones to look ahead calmly at some of what may come. 1.84 And do not be ashamed of the slowness and delay for which they criticize us most. If you hurry, you will be slower to finish, because you began unprepared; and besides, the city we live in has always been free and held in the highest esteem. This quality, more than anything, can be called a sensible self-control. Because of it, we alone do not grow insolent in success, and we give way to misfortune less than others do. When people urge us toward dangers with praise, against our own judgment, we are not carried away by the pleasure of it. And if anyone tries to goad us with accusations, we are none the more persuaded for being annoyed. Our discipline makes us both warlike and wise in counsel. We are warlike because a sense of shame has the largest share in self-control, and courage the largest share in a sense of shame. We are wise in counsel because we are brought up too unlearned to look down on the laws, and with too much strictness and self-control to disobey them. We are not trained to be overclever in useless matters, finding fine fault in word with the enemy's preparations and then failing to match it in deed when we march against them. We are taught to think

that our neighbors' plans are much like our own, and that the chances that befall us cannot be settled by argument. In deed, we always prepare against our opponents on the assumption that their plans are sound; we must not base our hopes on the expectation that they will blunder, but on our own careful forethought. We should not think that one man differs much from another: the best is he who is brought up under the strictest necessity.

1.85 "So let us not abandon these practices, which our fathers handed down to us and which we ourselves have always kept to our profit. Let us not be hurried into deciding, in a small part of a single day, about many lives, much money, many cities and our good name; let us decide at our leisure. We can do this more than others can, because of our strength. Send to the Athenians about Potidaea, and send about the wrongs our allies say they are suffering, especially since the Athenians are ready to submit to arbitration; and it is not lawful to proceed against one who offers it as though against a wrongdoer, before the offer is tried. But at the same time prepare for war. These decisions will be the best for you and the most frightening to your enemies." That was what Archidamus said. Last of all Sthenelaidas, who was one of the ephors at the time, came forward and spoke [to the Spartans] as follows:[48]

1.86 "The long speeches of the Athenians I don't understand. They praised themselves at length, but nowhere denied that they are wronging our allies and the Peloponnese. Yet if they were good men against the Persians then and are bad men toward us now, they deserve double punishment, because they have turned bad instead of good. We are the same now as we were then, and if we are sensible we will not stand by while our allies are wronged, nor delay in avenging them. Their sufferings are not being delayed. Others may have plenty of money and ships and horses, but we have good allies, and they must not be handed over to the Athenians. Nor is this to be settled by law-

48 The ephors were five officials elected annually at Sparta, with wide powers, including presiding over the assembly.

suits and words, when it is not in word that our allies are being harmed; they must be avenged, quickly and with all our strength. And let no one lecture us that we ought to deliberate when we are being wronged; it is rather those who intend to do wrong who should deliberate for a long time. So vote for war, Spartans, as befits Sparta. Do not let the Athenians grow any greater, and let us not betray our allies; but with the gods' help let us march against those who do wrong."

1.87 Having said this, he himself, as ephor, put the question to the vote in the Spartan assembly. They decide by shouting, not by ballot; and he said he could not tell which shout was louder. Wanting them to declare their opinion openly, and so to be more eager for war, he said: "Whoever of you, Spartans, thinks that the treaty has been broken and that the Athenians are in the wrong, stand up and go over to that place"—and he pointed out a place to them—"and whoever does not think so, to the other side." They stood up and divided, and those who thought the treaty had been broken were by far the greater number. They then called in the allies and told them that in their own view the Athenians were in the wrong, but that they wished to summon all the allies together and put the matter to a vote, so that they might deliberate in common and make war, if that was decided. Having accomplished this, the allies went home, and later so did the Athenian envoys, once they had done the business they had come for. This decision of the assembly, that the treaty had been broken, was made in the fourteenth year of the Thirty Years' Peace, which had been concluded after the affair in Euboea.[49] 1.88 The Spartans voted that the treaty had been broken and that they must go to war, not so much because they were persuaded by their allies' arguments as because they feared that the Athenians might become still more powerful, seeing that most of Greece was already in their hands.

49 The Thirty Years' Peace was made in 446/445 BC, after the Athenians put down a revolt in Euboea; the Spartan vote was in 432 BC.

THE RISE OF ATHENS

The fifty years between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars (the "Pentecontaetia").

1.89 For this is how the Athenians came to the position in which they grew great. When the Persians withdrew from Europe, defeated by the Greeks on sea and on land, and those of them who had fled with their ships to Mycale had been destroyed, Leotychidas, the king of the Spartans, who had led the Greeks at Mycale, went home with the allies from the Peloponnese. But the Athenians and the allies from Ionia and the Hellespont, who had by now revolted from the King, stayed on and besieged Sestos, which the Persians held. They spent the winter there and took it after the Persians had abandoned it; and after this they sailed away from the Hellespont, each to their own cities.[50] As for the Athenian people as a body, once the foreigners had left their land, they immediately began bringing back their children, their wives and what remained of their household goods from the places where they had put them for safety, and they set about rebuilding their city and its walls. Only short stretches of the circuit wall were still standing, and most of the houses had fallen; a few survived, in which the leading Persians themselves had been quartered.[51]

1.90 The Spartans, learning what was coming, sent an embassy. In part they themselves would have preferred to see neither the Athenians nor anyone else with a wall; but they acted mostly because their allies urged them on, alarmed at the size of the Athenian navy, which had not existed before, and at the daring the Athenians had shown in the Persian War. They asked the Athenians not to build walls, and instead to join them in pulling down the circuit walls of all the cities outside the Peloponnese

50 Mycale is a promontory on the coast of Asia Minor where the Greeks defeated the Persians in 479 BC; Sestos lies on the European shore of the Hellespont.
51 In 480 BC the Athenians had evacuated Attica before the Persian advance, sending their families to places such as Salamis, Aegina and Troezen.

that still had them. They did not reveal to the Athenians what they really wanted or what they suspected. They argued that the Persian, if he invaded again, would then have no stronghold to operate from, as he had just now had Thebes; and they said that the Peloponnese was enough for everyone, both as a refuge and as a base. On Themistocles' advice the Athenians answered the Spartans, after they had said this, that they would send envoys to them about what they proposed, and sent them away at once. Themistocles told them to send him to Sparta as quickly as possible; they were to choose other envoys to go with him, but not to send them off at once, and to hold them back until they had raised the wall high enough to fight from, at the least height that was strictly necessary. Everyone in the city, the whole population [men, women and children], was to work on the wall, sparing no building, private or public, that might be of any use for the work, but pulling everything down. After giving these instructions, and hinting that he himself would handle the rest at Sparta, he left. When he arrived in Sparta he did not go before the authorities, but kept putting it off and making excuses. Whenever any of those in office asked him why he did not come before the government, he said he was waiting for his fellow envoys: they had been left behind because of some business, but he expected them to arrive soon and was surprised they were not there yet. [1.91] Hearing this, they believed Themistocles because of their friendship for him. But when others arrived and stated plainly that the wall was being built and was already rising, they did not see how they could disbelieve it. Realizing this, he told them not to be misled by reports, but rather to send men of their own, men of good character who would look and report back faithfully. So they sent them, and Themistocles sent word secretly to the Athenians about them, telling them to detain the men as unobtrusively as possible and not to let them go until he and his colleagues had returned. (By now his fellow envoys, Abronichus son of Lysicles and Aristides son of Lysimachus, had joined him, with the news that the wall was high enough.) For he was afraid that the Spartans, once they

heard the plain truth, would not let them go. So the Athenians detained the envoys, as they had been instructed, and Themistocles went before the Spartans and now at last said openly that his city had already been walled, enough to protect its inhabitants. If the Spartans or their allies wished to send an embassy to them, they should come in future as to people who could judge both what was in their own interest and what was in the common interest. For when they had decided it was better to abandon their city and take to their ships, he said, they had made that bold decision without the Spartans; and in everything they had deliberated on together with them, they had shown themselves second to none in judgment. So now too they thought it better for their city to have a wall, and that this would be more advantageous both for their own citizens and for all the allies; for it was impossible to offer any comparable or equal counsel for the common good without comparable strength behind it. Either, then, he said, all the members of the alliance must be without walls, or they must accept that this step too was right. [1.92] When the Spartans heard this, they showed no open anger at the Athenians. They had sent the embassy, so they claimed, not to stop them but to offer advice for the common good; and besides, at that time they were on the friendliest terms with the Athenians because of the zeal they had shown against the Persians. But they were secretly vexed at failing to get what they wanted. And the envoys on both sides went home without any formal complaint.

[1.93] In this way the Athenians walled their city in a short time. Even now the construction shows that it was done in haste. The foundations are laid with stones of every kind, in some places not even shaped to fit, but set just as each was brought at the time; and many grave stelae and worked stones were built into it. For the circuit of the city was extended farther on every side, and so they hurried, taking everything alike. Themistocles also persuaded them to finish building the Piraeus. (It had been begun earlier, during the year in which he held office at Athens.) He thought the site a fine one, with its three natural harbors,

and he thought that now they had become a seafaring people this would greatly help them to gain power. (He was, in fact, the first who dared to say that they must hold on to the sea.) And so he at once began helping to lay the foundations of the empire. On his plan they built the wall to the thickness that can still be seen around the Piraeus: two wagons, passing each other in opposite directions, brought up the stones along it. Inside there was neither rubble nor clay, but large stones fitted together and cut square, bound to one another on the outer face with iron clamps and lead.[52] The wall was completed to about half the height he intended. He wanted to ward off enemy attacks by its size and thickness, and he thought that a guard of a few men, the least fit for service, would be enough, while the rest would man the ships. For he was devoted above all to the ships, having seen, I think, that for the King's forces an approach by sea was easier than one by land. He considered the Piraeus more useful than the upper city, and he often advised the Athenians, if they were ever overpowered on land, to go down to it and resist all comers with their ships. So it was in this way that the Athenians got their walls and made their other preparations, immediately after the Persian withdrawal.

ATHENS TAKES THE LEAD

Pausanias' arrogance drives the allies to Athens, which organizes the tribute of the Delian League.

1.94 Pausanias son of Cleombrotus was sent out from Sparta as general of the Greeks with twenty ships from the Peloponnese; the Athenians sailed with him with thirty ships, along with a large number of the other allies. They campaigned against Cyprus and subdued most of it, and afterward against Byzantium, which the Persians held, and took it by siege, still under

52 Themistocles held the chief magistracy at Athens, the annual archonship, in 493/492 BC; the Piraeus is the harbor district of Athens.

his leadership.[53] 1.95 But by now he was behaving violently, and the other Greeks resented it, not least the Ionians and those who had recently been freed from the King. They went to the Athenians and asked them to become their leaders, on the grounds of kinship, and not to give way to Pausanias if he used force anywhere. The Athenians accepted these proposals and turned their attention to the matter, meaning not to stand by, and to settle everything else as seemed best to them. Meanwhile the Spartans recalled Pausanias to examine him about what they were hearing; for the Greeks who came to Sparta accused him of much wrongdoing, and his conduct seemed more an imitation of tyranny than a generalship. It so happened that he was recalled at the same moment that the allies, out of hatred for him, went over to the Athenians—all except the soldiers from the Peloponnese. When he reached Sparta he was called to account for wrongs done privately to individuals, but acquitted on the most serious charges. One of the chief charges against him was collaborating with the Persians, and it seemed very clearly proved. They did not send him out again as commander, but sent Dorcis and some others with him, with a force of no great size; but the allies would no longer grant them the leadership. Realizing this, they went home, and afterward the Spartans sent no others. They were afraid that those who went abroad would be corrupted, as they had seen in Pausanias' case; they also wanted to be rid of the Persian War, and they thought the Athenians capable of leading and, at that time, well disposed toward themselves.

1.96 Having taken over the leadership in this way, with the consent of the allies because of their hatred of Pausanias, the Athenians fixed which cities were to provide money against the Persians and which were to provide ships; the declared aim was to avenge what they had suffered by ravaging the King's land. It was then that the Athenians first set up the office of the Hellenotamiae, who received the tribute; for that was the name given to the contribution of money. The first tribute assessed was four

53 Pausanias, regent for the young Spartan king, had commanded the Greeks at their victory over the Persians at Plataea in 479 BC.

hundred and sixty talents. Delos was their treasury, and the meetings were held in the sanctuary there.[54] 1.97 Leading allies who were at first independent and deliberated in common meetings, the Athenians undertook the following actions, in war and in the management of affairs, between the Persian War and this one: actions against the Persians, against their own allies when they rebelled, and against those Peloponnesians with whom they came into conflict on each occasion. I have written about these events and made this digression from my account for the following reason: this period was left out by all my predecessors, who wrote either the history of Greece before the Persian Wars or of the Persian Wars themselves; and Hellanicus, the one who did touch on these events in his history of Attica, treated them briefly and with inaccurate chronology. At the same time, it shows how the Athenian empire came to be established.[55]

FROM LEAGUE TO EMPIRE

Athens subdues rebellious allies such as Naxos and Thasos, and breaks with Sparta over Ithome.

1.98 First, with Cimon son of Miltiades in command, they besieged and took Eion on the Strymon, which the Persians held, and enslaved its people. Next they enslaved Scyros, the island in the Aegean inhabited by Dolopians, and settled it themselves. They had a war with the Carystians, in which the rest of Euboea took no part, and in time an agreement was reached on terms. After this they made war on the Naxians, who had revolted, and reduced them by siege. This was the first allied city to be enslaved contrary to established practice; afterward the others followed, as each case arose.[56] 1.99 There were

54 Hellenotamiae means "treasurers of the Greeks." A talent was a large unit of silver, worth 6,000 drachmas.

55 Hellanicus of Lesbos was a fifth-century BC historian who wrote, among much else, a history of Attica.

56 Eion lay at the mouth of the river Strymon in Thrace; Carystus is in southern Euboea.

various causes of the revolts, the greatest being failures to pay tribute or supply ships, and desertion from service where it occurred. For the Athenians were strict in exacting what was due and made themselves oppressive, applying compulsion to people who were neither used to hardship nor willing to endure it. In other ways too the Athenians were no longer as welcome as rulers as they had been: they did not take part in campaigns on equal terms, and it was easy for them to bring rebels back into subjection. For this the allies themselves were responsible. Because of this reluctance to go on campaign, most of them, so as not to be away from home, had arranged to pay their due share in money instead of ships. So the Athenian navy grew on the money they contributed, while they themselves, whenever they revolted, found themselves unprepared and inexperienced for war.

1.100 After this came the battle on land and sea at the river Eurymedon in Pamphylia, between the Athenians and their allies and the Persians. The Athenians, with Cimon son of Miltiades in command, won both on the same day, and they captured and destroyed Phoenician triremes, as many as two hundred in all. Some time later the Thasians revolted from them, after a dispute about the trading posts on the Thracian coast opposite and the mine that they controlled.[57] The Athenians sailed against Thasos with a fleet, won a sea battle and landed on the island. At about the same time they sent ten thousand settlers, from among themselves and their allies, to the Strymon, to found a settlement at the place then called Nine Ways, now Amphipolis. They themselves gained control of Nine Ways, which the Edonians held; but when they advanced into the interior of Thrace they were destroyed at Drabescus in Edonian territory by the Thracians as a whole, who regarded the founding of the place [Nine Ways] as an act of hostility.[58] 1.101 The Thasians, defeated in battle and under siege, appealed to the

57 Pamphylia is on the south coast of Asia Minor; Thasos is an island in the northern Aegean, off the coast of Thrace.

58 The Edonians were a Thracian people living around the lower Strymon.

Spartans and urged them to come to their aid by invading Attica. The Spartans promised to do so, without the Athenians' knowledge, and meant to, but they were prevented by the earthquake that occurred. During it their helots, and among the perioeci, the "dwellers round about," the people of Thuria and Aethaea, revolted and went to Ithome. Most of the helots were descendants of the old Messenians who had been enslaved long before, which is why they were all called Messenians. So the Spartans had a war on their hands against those on Ithome, while the Thasians, in the third year of the siege, came to terms with the Athenians: they pulled down their wall and handed over their ships, agreed to pay at once whatever money was due and to keep paying in future, and gave up their mainland possessions and the mine.[59]

1.102 As their war against the rebels on Ithome dragged on, the Spartans called in their allies, the Athenians among them. The Athenians came in no small force, with Cimon in command. The main reason they were called in was that they were thought to be skilled at assaulting walls. But as the siege dragged on, they seemed to the Spartans to fall short in this, since otherwise they would have taken the place by storm. It was from this expedition that the quarrel between the Spartans and the Athenians first came into the open. When the place was not taken by storm, the Spartans grew afraid of the Athenians' daring and their appetite for innovation. They also regarded them as men of a different stock, and feared that if they stayed on they might be won over by the rebels on Ithome and start some revolutionary move. So they sent them away, alone of the allies. They did not reveal their suspicion but said only that they had no further need of them. The Athenians, however, realized that they were being dismissed not for the more respectable reason given but because some suspicion had arisen. They took it hard and felt they did not deserve such treatment from the Spartans. As soon

59 Helots were the state-owned serfs of Sparta; the perioeci were free but non-citizen inhabitants of the communities around Sparta. Ithome is a mountain stronghold in Messenia.

as they had withdrawn, they abandoned the alliance they had made with the Spartans against the Persians and became allies of the Argives, the Spartans' enemies. At the same time both Athens and Argos concluded the same oaths and alliance with the Thessalians.

1.103 In the tenth year, since they could hold out no longer, the rebels on Ithome came to terms with the Spartans. They were to leave the Peloponnese under a truce and never set foot in it again, and if any of them was caught there, he was to be the slave of whoever seized him. Some time before, the Spartans had also received a Pythian oracle telling them to let the suppliant of Zeus of Ithome go. So they came out, the men with their children and wives. The Athenians, out of the hostility they now felt toward the Spartans, took them in and settled them at Naupactus, which they happened to have captured recently from its holders, the Ozolian Locrians.[60] The Megarians also broke away from the Spartans and came over to the Athenians as allies, because the Corinthians were pressing them hard in a war over boundary land. So the Athenians gained Megara and Pegae. They built the Megarians their long walls from the city to Nisaea and garrisoned them themselves. It was not least from this that the Corinthians' violent hatred of the Athenians first began.[61]

EGYPT AND THE LAND EMPIRE

Athens fights in Egypt and in Greece at once; the Egyptian expedition ends in disaster.

1.104 Inaros son of Psammetichus, a Libyan and king of the Libyans who border on Egypt, set out from Marea, the city above Pharos, and brought the greater part of Egypt to revolt from King Artaxerxes. Having made himself its ruler, he called in the

60 A Pythian oracle is one given by Apollo at Delphi. Naupactus is a harbor on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth.

61 Megara lay between Attica and Corinth. Pegae was its port on the Gulf of Corinth, Nisaea its port on the Saronic Gulf.

Athenians. They happened to be campaigning against Cyprus with two hundred ships of their own and their allies. They left Cyprus and came, and sailed up from the sea into the Nile. They took control of the river and of two-thirds of Memphis, and made war on the remaining third, which is called the White Fort. Inside it were the Persians and Medes who had taken refuge there, and those Egyptians who had not joined the revolt.[62]

1.105 The Athenians made a landing from their ships at Halieis and fought a battle against the Corinthians and Epidaurians, and the Corinthians won. Later the Athenians fought a sea battle off Cecryphaleia against a Peloponnesian fleet, and the Athenians won. After this, when war had broken out between the Athenians and the Aeginetans, a great sea battle was fought off Aegina between the two, with the allies of each side present. The Athenians won and captured seventy of their ships. Then they landed and laid siege to the city, with Leocrates son of Stroebus in command. Then the Peloponnesians, wanting to help the Aeginetans, sent across to Aegina three hundred hoplites who had earlier been serving as auxiliaries with the Corinthians and Epidaurians. The Corinthians and their allies seized the heights of Geraneia and came down into the Megarid. They thought the Athenians would be unable to help the Megarians, with large forces away both in Aegina and in Egypt, and that if they did come to help, they would have to withdraw from Aegina. The Athenians, however, did not move their army at Aegina. Instead, from those left behind in the city, the oldest and the youngest went to Megara with Myronides in command.[63] A battle was fought against the Corinthians that was evenly matched, and the two sides drew apart, each thinking it had not had the worse of the action. The Athenians had in fact had rather the better of it, and when the Corinthians had gone they set up a trophy. The

62 Artaxerxes I was king of Persia. Memphis, near the head of the Nile Delta, was the chief city of Egypt.

63 Geraneia is the mountain range on the Isthmus between the territories of Megara and Corinth.

Corinthians, taunted by the older men in their city, made their preparations and came back about twelve days later. They set up a trophy of their own, claiming that they too had won. The Athenians sallied out from Megara, killed the men setting up the trophy, and engaged the rest and defeated them. 1.106 The defeated men retreated. A considerable part of them, hard pressed and missing their way, blundered into a piece of private land that happened to be surrounded by a great ditch and had no way out. When the Athenians realized this, they blocked them in at the front with their hoplites, posted their light troops in a ring all round, and stoned to death everyone who had gone in. This was a great disaster for the Corinthians. The main body of their army went back home.

1.107 About this time the Athenians also began building the long walls to the sea, one to Phalerum and the other to the Piraeus. Meanwhile the Phocians campaigned against Doris, the mother country of the Spartans, with its towns of Boeum, Cytinium and Erineum, and took one of these towns. The Spartans then went to help the Dorians with fifteen hundred hoplites of their own and ten thousand from their allies. They were led by Nicomedes son of Cleombrotus, acting for King Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, who was still young. They forced the Phocians to come to terms and give back the town, and then started back. If they chose to cross by sea through the Gulf of Crisa, the Athenians meant to sail round with their fleet and stop them. And with the Athenians holding Megara and Pegae, the route over Geraneia did not look safe to them.[64] Geraneia was hard to cross and was always guarded by the Athenians, and the Spartans now learned that the Athenians meant to stop them that way too. So they decided to wait in Boeotia and consider how they could get across most safely. Partly, too, certain Athenians were secretly inviting them in. These men hoped to put an end to the democracy and to the building of the long

64 Phalerum was Athens' older harbor, east of the Piraeus. Doris, a small district in central Greece, was regarded as the homeland of the Dorians, and the Gulf of Crisa is the Gulf of Corinth.

walls. The Athenians marched out against them in full force, together with a thousand Argives and contingents from each of the other allies, fourteen thousand men in all. They marched against them believing the Spartans were at a loss how to get through, and partly also because they suspected a plot to overthrow the democracy. Thessalian cavalry also came to the Athenians under the terms of the alliance, but in the action they went over to the Spartans. 1.108 A battle was fought at Tanagra in Boeotia. The Spartans and their allies won, and there was heavy slaughter on both sides. The Spartans went into the Megarid, cut down the trees, and returned home through Geraneia and the Isthmus. On the sixty-second day after the battle the Athenians marched against the Boeotians with Myronides in command. They defeated the Boeotians in a battle at Oenophyta and became masters of Boeotia and Phocis. They pulled down the wall of Tanagra and took a hundred of the richest men of the Opuntian Locrians as hostages. They also completed their own long walls. After this the Aeginetans also came to terms with the Athenians. They pulled down their walls, surrendered their ships, and accepted an assessment of tribute for the future. The Athenians also sailed round the Peloponnese with Tolmides son of Tolmaeus in command. They burned the Spartans' dockyard, took Chalcis, a city belonging to the Corinthians, and in a landing on Sicyonian territory defeated the Sicyonians in battle.

1.109 The Athenians and their allies in Egypt stayed on, and the war there took many shapes for them. At first the Athenians were masters of Egypt. The King sent Megabazus, a Persian, to Sparta with money, so that the Peloponnesians might be persuaded to invade Attica and so draw the Athenians away from Egypt. But he made no headway, and the money was being spent to no purpose. So Megabazus went back to Asia with what was left of it, and the King sent Megabyzus son of Zopyrus, a Persian, with a large army. He came by land, defeated the Egyptians and their allies in battle, and drove the Greeks out of Memphis. Finally he shut them up on the island of Prosopitis and besieged them there for a year and six months. In the end he drained the

canal and diverted the water elsewhere, which left their ships high and dry and turned most of the island into mainland. Then he crossed over and took the island on foot. 1.110 So the Greek enterprise came to ruin after six years of war. A few out of many made their way through Libya to Cyrene and were saved, but most perished. Egypt came back under the King, except for Amyrtaeus, the king in the marshes. They could not capture him because of the size of the marsh, and besides, the marsh-dwellers are the best fighters among the Egyptians. Inaros, king of the Libyans, who had been behind the whole Egyptian venture, was betrayed, captured and impaled. Fifty triremes from Athens and the rest of the alliance, sailing to Egypt as a relief force, put in at the Mendesian mouth of the Nile knowing nothing of what had happened. Infantry attacked them from the land and a Phoenician fleet from the sea. Most of their ships were destroyed, and the smaller part escaped home. So ended the great expedition of the Athenians and their allies to Egypt.

1.111 Orestes, son of the Thessalian king Echecratidas, was an exile from Thessaly, and he persuaded the Athenians to restore him. The Athenians took along the Boeotians and Phocians, who were their allies, and marched against Pharsalus in Thessaly. They controlled as much of the land as they could reach without going far from their camp, because the Thessalian cavalry kept them in check. But they did not take the city, and none of the other things they had come for went their way. So they went back again with Orestes, having achieved nothing. Not long afterward a thousand Athenians embarked on the ships at Pegae, which the Athenians now held, and sailed along the coast to Sicyon with Pericles son of Xanthippus in command. They landed and defeated the Sicyonians who came out against them. Then they at once took the Achaeans along, sailed across, and marched against Oeniadae in Acarnania and besieged it. They did not take it, however, but went back home.

1.112 Three years later a five-year treaty was made between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians. The Athenians then held off from war with Greeks and campaigned against Cyprus with two

hundred ships of their own and their allies, under Cimon's command. Sixty of these ships sailed off to Egypt at the request of Amyrtaeus, the king in the marshes, while the rest besieged Citium. When Cimon died and famine set in, they withdrew from Citium. Sailing out beyond Salamis in Cyprus, they fought the Phoenicians, Cypriots and Cilicians by sea and on land at the same time. They won both battles and went back home, and with them went the ships from Egypt, [the ones] that had rejoined them. After this the Spartans waged what is called the Sacred War. They took control of the sanctuary at Delphi and handed it over to the Delphians. Later, after they had withdrawn, the Athenians marched out in turn, took control of it, and handed it over to the Phocians.[65]

1.113 Some time after this, Boeotian exiles were holding Orchomenus, Chaeronea and certain other places in Boeotia. The Athenians marched against these places, which were hostile to them, with a thousand hoplites of their own and contingents from each of their allies, under the command of Tolmides son of Tolmaeus. They took Chaeronea, enslaved its people, left a garrison and started back. On their march, at Coronea, they were attacked by the Boeotian exiles from Orchomenus, together with Locrians, Euboean exiles and all who shared their views. These defeated them in battle, killed some of the Athenians and took others alive. The Athenians then evacuated the whole of Boeotia, making a treaty on condition that they would recover their men. The Boeotian exiles returned home, and they and all the rest became independent again.

THE THIRTY YEARS' PEACE

Euboea and Megara revolt; Athens makes peace with Sparta, then crushes the revolt of Samos.

1.114 Not long after this Euboea revolted from the Athenians. Pericles had already crossed over to the island with an Athenian

65 The Sacred War was fought over control of Apollo's sanctuary at Delphi, which the Phocians claimed.

army when news reached him that Megara had revolted, that the Peloponnesians were about to invade Attica, and that the Athenian garrison had been wiped out by the Megarians, except for those who had escaped to Nisaea. The Megarians had brought in the Corinthians, Sicyonians and Epidaurians before revolting. Pericles hurriedly brought the army back from Euboea. After this the Peloponnesians invaded Attica as far as Eleusis and Thria and ravaged it, led by Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of the Spartans. Then, without advancing any further, they went back home. The Athenians crossed over to Euboea again with Pericles in command and subdued the whole island. They settled the rest of it by agreement, but they expelled the Hestiaeans and took their land for themselves. 1.115 Not long after withdrawing from Euboea, they made the Thirty Years' Peace with the Spartans and their allies. Under it they gave back Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea, for these were the Peloponnesian places the Athenians held.[66]

In the sixth year a war broke out between the Samians and the Milesians over Priene. The Milesians were getting the worst of it, so they came to the Athenians and loudly denounced the Samians. Some private citizens from Samos itself joined them, because they wanted a revolution in the constitution. So the Athenians sailed to Samos with forty ships and set up a democracy. They took fifty boys and as many men of the Samians as hostages and lodged them on Lemnos. Then they left a garrison behind and withdrew. Some of the Samians, however, had not stayed but fled to the mainland. They made an alliance with the most powerful men in the city and with Pissuthnes son of Hystaspes, who then held Sardis. They gathered about seven hundred mercenaries and crossed over to Samos by night. First they rose against the democracy and overpowered most of its supporters. Then they stole their own hostages away from Lemnos and revolted. They handed over the Athenian garrison and the Athenian officials who were among them to Pissuthnes, and at

66 The Thirty Years' Peace was concluded in the winter of 446/5 BC.

once began preparing to march against Miletus. The Byzantines joined them in the revolt.[67]

1.116 When the Athenians learned of this, they sailed against Samos with sixty ships. Sixteen of these they did not use, because some had gone off to Caria to watch for the Phoenician fleet and others to Chios and Lesbos to ask for help. With the other forty-four ships, under the command of Pericles and nine fellow generals, they fought a sea battle off the island of Tragia against seventy Samian ships. Twenty of the Samian ships were troop transports, and the whole fleet happened to be sailing back from Miletus. The Athenians won.[68] Later forty ships from Athens and twenty-five from Chios and Lesbos came to reinforce them. They landed, and since they had the upper hand on land, they besieged the city with three walls and blockaded it from the sea at the same time. Pericles then took sixty of the blockading ships and went off in haste toward Caunus and Caria, because word had come that a Phoenician fleet was sailing against them. Stesagoras and others had also gone from Samos with five ships to meet the Phoenicians. 1.117 Meanwhile the Samians made a sudden sortie and fell on the unfortified camp. They destroyed the guard ships and defeated in a sea battle the ships that put out against them. For about fourteen days they controlled the sea off their own coast and brought in and carried out whatever they wanted. But when Pericles returned, his ships shut them in again. Later further reinforcements came from Athens, forty ships with Thucydides, Hagnon and Phormio and twenty with Tlepolemus and Anticles, and thirty more came from Chios and Lesbos. The Samians fought a brief sea battle, but they were unable to hold out. In the ninth month they were starved into surrender and came to terms. They pulled down their wall, gave hostages, surrendered their ships, and agreed to

67 Pissuthnes was the Persian governor (satrap) at Sardis, in western Asia Minor.
68 Athens elected ten generals each year, and here all ten held the command together.

repay the costs of the war in installments. The Byzantines also agreed to be subjects as before.[69]

1.118 Not many years after this came the events already described: the affairs of Corcyra and Potidaea and all that became the pretext for this war. All these actions of the Greeks against one another and against the Persians took place in about fifty years, between Xerxes' retreat and the beginning of this war. In this period the Athenians put their empire on a firmer footing and themselves advanced greatly in power. The Spartans saw this happening but did nothing to stop it, except for brief spells, and stayed inactive most of the time. They had never been quick to go to war unless they were forced to, and they were also partly held back by wars at home. So it went on until the power of the Athenians was rising unmistakably and the Athenians were laying hands on the Spartans' own allies. At that point the Spartans found it no longer bearable. They decided that they must set to work with all their energy and destroy the Athenians' strength, if they could, by undertaking this war. The Spartans themselves had already decided that the treaty had been broken and that the Athenians were doing wrong. But they sent to Delphi and asked the god whether it would be better for them to go to war. He answered them, so it is said, that if they fought with all their might they would win, and he said that he himself would take their part, whether called upon or not.

THE CORINTHIANS' SECOND SPEECH

At a congress of Sparta's allies the Corinthians urge war, and the allies vote for it.

1.119 They summoned their allies once more, intending to put to them the vote on whether to go to war. The envoys came from the alliance and a congress was held. The others said what they wished, most of them accusing the Athenians and demanding that the war go ahead. Before this the Corinthians had gone to

69 This Thucydides is probably not the historian but another Athenian general of the same name.

each of the cities in turn and begged them privately to vote for war, because they were afraid that Potidaea would be destroyed before anything was done. They were present this time too, and they came forward last and spoke as follows:

1.120 "Men of the alliance, we can no longer accuse the Spartans of failing to vote for war themselves or of failing to bring us together now for this purpose. Leaders ought to manage their own affairs on equal terms with the rest, but to look ahead on behalf of the common interest, just as they are honored above everyone in other ways too. Those of us who have already had dealings with the Athenians need no lesson in guarding against them. But those who live farther inland and away from the trade routes must understand this. If they do not defend the peoples on the coast, they will find it harder to bring their seasonal produce down to the sea and to get back in exchange what the sea provides to the mainland. They must not be poor judges of what is being said now, as though it did not concern them. They should expect that if they abandon the coast, the danger may one day reach them too, and they should be deliberating now for themselves no less than for others. That is exactly why they must not hesitate to exchange peace for war. It is the mark of prudent men to keep quiet if they are not wronged. But it is the mark of brave men, when they are wronged, to go from peace to war, and then, when a good opportunity offers, to come to terms again after war. They are neither carried away by success in war nor willing to suffer wrong because they enjoy the quiet of peace. The man who hesitates for the sake of pleasure would very quickly, if he kept quiet, be robbed of the delightful ease that makes him hesitate. And the man who presses too far on the strength of success in war has failed to reflect that he is being carried away by a confidence that cannot be trusted. Many plans badly conceived have succeeded because the enemy turned out to be even more ill-advised. Even more plans that seemed well thought out have ended, on the contrary, in disgrace. For no one carries out a plan in action with the same confidence with which he conceives it.

We form our opinions in safety, but when it comes to action, fear makes us fall short.

1.121 "We are now stirring up this war because we have been wronged and have complaints enough, and once we have avenged ourselves on the Athenians, we will lay it down at the proper time. There are many reasons why we are likely to prevail. First, we are superior in numbers and in military experience. Second, we all carry out orders in the same way. As for a navy, where their strength lies, we will fit one out from the resources each of us already has and from the funds at Delphi and Olympia. By raising a loan we can lure away their foreign sailors with higher pay. For the power of Athens is bought rather than its own. Ours would be less exposed to this, since its strength lies more in men than in money.[70] In all likelihood a single naval victory will finish them. If they hold out, we too will train at seamanship over a longer period, and once we have brought our skill up to their level, we will surely be their superiors in courage. For the good that we have by nature they could never acquire by teaching, while the advantage they have in skill we can eliminate by practice. As for the money to pay for all this, we will contribute it. It would be outrageous if their allies never refuse to pay for their own enslavement, while we, it seems, will not spend money to punish our enemies and save ourselves at the same time, and to avoid having that very money taken from us by them and used to do us harm. 1.122 We have other ways of waging the war as well. We can bring about the revolt of their allies, which above all means stripping them of the revenues on which their strength depends. We can build a fortified post in their territory. And there are other measures that no one could foresee now. For war is the last thing to proceed on fixed terms. It mostly devises its own means to meet whatever turns up. In war the man who deals with it calmly stands on firmer ground, while the man who loses his temper over it suffers falls no smaller.

70 The great sanctuaries of Apollo at Delphi and of Zeus at Olympia held large treasuries of dedicated wealth.

"Let us also bear in mind that if each of us were merely having border disputes with rivals of equal strength, it could be tolerated. As things are, the Athenians are a match for all of us together and still more powerful than any one city. So unless we resist them all together, nation by nation and city by city, with a single resolve, they will subdue us without effort, divided as we are. And let everyone be sure, terrible as it may be to hear, that defeat brings nothing other than outright slavery. It is a disgrace for the Peloponnese that this should even be put into words as a possibility, or that so many cities should suffer at the hands of one. In that case we would seem either to deserve our suffering or to endure it out of cowardice, and to prove ourselves worse than our fathers, who freed Greece. We are not even securing that freedom for ourselves. We allow a city to establish itself as a tyrant, while we think it right to overthrow sole rulers in individual cities. And we do not see how this conduct can be free of the three greatest failings: lack of sense, softness, or negligence. You surely have not escaped these only to fall into the contempt for the enemy that has ruined so many. Because it trips up so many, that contempt has been renamed with the opposite name, senselessness.[71] 1.123 Why should we blame what has happened in the past any longer than serves the present? As for what lies ahead, you must take on further hardship to deal with the present situation. It is your ancestral way to win excellence through toil. You must not change that custom just because you now have a slight advantage in wealth and resources, for it is not right that what was won in poverty should be lost in plenty. Instead you should go into the war with confidence, for many reasons. The god has given his oracle and has promised to help in person, and all the rest of Greece will join in the struggle, partly from fear and partly for advantage. Nor will you be the first to break the treaty, since the god, in bidding you to go to war, considers it already violated. Rather, you will be coming to the aid of a treaty that has been wronged. For a treaty is broken

71 The Greek plays on kataphronēsis, "contempt" (literally "thinking down on"), and aphrosynē, "senselessness" ("not thinking").

not by those who defend themselves but by those who attack first.

1.124 "So, since you are well placed in every respect to go to war, and since we are giving this advice in our common interest —if indeed the surest bond, for cities as for individuals, is a shared interest—do not delay. Bring help to the Potidaeans, who are Dorians and are being besieged by Ionians, the reverse of what used to happen, and go after the freedom of the others. It is no longer possible to wait while some are already being harmed and others, once it becomes known that we met but did not dare defend ourselves, will soon suffer the same.[72] No, men of the alliance. Recognize that necessity has come upon you, and that this is also the best advice. Vote for war. Do not fear the immediate danger, but long for the more lasting peace that will come from it. For peace is made more secure by war, while refusing war for the sake of quiet is not equally free of danger. Let us consider that the city which has set itself up as a tyrant in Greece has been set up against all of us alike, ruling some already and planning to rule others. Let us attack it and bring it to heel, so that we ourselves may live safely from now on and may free the Greeks who are now enslaved." Such was the speech of the Corinthians.

1.125 When the Spartans had heard everyone's opinion, they put the vote to all the allies present, one after another, larger city and smaller alike, and the majority voted for war. The decision had been made, but they could not set to work at once, being unprepared. It was agreed that each state should provide what was needed and that there should be no delay. Even so, while they were assembling what they needed, not a full year but somewhat less went by before they invaded Attica and openly began the war. 1.126 During this time they kept sending embassies to the Athenians with complaints, so that they would have the strongest possible pretext for war if the Athenians paid no attention.

72 Potidaea was a colony of Corinth and so Dorian; the Athenians counted themselves Ionians.

THE CURSE OF CYLON

Sparta demands that Athens expel those under an old curse, aiming at Pericles; Athens replies in kind.

First the Spartans sent envoys and told the Athenians to drive out the curse of the goddess. The curse was as follows. In former times there was an Athenian named Cylon, an Olympic victor, well born and powerful, who had married the daughter of Theagenes, a Megarian who was at that time tyrant of Megara. When Cylon consulted the oracle at Delphi, the god told him to seize the Athenian Acropolis during the greatest festival of Zeus. So he got a force from Theagenes and won over his friends, and when the Olympic festival in the Peloponnese came round, he seized the Acropolis with the aim of making himself tyrant. He thought that this was the greatest festival of Zeus and that it had a special connection with him, since he had been a victor at Olympia.[73] Whether the greatest festival meant was in Attica or somewhere else was something he did not stop to consider, and the oracle did not make it clear. The Athenians too have a festival, the Diasia, which is called the greatest festival of Zeus Meilichius. It is held outside the city, and at it the whole people make many offerings, not animal victims but pure offerings of a local kind. Thinking he had understood correctly, Cylon put his plan into action. When the Athenians learned of it, they came in from the countryside in full force against them, sat down before the Acropolis and besieged it.[74] As time went on, most of the Athenians grew weary of the siege and went away. They entrusted the guard to the nine archons, with full powers to settle everything as they judged best; at that time the nine archons handled most public business. Cylon and those besieged with him were in a bad way for lack of food and water. Cylon and his

73 Cylon's attempt is usually dated to the 630s BC; the goddess is Athena, whose sanctuary was on the Acropolis.

74 Zeus Meilichius means "Zeus the Gracious"; the local offerings were probably cakes shaped like animals.

brother escaped. The rest, hard pressed, with some actually dying of hunger, sat down as suppliants at the altar on the Acropolis.[75] The Athenians who had been entrusted with the guard, seeing them dying in the sanctuary, made them get up on condition that they would do them no harm, then led them away and killed them. Some who had seated themselves at the altars of the Venerable Goddesses as they went past were also put to death there. Because of this, the killers and their descendants were called accursed and offenders against the goddess. The Athenians drove these accursed people out, and later Cleomenes the Spartan also drove them out, with the help of one side in an Athenian civil conflict. They expelled the living and dug up the bones of the dead and threw them out. They did, however, return later, and their family is still in the city.[76] 1.127 It was this curse, then, that the Spartans told the Athenians to drive out, supposedly to avenge the gods first of all. In fact they knew that Pericles son of Xanthippus was connected with it on his mother's side, and they thought that if he were banished, their dealings with the Athenians would go more easily for them. They did not so much expect him actually to suffer this as to bring discredit on him in the eyes of the city, as though the war would be partly due to his family's misfortune. For as the most powerful man of his time and the leader of the state, he opposed the Spartans in everything. He would not allow concessions, but kept urging the Athenians on to war.

PAUSANIAS AND THEMISTOCLES

The downfall of the Spartan regent Pausanias and the exile of Themistocles.

1.128 The Athenians in turn told the Spartans to drive out the curse of Taenarum. Once the Spartans had made some helot suppliants get up from the sanctuary of Poseidon [at Taenarum],

75 The archons were Athens' chief magistrates, chosen annually.
76 The Venerable Goddesses were the Furies (Eumenides), who had a shrine below the Areopagus. The accursed family was the Alcmaeonidae.

had led them away and put them to death. The Spartans themselves believe that this was why the great earthquake struck Sparta. The Athenians also told them to drive out the curse of the goddess of the Bronze House, which came about as follows. Pausanias the Spartan had been recalled by the Spartiates the first time from his command in the Hellespont, and he had been tried by them and acquitted of wrongdoing. He was not sent out again in an official capacity, but on his own account he took a trireme from Hermione and went to the Hellespont without Spartan authority. In word, it was for the war of the Greeks. In deed, it was to pursue his dealings with the King, as he had first attempted, since he was aiming at rule over Greece.[77] This was how he first laid up a service with the King and set the whole affair in motion. On his earlier stay, after he returned from Cyprus, he had captured Byzantium. It was held by the Persians, and some connections and kinsmen of the King were captured there. On this occasion he sent the prisoners he had taken back to the King without the knowledge of the other allies, giving out that they had escaped from him. He managed this with the help of Gongylus of Eretria, to whom he had entrusted Byzantium and the prisoners. He also sent Gongylus to take a letter to the King. In it was written the following, as was discovered later: "Pausanias, the leader of Sparta, wishing to do you a favor, sends you back these men whom he captured by the spear. I propose, if you also approve, to marry your daughter and to make Sparta and the rest of Greece subject to you. I believe I am able to do this with you in counsel with me. So if any of this pleases you, send a trustworthy man to the coast, through whom we will carry on our communications from now on." 1.129 That was all the writing revealed. Xerxes was pleased with the letter. He sent Artabazus son of Pharnaces down to the coast, with orders to take over the satrapy of Dascylium, replacing Megabates, who had governed it before. He gave him a letter in reply, to send across to Pausanias at Byzantium as quickly as possible and to show

77 The Spartiates were the full Spartan citizens. Taenarum is the southern tip of the Peloponnese, site of a sanctuary of Poseidon.

him the seal. If Pausanias gave him any instructions about his own affairs, Artabazus was to carry them out as well and as faithfully as he could. When he arrived, Artabazus did everything else as he had been told and sent the letter across. The reply read as follows: "Thus says King Xerxes to Pausanias.[78] For the men you saved for me from Byzantium across the sea, a benefaction stands to your credit in our house, recorded forever, and I am pleased with the words that come from you. Let neither night nor day stop you so that you slacken in doing any of the things you promise me. Do not be held back by the expense of gold and silver, or by the size of the army, if one is needed anywhere. With Artabazus, a good man whom I have sent to you, go ahead confidently with my affairs and yours, so that they may turn out most honorably and best for both of us."

1.130 When Pausanias received this letter, he was already held in great esteem by the Greeks for his leadership at Plataea, but now he grew far more puffed up and could no longer live in the established manner. He would go out of Byzantium dressed in Persian clothes. As he traveled through Thrace, Persians and Egyptians escorted him as a bodyguard. He had a Persian table set before him. He could not conceal his intentions, but by small actions revealed in advance what he meant to do on a grander scale later. He made himself hard to approach and showed such a harsh temper to everyone alike that no one could come near him. This was not the least of the reasons why the alliance went over to the Athenians.[79]

1.131 When the Spartans learned of this, they recalled him the first time for precisely these reasons. Then he sailed out a second time in the ship from Hermione without their orders and was evidently behaving in the same way. He was forced out of Byzantium by an Athenian siege, and instead of returning to Sparta he settled at Colonae in the Troad, and it was reported to

78 A satrapy was a province of the Persian empire; Dascylium lay in northwest Asia Minor, near the Propontis.

79 At the battle of Plataea in 479 BC, Pausanias commanded the Greek army that defeated the Persians.

them that he was intriguing with the Persians and that his stay there was for no good purpose. Then at last they held back no longer. The ephors sent a herald with a skytale and told him to follow the herald back; otherwise the Spartiates would declare war on him.[80] Pausanias, wanting to arouse as little suspicion as possible and confident that he could dispose of the accusation with money, returned to Sparta a second time. At first he was thrown into prison by the ephors (the ephors have the right to do this even to the king). Later he managed to get himself released and offered to stand trial before anyone who wanted to bring charges against him. 1.132 The Spartiates, both his personal enemies and the city as a whole, had no clear evidence on which they could rely in punishing a man who was of the royal family and held high office at the time; he was acting as regent for Pleistarchus son of Leonidas, his cousin, who was king and still young. But by his disregard for the laws and his imitation of foreign ways he gave rise to many suspicions that he did not wish to be on a level with things as they stood. They examined the rest of his conduct, to see whether he had departed anywhere from the established customs. They recalled in particular that he had once seen fit to have the following couplet inscribed, on his own account, on the tripod at Delphi that the Greeks had dedicated as first fruits of the spoils taken from the Persians: "Leader of the Greeks, when he destroyed the army of the Persians, Pausanias dedicated this memorial to Phoebus."[81] The Spartans had this couplet chiseled off the tripod immediately at the time, and they inscribed by name all the cities that had joined in defeating the Persians and set up the offering. Even then, however, it was considered an offense on Pausanias' part, and now that he was in this position, it looked all the more in keeping with his present intentions. They also learned that he was intriguing with the helots, and this was true: he was prom-

80 A skytale was a staff around which a strip bearing an official message was wound; it was the ephors' means of sending orders to commanders abroad.
81 Phoebus is Apollo, the god of Delphi. The tripod stood on a bronze column of twisted serpents, part of which survives in Istanbul.

ising them freedom and citizenship if they would rise up with him and help him carry the whole plan through. But even so, they did not see fit to take any drastic measures against him on the word of certain helot informers. They kept to the practice they usually follow among themselves: not to be quick to take an irreversible decision about a Spartiate without indisputable proof. Finally, so it is said, the man who was to carry the last letters to Artabazus for the King turned informer. He was a man from Argilus who had once been Pausanias' beloved and was the man he trusted most. He had grown afraid when it occurred to him that none of the messengers before him had ever come back. So he counterfeited the seal, so that Pausanias would not find out if his suspicion proved mistaken, or if Pausanias asked to alter something in the letters, and he opened them. Since he had suspected that some such instruction had been added, he found written in them that he himself was to be killed.[82] 1.133 When he showed the ephors the letter, they were more convinced, but they still wanted to hear something from Pausanias' own lips. So by arrangement the man went to Taenarum as a suppliant. There he put up a hut divided in two by a partition, and he hid some of the ephors inside it. Pausanias came to him and asked the reason for his supplication, and the ephors heard everything clearly. The man reproached Pausanias with what had been written about him and set out the rest point by point. He had never once exposed Pausanias to danger in his errands to the King, and yet he had been honored, on a level with the mass of servants, with death. Pausanias admitted these very things and urged him not to be angry about the present situation. He gave him a pledge of safety if he left the sanctuary, and asked him to set off as quickly as possible and not to obstruct the business in hand. 1.134 After hearing every detail, the ephors left for the time being. Now that they knew for certain, they prepared to arrest him in the city. It is said that when he was about to be arrested in the street, he saw the face of one of the ephors as he came toward him and realized what he was coming for.

82 Argilus was a Greek town on the coast of Thrace.

Another ephor, out of goodwill, gave him a covert nod and let him know, so he ran to the sanctuary of the goddess of the Bronze House and took refuge there before they could reach him, for the precinct was close by. He went into a small building that belonged to the sanctuary, so as not to suffer out in the open, and stayed there quietly. For the moment his pursuers were too late. Afterwards they took the roof off the building, waited until he was inside, shut him in and walled up the doors. Then they sat down around it and starved him out, as if in a siege.[83] When he was about to breathe his last, just as he was, inside the building, they saw it and carried him out of the sanctuary while he was still breathing, and once he had been brought out he died at once. They intended to throw him into the Caeadas [, where they throw criminals], but then they decided to bury him somewhere nearby. Later, however, the god at Delphi instructed the Spartans by oracle to move his tomb to the place where he had died. He now lies in the forecourt of the sanctuary, as the inscription on some stone slabs shows. The oracle also declared that what they had done was a curse upon them, and that they must give back two bodies in place of one to the goddess of the Bronze House. So they had two bronze statues made and dedicated them as a substitute for Pausanias.[84] 1.135 The Athenians, on the grounds that the god too had judged it a curse, made a counter-demand that the Spartans drive out this curse.

THE FLIGHT OF THEMISTOCLES

Accused along with Pausanias, Themistocles flees across Greece to the Persian king and dies in Asia.

Pausanias had collaborated with the Persians, and the Spartans sent envoys to the Athenians to accuse Themistocles of being his

83 The goddess of the Bronze House (Chalcioecus) was Athena, whose temple stood on the acropolis of Sparta.

84 The Caeadas was a ravine near Sparta into which the bodies of executed criminals were thrown.

accomplice, on the basis of what they had found in the evidence against Pausanias. They demanded that he be punished in the same way. The Athenians were persuaded. Themistocles happened to have been ostracized and was living in Argos, though he also traveled about the rest of the Peloponnese. So the Athenians sent men, together with the Spartans, who were ready to join in the pursuit, with orders to bring him back from wherever they found him.[85] 1.136 But Themistocles learned of it in advance and fled from the Peloponnese to Corcyra, since he was a benefactor of the Corcyraeans. When they said they were afraid to keep him and so make enemies of the Spartans and the Athenians, they took him across to the mainland opposite. He was pursued by the men assigned to the task, who kept finding out which way he was going. At one point of desperate difficulty he was forced to stop with Admetus, king of the Molossians, who was no friend of his. Admetus happened not to be at home. Themistocles became a suppliant of his wife, and she told him to take their child and sit down at the hearth.[86] When Admetus came back not long afterward, Themistocles told him who he was. He asked Admetus not to take vengeance on him as an exile, even if he himself had perhaps opposed some request Admetus had made of the Athenians. In his present state, he said, he could be harmed even by someone far weaker than Admetus, whereas it was noble to take vengeance on equals on equal terms. Besides, he himself had opposed Admetus over a mere request, not over saving his life. Admetus, by contrast, if he gave him up, would be depriving him of the means of saving his life. Here he told him who was pursuing him and why. 1.137 On hearing this, Admetus raised him up, together with his own son, whom Themistocles had been holding as he sat. This was the most solemn form of supplication. Not long afterward the Spartans and Athenians came and argued at length, but Admetus did not give him up. Themistocles wanted to go to the

85 Ostracism was an Athenian vote by which a leading citizen could be sent into exile for ten years without losing his property.
86 The Molossians were a people of Epirus, in northwestern Greece.

King, so Admetus sent him overland to the other sea, to Pydna, the city of Alexander. There he found a merchant ship putting out for Ionia. He went on board, and a storm carried the ship to the Athenian camp that was besieging Naxos.[87] Afraid—for no one on board knew who he was—he told the ship's master who he was and why he was in flight. He said that if the master did not save him, he would claim the man was carrying him because he had been bribed. Their safety, he said, lay in no one leaving the ship until they could sail on, and if the master did as he asked, he would repay the favor as it deserved. The master did so. He rode at anchor for a day and a night off the camp, and eventually reached Ephesus. Themistocles rewarded him with a gift of money, since later he received money from his friends in Athens and from Argos, where funds had been secretly deposited for him. Then he traveled inland with one of the Persians from the coast and sent a letter up to King Artaxerxes, son of Xerxes, who had recently come to the throne. The letter said: "I, Themistocles, have come to you. Of all the Greeks I did your house the most harm for as long as I was forced to defend myself against your father's invasion. But I did it far more good when his withdrawal was under way, at a time when I was safe and he was in danger. A kindness is owed to me"—here he wrote of the advance message from Salamis about the withdrawal, and of the bridges not being broken up at that time, thanks to him, which was a false claim—"and now I am here, able to do you great services, pursued by the Greeks because of my friendship for you. I wish to wait a year and then explain to you myself what I have come about."[88] 1.138 The King, it is said, admired his intention and told him to do so. During the time he waited, Themistocles learned as much of the Persian language and of the customs of the country as he could. When he arrived after the year was up, he became a great man at the King's court, greater than any

87 Pydna lay on the Aegean coast of Macedonia, whose king at the time was Alexander I.

88 Before the battle of Salamis (480 BC) Themistocles sent a secret message to Xerxes. The bridges were Xerxes' bridges of boats across the Hellespont.

Greek before him. This was partly because of the standing he already had, and partly because of the hope he held out to the King of enslaving the Greek world. Above all, though, it was because he gave proof of his ability and showed himself to be intelligent.

For Themistocles displayed the force of natural genius beyond all question, and in this respect he deserves admiration in an exceptional degree, more than any other man. By his own native intelligence, without having learned anything to add to it either beforehand or afterward, he was the best judge of an immediate situation with the least deliberation. He was also the best at forecasting what was going to happen, furthest into the future. Whatever he had in hand, he was able to explain to others as well. Where he had no experience, he was still not at a loss to judge soundly. He was also the best at foreseeing the better or the worse course while it was still hidden. In short, through the power of his nature and with the least preparation, this man was the very best at improvising what was needed. He fell ill and died. Some, however, say that he took poison and died by his own choice, believing it impossible to carry out what he had promised the King. There is a monument to him in the marketplace of Magnesia in Asia. He governed that region, for the King had given him Magnesia for his bread, which brought in fifty talents a year, Lampsacus for his wine (it was considered the richest in wine of any place at that time), and Myus for the rest of his table. His relatives say that his bones were brought home at his own request and buried in Attica without the Athenians' knowledge. It was not lawful to bury him there, since he was in exile for treason. So ended the story of Pausanias the Spartan and Themistocles the Athenian, the most brilliant Greeks of their time.

1.139 On the first embassy, then, the Spartans made demands like these and were answered with counter-demands about expelling those under a curse. Later they kept coming to the Athenians, telling them to withdraw from Potidaea and to leave Aegina independent. Above all, and most plainly, they declared

that there would be no war if the Athenians revoked the decree about the Megarians. That decree had laid down that the Megarians were not to use the harbors in the Athenian empire or the Attic market. The Athenians would neither comply in the other matters nor revoke the decree. They accused the Megarians of cultivating the sacred land and the unmarked borderland, and of harboring runaway slaves.[89] Finally the last envoys came from Sparta: Ramphias, Melesippus and Agesander. They said nothing of what had usually been said before, only this: "The Spartans want peace, and there would be peace if you left the Greeks independent." The Athenians held an assembly and opened the question for debate among themselves. They decided to deliberate once and for all on every issue and then give their answer. Many others came forward and spoke on both sides, some arguing that they must go to war, others that the decree should not stand in the way of peace and should be revoked. Then Pericles son of Xanthippus came forward. He was the leading man in Athens at that time and the most able in both speech and action, and he gave the following advice:

PERICLES' FIRST SPEECH

Pericles urges the Athenians to refuse Sparta's demands and sets out his strategy.

1.140 "Athenians, I hold always to the same judgment: that we must not give way to the Peloponnesians. I know that people do not carry on a war in the same mood in which they are persuaded to go to war, but change their judgments according to what happens to them. I see that now too I must give the same advice as before, or very nearly the same. I ask those of you who are being persuaded to stand by what we decide together, even if we should meet with some failure. Otherwise they should not claim any credit for intelligence if we succeed. For the course of events can go no less senselessly than human plans, and that is

89 The sacred land lay on the border between Attica and Megara and was consecrated to the goddesses of Eleusis.

why we tend to blame chance for whatever turns out contrary to our calculations.

"The Spartans were plainly plotting against us before, and now more than ever. It was agreed that we should give and accept arbitration of our differences, each side keeping what it has. Yet they have never once asked for arbitration themselves, and they do not accept it when we offer it. They want to settle their complaints by war rather than by words. And now they come giving orders, no longer making complaints. They tell us to withdraw from Potidaea, to leave Aegina independent and to revoke the Megarian decree. These last envoys have come with the further proclamation that we are to leave the Greeks independent. None of you should think we would be going to war over a trifle if we refused to revoke the Megarian decree. They put this forward more than anything else, saying that if it were revoked there would be no war. Do not leave yourselves with the nagging reproach that you went to war over something small. For this 'trifle' contains the whole confirmation and test of your resolve. If you give in to them, you will at once be ordered to do something greater, since they will think you obeyed in this out of fear as well. But if you refuse firmly, you will make it clear to them that they must deal with you as equals. [1.141] Make up your minds, then, here and now. Either submit before you suffer any harm, or, if we are to go to war, as I think the better course, resolve not to give way on any pretext, great or small, and not to hold what we have acquired in fear. When equals impose a claim on their neighbors before any arbitration, the greatest claim and the smallest alike amount to the same enslavement.

"As for the war and the resources each side has, listen to the details and you will see that ours will be no weaker. The Peloponnesians work their own land, and they have no money, either privately or in public funds. They also have no experience of long wars or wars overseas, because their poverty keeps their wars against one another short. Men like these cannot often man fleets or send out armies by land. That would mean being away from their own affairs while paying the costs from their

own pockets, and besides, they will be shut off from the sea. It is accumulated reserves, not forced levies, that keep wars going. Men who work their own land are readier to fight with their bodies than with their money. They trust that they may come through the dangers alive, but they are not sure they will not run out of money first, especially if the war drags on longer than they expect, as it probably will. In a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies can hold their own against all the Greeks together. But they cannot wage war against forces organized differently from their own. They have no single council chamber to carry out any measure quickly on the spot. They all have an equal vote and are not of the same stock, so each of them presses his own interests. From this, nothing ever tends to get done. Some want to take as much revenge on someone as possible, while others want their own property damaged as little as possible. They meet only at long intervals, and they give a small part of that time to any common business and the larger part to their own affairs. Each thinks his own neglect will do no harm and that it is somebody else's job to look ahead on his behalf. So, because each of them privately holds the same idea, the common cause is ruined wholesale without anyone noticing.

1.142 "Most important of all, they will be hampered by lack of money, since they raise it slowly and so keep delaying, and the opportunities of war do not wait. Nor is there anything to fear from their building a fortified base in our land, or from their navy. It is hard even in peacetime to build up a city that could rival ours. It is much harder in enemy country, when we have fortifications facing them no less than theirs face us. If they build a fort, they might damage some part of our land with raids and by drawing off deserters. But it will not be enough to stop us from sailing to their land and building forts there, and from striking back with our ships, where our strength lies. For our naval experience has taught us more about fighting on land than their experience on the mainland has taught them about the sea. Becoming experts at sea will not come easily to them. Even you, who have been practicing it ever since the Persian Wars, have

not yet mastered it completely. So how could men who are farmers and not seafarers achieve anything worth mentioning, especially when they will not even be allowed to practice, because we will always be blockading them with many ships? Against a few blockading ships they might take a risk, letting their numbers embolden their ignorance. But when many ships keep them in, they will stay quiet, and for lack of practice they will become less skilled and, for that very reason, more hesitant. Seamanship is a matter of skill, like anything else. It cannot be practiced as a sideline when the chance arises. On the contrary, it leaves no room for anything else as a sideline.

1.143 "They might lay hands on the funds at Olympia or Delphi and try to lure away the foreigners among our sailors with higher pay. That would be serious if we were not a match for them by going on board ourselves, together with the metics. But as things are, we have this advantage. Most important of all, we have citizens as helmsmen, and the rest of our crews are more numerous and better than those of all the rest of Greece. In the face of danger, none of those foreigners would agree to be exiled from his own country and at the same time fight on their side, with less hope of success, for the sake of a few days' high pay.[90]

"That, or something close to it, seems to me to be the position of the Peloponnesians. Ours, I think, is free of the weaknesses I found in theirs, and it has other great advantages that theirs cannot match. If they march against our land, we will sail against theirs, and it will no longer be the same thing for part of the Peloponnese to be ravaged as for the whole of Attica. They will have no other land to take in its place without a fight, whereas we have plenty of land, both in the islands and on the mainland. Mastery of the sea is a great thing. Just consider: if we were islanders, who would be harder to capture? As it is, we must think of ourselves as being as close to islanders as possible. We must give up our land and houses and keep guard over the sea and the city. We must not let anger over them drive us into a

90 Metics were free foreigners living in Athens. They paid a special tax and served in the forces but had no citizen rights.

decisive battle with the Peloponnesians, who far outnumber us. If we win, we will have to fight again against just as many. If we fail, we lose our allies as well, and they are the source of our strength, for they will not keep quiet once we are no longer able to march against them. And we must not lament the loss of houses and land, but the loss of lives, for it is not these things that win men, but men who win these things. If I thought I could persuade you, I would urge you to go out and lay them waste yourselves, and show the Peloponnesians that you will not submit for the sake of these things, at any rate.

1.144 "I have many other grounds for hoping that we will prevail, if you are willing not to extend the empire while we are at war and not to take on dangers of our own choosing. I am more afraid of our own mistakes than of our enemies' plans. But those matters will be explained in another speech, when the time for action comes. For now, let us send these envoys away with this answer. As for the Megarians, we will allow them to use our market and harbors if the Spartans, for their part, stop expelling foreigners, whether ourselves or our allies, for the treaty forbids neither the one nor the other. As for the cities, we will leave them independent if they were independent when we made the treaty, and when the Spartans too allow their own cities to be independent. That independence must not be in a way that suits [the Spartans] themselves, but in whatever way each city wishes. Finally, we are willing to submit to arbitration as the agreement provides, and we will not start a war, but we will defend ourselves against those who do.[91] This answer is both just and worthy of this city. But you must understand that war is unavoidable, and the more willingly we accept it, the less pressing we will find our enemies. You must also understand that the greatest honors, for city and individual alike, come out of the greatest dangers. Our fathers, at any rate, stood up to the Persians, though they did not start from resources like ours and even abandoned what they had. More by judgment than by

91 The Spartans periodically expelled foreigners from their territory, a practice known as *xenelasia*.

chance, and with daring greater than their power, they drove back the foreign invader and brought our affairs to their present height. We must not fall short of them. We must defend ourselves against our enemies in every way, and try to hand on what we have to those who come after us undiminished."

1.145 That is what Pericles said. The Athenians believed he was giving them the best advice and voted as he urged. They answered the Spartans as he had proposed, both point by point as he had set it out and in general: they would do nothing on command, but they were ready to settle the complaints by arbitration as the agreement provided, on fair and equal terms. The envoys went back home and sent no further embassies. 1.146 These were the grievances and disputes between the two sides before the war, beginning right from the events at Epidamnus and Corcyra. Even so, they kept up contact while these went on and visited each other without heralds, though not without suspicion. For what was happening amounted to a breaking of the treaty and a pretext for war.[92]

92 In wartime, enemies communicated only through heralds, who were protected by sacred custom.

Book 2

The first years of war, 431–429 BC
The Theban attack on Plataea, the invasions of Attica, Pericles' Funeral Oration, the plague at Athens, Pericles' last speech and death, and Phormio's naval victories.

2.1 From this point begins the war between the Athenians and the Peloponnesians and the allies of each side. In it they no longer had dealings with each other except through heralds, and once it had started they fought continuously. It has been written up in order, as each thing happened, by summers and winters.

THE ATTACK ON PLATAEA

Theban troops enter Plataea by night in peacetime and are trapped and killed; the war begins.

2.2 The Thirty Years' Peace, which was made after the capture of Euboea, lasted fourteen years. In the fifteenth year—when Chrysis was in her forty-eighth year as priestess at Argos, Aenesias was ephor at Sparta, and Pythodorus still had two months of his archonship to run at Athens—in the sixth month after the battle at Potidaea, at the very beginning of spring, a little over three hundred Thebans entered Plataea under arms at about the hour of first sleep. Plataea was a city of Boeotia allied to the Athenians. They were led by the boeotarchs Pythangelus son of Phyleides and Diemporus son of Onetorides.[1] They had been

1 Chrysis was priestess of Hera at Argos; ephors were Sparta's five annually elected magistrates, the archon gave his name to the Athenian year, and boeotarchs were the chief officials of the Boeotian League. The date is early spring 431 BC.

invited in, and the gates opened for them, by men of Plataea: Naucleides and his associates. For the sake of their own power, these men wanted to kill those citizens who opposed them and bring the city over to Thebes. They arranged this through Eurymachus son of Leontiades, a very powerful man at Thebes. The Thebans foresaw that the war was coming, and they wanted to seize Plataea, which had always been at odds with them, while it was still peacetime and the war had not yet openly broken out. That is also why they found it easier to get in unnoticed: no guard had been posted. They grounded their arms in the marketplace. But they did not do as the men who had brought them in urged, which was to set to work at once and go for the houses of their enemies. Instead they decided to make conciliatory proclamations and to bring the city round to an agreement and friendship. The herald announced that anyone who wished to be an ally according to the ancestral tradition of all the Boeotians should come and ground his arms beside them. They thought that in this way the city would easily come over to them. 2.3 When the Plataeans realized that the Thebans were inside and that the city had been suddenly seized, they were terrified. Believing that far more men had come in than had (for they could not see in the dark), they came to terms, accepted the proposals and kept quiet, especially since the Thebans were taking no violent action against anyone. But in the course of these negotiations they somehow noticed that the Thebans were not many, and they thought that if they attacked they would easily overcome them. For the mass of the Plataeans did not want to break away from the Athenians. So they decided the attempt had to be made. They gathered together by digging through the party walls between their houses, so that they would not be seen going along the streets. They set wagons without their draught animals in the streets to serve as a barricade, and they got everything else ready in whatever way seemed likely to be useful in the circumstances. When things were as ready as they could make them, they waited for the very end of the night, just before dawn, and then

moved out from their houses against the Thebans. They did not want to attack them by daylight, when the Thebans would be bolder and fight on equal terms. At night the Thebans would be more frightened and at a disadvantage against the Plataeans' own knowledge of the city. They attacked at once and quickly came to close quarters. 2.4 When the Thebans realized they had been tricked, they closed up into a tight body and pushed back the attacks wherever they fell on them. Two or three times they drove them off. But the Plataeans kept attacking with a great uproar, while the women and slaves on the houses screamed and shrieked and pelted them with stones and tiles, and heavy rain had set in during the night as well. Then the Thebans panicked, turned and fled through the city. Most of them did not know, in the dark and the mud, which way through the streets led to safety (for this happened at the end of the month). Their pursuers, by contrast, knew exactly how to stop them escaping, so most of them were killed.[2] One of the Plataeans shut the gates by which they had come in, the only ones that were open. He used the butt-spike of a javelin in place of the pin in the bar, so that there was no longer a way out even there. Chased through the city, some of the Thebans climbed onto the wall and threw themselves over to the outside, and most of these were killed. Others got out by a deserted gate, where a woman gave them an axe and they cut through the bar unnoticed. But not many escaped this way, for they were soon discovered. The rest were killed, scattered in different parts of the city. The largest group, the men who had kept most closely together, burst into a large building that formed part of the wall. Its doors happened to be open, and they thought the doors of the building were a gate and a passage straight through to the outside. When the Plataeans saw that they were trapped, they debated whether to burn them where they were by setting fire to the building, or to deal with them in some other way. In the end these men and all the other Thebans still left wandering about the city agreed to surrender themselves and their arms to the Plataeans, to be dealt with as

2 Greek months were lunar, so the end of the month meant a moonless night.

they wished. That, then, was how things had gone for those in Plataea. 2.5 The rest of the Thebans were supposed to arrive in full force while it was still night, in case anything went wrong for those who had gone in. They were on their way to help when the news of what had happened reached them on the road. Plataea is seventy stades from Thebes, and the rain that had fallen in the night made them slower in coming, because the river Asopus was running high and was not easy to cross. Marching in the rain and crossing the river with difficulty, they arrived too late. By then some of the men had been killed and the rest were being held alive.[3] When the Thebans learned what had happened, they began plotting against the Plataeans outside the city. There were people out in the fields, and property too, as you would expect when trouble has come unexpectedly in peacetime. They wanted anyone they caught to be in their hands as a counterweight for the men inside, in case any of these had in fact been taken alive. While they were planning this, the Plataeans suspected that something of the sort would happen. Fearing for those outside, they sent a herald to the Thebans while the Thebans were still deliberating. They declared that what the Thebans had done was impious, trying to seize their city while the treaty was in force, and they told them not to harm what was outside. Otherwise, they said, they too would kill the Theban men they were holding alive; but if the Thebans withdrew from their territory, they would give the men back to them. That is the Theban account, and the Thebans say the Plataeans swore to it. The Plataeans do not agree that they promised to return the men at once. They say the men were to be returned only after talks had been held, and only if an agreement was reached, and they deny having sworn any oath. At any rate, the Thebans withdrew from the territory without doing any harm. But as soon as the Plataeans had hastily brought in their property from the countryside, they killed the men immediately. A hundred and eighty had been taken, and Eurymachus, with whom the traitors had made their arrangements, was one

3 A stade was about 185 meters; seventy stades is roughly 13 kilometers (8 miles).

of them. 2.6 After doing this they sent a messenger to Athens, gave the dead back to the Thebans under a truce, and settled matters in the city as seemed best to them in the circumstances. The Athenians were told at once what had happened at Plataea. They immediately arrested all the Boeotians who were in Attica and sent a herald to Plataea. His orders were to tell the Plataeans to take no drastic step about the Theban men they held until the Athenians too had come to some decision about them. The Athenians had not been told that the men were dead. The first messenger had left just as the Thebans were getting in, and the second just after they had been defeated and captured, so the Athenians knew nothing of what happened later. They therefore sent their instructions in ignorance, and when the herald arrived he found the men dead. After this the Athenians marched to Plataea, brought in grain and left a garrison there. They also took away the least useful of the population, along with the women and children.

PREPARATIONS AND ALLIANCES

Both sides prepare for war; Greek opinion favors Sparta, and the allies of each side are listed.

2.7 Now that the affair at Plataea had taken place and the treaty had been openly broken, the Athenians prepared to go to war. So did the Spartans and their allies. Both sides intended to send embassies to the King and to foreign peoples elsewhere, wherever each hoped to gain some help. They were also making allies of the cities outside their own sphere of power. The Spartans had ships already in the Peloponnese. In addition, they ordered those in Italy and Sicily who had taken their side to build ships in proportion to the size of their cities, so that the total would come to five hundred. These cities were also to have a fixed sum of money ready. Otherwise they were to stay quiet and to admit the Athenians with only a single ship at a time until these preparations were complete. The Athenians reviewed their existing alliance and sent embassies above all to the places

around the Peloponnese: Corcyra, Cephallenia, the Acarnanians and Zacynthus. They saw that if these were firmly on their side, they could surround the Peloponnese and wage war on it from all sides.[4] 2.8 Neither side thought small; both threw themselves vigorously into the war, and not unnaturally. Everyone takes hold of things more eagerly at the beginning. At that time there were also many young men in the Peloponnese and many in Athens who had never known war, and so were far from unwilling to take it up. All the rest of Greece was in suspense as its leading cities came into conflict. Many prophecies were being recited, and oracle-mongers chanted many oracles, both among those about to go to war and in the other cities. Besides this, Delos had been shaken by an earthquake shortly before, though it had never been shaken before within Greek memory. It was said, and believed, to be a sign of what was to come.[5] And whenever anything else of the kind happened to occur, it was all eagerly searched out. People's goodwill leaned strongly toward the Spartans, especially since they had proclaimed that they were liberating Greece. Every individual and every city was eager to help them in any way possible, in word and in deed. Each one felt that the cause would suffer wherever he could not take part himself. That was how angry most people were with the Athenians. Some wanted to be freed from their empire, and others were afraid of coming under it. 2.9 Such, then, were the preparations and the spirit with which they set out. These were the cities that each side had as allies when they entered the war. The allies of the Spartans were as follows. Within the Isthmus there were all the Peloponnesians except the Argives and the Achaeans. These two were on friendly terms with both sides, though the Pellenians alone of the Achaeans joined in the war at first, and later all of them did. Outside the Peloponnese there were the Megarians, Boeotians, Locrians, Phocians, Ambraciots, Leucadians and Anactorians. Of these, the Corinthians, Megarians, Sicyonians, Pellenians, Eleans, Ambraciots and Leucadians

4 The King: the king of Persia.
5 Delos was a small Aegean island sacred to Apollo.

supplied ships, and the Boeotians, Phocians and Locrians supplied cavalry. The other cities supplied infantry. That was the Spartan alliance. The Athenians' allies were the Chians, the Lesbians, the Plataeans, the Messenians at Naupactus, most of the Acarnanians, the Corcyraeans and the Zacynthians. Besides these there were the other cities that paid tribute, among the following peoples: coastal Caria, the Dorians living next to the Carians, Ionia, the Hellespont, the region toward Thrace, the islands lying east between the Peloponnese and Crete, and all the Cyclades except Melos and Thera. Of these, the Chians, Lesbians and Corcyraeans supplied ships, and the rest supplied infantry and money. Such were the alliance and the war resources of each side.

ARCHIDAMUS ADDRESSES THE ARMY

The Spartan king urges caution and discipline before the invasion; Athens refuses his last envoy.

2.10 Immediately after the events at Plataea, the Spartans sent word round the Peloponnese and to their allies outside it. The cities were to prepare an army and the kind of supplies suitable for an expedition abroad, because the Spartans meant to invade Attica. As each city got ready, two-thirds of its forces assembled at the Isthmus at the appointed time. When the whole army had been gathered, the Spartan king Archidamus, who was leading this expedition, called together the generals of all the cities and the men in highest office and of most note. He spoke as follows:

2.11 "Men of the Peloponnese and allies, our fathers made many campaigns both within the Peloponnese itself and outside it, and the older men among us are not without experience of wars. Yet we have never set out with greater forces than these. Now we are going against a very powerful city, and we ourselves march in the greatest numbers and with the finest troops. It is right, then, that we should prove neither worse than our fathers nor unequal to our own reputation. For all Greece has been roused by this enterprise and is watching it closely. Because it

hates the Athenians, it wishes us success in what we intend. Some of you may think that we are attacking in great numbers and that it is quite safe to assume the enemy will not come out and fight us. Even so, we must not advance any less carefully prepared on that account. Rather, the leader and soldier of each city must always expect, for his own part, to meet some danger. For the course of wars is uncertain, and attacks mostly come at short notice and in anger. Often a smaller force has been afraid and so defended itself better against a larger one, because the larger force held it in contempt and was caught unprepared. In enemy territory one must always march confident in spirit but, in action, prepared as though afraid. In this way men will be most courageous in attacking the enemy and safest against being attacked. And the city we are going against is far from incapable of defending itself; it is superbly equipped in every respect. So we must fully expect them to come out and fight. If they are not already on the move before we have even arrived, they will be when they see us in their land, ravaging it and destroying their property. Anger seizes everyone when they see themselves suffering something unaccustomed, before their very eyes and at that very moment. Those who use reason least are the ones most driven to act by passion. The Athenians are likely to do this even more than others. They claim the right to rule others, and they are used to invading and ravaging their neighbors' land rather than seeing their own ravaged. You are marching against so great a city, and the outcome, whichever way it falls, will bring the greatest reputation to our ancestors and to ourselves. So follow wherever you are led, putting discipline and vigilance above everything and carrying out orders promptly. For the finest and safest thing is this: that a large body of men should be seen acting with a single discipline."

2.12 With these words Archidamus dismissed the meeting. His first step was to send Melesippus son of Diacritus, a Spartiate, to Athens, in case the Athenians might be more inclined to give way now that they saw the Peloponnesians already on the march. But the Athenians did not admit him into the city or

before the public authorities. A proposal of Pericles had carried earlier that they should receive no herald or embassy from the Spartans once the Spartans had taken the field. So they sent him away without a hearing and ordered him to be outside their borders that same day. In future, if the Spartans wanted anything, they were to withdraw to their own territory first and then send embassies.[6] They sent escorts with Melesippus to make sure that he spoke with no one. When he reached the border and was about to part from them, he said only this before going on his way: "This day will be the beginning of great troubles for the Greeks." When he got back to the camp, Archidamus realized that the Athenians would still not give way at all. Only then did he break camp and advance with his army into their territory. The Boeotians supplied their share of troops and their cavalry to campaign with the Peloponnesians. With the rest of their forces they went to Plataea and ravaged its land.

PERICLES' STRATEGY AND ATHENS' RESOURCES

Pericles lists Athens' money and forces, and the country people move inside the walls.

2.13 The Peloponnesians were still gathering at the Isthmus and on the march, and had not yet invaded Attica. Meanwhile Pericles son of Xanthippus, one of the ten Athenian generals, learned that the invasion was going to happen. Archidamus happened to be his guest-friend, and Pericles suspected that he might pass over Pericles' estates and leave them unravaged. Archidamus might do this on his own initiative, out of a wish to do him a personal favor. Or he might do it on the Spartans' orders, to discredit Pericles, just as they had demanded that the curse be driven out on his account. So Pericles announced to the Athenians in the assembly that Archidamus was indeed his guest-friend, but that this would never be to the city's harm. If the enemy did not ravage his estates and houses as they did everyone else's, he was giving them up as public property, so

6 A Spartiate was a full Spartan citizen.

that no suspicion should arise against him on that score.[7] He also gave them the same advice about the present situation as before. They were to prepare for the war and bring in their property from the countryside. They were not to go out to battle, but to come into the city and guard it. They were to fit out the fleet, in which their strength lay, and to keep a firm hand on the allies. He told them that their strength came from the money the allies paid in, and that most things in war are won by judgment and a surplus of money. He told them to take heart. On average, six hundred talents of tribute came in to the city every year from the allies, not counting its other revenue. There were also still at that time six thousand talents of coined silver on the Acropolis. (The most there had ever been was ten thousand less three hundred, and from this money had been spent on the Propylaea of the Acropolis and the other buildings, and on Potidaea.) Besides this there was uncoined gold and silver in private and public dedications, all the sacred vessels used for the processions and the games, the spoils taken from the Persians, and anything else of that kind, all of which [was worth] no less than five hundred talents.[8] He added the considerable sums held in the other temples, which they could use. If they were cut off from absolutely everything, they could use even the gold plating on the goddess herself. He pointed out that the statue carried forty talents' weight of refined gold, and that all of it was removable. But if they used it to save themselves, he said, they must afterward put back no less than they took. That was how he encouraged them about money. As for hoplites, he said there were thirteen thousand, not counting the sixteen thousand in the forts and along the battlements. For that was how many stood guard at first whenever the enemy invaded, drawn from the oldest and

7 A guest-friend was a friend in another city bound by hereditary ties of hospitality. The "curse" was the pollution attached to the Alcmaeonids, Pericles' mother's family, which the Spartans had demanded Athens expel (1.126–127).

8 A talent was a large unit of weight and of money, equal to 6,000 drachmas.

the youngest citizens and from those metics who were hoplites.[9] For the Phaleric wall ran thirty-five stades to the circuit of the city, and the guarded part of the circuit itself was forty-three stades. (Part of it was left unguarded: the stretch between the Long Wall and the Phaleric.) The Long Walls to the Piraeus were forty stades, of which the outer one was manned. The whole perimeter of the Piraeus, including Munychia, was sixty stades, half of it under guard. He reported twelve hundred cavalry, including mounted archers, sixteen hundred archers, and three hundred seaworthy triremes. These were the forces the Athenians had, and no less in each category, when the Peloponnesian invasion was first about to happen and they were entering the war. Pericles also made other arguments, as he usually did, to show that they would come through the war victorious.[10]

2.14 The Athenians listened and were persuaded. From the countryside they brought in their children and wives and the rest of the household goods they used, even stripping the woodwork from the houses themselves. Their sheep and draft animals they sent across to Euboea and the islands lying off the coast. But the move was hard for them, because most of them had always been used to living in the countryside. 2.15 This had been the Athenians' way, more than other people's, from very early times. Under Cecrops and the first kings down to Theseus, Attica had always been inhabited in separate cities, each with its own town hall and magistrates. Unless they were afraid of something, they did not gather to take counsel with the king; each governed itself and made its own decisions. Some of them even went to war at times, as the Eleusinians under Eumolpus did against Erechtheus.[11] But when Theseus became king, being powerful as well as intelligent, he reorganized the country in various ways. In particular, he abolished the council chambers

9 The goddess is Athena, whose gold-and-ivory statue by Pheidias stood in the Parthenon. Hoplites were heavy infantry; metics were resident foreigners at Athens.

10 Munychia is the hill above the harbors of the Piraeus.

11 Cecrops and Erechtheus were legendary early kings of Athens; Theseus was the hero credited in legend with unifying Attica.

and magistracies of the other cities and brought everyone together into what is now the city, establishing a single council chamber and town hall. Each group went on occupying its own land as before, but he compelled them all to use this one city. Since everyone now contributed to it, it became great, and Theseus handed it on in that state to those who came after. And from that time to this day the Athenians hold a public festival for the goddess, the Synoikia.[12] Before that, what is now the Acropolis was the city, together with the area below it facing mainly south. The evidence is this: the temples on the Acropolis itself are those of other gods too, and those outside are situated mostly toward this part of the city—the temple of Olympian Zeus, the Pythium, the temple of Earth, and that of Dionysus in the Marshes, in whose honor the older Dionysia are held [on the twelfth day] in the month of Anthesterion, just as the Ionians descended from the Athenians still customarily hold them today.[13] Other ancient temples are also situated there. Then there is the fountain now called Enneakrounos, "Nine Spouts," because the tyrants arranged it so, but which in old times, when the springs were open, was named Callirrhoe, "Fair-flowing." Since it was close by, the people of those days used it for the most important purposes, and even now, by ancient custom, its water is used before weddings and for other sacred rites. And because of that ancient settlement, the Acropolis is still to this day called "the city" by the Athenians.[14] 2.16 So for a long time the Athenians lived in independent settlements spread throughout the country. Even after they were unified, most of them, both in early times and afterward down to this war, kept the habit of being born and living in the countryside, and so they did not easily move with their whole households—especially as they had only recently restored their property after the Persian Wars.

12 The Synoikia ("Festival of Living Together") commemorated the unification of Attica.

13 The Greek text is uncertain here. Anthesterion was a month in late winter (roughly February).

14 The tyrants are Peisistratus and his sons, who ruled Athens in the sixth century BC.

They were weighed down with distress at leaving their homes and the shrines that had always been their ancestral ones since the old form of government, at having to change their way of life, and at each of them abandoning nothing less than his own city. 2.17 When they reached the city, a few had houses of their own, and some found refuge with friends or relatives. Most of them, though, settled in the empty parts of the city and in all the temples and hero-shrines except the Acropolis, the Eleusinium, and any other that could be securely locked. Even the so-called Pelargikon below the Acropolis was occupied under the pressure of immediate necessity, although there was a curse against living there, and the tail end of a Pythian oracle also forbade it, saying, "Better the Pelargikon left idle."[15] It seems to me that the oracle came true in the opposite way from what people expected. The disasters did not come upon the city because of the unlawful occupation; rather, the need to occupy the place came because of the war, and the oracle, without naming the war, foresaw that the place would never be settled for any good reason. Many also set themselves up in the towers of the walls, and wherever each could find room, since the city could not hold them all once they had come together. Later, though, they divided up the Long Walls and lived along them, and in most of the Piraeus. At the same time they set about preparing for the war, gathering allies and fitting out an expedition of a hundred ships against the Peloponnese. That was the stage their preparations had reached.

THE FIRST INVASION OF ATTICA

Archidamus besieges Oenoe, ravages Acharnae, and the Athenians rage at Pericles for refusing battle.

2.18 The Peloponnesian army, advancing, came first to Oenoe in Attica, where they intended to make their invasion. When they had encamped, they prepared to assault the wall with siege

15 The Pelargikon was an area enclosed by an ancient wall at the foot of the Acropolis; the Pythian oracle is Apollo's oracle at Delphi.

engines and by other means. For Oenoe, lying on the border between Attica and Boeotia, had been fortified, and the Athenians used it as a fort whenever war broke out. So they made their assaults ready, and in other ways too wasted time around the place. Archidamus incurred no small blame for this. Even while the war was being brought about he had seemed slack and well disposed to the Athenians, not urging wholehearted war. Then, while the army was being assembled, the delay at the Isthmus and his slowness on the rest of the march had brought him into discredit, and most of all the halt at Oenoe. For it was during this time that the Athenians were bringing their property in, and the Peloponnesians thought that if they had advanced quickly they would have caught everything still outside, had it not been for his dawdling. Such was the anger the army felt toward Archidamus during the encampment. But he held back, so it is said, because he expected that the Athenians, while their land was still unharmed, would make some concession and would shrink from letting it be ravaged. 2.19 However, when they had attacked Oenoe and tried every method without being able to take it, and the Athenians sent no herald, they finally set out from there. About the eightieth day after what happened at Plataea [to the Thebans who entered it], in midsummer when the grain was ripe, they invaded Attica. They were led by Archidamus son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Spartans. They encamped and ravaged first Eleusis and the Thriasian plain, and routed some Athenian cavalry near the place called the Rheiti. Then they advanced through Cropia, keeping Mount Aegaleos on their right, until they reached Acharnae, the largest place in Attica among the so-called demes. They halted there, made camp, and stayed a long time ravaging.[16] 2.20 It is said that Archidamus' reason for staying around Acharnae in battle order, and not coming down into the plain during that invasion, was this. He hoped that the Athenians, in the prime of a large population of young men and prepared for war as never before, might come out against him and would not let their land be rav-

16 Demes were the villages and districts into which Attica was divided.

aged. So when they did not meet him at Eleusis and the Thriasian plain, he camped around Acharnae to test whether they would come out. For one thing, the place seemed to him suitable for a camp. For another, he thought the Acharnians, who were a large part of the city (they numbered three thousand hoplites), would not stand by and see their property destroyed, but would rouse everyone to battle. And if the Athenians did not come out against him during that invasion, he could in future ravage the plain with less fear and even advance on the city itself. For the Acharnians, once deprived of their own property, would not be as eager to run risks for the land of others, and there would be division in the Athenians' resolve. Such was Archidamus' thinking at Acharnae.

2.21 As for the Athenians, so long as the army was around Eleusis and the Thriasian plain, they had some hope that it would not advance any closer. They remembered that Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of the Spartans, when he invaded Attica with a Peloponnesian army fourteen years before this war, as far as Eleusis and Thria, had withdrawn without advancing further. (Indeed, it was for this that he was exiled from Sparta, since he was thought to have been bribed [to withdraw].) But when they saw the army around Acharnae, sixty stades from the city, they no longer found it bearable. With their land being ravaged before their eyes—something the younger men had never yet seen, nor the older ones except in the Persian Wars—it naturally seemed a terrible thing, and everyone, the young above all, thought they should go out and not stand by and watch.[17] They gathered in knots and argued fiercely, some urging a sortie, others opposing it. Oracle-mongers chanted oracles of every kind, and each man listened to them according to his own inclination. The Acharnians, who considered themselves no small part of the Athenian people, pressed hardest for the sortie, since it was their land being ravaged. The city was stirred up in every way. They were angry with Pericles and remembered nothing of the advice he had given earlier; they

17 Pleistoanax's invasion took place in 446 BC.

abused him because, though he was general, he would not lead them out, and they held him responsible for everything they were suffering. 2.22 Pericles saw that they were angry at the present situation and not thinking at their best, but he was confident that he was right not to go out. So he did not call an assembly or any meeting at all, so that they would not come together and make some mistake through anger rather than judgment. He kept guard over the city and kept it as quiet as he could. He did, however, keep sending out cavalry to stop advance parties from the army from raiding the fields near the city and doing damage. There was a brief cavalry engagement at a place called Phrygia between one squadron of the Athenian cavalry, with the Thessalians alongside them, and the Boeotian cavalry. In it the Athenians and Thessalians held their own until the Boeotian hoplites came up in support; then they were routed, and a few of the Thessalians and Athenians were killed. They recovered the bodies, though, the same day, without a truce. The Peloponnesians set up a trophy the next day. This help from the Thessalians came to the Athenians under their old alliance. Those who came were Larisaeans, Pharsalians, [Parasians,] Crannonians, Pyrasians, Gyrtonians and Pheraeans. Their leaders were Polymedes and Aristonous from Larisa, one from each faction, and Menon from Pharsalus; the others too had their own commanders city by city.[18]

2.23 When the Athenians did not come out to fight them, the Peloponnesians moved on from Acharnae and ravaged some other demes between Mount Parnes and Mount Brilessus. While they were in the country, the Athenians sent off around the Peloponnese the hundred ships they had been preparing, with a thousand hoplites and four hundred archers aboard. The generals were Carcinus son of Xenotimus, Proteas son of Epicles, and Socrates son of Antigenes. They set out with this force and sailed around the Peloponnese. The Peloponnesians, after staying in Attica as long as their provisions lasted, withdrew through

18 Asking the enemy for a truce to recover the dead was an admission of defeat; recovering them without one avoided that admission.

Boeotia, not by the route they had come in. Passing Oropus, they ravaged the land called Graea, which the Oropians, subjects of the Athenians, inhabit. When they reached the Peloponnese, they dispersed, each to his own city.[19]

THE FIRST YEAR'S CAMPAIGNS

Athens sets aside a reserve, raids the Peloponnese, expels the Aeginetans and allies with Sitalces.

2.24 After they had withdrawn, the Athenians posted guards by land and sea, just as they were to keep guard throughout the war. They also decided to set aside a thousand talents from the money on the Acropolis as a special reserve and not spend it, but to fight the war with the rest. If anyone proposed, or put to the vote, using this money for any other purpose—unless the enemy attacked the city with a fleet and it had to be defended—they fixed death as the penalty. Along with this money they also set aside a special reserve of a hundred triremes each year, the best ones, with trierarchs for them. None of these was to be used for any other purpose than, together with the money, to meet that same danger, if the need arose.[20]

2.25 The Athenians in the hundred ships around the Peloponnese, together with the Corcyraeans, who had come to help them with fifty ships, and some other allies from those parts, did damage in various places as they sailed round. Landing at Methone in Laconia, they attacked the wall, which was weak and had no men inside. But Brasidas son of Tellis, a Spartiate, happened to be in the area with a garrison, and when he learned of it he came to the help of those in the place with a hundred hoplites. He dashed through the Athenian army, which was scattered over the country and had its attention on the wall, and burst into Methone. He lost a few of his men in the dash, but he saved the city, and for this daring act he was the first man in the

19 This Socrates is not the philosopher.
20 Trierarchs were wealthy citizens who commanded a trireme and paid for its upkeep.

war to be publicly praised at Sparta. The Athenians set out and sailed along the coast. Putting in at Pheia in Elis, they ravaged the land for two days and defeated in battle a picked force of three hundred from Hollow Elis and some Eleans from the dependent territory nearby who came to help. Then a strong wind came down, and since they were caught by the storm in a place without a harbor, most of them boarded the ships and sailed round the headland called Ichthys to the harbor at Pheia. Meanwhile the Messenians and some others who could not get aboard went overland and took Pheia. Later the ships sailed round and picked them up, and they put out to sea, abandoning Pheia, and by now the main Elean army had come up in support. The Athenians sailed on along the coast to other places and ravaged them.[21]

2.26 About this same time the Athenians sent thirty ships around Locris, at the same time to guard Euboea; their commander was Cleopompus son of Cleinias. He made landings and ravaged some places along the coast, captured Thronium and took hostages from its people, and at Alope defeated in battle the Locrians who came to help.[22]

2.27 That same summer the Athenians also expelled the Aeginetans from Aegina, men, children and women alike, charging that they were in large part responsible for the war. Besides, it seemed safer to hold Aegina, which lies off the Peloponnese, by sending settlers of their own, and not long afterward they sent the settlers there. The Spartans gave the exiled Aeginetans Thyrea to live in and its land to farm, both because of their quarrel with the Athenians and because the Aeginetans had been their benefactors at the time of the earthquake and the helot revolt. The territory of Thyrea lies on the border between Argolis and Laconia and reaches down to the sea. Some of the

21 Hollow Elis was the lowland plain of Elis. The Messenians were exiles whom Athens had settled at Naupactus.

22 This is Opuntian Locris, on the mainland opposite northern Euboea.

Aeginetans settled there, while others were scattered throughout the rest of Greece.[23]

2.28 In the same summer, at the new moon by the lunar calendar (the only time, it seems, when this can happen), the sun was eclipsed after midday and then became full again, after it had turned crescent-shaped and some stars had come out.[24]

2.29 In the same summer the Athenians made Nymphodorus son of Pythes, a man of Abdera, their proxenos and sent for him. They had previously regarded him as an enemy, but Sitalces had married his sister and he had great influence with him, and they wanted Sitalces son of Teres, king of the Thracians, to become their ally. This Teres, the father of Sitalces, was the first to make the great kingdom of the Odrysians extend over much of the rest of Thrace, for a large part of the Thracians is independent.[25] This Teres has no connection at all with the Tereus who took Procne, the daughter of Pandion, from Athens as his wife. They did not even come from the same Thrace. [Tereus] lived in Daulia, in the land now called Phocis, which was then inhabited by Thracians, and it was in this land that the women committed the deed concerning Itys. (Many of the poets, too, when they mention the nightingale, call the bird "the Daulian.") It is also likely that Pandion formed the marriage alliance for his daughter across so short a distance, for the sake of mutual help, rather than across a journey of many days to the Odrysians. Teres, who did not even have the same name, was the first to become king [and] hold power among the Odrysians.[26] It was his son Sitalces whom the Athenians were now making their ally, because they wanted him to help them subdue the places in the Thracian region, and Perdiccas. Nymphodorus came to Athens, concluded the alli-

23 Helots were the state-owned serfs of Sparta; the earthquake and the helot revolt that followed it date to about 464 BC.

24 This solar eclipse can be dated to 3 August 431 BC.

25 A proxenos was a citizen of another state who represented a city's interests and looked after its citizens in his own community. The Odrysians were the dominant Thracian people.

26 In myth, Procne killed her son Itys to punish her husband Tereus for raping her sister Philomela; the sisters were turned into a nightingale and a swallow.

ance with Sitalces and had Sitalces' son Sadocus made an Athenian, and he undertook to bring the war in Thrace to an end, for he would persuade Sitalces to send the Athenians a Thracian force of cavalry and peltasts. He also reconciled Perdiccas with the Athenians and persuaded them to give Therme back to him. And Perdiccas at once joined the Athenians and Phormio on a campaign against the Chalcidians. In this way Sitalces son of Teres, king of the Thracians, became an ally of the Athenians, and so did Perdiccas son of Alexander, king of the Macedonians.[27]

2.30 The Athenians in the hundred ships, who were still off the Peloponnese, took Sollium, a small town belonging to the Corinthians, and handed it over to the Palaereans, alone among the Acarnanians, to occupy both the land and the town. They also took Astacus by storm, where Evarchus was tyrant, drove him out and brought the place into their alliance. They then sailed to the island of Cephallenia and won it over without a battle. Cephallenia lies opposite Acarnania and Leucas and is made up of four cities: those of the Paleans, the Cranians, the Samaeans and the Pronnaeans. Not long afterwards the ships returned to Athens.

2.31 Around the autumn of this summer the Athenians invaded the Megarid in full force, citizens and metics alike, under the command of Pericles son of Xanthippus. The Athenians with the hundred ships around the Peloponnese happened to be at Aegina already, on their way home. When they learned that the men from the city were at Megara in full strength, they sailed over to them and joined forces.[28] This was indeed the largest Athenian army ever assembled in one body, since the city was still at its height and had not yet been struck by the plague. The Athenians themselves numbered no fewer than ten thousand hoplites (not counting the three thousand at Potidaea), and the metics who joined the invasion numbered no fewer than three

27 Peltasts were light infantry armed with javelins and a small shield. Perdiccas II was king of Macedon.

28 The Megarid is the territory of Megara, Athens' western neighbor.

thousand hoplites. Besides these there was a sizable crowd of light troops. After ravaging most of the land they withdrew. Later in the war the Athenians made other invasions of the Megarid every year, sometimes with cavalry and sometimes in full force, until Nisaea was captured by the Athenians.[29]

2.32 At the end of this summer the Athenians also fortified Atalante as a guard post. This island off the coast of the Opuntian Locrians had previously been uninhabited. The aim was to stop pirates sailing out from Opus and the rest of Locris from doing damage to Euboea.

These were the events of this summer after the Peloponnesians withdrew from Attica. 2.33 In the following winter Evarchus the Acarnanian, who wanted to return to Astacus, persuaded the Corinthians to sail with forty ships and fifteen hundred hoplites and restore him, and he himself hired some mercenaries as well. The commanders of the expedition were Euphamidas son of Aristonymus, Timoxenus son of Timocrates and Eumachus son of Chrysis. They sailed and restored him. They also wanted to win over some places in the rest of coastal Acarnania, and made the attempt, but when they could not, they sailed off home. On the voyage along the coast they put in at Cephallenia and made a landing in the territory of the Cranians. There they were deceived by the Cranians under some agreement, and when the Cranians fell on them unexpectedly they lost some of their men. They put out to sea under heavy pressure and made their way home.

PERICLES' FUNERAL ORATION

At the public funeral for the first year's dead, Pericles praises Athens and its way of life.

2.34 In the same winter the Athenians, following their ancestral custom, held a public funeral for those who had been the first to die in this war. It is done in the following way. They lay out the bones of the dead two days beforehand in a tent they have put

29 Nisaea, the port of Megara, fell to the Athenians in 424 BC.

up, and each person brings any offering he wishes to his own dead. When the funeral procession takes place, wagons carry coffins of cypress wood, one for each tribe, and in each coffin are the bones of the men of that tribe. One empty bier is also carried, spread with coverings, for the missing, those whose bodies could not be found and recovered. Anyone who wishes, citizen or foreigner, joins the procession, and the women of the families are present at the grave, lamenting.[30] They then place the bones in the public tomb, which lies in the most beautiful suburb of the city. There they always bury those who have fallen in war, except for those who fell at Marathon: they judged the excellence of these men to be outstanding, and so made their tomb on the spot. When they have covered the remains with earth, a man chosen by the city, someone thought to be of sound judgment and preeminent in public esteem, delivers a fitting eulogy over them. After this they depart. That is how they bury their dead, and throughout the whole war, whenever the occasion arose, they followed this custom. Over these first dead, then, Pericles son of Xanthippus was chosen to speak. When the moment came, he went forward from the tomb onto a high platform that had been built so that he could be heard by as much of the crowd as possible, and spoke as follows:[31]

2.35 "Most of those who have spoken here before me praise the man who added this speech to the custom, saying that it is a fine thing for it to be delivered over those who are buried after falling in war. To me, though, it would have seemed enough that, when men have proved themselves brave in deed, their honors too should be shown in deed, such as you see now in the arrangements made at public expense for this funeral, and that the excellence of many should not be staked on one man, to be believed or not according to whether he speaks well or badly. For it is hard to speak with due measure on a subject where even

30 Athenian citizens were divided into ten tribes (phylai), the basis of the city's military and political organization.

31 The public burial ground lay in the Ceramicus, just outside the city walls. The dead of Marathon (490 BC) were buried on the battlefield under a mound.

the impression of truthfulness is barely established. The hearer who knows the facts and is well disposed may well think that what is said falls somewhat short of what he wishes and knows. The one without experience, if he hears of anything beyond his own nature, may think some things exaggerated, out of envy. For praise spoken of others is tolerable only up to the point where each man believes that he too could do some of what he has heard. Whatever goes beyond that, men envy, and so they disbelieve it. But since the men of old approved this practice as right, I too must follow the custom and try to meet, as far as I can, the wishes and expectations of each of you.

2.36 "I shall begin first with our ancestors, for it is right, and fitting as well, that on such an occasion they should be given this honor of remembrance. The same people always lived in this land, generation after generation, and by their excellence they handed it down free to the present day. They deserve praise, and our fathers deserve it still more. In addition to what they inherited, they acquired, not without toil, the whole empire we hold, and left it to us of the present generation. Most of it we ourselves, who are still alive and mostly in the settled years of life, have enlarged further, and we have made the city entirely self-sufficient in every respect, for war and for peace alike. The deeds of war by which each of these possessions was won, or the times when we ourselves or our fathers eagerly beat off an enemy, non-Greek or Greek, who came against us, I shall pass over, since I do not wish to speak at length among those who already know them. Instead I shall first show the way of life by which we came to them, and the form of government and the habits out of which our greatness grew, and then I shall go on to the praise of these men. I think these things are not unfitting to speak of on the present occasion, and that it is to the advantage of this whole gathering, citizens and foreigners alike, to hear them.

2.37 "We live under a constitution that does not emulate the laws of our neighbors. We are an example to some, rather than imitators of others. It is called a democracy because it is run

with a view not to the few but to the many. In private disputes everyone has an equal share under the laws. But as for public esteem, each man, as he is distinguished in something, is preferred for public office not so much because of his class as because of his excellence. Nor again, if he has it in him to do the city some good, is he held back by poverty and the obscurity of his rank. We conduct our public affairs freely, and we are just as free from suspicion of one another in our daily pursuits. We are not angry with our neighbor if he does something for his own pleasure, nor do we put on the sour looks that do no actual harm but are still painful to see. While we associate with one another in private without offense, in public affairs it is above all through fear that we do not break the law. We obey whoever holds office at the time, and the laws, especially those laid down for the protection of the wronged and those which, though unwritten, bring acknowledged shame on anyone who breaks them.

2.38 "What is more, we have provided our minds with a great many respites from toil. We hold contests and sacrifices throughout the year, and we have elegant private establishments, whose daily delight drives away gloom. Because of the city's greatness the products of every land flow in to us, so that the good things of the rest of mankind are as much ours to enjoy as those produced here at home.

2.39 "We differ from our opponents in our training for war as well. We keep our city open to all, and we never expel foreigners to prevent anyone from learning or seeing something that an enemy might profit from seeing if it were not hidden. For we rely not so much on preparations and deceptions as on our own courage in action. And in education, they pursue courage from early youth with laborious discipline, while we live a relaxed life and yet go out no less readily to face equal dangers. Here is the proof: the Spartans do not invade our land on their own, but with all their allies, while we attack our neighbors' land by ourselves and, fighting on foreign soil against men defending

their own homes, generally defeat them without difficulty.[32] No enemy has ever yet met our full strength in one body, because we attend to our navy at the same time as we send our own men out on land to many places. But if they engage some part of our forces somewhere, they boast that they have beaten all of us when they defeat a few, and that they were beaten by all of us when they lose. And yet if we are willing to face danger in a relaxed spirit rather than through laborious training, and with a courage that springs less from laws than from our way of life, we gain this advantage: we do not suffer in advance over hardships still to come, and when we meet them we show ourselves no less daring than those who are forever toiling. In these respects the city deserves to be admired, and in others too.

2.40 "We love beauty without extravagance and wisdom without softness. We use wealth as an opportunity for deeds rather than a boast in words, and as for poverty, there is no disgrace in admitting it; the greater disgrace is not to escape it by deeds. The same men attend to their households and to public affairs alike, and others, though occupied with their trades, do not lack understanding of public affairs. For we alone regard the man who takes no part in these things not as one who minds his own business, but as useless. And we ourselves either decide on our affairs or at least think them through properly. We do not regard words as harmful to deeds; what is harmful is not to be instructed by words beforehand, before going into action where action is needed. For in this too we are distinctive: the same men are both most daring and most given to reasoning out what we are about to undertake, whereas in others ignorance brings boldness and reasoning brings hesitation. Those would rightly be judged the strongest of soul who know most clearly both what is terrible and what is pleasant, and are not deterred by this from facing danger. In matters of excellence, too, we are the opposite of most people: we make our friends not by receiving kindness but by doing it. The one who has done the favor is the

32 Sparta periodically expelled foreigners from its territory (the practice called xenelasia).

firmer friend, since through his goodwill he keeps alive the debt owed by the one to whom he gave it. The one who owes in return is less keen, knowing that he will repay his good deed not as a favor but as a debt. And we alone help others fearlessly, not from a calculation of self-interest so much as from confidence in our freedom.

2.41 "In short, I say that the whole city is an education to Greece, and that, in my view, each individual among us would show himself self-sufficient in his own person for the widest range of activities, and with the greatest grace and versatility. That this is not a boast of words for the present occasion but the truth of deeds is shown by the very power of the city, which we have won through these habits. For she alone of the cities of today proves greater than her reputation when put to the test. She alone gives no enemy who attacks her cause to resent the kind of people at whose hands he suffers, and no subject cause to complain that he is ruled by men unworthy to rule. We have displayed our power with great proofs, and certainly not without witnesses, and we shall be admired by men now and in times to come. We need no Homer to praise us, nor any poet whose verses will give pleasure for the moment while the truth will undo the impression they give of the deeds. We have forced every sea and every land to open up to our daring, and everywhere we have established, along with our settlements, everlasting memorials of harm and of good. It was for such a city, then, that these men nobly fought and died, holding it right that she should not be taken from them, and it is fitting that every one of those left behind should be willing to suffer for her.

2.42 "That is why I have dwelt at such length on the city: to show that the contest is not for equal stakes between us and those who have nothing of this kind, and at the same time to make the praise of the men I am now speaking of clear by proofs. And the greatest part of that praise has now been spoken. For what I have celebrated in the city, the excellence of these men and men like them has adorned, and there are not many Greeks whose praise in words would appear as evenly bal-

anced with their deeds as theirs does. It seems to me that the end these men have now met reveals a man's excellence, whether as its first sign or as its final confirmation. Even for those who were worse in other respects, it is right that their bravery in war on behalf of their country should come first. For they blotted out evil with good, and did more benefit in public than harm in their private lives. None of these men grew soft because he preferred the continued enjoyment of wealth, nor did any put off the danger in the hope that poverty holds out, that he might yet escape it and grow rich. They desired revenge on their enemies more than these things, and, believing this the finest of dangers, they chose to face it, so as to punish the enemy and, with that, to aim at those other things. They entrusted to hope the uncertainty of success, but in deed, regarding what was already before their eyes, they saw fit to rely on themselves. And thinking it better to suffer in the very act of defending themselves than to find [the] safety that comes of giving way, they fled from dishonor in word, but in deed stood their ground with their bodies. And in the briefest moment of fortune, at the height of their glory rather than of their fear, they passed away.

2.43 "So these men proved themselves worthy of their city. You who remain must pray that your spirit toward the enemy meets with a safer fortune, but you must not think it right for that spirit to be any less daring. Do not judge its advantage by words alone. Anyone could spin that out at length to you, who know it just as well yourselves, by listing all the good there is in resisting the enemy. Look instead, day after day, at the power of the city as it is in deed, and become its lovers. And whenever it seems great to you, reflect that it was won by men who dared, who knew what had to be done, and who felt shame at failing in action. Whenever they failed in some attempt, they did not for that reason think it right to deprive the city of their excellence as well. Instead they freely offered it the finest contribution they had to give. For by giving their bodies in common, each of them won for himself the praise that never grows old and the most distinguished of tombs. That tomb is not so much the one in

which they lie. It is the one in which their glory is left behind, remembered for ever, whenever the occasion for word or deed comes round. For the whole earth is the tomb of famous men. It is not only the inscription on gravestones in their own land that marks them out. Even in lands not their own, an unwritten memory of them dwells in each person, a memory of their resolve rather than of their deed. Make these men your models now. Judge that happiness is freedom and freedom is courage, and do not shrink from the dangers of war. For it is not the unfortunate, who have no hope of anything good, who have more reason to be unsparing of their lives. It is those who, while they still live, risk a reversal for the worse, and for whom the difference is greatest if they stumble. For to a man of any pride, the degradation that comes with cowardice is more painful than a death that comes unfelt, in the midst of his strength and the hope he shares with all.

2.44 "That is why I will not lament for the parents of these men, those of you who are here, so much as comfort you. You know that you were brought up amid the many turns of fortune. Good fortune belongs to those who are allotted the most honorable end, as these men now are, or the most honorable grief, as you are, and to those whose span of life has been measured so that they are happy in it and die in it alike. I know it is hard to persuade you of this. You will often be reminded of them by the good fortune of others, in which you too once took delight. And grief is not felt for good things one loses without ever having tasted them, but for what is taken away after one has grown used to it. Those of you still of an age to have children must bear up in the hope of others. In private life, the children who are born will help some of you forget those who are gone. And the city will gain in two ways: it will not be left empty, and it will be more secure. For men cannot give fair and just counsel unless they too have children to stake and risk on equal terms with the rest. As for those of you who are past your prime, count as gain the greater part of your life, in which you were fortunate, and remember that what remains will be short. Take comfort in the

glory of these men. For the love of honor alone does not grow old. In the useless years of life it is not making money, as some say, that gives the greater pleasure, but being honored. 2.45 For those of you here who are sons or brothers of these men, I see a great struggle ahead, since everyone is accustomed to praise the one who is no more. Even if your excellence surpasses theirs, you would hardly be judged their equals, only a little inferior. For the living are envied by their rivals, while what no longer stands in anyone's way is honored with a goodwill that has no rival. And if I must also say something about the excellence of women, to those of you who will now be widows, I will put it all in a brief piece of advice. Great is your glory if you do not fall short of the nature that is yours, and great is hers who is least spoken of among men, whether in praise or in blame.

2.46 "I too, as the law requires, have said in words all I had that was fitting. In deed, those we are burying have already received part of their honors. For the rest, the city will from this day bring up their children at public expense until they come of age. It offers both the dead and those they leave behind a crown that brings real benefit for such contests. For where the prizes set for excellence are greatest, there the best men are found as citizens. And now, when each of you has finished mourning your own, go home."

THE PLAGUE

The Peloponnesians invade again and plague strikes Athens; Thucydides, who caught it, describes its symptoms and effects.

2.47 Such was the funeral held during this winter. When the winter had passed, the first year of this war came to an end. As soon as summer began, the Peloponnesians and their allies invaded Attica with two-thirds of their forces, as they had the first time. They were led by Archidamus son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Spartans. They settled down and began to lay waste the land.[33] They had not yet been many days in Attica when the

33 The second summer of the war, 430 BC.

disease first broke out among the Athenians. It was said to have struck in many places before, around Lemnos and elsewhere, but nowhere was there any memory of so great a plague or such a destruction of human life. At first the doctors were no help, since they were treating it in ignorance. Indeed they died in the greatest numbers, because they came most into contact with the sick. No other human skill was any help either. Whatever supplications people made at temples, and whatever use they made of oracles and the like, all of it was useless. In the end they gave these things up, overcome by the evil. 2.48 It began first, so it is said, in Ethiopia beyond Egypt. Then it came down into Egypt and Libya and into most of the King's territory. On the city of Athens it fell suddenly. It attacked people first in the Piraeus, so that they even said the Peloponnesians had thrown poison into the wells, for there were as yet no fountains there. Later it reached the upper city as well, and from then on far more people died. Let each person, doctor or layman, say what he thinks about it: from what source it is likely to have arisen, and what causes he believes were powerful enough to bring about so great a change. I for my part will describe what it was like. I will set out the signs by which anyone who studies them would be best able to recognize it, knowing something in advance, should it ever strike again. I had the disease myself and saw others suffering from it.

2.49 That year, as everyone agreed, happened to be more free of other illnesses than any other. If anyone was already sick with something, it all turned into this. Others, with no apparent cause, were suddenly struck while in good health. First they were seized by violent heat in the head, and by redness and inflammation of the eyes. The inner parts, the throat and the tongue, at once became bloody and gave off an unnatural, foul-smelling breath. After this came sneezing and hoarseness, and before long the pain moved down into the chest, with a violent cough. When it settled in the stomach, it turned it upside down, and every discharge of bile that doctors have a name for followed, and with great distress. Most were attacked by empty

retching, which brought on violent spasms. In some these abated soon afterward, in others only much later. Outwardly the body was not very hot to the touch, nor pale. It was reddish and livid, and broke out in small blisters and sores. Inside, though, it burned so fiercely that they could not bear even the lightest clothing or linen sheets on them, or anything but going naked, and they would most gladly have thrown themselves into cold water. Many of those left untended actually did so and plunged into wells, gripped by an unquenchable thirst. It made no difference whether they drank much or little. They were tormented without respite by a restlessness that would not let them keep still, and by sleeplessness. For as long as the disease was at its height, the body did not waste away but held out against the suffering beyond all expectation. So most of them either died on the ninth or seventh day from the burning within, while they still had some strength left, or else, if they got through that, the disease went down into the bowels. There severe ulceration set in, together with uncontrollable diarrhea, and most of them later died from the weakness this caused. For the evil first settled in the head and then passed through the whole body, from the top downward. If anyone survived the worst of it, it still left its mark by seizing the extremities. It struck the genitals and the tips of the hands and feet, and many survived with the loss of these, some with the loss of their eyes as well. Others again, as soon as they rose from their sickbed, were seized by a loss of memory about everything alike, and did not know themselves or their friends. [2.50] The nature of the disease was beyond description. In other respects it fell upon each person more harshly than human nature can bear, and in one respect above all it showed itself to be something different from the familiar ailments. Many bodies lay unburied, yet the birds and four-footed animals that feed on human flesh either did not come near them or died if they tasted them. The proof is this: birds of that kind clearly disappeared, and they were not to be seen either elsewhere or around anything of the sort. The dogs made the outcome easier to observe, because they live with people.

2.51 Such, then, was the disease in its general character, if one passes over many other unusual features, since it happened to affect each person somewhat differently from the next. During that time none of the usual ailments troubled anyone, and any that did occur ended in this one. Some died from neglect, others in spite of every care. There was not, one might say, a single remedy that could be applied and do good, for what helped one person harmed another. No constitution, whether strong or weak, proved able to hold out against it. It carried them all off, even those cared for with every kind of regimen. The most terrible thing in the whole calamity was the despair that came when someone realized he was sick. They turned at once in their minds to hopelessness, gave themselves up far more readily and did not resist. Just as terrible was that they caught the infection from nursing one another and died like sheep. This caused the greatest loss of life. If, out of fear, they were unwilling to go near one another, they died alone, and many houses were emptied for lack of anyone to care for the sick. If they did go near, they perished, especially those who laid some claim to excellence. A sense of honor made them unsparing of themselves when they visited their friends, since in the end even the members of the household grew too exhausted to lament for the dying, overcome by the sheer scale of the evil. Yet those who had come through it showed the most pity for the dying and the suffering. They knew it from experience, and they themselves now felt safe, for it did not attack the same person twice, at least not fatally. They were congratulated by everyone else. In the elation of the moment they also held a light-headed hope that for the rest of their lives no other disease would ever kill them either.

2.52 On top of the suffering they already had, they were oppressed still more by the crowding in from the countryside to the city, and it weighed not least on those who had come in. They had no houses and lived in stifling huts at the hottest time of year, so the dying went on in complete disorder. The bodies of the dying lay one on top of another, and half-dead people

staggered about in the streets and around all the fountains in their longing for water. The sanctuaries in which they had camped were full of corpses, for people died right there. As the evil overwhelmed them, people did not know what would become of them and came to disregard what was sacred and what was profane alike. All the customs they had previously observed for burials were thrown into confusion, and each buried his dead as best he could. Many resorted to shameless ways of disposing of the dead, because they lacked what they needed, since so many in their families had already died. Some would reach a pyre built by others before the builders did, lay their own dead on it and set it alight. Others, while another body was burning, threw the one they were carrying on top of it and went away.

2.53 In other respects too, the disease first brought greater lawlessness to the city. People now dared more readily to do for pleasure what they had formerly kept hidden. They saw how swift the reversal was: the prosperous dying suddenly, and those who had owned nothing before at once in possession of the dead men's property. So they thought it right to take their enjoyment quickly and to aim at pleasure, regarding their bodies and their wealth alike as things of a day. No one was eager to toil any further for what was thought fine, since he considered it uncertain whether he would die before he reached it. Whatever was pleasant here and now, and whatever served that pleasure from any quarter, became both fine and useful. No fear of gods or law of men held them back. As for the gods, they judged it the same whether one worshipped them or not, since they saw everyone perishing alike. As for their offenses, no one expected to live until the case came to trial and to pay the penalty. They believed that a far heavier sentence had already been passed on them and was hanging over their heads, and before it fell it was reasonable to get some enjoyment out of life.

2.54 Such was the calamity that had befallen the Athenians and was crushing them, with people dying inside the walls and the land being ravaged outside. In their distress they naturally

recalled, among other things, this verse, which the older men said had been sung long ago: "A Dorian war will come, and plague along with it." People argued over it, some saying that the word the ancients used in the verse was not "plague" but "famine." In the circumstances the view naturally won out that it had said "plague," for people shaped their memory to fit what they were suffering. But I suppose that if another Dorian war ever comes after this one, and a famine happens to come with it, they will naturally sing it that way.[34] Those who knew of it also recalled the oracle given to the Spartans. When they asked the god whether they should go to war, he answered that if they fought with all their might victory would be theirs, and he said that he himself would take their part. As for the oracle, people supposed that what was happening matched it. The disease had begun immediately after the Peloponnesians invaded, and it did not enter the Peloponnese to any extent worth mentioning. It ravaged Athens most of all, and after Athens the most populous of the other places. These were the events of the plague.[35]

2.55 When the Peloponnesians had ravaged the plain, they moved on into the region called the Coastland, as far as Laurium, where the Athenians' silver mines are. First they ravaged the part that faces the Peloponnese, then the part that looks toward Euboea and Andros. Pericles, who was general then too, held the same view as during the earlier invasion: that the Athenians should not march out against them.[36] 2.56 While the enemy were still in the plain, before they reached the coastal region, he was preparing an expedition of a hundred ships against the Peloponnese, and when it was ready he put to sea. On board the ships he took four thousand Athenian hoplites and three hundred cavalry in horse transports, which were then made for the first time out of old ships. The Chians and Lesbians also joined the expedition with fifty ships. When this Athenian

34 In Greek, "plague" (loimos) and "famine" (limos) differ by a single letter. The Spartans and most Peloponnesians were Dorians.
35 The oracle of Apollo at Delphi, consulted by the Spartans before the war (1.118).
36 Laurium lies near the southeastern tip of Attica.

force put to sea, it left the Peloponnesians in the coastal part of Attica. They arrived at Epidaurus in the Peloponnese and ravaged most of the land. They attacked the city and came to hope they might take it, but they did not succeed. Putting out from Epidaurus, they ravaged the territories of Troezen, Halieis and Hermione, all of which lie on the coast of the Peloponnese. Setting sail from there, they came to Prasiae, a small coastal town in Laconia. They ravaged some of its land, and took the town itself and sacked it. After this they returned home. They no longer found the Peloponnesians in Attica, since these had withdrawn.

2.57 All the time that the Peloponnesians were in Athenian territory and the Athenians were campaigning on their ships, the disease was killing Athenians both in the army and in the city. It was even said that the Peloponnesians left the country sooner because they were afraid of the disease, since they learned from deserters that it was in the city and at the same time saw the Athenians burying their dead. In this invasion they stayed longest and ravaged the whole land, for they were in Attica about forty days.

2.58 In the same summer Hagnon son of Nicias and Cleopompus son of Cleinias, Pericles' fellow generals, took the force he had used and marched at once against the Chalcidians in the region of Thrace and against Potidaea, which was still under siege. When they arrived, they brought siege engines against Potidaea and tried every means of taking it. But neither the capture of the city nor anything else went as well as their forces deserved. The disease came upon them there too and pressed the Athenians very hard, destroying the army. Even the Athenian soldiers who had been there before, and had been healthy until then, caught it from Hagnon's force. Phormio and the sixteen hundred were no longer in the region of the Chalcidians. So Hagnon returned with his ships to Athens. He had lost to the disease 1,050 out of four thousand hoplites in about

forty days. The earlier soldiers stayed where they were and kept up the siege of Potidaea.[37]

PERICLES' LAST SPEECH

Pericles defends his war policy to the angry Athenians and urges them to hold on to their empire.

2.59 After the second invasion by the Peloponnesians, the Athenians changed their minds. Their land had now been ravaged a second time, and the plague and the war were pressing on them together. They blamed Pericles for having persuaded them to go to war, holding that it was through him that they had fallen into their misfortunes, and they were eager to come to terms with the Spartans. They even sent some envoys to them, but accomplished nothing. With their judgment at a loss on every side, they turned on Pericles. He saw that they were exasperated by their present situation and were doing everything just as he himself had expected. So he called a meeting (he was still general), wishing to give them confidence, to draw off the anger in their mood and bring them to a calmer and less fearful state. He came forward and spoke as follows:

2.60 "I have been expecting this anger of yours against me, for I can see its causes. I have called this assembly for this purpose: to remind you, and to reproach you if you are in any way wrong either to be angry with me or to give in to your misfortunes. My view is that a city which is on a sound footing as a whole does more good to its private citizens than one which prospers in each of its citizens individually but is failing collectively. A man who is doing well in his own affairs is ruined along with his country no less if it is destroyed, whereas one who is unfortunate in a fortunate country is far more likely to come through safely. Since, then, a city can bear the misfortunes of individuals, while no single individual can bear those of the city, surely all of you must come to its defense, and not do what you are

37 Phormio had brought 1,600 hoplites to Potidaea earlier (1.64). This Nicias is not the well-known general Nicias son of Niceratus.

doing now. Stunned by your troubles at home, you are letting go of the common safety, and you are blaming both me, who advised you to go to war, and yourselves, who decided on it with me. And yet the man you are angry with is someone who, I believe, is inferior to no one in knowing what needs to be done and in explaining it, a man who loves his city and is above money. A man who knows what is needed but does not explain it clearly is no better off than if he had never thought of it. One who has both abilities but is ill-disposed to the city would not speak with the same loyalty to its interests. And if he has this as well but can be overcome by money, he would sell everything for that one thing alone. So if you were persuaded to go to war because you thought that these qualities belonged to me even moderately more than to others, it would not be reasonable for me to bear the blame for wrongdoing now.

2.61 "Certainly, for those who have a free choice and are otherwise doing well, it is great folly to go to war. But if the necessity was either to give in at once and submit to our neighbors, or to run the risk and come out on top, then the man who shrinks from the danger deserves more blame than the one who faces it. I am the same as I was, and I do not shift my ground. It is you who are changing. It has turned out that you were persuaded while you were still unharmed and now regret it when you are suffering, and in the weakness of your judgment my argument appears to have been wrong. This is because the pain is already felt by each of you, while the proof of the advantage is not yet evident to anyone; and now that a great reversal has befallen you, and a sudden one at that, your spirit is too low to persevere in what you resolved. What is sudden and unexpected, what happens most against all calculation, enslaves the spirit, and this has happened to you, on top of everything else, above all with the plague. Nevertheless, as inhabitants of a great city, raised in a character to match it, you must be willing to stand up even to the greatest misfortunes and not let your reputation be extinguished. People think it equally right to blame anyone who through weakness falls short of the glory he already has, and to

hate anyone who through presumption reaches for a glory that does not belong to him. You must put aside your private griefs and hold fast to the common safety.

2.62 "As for the hardship of the war, and your fear that it may be great and that we may be no nearer to winning, let it be enough for you that I have shown on many other occasions that this suspicion is unfounded. But I will point out this as well, an advantage you possess in the greatness of your empire. You seem never to have considered it yourselves, and I have not mentioned it in my earlier speeches. I would not have used it even now, since its claim has rather a boastful air, if I did not see that you were dismayed beyond all reason. You think that you rule only over your allies. But I declare that of the two parts of the world open to men's use, land and sea, you are absolute masters of the whole of one, both as far as you now control it and further if you wish. With the naval force you now possess, there is no one, neither the King nor any other nation now in existence, who will stop you sailing where you please. So this power is plainly not to be measured against the use of your houses and land, which you think it a great loss to be deprived of. Nor is it reasonable to take their loss hard, rather than to think little of them, regarding them, compared with this power, as a garden plot or an ornament of wealth. You should recognize that freedom, if we hold on to it and preserve it, will easily recover these things, whereas those who submit to others tend to lose even what they had before. You should show yourselves no worse in either respect than your fathers. They won these things by their own labors and did not receive them from others, and they not only held them but preserved them and handed them on to you (and it is more shameful to be robbed of what you have than to fail in acquiring it). And you should go to meet the enemy not only with pride but with contempt. Boastful pride can arise even from lucky ignorance, and even in a coward. Contempt belongs to the man who is confident, on the basis of judgment, that he is superior to his enemies, and that is our position. When fortune is equal, intelligence, drawing on this sense of superiority,

makes daring more secure. It relies less on hope, whose strength lies in desperate situations, and more on judgment based on the facts as they are, whose foresight is more dependable. 2.63 It is right, too, that you should come to the support of the honor the city derives from its rule, in which you all take pride, and not shun the labors unless you also give up pursuing the honors. Do not think that you are fighting over one thing only, slavery instead of freedom. It is also about the loss of empire, and the danger from the hatred you have incurred in ruling it. Nor is it possible for you any longer to give it up, even if someone, out of fear in the present crisis, is playing the honest man by keeping out of affairs. For by now you hold it like a tyranny: to have taken it may seem unjust, but to let it go is dangerous. Men like these would very quickly ruin a city if they persuaded others, or if they set up somewhere on their own as an independent state. For the quiet life is not safe unless it is ranged alongside the active, and it does not suit a ruling city, but only a subject one, to be safely enslaved.

2.64 "Do not be led astray by citizens like these, and do not be angry with me, when you yourselves joined me in deciding on war, just because the enemy has invaded and done what was to be expected once you refused to submit. Nor be angry because this plague has come upon us beyond anything we anticipated, the one thing of all that has turned out beyond what anyone could have foreseen. I know that I am hated somewhat more on account of it, but unjustly, unless you will also give me the credit whenever you have some unexpected success. One must bear what the gods send with resignation and what comes from the enemy with courage. This was the custom of this city before; do not let it be checked in you now. Know that our city has the greatest name among all mankind because it does not give in to misfortunes, because it has spent more lives and labors in war than any other, and because it has possessed the greatest power up to this time. The memory of that power will be left to those who come after us forever, even if now we should at some point give way a little (for all things are by nature subject to decline):

that we, Greeks, ruled over more Greeks than any other Greeks; that we held out in the greatest wars against them, both all together and one by one; and that we lived in a city richer in every resource and greater than any. Granted, the man who wants a quiet life may find fault with this, but the man who wants to accomplish something himself will emulate it, and anyone who does not have it will envy it. To be hated and resented for the present has been the lot of all who have claimed to rule over others. But whoever incurs envy for the greatest ends judges rightly. Hatred does not last long, while the brilliance of the moment and the glory hereafter are left behind in everlasting memory. You, then, must foresee what will be fine in the future and what will not be shameful in the present, and win both by your zeal now. Do not send heralds to the Spartans, and do not let it be seen that you are weighed down by your present hardships. For those who in the face of misfortune are least troubled in spirit and most resistant in deed are the strongest, whether they are cities or individuals."

PERICLES' DEATH

Thucydides' judgment of Pericles and of the leaders who came after him.

2.65 With words like these Pericles tried to release the Athenians from their anger against him and to divert their thoughts from the dangers of the moment. As a community they were won over by his arguments: they sent no more envoys to the Spartans and threw themselves more into the war. But privately they were grieved by their sufferings. The common people had started with less and had been deprived even of that; the powerful had lost fine estates in the country, with their buildings and costly furnishings; and, most of all, they had war instead of peace. Still, they did not all let go of their anger against him until they had fined him. But not long afterward, as a crowd tends to do, they elected him general again and entrusted everything to him. By now each of them felt the pain of his own

private losses less keenly, and they considered him the most valuable man for what the whole city needed. For all the time he stood at the head of the city in peacetime, he led it with moderation and kept it safe, and it was under him that it reached its greatest height. And when the war broke out, he evidently judged its strength correctly in this too. He lived on for two years and six months, and after his death his foresight about the war was recognized still more. He had said that they would prevail if they kept quiet, looked after the navy, did not try to add to the empire during the war, and did not put the city at risk. They did the opposite in all of this. And in other matters that seemed unrelated to the war, driven by private ambition and private gain, they pursued policies that were bad both for themselves and for their allies. When these succeeded, the honor and advantage went rather to individuals; when they failed, the damage fell on the city in its conduct of the war.[38] The reason was that he, powerful through his standing and his judgment, and conspicuously incorruptible, held the people in check while respecting their freedom. He was not led by them; rather, he led them. Because he had not acquired his power by improper means, he did not speak to please them; holding it by virtue of his standing, he could even oppose them to the point of making them angry. At any rate, whenever he saw them arrogantly confident at the wrong moment, his words would strike them with fear; and when they were unreasonably afraid, he would restore them to confidence again. So what was in word a democracy was in deed rule by the first man. Those who came after were more on a level with one another, and as each strove to be first, they took to handing over even the conduct of affairs to the people's whims. From this came many mistakes, as one would expect in a great city that held an empire, among them the expedition to Sicily. This was not so much an error of judgment about the people they were attacking. Rather, those who sent it out failed to decide on what would support the men who had gone, and instead, busy with private slanders over the leadership of the

38 Pericles died in 429 BC, a victim of the plague.

people, they blunted the army's operations and for the first time fell into turmoil among themselves over the affairs of the city.[39] Yet even after their defeat in Sicily, where they lost the rest of their forces and the greater part of their fleet, and with the city by then in civil strife, they held out for three years against their original enemies, who were now joined by those from Sicily, and against most of their allies, who had revolted, and later against Cyrus, the King's son, who joined the enemy and supplied the Peloponnesians with money for their fleet. And they did not give in until they had fallen foul of one another in their private quarrels and brought themselves down. So ample were the grounds Pericles had at that time for his own forecast that the city could very easily prevail in the war over the Peloponnesians alone.[40]

2.66 The same summer the Spartans and their allies made an expedition with a hundred ships against the island of Zacynthus, which lies opposite Elis. Its people are colonists of the Achaeans of the Peloponnese and were allies of the Athenians. On board were a thousand Spartan hoplites, with Cnemus, a Spartiate, as admiral. They landed and laid waste most of the country, and when the inhabitants would not come to terms, they sailed back home.

2.67 At the end of the same summer, Aristeus of Corinth, the Spartan envoys Aneristus, Nicolaus and Pratodamus, Timagoras of Tegea, and Pollis of Argos, who was acting in a private capacity, were on their way to Asia, to the King, to see whether they could persuade him to provide money and join in the war. They came first to Sitalces son of Teres in Thrace. They wished to persuade him, if they could, to abandon his alliance with Athens and march against Potidaea, where an Athenian army was conducting the siege, and also to travel with his help, as they had set out to do, across the Hellespont to Pharnaces son of Pharnabazus, who was to send them on up to the King.[41] But Athenian

39 The Athenian expedition to Sicily (415–413 BC) is the subject of Books 6–7.
40 The Greek text is uncertain here; editors have proposed "eight" or "ten" years for "three". Cyrus is Cyrus the Younger, son of the Persian King Darius II.
41 Pharnaces was the Persian governor of the region near the Hellespont.

envoys who happened to be with Sitalces, Learchus son of Callimachus and Ameiniades son of Philemon, persuaded Sadocus, the son of Sitalces, who had been made an Athenian citizen, to hand the men over to them, so that they would not cross over to the King and do what harm they could to his adopted city. He was persuaded. As they were traveling through Thrace to the boat in which they were to cross the Hellespont, he arrested them before they could embark, sending others along with Learchus and Ameiniades, and ordered that the men be handed over to the two envoys. They took them and brought them to Athens. When they arrived, the Athenians were afraid that Aristeus might escape and do them still more harm, since even before this he had evidently been behind everything at Potidaea and in the Thracian region. So that same day they put them all to death without trial, though they wished to say something, and threw them into a ravine. They considered it right to retaliate by the same means the Spartans had used first, when they had killed the traders of the Athenians and their allies whom they had caught sailing round the Peloponnese in merchant ships, and had thrown them into ravines. For at the beginning of the war the Spartans killed as enemies all those they caught at sea, both those fighting on the Athenian side and those who were on neither side.[42]

2.68 About the same time, at the end of the summer, the Ambraciots, with their own forces and many non-Greeks whom they had roused, made an expedition against Amphilochian Argos and the rest of Amphilochia. Their enmity toward the Argives first arose as follows. Amphilochian Argos and the rest of Amphilochia were founded after the Trojan War by Amphilochus son of Amphiaraus. On returning home he was dissatisfied with the state of affairs in Argos, so he founded this city on the Ambracian Gulf and named it Argos after his own homeland (it was the largest city in Amphilochia and had the most powerful inhabitants). Many generations later, oppressed by misfortunes,

42 The Athenian "ravine" (the barathron) was a pit into which the bodies of executed criminals were thrown.

its people brought in the Ambraciots, who bordered on Amphilochia, as fellow settlers. It was then that they first became Greek in the language they now speak, learning it from the Ambraciots who settled with them; the rest of the Amphilochians are non-Greek. In time, then, the Ambraciots expelled the Argives and held the city themselves.[43] When this happened, the Amphilochians put themselves under the protection of the Acarnanians, and the two together called in the Athenians, who sent them Phormio as general with thirty ships. [And] when Phormio arrived they took Argos by storm and enslaved the Ambraciots, and the Amphilochians and Acarnanians settled it jointly. After this the alliance between the Athenians and the Acarnanians was first made. The Ambraciots first conceived their enmity toward the Argives from this enslavement of their own people. Later, in the war, they made this expedition, with their own forces and those of the Chaonians and some other neighboring non-Greeks. They came to Argos and controlled the countryside, but when they could not take the city by assault, they went back home and dispersed, each people to its own land. These were the events of the summer.[44]

2.69 The following winter the Athenians sent twenty ships round the Peloponnese under Phormio as general. He made Naupactus his base and kept watch so that no one could sail out of Corinth and the Crisaean Gulf, or in. They sent six others to Caria and Lycia under Melesander as general, to collect money there and to prevent Peloponnesian privateers from using the area as a base to harm the merchant ships sailing from Phaselis and Phoenicia and the mainland in that region. Melesander went up into Lycia with an army of Athenians from the ships

43 Ambracia was a Corinthian colony in northwestern Greece; Amphiaraus was the legendary seer, one of the Seven against Thebes.

44 Acarnania lies on the west coast of Greece, south of the Ambracian Gulf; the Chaonians were a people of Epirus.

and of allies; he was killed, and, defeated in battle, lost part of his army.[45]

POTIDAEA SURRENDERS

Starving Potidaea surrenders to the Athenian generals, and its people leave under a truce.

2.70 In the same winter the Potidaeans could no longer hold out under the siege. The Peloponnesian invasions of Attica had done nothing to draw the Athenians away, their grain had run out, and they had already been driven to many things in the way of eating out of necessity; some had even eaten one another. So, at last, they made proposals for an agreement to the Athenian generals posted against them: Xenophon son of Euripides, Hestiodorus son of Aristocleides and Phanomachus son of Callimachus. The generals accepted, because they saw the hardship the army was suffering in an exposed winter position, and because the city had already spent two thousand talents on the siege. These were the terms they agreed on: the Potidaeans were to leave with their children, their wives and their mercenaries. The men could take one cloak each and the women two, and they could take a fixed sum of money for the journey. So they left under the truce for Chalcidice, or wherever each of them could go. The Athenians, however, blamed the generals for making the agreement without consulting them, since they thought they could have taken the city on whatever terms they wished. Later they sent settlers of their own to Potidaea and colonized it. These things happened in the winter, and so ended [the] second year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

45 Naupactus, an Athenian base, lies on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth (here called the Crisaean Gulf); Caria and Lycia are in southwestern Asia Minor, and Phaselis is a Lycian port.

ARCHIDAMUS AT PLATAEA

The Plataeans appeal to Pausanias' oaths; Archidamus offers terms, and the Plataeans stay loyal to Athens.

2.71 In the following summer the Peloponnesians and their allies did not invade Attica but marched against Plataea. Their leader was Archidamus son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Spartans. He encamped his army and was about to ravage the land, but the Plataeans at once sent envoys to him, who spoke as follows: "Archidamus and Spartans, you are not acting justly in marching against the land of the Plataeans, nor in a way worthy of yourselves or of the fathers you come from. Pausanias son of Cleombrotus, the Spartan, freed Greece from the Persians together with those Greeks who chose to share the danger of the battle fought on our land. Afterward he offered sacrifice in the marketplace of Plataea to Zeus the Liberator. Then he called together all the allies and gave back to the Plataeans their land and their city, to hold and to live in as an independent people. No one was ever to march against them unjustly or to enslave them. If anyone did, the allies then present were to defend them with all their strength.[46] This is what your fathers granted us, in return for the excellence and zeal we showed in those dangers. But you are doing the opposite, because you have come with the Thebans, our bitterest enemies, to enslave us. We call to witness the gods by whom the oaths were sworn then, the gods of your fathers and the gods of our own land. We tell you not to wrong the land of Plataea and not to break the oaths, but to let us live as an independent people, as Pausanias rightly decreed."

2.72 When the Plataeans had said this much, Archidamus answered: "What you say is just, men of Plataea, provided your actions match your words. Do as Pausanias granted you: be independent yourselves, and help to free the others. They shared the dangers of that time and swore the oaths with you, and now they are under the Athenians. It is for their sake, and to

46 The battle of Plataea in 479 BC ended the Persian invasion of Greece.

free the rest, that these great preparations have been made and this war has come about. The best course would be for you to take part in that freedom yourselves and keep the oaths. Failing that, do what we have already proposed to you before: keep quiet and enjoy what is your own. Join neither side, but receive both as friends and neither for purposes of war. That will satisfy us." Archidamus said this much. When the Plataean envoys had heard it, they went into the city and reported what had been said to the people. Then they answered him that they could not do what he proposed without the Athenians, since their children and wives were in Athens. They also feared for the city as a whole. Once the Spartans had withdrawn, the Athenians might come and refuse to allow it. Or the Thebans, claiming to be covered by the oath under the clause about receiving both sides, might try again to seize their city. To reassure them on these points he said: "Then hand over your city and your houses to us Spartans. Show us the boundaries of your land, the number of your trees, and anything else that can be counted. Move yourselves wherever you like for as long as the war lasts. When it is over, we will give back to you whatever we have received. Until then we will hold it in trust, working the land and paying you whatever rent will be enough for you." 2.73 When they had heard this they went back into the city. After consulting with the people they replied that they wished first to put his proposals to the Athenians, and that if they could win the Athenians over, they would do what he asked. In the meantime they asked him to grant them a truce and not to ravage the land. He granted a truce for as many days as the journey there and back was likely to take, and he did not lay waste the land. The Plataean envoys went to the Athenians, consulted with them, and came back with this message for those in the city: "Men of Plataea, the Athenians say that never in the past, since we became their allies, have they abandoned you to anyone who wronged you, nor will they stand by and allow it now; they will help you with all their strength. And they charge you, by the oaths your fathers swore, to make no change in the alliance." 2.74 When the

envoys had brought back this report, the Plataeans resolved not to betray the Athenians but to endure, if they had to, the sight of their land being ravaged and whatever else they might suffer. No one was to go out any more, and they would answer from the wall that they could not do what the Spartans proposed. When they had given this answer, King Archidamus began by calling the gods and heroes of the country to witness, speaking as follows: "All you gods and heroes who hold the land of Plataea, be our witnesses. We did not come against this land wrongfully in the first place, but only after these people had first broken the oath we all swore together. This is the land where our fathers prayed to you and then defeated the Persians, and which you made favorable for the Greeks to fight in. Whatever we may do now, we will be doing no wrong, for we have made many reasonable proposals and have had none of them accepted. Grant, then, that those who began the wrong may be punished for it, and that those who seek lawful vengeance may obtain it."

THE SIEGE OF PLATAEA

The Peloponnesians build a siege mound, try fire, and finally wall the city in.

2.75 After this appeal to the gods he committed his army to the war. First they fenced the Plataeans in with a palisade made from the trees they had cut down, so that no one could come out. Then they began piling up a mound against the city. They expected that with so large an army at work it would be taken very quickly. They cut timber on Cithaeron and built it up along both sides of the mound, laying it crosswise like latticework to serve as walls, so that the mound would not spread out too far. Into it they carried brushwood, stones, earth and anything else that would help fill it when thrown on. They kept piling up the mound for seventy days and nights without a break. They were divided into shifts, so that some were carrying while others took sleep and food. The Spartan officers in command of each city's

contingent stood over them and kept them at the work.[47] When the Plataeans saw the mound rising, they put together a wooden framework and set it on top of their own wall at the point where the mound was being piled against it. They filled it in with bricks, which they took by pulling down the houses nearby. The timbers held the structure together, so that it would not become weak as it grew higher. It had a screen of hides and skins in front, so that the workers and the timbers would not be hit by fire-arrows and could work in safety. The wall rose to a great height, and the mound rose against it just as fast. Then the Plataeans came up with this plan: they broke an opening in their wall where the mound met it and carried the earth into the city. 2.76 When the Peloponnesians noticed this, they packed clay into reed baskets and threw them into the gap, so that it would not crumble and be carried away like the earth. Blocked in this direction, the Plataeans gave up that method. Instead they dug a tunnel from the city and worked out where the mound lay above them. Once again they drew the loose earth away into the city, this time from underneath. For a long time the besiegers outside did not notice, and so for all the earth they threw on they made less progress, because the mound was being drawn away from beneath them and kept settling into the space being emptied. But they were afraid that even so they might not be able to hold out, few as they were against many, so they devised something further. They stopped work on the great structure opposite the mound. Instead, starting from the low wall on either side of it, they built a crescent-shaped wall on the inside, curving back into the city. If the great wall were taken, this one would hold, and the enemy would have to pile up another mound against it. As they advanced inside they would have double the labor and be more exposed to attack from both sides. Along with the mound, the Peloponnesians also brought siege engines up to the city. One was brought up on the mound against the great structure; it shook down a large part of it and frightened the Plataeans. Others were brought against other parts of the wall. Some

47 The Greek text is uncertain here; the number seventy is doubtful.

of these the Plataeans caught in nooses and wrenched upward. They also hung great beams on long iron chains, attached at either end to two poles that leaned out and projected over the wall. They hauled the beams up crosswise. Whenever the engine was about to strike at any point, they let the beam go with the chains slack instead of holding it in their hands. It fell with a rush and snapped off the head of the ram.

2.77 After this the engines were doing no good, and a counter-wall was rising against the mound. The Peloponnesians therefore concluded that it was impossible to take the city with the means of attack they had, and began preparing to wall it in. But first they decided to try fire, to see whether, with the help of a wind, they could set the city ablaze, since it was not large. In fact they were thinking of every possible method by which it might be brought over to them without the expense of a siege. They brought bundles of brushwood and threw them down from the mound, first into the space between the wall and the mound. With so many hands at work this was soon filled, and they heaped more on top over as much of the rest of the city as they could reach from the height. Then they threw in fire, along with sulfur and pitch, and set the wood alight. The blaze was greater than any fire made by human hands that anyone had yet seen, up to that time at least; for in the mountains, before now, forest timber rubbed together by the winds has caught fire of its own accord and burst into flame. This fire was a great one, and the Plataeans, who had escaped everything else, came very close to being destroyed by it. There was a large area within the city that no one could approach, and if a wind had sprung up blowing toward the city, as the enemy were hoping, they would not have escaped. As it was, this too is said to have happened: heavy rain [from the sky] and thunder came on and put out the flames, and so the danger passed.

2.78 When the Peloponnesians had failed in this as well, they left part of their army there and sent the larger part home. They began building a wall round the city in a circle, dividing the ground among the various cities. There was a ditch both inside

and outside the wall, and they made their bricks from the earth dug out of it. The whole work was finished around the rising of Arcturus. They left guards for half the wall, while the Boeotians guarded the other half, and then withdrew with the army and dispersed to their cities. The Plataeans had earlier sent their children and wives, the oldest men and the rest of the population who were of no use for fighting away to Athens. Those left behind to stand the siege were four hundred of their own men and eighty Athenians, along with a hundred and ten women to bake bread. That was the whole number when the siege began, and there was no one else within the walls, slave or free. This is how the siege of Plataea was set up.[48]

SPARTOLUS AND STRATUS

An Athenian force is routed at Spartolus, and a Peloponnesian attack on Acarnania fails at Stratus.

2.79 In the same summer, at the same time as the expedition against Plataea, the Athenians marched with two thousand of their own hoplites and two hundred cavalry against the Chalcidians in the Thracian region and the Bottiaeans, when the grain was ripening. They were commanded by Xenophon son of Euripides, with two colleagues. They came up to Spartolus in Bottiaea and destroyed the grain. It also seemed likely that the city would come over to them, since some people inside were negotiating to bring this about. But those who wanted something else sent to Olynthus, and hoplites and other troops came to garrison the place. When these troops made a sally from Spartolus, the Athenians gave battle right under the city walls. The Chalcidian hoplites, and some mercenaries with them, were defeated by the Athenians and fell back into Spartolus. But the Chalcidian cavalry and light troops defeated the Athenian cavalry and light troops. The Chalcidians had a few peltasts from the land called Crusis. Just after the battle more peltasts came from Olynthus to help. When the light troops from Spartolus

48 The rising of Arcturus at dawn fell in mid-September.

saw them, they took heart from the reinforcements and from the fact that they had not been beaten before. Together with the Chalcidian cavalry and the newly arrived reinforcements they attacked the Athenians again, and the Athenians fell back to the two companies they had left with the baggage. Whenever the Athenians advanced, the enemy gave way. When the Athenians withdrew, they pressed close and hurled javelins at them. The Chalcidian cavalry rode up and charged wherever they saw fit. Above all by spreading panic they routed the Athenians and pursued them a long way. The Athenians took refuge in Potidaea. Later they recovered their dead under a truce and returned to Athens with what was left of the army. Four hundred and thirty of them had been killed, and all the generals. The Chalcidians and Bottiaeans set up a trophy, took up their own dead, and dispersed to their cities.

2.80 In the same summer, not long after this, the Ambraciots and the Chaonians wanted to subdue the whole of Acarnania and detach it from Athens. They persuaded the Spartans to fit out a fleet from their allies and to send a thousand hoplites against Acarnania. They argued that if the Spartans came with ships and land forces together, alongside them, the coastal Acarnanians would be unable to come to the rescue. They would then easily take Acarnania and gain control of Zacynthus and Cephallenia as well. The Athenians would no longer be able to sail round the Peloponnese as before, and there was hope of taking Naupactus too. The Spartans were persuaded. At once they sent Cnemus, who was still admiral, with the hoplites on a few ships, and sent word round to the fleet to get ready and sail as quickly as possible to Leucas. The Corinthians were especially eager to support the Ambraciots, who were their colonists. The fleet from Corinth, Sicyon and the places in that area was still being got ready. The ships from Leucas, Anactorium and Ambracia had arrived first and were waiting at Leucas. Phormio commanded the twenty Athenian ships keeping guard off Naupactus, but Cnemus and his thousand hoplites crossed over without his noticing. As soon as they had crossed, they began preparing

for the campaign by land. Of Greeks, Cnemus had with him the Ambraciots, the Leucadians and the Anactorians, and the thousand Peloponnesians he had brought himself. Of non-Greeks he had a thousand Chaonians, who have no king. They were led by Photius and Nicanor, from the ruling family, who held the leadership for a year at a time. Thesprotians, who also have no king, marched along with the Chaonians. The Molossians and Atintanians were led by Sabylinthus, who was guardian of their king, Tharyps, since Tharyps was still a boy. The Parauaeans were led by their king, Oroedus. A thousand Orestians, whose king was Antiochus, marched with the Parauaeans, because Antiochus had entrusted them to Oroedus. Perdiccas also sent a thousand Macedonians without the Athenians' knowledge, but they came later. With this army Cnemus set out, without waiting for the fleet from Corinth. Marching through the territory of Argos, they sacked Limnaea, an unwalled village. Then they came to Stratus, the largest city in Acarnania. They thought that if they took it first, the rest would readily come over to them.[49]
2.81 The Acarnanians learned that a large army had invaded by land and that the enemy would also be on them from the sea with ships. So they did not join forces to resist. Each community guarded its own territory, and they sent to Phormio urging him to help. He replied that he could not leave Naupactus unguarded when a fleet was about to sail out from Corinth. The Peloponnesians and their allies formed three divisions and advanced on the city of the Stratians. They meant to camp close by and, if they could not persuade the Stratians by words, to attack the wall in deed. The Chaonians and the other non-Greek troops advanced in the center. On their right were the Leucadians, the Anactorians and those with them, and on the left Cnemus with the Peloponnesians and the Ambraciots. The three divisions were far apart from one another, and at times they could not even see each other. The Greeks advanced in order and kept on their guard until they had camped in a suitable spot. But the Chaonians were confident in themselves, and the

49 Perdiccas was at this time officially an ally of Athens.

mainland peoples of that region regarded them as the best fighters there. So they did not stop to occupy a camp. Instead they rushed ahead with the other non-Greeks, thinking they would take the city at the first assault and claim the achievement for themselves. The Stratians noticed them while they were still approaching. They reckoned that if they could defeat them while they were cut off from the rest, the Greeks would be less ready to come on against them. So they set ambushes around the city, and when the enemy were close, they charged at them all at once, both from the city and from the ambushes. Once they were thrown into panic, many of the Chaonians were killed. When the other non-Greeks saw them give way, they no longer stood their ground but took to flight. Neither of the Greek divisions noticed the battle, because the Chaonians had gone far ahead of them and were thought to be hurrying on to seize a campsite. But when the fleeing non-Greeks came crashing in on them, they took them in, brought their camps together, and stayed quietly where they were for the rest of the day. The Stratians did not come to close quarters with them, since the rest of the Acarnanians had not yet arrived to support them. Instead they slung stones at them from a distance and reduced them to helplessness, for it was impossible to move without armor. The Acarnanians are considered the best at this kind of fighting. 2.82 When night fell, Cnemus hurried his army back to the river Anapus, which is eighty stades from Stratus. On the next day he recovered his dead under a truce. The people of Oeniadae had joined him out of friendship, and he withdrew into their territory before the Acarnanian relief force could arrive. From there each contingent went home. The Stratians set up a trophy for the battle against the non-Greeks.

PHORMIO'S FIRST SEA VICTORY

Phormio's twenty ships rout forty-seven Peloponnesian ships at the mouth of the gulf.

2.83 The fleet from Corinth and the other allies on the Crisaean Gulf, which was supposed to join Cnemus to keep the coastal Acarnanians from going inland to help, never arrived. Instead, at about the same time as the battle at Stratus, they were forced to fight a sea battle against Phormio and the twenty Athenian ships on guard at Naupactus. For Phormio was watching them as they sailed along the coast out of the gulf, intending to attack them in open water. The Corinthians and their allies were not sailing as if for a sea battle. They were equipped more as a military expedition to Acarnania, and did not think the Athenians would dare to fight a battle with their own twenty ships against the Corinthians' forty-seven. But they saw the Athenians shadowing them along the opposite shore as they themselves coasted along theirs. Then, as they crossed from Patrae in Achaea to the mainland opposite on their way to Acarnania, they sighted the Athenians sailing toward them from Chalcis and the river Evenus. Their attempt to slip away by putting out at night had not gone unnoticed. So at this point they were forced to fight in the middle of the strait. Each city's contingent had its own generals, who had fitted it out. The Corinthian generals were Machaon, Isocrates and Agatharchidas. The Peloponnesians drew up their ships in as large a circle as they could without leaving room for the enemy to break through, prows outward and sterns inward. Inside the circle they placed the light boats that were sailing with them, and also five of their fastest ships, so that these could sail out at short notice and be on hand wherever the enemy attacked. 2.84 The Athenians, drawn up in single file, sailed round and round them in a circle and kept squeezing them into a smaller space. They kept brushing close past them and giving the impression that they were about to ram at any moment. Phormio had ordered them beforehand not

to attack until he gave the signal. For he expected that the enemy's formation would not hold the way an infantry line does on land, but that the ships would fall foul of one another and the small boats would cause confusion. And if the wind blew out of the gulf—he was waiting for it as he sailed round, and it usually rose toward dawn—they would not stay steady for a moment. He thought the attack was in his own hands, to make whenever he wished, since his ships were faster, and that the moment would be best then. The wind came down, and the ships, already in a narrow space, were thrown into confusion by both the wind and the small boats pressing on them at once. Ship collided with ship, and the crews were pushing them apart with poles. Shouting, fending each other off and cursing, they could hear neither the orders nor the men calling the stroke. Being inexperienced, they could not lift their oars clear in the rough water, and so they made the ships less responsive to the helmsmen. Then, at that moment, Phormio gave the signal. The Athenians fell on them and first sank one of the generals' flagships, then went on destroying the others wherever they came at them. They reduced them to such a state that, in the confusion, not one of them turned to fight; instead they fled to Patrae and Dyme in Achaea. The Athenians gave chase, captured twelve ships and took most of their crews on board, and then sailed off to Molycreium. After setting up a trophy at Rhium and dedicating a ship to Poseidon, they withdrew to Naupactus. The Peloponnesians, too, immediately sailed with the rest of their ships from Dyme and Patrae along the coast to Cyllene, the port of the Eleans. After the battle at Stratus, Cnemus also arrived at Cyllene from Leucas, with the ships from there that were supposed to have joined this fleet.

SPEECHES BEFORE THE SECOND SEA BATTLE

The Peloponnesian commanders and Phormio each encourage their crews before battle.

2.85 The Spartans sent Timocrates, Brasidas and Lycophron to Cnemus as advisers for the fleet. Their orders were to prepare for another, better sea battle and not to let themselves be shut off from the sea by a few ships. The outcome seemed to the Spartans wholly unaccountable, especially since this was their first attempt at a sea battle. They did not think their navy was so far inferior, and believed there had been some faintheartedness. They did not weigh the Athenians' long experience against their own brief practice. So they sent the advisers off in anger. When the advisers arrived, they and Cnemus sent round to the cities for more ships and fitted out the ones they already had for a sea battle. Phormio, for his part, sent messengers to Athens to report the enemy's preparations and tell of the sea battle they had won. He asked the Athenians to send him as many ships as possible, as quickly as possible, since a sea battle was expected any day. The Athenians sent him twenty ships, but instructed their commander to go to Crete first. For Nicias, a Cretan from Gortyn who was their proxenos, persuaded them to sail against Cydonia, promising to win it over, though it was hostile. In fact he was bringing them in as a favor to the Polichnitans, neighbors of the Cydonians. So the commander took the ships and went off to Crete. With the Polichnitans he ravaged the land of the Cydonians, and because of contrary winds and bad sailing weather he was held up there for no short time. 2.86 Meanwhile, while the Athenians were held up around Crete, the Peloponnesians at Cyllene, now ready for a sea battle, sailed along the coast to Panormus in Achaea, where the Peloponnesian land army had come to support them. Phormio, too, sailed along to the Molycrian Rhium and anchored off it with twenty ships, the same ones with which he had fought the battle. This Rhium was friendly to the Athenians. The other Rhium is opposite it, on the

Peloponnesian side. They are about seven stades of sea apart, and this is the mouth of the Crisaean Gulf. The Achaean Rhium is not far from Panormus, where the Peloponnesians had their land forces. Once they had seen the Athenians, they too anchored there with seventy-seven ships. For six or seven days they lay at anchor facing each other, practicing and preparing for the battle. The Peloponnesians were resolved not to sail out beyond the two Rhia into open water, fearing a repeat of their earlier disaster. The Athenians were resolved not to sail into the narrows, thinking that fighting in a confined space favored the enemy. Then Cnemus, Brasidas and the other Peloponnesian generals wanted to fight the battle quickly, before reinforcements came from Athens too. They first called the soldiers together. Seeing that most of them were frightened after their earlier defeat and had no appetite for fighting, they encouraged them and spoke as follows:

2.87 "Peloponnesians, if any of you is afraid of the coming battle because of the one already fought, that battle gives you no fair grounds for alarm. Our preparations were inadequate, as you know, and we were sailing not so much to fight at sea as on a military expedition. Chance also worked against us in no small way, and perhaps our inexperience, in our first sea battle, played some part in our failure. So our defeat did not come about through any cowardice of ours. Our resolve was not overcome by force and still has something to say for itself, and it is not right that it should be blunted by the outcome of a misfortune. Rather, we should consider that men may be tripped up by fortune, but that the same men are always truly brave in their resolve. When courage is present, they cannot reasonably plead inexperience as an excuse for turning coward in any situation. And your inexperience does not put you as far behind as your daring puts you ahead. The enemy's skill, which you fear most, will keep its memory in the moment of danger and carry out what it has learned, if it is joined with courage. But without stoutness of heart no skill is any use against danger. For fear drives out memory, and skill without valor is worthless. So set

your greater daring against their greater experience. And against the fear the defeat has caused you, set the fact that you happened to be unprepared then. You have the advantage of a larger number of ships, and of fighting close to land that is your own, with hoplites at hand. For the most part, victory goes to the more numerous and the better prepared. So we cannot find a single point on which we would be likely to fail. The very mistakes we made before, now added to our experience, will serve as a lesson. Take heart, then, helmsmen and sailors alike. Each of you, follow orders at your own post, and do not leave the position you are assigned to. We will prepare the attack no worse than your previous leaders did, and we will give no one any excuse for cowardice. But if anyone does choose to be a coward, he will be punished with the penalty he deserves, while the brave will be honored with the fitting prizes for excellence."

2.88 Such was the encouragement the commanders gave the Peloponnesians. Phormio, too, was afraid of his soldiers' dread. He noticed that they were gathering in groups among themselves and were frightened by the number of the enemy's ships. So he wanted to call them together, give them heart, and address an exhortation to them in the situation. Before this he had always told them, and prepared their minds in advance, that no number of ships was so great that they could not stand up to it if it came at them. The soldiers had long held this conviction among themselves: that as Athenians they did not give way before any mass of Peloponnesian ships. But now he saw them disheartened by the sight before their eyes, and he wanted to remind them of the reasons for confidence. So he called the Athenians together and spoke as follows:

2.89 "Soldiers, I have called you together because I see you are frightened of the enemy's numbers, and I do not think you should be in dread of what is not dangerous. First, these men have been beaten before and do not even think themselves a match for us. That is why they have equipped themselves with a great number of ships rather than meeting us on equal terms. Second, consider what they most rely on in coming against us,

as if bravery were their birthright. Their confidence comes from nothing but their experience on land, where they are usually successful, and they think it will do the same for them at sea. But at sea the advantage will more justly be ours, just as on land it is theirs. For in courage they are in no way superior, and each side is the bolder where it has more experience. Besides, the Spartans who lead them are bringing most of them into danger against their will, for the sake of their own reputation. Otherwise, after such a heavy defeat, they would never have attempted another sea battle. So do not fear their daring. You inspire far more fear in them, and with better grounds, both because you have beaten them before and because they think you would not be standing up to them unless you meant to do something worthy of so great a disparity. Opponents who are more numerous, like these, attack relying more on their strength than on their resolve. But those who come from a much weaker position, and without being compelled to, dare to stand against them because there is great firmness in their thinking. With this in mind, they are more afraid of us for the very unreasonableness of our stand than they would be of a force reasonably matched to theirs. Many armies, too, have fallen before smaller numbers through inexperience, and some also through lack of daring. We have no share in either. As for the battle, I will not fight it in the gulf if I can help it, nor sail into the gulf. For I see that when a few experienced and faster ships face many unskilled ones, the narrow space is a disadvantage. A ship cannot sail in properly to ram without a view of the enemy from a long way off, nor back away in time when hard pressed. There is no breaking through the line or wheeling round to attack again, which are the work of faster ships. The sea battle would inevitably turn into a land battle, and in that the larger number of ships has the upper hand. I will take care of these things as far as I can. You must keep good order and stay by your ships. Take your orders promptly, especially since we are anchored so close to the enemy. In action, regard discipline and silence as all-important. This is useful in most military matters, and not least in a sea

battle. Fight these men off in a manner worthy of what you have already achieved. The contest before you is a great one: either to destroy the Peloponnesians' hopes for their navy, or to bring the Athenians' fear for the sea closer to home. I remind you again that you have beaten most of them. And men who have been defeated are not willing to face the same dangers in the same spirit."

PHORMIO'S SECOND SEA VICTORY

The Peloponnesians trap most of Phormio's ships, but the escapees turn and rout them.

2.90 Such was Phormio's exhortation in turn. The Athenians would not sail into the gulf and the narrows against the Peloponnesians, so the Peloponnesians wanted to draw them in against their will. Putting out at dawn, they sailed with their ships drawn up four abreast toward their own coast, inside the gulf, with the right wing leading, in the order in which they had been lying at anchor. On this wing they posted their twenty fastest ships. That way, if Phormio thought they were sailing against Naupactus and himself sailed along the coast to help it, the Athenians would not escape their attack by slipping out beyond their wing, but these ships would cut them off. And Phormio, as they had expected, was alarmed for the place, which was undefended. As soon as he saw them putting out, he reluctantly and hastily got his men on board and sailed along the coast, and the Messenian infantry came along to help at the same time. The Peloponnesians saw them sailing along in single file and already inside the gulf and close to land, which was exactly what they most wanted. At a single signal they suddenly turned their ships and sailed line abreast at the Athenians, each as fast as he could, hoping to cut off all their ships. Some eleven of the Athenian ships, the ones in the lead, slipped past the Peloponnesian wing and its turning movement into open water. The rest the Peloponnesians caught. They drove them ashore as they tried to escape and disabled them, and they killed all the Athenians who

did not swim to safety. Some of the ships they made fast and began towing away empty (one they had already captured with its crew). But others the Messenians recovered when they were already being towed off: they came to the rescue, waded into the sea in full armor, boarded the ships and fought from the decks.

2.91 In this quarter, then, the Peloponnesians were victorious and disabled the Athenian ships. Meanwhile their twenty ships from the right wing were chasing the eleven Athenian ships that had escaped the turning movement into open water. All but one of these got to Naupactus ahead of them. They took up position off the temple of Apollo with their prows facing outward and prepared to defend themselves if the enemy sailed in to the shore against them. The Peloponnesians came up later, singing the paean as they sailed, as men who had won. One Leucadian ship, far ahead of the others, was chasing the one Athenian ship that had been left behind. There happened to be a merchant ship anchored out in deep water. The Athenian ship reached it first, swung round it, rammed the pursuing Leucadian ship amidships, and sank it. This was so unexpected and so contrary to all reason that panic seized the Peloponnesians. Besides, they had been pursuing in disorder because they were winning. Some of their ships dropped their oars and stopped, meaning to wait for the main body. This was a dangerous thing to do with the enemy so close and able to strike back. Others ran aground in the shallows because they did not know the waters. 2.92 When the Athenians saw this happening, they took heart, and at a single word of command they raised a shout and charged at them. Because of the mistakes they had already made and their present disorder, the Peloponnesians held out only a short time and then fled to Panormus, where they had put out from. The Athenians pursued them and captured the six ships nearest at hand. They also recovered their own ships, which the enemy had disabled close to the shore at first and taken in tow. Some of the men they killed, and some they took prisoner. On board the Leucadian ship that sank by the merchantman was Timocrates the Spartan. As the ship was going down he killed himself, and

his body washed up in the harbor of Naupactus. The Athenians withdrew and set up a trophy at the spot from which they had put out and won their victory. They took up the dead and the wreckage lying off their own shore, and gave the enemy back theirs under a truce. The Peloponnesians also set up a trophy, as victors, for the rout of the ships they had disabled near the shore; and the one ship they had captured they dedicated at Achaean Rhium beside the trophy. After this, fearing the reinforcements expected from Athens, they all sailed under cover of night into the Crisaean Gulf and to Corinth, except the Leucadians. Not long after this withdrawal, the Athenians from Crete arrived at Naupactus with the twenty ships that should have joined Phormio before the battle. And the summer ended.

THE RAID ON THE PIRAEUS

The Peloponnesians plan to surprise the Piraeus but raid Salamis instead, causing panic at Athens.

2.93 Before dispersing the fleet that had withdrawn to Corinth and the Crisaean Gulf, Cnemus, Brasidas and the other Peloponnesian commanders wanted, at the beginning of the winter and on the advice of the Megarians, to make an attempt on the Piraeus, the harbor of Athens. It was unguarded and not closed off, which was natural, since the Athenians' navy was so far superior. The plan was this. Each sailor would take his oar, his cushion and his oar-loop and go on foot from Corinth to the sea on the Athenian side. They would hurry to Megara, launch forty ships that happened to be lying at Nisaea, the Megarian dockyard, and sail straight for the Piraeus.[50] For there was no fleet on guard there, and no expectation at all that the enemy would ever sail against it so suddenly. It was assumed that they would not dare even an open attack in their own time, and that if they did plan one, the Athenians could not fail to detect it in advance.

50 The cushion was the rower's leather seat pad, and the oar-loop a leather strap that fastened the oar to its pin. Nisaea was Megara's port on the Saronic Gulf, facing Athens.

Once they had decided, they set off at once. They arrived by night and launched the ships from Nisaea. But they no longer sailed for the Piraeus as they had intended, because they took fright at the danger (a wind is also said to have stopped them). Instead they sailed for the headland of Salamis that faces Megara. There was a fort on it, and a guard of three ships to prevent anything from sailing into or out of Megara. They attacked the fort, towed away the triremes empty, and fell on the rest of Salamis while its people were off their guard, and plundered it. 2.94 Fire signals warning of the enemy were raised toward Athens, and there was a panic as great as any during the war. Those in the city thought the enemy had already sailed into the Piraeus, and those in the Piraeus thought that Salamis had been taken and that the enemy were all but sailing in on them. This could easily have happened if they had been willing not to hang back, and no wind would have prevented it. At daybreak the Athenians rushed to the Piraeus in full force. They launched ships, embarked in haste and amid great uproar, and sailed with the fleet for Salamis, while they posted their infantry to guard the Piraeus. When the Peloponnesians became aware of the relief force, they hurriedly overran most of Salamis, took prisoners and plunder and the three ships from the fort of Budorum, and sailed off in haste for Nisaea, partly because their own ships also frightened them: they had been launched after lying idle a long time and were not at all watertight. When they reached Megara they went back to Corinth on foot. The Athenians, no longer finding them off Salamis, sailed back as well. From then on they guarded the Piraeus more carefully, by closing the harbors and taking other precautions.

SITALCES INVADES MACEDONIA

The Thracian king leads a huge army against Perdiccas, then withdraws with little achieved.

2.95 At about the same time, as this winter was beginning, Sitalces son of Teres, the Odrysian, king of the Thracians, marched

against Perdiccas son of Alexander, king of Macedonia, and against the Chalcidians in Thrace. He wanted to exact the fulfillment of one promise and to fulfill another himself. Perdiccas had made him promises in return for reconciling him with the Athenians, when he was hard pressed by the war at the start, and for not restoring Perdiccas's brother Philip, his enemy, to the throne. But Perdiccas was not carrying out what he had undertaken. Sitalces himself, for his part, had agreed with the Athenians, when he made the alliance, to bring the Chalcidian war in Thrace to an end. He made the expedition for both these reasons. He took with him Philip's son Amyntas, intending to make him king of the Macedonians, along with the Athenian envoys who happened to be with him on this business, and Hagnon as their leader. The Athenians, too, were supposed to join him against the Chalcidians with ships and as large an army as possible.[51] 2.96 So, setting out from the Odrysians, he raised first the Thracians on this side of Mount Haemus and Mount Rhodope, all those he ruled as far as the sea [toward the Euxine Sea and the Hellespont]. Next he raised the Getae, beyond Haemus, and all the other peoples settled south of the river Ister, toward the coast of the Euxine Sea. The Getae and the peoples of that region border on the Scythians and are equipped like them, all of them mounted archers. He also called up many of the mountain Thracians, who are independent and carry swords. They are called the Dii, and most of them live on Rhodope. Some he won over with pay, while others came along as volunteers.[52] He also raised the Agrianes and the Laeaeans and all the other Paeonian peoples he ruled; these were at the edge of his empire. Toward the Paeonians, who were already independent, the empire reached as far as the Laeaean Paeonians and the river Strymon, which flows from Mount Scombrus through the Agrianes and the Laeaeans, and [there] it had its boundary. Toward the Triballi, who were also independent, the boundary was formed by the Treres and the Tilataeans. These

51 Sitalces had become an ally of Athens at the start of the war (2.29).
52 The Euxine Sea is the Black Sea, and the Ister is the Danube.

live north of Mount Scombrus and stretch westward as far as the river Oscius. This river flows from the same mountain as the Nestus and the Hebrus, a large, uninhabited mountain adjoining Rhodope.

2.97 The empire of the Odrysians was large. Along the coast it stretched from the city of Abdera to the Euxine Sea, as far as the river Ister. By the shortest route, the voyage around this stretch of coast takes a merchant ship four days and as many nights, if the wind is astern the whole way. By land, a man traveling light covers the shortest route from Abdera to the Ister in eleven days. That was its extent along the coast. Inland, from Byzantium to the Laeaeans and the Strymon (for this was where it reached farthest into the interior from the sea), it was a journey of thirteen days for a man traveling light. The tribute from all the non-Greek territory and from the Greek cities, at the level it reached under Seuthes, who reigned after Sitalces and raised it highest, was worth about four hundred talents of silver, paid in gold and silver. Gifts of gold and silver no smaller than this were also brought in, not counting fabrics, both patterned and plain, and other goods. These went not only to the king himself but also to the lesser rulers and the nobles of the Odrysians. The Odrysians had established a custom that was the opposite of the practice of the Persian kingdom, though the other Thracians shared it too: to take rather than to give. Among them it was more shameful to be asked for something and refuse than to ask and be refused. But because of their power the Odrysians made greater use of the custom, for nothing could be accomplished there without giving gifts. As a result the kingdom became very powerful. Of all the kingdoms in Europe between the Ionian Gulf and the Euxine Sea, it was the greatest in revenue and in general prosperity. In fighting strength and size of army, though, it came a distant second to the kingdom of the Scythians. With the Scythians no nation in Europe can be compared. Not even in Asia is there any single nation that could, one against one, stand up to the Scythians if they were all of one mind. Yet in good

judgment generally, and in intelligent use of what life puts at hand, they are no match for others.

2.98 So Sitalces, king of so great a country, made his army ready. When everything was prepared, he set out and marched on Macedonia, first through his own territory and then over Cercine, an uninhabited mountain on the border between the Sinti and the Paeonians. He crossed it by the road he had made himself on an earlier campaign against the Paeonians, when he cut a way through the forest. As they crossed the mountain coming from the Odrysians, they had the Paeonians on their right and the Sinti and Maedi on their left. Once over it, they arrived at Doberus in Paeonia. On the march his army lost no men, except some to sickness, and instead it grew. Many of the independent Thracians followed uninvited in search of plunder, so that the whole host is said to have numbered no fewer than a hundred and fifty thousand. Most of it was infantry, and about a third was cavalry. The Odrysians themselves supplied most of the cavalry, and the Getae came next. Among the infantry, the most warlike were the sword-bearers, the independent men who had come down from Rhodope. The rest of the crowd that followed was of mixed peoples and most formidable for its numbers. 2.99 So they gathered at Doberus and prepared to descend over the heights into lower Macedonia, which Perdiccas ruled. The Macedonians also include the Lyncestians, the Elimiotes and other upland peoples. These are allies and subjects of the lowland Macedonians but have kingdoms of their own. What is now coastal Macedonia was first acquired and ruled by Alexander, Perdiccas's father, and his ancestors, who were originally Temenids from Argos. They became its kings after driving out by force the Pierians from Pieria and the Bottiaeans from the region called Bottia. The Pierians later settled Phagres and other places below Mount Pangaeum beyond the Strymon (even now the land below Pangaeum toward the sea is called the Pierian Gulf). The Bottiaeans now live as neighbors of the Chalcidians.[53] They also

53 The Temenids claimed descent from Temenus, a descendant of Heracles who was the legendary king of Argos.

acquired a narrow strip of Paeonia along the river Axius, reaching down from the interior to Pella and the sea. Beyond the Axius, as far as the Strymon, they hold the district called Mygdonia, having driven out the Edonians. They also drove the Eordians out of what is now called Eordia. Most of the Eordians were destroyed, but a small remnant of them is settled around Physca. And they drove the Almopians out of Almopia. These Macedonians also conquered the other peoples whose lands they still hold today: Anthemus, Grestonia, Bisaltia, and much of the land of the upland Macedonians themselves. The whole is called Macedonia, and Perdiccas son of Alexander was its king when Sitalces invaded.

2.100 These Macedonians could not defend themselves against so large an invading army, so they took refuge in whatever strongholds and walled places there were in the country. These were not many. Later, Archelaus son of Perdiccas, when he became king, built the ones that now stand in the country. He also cut straight roads and organized everything else for war, providing horses, arms and other equipment on a greater scale than all eight kings before him put together. The Thracian army invaded from Doberus, first into what had formerly been Philip's realm. They took Idomene by storm, while Gortynia, Atalanta and some other places came over by agreement, out of friendship for Philip's son Amyntas, who was with the army. They besieged Europus but could not take it. Next Sitalces advanced into the rest of Macedonia, to the left of Pella and Cyrrhus. They did not get farther in than these, into Bottiaea and Pieria, but they ravaged Mygdonia, Grestonia and Anthemus. The Macedonians did not even consider defending themselves with infantry. Instead they sent for more horsemen from their allies in the uplands and charged into the Thracian army wherever they saw fit, a few against many. Wherever they struck, no one could stand up to them, since they were good horsemen and wore breastplates. But they were hemmed in by the enemy's numbers and put themselves in danger against a host many times their size. In the end they kept quiet, not thinking themselves strong

enough to risk an encounter with superior numbers. 2.101 Sitalces opened talks with Perdiccas about the reasons for his expedition. The Athenians had not arrived with their ships, because they did not believe he would come, but they had sent him gifts and envoys. So he sent part of his army against the Chalcidians and the Bottiaeans, shut them up inside their walls and ravaged their land. While he was encamped in these parts, the peoples to the south grew afraid that the army might advance against them too: the Thessalians, the Magnesians and the other subjects of the Thessalians, and the Greeks as far as Thermopylae. They made themselves ready. The Thracians who lived on the plains beyond the Strymon to the north were also afraid: the Panaeans, the Odomanti, the Droi and the Dersaeans, all of them independent peoples. The expedition also gave rise to talk even among the Greeks who were enemies of the Athenians, who feared that the Athenians might lead this army against them under the alliance. Meanwhile Sitalces occupied Chalcidice, Bottice and Macedonia all at once and ravaged them. None of the aims of his invasion was being achieved, his army had no food, and it was suffering from the winter. So he was persuaded by Seuthes son of Sparadocus, his nephew and the most powerful man after himself, to withdraw quickly. Perdiccas had secretly won Seuthes over by promising to give him his sister in marriage, with money besides. So Sitalces was persuaded. After staying thirty days in all, eight of them among the Chalcidians, he withdrew home with his army in haste. Later Perdiccas gave his sister Stratonice to Seuthes, as he had promised. These, then, were the events of Sitalces' expedition.

2.102 In the same winter, after the Peloponnesian fleet had been dispersed, the Athenians at Naupactus made an expedition under Phormio's command. They sailed along the coast to Astacus, landed, and marched into the interior of Acarnania with four hundred Athenian hoplites from the ships and four hundred Messenians. They expelled from Stratus, Coronta and other places men who were thought unreliable. They restored Cynes son of Theolytus to Coronta and then returned to their ships.

They did not think it possible to campaign in winter against Oeniadae, the only Acarnanian city that had always been hostile. The river Achelous flows from Mount Pindus through Dolopia and the lands of the Agraeans and the Amphilochians, and across the Acarnanian plain. Upstream it passes the city of Stratus, and it empties into the sea near Oeniadae, where it surrounds their city with marshes. Its water makes campaigning there impossible in winter. Most of the Echinades islands also lie opposite Oeniadae, very close to the mouths of the Achelous. As a result the river, which is large, is constantly silting them up. Some of the islands have already been joined to the mainland, and it is expected that before very long all of them will be. The stream is large, full and muddy, and the islands lie close together. They bind the deposits to one another [so that they are not dispersed], because they lie staggered rather than in line and leave the water no straight passages to the open sea. The islands are uninhabited and not large. There is also a story about Alcmaeon son of Amphiaraus. When he was wandering after murdering his mother, Apollo is said to have told him in an oracle to settle in this land. The god hinted that there would be no release from his terrors until he found a country that had not yet been seen by the sun and was not yet land at the time he killed his mother, and settled there. All the rest of the earth, the reasoning went, was polluted for him. In his perplexity, so they say, he at last noticed this deposit of the Achelous. It seemed to him that enough land to keep him alive would have been piled up during the long time he had been wandering since killing his mother. So he settled in the region around Oeniadae, became its ruler, and left the country the name it took from his son Acarnan. That is the story about Alcmaeon as it has come down to us.[54]

2.103 The Athenians and Phormio set out from Acarnania and arrived at Naupactus. At the beginning of spring they sailed back to Athens, bringing the ships they had captured and the

54 In legend, Alcmaeon killed his mother Eriphyle to avenge his father Amphiaraus, whom she had betrayed to his death, and was then pursued by the Furies.

free men among the prisoners from the sea battles, who were exchanged man for man. So the winter ended, and with it the third year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

Book 3

Mytilene and Corcyra, 428–426 BC
The revolt of Mytilene and the debate over its punishment, the fall of Plataea, civil war at Corcyra, and Demosthenes in western Greece.

3.1 The following summer, at the time when the grain was ripening, the Peloponnesians and their allies marched into Attica. They were led by Archidamus son of Zeuxidamus, king of the Spartans. They settled in and ravaged the land. As usual, the Athenian cavalry made attacks wherever there was an opening, and kept the bulk of the light troops from going out beyond the main army and doing damage near the city. The invaders stayed as long as their provisions lasted, then withdrew and dispersed to their various cities.

THE REVOLT OF MYTILENE

Mytilene and most of Lesbos rise against Athens.

3.2 Immediately after the Peloponnesian invasion, Lesbos, except for Methymna, revolted from Athens. The Lesbians had wanted to do this even before the war, but the Spartans would not accept them; and now too they were forced to revolt sooner than they had intended. They were waiting for the moles of their harbors, the building of their walls and the construction of their ships to be finished. They were also waiting for what was due to arrive from the Pontus, archers and grain, and for whatever else they had sent for. But the Tenedians, who were at odds with them, and the Methymnaeans, and some individual citizens of

Mytilene itself, who were acting out of factional strife and were proxenoi of the Athenians, turned informer to the Athenians. They reported that the Mytileneans were forcibly concentrating all of Lesbos into Mytilene, and that, together with the Spartans and the Boeotians, who were their kinsmen, they were pushing ahead with all their preparations for revolt. Unless someone forestalled them at once, the Athenians would lose Lesbos.[1] 3.3 The Athenians were worn down by the plague and by the war, which had only just got under way and was now at its height. They thought it a serious matter to take on Lesbos as an enemy as well, with its fleet and its forces intact. At first they would not accept the accusations, giving more weight to their wish that they not be true. But when they sent envoys as well and still could not persuade the Mytileneans to abandon the concentration and the preparations, they took fright and wanted to strike first. Without warning they sent forty ships that happened to be fitted out to sail round the Peloponnese. Cleippides son of Deinias was in command, with two colleagues. Word had reached them that there was a festival of Apollo Maloeis outside the city, which the Mytileneans celebrate with the whole population, and that if they made haste there was hope of falling on them unexpectedly. If the attempt came off, well and good. If not, they were to tell the Mytileneans to hand over their ships and pull down their walls, and if they did not comply, to make war on them.[2] So the ships set off. The ten Mytilenean triremes that happened to be serving with the Athenians as auxiliaries under the terms of the alliance were detained by the Athenians, who put their crews under guard. But a man crossed from Athens to Euboea, went on foot to Geraestus, and found a merchant ship putting out to sea. He took passage, reached Mytilene on the third day out from Athens, and reported the coming attack to the Mytileneans. They did not go out to the sanctuary of Maloeis. They barricaded the half-finished parts of their walls

1 The Pontus is the Black Sea.

2 Maloeis was a local title of Apollo on Lesbos, whose sanctuary lay outside Mytilene.

and harbors and otherwise kept on guard. 3.4 Not long afterward the Athenians sailed in. When they saw how matters stood, the generals delivered their instructions, and when the Mytileneans would not listen, they began the war. The Mytileneans were unprepared and suddenly forced to fight. They made a kind of sortie with their ships, as if for a sea battle, a short way in front of the harbor. Then, after being chased back by the Attic ships, they promptly opened talks with the generals, hoping, if they could, to get the ships sent away for the present on some reasonable terms. The Athenian generals accepted, because they were themselves afraid that they were not strong enough to fight the whole of Lesbos. An armistice was made, and the Mytileneans sent to Athens one of the informers, who by now regretted what he had done, along with others, to see whether they could somehow persuade the Athenians to recall the ships, on the grounds that they themselves would stir up no revolution. Meanwhile they also sent envoys to Sparta in a trireme, slipping past the Athenian fleet, which lay at anchor at Malea, north of the city. They had no confidence that the mission to Athens would succeed. These envoys had a hard voyage across the open sea, reached Sparta, and worked to get some help sent. 3.5 When the envoys came back from Athens having achieved nothing, the Mytileneans and the rest of Lesbos, apart from Methymna, went to war. The Methymnaeans had come to the help of the Athenians, as had the Imbrians and the Lemnians and a few of the other allies. The Mytileneans made a sortie in full force against the Athenian camp, and a battle took place. The Mytileneans did not have the worse of it, yet they neither camped on the field nor trusted in themselves, but withdrew. After that they kept quiet, wanting to take risks only if reinforcements came from the Peloponnese and they had additional forces. For Meleas, a Laconian, and Hermaeondas, a Theban, had now arrived. They had been sent out before the revolt, but since they could not get there ahead of the Athenian expedition, they sailed in secretly in a trireme after the battle. They urged the Mytileneans to send another trireme and envoys back with them, and the Mytile-

neans did so. 3.6 The Athenians were greatly encouraged by the Mytileneans' inaction. They summoned allies, who came much more quickly when they saw that there was no strength on the Lesbian side. Moving their ships round to anchor on the south side of the city, they fortified two camps, one on each side of the city, and set up blockades at both harbors. They kept the Mytileneans off the sea. On land, the Mytileneans and the other Lesbians, who had by now come to their help, controlled the rest of the country, while the Athenians held only the small area around their camps. Malea served them rather as an anchorage for their ships and as a market. That was how the war around Mytilene was being fought.

3.7 At the same time in this summer the Athenians also sent thirty ships round the Peloponnese, with Asopius son of Phormio as general. The Acarnanians had asked them to send someone of Phormio's family as commander, either a son or a kinsman. Sailing along the coast of Laconia, the ships plundered the places on the coast. Then Asopius sent most of the ships back home and went on with twelve himself to Naupactus. Later he called out the Acarnanians in full force and marched against Oeniadae. He sailed up the Achelous with the ships, while the army on land ravaged the country. When the people did not come over, he dismissed the land forces and sailed himself to Leucas. He made a landing at Nericus, and on his way back he was killed, together with part of his force, by the people of the area, who rallied to the defense, and by a few garrison troops. The Athenians sailed away, and afterward recovered their dead from the Leucadians under a truce.

THE MYTILENEANS AT OLYMPIA

Mytilenean envoys explain their revolt and ask Sparta and its allies for an alliance.

3.8 The Mytilenean envoys sent out on the first ship were told by the Spartans to come to Olympia, so that the other allies too could hear them and deliberate. So they came to Olympia. It was

the Olympiad in which Dorieus of Rhodes won his second victory. When, after the festival, they were given a hearing, they spoke as follows:[3]

3.9 "Spartans and allies, we know the custom that is established among the Greeks. When people revolt in wartime and abandon their former alliance, those who receive them welcome them insofar as they profit by them. But they think less of them, regarding them as traitors to their former friends. This view is not unjust, if those who revolt and those they break away from happen to be alike in outlook and goodwill, evenly matched in resources and power, and if there is no reasonable cause for the revolt. None of this held between us and the Athenians. So let no one think worse of us because we were honored by them in peacetime and are revolting from them now that they are in danger.

3.10 "We will speak first about justice and excellence of character, especially since we are asking for an alliance. We know that neither friendship between individuals nor partnership between cities ever comes to anything lasting unless each side deals with the other with evident excellence of character and they are alike in other respects as well. For it is from differences of outlook that differences in action arise. Our alliance with the Athenians began when you withdrew from the Persian War and they stayed on to finish what remained of the work. But we became allies not of the Athenians for the enslavement of the Greeks, but of the Greeks for their liberation from the Persians. As long as they led us on equal terms, we followed them eagerly. But when we saw them relaxing their hostility toward the Persians and moving to enslave the allies, we were no longer free of fear. The allies, unable to unite and defend themselves because there were so many separate votes, were enslaved, all except us and the Chians. We went on campaigning with them, supposedly autonomous and free in name. We no longer trusted the Athenians as leaders, for we took what had already happened as

3 This was the Olympic festival of 428 BC. Dorieus was a celebrated athlete who won the pancration, a combination of boxing and wrestling.

our guide. It was not likely that they would subdue those whom they had made parties to the treaty along with us, and not do the same to those who remained, if ever they had the power. 3.11 If we had all still been autonomous, we would have been surer that they would attempt no revolutionary change. But they had most of the allies under their control while dealing with us on equal terms. Naturally, then, they were going to find it harder to bear that our position alone still stood on a par with theirs, when the majority had already given way. This was all the more true as they grew more powerful and we more isolated. Only fear that is evenly matched makes an alliance reliable, for whoever wants to break faith is deterred by not having the advantage if he attacks. And we were left autonomous for no other reason than this: with their empire in view, they saw that they could get their way more by specious argument and by working on opinion than by force. On the one hand, they used us as evidence that states with an equal vote would not be joining their campaigns against their will unless those they attacked were in the wrong. By the same means they led the strongest states along with them against the weaker ones first. By leaving the strongest to the last, when everything else around them had been stripped away, they would find them weaker. If they had begun with us, while all the allies still had their own strength and something to rally around, they would not have subdued them so easily. Our navy, too, caused them some fear that it might one day unite and join either you or someone else, and become a danger to them. We also survived partly by courting their people and whoever their leaders happened to be at the time. But we did not think we could hold out for long, if this war had not broken out, judging by the examples of how they treated the others. 3.12 What kind of friendship or reliable freedom was this, in which we received each other against our true feelings? They courted us in wartime because they were afraid of us, and we did the same to them in peacetime. In other cases it is goodwill above all that makes trust secure, but in ours it was fear that made it firm. We were held together as allies more by fear than

by friendship, and whichever side first gained confidence from feeling safe was going to be the first to break the agreement in some way. So if anyone thinks we did wrong in revolting first, over harm they were only intending to do us, without waiting ourselves to know for certain whether any of it would happen, he is not judging the matter rightly. If we had been able, on equal terms, to plot against them in return and to bide our time in return, why should we, their equals, have been at their mercy? But since the power to attack always lies with them, the power to defend ourselves in advance must lie with us.

3.13 "These, Spartans and allies, were the causes and grievances that led us to revolt. They are clear enough for anyone who hears them to see that we acted reasonably, and they were sufficient to alarm us and turn us toward some means of safety. We wanted to do it long ago, when we sent to you about a revolt while there was still peace, but we were prevented because you would not accept us. Now, when the Boeotians invited us, we responded at once. We believed that we were making a double break: from the Greeks, so as not to join the Athenians in harming them but to help free them; and from the Athenians, so as not to be destroyed by them later on but to act first. Our revolt, however, came sooner than we planned, and before we were prepared. All the more reason, then, for you to take us as allies and send help quickly, so that you may be seen both to defend those you ought to defend and at the same time to harm your enemies. The moment is right as never before. The Athenians have been ravaged by the plague and drained by their spending. Some of their ships are around your territory, and others are deployed against us. So they are not likely to have any ships to spare if this summer you invade a second time, with ships and land forces at once. Either they will not resist you when you sail against them, or they will withdraw from both places. And let no one think that he will be running a risk of his own for the sake of someone else's land. The man to whom Lesbos seems far away will find that the advantage it brings is close at hand. The war will not be fought in Attica, as some people suppose, but in

the places from which Attica draws its strength. Their revenue comes from the allies, and it will be greater still if they subdue us. No one else will revolt, our resources will be added to theirs, and we would suffer worse than those who were enslaved before us. But if you help us wholeheartedly, you will gain a city with a large navy, which is what you most need. You will bring down the Athenians more easily by taking their allies away from them, for everyone will come over to you more boldly. And you will escape the charge you have faced, of not helping those who revolt. If you are seen to be liberators, your hold on victory in the war will be firmer.

3.14 "So, out of regard for the hopes the Greeks have placed in you, and for Olympian Zeus, in whose sanctuary we are as good as suppliants, come to the aid of the Mytileneans and become their allies. Do not abandon us. We are staking our own lives in a risk that is ours alone. But if we succeed, we will give everyone a share in the advantage, and if we fail because you were not persuaded, everyone will share still more widely in the harm. Be the men the Greeks expect you to be and our fears need you to be."

3.15 That is what the Mytileneans said. When the Spartans and their allies had heard them, they accepted their arguments and made the Lesbians allies. They told the allies who were present to go quickly to the Isthmus with two-thirds of their forces, to make the invasion of Attica. They themselves arrived first and prepared haulways for ships at the Isthmus, meaning to drag them across from Corinth to the sea on the Athens side and attack by sea and land at once. They went about this eagerly. But the other allies were slow to assemble, since they were busy bringing in the harvest and had no appetite for campaigning.[4]

3.16 The Athenians saw that the Spartans were making these preparations because they judged Athens to be weak. They wanted to show that this judgment was wrong, and that without moving the fleet off Lesbos they could easily repel the force coming

4 The Isthmus of Corinth, where ships could be hauled overland between the Corinthian Gulf and the Saronic Gulf, which faces Athens.

from the Peloponnese as well. So they manned a hundred ships, and they went aboard themselves, all except the cavalry class and the pentacosiomedimni, together with the metics. They sailed along the Isthmus, made a show of their strength, and landed on the Peloponnese wherever they pleased.[5] The Spartans saw much that went against their expectations. They concluded that what the Lesbians had told them was not true and judged the plan impracticable. Their allies had not turned up together with them, and news came as well that the thirty Athenian ships around the Peloponnese were plundering the territory of their perioeci. So they went back home. Later they began preparing a fleet to send to Lesbos. They ordered the cities to supply forty ships in all and appointed Alcidas admiral, to sail with it. The Athenians, too, withdrew with their hundred ships once they saw that the Spartans had gone. 3.17 [At the time when these ships were at sea, the Athenians had about the largest number of ships in active service at once that they ever had, and in the finest trim, though they had as many or even more at the start of the war. A hundred guarded Attica, Euboea and Salamis, and another hundred were around the Peloponnese, besides those at Potidaea and in other places. So in a single summer there were two hundred and fifty in all at once. This, together with Potidaea, was what drained their funds most. Potidaea was garrisoned by hoplites paid two drachmas a day, for each man received a drachma a day for himself and one for his attendant. There were three thousand at first, and no fewer than that number stayed to the end of the siege. Another sixteen hundred were with Phormio, and they left before the end. All the ships drew the same pay. In this way, then, their money was drained at first, and this was the largest number of ships they manned.][6] 3.18 At the same time as the Spartans were at the Isthmus, the Mytileneans marched by land against Methymna, both they and their mercenaries, believing it was

5 The cavalry class and the pentacosiomedimni ("five-hundred-bushel men") were the two wealthiest property classes at Athens, normally exempt from rowing.
6 The Greek text is uncertain here.

about to be betrayed to them. They attacked the city, but when things did not go as they had expected, they went off to Antissa, Pyrrha and Eresus. There they put affairs in these cities on a firmer footing and strengthened the walls, and then went home in haste. Once they had withdrawn, the Methymnaeans in their turn marched against Antissa. But the Antissaeans and the mercenaries made a sally and beat them: many were killed, and the rest hurried back.[7] When the Athenians learned of this, that the Mytileneans were masters of the land and that their own soldiers were not enough to hem them in, they sent out Paches son of Epicurus as general, just as autumn was beginning, with a thousand of their own hoplites. These men rowed their ships themselves. On arrival they walled Mytilene round with a single wall, and at some points on strong ground forts were built into it. So Mytilene was now firmly shut in on both sides, by land and by sea, and the winter was beginning.

3.19 The Athenians needed more money for the siege. They then for the first time paid a property tax themselves, raising two hundred talents, and they also sent out twelve ships to the allies to collect money, with Lysicles and four others as generals. Lysicles went about collecting money and sailing from place to place. He went inland from Myus in Caria through the plain of the Maeander as far as the hill of Sandius, and there the Carians and the people of Anaia attacked. He himself was killed, along with many of the rest of his force.[8]

THE ESCAPE FROM PLATAEA

On a stormy night half the besieged Plataeans scale the enemy wall and escape to Athens.

3.20 In the same winter the Plataeans were still being besieged by the Peloponnesians and Boeotians. They were hard pressed as their grain ran short, there was no hope of help from Athens,

7 Methymna, Antissa, Pyrrha and Eresus were the other cities of Lesbos besides Mytilene. Methymna had stayed on the Athenian side in the revolt.
8 The property tax (eisphora) was a direct levy on wealthy Athenians in wartime.

and no other way of rescue was in sight. So they made a plan, together with the Athenians besieged with them. At first they all planned to go out and cross the enemy's walls, if they could force their way over. The attempt was proposed to them by Theaenetus son of Tolmides, a seer, and Eupompides son of Daimachus, who was also their general. Then half of them somehow lost heart, thinking the danger too great. But about two hundred and twenty held to the break-out as volunteers, and it was made in the following way. They made ladders equal in height to the enemy's wall. They worked out the height by counting the courses of bricks, at a place where the wall facing them happened not to be plastered over. Many men counted the courses at the same time. Some were bound to get it wrong, but most would arrive at the true figure, especially as they counted many times and were not far away either, but could easily see the part of the wall they wanted. In this way, then, they got the measurement for the ladders, calculating it from the thickness of a brick. 3.21 The Peloponnesian wall was built as follows. It had two circuits, one facing Plataea and the other facing outward in case anyone attacked from Athens, and the two circuits were about sixteen feet apart. This space between them [the sixteen feet] had been built up with quarters allotted to the guards. These were continuous, so that it looked like a single thick wall with battlements on both sides. At every tenth battlement there were large towers, as wide as the wall, reaching to both its inner and its outer face, so that there was no way past a tower alongside it; men went through the middle of the towers. So on nights of wet, stormy weather they left the battlements and kept watch from the towers, which were not far apart and were roofed over. Such, then, was the wall by which the Plataeans were shut in. 3.22 When their preparations were complete, they waited for a night that was stormy with rain and wind and moonless as well, and went out. They were led by the very men who had been responsible for the attempt. First they crossed the ditch that surrounded them. Then they reached the enemy's wall without being seen by the guards. In the darkness the guards could not see them

coming, and they did not hear the noise of their approach because the wind drowned it with its own rattling. The men also kept well apart as they went, so that their weapons would not knock against each other and give them away. They were lightly equipped, and had a shoe on the left foot only, to keep a firm footing in the mud. They came up to the battlements at a point between two towers, knowing that the battlements were unmanned. First came the men carrying the ladders, who set them against the wall. Then twelve lightly armed men with daggers and breastplates went up, led by Ammeas son of Coroebus, who was the first to climb. After him his followers went up, six toward each of the two towers. After these came other light troops with javelins. Others behind them carried their shields, so that they could climb more easily, and were to hand them over when they were up against the enemy. When more of them had got to the top, the guards in the towers noticed them. One of the Plataeans, grabbing hold of the battlements, had knocked off a tile, which crashed as it fell. At once there was shouting, and the army rushed to the wall, for on a dark and stormy night it did not know what the danger was. At the same time the Plataeans left behind in the city came out and attacked the Peloponnesian wall on the side opposite to where their own men were climbing over, so that the enemy would pay as little attention to the climbers as possible. So there was confusion, though the men stayed at their posts. No one dared leave his own station to help; they were at a loss to guess what was happening. Their three hundred, who had been assigned to bring help wherever it might be needed, went outside the wall toward the shouting. Fire signals warning of an enemy attack were raised toward Thebes. But the Plataeans in the city also raised many fire signals from their own wall, which they had prepared beforehand for this very purpose. They wanted to make the enemy's signals unclear, so that the Thebans would take what was happening for something other than what it was, and would not come to help before their own men who were going out had escaped and reached safety. [3.23] Meanwhile the Plataeans who

were climbing over had their first men up. These killed the guards of both towers and took control of them. They posted themselves in the towers' passageways and held them, so that no one could come through to help. Then they set ladders from the wall against the towers and brought more men up. Those on the towers kept off the enemy coming to help with missiles, both from below and from above, while the majority set up many ladders, pushed down the battlements and crossed over through the space between the towers. Each man, as he got across, halted on the edge of the ditch, and from there they shot arrows and threw javelins at anyone who came along the wall to help and tried to block the crossing. When they had all got across, the last men came down from the towers with difficulty and made for the ditch, and at that moment the three hundred bore down on them carrying torches. The Plataeans, standing out of the darkness on the edge of the ditch, could see them all the better, and shot arrows and threw javelins at their unprotected sides. They themselves were in the dark, and the torches made them harder to see. So even the last of the Plataeans got across the ditch in time, though with difficulty and a hard struggle. For ice had formed in it that was not firm enough to walk on, but slushy, as it is when the wind is east [or north]. The night, with snow falling in such a wind, had also filled the ditch with water, and they barely kept their heads above it as they crossed. In fact, their escape owed more than anything to the severity of the storm. [3.24] Setting off from the ditch, the Plataeans went in a body along the road leading to Thebes, keeping the shrine of the hero Androcrates on their right. They thought that this road, the one toward the enemy, was the last one they would be suspected of taking. At the same time they could see the Peloponnesians pursuing with torches along the road toward Cithaeron and Dryoscephalae, the one leading to Athens. For six or seven stades the Plataeans went along the Thebes road. Then they turned off and took the road leading to the mountains, toward Erythrae and Hysiae. Reaching the hills, they escaped to Athens: two hun-

dred and twelve men out of a larger number.[9] Some of them had turned back to the city before climbing over, and one, an archer, was captured at the outer ditch. The Peloponnesians, then, returned to their posts and gave up their efforts to help. The Plataeans in the city knew nothing of what had happened, and those who had turned back reported to them that no one had survived. So when day came they sent out a herald and asked for a truce to take up the dead, but on learning the truth they let it drop. In this way, then, these men of Plataea climbed over and were saved.

3.25 Toward the end of the same winter, Salaethus the Spartan was sent from Sparta to Mytilene in a trireme. He sailed to Pyrrha and went on from there on foot along a ravine, where the siege wall could be crossed. He got into Mytilene unseen and told the magistrates that there would be an invasion of Attica, and that at the same time the forty ships that were to help them would arrive. He himself, he said, had been sent ahead for this reason and also to take charge of everything else. The Mytileneans took heart and were less inclined to come to terms with the Athenians. So the winter ended, and with it the fourth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

MYTILENE SURRENDERS

Sparta's relief fleet delays; the newly armed common people force Mytilene to surrender to Paches.

3.26 In the following summer the Peloponnesians sent off the forty-two ships to Mytilene under the command of Alcidas, who was their admiral. Then they and their allies invaded Attica themselves, so that the Athenians, harassed on both fronts, would be less able to act against the ships sailing in to Mytilene. This invasion was led by Cleomenes on behalf of Pausanias son of Pleistoanax, who was king but still a minor. Cleomenes was his father's brother. In Attica they ravaged what had been cut

9 Cithaeron is the mountain range between Boeotia and Attica, and Dryoscephalae was a pass through it.

down before, [and] whatever had grown up again, and whatever had been passed over in the earlier invasions. This invasion was the hardest on the Athenians after the second. The Peloponnesians kept waiting to hear from Lesbos of some action by the ships, which they supposed had crossed by now, and so they pressed on, ravaging most of the country. But when none of the things they expected happened and their food had run out, they withdrew and dispersed to their cities.

3.27 Meanwhile the ships had not come to the Mytileneans from the Peloponnese but were taking their time, and the Mytileneans' food had run out. So they were forced to come to terms with the Athenians, and this is how it happened. Salaethus, who no longer expected the ships either, armed the common people with heavy arms. They had previously been light-armed, and he meant to make a sortie against the Athenians. But once the people had arms, they no longer obeyed the authorities. They gathered in groups and demanded that the powerful bring the grain out into the open and distribute it to everyone. Otherwise, they said, they would come to terms with the Athenians on their own and hand over the city. 3.28 Those in charge of affairs realized that they could not stop this, and that they would be in danger if they were left out of the agreement. So together with the people they made an agreement with Paches and the army. Under it the Athenians were to be free to decide whatever they wished about the Mytileneans, and the Mytileneans were to receive the army into the city and send an embassy to Athens to plead their own case. Until the envoys came back, Paches was not to imprison, enslave or put to death any Mytilenean. This was the agreement that was made. But the Mytileneans who had been most involved in the dealings with the Spartans were terrified, and when the army entered they could not contain themselves, and sat down at the altars in spite of it. Paches raised them up, promising not to harm them, and placed them on Tenedos until the Athenians should reach a decision. He also

sent triremes to Antissa and won it over, and he settled the other military matters as he thought best.[10]

3.29 The Peloponnesians in the forty ships, who should have arrived quickly, wasted time sailing around the Peloponnese itself and made a leisurely voyage the rest of the way. They went unnoticed by the Athenians in the city until they put in at Delos. From there they touched at Icarus and Myconos, and there they first learned that Mytilene had been taken. Wanting to know for certain, they sailed to Embatum in the territory of Erythrae. It was about seven days after Mytilene's capture that they sailed in to Embatum. Having learned the truth for certain, they discussed what to do in the circumstances, and Teutiaplus, a man of Elis, spoke to them as follows:[11]

3.30 "Alcidas, and you leaders of the Peloponnesian force who are here, my view is that we should sail for Mytilene before our arrival becomes known, just as we are. In all likelihood we shall find men who have only recently taken a city very much off their guard. That will be true above all at sea, where they do not expect any enemy to come upon them, and where our strength happens chiefly to lie. Their infantry too is likely to be scattered rather carelessly among the houses, as men who have won. So if we fell on them suddenly and by night, I hope that with the help of those inside, if any of our well-wishers are still left there, we could take control of the situation. Let us not shrink from the risk. Let us consider that the openings of war are nothing other than this. A general who guards against such an opening in his own forces, and who watches for it in the enemy and attacks, will most often succeed."

3.31 He said this much, but he did not persuade Alcidas. Some others, exiles from Ionia, and the Lesbians who were sailing with the fleet, then urged him to do something else, since he was afraid of this risk. They urged him to seize one of the cities

10 By sitting at an altar a person became a suppliant, under the protection of the god. Tenedos is an island off the coast of the Troad, north of Lesbos.

11 Erythrae was an Ionian city on the mainland of Asia Minor, opposite the island of Chios.

in Ionia, or Cyme in Aeolis, so that with a city as their base they could bring Ionia to revolt. There was hope of this, they said, since their arrival had been unwelcome to no one. They could also take away this revenue, the Athenians' largest, and at the same time, if the Athenians blockaded them, the cost would fall on the Athenians. They also thought they could persuade Pissuthnes to join them in the war. But Alcidas would not accept this either. Since he had come too late for Mytilene, his mind was set above all on getting back to the Peloponnese as quickly as possible.[12] 3.32 Putting out from Embatum, he sailed along the coast. He put in at Myonnesus, which belongs to the people of Teos, and there he slaughtered most of the prisoners he had taken on the voyage. When he anchored at Ephesus, envoys came to him from the Samians at Anaia. They told him that this was no fine way to free Greece, killing men who had neither raised a hand against him nor were his enemies, but were allies of the Athenians by compulsion. If he did not stop, they said, he would win over few of his enemies to friendship and turn far more of his friends into enemies. He was persuaded, and released the Chians he still held and some of the others. These people had not fled when they saw the ships. They had come up to them instead, taking them for Athenian. They had not the slightest expectation that, while the Athenians controlled the sea, Peloponnesian ships would ever cross over to Ionia.[13] 3.33 From Ephesus Alcidas sailed off in haste, making his departure a flight. He had been sighted by the *Salaminia* and the *Paralus* while still anchored off Clarus, for they happened to be sailing from Athens. Fearing pursuit, he sailed across the open sea, meaning to touch land of his own accord nowhere but in the Peloponnese.[14]

Meanwhile news reached Paches and the Athenians from the territory of Erythrae, and it was arriving from every other

12 Pissuthnes was the Persian governor (satrap) at Sardis. Cyme was the chief city of Aeolis, the Greek coastland north of Ionia.

13 Anaia, on the mainland opposite Samos, was held by Samian exiles hostile to Athens.

quarter as well. Since Ionia was unwalled, there was great fear that the Peloponnesians, sailing along the coast, might fall on the cities as they went and sack them, even if they did not mean to stay. The *Paralus* and the *Salaminia*, which had seen him at Clarus, brought the report themselves. Paches went after him in haste and chased him as far as the island of Patmos, but when it was clear that he could no longer be overtaken, he turned back. Since he had not caught them on the open sea, he counted it a gain that they had not been trapped anywhere and forced to set up camp, which would have given him the task of guarding and blockading them. 3.34 On his way back along the coast he also put in at Notium, the port of the Colophonians. Colophonians had settled there after their upper city was captured by Itamenes and the non-Greeks, who had been brought in by one side in a local factional quarrel. It was captured at about the time the second Peloponnesian invasion of Attica was taking place. Now those who had taken refuge and settled at Notium fell into civil strife once again. One side brought in mercenaries from Pissuthnes, Arcadians and non-Greeks, and kept them in a walled-off quarter; and those Colophonians from the upper city who had sided with the Persians came in with them and ran the city. The other side, who had slipped away from them and were in exile, called in Paches.[15] Paches invited Hippias, the commander of the Arcadians in the walled quarter, to a parley, on the understanding that if he said nothing acceptable, Paches would put him back in the fort safe and sound. Hippias came out to him. Paches kept him under guard, though not in chains, and himself made a sudden attack on the fort while they were not expecting it, took it, and killed the Arcadians and all the non-Greeks who were inside. Afterward he brought Hippias into the fort, as he had agreed, and once he was inside, seized him and shot him down with arrows. He handed Notium over to the

14 The Salaminia and the Paralus were the two official state triremes of Athens, used for public missions and dispatches.

15 Notium was the harbor town of Colophon, on the Ionian coast north of Ephesus. The second invasion of Attica took place in 430 BC.

Colophonians, except for those who had sided with the Persians. Later the Athenians sent out founders and resettled Notium under their own laws, gathering in all the Colophonians to be found anywhere in the cities.

3.35 When Paches reached Mytilene, he brought Pyrrha and Eresus to terms. He caught Salaethus the Spartan hiding in the city and sent him off to Athens, together with the Mytilenean men he had deposited at Tenedos and anyone else he thought responsible for the revolt. He also sent away the greater part of his army, and staying on with the rest, he settled affairs in Mytilene and the rest of Lesbos as he thought best.[16]

THE MYTILENEAN DEBATE

Athens votes to kill all the men of Mytilene, then reconsiders: Cleon against Diodotus.

3.36 When the men and Salaethus arrived, the Athenians put Salaethus to death at once, although he offered, among other things, to get the Peloponnesians to withdraw from Plataea, which was still under siege. About the men they held a debate, and in their anger they decided to kill not only those who were there but all the adult men of Mytilene, and to enslave the women and children. They held the revolt against them as a whole, because they had made it without being subjects like the others; and what added not a little to their fury was that the Peloponnesian ships had dared to venture all the way to Ionia to help them, for the revolt did not seem to have been undertaken on a moment's impulse. So they sent a trireme to Paches to announce what had been decided, with orders to make an end of the Mytileneans quickly. The very next day, however, a change of heart came over them, and they began to reckon that the decision they had made was cruel and monstrous: to destroy a whole city rather than only those responsible. When the Mytilenean envoys who were in Athens and the Athenians who were working with them became aware of this, they got the authorit-

16 Pyrrha and Eresus were towns on Lesbos that had joined Mytilene in the revolt.

ies to put the matter to debate again. They persuaded them the more easily because it was plain to the authorities too that most of the citizens wanted someone to give them the chance to deliberate again. An assembly was called at once, and various opinions were put forward by different speakers. Among them was Cleon son of Cleaenetus, who had carried the earlier motion to put them to death. He was the most violent of the citizens in other respects as well, and at that time by far the most persuasive with the people; he came forward again and spoke as follows:[17]

CLEON'S SPEECH

Cleon urges Athens to keep its decision: the empire is a tyranny, and rebels must die.

3.37 "I have often realized before now, on other occasions too, that a democracy is incapable of ruling others, but never more than in your present change of heart about the Mytileneans. Because in your daily life you are free of fear and intrigue in your dealings with one another, you take the same attitude toward your allies. Whenever you make a mistake because their arguments have persuaded you, or give way out of pity, you don't reckon that this softness is dangerous to you and wins you no gratitude from the allies. You fail to see that the empire you hold is a tyranny, imposed on people who plot against you and are ruled against their will. They obey you not because of any favors you do them to your own cost, but because of whatever superiority you gain over them by strength rather than by their goodwill. Most dreadful of all is the prospect that nothing we decide will stand firm, and that we will not recognize that a city with worse laws that are kept unchanged is stronger than one with good laws that have no authority; that lack of learning joined with self-restraint is more useful than cleverness joined with indiscipline; and that ordinary people, compared with the more

17 Cleon was the leading popular politician in Athens in the years after Pericles' death (429 BC).

intelligent, generally run their cities better. For the clever want to appear wiser than the laws and to outdo every speech made in public debate, as though there were no weightier matters in which to show off their judgment; and by behaving like this they usually bring their cities to grief. The others, distrusting their own intelligence, are content to be less learned than the laws and less able to find fault with the arguments of a fine speaker; and being impartial judges rather than competitors, they mostly get things right. That, then, is how we too should act, instead of being carried away by cleverness and contests of wit into giving you, the people, advice that goes against our own judgment.

3.38 As for me, I hold the same view as before. I am amazed at those who have proposed debating the Mytileneans again and so have caused delay, which works rather to the advantage of the wrongdoers. For the victim goes after the offender with his anger blunted, whereas a reprisal that follows as closely as possible on the injury matches it best and exacts the fullest vengeance. And I am amazed, too, at whoever is going to speak against me and claim to show that the Mytileneans' crimes are beneficial to us, and that our misfortunes are a loss to the allies. Clearly he will either trust in his eloquence and strive to prove that what has been thoroughly decided has not been decided at all, or else, spurred on by gain, he will labor to produce a specious speech and try to lead you astray. In contests of this kind the city gives the prizes to others and bears the risks itself. You are to blame, for staging these contests badly. You are in the habit of being spectators of words and listeners to deeds. You judge future deeds possible because fine speakers say so; and as for deeds already done, you do not take what was done, which you saw with your own eyes, as more credible than what you have heard, but rely on those who have criticized it in fine words. You are the best at being deceived by novelty in argument and at refusing to follow what has been tested; you are slaves to every new paradox and scorners of the familiar. Each of you wants above all to be able to speak himself, and failing that, you compete with those who make such speeches so as not

to seem to lag behind in following their thought. You applaud a sharp point before it is even made, and you are as quick to anticipate what is being said as you are slow to foresee its consequences. You are looking, so to speak, for some world other than the one we live in, yet you do not think adequately even about what is in front of you. In short, you are overcome by the pleasure of listening, and are more like an audience sitting at a display by sophists than men deliberating about their city.[18]

3.39 Trying to turn you from these habits, I declare that the Mytileneans have wronged you more than any single city ever has. For my part, I can make allowance for those who revolted because they could not bear your rule, or because they were forced to by the enemy. But these people held an island with walls; they had to fear our enemies only by sea, and even there they were not unprotected against them, with their own force of triremes; they lived autonomously and were held by us in the highest honor—and they did this. What else is this but a conspiracy and an uprising rather than a revolt (revolt, after all, is what people do when they are treated with violence), an attempt to destroy us by taking their stand alongside our bitterest enemies? And yet that is more dreadful than if they had built up power of their own and made war on us. The disasters of their neighbors, those who have already revolted from us and been subdued, were no lesson to them, nor did the prosperity they enjoyed make them hesitate before running into danger. Growing overconfident about the future, and forming hopes that went beyond their power though they fell short of their ambition, they took up war, thinking fit to put strength before justice. For at the moment they thought they would prevail, they attacked us, without having been wronged. It is usual for cities to which prosperity comes most unexpectedly and most suddenly to turn to arrogance. In general, good fortune that comes to people as calculation would lead them to expect is safer than good fortune beyond expectation; and men, one might say, find it easier to

18 Sophists were professional teachers of rhetoric and other subjects who gave public displays of their skill.

fend off adversity than to preserve prosperity. The Mytileneans ought long ago to have been treated by us no differently from the others, and then they would not have gone to such lengths of arrogance; for it is human nature in any case to despise those who court one and to admire those who do not give way. Let them be punished now as their crime deserves, and do not lay the blame on the few while you acquit the people. For they all attacked you alike—though they could have turned to our side and would now be back in their city. Instead they reckoned that the risk shared with the few was the safer one, and joined in the revolt. Consider your allies. If you impose the same penalties on those forced to revolt by the enemy and on those who revolt of their own accord, who do you think will not revolt on the slightest pretext, when success brings freedom and failure brings no irreparable harm? We, meanwhile, will have to risk our money and our lives against each city in turn. If you succeed, you will take over a ruined city and lose for the future its revenue, which is the source of our strength; if we fail, we will have new enemies on top of those we already have, and the time we ought to spend resisting our present enemies we will spend fighting our own allies.

3.40 So we must not hold out any hope, whether made credible by argument or bought with money, that they will be pardoned because their error was only human. They did not harm us unwillingly; they plotted against us knowingly; and it is what is involuntary that deserves pardon. I, then, both at the start and now, contend that you must not reverse your previous decision, nor go wrong through the three things most damaging to an empire: pity, the pleasure of speeches, and leniency. Pity is properly given in return to people like ourselves, not to those who will feel none for us in return and are, of necessity, our enemies forever; the orators who charm us with their words can have their contest on other, less important matters, not on one where the city will pay a great penalty for a brief pleasure while they themselves are well rewarded for speaking well; and leniency is better shown to those who are going to be our friends in

the future than to those who will remain just as they are and no less our enemies. To sum it up in a word: if you are persuaded by me, you will do what is just toward the Mytileneans and at the same time what is in your interest; if you decide otherwise, you will not win their gratitude, and you will rather be passing sentence on yourselves. For if these people were right to revolt, then you would be wrong to rule. If, however, you think fit to rule even though you have no right to, then these people too must be punished to suit your interest, fair or not—or else you must give up your empire and play the good man in safety. Resolve to pay them back with the same penalty, and do not show yourselves, who escaped, less sensitive than those who plotted against you. Consider what they would likely have done if they had defeated you, especially since they were the aggressors. It is above all those who harm someone without cause who pursue him all the way to destruction, wary of the danger from an enemy left alive; for a man who has suffered without necessity is more dangerous if he escapes than an enemy on equal terms.

Do not, then, become traitors to yourselves. Put yourselves in thought as close as possible to the moment you suffered, and recall how you would have given anything to get them in your power; pay them back now, without growing soft at the present moment or forgetting the danger that once hung over you. Punish them as they deserve, and make them a clear example to the rest of the allies that whoever revolts will be punished with death. For if they know this, you will less often neglect your enemies to fight against your own allies."

DIODOTUS' SPEECH

Diodotus argues that executions do not deter revolt and that mercy serves Athens' interest.

3.41 That was Cleon's speech. After him Diodotus son of Eucrates, who in the earlier assembly too had been the chief speaker

against putting the Mytileneans to death, came forward on this occasion as well and spoke as follows:[19]

3.42 "I neither blame those who have put the question of the Mytileneans up for decision again, nor do I approve of those who object to deliberating more than once on matters of the greatest importance. I think the two things most opposed to good counsel are haste and anger: the first usually goes with folly, the second with lack of education and narrowness of mind. And whoever contends that words are not to be our guide to action is either stupid or has some private interest at stake. He is stupid if he thinks there is any other way of explaining the future, which is not yet visible. He has an interest at stake if he wants to persuade you of something shameful, and, believing he could not speak well for a bad cause, thinks that by slandering well he can intimidate both his opponents and his audience. Hardest of all to deal with are those who go further and accuse a speaker of putting on a display for money. If they charged him only with ignorance, the speaker who failed to persuade would leave seeming more unintelligent than dishonest; but when dishonesty is alleged, he is suspected if he persuades, and if he fails he is thought not only unintelligent but dishonest as well. The city gains nothing from this, for fear robs it of its advisers. It would do best if citizens of this sort were incapable of speaking, for then people would least often be persuaded into making mistakes. The good citizen ought not to intimidate his opponents, but to show himself the better speaker on equal terms. The sensible city ought not to give added honor to the man who most often gives good advice, but not to diminish the honor he already has either; and as for the man whose proposal fails, it ought not only not to punish him but not even to disgrace him. In this way the successful speaker would be least likely to say anything against his own judgment to please the people, in the hope of still greater honors, and the unsuccessful one would be least likely to strive by the same means, by gratifying them, to win the people over to himself.

19 Diodotus is known only from this debate.

3.43 We do the opposite of all this. What is more, if a man is even suspected of speaking for gain, though what he says is the best advice, we begrudge him a gain that is only an uncertain suspicion, and deprive the city of a benefit that is certain. It has come to the point where good advice given straightforwardly is no less suspect than bad, so that a man who wants to persuade you to the most terrible measures has to win the people over by deceit, just as a man who gives better advice has to lie to be believed. Ours is the only city that, because of all this over-subtlety, no one can benefit openly without deceiving it; for anyone who openly offers it something good is suspected in return of somehow secretly getting more for himself. But given how much is at stake, and in such a situation, you must expect us speakers to talk with somewhat more foresight than you who take only a short view, especially since we are accountable for our advice, while you are not accountable for how you listen. If the man who persuaded and those who followed him suffered alike, you would judge more prudently. As it is, whenever you meet with failure, you sometimes punish, in whatever anger you happen to feel, the single judgment of the man who persuaded you, and not your own judgments, many as they were, which shared in the error.

3.44 I have come forward neither to defend the Mytileneans nor to accuse them. If we are sensible, our contest is not about their wrongdoing but about our own good judgment. Even if I prove them utterly guilty, I will not on that account tell you to put them to death, unless it is in our interest; and even if they should have some claim to pardon, I would not urge it unless it seemed good for the city. In my view we are deliberating about the future rather than the present.[20] As for the point Cleon insists on most, that it will be in our interest for the future to make death the penalty so that there are fewer revolts, I too insist on what is best for the future, and I hold the opposite view. And I ask you not to reject the usefulness of my argument because of the attractiveness of his. For his argument, seeming

20 The Greek text is uncertain here.

more just in view of your present anger against the Mytileneans, might well win you over; but we are not taking them to court, where we would need what is just. We are deliberating about them, and how they may be useful to us.

3.45 "Now in our cities the death penalty has been laid down for many offenses, and not for offenses as serious as this one but for lesser ones. People still take the risk, carried away by hope, and no one has yet walked into danger after deciding beforehand that his scheme would fail. And has any city in revolt ever made the attempt with forces it believed were too weak, whether its own or those brought in through alliance with others? All men, by nature, do wrong, both in private and in public, and there is no law that will keep them from it. Men have run through the whole range of penalties, adding to them in the hope of suffering less wrong at the hands of wrongdoers. It is likely that in ancient times the penalties for the greatest crimes were milder. But as the laws went on being broken over time, most of the penalties came round to death, and even this is broken all the same. Either, then, some terror more dreadful than this must be found, or this one at any rate restrains nothing. Poverty makes men daring through necessity. Abundance makes them grasping through insolence and pride. The other conditions of life each hold men in the grip of some irresistible master passion, and through their passions they are driven into danger. Hope and desire are present in every case, desire leading and hope following; desire devises the plan, and hope suggests that chance will supply the means. These do the most harm, and because they are unseen they are stronger than the dangers that can be seen. Chance contributes no less than these to carry men away. She sometimes presents herself unexpectedly and leads a man to take a risk even when his means are inferior. This is no less true of cities, since the stakes are the greatest ones, freedom or rule over others, and each man, acting together with everyone else, irrationally overrates himself. In short, it is impossible, and very naive, for anyone to believe that

when human nature is eagerly set on doing something, it can be turned back by the force of laws or by any other terror.

3.46 "We must not, therefore, trust the death penalty as a guarantee and make a worse decision because of it. Nor must we leave rebels without hope, as though they will have no chance to change their minds and put an end to their error as quickly as possible. Consider this. As things stand, if a city has revolted and realizes that it will not prevail, it may come to terms while it can still repay our costs and pay tribute in future. Under the other policy, what city do you think will not prepare better than now, and hold out under siege to the very last, if surrendering late and surrendering quickly come to the same thing? And how is it not a loss to us to spend money sitting before a city that will not come to terms, and then, if we take it, to receive a ruined city and be deprived of its revenue from then on? It is by this revenue that we are strong against our enemies. So we must not act as strict judges of the offenders and harm ourselves. We should rather see how, by punishing in moderation, we shall be able in future to make use of cities that are strong in financial terms. We should seek our security not in the severity of our laws but in the vigilance of our deeds. At present we do the opposite. If we subdue some free people who were ruled by force and have quite naturally revolted to win independence, we think we must take harsh revenge. But the right course with free people is not to punish them severely when they revolt. It is to watch them severely before they revolt and forestall them, so that they never even come to think of it, and when we have subdued them, to lay the blame on as few as possible.

3.47 "Consider, too, how great a mistake you would make in this respect as well if you follow Cleon. At present the people in all the cities are well disposed to you. Either they do not join the few in revolt, or, if they are forced to, they are at once hostile to those who caused it, and when you go to war you have the common people of the rebel city as your allies. But if you destroy the people of Mytilene, who took no part in the revolt and who handed over the city of their own accord as soon as they got

hold of arms, you will first do wrong by killing your benefactors. You will then bring about for the powerful the very thing they most want: when they bring their cities to revolt, they will at once have the people as their allies, because you will have shown in advance that the same penalty is laid down for the guilty and the innocent alike. Even if the people did do wrong, we should pretend not to notice, so that the one element still allied to us does not become our enemy. I believe it is far more advantageous for holding on to our empire that we should willingly suffer wrong than that we should justly destroy those we ought not to destroy. Cleon claims that the same punishment is both just and advantageous, but in this case the two prove impossible to achieve at once.

3.48 "Recognize that this is the better course. Do not give too much weight to pity or to leniency, for I would not have you swayed by these either. On the strength of the advice itself, do as I say: try at your leisure those Mytileneans whom Paches sent here as guilty, and let the rest go on living in their city. This course is good for the future and alarming to our enemies already. For whoever plans well against his opponents is stronger than one who attacks them recklessly with brute force."

THE SECOND TRIREME

Diodotus narrowly wins; a second ship races to Mytilene and arrives just in time.

3.49 That was what Diodotus said. After these sharply opposed opinions had been put forward, the Athenians were still divided in their views, and in the show of hands the two sides were nearly equal, but Diodotus' proposal prevailed. They at once sent off a second trireme in haste, so that the first would not arrive ahead of it and they would find the city destroyed. The first ship had a start of about a day and a night. The Mytilenean envoys provided the ship with wine and barley-meal and promised a large reward if the crew got there first. The voyage was made in such haste that the men ate barley-meal kneaded with

wine and olive oil as they rowed, and they took turns, some sleeping while the others rowed. By luck no wind blew against them. The first ship was in no hurry on its monstrous errand, while this one pressed on in the way described, so the first arrived only so far ahead that Paches had read the decree and was about to carry out what had been decided, when the second put in after it and prevented the destruction. That was how close Mytilene came to disaster. 3.50 The other men, whom Paches had sent to Athens as the people most to blame for the revolt, the Athenians put to death on Cleon's motion; there were a little more than a thousand of them. They also pulled down the walls of Mytilene and took over its ships. Later they did not impose tribute on the Lesbians. Instead they divided the land, except that of Methymna, into three thousand lots. Three hundred of these they set apart as sacred to the gods, and to the rest they sent out cleruchs of their own, chosen by lot. The Lesbians agreed to pay these men two minas of silver a year for each lot and worked the land themselves. The Athenians also took over the towns on the mainland that the Mytileneans had controlled, and these were afterward subject to Athens. That was how things went on Lesbos.[21]

3.51 In the same summer, after the capture of Lesbos, the Athenians campaigned under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus against the island of Minoa, which lies off Megara. The Megarians had built a tower on it and were using it as a fort. Nicias wanted the Athenians to keep watch from there, at closer range, instead of from Budorum and Salamis. He also wanted to stop the Peloponnesians from slipping out from there unobserved, whether with triremes, as had happened before, or by sending out pirates, and at the same time to stop anything from sailing in to the Megarians.[22] So he first used siege engines from the sea to capture two towers projecting from the Nisaea side.

21 Cleruchs were Athenian citizens given allotments of land abroad. A mina was a sum of 100 drachmas.

22 Minoa was a small island just off Nisaea, the port of Megara. Budorum was an Athenian fort on Salamis facing Megara.

This opened up the passage into the channel between the island and the shore. He then also walled off the approach from the mainland, where help could reach the island by a bridge across a shallow marsh, since the island is not far from the mainland. When they had finished this work in a few days, he left a fort and a garrison on the island as well and withdrew with his army.

THE FALL OF PLATAEA

The Plataeans and Thebans plead before Spartan judges.

3.52 At about the same point in this summer the Plataeans, too, came to terms with the Peloponnesians. They had no grain left and could no longer withstand the siege, and terms were reached in the following way. The Peloponnesians were attacking their wall, and the Plataeans were unable to defend themselves. The Spartan commander recognized their weakness but did not want to take the place by force. He had instructions from Sparta that if a treaty were ever made with the Athenians, and both sides agreed to return the places each held as a result of the war, Plataea should not have to be given back, on the grounds that its people had come over of their own accord. So he sent them a herald to ask whether they were willing to surrender their city voluntarily to the Spartans and accept them as judges. The Spartans would punish the guilty, but no one contrary to justice. That was what the herald said, and the Plataeans, who were by now at their weakest, surrendered the city. The Peloponnesians fed the Plataeans for some days, until the judges from Sparta, five men, arrived. When they came, no charge was brought. Instead they summoned the Plataeans and asked them only this: whether they had done the Spartans and their allies any good [at all] in the present war. The Plataeans asked to speak at greater length and put forward from among themselves Astymachus son of Asopolaus and Lacon son of Aeimnestus, who was the Spartans' proxenos. These came forward and spoke as follows:

THE PLATAEANS' PLEA

The Plataeans recall their service against the Persians and beg the Spartans to spare them.

3.53 "Spartans, we surrendered our city because we trusted you. We did not expect to face a trial of this kind but one more in keeping with law, and we accepted being tried by no other judges [than you], as we now are, believing that from you above all we would receive fair treatment. Now we fear that we have been mistaken on both counts. We have good reason to suspect that this trial is over the most terrible stakes and that you will not prove impartial. We judge this from two things. No accusation was first brought against us that we could answer; we ourselves had to ask to speak. And the question is short: a true answer tells against us, while a false one can be refuted. Since we are at a loss on every side, we are compelled to speak, and it seems safer to say something and take the risk. For men in our situation, a speech left unspoken might later give rise to the reproach that it would have saved them had it been made. Besides everything else, persuasion itself is hard for us. If we did not know each other, we might help ourselves by bringing evidence of things you knew nothing about. As it is, everything will be said to people who already know it. What we fear is not that you have already judged our excellence inferior to yours and are making that the charge against us. We fear that, to please others, we are being brought before a verdict already decided. 3.54 Nevertheless, we shall present the just claims we have, both regarding our quarrel with the Thebans and with respect to you and the rest of the Greeks. We shall remind you of the good we have done and try to persuade you.

"To the short question, whether we have done the Spartans and their allies any good in this war, we reply as follows. If you are asking us as enemies, you are not wronged by not having been treated well. If you regard us as friends, then the ones at fault are rather you who marched against us. In peacetime and

against the Persians we have shown ourselves good men. We have not now been the first to break the peace, and back then we alone of the Boeotians joined in the attack on the Persians for the freedom of Greece. Although we are an inland people, we fought in the sea battle at Artemisium. In the battle fought on our own land we stood beside you and Pausanias. Whatever other danger arose for the Greeks at that time, we took part in all of it beyond our strength. And to you in particular, Spartans, when Sparta was gripped by the greatest fear after the earthquake, when the helots had revolted and withdrawn to Ithome, we sent a third of our own men to help. It would not be right to forget these things.[23]

3.55 "That is the part we chose to play in the old days and in the greatest matters. We became your enemies later, and you were to blame. When the Thebans were using force against us and we asked you for an alliance, you pushed us away and told us to turn to the Athenians, because they were near and you lived far off. In the war, however, you have neither suffered nor been threatened with anything out of the ordinary at our hands. If we refused to revolt from the Athenians when you told us to, we did no wrong. They had helped us against the Thebans when you held back, and it was no longer honorable to betray them. This was all the more so because we had been well treated by them, had ourselves asked to become their allies, and had received a share in their citizenship. It was only reasonable for us to answer their summons readily. And whatever either of you leaders directs your allies to do, if something wrong is done, it is not the followers who are to blame but those who lead them into what is not right.

3.56 "The Thebans have done us many other wrongs, and the latest you know yourselves; it is the very reason we are suffering all this. They were seizing our city in time of peace and during a holy month as well. We punished them rightly, in accordance with the law established for everyone, that it is sanctioned by

23 Artemisium was the sea battle of 480 BC. The battle on Plataean land is the battle of Plataea, 479 BC, where Pausanias commanded the Greek forces.

the gods to defend oneself against an enemy who attacks. We could not now reasonably be made to suffer on their account. If you make your own immediate advantage and their hostility toward us your standard of justice, you will show that you are not true judges of what is right but are rather serving your self-interest.[24] And yet, if they seem useful to you now, we and the other Greeks were far more useful then, when you were in greater danger. Now it is you who go on the attack and threaten others. But at that moment, when the foreign invader was bringing slavery upon everyone, these men were on his side. It is just to set our zeal then against our error now, if indeed we have committed any error. You will find the zeal greater than the fault. It was shown at a time when it was rare for any Greek to set his courage against the power of Xerxes. And those were praised more highly who did not look to their own advantage and safety in the face of the invasion but were willing to dare the best course amid dangers. We were among these and were honored among the foremost, and now we fear we shall be destroyed for the very same things, for having chosen the Athenians justly rather than you for profit. Yet you ought to be seen judging the same things consistently in the same way. You ought to regard as advantageous nothing other than this: that good allies should always keep secure your gratitude for their excellence, while your immediate interest is also served in some way.

3.57 "Consider also that at present most Greeks regard you as a model of noble conduct. If you reach an improper verdict about us (and this case will not go unnoticed, since you who judge it are admired and we are not men to be despised), take care that they do not refuse to accept an unseemly verdict passed on good men by men who are better still, or the dedication in the common temples of spoils taken from us, the benefactors of Greece. It will seem a terrible thing that the Spartans sacked Plataea, and that your fathers inscribed our city on the tripod at Delphi for its excellence, while you wiped it out, every household of it,

24 A holy month was a sacred period during which festivals were held and fighting was forbidden.

from the whole Greek world for the sake of the Thebans.[25] This is the depth of misfortune we have reached. When the Persians prevailed, we were ruined; and now, before you who were once our dearest friends, we are being worsted by the Thebans. We have faced two of the greatest ordeals: then, the threat of being destroyed by famine if we did not surrender the city; now, a trial for our lives. We Plataeans, who were devoted to the Greeks beyond our strength, have been thrust aside by everyone, deserted and with no one to avenge us. None of our allies of that time helps us, and you, Spartans, our only hope, we fear are not steadfast.

3.58 "And yet we ask you, for the sake of the gods who once witnessed our alliance and for the sake of our excellence toward the Greeks, to relent and change your minds if the Thebans have persuaded you of anything. We ask you to demand from them in return the favor of not killing those whom it does not become you to kill. Win a decent gratitude instead of a shameful one, and do not give pleasure to others only to receive disgrace for yourselves in return. Destroying our bodies is quickly done, but wiping out the infamy of it is hard work. For it is not enemies you would be justly punishing, but friends who made war on you under compulsion. So by granting us our lives you would be judging in accordance with what is sacred. Bear in mind that we surrendered of our own will and held out our hands to you, and the law among the Greeks is not to kill such people, and moreover that we have been your benefactors throughout. Look at the tombs of your fathers, who were killed by the Persians and buried in our land. Every year we honored them at public expense with garments and the other customary rites, bringing them the first fruits of everything our land produced in season, as friends from a friendly country and as allies to men who were once our comrades in arms. If you judged wrongly, you would do the opposite. Consider: Pausanias buried them believing that he was laying them in friendly soil and among men like us. But

25 After the victory at Plataea the Greeks dedicated a golden tripod at Delphi inscribed with the names of the states that had fought the Persians.

if you kill us and make the land of Plataea Theban, what else will you be doing but leaving your fathers and kinsmen in hostile ground among their murderers, deprived of the honors they now receive? What is more, you will enslave the land in which the Greeks won their freedom. You will leave desolate the temples of the gods to whom they prayed before they defeated the Persians, and you will take away the ancestral sacrifices from those who established and founded them.

3.59 "It is not in keeping with your reputation, Spartans, to do such things. You should not offend against the common customs of the Greeks and against your ancestors, nor destroy us, your benefactors, for the sake of someone else's enmity when you yourselves have suffered no wrong. Spare us instead, and let your judgment relent, moved by a prudent pity. Consider not only how terrible our fate will be, but also who we are who would suffer it, and how unpredictable misfortune is, since it may strike anyone at all, even one who does not deserve it. For our part, as is fitting for us and as our need compels, we beg you to be persuaded in this, and we call upon the gods whom the Greeks worship in common at shared altars. We hold before you the oaths your fathers swore, and we ask you not to forget them. We become suppliants at your fathers' tombs, and we call upon the dead not to let us fall into the power of the Thebans, nor to let their dearest friends be handed over to their bitterest enemies. We remind you, too, of that day on which we achieved the most glorious deeds alongside them, we who now, on this day, are in danger of suffering the most terrible fate. Now we must do what is necessary and yet hardest for people in our position: bring our speech to an end, since with its end the danger to our lives also draws near. In closing, we say this. It was not to the Thebans that we surrendered our city. Rather than that, we would have chosen to die of starvation, the most shameful of deaths. We came over to you, trusting you. And it is only just, if we cannot persuade you, that you restore us to our former position and let us choose for ourselves whatever danger befalls us. At the same time we solemnly charge you, Spartans: do not let

us, the Plataeans, who were the most zealous of all in the cause of the Greeks, be handed over out of your hands and your good faith, suppliants as we are, to the Thebans, our bitterest enemies. Become our saviors instead, and do not destroy us while you are freeing the rest of the Greeks."

THE THEBANS' REPLY

The Thebans answer that Plataea chose Athens and deserves no mercy.

3.60 Such was the speech of the Plataeans. The Thebans were afraid that the Spartans might give way somewhat in response to it. So they came forward and said that they too wished to speak, since the Plataeans had been allowed, against the Thebans' own wishes, a longer speech than an answer to the question required. When the Spartans told them to go ahead, they spoke as follows:

3.61 "We would not have asked to make a speech if the Plataeans themselves had given a short answer to the question put to them. Instead, they turned on us and made accusations. They also offered a long defense of themselves on matters outside the question at hand, on which they had not even been accused, and praised themselves for things no one had found fault with. As it is, we must answer some of what they said and refute the rest, so that neither our supposed wickedness nor their good name may do them any good, and so that you may hear the truth about both of us before you decide.

"Our quarrel with them began like this. We founded Plataea later than the rest of Boeotia, together with other places that we took over after driving out a mixed population. These people refused to accept our leadership, as had been arranged at the start. Instead they cut themselves off from the other Boeotians, transgressing the customs of their ancestors, and when pressure was brought to bear on them they went over to the Athenians. With the Athenians they did us a great deal of harm, and for this they suffered harm in return.

3.62 "Then, when the Persian came against Greece, they claim that they alone of the Boeotians did not side with the Persians, and it is this above all that they pride themselves on and use to abuse us. We say that they did not side with the Persians only because the Athenians did not either. Later, on the same principle, when the Athenians attacked the Greeks, they alone of the Boeotians sided with Athens. Yet consider under what conditions each of us acted. At that time our city was governed neither as an oligarchy in which all had equal rights under the law, nor as a democracy. What held power was the thing most opposed to laws and to sound, moderate government, and closest to a tyranny: a narrow clique of a few men. These men hoped to increase their private power still further if the Persian cause prevailed, and so, holding the people down by force, they brought him in. The city as a whole did this when it was not its own master, and it is not right to reproach it for errors it committed when it was not living under laws. At any rate, after the Persian had gone and the city had recovered its laws, you should consider what happened next. When the Athenians later attacked the rest of Greece and tried to bring our country too under their control, and through civil strife already held most of it, did we not fight them at Coronea, defeat them and free Boeotia? And are we not now eagerly helping to free the others, supplying cavalry and forces on a scale that none of the other allies can match?[26]

3.63 "That is our defense on the charge of siding with the Persians. Now we shall try to show that it is you who have done the Greeks more wrong and who deserve every punishment. It was, as you say, to protect yourselves against us that you became allies and citizens of the Athenians. In that case you ought to have brought them in against us alone, and not joined them in attacking others. That course was open to you, even if you really were being drawn in by the Athenians against your will, since the alliance with the Spartans here against the Persian had

26 At the battle of Coronea in 447 BC the Boeotians defeated the Athenians and ended Athenian control of Boeotia.

already been made, the very alliance you yourselves make so much of. It was quite enough to keep us off you and, what matters most, to let you make your decisions without fear. But you chose the Athenian side willingly, no longer under any compulsion. You say it would have been shameful to betray your benefactors. Yet it was far more shameful and more unjust to betray all the Greeks, with whom you had sworn an oath, than to betray the Athenians alone, when the Athenians were enslaving Greece and the others were freeing it. And the favor you returned them was not equal to theirs, nor free of disgrace. You called them in, as you say, because you were being wronged; but you became their accomplices in wronging others. Yet what is shameful is failing to return like favors for like, not failing to repay favors that were owed in justice but can be repaid only by doing wrong. 3.64 You made it plain that even back then it was not for the sake of the Greeks that you alone did not side with the Persians, but because the Athenians did not either: you wanted to do as they did and the opposite of what we did. And now you expect to profit from the good conduct you displayed thanks to others. That is unreasonable. As you chose the Athenians, so fight on their side, and do not bring up the sworn alliance made back then as though it ought to save you now. For you abandoned it, and in breaking it you helped to enslave the Aeginetans and some others of those who had sworn it, instead of trying to prevent it. And you did this not against your will, but living under the same laws you have kept down to the present day, with no one forcing you, as someone forced us. And the last proposal we made to you before you were walled in, that you should keep quiet and help neither side, you refused. Who, then, could more justly be hated by all the Greeks than you, who put your valor on display to their harm? The good qualities you once showed, as you claim, you have now proved are not truly yours; and what your nature always wanted has been exposed for what it really is. For you went along with the Athenians when they took the path of injustice.

"So much, then, for our involuntary siding with the Persians and your voluntary siding with Athens. 3.65 As for the latest wrong you say you have suffered, that we came against your city unlawfully, during a truce and at a time of sacred festival, we do not think that in this either we were more at fault than you. If we had come on our own, attacked your city and ravaged your land as enemies, we would be in the wrong. But if men of yours, the first among you in wealth and birth, wishing to end your alliance abroad and to restore you to the ancestral institutions shared by all the Boeotians, called us in of their own free will, what wrong are we doing? For it is those who lead who break the law, more than those who follow. But in our judgment neither they nor we did wrong. They were citizens like you, with more at stake than you. They opened their own walls and brought us into their own city as friends, not as enemies. They wanted the worse among you to go no further, and the better to have what they deserved. They were bringing your thinking to its senses without banishing any of you from the city, bringing you home into kinship with us, making you enemies of no one and at peace by treaty with all alike. 3.66 Here is proof that we did not act as enemies: we harmed no one, and we publicly invited anyone who wished to live as a citizen under the ancestral institutions of all the Boeotians to come over to us. You gladly accepted, made a settlement with us, and at first kept quiet. But later you realized that we were few. Even supposing we did seem to have acted rather unfairly in entering without the consent of your people, you did not return like for like, using no force but persuading us by argument to leave. Instead, you attacked us in breach of the settlement. For those you killed in the fighting we do not grieve so much, since they suffered according to a kind of law. But those who held out their hands, whom you took alive and then promised us not to kill, and afterward killed in defiance of the law: how can you say you have not done a terrible thing? You committed these three crimes in a short space of time: you broke the settlement, you then killed the men, and you broke your promise to us not to kill them if we did no harm

to your property in the countryside. And yet you claim that it is we who broke the law, and you expect not to pay the penalty yourselves. No, not if these judges decide rightly. You will be punished for all of these things.

3.67 "We have gone through all this at length, Spartans, for your sake as well as ours: so that you may know that you will be condemning them justly, and we that our revenge will be all the more righteous. Do not be softened by hearing of their acts of excellence long ago, if there ever were any. Such deeds ought to help those who are wronged, but bring double punishment on those who do something shameful, because their offenses are unworthy of their past. Nor let them gain anything by their laments and pleas for pity, calling on your fathers' tombs and their own desolation. For we in turn can show that our young men, whom these people killed, suffered a far more terrible fate. Some of their fathers died at Coronea bringing Boeotia over to your side; others, left in their old age with their homes desolate, make a far juster plea to you to punish these men. Pity is better deserved by those who suffer undeservedly; those who suffer justly, as these men do, deserve on the contrary to have their misfortune rejoiced over. Their present desolation, too, is of their own making, for they willingly rejected the better allies. They broke the law without having first been wronged by us, deciding out of hatred rather than justice, and even now they are not paying a penalty equal to their crime. For they will suffer a lawful punishment, and not as men holding out their hands after a battle, as they claim, but as men who handed themselves over to a trial by agreement. So uphold, Spartans, the law of the Greeks that these men have violated, and give us, who have suffered lawless treatment, a just return for the zeal we have shown. Do not let their words thrust us aside in your esteem. Instead, show the Greeks by your example that the contests you set will be contests of deeds, not of words. When deeds are good, a brief report of them is enough; when they are wrong, speeches dressed up in fine phrases become a screen for them. But if leaders, as you are now, reduce the matter to its essentials and give

your verdicts on all the accused together, people will be less inclined to look for fine words to cover unjust deeds."

THE VERDICT ON PLATAEA

The Spartans put each Plataean to death and the Thebans raze the city.

3.68 Such was the speech of the Thebans. The Spartan judges thought that their question, whether the Plataeans had received any good service from them in the war, would be the proper one to put. Their reasoning was this. They had supposedly been asking the Plataeans all along to keep quiet in accordance with the old treaty made by Pausanias after the Persian Wars; and later, before the siege wall was built, they had offered them the chance to be neutral on those same terms. Since the Plataeans had refused, the Spartans considered that, by the justice of their own intention, they were now released from the treaty and had been wronged by the Plataeans. So once more they brought them forward one at a time and asked each the same question, whether he had done the Spartans and their allies any good service in the war; and whenever a man said no, they led him away and put him to death, making no exceptions. They put to death not fewer than two hundred of the Plataeans themselves, and twenty-five Athenians who had been besieged with them; the women they enslaved. As for the city, [the Thebans] gave it for about a year to some Megarians who had been driven out in civil strife, and to those surviving Plataeans who were on their side, to live in. Later they razed it completely to the ground, from its foundations, and built near the Heraeum a hostel two hundred feet square, with rooms all around it on the ground floor and the upper floor, using the roofs and doors of the Plataeans. From the rest of the furnishings that were inside the walls, the bronze and iron, they made couches and dedicated them to Hera; and they built her a stone temple a hundred feet long.[27] The land they confiscated as public property and leased out for ten years, and

27 The Heraeum was the sanctuary of Hera at Plataea.

the Thebans farmed it. Almost entirely, in fact, it was for the Thebans' sake that the Spartans had turned so harshly against the Plataeans, believing that the Thebans would be useful to them in the war, which was then just beginning. So ended the affairs of Plataea, in the ninety-third year after the Plataeans became allies of the Athenians.[28]

CIVIL WAR AT CORCYRA

Returned prisoners stir up faction at Corcyra; the oligarchs murder Peithias and the people fight back.

3.69 Meanwhile the forty Peloponnesian ships that had gone to help the Lesbians had, as described earlier, fled across the open sea, been chased by the Athenians and caught in a storm off Crete, and from there had made their way back to the Peloponnese scattered. At Cyllene they found thirteen triremes of the Leucadians and Ambraciots, and Brasidas son of Tellis, who had come to serve as adviser to Alcidas. For after their failure at Lesbos the Spartans wanted to enlarge their fleet and sail to Corcyra, which was torn by civil strife. The Athenians had only twelve ships at Naupactus, and the Spartans wanted to get there first, before any larger naval force could come to help from Athens; so Brasidas and Alcidas were making preparations for this.[29]

3.70 For the Corcyraeans had been in civil strife ever since the prisoners taken in the sea battles off Epidamnus came home, released by the Corinthians. In word, they had been released on a surety of eight hundred talents given by their proxenoi; in deed, they had been persuaded to bring Corcyra over to Corinth. These men set to work, approaching each of the citizens in turn, trying to make the city revolt from Athens. When an Athenian ship and a Corinthian ship arrived bringing envoys, and talks were held, the Corcyraeans voted to remain allies of the Atheni-

28 Plataea fell in the summer of 427 BC; its alliance with Athens dated to about 519 BC.

29 Cyllene was the port of Elis, in the northwest Peloponnese.

ans according to their agreement, but to be friends of the Peloponnesians as before. Now Peithias was a volunteer proxenos of the Athenians and leader of the people, and so these men brought him to trial, alleging that he was enslaving Corcyra to the Athenians. He was acquitted, and in turn he prosecuted the five richest of them, charging that they had been cutting vine-props from the sacred precinct of Zeus and of Alcinous; the penalty laid down was a stater for each prop. They were convicted, and because the fine was so large they sat as suppliants at the temples, asking to pay it in installments. But Peithias, who happened also to be a member of the council, persuaded it to enforce the law.[30] Since the law barred them, and at the same time they learned that Peithias intended, while he was still on the council, to persuade the people to have the same friends and enemies as the Athenians, they banded together, took daggers, burst suddenly into the council chamber, and killed Peithias and about sixty others, councilors and private citizens alike. A few of those who shared Peithias' views took refuge on the Athenian trireme, which was still there. 3.71 Having done this, they called the Corcyraeans together and told them that this was for the best and was the surest way to avoid being enslaved by the Athenians. For the future, they said, the Corcyraeans should receive neither side unless they came peaceably with a single ship, and should treat any larger force as hostile. Having said this, they compelled the people to ratify the proposal. They also sent envoys to Athens at once, to explain that what had been done was expedient, and to persuade those who had fled there not to take any hostile action, so that there would be no backlash. 3.72 When the envoys arrived, the Athenians arrested them as revolutionaries, together with all those they had won over, and placed them in custody on Aegina.

Meanwhile, when a Corinthian trireme arrived with Spartan envoys, the party in power at Corcyra attacked the people and defeated them in battle. When night fell, the people took refuge

30 Alcinous was the legendary king of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*, honored at Corcyra; a stater was a silver coin.

on the acropolis and the high parts of the city, gathered there and established themselves, and they held the Hyllaic harbor. The other side seized the marketplace, where most of them lived, and the harbor beside it facing the mainland. 3.73 The next day there was some skirmishing at long range, and both sides sent round to the countryside, calling on the slaves to join them and promising them freedom. Most of the household slaves joined the people as allies, while the other side got eight hundred mercenaries from the mainland. 3.74 After a day's interval there was another battle, and the people won, having the advantage both in the strength of their positions and in numbers. The women, too, boldly joined in the fight, pelting the enemy with tiles from the houses and standing up to the uproar with a steadiness beyond their nature. The rout came toward late afternoon, and the few were afraid that the people would come on and seize the dockyard at the first rush and kill them. So they set fire to the houses around the marketplace and the apartment blocks, so that there would be no way of approach. They spared neither their own property nor anyone else's, with the result that a great deal of merchants' goods was burned, and the whole city would have been in danger of destruction if a wind had sprung up to carry the flames toward it.

So both sides broke off the fighting and spent the night quietly on guard. Now that the people had won, the Corinthian ship slipped quietly out to sea, and most of the mercenaries got themselves secretly carried across to the mainland. 3.75 On the following day Nicostratus son of Diitrephes, an Athenian general, arrived from Naupactus to help, with twelve ships and five hundred Messenian hoplites. He set about arranging a settlement and persuaded the two sides to agree on these terms. Ten men, those most to blame, were to be put on trial; they did not stay to face it. The rest were to go on living in the city, after making a treaty with one another and with the Athenians to have the same enemies and the same friends. Having arranged this, he was about to sail away. But the leaders of the people persuaded him to leave them five of his own ships, so that their opponents

would be less inclined to make trouble. They themselves would man an equal number from their own people and send them with him. He agreed, and they began enlisting their enemies for the ships.[31] These men were afraid of being sent off to Athens, so they sat down as suppliants in the temple of the Dioscuri. Nicostratus tried to get them to stand up and to reassure them. When he could not persuade them, the people armed themselves. Their pretext was that the suppliants' refusal to sail, and the distrust it showed, proved that they intended nothing good. The people took the suppliants' weapons from their houses, and they would have killed some of those they came across if Nicostratus had not stopped them. Seeing what was happening, the rest sat down as suppliants in the Heraeum, no fewer than four hundred of them. The people feared they might start a revolt. So they persuaded them to get up, ferried them across to the island in front of the Heraeum, and had their provisions sent over to them there.[32]

THE MASSACRE AT CORCYRA

A Peloponnesian fleet wins a sea battle and withdraws; the Corcyraean people slaughter their opponents.

3.76 The civil strife had reached this stage when the Peloponnesian ships from Cyllene arrived, fifty-three of them, on the fourth or fifth day after the men had been taken over to the island. They had been lying at anchor there since their voyage from Ionia. Their commander was Alcidas, as before, and Brasidas sailed with him as his adviser. They anchored at Sybota, a harbor on the mainland, and at dawn sailed against Corcyra. 3.77 The Corcyraeans were in great confusion and alarmed both by the situation in the city and by the approaching fleet. They set about fitting out sixty ships at once, and sent each one out

31 Naupactus, on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth, was an Athenian base where Messenians who had rebelled against Sparta had been settled.
32 The Dioscuri are Castor and Polydeuces, the twin sons of Zeus; the Heraeum was the temple of Hera.

against the enemy as soon as it was manned. The Athenians, however, urged them to let the Athenians sail out first and to follow afterward with all their ships together. As it was, their ships reached the enemy in scattered groups. Two deserted at once, and on others the crews were fighting among themselves; there was no order in anything they did. Seeing the confusion, the Peloponnesians deployed twenty ships against the Corcyraeans and the rest against the twelve Athenian ships, two of which were the *Salaminia* and the *Paralus*. 3.78 The Corcyraeans attacked badly and a few ships at a time, and on their side of the battle they were in trouble. The Athenians feared the enemy's numbers and being surrounded. So they did not attack the ships ranged against them in a body or in the center, but charged at one wing and sank a single ship. When the enemy then formed into a circle, the Athenians sailed round them and tried to throw them into confusion. The Peloponnesians facing the Corcyraeans saw this. Fearing a repeat of what had happened at Naupactus, they came to help, and the united fleet advanced on the Athenians together. The Athenians now began to give way, backing water. At the same time they wanted the Corcyraean ships to escape first, as far as possible, while they themselves retreated slowly with the enemy ranged against them.[33]

Such was the sea battle, and it ended at sunset. 3.79 The Corcyraeans were afraid that the enemy, as victors, would sail against the city and either take off the men on the island or start some other upheaval. So they ferried the men from the island back to the Heraeum and kept the city under guard. But the enemy, though they had won the sea battle, did not dare to sail against the city. Instead they sailed back to the mainland, to the place they had put out from, with thirteen Corcyraean ships they had captured. The next day they still did not sail against the city, although the Corcyraeans were in great confusion and fear, and although Brasidas, it is said, urged Alcidas to attack; but he did not have an equal vote. Instead they landed at the promon-

33 Off Naupactus in 429 BC, Phormio's Athenian squadron had rowed round a Peloponnesian fleet drawn up in a circle until it fell into confusion and was routed.

tory of Leucimme and ravaged the countryside. 3.80 Meanwhile the Corcyraean people were terrified that the ships would sail against them. They entered into talks with the suppliants and the others about how the city could be saved, and persuaded some of them to go aboard the ships; for in spite of everything they had manned thirty, expecting the attack. The Peloponnesians ravaged the land until midday and then sailed away. At nightfall, fire signals warned them that sixty Athenian ships were approaching from Leucas. The Athenians had sent these, with Eurymedon son of Thucles as general, when they learned of the civil strife and that the ships with Alcidas were about to sail against Corcyra. 3.81 So that same night the Peloponnesians set off at once for home with all speed, keeping close to the coast. They hauled their ships across the isthmus of Leucas so as not to be seen sailing round it, and got away. When the Corcyraeans saw that the Athenian ships were approaching and the enemy's ships had gone, they brought the Messenians, who had previously been outside the walls, into the city. They ordered the ships they had manned to sail round to the Hyllaic harbor, and while these were on their way round, they killed any of their enemies they could catch. They also made all those they had persuaded to go aboard disembark from the ships, and did away with them. Then they went to the Heraeum, persuaded about fifty of the suppliants to stand trial, and condemned them all to death.[34] Most of the suppliants, those who had not been persuaded, saw what was happening and killed one another right there in the sanctuary. Some hanged themselves from the trees, and the rest made away with themselves, each as best he could. Eurymedon stayed seven days after arriving with his sixty ships, and for those seven days the Corcyraeans went on slaughtering those of their own people they regarded as their enemies. The charge they brought was that their victims were trying to overthrow the democracy. But some were killed because of private enmity, and others by their debtors because

34 Leucas was then joined to the mainland by a narrow isthmus, across which ships could be dragged.

of money owed to them. Death took every form. As tends to happen at such times, there was nothing that did not happen, and worse besides. A father killed his son; men were dragged from the altars and killed beside them; and some were even walled up in the temple of Dionysus and died there.

THUCYDIDES ON CIVIL STRIFE

Thucydides analyzes how civil war spread through Greece and corrupted morals and even language.

3.82 So savage was the course the civil strife took. It seemed all the more savage because it was one of the first; for later practically the whole Greek world was convulsed. Everywhere there were quarrels, with the leaders of the democracies trying to bring in the Athenians and the few trying to bring in the Spartans. In peacetime they would have had no pretext for calling them in, nor would they have been ready to. But now the two powers were at war, and either party could count on an alliance that would damage its opponents and, by the same means, strengthen itself. So those who wanted revolution easily found ways to bring in outsiders. Civil strife brought many terrible things upon the cities. Such things happen and always will, as long as human nature remains the same, though they are more violent or milder, and different in form, according to each change of circumstance. In peace and prosperity, cities and individuals alike have better judgment, because they are not forced into necessities they did not choose. But war takes away the easy supply of daily needs; it is a violent teacher, and it brings most people's tempers down to the level of their circumstances. So the cities fell into civil strife. Those where it broke out later had heard what had happened elsewhere, and they went much further in devising new ideas, both in the ingenuity of their schemes and in the outrageousness of their reprisals. They even changed the customary meaning of words with respect to deeds, to suit their own justifications. Reckless daring came to be regarded as courageous loyalty to one's comrades; prudent hes-

itation as cowardice in disguise; moderation as a cover for unmanliness; and an understanding of every side of a question as an inability to act on any. Frantic impetuosity was counted part of being a man, and taking careful thought for one's safety was a plausible excuse for backing out. The man with a violent temper was always trusted, and the man who spoke against him was suspect. A man who plotted and succeeded was clever, and one who detected a plot was cleverer still. But a man who planned ahead so as to need neither was a wrecker of his party and terrified of his opponents. In short, people praised the man who struck first at someone about to do harm, and the man who incited to wrongdoing someone who had never thought of it. Indeed, ties of kinship became weaker than ties of party, because party members were readier to dare anything without excuses. For such associations were formed not for mutual help under the established laws, but for self-aggrandizement in defiance of them. And they confirmed their pledges to one another less by divine law than by having broken the law together. When their opponents made fair proposals, they accepted them, if they had the upper hand, to guard against their opponents' actions, not out of generosity. Getting revenge on someone mattered more than not being wronged in the first place. If oaths of reconciliation were ever sworn, each side gave them to meet an immediate impasse, and they held only while neither had strength from any other source. But when the chance came, whoever was first to take courage, if he saw his enemy off guard, took more pleasure in a revenge that exploited trust than in one taken openly. He counted its safety, and also that by winning through deceit he gained a prize for cleverness as well. Most people would sooner be called clever when they are villains than good when they are simple, and they are ashamed of the second and take pride in the first. The cause of all this was power pursued out of greed and ambition; and from these came the fierce zeal of men once they were locked in rivalry. For the leaders in the cities, on each side, used fine-sounding slogans: political equality for the people on one side, moderate aristo-

cracy on the other. In word they served the common interest, but in fact they made it their prize. Struggling by every means to get the better of one another, they dared the most terrible deeds and carried out reprisals that were greater still. They did not limit these to what was just and good for the city, but measured them by whatever pleased their own side at the moment. Whether by an unjust vote of condemnation or by seizing power with their own hands, they were ready to satisfy the rivalry of the moment. So neither side practiced piety; but those who managed to bring off some odious deed under cover of fine words had the better reputation. The citizens in between were destroyed by both sides, either because they would not join the struggle or out of resentment that they should survive. 3.83 Thus every form of wickedness took hold in the Greek world because of civil strife. Simplicity, which is so large a part of nobility, was laughed to scorn and vanished. Distrust ranged men against one another in their minds and prevailed far and wide. For there was nothing to reconcile them, no word that could be relied on, no oath that inspired fear. All of them, when they had the upper hand, calculated that nothing could be counted on as secure, so they took precautions against being harmed rather than being able to trust anyone. And on the whole it was the less intelligent who came out on top. They feared their own shortcomings and their opponents' intelligence. They were afraid of being beaten in argument and of being plotted against first by their opponents' versatile minds, so they went boldly into action. Their opponents, in contempt, assumed they would see trouble coming and need not take by action what they could secure by intelligence; so they were caught off guard and destroyed in greater numbers.

3.84 [It was in Corcyra, then, that most of these things were first dared. There occurred every act of retaliation by men who had been ruled with insolence rather than moderation by those who now gave them the chance for revenge. There were the unjust decisions of men who longed to escape their habitual poverty and, above all under the force of passion, coveted their

neighbors' possessions. And there were the savage and relentless attacks of men who set upon others not for gain but as equals, carried away to the utmost by undisciplined anger.[35] Life in the city was thrown into confusion at this crisis. Human nature, which is used to doing wrong even in defiance of the laws, now gained mastery over the laws. It gladly showed itself unable to govern its anger, stronger than justice, and hostile to all superiority. For men would not have put revenge above piety, and gain above not doing wrong, had envy not had its power to do harm. When they take revenge on others, men think fit to abolish in advance the common laws on such matters. These are the laws that give everyone the hope of being saved themselves if they come to grief. Men do not leave them in place in case someone in danger should one day need one of them.] 3.85 Such were the first outbursts of rage that the Corcyraeans in the city turned on one another, and Eurymedon and the Athenians sailed away with their ships. Later the Corcyraean exiles, about five hundred of whom had got away safely, seized forts on the mainland and took control of the territory across the water that belonged to Corcyra. Using it as their base, they plundered the people on the island and did a great deal of damage, and a severe famine broke out in the city. They also sent envoys to Sparta and Corinth about their return. When nothing came of this, they later got together boats and mercenaries and crossed over to the island, about six hundred in all. They burned their boats so that there would be no hope of anything except mastering the land. Then they went up onto Mount Istone, built a fort there, and harassed those in the city and controlled the countryside.

ATHENS IN SICILY AND THE PLAGUE'S RETURN

Athens sends ships to Sicily; the plague and earthquakes strike again.

3.86 At the end of the same summer the Athenians sent twenty ships to Sicily, with Laches son of Melanopus and Charoeades

son of Euphiletus as their generals. For the Syracusans and the Leontinians had gone to war with each other. The Syracusans were allied with all the other Dorian cities except Camarina. These were the cities that at the very beginning of the war had been ranged with the Spartan alliance, though they had not actually fought in it. The Leontinians were allied with the Chalcidian cities and Camarina. In Italy the Locrians sided with the Syracusans, and the Rhegians, because they were kin, with the Leontinians.[36] So the Leontinians' allies sent to Athens. Appealing to an old alliance and to their being Ionians, they persuaded the Athenians to send them ships, for the Syracusans were shutting them off from both land and sea. The Athenians sent the ships. Their pretext was kinship, but their real aims were to stop grain being shipped from Sicily to the Peloponnese and to make a preliminary trial of whether they could bring affairs in Sicily under their control. So they established themselves at Rhegium in Italy and carried on the war together with their allies. And the summer ended.

3.87 In the following winter the plague attacked the Athenians a second time. It had never entirely left them, but there had been something of a lull. This second outbreak lasted no less than a year, and the first had lasted two years. So for the Athenians, at least, nothing did more than this to crush them and damage their power. No fewer than four thousand four hundred hoplites from the ranks died, and three hundred cavalrymen, and the number among the rest of the population was never discovered. It was at this time too that the many earthquakes occurred, at Athens, in Euboea, in Boeotia, and above all at Orchomenus in Boeotia.[37]

3.88 In the same winter the Athenians in Sicily and the Rhegians sent an expedition of thirty ships against the so-called

35 The brackets mark chapter 84, which many editors believe was not written by Thucydides.

36 The Greek cities of Sicily were divided by descent: Dorian cities such as Syracuse, and Ionian ones founded from Chalcis in Euboea (the Chalcidian cities), among them Leontini.

37 This is the plague that first struck Athens in 430 BC.

Islands of Aeolus; in summer it was impossible to campaign there for lack of water. The islands are held by the Liparaeans, who are colonists from Cnidus. They live on one of the islands, which is not large and is called Lipara. From there they go out to farm the others, Didyme, Strongyle and Hiera. The people there believe that Hephaestus works his forge on Hiera, because the island can be seen sending up a great deal of fire at night and smoke by day. These islands lie off the territory of the Sicels and the Messanians, and they were allies of the Syracusans. The Athenians ravaged their land, and when the islanders would not come over to their side, they sailed back to Rhegium. So the winter ended, and with it the fifth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.[38]

3.89 The following summer the Peloponnesians and their allies, led by Agis son of Archidamus, king of the Spartans, came as far as the Isthmus, intending to invade Attica. But many earthquakes occurred, so they turned back again, and there was no invasion. About this same time, while the earthquakes were going on, the sea at Orobiae in Euboea drew back from what was then the shoreline, rose up in a wave and came over part of the city. Some of it was flooded and some of it subsided, so that what was once land is now sea. It killed all the people who could not run up to the high ground in time. A similar flood occurred at Atalante, the island off Opuntian Locris. It carried away part of the Athenian fort, and of two ships that had been hauled up on shore it smashed one. At Peparethus too the sea drew back somewhat, though it did not flood the land. An earthquake threw down part of the wall, the prytaneum and a few other houses. In my own opinion, the cause of this sort of thing is that wherever the earthquake was strongest, the sea is driven back at that point, and then, suddenly drawn back in again, it makes the flood more violent. I do not think such a thing could happen without an earthquake.[39]

38 The Islands of Aeolus are the modern Lipari Islands off northeast Sicily (Strongyle is Stromboli, Hiera is Vulcano); Messana is modern Messina.
39 The prytaneum was a Greek city's town hall, where its sacred hearth was kept.

3.90 That same summer various other parties were also at war in Sicily, as circumstances had placed each of them: the Sicilian Greeks themselves were campaigning against one another, and the Athenians were fighting alongside their own allies. I shall mention the actions most worth recording, whether carried out by the allies together with the Athenians or by their enemies against the Athenians. Charoeades, the Athenian general, had already been killed in battle by the Syracusans, and Laches, who now held sole command of the fleet, campaigned with the allies against Mylae, a town belonging to the Messanians.[40] Two tribal contingents of the Messanians happened to be garrisoning Mylae, and they had also laid an ambush for the men from the ships. But the Athenians and their allies routed the men in the ambush and killed many of them. Then they attacked the fortification and forced the garrison to agree to terms: to surrender the acropolis and to join them in a campaign against Messana. After this, when the Athenians and their allies advanced, the Messanians themselves came over as well, giving hostages and providing the other guarantees.

3.91 That same summer the Athenians sent thirty ships round the Peloponnese under the command of Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes and Procles son of Theodorus, and sixty ships to Melos with two thousand hoplites, commanded by Nicias son of Niceratus. They wanted to bring over the Melians, who, though islanders, were unwilling to submit or to join the Athenian alliance. When the Melians did not come over even though their land was being ravaged, the Athenians set sail from Melos and went to Oropus in the district of Graïce. Putting in at nightfall, the hoplites immediately left the ships and marched by land to Tanagra in Boeotia.[41] At a signal, the Athenians from the city came out in full force by land to meet them at the same spot, under the command of Hipponicus son of Callias and Eurymedon son of Thucles. They encamped that day at Tanagra,

40 Mylae (modern Milazzo) lay west of Messana; the Greek calls the people of Messana "Messenians," but they are not the Messenians of the Peloponnese.
41 Oropus lay on the border between Attica and Boeotia.

ravaged the land and spent the night there. The next day they defeated in battle the Tanagraeans who came out against them, along with some Thebans who had come to their aid. They took the arms of the fallen, set up a trophy and withdrew, some to the city, the others to the ships. Nicias sailed along the coast with the sixty ships, ravaged the coastal districts of Locris and went back home.

SPARTA FOUNDS HERACLEA

The Spartans found a colony at Trachis near Thermopylae, which soon declines.

3.92 About this time the Spartans founded their colony of Heraclea in Trachis, with the following purpose. The Malians as a whole are made up of three groups: the Paralians, the Hierians and the Trachinians. Of these, the Trachinians had been ruined by war with their neighbors, the Oetaeans. At first they intended to attach themselves to the Athenians, but fearing that the Athenians might not be reliable, they sent to Sparta, choosing Tisamenus as their envoy. The Dorians, the mother city of the Spartans, joined them in the embassy and made the same request, since they too were suffering at the hands of the Oetaeans. The Spartans heard them out and decided to send out the colony, wanting to help both the Trachinians and the Dorians.[42] At the same time the city seemed to them well placed for the war against the Athenians. A fleet could be made ready there against Euboea, so that the crossing would be short, and it would be useful for the route to Thrace. All in all, they were eager to found the place. First, then, they consulted the god at Delphi, and when he told them to proceed, they sent out settlers drawn from themselves and from the perioeci, and invited any of the other Greeks who wished to join them, except Ionians, Achaeans and certain other peoples. Three Spartans led the

42 The Malians lived around the Malian Gulf near Thermopylae; Doris, a small region of central Greece, was traditionally the homeland of the Spartans' Dorian ancestors.

colony as its founders: Leon, Alcidas and Damagon. Once established, they built new walls for the city, which is now called Heraclea and lies about forty stades from Thermopylae and twenty from the sea. They also set about building dockyards, and they walled off the side toward Thermopylae at the pass itself, so that it would be easy for them to defend. 3.93 When this city was first being settled, the Athenians were alarmed and thought it was being established chiefly against Euboea, since the crossing to Cenaeum in Euboea is short. Afterward, however, things turned out contrary to their expectation, for nothing dangerous came of it. The reason was this. The Thessalians, who were the dominant power in that region, and the people on whose land it was being founded were afraid of having such powerful neighbors. So they kept harming the newly established settlers and waging war on them without pause, until they had worn them down, even though there had been very many of them at first (for everyone joined confidently, since it was the Spartans who were founding the city and they believed it would be secure). Not least, though, the Spartans' own governors who came out there ruined its affairs and reduced it to a small population. They frightened away most of the settlers by governing harshly and in some matters unjustly, so that its neighbors now overpowered it more easily.

DEMOSTHENES IN AETOLIA

Demosthenes invades Aetolia and is routed by light-armed mountain troops.

3.94 That same summer, at about the time when the Athenians were held up at Melos, the Athenians from the thirty ships operating around the Peloponnese first ambushed and killed some garrison troops at Ellomenus in Leucadian territory. Later they came against Leucas with a larger force: all the Acarnanians, who followed in full strength except for Oeniadae, the Zacynthians and Cephallenians, and fifteen Corcyraean ships. The Leucadians, overwhelmed by numbers, kept quiet while their land

was ravaged, both outside the isthmus and within it, where Leucas itself and the temple of Apollo are. The Acarnanians urged Demosthenes, the Athenian general, to wall them off, thinking they could easily take the city by siege and be rid of a city that had always been hostile to them.[43] At this point Demosthenes was persuaded by the Messenians that, with so large an army assembled, it would be a fine thing for him to attack the Aetolians. They were enemies of Naupactus, and if he defeated them, he would easily win over to the Athenians the rest of the mainland in that region as well. The Aetolian people, they explained, was large and warlike, but since it lived in unwalled villages, and these widely scattered, and used only light equipment, it would not be hard to subdue before its men could gather to defend themselves. They urged him to attack the Apodotians first, then the Ophioneans and after them the Eurytanians. These are the largest part of the Aetolians; they speak a language very hard to understand and, it is said, eat raw flesh. Once these were taken, they said, the rest would easily come over. 3.95 Demosthenes was persuaded, partly to oblige the Messenians, but above all because he thought that, without Athenian forces, using his mainland allies together with the Aetolians, he could go by land against the Boeotians. His route would run through the territory of the Ozolian Locrians to Cytinium in Doris, keeping Parnassus on his right, until he came down into Phocis. The Phocians seemed likely to join the campaign eagerly, given their long-standing friendship with Athens, or else could be brought over by force (and Phocis already borders on Boeotia). So he set out with his whole army from Leucas, against the wishes of the Acarnanians, and sailed along the coast to Sollium. He told the Acarnanians his plan, but they would not accept it because of his failure to wall off Leucas. So with the rest of the army—Cephallenians, Messenians, Zacynthians and three hundred Athenian marines from his own ships (for the fifteen Corcyraean ships had gone away)—he marched against the Aetolians. He set out

43 Leucas, a Corinthian colony allied with Sparta, lay on a peninsula off Acarnania joined to the mainland by an isthmus.

from Oeneon in Locris. These Ozolian Locrians were allies, and they were supposed to meet the Athenians in the interior with their whole force. Since they bordered on the Aetolians and were armed in the same way, it was thought they would be of great help on the campaign, because of their experience of the Aetolians' way of fighting and of the terrain. 3.96 He camped for the night with his army in the sanctuary of Nemean Zeus, where the poet Hesiod is said to have been killed by the local people, after an oracle had told him he would suffer this fate at Nemea. At dawn he set off and marched into Aetolia. On the first day he took Potidania, on the second Crocyleium and on the third Teichium. There he halted and sent the plunder back to Eupalium in Locris. His plan was to subdue the rest first, and then, if the Ophioneans were unwilling to come to terms, to return to Naupactus and campaign against them later.[44]

But the Aetolians had not failed to notice this preparation, even when it was first being planned. Once the army had invaded, they all came to the defense in great numbers, so that even the most remote of the Ophioneans, the Bomians and the Callians, whose land stretches down toward the Malian Gulf, came to help. 3.97 The Messenians gave Demosthenes much the same advice as they had at first, when they were assuring him that the conquest of the Aetolians would be easy. They urged him to advance as quickly as possible against the villages and not to wait until the Aetolians had all gathered and drawn up against him, but always to try to take whatever village lay in his path. Persuaded by them, and putting his hopes in his good fortune since nothing had stood in his way, he did not wait for the Locrians who were supposed to come to his support (light-armed javelin men were what he lacked most). Instead he advanced on Aegitium and took it by storm at the first assault. For the inhabitants had slipped away and were sitting on the hills above the town, which stood on high ground about eighty stades from the sea. The Aetolians, who by now had come to the

44 Hesiod, the early epic poet, had been warned to beware of Nemea and took the oracle to mean the better-known Nemea in the Peloponnese.

relief of Aegitium, attacked the Athenians and their allies, running down from the hills from every direction and hurling javelins. Whenever the Athenian army advanced, they gave way, and when it withdrew, they pressed it hard. For a long time the fighting went on like this, with pursuits and retreats, and in both the Athenians had the worst of it. 3.98 So long as the archers had arrows and were able to use them, the Athenians held out, since the Aetolians, being lightly armed, were kept back when they were shot at. But when the archers' commander was killed and his men scattered, the soldiers themselves were exhausted, having been worn down for a long time by the same toil, and the Aetolians kept pressing them and hurling javelins. At that point they finally turned and fled. They fell into ravines with no way out and into country they did not know, and were cut down; for their guide on the roads, Chromon the Messenian, had happened to be killed. The Aetolians, quick on their feet and lightly armed, kept hurling javelins, caught many of the fugitives on the spot during the rout and killed them. Most of the rest lost their way and were swept into the woods, from which there were no paths out; the Aetolians brought fire and burned the woods all around them. Every form of flight and destruction befell the Athenian army, and the survivors barely escaped to the sea and to Oeneon in Locris, the very place from which they had set out. Many of the allies were killed, and of the Athenians themselves about a hundred and twenty hoplites. These men, so many in number and all of the same age, were the very best men lost from the city of Athens in this war. The other general, Procles, was killed as well. They recovered their dead from the Aetolians under a truce, withdrew to Naupactus and later went back to Athens on the ships. Demosthenes stayed behind around Naupactus and in that region, because he feared the Athenians after what had happened.

3.99 About the same time the Athenians in Sicilian waters sailed to the territory of Locri. In the course of a landing they

defeated the Locrians who came out to defend it, and took a frontier fort on the river Halex.[45]

THE ATTACK ON NAUPACTUS

A Peloponnesian army marches on Naupactus, which Demosthenes saves with Acarnanian help.

3.100 That same summer the Aetolians, who had earlier sent envoys to Corinth and to Sparta—Tolophus the Ophionean, Boriades the Eurytanian and Tisander the Apodotian—persuaded them to send an army against Naupactus, since Naupactus had brought the Athenians in against them. Around autumn the Spartans sent out three thousand allied hoplites. Five hundred of these came from Heraclea, the city in Trachis, which had just been founded. A Spartiate, Eurylochus, commanded the force, and the Spartiates Macarius and Menedaïus went with him. 3.101 When the army had assembled at Delphi, Eurylochus sent a herald to the Ozolian Locrians, since the road to Naupactus ran through their territory, and he also wanted to detach them from the Athenians. Of the Locrians, it was the Amphissians above all who worked with him, being afraid because of their hostility with the Phocians. They were the first to give hostages themselves, and they persuaded the others to give them as well, since these feared the approaching army: first their neighbors the Myoneans (for at this point Locris is hardest to invade), then the Ipneans, Messapians, Tritaeans, Chalaeans, Tolophonians, Hessians and Oeanthians. All of these also joined the campaign. The Olpaeans gave hostages but did not follow, and the Hyaeans did not give hostages until their village called Polis had been taken. 3.102 When everything was ready and he had deposited the hostages at Cytinium in Doris, Eurylochus advanced with the army on Naupactus through Locrian territory. On the way he took two of their towns, Oeneon and Eupalium, because they would not come over. Once they were in the territory of Naupactus, with the Aetolians now joining them as well, they ravaged the land

45 This is Locri in the toe of Italy, not Locris in mainland Greece.

and took the suburb, which was unwalled. Then they went against Molycreium, a Corinthian colony but subject to the Athenians, and took it. Demosthenes the Athenian (he happened still to be around Naupactus after the affair in Aetolia) learned of the army in advance and, fearing for the city, went and persuaded the Acarnanians to come to the aid of Naupactus. It was difficult, because of his withdrawal from Leucas. They sent a thousand hoplites with him on the ships, and these got in and saved the place; for there was a danger that, with the wall so long and the defenders so few, they would not hold out. When Eurylochus and those with him realized that the force had got in and that it was impossible to take the city by storm, they withdrew, not to the Peloponnese but to Aeolis, the region now called Calydon and Pleuron, to the places in that area, and to Proschium in Aetolia. For the Ambraciots had come to them and persuaded them to join in attacking Amphilochian Argos and the rest of Amphilochia, and Acarnania as well. They said that if they conquered these, the whole mainland would be in alliance with Sparta. Eurylochus was persuaded, dismissed the Aetolians and waited with his army in that area until the Ambraciots should take the field against Argos and he would need to support them. And the summer ended.[46]

3.103 In the following winter the Athenians in Sicily attacked Inessa, a Sicel town whose acropolis the Syracusans held. With them were their Greek allies and those Sicels who had been ruled by force by the Syracusans as their allies, but had revolted [from the Syracusans] and were fighting on the Athenian side. Unable to take the town, they went away. During the withdrawal the Syracusans from the fort attacked the Athenians' allies, who were retreating in the rear; they fell on them, routed part of the army and killed a good many. After this Laches and the Athenians made several landings from the ships in Locrian territory. At the river Caicinus they defeated in battle about three hundred

46 Amphilochian Argos lay on the Ambracian Gulf in northwestern Greece; it is not the Argos of the Peloponnese.

Locrians who had come out to defend it under Proxenus son of Capaton, took their arms and withdrew.[47]

THE PURIFICATION OF DELOS

Athens purifies Delos and revives its festival; Thucydides quotes the Hymn to Apollo.

3.104 In the same winter the Athenians also purified Delos, apparently in obedience to some oracle. Peisistratus the tyrant had purified it before, but not the whole island, only as much of it as could be seen from the sanctuary. This time the whole island was purified, in the following way. They removed all the graves of the dead that there were on Delos, and proclaimed that in future no one was to die on the island or give birth there; such people were to be carried across to Rheneia. Rheneia lies so close to Delos that Polycrates, the tyrant of the Samians, who for a time was powerful with his navy and ruled the other islands as well, captured Rheneia and dedicated it to Delian Apollo by binding it to Delos with a chain.[48] And it was then, after the purification, that the Athenians first held the four-yearly festival of the Delia. In fact, even in ancient times there had once been a great gathering at Delos of the Ionians and the neighboring islanders. They came to the festival with their wives and children, as the Ionians now go to the Ephesia, and a contest was held there, both athletic and musical, and the cities brought choruses. Homer shows most clearly that this was so in the following verses, which come from a hymn to Apollo: "But it is in Delos, Phoebus, that your heart delights most of all, where the Ionians in their trailing robes gather with their children and wives in your streets. There they remember you and delight you with boxing and dancing and song, whenever they hold the con-

47 The Sicels were the native, non-Greek people of eastern Sicily.
48 Delos, a small island in the Cyclades, was the site of a great sanctuary of Apollo, said to have been born there. Rheneia lies just to its west.

test."[49] That there was also a musical contest, and that people traveled there to compete in it, he shows again in the following lines, which come from the same hymn. After singing the praises of the Delian chorus of women, he ended his tribute with these verses, in which he also mentioned himself: "But come now, may Apollo be gracious, and Artemis with him; and farewell to all of you. Remember me in time to come, whenever some other man on earth, a much-suffering stranger, comes here and asks: 'Girls, who is the sweetest of the singers who visit here, and in whom do you take the most delight?' Then all of you answer him well, and speak of me: 'A blind man; he lives in rocky Chios.'" That is the evidence Homer gave that even in ancient times there was a great gathering and festival on Delos. Later the islanders and the Athenians went on sending choruses with offerings, but the contests and most of the rest were discontinued, presumably because of misfortunes, until the Athenians on this occasion held the contest, and horse races as well, which had not been held before.

OLPAE AND IDOMENE

Demosthenes defeats the Peloponnesians and Ambraciots at Olpae and destroys an Ambraciot army at Idomene.

3.105 In the same winter the Ambraciots, as they had promised Eurylochus when they kept his army there, marched out against Amphilochian Argos with three thousand hoplites. They invaded Argive territory and seized Olpae, a strong fortified place on a hill by the sea, which the Acarnanians had once fortified and used as their common court of justice; it lies about twenty-five stades from the city of the Argives, which is on the coast. Of the Acarnanians, some went to help defend Argos, while others encamped in the part of Amphilochia called Crenae, keeping watch on the Peloponnesians with Eurylochus

49 The verses come from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which Thucydides, like most Greeks of his day, took to be by Homer. The Ephesia was the festival of Artemis at Ephesus.

so that they should not slip through to the Ambraciots unnoticed. They also sent for Demosthenes, the Athenian who had commanded the expedition to Aetolia, to be their leader, and for the twenty Athenian ships that happened to be around the Peloponnese, under the command of Aristoteles son of Timocrates and Hierophon son of Antimnestus. The Ambraciots at Olpae, for their part, sent a messenger to their city urging the people to come to their help in full force. They were afraid that Eurylochus' men would not be able to get past the Acarnanians, and that they themselves would either have to fight on their own or find it unsafe to retreat if they wanted to.

3.106 So when the Peloponnesians with Eurylochus learned that the Ambraciots had arrived at Olpae, they set out from Proschium and went to their help with all speed. They crossed the Achelous and marched through Acarnania, which was empty because its men had gone to help Argos, with the city of the Stratians and its garrison on their right and the rest of Acarnania on their left. After crossing Stratian territory they went on through Phytia and then along the edge of Medeon, and after that through Limnaea; and they entered the territory of the Agraeans, which was no longer Acarnania but friendly to them. Taking to Mount Thyamus, which belongs to the Agraeans, they marched across it and came down into Argive territory when it was already night. Passing between the city of the Argives and the Acarnanian guard post at Crenae, they went unnoticed and joined the Ambraciots at Olpae. 3.107 Having united their forces, at daybreak they took up position at the place called Metropolis and made camp. Not much later the Athenians arrived in the Ambracian Gulf with their twenty ships to help the Argives, and so did Demosthenes with two hundred Messenian hoplites and sixty Athenian archers. The ships lay at anchor off the hill at Olpae, on the seaward side. The Acarnanians and a few of the Amphilochians (most of them were held back by force by the Ambraciots), who had by now gathered at Argos, were preparing to fight the enemy, and they chose Demosthenes, together with their own generals, as leader of the whole allied force. He led

them up near Olpae and encamped; a large ravine separated the two armies. For five days they stayed quiet, and on the sixth both sides drew up for battle. The Peloponnesian army was larger and overlapped his line, so Demosthenes, afraid of being encircled, set an ambush of hoplites and light troops, some four hundred in all, in a sunken road overgrown with brush. At the very moment of the clash they were to spring up where the enemy's line overlapped and fall on them from the rear. When both sides were ready, they closed. Demosthenes held the right wing with the Messenians and a few Athenians; the rest of the line was held by the Acarnanians, drawn up by their separate contingents, and by the Amphilochian javelin-men who were present. The Peloponnesians and Ambraciots were drawn up mixed together, except for the Mantineans. These stood in a body rather toward the left, though not at the very end of the wing; the extreme left was held by Eurylochus and his men, opposite the Messenians and Demosthenes. [3.108] When they were already engaged and the Peloponnesians were overlapping with their wing and encircling their opponents' right, the Acarnanians from the ambush came up behind them, fell on them from the rear and routed them. They did not stand to resist, and in their panic they carried the greater part of the army into flight with them; for when they saw the division under Eurylochus, the strongest part of their army, being destroyed, they were far more frightened. And the Messenians, who were stationed there with Demosthenes, did most of the work. The Ambraciots and those on the right wing, meanwhile, defeated the troops opposite them and pursued them toward Argos; for they happen to be the most warlike people in that region. But as they came back and saw that most of their army had been beaten, and the rest of the Acarnanians pressed them hard, they barely made it to safety at Olpae, and many of them were killed as they dashed in without order or discipline—except for the Mantineans, who of the whole army kept their formation best in the retreat. The battle ended late in the evening.

3.109 The next day Menedaïus, who had himself taken over command since Eurylochus and Macarius were dead, was at a loss after so great a defeat. He could not see how he might either stay and endure a siege, shut in by land and by sea by the Athenian ships, or else retreat and get away safely. So he opened talks with Demosthenes and the Acarnanian generals about a truce and a retreat, and at the same time about recovering the dead. They gave back the dead, set up a trophy themselves, and took up their own dead, about three hundred of whom had been killed. Openly they would not grant all of them a truce to withdraw; but in secret Demosthenes and his fellow generals of the Acarnanians agreed with the Mantineans, Menedaïus and the other Peloponnesian commanders, and those of them who were of most consequence, that they could leave quickly. His aim was to strip the Ambraciots and the crowd of [foreign] mercenaries of their support, and above all he wanted to discredit the Spartans and Peloponnesians among the Greeks of that region as men who had betrayed their allies and put their own interest first. So they took up their dead and buried them hastily, as best they could, and those who had been granted permission began planning their secret withdrawal. 3.110 Word now reached Demosthenes and the Acarnanians that the Ambraciots from the city, in response to the first message from Olpae, were coming in full force through the territory of the Amphilochians to help, wanting to join their men at Olpae and knowing nothing of what had happened. He at once sent part of his army to lay ambushes along the roads and occupy the strong points in advance, and at the same time made ready to march against them with the rest of his forces. 3.111 Meanwhile the Mantineans and the others who had the agreement went out on the pretext of gathering vegetables and firewood and slipped away in small groups, collecting as they went the things they had supposedly come out for. But once they had got some way from Olpae, they moved off faster. The Ambraciots and the others, as many as happened to have come out with them in this way in a body, when they realized that they were leaving, set off too and ran after them at full

speed, wanting to catch up with them.[50] At first the Acarnanians thought that all of them alike were leaving without a truce, and they set off in pursuit of the Peloponnesians too; and when some of their generals tried to stop them, saying there was a truce with these men, one soldier threw a javelin at them, thinking that they were being betrayed. Afterward, though, they let the Mantineans and the Peloponnesians go and killed the Ambraciots. There was much dispute and confusion over whether a given man was an Ambraciot or a Peloponnesian. They killed some two hundred of them; the rest escaped to Agraïs, which borders on that area, and Salynthius, the king of the Agraeans, who was friendly to them, took them in.

3.112 The Ambraciots from the city, meanwhile, arrived at Idomene. Idomene consists of two high hills. As night fell, the troops sent ahead by Demosthenes from the camp reached the larger of the two first and occupied it without being noticed; the Ambraciots had happened to go up the smaller one first and camped there for the night. Demosthenes, after supper, set out with the rest of the army as soon as evening came, himself taking half of it toward the pass and sending the other half through the Amphilochian hills. At dawn he fell on the Ambraciots while they were still in their beds. They had no inkling of what had happened and took the attackers for their own men instead. Demosthenes had deliberately put the Messenians in front and told them to call out to the enemy; they spoke the Doric dialect and so reassured the sentries, and at the same time they could not be made out by sight, since it was still night. So when he fell on their army, they routed it, killing most of them on the spot, while the rest took to flight through the mountains. But the roads had already been occupied. The Amphilochians, moreover, knew their own country and were light-armed against hoplites, while the Ambraciots did not know it and had no idea which way to turn; so they fell into ravines and into the ambushes laid in advance, and were destroyed. Trying every kind of escape, some even made for the sea, which was not far

50 The Greek text is uncertain here.

off. When they saw the Athenian ships sailing along the coast just as the action was taking place, they swam out to them, thinking in the panic of the moment that it was better to be killed, if they must be, by the men in the ships than by the Amphilochians, who were non-Greeks and their bitterest enemies. So the Ambraciots, after such a disaster, came safely home to their city, few out of many. The Acarnanians stripped the dead, set up trophies, and returned to Argos. 3.113 The next day a herald came to them from the Ambraciots who had fled from Olpae to the Agraeans. He came to ask for the return of the dead who had been killed after the first battle, when they had gone out together with the Mantineans and the others covered by the truce, without being covered themselves. When the herald saw the arms of the Ambraciots from the city, he was astonished at their number, for he did not know of the disaster but thought they belonged to his own group. Someone asked him why he was astonished and how many of their men had died, the questioner in turn thinking that the herald came from the men at Idomene. He said about two hundred. The questioner broke in: "Well, these arms don't look like that—there are more than a thousand here." The herald replied, "Then they don't belong to the men who were fighting with us." The other answered, "They do, if you were the ones fighting at Idomene yesterday." "But we didn't fight anyone yesterday; it was the day before, during the retreat." "Well, we certainly fought these men yesterday—the ones who came to help from the city of the Ambraciots." When the herald heard this and realized that the relief force from the city had been destroyed, he cried out in grief and, stunned by the scale of the disaster before him, went straight off without accomplishing his errand, no longer asking for the dead. This was in fact the greatest disaster to befall a single Greek city within so few days in the whole of this war. I have not recorded the number of the dead, because the number said to have perished is incredible in proportion to the size of the city. I do know, however, that if the Acarnanians and Amphilochians had been willing to follow the Athenians and

Demosthenes and take Ambracia, they would have taken it at the first assault. As it was, they were afraid that if the Athenians held it, they would be more troublesome neighbors to them.

3.114 After this they allotted a third of the spoils to the Athenians and divided the rest among the cities. The Athenian share was captured at sea; what is now dedicated in the temples of Attica are three hundred full suits of armor that were set aside for Demosthenes, and he brought them with him when he sailed home. Thanks to this exploit his return, after the disaster in Aetolia, was also less fraught with danger. The Athenians in the twenty ships also went back to Naupactus. After the Athenians and Demosthenes had gone, the Acarnanians and Amphilochians granted the Ambraciots and Peloponnesians who had taken refuge with Salynthius and the Agraeans a truce to withdraw from Oeniadae, to which they had moved from Salynthius' territory. For the future the Acarnanians and Amphilochians made a treaty and alliance with the Ambraciots for a hundred years, on these terms: the Ambraciots were not to join the Acarnanians in a campaign against the Peloponnesians, nor the Acarnanians to join the Ambraciots against the Athenians; each was to help defend the other's territory; the Ambraciots were to give back whatever places or hostages of the Amphilochians they held; and they were not to help Anactorium, which was hostile to the Acarnanians. Having made this agreement, they ended the war. After this the Corinthians sent a garrison of their own to Ambracia, some three hundred hoplites under the command of Xenocleidas son of Euthycles; they made their way through the mainland with difficulty and arrived. Such were the events at Ambracia.

3.115 During the same winter the Athenians in Sicily made a landing from their ships in the territory of Himera, together with the Sicels, who had come down from the interior and invaded the borders of Himeraean territory; and they also sailed against the Islands of Aeolus. On returning to Rhegium they found there the Athenian general Pythodorus son of Isolochus, who had come to take over the ships that Laches had com-

manded. For the allies in Sicily had sailed to Athens and persuaded the Athenians to help them with more ships. The Syracusans controlled their land, and since they were kept off the sea by only a few ships, they were gathering a fleet and preparing not to put up with this. The Athenians began manning forty ships to send them, partly because they thought the war there would be ended sooner, partly because they wanted to give their navy practice. So they sent out one of the generals, Pythodorus, with a few ships, and they intended to send Sophocles son of Sostratides and Eurymedon son of Thucles with the larger part of the fleet. Pythodorus, who now held Laches' command of the ships, sailed at the end of the winter against the Locrian fort that Laches had taken earlier, was defeated in battle by the Locrians, and withdrew.[51]

3.116 Around the beginning of this spring the stream of fire flowed from Etna, as it had before, and destroyed some of the land of the Catanaeans, who live below Mount Etna, the largest mountain in Sicily. This flow is said to have come in the fiftieth year after the previous one, and altogether there have been three such flows since Sicily was settled by Greeks. These were the events of this winter, and with it ended the sixth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

51 This Sophocles is an Athenian general, not the tragic poet.

Book 4

Pylos and Brasidas, 425–423 BC
The Athenian victory at Pylos and Sphacteria, the conference at Gela, the battle of Delium, and Brasidas' campaign in Thrace; Amphipolis falls.

MESSANA GOES OVER TO SYRACUSE

Syracusan and Locrian ships seize Messana, and the Locrians invade the territory of Rhegium.

4.1 In the following summer, about the time the grain comes into ear, ten Syracusan ships and the same number from Locri sailed to Messana in Sicily and took it, at the invitation of the inhabitants themselves, and Messana revolted from the Athenians. The Syracusans did this chiefly because they saw that the place offered a way of approach to Sicily. They feared that the Athenians might one day use it as a base and come against them with a larger force. The Locrians did it out of hatred for the Rhegians, because they wanted to crush them in war from both sides.[1] At the same time the Locrians had also invaded Rhegian territory in full force, so that the Rhegians would not go to the help of the Messanians. Another reason was that Rhegian exiles who were with them were urging them on. Rhegium had long been torn by civil strife, and at that moment it could not defend itself against the Locrians, which was all the more reason for them to attack. After ravaging the land the Locrians withdrew their infantry,

1 Messana (modern Messina) lies on the Sicilian side of the strait, opposite Rhegium on the Italian mainland. It is not to be confused with Messenia in the Peloponnese.

while the ships stayed to guard Messana. Other ships that were being manned were to anchor there and carry on the war from that base.

PYLOS

Demosthenes fortifies Pylos, the Spartans attack, and Athenian ships trap Spartans on Sphacteria.

4.2 At about the same time in the spring, before the grain was ripe, the Peloponnesians and their allies invaded Attica. They were led by Agis son of Archidamus, king of the Spartans. They settled in and ravaged the land. The Athenians sent off the forty ships to Sicily, as they had been preparing to do, together with the remaining generals, Eurymedon and Sophocles, for Pythodorus, the third of them, had already gone on ahead to Sicily. They also told these men to look after the Corcyraeans in the city as they sailed past Corcyra, since the exiles on the mountain were raiding them. Sixty Peloponnesian ships had also sailed there to help the men on the mountain, thinking that, with a great famine in the city, they would easily get control of the situation. Demosthenes had held no office since his return from Acarnania, but at his own request they gave him permission to use these ships around the Peloponnese, if he wished.[2]

4.3 When they were sailing off Laconia and learned that the Peloponnesian ships were already at Corcyra, Eurymedon and Sophocles wanted to hurry on to Corcyra. Demosthenes, however, urged them to put in at Pylos first and do what was needed before continuing the voyage. They objected, but as chance would have it a storm came up and carried the ships into Pylos. Demosthenes at once demanded that they fortify the place, saying that this was why he had come along on the voyage. He pointed out that there was plenty of timber and stone, and that the place was strong by nature and deserted, as was much of the country around it; for Pylos is about four hundred stades from

2 After the civil war at Corcyra described in Book 3, the oligarchic exiles had fortified themselves on Mount Istone in the island.

Sparta and lies in what was once Messenian land; the Spartans call it Coryphasium. The others said that there were plenty of deserted headlands in the Peloponnese if he wanted to occupy them and run up costs for the city. But to him this place seemed to stand out from any other. There was a harbor next to it. The Messenians had been at home there in the old days and spoke the same dialect as the Spartans, so with it as their base they could do the Spartans the greatest damage, and they would also be reliable guards of the place.[3] 4.4 He failed to persuade either the generals or the soldiers, and afterward also shared his plan with the taxiarchs without success. So he stayed idle, since the weather kept them from sailing, until the soldiers themselves, having nothing to do, were seized by an impulse to stand around and fortify the place. They set to work. They had no iron tools for working stone, so they brought stones as they picked them out and fitted them together however each one happened to fit. Wherever they needed mortar, they carried it on their backs for lack of hods, bending forward so that it would stay on as well as possible and clasping their hands behind them so that it would not slide off. They hurried in every way to finish the most vulnerable points before the Spartans could arrive to stop them. Most of the place was strong by nature and needed no wall at all.[4] 4.5 The Spartans happened to be celebrating a festival. Besides, when they heard the news they made light of it, thinking that whenever they marched out they would find either that the Athenians would not stand their ground or that they could easily take the place by force. Their army was also still at Athens, and that held them back somewhat. In six days the Athenians fortified the landward side of the place and the points where a wall was most needed. Then they left Demosthenes there with five ships to guard it and hurried on with most of the fleet on their voyage to Corcyra and Sicily.

3 A stade was about 600 feet (roughly 180 meters), so four hundred stades is about 45 miles.

4 The taxiarchs were infantry officers, each commanding one of the ten Athenian tribal regiments.

4.6 When the Peloponnesians in Attica heard that Pylos had been occupied, they hurried back home. The Spartans and King Agis regarded the business at Pylos as their own concern. Besides, they had invaded early, while the grain was still green, and most of them were short of food. A storm also came on, worse than usual for the season, and it distressed the army. So it came about, for many reasons, that they withdrew sooner than usual and that this invasion was the shortest of all. They stayed only fifteen days in Attica.

4.7 About the same time Simonides, an Athenian general, gathered a few Athenians from the garrisons and a large number of the allies in that region. With them he took Eion in Thrace, a colony of Mende that was hostile to Athens, after it was betrayed to him. But the Chalcidians and Bottiaeans came at once to its aid, and he was driven out with the loss of many of his soldiers.

4.8 When the Peloponnesians had withdrawn from Attica, the Spartiates themselves and the nearest of the perioeci went at once to the relief of Pylos. The rest of the Spartans were slower to set out, since they had only just returned from another campaign. They also sent word around the Peloponnese for everyone to come to Pylos as quickly as possible, and they sent for their sixty ships at Corcyra. These were hauled across the isthmus of Leucas, slipped past the Athenian ships at Zacynthus unnoticed, and arrived at Pylos. By now the land army was there too.[5] While the Peloponnesians were still sailing up, Demosthenes managed in time to send off two ships secretly. They were to tell Eurymedon and the Athenians with the fleet at Zacynthus to come, because the place was in danger. The ships sailed in haste as Demosthenes had instructed. Meanwhile the Spartans prepared to assault the fort by land and by sea, expecting to capture with ease a structure built in a hurry and held by only a few men. But they also expected the Athenian ships to come from Zacynthus to its relief. So they intended, if they did

5 The Spartiates were the full Spartan citizens. The perioeci ("dwellers round about") were free but non-citizen inhabitants of the towns of Laconia and Messenia who served in Sparta's army.

not take it first, to block the entrances of the harbor as well, so that the Athenians could not anchor in it. The island called Sphacteria stretches along the harbor and lies close in front of it, and so it makes the harbor secure and its entrances narrow. On one side, by the Athenian fort and Pylos, there is a channel for two ships, and on the other, toward the rest of the mainland, a channel for eight or nine. The island was entirely wooded and, being uninhabited, had no paths. It was about fifteen stades in length. The Spartans meant to close the entrances with ships packed close together, prows facing outward. They also feared that the enemy might use the island as a base to make war on them, so they ferried hoplites across to it and posted others along the mainland.[6] In this way, they reckoned, both the island and the mainland would be hostile to the Athenians. The mainland offered no place to land, because the coast of Pylos itself outside the entrance, facing the open sea, had no harbors, and the Athenians would have no base from which to help their own men. The Spartans themselves, meanwhile, would in all likelihood take the place by siege without a sea battle or any risk, since there was no grain in it and it had been occupied with scanty preparations. Once they had decided this, they began ferrying the hoplites across to the island, choosing them by lot from all the companies. Others had crossed before in relays, but the last group, who were trapped there, numbered four hundred and twenty, together with the helots who attended them. Their commander was Epitadas son of Molobrus.[7]

4.9 Demosthenes saw that the Spartans were about to attack with ships and infantry at the same time, so he made his own preparations. He hauled the triremes he still had of those left with him up under the fort and fenced them in with a stockade. He armed their sailors with shields that were [both] poor and, for the most part, made of wicker, for it was impossible to get arms in a deserted place. Even these they had taken from a

6 Hoplites were heavy-armed infantry, the core of every Greek army.
7 The helots were the state-owned serfs of Sparta. They worked the land and attended Spartan soldiers on campaign.

Messenian privateering thirty-oared ship and a light boat that happened to have come along. There were also about forty hoplites among these Messenians, and he used them along with the rest. He posted most of his men, armed and unarmed alike, at the best fortified and strongest parts of the place, facing the mainland, with orders to repel the infantry if it attacked. He himself picked out sixty hoplites and a few archers from the whole force and went outside the wall toward the sea, where he most expected the enemy to try to land. The ground there was difficult and rocky and faced the open sea, but the wall was weakest at that point, and he thought they would be eager to force their way in there. The Athenians had never expected to be beaten at sea, so they had not built a strong wall there, and if the enemy forced a landing the place could be taken. So at this point he went down to the very edge of the sea and posted his hoplites to keep the enemy off if he could, and he exhorted them as follows:

DEMOSTHENES' SPEECH AT PYLOS

Demosthenes urges his few men to hold the beach against the Spartan landing.

4.10 "Men, you who have joined me in this danger: in a crisis like this, let none of you want to appear clever by reckoning up all the danger that surrounds us. Let him rather want to close with the enemy, full of hope and without second thoughts, as one who will come through even this. When things have come to necessity, as they have here, they leave very little room for calculation and call for taking the risk as quickly as possible. For my part, I see that most of the advantages are on our side, if we are willing to stand firm and not, in panic at their numbers, throw away the advantages we have. I count the difficulty of landing here as ours. It becomes our ally if we stand firm. But if we give way, then however difficult the ground is, it will be easy going for them with no one to stop them. We shall also find the enemy more dangerous, since it will not be easy for him to

retreat again, even if we press him hard. While they are on their ships they are easiest to fight off, but once they have landed they are on equal terms with us. Nor need we be too afraid of their numbers. Large as their force is, it will fight only a little at a time, because there is no room to bring the ships in to shore. And this is not an army on land, greater than ours on equal terms, but an army fighting from ships, and ships need many things to go right at sea. So I consider their difficulties a match for our numbers. You are Athenians, and you know from experience of landing from ships on other people's shores that if a man stands his ground and does not give way out of fear of the surf and of the terrifying approach of the ships, the landing can never be forced. So I also ask you now to stand firm yourselves, to fight them off right here at the water's edge, and to save both ourselves and the place."

4.11 After this exhortation from Demosthenes the Athenians took heart, went down, and formed up at the very edge of the sea. The Spartans set out and attacked the fort with their land army and at the same time with their ships, forty-three in number. Their admiral, sailing with them, was Thrasymelidas son of Cratesicles, a Spartiate. He attacked just where Demosthenes had expected. The Athenians defended themselves on both sides, from land and from sea. The Spartans divided their ships into small groups, because there was no room for more to put in, and rested them in turn while they made their attacks. They threw themselves into it with every effort and shout of encouragement, in the hope of somehow pushing the Athenians back and taking the fort. Of them all, Brasidas stood out most. He was in command of a trireme, and he saw that because the ground was difficult the trierarchs and helmsmen were holding back even where it seemed possible to put in, careful not to smash their ships. He shouted at them that it made no sense to spare timber and let the enemy build a fort in their country. He ordered them to wreck their own ships if that was what it took to force a landing. He urged the allies not to shrink, at this moment, from giving up their ships to the Spartans in return for

the great benefits they had received, but to run them aground, get ashore however they could, and master both the men and the place.[8] 4.12 So he urged the others on in this way. Then he forced his own helmsman to run the ship aground and made for the gangway. As he tried to land he was beaten back by the Athenians, and after receiving many wounds he fainted. As he fell into the outrigger his shield slipped off into the sea. It was washed ashore, and the Athenians picked it up and later used it for the trophy they set up for this attack. The rest were eager, but they could not land, both because the ground was difficult and because the Athenians stood firm and gave no ground at all. Fortune had turned things round to the point that the Athenians were fighting off an attack from the sea while standing on land, and Laconian land at that, while the Spartans were trying to land from ships on their own country, now hostile to them, against Athenians. For at that time it made up a large part of the reputation of the Spartans that they were above all a land people and supreme in infantry, and of the Athenians that they were a seafaring people and far superior in ships.

4.13 They kept up their attacks that day and for part of the next, and then stopped. On the third day they sent some of their ships to Asine for timber to make siege engines. The wall by the harbor was high, but they hoped to take it with engines, because that was where landing was most possible. Meanwhile the Athenian ships from Zacynthus arrived, forty of them, for they had been reinforced by some of the guard ships from Naupactus and by four Chian ships. They saw that the mainland and the island were both crowded with hoplites, and that the ships in the harbor were making no move to sail out. Since they could not tell where to anchor, they sailed for the time being to the island of Prote, which is not far off and is uninhabited, and camped there. The next day they put out prepared for a sea battle. If the enemy was willing to come out against them into open water, they would fight there; if not, they meant to sail in on them themselves. The Spartans neither put out to meet them

8 A trierarch was the commander of a trireme.

nor, as it turned out, had they done what they had planned and blocked the entrances. Instead they stayed quietly on land, manning their ships and preparing to fight a sea battle in the harbor, which was not small, if anyone sailed in. 4.14 When the Athenians realized this, they rushed in against them through both entrances. They fell on most of the ships, which were already afloat and facing them, and put them to flight. They pursued them as far as the short distance allowed, disabled many and captured five, one of them with its crew aboard. Then they rammed the rest, which had fled to the shore for refuge. Some ships were struck while still being manned, before they could put out, and some, whose crews had fled, the Athenians fastened to their own ships and towed away empty. The Spartans saw this and were deeply distressed at the disaster, because their men were being cut off on the island. They rushed to help, waded into the sea in their armor, took hold of the ships, and pulled them back. In all this, each man felt that the action was being held up wherever he was not taking part himself. The confusion was great, and around the ships each side's usual way of fighting was reversed. The Spartans, in their eagerness and dismay, were simply fighting a sea battle from the land, so to speak. The Athenians had the upper hand and wanted to push their present good fortune as far as it would go, so they were fighting a land battle from ships. After giving each other a great deal of trouble and inflicting wounds, they separated, and the Spartans saved their empty ships, except those captured at first. Each side returned to its camp. The Athenians set up a trophy, gave back the dead, and took possession of the wrecks. They at once began sailing round the island and keeping it under guard, since the men on it were cut off. The Peloponnesians on the mainland, now reinforced from every quarter, stayed where they were at Pylos.

4.15 When news of what had happened at Pylos reached Sparta, they treated it as a great disaster. They decided that the authorities should go down to the camp, see for themselves, and decide on the spot what seemed best. The authorities saw that it was

impossible to help the men, and they did not want to risk the men starving or being overpowered by numbers. So they decided to make a truce covering Pylos with the Athenian generals, if they were willing. Then they would send envoys to Athens about an agreement and try to recover the men as quickly as possible. 4.16 The generals accepted the proposal, and a truce was made on the following terms. The Spartans were to bring to Pylos and hand over to the Athenians the ships in which they had fought and all the warships in Laconia, and they were not to attack the fort by land or by sea. The Athenians were to allow the Spartans on the mainland to send in to the men on the island a fixed ration of food, already kneaded: two Attic choenices of barley meal for each man, two cotylae of wine, and meat, and half that amount for each attendant. These were to be sent in under the eyes of the Athenians, and no boat was to sail in secretly. The Athenians were to go on guarding the island no less than before, provided they did not land on it, and they were not to attack the Peloponnesian army by land or by sea.[9] If either side broke any of these terms in any way whatever, the truce was at once to be void. It was to last until the Spartan envoys returned from Athens, and the Athenians were to take them there in a trireme and bring them back. When the envoys returned, this truce was to end, and the Athenians were to give back the ships in the same condition in which they had received them. The truce was made on these terms. The ships, about sixty in number, were handed over, and the envoys were sent off. When they arrived in Athens they spoke as follows:

THE SPARTAN ENVOYS' SPEECH

Under a truce, Spartan envoys offer Athens peace and alliance in return for the men on the island.

4.17 "The Spartans have sent us, Athenians, about the men on the island. Our task is to do whatever we can persuade you is both to

9 An Attic choenix was a dry measure of a little over a liter (about a quart), and a cotyle a liquid measure of about a quarter of a liter (half a pint).

your benefit and likely to bring us, in our misfortune, the most credit that present circumstances allow. If we speak at some length, we shall not be departing from our custom. It is our native way not to use many words where few will do, but to use more when the moment calls for explaining something important and so achieving by words what needs to be done. Take what we say neither in a hostile spirit nor as if you were being lectured like men without understanding. Regard it instead as a reminder, addressed to those who already know, of how to deliberate well.

"You now have the chance to make good use of your present good fortune. You can keep what you hold and gain honor and glory besides, and so avoid what happens to people who come upon some good thing they are not used to. Such people always reach out for more in hope, because their present good fortune came to them unexpectedly. But those who have experienced the most reversals in both directions have every reason to be the most distrustful of success. Both your city, through experience, and we ourselves should naturally feel this more than anyone. 4.18 You can see it by looking at our present misfortunes. We hold the greatest standing among the Greeks, and yet we have come to you asking for what we used to think we were better placed to grant. Yet this did not happen to us through any lack of power, nor because some increase in power made us arrogant. We misjudged the resources we have always had, and in that everyone is equally liable to go wrong. So it would not be reasonable for you, because of your city's present strength and its recent gains, to suppose that fortune too will always be on your side. Prudent men are those who have safely counted their advantages as uncertain (and the same men would also meet misfortune more intelligently). They recognize that a man does not engage with war only as far as he chooses to take on some part of it, but goes wherever chance leads him. Such men stumble least often, because they are not carried away by confidence in success, and they are the most ready to make peace while their fortune is good. This, Athenians, is what you now have a fine opportunity

to do with us. Do it, so that you never come to be thought, later on, to have won even your present successes by chance, should you refuse our advice and then fail, as may happen in many ways. As things stand, you can leave behind for the future a reputation for strength and intelligence that carries no risk.

4.19 "The Spartans invite you to make a treaty and end the war. They offer peace and alliance, along with close friendship and good relations with each other in every other way, and they ask in return for the men on the island. They think it better for both sides that the matter not be fought out to the end, whether the men should break out by force if some chance of escape came their way, or whether they should be starved into surrender and fall into your hands. We believe that great enmities are most securely ended not when one side retaliates, gains the upper hand in most of the war, binds the other with oaths sworn under compulsion and makes an agreement on unequal terms. They are ended when that side, though able to do exactly this, turns to reasonableness, overcomes the other by excellence of conduct, and comes to terms with a moderation beyond what was expected. For the opponent is then under an obligation, not to retaliate as one who has been coerced, but to repay excellence in kind, and he is more ready, out of a sense of shame, to abide by what he has agreed. And people do this more toward their greater enemies than toward those with whom their differences were moderate. It is human nature to give way gladly in turn to those who yield of their own accord, but against arrogance to take risks even against one's better judgment.

4.20 "For both of us, if ever, reconciliation is the right course now, before something irreparable comes between us and overtakes us. If that happens, we would be bound to hate you forever, privately as well as publicly, and you would lose what we are now offering. While the issue is still undecided, while you can gain glory and our friendship, and while our misfortune can be settled on moderate terms before anything shameful happens, let us be reconciled. Let us choose peace for ourselves instead of war, and give the rest of the Greeks a respite from

their troubles. They will consider you more responsible for this than us. They are at war without knowing clearly which side started it. But if a settlement comes, and that is now mostly in your hands, they will give you the credit. If you so decide, you can become firm friends of the Spartans: they are themselves inviting it, and you will have done them a favor rather than coerced them. Consider how many advantages this is likely to contain. If we and you speak with one voice, you may be sure that the rest of the Greek world, being weaker, will treat what we say with the greatest respect."

CLEON REJECTS PEACE

Urged on by Cleon, the Athenians demand more, the talks fail and the truce ends.

4.21 That was all the Spartans said. They believed that in the past the Athenians had wanted a treaty but had been prevented by Spartan opposition, and that now, if peace were offered, they would gladly accept it and give back the men. But the Athenians thought that since they held the men on the island, a treaty was already theirs whenever they chose to make one, and they reached out for more. They were urged on above all by Cleon son of Cleaenetus, a popular leader at that time and the most persuasive man with the masses. He persuaded them to answer as follows. First, the men on the island must surrender their arms and themselves and be brought to Athens. When they had arrived, the Spartans must give back Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen and Achaea. The Athenians had not lost these places in war but had given them up under the earlier agreement, conceding them in a time of misfortune when they were in somewhat greater need of a treaty. Then the Spartans could recover the men and make a treaty for as long as both sides decided.[10] 4.22 The Spartans did not dispute this answer. Instead they asked the Athenians to choose commissioners to confer with them, who would discuss

10 Nisaea and Pegae were the ports of Megara; Athens had given up these places under the Thirty Years' Peace of 446 BC.

each point, speaking and listening in turn, and quietly agree on whatever they could persuade each other of. At this Cleon came down hard on them. He said he had known before that they had nothing honest in mind, and now it was plain: they were unwilling to say anything in front of the people, and wanted to confer with a few men. If they had any sound intention, he told them, let them state it before everyone. The Spartans saw that they could not speak before a crowd, even if their misfortune made them inclined to make some concession, for fear of being discredited with their allies if they spoke and did not succeed. They also saw that the Athenians would not grant what they proposed on moderate terms. So they left Athens without achieving anything. 4.23 As soon as they returned, the truce at Pylos was at an end, and the Spartans asked for their ships back, as had been agreed. But the Athenians complained of an attack on their fortification in breach of the truce, and of other matters that seemed of no importance, and refused to return them. They insisted that it had been stated that the truce would be void if there was any breach whatever. The Spartans protested, denounced the business of the ships as a wrong done to them, and went away to resume the war. At Pylos the fighting was pressed hard by both sides. By day the Athenians kept two ships continually sailing round the island in opposite directions (at night the whole fleet lay at anchor round it, except on the seaward side when there was wind; twenty more ships had come from Athens to join the blockade, so that there were seventy in all). The Peloponnesians camped on the mainland and made assaults on the wall, watching for any opportunity that might arise to rescue the men.

4.24 Meanwhile in Sicily the Syracusans and their allies brought up the rest of the fleet they had been preparing to join the ships on guard at Messana, and carried on the war from Messana. The Locrians pressed for this most of all, out of hostility toward the Rhegians, and they themselves had invaded Rhegian territory in full force. The Syracusans wanted to try their luck in a sea battle, since they saw that the Athenians had only a few ships on the spot, and they had learned that the lar-

ger part, which was to come, was engaged in blockading the island.[11] For if they won at sea, they hoped to blockade Rhegium by land and sea and take it easily, and then their position would at once become strong. Since the promontory of Rhegium in Italy and Messana in Sicily lie close together, the Athenians would no longer be able to keep station there and control the strait. The strait is the stretch of sea between Rhegium and Messana, where Sicily is nearest to the mainland; it is the place called Charybdis, through which Odysseus is said to have sailed. Because it is narrow, and because the sea pours into it from two great expanses, the Tyrrhenian and the Sicilian, and is full of currents, it has naturally been thought dangerous. 4.25 In the meantime, then, the Syracusans and their allies, with a little over thirty ships, were forced late in the day to fight at sea over a merchant ship that was passing through. They put out against sixteen Athenian ships and eight from Rhegium. Defeated by the Athenians, they sailed off in haste, each group as best it could, to their own camps at Messana and at Rhegium, having lost one ship; and night fell on the action. After this the Locrians withdrew from Rhegian territory, and the ships of the Syracusans and their allies gathered at Pelorus, in the territory of Messana, and lay at anchor there with their land forces beside them.[12] The Athenians and Rhegians sailed up, and seeing the ships empty of crews, attacked them; but they lost one ship of their own when a grappling iron was thrown onto it, its crew swimming away. After this, when the Syracusans had gone aboard and were being towed along the coast toward Messana, the Athenians attacked again. The enemy swung out to sea and rammed first, and the Athenians lost another ship. So in the passage along the coast and in the sea fight that developed in this way, the Syracusans had no worse of it, and they made their way into the harbor at Messana.

The Athenians, on hearing that Camarina was being betrayed to the Syracusans by Archias and his associates, sailed there.

11 These Locrians are those of Locri in southern Italy.
12 Pelorus is the cape at the northeastern tip of Sicily.

Meanwhile the Messanians marched in full force by land, and with their ships at the same time, against Naxos, the Chalcidian city on their border. On the first day they shut the Naxians up inside their walls and laid waste their land. On the next day they sailed round with their ships to the river Acesines and ravaged the land there, while with their infantry they attacked the city. At this point many Sicels came down from the heights to help the Naxians against the Messanians.[13] When the Naxians saw them, they took heart and urged one another on, telling themselves that the Leontines and their other Greek allies were coming to their aid. They suddenly sallied out of the city and fell on the Messanians, routed them and killed more than a thousand; the rest got home with difficulty, for the non-Greeks attacked them on the roads and killed most of them. The ships put in at Messana and later dispersed, each to its own home. The Leontines and their allies, together with the Athenians, at once marched against Messana, thinking it weakened. They attacked, the Athenians making an attempt with their ships on the harbor and the land army on the city. But the Messanians, together with some Locrians under Demoteles who had been left there as a garrison after the disaster, made a sortie. Falling on the enemy suddenly, they routed most of the Leontine army and killed many. The Athenians saw this, landed from their ships and came to help; catching the Messanians in disorder, they chased them back into the city. They set up a trophy and returned to Rhegium. After this the Greeks in Sicily campaigned against one another by land, without the Athenians.

SPHACTERIA

The blockade drags on as helots and divers smuggle food to the trapped Spartans.

4.26 At Pylos the Athenians were still besieging the Spartans on the island, and the Peloponnesian army on the mainland stayed

13 The Sicels were the native, non-Greek inhabitants of eastern Sicily; Naxos and Camarina were Greek cities on the island.

where it was. The blockade was hard on the Athenians, through lack of food and water. There was no spring except one on the acropolis of Pylos itself, and that not a large one; most of them scraped away the shingle on the beach and drank the sort of water you would expect. They were also cramped, camping in a small space. And since the ships had no anchorage, some crews took their meals on land in turn, while the others lay at anchor out at sea. What discouraged them most was that the siege was dragging on far beyond expectation. They had thought to starve out within a few days men who were on a desert island and had only brackish water. The reason was that the Spartans had issued a proclamation inviting anyone who wished to bring into the island ground grain, wine, cheese and any other food that might be useful in a siege. They had fixed a large payment in silver for this, and promised freedom to any helot who brought supplies in. And supplies were brought in, by others who took the risk but above all by the helots. They would set out from wherever in the Peloponnese they happened to be and sail in, while it was still night, to the seaward side of the island. Above all they waited for a wind to carry them in. They could more easily slip past the guard of triremes when the wind blew from the sea, since it then became impossible for the ships to lie at anchor round the island. The blockade-runners, for their part, could land with no thought for their boats: they ran them aground, since the boats had been valued in money beforehand, and the hoplites kept watch for them at the landing places on the island. But all who risked it in calm weather were caught. Divers also swam underwater into the harbor, towing behind them on a cord skins filled with poppy-seed mixed with honey and with pounded linseed. At first they went unnoticed, but later guards were posted against them. Each side tried every device, the one to send in food, the other to stop it slipping past them.[14]

14 The owners of the boats had been promised compensation at an agreed value, so a wreck cost them nothing.

CLEON TAKES THE COMMAND

Nicias hands the Pylos command to Cleon, who promises to finish the job within twenty days.

4.27 At Athens, when they heard that the army was in trouble and that food was getting through to the men on the island, they were at a loss. They were afraid that winter might overtake them still on blockade. They saw that bringing supplies round the Peloponnese would be impossible, especially to a desert place where even in summer they could not send round enough. They saw too that a blockade could not be kept up on a coast without harbors. Either they would relax their watch and the men would survive, or the men would wait for bad weather and sail away in the boats that brought them food. Most of all they were afraid of the Spartans' attitude: since they were no longer sending heralds to them, the Athenians thought they must have something strong to rely on. And they regretted having refused the treaty. Cleon, aware of their suspicion of him for having blocked the agreement, said that those who brought the reports were not telling the truth. Those who had come from Pylos advised that, if the Athenians did not believe them, they should send some inspectors, and Cleon himself was chosen by the Athenians as inspector, along with Theagenes. He realized that he would be forced either to report the same things as the men he was slandering, or else to say the opposite and be shown up as a liar. Seeing too that the Athenians were rather more inclined to send an expedition, he advised them not to send inspectors or to delay and let the moment slip, but, if they thought the reports were true, to sail against the men. And he pointed at Nicias son of Niceratus, who was a general, being his enemy and wanting to discredit him. It would be easy, he said, if the generals were real men, to sail with a proper force and take those on the island; he himself, if he were in command, would certainly do it. 4.28 The Athenians raised something of an outcry against Cleon, asking why he did not sail now, if he thought it so easy.

Nicias, seeing this and also seeing that Cleon was taunting him, told him to take whatever force he wanted and make the attempt, as far as the generals were concerned. At first Cleon was ready, thinking that Nicias was handing over the command in word only. But when he realized that Nicias really meant to give it up, he backed off and said that it was not he but Nicias who was general. He was frightened by now, and had never imagined that Nicias would dare to give way to him. Nicias again told him to go, resigned the command at Pylos and called the Athenians to witness. And they, as a crowd tends to do, the more Cleon tried to dodge the voyage and back out of what he had said, the more loudly they urged Nicias to hand over the command and shouted at Cleon to sail. So, with no way left to get out of what he had said, he undertook the expedition. He came forward and said that he was not afraid of the Spartans, and that he would sail without taking anyone from the city: only the Lemnians and Imbrians who were in Athens, the peltasts who had come as reinforcements from Aenus, and four hundred archers from elsewhere. With these, he said, in addition to the soldiers at Pylos, he would within twenty days either bring the Spartans back alive or kill them on the spot. His empty boasting raised something of a laugh among the Athenians. But the sensible men were pleased all the same, reckoning that they would get one of two good things: either they would be rid of Cleon, which they thought more likely, or, if they were wrong about that, he would deliver the Spartans into their hands.[15]

4.29 Cleon settled everything in the assembly, and the Athenians voted him the expedition. He chose one of the generals at Pylos, Demosthenes, as his colleague and put to sea with all speed. He took on Demosthenes because he had learned that Demosthenes was already planning a landing on the island. The soldiers there were suffering from the hardships of the place, and were more besieged than besieging, so they were eager to

15 Peltasts were light infantry armed with small shields and javelins. The Lemnians and Imbrians were Athenian settlers on Lemnos and Imbros, islands in the northern Aegean, and Aenus was a city in Thrace.

risk a decisive fight. The burning of the island had also given Demosthenes further confidence. Before, the island had been mostly wooded and without paths, since it had always been uninhabited, and he had been afraid of it and thought this favored the enemy. They could attack a large army after it landed from places out of sight and do it damage. Because of the woods, the enemy's mistakes and preparations would not be equally visible to the Athenians, whereas every mistake of their own army would be in plain view. So the enemy could fall on them unexpectedly wherever they chose, since the initiative would be theirs. If, on the other hand, he forced his way into the thick cover to close with them, he thought the smaller force that knew the ground would be stronger than the larger one that did not. His own army, large as it was, could be destroyed piecemeal without anyone noticing, since they would not be able to see where they ought to go to each other's help. 4.30 It was not least the disaster in Aetolia, which had been due in part to the woods, that brought these thoughts to his mind. But the island was so cramped that the soldiers had been forced to put in at its edges and take their meals with an outpost guarding them. One of them accidentally set fire to a small part of the woods, and then a wind sprang up, and most of it burned down before anyone noticed. In this way Demosthenes could see more clearly that the Spartans were more numerous than he had thought, since he had earlier suspected that the food sent in was for fewer men. He could also see that the island was easier to land on. Now he judged it an undertaking worth the Athenians' more serious effort, and he began preparing the attack, sending for troops from the allies nearby and getting everything else ready.[16]

Cleon sent a messenger ahead to tell him he was coming, and arrived at Pylos with the force he had asked for. Once they were together, they first sent a herald to the Spartan camp on the mainland. They proposed that the Spartans there, if they wished, should order the men on the island to surrender their

16 In 426 BC Demosthenes had been badly defeated in the wooded hill country of Aetolia, in west-central Greece (3.97–98).

arms and themselves without further risk. The men would be kept under moderate guard until some agreement was reached on the larger question.

THE BATTLE ON SPHACTERIA

Athenian light troops wear down the Spartans, and the survivors surrender.

4.31 When the Spartans did not accept, the Athenians waited one day. On the next they put all the hoplites aboard a few ships and set out by night. Shortly before dawn they began landing on both sides of the island, from the open sea and from the harbor side. There were about eight hundred hoplites, and they advanced at a run against the first guard post on the island. This is how the Spartans were disposed. In this first post there were about thirty hoplites. Most of them, with Epitadas their commander, held the center, the flattest part of the island, around the water. A small detachment guarded the very end of the island facing Pylos, which was sheer on the sea side and very hard to attack from the land. There was also an old fort there, built of roughly gathered stones, which they thought would be useful to them if they were driven into a forced retreat. That was how they were deployed.

4.32 The Athenians charged the first guards and killed them at once, some still in their beds and some snatching up their arms. Their landing had gone unnoticed, because the guards thought the ships were sailing to their usual night station offshore. As dawn broke the rest of the army landed as well. From seventy-odd ships came everyone except the rowers of the lowest bench, each equipped as best he could be. There were eight hundred archers and no fewer peltasts, the Messenians who had come to help, and all the others holding positions around Pylos except the guards on the wall. Under Demosthenes' dispositions they split into groups of two hundred or more, in some places fewer, and occupied the highest points of ground. The aim was that the enemy, surrounded on every side, should be at the greatest pos-

sible loss, with no single body to form up against. Instead they would be exposed on both sides to sheer numbers. If they attacked those in front, they would be shot at by those behind; if they attacked those on one flank, by those posted on either side. Wherever they moved, there would always be enemies at their backs. These were light troops, the hardest of all to deal with, whose strength lay in arrows, javelins, stones and slings at long range, and whom it was impossible even to come to grips with. They won even as they fled, and pressed hard on their opponents whenever these withdrew.

This was the thinking behind Demosthenes' first plan for the landing and the dispositions he made in the action itself. 4.33 Epitadas and his men, the main body of those on the island, saw that the first guard post had been wiped out and that an army was advancing on them. They formed up and moved against the Athenian hoplites, wanting to come to close quarters, since the hoplites had taken up position facing them while the light troops were on their flank and at their rear. But they could not engage the hoplites or make use of their own experience. The light troops held them off with missiles from both sides, and the hoplites did not advance to meet them but stayed where they were. Wherever the Spartans ran at the light troops and pressed them hardest, they drove them back. But these men turned and kept fighting. They were lightly equipped and easily got a head start in their flight. The ground was difficult and rough, because the island had never been inhabited, and in such ground the Spartans could not pursue them in their heavy armor. 4.34 For a short time they skirmished with each other in this way. But the Spartans could no longer dash out quickly wherever they were attacked, and the light troops saw that they were now slower to defend themselves. The light troops had also gained great confidence from seeing that they were many times more numerous. They had grown used to the Spartans, who no longer seemed as formidable to them, because they had not at once suffered what they expected when they first landed, their spirits cowed by the thought that they were going against Spartans. Now they felt

contempt for them. They raised a shout and charged in a mass, pelting them with stones, arrows and javelins, whatever each man had to hand. The shout that went up with the charge struck panic into men unused to this kind of fighting. Thick dust rose from the newly burned woods, and it was impossible to see what was in front of you for the arrows and stones flying from so many men together with the dust. At this point the action began to go hard for the Spartans. Their felt caps did not keep out the arrows, and javelins had broken off and stuck in them where they were hit. They could do nothing to help themselves. They were cut off from seeing ahead, and the louder shouting of the enemy kept them from hearing the orders given in their own ranks. Danger surrounded them on every side, and they had no hope of any means of defense that could save them. 4.35 At last, with many already wounded from constantly wheeling about in the same spot, they closed ranks and fell back to the fort at the far end of the island, which was not far off, and to their own guards there. Once they gave ground, the light troops, now emboldened, pressed on them with an even louder shout. Those Spartans who were caught as they retreated were killed. But most of them escaped to the fort and, with the guards stationed there, took up positions all along it, ready to defend it wherever it was open to attack. The Athenians followed, but the strength of the position kept them from going round and encircling the Spartans, so they tried to dislodge them by attacking from the front. For a long time, most of the day, both sides held out, worn down by the fighting, by thirst and by the sun. One side tried to drive the enemy off the high ground, the other tried not to give way. The Spartans defended themselves more easily than before, since they could not be outflanked.

4.36 When there was no end in sight, the commander of the Messenians went to Cleon and Demosthenes and told them they were wasting their efforts. If they would give him some of the archers and light troops to go round to the enemy's rear by whatever path he could find himself, he thought he could force the approach. He was given what he asked for. He set off from a

point out of sight, so that the enemy would not see him, and made his way along wherever the cliffs of the island gave a foothold, in places the Spartans left unguarded because they trusted the strength of the position. With great difficulty and effort he got round without being noticed. Then he suddenly appeared on the heights at their rear. The surprise struck the enemy with dismay, and the sight of what they had been waiting for greatly heartened his own side. The Spartans were now being shot at from both sides. They were in the same predicament, to compare small things with great, as the men at Thermopylae. Those men were destroyed when the Persians came round by the path, and these men too, now attacked on both sides, held out no longer. Few were fighting against many, and their bodies were weak from lack of food, so they began to give way. The Athenians were now masters of the approaches.[17]

4.37 Cleon and Demosthenes realized [that] if the enemy gave way even a little more, they would be destroyed by their own troops. So they stopped the fighting and held their men back. They wanted to bring the Spartans to the Athenians alive, hoping that on hearing a proclamation their resolve might break, so that they would surrender their arms and yield to the danger at hand. They had a herald proclaim that, if they wished, they could surrender their arms and themselves to the Athenians, to be dealt with as the Athenians should decide. 4.38 When they heard it, most of them lowered their shields and waved their hands, showing that they accepted the terms. After this a truce was made, and Cleon and Demosthenes met for talks with Styphon son of Pharax on the Spartan side. Of their earlier commanders, the first, Epitadas, was dead. The man chosen to succeed him, Hippagretas, was lying among the dead, still alive but taken for dead. Styphon himself had been chosen by law as third in command, should anything happen to the other two. Styphon and those with him said they wanted to send a herald across to the Spartans on the mainland to ask what they should do. The

17 At Thermopylae in 480 BC, the Persians took a mountain path around the pass and destroyed Leonidas and his Spartans.

Athenians would let none of them go, but they themselves called heralds over from the mainland. After questions had passed back and forth two or three times, the last man to cross over to them from the Spartans on the mainland brought this message: "[The] Spartans bid you decide for yourselves about yourselves, provided you do nothing dishonorable." They then talked it over among themselves and surrendered their arms and themselves. That day and the following night the Athenians kept them under guard. The next day the Athenians set up a trophy on the island, made everything else ready for sailing, and handed the men over to the trierarchs to guard. The Spartans sent a herald and took away their dead. These were the numbers killed and taken alive on the island. Four hundred and twenty hoplites in all had crossed over. Of these, eight short of three hundred were brought away alive, and the rest were killed. Of those taken alive, about a hundred and twenty were Spartiates. Not many Athenians were killed, since the battle was not fought at close quarters.

4.39 The whole time the men on the island were blockaded, from the sea battle to the battle on the island, was seventy-two days. For about twenty of these, while the envoys were away negotiating about the truce, they were given rations. For the rest they lived on what was smuggled in to them. In fact there was still some grain on the island, and other food was found there, because the commander Epitadas had been issuing each man less than the supplies allowed. So the Athenians and the Peloponnesians each withdrew their forces from Pylos and went home. And Cleon's promise, mad as it was, came true: within twenty days he brought the men back, just as he had undertaken.

THE SURRENDER SHOCKS GREECE

The Greeks are amazed that Spartans gave up their arms; the prisoners are held at Athens.

4.40 Of everything that happened in the war, this was what most confounded the Greeks' expectations. They had thought that Spartans would never surrender their arms, whether from hunger or under any necessity, but would keep them and die fighting as best they could. They could not believe that those who surrendered were men of the same kind as those who died. Some time later, one of the Athenian allies asked one of the prisoners from the island, to taunt him, whether those of them who had died were the brave and noble ones. He replied that the "spindle," meaning the arrow, would be worth a great deal if it could pick out the brave. He meant that whoever happened to be in the way of the stones and arrows was killed.[18]

4.41 When the men had been brought to Athens, the Athenians decided to keep them in chains until some settlement was reached. If the Peloponnesians invaded their land before then, they would bring the prisoners out and kill them. They set up a garrison at Pylos. The Messenians from Naupactus regarded Pylos as their homeland, since it lies in what was once Messenian territory. They sent their best-suited men there, who began raiding Laconia and did a great deal of damage, because they spoke the same dialect as the people there.[19] The Spartans had never before had any experience of raiding or warfare of this kind. Their helots were deserting, and they were afraid that revolution might spread still further through their country. They took it hard. Though they did not want the Athenians to see how they felt, they sent envoys to Athens and tried to get back Pylos and the men. But the Athenians were reaching for

18 "Spindle" was a disparaging word for an arrow, likening it to a woman's spinning tool.

19 These Messenians were descendants of rebel helots whom the Athenians had settled at Naupactus, on the Corinthian Gulf, after the great revolt of the 460s BC.

more, and although the envoys came again and again, they kept sending them away with nothing accomplished. That is what happened at Pylos.

NICIAS IN CORINTHIAN TERRITORY

The Athenians defeat the Corinthians at Solygeia and fortify Methana.

4.42 In the same summer, immediately after this, the Athenians campaigned against Corinthian territory. They had eighty ships, two thousand of their own hoplites, and two hundred cavalry on horse transports. Of the allies, the Milesians, Andrians and Carystians also went with them. The general was Nicias son of Niceratus, with two colleagues. They sailed in and at dawn put in between Chersonesus and Rheitus, on the beach below the hill of Solygeia. In the old days the Dorians had established themselves on that hill and made war on the Corinthians in the city, who were Aeolians. There is now a village on it called Solygeia. From the beach where the ships put in, this village is twelve stades away, the city of Corinth sixty, and the Isthmus twenty. The Corinthians had learned in advance from Argos that the Athenian army was coming. Well beforehand they had gone to the Isthmus to meet it, all of them except those living beyond the Isthmus. Five hundred more were away on garrison duty in Ambracia and Leucas. The rest, in full force, were watching to see where the Athenians would put in. But the Athenians eluded them by sailing in at night, and when signals were raised to tell them, they left half their men at Cenchreae, in case the Athenians went against Crommyon, and hurried to the rescue. 4.43 Battus, one of the generals (two were present at the battle), took a company and went to guard the village of Solygeia, since it had no walls. Lycophron engaged with the rest. First the Corinthians fell on the Athenian right wing, which had just landed in front of Chersonesus, and then on the rest of the army as well. The battle was fierce and fought hand to hand throughout. The right wing, made up of the Athenians and the Carystians (the Carystians

were posted at the end of the line), received the Corinthian attack and with difficulty pushed them back. The Corinthians fell back to a dry-stone wall (the whole place was a slope) and pelted them with stones from above. Then they raised the paean and came on again, and when the Athenians met them the fighting was hand to hand once more. A company of Corinthians came up to support their own left wing, routed the Athenian right wing and chased it down to the sea. But from the ships the Athenians and Carystians turned and came back again. The rest of the army on both sides fought without a break, above all the Corinthian right wing, where Lycophron was, fighting against the Athenian left; for the Corinthians expected the Athenians to make an attempt on the village of Solygeia.[20] 4.44 For a long time they held out, neither side giving way. Then the Corinthians were routed, because the Athenians had their cavalry fighting alongside them and the other side had no horses. The Corinthians withdrew to the hill, grounded their arms there and did not come down again, but stayed where they were. Most of their losses came in this rout on the right wing, and among the dead was Lycophron the general. The rest of the army was not hotly pursued and did not break into headlong flight. When it was forced back, it withdrew in this manner to the high ground and took up a position there. Since the enemy no longer came out to fight them, the Athenians stripped the enemy dead, took up their own, and immediately set up a trophy. Half the Corinthians had been stationed at Cenchreae as a guard in case the Athenians sailed against Crommyon. Mount Oneium hid the battle from their view. But when they saw the dust and [when] they realized what was happening, they came to help at once. The older Corinthians in the city also came out to help when they learned what had happened. The Athenians saw them all advancing together and thought the neighboring Peloponnesians were coming to help. They withdrew in haste to their ships, taking the spoils and their own dead except for two,

20 The paean was a chant to Apollo, sung by Greek troops as they advanced into battle.

whom they left behind because they could not find them. They went aboard and crossed to the islands lying off the coast. From there they sent a herald and recovered under truce the dead they had left behind. In the battle the Corinthians lost two hundred and twelve men, and the Athenians a little under fifty.

4.45 Setting out from the islands, the Athenians sailed the same day to Crommyon in Corinthian territory, which is a hundred and twenty stades from the city. They put in there, laid waste the land and spent the night. The next day they sailed along the coast, first to the territory of Epidaurus, where they made a landing, and then came to Methana, between Epidaurus and Troezen. There they cut off the isthmus of the peninsula with a wall [on which Methone is situated] and established a garrison, from which they raided the territory of Troezen, Halieis and Epidaurus in the time that followed. Once they had finished walling off the place, they sailed home with the fleet.

THE END OF THE CORCYRAEAN EXILES

Tricked into breaking their truce, the exiles from Mount Istone are massacred by the Corcyraean people.

4.46 At about the same time, Eurymedon and Sophocles left Pylos for Sicily with the Athenian ships. When they reached Corcyra, they joined the men from the city in a campaign against the Corcyraeans who had established themselves on Mount Istone. These men had crossed over after the civil strife, and at that time they controlled the countryside and were doing a great deal of damage. The Athenians attacked and took the fortification. The men themselves fled in a body to some high ground and came to terms: they would hand over their mercenaries, and as for themselves, they would surrender their arms and let the Athenian people decide their fate.[21] The generals brought them across under truce to the island of Ptychia to be kept under guard until they could be sent to Athens. The condition

21 These were the oligarchic exiles who had seized Istone after the Corcyraean civil war described in Book 3.

was that if any one of them was caught trying to escape, the truce would be void for all of them. But the leaders of the Corcyraean people were afraid that the Athenians would not put the men to death once they reached Athens, and they devised the following scheme. They won over a few of the men on the island by secretly sending friends to them. These friends had been instructed to say, supposedly out of goodwill, that the best thing for them was to escape as quickly as possible, and that they themselves would have a boat ready. The Athenian generals, so they claimed, were about to hand them over to the Corcyraean people. 4.47 They persuaded them, and when the men sailed off in the boat that had been arranged for them, they were caught. The truce was broken, and all of them were handed over to the Corcyraeans. The Athenian generals did as much as anyone to bring this about, so that the pretext seemed genuine and the schemers could act with less fear. It was plain that, since they themselves were sailing on to Sicily, they did not want the men taken to Athens by others, who would get the credit for bringing them. The Corcyraeans took the men over and shut them up in a large building. Later they brought them out twenty at a time and led them between two lines of hoplites drawn up on either side. The prisoners were bound to one another, and the men in the lines struck and stabbed them whenever one of them saw a personal enemy. Men with whips walked beside them and hurried along those who moved more slowly. 4.48 In this way the Corcyraeans brought out and killed as many as sixty men without the others in the building realizing it, since they thought the men were being taken out to be moved somewhere else. But when they noticed, and someone told them, they called on the Athenians and told them to kill them themselves, if that was what they wanted. They refused to come out of the building any longer, and they said that they would let no one come in, as far as they were able to prevent it. The Corcyraeans for their part had no intention of forcing their way in through the doors. Instead they climbed onto the roof of the building, broke through the ceiling, and threw down the roof tiles and shot arrows at the men below.

The men inside protected themselves as best they could, and at the same time most of them were killing themselves. Some plunged into their throats the arrows that the Corcyraeans shot at them. Others hanged themselves with the cords from some beds that happened to be there and with strips torn from their clothes. For most of the night (for night fell upon their suffering) they made away with themselves in every way they could or were struck by those above, and so they perished. When day came, the Corcyraeans threw the bodies crosswise onto wagons, stacked like matting, and carted them out of the city. The women who had been captured in the fortification were sold as slaves. In this way the Corcyraeans from the mountain were destroyed by the people, and the civil strife, which had been great, ended here, at least as far as this war was concerned, since nothing worth mentioning was left of the other side. The Athenians sailed off to Sicily, which had been their destination in the first place, and carried on the war with their allies there.

4.49 At the very end of the summer, the Athenians at Naupactus and the Acarnanians made an expedition against Anactorium, a Corinthian city lying at the mouth of the Ambracian Gulf, and took it by betrayal. The Acarnanians expelled [the Corinthians] and held the place themselves, with settlers drawn from all their communities. And the summer ended.

4.50 In the following winter Aristides son of Archippus was one of the generals commanding the Athenian ships that had been sent out to collect money from the allies. At Eion on the Strymon he arrested Artaphernes, a Persian, who was on his way from the king to Sparta. Artaphernes was brought to Athens, and the Athenians had his letters transcribed from the Assyrian script and read them. Much else was written in them, but the main point addressed to the Spartans was that the king did not understand what they wanted: many envoys had come, and no two of them said the same thing. If, then, they wanted to say anything clear, they should send men to him along with the Persian. Later the Athenians sent Artaphernes back by trireme to Ephesus, and envoys with him. But when the envoys learned

there that King Artaxerxes son of Xerxes had recently died (he died at about this time), they went back home.[22]

4.51 In the same winter the Chians also pulled down their new wall at the bidding of the Athenians, who suspected them of planning some revolution against them. The Chians did, however, obtain pledges from the Athenians, and the firmest assurance they could, that the Athenians would make no drastic move against them. So the winter ended, and with it the seventh year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

4.52 At the very start of the next summer there was a partial eclipse of the sun around the new moon, and early in the same month there was an earthquake. The exiles from Mytilene and the rest of Lesbos were operating for the most part from the mainland. They hired a mercenary force from the Peloponnese, raised another force on the spot, and took Rhoeteum. They received two thousand Phocaean staters for it and gave it back without doing it any harm. After this they marched against Antandrus and took the city when it was betrayed to them.[23] Their plan was to free the other cities known as the Actaean cities, which the Mytileneans had formerly occupied and the Athenians now held, and above all Antandrus. Antandrus offered ample means for building ships, since there was timber on the spot and Mount Ida rises above it, and there was the rest of the equipment as well. Once they had made the city strong, they meant to use it as a base from which they could easily harass Lesbos, which was close by, and subdue the Aeolian towns on the mainland. These were the preparations they intended to make.[24]

22 "Assyrian script" probably means Aramaic, the script used in the Persian chancery. Artaxerxes I died in 424 BC.

23 The eclipse took place on 21 March 424 BC. Phocaean staters were coins of electrum, an alloy of gold and silver, widely used in the Aegean.

24 The "Actaean" cities were the towns on the Asian coast opposite Lesbos, which Athens took from Mytilene after crushing its revolt in 427 BC.

THE CAPTURE OF CYTHERA

Nicias takes Cythera and raids Laconia, and the shaken Spartans stay on the defensive.

4.53 In the same summer the Athenians made an expedition against Cythera with sixty ships, two thousand hoplites, a few cavalry, and some of their allies, the Milesians and others. Their generals were Nicias son of Niceratus, Nicostratus son of Diitrephes and Autocles son of Tolmaeus. Cythera is an island lying off Laconia opposite Malea. Its inhabitants are Spartans of the perioeci, and an official called the "judge of Cythera" crossed over to it from Sparta every year. The Spartans also regularly sent over a garrison of hoplites and paid great attention to the place. It served them as a landing place for merchant ships from Egypt and Libya, and it also made pirates less able to trouble Laconia from the sea, the only side from which Laconia could be attacked, since the whole country juts out into the Sicilian and Cretan seas. 4.54 So the Athenians put in with their force. With ten ships and two thousand Milesian hoplites they took the town on the sea called Scandea. With the rest of the army they landed on the side of the island facing Malea and advanced against the [seaside] city of the Cytherians, where they found at once that all the inhabitants had encamped. In the battle that followed, the Cytherians held out for a short time. Then they were routed and fled to the upper city, and later they came to terms with Nicias and his fellow generals, agreeing to leave their fate to the Athenians, short of death. Some talks had also taken place earlier between Nicias and certain of the Cytherians, and this is why the terms of the agreement were carried out more quickly and more favorably for them, both then and afterward. Otherwise the Athenians would have removed the Cytherians, since they were Spartans and their island lay so close off Laconia. After the agreement the Athenians took over Scandea, the town by the harbor, and put a garrison on Cythera. Then they sailed to Asine and Helos and most of the places along the coast, mak-

ing landings and camping at whatever spots were convenient, and they laid waste the land for about seven days.

4.55 The Spartans saw the Athenians holding Cythera and expected them to make landings of the same kind on their own land as well. Yet they nowhere opposed them with their forces massed. Instead they sent garrisons of hoplites around the country, as many as were needed at each place, and in general they kept a close watch. They were afraid that some revolution might break out against their established order. The disaster on the island had come upon them unexpected and great, Pylos and Cythera were in enemy hands, and on every side they were surrounded by a war that moved fast and could not be guarded against. As a result, contrary to their custom, they raised a force of four hundred cavalry and a body of archers, and in military matters they became more hesitant than ever before. They found themselves engaged in a naval struggle, which did not suit the established character of their forces, and against Athenians at that, who always counted any attempt they had not made as a loss against what they had expected to achieve. At the same time the many strokes of fortune that had befallen them unexpectedly in a short time caused them the greatest dismay, and they were afraid that some disaster like the one on the island might overtake them again. For this reason they were less daring in battle, and they thought that any move they made would go wrong. Their judgment had lost its confidence because they had never before been used to misfortune. 4.56 So when the Athenians laid waste the coastal country at that time, the Spartans for the most part stayed quiet whenever a landing took place near one of their garrisons. Each garrison thought itself outnumbered, and they were in the state of mind already described. One garrison, however, did put up a defense around Cotyrta and Aphroditia. It charged the mass of light troops, who were scattered, and routed them, but when the hoplites met its attack it fell back again. A few of its men were killed and some arms were captured, and the Athenians set up a trophy and sailed back to Cythera. From there they sailed round to Epidaurus Limera, and

after ravaging part of the land they came to Thyrea. Thyrea belongs to the district called Cynuria and lies on the border between Argive territory and Laconia. The Spartans held it, and they had given it to the Aeginetans to live in after they were expelled from Aegina. They did this because of the services the Aeginetans had done them at the time of the earthquake and the revolt of the helots, and because the Aeginetans, though subjects of the Athenians, had always taken the Spartan side in policy.[25]

4.57 While the Athenians were still sailing in, the Aeginetans abandoned the wall on the coast that they happened to be building and withdrew to the upper city, where they lived, about ten stades from the sea. One of the Spartan garrisons posted around the country had been helping them build the wall. The Aeginetans begged these men to join them inside the walls, but they refused, because it seemed dangerous to them to be shut up inside. Instead they withdrew to the high ground and, since they did not think themselves a match for the enemy, stayed quiet. Meanwhile the Athenians put in, advanced at once with their whole army, and took Thyrea. They burned the city and plundered what was in it. Then they returned to Athens, bringing with them those of the Aeginetans who had not been killed in the fighting, and also the Spartan commander who had been with them, Tantalus son of Patrocles, who had been wounded and taken alive. They also brought a few men from Cythera whom they had thought it best to remove for safety's sake. The Athenians decided to settle these men in the islands. The rest of the Cytherians were to live on their own land and pay a tribute of four talents. All the Aeginetans who had been captured were to be put to death because of the long-standing enmity between the two peoples. Tantalus was to be put in chains along with the other Spartans taken on the island.[26]

25 The earthquake and the great helot revolt came in 464 BC.
26 The talent was a large sum of silver, equal to 6,000 drachmas.

THE CONFERENCE AT GELA

Hermocrates urges the Sicilian Greeks to make peace among themselves.

4.58 In the same summer, in Sicily, the people of Camarina and Gela first made an armistice with each other. Then the other Sicilian Greeks also met at Gela, with envoys from all the cities, and opened discussions with one another to see whether they could somehow be reconciled. Many opinions were put forward on both sides, as each party argued and pressed its claims according to where it thought it was at a disadvantage. Among the speakers was Hermocrates son of Hermon, a Syracusan, the man who in fact did most to persuade them, and he spoke before the whole gathering as follows:[27]

4.59 "Siceliots, I do not speak as a man from the least of cities, nor from the city that suffers most from the war. I speak in order to set before you all the policy that seems to me best for the whole of Sicily. As for war, and how harsh a thing it is, why should anyone list every evil it holds and talk at length before those who already know? No one is driven into war through ignorance, and no one is deterred from it by fear if he thinks he will gain something by it. What happens is that to some the gains appear greater than the dangers, while others are willing to face the risks rather than accept some loss for the present. But if both sides are acting at the wrong moment, then advice to make peace is useful. That advice would be of the greatest value to us now, if we were persuaded by it. For it was in the belief, of course, that each of us was looking after his own interests well that we went to war in the first place. Now we are trying to be reconciled with one another through debate, and if after all it turns out that not every party can go away with a fair share, we shall go to war again.

4.60 "And yet we must recognize that this conference, if we are sensible, will be about more than our own interests. It will be

about whether we can still save the whole of Sicily, which in my judgment the Athenians have designs on. We must consider the Athenians far more compelling peacemakers in this matter than any words of mine. They have the greatest power of all the Greeks, and they are here with a few ships, watching for our mistakes. Under the lawful name of alliance they are plausibly turning what is naturally hostile to their own advantage. Consider what will follow if we take up war and call them in, men who launch expeditions of their own accord even against those who do not invite them, and if we harm ourselves at our own expense while clearing the way for their empire. When they see that we are worn out, they are likely to come one day with a larger expedition and try to bring all of this under their control.

4.61 "And yet, if we are sensible, each of us should call in allies and take on dangers for his own city to win what is not ours, not to ruin what we already have. We must recognize that civil strife is the greatest destroyer of cities, and of Sicily too. All of us who live in Sicily are threatened together, and yet we are divided city against city. Knowing this, we should be reconciled, private citizen with private citizen and city with city, and try to save the whole of Sicily in common. And let no one imagine that the Dorians among us are the enemies of the Athenians while the Chalcidian stock is safe because of its Ionian kinship.[28] They do not attack us out of hatred for one of the two stocks into which we are divided. They attack because they covet the good things of Sicily, which we possess in common. They have shown this just now in their response to the appeal of the Chalcidian people. Those people had never once come to their help under the alliance, and yet the Athenians have eagerly given them more than the agreement entitled them to. It is entirely forgivable that the Athenians should seek this advantage and plan ahead for it. I do not blame those who want to rule, but those

27 The Sicilian Greeks (Siceliots) were the Greek colonists of Sicily, as distinct from the island's native peoples.

28 Some Sicilian Greek cities were founded by Dorians (Syracuse among them), others by Ionians, such as the Chalcidian colonies like Leontini; the Athenians were Ionians.

who are too ready to submit. For human nature always rules what yields and guards against what attacks. Those of us who know this and yet fail to look ahead correctly are making a mistake. So is anyone who has come here without judging the most important thing to be this: that we should all deal well with the danger that threatens us in common. The quickest way to be rid of it would be for us to come to terms with one another, for the Athenians do not set out from their own country but from the country of those who invited them in. In this way war is not ended by war; our differences are ended by peace, without trouble. And those who were called in, having come with a plausible pretext for wrongdoing, will go away with a good reason for having achieved nothing.

4.62 "That is the great good that sound planning finds in our dealings with the Athenians. As for peace, which everyone agrees is the best thing, why should we not make it among ourselves as well? Suppose one man has some good thing and another the opposite. Do you not think that peace rather than war would end the troubles of the one and preserve the good fortune of the other? Do you not think that peace offers honors and distinction with less danger, and all the other advantages one could go through at length, just as one could about war? With this in mind you must not disregard my words. Rather, each of you should see in them in advance the way to his own safety. And if anyone thinks he will surely achieve something, whether through justice or by force, let him not be badly tripped up by the unexpected. Let him recognize that many men before now have pursued wrongdoers to punish them, and others have hoped to gain an advantage through some power. The first, far from avenging themselves, did not even survive, while the second, instead of gaining more, ended up losing what they had besides. For vengeance does not succeed as a matter of justice simply because a wrong has been done, nor is strength secure because it is confident. It is the unpredictability of the future that for the most part prevails. It is the most treacherous thing

of all, and yet it also proves the most useful, for since we all fear it equally, we think twice before we attack one another.

4.63 "And now we are alarmed on two counts: by fear of this hidden future, which no one can gauge, and by the Athenians, who are already here and already formidable. We should consider these obstacles reason enough why each of us has fallen short of what he thought he would achieve. So let us send the enemy who stands over us out of our country. Let us ourselves make a lasting settlement if we can, or, failing that, make a treaty for as long a time as possible and put off our private quarrels to another day. In short, let us recognize this. If we follow my advice, each of us will have a free city, and from it, as our own masters, we will repay those who do us good and those who do us harm on equal terms and with excellence. But if we distrust one another and submit to others, it will no longer be a question of punishing anyone. Even if things went extremely well for us, we would be forced by necessity to become friends of our worst enemies and at odds with those we ought not to be.[29]

4.64 "For my part, as I said at the beginning, I represent the greatest city, and I am more likely to be attacking someone than defending myself. Yet I think it right to foresee these dangers and make concessions. I should not harm my opponents in a way that does more damage to myself. Nor should I suppose, out of foolish contentiousness, that I am master of chance, which I do not control, in the same way as I am master of my own judgment. Instead I should give way as far as is reasonable. And I ask the rest of you to do as I do: to accept this at your own hands, and not to suffer it at the hands of the enemy. For there is nothing shameful in kin giving way to kin, a Dorian to a Dorian or a Chalcidian to his own people. In short, we are neighbors, living together in a single country surrounded by the sea and called by a single name, Siceliots. We will go to war, I suppose, when it comes to that, and we will make terms again among ourselves, through discussions held in common. But foreign invaders we

29 The Greek text is uncertain here.

will always resist together, if we have any sense, since when we are harmed one by one, all of us are in danger. And we will never again call in allies or mediators. If we act in this way, we will not deprive Sicily of two good things in the present, riddance of the Athenians and of a war among ourselves. And for the future we will inhabit it by ourselves, free and less exposed to the designs of others."

4.65 After Hermocrates had spoken in this way, the Siceliots were persuaded and reached an agreement among themselves to end the war, each keeping what they held. The one exception was that the Camarinaeans were to have Morgantine on paying a fixed sum of money to the Syracusans. The allies of the Athenians called in the Athenians in authority and told them that they were going to make terms and that the treaty would include the Athenians as well. The Athenians approved, and they concluded the agreement. After this the Athenian ships sailed away from Sicily.[30] When the generals came home, the Athenians in the city punished two of them, Pythodorus and Sophocles, with exile, and fined the third, Eurymedon. Their charge was that the generals could have subdued Sicily but had been bribed into withdrawing. So far did the Athenians trust their present good fortune that they expected nothing to stand in their way. They thought they could achieve the possible and the more difficult alike, with a large force or an inadequate one equally. The cause was the unexpected success of most of their undertakings, which lent strength to their hopes.

THE PLOT TO BETRAY MEGARA

Megarian democrats let the Athenians into the long walls, and Nisaea surrenders.

4.66 In the same summer the Megarians in the city were hard pressed in two ways. The Athenians pressed them in the war, invading their land with their full force twice every year. Their

30 Camarina was a Greek city on the south coast of Sicily; Morgantine was a town in the interior of the island.

own exiles in Pegae pressed them too. These men had been driven out by the people during civil strife, and they were causing trouble by raiding. So the Megarians began saying to one another that they ought to take the exiles back and not let the city be ruined from both sides. The friends of those outside, noticing the talk, now urged more openly than before that the proposal be taken up.[31] The leaders of the people realized that under these hardships the people would not be able to hold out on their side. They took fright and opened talks with the Athenian generals, Hippocrates son of Ariphron and Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes. They wanted to hand the city over, considering this less dangerous for themselves than the return of the men they had expelled. They agreed that the Athenians should first seize the long walls, which ran about eight stades from the city to Nisaea, their harbor. That way the Peloponnesians could not come to the rescue from Nisaea, where they alone formed the garrison, to keep Megara secure. After that the leaders would try to hand over the upper city as well. Once the walls had been taken, the Megarians would be more ready to come over.[32]

4.67 So the Athenians, once both parties had arranged everything in word and deed, sailed by night to Minoa, the Megarians' island, with six hundred hoplites under the command of Hippocrates. They took up position in a pit not far from the walls, where the bricks for the walls had been made. The force with the other general, Demosthenes, made up of Plataean light troops and frontier guards, lay in ambush at the shrine of Enyalius, which is nearer still. No one noticed except the men whose business it was to know that night.[33] As dawn was about to break, these Megarian traitors carried out the following plan. They had long been preparing the ground for opening the gates. With the commander's permission, they had made a habit of

31 Pegae was Megara's port on the Corinthian Gulf.
32 Nisaea was Megara's port on the Saronic Gulf, facing Athens.
33 The frontier guards (peripoloi) were Athenian patrol troops. Enyalius was a war god, often identified with Ares.

carrying a two-oared skiff on a cart by night down through the ditch to the sea, as though they were going raiding, and sailing out. Before daylight they would bring it back on the cart to the wall and take it in through the gates. The supposed purpose was to leave the Athenians on Minoa nothing to watch, since no boat was ever to be seen in the harbor. On this occasion the cart was already at the gates, and the gates were opened as usual for the skiff. The Athenians saw this (it was done by prearranged signal) and ran out of their ambush at full speed. They wanted to arrive before the gates were shut again, while the cart was still in the gateway and kept them from being closed. At the same moment the Megarians working with them killed the guards at the gates. The first to run in were the Plataeans and frontier guards with Demosthenes, at the spot where the trophy now stands. Just inside the gates the nearest Peloponnesians had become aware of what was happening, and the Plataeans fought and overcame the men coming to help. They held the gates secure for the Athenian hoplites as they came on; [4.68] and then each Athenian, as he got inside, advanced on the wall. At first the Peloponnesian garrison held out and defended themselves, few as they were, and some of them were killed. But most of them took to flight. They were frightened because the enemy had fallen on them at night and the Megarian traitors were fighting against them, and they thought that the Megarians as a whole had betrayed them. It so happened, too, that the Athenian herald, on his own initiative, proclaimed that any Megarian who wished should come and take his place in the ranks with the Athenians. When the garrison heard this, they held their ground no longer. Believing that they really were being attacked by both together, they fled to Nisaea. At dawn the walls had been taken and the Megarians in the city were in an uproar. Those who had been dealing with the Athenians, and a number of others who were in on the plot, said that they ought to open the gates and march out to battle. They had agreed with the Athenians that when the gates were opened the Athenians would burst in. They themselves were going to anoint themselves with oil so as to be easily

recognized and not be harmed. They had all the more security in opening the gates, because four thousand Athenian hoplites and six hundred cavalry had now arrived from Eleusis, as agreed, after marching through the night. They had anointed themselves and were already near the gates when one of those in on the secret revealed the plot to the other side. These men banded together and came in a body. They said that the Megarians must not march out, since they had never dared to do this before, even when they were stronger, and must not lead the city into obvious danger. If anyone would not listen, they said, the battle would be fought right there. They gave no sign that they knew what was going on, but insisted that theirs was the best advice. At the same time they stayed by the gates on guard, so that the plotters were unable to carry out what they intended. 4.69 The Athenian generals saw that something had gone wrong and that they would not be able to take the city by force. They immediately began walling Nisaea off, thinking that if they could take it before anyone came to help, Megara too would come over sooner. Iron arrived quickly from Athens, along with stonemasons and everything else they needed. They started from the wall they held and built a cross-wall on the side facing Megara. From there the army divided up the work and ran a ditch and walls on both sides of Nisaea to the sea. They used stones and bricks from the suburb, and they cut down trees and timber to build a stockade wherever one was needed. The houses of the suburb, once given battlements, themselves served as a fortification. They worked the whole of that day, and by the late afternoon of the next day the wall was all but finished. Those in Nisaea became afraid. They were short of food, since they drew their supplies from the upper city one day at a time. They did not think the Peloponnesians would come quickly to help, and they regarded the Megarians as enemies. So they came to terms with the Athenians. Each man would hand over his arms and be released for a fixed sum of money, and the Athenians could deal as they wished with the Spartans, the commander and any others who were there. On these terms they

agreed and came out. The Athenians cut the long walls off from the city of Megara, took over Nisaea and went on with their other preparations.

BRASIDAS SAVES MEGARA

Brasidas and the Boeotians arrive, the Athenians decline battle, and Megara becomes an oligarchy.

4.70 At this time Brasidas son of Tellis, the Spartan, happened to be near Sicyon and Corinth, preparing an expedition to the Thracian region. When he learned that the walls had been captured, he feared for the Peloponnesians in Nisaea and feared that Megara might be taken. He sent to the Boeotians, telling them to meet him with an army as quickly as possible at Tripodiscus, a village of the Megarid by that name below Mount Geraneia. He himself came with two thousand seven hundred Corinthian hoplites, four hundred from Phlius and six hundred from Sicyon, together with the troops of his own that had already been gathered, thinking that he would still find Nisaea untaken.[34] But when he learned the truth (he had happened to set out by night for Tripodiscus), he picked three hundred men from his army before his arrival was known. He approached the city of Megara without being noticed by the Athenians, who were down by the sea. In word his aim was to make an attempt on Nisaea, and also in deed if he could. But his chief aim was to get into the city of Megara and make it secure. He asked the Megarians to let his men in, saying that he had hopes of recovering Nisaea. 4.71 But the factions in Megara were afraid. One side feared that he would bring the exiles back and throw them out. The other feared that the people, afraid of exactly that, would attack them, and that the city, fighting within itself while the Athenians lay in wait close by, would be destroyed. So they did not let him in, and both sides thought it best to keep quiet and watch what would happen. For each of them expected a battle

34 "The Thracian region" in Thucydides means the Greek cities on the north Aegean coast, especially in and around Chalcidice.

between the Athenians and the relief force, and thought it would be safer to go over to whichever side they favored once it had won. Brasidas, when he could not persuade them, went back to the rest of his army.

4.72 At dawn the Boeotians arrived. Even before Brasidas sent to them, they had intended to come to the aid of Megara, regarding the danger as no concern of others but their own, and they were already at Plataea with their full force. When the messenger came as well, they were much more encouraged. They sent on two thousand two hundred hoplites and six hundred cavalry and went back home with the main body. The whole army was now present, no fewer than six thousand hoplites. The Athenian hoplites were drawn up around Nisaea and by the sea, while their light troops were scattered over the plain. The Boeotian cavalry fell on the light troops, who were not expecting them, and drove them toward the sea, for until then no help had come to the Megarians from anywhere;[35] but the Athenian cavalry rode out against them in turn and they came to close quarters. There was a long cavalry battle, in which each side claims not to have had the worse of it. The Athenians killed the Boeotian cavalry commander and a few others who had ridden right up to Nisaea itself, and stripped the bodies. Since they held these dead, they gave them back under a truce and set up a trophy. In the action as a whole, however, neither side came off with a decisive result when they parted. The Boeotians went back to their own forces, and the Athenians to Nisaea.

4.73 After this Brasidas and his army moved closer to the sea and to the city of Megara. They took up a suitable position, drew up in line and waited. They thought the Athenians would attack them, and they knew the Megarians were watching to see which side would win. They believed they were well placed in two respects. First, they were not attacking first or starting a battle and its risks by choice. Since they had openly shown that they were ready to defend themselves, the victory could fairly be

35 Plataea, Athens' ally, had been in Theban hands since its capture and destruction in 427 BC.

credited to them without their so much as getting dusty. Second, things were turning out well for them with regard to the Megarians. If they had not been seen to come, they would not have had even a chance: they would plainly have lost the city at once, as though they had been beaten. As it was, the Athenians themselves might well be unwilling to fight, so that they would gain what they had come for without a battle. And that is exactly what happened. For the Athenians came out and drew up in line beside the long walls, but since the enemy did not attack, they too kept still. Their generals, too, reckoned that the risk was not evenly balanced for them. Most things had already gone their way. If they began a battle against superior numbers, they would either win and take Megara or fail and lose the best of their hoplites. The enemy, on the other hand, would naturally be willing to venture, since each contingent was risking only a part of the whole force present. They waited for some time, and when nothing was attempted by either side, the Athenians were the first to withdraw, to Nisaea, and then the Peloponnesians went back to where they had started from. So it was that the Megarians who were friends of the exiles took courage. Brasidas had won, they reasoned, since the Athenians had refused to fight any longer. So they opened the gates to Brasidas himself and to the commanders from the cities, let them in and entered into talks, while those who had dealt with the Athenians were by now thoroughly dismayed. 4.74 Later, when the allies had dispersed to their own cities, Brasidas himself went back to Corinth and went on preparing the expedition to the Thracian region, which had been his original aim. The Athenians too went home. Then those Megarians in the city who had been most involved in the dealings with the Athenians knew that they had been found out and immediately slipped away. The rest consulted with the friends of the exiles and brought back the men from Pegae. They bound them with solemn oaths to bear no grudges for the past and to give the city the best counsel. But once the returned exiles were in office, they held a review of arms. They separated the companies and picked out about a

hundred men, from among their enemies and from those thought to have been most involved in the dealings with the Athenians. They forced the people to vote on these men openly, and when they had been condemned, they put them to death and turned the city into an extreme oligarchy. And this change of government, made by so very few out of civil strife, lasted for a very long time.

4.75 In the same summer the Mytileneans were about to fortify Antandrus, as they had planned. The generals of the Athenian ships that collected the tribute money, Demodocus and Aristides, were in the region of the Hellespont; the third of them, Lamachus, had sailed into the Pontus with ten ships. They learned of the work going on at the place and thought it dangerous that it might become another Anaea, opposite Samos. The Samian exiles had established themselves there and were helping the Peloponnesians at sea by sending them helmsmen. They were also throwing the Samians in the city into turmoil and taking in those who left it;[36] so they gathered an army from the allies and sailed there. They defeated in battle the men who came out from Antandrus against them and took the place back. Not long afterward Lamachus, who had sailed into the Pontus, anchored in the river Cales in the territory of Heraclea. Rain fell upcountry and the flood came down suddenly, and he lost his ships. He himself and his army went by land through the Bithynian Thracians, who live across the water in Asia, and reached Calchedon, the Megarian colony at the mouth of the Pontus.[37]

THE BOEOTIAN PLOT

Hippocrates and Demosthenes plan simultaneous strikes to bring democracy to Boeotia.

4.76 In the same summer Demosthenes, the Athenian general, also arrived at Naupactus with forty ships, immediately after the

36 Antandrus lay on the Asian mainland opposite Lesbos; "the Pontus" is the Black Sea.

withdrawal from the Megarid. For certain men in the Boeotian cities were working with him and Hippocrates on a scheme concerning Boeotia. They wanted to change the constitution and turn it into a democracy like that of the Athenians. It was chiefly at the instigation of Ptoeodorus, an exile from Thebes, that the following plan was arranged for them. Some men were going to betray Siphae (Siphae lies on the coast of the Crisaean Gulf, in the territory of Thespiae). Chaeronea belongs to the district of Orchomenus, formerly called Minyan Orchomenus but now Boeotian Orchomenus, and others from Orchomenus were offering to hand it over. The Orchomenian exiles were especially active in the plot and were hiring men from the Peloponnese (Chaeronea is the last place in Boeotia, next to Phanotis in Phocis). Some of the Phocians were involved as well.[38] The Athenians were to seize Delium, the sanctuary of Apollo in the territory of Tanagra that faces Euboea. All this was to happen at the same time, on a fixed day, so that the Boeotians would not rush together in full force to Delium but would each be busy with the trouble stirring in their own territory. If the attempt succeeded and Delium was fortified, they confidently expected that the situation would not stay as it was, even if no revolution in the Boeotians' constitutions took place at once. These places would be held, the land would be raided, and each group would have a refuge close at hand. In time, with the Athenians coming to the support of those who had revolted and the others lacking a united force, they expected to settle matters to their advantage.

4.77 Such was the plot being prepared. Hippocrates himself was to march into Boeotia with a force from the city when the moment came. He sent Demosthenes ahead to Naupactus with the forty ships, so that he could gather an army of Acarnanians and the other allies from that region and sail against Siphae, which was to be betrayed. A day had been agreed between them

37 Heraclea lay on the southern coast of the Black Sea; Calchedon stood on the Asian shore of the Bosporus, opposite Byzantium.

38 Orchomenus was called "Minyan" after the Minyans, its legendary early inhabitants. Chaeronea was grouped with Orchomenus as one district of the Boeotian federation.

on which they were to carry out these operations simultaneously. When Demosthenes arrived, he found that Oeniadae had been forced into the Athenian alliance by the Acarnanians as a whole. He then raised the entire allied force in that area himself, first marched against Salynthius and the Agraeans and won them over, and then made the rest of his preparations to meet the others at Siphae when required.

BRASIDAS MARCHES THROUGH THESSALY

Brasidas hurries through Thessaly to join Perdiccas and the Chalcidians.

4.78 At about the same time in the summer Brasidas was marching to the Thracian region with seventeen hundred hoplites. When he reached Heraclea in Trachis, he sent a messenger ahead to his friends at Pharsalus asking them to escort him and his army through. Panaerus, Dorus, Hippolochidas, Torylaus and Strophacus, who was proxenos of the Chalcidians, came to Melitia in Achaea, and only then did he set out. Other Thessalians also escorted him, among them Niconidas from Larissa, a friend of Perdiccas. For Thessaly was not easy to pass through without an escort in any case, and certainly not under arms. Among all the Greeks alike, crossing a neighbor's territory without its consent had come to be regarded with suspicion. Besides, the mass of the Thessalian people had always been well disposed to the Athenians.[39] So if the Thessalians had not traditionally been governed by a narrow ruling group rather than under equal rights for all, he would never have got through. Even as it was, others from the opposing party met him on his march at the river Enipeus and tried to stop him, saying that he was doing wrong in passing through without the consent of the whole Thessalian commonwealth. His escorts said that they would not take him through against the others' will. But he had turned up unexpectedly, they said, and they were his hosts and

39 A proxenos was a citizen who looked after the interests of another state in his own city.

were conducting him on his way. Brasidas himself also said that he came as a friend to the land of Thessaly and its people, and that he was bearing arms against the Athenians, who were enemies, and not against them. He said that he knew of no hostility between the Thessalians and the Spartans that would keep them from using each other's land. He would not go on now against their will, he said, since indeed he could not. But he did not think it right that he should be barred. On hearing this they went away. Brasidas, on the advice of his escorts, pushed on at a run without stopping, before any larger force could gather to stop him. On the day he set out from Melitia he got as far as Pharsalus and camped on the river Apidanus. From there he went to Phacium, and from there into Perrhaebia. At this point the Thessalian escorts went back. The Perrhaebians, who are subjects of the Thessalians, brought him to Dium in Perdiccas' realm, a small town of Macedonia that lies below Olympus, facing Thessaly. 4.79 In this way Brasidas ran through Thessaly before anyone could get ready to stop him, and reached Perdiccas and Chalcidice. For when things were going well for the Athenians, the peoples in the Thracian region who had revolted from Athens took fright, and so did Perdiccas, and they brought the army out from the Peloponnese. The Chalcidians thought the Athenians would attack them first, and at the same time the neighboring cities that had not revolted were secretly joining in the invitation. Perdiccas was not openly at war with Athens. But he too feared his old quarrels with the Athenians, and above all he wanted to subdue Arrhabaeus, king of the Lyncestians.

The bad fortunes of the Spartans at that time helped them to get an army out of the Peloponnese more easily.

SPARTA AND THE HELOTS

Fearing the helots, Sparta secretly kills two thousand of them and sends others with Brasidas.

4.80 For since the Athenians were pressing hard on the Peloponnese, and not least on Spartan territory, the Spartans hoped

that the best way to divert them was to trouble them in return by sending an army against their allies. This was all the more attractive because the allies were ready to maintain the army and were calling on them for help in revolting. At the same time the Spartans were glad of a pretext to send some of the helots away, in case they attempted some revolution in the present circumstances, with Pylos in enemy hands. They had even done the following, out of fear of the helots' unruliness and their numbers (for most Spartan arrangements had always been designed above all for security against the helots): they proclaimed that those helots who claimed to have served them best in the wars should be selected, on the understanding that they would be set free. It was a test. They thought that those with the spirit to claim their freedom first, each for himself, would also be the most likely to attack them. About two thousand were chosen. They put on garlands and went round the temples as men who had been freed. But not long afterward the Spartans made them disappear, and no one knew how each of them was killed. So on this occasion the Spartans were glad to send seven hundred of the helots with Brasidas as hoplites. The rest of his force Brasidas hired with pay from the Peloponnese. 4.81 The Spartans sent Brasidas himself mainly because he wanted to go (the Chalcidians were eager for him too). At Sparta he was considered energetic in everything, and once he had gone abroad he proved of the greatest value to the Spartans. In the short term, he showed himself just and moderate toward the cities and brought most of them to revolt, while some places he took by betrayal. As a result, when the Spartans wanted to come to terms, as they did, they had places to give back in exchange for others they wanted returned, and they could relieve the Peloponnese of the war. And in the later war, after the events in Sicily, the excellence and intelligence Brasidas showed at that time did more than anything to make the Athenians' allies eager for the Spartans. Some had known these qualities by experience, and others believed in them from report. For he was the first to be sent out, and because he was thought good in every

respect, he left behind a firm belief that the other Spartans were like him too.[40]

4.82 When the Athenians learned that he had arrived in the Thracian region, they declared Perdiccas an enemy, believing him responsible for the march, and they set up a stronger guard over their allies in the area. 4.83 Perdiccas at once took Brasidas and his army, together with his own forces, and marched against Arrhabaeus son of Bromerus, king of the Lyncestian Macedonians. Arrhabaeus was his neighbor, and Perdiccas had a quarrel with him and wanted to subdue him. But when Perdiccas and his army, with Brasidas, reached the pass into Lyncus, Brasidas said he wanted first to go and try talking before resorting to war, and to make Arrhabaeus an ally of the Spartans if he could. For Arrhabaeus had in fact been sending heralds, ready to submit to Brasidas as a neutral arbitrator. The Chalcidian envoys who were with Brasidas kept urging him not to rid Perdiccas of his dangers, so that they could count on Perdiccas being more eager to serve their own interests too. At the same time Perdiccas' envoys at Sparta had said something to the effect that he would bring many of the places around him into alliance with the Spartans. Because of this, Brasidas felt entitled to deal with the matter of Arrhabaeus as a common concern rather than as Perdiccas' alone. Perdiccas replied that he had not brought Brasidas to judge their disputes but rather to destroy whatever enemies he himself pointed out. Brasidas would be doing him wrong, he said, if he dealt with Arrhabaeus while Perdiccas was maintaining half the army. But Brasidas met Arrhabaeus against Perdiccas' will and in defiance of him. Persuaded by what Arrhabaeus said, he withdrew his army before invading the country. After this Perdiccas provided a third of the army's maintenance instead of half, considering himself wronged.

40 The "later war" is the renewed fighting after the Athenian disaster in Sicily in 413 BC.

BRASIDAS AT ACANTHUS

Brasidas persuades the Acanthians to revolt from Athens, promising them freedom and independence.

4.84 In the same summer, straight after this, Brasidas, now with the Chalcidians as well, marched against Acanthus, the colony of Andros, shortly before the grape harvest. The Acanthians were divided among themselves over whether to admit him: on one side were those who were joining the Chalcidians in inviting him, on the other the common people. All the same, they feared for their crops, which were still out in the fields. So the majority were persuaded by Brasidas to admit him alone and to hear him before deciding, and they let him in. He stood before the people (and for a Spartan he was not a bad speaker) and spoke as follows:

4.85 "Men of Acanthus, the Spartans have sent me and my army out to make good the reason we announced at the beginning of the war, when we declared that we would fight the Athenians to free Greece. We were mistaken in our expectations about the war back home, and hoped to bring the Athenians down quickly on our own, without exposing you to danger. If we have been slow in coming for that reason, let no one blame us. For now, as soon as the chance arose, we have come, and with your help we will try to subdue them. I am surprised that the gates were shut against me, and surprised if you are not glad that I have come. We Spartans thought we were coming to allies who had joined us in spirit at least, even before we actually arrived, and that we would be welcome. That is why we ran so great a risk, marching many days' journey through foreign territory and showing every possible eagerness. If you have something else in mind, or if you intend to stand in the way of your own freedom and that of the rest of the Greeks, it would be a terrible thing. For the trouble is not only that you yourselves resist me. Whoever else I approach will be less willing to join me. They will take it hard that you, the first people I came to, with a city of real con-

sequence and a reputation for good sense, did not receive me. And I will not be able to give a convincing explanation. People will think either that the freedom I offer is not just, or that I have come too weak and powerless to protect you if the Athenians attack. Yet when I went to the help of Nisaea with this very army that [I] now have, the Athenians would not engage, although they outnumbered us. So they are not likely to send a naval force against you as large as the army they had at Nisaea. 4.86 I myself have come not to do harm but to free the Greeks. I have bound the Spartan authorities by the most solemn oaths that whoever I bring over will be independent allies. We are not here to win you over as allies by force or by deceit. Quite the opposite: we have come to be your allies, since you are enslaved by the Athenians. So I do not think I deserve to be suspected, when I am giving the strongest guarantees, or to be considered a powerless protector. I think you should come over to us with confidence. And if anyone is holding back out of private fear of some particular person, in case I hand the city over to some faction, he above all should trust me. For I have not come to take part in civil strife. I do not think I would be bringing you genuine freedom if I disregarded your traditional constitution and enslaved the many to the few, or the few to the whole people. That would be harsher than foreign rule. We Spartans would get no gratitude for our efforts. Instead of honor and glory we would get blame. We would be seen committing ourselves the very offenses we charge the Athenians with in making war on them, and we would be more hateful for it than someone who had never made a show of excellence. For men of standing, gaining an advantage by specious deceit is more disgraceful than gaining it by open force. Force attacks by the right of strength, which chance has given. Deceit attacks by the scheming of an unjust mind. 4.87 That is how carefully we watch over matters of such great importance to us. Beyond our oaths, you could have no greater assurance than this: we are men whose deeds, when weighed against our words, compel the conclusion that it is in our interest to act just as we have said.

"Suppose that after I have offered you all this, you say that you cannot join us. Suppose you claim that, being well disposed, you have a right to reject us without suffering for it, that freedom does not seem to you free of danger, and that it is right to offer it to those able to accept it but to force it on no one against their will. Then I will call the gods and heroes of your country to witness that I came for your good and could not persuade you. I will try to compel you by ravaging your land. And I will no longer think I am doing wrong. I will think that I have some justification, on the grounds of two necessities. The first concerns the Spartans: if you do not come over, they must not be harmed by your 'goodwill', through the money you pay to the Athenians. The second concerns the Greeks: they must not be prevented by you from escaping slavery. For otherwise we would have no good reason for acting like this, and we Spartans have no business freeing people who do not want it, except for the sake of some common good. Nor are we seeking empire. On the contrary, we are eager to put a stop to others' empire. We would be wronging the majority if we brought independence to everyone and then let you stand in the way. Consider this, and deliberate well. Strive to be the first to begin freedom for the Greeks and to lay up glory for all time. Save your own property from harm, and crown your whole city with the finest of names."

4.88 That was what Brasidas said. Much had already been said on both sides, and the Acanthians now voted in secret. Partly because Brasidas had spoken persuasively and partly out of fear for their crops, the majority decided to revolt from the Athenians. They made him pledge himself by the oaths that the Spartan authorities had sworn when they sent him out: that whoever he won over would be independent allies. On these terms they admitted the army. Not long afterward Stagirus, a colony of Andros, joined the revolt as well. These were the events of this summer.

DELIUM

The plot in Boeotia miscarries, and Hippocrates fortifies the sanctuary of Apollo at Delium.

4.89 At the very beginning of the following winter, Boeotia was being betrayed to the Athenian generals Hippocrates and Demosthenes. Demosthenes was to meet the conspirators at Siphae with his ships, and Hippocrates was to go to Delium. But there was a mistake about the days on which both were to march. Demosthenes sailed to Siphae too early, with Acarnanians and many of the allies from that region on board, and he achieved nothing. The plot had been revealed by Nicomachus, a Phocian from Phanoteus, who told the Spartans, and they told the Boeotians. The Boeotians all came out in force (for Hippocrates was not yet in their country to distract them), and Siphae and Chaeronea were secured before the conspirators could act. When the plotters realized the mistake, they made no move in the cities. 4.90 Hippocrates called out the entire Athenian population: the citizens themselves, the metics, and all the foreigners who were in the city. He arrived at Delium too late, after the Boeotians had already withdrawn from Siphae. He encamped his army and fortified Delium [the sanctuary of Apollo] in the following way. They dug a ditch all round the sanctuary and the temple, and they threw up the earth from the trench to serve as a wall. They drove stakes in alongside it, cut down the vines around the sanctuary and threw them in, along with stones and bricks pulled down from the nearby houses. In every way they could, they built the fortification up high.[41] They also set up wooden towers where they were needed and where there was no building belonging to the sanctuary, for the colonnade that had stood there had collapsed. They began work on the third day after setting out from home, worked that day and the fourth, and on the fifth until the midday meal. Then, when most of the

41 Metics were foreigners who lived at Athens as permanent residents, without citizen rights.

work had been finished, the army withdrew about ten stades from Delium as if to march home. Most of the light troops went straight on, while the hoplites grounded their arms and halted. Hippocrates stayed behind and was still posting guards and arranging for whatever remained of the outworks to be completed as it should be.

PAGONDAS' SPEECH TO THE BOEOTIANS

The Theban commander urges the Boeotians to attack the Athenians before they get home.

4.91 During these days the Boeotians were gathering at Tanagra. Contingents had now arrived from all the cities, and they learned that the Athenians were moving off homeward. The other boeotarchs, of whom there are eleven, did not approve of fighting, since the Athenians were no longer in Boeotia (when they halted, they were roughly on the border of the territory of Oropus). But Pagondas son of Aeoladas, boeotarch from Thebes together with Arianthidas son of Lysimachidas, held the command, and he wanted to fight the battle. He thought it better to take the risk. He called the men to him company by company, so that they would not all leave their arms at once, and urged the Boeotians to march against the Athenians and fight it out. He spoke as follows:[42]

4.92 "Boeotians, it should never even have entered the head of any of us commanders that we ought not to fight the Athenians just because we may no longer catch them on Boeotian soil. They came from the country next door, built a fort in Boeotia, and mean to lay it waste. Surely they are enemies wherever they are caught, and also in the country from which they set out to commit acts of war. If anyone did think it the safer course, let him change his mind now. When another attacks you and your own country is at stake, prudence cannot reason in the same way as it does for a man who has what is his own and, reaching

42 The boeotarchs were the chief magistrates and generals of the Boeotian federation.

for more, attacks someone of his own free will. It is your ancestral custom to drive back a foreign army that attacks you, whether in your own land or in your neighbors'. Against the Athenians, who are our neighbors as well, this is far more necessary than against anyone. With neighbors, everyone's freedom depends on being their match. These men try to enslave not only those near them but those far away as well. Against them above all, how can we not go to the very last extremity of struggle? We have as an example the Euboeans across the strait, and the condition of most of the rest of Greece under them. Other peoples fight their neighbors over boundaries. How can we not see that for us, if we are beaten, a single boundary will be fixed around our whole country, and no one will dispute it? They will come in and hold what is ours by force. That is how much more dangerous these neighbors are than other people's. Those who attack their neighbors out of confidence in their strength, as the Athenians are doing now, usually march with less fear against the man who keeps quiet and defends himself only in his own country. They are less ready to grapple with the one who goes out beyond his borders to meet them and, when the moment is right, starts the war himself. We have proof of this ourselves against these very men. They had occupied our country while we were torn by civil strife, and we beat them at Coronea and gave Boeotia a great security that has lasted until now.[43] We must remember this. The older men among us must live up to their former deeds. The younger, sons of fathers who proved themselves brave in those days, must try not to disgrace the excellence that is their birthright. Let us trust that the god will be on our side, whose sanctuary they have fortified and occupy in defiance of law, and trust in the sacrifices, which have proved favorable to us. Then let us close with these men and show them this. Let them win what they covet by attacking people who do not defend themselves. But there are people whose noble way is always to free their own land by battle and

43 At Coronea in 447 BC the Boeotians defeated an Athenian army and ended Athenian control of Boeotia.

never to enslave another's unjustly, and from them they will not get away without a fight."

4.93 With exhortations like these Pagondas persuaded the Boeotians to go against the Athenians. He quickly broke camp and led the army forward, for it was already late in the day. When he came close to their army, he halted it at a spot where a hill lay between them, so that the two sides could not see each other. There he drew up his men and prepared for battle. Hippocrates was at Delium. When it was reported to him that the Boeotians were advancing, he sent word to the army ordering it to form up in line. He came himself not long after, leaving about three hundred cavalry around Delium. They were to guard it in case anyone attacked it, and also to watch for an opportunity to fall on the Boeotians during the battle. The Boeotians posted a force opposite these to deal with them. When everything was ready, they appeared over the crest of the hill and took up position under arms in the order they intended. There were about seven thousand hoplites, more than ten thousand light troops, a thousand cavalry and five hundred peltasts. The Thebans and those grouped with them held the right wing. In the center were the Haliartians, the Coroneans, the Copaeans and the others who live around the lake. The left wing was held by the Thespians, the Tanagraeans and the Orchomenians. The cavalry and light troops were on each wing. The Thebans were drawn up twenty-five shields deep, the others in whatever depth each contingent happened to have. Such were the Boeotians' forces and their order of battle.[44] 4.94 On the Athenian side, the hoplites, who were equal in number to the enemy, were drawn up eight deep along the whole line, with cavalry on each wing. Light troops properly equipped for the purpose were not present on this occasion, nor did the city have any. Those who had joined in the invasion were many times more numerous than the enemy's, but many of them had come along unarmed, since this was a general levy of the citizens and of the foreigners who were in Athens. As soon as the army started for home, these men were

44 The lake is Lake Copais in central Boeotia.

gone, apart from a few. When the Athenians had taken their positions and were about to engage, Hippocrates the general passed along the Athenian line, encouraged the men and spoke as follows:

4.95 "Athenians, this exhortation will be brief, but to brave men a few words count for as much as many, and they are a reminder more than a command. Let none of you think that it is wrong for us to stake so much on a single throw in another people's land. We will fight in their land, but the contest will be for ours. If we win, the Peloponnesians will never again invade your country, because they will be without the cavalry of these men. In one battle you will win this land and make your own freer. So advance against them in a way worthy of your city, which each of you is proud to have as his fatherland, the first city in Greece. Be worthy too of your fathers, who once beat these men in battle at Oenophyta under Myronides and held Boeotia."[45]

THE BATTLE OF DELIUM

The Boeotians rout the Athenian army after a surprise cavalry move.

4.96 Hippocrates was still giving this exhortation and had got as far as the middle of the army, but no further, when the Boeotians attacked. Pagondas had given them a brief exhortation there as well, and they struck up the paean and came down from the hill. The Athenians advanced to meet them and closed at a run. The extreme ends of the two armies never came to blows, and the same thing happened on both sides: watercourses got in the way. The rest stood locked in hard fighting, shield pushing against shield. The Boeotian left, as far as the center, was beaten by the Athenians. They pressed hard on the others there, and not least on the Thespians. The men posted beside the Thespians gave way, and the Thespians were surrounded in a narrow space. Those of them who died were cut down fighting hand to hand. Some of the Athenians, too, were thrown into confusion

45 At Oenophyta in 457 BC the Athenians under Myronides defeated the Boeotians and gained control of Boeotia for about ten years.

as they encircled the enemy, failed to recognize one another and killed each other. So the Boeotians were beaten on this side and fled to the part of the line that was still fighting. But the right, where the Thebans were, was getting the better of the Athenians, pushing them back little by little at first and following up. When his left was in trouble, Pagondas had sent two squadrons of cavalry round the hill out of sight. They suddenly appeared over it, and the victorious Athenian wing thought another army was attacking and panicked. Now the whole Athenian army was put to flight, both by this and by the Thebans, who were following up and breaking through. Some made for Delium and the sea, some for Oropus, others for Mount Parnes, and others wherever each saw some hope of safety. The Boeotians pursued them and killed them. The cavalry did most of the killing, both their own and the Locrians, who had come to their aid just as the rout was beginning. But night fell before the action was finished, and the mass of the fugitives escaped more easily. The next day the men who had reached Oropus and Delium left a garrison in Delium, which they still held in spite of everything, and went home by sea. 4.97 The Boeotians set up a trophy, took up their own dead and stripped those of the enemy. Then they left a guard and withdrew to Tanagra, and planned an assault on Delium.

THE DISPUTE OVER THE DEAD

The Boeotians refuse to return the Athenian dead while Athenians occupy the sanctuary.

A herald from the Athenians was on his way to ask for the dead when he met a Boeotian herald. The Boeotian turned him back, telling him he would achieve nothing until he himself had returned. He then came before the Athenians and delivered the Boeotians' message. They said the Athenians had acted unjustly in breaking the customs of the Greeks. It was an established rule among all Greeks that those who invade one another's country keep their hands off the sanctuaries in it. Yet the Athenians had

fortified Delium and were living in it, and everything that men do on unconsecrated ground was going on there. They were even drawing the water for ordinary use, though the Boeotians themselves were not allowed to touch it except as holy water for the sacrifices. Therefore, on behalf of the god and of themselves, the Boeotians called on the deities who shared the sanctuary and on Apollo, and gave notice to the Athenians that they must leave the sanctuary before taking away what belonged to them. 4.98 When the herald had said this, the Athenians sent their own herald to the Boeotians. They said that they had done the sanctuary no wrong and would not willingly damage it in future. They had not entered it for that purpose in the first place, but to use it as a base for defending themselves against those who were really wronging them. The custom among the Greeks, they said, was that whoever held power over a territory, large or small, always held its sanctuaries too, and tended them with the customary rites and in whatever other ways they could. The Boeotians themselves, and most others who had driven out some people by force and now occupied their land, had first attacked sanctuaries that belonged to others, and now possessed them as their own. If the Athenians had been able to conquer more of the Boeotians' land, they would be holding that too. As it was, they would not willingly leave the part they now held, since they regarded it as their own. As for the water, they had disturbed it out of necessity, and they had not brought that necessity on themselves through insolence. They had been forced to use it while defending themselves against the Boeotians, who had invaded their land first. Anything done under the constraint of war and danger could reasonably expect some forgiveness, even from the god. The altars were a refuge for involuntary offenses, and the word "transgression" was used of those who did evil without necessity, not of those who had been driven to a bold act by misfortune. The Boeotians, by demanding sanctuaries in exchange for the dead, were committing a far greater impiety than the Athenians, who refused to give up sanctuaries to recover what was rightfully theirs. The Athenians told them

to say plainly that they could take up their dead under truce in accordance with ancestral custom, and not to make it a condition that they leave Boeotian land. They were no longer in the Boeotians' land, they said, but in land they had won with the spear. 4.99 The Boeotians answered that if the Athenians were in Boeotia, they must leave Boeotian land and then take what was theirs. If they were in their own land, they knew for themselves what to do. The Boeotians reasoned as follows. The battle had been fought on the border, so the dead happened to be lying in the territory of Oropus, which belonged to the Athenians as subject territory. The Athenians could not get possession of the bodies by force against the Boeotians' will. And the Boeotians were certainly not going to make a truce over land that was supposedly Athenian. So it seemed to them a respectable answer to say "leave our land and take back what you ask for." The Athenian herald heard this and went away with nothing accomplished.[46]

THE FALL OF DELIUM

A fire-blowing engine burns the fort, and the Boeotians then return the dead.

4.100 The Boeotians at once sent for javelin-throwers and slingers from the Malian Gulf. After the battle they had been reinforced by two thousand Corinthian hoplites, by the Peloponnesian garrison that had come out of Nisaea, and by the Megarians as well. With these they marched against Delium and attacked the fort. They tried various methods, and in the end they brought up an engine of the following kind, which took it. They sawed a great beam in two, hollowed out the whole length of it, and fitted the halves together again exactly, like a pipe. At one end they hung a cauldron on chains, and an iron tube ran down from the beam and curved into the cauldron. A large part of the rest of the wood was also plated with iron. They brought it up on wagons

46 Oropus was a border district between Boeotia and Attica, then under Athenian control.

from a distance to the part of the wall built mostly of vine stems and timber. When it was close, they inserted large bellows into their own end of the beam and blew. The blast passed through the sealed pipe into the cauldron, which held lit coals, sulfur and pitch. This made a great flame and set the wall on fire, so that no one could stay on it any longer. The defenders abandoned it and fled, and in this way the fort was taken. Some of the garrison were killed and two hundred were captured. Most of the rest got on board the ships and were carried home. 4.101 Delium was taken on the seventeenth day after the battle. Not long afterward the Athenian herald, who knew nothing of what had happened, came again to ask for the dead, and this time the Boeotians gave them back and no longer gave the same answer. A little under five hundred Boeotians died in the battle. Of the Athenians a little under a thousand died, including Hippocrates the general, as well as a great number of light troops and baggage carriers.

Not long after this battle, Demosthenes also made a landing in the territory of Sicyon. When he had sailed to Siphae, the plan to betray the place had not succeeded. He now had an army on board his ships made up of Acarnanians, Agraeans and four hundred Athenian hoplites. Before all the ships had come in to shore, the Sicyonians came out to defend their land. They routed the men who had landed and chased them back to the ships, killing some and capturing others alive. They set up a trophy and gave back the dead under truce.

At about the same time as the events at Delium, Sitalces, king of the Odrysians, also died. He had campaigned against the Triballi and been defeated in battle. Seuthes son of Sparadocus, his nephew, became king of the Odrysians and of the rest of Thrace that Sitalces had ruled.

AMPHIPOLIS

Brasidas takes Amphipolis; Thucydides, the Athenian general there, arrives too late.

4.102 In the same winter Brasidas, with the allies in the Thracian region, marched against Amphipolis, the Athenian colony on the river Strymon. Others had tried to settle the site where the city now stands. First Aristagoras of Miletus tried, when he was fleeing from King Darius, but he was driven out by the Edonians. Then thirty-two years later the Athenians tried. They sent out ten thousand settlers, drawn from their own people and from anyone else who wished to go, and these were destroyed by the Thracians at Drabescus.[47] Then, twenty-nine years after that, the Athenians came again, with Hagnon son of Nicias sent out as founder. They drove out the Edonians and founded a settlement on this site, which had formerly been called Nine Ways. They set out from Eion, a trading post they held on the coast at the mouth of the river, twenty-five stades from the present city. Hagnon named the city Amphipolis because the Strymon flows round it on both sides [because it encloses it]. He cut the site off with a long wall from river to river and settled a city there that could be seen from the sea and from the mainland alike.[48]

4.103 It was against this city that Brasidas set out from Arnae in Chalcidice and marched with his army. Toward evening he reached Aulon and Bormiscus, where Lake Bolbe flows out into the sea. There he had supper, and then he went on through the night. The weather was stormy and a little snow was falling, and this made him press on all the harder. He wanted to escape the notice of the people in Amphipolis, apart from those who were betraying it. There were settlers from Argilus living in the city (the Argilians are colonists of the Andrians), and others who were involved in the plot, some won over by Perdiccas and some

47 Aristagoras led the Ionian revolt against Persia (499–494 BC).
48 The name Amphipolis suggests "the city on both sides," that is, ringed by the river.

by the Chalcidians. The Argilians were the most active of all. They lived close by, the Athenians had always suspected them, and they had always had designs on the place. When the opportunity came and Brasidas arrived, they had already been working for some time with those of their own people who were citizens there to have the city betrayed. Now they received him into their own city, revolted from the Athenians that night, and brought his army before dawn to the bridge over the river. The town lies some distance from the crossing, and walls did not run down to it then as they do now, but a small guard had been posted there. Brasidas easily overpowered it, partly because of the betrayal, and partly because of the storm and the surprise of his attack. Then he crossed the bridge, and at once he held everything that belonged to the Amphipolitans who lived outside the walls throughout the whole area. 4.104 His crossing took the people in the city by surprise. Many of those outside were being captured, and others were fleeing inside the walls. The Amphipolitans were thrown into great confusion, especially as they suspected one another. It is said that if Brasidas had not let his army turn to plunder, and had advanced on the city at once, he would probably have taken it. As it was, after overrunning the country outside, he settled his army in position. When nothing happened inside the city as he had expected, he waited. But the opponents of the traitors were in the majority, so the gates were not opened at once. Together with Eucles the general, who had come from Athens to guard the place for them, they sent to the other general in the Thracian region, Thucydides son of Olorus, who wrote this history. He was then near Thasos, an island colonized by the Parians, about half a day's sail from Amphipolis. They urged him to come to their aid. When he heard, he set sail in haste with seven ships that happened to be there. Above all he wanted to reach Amphipolis before it gave in. Failing that, he meant to occupy Eion first.

4.105 Meanwhile Brasidas was afraid of the naval relief from Thasos. He had also learned that Thucydides owned rights to work the gold mines in that part of Thrace, and that this gave

him influence among the leading men of the mainland. So he hurried to secure the city first, if he could. He feared that if Thucydides arrived, the people of Amphipolis would hope that he would save them by gathering an allied force from the sea and from Thrace, and would no longer come over. He offered moderate terms and had this proclamation made. Any Amphipolitan or Athenian in the city who wished could stay, keeping his own property and enjoying equal and fair rights. Anyone unwilling to stay could leave within five days and take his property with him. 4.106 When the majority heard this, they began to change their minds. Only a small part of the citizen body was Athenian; most were of mixed origin. Many also had relatives among those captured outside. Compared with what they had feared, they thought the proclamation was fair. The Athenians would be glad to leave, since they thought the danger was greater for them than for the others, and they did not expect help soon. The rest of the people would not lose their city and would keep equal rights in it, and they would be freed from danger beyond their hopes. Those who were working for Brasidas now defended these terms openly, since they saw that the people had turned and were no longer listening to the Athenian general who was present. So the agreement was made, and they received Brasidas on the terms he had proclaimed. In this way they surrendered the city. Thucydides and his ships sailed into Eion late on that same day. Brasidas had only just taken Amphipolis, and he came within a night of taking Eion: if the ships had not come to the rescue quickly, it would have been taken at dawn.

4.107 After this Thucydides set things in order at Eion, so that it would be secure both for the moment, if Brasidas attacked, and for the future. He took in those who wished to come down from upriver under the terms of the agreement. Brasidas suddenly sailed down the river against Eion with many boats, hoping to seize the point that projects from the wall and so command the entrance, and at the same time he made an attempt by land. He was beaten off on both sides, and he turned to organizing affairs

at Amphipolis. Myrcinus, an Edonian city, came over to him after Pittacus, king of the Edonians, had been killed by the sons of Goaxis and by his own wife Brauro. Not long afterward Galepsus and Oesyme came over too; these are colonies of the Thasians. Perdiccas, who had arrived immediately after the capture, also helped him settle these matters.

ATHENS FEARS FOR ITS ALLIES

Brasidas' success and mildness tempt Athenian subjects in the north to revolt.

4.108 With Amphipolis in enemy hands, the Athenians were thrown into great fear. One reason was that the city was useful to them for the timber it sent for shipbuilding and for the revenue it brought in. Another was that the Spartans had a way through as far as the Strymon whenever the Thessalians escorted them against the Athenians' allies, but without control of the bridge they could not have advanced any farther. Upstream the river widens into a large lake stretching a long way, and the stretch toward Eion was watched by triremes. Now, [they thought,] the advance had become easy. They were also afraid that their allies would revolt. Brasidas showed himself moderate in every other respect, and in his speeches everywhere he declared that he had been sent out to liberate Greece. The cities subject to the Athenians heard of the capture of Amphipolis, of the terms he was offering, and of his mildness, and they were roused as never before to revolution. They sent messages to him in secret, urging him to come on to them, and each wanted to be the first to revolt. They also felt they had nothing to fear. They had misjudged the Athenians' power by as much as later became plain, and they judged more by uncertain wishing than by secure foresight. It is the habit of men to entrust what they desire to unthinking hope, and to thrust aside what they do not care for with arbitrary reasoning. At the same time the Athenians had recently taken a blow among the Boeotians. Brasidas was also saying, attractively but untruly, that at Nisaea the

Athenians had refused to engage him and his army alone. So the cities grew bold and were convinced that no one would come against them. Most of all, because of the immediate pleasure of it, and because for the first time they would be dealing with Spartans who were in earnest, they were ready to run any risk. The Athenians became aware of this and sent garrisons round to the cities, as far as they could at short notice and in winter. Brasidas sent to Sparta asking them to dispatch an additional army, and he himself prepared to build triremes on the Strymon. But the Spartans did not support him. This was partly out of envy on the part of their leading men, and partly because they were more anxious to get back the men from the island and to end the war.[49]

4.109 In the same winter the Megarians captured the long walls of theirs that the Athenians had been holding and razed them to the ground. Brasidas, after the capture of Amphipolis, marched with his allies against the peninsula called Acte. It runs out from the king's canal, and Athos, a high mountain, forms its end at the Aegean Sea.[50] Its cities are Sane, a colony of the Andrians, right beside the canal and facing the sea toward Euboea, and the others: Thyssus, Cleonae, Acrothoi, Olophyxus and Dium. These are inhabited by mixed peoples of non-Greeks who speak two languages. There is also a small Chalcidian element, but most are Pelasgian, of the Tyrrhenians who once lived on Lemnos and at Athens, along with Bisaltians, Crestonians and Edonians. They live in small towns. Most of them came over to Brasidas, but Sane and Dium held out, so he stayed there with his army and laid waste their land.[51]

49 The men from the island were the Spartans captured on Sphacteria, off Pylos, in 425 BC.

50 The king's canal was cut across the neck of the Athos peninsula by the Persian king Xerxes for his invasion of Greece in 480 BC.

51 The Pelasgians were held by the Greeks to be a people who lived in Greece before the Greeks.

BRASIDAS TAKES TORONE

Traitors let Brasidas into Torone, and he captures the Athenian fort at Lecythus.

4.110 When they would not listen, he marched at once against Torone in Chalcidice, which was held by the Athenians. A few men were inviting him in, ready to hand the city over. He arrived while it was still night, and toward dawn he settled down with his army near the temple of the Dioscuri, about three stades from the city. The rest of the city of Torone and the Athenians garrisoning it did not notice him. But his collaborators knew he would come, and a few of them had secretly gone out ahead and were watching for his approach. When they saw he had arrived, they brought in to themselves seven light troops armed with daggers. Only that many of the twenty first assigned had not been too frightened to go in, and their leader was Lysistratus of Olynthus. These men slipped through the wall facing the sea and climbed up unnoticed. The city is built on a hill, and they killed the guards at the highest guard post and began breaking down the postern gate toward Canastraeum. 4.111 Meanwhile Brasidas advanced a little way with the rest of his army and waited quietly. He sent ahead a hundred peltasts, so that they could be the first to rush in whenever any gates were opened and the agreed signal raised. As time went on, they wondered at the delay and gradually drew near the city. The Toronaeans inside were making their preparations together with the men who had got in. Once the postern had been broken through, and the gates by the marketplace were being opened by cutting through the bar, they first brought some men round to the postern and let them in. They meant to strike sudden terror into the people in the city, who knew nothing, from the rear and from both sides. Then they raised the fire signal as had been arranged, and now they let in the rest of the peltasts through the gates by the marketplace. 4.112 When Brasidas saw the signal he set off at a run, getting his army to its feet. They raised a shout

all together and caused great panic among those in the city. Some burst straight in through the gates. Others came in over squared beams that happened to be lying against the wall for hauling up stones, since the wall had fallen down and was being rebuilt. Brasidas and the main body turned at once upward toward the high parts of the city, wanting to take it from the top and so hold it securely. The rest of the crowd scattered in every direction alike.

4.113 While the capture was under way, most of the Toronaeans knew nothing of the plan and were thrown into confusion. The conspirators and those who favored the plan at once joined the men who had entered. About fifty Athenian hoplites happened to be sleeping in the marketplace. When they realized what was happening, a few were killed in hand-to-hand fighting. Of the rest, some fled on foot and some to the ships, two of which were on guard there, and they reached safety in Lecythus. This was a fort they had seized and held themselves, a height of the city that runs out into the sea and is cut off by a narrow isthmus. Those of the Toronaeans who were friendly to them also fled to them there. 4.114 When it was day and the city was securely held, Brasidas made a proclamation to the Toronaeans who had taken refuge with the Athenians. Anyone who wished could come out to his own property and live as a citizen without fear. To the Athenians he sent a herald, telling them to leave Lecythus under truce with their belongings, since it belonged to the Chalcidians. They refused to abandon it, but asked him to grant them a truce for one day to take up their dead. He granted two. During those two days he fortified the houses nearby, and the Athenians fortified their own positions. He also called an assembly of the Toronaeans and spoke to them much as he had at Acanthus. He said it was not right to regard those who had arranged with him the taking of the city as worse men or as traitors. They had done it not to enslave the city, nor because they had been bribed, but for the good and the freedom of the city. Nor should those who had taken no part think they would not receive the same treatment. He had not come to destroy either a city or any private

individual. He had made the proclamation to those who had fled to the Athenians for this reason: he did not think them any the worse for their friendship with the Athenians. Once they had made trial of them [the Spartans], he did not think they would be any less well disposed toward them. They would be much more so, inasmuch as the Spartans acted more justly, and their present fear came from inexperience. He urged them all to prepare to be steadfast allies, and from now on to be held responsible for any wrong they did. As for the past, it was not the Spartans who had been wronged but rather the Toronaeans, by others stronger than they, and it was forgivable if they had opposed him in anything. 4.115 After speaking in this way and encouraging them, he began his assaults on Lecythus once the truce had run out. The Athenians defended themselves from a poor wall and from houses that had battlements, and for one day they beat the enemy off. The next day the enemy was about to bring up an engine against them, from which they intended to throw fire onto the wooden palisades, and the army was already advancing. The Athenians set up a wooden tower on top of a building at the point where they thought the engine was most likely to be brought up and which was most open to attack. They carried up many jars and casks of water and large stones, and many men climbed up. But the building took too great a load and suddenly collapsed with a great crash. This distressed the Athenians who were nearby and saw it more than it frightened them. Those farther off, and especially those farthest away, thought the place had already been taken at that point, and they rushed in flight to the sea and the ships. 4.116 Brasidas noticed that they were abandoning the battlements and saw what was happening. He charged with his army, took the fort at once, and killed all he caught inside. In this way the Athenians abandoned the place and crossed over to Pallene in their boats and ships. There is a temple of Athena in Lecythus, and when Brasidas was about to attack he had proclaimed that he would give thirty minas of silver to the first man to mount the wall. Believing that the capture had come about by some means other

than human, he paid the thirty minas to the goddess for her temple. He pulled down and cleared Lecythus and dedicated the whole of it as a sacred precinct. For the rest of the winter he set in order the places he held and made plans against the others. So the winter ended, and with it the eighth year of the war.[52]

THE ONE-YEAR TRUCE

Sparta and Athens agree to a year's armistice; the terms are given in full.

4.117 At the very beginning of the next summer, in spring, the Spartans and the Athenians made a truce for a year. The Athenians thought that Brasidas could then cause no further revolts among their allies before they had made their preparations at leisure. They also thought that, if it suited them, they could come to a more general agreement. The Spartans believed that the Athenians feared exactly what they did in fact fear. Once the Athenians had tasted a respite from troubles and hardship, the Spartans expected them to be more eager to come to terms, give back the men, and make a treaty for a longer time. The Spartans set greater store by recovering the men while Brasidas was still enjoying good fortune. If he advanced further and made the two sides even, they expected to lose the men, while with what remained, fighting on equal terms, they would be running risks and might win. So the following truce was made, between themselves and their allies.

4.118 "Concerning the temple and oracle of Pythian Apollo, we resolve that anyone who wishes may consult it without fraud and without fear, according to the ancestral laws. This is resolved by the Spartans and the allies present. They say they will persuade the Boeotians and Phocians as far as they can, by sending heralds to them. Concerning the god's treasures, we resolve to take care to find out those who do wrong. We will follow the ancestral laws rightly and justly, both you and we and any others who wish, all following the ancestral laws. On these

52 A mina was a sum of 100 drachmas; sixty minas made a talent.

matters, then, the Spartans and the other allies have resolved as stated. "The Spartans and the other allies have resolved the following, if the Athenians make a treaty. Each side shall remain in its own territory, keeping what we now hold. Those at Coryphasium shall stay within Buphras and Tomeus. Those on Cythera shall have no dealings with the alliance, neither we with them nor they with us. Those in Nisaea and Minoa shall not cross the road that runs from the gates by the shrine of Nisus to the temple of Poseidon, and from the temple of Poseidon straight to the bridge to Minoa; nor shall the Megarians and their allies cross this road. The Athenians shall keep the island they took, with neither side having dealings with the other in either direction. They shall keep what they now hold in Troezen, according to the terms agreed with the Athenians.[53] "As to the use of the sea along their own coast and that of their alliance, the Spartans and their allies may sail not in a warship but in any other rowed vessel of up to five hundred talents' burden. A herald or embassy, with as many attendants as they think fit, traveling to the Peloponnese or to Athens about ending the war or about legal disputes, shall have safe-conduct going and coming, by land and by sea. During this time neither you nor we shall receive deserters, whether free or slave.[54] "You shall give legal satisfaction to us and we to you according to ancestral custom, settling disputes by arbitration without war. This is the resolution of the Spartans and the allies. If anything seems better or more just to you than this, come to Sparta and explain it to us. Neither the Spartans nor the allies will reject anything just that you propose. But let those who come have full powers, just as you also require of us. The treaty shall be for one year."

"Resolved by the people. The tribe Acamantis held the prytany, Phaenippus was secretary, Niciades presided. Laches moved, with good fortune for the Athenians, that the truce be

53 Coryphasium is the Spartan name for Pylos, which the Athenians had fortified in 425 BC.

54 The talent was also a unit of weight, about 26 kilograms, so the limit is a cargo capacity of roughly 13 tons.

made on the terms which the Spartans and their allies offer and agreed to before the people. The truce is to be for one year, beginning this day, the fourteenth of the month Elaphebolion. During this time ambassadors and heralds are to go to each other's cities and discuss on what terms the war is to be ended. The generals and the prytaneis are to call an assembly, and the Athenians are to deliberate first about the peace … on whatever terms the embassy concerning the ending of the war may bring in. The embassies now present are to swear at once before the people that they will abide by the truce for the year."[55]

4.119 These terms were agreed [and sworn to] by the Spartans and their allies with the Athenians and their allies, at Sparta on the twelfth of the month Gerastius. Those who made the agreement and poured the libations were these. For the Spartans: Taurus son of Echetimidas, Athenaeus son of Pericleidas, Philocharidas son of Eryxilaidas. For the Corinthians: Aeneas son of Ocytus, Euphamidas son of Aristonymus. For the Sicyonians: Damotimus son of Naucrates, Onasimus son of Megacles. For the Megarians: Nicasus son of Cecalus, Menecrates son of Amphidorus. For the Epidaurians: Amphias son of Eupaiidas. For the Athenians, the generals Nicostratus son of Diitrephes, Nicias son of Niceratus, and Autocles son of Tolmaeus.[56]

This, then, was the truce that was made, and while it lasted they met continually to discuss a larger treaty.

SCIONE AND MENDE REVOLT

Scione and then Mende go over to Brasidas, and Athens prepares to punish them.

4.120 In the days when the envoys were going round with the news of the truce, Scione, a city in Pallene, revolted from the Athenians to Brasidas. The Scionaeans say that they are Pellenians

55 The prytaneis were the councilors of one tribe who presided over the council and assembly in turn for a tenth of the year. Elaphebolion fell in March–April, here in 423 BC.

56 Gerastius was a month of the Spartan calendar.

from the Peloponnese. Their first ancestors, sailing back from Troy, were carried to this place by the storm that struck the Achaeans, and they settled there. After they revolted, Brasidas crossed to Scione by night. A friendly trireme sailed ahead, and he followed some distance behind in a small boat. If he met any vessel larger than the boat, the trireme would defend him. If another trireme of equal strength appeared, he reckoned that it would turn not against the smaller vessel but against the warship, and meanwhile he would get through safely.[57] Once across, he called an assembly of the Scionaeans and said what he had said at Acanthus and Torone. He added that they were most deserving of praise. Pallene was cut off at the isthmus by the Athenians, who held Potidaea, so the Scionaeans were in effect nothing but islanders. Even so, they had of their own accord come forward to claim their freedom. They had not been so lacking in courage as to wait until necessity was laid upon them in a matter plainly for their own good. This, he said, was a sign that they would bravely endure any other trial, even of the greatest. If things turned out as he intended, he would regard them as in truth the most loyal friends of the Spartans and would honor them in every other way. 4.121 The Scionaeans were elated by his words. All alike took heart, even those who had earlier disapproved of what was being done, and they resolved to carry on the war with zeal. They gave Brasidas a fine reception in every way. Publicly they crowned him with a golden crown as the liberator of Greece, and privately they decked him with ribbons and came up to him as if he were an athlete. For the moment he left a small garrison with them and crossed back. Not long afterward he brought over a larger army, wanting to make an attempt with them on Mende and Potidaea. He thought the Athenians would send help to Pallene as they would to an island, and he wanted to forestall them. He also had negotiations under way for the betrayal of these cities.

4.122 Brasidas was about to make his attempt on these cities when the men who were carrying round the news of the

57 Pellene was a city of Achaea in the northern Peloponnese.

armistice reached him in a trireme: Aristonymus for the Athenians and Athenaeus for the Spartans. The army crossed back to Torone, and the envoys announced the agreement to Brasidas, and all the Spartans' allies in the Thracian region accepted what had been done. Aristonymus agreed for the rest. But in the case of the Scionaeans, he calculated the days and realized that they had revolted after the agreement, and he said they would not be included in the treaty. Brasidas argued at length against this, insisting that they had revolted earlier, and he would not give up the city. When Aristonymus reported on the matter to Athens, the Athenians were at once ready to send an expedition against Scione. The Spartans sent envoys and said that the Athenians would be breaking the treaty. Trusting Brasidas, they laid claim to the city and were ready to have the question settled by arbitration. But the Athenians would not risk arbitration. They wanted to march as quickly as possible, furious that even people who lived on islands now thought fit to revolt from them, trusting in the Spartans' strength on land, which could do them no good. And in fact the truth about the revolt lay more on the side the Athenians claimed, for the Scionaeans revolted two days after the agreement. The Athenians at once passed a decree, persuaded by Cleon's motion, to capture the Scionaeans and put them to death. And keeping quiet in all other respects, they prepared for this.

4.123 Meanwhile Mende revolted from them, a city in Pallene and a colony of the Eretrians. Brasidas received them. He did not think he was doing wrong, since they had come over openly during the armistice, and there were points on which he too accused the Athenians of breaking the treaty. This was also why the Mendaeans were bolder. They saw that Brasidas was ready to act, and they judged from Scione that he would not abandon them. At the same time, the men negotiating on their behalf were few. They had held back once before, but now they would not let the matter drop. Fearing for themselves that they would be found out, they forced the majority into it against their will. As soon as the Athenians learned of it, they were angrier still,

and they prepared to move against both cities. Brasidas, expecting their attack by sea, secretly removed the children and women of the Scionaeans and Mendaeans to Olynthus in Chalcidice. He sent over to them five hundred Peloponnesian hoplites and three hundred Chalcidian peltasts, with Polydamidas as commander of the whole force. The two cities, for their part, made joint preparations for their defense, expecting the Athenians to arrive soon.

THE RETREAT FROM LYNCUS

Deserted by the Macedonians, Brasidas leads his men out of Lyncus under attack.

4.124 Meanwhile Brasidas and Perdiccas marched together against Arrhabaeus in Lyncus for the second time. Perdiccas led the forces of the Macedonians under his rule and hoplites from the Greeks who lived there. Brasidas led what remained of his Peloponnesians, along with Chalcidians, Acanthians and the others, each in proportion to their strength. The whole Greek hoplite force came to about three thousand. The cavalry who went with them, Macedonians together with Chalcidians, numbered nearly a thousand in all, and there was also a large crowd of non-Greeks. They invaded Arrhabaeus' territory, found the Lyncestians encamped against them, and took up a position opposite them. The infantry of each side held a hill, with a plain lying between them. First the cavalry of both sides charged down into the plain and fought a cavalry battle. Then the Lyncestian hoplites advanced from their hill with their cavalry and stood ready to fight, and Brasidas and Perdiccas in turn led their own men forward. They engaged, routed the Lyncestians and killed many of them, while the rest escaped to the heights and kept quiet there. After this they set up a trophy and waited two or three days for the Illyrians, who as it happened were to come to Perdiccas as mercenaries. Then Perdiccas wanted to advance against Arrhabaeus' villages rather than sit still. But Brasidas was not eager. He was anxious that Mende might come to some

harm if the Athenians sailed there before he got back, and the Illyrians had not turned up either, so he was inclined rather to withdraw. 4.125 While they were at odds over this, news came that the Illyrians had betrayed Perdiccas and gone over to Arrhabaeus. So both of them now thought it best to withdraw, out of fear of these men, who were warlike. But because of their disagreement, nothing had been settled about when they should set out. Night came on, and the Macedonians and the mass of the non-Greeks were suddenly seized by fear, as great armies are apt to be struck by panic for no clear reason. They imagined that many times more men were coming against them than had actually come, and that the enemy were all but on them already. So they broke into sudden flight and made for home. At first Perdiccas did not notice. When he found out, they forced him to leave before he could see Brasidas, for the two were encamped a long way from each other. At dawn Brasidas saw that the Macedonians had gone on ahead and that the Illyrians and Arrhabaeus were about to attack. So he too formed his hoplites into a square, took the crowd of light troops into the middle, and planned to retreat. He posted the youngest men to dash out wherever the enemy attacked. He himself, with three hundred picked men, meant to bring up the rear and, as he withdrew, to turn and fight off the foremost of the enemy as they pressed on him. Before the enemy came near, he encouraged his soldiers, as briefly as he could, as follows:

4.126 "Peloponnesians, if I did not suspect that you are dismayed at being left on your own, and because the men coming against you are non-Greeks and many, I would not be giving you instruction along with encouragement. As it is, given that our side has deserted us and the enemy are so many, I shall try to persuade you of the most important points with a brief reminder and some advice. For it befits you to be brave in war not because allies happen to be with you on each occasion, but because of your own excellence. Nor should you fear any number of others. You come from states where it is not the many who rule the few, but rather the fewer who rule the more, and

they won that power by no other means than by winning in battle. As for these non-Greeks, whom you now fear because you have no experience of them, you must learn that they will not be formidable. You can see this from your earlier fights against the Macedonians among them, and from what I myself infer and know from what others report. Whenever an enemy is weak in reality but looks strong, the truth about them, once learned, has made those defending against them bolder. Against an enemy who has some solid advantage, on the other hand, a man would attack more boldly if he did not know of it beforehand. These men are frightening to the inexperienced in the threat of what is coming. They are fearsome in the numbers they show the eye, their shouting is unbearably loud, and their brandishing of weapons in the empty air gives some show of menace. But in hand-to-hand fighting against men who stand up to all this, they are not the same. They have no battle order, so they would feel no shame at abandoning any position when they are hard pressed. Flight and attack carry equal honor among them, so their courage is never put to the test. (A battle in which every man is his own master would give anyone the best excuse for saving his skin with decency.) And they think it surer to scare you off without danger to themselves than to come to close quarters with you. Otherwise they would have done that rather than this. You can see clearly that all the terror they hold out in advance is slight in fact, however hard it hits the eye and the ear. If you stand up to its onset and, when the moment comes, withdraw again in good order and formation, you will reach safety all the sooner. And you will learn for the future that mobs like these brag of their courage from a distance, with threats of what they will do, against those who withstand their first charge. But against those who give way to them, they are quick to show their bravery at their heels, where it is safe."

4.127 After this encouragement Brasidas began to lead his army off. When the non-Greeks saw this, they pressed on with much shouting and uproar, thinking that he was running away and that they would catch him and destroy him. But the skirmishers

met them wherever they attacked, and Brasidas himself, with his picked men, stood up to them as they pressed on. The Greeks withstood their first rush, which the enemy had not expected. After that, they received each attack and beat it off, and whenever the enemy held still, they themselves withdrew. Then at last most of the non-Greeks held off from Brasidas' Greeks in the open country. They left a part of their force to follow and attack them, while the rest went at a run after the fleeing Macedonians and killed any they came upon. They also got ahead and seized the pass into Arrhabaeus' country, a narrow one between two hills, knowing that Brasidas had no other line of retreat. And as he was approaching the most difficult stretch of the road, they began to surround him in order to cut him off. 4.128 Seeing this, Brasidas ordered his three hundred to make for whichever of the two hills he thought they could more easily take. They were to run at it, each as fast as he could, without keeping formation, and try to dislodge the non-Greeks already on it before the larger encircling force could join them there. They charged and overcame those on the hill, and the main body of the Greek army now made its way there more easily. For the non-Greeks were frightened when their own men were routed from the high ground at that spot, and they pursued no further, thinking that the Greeks were already at the frontier and had escaped. Once Brasidas had gained the heights, he went on in greater safety and reached Arnisa, the first town in Perdiccas' dominions, the same day. The soldiers were angry on their own account at the Macedonians for retreating ahead of them. Whenever they came upon the Macedonians' ox-teams along the road, they unyoked and slaughtered the oxen, and they took for themselves any baggage that had fallen off, as was likely to happen in a retreat made by night and in panic. From this time Perdiccas first regarded Brasidas as an enemy. From then on he harbored a hatred of the Peloponnesians that, given his hostility to the Athenians, went against his usual policy. But he broke away from his pressing interests and set about finding the quickest way to come to terms with the one and be rid of the other.

THE ATHENIANS RECOVER MENDE

Nicias and Nicostratus take Mende and begin walling in Scione.

4.129 Brasidas withdrew from Macedonia to Torone and found that the Athenians already held Mende. He stayed there quietly, judging that it was now impossible to cross over to Pallene and help, and he kept Torone under guard. For at about the same time as the events in Lyncus, the Athenians had sailed against Mende and Scione, as they had been preparing to do. They had fifty ships, ten of them Chian, a thousand of their own hoplites, six hundred archers, a thousand Thracian mercenaries and peltasts from their other allies in the area. The generals were Nicias son of Niceratus and Nicostratus son of Diitrephes. They set out with the ships from Potidaea, put in at the temple of Poseidon, and advanced against the Mendaeans. The Mendaeans themselves, three hundred Scionaeans who had come to help them, and the Peloponnesian auxiliaries, [and] in all seven hundred hoplites, together with their commander Polydamidas, happened to be encamped outside the city on a strong hill. Nicias, with a hundred and twenty light troops from Methone, sixty picked Athenian hoplites and all the archers, tried to climb the hill by a certain path. But his men took wounds from the defenders, and he could not force his way up. Nicostratus approached by another route from farther off with all the rest of the army, but the hill was hard to climb and he was thrown into complete confusion, and the whole Athenian army came close to being defeated. On that day, since the Mendaeans and their allies did not give way, the Athenians withdrew and encamped, and when night came the Mendaeans went back into the city. 4.130 The next day the Athenians sailed round to the side facing Scione, took the suburb, and spent the whole day ravaging the land. No one came out against them, for there was some civil strife in the city. The following night the three hundred Scionaeans went off home. On the next day Nicias advanced with half the army to the border with Scione, ravaging the land as he

went, while Nicostratus with the rest sat down before the city at the upper gates, where the road leads to Potidaea. Polydamidas drew up his men as if for battle and urged the Mendaeans to go out against the enemy (it happened that the Mendaeans' and auxiliaries' arms were stacked at that spot inside the wall). One of the popular party, in a factional spirit, answered him back that he would not go out and that they had no need to fight. When he answered back, Polydamidas dragged him by the arm and manhandled him. At once the people took up their arms and went in a fury for the Peloponnesians and for those who had worked with them against the people. They fell on them and routed them, partly because the fighting was so sudden and partly because the Peloponnesians were frightened when the gates were opened to the Athenians, for they thought the attack had been made by some prior arrangement. Those who were not killed on the spot fled to the acropolis, which they had held before as well. The Athenians burst into the city of Mende (for Nicias too had now turned back and was at the city). Since the city had been opened without any terms of surrender, they plundered it with their whole army as though they had taken it by storm, and the generals had difficulty stopping them from killing the inhabitants as well. Afterward they told the Mendaeans to keep their constitution as they were accustomed, and to judge among themselves anyone they considered responsible for the revolt. Those on the acropolis they walled off with a wall running down to the sea on either side, and they posted a guard there. When they had settled affairs at Mende, they advanced on Scione. 4.131 The Scionaeans and the Peloponnesians came out against them and established themselves on a strong hill in front of the city. Unless the enemy took it, there could be no walling them in. The Athenians attacked the hill in force, drove off its defenders in battle, encamped, set up a trophy, and prepared to build the wall around the city. Not long afterward, when they were already at work, the auxiliaries who were under siege on the acropolis at Mende forced their way past the guard

along the shore by night and arrived. Most of them got through the camp at Scione and entered the city.

4.132 While Scione was being walled in, Perdiccas sent a herald to the Athenian generals and came to an agreement with the Athenians, because of his quarrel with Brasidas over the retreat from Lyncus; he had begun negotiating immediately afterward. (At that time Ischagoras the Spartan happened to be about to lead an army overland to Brasidas.) [Then] Perdiccas acted, partly because Nicias urged him, now that the agreement had been made, to give the Athenians some clear proof of his reliability, and partly because he himself no longer wanted the Peloponnesians coming into his territory. He worked on his guest-friends in Thessaly, being always on close terms with the leading men there, and so blocked the army and its preparations that they did not even attempt to get through Thessaly. Ischagoras, Ameinias and Aristeus, however, did make their way to Brasidas themselves, sent by the Spartans to inspect the situation. Contrary to law, they brought with them from Sparta some of their men of military age, to set them up as governors of the cities instead of entrusting the cities to whoever happened to be at hand. He installed Clearidas son of Cleonymus at Amphipolis and Pasitelidas son of Hegesander at Torone.

4.133 In the same summer the Thebans pulled down the wall of Thespiae, accusing the Thespians of siding with Athens. They had always wanted to do this, but it had become easier now that the flower of the Thespians' manhood had perished in the battle against the Athenians. In the same summer the temple of Hera at Argos burned down. Chrysis the priestess had set a lighted lamp near the sacred garlands and then fallen asleep, so that everything caught fire and was ablaze before anyone noticed. That very night Chrysis, afraid of the Argives, fled to Phlius, and the Argives appointed another priestess, named Phaeinis, in accordance with the established law. Chrysis had held office for eight years of this war and half of the ninth when she fled. And at the very end of the summer Scione had been completely

walled in, and the Athenians left a garrison to guard it and withdrew with the rest of their army.[58]

4.134 In the following winter the Athenians and Spartans kept quiet because of the armistice. But the Mantineans and the Tegeans, each with their allies, fought a battle at Laodoceum in Oresthis, and the victory was disputed. Each side routed the wing facing it, and both set up trophies and sent spoils to Delphi. Many fell on each side, however, the battle was evenly balanced, and night broke off the fighting. The Tegeans camped on the field and set up a trophy at once, while the Mantineans withdrew to Bucolion and set up a trophy of their own later.[59]

4.135 At the end of the same winter, with spring already near, Brasidas also made an attempt on Potidaea. He came up by night and set a ladder against the wall, and got that far without being noticed. The bell had just been carried past, and the ladder was put up in the gap that was left before the man passing it on came back. But then the defenders noticed at once, before his men could climb up, and he quickly led his army back again, without waiting for daylight. So the winter ended, and with it the ninth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.[60]

58 The battle was Delium (424 BC). At 2.2 Thucydides dated the outbreak of the war by the years of Chrysis' priesthood.
59 Mantinea and Tegea were rival cities in Arcadia, in the central Peloponnese.
60 Sentries on a city wall passed a bell from post to post to check that each man was awake.

Book 5

The Peace of Nicias, 422–416 BC
Cleon and Brasidas die at Amphipolis; the peace and its unraveling, the battle of Mantinea, and the Melian Dialogue.

CLEON SAILS FOR THRACE

Athens expels the Delians; Cleon takes Torone, and Phaeax seeks allies in Sicily.

5.1 The following summer the one-year truce came to an end, though the armistice held until the Pythian Games. During the armistice the Athenians removed the Delians from Delos. They believed that because of some old offense the Delians had been impure when they were consecrated, and also that this was the part still missing from the purification in which, as I have explained earlier, they thought they had acted rightly by taking up the coffins of the dead. The Delians settled at Atramyttium in Asia, which Pharnaces gave them, each going there as he had set out.[1]

5.2 After the armistice Cleon persuaded the Athenians to send him, and he sailed out to the Thracian region with twelve hundred Athenian hoplites and three hundred cavalry, a larger number of allied troops, and thirty ships. He put in first at Scione, which was still under siege, and took on some hoplites from the besieging force there. Then he sailed into Cophos, the harbor of the Toronaeans, which lies not far from the city. From there he learned from deserters that Brasidas was not in Torone

1 The Pythian Games, held at Delphi in honor of Apollo every four years, fell in late summer.

and that the men inside were no match for him. So he advanced on the city with his land army, and sent ten ships to sail round into the harbor. He came first to the new wall that Brasidas had thrown round the city to take in the suburb; Brasidas had broken through part of the old wall and made the whole into a single city. 5.3 Pasitelidas, the Spartan commander, and the garrison that was there came out to defend this wall and fought off the Athenian assault. But they were being hard pressed, and at the same moment the ships sent round were sailing into the harbor. Pasitelidas was afraid that the ships would get there first and take the city with no one to defend it, and that he would be trapped if the wall fell, so he abandoned it and ran back to the city. But the Athenians got there before him: the men from the ships took Torone, and the land army, following close behind, burst in with them at the first rush through the breach in the old wall. Some of the Peloponnesians and Toronaeans they killed on the spot in hand-to-hand fighting; others they took alive, among them Pasitelidas the commander. Brasidas was on his way to help Torone, but when he learned on the road that it had fallen, he turned back. He had been about forty stades short of arriving in time. Cleon and the Athenians set up two trophies, one by the harbor and the other at the wall. They enslaved the women and children of Torone, and sent the men themselves to Athens, together with the Peloponnesians and any other Chalcidians who were there, about seven hundred in all. Later the Peloponnesians among them went home under the treaty that was made, and the rest were recovered by the Olynthians in an exchange of man for man. Around the same time the Boeotians also took Panactum, an Athenian fort on the border, through treachery. Cleon, after stationing a garrison in Torone, set off and sailed round Athos to make for Amphipolis.[2] 5.4 Around the same time Phaeax son of Erasistratus, with two colleagues, sailed as an envoy to Italy and Sicily with two ships, sent by the Athenians. What had happened was this. After the Athenians left

2 A stade is about 600 feet (some 185 meters); forty stades is about four and a half miles.

Sicily following the settlement, the Leontines had enrolled many new citizens, and the people were planning to redistribute the land. The powerful learned of it, brought in the Syracusans, and drove out the people. The people scattered, wandering wherever each of them could; the powerful came to terms with the Syracusans, abandoned their own city and left it deserted, and went to live at Syracuse, receiving citizenship there. Later some of them again left Syracuse because they were dissatisfied, and seized a place called Phocaeae, a quarter of the city of Leontini, and Bricinniae, a stronghold in Leontine territory.[3] Most of the people who had been expelled at that time came to join them, and established in these strongholds they carried on a war. When the Athenians heard of this, they sent Phaeax to see whether they could somehow persuade their allies there, and the other Sicilian Greeks as well if they could, to join in a campaign against the Syracusans, on the grounds that Syracuse was building up its power, and so save the people of Leontini. When Phaeax arrived he won over the Camarinaeans and the Acragantines; but at Gela his business met opposition, and he did not go on to the others, since he saw he would not persuade them. Instead he went back through the territory of the Sicels to Catana, visiting Bricinniae on the way and encouraging them, and then sailed away.[4] 5.5 On his voyage to Sicily and back again he also negotiated with some cities in Italy about friendship with the Athenians. He also came across some Locrian settlers who had been expelled from Messana. After the agreement among the Sicilian Greeks, the Messanians had fallen into civil strife and one faction had called in the Locrians, and these men had been sent out as settlers, so that for a time Messana belonged to the Locrians. Phaeax, then, meeting them on their way home, did them no harm, because the Locrians had reached an understanding with him about coming to terms with the Athenians. For they alone of the allies had made no treaty with

3 The settlement is the general peace among the Sicilian Greeks made at Gela in 424 BC, after which the Athenian fleet went home.

4 The Sicels were the native, non-Greek people of eastern Sicily.

the Athenians when the Sicilian Greeks were reconciled, and they would not have done so now either, had they not been tied down by their war with the Hipponians and Medmaeans, who were their neighbors and their colonists. Phaeax arrived back at Athens some time later.

CLEON AND BRASIDAS AT AMPHIPOLIS

Brasidas surprises Cleon's army outside Amphipolis; both commanders are killed.

5.6 Cleon, meanwhile, having sailed round from Torone to Amphipolis, used Eion as his base. He attacked Stagirus, a colony of Andros, without taking it, but took Galepsus, the Thasian colony, by storm. He sent envoys to Perdiccas, asking him to come with an army in accordance with their alliance, and others to Thrace, to Polles king of the Odomantians, for him to bring as many Thracian mercenaries as he could. He himself stayed quietly at Eion and waited. When Brasidas learned of this, he took up a position facing him on Cerdylium. This is a place belonging to the Argilians, on high ground across the river, not far from Amphipolis, and from it everything could be seen, so that Cleon could not have set his army in motion without Brasidas noticing. He expected Cleon to do just that: to go up against Amphipolis with the army he had, out of contempt for their numbers. At the same time he was getting ready fifteen hundred Thracian mercenaries and calling up all the Edonians, both peltasts and cavalry; and besides the troops in Amphipolis he had a thousand Myrcinian and Chalcidian peltasts. His hoplite force, when assembled, came to about two thousand in all, with three hundred Greek cavalry. Of these, Brasidas had about fifteen hundred with him on Cerdylium, and the rest were stationed in Amphipolis under Clearidas.[5] 5.7 For a while Cleon stayed quiet, but then he was forced to do exactly what Brasidas expected. His soldiers were fed up with sitting idle, and they kept reckoning up what his leadership would amount to—what

5 Peltasts were light infantry armed with a small shield and javelins.

inexperience and cowardice pitted against what experience and daring—and how unwillingly they had come out with him from home. He noticed their muttering, and not wanting them to grow sullen from sitting in one place, he broke camp and led them out. He used the same approach that had worked for him at Pylos and had convinced him he knew a thing or two. He did not even expect anyone to come out and fight him; he said rather that he was going up to look over the ground. And he was waiting for his larger force, not so as to be sure of winning should he be forced to fight, but so as to surround the city and take it by storm. When he arrived, he posted his army on a strong hill in front of Amphipolis, and he himself surveyed the marshy stretch of the Strymon and the lie of the city in relation to Thrace. He thought he could leave without a fight whenever he liked, for no one was to be seen on the wall and no one came out through the gates, which were all shut. So he even thought he had made a mistake in not bringing siege engines with him, because he could have taken the city, since it was undefended. 5.8 As soon as Brasidas saw the Athenians on the move, he too came down from Cerdylium and entered Amphipolis. He did not march out and draw up his army against the Athenians, because he was afraid of his own forces and thought them inferior—not in numbers (the two sides were roughly equal) but in quality, since the Athenians had sent out a picked force of their own citizens, along with the best of the Lemnians and Imbrians. Instead he prepared to attack them by a stratagem.[6] For if he showed the enemy the numbers of his men and their makeshift equipment, he did not think he would be as likely to win as if the enemy had not seen them beforehand, and their contempt was not grounded in the facts. So he picked out a hundred and fifty hoplites for himself, put Clearidas in charge of the rest, and planned to attack suddenly before the Athenians withdrew; he thought he would not catch them so isolated again if their reinforcements happened to arrive. He called all the soldiers

6 Lemnos and Imbros were northern Aegean islands settled by Athenian colonists.

together, wanting to encourage them and explain his plan, and spoke as follows:

5.9 "Peloponnesians, the kind of land we come from—one that has always been free because of its courage—and the fact that you are Dorians about to fight Ionians, whom you are used to beating, let it be enough to have mentioned briefly. But I will explain how I intend to make the attack, so that the fact that we are risking only a few of us at a time, and not all of us, may not look to anyone like weakness and so cost him his nerve. My guess is that the enemy came up to this position out of contempt for us, never expecting that anyone would come out to fight them, and that now, with their ranks broken and their attention turned to sightseeing, they are off their guard.[7] The man who most clearly spots mistakes of this kind in the enemy, and who also matches his attack to his own strength—not so much openly and in pitched battle as according to what the moment makes advantageous—will succeed most often. And the stratagems that win the finest reputation are those by which a man most deceives his enemy and most helps his friends. So while they are still unprepared and confident, and, as far as I can see, are thinking more about slipping away than about staying, while their minds are slack and before their judgment tightens up, I will take my own men and, if I can, catch them first, charging at a run into the middle of their army. And you, Clearidas, afterwards, when you see me already engaged and, as one would expect, throwing them into panic, take your own men, the Amphipolitans and the other allies, throw open the gates suddenly and rush out, and press on to close with them as fast as you can. This is our best hope of panicking them, for the force that comes on afterwards is more frightening to an enemy than the one already in front of him and fighting. Prove yourself a brave man, as is fitting for a Spartiate; and you, allies, follow bravely. Remember that there are three things that make for fighting well: willingness, a sense of shame, and obedience to

7 The Dorians and Ionians were the two main branches of the Greeks: the Spartans and most Peloponnesians were Dorian, the Athenians Ionian.

your commanders. Remember that this day, if you prove brave, you will have your freedom and the name of allies of the Spartans; otherwise you will be slaves of the Athenians—even if things go as well as they possibly can, and you are not sold into slavery or put to death—with a harsher slavery than you had before, and you will stand in the way of the liberation of the rest of the Greeks. So do not lose heart, when you see how much this struggle is for; and I will show that I am no better at urging others on than at going into action myself."[8]

5.10 After saying this much, Brasidas prepared his own sally, and stationed the others with Clearidas at the gates called the Thracian Gates, so that they could rush out as they had been told. Cleon, meanwhile, had gone forward at that moment to look over the ground. Brasidas had been seen coming down from Cerdylium, and in the city, which is visible from outside, sacrificing near the temple of Athena and making these preparations. So a report reached Cleon that the enemy's whole army could be seen in the city, and that under the gates many feet of horses and men were showing, as though they were about to come out. When he heard this he went up to look; and when he saw it, since he did not want to fight a battle before his reinforcements arrived and thought he could get away in time, he ordered the signal for retreat to be sounded, and at the same time gave orders that the troops withdrawing on the left wing should move off toward Eion, which was the only way possible. When he thought there was time enough, he wheeled the right wing himself and, exposing their unshielded side to the enemy, began to lead the army away. At this point Brasidas, seeing his opportunity and the Athenian army on the move, said to his own men and the rest: "These men aren't going to wait for us. You can tell by the way their spears and heads are moving; men who behave like that don't usually stand up to an attack. Someone open the gates I mentioned for me, and let's go out against them as fast as we can, with confidence." He went out by

8 Spartiates were full Spartan citizens, as distinct from the other inhabitants of Spartan territory.

the gate facing the palisade, the first gate in the long wall as it then stood, and ran at full speed straight along this road, where, as you go up the steepest part of the ground, a trophy now stands. He fell on the Athenians, who were frightened by their own disorder and stunned by his daring, and routed their center. And Clearidas, as he had been told, at the same moment came out by the Thracian Gates and bore down on them with his force. So it came about that the Athenians, attacked unexpectedly and suddenly from both sides, were thrown into confusion. Their left wing, the one toward Eion, which had in fact already moved off ahead, at once broke away and fled. As it was already retreating, Brasidas was moving on against the right wing when he was wounded. The Athenians did not notice his fall, and those near him picked him up and carried him away. The Athenian right held its ground better. Cleon, since he had never meant to stand and fight in the first place, fled at once, and was overtaken and killed by a Myrcinian peltast; but his hoplites rallied together on the hill and held off Clearidas, who attacked them two or three times, and they did not give way until the Myrcinian and Chalcidian cavalry and the peltasts surrounded them, showered them with javelins and put them to flight. So now the whole Athenian army was in flight, struggling along and taking many different routes over the mountains; all who were not killed, either on the spot in hand-to-hand fighting or by the Chalcidian cavalry and the peltasts, made their way back to Eion. The men who had lifted Brasidas out of the battle and carried him to safety brought him into the city still breathing. He learned that his men were winning, and not long afterwards he died. The rest of the army, returning with Clearidas from the pursuit, stripped the dead and set up a trophy. 5.11 After this all the allies, following in arms, gave Brasidas a public funeral in the city, in front of what is now the agora. Ever since, the Amphipolitans have fenced off his tomb and offer sacrifices to him as a hero, and they have given him honors in the form of games and yearly sacrifices. They also made the colony over to him as its founder, pulling down the buildings of Hagnon and

obliterating anything that might have survived as a memorial of his founding. They regarded Brasidas as their savior, and at the same time, at that moment, they were courting the Spartan alliance out of fear of the Athenians; while Hagnon, given their state of war with the Athenians, could not hold the honors either to their advantage or to their liking as before.[9] They gave the dead back to the Athenians. About six hundred of the Athenians were killed, and seven of their opponents, because the battle was not fought in regular order but arose from the circumstances I have described and from a panic that struck first. After recovering their dead, the Athenians sailed home, and those with Clearidas set about settling affairs at Amphipolis.

5.12 About the same time, as the summer was ending, the Spartans Ramphias, Autocharidas and Epicydidas were leading a relief force of nine hundred hoplites to the Thracian region. When they arrived at Heraclea in Trachis, they set in order whatever seemed to them to be amiss there. While they were spending time there, this battle took place, and the summer ended.[10]

BOTH SIDES TURN TO PEACE

Athens and Sparta, weary and anxious, decide to make peace; Nicias and Pleistoanax lead the way.

5.13 At the very start of the following winter Rhamphias and his men advanced as far as Pierium in Thessaly. But the Thessalians tried to stop them, and Brasidas, to whom they were bringing the army, was dead, so they turned back home. They thought the moment had passed, since the Athenians had gone away defeated and they themselves were not strong enough to carry out any of the plans Brasidas had had in mind. Above all, though, they went back because they knew that the Spartans, when they themselves set out, had already been inclined toward

9 Hagnon was the Athenian who had founded Amphipolis in 437 BC.
10 Heraclea in Trachis was a colony founded by the Spartans in 426 BC near Thermopylae.

peace. 5.14 So it came about that, right after the battle at Amphipolis and Rhamphias' withdrawal from Thessaly, neither side took up the war again, and both were inclined toward peace instead. The Athenians had taken a blow at Delium and, a short while later, another at Amphipolis. They no longer had the confident hope in their strength that had led them to reject the treaty earlier, when they thought their good fortune at the time would carry them to victory. They also feared that their allies, encouraged by their setbacks, would revolt on a wider scale, and they regretted not having come to terms after the events at Pylos, when a good opportunity had offered itself. The Spartans, for their part, found the war turning out contrary to their expectations. They had thought they would destroy the power of the Athenians within a few years if they laid waste their land. Instead they had met with the disaster on the island, such as had never yet befallen Sparta. Their territory was being raided from Pylos and Cythera, the helots were deserting, and there was a constant fear that those who remained would rely on those outside and, taking advantage of the present situation, stir up revolution as they had before. It also happened that their thirty-year peace with the Argives was about to expire, and the Argives refused to make another unless someone gave the land of Cynuria back to them. So it seemed impossible to fight the Argives and the Athenians at the same time. They also suspected that some of the cities in the Peloponnese would go over to the Argives—which is exactly what happened.[11]

5.15 Weighing all this, then, both sides decided that an agreement had to be made—not least the Spartans, out of their eagerness to recover the men from the island, for the Spartiates among them were men of the first rank and kinsmen of theirs alike. They had begun negotiating, in fact, immediately after the men were captured, but the Athenians, with things going well for them, were not yet willing to settle on equal terms. When the Athenians were defeated at Delium, however, the Spartans, real-

11 Helots were the state serfs of Sparta, who worked the land for their Spartan masters.

izing that they would now be more receptive, at once concluded the one-year armistice, during which the two sides were to meet and discuss a longer settlement.[12] 5.16 But now the Athenians had also suffered the defeat at Amphipolis, and Cleon and Brasidas were dead—the two men who on either side had most opposed peace. Brasidas did so because war brought him success and honor; Cleon because he thought that once quiet returned his misdeeds would be more conspicuous and his slanders less believed. It was then that the men in each city who were striving hardest for the leading position—Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of the Spartans, and Nicias son of Niceratus, who had been more successful in his commands than anyone of his time—became far more eager still. Nicias wanted, while he was still unscathed and held in esteem, to preserve his good fortune. He wanted to rest from his labors for the present and give his fellow citizens rest, and to leave behind for the future the name of a man who had come through life without ever bringing disaster on the city. He thought that this came from avoiding risk and from trusting oneself to chance as little as possible, and that peace was what kept one free from risk. Pleistoanax, for his part, was being slandered by his enemies over his restoration. Every time the Spartans suffered a setback, his enemies held it up to them as a matter of religious scruple, claiming that these things were happening because his return had been against the law. For they accused him and his brother Aristocles of having persuaded the prophetess at Delphi to give this answer, over a long period, to the Spartan envoys who came to consult her: that they should bring back the seed of the demigod son of Zeus from a foreign land to their own, or else they would plow with a silver plowshare. And so in time, they said, she induced the Spartans to bring him back. He was in exile at Lycaeum because of his withdrawal from Attica years before, which was thought to have been bought with bribes, and out of fear of the Spartans he was living in a house half of which lay inside the sanctuary of Zeus. In the nineteenth year they brought him back with the

12 The Greek text is uncertain here.

same choruses and sacrifices with which they had installed their kings when they first founded Sparta.[13] 5.17 Vexed by this slander, then, he thought that in peacetime, with no setbacks occurring and the Spartans recovering their men, he too would be beyond his enemies' reproach, whereas while war lasted those in leading positions were always bound to be slandered for its misfortunes. So he was eager for the agreement. Throughout this winter, then, they held talks. As spring approached, the Spartans first brandished their preparations, sending word round the cities to get ready for building a fort in Attica, so that the Athenians would be more inclined to listen. Then, after meetings at which each side put forward many claims against the other, it was agreed that peace should be made with each side giving back what it had taken in war, but that the Athenians should keep Nisaea. (When the Athenians demanded Plataea back, the Thebans said that they held the place not by force but because its people had come over to them by agreement and without betrayal; and the Athenians said they held Nisaea in the same way.) At that point the Spartans summoned their own allies. All except the Boeotians, Corinthians, Eleans and Megarians voted to make peace (these did not like what was being done), and the Spartans concluded the agreement: they made the treaty with the Athenians and swore to it, and the Athenians did the same toward the Spartans, as follows:[14]

THE PEACE OF NICIAS

The text of the fifty-year peace between Athens and Sparta, followed by their alliance.

5.18 "The Athenians and the Spartans and their allies made a treaty on the following terms, and swore to it city by city. Concerning the common sanctuaries: anyone who wishes may sacri-

13 Pleistoanax had withdrawn from an invasion of Attica in 446 BC and was exiled on suspicion of bribery; Mount Lycaeum is in Arcadia. The "demigod son of Zeus" is Heracles, from whom the Spartan kings claimed descent.
14 Nisaea, the port of Megara, had been taken by the Athenians in 424 BC; Plataea had surrendered to the Spartans and Thebans in 427 BC.

fice, travel there, consult the oracles and attend as an official envoy according to ancestral custom, by land and by sea, without fear. The sanctuary and the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and the Delphians, shall be autonomous, with their own taxation and their own courts, both for themselves and for their own land, according to ancestral custom. The treaty shall last fifty years for the Athenians and the allies of the Athenians and for the Spartans and the allies of the Spartans, without fraud and without harm, by land and by sea. It shall not be permitted to take up arms with intent to harm, either for the Spartans and their allies against the Athenians and their allies, or for the Athenians and their allies against the Spartans and their allies, by any art or device whatever. If there is any dispute between them, they shall resort to legal process and oaths, in whatever way they agree. The Spartans and their allies shall give Amphipolis back to the Athenians. From all the cities that the Spartans handed over to the Athenians, the inhabitants shall be permitted to leave for wherever they wish, taking their property with them. These cities, paying the tribute assessed in the time of Aristides, shall be autonomous. Once the treaty has been made, neither the Athenians nor their allies shall be permitted to take up arms against them to do them harm, so long as they pay the tribute.[15] These cities are Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Scolus, Olynthus and Spartolus. They shall be allies of neither side, neither of the Spartans nor of the Athenians; but if the Athenians persuade the cities, they may, with the cities' consent, make them their own allies. The Mecybernaeans, Sanaeans and Singaeans shall live in their own cities, like the Olynthians and Acanthians. The Spartans and their allies shall give Panactum back to the Athenians. The Athenians in turn shall give back to the Spartans Coryphasium, Cythera, Methana, Pteleum and Atalanta, and all the Spartans who are in the public prison at Athens or in public custody anywhere else in the Athenian

15 Aristides fixed the original assessment of the allies' tribute when the Athenian-led alliance was founded in 478/7 BC.

dominions;[16] and they shall release the Peloponnesians under siege in Scione, and all the other allies of the Spartans who are in Scione, and those whom Brasidas sent in, and any of the Spartans' allies who is in public custody at Athens or anywhere else in the Athenian dominions. The Spartans and their allies shall likewise give back any of the Athenians and their allies whom they hold. As for the Scionaeans, Toronaeans and Sermylians, and any other city that the Athenians hold, the Athenians shall decide about them and about the other cities as they see fit. The Athenians shall swear oaths to the Spartans and their allies city by city. Each side shall swear the oath that is most binding in its own country, seventeen men from each city. The oath shall be as follows: 'I will abide by this agreement and this treaty justly and without fraud.' The Spartans and their allies shall swear an oath to the Athenians on the same terms, and both sides shall renew the oath every year. They shall set up inscribed pillars at Olympia, at Pytho, at the Isthmus, at Athens on the Acropolis, and at Sparta in the Amyclaeum. If either side has forgotten anything, on any point whatever, it shall be consistent with their oaths for both sides, after fair discussion, to change it in whatever way seems good to both, the Athenians and the Spartans.[17]

5.19 "The treaty begins in Sparta under the ephor Pleistolas, on the fourth day from the end of the month Artemisius, and in Athens under the archon Alcaeus, on the sixth day from the end of the month Elaphebolion. The following men swore and made the treaty. For the Spartans: Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damagetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antippus, Tellis, Alcinadas, Empedias, Menas, Laphilus. For the Athenians, these: Lampon, Isthmionicus, Nicias, Laches, Euthydemus, Procles, Pythodorus,

16 Coryphasium is the Spartan name for Pylos.
17 Pytho is Delphi; the Amyclaeum was the sanctuary of Apollo at Amyclae, near Sparta.

Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasycles, Theagenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus, Demosthenes."[18]

5.20 This treaty was made at the end of winter, just as spring began, right after the City Dionysia, when exactly ten years had passed, give or take a few days, since the first invasion of Attica and the beginning of this war. Let the reader reckon by the actual times, rather than trusting more to a list of the names of those who, in various places, held office or some other honor and are used to date past events. That is not accurate, since an event may have fallen at the beginning of their term, in the middle, or at any point at all. But if one counts by summers and winters, as I have written it, each amounting to half of the year, one will find that ten summers and as many winters passed in this first war.[19]

5.21 The Spartans (since the lot had fallen to them to give back first what they held) immediately released the prisoners they had. They sent Ischagoras, Menas and Philocharidas as envoys to the Thracian region, ordering Clearidas to hand Amphipolis over to the Athenians and the others to accept the treaty as it applied to each of them. But these refused, thinking it not in their interest; nor did Clearidas hand over the city. Wishing to oblige the Chalcidians, he said that he was not able to hand it over against their will. He himself went in haste to Sparta with envoys from there, to defend himself in case Ischagoras and his colleagues accused him of disobedience, and at the same time wanting to know whether the agreement could still be altered. When he found that the Spartans were committed to it, he hurried back, the Spartans sending him off with orders, preferably, to hand over the place as well, and if not, to bring out all the Peloponnesians who were in it.

5.22 The allies happened to be at Sparta themselves, and the Spartans told those of them who had not accepted the treaty to

18 The ephors were five Spartan magistrates elected annually; the year was named after one ephor at Sparta and after one archon at Athens.

19 The City Dionysia was Athens' great spring festival of Dionysus, held in the month Elaphebolion (March–April).

make it. But they said, on the same pretext on which they had rejected it in the first place, that they would not accept it unless a fairer one were made. When they would not listen, the Spartans dismissed them and set about making an alliance with the Athenians themselves. They reasoned that this way the Argives would be least of a threat to them—for the Argives had refused to renew their treaty when Ampelidas and Lichas came to them, thinking that the Spartans were not dangerous without the Athenians—and that the rest of the Peloponnese would then be most likely to keep quiet, since otherwise it would have gone over to the Athenians if it could. So, with envoys from the Athenians present and discussions held, they came to terms, and the following oaths and alliance were made.

5.23 "The Spartans and the Athenians shall be allies for fifty years on the following terms. [And] if any enemy invades the territory of the Spartans and does harm to the Spartans, the Athenians shall help the Spartans in whatever way is most effective, to the best of their ability; and if the enemy ravages the land and leaves, that city shall be an enemy of the Spartans and the Athenians and shall suffer harm from both, and both cities shall make peace together. This shall be done justly, zealously and without fraud. And if any enemy invades the territory of the Athenians and does harm to the Athenians, the Spartans shall help the Athenians in whatever way is most effective, to the best of their ability; and if the enemy ravages the land and leaves, that city shall be an enemy of the Spartans and the Athenians and shall suffer harm from both, and both cities shall make peace together. This shall be done justly, zealously and without fraud. If the slave population rises in revolt, the Athenians shall come to the aid of the Spartans with all their strength, to the best of their ability. These terms shall be sworn by the same men on each side who swore the other treaty. The oath shall be renewed every year, by the Spartans coming to Athens for the Dionysia and by the Athenians going to Sparta for the Hyacinthia. Each side shall set up an inscribed pillar, the one at Sparta beside Apollo in the Amyclaeum, the other at Athens on

the Acropolis beside Athena. If the Spartans and the Athenians decide to add anything to or remove anything from the terms of the alliance, whatever they decide shall be consistent with the oaths of both."[20]

5.24 The following men swore the oath for the Spartans: Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damagetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antippus, Alcinadas, Tellis, Empedias, Menas, Laphilus; and for the Athenians: Lampon, Isthmionicus, Laches, Nicias, Euthydemus, Procles, Pythodorus, Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasycles, Theagenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus, Demosthenes.

This alliance was made not long after the treaty, and the Athenians gave the men from the island back to the Spartans; and the summer of the eleventh year began. This completes the record of these ten years, during which the first war was fought without a break.

5.25 After the treaty and the alliance between the Spartans and the Athenians, which were made after the ten-year war, when Pleistolas was ephor at Sparta and Alcaeus archon at Athens, there was peace for those who had accepted them. But the Corinthians and some of the cities in the Peloponnese tried to unsettle what had been agreed, and at once there was fresh turmoil, this time between the allies and Sparta. At the same time, as time went on, the Spartans also came under suspicion from the Athenians, since on some points they failed to do what had been specified in the agreement. For six years and ten months they refrained from invading each other's territory, but abroad, under an unstable truce, they did each other as much harm as they could. In the end, however, they were forced to break the treaty made after the ten years, and entered once again into open war.

20 The Hyacinthia was a Spartan festival of Apollo and Hyacinthus held at Amyclae.

THUCYDIDES' SECOND PREFACE

The war lasted twenty-seven years; the author on his exile.

5.26 The same Thucydides, an Athenian, has also written up these events in order, as each one happened, by summers and winters, down to the time when the Spartans and their allies put an end to the empire of the Athenians and took the Long Walls and the Piraeus. By that point the war had lasted twenty-seven years in all. And if anyone refuses to count the agreement in between as part of the war, he will be judging wrongly. Let him look at the facts as they have been set out, and he will find that it is not reasonable to judge it a peace. In it neither side gave back or received everything it had agreed to; besides this, there were violations on both sides in the Mantinean and Epidaurian war and in other matters; the allies in the Thracian region were no less hostile than before; and the Boeotians kept only a ten-day truce. So, taking the first, ten-year war together with the uneasy truce that followed it and the war that later grew out of that, one will find, reckoning by the seasons, this many years and a few days over. And for those who put their trust in oracles, here was the one prediction that proved reliable. For I myself remember that all along, from the beginning of the war until its end, many people were putting it about that it was destined to last three times nine years. I lived through the whole of it, old enough to understand and applying my mind to it, so that I might know something accurately. It also happened that I was exiled from my own country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis; and being present on both sides—not least, because of my exile, on the Peloponnesian side—I was able at my leisure to understand more of what happened. So I shall now describe the dispute after the ten years, the breakdown of the treaty, and how the war was fought after that.

THE ARGIVE LEAGUE

Corinth urges Argos to lead a new alliance; Mantinea, Elis and others join it.

5.27 Once the fifty-year treaty had been made, and later the alliance, the embassies from the Peloponnese that had been summoned for these matters began to leave Sparta. The others went home, but the Corinthians turned aside to Argos and first opened talks with some of the Argives in office. Their argument was this. The Spartans had made a treaty and an alliance with the Athenians, formerly their bitterest enemies, not for the good of the Peloponnese but to enslave it. So the Argives ought to see to it that the Peloponnese was saved. They should pass a decree that any Greek city that wished, provided it was independent and settled disputes on fair and equal terms, might make an alliance with the Argives for the defense of each other's territory. They should also appoint a few men with full powers, and not conduct the negotiations before the people, so that those who failed to win over the people would not be exposed. Many, they said, would come over out of hatred for the Spartans. Having given this advice, the Corinthians went home.[21] 5.28 The Argives who had heard them reported the proposals to the magistrates and the people. The Argives passed the decree and chose twelve men with whom any Greek who wished might make an alliance, except the Athenians and the Spartans; with neither of these were the twelve permitted to make a treaty without the Argive people. The Argives accepted this all the more readily because they saw that war with the Spartans was coming (their treaty with them was about to expire). At the same time they hoped to take the leadership of the Peloponnese. For at this time Sparta had fallen into very bad repute and was held in contempt because of its disasters, while the Argives were in excellent shape in every respect. They had taken no part in the war with

21 The "fifty-year treaty" is the Peace of Nicias of 421 BC, followed soon afterwards by a separate alliance between Athens and Sparta.

Athens, but, being at peace with both sides, had reaped the profits. So the Argives in this way began admitting into the alliance any Greeks who wished, 5.29 and the Mantineans and their allies were the first to come over to them, out of fear of the Spartans. For the Mantineans had subjugated part of Arcadia while the war with Athens was still going on, and they believed that the Spartans, now that they had leisure, would not stand by and let them keep their rule. So they gladly turned to the Argives, regarding Argos as a great city, always at odds with the Spartans, and a democracy like themselves.[22] Once the Mantineans had defected, the rest of the Peloponnese also began to murmur that they ought to do the same. They supposed that the Mantineans must have known something more to change sides, and at the same time they were angry with the Spartans. Among other things, it had been written into the treaty with Athens that it would be consistent with the oaths to add or remove anything that both cities, the Spartans and the Athenians, agreed on. This clause more than anything unsettled the Peloponnese and made them suspect that the Spartans wanted to enslave them with the help of the Athenians; for justice required that the power of amendment be granted to all the allies. So most of them, out of fear, were eager each to make an alliance with the Argives themselves.

5.30 When the Spartans noticed this murmuring in the Peloponnese, and that the Corinthians had been its instigators and were about to make a treaty with Argos themselves, they sent envoys to Corinth to forestall what was coming. They blamed the Corinthians for having instigated the whole affair. If they abandoned Sparta and became allies of the Argives, the envoys said, they would be breaking their oaths. Indeed they were already in the wrong for not accepting the treaty with Athens, since it had been laid down that whatever the majority of the allies voted should be binding, unless some obstacle from gods or heroes stood in the way. The Corinthians, with those of their allies present who had likewise not accepted the treaty (they

22 Mantinea was a city in Arcadia, the mountainous center of the Peloponnese.

had invited them beforehand themselves), answered the Spartans. They did not state openly the wrongs they had suffered—that they had not recovered Sollium or Anactorium from the Athenians, or anything else in which they thought themselves shortchanged. Instead they made a pretext of not betraying their allies in Thrace. They had sworn oaths to them, they said, both privately, when those allies first revolted together with the Potidaeans, and others later. So they were not breaking the oaths of the allies by not entering the treaty with Athens; having sworn pledges by the gods to those people, they would be breaking their oaths if they betrayed them.[23] The treaty said "unless there is some obstacle from gods or heroes"; this, then, they thought plainly was a divine obstacle. That was what they said about the old oaths. As for the Argive alliance, they would consult with their friends and do whatever was right. The Spartan envoys went home. Argive envoys also happened to be present in Corinth, urging the Corinthians to join the alliance without delay; the Corinthians told them to come to their next assembly. 5.31 An embassy from Elis also came at once and made an alliance first with the Corinthians; then, going on from there to Argos, the Eleans became allies of the Argives on the terms already proclaimed. They happened to be at odds with the Spartans over Lepreum. Some time before, the Lepreans had been at war with some of the Arcadians, and had called in the Eleans as allies in return for half their land. When the Eleans had ended the war, they left the land to the Lepreans themselves to farm, on condition that they pay a talent a year to Olympian Zeus. The Lepreans paid it until the war with Athens; then they stopped, using the war as a pretext, and the Eleans tried to force them, whereupon they turned to the Spartans. The case was referred to the Spartans for arbitration, but the Eleans, suspecting that they would not get fair treatment, renounced the arbit-

23 Sollium and Anactorium were Corinthian possessions on the northwest coast of Greece, captured by Athens and its allies earlier in the war.

ration and ravaged the Lepreans' land.[24] The Spartans nonetheless gave judgment that the Lepreans were independent and that the Eleans were in the wrong, and, on the ground that the Eleans had not abided by the arbitration, sent a garrison of hoplites into Lepreum. The Eleans considered that the Spartans had taken in a city that had revolted from them, and they pointed to the agreement which laid down that whatever places each party held when it entered the war with Athens, it should hold when it came out. So, holding that they had not been treated fairly, they went over to the Argives, and they too made the alliance on the terms already proclaimed. Immediately after them the Corinthians and the Chalcidians in Thrace also became allies of the Argives. The Boeotians and the Megarians, who took the same line, held back. They were left to themselves by the Spartans, and they thought that the Argive democracy would suit them, as oligarchies, less well than the Spartan constitution.[25]

5.32 About the same time this summer the Athenians took Scione after a siege. They killed the men of military age, enslaved the children and women, and gave the land to the Plataeans to live on. They also brought the Delians back to Delos, mindful of their defeats in battle and of the oracle of the god at Delphi. And the Phocians and the Locrians went to war with each other.[26]

The Corinthians and the Argives, now allies, went to Tegea to make it revolt from the Spartans. They saw that it was a large part of the Peloponnese, and thought that if it joined them they would hold the whole Peloponnese. But when the Tegeans said they would do nothing in opposition to the Spartans, the Corinthians, who had been zealous up to that point, lost their ardor for the contest and began to fear that none of the others would

24 Elis, in the northwestern Peloponnese, controlled the sanctuary of Olympia. A talent was a large sum of silver, equal to 6,000 drachmas.
25 Hoplites were heavily armed infantry, the core of every Greek army.
26 Scione, in Chalcidice, had revolted from Athens in 423 BC; the year before, the Athenians had expelled the Delians from their island on the grounds of purifying it.

come over to them any longer. Nevertheless they went to the Boeotians and asked them to become allies of themselves and the Argives, and to act in common in other matters; and they asked the Boeotians to go with them to Athens and obtain for them too the ten-day truce that the Athenians and Boeotians had made with each other not long after [this] fifty-year treaty, [on the same terms as the Boeotians had it,] and, if the Athenians refused, to renounce the armistice and in future make no treaty without them. In answer to this request the Boeotians told the Corinthians to hold off on the matter of the Argive alliance; but they went to Athens with them. They did not obtain the ten-day truce: the Athenians replied that the Corinthians already had a treaty, if they were allies of the Spartans. The Boeotians, for all that, did not renounce their ten-day truce, though the Corinthians demanded it and accused them of having agreed to do so. And the Corinthians had a cessation of hostilities with the Athenians, but no treaty.[27] 5.33 The same summer the Spartans marched out in full force, under the command of Pleistoanax son of Pausanias, king of the Spartans, against the Parrhasians in Arcadia. These were subjects of the Mantineans, and one faction in a civil conflict had called the Spartans in. At the same time the Spartans meant to destroy, if they could, the fort at Cypsela, which the Mantineans had built and garrisoned themselves; it lay in Parrhasian territory, facing the Sciritis in Laconia. The Spartans ravaged the land of the Parrhasians, while the Mantineans handed their city over to an Argive garrison and themselves guarded their allied territory. But since they were unable to save both the fort at Cypsela and the Parrhasian towns, they withdrew. The Spartans made the Parrhasians independent, demolished the fort, and went home.

5.34 That same summer, when the soldiers who had gone out to Thrace with Brasidas had come home (Clearidas brought them back after the treaty), the Spartans voted that the helots who had fought with Brasidas should be free and live wherever they wished. Not long afterwards they settled them, together with the

27 A ten-day truce was an armistice that either side could end at ten days' notice.

neodamodeis, at Lepreum, which lies between Laconia and Elis, since they were already at odds with the Eleans. As for their own men who had been captured on the island and had surrendered their arms, the Spartans feared that they might think they would be slighted because of their misfortune and, if they kept their full rights, stir up revolution. So they deprived them of their civic rights, even though some of them already held office. The loss of rights was of this kind: they could neither hold office nor validly buy or sell anything. Some time later, however, their rights were restored.[28]

5.35 The same summer the people of Dium took Thyssus on the Acte peninsula of Athos, an ally of the Athenians.

All through this summer the Athenians and the Peloponnesians had dealings with each other, but from the moment the treaty was made the Athenians and the Spartans were suspicious of each other because the places were not handed back. The Spartans, who had drawn the lot to make restitution first, had not given back Amphipolis and the rest. Nor had they got their allies in Thrace to accept the treaty, nor the Boeotians, nor the Corinthians; they kept saying that if these were unwilling, they would join the Athenians in compelling them. They also set deadlines, without a written agreement, after which those who had not come in were to be enemies of both. So the Athenians, seeing none of this happen in deed, suspected that the Spartans had no just intentions. Accordingly they would not give back Pylos when the Spartans asked for it; they even regretted having returned the prisoners from the island, and they held on to the other places, waiting until the Spartans for their part did what had been agreed. The Spartans said they had done what they could. They had returned the Athenian prisoners in their hands, withdrawn their soldiers from Thrace, and done the same with anything else in their power. Amphipolis, they said, they did not control, and so could not hand it over; but they would try to bring the Boeotians and the Corinthians into the treaty, to

28 The neodamodeis were helots who had been given their freedom.

recover Panactum, and to bring back all the Athenian prisoners held in Boeotia.[29]

They did, however, demand that Pylos be given back to them; or, failing that, that the Messenians and the helots at least be withdrawn, as they themselves had withdrawn their troops from Thrace, and that the Athenians garrison the place themselves if they wished. After frequent and lengthy discussions during this summer, they persuaded the Athenians to withdraw from Pylos the Messenians and the others, both helots and all who had deserted from Laconia; and the Athenians settled them at Cranii in Cephallenia. So this summer passed in quiet, with visits back and forth.[30]

THE EPHORS' INTRIGUE

Spartan ephors opposed to the peace scheme with Boeotia and Corinth; Panactum is demolished.

5.36 In the following winter (it happened that other ephors, not those in whose term the treaty had been made, were now in office, and some of them were actually opposed to the treaty), embassies came from the alliance, and the Athenians, Boeotians and Corinthians were present. Much was said among them, but nothing was agreed. As they were leaving for home, Cleobulus and Xenares, the very ephors who most wanted to dissolve the treaty, held private talks with the Boeotians and the Corinthians. They urged them to take the same line as themselves as far as possible, and that the Boeotians should try, having first become allies of the Argives themselves, to make the Argives, together with the Boeotians, allies of the Spartans. (In this way, they said, the Boeotians would be least likely to be forced into the treaty with Athens; for the Spartans would choose to have the Argives as their friends and allies even at the cost of enmity with Athens

29 Panactum was an Athenian border fort on the frontier with Boeotia, captured by the Boeotians in 422 BC.

30 The Messenians at Pylos, descendants of rebel helots whom Athens had settled at Naupactus, had used the fort to raid Spartan territory. Cephallenia is a large island off western Greece.

and the dissolution of the treaty. The ephors knew that the Spartans had always wanted Argos to be on good and friendly terms with them.) They thought that with this done, a war outside the Peloponnese would be easier. They did ask the Boeotians, however, to hand Panactum over to the Spartans, so that they might recover Pylos in exchange for it, if they could, and so find it easier to go to war with the Athenians. 5.37 The Boeotians and the Corinthians, having received these instructions from Xenares and Cleobulus and their friends among the Spartans, to report to their governments, went home, each to their own city. But two men of the highest magistracy at Argos watched for them on their way and, meeting them, opened talks to see whether the Boeotians might become their allies, as the Corinthians, Eleans and Mantineans had. If this went forward, they said, they thought they could then readily make war or make a treaty, even with the Spartans if they wished, speaking with one voice, and with anyone else if need be. The Boeotian envoys were pleased to hear this; for, as chance would have it, the Argives were asking for the very things their friends in Sparta had instructed them to do. When the Argives saw that the Boeotians welcomed the proposal, they said they would send envoys to Boeotia, and departed. On their return the Boeotians reported to the boeotarchs both what had been said at Sparta and what the Argives who had met them had proposed. The boeotarchs were pleased and far more eager, because it had turned out on both sides that the friends of the Spartans were asking for the same thing and the Argives were pressing for the like. Not long afterwards Argive envoys arrived with the proposals already described; the boeotarchs sent them away with praise for their proposals, promising to send envoys to Argos about the alliance.[31]

5.38 Meanwhile the boeotarchs, the Corinthians, the Megarians and the envoys from Thrace decided first to swear oaths to one another that they would truly help whichever of them needed it whenever occasion arose, and would neither make war nor

31 The boeotarchs were the chief magistrates of the Boeotian federation.

come to terms with anyone without common consent; and that on this basis the Boeotians and Megarians (who were acting together) would then make a treaty with the Argives. But before the oaths were taken, the boeotarchs communicated this to the four councils of the Boeotians, which hold all final authority, and recommended that oaths be exchanged with all the cities willing to join in a sworn pact for their mutual benefit. But the members of the Boeotian councils did not accept the proposal, fearing that they would be acting against the Spartans if they swore alliance with the Corinthians, who had broken away from them. For the boeotarchs had not told them what had passed at Sparta—that Cleobulus and Xenares among the ephors, and their friends, were advising them to become allies first of the Argives and the Corinthians and afterwards to join with the Spartans. They thought that the council, even if they did not tell it, would vote for nothing other than what they had decided beforehand and recommended. When the plan met this opposition, the Corinthians and the envoys from Thrace went away with nothing achieved. The boeotarchs, who had previously meant, if they carried this, to try to make the alliance with the Argives as well, no longer brought the question of the Argives before the councils, nor did they send to Argos the envoys they had promised; a certain negligence and delay hung over the whole business.

5.39 In this same winter the Olynthians took Mecyberna, which was held by an Athenian garrison, in a sudden attack.

After this (for negotiations were constantly going on between the Athenians and the Spartans about the places each held of the other's), the Spartans hoped that if the Athenians got Panactum back from the Boeotians, they themselves would recover Pylos. So they went on an embassy to the Boeotians and asked them to hand over to them Panactum and the Athenian prisoners, so that they could get Pylos back in exchange. The Boeotians said they would not give them up unless the Spartans made a separate alliance with them, as they had with the Athenians. The Spartans knew that they would be wronging the Athenians, since it had been agreed that neither would make a treaty or war

with anyone without the other. But they wanted to take over Panactum so as to recover Pylos in exchange for it, and at the same time those who were eager to wreck the treaty were keen on the arrangement with the Boeotians. So they made the alliance, as the winter was ending and spring approaching; and Panactum was at once demolished. And so the eleventh year of the war ended.

5.40 At the very start of the following summer, with the coming of spring, the Argives grew afraid. The Boeotian envoys they had said they would send had not come, and they learned that Panactum was being demolished and that the Boeotians had made a separate alliance with the Spartans. They feared they would be left isolated and that the whole alliance would go over to the Spartans. For they thought the Boeotians had been persuaded by the Spartans both to demolish Panactum and to join the Athenians' treaty, and that the Athenians knew about it. So it was no longer open to them to make an alliance even with the Athenians. Before this, they had hoped that because of the quarrels between Athens and Sparta they would at least become allies of the Athenians if their own treaty with the Spartans did not hold. The Argives were therefore at a loss. They were afraid of having to fight the Spartans, the Tegeans, the Boeotians and the Athenians all at once, though they had earlier refused the Spartans' treaty and in their pride had expected to lead the Peloponnese. So they sent envoys to Sparta as quickly as they could: Eustrophus and Aeson, who were thought to be the men the Spartans liked best. They judged that in the present circumstances their best course was to make a treaty with the Spartans on whatever terms they could get, and keep quiet. 5.41 When the envoys arrived, they opened talks with the Spartans on the terms on which the treaty might be made. At first the Argives demanded that the question of the territory of Cynuria be referred to arbitration, either by some city or by a private individual. The two sides are always quarreling over this land, since it lies on the border; it contains Thyrea and the town of Anthene, and the Spartans occupy it. Then the Spartans refused to let it even be

mentioned, but said that if the Argives wanted a treaty on the same terms as before, they were ready. Even so, the Argive envoys induced the Spartans to agree to the following: for the present they would make a treaty for fifty years; but either side would be allowed, on issuing a challenge, to fight it out for this land, provided that there was neither plague nor war at Sparta or at Argos, just as they had once done before, when each side claimed the victory; and pursuit would not be allowed beyond the boundaries of Argos and Sparta.[32] At first the Spartans thought this was foolishness. Then, because they were eager to have Argos as a friend at any cost, they agreed to the terms the Argives asked for and put them in writing. But before any of it took effect, the Spartans told the envoys to go back to Argos first and lay the terms before the people, and, if they were acceptable, to return at the Hyacinthia to swear the oaths. So the envoys went home. 5.42 During the time the Argives were negotiating this, the Spartan envoys Andromenes, Phaedimus and Antimenidas were to take over Panactum and the prisoners from the Boeotians and hand them back to the Athenians. They found that the Boeotians themselves had demolished Panactum. The pretext was that long ago, after a quarrel over the place, the Athenians and Boeotians had sworn oaths that neither side should live there and that both should graze it in common. As for the Athenian prisoners held by the Boeotians, Andromenes and his colleagues took them over, brought them to the Athenians and handed them back. They also told the Athenians that Panactum had been demolished, regarding this too as a restoration, since no enemy of the Athenians would live there any longer. When this was reported, the Athenians were outraged. They considered that the Spartans had wronged them by the demolition of Panactum, which ought to have been handed over standing. They also learned that the Spartans had made a separate alliance with the Boeotians, though earlier they had claimed they would join Athens in forcing those who rejected the treaty

32 The earlier fight was the "Battle of the Champions" (about 546 BC), in which 300 Argives and 300 Spartans fought for Thyrea and both sides claimed to have won.

to accept it. They took stock of all the other points on which the Spartans had failed to keep the agreement, and they believed they had been deceived. So they gave the envoys a harsh answer and sent them away.

ALCIBIADES AND THE ARGIVE ALLIANCE

Alcibiades tricks the Spartan envoys, and Athens makes a hundred-year alliance with Argos, Mantinea and Elis.

5.43 With the Spartans and the Athenians at odds in this way, those at Athens who for their part wanted to break the treaty went at once to work. One of them was Alcibiades son of Cleinias. At that time he was still young in years, as age would be reckoned in any other city, but he was honored for the distinction of his ancestors. He did think it better to side with the Argives, but he also opposed the treaty out of pride and a spirit of rivalry, because the Spartans had negotiated it through Nicias and Laches, overlooking him because of his youth and failing to honor the old proxeny his family had once held. His grandfather had renounced it, and he himself had meant to renew it by looking after their prisoners from the island.[33] Feeling slighted on every side, he had spoken against the treaty from the first. He said the Spartans could not be relied on, and that they were making a treaty with Athens only so that they could crush the Argives and then march against the Athenians again once they were alone. Now that the quarrel had broken out, he at once sent privately to Argos. He urged the Argives to come as quickly as possible with the Mantineans and Eleans and invite Athens into the alliance, since the moment was right and he would do all he could to help.

5.44 The Argives heard his message and learned that the Boeotian alliance had not been made with the Athenians' consent, and that the Athenians had in fact fallen into a serious quarrel

33 A proxenos was a citizen who looked after a foreign state's interests and visitors in his own city. The island is Sphacteria, where Spartans had been captured in 425 BC.

with the Spartans. So they paid no further attention to their envoys in Sparta, who happened to be away negotiating the treaty, and turned their thoughts toward the Athenians instead. They reasoned that a city that had long been their friend, that was a democracy as they were, and that had great power at sea would fight on their side if they went to war. They therefore sent envoys to the Athenians at once about the alliance, and the Eleans and Mantineans joined in the embassy.

Envoys from Sparta also arrived in haste: Philocharidas, Leon and Endius, men thought to be on good terms with the Athenians. The Spartans were afraid that the Athenians in their anger would make the alliance with the Argives. The envoys were also to ask for Pylos in return for Panactum, and to defend the Boeotian alliance, saying it had not been made to harm the Athenians. 5.45 They spoke in the council about these matters and said they had come with full powers to settle all the points in dispute. This made Alcibiades afraid that if they said the same before the people, they would win over the majority and the Argive alliance would be rejected. So Alcibiades devised the following scheme against them. He gave the Spartans his pledge and persuaded them that if they did not admit before the people that they had come with full powers, he would give Pylos back to them, since he himself would persuade the Athenians, just as he was now arguing against it, and would settle the other matters as well. His aim was to separate them from Nicias, and to discredit them before the people as men who meant nothing honest and never said the same thing twice, so that he could make the Argives, Eleans and Mantineans allies of Athens. And that is what happened. The envoys came before the people and, when they were questioned, said they had not come with full powers, as they had said in the council. The Athenians would put up with them no longer. Alcibiades denounced the Spartans far more loudly than before, and the people listened to him and were ready to bring in the Argives and those with them at once and make them allies. But an earthquake occurred before anything was ratified, and this assembly was adjourned. 5.46 At the

assembly the next day Nicias spoke. The Spartans themselves had been tricked, and he too had been taken in about their failure to admit that they had come with full powers. Even so, he said that they ought rather to be friends with the Spartans, and that they should hold off on the business with the Argives and send to the Spartans again to find out what they intended. Putting off the war, he said, did Athens credit and Sparta discredit. The Athenians, whose affairs were in good shape, did best to preserve their good fortune for as long as possible, while for the Spartans, in their misfortune, it would be a windfall to risk everything as soon as possible. He persuaded them to send envoys, himself among them. The envoys were to tell the Spartans that if their intentions were at all honest, they should hand back Panactum standing, and Amphipolis too. They should also give up the Boeotian alliance unless the Boeotians joined the treaty, in keeping with the clause that neither side would come to terms with anyone without the other. The Athenians also told the envoys to say that if Athens had wanted to do wrong, it would already have made the Argives its allies, for the Argives were present for that very purpose. They gave Nicias and his fellow envoys instructions on every other complaint they had and sent them off.

The envoys arrived and delivered the rest of their message. Finally they said that unless the Spartans gave up their alliance with the Boeotians if the Boeotians did not join the treaty, the Athenians for their part would make allies of the Argives and those with them. The Spartans said they would not give up the Boeotian alliance, for Xenares the ephor and his supporters, along with all who shared their view, carried the day. But at Nicias' request they renewed the oaths. Nicias was afraid of returning with nothing accomplished and being attacked, as in fact happened, since he was regarded as responsible for the treaty with the Spartans. When he got back and the Athenians heard that nothing had been achieved at Sparta, they were furious at once. Believing themselves wronged, and since the Argives and their allies happened to be present after Alcibiades

had brought them in, they made a treaty and alliance with them, as follows.

5.47 "The Athenians and the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans have made a treaty with one another for a hundred years, on behalf of themselves and of the allies whom each of them rule, without fraud and without harm, on land and at sea. It shall not be lawful to take up arms to do harm, neither for the Argives, Eleans, Mantineans and their allies against the Athenians and the allies whom the Athenians rule, nor for the Athenians and the allies whom the Athenians rule against the Argives, Eleans, Mantineans and their allies, by any craft or contrivance whatsoever. On the following terms the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans and Eleans shall be allies for a hundred years. If enemies invade the territory of the Athenians, the Argives, Mantineans and Eleans shall come to the aid of Athens, according to whatever the Athenians request, in the most effective way they can, to the best of their ability. If the enemy ravage the land and depart, that city shall be an enemy to the Argives, Mantineans, Eleans and Athenians, and shall suffer harm at the hands of all these cities. No one of the cities shall be allowed to end the war against that city unless all of them agree. The Athenians likewise shall come to the aid of Argos, Mantinea and Elis if enemies invade the territory of the Argives, the Mantineans or the Eleans, according to whatever these cities request, in the most effective way they can, to the best of their ability. If the enemy ravage the land and depart, that city shall be an enemy to the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans and Eleans, and shall suffer harm at the hands of all these cities. No one of the cities shall be allowed to end the war against that city unless all [the cities] agree. They shall not allow armed men to pass through their own territory, or that of the allies whom each of them rule, for purposes of war, nor by sea, unless all the cities, the Athenians, Argives, Mantineans and Eleans, have voted to allow the passage. For troops sent to help, the city that sends them shall supply provisions for up to thirty days after they arrive in the city that asked for help, and the same for their return. If the city that

summoned the army wishes to use it for a longer time, that city shall supply provisions at the rate of three Aeginetan obols a day for each hoplite, light-armed soldier and archer, and one Aeginetan drachma a day for each cavalryman.[34] The city that summoned the army shall hold the command when the war is in its own territory. But if all the cities decide on a joint expedition anywhere, all the cities shall share the command equally. The Athenians shall swear to the treaty on behalf of themselves and their allies; the Argives, Mantineans, Eleans and their allies shall swear city by city. Each shall swear the oath that is held most binding in their own country, over full-grown victims. The oath shall be as follows: 'I will abide by the alliance according to the terms agreed, justly, without harm and without fraud, and I will not break it by any craft or contrivance whatsoever.' At Athens the oath shall be sworn by the council and the magistrates in the city, and administered by the prytaneis. At Argos it shall be sworn by the council, the Eighty and the artynae, and administered by the Eighty. At Mantinea it shall be sworn by the demiurgi, the council and the other magistrates, and administered by the theori and the polemarchs. At Elis it shall be sworn by the demiurgi, the holders of office and the Six Hundred, and administered by the demiurgi and the thesmophylaces.[35] The oaths shall be renewed by the Athenians going to Elis, Mantinea and Argos thirty days before the Olympic Games, and by the Argives, Eleans and Mantineans going to Athens ten days before the Great Panathenaea. The terms of the treaty, the oaths and the alliance shall be inscribed on a stone pillar: by the Athenians on the Acropolis, by the Argives in the marketplace in the sanctuary of Apollo, and by the Mantineans in the sanctuary of Zeus in the marketplace. They shall also jointly set up a bronze pillar at Olympia at the present Olympic Games. If these cities think it better to add anything to what has been agreed,

34 Aeginetan coinage was heavier than Athenian; a drachma was worth six obols.
35 The prytaneis were the members of the Athenian council presiding in rotation; the other titles are local councils and magistracies of Argos, Mantinea and Elis.

whatever all the cities decide in joint deliberation shall be binding."[36]

5.48 So the treaty and the alliance were made, and neither side renounced the treaty between the Spartans and the Athenians on this account. The Corinthians, though allies of the Argives, did not join it. Even before this, when the Eleans, Argives and Mantineans had made an alliance to be at war and at peace with the same states, the Corinthians had not joined in the oath. They said the first alliance was enough for them, the defensive one: to help one another, but not to join anyone in attacking. In this way the Corinthians held aloof from their allies and turned their thoughts toward the Spartans again.

SPARTA BARRED FROM OLYMPIA

Elis excludes the Spartans from the Olympic Games of 420 BC; Argos goes to war with Epidaurus.

5.49 The Olympic Games were held this summer, at which Androsthenes the Arcadian won his first victory in the pancration. The Spartans were barred from the sanctuary by the Eleans, so that they could neither sacrifice nor compete, because they had not paid the fine the Eleans had imposed on them under Olympic law. The Eleans alleged that the Spartans had made an armed attack on their fort of Phyrcus and had sent some of their hoplites into Lepreum during the Olympic truce. The fine was two thousand minas, two minas for each hoplite, as the law prescribes. The Spartans sent envoys and argued that the sentence against them was unjust, saying that the truce had not yet been proclaimed at Sparta when they sent in the hoplites.[37] The Eleans said that the truce was already in force in their own country, since they proclaim it first among themselves. While they were keeping quiet and expecting nothing, as

36 The Great Panathenaea was Athens' chief festival of Athena, celebrated every four years.

37 The pancration was a combined boxing and wrestling contest; a mina was a sum of silver worth 100 drachmas.

one would in time of truce, the Spartans had taken them by surprise and done them wrong. The Spartans replied that if the Eleans already thought the Spartans were in the wrong, there would have been no need for them to go on and proclaim the truce at Sparta; yet they had done so, as men who did not think so. Besides, the Spartans had made no armed attack anywhere after that. The Eleans held to the same argument: they would never be persuaded that the Spartans had done no wrong. But if the Spartans were willing to give Lepreum back to them, the Eleans would remit their own share of the money and would themselves pay, on the Spartans' behalf, the portion due to the god. 5.50 When the Spartans would not listen, the Eleans made a second proposal. The Spartans need not give back Lepreum if they did not want to. But since they were eager to use the sanctuary, they should go up to the altar of Olympian Zeus and swear before the Greeks that they would pay the fine later. When they refused this too, the Spartans were barred from the sanctuary [from the sacrifice and the games] and sacrificed at home, while the other Greeks attended the festival, except for the Lepreans. Even so, the Eleans were afraid that the Spartans would force their way in to sacrifice, and they kept a guard of their younger men under arms. The Argives and Mantineans also came to support them, a thousand of each, along with Athenian cavalry, who waited at Harpina during the festival.[38] The assembled festival crowd was greatly afraid that the Spartans would come in arms, especially after Lichas son of Arcesilaus, a Spartan, was beaten in the arena by the officials who carried rods. His team had won, but it had been proclaimed as belonging to the Boeotian state, since he was not allowed to compete. He came forward into the arena and crowned the charioteer, wanting to show that the chariot was his. After this everyone was far more alarmed, and it seemed that something untoward was going to happen. The Spartans, however, kept quiet, and for them the festival passed in this way.

After the Olympic Games the Argives and their allies went to Corinth to ask the Corinthians to join their side. Spartan envoys happened to be there as well. There was a great deal of talk, but in the end nothing was achieved; an earthquake occurred, and they all dispersed to their homes. And the summer ended.

5.51 In the following winter the Heracleots in Trachis fought a battle against the Aenianians, Dolopians, Malians and some of the Thessalians. These peoples lived near the city and were hostile to it, because the place had been fortified against no other land but theirs. They had opposed the city from the moment it was founded, doing it all the harm they could. On this occasion they defeated the Heracleots in the battle. Xenares son of Cnidis, the Spartan who commanded them, was killed, and other Heracleots also perished. So the winter ended, and with it the twelfth year of the war.

5.52 At the very beginning of the following summer the Boeotians took over Heraclea, since it was in a bad way after the battle, and they expelled Agesippidas the Spartan for governing it badly. They took over the place out of fear that, while the Spartans were distracted by their troubles in the Peloponnese, the Athenians might seize it. The Spartans, however, were angry with them.

That same summer Alcibiades son of Cleinias, who was then one of the Athenian generals, went into the Peloponnese with a few Athenian hoplites and archers, with the Argives and their allies working with him. He took on allied troops from the region as well and marched through the Peloponnese with his army, helping to settle the affairs of the alliance. Among other things he persuaded the people of Patrae to build walls down to the sea, and he himself intended to build another fort at Achaean Rhium. But the Corinthians and Sicyonians, and all those whom a fort there would harm, came out in force and prevented it.[39]

38 Harpina was a town close to Olympia.

39 Rhium: the promontory on the Achaean (southern) shore at the narrowest point of the Corinthian Gulf.

5.53 The same summer war broke out between the Epidaurians and the Argives. The pretext was the offering to Apollo Pythaeus: the Epidaurians were bound to send it in return for their pasture lands but were not doing so (the Argives had chief authority over the sanctuary). But even apart from this grievance, Alcibiades and the Argives had decided to win over Epidaurus if they could, both to keep Corinth quiet and because the Athenians could send help more quickly from Aegina than by sailing round Scyllaeum. So the Argives prepared to invade Epidaurus on their own, as if to exact the offering.[40]

5.54 At about the same time the Spartans also marched out in full force to Leuctra, on their own frontier facing Mount Lycaeum, under the command of King Agis son of Archidamus. No one knew where they were marching, not even the cities that had sent the contingents. When the sacrifices for crossing the frontier proved unfavorable, they went back home and sent word round to their allies to be ready for a campaign after the coming month (it was the month Carneus, a sacred month for the Dorians). Once they had withdrawn, the Argives set out on the fourth day from the end of the month before Carneus, and, by treating that same day as the date for the whole time, they invaded the territory of Epidaurus and ravaged it. The Epidaurians called on their allies for help. Some of these pleaded the month as an excuse; others came as far as the Epidaurian frontier and stayed there doing nothing.[41] 5.55 While the Argives were in Epidaurus, embassies from the cities met at Mantinea at the invitation of the Athenians. In the course of the discussions Euphamidas the Corinthian said that their words did not match their deeds: they were sitting together talking about peace, while the Epidaurians with their allies and the Argives stood facing each other under arms. They ought therefore first to go to both armies and break them up, and then come back and talk

40 Scyllaeum: the cape at the eastern tip of the Argolid, which ships from Athens had to round to reach Argos by sea.

41 The Carneia was a festival of Apollo kept by Dorian Greeks, during which they did not make war. By not advancing their calendar, the Argives avoided ever entering the sacred month.

about peace. They were persuaded, went off, and brought the Argives out of Epidaurian territory. Later they met again in the same place, but even so they could not come to an agreement, and the Argives invaded Epidaurian territory again and ravaged it. The Spartans too marched out, to Caryae, and when the frontier sacrifices proved unfavorable there as well, they went back. The Argives laid waste about a third of Epidaurian territory and went home. A thousand Athenian hoplites had come to help them, with Alcibiades as general; but on learning that the Spartans' expedition was over, and since there was no further need of them, he went away. And so the summer passed.

5.56 The following winter the Spartans, without the Athenians' knowledge, sent three hundred garrison troops by sea into Epidaurus, with Agesippidas in command. The Argives went to the Athenians and complained that, although it was written in the treaty that neither party should let enemies pass through its own territory, they had let the Spartans sail along their coast; and that unless the Athenians in turn brought the Messenians and helots to Pylos to act against the Spartans, they would consider themselves wronged. At Alcibiades' urging, the Athenians wrote at the foot of the Laconian pillar that the Spartans had not kept their oaths, and they brought the helots from Cranii to Pylos to carry out raids; otherwise they kept quiet.[42] This winter, while the Argives and Epidaurians were at war, there was no pitched battle, only ambushes and raids, in which some men on either side were killed as chance would have it. At the end of the winter, with spring already approaching, the Argives came against Epidaurus with ladders, expecting to take it by storm, since it was left undermanned by the war; but they went away having achieved nothing. So the winter ended, and with it the thirteenth year of this war.

42 Cranii was the town on Cephallenia where the Messenians and helots withdrawn from Pylos had been settled.

STANDOFF ON THE ARGIVE PLAIN

Agis traps the Argive army but lets it go under a truce, angering both sides.

5.57 In the middle of the following summer the Spartans saw that their Epidaurian allies were in distress, and that elsewhere in the Peloponnese some states had revolted while others were in a bad way. They believed that unless they forestalled it quickly the trouble would spread further, so they marched against Argos in full force, themselves and the helots, under the command of Agis son of Archidamus, king of the Spartans. With them marched the Tegeans and all the other Arcadians who were allies of Sparta. The allies from the rest of the Peloponnese and from outside it gathered at Phlius: the Boeotians with five thousand hoplites, as many light troops, five hundred cavalry and an equal number of foot soldiers who ran alongside the horsemen; the Corinthians with two thousand hoplites; the rest with varying numbers; and the Phliasians with their entire force, since the army was in their territory.[43] 5.58 The Argives had learned in advance, first of the Spartans' preparations, and then that they were moving toward Phlius to join the others; it was then that they too took the field. The Mantineans came to help them, bringing their own allies, along with three thousand Elean hoplites. Advancing, they met the Spartans at Methydrium in Arcadia. Each side occupied a hill. The Argives prepared to fight the Spartans while they were on their own, but Agis broke camp during the night and, unnoticed, marched off to Phlius to join the rest of the allies. When the Argives realized this, at dawn they set off, first to Argos, and then to the road by Nemea, where they expected the Spartans and their allies to come down. Agis, however, did not take this road, where they were expecting him. Instead he passed the word to the Spartans, Arcadians and Epidaurians, went by another, difficult route, and came down into

43 Phlius: a small city in the northeastern Peloponnese, west of Corinth and north of Argos.

the plain of Argos. The Corinthians, Pellenians and Phliasians took yet another, steep route. The Boeotians, Megarians and Sicyonians had been ordered to come down by the Nemea road, where the Argives were posted, so that if the Argives went down into the plain to defend it against Agis' force, they could follow on their heels and use their cavalry against them. Having made these dispositions and invaded the plain, Agis began ravaging Saminthus and other places; 5.59 when the Argives learned of this, they came from Nemea to the rescue, by now in daylight. They fell in with the force of the Phliasians and Corinthians and killed a few of the Phliasians, but lost not many more of their own to the Corinthians. The Boeotians, Megarians and Sicyonians marched, as they had been ordered, toward Nemea, and no longer found the Argives there; for the Argives had come down and, seeing their own land being ravaged, were forming up for battle. The Spartans too made ready to meet them. The Argives were trapped in the middle: on the side of the plain the Spartans and those with them cut them off from the city; above them were the Corinthians, Phliasians and Pellenians; and on the side toward Nemea the Boeotians, Sicyonians and Megarians. They had no cavalry with them, for the Athenians alone of their allies had not yet arrived.

Now the mass of the Argives and their allies did not think their present situation so dangerous. They believed the battle would be fought on favorable terms, and that they had cut the Spartans off in Argive territory and close to the city. But two of the Argives, Thrasylus, one of the five generals, and Alciphron, the Spartans' proxenos, went up to Agis when the armies were all but engaging, and talked with him to persuade him not to give battle. The Argives, they said, were ready to submit to and accept fair and impartial arbitration on any complaint the Spartans had against them, and for the future to make a treaty and keep the peace. 5.60 These Argives said this on their own initiative, not at the bidding of the people. Agis too accepted their proposals on his own: he did not deliberate with the majority either, but merely shared the matter with one of the officials

serving on the campaign, and made a truce for four months, within which they were to carry out what had been promised. And he led the army away at once, without explaining to any of the other allies. The Spartans and their allies followed where he led, as the law required, but among themselves they blamed Agis severely. They thought that when a fine chance of engaging had come their way, with the enemy shut in on every side by cavalry and infantry, they were going away having done nothing worthy of their forces. For this was indeed the finest Greek army ever assembled up to that time. It looked its best while it was still all together at Nemea: the Spartans were there in full force, along with the Arcadians, Boeotians, Corinthians, Sicyonians, Pellenians, Phliasians and Megarians, all of them picked men from each state, and they seemed a match not only for the Argive alliance but for another alliance besides, had one been added to it. So the army withdrew, blaming Agis in this way, and dispersed, each to their own homes. The Argives for their part blamed even more severely the men who had made the truce without the people. They too thought that the Spartans had escaped them when they would never have had a finer opportunity, since the contest would have been fought close to their own city and alongside many good allies. On their return, at the Charadrus, where they try cases arising from campaigns before entering the city, they began to stone Thrasylus. He saved himself by taking refuge at the altar, but they confiscated his property.[44]

5.61 After this a thousand Athenian hoplites and three hundred cavalry arrived to help, commanded by Laches and Nicostratus. The Argives, who were reluctant, despite everything, to break the truce with the Spartans, told them to leave and would not bring them before the people when they wanted to negotiate, until at last the Mantineans and Eleans, who were still there, forced them to by their entreaties. Then the Athenians, with Alcibiades present as ambassador, told the Argives and their allies that the truce had been improperly made in the first place,

44 The Charadrus: a stream-bed just outside Argos.

without the other allies, and that now, since they had arrived at the right moment, they ought to take up the war. Having won over the allies with these arguments, they all marched at once against Arcadian Orchomenus, except the Argives; these, though persuaded, stayed behind at first all the same, but later they too came. They all sat down before Orchomenus, besieged it and made assaults on it, wanting to win it over for various reasons, and above all because hostages from Arcadia had been deposited there by the Spartans. The Orchomenians, alarmed at the weakness of their wall and the size of the army, and afraid that, with no one coming to their help, they would perish before relief came, came to terms: they would become allies, give hostages of their own to the Mantineans, and hand over those the Spartans had deposited with them. 5.62 After this, now that they held Orchomenus, the allies deliberated which of the remaining places they should attack first. The Eleans urged them to go against Lepreum, the Mantineans against Tegea; and the Argives and Athenians sided with the Mantineans. The Eleans, angry that they had not voted to go against Lepreum, went home; the rest of the allies made preparations at Mantinea to march on Tegea. And some people inside the city itself were ready to hand it over to them.

MANTINEA

Sparta defeats Argos, Mantinea and Athens in the greatest battle among Greeks for many years.

5.63 The Spartans, after withdrawing from Argos with the four-month truce made, blamed Agis severely for not having subdued Argos for them when, as they thought, the opportunity had been finer than ever before; for it was not easy to catch so many allies, and such good ones, all together. When news came that Orchomenus too had been taken, they were angrier still, and, carried away by anger contrary to their character, they were for deciding at once that they must raze his house and fine him a hundred thousand drachmas. He begged them to do none of

this: he would wipe out the charges by a fine deed when he took the field, or else they could then do whatever they wished. They held off from the fine and the razing, but for the present they passed a law such as they had never had before: they chose ten Spartiates to serve as his advisers, without whom he had no authority to lead an army out of the city.[45]

5.64 Meanwhile a message reached them from their friends in Tegea that unless they came quickly Tegea would break away from them and go over to the Argives and their allies, and that it had all but done so already. At this the Spartans came to the rescue, themselves and the helots in full force, swiftly and on a scale never seen before. They marched to Orestheum in Maenalia. They ordered those Arcadians who were their allies to assemble and follow close behind them to Tegea, while they themselves all went as far as Orestheum. From there they sent home a sixth of their own number, made up of the oldest and the youngest, to guard things at home, and with the rest of the army arrived at Tegea. Not long afterwards their allies from Arcadia arrived. They also sent to Corinth, and to the Boeotians, Phocians and Locrians, calling on them to come quickly to help at Mantinea. But for these the summons came at short notice, and it was not easy for them to pass through enemy territory unless they gathered together and waited for one another, since it lay in between and blocked their way; nevertheless they made haste. The Spartans, taking with them the Arcadian allies who were present, invaded Mantinean territory, encamped by the sanctuary of Heracles, and ravaged the land.

5.65 When the Argives and their allies saw them, they occupied a strong position that was hard to approach and drew up as if for battle. The Spartans advanced against them at once, and came within a stone's throw or a javelin's cast. Then one of the older men, seeing that they were going against a strong position, shouted to Agis that he meant to cure one evil with another, meaning that his present ill-timed eagerness was intended to

45 A hundred thousand drachmas came to nearly seventeen talents, an enormous sum.

make amends for his discreditable retreat from Argos. Agis, whether because of the shout or because some other idea, or the same one, suddenly struck him as well, quickly led the army back again before engaging. On reaching Tegean territory he began diverting the water into Mantinean territory—the water over which the Mantineans and Tegeans go to war, since it generally does damage to whichever side it flows into. He wanted the men on the hill [the Argives and their allies], once they learned of it, to come down to stop the water being diverted, and to fight the battle on level ground. He stayed there that day diverting the water. The Argives and their allies were at first astonished at the enemy's sudden withdrawal from such close range and could not tell what to make of it. Then, when the enemy had withdrawn out of sight while they themselves stayed still and did not follow, they once again blamed their own generals: earlier the Spartans, caught in so favorable a position near Argos, had been let go, and now, when they were running away, no one was pursuing them; instead the enemy were getting away unhindered while they themselves were being betrayed. For the moment the generals were thrown into confusion, but afterwards they led them down from the hill, advanced into the level ground and encamped there, intending to go against the enemy.

5.66 On the next day the Argives and their allies formed up in the order in which they meant to fight if they met the enemy. The Spartans, going back from the water to their old camp by the temple of Heracles, suddenly saw their opponents close at hand, all of them already in battle order and advanced from the hill. At that moment the Spartans were more alarmed than at any other time they could remember. They had only a short time to make their preparations, and at once, in haste, they fell into their own order, with King Agis directing each step as their law requires. For when a king is in command, every order starts with him. He himself tells the polemarchs what needs doing; they tell the company commanders, these the commanders of fifties, these in turn the commanders of the sworn bands, and

these their sworn band. Any orders they want to give pass down in the same way and arrive quickly. Nearly the whole Spartan army, except for a small part, consists of officers serving under officers, and responsibility for what is done falls on many.[46] 5.67 On this occasion the Sciritae formed their left wing. They alone of the Spartans always hold this position, and they hold it by themselves. Next to them were the soldiers who had served with Brasidas in Thrace, and with them the neodamodeis. Then came the Spartans themselves, posting their companies one after another. Beside them were the Heraeans from Arcadia, after these the Maenalians, and on the right wing the Tegeans, with a few Spartans holding the extreme end. Their cavalry was on each wing.[47] That was how the Spartans were drawn up. Facing them, the Mantineans held the right wing, since the action was taking place in their territory. Next to them were their Arcadian allies, then the thousand picked Argives, whom the city had long trained in warfare at public expense. Beside them were the rest of the Argives, and after them their allies, the Cleonaeans and Orneates. Last came the Athenians, holding the left wing, with their own cavalry beside them.[48]

5.68 Such were the order and the forces of both sides, and the Spartan army looked the larger. But I could not write down the numbers accurately, either for each contingent on either side or for the whole. The number of the Spartans was unknown because of the secrecy of their constitution. The numbers of the others, on the other hand, were not believed, because men tend to boast about their own strength. Still, one can work out from the following calculation how many Spartans were present on that occasion. Seven companies fought, not counting the Sciritae, who numbered six hundred. In each company there were four fifties, and in each fifty four sworn bands. Four men of each sworn band fought in the front rank. In depth they were not all

46 The polemarchs were the senior Spartan officers. The units below them were the lochos (company), the pentecostys ("fifty") and the enomoty ("sworn band").
47 The Sciritae came from the Sciritis, a hill district on Sparta's northern border.
48 Cleonae and Orneae were small towns in the northeastern Peloponnese, allied with Argos.

drawn up alike, but as each company commander wished; on the whole, though, they stood eight deep. Along the whole line, leaving out the Sciritae, the front rank consisted of four hundred and forty-eight men.

5.69 When they were now about to engage, the generals of each contingent encouraged their own men along these lines. The Mantineans were told that the battle would be for their fatherland, and at the same time a battle for dominion or slavery. Having tasted dominion, they must not be robbed of it, and they must not taste slavery again. The Argives were told that it was for their ancient leadership and the equal share they had once held in the Peloponnese. They must not put up with being deprived of these for ever, and they must at the same time take revenge for many wrongs on men who were both their enemies and their neighbors. The Athenians were told that it would be a fine thing, fighting alongside many brave allies, to prove second to none. If they defeated the Spartans in the Peloponnese, they would hold their empire more securely and on a larger scale, and no one would ever invade their land again. Such were the exhortations given to the Argives and their allies. The Spartans, unit by unit and with their war songs, encouraged one another among themselves, reminding brave men of what they already knew. They understood that long practice in deeds does more to save men than a fine exhortation in words delivered at the last moment.

5.70 After this the armies met. The Argives and their allies advanced with vigor and fury, the Spartans slowly, to the music of many pipers stationed among them by custom. This is not done for any religious reason. It is done so that they advance evenly, keeping in step, and their order does not break up, as large armies tend to do when they go into battle. 5.71 While they were still closing, King Agis decided on the following move. All armies do this: as they engage they get pushed out toward their right wings, and both sides overlap the enemy's left with their own right. This happens because in fear each man brings his unprotected side as close as he can to the shield of the man pos-

ted on his right, and thinks that the tighter the line is locked, the better he is covered. The man chiefly responsible is the front-rank man on the right wing, who is always eager to keep his own exposed side away from the enemy. The others follow him out of the same fear. On this occasion the Mantineans overlapped the Sciritae with their wing by a long way, and the Spartans and Tegeans overlapped the Athenians by still more, since their army was larger. Agis was afraid that his left might be surrounded, and he thought the Mantineans overlapped it too far. So he signaled to the Sciritae and the Brasideans to move out from the main line and make their front level with the Mantineans. He ordered the polemarchs Hipponoidas and Aristocles to bring two companies across from the right wing, throw them into the gap this created and fill it. He thought his own right would still have men to spare and the line facing the Mantineans would be more firmly set. 5.72 But because he gave the order in the middle of the advance itself and at short notice, Aristocles and Hipponoidas refused to move across. Later they were exiled from Sparta on this charge, judged to have shown cowardice. Meanwhile the enemy closed with them first. When Agis then ordered the Sciritae to close up again with the main line, since the companies had not come across, the Sciritae too could no longer shut the gap. But it was then above all that the Spartans, though they had come off worst in every point of skill, proved that in courage they were superior all the same. When they came to close quarters with the enemy, the Mantinean right routed their Sciritae and Brasideans. The Mantineans, their allies and the thousand picked Argives burst in through the gap that had not been closed and cut down the Spartans. They surrounded them, routed them and drove them back to the wagons, killing some of the older men posted there. In this part of the field the Spartans were beaten. But the rest of their army, and especially the center, where King Agis was with the so-called Three Hundred Horsemen around him, fell upon [both] the older Argives and the units called the Five Companies, the Cleonaeans, the Orneates and the Athenians posted beside them, and routed

them. Most of these did not even stand to fight hand to hand. They gave way the moment the Spartans came on, and some were even trampled in their haste to get away before being caught.[49]

5.73 Once the army of the Argives and their allies had given way at this point, it now began to break apart toward both sides at once. At the same time the Spartan and Tegean right, with the part of it that overlapped, was encircling the Athenians. Danger surrounded them on both sides: on one side they were being encircled, on the other they were already beaten. They would have suffered more than any part of the army if their cavalry had not been on hand to help them. Then Agis saw that his own left, the part facing the Mantineans and the thousand Argives, was in trouble, and he ordered the whole army to go to the help of the part that was being beaten. When this happened, the army passed by and turned aside from the Athenians, and in the meantime they got away safely and without being harried, and the beaten part of the Argives with them. But the Mantineans, their allies and the picked Argives no longer had any thought of pressing the enemy. Seeing their own side defeated and the Spartans bearing down on them, they turned to flight. A good many of the Mantineans were killed, but most of the picked Argives got away. The flight and retreat, however, was neither hard-pressed nor long. The Spartans fight their battles long and steadily, holding their ground, until they have routed the enemy. Once they have routed him, they keep their pursuits short and do not chase far.

5.74 Such was the battle, as nearly as it can be described. It was the greatest battle fought between Greeks for a very long time, and the most notable cities took part in it. The Spartans halted under arms in front of the enemy dead and at once set up a trophy and stripped the bodies. They took up their own dead and carried them back to Tegea, where they were buried, and they gave back the enemy's dead under truce. Seven hundred of

49 Despite their name, the Three Hundred Horsemen were the elite royal guard of Sparta, who fought on foot.

the Argives, Orneates and Cleonaeans were killed, two hundred of the Mantineans, and two hundred of the Athenians, counting the Aeginetans, together with both their generals. On the Spartan side, the allies did not suffer badly enough to lose any significant number. As for the Spartans themselves, it was hard to learn the truth, but about three hundred were said to have been killed.[50]

5.75 When the battle was about to take place, Pleistoanax, the other king, had also come out to help with the older and the younger men. He got as far as Tegea, but on learning of the victory he went back. The Spartans also sent word and turned back their allies from Corinth and from beyond the Isthmus. They themselves withdrew, dismissed their allies and celebrated the festival, since the Carneia happened to be under way. By this single action they cleared themselves of the charges the Greeks were bringing against them at the time: softness because of the disaster on the island, and poor counsel and slowness in general. It was by chance, people thought, that they had been disgraced, but in resolve they were still the same men.

On the day before this battle, the Epidaurians had invaded Argive territory in full force, thinking it undefended, and killed many of the guards left behind when the Argives marched out. After the battle three thousand Elean hoplites came to help the Mantineans, and a thousand Athenians in addition to the earlier ones. All these allies marched at once against Epidaurus while the Spartans were celebrating the Carneia. They divided up the circuit of the city among themselves and began to wall it off. The others stopped work, but the Athenians completed their assigned section, the headland where the Heraeum stood, without delay. Then they all left a joint garrison in this fortification and withdrew, each to their own cities. And so the summer ended.[51]

50 Aegina had been settled by Athenian colonists after its inhabitants were expelled in 431 BC.

51 The Heraeum here was a sanctuary of Hera on a headland near Epidaurus.

ARGOS CHANGES SIDES

Argos makes peace and alliance with Sparta and turns oligarchic, then the people take power back.

5.76 At the very beginning of the following winter, once they had celebrated the Carneia, the Spartans marched out. When they reached Tegea they sent ahead to Argos proposals for a settlement. Even before this they had friends in Argos who wanted to overthrow the democracy there. Now that the battle had been fought, these men were much better able to persuade the majority to come to terms. Their plan was first to make a treaty with the Spartans, then later an alliance as well, and only then to attack the people. Lichas son of Arcesilaus, the Argives' proxenos, came to Argos from the Spartans with two proposals. One set out the terms on which they would be at war, if the Argives wanted war, the other the terms on which they would be at peace, if they wanted peace. There was a great deal of debate, since Alcibiades happened to be there too. But the men working for the Spartans, who now dared to act openly, persuaded the Argives to accept the proposal for a settlement. It runs as follows.[52]

5.77 "The assembly of the Spartans resolves to come to an agreement with the Argives on the following terms. They are to give back the children to the Orchomenians and the men to the Maenalians, to give back to the Spartans the men in Mantinea, to withdraw from Epidaurus and to pull down the wall. If the Athenians do not withdraw from Epidaurus, they are to be enemies of the Argives and the Spartans, and of the allies of the Spartans and the allies of the Argives. If the Spartans hold any children, they are to give them back to all the cities. Concerning the sacrifice to the god, the Argives are to offer the Epidaurians the oath, if they wish; if not, they are to swear it themselves.[53]

52 Lichas was a Spartan who looked after Argive interests at Sparta.
53 The children and men were hostages taken by Argos and its allies. The treaty documents are in the Doric dialect of Sparta.

All the cities in the Peloponnese, small and great, are to be autonomous according to their ancestral ways. If anyone from outside the Peloponnese comes against Peloponnesian territory with hostile intent, they are to repel him together, after taking counsel jointly, in whatever way seems most just to the Peloponnesians. Those allies of the Spartans who are outside the Peloponnese shall be on the same footing as the Spartans, and the allies of the Argives shall be on the same footing as the Argives, keeping their own territory. They are to show this agreement to the allies and conclude it, if the allies approve. If the allies have any objection, they are to refer it back home."

5.78 This proposal the Argives accepted first, and the Spartan army withdrew from Tegea homeward. After this, now that there were dealings between them, the same men before long contrived that the Argives should give up their alliance with the Mantineans, the Athenians and the Eleans, and make a treaty and alliance with the Spartans. Its terms were as follows.

5.79 "The Spartans and the Argives have resolved on the following terms. There is to be a treaty and alliance for fifty years, on fair and equal terms, both sides submitting disputes to arbitration according to ancestral custom. The other cities in the Peloponnese are to share in the treaty and the alliance, autonomous and independent, keeping their own territory, and submitting disputes to arbitration on fair and equal terms according to ancestral custom. Those allies of the Spartans who are outside the Peloponnese shall be on the same footing as the Spartans, and the allies of the Argives shall be on the same footing as the Argives, keeping their own territory. If there is need of a joint expedition anywhere, the Spartans and Argives are to consult about it and decide in whatever way is fairest to the allies. If any of the cities, whether inside or outside the Peloponnese, has a dispute, whether about boundaries or anything else, it is to be settled by arbitration. If any allied city quarrels with another city, they are to go to a city that both cities consider impartial. Private citizens are to have their cases judged according to ancestral custom."

5.80 This was the treaty and alliance that had been made. They settled up whatever each held of the other's, whether taken in war or in any other way. From now on they managed their affairs in common. They voted not to receive any herald or embassy from the Athenians unless the Athenians left the Peloponnese and abandoned their forts, and not to make peace or war with anyone except jointly. They pursued their other business with energy. Both of them sent envoys to the places in Thrace and to Perdiccas, and persuaded Perdiccas to bind himself to them by oath. He did not, however, break away from the Athenians at once, but was considering it, because he saw the Argives had done so. He himself was of Argive descent by origin.[54] They also renewed their old oaths with the Chalcidians and swore new ones. The Argives also sent envoys to the Athenians, telling them to evacuate the fort at Epidaurus. The Athenians saw that their own men in the joint garrison were few compared with the others, and they sent Demosthenes to bring their troops out. On his arrival he held an athletic contest outside the fort as a pretext. When the rest of the garrison had gone out to it, he shut the gates. Afterward the Athenians renewed their treaty with the Epidaurians and themselves handed over the fortification to them. 5.81 After the Argives deserted the alliance, the Mantineans too held out at first, but then, unable to manage without the Argives, came to terms with the Spartans themselves and gave up their rule over the cities. The Spartans and the Argives, a thousand of each, marched out together. The Spartans went by themselves and put the affairs of Sicyon on a more oligarchic footing. After that the two of them together overthrew the democracy in Argos as well, and an oligarchy friendly to the Spartans was established. This was now toward spring, as the winter was drawing to a close, and with it the fourteenth year of the war ended.

5.82 In the following summer the Dians on Athos revolted from the Athenians and went over to the Chalcidians, and the

54 Perdiccas II was king of Macedonia; his royal house claimed descent from Argos.

Spartans settled affairs in Achaea, which until then had not been to their liking.

The Argive people, gradually rallying and regaining their confidence, attacked the few, choosing the very time of the Spartans' Gymnopaediae. A battle took place in the city; the people won, killing some of the few and driving out others. For a long time, while their friends kept sending for them, the Spartans did not come. Then they postponed the Gymnopaediae and set out to help. But at Tegea they learned that the few had been defeated, and they were no longer willing to go on, though the men who had escaped begged them to. They went back home and celebrated the Gymnopaediae. Later envoys came, both from the party in the city [as messengers] and from the Argives outside it. With the allies present and much said on both sides, the Spartans decided that the party in the city were in the wrong, and they resolved to march on Argos. But there were delays and postponements.[55] Meanwhile the Argive people, fearing the Spartans, tried to win back the Athenian alliance, which they thought would be of the greatest benefit to them. They began building long walls down to the sea, so that if they were cut off by land, they could bring in supplies by sea with the Athenians' help. Some of the cities in the Peloponnese also knew about the wall-building. The Argives worked on the walls in full force, the men themselves, their women and their household slaves, and carpenters and masons came to them from Athens. And so the summer ended.

5.83 In the following winter, when the Spartans learned that the Argives were building the walls, they marched against Argos, they and their allies, except the Corinthians. They also had an intrigue under way inside Argos itself. The army was led by Agis son of Archidamus, king of the Spartans. The plans in the city that were thought to be already in place made no further progress. But they captured and demolished the walls that were being built. They took Hysiae, a place in Argive territory,

55 The Gymnopaediae was a Spartan summer festival of choral dancing and athletic display.

and killed all the free men they caught there. Then they withdrew and disbanded, each to their own city. After this the Argives in their turn marched into the territory of Phlius, ravaged it and went home, because the Phliasians were harboring their exiles; most of the exiles had settled there. In the same winter the Athenians also blockaded the Macedonians. They charged Perdiccas with the sworn compact he had made with the Argives and the Spartans. They also charged that, when they had prepared to lead an army under the command of Nicias son of Niceratus against the Chalcidians in Thrace and against Amphipolis, he had broken faith with the alliance, and that the expedition had broken up chiefly because he pulled out. So he was an enemy. So this winter ended, and with it the fifteenth year of the war.[56]

THE MELIAN DIALOGUE

Athenian envoys and the rulers of Melos debate power and justice.

5.84 In the following summer Alcibiades sailed to Argos with twenty ships. There he seized three hundred Argives who were thought still to be suspect and to favor the Spartan side, and the Athenians lodged them on the nearby islands under their rule. The Athenians also made an expedition against the island of Melos. They brought thirty ships of their own, six Chian and two Lesbian. They had twelve hundred hoplites of their own, three hundred archers and twenty mounted archers, and about fifteen hundred hoplites from the allies and the islanders.[57] The Melians are colonists of the Spartans. They were unwilling to submit to the Athenians as the other islanders had. At first they sided with neither party and kept quiet. Then, when the Athenians tried to force them by ravaging their land, they entered into open war. So the generals Cleomedes son of Lycomedes and Teisias son of Teisimachus encamped in their territory with this force. Before doing any harm to the land, they first sent envoys

56 The Greek text is uncertain here.
57 Melos is an island in the southern Aegean, in the Cyclades.

to hold talks. The Melians did not bring the envoys before the people. Instead they told them to state their business before the magistrates and the few.

ATHENIANS 5.85 The Athenian envoys spoke as follows: "Since these talks are not being held before the people, presumably so that the many will not be deceived by hearing from us, all at once and in one continuous speech, persuasive arguments that go unchallenged (for we realize that this is the point of bringing us before the few), you who sit here should make matters safer still. Judge each point as it comes, and do not make a single set speech of your own either. Take us up at once whenever something seems not to have been well put, and decide on it. And first tell us whether what we propose suits you."

MELIANS 5.86 The Melian councilors replied: "There is nothing to fault in the reasonableness of instructing each other at leisure. But the acts of war, which are already here and not merely in the future, are plainly at odds with it. For we see that you have come to be judges yourselves of what is to be said. We also see that the outcome is likely to bring us war if we prevail on the score of justice and refuse to give way for that reason, and slavery if we are persuaded."

ATHENIANS 5.87 Well then, if you have come together to reckon up suspicions about the future, or for any purpose other than to take counsel for your city's survival on the basis of the present facts and what you see before you, we may as well stop. But if that is your purpose, we will speak.

MELIANS 5.88 It is natural, and forgivable, for people in our position to turn in many directions, both in what they say and in what they think. But this meeting is in fact here to deal with survival. So let the discussion proceed, if you like, in the way you propose.

ATHENIANS 5.89 For our part, then, we will not offer a long and unconvincing speech dressed in fine words, claiming that we rule justly because we overthrew the Persians, or that we are now taking action because we have been wronged. Nor do we

expect you to think you will persuade us by saying that you did not join the Spartans' campaigns although you are their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong. We expect you instead to achieve what is possible on the basis of what each of us really thinks. You know as well as we do that, in human reckoning, justice comes into question only where the necessity on both sides is equal, and that otherwise the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must.

MELIANS 5.90 As we see it, at least, it is useful (we must speak of usefulness, since you have laid it down that we should talk of self-interest in place of justice) that you should not destroy the common good. Whoever is in danger at any time should be able to count on fair and just treatment. He should be able to benefit even by persuading someone with arguments that fall short of strict proof. And this is no less in your own interest, since, if you were ever to fall, you would become an example to others of the heaviest vengeance.

ATHENIANS 5.91 For ourselves, even if our empire should come to an end, we do not lose heart at the prospect. It is not those who rule others, as the Spartans also do, who are terrible to the defeated (and in any case our contest is not with the Spartans). The terrible ones are subjects, if they ever attack their rulers on their own and overpower them. Let that be a risk left for us to run. What we will make clear to you is that we are here for the advantage of our empire, and that what we are about to say is for the survival of your city. We want to rule you without trouble, and to have you preserved to the advantage of us both.

MELIANS 5.92 And how could it turn out to be as useful for us to be slaves as it is for you to rule?

ATHENIANS 5.93 Because you would get to submit instead of suffering the most terrible fate, and we would profit by not destroying you.

MELIANS 5.94 So you would not accept our keeping quiet and being friends instead of enemies, allies of neither side?

ATHENIANS 5.95 No, because your hostility does not harm us as much as your friendship would. To those we rule, your friendship would be shown as proof of our weakness, and your hatred as proof of our power.

MELIANS 5.96 Do your subjects judge what is reasonable in such a way that they put in the same category those who have no connection with you and those who have been subdued, most of them your own colonists and some of them rebels?

ATHENIANS 5.97 Yes, for they think that neither side lacks claims of justice. They think the ones who stay free do so by their strength, and that we do not attack them because we are afraid. So, quite apart from extending our rule, you would provide us with security by being subdued. All the more so since you are islanders, and weaker than others, if you fail to get the better of the masters of the sea.

MELIANS 5.98 And do you see no safety in what we proposed? Here again, just as you have pushed us off the ground of justice and are trying to persuade us to submit to your interest, so we in our turn must explain what is useful to us and try to persuade you, in case it happens to coincide with yours as well. Consider all those who are now allied with neither side. How will you not make enemies of them, when they look at what is happening here and conclude that someday you will come against them too? And in doing so, what else are you doing but strengthening the enemies you already have, and bringing in against their will those who never even meant to become your enemies?

ATHENIANS 5.99 No, for we do not consider the most dangerous to us to be those who live somewhere on the mainland. Their freedom will make them slow to take precautions against us. The dangerous ones are islanders here and there who are not under our rule, as you are not, and those already chafing under the compulsion of our empire. These are the people most likely to give themselves over to unreason and to lead both themselves and us into a danger they can plainly foresee.

MELIANS [5.100] Surely, then, if you run such great risks so as not to lose your empire, and those who are already slaves run them to be rid of it, it would be great baseness and cowardice on the part of us who are still free not to try everything before becoming slaves.

ATHENIANS [5.101] Not if you think it over sensibly. You are not in a contest of manliness between equals, where the point is to avoid disgrace. The question before you is rather one of survival: not to stand up against those who are far stronger.

MELIANS [5.102] But we know that the fortunes of war are sometimes more even-handed than the difference in numbers between the two sides would suggest. For us, to give way at once is to give up hope. If we act, there is still hope that we may stand upright.

ATHENIANS [5.103] Hope is a comfort in danger. Those who indulge in it from a position of abundance may be harmed by it, but they are not ruined. But those who stake everything they have on a single throw (for hope is extravagant by nature) recognize it for what it is only when they have already fallen, and by then, once it is known, it leaves them nothing with which to guard against it. Weak as you are, and hanging on a single turn of the scale, do not choose to suffer this fate. Do not be like the many who could still be saved by human means, but who, when they are hard pressed and their visible hopes fail them, turn to invisible ones: divination, oracles and all such things that ruin people with hopes.

MELIANS [5.104] We too, you may be sure, think it hard to contend against your power and against fortune, unless the contest is to be on equal terms. Nevertheless we trust that in fortune, which comes from the divine, we will not be at a disadvantage, because we are god-fearing men standing against men who are unjust. We also trust that the alliance of the Spartans will make up for what we lack in power. They are bound to come to our help out of shame, and for kinship's sake if for no other reason. So our confidence is not altogether as unreasonable as you think.

ATHENIANS 5.105 As for the favor of the divine, we do not think we will fall short of it either. Nothing that we claim or do goes beyond what men believe about the divine or what they want for themselves. Of the divine we believe, and of the human we know clearly, that by a necessity of nature each always rules wherever it has the power. We did not make this law, and we were not the first to use it once it was laid down. We found it already in existence, and we shall leave it to exist for all time, and we act on it. We know that you and others, if you had the same power as we have, would do the same. So, as regards the divine, we have no reason to fear being at a disadvantage. Then there is your view of the Spartans, your trust that out of shame, of all things, they will come to your aid. We bless your innocence, but we do not envy your folly. Among themselves and in keeping with their own native customs, the Spartans show the greatest excellence. Much could be said about how they behave toward others, but one could sum it up best this way: of all the people we know, they most conspicuously consider what is pleasant fine, and what is advantageous just. And yet such a way of thinking does not favor your present unreasoning hope of survival.

MELIANS 5.106 But it is on precisely this point that we now trust them most: their self-interest. The Melians are their colonists, and they will not want to betray them. If they did, they would lose the trust of the Greeks who are well disposed toward them and would be useful to their enemies.

ATHENIANS 5.107 So you do not think that self-interest goes with safety, whereas what is just and fine is done at some risk. The Spartans, as a rule, are the people least inclined to run that risk.

MELIANS 5.108 But we think they would be readier to take on dangers for our sake, and would consider those dangers safer than in the case of others. For practical action we lie close to the Peloponnese, and in sentiment our kinship makes us more trustworthy than others.

ATHENIANS [5.109] But for those who join in a fight, security plainly lies not in the goodwill of those who call them in. It lies in having far superior power for action. The Spartans pay even more attention to this than others do. Because they distrust their own resources, they attack their neighbors only with many allies. So it is not likely that they will cross over to an island, at least, while we are masters of the sea.

MELIANS [5.110] But they could send others as well. And the Cretan sea is wide. Across it, it is harder for those who control it to make a capture than for those who want to slip through to reach safety. And if they failed in this, they would turn against your own land and against the rest of your allies, those whom Brasidas did not reach. Then your struggle would be less over a land that is no concern of yours than over land much closer to you, your allies' and your own.

ATHENIANS [5.111] Something of that kind might happen. You too would then learn by experience what you already know, that the Athenians have never yet withdrawn from a single siege for fear of anyone else. But we notice something. You said you would deliberate about survival, yet in all this long discussion you have said nothing that people could rely on and expect to be saved. Your strongest supports are hopes deferred to the future. Your present resources are too slight to prevail against the forces already ranged against you. You show a great lack of reason in your thinking, unless, once you have sent us out, you reach some decision more sensible than this. Surely you will not turn to that sense of shame which, in dangers that are both disgraceful and plainly foreseen, destroys people more than anything else. Many people still foresaw what they were heading into, yet they were drawn on by what is called disgrace, through the power of a seductive word. Overcome by a mere word, they fell in fact, and of their own will, into irreparable disasters. They brought on themselves a disgrace more disgraceful for being due to folly rather than to bad luck. This is what you will guard against, if you take good counsel. You will not think it

unseemly to give way to the greatest of cities when it makes you a moderate offer: to become its tribute-paying allies while keeping your own land. And when you are given a choice between war and safety, you will not stubbornly hold out for the worse. Those who do not give way to their equals, who behave well toward the stronger and are moderate toward the weaker, are the most likely to prosper. So reflect, after we have withdrawn, and consider again and again that you are deliberating about your country. You have only one country, and on this one deliberation it will depend whether it succeeds or fails.

MELIANS 5.112 The Athenians withdrew from the discussion. The Melians, left by themselves, reached much the same decision as the arguments they had made in reply, and gave this answer: "Athenians, our view is no different from what it was at first. We will not, in a short space of time, take away the freedom of a city that has been inhabited for seven hundred years already. Instead we will try to save ourselves, trusting in the fortune from the divine that has preserved it until now, and in help from men, and from the Spartans. We propose that we be friends to you and enemies to neither side, and that you leave our land after making a treaty that seems suitable to both."

ATHENIANS 5.113 That was the Melians' answer. The Athenians, now breaking off the talks, said: "Well, judging by these decisions, you seem to us the only people who regard the future as clearer than what is before your eyes. You look on what is unseen as already happening, simply because you wish it. You have staked the most on the Spartans, on fortune and on hopes, and trusted in them the most. So you will also be the most utterly ruined."

THE FATE OF MELOS

The Athenians besiege Melos; it surrenders, the men are killed and the women and children enslaved.

5.114 The Athenian envoys went back to the army. Since the Melians would not submit at all, their generals turned at once to war.

They divided the work among the cities and built a wall all the way round the Melians. Later the Athenians left a garrison of their own men and of their allies, by land and by sea, and withdrew with the greater part of the army. Those left behind stayed on and besieged the place.

5.115 About the same time the Argives invaded the territory of Phlius. They were ambushed by the Phliasians and by their own exiles, and about eighty of them were killed. The Athenians at Pylos carried off a great deal of plunder from the Spartans. Even so the Spartans did not renounce the treaty and go to war with them over it. Instead they proclaimed that any of their people who wished might plunder the Athenians. The Corinthians also went to war with the Athenians over some private quarrels of their own; the rest of the Peloponnesians kept quiet. The Melians, too, made a night attack and captured the part of the Athenian wall opposite the marketplace. They killed some men, brought in grain and as many other useful supplies as they could, and then withdrew and kept quiet. The Athenians thereafter made better provision for their guard. And the summer ended.

5.116 In the following winter the Spartans were about to march into Argive territory. But when the crossing sacrifices [the offerings at the frontier] did not turn out favorably, they turned back. Because of this planned invasion the Argives came to suspect some of the people in their city. They arrested some of them, but others escaped them. About the same time the Melians again captured a different part of the Athenian wall, where there were not many guards. Because of these events another army later came from Athens, under the command of Philocrates son of Demeas. The Melians were now being besieged in earnest, and there was also some treachery from within, so they surrendered to the Athenians on condition that the Athenians should decide their fate. The Athenians killed all the grown men of Melos whom they took, and enslaved the children and women. They

settled the place themselves, later sending out five hundred colonists.[58]

58 Spartan commanders sacrificed before leading an army across the border; unfavorable omens meant the campaign was called off.

Book 6

The Sicilian expedition, 416–414 BC
Sicily's early history, the debate at Athens, the mutilation of the Herms, Alcibiades' flight to Sparta, and the siege of Syracuse begins.

THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

Athens resolves to conquer Sicily; Thucydides describes the island and its non-Greek peoples.

6.1 In the same winter the Athenians wanted to sail against Sicily again, with a larger force than the one under Laches and Eurymedon, and to conquer it if they could. Most of them had no idea how large the island was or how many people lived on it, both Greeks and non-Greeks. Nor did they realize that they were taking on a war not much smaller than the one against the Peloponnesians. For sailing around Sicily takes a merchant ship not much less than eight days. Yet large as it is, it is kept from being part of the mainland only by a stretch of sea about twenty stades wide.[1] 6.2 This is how it was settled in ancient times, and these are all the peoples that held it. The earliest inhabitants of one part of the country are said to have been the Cyclopes and the Laestrygonians. I cannot say what race they were, where they came from or where they went. What the poets have said, and what each person knows of them in one way or another, will have to do. After them the Sicanians appear to have been the first settlers. By their own account they were there even earlier,

1 Laches, and later Eurymedon, commanded the earlier Athenian expedition to Sicily (427–424 BC). A stade is about 185 meters.

since they claim to have sprung from the land itself. But the truth, as it is found, is that they were Iberians, driven out by the Ligurians from the river Sicanus in Iberia.[2] From them the island was then called Sicania, though it had earlier been called Trinacria, and they still live in the western parts of Sicily even now. When Ilium was being taken, some of the Trojans escaped the Achaeans and came to Sicily in boats. They settled next to the Sicanians, and together they were called Elymians, and their cities were Eryx and Egesta. Some Phocians returning from Troy also settled with them. A storm had carried them first to Libya, and from there to Sicily. The Sicels crossed into Sicily from Italy, where they had been living, fleeing the Opicans. They crossed, as is likely and as the story goes, on rafts, waiting for the wind to blow down the strait. They may also have sailed over in some other way.[3] There are still Sicels in Italy even now, and the country got its name of Italy from Italus, a king of the Sicels who bore that name. They came into Sicily as a large army, defeated the Sicanians in battle and drove them back to the southern and western parts of the island. They made it be called Sicily instead of Sicania, and they settled and held the best of the land for nearly three hundred years after they crossed, before the Greeks came to Sicily. Even now they still hold the central and northern parts of the island. Phoenicians also lived all round Sicily. They had taken over headlands by the sea and the small islands lying off the coast for the sake of trade with the Sicels. But when the Greeks began to arrive by sea in large numbers, they abandoned most of these places. They gathered together in Motya, Soloeis and Panormus, near the Elymians, and lived there. They relied on their alliance with the Elymians, and also on the fact that from there the voyage between Carthage and Sicily is shortest.

2 The Cyclopes and Laestrygonians are the man-eating giants of Homer's *Odyssey*. Iberia is Spain; the Ligurians lived around the Gulf of Genoa.

3 Ilium is Troy. The Opicans were the Oscan-speaking peoples of Campania in southern Italy.

These, then, were the non-Greeks who settled Sicily, and this is how they settled it.[4]

THE GREEK COLONIES IN SICILY

The founding of the Greek cities of Sicily, from Naxos and Syracuse to Camarina.

6.3 Of the Greeks, the first were Chalcidians from Euboea, who sailed with Thucles as their founder and settled Naxos. They set up the altar of Apollo Archegetes, "the Founder," which now stands outside the city. On this altar sacred envoys sacrifice first whenever they sail from Sicily. In the following year Archias, one of the Heraclidae, founded Syracuse from Corinth. He first drove the Sicels out of the island on which the inner city now stands, though it is no longer surrounded by water. Later in time the outer city too was brought within the walls and became populous. In the fifth year after the founding of Syracuse, Thucles and the Chalcidians set out from Naxos, drove out the Sicels in war and founded Leontini, and after it Catana. But the Catanians themselves chose Evarchus as their founder.[5] 6.4 At about the same time Lamis also arrived in Sicily, leading a colony from Megara. He settled a place called Trotilus above the river Pantacyas. Later he moved from there and for a short time shared a community with the Chalcidians at Leontini. After they drove him out he founded Thapsus, and there he died. The rest of his people left Thapsus. Hyblon, a Sicel king, handed over the land to them and led them there, and they founded the settlement of the Megarians who were called Hyblaean. After living there two hundred and forty-five years, they were driven out of their city and their land by Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse.[6] Before

4 Panormus is modern Palermo. Carthage was the great Phoenician city in North Africa, in modern Tunisia.

5 The sacred envoys (*theoroi*) were official delegations sent to festivals and oracles in Greece. The Heraclidae claimed descent from Heracles; Syracuse's inner city was on the island of Ortygia.

6 Their city is known as Megara Hyblaea, on the east coast north of Syracuse. Gelon ruled Syracuse c. 485–478 BC.

they were driven out, and a hundred years after their own settlement, they sent out Pamillus and founded Selinus. Pamillus had come from Megara, their mother city, and joined in founding it. Gela was founded jointly by Antiphemus from Rhodes and Entimus from Crete, who brought settlers there in the forty-fifth year after the founding of Syracuse. The city took its name from the river Gelas. But the place where the city now stands, which was the first part to be fortified, is called Lindii. Dorian institutions were established for them. Almost exactly a hundred and eight years after their own founding, the Geloans founded Acragas. They named the city after the river Acragas, made Aristonous and Pystilus its founders and gave it the institutions of Gela.[7] Zancle was originally settled by pirates who came from Cumae, the Chalcidian city in Opicia. Later a large body of people came from Chalcis and the rest of Euboea and shared out the land with them. Its founders were Perieres and Crataemenes, one from Cumae and the other from Chalcis. Its first name was Zancle, as the Sicels called it, because the place is shaped like a sickle, and the Sicels call a sickle *zanclon*. Later these settlers were driven out by Samians and other Ionians, who had put in at Sicily as they fled from the Persians. Not long afterward Anaxilas, tyrant of Rhegium, drove out the Samians. He settled the city himself with a mixed population and renamed it Messana, after his own original homeland.[8] 6.5 Himera was settled from Zancle by Euclides, Simus and Sacon. Most of those who came to the colony were Chalcidians, but exiles from Syracuse also settled with them. These were the so-called Myletidae, who had been defeated in civil strife. Their dialect became a mixture of Chalcidian and Dorian, but Chalcidian institutions prevailed. Acrae and Casmenae were founded by the Syracusans: Acrae seventy years after Syracuse, and Casmenae about twenty years after Acrae. Camarina too was first settled by the Syracusans, almost exactly a hundred and

7 Lindus was one of the cities of Rhodes. Acragas is modern Agrigento.
8 Zancle is modern Messina. Anaxilas' family came from Messenia in the Peloponnese.

thirty-five years after the founding of Syracuse. Its founders were Dascon and Menecolus. The Camarinaeans revolted, and the Syracusans drove them out in war. Some time later Hippocrates, tyrant of Gela, received the land of the Camarinaeans as ransom for Syracusan prisoners. He made himself founder and resettled Camarina. Gelon depopulated it again, and it was resettled a third time by the Geloans.

6.6 These were all the peoples, Greek and non-Greek, who lived in Sicily, and this was the size of the island against which the Athenians were bent on sending an expedition. The truest cause was that they were aiming to rule the whole of it. At the same time they wanted the respectable appearance of helping their own kin and the allies they had acquired. What spurred them on most were the envoys from Egesta, who were in Athens and appealing to them ever more urgently. The Egestaeans were neighbors of the Selinuntines and had gone to war with them over certain questions of marriage and over disputed land. The Selinuntines had brought in the Syracusans as allies and were pressing them hard in the war, by land and by sea. So the Egestaeans reminded the Athenians of the alliance made in the time of Laches, during the earlier war of the Leontines, and begged them to send ships to their aid. They made many other arguments, but the main point was this. If the Syracusans went unpunished for driving out the Leontines, they would go on destroying the rest of Athens' remaining allies and would gain control of the whole power of Sicily. Then there was a danger that one day they would come with a great force, as Dorians helping Dorians out of kinship, and at the same time as colonists helping the Peloponnesians who had sent them out, and would join in destroying the Athenians' power too. It would be prudent, then, to stand up to the Syracusans with the allies they still had left, especially since the Egestaeans would supply enough money for the war. The Athenians heard these arguments repeatedly in their assemblies, both from the Egestaeans and from those who spoke in their support. They voted first to send envoys to Egesta to look into the money, to see whether it really existed, as the

Egestaeans claimed, in the public treasury and in the temples. At the same time the envoys were to find out how the war against the Selinuntines stood.

6.7 So the Athenian envoys were sent off to Sicily. In the same winter the Spartans and their allies, except the Corinthians, marched into the Argive land. They ravaged a small part of it and carried off some grain in wagons they had brought. They settled the Argive exiles at Orneae and left a few men from the rest of the army with them. They made a truce for a certain time under which the Orneates and the Argives were not to do wrong to each other's land, and then they went home with the army. Not long afterward the Athenians arrived with thirty ships and six hundred hoplites. The Argives marched out in full force with the Athenians and besieged the men in Orneae for one day. But at nightfall, when the army had camped some distance away, the men in Orneae slipped away. The next day, when the Argives realized this, they razed Orneae and withdrew. Afterward the Athenians too went home with their ships.

The Athenians also brought cavalry by sea to Methone, on the border of Macedonia. These were partly their own men and partly the Macedonian exiles living with them, and with them they plundered the land of Perdiccas. The Spartans sent to the Chalcidians in Thrace, who were observing ten-day truces with the Athenians, and urged them to join Perdiccas in the war, but they refused. So the winter ended, and with it the sixteenth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

THE DEBATE ON SICILY

Athens votes sixty ships; Nicias asks the assembly to reconsider the whole expedition.

6.8 Early in the spring of the following summer the Athenian envoys came back from Sicily. The Egestaeans came with them, bringing sixty talents of uncoined silver as a month's pay for sixty ships, which they meant to ask the Athenians to send. The Athenians held an assembly and heard from the Egestaeans and

from their own envoys many things that were enticing and untrue. In particular they heard that the money was ready in large amounts in the temples and in the public treasury. They voted to send sixty ships to Sicily, with Alcibiades son of Cleinias, Nicias son of Niceratus and Lamachus son of Xenophanes as generals with full powers. The generals were to help the Egestaeans against the Selinuntines. If things went well for them in the war, they were also to help resettle the Leontines. And they were to manage everything else in Sicily as they judged best for the Athenians.[9] On the fifth day after this another assembly was held to decide how the ships could be made ready most quickly and to vote the generals anything further they might need for the expedition. Nicias had been chosen to command against his will. He believed the city had not decided rightly, but was reaching for the whole of Sicily, a great undertaking, on a slight and specious pretext. He came forward, wanting to turn the Athenians from it, and gave them the following advice:

6.9 "This assembly was called to discuss our preparations, and how we are to sail to Sicily. But I think we still need to consider this very question: whether it is better to send out the ships at all. We should not, after such brief deliberation on such great matters, let foreigners persuade us into a war that is none of our business. And yet I personally gain honor from this sort of thing, and I fear for my own life less than others do. Still, I consider a man who takes some thought for his life and his property to be just as good a citizen. Such a man, after all, would most want the city's affairs to go well, for his own sake as well. Nevertheless, I have never in the past spoken against my own judgment for the sake of being honored, and I will not do so now. I will say what I think best. Against your character my argument would be weak if I urged you to keep what you have and not to risk what is in hand for what is uncertain and still to come. But I

9 A talent was a large sum of silver (6,000 drachmas); a talent a month was roughly the pay of one trireme's crew.

will show you that your haste is untimely, and that what you are bent on is not easy to achieve.

6.10 "I tell you that you are leaving many enemies behind you here and are eager to sail there and bring yet more of them back here. Perhaps you think the treaty you have made gives some security. As long as you keep quiet, it will be a treaty in name, for that is how men on our side and on theirs have handled it. But if we suffer a setback anywhere with a sizable force, our enemies will be quick to attack us. In the first place, they came to the agreement under compulsion, through disasters, and on more disgraceful terms than we did. And secondly, there are many points in the agreement itself that we dispute. There are also some who have not yet accepted even this agreement, and they are not the weakest. Some are openly at war with us. Others are held back only by ten-day truces, because the Spartans are still keeping quiet. And it is quite likely that if they caught our power divided, which is exactly what we are now hurrying to do, they would eagerly join in attacking us together with the Sicilian Greeks, whose alliance they would have valued above many others in the past. So we need to consider all this. We should not think it right to run risks while the city is still in a precarious state, or reach for another empire before we have secured the one we have. The Chalcidians in Thrace revolted from us so many years ago and are still unsubdued, and certain others on the mainland coasts are wavering in their obedience. Yet we are rushing to help the Egestaeans—our allies, you see—because they are being wronged. Meanwhile we keep putting off punishing those who revolted long ago and are wronging us ourselves. 6.11 And yet if we subdued the first, we could actually hold them. The second, even if we conquered them, we could govern only with difficulty, since they are far away and numerous. It is foolish to go against people whom one cannot hold even after conquering them, and if one fails, one will not be in the same position as before the attempt. As things stand now, the Sicilian Greeks seem to me no great danger to us. They would be even less of one if the Syracusans ruled them, which is

exactly the prospect the Egestaeans most use to frighten us. As things are, they might perhaps come against us, each of them, as a favor to the Spartans. But if the Syracusans ruled them, it is not likely that one empire would march against another. For if they joined the Peloponnesians in taking away our empire, the same people would likely destroy theirs in the same way. As for the Greeks over there, they would be most awed by us if we did not come at all. Next best would be to show them our power and leave soon after. We all know that what is most admired is what is farthest away and least puts its reputation to the test. But if we suffered any setback, they would very quickly come to despise us and join our enemies here in attacking us. That is exactly what has happened to you now, Athenians, in your attitude to the Spartans and their allies. Contrary to your expectations, you got the better of them where at first you feared them, and so now you despise them and are reaching for Sicily as well. But one should not be elated by an opponent's misfortunes. One should feel confident only after mastering their plans. Nor should you suppose that the Spartans, smarting from their disgrace, have anything else in mind than how even now, if they can, they may bring us down and make good their own loss of face. This is all the more so because they have long cared most of all for a reputation for excellence and have cultivated it longest. So if we are sensible, our contest is not over the Egestaeans in Sicily, who are non-Greeks. It is over how to guard ourselves swiftly against a city that is plotting against us through oligarchy.

6.12 "We must also remember that we have only recently recovered a little from a great plague and from war, and have regained some strength in money and in men. It is right to spend these here on ourselves, and not on these exiles who are begging for help. It pays them to lie well. They contribute nothing but words while others run the risk, and if they succeed, they will show no proper gratitude. If they fail somewhere, they will drag their friends down with them. And there may be someone who is delighted to have been chosen to command and

urges you to sail, looking only to his own interest, especially since he is still too young for command. He wants to be admired for his horse-breeding and, since it costs him so much, to make some profit from his command as well. Do not give this man the chance to make a personal show at the city's risk. Bear in mind that such men wrong the public while squandering their own private means. Remember too that this is a great matter, not the kind of thing for a young man to decide and rush into handling.[10]

6.13 "When I see these men sitting here now, summoned by that same man to support him, I am alarmed. I appeal in turn to the older men: if any of you is sitting beside one of them, do not be shamed into fearing that you will look like a coward if you do not vote for war. Do not be, as they might well be, lovesick for what is far away. Know that very little is achieved by desire and most by foresight. Instead, on behalf of our country, which is now running perhaps the greatest risk it has ever run, raise your hands against this. Vote that the Sicilian Greeks, keeping the boundaries with us that they have now, boundaries no one can find fault with (the Ionian Gulf if one sails along the coast, the Sicilian sea if one crosses open water), should manage their own affairs by themselves and settle their differences among themselves. Tell the Egestaeans separately that, since they started their war with the Selinuntines without the Athenians, they should also end it on their own. And in future do not make allies as we usually do, whom we must defend when they fare badly but from whom we get no help when we need it ourselves.[11]

6.14 "And you, prytanis, if you believe it is your duty to care for the city and you want to be a good citizen, put this to the vote and lay the proposals before the Athenians a second time. If you are afraid of reopening a vote, consider this. With so many witnesses you would not be blamed for breaking the law. Rather,

10 Nicias is alluding to Alcibiades, then in his mid-thirties and famous for the chariot teams he entered at Olympia.

11 The Ionian Gulf is the sea between western Greece and southern Italy, reached by coasting; the Sicilian sea is the open water to the south of it.

you would be the physician of a city that has made a bad decision. And ruling well means this: doing your country as much good as possible, or at least no harm that you can help."[12]

ALCIBIADES' SPEECH

Alcibiades defends his way of life and urges the Athenians to sail.

6.15 Such was Nicias' speech. Of the Athenians who came forward, most urged them to make the expedition and not to undo what had been voted, though some spoke against it. The man who pressed most eagerly for the expedition was Alcibiades son of Cleinias. He wanted to oppose Nicias, with whom he was at odds in politics generally and who had referred to him slightingly. Above all, he was eager to be general. He hoped that it would be through him that Sicily and Carthage would be taken, and that success would at the same time benefit his own fortunes, in money and in reputation alike. Because he was held in high esteem by his fellow citizens, he indulged desires greater than his actual means could support, both in keeping racehorses and in his other expenses. This, later on, had not a little to do with the ruin of the city of Athens. For the many were alarmed at the scale both of the lawlessness of his personal way of life and of the ambition he showed in every single thing he took part in, and they became his enemies, believing he was aiming at tyranny. Though in public he had managed the conduct of the war excellently, each of them in private was offended by his habits. So they entrusted affairs to others, and before long they brought the city down. At that time, however, he came forward and advised the Athenians as follows:

6.16 "Athenians, I have a better claim than others to command (I must begin here, since Nicias has attacked me), and I think I am worthy of it as well. The things I am notorious for bring glory to my ancestors and to me, and benefit to our country too.

12 The prytaneis were councillors presiding in rotation over the council and assembly; the one in the chair put proposals to the vote, and reopening a matter already decided could expose him to prosecution.

The Greeks had earlier hoped that our city had been worn down by the war, but because of the magnificence of my appearance at the Olympic festival they came to think it even greater than its actual power. I entered seven chariots, more than any private citizen had ever done before, and I won, and I also came second and fourth, and I arranged everything else in a style worthy of the victory. By custom such things bring honor, and from what is done, power is also inferred.[13] Again, whatever splendor I display in the city, in funding choruses or in anything else, naturally arouses envy among my fellow citizens, but to foreigners this too looks like strength. And this folly is not useless, when a man at his own expense benefits not only himself but the city. Nor is it unjust for someone who thinks highly of himself not to be on an equal footing with others, since the man who fares badly finds no one to share his misfortune equally. Just as no one greets us when we are down on our luck, so in the same way let a man put up with being looked down on by the successful, or else let him treat others as equals before claiming the same in return.[14] I know that men of this kind, and all who have stood out for brilliance of any sort, are resented during their own lifetimes, above all by their equals and then by others who associate with them. But they leave to some of those who come after them a claim of kinship, even where none exists, and to their country, whichever it is, a boast about them, not as strangers or failures but as its own sons and men who did fine things. That is what I aspire to, and that is why my private life is cried out against. But look at my handling of public affairs and see whether it is worse than anyone's. I brought together the most powerful states of the Peloponnese without great danger or expense to you, and I forced the Spartans to stake everything on a single day at Mantinea. As a result, though they won the battle,

13 Alcibiades' chariots competed at the Olympic Games of 416 BC.
14 A choregus was a wealthy citizen who paid for training and equipping a chorus at a public festival.

even now they have not yet recovered their confidence securely.[15]

6.17 "That is how my youth and my folly, which is thought to be so unnatural, dealt with the power of the Peloponnesians: it spoke to them in fitting words, and its passion made them trust it and won them over. Do not be afraid of it now. While I am still in my prime with it and Nicias has the name of being lucky, make full use of the services of each of us. And do not change your minds about the voyage to Sicily on the ground that it will be against a great power. For the cities there are crowded with mixed populations, and their citizen bodies change easily and readily take in newcomers. For this reason no one there has equipped himself as he would for a country of his own, either with arms for his person or with proper improvements on his land. Each man provides himself only with what he thinks he can take from the common stock, by persuasive speaking or by civil strife, so that he can go and live in another land if things go wrong. Such a crowd is not likely either to listen to a proposal with one mind or to turn to action together. Each group would quickly come over to whatever was said to please it, especially if they are torn by civil strife, as we hear they are. Moreover, they do not have as many hoplites as they boast, any more than the rest of the Greeks proved to be as numerous as each people reckoned itself to be. Greece was grossly deceived on that score, and in this war it was barely armed with enough. So, from what I learn by report, things there will be like this, and even easier to deal with, for we will [also] have many non-Greeks who, out of hatred of the Syracusans, will join us in attacking them. And affairs here will not stand in our way, if you plan correctly. Our fathers had these same enemies that people say we would be leaving behind us if we sailed, and the Persian as their foe besides, and yet they won the empire, strong in nothing but their superiority at sea. And now the Peloponnesians have never had less hope against us. Even if they are at full strength, they

15 At Mantinea in 418 BC the Spartans defeated Argos and her allies, a coalition Alcibiades had promoted.

are capable of invading our land whether we sail or not, but with their navy they could not harm us, for we will be leaving behind a navy that is a match for theirs. 6.18 So what reasonable excuse could we give for holding back ourselves, or what pretext could we offer our allies there for not helping them? We ought to come to their aid, since we have sworn oaths to them, and not object that they have not helped us either. We did not take them on so that they would come here to help us in return, but so that by being a nuisance to our enemies there they would stop them from coming here. That is how we won our empire, we and everyone else who has ever ruled: by readily coming to the aid of whoever called on us at any time, non-Greeks or Greeks. If everyone kept quiet, or sorted by race whom they ought to help, we would add little to the empire and would instead be risking the empire itself. For a man does not only defend himself against a superior power when it attacks; he also strikes first to keep it from attacking. And we cannot ration how far we want to rule. Since we are in this position, we have no choice but to plot against some and not let go of others, because there is a danger of being ruled by others ourselves if we do not rule others. And you cannot view staying quiet from the same standpoint as others do, unless you are also going to change your way of life to match theirs.

"So let us reckon that we will increase our power here more if we go against them there, and let us make the voyage. That way we will humble the pride of the Peloponnesians, when they see that we have scorned the present peace and sailed against Sicily as well. At the same time, once the Greeks there have been added to us, we will in all likelihood rule the whole of Greece, or at least we will damage the Syracusans, and that will benefit both us and our allies. As for safety, the ships will give us the choice either to stay, if things go well, or to leave. For we will be masters at sea even against all the Sicilian Greeks combined. And do not let Nicias' argument for doing nothing, and his setting the young against the old, turn you aside. Our fathers, young and old deliberating together, raised our affairs to their

present height; keep to that customary order and try now in the same way to advance the city. Consider that youth and age can do nothing without each other, but that the inferior, the middling and the most refined, blended together, are strongest. Consider too that the city, if it stays quiet, will wear itself out against itself like anything else, and its skill in everything will grow old; but if it is always contending, it will keep adding to its experience and will become used to defending itself not in word but in deed. In short, my judgment is that a city which is not inactive would very quickly, I think, be ruined by a change to inactivity, and that those people live most securely who govern themselves with the least departure from the character and laws they have, even if these are worse."

NICIAS' SECOND SPEECH

Nicias demands a huge force, and the Athenians are seized with passion for the voyage.

6.19 That is what Alcibiades said. When the Athenians had heard him, and also the Egestaeans and the Leontine exiles, who came forward and begged them, reminding them of their oaths and entreating them to help, they were far keener than before to make the expedition. Nicias realized that he could no longer turn them aside with the same arguments, but that he might perhaps change their minds by the size of the forces, if he demanded a large one. So he came forward again and spoke as follows:

6.20 "Athenians, since I see you are absolutely set on the expedition, may it turn out as we wish; but for the present I will tell you what I think. From what I learn by report, we are about to go against great cities. They are neither subject to one another nor in need of the kind of change by which a man would gladly pass from forced slavery to an easier condition, nor would they be likely to accept our rule in exchange for their freedom. And for a single island, the Greek cities are many in number. Apart from Naxos and Catana, which I expect will side with us because

of their kinship with the Leontines, there are seven others, equipped in every respect very much like our own power, and none more so than those we are chiefly sailing against, Selinus and Syracuse. They have many hoplites, archers and javelin-throwers, and many triremes and a crowd of men to man them. They have money, some of it in private hands, and some in the temples at Selinus; and the Syracusans also receive first-fruits as tribute from certain non-Greeks. But where they most surpass us is that they own many horses and eat grain grown at home, not imported.[16]

6.21 "Against such a power, then, we need not just a naval force of poor quality; a large land army must sail with it as well, if we want to achieve something worthy of our plans and not be shut out of the country by their numerous cavalry. This is all the more so if the cities unite out of fear, and no friends other than the Egestaeans come forward to provide us with cavalry to fight them off. (It would be shameful to be forced to withdraw, or to send for reinforcements later, having planned carelessly at the start.) We must set out from here with an adequate force, recognizing that we are going to sail far from our own land. This will not be a campaign like those when you went as allies against someone among your subjects here, where supplies of whatever you lacked came easily from friendly territory. Instead we will be cutting ourselves off in an entirely foreign land, from which in the four winter months it is not easy even for a messenger to come. 6.22 So I think we must take many hoplites, both our own and the allies', from our subjects and from any in the Peloponnese we can win over by persuasion or by pay; and many archers and slingers, to hold out against their cavalry. We must have a large superiority in ships, so that we can bring in supplies more easily. We must also take grain from here in merchant ships, wheat and parched barley, and bakers requisitioned in fixed proportion from the mills and paid wages, so that if we are held up anywhere by bad sailing weather the army will have

16 Naxos, Catana and Leontini were all founded by settlers from Chalcis in Euboea.

provisions (since it is large, not every city will be able to take it in). We must prepare everything else as far as possible and not be dependent on others; above all we must take as much money as we can from here. As for the money from the Egestaeans, which is said to be ready there, consider that it is most likely ready only in word. 6.23 For even if we go from here with a force not merely equal to theirs (except, that is, against their real fighting strength, their hoplites) but superior in every respect, even so we will barely be able to defeat them and bring our own force through safely. We must think of ourselves as going to found a city among foreign and hostile peoples, settlers who must be masters of the land on the very first day they land, or else know that, if they fail, everything will be hostile to them. This is what I fear. I know that we need much good planning and still more good fortune, which is hard for us, being human; so I want to sail out leaving myself to chance as little as possible, and with forces that by any reasonable reckoning make me safe. This I believe is surest for the city as a whole and the means of safety for those of us who are going to serve. But if anyone thinks otherwise, I hand over my command to him."

6.24 Nicias said this much, thinking that he would either deter the Athenians by the magnitude of the undertaking or, if he were forced to make the expedition, would in this way sail out as safely as possible. But the troublesome scale of the preparations did not take away their desire for the voyage; they became far more eager, and the opposite of what he intended happened to him. For they thought his advice was good, and that now there would be security in plenty. And a passion for sailing fell on everyone alike. The older men thought they would either subdue the places they were sailing against, or at any rate that so great a force could come to no harm. Those in their prime longed for distant sights and spectacles and were confident of coming back safe. The great mass, the ordinary soldiers, expected to earn money for the present and to acquire a power that would provide them with pay forever. So, because of the excessive enthusiasm of the majority, anyone who did not like it kept

quiet, afraid that if he voted against it he might seem ill-disposed toward the city. 6.25 Finally one of the Athenians came forward, called on Nicias, and said that he should not make excuses or delay, but say right now, in front of everyone, what forces the Athenians should vote him. Nicias said reluctantly that he would rather consider the matter at leisure with his fellow generals; but as far as he could see now, they must sail with no fewer than a hundred triremes (of the Athenians' own ships, as many as seemed right would serve as hoplite transports, and others must be sent for from the allies), and with no fewer than five thousand hoplites in all, Athenians and allies, and more if possible. The rest of the forces would be in proportion: archers from home and from Crete, and slingers, and anything else that seemed suitable, which they would get ready and take with them. 6.26 On hearing this, the Athenians at once voted that the generals should have full powers regarding the size of the army and the whole expedition, to act as they thought best [for the Athenians]. After this the preparations began. They sent to the allies and drew up muster lists at home. The city had just recovered from the plague and the continuous war, both in the number of young men who had grown up and in the money accumulated thanks to the truce, so that everything was provided more easily. So they were busy with their preparations.[17]

THE HERMS

The statues of Hermes are mutilated, and Alcibiades is accused of profaning the Mysteries.

6.27 Meanwhile, of all the stone Herms in the city of Athens, most had their faces mutilated in a single night. These are, by local custom, the square-cut kind, and there are many of them, both in the doorways of private houses and in sanctuaries. No one knew who had done it, but large rewards were publicly offered to find the culprits. In addition, the Athenians voted that anyone

17 The truce is the Peace of Nicias, concluded in 421 BC.

who wished, whether citizen, foreigner or slave, who knew of any other act of impiety that had been committed should inform without fear. They took the affair very seriously, for it seemed to be an omen for the expedition, and at the same time to have been done as part of a conspiracy for revolution and the overthrow of the democracy.[18] 6.28 Information was then laid by certain resident foreigners and servants. It said nothing about the Herms, but reported that there had earlier been some mutilations of other statues by young men in drunken fun, and also that the Mysteries were being performed in private houses in mockery. Among those they accused was Alcibiades. These charges were taken up by the men who most resented Alcibiades because he stood in the way of their own secure leadership of the people, and who thought that if they drove him out they would be first. They magnified the charges and shouted that both the affair of the Mysteries and the mutilation of the Herms had been aimed at overthrowing the democracy, and that none of it had been done without him. As evidence they cited the general lawlessness of his way of life, which was not that of a democrat.[19] 6.29 Alcibiades defended himself against the allegations on the spot, and was ready to stand trial before sailing to determine whether he had done any of these things (for by now the preparations had been completed): if he had done any of it, he would pay the penalty, but if he were acquitted, he would keep his command. He called on them to bear witness that they should not entertain slanders about him in his absence, but put him to death at once if he was guilty. It would be wiser, he said, not to send him out at the head of so great an army with such a charge against him before they had reached a verdict. But his enemies were afraid that he would have the army on his side if he stood trial at once, and that the people would go soft and favor him, because it was through him that the Argives and some of the

18 Herms were square stone pillars topped with a carved head of the god Hermes, set up at doorways and in public places as protectors.

19 The Eleusinian Mysteries were secret rites of Demeter and Persephone that only initiates could witness. Resident foreigners (metics) were free non-citizens living in Athens.

Mantineans were joining the expedition. So they tried to head off the trial and put it off. They put up other speakers, who said that for now he should sail and not hold up the departure, and on his return should stand trial within a fixed number of days. Their aim was to have him recalled and brought home for trial on the strength of a graver slander, which they would find it easier to contrive while he was away. And it was decided that Alcibiades should sail.

THE FLEET SAILS

The great armada leaves the Piraeus amid prayers, hopes and laments.

6.30 After this, when it was already midsummer, the departure for Sicily took place. Most of the allies, the grain transports, the smaller craft and all the rest of the equipment accompanying the expedition had previously been ordered to assemble at Corcyra, so that from there they could cross the Ionian Sea in a body to the Iapygian promontory. The Athenians themselves, and any of the allies who were present, went down to the Piraeus on the appointed day at dawn and manned the ships, ready to put out. Virtually the whole of the rest of the population in the city, citizens and foreigners alike, went down with them. The Athenians were each seeing off their own: some their comrades, some their relatives, some their sons. They went with hope and with lament at once: hope of what they would gain, lament for those they might never see again, as they considered how long a voyage these men were being sent on from their own land.[20] 6.31 And at this moment, as they were on the point of parting from one another with dangers ahead, the terrors of it came home to them more than when they had voted to sail. Still, at the sight of the strength before them, and the abundance of everything they saw, they took heart. The foreigners and the rest of the crowd came to look, as at an enterprise worth seeing and beyond belief. For of all the forces up to that time, this one, sent

20 The Iapygian promontory is the heel of Italy, the usual landfall for ships crossing from Corcyra.

out by a single city with Greek troops, was the first to be so lavish and so splendid. In number of ships and hoplites, it is true, the expedition against Epidaurus under Pericles, and the same force when it went against Potidaea under Hagnon, had been no smaller: four thousand Athenian hoplites, three hundred cavalry and a hundred triremes had sailed on it, along with fifty ships from Lesbos and Chios and many allies besides. But they had set out on a short voyage and with meager equipment. This expedition, by contrast, was fitted out in the expectation that it would be a long one, and equipped for both kinds of fighting at once, with ships and with infantry, wherever needed. The fleet was perfected at great expense both to the trierarchs and to the city. The treasury paid each sailor a drachma a day and provided the empty hulls, sixty fast warships and[21] forty troop transports, and manned them with the best crews of petty officers. The trierarchs, for their part, paid bonuses on top of the pay from the treasury to the thranites among the rowers and to the petty officers, and went to great expense in figureheads and fittings generally. Each one of them went to the greatest lengths to make his own ship stand out above the rest, both for its fine appearance and for its speed. The infantry was picked from the best muster rolls, and the men competed eagerly with one another in their weapons and personal equipment. And so it turned out that there was rivalry among themselves, each man in the post assigned to him, and that to the rest of the Greeks the whole thing looked more like a display of power and resources than a force raised against an enemy.[22] For if anyone had added up the public expenditure of the city and the private expenditure of those serving, it would have been found that many talents in all were being taken out of the city. On the city's side, there was what it had already spent and what it was sending the generals off with. On the private side, there was what each man had

21 A trierarch was a wealthy citizen who commanded a trireme and met much of its running cost. A drachma was a silver coin, roughly a day's wage for a skilled worker.

22 Thranites were the rowers of the top bank, whose long oars made theirs the hardest work.

spent on his personal equipment and each trierarch on his ship, and what they were still going to spend. Besides this, there was what everyone was likely to have provided for himself as provisions for a long campaign, over and above his pay from the treasury, and whatever any soldier or merchant took with him for trade. And the expedition became famous no less for the astonishment at its daring and the brilliance of its spectacle than for its overwhelming superiority to those it was going against; and also because it was the longest voyage from home yet attempted, and undertaken with the greatest hopes for the future compared with what they already had.

6.32 When the ships were manned and everything they were to take with them had been put aboard, the trumpet signaled for silence. They offered the customary prayers before putting to sea, not ship by ship but all together, led by a herald. Bowls of wine were mixed along the whole line, and the marines and the officers poured libations from cups of gold and silver. The rest of the crowd on shore, both the citizens and anyone else present who wished them well, joined in the prayers. When they had sung the paean and finished the libations, they put out. At first they sailed in column, and then raced each other as far as Aegina. And they hurried to reach Corcyra, where the rest of the allied force was also assembling.[23]

HERMOCRATES WARNS SYRACUSE

Hermocrates tells the Syracusan assembly the Athenians are coming and urges them to meet them at sea.

News of the expedition reached Syracuse from many quarters, but for a long time none of it was believed. Indeed, an assembly was held, and speeches such as the following were made by various people, some believing the reports about the Athenian expedition, others saying the opposite. Among them Hermo-

23 The paean was a solemn hymn, usually to Apollo, sung before battle or on occasions such as this.

crates son of Hermon came forward, convinced that he knew the facts clearly, and spoke and advised them as follows:

6.33 "When I tell you the truth about this expedition, I shall perhaps seem to you, as certain others have, to be saying things beyond belief. I know that those who either say or report things that seem incredible not only fail to persuade but are even thought foolish. Even so, I shall not be frightened into holding back while the city is in danger, since I am convinced that I speak with clearer knowledge than anyone else. The Athenians, astonishing as you find it, have set out against you with a large force, both naval and land. Their pretext is their alliance with the Egestaeans and the resettlement of the Leontines; the truth is that they desire Sicily, and above all our city, thinking that if they take it they will easily have the rest as well. So take it that they will be here soon, and consider how, with the resources you have, you can best defend yourselves against them. Do not be caught unprepared through contempt, or neglect the whole matter through disbelief. And if anyone does believe it, let him not be dismayed by their daring and their power. For they will not be able to do us more harm than they suffer; nor is it of no use to us that they come with a great armament. On the contrary, it puts us in a much better position with the rest of the Sicilian Greeks, for in their alarm they will be more willing to join our alliance. And if we either crush them or drive them back without achieving what they are after (for I am certainly not afraid that they will get what they expect), it will turn out to be a very fine achievement for you—and one I have every hope of. For few great expeditions, whether Greek or foreign, have succeeded when they set out far from home. They do not come in greater numbers than the inhabitants and their neighbors, since everyone unites out of fear. And if they fail in a foreign land through lack of supplies, they still leave a great name to those they plotted against, even if their downfall is mostly their own doing. That is exactly how these very Athenians grew great: when the Persian failed in many ways, against all reckoning, they grew on the reputation that it was Athens he was marching

against. And it is not beyond hope that the same thing should happen to us.

6.34 "Let us therefore take heart and make our preparations here. Let us send to the Sicels, to secure some of them more firmly and to try to make friendship and alliance with others. Let us send envoys to the rest of Sicily to show that the danger is common to all, and to Italy, so that they may either make an alliance with us or refuse to receive the Athenians. I think it would also be better to send to Carthage. For an attack is not beyond their expectation there: they are always afraid that the Athenians may one day come against their city. So perhaps they may reckon that if they abandon us here, they too will be in trouble, and may be willing to help us, whether secretly or openly or in one way or another.[24] They are better able to do so than anyone at present, if they wish; for they possess the most gold and silver, and that is what makes war, and everything else, go smoothly. Let us also send to Sparta and to Corinth, asking them to come to our help here quickly and to stir up the war over there. But there is one thing which I believe is the most timely of all, and which you, with your habitual love of quiet, would be least quick to accept; nevertheless, it shall be said. Suppose we Sicilian Greeks—all of us, if we were willing, or failing that, as many as possible joining us—launched our entire existing fleet with two months' provisions and met the Athenians at Tarentum and the Iapygian promontory, and made it plain to them that before there is any contest over Sicily there will be one over their crossing of the Ionian Sea. We would then strike them with the greatest alarm, and bring them to reflect that we are setting out as guardians from friendly territory (for Tarentum will receive us), while they have a wide sea to cross with all their armament. It is hard to keep formation over a long voyage, and their fleet would be easy for us to attack, coming on slowly and a few ships at a time.[25] If, on the other hand, they lightened their ships and attacked us in a more compact body with their fast-

24 The Sicels were a non-Greek native people of central and eastern Sicily.
25 Tarentum (Greek Taras) was a Spartan colony on the gulf inside the heel of Italy.

sailing squadron, then if they had rowed the whole way, we would set upon them when they were exhausted; and if we decided against it, we can also retire to Tarentum. They, having crossed with few provisions as though for a sea battle, would be in difficulties along a deserted coast. Either they would stay and be besieged, or they would try to sail on along the coast, leaving the rest of their armament behind, and would lose heart, unsure whether the cities would receive them. So I for my part believe that, shut off by this calculation, they would not even put out from Corcyra. Either they would deliberate and send out scouts to learn how many we are and where, and be pushed by the season into winter; or, dismayed by the unexpected, they would abandon the voyage—especially since the most experienced of their generals, as I hear, is in command against his will and would gladly seize a pretext, if any serious move were seen from us.[26] Reports of us, I know well, would make us out to be more than we are. Men's judgments are shaped by what they hear, and they are more afraid of those who strike first, or who at least show the attackers in advance that they will defend themselves, since they consider them a match for the danger. That is exactly what would happen to the Athenians now. For they are coming against us thinking we will not defend ourselves, having condemned us, with reason, for not joining the Spartans in destroying them. But if they saw us show daring beyond their expectation, they would be more dismayed by the unexpected than by our real power.

"So be persuaded—preferably to dare this course, or failing that, to make ready everything else for the war as quickly as possible. And let every man keep in mind that contempt for attackers is shown in the vigor of action, but that for now the most useful course would be to consider precautions taken in fear the safest, and to act as though in danger. The men are coming; they are already at sea, I know well, and all but here."

26 Hermocrates means Nicias, who had opposed the expedition in the Athenian assembly.

ATHENAGORAS REPLIES

The democratic leader dismisses the reports as an oligarchic plot to frighten the people.

6.35 That was what Hermocrates said. The people of Syracuse were in great dispute among themselves. Some said that the Athenians would on no account come and that what he said was untrue; others asked, if they did come, what could they do to the Syracusans that they would not suffer worse in return? Still others, in utter contempt, turned the matter into a joke. Only a few believed Hermocrates and feared what was coming. Then Athenagoras, who was a leader of the people and at that time the most persuasive speaker with the many, came forward and spoke as follows:

6.36 "As for the Athenians, anyone who does not wish them to be so misguided as to come here and fall into our hands is either a coward or no friend to the city. As for those who bring such reports and fill you with alarm, it is not their audacity that surprises me but their stupidity, if they think they are not seen through. Men who have private fears want to throw the city into panic, so that they can hide their own fear under the common one. And that is what these reports amount to now. They have not arisen of their own accord; they have been concocted by men who are always stirring up this sort of thing. But if you deliberate well, you will not judge what is likely by examining what these men report, but by what shrewd men of wide experience, as I take the Athenians to be, would do. For it is not likely that they would leave the Peloponnesians behind them, with the war there not yet securely ended, and willingly come to take on another war no smaller. Indeed, I think they are content that we are not coming against them—so many cities, and so great. 6.37 And if they really should come, as they are said to be coming, I consider Sicily better able than the Peloponnese to fight the war through, inasmuch as it is better equipped in every respect; and I consider our own city by itself far stronger than the army that,

they say, is now coming against us, even if it came twice as large. For I know that they will bring no horses with them, nor obtain any here, apart from a few from the Egestaeans; nor will they bring hoplites equal in number to ours, coming as they do by sea (for it is a great thing even to make so long a voyage here in the ships alone, lightly laden); nor will they obtain the rest of the equipment needed against a city as great as this, which is no small amount. So strongly do I hold this view that, in my opinion, even if they came bringing with them another city as large as Syracuse, and settled it on our border to wage war from, they would scarcely escape utter destruction. How much less, then, in a Sicily hostile throughout (for it will unite), with a camp pitched from their ships, and venturing out not far from their little huts and bare necessities because of our cavalry! In short, I do not think they would even gain control of the land, so much superior do I consider our forces.

6.38 "But the Athenians, as I say, know this and, I am sure, are looking after their own affairs; while men here are inventing things that neither are so nor could ever be. I know these men, not now for the first time but always, wanting to terrify the mass of you with stories like these, or even more mischievous ones, or else by actions, and to rule the city themselves. And indeed I fear that by trying often they may one day succeed. We are poor at taking precautions before we are actually suffering, and at going after them once we have detected them. That is precisely why our city is seldom at peace, and goes through much civil strife and many contests, more against itself than against its enemies, and at times tyrannies and unjust cliques of the powerful. I shall try, if you are willing to follow me, never to let any of this happen in our time. I will do it by persuading you, the many, and by punishing those who contrive such things—not only when they are caught in the act (for that is hard to manage), but also for what they wish to do but cannot. For one must defend oneself in advance against an enemy, not only for what he does but also for what he intends, since anyone who fails to take precautions will be the first to suffer. As for the few, I will

expose some, watch others, and instruct still others; for in this way, I think, I would best deter them from mischief. And really—a question I have often considered—what is it you want, you young men? To hold office already? But that is not lawful; and the law was laid down because you are not yet capable, not to disqualify you when you are capable. Or is it that you do not want to share equal rights with the many? And how is it just that the same people should not be granted the same rights? 6.39 Someone will say that democracy is neither intelligent nor fair, and that those who have the money are also the best at ruling. But I say, first, that "the people" is the name for the whole, and oligarchy for a part; and second, that while the rich are the best guardians of money, the intelligent would give the best counsel, and the many, having heard the arguments, would judge best; and that in a democracy all these share equally, both separately and as a whole. Oligarchy, on the other hand, gives the many a share in the dangers, but of the benefits it not only takes more than its share but takes everything away and keeps it. That is what the powerful and the young among you are eager for—and it is impossible to hold on to in a great city.

"But even now, you most senseless of all men: if you don't realize that you are bent on harm, you are the most ignorant of all the Greeks I know; or, if you know it and still dare to go ahead, you are the most unjust. 6.40 Instead, either learn better or change your minds, and build up the city's good, which is common to all. Reckon that in this the good men among you would have a share equal to, or even greater than, [the mass of the city], but that if you want anything else, you risk being stripped of everything. And give up reports like these, since you are dealing with people who see through them and will not let them pass. For this city, even if the Athenians are coming, will fight them off in a manner worthy of itself, and we have generals who will see to these matters. And if none of it is true, as I believe it is not, the city will not be panicked by your reports, choose you as its rulers and so lay on itself a slavery of its own choosing. Instead, looking into the matter itself, on its own account, it will

judge the words that come from you as if they had the force of deeds. It will not let itself be robbed of the freedom it has by listening to you; it will try to preserve that freedom by guarding it in deed and refusing to give way."

6.41 That was what Athenagoras said. But one of the generals stood up, allowed no one else to come forward, and himself spoke as follows on the situation: "It is not prudent for people to trade slanders against one another, nor for those listening to accept them. We should look instead to the reports coming in, and see how each of us individually and the city as a whole may be well prepared to fight off the invaders. And if, after all, there turns out to be no need, there is no harm in having the state equipped with horses and arms and the other things that war takes pride in (we shall see to their provision and inspection), or in sending missions round to the cities, both to gather intelligence and for anything else that seems useful. Some of this we have already seen to, and whatever we learn we will bring before you." When the general had said this much, the Syracusans broke up from the meeting.

6.42 The Athenians, meanwhile, were already at Corcyra, both they themselves and all their allies. First the generals held a further review of the army and arranged the order in which they were to anchor and make camp. They divided it into three divisions and allotted one to each general by lot, so that by sailing all together they would not run short of water, harbors and supplies at their landing places, and so that in other respects they would be better ordered and easier to command, with each division assigned to a general. Then they sent three ships ahead to Italy and Sicily to find out which of the cities would receive them. These ships had orders to come back and meet them, so that they would know before they put in. 6.43 After this, with forces now on this scale, the Athenians set out from Corcyra and began the crossing to Sicily. They had 134 triremes in all, plus two Rhodian pentecontors. Of the triremes, a hundred were Attic, sixty of them fast ships and the rest troop-carriers, while the rest of the fleet belonged to the Chians and the other allies.

They had 5,100 hoplites in all: of these, 1,500 were Athenians themselves from the muster roll, and 700 were thetes serving as marines on the ships; the rest who served with them were allies, some of them from the subjects, and also 500 Argives, and 250 Mantineans and mercenaries. There were 480 archers in all (eighty of them Cretans), 700 Rhodian slingers, 120 light-armed Megarian exiles, and one horse-transport carrying thirty cavalry.[27]

6.44 Such was the first expedition that crossed over for the war. Carrying supplies for it were thirty grain-carrying merchant ships, which also carried the bakers, stonemasons and carpenters and all the tools for building walls, and a hundred boats, which had been requisitioned to sail with the merchant ships. Many other boats and merchant ships also followed the army of their own accord, for the sake of trade. All of these now crossed the Ionian Gulf together from Corcyra. The whole force made land at the Iapygian promontory, at Tarentum, and wherever each group found it convenient, and then coasted along Italy. The cities would not receive them with a market or within their walls, only with water and anchorage, and Tarentum and Locri not even with these, until they reached Rhegium, the promontory at the tip of Italy.[28] There they now gathered. Since the Rhegians would not receive them inside the city, they set up camp outside it in the sanctuary of Artemis, where the Rhegians did provide them with a market, and they hauled up their ships and rested. They held talks with the Rhegians, asking them, as Chalcidians, to help the Leontines, who were Chalcidians too. But the Rhegians said they would side with neither party, and would do whatever the other Italian Greeks agreed on. The Athenians, for their part, considered how best to approach affairs in Sicily. At the same time they waited for the ships sent ahead to return from Egesta, wanting to know whether the money the messengers had spoken of in Athens really existed.

27 Thetes were the lowest of Athens' four property classes, who usually served as rowers; a pentecontor was an older type of fifty-oared warship.
28 Rhegium (modern Reggio Calabria) lies at the toe of Italy, opposite Sicily.

6.45 Meanwhile clear reports were reaching the Syracusans from many quarters, including from their scouts, that the ships were at Rhegium. In view of this they began preparing with all their resolve and no longer disbelieved. They sent round to the Sicels, guards to some and envoys to others, and brought garrisons into the outposts in the countryside. In the city they held an inspection of arms and horses to check whether everything was complete, and they put everything else in order as for a war that was close at hand and all but upon them.

THE EGESTAEAN DECEPTION

Egesta's promised money proves a sham, and the three generals propose three different plans.

6.46 The three ships sent ahead came back from Egesta to the Athenians at Rhegium, reporting that the rest of the money that had been promised did not exist; only thirty talents were to be seen. The generals were at once disheartened, because this was the first setback they had met, and because the Rhegians had refused to join the campaign—the very people they had first set about persuading and who were the most likely to agree, being kin of the Leontines and always well disposed to Athens. For Nicias the news from Egesta was what he had expected, but to the other two it came as a greater surprise. The Egestaeans had devised a trick of this kind at the time when the first Athenian envoys came to them to inspect the money. They took them to the sanctuary of Aphrodite at Eryx and showed them the offerings—bowls, wine-jugs, censers and no small amount of other plate—which, being silver, gave an impression far greater than their small monetary value. And in private they gave dinners for the trireme crews: they collected the drinking-cups of gold and silver from Egesta itself and borrowed those from the nearby cities, both Phoenician and Greek, and each host brought them to the feasts as if they were his own.[29] Since they all used mostly

29 Eryx, a mountain near Egesta in western Sicily, had a famous sanctuary of Aphrodite.

the same cups, and a great deal of plate was on view everywhere, the Athenians from the triremes were deeply impressed, and when they got back to Athens they spread it about that they had seen great wealth. These men, who had been deceived themselves and had at the time persuaded everyone else, now came in for a great deal of blame from the soldiers, once word got round that the money was not in Egesta. The generals, meanwhile, took counsel on the situation.

6.47 Nicias' view was that they should sail against Selinus with the whole force, since that was the main object for which they had been sent. If the Egestaeans provided money for the entire army, they should plan accordingly; if not, they should require them to provide maintenance for the sixty ships they had asked for, and stay until they had reconciled the Selinuntines with them, either by force or by agreement. Then they should coast past the other cities, display the power of the city of Athens and make plain their readiness to help their friends and allies, and sail back home—unless they could quickly and unexpectedly either help the Leontines or bring over some of the other cities—and not endanger the city by spending its own resources. 6.48 Alcibiades said that, having sailed out with so great a force, they must not go away in disgrace with nothing achieved. They should send heralds to all the cities except Selinus and Syracuse, and try to detach some of the Sicels from the Syracusans and make friends of others, so as to have grain and troops. First of all they should win over the Messanians, for their city lay right on the crossing, at the point of approach to Sicily, and would provide a harbor and base for the army that was entirely adequate. Then, once they had brought over the cities and knew who would be fighting alongside them, they should attack Syracuse and Selinus—unless the Selinuntines came to terms with the Egestaeans and the Syracusans allowed them to resettle the Leontines.

6.49 Lamachus said they should sail straight for Syracuse and give battle at the city as quickly as possible, while the Syracusans were still unprepared and at their most panic-stricken. For

every army is most formidable at first; but if it delays before it comes into view, men recover their spirits and are more inclined to despise it when they do see it. If, on the other hand, they fell on the Syracusans suddenly, while they were still awaiting them in terror, they would have the best chance of prevailing and would frighten them in every way: by the sight of them (for they would never look more numerous than now), by the anticipation of what they were going to suffer, and above all by the immediate danger of battle. It was also likely, he said, that many people would be cut off outside in the countryside, because they did not believe the Athenians would come; and while they were trying to bring their property in, the army would not be short of money, if it sat down victorious before the city. In this way, too, the other Sicilian Greeks would be all the more ready not to ally themselves with the Syracusans but to come over to the Athenians, and would not hang back watching to see which side would win. As a naval station, he said, they should fall back on Megara and make it their base; it was deserted and lay not far from Syracuse, either by sea or by land.[30]

6.50 Lamachus, having said this, nevertheless gave his own support to Alcibiades' view. After this Alcibiades sailed across in his own ship to Messana and held talks with the Messanians about an alliance. When he failed to persuade them, and they answered that they would not receive the Athenians in the city but would provide a market outside, he sailed back to Rhegium. The generals at once manned sixty ships out of the whole fleet, took on provisions and coasted along to Naxos, leaving the rest of the army at Rhegium together with one of their own number. The Naxians received them in their city, and they coasted on to Catana.[31] When the Catanaeans would not receive them (for there were men there who favored the Syracusan cause), they went on to the river Terias, and after bivouacking there they sailed the next day for Syracuse with the rest of the ships in

30 This is Megara Hyblaea, a Greek city on the east coast of Sicily north of Syracuse, which the Syracusans had destroyed.

31 Not the Aegean island but Sicilian Naxos, a Greek city on the east coast of Sicily.

column. They sent ten of the ships ahead to sail into the Great Harbor and see whether any fleet had been launched, and to come in close and proclaim from the ships that the Athenians had come to restore the Leontines to their own land, in accordance with alliance and kinship; so any Leontines in Syracuse should leave without fear and come over to the Athenians as their friends and benefactors. When the proclamation had been made and they had reconnoitered the city, the harbors and the lie of the country from which they would have to operate in making war, they sailed back to Catana.[32] 6.51 An assembly was held, and the Catanaeans would not admit the army, but told the generals to come in and say what they wanted. While Alcibiades was speaking, and the people in the city had their attention fixed on the assembly, the soldiers broke down a small postern gate that had been badly walled up, without anyone noticing, came in and began buying things in the marketplace. Those Catanaeans who sided with the Syracusans, when they saw the army inside, at once became terrified and slipped away—there were not very many of them—while the rest voted for an alliance with the Athenians and told them to bring the rest of their army from Rhegium. After this the Athenians sailed across to Rhegium, set out with the whole army now for Catana, and on arriving set about building their camp.

6.52 Word reached them from Camarina that if they came, the Camarinaeans would join them, and also that the Syracusans were manning a fleet. So with the whole force they first sailed along the coast to Syracuse; and when they found no fleet being manned, they coasted on again to Camarina, put in at the beach and sent a herald. But the Camarinaeans would not receive them, saying that their oaths bound them to receive the Athenians if they sailed in with a single ship, unless they themselves sent for more. Having achieved nothing, they sailed away. They landed at a point in Syracusan territory and carried off plunder, but the Syracusan cavalry came to the rescue and killed some of

32 The Great Harbor is the large bay just south of the city of Syracuse.

the light troops who had scattered, and they went back to Catana.

HARMODIUS AND ARISTOGEITON

Alcibiades is recalled; Thucydides tells the true story of the tyrant-slayers.

6.53 There they found the *Salaminia*, which had come from Athens to fetch Alcibiades, with orders for him to sail home and answer the charges the city was bringing against him, and also to fetch certain others of the soldiers with him who had been denounced for impiety, some in connection with the Mysteries and some with the Herms as well. For after the expedition had sailed, the Athenians had kept up their investigation, no less than before, into what had been done concerning the Mysteries and the Herms. Instead of testing the informers, they accepted everything in a spirit of suspicion, and on the word of worthless men they were arresting and imprisoning citizens of the highest character. They thought it more useful to probe the affair thoroughly and find out the truth than to let anyone, however respectable he seemed, escape without examination once he had been accused through an informer's villainy. For the people knew by hearsay that the tyranny of Peisistratus and his sons had become harsh toward its end, and moreover that it had been brought down not by themselves and Harmodius but by the Spartans; so they were constantly afraid and took everything with suspicion.[33]

6.54 For the daring deed of Aristogeiton and Harmodius was undertaken because of a love affair, and by narrating it at some length I shall show that neither others nor the Athenians themselves give any accurate account of their own tyrants or of what happened. When Peisistratus died an old man, still holding the tyranny, it was not Hipparchus, as most people think, but Hippias, as the eldest, who took power. Harmodius was then in the

33 The *Salaminia* was one of Athens' two official state triremes, used for religious and public missions.

full bloom of youth, and Aristogeiton, a man of the city and a citizen of the middle rank, was his lover and had him as his beloved. Harmodius was propositioned by Hipparchus son of Peisistratus, refused him, and told Aristogeiton. Aristogeiton, stung as a lover would be, and fearing that Hipparchus would use his power to take Harmodius by force, at once began plotting, with such standing as he had, to overthrow the tyranny. Meanwhile Hipparchus made a second attempt, but had no more success in persuading Harmodius. He did not want to do anything violent, but was preparing to insult him in some covert way, so that it would not look as if this were the reason. For in the rest of his rule, too, he was not oppressive to the many, but conducted it without arousing resentment. These tyrants, in fact, cultivated excellence and intelligence to a very great degree; exacting from the Athenians only a twentieth of their produce, they adorned their city handsomely, carried on their wars and provided the sacrifices at the temples. In other respects the city itself continued to use the laws already established, except that the tyrants always took care that one of their own family held office. Among those of them who held the annual archonship at Athens was Peisistratus, the son of Hippias who had been tyrant, named after his grandfather. During his archonship he dedicated the altar of the Twelve Gods in the marketplace and the altar of Apollo in the Pythian precinct. To the altar in the marketplace the Athenian people later added an extension in length and so obliterated the inscription; but the inscription on the altar in the Pythian precinct can still be seen today, in faint letters, and it says this: "Peisistratus son of Hippias set up this memorial of his archonship in the precinct of Pythian Apollo."[34] 6.55 That Hippias ruled because he was the eldest, I state with confidence, since I know it from oral report more accurately than others do. But one could also recognize it from this very fact. He alone of the legitimate brothers is known to have had children, as is shown both by the altar and by the

34 The archons were Athens' chief annual magistrates; the Pythian precinct was a sanctuary of Apollo in the south-east of the city.

pillar about the wrongdoing of the tyrants that was set up on the Athenian acropolis. On it no child of Thessalus or of Hipparchus is recorded, but five of Hippias, born to him by Myrrhine, daughter of Callias son of Hyperochides; and it was natural for the eldest to marry first. On the same pillar, too, he is listed first after his father. This also is not surprising, since he was next in seniority after him and was the one who became tyrant. Nor, I think, would Hippias ever have taken over the tyranny so easily on the spot if Hipparchus had died while in power and he himself had been installed that same day. Instead, because of his long familiarity with power, he was feared by the citizens and kept strict discipline over the mercenaries, and so he prevailed with a wide margin of safety. He was not at a loss, as a younger brother would have been, who had not previously been in constant contact with power. As for Hipparchus, it fell to him that, made famous by the misfortune of his death, he also acquired in later times the reputation of having been the tyrant.

6.56 Anyway, when Harmodius rejected his advances, Hipparchus insulted him, as he had planned. They invited his sister, a young girl, to come and carry a basket in a certain procession, and then drove her away, saying they had never invited her in the first place, since she was not worthy. Harmodius took this hard, and on his account Aristogeiton was far more provoked still. Everything else had already been arranged with those who were to join them in the deed, and they were waiting for the Great Panathenaea, the only day on which it aroused no suspicion for the citizens who were to take part in the procession to gather together under arms. The two of them were to begin, and the others were to join in at once and deal with the bodyguards. The conspirators were few, for the sake of security. They hoped that even those not in on the secret, once any number at all had dared to act, would be willing on the spur of the moment, since they would have weapons in their hands, to join in winning their own freedom.[35] 6.57 When the festival came, Hippias was

35 The Panathenaea was Athens' chief festival, in honor of Athena; every fourth year it was celebrated on a grander scale as the Great Panathenaea.

outside the walls in the place called the Ceramicus with his bodyguards, arranging how each part of the procession was to move forward. Harmodius and Aristogeiton, with their daggers already in hand, were advancing to do the deed. But when they saw one of their fellow conspirators talking familiarly with Hippias (Hippias was easy for anyone to approach), they were afraid, believing they had been informed on and were all but on the point of arrest.[36] So they wanted first, if they could, to take revenge on the man who had wronged them and on whose account they were risking everything. Just as they were, they rushed inside the gates and came upon Hipparchus by the so-called Leocoreum. At once, without a thought, they fell on him in the greatest fury, the one out of a lover's anger, the other because he had been insulted, and struck and killed him. Aristogeiton escaped the bodyguards for the moment, as the crowd came running together, but was later caught and dealt with in no gentle way. Harmodius was killed on the spot.[37] 6.58 When the news reached Hippias in the Ceramicus, he went at once, not to the scene of what had happened, but to the armed men in the procession, before they found out, since they were some distance away. Composing his face so as to betray nothing of the disaster, he pointed to a certain spot and ordered them to go over to it without their weapons. They withdrew, thinking he was going to tell them something; but he told his mercenaries to take away the weapons, and at once picked out those he held guilty and anyone found carrying a dagger. For the custom was to march in processions with shield and spear.

6.59 In this way, then, it was a lover's grief that started the plot, and Harmodius and Aristogeiton's reckless daring came from the sudden panic of the moment. After this the tyranny grew harsher for the Athenians. Hippias, now more afraid, put many of the citizens to death, and at the same time looked abroad to

36 The Ceramicus was the potters' quarter of Athens, partly outside the city wall, where the Panathenaic procession assembled.

37 The Leocoreum was a shrine in the Athenian agora to the daughters of the legendary Leos.

see whether he could find a secure refuge anywhere in case of a revolution. At any rate, after this he, an Athenian, gave his daughter Archedice to a man of Lampsacus, Aeantides, son of Hippoclus the tyrant of Lampsacus, since he saw that they had great influence with King Darius.[38] Her tomb is at Lampsacus, with this inscription: "This dust covers Archedice, daughter of Hippias, the foremost man in Greece in his day. Though her father, her husband, her brothers and her sons were tyrants, her mind was not lifted up to arrogance." Hippias ruled the Athenians as tyrant for three more years, and in the fourth he was deposed by the Spartans and the exiled Alcmaeonidae. He left under a truce for Sigeum and for Aeantides at Lampsacus, and from there went to King Darius. Setting out from Darius' court, twenty years later, already an old man, he joined the Persian expedition to Marathon.[39]

ALCIBIADES FLEES

An informer's confession calms Athens; Alcibiades escapes at Thurii and is condemned to death.

6.60 The Athenian people had all this in mind, and remembered everything they knew about it from hearsay. So they were harsh and suspicious at that time toward those accused in the affair of the Mysteries, and everything seemed to them to have been done as part of an oligarchic and tyrannical conspiracy. Because of their anger on this score, many men of note were already in prison, and there seemed to be no end to it. Instead, every day they went further toward savagery and toward arresting still more. At this point one of the prisoners, the one thought most guilty, was persuaded by one of his fellow prisoners to give information, whether it was true or not. Both views are held, and no one, either then or later, has been able to say anything certain about the men who did the deed. His fellow prisoner

38 Lampsacus was a Greek city on the Hellespont; Darius I was king of Persia.
39 The Alcmaeonidae were a leading Athenian family exiled under the tyranny; Hippias was expelled in 510 BC, and the Persians landed at Marathon in 490 BC.

argued and persuaded him that, even if he had not done it, he ought to secure immunity and save himself, and free the city from its present suspicion; for his safety would be surer if he confessed under a grant of immunity than if he denied it and went to trial. So he informed both against himself and against others in the matter of the Herms. The Athenian people gladly seized on what they took to be the truth, having previously found it intolerable that they might never discover who was plotting against their popular government. They at once released the informer, and with him all the others he had not accused. Those he had charged they put on trial: all who had been caught they executed, and those who had escaped they condemned to death, proclaiming a reward of money for anyone who killed them. In all this it remained unclear whether those who suffered had been punished unjustly; but the rest of the city, for the moment at least, had plainly benefited. 6.61 As for Alcibiades, his personal enemies, the same men who had attacked him even before he sailed, kept pressing the charge, and the Athenians took a harsh view. Since they thought they had the truth about the Herms, it seemed all the more likely that the affair of the Mysteries, of which he stood accused, had been his doing, with the same aim and as part of the conspiracy against the democracy. For it also happened that at this very moment, while they were in turmoil over these matters, a Spartan force, not a large one, had come as far as the Isthmus on some business with the Boeotians. So it was thought that it had come by prearrangement, at his instigation and not on account of the Boeotians, and that if they had not acted first themselves and arrested the men on the information, the city would have been betrayed. For one night they even slept under arms in the Theseum in the city.[40] At the same time Alcibiades' guest-friends at Argos were suspected of planning an attack on the democracy there, and for this reason the Athenians then handed over to the Argive people for execution the Argive hostages held on the

40 The Isthmus of Corinth; the Theseum was the sanctuary of the hero Theseus in Athens.

islands. Suspicion surrounded Alcibiades on every side. So, wishing to bring him to trial and put him to death, they sent the *Salaminia* to Sicily for him and for the others who had been informed against. Its orders were to tell him to come and make his defense, but not to arrest him. They were careful not to stir up trouble among their own soldiers and the enemy in Sicily, and above all they wanted the Mantineans and Argives to stay, believing that it was through him that they had been persuaded to join the expedition. So he, with his own ship, and those accused along with him, sailed from Sicily with the *Salaminia* as if for Athens. But when they reached Thurii they followed no farther; they left the ship and vanished, afraid to sail home to stand trial in the face of such prejudice. The men of the *Salaminia* searched for Alcibiades and his companions for a while, but since they were nowhere to be found, they sailed away. Alcibiades, now an exile, crossed not long afterward in a boat from the territory of Thurii to the Peloponnese; and the Athenians condemned him and those with him to death in their absence.[41]

6.62 After this the remaining Athenian generals in Sicily divided the army into two parts, each taking one by lot, and sailed with the whole force for Selinus and Egesta. They wanted to find out whether the Egestaeans would hand over the money, and also to look into the affairs of the Selinuntines and learn the points at issue between them and the Egestaeans. Sailing along with Sicily on their left, on the side facing the Tyrrhenian Sea, they put in at Himera, the only Greek city in that part of Sicily; and when it would not receive them, they sailed on along the coast. On the way they took Hyccara, a small Sicanian town but hostile to Egesta; it lay on the coast. They enslaved the inhabitants and handed the town over to the Egestaeans, whose cavalry had joined them. They themselves went back by land through the territory of the Sicels until they reached Catana, while the ships sailed round with the captives. Nicias sailed straight from Hyccara along the coast to Egesta, and after transacting his

41 Thurii was a colony in southern Italy founded under Athenian sponsorship.

other business and receiving thirty talents, rejoined the army. They sold the captives, who brought in a hundred and twenty talents. They also sailed round to their Sicel allies, telling them to send troops; and with half of their own force they went against Hybla Geleatis, which was hostile, and failed to take it. And the summer ended.

THE BATTLE BY THE OLYMPIEUM

The Athenians trick the Syracusans out of their city and defeat them near the temple of Zeus.

6.63 At the very start of the following winter the Athenians began preparing their attack on Syracuse, and the Syracusans for their part prepared to go against them. For when the Athenians did not press them at once, as their first fear and expectation had led them to think, they grew bolder with each day that passed. And when the Athenians were seen sailing along the far side of Sicily, a long way from them, and going against Hybla and failing to take it by force when they tried, they despised them still more. They demanded that their generals lead them against Catana, as a crowd likes to do once it has grown confident, since the enemy would not come against them. And Syracusan cavalry scouts kept riding up to the Athenian army and jeering at them, asking among other things whether they had really come to settle down with the Syracusans themselves on foreign soil rather than to resettle the Leontines on their own. 6.64 The Athenian generals were aware of this. They wanted to draw the Syracusans out of their city in full force as far away as possible, while they themselves in the meantime sailed along the coast by night and took up a camp in a suitable position undisturbed. They knew they could not do this equally well if they disembarked from the ships against an enemy ready for them, or if they were seen marching by land. (The Syracusan cavalry were numerous, while they themselves had no cavalry with them, so they would do great harm to the Athenians' light troops and their crowd of camp-followers; whereas in this way they would

seize a position where they would suffer no harm worth speaking of from the cavalry. Syracusan exiles who were with them told them about the ground near the Olympieum, which in fact they occupied.) So, with their aims in view, the generals devised a scheme of the following kind.[42] They sent a man who was loyal to them but whom the Syracusan generals believed to be no less their own friend. He was a Catanaean, and he said he came from men in Catana whose names they knew and whom they knew to be still in the city, among those who had stayed loyal to them. He said that the Athenians were spending the nights in the city, away from their arms. If the Syracusans were willing to come in full force on a stated day at dawn against the army, his friends would shut in the Athenians who were among them and set fire to the ships, and the Syracusans could easily take the army by attacking the stockade. Many Catanaeans, he said, would take part in this, and those who had sent him had already made their preparations. 6.65 The Syracusan generals were confident in general, and had intended and prepared to march against Catana even without this; so they trusted the man with much less caution than they should have. At once they agreed on a day when they would be there and sent him back. Then, since the Selinuntines and some others of their allies had already arrived, they gave notice for all the Syracusans to march out in full force. When their preparations were complete and the days on which they had agreed to come were near, they set out for Catana and camped by the river Symaethus in the territory of Leontini. When the Athenians learned that they were approaching, they took up their whole army, along with all the Sicels or anyone else who had joined them, put them aboard the warships and transports, and sailed by night against Syracuse. At dawn the Athenians were landing opposite the Olympieum to occupy their camp site, while the Syracusan cavalry, who had ridden up to Catana ahead of the rest, found that the whole army had put out to sea. They turned back and reported this to the infantry, and then they all turned round together and hurried to defend

42 The Olympieum was the temple of Olympian Zeus, just south of Syracuse.

the city. 6.66 Meanwhile, since the Syracusans had a long way to go, the Athenians settled their army at leisure in a suitable position. There they could begin a battle whenever they wished, and the Syracusan cavalry would be least able to harm them, either during the action or before it: on one side walls, houses, trees and a marsh hemmed them in, and along the other side there were cliffs. They cut down the nearby trees, carried them down to the sea, and drove in a stockade alongside the ships. At Dascon, where the ground was most open to enemy attack, they quickly put up a fort of rough stones and timber, and they broke down the bridge over the Anapus. While they were making these preparations, no one came out of the city to stop them. The Syracusan cavalry were the first to arrive, and later the whole of their infantry gathered as well. At first they came close to the Athenian army; then, as the Athenians did not advance against them, they withdrew, crossed the road to Helorus, and camped for the night.

6.67 The next day the Athenians and their allies prepared for battle and drew up as follows. The Argives and Mantineans held the right wing, the Athenians the center, and the remaining allies the rest of the line. Half their army was drawn up in front, eight deep, and the other half by the tents in a hollow square, also eight deep. These had orders to watch for wherever any part of the army was hardest pressed and go to its aid. They placed the baggage carriers inside this reserve. The Syracusans drew up all their hoplites sixteen deep: these were the whole Syracusan levy and all the allies who were present. (The Selinuntines had come to help them in the largest numbers; besides them there were cavalry from Gela, about two hundred in all, and from Camarina about twenty horsemen and some fifty archers.) They stationed their cavalry, no fewer than twelve hundred, on the right, and next to them the javelin-throwers. As the Athenians were about to attack first, Nicias went along the line to each of the contingents in turn, and gave this exhortation to them all:

6.68 "Gentlemen, what need is there for a long exhortation, when we are all here for the same contest? The forces themselves seem to me better able to give you confidence than finely spoken words joined to a weak army. Where we are Argives, Mantineans, Athenians and the foremost of the islanders, how can every one of us not have high hopes of victory with allies of this quality and in these numbers? This is especially true against men who are defending themselves with their whole population, not picked troops as we are, and Sicilian Greeks besides, who look down on us but will not stand their ground against us, because their skill falls short of their daring. Let each of you also bear this in mind: we are far from our own land, and near no friendly land except what you win for yourselves by fighting. I remind you of the opposite of what I am quite sure the enemy are urging on one another. They say that the contest will be for their country. I say that it will be in a country not our own, from which we must either conquer or find it no easy matter to get away, for their cavalry, in great numbers, will be on our backs. So remember your own worth, and go at your opponents with spirit, believing that our present necessity and our hard straits are more to be feared than the enemy."

6.69 After this exhortation Nicias at once led the army forward. The Syracusans did not expect to have to fight at that moment, and some of them, since the city was close by, had even gone off. These hurried back at a run to help, and though they came late, each man took his place wherever he could join the main body. For they were certainly not lacking in spirit or daring, either in this battle or in the others. In courage they were no worse than their enemies, so far as their skill held out; but where it failed them, they betrayed their resolve as well, against their will. Even so, although they had not thought the Athenians would attack first, and were forced to defend themselves in haste, they took up their arms and at once advanced to meet them. First, on each side, the stone-throwers, slingers and archers skirmished in front, and drove each other back in turn, as light troops are apt to do. Then the seers brought forward the customary sacri-

fices, and the trumpeters urged the hoplites to close. And they advanced. The Syracusans were fighting for their country, and each man for his own safety in the moment and his freedom in the future. On the other side, the Athenians were fighting to make another's land their own and to save their own from harm through defeat; the Argives and the independent allies, to help the Athenians win what they had come for and, by victory, to see once more the country that was theirs. As for the subject allies, their greatest eagerness was for their immediate survival, for which they had no hope unless they won; and then, secondarily, in the hope that if they helped conquer something further, their own subjection would be easier to bear. 6.70 When the battle came to close quarters, the two sides held out against each other for a long time. And it happened that at the same time there were some claps of thunder, with lightning and heavy rain, so that for those who were fighting for the first time and had least experience of war this too added to their fear. To the more experienced, however, these events seemed simply the work of the season, and what alarmed them far more was that their opponents were not being beaten. The Argives first pushed back the Syracusan left wing, and after them the Athenians drove back the part facing them; and then the rest of the Syracusan army too began to break apart and was put to flight. The Athenians did not pursue far, for the Syracusan cavalry, numerous and undefeated, held them off, charging into their hoplites and driving back any they saw pursuing ahead of the rest. They followed in a body as far as it was safe, then withdrew again and set up a trophy. The Syracusans gathered on the Helorine road and formed up as well as the circumstances allowed; even so, they sent off a garrison of their own to the Olympieum, afraid that the Athenians might lay hands on the treasures there, and the rest went back into the city. 6.71 The Athenians did not go to the temple, but gathered their own dead, laid them on a pyre, and camped there for the night. The next day they gave the Syracusans back their dead under truce (about two hundred and sixty of them and their allies had been killed), and collected the bones

of their own (about fifty of them and their allies had been killed); and taking the enemy's spoils with them they sailed back to Catana. For it was winter, and it did not yet seem possible to carry on the war from there. First they had to send to Athens for cavalry and raise more from their allies in Sicily, so as not to be completely at the mercy of the enemy's horse; they also had to collect money there and have it come from Athens, and win over some of the cities, which they hoped would be more ready to submit to them after the battle; and they had to get together grain and everything else they needed, so as to attack Syracuse in the spring.

HERMOCRATES RALLIES SYRACUSE

Syracuse reorganizes its command and fortifies the city for the coming siege.

6.72 With this plan they sailed off to Naxos and Catana to pass the winter. The Syracusans, after burying their own dead, held an assembly. Hermocrates son of Hermon came forward before them, a man second to none in intelligence generally, who had proved himself capable in war through experience and conspicuous for courage. He encouraged them and would not let them give way because of what had happened. Their resolve, he said, had not been beaten; it was their lack of discipline that had done the harm. Yet they had not fallen short as far as might have been expected, especially since they had been amateurs, so to speak, contending against craftsmen, the most experienced of the Greeks. Great harm had also been done by the number of generals and the divided command (they had fifteen generals), and by the disorganized indiscipline of the rank and file. But if a few experienced generals were chosen, and if during this winter they got the hoplite force ready, providing arms for those who had none so that there would be as many as possible, and compelling them to train in other ways as well, then, he said, in all likelihood they would overcome their opponents, since they already had courage and would now gain discipline in action.

Both would improve: discipline by being practiced in the face of danger, while their courage would grow bolder than it was before, backed by the confidence that skill brings. The generals should be few and given full powers, and the people should swear an oath to them that they would truly let them command in whatever way they judged best. In that way what needed to be kept secret would be better concealed, and everything else would be prepared in good order and without excuses. 6.73 The Syracusans heard him and voted everything as he urged. They elected as generals Hermocrates himself, Heracleides son of Lysimachus and Sicanus son of Execestus, these three. They also sent envoys to Corinth and to Sparta, to secure an alliance and to persuade the Spartans to wage the war against the Athenians more resolutely and openly on their behalf, so that either they would draw the Athenians away from Sicily, or the Athenians would be less able to send further help to their army in Sicily.

6.74 The Athenian army at Catana at once sailed against Messana, expecting it to be betrayed to them. But the plot came to nothing. For Alcibiades, when he left his command after being recalled, knowing that he would be an exile, revealed it to the friends of the Syracusans in Messana, since he had been in on the plan. They had already put the men involved to death, and now, amid civil strife and under arms, the party that wanted this carried their point that the Athenians should not be admitted. The Athenians waited about thirteen days, but since they were suffering from the weather, had no supplies and were making no progress, they went away to Naxos, marked out boundaries and built stockades around their camp, and wintered there. They also sent a trireme to Athens for money and cavalry, so that these would arrive at the beginning of spring.

6.75 During the winter the Syracusans too built fortifications. At the city they built a wall that took in the Temenites, running along the whole side facing Epipolae, so that if they should after all be defeated, they could not easily be walled off along a shorter line. They also made Megara a fort, and built another at the Olympieum; and they drove stakes into the sea wherever

there were landing places. Knowing that the Athenians were wintering at Naxos, they marched in full force against Catana, ravaged part of its territory, burned the Athenians' tents and camp, and went back home.[43]

THE DEBATE AT CAMARINA

Hermocrates warns the Camarinaeans that Athens means to enslave all Sicily.

Learning that the Athenians were sending an embassy to Camarina, on the strength of the alliance made in Laches' time, to see if they could win the Camarinaeans over, the Syracusans sent a counter-embassy themselves. For they suspected that the Camarinaeans had not been eager in sending what they did send to the first battle, and that in future they might no longer be willing to help, now that they saw the Athenians had done well in the battle, but might go over to them, persuaded by their former friendship. So when Hermocrates and others had arrived at Camarina from Syracuse, and Euphemus with others from the Athenians, an assembly of the Camarinaeans was held, and Hermocrates, wishing to prejudice them against the Athenians in advance, spoke as follows:[44]

6.76 "Camarinaeans, we have come on this embassy not because we feared that you would be dismayed by the Athenian force that is here, but rather because we feared that the words they are about to address to you might win you over before you had heard anything from us as well. They have come to Sicily on the pretext you hear of, but with the intention we all suspect. And it seems to me that what they want is not to settle the Leontines back in their homes, but rather to settle us out of ours. For surely it makes no sense to empty the cities over there and to resettle the ones here, or to care for the Leontines on the

43 The Temenites was the sacred precinct of Apollo on the high ground west of the city.

44 Laches commanded the first Athenian expedition to Sicily (427–424 BC), during which Athens made an alliance with Camarina, a city on Sicily's south coast.

grounds of kinship because they are Chalcidians, while keeping enslaved the Chalcidians in Euboea, whose colonists these Leontines are. It is by the same method that they acquired their possessions there and are now attempting those here. They became leaders of the Ionians, and of all the allies descended from themselves, who followed them willingly, supposedly to take vengeance on the Persians. Then they subjugated them, bringing against some the charge of deserting the army, against others that of making war on one another, and against the rest whatever plausible charge they could find in each case. So it was not, after all, for freedom that either of them stood against the Persians—neither the Athenians for the freedom of the Greeks, nor the Greeks for their own. The Athenians fought to have the others enslaved to themselves instead of to him; the others, for a change of master—to one no less clever, but cleverer at doing harm.

6.77 "But no: we have not come now to show, before people who already know, how many wrongs the Athenians' city commits, easy as it is to accuse. We have come far more to blame ourselves. We have the example of how the Greeks over there were enslaved for failing to defend themselves; the same tricks are now being used against us—resettlements of Leontine kinsmen, aid for Egestaean allies. And yet we are not willing to band together and show them more resolutely that here there are no Ionians, or Hellespontines and islanders, who are always changing masters, the Persian or some other single ruler, and remain slaves, but free Dorians from the independent Peloponnese who dwell in Sicily. Or are we going to wait until we are taken one by one, city by city, knowing that this is the only way we can be conquered, and seeing them turn to precisely this method—dividing some of us by words, setting others at war with one another by holding out hopes of alliance, and doing harm to others by saying something agreeable to each? And do we imagine that when a distant fellow-dweller in Sicily is destroyed first, the danger will not reach each of us in turn, but that the one who suffers before him will meet his misfortune alone? 6.78 And if it

has occurred to anyone that it is the Syracusan and not himself who is the enemy of the Athenian, and he thinks it hard to run risks for my country, let him reflect that he will be fighting in my country not for mine any more than for his own; and all the more safely, since I will not have been destroyed first, and he will contend with me as his ally and not alone. Let him reflect too that the Athenian wants not to punish the Syracusan's enmity, but to use me as a pretext for making sure, no less, of his friendship. And if anyone envies us or even fears us (for greater powers are exposed to both), and for that reason wants Syracuse to be harmed so that we may be taught restraint, yet to survive for the sake of his own security, he is hoping for something beyond human power. For one and the same man cannot be the steward of his desires and of chance alike. And if his judgment proves wrong, then, lamenting his own misfortunes, he might perhaps wish some day that he could envy my good fortune once again. But that will be impossible for one who has abandoned us and refused to take on the same dangers—dangers that concern not names but realities. For in word a man would be preserving our power, but in deed his own safety. And you above all, Camarinaeans, as our neighbors who will be next in danger, ought to have foreseen this and not be such half-hearted allies as you are now. You should rather be coming to us yourselves; and the appeals you would be making to us if the Athenians had come first to Camarinaean territory, those same appeals you should now be seen making to us on equal terms, urging us to give no ground. But so far neither you nor the others have set about doing this.

6.79 "Perhaps, out of cowardice, you will pay court to justice toward both us and the invaders, saying that you have an alliance with the Athenians. But you made that alliance not against your friends, but in case any of your enemies should attack you; and to help the Athenians when they are wronged by others, not when they themselves are wronging their neighbors, as they are now. Why, not even the Rhegians, though they are Chalcidians, are willing to help resettle the Leontines, who are Chalcidians

too. And it is monstrous that they, suspecting the reality behind the fine plea of right, show good sense without a plausible argument to plead, while you, with a plausible pretext, want to help your natural enemies and, together with your bitterest foes, destroy those who are still more truly your natural kin. That is not just. You should defend us, and not fear their forces. They are not formidable if we all stand together, but only if we do the opposite and split apart—which is exactly what they are striving for. For even when they came against us alone and beat us in battle, they did not achieve what they wanted, but went away in haste. 6.80 So, as long as we are united, there is no reason to lose heart; rather, we should enter the alliance more eagerly, especially since help will be coming from the Peloponnese, whose men are altogether better than these at warfare. And let no one think that the cautious policy of helping neither side, on the grounds of being allies of both, is fair to us and safe for you. For it is not equal in deed, as it is in the plea of right. If, because you did not join the alliance, the victim falls and the victor prevails, what else will you have done by that same absence but fail to help the one to be saved and fail to stop the other from doing evil? And yet it is finer to side with those who are wronged, who are also your kin, and so to protect the common advantage of Sicily, and not to let the Athenians—your friends, of course—go wrong.

"To sum up, we Syracusans say that there is no point in explaining in detail, either to you or to the others, matters that you understand yourselves as well as we do. But we entreat you—and at the same time, if we fail to persuade you, we call you to witness—that we are being plotted against by Ionians, our perpetual enemies, and betrayed by you, Dorians by Dorians. If the Athenians subdue us, they will have won by your decisions, but they will be honored in their own name, and the prize they take for the victory will be none other than the very ones who made the victory possible. And if, on the other hand, we prevail, you will pay the penalty for having caused our dangers. So consider, and choose now: either slavery at once, without danger; or the

chance, if you prevail with us, of not taking these men as your masters in disgrace, and of escaping an enmity with us that would not prove short-lived."

EUPHEMUS REPLIES

The Athenian envoy defends the empire as necessary for Athens' security.

6.81 Such was the speech of Hermocrates. After him Euphemus, the Athenian envoy, spoke as follows:

6.82 "We came here to renew the alliance that already existed. But since the Syracusan has attacked us, we must also speak about our empire and show that we hold it with good reason. Now the strongest evidence he supplied himself: that the Ionians are forever enemies of the Dorians. And so it is. We are Ionians, and the Peloponnesians are Dorians, more numerous than we are and our neighbors, so we considered how we might least be subject to them. After the Persian Wars we acquired ships, and so freed ourselves from the rule and leadership of the Spartans. It was no more fitting for them to give orders to us than for us to give orders to them,[45] except insofar as they were stronger at the time. We ourselves became leaders of those who had formerly been subjects of the Persian King, and that is how we live. We believed that this was how we would be least under the Peloponnesians, since we would have the power to defend ourselves. And, to speak precisely, it was not unjust of us to subjugate the Ionians and the islanders either, though the Syracusans say we have enslaved our own kin. These people came with the Persians against their mother city, against us. They did not dare to revolt and sacrifice their homes, as we did when we abandoned our city. Instead they chose slavery for themselves and wanted to impose the same on us. 6.83 For this reason we rule. We deserve to, because we contributed the largest navy and unstinting zeal to the Greek cause, while these people read-

45 Ionians and Dorians were the two main ethnic branches of the Greeks. Athens was Ionian, while Sparta, Corinth and Syracuse were Dorian.

ily did the same for the Persians and so did us harm. And at the same time we were reaching for strength against the Peloponnesians. We make no fine speeches claiming that we rule with good reason because we alone overthrew the Persians, or that we ran our risks for the freedom of these people rather than for that of everyone, ourselves included. No one can be blamed for securing the safety that is rightly his. And now, too, it is for the sake of our own security that we are here as well, and we see that the same course is in your interest. We will show this from the very charges these men bring against us and from the points on which you are most inclined to suspect the worst. We know that people who harbor anxious suspicions enjoy the charm of an argument for the moment, but later, when they come to act, they do what is in their interest. We have said that we hold our empire over there out of fear, and that it is for the same reason that we have come here: to settle affairs here safely with our friends. We have not come to enslave anyone, but rather to prevent that from happening.

6.84 "Let no one suppose that we are taking an interest in you even though your affairs are no concern of ours. He should recognize that if you are preserved, and are strong enough to hold out against the Syracusans, we will suffer less harm from their sending some force to help the Peloponnesians. In this respect you are already of the greatest concern to us. That is why it is reasonable for us to restore the Leontines as well. We want them not as subjects, like their kinsmen in Euboea, but as strong as possible, so that from their own territory, which borders on these men's, they can be a thorn in their side on our behalf. Over there we are able to cope with our enemies by ourselves. The Chalcidian, whom he says it is absurd of us to enslave over there while freeing the people here, is useful to us without armed forces, paying only money. Here, by contrast, the Leontines and our other friends are most useful to us when they are as independent as possible.[46] 6.85 For a tyrant or a city that holds an

46 Chalcis in Euboea, the mother city of Leontini, was a tribute-paying subject of Athens.

empire, nothing that is expedient is unreasonable, and nothing that cannot be trusted is one's own. In each case one must become enemy or friend as the occasion demands. What benefits us here is not to harm our friends, but for our enemies to be powerless because our friends are strong. You must not doubt this. Over there, too, we lead our allies according to how each is useful to us. The Chians and Methymnaeans stay independent in return for supplying ships. Most of the others are treated more forcibly and pay money. Others again are allies on entirely free terms, though they are islanders and easy to take, because they occupy strategic positions around the Peloponnese.[47] So it is reasonable that matters here, too, should be arranged with an eye to our advantage and, as we keep saying, to fear of the Syracusans. They are aiming to rule you. Their plan is to unite you on the basis of your suspicion of us, and then, by force or once you are left isolated after we have gone home with nothing achieved, to rule Sicily themselves. And that is bound to happen if you unite with them. Such a great force combined in one would no longer be easy for us to handle, and once we were gone these people would hardly be weak against you. 6.86 Anyone who disagrees can be refuted by the facts themselves. On the previous occasion, when you called us in, the only fear you held out to us was that if we let you fall under the Syracusans, we would be in danger ourselves. It is not right now to distrust the same argument with which you thought fit to persuade us. Nor is it right to suspect us because we are here with a larger force to meet these men's power. You should far rather distrust them. We, for our part, cannot remain here without your support. Even if we turned villains and subdued you, we could not hold you, because of the length of the voyage and the difficulty of guarding large cities with the resources of mainland states. These men, by contrast, live beside you not with an army in camp but with a city greater than our expedition here. They are always plotting against you, and whenever they get an oppor-

47 Methymna was a city on Lesbos. By this time it and Chios were the only allies still supplying ships to Athens instead of paying tribute.

tunity in any matter, they never let it slip. They have shown this before in other cases, and particularly in that of the Leontines. And now they have the effrontery to call on you, as though you had no sense, to oppose the very people who are preventing this and who have kept Sicily from falling under them until now. We in turn call on you to a far more genuine safety. We beg you not to betray the safety that each of us, on both sides, gains from the other. Consider that they, because of their numbers, always have a road open against you even without allies, while you will not often have the chance to defend yourselves with so great a force of auxiliaries. If, out of suspicion, you let it leave with nothing achieved, or even defeated, the day will come when you will long to see even the tiniest fraction of it, and by then its coming will no longer do you any good.

6.87 "So, men of Camarina, do not be won over by these men's slanders, and let the others not be either. We have told you the whole truth about the matters on which we are suspected, and we will now remind you of the main points and expect to persuade you. We say that we rule those over there so as not to be subject to anyone else. We free those here so as not to be harmed by them. We are compelled to do many things because we also have many things to guard against. And both now and before, we have come as allies to those of you here who are being wronged, not uninvited but called in. Do not set yourselves up as judges of what we do, or as its correctors, and try to turn us from it; that would be a hard task at this point. Rather, insofar as anything in our busy meddling and our character serves your interest as well, take that and make use of it. And consider that these qualities do not harm everyone alike, but actually benefit far more of the Greeks. Everywhere, even where we have no presence, there are two kinds of men. One expects to be wronged, and has the ready hope of getting help from us in return. The other is plotting, and knows that if we come he will run his risks in fear. So both are compelled, the plotter to show restraint against his will, the other to be saved without trouble to himself. Do not, then, reject this security, which is open to

anyone who needs it and is now available to you. Put yourselves on the same footing as the others, and instead of always guarding against the Syracusans, take your turn at last to plot against them, on equal terms, with us."

6.88 Such was Euphemus' speech. The Camarinaeans were in the following state of mind. They were well disposed to the Athenians, except insofar as [if] they thought they would enslave Sicily. With the Syracusans they had always been at odds, as neighbors are. But they were no less afraid that the Syracusans, who were close by, might prevail even without them. That was why they had at first sent them those few horsemen. For the future they decided to help the Syracusans more in deed, but as sparingly as they could. For the present, however, they decided to give both sides an equal answer in word, so as not to seem to favor the Athenians any less, especially since the Athenians had come off the stronger in the battle. Having resolved on this, they replied that since there happened to be a war between two parties who were both their allies, they thought it consistent with their oaths, for the present, to help neither. And the envoys of both sides went away.

The Syracusans, for their part, made their own preparations for the war. The Athenians, encamped at Naxos, negotiated with the Sicels to bring over as many of them as possible. Most of the Sicels who lived more toward the plains were subjects of the Syracusans, and had revolted. The settlements of those who held the interior had always been independent, and all but a few at once sided with the Athenians. They brought down grain for the army, and some even brought money. The Athenians marched against those who did not come over, and compelled some of them to join. Elsewhere they were prevented by the Syracusans, who sent garrisons and help. For the winter they moved their anchorage from Naxos to Catana, rebuilt the camp that the Syracusans had burned, and wintered there. They sent a trireme to Carthage to seek friendship, in the hope of getting some help. They also sent to Etruria, since some of the cities there were themselves offering to join in the war. They sent

round to the Sicels as well, and sent to Egesta, telling them to send as many horses as possible. And they got ready everything else for walling the city in, bricks and iron and whatever else was needed, intending to take up the war as soon as spring came.[48]

Meanwhile the Syracusan envoys who had been sent to Corinth and Sparta tried, as they sailed along the coast, to persuade the Italian Greeks too not to stand by and watch what the Athenians were doing, since it was aimed at them just as much. When they reached Corinth, they made speeches asking for help on the grounds of kinship. The Corinthians at once voted, being the first to do so, to defend them with all their zeal. They also sent envoys with them to Sparta, to help persuade the Spartans as well to prosecute the war at home more openly against the Athenians and to send some help to Sicily.[49] So the envoys from Corinth arrived at Sparta. So did Alcibiades with his fellow exiles. Right after his escape he had crossed on a merchant ship from the territory of Thurii, first to Cyllene in Elis. Afterward he came to Sparta under safe-conduct, the Spartans themselves having sent for him, for he was afraid of them because of his part in the affair at Mantinea. And it happened that in the Spartan assembly the Corinthians, the Syracusans and Alcibiades all made the same requests and tried to persuade the Spartans. The ephors and the authorities were intending to send envoys to Syracuse to prevent it from coming to terms with the Athenians, but were not eager to send help. Then Alcibiades came forward, roused the Spartans and spurred them on, speaking as follows:[50]

48 Etruria, the land of the Etruscans, lay in central Italy.
49 Syracuse was a colony of Corinth, hence the appeal to kinship.
50 The ephors were Sparta's five annually elected chief magistrates. The "affair at Mantinea" was Alcibiades' organizing of the anti-Spartan alliance of Argos, Mantinea and Elis, defeated by Sparta in 418 BC.

ALCIBIADES AT SPARTA

The exiled Alcibiades reveals Athens' plans and tells Sparta how to defeat it.

6.89 "I must first speak to you about the prejudice against me, so that suspicion of me does not make you listen less favorably to matters that concern us all. My ancestors renounced their proxeny for you over some grievance. I myself took it up again and paid you attention in various ways, especially over the disaster at Pylos. Yet though I remained zealous on your behalf, when you made peace with the Athenians you negotiated through my enemies and so gave them power, while you covered me with dishonor.[51] For this reason you were justly harmed by me, when I turned to the Mantineans and Argives and in whatever else I opposed you. And now, if anyone was unreasonably angry with me at the time, while he was suffering, let him look at the matter in the light of the truth and change his mind. Or if anyone thought worse of me because I was more attached to the people, let him not think, on that account either, that he is right to be offended. Our family has always been opposed to tyrants, and whatever opposes one-man rule has been given the name 'the people.' From that time the leadership of the multitude has stayed with us. Besides, since the city was a democracy, we were obliged for the most part to conform to existing conditions. Even so, in the face of the prevailing unruliness, we tried to be more moderate in our politics. There were others, both in the past and now, who led the mob toward worse courses, and it was they who drove me out. But we were leaders of the people as a whole. We thought it right to help preserve the form of government under which the city happened to be greatest and most free, and which we had inherited. Those of us with any sense knew well enough what democracy is, and I as well as anyone,

51 A proxenos was a citizen who represented and looked after the interests of a foreign state in his own city; Alcibiades' family held this office for Sparta at Athens.

the more so since I have more cause to rail against it. But nothing new could be said about acknowledged folly. And to change it did not seem safe to us while you were camped at our gates as enemies.

6.90 "That is how things stood regarding the charges against me. Now hear about the matters on which you must deliberate, and on which I must advise you, if I know anything more. We sailed to Sicily first to subdue the Sicilian Greeks, if we could; after them, in turn, the Italian Greeks; and then to make an attempt on the Carthaginian empire and on Carthage itself. If this succeeded, either wholly or for the most part, we were then going to attack the Peloponnese. We would bring the entire Greek force gained over there. We would hire many foreigners, Iberians and others among the peoples there who are acknowledged to be the most warlike foreigners now. We would build many triremes in addition to our own, since Italy has timber in abundance. With these ships we would blockade the Peloponnese all round, while at the same time our infantry attacked from the land. We would take some cities by storm and wall others in, and so we expected to defeat you easily, and after that to rule the whole Greek world. As for money and grain, the places acquired over there were themselves to supply enough of both, without the revenue from here, so as to make some part of these plans easier to carry out. 6.91 You have now heard about the expedition that has sailed, from the man who knows most precisely what we intended. And the generals who remain will carry out the same plan, if they can. Now learn why things over there will not survive unless you send help. The Sicilian Greeks are rather inexperienced, but even so, if they banded together in a body, they might still prevail even now. The Syracusans on their own, however, have already been defeated in battle with their whole force and are at the same time hemmed in by ships, and they will be unable to withstand the Athenian forces now there. And if this city is taken, all Sicily is held as well, and Italy immediately after. Then the danger from there that I described a moment ago would soon fall upon you. So let no one think that

he is deliberating only about Sicily. It concerns the Peloponnese as well, unless you quickly do the following. Send out by sea an army of men who will row themselves there and serve as hoplites the moment they land. And send what I consider even more useful than the army: a Spartiate as commander, to organize the men already there and compel those who are unwilling. In this way your existing friends will take more courage, and those who are wavering will come over with less fear. At the same time you must wage the war here more openly, so that the Syracusans, believing that you care, will hold out more firmly, and the Athenians will be less able to send further reinforcements to their own men. And you must fortify Decelea in Attica. That is what the Athenians have always feared most, and it is the one hardship of war they think they have not yet experienced.[52] The surest way to harm one's enemies is to discover for certain what one sees they fear most, and bring that against them. For it is natural that each people should know its own dangers most precisely and fear them. As for the benefits you will gain from the fortification, and those you will deny your opponents, I will pass over many and sum up the most important. Most of the property with which the countryside is stocked will come to you, some of it captured, some of its own accord. The Athenians will at once lose the revenues from the silver mines at Laurium and whatever they now gain from the land and the law courts. Above all, they will lose the revenue from the allies, which will be paid in less regularly. The allies will think that you are now waging the war in earnest, and will take Athens less seriously.[53]

6.92 Whether any of this is done, and done quickly and with more zeal, depends on you, Spartans. That it can be done I am fully confident, and I do not think my judgment will prove wrong.

"I ask that none of you think worse of me if I, who once had a reputation for loving my city, now attack it with all my strength alongside its bitterest enemies. Nor should you suspect my

52 Spartiates were full Spartan citizens. Decelea lay in northern Attica, about fourteen miles from Athens.

53 Laurium, in southeastern Attica, was the site of Athens' silver mines.

words of being the eagerness of an exile. I am an exile from the villainy of those who drove me out, not from serving you, if you take my advice. The worse enemies are not you, who may have harmed your enemies, but those who forced their friends to become enemies. My love for my city does not lie in the condition in which I am wronged, but in the condition in which I lived securely as a citizen. Nor do I think that I am now marching against a country that is still mine. Far rather, I am trying to recover one that is mine no longer. And the true lover of his city is not the man who has lost it unjustly and refuses to attack it, but the man who longs for it so much that he tries by every means to get it back. So I ask you, Spartans, to make use of me without misgiving for every danger and every hardship. Recognize the truth of the argument everyone puts forward: if as an enemy I did you great harm, as a friend I could do you good service, since I know the Athenians' affairs, while yours I could only guess at. And I ask you yourselves to consider that you are now deliberating about interests of the very greatest importance, and not to shrink from the expedition to Sicily and to Attica. In this way, by being present there with a small part of your forces, you may save great things and overthrow the power of the Athenians, both present and future. And after this you may live in security yourselves and lead the whole of Greece, which will follow you willingly, not by force but out of goodwill."

SPARTA SENDS GYLIPPUS

Sparta resolves to fortify Decelea and sends Gylippus to command at Syracuse.

6.93 That was the end of Alcibiades' speech. The Spartans had already been thinking of marching against Athens themselves, but they were still delaying and waiting to see what would happen. Now they were much more strongly resolved, since he had explained each of these points and they believed they had heard it from the man who knew the facts best. As a result they now

turned their minds to fortifying Decelea and to sending some help at once to those in Sicily. They appointed Gylippus son of Cleandridas to command the Syracusans and ordered him to consult with them and with the Corinthians and to act in whatever way, given the circumstances, would bring help to the people there most effectively and most quickly. Gylippus told the Corinthians to send him two ships at once to Asine, and to get the rest ready, as many as they intended to send, so that they could sail when the moment came. Once they had agreed on this, the envoys left Sparta.

The Athenian trireme from Sicily also arrived, the one the generals had sent home to ask for money and cavalry. When the Athenians heard the request, they voted to send the army both its maintenance and the cavalry. So the winter ended, and with it the seventeenth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

6.94 Right at the start of spring of the following summer, the Athenians in Sicily set out from Catana and sailed along the coast to Megara in Sicily. As I have said before, the Syracusans had driven its inhabitants out in the time of Gelon the tyrant and now hold the land themselves. The Athenians landed and ravaged the fields. They then went against a Syracusan fort but failed to take it, and moved on again, by land and by sea, to the river Terias. There they went up into the plain, ravaged it and set fire to the grain. They ran into a small number of Syracusans, killed some of them, set up a trophy and withdrew to their ships. They sailed back to Catana, took on provisions there, and marched with the whole army against Centoripa, a Sicel town. They brought it over by agreement and went away, burning the grain of the Inessaeans and the Hyblaeans as they went. On reaching Catana they found that the cavalry had arrived from Athens: two hundred and fifty men without their horses but with their gear, since horses were to be obtained on the spot. With them came thirty mounted archers and three hundred talents of silver.

6.95 In the same spring the Spartans also marched against Argos and got as far as Cleonae, but when an earthquake struck

they withdrew. After this the Argives invaded the Thyreatis, which borders their territory, and took a great deal of plunder from the Spartans, which sold for no less than twenty-five talents. In the same summer, not long afterward, the people of Thespiae rose against those who held office but failed to prevail. The Thebans came to the officials' help, and some of the rebels were arrested while others fled to Athens.[54]

THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE

The Athenians seize Epipolae and begin walling off the city as both sides race to build.

6.96 In the same summer the Syracusans learned that the cavalry had reached the Athenians and that the Athenians were about to march against them. They reasoned that unless the Athenians got control of Epipolae, a steep height lying directly above the city, the Athenians could not easily wall them off, even if they themselves were beaten in battle. So they planned to guard the ways up to it, so that the enemy could not climb up by them without being seen; for there was no other way they could get up. The rest of the ground falls away sheer, while the height slopes all the way down to the city and can all be seen from inside it. The Syracusans call it Epipolae because it lies on top of the rest. So at daybreak they went out in full force to the meadow by the river Anapus (Hermocrates and his fellow generals had just taken up their command), held a review of arms, and first picked out six hundred select hoplites under the command of Diomilus, an exile from Andros. These were to guard Epipolae and, if they were needed anywhere else, to be on hand quickly as a single body.[55] 6.97 But on the night before the day of the review, the Athenians had already come from Catana with their whole army without the Syracusans noticing. They put in at the place called Leon, which is six or seven stades from Epipolae, landed the infantry, and anchored the ships at Thapsus.

54 The Thyreatis was a border district long disputed between Argos and Sparta.
55 The name comes from the Greek *epipolēs*, "on the surface" or "on top."

This is a peninsula that juts out into the sea on a narrow isthmus, and it is not far from the city of Syracuse either by sea or by land. The Athenian naval force at Thapsus built a stockade across the isthmus and stayed there quietly, while the infantry went straight to Epipolae at a run and climbed up by way of Euryelus before the Syracusans noticed and arrived from the meadow and the review. The Syracusans rushed to the defense, the rest of them each as fast as he could, and Diomilus' six hundred with them; but they had no less than twenty-five stades to cover from the meadow before they could engage. So the Syracusans attacked in this way, in some disorder, were beaten in battle on Epipolae and withdrew into the city. Diomilus was killed, and about three hundred of the others. After this the Athenians set up a trophy and gave the Syracusans back their dead under truce. The next day they went down against the city itself, and when the Syracusans did not come out against them, they withdrew again and built a fort at Labdalum, at the edge of the cliffs of Epipolae, looking toward Megara. It was to serve them as a storehouse for their baggage and their money whenever they went out to fight or to build walls. [6.98] Not long afterward three hundred cavalry came to them from Egesta, and about a hundred from the Sicels, the Naxians and some others. The Athenians already had their own two hundred and fifty, for whom they got horses partly from the Egestaeans and Catanaeans and partly by purchase, so that six hundred and fifty cavalry were assembled in all. After putting a garrison in Labdalum, the Athenians advanced to Syce, where they took up position and built the circle at speed. The speed of the building struck the Syracusans with alarm, and they came out intending to give battle rather than look on.[56] When the two sides were already drawn up facing each other, the Syracusan generals saw that their army was scattered and not easily getting into formation, and they led it back into the city, except for part of the cavalry. These stayed behind and tried to stop the Athenians from carry-

56 The "circle" was a fortified enclosure on Epipolae from which the Athenian siege walls were to run out on either side.

ing stones and spreading out too far. Then one tribe of the Athenian hoplites, together with all the cavalry, charged and routed the Syracusan cavalry, killed some of them, and set up a trophy for the cavalry battle.[57]

6.99 The next day some of the Athenians worked on the wall running north from the circle, while others kept bringing stones and timber and laying them out along the line toward the place called Trogilus, where their blockading wall from the Great Harbor to the other sea would be shortest. The Syracusans, chiefly at the urging of Hermocrates among their generals, no longer wanted to risk battles in full force against the Athenians. It seemed better to build a counter-wall across the line along which the Athenians were going to carry their wall. If they got there first, the Athenian wall would be cut off. And if meanwhile the Athenians came to stop them, they would send part of their army against them and would themselves seize the approaches first with stakes; the Athenians would then have to stop their work and turn their whole force against them. So they went out and began building from their own city, running a cross-wall below the Athenian circle, cutting down the olive trees of the sacred precinct and putting up wooden towers. The Athenian ships had not yet sailed round from Thapsus into the Great Harbor; the Syracusans still controlled the coast, and the Athenians brought in their supplies overland from Thapsus.[58] 6.100 When the Syracusans judged that the stretch of the counter-wall that had been staked and built was enough, and the Athenians had not come to stop them (they were afraid that the Syracusans would find it easier to fight them if they split their forces, and they were also pressing on with their own wall), the Syracusans left one tribe to guard the work and withdrew into the city. The Athenians then destroyed the Syracusans' pipes, which had been laid underground to bring drinking water into the city.

57 Athenian hoplites were organized in regiments by the ten tribes of the citizen body.

58 The precinct was probably that of Apollo Temenites, which gave its name to the Temenites district on the outskirts of the city.

They also waited for a moment when the rest of the Syracusans were in their tents at midday, some had even gone off into the city, and the men at the stockade were keeping careless guard. Then they sent ahead three hundred picked men of their own, with some selected light troops equipped as hoplites, to run suddenly at the counter-wall. The rest of the army went in two divisions: one, with one general, toward the city, in case the Syracusans came out to help; the other, with the second general, toward the stockade by the postern gate. The three hundred attacked and took the stockade, and its guards abandoned it and fled to the outwork around Temenites. Their pursuers burst in along with them, but once inside they were driven out again by force by the Syracusans, and some of the Argives and a few of the Athenians were killed there. The whole army then came back, demolished the counter-wall, pulled up the stockade, carried the stakes off to their own lines and set up a trophy.

6.101 The next day the Athenians began a wall from the circle to the cliff above the marsh. On this side of Epipolae the cliff faces the Great Harbor, and here their encircling wall would be shortest, running down across the level ground and the marsh to the harbor. Meanwhile the Syracusans came out too and began another stockade, starting again from the city and running through the middle of the marsh. At the same time they dug a ditch alongside it, so that the Athenians could not wall them off all the way to the sea. When the Athenians had finished the section to the cliff, they attacked the Syracusan stockade and ditch in their turn. They ordered the ships to sail round from Thapsus into the Great Harbor of Syracuse, while they themselves went down around dawn from Epipolae to the level ground. They crossed the marsh where the ground was clay and firmest, laying doors and broad planks on it and walking across on them. At daybreak they took the stockade, apart from a small part, and the ditch, and later took the rest as well.

THE DEATH OF LAMACHUS

Lamachus falls in battle, and Syracuse, nearly walled in, considers terms as Gylippus approaches.

A battle followed, and the Athenians won it. Of the Syracusans, those on the right wing fled toward the city, and those on the left along the river. Wanting to cut the latter off from the crossing, the three hundred picked Athenians hurried at a run toward the bridge. But the Syracusans took fright (most of their cavalry were also there), closed with these three hundred, routed them and charged into the Athenian right wing. Under their attack the leading tribe of that wing was also thrown into panic. Seeing this, Lamachus came to help from their own left wing with a few archers, taking the Argives with him. He crossed a ditch after the enemy and was cut off with the few who had crossed with him, and he was killed along with five or six of his men. The Syracusans quickly snatched up the bodies and got them across the river to safety before anyone could stop them; then, as the rest of the Athenian army was now coming up, they withdrew. 6.102 Meanwhile the Syracusans who had first fled toward the city saw what was happening. They took heart again and came out from the city to form up against the Athenians facing them, and they sent part of their force against the circle on Epipolae, expecting to find it undefended and take it. They took and destroyed the outwork of ten plethra, but Nicias stopped them from taking the circle itself; he happened to have been left behind in it because of illness. He ordered the servants to set fire to the siege engines and to all the timber that had been laid down in front of the wall, since he saw that for lack of men they could not survive in any other way.[59] And so it turned out: because of the fire the Syracusans came no closer, but withdrew again. For help was now coming back up to the circle from below, the Athenians there having driven off their opponents, and at the

59 A plethron was about 100 feet (some 30 meters), so the outwork was about 1,000 feet long.

same time the Athenian ships were sailing from Thapsus into the Great Harbor, as they had been ordered. Seeing this, the men on the height hurried away, and the whole Syracusan army went back into the city. They believed that with the forces they now had they could no longer prevent the wall to the sea from being built.

6.103 After this the Athenians set up a trophy, gave the Syracusans back their dead under truce, and recovered the bodies of Lamachus and the men who fell with him. Now that their whole force, both naval and infantry, was with them, they began from Epipolae and the cliffs and walled the Syracusans off all the way to the sea with a double wall. Supplies for the army were brought in from all over Italy. Many of the Sicels, who had been holding back to see how things would go, came over to the Athenians as allies, and three fifty-oared ships came from Etruria. In every other respect too, things were going in a way that gave them hope. For the Syracusans no longer thought they could win the war, since no help had reached them even from the Peloponnese. They were discussing terms of settlement among themselves and with Nicias, who now held sole command after Lamachus' death. Nothing was decided, but, as one would expect of men at a loss and more closely besieged than before, a great deal was said to him, and still more within the city. Their present troubles had also made them somewhat suspicious of one another. They deposed the generals under whom these things had happened, as though they had suffered through their bad luck or their treachery, and chose others in their place: Heracleides, Eucles and Tellias.

6.104 Meanwhile Gylippus the Spartan and the ships from Corinth were already off Leucas, eager to bring help to Sicily quickly. But the reports that kept reaching them were alarming, and all of them agreed in the same false claim, that Syracuse was already completely walled off. So Gylippus no longer had any hope for Sicily, but he wanted to save Italy. He and Pythen the Corinthian crossed the Ionian Gulf to Tarentum as fast as they could with two Laconian and two Corinthian ships, while

the Corinthians were to sail later, after manning two Leucadian and three Ambraciot ships in addition to their own ten. From Tarentum Gylippus first went as an envoy to Thurii, where he renewed the citizenship his father had held, but he could not win the Thurians over. He then put to sea and sailed along the coast of Italy. Off the Terinaean Gulf he was caught by the wind that blows hard there from the north and carried out to sea. After being battered by severe storms he came back to land at Tarentum, where he hauled up the ships that had suffered most in the storm and repaired them. Nicias, learning that he was on his way, made light of the small number of his ships, as the Thurians had also done, and thought they were sailing equipped more for piracy than for war; and he did not yet post any guard against them.[60]

6.105 At about the same time this summer the Spartans and their allies invaded the territory of Argos and ravaged most of the land, and the Athenians came to the Argives' aid with thirty ships. It was these ships that most openly broke the Athenians' treaty with the Spartans. Before this they had made war alongside the Argives and Mantineans with raids from Pylos and by landing in other parts of the Peloponnese rather than in Laconia. The Argives had often urged them merely to put in to Laconia under arms, ravage even the smallest piece of land with them, and leave, but they had refused. This time, however, under the command of Pythodorus, Laespodias and Demaratus, they landed at Epidaurus Limera, Prasiae and other places and ravaged the land. In this way they now gave the Spartans a far more plausible grievance for retaliating against the Athenians. After the Athenians had left Argos with their ships and the Spartans had gone too, the Argives invaded Phliasia, ravaged part of the land, killed some of the inhabitants and went home.[61]

60 Gylippus' father Cleandridas had gone into exile from Sparta and become a citizen of Thurii, a city in southern Italy.

61 Epidaurus Limera and Prasiae were towns on the east coast of Laconia.

Book 7

Disaster at Syracuse, 414–413 BC
Gylippus arrives, Nicias' letter, Demosthenes' reinforcements, defeat in the Great Harbor, and the destruction of the Athenian army.

GYLIPPUS

Gylippus reaches Syracuse before the Athenian wall is finished and blocks it with a counter-wall.

7.1 Gylippus and Pythen, once they had repaired their ships, sailed along the coast from Tarentum to Epizephyrian Locri. There they learned more definitely that Syracuse was not yet completely walled off, and that a force arriving by way of Epipolae could still get in. So they debated two courses. One was to keep Sicily on their right and risk sailing in. The other was to keep it on their left, sail first to Himera, pick up the Himeraeans themselves and any other troops they could persuade to join, and go overland.[1] They decided to sail for Himera, especially since the four Athenian ships had not yet reached Rhegium. Nicias had sent these ships after all, once he learned that the enemy were at Locri. Getting ahead of this guard, they crossed the strait, put in at Rhegium and Messana, and reached Himera. While they were there they persuaded the Himeraeans to join the war. The Himeraeans were to march with them and to supply arms to those sailors from their ships who had none, for they had beached their ships at Himera. They also sent word to the Selinuntines, telling them to meet them at a certain place

1 Himera was a Greek city on the north coast of Sicily.

with their full forces. The Geloans also promised to send them a force, though not a large one, and so did some of the Sicels. The Sicels were ready to come over far more eagerly than before for two reasons. Archonides had recently died; he had been king over some of the Sicels in that region, was a man of some power, and had been a friend of the Athenians. And Gylippus seemed to have come from Sparta in earnest. So Gylippus set out for Syracuse. He took about seven hundred of his own sailors and marines who had been given arms, a thousand Himeraean hoplites and light troops together, and a hundred Himeraean cavalry. He also took some light troops and cavalry from Selinus, a few Geloans, and Sicels to the number of about a thousand in all. 7.2 Meanwhile the Corinthians from Leucas were hurrying to help with the rest of their ships, each as fast as it could. Gongylus, one of the Corinthian commanders, set out last with a single ship but arrived first at Syracuse, a little before Gylippus. He found the Syracusans about to hold an assembly on ending the war. He prevented it and gave them fresh heart, telling them that more ships were still on their way, and that Gylippus son of Cleandridas was coming as commander, sent by the Spartans. The Syracusans took courage and at once marched out in full force to meet Gylippus, for they now learned that he was close at hand. Gylippus had meanwhile taken Ietae, a Sicel fort on his route. He drew up his army ready for battle and arrived at Epipolae. He climbed up by Euryelus, the same way the Athenians had first come up, and advanced with the Syracusans against the Athenian wall. He arrived at the very moment when the Athenians had already completed a double wall of seven or eight stades down to the Great Harbor, except for a short stretch next to the sea, which they were still building; and along the rest of the circle, toward Trogilus on the other sea, stones had already been laid down for most of its length. Some stretches had been left half-finished and others fully completed. That is how close Syracuse came to danger.

7.3 Gylippus and the Syracusans came at the Athenians so suddenly that they were thrown into confusion at first, but they

formed up for battle. Gylippus grounded arms close by and sent a herald to them. The herald said that if they were willing to leave Sicily within five days, taking their belongings, he was ready to make a truce. The Athenians treated this with contempt and sent the herald away without an answer. After this the two sides prepared for battle against each other. Gylippus saw that the Syracusans were in disorder and were having trouble getting into formation, and he drew his army back into more open ground. Nicias did not lead the Athenians forward but stayed quiet beside their own wall. When Gylippus saw that they were not coming on, he led his army away to the height called Temenites, and they camped there for the night. The next day he led out most of his army and drew it up facing the Athenian walls, so that they could not send help anywhere else. Meanwhile he sent a detachment against the fort of Labdalum and took it, killing everyone he captured in it; the place was out of the Athenians' sight. On the same day the Syracusans captured an Athenian trireme that was keeping watch off the harbor.

7.4 After this the Syracusans and their allies began building a single wall across Epipolae. It started from the city and ran up toward the transverse wall, so that the Athenians, unless they could stop it, would no longer be able to wall them off. By now the Athenians had finished the wall along the sea and had come up onto the heights. Part of the Athenian wall was weak, so Gylippus took his army by night and went against it. But the Athenians happened to be camping outside the wall. When they noticed him they came out to meet him, and he, seeing this, quickly led his men back again. The Athenians built that part higher and guarded it themselves. The rest of the allies they now posted along the remainder of the fortifications, at the places each contingent was to hold.

Nicias decided to fortify the place called Plemmyrium. This is a headland opposite the city, which juts out and narrows the mouth of the Great Harbor. If it were fortified, he thought, bringing in supplies would be easier. They would be lying at watch closer to the Syracusans' harbor, and they would not have to put

out from the inner end of the harbor, as they did now, whenever the enemy made any move with their navy. He was now giving more attention to the war at sea, since he saw that their prospects on land had become less hopeful after Gylippus came. So he brought troops and the ships across and built three forts. Most of the equipment was stored in them, and the large transports and the fast warships now lay at anchor there. It was then that the crews first began to suffer serious losses. The water they used was scarce and not close at hand, and whenever the sailors went out to gather firewood, the Syracusan cavalry, who controlled the countryside, cut them down. The Syracusans had posted a third of their cavalry at the small town by the Olympieum, to stop the men at Plemmyrium from going out to do damage. Nicias also learned that the rest of the Corinthian ships were on their way. He sent twenty ships to watch for them, with orders to lie in wait for them around Locri, Rhegium and the approach to Sicily.[2]

7.5 Meanwhile Gylippus kept building the wall across Epipolae, using the stones the Athenians had laid down beforehand for their own wall. At the same time he kept leading the Syracusans and their allies out and drawing them up in front of the wall, and the Athenians drew up against them. When Gylippus thought the moment had come, he led the attack. They came to close quarters and fought between the walls, where the Syracusan cavalry could be of no use. The Syracusans and their allies were defeated and took up their dead under truce, and the Athenians set up a trophy. Gylippus called his army together and told them that the mistake had been his own, not theirs. By drawing up his line too far within the walls, he had robbed them of the advantage of their cavalry and javelin-throwers. Now, then, he would lead them out again. He urged them to bear in mind that their forces would be no weaker than the enemy's. As for resolve, it would be intolerable if they, Peloponnesians and Dorians as they were, did not see fit to defeat Ionians and

2 The Olympieum was the temple of Olympian Zeus, south of Syracuse across the Great Harbor.

islanders and a motley crowd and drive them out of the land. 7.6 After this, when the moment came, he led them out again. Nicias and the Athenians thought that even if the enemy chose not to begin a battle, they themselves could not afford to stand by and let the wall be built past theirs. (The enemy's wall had by now very nearly passed the end of the Athenian wall. If it went any further, it would make no difference to the Athenians whether they won every battle they fought or never fought at all.) So they went out to meet the Syracusans. Gylippus led his hoplites further outside the walls than before and engaged the Athenians. He posted his cavalry and javelin-throwers on the Athenians' flank, in the open ground where the works of both walls came to an end. In the battle the cavalry charged the Athenian left wing, which was opposite them, and routed it. Because of this the rest of the Athenian army too was beaten by the Syracusans and driven headlong back behind its fortifications. The following night the Syracusans managed to carry their wall past the Athenian works. They could no longer be hindered by the Athenians, and they had taken from them, even if they won a battle, all chance of ever walling them off.

7.7 After this the remaining twelve ships of the Corinthians, Ambraciots and Leucadians sailed in, slipping past the Athenian guard; they were commanded by Erasinides, a Corinthian. They helped the Syracusans build the rest of the wall [up to] the transverse wall. Gylippus went off to the rest of Sicily to raise forces, both naval and land. At the same time he meant to win over any cities that were lukewarm or were still keeping entirely out of the war. Further envoys of the Syracusans and Corinthians were sent to Sparta and Corinth to get another army brought across, in merchant ships or boats or any other way that might work, since the Athenians too were sending for reinforcements. The Syracusans also began manning a fleet and training it, meaning to try their hand at this as well, and in every other respect they were greatly encouraged.

7.8 Nicias was aware of this, and he could see the enemy's strength and his own difficulties growing day by day. So he too

sent messages to Athens. He had often reported before on events as each occurred, but he did so with special urgency now. He believed that they were in a dangerous position, and that there was no hope of safety unless the Athenians either recalled them as soon as possible or sent out a large force of others. He feared, however, that the men he sent might fail to report the true situation. They might lack skill in speaking, or their memories might fail them, or they might say something to please the crowd. So he wrote a letter. He thought this was the best way for the Athenians to learn his own view, with nothing of it lost through the messenger, and to deliberate on the basis of the truth. The men he had sent left, carrying the letter and whatever they were to say themselves. Nicias now managed affairs in the camp with an eye to keeping it safe rather than to taking risks of his own choosing.

7.9 At the end of the same summer Euetion, an Athenian general, also campaigned against Amphipolis with Perdiccas and a large force of Thracians. He did not take the city, but he brought triremes round into the Strymon and besieged it from the river, using Himeraeum as his base. And the summer ended.[3]

7.10 In the following winter the messengers from Nicias arrived in Athens. They delivered the messages they had been told to give by word of mouth, answered any questions put to them, and handed over the letter. The secretary of the city came forward and read it to the Athenians. It ran as follows:[4]

NICIAS' LETTER

Nicias writes that the besiegers are now besieged and asks to be recalled or reinforced.

7.11 "Our earlier operations, Athenians, you know from many other letters. But now it is just as important for you to learn the

3 Perdiccas was king of Macedonia; Amphipolis stands on the river Strymon in Thrace.

4 The secretary of the city was the public official who read documents aloud to the assembly.

position we are in and to decide what to do. We defeated the Syracusans, against whom we were sent, in most of our battles, and we built the walls we now occupy. Then Gylippus the Spartan arrived with an army from the Peloponnese and from some of the cities in Sicily. We defeated him in the first battle, but the next day we were overwhelmed by large numbers of cavalry and javelin-throwers and fell back within our walls. So now, because of the enemy's numbers, we have stopped the encircling wall and are keeping quiet. We could not even use our whole army, since guarding the walls has used up part of our hoplite force. They, meanwhile, have built a single wall past ours, so that it is no longer possible to wall them in, unless someone attacks this counter-wall with a large army and takes it. The upshot is that we, who are supposed to be besieging others, are ourselves the ones suffering a siege, at least by land, for because of their cavalry we cannot even go far out into the country.

7.12 "They have also sent envoys to the Peloponnese for another army. Gylippus has gone off to the cities in Sicily. He means to persuade those that are now staying out of the war to join it, and to bring more land forces and naval equipment from others, if he can. For they intend, as I learn, to attack our walls with their infantry and at the same time with their ships by sea. And none of you should find it alarming that the attack is to come by sea as well. For our navy, as the enemy are well aware, was at its peak at first, both in the dryness of its ships and in the soundness of its crews. But now the ships have been at sea so long that they are waterlogged, and the crews are ruined. We cannot haul the ships ashore and dry them out, because the enemy's ships are as many as ours or more, and they keep us constantly expecting an attack. They are plainly training, the initiative lies with them, and they have more chance to dry out their own ships, since they are not blockading anyone. 7.13 We could hardly do this even if we had a large surplus of ships and were not forced, as we are now, to keep guard with all of them. For if we relax our watch even a little, we shall lose our supplies,

which even now we bring in with difficulty past their city. Our crews have been ruined, and are still being ruined, for the following reasons. [Some of] the sailors are being killed by the cavalry while gathering firewood, foraging and fetching water from far off; the servants are deserting, now that we are evenly matched; and of the foreigners, those who were pressed into service go straight off to their cities. Others, who were at first lured by high pay and thought they would be making money rather than fighting, now, contrary to their expectation, they see a navy and everything else on the enemy's side standing up to us; and some of these are leaving on the pretext of deserting to the enemy, others in whatever way each can, for Sicily is a big place. There are even some who have gone into trade themselves, and have persuaded the trierarchs to take slaves from Hyccara on board in their place. In this way they have destroyed the discipline of our navy.[5] 7.14 I am writing to people who know that a crew's prime is short, and that only a few sailors in each crew can get a ship under way and keep the rowing together. The most difficult thing of all is that I, as general, cannot prevent these things, for your natures are hard to command. Nor do we have anywhere to get men to fill up the ships, as the enemy can from many places. Both our present strength and the replacement of our losses must come out of the men we brought with us, for the cities now allied to us, Naxos and Catana, are powerless. If the enemy gain just one thing more, if the places in Italy that feed us see the state we are in and that you are sending no help, and go over to them, then the enemy will have won [the war] without a battle, and we shall have been starved into surrender.

"I could have sent you other news more pleasant than this, but none more useful, if you are to make your decisions with clear knowledge of the situation here. Besides, I know your natures. You like to hear what is most pleasant, but afterwards you blame people if anything turns out differently for you. So I

5 Hyccara was a Sicilian town captured by the Athenians, whose inhabitants they had sold into slavery.

thought it safer to show you the truth. 7.15 Now, as regards the purpose for which we first came, rest assured that neither the soldiers nor the commanders have given you cause for complaint. But all Sicily is uniting, and another army is expected from the Peloponnese. So you must now decide on the understanding that our forces here are not a match even for the enemy we already face. You must either recall them or send out another army no smaller than this one, both land and naval forces, and no small sum of money. You must also send a successor for me, since a disease of the kidneys makes me unable to stay on. I think I have a right to your indulgence, for when I was in good health I did you much good service in my commands. Whatever you intend to do, do it at the very beginning of spring, without delay. The enemy will soon obtain their reinforcements in Sicily, and those from the Peloponnese will come more slowly. Even so, unless you pay attention, some of their forces will slip past you, as they did before, and others will arrive ahead of you."

ATHENS SENDS REINFORCEMENTS

Athens appoints Demosthenes and Eurymedon, and the Spartans prepare to invade Attica.

7.16 Such was the content of Nicias' letter. When the Athenians had heard it, they did not relieve Nicias of his command. Instead, until other colleagues could be chosen and arrive, they appointed two of the men already out there with him, Menander and Euthydemus, to share it, so that he would not have to bear the hardship alone in his sickness. They also voted to send another force, both naval and land, made up of Athenians from the muster roll and of the allies. As his colleagues they chose Demosthenes son of Alcisthenes and Eurymedon son of Thucles. Eurymedon they sent off to Sicily at once, around the winter solstice, with ten ships and a hundred and twenty talents of silver, and with orders to tell the men there that help would come and that they would be looked after; 7.17 Demosthenes stayed behind

and prepared to sail out at the beginning of spring. He sent word to the allies to raise troops, and at home he got money, ships and hoplites ready. The Athenians also sent twenty ships around the Peloponnese to guard against anyone crossing to Sicily from Corinth and the Peloponnese. For when their envoys had returned and reported that things in Sicily were improving, the Corinthians concluded that their earlier dispatch of ships had also been well timed, and they were much encouraged. They prepared to send hoplites to Sicily in merchant ships themselves, and the Spartans were to send others in the same way from the rest of the Peloponnese. The Corinthians also manned twenty-five ships, in order to try a sea battle against the squadron guarding Naupactus, and so that the Athenians at Naupactus would be less able to stop their merchant ships from setting sail, since they would have to keep watch against the Corinthian triremes drawn up opposite them.

7.18 The Spartans were also preparing their invasion of Attica. They had decided on it earlier, and the Syracusans and Corinthians were urging them on, now that they were learning of the reinforcements the Athenians were sending to Sicily, so that an invasion might stop them. Alcibiades too kept pressing them, urging them to fortify Decelea and not to let the war slacken. But above all the Spartans had gained a certain confidence, because they thought that the Athenians, with a war on two fronts, against themselves and against the Sicilian Greeks, would be easier to overthrow, and because they considered that the Athenians had been the first to break the treaty. In the earlier war, they felt, the breach of law had been more on their own side: the Thebans had entered Plataea in time of peace, and although the earlier agreement laid down that no one should take up arms against a party willing to submit to arbitration, they themselves had refused when the Athenians called on them to go to arbitration. For this reason they believed their misfortunes had been deserved, and they took to heart the disaster at Pylos and whatever other setbacks they had suffered. But now the Athenians, setting out from Argos with their thirty ships,

had ravaged part of the territory of Epidaurus, of Prasiae and of other places, and at the same time were raiding from Pylos; and whenever disputes arose over any of the points contested under the treaty, they refused to submit to arbitration when the Spartans called for it. So the Spartans now believed that the very breach of law they themselves had committed before had in turn come round to the Athenians, and they were eager for war. During this winter they sent round to their allies for iron and got the other tools ready for the fortification; and at the same time, intending to send help in merchant ships to their people in Sicily, they raised a force themselves and compelled the other Peloponnesians to do the same. So the winter ended, and with it the eighteenth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

THE FORT AT DECELEA

The Spartans fortify Decelea in Attica, and Athens suffers under the permanent occupation.

7.19 At the very beginning of the following spring, earlier than ever before, the Spartans and their allies invaded Attica, led by Agis son of Archidamus, king of the Spartans. First they ravaged the country around the plain; then they began to fortify Decelea, dividing the work among the cities. Decelea is about a hundred and twenty stades from the city of Athens, and about the same distance, not much more, from Boeotia. The fort was built overlooking the plain and the parts of the country best suited for doing damage, and it could be seen from the city of Athens itself. While the Peloponnesians and their allies in Attica were building the fort, those in the Peloponnese were at about the same time sending off their hoplites to Sicily in merchant ships. The Spartans picked the best of the helots and of the neodamodeis, about six hundred hoplites from the two groups together, with Eccritus, a Spartiate, in command; the Boeotians sent three hundred hoplites, commanded by Xenon and Nicon of Thebes and Hegesander of Thespiae. These were among the first to set out, putting out to the open sea from Taenarum in Laconia. Not

long after them the Corinthians dispatched five hundred hoplites, some from Corinth itself and some Arcadians they had hired besides, with Alexarchus, a Corinthian, appointed to command. The Sicyonians too sent two hundred hoplites along with the Corinthians, commanded by Sargeus of Sicyon. Meanwhile the twenty-five Corinthian ships that had been manned in the winter lay at anchor facing the twenty Athenian ships at Naupactus, until these hoplites had got away from the Peloponnese in their merchant ships. That was the very reason they had been manned in the first place: so that the Athenians would not have their minds on the merchant ships rather than on the triremes.

7.20 In the meantime the Athenians too, at the same time as the fortification of Decelea and at the very beginning of spring, sent thirty ships around the Peloponnese under the command of Charicles son of Apollodorus. He had instructions to go to Argos and, under the terms of the alliance, call on the Argives for hoplites to serve on the ships. And they sent Demosthenes off to Sicily, as they had intended, with sixty Athenian ships and five from Chios, twelve hundred Athenian hoplites from the muster roll, and as many islanders as could possibly be raised from each place; they had also gathered from their other allies, the subjects, anything useful for the war that they could get from anywhere. His instructions were first to sail round with Charicles and join him in operations off the coast of Laconia. Demosthenes sailed to Aegina and waited there for any part of his force that had been left behind, and for Charicles to pick up the Argives.

THE FALL OF PLEMMYRIUM

The Syracusans lose a sea battle but capture the Athenian forts and stores at Plemmyrium.

7.21 In Sicily, at about the same time this spring, Gylippus too came to Syracuse, bringing from the cities he had won over as large a force as he could raise from each. He called the Syracus-

ans together and told them they must man as many ships as they could and try their hand at a sea battle; he hoped, he said, to achieve something from it for the war that would be worth the risk. Hermocrates, not least of all, joined in persuading them not to lose heart about taking on the Athenians with their ships. The Athenians themselves, he said, did not have their experience of the sea as something inherited from their fathers or held from all time; they had been landsmen even more than the Syracusans, and had been forced by the Persians to become seamen. Against daring men such as the Athenians, he went on, those who dared in return would appear the most formidable [to them]; for the means by which the Athenians terrified their neighbors—attacking with boldness, even at times when they were not superior in strength—the Syracusans could equally use against their enemies. And he said he knew well that by daring, against all expectation, to stand up to the Athenian navy, the Syracusans would gain more from the shock this would give the Athenians than the Athenians, with their skill, would do harm to the Syracusans' inexperience. So he urged them to go and put their navy to the test and not to hold back.

So the Syracusans, under the persuasion of Gylippus and Hermocrates and anyone else who joined in, were eager for the sea battle and began manning their ships; [7.22] and when Gylippus had got the fleet ready, he led out his whole land army by night, intending to attack the forts at Plemmyrium himself from the land side. Meanwhile the Syracusan triremes, at the same moment and on a signal, moved out: thirty-five advanced from the Great Harbor, while forty-five from the smaller harbor, where their dockyard was, [and] sailed round, intending to join the ships inside and at the same time to sail against Plemmyrium, so that the Athenians would be thrown into confusion on both sides. The Athenians quickly manned sixty ships in reply. With twenty-five of them they fought the thirty-five Syracusan ships in the Great Harbor, and with the rest they went out to meet those sailing round from the dockyard. They fought at once in front of the mouth of the Great Harbor, and held out

against each other for a long time, the one side trying to force the entrance, the other to stop them. 7.23 Meanwhile, as the Athenians at Plemmyrium had gone down to the sea and were giving their attention to the battle, Gylippus forestalled them by falling suddenly on the forts at dawn. He took the largest first, and then the two smaller ones as well, since their garrisons did not stand their ground when they saw the largest taken so easily. From the first fort to fall, the men who escaped into the boats and a merchant ship got across to the camp only with difficulty; for while the Syracusans were winning the sea battle with their ships in the Great Harbor, they were pursued by a single fast-sailing trireme. But by the time the two forts were being taken, the Syracusans happened to be already losing, and those fleeing from them sailed past more easily. For the Syracusan ships fighting in front of the mouth had forced their way past the Athenian ships and were sailing in without any order; falling foul of one another, they handed the victory to the Athenians, who routed both these ships and those by which they had at first been beaten inside the harbor. They sank eleven Syracusan ships and killed most of the men aboard, except for the crews of three ships, whom they took prisoner; three of their own ships were destroyed. They hauled in the Syracusan wrecks, set up a trophy on the islet off Plemmyrium, and withdrew to their own camp.

7.24 This was how the Syracusans had fared in the sea battle; but they held the forts at Plemmyrium, and set up three trophies for them. One of the two forts taken later they demolished; the other two they repaired and garrisoned. Many men were killed or taken prisoner in the capture of the forts, and a great deal of property was taken in all. For the Athenians had been using the forts as a sort of storehouse, and inside there was much property belonging to merchants, and grain, and much belonging to the trierarchs too: the sails of forty triremes were captured along with the rest of their gear, and three triremes that had been hauled up on shore. The capture of Plemmyrium was the greatest blow to the Athenian army, and among the first. For even the passages into the harbor were no longer safe for bring-

ing in supplies (the Syracusans kept ships stationed there to block them, and convoys now had to fight their way in), and in other respects too it caused alarm and discouragement in the army.

7.25 After this the Syracusans sent out twelve ships with Agatharchus, a Syracusan, in command. One of them went off to the Peloponnese carrying envoys, who were to report that their own prospects were hopeful and to urge that the war there be pressed still harder. The other eleven sailed to Italy, having learned that boats laden with goods were on their way to the Athenians. They came upon the boats and destroyed most of them, and in the territory of Caulonia they burned timber for shipbuilding that lay ready for the Athenians.[6] After this they went to Locri, and while they lay at anchor there, one of the merchant ships from the Peloponnese put in, carrying hoplites from Thespiae. The Syracusans took them aboard their ships and sailed along the coast for home. The Athenians lay in wait for them with twenty ships off Megara and captured one ship, crew and all; the others they could not catch, and these escaped to Syracuse.[7]

There was also skirmishing in the harbor over the stakes that the Syracusans had driven into the sea in front of their old ship sheds, so that their ships could lie at anchor inside them and the Athenians could not sail in and damage them by ramming. The Athenians brought up against them a merchant ship of ten thousand talents' burden, fitted with wooden towers and screens. From small boats they tied ropes to the stakes and winched them up, or broke them off, or dived down and sawed them through. The Syracusans shot at them from the ship sheds and the men on the merchant ship shot back; and in the end the Athenians removed most of the stakes.[8] The hardest part of the stockade to deal with was the hidden part. Some of the stakes they had driven in did not stand above the surface of the sea, so

6 Caulonia was a Greek city on the east coast of the toe of Italy.
7 This Megara is Megara Hyblaea, on the Sicilian coast north of Syracuse.
8 That is, a ship able to carry roughly 250 tons.

that it was dangerous to sail in, for fear of failing to see them and running one's ship onto them as onto a reef. But divers went down and sawed through these too, for pay. Even so, the Syracusans drove in stakes again. The two sides devised many other things against each other, as was natural with the armies so close and facing one another, and made use of skirmishes and attempts of every kind.

The Syracusans also sent envoys to the cities of the Corinthians, the Ambraciots and the Spartans, to report the capture of Plemmyrium, and to explain about the sea battle that they had been beaten not so much by the enemy's strength as by their own confusion. They were also to make clear [again] that in other respects they were hopeful, and to ask them to come to their aid with ships and land forces, since the Athenians too were expecting another army; and if they themselves could destroy the Athenian army already there before it arrived, the war would be over. Such were the activities of those in Sicily.

7.26 When Demosthenes had assembled the force he was to take to the relief of Sicily, he set out from Aegina, sailed to the Peloponnese and joined Charicles and the thirty Athenian ships. Taking the Argive hoplites aboard, they sailed to Laconia. First they ravaged part of the territory of Epidaurus Limera; then, putting in on the coast of Laconia opposite Cythera, where the temple of Apollo is, they ravaged parts of the land and fortified a spot shaped like an isthmus, so that the helots of the Spartans could desert to it and raiders could at the same time use it, as they did Pylos, as a base for plunder. As soon as he had helped to occupy the place, Demosthenes sailed on along the coast toward Corcyra, so as to pick up allies from there too and make the voyage to Sicily as quickly as possible. Charicles waited until he had finished fortifying the place, left a garrison in it, and then he too went home later with his thirty ships, and the Argives with him.

7.27 In this same summer there also arrived in Athens thirteen hundred peltasts, sword-bearing Thracians of the tribe of the Dii, who were to have sailed with Demosthenes to Sicily. Since they had come too late, the Athenians planned to send them

back to Thrace, where they had come from. Keeping them for the war against Decelea seemed too expensive, for each man was paid a drachma a day. For Decelea was doing the Athenians great harm. It had first been fortified by the whole army during this summer, and afterward was occupied as a standing threat to the country by garrisons from the cities, which relieved one another at set intervals; and it was among the chief things that damaged their position, through the destruction of property and the loss of men. Before, the invasions had been short, and had not prevented them from enjoying the use of their land for the rest of the time. But now the enemy was there continuously. Sometimes larger forces came in; at other times the regular garrison, out of necessity, overran the country and plundered it; and the Spartan king Agis was there in person and pursued the war as no side issue. So the Athenians suffered greatly. They were deprived of the whole of their country; more than twenty thousand slaves had deserted, most of them skilled workers; all their sheep and pack animals were lost; and as for the horses, since the cavalry rode out every day, making raids toward Decelea and keeping watch over the countryside, some went lame on the hard ground and from the constant strain, and others were wounded. 7.28 The transport of supplies from Euboea, which had formerly come more quickly overland from Oropus through Decelea, now went round Sunium by sea at great expense. The city had to import everything alike, and instead of a city it had become a fortress. The Athenians kept guard on the battlements by turns during the day, and at night all of them together except the cavalry, some †posted† by the stacked arms and others on the wall; and summer and winter alike they were worn out. What oppressed them most was that they had two wars on their hands at once, and they had reached such a pitch of determination to win as no one would have believed if he had heard of it before it happened.[9] For it would have seemed incredible that men besieged at home by a Peloponnesian fort should even then not withdraw from Sicily, but should in turn

9 The Greek text is uncertain here.

besiege Syracuse there in the same way, a city in itself no smaller than Athens; and that they should so confound the Greeks' estimate of their power and daring. At the beginning of the war some had thought they would hold out for a year if the Peloponnesians invaded their country, others for two, but no one for more than three; yet in the seventeenth year after the first invasion they went to Sicily, already worn down by the war in every way, and took on another war no smaller than the one they already had with the Peloponnese. That was why, at this time too, with Decelea doing them great harm and other heavy expenses falling on them, they ran short of money. Around this time they imposed on their subjects, in place of the tribute, a tax of one-twentieth on goods carried by sea, thinking that more money would come in to them this way. For their expenses were no longer as they had been before, but had become much greater, as the war had become greater, while their revenues were dwindling.[10]

THE MASSACRE AT MYCALESSUS

Thracian mercenaries sent home by Athens sack a Boeotian town and kill everyone they find.

7.29 Because of their present shortage of money, the Athenians did not want to spend it on the Thracians who had arrived too late to go with Demosthenes, so they sent them straight back. They assigned Diitrephes to take them home and told him at the same time to use them to do the enemy whatever damage he could on the voyage along the coast, since they were going by way of the Euripus. He landed them at Tanagra and quickly carried off some plunder. Then, at dusk, he crossed the Euripus from Chalcis in Euboea, landed them in Boeotia, and led them against Mycalessus.[11] He spent the night unobserved by the

10 This 5 percent duty was levied on goods passing through the harbors of the empire.

11 The Euripus is the narrow strait between the island of Euboea and Boeotia on the mainland; Mycalessus was a small Boeotian town near it.

temple of Hermes, which is about sixteen stades from Mycalessus. At daybreak he attacked the city, which was not large, and took it. He fell on the inhabitants when they were off guard and never expected that anyone would come so far up from the sea to attack them. Their wall was weak, in places it had even collapsed, and elsewhere it had been built low, and because they felt safe the gates were standing open as well. The Thracians burst into Mycalessus, sacked the houses and the temples, and slaughtered the people. They spared neither old nor young but killed everyone they came across, one after another, children and women alike, and the pack animals too, and every other living thing they saw. For the Thracian people, like the most bloodthirsty of the non-Greek peoples, are at their most murderous whenever they feel bold. There was confusion everywhere, and death in every form. They fell on a boys' school, the largest in the place, just after the children had gone in, and cut them all down. For the whole city this calamity was second to none, and more than any other it was unexpected and terrible. 7.30 When the Thebans learned of it, they came to the rescue. They caught up with the Thracians, who had not yet got far, took the plunder from them, routed them, and chased them down to the Euripus and the sea, where the boats that had brought them lay at anchor. They killed most of them as they tried to get on board, because the Thracians could not swim, and the men in the boats, seeing what was happening on land, had anchored them out of bowshot. During the rest of the retreat, by contrast, the Thracians had defended themselves quite skillfully against the Theban cavalry, which attacked first. They would dash out ahead and then close up again in their native formation, and only a few of them were killed in that part of the fighting. Some of them were also caught in the city itself because they stayed to plunder, and they were killed. In all, two hundred and fifty of the thirteen hundred Thracians died. They killed about twenty of the Thebans and the others who had come to help, cavalry and hoplites together. Among the Thebans they killed Scirphondas, one of the boeotarchs. A part of the population of Myca-

lessus was wiped out. Such was the fate of Mycalessus, which, for its size, suffered a calamity as pitiable as any in the war.

DEMOSTHENES ON THE WAY

Demosthenes gathers allies in western Greece and Italy while the Sicels ambush Syracuse's reinforcements.

7.31 Meanwhile Demosthenes, who was sailing off toward Corcyra after fortifying the post in Laconia, found a merchant ship at anchor at Pheia in Elis. It was the ship in which the Corinthian hoplites were to cross to Sicily. He destroyed the ship, but the men escaped, later found another, and sailed on. After this Demosthenes came to Zacynthus and Cephallenia and took on hoplites there. He sent for some of the Messenians from Naupactus and crossed to the mainland opposite, in Acarnania, to Alyzia and to Anactorium, which the Athenians held. While he was busy with this, he was met by Eurymedon, who was on his way back from Sicily. Eurymedon had been sent out during the winter with the money for the army. Among other news, he reported that while already on the voyage he had heard that Plemmyrium had been taken by the Syracusans. Conon, who commanded at Naupactus, also came to them. He reported that the twenty-five Corinthian ships stationed opposite them were not giving up the war but were preparing to fight at sea. So he urged them to send him ships, since his own eighteen were not enough to fight the enemy's twenty-five. So Demosthenes and Eurymedon sent Conon ten ships, the fastest they had in their own force, to join those at Naupactus. They themselves set about mustering the army. Eurymedon sailed to Corcyra, told the Corcyraeans to man fifteen ships, and enlisted hoplites. He had now turned back and was serving as joint commander with Demosthenes, as he had been elected to do. Meanwhile Demosthenes gathered slingers and javelin-men from the places around Acarnania.

7.32 After the capture of Plemmyrium, envoys had gone out from Syracuse to the cities. They had now won them over and

gathered an army, and were about to bring it back. Nicias learned of this in advance and sent word to those Sicels who controlled the route and were allies of the Athenians, the Centoripae, the Halicyaeans and others. He asked them not to let the enemy through but to band together and stop them from passing. The enemy, he said, would not even try another way, since the Acragantines refused them passage through their territory. When the Sicilian Greeks were already on the march, the Sicels did as the Athenians had asked. They laid an ambush in three places, fell on the enemy suddenly while they were off guard, and killed about eight hundred of them. They also killed all the envoys except one, the Corinthian, and he brought the survivors, about fifteen hundred, to Syracuse. [7.33] About the same time the Camarinaeans also arrived to help the Syracusans, with five hundred hoplites, three hundred javelin-men and three hundred archers. The Geloans too sent a naval force of about five ships, along with four hundred javelin-men and two hundred cavalry. For by now almost the whole of Sicily had joined the Syracusans against the Athenians, except the Acragantines, who were on neither side. All the rest, who had earlier held back and watched, now united with the Syracusans and came to their aid.

After the disaster among the Sicels, the Syracusans held off from attacking the Athenians right away. Demosthenes and Eurymedon, whose army from Corcyra and the mainland was now ready, crossed the Ionian Sea with their whole force to the Iapygian promontory. Setting out from there, they put in at the Choerades islands off Iapygia. There they took on board about a hundred and fifty Iapygian javelin-men of the Messapian tribe. They renewed an old friendship with Artas, the local ruler who had supplied them with the javelin-men, and then arrived at Metapontum in Italy. They persuaded the Metapontines, under the terms of their alliance, to send three hundred javelin-men and two triremes with them. Taking these on, they sailed along the coast to Thurii. There they found that the opponents of the Athenians had recently been driven out in civil strife. They

wanted to gather the whole army there and review it, to see whether anyone had been left behind. They also wanted to persuade the Thurians to join the campaign as wholeheartedly as possible and, now that their fortunes had turned this way, to regard the Athenians' enemies and friends as their own. So they waited in Thurian territory and worked at this.

THE BATTLE OFF ERINEUS

An indecisive sea battle near Naupactus, where both sides claim victory.

7.34 About this same time the Peloponnesians in the twenty-five ships, who had been stationed opposite the ships at Naupactus to protect the passage of the merchant ships to Sicily, prepared for a sea battle. They manned additional ships, so that they were only a little outnumbered by the Athenian ships, and took up their anchorage off Erineus in Achaea, in the territory of Rhypes. The place where they lay at anchor was crescent-shaped. The land forces of the Corinthians and of their local allies had come up on either side and were drawn up on the headlands that jutted out, while the ships filled the space between and blocked it. The fleet was commanded by Polyanthes, a Corinthian. The Athenians, commanded by Diphilus, sailed against them from Naupactus with thirty-three ships. At first the Corinthians kept still. Then, when the moment seemed right, their signal was raised and they charged the Athenians and engaged them. Both sides held out against each other for a long time. Three Corinthian ships were destroyed. None of the Athenian ships was sunk outright, but seven were put out of action. They were rammed head-on, and their outriggers were smashed by the Corinthian ships, whose catheads had been made thicker for exactly this purpose.[12] The battle was so evenly fought that each side could claim the victory. Still, the Athenians gained possession of the wrecks, because the wind drove them

12 The catheads were heavy beams projecting from either side of a trireme's bow; the outrigger was the projecting frame that carried the upper bank of oars.

out to sea and the Corinthians did not put out again. So the two fleets separated. There was no pursuit, and no prisoners were taken on either side, for the Corinthians and Peloponnesians, fighting close to land, easily got to safety, and no Athenian ship was sunk. When the Athenians had sailed back to Naupactus, the Corinthians at once set up a trophy as victors, because they had put more of the enemy's ships out of action. They considered themselves undefeated for the same reason that the other side did not consider itself victorious. The Corinthians thought they had won if they were not heavily defeated, while the Athenians thought they had lost because they had not won heavily. When the Peloponnesians had sailed away and their land forces had dispersed, the Athenians too set up a trophy as victors, in Achaea, about twenty stades from Erineus, where the Corinthians had been anchored. That was how the sea battle ended.

7.35 Once the Thurians were ready to join the campaign with seven hundred hoplites and three hundred javelin-men, Demosthenes and Eurymedon ordered the ships to sail along the coast to the territory of Croton. They themselves first reviewed all the infantry at the river Sybaris and then led it through Thurian territory. When they reached the river Hylias, the Crotoniates sent them word that they did not wish the army to pass through their land. So they went down toward the sea and camped by the mouth of the Hylias, and the ships met them at the same spot. The next day they embarked and sailed along the coast, putting in at each city except Locri, until they reached Petra in the territory of Rhegium.

SYRACUSE WINS AT SEA

The Syracusans strengthen their bows for head-on ramming and defeat the Athenian fleet in the harbor.

7.36 Meanwhile the Syracusans learned that this fleet was on its way, and they wanted to make another attempt with their ships and with the rest of their land forces, which they had been gath-

ering for exactly this purpose so as to strike before the newcomers arrived. They fitted out their fleet in the ways that, as they had seen in the previous sea battle, would give them an advantage. They cut down the bows of their ships to a shorter length and made them more solid. They fitted thick catheads to the bows and ran struts from them to the ships' sides, about six cubits long, inside and out. This was the same way the Corinthians had refitted their bows before fighting the ships at Naupactus.[13] The Syracusans reasoned as follows. The Athenian ships were not built in the same way but were light in the bow, because the Athenians relied less on ramming head-on than on ramming after sailing round the enemy. Against such ships, the Syracusans thought, they would not come off worse, and the battle in the Great Harbor, with many ships in little space, would work in their favor. By ramming head-on they would smash the Athenians' bows, striking with their solid, thick rams against hollow, weak ones. In the cramped space the Athenians would have no room either to sail round them or to break through their line, the maneuvers of their skill they relied on most. The Syracusans would do everything they could to prevent the breakthrough, and the narrowness of the space would stop the Athenians from sailing round. They also thought that ramming prow to prow, which had earlier been considered a lack of skill on the part of helmsmen, would be the very tactic they would use most, for it would give them the greatest advantage. When the Athenians were pushed back, they would have nowhere to back water except toward the land, and only over a short distance and into a small space, right by their own camp. The Syracusans would control the rest of the harbor. Wherever the Athenians were hard pressed, they would be forced together into a small space, all into the same spot, and would fall into confusion by colliding with one another. (This was in fact what harmed the Athenians most in all the sea battles, since they could not back water across the whole harbor, as the Syracusans could.) Nor would the Athenians be able to sail round into open

13 A cubit was about 45 centimeters (18 inches).

water, since the Syracusans would control both the approach from the open sea and the room to back away into it. Besides, Plemmyrium would be hostile to them, and the mouth of the harbor was not large.

7.37 The Syracusans devised these plans to suit their own skill and strength. At the same time they were more confident now after the previous sea battle, and they attacked with infantry and ships at once. A little earlier Gylippus led the infantry out of the city and brought it up against the part of the Athenian wall that faced the city. From the other side the force at the Olympieum advanced on the wall: the hoplites stationed there, the cavalry and the Syracusan light troops. Immediately after this the ships of the Syracusans and their allies sailed out. At first the Athenians thought the enemy would make the attempt with infantry alone, so when they suddenly saw the ships bearing down on them too, they were thrown into confusion. Some took up position on the walls and in front of them to face the attackers. Others went out against the large numbers of cavalry and javelin-men advancing rapidly from the Olympieum and the country outside. Others manned the ships and at the same time ran to help along the beach. When the ships were manned, they put out seventy-five ships against the enemy, and the Syracusans had about eighty. 7.38 For much of the day they sailed at each other, backed water and tested each other's strength. Neither side could achieve anything worth mentioning, except that the Syracusans sank one or two Athenian ships, and then they separated. At the same time the infantry withdrew from the walls.

The next day the Syracusans kept quiet and gave no sign of what they intended to do. But Nicias saw that the sea battle had been evenly matched and expected them to attack again. He made the trierarchs repair any ship that had been damaged. He also anchored merchant ships in front of the stockade that the Athenians had driven into the sea in front of their ships to serve as an enclosed harbor. He placed the merchant ships about two plethra apart, so that any ship that was hard pressed would have

a safe refuge and could sail out again without hurry. The Athenians spent the whole day until nightfall on these preparations.

7.39 The next day the Syracusans engaged the Athenians earlier in the day, but with the same combined attack by land and sea. Facing each other with their ships in the same way, they again spent much of the day testing each other. Then Ariston son of Pyrrhichus, a Corinthian and the best helmsman on the Syracusan side, persuaded the commanders of their fleet to send word to the officials in the city. He had them ask the officials to move the market as quickly as possible down to the shore, and to make everyone bring whatever food they had there and sell it. That way the commanders could land the crews and have them eat their midday meal right beside the ships, and then shortly afterward, on that same day, attack the Athenians again when they were not expecting it. 7.40 The commanders were persuaded and sent a messenger, and the market was set up. The Syracusans suddenly backed water, sailed back toward the city, disembarked at once on the spot and took their meal. The Athenians thought the enemy had pulled back to the city because they had been beaten. So they disembarked without hurry and went about their other business, including their meal, believing that for that day at least there would be no more fighting at sea. But suddenly the Syracusans manned their ships and sailed at them again. The Athenians, in great confusion and most of them without having eaten, embarked in no order and with difficulty finally put out to meet them. For some time the two fleets kept apart, watching each other. Then the Athenians decided not to let themselves be worn down by exhaustion through their own delay but to attack as soon as possible, and with a shout of encouragement they charged and engaged. The Syracusans received the attack and, [both] by meeting them head-on with their ships, as they had planned, and by the build of their rams, they stove in the Athenian ships along much of their outriggers. The javelin-men on the Syracusan decks did the Athenians great harm. Yet the Syracusans who sailed round in light boats did far more. They slipped in under the oars of the enemy ships, sailed

up alongside them, and hurled javelins from the boats at the sailors. 7.41 In the end, fighting hard in this way, the Syracusans won. The Athenians turned and fled through the merchant ships to their own anchorage. The Syracusan ships pursued them as far as the merchant ships, but there they were stopped by the beams carrying "dolphins" that were slung from the merchant ships above the gaps. Two Syracusan ships, elated by their victory, came close to them and were destroyed, and one of them was captured with its crew. The Syracusans sank seven Athenian ships and damaged many. They took most of the men alive, killed the rest, and withdrew. They set up trophies for both sea battles. They now had a firm hope that they were far superior at sea, and they expected to overcome the land forces as well.[14]

DEMOSTHENES ARRIVES

A second Athenian army reaches Syracuse, and its night attack on Epipolae ends in a rout.

7.42 So the Syracusans were preparing to attack again on both fronts. At this point Demosthenes and Eurymedon arrived with the relief force from Athens. They had about seventy-three ships, counting the foreign ones, and some five thousand hoplites, Athenian and allied. There were also a good many javelin-throwers, both non-Greek and Greek, along with slingers and archers and ample forces of every other kind. For the moment the Syracusans and their allies were thrown into considerable dismay, wondering whether there would ever be an end to their danger. They saw that the fortification of Decelea had done nothing to prevent the arrival of a second army, as large as the first and very like it, and that the power of Athens was evidently great in every quarter. The earlier Athenian army, on the other hand, had recovered a measure of strength, as far as men could after such misfortunes. Demosthenes saw how things stood and judged that he could not afford to waste time or

14 The "dolphins" were heavy lead weights, shaped like dolphins, hung from beams so that they could be dropped onto an enemy ship to hole or sink it.

to suffer what Nicias had suffered. When Nicias first arrived he was a figure of terror. But because he did not press Syracuse at once and wintered at Catana instead, he came to be despised, and Gylippus got in ahead of him by arriving from the Peloponnese with an army. The Syracusans would never even have sent for that army if Nicias had attacked at once. Believing themselves strong enough on their own, they would have discovered they were the weaker only when they were already walled in, so that even if they had sent for help, it would no longer have done them the same good. Reflecting on all this, then, Demosthenes recognized that he too, at this moment, on this first day, was at his most formidable to the enemy. He therefore wanted to make the most, as quickly as possible, of the dismay his army was causing. He saw that the Syracusan counter-wall, by which they had prevented the Athenians from walling them in, was only a single wall. If one could gain control of the ascent to Epipolae, and then of the camp on the heights, the wall would be easily taken, since no one would stand his ground against them. So he was in a hurry to make the attempt, and thought it the quickest way to bring the war to an end. If he succeeded, he would take Syracuse. If not, he would lead the army home rather than wear down, to no purpose, both the Athenians serving on the expedition and the city as a whole.

First, then, the Athenians marched out and ravaged the Syracusans' land around the Anapus. Their forces had the upper hand, as at the beginning, both by land and by sea, for the Syracusans did not come out against them on either front except with their cavalry and javelin-throwers from the Olympieum. 7.43 Next, Demosthenes decided to try the counter-wall with siege engines first. But when he brought them up, the engines were burned by the enemy defending from the wall, and the rest of the army was beaten back wherever it attacked. He decided to waste no more time. Having persuaded Nicias and his other fellow commanders, he set about the attack on Epipolae as he had planned. It seemed impossible to approach and climb up undetected by day. So he ordered five days' rations, took all the

stonemasons and carpenters, and a further supply of arrows and everything else they would need for building fortifications if they succeeded. Then, at the hour of first sleep, he set off for Epipolae with the whole army, together with Eurymedon and Menander, while Nicias was left behind in the walls. When they reached the heights at Euryelus, where the earlier army had also made its first ascent, they slipped past the Syracusan guards. They went up, took the Syracusan fort that stood there, and killed some of the garrison. But most of the guards escaped and ran at once to the camps on Epipolae. There were three of these, each within an outwork: one of the Syracusans, one of the other Sicilian Greeks, and one of the allies. The fugitives reported the attack, and they also told the six hundred Syracusans who formed the forward guard on this part of Epipolae. These came to the rescue at once, but Demosthenes and the Athenians met them and routed them, though they fought hard. The Athenians themselves pressed straight on, so as not to lose the momentum of the moment in achieving what they had come for. Others, from the very first, began taking the Syracusan counter-wall, whose guards did not stand their ground, and tearing down its battlements. The Syracusans and their allies, and Gylippus and his men, came up to the rescue from the outworks. But this daring stroke had come upon them unexpectedly and at night, so they were badly shaken when they engaged the Athenians, and at first they were forced back. The Athenians, however, were now advancing in some disorder, as men who had already won, and wanted to drive as quickly as possible through all the part of the enemy that had not yet fought, so that the enemy could not rally if they slackened their onset. At this point the Boeotians were the first to stand up to them. They charged, routed them, and put them to flight.

7.44 From here on the Athenians fell into great confusion and helplessness, and it was not easy to learn, even from either side, how each thing had happened. In daylight things are clearer, and yet even then those who are present hardly know everything, except what happens around each of them. But in a

night battle—and this was the only one fought between large armies in this war, at least—how could anyone know anything clearly? There was a bright moon, but they saw one another only as you would expect by moonlight: they could make out the shape of a figure in front of them but could not be sure whether it was one of their own. Large numbers of hoplites on both sides were milling about in a confined space. Some of the Athenians were already being beaten, while others were still advancing undefeated in their first onset. Much of the rest of their army, too, had either just come up or was still climbing, so that they did not know which way to go. For with the rout in front, everything had already been thrown into confusion, and the shouting made it hard to tell anything apart. The Syracusans and their allies, as the winners, were urging each other on with loud cries, since there was no other way of signaling at night, while at the same time they met those who charged them; and the Athenians were looking for one another and took everything coming from the opposite direction for the enemy, even if it was friendly and belonged to those who were already fleeing back. Since there was no other way of recognizing each other, they kept asking for the watchword. As they were all asking at once, they caused great confusion among themselves, and they also gave the watchword away to the enemy. They did not learn the enemy's watchword in the same way, because the Syracusans were winning and were not scattered, and so had less trouble recognizing one another. The result was that whenever the Athenians came upon a party of the enemy and were stronger, the enemy got away, since they knew the Athenian watchword; but when the Athenians themselves could not answer, they were cut down. But what did the most damage of all was the singing of the paean. Because it sounded much the same on both sides, it caused bewilderment. Whenever the Argives and the Corcyraeans, and all the Dorians who were with the Athenians, struck up the paean, they frightened the Athenians, and the enemy did the same. So in the end, once they had been thrown into confusion, they collided with one another in many parts of

the field, friends with friends and fellow citizens with fellow citizens. They not only panicked but even came to blows with each other, and were separated only with difficulty.[15] Many who were pursued threw themselves down the cliffs and were killed, for the way back down from Epipolae was narrow. Those who got down safely from the heights to level ground mostly escaped to the camp, especially those of the earlier army, who knew the country better. But some of the late arrivals missed the roads and wandered about the countryside, and when day came the Syracusan cavalry rode round them and killed them.

7.45 The next day the Syracusans set up two trophies, one on Epipolae at the ascent and the other at the spot where the Boeotians had first made a stand, and the Athenians recovered their dead under truce. A good many of them and of their allies had been killed, yet even more arms were taken than the number of dead would suggest. For of those who were forced to leap down the cliffs stripped of their gear [without their shields], some perished and others survived.

7.46 After this the Syracusans regained their confidence once again, as they had before, at such an unexpected success. They sent Sicanus with fifteen ships to Acragas, which was torn by civil strife, to win the city over if he could. Gylippus went off again by land to the rest of Sicily to bring still more troops, hoping that he might even take the Athenian walls by storm, now that things had gone as they had on Epipolae.

STAY OR GO

Demosthenes urges withdrawal; Nicias refuses to leave without a vote at Athens.

7.47 Meanwhile the Athenian generals were deliberating about the disaster that had happened and the weakness that now prevailed in every respect in the camp. They saw that their attempts were failing and that the soldiers were weary of stay-

15 The paean on the Athenian side was sung by Dorian allies in the same way as by their Dorian enemies.

ing on. They were suffering from sickness for two reasons: it was the season of the year when people are most often ill, and the place where they were encamped was marshy and unhealthy. Besides, everything else looked hopeless to them. Demosthenes, therefore, thought they should not stay any longer. In line with the thinking on which he had risked the attack on Epipolae, now that it had failed, he voted to leave without delay, while it was still possible to cross the open sea and while, with the ships that had just arrived at least, their forces still had the upper hand. It would be more useful to the city, he said, to make war on the men who were building a fort in their own country than on the Syracusans, whom it was no longer easy to subdue. Nor was it reasonable to go on besieging them and spending large sums of money to no purpose.

7.48 That was Demosthenes' view. Nicias, for his part, also thought their situation was bad, but he did not want to admit its weakness in words, or to have the enemy informed of their withdrawal by an open vote taken in a large meeting; for then they would be much less likely to get away unnoticed when they wanted to. Besides, he knew more about the enemy's position than the others did, and it still gave him some hope that it would become worse than their own if they persisted with the siege. They would wear the Syracusans out through lack of money, especially now that, with the ships they already had, they controlled the sea more widely. And there was also a party in Syracuse that wanted to hand things over to the Athenians, and these men kept sending messages to him and urging him not to raise the siege. Knowing this, he was in fact still wavering between the two courses and holding back to consider them, but in what he openly said at the time he declared that he would not lead the army away. He knew very well, he said, that the Athenians would not accept such a course from them if they left without a vote of the Athenians themselves. For those who would vote on their [own] case would not be people who saw the situation with their own eyes, as they did, and who would judge it without listening to others' criticism; they would be persuaded by

whatever charges some clever speaker might bring. And many of the soldiers now present, most of them in fact, who were now crying out that they were in a terrible plight, would cry the opposite once they got home: that the generals had been bribed to betray them and had come away. For his own part, then, knowing the Athenian character as he did, he had no wish to be put to death by the Athenians on a shameful charge and unjustly. If he must meet that fate, he would rather take his own chances and meet it at the hands of the enemy. The Syracusans' situation, he said, was still worse than theirs in spite of everything. They were paying for the upkeep of mercenaries, spending money on guard posts as well, and had now been feeding a large navy for a year; in some respects they were already short, and in others they would soon be at a loss. They had already spent two thousand talents and owed a great deal more besides. If they let any part of their present forces go by failing to pay their keep, their cause would be ruined, since it rested on auxiliaries rather than on men compelled to serve, as the Athenians' did. So, he said, they must wear the enemy down by keeping up the siege, and not go away beaten on money, where they were far superior.

7.49 Nicias held firmly to his position when he said all this. He had precise knowledge of the situation in Syracuse: of their lack of money, and of the large party there that wanted things to go the Athenians' way and kept sending messages to him urging him not to raise the siege. At the same time he felt more confident than before of prevailing, with the fleet at least. Demosthenes would not hear of continuing the siege on any terms. But if they must not lead the army away without a decree of the Athenians, and had to wear the enemy down where they were, then, he said, they should move either to Thapsus or to Catana and do it from there. From there their land forces could overrun much of the country, live off it by plundering the enemy's property, and do the enemy harm. With their fleet they could fight their battles in the open sea and not in a confined space, which favored the enemy, but in open water, where their experience

would count, and where they could retreat and attack without having to set out from and put back into a narrow, hemmed-in base. In short, he said, he was entirely against staying any longer in the same place; they should move out as quickly as possible, now, without delay. Eurymedon supported him in this. But Nicias opposed it, and a certain hesitation and delay set in, together with a suspicion that Nicias knew something more and that this was why he was so insistent. In this way the Athenians kept putting things off and stayed where they were.

THE ECLIPSE

The Athenians are ready to sail when an eclipse of the moon makes Nicias delay twenty-seven days.

7.50 Meanwhile Gylippus and Sicanus had arrived back at Syracuse. Sicanus had failed at Acragas, for while he was still at Gela, the party friendly to the Syracusans had been driven out. Gylippus came with a large army from Sicily, and also with the hoplites who had been sent out from the Peloponnese in the spring in the merchant ships and had reached Selinus from Libya. They had been carried off course to Libya. The Cyrenaeans gave them two triremes and pilots for the voyage, and as they sailed along the coast they fought as allies of the Euesperitae, who were being besieged by the Libyans, and defeated the Libyans. From there they coasted on to Neapolis, a Carthaginian trading post, from which Sicily is only two days' and a night's sail at the shortest; and crossing over from there they reached Selinus.[16] As soon as these troops arrived, the Syracusans prepared to attack the Athenians again on both fronts, by sea and by land. The Athenian generals saw that the enemy had been joined by a further army, while their own situation was not improving but growing worse every day in every respect, and above all was being pressed hard by the men's sickness. They regretted not having moved earlier. And since Nicias no longer

16 Cyrene and Euesperides were Greek cities on the coast of Libya, in what is now eastern Libya.

opposed them as strongly, but only asked that there be no open vote, they gave notice to everyone, as secretly as they could, that the army would sail from the camp, and told them to be ready when the signal was given. Everything was ready and they were on the point of sailing away when the moon went into eclipse; it happened to be full moon. Most of the Athenians took it to heart and urged the generals to wait. Nicias, who was rather too much given to divination and that sort of thing, said he would not even discuss the matter further until they had waited three times nine days, as the seers prescribed, before making any move. So for this reason the Athenians delayed and stayed on.[17]

7.51 When the Syracusans heard of this as well, they were all the more determined not to let up on the Athenians, since the Athenians themselves had now admitted that they were no longer superior to them either at sea or on land; otherwise they would never have planned to sail away. At the same time they did not want the Athenians to settle somewhere else in Sicily and become harder to fight; they wanted to force them to a sea battle there and then, as quickly as possible and on terms that suited themselves. So they manned their ships and trained for as many days as seemed enough. When the moment came, on the first day they attacked the Athenian walls. A small force of hoplites and cavalry came out against them through one of the gates, and the Syracusans cut off some of the hoplites, routed them, and chased them back. As the entrance was narrow, the Athenians lost seventy horses and a few of their hoplites.

DEFEAT IN THE HARBOR

The Syracusans defeat the Athenian fleet, kill Eurymedon, and resolve to destroy the whole army.

7.52 On that day, then, the Syracusan army withdrew. On the next day they sailed out with their ships, seventy-six of them, and at the same time advanced on the walls with their infantry. The Athenians put out against them with eighty-six ships, closed

17 The eclipse took place on 27 August 413 BC.

with them and fought a sea battle. Eurymedon commanded the Athenian right wing. He wanted to encircle the enemy's ships and was extending his line too far toward the shore. The Syracusans and their allies first defeated the Athenian center, and then cut him off too in the hollow, innermost recess of the harbor. They killed him and destroyed the ships that had followed him. After that they were chasing all the Athenian ships now and driving them ashore.

7.53 Gylippus saw the enemy's ships beaten and being carried ashore outside their stockades and their own camp. He wanted to kill the men as they landed, and to make it easier for the Syracusans to tow the ships off a shore held by their friends, so he came down to the breakwater to help, with part of the army. But the Etruscans, who were on guard for the Athenians at that point, saw them coming on in disorder. They sallied out against them, fell on the leading men, routed them and drove them into the marsh called Lysimeleia.[18] Later, when a larger part of the Syracusan and allied army had arrived, the Athenians too came up in support, fearing for their ships. They engaged them, won, pursued them and killed a few hoplites. As for the ships, they saved most of them and brought them together by their camp, but the Syracusans and their allies captured eighteen and killed all their crews. Then, wanting to burn the rest, they filled an old merchant ship with brushwood and pinewood (the wind was blowing straight toward the Athenians), set it on fire and let [the ship] go. The Athenians, fearing for their ships, devised means of their own to quench and fend it off. By putting out the flames and keeping the merchant ship from coming close, they escaped the danger. 7.54 After this the Syracusans set up a trophy for the sea battle, and for the cutting off of the hoplites up by the wall, where they had also taken the horses. The Athenians set one up for the rout of the infantry that the Etruscans had driven into the marsh, and for the rout they had themselves inflicted with the rest of the army.

7.55 Now that the Syracusans had won a brilliant victory with their fleet as well (before, they had been afraid of the ships that had come with Demosthenes), the Athenians were in utter despair. Their shock at the reversal was great, and their regret at having made the expedition was greater still. These were the only cities they had yet attacked that were like their own in character: democracies, as they were themselves, and possessed of ships, horses and size. They could not use a change of constitution to sow division among them and so win them over, nor could they bring a much superior force against them. They had failed for the most part, and they had been at a loss even before; and once they had been beaten at sea as well, which they would never have thought possible, they were much more so still. 7.56 The Syracusans at once began sailing along the harbor without fear, and planned to close its mouth, so that the Athenians could no longer slip out unseen, even if they wanted to. They were no longer concerned only with saving themselves, but also with how to stop the Athenians. They believed, and rightly, that on present showing their position was far the stronger, and that if they could defeat the Athenians and their allies on land and sea, the achievement would appear a fine one in the eyes of the Greeks. For of the other Greeks, some would at once be set free and others released from fear (since what remained of Athenian power would no longer be able to withstand the war that would afterward be brought against it); and they themselves, seen as the authors of this, would be greatly admired both by the rest of mankind and by posterity. And the contest was a worthy one, both for these reasons and because they were getting the better not of the Athenians alone but of their many allies too. Nor were they doing it by themselves alone, but together with those who had come to their aid: they had become leaders alongside the Corinthians and the Spartans, had offered their own city to face the danger first, and had made great advances in seamanship. For the greatest number of peoples came together against this one city—apart, that is, from the whole tally of those who

18 Lysimeleia was a marsh at the head of the Great Harbor of Syracuse.

gathered in this war around the city of the Athenians and that of the Spartans.

THE FORCES ON EACH SIDE

Thucydides lists every people that fought for and against Athens at Syracuse, and why.

7.57 These were the peoples on each side who came against Sicily or for Sicily and fought at Syracuse, the one side to help win the land, the other to help save it. They took their stand together not so much on grounds of justice or kinship as according to how circumstance had placed each of them, whether by self-interest or by necessity. The Athenians themselves, Ionians, came of their own will against the Syracusans, who are Dorians; and with them, still using the same speech and institutions, campaigned the Lemnians and Imbrians, the Aeginetans who then held Aegina, and also the Hestiaeans who live at Hestiaea in Euboea, as colonists.[19] Of the others, some campaigned with them as subjects, some as independent allies, and some as mercenaries. Among the subjects paying tribute were the Eretrians, Chalcidians, Styrians and Carystians from Euboea; from the islands the Ceans, Andrians and Tenians; and from Ionia the Milesians, Samians and Chians. Of these the Chians paid no tribute but supplied ships, and came along as independent. For the most part all these were Ionians and descended from the Athenians, except the Carystians (they are Dryopes); and though they were subjects and under compulsion, they were still Ionians going against Dorians.[20] Besides these there were Aeolians: the Methymnaeans, subjects who supplied ships and not tribute, and the Tenedians and Aenians, who paid tribute. These Aeolians were fighting under compulsion against Aeolians, the Boeotians, their founders, who were on the Syracusan side; whereas

19 The Aeginetans meant here were Athenian settlers, installed after the islanders were expelled in 431 BC.

20 The Dryopes were an ancient people, neither Ionian nor Dorian, believed to have once lived in central Greece.

the Plataeans, Boeotians directly opposed to Boeotians, were the only ones to do so with good reason, out of hatred. The Rhodians and Cytherians were both Dorians. The Cytherians, colonists of the Spartans, bore arms with the Athenians against the Spartans who were with Gylippus; while the Rhodians, Argives by descent, were compelled to make war on the Syracusans, who were Dorians, and on the Geloans, who were actually their own colonists and were campaigning with the Syracusans.[21] Of the islanders around the Peloponnese, the Cephallenians and Zacynthians were independent, but as islanders they were rather constrained, since the Athenians controlled the sea, and so they went along. The Corcyraeans, who were not only Dorians but plainly Corinthians, followed against the Corinthians and the Syracusans, though they were colonists of the one and kin of the other. Compulsion was their respectable excuse, but they came no less by choice, out of hatred for the Corinthians. Those now called the Messenians were also brought into the war, from Naupactus and from Pylos, which was then held by the Athenians. And a few Megarian exiles too, by misfortune, fought against the Selinuntians, who were Megarians.[22] With the rest, the campaign was by now more a matter of choice. The Argives followed the Athenians, Dorians against Dorians alongside Ionians, not so much for the sake of the alliance as out of hatred of the Spartans and for each man's own immediate advantage. The Mantineans and other Arcadians, as mercenaries, were used to going against whoever was pointed out to them at the time as the enemy, and on this occasion too, for the sake of gain, they regarded the Arcadians who had come with the Corinthians as no less their enemies. The Cretans and Aetolians, too, were won over by pay. And it so happened that the Cretans, who had helped the Rhodians found Gela, came willingly for pay not with their colonists but against them. Some of the

21 The Aeolians were the third main branch of the Greeks. Gela, on the south coast of Sicily, had been founded by Rhodians and Cretans.

22 Selinus, in western Sicily, was a colony of Megara Hyblaea, itself founded from Megara near Athens.

Acarnanians also came to help, partly for gain, but more out of friendship for Demosthenes and goodwill toward the Athenians, whose allies they were. These, then, were the peoples within the bounds of the Ionian Gulf. Of the Italian Greeks, the Thurians and Metapontines campaigned with them, caught at that time in the compulsions of civil strife; of the Sicilian Greeks, the Naxians and Catanaeans; of the non-Greeks, the Egestaeans, who had called them in, and most of the Sicels; and from outside Sicily, some of the Etruscans, because of their quarrel with the Syracusans, and Iapygian mercenaries. These were the peoples who campaigned with the Athenians.

7.58 On the Syracusan side, the Camarinaeans came to help, being their neighbors, and the Geloans, who live next beyond them; then, since the Acragantines were staying neutral, the Selinuntians, who are settled on the far side of them. These live in the part of Sicily that faces Libya. The Himeraeans came from the part facing the Tyrrhenian Sea, where they are also the only Greeks living, and they were the only ones to come to help from there. These were the Greek peoples in Sicily who fought on their side, all Dorians and [the] independent ones; of the non-Greeks, only those Sicels who had not gone over to the Athenians.[23] Of the Greeks outside Sicily there were the Spartans, who provided a Spartiate as commander and, for the rest, neodamodeis and helots [a neodamode is one who is now free]; the Corinthians, the only ones present with both ships and infantry; the Leucadians and Ambraciots, because of kinship; mercenaries from Arcadia sent by the Corinthians; the Sicyonians, campaigning under compulsion; and, from outside the Peloponnese, the Boeotians. Against these invaders the Sicilian Greeks themselves supplied larger numbers in every arm, since they live in great cities: many hoplites, ships and horses were gathered, and other troops in abundance. And again, compared with all the rest put together, one might say, the Syracusans themselves provided more, because of the size of their city and because they were in the greatest danger. 7.59 Such were the forces

23 Libya is the Greek name for Africa.

gathered to help each side; by this time all of them were present on both sides, and nothing more arrived for either.

NICIAS' SPEECH TO THE FLEET

The harbor is blocked; the Athenians man every ship to break out, and Nicias rallies the crews.

The Syracusans and their allies, at any rate, naturally thought it would be a fine achievement for them, on top of the victory they had won at sea, to capture the whole Athenian army, large as it was, and not let them escape by either route, by sea or by land. So they at once began closing the Great Harbor, whose mouth is about eight stades across, with triremes moored broadside on, and merchant vessels and boats, all at anchor. They made their other preparations in case the Athenians should still dare to fight at sea, and nothing they planned was on a small scale. 7.60 The Athenians saw the harbor being closed and realized what the rest of the enemy's plan was, and decided they must take counsel. The generals and the taxiarchs met to consider their present difficulties, above all that they no longer had supplies for immediate use (for, expecting to sail away, they had sent ahead to Catana telling them to stop bringing any), and would not have any in future either unless they won control of the sea. They decided to abandon the upper walls; to cut off with a cross-wall, right by the ships, as small an area as possible that would be enough for the baggage and the sick, and to garrison this; and with the rest of the infantry to man all the ships, both the sea-worthy ones and those less fit to sail, putting every man aboard. They would fight it out at sea, and if they won, they would make their way to Catana; if not, they would burn the ships, form up and retreat by land by whatever route would let them reach most quickly some friendly place, non-Greek or Greek. Having decided this, they did it. They came down from the upper walls and manned all the ships, forcing anyone to embark who seemed in any way fit and of military age. In all, about a hundred and ten ships were manned. They put many archers and

javelin-throwers aboard, Acarnanians and other foreigners, and made their other provisions as far as was possible under necessity and with such a plan in view. When most things were ready, Nicias saw that the soldiers were disheartened at having been beaten at sea, so contrary to what they were used to, and that because of the shortage of supplies they wanted to risk a decisive battle as soon as possible. He called them all together, and before anything else encouraged them, speaking as follows:

7.61 "Soldiers, Athenians and our other allies, the coming contest will be shared alike by all of you: for each of you, no less than for the enemy, it will be a fight for your safety and your country. For if we win now with our ships, each man can see his own city again, wherever it may be. You must not lose heart, or behave like the most inexperienced of men, who fail in their first contests and ever afterward keep their expectations as fearful as their misfortunes. Rather, those of you here who are Athenians, experienced already in many wars, and those of the allies who have always campaigned with us: remember the surprises that happen in war, and prepare yourselves in the hope that chance may yet stand on our side, and with the resolve to fight again in a manner worthy of your own great numbers, which you see before you.

7.62 "We saw what would help us against the narrowness of the harbor, in view of the crowd of ships there will be, and against their forces on the decks, which did us harm before. All of this has now been considered with the helmsmen and prepared on our side too, as far as present means allow. Many archers and javelin-throwers will go aboard, and a mass of men we would not use if we were fighting a sea battle in open water, because it would hamper our skill by weighing down the ships; but in the land battle from shipboard that we are forced into here, they will be useful. We have also worked out what we must fit to our ships in answer to theirs. Against the thick catheads of theirs, which did us the most damage, we will throw iron hands, which will stop the ship that has rammed us from backing away again, provided the marines do their part. For we have been driven to

the point where we must fight a land battle from the ships, and it is plainly to our advantage neither to back water ourselves nor to let them do so—especially since the shore, apart from what our infantry holds, is hostile.

7.63 "Remember this, and fight it out as hard as you can, and do not be driven back onto the shore. When ship has met ship, do not think of breaking free until you have swept the hoplites off the enemy's deck. I urge this on the hoplites no less than on the sailors, since this is more the work of the men on deck; and even now we are still, for the most part, superior with our infantry. To the sailors I give this advice, and in the same breath this plea: do not be too dismayed by your misfortunes, since you now have better forces on the decks and more ships. And consider how well worth preserving that pleasure is—you who, though not Athenians, were until now taken for Athenians, and were admired throughout Greece for your knowledge of our language and your imitation of our ways. You had no smaller share in our empire as far as its benefits went, and a far larger one in being feared by the subjects and protected from wrong. So, since you alone are free partners with us in the empire, it is only right that you [should] not betray it now. Despise the Corinthians, whom you have often beaten, and the Sicilian Greeks, not one of whom even thought of standing up to us while our navy was in its prime. Drive them off, and show that even in weakness and misfortune your skill is stronger than another's strength that is enjoying good luck. 7.64 To the Athenians among you, again, I give this reminder too. You left behind in the dockyards no other ships like these, and no generation of hoplites; and if anything but victory befalls you, the enemy here will at once sail against Athens, and those of our people left there will be unable to defend themselves against both the enemy already there and those who come against them. Those of you here would at once be in the power of the Syracusans—and you know yourselves with what intentions you came against them—and those there in the power of the Spartans. Since, then, you are engaged in this one contest on behalf of both, hold firm now if ever, and keep in

mind, each of you and all together, that those of you who will now be on the ships are, for the Athenians, their infantry and their ships, all that remains of their city, and the great name of Athens. On behalf of these, if any man surpasses another in skill or courage, he could find no better occasion to show it, and so serve his own good and be the salvation of all."

GYLIPPUS' SPEECH

The Syracusan commanders and Gylippus urge their men to finish off the Athenians.

7.65 When he had given this encouragement, Nicias at once ordered them to man the ships. Gylippus and the Syracusans could tell, as they watched the preparations themselves, that the Athenians were going to fight at sea, and they had also been told in advance about the throwing of the iron hands. They made ready against each of the other measures, and against this one too: they covered the prows and a good part of the upper ship with hides, so that the hand, when thrown, would slip off and find no hold. When everything was ready, the generals and Gylippus encouraged their men, speaking as follows:

7.66 "Men of Syracuse and allies, most of you, we think, know that what has been achieved so far has been fine and that the coming struggle will be for fine stakes. Otherwise you would not have taken these things up so eagerly. If anyone has not grasped this as fully as he should, we will make it plain. The Athenians came to this land first to enslave Sicily, and then, if they succeeded, the Peloponnese and the rest of Greece as well. They had acquired an empire already greater than that of any Greeks before them or now. Yet you, the first of all mankind to stand up to the navy by which they had made themselves masters of everything, have already beaten them in the earlier sea battles, and in all likelihood you will beat them in this one now. For when men are cut down in the very thing in which they claim to excel, what remains of their opinion of themselves is weaker than it would have been if they had never held that belief at all.

Tripped up, against all expectation, in what they boasted of, they give way even beyond what their real strength warrants. This is very likely what has now happened to the Athenians. 7.67 With us it is different. The spirit we had from the start, with which we dared even while we were still unskilled, is now more secure. And since there is now added to it the conviction that we must be the strongest if we have beaten the strongest, each man's hope is doubled. In most undertakings it is the greatest hope that also supplies the greatest eagerness.

"As for their imitation of our equipment, it is familiar to our own way of fighting, and we will not be ill-matched against any part of it. But on their side, when many hoplites stand on the decks, contrary to established practice, and many javelin-throwers too—landsmen, so to speak, Acarnanians and others who have gone aboard ship and who will not even work out how to throw a missile from a sitting position—how can they fail to make their ships unsteady, and how can they all fail to fall into confusion among themselves, moving in a way that is not their own? Nor will the number of their ships do them any good, if any of you is afraid of this too, that he will be fighting against unequal numbers. Many ships in a small space will be slower to do anything they want, and very easy to damage by the means we have prepared. And understand the plain truth from what we believe we have learned for certain. Their troubles have overwhelmed them, and, forced by their present helplessness, they have been driven to desperation: they mean to take a last gamble as best they can, trusting not so much to their forces as to chance, so that they may either force their way out and sail off, or after this make their retreat by land—on the view that they could hardly fare worse than they are faring now. 7.68 Against such disorder, then, and against the fortune of our bitterest enemies, which has delivered itself into our hands, let us close with them in anger. Let us consider, first, that against opponents it is entirely lawful for those who are avenging an aggression to claim the right to sate the rage in their hearts; and second, that we will have the chance to punish our enemies,

which is, as the saying goes, the sweetest thing of all. That they are our enemies, and our bitterest enemies, you all know. They came against our land to enslave it, and if they had succeeded, they would have inflicted the most painful sufferings on our men, the most degrading on our children and women, and on the whole city the most shameful name. For this reason no one should go soft, or think it a gain if they simply get away without danger. They will do that just the same even if they win. But if we accomplish what we want, as is likely, these men will be punished, and we will hand on to the whole of Sicily, which enjoyed its freedom before as well, a freedom more secure; that is a fine thing to fight for. And the rarest of risks are those in which failure does the least harm and success brings the most advantage."

THE BATTLE IN THE GREAT HARBOR

The armies watch from shore as the Athenian fleet is beaten and its crews refuse to sail again.

7.69 So the Syracusan generals and Gylippus, after encouraging their own soldiers in this way, began manning their ships in turn as soon as they saw the Athenians doing so. Nicias was dismayed by the situation. He saw how great the danger was and how close it [was] now, since they were all but on the point of putting out; and he believed, as men do in great contests, that in deed everything still fell short, and in word not enough had yet been said to them. So he called up each of the trierarchs again, one by one, addressing each by his father's name, his own name and his tribe, and urged each, if he had any personal distinction, not to betray it, and not to obscure the excellences of his family, for which his ancestors were famous. He reminded them of their country, the freest in the world, and of the freedom everyone there enjoyed to live his life without taking orders. And he said all the other things that men at such a moment of crisis would say, without taking care to avoid seeming to talk in old-fashioned commonplaces—the appeals that are brought out alike on every occasion, to wives and children and ancestral gods—but

calling them out because they think them useful in the terror of the moment.

Having given an exhortation that he thought was not so much adequate as at least what had to be said, he withdrew, led the land army down to the sea and drew it up along as great a stretch as he could, so that it might give the greatest possible encouragement to the men on the ships. Demosthenes, Menander and Euthydemus (these were the generals who went aboard the Athenian ships) put out from their own camp and sailed straight for the barrier across the harbor and the passage that had been left open in it, wanting to force their way out into the open sea.[24] 7.70 The Syracusans and their allies had already put out with about the same number of ships as before. With part of them they guarded the exit, and with the rest the remainder of the harbor all round, so as to fall on the Athenians from every side at once; and their land army was ready at the same time to support them wherever the ships put in. The Syracusan fleet was commanded by Sicanus and Agatharchus, each holding one wing of the whole, and by Pythen and the Corinthians in the center. When the Athenians for their part reached the barrier, in the first rush of their attack they overpowered the ships stationed by it and tried to break the fastenings. But after this, as the Syracusans and their allies bore down on them from every side, the sea battle was no longer at the barrier alone but all over the harbor, and it was fiercely fought, as none of the earlier ones had been. On both sides the sailors showed great eagerness to attack whenever the order was given, and there was a great contest of skill among the helmsmen and rivalry with one another. The marines made sure, whenever ship struck ship, that their work on deck did not fall short of the skill shown elsewhere; and every man, at whatever post he had been assigned, strove to be seen first. Many ships collided in a small space—these were the most ships ever to fight in the smallest area, for together they fell only a little short of two hundred.

24 The Syracusans had closed the mouth of the Great Harbor with a line of ships moored side by side (7.59).

Ramming attacks were few, because there was no room for backing water or for breaking through the line; but collisions, as ship happened to run into ship, either in flight or while attacking another, were more frequent. As long as a ship was bearing down, the men on the decks used javelins, arrows and stones against it unsparingly; once they closed, the marines fought hand to hand and tried to board each other's ships. And in many places, because of the narrow space, it happened that ships had rammed others on one side and were themselves rammed on the other, and that two ships, and sometimes even more, were locked around one by necessity. The helmsmen found themselves faced with defense on one side and attack on another, not one thing at a time but many things from every side. And the great din of many ships crashing together both caused terror and made it impossible to hear what the rowing-masters were calling out. For on both sides there was a great deal of exhortation and shouting from the rowing-masters, both as part of their craft and in the competitive spirit of the moment. To the Athenians they shouted to force the passage and to fight with all their heart for their safe return to their homeland, now if ever; to the Syracusans and their allies, that it would be a fine thing to prevent the enemy's escape and by winning to bring honor each to his own country. Besides this, the generals on each side, if they saw anyone anywhere backing water without being forced to, would call out to the trierarch by name and ask him—the Athenians, whether they were retreating because they now thought the most hostile land more their own than the sea, which they had won with no small effort; the Syracusans, whether they were fleeing from men whom they knew for certain to be eager to escape by any means—fleeing from men who were fleeing. [7.71] The land forces on both sides, watching from the shore while the sea battle hung in the balance, went through great agony and inner conflict: the local men were striving now for still greater glory, while the invaders feared they might fare even worse than at present. For since the Athenians had staked everything on their ships, their fear for the outcome was like

nothing else; and because the battle was uneven, they were forced to watch it unevenly from the land. The spectacle was close at hand, and not all were looking at the same point at once. If some saw their own side winning somewhere, they took heart and turned to calling on the gods not to rob them of their safety. Those who looked at the part that was losing broke out into lamentation and cries, and from the mere sight of what was happening were more crushed in spirit than the men actually fighting. Others, looking at some part of the battle that was evenly matched, swayed their very bodies in fear along with their hopes, because the struggle went on without a decision, and they had the most agonizing time of all; for they were always on the very point of escaping or of being destroyed. So long as the sea battle was closely balanced, one could hear everything at once in the same Athenian army—wailing, shouting, cries of men winning, of men beaten, and all the other varied sounds a great army in great danger would be forced to utter. The men on the ships went through much the same as they did, until at last the Syracusans and their allies, after the battle had held out for a long time, routed the Athenians and, pressing hard on them in brilliant fashion, with loud cheering and encouragement to one another, chased them to the land. Then the naval force, all those who had not been captured afloat, were driven ashore, some here, some there, and rushed into the camp; and the land army, no longer divided in feeling but all moved by one impulse, groaning and lamenting, unable to bear what was happening, rushed, some to help at the ships, others to guard what remained of the wall, while others still—and these were now the majority—began to think about themselves and how they could save their lives. In that moment the panic was as great as any of all they had known. They had suffered much the same as they themselves had inflicted at Pylos: there, once the Spartans' ships were destroyed, the men who had crossed over to the island were lost along with them; and now the Athenians had no hope

of reaching safety by land, unless something happened beyond all reckoning.[25]

7.72 The sea battle had been hard-fought, and many ships and men were lost on both sides. The Syracusans and their allies, as the victors, took up the wrecks and the dead, sailed back to the city and set up a trophy. The Athenians, because of the magnitude of their present troubles, did not even think of asking for the recovery of their dead or the wrecks, but planned to retreat at once that night. Demosthenes, however, went to Nicias and proposed that they should man the remaining ships once more and try to force the passage at dawn if they could, saying that they still had more serviceable ships left than the enemy; for the Athenians had about sixty remaining, the enemy fewer than fifty. Nicias agreed with the proposal, but when they wanted to man the ships, the sailors refused to go aboard, because they were demoralized by their defeat and no longer thought they could win.

HERMOCRATES' TRICK

A false message persuades the Athenians to delay their retreat while the Syracusans block the roads.

7.73 So they had all now made up their minds to retreat by land. But Hermocrates the Syracusan suspected their intention, and thought it would be dangerous if so large an army withdrew by land, settled somewhere in Sicily, and chose to make war on them again. He went to the authorities and advised that they ought not to let the enemy get away by night—telling them what he himself thought—but that all the Syracusans and their allies should go out at once, wall off the roads, and occupy and guard the narrow passes ahead of them. They themselves agreed with this no less than he did, and thought it should be done. But they did not think the men would readily be willing to obey: they had only just gladly found rest after a great sea battle, and there was

25 In 425 BC the Athenians destroyed the Spartan fleet at Pylos, cutting off the Spartan troops on the island of Sphacteria (Book 4).

a festival besides (it happened to be their day of sacrifice to Heracles). In their overwhelming joy at the victory most of them had turned to drinking at the festival, and they could be expected to obey in anything sooner than take up arms and march out at that moment. When, on consideration, this seemed impracticable to the magistrates, and Hermocrates could not persuade them any further, he himself devised the following scheme on top of this, fearing that the Athenians would get ahead of them and pass through the most difficult places in the night at their leisure. He sent some of his own friends with some cavalry to the Athenian camp as it was getting dark. They rode up within earshot and called out to some of the men, pretending to be friends of the Athenians (for there were some people in the city who sent reports to Nicias). They told them to tell Nicias not to lead the army away during the night, since the Syracusans were guarding the roads, but to make his preparations at his leisure and withdraw by day. Having said this they went away, and those who had heard it reported it to the Athenian generals; 7.74 and they, on the strength of the message, held off for that night, thinking it was no trick. And since even so they had not set out at once, they decided to wait the following day too, so that the soldiers could pack up the most useful things as best they could, and then leave everything else behind and set out, taking with them only what they needed personally to stay alive. The Syracusans and Gylippus went out ahead with their infantry, blocked the roads through the countryside by which the Athenians were likely to go, guarded the crossings of the streams and [the] rivers, and took up positions where they thought best to receive the army and stop it. With their ships they sailed up and towed the Athenian ships away from the beach. (A few the Athenians themselves had burned, as they had intended.) The rest, at their leisure and with no one to stop them, they took in tow, each from wherever it had run aground, and brought them to the city.

THE RETREAT

The Athenians abandon their dead and wounded and march inland, some forty thousand strong.

7.75 After this, when Nicias and Demosthenes thought that adequate preparations had been made, the army finally began to move off, on the third day after the sea battle. It was a terrible thing, and not in one respect alone—that they were going away having lost all their ships, and that instead of great hope both they and their city were in danger. In abandoning the camp, too, it was the lot of each man to see things painful to the eye and to feel things painful to the mind. The dead lay unburied, and whenever someone saw one of his friends lying there, he was plunged into grief and fear; and the living who were being left behind, the wounded and the sick, were far more painful to the living than the dead, and more wretched than those who had perished. For they turned to entreaty and lamentation and reduced the rest to helplessness. They begged to be taken along and called out to each one by name, if they saw any comrade or kinsman anywhere; they clung to their tentmates as they were already leaving and followed as far as they could; and when anyone's strength and body gave out, he was left behind with many invocations of the gods and wailing. So the whole army, filled with tears and in such helplessness, found it hard to set out, even though it was leaving a hostile land, had already suffered things too great for tears, and feared what it might suffer in the unknown future. There was also a kind of dejection, and much self-reproach. They looked like nothing so much as a city that had been starved out by siege and was slipping away in flight, and no small city at that: the whole multitude on the march together numbered not less than forty thousand. All the rest of them carried whatever each could that was useful, and the hoplites and cavalry, contrary to custom, carried their own food along with their arms, some for lack of attendants, others because they did not trust them; for the attendants had been

deserting for a long time, and most of them had done so just now. Even so, what they carried was not enough, since there was no longer any grain in the camp. Indeed, the rest of their misery and the equal share in suffering, though there is still some relief in suffering along with many, did not seem easy to bear even so at that moment, especially considering the splendor and boasting of the beginning from which they had come down to such an end and such humiliation. This was the greatest reversal that ever befell [a] Greek army. They had come to enslave others, and now they were going away afraid that they would suffer this themselves; instead of the prayers and paeans with which they had sailed out, they were setting off again to words of ill omen that were the very opposite; they were marching on foot instead of sailing, and relying on hoplites rather than on a navy. Yet, in view of the magnitude of the danger still hanging over them, all this seemed bearable.

NICIAS' SPEECH ON THE MARCH

Nicias tells the army that men, not walls or ships, make a city.

7.76 Nicias saw that the army was disheartened and greatly changed. He went along the ranks encouraging and consoling the men as well as the circumstances allowed. In his eagerness he raised his voice still louder to each group as he reached them, wanting his words to carry as far as possible and do some good.

7.77 "Even in our present situation, Athenians and allies, you must keep hope. Men have been saved before now from worse straits than these. And you must not blame yourselves too much, either for our disasters or for the sufferings you are now enduring beyond anything you deserve. I am no stronger than any of you; you can see what state my illness has left me in. In good fortune, I think, I have been second to no one, both in my private life and in other respects. Yet now I hang in the same danger as the humblest among you. And yet I have spent my life performing many of the observances due to the gods, and doing

much toward men that was just and gave no cause for resentment. Because of this my hope for the future is still bold, even so, and our disasters do not frighten me as much as they might. Perhaps they may even ease. Our enemies have had good fortune enough, and if our expedition roused the resentment of any of the gods, we have by now been punished sufficiently. Others too, surely, have attacked their neighbors before now, and after doing what men do, they suffered what men can bear. So it is reasonable for us now to hope that the god will deal with us more gently, for by now we deserve the gods' pity rather than their resentment. Look at yourselves, at what fine hoplites you are and how many of you are marching together in ranks, and do not be too dismayed. Reckon that you yourselves are a city the moment you settle anywhere. No other city in Sicily could easily withstand your attack, or drive you out once you had established yourselves somewhere. See to it yourselves that the march is safe and orderly. Let each of you believe one thing only: whatever place he is forced to fight in, if he wins it, he will have it as his homeland and his fortress. We shall press on with the journey night and day alike, because our provisions are short. If we reach some friendly place belonging to the Sicels, who are still loyal to us out of fear of the Syracusans, you may consider yourselves safe from that moment. Word has been sent ahead to them, with instructions to meet us and to bring further supplies.

"In short, soldiers, understand that you must be brave men, since there is no place nearby where you could find safety if you faltered. If you escape the enemy now, the rest of you will see again what you surely long to see, and the Athenians among you will raise up again the great power of our city, fallen though it is. For men are the city, not walls or ships empty of men."

THE MARCH SOUTH

Blocked at the Acraean Cliff, the army turns toward the sea by night and splits in two.

7.78 With such words of encouragement Nicias went along the army. Wherever he saw it straggling and out of formation, he brought the men together and put them in their places. Demosthenes did no less, saying the same or similar things to the troops under him. The army marched drawn up in a hollow square, Nicias' division leading and Demosthenes' following, and the hoplites kept the baggage carriers and most of the crowd inside. When they reached the crossing of the river Anapus, they found a force of Syracusans and their allies drawn up there. They routed them, took control of the ford, and pressed on. But the Syracusans kept harassing them, their cavalry riding alongside and their light troops hurling javelins.

That day the Athenians advanced about forty stades and camped by a hill. The next day they set out early and advanced about twenty stades. Then they came down into a stretch of level ground and camped there. They wanted to get something to eat from the houses, since the area was inhabited, and to carry water with them from there, because for many stades ahead along the route they meant to take it was scarce. Meanwhile the Syracusans went on ahead and walled off the pass in front of them. It was a strong hill with a steep-sided ravine on either side, and it was called the Acraean Cliff.

The next day the Athenians moved forward. The cavalry and javelin-throwers of the Syracusans and their allies, who were numerous, blocked them on both flanks, hurling javelins and riding alongside. The Athenians fought for a long time and then withdrew again to the same camp. They no longer had supplies as before, because the cavalry made it impossible to leave the camp any more.

7.79 Early in the morning they broke camp and marched again, and forced their way to the hill that had been walled off. There

they found the enemy infantry in front of them, drawn up behind the wall many shields deep, because the place was narrow. The Athenians attacked and assaulted the wall. But they were pelted by many men from the hill, which was steep, and those above could reach their targets more easily. Unable to force their way through, they withdrew again and rested. As it happened, there was also thunder at the same time, and rain, as often happens when the year is already turning toward autumn. This made the Athenians still more despondent, and they believed that all this too was happening to bring about their destruction. While they were resting, Gylippus and the Syracusans sent part of their army to wall them off in the rear as well, along the way they had come. But the Athenians sent some of their own men against them and prevented it. After this the Athenians withdrew with their whole army further toward the plain and camped there.

The next day they moved forward, and the Syracusans attacked them on every side, all the way round, and wounded many. If the Athenians charged, they gave way; if the Athenians fell back, they pressed on them. They fell especially on the rearmost, hoping to rout them a little at a time and so throw the whole army into panic. For a long time the Athenians held out in this way. Then, after advancing five or six stades, they rested on the plain, and the Syracusans too withdrew from them to their own camp.

7.80 During the night Nicias and Demosthenes reached a decision. Their army was in a bad way, now short of every kind of provision, and many men had been wounded in the many attacks the enemy had made. So they resolved to light as many fires as possible and lead the army away, no longer by the route they had planned. Instead they would go toward the sea, in the opposite direction from the one the Syracusans were watching. This whole route did not lead the army toward Catana. It led to the other part of Sicily, toward Camarina and Gela and the cities in that region, both Greek and non-Greek. So they lit many fires and set off in the night. Fears and terrors tend to arise in every

army, and most of all in the largest, especially when it is marching by night through hostile country with the enemy not far off. So it was with them, and confusion fell upon them. Nicias' division, since it was in the lead, kept together and got well ahead. But Demosthenes' division, about half the army or more, became separated and marched in greater disorder. All the same, at dawn they reached the sea. They turned onto the road called the Helorine Road and marched along it. Their intention was to go up along the river Cacyparis into the interior once they reached it, for they hoped that the Sicels they had sent for would meet them on that route. When they reached the river, they found a Syracusan guard post there too, walling off the ford and fencing it with stakes. They forced their way past it, crossed the river, and marched on again toward another river, the Erineus, because that was the way their guides told them to go.[26]

DEMOSTHENES SURRENDERS

The Syracusans surround Demosthenes' division in an olive grove, and six thousand men surrender.

7.81 Meanwhile day came, and the Syracusans and their allies realized that the Athenians had gone. Most of them blamed Gylippus for deliberately letting the Athenians get away. They pursued in haste along the route the Athenians had taken, which they had no difficulty in finding out, and overtook them at about the time of the midday meal. They came up with Demosthenes' troops, who were in the rear and marching more slowly and in greater disorder, having been thrown into confusion during the night, as described. They fell on them at once and fought. Now that the army was split in two, the Syracusan cavalry could surround these men more easily, and they herded them together into one spot. Nicias' division was as much as fifty stades ahead. Nicias was leading at a faster pace, believing that in such a situation safety lay not in staying behind of their own accord and

26 The Helorine Road ran south from Syracuse along the coast to the town of Helorus.

fighting, but in retreating as fast as possible and fighting only as much as they were forced to. Demosthenes, for his part, had been under more continuous strain for most of the march, because he was retreating in the rear and the enemy fell on him first. Now, realizing that the Syracusans were in pursuit, he did not push forward but formed his men up for battle instead. Through this delay he was surrounded by them, and he and the Athenians with him were thrown into great confusion. They had been hemmed into a place with a low wall running all round it, a road on either side, and a good many olive trees, and missiles were hurled at them from all sides. The Syracusans had good reason to use attacks of this kind rather than close-quarters fighting. Staking everything against desperate men would now have favored them no more than the Athenians. At the same time, with success already plain, they were inclined to spare themselves, so that no one would be thrown away before the end. They also thought that even so, by wearing the enemy down in this way, they would take them. 7.82 All day long they pelted the Athenians and their allies from every side, until they saw that they were worn out by their wounds and their other sufferings. Then Gylippus, the Syracusans and their allies first made a proclamation: any of the islanders who wished could come over to them and be free. Some cities, though not many, came over. Later an agreement was made with all the rest of Demosthenes' men as well. They would hand over their arms, and no one would be put to death, whether by violence, by imprisonment, or by being denied the bare necessities of life. In all, six thousand of them surrendered. They gave up all the money they had, throwing it into upturned shields, and they filled four shields. These men were taken off to the city at once. That same day Nicias and his men reached the river Erineus. He crossed it and halted his army on some high ground.

7.83 The next day the Syracusans overtook him and told him that Demosthenes' men had surrendered, and they urged him to do the same. He did not believe them, and he arranged a truce so that he could send a horseman to look. When the man went

and reported back that they had indeed surrendered, Nicias sent a herald to Gylippus and the Syracusans. He said he was ready to make an agreement on behalf of the Athenians to repay all the money the Syracusans had spent on the war, on condition that they let his army go. Until the money was repaid, he would give Athenian men as hostages, one for each talent. But the Syracusans and Gylippus would not accept these proposals. They fell on these men too, surrounded them, and pelted them from every side until late in the day. These men too were in a wretched state for lack of food and other necessities. Even so, they waited for the quiet of the night and meant to march on. They were taking up their arms when the Syracusans noticed and struck up the paean. Realizing that they had been detected, the Athenians laid their arms down again, all except about three hundred men. These forced their way through the guards and went off in the night wherever they could.

THE ASSINARUS

Nicias' men are slaughtered while drinking at the river, and Nicias surrenders to Gylippus.

7.84 When day came, Nicias led the army on. The Syracusans and their allies pressed on them in the same way, pelting them from every side and shooting them down with javelins. The Athenians hurried toward the river Assinarus. They were hard pressed by the attacks of the numerous cavalry and the rest of the host from every side, and they thought things would be somewhat easier for them if they crossed the river. They were also driven by exhaustion and by their craving to drink. When they reached it, they rushed in with no order left at all. Every man wanted to be the first across himself, and the enemy pressing on them now made the crossing hard. Forced to move in a dense mass, they fell over one another and trampled each other. Some were killed at once on their own spears and gear, while others got entangled and were swept away. The Syracusans lined the far bank of the river, which was steep, and pelted the Athenians from above.

Most of the Athenians were drinking greedily, crowded in confusion in the deep riverbed. The Peloponnesians came down after them and did most of the slaughtering among those in the river. The water was fouled at once, but it was drunk all the same, muddy and bloodied as it was, and most of them fought over it. 7.85 At last many corpses lay heaped on one another in the river, and the army had been destroyed, part of it at the river and part by the cavalry, if any got away. Then Nicias surrendered himself to Gylippus, trusting him more than the Syracusans. He told Gylippus and the Spartans to do with him whatever they wished, but to stop killing the rest of the soldiers. After this Gylippus gave orders to take prisoners. They brought in alive all the rest, except those whom the soldiers hid away for themselves, and these were many. They also sent men in pursuit of the three hundred who had broken through the guard during the night, and captured them. So the part of the army collected as public prisoners was not large, but the part spirited away privately was large, and all Sicily was filled with them, since they had not been taken under an agreement like those captured with Demosthenes. A considerable part also died, for this slaughter was very great, second to none in this [Sicilian] war. Not a few had also died in the other attacks during the march, which had been frequent. Nevertheless many escaped too, some right away, others after being enslaved and running away later. These found refuge in Catana.

THE FATE OF THE PRISONERS

Nicias and Demosthenes are executed, and the prisoners are left to suffer in the stone quarries.

7.86 The Syracusans and their allies gathered together, took up the spoils and as many of the prisoners as they could, and returned to the city. They sent all the other Athenians and allies they had captured down into the stone quarries, thinking this the safest way to keep them. But Nicias and Demosthenes they put to death, against Gylippus' wishes. Gylippus thought it would be a

fine achievement, on top of everything else, to bring the opposing generals to the Spartans as well. It so happened that one of them, Demosthenes, was the Spartans' bitterest enemy because of what had happened on the island and at Pylos. The other was their best friend, for the same reasons. Nicias had worked hard to get the Spartan men from the island released, by persuading the Athenians to make the treaty.[27] In return the Spartans were well disposed toward him, and it was not least for this reason that he trusted Gylippus and surrendered himself to him. But some of the Syracusans, so it was said, had their own fears. Some had been in communication with him and feared that under torture he would cause them trouble on that account in the midst of their success. Others, especially the Corinthians, feared that since he was rich he might bribe someone and escape, and cause them fresh trouble again. These persuaded the allies and put him to death. That, or something very close to it, was the reason he was killed. Of all the Greeks of my time, he least deserved to come to such misfortune, because his whole life had been devoted to the practice of excellence as it is commonly understood.

7.87 The Syracusans treated the men in the quarries harshly at first. There were many of them in a deep, cramped place. At first the sun and the stifling heat still tormented them, since there was no roof. Then the nights that followed, by contrast autumnal and cold, brought on sickness through the change. For lack of space they did everything in the same spot. Besides, the corpses lay heaped together on top of one another, men who had died of their wounds, of the change in temperature, and the like, and the stench was unbearable. They were tormented by hunger and thirst at the same time, for over eight months the Syracusans gave each of them a kotyle of water and two kotylai of grain. Of all the other sufferings one would expect men thrown into such a place to undergo, there was none that did not befall

27 The island is Sphacteria, off Pylos, where Demosthenes trapped and captured Spartan troops in 425 BC; the Peace of Nicias in 421 BC brought about their release.

them.[28] They lived crowded together like this for some seventy days. Then the Syracusans sold all the rest, except the Athenians and any Sicilian or Italian Greeks who had joined the expedition. It is hard to state the total number captured precisely, but it was not less than seven thousand. This proved to be the greatest [Greek] action of this war, and in my view at least of all the Greek actions we know of by report. It was the most brilliant for the victors and the most disastrous for the defeated. They were beaten utterly at every point, and their sufferings were in no respect small. Army and fleet were destroyed root and branch, as the saying goes; there was nothing that was not lost; and few out of many came home. Such were the events in Sicily.

28 A kotyle was a little over a quarter of a liter (about half a pint); the ration was presumably daily.

Book 8

Revolution at Athens, 413–411 BC
Athens' allies revolt, Sparta allies with Persia, Alcibiades intrigues, and the oligarchy of the Four Hundred rises and falls; the history breaks off in 411 BC.

ATHENS AFTER THE DISASTER

News of the Sicilian catastrophe reaches Athens, and the city resolves to fight on.

8.1 When the news reached Athens, for a long time the people refused to believe it, even when it came from the very soldiers who had escaped from the action itself and gave a clear report. They could not believe that everything had been so utterly destroyed at one stroke. When they did grasp it, they turned on the orators who had joined in urging the expedition, as though they had not voted for it themselves, and they were furious too with the oracle-mongers and seers and all those who, by some divine inspiration at the time, had raised their hopes that they would take Sicily. Everything, from every side, distressed them, and in the wake of what had happened they were gripped by fear and by the very greatest consternation. For one thing, each man in his own household, and the city as a whole, had been robbed of a great many hoplites and cavalry and of a generation of young men whose like they saw nowhere left to them, and they were weighed down by it. For another, when they saw that there were not enough ships in the dockyards, nor money in the treasury, nor crews for the ships, they despaired for the moment of coming through safely. They thought that their enemies in Sicily would sail at once with their fleet against the Piraeus, especially

after so great a victory. They thought that their enemies at home, now doubly prepared in every respect, would press them with all their might by land and sea alike, and that their own allies would revolt and join them. Nevertheless they resolved that, so far as their circumstances allowed, they must not give in. They would build up a fleet, procuring timber wherever they could, and raise money. They would make sure of their allies, above all Euboea. They would bring some economy and restraint into the city's affairs, and they would choose a board of older men to give advance consideration to current matters as occasion required. In the terror of the moment they were ready, as a democracy tends to be, to submit to discipline in everything. And as they had resolved, so they acted; and the summer ended.[1]

8.2 In the following winter, in response to the Athenians' great disaster in Sicily, all the Greeks were at once roused against them. Those who were allies of neither side felt that, even if no one invited them, they should no longer stand aloof from the war but should go against the Athenians of their own accord. Each of them supposed that the Athenians would have come against them too if they had succeeded in Sicily; they also thought that the rest of the war would be short, and that it was a fine thing to have a share in it. The Spartans' allies, for their part, were more eager than ever to be quickly rid of their long hardships. Most of all, the Athenians' subjects were ready to revolt, even beyond their strength, because they judged the situation in anger and would not leave room even for the reckoning that the Athenians might be able to survive the coming summer. The Spartan state took heart from all this, and most of all because its allies from Sicily, with great forces — now that they had of necessity acquired a navy — would in all likelihood be with them at the beginning of spring. Hopeful on every side, they meant to take up the war without holding back. They reckoned that if it ended well they would be freed for the future from dangers like the one the Athenians would have posed to

1 This board was the ten *probouloi* ("preliminary councillors"), created in 413 BC.

them if they had added Sicily to their power, and that once they had brought the Athenians down they would themselves lead the whole of Greece in security.

8.3 So at once, in this winter, Agis their king set out from Decelea with a force and levied money from the allies for the fleet. Turning toward the Malian Gulf, he carried off most of the Oetaeans' property as plunder, in pursuit of the old enmity, and exacted money from them. He also forced the Achaeans of Phthiotis and the other subjects of the Thessalians in that region, despite the complaints and unwillingness of the Thessalians, to give him hostages and money. He deposited the hostages at Corinth and tried to bring these peoples into the alliance.[2] The Spartans issued to the cities their requisition for the building of a hundred ships. They assigned twenty-five each to themselves and the Boeotians, fifteen to the Phocians and Locrians, fifteen to the Corinthians, ten to the Arcadians, Pellenians and Sicyonians, and ten to the Megarians, Troezenians, Epidaurians and Hermionians. And they made their other preparations so as to take up the war at once at the beginning of spring.

8.4 The Athenians too made their preparations in this same winter, as they had resolved. They pressed on with shipbuilding, having procured timber. They fortified Sunium, so that their grain ships would be safe in rounding the cape. They abandoned the fort in Laconia that they had built on their voyage past it to Sicily. And wherever any expenditure seemed useless, they cut it back for economy. Above all they kept a close watch on their allies, to make sure they did not revolt from them.

8.5 While both sides were doing this, and were in effect just beginning to equip themselves for the war, the Euboeans were the first, in this winter, to send envoys to Agis about revolting from the Athenians. He accepted their proposals and sent to Sparta for Alcamenes son of Sthenelaidas and Melanthus, to take command in Euboea. They came with about three hundred of the neodamodeis, and he began to prepare their crossing. Mean-

2 Decelea, in northern Attica, had been fortified and permanently occupied by the Spartans since 413 BC.

while the Lesbians also came, wanting to revolt as well; and since the Boeotians backed them, Agis was persuaded to hold off on Euboea and began to prepare the Lesbians' revolt instead. He gave them as harmost Alcamenes, the man who had been about to sail to Euboea, and the Boeotians promised ten ships and Agis ten.[3] All this was done without reference to the Spartan state. For Agis, as long as he was at Decelea with the force under his command, had authority to send troops wherever he wished, to raise them, and to collect money. And at this time, one might say, the allies obeyed him far more [than] they did the Spartans in the city; for since he had a force of his own, he could appear at once anywhere as a formidable presence.

THE PERSIAN SATRAPS

Tissaphernes and Pharnabazus compete to bring a Spartan fleet to their provinces.

While he was working with the Lesbians, the Chians and Erythraeans, who were also ready to revolt, turned not to Agis but to Sparta. With them came an envoy from Tissaphernes, who was general of the coastal region for King Darius son of Artaxerxes. For Tissaphernes too was trying to bring in the Peloponnesians, and he promised to provide maintenance for their forces. He had recently been pressed by the King for the tribute from his province, which he owed in arrears because the Athenians had prevented him from collecting it from the Greek cities. He therefore thought that by damaging the Athenians he would be more likely to get the tribute; that at the same time he would make the Spartans allies of the King; and that he would either bring back alive or kill Amorges, the illegitimate son of Pissuthnes, who had revolted in Caria, as the King had ordered him to.[4]

8.6 So the Chians and Tissaphernes were working together toward the same end. At about the same time Calligeitus son of

3 The neodamodeis ("new members of the people") were helots freed in return for military service; a harmost was a Spartan governor of a subject or allied city.

Laophon, a Megarian, and Timagoras son of Athenagoras, a Cyzicene, both exiles from their own cities who lived at the court of Pharnabazus son of Pharnaces, arrived in Sparta. Pharnabazus had sent them to bring ships to the Hellespont. He too wanted, if he could, to achieve the very things Tissaphernes was eager for: to make the cities in his own province revolt from the Athenians, for the sake of the tribute, and to win the Spartans' alliance for the King through his own efforts.[5]

As the two parties — Pharnabazus' men and Tissaphernes' men — were negotiating separately, there was intense competition between the two delegations at Sparta, each trying to persuade the Spartans to send ships and an army to its own region first, one to Ionia and Chios, the other to the Hellespont. The Spartans, however, much preferred the proposals of the Chians and Tissaphernes. For Alcibiades was working with them too; he was a very close hereditary guest-friend of Endius, who was then ephor. It was in fact from this guest-friendship that the family took its Spartan name, for Endius was called "son of Alcibiades."[6] Even so, the Spartans first sent Phrynis, one of the perioeci, to Chios as a spy, to find out whether the Chians had as many ships as they claimed and whether in other respects the city lived up to its reputation. When he reported back that what they had heard was true, they at once made the Chians and Erythraeans their allies and voted to send them forty ships, on the grounds that there were already no fewer than sixty there, according to what the Chians said. At first they were going to send ten of these themselves, with Melanchridas, who was their admiral; but then an earthquake occurred, and they sent Chalcideus instead of Melanchridas, and began fitting out five ships in Laconia instead of ten. So the winter ended, and with it the

4 Tissaphernes was the Persian satrap (provincial governor) of western Asia Minor; Darius II reigned 424–404 BC.

5 Pharnabazus was the Persian satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, in the northwest of Asia Minor.

6 The ephors were five annually elected Spartan magistrates with wide powers. A guest-friendship was a hereditary bond of hospitality between families of different cities.

nineteenth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.[7] 8.7 At the very beginning of spring in the following summer, the Chians were pressing for the ships to be sent at once, afraid that the Athenians would get wind of what was going on (for all their embassies had been sent in secret from them). So the Spartans sent three Spartiates to Corinth, to have the ships hauled across the Isthmus as quickly as possible from the other sea to the sea facing Athens, and to order them all to sail to Chios — both those Agis had been preparing for Lesbos and the rest. The allied ships there numbered thirty-nine in all.[8] 8.8 Calligeitus and Timagoras, acting for Pharnabazus, took no part in the expedition to Chios, nor did they hand over the money they had brought for dispatching a force, twenty-five talents; they meant to sail later on their own with another expedition. Agis, when he saw that the Spartans were set on going to Chios first, did not take any other view himself either. The allies met at Corinth and deliberated, and they decided to sail first to Chios under the command of Chalcideus, who was fitting out the five ships in Laconia,[9] then to Lesbos under the command of Alcamenes, the man Agis also had in mind, and finally to go to the Hellespont (Clearchus son of Ramphias had been appointed commander for that). They would haul half the ships across the Isthmus first and have these sail off at once, so that the Athenians would not concentrate their attention on the ships setting out any more than on those hauled across afterwards. For they were making this voyage openly, holding the Athenians' weakness in contempt, since no Athenian fleet of any size had yet appeared. As they had decided, so they acted, and at once took twenty-one ships across. 8.9 But the Corinthians, though the others were pressing for the voyage, were not eager to sail with them until they had celebrated the Isthmian Games, which were being held at that time. Agis was ready to spare them from breaking the Isthmian

7 The perioeci, "dwellers round about," were free but non-citizen inhabitants of the towns of Laconia and Messenia, subject to Sparta.
8 Spartiates were full Spartan citizens. Ships could be dragged overland across the Isthmus of Corinth from the Corinthian Gulf to the Saronic Gulf.
9 A talent was a large sum of money, equal to 6,000 drachmas.

truce by making the expedition his own. The Corinthians would not agree, and as time was lost, the Athenians began to get a clearer picture of what was going on at Chios. They sent Aristocrates, one of their generals, and accused the Chians; and when the Chians denied it, they ordered them to send ships with them to the allied force as a pledge of good faith. The Chians sent seven. The reason the ships were sent was that the majority of the Chians did not know what was going on, while the few who were in on it did not yet want to make an enemy of the common people before they had secured some strength, and no longer expected the Peloponnesians to come, since they were delaying.[10]

8.10 Meanwhile the Isthmian Games were held, and the Athenians, to whom the truce had been formally announced, sent an official delegation to them; and the Chians' intentions became still plainer to them. As soon as their delegates returned, they began preparing to make sure the ships would not slip out of Cenchreae unnoticed. After the festival the Peloponnesians put out for Chios with twenty-one ships under the command of Alcamenes. The Athenians at first sailed toward them with an equal number of ships and tried to draw them out to the open sea.[11] But when the Peloponnesians did not follow far and turned back, the Athenians withdrew too; for they did not consider trustworthy the seven Chian ships that were counted in their number. Later, however, after manning more ships to bring the total to thirty-seven, they chased the Peloponnesians as they sailed along the coast into Speiraeum, in Corinthian territory. This is a deserted harbor, the last one before the border of Epidaurian territory. The Peloponnesians lost one ship out at sea, but gathered the rest together and anchored them. The Athenians attacked both from the sea with their ships and by landing on shore, and there was great and disorderly confusion. The Athenians disabled most of the ships on the beach and

10 The Isthmian Games, a Panhellenic festival held every two years at Corinth's sanctuary of Poseidon on the Isthmus, were protected by a sacred truce.
11 Cenchreae was Corinth's harbor on the Saronic Gulf.

killed the commander Alcamenes; some of their own men were killed as well. 8.11 When they had disengaged, the Athenians assigned enough ships to blockade the enemy's, and with the rest they anchored off the islet nearby, on which they made their camp, and they sent to Athens for reinforcements. For on the next day the Corinthians had come to help the Peloponnesians' ships, and not long afterwards the other people of the area too. The Peloponnesians, seeing that guarding the ships in a deserted place was laborious, were at a loss. Their first thought was to burn the ships, but then they decided to haul them up on shore and keep guard over them, staying there with their land forces until some suitable chance of escape should present itself. Agis too, on learning of this, sent them a Spartiate, Thermon. The Spartans had first received word that the ships had put out from the Isthmus (for the ephors had told Alcamenes to send a horseman when this happened), and they had wanted to send their own five ships at once, with Chalcideus in command and Alcibiades with him. Then, just as these were setting out, news came of the ships taking refuge in Speiraeum; and disheartened that they had stumbled at the very start of the Ionian war, they no longer intended to send the ships from their own country, and even meant to recall some that had already put out.

CHIOS REVOLTS

Alcibiades and Chalcideus sail to Chios and bring it to revolt from Athens.

8.12 When Alcibiades learned this, he again persuaded Endius and the other ephors not to shrink from the voyage. He told them that they would get there before the Chians heard of the disaster to the ships, and that once he himself reached Ionia, he would easily persuade the cities to revolt by telling them of the Athenians' weakness and the Spartans' zeal; for he would be more believable than anyone else. To Endius himself he said privately that it would be a fine thing for Endius to be the man

through whom Ionia was brought to revolt and the King made an ally of the Spartans, and for this prize not to go to Agis; for he himself happened to be at odds with Agis. Having won over the other ephors and Endius, he put out with the five ships along with Chalcideus the Spartan, and they made the voyage with all speed.

8.13 About this same time the sixteen Peloponnesian ships from Sicily that had fought through the war alongside Gylippus were also on their way home. Off Leucas they were intercepted and roughly handled by twenty-seven Athenian ships under Hippocles son of Menippus, who was on watch for the ships from Sicily; but the rest, all but one, escaped the Athenians and sailed into Corinth.

8.14 As they sailed, Chalcideus and Alcibiades seized everyone they came across, so that no word of their coming would get out. They put in first at Corycus on the mainland and let these people go there. They then met in advance with some of the Chians who were in the plot, who urged them to sail into the city without announcing themselves, and so they arrived at Chios unexpectedly. The many were astonished and dismayed; but the few had arranged things so that the council happened to be in session. Chalcideus and Alcibiades made speeches saying that many other ships were on their way to join them, and said nothing of the blockade of the ships in Speiraeum; and the Chians revolted from the Athenians, followed by the Erythraeans. After this they sailed with three ships and brought Clazomenae over to revolt as well. The Clazomenians at once crossed to the mainland and began to fortify Polichna, as a place of refuge for themselves, should it be needed, from the islet on which they live. So the rebels were all busy with fortification and preparation for war. 8.15 The news of Chios quickly reached Athens. The Athenians thought that the danger surrounding them was now great and unmistakable, and that the rest of the allies would not be willing to stay quiet when the greatest city among them had changed sides. In the alarm of the moment they at once lifted the penalties laid down for anyone who proposed or put to the

vote the use of the thousand talents, which throughout the war they had been so anxious not to touch. They voted to use the money and to man a good many ships. Of the ships blockading Speiraeum they voted to send off eight at once — those that had left the blockade to pursue Chalcideus' squadron and had returned without catching it (they were commanded by Strombichides son of Diotimus) — and, not long afterwards, to send twelve more to help under Thrasycles, these too leaving the blockade.[12] They also brought back the seven Chian ships that had been helping them blockade the ships in Speiraeum, freed the slaves on board, and put the free men in chains. In place of all the ships that had left, they quickly manned ten others and sent them out to blockade the Peloponnesians, and they intended to man thirty more. Their eagerness was great, and nothing was done on a small scale in the effort to relieve Chios.

8.16 Meanwhile Strombichides arrived at Samos with his eight ships. He took on one Samian ship as well, sailed to Teos, and urged the Teians to keep quiet. But Chalcideus was also sailing from Chios against Teos with twenty-three ships, and at the same time the land force of the Clazomenians and Erythraeans was marching along the coast. Strombichides learned of this in advance and put out to sea. Once he was out in open water and saw how many ships were coming from Chios, he fled toward Samos, and they gave chase.[13] At first the Teians would not admit the land force, but when the Athenians fled they let it in. The infantry held back for a while, waiting for Chalcideus to return from the pursuit. When he was slow in coming, they began on their own to demolish the wall that the Athenians had built on the landward side of the city of Teos. A small number of non-Greek troops also came up and helped them pull it down, under the command of Stages, a deputy of Tissaphernes. 8.17 When Chalcideus and Alcibiades had chased Strombichides

12 In 431 BC the Athenians had set aside a reserve of 1,000 talents, to be used only if an enemy fleet attacked Athens, with the death penalty for proposing any other use.

13 Teos was an Ionian city on the mainland coast of Asia Minor, north of Samos.

back to Samos, they armed the sailors from the ships from the Peloponnese and left them in Chios. They manned these ships afresh from Chios, along with twenty others, and sailed to Miletus to bring it to revolt. For Alcibiades was on good terms with the leading men of Miletus, and he wanted to win them over before the ships from the Peloponnese arrived. In that way, as he had promised, he would give the credit for the achievement to the Chians, to himself, to Chalcideus, and to Endius who had sent them out, by bringing over as many of the cities as possible with the Chian forces and Chalcideus. So they went unnoticed for most of the voyage, and arriving not much ahead of Strombichides and Thrasycles, who had just come from Athens with twelve ships and joined in the pursuit, they brought Miletus to revolt. The Athenians sailed up hard on their heels with nineteen ships. When the Milesians would not admit them, they took up station on Lade, the island lying off the city. And as soon as the Milesians had revolted, the first alliance between the Spartans and the King was concluded, through Tissaphernes and Chalcideus. It ran as follows:[14]

THE FIRST TREATY WITH PERSIA

Sparta and the King agree to fight Athens jointly.

8.18 "The Spartans and their allies have made an alliance with the King and Tissaphernes on the following terms. Whatever territory and cities the King holds, or the King's fathers held, shall be the King's. Whatever money or anything else came in to the Athenians from these cities, the King and the Spartans and their allies shall jointly prevent the Athenians from receiving, whether money or anything else. The King and the Spartans and their allies shall wage the war against the Athenians jointly. It shall not be permitted to bring the war against the Athenians to an end unless both parties, the King on one side and the Spartans and their allies on the other, so decide. If any revolt from the King, they shall be enemies to the Spartans and their

14 Lade is a small island just off Miletus.

allies. And if any revolt from the Spartans and their allies, they shall be enemies to the King on the same terms."

8.19 That was the alliance. After this the Chians at once manned ten more ships and sailed to Anaia. They wanted to find out what was happening at Miletus and at the same time to bring the cities to revolt. But a message came to them from Chalcideus telling them to sail back again and saying that Amorges would be there with an army by land. So they sailed to the Temple of Zeus. There they caught sight of sixteen ships, which Diomedon was bringing up from Athens. He had set out even later than Thrasycles. As soon as they saw them, they fled, one ship to Ephesus and the rest toward Teos. The Athenians captured four of them empty, because the men had got ashore first. The others took refuge in the city of Teos. The Athenians sailed off toward Samos. The Chians put out with their remaining ships, and together with the land force they brought Lebedus to revolt, and then Erae. After this each returned home, the land force and the ships alike.

8.20 At about the same time the twenty Peloponnesian ships at Speiraeum, which had been chased in there earlier and were being blockaded by an equal number of Athenian ships, made a sudden sortie. They won a sea battle and captured four Athenian ships. Then they sailed back to Cenchreae and prepared once more for the voyage to Chios and Ionia. Astyochus came out to them from Sparta as admiral, for the whole naval command had now passed to him.

After the land force had withdrawn from Teos, Tissaphernes himself arrived with an army. He finished demolishing whatever was left of the wall at Teos and then withdrew. Not long after he had gone, Diomedon arrived with ten Athenian ships and made a treaty with the Teians that they would admit the Athenians too. He then sailed along the coast to Erae and attacked it, and when he failed to take the city he sailed away.

8.21 At about this time there also took place the rising of the people at Samos against the powerful, carried out with the help of the Athenians, who happened to be there with three ships.

The Samian people put to death some two hundred in all of the most powerful men and punished four hundred with exile, and they divided up their land and houses among themselves. After this the Athenians, regarding them now as reliable, voted them autonomy, and from then on they ran the city themselves. They gave the landowners no share in anything else, and no member of the people was any longer allowed to give a daughter in marriage to them or take a wife from among them.[15]

8.22 After this, in the same summer, the Chians showed no less zeal than they had at the start. They had enough men on the spot to bring the cities to revolt even without the Peloponnesians, and they also wanted as many as possible to share the danger with them. So they made an expedition with thirteen ships of their own against Lesbos, because the Spartans had instructed them to go there second and from there on to the Hellespont. At the same time the land force, made up of the Peloponnesians on the spot and the local allies, marched along the coast toward Clazomenae and Cyme. It was commanded by Eualas, a Spartiate, and the ships by Deiniadas, one of the perioeci. The ships sailed in and first brought Methymna to revolt, and four ships were left there. Then the rest brought Mytilene to revolt.

8.23 Astyochus, the Spartan admiral, sailed from Cenchreae with four ships, as he had set out to do, and arrived at Chios. On the third day after his arrival the Athenian ships, twenty-five of them, sailed to Lesbos under the command of Leon and Diomedon, for Leon had come out later from Athens with ten ships as reinforcements. Late on the same day Astyochus also put out, taking along one Chian ship, and sailed for Lesbos to give whatever help he could. He reached Pyrrha, and from there went on next day to Eresus. There he learned that Mytilene had been taken by the Athenians at the first assault. For the Athenians had sailed in unexpectedly and put straight into the harbor. They overpowered the Chian ships, landed, defeated in battle

15 The geomoroi ("landowners") were the old landed aristocracy of Samos.

those who resisted, and took the city.[16] Astyochus learned of this from the Eresians and from the Chian ships with Eubulus that had come from Methymna. These had been left there earlier, and when Mytilene was taken they fled and fell in with him, three of them, because one had been captured by the Athenians. So he no longer made for Mytilene. Instead he brought Eresus to revolt and armed it. He sent the hoplites from his own ships by land to Antissa and Methymna, putting Eteonicus in command, and he himself sailed along the coast with his own ships and the three Chian ones. He hoped that the Methymnaeans would take heart at the sight of them and stand firm in their revolt. But when everything on Lesbos went against him, he took his own land force on board and sailed back to Chios. The land force that went with the ships, which was to have gone to the Hellespont, was also brought back to the various cities. After this, six of the allied Peloponnesian ships at Cenchreae reached them at Chios. The Athenians restored order on Lesbos. Sailing from there, they captured Polichna, the place on the mainland that the Clazomenians were fortifying, and brought the Clazomenians back to their city on the island, except for those responsible for the revolt, who went off to Daphnus. So Clazomenae came over to the Athenians again.

8.24 In the same summer the Athenians at Miletus, who were blockading it from Lade with their twenty ships, made a landing at Panormus in Milesian territory. There they killed the Spartan commander Chalcideus, who had come out to meet them with a few men. On the third day afterward they sailed across and set up a trophy, but the Milesians took it down on the ground that it had not been set up by men who controlled the land. Meanwhile Leon and Diomedon, with the Athenian ships from Lesbos, carried on the war against the Chians from their ships. They used as bases the Oenussae islands off Chios, Sidussa and Pteleum, which were forts they held in the territory of Erythrae, and Lesbos itself. As marines they had hoplites conscripted from the

16 Pyrrha and Eresus were towns on Lesbos.

muster roll.[17] They landed at Cardamyle and at Boliscus, defeated in battle the Chians who came out against them, and killed many of them. They laid waste the places in that area, then won another battle at Phanae and a third at Leuconium. After this the Chians no longer came out to meet them, and the Athenians ravaged the land, which was finely developed and had suffered no damage from the time of the Persian Wars until then. For the Chians are the only people I know of, apart from the Spartans, who were both prosperous and prudent, and the greater their city grew, the more securely they ordered their affairs.[18] Even the revolt itself, if it is thought that in this they acted against what was safest, they did not venture on until they were going to share the danger with many good allies. They also waited until they saw that after the disaster in Sicily even the Athenians themselves no longer denied that their situation was beyond question desperate. And if they were tripped up by one of the surprises to which human life is subject, they made their mistake together with many others who shared their belief that Athenian power would quickly be destroyed. Now that they were shut off from the sea and their land was being ravaged, some of them tried to bring the city over to the Athenians. When the magistrates learned of this, they took no action themselves. Instead they brought over the admiral Astyochus from Erythrae with the four ships he had with him, and considered how they could put a stop to the plot as moderately as possible, by taking hostages or in some other way. That is what they were doing.

THE BATTLE AT MILETUS

The Athenians win at Miletus but withdraw on Phrynichus' advice when an enemy fleet arrives.

8.25 Toward the end of the same summer a force sailed from Athens to Samos. It consisted of a thousand Athenian hoplites,

17 Athenian citizens of hoplite status were listed on a muster roll and could be called up for service. Marines were the soldiers who fought from the decks of warships.

fifteen hundred Argives, and a thousand from the allies. Five hundred of the Argives had been light troops, and the Athenians had armed them as hoplites. They came in forty-eight ships, some of them troop transports, under the command of Phrynichus, Onomacles and Scironides. They crossed over to Miletus and made camp. The Milesians came out against them with eight hundred hoplites of their own, together with the Peloponnesians who had come with Chalcideus, a body of [foreign] mercenaries belonging to Tissaphernes, and Tissaphernes himself in person with his cavalry, and they engaged the Athenians and their allies. The Argives on their own wing dashed out ahead. They despised the enemy, thinking these were Ionians who would not stand up to them, and they advanced in some disorder. The Milesians beat them and killed a little under three hundred of their men. The Athenians first defeated the Peloponnesians and then drove back the non-Greeks and the rest of the crowd. They did not engage the Milesians, because after the rout of the Argives the Milesians had withdrawn into the city when they saw the rest of their side being beaten. As victors, the Athenians now grounded their arms right under the walls of Miletus. So it happened in this battle that on both sides the Ionians got the better of the Dorians, for the Athenians defeated the Peloponnesians facing them and the Milesians defeated the Argives. The Athenians set up a trophy and prepared to wall the place off, since it stood on an isthmus. They thought that if they won over Miletus, the rest would easily come over to them too.[19]

8.26 Meanwhile, now late in the afternoon, word reached them that the fifty-five ships from the Peloponnese and Sicily were all but there. The Sicilian Greeks had been urged on most of all by Hermocrates of Syracuse to join in finishing off what remained of Athenian power, and twenty Syracusan ships and two from Selinus had come. The ships from the Peloponnese that had

18 Cardamyle, Boliscus, Phanae and Leuconium were places on the island of Chios.

19 The Athenians and the Milesians were Ionian Greeks, while the Peloponnesians and the Argives were Dorians.

been in preparation were now ready as well. Both squadrons together had been placed under the Spartan Therimenes, who was to bring them to the admiral Astyochus. They sailed first to Leros, the island off Miletus. From there they learned that the Athenians were at Miletus, so they sailed first into the Iasic Gulf, wanting to find out how things stood at Miletus. Alcibiades came on horseback to Teichiussa in Milesian territory, the place on the gulf where they had put in and spent the night, and from him they learned about the battle. Alcibiades had been present and had fought on the side of the Milesians and Tissaphernes. He urged them to go to the help of Miletus as quickly as possible and not let it be walled off, unless they wanted to ruin their cause in Ionia and their whole enterprise. 8.27 They meant to bring help at dawn. But Phrynichus, the Athenian general, received definite information about the ships from Leros. His fellow commanders wanted to stay and fight it out at sea, but he said that he would not do so himself, and as far as it lay in his power he would not allow them or anyone else to do so either. When it [was possible] to fight later, knowing clearly how many enemy ships they faced and how many of their own could match them, after preparing adequately and at their leisure, he would never give in to a shameful taunt and run an unreasonable risk. It was no disgrace, he said, for Athenians to withdraw with their navy when the moment called for it. In every way it would be a greater disgrace to be defeated. Then the city would face not only disgrace but the gravest danger. After the disasters it had suffered, it could hardly afford to take the offensive anywhere, even with secure forces, either of its own free will or under absolute necessity, much less go into dangers of its own choosing when nothing forced it to. He told them to take up the wounded, the infantry, and as much of the gear as they had brought with them, and to leave behind what they had taken from enemy territory so that the ships would be light. Then they were to sail back to Samos as quickly as possible, gather all their ships there, and from there make their attacks whenever there was an opportunity. Once he had persuaded them, he did just

that. And not so much at the time as afterward, in this matter and in all the others in which he became involved, Phrynichus was seen to be a man of no small intelligence. So that very evening the Athenians left Miletus in this way, with their victory incomplete. The Argives, in haste and angry at their disaster, sailed home from Samos. 8.28 At dawn the Peloponnesians set out from Teichiussa and put in at Miletus after the Athenians had gone. They stayed for one day. On the next they took along the Chian ships that had originally been chased in with Chalcideus and intended to sail back to Teichiussa for the gear they had unloaded there. When they arrived, Tissaphernes, who had come up with his land force, persuaded them to sail against Iasus, which Amorges, his enemy, was holding. They attacked Iasus without warning and took it, because the inhabitants assumed the ships could only be Athenian. The Syracusans were especially praised for their part in the action. The Peloponnesians took Amorges alive, an illegitimate son of Pissuthnes who had revolted from the King. They handed him over to Tissaphernes so that he could take him to the King if he wished, as the King had ordered him to do. They sacked Iasus, and the army took a great deal of money, for the place had been rich since early times. They took Amorges' mercenaries into their own ranks without harming them, because most of them were from the Peloponnese. They handed over the town to Tissaphernes, together with all the captives, slave and free alike, and for each of these they agreed to receive a Daric stater from him. Then they returned to Miletus. The Spartans had sent out Pedaritus son of Leon to command at Chios, and they sent him by land as far as Erythrae with Amorges' mercenary force. They appointed Philip to command at Miletus itself. And the summer ended.[20]

8.29 In the following winter, after Tissaphernes had put a garrison in Iasus, he came on to Miletus. There he distributed a month's pay to all the ships at the rate of an Attic drachma a man, as he had undertaken at Sparta. For the time to come he

20 The Daric stater was a Persian gold coin.

proposed to pay three obols until he had consulted the King, and if the King so ordered, he said, he would pay the full drachma. Hermocrates, the Syracusan general, objected. Therimenes was not the admiral and was sailing with the fleet only to hand the ships over to Astyochus, so he was soft on the question of pay. All the same, it was agreed that each man would receive more than three obols, by the amount of five ships' pay. For Tissaphernes gave thirty talents a month for fifty-five ships, and payment was made at the same rate to the rest, for as many ships as there were beyond this number.[21]

8.30 In the same winter, the Athenians at Samos had been joined by thirty-five more ships from home, under the generals Charminus, Strombichides and Euctemon. They brought together the ships from Chios and all the rest, and wanted to divide their tasks by lot: to blockade Miletus with the fleet, and to send both a fleet and a land force against Chios. And this is what they did. Strombichides, Onomacles and Euctemon, who had drawn Chios, sailed against it with thirty ships, carrying part of the thousand hoplites who had come to Miletus in troop transports. The others stayed at Samos with seventy-four ships, held command of the sea and made attacks on Miletus.

8.31 Astyochus happened at that time to be on Chios, rounding up hostages because of the plot to betray the island. He stopped doing this when he learned that the ships with Therimenes had arrived and that the alliance's affairs were in better shape. Taking ten Peloponnesian ships and ten Chian ones, he put out to sea. He attacked Pteleum but failed to take it, and sailed on along the coast to Clazomenae. There he ordered those of its people who favored the Athenians to move inland to Daphnus and come over to his side. Tamos, the deputy governor of Ionia, joined in the order. When they would not listen, he made an assault on the city, which had no walls, but could not take it. Then he sailed away in a strong wind, he himself to Phocaea and Cyme, while the other ships put in at the islands lying off

21 Six obols made a drachma, and six thousand drachmas a talent. A drachma a day was a generous wage for a rower.

Clazomenae: Marathussa, Pele and Drymussa. The Clazomenians had deposited property there for safekeeping. Kept there eight days by the winds, the crews plundered and used up part of it, loaded the rest on board, and sailed away to Phocaea and Cyme to join Astyochus. 8.32 While he was there, envoys came from the Lesbians, who wanted to revolt again. They persuaded him. But since the Corinthians and the other allies were reluctant because of the earlier failure, he set out and sailed for Chios. His ships were caught in a storm and reached Chios later, from different directions. After this Pedaritus, who was at that time marching overland from Miletus, reached Erythrae and crossed over to Chios with his army. He also had at his disposal about five hundred soldiers from the five ships, whom Chalcideus had left behind with their arms. When some Lesbians offered to bring about the revolt, Astyochus put the proposal to Pedaritus and the Chians that they should go with the fleet and bring Lesbos to revolt. Either they would gain more allies, or, even if something went wrong, they would do the Athenians harm. But they would not listen, and Pedaritus said he would not hand over the Chian ships to him either. 8.33 So Astyochus took the five Corinthian ships, a sixth from Megara, one from Hermione, and the Laconian ships he had come with himself, and sailed for Miletus to take up his command as admiral. Before going, he threatened the Chians over and over that he would certainly not come to their aid if they needed anything. He put in at Corycus in Erythraean territory and spent the night there. The Athenians from Samos, sailing against Chios with their army, had also anchored there, on the other side of a hill that separated them, and neither side knew the other was there. During the night a letter came from Pedaritus saying that some Erythraean prisoners had been released from Samos and had come to Erythrae to betray it. Astyochus at once put out to sea and went back to Erythrae, and that was how narrowly he escaped running into the Athenians. Pedaritus too crossed over to him, and they looked into the case of those suspected of treachery. They found that the whole thing had been a pretext the men had used to get

away from Samos, so they acquitted them of the charge and sailed off, Pedaritus to Chios, while Astyochus went on to Miletus, as he had intended.

8.34 Meanwhile the Athenian force, sailing round from Corycus, came upon three Chian warships off Arginus, and as soon as they saw them they gave chase. A great storm came on. The Chian ships barely escaped into the harbor, but of the Athenian ships the three that had pressed the chase hardest were wrecked and driven ashore near the city of Chios, and of their crews some were captured and others killed. The rest took refuge in the harbor called Phoenicus, under Mount Mimas. From there they later came to anchor at Lesbos and made preparations for building their fortification.

8.35 In the same winter Hippocrates the Spartan sailed out from the Peloponnese with ten Thurian ships, commanded by Dorieus son of Diagoras and two colleagues, along with one Laconian ship and one Syracusan, and put in at Cnidus, which had already revolted at Tissaphernes' instigation. When the commanders at Miletus learned of this, they ordered them to guard Cnidus with half their ships, and with those stationed around Triopium to seize the merchant ships putting in from Egypt. Triopium is a promontory jutting out from Cnidian territory, with a sanctuary of Apollo.[22] The Athenians learned of this, sailed from Samos and captured the six ships on guard at Triopium, though their crews escaped. After this they sailed to Cnidus, attacked the city, which had no walls, and nearly took it. The next day they attacked again. But the inhabitants had fenced themselves in better during the night, and the men who had escaped from the ships at Triopium had come in to join them, so the Athenians could no longer do as much damage. They withdrew, ravaged the Cnidians' land and sailed back to Samos.

22 Dorieus, a Rhodian exile and famous Olympic victor, was the son of the celebrated boxer Diagoras of Rhodes.

THE SECOND TREATY

The Spartans revise their treaty with the King and Tissaphernes.

8.36 About the same time Astyochus arrived at Miletus to take over the fleet. The Peloponnesians were still well supplied with everything in the camp. Pay was being given in sufficient amounts, the soldiers still had the great wealth plundered from Iasus, and the Milesians were bearing the burdens of the war with enthusiasm. Even so, the Peloponnesians thought that their first agreement with Tissaphernes, the one Chalcideus had made, was defective and not really in their favor. So they made another while Therimenes was still there. It ran as follows:

8.37 "Agreement of the Spartans and their allies with King Darius, the King's sons, and Tissaphernes, that there shall be a treaty and friendship on the following terms. Whatever territory and cities belong to King Darius, or belonged to his father or his ancestors, neither the Spartans nor the allies of the Spartans shall go against them to make war or to do any harm; nor shall either the Spartans or the allies of the Spartans exact tribute from these cities. Nor shall King Darius or any of those whom the King rules go against the Spartans or their allies to make war or to do any harm. If the Spartans or their allies need anything from the King, or the King anything from the Spartans or their allies, whatever they persuade each other to do, it shall be right for them to do. Both parties shall wage the war against the Athenians and their allies jointly; and if they bring it to an end, both shall do so jointly. Whatever army is in the King's territory at the King's summons, the King shall pay its costs. If any of the cities that have made this agreement with the King goes against the King's territory, the others shall stop it and defend the King as far as they are able. And if anyone in the King's territory, or in territory the King rules, goes against the territory of the Spartans or of their allies, the King shall stop it and defend them as far as he is able."

8.38 After this agreement Therimenes handed the ships over to Astyochus, sailed away in a light boat, and disappeared. The Athenians from Lesbos had by now crossed to Chios with their army, and with control of both land and sea they began fortifying Delphinium, a place that was strong on the landward side, had harbors besides, and was not far from the city of Chios. The Chians had been battered in many earlier battles, and in any case were not on good terms among themselves. Indeed, Tydeus son of Ion and his associates had already been put to death by Pedaritus for favoring Athens, and the rest of the city was being held down by force in the hands of a few. So they were suspicious of one another and kept quiet, and for these reasons neither they themselves nor Pedaritus' mercenaries seemed a match for the Athenians.[23] They did, however, send to Miletus urging Astyochus to come to their aid; and when he would not listen, Pedaritus wrote to Sparta about him, charging him with misconduct. That was how things stood for the Athenians on Chios. Their ships at Samos kept making attacks on the ships at Miletus, but since these would not put out to meet them, they withdrew to Samos again and kept quiet.

8.39 In the same winter the twenty-seven ships that the Spartans had fitted out for Pharnabazus, [through] the negotiations of Calligeitus of Megara and Timagoras of Cyzicus, set sail from the Peloponnese for Ionia around the solstice, with Antisthenes, a Spartiate, sailing as their commander. The Spartans also sent with them eleven Spartiates as advisers to Astyochus, one of whom was Lichas son of Arcesilaus. Their instructions were these: on reaching Miletus they were to help oversee everything else so that it would turn out as well as possible; they were to send these ships, either the same number or more or fewer, on to Pharnabazus in the Hellespont if they saw fit, putting in command Clearchus son of Ramphias, who was sailing with them; and, if the eleven saw fit, they were to relieve Astyochus of his command as admiral and install Antisthenes. For Pedaritus' letters had made them suspicious of him. So the ships

23 Ion of Chios was a well-known poet and prose writer of the fifth century BC.

sailed from Malea across the open sea and put in at Melos. There they fell in with ten Athenian ships, took three of them empty and burned them. After this they were afraid that the Athenian ships that had escaped from Melos would report their approach to the Athenians at Samos, which is in fact what happened. So they sailed to Crete, made their voyage longer for the sake of caution, and put in at Caunus in Asia. From there, now that they believed themselves safe, they sent a message to the ships at Miletus to come and escort them along the coast.

8.40 At the same time the Chians and Pedaritus kept sending messengers to Astyochus, no less than before, even though he kept delaying. They asked him to come to their aid with his whole fleet, since they were under siege, and not to stand by while the greatest of the allied cities in Ionia was shut off from the sea and ravaged by raids on land. For the Chians had many slaves, more in fact than any single city except Sparta, and because there were so many of them they were punished all the more harshly for their offenses. So when the Athenian army seemed to be securely established behind a wall, most of them at once deserted to it, and it was these men, who knew the countryside, who did it the most damage. So the Chians said that he must come to their aid while there was still hope and a chance of stopping it, while Delphinium was still being fortified and unfinished, and a larger defensive wall was being added around both the camp and the ships. Astyochus had not intended to help, because of the threat he had made earlier; but when he saw that the allies too were eager, he set out to bring help. 8.41 Meanwhile word came from Caunus that the twenty-seven ships and the Spartan advisers had arrived. He thought that everything else came second to escorting so many ships, which would give them firmer command of the sea, and to getting the Spartans who had come to keep an eye on him safely across. So he at once gave up the expedition to Chios and sailed for Caunus. On the way along the coast he landed at Cos Meropis. The city had no walls and had been thrown down by an earthquake, the greatest, in fact, of any we remember, and its people

had fled to the mountains. He sacked it, overran the countryside with raids and carried everything off as plunder, except the free inhabitants; these he let go. From Cos he reached Cnidus at night. There the Cnidians urged him, and so forced him, not to disembark his crews but to sail as he was straight against the twenty Athenian ships with which Charminus, one of the generals from Samos, was watching for these same twenty-seven ships sailing from the Peloponnese, the very ships Astyochus too was sailing along the coast to meet. The Athenians at Samos had learned of their approach from Melos, and Charminus was patrolling around Syme, Chalce, Rhodes and Lycia, for he already knew that they were at Caunus. 8.42 So Astyochus sailed off for Syme just as he was, before word of him could get out, in the hope of catching the enemy ships somewhere out at sea. But rain and a heavily clouded sky made his ships lose their way in the darkness and threw them into confusion. At dawn his fleet was scattered: the left wing was already in sight of the Athenians, while the rest was still wandering around the island. Charminus and the Athenians hastily put out against them with fewer than their twenty ships, thinking these were the ships from Caunus they had been watching for. Falling on them at once, they sank three and disabled others, and were getting the better of the action until, contrary to their expectation, the greater part of the fleet came into view and they began to be cut off on all sides. Then they took to flight, lost six ships, and escaped with the rest to the island of Teutlussa, and from there to Halicarnassus. After this the Peloponnesians put in at Cnidus, and when the twenty-seven ships from Caunus had joined them, they all sailed together, set up a trophy on Syme, and came back to anchor at Cnidus. 8.43 When the Athenians learned of the sea battle, they sailed to Syme with all the ships from Samos. They made no move against the fleet at Cnidus, nor did the enemy against them; but they took the ships' gear that was on Syme, attacked Loryma on the mainland, and sailed back to Samos.

Now that all the Peloponnesian ships were together at Cnidus, they were refitted wherever necessary, and the eleven Spartan

advisers held talks with Tissaphernes, who had come there. They discussed what had already been done, in case anything in it displeased them, and the future conduct of the war: how it could be fought best and most to the advantage of both sides. Lichas in particular scrutinized what was being done. He said that neither treaty, neither that of Chalcideus nor that of Therimenes, had been properly drawn up. It was outrageous, he said, that the King should claim even now to rule all the territory that he and his ancestors had ruled before. Under those terms all the islands could become slaves again, and Thessaly, and Locris, and everything as far as Boeotia, and instead of freedom the Spartans would be imposing Persian rule on the Greeks. So he told Tissaphernes to make another, better treaty; otherwise they would certainly not abide by these, nor did they want any of his maintenance money on such terms. Tissaphernes was indignant and left them in anger, having achieved nothing. 8.44 The Peloponnesians, for their part, had resolved to sail to Rhodes, since the most powerful men there were sending them overtures. They hoped to win over an island of considerable strength, both in its number of seamen and in its land forces, and at the same time they thought that with their existing alliance they would be able to maintain the fleet themselves without asking Tissaphernes for money. So they sailed at once from Cnidus, in the same winter, and with ninety-four ships attacked Camirus in Rhodian territory first. They terrified the mass of the people, who knew nothing of what was being arranged, and these fled, especially as the city had no walls. Then the Spartans called together these people and those from the two other cities, Lindus and Ialysus, and persuaded the Rhodians to revolt from the Athenians; and Rhodes went over to the Peloponnesians. At this time the Athenians learned of it and sailed with the ships from Samos, wanting to get there first, and appeared out at sea. But they arrived a little too late, and for the moment they sailed off to Chalce, and from there to Samos. Later they made war on Rhodes, launching attacks from Chalce and from Cos [and from Samos]. The Peloponnesians collected about thirty-two talents

from the Rhodians, but otherwise stayed inactive for eighty days, with their ships hauled up on shore.

ALCIBIADES AND TISSAPHERNES

Alcibiades, now distrusted at Sparta, advises the satrap to let both sides wear each other out.

8.45 Meanwhile, and even earlier, before they moved over to Rhodes, the following was going on. After the death of Chalcideus and the battle at Miletus, Alcibiades was under suspicion with the Peloponnesians, and a letter had come from them at Sparta to Astyochus ordering him to be put to death (for he was an enemy of Agis, and in other respects too he seemed untrustworthy). First, in fear, he withdrew to Tissaphernes. Then he did all he could to damage the Peloponnesian cause with him. He became his instructor in everything, and he cut down their pay, so that instead of an Attic drachma three obols were given, and even that not regularly. He told Tissaphernes to say to them that the Athenians, who had longer experience of naval affairs, gave their own men three obols. This was not so much from poverty as to keep their sailors from growing insolent through having too much. Otherwise some would ruin their bodies by spending on the sort of things that lead to weakness, and others would desert their ships without leaving their back pay behind as a pledge. He also showed him [how] to win over the trierarchs and the generals of the cities by giving them money, so that they would go along with him in this. All agreed except the Syracusans, and among these Hermocrates alone opposed him, on behalf of the whole alliance.[24] He himself also sent the cities away when they asked for money, answering them on Tissaphernes' behalf. The Chians, he said, were shameless. They were the richest of the Greeks, and yet, though they were being saved by outside help, they expected others to risk their bodies and their money for the Chians' freedom. As for the other cities, he said, they would be in the wrong if, having paid out money to

24 Trierarchs were the commanders of individual triremes.

the Athenians before they revolted, they were not willing now to contribute as much and even more on their own behalf. He also made out that Tissaphernes, who was fighting the war with his own money at present, was reasonably being sparing. But if pay ever came down from the King, he would give them their wages in full and help the cities as was reasonable. 8.46 He also advised Tissaphernes not to be in too great a hurry to end the war. He should not want to give the same people mastery of both land and sea, either by bringing in the Phoenician ships he was preparing or by providing pay for more Greeks. He should rather let both sides keep the rule divided, so that the King could always bring one side against whichever was troubling him. If supremacy on land and sea came into one hand, he would have no one to help him pull down the dominant side, unless he wanted at some point to rise up himself and fight it out, at great expense and risk. The other way was cheaper, he said: at a small fraction of the cost, and with safety for himself as well, to let the Greeks wear one another down. He said too that the Athenians were the more suitable partners for him in rule. They were less eager for possessions on land, and both in word and in deed they waged war in the way most convenient to him. The Athenians would help subjugate the maritime part for themselves, and for him all the Greeks who lived in the King's territory. The Spartans, on the contrary, had come to liberate them. And it was not likely that the Spartans, who were now freeing the Greeks from their fellow Greeks, would not free them from those others [the non-Greeks], unless the Persians got rid of the Spartans first. So he urged him first to wear both sides down. Then, once he had cut away as much as possible from the Athenians, he should rid his country of the Peloponnesians. And for the most part Tissaphernes intended to do just this, as far at least as one could judge from what he did. Because of this he trusted Alcibiades as one who gave him good advice on these matters. So he supplied the Peloponnesians with their pay poorly, and he would not let them fight at sea. Instead, by saying that the Phoenician ships would come and that they would then fight

with a superior force, he ruined their cause. He took away the peak of their fleet's strength, which had become very great indeed, and in everything else he was too plainly half-hearted a partner in the war for it to go unnoticed.

8.47 Alcibiades gave this advice partly because, while he was with Tissaphernes and [the] King, he thought it was best for them. He was also working toward his own return to his country. He knew that if he did not destroy it, there would come a time when he could persuade them to let him return. And he thought he could best persuade them in this way: if Tissaphernes were seen to be on friendly terms with him. And that is exactly what happened.

THE PLOT AT SAMOS

Athenian officers at Samos plan to overthrow the democracy and recall Alcibiades.

For the Athenian soldiers at Samos saw that he had influence with Tissaphernes. Partly this was because Alcibiades had sent messages to the most powerful men among them, asking them to mention him to the best people. He wanted, he said, to return under an oligarchy, not under a corrupt regime, the democracy that had banished him, and to provide Tissaphernes as their friend and live as a citizen alongside them. But it was even more on their own initiative that the trierarchs and the most powerful of the Athenians at Samos were eager to overthrow the democracy. 8.48 This movement began first in the camp, and from there it later reached the city. Some men crossed over from Samos and came to talks with Alcibiades. He held out the prospect of making first Tissaphernes and then the King too their friend, if they were not governed as a democracy, for in that way the King would trust them more. And the most powerful of the citizens, who also bear the heaviest burdens, had high hopes of getting affairs into their own hands and of defeating the enemy as well. When they returned to Samos, they organized the suitable men into a conspiracy. To the mass of the men they said

openly that the King would be their friend and would provide money if Alcibiades were restored and they were not governed as a democracy. The crowd, even if it was somewhat annoyed for the moment at what was being done, kept quiet because of the easy prospect of pay from the King. Those who were organizing the oligarchy had now communicated the plan to the masses, and they examined Alcibiades' proposals once more among themselves and with most of their club.[25] To the rest these proposals seemed practicable and trustworthy, but Phrynichus, who was still general, liked none of it. Alcibiades, he thought, no more wanted oligarchy than democracy, and in this he was right. He had no other aim than to change the city's existing order in some way, so that his associates would invite him back and he could return. Their own first concern, he said, must be to avoid falling into civil strife. And it was not easy for [the] King to side with the Athenians, whom he did not trust, and take on trouble. The Peloponnesians were now at sea on equal terms and held cities in his own empire, and not the smallest ones, and he could make friends of them instead, at whose hands he had as yet suffered no harm. There were also the allied cities, to which they were supposedly promising oligarchy, on the grounds that they themselves would no longer be a democracy either. He said he knew well that this would not make those that had revolted come over to them any more readily, nor make those that remained any more secure. For they would not want to be slaves under an oligarchy or a democracy rather than free under whichever of the two they happened to have. They thought the so-called gentlemen would give them no less trouble than the people, since it was the gentlemen who devised wrongful measures and proposed them to the people, and they themselves profited most from these. Where it was up to the gentlemen, the allies would be put to death even without trial and more violently. The people, on the other hand, was their refuge and a check on the gentlemen. He knew for certain that

25 The clubs (hetaireiai) were private political associations of upper-class Athenians.

the cities had learned this from experience itself, and that this was what they thought. So for his part, he was pleased with none of the dealings now being carried on through Alcibiades. 8.49 But those of the conspiracy who had gathered held to their first decision and accepted what was being offered. They prepared to send Peisander and others as envoys to Athens to negotiate the return of Alcibiades and the overthrow of the democracy there, and to make Tissaphernes a friend of the Athenians. 8.50 Phrynichus realized that there would be a proposal to bring Alcibiades back and that the Athenians would accept it. Since he had spoken against it, he was afraid that if Alcibiades returned he would do him harm for having tried to stop him, and so he resorted to the following scheme. He sent secretly to Astyochus, the Spartan admiral, who was still near Miletus at the time, informing him that Alcibiades was ruining their cause by making Tissaphernes a friend of the Athenians, and writing out everything else clearly. He should be pardoned, he said, for plotting harm against a man who was his enemy, even to the disadvantage of his city. Astyochus had no intention of punishing Alcibiades, especially since he no longer came within his reach as he had before. Instead he went up to him at Magnesia, and to Tissaphernes as well, told them what had been written from Samos, and himself became the informer. It was said that he had attached himself to Tissaphernes for private gain, to share with him in this and other matters. That was also why he protested rather feebly [about] the pay not being in full. Alcibiades at once sent a letter against Phrynichus to the authorities at Samos, telling them what he had done and demanding that he be put to death.[26] Phrynichus was thrown into confusion and was in the very greatest danger because of the disclosure. He sent again to Astyochus, complaining that his earlier message had not been well kept secret. Now, he said, he was ready to give them the chance to destroy the whole Athenian army at Samos, and he wrote out in detail how he would bring it about, since Samos

26 Magnesia on the Maeander, in western Asia Minor, was one of Tissaphernes' seats.

was unwalled. Being in danger of his life because of them, he said, he could no longer be blamed for doing this or anything else rather than be destroyed by his worst enemies. Astyochus revealed this too to Alcibiades. 8.51 Phrynichus learned in advance that Astyochus was playing him false and that a letter on the matter from Alcibiades had all but arrived. So he got in first and announced to the army himself that the enemy intended to attack the camp, since Samos was unwalled and not all the ships were moored inside the harbor. He had clear information of this, he said, and they must fortify Samos as quickly as possible and keep everything else under guard. He was general, and he had the authority to carry this out himself. So they set about the fortification, and as a result Samos, which was going to be fortified anyway, was walled all the more quickly. Not much later the letters from Alcibiades arrived, saying that the army was being betrayed by Phrynichus and that the enemy were about to attack. But Alcibiades was thought untrustworthy. People believed that he had learned the enemy's plans in advance and was laying them at Phrynichus' door out of enmity, as if he were an accomplice. So far from harming Phrynichus, he rather confirmed his report by bringing the same news.

8.52 After this Alcibiades worked on Tissaphernes and tried to persuade him to become a friend of the Athenians. Tissaphernes was afraid of the Peloponnesians, since they were there with more ships than the Athenians, but he was nevertheless willing to be persuaded if he somehow could. This was especially so after he learned of the Peloponnesians' quarrel at Cnidus over the treaty of Therimenes (for by this time it had already happened, while they were at Rhodes). In that quarrel Lichas had proved true what Alcibiades had said earlier about the Spartans freeing all the cities, when he declared it intolerable that there should be an agreement for the King to rule the cities which he or his fathers had ever ruled in the past. And Alcibiades, as a man contending for great stakes, pressed on with zeal in courting Tissaphernes.

PEISANDER AT ATHENS

Peisander persuades the Athenian assembly to accept oligarchy for the sake of Persian help.

8.53 The Athenian envoys who had been sent from Samos with Peisander arrived at Athens and spoke before the people. They summarized a great many points, but above all they argued that if they restored Alcibiades and were not governed as a democracy in the same way, they could have the King as an ally and get the better of the Peloponnesians. Many others spoke against them in defense of the democracy. At the same time Alcibiades' enemies loudly protested that it would be outrageous for him to return by doing violence to the laws, and the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes bore witness about the mysteries, the cause of his exile, and called on the gods against bringing him back. Then Peisander came forward in the face of all this opposition and indignation. Calling up each of the objectors one by one, he asked him whether he had any hope of saving the city. The Peloponnesians had no fewer ships than they did facing them at sea, and more allied cities; the King and Tissaphernes were supplying them with money, while the Athenians had none left — unless someone could persuade the King to come over to their side.[27] When they answered no to his questions, he then told them plainly: "Well, this cannot happen for us unless we conduct our politics more moderately and put the offices more into the hands of a few, so that the King will trust us. At the present moment we must deliberate less about our constitution than about our survival, for later we will be able to change it back, if anything is not to our liking. And we must bring back Alcibiades, who is the only man living capable of bringing this about." 8.54 When the people first heard the talk of oligarchy, they took it hard. But Peisander showed them clearly that there was no other way to be saved, and out of fear, and in the hope too that it

27 The Eumolpidae and the Kerykes were the priestly families of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which Alcibiades had been accused of profaning in 415 BC.

could be changed back, they gave in. They voted that Peisander and ten men with him should sail and handle matters with Tissaphernes and Alcibiades in whatever way they thought [might] turn out best. At the same time, since Peisander had also slandered Phrynichus, the people removed him from his command, along with his colleague Scironides, and sent out Diomedon and Leon in their place as generals to the fleet. Peisander slandered Phrynichus by alleging that he had betrayed Iasus and Amorges, because he thought him unsuitable for the dealings with Alcibiades. Peisander also went round all the clubs which already existed in the city for mutual help in lawsuits and elections to office, and urged them to unite and, taking counsel together, to overthrow the democracy. And when he had made the other preparations the situation called for, so that there would be no further delay, he set sail himself with the ten men to Tissaphernes.

8.55 That same winter Leon and Diomedon, who had by now joined the Athenian fleet, made an attack on Rhodes. They found the Peloponnesian ships hauled up on shore. They made a landing, defeated in battle the Rhodians who came out to resist, and withdrew to Chalce, and from then on they conducted the war from there rather than from Cos; for from there it was easier for them to keep watch in case the Peloponnesian fleet put out anywhere.

Xenophantidas, a Spartan, also came to Rhodes from Pedaritus at Chios. He said that the Athenian wall was now complete, and that unless they came to help with all their ships, the cause at Chios would be lost. They resolved to go to help. Meanwhile Pedaritus, with his own mercenary force and the Chians in full strength, attacked the Athenian fortification around the ships. He took part of it and got control of some ships that were hauled up on shore. But the Athenians came out against them and routed the Chians first, and then the rest of Pedaritus' force was defeated as well. Pedaritus himself was killed, along with many of the Chians, and many arms were captured.

8.56 After this the Chians were besieged by land and sea even more closely than before, and the famine there was severe. Meanwhile the Athenian envoys with Peisander arrived at Tissaphernes' court and held talks about an agreement. But Alcibiades was not entirely sure of Tissaphernes, who feared the Peloponnesians more and still wanted, as Alcibiades himself had taught him, to wear both sides down. So he resorted to the following kind of tactic: Tissaphernes was to demand as much as possible from the Athenians, so that no agreement would be reached. I think Tissaphernes too wanted the same thing, he himself out of fear. Alcibiades, since he saw that Tissaphernes would not come to terms even so, wanted the Athenians to think that he was not incapable of persuading him. Rather, he wanted it to seem that Tissaphernes had been persuaded and was willing to join them, and that the Athenians were not offering enough. For Alcibiades, speaking himself on Tissaphernes' behalf in his presence, made such excessive demands that the Athenians were made to seem responsible for the failure, even though they conceded much of what he asked. He demanded that all Ionia be handed over, and then the islands lying off it, and other things. The Athenians did not oppose these, and finally, at the third meeting, afraid that he would be exposed as quite unable to deliver, he demanded that they allow the King to build ships and sail along his own coast wherever and with as many as he wished. At this point the Athenians no longer ... but thought the terms impossible and that they had been deceived by Alcibiades, and they left in anger and went back to Samos.[28]

8.57 Immediately after this, in the same winter, Tissaphernes went along the coast to Caunus. He wanted to bring the Peloponnesians back to Miletus and, after making yet another agreement on whatever terms he could, to provide them with pay and not be completely at war with them. He was afraid that if they were short of pay for their many ships, they would either be forced to fight the Athenians at sea and be defeated, or their ships would be emptied of men and the Athenians would get

28 Some words appear to be missing from the Greek text here.

what they wanted without him. Still more, he feared that in their search for supplies they would ravage the mainland. So, taking all this into account and looking ahead, in keeping with his wish to keep the Greeks evenly balanced against each other, he sent for the Peloponnesians, gave them pay, and concluded a third treaty with them, as follows:

THE THIRD TREATY

Tissaphernes makes a new treaty with the Spartans and resumes paying the fleet.

8.58 "In the thirteenth year of the reign of Darius, when Alexippidas was ephor at Sparta, an agreement was made in the plain of the Maeander. It was made between the Spartans and their allies on the one side and Tissaphernes, Hieramenes and the sons of Pharnaces on the other, concerning the affairs of the King and of the Spartans and their allies. The King's territory, as much of it as is in Asia, shall belong to the King, and the King shall decide about his own territory as he wishes. The Spartans and their allies shall not go against the King's territory to do any harm, nor shall the King go against the territory of the Spartans or of their allies to do any harm. If any of the Spartans or their allies goes against the King's territory to do harm, the Spartans and their allies shall prevent it. If anyone from the King's territory goes against the Spartans or their allies to do harm, the King shall prevent it.[29] Tissaphernes shall provide maintenance for the ships now present, according to the terms agreed, until the King's ships arrive. Once the King's ships have arrived, the Spartans and their allies shall be free to maintain their own ships if they wish. If they choose to receive maintenance from Tissaphernes, Tissaphernes shall provide it, and at the end of the war the Spartans and their allies shall repay Tissaphernes whatever money they have received. Once the King's ships have arrived, the ships of the Spartans, those of their allies and those

29 The treaty is dated by the year's ephor at Sparta and by the regnal year of the Persian king Darius II (412/411 BC).

of the King shall wage the war jointly, in whatever way Tissaphernes and the Spartans and their allies think best. If they wish to make peace with the Athenians, they shall make it together, on the same terms."

8.59 This was the treaty. After it, Tissaphernes began preparing to bring the Phoenician ships, as had been agreed, and everything else he had promised, and he wanted at least to be seen making preparations. 8.60 As the winter was drawing to its close, the Boeotians took Oropus by betrayal, although it had an Athenian garrison. Some men of Eretria and of Oropus itself helped bring this about, because they were plotting the revolt of Euboea. The place lies opposite Eretria, and as long as the Athenians held it, it was bound to do great harm both to Eretria and to the rest of Euboea. So, with Oropus already in their hands, the Eretrians went to Rhodes and invited the Peloponnesians to Euboea.[30] But the Peloponnesians were more intent on relieving Chios, which was in distress, and they put out from Rhodes with all their ships and sailed. When they were off Triopium, they caught sight of the Athenian ships out at sea, sailing from Chalce. Since neither side moved to attack the other, the Athenians went on to Samos and the Peloponnesians to Miletus, and the Peloponnesians saw that it was no longer possible to relieve Chios without a sea battle. So the winter ended, and with it the twentieth year of this war that Thucydides recorded.

8.61 Early the following summer, just as spring was beginning, Dercylidas, a Spartiate, was sent with a small force by land along the coast to the Hellespont to bring about the revolt of Abydos (its people are colonists of Miletus). Meanwhile the Chians, while Astyochus was at a loss how to help them, were forced by the pressure of the siege to fight at sea. While Astyochus was still at Rhodes, they had brought in from Miletus, as their commander after the death of Pedaritus, a Spartiate named Leon, who had come out with Antisthenes as a marine. With

30 Oropus was a town on the border between Attica and Boeotia, facing Eretria across the strait from Euboea.

him came twelve ships that happened to be guarding Miletus: five from Thurii, four from Syracuse, one from Anaea, one from Miletus, and one that was Leon's own. The Chians came out in full force and seized a strong position, while at the same time their ships, thirty-six of them, put out against the thirty-two ships of the Athenians, and they fought at sea. The battle was hard fought. The Chians and their allies did not have the worse of the action, but since it was already late, they withdrew to the city. 8.62 Immediately after this, once Dercylidas had made his way along the coast by land from Miletus, Abydos on the Hellespont revolted to Dercylidas and Pharnabazus, and Lampsacus did the same two days later. When Strombichides heard of this at Chios, he hurried to the rescue with twenty-four Athenian ships, among them troop transports carrying hoplites. The Lampsacenes came out against him; he defeated them in battle and took Lampsacus, which was unwalled, at the first assault. He seized the goods and the slaves as plunder but resettled the free inhabitants, and then went on to Abydos. When its people would not come over to him and he could not take the place by assault, he sailed across to the shore opposite Abydos. There he made Sestos, a city of the Chersonese once held by the Persians, a fort and guard post for the whole Hellespont.[31]

THE FOUR HUNDRED

The oligarchic conspirators take control of Athens through terror and a packed assembly.

8.63 Meanwhile the Chians gained more command of the sea. The forces at Miletus and Astyochus took heart when they heard about the sea battle and learned that Strombichides and his ships had left. Astyochus sailed along the coast with two ships to Chios, took the fleet from there, and with all his ships together now made an attack on Samos. When the Athenians did not put

31 The Chersonese is the long peninsula (modern Gallipoli) on the European side of the Hellespont.

out against him, because they mistrusted one another, he sailed back to Miletus.

For about this time, and even earlier, the democracy at Athens had been overthrown. When Peisander and the other envoys came from Tissaphernes to Samos, they secured their hold on the army itself still more firmly. They also urged the most powerful of the Samians themselves to try to set up an oligarchy together with them, although these same Samians had risen against one another precisely in order not to be ruled by an oligarchy. At the same time the Athenians at Samos conferred among themselves and decided to leave Alcibiades out of it, since he was unwilling (and in any case he was not the right man to come into an oligarchy). They themselves, on their own account, since they were already in danger, would look for a way to keep the movement from flagging. At the same time they would keep up the war and contribute money, and anything else that was needed, from their own private resources with a will, since they were no longer toiling for others but for themselves. 8.64 After urging one another on in this way, they at once sent Peisander and half the envoys home to carry the business through there, with instructions to set up oligarchies in any subject cities where they put in. The other half they sent off in different directions to the other subject places. Diitrephes, who was in the area of Chios but had been elected to command in the Thracian region, they sent off to his command. On reaching Thasos he overthrew the democracy. But about two months after he left, the Thasians began fortifying their city: they no longer had any wish for an aristocracy under the Athenians, and were expecting freedom from the Spartans any day. For there was also a body of their exiles, banished by the Athenians, living among the Peloponnesians, and these, together with their friends in the city, were working with all their might to bring ships and make Thasos revolt. So things turned out exactly as they most wished: their city was set right without any risk, and the democracy that would have opposed them had been overthrown. At Thasos, then, the outcome was the opposite of what

the Athenians setting up the oligarchy intended, and in my opinion the same happened in many other subject states as well. For once the cities had gained a moderate government and could act without fear, they went on to outright freedom, setting no value on the hollow good order offered by the Athenians.

8.65 Peisander and his colleagues, as they sailed along the coast, overthrew the democracies in the cities, as had been decided. They also brought hoplites from some places as allies for themselves, and so came to Athens. There they found most of the work already done by their associates in the clubs. Some of the younger men had banded together and secretly killed one Androcles, the leading champion of the people, who had also been chiefly responsible for driving out Alcibiades. They did away with him for two reasons in particular: because he was a popular leader, and because they thought they would gratify Alcibiades, who, they believed, would return and make Tissaphernes their friend. Some other inconvenient men they disposed of secretly in the same way. They had also openly put forward a program: no one should draw pay except those serving in the forces, and no more than five thousand should share in political affairs, these being the men best able to serve with their money and their persons.[32] 8.66 This was an attractive pretext for the majority, since in fact the men who were changing the constitution were going to hold the city themselves. Nevertheless the assembly and the council chosen by the bean still met. But they deliberated nothing that the conspirators did not approve; indeed the speakers came from their number, and what was to be said had been reviewed by them in advance. None of the rest spoke against them any longer, out of fear and because they saw how large the conspiracy was. And if anyone did speak against them, he was soon dead in some convenient way, and there was no search for those who had done it, nor any prosecution if they were suspected. Instead the people kept quiet and were so cowed that anyone who suffered no violence

32 The clubs (hetaireiai) were private associations of upper-class Athenians, which here served as the organizing core of the oligarchic movement.

counted himself fortunate, even if he kept silent.[33] Believing the conspiracy to be much larger than it really was, they were beaten in spirit. They were unable to find out its extent because of the size of the city and because they did not know one another, and so they were not in a position [to discover it themselves]. For the same reason it was impossible for a man who was indignant to pour out his grievance to someone else and so plot revenge: he would have found either a stranger to speak to or an acquaintance he could not trust. All the members of the popular party approached one another with suspicion, as if each had a part in what was going on. For among the conspirators were men whom no one would ever have thought would turn to oligarchy. It was these who created the greatest distrust among the many and did most for the security of the few, by making the people's mistrust of itself firm.

8.67 It was at this moment, then, that Peisander and his colleagues arrived, and they immediately set about the rest of the business. First they called the people together and proposed that ten men be elected as commissioners with full powers to draft proposals. After drafting them, these were to bring before the people, on a fixed day, a proposal for how the city could best be governed. Then, when the day came, they convened the assembly in a confined space at Colonus (a sanctuary of Poseidon outside the city, about ten stades away). The commissioners brought forward nothing but this single proposal: that any Athenian might put forward whatever proposal he wished with impunity;[34] and they laid down heavy penalties for anyone who indicted the speaker for an illegal proposal or harmed him in any other way. Then at last it was said openly that no office should be held any longer under the existing system, and that no pay should be drawn. Five men should be chosen as presidents, these should choose a hundred men, and each of the hun-

33 The regular Council of Five Hundred was chosen by lot, for which beans were used.

34 A stade was about 600 feet (roughly 180 m), so Colonus lay a little over a mile from the city.

dred should choose three more besides himself. These, four hundred in all, should enter the council chamber and govern with full powers as they judged best, and should convene the Five Thousand whenever they saw fit.[35] 8.68 The man who put forward this proposal was Peisander, who had also been the most zealous of all in openly helping to overthrow the democracy in every other way. But the man who had devised the whole affair, how it should be brought to this point, and who had given it the longest attention, was Antiphon. He was an Athenian second to none of his contemporaries in excellence, and the most able both to think a plan through and to express what he had decided. He did not come forward before the people or enter any other public contest of his own accord, but was regarded with suspicion by the masses because of his reputation for cleverness. Yet for those engaged in contests, whether in the law courts or before the people, he was the one man most able to help anyone who consulted him on any matter. When the democracy was restored and the doings of the Four Hundred, after their later fall, came before the courts, he was harshly treated by the people. Accused over these very matters, of having helped to set up the regime, he evidently made the finest defense on a capital charge of anyone down to my time. Phrynichus, too, showed himself exceptionally eager, more than anyone, for the oligarchy, because he feared Alcibiades and knew that Alcibiades was aware of all his dealings with Astyochus at Samos. He reckoned that, in all likelihood, Alcibiades would never be restored under an oligarchy. Once he had committed himself, he proved by far the most dependable man in the face of danger.[36] Theramenes son of Hagnon was also among the foremost of those who helped overthrow the democracy, a man not lacking in ability either to speak or to judge. So it was not surprising that the enterprise, carried out by many able

35 The indictment for an illegal proposal (graphē paranomōn) was the Athenian legal action against anyone who proposed a measure contrary to the laws, and it was a chief safeguard of the democracy.
36 The Greek text is uncertain here.

men, succeeded, great as it was. For it was a hard thing, about a hundred years after the tyrants were deposed, to deprive the Athenian people of their freedom: a people who were not only subject to no one, but for more than half of that time had been accustomed to rule others themselves.[37]

8.69 When the assembly had ratified these measures without opposition and dispersed, they afterwards brought the Four Hundred into the council chamber in the following way. [Now] all the Athenians were constantly under arms, some on the walls and some at their posts, because of the enemy at Decelea. On that day, then, they let those who were not in the secret go off as usual. Those in the conspiracy had been told to wait quietly, not right beside their arms but at a distance, and if anyone tried to oppose what was being done, to take up their arms and not allow it. There were also men from Andros and Tenos, three hundred from Carystus, and some of the settlers on Aegina whom the Athenians had sent there to live, who had come for this very purpose with their own arms; they had been given the same instructions. When these arrangements had been made, the Four Hundred arrived, each with a dagger concealed on him, accompanied by the hundred and twenty [Greek] young men whom they used whenever there was rough work to be done. They confronted the councillors chosen by the bean in the council chamber and told them to take their pay and leave. They had brought the pay for the whole of the rest of their term themselves, and handed it to them as they went out.[38] 8.70 When the council had withdrawn in this way without a word of protest, and the rest of the citizens made no move against them but kept quiet, [then] the Four Hundred entered the council chamber. For the time being they chose prytaneis from their own number by lot, and performed the customary prayers and sacrifices to the gods on entering office. Later, however, they

37 The tyranny of the Peisistratids at Athens ended with the expulsion of Hippias in 510 BC.

38 In 431 BC the Athenians had expelled the people of Aegina and settled Athenians on the island in their place.

made great changes in the democratic administration (except that they did not recall the exiles, because of Alcibiades), and in general governed the city by force. They put to death some men, not many, whom they thought it best to have out of the way, imprisoned others and banished others. They also sent heralds to Agis, the Spartan king, who was at Decelea, saying that they wished to come to terms, and that it was reasonable for him to reach an agreement with them, and no longer with the untrustworthy democracy.[39] 8.71 But Agis thought the city was not at peace, and that the people would not surrender their ancient freedom so quickly; if they saw a large army of his, they would not stay quiet, and even at present he was not at all confident that they were no longer in turmoil. So he gave the envoys from the Four Hundred no conciliatory answer. Instead he sent to the Peloponnese for a large additional army, and not long afterwards he came down himself, with the garrison from Decelea and the newly arrived troops, right up to the walls of Athens. He hoped either that the Athenians would be thrown into confusion and so be more easily brought to submit on the Spartans' terms, or even that the city would be taken at the first assault in the turmoil likely to arise both inside and outside. For he thought he could not fail to take the Long Walls, since they would be deserted. But when he came close, the Athenians made no movement whatever inside the city. Instead they sent out their cavalry and a detachment of hoplites, light troops and archers, who struck down some of his men for coming too near and got possession of some arms and bodies. Then at last he understood, and led his army back again. He and his own troops stayed where they were at Decelea, but the troops who had come in he sent home after they had stayed a few days in the country. After this the Four Hundred went on sending envoys to Agis all the same, and now that he was more receptive and encouraged them, they sent envoys to Sparta as well to negotiate an agreement, since they wanted to come to terms.

39 The prytaneis were the councillors who in turn presided over the council and the assembly for part of the year.

8.72 They also sent ten men to Samos to reassure the army and explain that the oligarchy had been set up not to harm the city and the citizens but to save the state as a whole. They were to say that those in power were five thousand, not just four hundred, and that in any case the Athenians, because of their campaigns and their business abroad, had never yet met to deliberate on any matter so important that five thousand had come together. They gave them other instructions about what was fitting to say and sent them off immediately after establishing themselves in power. They feared what did in fact happen: that the crowd of sailors would refuse to remain under the oligarchic system themselves, and that, with the trouble starting there, they would overthrow them.

DEMOCRACY HOLDS AT SAMOS

The fleet at Samos defeats an oligarchic plot and swears loyalty to democracy.

8.73 For on Samos the move toward oligarchy had already set off an upheaval, and the following happened at just about the time when the Four Hundred were banding together. Those Samians who had earlier risen against the powerful and were the democratic party changed sides again. They were persuaded by Peisander when he came, and by the Athenians on Samos who had joined the conspiracy, and they formed a sworn band of about three hundred and were preparing to attack the rest as being the democracy. They put to death one Hyperbolus, an Athenian, a worthless man who had been ostracized not out of fear of his power and standing but because of his villainy and because he was a disgrace to the city. They did this together with Charminus, one of the generals, and some of the Athenians among them, giving these a pledge of good faith. With them they carried out other acts of the same kind, and they were set on attacking the majority.[40] But the majority got wind of it and revealed what was coming to the generals Leon and Diomedon,

40 Hyperbolus, a popular leader at Athens, had been ostracized around 416 BC.

who were honored by the people and so put up with the oligarchy unwillingly. They also told Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus, one a trireme commander and the other serving as a hoplite, and others who were thought always to be the most opposed to the conspirators. They called on them not to stand by and see the Samian people destroyed and Samos estranged from the Athenians, when Samos alone had held their empire together [up to now]. When these men heard this, they went to the soldiers one by one and urged them not to allow it. Above all they went to the crew of the Paralus, men who sailed on that ship as Athenians and free men to a man, and who had always been hostile to oligarchy, even when there was none. Leon and Diomedon, for their part, would leave the Samians some ships as guards whenever they sailed anywhere. So when the Three Hundred attacked them, all these came to help, the Paralians most of all, and the Samian majority prevailed. They killed some thirty of the Three Hundred and punished the three most responsible with exile. They held no grudge against the rest, and from then on lived alongside them as fellow citizens under a democracy.[41] 8.74 The Samians and the soldiers sent the Paralus off to Athens in haste to report what had happened. On board was Chaereas son of Archestratus, an Athenian who had been zealous for the change, for they did not yet know that the Four Hundred were in power. As soon as the ship put in, the Four Hundred threw two or three of the Paralians into chains. They took the ship away from the rest, transferred them to another vessel, a troopship, and posted them on guard duty around Euboea. Chaereas, as soon as he saw how things stood, somehow slipped away at once and returned to Samos. There he reported to the soldiers what was going on in Athens, exaggerating it all for the worse. Everyone, he said, was being punished with flogging, and no one could say a word against those who held power. The soldiers' wives and children were being abused. And the oligarchs intended to seize and imprison the relatives of

41 The Paralus was one of Athens' two sacred state triremes, used for official missions, and its crew were all citizens.

all those serving at Samos who were not of their way of thinking, so that if the soldiers did not submit, these would be put to death. And he told many other lies besides. 8.75 When they heard this, their first impulse was to stone those who had done most to set up the oligarchy, and any of the rest who had taken part. But they were held back by men who intervened and made them see that they must not ruin everything while the enemy lay close by, prows facing them; and so they stopped. After this, Thrasybulus son of Lycus and Thrasyllus, who had been the chief leaders of the change, wanted now to bring Samos openly over to democracy. They made all the soldiers swear the most solemn oaths, especially those who had been of the oligarchic party. They swore that they would live under a democracy and in concord, would carry on the war against the Peloponnesians with energy, would be enemies to the Four Hundred, and would hold no negotiations with them. All the Samians of military age swore the same oath as well. The soldiers made the Samians partners in all their affairs and in whatever might come of the dangers they faced. They believed that neither the Samians nor they themselves had any refuge to save them, but that whether the Four Hundred won or the enemy at Miletus, they would be destroyed. 8.76 So at this time the two sides were locked in a struggle, one trying to force the city to be a democracy, the other trying to force the army to be an oligarchy. The soldiers immediately held an assembly of their own. In it they deposed the former generals and any trireme commanders they suspected, and chose others in their place, both trireme commanders and generals, among whom were Thrasybulus and Thrasyllus. They stood up and encouraged one another. Among other things they said that there was no need to lose heart because the city had broken away from them, for it was the few who had broken away from them, the many, who were also better provided in every respect. Since they held the entire fleet, they said, they would compel the other cities under their rule to pay them money just as if they were operating from Athens. They had a city in Samos, and no weak one: when it had gone to war with

Athens, it had come within a hair of taking away the Athenians' command of the sea. And they would ward off the enemy from the same base as before. Having the ships, they were also better able to provide themselves with supplies than those in the city. Indeed, it was because they were stationed out in front at Samos that those at home had controlled the entrance to the Piraeus even before. Now, if the others refused to give them back their constitution, they would put themselves in a position where they could shut the others out of the sea more easily than they could be shut out by them.[42] What the city had contributed to their defeating the enemy was a small thing and worth nothing, and they had lost nothing. Those at home no longer had money to send, since the soldiers were providing for themselves, nor good counsel, which is the reason a city has authority over its armies. On the contrary, in this respect too the others had done wrong by overthrowing the ancestral laws, whereas they themselves were preserving them and would try to force the others to do the same. So even in counsel, the men among them who could advise well were no worse than those at home. Alcibiades, too, if they granted him immunity and his return, would gladly bring them the alliance with the King. And most important of all, if everything else failed, with so large a fleet they had many places of refuge where they would find both cities and land. 8.77 After holding an assembly among themselves along these lines and encouraging one another, they went on with their preparations for the war no less than before. The men sent to Samos by the Four Hundred [the ten envoys] learned of these events when they were already at Delos, and they stayed where they were.

8.78 About this same time the Peloponnesian soldiers in the fleet at Miletus were also loudly complaining among themselves that their cause was being ruined by Astyochus and Tissaphernes. Astyochus, they said, had refused to fight at sea before, while they themselves were still the stronger and the Athenian fleet was small. He was refusing now too, when the Athenians were said to be in civil strife and their ships were not

42 The Samian revolt of 440 BC, described in Book 1.

yet gathered in one place. Instead, waiting for the Phoenician ships from Tissaphernes, which existed in word and not in deed, they were in danger of wasting away. Tissaphernes, for his part, was not bringing these ships, and he was ruining the fleet by not paying its maintenance regularly or in full. So they said they must not wait any longer but fight it out at sea. 8.79 The Syracusans were the most insistent of all. The allies and Astyochus became aware of the murmuring, and they decided in council to fight it out at sea. Since news of the turmoil on Samos was also reaching them, they put out with all their ships, a hundred and twelve in number, ordered the Milesians to march along the coast to Mycale, and sailed for Mycale. The Athenians had eighty-two ships from Samos, which happened to be lying at Glauce on Mycale; at this point Samos is only a short distance from the mainland at Mycale. When they saw the Peloponnesian ships sailing toward them, they withdrew to Samos, not thinking they had enough ships to risk everything on a battle.[43] At the same time they were expecting Strombichides to come from the Hellespont to their aid with the ships from Chios that had gone to Abydos, for they had learned in advance that the enemy at Miletus were eager for a battle, and a messenger had been sent ahead to him. So the Athenians withdrew to Samos in this way. The Peloponnesians put in at Mycale and encamped there, together with the land forces of the Milesians and their neighbors. The next day, as they were about to sail against Samos, news came that Strombichides had arrived with the ships from the Hellespont, and they immediately sailed back to Miletus. The Athenians, now reinforced by these ships, themselves made an attack on Miletus with a hundred and eight ships, wanting to fight it out. When no one put out against them, they sailed back to Samos.

8.80 In the same summer, immediately after this, the Peloponnesians, thinking themselves no match for the enemy's combined fleet, had refused to put out against it. They were at a loss

43 Mycale is a mountainous promontory on the coast of Asia Minor, directly opposite Samos.

where to find money for so many ships, especially as Tissaphernes was paying badly. So they sent Clearchus son of Ramphias with forty ships to Pharnabazus, as had been ordered from the Peloponnese at the start. For Pharnabazus was inviting them and was ready to provide maintenance, and at the same time Byzantium too was sending messages to them offering to revolt. These Peloponnesian ships set out into the open sea so as to escape the Athenians' notice on the voyage, and were caught in a storm. Most of them, with Clearchus, made it to Delos and later returned to Miletus; Clearchus went back to the Hellespont by land and took command there. The other ten, under the Megarian general Helixus, got through safely to the Hellespont and brought about the revolt of Byzantium. After this the Athenians at Samos, learning of it, sent ships to the Hellespont to help and keep guard, and there was even a short sea battle off Byzantium, eight ships against eight.

ALCIBIADES RETURNS TO THE FLEET

The army at Samos recalls Alcibiades and elects him general; he stops them sailing on Athens.

8.81 Meanwhile the leaders at Samos, and especially Thrasybulus, who ever since he had changed the situation there had held firmly to the same view, that Alcibiades should be recalled, [and] finally won over the mass of the soldiers in an assembly. When they had voted Alcibiades his return and immunity, Thrasybulus sailed to Tissaphernes and brought Alcibiades back to Samos, thinking that their only salvation lay in bringing Tissaphernes over to their side and away from the Peloponnesians. An assembly was held, and Alcibiades complained of and lamented the personal misfortune of his exile. He spoke at length about public affairs and raised no small hopes in them for the future. He also magnified his own influence with Tissaphernes beyond all measure. He wanted those who held the oligarchy at home to fear him and the conspiratorial clubs to be the more likely to break up; he wanted the men at Samos to hold

him in higher honor and to take greater courage themselves; and he wanted the enemy to be discredited with Tissaphernes as much as possible and to fall [away from] the hopes they had. At any rate, the greatest of the promises Alcibiades boasted of was this. Tissaphernes, he said, had solemnly assured him that if he could trust the Athenians, they would never lack maintenance as long as he had anything of his own left, not even if in the end he had to sell his own bed for silver. He would bring the Phoenician ships, already at Aspendus, to the Athenians and not to the Peloponnesians. But he could trust the Athenians only if Alcibiades were restored safely and became his guarantor for them.[44]

8.82 Hearing these and many other things, they at once elected him general alongside the existing generals and entrusted everything to him. Not one of them would have exchanged for anything the hope this gave him on the spot, both of safety and of revenge on the Four Hundred. In the excitement of the moment, on the strength of what had been said, they were ready by now to despise the enemy in front of them and to sail for the Piraeus. But Alcibiades flatly prevented them from sailing to the Piraeus and leaving the nearer enemy behind, though many were pressing for it. He said that, since he had been elected general, he would first sail to Tissaphernes and deal with matters concerning the war. He left straight from that assembly, so as to seem to share everything with Tissaphernes. At the same time he wanted to stand higher in his esteem, and to show him that he had now been elected general and was [now] in a position to do him good or harm. So it came about that Alcibiades frightened Tissaphernes with the Athenians, and the Athenians with Tissaphernes.

8.83 When the Peloponnesians at Miletus learned of Alcibiades' recall, they had already distrusted Tissaphernes, and now they were far more set against him. For it had happened that at the time of the Athenian attack on Miletus, when they had refused to put out and fight, Tissaphernes had become much slacker in paying them, and their hatred of him, already there before this,

44 Aspendus was a city in Pamphylia, on the southern coast of Asia Minor.

had grown because of Alcibiades. The soldiers gathered in groups, just as before, and went over their grievances, and so did some others, men of consequence, not only the rank and file. They had never received their pay in full, they said; what they were given was small, and not even that came regularly. Unless someone either fought it out at sea or took them away to some place where they could get maintenance, the men would desert the ships. And Astyochus, they said, was to blame for everything, humoring Tissaphernes' whims for his own private gain. 8.84 While they were in this frame of mind, there was also an uproar of the following kind around Astyochus. The sailors of the Syracusans and Thurians, being for the most part free men, were all the bolder in coming at him and demanding their pay. He answered rather harshly and threatened them, and when Dorieus spoke up for his own sailors, he even raised his staff against him. When the mass of the soldiers saw this, they broke out, as sailors will, and rushed at Astyochus to stone him. He saw it coming and took refuge at an altar. He was not hit, however, and they dispersed. The Milesians also made a surprise attack and took the fort that Tissaphernes had built in Miletus, and threw out the garrison in it. The other allies approved of this too, and the Syracusans not least. Lichas, however, was not pleased with them. He said that the Milesians and the others in the King's territory must submit to Tissaphernes within reasonable limits and keep on his good side until they had brought the war to a good conclusion. The Milesians were angry with him for this and other things of the kind, and when he later died of illness, they would not allow the Spartans who were present to bury him where they wished.

8.85 Their relations with Astyochus and Tissaphernes were at this pitch of discord when Mindarus arrived from Sparta to succeed Astyochus as admiral and took over the command, and Astyochus sailed for home. Tissaphernes sent with him one of his own men as an envoy, Gaulites by name, a Carian who spoke two languages. He was to bring charges against the Milesians over the fort and at the same time to defend Tissaphernes. For

Tissaphernes knew that the Milesians were going chiefly to denounce him, and that Hermocrates was going with them, intending to show that Tissaphernes, together with Alcibiades, was ruining the Peloponnesians' cause and playing a double game.[45] Tissaphernes had always been on bad terms with Hermocrates over the payment of wages. Finally, when Hermocrates had been exiled from Syracuse and other Syracusan generals — Potamis, Myscon and Demarchus — had come to Miletus to take over the ships, Tissaphernes pressed still harder on Hermocrates, who was now an exile. Among other things, he accused him of having once asked him for money and, when he was refused, of having declared his enmity toward him. So Astyochus, the Milesians and Hermocrates sailed off to Sparta. Alcibiades, meanwhile, had already crossed back from Tissaphernes to Samos.

8.86 The men from the Four Hundred [the envoys] whom they had sent at that time to reassure and inform the men at Samos now arrived from Delos, while Alcibiades was there. An assembly was held, and they tried to speak. At first the soldiers would not listen, but shouted that those who were overthrowing the democracy should be put to death; then, though, they quieted down with difficulty and heard them. The envoys reported that the change had been made not to destroy the city but to save it, and not to hand it over to the enemy; they could have done that, they said, when the enemy invaded while they were already in power. They also said that all the Five Thousand would have their share in turn, and that the soldiers' families were neither being abused, as Chaereas had slanderously reported, nor suffering any harm, but were each staying where they were, in possession of their own property. They said much else besides, but the soldiers listened no more readily. They were angry, and different men proposed different courses, most of all to sail against the Piraeus. It was then, it seems, that Alcibiades first did the city a service, and one as great as anyone's. When the Athenians at Samos were set on sailing against their own

45 Caria was a region of southwestern Asia Minor.

people — in which case the enemy would quite plainly have taken Ionia and the Hellespont at once — he was the one who stopped them. At that moment no one else would have been able to restrain the crowd; but he put a stop to the expedition, and by rebuking those who were angry with the envoys on personal grounds he turned them from their purpose. He himself gave the envoys their answer and sent them away. He did not object to the Five Thousand ruling, he said, but he told them to get rid of the Four Hundred and to restore the council as it had been before, the Five Hundred. If any cuts had been made for the sake of economy, so that those on campaign might be better supplied, he fully approved. In all other respects he told them to hold out and make no concession to the enemy. For as long as the city was preserved, there was every hope that the two sides would also come to terms with each other; but if once either of them came to grief, either the force at Samos or the men at home, there would no longer be anyone left to be reconciled with.[46]

Envoys from Argos were also there, offering to help the Athenian democracy at Samos. Alcibiades praised them, told them to be on hand whenever anyone called on them, and sent them away with that answer. The Argives had come with the Paralians. These men had been posted at that time by the Four Hundred on board the troopship to cruise around Euboea, and they were carrying Athenian envoys [sent] by the Four Hundred to Sparta: Laespodias, Aristophon and Melesias. [These men,] when they were sailing off Argos, seized the envoys and handed them over to the Argives as among the chief men responsible for overthrowing the democracy. They themselves did not go back to Athens. Instead they came from Argos to Samos, bringing the envoys in the very trireme they had.

46 The Council of Five Hundred was the regular council of the Athenian democracy, which the Four Hundred had replaced.

THE PHOENICIAN FLEET

Tissaphernes goes to Aspendus but never brings the Phoenician ships.

8.87 In the same summer the Peloponnesians were especially angry with Tissaphernes. There were various reasons, but above all it was because of Alcibiades' recall, since they now took him to be openly siding with Athens. At this moment Tissaphernes wanted, so it seemed at least, to clear himself of their charges. He prepared to go to Aspendus to fetch the Phoenician ships, and he told Lichas to come with him. He said he would put Tamos, his deputy, in charge of the army, to provide its pay while he himself was away. The accounts differ, and it is not easy to know with what intention he went to Aspendus, and why, once there, he did not bring the ships.[47] That the Phoenician ships, a hundred and forty-seven of them, came as far as Aspendus is clear. Why they did not come on is the subject of many conjectures. Some say he went off so as to wear down the Peloponnesian cause, as he had in fact planned. At any rate, Tamos, the man put in charge, provided pay no better than he had, and even worse. Others say that he brought the Phoenicians forward to Aspendus so that he could extort money from them for letting them go, since he was not going to use them in any case. Still others say it was because of the outcry against him at Sparta: he wanted it said that he was doing no wrong, and that he had plainly gone off to fetch ships that were really manned. To me, though, it seems clearest that he did not bring the fleet because he wanted to wear down the Greek forces and hold them in check. He wore them down in the time he spent going there and delaying. He held them in balance by joining neither side, so as to make neither stronger. For if he had wanted to, he could surely have appeared and finished off the war beyond any doubt. Had he brought the fleet, he would in all likelihood have given the Spartans the victory, since even as things stood their fleet lay facing the enemy's on terms of equality rather than

47 The Phoenician fleet was the Persian King's navy.

inferiority. What convicts him most of all is the excuse he gave for not bringing the ships. He said there were fewer of them than the King had ordered to be assembled. Yet surely he would have earned even more gratitude that way, by not spending much of the King's money and achieving the same results with fewer ships. In any case, with whatever intention, Tissaphernes reached Aspendus and met the Phoenicians. The Peloponnesians, at his request, sent Philip, a Spartan, with two triremes, as if to fetch the ships. 8.88 When Alcibiades learned that Tissaphernes too was on his way to Aspendus, he set sail himself with thirteen ships. He promised those at Samos a great service that could not fail: either he would bring the Phoenician ships to the Athenians himself, or at least he would prevent them from going to the Peloponnesians. He probably had long known Tissaphernes' intention not to bring them. He also wanted to discredit Tissaphernes as much as possible with the Peloponnesians, on account of his friendship with himself and the Athenians, so that Tissaphernes would be all the more compelled by this to come over to their side. So he put out and set his course straight up the coast for Phaselis and Caunus.

THE OLIGARCHY DIVIDES

Theramenes and other moderates turn against the extremists building the Eetionea wall.

8.89 The envoys sent by the Four Hundred returned from Samos to Athens and reported Alcibiades' message. He urged them to hold out and to give nothing up to the enemy, and he had high hopes of reconciling the army with them and of overcoming the Peloponnesians. Many of those who shared in the oligarchy were already discontented, and would gladly have got out of the business somehow, if they could do it safely. This report encouraged them far more. They were now banding together and finding fault with the conduct of affairs. Their leaders were among the very [generals] who belonged to the oligarchy and held office, such as Theramenes son of Hagnon, Aristocrates son of

Scellias and others. These men had been among the foremost in the regime. But they were afraid, so they said, and very seriously, of the army at Samos and of Alcibiades. They were also afraid of those who [were sending] envoys to Sparta, in case they did the city some harm without the majority's consent. They did not speak of wanting to be rid of power that had fallen too much into the hands of a few. They spoke of the need to appoint the Five Thousand in deed and not just in name, and to establish a more equal constitution.[48] This was the political front they put on their words. Most of them, however, were devoted to this course out of private ambition, and that is above all what destroys an oligarchy that has arisen out of a democracy. For from the very first day every one of them claims not merely to be an equal but to be by far the first himself. In a democracy, by contrast, when elections are held, a man bears the outcome more easily, since he has not been outdone by his equals. What spurred them on most plainly was the strength of Alcibiades' position at Samos, and the fact that they did not think the oligarchy would last. So each of them competed to become the leading champion of the people himself. 8.90 Most opposed to this kind of thing were the leaders among the Four Hundred. There was Phrynichus, who had [once] quarreled with Alcibiades while he was general at Samos. There was Aristarchus, a man among the most bitter and longest-standing enemies of the democracy. There were Peisander, Antiphon and others of the most powerful men. Earlier on, as soon as they had come to power, and once their side at Samos had gone over to democracy, they had sent envoys of their own to Sparta, pressed eagerly for an agreement, and begun building the wall at the place called Eetionea. They did all this much more after their own envoys came back from Samos, because they saw that the majority, and even those of their own number who had previously seemed trustworthy, were changing sides. They sent Antiphon, Phrynichus and ten others in haste, since they feared both the situation at home and that at Samos. Their instructions

48 The Greek text is uncertain here.

were to come to terms with the Spartans in any way at all that was in the least tolerable. Meanwhile they built the wall at Eetionea even more eagerly. According to Theramenes and his associates, the purpose of the wall was not to keep the men at Samos out of the Piraeus if they tried to sail in by force. It was rather to let the enemy in, with ships and with infantry, whenever they wished. For Eetionea is a mole of the Piraeus, and the entrance to the harbor runs right beside it. So it was being fortified, along with the wall that already stood on the landward side, in such a way that a few men stationed in it could control the entrance. For both the old wall facing the land and the new inner wall being built facing the sea ended at one of the two towers at the narrow mouth of the harbor. They also walled off a colonnaded hall, the largest in the Piraeus, standing right next to this wall, and kept control of it themselves. They forced everyone to store there the grain they had and any that came in by sea, and to take it out from there when they sold it.

8.91 Theramenes had long been spreading talk about these things. He did so all the more after the envoys came back from Sparta without having reached any agreement that would serve the whole people, and he said this wall was likely to ruin the city. For at this same time, as it happened, forty-two ships from the Peloponnese had been called in by the Euboeans. Among them were some from Italy, from Taras and Locri, and some from Sicily. They were already anchored at Las in Laconia and preparing for the voyage to Euboea, and their commander was Agesandridas son of Agesander, a Spartiate. Theramenes said they were sailing not so much for Euboea as for the men fortifying Eetionea, and that unless people took precautions now, they would be destroyed before they knew it. There was in fact something of this kind on the part of those accused, and the talk was not mere slander. What they wanted most was to keep their oligarchy and rule the allies as well. Failing that, they wanted to keep the ships and the walls and be independent. If they were shut out from that too, they at any rate did not want to be destroyed first of all by a restored democracy. They would rather

bring in the enemy, come to terms without walls or ships, and keep hold of the city on any terms at all, so long as their own persons were safe.

THE EETIONEA WALL FALLS

Phrynichus is murdered, and the hoplites in the Piraeus tear down the new fortification.

8.92 That is why they were eagerly building this wall, with its posterns and entrances and ways of letting the enemy in, and why they wanted to finish it in time. Until then, such talk had been confined to a few and kept fairly secret. Then Phrynichus came back from the embassy to Sparta. As he left the council chamber, he was struck by one of the frontier patrol in a planned attack, in the crowded agora not far from the building, and died on the spot. The man who struck him escaped. His accomplice, an Argive, was caught and tortured by the Four Hundred, but he named no one as having ordered it. He said nothing except that he knew many men used to meet at the house of the commander of the patrol and at other houses. Nothing further came of it. At that point Theramenes, Aristocrates and all the others who shared their views, both within the Four Hundred and outside it, went to work more boldly.[49] For at the same time the ships from Las had already sailed round, anchored at Epidaurus, and overrun Aegina. Theramenes said it was not likely that ships sailing for Euboea would have turned into the gulf toward Aegina and then gone back to anchor at Epidaurus. They could only have done so if they had come by invitation, for the very purposes he had always been charging. So it was no longer possible to keep quiet. In the end, after much factional talk and suspicion, they set about things in deed. The hoplites in the Piraeus who were building the Eetionea wall included Aristocrates, who was serving as taxiarch in command of his own tribe. They arrested Alexicles, one of the oligarchy's

49 The frontier patrol (*peripoloi*) was made up of young citizens who did guard duty in the Attic countryside.

generals and a man particularly attached to the clubs, took him into a house and locked him up.[50] Others joined them in this, among them a certain Hermon, commander of the patrol stationed at Munychia. Most important of all, the main body of the hoplites wanted it. The news was brought to the Four Hundred, who happened to be sitting together in the council chamber. At once they were ready to take up arms, except for those who did not like what was going on, and they threatened Theramenes and his associates. Theramenes defended himself and said he was ready to go with them right away and help rescue the man. Taking one of the generals who shared his views, he made for the Piraeus. Aristarchus also went to help, together with some young men from the cavalry.[51] There was great and alarming confusion. The men in the city thought that the Piraeus had already been seized and that the arrested man had been killed. The men in the Piraeus thought that those from the city were all but upon them. In the city men were running about and rushing to arms. The older men tried to stop them, and so did Thucydides of Pharsalus, the city's proxenos, who was there. He eagerly put himself in everyone's way and shouted at them not to destroy their country while the enemy lay in wait nearby. With difficulty they calmed down and kept their hands off one another.[52] Theramenes reached the Piraeus (he too was a general) and made a show of anger at the hoplites, as far as shouting went. Aristarchus and those on the other side, though, were angry in earnest. Most of the hoplites pressed on with the business and had no second thoughts. They asked Theramenes whether he thought the wall was being built for any good purpose, and whether it would not be better pulled down. He said that if they thought it should be pulled down, he thought so too. At that the hoplites and many of the people of the Piraeus at once climbed up and began demolishing the fortification. The

50 A taxiarch commanded the hoplite regiment of one of Athens' ten tribes; the clubs were the political associations that had organized the oligarchic coup.
51 Munychia was the hill above the Piraeus, with a harbor of its own.
52 A proxenos was a citizen of another state who represented a city's interests there; this Thucydides was a Thessalian, not the historian.

appeal to the crowd was that whoever wanted the Five Thousand to rule instead of the Four Hundred should come and join in the work. For they still hid behind the name of the Five Thousand and did not say outright "whoever wants the people to rule." They were afraid that the Five Thousand might really exist, and that a man might say something to one of them and come to grief through not knowing. This was also why the Four Hundred wanted the Five Thousand neither to exist nor to be known not to exist. They thought that making so many people partners in power would amount to outright democracy, while the uncertainty would make men afraid of one another.

8.93 The next day the Four Hundred, shaken as they were, still met in the council chamber. The hoplites in the Piraeus released Alexicles, whom they had arrested. Having demolished the fortification, they went to the theater of Dionysus near Munychia, grounded their arms and held an assembly. They reached a decision and at once marched to the city, where they grounded their arms again in the Anaceum.[53] Men chosen by the Four Hundred came to them and talked with them man to man. They tried to persuade any reasonable people they saw both to keep quiet themselves and to restrain the rest. They said they would publish the names of the Five Thousand, and that the Four Hundred would be drawn from these in rotation, in whatever way the Five Thousand decided. In the meantime, they said, the hoplites must on no account ruin the city or drive it into the enemy's hands. With many people talking to many, the whole mass of the hoplites grew calmer than before, and their chief fear was for the state as a whole. They agreed to hold an assembly on a fixed day in the theater of Dionysus to discuss concord. 8.94 The day of the assembly [in the theater of Dionysus] arrived, and they had almost finished gathering, when news came that the forty-two ships under Agesandridas were sailing from Megara along the coast of Salamis. Every one [of the mass of hoplites] thought this was exactly what Theramenes and his

53 The Anaceum was the sanctuary of the Dioscuri (the Anakes), below the Acropolis.

associates had long been saying: the ships were sailing to the fortification. It seemed a good thing that it had been demolished. Agesandridas may perhaps have been cruising around Epidaurus and those waters by some prior arrangement. But he was probably also lingering there because of the civil strife now going on among the Athenians, in the hope of arriving at the right moment. As soon as the news reached the Athenians, they ran down to the Piraeus in full force. They saw that a war greater [than] their private one, the war with the enemy, was not far off but right at the harbor. Some boarded the ships that were there, others launched more, and others hurried to defend the walls and the mouth of the harbor.

EUBOEA LOST

The Peloponnesians defeat an Athenian fleet off Eretria, and Euboea revolts.

8.95 The Peloponnesian ships sailed along the coast, rounded Sunium, and anchored between Thoricus and Prasiae, and later they reached Oropus. The Athenians were forced to act in haste and to use crews that had not trained together, as was natural in a city torn by civil strife that wanted to send help quickly where the most was at stake. For now that Attica was shut off to them, Euboea was everything. They sent Thymochares as general with ships to Eretria. When these arrived, together with those already at Euboea, there were thirty-six in all. They were forced to fight at sea at once, because Agesandridas had his men take their meal and then put out from Oropus with his ships. Oropus is about sixty stades by sea from the city of Eretria. As he sailed against them, the Athenians at once began manning their ships, thinking their soldiers were close to the ships. But the men happened to be buying provisions for their meal not from the marketplace, where the Eretrians had deliberately arranged that nothing should be on sale, but from houses at the edge of the town. The aim was that while the Athenians were slowly manning their ships, the enemy could fall on them first and force

them to put out just as they were. A signal was also raised at Eretria for the Peloponnesians at Oropus to show when they should put to sea. In this state of readiness the Athenians put out and fought off the harbor of Eretria. For a short while they still held their own, but then they turned to flight and were chased to the shore. Those of them who fled to the city of Eretria, thinking it friendly, fared worst of all, for they were slaughtered by the Eretrians. Those who fled to the fort at Eretria, which the Athenians held themselves, survived, and so did the ships that reached Chalcis. The Peloponnesians captured twenty-two Athenian ships. They killed some of the men and took others prisoner, and they set up a trophy. Not long afterwards they brought all of Euboea to revolt, except Oreus, which the Athenians themselves held, and settled affairs there generally.

8.96 When news of what had happened at Euboea reached the Athenians, it caused the greatest consternation they had ever known. Neither the disaster in Sicily, great as it had seemed at the time, nor anything else had ever frightened them so much. Consider their position. The army at Samos was in revolt. They had no other ships and no crews to man them. They themselves were in the grip of civil strife, and no one could tell when they would come to blows with one another. And on top of all this came a disaster of such size, in which they had lost ships and, worst of all, Euboea, from which they drew more benefit than from Attica itself. Was it any wonder that they lost heart? What alarmed them most, and most immediately, was the thought that the enemy, after their victory, would dare to sail straight against the Piraeus, which was empty of ships. They believed the enemy were all but there already. Had the enemy been bolder, they could easily have done just that. Either they would have divided the city still further by lying off it, or, if they had stayed and laid siege to it, they would have forced even the fleet from Ionia, hostile as it was to the oligarchy, to come to the aid of their own families and of the whole city. In the meantime the Hellespont would have been theirs, and Ionia, and the islands, and everything as far as Euboea: in a word, the whole Athenian

empire. But this was not the only occasion on which the Spartans proved the most convenient of all enemies for the Athenians to be at war with; there were many others. The two peoples were utterly different in character. The Athenians were quick and the Spartans slow, the Athenians enterprising and the Spartans unadventurous, and this was of the greatest help to the Athenians, especially since theirs was a naval empire. The Syracusans showed as much: they were the most like the Athenians in character, and they fought them the best.

THE FIVE THOUSAND

The Four Hundred are deposed; Thucydides praises the new constitution.

8.97 At any rate, in response to the news the Athenians still manned twenty ships and called an assembly. The first was held at once, on the hill called the Pnyx, where they had been accustomed to meet in the past. At this assembly they deposed the Four Hundred and voted to hand over affairs to the Five Thousand, who were to include all who could provide their own arms. They also voted that no one should receive pay for any office, and they declared anyone who did so accursed. Many other assemblies were held afterwards, at which they voted to appoint lawgivers and passed the other measures for the constitution.[54] And it was during this first period, in my lifetime at least, that the Athenians appear to have been best governed. There was a moderate blending of the interests of the few and the many, and it was this, above all, that first lifted the city out of the wretched state its affairs had fallen into. They also voted to recall Alcibiades and others with him, and they sent messengers to him and to the army at Samos, urging them to take matters vigorously in hand.

8.98 At this change of government Peisander, Alexicles and the most extreme of the oligarchs immediately slipped away to

54 The Pnyx was the hill near the Acropolis where the Athenian assembly normally met.

Decelea. Aristarchus alone among them, since he happened to be a general, quickly took some archers, the most outlandish foreigners among them, and marched to Oenoe. This was an Athenian fort on the Boeotian border. The Corinthians were besieging it of their own accord, having called in the Boeotians to help, because of a disaster they had suffered from Oenoe: the slaughter of some of their men as they were returning from Decelea. Aristarchus, then, after conferring with them, deceived the men in Oenoe. He told them that the people in the city had also come to terms with the Spartans on all other points, and that they too had to hand the place over to the Boeotians, since this was one of the terms of the agreement. They trusted him because he was a general, and because they were under siege they knew nothing of what had happened, so they came out under a truce. In this way the Boeotians took over Oenoe after its surrender, and the oligarchy and the civil strife at Athens came to an end.

MINDARUS SAILS FOR THE HELLESPONT

The Peloponnesian fleet leaves Tissaphernes and slips past the Athenians to the Hellespont.

8.99 About the same time this summer the Peloponnesians at Miletus were in difficulties. None of those whom Tissaphernes had appointed at the time [when he went off to Aspendus] was supplying them with maintenance. Neither the Phoenician ships nor Tissaphernes himself had yet arrived. Philip, who had been sent with him, and another man, Hippocrates, a Spartiate who was at Phaselis, had written to Mindarus the admiral that the ships would not be coming and that they were being wronged by Tissaphernes in every way. And Pharnabazus was inviting them and was eager, once he had the fleet, to bring about the revolt of the remaining cities of his province from the Athenians himself, just as Tissaphernes had been, since he hoped to gain something more by it. So it was that Mindarus, in good order and on a sudden word of command so as to escape the notice of

those at Samos, set out from Miletus with seventy-three ships and sailed for the Hellespont. (Earlier in this same summer sixteen ships had sailed into it and overrun part of the Chersonese.) But he was caught by a storm and forced to put in at Icarus, and after being held there by bad weather for five or six days he reached Chios.

8.100 When Thrasyllus at Samos learned that Mindarus had left Miletus, he too immediately put to sea with fifty-five ships, hurrying so that Mindarus would not get into the Hellespont ahead of him. But on learning that he was at Chios, and thinking he would keep him pinned there, he posted lookouts both on Lesbos and on the mainland opposite, so that the ships could not move anywhere without his knowing. He himself sailed along the coast to Methymna and ordered barley meal and other provisions to be prepared, intending, if the delay went on longer, to make his attacks on Chios from Lesbos. At the same time he wanted to sail against Eresus on Lesbos, which had revolted, and take it if he could. Some exiles from Methymna, not the least powerful of them, had brought over from Cyme about fifty hoplites who were their partisans, and had hired others from the mainland, some three hundred in all, under the command of Anaxander, a Theban, chosen because of kinship. They first attacked Methymna, but were beaten back in the attempt by the Athenian garrison troops who came out from Mytilene. Driven off again in a battle outside the city, they made their way across the mountain and brought about the revolt of Eresus.[55] So Thrasyllus sailed against it with his whole fleet, intending to make an assault. Thrasybulus had already arrived there before him with five ships from Samos, having set out as soon as they received word of this crossing by the exiles. He had come too late to stop it, and on arrival had taken up position off Eresus. They were also joined by two ships returning home from the Hellespont and by five from Methymna. There were now sixty-seven ships present in all, and with the troops from them they prepared to

55 The kinship was the Aeolian descent shared by Thebans and Lesbians.

take Eresus by storm, with siege engines and by every means, if they could.

8.101 Meanwhile Mindarus and the Peloponnesian ships at Chios spent two days taking on provisions and received from the Chians three Chian fortieths per man. On the third day they set out quickly from Chios. They did not take the open sea, so as not to fall in with the ships at Eresus, but kept Lesbos on their left and sailed for the mainland. They put in at the harbor of Carteria in the territory of Phocaea and had their breakfast there, then sailed along the coast of Cyme and had dinner at Arginusae on the mainland, opposite Mytilene. From there they sailed on while it was still deep night and reached Harmatus on the mainland, opposite Methymna. After a quick breakfast they sailed rapidly past Lectum, Larisa, Hamaxitus and the other places in that area and reached Rhoeteum, already within the Hellespont, before midnight. Some of the ships also put in at Sigeum and at other places in that area.[56]

8.102 The Athenians at Sestos had eighteen ships. Their fire-signallers gave the signal and they saw many fires suddenly appear in enemy territory, and from this they realized that the Peloponnesians were sailing in. That same night, as fast as they could, they hugged the coast of the Chersonese and sailed along it toward Elaeus, wanting to slip past the enemy's ships into open water.[57] They got past the sixteen ships at Abydos unnoticed, even though these had been told in advance, with their friends' fleet approaching, to keep a sharp watch on the Athenians in case they sailed out. But at dawn they sighted Mindarus' ships, which gave chase at once, and they could not all get away. Most of them escaped toward Imbros and Lemnos, but the four hindmost ships were caught off Elaeus. One, which had run aground near the shrine of Protesilaus, the enemy captured together with its crew, and two others without their crews. The

56 A Chian fortieth was a small Chian coin, one fortieth of a stater.
57 Sestos lay on the European side of the Hellespont, facing Abydos on the Asian side.

fourth they burned, empty, off Imbros.[58] 8.103 After this, with the ships from Abydos that had joined them and the rest, eighty-six in all, they besieged Elaeus that day; and when it would not come over to them, they sailed back to Abydos. The Athenians had been misled by their lookouts. Never imagining that the enemy fleet could sail past without their knowing, they had been besieging the walls at their leisure. As soon as they learned what had happened, they abandoned Eresus and hurried to the defense of the Hellespont. They captured two Peloponnesian ships, which had ventured rather boldly out to sea during the pursuit and ran into them. Arriving a day later, they anchored at Elaeus, brought in the ships that had taken refuge at Imbros, and spent five days preparing for battle.

CYNOSSEMA

The Athenians win a sea battle in the Hellespont that restores their confidence.

8.104 After this they fought the battle in the following way. The Athenians sailed in column close along the shore toward Sestos, and the Peloponnesians, seeing this, put out from Abydos to meet them. When both sides realized that there would be a battle, they extended their lines: the Athenians along the Chersonese, from Idacus to Arrhiani, with seventy-six ships; the Peloponnesians from Abydos to Dardanus, with eighty-six ships. On the Peloponnesian side the Syracusans held the right wing, and Mindarus himself the other, with the best-sailing ships. On the Athenian side Thrasyllus held the left and Thrasybulus the right, while the other generals took up the positions each had been assigned. The Peloponnesians were eager to engage first. On the Athenian right they meant to outflank the enemy with their own left and cut them off, if they could, from sailing out of the strait; in the center they meant to drive them onto the land, which was not far off. The Athenians saw this. Where the enemy wanted to shut them in, they extended their own line to counter

58 Protesilaus, in legend the first Greek killed at Troy, had a shrine at Elaeus.

them and outstripped them in sailing, but their left had by now passed the headland called Cynossema. As a result their center was left with weak and scattered ships, especially since they had the smaller number and the coast around Cynossema juts out at a sharp angle, so that what was happening on the far side of it could not be seen.[59] 8.105 So the Peloponnesians fell on the center, drove the Athenian ships onto the dry land and landed after them, gaining a great advantage in the action. Thrasybulus' men on the right could not help the center because of the number of ships pressing them, nor could Thrasyllus' men on the left: the headland of Cynossema hid the center from view, and at the same time the Syracusans and the others, ranged against them in no smaller numbers, held them off. This lasted until the Peloponnesians, pursuing fearlessly in their victory, each chasing a different ship, began to fall into disorder in one part of their fleet. Thrasybulus' men saw this. They broke off extending their wing, turned about, at once engaged the ships bearing down on them and routed them. Then they caught the ships of the victorious Peloponnesian division as they wandered about, battered them, and threw most of them into panic without a fight. The Syracusans too, as it happened, had already given way before Thrasyllus' men, and were all the more ready to flee when they saw the others doing so. 8.106 When the rout had taken place and the Peloponnesians had fled, first mostly to the river Meidius and later to Abydos, the Athenians captured only a few ships, since the narrowness of the Hellespont gave the enemy only short distances to reach safety. But this naval victory came at the most opportune moment of all. Until then they had been afraid of the Peloponnesian fleet, because of their run of small reverses and because of the disaster in Sicily. Now they were rid of their self-reproach and of the belief that the enemy were still worth anything at sea. They did capture from the enemy eight Chian ships, five Corinthian, two Ambraciot and two Boeotian, and one each from the Leucadians, the Spartans, the Syracusans and the Pellenians; they themselves lost fifteen ships. They set

59 Cynossema, "the Dog's Tomb," was a headland on the Chersonese.

up a trophy on the headland where Cynossema stands, collected the wrecks, gave back the enemy's dead under a truce, and sent a trireme to Athens to report the victory. When the ship arrived and the Athenians heard of this unexpected good fortune, coming after their recent disasters at Euboea and in the civil strife, they took great heart, and believed that if they set to with a will, their cause could still win through.

8.107 On the fourth day after the battle the Athenians at Sestos, having hastily repaired their ships, sailed against Cyzicus, which had revolted. Off Harpagium and Priapus they sighted the eight ships from Byzantium lying at anchor; they sailed against them, defeated the men on shore and took the ships. Arriving at Cyzicus, which had no walls, they brought it back over to their side and exacted money from it. Meanwhile the Peloponnesians also sailed from Abydos to Elaeus and recovered those of their captured ships that were still sound (the rest the people of Elaeus had burned). They also sent Hippocrates and Epicles to Euboea to bring back the ships from there.

8.108 Around this same time Alcibiades too sailed back to Samos with his thirteen ships from Caunus and Phaselis. He reported that he had turned the Phoenician fleet back so that it would not come to the Peloponnesians, and that he had made Tissaphernes friendlier to the Athenians than before. He manned nine ships in addition to those he had, exacted a large sum of money from the Halicarnassians, and fortified Cos. After doing this and installing a governor on Cos, he sailed back to Samos, by now toward autumn.

When Tissaphernes learned that the Peloponnesian ships had sailed from Miletus to the Hellespont, he broke camp at Aspendus and marched for Ionia. While the Peloponnesians were in the Hellespont, the Antandrians (who are Aeolians) brought hoplites over from Abydos by land across Mount Ida and admitted them into their city. They were being wronged by Arsaces the Persian, Tissaphernes' deputy. It was he who, when the Delians had settled at Atramyttium after the Athenians removed them from Delos to purify it, pretended to have an enemy whom

he would not name and called on the best of them for a campaign; he led them out as friends and allies, waited until they were at breakfast, surrounded them with his own men and shot them down with javelins. Because of this deed, then, the Antandrians feared that he might one day commit some outrage against them too; and since he was also imposing other burdens on them that they could not bear, they expelled his garrison from their acropolis.[60] 8.109 Tissaphernes learned of this action of the Peloponnesians as well as their actions at Miletus and Cnidus, where his garrisons had also been thrown out. He believed he had been badly discredited with them and feared they might do him some further harm. He was also vexed at the thought that Pharnabazus, who had taken them on in less time and at less expense, might have more success against the Athenians. So he decided to go to them in the Hellespont, to complain of what had happened at Antandrus and to defend himself as plausibly as possible against the accusations about the Phoenician ships and the rest. Arriving first at Ephesus, he offered a sacrifice to Artemis. [When the winter following this summer ends, the twenty-first year is completed.][61]

60 The Athenians removed the Delians from their island in 422 BC as an act of religious purification.

61 Thucydides' history breaks off here, unfinished, in 411 BC.