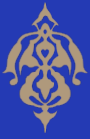 Encyclopædia Iranica

PERICLES
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# PERICLES

**PERICLES** (ca. 495-429 B.C.E.), Athenian politician and commander. His father, Xanthippus, after playing the leading role in the victory of Mycale, which destroyed the Persian army of Asia Minor and the Phoenician fleet, and seizing Sestos for the Athenians, had successfully prosecuted Miltiades, the victor of Marathon (all 489 B.C.E.). Pericles' mother Agariste was an Alcmeonid, a family of the highest aristocracy but often at odds with its peers: she was a niece of Cleisthenes, who had organized the expulsion of the tyrants from Athens and, just before 500, had reformed the administration of Attica in a way that was to make democracy possible. While pregnant, she was said to have dreamt that she would give birth to a lion (Herodotus, 6.131.2; taken over by Plutarch, *Pericles* 3.3).

The biography of Pericles, from this start, was overlaid with invention: there are few reliably attested facts and much later ex post facto assessment of his power (see, e.g., Plut., 16.2-3: the leading politician for forty years; yet men could only enter politics at age thirty, and he died in 429). Moreover, the chronology, along with much of Athenian chronology, particularly concerning the development of the Athenian Empire (see below), is obscure and debatable, some of it within the margins of a whole generation. In the circumstances, any historical account can only be tentative. (For a good attempt at a chronology of Pericles' life, see Stadter, pp. 357-58).

Various philosophers and orators were said to have been his teachers (Plut., 4; Plato, *Phaedrus* 270a names Anaxagoras), and this, according to Plutarch, was responsible for his austere and haughty demeanor. His first recorded

appearance was in 472, as *chorēgos* (trainer and paymaster of the chorus) for Aeschylus's *The Persians*, celebrating the Athenians' victory over Xerxes. We do not know whether the position was open to choice. During this decade, Cimon, son of Miltiades, was the most popular leader. Successful as *stratēgos* (general) and generous in the use of his great wealth, he built up and extended the league of (mainly) Ionian cities joined to Athens in the "League of Delos" (where the common treasury was kept, under the guardianship of Apollo). He kept up public and private friendship with Sparta (he called a son Lacedaemonius), and he centralized the League by encouraging members to redeem their obligations of contributions in ships and men with contributions to Athens in money (the tribute: *phoros*). When an earthquake led to a rising of the helot populations against Sparta, he took a force of Athenian hoplites to Peloponnese and helped to save Sparta (Plut., *Cimon* 16; Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 1137 ff.: probably 467 B.C.E.). In the following year he won the great victory at the mouth of the Eurymedon River, destroying a Persian army and fleet in Asia Minor (Thucydides, 100.1; cf. *Suda*, s.v. Kim˛n, 1620 et al.)

Cimon now saw no point in continuing the war, since Athenian expansion had reached its tenable limits. Xerxes was tired of unsuccessfully fighting the Athenians, and so a complex formula for peace was arrived at by Cimon's brother-in-law Callias, safeguarding the King's honor, but giving the Athenians practical control of the cities of Asia Minor and barring Persian fleets from the Aegean (see Badian, 1993, pp. 1-72; see also CALLIAS, PEACE OF). The peace (soon confirmed by Artaxerxes I) was, however, opposed as shameful by Ephialtes, Cimon's most prominent political adversary, who had also strongly opposed aid for Sparta, and by Ephialtes' young associate, Pericles, here making his first appearance in politics. In successive years following the Peace, Ephialtes and Pericles demonstrated disapproval by launching naval sweeps as far east as the Gulf of Antalya, without meeting opposition, but carefully avoiding actual attacks on the King's territory. The King was shown to be so weak that there had been no need to grant him peace.

Cimon meanwhile concentrated on extending Athenian power in Thrace. The appropriation by Athens of mines belonging to Thasos led to a revolt by the island (in 465), which it took Cimon over two years to defeat. However, he used the protection by Athenian forces to send a colony of 10,000 Athenians and allies to Nine Roads, a strategic site at a ford over the Strymon River, where they had time to fortify the site and establish themselves (Thuc., 1.100.2-3). On his return, Cimon was prosecuted for having failed to attack

Macedon, an interesting illustration of the Athenian temper at the time. Pericles was among the accusers, but gave up when it became clear that Cimon could not yet be convicted (Plut., 10.5; *Cimon* 14.2 ff. with anecdotal embroidery). Then, in 463/2, Cimon followed another appeal by Sparta for aid, this time in storming the fortress of Mount Ithome, where the helot rebels had for some years been entrenched; for the Athenians had acquired a reputation for being able to take fortifications by storm. However, the Athenians failed, and Sparta, unable to pay unsuccessful allies, sent them home. This disgrace, later inevitably disguised by Athenian historians (see, e.g., Thuc., 1.12.3, on which see Badian, 1993, pp. 95 f.), at last turned the people against Cimon: he was ostracized for the usual ten years, ostracism not being a legal punishment, but a device for the removal of an unpopular man from Athens. His enemies now dominated the Assembly and soon took advantage of it. Probably under the impact of his failure to convict Cimon, Pericles passed one of the most important laws in Athenian history: members of juries were to be paid out of public funds ([Aristotle] *Constitution of Athens* 27.3-4; Plut., 9.2). Decried by his enemies as an attempt to "bribe the people with their own money," it was, in fact, the first step towards making participation in public life possible for the poorer citizens. Pay for other offices, nearly all except for treasurers and generals (*stratˇgoi*), followed during the next generation, until, as regards citizens, Athens approached becoming a genuine democracy.

Cimon's power had largely rested upon the support of the Areopagus, the council of ex-archons distinguished by wealth. Ephialtes now embarked on a series of prosecutions of Areopagites for corruption, and under the new juries convicted them. He then, with Pericles' help, either while Cimon was away or just after his return in disgrace, passed a constitutional reform that transferred all powers except in the area of religion from the Areopagus to elected bodies. The collaboration of Ephialtes and Pericles had managed to change the face of Athenian politics. In 461, soon after passing his reform, Ephialtes was assassinated by a Boeotian. (For the complicated calculation needed to arrive at the date of the reform and of his death, "not long after," see Badian, 1993, p. 190, n. 19.) He and Pericles, his heir, set their stamp of activism on foreign policy, following up their protest against the Peace of Callias and against aid to Sparta. Yet Pericles was by no means in a position to shape policy by himself: the program clearly attracted other leaders, senior to him in standing, e.g., Tolmides, who was *stratēgos* for most of the 450s and early 440s and supported a policy of complementing the naval league with a land empire in Greece. He is most famous for his circumnavigation of the

Peloponnese, the first on record, in 456/5, culminating in the capture of the strategic site of Naupactus, at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth, where he settled the Messenians whom the Spartans had finally been forced to dismiss unharmed from Ithome and who henceforth provided a reliably anti-Spartan garrison for Athens at a crucial site. (On Tolmides see Stadter, p. 210.)

Much had happened in Greece by then, which can only be sketched here. Athens had formed an alliance with Argos, the Thessalian League and Megara, and confused fighting in central Greece had led to a Spartan invasion of Central Greece and a major battle at Tanagra in Boeotia (mid-457), in which Pericles fought (probably as *stratēgos* but not as commander-in-chief: see Plut., 10.2). The Spartans were victorious, but went home and left the field to the Athenians, who won a battle that gave them control of Boeotia and Phocis. Athens' old enemy Aegina ("the eye-sore of the Piraeus," Pericles had called it, urging its removal: Plut., 8.5) was besieged and surrendered when the Spartan evacuation of Central Greece showed it had no hope of relief: it became a tributary member of the Athenian alliance. Meanwhile, the Athenians had built "Long Walls" linking Athens to the sea, so that it could never be deprived of supplies. (On all this see, briefly, Thuc., 1.108. Pericles is not explicitly linked with these projects, except for the attack on Aegina, but clearly supported them. A comic fragment links him with the building, a decade later, of the "Middle Wall" that went all the way to the Piraeus.)

Elsewhere, the middle 450s were a time of disaster. After Cimon's disgrace the Peace of Callias had been repudiated. Cyprus was attacked and major support given to a revolt against the King in Egypt (Thuc. 1.104; in 460): a vast expansion of the activist foreign policy. We know nothing of the fighting in the following years. Thucydides again turns his attention to Egypt only six years later, when Megabyxus (on the name see Mayrhofer, 1973, no. 8.210, Elamite Bakapukša, probably corresponding to OPers. Bagabuxša, cf. 8.1370) was sent by the King with an overwhelming force, which finally destroyed the rebels and their Greek supporters after a siege (Thuc., 1.109). At least 100 triremes of the Athenians and allies were lost (ibid., 110.4: some scholars have suggested a much larger number than Thucydides here implies). Of the (perhaps) 20,000 men (but probably fewer, since the triremes already in Egypt for some years must have lost some of their complement), a few escaped via Libya and Cyrene. Megabyxus's wife may have saved some of the Athenian prisoners (see Badian, 1993, p. 194, n. 45).

The year 453 brought another major disaster: the colonists settled at Nine

Roads (see above) unwisely ventured far into the interior of Thrace to Drabescus (modern Drama), trying to seize mines. They (and apparently the colonists who had remained to defend the city) were destroyed by the Thracian Edones. The date is securely attested in a scholiast on Aeschines, 2.31, supported without an actual date by Diodorus, 11.70.5: the colonists for some time warded off the Thracians, but “later” (*hysteron*) were destroyed when they marched inland. Thucydides does not specify an interval between settlement and destruction (Thuc., 1.100.3; see discussion in Badian, 1993, pp. 81-86, showing that no source contradicts the scholiast’s date, probably taken from an *Atthis*, a fourth-century chronicle of Athens).

There was also major dissatisfaction and rebellion among some of the allies. In 454 (scholars have argued that the Egyptian disaster was used as a pretext) the League’s treasury was transferred from Apollo’s sacred island to Athens. The treasurers, who had always been Athenians, henceforth stayed in Athens, and Athena received one-sixtieth (a mina from each talent) of the tribute paid by the allies. (Perhaps Apollo had originally been awarded this quota.) The Athenians decided to put up a monumental pillar, on the faces of which the lists of the annual quotas, as received by the treasurers, were affixed. We do not know who initiated this important change, symbolizing the development of the League into an Athenian Empire. It was Cimon who had begun the centralization of the League (see above), but it was Pericles who soon began to use the money for purposes never envisaged.

This was the Athens to which Cimon returned in 451 at the end of his ostracism. The much-embroidered story that he was allowed to return earlier, perhaps even by a decree of Pericles (Stadter, pp. 124-26), does not inspire much confidence; if he did return, he was certainly not allowed to take part in politics until the full term was up. He at once set out to restore his standing by turning his opponents’ weapons against them. He easily secured election as *stratēgos* and led an expedition of 200 ships (40,000 men) of the Athenians and allies to Cyprus, sixty of which were diverted to Egypt (Thuc., 1.112). Before leaving he had secured Athens against surprise attack by arranging a five-year truce with Sparta, giving him time to demonstrate in the East that he could avenge his enemies’ failures. But Cimon died while besieging Citium, and it was decided to order the expedition to return. On its way back, the fleet (we do not know who commanded it) won a major victory off Cyprian Salamis, which ended all attempts by Persia to challenge the Athenians at sea: not surprisingly, the victory later had Cimon’s name attached to it in popular

history, refuted in advance by Thuc., 1.112.3-4, with the correct chronology and adding a victory on land. (For the importance of this Salamis, surpassing even Eurymedon, see Badian, 1993, p. 200, n. 75; for the date, ibid., pp. 59-60: Spring 449.)

Cimon's glory obviously survived, but Pericles was rid of his overpowering presence. While Cimon was still fighting on Cyprus, or perhaps before he had even left on the campaign, Pericles passed his most famous law, the "citizenship law" of 451/50 (dated by Arist., *Constitution of Athens* 26.4), restricting Athenian citizenship to persons born of an Athenian father and mother (and probably only if they were legitimately married). The purpose of the law has been much discussed (Stadter, pp. 333-35). It will have served a variety of purposes. First, there were now concrete benefits attached to the citizenship, especially pay for office. Moreover, unforeseen benefits could turn up: in 445/44 an Egyptian rebel, obviously hoping for Athenian support, sent a large amount of wheat to Athens for distribution among the citizens. (An alleged famine was probably invented to explain the gift.) The windfall led to an almost hysterical outburst of accusations and prosecutions for illicit claims to citizenship. It ultimately led to a census, registering 14,040 male citizens (Plut., 37.3-4). It is clear that the law had not been enforced in the intervening years. Another purpose of the citizenship law, often recognized, was to prevent the numerous allies flocking to Athens, or forced by law to come there, from finding Athenian wives, and, perhaps more important, to prevent Athenian garrisons and settlers on land confiscated after an ally's rebellion from intermarrying with the local population and thus losing their effectiveness. The law was obviously in the main directed against the allies, and it converted Athenian citizens into a "master race," self-perpetuating and enjoying the fruits of an Athenian Empire. Despite his partly foreign ancestry, Cimon probably approved.

Another important thought must also have been in Pericles' mind. In the long run, demography could not support the euphoric expansionist policy in which he had once believed. The casualty lists were piling up. One, listing the members of the Erechtheid tribe (one of the ten divisions of the people), starts: "Of Erechtheis these men died in the war, in Cyprus, in Egypt, in Phoenicia, at Halieis, at Aegina, at Megara, *in the same year*" (perhaps 459); the last phrase was engraved spaced for emphasis (Fornara, no. 78). The list includes three generals (probably successive), a seer, and over 170 men. The disasters of 454 and 453 must have produced much longer lists—if the names were known.

Pericles was now preparing to make peace. It was all the easier, since he no longer had to compete with Cimon for glory. He had made the Athenian citizen base visibly inadequate for enthusiastic expansion.

Diodorus (12.4) ascribes the initiative for the new peace to Artaxerxes, still before Cimon's death. The dating is unlikely: it was the battle of Cyprian Salamis that must have made him willing to make peace. But the procedure is credibly described: there is no fiction about the King swearing to the Peace: he instructs the relevant satraps on what terms they are allowed to make peace. Diodorus omits the satraps of Asia Minor, who must surely have been concerned. But the Peace is clearly described as made with the satraps, the King having given his consent. (See Badian, 1993, pp. 46 ff. for more detailed discussion. Diodorus's date, 449/8, need not be questioned.) The Peace is attested as being a renewal of an earlier one under Cimon in the *Suda* s.v. Kallias 214 (quoted Badian, 1993, p. 23, with discussion of all the sources). Pericles had returned to Cimon's policy, and fortunately Callias, known to the King, was still available to secure ratification. The long Persian War had at last been wound up. Henceforth we hear of embassies to the King and gifts to the envoys—the most spectacular being the pair of peacocks given to Pericles' friend Pyrilampes (see Badian, 1993, p. 192, n. 28); peacocks later became a frequent gift to Athenian ambassadors.

In Greece, where there was only a truce, peace was harder to attain. Even during the truce Athenian and Spartan forces had been fighting each other's allies, although never each other. In 447, with the truce about to expire, Pericles tried to dissuade Tolmides from invading Boeotia; Tolmides and the Assembly ignored his advice, and Tolmides was killed in the defeat at Coronea. The Athenians, no doubt at Pericles's urging, now agreed to evacuate all of Boeotia (they had held most of it) in return for the prisoners taken by the Boeotians (Thuc., 1.113; Plut., 18.2 f.). The effect of this was immediate. Megara renounced the Athenian alliance, and Euboea, long safely held and a basic source of the Athenian food supply, rebelled. Pericles, at once trying to regain it, had to return on hearing that a Peloponnesian army had invaded Attica. He persuaded the young Spartan king Pleistoanax to take his army home, enabling Pericles to return to Euboea, subdue the rebellion, and install democracies. The story that he bribed the king with ten talents is probably true, for there is no other clear reason why the Spartans should have gone home, when they were obviously superior to the Athenian force; and the king was tried at Sparta and forced into exile. (See Thuc., 1.114, mentioning the

establishment of an Athenian cleruchy at Hestiaea; Plut., 22-23, giving fuller details, with Stadter's commentary.)

In the winter negotiations led to the Thirty Years' Peace between Athens and Sparta, the breakdown of which is the main topic of Thucydides' first book. Athens was again at peace with Persia and Sparta, as she had been in the final years of Cimon's predominance. Geography and demography had imposed their laws, and Pericles had come to see it. But this time the peace with Sparta was no longer based on an alliance, but on the realization that mutual suspicion was better than war: in fact, what followed was akin to "cold war."

Nor was Athens any longer the leader of an alliance of free cities. She had become the ruler over subjects, many of whom were restive under their exploitation. As Thucydides' Pericles puts it (2.63.2): "The empire you hold is by now a tyranny." This is echoed by Thucydides' Cleon (3.37.2), "which it seems unjust to have set up, but which it is very dangerous to abandon."

In Athens the political struggle was resumed by a relative by marriage of Cimon's, Thucydides son of Melesias: a shrewd politician, who knew how to make his presence felt in the Assembly (Plut., 11.1-2). He and his followers objected to the use of the allies' tribute money, contributed for military purposes, for the beautification of the city: Pericles was stealing the money, and Athens was being adorned like a vain woman with money extorted from the allies for war (Plut., 12.1-2). Pericles replies to this that Athens was indeed securing the allies' peace and was entitled to use the surplus for works that would bring fame to the city and wealth to the citizens (12.3 ff.: see Stadter's comments, showing that the words are largely Plutarch's own and setting out the procedure attested for the construction of public buildings). Pericles in fact now began to use the tribute money freely for a program of magnificent public (especially sacred) buildings. Plutarch (12-13) describes them with enthusiasm, mentioning the eminent architects and artists who created them under the general oversight of Phidias. We have no reason to disbelieve this informal organization instituted by Pericles, while technical supervision remained with the public commissions. Nor did Pericles neglect preparedness for war. He is said to have kept sixty triremes manned by citizens at sea for the whole of the sailing season every year, in order to train the citizens in handling warships (Plut., 11.4). The number has been doubted but is within the bounds of the possible (see Stadter's comments). Athenian skill (shared by the allied crews) in performing difficult maneuvers was the main ingredient in Athens' long naval superiority.

Much must be omitted here, e.g., the colonies sent out, some on Pericles' initiative, and his "showing the flag" in distant regions (Plut., 19-20.2); also the so-called Congress Decree: a call by Pericles for "all" the Greeks (not, it seems, the western Greeks) to meet in Athens to decide on rebuilding the temples destroyed by the Persians and other matters—an attempt that was (inexplicably) abandoned when the Spartans (predictably) refused to attend (Plut. 17, a decree no doubt invented, as it is used by Plutarch, to show the "loftiness of [Pericles'] ideas," 17.3). Internal opposition was finally overcome when Pericles succeeded in having Thucydides son of Melesias ostracized (Plut., 14.2) in 443. (The date can be derived from Plutarch's statement that after this Pericles was elected *stratˇgos* each year for fifteen years: he died in 429.) Henceforth Athens was indeed, in the historian Thucydides' famous formulation (2.65.9), "in name a democracy, in fact a state ruled by its leading man."

By the late 440s there were only three allies left which retained a naval force and had not converted to paying tribute, a fact that entitled them to autonomy: Samos, Chios, and Lesbos. Samos was the most powerful, and Pericles now set about depriving it of that power. In 442, a township among Samos' continental possessions, Marathesion, was detached and (to us) inexplicably appears on the quota list as paying tribute. Whatever reason was given for this, it looks like an attempt to drive Samos into rebellion. If so it had no immediate results. But the gods were on Pericles' side and an opportunity soon offered.

The dispute over possession of Priene between Samos and Miletus was of long standing. In what way it was revived in 441/40 we cannot tell. But Miletus, once a great city, was by now unable to hold its own against the power of Samos. It appealed to Athens, supported by some Samian democrats (presumably in exile) who wanted to overthrow Samos' oligarchic government. That the appeal would also be supported by Pericles' famous Milesian partner Aspasia (on whom Plutarch here inserts a long excursus, nearly the whole of 24) may be taken for granted and was apparently noted at the time (Plut., 25.1). Plutarch reports (ibid.) that the Athenians ordered Samos to stop fighting and submit to arbitration by Athens and that Samos "did not obey." This is not mentioned in Thucydides' long account of the Samian war, where an Athenian fleet at once sails to Samos, in answer to the complaint, and sets up a democracy (1.115.3); and in view of the obvious lack of preparedness for the attack on the part of the Samians, this is likely to be the correct version: Pericles seized what seemed a heaven-sent chance of crushing

the suspect power of Samos. A democracy was set up on Samos, and fifty leading men and fifty boys (in Plutarch their sons) were taken as hostages and sent for internment in the Athenian cleruchy of Lemnos. The Athenians left a garrison and sailed home. Pericles no doubt thought his scheme had easily been accomplished. (Plutarch adds an unlikely tale of a massive attempt to bribe Pericles, which he resisted, 25.2; even the satrap Pissuthnes is said to have offered 10,000 darics, over 33 talents: see Stadter's comment. Pissuthnes, son of Hystaspes [Thuc. 1.115.4], no doubt a relative of the King, had considerable freedom of action.)

However, some of the oligarchs persuaded Pissuthnes to let them recruit mercenaries in his satrapy (Thucydides' report of a formal "alliance" is absurd), which enabled them to seize power on Samos and to get their hostages out of Lemnos. Samos was now in open rebellion and was joined by Byzantium (we do not hear why), which closed the route through the Dardanelles. Pericles' eagerness to seize his opportunity had landed him in a major war.

He took a fleet of over forty ships to attack Samos, and it won a battle against a Samian fleet encumbered by transport vessels. Receiving reinforcements from Athens and also from Chios and Lesbos, which no doubt hoped to avoid the fate of Samos by obediently providing aid, he landed on Samos. After building the siege works, Pericles took sixty ships to Caunus, to check a report that a Phoenician fleet was sailing up to intervene. This gave the Samians an opportunity for a counter-attack and enabled them to ship in supplies for a long siege. In fact, Pericles had probably gone to Caunus in part for negotiations with Pissuthnes, to whom the Samian rebels had handed over the Athenian garrison that Pericles had left on the island. He presumably managed to free the Athenians (though this is not mentioned directly), but it seems that he also struck a bargain with the satrap, to make sure the King did not intervene: it has been noted by Lewis (p. 60 and n. 70) that some eastern Carian cities now disappear from the tribute quota lists and that the rest of Caria is now joined to Ionia. Pericles could confidently return to Samos and re-establish the siege. After eight months the Samians had to surrender on harsh terms: they had to demolish their walls, hand over their navy, give hostages, and pay for the cost of the war to the Athenians, a sum of at least 1,200 talents. (The figures we are given vary: see Stadter, p. 256.) Byzantium also surrendered. (On the war see Thuc., 1.115-117.)

It is by chance that we find out what neither Thucydides nor other sources

mention at the time: that the danger had been far greater than the narratives of the war suggest. It seems that not only the King (who was easily bought off, as he did not really want to start another Athenian war) but also the Peloponnesian League had considered intervention. It was summoned by Sparta to a special meeting, which seems to imply that Sparta herself had decided that a *casus belli* existed. We discover the fact from a remark by the Corinthians, when they try to dissuade the Athenians from making an alliance with Corcyra (see below: Thuc., 1.40.4; on this see Hornblower pp. 83 f., with other instances of "artful concealment" by displacement in Thucydides). There is little doubt that the Thirty Years' Peace had contained a clause in some way guaranteeing the autonomy of cities that were autonomous at the time, as Samos certainly was. (For the parallel of the Peace of Nicias, see Badian, 1993, p. 140.) Thus there would be a good case for holding that Athens had broken the Peace. We must believe that only Corinthian opposition (for obvious Corinthian interests) had prevented the Peloponnesian League from endorsing Sparta's decision and assisting Samos. (See Badian, 1993, pp. 138 ff. with notes.)

Any thinking Athenian, and Pericles himself most of all, must have recognized how close to disaster Pericles' wanton attack on Samos had brought Athens. Although according to an anecdote (Plut. 38.5-6) he was particularly proud of his victory over Samos, it had become clear that he could now be attacked. One obvious vehicle was comedy. For the first time ever in Athens, Pericles passed a law banning attacks on living persons. Censorship, hitherto unimaginable, had been introduced (Schol. on Aristophanes' *Acharnians* 67). Significantly, it was not lifted after the war—only three years later (437/6), presumably under political compulsion (Fornara, no. 111). The building program was intensified to a point approaching megalomania. Phidias's gold-and-ivory Athena was set up in 438/7, and the Propylaea was begun in 437/6, at a cost of over 2,000 talents, probably three or four times Athens' annual income. (For some of the accounts, see Fornara no. 118.) The people had to be impressed, whatever the cost. But Phidias was convicted of malversation in connection with the statue of Athena (at a time obviously close to its completion), and he had to flee to Elis. (Plut. 31.5 mistakenly reports his death in an Athenian prison.) At Elis he was asked to work at Olympia, where he sculpted a statue of Zeus comparable to his Athena (see Stadter, p. 166).

The prosecutions of Anaxagoras and of Aspasia for *asebeia* (roughly, atheism) cannot be dated, except that they must also fall in the 430s. (On Anaxagoras,

see Stadter, pp. 298 f., with sources and listing discussion. He was convicted and had to leave Athens. Aspasia was saved from conviction when Pericles burst into tears in her defense: Plut., 32.1 and 3.) These associates of Pericles were all non-citizens, but in view of Pericles' close connection with them it is clear that, as soon as the time seemed ripe, Pericles himself might be prosecuted.

It was in this atmosphere that Corcyra appealed to Athens for alliance against Corinth (434/3). The debate between the two parties in front of the Athenian Assembly is one of the showpieces of Thucydides' rhetoric (1.32-43; see Hornblower, pp. 75 ff. for full comment). We do not know how closely his speeches correspond to what was actually said. (Thucydides' ambivalent exposition of his principles, 1.22, does not help.) But the facts alleged may probably be taken as true. At the first meeting the Assembly was persuaded by the Corinthians. It was Pericles who persuaded them to change their minds and accept a limited alliance with Corcyra (Thuc., 1.44.1, not mentioning Pericles; Plut., 29.1). At this point he was careful not to break the oaths of the Thirty Years' Peace (Thuc., 1.45.3). When these events had played themselves out, leading to bitter anti-Athenian feeling in Corinth, this led to the affair of Potidaea. That city, on the neck of Pallene, bordering on Chalcidice, had for some time been a tributary ally of Athens, but received its magistrates from its Corinthian mother city (*metropolis*). It was now ordered by Athens to pull down part of the city wall, to give hostages, and to stop accepting magistrates from Corinth, that is, to cut all ties with the mother city (Thuc., 1.56.2). Pericles must certainly have been the author of this important decision, just as it was he who changed the Athenians' minds about the Corcyraean alliance. (Thucydides nowhere says so, as indeed he throughout disguises Pericles' personal responsibility for the provocations.) The result was full-scale rebellion by Potidaea after Sparta had promised support. Athens had again flagrantly violated the autonomy clause of the Peace. (On relations with Perdiccas of Macedon, who also now took an effective hand in opposing Athens, see Badian, 1993, chap. 6. We cannot enter into this here, important though it was.)

By now Sparta had decided on cautious action, still trying to avoid a hasty rush to war. Her allies were invited to present their grievances. In addition to what we have noted, two more were presented. Aegina complained that its autonomy (preserved when it had to enter the Athenian alliance) had been violated (Thuc., 1.67.2; he nowhere tells us how). Above all, Megara had a

serious complaint: a series of decrees moved by Pericles had excluded Megara from all trade with Athens and her allies, alleging illegal occupation of sacred lands by Megara at Eleusis. Sparta now sent various embassies to Athens to negotiate (see especially Plut., 29.5), one of them intended to show that Pericles, an Alcmeonid on his mother's side, was under a curse affecting the whole of that family (Thuc., 1.126-127). After this sacred demonstration, the Spartans began to present their allies' grievances individually. There is no indication that these attempts to negotiate were presented to the Assembly. Pericles, as a general, was a member of the Council that would in the first place deal with envoys, and he appears to have prevented the Spartan terms from reaching the people. In the end, the Spartans, desperate to avoid war, announced that an Athenian cancellation of the decrees against Megara would suffice to do so: they were now willing to sacrifice the interests of all the other complainants. When this also was ignored, they saw that war could not be avoided at any price and sent an embassy with a purely propagandist demand, asking the Athenians to let the Greeks "go free." It was only now that the Assembly was allowed to debate the issues, apparently discussing all the earlier embassies as well (Thuc., 1.139). Thucydides makes Pericles respond in a long speech (1.140-44), proposing an irrelevant reply to the complaint by Megara (1.144.2) and arguing that war was inevitable in view of the outrageous (most recent) Spartan demand and that Athens would prevail.

When the war started, through an essentially trivial incident (a local conflict: Thuc., 2.1 ff.), Pericles began to carry out the plan Thucydides had made him announce (1.143.5), not allowing the Athenians to go out to meet a Peloponnesian army standing in Attica, but to move from the country into the city and allow the enemy to devastate the land. When this, inevitably, evoked strong resistance among important groups (see esp. Thuc., 2.21), Pericles partly met the indignation by harassing the enemy with small detachments of cavalry. In the end he stopped meetings of the Assembly and ruled the city with an iron fist (Thuc., 2.22.1: see the correct interpretation in Hornblower, pp. 275-76). There is no doubt that this crowding into the city, where people had to stay in temples and other public places, with no sanitary provision or comfort, was responsible for the outbreak and quick spreading of "the plague" (whatever it was: this is ineffectually debated by scholars, since it may well have been a virus that mutated long ago). This was known even at the time (Thuc., 2.52; cf. Plut., 34.4) and it naturally turned the people against Pericles. Trying to defuse the dissatisfaction with a military success, he took a very large naval expedition to attack Epidaurus, hoping to take it (Thuc., 2.56: in

430). It was essentially ineffectual, merely plundering along the coast and sacking a small town. Another expedition, hoping to take Potidaea, failed and was decimated by the plague (2.58). Despite an eloquent speech put into Pericles' mouth by Thucydides (2.60-64), the people briefly escaped from his spell and deposed and fined him. But, finding no one to replace him, they soon reelected him (Thuc., 2.65, with Hornblower's comments, p. 34; Plut., 35.3-4, 37.1 gives more detail). However, he died of the plague soon after (429).

Thucydides idealized him, suppressing much that would have cast a shadow. (See Badian, 1993, chap. 4.) He wrote the famous funeral oration (2.34-46) put in Pericles' mouth, but demonstrably written by the historian, to glorify Athens and, indirectly, Pericles himself. After his death he honors him with a solemn and splendid obituary (2.65). Thucydides' idealized and partisan view has, on the whole, shaped the judgement of posterity. The Athenians, as Thucydides and Plutarch report, when struck by various disasters after his death, came to think of him as the golden leader of a golden age, forgetting the sordid end. (The longing for Camelot in the U.S.A. distantly comes to mind.) An immature democracy is easily impressed by an "Olympian" leader. Fifth-century Athenians in fact remained close to the aristocratic world-view, in spite of enjoying a full machinery of democracy. The trials of Pericles' friends before the war show a spark of doubt (and perhaps maturity). But nothing, not even war and plague, both patently caused by Pericles, could in the end free them from his spell. It would be interesting to know (but we cannot even guess) whether the tawdry apology put into his mouth by Thucydides (2.64.1), that the people were no less to blame than he for the disasters that had struck them, "for you yourselves voted for the war," was really advanced by him, and if so, how it was received.

There is no doubt that he led Athens to an age of glory—paid for, as such ages usually are, by oppression and exploitation of others—that will always be remembered. There is also no doubt that he lured Athens into destruction, devastation, and death, through serious miscalculations and personal pride, which a lesser man might have avoided. We must finally wonder whether the words that Plutarch (38.4) ascribes to him as he lay dying, that his finest achievement was that no Athenian then alive had ever had to put on mourning because of him, were truly uttered as a supreme example of self-deception, and (again) how they were received by those who heard of them.

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