

Week 10: The Peloponnesian War, Part I

Lecture 17, **Thucydides, The Revisionist Historian of the Peloponnesian War**, Key Words

Revisionist
Romantic Element
Human Nature
Possession Forever
World War I
Allied Nations
Central Powers
Germany
Austria
Russia
France
England
Bolshevik Government
Tsarist Regime
A. J. P. Taylor
Hitler
Second World War
Cold War
Vietnam
Versailles Treaty
Disarmament
Unpreparedness
Appeasement
W. H. Auden
Poland
Luther
Linz
Homer
Trojans
Troy
Polemic
Epidamnus
Albania
Corcyra
Corinth
Potidaea
Megara
Megarian Decree
Pericles
Aristophanes
Dicaeopolis
Chorus

(Picture of Thucydides)

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Propylaia, Athenian acropolis
Mnesikles, fl. 437-432 BC

Aspasia
Drinking Songs
Harlots
Herodotus
Acharnians
Peace
Hermes
Phidias
Truest Reason
Orthodoxy
Commando Raids
Plague
Cleon
Democratic Mob
First Citizen
Sicilian Expedition
Private Cabals
Civil Discord
Cyrus
Pygmies
Payment for Jurors
Aristotle
Lots
Demagogues
Cleophon
Plato
Gorgias
Socrates
Winston Churchill
Augustan Rome
Mediterranean World
Hungry Media
Blue-blooded Aristocrat
Amphipolis
Exile
Paradox
Apologia pro vita sua
Funeral Oration
Periclean Athens
Acropolis

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(Picture of Pericles)

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Parthenon, Athenian acropolis
Phidias, fl. 447-432 BC

Lecture 18, **The Origins of the Peloponnesian War I**, Key Words

“The truest cause”

“The truest explanation”

Lacedaemonians

Cimon

Argos

Thessaly

Helots

Naupactus

The First Peloponnesian War

Megara

Corinth

Nisaea

Pegae

Halieis

Troezen

Cecrphyleia

Egyptian expedition

Erechtheid

Phoenicia

Aegina

Doris

Boeotia

Tanagra

Oenophyta

Achaia

Saronic Gulf

5 Year Truce

Phocis

Tolmides

Coronea

Euboean rebellion

Pleistoanax

Cleandridas

Thirty Years' Peace

Arbitration Clause

Punic Peace

Westphalia

Alsace-Lorraine

Peace of Callias

Congress Decree

Parthenon

Thurii

Panhellenic colony

Taras

Diplomatic signal
Samian Rebellion
Miletus
Priene
Pissuthnes
Byzantium
Mytilene
Congress at Sparta

Chronological Table for the Origins of the Peloponnesian War (435-431)

435 in Epidamnus, Corcyra's Adriatic colony, *stasis* breaks out between the oligarchs and democrats; Corinth and its colony Corcyra become embroiled in a dispute over Epidamnus. Corcyra defeats Corinth in naval battle off Leucimne; Corinth spends the years 434 and 433 preparing a powerful fleet to take vengeance on Corcyra.

434 summer: new Corinthian fleet sent out to protect allies in the Adriatic; Corcyra, enrolled in neither the Athenian nor Spartan alliances, is alarmed over Corinth's preparations. Inventory made of Athena's treasures begins on Acropolis. Last annual payment of 200 talents made to Athens' treasury.

434/3 Conservative pro-Spartan *coup* takes over Thuri, which passes from Athenian influence.

433/2 Pericles claims to see war 'coming out of the Peloponnese' (Plut. *Per.* 8.7). Son is born to Pericles and Aspasia. Thucydides son of Melesias back from exile, conservative attacks on radicals intensify. Old Oligarch's *Constitution of Athens* published as a pamphlet. Early spring: financial decrees moved by Callias, curtailing spending on the great building program on the acropolis: decision taken to concentrate treasures of country dome temples and lower city on Acropolis.

June 433 Athens accepts Corcyra's appeal for help against Corinth; Athenians make a defensive alliance (*epimachia*) with Corcyra and send a squadrons of ten ships (with Lacedaemonius as a general), and then twenty reinforcements to Corcyra.

August 433: naval battle off the Sybota islands (Corcyra regains Epidamnus, Athens breaks peace treaty by taking part in battle); Corinth seizes and colonizes Anactorium. Corinth, convinced the Athenians had broken the Thirty Years' Peace of 445, is openly hostile to Athens. Athens gives ultimatum to its ally, Corinth's colony, Potidaea to destroy its southern wall, to furnish hostages and to dismiss the Corinthian magistrates; Potidaea's tribute raised from 6 to 15 talents; Potidaea seeks help from Corinth and Sparta; Corinth sends troops to Potidaea; Perdiccas, king of Macedon, fomenting rebellions against Athens among Chalcidic cities; Athens passes the Megarian Decree barring Megara from the market of Athens and the ports of the Athenian Empire. Diotimus makes good-will cruise from Athens to Naples via Rhegium and Leontini, where treaties with Athens renewed for further period.

432 Building of Parthenon completed: cost nearly 2000 talents including Phidias' cult statue and Propylaea. Spring: revolt of Potidaea against Athens. Phormio makes an expedition to aid the Amphilocheians and Acarnanians on the west coast of Greece against some Ambraciots, formerly from the Corinthian colony Ambracia, and gains the Acarnanians as allies.

Fall 432: Megarians complain before the Spartan assembly that the Megarian Decree violates Thirty Years' Peace treaty; Corinthians promote war; Spartan king Archidamus urges caution, but the Spartans, led by the ephor Sthenelaidas, vote that Athens had broken the treaty of 446/5; Spartans arrange a meeting of Peloponnesian League to consider whether to go to war; Most of the Chalcidic communities have revolted by the end of 432; Athenian army, including Alcibiades and Socrates, besieging Potidaea, whose defenders include Corinthian troops.

431 Euripides produces *Medea* and wins third prize. Athenians refuse to rescind the Megarian decree; Spartans deliver ultimatum to the Athenians: "Free the Greeks!" Formal declaration of war made between Athenian Empire and Peloponnesian League led by Sparta. Spartan allies include all the Peloponnesians except the Argives and Achaeans, who were neutral; outside the Peloponnese, Megara on the Isthmus, the Boeotians, Phocians, and Locrians in central Greece, the Ambraciots along the western coast, and three of Corinth's colonists, the Anactorians, the

islanders and the Leucadians are allies. Athenians have 6,000 talents of coined silver in the acropolis, 600 talents annual income from empire; 13,000 hoplites, and 16,000 more from oldest, youngest and metics; 1,200 cavalry; 1,600 archers; 300 triremes ready for service. The Athenian alliance included some 200 tributary members of the Athenian empire, and the islands of Chios and Lesbos, which provided ships and maintained their independence; in Greece proper their allies were the Plataeans, the Messenians in Naupactus, most of the Acarnanians, the Thessalians at times, and the islanders off the west coast, the Zacynthians and the Corcyreans (Thucydides, 2.9).

The Causes of the Peloponnesian War

BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY:

Pentekontaetia, Long Walls (c. 459-57), Naupactus, Tanagra (457), Oenophyta (457), Tolmides (456/5), Peace of Callias (c. 450), Congress Decree (449?), Papyrus Decree (449), Currency/Monetary/Clearchus' Decree (c. 449-47), Coronea (447/6), Euboean Rebellion (447/6), Thirty Years' Peace (446/5), Thurii (443), Samian Rebellion (440-39), Epidamnus (435), Corcyra, Sybota (433), *epimachia* (433), *symmachia*, Megarian Decree(s) (c.432), Phidias, Aspasia, Potidaea (432), Sthenelaidas, Archidamus

CONSIDER:

1. How does Thucydides' account of the causes of the war differ from those given by other sources?
2. According to Attic comedy writers, who was responsible for the war? Are they serious? Are their explanations plausible? Do their views affect later sources?
3. Thucydides (1.88) summarizes his view on the origins of the war. Is his view on the growth of the Athenian Empire valid? Was Athens stronger in 431 than in, say, 454? Did Athens pose a serious threat to Spartan interests? Whatever long-term problems contributed to the outbreak of war in 431, was this the period in which these problems were most acute?
4. What was Pericles' foreign policy in the period 446-31? Who in Athens wanted war?
5. Was it reasonable to expect that the Thirty Years' Peace (446) would last? What factors would further or hinder the prospects for continued peace?
6. What was Spartan policy towards Athens in the period 446-31? Who in Sparta wanted war?
7. Who was most at fault in the Corcyrean episode? In the Potidaean? The Megarian? Which state is most responsible for the outbreak of the war?
8. How important is the Megarian Decree for our understanding of the causes of the war? How many Megarian Decrees were there, and when should we date them?
9. Is the war the result of irreconcilable conflicts between Sparta and Athens, or the result of Sparta's weak control over her allies?
10. Did Thucydides think the war inevitable? Was it? If so, when did it become inevitable? When could the war have been prevented? Why it was not prevented?
11. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the two sides at the start of the war? Did these affect their behavior before the outbreak of the war? What were the initial strategies of the two sides? What would the Peloponnesians have to accomplish in order to be victorious? What would the Athenians have to accomplish in order to be victorious? How long did the two sides expect the war to last?