

ANCIENT GREECE

Viewpoints

In the Greek world, Athens and Sparta were rivals not only in politics, but also in their overall approach to life, to education, and even to making war. Leaders in each city defended their way of life. In the excerpts below, Pericles of Athens and King Archidamus of Sparta describe some of their reasons for thinking their way of life is best. Both speeches were recorded by the historian Thucydides. ♦ *As you read, think what these attitudes meant for ordinary people in each city-state. Then, on a separate piece of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

The Values of Sparta and Athens**Pericles of Athens**

The freedom which we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life. There, far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other, we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbor for doing what he likes. . . . But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens. Against this, fear is our chief safeguard, teaching us to obey the magistrates and the laws, particularly such as regard the protection of the injured. . . .

Further, we provide plenty of means for the mind to refresh itself from business. We celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and the elegance of our private establishments forms a daily source of pleasure . . . while the magnitude of our city draws the produce of the world into our harbor, so that to the Athenian the fruits of other countries are as familiar a luxury as those of his own.

If we turn to our military policy, there also we differ from our antagonists. We throw open our city to the world, and never by alien acts exclude foreigners from any opportunity of learning or observing.

King Archidamus of Sparta

We are both warlike and wise, and it is our sense of order that makes us so. We are warlike, because self-control contains honor as a chief constituent, and honor bravery. And we are wise, because we are educated with too little learning to despise the laws, and with too severe a self-control to disobey them, and are brought up not to be too knowing in useless matters. . . .

In practice we always base our preparations against an enemy on the assumption that his plans are goods; indeed, it is right to rest our hopes not on a belief in his blunders, but on the soundness of our provisions. Nor ought we to believe that there is much difference between man and man, but to think that the superiority lies with him who is reared in the severest school.

These practices, then, which our ancestors have delivered to us, and by whose maintenance we have always profited, must not be given up.

Source: Thucydides, in *The Greek Historians* (Penguin Books, 1959).

Questions to Think About

1. What qualities of Athenian life does Pericles mention? How do these contrast with those that Archidamus points out for Sparta?
2. According to Archidamus, what kind of person do Spartans consider superior?
3. **Recognize Ideologies** From his speech and what you have read about Sparta, what kind of learning do you think King Archidamus would consider "useless matters"? Would an Athenian agree?

CHAPTER

5

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

The Peloponnesian War

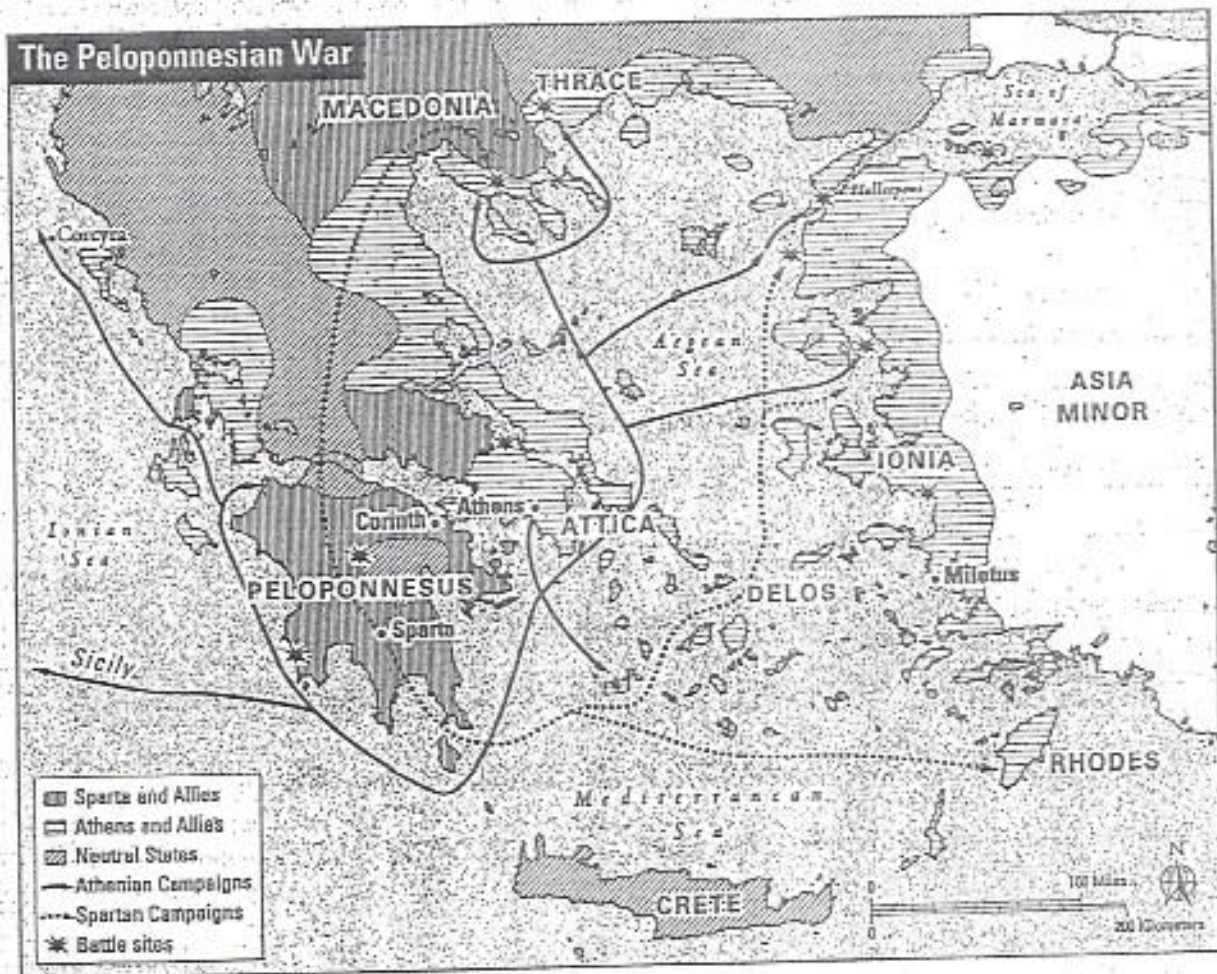
Section 3

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

The two Greek city-states of Sparta and Athens maintained an uneasy existence in the fifth century B.C. Spartan discipline, militarism, and aristocratic rule were in direct opposition to creative, vibrant, and democratic Athens.

The immediate cause of the Peloponnesian War was Athenian expansion onto the island of Corcyra in 431 B.C., which threatened the Spartan ally of Corinth. The coastal city of Athens, without a strong army, used its navy to raid the Spartan coast, supply the city of Athens, and maintain contact with its allies. On the other hand, the landlocked Spartans

ravaged the countryside with their army, forcing the Athenians to hide within their city walls. A truce was finally arranged in 421 B.C. after ten indecisive years. However, Athens broke the peace in 415 B.C. with a poorly planned attack on Syracuse, a Spartan ally located on the island of Sicily. The invasion failed miserably, and the Spartans, with their new ally of Persia, eventually forced the surrender of Athens in 404 B.C. The entire Greek world, though, felt the loss as the Greek city-states began a continuous period of decline.



The Peloponnesian War and Its Aftermath

War Between Athens and Sparta

The remainder of the fifth century B.C. was dominated by another great war. It was a war between the two biggest powers of Greece: Athens and Sparta. The growth and collapse of Athenian seapower was the focus of this period in Greek history, which was reported by the second great Greek historian of the fifth century B.C., Thucydides.

The Delian League

The Persian Wars gave the Greeks pride and a new self-confidence that led to great achievements in the following years. After the war, Athens became the leading Greek city-state. It began in 478 B.C. when she set up a league of Asiatic Greek city-states called the **Delian League**. It protected Ionia and the rest of Greece against any further attack from the Persians. Athens acquired the league's leadership and the cities within the league were obliged to contribute either money or ships. The purpose of the league was to take revenge on the Persians for the sufferings they had caused and liberate all Asiatic and other Greek cities still under Persian control. By 468 B.C. all Greek cities along the Aegean coast were liberated and the Persian fleet was demolished. However, when the mission of the league was accomplished, Athens did not renounce the Delian League. Instead she began forcing the liberated Greek cities to stay in the league under her control. In addition, Athens forced other cities to join the league. Athens thus became the leader of an Athenian sea empire and the greatest power in Greece.

It was the Athenian leader Pericles (461–429 B.C.) who was responsible for Athens' growth in power. He also made Athens the cultural center of Greece. A building program was begun that included the **Parthenon** on the Acropolis, a temple dedicated to the city's patron goddess Athena. He also connected Athens and its port, Piraeus, by long walls to protect the city against attacks. With his ambitious political policy, he was responsible for bringing Athens into a war against Sparta.

The Peloponnesian League

In the 500s B.C., Sparta had earlier established her own league, called the **Peloponnesian League**, which consisted mostly of cities in the Peloponnese. It was a loose organization of cities that strengthened to oppose Athens. According to Thucydides, it was Sparta's fear of Athenian power that made war between the two city-states inevitable. This war, called the **Peloponnesian War**, broke out in 431 B.C. and continued for 27 years with a short break between 421 and 415 B.C. The whole of Greece was involved in the war. Athens and her allies (the Delian League) fought on one side of the war and Sparta and her allies (the Peloponnesian League) on the other. (See map on page 18.)

During the first part of the war (431–421 B.C.), Sparta continually ravaged the countryside of Attica, but it had little effect on Athens. No decisive victory on either side was achieved during those ten years. However, **plagues** hit Athens twice during this time and killed a third of her population. One of the victims was Pericles. This was a critical turning point in Athens' destiny. Having lost one of her greatest generals and most experienced politicians, Athens gradually lost control over her sea empire.



Pericles

Sparta Defeats Athens

A truce was concluded between the two powers in 421 B.C., but war broke out again in 415 B.C. and lasted until 404 B.C. It began when both Athens and Sparta and their allies became involved in a war between some of the Greek city-states in Sicily. Athens sent out a big expedition and after two years of fighting, met with the greatest defeat in Athenian history. She not only lost many men, but also her whole fleet. This incident made Athens' final defeat unavoidable. During the last years of the war, despite some successes in battle, Athens' power diminished. Many of her allies revolted. Her **treasury** was empty of funds needed for the war. An oligarchic revolution in 411 B.C. brought about internal problems. Finally, Sparta received monetary help from the Persians to insure victory. In 405 B.C. a decisive battle near the Hellespont, the Battle of Aegospotami, insured victory for the Spartans. The Athenians surrendered a year later. They had lost the war and their once-mighty sea empire. Peace was declared, and Sparta set up an oligarchic rule in Athens called the **Rule of the Thirty** or Thirty Tyrants. This rule did not last very long, and democracy was restored in Athens in 403 B.C. After the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, Sparta now became the leading power in Greece, taking over the empire once ruled by Athens.

Fighting Among the City-States

At this point in Greek history, the Greek historian Xenophon takes over the account of Greece during the fourth century B.C. The fourth century is characterized by the rivalry between various Greek city-states, most prominently Sparta, Athens, and Thebes in various alliances. This conflict between the city-states eventually weakened the Greeks and led to the takeover of Greece by the King of Macedon, Philip II, in 338 B.C.

Between 395 and 386 B.C., Athens, in alliance with Thebes and other city-states with the support of Persia, was involved in a war to put down Sparta's growing power. Peace was subsequently imposed temporarily in 386 B.C. by the King of Persia. This was called the **King's Peace**. The terms included the abandonment of all Asiatic Greek city-states back to Persia. The peace did allow Sparta to continue its dominant power in Greece; however, Sparta's arrogance led to more fighting, and finally, her power was destroyed at the Battle of Leuctra in 371 B.C. by the Thebans.

Thebes was under the rule of a very skilled general named Epaminondas, who made his city the center of power in Greece for a short time. However, in 362 B.C. the allied forces of Sparta and Athens fought against Thebes at the Battle of Mantinea, and even though the Thebans won the battle, Epaminondas was killed. Since there was no one to replace his excellent leadership, Thebes' brief period of dominance came to an end. Fighting among various city-states continued until 338 B.C., and no one city-state was stronger than another.

The Rise of Macedonia

In the meantime another state in the north, Macedonia, was rising to power under its king, Philip II. In 359 B.C. he united the Macedonian state and built up a loyal and professional army, which brought him great successes in battle. While the Greek city-states were quarreling among themselves, Philip extended his influence over the whole of Greece. Except for one man, the orator Demosthenes, no one in Athens foresaw Philip's actions of conquest. Philip eventually conquered the Greeks in 338 B.C. at the Battle of Chaeronea. By then the Greeks were too weak and disorganized to stand up to him.