

GCSE (9–1)

Prescribed Source Booklet

ANCIENT HISTORY

J198

For first teaching in 2017

Athens in the Age of Pericles, 462–429 BC

Version 1



Overview of the depth study

This depth study continues the time-frame covered in the period study to look at how Athens changed during the Age of Pericles. The contextual background to this depth study tracks the relationships between Athens and its allies and between Athens and Sparta and the creation of a radical democracy. This depth study involves gaining an understanding of the workings of Athenian democracy and the political, cultural and religious context which allowed Pericles to claim in his Funeral Oration that “Athens was an education to Greece”. Students will also analyse how Athenians saw themselves as well as the role and position of women in society at this time.

Specification content

Key topics	Learners should have studied the following content:
The workings of Athenian democracy	Citizenship after the reforms of Ephialtes and Pericles; Pericles as a leader in Athens; the workings of the <i>ecclesia</i> (assembly), <i>boule</i> (council), <i>archontes</i> (magistrates) and <i>strategoi</i> (generals); the role of the assembly in law making; the role of public speaking, including the role of tuition by Sophists; the use of ostracism in removing Cimon and Thucydides.

The relationship between Athens and Sparta and Pericles’ Foreign Policy	Contextual background for the rising tensions between Athens and Sparta including refusal of Athenian help suppressing the helot revolt, construction of the Long Walls and Athens’ growing power; Athens as a leader in the Greek world: the aftermath of the Persian Wars, the Delian League and Athenian Empire; the significance ascribed to the Megarian decree by Aristophanes; moving the Delian League treasury to Athens; Pericles’ strategy during the Archidamian War and its impact including the plague.
Pericles and the cultural and religious life in Athens	The importance of Pericles’ building programme; the buildings on the acropolis; the cultural and religious significance of these buildings; criticisms of the building programme, including the tribute money and the trial of Pheidias; the events of the Panathenaia and City Dionysia and their religious and cultural significance; the significance of Athena and Poseidon for Athenians; Athenian views of themselves as seen in the Funeral Oration.
Women in Athens	Role and position of women in daily life, including marriage; position of women in the democratic system and the enhanced status of Athenian citizen women after Pericles’ citizenship law; depictions of women in <i>Medea</i> ; the <i>Arrhephoroi</i> and Aspasia in reflecting Athenian attitudes to women.

The format of this source booklet is to list the sources in a logical way to allow students to gain familiarity with the facts and sources. The themes in the specification can be accessed at various points in the scheme.



How did democracy work in Athens?

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 25

[1] So the means of maintaining the people came about in that way. For about 17 years after the Persian Wars the constitution with the members of the Areopagos being in control of power continued, although it faded bit by bit. As the masses increased, Ephialtes, the son of Sophonides, became the leader of the people. He seemed to be incorruptible and just in politics, and he turned on the Council of the Areopagos. [2] First he got rid of many of its members, prosecuting them for their administration. Then, when Conon was archon, he removed from the Council [of the Areopagos] all the additional powers through which it was the guardian of the constitution. He gave some of the powers to the Council of 500, others to the people and the jury-courts. [3] Themistocles joined in being responsible for doing these things. He was a member of the Areopagos, and was about to be put on trial for medism. Themistocles wanted to destroy the Areopagos; on the one hand he told Ephialtes that it intended to destroy him, but on the other he told the members of the Areopagos that he was going to show them the men who were plotting the overthrow of the constitution. He took some men chosen from the Areopagos to where Ephialtes happened to be, as though to show them the conspirators, and began to talk seriously with them. [4] Ephialtes, when he saw this, was overcome with fright and sat down at the altar wearing only his tunic. Everyone was amazed at what had happened. After these events, when the Council of 500 was meeting, Ephialtes and Themistocles spoke against the Areopagos, and then again in the same way in the Assembly. They kept this going until they had removed the Areopagos' power. Ephialtes was assassinated not much later, being murdered by Aristodicus of Tanagra.

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Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 26.3

[3] ... And in the third year after this, when Antidotos was *Archon*, it was decided, because of the number of citizens, that no-one should be a citizen who was not born from both parents who were citizens; this was proposed by Pericles.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 42–45**42**

[1] The state of the constitution currently has the following form. Men have a share in the government if they are born from parents both of whom are citizens; they are signed-up into their demes when they are 18. When they are being signed-up, the demesmen, having taken an oath, vote about them, first whether they appear to be the age required by the law (and if they do not appear to be, they return again to the boys); secondly they vote whether the man is a free man and has been born in accordance with the laws. Then, if they vote that someone is not a free man, he goes to the jury-court, and the demesmen choose five from themselves as prosecutors. If he does not seem to have been registered justly, the city sells him; but if he wins his case the demesmen have to register him. [2] After this the Council examines those who have been signed-up, and if anyone seems to be younger than 18 it punishes the demesmen who signed him. When the young men have been checked, their fathers swear an oath and choose three of the tribe-members who are over 40 whom they consider are the best and most suitable to be in charge of the ephebes. From these, the people elects one from each tribe to be an overseer, and from the other Athenians, a commander for them all. [3] These men gather together the ephebes, and they then first go round the temples, then they march to the Peiraeus, and some are guards at Mounychia, others at Acte. The people also elects two gym-masters for them and teachers

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who teach them hoplite fighting, archery, throwing the javelin and firing the catapult. They give one drachma each to the overseers as living-expenses, and four obols each for the ephebes. Each overseer takes this from his tribesmen and purchases supplies for all in common (for they dine by tribes), and manages everything else. [4] This is how they spend the first year. In the next year an assembly is held in the theatre and they show the people what they have learnt about military movements. They also receive a shield and spear from the city and then patrol the countryside and pass their time in the guard-posts. [5] They keep guard for two years with short cloaks and they are exempt from all taxes. Also they neither bring nor receive lawsuits so that there is no excuse for them to be absent, unless it concerns an inheritance or an heiress. It is also allowed for anyone who has a hereditary priesthood. Having passed through the two years, the ephebes join the rest of the citizen body.

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[1] So that is how things are arranged for registering citizens and the ephebes. They appoint all those concerned with everyday administration by lot, except the military treasurer, and those in charge of the theatre fund and the manager of the water-supply. They elect these and, having been elected they are in office from the Panathenaia to the next one. They also elect all military officers. [2] The Council of 500 is also elected by lot, 50 from each tribe. Each of the tribes holds the prytany in a turn which is ascribed by lot, the first four for 36 days each, the rest for 35 days each; for they calculate the year by the moon. [3] The members of the prytany first dine together in the Tholos, paid for by the city. Then they call meetings of both the Council and the Assembly; the Council every day unless there is a holiday, the assembly four times in each prytany. They also publish what the Council has to consider and what it does each day, and where it meets. [4] They also publish the meetings of the assembly; one [in each prytany] is the main meeting at which they have to vote whether the magistrates are governing well, and debate about the food supply and

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the defence of the country. On that day, anyone who wants to can make an accusation; they publicise lists of confiscated property, and applications about inheritances and heiresses, so that nothing escapes the notice of anyone and is not claimed. [5] In the 6th prytany, in addition to the things just mentioned, they also give a vote as to whether there should be an ostracism or not. They also ask for complaints against informers, up to three each against Athenians and metics respectively; also anyone who has promised something to the people and not done it. [6] The second meeting is for supplications, at which anyone wanting to make a supplication on whatever he wishes, either private or public, speaks to the people. The other two are concerned with other matters; at these, the laws decree that three religious matters should be considered, three about heralds and embassies and three non-religious. Sometimes they also discuss matters which have not been voted on beforehand. Heralds and embassies go to the prytanes first, and those bringing letters also hand them over to these men.

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[1] There is one chairman of the prytanes selected by lot. He is chairman for a night and a day and is not allowed to be chairman either for a longer time or a second time. He is in charge of both the keys of the temples in which the city's money and records are, and the public seal. He has to stay in the Tholos along with a third of the prytanes which he assigns. [2] Whenever the prytanes call a meeting of the Council or the people he chooses by lot, nine presiding officers, one from each tribe except the one which was the prytany, and again one of these to be chairman, and he gives the agenda to them. [3] They receive this and are in charge of good order, bring forward the matters which are to be debated and judge the voting. They also manage all other matters and are in charge of ending a meeting. It is not possible to be chairman more than once in the year, but can be on the committee once in each prytany. [4] In the assembly they also elect generals, cavalry commanders and other military officers in whatever way seems good to the people. They do this in the prytany after the

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6th in which there are favourable omens. It is also necessary for there to be a probouleuma concerning these matters.

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[1] In earlier times, the Council had the power to fine, imprison and condemn to death. But when it had taken Lysimachos to the public executioner and he was already sitting down about to be killed, Eumelides from Alopece took him off saying that no citizen should be killed without the verdict of a jury-court. A trial was held in a jury-court, and Lysimachos was acquitted. He then had the nick-name of 'the man who escaped the gallows'. The people then removed from the Council the ability to condemn to death, imprison and fine, and passed a law that if the Council found someone guilty of a crime or would punish him, the thesmothetai were to take the guilty verdict and the punishment to the jury-court, and however the jurors voted was to be final. [2] The Council passes judgement over most public officials and especially those who managed money; its judgement is not final but can be appealed in the jury-court. It is also possible for private citizens to prosecute any of the officials they wish for not obeying the laws. Appeal to the jury-court is also possible for these men if the Council finds them guilty. [3] The Council also examines those elected to be members of the Council for the following year and the nine magistrates. In earlier times it has the power to reject them, but now these men also have the right of appeal to the jury-court. [4] So in those areas the Council does not have ultimate power but puts a preliminary proposition to the people. The people cannot vote on anything which has not been proposed in advance nor anything which the prytanes have not placed on the agenda. As a defence against this, a man who carries such a proposal is liable to prosecution for proposing something against the law.

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Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 55

[1] These officials are selected by lot and have power over the areas mentioned above. Those called the nine archons (magistrates) have been appointed from the beginning in the manner mentioned above. And now they select by lot the six thesmothetai and their secretary, and again the [eponymous] archon, the basileus and the polemarchos, in turn from each tribe. [2] These are examined first in the Council of 500, except for the secretary who is examined only in the jury-court just like other officials. For all those chosen by lot and those elected are examined and then take office. The nine archons (magistrates) are examined in the Council and again in a jury-court. Before, no-one took office whom the Council had rejected, but now there is a right of appeal to the jury-court and this is the final decision in the examination. [3] When they are examined, they are asked, first "Who is your father, and of what deme? Who is your father's father? Who is your mother? Who is your mother's father, and from what deme?" Then the candidate is asked whether he possesses an ancestral Apollo and a household Zeus, and where their sanctuaries are; next if he possesses a family tomb, and where; then if he treats his parents well, and pays his taxes, and has served on the required military expeditions. Having asked these things, the official says, "Call witnesses of these things." [4] When he has provided the witnesses the official asks whether anyone wants to denounce him. If there is an accuser, having given the opportunity for the accusation and a defence, they give their decision in the Council by voting by hands, in the jury-court by ballot. If no-one wants to make an accusation, they give their vote immediately. Before, one man cast a vote, but now it is necessary for all to vote on those put forward, so that if a wicked man wants to be delivered from his accusers he can be rejected by the jurors. [5] Having been examined in this way they go to the stone on which the cut-up victims are. (It is also on this stone that the arbitrators swear an oath and then declare their judgement, and witnesses when they deny testimony.) Having climbed onto it they swear they will carry out their duties

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justly and according to the laws, and will not accept bribes for the sake of their office, and if they do accept them they will set-up a golden statue. Then, having taken the oath, they go to the Acropolis and swear the same things again there. After this they enter into their office.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 63–64

63

[1] The nine magistrates are allocated their jury-courts by tribe, and the secretary of the thesmothetai by the tenth tribe. [2] There are ten entrances to the jury-courts, one for each tribe, and 20 selection-machines, two for each tribe. There are also a hundred boxes, ten for each tribe, and other boxes into which are thrown the voting-tablets of the jurors who have been chosen by lot, and two water-jars. Sticks are set up by each exit, as many as there are jurors, and the same number of acorns as the sticks are placed in the water-pots. On the acorns are written letters, from the eleventh (lambda), as many as there are courts scheduled to be filled. [3] It is allowed for men over the age of 30 to serve as jurors, that is to those of them who do not owe a public debt or have lost their civic rights. If anyone is a juror who is not allowed to, he is pointed out and taken before the jury-court; if he is found guilty, the jurors decide the penalty, what they think he should suffer or pay. If the penalty awarded is money, he must be imprisoned until he has paid both the earlier debt for which he was pointed out, and what the jury-court decided for him as a penalty. [4] Each juror has a tablet of boxwood, with his name and his father's and his deme written on it, and one of the letters up to kappa. The jurors are divided into ten parts by the tribes, roughly the same number for each number. [5] When the thesmothetes has drawn by lot the letters which must be allocated to the courts, an assistant takes them and fixes the chosen letter to each courtroom.

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[1] The ten boxes lie in front of the entrance for each tribe. They have inscribed on them the letters as far as kappa. The jurymen drop their tickets into the box which has the same letter of the alphabet as is on the ticket itself. Then the attendant shakes the boxes thoroughly and the Law-giver draws one ticket from each box. [2] The man whose ticket is drawn is called the inserter, and he inserts the tickets taken from his box to the column on the allotment-machine on which has the same letter as is on the box. This attendant is chosen by lot, in order that the same person may not always insert the tickets and cheat. There are five columns on each of the machines. [3] The Archon, when he has thrown in the dice, casts lots for the tribe on the machine; they are bronze dice, black and white. As many white ones are thrown in as jurymen are required to be selected, one white die for each five tickets, and the black die are added in the same proportion. As he [the archon] draws out the dice, the herald calls the men who have been picked. The inserter is also included in the number of men picked as jurors. [4] Each juror, as he is chosen and answers to his name, draws an acorn from the water-pot and, holding it out with the inscription upward, shows it first to the magistrate in charge. When the magistrate has seen it, he throws the man's ticket into the box that has the same letter written on it as the one on the acorn, in order that he may go into the court he is allotted, and not into whichever court he chooses, so that it may be impossible for anyone to collect into a court whichever jurymen a person wishes. [5] The magistrate has by him as many boxes as courts are going to be filled, each lettered with whichever is the letter assigned by lot to each court.

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Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 67–69**67**

... [2] There are water-clocks with reeds as out-flow pipes, into which they pour water to which speakers have to keep in the trials. ...

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[1] Most of the courts consist of 500 members ... ; and when it is necessary to bring public cases before a jury of 1,000 members, two courts combine for the purpose, the most important cases of all are brought 1,500 jurors, or three courts.

[2] The ballots are bronze, with a pipe through the middle, half hollow and half solid. When the speeches have finished, those men chosen by lot to be in charge of the ballots give each of the jurors two ballots, a hollow one and a solid one. This is done in the sight of the two opponents so that no-one will take both solid or both hollow. The man chosen by lot for this duty then takes the sticks in return for which each juror, when he has voted, receives a bronze token with a figure 3 on it (because when he hands it over he receives 3 obols¹). This is so that they all vote, for it is not possible for anyone to receive their token unless he votes. [3] There are two jars set in the court, one made of bronze, the other of wood. These can be taken to pieces so that no-one can put ballots in them in secret. The jurors put their votes in these, the jar of bronze being the one that matters, the one of wood is the discard. The bronze one has a lid with an opening in it such as it gives room for only one vote so that the same man may not make two votes. [4] When the jurors are about to vote, the herald first makes an announcement asking whether the opponents denounce the testimonies as false. For it is not allowed to reject them when they have begun to vote. Then he makes another announcement: "The hollow ballot is for the one who spoke first, the solid one for the second speaker." The juror takes his ballots from the stand and, holding the pipe through the ballot not showing the

¹ When Pericles introduced jury pay it was 2 obols a day; Cleon later raised it to 3 obols a day.

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opponents either the hollow one or the solid one, places the one to count in the bronze jar and the one for discard into the wooden jar.

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[1] When they have all voted, the assistants take the jar which counts and pour it out onto a board with as many holes as there are votes so that they may be laid out visibly and counted, both the hollow and the solid in sight of the opponents. Those chosen to be in charge of the ballots count them on the board, the solid ones and the hollow separately. The herald announces the number of the votes, the hollow for the man bringing the case, the solid for the defendant. Whoever has more wins, but if they are equal the defendant wins. [2] Then they make the assessment of damages, if it is necessary to do so, voting in the same way. The jurors return their token and take back again their stick. Each opponent has a half measure of water for the assessment. When everything which is demanded by the laws has been done by them, they receive their pay, each in the area which he was assigned.

Rhetoric and the role of tuition by Sophists in persuading the people

Plato, *Gorgias* 452d–e and 459b–c

GORGIAS:

From my point of view it is to be able to persuade with your words either jurors in the law-court, council-members in the Council, citizens in the assembly or anyone who may be at any type of public meeting at all. And yet with this power you will have the doctor as a slave, and a gym-trainer as a slave. This money-trafficker will appear to be making money for another man, not for himself. It will really be for you who have the ability to speak and persuade the masses.

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SOCRATES:

You now seem to me, Gorgias, to be very close to showing us the art of rhetoric as you think it is.

SOCRATES:

So the man who does not have knowledge will be more persuasive to others who do not have knowledge than the man who does have knowledge would be, that is if the orator is more persuasive than a doctor. Is that the natural conclusion, or is it something else?

GORGAS:

In this case that is certainly the conclusion.

SOCRATES:

Well then the orator and his rhetoric has the same argument concerning all other skills: it is not necessary to know any real knowledge about the matters themselves, but to have found some persuasive device so that you appear to those who do not have knowledge to know more than those who really do have knowledge.

Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1402a

This amounts to making the worse appear the better argument. And this is why people justly criticised Protagoras' profession. It is both deceptive, involving apparent but not real probability, and based not on genuine art but on rhetoric and sophism.

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Athens, the continuing struggle with Persia and the Delian League

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.96

[1] Thus the Athenians, by the will of the allies and their hatred of Pausanias, gained leadership. They drew up which cities should contribute money and which should contribute ships in a campaign against the barbarians [Persians]. Their alleged objective was to avenge their sufferings by pillaging the Persian king's land. [2] This was the time when the offices of Hellenic Treasurers were first set up by the Athenians: they received the "tributes", which were what the payments were called. The tribute was first established as 460 talents. The public treasury was at Delos, and conferences were held in the temple there.

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The leadership of Athens: Athenian politics, relationship with Sparta and growing Athenian imperialism

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.101–1.102

1.101

[1] The Thasians, whose city was under siege after their defeat in battle by the Athenians, called upon the Spartans and begged them to come to their assistance and march on Attica.² [2] Unknown to the Athenians, the Spartans agreed and intended to do this, but the plan was scuppered by an earthquake, along with the revolt of the helots, and their neighbours from Thuria and Aethaea, who seized Ithome. The majority of the helots were descended from the Messenians of old who had been enslaved in war long ago, and so they were all known as Messenians. [3] So, whilst the Spartans were engaged in conflict at Ithome, the Thasians made a bargain with the Athenians in the third year of the siege by demolishing their walls, surrendering their ships, and promising to make any necessary payments, whether immediately, or in future tributes. They also gave up their mainland territory and their mine.

1.102

[1] The Spartans, meanwhile, finding their war in Ithome showing no sign of ending, called upon their allies; particularly the Athenians, who came with a considerable force under the leadership of Cimon. [2] They were summoned mainly because of their reputed skill in siege operations; the apparent length of this siege seemed to call for these skills, or the Spartans would have taken the place by assault. [3] From this campaign came the first open disagreement between the Spartans and Athenians. For the Spartans, when they were unable to seize Ithome by force, were alarmed at the daring and revolutionary spirit of the Athenians. They considered that they were a foreign race, and feared that if

² Thasos had revolted from the Delian League

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they were allowed to remain, they might be persuaded to change sides by the helots in Ithome. Consequently, they dismissed them alone out of all their allies, and did not reveal their suspicions. [4] The Athenians, however, understood that their dismissal was the result of some creeping suspicion, rather than the more honourable reason offered, and felt that they did not deserve to be slighted so by the Spartans. So, on their march home, they immediately abandoned the alliance they had established in the war against the Persians and changed to the side of their Argive enemies. Thus, both Athens and Argos simultaneously joined themselves to Thessaly with the same oath of alliance.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 7

[1] As a young man, Pericles was very reluctant to face the people because they thought he looked like the tyrant Peisistratus. When old men also noticed that his voice was charming and his speech was fluent and smooth they were amazed at the similarity. Also, since he was rich, from a noble family, and had very powerful friends, he was afraid that he might be ostracised. So at first he had nothing to do with politics, but instead concentrated on his military career in which he was brave and resourceful. [2] But when Aristides was dead, Themistocles banished and Cimon was often abroad on campaigns, then at last Pericles decided to commit himself to the people. He decided to help the many poor people instead of a few rich people even though it went against his own nature, which was very aristocratic. [3] But it seems that he was afraid of being suspected of trying to make himself a tyrant. When he saw that Cimon had a lot of sympathy with the nobles, and was very well liked by the aristocratic party, he began to make himself popular with the people so that he could keep himself safe and get power [to wield] against his rival. [4] Straightway, too, he made a different ordering in his way of life. On one street only in the city was he to be seen walking, – the one which took him to the market-place and the council-

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chamber. Invitations to dinner, and all such friendly and familiar intercourse, he declined, so that during the long period that elapsed while he was at the head of the state, there was not a single friend to whose house he went to dine, except that when his kinsman Euryptolemus gave a wedding feast, he attended until the libations were made, and then straightway rose up and departed.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 9

[1] Thucydides describes Pericles' administration as rather aristocratic, "a democracy in name, but in fact government by the greatest citizen." But many others say that it was Pericles who first led the people into giving out allotments of public land, grants to pay for festivals and fees for doing public services. They say that this caused people to fall into bad habits and become luxurious and undisciplined because of his policies, instead of economical and self-sufficient. So let us look in detail at the reason for this change in him. [2] As we have seen, in the beginning, he was up against the reputation of Cimon, so he tried to make himself popular with the people. Cimon could win the poor people over by giving dinner every day to any Athenian who wanted one, giving clothes to old men and removing the fences from his estates so people could pick the fruit if they wanted. But Pericles did not have such a lot of wealth and property so he could not do that sort of thing; instead he decided to share out the people's own wealth. As Aristotle has told us, he did this on the advice of Damonides from the *deme* Oa. [3] Soon, he bribed the people completely with the festival grants, wages for jury service, other fees and generosity, and used them to help him attack the Council of the Areopagus. Pericles himself was not a member of the Areopagus, because he had never been chosen by lot to be either First Magistrate or Archon Thesmothete or King Archon or Archon Polemarch. In ancient times, these jobs were decided by lot and men who carried them out properly were promoted into the Areopagus. [4] Because he had been left out in this way, once Pericles had the support of the people, he led his party in a

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campaign against the Council of the Areopagus. Ephialtes successfully proposed that it should lose most of its power to make judgements. Cimon was ostracised on the charge of being a friend of Sparta and a hater of the people. As is written in his biography, Cimon was one of the wealthiest noble men in Athens and had won very glorious victories over the Persians, filling the city full of money and treasure. That shows how great the power of Pericles was among the people.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 27

[1] After these things, Pericles came to be leader of the people; he first became prominent when, as a young man, he was a prosecutor in the examination of Cimon's generalship³. The constitution also happened to become even more democratic. For Pericles removed some of the powers of the Areopagos, and in particular turned the city towards naval power, from which it came about that the masses gained confidence and rather brought the whole constitution into their own control.

[2] ... Some aspects of government they chose willingly to manage themselves, others unintentionally. [3] Pericles then was also the first to set up payment for the juries, in an attempt to gain public support against the generosity of Cimon. For Cimon had as much wealth as a tyrant, and first performed the public liturgies extravagantly, then supported many of his demesmen. For if any of the Laciadaí wanted, they could go to him each day and obtain their moderate needs. Moreover all his land was unfenced so that it was possible for anyone who wanted to could enjoy the fruit. [4] Pericles was falling short of this generosity. Damonides of Oe advised him to give to the masses their own property, since he was less well off personally. This man seems to have been the author of many of Pericles' policies, because of which he was also ostracised later. He established payment for the jury-courts. As a result some people

³ In 463, Pericles prosecuted Cimon after he had returned from the siege of Thasos on a charge of corruption. Cimon was acquitted, but the trial raised the profile of Pericles.

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claimed that they became worse as it was always the common people who were chosen by lot rather than those who were suitable. ...

The Athenian building programme and the ostracism of Thucydides

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 11–14, 16

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[1] The aristocrats already knew that Pericles had now become the most important citizen, but they wanted to have someone in the city to stand up to him and blunt the edge of his power, so that there would not completely be an autocracy. So they put forward Thucydides of Alopecé, a sensible man who was a relative of Cimon, to oppose him. [2] He was not so much of a soldier as Cimon and more of a public speaker and politician. He soon brought a balance of power to Athens by keeping watch on the city and by debating with Pericles. He did not allow the aristocrats: the party of the “Good and True” as they called themselves, to be scattered among the people in the assembly anymore because that meant that their influence was hidden by the mass of the people. Instead, by grouping them into one body, he concentrated their strength, making them more effective in tipping the balance of power. [3] From the beginning there had been a sort of flaw hidden beneath the surface of affairs, as in a piece of iron, which showed faintly the different aims of the people’s and the aristocrats’ parties. The jealous ambition of these two men [Pericles and Thucydides of Alopecé] made a deep cut in the state and so one section was called the many, and the other was called the few. [4] So, particularly at this time, Pericles let the people have control and made it his policy to please them. He was always providing some sort of a celebration in the town for the people, or a feast, or a procession, amusing them like children with elegant delights. Every

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year, he sent out 60 triremes with a large numbers of the citizens cruising about on them for eight months and getting paid, at the same time learning and practising sailing. ...

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[1] But it was Pericles building of temples and public buildings that pleased the people, that made Athens beautiful and amazed everyone else. Nowadays, that alone proves that the ancient power and glory of Greece, which is so often talked about, was not a myth. The enemies of Pericles bad-mouthed and attacked this more than all his other actions. They cried out in the assembly that the Athenians had lost their good reputation and were in disgrace because they had removed the Greek public money from Delos to Athens for safe-keeping. The best excuse for this was that Athens took the Greek public funds from the sacred island of Delos [2] because they feared the Barbarians [Persians] stealing it and was now guarding them in a safe place, but Pericles had undermined this excuse. They cried out that surely the Greeks must be dreadfully insulted and feel like victims of obvious tyranny when they see that the Athenians are smartening and decorating the city with their compulsory contributions for the war. Athens was like a shameless woman, adding to her wardrobe precious stones and expensive statues and temples worth millions. [3] Pericles answered the people by saying that the Athenians did not have to justify to the allies how they spent the money as long as they carried on the war for them and kept the Persians away. He said, "They do not give us a horse, a ship or a soldier, but only money and that doesn't belong to those who pay it, but to those who accept it as long as they do the job they have been paid to do. [4] It is only fair that when Athens has all the equipment necessary for fighting the war, what is left over should be used for public buildings. When the buildings have been completed, they will bring everlasting glory to Athens, and building them makes immediate use of the money left over from the war because there are all sorts of activity and different demands, which need every

Notes

skill and use every pair of hands, giving employment to the whole city, so that Athens is not only decorated but supports itself from its own resources." [5] It was true that his military expeditions provided fit young men with plenty of opportunity to make a living from the public money by being soldiers. But he wanted the masses of unskilled labourers with no military training to have a share in the public money, but did not want to give them money for doing nothing. So, boldly, he suggested to the people designs for great public buildings, and plans for work which would involve many skills and long time scales, so that the men who stayed at home, no less than the sailors and guards and soldiers, would be able to benefit from a share of the public wealth. [6] The materials to be used were stone, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony, and cypress-wood. The skills which worked these materials were those of the carpenter, moulder, bronze-smith, stone-cutter, dyer, worker in gold and ivory, painter, embroiderer, embosser, as well as the transporters and providers of the materials, such as merchants, sailors and navigators at sea, and, on land, wagon-makers, trainers of animals to pull carts, and cart drivers. [7] There were also rope-makers, weavers, leather-workers, road-builders, and miners. Each particular trade, like a general with an army under his own command, kept its own platoon of unskilled or untrained labourers ready for action. They worked to help the others like an instrument for the player and like the body for the soul. So that it ended up that the city's great wealth was divided up and shared around by the demands for almost every age and every ability.

13

... [9] He [Pheidias] was friends with Pericles, so, as I have said, he was in charge of almost all the work and all the artists and all the craftsmen. This caused envy towards Pheidias, and gossip about Pericles. There was a rumour that Pheidias arranged secret meetings for Pericles with free-born women who would come supposedly to see the works of art.

[10] The comic poets got hold of this story and showered Pericles with

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accusations of shamelessness and lust. In the rumours they linked Pericles with the wife of his friend and fellow general, Menippus. They also brought in Pylilampes, who liked to keep birds; since he was a comrade of Pericles, he was accused of using his peacocks to bribe the women who Pericles wanted to seduce. [11] Men with no decency never miss an opportunity of making up gossip about their superiors and offering them up as sacrifices to the evil goddess of people's jealousy. But why should this surprise anyone when even Stesimbrotus of Thasos has dared to make a completely fictional accusation against Pericles for seducing his son's wife?

[12] To such degree, it seems, is truth hedged about with difficulty and hard to capture by research, since those who come after the events in question find that lapse of time is an obstacle to their proper perception of them; while the research of their contemporaries into men's deeds and lives, partly through envious hatred and partly through fawning flattery, defiles and distorts the truth.

14

[1] Thucydides [of Alopecé] and his party kept criticising Pericles for wasting public money and throwing away the city's income. So Pericles asked the people in the assembly whether they thought he had spent too much, and when they declared that it was far too much, he said, "Well then, I shall take all the responsibility for the money away from you and dedicate all the buildings just in my name." [2] When Pericles had said this, whether it was because they admired his spirit or did not want him to get all the glory for the buildings, they cried out with a loud voice and told him take what he wanted from the public funds for his projects, and to spare nothing whatsoever. Finally Pericles dared to go into to the contest of ostracism with Thucydides [of Alopecé], and by this he got his rival banished, and the party which had been organised to stand up to him, split up.

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16

[1] There can be no doubt about Pericles' power since Thucydides gives such a clear description of it, and the comic poets accidentally reveal it even in their nasty jokes. They call him and his associates "new Peisistratids," and beg him to make a solemn promise not to make himself a tyrant. It is as if his dominance is out of line with democracy and too oppressive. [2] Telecleides says that the Athenians had handed over to him,

"The cities' contributions, even the cities themselves,
to keep or release as he pleases,
their stone walls to build up if he likes,
then to pull back down,
their treaties, their forces, their strength, peace,
and riches, and all their good fortune."

All this was not a brief winning streak or the final popularity of an administration that succeeded for just one term. For 40 years Pericles was in first place among such men as Ephialtes, Leocrates, Myronides, Cimon, Tolmides, and Thucydides [of Alopecé]. [3] After Thucydides [of Alopecé] was dismissed and ostracised, for no less than 15 years, Pericles held power that was continuous and unbroken, by holding the post of general each year. During all these years Pericles could not be bribed, but he still liked to make money. He inherited some money legally from his father. He did not want to lose it all if he neglected it. But he did not want to spend a lot of time on it when he was busy with more important things so he set up the simplest, most orderly way he could think of to deal with it. ...

Notes

Pericles as a general

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 18

[1] As a general, he was most famous for being cautious. He was never willing to go into a battle involving much uncertainty or danger. He did not envy and copy men who were admired as great generals because they took great risks and relied on good luck. He often told his fellow citizens that, as far as he could manage it, they would stay alive forever and be immortal. [2] Once he saw that Tolmides, son of Tolmaeus, was getting ready to invade Boeotia⁴. Tolmides doing this because he had had good luck before and won very great honour for fighting wars. Without thinking about whether it was the right time, he had persuaded as many as a thousand of the bravest and most adventurous men of military age to volunteer for the campaign, as well as the rest of his forces. In the assembly, Pericles tried to hold him back and talk him out of it. It was then that he made the well-known statement that if Tolmides would not listen to Pericles, he should wait for the wisest of all advisers: Time. [3] Pericles did not get much credit for the saying at the time. However a few days later, when it was reported that Tolmides was dead and had been defeated in a battle near Coroneia, and that many brave citizens also were dead, then people admired Pericles and felt goodwill towards him because of his foresight and patriotism.

⁴ in 447/6

Notes

440 BC: Revolt in Samos

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 24, 28

24

[1] After this, when there had been peace for 30 years between Athens and Sparta, Pericles got a declaration passed for an expedition to Samos because he said that the people had been ordered to stop fighting with the Milesians but they had disobeyed. People think that Pericles did this against Samos to please Aspasia. ...

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[1] After eight months, the Samians surrendered. Pericles destroyed their walls, took away their warships, and made them pay a big fine. They paid part of the fine at once, and agreed to pay the rest after a certain time; they handed over hostages as security. Duris the Samian tells this story as a huge tragedy, accusing the Athenians and Pericles of great brutality, but this is not mentioned by Thucydides, or Ephorus, or Aristotle. [2] Duris certainly seems to be lying when he says that Pericles had the Samian sea captains and marines brought into the market-place at Miletus and crucified and that when they had already suffered horribly for ten days, he gave orders to break their heads in with clubs and finish them off, then throw their bodies down but not give them a burial. [3] Anyway, even when he has no personal interest in the events, Duris does not usually stick to the truth in his narratives, so it is even more likely that, in this instance, he has given a dreadful account of the disasters of his country to make the Athenians look wicked. After he overpowered Samos, when Pericles got back to Athens he gave the men who had died in the war an honourable burial. He was very greatly admired for the speech which he made, as is usual, over the tombs. [4] As he came down from the platform, the rest of the women grabbed his

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hands and put garlands and ribbons on his head as if he was a victorious athlete, but Elpinice came up to him and said:

“That was noble of you Pericles and you deserve the garlands; you have lost us many brave citizens, not in a war with the Phoenicians or the Medes, like my brother Cimon, but by overpowering a Greek city which was an ally.”

[5] When Elpinice had said this, we are told that with a quiet smile Pericles quoted to her this line of Archilochus: “Old woman, have you put perfume on yourself?”

Ion says that Pericles was ridiculously full of himself for having overpowered the Samians, saying that it took Agamemnon 10 years to capture a barbarian city, but he had only taken nine months to capture the most important and powerful city in Ionia. [6] In fact, his opinion of himself is not that unreasonable: the war actually brought with it a lot of uncertainty and a high degree of risk, if Thucydides is telling the truth when he says that the city of Samos came very close to stripping Athens of her power over the sea.

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Pericles' foreign policy in the late 430s

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 515–539

For you see, some men – not the city, be certain that I am not saying the city – some wretched wretches, their minds all mixed up with bad deeds, dishonourable, and not even citizens of good standing, but foreigners – these men have accused the Megarians of selling counterfeit goods. So, whenever anything was seen, whether a cucumber, or a young hare, a piglet, a garlic clove, or a block of salt, someone would cry: "These must come from Megara!" and the goods were immediately confiscated.

Up until now, these misdeeds have only been small. Now, however, some young men have gone to Megara off their heads with drink, and carried off the prostitute Simaetha. The Megarians were utterly infuriated by this, so stole away two prostitutes from the house of Aspasia as revenge. And, war breaks out across the whole of Greece for the sake of three harlots. And Pericles, raging on Olympus, hurled down lightning bolts (completely confounding the Greeks), and laid down a law which went just like a zig-zagging banquet song, that "the Megarians should not remain in our land, or our markets; nor in this sea, or under this same sky." Meanwhile the Megarians, who were falling gradually into famine, begged the Spartans to vote for the abolition of this decree, which was caused by three prostitutes. We refused several times to do this, and from that point on there was a huge clattering of shields.

Aristophanes, *Peace* 605–609

Our misfortunes first began with the exile of Pheidias. Then Pericles was afraid of sharing his bad luck, and did not trust your irritable disposition. So, before anything bad could happen to him, he threw out the little spark of the Megarian decree, and set the city on fire.

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Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 29

[1] Later, when the Peloponnesian War was already starting, Pericles persuaded the people to send help to the island of Corcyra in its war with the Corinthians. This meant that the Athenians had made an ally of an island with a strong navy at a time when the Peloponnesians were practically at war with them.

[2] But when the people had voted to send the help, he [Pericles] sent Lacedaemonius, the son of Cimon, with only 10 ships, as if he meant to humiliate him because there was a lot of good-will and friendship between the family of Cimon and the Spartans. Pericles gave Lacedaemonius only a few ships and sent him out against his will so that if he did not perform well as a general he would be criticised for his sympathy with Sparta. [3] In general, Pericles used to pick on Cimon's sons because not even their names were genuinely Athenian; he claimed they were like aliens or strangers. One of them was called Lacedaemonius, another was Thessalus, and a third was called Eleius. They were all said to be the sons of a woman from Arcadia.

Pericles was harshly criticised for sending only these 10 ships because they weren't much help to Corcyra when it was in need, but they provided the enemies of Athens with an excuse to declare war. Afterwards he sent out other ships, and more of them, but they got there after the battle. [4] The Corinthians were very angry about this and publically criticised the Athenians at Sparta. They were joined by the Megarians who complained that they were excluded and driven away from every market-place and from all the harbours controlled by the Athenians, which was against the law that all the Greeks had agreed to. The people of Aegina also felt wronged and outraged and secretly kept complaining to the Spartans because they did not have the courage to accuse the Athenians openly. At this point, Potidaea too rebelled: a city that was controlled by Athens, although it was a colony of Corinth. The Athenians besieged Potidaea hastened the advance of the war even more.

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Despite all this, the Athenians could probably have avoided war for any remaining reasons, if only they could have been persuaded to lift their embargo against the Megarians and make peace with them. [5] Ambassadors were repeatedly sent to Athens and Archidamus, the king of Sparta, tried to bring a peaceful settlement over most of the accusations made by his allies and to soften their anger. Since it was Pericles who was most of all opposed to lifting the embargo and he incited the people to keep up their dispute with the Megarians, he alone was held responsible for the war.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.126

[1] In the meantime, they [Sparta] sent ambassadors to Athens to make various charges, so that they might build the best possible case for war, if she paid no attention to their complaints. [2] The first Spartan embassy was sent to order the Athenians to expel the curse of the goddess, the story of whom goes like this. [3] Once upon a time, there was an Athenian man named Cylon; an Olympic victor, well-born and powerful. He married the daughter of Theagenes, the Megarian tyrant at that time. [4] Cylon was consulting the Delphic oracle when the god told him that he should seize the Athenian acropolis during the great festival of Zeus. [5] So he assembled a large force from Theagenes, and persuaded his friends to join him. When the Olympic festival in the Peloponnese began, he seized the acropolis, intending to make himself a tyrant and thinking that this was the great festival of Zeus; an occasion befitting an Olympic victor. [6] He had never actually considered whether or not this great festival would be in Attica or somewhere else, nor had the oracle made this clear at all. (For the Athenians do also have a festival known as the grand festival of Zeus the Gracious, or the Diasia. It is celebrated outside the city, where the whole population did not make real sacrifices, but bloodless offerings as was the custom of the region.) By any means, he thought he had the right time and place, and launched his offensive.

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[7] When the Athenians noticed what had happened, they all came from the countryside and laid siege to the city. [8] But, as time wore on, they grew tired from maintaining the blockade, and the majority left, leaving guard duties to the nine magistrates. These magistrates were left with the power to arrange things according to what they considered best; at that time, the nine magistrates managed the majority of political duties. [9] Meanwhile, Cylon and his besieged allies were in a bad way, hungry and thirsty. [10] Cylon and his brother made their escape, but the rest, who were stuck in their surroundings with many starving to death, sat as suppliants before the altar at the acropolis. [11] The Athenians, who had been given the job of keeping guard, when they saw them half-dead in the temple, raised their spirits with the promise that no harm would come to them, then led them outside and killed them. They even murdered some in the presence of the fearful goddesses in whose altars they had sought shelter. As a result of this deed, the perpetrators and their descendants after them were marked out as cursed and sinful against the goddess. [12] These accursed men were thus banished by the Athenians, then banished again by Cleomenes the Spartan and an Athenian faction, driving out the living and collecting up the bones of the dead. Later on, however, they returned, and their descendants still live in the city.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.139

[1] This was the demand for the banishment of the cursed men made by the Spartans in their first embassy to Athens; one which was met by a counter-demand from the Athenians. After this, they sent more envoys to Athens and ordered them to give up their siege of Potidaea and give Aegina its freedom. Most significantly and most clearly, they insisted that if the Athenians wanted to avoid going to war, they should repeal the decree which banned Megara from accessing the Athenian markets and harbours. [2] But the Athenians would not listen, nor repeal the decree. Their response implied that the Megarians had

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ploughed the holy land and the neutral borders, and were harbouring all their escaped slaves. ...

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.67

[1] The siege of Potidaea brought Corinth out of its period of inactivity; there were Corinthian troops inside the city, and equally, they were afraid for the place. They summoned the allies to Sparta immediately, where they came and loudly accused the Athenians of breaking the treaty and aggression towards the Peloponnese. [2] The Aeginetans did not send envoys openly out of fear of Athens, but acted covertly with the Corinthians, and played a part in instigating the war which was by no means small; they claimed that they had lost the autonomy which the treaty had afforded them. [3] Having called out to the rest of the allies and any others who might have been mistreated by the Athenians, the Spartans hosted their customary assembly and invited them to speak. [4] Many came forward and made accusations; the Megarians amongst them, and in a huge list of complaints, made particular light of how they had been barred from all the ports of Athens and the Attican market, contrary to the terms of the treaty.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 30–32

30

[1] People say that when ambassadors had come from Sparta to Athens to discuss the subject, Pericles was claiming that a certain law stopped him from taking down the tablet where decree was written. Polyalces, one of the ambassadors, shouted: “Well then, don’t take it down: turn the tablet to the wall; surely there’s no law preventing that?” The proposal was clever, but Pericles still would not give in. [2] He must have secretly had a private grudge against

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the Megarians. In public, he accused them of using the sacred land of Eleusis for their own mundane uses, and proposed that a messenger should be sent to tell them, and then go to the Spartans with a complaint about the Megarians.

[3] Pericles made this proposal, aiming to justify his actions reasonably and humanely. But it is believed that the messenger who was sent, Anthemocritus, was killed by the Megarians. So Charinus made a proposal against them that from now on Athens and Megara were immovable enemies, and if any Megarians set foot on the soil of Attica they would be punished with death. He said that whenever the generals swore their traditional oath of office, a clause should be added that they would invade the Megarian lands twice each year after. He also said that Anthemocritus should be buried honourably at the Thriasian gates, which are now called the Dipylon.

[4] But the Megarians denied the murder of Anthemocritus, and blamed the Athenian hatred of them on Aspasia and Pericles, quoting those famous and over used verses from Aristophanes' play "Acharnians":

"Simaetha the Megarian prostitute was stolen by young men drunk from a drinking game, and so the Megarians angry and wound up, stole away Aspasia's two prostitutes."

31

[1] It is not easy to discover what the original reason was for the proposal being accepted, but everyone blames Pericles for the fact that it was not overturned. But some say that he kept up his refusal for a good reason and because he had clear view of what was best for the city. They say that he saw the demand as a test of resistance, and giving in would have been a sign of weakness. Others say that he went against the Spartans because of his arrogance and love of conflict, as well as to display his power. [2] But the worst charge of all, and the one with the most support, goes something like this. As I have said, Pheidias the sculptor was the contractor for the great statue of Athena and a friend of Pericles with very great influence on him. Pheidias had made some enemies because people

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were jealous of him; others also used him to test the people and see what sort of a judge it would be in a case where Pericles was involved. These persuaded a man called Menon, an assistant of Pheidias, to sit in the market place and, as a suppliant, demand protection from punishment for bringing information and accusation against Pheidias. [3] The people accepted Menon's proposal and a formal prosecution of Pheidias was made in the assembly. The charge of embezzlement was not proved because, from the very start, at the wise suggestion of Pericles, Pheidias had shaped the gold for the statue and put it on in such a way that it could all be taken off and weighed, and this is what Pericles ordered the accusers of Pheidias to do at this time. [4] But the reputation of Pheidias' work still brought jealous hatred on him, especially because when he carved the battle of the Amazons on the shield of the goddess, he carved out a figure that looked like himself as a bald old man lifting a stone high with both hands, and also made a very good image of Pericles fighting with an Amazon. The position of the hand which holds out a spear in front of Pericles' face is cunningly made as if to try to hide the likeness, but it can be seen plainly from either side. [5] So Pheidias was led away to prison and died there of an illness. But some people say he died from poison which Pericles' enemies provided to make him look bad. Glycon's proposal about Menon the informer was accepted and the people let him off paying tax and told the generals to keep the man safe.

32

[1] About this time, Aspasia was also put on trial for immorality. Hermippus the comic poet prosecuted her and said that she received free-born women into her house for Pericles to associate with. And Diopieithes got his proposal accepted that people who did not believe in the gods or taught theories about the heavens should be prosecuted, which caused suspicion against Pericles because of Anaxagoras. [2] The people were delighted with these scandals, so while they were in this mood, Dracontides' suggestion was accepted that Pericles should

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hand over his records of how he had spent the public money to the prytanes, and that the jury should decide his case with ballots which had been laid on the altar of the goddess on the acropolis. But Hagnon changed the last part of the proposal so that the case was tried in front of 1,500 jurors in the usual way, whether it was called a prosecution for embezzlement or bribery, or misconduct. [3] Aeschines says that Pericles tried to get Aspasia off by bursting into tears at her trial and pleading with the jury and he feared for Anaxagoras so much that he sent him away from the city. Since Pericles had come up against the people in Pheidias' case, he was dreading the jury in his own case. War was threatening and smouldering so he fanned it into flame, hoping to get rid of the charges made against him and stop the people's jealousy. He did this because he knew that when something serious happened in the city and great danger threatened it, the city always trusted only him because of his authority and power. So, those are the reasons which have been suggested for Pericles not allowing the people to give in to the Spartans, but the truth about it is not clear.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.23.6

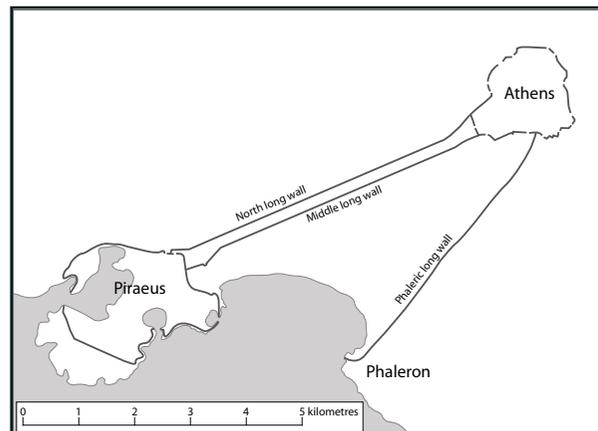
[6] I believe that the most obvious cause of the war was the one which was kept most hidden in writing. The growing power of Athens, and the resultant fear it caused amongst the Spartans, made war inevitable.

Notes

Pericles' strategy during the Archidamian War, and its impact including the plague

Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.107.1

[1] At about this time⁵, Athens began to build long walls towards the sea; to Phaleron and to Piraeus.



Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution* 27.2

... [2] In the 49th year after the sea-battle at Salamis, when Pythodoros was archon, the Peloponnesian War began. During this, the people were confined in the city and became used to earning pay on campaign. ...

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.13

... [2] As before, Pericles also offered the people some advice on their current situation. They should prepare for war, and move all their property out of the country. They should not march into battle, but come into the city to guard

⁵ 458 BC

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it, and to ready their fleet, in which they had real strength. They should also keep their allies firmly in check; Athens' power was based upon money paid from their tributes, and strength in war relies largely upon resolve, and wealth. Their accounts were healthy at this point. [3] Other sources aside, an income of approximately 600 talents of silver was taken from allied tributes, and there were still 6,000 talents of silver coins in the Acropolis, out of 9,700 which had once been there (money had been taken for acropolis' porch and other public buildings, and for Potidaea). [4] This money did not include the un-minted gold and silver of public and private offerings; the sacred vessels for the processions and games; Persian bounty; and other such resources to the value of 500 talents. [5] He added considerable treasures from other temples to these, which could prove incredibly lucrative. Indeed, if they ever had to act out of sheer desperation, they could even take even the gold ornaments of Athena herself; the statue contained 40 talents of solid gold, and it was all removable. Pericles stated that if this was used to secure the people's safety, it should be restored completely afterwards.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 33–34

33

... [3] So the Spartans and their allies invaded Attica with a great army under the leadership of Archidamus the King. They advanced, destroying the countryside as they went, as far as Acharnae, where they set up camp, assuming that the Athenians would not put up with it, but would fight with them because of anger and pride. [4] But Pericles thought it was a bad idea to fight a battle against 60,000 Peloponnesian and Boeotian hoplites (the first invasion was that numerous), and risk Athens itself on the outcome. So he tried to calm the men who wanted to fight and those who were worried about what the enemy was doing by saying that trees cut and chopped grow quickly but men, once killed,

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are not easy to replace.

[5] He did not call the people together into an assembly because he was afraid that he would be pushed to act against his better judgement. Like the pilot of a ship when a stormy wind swoops down on it in the open sea fastens everything down, takes in the sails and uses his skill, ignoring the tears and pleas of the sea sick and frightened passengers, in the same way Pericles shut the city up tight, put all parts of it under guard and used his own judgement, not listening to complaints and outcries. [6] But many of his friends begged him and many of his enemies threatened him and choruses sang rude songs mocking him, and criticising him as a general for being a coward, and giving everything to the enemy. Cleon too, was already annoying him, taking advantage of the anger the citizens had for Pericles to make his own way towards leading the people. ...

34

[1] But Pericles was not moved by such things; he gently and silently put up with the shame and hatred, and sent out a fleet of a 100 ships against the Peloponnese. He did not sail with it but stayed behind to keep the city safe and under his control until the Peloponnesians withdrew. The Athenian people were distressed about the war even though the enemies had departed, so to cheer them up Pericles gave out money and suggested they have allotments from conquered land. This made him a bit more popular again. For example, he threw out all the people from Aegina and shared out their island between the Athenians by lot. The Athenians were comforted a bit because their enemies were suffering. [2] The navy sailed around the Peloponnese and raided a lot of land and destroyed villages and small cities, while on land Pericles himself invaded the Megarian territory and demolished it all. It was obvious from this that even though the enemies were harming the Athenians on land, the enemies themselves were suffering from what the Athenians were doing at sea. ...

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Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.52–2.53**2.52**

... [3] The temples where the people sheltered were stuffed full of the bodies of those who had died there; the disaster was so violent that men, not knowing where to turn, became reckless and ignored all laws, both human and divine.

[4] All the established funeral customs were violated, and each man buried his dead as best he could. Most of them had none of the proper equipment, and lost all respect for the funeral rites. If one man had built a pyre, others would come, put their dead onto it, and light it. Or, if another body was already burning, they would throw their own on before anyone could stop them, and leave.

2.53

[1] Not only that, but there were other, even worse crimes brought to Athens by the plague. Men who had always made the effort to conceal their pleasures grew bolder. This was because they had seen the sudden changes of fortune; how rich men died in an instant, and poor ones inherited their property; [2] and they decided that life and riches were both transient, so they should enjoy themselves and think only of their own pleasure whilst they still could. [3] Who would want to sacrifice himself to the law of honour, if he did not know whether he would ever live to receive honour himself? Fast pleasures and anything which enabled them took the places of both honour and prudence. [4] Criminals were not deterred by the fear of gods, or of human laws. To those who saw all men dying the same, it seemed conceivable that worshipping or neglecting the gods made no difference. There was no fear of punishment for crimes against mortal law because nobody would live long enough to receive it. A far worse sentence had been passed already, and hung over every man's head; before it fell upon him, why should he not indulge himself a little?

Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 34–35**34**

[2] ... They [Spartans and her allies] would not have carried on the war for such a long time, but would have quickly given up just as Pericles predicted at the start if it had not been for a terrible disaster from heaven that upset human calculations. [3] Athens was hit by a plague which killed most of the young men who were the city's strength. It made the people weak in their bodies and spirits and made them very angry with Pericles so that they tried to harm him, just like a mad man attacks his doctor or his father, that is how they acted because of the plague. [4] Pericles' enemies persuaded the people that the plague was caused by the crowding together of the people from the countryside into the city where, in the summer, many were squashed together in small houses and stuffy barracks and had to stay in all the time with nothing to do, instead of being in the clean, open air of the countryside as they usually were. They said that this was Pericles' fault because, due to the war, he had packed everyone from the countryside into the city walls, and then given that big group of men nothing at all to do, but had let them, penned up like cattle, infect one another, and not given them any way to move out or get better.

35

Pericles prepared 150 triremes with many hoplites and horsemen, and set out to lay siege to Epidaurus in the hope that it might be captured.

... [3] So Pericles set sail but he does not seem to have achieved anything worthy of all the preparations. He besieged the holy town of Epidaurus, and people hoped he would capture it, but he had no such luck because of the plague. The plague was so fierce that it destroyed not only the Athenian soldiers, but anyone who had any contact with them. [4] The Athenians were angry with him because of this so he tried to calm them down and encourage them. But he did

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not calm them fast enough or change their minds before they got their hostile ballots in their hands and took control of his fate; they took away his command and punished him with a fine. The fine was 15 talents according to those who give the lowest figure and 50 according to those who give the highest. Idomeneus says that the public prosecutor mentioned in the records of the case was Cleon, but according to Theophrastus it was Simmias and Heracleides Ponticus says it was Lacratides.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.59–2.61, 2.65

2.59

[1] After the second Peloponnesian invasion, the Athenians suffered a change of spirit: now their land had been ransacked twice, and all at once war and pestilence weighed down heavily upon them.

When Pericles saw the people acting in such a way, he called an assembly. He came forward and spoke, wanting to encourage them and transform their angry feelings to a more hopeful mood.

2.60

... [2] "I believe that it is better for private citizens that the people should suffer and the state flourish, than the state suffer and the people flourish. [3] A man may have a great personal fortune, but if his country is ruined, he must be ruined with it; a flourishing nation, however, always offers the opportunity for salvation to any unfortunate citizens. [4] Seeing that a state is able to bear the misfortunes of individuals, whereas individuals cannot support the misfortunes of the state, we should all be proactive in protecting our country; not do what you are doing now. You, who are so overwhelmed by your personal calamities that you are abandoning hope of saving the state. You are not only condemning me, who advised you, to war, but also yourselves, who consented to it." ...

Notes

2.61

... [2] "Of course, for those who have a freedom of choice, and whose fortunes are not at stake, war is the greatest of follies. But if forced to choose between submission with a loss of freedom, and danger with the hope of preserving it, in such a case the man who will not take the risk is the one who deserves blame, not the one who will." ...

2.63

[1] "Once again, it is right for you to give service in maintaining your country's honour and position of power, which brings glory to all: you cannot avoid her toils and still expect to share in her honours. You should also be mindful that it is not only slavery over freedom which you are fighting against, but the loss of the empire, and danger from any hatred which is incurred along the way." ...

2.65

... [2] They took his advice on the conduct of public affairs and sent no further embassies to Sparta, and sent themselves to war with even greater zeal. In private, however, they felt their sufferings acutely. The lower classes had been deprived of the very little they owned, and the upper classes had lost fine country estates with all their houses and luxurious furniture. But the worst thing was that instead of enjoying peace, they were now at war. [3] Public discontent did not cease until they had fined Pericles, [4] but soon afterwards, with the typical inconsistency of a crowd, they elected him general, and put him in charge of all their affairs. They were beginning to feel their personal grievances less keenly, and believed that on the whole there was no man better than him in a time of public crisis. ...

Notes

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 37

[1] The city tried out its other generals and politicians to carry on the war but no one had the influence or authority needed for the leadership, so they wanted Pericles, and called him back to the assembly and the war office. He was at home feeling miserable because of his misfortune but Alcibiades and his other friends persuaded him to return to public life. [2] When the people had said sorry to Pericles for treating him ungratefully, again he took control of the state and was elected as a general. He asked for the law about illegitimate children to be suspended so that his name and family would not die out because he had no heir. It was Pericles who had brought in the law in the first place. [3] The circumstances of this law were as follows. Many years before, when Pericles was at the peak of his political career and had legitimate sons with his wife, he put forward a law that only people who had two Athenian parents would count as Athenian citizens. So when the King of Egypt sent 40,000 measures of grain as a present to the Athenian people and it had to be divided up among the citizens, there were lots of prosecutions against people who were now illegitimate because of Pericles' law; until then no one had noticed or questioned them but many were also falsely accused. [4] In the end, nearly 5,000 people were convicted and sold into slavery. As a result of all this attention, it was found that there were 14,040 confirmed Athenian citizens left. [5] So, it was a serious matter to suspend a law that had been strictly carried out on so many people for the very man who had introduced it.

But the Athenians saw the disasters Pericles was suffering in his family life as the penalty he had paid for his arrogance and pride in the past, and this got rid of any doubts. They thought that what he had suffered was enough of a punishment. They thought it was only human for Pericles to make his request and human for them to grant it. So they allowed him to enrol his illegitimate son in the phratry and to give him his own name. ...

Notes

Death and reputation

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 39

[1] We should admire Pericles not only because he was reasonable and gentle even when he had huge responsibility and when people hated him, but also for his noble spirit. Even when he had huge power, he saw it as his most honourable feature that he never used his power to satisfy his own jealousy or hatred, or treated an enemy as someone who could never be a friend. [2] His childish and pretentious sounding nickname does not seem so bad because of this. It even seems quite suitable because he did have such a gracious nature and his life was so pure and uncorrupted by holding power like a king that he deserves to be called Olympian because we do firmly believe that the heavenly rulers and kings of the universe can only do good, and cannot do evil. [3] In this we are not like the poets who confuse us with their ignorant myths and contradict themselves in their own stories. The poets tell us that the place where the gods live is a calm, safe place, without wind or clouds, but shining for all time with the soft glow of very pure light and they say that this way of living is most suitable for the immortal gods. But the poets show the gods themselves as full of wickedness and hatred and anger and other passions which are a disgrace even to men of any sense. But perhaps this should be discussed elsewhere.

[4] What happened next made the Athenians appreciate quickly how much Pericles had done for them, and they missed him very much. Men who had felt bitter about his power while he was alive and thought that it overshadowed them, as soon as he was gone, turned to other speakers and popular leaders, only to find themselves admitting that there was no character more moderate than his in its sincere dignity, and more noble in its gentleness. [5] Afterwards the state of Athens was troubled very much by corruption and all sorts of immorality. Pericles had always kept this away, out of sight, and stopped it from becoming too powerful. So now everyone could see that his power, which

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had made people jealous and they used to call monarchy and tyranny, was a defensive protection for the state.

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.65

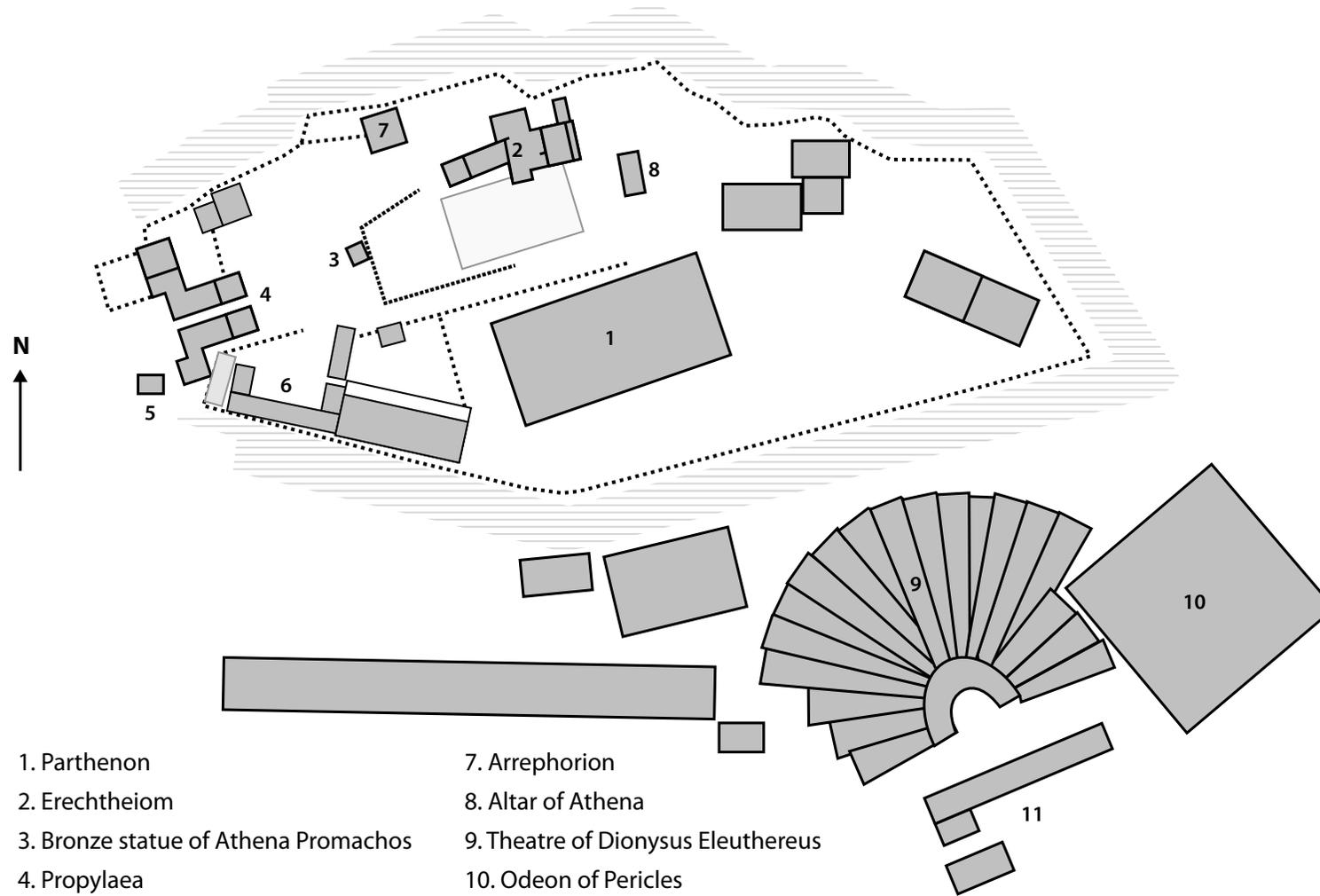
... [5] During peacetime, he had ruled moderately and steadfastly. Athens had been safe under his leadership, and had indeed reached the very height of her greatness. When the war began, he also demonstrated that he had made an accurate estimate of Athens' power under these circumstances. He outlived the outbreak of war by two years and six months, [6] and after his death, his foresight was appreciated even more than when he was alive. [7] He had told the Athenians to be patient and take care of their navy, not to attempt to enlarge their empire during the war, and not to put the city in danger; if they did all of this, they would be victorious. In fact, they did everything he told them not to do, adopting policies with disastrous effects for themselves and their allies in matters seemingly unrelated to the war, motivated by personal ambition and self-interest. Had this been successful, it would have brought honour and profit only to individuals, and if unsuccessful, it would have sabotaged the city's war effort.

[8] The reason for this was not difficult to find. Pericles derived his authority from his high reputation and intelligence, while he was also clearly incorruptible. Therefore he was able to control the people freely: to lead, rather than be led by them. Since he did not seek power by dishonest means, he did not need to flatter them; because of the strength of his own worthy character, he could go so far as to oppose and even to anger the people. [9] When he saw them unsuitably over-confident and arrogant, his words would strike fear into them; when they were needlessly fearful, he would build up their confidence again. Thus Athens, although a democracy in name, was in fact ruled by its first citizen. ...

Notes

The religious and cultural importance of Pericles' building programme

Buildings on the Acropolis



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Parthenon | 7. Arrephorion |
| 2. Erechtheion | 8. Altar of Athena |
| 3. Bronze statue of Athena Promachos | 9. Theatre of Dionysus Eleuthereus |
| 4. Propylaea | 10. Odeon of Pericles |
| 5. Temple of Athena Nike | 11. Sanctuary of Dionysus |
| 6. Sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia | |

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 13

[1] So the buildings grew, as towering in their splendour as they were unique in the attractiveness of their outlines, since the workmen eagerly tried to excel in the beauty of their handicraft. Still, the most wonderful thing about them was the speed with which they were done. Men thought that each one of them would take many continuous generations to complete, but all of them were fully finished in the peak of a single man's administration. [2] But people say that once when Agatharchus the painter was boasting loudly about how quickly and easily he made his figures, Zeuxis heard him, and said, "Mine take a long time, and last a long time." It is true that dexterity and speed of work do not give lasting power of influence or precision of beauty to a piece of work. It is the time put in to creating something painstakingly that is repaid later by making the creation last a long time. [3] This is why the works of Pericles are all the more amazing: they were created in a short time but for all time. Each one of them, when it was new seemed old and grand in its beauty, but in its bright freshness even nowadays, seems modern and newly built. His buildings seem to glow with constant newness, which makes them always look untouched by time, as if they have been filled with the everlasting breath of a timeless spirit. [4] His general manager and supervisor was Pheidias, but each of the building projects had its own great architects and artists. For example Callicrates and Ictinus were the architects of the Parthenon with its cella⁶ a hundred feet long. Coroebus started building the sanctuary of the mysteries at Eleusis: he placed the columns on the floor and joined their capitals together with architraves. After his death Metagenes of the deme Xypete added the frieze and the top tier of columns. [5] Xenocles of the deme Cholargus set up the lantern over the shrine. Callicrates was the contractor for the long wall; Socrates says that he himself heard Pericles make the proposal for this. Cratinus makes fun of the slow progress of this work with these words:

⁶ the inner chamber of a temple

Notes

“For such a long time now Pericles has pushed the thing forward with words but his words don’t actually make it any longer.”

The Odeon was also built under Pericles’ management. Inside it had many tiers of seats and many pillars and it had a roof made with a circular slope from the apex; people say was an exact replica of the Persian king’s pavilion. [6] Cratinus makes fun of him again because of it in “Thracian Women”:

“O the squill-head Zeus! Here he comes,
Wearing the Odeon on his head,
After the ostracism has finished.”

At that time, Pericles, always looking for admiration, got a proposal passed for a music competition to be held as part of the Panathenaic festival. He got himself elected manager, and decided how the contestants should blow their flutes, or sing, or twang the kithara⁷. These music competitions were seen, both then and afterwards, in the Odeon.

[7] The Propylaea of the acropolis was completed in the space of five years, with Mnesicles as architect. A wonderful thing happened while it was being built, which showed that the goddess Athena was not remaining in the distance, but was helping both with the beginning and the completion of the work. [8] One of the craftsmen, the most active and enthusiastic of them all, lost his footing and fell from a great height. He was in a sorry state and the doctors despaired. Pericles was very sad about this, but the goddess Athena appeared to him in a dream and told him what treatment to use, so that the man was quickly and easily healed. To commemorate this, Pericles set up the bronze statue of Athena the Healer on the acropolis near the altar of Athena that people say was there before.

[9] But it was Pheidias who made the great golden statue of Athena and his name is carved on the tablet as the workman who did it. ...

⁷ an ancient Greek musical instrument in the lyre family

Notes

Quintilian, *Oratorical Education* 12.10.9

Pheidias is believed to be an artist better at creating statues of gods than of men. In fact, he would still be considered far and away the best at working in ivory, even if he had not made the Athena at Athens or the Zeus in Olympia. The beauty of the latter is even considered to have added something to the traditional religious understanding of the god, so greatly did the majesty of his work match that of the god himself.

Pliny, *Natural History* 34.74

Cresilas made a wounded man dying in which you can tell how much of his spirit still remains, a wounded Amazon and a Pericles worthy of being called Olympian.

Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.28.2

Apart from what I have listed, the Athenians have two dedications which were from tithes from when they were fighting: a bronze statue of Athena, a work of Pheidias, from the Persian landing at Marathon (they say that the battle of Lapiths against Centaurs and whatever else is depicted on the shield was carved by Mys, for whom Parrhasios, the son of Euenor, drew this, and his other works, in outline). The tip of the spear of this Athena and the crest of her helmet is already visible to those sailing up from Sounion. The second tithe is a bronze chariot from Boeotia and the Chalcideans in Boeotia. There are two other dedications, Pericles the son of Xanthippos and a statue of Athena called the Lemnian after the people who set it up, which is the most worth seeing of the works of Pheidias.

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Marble Roman copy of Athena Parthenos⁸



⁸ the original was made from gold and ivory and housed in the Parthenon

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Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.24.5, 1.24.7

[5] [In the Parthenon] whatever lies in the pediments is concerned with the birth of Athena and at the back is the quarrel between Poseidon and Athena over the land.

The statue itself is made from ivory and gold. In the middle of her helmet lie an image of a Sphinx (I will write the story which was told to me about the Sphinx when I get to Boeotia). On each side of the helmet, griffins are carved.

[7] The statue of Athena is upright in a tunic which reaches to her feet and the head of Medousa is carved on her breast in ivory. She holds a Victory as tall as four cubits and a spear in her hand and a shield lies at her feet and there is also a snake next to the spear. This snake may be Erichthonios. On the base of the statue is carved the birth of Pandora. It is said by Hesiod and others that this Pandora was the first woman, and that before Pandora was born there was not yet the female sex.

Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.26.6

Both the city and the whole of the land alike are sacred to Athena; for even those who in their demes have an established worship of other gods nevertheless hold Athena in honour. But the most holy symbol, that was so considered by all many years before the unification of the demes, is the image of Athena which is on what is now called the Acropolis. A legend concerning it says that it fell from heaven; whether this is true or not I shall not discuss.

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Reconstruction of the Parthenon West Pediment



The Panathenaic Games

Parthenon frieze: Peplos scene, East V 31–35



Parthenon frieze: Cattle led to sacrifice, South XLV, 137–140



Notes

Aristophanes, *Frogs* 1089–1098**DIONYSUS:**

By God, not any more! Just as when I laughed myself silly at the Panathenaic Games, when some slow bloke was running, hunched over, pale, drunk, and generally having a bad time. And the people of the kerameikos at the gate whacked him on the belly, on the chest, on the sides, on the bum, and as he was being smacked with their hands he farted, blew out the torch, and ran off.

Inscriptiones Graecae Vol I, 46

... They shall bring a cow and a full set of armour to the Great Panathenaia, and to the Dionysia a phallos. ...

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 13

... [6] ... At that time, Pericles, always looking for admiration, got a proposal passed for a music competition to be held as part of the Panathenaic festival. He got himself elected manager, and decided how the contestants should blow their flutes, or sing, or twang the kithara . These music competitions were seen, both then and afterwards, in the Odeon. ...

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Panathenaic amphora



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Panathenaic amphora



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Panathenaic amphora



Notes

Women

Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, 1.27.3

What particularly amazed me is something not known to everyone, but I will write what happens. Two virgins live not far from the temple of Athena the Guardian, whom the Athenians call the Carriers. They live with the goddess for a certain time and when the festival happens they do the following things at night: they put on their heads whatever the priestess of Athena gives them to carry, and neither the one giving them knows what they give nor do those who do the carrying. There is an enclosure in the city not far from the place known as Aphrodite in the Gardens and from it is a natural underground descent; the virgins go down this. Down there they leave what they have been carrying and having picked up something else they take it away all covered up. Then they send these girls away from Acropolis and take other virgins there in their place.

Plutarch, *Life of Pericles* 24

[1] ... So this may be a suitable place to consider what great skill or power this woman [Aspasia] had for her to charm one of the leading men of the state, and cause philosophers to discuss her for a long time in serious debates. [2] It is generally agreed that she was born in Milesia, and was the daughter of Axiochus. People say that she was copying an Ionian woman from ancient times called Thargelia by only having relationships with the most powerful men. Thargelia became very beautiful and had graceful manners as well as clever wits. She had lots of Greek lovers and won them all over to the Persian cause. In the cities of Greece she sneakily spread the seeds of Persian sympathy by using her lovers, who were men of the greatest power and influence. [3] So, some say that Pericles favoured Aspasia highly because of her rare political wisdom. Socrates

Notes

sometimes went to see her with his followers, and his close friends brought their wives to her to hear her conversation, even though she ran a business that was not at all honest or even respectable, since she kept a house of young *hetairai*⁹. [4] Aeschines says that Lysicles, a sheep-dealer and a common man with little personality, came to be the leading man in Athens because he moved in with Aspasia after Pericles had died. In Plato's "Menexenus", even though the first part of it is written as a humorous parody, there is, at least, this much fact: the woman had a reputation for mixing with many Athenians as a teacher of rhetoric. [5] But, Pericles' feelings for Aspasia seem to have been rather passionate. His own wife was one of his close relatives. She had been married before to Hipponicus and with him she had a son called Callias who ended up being nicknamed 'the rich'. When she was married to Pericles she had two sons called Xanthippus and Paralus. Afterwards, their married life was not happy, so Pericles legally handed her over to another man (she agreed to this), and he went to live with Aspasia and loved her very much. [6] People say that twice a day, when he was going out and coming back from the market-place, he greeted her with a loving kiss. In comedies Aspasia is presented as the new Omphale one minute, then the new Deianeira, and then Hera. Cratinus blatantly called her a prostitute in these lines:

"As his Hera, Brutal Lust gave birth to Aspasia,
a shameless prostitute."

Also Pericles seems to have had an illegitimate son with her. In a play called "Demes", written by Eupolis, Pericles (as a character in the play) asks: "Is my illegitimate son alive?" Myronides (another character) replies: "Yes, and he would have been a voting citizen ages ago, except for the shame that his mother is a prostitute."

⁹ *hetairai* were usually free women. She could have been a free Athenian citizen who chose to earn a living as a *hetaira*, but more commonly would have been a metic (foreigner living in Athens). Whereas a *pornē* would have been hired just for sex, the *hetaira* could offer a range of talents to her clients, from singing and dancing to intellectual conversation. *Hetairai* often had long-term relationships with their clients. For this reason the word "*hetairai*" is sometimes translated as "companion" or "courtesan" rather than "prostitute".

Notes

[7] People say that Aspasia became so famous, that even Cyrus, the prince who fought his brother the king because he wanted to rule over the Persians, called his favourite concubine Aspasia: she was called Milto before. Milto was a Phocaeon, the daughter of Hermotimus, and after Cyrus had died in battle, she was taken as a prisoner to the king, and later became very influential with him. These things have come into my mind as I am writing: it would be unnatural to miss them out.

Euripides, *Medea* lines 230–251

MEDEA:

Of all the beings which have life and sense, we women are the most miserable. First, we must buy (at an overinflated price) a husband, master of our body (this misfortune is even worse than misfortune itself). The best part of our lives' struggles hinge on this: whether we take a bad husband, or a good one. For divorce is dishonourable for women, and we cannot refuse marriage. And when a woman enters her husband's house, with its new rules and customs, she must be a mind-reader, if she did not learn it at home, as to how best to deal with her husband.

If, having devoted much of our time to learning such things, our husbands happily live with us without resenting the marriage yoke, then our lives are enviable; if not, it is better to die. Whenever a man is troubled by those around him in the home, he goes out and stops the distress of his soul (by turning to some friend or peer of his).

We, however, must set our sights on one single person. Men claim we live a risk-free life at home, whilst they fight with the spear – Rubbish! I would rather stand in battle with a shield three times than give birth once.

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Euripides, *Medea* lines 1081–1087**CHORUS:**

Many times have I entered contests greater, and my speech been more delicate, than is suitable for the gaze of the female race.

No – we also have a muse of our own, who associates with us for the purpose of conveying wisdom. Not all of us, for it is a select few, one woman among many, whom you would find with an understanding of the Muse.

Sophocles, *Tereus* Fragment 583

On my own, I am now nothing. But I have often looked upon a woman's nature like this, seeing as we are nothing. For, in my opinion, we live the sweetest life of all when we are young girls in our fathers' homes. For ignorance always rears children in happiness. But when we reach puberty and some understanding, we are pushed out and sold away from our ancestral gods and from our parents; some of us go to husbands who are strangers, some go to foreign husbands, some to joyless homes, and some to unfriendly homes. And all this, when a single night has yoked us, we must praise and consider to be happiness.

Xenophon, *The Estate Manager* 7.4–6, 7.23–25, 7.35–37, 7.42

[4] I said, "Isamachus, but I would also really like to learn this from you. Did you yourself train your wife to be how she ought to be or did she understand how to organise such things when you received her from her mother and father?" [5] He said, "Socrates, what would she have understood when I received her? She was

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not yet fifteen when she came to me, and until then she had lived in a situation of great care so that she saw as little as possible, heard as little as possible and said as little as possible. [6] For does it not seem reasonable to you if she came to me only understanding how to produce a cloak when she was given wool, and had seen how spinning was given to the slave-girls? Then again she came well-trained in matters concerning her appetite. I, at any rate, think that this is the most important training for both a man and his wife.

[23] For god made the body and mind of man more able to bear cold and heat and expeditions and military campaigns. I think that as god made a woman's body less able in these areas he assigned indoor tasks to her. [24] And knowing that he had implanted and placed in woman the nourishment of new-born children, he also gave her greater love for new-born babies than to man. [25] And, since he also assigned the guarding of the food-stores to woman, knowing that to have a fearful spirit is not a bad thing when it comes to guarding, he gave a greater share also of fear to woman than to man. And knowing that the one who had the outdoor tasks would also have to ward-off anyone who might do wrong, he gave to him in addition a greater share of courage.

[35] My wife said, "Will I too have to do these things?" I replied, "Indeed you will have to, and to stay indoors and to send outside those of the slaves who have outdoor tasks, and oversee those of them who have to work indoors. You will also have to receive produce which is brought in [36] and distribute what of it must be spent and watch over what must be kept as a surplus, and keep an eye lest what is set as spending for a year is not spent in a month. And when wool is brought in to you, you must ensure that there are cloaks for those that need them. And you must ensure that the dry corn is suitable for food." [37] "However," I said "one of the duties which are your responsibility will perhaps seem to be thankless, that you must ensure that any of the slaves who might be ill is looked after." My wife said, "By Zeus, that will be a most pleasing task, as long as those that are well looked-after will be grateful and will be more well-

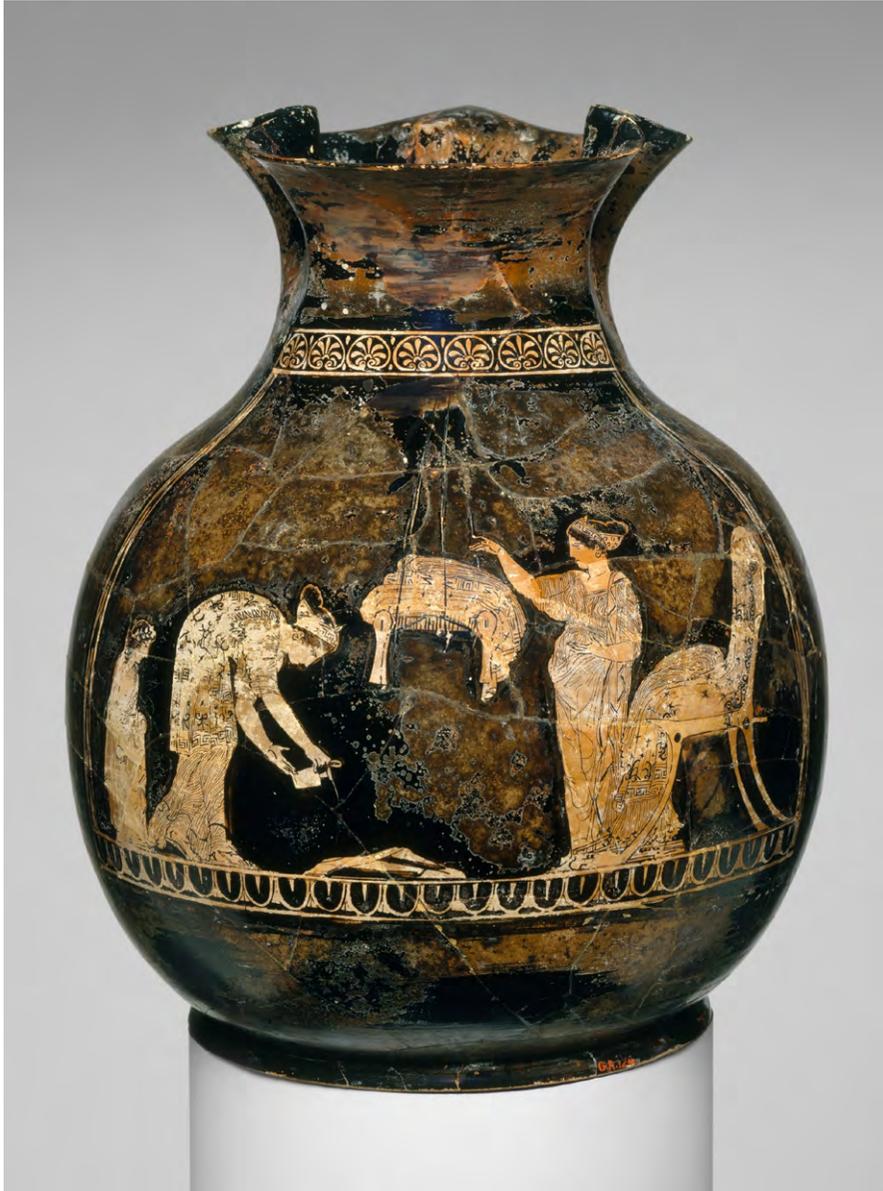
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disposed than before.”

[42] But the most pleasurable of all is if you seem better than me and make me your servant. And you should not be afraid that as your age advances you will become less honoured in the household, but you should trust that as you become older, the better partner you become for me and house-keeper for the children, the more honoured you will be in the household.

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Red-figure Chous attributed to the Meidias Painter c. 420–410 BC: women perfuming garments



Notes

Athenians views of themselves as seen in Pericles' Funeral Oration

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 2.34–2.46

2.34

[1] In that same winter, the Athenians gave a public funeral to the first men who had died in the war. This was a custom of their ancestors, and was conducted in this way. [2] Having set up a tent three days prior to the ceremony, the bones of the dead are laid in it, and each man brings his own dead comrade whatever offerings he wishes. [3] In the funeral procession, cypress wood coffins are carried in a wagon for each tribe; the bones of the dead are placed in their own tribe's coffin. Among these, one empty bier is carried in honour of the missing, or rather, of those whose bodies could not be recovered. [4] Any citizen or stranger can join the procession, and female relatives are present to mourn at the burial. [5] Then they lay the dead in a public monument in the most beautiful suburb of the city, in which war dead are always buried (except for those killed at Marathon, who were interred in the very place they fell for their especially distinguished valour). [6] After the bodies have been laid to rest in the ground, a man chosen by the city, believed to be of outstanding wisdom and honour, gives a speech of fitting praises over their resting place. After this, the crowd departs; such is the funereal custom. [7] Throughout the war, whenever the occasion arose, this established custom was observed in the same manner. [8] For these, the first of the fallen, Pericles son of Xanthippus was chosen to make the speech. When the time came, he advanced from the tomb to a high platform, so that he might be heard by as much of the crowd as possible, and spoke as follows:

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[1] “Most of those who have spoken here before me have praised the institution of this speech, saying that it is honourable for it to be delivered at the burial of war dead. For me, however, it seems appropriate that those who have displayed their valour in their own deeds should be honoured by the deed of another; just as you see here, in this state-funded tomb. And I could have wished that the reputations of so many brave men were not risked in the mouth of one, lone man; standing or falling according to whether he spoke well or not. [2] For it is difficult to speak properly of a matter where it is tricky to convince the audience that even what is correct is the truth. A friend of the dead who knows the whole story, for example, may think that some point has not been communicated with the fullness he wants and knows it deserves. Alternatively, he who is a stranger to the story may be led by envy to suspect exaggeration if he hears anything which is superior to his own character. For men can endure the praise of others only so long as they can persuade themselves that their own abilities at least equal the actions recounted: when this point is passed, envy enters, and disbelief with it. [3] Since this custom, however, was much approved of by our ancestors, it is my duty to obey the law and to try to satisfy your wishes and opinions to the best of my ability.

2.36

[1] I will speak first about our ancestors, for it is right and proper that now, whilst we are mourning the dead, we should pay tribute to them before anything else. They have lived, uninterrupted, in this land, which has been handed down from generation to generation, and by their courage, has been given to us as a free state. [2] But if our distant forefathers are worthy of praise, our fathers are even more so; those who expanded their inheritances, and passed this great empire to us, their sons, after many toils. [3] We ourselves who are gathered here today, most of whom are still (more or less) in the prime of our lives, have increased our fathers’ improvements even further, and furnished our city with

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all things imaginable so she [Athens] might be able to look after itself in both times of war or peace. I will not speak of the military campaigns through which many of these possessions were acquired, or of the zeal with which our fathers or we ourselves resisted our enemies, Greek or foreign. It is too long-winded and well-known for me to detail here. But before I praise the dead, I wish to set forth the following: how, and by what efforts we rose to power, and under what governance and which ways of life did our empire become great. For I believe that such thoughts are not inappropriate for this occasion, and that it will be constructive for this large assembly of citizens and strangers to listen to them.

2.37

[1] The Athenian constitution is not a rival to the laws of our neighbour states; we are a model to others, rather than imitators. It favours the majority, instead of the few; this is why it is called a "democracy". If we consider the laws, they provide equal justice to all in their personal disputes. They also recognise worthiness, so that if one citizen is particularly distinguished, the majority does not honour him because of his social class, but because of his virtue. So long as he can do good for the state, he will not be returned to poverty because of the modesty of his social status. [2] We live freely not only in government, but also in our everyday lives, in which we do not feel jealousy towards each other, or angry with a neighbour for acting in his own ways and doing what he wants; we do not then give him dirty looks, which are unpleasant, even if they are harmless. [3] Although we are free and tolerant in our private lives, this does not make us unlawful citizens: fear of public transgression makes us reverent and obedient to the authorities and the laws themselves, especially those unwritten ones which lay undeniable shame upon those who break them.

2.38

[1] We have also provided our minds with many ways to rest from toil; with established public contests and sacrifices throughout the year; our own homes are attractive and well-prepared, both of which offer daily pleasure and expel

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sadness. [2] All the fruits of the earth are imported into our city because of its greatness, so we are able to enjoy the luxuries of other nations with the same familiarity as those of our own.

2.39

[1] Furthermore, we differ to our enemies in our attention to military training. We leave our city open to all, and never banish a foreigner or prevent him from seeing or learning anything, even if, made public, the knowledge might give advantage to an enemy. We do not rely upon preparation or deceit, but upon own deeds and courage. We also differ in education: whilst our enemies seek bravery with painful training from the cradle, we live at ease, yet are equally prepared to face the same dangers as them. [2] This is the proof: the Spartans do not enter Attica alone, but rather with the aid of all their allies. We, however, enter a neighbouring land alone, and although we are fighting on foreign soil, against opponents defending their homes, most of the time we have no difficulty in beating them.

[3] Our rivals have never yet experienced the full force of our allied military strength, because our efforts have to be divided between maintaining the navy and despatching our own men to countless different places on land. But they, if they encounter and defeat just one part of our army, are as proud as if they had defeated us all. Likewise, when they are defeated, they pretend that they were defeated by our entire force. [4] And yet, when we opt to face danger with valiant hearts formed out of habit, rather than intensive training demanded by law, surely we gain the most by far? We do not anticipate the suffering, although when the occasion arises, we can be as brave as those who never rest from their military training. Thus, our city is equally distinguished, both in war and peace.

2.40

[1] For we are lovers of beauty, yet economical in taste; we pursue knowledge

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without effeminacy. We use our wealth for action, rather than to boast about. It is no shame to admit to poverty, whereas it is a disgrace to do nothing to avoid it. [2] Athenian citizens give equal care to the affairs of the state and to their own affairs, and even those of us engaged in business have a fair understanding of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs not as a harmless, but as a useless individual; and although few of us determine them, we are all sound judges of policy. The great obstacle to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but rather not gaining the required knowledge by discussion before taking the necessary action. [3] For we have a distinctive characteristic of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are brave out of ignorance, but hesitate after they stop to think. Surely the men who should be considered the bravest souls are those who do not shrink away from danger even with the clearest idea of both the pains and pleasures of life.

[4] In good deeds, we are again unlike others. We build friendships out of co-operation, not by receiving favours. Indeed, he who grants a favour is the better friend, because he will save the thanks owed to him by the one to whom he granted it. The recipient of the favour is less keen, since he knows that in repaying another's generosity he will not receive any gratitude; he is only paying a debt. [5] We alone do good to our neighbours, not because we have worked out our profit, because we have confidence and trust in freedom.

2.41

[1] To sum up: I say that our city is an education to Greece, and that each Athenian citizen in his own right has the ability to adapt himself to the most varied forms of action with outstanding versatility and virtue. [2] This is no idle boast for the occasion, but truth and fact, and my claim is proved true by the power that Athens has won through these qualities. [3] For when in testing times, only Athens among her neighbours is found to be even better than her reputation. No enemy who fights her feels shame at the setbacks he sustains at the hands of such a city; nor does any subject complain of being governed by

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people unworthy of ruling them. [4] For both now and in the future, we shall be admired; our power has not gone unwitnessed, and is demonstrated by mighty evidence. We will not need the praises of Homer, or anyone else whose poetry may delight us for the moment, whose estimation of the facts will fall short of what is really true. With our daring spirit, we have forced open a path to every land and every sea; and everywhere we have gone, we have left eternal memorials of our alliances and enemies. [5] Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died: they could not bear the idea of losing her. So, every one of us survivors must be ready to suffer on her behalf.

2.42

[1] Indeed, if I have spoken at length upon the nature of Athens, it has been to demonstrate that there is more at stake for us than for others who do not have such fortune to lose, and also to establish definitive proof of the greatness of the men over whom I speak. [2] Their greatest praise has been spoken, for the Athens I have saluted is only what the heroism of such men have made her; men who, unlike so many Greeks, can be said to have fame equal to their achievements! It seems to me that a death such as theirs provides the true measure of a man's worth: perhaps the first revelation of their virtues, but certainly their final confirmation. [3] For it is a just claim that bravery in defence of their native land should be like a cloak to cover his other shortcomings; since the good action has obscured the bad, and his merit as a citizen more than outweighed his individual misdeeds.

[4] But none of these men allowed wealth and its prospect of future pleasure to discourage their spirits; or poverty, with the hope of eventually escaping and becoming rich, to tempt them to shield themselves from danger. For their desire above all personal fortune was to exact revenge upon their enemies. Considering this to be the most noble of dangers, they willingly decided to accept the risk, to pursue honourable vengeance, and to leave behind their other wishes. They left the uncertainty of success to Hope, and thought it best

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to act bravely and trust only in themselves in the events which lay before them. So, they chose to die resisting rather than live in submission; they fled only from dishonour, and stood fast in the face of war. In an instant, at the height of their fortune, they slipped away: not in fear, but out of glory.

2.43

[1] And so, these men met their death in a manner worthy of Athens. The living should not wish for a braver spirit, although they might pray for a safer fate: a soul like theirs has an indescribable value. Anyone could go on and on at you about the advantage of a strong defence, which is nothing you do not know already; instead of listening to him, I would make you take in the greatness of Athens every day, until you are filled with love for her. And, when you are amazed by the greatness of her glory, you should contemplate how her empire has been acquired by men who understood their duty, and were brave enough to act upon it. In the heat of battle, the fear of dishonour was ever-present for those men. And, if they ever failed in their endeavours, they would not allow the country to be deprived of their greatness; rather, they gave their lives freely to Athens, as the finest offering they could bring to her feast. [2] Their collective sacrifice was individually repaid, for they each received a kind of personal praise, a reputation, which is timeless, and also the most noble of public monuments. I do not speak of the one in which their bones are laid, but the one in which their glory lives on, and is hailed at every fitting occasion in both word and deed. [3] For the whole world is a monument to famous men; they are not only remembered by columns and inscriptions in their homelands, but there are unwritten memorials to them abroad, not inscribed in stone, but the hearts of men. [4] Take them as your examples, and, believing that courage is freedom, and freedom, happiness, never decline the dangers of war. [5] The unlucky man whose fortunes have no chance of improving has far less reason to throw his life away than the lucky one: if he survives, he is always more inclined to change for the worst, and any fall would have the worst effect on his reputation. [6] For a

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brave man, the combination of cowardice and disaster are far worse than death knocking him down unexpectedly, at a time when he is full of courage, and spurred on by patriotism.

2.44

[1] Therefore, I am not pitying the parents of the dead who stand here before me: I would rather comfort them. You know that you live in the shadow of countless potential changes of fate, and that the ones who are worthy of the most honour shall be considered the most fortunate; whether that is through an honourable death, like theirs, or an honourable mourning, like yours. The man whose fate determines that he should be as happy in life as he is in death is a fortunate one. [2] I know how hard it is to make you see this, when others' happiness will all too often remind you of the pride and happiness which warmed your hearts once upon a time. Sorrow is born not from wishing for these blessings, but from losing them when we have grown used to them. [3] Some of you are at an age when you may want to have other children; you will probably handle your grief better. Not only will your future children help dim the memory of your lost ones, but the city will gain from their births too: she will not be empty, and she will be safer. A man's advice cannot be worth much if he alone has no children who will be caught up in any war or public crisis. [4] To those of you past child-bearing age, I say you should congratulate yourselves for having been happy for the best part of your lives. Remember that your life of sadness will be short, and comfort yourselves with the glory of the dead. For only the love of honour is eternally young; not riches, as some claim, but honour is the joy of men who are elderly and decrepit.

2.45

[1] To all of you who are sons and brothers of the dead, I see that your efforts to emulate them will be difficult. All men, you see, praise the dead, and however outstanding your virtue may be, I dare say you will scarcely be seen even (and I do not say to equal) to come close to them. The living have envy to deal with,

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but when a man is gone, he receives pure, steadfast honour and good-will. [2] And, if I am to speak of female virtue to you, who are recent widows, let me sum it up in this short piece of advice: it is most honourable for a woman to show no more weakness than is appropriate for her sex, and to be least talked about by men; whether for good or for bad reasons.

2.46

[1] Now I have made the speech required of me by law to the best of my ability. Those buried here have already been honoured appropriately, and their children shall also be brought up at public expense until they are adults: this is the prize with which, like with a victor's wreath, Athens crowns her dead and living sons for the ordeals they have faced. For the noblest citizens are enrolled as servants of the states which have the greatest rewards for virtue. And now, when each of you has mourned your own dear ones, you may depart."

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