

# The Golden Age and the Peloponnesian War

The Persian Wars were followed by an era of great prosperity and achievement in Athens. This is known as its Golden Age (479-431BC). Trade flourished and the city became very rich. Athens became a leading city for the arts, attracting the best sculptors, potters, architects, dramatists and philosophers. This security was shattered by the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. It lasted for 27 years (431-404BC) and left the city-states weak and exhausted. Athens never regained its former power.

During the Golden Age, the city was improved and the temples on the Acropolis were rebuilt.



## Pericles

The democratic system was finalized during this time. The most famous politician was Pericles, who dominated Athenian politics from 443-429BC, as he was elected repeatedly. He was a powerful public speaker and usually persuaded the Assembly to vote the way he wanted. One of his most notable achievements was to organize the rebuilding of the Acropolis.

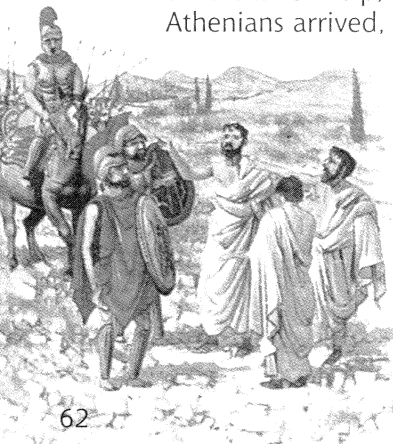


Bust of Pericles

## Relations between Sparta and Athens

Soon after the Persian Wars, relations between Sparta and Athens began to deteriorate. As Athens grew powerful and wealthy, the Spartans felt threatened.

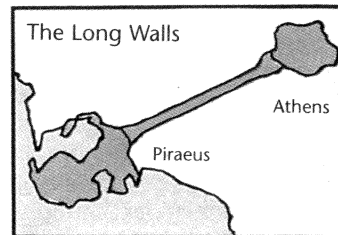
In c.460BC the *helots* and the people of Messenia rebelled against Sparta. The Spartans asked Athens for help, but by the time the Athenians arrived, the Spartans had changed their minds. They were so distrustful of democrats that they would not let the Athenians intervene. The Athenians felt bitterly insulted and abandoned their alliance with Sparta.



## The Long Walls

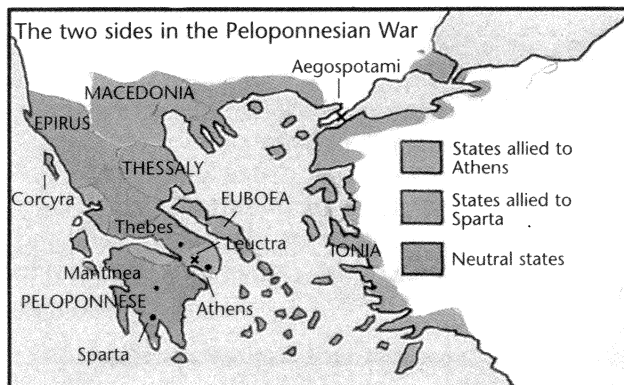
In 460BC, the Athenians began building huge walls linking their city to its port at Piraeus. They are known as the Long Walls. They meant that Athens could not be cut off from its navy. The Spartans thought this meant that Athens was preparing for war, and fighting broke out between the two states in 448-447BC.

After this, Sparta and Athens signed a treaty known as the Thirty Years' Peace, but relations between them remained hostile.



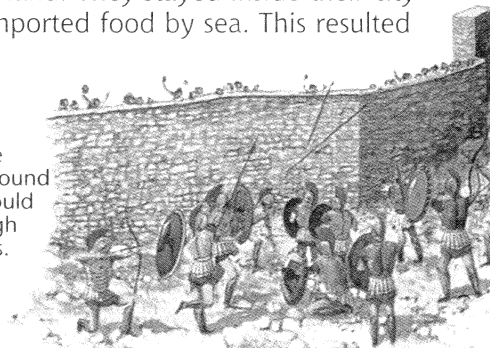
## The Peloponnesian War begins

In 431BC, hostilities broke out between Corinth and its colony of Corcyra (modern Corfu). Sparta supported Corinth and Athens backed Corcyra. This began the Peloponnesian War. It was given this name because Sparta was supported by a league of states in the Peloponnese, which is the southern part of mainland Greece. Athens was backed by its allies in the Delian League.



The Spartans were nearly unbeatable in land battles. They were easily able to invade Attica. The Athenians had a superior navy and a weaker army than the Spartans. They tried to avoid fighting the Spartans on land. They stayed inside their city walls and imported food by sea. This resulted in a long deadlock.

The Spartans devastated the countryside around Athens, but could not get through the Long Walls.

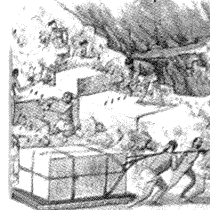


## The Sicily

In 430BC, a... around a qu... both sides w...

But war b... against Athe... Alcibiades pe... Syracuse, in... return to Ath... him by his e... advised the S... Athenians we... their troops v...

Around 7000 of Athenians were in stone quarries



## Political

In 411BC a co... Athens and al... caused Athen... three months... Athenians nee... Alcibiades an... to fulfil their... Support for th... their allies wit...

## The Sparta



Meanwhile the... fighting the Gr... supported by 1... the Spartans to... money to buil... to attack the A...