



## **CA Ancient History A Level Prescribed Source Translations Greek Period Study**

This resource was created in collaboration with James Renshaw, Team Leader for the Classical Association's Subject Advisory Team for Ancient History. We would also like to thank the following contributors for their work in developing and advising on this resource:

Dr John Holton  
Dr Stephanie Holton  
Prof. James Robson  
Dr James Watson  
Dr Rosie Wyles

### **About this resource**

This resource is designed to support teachers and students of the OCR A Level Ancient History. Initially, we have focused on the period studies, but we hope to cover the whole specification in time. The aims of the project are:

- To provide schools with good quality, free online sourcebooks for this qualification.
- To provide translations which are accurate, accessible and easy to read.
- Where appropriate, to give some context to a prescribed source.
- To invite teachers and students to give feedback so that we can improve and amend the resource as appropriate.

### **Accessibility**

The Classical Association is committed to making our teaching resources as accessible as possible. You can find our accessibility statement, which applies to this resource, here:

- Teaching Resources: <https://classicalassociation.org/resources/>

This statement includes information on the principles we have followed and what to do if you cannot access our resources.

### **Guidance for users**

We want our teaching resources to be as useful as possible to a wide range of classroom environments. Whilst we accept that educators may adapt our resources to best suit their learners, we request that any amendments adhere to the principles as set out in our accessibility statement. We have produced this guidance in collaboration with Dr Cora Beth Fraser, Director of [Asterion](#).

## **Copyright**

© The Classical Association, 2023. All rights reserved.

## **Greek Period Study: Contents**

Students and teachers will need their own versions of Herodotus and Thucydides. Translations can be found on Perseus as follows:

[Herodotus](#)

[Thucydides](#)

### **Other Translations**

<a href="#">Timespan 1</a>	<a href="#">Timespan 2</a>	<a href="#">Timespan 3</a>
<a href="#">Timespan 4</a>	<a href="#">Timespan 5</a>	

## Timespan 1

### Source

[The Serpent Column](#)

### Linked Sources:

Naqs-e Rostam inscription [Number 1](#) (DNa) and [Number 2](#) (DNb)

[Xerxes Inscription](#) (XPa)

[Top of document](#)

## The Serpent Column

**Date:** c.478 BC

**Language:** Greek

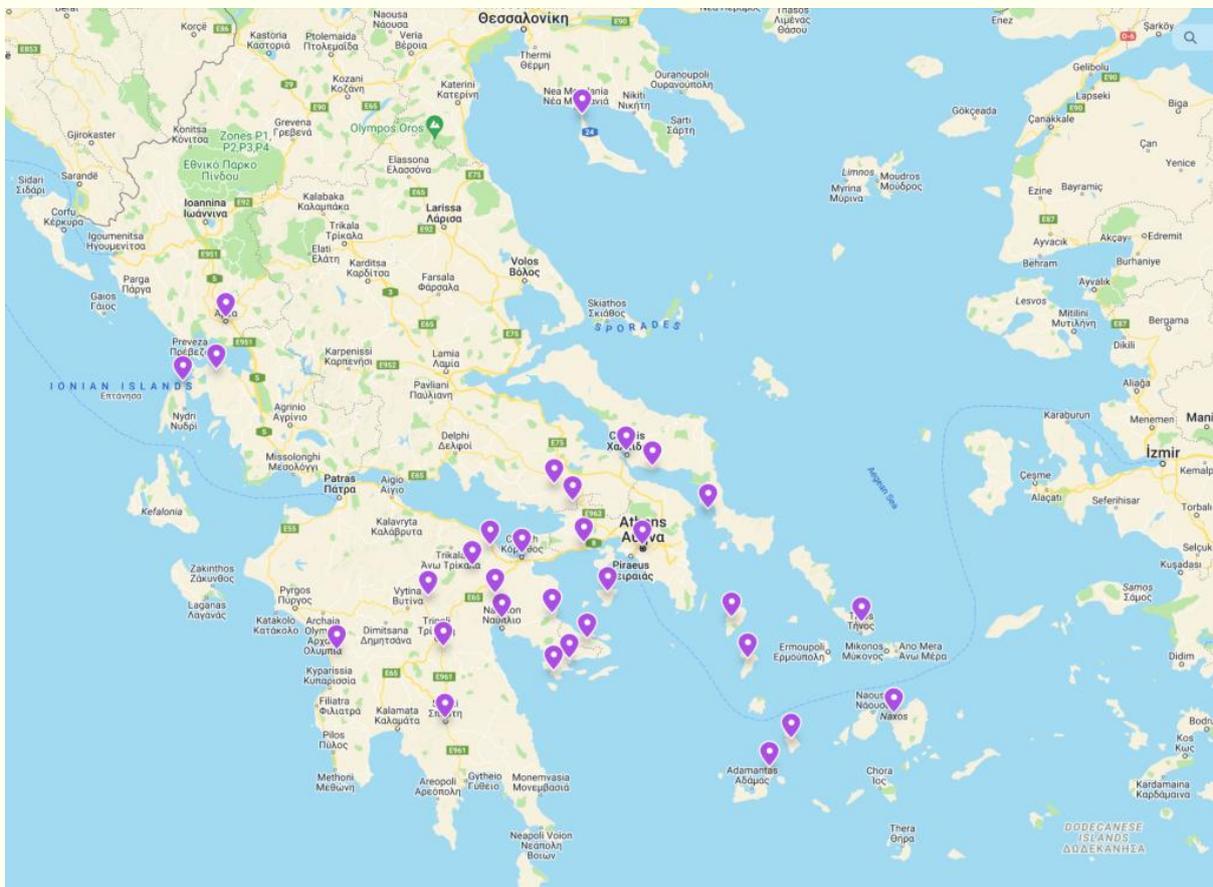
**Material:** stone base; gold tripod (destroyed in 355 BC); bronze column with serpent heads (likely cast from the Persian weapons and armour captured at Plataea)

**Dimensions (H):** serpent column about 5.5 metres high

**Context:** The monumental base is still in place in front of the temple of Apollo at Delphi; the serpent column was removed in about AD 330 by the Roman emperor Constantine to decorate his new capital of Constantinople; it remains in Istanbul

**Further Reading:** [Herodotus 9.81](#); [Livius.org](#); [UChicago](#)

### Map of listed states



A map showing the 31 states listed on the Serpent Column

## Commentary

The Serpent Column was part of an offering set up to the god Apollo at Delphi soon after the battle of Plataea by 31 allied Greek states who fought against the Persians. Delphi had historically been a place where Greek states aimed to outdo each other with impressive dedications, and this offering by so many states was remarkable as one of the first panhellenic offerings at the site.

The column took the form of three snakes, their tails entwined, carrying on their heads a tripod made of gold. The names of the 31 states were listed on the coils of the column, as per the table below. It is notable that the highest engraved coil has the three largest contributors of troops according to Herodotus - Sparta, Athens, and Corinth. Herodotus also tells us that Sparta was the leader of the Hellenic League, and the city is listed at the top of the column.

The column also illustrates how Sparta brought its Peloponnesian League allies into the Hellenic League. 13 of the 31 states are from the Peloponnese, while two others – Aegina and Megara – were probably either in the Peloponnesian League or at least under Spartan influence.

The four geographical outliers were all colonies of Corinth, the second most powerful state in the Peloponnese. From the western coast of Greece came the cities of Ambracia and Anactorium, as well as the island of Leukas. From the northern Aegean came the city of Potidaea, which had especially close links to its mother-city – Corinth sent out one of its citizens there as a magistrate annually (Thucydides 1.56). Herodotus tells how Potidaea gave men to Xerxes' expedition (7.123), but then revolted against the Persians after the battle of Salamis in September 480 (8.126).

It is easy to understand why a number of other listed states joined the alliance. On the island of Euboea, Chalkis was a long term ally of Athens, while Eretria had sent 5 ships to assist the Ionian Revolt and had been sacked by the Persians in revenge in 490. The island of Naxos had also suffered during the Ionian Revolt and was also sacked by the Persians on the 490 expedition. Of the mainland states, the Plataeans and Thespians were the two Boeotian states who were fiercely opposed to Thebes, the largest state in the region which took a pro-Persian line. Plataea had been allied to Athens since 519 and had sent troops to fight at Marathon in 490.

The table below sets out the states on the Serpent Column and the order in which they are listed. The third column adds contextual information from Herodotus 9.28-30 - the number of soldiers that he tells us each state sent to Plataea. **Note that these figures are not given on the Serpent Column.**

<b>Coil</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Number of soldiers given by Herodotus (9.28-30)</b>
12th	Lacedaemonians Athenians Corinthians	10,000 8,000 5,000
11th	Tegeans Sicyonians Aeginetans	1,500 3,000 500
10th	Megarians Epidaurians Orchomenians	3,000 700 600
9th	Phliasians Troezenians Hermionians	1,000 1,000 300
8th	Tyrinthians Plataeans Thespians	200? 600 1,800
7th	Mycenaeans Ceans Melians Tenians	200? - - -
6th	Naxians Eretrians Chalcidians	- 300? 400
5th	Styrians Eleans Potidaeans	300? - 300
4th	Leucadians Anactorians Cythnians Siphnians	400? 400? - -
3rd	Ambraciots Lepreans	500 200

[Top of document](#)

## Timespan 2

[Aristotle](#), *Politics* 1284a38

[Diodorus](#), *Universal History* 11.46–47; 11.50; 12.2.1–2; 12.4.4–6; 12.38.2

[Harpokration](#) s.v. *Attikois grammasin*

[Plutarch](#), *Aristeides* 23; *Aristeides* 24.1–4; *Cimon* 11–12.4; *Cimon* 13.4–5; *Pericles* 23.1–2

### Linked sources

[Chalkis Decree](#) with a parallel commentary in [this document](#).

[Top of document](#)

## Aristotle

Aristotle, *Politics* 1284a38

The behaviour of the Athenians towards their ship-providing allies.

And those people holding power do the same, both in the case of cities and in the case of nations, as for instance the Athenians did in the case of the Samians and the Chians and the Lesbians (for as soon as they held their empire with a firm hand they humbled them in contravention of the treaties).

[Top of document](#)

## Diodorus Siculus

Diodorus, *Universal History* [11.46–47](#); [11.50](#); [12.2.1–2](#); [12.4.4–6](#); [12.38.2](#)

### 11.46-47

Diodorus describes the positive quality of Aristeides' character, following from a section explicitly detailing Pausanias' negative one. He then goes on to outline Aristeides' early leadership of the new 'Delian League'.

46 By contrast,<sup>1</sup> Aristeides' strategic diplomacy with the allies, that is his habit of keeping company with his subordinates and other virtues, made them all, as though moved from a single impulse, lean towards the Athenians. For this reason, they no longer paid heed to the leaders sent from Sparta, while in their admiration for Aristeides and eager attention to him on all matters they saw to it that he received the command over the sea without contest.

47 And so at once Aristeides advised all the allies, who were holding a common assembly, to nominate Delos as the common treasury, and to deposit there all the money they collected; and, in reference to the war that they suspected of coming from the Persians, to fix a payment on all the cities according to their means, so that the total collection was 560 talents<sup>2</sup>. And when he was appointed to organise the payments, he completed the division so accurately and fairly that all the cities were well-pleased. For this reason, as he was seen to have accomplished an impossible task, he acquired a high reputation for justice and because of his high excellence in that area he was given the name "the just".

[Top of document](#)

### 11.50

Diodorus gives an account of the supposed public sentiment and internal debate in Sparta following the loss of their leadership of the Greek alliance.<sup>3</sup>

When Dromicleides was archon in Athens, the Romans elected as consuls Marcus Fabius and Gnaeus Manlius<sup>4</sup>. During their terms of office, the Spartans lost command of the sea without good reason and took that very heavily; for this reason they were angry with the Greeks who had kept apart from them and they were threatening that they would impose on them the appropriate punishment. And when

---

<sup>1</sup> i.e. Aristeides by contrast with Pausanias.

<sup>2</sup> The figure of 560 talents given by Diodorus is given as 460 in other sources (Thucydides 1.96; Plutarch Aristides 24.3). 460 is more likely to be the correct figure.

<sup>3</sup> Thucydides 1.95 gives a different account, and suggests that the Spartans were content with the Athenian leadership, which they regarded as both competent and friendly to them at that point in time.

<sup>4</sup> The year 475/4 BC. Diodorus dated years by the lists of the Athenian archons and Roman consuls.

the Gerousia<sup>5</sup> was gathered they deliberated whether to go to war against the Athenians on the matter of naval leadership.

And likewise, when the general Assembly was gathered, the younger men and the majority of the others were keen to recover the leadership: they believed that if they acquired it, they would gain great wealth, and Sparta in general would be made greater and more powerful, and the households of private citizens would receive a great increase in their prosperity. They were also remembering the ancient oracle, in which the god commanded them to watch out, lest they have a 'lame' leadership: and that oracle, they said, referred to none other than the present circumstances, for their rule would indeed be lame if, of their two leaderships,<sup>6</sup> they lost one of them.

Since almost all the citizens were eagerly in support of this proposal, and since the Gerousia was already in session to discuss it, no one expected that anyone would dare to make a different recommendation. But a certain member of the Gerousia, Hetoemaridas by name, who was a descendant of Heracles and enjoyed favour among the citizens because of his character, did attempt to advise that they should leave the Athenians with the leadership: that it was not to Sparta's advantage to engage in a dispute over rule of the sea. He spoke in support of his unexpected proposal with well-composed arguments and, contrary to general expectations, he persuaded the Gerousia and the people. And so in the end the Spartans, deciding that Hetoemaridas had spoken to their advantage, let go of their eagerness for war against the Athenians.

And the Athenians at first expected to have a great war against the Spartans for the naval hegemony, and for that reason they were constructing more triremes, raising a large amount of money, and treating the allies fairly; but when they learned of the Spartans' decision, they were freed from their fear of war, and they occupied themselves with the advancement of their own city.

[Top of document](#)

### 12.2.1–2

At the opening of book 12, Diodorus lists the good fortunes that followed for the Greeks after the end of the Persian invasion in 479. They secured their freedom, they won glory, and increased their prosperity. Prosperity in particular is framed by Diodorus not simply in financial terms but also how it led to an increase in the arts – here, he gives examples of great artists, philosophers, orators, and generals from the period (significantly, all but one are from Athens).

---

<sup>5</sup> The Gerousia was the Spartan Council of 30 Elders which had significant influence in the state.

<sup>6</sup> 'The two leaderships' means the leadership of both land and sea.

12.2 follows immediately from this, so celebrating the advancement of Athenian power is part of the wider rhetorical and historiographical context in Diodorus of celebrating Greek achievement after the Persian invasion; indeed, he seems to construct Greek achievement as progressing hand in hand with an increase in Athenian supremacy. 12.2 is therefore not a straightforward bit of historical analysis, but a follow-on from the theme of how much Athens had done for the wider Greek world; appropriately, this includes highly rhetorical, almost poetic language.

1 The Athenians in particular had so far advanced in reputation and prowess that their name was distinguished throughout almost the whole inhabited world. For to such a degree had they increased their leadership that by themselves, without the Spartans and Peloponnesians, they had prevailed against huge Persian forces both on land and on sea; and to such a degree had they humbled the far-renowned Persian supremacy that they forced them, through treaty, to liberate all the cities of Asia.<sup>7</sup>

2 But I have written a more specific and appropriately placed account of these matters in two books, both in this one<sup>8</sup> and in the one preceding it<sup>9</sup>.

[Top of document](#)

#### **12.4.4–6**

This passage refers to the so-called 'Peace of Callias', which formalised an end of hostilities between the Delian League and Persia in c.449 BC. The existence and date of such a treaty has been widely debated (including on the grounds that Herodotus and Thucydides do not mention it), and the fourth-century historian Theopompus thought that the text inscribed in Athens was a forgery (see below). However, although there is still some scepticism, it is now considered highly likely that such a peace treaty was developed.

4 But King Artaxerxes, after learning of the setbacks at Cyprus and taking counsel with his friends about the war, decided that it was to his advantage to come to terms with the Greeks. Accordingly, he wrote to the commanders on Cyprus and to the satraps about the conditions on which they could come to a settlement with the Greeks.

5 As a result, Artabazus and Megabyzus sent ambassadors to Athens to discuss a settlement. After the Athenians had listened carefully and sent out ambassadors

---

<sup>7</sup> 'All the cities of Asia' refers to the Greek cities of Asia Minor.

<sup>8</sup> c.f. 12.4

<sup>9</sup> c.f. 11.60-61

plenipotentiary,<sup>10</sup> led by Callias the son of Hipponicus, a peace treaty was agreed between the Athenians plus the allies and the Persians, of which the main terms were: “All the Greek cities in Asia are to be governed by their own laws. The Persian satraps are not come nearer to the sea than a journey of three days. No warship is to sail between Phaselis and the Cyanean Rocks.<sup>11</sup> Should these terms be implemented in full by the King and his generals, the Athenians shall not send armies into territory over which King Artaxerxes holds dominion.”

6 After the truce had been concluded with appropriate oaths, the Athenians withdrew their forces from Cyprus, having won a spectacular victory and accomplished very remarkable terms of peace. And, as chance would have it, Cimon also met his end on Cyprus, wasted by a disease.

[Top of document](#)

### 12.38.2

This passage refers to the transfer of the Delian League treasury from Delos to Athens, probably in 454 BC. Pericles, who became Athens' leading statesmen at the high point of the League's power, was criticised at times for financial extravagance; he was even rumoured to have given 10 talents a year in bribes to Sparta (see Plutarch *Pericles* 23.1).

While the Athenians were maintaining their leadership at sea, they transferred to Athens the money that had been collected on Delos in a common treasury, nearly 8,000 talents, and handed it over to Pericles' safekeeping. This man greatly surpassed his fellow citizens in birth, reputation, and oratorical skill. But over some time he spent a considerable amount of this money on his own affairs and fell ill when an accounting was demanded of him, as he was unable to render a financial report for the funds that had been entrusted to him.

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>10</sup> 'plenipotentiary' means with full negotiating powers and authorisation to make a settlement.

<sup>11</sup> The Cynaean rocks were at the boundary between the Bosphorus and the Black Sea entrance.

Harpokration s.v. *Attikois grammasin*

This passage, quoting the 4th century historian Theopompus, suggests that the so-called Peace of Callias was a 4th century forgery. The point is that only in 403/2 BC did Athens officially change its alphabet from Attic to Ionic (which had extra letters such as eta and omega). So if the Peace was written in Ionic, it must have post-dated 403/2, whereas it was supposed to belong to the middle of the 5th century.

And Theopompus in the 25<sup>th</sup> book of his *History of Philip II* says that the treaties with the barbarians have been fabricated, as they were written up as an inscription not with Attic letters but with those of the Ionians.

[Top of document](#)

## Plutarch

Plutarch, [Aristeides 23](#); [Aristeides 24.1–4](#); [Cimon 11–12.4](#); [Cimon 13.4–5](#); [Pericles 23.1–2](#)

### **Aristeides 23**

Plutarch gives an account of how the Athenian general Aristeides, working closely with fellow Athenian and general Cimon, won over the allies to Athenian leadership in 478 BC. Their leadership style and behaviour contrasts sharply with that of Pausanias and the other Spartan commanders. (See also Thucydides 1.94-95).

1 When Aristeides was dispatched alongside Cimon as general to lead the war and saw that Pausanias and the other Spartan commanders were oppressive and harsh towards the allies, he himself associated with them in a gentle and generous manner and saw to it that Cimon fitted in well with them and was common member on their expeditions: so did he detach the leadership from the Spartans without their noticing, not by means of hoplites or ships or cavalry but rather by good judgement and citizenship.

2 For though the Athenians were held as friends by the Greeks because of Aristeides' justice and Cimon's reasonableness, still more did Pausanias' greedy and demanding behaviour make them objects of longing. For he always conversed with the allied commanders angrily and sharply, and the common rank he punished with floggings or forced them to stand all day long bearing an iron anchor.

3 And nobody could take bedding or food or visit a spring for water before the Spartans, and in fact servants wielding whips drove away those who approached. On these matters Aristeides once wanted to call him out and reprimand him, and as his face tightened Pausanias said that he did not have time and did not listen.

4 Following on from this, the Greek admirals and generals, especially the Chians, Samians and Lesbians, were urging Aristeides to assume the leadership and the allies to transfer their support to him, who had for a long time wished to be released from the Spartans and to transfer to the side of the Athenians.

5 Aristeides replied that he saw the necessity and justice in their proposals, but that to gain the trust of the Athenians some sort of action was needed which, once carried out, would make it impossible for the majority to change sides again. And so, Uliades the Samian and Antagoras of Chios conspired with each other: they rammed into Pausanias' trireme near Byzantium, catching it in between their ships as it sailed ahead of the others.

6 When Pausanias saw this, he got up and angrily threatened to show everyone that the men had struck not just his ship but their own homelands. They ordered him to

depart and be content that fortune had fought on his side at Plataea; for in honouring this still the Greeks would not exact the punishment he deserved. At last, they left, and headed off to the Athenians.

6 In this, the Spartans clearly demonstrated their admirable spirit. For when they noticed that their leaders were being corrupted by the huge amount of authority given to them, they voluntarily handed over the leadership and stopped sending generals into the war, preferring that their citizens act with self-control and stand by their customs rather than rule over all of Greece.

[Top of document](#)

### ***Aristeides 24.1–5***

Plutarch explains how Aristeides set up the payment system for the Delian League (see also Thucydides 1.96-97). For the reference to the 'demagogues' raising the tribute to 1300 talents, compare the Thoudippos Decree of 425 BC.

1 The Greeks paid a sort of tribute for the war even when the Spartans were in command, but now, wishing each city to be assessed proportionately, they asked the Athenians for Aristeides. They appointed him to inspect their territories and revenues, and then set contributions according to each member's value and power.

2 But though he became master of such authority, and Greece, in a way, put all their fortunes in his hands alone, he headed out a poor man and returned poorer still; he made the financial assessments not only honest and well-balanced, but also pleasing and suitable for everyone.

3 Just as the ancients used to sing about the time of Cronus, so too did the Athenians' allies celebrate the tribute of Aristeides, calling it a kind of blessed gift for Greece, especially as, after just a short time, it was doubled and then tripled.

4 The payment which Aristeides set amounted to 460 talents; then Pericles must have increased this by almost a third, since Thucydides reports that when the war began the Athenians were taking in 600 talents from their allies.<sup>12</sup>

5 After Pericles died,<sup>13</sup> the demagogues increased it little by little until it reached the sum of 1300 talents; this was not so much because the war, owing to its length and changing fortunes, was becoming hugely expensive, as that the demagogues had persuaded the people to distribute public money on entertainment as well as the construction of statues and temples.

---

<sup>12</sup> Thucydides 2.13: 'each year they brought in 600 talents in payment from the allies.'

<sup>13</sup> Pericles died in 429 BC.

### **Cimon 11–12.4**

Plutarch describes how Cimon took a new approach to managing the allies, who had started to neglect some of their responsibilities (namely supplying men and ships) now that the Persians were no longer an imminent threat.

#### **11**

1 The allies continued to pay tribute, but they did not supply men or ships as agreed; but growing tired of military expeditions by this time, and no longer needing war, they desired instead to farm the land and live peacefully. Now that the barbarians were gone and no longer causing them trouble, they no longer manned the ships nor dispatched men. The other Athenian generals used to force them to do these things, and indeed by prosecuting those who failed in their duties and punishing them, made their empire oppressive and troublesome.

2 Cimon, however, took the opposite approach when he was general. He did not apply force to any of the Greeks, but by taking money or empty ships from those who did not want to serve in war, he allowed men enticed by leisure to fritter away their time on personal enjoyment, turning from warriors into farmers and traders through their love of comfort and foolishness. In turn, he made a large number of Athenians man the ships and wore them out on expeditions, and in a short time, by using the money from the allies, he made them<sup>14</sup> rulers of those sending the payments.

3 For the men avoiding military service used to fear and even flatter the men who were constantly sailing, training, and exercising – while always carrying weapons – until, before they knew it, they became tributaries and subjects instead of allies.

#### **12**

1 And besides, nobody humbled the Great King, and knocked down his pride, more than Cimon. For he did not relent as the King retreated out of Greece, but followed hard on his heels; before the barbarians could pause and catch their breath, Cimon destroyed and flattened some cities, caused revolts and annexed others to the Greeks, until he had cleared all of Asia Minor – from Ionia to Pamphylia – of Persian soldiers.

2 He heard that the King's generals were lying in wait near Pamphylia with a great army and many ships, and wishing to make the sea by the Chelidonian islands completely unnavigable and inaccessible to them through fear, he set sail from Cnidus and Triopium with two hundred triremes. These ships had been well-built

---

<sup>14</sup> i.e. the Athenians.

under Themistocles, constructed at first for speed and manoeuvrability, but Cimon now made them wider, and added bridges between their decks, so that they could attack the enemy more effectively with their many hoplites.

3 He sailed into the city of Phaselis, and although the people there were Greek, they didn't welcome the fleet and didn't want to turn against the King, so he damaged their land and attacked their walls.

4 However, the Chions, sailing as part of his fleet, were old friends of the Phaselians and tried to soften Cimon while at the same time shooting arrows over the wall with notes attached to report their activities to the Phaselians. Eventually he reconciled with them, on the condition that they paid ten talents and joined them on campaign against the barbarians.

[Top of document](#)

### ***Cimon 13.4–5***

In this passage, Plutarch discusses the alleged 'Peace of Callias' (see note above on Diodorus 12.4.4-6).

4 This action weakened the resolve of the king<sup>15</sup> so much that he agreed to that notorious peace: to always keep a day's horse-ride away from the Greek sea-coast, and not to sail farther than the Cyanean and Chelidonian islands by warship or bronze-beaked galley. And yet, Callisthenes does not say that the barbarian agreed to these terms, but acted this way because of the fear from that defeat; and, indeed, kept so far away from Greece that Pericles with a fleet of fifty ships and Ephialtes with only thirty sailed beyond the Chelidonian islands without meeting even one ship belonging to the barbarians.

5 On the other hand, among the decrees which Craterus collected, is a copy of the peace agreement, in its proper place, as though it had really happened. It is said that the Athenians also dedicated an altar to Peace, and honoured the ambassador Callias above all others.

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>15</sup> Xerxes.

### **Pericles 23.1–2**

Plutarch notes a mysterious expenditure recorded by Pericles during his campaign against the Spartans, who had invaded Attica in 446 BC.

1 When Pericles, in the records of his campaign, had written an expense of 10 talents as spent on 'necessities',

2 the people approved it without inquiring closely or investigating the mysterious sum. But some people – including Theophrastus the philosopher – have claimed that each year 10 talents came into Sparta from Pericles, and with this money he appeased those in office and averted the war, not buying peace but time, during which he could make preparations at his leisure and be more likely to wage a better war in the future.

[Top of document](#)

### Timespan 3

[Aristophanes](#), *Acharnians* 524–539

[Plutarch](#), *Pericles* 23.1–2; *Pericles* 28.1–3; *Pericles* 30–31

#### Linked sources

[Chalkis Decree](#) with a parallel commentary in [this document](#).

[Top of document](#)

## Aristophanes

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 524–539

*Acharnians* was first performed in Athens in January 425 at the Lenaia festival. In this passage, the protagonist Dikaiopolis, an Athenian farmer, is making a speech in which he talks about the origins of the Peloponnesian war. He begins by talking about some ‘trivial and purely local’ discontent being stirred up in Athens against the neighbouring city-state of Megara. He then goes on to outline a chain of events that supposedly caused the situation to escalate.

Dikaiopolis: Some young [Athenian] guys, drunk from playing kottabos,<sup>16</sup> went to Megara and stole a prostitute, Simaitha;<sup>17</sup> and then the Megarians, garlic-stung<sup>18</sup> by the pain, stole two prostitutes from Aspasia in return.<sup>19</sup> And as a result the war began, bursting out on every Greek, all because of three cock-sucking whores.

As a result Olympian Pericles in his anger began hurling lightning, thundering, throwing Greece into confusion, and making laws worded like drinking songs which said that ‘Megarians must neither remain on land, nor in the agora, nor on the sea, nor on shore’.<sup>20</sup>

As a result, the Megarians, becoming ever more hungry, begged the Spartans to get the decree changed – the one passed because of the cocksuckers. As for us, we refused, even though they begged us many times. And as a result, there was an immediate clattering of shields.

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>16</sup> Kottabos was a drinking game, in which players would toss a small amount of wine from their cups at a target.

<sup>17</sup> Simaitha is an attested name in antiquity (derived from *simos*, ‘snub-nosed’), but it is unclear whether or not a real individual is being referred to here.

<sup>18</sup> Megara was known for its garlic production.

<sup>19</sup> Aspasia was a free woman from Miletus who lived with Pericles from some time in the 440s BC. In comedy, she is regularly characterised as a prostitute and/or a brothel-keeper.

<sup>20</sup> The reference here is to the Megarian decree, in effect by 432 BC at the latest, which barred Megarians from the Athenian agora and the harbours of its empire. See Thucydides 1.67 and 1.139.

## Plutarch

Sections: [Pericles 23.1–2](#); [Pericles 28.1–3](#); [Pericles 30–31](#)

### **Pericles 28.1–3**

War between Athens and Samos lasted from 440-339 BC after the Athenians intervened (on the Milesian side) during a conflict between Samos and Miletus over possession of the city of Priene. Pericles led the Athenian forces in their defeat of the Samians. Plutarch here mentions the terms imposed on the defeated party in this passage, with the fine referring to Athenian war costs.

#### **28**

1 In the ninth month, when the Samians surrendered, Pericles tore down the walls, seized the ships, and fined them a lot of money. The Samians paid some of the fine immediately, while the rest they agreed to pay at a later date, handing over hostages. Douris the Samian exaggerates these events, accusing the Athenians and Pericles of much cruelty, but this is not mentioned by Thucydides, Ephorus, or Aristotle.

2 He doesn't seem to speak truthfully when he says that Pericles led the Samian trierachs and soldiers down into the Milesian marketplace and crucified them; and then, when they had already suffered terribly for ten days, he gave orders to kill them – by bashing their heads in with clubs – and throw away the unburied bodies.

3 At any rate, even whenever an incident is of no personal interest to him, Douris is not in the habit of sticking to the truth in his narrative. Instead, it seems here that he has exaggerated the misfortunes of his country to falsely accuse the Athenians.

[Top of document](#)

### **Pericles 30–31**

Plutarch in this passage gives his account of the Megarian decree, and Pericles' relationship to it. Plutarch then includes other factors in the build-up to the war, including the trials of Pericles' friends, prominently including the famous sculptor Pheidias. These show the political and legal opposition experienced by Pericles and his circle at this time from within Athens, which may have caused him to aim for war against the Spartans as a way to deflect attention from politics at home.

#### **30**

1 People say that when ambassadors had come from Sparta to Athens to discuss the matter, Pericles was using the excuse that a certain law forbade the removal of the tablet where the decree happened to be written. Polyalces, one of the ambassadors, suggested: "Well then, don't take it down, turn the tablet to the wall

instead; surely there is no law preventing that?" Although it was a clever proposal, Pericles still did not give in.

2 It seems that he was hiding some sort of personal grudge against the Megarians. In public, he openly accused them of taking a slice of the sacred Eleusinian land<sup>21</sup> for themselves, and proposed a decree that a messenger be sent to them and to the Spartans bringing this accusation against the Megarians.

3 The decree is certainly the work of Pericles, aiming to justify his actions reasonably and humanely. But when the dispatched messenger, Anthemocritus, was killed - allegedly by the Megarians - then Charinus proposed a decree against them which stated 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. It also stated that whenever the generals swore their traditional oath of office, a clause should be added that they would invade Megarian territory twice a year for every year which followed. And finally it stated that Anthemocritus should be buried honourably at the Thriasian gates, which are now called the Dipylon.<sup>22</sup>

4 But the Megarians utterly denied the murder of Anthemocritus, and focused the blame for the Athenian hatred of them onto Aspasia and Pericles, employing those well known and overused lines from Aristophanes' *Acharnians*:

Some young [Athenian] guys, drunk from playing kottabos, went to Megara and stole a prostitute, Simaitha; and then the Megarians, garlic-stung by the pain, stole two prostitutes from Aspasia in return.<sup>23</sup>

### 31

1 So while it is not easy to determine what its original grounds were, everyone alike holds Pericles responsible for not repealing the decree. Even so, some say that he refused out of a high purpose, with sound judgement, and in pursuit of the best course of action; that he regarded the command as a test to see if they would give way and compliance with it as a sign of weakness. Others say that it was more owing to his stubbornness and combative nature, and for the projection of his own strength, that he defied the Spartans.

---

<sup>21</sup> This sacred Eleusinian land was a stretch of fertile land between Athens and Megara, near the Attic town of Eleusis. The land was sacred to the goddesses Demeter and Persephone.

<sup>22</sup> The Dipylon was the main double gateway in the city walls of Athens. It led to the Kerameikos district and to a large cemetery outside that section of wall. The tomb of the same Anthemocritus is also mentioned by the travel writer Pausanias (1.36.3).

<sup>23</sup> Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 524-527 (Plutarch is quoting from the section of *Acharnians* given above this passage).

2 But the worst charge of all, and the one with the most testimonies behind it,<sup>24</sup> goes something like this. Pheidias the sculptor was contracted for the cult statue,<sup>25</sup> as has been related: he was a friend of Pericles who had considerable sway with him, and he aroused jealousy and gained enemies because of this, while others used him in that respect to test the mood of the people and see what sort of a judge it might be in a case linked to Pericles. Persuading a certain Menon, one of Pheidias' assistants, they set him up as a suppliant in the marketplace demanding immunity for revealing information and making an accusation against Pheidias.

3 The people accepted Menon's proposal and a prosecution was brought in the assembly, though the charge of theft was not proven: for, following Pericles' wise advice, Pheidias had from the start worked the gold and wrapped it around the statue in such a way that all of it could be removed and its weight accounted for – which Pericles now ordered Pheidias' accusers to do.

4 But the reputation of his works weighed down Pheidias with the envy it aroused, especially due to his composition of the battle of the Amazons on the shield,<sup>26</sup> where he carved one figure in his own likeness as a baldheaded, elderly man holding aloft a stone with both hands, and he inserted one beautifully rendered image of Pericles battling an Amazon. The pose of the hand, holding up a spear in front of Pericles' face, is ingeniously made as though it was designed to conceal the likeness that can be distinguished on either side.

5 And so Pheidias was taken away to prison and met his death there through illness, although there are some that say it was by poison, provided by Pericles' enemies to try to discredit him. And to the informant Menon, on a motion by Glycon, the people granted exemption from obligations<sup>27</sup> and ordered the generals to take charge of his safety.<sup>28</sup>

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>24</sup> This is probably a reference to Plutarch's source material.

<sup>25</sup> This refers to the huge cult statue of Athena Parthenos in the Parthenon which Pheidias crafted with gold and ivory.

<sup>26</sup> This was the shield which went with the cult statue of Athena Parthenos.

<sup>27</sup> 'Exemption from obligations' was a specific honour in Athens.

<sup>28</sup> The specific mention of the motion's mover, Glycon, and description of the specific terms enjoyed by Menon, probably means Plutarch is referring to a real piece of legislation.

## Timespan 4

[Andocides](#) 3.29

[Aristophanes](#), *Acharnians* 61–71

[Aristophanes](#), *Peace* 619–622; 639–648

### Linked sources

[Thoudippos Decree](#) with a parallel commentary in [this document](#).

[Top of document](#)

## Andocides 3.29

Andocides (c.440-c.390) was an Athenian orator. This passage of his *On the Peace with the Spartans*, delivered in c.391, is notable for two reasons.

The first is that it refers to a Peace made by Epilycus (Andocides' uncle), which scholars place in c.424. In this year Darius II became King of Persia in controversial circumstances, and he may have been looking to secure alliances and stabilise the empire. If so, the Peace of Epilycus would seem to be a renewal of an earlier treaty made with the Persians, and so could be evidence for the controversial Peace of Callias in c.449.

The second point is reference to the Persian rebel Amorges, and Athens' siding with him in his revolt against Darius II in c.414. Amorges was the son of the former Persian satrap of Sardis, Pissuthnes, who had revolted against Darius in c.420, and Amorges carried on this revolt after his father's death in 415, causing the Persian king to support the Spartans instead. In this speech, Andocides is using this Athenian decision as an example of how his city in the past had picked the wrong side - supporting a weaker party against a stronger one - in order to advise them not to make the same mistake again.

Since this passage suggests that there were diplomatic channels between the Athenians and the Persians in the mid-420s, it should be read alongside Thucydides 4.50 and Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 61-71.

We Athenians, who first made a treaty with the Great King - for I must recall past events in order to advise you well - and agreed on friendship for all time, which Epilycus, the son of Teisander, (my mother's brother) negotiated for us, after these events, persuaded by Amorges - the slave and fugitive of the King - cast off the power of the King as though it were worthless, and chose the friendship of Amorges, judging that he was more powerful. In response to which the King, angry with us, became an ally of the Spartans and provided them with five thousand talents for the war, until he destroyed our power.

Aristophanes, *Acharnians* 61–71

*Acharnians* was first performed in Athens in January 425 at the Lenaia festival. The dramatic setting of this passage is a meeting of the Athenian assembly on the Pnyx. The play's protagonist, Dikaiopolis, intervenes in the action when a Herald introduces a number of Athenian ambassadors who have just returned from a delegation to the Persian King, Artaxerxes. These men are dressed in eye-catching eastern clothing.

Herald:        [*introducing the new arrivals as they enter the assembly*] The ambassadors from the King.

Dikaiopolis: King, indeed! I've had it up to here with ambassadors and peacocks and all their empty crap.

Herald:        Silence!

Dikaiopolis: [*catching sight of their elaborate garb for the first time*] Woah: Ecbatana!<sup>29</sup> What a get up!

Ambassador: [*ignoring Dikaiopolis and addressing the assembly*] You sent us to the Great King when Euthymenes was archon<sup>30</sup> on a wage of two drachmas a day.<sup>31</sup>

Dikaiopolis: Alas for the drachmas!

Ambassador: And we certainly wore ourselves out, strolling through the plains of the River Cayster<sup>32</sup>, softly bedded down in covered carriages - we were practically dying.

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>29</sup> Ecbatana was one of the Persian royal capitals.

<sup>30</sup> 437/6 BC

<sup>31</sup> *Acharnians* was first performed at the Lenaia drama festival in Athens in 425 BC, so the point is that these Athenian ambassadors have been away on their diplomatic mission for more than ten years. Real-life ambassadors would have probably received a stipend of one and a half drachmas a day, so this is a generous sum, especially when received for over a decade.

<sup>32</sup> The river Cayster was a river in south-west Asia Minor (and so in Persian territory).

Aristophanes, *Peace* 619–622; 639–648

*Peace* was first performed in Athens at the City Dionysia in the spring of 421 (shortly before the Peace of Nicias was agreed). The play's protagonist, Trygaeus, flies to heaven on a giant dung beetle to rescue the goddess Peace.

### 619-622

When the chorus asks the god Hermes to explain what had caused Peace to be absent for so long, he provides a potted history of the beginnings of the Peloponnesian War, including the following account of relations between Athens and its empire.

Hermes:                   And then the cities that you [Athenians] ruled over, when they realised that you [Athens and Sparta] had turned savage against one another and were baring your teeth, began scheming all kinds of things against you, fearing an increase in their tribute-payments, even trying to win over the most powerful Spartans with bribes.

### 639–648

Hermes goes on to talk about the early years of the Peloponnesian War when 'working folk flocked in [to Athens] from the countryside', accusing speakers in the assembly of repeatedly 'thrusting away' the goddess Peace in an attempt to appeal to the city's poor.

Hermes:                   And [the speakers] tried to intimidate the fat cats and rich men among the allies, accusing them of being on the same side as Brasidas. Then you would tear these men apart like puppies; for the city – all pale and sitting in fear – happily gobbled down any slander that was thrown at it. And they, the foreigners, seeing the blows they were receiving, kept stuffing the mouths of those doing all this with gold. So they made those men rich, but meanwhile you failed to notice that Greece could have been emptied of all its men. And the man who was doing these things was a leather-seller.<sup>33</sup>

[Top of document](#)

---

<sup>33</sup> This is a reference to Cleon. Aristophanes is frequently hostile to Cleon, and often ridiculed him by referring to his family's business running a tannery (i.e. a business which produces leather). The joke was that Cleon comes from new money in contrast to Athens' traditional aristocratic elite.

## Timespan 5

[Andocides](#) 3.29

[Xenophon](#), *History of My Times* 1.4.1–7; 1.5.1–3; 1.6.6–11; 2.1.7–14; 2.1.20–32

[Top of document](#)

Xenophon, *History of My Times* [1.4.1–7](#); [1.5.1–3](#); [1.6.6–11](#); [2.1.7–14](#); [2.1.20–32](#)

#### 1.4.1–7

Cyrus arrives as Persian commander to support the Spartans in 407, and detains some Athenian ambassadors.

1 Pharnabazus and the ambassadors heard about the events in Byzantium while they were at Gordium (in Phrygia) for the winter.

2 At the beginning of spring<sup>34</sup>, as they were journeying to the King, they met the Spartan ambassadors (Boiotios, those with him, and the messengers), who were returning to the coast. The ambassadors said that the Spartans had obtained everything they needed from the King,

3 and that Cyrus, who was going to govern all the lands along the coast and join the Spartans in fighting the war, was carrying a letter bearing the royal seal to all those on the coast. And that the letter included these words: “I send down Cyrus as chief (*karanos*) of those who gather together at Castolus.”

4 The *karanos* is the ruling power. And so when the Athenian ambassadors heard these things and saw Cyrus, they were very keen to journey to the King, or else to set off for home.

5 However Cyrus told Pharnabazus either to hand the ambassadors over to him or not to send them home yet, since he did not want the Athenians to know what was happening.

6 Pharnabazus detained the ambassadors for a time, promising at one moment that he would take them to the King, at another that he would send them home, so that Cyrus would not find fault with him;

7 but when three years had passed, he asked Cyrus to set them free, saying that he had sworn also to guide them back to the sea, since he could not take them to the King. And so they sent them to Ariobarzanes and ordered him to escort them; and he guided them to Cius in Mysia, and they sailed from there back to the Athenian army.

---

<sup>34</sup> 407 BC

### 1.5.1–3

Cyrus promises his support to Lysander, the Spartan admiral in 407.

1 Not long before this, the Spartans had sent out Lysander as admiral, after Cratesippidas had served his term as admiral. Lysander arrived at Rhodes and took ships from there, then sailed to Cos and Miletus, and from there to Ephesus, and there he waited with 70 ships until Cyrus arrived at Sardis. And when Cyrus had come, Lysander went to him with the ambassadors from Sparta.

2 At that time they criticised the actions of Tissaphernes, and they asked Cyrus himself to be very enthusiastic about the war.

3 And Cyrus said that his father had commanded this, and that he himself thought exactly the same way, and would do all this. He also said that he had come with 500 talents. And if these talents ran out, he would use his own money, which his father had given to him. And if this ran out as well, he would even turn the throne on which he sat, which was made of silver and of gold, into money.

### 1.6.6–11

Poor relations between Cyrus and Callicratidas, the Spartan admiral of 406.

6 And when no one dared to say anything except that he should obey those at home<sup>35</sup> and do what he had come to do, Callicratidas went to Cyrus and asked for pay for the sailors;

7 but Cyrus told him to wait for two days. And Callicratidas was annoyed at the delay and angered by repeatedly going to Cyrus' court. He said that Greeks were in a very sorry state because they had to flatter the barbarians in order to get money, and that, if he came home safe, he would do what he could to reconcile the Athenians and the Spartans. He then sailed away to Miletus,

8 and he sent triremes from there to Sparta for the money. And he gathered together an assembly of the Milesians and spoke as follows: "Milesians, I must obey those who rule at home; and I think that you should be very keen for the war since you live among the barbarians and have already suffered very many bad things from them.

9 And you must show the allies the way: how we may damage the enemy - both as soon as possible and as much as possible - until the men I have sent to bring money have come from Sparta,

---

<sup>35</sup> 'Those at home' refers to those back in Sparta.

10 since Lysander's money that was ready here is gone, given to Cyrus as if it were surplus; and when I went to him, Cyrus kept delaying discussing it with me, but I could not persuade myself to wait at his court.

11 But I promise you that I will give deserved thanks for the good things that happen to us while we are waiting for that money. But with the gods' help let us show the barbarians that we are able to take revenge on our enemies without even paying them any respect."

### 2.1.7–14

Both Spartan allies and Cyrus send ambassadors to the Spartans in 406 to request that Lysander be reinstated as admiral. Lysander is appointed vice-admiral for 405.

7 And ambassadors were sent, and with them messengers from Cyrus saying the same things. And the Spartans appointed Lysander as vice-admiral, but Aracus as admiral; for their law does not allow the same man to be admiral twice; however they handed the ships over to Lysander after 25 years of the war had already passed by<sup>36</sup>.

8 And in this year too Cyrus killed Autoboisaces and Mitraeus, who were sons of Darius' sister. This was because upon meeting him they did not thrust their hands through the sleeve [*kore*], which is done only for the King. The sleeve is longer than a loose sleeve [*kheiris*]: having a hand in this would not allow anyone to do anything.

9 And so Hieramenes and his wife told Darius that it would be terrible if he ignored the excessive arrogance of this man; and he summoned him, pretending to be unwell and sending messengers.

10 And in the following year<sup>37</sup>, when Archytas was ephor and Alexius was archon at Athens, after Lysander arrived at Ephesus he sent for Eteonicus from Chios with his ships, and he assembled all the other ships, wherever there were any, and he repaired these and built other ships at Antandros.

11 And he went to Cyrus and asked for money; but Cyrus told him that the money from the King had been spent, and much more in addition, pointing out how much each of the admirals had; but nevertheless he gave some.

12 And Lysander took the money and appointed captains to the triremes and paid the sailors the pay they were owed. And the Athenian generals were also making preparations for their fleet at Samos.

---

<sup>36</sup> 406 BC

<sup>37</sup> 405 BC

13 After this Cyrus sent for Lysander, since a messenger had come to him from his father<sup>38</sup> saying that he was ill and was summoning him. Darius was at Thamneria in Media near the Cadusians, against whom he had advanced with an army as they were revolting from him.

14 And after Lysander arrived, Cyrus ordered him not to fight a sea-battle with the Athenians unless he had many more ships; for both the King and he had a lot of money, and because of this they could man many ships. Cyrus handed over to Lysander all the tribute payments which came from the cities, which were in his personal possession, and he gave him the surplus money; and after reminding him that he was a friend both to the city of the Spartans and to Lysander personally, he journeyed to his father.

### **2.1.20–32**

#### **The battle of Aegospotami in 405.**

20 The Athenians, sailing in close pursuit, anchored in Elaeus in the Chersonese with 180 ships. There, while they were getting their breakfast, they were told about what was happening around Lampsacus and they immediately set sail for Sestus.

21 After stocking up on food, they at once sailed from there towards Aegospotami, opposite Lampsacus; in that place the Hellespont is about 15 stades<sup>39</sup> wide. They ate dinner there.

22 At daybreak the following morning, Lysander gave the signal for his men to board the ships after eating breakfast; having prepared everything as if for the sea battle and exposing the side-screens<sup>40</sup>, he ordered that no one move forward from the line or put to sea.

23 And, just as the sun was rising, the Athenians drew up in line in battle-order for the sea battle near the harbour. But when Lysander did not put to sea against them and it was late in the day, they sailed away again to Aegospotami.

24 Lysander ordered the fastest of the ships to follow the Athenians and, when they disembarked, to observe whatever they were doing, then to sail away and report to him; and he did not disembark his men from the ships before they had returned. He did this for four days; and the Athenians kept on putting out to sea against them.

---

<sup>38</sup> i.e. Darius II, King of Persia

<sup>39</sup> 15 stades is about 1.8 miles

<sup>40</sup> These side-screens were temporary screens of cloth or animal hide set up along the sides of ships to offer greater protection against missiles during battle.

25 Now Alcibiades looked down from his stronghold<sup>41</sup> and saw that the Athenians were anchored at the sea-shore and not near any city, and that they were fetching their provisions from Sestus, 15 stades from their ships, but that the enemy, which was in the harbour and near a city, had everything. He told them that they were not anchored in a good place, but advised them to move their anchorage to Sestus - both for its harbour and for the city; he said: "Based there, you will fight at sea whenever you want."

26 However the generals, especially Tydeus and Megandrus, ordered him to go away, for they were now generals themselves, not him. And he departed.

27 Lysander, however, on the fifth day of the Athenians sailing against them, told those of his men who were following them, that, when they saw that the Athenians had disembarked and were dispersed throughout the Chersonese (which in fact they were doing much more every day, both buying their food from far away and actually being disdainful of Lysander, because he was not sailing out against them), they should sail back to him and raise up a shield in the middle of their voyage. And they did these things as he ordered.

28 Lysander straightaway gave a signal to sail very quickly; and Thorax<sup>42</sup> marched alongside with the infantry. When Conon<sup>43</sup> saw the attacking ships, he signalled to the Athenians that they should come to aid the ships with all their strength. But since they were dispersed, some of their ships had two banks of oars manned, others one bank of oars manned, others were completely empty. Conon's ship and seven others around him that were fully-manned and the Paralus<sup>44</sup> sailed out to battle in close order, but Lysander captured all the others on land. And he gathered together most of the Athenians on the land; but some also escaped to minor fortifications.

29 When Conon, escaping with his nine ships, recognised that the Athenian cause lay in complete ruins, he brought the ships to land at Abarnis, the headland of Lampsacus, and captured from there the large sails of Lysander's ships. He sailed away with eight ships to Euagoras in Cyprus, and the Paralus sailed away to Athens to report what had happened.

30 Lysander took off the ships and the prisoners and everything else to Lampsacus, and among those he had captured were Philocles, Adeimantus, and other generals. And on the day on which these things were achieved, he sent Theopompus the Milesian pirate to Sparta to report what had happened; he arrived within three days and reported the news.

---

<sup>41</sup> Alcibiades had moved to nearby Pactye after his exile from Athens.

<sup>42</sup> Thorax was a Spartan commander based on land.

<sup>43</sup> Conon was the commander of the Athenian navy.

<sup>44</sup> The Paralus was the state trireme of Athens.

31 After this Lysander gathered the allies together and ordered them to deliberate about what to do with the prisoners. At that point there were many accusations made against the Athenians, both the outrages which they had already committed and those which they had voted to do: if they had been victorious in the sea battle, to cut off the right hand of all those captured alive; and that after capturing two triremes, a Corinthian and an Andrian, they had thrown overboard all the men from them; Philocles was the general of the Athenians who had killed these men.

32 Many other things were said, and the decision was taken to kill all of the prisoners who were Athenian except Adeimantus, because he alone in the Assembly had attacked the decree about cutting off the hands; however he was accused by some people of betraying the ships. Lysander first asked Philocles (who had thrown the Andrians and Corinthians overboard) what he deserved to suffer against Greeks, then he cut his throat.

[Top of document](#)