Archidamian War

Policy + Strategy

- Athens
  - Pericles: “his object was to wear out the enemy, not to attempt to subjugate or decisively defeat him” (Bury and Meiggs)
  - To meet land battle = foolish, superiority of Spartan numbers
  - Beginning war Athens treasury 6000 talents, 500 uncoined gold/silver, 40 talents gold plating statue Athana
  - “Pericles gave just the same advice as he had given before... they were to prepare for war and bring into the city their property in the country. They were not to go out and offer battle, but were to come inside the city and guard it. Their navy, in which their strength lay, was to be brought to the highest state of efficiency, and their allies were to be handled firmly, he said, the strength of Athens came from the money paid in tribute to her allies... “ (Thucydides)
  - “For Pericles had said that Athens would be victorious if she bidded her time and took care of her navy, if she avoided trying to add to the empire during the course of the war, and if she did nothing to risk the safety of the city” (Thucydides)
  - Offensive elements:
    - Attacks Peloponnesian fleets
    - Retaliatory raids in enemy territory from sea-borne forces
    - Annual devastation of the Megarid w/ land forces after Peloponnesian invasion of Attica
  - Finance
    - 1000 reserve fund to defend city by attack by sea and 100 best tiremes from each year (same purpose)
    - beginning of the war treasury 6000 talents
    - Allies annual tribute = 600 talents (431)
    - Thoudippos Decree 425/4 raised phoros approx. 1500 talents

- Sparta
  - Aim: destruction of Athenian empire + resources → walls (secure against Spartan army, fleet [command of seas]), empire (provides money), ‘freedom for the Greeks,’ fear Athenian power, wish restore sole hegemonic position
  - Traditional approach, history 446 BC invade → Athens made peace and gave up land empire
  - Land invasion of Attica most years from 431-425
    - Aim provoke Athenians fight to protect crops/if they destroy crops → starve into submission
  - Alternate strategy: incite rebellion allies → required navy able beat Athens
    - Corinthians: “There exist for us other ways of waging war – by encouraging their allies to revolt, especially as this would deprive
them of their income on which their strength depends, and the planting of forts in their territory” (432)

- Archidamus: Peloponnesian had ‘neither money in the public treasury nor [could they] raise money from taxation’
- Any naval combat, inferior in ships/sailors/tactics

- “The Spartans... believed that they could destroy the power of Athens in a few years by laying waste her land” (Thucydides)
- “Some though that, if the Peloponnesians invaded Attica, Athens might survive for a year, and while others put the figure at 2 or 3 years, no one imagined she could last for more than that” (Thucydides)
- Defeat at Pylos 425 + capture 120 Spartiates tipped balance
  - 424-422 Brasidas + ‘helot’ hoplites damage Athens via campaigns in Thracian region

“The key to the war is the fundamental fact that it was waged between a power which was mainly continental and a power which was mainly maritime”

**Events**

- 431: Plataea
  - Thebes ambitious exert leadership in Boeotia
  - Thebes strategic value want capture Plataea (deep hatred between 2 states)
  - 300 Thebans secretly let into city by oligarchic faction: aim removing democratics
  - 180 Thebans captured + rest withdrew
  - Plataea killed hostages
  - From 429 Spartans support Thebans
  - Thebans action against Plataea last 4 years

- 431: Invasion of Attica
  - Attack of Plataea breached the peace
  - Athenian preparation → sheep + cattle to Euboea, families within the city/Piraeus/Long Walls
  - Attic grain ripe → ravage Eleusis
  - Peloponnesian force build up at Isthmus (24 000 hoplites under King Archidamus. Boeotians, Locrians, Phocians 10000 hoplites + 1000 cavalry)
  - Plutarch: Athens was facing ’60 000 Peloponnesian + Boeotian hoplites’
  - Beseige Oenoe on border, abandoned May 431
  - Destroy Attic farms and crops
  - Archidamus’ forces Archarnae (largest deme, city’s nobility → provocative tactic) Athens + wait Athenian engagement
  - Envoy sent Athens: ask Athenians to yield
  - Pericles order no communication + envoy turned away muttered “This day will be the very beginning of great evils for the Hellenes” (Thucydides)
  - Thucydides: Pericles refuse call Assembly groups may ‘make a mistake by obeying their anger instead of their judgement’
Athens plague

Revolt of Lesbos, led by Mytilene 428 BC
- “It was a protest of the Hellenic instinct for absolute autonomy against an empire such as the Athenian” (Bury)
- Lesbos independent, own fleet, no ‘phoros’
- Oligarchs Mytilene aim unite Lesbos + approach Sparta (unwilling)
- Build defensive walls, block harbour, increase navy and send Black sea grain and mercenary bowmen
- Athens warned planned secession
- Athenians 40 triremes seige city, await reinforcements (Athens, Imbros, Lemnos)
- Envoys Mytilene → Peloponnesse
  - “It is not in Attica, as some people think, that the war will be won or lost, but in the countries from which Attica draws her strength... If you give us your wholehearted support you will gain yourselves a state which has a large navy (which is the thing you need most); you will be in a much better position for breaking the power of Athens by detaching her allies from her...”
- Lesbos joined Spartan alliance, Peloponnesians agreed attack Attica land and sea + send fleet Lesbos: belief Athens weakened by plague
- Athens difficulty rowers – thetes – (plague), every hoplite citizen = rower + some metic
- Peloponnesians (harvest time) reluctance attack Attica – invasion abandoned
- Athens send 100 ships attack Peloponnesian coast
- Athens ships + 1000 hoplites → Lesbos, command Paches + beseige
- seige Mytilene: increase tribute from allies “Being in need of money for the siege, they themselves introdyced for the first time a direct tax in the amount of 200 talents”
- Spartan arrival too late, Mytilenians surrender
- Bury: “The Lesbians had a large fleet; and the Athenians were feeling so severely the effects of the plague and of the war that the rebellion had a good prospect of success if it had been energetically supported by the Peloponnesians”

Mytilene Debate
- Thucydides comment: “Each grasping at supremacy – they ended by committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whim of the multitude”
- Mood anger, Ekklesia vote put ringleaders death + “the entire adult male population of Mytline and to make slaves of the women and children”: influence Cleon
- Following day reconsider: debate Cleon + Diodotus
  - Cleon:
    - revolt act calculated aggression, by ally, took sides w/ enemy
    - Athenian empire = ‘tyranny’ → hold by force “Your leadership depends on superior strength, not on any goodwill of theirs”
    - Should suffer death sentence and enslavement
    - “make an example of them to your other allies”