

## F. The Third Persian Campaign (480-479 BC) (cont.)

### 1. Greek Preparations for a Last Stand

- a) With the Persians advancing into the heart of Greece, the Greeks sought the advice of the Oracle at Delphi. The Oracle gave the following advice:

*"Far-seeing Zeus grants to thrice-born Athena a wooden wall,  
The only place not to be sacked, it will help you and your children.  
Do not wait for the great host coming from the continent,  
Cavalry and foot soldiers; turn your back and withdraw from the foe.  
Eventually you will stand opposite them.  
O divine Salamis, you will destroy the sons of women..."*

- b) The Athenian leader Themistocles attempted to fashion an interpretation of this message that was militarily sound. He advised that the Athenians should withdraw from Athens to Salamis (an island near Athens) where they would be protected by "wooden wall" of the Greek fleet.
- c) The Persians found Athens abandoned, and they destroyed it.

### 2. Battle of Salamis (480)

- a) Salamis was surrounded by narrow waterways, where the Persian fleet could not attack all at once.
- b) The Greeks attacked the best Persian ships first. Once these were defeated, the battle turned in favor of the Greeks.
- c) Without a navy, Xerxes had to withdraw from Greece because the Greeks could destroy his bridge at the Hellespont and cut off his supply lines from Asia.

### 3. Battle of Plataea and the End of the War in Greece (479)

- a) Xerxes withdrew with half his army, leaving his brother-in-law Mardonius to try to win the land war with the remaining army.
- b) The Greeks assembled a combined force of 100,000 men and defeated Mardonius at the Battle of Plataea in 479.
- c) The remaining Persians withdrew and Persia was no longer a threat to Greece.

## G. The War Continues after 479

### 1. Athens takes the lead

- a) Immediately after the Persians were defeated the Athenians began to rebuild their city.
- b) In order to continue attacking Persia, Athens formed an alliance called the Delian League.

- c) Athens had the largest military in the alliance and was the leader. Sparta was not invited to participate.

## 2. The Athenian Empire

- a) At first, the Delian League was a voluntary alliance, in which member states contributed either ships or money to build them.
- b) Many cities preferred to send money rather than build ships and provide crews to participate in the ongoing war.
- c) As the war progressed, and the Persians were in retreat, some cities, starting with the island of Naxos in 466 BC, decided that they no longer wished to contribute.
- d) Athens, spurred by a violent obsession to destroy the Persians, refused to accept that member states could withdraw from the alliance. Athens conquered Naxos, and forced its people to remain in the league as tributary members.
- e) Other city-states followed suit, and each in turn was subjugated by Athens. (While many had contributed money to the league, Athens had always built more ships. It was now by far the strongest naval power in Greece.)
- f) Soon the voluntary alliance had become an Athenian Empire.

## 3. Sparta after 479

- a) Many of the cities that Athens subjugated turned to Sparta for help, however, Sparta was unable to render assistance, even if it had wanted to.
- b) Sparta's slaves revolted in the Third Messenian War (464-456 BC). This absorbed all Sparta's resources.
- c) Athens actually agreed to help Sparta put down the revolt, but the Spartans were suspicious of Athens and turned away their army.
- d) If the two had found a way to continue cooperating, it is hard to predict how differently history would have turned out. Maybe Greece would have become even more glorious than it did.

## 4. A Spark

- a) Greece was now divided into two great alliances: the Athenian Empire, and the Spartan Peloponnesian Alliance.
- b) The two sides almost went to war when the people of Thebes rebelled against the Dorian aristocracy there.
  - i) Athens sent an army to Thebes to assist in the establishment of a democracy. Sparta sent an army to help restore the aristocracy.
  - ii) The two sides fought at the Battle of Tanagra (457 BC). It was the first time Athenians and Spartans had fought against each other since the time the Spartans had helped free Athens from its tyrannoi.
- c) Neither Sparta nor Athens wanted to fight another war so soon after fighting the Persians. They agreed to the Thirty Years' Peace in 445 BC.

## **II. The Athenian Golden Age (449 – c.429/c.399 BC)**

For the first time in 50 years, the Greek world was at peace. The threat of Persia was gone. The Greeks could return to leading their own lives. As wonderful as peace is in any time and place, there may never have been such a wonderful time of progress as the *Athenian Golden Age* that came from this particular peace. If the modern world comes from the *Renaissance* or rebirth of Greek ideas and values, then the Athenian Golden Age is the *birth itself*—the one original, irreplaceable beginning of life beyond the archaic plateau!

### A. A New World of Ideas

#### 1. Democracy and Education

- a) In the Athens, where every individual was allowed to participate in the government, it was important for the citizens to be able to make good laws.
- b) The Athenians created schools for their children that started at age seven, and taught literature, music, mathematics, and writing, in addition to physical education.
- c) As students grew to adulthood, they could also learn rhetoric (the art of debating) and philosophy.

#### 2. Philosophy

- a) The Athenians invented “philosophy,” which means “the love of wisdom.”
- b) Greek philosophers believed that it is possible to think carefully about important questions using logic to arrive at correct answers that can be used to guide one's life.
- c) Socrates, the first of the philosophers, believed that one must be honest with oneself in order to attain the truth. His first rule of philosophy was “Know Thyself.”
- d) Unfortunately for Socrates, his love of wisdom was not matched by others who were upset by how Socrates revealed their own ignorance by his constant questioning. Socrates was brought up on charges of disrespecting the laws and corrupting the youth. For this he was sentenced to death!
- e) Socrates' student Plato was greatly angered by what Athenian democracy had done to his teacher. He believed that the only proper government was one that was ruled by philosopher-kings. Plato's student Aristotle concluded instead that a democracy had to be limited by a proper set of laws.
- f) The teachings of Socrates, and especially Plato and Aristotle became so important in Europe that the Renaissance painter Raphael created a massive painting for the pope called *The School of Athens*. The theme of the painting is the importance of Greek philosophy to the Renaissance.

### 3. History

- a) The first two great historians lived in Athens at times during the Golden Age.
- b) Herodotus created the first major work of history called “the Inquiries.” Today it is usually known as “the Histories.” His main interest was the story of the Greco-Persian wars.
- c) Thucydides wrote “The History of the Peloponnesian War” (which we are about to learn of next) because he believed that history could teach lessons about the past that would help people make better choices in the future.

### 4. Art and Architecture

- a) There were also many great Athenian sculptors, including Phidias (who made the sculptures of the Parthenon), and Myron (who made the famous *Discus Thrower*). They created sculptures of great beauty and realism that inspired the artists of Rome and the Italian Renaissance (including Michelangelo).
- b) Athens became the home of great new monuments, including the Parthenon, which is now one of the most famous buildings in all of history. Many modern buildings are designed in such a style out of reverence for ancient Greece.