

PEACE OF NICIAS

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1. Letter From the Secretary General

Firstly, it is with immense pride and enthusiasm that I extend my warmest welcomes to all participants of the Kırmızı Çizgi High Schools Model United Nations Conference 2026, taking place on July 20th-21st-22nd in Antalya.

I am Güney Deniz Ala, Secretary-General of this distinguished conference. It is both an honor and a privilege to lead this organization in this position. Model United Nations has always been far more than a simulation, it is a journey. Whether you're a more experienced delegate or a first-timer, with KCMUN'26 I promise unparalleled growth and inspiration.

Our Academic Team: Under-Secretary Generals, Academic Assistants, and Board Members, represent the finest minds in Antalya, each meticulously selected to deliver your committees of exceptional caliber. From beginner to advanced committees, every session has been crafted for the maximum impact. My deepest gratitude goes to my fellow executive team Can Kurnaz, Berkcan Şahin, Mert Sürücü, Erdem Demirci and Çağın Orkan Benzeş, whose unwavering support made this vision reality.

I extend special thanks to the KCMUN'26 participants, whose passion set the standard we strive to exceed.

As we gather, let us draw inspiration from the eternal words of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey: "Ey Türk

gençliđi! Birinci vazifen, Türk istiklâlini, Türk Cumhuriyeti'ni, ilelebet muhafaza ve müdafaa etmektir. Mevcudiyetinin ve istikbalinin yegâne temeli budur. Bu temel, senin en kıymetli hazinendir.”

To delegates: embrace the challenge, defend your interests, and leave KCMUN'26 having elevated your voice on the world stage. I am eager to witness your brilliance. Sincerely,

Güney Deniz Ala

Secretary-General, KCMUN'26

2. Letter from the Under Secretaries General

3. Letter From the Academic Assistant

Dear Delegates,

I welcome you all to the KCMUN'26 "Peace of Nicias" Committee. My name is Nida Demirci and I will be serving as your Academic Assistant of this committee within this highly prestigious conference.

I want to thank the executive team for giving me this chance to make an unforgettable committee with my Under Secretaries General and my brothers Kuzey Karlık and Emre Uyanık who have always supported me.

It is very essential that you read the study guide because it is a document that includes all the events and crises that took place in a too-distant time.

Lastly I wish you all to have three amazing days and have so much fun in the committee. You can contact me via my phone number, which I am going to leave down below, please do not hesitate to contact me if you ever have a question and problem about the committee.

Sincerely,

Nida Demirci
Academic Assistant

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4. Introduction to the Topic

In the spring of 421 B.C. Athens and Sparta signed an agreement which officially ended the ten year Archidamian War. This treaty became known as the Peace of Nicias, after an Athenian commander who had been most important in its creation.

The Peace of Nicias is the short-lived truce Athens and Sparta signed in 421 BCE during the Peloponnesian War. In Ancient Mediterranean history, it is the clearest example of how exhausted rivals can agree to peace on paper without solving the deeper causes of war.

The treaty was negotiated by the Athenian general Nicias, which is why it takes his name. It was supposed to last for 50 years and included practical steps like exchanging prisoners and returning territory that had been taken during the fighting. On paper, it looked like both sides were trying to reset the conflict and stabilize the Greek world.

But the agreement did not remove the real sources of tension. Athens still had an empire built through the Delian League, and Sparta still feared Athenian power. Both sides also had allies whose interests did not always match the treaty, which made enforcement messy. In a world of independent city-states, a peace treaty was only as strong as the willingness of each alliance network to follow it.

That is why the Peace of Nicias quickly became fragile. Even after the signing, distrust stayed high, and skirmishes continued. Some allies resisted the deal, and neither Athens nor Sparta fully committed to the spirit of the agreement. Instead of ending the war, the peace created a pause in which both sides could regroup, negotiate, and test each other.

This failed truce sits between major phases of the war. It marks the end of the Archidamian War and leads into the unstable period that eventually helped set up the Sicilian Expedition. When you see the Peace of Nicias, think less about a true settlement and more about a temporary break in a much larger struggle for hegemony in Greece.

5. Events Leading to the Peace

5.1. First Peloponnesian War (460-446 BC)

The First Peloponnesian War (c. 460–446 BC) was a succession of conflicts involving several Greek city-states and was the first major war in central Greece since the end of the Persian invasion in 479. The name, coined by modern scholarship, makes an explicit connection with the Spartan and Athenian hostilities during the Second Peloponnesian War, but the first war in fact remained for a long time a clash between Athens and other states in central Greece, and settled the competing interests of Argos, Athens, Corinth, and Megara.

The war must be situated within the context of the local struggles between the city-states around the shores of the Saronic Gulf, many of which dated back to around 500, and the confrontations for power and hegemony in the broader Greek world. Local feuds and disputes, individual interests and aspirations, revenge for previous offenses and insults—all contributed to escalate local quarrels into a major war, while the mutual and growing suspicion between Athens and Sparta (and their competition for rank, deference, and hegemony) represents the background for the whole conflict.

Athens had been strengthening its domination over the cities of the Delian League in the decades following the Persian War, and by the 460s it had finally managed to establish undisputed rule over a vast maritime empire, thereby disrupting the balance of power in Greece. The empire resulted not only in unprecedented military activity, including the suppression of revolts in cities (Naxos, perhaps 470; Thasos, 465–463) and the conduct of naval operations against the Persian empire (attacks on Eion and Scyros in 476; a campaign in Cyprus and the Battle of Eurymedon, perhaps 469, but more probably 465), but also in more global interests and strategies in order to protect it from external threats. Sparta, in contrast, retired from the Aegean after 479 and focused on domestic affairs, in particular helot unrest and control over the allies of the Peloponnesian League (the obscure campaigns in Tegea and Dipaea, c. 470–460). Disturbed as well by dynastic troubles, especially the trial of the regent Pausanias and death of King Leotychidas, Sparta appears in the ancient sources as distracted by revolting allies and reluctant to undertake campaigns abroad.

In 464 a new helot war broke out, and Sparta called for Athenian help to lay siege to the helot refuge, Mount Ithome. After two years, however, the Spartans sent the Athenian contingent home, perhaps trying to assert their preeminence over Athens but actually causing offense to the Athenians and their pro-Spartan leader, Cimon. This insult prompted Athenian retaliation, thus activating a chain reaction that ultimately led to the war: in 461 Athens broke its nominal alliance with Sparta (still extant since the Persian Wars) and formed alliances

with both Argos and Thessaly; immediately, Megara broke with the Peloponnesian League and joined its old enemy Athens to counteract Corinthian expansion. The Athenians sent a garrison to Megara, occupied the port of Pegae, and built long walls from the urban center of Megara to the port of Nisaea, thus constructing a barrier across the Isthmus of Corinth and thereby precluding the possibility of a land invasion of Attica from the Peloponnese. They simultaneously embarked on an overseas expedition to Cyprus and Egypt, at the request of Inarus, the Egyptian leader of a rebellion against the Persians, sending 200 ships.

Although the alliance of the main cities in the Saronic Gulf represented a serious disruption of the balance of power, Sparta remained busy for a long time with the 2nd The Classical Greek World helot revolt. Athens, then, took the initiative to consolidate its dominance over the area and in 460/459 launched an expedition against Corinth's ally, Epidaurus. The Athenians disembarked at Halieis but were repelled by Corinthian, Epidaurian, and Sycionian troops. The Athenian fleet later defeated the Corinthians at Cecryphaleia, an island near Epidaurus, thus directly threatening Aegina.

5.1.1. Aegina (458 BC)

Athens and Aegina had been in competition with each other for generations, but recent events triggered a new war. The Athenians sent a great fleet that met the Aeginetan ships off the shores of Aegina. The Athenians came off victorious, and their troops, commanded by Leocrates, landed on the island to lay siege to the city; this lasted until the spring of 457 and ended with the Aeginetans' surrender and incorporation into the Athenian league. The sources offer no numbers for the troops involved, apart from the 70 ships that the Aeginetans lost in the naval battle and the 300 hoplites sent by the Peloponnesians to aid Aegina.

5.1.2. Megara (458 BC)

Seeing the Athenians distracted by the siege and trying to relieve the pressure on Aegina, the Corinthians launched an attack on Megara. The Athenians, in an extraordinary display of determination, decided not to remove the besieging army but called up the oldest and youngest men under the command of Myronides to face the Corinthians. A clash followed before the walls of Megara, but the result was inconclusive: both sides claimed victory, and the Athenians erected a trophy. Twelve days later, the Corinthians returned and tried to erect a trophy, but the Athenians made a surprise attack and utterly defeated them. The Corinthians withdrew in disorder, but most of their troops were surrounded and massacred. With its victories in the Megarid and Aegina, Athens secured the upper hand in the war: Corinthian aspirations were seriously affected, and Athenian domination over the Saronic Gulf seemed complete. In that favorable situation, Athens finished building its own Long Walls to connect the city to the Piraeus harbor complex. The theater of the war then moved to central Greece.

5.1.3. Tanagra (457 BC)

The first intervention of Sparta in the conflict had apparently nothing to do with the previous events: in 458, it responded to a request of small Doris, the legendary homeland of the Dorians, which was now threatened by a Phocian invasion, and sent a considerable army of 1,500 Spartan and 10,000 allied hoplites under the command of Nicomedes via the Gulf of Corinth. The Spartans quickly finished the campaign in Doris and, since the way back was blocked by an Athenian fleet in the Gulf of Corinth, entered the territory of Boeotia and waited there. The whole expedition was probably intended to draw Thebes, Athens' old neighbor and enemy, into open conflict with Athens, thus threatening the only Athenian border that remained unsecured. The sources suggest that some Athenian oligarchic factions contacted Nicomedes, encouraging him to advance against Athens, which would offer another explanation for the Spartan advance across Boeotia. The Athenians, with the help of allied forces, including 1,000 Argive hoplites and Thessalian cavalry, mustered an army of 14,000 hoplites and marched in full force against the Spartans and their allies; Boeotian participation remains unclear. The armies met at the Boeotian town of Tanagra in a battle with heavy casualties on both sides. There is no record of the tactics or events of the battle itself, apart from the desertion of the Thessalians and Diodorus' statement that the battle was fought on two successive days and ended in a four-month truce. Thucydides only says that the Spartans prevailed and, having temporarily restrained the Athenians, immediately forced their way back home through the Megarid.

5.1.4. Oenophyta (457 BC)

The Spartan withdrawal left Boeotia on its own. The Athenians quickly recovered from the defeat at Tanagra and decided to seize the opportunity to put an end to the Boeotian threat. Only two months after Tanagra, they sent an army under the command of Myronides and faced the Boeotian forces at Oenophyta, where they utterly defeated them. The battle remains a puzzle: Thucydides' account is extremely short, while Diodorus' is too long and confusing.

Besides, no certain details about the number of troops involved can be recovered. The consequences of the Athenian victory, however, were crucial, strikingly so in view of the limited attention received in contemporary sources: not only Boeotia but also Locris and Phocis fell under Athenian control, which lasted for a whole decade; the Athenians pulled down the walls of Tanagra and established democracies in several Boeotian cities; Corinth suffered severe reverses; and the Spartans were forced to return home, abandoning any aspirations in central Greece and having their prestige in the Peloponnese seriously compromised.

This period represented the peak of Athenian dominance, when the city displayed an unrivaled maritime power in distant expeditions overseas and its territorial expansionism in mainland Greece stretched from the Saronic to the Malian gulfs. In the following years, Athens maintained an aggressive policy, with naval and land expeditions to the Peloponnese, Sicyon, Thessaly, and Acarnania. But the disaster that put an end to its military intervention in Egypt in 454 (see "Egypt (460–454)" in Chapter 9: The Persian Wars, 492–450 BC), when

all the fleet and crews were lost, forced it to abandon expansion and focus on the preservation of its maritime and land empire. The Athenian change of fortune prompted some attempts at revolt, for example by Erythrae and Miletus in 452, and the need to avoid a war on two fronts led to a five-year truce with the Peloponnesians in 451. Perhaps that very same year, Sparta made a 30-year peace with Argos, thus threatening the Athenian security belt in the Saronic Gulf.

threatening the Athenian security belt in the Saronic Gulf. After a campaign and crushing victory against the Persian fleet in Cyprus in 449 (where Cimon died), the Athenians concluded a treaty with Persia, the Peace of Callias, which enabled them to focus on its empire. Friction with the Peloponnesians was still possible, as is shown by the Athenian intervention in Delphi to return the control of the sanctuary to the Phocians after Spartan interference in the so-called Second Sacred War of 449–447. In this situation of a slow Spartan recovery and Athens' struggle to preserve its imperial hegemony, the reestablishment of traditional oligarchy in Boeotia in 447 opened the last phase of the war.

5.1.5. Coronea (447 BC)

A series of oligarchic moves in several Boeotian cities prompted an Athenian expedition under the command of Tolmides in 447. Initially successful, Tolmides captured Chaeronea and sold the population into slavery, but on his way back to Athens he was attacked by the armies of the revolting cities, which were supported by Locrian and Euboean exiles. A battle took place at Coronea and resulted in a crushing Athenian defeat, in which many Athenians were killed, Tolmides among them, and many others were captured. In order to recover its bodies, Athens agreed to abandon Boeotia and restore the autonomy of the Boeotian cities. At Athens Pericles had argued strongly against the expedition; this had led to accusations of cowardice, especially after the early successes, but his eventual vindication greatly enhanced his reputation for military ability and underpinned his dominance of Athenian politics over the next 15 years.

The defeat sealed the end of Athenian domination in central Greece: control over Locris and Phocis could no longer be maintained, and Euboea revolted the following year. When Pericles, commanding considerable forces, landed on the island to restore Athenian domination, news came both that Megara had revolted as well, destroying its Athenian garrison with the support of Corinth, Epidaurus, and Sicyon, and that the entire Peloponnesian army was approaching to invade Attica. Pericles returned to Athens to face the Peloponnesians, but, when a decisive battle seemed imminent, the Spartans returned home. This decision was hard to explain, and at Athens Pericles was credited with judicious expenditure on bribes to the Spartans, but it left Athens a free hand to discipline Euboea.

The settlement of Euboea in 446 ended the period of imperial adjustment after the Athenian defeat in Egypt and consolidated the position of Athens in the Aegean. Perhaps with that new stability in mind, the Athenians made a 30-year peace treaty with Sparta, restoring the towns and fortresses captured since 460. The peace upheld the *de facto* distribution of power in Greece, accepting Spartan hegemony over the Peloponnese and Athenian dominance over the Aegean. Fifteen years of intermittent fighting settled the

conflicts of interests and policies derived from the Persian Wars, but defined in turn those that led to the (Second) Peloponnesian War.

5.2. Thirty Years Peace (446-431 BC)

The Thirty Years' Peace was an important agreement signed between two powerful ancient Greek city-states: Athens and Sparta. This treaty was made in 446 or 445 BC. Its main goal was to stop the fighting of the First Peloponnesian War.

Both sides were exhausted. The Spartans had had to cope not only with the Athenians, but also with a revolt of the helots, and the Athenians had been fighting both Sparta and Persia. But now, negotiators swore that for thirty years, they would refrain from violence and would ask arbiters to solve any problems that might arise. This was more than just a peace treaty between nations, because Athens allowed the Spartans to swear the oaths on behalf of their allies (the "Peloponnesian League"), and Sparta recognized that the Athenians spoke on behalf of the cities with which they were allied (the "Delian League"). If the two former enemies had not achieved their war aims, they could at least expand their power vis-à-vis their allies

As seen, Athens had to give up some lands it controlled in the Peloponnese region. These included the ports of Nisaea and Pagae near Megara, along with Troezen and Achaia in Argolis. However, Sparta agreed that Athens could keep the city of Naupactus.

The treaty also said that Sparta and Athens should not fight each other directly if one of them wanted to solve a problem through "arbitration." Arbitration means having a neutral third party to help settle a disagreement. Cities that were not allied with either side could choose to join Athens or Sparta. This shows that both sides had official lists of their allies. Athens and Sparta would keep all other lands they controlled until any disputes were settled by arbitration. The treaty also officially recognized both the Athenian and Spartan alliances, which was a big win for Athens and its growing empire.

However, this peace only lasted for fifteen years. It ended when Sparta declared war on Athens. During the peace, Athens took actions that seemed to break the truce. For example, in 435 BC, Athens got involved in a dispute over the cities of Epidamnus and Corcyra. This made the Corinthians, who were allies of Sparta, very angry. Athens also put trade restrictions on Megara, another Spartan ally, because Megara was involved in the dispute between Corinth and Corcyra. In 432 BC, Athens attacked Potidaea. Potidaea was listed as an Athenian ally, but it was also a colony of Corinth. These disagreements led Sparta to declare that Athens had broken the treaty. Sparta then declared war, ending the Thirty Years' Peace and starting the Second Peloponnesian War.

The terms for the peace are as follows:

- (a) The duration of the treaty is to be for thirty years.
- (b) The Athenians are to give up their possession of "Nisaea, Pegae, Troezen, and Achaia, all places which they have seized from the Peloponnesians".

- (c) In case of subsequent disputes between the two parties, Athens and Sparta are to resort not to arms but to arbitration.
- (d) Each side is to keep what it possesses at the date of the agreement of the treaty.
- (e) The Athenians and the Peloponnesians are not to interfere in the internal affairs of each other.
- (f) Each side is free to treat or punish their allies as they consider fitting.
- (g) Lists of the allies on each side are to be included with the treaty.
- (h) Neutral states should be free to choose to join either the Athenian alliance or the Peloponnesian League.
- (i) "Argos is not to be a party to the Peace between Athens and Sparta, but on the unofficial level friendly relations are to be established between Athens and Argos, if they so wish."
- (j) Athens is to recognise Aegina's autonomy and is not to interfere in Aeginetan internal affairs, but Sparta is to recognise Aegina as a member of the Athenian alliance.
- (k) Athens is to retain control of the naval base at Naupactus.
- (l) Athens is to guarantee that inter-state trade shall remain unmolested.

5.3. Second Peloponnesian War

The war can be divided into separate sections; the first spell of war lasted for a decade and was followed by six years of peace before hostilities came to a climax. The first couple of years went poorly for Athens as Sparta began the campaign by causing as much destruction to Athenian land as possible. A terrible plague hit Athens in 430 BC; it was so bad that Sparta decided against attacking its enemy in case its soldiers contracted the deadly illness. Things got worse for Athens when Pericles, one of its most influential leaders, died from the plague.

However, Athens recovered well and under the leadership of Nikias and Kleon, it enjoyed success in the Corinthian Gulf in 429 BC. The Peloponnesians began their Siege of Plataia in the same year. The city was an Athenian ally and the siege probably ended any lingering hope of peace between Athens and Sparta. The Thebans began the assault and succeeded in taking the city after two years.

The Spartans probably thought an early victory was possible, but these hopes were completely dashed as the tide of the war turned against them. Athens enjoyed a couple of significant wins in consecutive years. At the Battle of Olpae in 426 BC, over 1,000 Spartans died. Things looked bleak for Sparta in 425 BC after losing the Battle of Pylos and the Battle of Sphacteria in quick succession.

It was a crucial period of the war; Athens had the initiative, and there was the possibility of Sparta suing for peace. Spartans were always trained to die in battle rather than surrender, but at Sphacteria, 120 Spartans were captured. Athens looked to push home its advantage, and in 424 BC, it launched an expedition against Boeotia and Megara. However, this mission was a complete failure as it suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Delium. Athens lost over 1,000 men in a battle that cost it considerable momentum even though it did take Kythera, a Spartan island.

A one-year truce was called in 423 BC, but as soon as it expired, Kleon led an Athenian army to Thrace. His attempt to capture Amphipolis was a disaster as he died in the

battle. The Spartan hero of Delium, Brasidas, was also killed in the fight. With two warlike leaders now dead, it became easier to create a peace treaty. In 421 BC, the Peace of Nicias was agreed. The deal agreed to restore the situation as it stood at the beginning of the war: Sparta was allowed to keep Plataea and Athens held Nicaea.

5.3.1. The Archidamian War (431-421 BC)

The Archidamian War did not start without serious disturbances in the Greek balance of power. In 433, Athens had concluded an alliance with Corcyra (modern Corfu; more...), and had started to besiege Potidaea. This threatened to reduce Corinth, until then an important city, to a third-rank power. To Sparta, this was dangerous: it needed the Corinthian navy.

The Spartans started to fear that Athens was becoming too powerful but still tried to prevent war. Peace was possible, they said, when Athens would revoke an economical decree against Megara, a Spartan ally. The Athenian leader Pericles refused this, because Sparta and Athens had once agreed that conflicts would be solved by arbitration. If the Athenians would yield to Sparta's request to revoke the Megarian Decree, they would in fact allow Sparta to give orders to Athens. This was unacceptable, and war broke out between two regional empires: Athens and its Delian League, and Sparta and its Peloponnesian League.

When Sparta declared war, it announced that it did so to liberate Greece from Athenian oppression. And with some justification, because Athens had converted the Delian League, which had once been meant as a defensive alliance against the Persian Empire, into an Athenian empire.

To achieve victory, Sparta had to force Athens into some kind of surrender; on the other hand, Athens simply had to survive the attacks. Pericles' strategy was to evacuate the countryside, leave it to the Spartans, and concentrate everyone in the city itself, which could receive supplies from across the sea. Cattle, for example, could be kept on the isle of Euboea. As long as the "Long walls" connected the city to its port Piraeus, as long as Athens ruled the waves, and as long as Athens was free to strike from the sea against Sparta's coastal allies, it could create great tensions within the Spartan alliance.

So, the Athenian position was better than that of their enemies, and it comes as no surprise that the Spartans immediately asked for help in Persia. This is only recorded by Diodorus, who mentions that the Spartans did not just declare war, but decided to declare war and ask for help in Persia. Thucydides also admits, much later, that the Spartans sent an embassy to the east. They failed to achieve their aim, because they were captured by the Athenians.

War broke out when the Thebans, without declaration of war, attempted to capture Plataea during a nightly attack. If it had succeeded, Theban armies could easily move to the Peloponnese, and Peloponnesian armies would have been capable of marching to Boeotia. However, the operation was a failure, and Plataea was to be a major bone of contention for some time.

In 431 and 430, the Spartan king Archidamus II invaded Attica (the countryside of Athens) and laid waste to large parts of it. The Athenian admiral Phormio retaliated with attacks on the Spartan navy. However, it soon became apparent that Pericles' strategy was too expensive, and the Athenian leader was deposed. Worse was to come, because in 429, a

terrible plague (probably typhoid fever) took away about a third of the Athenian citizens, including Pericles. At the same time, the Spartans laid siege to Plataea (text), which fell in 427.

Believing that Athens was about to collapse, the island of Lesbos revolted and Archidamus invaded Attica again. However, the Athenians were not defeated at all. They suppressed the revolt (427) and at the same time embarked upon a more aggressive policy, invading western Greece and launching a small expedition to Sicily to gain support from the far west. At the same time, general Nicias seized the small island Minoa, which controlled the port of Megara. In the following year, the same Nicias pillaged the isle of Melos, and the countryside of Tanagra and Locris; at the same time, the Athenian commander Demosthenes wanted to attack central Greece from the west, but he failed.

Athens had survived and won the Archidamian War. However, Sparta had not been decisively defeated and was - although it regretted that it had attacked Athens - still very strong. And this humiliated superpower was looking for an opportunity to show that it was still a power to be reckoned with. It did not have to wait very long.

5.3.2. The Peace of Nicias

The Peace of Nicias was probably doomed from the start as it wasn't popular with Sparta's allies. The Boeotians and Corinth were against it; especially the part which allowed Sparta and Athens to make changes without consulting their allies. The warring states created an unexpected alliance; each agreed to come to one another's aid if they were attacked. Sparta initiated this agreement due to the fear of the state of Argos forming a powerful alliance once its peace treaty with Sparta expired.

Although the war itself did not restart for another six years, the 'peaceful' period consisted of various skirmishes involving the other city states. In 420 BC, Boeotia formed a new alliance with Sparta whereas Athens allied itself with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis. The two alliances came close to battle on several occasions, but there was no major battle for a couple of years.

The Athenian alliance encountered an enormous Spartan army under King Agis II at the Battle of Mantinea in 418 BC. The Athenian-allied army lost well over 1,000 men while Spartan losses were below 300 according to historian Thucydides. It was a crushing defeat that helped remind the rest of the Greek world that the Spartans were still the best warriors in the region. Even though the enemies had clashed at the Battle of Mantinea, the Peace of Nicias had technically not been breached, so the tense peace continued for a few more years.

Both states were guilty of some terrible crimes in this period. In 417/16 BC, the Spartans executed all the citizens of Hysiai while the Athenians murdered the citizens of Melos. The following three years was a period of stalemate as both states carried out minor actions that didn't breach the peace treaty. The defeat at Mantinea did nothing to dent Athenian confidence, so it answered a call for help from some of the Greek cities of Sicily. Athens had allies on the island such as the Segestans, and they tried to get Athenian help by suggesting that the Syracusans would take control of Sicily thus helping Sparta.

(Explained further in Section 6)

****Sections 5.3.3. and 5.3.4. refers to events in the Second Peloponnesian War but after the Peace of Nicias. (Further explained in sections 6.2. and 6.3.)**

5.3.3. The Sicilian Expedition

Athens launched its aggressive campaign with an invasion of Sicily in 415 BC. The expedition began with Nicias, Lamachus, and Alcibiades as the chief commanders; however, the latter was recalled to Athens to face charges of impiety. He avoided the trial by fleeing to Sparta. Athens sent 200 ships on the expedition along with an estimated 650 cavalymen. It was a reasonable force, but Syracuse had over 1,200 cavalymen.

Aside from the setback of losing Alcibiades, the expedition began reasonably well. A victory at Catane was followed by what should have been a significant victory at the Battle of Syracuse in 415 BC. Instead of pressing their advantage, the Athenians abandoned their camp and returned to Catane. Perhaps the Athenians were concerned about potential harassment by the Syracusan cavalry; this could be the reason why its infantry failed to pursue its defeated enemy. Whatever the reason, it was a crucial error and one that perhaps turned the tide of the war; it certainly impacted the Sicilian invasion as the Syracusans were able to recover and persuade Sparta to declare war on Athens once again.

During the winter of 415-14, the Syracusans raided Athenian camps at Catane and forced their enemies to move to Naxos. The Corinthians sent aid to Syracuse and Sparta also agreed to send a small force. Unperturbed, Athens began its Siege of Syracuse in early 414 BC, and after a promising start, Lamachus was killed during the fighting. Nicias was left in sole charge, and he was apparently a poor commander (although he may have been ill) as the Spartan force under the leadership of Gylippus managed to sneak past the Athenians and join up with Syracuse.

With their combined power, they built a wall to prevent the Athenian attempt to blockade the city. In 413 BC, Athens won a naval and land battle but a second naval battle resulted in a shock defeat. An Athenian general called Demosthenes arrived on the scene with reinforcements but his ambitious attempt to attack the city ended in failure with heavy losses. Instead of retreating immediately, the Athenians followed superstition and insisted on waiting 27 days before leaving. This delay allowed the Syracusans to block their attempts to move by sea and land. The Athenian retreat was a complete disaster as its army was surrounded and forced to surrender. Nicias and Demosthenes were executed, and the survivors treated as slaves.

5.3.4. The Ionian War (413–404 BC)

Sparta reinforced its war against Athens in 414 BC. At this time, Sparta had a very powerful army and navy. Athens had suffered serious losses amongst its sailors and finance to support the war was dwindling. Under the orders of King Agis, the Spartans occupied Decelea, effectively blocking the Athenians from accessing their silver mines. Under constant and relentless attacks from the Spartans, the Athenian empire started to crumble. The Persian

Empire entered the war in support of Sparta. The military commander, Alcibiades, who had fled to Sparta was called back by the Athenian navy in order to help them.

Egypt and Sparta controlled the food sources from both Sicily and Egypt. The only support Athens had at this time, came from Crimea. Under the leadership of Thrasybulus, the Athenians defeated Sparta at Cynossema. Athens also celebrated another naval victory, defeating Persia at Cyzicus by the Sea of Marmara.

Lysander arose as a new leader in Sparta, and together with the Persian leader Cyrus, began to rebuild a new and stronger armada. The Athenian leader, Alcibiades divided his forces, leaving one half one at Notium. This was a fatal decision, as his forces were attacked and defeated by Lysander. By the time Alcibiades returned to Notium, it was far too late to rescue the situation, and he was recalled to Athens. Rather than obey and stand trial, he fled to the Hellespont.

After Lysander stepped down, Callicratis arose as the next leader. He attacked the harbour of Mitylene which was an Athenian stronghold. Athens defeated Sparta by using their new strong fleet at the battle of Arginusae. After Callicratis lost his life in a drowning accident, Sparta attempted to make peace with Athens, but the offer was rejected.

The Athenian navy sailed to Aegospotami in Hellespont. The leader Lysander was recalled and set up his base in the harbour of Abydos, opposite Aegospotami. Lysander then had his greatest victory, crushing the entire Athenian fleet and bringing the war to an end in one battle. He effectively wiped out the Athenians naval power at sea, and closed down its food supplies on land, forcing Athens to surrender on Spartan terms.

After the war ended, Athens was subjected to the rule of the ‘‘Thirty Tyrants’’ for a period of about a year. Democracy was restored in 403 BC. The impact of the Spartan victory in the Peloponnesian War was diminished by their defeat in the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BC. Sparta’s empire and power was finally destroyed years later when Greece was totally conquered by Philip II of Macedon.

6. The Peace of Nicias

6.1. Situation During the Peace

By 421 BC, the Peloponnesian War had been raging for ten years, profoundly affecting nearly every part of the Greek world. When the conflict began, both Athens and Sparta believed that

they could secure a decisive victory within a short period. As the years passed, however, it became increasingly clear to both sides that such an outcome was unattainable. Although each state achieved significant military successes, neither was able to gain the overwhelming superiority necessary to force the other's unconditional submission. Consequently, the war evolved into a prolonged war of attrition in which the two great powers steadily exhausted one another. Agricultural lands had been devastated, trade had been severely disrupted, the economies of many city-states had weakened, and thousands of lives had been lost. By this stage, the exhaustion, uncertainty, and instability brought about by the conflict were felt throughout the Greek world.

During the early years of the war, Athens succeeded in maintaining its naval supremacy and largely preserved its dominance over the Delian League. Its powerful fleet enabled it to control the trade routes of the Aegean Sea and continue collecting tribute from its allies. Protected by the Long Walls, the city remained beyond the direct reach of the Spartan army, while grain and other essential supplies could still be transported to Athens by sea.

Despite these advantages, however, Athens suffered several devastating setbacks. The great plague that broke out in 430 BC and lasted for several years claimed a significant portion of the population, severely weakened the city's military strength, and shattered public morale. The death of Pericles, Athens' foremost statesman, further undermined political stability. In addition, the successful northern campaigns of the Spartan commander Brasidas resulted in the loss of Amphipolis, a city of immense strategic and economic importance to Athens. After a decade of continuous warfare, a growing proportion of the Athenian population favored peace and economic recovery over further military adventures. The leading advocate of this policy was the Athenian statesman Nicias.

Although Sparta maintained its superiority in land warfare, it failed to achieve the decisive victory it had expected. Despite invading Attica almost every year and devastating its farmland, Athens refused to surrender and continued to sustain itself through its naval power. Moreover, the defeats at Pylos and Sphacteria in 425 BC dealt a severe blow to Spartan prestige, resulting in the capture of a large number of Spartan soldiers. Under normal circumstances, the surrender of Spartan warriors was almost unheard of, making the incident a profound shock to Spartan society.

The death of Brasidas, one of Sparta's most capable commanders, at the Battle of Amphipolis in 422 BC further weakened the influence of the pro-war faction. At the same time, the Spartan leadership grew increasingly concerned that the prolonged absence of its army from the homeland would heighten the risk of a revolt by the helots, the state's dependent population. As a result, the continuation of the war had become not only a military burden but also a serious domestic political concern for Sparta.

However, it was not only Athens and Sparta that had begun to experience deep divisions; the alliances they led were also increasingly fractured. Within the Peloponnesian League, influential members such as Corinth, Thebes, and Elis opposed Sparta's willingness to make peace, believing that Athens remained too powerful to be left intact. Likewise, several

city-states within the Delian League had grown dissatisfied with the heavy financial burden imposed by the prolonged conflict. Thus, by 421 BC, Greece was characterized not by a sense of victory but by mutual distrust, economic exhaustion, and widespread war weariness.

It was in this political climate that negotiations between the Athenian statesman Nicias and the Spartan leadership culminated in the signing of the Peace of Nicias. Both sides accepted the treaty not because either had defeated the other, but because they had come to recognize that the war was no longer sustainable under the existing circumstances. Even so, the peace rested on fragile foundations from the very beginning. It failed to resolve the fundamental rivalry between Athens and Sparta, and many of their allied city-states accepted the agreement only reluctantly. For this reason, the Peace of Nicias is remembered not as a lasting settlement, but as a temporary respite sought by two exhausted great powers rather than a definitive end to their conflict.

One of the principal reasons behind the desire for peace was the approaching expiration of the thirty-year peace treaty between Sparta and Argos, Sparta's longstanding rival in the Peloponnese. With the treaty nearing its end, the Spartan leadership was unwilling to risk fighting wars on two fronts simultaneously—against both Athens and a potentially hostile Argos. This strategic concern became one of the strongest incentives for Sparta to pursue a negotiated settlement.

In Athens, the political balance also shifted in favor of peace following the death of the popular general and influential war advocate Cleon. His death weakened the pro-war faction and allowed supporters of reconciliation, led by Nicias, to gain greater influence within the Assembly. As a result, both sides found themselves increasingly willing to negotiate. These circumstances ultimately led to the conclusion of the Peace of Nicias, a treaty that was intended to remain in force for fifty years.

6.2. Reasons for the Collapse of the Peace

The failure of the Peace of Nicias cannot be attributed to a single event. From the moment it was signed, the treaty was never fully implemented, and within only a few years it had effectively collapsed. Several key factors contributed to its failure.

6.2.1. Failure to implement the key provisions of the treaty

First, some of the treaty's most important provisions were never carried out. Both sides had agreed to restore the cities they had captured during the war. However, Amphipolis (one of the cities of greatest strategic and economic importance to Athens) was never returned. The city's local authorities and several of Sparta's allies refused to surrender it, and Sparta either proved unable or unwilling to compel them to comply. From the Athenian perspective, this

constituted a clear violation of the treaty and gradually eroded confidence in Sparta's commitment to the agreement.

Another key provision involved a territorial exchange. Sparta returned Amphipolis to Athens, while Athens returned Pylos (Coryphasium), Cythera, Methana, Pteleum, and Atalanta to Sparta. In addition, the Athenians released Spartan prisoners taken at Sphacteria.

6.2.2 Conflicts between Allies

Second, Sparta had concluded the peace without securing the full support of its own allies, making enforcement of the treaty extremely difficult. When Corinth learned that Amphipolis was to be returned to Athens, it strongly objected because of its own interests in the region. At the same time, the inhabitants of Amphipolis themselves resisted Athenian rule. Influential members of the Peloponnesian League—including Corinth, Thebes, and Elis (opposed the Peace of Nicias), believing that Athens remained too powerful and that the war should continue. As a result, some allies refused to ratify the treaty, while others actively obstructed its implementation. Consequently, the peace agreement never gained unanimous acceptance even within Sparta's own alliance.

6.2.3 Diplomatic moves

Third, Athens soon began pursuing new diplomatic initiatives directed against Sparta. In particular, the ambitious young statesman Alcibiades argued that Sparta's failure to return Amphipolis demonstrated its lack of commitment to the treaty. He subsequently forged alliances with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis (states that were hostile to Sparta) in an effort to contain Spartan power. Sparta regarded these actions as contrary to the spirit of the agreement. Although the treaty technically remained in force, both sides increasingly came to view one another as imminent threats once again.

6.2.4 Distrust complications

Fourth, the profound distrust that had accumulated over a decade of warfare never truly disappeared. Neither Athens nor Sparta believed that the other genuinely desired a lasting peace. Both continued to strengthen their armies and fleets, while minor frontier clashes, disputes among allied city-states, and mutual accusations persisted. Although peace existed on paper, rivalry and hostility continued in practice.

Also the first major blow to the treaty came with the Battle of Mantinea in 418 BC, where Sparta defeated the Argive alliance supported by Athens. This battle demonstrated that the Peace of Nicias had become little more than a formal agreement in name. The final blow came in 415 BC, when Athens launched its massive Sicilian Expedition against Syracuse. Sparta interpreted this campaign as the effective resumption of large-scale hostilities, and open war between the two powers soon resumed.

6.3. Aftermath

Following the effective collapse of the Peace of Nicias, the Peloponnesian War entered a far more aggressive and destructive phase. Although Athens and Sparta initially avoided direct confrontation, they continued to compete through their respective allies. The Athenian statesman Alcibiades, in particular, sought to weaken Sparta by forging an alliance with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis, while Sparta worked to restore and strengthen its own influence. At the Battle of Mantinea in 418 BC, Sparta decisively defeated the Argive coalition supported by Athens, reaffirming its supremacy in land warfare. This victory demonstrated that the Peace of Nicias had effectively ceased to exist.

The most significant turning point of the war came in 415 BC with the launch of the Sicilian Expedition. Athens sought to conquer Syracuse, the most powerful city in Sicily, in order to secure its rich grain resources and expand Athenian influence throughout the western Mediterranean. The campaign was strongly advocated by Alcibiades, whereas Nicias warned that such an ambitious expedition carried enormous risks. Despite his objections, the Athenian Assembly approved the operation and dispatched a massive fleet accompanied by tens of thousands of soldiers.

Shortly after the expedition began, Alcibiades was recalled to Athens to stand trial on charges brought against him. Rather than return, he defected to Sparta and revealed Athens' strategic plans to the Spartans. Taking advantage of this intelligence, Sparta sent military assistance to Syracuse. After a prolonged siege, the Athenian expeditionary force was completely surrounded and suffered a catastrophic defeat. Nearly the entire Athenian fleet was destroyed, while thousands of soldiers were either killed or captured. Nicias, one of the expedition's commanders, was taken prisoner and subsequently executed. Historians widely regard the Sicilian Expedition as one of the greatest military disasters in Athenian history.

The defeat in Sicily severely weakened Athens militarily, economically, and psychologically. Exploiting this opportunity, Sparta permanently occupied Decelea in Attica, cutting Athens' overland supply routes and inflicting serious damage on its economy. At the same time, the Achaemenid Persian Empire provided Sparta with substantial financial assistance, enabling it to build a powerful navy. As a result, Athens, which had long dominated the seas, now faced a formidable maritime rival.

During the final years of the conflict, Athens struggled with internal political instability and deep economic hardship. In 405 BC, the Spartan admiral Lysander virtually annihilated the Athenian fleet at the Battle of Aegospotami. Deprived of its navy, Athens lost its connection with the outside world and was soon placed under siege. Faced with starvation and no realistic prospect of relief, the city surrendered in 404 BC. Under the terms of capitulation, the Long Walls were demolished, most of the Athenian fleet surrendered, and Athens lost its

maritime empire in the Aegean. Thus, after twenty-seven years of conflict, the Peloponnesian War ended in a Spartan victory, fundamentally transforming the political balance of the Greek world.

6.4. Text of the Treaty

[5.18.1] The Athenians, the Spartans and their allies made treaty and swore to it, city by city, as follows:

[5.18.2] With regard to the Panhellenic temples, everyone who wishes, according to the customs of his country, to sacrifice in them, to travel to them, to consult the oracles, or to attend the games shall be guaranteed security in doing so, both by sea and by land. At Delphi the consecrated ground and the temple of Apollo and the Delphians themselves shall be governed by their own laws, taxed by their own state, and judged by their own judges, both the people and the territory, according to the custom of the place.

[5.18.3] The treaty is to be in force between the Athenians, with their allies, and the Spartans, with their allies, for fifty years without fraud or damage by land or sea.

[5.18.4] It shall not be lawful to take up arms with the intent to do injury either for the Spartans and their allies against the Athenians and their allies, or for the Athenians and their allies against the Spartans and their allies, in any way or by any means whatsoever. If any dispute should arise between them, they are to deal with it by law and by oath, as may be agreed between them.

[5.18.5] The Spartans and their allies are to give back Amphipolis to the Athenians. In the case of all cities given back by the Spartans to the Athenians, the inhabitants shall have the right to go where they please, taking their property with them.

These cities are to pay the tribute fixed by Aristides and are to be independent. So long as they pay the tribute, it shall not be lawful for the Athenians and their allies to take up arms against these cities, once the treaty has been made. The cities referred to are Argilus, Stagirus, Acanthus, Scolusm, Olynthus, and Spartalus. These cities are to be allied neither to

Sparta nor to Athens. If, however, the Athenians persuade the cities to do so, it shall be lawful for the Athenians to make them their allies, provided that the cities themselves are willing.

[5.18.6] The Mecenaeans, the Sanaeans, and Singaean shall inhabit their own cities, as shall the Olynthians and Acanthians.

[5.18.7] The Spartans and their allies shall give back Panactum to the Athenians.

The Athenians shall give back Coryphasium, Cythera, Methana, Ptelium, and Atalanta to the Spartans; also all Spartans who are in prison in Athens or in any other prison in the Athenian dominions.

[5.18.8] The Athenians shall let go the Peloponnesians besieged in Scione and all others in Scione who are allies of Sparta, and those whom Brasidas sent in there, and any other allies of Sparta who are in prison in Athens or in any other prison in the Athenian dominions.

The Spartans shall and their allies shall in the same way give back all Athenians or allies of Athens whom they have in their hands. With regard to Scione, Torone, Sermyle, and any other cities in Athenian hands, the Athenians may act as they shall see fit.

[5.18.9] The Athenians shall take an oath to the Spartans and their allies, city by city. The oath shall be the most binding one that exists in each city, and seventeen representatives on each side are to swear it. The words of the oath shall be these: "I shall abide by the terms of the treaty honestly and sincerely." In the same way, the Spartans and their allies shall take an oath to the Athenians. This oath is to be renewed annually by both sides.

[5.18.10] Pillars are to be set up at Olympia, Pythia, the Isthmus, in the Acropolis at Athens, and in the temple at Amyclae in Lacedaemon.

[5.18.11] If any point connected with any subject at all has been overlooked, alterations may be made, without any breach of oath, by mutual agreement and on due consideration by the two parties, the Athenians and the Spartans.

[5.19.1] The treaty comes into effect from the 27th day of the month of Artemisium at Sparta, Pleistolas holding the office of ephor; and at Athens from the 25th day of the month of Elaphebolium, in the archonship of Alcaeus.

[5.19.2] Those who took the oath and poured the libations were as follows:

For the Spartans: Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damagetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antiphus, Tellis, Alcindas, Empedias, Menas, and Laphilus.

For the Athenians: Lampon, Isthmonicus, Nicias, Laches, Euthydemus, Procles, Pythodorus, Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasyclus, Theagenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus, and Demosthenes.

The Defensive Alliance

[5.23.1] Sparta and Athens shall be allies for fifty years, under the conditions to be set out.

In case of any enemy invasion of Spartan territory or hostile action against the Spartans themselves, the Athenians are to come to the aid of Sparta in the most effective way possible, according to their resources.

But if by this time the enemy has laid waste to the country and gone away, then that city shall be held to be in a state of war with both Sparta and Athens and shall be punished by them both. Peace shall be made by Sparta and Athens jointly and simultaneously. These provisions are to be carried out honestly, promptly, and sincerely.

[5.23.2] In case of any enemy invasion of Athenian territory or hostile action against the Athenians themselves, the Spartans are to come to the aid of Athens in the most effective way possible, according to their resources.

But if by this time the enemy has laid waste to the country and gone away, then that city shall be held to be in a state of war with both Sparta and Athens and shall be punished by them both. Peace shall be made by Sparta and Athens jointly and simultaneously. These provisions are to be carried out honestly, promptly, and sincerely.

[5.23.3] In case of a rising of the slaves, the Athenians are to come to the aid of Sparta with all their strength, according to their resources.

[5.23.4] This treaty shall be sworn to by the same people on either side who took the oath on the previous treaty. The oath shall be renewed every year by the Spartans going to Athens for the Dionysia and by the Athenians going to Sparta for the Hyacinthia.^{note}

[5.23.5] Each party shall set up a pillar, the one at Sparta to be near the statue of Apollo at Amyclae, the one at Athens near the statue of Athena on the Acropolis.

[5.23.6] If the Spartans and the Athenians should wish to add or take away anything from the terms of this alliance, they may do it jointly together without any breach of oath.

[5.24.1] Those who took the oath for the Spartans were Pleistoanax, Agis, Pleistolas, Damagetus, Chionis, Metagenes, Acanthus, Daithus, Ischagoras, Philocharidas, Zeuxidas, Antiphus, Tellis, Alcindas, Empedius, Menas, and Laphilus, and for the Athenians Lampon, Isthmonicus, Nicias, Laches, Euthydemus, Procles, Pythodorus, Hagnon, Myrtilus, Thrasycles, Theagenes, Aristocrates, Iolcius, Timocrates, Leon, Lamachus, and Demosthenes.

7. Explanation of the Committee Allocations

Throughout the Peace of Nicias, delegations of 17 representatives from Sparta and 17 representatives from Athens convened to negotiate and uphold the diplomatic agreement. These representatives can be examined in two distinct blocs as Athenian delegation and the Spartan delegation.

Delegation of Athens

- **Lampon (Λάμπων)**

Lampon was an Athenian soothsayer and interpreter of dreams and oracles; he was responsible for prescribing rituals, and overseeing the religious aspects of the city's foundation. Lampon, serving as the official religious adviser of the Athenian state, sat at the head of the delegation to ensure that the peace oaths were considered valid before the gods and that the required rituals were performed correctly. His presence demonstrates the importance the Athenians attached to religious prophecy and the sacred nature of sworn oaths. He was regarded as one of the most farsighted and knowledgeable individuals concerning the costs and benefits of both war and peace.

- **Nicias (Νικίας)**

Nicias was the statesman after whom the Peace of Nicias was named. The treaty bears his name because he was the principal architect of the agreement, the man who persuaded both sides to reach a compromise, and the chief Athenian representative at the negotiating table. He was one of the wealthiest statesmen and generals of Classical Athens and played a decisive role in shaping the city's destiny. Born into an aristocratic family, he inherited immense wealth and was regarded as the richest man in Athens. His greatest advantage was the personal friendship and mutual trust he enjoyed with influential Spartans, which greatly facilitated the negotiations. His greatest weakness, however, was his extreme religiosity and superstition. From personal affairs to major military decisions, he relied heavily on what he believed to be signs and omens from the gods.

- **Isthmionicus (Ισθμόνικος)**

Isthmionicus was a wealthy and noble citizen of Athens. A devoted patriot, he considered it his duty to work for the benefit of the Athenian state. Although he was neither a general nor a prominent statesman, he was well respected within the city. Most of his wealth came from the public bathhouses his family owned and operated in Athens, and the other part was his family's fortune. The reason for his presence in the delegation was the trust and confidence he had among the Athenian people.

- **Laches (Λάχης Μελανώπου Αίξωνευσ)**

Laches was one of Nicias' closest friends and political allies. He was a successful Athenian general and he belonged to the aristocratic class. Recognizing the severe economic damage that the war inflicted upon Athens, he worked alongside Nicias and became one of the strongest advocates for peace. Following the collapse of the Peace of Nicias, he was killed in one of the subsequent battles which Athens suffered defeat.

- **Euthydemus (Εὐθύδημος)**

Euthydemus was a strategos who combined military command with political service, taking part in the Athenian assemblies while also leading troops in times of war. By the time the Peace of Nicias was concluded, he had earned the confidence of both the Athenian Assembly and the aristocratic elite. As one of the senior diplomats responsible for overseeing the terms of the agreement, he served as a member of the Athenian delegation. Following the collapse of the Peace of Nicias, he was appointed as a general during the Sicilian Expedition.

- **Theogenes (Θεαγένης)**

Theogenes was one of the most colorful and ambitious figures in Classical Athenian politics, earning a reputation as a populist demagogue and frequently becoming the subject of contemporary comic playwrights. During the negotiations of the Peace of Nicias, he was known in the Athenian Assembly as a highly effective political operator with a strong understanding of logistics and diplomacy. Ambitious, pragmatic, and capable of shifting his position when politically advantageous, he was also one of the delegation's fiercest opponents of Sparta. Throughout the negotiations, he consistently challenged the Spartan representatives and was known for his aggressive style of debate.

- **Aristocrates (Αριστοκράτης)**

Aristokrates was a genuine Athenian statesman, member of the Assembly, and general who belonged to one of the oldest and most distinguished aristocratic families of Classical Athens.

At the negotiating table of the Peace of Nicias, he represented the city's wealthy aristocratic elite. As a member of Athens' traditional landowning nobility, Aristokrates shared the concerns of Nicias' political faction, which viewed the war as a source of severe economic damage and commercial disruption. Regarded as one of the most trusted figures of the conservative bloc, he played an active role in securing the treaty's approval in the Athenian Assembly and was among the seventeen Athenian representatives who signed the Peace of Nicias.

- **Iolcius (Ίόλκιος)**

Iolcius was not an ambitious political leader or a celebrated military commander. Instead, he represented the continuity of the Athenian state, the authority of the Assembly, and the city's legal and administrative oversight at the negotiating table. A career public official rather than a prominent statesman, his name has survived primarily because of the official seal and signature he placed on this historic peace treaty.

- **Timocrates (Τιμοκράτης)**

Timocrates belonged to one of Athens' long-established and respected families. As an active member of the Athenian Assembly and a statesman well versed in legal and diplomatic procedure, he was selected to serve on the elite seventeen-member commission responsible for approving and sealing the Peace of Nicias.

- **Leon (Λέων)**

Leon came from a relatively poor family but rose through the military ranks thanks to his remarkable achievements on the battlefield. An accomplished strategist with undeniable talent, he earned recognition for his military abilities. Nevertheless, because of his modest social background, he never enjoyed the same level of respect from Athens' noble and aristocratic elite as commanders of aristocratic birth.

- **Lamachus (Λάμαχος)**

Lamachus was an Athenian strategos or general in the Peloponnesian War. Although advanced in age, Lamachus was known for his fiery temperament and his willingness to take bold risks in battle. He was also notoriously poor; during the campaigns he commanded as a general, he even received public funds from the Athenian state to purchase his own clothing and military boots. While Lamachus was widely respected for his courage and military skill, his lack of wealth and aristocratic status often led some of his contemporaries to regard him as less distinguished than other Athenian generals.

- **Demosthenes (Δημοσθένης)**

At the negotiating table of the Peace of Nicias, Demosthenes stood in sharp contrast to the more cautious and conservative generals. Renowned for his innovative tactics, willingness to take calculated risks, and rapid execution of military operations, he was regarded as one of Athens' most brilliant commanders. He represented the military strength and strategic ingenuity of Athens and was considered one of Sparta's greatest military adversaries. His presence at the negotiations served as a powerful reminder of Athens' military leverage, particularly its possession of the Spartan prisoners captured at Sphacteria, which gave Athens a significant advantage during the peace talks.

- **Thracycles (Θρασυκλής)**

Thrasycles was a genuine Athenian general and envoy who emerged as one of the most significant diplomatic figures of the Peace of Nicias period. Shortly after the treaty was signed, several of Sparta's allies refused to recognize its terms. In response, Athens and Sparta agreed to establish a bilateral defensive alliance to safeguard the peace. Thrasycles played a leading role in drafting this crucial alliance agreement and, on behalf of Athens, participated in the formal oath that brought the alliance into effect.

- **Hagnon (Ἄγνων)**

Hagnon was an old-school statesman known for his conservative views and unwavering convictions. Although often regarded as rigid and resistant to change, his long career in public service and his distinguished family background earned him widespread respect.

While he was not particularly well liked, he was recognized as a respected and influential figure within Athenian politics.

- **Procles (Προκλῆς)**

Procles was a highly intelligent and adaptable young envoy, renowned for his quick thinking and ability to adjust rapidly to changing circumstances. In addition to his diplomatic talents, he had also distinguished himself through his military service. His inclusion among those who swore the oath of the Peace of Nicias was particularly symbolic. Because the Spartans had previously associated his name with allegations of misconduct and corruption, the Athenians deliberately placed him at the negotiating table as a political statement and a subtle act of defiance toward the Spartan delegation.

Delegation of Sparta

- **Pleistoanax (Πλειστοάναξ)**

Pleistoanax was the Agiad king of Sparta. He was known for his moderate, conciliatory, and peace-oriented policies. After being accused of accepting a bribe to withdraw from an invasion of Attica, he spent many years in exile before eventually reclaiming his throne, aided in part by the influence of the Delphic oracle. Upon his return, he worked tirelessly to strengthen his position and dispel the reputation of being reluctant to wage war. He became one of the principal architects of the Peace of Nicias, forging a close political partnership with the Athenian leader Nicias and treating the success of the treaty as a matter of personal and national prestige. His presence at the negotiating table served as the highest possible assurance of Sparta's commitment to maintaining the peace.

- **Agis II (Ἄγις)**

Agis II was the Eurypontid king of Sparta, representing the city's second royal dynasty. Unlike Pleistoanax, he was known for his more aggressive and militaristic character. In the years that followed, he would play a leading role in the renewal of the Peloponnesian War. His inclusion in the Peace of Nicias reflected Sparta's dual kingship system, under which both royal houses were expected to endorse major state decisions. Whereas Pleistoanax actively championed the cause of peace, Agis participated primarily as a symbol of official state approval and constitutional legitimacy. His name was included among those who swore the oath to encourage compliance with the treaty among Sparta's more warlike factions.

- **Pleistolas (Πλειστόλας)**

Pleistolas served as one of Sparta's ephors in 421 BC, holding the office of ephor, the highest civilian executive authority in the Spartan state. He was present at the negotiations to provide the necessary legal and administrative approval for the treaty. The official text of the Peace of Nicias explicitly dates the agreement to "the ephorate of Pleistolas" in Sparta. As the senior civilian authority presiding over the oath-taking ceremony, he represented the constitutional legitimacy of the Spartan state and ensured that the treaty acquired full legal force.

- **Damagetus (Δαμάγητος), Chionis (Χίωνις), Metagenes (Μεταγένης), Acanthus (Ἄκανθος), Daithus (Δαΐθος)**

These individuals are generally regarded as either the other Spartan ephors serving alongside Pleistolas or as highly influential members of the Gerousia (Council of Elders). According to the Spartan constitution, the authority of the kings was balanced and constrained by the ephors. Their collective presence at the negotiating table demonstrated that the treaty was not merely the decision of the Spartan kings, but had the full backing of Sparta's civilian institutions, including the ephorate, the Gerousia, and ultimately the Apella (the Spartan Assembly). In this sense, they served as a constitutional guarantee of the agreement's legitimacy. It is highly likely that they acted in close coordination, presenting a united political front and supporting one another throughout the negotiations.

- **Ischagoras (Ἰσχαγόρας)**

Ischagoras was one of Sparta's most trusted military commanders and envoys, having served on the northern front in Thrace. He initially attempted to lead reinforcements to the renowned Spartan general Brasidas but was prevented from doing so. He later traveled to the region to supervise Sparta's governors and oversee its interests there. One of the most contentious provisions of the Peace of Nicias concerned the return of Amphipolis to Athens, making Ischagoras one of the officials most familiar with the situation in the city. Shortly after the treaty was concluded, he was dispatched as a special envoy to communicate the terms of the agreement to the northern cities and persuade them to comply. At the negotiating table, his primary responsibility was to coordinate the military and logistical implementation of the peace settlement.

- **Philocharidas (Φιλοχαρίδας)**

Philocharidas was Sparta's most experienced professional diplomat, having been involved in nearly every major negotiation with Athens throughout his career, including the truce of 423 BC. Well known and respected by the Athenians, he enjoyed a reputation as a skilled and reliable negotiator. As a senior diplomat and mediator, he drew upon his long-standing relationships with Nicias and other Athenian delegates to foster an atmosphere of compromise. He was one of the principal architects of the treaty's diplomatic language and was instrumental in resolving its technical and procedural details.

- **Zeuxidas (Ζευξίδας), Antiphus (Ἀντιφος), Empedias (Εμπεδίας), Alcindas (Ἀλκίνδας)**

These individuals were senior Spartan military officers, members of the Spartiate aristocracy, and experienced diplomats. Their role at the negotiating table was to represent the interests of the Spartan army and the military elite. In particular, they served as military observers and guarantors during the negotiations concerning the safe return of the 120 elite Spartan prisoners captured by the Athenians on the island of Sphacteria, men who belonged to some of Sparta's most prominent families. Their presence ensured that the military establishment fully endorsed the terms of the agreement and the implementation of the prisoner exchange.

- **Tellis (Τέλλης)**

Tellis was the father of Brasidas, the legendary Spartan general whose victories on the northern front had transformed the course of the Peloponnesian War before his death in 422 BC. Although some sources describe Tellis as having served as an envoy, his role at the negotiating table was most likely political and symbolic. Brasidas had secured key strategic gains for Sparta (most notably Amphipolis) which greatly strengthened Sparta's position during the peace negotiations. By including Tellis in the delegation, the Spartans paid tribute to Brasidas' legacy while also signaling continuity with the alliances and personal relationships Brasidas had established in Thrace. His presence embodied both respect for his son's achievements and Sparta's commitment to preserving the influence Brasidas had won in the region.

8. Notes From the Academic Team

As it is explained thoroughly in the study guide, the Peace of Nicias was a very fragile treaty, directed by a more peaceful commander (Nicias) as quote from Thucydides: “Nicias...was a man who had all his life been devoted to the study of virtue, and who wished to leave behind him a reputation for goodness.” After all the wars and violence between Sparta and Athens, both were incredibly exhausted and that’s why Nicias was able to pursue its diplomatic goals for a peace. But all the wars and fighting also had a legacy of deep untrust between Athens and Sparta. Major breakthroughs were achieved, but this deep untrust and failure to comply with the treaty resulted in it breaking in 6 years.

As delegates, you will have the roles of major people from both Athens and Sparta aiming to rewrite the treaty for the better and to ensure compliance to the treaty by all city states participating. Issues that caused the breakdown of the treaty and explained in detail at section 6.2. you will need to deeply understand the issues in order to both support your character's own stance at the issues and to conclude the treaty with most benefit.

Treaty committees are interesting because you need to focus on both getting the most benefit to your character and to create a treaty acceptable by all sides. So you need to know how and when to compromise and not compromise. To achieve that you need to understand your side as well as the opposing side very well because even though we will create a treaty aiming for peace you wouldn’t want to sign a treaty that is non beneficial to your side.

For the Peace of Nicias, there are issues of land, hostages, death of soldiers and commanders, rebellions, attacks, power... all compacted in this piece of history. You will tackle these, sometimes you will agree right away sometimes you will debate for hours on end aiming to get the most benefit while creating a peace treaty complied by all city states.

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