

NIKIAS: AN ATHENIAN GENERAL OF THE FIFTH CENTURY B.C.

by

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ABSTRACT

My thesis is a biography of Nikias, an Athenian general and politician who lived from c. 470 to 413 B.C. Chapter I gives an account of the sources I have used (chiefly Thucydides' History), and Chapter II information about his family. The remaining chapters are a chronological account of his career: Chapter III dealing with the first portion of the Peloponnesian War known as the Archidamian War (431-421); Chapter IV, the Peace of Nikias (421) and the following uneasy years of truce; and Chapter V, the Sicilian Expedition (415-413), the second portion of the Peloponnesian War, which was not concluded until 404. Parts of the thesis cover material not directly pertaining to Nikias but needed for an understanding of his actions.

I have intended as my theme a defence of his career. Most scholars are agreed that Nikias was a respectable man, but decry his abilities as a general and politician. They think of his final disgrace in Sicily and analyse the earlier portions of his career in light of his eventual failure; not considering that Nikias was by then changed into an old and sick man. It is impossible to recreate Nikias as a brilliant politician and strategist; he was not. Nevertheless I hope my account will make readers judge him more fairly than they perhaps have done before.

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CHAPTER I

THE AUTHORITIES

The major primary source for the life of Nikias is Thucydides' History, Books III to VII, and I have based much of my thesis on this. There is some disagreement among modern authorities about Thucydides' treatment of Nikias; De Sanctis and Grote especially feel that he is far too lenient, but I tend to the less common and opposing view, as expressed by Westlake, that Thucydides is quite impartial and does not hesitate to report Nikias' failings, as well as his good points, in character and behaviour, without any apology.

I must state at the outset that I find the amount of space that Thucydides devotes to speeches made by Nikias most extraordinary. Even if the speeches are imaginative artistic devices, and were not in fact delivered (which seems highly unlikely in view of Thucydides' statement in I, 22), their purpose is the same: to emphasize crisis. While Perikles' speeches are more important documents of political ideals, Nikias' speeches are more numerous, and perhaps are meant by Thucydides to depict his views on the losses of Athenian power and ideals. For example, Nikias' first speech¹ outlines a staid, safe policy for maintaining an empire, a policy that

¹Thucydides, VI, 9-14.

is a close imitation yet inadequate reflection of Perikles' lofty aspirations. Nikias' last speech² looks back at the former grandeur of the Athenian forces and hopes the power of Athens may be created again. Some of his other speeches are merely exhortations to his army, but, like those of Brasidas, still contain political sentiments that are of interest to us.

A second primary source is Aristophanes' comedies, in which there exists little doubt about the identification of Nikias.³ The epigraphic evidence augments Thucydides and Aristophanes.

Other primary sources of lesser value are Plato and Xenophon. Occasional references are found in Aischines, Pseudo-Andokides, Aristotle, Lysias, and Demosthenes. Some of these are either dialogues or forensic speeches, and their evidence may be prejudiced according to their theme.

Two important secondary sources are Plutarch and Diodoros of Sicily. In Plutarch's Alkibiades and Nikias are recorded anecdotes concerning Nikias that are not found elsewhere but can presumably be traced through Philistos and

²Thucydides, VII, 77.

³I disagree with Croiset's view (Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens [London, 1909], p. 77) that Nikias is not one of the generals in the Knights. Ehrenberg (The People of Aristophanes [Oxford, 1951], p. 270) supports my position.

Timaïos, sources he names in the beginning of his account of Nikias, and through the comic poets.

Diodoros' History, Books XII and XIII, is important chiefly for an account of the Sicilian expedition, although basically it is a shortened edition of Thucydides. Diodoros' work also shows the influence of Timaïos and Ephoros.⁴

In the last century little has been written about Nikias except what is to be found in general histories. For the first half of his career many modern historians⁵ argue that Thucydides was prejudiced against Kleon and tried to detract from his abilities and successes. As a result they in turn try to rehabilitate Kleon and in the process often decry Nikias' achievements.⁶

Writing about the second half of his career they suffer from no need to obscure Nikias; he pales easily in comparison with the brilliance and colour of Alkibiades.

⁴Nepos' Life of Alkibiades adds nothing to our knowledge of Nikias.

⁵For examples see the works of Adcock, Gomme, Grote, Grundy, and Henderson, as cited in the Bibliography.

⁶A.G. Woodhead, "Thucydides' Portrait of Cleon", Mnemosyne, XIII (1960), pp. 289-317, cites most of the preceding literature and provides the best substantiated argument in opposition to my view.

However, Thucydides does not pass over the end of Nikias' career lightly and his opinion should not be ignored.

In the following chapters I give more detailed references. A full list of the sources may be found in the Bibliography.

Throughout my study I use my own translations unless I note otherwise. I employ Greek spelling except for those names that are very common in their latinized forms.

CHAPTER II

NIKIAS AND HIS FAMILY

Nikias was the son of Nikeratos, from the deme Kydantidai.¹ No other information about his ancestors is recorded. Not even his mother's name was known in Plutarch's time.²

Nikias was apparently older than the philosopher Sokrates and was therefore born before the year 469 B.C.³ He seems to have come not from an aristocratic but from a wealthy family, although no ancient author gives any details. Since no source describes him as having acquired great wealth while he was a young man - a type of story that would appeal especially to Plutarch⁴ - and since he certainly was wealthy

¹For the evidence see J. Kirchner, P.A., II, no. 10808.

²Plutarch, Alkibiades, 1.

³Plato, Laches, 186c. The dramatic date of this dialogue should be set between the battle of Delion in 424 (181b) and the battle of Mantinea in 418, when Laches died. In the dialogue Plato describes Nikias as older than Sokrates; he also describes Sokrates as a young man, an unlikely term for a man of fifty years, so we cannot rely on his accuracy.

⁴Plutarch compares Nikias' life with that of Crassus. He recounts in great detail the ways by which Crassus acquired wealth and might well have done the same for Nikias if he had possessed any such knowledge.

by Athenian standards,⁵ possibly he did inherit his money and possessions. However, Nikias was born soon after the mining of silver at Laureion increased, and perhaps he acquired his own fortune.⁶

Many sources tell us of Nikias' wealth. He evidently paid for a number of public choral and gymnastic displays, and made dedicatory offerings in both Athens and Delos.⁷ While other rich men performed similar duties, few seem to have been as noted for their munificence as Nikias was. Plutarch reports that in his day monuments dedicated by Nikias were still standing, one a statue of Pallas Athene on the Acropolis and the other a shrine in the precinct of Dionysos. In addition he describes the reorganization of the ceremonies at Delos by Nikias. This event has been linked with

⁵"Callias, the richest Athenian of the Periclean period, was popularly reputed to possess 200 talents and Nicias 100, but these sums are probably gravely exaggerated" (M.N. Tod, C.A.H., V [Cambridge, 1927], p. 32).

⁶But R.J. Hopper ("The Attic Silver Mines in the Fourth Century B.C., "B.S.A., XLVIII [1953], p. 246) states: "It also appears unlikely that the mines were the sole or original source of the wealth of those of considerable financial standing, though many trierarchs appear in the list of those engaged in the mines."

⁷Plutarch, Nikias, 3; Plato, Gorgias, 472a.

the purification of Delos by the Athenians in 426, as reported by Thucydides (III,104).⁸

Plutarch also remarks that Nikias, trying to win the favour of the Athenian public, was extremely generous to friends and informers alike. This last tendency was cited with glee by the comic poets (Plutarch quotes Telekleides, Eupolis, Aristophanes, and Phrynichos as examples), but never related to specific events.⁹

⁸Both Thucydides' and Plutarch's accounts include the name of the island of Rheneia and a discussion of choruses, sacrifices, and offerings. Although Thucydides does not mention Nikias or any other individual in connection with the choruses performing at the sacred games, possibly Nikias should be associated with them, since the renewed celebration of the games could have been recorded in detail and available to Plutarch. On the other hand, L. Kirtland ("Nikias' Display of Great Wealth at Delos," P.A.P.A., LXIX [1938], p. xli) notes the possibility that Plutarch's description of Nikias' wealth may be inaccurate, since he has assigned to Nikias things such as the bronze palm tree, probably set up by the Naxians, and a plot of land, actually bought at the end of the fourth century, that should be assigned to men called Nikias who lived after the time of the general.

⁹Plutarch, Nikias, 3-5.

Plutarch says that most of Nikias' wealth consisted of the silver obtained by his slaves in the mines that he leased at Laureion.¹⁰ The source of his information was probably Xenophon. The latter reports as common knowledge the fact that Nikias "once owned a thousand men in the mines and let them out to Sosias the Thracian on condition that Sosias paid him an obol a day a man, and filled all vacancies as they occurred."¹¹ Elsewhere he states that Nikias was said "to have given a whole talent for a manager of his silver mine."¹²

At the death of Nikias' son Nikeratos,¹³ it was discovered that the property Nikias had left, expected to be not less than a hundred talents, had dwindled to not more than fourteen talents, none of it in silver or gold.¹⁴

Despite this information, it is obvious that Nikeratos

¹⁰Plutarch, Nikias, 4.

¹¹Xenophon, Vectigalia, 4, 14. M.N. Tod notes that this would amount to ten talents annually. (C.A.H., V, p. 9).

¹²Xenophon, Memorabilia, II, 5, 2.

¹³Plato, Republic, 327c; Laches, 200d; Lysias, 18, 6; Xenophon, Hellenika, II, 3, 39; Diodoros, XIV, 5.

¹⁴Lysias, 19, 47.

also was known for his wealth and desire for wealth.¹⁵ In Xenophon's Symposium he is portrayed poking fun at himself because of this weakness. " 'As a result, to some people I might seem to be rather fond of money.' Thereupon everyone laughed, considering him to tell only the truth."¹⁶

Nikias himself had the opportunity to acquire a good education,¹⁷ but we know little about it. Plato, in the Laches, characterizes him as at least being well acquainted with the dialectics that Sokrates employed, and as being interested in new forms of schooling and training.

Nevertheless his son Nikeratos seems to have been given a thorough schooling of the traditional sort. He was reported to have said, "My father, taking care that I should become a fine man, made me learn all of Homer. Even now I can repeat the whole Iliad and Odyssey by heart."¹⁸ Yet Nikias would have liked Sokrates to instruct his son, presumably in modern dialectics, if Plato does not exaggerate.¹⁹ Sokrates did supply him with a teacher of music for Nikeratos -

¹⁵Xenophon, Hellenika, II, 3, 39.

¹⁶Xenophon, Symposium, 4, 45.

¹⁷Plato, Laches, 186c.

¹⁸Xenophon, Symposium, 3, 5.

¹⁹Plato, Laches, 200d.

Damon, a pupil of Agathokles.²⁰

Nikeratos must have competed in rhapsodic competitions. Aristotle mentions an amusing simile used to describe him when he was defeated by a certain Pratys.²¹

Nikias had two brothers, Eukrates and Diognetos. Eukrates was a brother-in-law to Kallias, who married a sister of Andokides.²² He was evidently younger than Nikias, since his sons are described as being children when Nikeratos' son (Nikias' grandson) was a child.²³ He was elected general after the battle of Aigospotamoi,²⁴ and finally put to death by the Thirty Tyrants.²⁵ Nikeratos also was put to death by the

²⁰Plato, Laches, 180d.

²¹Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1413a8: καὶ τὸν Νικήρατον φάναι Φιλοκτῆτην εἶναι δεδηγμένον ὑπὸ Πράτυος, ὥσπερ εἵκασε Θρασύμαχος ἰδὼν τὸν Νικήρατον ἡττημένον ὑπὸ Πράτυος ῥαψφδοῦντα, κομῶντα δὲ καὶ αὐχμηρὸν ἔτι.

²²Andokides, De Mysteriis, 1, 47. This is a link between Nikias and Andokides that could cause him to portray Nikias sympathetically.

²³Lysias, 18, 10. Nikeratos' bride is mentioned in Xenophon's Symposium, 2, 3. This dialogue is set about 420, although it was written about 380.

²⁴Lysias, 18, 4.

²⁵Lysias, 18, 5-6.

Thirty. Diognetos left the city as an exile at this time but returned to Athens in 403. He apparently died soon after.²⁶

The two sons of Eukrates, and Diomnestos, the son of Diognetos, were serving as trierarchs when they were prosecuted about 396.²⁷ The property of the family must have been considerable even at this time.

The grandson of Nikias, also called Nikias, is mentioned by Lysias,²⁸ and perhaps by Aristophanes in his Ekklesiazousai.²⁹ By chance it is known that he and his son Nikeratos owned mining property.³⁰ These two served as trierarchs.³¹

²⁶Lysias, 18, 9. Probably this case can be dated to 396, since it preceded the Corinthian war. Diognetos must have died or he would have been present to guard the property belonging to Eukrates' sons (his nephews) and his own son, Diomnestos.

²⁷Lysias, 18, 10.

²⁸Lysias, 18, 10.

²⁹Aristophanes, Ekklesiazousai, 426-430:

μετὰ τοῦτο τοίνυν εὐπρεπὴς νεανίας
λευκός τις ἀνεπήδησ', ὅμοιος Νικίᾳ
δημηγορήσων, κἀπεχείρησεν λέγειν
ὥς χρὴ παραδοῦναι ταῖς γυναιξὶ τὴν πόλιν.

³⁰R.J. Hopper, "The Attic Silver Mines in the Fourth Century B.C.," B.S.A., XLVIII (1953), p. 243.

³¹I.G., II², 807,b2; 809,c20,d113; 811,b163; 848.

This last-named Nikeratos, a great-grandson of Nikias the general, was discussed by Demosthenes. He was apparently of good character but physically weak. He had no children at that time.³²

The evidence for the later political sympathies of the family is slim. Nikias' brothers and son obviously did not support the rule of the Thirty Tyrants. Lysias claimed that they took the part of the demos and not the oligarchs,³³ although, according to Xenophon, Theramenes said just before he was killed: ἐγίγνωσκον δὲ ὅτι συλλαμβανομένου Νικηράτου τοῦ Νικίου καὶ πλουσίου καὶ οὐδὲν πώποτε δημοτικὸν οὔτε αὐτοῦ οὔτε τοῦ πατρὸς πράξαντος οἱ τούτῳ ὅμοιοι δυσμενεῖς ἡμῖν γενήσονται.³⁴

On the whole the family of Nikias for at least his own and the following generation was held in high esteem. The phrase πλούτῳ δὲ καὶ δόξῃ σχεδὸν πρῶτον πάντων Ἀθηναίων³⁵ applied to Nikeratos, son of the general, by Diodoros fits other members of the family also. While the authors contemporary with the family - Thucydides, Xenophon, Plato, Andokides,

³²Demosthenes, 19, 290; 21, 165; 54, 32.

³³Lysias, 18, 5-6, 9.

³⁴Xenophon, Hellenika, II, 3, 39.

³⁵Diodoros, XIV, 5.

and Lysias, and later Demosthenes and Aristotle - were all of good birth, wealth, or reputation and likely to be prejudiced in favour of their own class, their testimony should not be dismissed lightly in view of the supporting epigraphical evidence. Certainly relatives of Nikias served as trierarchs. Such honourable positions, because of the financial burden involved,³⁶ were held by men who had enough wealth to outfit a trireme for a year.

Little is known of Nikias' personality as a private citizen. Everywhere we see only his public image, carefully cultivated and advertised. In contrast to the tales about his own son or the gay young Alkibiades nothing of Nikias' childhood is recorded that might have either endeared him or weakened him to the public view.

Without question Nikias was noted for his ἀρετή. No source suggests otherwise. While he probably added to his private fortune by exploiting what some today think to have been the most unfortunate members of the Athenian slave class, the miners, his contemporaries would not have considered the gains or their owner with distaste.

Nikias' religious devotion and conservatism, part of his ἀρετή, appear especially dramatized. Whether he really was pious or not is difficult to say. Even Thucydides describes

³⁶Aristophanes, Knights, 912-918.

him as being "over-inclined to divination and such things,"³⁷ and Aristophanes utilizes this side of his character in the Knights. By Plutarch's time the view had been broadened to imply that Nikias merely used this image to impress others; while he said he was taking omens at home to determine public policy he was actually trying to further his personal affairs. Moreover, Nikias was reputed to decline social invitations in order to guard his reputation against informers, and to work all day long on political projects. An associate, Hieron, helped him maintain the aura of public servant.

Plutarch goes so far as to state that Nikias' inadequacies, his nervousness and discomfiture in public,³⁸ actually gave him a large measure of power among ordinary citizens, who felt that he did not despise them.

Nikias has been identified as possibly a power behind the mutilation of the Herms;³⁹ if the speculation is true, Nikias' upright, loyal, and rather dull personality did have

³⁷Thucydides, VII, 50.

³⁸Plutarch, Nikias, 2, 4. See Phrynichos' Solitary, frag. 59 (Edmonds, F.A.C., pp. 468-469):

"A right good citizen I know he was,

He had no shrinking gait like Nicias."

³⁹Ruth E. Allen, The Mutilation of the Herms: a Study in Athenian Politics (Diss., University of Cincinnati, 1951).

some devious undercurrents. Nevertheless, he always seems to have acted not for selfish reasons but for the good of the state as he saw it. As a result this ἀρετή is still undisputed.

CHAPTER III

NIKIAS AND POLITICS: 427-421

An Athenian strategos in the fifth century B.C. was more than a military commander. Men were chosen by lot for most other official duties in the state and expected to serve no more than once in each position. But a general was elected and could be elected year after year as long as the public was pleased with his work. In this way outstanding men, by serving on the board of ten strategoi, could obtain public eminence and political influence for extended periods of time.

While some generals were chosen chiefly for their military knowledge alone, others were elected for their political abilities. Nikias seems to have found favour for both his military and political abilities.

Plutarch tells us:

... νεώτερος δὲ Νικίας γενόμενος ἦν μὲν ἔν τινι λόγῳ καὶ
Περικλέους ζῶντος ὥστε κακεῖνῳ συστρατηγῆσαι καὶ καθ' αὐτόν
ἄρξαι πολλάκις¹

He is the only author who says that Nikias was a general while Perikles was alive. It is commonly assumed that he is correct.

¹Plutarch, Nikias, 2, 2.

Thucydides does not mention him before the year 427.²

While we should perhaps ignore the first part of Plutarch's statement, the rest of the sentence, ...Περικλέους δ' ἀποθανόντος εὐθὺς εἰς τὸ πρωτεύειν προήχθη, μάλιστα μὲν ὑπὸ τῶν πλουσίων καὶ γνωρίμων ἀντίταγμα ποιουμένων αὐτὸν πρὸς τὴν Κλέωνος βδελυρίαν καὶ τόλμαν, οὐ μὲν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν δῆμον εἶχεν εὖνουν καὶ συμφιλοτιμούμενον,³

seems to describe the position of Nikias during the next six years as shown by Thucydides and Aristophanes.

²Thucydides first mentions Nikias two years after Perikles' death in describing the expedition against Minoa in the summer of 427 (III,51). He does not say whether Nikias is a young or mature man, an experienced or inexperienced general. There is a very strong possibility that Plutarch himself has made the assumption that Nikias served along with Perikles, for the only specific events of Nikias' early career named by Plutarch appear to come in a somewhat jumbled fashion from Thucydides. (Plutarch also states that Kleon opposed Perikles during the latter's lifetime; Thucydides is silent.) As Lewis, "Double Representation in the Strategia," J.H.S., LXXXI (1961), p. 121, states, Nikias did not serve as general for the tribe Aigeis in 432/1 or 431/0.

³Plutarch, Nikias, 2, 2.

Many complicating factors are involved in any attempt to comprehend the political scene then. One of the most important is that we cannot always determine from his deeds what policies a strategos was following. Frequently we cannot even determine what his deeds were.

For example, did a strategos lead a military expedition whether or not he agreed politically with the aims of that expedition? Sometimes, we know, a general asked the ekklesia to authorize a campaign and make him leader. Kleon sailed to Thrace under such circumstances.⁴ At other times a general was sent as leader of an expedition of which he disapproved for political or military reasons. The classic example is Nikias himself leading the Sicilian expedition.⁵

Occasionally a general seemed to act entirely upon his own initiative. When Demosthenes, operating in the west in 426, wished to invade Boiotia by land, he was probably not acting on specific instructions from the assembly.⁶ Again, at Pylos in 425, he was allowed to use the fleet even though he held no official position.⁷ There he evidently had to

⁴Thucydides, V, 2.

⁵Thucydides, VI, 8; VII, 10.

⁶Thucydides, III, 114.

⁷Thucydides, IV, 2: ὅντι ἰδιώτη.

persuade the other military commanders that his plan was feasible, and they in turn did not have to agree with him or give him troops that they felt were needed elsewhere.

Some generals served in a military capacity alone, and perhaps had little to do with the strategy of the war. Asopios, collaborating with the Akarnanians in 428 as a replacement for his father Phormion, may be an example.

Commonly the only definite information we have is the almost formulaic statement by Thucydides, such as:

Τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ θέρους καὶ ἅμα τῇ τῶν Πλαταιῶν ἐπιστρατείᾳ
'Αθηναῖοι δισχιλίοις ὀπλίταις ἑαυτῶν καὶ ἵππεῦσι διακοσίοις
ἐπεστράτευσαν ἐπὶ Χαλκιδέας τοὺς ἐπὶ Θράκης καὶ Βοττιαίους
ἀκμάζοντος τοῦ σίτου. ἑστρατῆγει δὲ Ξενοφῶν ὁ Εὐριπίδου
τρίτος αὐτός. ⁸

Clearly we must assume the final decision on policy to have rested with the Athenian public, when evidence to the contrary is lacking.

Another problem is that we cannot identify precisely which generals were elected each year. Sometimes we know only four names out of a minimum of ten.⁹ In 424/3 we are

⁸Thucydides, II, 79.

⁹Occasionally we have information that cannot be identified with specific years. For example, Lamachos is not mentioned by Thucydides as taking any active part in the first half of the Archidamian War. However, the use of his name in

fairly certain that thirteen were elected, but are unsure when or how by-elections were held. We gather that one general was killed, three were banished, and one was fined; that some generals were from the same tribes and probably did not serve concurrently (sometimes two did¹⁰); and that some generals were involved in no campaigns or politics until the end of the year.

Despite these difficulties we can attempt some analysis of a particular leader's policies, using the facts we do have, as long as we recognize their deficiencies.

Over the last half century at least scholars have been trying to determine who succeeded politically to Perikles'

the Acharnians of Aristophanes implies that it was a by-word for military spirit, and well-known to the Athenian public. Yet we can make no further deductions, e.g., that Lamachos served as a general in the year the Acharnians was performed or before.

¹⁰K.J. Dover, "ΔΕΚΑΤΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΣ " J.H.S., LXXX(1960), pp. 61-77, gives a cogent description of the problems, with special reference to the phrases δέκατος αὐτός and ἐξ πάντων. D.M. Lewis, "Double Representation in the Strategia," J.H.S., LXXXI (1961), pp. 118-123, discusses the problem further.

The two men most commonly supported for this position are Kleon and Nikias, who appear most often in Athenian literature as men of eminence during the Archidamian War. Now while these two became prominent after Perikles' death, it is not easy to say which of them inherited and followed Perikles' policies.

Few would disagree with A.B. West's description of Perikles' aims:

To retain command of the seas, to maintain the empire intact, to attempt no further conquests, to avoid battle with the superior forces of the enemy on land, and to wait for war-weariness to develop in Sparta, these were Periclean war policies. Sparta was to be tired out rather than defeated. Pericles foresaw that the Lacedaemonians, when once convinced nothing could be gained even though the war was fought through to a doubtful end, would readily consent to a peace of reconciliation, and that their allies, the commercial rivals of Athens, would then be left to a future of decay and ruin. With Megara and Corinth eliminated from this unequal struggle for Hellenic markets, Athens could look forward to an empire such as no Greek city had known. Such was the peace that

Pericles had taught the Athenian people to expect.¹¹

As shown by his conduct of the first two years of the war, Perikles planned to carry out these aims by shutting the Athenians safely behind the walls of Athens. He also planned retaliation for Spartan invasions, as evidenced by his expeditions to the Peloponnese. Further, he maintained mastery of the seas in the west and north-east in important trading areas. After renewal of the treaties with Egesta and Leontinoi in Sicily¹² Perikles seemed to intend no conquests in that area during the war, perhaps because expansion of the Athenian empire was not yet feasible. The Megarid and Euboia were more important.

It is not difficult to find evidence that during these six years Nikias was a very competent military tactician who had a reputation for being lucky.¹³

¹¹A.B. West, "Pericles' Political Heirs," Classical Philology, XIX (1924), p. 125.

¹²The treaty with Egesta was made in 458/7 B.C. See I.G., I², 19, dated by the archon[ἡ]β[ρ]οχ (Raubitschek, T.A.P.A., LXXV [1944], pp. 10-12, and Meritt, B.C.H., LXXXVIII [1964], pp. 413-415). The treaties with Rhegion and Leontinoi were signed first about 448; they were renewed in 433/2. See I.G., I², 51 and 52 (Meritt, Class. Quart., XL [1946], pp. 85-91).

¹³Thucydides, VI, 17.

First he showed himself capable of carrying out the tactics employed under Perikles' direction during the first two years of the war¹⁴ - landing in enemy territory, laying waste the nearby areas, and retreating quickly with few losses to the Athenian forces. Nikias' campaign against Melos, Tanagra, and Lokris in the year 426¹⁵ is typical. He led similar plundering expeditions against the Corinthians at the end of the summer of 425,¹⁶ and finally, in 424, on the eastern coast of the Peloponnese against the Spartans,¹⁷ now demoralized by the loss of first Pylos, then Kythera.

But Nikias went a step further than Perikles. Although Perikles seems to have considered the possibility of locating *προὔρτια* on the sea-coast of the Peloponnese in order to help with plundering,¹⁸ he did not actually do this. Nor did any other general until after Demosthenes' success at Pylos. Before then garrisons behind fortifications were used only

¹⁴Thucydides, II, 25, 26. Cf. H.D. Westlake, "Seaborne Raids in Periclean Strategy," Class. Quart., XXXIX (1945), pp. 75-84.

¹⁵Thucydides, III, 91.

¹⁶Thucydides, IV, 42.

¹⁷Thucydides, IV, 55.

¹⁸Thucydides, I, 142. H.D. Westlake, op. cit.

outside the Peloponnese for purposes other than plundering. For example, Naupaktos was exploited to blockade the Korinthians, and the island of Minoa, captured by Nikias, helped the blockade against Megara. But with the establishment of a garrison at Pylos the Athenians found an efficient way to harass the Peloponnesians. Nikias recognized good ideas even if he could not invent them. In the same summer as the fall of Pylos he employed the new tactics by combining the raiding attack against Korinth and the nearby coast of the Peloponnese with the establishment of a fortification on the peninsula of Methana.¹⁹ A garrison located there was afterwards deployed effectively against the area of Troizen, Epidauros, and Halieis.

In the beginning of the next year Nikias followed up this success with the capture of Kythera and the establishment of a garrison there too, in addition to raids on the coast.

Nikias showed himself well versed in other, more ordinary, military practices. Simple machines of war, such as scaling ladders and battering rams, and walls for siege or protection were commonly used by the Athenians, who frequently appear more skilled in their use than other Greeks were.

¹⁹For opposing views on the effectiveness of this move see Adcock, C.A.H., V, p. 237, and Gomme, Commentary, III, p. 494.

Nikias was no exception as two campaigns described in some detail by Thucydides demonstrate. The one is the capture of Minoa, the other the investment of Skione. Both were carried out efficiently. Nikias, however, showed no inclination to develop more imaginative weapons but merely used those that were available.²⁰

Nikias also appears to have been capable in negotiating with an enemy. He was clearly not averse to winning victories on less bloody terms than physical fighting. At Kythera, because of previous discussions, he quickly arranged a surrender that was advantageous to the Athenians and Kythereians.²¹ Instead of endangering his men by attacking the inhabitants Nikias demanded hostages. It is noteworthy that the Athenians did not condemn this move when Nikias returned as they did in similar cases concerning several other generals. Rather they took advantage of it, confirming it and making the islanders pay a tribute of four talents.²²

²⁰See Phrynichos, Solitary, frag. 22 (Edmonds, F.A.C., I, pp. 458-459):

ἀλλ' ὑπερβέβληκε πολὺ τὸν Νικίαν
στρατηγίας πλήθει τε κάξευρήμασιν.

and Suidas, Lexicon (from a lost scholion on Aristophanes):

"Now you outdo Nicias at engineering feats."

²¹Thucydides, IV, 54.

²²Thucydides, IV, 57.

Nikias was involved in negotiations with Perdikkas too, while the Athenian army was investing Skione,²³ and accomplished as much with that fickle leader as any other Athenian, probably because Perdikkas wished to be rid of the Peloponnesians and Brasidas rather than because he wanted to help Nikias and Athens. Later, of course, Nikias was betrayed by Perdikkas.²⁴

Most of all Nikias seems to have been trusted in negotiations by the Spartans, to such an extent that the Athenians were sometimes suspicious of his motives.²⁵

Nikias showed no special insight in his use of the navy. He employed it to land forces in areas that he wished to attack and did not partake in actual sea-battles. Only twice are any specific naval tactics of his mentioned by Thucydides. The first was not unusual. At Minoa Nikias used *πυρραμί* from ships. The second was not as risky as an actual night battle. At Korinth his fleet sailed under cover of darkness in order that his troops might make a surprise attack at dawn.²⁶

²³Thucydides, IV, 132.

²⁴Thucydides, V, 80, 83.

²⁵Thucydides, V, 46.

²⁶In the final year of the campaign in Sicily Nikias showed a distinct lack of insight in naval tactics, employing his fleet in the Great Harbour of Syracuse where it had no room to manoeuvre.

Nikias seemed to have few problems with logistics and discipline. Thucydides reports that he and Nikostratos had difficulty in preventing their men from killing the inhabitants of Mende when that city's gates were opened before any agreement was made for surrender, but otherwise no trouble is mentioned.

As for communications, or perhaps just careful planning, in the expedition against Tanagra Nikias' forces met the troops from Athens as arranged, unlike Demosthenes' and Hippokrates' armies at Delion. Similarly, while the army that split up under Nikias and Nikostratos in the attack on Mende was almost defeated, both sections were able to return to camp and renew their onslaught the same day.²⁷ Two days later the same commanders again divided their forces and encountered no losses as a result of doing this. Frequently ancient armies using such tactics courted defeat because of either a breakdown in communications or ineffectiveness in carrying out plans.

Clearly Nikias was considered by Thucydides, and probably by the Athenian populace, to be a capable and fortunate commander. While the facts do not show him to be an outstanding military tactician, nor a commander exceptionally interested in new techniques of fighting, as the dialogue in Plato's Laches might lead one to suspect, they do demonstrate

²⁷See Gomme, Commentary, I, p. 620.

that he earned his good reputation.

In contrast, Kleon had little military reputation or training. He was not elected general until after his good fortune at Pylos. His military career afterwards was not noted for its brilliance. Certainly he was no match for Brasidas in inventiveness or Nikias in steadiness.²⁶

Indications that Nikias was an adequate politician, but not a great leader, are quite common in Thucydides. Nikias was unfortunate enough throughout his lengthy career to have one rival or another with flamboyant qualities attractive to a mass of people, qualities that Nikias lacked. A detailed examination of the period from 427 to 421 will show his first major opponent to have been Kleon.²⁷

Events after Perikles' death suggest that no one person was either especially strong or close to Perikles. From Aristophanes²⁸ we suspect that a certain Eukrates may have been

²⁶A.G. Woodhead, "Thucydides' Portrait of Cleon," Mnemosyne, XIII (1960), pp. 303-310, argues that Thucydides was unfair to Kleon in his account of the Amphipolitan campaign of 422.

²⁷It must be remembered that political parties in the modern sense did not exist in Athens at this time. Individual leaders merely tended to more radical or conservative outlooks, and gained or lost supporters among the other leaders and in the ekklesia because of their views on specific situations.

²⁸Aristophanes, Knights, 129, 254.

leader in Athens after Perikles' death. Nothing more is known about him except that he did not seek power for long; he may have been the father of the Diodotos who spoke in opposition to Kleon in the Mytilenaian debate.²⁹

Lysikles may have been a more likely candidate to succeed Perikles than was Eukrates. From Plutarch's discussion³⁰ and Thucydides' description of his large tribute-collecting expedition to Karia, along with four other generals, it may be assumed that he was fairly important.

This was in the same year, 428/7, in which Nikias is known without doubt first to have been one of the board of strategoi. While he may have served earlier as a colleague of Perikles³¹ there is no certain evidence that he did, or, if he did, that his position was very strong. Other generals who served during the year were Asopios and Paches, and perhaps Nikostratos.³² None of their campaigns were contrary to

²⁹This conjecture is made by A.B. West, "Pericles' Political Heirs," Class. Phil., XIX (1924), p. 132, n. 1.

³⁰Plutarch, Perikles, 24.

³¹Plutarch, Nikias, 2.

³²It is probable that Eurymedon succeeded Nikostratos at the Kerkyraian revolt (Thucydides, III, 81). If so, Nikostratos was general for the year 428/7. If Eurymedon merely joined Nikostratos, then they were both generals for 427/6.

the policy of Perikles. The reduction of Mytilene fitted in with the policy of keeping the empire intact. Tribute-collecting was probably carried on every year. Asopios' expedition, attacking the Peloponnese and the area around Akarnania,³³ was following in the tradition of Phormion's blockade from Naupaktos two years previously.³⁴

Similarly the expedition of Nikias against Minoa made the blockade of Megara, imposed by Perikles, more effective than before. The garrison there, located on an island, could observe any ships leaving the eastern part of Megara and yet be close to Salamis and Athens.³⁵

Nikostratos' efforts to keep the Kerkyraian party-conflict under control, and to support and pacify the democrats there, were not only statesmanlike but well in keeping

³³G.B. Grundy, Thucydides and the History of his Age, I² (Oxford, 1961), pp. 347-349.

³⁴Thucydides, II, 69.

³⁵Plutarch's account of this battle is confused by the addition of the capture of Nisaia, actually carried out by Demosthenes three years later (Plutarch, Nikias, 6). Diodoros also believed that Nikias captured Nisaia (Diodoros, XII, 80). Perhaps their information came from Ephoros, a common source.

with the terms of the alliance between Athens and Kerkyra.³⁶

In contrast his successor, Eurymedon, seems to have been a helpless bystander at the massacre that followed his arrival.³⁷ But the main point was that the democrats were left in control of Kerkyra.

There is no evidence that any one of these five men, other than Lysikles, was considered an outstanding leader at the time. None of them deviated noticeably from the course that Perikles had already set. It is only outside the board of generals that a rising leader is found. Kleon is given his first vivid portrayal by Thucydides in a speech condemning the Mytilenaians. From the first he is described as ὢν καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα βιαίότατος τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος.³⁸ although he is defeated by Diodotos in this debate. In his speech he uses words and phrases reminiscent of Perikles. While his ideas may seem harsh to us, those of Diodotos, who opposed him, were not

³⁶Thucydides, III, 75-80.

³⁷Thucydides, III, 81.

³⁸Thucydides, III, 36. Aristophanes, Knights, 773-776, implies that Kleon had been prominent before 425 in establishing fiscal policies.

too different, for both were arguing about the most expedient action for Athens. Granted that the killing of the male population of Mytilene might seem an excessive demand, the principle behind it, the destruction of all opposition within the empire, cannot be described as at variance with Perikles' aims. The intention of Perikles, Diodotos, and Kleon was to keep the empire intact without endangering Athens.

In fact all the information for this year leads to the conclusion that there was no deviation from Perikles' policies; either the ekklesia still agreed with them or there was no one yet powerful enough to change them. The disappearance of Lysikles from the political scene is easily explained since he was killed in Karia,³⁹ as was Asopios in his campaign.⁴⁰ Paches, a third general for the year, apparently committed suicide in court after the capitulation of Mytilene in the spring of 427.⁴¹

But by the beginning of the next official year, in the same campaigning season, the summer of 427, the earliest deviations from Perikles' programme can be observed. The first indication is slight. Laches and Charoiades were sent

³⁹Thucydides, III, 19.

⁴⁰Thucydides, III, 7.

⁴¹Plutarch, Nikias, 6.

to Sicily with twenty ships. If the Athenians sent them because of the old alliance and ordered them only to pacify affairs in Sicily and discourage any Sicilians from making an alliance with the Peloponnesians, they still could have worked within the limits of Perikles' plans. But once they set the terms, βουλόμενοι δὲ μήτε σῖτον ἐς τὴν Πελοπόννησον ἄγεσθαι αὐτόθεν πρόπειράν τε ποιούμενοι εἰ σφίσι δυνατὰ εἶη τὰ ἐν τῇ Σικελίᾳ πράγματα ὑποχείρια γενέσθαι,⁴² they were starting to expand beyond Perikles' aims.⁴³

Nikias, who perhaps desired little activity because of the effects of the plague on Athenian forces,⁴⁴ appears to have been stung into action by the populace when he was not re-elected for 426/5,⁴⁵ since he made attacks on Melos and Tanagra in May or June of 426.⁴⁶

⁴²Thucydides, III, 86. See also Diodoros, XII, 54.

⁴³Thucydides might have written these words at a later time when he knew of the large expedition to Sicily.

⁴⁴H.N. Couch, "Some Political Implications of the Athenian Plague," T.A.P.A., LXVI (1935), p. 101.

⁴⁵D.M. Lewis, "Double Representation in the Strategia," J.H.S., LXXXI (1961), p. 120, thinks that Nikias was re-elected.

⁴⁶Thucydides, III, 91.

There is some disagreement about Nikias' success in this campaign. The views range from an abortive, unsuccessful attack aimed at bringing Melos into the empire to quite successful diversionary tactics.⁴⁷

The truth probably lies somewhere between them. It seems likely that Nikias did not have the time necessary for besieging and subduing Melos (although he could have been relieved by a successor), both because his term of office was expiring, and because he had made arrangements to meet the Athenian army under Hipponikos and Eurymedon in order to make the attack on Tanagra. After a final raid on the coast of Lokris, opposite Euboea, a key point in Athenian defence, Nikias returned to Athens to surrender his command.

Demosthenes' attack on Aitolia was again a move beyond Perikles' policy. As a defence for Naupaktos his plan was

⁴⁷Grundy (Thucydides and the History of his Age, I [Oxford, 1948], p. 343) and Henderson (The Great War Between Athens and Sparta [London, 1927], pp. 142, 224ff.) believe that the attack on Tanagra was meant to connect with Demosthenes' land-attack on Boiotia. However, Thucydides says nothing about a connection between the two expeditions and the phrase ἀνευ τῆς τῶν Ἀθηναίων δυνάμεως suggests that Demosthenes' idea was independent of Athenian policy.

justifiable, but Demosthenes was more ambitious: καὶ
 μάλιστα νομίσας ἄνευ τῆς τῶν Ἀθηναίων δυνάμεως τοῖς
 ἡπειρώταις συμμάχοις μετὰ τῶν Αἰτωλῶν δύνασθαι ἂν κατὰ
 γῆν ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ Βοιωτοὺς 48

After the resulting disaster there and the death of his colleague Prokles, Demosthenes also did not hold office for the next year, but, unlike Nikias, did not even dare return to face the Athenian public.⁴⁹

Of the policies supported by the remaining strategoi of the year we know little. Laches was a friend of Nikias.⁵⁰ Hipponikos, an extremely wealthy man, had family-connections with Perikles.

Although his fellow-commander in 426, Charoiades, had been killed, Laches must have remained in office that summer. His efforts cannot have been vigorous enough for the new mood of the assembly;⁵¹ by the following winter he was superseded by Pythodoros, who was to be joined in the beginning of

⁴⁸Thucydides, III, 95.

⁴⁹Thucydides, III, 98.

⁵⁰Plato, Laches.

⁵¹See Diodoros, XII, 54,6; Aristophanes, Wasps, 240-244, 894-997.

spring, 425, by Sophokles and Eurymedon. The new commanders were to use a larger fleet to end the war quickly, and maintain Athenian naval efficiency.

Despite the evidence for more aggressive policies than Perikles', in the year 426/5 lack of military success seems to have caused a reaction against the more radical group of leaders.

The new generals in Sicily achieved little more than Laches had. Still they were re-elected for the following year, presumably because the demos did not want to break the continuity of their campaign.

Nothing is known about Hippokrates, the nephew of Perikles, except that he did serve during this year. He may have been associated with Kleon, and was not elected for the next year.

The names of Aristoteles, Hierophon, and Simonides are no more helpful. The main action of the year was provided by Demosthenes, who was evidently not serving in an official capacity. After his successful defence of Naupaktos he was asked that winter by the Akarnanians to be commander-in-chief over their own troops and the Athenian generals Aristoteles and Hierophon, who had also been requested to help in the defence of Amphiloichian Argos against the Spartans. After his brilliant coup there the Athenians were happy to elect him for the next summer's campaign.

During the summer of 426 there also occurred the purification of Delos.⁵² While this festival might have been supported by Nikias in an attempt to regain favour with the Athenians, there is no evidence that links him precisely with the event.⁵³ Thucydides says that the festival was organized *κατὰ χρησμοῦν ὅη τινα*.

Although Nikias, Nikostratos, and Autokles were elected for the year 425/4, a more aggressive policy was still in effect. Sailing around the Peloponnese in the early summer of 425 Demosthenes continued his streak of successful activity by trapping four hundred and forty Peloponnesian hoplites, including one hundred and twenty Spartiates, on the island of Sphakteria. The ensuing difficulties of protecting his garrison and then capturing the Spartans on the island caused a furore in Athens. The results, as recorded by Thucydides,⁵⁴ give the first hints of any strong leadership in Athens.

When the Spartans make their first offer of peace, Kleon is the dominant figure, the man who persuades the Athenians to turn down the offer. No one seems to have opposed him, and this is not surprising if one considers the terms

⁵²Thucydides, III, 104; Plutarch, Nikias, 3, 4; Diodoros, XII, 58.

⁵³See Chapter II above.

⁵⁴Thucydides, IV, 1-41.

offered by the Spartans and the position held by the Athenians. Even Nikias, so often accused of wanting peace on any terms, was not likely to have voted in favour of the Spartan proposal.⁵⁵

Later events, when the Athenians first realized the obstacles they would have to overcome at Pylos, are related in some detail by Thucydides. The unrest fomented by lack of a decisive action at Pylos led Kleon, evidently in an attempt to gain personal power, to attack the generals now guiding the state's policy. He accused the generals, and particularly Nikias, whom Thucydides says Kleon considered a personal enemy,⁵⁶ of not being men; otherwise they would sail to the island and capture the Spartans. Exasperated, Nikias in turn offered Kleon the command at Pylos. After some pressure from

⁵⁵Cf. Plutarch, Nikias, 7; Philochoros, frag. 105 (Jacoby); Gomme, Commentary, I, pp. 458-460. In the Acharnians (1. 26) of Aristophanes, produced in 425, Dikaiopolis says of the Athenian citizens, εἰρήνην δ' ὅπως ἔσται πορευμῶσ' οὐδέν, and makes his own private treaty with the Spartans. In this play Lamachos is mentioned many times as a symbol of a war-like general and Kleon is attacked incidentally; Nikias is not mentioned. Adcock, C.A.H., V, p. 234, insists, however, that Nikias must have advocated peace.

⁵⁶Thucydides, IV, 28.

the demos Kleon accepted and made the rash promise of victory within twenty days. As is well known, he did succeed, and ever since Nikias has been blamed for his irresponsibility or lack of foresight.

At the time the Athenians even laughed at Kleon's assertions, or so Thucydides says, and the "better types" were not unhappy because they thought they would either be rid of Kleon or capture the Spartans. When Kleon did succeed all the Greeks were surprised - not at Kleon's success but at the fact that the Spartans surrendered. But Thucydides says nothing about Nikias' being remiss in his duties.

Remiss or not, Nikias caused a great deal of confusion. An explanation for his actions is difficult to find. If Kleon had "inside" information from Demosthenes, it is unlikely that Nikias did not have the same or more.⁵⁷ It has also been suggested that Nikias expected the campaign to fail, in which case he might be happy to have Kleon associated with it. If he expected Demosthenes to succeed, and did not wish to replace

⁵⁷Aristophanes' Knights possibly supports the conclusion that Demosthenes collaborated with Kleon since it represents Demosthenes as cheated of his share of the credit for Pylos. Throughout the play Kleon is the butt of Aristophanes' jokes and his chief opponents are Demosthenes and Nikias.

him in his command, an act probably against professional ethics, Nikias then had no business inviting Kleon to go.⁵⁸ Perhaps Nikias, like most of the Greeks, never considered that the Spartiates might surrender rather than be killed, and then how valuable they would be as prisoners of the Athenians.

The usual solution is that Nikias was extremely annoyed by Kleon's heckling, and, not being as astute a politician as Kleon, did not foresee the possible consequences of his act, for despite jibes such as Aristophanes'⁵⁹ Kleon must have gained considerable prestige and influence at Nikias' expense.⁶⁰

Until this time it is a curious fact that Nikias had never been involved in a campaign beyond the west coast of the Peloponnese and the area around Attica. While this might be

⁵⁸At one other time he made a similar offer, although under more general circumstances, when his offer was not likely to be accepted. See Thucydides, VI, 23.

⁵⁹Aristophanes, Knights, 52-57.

⁶⁰The spectacular assessment of 425 (A9 in A.T.L., II) belongs either before Nikias' attack on Korinth (Wade-Gery and Meritt, "Pylos and the Assessment of Tribute," A.J.P., LVII [1936], pp. 377-394) or after (M.F. McGregor, "Kleon, Nikias, and the Trebling of the Tribute," T.A.P.A., LXVI [1935], pp. 146-164) and may have been a result of Kleon's new influence.

due to chance, it is noteworthy that two men often associated with him who had served in the west, Laches in Sicily and Nikostratos in Kerkyra, were recalled from this area, perhaps because of their excessive caution.

Certainly Nikias must have obtained most of his information on Sicily from Laches,⁶¹ who himself seemed rather disillusioned about the possibilities of capturing it. Perhaps Nikostratos was aware that internal problems alone would be enough to neutralize Kerkyra in the war.⁶² Nikias, having access to this information, might have been pursuing a more than Periklean programme, hoping to retain only the empire in the Aegean. This was his idea later about Sicily, as we know from his speech in Thucydides (VI, 15), and may be one of the reasons why he seemed to behave so ridiculously about Pylos. (Possibly Nikias was defeated in the elections for strategos in 426 because he took a stand against an expedition to Sicily.)

Probably as a counter-move to Kleon's success Nikias made an attack on the territory of Korinth shortly after. While the expedition does not seem as brilliant as the campaign

⁶¹Diodoros states, however, that Nikias served as *πρόξενος* for the Syracusans resident in Athens (XIII, 27).

⁶²Kerkyra provided little assistance to Athens during the war despite her fleet.

at Pylos, the establishment of a garrison at Methana was not useless since it provided a convenient landing place for the Athenians.⁶³ It also showed that Nikias could understand and employ a new technique of fighting, although in his favourite territory near Athens. At any rate, Nikias, along with Nikostratos and Autokles, followed this move with the capture of Kythera in the next March, a much more notable feat.⁶⁴

That island, off the coast of Lakonia and considered very important by the Spartans, completed the line of bases encircling the Peloponnese, and enabled the Athenians to sail to the west without any difficulty. The Spartans seem to have worried not so much about this as about the fact that the Athenians could easily attack them from the island and

⁶³Plutarch says that after this battle Nikias renounced his claim to victory because he preferred to send a herald back and ask for the return of two bodies of Athenians that had been left unnoticed and unburied.

⁶⁴For the one hundred talents paid to Nikias for this expedition on either the fifteenth or eighteenth day of the ninth prytany see I.G., I², 324, II, in M. Lang, "The Abacus and the Calendar," Hesp., XXXIII (1964), pp. 146-167, and "The Abacus and the Calendar, II," Hesp., XXXIV (1965), pp. 224-247.

also cut off the grain supply from Egypt.⁶⁵ The result was a great loss of morale among the Spartans, who had difficulty in marshalling their forces to oppose the raiding attacks that followed on the mainland for seven days.

Whether this aggressive policy was forced upon the generals, was what they wished, or merely seemed best under the circumstances we do not know. The Athenians were not impressed enough to elect Nikias, Nikostratos, and Autokles generals for the year 424/3. Kleon, who had raised the pay of jurors during the preceding year,⁶⁶ was left in power, an elected general for the first time.

Just after the incident of Pylos the two generals Eurymedon and Sophokles, perhaps because of the more violent tone at Athens, permitted the Kerkyraian democrats to massacre the opposing party, although by devious methods.⁶⁷ They then sailed on to Sicily.

The first upset in the year 424/3 was the decision of the Sicilians to make peace. At Gela the Athenian generals did not have much choice and concurred in the settlement.

⁶⁵See Xenophon, Hellenika, IV, 8, 7-8; and Herodotos, VII, 235.

⁶⁶Aristophanes, Knights, 255, 797.

⁶⁷Eurymedon had been involved in a similar situation there two years before.

The Athenians at home, disgruntled because they thought the generals had been bribed, banished Pythodoros and Sophokles and fined Eurymedon.

In the same summer Demosthenes and Hippokrates captured Nisaia, although because of the intervention of Brasidas they did not gain Megara as they had hoped.

In the following winter these same two were generals at the disaster of Delion, where Hippokrates and almost a thousand Athenians were killed. Demosthenes' plans for conquering Boiotia had again come to nothing.

All through this time the Spartan commander Brasidas was carrying on a campaign that alarmed the Athenians greatly. He had successfully prevented them from taking Megara without even fighting. After a quick march through Thessaly, by means of effective combat and magnanimous offers of liberation, he was managing to win over many Athenian tributaries and allies in Chalkidike, Akanthos and Amphipolis among them. Because of the loss of the latter, Thucydides, probably a replacement for Eurymedon, was banished.⁶⁸

As a direct result of Delion and the losses to Brasidas the Athenians must have decided that Nikias' policy was

⁶⁸Thucydides, IV, 104; A.B. West, "Notes on Athenian Generals of the Year 424-3 B.C.," A.J.P., XLV (1924), pp. 151-152.

vindicated and that the course of discretion was to make an armistice with the Spartans for one year. The Spartans too were convinced of the advantages of an agreement. Nikias, Nikostratos, and Autokles appear as signatories of a truce for which Laches had been the proposer of the motion in the assembly.⁶⁹ The opportunity for making a settlement similar to the one eventually concluded in 421 existed.

But Brasidas, breaking the truce, aroused a concerted reaction of anger among the Athenians. Kleon moved that Skione be recaptured and its inhabitants executed. Nikias and Nikeratos were prepared to undertake the expedition.

The only general mentioned after this time and before the Peace of Nikias is Kleon, who during his campaign of 422 in Thrace was killed before the walls of Amphipolis along with the opposing general, Brasidas.⁷⁰

After their deaths Nikias was able to have his plans for peace carried in the assembly. In Thucydides' description of him at this time is to be found the implication that Nikias

⁶⁹Thucydides, IV, 119.

⁷⁰Their deaths are represented as the loss of the "pestles of war" in Aristophanes' Peace, which was performed just before peace was concluded.

always wished for peace: ... Νικίας μὲν βουλόμενος ἐν
 Φ. ἀπαθῆς ἦν καὶ ἡξιούτο, διασώσασθαι τὴν εὐτυχίαν, καὶ
 ἔς τε τὸ αὐτίκα πόνων πεπαῦσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τοὺς πολίτας
 παῦσαι καὶ τῷ μέλλοντι χρόνῳ καταλιπεῖν ὄνομα ὥς οὐδὲν
 σφήλας τὴν πόλιν διεγένετο, νομίζων ἐκ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου
 τοῦτο συμβαίνειν καὶ ὅστις ἐλάχιστα τύχη αὐτὸν
 παραδίδωσι τὸ δὲ ἀκίνδυνον τὴν εἰρήνην παρέχειν....

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The description is of Nikias in 421, however, not in 425, and
 for Thucydides is most laudatory.

⁷¹Thucydides, V, 16.

CHAPTER IV

THE PEACE OF NIKIAS

Thucydides reports that after the deaths of Kleon and Brasidas in Thrace both the Athenians and Spartans had second thoughts about their abilities to defeat each other.

The Athenians had suffered serious defeats at Delion and Amphipolis, and were no longer confident of their good fortune. They felt that their allies would be encouraged to revolt now, and wished they had not thrown away their opportunity for making peace after Pylos. Moreover, their fighting numbers were probably still depleted from the ravages of the plague.¹

The Spartans realized that their basic strategy in war - laying waste the enemy's land - was no longer effective in the case of a sea-power such as Athens. They were being raided from Pylos and Kythera, and were worried about helots deserting and allies revolting.² The thirty-year truce between

¹H.N. Couch, "Some Political Implications of the Athenian Plague," T.A.P.A., LXVI (1935), p. 101.

²Thucydides stresses here difficulties not emphasized before and makes no mention of possible Athenian financial problems.

them and the Argives was expiring and the Argives wished to regain Kynouria more than they wished to renew the treaty. The possibility of having to fight both Athens and Argos was frightening for Sparta, especially if her Peloponnesian allies went over to Argos.

Accordingly Pleistoanax, the Spartan king, and "Nikias, the son of Nikeratos, who had done better in his military commands than anyone else of his time,"³ made great efforts to achieve peace. Thucydides notes Nikias' selfish interest in making peace.⁴ The charge is made less severe only by the fact that his interest coincided with that of the majority of citizens in 421 (as shown already by Thucydides), and that the charges made against Pleistoanax, hoping to avoid attack by his enemies, are more damning.

Discussions dragged on through the winter and Sparta threatened another invasion and the building of permanent fortifications in Attica in an attempt to force Athenian compliance.

Finally peace was made at the beginning of spring, 421, in the archonship of Alkaios, on the understanding that each party would give back what it had acquired during the

³Thucydides, V, 16.

⁴Thucydides, V, 16. See Chapter III, ad fin.

war, with the exception that Athens would retain Nisaia.⁵

The treaty was to exist for fifty years and involve the allies on both sides. (Sparta had called a meeting of her allies, who voted in favour of peace except for the Boiotians, Corinthians, Eleians, and Megarians.) The terms of the treaty are given by Thucydides in such a way as to suggest that he has consulted the actual document. Nikias, Laches, Lamachos, and Demosthenes were among the seventeen who took the oath for Athens.⁶

As the lot fell, the Spartans were to restore their prizes first⁷ and they did immediately release their prisoners

⁵Adcock, C.A.H., V, p. 253: "It is possible that Nikias looked back beyond the policy of Pericles to the policy of Cimon, and was willing to make some sacrifice of Athenian interests in order to revive an ancient dualism."

⁶A. Andrewes and D.M. Lewis, "Note on the Peace of Nikias," J.H.S., LXXVII (1957), pp. 177-180, offer some interesting speculations on the number of signatories used (seventeen on each side).

⁷Plutarch, in Nikias, 10, 1, reports that according to Theophrastos Nikias accomplished this for Athens by bribery. Theophrastos seems elsewhere to have enjoyed this type of tale. In Plutarch's Aristeides, 25, he is quoted saying that Aristeides ("The Just"), "nicely just in his private dealings with citizens," felt that the public advantage required injustice.

of war. They also sent representatives to the Thracian area to instruct Klearidas to hand over Amphipolis to the Athenians.

They maintained their attempt to get their allies to agree and accept the treaty but met with refusal unless the treaty should be made "more just," or, in other words, more profitable for the allies. Argos refused to renew her treaty of 451 too, so faced with the prospect of Argos and probably other Peloponnesian states joining Athens, the Spartans concluded that their best course of action was to make a fifty-year alliance with the Athenians in the hope that the other states would remain quiet.⁸

Why the Athenians accepted this invitation is doubtful. Plutarch says that against the opposition of Alkibiades Nikias persuaded them to do so for the sake of peace and more stable relations among the Greek states.⁹ Possibly Nikias felt that the maintenance of unrest between Sparta and her allies would benefit Athens. Thucydides makes only this bare statement: παρόντων οὖν πρέσβων ἀπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων καὶ γενομένων λόγων ξυνέβησαν, καὶ ἐγένοντο ὅρκοι καὶ συμμαχία ἥδε.¹⁰

⁸Thucydides, V, 22.

⁹Plutarch, Nikias, 10.

¹⁰Thucydides, V, 22.

Perhaps the Athenian signatories of the truce had remained in Sparta for a few days in the hope that the allies would relent, for the same representatives sign both treaty and alliance. If so, Nikias could have been present and active. In any case, the alliance was concluded shortly after the treaty and bound each party to aid the other if attacked by a third party. Soon after the Athenians returned the Lakedaimonian captives.

Thucydides gives no indication that the peace was welcomed or rejected, considered stable or unstable by the Athenians, only that Nikias seemed αἴτιος εἶναι τῶν πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους σπονδῶν.¹¹ Plutarch on the other hand expresses many views. He states: Nikias was the man who realized that Sparta was eager for peace while Athens was weary of war; Nikias had the support of older, wealthy men and particularly the landowners; Nikias won over more Athenians to his views and invited the Spartans to make offers of peace. Furthermore, men once more tasted the joys of security and the company of foreigners and friends; finally peace was concluded and Nikias was considered their saviour for he was responsible for the peace as Perikles had been responsible for the war;¹²

¹¹Thucydides, V, 46.

¹²Plutarch, Nikias, 9.

to this day the peace carries his name. How much of Plutarch's narrative has been elaborated from Thucydides, how much of it gathered from other reliable sources we do not know.

The peace, although observed technically for almost seven years in the territory of Athens and Sparta, was not observed in the Argolid or elsewhere. Korinth and other states in the Peloponnese did their best to terminate the agreement. The Athenians too became dissatisfied¹³ when the Spartans failed to carry out parts of the agreement. Thucydides himself says that these years cannot be called a period of peace.¹⁴

Immediately after the alliance between Athens and Sparta the Korinthians asked the Argives to organize an alliance among the other Peloponnesian states. Only in this way could the Korinthians manage a balance of power sufficient to neutralize Athens and her commercial projects. The Mantineians and their allies joined the proposed alliance first. Soon the Eleians, Korinthians, and Chalkidians in Thrace also joined.

During the summer of 420 communication went on between Athens and Sparta but with mounting suspicions. Sparta had not returned Amphipolis nor had the treaty been ratified by

¹³Adcock, C.A.H., V, p. 262.

¹⁴Thucydides, V, 26.

the Thrakian allies, Boiotians, or Korinthians. Despite promises of forcing them to do this the Spartans procrastinated. The Athenians in turn refused to restore Pylos and wished they had not returned the prisoners.

The Spartans felt they had done their best. They had given up their Athenian prisoners and withdrawn their soldiers from Thrace. They were trying to get the Boiotians and Korinthians to sign the treaty, and to return Panakton and all the Athenian prisoners in Boiotia. They could not give Amphipolis back because they lacked adequate control. In the meantime they wanted the Athenians to surrender Pylos or withdraw the Messenians and helots and use a garrison of Athenians instead. At length and after many conferences the Athenians acquiesced in this request.

Eventually the Spartans, now led by ephors, Kleobolos and Xenares, who did not favour the treaty, after several abortive proposals involving Boiotia and Argos, made an alliance with Boiotia, paradoxically committing a breach of faith with the Athenians in order to uphold a treaty with the Athenians. They hoped to receive Pylos for the return of Panakton. At this time the Boiotians began dismantling the fortifications of Panakton.

At the beginning of the next summer, the Argives feared that their failure to renew the treaty with Sparta now meant

that they would have to fight Sparta, Tegea, Boiotia, and Athens at the same time. Not grasping the actual situation, the dissension that would develop because the agreement between Sparta and Boiotia had been made without Athenian assent or knowledge, they immediately attempted to negotiate an alliance with the Spartans, who were only too willing.

During these negotiations the Spartans returned the Athenian prisoners from Boiotia and, after the discovery that Panakton had been dismantled, reported this to the Athenians since they considered its destruction equivalent to handing it back.

The Athenians were enraged. They felt the Spartans had shown bad faith by not restoring Panakton intact and by making a separate alliance with the Boiotians.

At this crucial time Nikias' second great opponent entered the scene, Alkibiades, son of Kleinias. Alkibiades was a young man,¹⁵ rather young to hold office in the opinion of Thucydides, but from a family and associations of

¹⁵"The struggle between Nikias and Alkibiades was partly one between the old and the young generation" (V. Ehrenberg, The People of Aristophanes [Blackwell, Oxford, 1951], p. 210). Cf. Euripides' Suppliants, 232. Alkibiades was about thirty years of age. (See Kirchner, P.A., I, no. 600.)

importance.¹⁶ He thought that Athens' best course of action was an alliance with Argos, so that Sparta would have no leisure to crush that state and then attack Athens. Besides, he resented the fact that the Spartans had negotiated the treaty through Nikias and Laches, ignoring his aid to the prisoners from Pylos and his grandfather's former associations with the Spartans.

Accordingly Alkibiades sent a message to the Argives suggesting that they propose an alliance among themselves, the Mantineians, and Eleians, and send representatives to Athens to invite the Athenians to join. The Argives, finally understanding the situation between Athens and Sparta, decided to comply. In a hurry, the Spartans also sent delegates to Athens with full powers to reach a settlement. They argued before the Athenian council that they should receive Pylos for Panakton and that their alliance with Boiotia was acceptable because it was not directed against Athens. Their speech in the boule appeared so persuasive to Alkibiades that he thought they would win over the Athenian public when they repeated it before the assembly.

¹⁶ Alkibiades was an Alkmaionid on his mother's side of the family, and associated with Perikles and Sokrates. See Thucydides, V, 43.

He therefore promised the Spartans that, if they did not claim to have full powers before the assembly, he himself would convince the Athenians that they should give Pylos back. Despite the fact that he was one of the leaders opposing this move, the Spartans obviously trusted him. They were thinking perhaps of the kindnesses he had shown to the prisoners from Pylos and his family's former associations, perhaps that he had changed his opinion of Nikias' ideas. Realizing the weakness of their position they did as he suggested, and Alkibiades publicly accused them of duplicity. His intentions were to destroy the relationship between them and Nikias and through more evidence of insincerity on the part of the Spartans draw the Athenians into alliance with the Argives. His attack was so successful that the Athenians were prepared to make an alliance with Argos that very day in the assembly.¹⁷

Both Nikias and the other members of the council must have been so distrustful of the Spartan negotiations by now that they were nonplussed by the situation. The Spartans clearly could not contradict themselves again and expect the Athenians to believe them.¹⁸ But fortunately for Nikias there was an earthquake before anything was arranged and the assembly

¹⁷Thucydides, V, 45.

¹⁸Plutarch, Nikias, 10.

was adjourned for the day. On the following day Nikias was yet strong enough politically to postpone the final decision. He felt that an alliance with Sparta was better than one with the Argives, and that even just delaying the war was increasing the prestige of Athens, lowering that of Sparta. Especially, he realized that Sparta had little to lose by fighting immediately - and possibly much to gain.¹⁹

He persuaded the Athenians to send him and some others to Sparta. They would ask the Spartans to prove their good faith by restoring Panakton intact, giving back Amphipolis and renouncing the treaty with the Boiotians. Otherwise the Athenians would make an alliance with the Argives. Nikias must have merely been stalling for time because it was unlikely that these conditions would be met. Perhaps he hoped even the Athenians, given time, would change their minds again.²⁰

Nikias, already deceived in Alkibiades, and in turn deceived by the influence of the party of Xenares the ephor, managed to get the oaths renewed but, of course, nothing else accomplished. In fear he returned home to see the Athenians conclude an alliance with the Argives, Mantineians, and Eleians.

¹⁹Thucydides, V, 46.

²⁰M.F. McGregor, "The Genius of Alkibiades, "Phoenix, XIX (1965), p. 30, agrees that Nikias' policy was "more immediately sound," Alkibiades' more imaginative and dangerous.

Over the next few years before the Sicilian expedition, evidence for the support that Nikias and Alkibiades had is confusing.

Alkibiades may have temporarily lost some influence, especially among the Argives, when the Spartans gained an entry into Epidauros. He had advocated that the Argives conquer this town for the convenience of the Athenian reinforcements in Aigina. The Argives complained that the Athenians had broken their treaty by allowing the Spartans sea-passage to that place and could make reparation only by putting a force of Messenians and helots back into Pylos. At length helots from Kranioi were sent and no further action taken on either side.²¹

Before the battle of Mantinea, Alkibiades was not serving as general but as πρεσβευτής. Instead Nikostratos and Laches were in office. Yet, after the disaster at Mantinea, for which Alkibiades may be considered basically responsible, the Athenians again elected him general. It is not known how he survived this catastrophe and retained his political prestige at the same time. He must have remained in Argos during the following winter, for he opposed the Argive alliance with the Lacedaimonians made then.

²¹Thucydides, V, 56.

Nikias had not been completely forgotten, for, when an expedition he was supposed to lead against the Chalkidians in Thrace and Amphipolis had to be called off because Perdikkas betrayed him and swore allegiance to the Argives and Spartans,²² a force was sent to blockade Perdikkas in Makedonia. Even at this date apparently Nikias was not fighting Sparta except to win back what belonged to Athens by the treaty's terms.

In the next summer, 416, Alkibiades completed the re-alliance of Athens and Argos with the signing of a fifty-year truce. The subjugation of Melos may have been his idea too. He was a general during the year 416 and Plutarch states that he gave his support in the assembly to the motion deciding the execution of all adult men in Melos.²³ This the Athenians carried out, also selling the women and children as slaves, as was common practice.²⁴

²²Thucydides, V, 83.

²³Plutarch, Alkibiades, 16. Pseudo-Andokides (4.22), states that Alkibiades supported the motion for enslavement.

²⁴M.I. Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?" Historia, VIII (1959), pp. 152, 161.

During this year²⁵ one of the interesting devices of the Athenian constitution, ostracism, was finally destroyed by Alkibiades and Nikias. Thucydides makes no mention of an ostracism during this period but Plutarch gives a full account.²⁶

²⁵The date of this ostracism formerly was linked with Alkibiades' political difficulties after Mantinea and dated to 417 by two statements: one by Theopompos (frag. 96B, Jacoby), that Hyperbolos lived in exile for six years, and the other by Thucydides (VIII, 73), that he was assassinated in the year 411. But Woodhead ("I.G., I², 95, and the Ostracism of Hyperbolos," Hesperia, XVIII [1949], pp. 78-83) dates I.G., I², 95, a decree in which Hyperbolos moves an amendment, to the tenth prytany of 418/7 B.C. by restoring ἐπὶ Ἀντιφ[ῶντος ἀρχόντος] McGregor ("The Genius of Alkibiades," Phoenix, XIX [1965], pp. 43-46) supports this reading. Undoubtedly the φ should be accepted along with the restoration that makes it impossible to believe that Hyperbolos was ostracized in the spring of 417. Raubitschek ("The Case against Alkibiades: Andocides IV," T.A.P.A., LXXIX [1948], pp. 192-193) agrees that 416 is the earliest possible date for Hyperbolos' ostracism, but prefers 415. However, 416 is the date that agrees best with all the evidence.

²⁶Plutarch, Nikias, 11; Alkibiades, 13.

Alkibiades and Nikias were the strongest politicians in the state. Apparently Alkibiades was feared because of his way of life and amoral character. Nikias on the other hand was envied because of his riches and disliked because of his aloofness. He was championed by the older Athenians, who wished for peace, while Alkibiades was supported by the younger generation, who desired war.

When it became clear that one of them was likely to be ostracized, the two joined their factions and managed to ostracize Hyperbolos, a leader of some stature who nevertheless was later thought unworthy of the honour of that punishment.²⁷ The demos was amused or angered when it realized that the process of ostracism had been so abused, and never employed

²⁷Plutarch, Nikias, II; Aristeides, 7. Plutarch also cites a different version from Theophrastos, who said that Hyperbolos was ostracized when Phaiax and Alkibiades were contending with one another. This version appears to derive from Pseudo-Andokides, IV, 23. A.E. Raubitschek, "The Case against Alcibiades: Andocides IV," T.A.P.A., LXXIX (1948), pp. 191-210, states that Theophrastos clearly believed in the authenticity of this speech.

it again.²⁸ In the meantime two strong political factions still existed in the city, their differences unresolved.

²⁸L. Pearson, "Party Politics and Free Speech in Democratic Athens," Greece and Rome, VII (1937), pp. 41-50, denies that ostracism works in party politics and evidently considers the groups led by Alkibiades and Nikias to be as strong as actual political parties by the time of the Sicilian expedition.

CHAPTER V

THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

The final part of Nikias' career occurs in the Sicilian expedition, 415-413. The Athenians, long involved in minor associations with Sicily, showed a special interest in that island now, an interest perhaps linked with a desire for wealth,¹ although they stated they wished to prevent the Sicilians from aiding their Dorian kinsmen in Sparta with grain or troops.

Periklean policy appeared to imply no expansion westward even though treaties of alliance had been made in 458 with Egesta and those made soon after with Rhegion and Leontinoi renewed in 433/2. Still the Athenians had not forgotten a Sicilian theatre of operation during the Archidamian War, for some expeditions had been sent there, first twenty ships in late summer 427 under Laches and Charoiades, which, when Charoiades was killed, remained under the sole command of Laches. Later, in winter 425/4, forty more ships were sent under the command of Eurymedon, Sophokles, and Pythodoros but achieved no spectacular successes. When finally the Sicilians made peace among themselves at Gela in 424/3 the

¹v. Ehrenberg, The People of Aristophanes (Blackwell, Oxford, 1951), p. 232.

Athenian commanders could do little but acquiesce and sail away. For this action the Athenian assembly banished Pythodoros and Sophokles and fined Eurymedon.²

The speech of Hermokrates reported in Thucydides to help accomplish this settlement in Sicily³ is interesting. It enumerates the points later debated by Nikias and Alkibiades. For example, the Athenians are described as not hating any group or race in Sicily but as wanting Sicilian property; as becoming aggressors when they meet no resistance; as being able to attack only from bases in a Sicily that has failed to unite against foreigners.

A diplomatic expedition to Sicily was sent by the Athenians at the same time as Kleon went to Thrace. Phaiax and two other *πρεσβευται* went to oppose the claims of Syracuse over the oligarchs in Leontinoi. They hoped to persuade the Athenian allies and remaining Siceliots to join in an expedition against Syracuse because of her continual aggression. Since

²See Chapter III. Laches may also have been accused of taking bribes in Sicily; Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 240-244; 894-997. H.D. Westlake, "Athenian Aims in Sicily, 427-424 B.C.," *Historia*, IX (1960), pp. 385-402, discusses the problem fully.

³Thucydides, IV, 86.

Phaiax was unsuccessful at Gela he realized the other states would also not give their support to Athenian troops, so he withdrew and returned to Athens.⁴

When at last the Egestaians went to war with their neighbours again and discovered themselves facing even the powerful Syracusans they remembered their earlier agreement with Laches and sent to Athens for aid. They repeatedly warned that the Syracusans, once they had gained full power in Sicily, would join up with their Dorian kinsmen and the Peloponnesians in a campaign to destroy Athens. Besides, the Egestaians were prepared to supply enough money to pay for the war.

The Athenians, eager to invade Sicily, in the winter of 416/5 gladly seized the pretext of aiding their kinsmen and allies. They decided to send delegates to Egesta to see for themselves what the situation really was. When the Athenian delegates reported back the next year along with an embassy from Egesta carrying sixty talents of silver to pay for sixty ships for one month, they encouraged the expedition because they had been duped about the funds still available in Egesta. Upon their report the Athenian assembly decided to send sixty ships⁵ to Sicily under the command of Alkibiades,

⁴Thucydides, V, 4 and 5.

⁵Cf. I.G., I², 98.

Nikias, and Lamachos with instructions to help the Egestaians against the Selinountines, to re-establish the Leontinoi and do whatever might seem in accord with Athenian interests.

Five days later when the assembly was making final arrangements about the expedition, Nikias spoke against it.⁶ His view was that the expedition really aimed at conquering the whole of Sicily, and that the Athenians were making a mistake. Thucydides says most of the Athenians were ignorant about Sicily and its inhabitants, and did not realize that they were undertaking another full-scale war.

Nikias argued that the time was wrong and Sicily not easy to conquer.⁷ Many enemies would be left behind, for the peace treaty offered no real security; the Chalkidians in Thrace were not yet conquered,⁸ other subjects wished to rebel but could be kept down easily if Athens did not scatter her forces. On the other hand, Sicily, once conquered, would be very difficult to keep, and antagonistic towards Athens. Sicily under the control of Syracuse would be even less a

⁶Thucydides, V, 9-14.

⁷Diodoros, XII, 83, adds that Nikias argued that even the Carthaginians had been unable to subdue Sicily.

⁸B.W. Henderson, The Great War Between Athens and Sparta (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1927), p. 339, condemns Nikias' policy in this area as in almost all else.

danger than Sicily divided, with some states feeling loyalty to Sparta. He suggested that any attack should be only a brief display of power in order that the Athenians might recoup their losses in men and money. He summed up his logic by saying that the Sicilians should be left in their present condition, which was perfectly satisfactory to the Athenians, while the Athenians faced the real problem of protecting themselves against the oligarchical plans of Sparta.

In a personal attack he also accused Alkibiades of being a selfish young man who wanted profits to maintain his personal extravagances. Finally Nikias asked for the expedition to be voted on again, a procedure that was perhaps a breach of the assembly's rules.

Alkibiades, according to Plutarch (Alkibiades, 17) and Thucydides (VI, 14) the chief proponent of the expedition to Sicily (and then Carthage and Libya,⁹ so that Italy and the Peloponnese would fall an easy prey to Athens), spoke in reply and finally suggested that the Athenians should not delay but send him, still in the strength of his youth, and

⁹The idea of attacking Carthage was already scoffed at by Aristophanes in the Knights, 174, 1303-1304; see also Thucydides, VI, 15; 90.

Nikias, with his reputation for luck, as generals. He answered the criticisms of strategy by claiming that Sicily was not united by racial ties or political alliances and that the enemies left behind could attack safely by land whether or not an expedition was in Sicily, and still do no harm to the Athenian fleet left behind.

Both Alkibiades' and Nikias' estimates of the situation can be justified.¹⁰ Alkibiades seemed to think that one must add to an empire or lose it. Nikias merely wanted to maintain it. Alkibiades felt that security was guaranteed by the Athenian navy which was superior to all the Sicilian navies put together.

As was to be expected, the colourful and generous tone of Alkibiades' speech won favour, and in a second speech in hopes of yet deterring the expedition¹¹ Nikias tried to add weight to his argument by exaggerating the armaments needed. In this speech he showed quite a detailed knowledge of Sicily. He described its cities as being independent and not wanting any other governments. Perhaps he had been given a great deal of information by Laches, (see Chapter III) for, even if he

¹⁰M.F. McGregor, "The Genius of Alkibiades," Phoenix, XIX (1965), pp. 32-34.

¹¹Thucydides, VI, 20-23.

was over-estimating the opposition to be expected, he clearly realized what the weaknesses of the Athenian expedition would be. For example, he knew the Sicilians had cavalry available to them, while the Athenians would have to get cavalry from the Egestaians. He knew that above all the Athenians would need a source of supplies for the four months of winter since even a messenger would have difficulty getting to Athens. In what appears to be foreshadowing by Thucydides he admitted that it would be shameful to have to retreat or send back for reinforcements through not being well enough prepared. The Athenians would have to establish mastery when they first landed or prepare to find enemies on every side.

After this speech, meant to discourage, the Athenians only became more enthusiastic and felt that in following Nikias' advice they were embarking on a safe project. By the time Nikias reluctantly gave large figures for the probable numbers of men and ships needed, subject to further discussion with his colleagues, the Athenians voted the generals full powers.

The incident of the Herms followed.¹² Perhaps the

¹²The incident probably occurred during the first week in June, a date based on I.G., I², 302, which records payments made to the generals for the financing of the expedition, and Thucydides' dating for the departure of the expedition, *θέρους μεσοῦντος ἤδη* (VI, 30); Meritt, "The Departure of Alkibiades for Sicily," A.J.A., XXXIV (1930), pp. 125-152.

work of oligarchs in the city, the mutilation of these religious figures on the eve of the departure of the Sicilian expedition seems to have been a plot against Alkibiades.¹³ Metics and servants gave evidence that other statues had been mutilated previously, and the Mysteries mocked in private homes; one of those implicated was Alkibiades. Despite his thoroughly sensible demand for an immediate trial to clear his name or prove him guilty, the generals were forced to set out with the expedition as planned.

In midsummer the forces sailed from the Peiraeos. In Kerkyra the generals divided their forces into three, one part under Alkibiades, one under Nikias, and one under Lamachos, so that they would not be stationed together in an area incapable of supporting them.

Three ships sent ahead to Eggesta returned shortly to the troops at Rhegion with the unequivocal message that the promised funds were not available to support the Athenians, but just thirty talents (Thucydides says that Nikias was expecting this news). Moreover, the people of Rhegion refused to join the expedition. At the ensuing consultations of the

¹³Ruth E. Allan, The Mutilation of the Herms: a Study in Athenian Politics, (Diss., University of Cincinnati, 1951). See Chapter II, ad fin.

commanders it became obvious that they disagreed on the method of executing their instructions.

Nikias wanted to settle the immediate situation either by sailing against Selinous and then determining further action if Egesta provided enough money for the whole army, or by getting together enough money from Egesta to provide the promised supplies, by forcing Egesta and Selinous to reach an agreement, and by making a show of power (including perhaps aid to the Leontinoid or agreements with other cities) before sailing home. He wished to take as limited a view as possible of the purpose of the expedition.

Alkibiades desired to encourage revolts and seek support from all the cities except Syracuse and Selinous. He hoped especially to win over Messene and some of the Sicels. Finally he hoped to make an attack upon Syracuse and Selinous. Lamachos wished to attack Syracuse immediately and make a naval base at Megara, but gave in to Alkibiades' plan. In this way the two courses of action that were most likely to succeed were turned down.

Unfortunately after Alkibiades was recalled to Athens Lamachos failed to impose his will upon Nikias, either because it was already too late to use Lamachos' plan or because Nikias prevailed in eminence and respect, if only in Lamachos' opinion. Reverting to Nikias' first plan the generals divided

their forces and set out to discover whether or not the Egestaians would produce some money and why the Selinountines were fighting the Egestaians. Nikias did collect thirty talents and sold captives as slaves for another one hundred and twenty talents before he rejoined the expedition. Aid was sought from the Sicels but little else was accomplished that summer.

Finally the Athenian force attacked Syracuse. At the beginning of winter the generals thought of a clever plan, reminiscent of Alkibiades' ingenuity, for moving their troops from Katana to Syracuse without fighting a pitched battle. Drawing the Syracusan army away from its city and to Katana by a ruse the Athenians sailed in and established themselves in a choice location before Syracuse without suffering any harm because of their lack of cavalry.

On the following day the Athenians and Syracusans prepared for battle. Nikias made a speech of encouragement to the Athenians and quickly led them into battle. The Syracusans did not expect action quite so soon and the Athenians broke through their line after the Argives had forced the Sicilian left wing back. The Athenians did not follow the fleeing Syracusans for long, to avoid being trapped by their undefeated cavalry; nor did they plunder the temple at Olympeion, but only set up a trophy and put their own dead,

about fifty, on a pyre. This victory was not consolidated immediately or later, and the Athenians sailed back to Naxos and Katana for the winter. The reason given was that they felt they needed cavalry and money to make an attack in the spring. The need of cavalry, as predicted by Nikias, had been made clear in the first battle.

During the winter they failed to win over many allies partly because of Alkibiades: Messene, supposed to be betrayed to the Athenians, was not handed over because he had already revealed the plan. Kamarina refused to help either side, while the Sicels of the interior, but not the coast, agreed to send aid. In the meantime Alkibiades was getting help for the Syracusans from the Spartans and giving them his estimate of Athenian chances for winning the war.

In this same winter the Athenians moved their quarters from Naxos to Katana where the camp burned by the Syracusans was rebuilt. Preparations for siege-works were made and overtures of friendship to Carthage and Etruria, places Alkibiades stated the Athenians meant to conquer after Sicily.

During the same period the Corinthians, Syracusans, and Alkibiades were prodding the Spartans into action. They finally agreed to send Gylippos, an experienced commander, to the Syracusans. At the same time their opposition, Nikias and Lamachos, had sent a trireme back to Athens, asking for

money and cavalry. The Athenians also agreed to give the help requested.

In the spring, after some minor expeditions against the areas of Megara, the river Terias, Kentoripa, Inessa, and Hybla, the Athenians received an additional force of two hundred and fifty cavalrymen and three hundred talents of silver. In the meantime the Syracusans had decided to defend Epipolai, the only area suitable for an enemy to wall and besiege their city, but they were taken by surprise because the Athenians made a sudden attack, ascended to Epipolai and defeated the disorganized troops which came out to meet them. The Athenians then built a fort at Labdalon, on the edge of Epipolai, facing Megara. Leaving a garrison there they moved on to Syke and constructed another fort called the Circle. The Syracusans were horrified to see how quickly the Athenians were building besieging walls, but did not dare risk another regular battle. In retaliation they started building a counter-wall. The Athenians finally destroyed this in a carefully arranged raid while the remainder of the army guarded against attacks by enemy reinforcements.

In a second raid of the same type Lamachos was killed. Nikias, left behind in the Circle because of illness, saved that unguarded area by ordering the servants to set fire to the machines and timbers in front of the walls. The Athenians

were once again victorious, but had lost one¹³ general and now were commanded by one who was ill.

The Syracusans felt they had no chance of preventing the Athenians from completing their walls. In fact the Athenians built a double wall and began to receive supplies from all over Italy. Many Sicels joined them at this time; the Etruscans contributed three ships. For good reasons the Syracusans gave up hope and began to discuss terms of surrender among themselves and with Nikias.

Gylippos, receiving the untrue story that Syracuse was completely walled in, despaired of saving Sicily and hurried to Italy. The Thourians there failed to support him and despised the small number of his ships. Nikias made the same error.

The first ship from Korinth soon reached Syracuse. Its commander, Gongylos, managed to restore the confidence of the Syracusans with the message that Gylippos and

¹³"The energy and practical ability of Lamachos must have been of the greatest value throughout these operations, and it is significant that the rapid progress of the blockade terminated abruptly with his death." Westlake, "Nicias in Thucydides," Class. Quart., XXXV (1941), pp. 58-65, shows the blackest side of the picture. Nikias was ill, it should be remembered.

reinforcements would be arriving shortly.

When the Corinthians and Spartans arrived in Syracuse, by the route that Nikias had used first, they found that city nearly cut off by besieging walls. Despite only minor losses on either side in the first encounters between them and the Athenians, this was the turning point in the war. Now the Athenians instead of the Syracusans were becoming discouraged. Nikias began to consider a war by sea rather than a war by land.

He made his first mistake by moving his base to Plemmyrion, a place where water was in short supply and the Syracusan cavalry could attack Athenian foragers at will. Shortly afterwards the Syracusans carried one of their cross-walls past the Athenian fortifications, and Nikias lost the opportunity of blockading the city.

The Syracusans now sought more help, and every day of delay increased their chances of winning. Nikias despaired of the expedition unless it were recalled or a large number

of reinforcements sent¹⁴ and wrote an urgent letter¹⁵ to the Athenians. Thinking of defence only, he reported the state of affairs - that their ships could not be careened,¹⁶ that slaves were deserting and mercenaries leaving. The situation was out of his control to such an extent that he felt he would have to surrender if his Italian sources of supply were cut off. Finally he asked to be relieved of his command as a

¹⁴A.W. Gomme, "Four Passages in Thucydides," J.H.S., LXXI (1951), p. 72, writes: "... the original expedition was splendidly adequate to its object; and when the unfortunate Nikias unexpectedly asked for large reinforcements - made necessary mainly by his own weakness in command - the Athenians at home do everything, or almost everything, possible to meet his wishes."

¹⁵The letter has great dramatic value at this point in Thucydides' narrative and, as Westlake notes, "... it is scarcely credible that even Nicias can in the original report have allowed his incapacity to stand out so glaringly" ("Nicias in Thucydides," Class. Quart., XXXV [1941], p. 62).

¹⁶In relation to this type of difficulty J.F. Charles, "The Anatomy of Athenian Sea-Power," Class. Journ., XLII (1946), p. 90, says: "The Sicilian expedition alone proved a major disaster because there naval principles were so far subordinated to the convenience of the army that the fleet lost its efficiency and was finally forced to fight under most unfavourable conditions."

disease of the kidneys made him unfit for service.

Despite his graphic description ("the besiegers had become the besieged") the Athenians refused to relieve him of his command. Instead they appointed two of the officers there, Menander and Euthydemus, to share the command with him until two more generals, Demosthenes and Eurymedon, should arrive. Eurymedon set out immediately with ten ships and one hundred and twenty talents of silver. Demosthenes prepared to come early in the spring.

The Corinthians and Spartans were taking heart and preparing to send more help. The Spartans also planned an attack against Attica and the fortification of Dekeleia. They felt at this point in the war that they and not the Athenians were justified in attacking since by now they had offered to submit to arbitration and the Athenians had refused. (This was a direct reversal of the earlier situation.)

At the beginning of spring Demosthenes sailed for Italy with a fleet of sixty-five ships. Unfortunately he delayed, following the assembly's orders to raid the coast of Lakonia with Charikles.

Meanwhile, in Sicily, Gylippos organized a double attack upon the Athenians. The Syracusan fleet assailed the Athenian fleet in the harbour. While the Athenians had the worst of it in the beginning, their superior training

gained them the upper hand in the naval battle.¹⁷ But the soldiers in Plemmyrion, who were watching the naval attack, were surprised by Gylippos. He captured the three forts in the Plemmyrion along with a great deal of property and supplies. Thucydides states that this loss was the greatest cause of deterioration in the Athenian army because it now had to fight to bring in supplies.

By this time the Athenians were in the anomalous situation of fighting two wars at the same time: at home Athens was like a fortress that they were defending; in Sicily they were attacking Syracuse, a city much like Athens.

Demosthenes was sailing to Sicily, but in the meantime the Syracusans had obtained aid from other cities. Nikias prevented a number of their supporters from reaching

¹⁷At this time naval battles were going on regularly, and Thucydides gives some interesting details of strategems used. For example, the Syracusans drove piles into the water of the harbour as a barrier behind which they could safely anchor their ships. The Athenians to retaliate would sail a big armoured ship near as protection and from small ships pull the piles out with windlasses, or saw them off beneath the water's surface. Some piles were driven beneath the surface of the water by the Syracusans and these acted as hidden reefs. The Athenians paid divers to go down and saw them off.

Syracuse by the simple expedient of asking the Sicels to stop them. The Sicels ambushed these troops on the march and killed about eight hundred. The remaining fifteen hundred managed to reach Syracuse. Almost all Sicily was uniting now against the Athenians, but this victory prevented an immediate attack.

However, the Syracusans knew Demosthenes was on his way and were anxious to destroy Nikias' army before he should arrive. They took advantage of what they had learned about Athenian naval strategy and prepared a method of retaliation. Thucydides says that they especially strengthened the prows of their boats, in imitation of the Corinthians (or at the instigation of Ariston, a Corinthian pilot, according to Diodoros, XIII, 10), in order to be able to ram the Athenian ships in the prow instead of amidships and force the Athenians to fight in the same manner.¹⁸

On the day of the attack neither side won a decisive

¹⁸Thucydides, VII, 36. A.M. Shepard, Sea Power in Ancient History (London, 1925), p. 29, believes that this tactic ultimately caused the ruin of Athens' sea-power. Plutarch, Nikias, 20, attributes the ruse of the Syracusans, re-embarking immediately after their meal (Thucydides, VII, 36-41), and the use of stones instead of javelins and arrows in naval battles (Nikias, 25) to Ariston.

action. The following day Nikias, realizing the Athenians had lost their advantage by sea, ordered the captains to repair their ships and to anchor a line of merchantmen outside the stockade of the Athenian harbour. On the third day the Syracusans tricked the Athenians into thinking the attack was over and defeated them in the melee resulting from an unexpectedly renewed attack. Nevertheless, the Athenian anchorage was saved by the merchant ships defending it.

Just now Demosthenes arrived, and it appeared even to the Syracusans that the Athenians were again in a position to win. Demosthenes decided that he would not make the same mistake as Nikias and delay in attacking Syracuse. He would either be successful quickly or withdraw the expedition. Getting the permission of Nikias and the other commanders he planned a night attack on Epipolai. This battle was successful in its beginning only. Before the attack could be consolidated the Athenians fell into disorder and were routed.

After this disaster Demosthenes wished to return immediately to Athens. Many of the men were ill because the camp was located on marshy ground. Yet Nikias could not decide what course of action he should follow. In a public speech he announced that he was sure the Athenians would not approve of a withdrawal unless they had voted for it previously. He himself preferred to be defeated and killed by the enemy

rather than to return and be executed by his fellow-citizens on a trumped-up charge of bribery. He stated that the Syracusans were even more dependent upon mercenaries than the Athenians and lacked more funds. He wished to continue the siege. Thucydides says further that Nikias had accurate information that the Syracusans were short of money and that a large group supported the Athenian cause.

Eurymedon agreed with Demosthenes' opinion that they should not go on with the siege. Nikias continued his resistance and the others capitulated, thinking he might have additional information that he did not wish to divulge.

Finally the Syracusans prepared another attack and the Athenians realized too late that they should have moved their army. Even Nikias was forced to this conclusion, although he still did not want an open vote on the subject. Everyone prepared secretly to sail out when the signal was given. When they were ready there was an eclipse of the full moon. Most of the Athenians encouraged the generals to delay, and Nikias (ἦν γάρ τι καὶ ἄγαν θείασμῳ τε καὶ τῷ τοιοῦτῳ προσκείμενος)¹⁹ refused to discuss any move until they had waited the thrice nine days²⁰ recommended by the soothsayers.

¹⁹Thucydides, VII, 50.

²⁰The period is "three days" in Diodoros, XIII, 12, and "another full period of the moon" in Plutarch, Nikias, 23.

The Syracusans did not wish the Athenians to escape to another part of Sicily so they decided to force them into a second battle, by sea. In the first action, despite a superior number of ships on the Athenian side, the Athenians were driven back and Eurymedon killed.

The Athenians, left with few provisions (no more had been ordered from Katana), determined on a last desperate attempt to break out of the harbour. As Nikias said in his speech, they prepared for a land battle on the sea. They would use grappling irons, a large number of hoplites, and fight in crowded quarters. Gylippos knew that under these conditions their superior numbers would not help them. Nikias was driven almost out of his mind and tried to make up for the inadequacy of Athenian preparations by encouraging his men individually. The battle was fought with great savagery but the inevitable happened. The Athenians were driven back on shore and the men were in a panic, aware there was no safety in a retreat overland.

The Athenians were so overcome with despair that they did not even ask permission to take up their dead. Demosthenes wished to attack again the next day, for they had sixty ships left to the Syracusans' fifty. Nikias agreed but neither of them could persuade the demoralized men even to board the ships.

Nothing was left except a retreat by land. Some

Syracusan leader, knowing the celebrating citizens were not prepared to stop such a retreat, sent messengers to Nikias saying that they were friendly and that the Athenians should not attempt to retreat that same night because the Syracusans were guarding the roads. The generals, thinking the information was genuine, postponed the immediate retreat.

After this first delay the generals lingered yet another two days after the battle. The wounded and sick were left behind, the dead unburied. About forty thousand men marched out of camp.

Nikias did his best to encourage them, although he himself was ill and seemed to feel the retreat was hopeless. In a speech to the army he gave this summary of his own life. "I myself surpass no one among you in physical strength (indeed you see how I am affected by this illness). I think none can be considered to have been more fortunate than I have been in both my private life and in other respects, but in trepidation I now await the same danger as the meanest man here. And yet I have worshipped the gods assiduously and my conduct towards men has been just and free of reproach."

The march that followed was a fantastic display of tenacity and courage by Nikias. The troops set out, Nikias' division leading. They routed Syracusan troops at the Anapos River and advanced four and a half miles the first day. The next day they were prevented from advancing further; in two

more days they managed to advance only half a mile.

During the next night Nikias and Demosthenes decided to go in the opposite direction, towards the sea. They lit fires to trick the enemy into thinking their men were still camped and set out at night. Nikias' group stayed together and reached the sea but Demosthenes' men fell into confusion and were separated. By noon the Syracusans caught up and attacked Demosthenes' division, which was now five or six miles behind since Nikias was trying to retreat rather than stay and fight. Naturally Demosthenes had more difficulties because the rear-guard was always attacked first by the enemy. Soon his men were surrounded and they surrendered to the number of six thousand.

On the seventh day the Syracusans overtook Nikias and informed him that Demosthenes had surrendered. Nikias could not believe the news and a truce was arranged while he sent a messenger to check. When he received confirmation of the message he offered to surrender only if the Syracusans would let his army go. In return he offered to reimburse Syracuse for all the money she had spent on the war (this might have completed the financial ruin of Athens), and give hostages, at the rate of one man a talent, until this was paid. Of course the Syracusans refused. Some Athenians escaped that night.

At dawn Nikias led the army forward toward the river Assinaros, but all discipline was gone because the men wanted water so badly. At the river itself the carnage was tragic. Nikias surrendered himself to Gylippos, asking that the slaughter be halted. All the rest, including the group that had escaped the night before, were taken prisoner. The disaster was much greater than had overtaken Demosthenes' men. A major part of the army had been killed, and because there had been no definite agreement for surrender a large number of men were kept captive and disposed of by individual Sicilians rather than by the state.

The prisoners taken by the state were retained in the stone quarries of Syracuse. Nikias and Demosthenes were put to death despite Gylippos, who wished to take the generals back to Sparta²¹ - Demosthenes being Sparta's greatest enemy,

²¹Plutarch's account differs from that of Thucydides. He states that Hermokrates urged the two generals to commit suicide, which they did in order to avoid public execution. Diodoros' account adds another variation. He states that Gylippos hated the Athenians violently and urged the execution of Nikias and Demosthenes. Also according to Plutarch, Nikias, 28, Timaios said the generals committed suicide before they could be executed, but Philistos agreed with Thucydides.

Pausanias, I, 29.12, says that Nikias' name was omitted

and Nikias her best friend. (As a result of this mutual trust Nikias had surrendered to Gylippos.) Because of the Syracusans' fear that he would reveal those who had supported him, and the Corinthians' fear that he would bribe his way to escape, the allies were persuaded to kill him. "For these reasons or reasons very similar Nikias was killed, a man who of all the Hellenes in my time was least deserving of such an unhappy end since he spent the whole of his life in the consideration and practice of virtue." This is Thucydides' final description of Nikias. To it must be added his summation of the war in Sicily:

This was the greatest Hellenic action that took place during the war, and, in my opinion, the greatest action that we know of in Hellenic history - to the victors the most brilliant of successes, to the vanquished the most calamitous of defeats; for they were utterly and entirely defeated; their sufferings

from a list of those killed in Sicily because, while Demosthenes made a truce for his men, not for himself, and attempted to commit suicide when he was taken prisoner (cf. Plutarch, Nikias, 27), Nikias surrendered voluntarily and was therefore an unworthy soldier. Pausanias also states that Philistos has the same account.

were on an enormous scale; their losses were, as they say, total; army, navy, everything was destroyed, and, out of many, only few returned. So ended the events in Sicily.²²

Such was the unhappy ending of Nikias' career. Until his last year of illness in Sicily Nikias had managed to maintain the reputation of a good commander; never before was he associated with a disastrous military defeat, and yet, because of the loss of the Athenian army there, his name is noted in history. He had served the Athenian public for at least fifteen years with the greatest diligence, but just fell short of the intelligence and character that acclaim the genius of a man such as Perikles. His was not a mediocre military or political career; rather it was good instead of brilliant.

His shortcomings should perhaps be attributed to his moral integrity. He was shortsighted in dealing with a Kleon, Alkibiades, or Hermokrates because he could not perceive that they, unlike him, were working for their private advancement and merely aiding the state as a necessary concomitant. They expected cleverness and lack of trust in politics; Nikias did not.

²²Thucydides, VII, 87 (trans. by Rex Warner, The Peloponnesian War [Penguin Books, 1954], p. 488).

In the end he surrendered to Gylippos with the same naivety, expecting his men's lives to be saved in an honourable surrender. He failed to foresee the greed and blood-thirstiness in men that prevented Gylippos from enforcing his orders and allowed so many more Athenians to be killed or made slaves privately, or the vicious mood of the Syracusans, recently released from fear of defeat and desiring revenge against the Athenians made prisoner by the state.

As for his own death, Nikias probably desired no more. He would have no wish to return to Athens and suffer justice at the hands of his even more vengeful compatriots; elsewhere he had no reason to remain alive.

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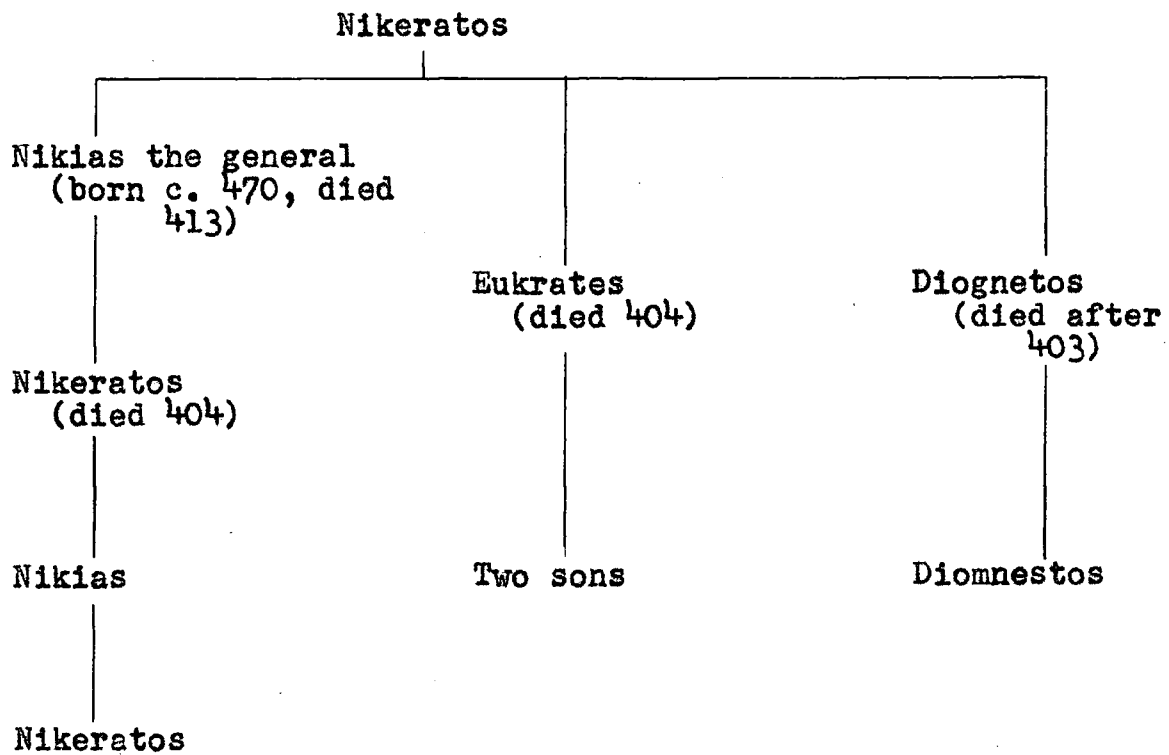
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APPENDIX A

GENEALOGICAL TABLE



APPENDIX B

A LIST OF GENERALS: 431-422

I here employed a list of generals compiled from Thucydides, Beloch, Griechische Geschichte, II², 264, and A.B. West, "Notes on Athenian Generals of the Year 424/3 B.C.," A.J.P., XLV (1924), pp. 141-160. It is useful but by no means exhaustive since the date of office for the strategoi cannot be always determined from Thucydides' "summers" and "winters", which cannot be dated exactly by us: further, although a general was elected at the beginning of the seventh Prytany, he probably did not enter office until the first day of Hekatombaion (around the beginning of July). Modern accounts working from this evidence vary greatly because they assign generals to differing civil years.

For example, H.B. Mayor, "The Strategi at Athens in the Fifth Century. When Did They Enter on Office?" J.H.S., LIX (1939), pp. 45-64, considers that the problem is solved more adequately if a general entered office immediately after his election and dokimasia.

D.M. Lewis, "Double Representation in the Strategia," J.H.S., LXXXI (1961), pp. 118-123, in contradiction to almost all the preceding literature, accepts the evidence of Athenaeus, 218 b, which dates the battle of Tanagra to the archonship

of Euthydemos and 426/5. That Nikias' "war party" failed of re-election he then describes as sheer fabrication.

- 431/0 Sokrates (Thucydides, II, 23)
 Karkinos (Thucydides, II, 23)
 Proteas (Thucydides, II, 23)
 Kleopompos (Thucydides, II, 26)
 Perikles (Thucydides, II, 31)
- 430/29 Perikles (Thucydides, II, 59)
 Hagnon (Thucydides, II, 58)
 Kleopompos (Thucydides, II, 58)
 Phormion (Thucydides, II, 69)
 Melesander (Thucydides, II, 69)
 Xenophon (Thucydides, II, 70)
 Hestiodoros (Thucydides, II, 70)
 Phanomachos (Thucydides, II, 70)
- 429/8 Phormion (Thucydides, II, 103)
 Perikles (Thucydides, II, 65)
 Kleidippides (Thucydides, III, 3)
- 428/7 Asopios (Thucydides, III, 7)
 Paches (Thucydides, III, 18)
 Lysikles (Thucydides, III, 19)
 Nikias (Thucydides, III, 51)
 Nikostratos (Thucydides, III, 75)
- 427/6 Eurymedon (Thucydides, III, 80)
 Laches (Thucydides, III, 86)
 Charoiades (Thucydides, III, 86)
 Demosthenes (Thucydides, III, 91)
 Prokles (Thucydides, III, 91)
 Nikias (Thucydides, III, 91)
 Hipponikos (Thucydides, III, 91)
- 426/5 Laches (implied Thucydides, III, 103)
 Aristotle (Thucydides, III, 105)
 Hierophon (Thucydides, III, 105)
 Pythodoros (Thucydides, III, 115; IV, 2. To replace Laches)
 Sophokles (Thucydides, III, 115)
 Eurymedon (Thucydides, III, 115)
 Simonides (Thucydides, IV, 7)
 Hippokrates (C.I.A., I, 273)
 ?Lamachos (Aristophanes, Acharnians, 593 ff.)

- 425/4 Eurymedon (Thucydides, IV, 46)
 Sophokles (Thucydides, IV, 46)
 Pythodoros (Thucydides, IV, 46)
 Nikias (Thucydides, IV, 28)
 Aristеides (Thucydides, IV, 50)
 Nikostratos (Thucydides, IV, 53)
 Autokles (Thucydides, IV, 53)
 Demosthenes (Thucydides, IV, 29)
- 424/3 Eurymedon (Thucydides, IV, 65)
 Sophokles (Thucydides, IV, 65)
 Pythodoros (Thucydides, IV, 65)
 Hippokrates (Thucydides, IV, 89)
 Demosthenes (Thucydides, IV, 89)
 Demodoros (Thucydides, IV, 75)
 Aristеides (Thucydides, IV, 75)
 Lamachos (Thucydides, IV, 75)
 Thucydides (Thucydides, IV, 104)
 Eukles (Thucydides, IV, 104)
 ?Kleon (Aristophanes, Clouds, 586; 7; Diodoros, XII, 63)
- 423/2 Nikias (Thucydides, IV, 129)
 Nikostratos (Thucydides, IV, 129)