

Pericles

Pericles was the most famous leader of the most famous ancient Greek democracy – and also extremely controversial in his own time and ever since. Was he a brutal imperialist ready to oppress other Greeks, or a clear-eyed defender of Athens' need for power to survive in a relentlessly hostile world? How did his intellectual training in ideas that many Athenians regarded as dangerous make him the most persuasive leader Athenian democracy ever knew? Why was his personal lifestyle so idiosyncratic? How should we evaluate his responsibility for the suffering and loss of the Peloponnesian War? Thomas R. Martin's unique emphasis on the effect on Pericles of his family's notorious history, his youthful experiences as a wartime refugee, and his unusual education reveals a brilliant politician whose hyper-rationality could not, in the end, protect him or his community from tragedy.

With nearly forty years of experience teaching ancient history to non-specialist audiences, Thomas R. Martin is the author of books including surveys of ancient Greece, ancient Rome, Alexander the Great, and the works of Herodotus and Sima Qian, and An Overview of Classical Greek History online at the Perseus Project, which has been consulted by countless readers since its appearance as the first resource of its kind on the subject. He has also appeared in various documentaries on ancient history shown on television around the world.

Pericles

A Biography in Context

THOMAS R. MARTIN

College of the Holy Cross



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

One Liberty Plaza, New York, NY 10006

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521133357

© Thomas R. Martin 2016

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2016

Printed in the United States of America

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Martin, Thomas R., author.

Pericles : a biography in context / Thomas R. Martin,
College of the Holy Cross.

New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

LCCN 2016009126 | ISBN 9780521116459 (hardback) |

ISBN 9780521133357 (pbk.)

LCSH: Pericles, approximately 495 B.C.-429 B.C. |
Statesmen – Greece – Athens – Biography. | Athens (Greece) –
Politics and government. | Athens (Greece) – History.

LCC DF228.P4 M37 2016 | DDC 938/.04092-dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016009126>

ISBN 978-0-521-11645-9 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-13335-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

This book is dedicated to the undergraduate students in the Department of Classics at Holy Cross in recognition of their thought-provoking questions during their ancient Greek class reading Plutarch's Life of Pericles, and to my wife, the classicist Ivy Sui-yuen Sun, in whose scholarly company I first and always studied the unforgettable archaeological treasures of the Athens of Pericles.

Every age has, or imagines it has, its own circumstances which render past experience no longer applicable to the present case... And no wonder, if we read history for the facts instead of reading it for the sake of the general principles, which are to the facts as the root and sap of a tree to its leaves.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Statesman's Manual; Or, The Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight: A Lay Sermon* (London, 1816), p. 14.

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	page viii
<i>List of Maps</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Chronology</i>	xiii
<i>Pericles' Alcmeonid Family Tree</i>	xix
Introduction: A Biography of Pericles in the Context of the Ancient Sources	I
1 The Notorious Family History of Pericles' Mother	25
2 The Harsh Lessons of the Career of Pericles' Father	47
3 Pericles Becomes a Teenager during a Family Crisis and a National Emergency	64
4 Pericles Becomes a Refugee during Athens' Greatest Peril	80
5 Pericles Becomes an Adult as Athens Builds an Empire	99
6 Pericles' Innovative Education for Leadership in Athenian Democracy	118
7 Pericles Becomes a Leader as Athens and Sparta Become Enemies	139
8 Pericles Becomes the First Man of Athens	159
9 Pericles' Responsibility for the Samian Revolt and the Peloponnesian War	181
10 Pericles' Fate, Then and Later	202
<i>Suggested Readings</i>	231
<i>Index</i>	241

Illustrations

1	Stone bust of Pericles	<i>page 2</i>
2	Back-to-back stone busts of the historians Herodotus and Thucydides	13
3	Greek vase painting of male athletes in a footrace	27
4	Stone sculpture in relief of the Great King of Persia	41
5	Greek vase painting of combat between a Greek and a Persian warrior	55
6	Ancient Greek <i>ostraca</i> (ballots for an ostracism)	68
7	Stone sculpture in relief of rowers in a trireme	83
8	Remains of the bronze “snake column” from Delphi	96
9	Greek vase painting of hoplites (heavy-armed infantry) in combat	110
10	Greek vase painting of boys receiving primary education	119
11	Greek vase painting of a scene from a symposium (drinking party)	129
12	Surviving portion of the fortification wall of Thasos	140
13	Athenian inscription listing soldiers killed in war	149
14	Athenian silver coin	162
15	View of the Acropolis and Parthenon	167
16	Copy in stone of the shield of the statue of Athena in the Parthenon	176
17	Stone bust of Aspasia	184
18	Temple on the island of Aegina	200
19	Alma-Tadema painting of Pericles and Aspasia viewing the Parthenon frieze	217

Maps

NB: Greek names with *os* or *on* can also be transliterated as *us* or *um* (for example, Thasos or Thasus, Phaleron or Phalerum), and those with *ai* or *aia* can also be transliterated as *ae* or *aea* or even as *e* and *ea* (for example, Aigina or Aegina or Egina, Plataia or Plataea or Platea).

1	Greece and the Aegean	<i>page</i> 22
2	Peloponnese and Central Greece	24
3	The Persian Empire	44
4	Athens in the late fifth century B.C.	137
5	Athens, Piraeus, and the Long Walls	138
6	Athenian and Peloponnesian Leagues 431 B.C.	180

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Anastasia Graf, Beatrice Rehl, and Isabella Vitti of Cambridge University Press for their editorial guidance and endless patience, and to the production staff of the Press for their expert work. Jessica Bailot, Holy Cross Class of 2015, and Sarah Zatoonian, Holy Cross Class of 2017, deserve recognition for their careful and helpful reading of the text during a busy time. Carson Bay, Ph.D. candidate in Religions of Western Antiquity at Florida State University, provided many insightful corrections and improvements. Thanks also go to Jim Fuhr for expert crafting of the index, Ramesh Karunakaran for efficient management of final production, and Susan Thornton for responsive copy-editing. Finally, I want to express my special appreciation to the anonymous peer reviewers for their insightful, thorough, and no-holds-barred reflections at the beginning and the end of the editorial process. Their forthright criticisms motivated me to reconsider thoroughly my approach in this biography. Although I am under no illusion that the changes made in response to their observations will seem sufficient to them, I remain deeply impressed by their scholarly acumen.

Chronology

All dates are B.C.; *ca.* indicates the date is approximate.

- 632 Cylon of Athens attempts to take over the city-state; one of Pericles' maternal relatives is implicated in sacrilegious murder and that side of his family (the Alcmeonids) is exiled from Athens.
- ca.* 600–570 Cleisthenes of Sicyon rules his city-state as a tyrant; Pericles' relative Megacles of Athens marries Agariste, Cleisthenes' daughter.
- ca.* 590s Pericles' relative Alcmeon wins an Olympic victory in chariot racing. He is a commander in the First Sacred War and reputedly visits King Croesus of Lydia.
- ca.* 546–527 Pisistratus of Athens rules his city-state as tyrant; the Alcmeonid family again goes into exile.
- 527 Hippias, son of Pisistratus, becomes tyrant at Athens; the Alcmeonids return.
- 514 The Alcmeonids go into exile again after the murder of Hippias' brother and rebuild Apollo's temple at Delphi.
- 511–510 Instructed by Apollo of Delphi, the Spartans use force to expel Hippias as tyrant at Athens.
- 507 Cleisthenes, maternal great-uncle of Pericles, creates a direct democracy as Athens' government, leading the Spartans to attack to overturn it; the Athenians successfully repel them and ask the Great King of Persia for a military alliance.
- 506 The Spartans again unsuccessfully attack Athens, allying with Athens' neighbors the Boeotians and Chalcidians, whom the Athenians defeat.

- ca.* 505 The Thebans and Aeginetans attack Athens.
- ca.* 500 Pericles' parents, Agariste and Xanthippus of Athens, marry.
- ca.* 499 Aristagoras of Miletus convinces the Athenians to send troops to support the Ionians' rebellion against Persian control.
- 494 The city-state of Miletus is captured as the Persians suppress the Ionian Revolt.
- Mid-490s Pericles is born.
- 490 The Athenians commanded by Miltiades defeat the Persians, who are accompanied by Hippias, on land at the Battle of Marathon.
- ca.* 489 Xanthippus prosecutes Miltiades for his failure in commanding an attack against the island of Paros.
- 484 Xanthippus is ostracized.
- 483 The Athenians vote to spend a large discovery of silver ore on building a navy instead of personal distributions of money.
- 480 The Persians invade Greece, winning the Battle of Thermopylae on land and drawing the Battle of Artemisium at sea; the Athenians evacuate; the Greek alliance wins the Battle of Salamis at sea.
- 479 The Persian invaders offer a tempting deal to the Athenians, who refuse and evacuate their land again; the Greek alliance wins the Battle of Plataea and the Battle of Mycale on land.
- 478 Xanthippus captures the city-state of Sestos; the Delian League, a naval alliance headed by Athens, is established by its members' oaths of permanent loyalty.
- 477 Aristides of Athens succeeds in having the Delian League allies voluntarily agree to assessments of annual payments, sworn to for eternity.
- 476 Cimon of Athens leads the Delian League to victory over the Persians at Eion.
- 475 Cimon captures the island of Scyros and takes back to Athens the bones of the legendary hero Theseus.
- Mid-/late 470s The Delian League attacks the islands of Carystos and Naxos; Themistocles is ostracized; Pericles is married; Pericles perhaps begins studying music with Damon.

Chronology

xv

- 472 Aeschylus of Athens produces the drama *Persians*, with Pericles as the *choregos*.
- 470s/460s(?) Pericles studies natural science, philosophy, and persuasive argumentation with Anaxagoras of Clazomenae.
- ca. 468 Cimon wins the Battle of the Eurymedon River against the Persians. An agreement may have been reached under which the Persians agree not to send military expeditions out of the eastern Mediterranean (The Peace of Callias).
- ca. 465–462 The island of Thasos attempts to revolt from the Delian League and is severely punished.
- ca. 464 After a giant earthquake, the helots (Greek slaves) revolt against the Spartans in the southern Peloponnese.
- 463 Pericles serves as one of the prosecutors of Cimon in the latter's trial for corruption.
- ca. 462 Cimon leads an Athenian military force to help the Spartans in response to their appeal for aid against the helots; the Spartans then dismiss the Athenians.
- ca. 461 To support radical democracy, Ephialtes of Athens and Pericles back reforms of the powers of the Areopagus Council; Cimon is ostracized.
- Early 450s Pericles persuades the Athenian democratic assembly to institute financial subsidies for service on juries; two of the Long Walls are built to connect the city of Athens to its western ports; Xanthippus, Pericles' son, is born.
- 458 Aeschylus' trilogy of dramas *Oresteia* is produced at Athens.
- Mid-450s The Delian League sends a large military expedition to Egypt to support a rebellion against the Persian Empire; Paralus, Pericles' son, is born; Pericles and his wife divorce.
- ca. 457 The Spartans defeat the Athenians at the Battle of Tanagra; Cimon attempts to return from ostracism; the Athenians defeat the Spartans at the Battle of Oenophytæ; Pericles supports recalling Cimon.
- ca. 454 Pericles commands a Delian League naval expedition in the Corinthian Gulf; massive losses of men and ships end the Egyptian expedition; the Delian League treasury is moved from the Aegean island of Delos to the Acropolis in Athens.

- 451 The Athenian democratic assembly passes a Citizenship Law proposed by Pericles.
- Late 450s/
early 440s Pericles studies with Zeno.
- ca. 450 Cimon dies on a military expedition to Cyprus; the Peace of Callias is perhaps renewed.
- 448 The Spartans send a military expedition to take control of the oracle of Apollo at Delphi; the Athenians send an expedition in response to take control.
- 447 Construction begins on the Parthenon temple at Athens; the Athenians suffer defeat at the Battle of Coronea in Boeotia; Pericles fortifies the Thracian Chersonese and settles Athenians there.
- 446 City-states on the island of Euboea rebel against the Delian League; the Spartans invade Athenian territory; Pericles bribes them to return home and takes Euboea.
- 446/5 Athens and Sparta swear to a peace treaty to last thirty years.
- ca. 445 A third Long Wall is built connecting Athens and its main port of Piraeus; disenfranchised citizens at Athens are prosecuted and enslaved.
- 444 Pericles recommends sending settlers to Thurii in southern Italy and designates the sophist Protagoras to design its constitution.
- Mid-440s Pericles and Aspasia begin their love affair.
- ca. 443 Thucydides of Athens, son of Melesias, is ostracized after heading political opposition to Pericles.
- Late-440s Pericles, son of Aspasia and Pericles, is born.
- 440–439 Pericles leads a Delian League force against the rebels on the island of Samos.
- 438 Athenian settlers found the city-state of Amphipolis in northern Greece/southern Thrace.
- 437 The sculptor Phidias is perhaps prosecuted for alleged sacrilege in the Parthenon project; construction begins on the Propylaea entrance to the Acropolis.
- Mid-430s Pericles leads a naval expedition to the Black Sea (the Euxine); construction begins on the Odeon concert hall proposed by Pericles.
- 433 The Athenians send warships to support the Corcyreans against the Corinthians.

Chronology

xvii

- Late 430s The Athenian assembly passes the Megarian Decree barring the inhabitants of the neighboring city of Megara from using the harbors of the members of the Delian League.
- 432 The Spartans send their final embassies to Athens refusing arbitration under the terms of the peace of 446/5 and demanding the revocation of the Megarian Decree; Pericles persuades the Athenian assembly to reject the Spartan demands.
- 431 The Peloponnesian War formally begins when the Spartans and their allies invade Athenian territory; the Athenians take refuge behind their fortification walls and send a naval expedition against the Peloponnese, displace the population of the island of Aegina, and attack Megara.
- 430 An epidemic disease (the “plague”) kills many Athenians; Pericles commands a naval expedition against the Peloponnese; he is temporarily deposed from his official position on the board of Athenian generals; the epidemic kills his legitimate sons, his sister, and other family members.
- 429 Pericles is reelected to office as a “general”; Pericles asks the Athenian assembly to grant citizenship to his son by Aspasia; Pericles dies from the epidemic disease.

Pericles' Alcmeonid Family Tree

Except for Pericles' father, Xanthippus, and his paternal grandfather, Ariphton, this simplified version of Pericles' ancestors shows only members of his mother's family, the Alcmeonids, and only as far back in time as the first of those maternal ancestors about whom we have any reliable historical information. For more detailed information, see Davies, J. K. 1971. *Athenian Propertied Families 600–300 B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), pp. 368–385, 455–460.

== indicates marriage
 --- indicates siblings

Megacles, archon in the late seventh century B.C. at time of Cylon's conspiracy



Alcmeon, commander in the First Sacred War in the 590s B.C., visitor to Croesus



Megacles, opponent of Pisistratus == Agariste, daughter of Cleisthenes of Sicyon



Cleisthenes, democratic reformer---Hippocrates---daughter married to Pisistratus



Agariste == Xanthippus

Ariphton



Pericles