

Notes on Quiz #5: The Legacy of the Persian Wars

1. All of the following are true of the Delian League EXCEPT:
 - a. Its treasury was originally kept on the island of Delos, before being moved to Athens
 - b. It was an alliance of Greek city-states against Persia formed after the Persian invasions
 - c. The allies paid dues either in ships or in money
 - d. It was dissolved immediately after a year

The Delian League is the modern historians' term for the naval alliance formed after the Persian Wars. The intent was to counterstrike against the Persians and win back Greek lands in the eastern Aegean and Anatolia previously conquered by Persia. A tribute of either ships or money was levied on all members of the league. Its treasury was at a neutral location, the temple of Apollo at Delos.

Originally Athens led the League as military hegemon. In a few short years the League had achieved its goal of winning back the Greek lands from the Persians, however, and after that the League became more and more about ensuring the cultural and economic preeminence of Athens, in opposition to its rivals Corinth and Sparta. Worse, Athens started punitively enforcing its dominance on member cities, forbidding them to leave the alliance and exacting retribution on cities that tried to do so or otherwise showed resistance. From the mid-century onward some modern historians call this alliance the Athenian Empire.

2. During the Undeclared War, things started going very badly for Athens when
 - a. Megara invaded Athens
 - b. Corinth invaded Megara
 - c. Athens invaded Egypt
 - d. Sparta invaded Boeotia

At first Athens had the advantage in the Undeclared War, as it was fighting mainly Corinth at first and now had the protection of the Long Walls, preventing siege. Even after Sparta entered, the fighting in Boeotia gave Athens the upper hand in that region, spreading democratic government there. But by opening up a second war in Egypt—which became a disastrous failure—Athens gave Sparta the initiative.

With the Athenians overextended and in danger of losing should the war continue, the war ended with Athens suing for peace. The result was the agreement of the Thirty Years' Peace, which established the Athenian and Spartan alliances as not being able to interfere in the other alliance's operations; neutrals were free to join either side, but no allies could switch sides; and Athens and Sparta could use force to resolve conflicts among their own allies.

3. Resident aliens in Athens were known as
 - a. metics
 - b. oikos
 - c. polis
 - d. Steve

“Metic” is the term for a resident alien. As skilled artisans and entrepreneurs who contributed to the robustness of Athens's economy. Though they could not vote and paid special taxes, they were often wealthy or respected for their craft. Many were deeply integrated into culture and were often close friends of wealthy Athenians and aristocrats, joining the nobility in public and private social gatherings. This means they had cultural and even political influence behind the scenes.

4. All of the following are true about the Athenian Assembly EXCEPT:

- a. A law passed in 451 meant that both parents had to be Athenian to vote
- b. It required a quorum of at least ten citizens to pass important legislation
- c. The frequency of its meetings increased from an average of once in a month to as often as once in every ten days
- d. It met on the Pnyx

The quorum (minimum number of voters needed for a measure to pass) was 6,000 citizens.

5. Pericles is primarily known for being

- a. the most prolific of the lyric poets
- b. the most erotically explicit of the vase-painters
- c. the sculptor most obsessed with minotaurs
- d. the guiding spirit of Athenian imperialism

Pericles was the statesman most associated with Athens's aggressive pursuit of dominance over its allies, which some historians say developed into an Athenian empire. His authority came from his recurring seat on the board of generals (*strategoï*) and from the faith the Athenians placed in him.

Optional Extra Credit

EC. Athens took pride in its radical democracy. In what ways was it unevenly representative of its (male) citizens? How might it be abused?

A number of factors prevented Athenian democracy from being representative of all its citizens. For example, the sprawling size of Attica meant that those living further from the urban center had to travel long distances to vote (the assembly met in Athens and you had to go there physically to participate). The frequency of assembly meetings also effectively disenfranchised those who could not easily leave their farms or workshops, giving disproportionate power to the wealthier citizens who could more easily be away from their jobs and lands.

There are also problems inherent in pure democracy. For example, the value of each citizens' vote led to people attempting to sway voters to the speakers' interests by telling the voters what they wanted to hear (demagoguery), as well as a market for those who teach how to argue convincingly regardless of morality or truth (sophistry).

The citizens divided into opposing groups, each working to block the other and preventing constructive action (faction). Finally, with majority vote comes the likelihood that the needs of the minority will be ignored (tyranny of the majority).

An example of these problems in action might be the way in which the Athenian practice of ostracism, the exile of one undesirable citizen by majority vote, gradually became a weapon wielded by politicians against their rivals.

Another, more unexpected problem was that the faceless, ephemeral nature of Athenian leadership, thanks to archons and council being chosen by the lot, led to a need for persistent faces; over time this empowered the board of generals (who could be reelected) and so men like Themistocles and Pericles, whose continued presence in a shifting government Athenians found reassuring.

Note: Male citizens are specified because no ancient society enfranchised its female citizens, so excluding women from voting is not a flaw of Athenian democracy specifically.