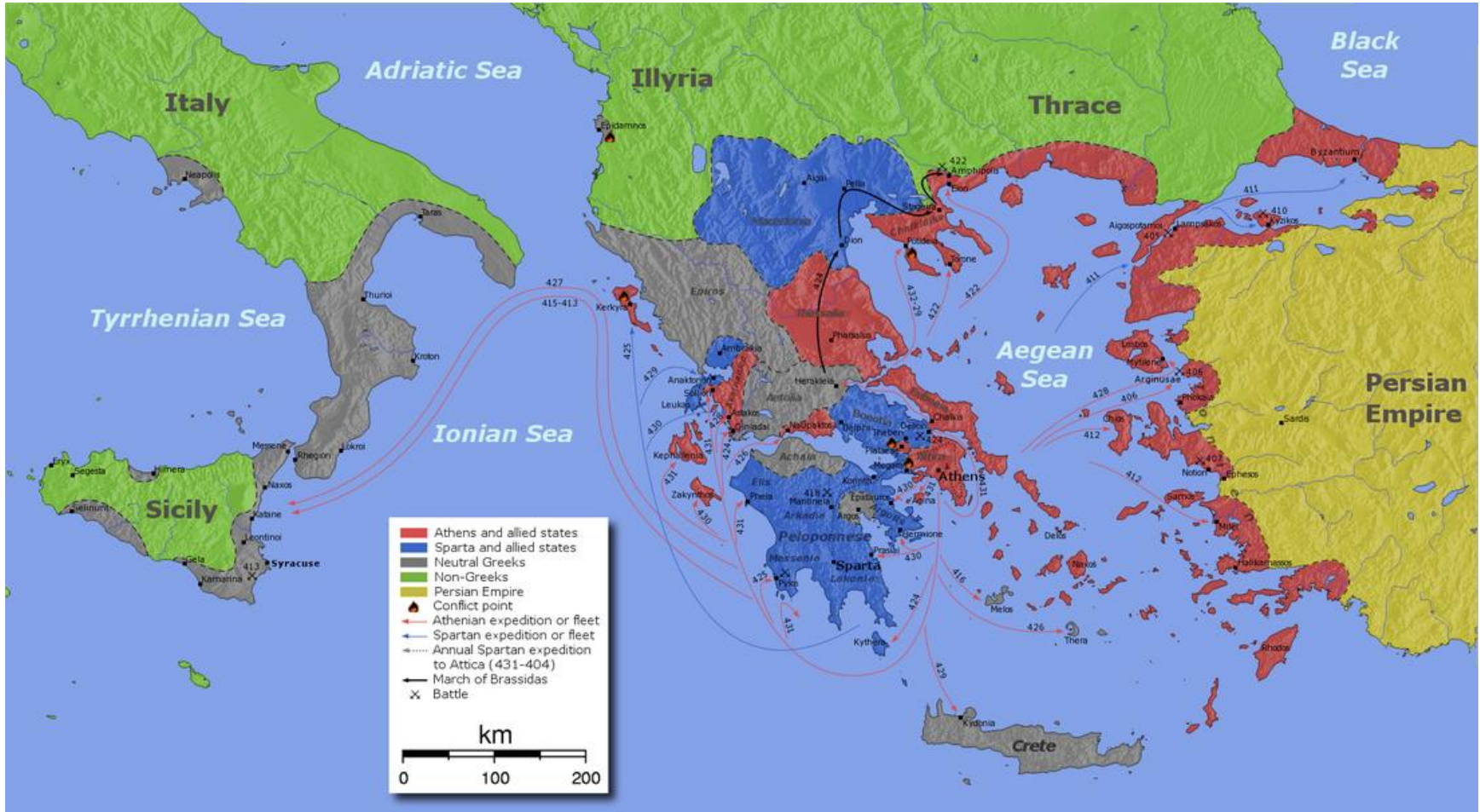


The Delian League, Athenian Imperialism and the Peloponnesian War

The Delian League



The Delian League

For the Greeks, who had just won the Persian Wars, that conflict was a beginning, not an end.

Defeat of the Persians had created a power vacuum in the Aegean. This favored the city-state with the strongest navy. Athens and her allies formed the **Delian League**. (island of Delos, sacred shrine)

intended as a free alliance under Athenian leadership;

Athens provided most of the warships and crews;



Athenian Success Has a Sinister Side

While the Athenians drove the Persians out of the Aegean, they also became increasingly imperialistic;

turned the Delian League into an Athenian Empire;

Athenian allies reduced to status of subjects;

Athens harshly suppressed dissident or rebellious governments; installed puppet governments; collected dues by force;

Aggressive expansion of Athens alarmed Sparta;

459 B.C to 455 B.C.



The Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.)

“This day will be the beginning of great evil for the Greeks.” Spartan Ambassador

The war lasted a generation and brought in its wake plagues, famine, civil wars, widespread destruction and huge loss of life.

Sparta invaded Athenian territory 5 times in the first 7 years.

Athenians remained behind walls; eventually plague; (Pericles himself dies)

- A new breed of politicians – rash, ambitious, and more self-serving;
- Temporary peace in 421 B.C. A cold war;
- Alcibiades – widened war to further his own career; convinced Athens to attack Syracuse in Sicily; FAILURE; Athenian force defeated;

Athens and Melos

- Athens sent fleet to the neutral island of Melos with an ultimatum: surrender or perish;
- Melians resisted.
- Athens conquers Melos, killing men of military age and selling women and children into slavery.

War Resumes

- Renewal of war between Athens and Sparta
- Persia intervenes: Sparta lacked a navy to take advantage of the revolts of islands against Athens; Alcibiades engineers alliance between Sparta and Persia;
- Many Athenian subjects revolt;

Athens – and Greece - Defeated

- Spartan commander Lysander destroys last Athenian fleet;
- Spartans now blockade Athens, starving them into submission;

