

GAME OVERVIEW

Game play is centered around using your Field Orders Book to issue orders as the Athenian commander in the solitaire game, or as either side in the 2-player version.

These game rules are for solitaire play. The rules adjustments for the two-player game are a separate section at the end of these rules.

The Syracuse side uses a solitaire deck of counter orders and leader cards for Syracuse to take actions against you. You can win the solitaire campaign as the Athenians by completing the wall of circumvallation and establishing a naval blockade of Syracuse, or by reducing Syracuse morale to zero (surrender). You lose immediately if you allow Athenian morale to fall to zero.

Many game rules of what can and cannot be done are within the Field Orders Book orders and the solitaire counter orders deck of cards.

A player can issue **one** order per game turn from their orders available in their Field Orders Book. He also has the option of using a Leader card with the one order played. The order is carried out based on your strategy, the current situation faced, and the actions and counter order issued by the solitaire opponent. Your choices can cause multiple actions and reactions with results that cause troop marker eliminations, morale reductions, building walls and counter-walls and events to occur.

The Athenian side is played by you and uses player orders from the Field Orders Book and Leader cards for the side being played. The solitaire opponent (Syracuse) uses the solitaire counter orders deck of cards for actions and issuing counter orders.

GAME BOARD

The game board map represents the locations around Syracuse that were prominent during the siege. There are eleven land locations and three sea locations. Athenian locations are in blue and include four land locations: Epiploon, Labdalum, Lysimeleia (reserve) and Plemmyrium; and the three sea locations: Lysimeleia, Great Harbor and Blockade. There are six Syracusan land locations in red: Achradina, Euryelos, Olympieum, Ortygia, Temenites and Neapolis. Each location is named and has spaces for troop markers on the land locations and ship markers on the sea locations. The markers spaces are also in blue for the Athenian and red for the Syracusan.

The terms "Locations" and "Areas" are synonymous. The same for "Troop Spaces" and "Slots"; "Vacant" and "Empty"; and "Action" and "Event".

The game board map is used to display the impact of orders by either removing troop markers from play, moving troop and ship markers, or recording affects to morale. The Morale Track on the game board is used to track reductions and additions to the morale of the Athenians and Syracusans.

Orders sometimes refer to the "Lowlands" and the "Epipolae Plateau." These references are to the geographic position of the city in regards to the terrain and the land locations around Syracuse. In general, the Lowlands is represented by Lysimeleia, Plemmyrium and Olympieum. The Epipolae plateau is represented by Labdalum, Epipolae, Achradina and Euryelos. Syka and Temenites are intermediate locations, and are considered to be in both the Lowlands and the Epipolae. A light line depicts the separation of the two areas. Other orders refer to "city spaces" for Syracuse. The four city spaces are Ortygia, Neapolis, Temenites and Achradina.

GAME MARKERS

The troops of Athens and Syracuse and ships of Athens are represented by wooden markers placed in the game board location spaces. Blue markers represent the Athenians and red markers represent the Syracusans.

Athenian wall segments are represented by grey wooden markers; Syracusan counter-wall segments are represented by brown wooden markers.

Blue markers are also used to track Athens morale and to show the selection of orders. A red marker is used to track Syracuse morale.

PLAYER FIELD ORDERS BOOK

There is a Field Orders Book for the Athenian player. The book is laid out with the seven orders available for you to issue each turn.

The orders are numbered. Each turn place the marker on the one order you plan to use for the turn.

SOLITAIRE COUNTER ORDERS CARD DECK

There is a Syracusan solitaire card deck. The solitaire cards include counter orders that are used by the solitaire opponent to bring actions into play and to issue counter orders against your side; and leader cards you can play to enhance your actions.

The cards of the solitaire counter orders cards have two parts; actions and counter orders. Actions are events that generally affect or require decisions by the Athenian side. The solitaire counter order portion is the solitaire commander's effort to counter the order you issued.

There are two phases for the solitaire cards. Phase-1 is the Syracuse period, as the 1st Athenian expedition battles Syracuse on its own. These cards have the Syracuse *triskeles* shield on the back. Phase-2 is the Spartan period, as the Spartan Expedition arrives and takes command of Syracuse's forces. These cards have the Spartan *lambda* shield on the back.

For example, if you decide to issue order 2, "Attack Epipolae" and the Syracusan solitaire counter order played is "B: Defend Epipolae" the results will probably turn out poorly for you as your point of attack was anticipated. However, if the Syracusan solitaire counter order played is "A: Defend Lowlands" the results will probably turn out well.

LEADER CARDS

There are nine leader cards for the Athenian player. The player may use leader cards to bring actions into play. Leader cards may only be played with certain orders. Each leader card may only be played once, and is then discarded. When you draw a leader card, you may use it immediately, or hold it in your hand for a better time. The order you selected may be canceled, and you may choose a different order to issue.

For example, if you decide to issue order 2, "Attack Epipolae" and .

SETUP

Place the same color marker on the game board in the locations with troop and ship spaces of the corresponding color. If a location has spaces that have diagonal lines in it, leave it empty (Achradina, Euryelos, Epipolae, Plemmyrium, Blockade and Great Harbor) to start the game.

On the game Morale Track place a corresponding blue wooden marker (Athens) on the ten (10) space and a red marker (Syracuse) on the eight (8) space to start the game.

Decide how strong you would like Syracuse to be by the number of cards in the solitaire counter orders deck and special actions hand. Use the chart below to determine Syracuse skill.

Card deck and hand size

Syracuse Skill Level:

STRONG: 26 Cards (remove 6 Phase-1 cards; and 7 Phase-2 cards)
GOOD: 30 Cards (remove 4 Phase-1 cards; and 5 Phase-2 cards)
WEAK: 34 Cards (remove 2 Phase-1 cards; and 3 Phase-2 cards)

Once you have selected the opposing skill level, prepare the cards, as follows.

1. Remove cards #40-41 (Spartan Expedition & 2nd Athenian Expedition) and set them aside.
2. Divide the cards into two piles, one for each phase of the game. Phase-1 is the Syracuse Phase (#1-20); Phase-2 is the Spartan Phase (cards #21-39).
3. Shuffle each pile and remove the number cards determined by the Syracuse Skill level. These cards are set aside unrevealed in the unused deck. Note: The Corinthian Reinforcements card may result in drawing two additional Phase 2 cards from this unused deck.
4. From the shuffled Phase-2 cards draw the first 5 cards and place them face down to start the deck. Take the next two cards and add in cards #41 (2nd Athenian Expedition). Shuffle these three cards. Now place these three cards face down on top of the deck.
6. Place the remaining shuffled Phase-2 cards face down on top of the deck. Take the top two cards, add in cards #40 (Spartan Expedition). Shuffle these three cards. Now place these three cards face down on top of the deck.
7. Place the Phase-1 cards face down on top of the deck. The deck is now ready for play.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

The Sequence of Play is based on a "turn" that is comprised of you selecting one command order, flipping face up one solitaire opponent counter order card and carrying out the actions and results of those two orders played. Once completed the turn is over and a new one begins.

Each turn uses the following Sequence of Play:

Select one of your command orders available by placing a marker on the choice in your Field Orders book.

Play a leader card to accompany your order, if you desire. This may be the leader card you just drew, or any leader card from your hand.

Select the top card of the solitaire counter orders draw deck of the solitaire opponent and place it face up.

If you have drawn a leader card, it goes in your hand, or it may be used immediately. You may change your order before selecting the next counter orders card.

Cards are resolved in this sequence:

- (1) Execute the actions portion from the solitaire counter order card played first. Apply results. If the action cancels your order, it also cancels your leader card, which must be discarded.
- (2) Execute the Leader card, if you played one, second. Apply results.
- (3) Execute your command order and compare its results to the solitaire counter order issued on the solitaire opponent card revealed. Apply results.

Discard the counter order card, and the leader card, if you played one.

Begin next turn.

ISSUING ORDERS FROM THE FIELD ORDERS BOOK

As the Athenian player you have the choice of 7 Orders that can be issued from your Field Orders Book plus leader cards that can be played with your orders. The orders fall into general types based on results. Attack type orders (Lowlands or Epipolae) generally cause troop losses and may result in the destruction of counter-wall segments. Build Wall orders (Lowlands or Epipolae) can allow you to place a wall or counter-wall segment, and/or result in troop losses. Move type orders, such as Move Troops and Move Ships, allow the movement of troops and ships into the empty spaces of locations. The Rest & Refit order may improve your morale and repair a damaged ship.

Each turn you may issue **one** order. Place a marker on the order being issued. You may also decide to use a leader card with the order. Follow the instructions for the order issued and the leader card and carry out the results.

Your orders and leader cards are generally played after following the actions portion of the solitaire card played for the turn. The counter order portion (A: Defend Lowlands, B: Defend Epipolae, etc.) of the solitaire card is played *with* and applies to your order.

Each order in the Field Orders Book has an Order Execution section that explains how the order is executed and an Order Restrictions section that lays out the conditions required to be able to use the order.

Each order has a results chart that shows the results of the order when compared to the counter order played by the solitaire opponent and a die roll which is the Order Die. If die roll modifiers (DRM) are used (i.e. +1 or -1), these are applied to the results of the die roll.

The results chart (on field orders and some counter order and leader cards) shows the impact of the order you issued compared to the counter order played by the solitaire opponent. The results can be No Effect and Fail which are in a white box. Results of Move apply to troop and ship moves and are in a green box. Results for troop losses, ships damaged and morale changes are shaded to show which side it applies to. Blue shaded boxes mean it is applied to the Athenian. Red shaded boxes mean that it is applied to the Syracusan. Troop losses are designated by a number. Morale changes show a plus or minus sign and say "morale" or "Mrl". A "W" in a grey box means a wall segment is placed; a "C" in a brown box indicates that a counter-wall segment is placed. A "D" result in a brown box means that a counter-wall segment is destroyed (removed).

Leader cards:

In a turn you may play one leader card in addition to the one order issued. Leader cards are discarded after one use. Losses and morale changes from your leader cards are *in addition* to any losses and morale changes resulting from your orders. Canceled orders also cancel leader cards played, the leader card is discarded.

Each order will state from which locations troop losses come from and each troop marker lost causes an adjustment one space downward on the Morale Chart. If there are no remaining troops in the location listed, you may choose any location to remove the loss from.

Damaged ships are removed from the board the same as troop losses. However, damaged ships may be repaired and returned to play. Keep damaged ships in the Damaged Ships box on the map.

Morale losses not involving troop losses are taken directly from the Morale Chart.

For example, if the results say -1 morale and is blue shaded, then Athenian morale on the Morale Chart would be moved one space downward.

The Command Orders restrictions section will note when an order cannot be played.

USING THE SOLITAIRE COUNTER ORDERS DECK

The counter order cards of the solitaire deck have the actions and the counter orders of the solitaire opponent.

The solitaire counter order cards are used by the solitaire opponent to bring actions into play and to issue counter orders against your side. Their card is revealed **after** you select an order to issue from the Field Orders Book and a leader card, if you choose to play one. The solitaire counter order card revealed is in play for the current turn only.

On each solitaire counter order card played there is an action and a counter order (lettered A, B, C, and D) that the solitaire player issues that is his play for the turn. The solitaire card actions are resolved first. Then your order is executed and it is compared with the solitaire opponent counter order to determine results. Generally, a die is rolled and a results table is used for your order when compared to the counter order played by the solitaire opponent.

Sometimes solitaire counter order card actions will change what you decide to do with your order issued.

For example, if you issued an Attack Lowlands order and the Syracusan opponent card revealed "Command Conflict; Cancel order issued for the turn OR Proceed with order at a -1 modifier"; you may decide to cancel your order instead of going forward with an attack when the odds are against you.

Sometimes solitaire counter orders card actions will not be playable against you.

For example, if you issued a Build Wall order and the Syracuse card revealed is "Soothsayer's Prediction; your Move Troops or Move Ships Order cannot be played this turn", the action has no effect on the order you issued. Had you issued a Move Troops order it would have affected you by canceling your order.

Canceled Orders: If an order is canceled by a solitaire action, the effect is as if the order had never been issued. A canceled order also cancels the accompanying leader card if one was played, and it must be discarded.

EXECUTING YOUR COMMAND ORDER FOR THE TURN

Your orders are executed against the solitaire counter orders card revealed for the turn which has actions and counter orders that impact the order played. The action portion of the solitaire counter orders card is executed first. It has an action that must be resolved. That action may or may not affect the order you played. Once the action is resolved, then execute your order and it is affected by the solitaire counter order played.

The Syracusan solitaire player has 4 counter orders available to them. The solitaire counter order directly impacts the Command Order you play. They are lettered A through D: A-Defend Lowlands, B-Defend Epipolae, C-Defend City/Harbor and D-Counterwalls. The counter order played for the turn is on the bottom of the solitaire order card revealed for the turn.

BATTLE

Battle occurs when attack type orders are used and with some counter order cards and leader cards. Most orders require you to roll one die and apply the results based on the counter order played by the solitaire opponent. Roll the white die to determine the results of orders. When using a leader card roll the black die to determine the results of the leader card along with the white die that determines results of the order played by you.

The order results tables on orders and leader cards (if used) are used to determine the outcome of the battle. The results are troop marker losses, ships damaged, no effect, walls or counter-walls placed, counter-walls destroyed and sometimes direct morale changes. When

using the results table of the order issued, use the column that matches the counter order played by the solitaire opponent. Compare the die roll (1-6) to the appropriate row to determine results.

Orders will state in what location or locations troop marker losses must be taken. When this occurs remove the troop or ship marker(s) from the game from the designated location(s) and adjust the Morale Chart downward one space for EACH troop or ship marker removed.

When you attack a location and the solitaire opponent has no troop markers in the location and yet incurs troop losses, take the troop losses directly from other opponent locations of your choice. When your forces take a loss, and you have no troops in the listed loss locations, take the troop losses directly from other Athenian locations of your choice.

Some solitaire orders cards have DRMs that are required if the order results table is used. Adjust the actual die roll up or down for the modifier to determine die roll result to use on the table.

MOVEMENT & BLOCKADE

Troop markers can only be moved by a Move Troops order and only to land locations. Athenian ship markers can only be moved by the Move Ships order and can only be moved in the 3 water locations, Lysimeleia, Great Harbor and Blockade. Troop and ship movement can be affected by the solitaire counter order card played.

When moving troop and ship markers, the movement must be from a location that has markers in its spaces to a location that has empty spaces. If no empty spaces exist, then a move to that location is not possible.

For the Athenian player using the Move Troops command order, the troops markers cannot move into empty ship marker spaces. The player can move up to three troops (or six troops from the reserve area Lysimeleia) to any one area with vacant space(s). For the Move Ships order, the ship markers cannot move into empty troop marker spaces. The player can move up to two Athenian ships from Lysimeleia to the Great Harbor, or from the Great Harbor to Blockade. For the Syracusan solitaire card, Reposition Troops, the card only applies to Syracusan troop markers (as there are no Syracusan ship markers).

WALLS AND COUNTER-WALLS

Wall segments, represented by grey blocks, can only be constructed by a Build Wall order or Special Action card. You must place wall segments in numerical order L1-4 and then E1-4. So you must first complete the L4 Lowlands Wall segment before you can construct segment the Epipolae segment E1. Build Wall orders can be affected by the solitaire counter order card played, sometimes resulting in a Counter-Wall segment, represented by a brown block, being placed. There are three possible Counter-walls. The Counter-wall segments are placed in order, 1A-B, 2A-B, 3A-D, but only if it is possible for the completed counter-wall to block Wall placement. A counter-wall space is considered a viable location only as long as it may be possible to block the Athenian wall. Athenian walls, once placed, may never be destroyed. For example, once the Athenian Wall has reached L4, the next Counter-wall is placed at 3A.

If the Syracusan Counter-wall blocks Athenian Wall placement, the player must order an attack (and possibly a leader) to destroy the blocking Counter-wall segment, before he can continue wall segment placement. You may destroy multiple viable counter-wall segments with an Attack order and a leader card. The results of the attack are applied before the results of the leader card.

When you place wall segments L-4 and E-4, you also add +1 to Athens morale level. If you place all eight wall segments, the wall of circumvallation is complete and any counter-wall results are ignored for the remainder of the game.

MORALE

Athens begins at Morale level 10; Syracuse begins at Morale level 8.

Morale may never be increased above level 10.

Reductions and additions to morale are recorded on the Morale Track.

Morale reductions occur in three ways:

Troop marker losses from locations (through either battle or solitaire card actions)

Ship damaged results (through either ship movement or solitaire card actions)

Direct morale reductions as a result of actions and orders results not involving troop losses

When the results of the order you played shows a troop loss or ship damaged, for each troop or ship removed from the game board there is a corresponding reduction made on the Morale Track for the side or sides affected. Results of the order played and actions on solitaire Orders Cards can cause also direct reductions to morale.

For example, a 2 troop loss for the Athenian resulting from an order played would require that 2 troops be removed from the game and a move 2 spaces downward on the Athenian Morale Track. A solitaire action result that calls for a reduction of Syracusan morale by 1 would be a direct reduction of Syracusan Morale without any troop loss and require a move of 1 space downward on the Syracusan Morale Track.

HOW TO WIN THE GAME

The solitaire Syracuse card deck represents the passage of time during the campaign. When the last card is played, the campaign is over. If you have not won the game at this point, then you have been defeated by Syracuse and their allies. The Corinthian Reinforcements have arrived, and your Athenians are doomed to their historical fate (defeat, capture, slavery and death).

VICTORY

You can win the game immediately in two ways:

1. Complete all 8 segments of the Wall *AND* have a ship in a Blockade space; OR
2. Reduce Syracuse to zero morale on the Morale Track.

You lose if:

1. You exhaust the solitaire card deck without having won; OR
2. You lose immediately if Athens is reduced to zero morale on the Morale Track.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

It is important that game rules writers try to cover the numerous situations that can occur and try to explain what to do in each situation in the rules. But sometimes it can make "rules" overwhelming when trying to explain as much as possible. We have no doubt that we are capable of causing this too.

But in the spirit of keeping it simple, as a reminder, the essential game mechanics are:

- Select one order to play
- Reveal the solitaire counter order card
- Resolve the action portion of the solitaire counter order card first
- Apply the results of your order using the solitaire counter order card portion
- Repeat the above.

Let the guidance of the orders selected and the solitaire counter order cards actions and instructions present the game rules to you for many situations.

TWO PLAYER VERSION OF THE GAME

414-13 Siege of Syracuse was designed as a solitaire game but it can also be played by two players. The two-player version of the game uses the rules from the solitaire version of the game with the exceptions noted in this section.

In summary, the major differences between the two-player version and the solitaire version are:

1. Players use Orders Cards for selecting orders from their Field Orders Book.
2. Players select a Counter Order card to play against their opponent's Orders Card played for the turn.
3. Players use the two player Command Decision deck of cards as the draw deck for BOTH players and the card drawn each turn applies to and can be used by both players.
4. Both players may issue Build Orders for Lowlands and Epipolae in any order. You do not have to complete the Lowlands wall/counter-wall before starting the Epipolae wall/counter-wall.
5. Build the Command Decision Deck
 - a. Remove cards #32-33 (Spartan Expedition & 2nd Athenian Expedition) and set them aside.
 - b. Shuffle the deck and remove nine (9) cards. These cards are set aside unrevealed in the unused deck. Note: The Corinthian Reinforcements card may result in drawing two additional cards from this unused deck.
 - c. From the shuffled deck draw the first 5 cards and place them face down to start the deck.
 - d. Draw 2 more cards and add in cards #33 (2nd Athenian Expedition). Shuffle these three cards. Now place these three cards face down on top of the deck.
 - e. Draw 5 more cards and place these cards face down on top of the deck.
 - f. Draw 2 more cards and add in card #32 (Spartan Expedition). Shuffle these three cards. Now

place these three cards face down on top of the deck.

g. Place the remaining cards face down on top of the deck. The deck is now ready for play.

If you want to handicap one player or the other it is possible by adjusting the Command Decision Cards draw deck. Reducing the draw card deck below 24 cards makes it more difficult on the Athens player. Increasing the draw deck above 24 cards makes it harder on the Syracuse Player.

In the two-player game, both players (Athens and Syracuse) use their Field Orders Book to issue orders. However, once a player decides on what order to use, he selects a matching Orders Card (the cards are numbered to match Field Orders, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.) that represents the order he is using for the turn and places it face down (so his opponent cannot see what order he has played) in front of him.

Both players also select a counter order (A, B, C, D, etc. using counter order cards) to play against their opponent's order played for the turn. The counter order card selected is placed face down in front of the player.

Once both players have selected their orders card and counter order card and placed them face down in front of themselves, a Command Decision Card is flipped face up from the draw deck and it applies to and can be used by both players. Note that some Command Decision cards require an action **before** players execute their orders (ex. Bad Weather, etc.).

The Athens player executes his orders card first by revealing his face down orders card by flipping it face up. He then decides how to use the Command Decision Card shown (if he has a choice) and announces his decision. The Syracuse player reveals his counter order card by flipping it face up. Results are applied using the Field Orders Book of the Athens Player for the order played (results are also on his Orders Card).

Then the process is repeated with the Syracuse player executing his order card by revealing it, deciding how to apply the Command Decision card (if he has a choice) and announcing it, and the Athens player revealing his counter order and applying the results using the Field Orders Book for the order played by the Syracuse player.

Two Player Sequence of Play:

The Sequence of Play is based on a "turn" that is comprised of each player selecting one order and one counter order and following the sequence of play. Once completed the turn is over and a new one begins.

Both players select one order from those available in their Field Orders Book for the side they are playing. Selection is done by placing the matching orders card face down in front of them. First Athens, then Syracuse.

Both players decide if they want to use one of their aggressive commander actions. If so place a marker on it. First Athens, then Syracuse.

Both players decide on the counter order card to be played and place it face down in front of them.

Select the top card of the Command Decisions draw deck and reveal it face up. If it has an action that applies for the turn (ex. Bad Weather, etc.), complete the action.

The Athens player reveals his face down orders card by flipping it face up. If he has a choice, he then decides how to use the Command Decision Card shown and announces his decision.

The Syracuse player reveals his counter order card by flipping it face up. Results are applied using the Field Orders Book of the Athens Player for the order issued (results are also on his orders card).

The Syracuse player reveals his face down orders card by flipping it face up. If he has a choice, he then decides how to use the Command Decision Card shown and announces his decision.

The Athens player reveals his counter order card by flipping it face up. Results are applied using the Field Orders Book of the Syracuse Player for the order issued (results are also on his Orders Card).

Begin next turn.

Note that some Command Decision card choices may result in a player canceling his order. When that occurs the order played is NOT revealed and the counter order played by the opposing player is not played or revealed.

In the two-player game if a player attacks an opponent's location that is empty of troop markers in the location spaces he gets a modifier to his die roll; +1 for Athens and -1 for Syracuse. Troop losses for the empty location are taken by the owning player from any other location of his choice in which he has troop markers.

VICTORY IN THE TWO PLAYER VERSION

Athens can win the game immediately in two ways:

1. Complete all 8 segments of the Wall *AND* have a ship in a Blockade space; OR
2. Reduce Syracuse to zero morale on the Morale Track.

Syracuse can win the game immediately by reducing Athens to zero morale on the Morale Track.

If the Command Decision Deck is exhausted and both players have 1 or greater on the morale track, the victor is decided by awarding victory points (VPs) as follows:

1. Athens receives 1 VP for achieving 2 of these 3 objectives at the end of the game:

Lowland wall completed;

Epipolae Wall completed;

Having a ship in a blockade space.

2. Syracuse receives a VP for each of the following achieved at the end of the game:

Either Lowland counter-wall completed;

Epipolae counter-wall completed.

Both players receive 1 VP for each of his opponent's land areas that is completely vacant of troops.

The player with the higher morale level receives 1 VP.

The player with the most VPs wins. Ties are possible.

Athens had been fighting Sparta for a long decade in the Great (or Second) Peloponnesian War (431-404, all dates BC) when a treaty, the "Peace of [Nicias](#)", brought a temporary lull to the fighting in 421. In 415, somehow, the leading politician Alcibiades convinced the assembly of Athens that it was a good time to invade Sicily and conquer Syracuse, even as Sparta was preparing to renew the war in Greece. Nicias, Alcibiades' chief rival, argued against the expedition. The democracy voted to launch the invasion, and vested command with the rivals [Alcibiades](#) and Nicias, along with a third *stratego* (general), [Lamachus](#). Lamachus was a competent soldier, with little political backing. The most powerful Greek city and greatest democracy in the world would be launching an unprovoked attack against Syracuse, probably the second largest Greek city and another democracy.

The Athenian expedition was the most powerful force ever dispatched overseas by a Greek city-state, with 134 triremes and over 25,000 men including 5,100 hoplites (but only 30 horses). The three *stratego* each had a different idea how to prosecute the expedition. Lamachus wanted to immediately attack Syracuse, taking advantage of shock and surprise to overwhelm their foe. Alcibiades planned to undertake limited actions in Sicily while building a coalition of allies to defeat Syracuse. Nicias advocated making a show of force by sailing around Sicily, and then returning to Greece forthwith. Lamachus broke the stalemate by siding with Alcibiades. Then disaster struck—Alcibiades was re-called to Athens to face trial for a religious scandal, and escaped to Sparta on the way home. Alcibiades began advising the Spartans on how to defeat Athens, including sending a Spartan general to take command in Syracuse. With the chief architect of the expedition turned traitor, the Athenians wasted most of the first year in Sicily, only landing at Syracuse in the late fall of 415. Athens' 5,000 veteran hoplites easily routed the 10,000 militia hoplites of Syracuse, but could not pursue in the face of the 1,200 Syracusan cavalry. The victory at the Anapous River was wasted and the Athenians withdrew north to winter quarters at Naxos and Catana.

The Syracusans, may have been filled with fear, but had not been idle. After the humiliating defeat at the Anapous, the committee of fifteen (which was just as bad as it sounds) was replaced with three *stratego*—[Heraclides](#), [Hermocrates](#) and [Sicanus](#). Seeing that the old town and citadel of [Ortygia](#) and the main city of [Neapolis](#) were well defended by strong walls, the three *stratego* decided to extend their defenses. During the winter of 415-414 the citizens labored hard to extend the city walls, enclosing the western suburb of [Temenites](#) and the northern suburb of [Achradina](#), thus sealing off the city from the [Epipolae](#) plateau. The temple at [Olympieum](#) was converted into a fortified outpost, where the Syracusan cavalry could have good access to forage and keep communications open with the rest of Sicily. A picked force of 600 men was formed to guard the [Euryalos](#) pass, the only easy access to the steep sided Epipolae plateau.

Finally, in the spring of 414, after nearly 800 Athenian and allied horsemen had arrived, Nicias was finally ready to begin the great siege. Landing north of the city, the Athenians swept through Euryalos and cleared the Epipolae plateau. The Syracusan army was afraid to face the Athenians in open battle and the small fleet of Syracuse was no match for the great Athenian navy. Nicias established his main camp at [Lysimeleia](#) and brought his fleet into the [harbor](#) to beach there. Forts were constructed at [Labdalum](#) (on the north edge of Epipolae) and a great circle fort at [Syka](#) (on the south edge of Epipolae). This is where the siege, and the game, begins.

The Athenians realized they lacked the siege-craft to directly assault the walls of Syracuse. Instead, a war of [wall](#) and [counter-walls](#) ensued. If Athens could complete a wall of circumvallation all the way from the harbor waters at Lysimeleia to the open sea north of Epipolae, Syracuse would be cut-off and forced to surrender. As the Athenians labored south from Syka on their wall, the Syracusans raced to build a counter-wall across its path. As the walls converged, shovels and trowels were dropped and spear and shields grabbed to fight it out. 300 picked Athenian hoplites overran the first counter-wall, which was then demolished. As the Athenians pressed their wall southward, Hermocrates started a second counter-wall. Fierce fighting led to the death of Lamachus and his opponent Callicretes. Meanwhile a second Syracusan column counter-attacked near the circle fort, and reached the wall. Nicias arose from his sick bed, and

cunningly ordered the Athenian supplies set alight. The wall of fire he created kept the Syracusans at bay long enough for reinforcements to arrive, saving the wall and the fort. Dejected by these losses, the assembly in Syracuse fired Hermocrates and Sicanus, placing [Eucles](#) and [Tellias](#) in command in their stead. Nicias, now the sole remaining general, had completed the lowland wall and began building north, across the Epipolae. But he was often sick, and the building progressed slowly, but steadily. The doom of Syracuse appeared inevitable in the early fall of 414.

Just as the assembly in Syracuse was debating surrender, Gongylus of Corinth slipped through the Athenian blockade in a single trireme with electrifying news—the Spartan general [Gylippos](#) was on his way with an army! Back in Greece, Sparta had stirred herself to aid Syracuse. Loath to send her vaunted *spartiates* on dangerous overseas missions, just one Spartan was sent to Sicily—the general Gylippos. With only four triremes under [Pythen](#) of Corinth and 700 men, mostly helots and *neodamodeis* (freed hoplites), Gylippos landed at Himera and recruited allies and mercenaries to bring his army up to 3,000 foot and 300 horse. A small army, but one led by a Spartan. Gylippos surprised the Athenian outposts, overran Euryalos, swept through the Athenian lines on Epipolae and entered Syracuse. His demand to be placed in command was heartily approved by the populace. The remainder of the Corinthian squadron arrived, bringing the total in this small expedition up to 17 triremes. After a series of attacks and counter-attacks, Gylippos began a third counter-wall, and the final wall-building race was on.

Gylippos chose Hermocrates to serve as his deputy army commander. The Corinthian, Pythen, commanded the fleet, seconded by [Agatharcus](#) and Sicanus. As Gylippos re-trained the hoplites of Syracuse with harsh Spartan discipline, Pythen trained the seamen of Syracuse in Corinthian seamanship and set about building more triremes over the winter of 414-413. Nicias, fearing his naval advantage was eroding, seized the [Plemmyrium](#) and built three forts overlooking the harbor, to give his navy the advantage in any battle there. Agatharcus took the new fast triremes out on raiding sorties, sinking many Athenian cargo ships. Athens won the first major naval battle, but Gylippos used the diversion to attack the Plemmyrium forts, destroying two and seizing the third. Pythen learned of the great naval battle at Naupactas, where the Corinthians prevailed by reinforcing the prows of their triremes. This innovation was applied to the allied Corinthian-Syracusan fleet, with even better results in the confined space of the harbor. Syracuse would win the next three sea battles! Meanwhile, Gylippos had seized the fort at Labdalum and won the building race—his counter-wall now blocked any further progress of the Athenian circumvallation. The doom of the Athenians appeared nigh, in the late spring of 413.

Back in Greece, the despairing reports of Nicias had an effect. A second expedition was sent to seize victory from the jaws of defeat. [Eurymedon](#) was sent ahead with funds and appointments for [Euthydemus](#) and [Menander](#) to replace Alcibiades and Lamachus as *strategoí*, until the second expedition would arrive. [Demosthenes](#), famed victor over the Spartans at the Battle of Sphacteria, and Eurymedon, leader of an earlier small expedition to Sicily, commanded a force nearly as large as the first: 73 triremes and 15,000 men, including another 5,000 hoplites. When the second expedition arrived in the early summer of 413, the stage was set for the final showdown.

Demosthenes was determined not to repeat the mistakes of the first expedition. He would strike immediately. On the night of a full moon, Demosthenes, Eurymedon and Menander led the Athenian army in a surprise attack! All went well at first—quickly overwhelming the garrison at Euryalos, the Athenians swept across Epipolae to assault the counter-wall. Then the confusion of night fighting took hold—the Athenians could not tell friend from foe and fell into confusion. The attack became a disaster, with very heavy casualties. Next, a group of [Corinthian reinforcements](#) arrived, furthering raising morale in the city. The Corinthians, probably about 400 hoplites, had been waylaid back at Elis in Greece by Demosthenes who burnt their cargo ships. Obtaining more ships, they continued on, but were blown off course to Cyrene in western Egypt. The Cyrenians convinced the Corinthians to join them in an expedition against the Libyans besieging Eusperitae (modern Benghazi). After dispersing the Libyans, Cyrene gave the Corinthians two triremes in gratitude, sending them on their way west towards Carthage. The Carthaginians decided to aid the Corinthians and sent them on to western Sicily. Here the wayward group met up with some allies gathering to support Syracuse, and entered the city in a large body. Demosthenes

now convinced Nicias that it was time to withdraw immediately by sea, while Athens still held some advantage with their new ships.

And then, on 28 August 413, an eclipse blotted out the sun. The Athenians, already disheartened, were terrified. Nicias' soothsayers prescribed a wait of thrice nine days, lest a great disaster ensue. While the Athenians sat immobilized, Pythen, Sicanus and Agatharcus boldly attacked with their fleet. Athens was again defeated, and Eurymedon went down with his ship while trying to lead his wing in a grand *periplous* (out-flanking) maneuver. Unopposed, the Syracusans now began constructing a boom to trap the Athenian fleet in the harbor. Finally ignoring the soothsayers, Demosthenes, Euthydemus and Menander launched a desperate naval attack on 9 September—and were defeated once more. Nicias and Demosthenes finally attempted to retreat by marching away from Syracuse on 13 September, but were continually harassed and then separated. Demosthenes' column surrendered first. Then Nicias' starving, thirsty men broke ranks to drink in the Assinarus River and were slaughtered. Over 30,000 were slain, and the remaining 7,000 enslaved and worked to death in quarries. Athens would fight on for nine long years after the Sicilian disaster, before finally surrendering to Sparta to end the Great Peloponnesian War in 404. But it was the loss of over 200 triremes and 40,000 men outside Syracuse that doomed Athens to its ultimate defeat.

Further reading: Thucydides, the greatest ancient historian and father of modern historiography, composed the history of the great Peloponnesian War, and told the story of the Athenian expedition in great detail in chapters 6 and 7, which can be found at <http://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.html> or in the Landmark edition with hundreds of maps and notes. The best modern account is Donald Kagan's Volume III of the Peloponnesian War, *The Peace of Nicias and the Sicilian Expedition*. A good short illustrated account of the campaign is Nic Field's *Syracuse 415-413 BC*, Campaign 195 in the Osprey series.