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Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles

Charles W. Fornara, Loren J. Samons

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By the mid fifth century B.C., Athens had become the most powerful city-state in Greece: a rich democracy led by Pericles that boldly gained control of an empire. Athens's strength under Pericles was the result of a complex interaction of events from the time of Cleisthenes. Fornara and Samons unravel the intricacies of the conflicting ancient sources to show how the development of both democracy and empire were interdependent in Athens's multifaceted evolution. The authors trace and contrast four stands of development: the history of the Alcmeonid family of Cleisthenes and Pericles, the nature and development of Athenian democracy, the growth of Athenian empire, and the burgeoning antagonism between Athens and Sparta. The fresh perspective thus afforded by this clear presentation will intrigue those with interests in both ancient economics and politics.

The figure of Pericles is central to all four avenues of inquiry. His decision to create the *enmisthos polis* marked a fateful turn. Henceforth the democracy and the empire presupposed each other. Ultimately, Pericles's policies fueled Sparta's growing insecurity, resulting in her declaration of war on Athens in 431 B.C. and Athens's eventual fall.

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