Notes on Quiz #7: Wars Between the Greeks

1. Pericles's strategy for dealing with the Spartan threat to Athens was to
   a. march out and fearlessly fight the Spartan army
   b. evacuate the farmlands and bring everyone within the city walls
   c. sail to Sparta and attack the city
   d. surrender and hope for the best

Pericles knew that the Athenian army could not defeat Sparta in pitched battle. He also knew the Spartans would not stay in Attica long enough to mount a long siege of the city, especially as Athens could be easily supplied by sea thanks to the Long Walls. Thus he ordered the farmers to hole up inside the walls of Athens with the urban population.

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2. People who taught the skill of arguing a question from any or all positions, as part of the art of rhetoric, in classical Athens were called
   a. sapiens
   b. solons
   c. socialites
   d. sophists

Sophists taught the skill of arguing a question from any or all positions, as part of the art of rhetoric, in fifth-century Athens. Democracy in Athens created a market for this service, since effectively persuading other voters to your point of view was a valuable ability in a society where ordinary votes mattered. Critics charged that sophists taught the ability to argue a position regardless of truth or morality. — Unlike sophists, who taught a skill, philosophers as a group sought the spread and increase of knowledge and understanding, whether of the physical world or of human behavior. They tended to question received wisdom and superstition in order to develop more rational explanations. Those who taught philosophy, generally, were interested in teaching their students how to question things in order to discover truth; sophists, by contrast, taught their students how to give the most convincing answer regardless of its truth or value.

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3. Sparta's victory over Athens was made possible by all of the following EXCEPT:
   a. Sparta's deal with India for naval assistance
   b. The devastating effects of plague in Athens
   c. The crippling losses from Athens's expedition to Syracuse
   d. The defection of an Athenian general, Alcibiades, to Sparta after accusations of religious desecration

It was Sparta's deal with Persia, in exchange for Persian control over Greek Anatolia, that allowed the Spartans to end the war in a naval victory at Aegospotomi. — The massive loss of life due to plague meant that Athens was much weaker in terms of its agricultural and industrial labor force, so there was a huge impact on its economy. It was also weakened militarily, losing a great deal of manpower both for army and navy. Finally, the Plague removed the one leader most of Athens had faith in, Pericles; though he was under a cloud at the time due to accusations of corruption, his loss was like a blow. The overextension of their strength and resources by extending the war to Sicily ended in a huge catastrophe that permanently weakened Athens's ability to fight off Sparta. — Another, more minor factor is the unexpected ability of a laconic Spartan general, Brasidas, winning over Athenian allies to Sparta, leveraging their disaffection and overcoming their feat of Athens.

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4. The aftermath of the Peloponnesian War included
    a. Athens and its empire rising stronger than ever
    b. the Persians reoccupying Greek lands in Ionia
    c. decades of peace allowing the Greeks to recover
    d. the philosopher Socrates being hailed as a hero of Athenian cultural achievement

As part of their alliance with Sparta toward the end of the war, Persia began to reoccupy the Greek lands in Anatolia, including Ionia and Caria. These were lands that Athens and its allies, the Delian League, had liberated from Persia in the years following the Persian wars. — The war devastated the economies, cultures, and populations of Athens, Sparta, and other Greek cities, while not solving the question of hegemony—leading to more wars in the following decades. —Socrates was tried for irreligion and corruption of the youth and executed not long after the war.

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5. Famous tragic or comic plays from classical Athens include all of the following EXCEPT:
    a. *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes, about the women of Greece denying their husbands sex until they stop the war
    b. *The Oresteia* by Aeschylos, about Orestes seeking revenge for the murder of Agamemnon by his wife
    c. *Medea* by Euripides, about a sorceress who gets even with her cheating husband, Jason, by killing her children
    d. *Helaiai* by Thucydides, about the murder of fellow historian Herodotus by a vengeful scribe

Thucydides was an historian, not a playwright.

Optional Extra Credit

EC. In your opinion, why did Sparta and Athens really go to war?

Sparta and Athens had incompatible visions of the Greek ideal. Sparta saw all its citizens as peers, equally accomplished and capable, with none standing ahead of the others; the prototype of this was the hoplite warrior, and Sparta bred itself into a society of hoplites to pursue this ideal. Athens, on the other hand, saw individual accomplishment as more beneficial. Each excelled as best he could, and society was made up of all kinds, with different classes a natural outcome, and greater status according to wealth and property a given. —There was also an ethnic/dialectical difference: the more conservative Dorians, which included the Spartans, did not see themselves as having exactly the same heritage or goals as the more liberal Ionians, which included the Athenians and their eastward allies around the Aegean. — Most of all, Sparta embraced a society governed by the few, with the masses completely without a voice (only the warrior elite were citizens of Sparta). Athens embraced a society of the many, instituting radical democracy in order to give voice to a wide and diverse population. These visions of society simply could not be reconciled.