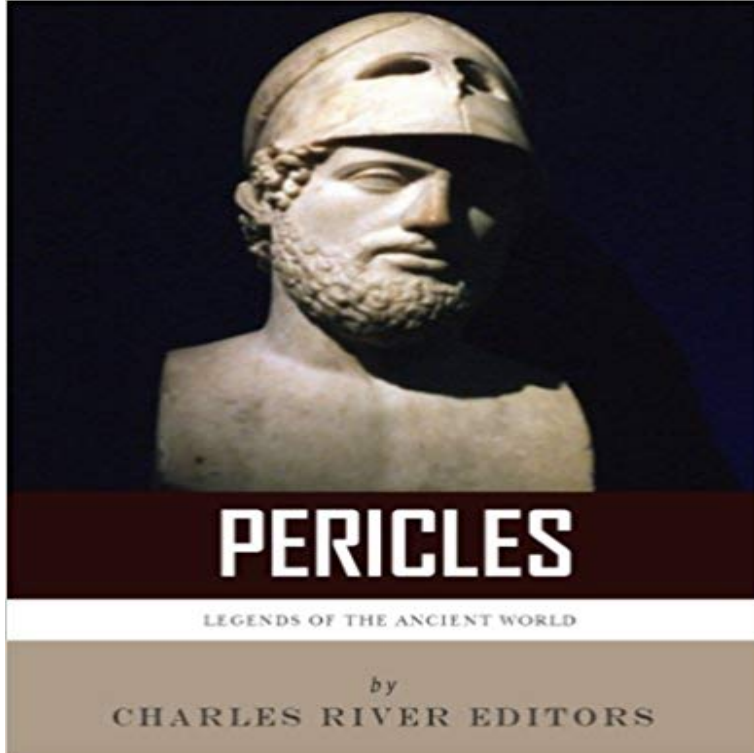


Legends of the Ancient World: The Life and Legacy of Pericles



*Includes the full text of Pericles famous Funeral Oration during the Peloponnesian War as recorded by Thucydides.*Includes pictures of famous art depicting Pericles and important people, places, and events in his life.*Includes a Table of Contents

Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now. We do not need the praises of a Homer, or of anyone else whose words may delight us for the moment, but the estimation of facts will fall short of what is really true.

Pericles A lot of ink has been spilled covering the lives of history's most influential figures, but how much of the forest is lost for the trees? In Charles River Editors' Legends of the Ancient World series, readers can get caught up to speed on the lives of antiquity's most important men and women in the time it takes to finish a commute, while learning interesting facts long forgotten or never known. In conjunction with the founding of democracy, Athens ushered in the Golden Age of the Ancient Greeks, which saw the invention or mastery of everything from mathematics and engineering to philosophy and art. And among the Athenians, none were as influential as Pericles, the West's first great statesman. Leading Athens for upwards of 40 years between the Second Persian War and the Peloponnesian War, Pericles has become an idealized figure over the last 2,000 years, but he was a polarising figure among his contemporaries. According to some, he was an honest and upstanding politician, while for others he was the lowest kind of demagogue, a political opportunist whose ability to wriggle free of criticism was best summed up by the typically pithy comment of his rival Thucydides (not to be confused by the famous historian of the same name, one of the main sources for Pericles' life). When asked who the better fighter was, Thucydides replied, Pericles even when he loses, he still convinces the Athenians he's

won. As Strategos, Pericles was Athens commander-in-chief, and the chief architect of the city's strategy, for a period of roughly two decades. Even in his military capacity, Pericles did not escape more than his fair share of criticism, both during his lifetime and all the way to the present day. His grand strategy, which put Athens on the defensive for much of the Peloponnesian War, has been accused by many critics as being too supine and too reliant on himself as its main architect, so when his death came during the first years of the war, Athens' ultimate defeat was inevitable. However, it is worth remembering that most of history's great generals planned strategy that was entirely reliant on their own particular species of military genius, so an unexpected, early death is hardly a valid reason to condemn an entire plan of operations. Even his prowess as an orator, on which Pericles built his political career, is questioned. The main source for the wording and content of his speeches is the historian Thucydides, but since he recorded the speeches from memory, it is unclear how much of the speeches are Pericles' words, and how much was put into his mouth by Thucydides. *Legends of the Ancient World: The Life and Legacy of Pericles* chronicles the life of the ancient Athenian statesman and looks at the mysteries and controversies surrounding his life and career, in an attempt to separate fact from fiction and analyze his legacy. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about Pericles like you never have before, in no time at all.

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