



**A magnificent mask of gold foil, found pressed on the face of a ruler of Mycenae, ca. 1500 B.C.
This is one of the first Europeans on whose faces we can look.**
Nimatallah/Art Resource, NY

Chapter Two

THE FORMING OF GREEK CIVILIZATION

CRETE AND EARLY GREECE (CA. 3000–1100 B.C.)
THE GREEK RENAISSANCE (CA. 800–600 B.C.) • THE POLIS • THE CHALLENGE OF PERSIA
THE WARS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY (479–404 B.C.)

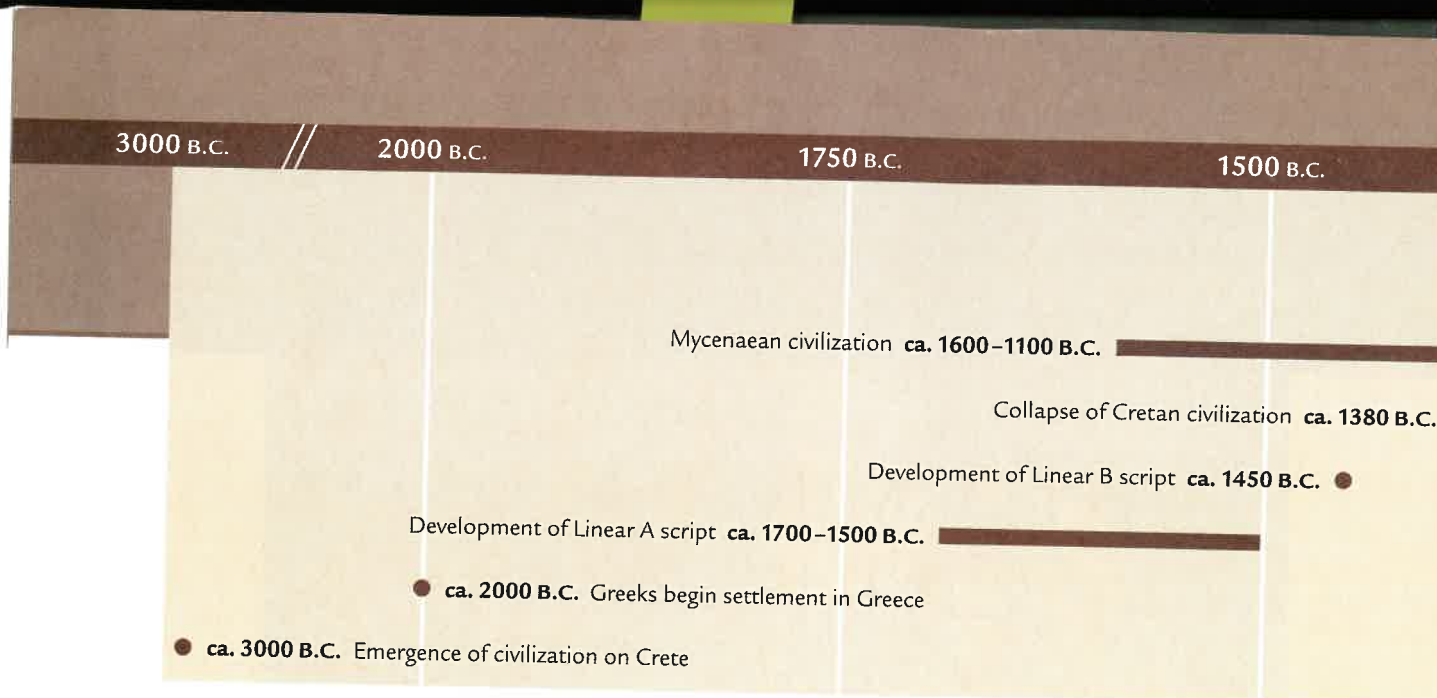
*G*reek civilization has been praised by our own more than any other for its creativity, its artistic genius, its intellectual daring. It created forms of thought and expression that have been imitated ever since, including philosophy, drama, and historical writing. Its immortal epic poetry, above all that of Homer, has traveled worldwide, even into India. Greek civilization also assigned a leading role to reason, debate, and logical argument. This civilization honored personal heroism and independence, and its literature is the oldest one with many individually known writers.

In Greece, for the first time, we see another theme that runs through Western civilization: a body politic, a political system with laws fashioned by the people and with guaranteed participation for citizens. The Greeks developed a civic culture that broke with the Near Eastern traditions of monarchy. They lived in independent communities, or city-states. These cities were normally dominated by an upper class of some

kind, but even this structure extended power beyond the all-powerful ruler of older civilizations.

Citizens of Greek city-states took pride in their temples, their civic traditions, the qualities of their own state, their participation in its life. In Athens the government was a democracy in which the male citizens themselves, not their representatives, made political decisions directly. This democracy allowed no role for women, foreigners, or slaves. Sparta, Athens' leading rival, chose by contrast a severe, authoritarian form of rule and was the only Greek state to retain monarchy after it had vanished in all others.

These two states led Greece into its most brilliant victories in war, the defeat of forces twice sent from the vast Persian Empire. They also became the nuclei of alliances that followed this triumph with tragedy, as their rivalry escalated into the long, destructive Peloponnesian War.



CRETE AND EARLY GREECE (CA. 3000–1100 B.C.)

The first important society in the Greek world developed on the island of Crete, just south of the Aegean Sea. The people of Crete were not Greek and probably came from western Asia Minor well before 3000 B.C. They traded with the nearby Greeks and left their influence in art, in religion, and in a system of writing. They were followed in history by a number of cities in Greece governed by monarchs. The most imposing such city was Mycenae, where tombs have disclosed stunning works of art. Greek legend also tells of a war against Troy in which Mycenae was the leading Greek power.

Cretan Civilization

We have no reliable historical narratives about early Cretan civilization. Therefore we must rely on archaeological evidence, found especially in a magnificent villa at Knossos. The historian must recognize that archaeological evidence often calls for much conjecture in its interpretation. The villa is known as the Palace of Minos; the civilization of Crete is thus often called Minoan.

King Minos and His Palace Greek legend told of the Minotaur (“Minos-bull”), a monster that lived in a labyrinth (surely a memory of the complex palace) and devoured girls and boys sent to it as tribute. The story suggests that Greeks had at least a dim recollection of a ruler, perhaps only a mythical one, called Minos, and the historian Thucydides tells of Minos, the powerful king who “cleared the seas of piracy, captured islands, and placed his sons in control over them.”

Other palaces on Crete exist, but none is so elegant as that at Knossos. For our knowledge of the palace, and much of Cretan culture generally, we must thank (Sir) Arthur Evans, a wealthy Englishman who began to excavate at Knossos in 1900 and spent some forty years at his task: he named the palace the Palace of Minos and restored much of it, including its colorful wall paintings.

The Palace of Minos was built over a period of about 700 years from ca. 2200 to ca. 1500 B.C. It was an extensive structure, with a vast eastern courtyard, an impressive grand staircase leading to upper rooms, and many wings and storage chambers. The palace even had a plumbing system with water running through fitted clay pipes.

The walls of the palace at Knossos were decorated with frescoes showing the Cretans’ delight in nature. Gardens, birds, and animals are vividly portrayed, and one spectacular painting shows young men vaulting over the horns of a bull. The absence of walls around the palace suggests that **Minoan** civilization was essentially peaceful.

Cretan Society and the Roles of Women Knossos was clearly the wealthiest of the Cretan cities, and the king was served by an efficient bureaucracy. The rulers were probably men; one wall painting shows a man, often identified as a priest or king, leading an animal to some kind of ceremony. Women were respected in this society, and jeweled ladies in elegant gowns appear in Minoan wall paintings.

Some historians have argued that women on Crete had actual political power in a system of matriarchy, or rule by women. This theory descends from a book published in 1861 by a Swiss scholar, Johann Bachofen, who theorized that early societies worshiped a goddess

1000 B.C.

750 B.C.

500 B.C.

ca. 1100–800 B.C. Cultural decline or “Dark Age” of Greece

● ca. 1250 B.C. Probable date of Trojan War

● 776 B.C. First Panhellenic games at Olympia

● ca. 750 B.C. Adaptation of Phoenician alphabet; epic poems of Homer

Cultural revival in Greece; emergence of polis; Greek colonization ca. 750–600 B.C.

● 508 B.C. Foundation of Athenian democracy

Spartan conquest of Messenia 736–716 B.C.

Solon reforms Athenian laws ca. 575–570 B.C.

■ 499–479 B.C. Persian Wars

Peloponnesian League formed ca. 530 B.C.

Peloponnesian War 431–404 B.C.



MAP 2.1 EARLY GREECE DURING THE BRONZE AGE

This map shows the areas in which Greek speakers settled between about 2000–1100 B.C. There was never a king or supreme ruler of the whole region, but rather rulers in the various cities. Which islands lay at the extreme boundaries of Greece, and where was Mycenae, where the Mycenaean culture originated?

◆ For an online version, go to www.mhhe.com/chambers9 > chapter 2 > book maps



This marble statuette of a goddess is a product of the Cycladic culture (named for its home in the Cyclades Islands of Greece), which preceded the coming of the Greeks. Carved ca. 2800 to 2300 B.C., the statuette represents the early emphasis on female rather than male gods. Neolithic art preferred abstraction to Paleolithic realism and points the way toward later abstract thought. In the twentieth century, artists like Brancusi and Mondrian returned to this type of noble, elegant simplicity.
© British Museum

called the Great Mother, Mother Goddess, or Earth Goddess. Only over time, the theory holds, did men wrest political power away from women. Statuettes of



Roman wall painting, showing Theseus having killed the Minotaur; he is surrounded by grateful Athenian children, whom he has saved from possibly being devoured by the half-man, half-beast monster.
Scala/Art Resource, NY

women are known from Crete, holding snakes or grain in their hands and thus dominating nature. This much need not surprise us, since *earth* is a noun of the feminine gender in many languages and is clearly the mother of all crops. But these facts fall short of proving the existence of a true matriarchy on Crete; it is better simply to accept that these figurines probably represent goddesses of nature.

On the other hand, paintings found at Knossos show women in elegant coiffures, dressed in splendid robes and wearing dramatic makeup. Their faces show no hint of hard labor; these women, at least, enjoyed an upper-class lifestyle, whether or not they had political influence.

A Cretan Empire? Much of the wealth of Crete came from trade, and Cretan pottery has been found far and wide throughout the Mediterranean world. About a dozen sites in the Greek world, probably trading posts, are called *Minoa*, obviously named after Minos. But we cannot speak of a true Cretan empire with political control of wide areas like the dominions of Assyria or Persia, for Crete lacked the population to conquer and permanently subdue overseas possessions.



A wall painting from Knossos, showing athletes vaulting over the horns of a bull. The figure at the right will catch the leaper in the center. The location of this painting in the palace suggests that the sport was a kind of ceremony. The bull may represent raw nature being tamed in this agricultural society.
Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY



THRONE ROOM AT PALACE OF KNOSSOS
Bridgeman Art Library

Crete and the Greeks

Minoan civilization reached its height between 1550 and 1400 B.C. Greek art of this period shows Minoan influence, and at least two Greek goddesses, Athena and Artemis, were probably adopted from Crete.

Cretean Writing ~ The Minoans also had interchange with the Greeks through writing. Clay tablets have been found at Knossos in two similar scripts, called

Linear A and **Linear B**. Both scripts are syllabic: Each symbol represents a sound, such as *ko*, rather than a letter of an alphabet. The language written in Linear A, the older script (used ca. 1700–1500 B.C.), has not yet been deciphered; but Linear B, the younger of the two scripts (used ca. 1450–1400 B.C.), has been deciphered as an early form of Greek. The decipherment was the work of a brilliant English architect, Michael Ventris, not a professional classical scholar. He achieved this feat in 1952 and tragically died in a motoring accident in 1956. The tablets contain inventories, rosters, and records of all kinds, listing footstools, helmets, vessels, seeds, and the like. They thus show that the rulers on Crete governed through fairly elaborate bureaucracies.

That these Linear B tablets were written in a form of Greek is a startling discovery, for it shows that the Greeks, who at this time had not developed writing of their own, learned to write their language in a Cretan script. Their presence on Crete during this period suggests that Greeks had come to dominate Knossos, perhaps through outright military seizure. Probably the only Greek community that could have done this was that of Mycenae.

The Collapse of Cretan Civilization ~ About 1380 B.C., a catastrophe, whose causes are uncertain, engulfed Knossos and other Cretan cities; several of the stately palaces were burned or destroyed. A massive earthquake shook the island at this time, but the disaster may also have been connected with a quarrel or rebellion against Greek rule.



A “marine style” vase by a Greek artist, ca. 1500 B.C., clearly imitating Cretan models. Sea creatures were often used in Minoan pottery in a free, naturalistic style.

C. M. Dixon



A large vase from Crete in the Late Minoan II style, ca. 1450 to 1400 B.C., when Cretan art came under Greek influence and became more disciplined and geometric. Note the double ax motif; found in the palace at Knossos.

C. M. Dixon

Some historians have tried to link the collapse of Knossos with a tremendous earthquake on the island of Thera (or Santorini) about seventy-five miles north of Crete. This earthquake is now dated to about 1625 B.C. It must have done damage on Crete, but the exact relationship, if any, between this natural disaster and the destruction of Knossos remains unclear.

Mycenaean Civilization **(ca. 1600–1100 B.C.)**

The Greeks, the people who spoke and imported the Greek language, began to settle in Greece about 2000 B.C., arriving from the Balkan areas to the north; they were members of the general family of Indo-Europeans who had started to migrate into Europe at an uncertain time, perhaps around 5000 B.C. (see chapter 1, p. 27). They called themselves Hellenes and their country Hellas; the Greeks still use these names, and only in West European languages are they called *Greeks*, a name given them by the Romans.

The City of Mycenae Geography divides Greece into many small valleys and forced the Greeks to develop independent communities with kings, but without the

direction—or oppression—of a central ruler like a pharaoh. By about 1600 B.C., the Greeks had created wealthy, fortified cities, among which the most prominent was Mycenae, a huge citadel built on a hill in the Peloponnese. The years from 1600 to 1100 B.C. are therefore often called the Mycenaean Age.

The Work of Heinrich Schliemann Another pioneer of archaeology, the German Heinrich Schliemann, is mainly responsible for the rediscovery of Mycenae. Arriving here in 1876, he discovered six graves, probably those of a ruling dynasty, containing gold masks and ornaments of stunning workmanship. The graves at Mycenae have given us a glimpse of the wealth and artistic accomplishments of this city. They contained such luxuries as masks of gold foil that were pressed on the faces of the dead and a complete burial suit of gold foil wrapped around a child, as well as swords, knives, and hundreds of gold ornaments. Tablets written in Linear B, attesting a palace bureaucracy, have been found at Mycenae and other sites of the Mycenaean Age.



A tablet in Greek, written in the Linear B script, from Pylos, about 1200 B.C. Note that each line contains a brief listing, probably items from an inventory, followed by a number. Such tablets reveal a complex bureaucracy within the monarchy at Pylos during the Mycenaean Age.

C. M. Dixon

The Zenith of Mycenaean Power and the Trojan War

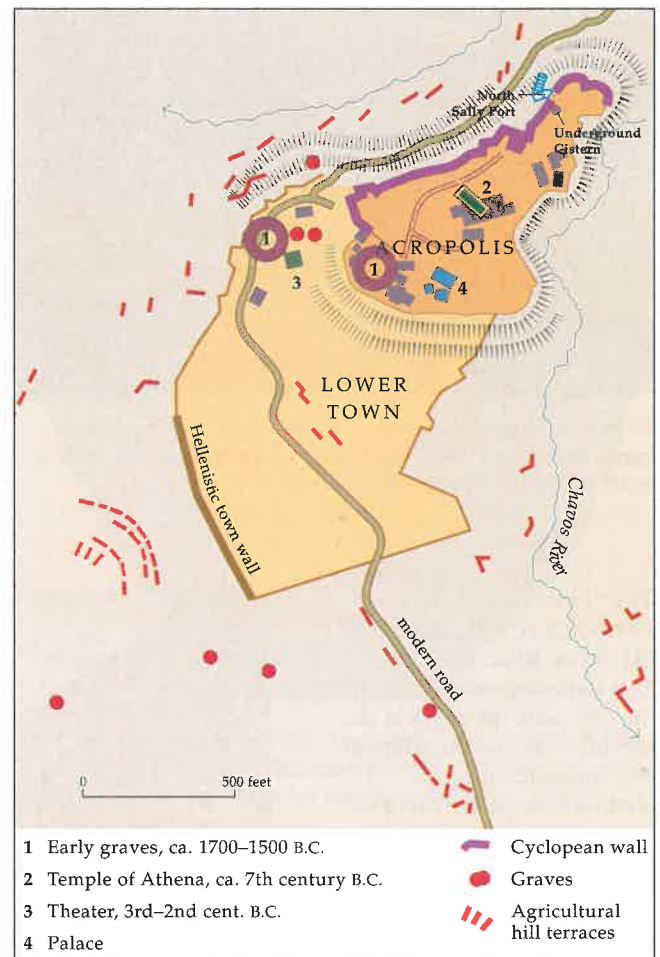
Between 1400 and 1200 B.C., Mycenae reached the height of its prosperity and created the most imposing monuments in Bronze Age Greece. A mighty decorated gateway with a relief of lions carved over it, known as the Lion Gate, formed the entrance to the walled citadel. Some rulers were buried in immense vaulted beehive-shaped tombs, of which the grandest and best preserved is the so-called Treasury of Atreus, named by archaeologists for the legendary father of King Agamemnon; but we do not really know which ruler or rulers were buried here.

Each city of the Mycenaean Age was probably independent under its own king. The only time these cities appear to have united was during the war against Troy, a rich city of obscure ethnic origin in Asia Minor near the Dardanelles. The evident wealth of the city must have offered a tempting prey to pirates and looters. Such was probably the real cause of the war against Troy, but Greek legend explained the war by the romantic story in Homer's *Iliad* about the seduction by a Trojan prince of Helen, the wife of a king of Sparta.

The Troy of Homer Because Homer is the only source recording the Greek attack on Troy, we must proceed with caution if we are to believe that there really was

such a war, for Homer was a poet, not a historian. Still, excavations at Troy have revealed several layers of building, among which one layer, called Troy VII A, was destroyed by some invaders about 1250 B.C., and this layer may well be the Troy that Homer says the Greeks attacked; some historians, however, would favor Troy VI, the preceding city.

The Decline of Mycenae The war against Troy was the last great feat of the Mycenaean Age. Between about 1300 and 1200 B.C., marauders, called sea-peoples, made trade by sea so dangerous that the export of Mycenaean pottery virtually ended. The identity of these warriors is still uncertain, but their homes were probably somewhere in Asia Minor. Even



MAP 2.2 MYCENAE

The most important city in Bronze Age Greece, Mycenae, was first settled on its citadel or Acropolis. As the population expanded, a lower town developed, also surrounded by a wall. Outside the town were terraced agricultural plots. Where was the palace of the king?

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more significant to the collapse of the Mycenaean Age was a series of attacks by land, lasting roughly from 1200 to 1100 B.C.; around 1100 B.C., Mycenae itself was overrun, though not obliterated. This invasion by land was probably the work of a later wave of Greeks who spoke the Doric dialect of the Greek language. Between about 1200 and 1100 B.C., these Greeks made their way southward from central Greece and settled mainly in the Peloponnese, especially in Corinth and Sparta, which became the most important cities in which Doric Greek was spoken.

The Dark Age The period 1100–800 B.C. is called the Dark Age of Greece, because throughout the area there



Picture of elegant little set of scales found in a Mycenaean grave, used to weigh out gold in the next world, 16th c. B.C. National Archaeological Museum, Athens, Greece

THE "LION GATE," THE ENTRANCE TO THE CITADEL AT MYCENAE, BUILT CA. 1350 B.C. Two lionesses stand guard over the city; note the depth of the entranceway and the width of the threshold. In early civilizations, power could be demonstrated by moving enormous stones.
Michael Holford Photographs



was sharp cultural decline: less elegant pottery, simple burials, no massive buildings. Even the art of writing in Linear B vanished, perhaps because the more learned class was killed off, or perhaps because the economy was so weakened that the keeping of records became pointless. Nor do we have written sources about the period. But the decline was not a total collapse. Farming, weaving, making pottery, the Greek language in spoken form, and other skills survived.

The invasions of the twelfth century B.C., in which the **Dorian** Greeks played at least a part, ended forever the domination of the palace-centered kings. The shattering of the monarchic pattern of the Mycenaean Age may even have been liberating. If these monarchies had survived, Greece might have developed as Egypt and Asia Minor did, with centralized rule and priests who interpreted religion in ways that justified kingship. Self-government in Greece might have been delayed for centuries, if it appeared at all.

THE GREEK RENAISSANCE (CA. 800–600 B.C.)

It is really the historian who is in the dark during the Greek Dark Age. At least near the end of this period, there must have been a revival of confidence and a nourishing of civic life.

With the passing of time, Greek culture revived after the Dark Age and entered a period of extraordinary artistic and intellectual vitality. Poetry and art broke new frontiers; the economy expanded, partly through overseas colonization; and the **polis**, or independent city-



The most spectacular tomb at Mycenae, the “Treasury of Atreus,” built in beehive style ca. 1300 B.C. The long entrance alley and the tomb itself are almost perfectly preserved.
Michael Holford Photographs

state, emerged. Historians borrow a term from a later period and call this movement the Greek Renaissance.

Greek Religion

The Greeks brought with them, during their earliest immigration around 2000 B.C., the worship of some of their gods, above all **Zeus**, the sky god, whose name is Indo-European; his counterparts are Dyaus in early India, Jupiter in Rome, and Tiu in Norse myths. Other gods were adapted from other regions: Apollo, the sun god, from western Asia Minor; Aphrodite, goddess of love, from Cyprus; Athena, goddess of wisdom, and Artemis, the hunter goddess, from Crete. At a much later stage, Greeks adopted some Egyptian gods (Isis, for example), but there is no solid evidence for the belief, recently put forth, that they received all or even many of their gods from Egypt (see “The Debate over Black Athena,” p. 43).¹

The Relationship of Greeks to Their Gods Greek gods are not the remote, transcendent deities of Mesopotamian peoples. They intervene in human affairs, they assist their favorites, and they are anthropomorphic: That is, they are humanlike superbeings, differing from people only in their physical perfection and im-

¹ Herodotus, the first historian, writing around 440 B.C., does say this, but he was perhaps so impressed with the antiquity of Egypt and with the resemblance of some gods in the two cultures that he drew this false conclusion.



The “warrior vase” from Mycenae, currently housed in the National Archeological Museum in Athens, Greece, showing armed warriors departing for battle; at the left, a woman waves her farewell.

C. M. Dixon

mortality. Even Mount Olympus, their legendary home, is an actual mountain in northern Greece.

The Greeks never developed a code of behavior prescribed by religion, as Israel did. Some acts, such as killing a parent or leaving a relative unburied, were obviously wrong, as were offenses against generally accepted conduct, such as betraying a friend. If people became too arrogant, Nemesis, an avenging force,



MAP 2.3 ARCHAIC AND CLASSICAL GREECE, CA. 800–400 B.C.

Four main dialects of the Greek language were spoken in the Greek world. Similarity of dialect could lead to political sympathy within the dialect group. Notice that Greeks never penetrated far into the Persian Empire. What was the most extreme reach of the Greek language to the north?

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would sweep down on them and destroy them. But on the whole, Greek religion had no spirit of evil and scarcely any demanding spirits of good.

The gods were viewed as generally benevolent, but they had to be appeased through offerings and suitable ceremonies. The most remarkable feature of Greek religion—especially in contrast to monarchies of Egypt and Mesopotamia—was that the Greeks had priests and priestesses for their temples and smaller shrines but no priestly class that intervened in politics. To put it simply, the Greeks had no church. The societies all around Greece seem to have needed priestly hierarchies to interpret religion and sacred lore. Only thus could they be sure that they were not offending divine powers.

Forms of Worship Why the Greeks felt they could worship without such a hierarchy we do not know, but the reason must be connected to the independence of the more than one thousand individual Greek city-states. There was no king, pharaoh, or emperor who had the power to install such a system. Religion and civic life were intertwined, and the beautiful temples all over Greece were built by decision of the governing power, but not at the orders of priests or viziers.

Most gods were common to all Greeks, and their worship is a sign of a Panhellenic culture that arose during the Greek Renaissance. Each locality, while recognizing the several gods generally, could have its own patron. For example, various gods had temples in



HISTORICAL ISSUES: THE DEBATE OVER BLACK ATHENA

Martin Bernal, in Black Athena, has set forth the challenging thesis that Greek civilization and even much of the Greek language rest on cultural borrowings from Egypt and the Levant from about 2100 to about 1100 B.C. Bernal also holds that anti-Semitic nineteenth-century scholars deliberately concealed the contribution of Egypt and the Phoenicians. This excerpt, in Bernal's words, summarizes his thesis.

"The scheme I propose is that while there seems to have been more or less continuous Near Eastern influence on the Aegean over this millennium, its intensity varied considerably at different periods. The first 'peak' of which we have any trace was the 21st century. It was then that Egypt recovered from the breakdown of the First Intermediate Period, and the so-called Middle Kingdom was established by the new 11th Dynasty. This not only reunited Egypt but attacked the Levant and is known from archaeological evidence to have had wide-ranging contacts further afield, certainly including Crete and possibly the mainland. . . . It is generally agreed that the Greek language was formed during the 17th and 16th centuries B.C. Its Indo-European

structure and basic lexicon are combined with a non-Indo-European vocabulary of sophistication. I am convinced that much of the latter can be plausibly derived from Egyptian and West Semitic. This would fit very well with a long period of domination by Egypto-Semitic conquerors. . . . [I] discuss some of the equations made between specific Greek and Egyptian divinities and rituals, and the general belief that the Egyptian were the earlier forms and that Egyptian religion was the original one."

From Martin Bernal, *Black Athena*, Vol. 1, Rutgers University Press, 1987, pp. 17–23, abridged.

Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, professors of classics at Wellesley College, have edited a 500-page volume, Black Athena Revisited, in which 24 scholars give their reactions to Bernal's theories. The following is one excerpt from the discussion.

"No expert in the field doubts that there was a Greek cultural debt to the ancient Near East. The real questions are: How large was the debt? Was it massive, as Bernal claims? Was it limited to the Egyptians and the Phoenicians? . . .

"All of the contributors agree that the early Greeks got their alphabet from the Phoenicians; but little else. Indeed, in terms of language, the evidence that Bernal has presented thus far for the influence of Egyptian or Phoenician on ancient Greek has failed to meet any of the standard tests which are required for the proof of extensive influence. . . .

"Similarly, in the area of religion, Egyptian and Canaanite deities were never worshiped on Greek soil in their indigenous forms. . . .

"Archaeologists, linguists, historians, and literary critics have the gravest reservations about the scholarly methods used in *Black Athena*. Archaeologists cite a constant misconstruing of facts and conclusions and misinterpretation of such archaeological evidence as there is. . . . Linguists see Bernal's methods as little more than a series of assertive guesses, often bordering on the fantastic."

From Mary R. Lefkowitz and Guy MacLean Rogers, *Black Athena Revisited*, University of North Carolina Press, 1996, pp. 449–452, abridged.

Athens, but Athena was accepted as the protecting goddess of the city. Zeus, though worshiped everywhere as the chief god, was the main local deity at Olympia. Apollo was the chief god at Delphi and supposedly inspired the oracle, a woman who gave guidance to inquirers after payment of a fee. New research supports the ancient tradition that she inhaled vapors from a chasm.

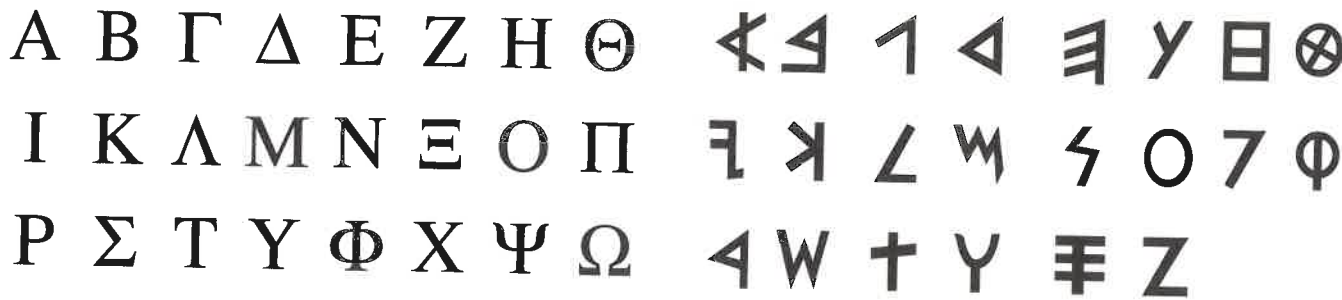
This woman, or the priests who interpreted her answers, was careful to express these answers in ambiguous language, so that the oracle could be justified no matter what happened. The historian Herodotus reports that, when King Croesus of Lydia asked whether he should invade Persia, he was told that "if Croesus crosses the Halys River [the frontier

of Persia], he will destroy a mighty kingdom." He took this to be encouraging, attacked Persia—and destroyed his own kingdom.

The Greek faith in this oracle is another sign of growing common identity among the Greeks. Though never more than a small village, Delphi was adorned with treasure houses built by the various cities to house the gifts they dedicated to Apollo when seeking his guidance.

Public Games

Another sign of a growing community among Greeks is the founding of Panhellenic athletic games in 776 B.C. This date is commonly agreed to mark



A COMPARISON OF GREEK AND PHOENICIAN ALPHABETS

the beginning of the "historic" period of Greek civilization: broadly speaking, the period when writing began and we begin to have fairly solid dates for events.

The first games were held at Olympia, in the Peloponnese, and were dedicated to Zeus; thus, from the beginning the games were connected with religion and demonstrate that religion can have wide uses in a community. But they were also a way of celebrating human perfection and heroism, aspirations typical of Greek civilization. Originally, the Olympics featured only foot races and wrestling, but gradually they came to include horse and chariot races, boxing, javelin throwing, and other events. Only the winner gained a prize, an olive wreath, but victory also brought rich awards from one's city and lifelong glory; the modern myth of the "amateur athlete" was unknown to the Greeks. In imitation of the Olympics, other cities founded games, and there was eventually one set of Panhellenic games (that is, open to all Greeks) each year, as well as games in many individual cities. The games also give us some of our dates in the archaic period, for the Greeks themselves used the Olympic games especially as chronological reference points.

Colonization (ca. 750–ca. 550 B.C.)

The growth in population during the Dark Age probably strained the natural resources in Greece, especially the limited farming land, and finally drove the Greeks into foreign colonization. In effect, the mainland Greeks, starting around 750 B.C., tried to relieve social tension by exporting their surplus population. They colonized vigorously from ca. 750 to ca. 550 B.C., and by the end of this period Greeks were spread throughout the Mediterranean. Wherever they went, they settled on the edge of the sea, never far inland. Colonies, when founded, were wholly independent cities, and among them are some of the great ports of modern Europe: Byzantium (today Istanbul in Turkey), Naples, Marseilles, and Syracuse.

This expansion overseas led to a revival of trade after the stagnation of the Dark Age. The Greeks now had access to a greater food supply, above all grain from southern Italy and the Black Sea. Trade brought prosperity to many Greek cities and, even more important, spread Greek civilization throughout the Mediterranean.

The Alphabet

Origin of the Alphabet The Greeks apparently lapsed into illiteracy when the Linear B script vanished, soon after 1200 B.C.; but by about 750 B.C. their trade had brought them to Palestine and into contact with the Phoenicians, who used a Semitic script called the alphabet. This alphabet had only twenty-two characters, but their precision and versatility made this script far easier to master than pictorial cuneiform scripts (see above). Fortunately for the future of European literacy, the Greeks adopted the alphabet and gave even greater precision to their script by changing some of the characters, which were all consonants, to vowels.

Two versions of the Greek alphabet developed. A Western version made its way to Cumae, a Greek town in Italy, and then to the Etruscans, the people in Italy who then controlled Rome. They passed it on to the Romans, who turned it into the alphabet used throughout the Western world. The Eastern version became the standard alphabet in Greece itself. Much later, many letters of the Greek alphabet were used in the Cyrillic script of Russian and other Slavic languages. Thus large parts of the world today use one or another derivative of the Phoenician alphabet in the form in which it was received from the Greeks.

The Alphabet and Greek Life The Greeks first used the alphabet in public for the proclamation of laws, which ordinary people could read and grasp; information could circulate more rapidly, with dynamic consequences for political life. Later, from about 500 B.C.,



MAP 2.4 GREEK COLONIZATION, CA. 750–CA. 550 B.C.

Partly to seek trading partners, partly to solve the problem of excessive population, Greek cities sent out many colonies in the Mediterranean and Black seas. Notice that all the colonial cities remained on the coastlines. Which were the farthest Greek cities in east and west directions?

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especially in Athens, people began to publish all kinds of public decisions and records on prominently displayed stone inscriptions; these were not simply boastful monuments to a king's victories but were documents enabling citizens to understand, criticize, and control the activities of the state.

Archaic Literature

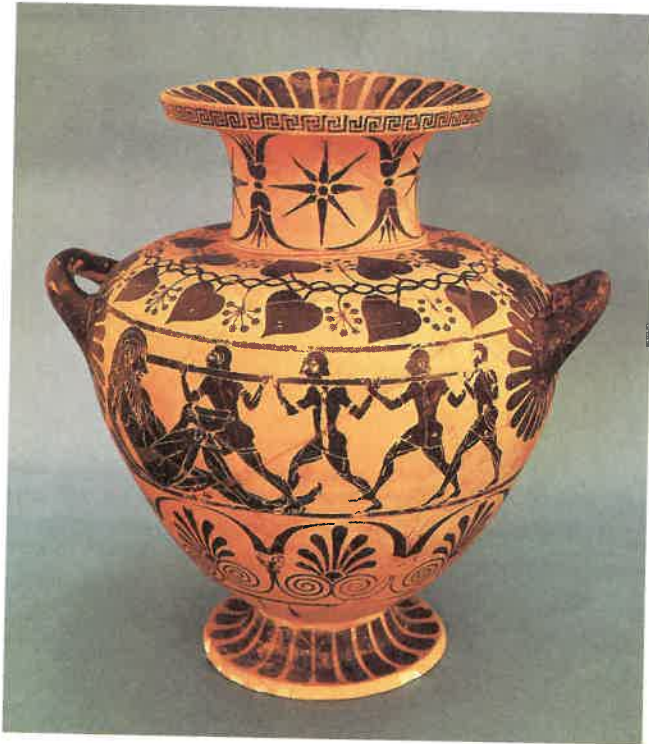
The Homeric Epics The greatest literary creations of the Greek Renaissance are the epic poems about the glorious heroes who had supposedly led the war against Troy. The supreme achievements of this poetic tradition are two epics ascribed to Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

The *Iliad* is a portrait—in rolling, majestic verse—of a warrior aristocracy in which greatness in combat is the highest virtue. The chief hero is the proud warrior Achilles, who withdraws from the siege of Troy when his concubine is taken from him; he then allows his friend Patroclus to wear his armor in combat and, after

Patroclus is killed by the Trojan hero Hector, avenges his friend's death by killing Hector in a scene of savage power. The gods take sides with their favorites, but the *Iliad* is essentially a poem about men and women.

The *Odyssey*, by contrast, celebrates cleverness rather than sheer military prowess. Its hero, Odysseus, makes his way home after the Trojan War through dozens of adventures that test his skill and tenacity and that enable Homer to explore human character and behavior in widely different situations. Eventually Odysseus reaches his home, the island of Ithaca, and drives off a band of suitors who are wooing his faithful wife Penelope.

The Homeric Question These epics were probably first recited at feasts by traveling bards, but over the years they became known to all through presentation at festivals and finally through study in schools. We have no idea who wrote these great epics. This is the famous “Homeric question.” Neither ancient Greeks nor modern scholars have been able to prove whether a



AN ETRUSCAN VASE (CA. 520 B.C.), WITH A SCENE FROM GREEK LITERATURE
Odysseus and his men escape from the Cyclops, Polyphemus, by putting out his only eye (Homer's *Odyssey*, book 9). This scene is found on several other vases from Greece.

Michael Holford Photographs

person named Homer really lived, whether the epics are the work of one writer or several, and whether they were originally composed orally or in writing.

It is clear, however, that the texts we have date from long after the Trojan War of ca. 1250 B.C. Most scholars date the poems to around 750 B.C., and this disparity raises the question of how any knowledge of the war could have been preserved. The traditions were evidently passed down through the centuries. The poems themselves were probably composed orally, recited for generations, and written down later, after the Greeks had become fluent in the art of writing. In any case, Homer remained the chief inspiration for Greek literature in all periods.

Homeric Legends Far from Greece Over the centuries Greek legends were known far and wide, reaching even the land of India. Greek gods, including Zeus, Athena, and others, were portrayed on Indian coins in later times. Sometimes Greek gods were transformed into, or identified with, Indian ones. Zeus became the Indian god Vajrapani, while Nike, a minor Greek god-

dess whose name means "victory," became an Indian spirit who celebrated the birth of the philosopher and mystic, Buddha. Some Indian scholars also hold that Indian legends and fables made the journey westward and found their way into Greek literature and myth. In any case, archaeological evidence has shown that the famous story of the Trojan Horse, the stratagem that is said to have led to the fall of Troy, found its way into Indian mythology and perhaps even Indian warfare.

Hesiod Homer never speaks in the first person (except to invoke the Muses to inspire him), but his successors began to express their own thoughts and feelings and to create a literature of intensely frank self-expression. The first major post-Homeric poet was Hesiod of Boeotia (in central Greece), whose *Works and Days* dates from around 700 B.C. Hesiod was a farmer, and his poem is a farmer's almanac, celebrating agriculture and telling the reader when to plow and plant. The poem also contains a bitter attack on the injustice of aristocratic landlords ("gift-devouring rulers") toward their peasants. In his other surviving poem, the *Theogony*, Hesiod recounts the genealogy of the various gods.

Archilochus About 650 B.C. Greek poets began to work with more personal themes. Archilochus of Paros has left us brief poems of brilliant vigor and audacity, written as bursts of self-revelation, a typically Greek kind of literature that has no predecessors in the ancient Eastern cultures. He was a traveler, a man of action, and a mercenary soldier who fell in battle. He criticizes traditional forms of chivalry and can be cynical about supposed aristocratic conduct. He boasts, for example, that he once threw away his shield to save his life and laughs off this unmilitary act: "Never mind, I'll buy another one just as good." His love poetry can be astonishingly frank. In one poem he tenderly yet passionately describes his seduction of a girl, including his own sexual fulfillment.

Sappho The most intense and subtle poet of the age was Sappho of the island of Lesbos (about 600 B.C.). We have only one complete poem from her pen and many short quotations (see "Sappho's Love Poetry," p. 48). In her poetry she writes about an association of young women, but it is not certain precisely what kind of group this was. They worshiped Aphrodite and the Muses, minor goddesses who inspired poetry and other arts.

The most tantalizing question, to which the surviving fragments of her work supply no exact answer, is what kind of experiences the group shared. Sappho was a widow and apparently taught the girls poetry, dance, music, and elegant dress as preparation for marriage.



A superb red-figure vase (the figures are left in the natural red of the clay), illustrating a scene from Homer's *Odyssey*, book 12. Odysseus, bound to the mast of his ship, listens to the song of the Siren, who guides him into troubled waters; by the Siren Painter, ca. 490 to 480 B.C. Michael Holford/© British Museum

Sometimes she sings of the beauty of the girls, sometimes of her pain when one leaves the circle (probably to marry) or is unresponsive to her affection. At other times she speaks frankly of the pleasures of love, and there is little question that she shared physical love with some of the girls. But, unlike Archilochus, she does not boast of her sexuality or of her conquests; rather, she writes of shared experience and love felt mutually.

THE POLIS

"The human being," said the Greek philosopher Aristotle, "is a political creature." By this he probably meant that humans normally want to live within a community of people sharing cultural traditions and common citizenship. The Greek city, at its largest, had about 40,000 adult male citizens. Originally, monarchs ruled, as they did at Mycenae, but over the years most cities reached at least an approach to government by a body of citizens. In their cities, the Greeks created architecture, dramas, and philosophic writings that are still worshiped and imitated.

Organization and Government

For the social and political history of Western civilization, the most important event in the Greek Renais-

sance was the emergence, soon after 800 B.C., of the independent city-state, the polis (plural, *poleis*). Physically, the polis had a central inhabited area (the *astu*), often surrounding a citadel called the acropolis ("high city"). Over time, the acropolis came to be reserved for temples, shrines, treasuries, and other official buildings. Within the *astu*, the nucleus of the city, the people dwelt in closely packed houses, each normally built on more than one level, without internal staircases but with the rooms opening to a courtyard. A wall usually surrounded the *astu*, outside it, but still part of the polis, were suburbs and fields. Those who owned land might live in the urban center and walk or ride a donkey to their land. Or they might live in smaller villages, which were still legally part of the polis.

General Structure of the Polis Greek cities usually had a large open space, the **agora**, that served as a main public square and civic center. Although used as a public market, the agora was always a sacred place and, like the acropolis, it housed temples and official buildings. In Athens, the agora was also the site of trials, of buildings containing laws and other documents, and of many free-standing inscriptions on marble recording further public business.

In a Greek polis, only male citizens could vote, pass on their property through wills, and generally participate in civic life. Females did not vote but, like men, were protected against seizure and violence. Outside



SAPPHO'S LOVE POETRY

The poetry of Sappho of Lesbos is amazingly sensitive and original. This short excerpt from a poem frankly acknowledges her need for love.

"You have come, and done,
And I was waiting for you
To temper the red desire
That burned my heart."

The following is addressed to a young woman.

"He seems to be a god, that man
Facing you, who leans to be close,
Smiles, and, alert and glad, listens
To your mellow voice.

"And quickens in love at your laughter
That stings my breasts, jolts my heart
If I dare the shock of a glance.
I cannot speak,

"My tongue sticks to my dry mouth,
Thin fire spreads beneath my skin,

My eyes cannot see and my aching ears
Roar in their labyrinths.

"Chill sweat slides down my body,
I shake, I turn greener than grass,
I am neither living nor dead and cry
From the narrow between.

"But endure, even this grief of love."

From Guy Davenport (tr.), *7 Greeks*, New Directions, 1995.

this group, and without civic rights, were slaves and resident aliens. No citizen of a polis had rights in any other polis; thus poleis were both cities and small states.

Population of the Poleis When Greeks referred to the size of the citizen body, they reckoned only adult males, and by this measure the poleis ranged from a few hundred citizens to tens of thousands. Athens, the largest, had between thirty-five and forty-five thousand citizens; if to this we add the estimated number of women, children, resident foreigners, and slaves, the total population of Athens and the outlying villages, which were also part of the polis, was between two and three hundred thousand (the whole region is known as Attica). Sparta, by contrast, probably had an adult male population of no more than twelve thousand.

Origins of Self-Government Despite considerable diversity within the six to seven hundred poleis, one development seems to have been common to all those poleis that we know anything about, namely, the growth of some kind of self-government by the male citizens. The major social problem that Greek poleis solved was how to harness the energies of all the citizens in support of a city rather than allow the rivalries inherent in such crowded quarters to erupt into civil war. In many poleis (Corinth, for example), oligarchy (a

system in which a small number of citizens governed) held sway, while other cities, especially Athens, developed control of affairs by the masses.

Evolution toward self-government is rare in history, and the various forms of self-government that arose in Greece may, like the Greeks' lack of a priestly class, be the result of topography and the scale of their towns. In a small state, locked within a ring of hills, no monarch could long remain a remote, transcendent figure like the rulers of Eastern kingdoms. Homer attests that the Greeks of the Mycenaean era had kings, but by about 700 B.C. they had vanished—though we can seldom say precisely how—in nearly all poleis. Sparta, the most authoritarian Greek state, was an exception and retained a system with two kings, each descended from a royal family, ruling together. The Spartans apparently felt safer in a system in which one king could act as a control over the other.

Hoplites and Society The wealthier classes—using the term loosely, we may call them aristocrats, but there was no hereditary nobility—must have governed, if Homer is to be believed, through assemblies that originated as the armed forces of the poleis. But as populations increased and armies came to include citizens outside the circle of the elite, the upper classes could no longer ignore the wishes of others. In particular, Greek infantry soldiers, called hoplites (Greek

hopla, arms), may have been an impetus toward self-government, because numbers of armed citizens could more effectively demand a say in political decisions. It is significant that the first Greek legal codes defining citizens' rights were published soon after the disappearance of kings, within the seventh century B.C.—evidence that the populace was no longer willing to accept direction from the wealthy.

Tyrants and Tyranny Also in the seventh century we hear of the first popular leaders who united the masses and overturned the rule of the old aristocracy. These men installed themselves as "tyrants" (the Greek word *tyrannos* meant an autocrat who ruled without strict legal foundation, not necessarily a cruel oppressor). The tyrants, though certainly no sponsors of democracy, did help to undermine rule by the traditional aristocracy and in a way opened the path to self-government. They sometimes built grandiose temples and other public works to beautify their cities and ensure the support of the people. Some sponsored industry and trade of their city's products overseas. Most saw to the buildup of armies, doubtless for their own security. On the whole, tyrants forced progress within their cities and helped lead the cities away from the rule of the older aristocratic class.

Greek Armies In the period of the Greek Renaissance, we also see the formation of the armies that were to make the Greeks supreme in battle against their neighbors. Infantry soldiers, or hoplites, were grouped into the formation called the phalanx. This was a close-packed formation of men, usually eight deep. A soldier carried a shield on his left arm and protected his right side by standing close to his neighbor's shield. The weapons were either swords or, especially in the fourth century B.C., long spears. The phalanx became a formidable instrument in battle, especially when moving forward to attack.

As the ranks pushed forward, one adversary or the other would give way. Once the front ranks of either side were broken, the Greeks normally broke off the battle, for they lacked the manpower to sustain huge casualties. Infantry soldiers had to provide their own equipment. This meant that they were men of the middle class, and many historians have concluded that solidarity among the hoplites contributed to the growth of political consciousness and pointed the way to a greater degree of self-government.

The Economy of the Poleis (ca. 700–400 B.C.)

A Modest Lifestyle The poleis were sufficiently similar to allow a general picture of their economy. The basic activity was agriculture, but in many areas of Greece the soil is thin and rocky, not suited to raising

grain or pasturing animals. A shortage of food was therefore a constant threat to economic stability. Some states, as we have seen, drained away part of their excess population through colonization and imported grain from areas on the fringe of the Greek world.

All Greek dwellings were modest, and sanitation was primitive, although the Athenians had a main drain under their central market. Grain, and occasionally fish, were staples of the diet; meat was usually reserved for festival days. Breakfast, if taken at all, was a lump of bread dipped in olive oil, which also served as fuel for lamps and even as a kind of soap. Sugar was unknown; the only sweetening agent was honey. With few luxuries available, Greeks could subsist on small incomes. Fishing and farming were suspended in winter, so Greeks had considerable leisure time, which they spent mainly in public places, as is still true today.

Coinage and Public Expenses The development of an economy based on coinage was slow. Coinage itself began in the kingdom of Lydia, in western Asia Minor, about 600 B.C. or a little later. Soon the Greeks began to use coins, but at first they played little part in daily trade: The smallest coin was usually a drachma, said to have been at that time the price of a sheep. In the fifth century the use of coinage expanded rapidly, as fractions of the drachma came into use. Taxation in poleis paid for the upkeep of walls, drains, roads, harbors, and the like, though Greeks had little grasp of the mechanics of public finance. There were no permanent military treasuries until the 300s B.C., a surprising fact since the cities were so often at war. Infantry soldiers had to arm themselves, but they were paid at the expense of the state. When large projects such as public buildings and maintenance of ships were planned, the expenses were assigned to citizens who were judged capable of bearing the cost.

Use of Slave Labor A great social-economic historian, M. I. Finley, once asked the challenging question: Was Greek civilization based on slave labor? Undeniably, slave owners had freedom to pursue civic affairs. Many Greeks looked down on manual labor as beneath their dignity, and it was usually the task of poor citizens or slaves. The troubling institution of slavery was accepted by all ancient societies and was justified by philosophers like Aristotle, who asserted that nature had divided humanity into natural masters and natural slaves—the latter including all "barbarians," that is, non-Greeks. Nor did anyone in antiquity ever recommend abolishing slavery on the ground that it was morally wrong: The only criticism of it was the occasional warning to manage it efficiently.

Greeks commonly obtained slaves through conquest of other territory, though kidnapping and even the sale of children added to recruitment. An ordinary slave

might cost about 150 drachmas, roughly four months' pay for a laborer, but a highly skilled one could cost much more.

Industry Greece, unlike Rome, did not use gangs of slaves in agriculture, and industry was rarely more than household craft. The only industries in which slaves worked together in large numbers were mining and stone quarrying, where conditions were atrocious. These industries and domestic service were the only tasks always assigned to slaves. In a unique exception to this rule, Athens had a police force composed of three hundred slaves from Scythia. The Athenian writer Xenophon said, "A man buys a slave to have a companion at work." Potters, shoemakers, and stonecutters might have a slave or two, though a few larger workshops are known: One shield maker, for example, had 120 slaves.

The availability of slaves and the prejudice against manual labor may explain why some slaves worked, along with citizens, on the building of the Parthenon in Athens and were paid the same as free men—one drachma a day, about the same wage paid to soldiers and sailors—and they partly explain the lack of inventions among the Greeks that could have made industry more productive.

Sparta and Athens (ca. 700–500 B.C.)

We know little about the internal workings of most poleis, and the two we know best, Sparta and Athens, were not typical; but their importance requires detailed discussion.

Early Sparta Sparta, the most influential of all the Dorian states, chose to solve its problem of overpopulation by conquering Messenia, the territory to its west, in a war usually dated 736 to 716 B.C. Many, probably most, of the Messenians were then enslaved. Only males of demonstrably pure Spartan descent could be full citizens, and they were each given an allotment of land to be worked for them by the enslaved Messenians, who were known as **helots**. They were public slaves, with no rights whatever, but they differed from other slaves in Greece in that they could not be bought and sold. Spartan landowners spent their lives in constant military training in order to maintain control over the helots, who outnumbered them by about seven to one.

Around 650 B.C. the Messenians tried to rebel, but the uprising failed, and the Spartans responded by making their army more invincible and their state even more rigid. The new arrangements, attributed to a lawgiver named Lycurgus, date from about 600 B.C. The identity of Lycurgus was obscure even in antiquity,

though such a man apparently lived around 800 B.C. and many historians believe that Spartan reformers around 600 B.C. ascribed their system to him in order to give it the appearance of ancient authority.

Sparta's Government In the Spartan regime, **oligarchy**, or rule by a small number, was tempered with some measure of democracy. The public assembly included all males over the age of thirty, who elected a council of twenty-eight elders over age sixty to serve for life and to plan business for the assembly. The assembly also chose five ephors ("overseers") each year; they received foreign delegates, summoned the assembly to meet, and in general acted as a check on the power of the kings. When proposals came before the assembly, voting was limited to yes or no, without debate. As a further safeguard against too much popular control, the ephors and council could simply dismiss the assembly if, in their opinion, it made the wrong choice. Thus, the limited democracy of Sparta yielded to its ultimate faith in oligarchy. To Greek political philosophers, Sparta was a superb example of a "mixed" constitution, in which the kings represented the element of monarchy, the council, oligarchy, and the assembly, a kind of democracy.

For a time Sparta tried to dominate some other Peloponnesian states by outright conquest. But by around 560 B.C. this policy had failed, and about 530 B.C. the Spartans sought strength through negotiation rather than warfare by forming an alliance, known as the Peloponnesian League, with their neighbors. The league is one of the earliest examples of alliance in the Greek world and is a rare instance of the Greeks' transcending the normal exclusiveness of city-state politics. The Spartans led the league but did not wholly control it, and action required approval of the member states.

Men and Women in Spartan Society The Spartan male dedicated most of his life, from age seven through age sixty, to soldiering. The warriors lived and trained together, and their discipline could be sadistic. As tests of their courage and resourcefulness, young men were taught to steal if necessary, to go without food and shelter, even at times to kill a helot.

Spartan women also had a lifestyle that other Greeks found extraordinary. Again the military commitments of the state played a role in shaping social practices, for the girls trained in games in order to become physically strong mothers. Spartan men, living with one another, seldom visited their wives, and if a marriage was childless, a woman could bear a child by a man other than her husband. These customs were meant to ensure enough manpower for the army and to focus loyalty on the state, not on the individual family.



AN ATTIC KOUROS, OR YOUNG MAN, IN THE "SEVERE" STYLE, CA. 510 B.C.

The figure is one of ideal physical perfection, typical of the humanity-centered aesthetics of Greece.

Nimatallah/Art Resource, NY

Spartan Isolationism Spartans were cut off from the other Greeks by two mountain ranges, and they traded little with other people, even adopting an intrinsically worthless iron currency to maintain their isolation.

Their lifestyle was one of extreme austerity. They rarely traveled, did not welcome visits by foreigners, and deliberately shielded themselves from new ideas that might have inspired intellectual pursuits such as philosophy or historical writing. Their short, abrupt speech is usually called "laconic" from the name of the plain where they lived, Laconia.

Though they did make fine pottery, at least until about 525 B.C., when the art declined, their military regime left little time for or interest in the arts. Thus the isolation of Sparta from other Greeks was both geographic and psychological, but it reflected the deliberate choice of the people.

Early Athens The city of Athens also had expansionist beginnings, extending its domain by about 700 B.C. to include the whole plain of Attica. It was a large polis with widespread trading interests, and its political currents were strong and turbulent. As the people experimented again and again with their constitution, their political history became the most varied of all the city-states of Greece.

Athens, like other states, once had kings; but the monarchy ended in 683 B.C. (we do not know exactly how), and the city was managed by three (later nine) archons, or administrators, elected annually by an assembly in which all adult male citizens could vote. After their year in office, the nine archons moved permanently into a council called the **Areopagus**, which eventually numbered about three hundred men. Because it comprised senior men with permanent membership, the Areopagus was probably more influential than the board of archons in setting public policy.

Draco and Homicide Law Our first information about a reform in Athens after the monarchy is dated around 621 B.C. when Draco, an otherwise unknown statesman, codified the law on homicide, apparently distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary homicide. This reform was a large step forward, for early societies often looked on any kind of homicide as defiling the community in the eyes of the gods. This reform was also another in the series of law codes that established a recognized basis for justice and did away with forcing citizens to rely on the dictates of tribal elders.

Crisis in the Athenian Economy An economic crisis in the 500s B.C. forced Athens into far-reaching social changes, the likes of which no Greek state had ever seen. As often happens in history, economic conditions demanded a social response. Down to about 600 B.C. the

Athenian economy was trying to do the impossible, namely, feed the growing population of Attica from its own limited area; this strategy caused a nearly desperate social and economic crisis. Some farmers had evidently borrowed food from others who were better off and had gone so deeply into debt in the form of grain that they had lost their own land and had even fallen into slavery by pledging their bodies as security for more food.

Their frustration might have exploded into violent revolution had the Athenians not found a rational solution by giving (probably in the 570s) powers of arbitration to Solon, who had been archon in 594 B.C.² He was a poet and statesman whose courageous, compassionate work has made him a towering figure in Greek history, indeed in the history of civilization.

Solon and Economic Reform Aware that the poor farmers could probably never repay their debts, Solon took the daring step of canceling all agricultural debts and forbade further borrowing against the body. At one stroke the enslaved men were free, but the land they had lost probably remained in the hands of its new owners, who were thus compensated for the cancellation of debt. This legislation left many families without land and made them seek work elsewhere, but the crucial fact was that Solon had prevented civil war. Such arbitration by a private citizen without an army to fight with is heretofore unknown in history.

Because an economic crisis had threatened the community and brought him to power, Solon determined to transform the economy of Athens. He decreed that no product from the soil could be exported except olive oil; by this means he forced the Athenians to cultivate olive trees, which they could grow more successfully than grain. He also changed the commercial weights used by the Athenians, making them the same as those more widely used in Greece, a reform that brought Athens into a wider circle of trade.

Solon's Political Reforms Solon now seized the opportunity to reform the Athenian state with the aim of breaking the grip of the wealthy and those with eminent family backgrounds on public office. He therefore divided all Athenian citizens into four classes based on their income from farmland and allowed members of the two highest classes to hold office. The significance of this reform is that men could improve their status economically and thus achieve positions of leadership regardless of their ancestry.

² That Solon was archon in 594 B.C. is fairly certain, and most historians follow ancient sources in dating his reforms to this year as well. But the assumed linkage between his archonship and his reforms was probably only an inference drawn in antiquity, and there is good reason to think that the reforms took place in the 570s; see C. Hignett, *A History of the Athenian Constitution*, 1952, p. 316.

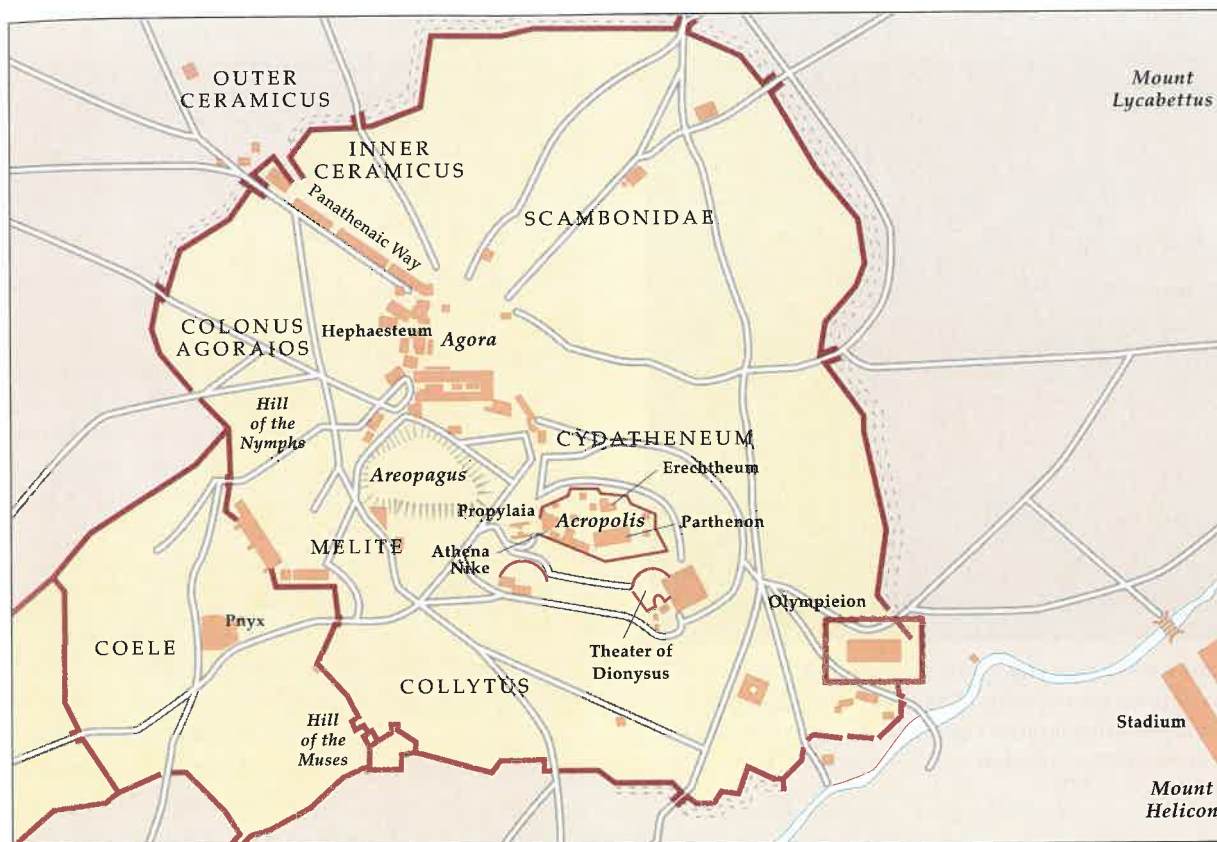
Solon also created a court of appeal, the Heliaea, somehow drawn from the people, but our sources tell us little of how it worked. His chief contribution was to see the common people as a group with grievances and to take bold steps to help them. He thus pointed the state toward eventual democracy, but he did not want to go too far and by no means gave the masses supreme power; in his own poetry he declared, "I gave the people just enough privilege and no more." Nor did his legislation, humane though it was, wholly end the agricultural problem; freeing farmers from servitude was not the same as guaranteeing them enough to eat, and the agony of those peasants who had lost their land continued.

The Tyrant Pisistratus Pisistratus, a popular Athenian military leader supported by poorer farmers from the hill country in eastern Attica, saw his chance in this turmoil. In 561 B.C. he and his followers seized power; though twice driven out, he returned in 546 with a mercenary army to gain permanent control and ruled from that year until his death in 528.

Pisistratus fits well the pattern of the Greek tyrant sketched earlier. He rewarded his supporters with grants of land, surely taken from the estates of landowning aristocrats who had opposed him, thus completing the work of Solon, who lacked the power and probably the will to redistribute land. And like many another "big city boss," he saw to a splendid program of public works. He built temples to Athena and Zeus and established a yearly festival to the god Dionysus. By encouraging dramatic contests at this festival, he opened the way for the development of Athenian tragedy in the next century.

He ruled by cloaking his despotic power in legal form. The assembly still chose archons, but from trusted men picked by the tyrant himself. The legal facade was actually one of his chief contributions, for the Athenians now became familiar with democratic procedures, which gave them experience with the working of real democracy when it came into existence at the end of the sixth century.

Cleisthenes and Demokratia Pisistratus' son, Hippias, ruled securely until 514 B.C., when a conspiracy frightened him into using terror as a means to maintain his control. He forced many Athenians into exile, including Cleisthenes, the leader of the Alcmaeonids, a powerful family. While in exile in Delphi, Cleisthenes and his supporters enlisted the help of the Spartans to overthrow Hippias. According to Herodotus, Cleisthenes and his family had spent lavishly to rebuild the temple at Delphi, and the Delphic priests had the oracle urge the Spartans to "liberate the Athenians." Moreover, Hippias had given his daughter in marriage to the son of a Persian vassal ruler, and this move may have looked to the Spartans like a dangerous act that could bring about Persian influence over Greece. In any case, a Spartan force led by



MAP 2.5 CLASSICAL ATHENS, CA. 400 B.C.

Athens became the largest Greek city in population and political importance. It also had the most impressive collection of public buildings and temples, especially on the Acropolis or “high city.” The urban area was surrounded by a wall. Where was the temple of Athena or Parthenon?

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the king Cleomenes drove out the Pisistratid family in 510 B.C. and ended the Athenian tyranny.

Cleisthenes returned to his native city and in 508—perhaps to secure his own political supremacy—carried the social revolution further by proposing a scheme whereby the masses would actually direct the state. The Greek word *demos* means “the people,” but in Greek political language it also means “the masses,” and the domination of the Athenian state by the whole mass of voters came to be called *demokratia*. Participation extended only to the adult male citizens of Athens, for women, aliens, and slaves did not vote; but this system was by far the closest to a democracy that had ever existed.

Cleisthenes anchored his system in popular support by a stroke of genius: He created a council of five hundred members (called the *boulé*) to prepare business for the assembly; all male citizens above age thirty were eligible to serve in it for a year. In later times (and perhaps from the beginning, though our sources do not say so) councillors were chosen by drawing lots, and no man could serve more than twice. There was a fair

chance that every eligible Athenian would be chosen to serve during his lifetime, and this widespread participation in the council ensured that the people would want to maintain the new regime. Within about fifty years, this new council came to surpass in political power the old Areopagus council, which continued to exist.

The End of Regional Factions in Athens Our sources tell us that the Athenians were loosely divided into three groups in Attica: those who lived in the central plain, or along the coast, or “beyond the hills” in eastern Attica. Cleisthenes set out to break up these regional factions through a complex system of building blocks. Every man was now enrolled as a citizen within the single village, or *deme*, in which he lived, and which kept registers of its citizens. These villages throughout Attica were then grouped into ten tribes, so composed that each tribe contained citizens from all parts of Attica. The council’s five hundred men included fifty men from each tribe and were, like the tribes, automatically a cross section of Athenian citizens. Thus within the council, too, no local faction could dominate.



Athenians used sherds of pottery, called *ostraka*, to vote men out of town for ten years. The sherd at the lower left bears the name Hippokrates; the others are directed against Themistocles, son of Neocles.

Scala/Art Resource, NY

As a result, when the council met to prepare business for the assembly, no single region could dominate the discussion. Each of the ten tribes fought as a unit in the army, and here, too, men from all over Attica, not from a single region, stood together in each tribal regiment.

The sovereign body was, as before, the assembly, including all adult male citizens, whether landowners or not. The assembly passed laws and resolutions brought before it by the council, elected magistrates, voted for or against war, and accepted alliances with other states. Unfortunately, as a democratic assembly, it was vulnerable to being misled or corrupted by unscrupulous politicians. Sometimes it gave way to disastrous or vindictive decisions.

The Use of the Lot in Elections After passing his reforms in 508 B.C., Cleisthenes vanishes from our sources, but the Athenians continued to refine his system, especially through the use of the lot. In 487 B.C. they began to choose their nine annual archons, the executive committee, by drawing lots from a slate of candidates. Later, in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., all manner of officials, such as public auditors and managers of public land and mines, were so chosen. The theory behind this practice held that many men were equally honest and capable of serving in a democracy and choosing officials by lot reduced corruption and angry competition in the process of selection.

CHRONOLOGY

The Persian Wars

(All dates B.C.)

499, autumn	Greek cities of Ionia in Asia Minor revolt from Persian Empire.
498	Athens and Eretria (on island of Euboea) take part in burning Sardis in Persian Empire.
496	Persians besiege Miletus, the leading city in the revolt.
494	Fall of Miletus.
493	End of Ionian revolt.
492, spring	Persian expedition to northern Greece suffers heavy losses in storms.
490, mid-August	Battle of Marathon near Athens; Persians defeated.
486, November	Death of King Darius of Persia; accession of Xerxes.
484, spring–480, spring	Xerxes prepares for new invasion of Greece.
480, spring	Persian army sets out from Sardis.
480, late August	Battles of Thermopylae and Artemisium.
480, late September	Battle of Salamis.
479, early August	Battle of Plataea.
479, mid-August	Battle of Mycale on coast of Asia Minor (according to Herodotus, fought on the same day as Plataea).

Choosing civic officials by lot greatly diminished the prestige of such positions and caused the most ambitious men not to bother to seek them. As a result, political power shifted to the ten generals, who were elected annually and could be reelected. From this point onward, the great Athenian politicians competed for the position of general.

Ostracism Also in 487 B.C., for the first time, a man was expelled from Athens for ten years by the process of **ostracism**. In this colorful procedure, the whole people could vote once a year to expel any man whom they considered potentially dangerous. They voted by scratching a name on *ostraka*, or potsherds. If the total number of votes was six thousand or more, the “win-



MAP 2.6 THE FIRST PERSIAN WAR, 490 B.C.

The king of Persia sent an expedition against Eretria and Athens to punish them for their part in an attack on Sardis. The battle of Marathon turned the Persian invasion back. On the way to Marathon, at which islands did the Persian fleet stop?

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ner" had to depart Attica for ten years; but neither his property nor his family suffered any penalty. Aristotle attributed the practice to Cleisthenes himself, but this statement remains controversial.

THE CHALLENGE OF PERSIA

By the beginning of the "classical" period of Greek history, lasting from about 500 to 323 B.C., the Greek states had reached the political form they would retain for more than two centuries. But almost at once they faced their supreme challenge, a clash with the great Persian Empire. In two brief but intensely dangerous

wars, they turned the Persian armies back. Their morale was heightened because they were fighting for their own land, and the poet Aeschylus, in his play *The Persians*, records their battle cry: "Now the struggle is about everything." Daring and even trickery played their parts in the remarkable victory.

The Invasion under Darius and Marathon (490 B.C.)

King Darius of Persia (r. 522–486 B.C.) had expanded his empire throughout Asia Minor, including the Greek cities in the region called Ionia, on the west coast. Some of these Greeks sought their liberty from Persian



MAP 2.7 THE SECOND PERSIAN WAR, 480–479 B.C.

Ten years after the first war, the Persians attacked Greece again. The Persian navy and army invaded in parallel routes. The critical battles were at the island of Salamis and at Plataea in Boeotia. Where is the island of Salamis? Note the canal cut through Mt. Athos in 492 B.C.

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control in 499 B.C. in the “Ionian revolt.” The rebels obtained a promise of help from the Athenians, who sent them twenty warships. The historian Herodotus declares that “these ships turned out to be the beginning of trouble for both Greeks and non-Greeks,” since they led directly to the two Persian wars. The revolt collapsed in 493 B.C., and Darius now proposed to invade Greece itself, largely for the sake of revenge against Athens, which had helped the rebels in the burning of Sardis, one of his cities.

After a brief campaign in 492, he sent a fleet across the Aegean in 490. The Persians first attacked Eretria, on the island of Euboea, and then landed in Attica on the beach at Marathon, a village north of Athens. The Athenian in-

fantry routed them in a brilliant victory and even marched back to Athens in time to ward off a Persian naval attack. A later legend told of an Athenian, Euclides, who ran back to Athens in his armor with the good news; he cried out, “Hail, we rejoice,” and dropped dead (the origin of the marathon race).³ The Athenians never forgot

³ The name Euclides is preserved by Plutarch in his *On the Glory of the Athenians*. The usual popular version calls this man Phidippides or Philippides, but Herodotus, our oldest source, says that Phidippides ran from Athens to Sparta in one day to ask for Spartan help before the battle of Marathon (book 6, chapter 105). A much later writer, Lucian, improves on Herodotus by having him run with the good news from Marathon back to Athens, but there is no trace of this run in Herodotus.

this immortal feat of arms; they lost only 192 men, according to Herodotus, and the Persians lost about 6,400.

The Second Persian War (480–479 B.C.)

Preparations for War To avenge this defeat, Darius' son, Xerxes (r. 486–465 B.C.), readied a huge force and swore that this time there would be no mistake. Fortunately for Greece and Europe, the Athenians were guided by a shrewd strategist, Themistocles. In 483 B.C., seeing the Persian menace on the horizon, he had persuaded the Athenians to use some newly found veins of silver in their mines to increase greatly the size of their fleet.

With this money they raised the number of their ships to two hundred. These ships were the famous **triremes**, on which nearly two hundred men rowed, seated in three banks. So powerful were these ships that they became, in effect, missiles, capable of smashing and disabling the enemy's ships. By thus greatly multiplying the striking power of one man, the trireme became the naval equivalent of the phalanx, in which hundreds of men could strike together on land.

The Invasion of 480 and Thermopylae Early in 480 some thirty Greek states, also fearing annihilation, formed a military alliance and entrusted to the Spartans command on both land and sea. A few months later Xerxes began his march toward Greece with a force of perhaps sixty thousand men and six hundred ships, in a grandiose amphibious invasion of Europe. The first Greek force sent out in 480 against the Persians was defeated at the pass of Thermopylae in central Greece. The Spartan king in command, Leonidas, dismissed many of his allies, with the result that the Spartans defended the pass almost alone in a stand always remembered for its heroism. A poet, in two simple, grave lines on a stone, immortalized the heroism of the three hundred Spartans and their king who fell there: "Stranger, tell the Spartans that we lie here, faithful to their orders." At the same time, a sea battle at nearby Artemisium was inconclusive.

Themistocles and the Victory at Salamis As the Persian army marched southward, the Athenians abandoned Athens and the Persians burned down the city. In this nearly desperate situation, Themistocles assembled the Greek fleet off the island of Salamis, near the Athenian coast. The Persians attacked with their ships into the narrows between Salamis and the shore, where the Greek fleet, with heavier ships, utterly defeated them. His navy shattered, Xerxes, who had watched the battle from a height, abandoned Greece and marched back to Persia (see "They Have a Master Called Law," p. 58).



Themistocles, the great Athenian strategist, was ostracized about 472 B.C. This ostrakon, cast against him, says, "Themistocles, son of Neocles, let him depart" (ITO). American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Agora Excavations

The Battle of Plataea (479 B.C.) Yet the Persians could still have won the war, for a large Persian army remained in central Greece. The reckoning with this force came in a battle in 479 B.C., at the village of Plataea. Once more a Greek army, under the Spartan general Pausanias, crushed the Persians; out of perhaps fifty thousand Persians, only a few thousand survived.

The Greeks won a further battle at Mycale on the shore of Asia Minor in 479. The Ionian Greeks now proclaimed their freedom and thus completed the work of throwing off Persian control that they had begun twenty years earlier in the Ionian revolt. Thus the Greeks crowned the most brilliant victory in the history of their civilization.

THE WARS OF THE FIFTH CENTURY (479–404 B.C.)

After a brief period of cooperation, the two leading Greek cities, Athens and Sparta, led their allies into the long, tragic war that fatally weakened the Greek poleis.

The Athenian Empire

The victorious Greeks continued the war against Persia in 479 and 478 B.C., liberating, for example, the Greek city of Byzantium on the Bosphorus from Persian control. But in 478 Sparta returned to its perennial isolationism and withdrew from the alliance that had been formed to oppose Persia. In response, many of the



“THEY HAVE A MASTER CALLED LAW”

As King Xerxes leads his army into Greece in 480 B.C., he asks a former king of Sparta, who is accompanying him, whether the Greeks will really fight against the Persians.

“Now, Demaratus, I will ask you what I want to know. You are a Greek and one from no minor or weak city. So now tell me, will the Greeks stand and fight me?” Demaratus replied, “Your Majesty, shall I tell you the truth, or say what you want to hear?” The king ordered him to tell the truth, saying that he would respect him no less for doing so.

“Your Majesty,” he said, “I am not speaking about all of them, only about the Spartans. First, I say they will never accept conditions from you that would enslave Greece; second, that they will fight you in battle even if all the other Greeks join your side.”

Xerxes said, “Demaratus, let’s look at it in all logic: why should a thousand, or ten thousand, or fifty thousand men, if they are all free and not ruled by a single master, stand up against such an army as mine? If they were ruled

by one man, like my subjects, I suppose they might, out of fear, show more bravery than usual and, driven into battle by the lash, go up against a bigger force; but if allowed their freedom, they wouldn’t do either one.”

Demaratus said, “Your Majesty, I knew from the beginning that if I spoke the truth you wouldn’t like my message, but, since you ordered me to do so, I told you about the Spartans. They are free men, but not wholly free: They have a master called Law, whom they fear far more than your soldiers fear you. And his orders are always the same—they must not run away from any army no matter how big, but must stand in their formation and either conquer or die. But, your Majesty, may your wishes be fulfilled.”

From *Herodotus*, book VII, M. H. Chambers (tr.).

newly liberated Greek states met on the island of Delos in 478 and formed an alliance, known as the **Delian League**, to continue the war and take further vengeance on Persia. Athens was recognized as head of the league and determined which members should supply ships to the common navy and which members should contribute money.

The military campaigns, often fought under the command of the Athenian general Cimon, were successful until the warfare between Greeks and Persians ended about 450. Meanwhile, Athenian control of the league had become stricter through the years. Sometimes Athens forcibly prevented members from withdrawing from the league; sometimes it stationed garrisons or governors in the supposedly independent member states. Athenian domination became unmistakable in or near 454, when the league transferred its treasury from Delos to Athens. The cash contributions were now nothing but tribute to Athens, and the alliance of equals had become an Athenian Empire.

The Age of Pericles

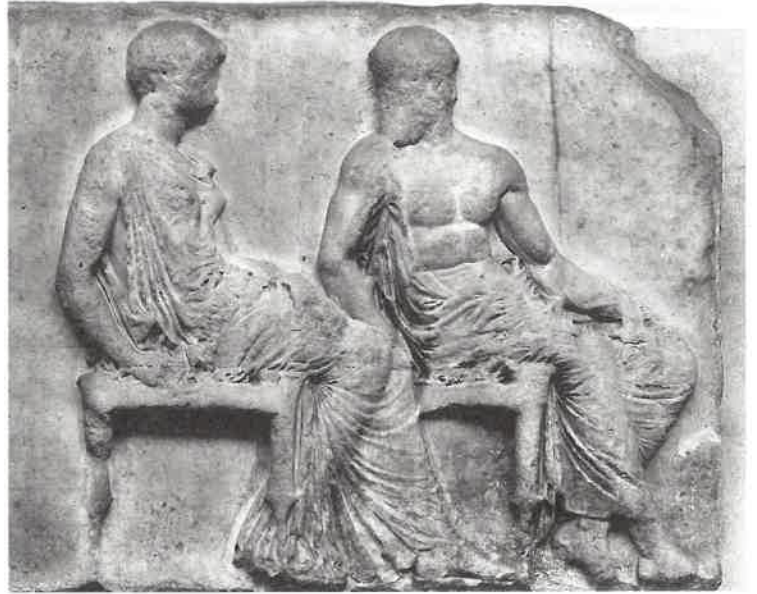
The Golden Age of Athens The leading statesman in the period of the Athenian Empire was Pericles (ca. 490?–429 B.C.), an aristocrat who had the support of the common people. Now that the archonship was no longer a position for an ambitious man, Pericles held only the post of general, to which he was reelected

from 443 to 429. He was a powerful orator and a highly competent general and was renowned for his personal honesty; moreover, his policies generally favored the common people.

He won them over by establishing pay for Athenian jurors and for those who served in the council. These measures not only supported the people but worked to ensure the fullest possible participation in government by all citizens. In 447 B.C. he proposed that the Athenians restore the damage done by the Persian invasion of 480 and rebuild the temples on the Acropolis.

Between 447 and 432 B.C. they built for their goddess Athena the most nearly perfect of all Greek temples, the Parthenon. Inside it was a statue of Athena bearing more than a ton of gold. It was the work of the sculptor Phidias, who probably directed the reliefs on the temple as well. They also built a magnificent gateway to the Acropolis. These public works both beautified the city and served the political aim of providing work for the people.

Moreover, Pericles’ lifetime coincided with the zenith of Athenian literature, when Athenian drama, especially, reached its highest development in the plays of Sophocles (a friend of Pericles) and Euripides. (On drama see further chapter 3, p. 71.) So brilliant was this era, and so strongly marked by his leadership, that historians often call the era from 450 to 429 the Age of Pericles. His political dominance drew praise from the historian Thucydides because “he controlled the



A portion of the frieze within the Athenian Parthenon, showing officials carrying the robe that will be presented to Athena. On the right, gods sit in conversation, awaiting the procession; note that they are portrayed as larger than the human beings.

Hirmer Fotoarchiv

masses, rather than let them control him. . . . Though the state was a democracy in name, in fact it was ruled by the most prominent man."⁴

The Athenian Judicial System The expansion of the empire must have been one of the causes of the development of the Athenian judicial system. Juries were chosen by lot and comprised two to five hundred or even more citizens drawn from all classes. There was no detailed body of civil or criminal law, and in trials there was no judge, merely a magistrate to keep order. Juries had wide powers of interpretation without the possibility of appeal from their decision. Nor were there professional attorneys, although a man facing trial could pay a clever rhetorician to write a courtroom speech for him. Juries heard all manner of cases with the exception of homicides, which were tried by the Areopagus council (see p. 51). Critics of this system saw it as too democratic, but it expressed the spirit of the Greek state: that the average citizen could and should play a part in governing the city.

The Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.)

The Athenians became more and more imperialistic and menacing to other states. The tension that followed led to the war that sealed the doom of the Greek city-states. By far the longest and most dramatic of all

collisions in Greek history, the Peloponnesian War received an immortal analysis from the greatest of ancient historians, Thucydides of Athens (ca. 455–395 B.C.).

The Outbreak of War In the 430s aggressive action by Athens convinced the Spartans and their allies that they must declare a preventive war on Athens. The war opposed two kinds of states. Sparta, the head of the Peloponnesian League, controlled no empire but had the strongest army in Greece and maintained itself through its own resources. Athens, which had the strongest navy, relied on its empire to provide grain for its people and tribute to pay for its fleet.

The Archidamian War (431–421 B.C.) The first ten years of the war are called the Archidamian War, so named for Archidamus, one of the kings of Sparta when the war began. The battles were inconclusive and neither side devised a winning strategy. Far more damaging to Athens than the annual Spartan invasions was a devastating plague, not yet identified with any known disease. It attacked the Athenians, who were packed inside their walls, in 430 B.C. The plague took thousands of lives in the crowded, unsanitary city; Thucydides survived it and has left us a horrifying description of its effects on the body.

Unfortunately for Athens' effectiveness in the war, Pericles died in 429 B.C., perhaps from the plague. None of his successors maintained his stable leadership, and

⁴Thucydides 2.65.



A Roman copy of an idealized portrait of Pericles, the leading Athenian statesman of his time. The helmet symbolizes his position as commander.

Scala/Art Resource, NY

some were unscrupulous demagogues playing only for their own power. Casualties finally made both sides ready to end, or at least suspend, the war. A peace treaty, supposed to make Athens and Sparta allies for fifty years, was signed in 421 B.C. It is called the Peace of Nicias for the Athenian general who led the negotiations.

The “Suspicious Truce” (421–415 B.C.) and the Affair of Melos At this point the Greeks could have turned their backs on war, for both Athens and Sparta had shown courage and neither had gained a decisive advantage. Thucydides called the next few years a time of suspicious truce, but during this period one event demands attention, the brutal subjugation of the small island of Melos by the Athenians in 416.

The Athenians sailed up to this neutral island and commanded the Melians to join the Athenian Empire.

Thucydides describes the negotiations in a brilliant passage, called the Melian Dialogue, in which envoys on each side argue their cases. It is by no means clear how he could have known what was said by either side, and this dialogue is probably based on his own conjectures. In any case, the Melians protest that they are so few in number that they cannot in any way threaten the Athenians, to which the Athenians reply that it is precisely their weakness that makes them dangerous: If the Athenians allow so small a state to remain neutral, this will show weakness in the Athenians themselves and may tempt their subjects to rebel.

In the Dialogue the Athenians brush aside all arguments based on morality and justice and finally seized the island, kill most of the adult men (probably two to three thousand), and sell the women and children as slaves. Without explicitly stating any moral conclusion, Thucydides shows the Athenians giving way to the corrupting influence of war; as he says in another passage, “War teaches men to be violent.”⁵

The Syracusan Expedition In 415 B.C. another occasion for war arose. The people of Segesta, a city in Sicily, appealed to Athens for help in a war they were fighting against Syracuse, the leading power on that island. In commenting on the death of Pericles, Thucydides noted that his successors were often lesser men of poor judgment. It was so now, as Alcibiades, a talented young political leader of enormous ambition and—as it later turned out—few scruples, persuaded the Athenian assembly, against the advice of the Athenian general Nicias, to raise a large fleet and attack Syracuse, with him as one of the generals. This campaign in effect reopened the Peloponnesian War despite the peace treaty of 421 B.C.

Thucydides makes it clear that a quick, resolute attack might well have succeeded, but the Athenians failed to strike when they had a clear advantage. One event that blunted the Athenian attack was the loss of Alcibiades. He was recalled to Athens to stand trial on two scandalous charges: that he had been part of a gang of rowdies that had mutilated small statues of the god Hermes and that he and his friends had mocked some religious ceremonies known as mysteries. Fearing that his political enemies would be able to secure his conviction, he defected to Sparta and advised them how to fight the Athenians. His defection left Nicias, who had opposed the campaign from the start, in command.

In Syracuse, the Athenians finally decided to break off the campaign, but they lost a critical battle in the harbor and could not sail away. Trying to retreat toward the interior of the island, they were cut off and decimated. Those who survived this calamity were imprisoned in

⁵ Thucydides 3.82.



MAP 2.8 GREECE IN 431 B.C. AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

The two main cities, Athens and Sparta, had allies throughout Greece. Most of the allies of Athens were members of the Delian League, which became the Athenian Empire. Which states or regions were neutral at the opening of the war?

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terrible conditions in a quarry at Syracuse; as Thucydides grimly says, "Few out of many returned home."⁶

Athens Defeated The disaster in Sicily led to many defections among Athens' subjects, but Sparta still could not strike the final blow. The war dragged on for another eight years until, in 405 B.C., the Spartan admiral Lysander captured the Athenian fleet at a spot called Aegospotami, in the Dardanelles (the ancient Hellespont). Athens, now unable to bring grain through the straits, had to surrender in desperate hunger in 404.

⁶Thucydides 7.87.

It abandoned its empire and, as a guarantee for the future and a symbol of humiliation, had to pull down the "long walls" that had protected the population during the war. Sparta proclaimed this event, in language often used by victors in war, as the "liberation of Greece" and imposed on the Athenians a cruel regime (known as the Thirty Tyrants). Pro-Spartan and anti-Spartan factions assailed one another during the rule of this hated clique, with atrocities and murders committed on both sides. After eight months the Spartan king Pausanias restored the democracy in 403 B.C.

Athens never regained its former power, although democracy survived for long years after the war. The

quality of political leadership had declined after the death of Pericles, as Thucydides observed. Several times when the war could have ended, ambitious politicians raised support for rash ventures that ended in disaster, of which the Sicilian expedition was only the most notable.

Looking back at the fifth century B.C., we can see that, in interstate politics, the Greek poleis made little

constructive use of their brilliant victory over the invaders from Persia. Freed of a foreign enemy, they divided themselves into two blocs that turned against one another and, like characters in a Greek tragedy, involved themselves in the catastrophe of the Peloponnesian War.

Summary

The Athenians lost their empire, which had made them the richest polis in Greek history. Sparta, persuaded by its allies to go to war in 431, had shattered the Athenian Empire, but this empire had been no threat whatever to Sparta's isolated life within the protecting mountains of the Peloponnese. The losses in manpower had been heavy on both sides, but Sparta could less easily sustain these losses because of its smaller population, and in the fourth century it could put fewer and fewer troops in the field.

Besides these losses, there now came a failure of will, a spirit of pessimism and disillusion among Athenian intellectuals. Such a collapse of civic morale all but destroyed the sense of community that was the very heart of the polis. Self-centered individualism replaced willing cooperation between citizens. Many thought uncontrolled democracy had led to social decline and military disaster, and they contrasted the discipline of Sparta, the victor, with the frequent chaos of Athenian policy. Thucydides often speaks critically of "the masses" and "the rabble," and similar ideas run through the work of Plato and other philosophers, who asked what had gone wrong with democracy and what system should replace it.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT

1. There was no single ruler of ancient Greece, as there was in Egypt. If there had been such a ruler, how might Greek history and society have been different?
2. In what ways would you have liked to live in ancient Greece? What features of Greek life would you have found undesirable?

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* Available in paperback.