CHAPTER THREE

Greece in the Heroic Age

CHAPTER EXPECTATIONS

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- *identify major changes in early Greek history including the introduction of bronze and the development of writing*
- *analyze diverse forms of government employed by the ancient Greeks including monarchy, dictatorship, and democracy*
- *assess the contribution of Athens to the development of modern Western ideas of citizenship and the rights of the individual*
- *explain the reaction of the ancient Greeks to outside influences such as the invasion of the Persians and trade with Egypt*

The Lions Gate entrance to the fortress at Mycenae, ca. 1500-1300 BCE.

The person many people call the "Father of History" was a Greek named Herodotus of Halicarnassus. In the fifth century BCE he wrote a book describing the conflict between two great civilizations: the Greeks and the Persians. The outcome of this conflict was crucial to the development of early European history and culture. Herodotus described the conflict as a struggle between West and East, between Europe and Asia, between the Greeks and what he called "barbarians," by which he merely meant foreigners. Herodotus wrote,

> These are the Researches [Histories] of Herodotus of Halicarnassus set down to preserve the memory of the past, and to prevent the great and wonderful achievements of the Greeks and the "Barbarians" from losing their glory, and in particular, to show how the two peoples came into conflict.
>
> **Herodotus *Histories* I.i**

We now know that there were in fact two other civilizations that had thrived in the area of Greece well before the time of Herodotus (ca. 480–429 BCE). We call these two earlier peoples Minoan and Mycenaean, since we are still not sure what they called themselves. Differences between the cultures of the Minoans, Mycenaeans, and later Greeks are clear and easy to distinguish. But while differences caused by changes in the environment, opportunities for trade, and threats from more highly developed neighbours are to be expected over a 1500-year period, threads of continuity remained. The Minoans influenced Mycenaean art, technical crafts, writing, and religion. The Mycenaeans in turn passed on their language, legends, and some aspects of their religion to the Greeks of the Classical Age.

KEY WORDS

democracy
ostracism
sanctuary
trireme
tyrant
metic
polis

KEY PEOPLE

Herodotus
Solon
Peisistratus
Cleisthenes
helots
Lycurgus
Sappho

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Good habits are man's finest friend, and bad are his worst enemy.

Hesiod *Works and Days* 470–472

TIME LINE: GREECE IN THE HEROIC AGE

	ca. 7000 BCE	Earliest known people on Crete arrive
Neolithic farming villages develop on mainland Greece and Crete	ca. 7000 BCE	
	ca. 3200 BCE	Bronze introduced to the Minoans
Early Minoan period on Crete; Early Helladic period in mainland Greece	ca. 3000–2100 BCE	
	ca. 1900 BCE	Linear A script is developed by the Minoans
Minoan palaces destroyed and rebuilt	ca. 1750 BCE	
	ca. 1680 BCE	Wealthy and powerful Mycenaean states emerge in mainland Greece
Massive volcanic eruption destroys the island of Thera	ca. 1628 BCE	
	ca. 1500 BCE	Destruction of Minoan palaces, perhaps due to Mycenaean invasion
Trojan War and the decline of Mycenaean civilization	ca. 1200 BCE	
	ca. 1100–800 BCE	Greek Dark Ages
Archaic Period, Greek colonization begins	ca. 800 BCE	
	776 BCE	First Olympic Games held
Solon's reforms lay the foundations for Athenian democracy	594 BCE	
	508 BCE	Cleisthenes's reforms establish worldís first democratic government
Ionian revolt leads to new Greek-Persian conflict	499–494 BCE	
	490 BCE	Persian attack on Athens beaten back in Battle of Marathon
Persia's second and final attempt to invade mainland Greece ends in failure	480–479 BCE	

THE EARLIEST CIVILIZATION IN EUROPE: THE MINOANS

Crete is a land of abundant agricultural wealth. The people of ancient Crete, whom we call Minoans, were highly proficient navigators. This navigational skill in combination with the island's agricultural bounty led the Minoans to become the first Europeans to acquire some of the facets of civilization. By about 1900 BCE, the Minoans had developed a form of writing, a palace-led social organization, advanced metal-working skills, and sophisticated artistic expression.

Crete is an island about 200 km long and divided into regions by tall mountain ranges. It enjoys a very pleasant, semi-tropical climate. When the first settlers made their way to the island from Asia Minor in the seventh millennium (7000–6000 BCE), they found a fertile, inviting home. Over the centuries, the settlers spread across the island, building small villages, growing grain, raising sheep and goats, hunting and fishing, and occasionally trading with neighbours on their own and nearby islands.

Innovations: The Introduction of Bronze

After more than 3000 years of this Neolithic farming life, several new elements were introduced to the culture. One of the most important was the use of metal to make better tools and weapons. The metal of greatest importance was bronze, an alloy of about nine parts copper to one part tin. Its introduction had as profound an impact on Crete as it did elsewhere in the ancient world, and the arrival of bronze on the island marks the Early Minoan period (ca. 3000–2100 BCE).

The copper used on Crete may have come first from the small island of Kythnos to the north, but it was especially plentiful at Lavrion near Athens on the mainland. On the eastern island of Cyprus, copper was plentiful, but tin was much rarer and therefore more expensive, perhaps coming from the mountains of southern Turkey. Separately, tools made of these metals were not much better than tools made of stone, but combined, they produced a tough but malleable metal with a reasonably low melting point, ideal for producing sharp knives and spear points, tough saws, hard chisels and many other implements.

How did the Minoans pay for bronze? Crete had no other valuable products to exchange except agricultural goods. It is likely that a new market developed, even if only on a small scale, involving surplus production of food or linen and wool clothing. Sailors, traders, merchants, and metal workers reaped profits for their work in the exchange system. There is certainly evidence of a great increase in the population of the island, and of better use of the land for agriculture: ploughing heavier soils, making cheese from milk, and planting grape vines. The farmers of Crete also planted olive trees to produce one of the most important staples of Mediterranean life: olive oil.

The process was slow, but over a thousand years, these changes brought about a society with more diverse skills and occupations, some accumulation of wealth, and greater contacts with peoples outside Crete. However, this development was interrupted toward the end of the third millennium (ca. 2300–2100 BCE), perhaps because of problems elsewhere in the eastern Mediterranean. It is not yet understood why settlements were abandoned and trading contacts severed.

The Ancient Greek World

1. Does the geography of Greece give any clues about why, historically, it was difficult for the Greeks to unite?
2. If you were heading an army in Asia sent to invade Athens, what might your strategy be?

WEB CONNECTION http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/echoes

Go to the site above to find out more about Minoan civilization.

TIME FRAMES
MINOAN AGES

Early Minoan ca. 3200–2100 BCE
Middle Minoan ca. 2100–1700 BCE
Late Minoan ca. 1700–1100 BCE

These chronological divisions were established by archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans, and were meant to parallel the division of Egyptian history into Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. The date of the change from Middle to Late Minoan has been adjusted in recent years, based on a re-dating of the volcanic eruption on the island of Thera, and new thinking on the dates of certain Egyptian Dynasties.

Cross-cultural Influences and the Minoans

At the beginning of the Middle Minoan period, ca. 2100 BCE, a recovery occurred, with new population growth helped in part by immigration. Very quickly, life on Crete began to flourish in completely new ways. Foreign trade with the Near East increased as it stabilized following a period of turmoil. There were new burial customs, impressive buildings, higher levels of artisanship, and a system of writing. There were now sacred grounds called sanctuaries built on hilltops. This was where temples, sacrificial altars and other forms or architecture were built in honour of the gods. Very clearly, some families on the island were accumulating substantial wealth. Archaeological evidence shows that these newly wealthy people found ways to enjoy their riches. They built bigger and finer houses — some on the scale of palaces — where possessions could be stored and administered. They had fine jewelry and clothing and enjoyed works of art and luxury imported products, many of which came from Egypt or elsewhere in the Middle East. To keep track of their property, the wealthy first developed a method of marking ownership with seals, then a system of record keeping using hieroglyphic characters, perhaps borrowed from Egypt. Eventually the Minoans developed a script of their own, which we call Linear A. By about 1900 BCE, civilization had appeared on the threshold of Europe.

Politics and the Palaces

The largest and most important palace on Crete was always at Knossos. It was also the earliest, along with the palaces of Phaestus and Mallia. These were certainly centres of political power. Knossos must have been home to the most powerful monarch on the island, king or queen, with other royal families ruling from other palaces. Power was partly exercised by controlling certain goods and products, so the palaces were also centres of exchange for the Minoan economy. The large storerooms for agricultural produce and for items of prestige created in the palace workshops are evidence of the role of the palace in the local economy.

The palaces were the most impressive buildings constructed by the Minoans. Dozens of interconnecting rectangular rooms on two, three, or more

storeys were grouped around a large open courtyard in the centre of the palace. There were areas for administration, residences, religious purposes, storage, and workshops. The finest rooms were decorated with colourful wall frescoes depicting processions of gift bearers, scenes of nature, lively ceremonies, or charging bulls. Fine building skills can be seen in the masonry reinforced by wooden beams to protect it from earthquakes, in the deep light wells (like elevator shafts) to bring air and light to the lower storeys, and in the advanced plumbing.

A restored passageway in the Palace of Minos at Knossos. Note the painting on the back wall.

All these palaces were destroyed around 1750 BCE, possibly as a result of a massive earthquake. Earthquakes and volcanoes are common in the Aegean region, but are rarely strong enough to cause such widespread destruction. Nevertheless, a little more than a century later, the volcano on the tiny island of Thera, to the north of Crete, erupted with cataclysmic results.

The Eruption of Thera

The beautiful island of Thera exploded in a tremendous eruption, dated by tree rings to around 1628 BCE. This explosion enlarged an existing caldera from earlier volcanic activity. The sea poured in and caused even more turmoil when it met the red-hot lava. A small, thriving town was buried by the ash that rained down on the south coast of the island. In 1967, the Greek archaeologist Spyridon Marinatos came upon this town, which had been wonderfully preserved. Unlike the later volcanic eruption at Pompeii, the people of Thera had had sufficient time to save themselves, but had to leave behind many of their possessions. The vibrant wall paintings are only the most famous legacy left to us by this culture. Remarkably, this devastating eruption seems to have had little long-term effect on Minoan culture on Crete, only about 120 km away.

EXTERNAL FORCES

The new palaces were rebuilt almost immediately after their destruction in 1750 BCE. They were virtually identical to those that had been destroyed, with no sign of major changes to their structure or decoration, and were as large and as fine as ever. Minoan life continued for another 250 years, reaching new heights of wealth and vigour. Then, around 1490 BCE, the palaces were destroyed again — except for the one at Knossos. This time, the cause was probably not a natural disaster. It might have had something to do with the Mycenaean warriors who began to arrive on Crete.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that Mycenaean lords took over the rule of Crete, with Knossos as their administrative centre, ca. 1500 BCE. The most convincing evidence for this is the use of a new language, which we call Linear B, that was being written on clay tablets to keep track of palace goods. This form of writing was derived from Linear A (the Minoan script), but recorded the language of the early Greek-speaking Mycenaeans, not the

non-Greek language of the Minoans. This discovery was made when a young Englishman, Michael Ventris, deciphered Linear B in 1952.

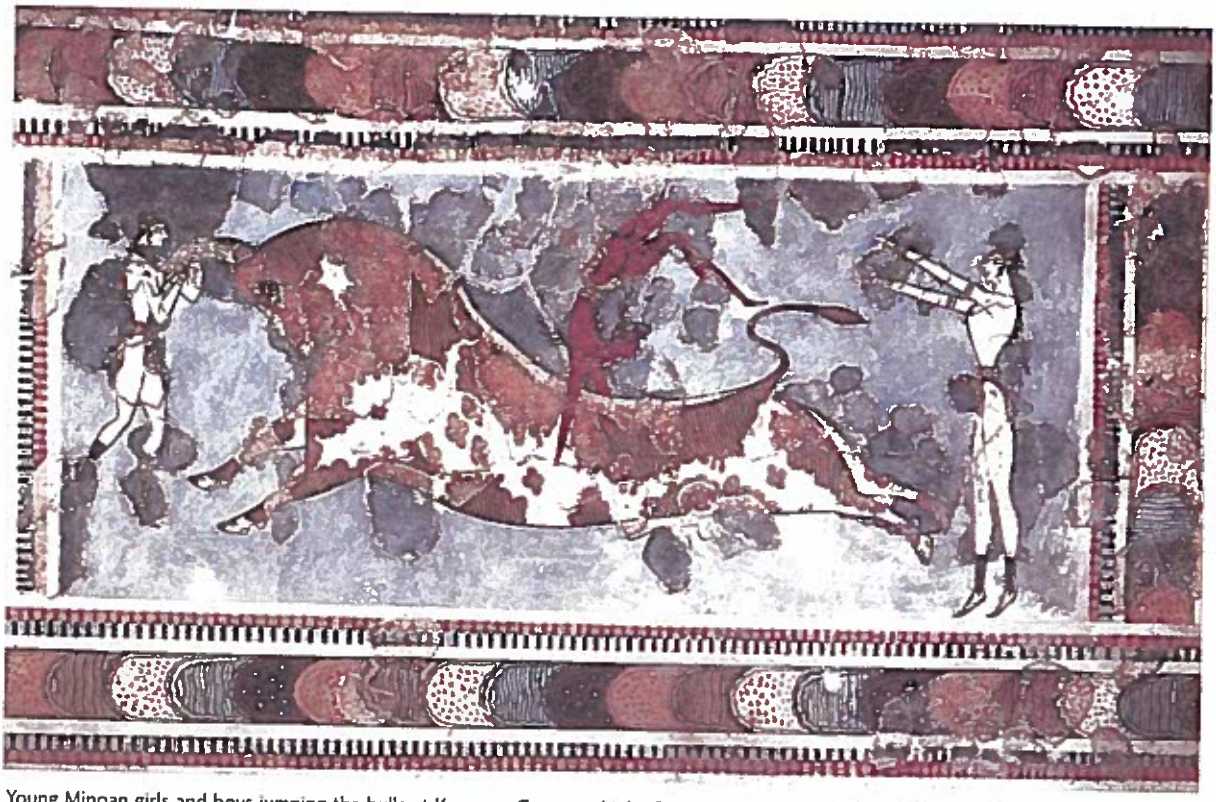
How and why the Mycenaeans invaded Crete is impossible to say. The Minoans might have been weakened by fighting among themselves, or perhaps by natural disasters. Whatever the cause, they could not hold back the newcomers. The palace at Knossos seems to have been taken intact and for about 80 years served as a main administrative centre. Many distinctive features of Minoan culture disappeared, such as buildings with central courts, art forms depicting scenes from nature, finely carved stone vases, and the Linear A script. Graves near Knossos contain the bodies and weapons of some of these new overlords. Eventually, the palace at Knossos was also destroyed, this time by a great fire. Whether the fire was an accident or was caused by an attack is not known, but the Mycenaean lords did not rebuild Knossos. Life on the island began reverting to its simpler past, and the finest accomplishments of the Minoans quietly disappeared.

The Myth of the Minotaur

Later Greeks had several myths about the Minoans, some of which may hold a kernel of truth. The most famous is the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. The wife of King Minos of Knossos gave birth to a monster called the Minotaur, who was half man and half bull. The bloodthirsty Minotaur was imprisoned in a maze-like structure built by Daedalus, the court inventor. The Greeks called this the Labyrinth. Since the Minotaur's diet included young unmarried men and women, every year King Minos forced the people of Athens to select 14 of its finest youth as a sacrifice. This horrific practice would have continued annually but for the young hero, Theseus, who volunteered to go to Knossos as part of the sacrifice. With the help of King Minos's daughter, Ariadne, Theseus killed the Minotaur, found his way out of the Labyrinth by following a string he trailed behind himself, and saved the youth of Athens.

A bronze figure of the mythical Minotaur, half man, half bull, and said to have lived in the Labyrinth at the palace of King Minos at Knossos.

This tale of human sacrifice seems out of character for the Minoans, who loved to show peaceful scenes of nature in their art. Nevertheless, in a few of the wall paintings and seal stones preserved at Knossos there are depictions of what looks like a very dangerous sport or ritual. Young men and women are shown leaping over the backs and long, pointed horns of charging bulls.



Young Minoan girls and boys jumping the bulls at Knossos. Can you think of any modern day activities similar to this?

Sometimes these acrobats are successful but some are gored and severely injured. Perhaps there is an echo of the Minotaur myth in these scenes. This idea is strengthened by the fact that the palace of Knossos itself could well be compared to a maze, given its complex plan of rooms and corridors.

Review...Recall...Reflect

1. How did the introduction of bronze change Minoan society?
2. Describe the Middle Minoan period.
3. What explanations have been suggested to account for the decline of the Minoan civilization?

THE EARLIEST GREEKS: THE MYCENAEANS

Mainland Greece developed in the same way as Crete, and at about the same pace, down to around 2000 BCE. Neolithic farming villages were scattered in the narrow valleys of Greece from ca. 6500 BCE to 3000 BCE. Then, as elsewhere around the Aegean, bronze came into common use, people learned to exploit natural resources more effectively, contacts with other regions increased, and life slowly changed. A new era began, now called the Early Helladic period, to distinguish this culture from the Early Minoan. Archaeologists have excavated several large, carefully planned houses that show the increased wealth of the Early Helladic people at this time. Then, toward the end

of the third millennium, development was interrupted by episodes of destruction and signs of depopulation, a pattern widely found around the eastern Mediterranean, including Crete. Why this happened is not well known, but in mainland Greece, one cause might have been invasions of various peoples that began some time after ca. 2300 BCE. By ca. 2000 BCE, most vestiges of the prosperous Early Helladic culture were gone and a simpler, less wealthy farming-herding culture (called Middle Helladic) had taken its place. Meanwhile, in sharp contrast to mainland Greece, the Minoans on Crete had recovered from their late third-millennium disasters and begun reaching new heights of prosperity, including the construction of huge palaces for their monarchs.

There is no evidence that the invaders of mainland Greece at the end of the third millennium spoke Greek. The Greek language might have developed after their arrival as the language of the invaders mixed with that of the indigenous peoples. What we do know is that the Mycenaeans, the descendants of these Middle Helladic peoples, did speak an early form of Greek.

TIME FRAMES
THE BRONZE AGE IN MAINLAND GREECE

Early Helladic ca. 3000–2000 BCE
Middle Helladic ca. 2000–1680 BCE
Mycenaean ca. 1680–1060 BCE
Sub-Mycenaean ca. 1060–1025 BCE

During the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries BCE (1700–1500 BCE), a surprising change occurred in Greece, or so it seems from the evidence first revealed by archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890). Powerful and wealthy chiefdoms sprang up and consolidated control of the small farming villages of the previous few centuries. What caused this rapid and important transformation is still not well understood. Most archaeologists now call this new culture Mycenaean, after its largest political centre, Mycenae. By the fourteenth century BCE, these chiefdoms had been further transformed into well-defined states ruled by kings with administrative centres (in palaces), a writing system for record keeping, and state institutions including a state religion.

The Mycenaeans were remarkable builders. To construct these burial places, called *tholos* tombs, stones weighing as much as 100 t had to be moved into place. Later Greeks believed that only the legendary one-eyed giants called the Cyclopes could have lifted these stones.

Schliemann did not know what he had found when he uncovered the fabulously wealthy graves at Mycenae in the fall of 1876. He thought he had discovered the burials of King Agamemnon and his family. He then declared that the epic poems of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, were based in history. The two poems describe the adventures of Greek heroes who fought in the Trojan War around 1200 BCE, about 450 years before Homer's own time. Agamemnon of Mycenae, the leader of the Greek army at Troy, returned home from the war successfully, only to be murdered by his wife Clytemnestra.

http://www.mcgrawhill.ca/links/echoes

Go to the site above to find out more about Mycenaean civilization.

The Legend of the Trojan War

> Sing of the building of the horse of wood, which Epeius made with Athena's help, the horse which once Odysseus led up into the citadel as a thing of guile, when he had filled it with the men who sacked Troy.
>
> Homer *Odyssey* VIII 492–495

The Trojan War itself, despite Homer's long descriptions, is still a vaguely understood event in Mycenaean history, if it was an event at all, and not pure legend. Excavations at Troy show that a city there was destroyed in a battle ca. 1240 BCE. At that time, the city was really just a fortified town, only 2 ha in area, with a rather poor standard of living. No wonder some scholars have suggested that the Trojan War was merely a dispute over fishing rights or control over shipping, and not the great conflict of West versus East, as later Greeks believed.

Schliemann could not have known that the graves he had found actually belonged to a royal family of Mycenae, which predated the legendary Trojan War by 300–400 years. The wonderful gold funeral masks, inlaid bronze daggers, and other exquisite objects of gold, silver, ivory, and faience are stunning testimony of a wealthy and powerful royalty or nobility living in Greece ca. 1650–1550 BCE.

Mycenaean rulers were similar to feudal lords, each governing his own wide area of central or southern Greece from a well-fortified palace. All of them might have owed some allegiance to the king of Mycenae. Indications from the tombs and the walls at Mycenae certainly point to it being the most powerful of the Mycenaean states. The wealth of these kings probably came from trade, particularly in metals like gold or tin. We know from the Linear

Scripts & Symbols

λ μ ν ο π θ υ ρ σ τ υ ϖ ω ξ ψ ζ α β χ ε δ φ γ

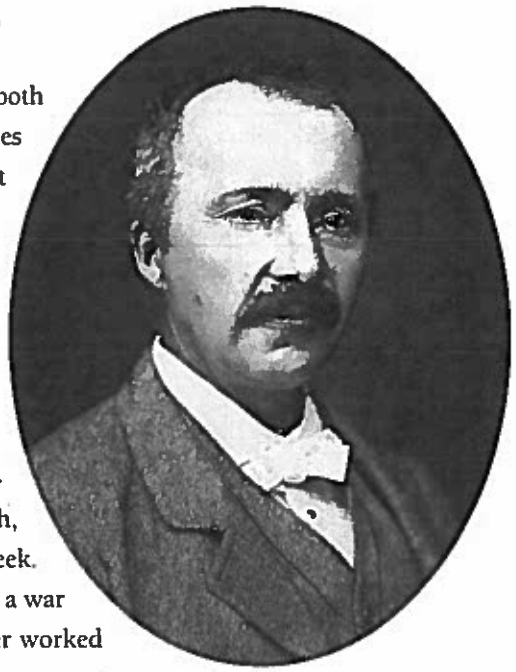
The Mycenaeans developed their script, Linear B, by borrowing from the Minoan Linear A, and making changes so that the two scripts could be distinguished. Of the 89 syllabograms (signs representing syllables composed of a consonant and a vowel) used in Linear B, 73 of them have predecessors in the Linear A script. The syllabograms in Linear B, however, were simplified and made more regular in writing. The Mycenaeans also adopted a different system for expressing numbers.

Feature Study

In the Field...

Heinrich Schliemann: Hero or Fraud?

There is a lot that can be said about Heinrich Schliemann, both good and bad. Much of what we know about him comes from his own writing, including an autobiography, at least 18 diaries, and close to 60 000 letters. Unfortunately, modern scholars have found many irregularities in Schliemann's writings, some trivial embellishments, but many outright lies.



Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890)

After leaving home at age 14, Heinrich Schliemann first apprenticed as a grocer, but soon left to work in Amsterdam and St. Petersburg. He had an amazing facility with languages and became fluent in Dutch, English, French, Russian, and both ancient and modern Greek. Schliemann worked as a trader and a banker, and also as a war profiteer, a black market dealer, and a smuggler. He later worked in the United States briefly, but left under suspicion of unscrupulous business practices. Schliemann made a fortune no matter what he did. In 1867, he retired from business, a very wealthy man.

As a child, Schliemann became fascinated with the ancient city of Troy. Later, his fascination turned to obsession, specifically with proving that the Trojan War, as told by Homer in his epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, was a historical fact. This obsession led to an interest in archaeology. Ultimately, Schliemann wanted to prove scientifically that Troy and the Trojan War were not just the stuff of myth and legend.

Unfortunately, in his zeal to prove the links between literature, history, and scientific fact, Schliemann tainted his discoveries by combining treasures from various sites to support his research. Archaeologists today agree that Schliemann did find the location of ancient Troy, but his falsifications cast a shadow over his considerable contributions to the field of archaeology.

The tinge of scandal that surrounded Schliemann and his discoveries did not end there. Schliemann smuggled much of what he found out of Turkey, and eventually donated the treasure to Germany in 1880. At the end of World War II, the Russian army confiscated the treasure and it was not seen or heard of again until 1991, when Russian art historians made it public again.

After his death on 26 December 1890, Heinrich Schliemann's body was buried in a huge ornate mausoleum he had built for himself at the entrance to the first cemetery in Athens. On the front of the mausoleum there is a large carved bust of Schliemann. The inscription above the entrance reads, in Greek, "For the hero Schliemann."

This cup is typical of the treasures Schliemann found in the tombs of Mycenae. It is solid gold, decorated with figures of young hunters chasing wild bulls. Found in a tholos tomb near Sparta, it dates to ca. 1500 BCE.

Activities

1. Turkey would like to gather all the artifacts removed from Troy and create a museum near the actual site. The Turks believe that the items would be more valuable placed in the context of their original location. Support or reject this idea. Write a response as if it were from an historian in Russia, Germany, or Turkey.

2. Explain why it is or is not important to know the details of an historian's life and work before you assess that individual's version of history.

B tablets that the palaces acted as redistribution centres, taking in commodities from the areas under their control, storing them, and then sending them (or products made at the palace workshops — pottery, weapons, etc.) to places within the kingdom and beyond.

Minoan Influence on Mycenae

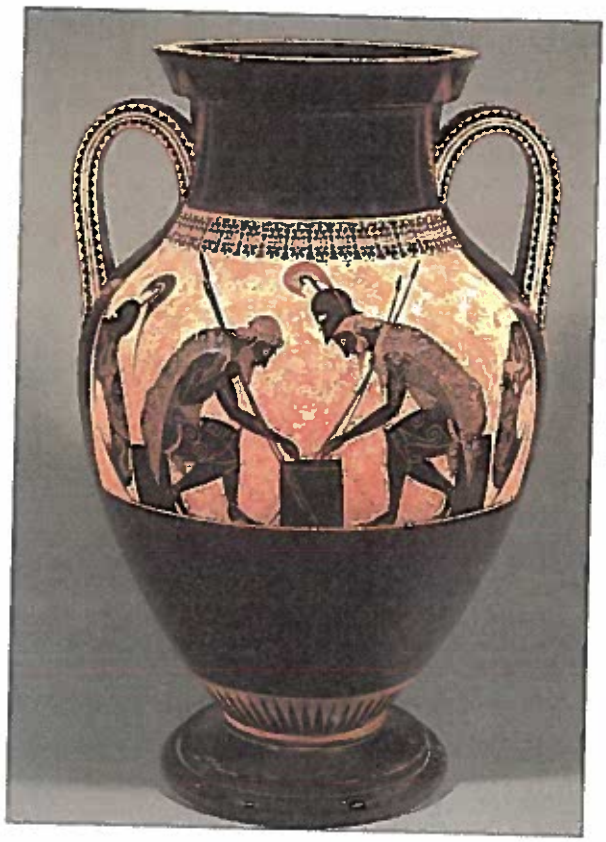
In their first two centuries, the Mycenaeans were very strongly influenced by the older Minoan civilization to the south. Minoan culture is reflected in Mycenaean wall painting, styles of dress, certain types of vases, seal carving, and even in some religious ideas. Both Minoans and Mycenaeans left clay figurines representing worshippers and human-shaped gods in their sanctuaries. Both cultures seemed to have practised animal sacrifice and the pouring of libations (small quantities of wine) into the ground, and both kept cult areas (smaller sacred areas) within the palace. The names of some of the Mycenaean gods are known from the Linear B tablets, and are the same as later Classical Greek gods, including Poseidon, Athena, and Dionysos. Zeus, the most powerful of the Greek gods, was actually thought to have been raised on the island of Crete. After the Minoan palaces were destroyed and Mycenaeans apparently took control of Crete, Minoan influence on Mycenaean culture diminished significantly.

The End of the Mycenaean World

The archaeological evidence shows that the first widespread destruction of Mycenae occurred around 1250 BCE. In order to protect water supplies, workshops, and storage areas from further destruction, the rulers extended the fortification walls. But around 1200 BCE, another series of disasters brought an end to the centralized administration, including the use of writing, and caused great depopulation in some areas. People continued to live at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Athens, but the monumental palaces fell into disuse. There was certainly a long process of decline, when the political and economic structure was weakened. Scholars continue to debate the causes of this decline, focusing on three main reasons: natural catastrophes (probably earthquakes), foreign attacks, and internal strife, or a combination of these factors. Clearly, the Mycenaean world had come to an end, leaving many impressive ruins and a deep-seated memory of a glorious past.

The Dark Ages

There was a period of recuperation lasting about 350 years, during which various groups of Greek-speaking peoples from the north settled in the Peloponnese (the Greek peninsula), established new homes, built new sanctuaries for their gods, farmed their new land, and built secure communities. But beyond vague notions of what life was like based on sparse archaeological finds, or what political changes were occurring, we know very little about this period. The collapse of the Mycenaean civilization took with it both the wealth and the writing used to keep track of that wealth. There are absolutely no written documents from this 350-year period and later Greeks did not preserve anything about this part of the past in their collective memory. For this reason, the period is called the Dark Ages of Greece. The Greeks did remember their distant, Mycenaean past as an age of heroes and supermen, like Herakles, Hector, Jason, and Achilles. Minstrels wandered from village to village, finding the houses of local nobles and singing their tales of past glory and brave adventures. In return, they would get a bed for the



A Greek black-figure vase (ca. 550 BCE) showing two heroes of the Trojan War, Achilles and Ajax, playing a board game.

night, a meal, and a small gift. By the second half of the eighth century, the handing down and constant enhancing of these tales provided Homer with the details he used to compose the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Geography and the Greek City-State

In what kind of land did the Greeks make their home? Flying into Athens today, a visitor is struck by three things: the tall grey mountains, the clear blue sky, and the deep blue sea. The mountains are everywhere, isolating one valley from another, one small cultivable area from its neighbour, and reducing the habitable land by well over half. But these mountains are more like partitions than real barriers. They trap the fall and winter rains, provide pasturage for animals, yield highly prized marble, but otherwise keep the nation separated into small communities. Many of these isolated communities quite naturally grew and developed into what the Greeks called a *polis*, an independent city-state.

While the mountains hindered communication and transportation between city-states, the sea was a special blessing — a vast blue highway linking all parts of the country. This highway, however, extended well beyond the bounds of the Greek nation, stretching hundreds of kilometres in all directions to join the Greeks to all the other nations of the Mediterranean. Since at least 7000 BCE, geography has forced the people of Greece to become fine sailors. Greek sailors brought home ideas and wealth from abroad and this gave their culture a special advantage in antiquity.

THE ARCHAIC PERIOD

Several significant developments mark the end of the Dark Ages in Greece and point to a great new culture. First was the appearance of a new national literature, epitomized by Homer's work. This not only provided Greeks with a glorious past, whether real or imagined, but also gave them a common view of their gods, almost like a national religion. Second was the resurgence of trade as the Greeks again regularly plied the waters beyond the Aegean Sea. Their first destinations were in the eastern Mediterranean, probably to exchange food or metal for manufactured goods. But more important than the objects they bought were the skills and ideas they soon acquired: shipbuilding and metal-working techniques, better knowledge of geography and navigation, artistic and religious ideas, and not least,

an alphabet. The alphabet we use today for English and many other languages came from the Greeks by way of the Romans. The Greeks themselves learned it from the Phoenicians, a seafaring people who lived in the region of present-day Lebanon. The new script had only 27 letters, and was easy enough for almost anyone to learn.

Soon after their voyages to the east began, the Greeks also began sailing westward, establishing contacts and settlements in Italy. They now had access to the iron and other metals found to the north of Rome, where a people known as the Etruscans were beginning to flourish. This led to the third development, colonization. Trading expeditions soon brought news to Greeks at home about the rich agricultural lands in Italy, Sicily, and other locations on the coasts of the Mediterranean. Since pressures to find better land were building in Greece, the trickle of groups emigrating from the Aegean soon became a flood. Hundreds of new Greek settlements were established abroad over a 200-year period, making much of the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts an extension of the Greek homeland. While these settlements are often called colonies, for the most part, they were new, independent Greek city-states.

A fourth development, though minor at first, later became more important. The first Olympic Games in honour of the god Zeus were held in 776 BCE. This is the first firm date we have in Greek history, the starting point from which later Greeks marked their own past. The Olympic festival was one of four Panhellenic ("all Greece") games that drew competitors and spectators from every corner of the Greek world. Since the prizes at these prestigious festivals were treasured crowns of sacred tree branches, they were called Crown Games. There were some 300 other local athletic games around Greece where winners received very valuable rewards. These were called Prize Games. The Olympic Games continued until 393 CE when the Roman emperor Theodosius I, a Christian, ordered all pagan sanctuaries closed.

Colonization

Towns in Greece wanting to establish new settlements abroad often consulted the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, a sacred place where priestesses or priests could answer questions put to the god about the new territory (or anything else). Then with the oracle's blessing, a group of several hundred men equipped with ships and all the tools and equipment they would need (at great expense) and promises of further help, would sail away in excitement and anticipation. Whether women and children went on these expeditions or came later, we do not know. We do know that many Greek men took native wives in their new homes, but many more probably brought their Greek wives with them.

The Panhellenic Games

Games	Site	Frequency	God	Crown
Olympic	Olympia	every 4 years	Zeus	olive wreath
Pythia	Delphi	every 4 years	Apollo	laurel wreath
Isthmian	Isthmia	every 2 years	Poseidon	pine wreath
Nemean	Nemea	every 2 years	Zeus	wild celery wreath

The sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, where people came to consult the greatest of the Greek oracles.

Below is an inscription discovered in Cyrene, Libya, that preserves the original foundation agreement between the colonists of Cyrene and their mother city, Thera. In this case, famine was forcing the mother city to send some of its hungry citizens away. Part of the agreement reads:

Agreement of the Founders

Decided by the assembly. Since Apollo has given a spontaneous prophesy to Battus and the Theraeans ordering them to colonize Cyrene, the Theraeans resolve that Battus be sent to Libya as leader and king; that the Theraeans sail as his companions; that they sail on fair and equal terms, according to family; that one son be conscripted from each family; that those who sail be in the prime of life;

The Greek Colonies

Greek city-states were established far away from the homeland. Why were so many Greeks willing to take their chances in new territories?

and that, of the rest of the Thracians, any free man who wishes may sail. ... But he who is unwilling to sail when the city sends him shall be liable to punishment by death and his goods shall be confiscated. And he who receives or protects another, even if it be a father his son or brother, shall suffer the same penalty as the man unwilling to sail ...

Once colonists had arrived at their destination, they had to choose the best location for their new home, usually a harbour site. Besides the endless work of dividing the land, planting the first crops, and building their homes, settlers also had to contend with the native peoples whose land they were taking. The colonists of Cyrene, for example, were often helped by the native Libyans, but there were also bitter wars. In one battle, says Herodotus, the Libyans killed 7000 Greeks. The number of dead sounds unbelievably high but it points out the seriousness of the problem of conflict between Greek colonists and the natives of the lands they colonized.

Review...Recall...Reflect

1. Describe the political organization of Mycenaean society.
2. How did the Minoans influence Mycenaean culture and society?
3. List the four developments that marked Greece's emergence from the Dark Ages.

GOVERNMENT IN GREECE

The Age of Tyrants

Democracy is just one of many political systems developed by humankind to govern its communities. The Greeks were the first people to invent a formal democratic system in which citizens governed *themselves* through voting. The word democracy comes from two Greek words, *demos* meaning "the people" and *kratos* meaning "the rule" or "power." But democracy was not invented easily — it was arrived at after a long, painful process. Other systems of government had been tried and failed.

The early Greek states were usually focused around the main town in a valley area. The normal system of rule was government by a king, and each king acted as the chief judge, leading administrator, military leader, and at times, priest of the state cult (religion). These kings, however, did not have absolute power, nor was their power automatically passed on to their heirs. A king's authority was limited by the rights and powers of a small, close-knit group of aristocrats who acted as his counsellors.

During the Dark Ages, many of the kings lost some or all of their powers to other members of the local aristocracy. Arbitrary rule by aristocratic families replaced the monarchy in some Greek states. But arbitrary administration of unwritten laws was just one concern. The power held by some aristocrats and not by others provoked dissent, as did the lack of a voice in government for wealthy men of non-aristocratic background. Poorer Greeks suffered loss of land, debts, and even enslavement for debt at the hands of wealthy nobles. However, the aristocrats could keep their power as long as they continued to be the military backbone of the state. Down to the early seventh century BCE, fighting depended on

Heavily armed hoplites and their flute-boy going into battle. The detailed figures on this vase made in Corinth ca. 650 BCE are only 0.05 m high.

heavily armed individual warriors backed up by their lightly armed supporters. Only wealthy aristocrats could afford the arms and armour needed for this style of warfare.

This all changed in the period ca. 675–650 BCE, as a new style of warfare was introduced, one that depended on the unified movement of larger numbers of warriors, called *hoplites*. These were heavily armed men with large round shields, shin protectors (greaves), helmets, body armour, and spears, which they thrust rather than threw. By standing side by side, six to ten lines deep, and maintaining their places in the lines, these warriors could easily defeat the old style of fighting. Large numbers of warriors were crucial to preventing the hoplite lines from being surrounded and attacked from behind. But there simply were not enough aristocrats to fill the new battle lines. Consequently, any citizen who could afford the armour eventually came to stand shoulder to shoulder with the aristocrats. The strategic importance of these new soldiers was probably one factor that led to their demand for more political power.

People in control of a government usually do not surrender their power willingly. In the richer Greek states near the Isthmus of Corinth, a man of noble blood named Cypselus was excluded from the ruling circle of nobles at Corinth, despite his ability and great ambition. He gathered a military force composed of other discontented citizens and in 657 BCE defeated and forced the ruling clan of nobles into exile. Cypselus took control of the government and began to rule for the benefit of the middle class people who had supported him. The Greeks called such a person, one who had seized power unconstitutionally (for good or bad), a *tyrannos* or tyrant.

FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC RULE

Solon and Peisistratus

Athens avoided tyranny for many years, first, by giving in to demands for a written code of law, and second, by appointing a special magistrate called an *archon* to try to solve the continuing problems between aristocrats and common citizens. The law code, written by Draco in 620 BCE was significant because it recognized that once laws were written down, they could be criticized and changed. The archon appointed in 594 BCE was Solon, who brought in a number of economic and social reforms. These included changes in the law code that helped relieve the debt and land problems of the poor. Solon also abolished the practice of selling debtors into slavery.

Solon's political reforms were an important step on the road to democracy. The most significant reform allowed all wealthy men, aristocrat or not, to run for the highest government offices. Solon also created a new institution called the Council of 400. One hundred citizens from each of the four traditional tribes of Athens were elected annually and met

regularly to prepare legislation to be voted on by the entire Citizen Assembly. The Council probably also acted as a court of appeal for judgments of the archons.

Many adults living in Athens, or in any Greek *polis* for that matter, still had no political power at all. This included women, since citizenship ultimately derived from the ability to fight in the army; the large slave population, which had no personal rights whatsoever; and foreigners, who rarely acquired citizenship because normally it was only bestowed by birth.

One man who eventually did become tyrant of Athens was Peisistratus, a noble famous for his generalship, and very ambitious. He actually made three tries for tyrant's rule, interspersed with periods of exile. On the second try (ca. 555 BCE), he boldly decided to have a handsome woman named Phye dress up like the goddess Athena, with armour and spear, and ride through the streets of Athens in a chariot proclaiming that she, the goddess herself, had come to restore Peisistratus to power! On his third attempt (ca. 546 BCE), Peisistratus defeated his opponents in battle and took the city. He ruled until his death in 527 BCE, when power was handed over to his son, Hippias.

Cleisthenes Establishes Democracy

Hippias continued the tyranny in Athens after his father's death, but eventually lost support. In 510 BCE, the army of Sparta, Athens's most powerful adversary, besieged Athens and forced an end to the tyranny of Hippias. He and his family surrendered and were forced into exile and the tyranny ended. Athens again had to find new political solutions to her problems of government.

The solution this time was proposed by Cleisthenes, a member of another noble family, in 508–507 BCE. Cleisthenes's novel approach set aside the ancient division of Athenian citizens into four tribes based on clan relationships and created an equitable division of citizens into ten new tribes, each with members from all parts of the city-state. Cleisthenes also replaced the old Council of 400 with a new Council of 500, with 50 members elected from each tribe. Not only did these 50 members take part in meetings of the full Council, for one tenth of the year, they also acted as the executive committee of the Council. Each tribe also elected a general (*strategos*) who would lead the city in all its military affairs. By 487 BCE, it was recognized that only the generals had to be highly qualified elected officials. In truly democratic fashion, the other offices came to be filled by drawing lots every year. Any fit citizen could now hold these high offices.

Another novel measure was introduced in these democratic reforms — the practice called ostracism. This measure was meant to rid Athens of any citizen who might want to become a tyrant. Ostracism allowed the city to send any citizen and his family into exile for a period of ten years. Every year around

These pieces of pottery are ostraka. They were used to decide whether a person should be banished from Athens. Can you read any of the names of the people being judged?

Athenian Democracy

Government Institution	Eligibility	Duties
Before Solon		
Magistrates (elected annually):		
basileus	aristocrats	chief religious officer
polemarch	aristocrats	chief army officer
archon	aristocrats	chief civil administrator and judge
six *thesmothetai*	aristocrats	lesser judges
Council (*Areopagus*)	ex-magistrates	advised *archons*, acted as "guardians of the law," passed legislation, served as criminal court
Assembly	all male citizens	approved motions of war
Solon's Reforms		
Magistrates (elected annually):	based on wealth, not birth	
basileus		chief religious officer
polemarch		chief army officer
archon		chief civil administrator and judge
six *thesmothetai*		lesser judges
Council (*Areopagus*)	ex-magistrates	advised *archons*, acted as "guardians of the law," passed legislation, served as criminal court
Council of 400 (elected annually)	members of top three classes based on wealth	deliberated and proposed legislation, acted as court of appeal
Assembly	all male citizens	approved motions of war, approved legislation
Cleisthenes's Reforms and Later		
Magistrates (chosen annually by lots)	all male citizens over 30 years of age	
basileus		chief religious officer
polemarch		chief army officer
archon		chief civil administrator and judge
six *thesmothetai*		lesser judges
Council (*Areopagus*)	ex-magistrates	acted as criminal court
Council of 500 (elected annually)	all male citizens over 30 years of age	administered government boards, proposed legislation, oversaw finances, acted as law court
Assembly	all male citizens over 18 years of age	elected generals (*strategoi*), debated and passed legislation, acted as treason court, approved ostracism votes

January (the middle of the Athenian calendar year), the Assembly voted on whether an ostracism was needed that year. For the ostracism procedure, a minimum of 6000 votes needed to be cast, and the person whose name appeared most often on the *ostraka* (pieces of broken pottery used as ballots) was sent into exile. The first ostracism occurred in 487 BCE and the last was held 70 years later.

Slaves in Greek Society

For those who had once been free, slavery was generally regarded as a wretched, degrading state. Conditions varied greatly — household slaves of the wealthy were the best off, while leased slaves working in state mines were probably the worst. In any case, slavery was common and totally accepted throughout the Greek world. Legally, slaves were simply property; they might be treated humanely or cruelly, depending on their owners. At the master's discretion, they were allowed to marry, have a home, and keep their children. Slaves were certainly an important part of the economy, filling virtually every occupation except government and military positions.

Athens was a major slave-owning state, obtaining new slaves in markets where foreign war captives or Greeks captured by pirates were for sale. Educated guesses suggest no more than one third (60 000 to 80 000) of the total population of Attica (greater Athens) in the fifth century BCE were slaves, of which the majority worked in manufacturing. For example, we learn from the fourth-century BCE orator Demosthenes that his father left him an estate that included a knife- and sword-making workshop with 32 skilled slaves, and a couch-frame-making workshop with 20 slaves. According to Thucydides, more than 20 000 slaves, of whom the majority were crafts workers, deserted Athens during the darkest part of the Peloponnesian War (412–404 BCE).

In 414 BCE, Cephisodorus, a *metic* (foreign resident) from Piraeus, had his 16 confiscated slaves sold for prices ranging from 72 drachmas for a boy, to 301 drachmas for a skilled man (1 drachma was a day's wage for a skilled worker at this time). These slaves included five Thracians, three Carians, two Syrians, two Illyrians, and one each from Colchis, Scythia, Lydia, and Malta.

Inscriptions in Athens dating between 349 and 320 BCE list 135 slaves (79 males, 56 females) who received their freedom (manumission). The men, where known, paid an average of 178 drachmas to be freed, while the women paid 180 drachmas on average. The occupations of these slaves were also given:

	Men	Women
Farmworkers	12	0
Crafts	26	48
Transport	10	0
Retail	21	7
Miscellaneous	10	1

Among the men in crafts, there was a bronzesmith, an ironworker, three goldsmiths, nine leather cutters, a pail maker, a glue boiler, and a sofa maker. Of the 48 women in crafts, 40 were wool workers. Retail workers included sellers of bread, pickled meats, incense, sesame seeds, fish, wool, rope, and cooked foods. Slaves did virtually every form of work needed for life to go on normally in Athens.

Lycurgus and Spartan Society

Of the more than 300 Greek city-states, Athens and Sparta were the most powerful. However, that is where any similarity between these two rivals ends. Spartans were foremost known as warriors, and despite their relatively small numbers, perhaps

5000 full Spartan warriors in good times, they enjoyed a position of leadership in Greece for some three centuries.

When other city-states were suffering from lack of land in the eighth century BCE and sending excess population overseas to settle, the Spartans took a different course. In a long war, Sparta defeated its neighbours to the west and thereby captured more needed territory. The conquered people joined the large and sometimes rebellious population of Spartan *helots*, the state slaves who worked the land.

The political, social, and military systems of Sparta were attributed in antiquity to one great legislator named Lycurgus. So much is credited to Lycurgus, but so little is known, that he has become an almost mythic figure. He may have lived in the early seventh century BCE and is supposed to have laid down the tough military training program that allowed Sparta to produce the best soldiers in the Greek world. At the same time, he proposed a constitution that guaranteed all Spartan citizens — meaning only adult males born to citizen parents — a minimum level of political equality. There were still rich and poor Spartans, aristocrats and ordinary people, but all who were "equals" (*homoioi*) could vote in the Assembly, have a share of Spartan land, and benefit from the work of the enslaved helots.

The Past at Play

A woman of royal blood from Sparta (Athens's chief rival city-state), named Kyniska, was the first woman to win a prize at the ancient Olympic Games. Married women could be neither competitors nor spectators at the Olympics: they were banned from Olympia during the games on pain of death. But Kyniska, who owned a four-horse chariot team, entered it and won twice (ca. 396 and 392 BCE). Though she was never able to see her team win, nor to accept the wreath in person, she saw to it that a statue of herself was erected at Olympia, like a true winner.

Sheltered family life for Spartan citizen boys ended at the age of seven when military training and rugged barracks life began. Spartiate boys learned to

Spartan Government

Government institution	Eligibility	Duties
kings (two, for life)	the two royal families	chief magistrates, army leaders
Assembly (no limit to numbers)	all Spartiate citizens over 30 years of age	approved legislation, elected Ephors and Elders
Ephorate (five Ephors elected annually)	Elders elected by the Assembly	acted as magistrates and judges, presided over Council and Assembly, supervised the state education system
Council of Elders (28 male citizens, elected for life)	aristocrats over 60 years of age, elected by the Assembly	advised kings, proposed legislation, acted as judges

withstand pain without complaint, be unquestioningly obedient to leaders, cunning when necessary, and above all, never to admit defeat. Though military service continued, only at age 30 did Spartan men become full citizens, able to vote in the Assembly, hold political office, marry, have a house, and receive an estate worked by helots.

The Spartan government was unusual in that it had two kings who ruled equally. This system provided a strong check on the powers of the monarchy since one king could oppose the other. Advising the kings was a Council of Elders, 28 men over the age of 60 who belonged to the Spartan aristocracy. Only this body could present legislation to the Assembly for approval. The Assembly could not initiate legislation, nor could it even discuss the legislation. The Council of Elders would explain the legislation to the Assembly and even give opposing views, but then the Assembly had to vote in favour or against it. Its decision was final. As a kind of advocate for the common citizens, a new institution, the *Ephorate*, was created; it soon took a leading role in running Spartan affairs. The Ephorate consisted of five men called *Ephors* who were elected by the Assembly to hold office for one year. The Ephors presided over the Council and Assembly, but were not part of either of those bodies.

The Spartan system of government was conservative in order to prevent revolt by the helots. Babies who were not healthy were abandoned at birth. Boys were sometimes brutally beaten and whipped. Interestingly though, Spartan women enjoyed more freedom and privileges than women anywhere else in Greece. As girls, they were encouraged to take part in sports to develop healthy bodies so they could have healthy children. They were given training in music and dance, like the boys, and when they reached adulthood, had both property and marriage rights. Other Greeks admired Spartan women, both for their independence and because they were said to be the most beautiful in all Greece.

THE PERSIAN WARS: GREECE UNITES IN CONFLICT

The Greeks took longer to recover from the serious political and economic turmoil at the end of the second millennium than their Near Eastern neighbours the Assyrians, Phoenicians, Babylonians, and Egyptians, all of whom quickly began accumulating wealth and territory. After centuries of great wars, it was the Persians, along with their close neighbours, the Medes, who emerged as the most powerful empire. By the sixth century BCE, the Persians threatened the Greek homeland itself. Somehow, the fiercely independent Greek city-states needed to find a way to cooperate to beat back the menace from the east.

Compared with the huge empires of the Near East, particularly Persia, Greek city-states were tiny. Even a coalition that included every Greek town would only equal a fraction of this eastern power. The fact that the Greek states were weakened by fighting amongst themselves and rarely agreed on anything long enough to act together, made defense against a mighty empire appear impossible. On the positive side, Greek soldiers were tough, their battle tactics and weapons inferior to none, and when they were finally ready to cooperate, they found good leaders.

The empire of the Persians and Medes had expanded northward toward the eastern Greek (or Ionian) cities in the early sixth century BCE, but was stopped by the wealthy power of the Lydians in west-central Asia Minor. While the Lydians acted as a buffer, keeping the Medes and Persians away from the Aegean for another 40 years, eventually the

Lydians themselves took over the eastern Greek cities, which were unable to unite even to resist a foreign invader. King Croesus of Lydia, for example, was famed for his generosity to Greek sanctuaries:

> Croesus now attempted to win the favour of the Delphian Apollo by a magnificent sacrifice. ... he melted down an enormous quantity of gold into one hundred and seventeen ingots about eighteen inches long, nine inches wide, and three inches thick; four of the ingots were of refined gold weighing approximately a hundred and forty-two pounds each; the rest were alloyed and weighed about a hundred and fourteen pounds. He also caused the image of a lion to be made of refined gold, in weight some five hundred and seventy pounds.
>
> Herodotus *Histories* 1.50–51

The Persian Wars

The Persian Wars were perhaps the only cause that forced the Greek city-states to unite and fight a common enemy. What factors made it so difficult for the Greek city-states to work together?

In 559 BCE, a great king and general rose to the throne of Persia — Cyrus the Great. Cyrus gained power over the Medes as well, and continued to expand the Persian Empire, which already stretched across Asia in the east to the shores of the Mediterranean in the west. A chance to expand further occurred when Croesus of Lydia decided to attack Cyrus across the old boundary between their empires about 546 BCE. We are told that the oracle at Delphi proclaimed that if Croesus crossed the Halys River, he would destroy a mighty empire. Little did Croesus know that it would be his own!

The fall of Sardis, capital of Lydia, brought the Ionian Greek states face to face with the "barbarian" Persians. Unable to secure favourable peace terms, the Greeks tried to fight, but again were unable to cooperate among themselves long enough to achieve any success. The Ionian states then surrendered to the Persians and accepted a fate that meant a greater loss of freedom and forced service in the Persian army. When the Greek governor of Miletus, Aristagoras, finally stirred up a revolt among the Ionians in 499 BCE, a call for help from the Greeks across the Aegean brought only 20 warships from Athens and five from Eretria (a city to the north-east). A naval battle off Miletus in 494 BCE ended the revolt. The Persians destroyed the city, killed many of the men, and sent the rest of the population into exile.

The Battle of Marathon

In 490 BCE, Darius, now King of Persia, sent a fleet with about 20 000 soldiers to punish Athens and Eretria for helping in the Ionian Revolt. After first burning and plundering Eretria, the Persian fleet sailed south to the eastern coast of Attica where a sheltered beach and small plain provided a perfect base for the Persian army. The plain was called Marathon.

The Athenians sent a professional messenger ("all-day runner") to Sparta, 250 km away, pleading for help. He returned about four days later saying that the Spartans would only come after the full moon, still a week or more away. So the Athenian citizen army of 9000 warriors went alone to Marathon to meet the Persians. Eventually, the only help to arrive was less than a thousand soldiers from Plataea, a close neighbour to the north.

After much debate, Miltiades, one of the Athenian generals, convinced his fellow commanders to attack, and thus won the Athenians everlasting glory. The Greeks in their heavy armour charged the Persians on the run and cut them down as they fled to their ships. Herodotus says 6400 Persians were killed but only 192 Athenians. Archaeological excavation of the burial mound of the Plataean dead has yielded less than a dozen bodies, including a young boy, perhaps their piper. The Persian threat had been beaten back, but its empire was far from destroyed.

Ancient ODDITIES

Writers after Herodotus maintained that the messenger who ran to Sparta and back before the battle of Marathon was the same runner who brought the news of victory from Marathon to Athens. He is supposed to have arrived at the Council House, spoken the words, "We have won! Rejoice!" and then dropped dead. This was the inspiration for the modern marathon race created by Pierre de Coubertin for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. Herodotus, who could never resist a good story, never mentioned any of these events. So the truth is, there probably never really was an ancient Marathon run.

Thermopylae: Greek Cooperation Defeats Persia

The victory at Marathon provided the mainland Greeks with a ten-year break from further Persian attacks. Then in 480 BCE, Xerxes, the Persian king who succeeded Darius, crossed the Hellespont (the narrow strait between the Greek mainland and Asia Minor). Xerxes did this by having twin bridges constructed of boats held together by cables made of linen and papyrus as thick as a human torso! Herodotus says that the Persian infantry alone numbered 1.7 million soldiers, and that with the fleet, cavalry, and other contingents and attendants, over five million people were in the expedition. As is common with ancient writers, these figures are no doubt vastly exaggerated — Xerxes's army probably consisted of about 200 000 soldiers, still an immense force for the time.

The Greeks had done little to prepare themselves for this latest Persian attack, and many of them intended simply to accept Persian domination without resistance. Athens, at least, had used the money from a rich new strike of silver at its mines near Laurion to build a strong fleet of 200 ships, and gathered with Sparta for a congress at Corinth to plan their defence against the Persian invaders. In the end, the strategic decision was made to defend a narrow pass in central Greece called Thermopylae (the Hot Gates) through which the Persians had to pass.

A small force of 4000 soldiers led by King Leonidas of Sparta and his bodyguard of 300 was sent to hold the pass until the full Greek army arrived. This small force was backed by the Greek fleet waiting just offshore. The Spartan stand was heroic but a local Greek shepherd betrayed them by showing Xerxes a mountain path around Thermopylae. Leonidas and about a thousand soldiers who refused to escape the Persian trap died fighting bravely. The epitaph at the site where the Spartans died read, "Go tell at Sparta, thou that passest by, that here obedient to her word, we lie." The Persian army poured southward through Boeotia to Athens and took revenge on the city for its defeat at Marathon.

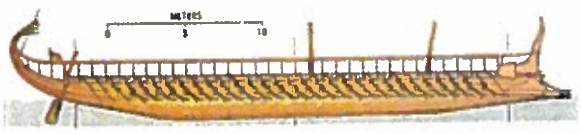
This relief sculpture shows Greeks battling Persians. The Persians are the ones wearing the baggy pants, which the Greeks thought were "womanish".

Salamis and Plataea

The combined Greek fleet of over 300 triremes (fast Greek ships with three levels of rowers) remained at Salamis, a large island just off the coast of Attica to the west of Athens. After much delay, about 600 Persian ships were enticed into the straits where they were attacked by the swift, well-crewed Greek ships. Xerxes could only watch in despair from his throne set high on a hill above the action. Aeschylus, a Greek playwright who probably fought at Salamis, puts these words into the mouth of a Persian messenger in one of his plays:

> First, then, the torrent of our Persian fleet bore up; but when the press of shipping jammed there in the strait, then none could help another, but our ships fouled each other with their rams, and sheared away each other's banks of oars. But the Greek ships, skillfully handled, kept the outer station, and struck in; till hulls rolled over, and the sea itself was hidden, strewn with their wreckage, dyed with blood of men. The dead lay thick on all the reefs and beaches, and flight broke out, all order lost; and all our eastern ships rowed hard to get away.

Aeschylus *The Persians* 412–423



Swift Greek triremes like this won the battle at Salamis in 480 BCE.

The battle was a severe loss for the Persians. Xerxes himself escaped from Greece but he left behind his army under the general Mardonius.

In the new year (479 BCE), Mardonius took up a position on the southern edge of the Boeotian plain near the town of Plataea. Here, the united army of the Greek city-states, led by the Spartans, met the barbarians in all-out battle. The Greeks were victorious. Mardonius was killed, a vast amount of Persian wealth and luxury goods was captured, and the remnants of the great invasion force hastily retreated from Greece. After Plataea, the Greek navy attacked the Persians again in Asia Minor and freed the Ionian Greeks.

Review...Recall...Reflect

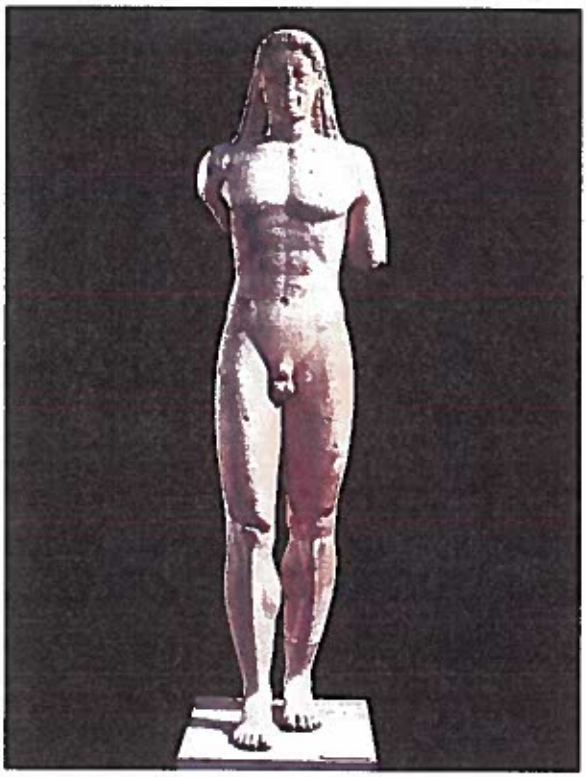
1. Explain the relationship between warfare and the development of democracy in Greece.
2. Describe the political reforms introduced by Solon and Cleisthenes.
3. What was the greatest challenge faced by the Greeks in preparing for the Persian invasion? What were the keys to their successful defence?

EARLY GREEK ART: CROSS-CULTURAL INFLUENCES

The great wars against Persia highlight the differences between the civilization developing in Greece and the older civilizations of the East. The Greeks beat back the Eastern threat to their freedom and won the opportunity to develop their own culture, accepting outside influences only if they appealed to Greek taste. This paid great dividends in the coming centuries, as the greatest Greek artists, writers, philosophers, and scientists began to explore their world in new ways and to new heights. But the Greeks were not ready to move forward until after they had absorbed many important ideas and influences from the East, Egypt, and other regions during the eighth and seventh centuries BCE. At this earlier time, Greek representational

art (art that attempts to depict the world as it appears), for example, was so far behind that of the East that it was easily influenced by forms of Eastern art — scenes of people, animals, and mythical creatures like griffins and sphinxes. This period in Greek art is actually called Orientalizing because of the strong Eastern influence.

For Greek art, the opening up of Egypt to Greek merchants and travellers was very important. In Egypt, the Greeks observed monumental statues carved in fine, hard stone and soon imitated these in the finest white marble of their homeland. Greek architects learned how to build great temples in stone after viewing the marvels of Karnak, Luxor, and Memphis. Greek artists began to appreciate the fine skills of drawing and the use of colour after seeing wall paintings adorning buildings and tombs all along the Nile. Likewise, metal-working skills, glass making, and other important crafts were picked up very quickly and brought back to Greece. In every case, the Greeks were not simply imitators. They did not merely



A life-size Greek kouros sculpture, ca. 540 BCE. The word "kouros" means male youth. Does this remind you of any sculpture you have seen earlier?

The enormous temple of Artemis at Ephesus was built and rebuilt from the 6th to the 4th centuries BCE. At least twice the size of the Parthenon, Ephesus had some 110 columns.

Current Research and Interpretations

Scholars today are still addressing important gaps in our understanding of the 2000 years of Bronze Age history. We still do not know how the Minoans ruled themselves or what bull-leaping really meant to them. As Greeks emerged from the Dark Ages, was it Phoenician trading in Greece or Greeks visiting Phoenicia that first opened doors to the East? Scholars still know very little about Homer, the Spartan Lycurgus, the poetess Sappho, or Thales of Miletus.

acquire skills, they also adapted them and applied them to their own needs and tastes. This is one of the keys to the greatness of Greek art and civilization.

We can see some of the great strides made in Greek art from the Dark Ages to the Persian Wars by looking at temple architecture. Temples changed from modest wood and clay "houses" for cult statues to grand marble showcases for Greek treasures, such as the temple of Artemis at Ephesus. This sanctuary was one of the largest in all the Greek world — the temple alone occupied an area almost the size of a football field — and was home to hundreds of marble sculptures of people, gods, and animals.

Sculpture was transformed from rather abstract figurines in bronze or clay to natural-looking, life-size statues in marble, bronze, or even a combination of gold and ivory. Vase painting also shows a similar transformation, changing from little black stickfigures to wonderfully fluid, idealized characters against a black, red, or white background.

Greek philosophy and science also took their first tentative steps during the Archaic Period. Thinkers from Miletus, like the astronomer Thales, were the first to ask, "How did the world originate?" and not be satisfied with the answer, "The gods created it." They wanted to know exactly how the Earth was formed and from what. They proposed theories about the world's origin, suggesting that all things had been formed from basic elements such as moisture or air or fire, through various fundamental processes, like condensation and vaporization. These ideas are no longer accepted, but it is significant that the development of philosophy (from the Greek *phileo*, "to love," and *sophia*, "wisdom") and a type of systematic science began in Greece.

Greek literature passed from the age of epic poems like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer to an age of lyric poetry in dozens of forms. Drinking songs, war songs, poems sung by choruses or by a single person, love poems, and poems in praise of athletic victories are just a few of the new themes that appeared.

One of the lyric poets was a woman named Sappho of Lesbos, who was admired by some Greeks as much as Homer. This is remarkable, given women's generally lowly status in Greek society. Even those belonging to wealthier citizen families enjoyed few freedoms; they were married to men chosen for them, had no right to vote or possess property, and could not go to public places unaccompanied.

Besides lyric poetry, the very first dramatic plays were written in Athens just before the Persian Wars. They were performed in honour of the god Dionysos, god of wine and fertility.

History Continues to Unfold

By the end of the fifth century BCE, the Greeks were poised to enter their greatest adventure yet. The Persian threat had been beaten back and the way was clear for the Athenians to build their empire and create unprecedented heights of cultural and political achievement. The level of civilization to come in the Classical Period of Greek history would be looked back on by people and empires to come as a golden age.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have seen:

- how interaction between Greece and other societies sometimes led to conflict and other times led to cultural change
- that several factors including the introduction of bronze, development of writing, and the evolution of democratic government contributed to change in ancient Greece
- the critical role played by individuals such as Solon, Cleisthenes, and Herodotus in Greek history
- that over time the ancient Greeks adopted several different forms of leadership

Reviewing the Significance of Key People, Concepts, and Events (Knowledge/Understanding)

1. Understanding the early history of ancient Greece requires a knowledge of the following people, concepts, and events, and an awareness of their significance in the development of the Greek city-states. In your notes, identify and explain the historical significance of three from each column.

People	*Concepts/Places*	*Events*
Minoans	Crete	Olympic Games
Herodotus	Knossos	Battle of Marathon
Homer	*Iliad* and *Odyssey*	Battle of Salamis
Solon	Linear A script	Battle of Thermopylae
Sappho	Mycenae	

2. List the four developments in Greek society and culture between 2100 BCE and 500 BCE that you believe were the most significant in leading to a complex, advanced civilization.

3. How did the Persian invasions contribute to advances in Greek art, architecture, literature, and philosophy?

Doing History: Thinking About the Past (Thinking/Inquiry)

1. Throughout history there have been several key developments in technology that have led to profound changes in a society. Explain why the introduction of bronze to Crete should be considered one of these major changes in Greek history.

Connecting to the *World History Handbook*: Once you have completed your answer, transfer the main ideas to the graphic organizer "Change in History: Technological Developments" in your *World History Handbook*.

2. Was the development of Athenian democracy the product of historical trends and events or the result of the work of a few brilliant individuals? Explain your answer in a clearly argued and well-supported paragraph.

Applying Your Learning (Application)

1. Using a Venn diagram, compare the similarities and differences between Athenian democracy and Canada's current political system. Based on your comparison, do you feel the Athenian system of democracy could work for a country like Canada or is it limited to use in city-states? Explain your answer.

   Connecting to the *World History Handbook*: Once you have completed your Venn diagram, transfer some of the most important aspects of Athenian democracy to the graphic organizer "Political Organization" in your *World History Handbook*.

2. Create a diorama that demonstrates the reaction of Greek artists to their exposure to external influences. Through research, locate examples of Egyptian sculpture and Greek sculpture from the Archaic Period to about 500 BCE. Arrange the pictures of Egyptian and Greek sculpture in such a way as to show a progression in Greek art.

Communicating Your Learning (Communication)

1. Select either Athens or Sparta to defend in a debate over which had the superior political and social organization. Prepare three arguments you can use in the debate.

2. Write a front-page news article reporting on the second Persian invasion of Greece under Xerxes in 480 BCE. Your news article should have a headline, a concise report on the events unfolding at the time, and some background information to explain the factors that influenced the relationship between the Greeks and the Persians, dating back to 499 BCE.

CHAPTER FOUR

Classical Greece

Chapter Expectations

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- *explain how Greek culture and the political empire of Philip and Alexander came to dominate much of the ancient world*
- *identify the major changes in history defined by the Classical Moment and the Hellenistic Age*
- *demonstrate an understanding of how Alexander's military genius and political leadership formed the basis of his authority*
- *describe the role of women in ancient Greek society*

In Greek, this figure is called Nike, victory. She was very popular in both Greek and Roman art, where she was Victoria. This version (ca. 150 BCE) was originally on a huge sculpture of the prow of a ship, as a naval victory monument.

Change in a society occurs at different rates. Sometimes it is so rapid and total that we call it revolutionary; other times it is so slow, extending over decades or even centuries, that it is hardly noticeable. From time to time, change occurs quickly in one or two aspects of life but not in others. If this change happens in the intellectual life of a society, it can appear to later times as a flash of brilliance. Classical Greece of the fifth and fourth centuries BCE was just such a revolution in intellectual life. The period that followed the Classical Age, from the death of Alexander the Great to the rise of Augustus in Rome, we call Hellenistic. This period rivalled the Classical Age, and the Romans were captivated by the wonders of Greek culture wherever they encountered them. Classical Greece was where the foundations of Western civilization were built.

This chapter will look at some of the great accomplishments of the Greeks, of people like Socrates, Pheidias, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, and Archimedes. It will also trace the troubled political events of the age that led to a weakening of the Greek states and eventually to their defeat by Rome. Alexander had quickly conquered the vast regions of the Near East held by Persia, and Greek culture spread throughout his newly acquired territories. Certainly, there were people whose lives were hardly affected by developments around them — shepherds, farmers, merchants, and dutiful mothers and fathers caring for their families. But eventually, even these ordinary people would have been touched by the rapid change.

KEY WORDS

Doric
Ionic
oligarchy
rhetoric
plague
sophist
gymnasium
dendrochronology

KEY PEOPLE

Pericles
Alcibiades
Socrates
Pheidias
Plato
Philip the Great
Alexander the Great
Aristotle
Archimedes
Hippocrates

VOICES FROM THE PAST

Nothing can be more absurd than the practice that prevails in our country of men and women not following the same pursuits with all their strengths and with one mind, for thus, the state instead of being whole is reduced to half.

Plato, *The Laws*

TIME LINE: CLASSICAL GREECE

	467 BCE	The Delian League decisively defeats the Persian fleet
The Treasury of the Delian League is moved to Athens, signalling the beginning of an Athenian empire	454 BCE	
	445 BCE	Athens and Sparta sign a peace treaty
In Athens, the Parthenon is completed	438 BCE	
	431 BCE	The Peloponnesian War begins, and continues for 27 years
Plague strikes Athens killing thousands, including Pericles	430 BCE	
	399 BCE	Socrates is found guilty of corrupting the youth of Athens and ordered to commit suicide
Philip of Macedon completes his conquest of southern Greek city-states. Shortly after, he is assassinated.	338 BCE	
	331 BCE	Carrying on Philip's military conquests, Alexander the Great defeats the Persians
Alexander the Great dies at the young age of 33. His vast empire splinters into three large parts.	323 BCE	
	148 BCE	Macedonia becomes a province of the Roman Republic
Ptolemaic Egypt comes under the control of the Roman Empire	31 BCE	

ATHENS BUILDS AN EMPIRE

The Greeks repulsed the mighty Persian invasion of 480–479 BCE and took a small piece of land along the coast of Asia Minor from Persia's huge empire. As the Persians were expected to attack again, at least to recover their lost territory, the Greeks discussed a permanent alliance to continue fighting them. Sparta refused to participate in affairs outside the Peloponnese, and so Athens needed a strong fleet and leaders with vision. Aristeides, acting for Athens, helped organize the Delian League to defend the Greek states should Persia attack again. Each state signed a defence treaty with Athens and agreed to pay an annual tribute toward maintaining a common fleet. Aristeides was the first to calculate how much tribute each member of the League should pay, and his fairness earned him the name, "Aristeides the Just." Athens provided all the officials and commanders of the League, and swore not to interfere in the internal affairs of its allies. The treasury and meetings were held at the great sanctuary of Apollo on the island of Delos, hence the name Delian League.

This League was originally a voluntary association but soon became a forced union. Some states that did not want to join were compelled to enter the alliance while others that wanted to drop out when the Persian threat receded were forced to remain and pay their share. Kimon, the son of Miltiades, who won the Battle of Marathon, moulded the League into an effective force to fight the Persians. As the fleet's commander, Kimon beat the Persians decisively in 467 BCE to keep them from any further attacks in the Aegean Sea. After this success, the League, led by young Pericles of Athens, felt strong enough to try to free the Greeks on the island of Cyprus and help in a new revolt against the Persians in Egypt. The Egyptian expedition ca. 450 BCE turned into a catastrophe when a Persian force trapped the Greek fleet in one branch of the Nile River and wiped it out. Fearing a Persian reprisal by sea, in 454 BCE, Pericles moved the League's treasury from the island of Delos back to Athens. This was taken as final proof that the League had now become an empire controlled by Athens.

The Athenian Empire

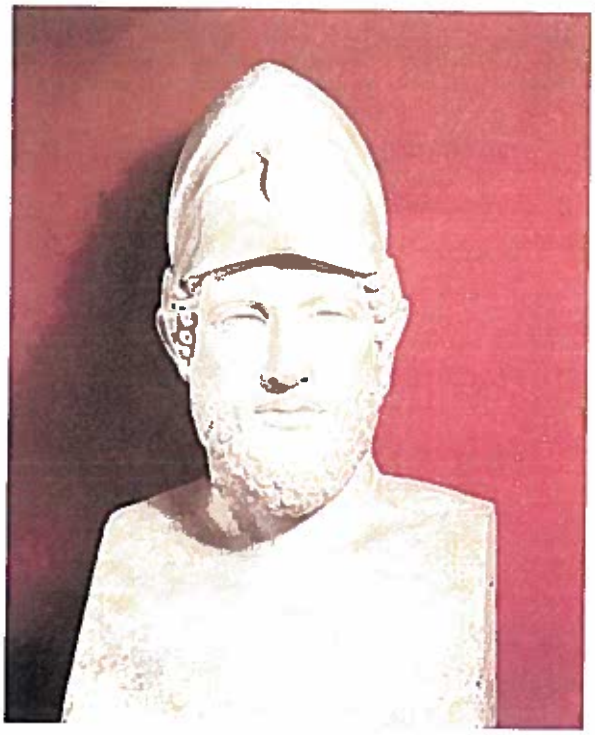
1. **Find Delos on the map.**
2. **What was the effect of moving the treasury of the Delian League from Delos to Athens?**

Pericles and Democracy

The city of Athens, just one of more than 300 Greek city-states, enjoyed its greatest period of wealth and power — 30 years — under the guidance of Pericles. To us today, the term democracy means an opportunity to elect politicians who share our views and to voice opinions through the media and public meetings. In the Athens of Pericles's day, democracy meant far more. Every citizen could speak and vote on every piece of

legislation in the Assembly. Every citizen had an equal chance to hold public office, with the exception of offices such as army general, which were elected positions. All law cases were decided by a majority vote of citizen juries of between 201 and 1501 people. The law and the government were firmly in the hands of the citizens. Pericles proclaimed, "We judge the man who takes no part at all [in public affairs] a useless, not just a quiet person."

Pericles himself was elected annually to the Board of Generals in Athens and so maintained his leading position in the city. The other civic offices, even the archonships, were only one-year positions and candidates were selected by lottery from a list proposed by the tribes. The introduction of pay for serving on the Council of 500, on juries, and in the various civic offices, allowed even the poorest citizen to take time away from his work. Paid civil service was a radical departure from the earlier system of government.

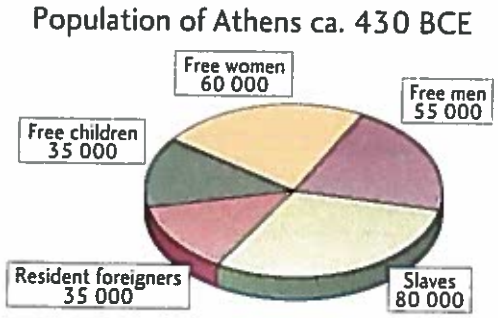


Pericles of Athens. What might have happened to the Athenian Empire had Pericles not died from the plague of 430 BCE?

In his funeral oration for the Athenian dead at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles declared:

> Our constitution is called a democracy, because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. When it is a question of settling private disputes, everyone is equal before the law; when it is a question of putting one person before another in positions of public responsibility, what counts is not membership of a particular class, but the actual ability which a man possesses. No one, so long as he has it in him to be of service to the state, is kept in political obscurity because of poverty.
>
> Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War* II 37

There were far more opportunities for citizens to participate in political affairs in ancient Athens than in our modern democracies. There was no pay for attending the Assembly until the fourth century BCE, so at this time many poor people could not afford to attend. Women, slaves, and foreign residents could still not hold citizenship, and Pericles himself



Total population = approx. 265 000

What if there had been no slaves in Athens?

introduced a law that limited citizenship to only those men whose parents had been born of citizen fathers.

Rivalry between Sparta and Athens

While he held office as general, Kimon had acted to defuse the long-standing rivalry between Sparta and Athens, the two main powers in Greece. Things had changed when Sparta asked Athens for help during a dangerous Helot revolt in 462 BCE. Kimon convinced the Athenians to send soldiers to help Sparta, but when they arrived, Sparta refused their help and sent the Athenians home. This insult led to Kimon's ostracism the following year, and the quick rise of Pericles to political prominence.

During the 450s BCE, under the leadership of Pericles, Athens tried to build a land empire in central Greece that truly was a threat to Sparta's traditional power base. Although it did not last long, the attempt by Athens increased tensions between the two states. To try to ease the increasingly bitter rivalry, Athens and Sparta signed a 30-year peace treaty in 445 BCE, agreeing to stay out of each other's internal affairs. Sparta still led the Peloponnesian League, which included some members or allies in central Greece, while Athens held tight rein on the many coastal and island states of her empire in the Aegean. Despite the peace treaty, the rivalry between Athens and Sparta continued, leading them into all-out war.

There were basic differences between Sparta and Athens. Sparta was a land power, with a conservative, oligarchic government, backward in terms of trade, wealth, and recent advances in Greek culture such as rhetoric, philosophy, and literature. It sought leadership among Greek states simply in order to protect itself and its narrow interests, rather than out of a desire for wealth, power, or expansion. Athens was the opposite. A sea power governed by a radical democracy, Athens was at the forefront of advances in culture. It was a progressive, wealthy, trading nation. Athens maintained and tried to expand its empire for the sake of the power and income it provided. These differences alone caused suspicion and dislike between the two states, but it was the other states, especially Corinth, that finally pushed the two toward war.

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

Corinth was a rich trading city like Athens, but it belonged to Sparta's Peloponnesian League and so remained quite independent. Athens kept Corinth's merchants away from the profitable trade of the Aegean area and provoked Megara, another state, by likewise excluding her from ports of the Athenian Empire. When Athens began to interfere with Corinth's colonies, it was accused of breaking its peace treaty with Sparta and provoked the so-called Peloponnesian War. This was the longest, most bitter and costly war the Greeks ever fought. Almost every city-state aligned itself with one side or the other. At the outset, Athens seemed the strongest of the combatants and the best prepared for war.

Pericles knew that Attica (greater Athens) could be invaded yearly by the more powerful land army of the Spartans. He therefore arranged for food to be imported and for the people to take refuge behind the Long Walls connecting the seaport of Piraeus with Athens whenever Attica was attacked. The Athenian fleet was strong and could raid the coast of the Peloponnese at will, and there was a big surplus in Athen's treasury. Prospects for victory looked good.

What Pericles could not have foreseen was the plague that struck Athens in 430 BCE, the second year of the Peloponnesian War. Athenians had

The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 BCE

1. **How did the city of Corinth figure in the war?**
2. **Why do you think Athens went ahead with its plan to conquer Syracuse?**

sought refuge between the Long Walls when Sparta invaded that year, and in the cramped, unsanitary conditions, a horrible disease struck. Thucydides, who wrote a history of this war, caught the plague himself but survived. He left a detailed description of its terrible symptoms. In two years, perhaps a third of the Athenians died, including their great leader Pericles. With Pericles out of the picture, the two opponents were now on more equal ground.

The conflict lasted for 27 years. First one side gained a strategic victory, then the other. After 300 Spartiates were trapped and captured alive off the

coast of the Peloponnese, Sparta wanted peace. Then Sparta successfully attacked Athens's allies in the North Aegean, and Athens wanted peace. Finally, King Brasidas of Sparta, and Cleon, the leader of the radical democrats in Athens, were killed in battle at Amphipolis in the North Aegean. This provoked a brief peace in 421 BCE.

Athens found a new leader who pushed for further hostilities. He was **Alcibiades**, the nephew and ward of Pericles. In 418 BCE, Athens put together an alliance to fight Sparta on land; the attack was not very successful. In 416 BCE, Athens attacked Melos, killing or enslaving its population and bringing this island into the Athenian Empire. Sparta was on the point of attacking Athens again.

At this critical point, Athens foolishly decided to try to conquer Syracuse, the most powerful city on the distant island of Sicily. This two-year campaign (415–413 BCE) required huge quantities of ships, manpower, and money to undertake. It was a total disaster. Alcibiades strongly supported the expedition and could have saved it, but having been charged with a school boy prank at a drinking party, he was forced to flee to Sparta for several years. When he finally returned to Athens to help its sinking cause in 411 BCE, he was able to turn the war effort around for a short time. When he went into exile again for losing a small naval engagement, Athens could find no other general to take his place.

By 408 BCE, the Persians had begun supporting the Spartans, providing ships to fight the Athenians. The Spartan general, Lysander, developed more effective ways to combat the Athenian fleet. Athens became desperate as its money for new ships dwindled and losses at sea continued. After one Athenian victory at sea in 406 BCE, a storm suddenly blew up and prevented the Athenians from picking up 2000 men drifting away from their wrecked triremes. Athens recalled its ten commanders to stand trial for this added loss. Only six of them dared to return for the trial, including Pericles, the son of the great Athenian leader of the same name. All six were found guilty and executed.

The decisive, final battle occurred in 405 BCE at Aegospotami in the Hellespont area. Athens put one last fleet on the water, depending on it for victory. After days of manoeuvring against the Peloponnesian fleet without a battle, the Athenian sailors beached their ships to collect food for their lunch as they had on previous days. The Peloponnesians caught them off guard, burned or captured their ships, and rounded up the sailors. The end had come. Just as the Athenians had killed all the men of Melos in 416 BCE and enslaved their women and children, now they could expect the same treatment.

Sparta's allies, Thebes and Corinth, forcefully encouraged Sparta to do exactly as Athens had done to Melos. What a tragic loss it would have been for Greece. In the end, Sparta spared Athens. As punishment, Athens was required to tear down its Long Walls, surrender all but 12 ships of its fleet, take back its political exiles, and acknowledge Spartan leadership in matters of peace and war.

This loss of freedom was just the beginning of dark days for the Athenians. Thirty men, backed by a Spartan garrison, were granted the authority to rule in Athens. These men, who came to be known as the 30 Tyrants, unleashed a reign of terror during which many people were declared outlaws and killed. Over the course of eight months, 1500 men died. Finally, the city was retaken by exiles favouring democracy. The bloodbath came to an end in 403 BCE, after which Athens then began a remarkably swift recovery, but it was never again a great power.

Thucydides

Thucydides, writer of the remarkable history of the Peloponnesian War, was old enough to recall and record the war's events right from the outbreak of the hostilities; he also fought in the war as an Athenian commander. His refusal to help the Athenians near Amphipolis in 424 BCE proved to be a disaster for his military career, but a blessing for future generations. Rather than fight, he chose to go into exile instead, and from that neutral vantage point he had a better perspective on all the events of the war. Though he lived to see the end of the Peloponnesian War, his book ends in mid-sentence in the year 411 BCE, seven years from the war's end. It is possible that another Greek historian edited and prepared his account for publication.

The introduction to *The Peloponnesian War* tells us much about Thucydides and his goals.

> I lived through the whole of it, being of an age to understand what was happening, and I put my mind to the subject so as to get an accurate view of it. It happened, too, that I was banished from my country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis; I saw what was being done on both sides, particularly on the Peloponnesian side, because of my exile, and this leisure gave me rather exceptional facilities for looking into things.
>
> Thucydides *The Peloponnesian War* I 1; V26

THE CLASSICAL MOMENT

Literature

Fifth-century BCE Athens was the focal point of the brief age of brilliance sometimes referred to as the Classical Moment. With Pericles as leader and people like the playwright Sophocles and the sculptor Pheidias expressing Greek ideals in artistic forms, Athenian society reached a cultural peak. It was a period of optimism, when the Greeks believed that their world could be made better, and that troubles they faced could be overcome. In *Antigone*, Sophocles wrote this hymn to humankind:

> There are many wonders, but none more wondrous than man
>
> Across the white-capped sea in the storms of winter this creature makes his way on through the billowing waves. And earth, the oldest of the gods, the undecaying and unwearied one, he wears away with constant ploughing, back and forth, year after year, turning the soil with horses he has bred ...
>
> Language, thought swift as the wind, and the patterns of city life he has taught himself, and escape from the shafts of storms, and the shelter—piercing frosts of clear days. He can cope with everything, never unprepared whatever the future brings. Only from death does he fail to contrive escape. Even for diseases thought hopeless he has figured out cures. Clever, with ingenuity and skill beyond imagining, He veers now toward evil, now toward good ...
>
> *Antigone* I 332–368

Other playwrights, such as Aeschylus and Euripides, hoped to improve their world by examining serious issues like the basis of justice, and the status of women in Greek society. The comic playwright Aristophanes also aimed to change his world — by making fun of it. In *Lysistrata*, he turns the world upside down by having Greek women go on strike — they refuse to have sexual relations with their husbands in order to force the men to end their destructive war:

> When the War began, like the prudent, dutiful wives that we are, we tolerated you men, and endured your actions in silence. (Small wonder

— you wouldn't let us say boo.) You were not precisely the answer to a matron's prayer — we knew you too well, and found out more. Too many times, as we sat in the house, we'd hear that you'd done it again — manhandled another affair of state with your usual staggering incompetence. Then, we'd ask you, brightly, "How was the Assembly today, dear? Anything in the minutes about Peace? " And my husband would give his stock reply.

"What's that to you? Shut up!" And I did...

But this time was really too much: ...

We women met in immediate convention and passed a unanimous resolution: To work in concert for safety and Peace in Greece. We have valuable advice to impart, and if you can possibly deign to emulate our silence, and take your turn as audience, we'll rectify you — we'll straighten you out and set you right.

Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 1 507–528

Architecture

The most celebrated of all Greek buildings ever constructed is the Parthenon, built in Periclean Athens as a showpiece of Athenian wealth and

The Parthenon. Try to imagine this temple as it and most other Greek buildings actually appeared: with sculptural decoration brightly painted in blue, red, and yellow.

The Acropolis at Athens. These buildings were constructed over a period from 447–405 BCE. The word "acropolis" means "high city."

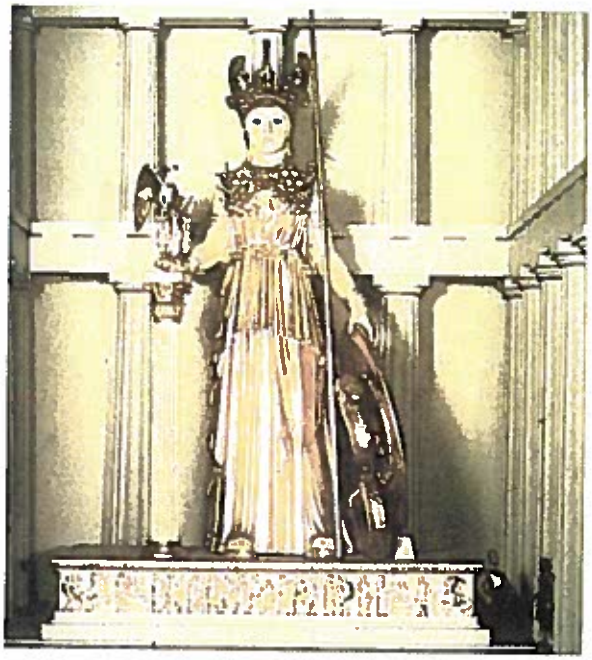
power. It dominated all of Athens from its perch high on the Acropolis. Designed by **Pheidias** and the architect Ictinus, this temple to Athena is a marvel of skill and beauty, inspired in part by the Greek victories over the Persians.

The construction of the Parthenon would not have been possible without masonry and sculpture techniques Greeks had learned 200 years earlier in Egypt. Each block of this huge temple was carved with incredible accuracy, using only hand tools.

It is the Parthenon's sculpture, however, that is its most striking feature. Though some remains in Athens, most of the sculpture from around the temple is now kept in the British Museum in London. The figures show the ideal forms of human beauty, serenely calm and unaffected by the momentary events of the world around them. Represented in the sculpture are mythological battles such as the Battle of the Gods and the Giants. The Birth of Athena, the goddess to whom the temple is dedicated is also portrayed. The Greeks chose not to represent the real battle with the Persians because they believed that such pride (*hubris*) in their own victory would surely be punished by the gods.

This sculpture of mounted Athenian warriors was on one side of the Parthenon as a frieze, a decorative panel above the columns.

Housed in the great *cella* (centre room) of the Parthenon was a towering statue of the warrior goddess Athena, made by the artist Pheidias. It was over 12 m high and made of ivory and gold plates set on a wooden frame. A reflecting pool sat in front of it. One can only imagine the awe that it inspired. Such magnificent works of art were not cheap and it was the revenue from Athens's Empire, a forced federation, that paid for much of this beauty.



The reflecting pool in front of the ivory and gold sculpture of Athena would have both multiplied the visual impact and protected the ivory from drying out.

Review...Recall...Reflect

1. Explain how the Delian League came to be the basis of the Athenian Empire.
2. List three significant innovations of Athenian democracy.
3. Describe the sculptures that adorned the Parthenon and explain why they are considered a brilliant example of Greek sculpture.

THE ROAD TO PERSIA: ALEXANDER THE GREAT

As a result of the Peloponnesian War, Sparta, with Persian support, tried to dominate the other Greek city-states as Athens had done. In reaction to this, new alliances were made against Sparta. Corinth, for example, joined with its old rival Athens to prevent Spartan interference. For a brief time (371–362 BCE), Thebes, another city-state, defeated the Spartans and assumed Greek leadership. It was able to achieve this because of changes in military tactics, including the use of a very deep formation of men (called a *phalanx*) who used longer than normal spears to punch holes through enemy lines. Theban dominance ended with the death of its best general, Epaminondas. The careful balance of power between the leading Greek city-states was soon to be upset by a new force from the north, the kingdom of Macedonia.

Philip of Macedon

The broad plains and hill country of the North Aegean were home to a people considered backward cousins of the Greeks. The Macedonians spoke a Greek dialect, but they were farmers and shepherds, not craftspeople and traders. They were behind their southern cousins in wealth and culture. In the fourth century BCE, several kings rose to unite the Macedonians and bring them success in battle against their enemy neighbours. The key figure in this success was Philip the Great. As a hostage in Thebes for three years, he had learned the new battle tactics of the Thebans. He created a professional army with a strong cavalry and more flexible units on the battlefield. As a result, Philip was able not only to unite his country, but also to defeat the southern Greeks at the Battle of Chaeronaea in 338 BCE. For the first time, all mainland Greeks were joined together under the rule of a single leader. It is likely that this ruthless, ambitious monarch planned to turn the combined Greek forces against their old enemy, Persia, but before he could launch such an expedition, he was assassinated by one of his own officers at a wedding celebration.

In one of the most exciting discoveries in Greek archaeology this century, a royal burial chamber was excavated at Vergina in northern Greece. The outside facade had a painting of a lion hunt with figures identified as Philip the Great and a young Alexander. Inside the vaulted chamber were found silver drinking cups, bronze armour, and a heavy gold box containing a beautiful golden wreath of oak leaves. Wrapped in a purple and gold cloth were the burnt bones of a man whom many believe was Philip the Great himself. Many others now think this tomb actually belonged to Philip's son, Philip III Arrhidaeus, the half brother of Alexander.

Philip the Great of Macedon, as reconstructed from fragments of a skull found in the tomb at Vergina. Philip was known to have lost an eye in battle.

Alexander the Great

After Philip's death, rule fell to his 20-year old son Alexander. He was a student of Aristotle and one of the most successful military leaders the world has known. He took his father's experienced, professional army, his own genius for finding the weaknesses of his enemies, and Philip's ambitious plans for conquest, and in 334 BCE set out against the Persians. He never returned to Europe. Intentionally or not, he conquered the entire Near East as far as India, in a gruelling, decade-long campaign.

How could such a young man with a relatively small army of 35 000 foot soldiers defeat the Persian Empire? The Macedonian army now represented the ultimate in improved Greek warfare. The Macedonians were led by seasoned commanders and all were devoted to Alexander. The Persian army, though much larger, was made up of many different subject peoples. Darius, the Persian king, was a despot who ruled by force, and once Alexander defeated the Persian foot soldiers, the rest of the Persian troops lost their eagerness to fight. The battle of Gaugamela on 1 October 331 BCE, was the final blow against the Persians, whose land and wealth fell into Alexander's hands. Even this, however, did not satisfy Alexander. He forced his weary army eastward against several great kingdoms, reaching all the way to the Indus River valley before turning back, disappointed that he had not reached the eastern ocean.

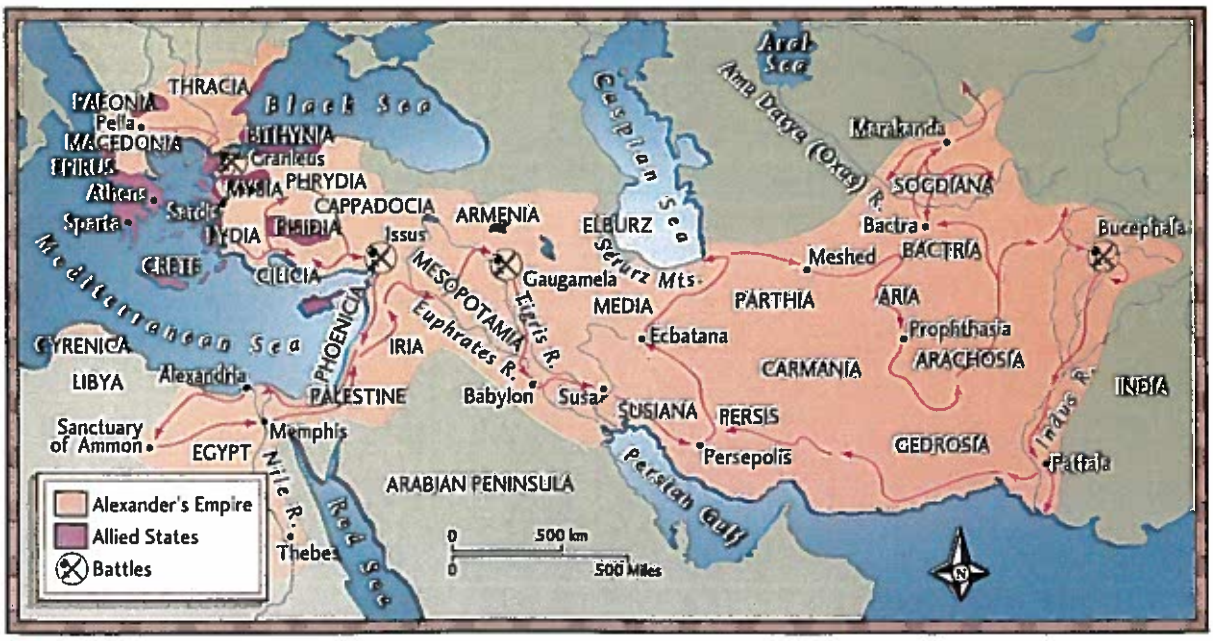
This mosaic, found at Pompeii, is believed to be a copy of a lost painting. It shows Alexander the Great (on the left) in battle with King Darius of Persia, wearing a gold headress. The Battle at Gaugamela in 331 BCE may be the event portrayed.

Alexander had dreamed of conquering the entire world as far as the Indian Ocean, but finally faced the fact that he now had to govern what he had won. Though as a boy, Alexander had been tutored by Aristotle, as an adult, his ideas about how to make a better empire out of all these foreign peoples were probably his own. He tried to make Greek culture and language a kind of common, uniting force. At the same time, he respected the customs and laws of the peoples he had conquered and encouraged their leaders to help him rule the various parts of his empire. This was a wise decision on Alexander's part, since each nationality had its own culture and might have rebelled if forced to adopt Greek customs completely.

Perhaps Alexander's great experiment would have worked, but he died of an illness just short of his thirty-third birthday. The empire that he fought so hard to create soon split apart as each of his best generals grabbed a large piece of its territory for himself.

THE HELLENISTIC AGE

The death of Alexander in 323 BCE marks the end of an era. It separates what historians call the Classical Age (480–323 BCE) from the Hellenistic Age (323–31 BCE). Greek culture began to travel from its home in the Aegean and, through conquest, became the common culture of all countries in the Near East. Teachers, soldiers, craftsmen, artists, writers, and



The Empire of Alexander the Great

1. **Alexander the Great tried to make the Greek language a uniting force in his vast empire. Do you think language can be a uniting force for so many people of different cultures?**
2. **What are some of the civilizations Alexander encountered?**

Feature Study

The History of the Imagination: Myths and Legends

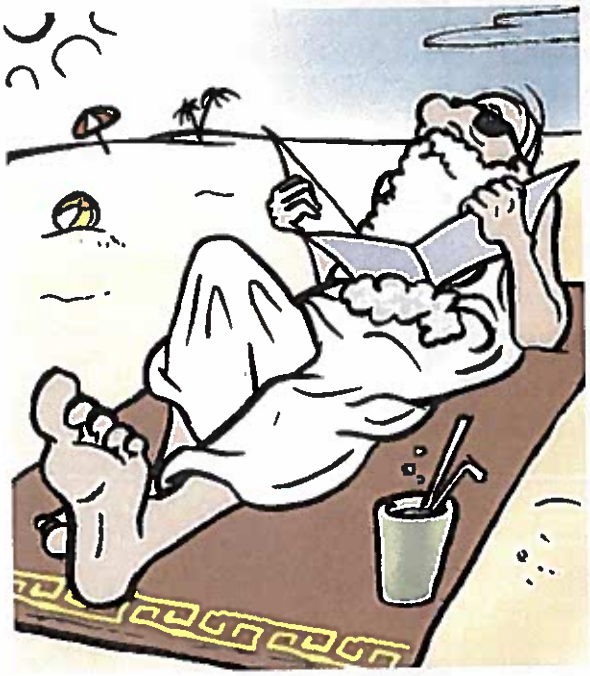
Legends of Alexander the Great — Did you hear the one about ...?

Legends often provide interesting clues in the detective work of piecing together history. Not wholly invented, legends usually grow around a real person who is larger than life, a hero like Alexander the Great. Since the hero is already braver, stronger, or somehow greater than average, legends tend to highlight these qualities. Though legends show plenty of imagination, at the heart, there is always some historic truth.

Several legends are attached to the life of Alexander:

- On the day of Alexander's birth, several extraordinary events occurred: there was a solar eclipse; the temple of Artemis at Ephesus caught fire; and an eagle, the bird of Zeus, sat on the roof of the building where Alexander was born. These were all taken to be signs of Alexander's future greatness.
- Also on the day of Alexander's birth, his father, King Philip, was told of two other happy events: one of his generals had won a great victory, and one of his horses won a race at the Olympic Games.
- While in the midst of his conquest of Persia, Alexander stopped at a place called Gordian. He was shown a famous wagon roped to a yoke pole by a mysterious knot. None of the ends of the rope were visible. Alexander was told that whoever was able to unravel the knot would conquer the world. At first Alexander was puzzled, but then he drew out his sword, cut through the knot, and fulfilled the prophecy his own way!

- While visiting Corinth, Alexander learned that the philosopher Diogenes was nearby. On his visit, Alexander was constantly surrounded by crowds of well-wishers, yet Diogenes did not seek him out like the others. So Alexander decided to seek out Diogenes and found him lying in the sun. Alexander stood over him and asked if there was anything he would like Alexander to do. Diogenes replied, "Stand a little out of my sun. " Impressed by this attitude, Alexander said: "Verily, if I were not Alexander, I would be Diogenes. "



Activities

1. What qualities of Alexander do these legends highlight?
2. Explain how legends still have a place in our lives today.

merchants flooded out of Greece into the newly conquered lands to take advantage of the many opportunities for fame and fortune in the Near East. Greek culture was so attractive that it significantly influenced every local society it met, especially the better-educated, urban populations of the Near East. Even when the Romans in turn conquered this area, Greek culture and language remained the common unifier until the coming of the Arabs, and much later, the Turks. Alexander founded more than 70 new cities, many of them named Alexandria. In these, and in the older cities of the Near East, we find typical Greek buildings: gymnasiums, theatres, stadiums, market buildings (the *stoa*), libraries, and temples. Everywhere, Greek became the language of the educated class, and Greek art and literature were appreciated as models of perfection to be imitated.

Alexander's empire was divided into three kingdoms. One of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, took over the Asiatic part of his empire and established the Seleucid dynasty. Another general, Ptolemy, established the Ptolemaic dynasty in the African portion of Alexander's empire (Egypt and eastern Libya), the last ruler of which was the famous queen, Cleopatra. Another Macedonian general, Antigonus, was able to snatch the European portion, including Greece and Macedonia, and founded the Antigonid dynasty. Smaller kingdoms like Pergamon and Rhodes became involved in the feuds between the Hellenistic kingdoms. The results of these conflicts are part of the history of Rome, since Rome eventually conquered Pergamon and Rhodes and made them part of its empire by 31 BCE. Macedonia itself was humiliated and made a Roman province by 148 BCE.

In the midst of this turbulent new era, most Greeks could find some degree of stability in the continuing role of the *polis*, their city. Most city-states maintained independence in their internal affairs, so the councils and assemblies continued to meet, local laws were passed, taxes were collected, and elections were held to fill the traditional offices. Democracy was the normal method of government on this level, but it was expensive to run a democracy. Gradually, wealthier citizens increased their power and the average citizen lost interest in participating in government when the individual polis was no longer threatened by neighbours. One means by which the small city-states could counter the influence of the great powers like Macedonia and Pergamon was to form leagues. Two in particular, the Aetolian and the Achaean Leagues, expanded their memberships beyond the regions of Central Greece and the Northern Peloponnese. Citizens of each league, or their representatives in the case of the Achaean League, met in large assemblies twice a year and decided matters of foreign policy and the military. In the end, however, none of the leagues could match the power of Rome.

Citizens, Slaves, and Foreigners

Demetrius of Phaleron was appointed governor of Athens in 317 BCE. Shortly afterward, he took a census and learned that there were 21 000 citizens (counting men only) in the city, 10 000 *metics* (resident foreigners), and 400 000 slaves (including those who worked in the mines). Even if the number of slaves is exaggerated, the ratio of slaves to free men was unusually high. This was partly because of the number of people captured during the wars of Alexander and his successors, and partly because slave dealers were rescuing abandoned newborn babies. Athens was not a typical Greek city, but it does give us some idea of the rights that different classes of people had.

This vase painting shows slaves working in a Greek mine. What must life for these men have been like?

Only men could be citizens, a legacy of their role in ancient warfare and law making. Women could not vote, hold office, or own property, but had protection within the family structure. Metics were obliged to pay taxes and contribute in other ways to the city, but like women, could not vote, hold office, or own land. Slaves had no rights. Some were fortunate enough to gain their freedom from generous owners. To abuse, assault, or even kill a slave was not a crime, though it may have been frowned upon. For most slaves life must have been miserable. We learn from the plays of Menander, however, that slaves did find ways to co-exist with their masters. In the difficult conditions of the ancient world where the survival of the individual, the family, and the community was regularly threatened, the rights of the individual depended strictly on his or her importance to the community.

GREEK CULTURE

Philosophy

Before the time of Socrates, Greek philosophy was often only concerned with scientific inquiry, such as the nature and origin of the universe. Thales of Miletus may have been influenced by Babylonian wise men when he predicted an eclipse around 585 BCE, or turned his thoughts to the problem of the beginnings of life. Another question addressed by early Greek thinkers concerned what we can really know for certain, when all the information about our world comes to us through our senses, which can be deceived. One noteworthy idea to come from this inquiry was the theory that all matter is made up of tiny, indivisible particles called atoms. Greeks of course never realized just how tiny atoms really are.

The foundations of Greek society were shaken by philosophers questioning traditional beliefs. Men called sophists sold their services as teachers for wealthy youths, training them in public speaking (rhetoric) and logic. One such sophist, Protagoras of Abdera, tried to throw out all the previous standards of judging what is right and wrong, good and bad, ugly and beautiful. He argued that people are the measure of all things — meaning that human beings themselves set all such standards for judgement. Into this climate of distrust of wise men, there appeared a greater genius — Socrates.

"Ugly in body, but magnetic in mind; convivial and erotic, yet Spartan in habits and of enormous physical endurance," is one scholar's description of Socrates. This true "lover of wisdom " left behind nothing in writing, but through Plato, his disciple, we learn that Socrates believed it was the duty of every person to care for one's inner being (soul), that is, the moral and intellectual personality, in order to

Socrates was accused of corrupting the youth of Athens and trying to introduce new gods. He was forced to commit suicide by drinking hemlock, a poison.

make it as good as possible. His method of inquiry, which came to be called the Socratic method, was to ask people simple questions about their beliefs, then to probe deeper and deeper into their assumptions, often making them look foolish as they recognized their errors. Socrates' impact on later philosophy has been profound, but in his own day he was often ridiculed. In the end, he was tried and forced to commit suicide by his own city.

> That was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, the man who of all men of his time whom we have known was, we may say, the best — yes, and what is more, the wisest and the most just.
>
> Plato *The Phaedo* 118

The most famous of Socrates' followers was Plato. Plato set up his own school, called the Academy, beside the *Academus* gymnasium just outside Athens. Here, he taught philosophy to advanced students. Plato wrote many works, called *Dialogues*, with Socrates as the main character. In these he sought to explain concepts such as love, beauty, justice, and what he called "the Good. " The concept of the Good had a strong impact on later Christian thinking since it was similar to the Christian idea of God.

Aristotle was a student at Plato's Academy. After Plato's death, Aristotle started his own school, the *Lyceum*, where he organized his students to carry out research in many fields of scientific learning. Aristotle himself made many important advances in biology, zoology, astronomy, meteorology, psychology, political science, ethics, and rhetoric. He also made great contributions to philosophy. He opposed some of Plato's ideas about the nature of true

knowledge, and the relationship between the world of the intellect and the world of the senses. Besides these schools there were dozens of others, including those of the Cynics, the Stoics, and the Epicureans, some of which especially influenced the Romans.

THE Past AT PLAY

Among the most popular games enjoyed by the Ancient Greeks were marbles, and an after-dinner game called *kottabos*. In this game, no doubt often played after consumption of considerable quantities of wine (always mixed with water), players reclining on couches in a circle tried to throw the last drops of liquid in their cups into a large vessel in the centre of the circle, without spilling any on the floor!

This bronze sculpture of the god Zeus throwing a thunder bolt was cast ca. 460 BCE. Note the balance and proportions of this figure. Does his face match his body?

This is a sculpture of a wounded Amazon, one of a tribe of women warriors said by the ancient Greeks to live at the edge of the known world. Despite being wounded, her expression is calm and serene.

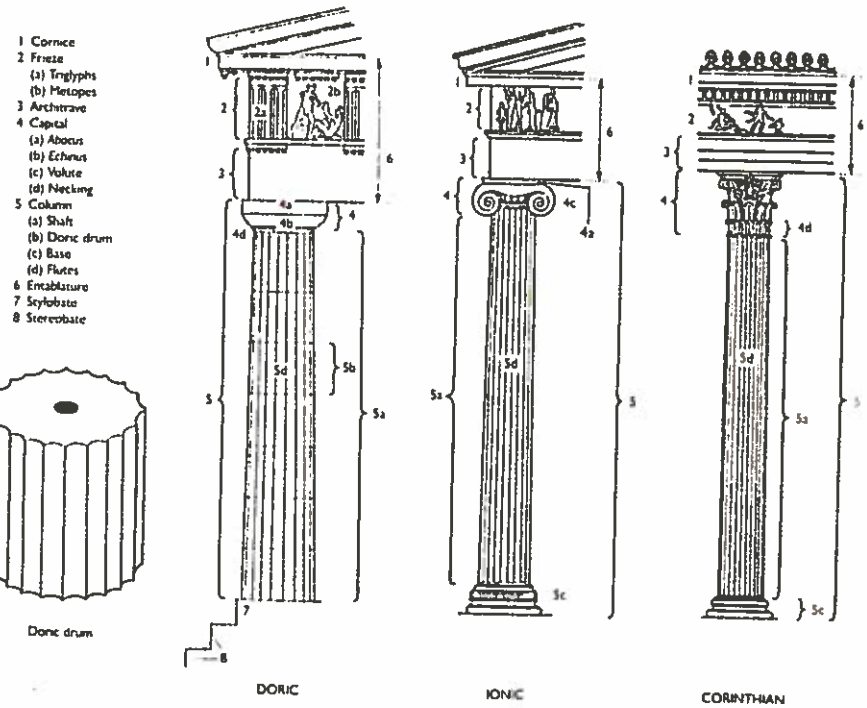
Art and Architecture

If you look at examples of Egyptian painting, you will see that they are really coloured drawings. A figure is drawn and then colours are added, like in a colouring book. Greek artists were the first to learn how to show three dimensions on a flat surface by using different shades of colour to give the illusion of depth. They also used techniques such as foreshortening (making near objects look bigger than distant ones) so as to produce images that looked real. Unfortunately, most Greek paintings are

lost, but we can read stories about how painters painted grapes that looked so real that birds tried to eat them. Greek painters aimed at producing not only real-looking pictures, but also ideal images. These images reflected a Greek concept of the ideal, or most beautiful, human form — youth, harmonious proportions, and calm expression. When the Greeks depicted the gods, they showed them as ideal human figures, though often larger than life.

The same was true of sculptors. The Greeks concentrated on creating statues of nude young men, and over time observed each detail and proportion of the body. Sculptors wanted to make the statues appear natural but also conforming to certain rules about how an ideal figure should look. This concentration on detail and proportion resulted in statues that were almost lifelike. In the Classical period, the sculptors, like the painters, usually portrayed men and women in their ideal state — in the prime of life, in the most beautiful or handsome pose.

In the Hellenistic period, Greek architecture was refined by elaborating on existing styles rather than by using new methods or materials. More public money was devoted to non-religious buildings such as theatres, stadiums, gymnasiums, and stoas (long colonnaded buildings, often with stores and public facilities, like ancient shopping malls). Private architecture also began to develop as rich individuals decided to use buildings to display their wealth, most notably in the construction of tombs. The most famous such tomb was built at



The Greeks developed three different orders, or styles, of architecture. The **Doric** and **Ionic** orders came first, and were used from the sixth century BCE on. The most ornate order, the Corinthian, was first used in Greece in the fifth century BCE, but was further developed and used more extensively by the Romans. Each order consisted of several distinct features and rules of proportion. More than one order of architecture was often used in one building.

Halicarnassus around 353 BCE by King Mausolus (from which we get the word "mausoleum") and his sister Queen Artemisia. Because of the novelty of the design, and the fame of the artists who decorated the building with sculpture, this building was later named one of the wonders of the ancient world. By the time of Alexander the Great, the Greeks had learned how to build arches and vaults out of stone, but it was the Romans who really took advantage of these new devices for spanning open spaces in their architecture.

Review...Recall...Reflect

1. Describe three ways in which the literature, art, and architecture of Classical Greece celebrated and glorified humanity.
2. For centuries, Greek city-states remained apart. How was Philip of Macedon able to unite mainland Greece? How was his son Alexander able to carry on after his father's death to build an enormous empire?
3. Describe what happened to Athenian democracy that tended to undermine the ideals upon which the government was built.

Medicine

Greek medical facilities, the equivalent of our hospitals, were located at sanctuaries of the healing god Asclepius. Compared to the worship of the other gods, worship of Asclepius began very late in Greece, around 500 BCE. The Asclepian sanctuaries were usually located well away from the noise and dust of the city, near a source of clean, cool spring water.

The oldest Asclepian sanctuary was at Epidaurus, and from there the cult spread to Corinth, Athens, Cyrene in Libya, the island of Cos, and many other places. At these sanctuaries, Greek doctors learned their skills in the use of potions, ointments, healthy diets and exercise, and surgery. A device to remove barbed arrows (like the one that went into the eye of Philip the Great) was one of the Greek surgical inventions. The usual cure for disease was to sleep in a special hall at a sanctuary and wait for a dream about the god to work a cure. This was probably combined with proper medical practices.

The most famous Greek physician was Hippocrates whose oath about caring for the sick is still repeated by newly graduated doctors even today. Hippocrates worked at the Asclepian sanctuary at Cos at the same time that Socrates lived in Athens. Hippocrates was the first to study how parts of the body work in relation to the body as a whole.

There was a great deal of superstition and religion mixed with the practice of ancient medicine, but cleanliness, healthy food, rest, and a number of good, naturally occurring drugs helped the healing process. There are many records of cures left at sanctuaries; some are unbelievable, bordering on miraculous, but a good portion of the inscriptions, and the hundreds of clay body parts dedicated in thanks to the god, suggest good success.

Sexuality

While some societies have abhorred, ridiculed, or even attacked homosexuality, that was not the case among the Greeks. On the contrary, it was quite a conspicuous part of Greek life. The Greeks were ready to respond favourably to the open expression of homosexual desire whether in words and behaviour, or in literature and the visual arts. Many vase paintings, for example, depict homosexual courtship and love. For the most part, these represent relationships

Feature Study

Daily Life in Classical Athens

The great majority of Greeks were farmers. A small plot of land, perhaps five hectares or so, would yield olives for oil, grain for bread and porridge, enough grapes for a year's supply of wine, and several fig trees. Pasturage for sheep and goats gave the people a small supply of meat, usually eaten only at festival times, and cheese, another staple. Most people lived close enough to the sea that they could get fresh fish occasionally, though salted fish was common too. Meat could also be found by hunting wild game, especially hares. Cattle were only killed on very special occasions, such as the 100 bulls sacrificed at the Olympic Games. Sausage making was popular to preserve meat. The Greeks also grew vegetables such as cabbage, beans, squash, and onions. Garlic was a favourite seasoning, and honey provided sweetness.

A typical day for an Athenian citizen might include waking early in the morning, leaving his daughters and wife at home, and then taking his son to the gymnasium for classes in music, literature (Homer, of course), and wrestling. Our citizen, whom we'll call Nikias, walks behind his son, nimbly stepping around donkey droppings in the narrow street. Above his head, he hears the sweet singing of his neighbour's daughter, Melosa, who won the weaving contest at Athena's great festival two years ago. An old slave woman hurries past — probably a midwife rushing to attend the birth of a baby.

Just as when he was a boy, Nikias's son learns Homer's two great epics, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as both a history lesson and a way of learning about the Greek gods and heroes. Competing in sports at the gymnasium prepares his son to be a soldier, should Athens need him to defend her people and interests. Loyalty to his polis begins with these lessons at the gym. Nikias stays for an hour to chat with friends and argue with some loud young men who are constantly criticizing Athenian customs. He also stops to admire Kallias, practising the *pankration*, a sport combining wrestling and boxing. Kallias won this event at the seventy-seventh Olympiad, though he broke three of his fingers. Nikias leaves the gymnasium and strolls past a city fountain where four women are filling their water pots and putting them on their heads to take home. He knows they will not talk to him out of modesty, but he sees at least one of them remove the cloak from her face so passing young men can see her.

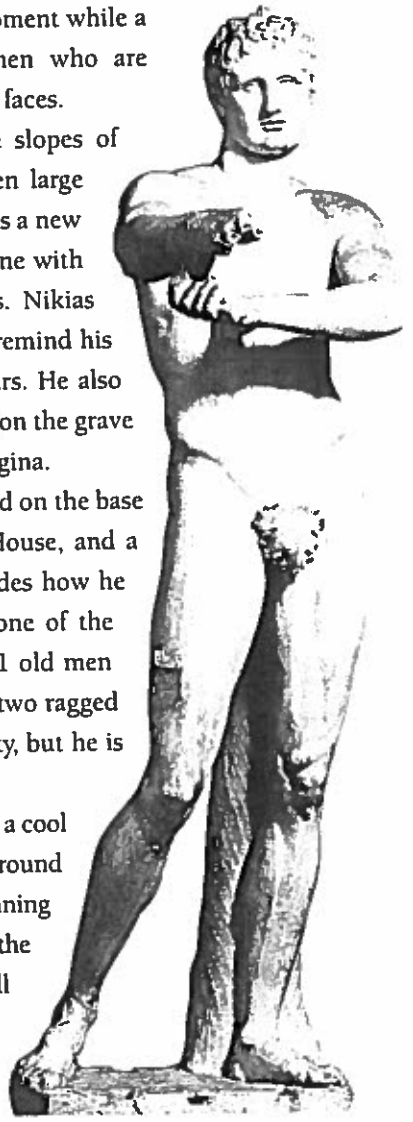
Nikias walks down to the Agora (the local mall) and directs the slave who has come with him to do the household errands. The slave buys some wool for

the women at home to spin and weave into clothes, checks the vegetable sellers' tables, bargains for a fresh fish at the stalls near the Great Drain, and argues with the sandal maker, whose work for Nikias has again fallen apart. Everywhere vendors shout out their prices and bargains, and people carry baskets full of goods from place to place. The noises suddenly die down for a moment while a funeral procession passes, led by a group of mourning women who are shrieking out their grief, pulling at their hair and scratching their faces.

Nikias has his own business to conduct. His farm on the slopes of Mt. Hymettus had a good crop of olives, so he needs two dozen large transport amphoras, pots made for shipping olive oil. He also needs a new krater, a big vase for mixing wine and water (usually one part wine with six parts water) for an upcoming party with his drinking pals. Nikias chooses one with an exciting scene of Greeks fighting Trojans to remind his friends of Greece's great victories over the Persians in recent years. He also buys a little white jug for perfumed olive oil. Nikias will place this on the grave of his older son, who died fighting last year near the island of Aegina.

The draft of a new law about payment for jury duty, just posted on the base of the heroes' statues, is being discussed outside the Council House, and a fierce argument is raging inside. Nikias listens intently and decides how he will vote when the law is presented to the Assembly. Nearby, one of the open-air courts is busy with a trial for slander, and a jury of 501 old men listens as the defendant, with his crying wife beside him and his two ragged children, proclaims his innocence. Nikias knows the man is guilty, but he is good at pleading his case.

It is early afternoon and the sun is hot. Time to return home for a cool drink and a light lunch brought to him by a slave boy who works around the house. Nikias's wife and daughters have been taking turns spinning wool for a new cloak for his son, and washing their dresses for the upcoming festival of Demeter at Eleusis. His older daughter will begin her initiation into the mysteries of the Demeter sanctuary this year. There is time for a long afternoon nap before Nikias rides out to his farm to check on the sausages being made from two pigs killed the day before yesterday. Nikias will take some dried sage and thyme along for seasoning. Dinner will not be until very late, when the temperature cools.



After exercising, athletes cleaned away sweat and dirt by rubbing olive oil on their bodies and scraping the oil and dirt off with a tool called a strigil — once held in this young man's right hand. Nikias's son would have groomed himself this way after exercising in the gymnasium.

between older men and youths. This was particularly common in aristocratic circles. Homosexuality is also a common theme in Greek poetry, and Plato treats it on a philosophical level when he discusses the concepts of ideal beauty and love.

The finest unit of warriors in the Theban army, during its period of dominance in the fourth century BCE, was called the Sacred Band. The Sacred Band was made up entirely of pairs of homosexual lovers. It was believed, and indeed proved correct, that a warrior would fight more fiercely if standing in battle beside his beloved. At the battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE, when Philip the Great of Macedon crushed the Greek army opposing his rule over mainland Greece, the entire Sacred Band of Thebes died fighting.

Female homosexuality was much less common but can be found in the poetry of Sappho (ca. 600 BCE), a woman poet who ran a finishing school for aristocratic girls on the island of Lesbos. Her poetry was regarded as among the finest of her age. A common theme was her love for certain of her students. It is because of the poetry of Sappho that the island of Lesbos gave its name to female homosexuality (lesbianism).

Science and Technology

Greek mathematics reached very advanced levels, especially by the Hellenistic Age. Best known are the works of Pythagoras and Euclid in geometry, but algebra and even trigonometry were also well developed. In the field of science, biology progressed particularly well, especially through the efforts of Aristotle. The Greeks did not know the scientific method, and while they observed natural phenomena carefully, they were not at all good at carrying out accurate experiments to test their theories.

The Greeks did develop a number of more complicated devices based on simple machines such as the pulley, the lever, and the plane. Clock-like mechanisms with complex gears, perhaps to measure astronomical data, have been found, as have large siege machines for hurling various projectiles against an enemy. The famous mathematician and inventor Archimedes, who lived in the third century BCE on the island of Syracuse, developed a device we call the Archimedean screw, which is still used today to draw water up out of streams to irrigate fields.

The Role of Women

The subject of women's roles in Greek society has received a great deal of attention in recent years. It is a topic that depends on very sparse evidence, since most of the archaeological and historical writings were produced by Greek men. Governments were run by men, temples were built by men, writers and artists were men almost exclusively. An exception was Sappho, of course, who was famous for her beautiful lyric verses.

Scripts & Symbols

There are many names, common and uncommon that are directly derived from Greek words or characters: George, Jason, Homer, Irene, Hector, Helen, Penelope, Theodore, Alexandra, Alexander, Cleo, Christopher, and many more.

In Athens, women of citizen families led very sheltered lives. They closely oversaw the running of their own households, but rarely ventured out in public, even to shop. Their skills in the production of textiles were admired, but cloth was woven just to fill household needs, not for commercial purposes.

In religion, women had a significant public part to play. In Athens, more than 40 priesthoods were held by women, and some festivals and rituals were led only by women, such as the *Thesmophoria* festival of Demeter, goddess of fertility and agriculture. Another example of a festival dominated by women occurred at the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron, located about 30 km outside Athens on the east coast of Attica. Here Artemis was worshipped as the goddess of childbirth, and especially of happy deliveries. She was linked to the bear (though the reason why is no longer known) so her young worshippers, unmarried girls, dressed as "little bears" (*arctoi*) in the rites performed in her honour. This was a rite of initiation that preceded puberty and was meant to guarantee a fertile marriage and safe childbirth. Childbearing was probably the single most important aspect of a Greek woman's life.

A woman in Greek society fulfilled her role in life almost entirely as a wife and mother, hidden in the home. She was, however, free to visit neighbours and participate in religious festivals, marriages, and funerals. Occasionally, women played a part in public life, as wife or mother of a ruler, but otherwise they did not participate in political life, either to hold office or even to vote. Women in most city-states could not even own property, and had to have a male guardian in legal matters. One exception to this was in Sparta. Though a Spartiate woman was still required to have a guardian, usually the woman's father before she married, and her husband afterward, she could own property. Women received their share of the family estate in the form of a dowry when they married, and this returned with them to their family in the event of divorce or widowhood.

Some ancient authors leave the impression that Greek men were nervously fearful of women and that they regarded the female character as unpredictable and mysterious. Other authors regarded women with a more liberal attitude. Herodotus described their influence in many historical events. It was mostly through the imagination of Greek men that women made a contribution to the literature and art of this civilization. The Athenian playwrights gave women important and sometimes powerful roles in their dramas.

Sometime not long after 400 BCE, attitudes toward women and their role in society began to change. For example, statues of nude women first appeared at this time. Women were also allowed to participate in important athletic competitions (though the Olympics were never opened to them) and they began to acquire a stronger role in public life. Women like Cleopatra, ruler of Hellenistic Egypt, were still an exception, however, in terms of political power.

Greek Religion

The Greeks had many special days when they celebrated and honoured the gods, days that occurred at irregular intervals (remember, there was no such thing as a weekend). But Greeks did not wait for a holy day to pay their respects to their deities. There were altars, shrines, temples, and statues of the gods everywhere in towns and in the countryside. If a person felt the need for help in a certain aspect of life, they might give a small gift and say a little prayer at the appropriate god's shrine. There were gods of birth, death, and the Underworld; gods for women, the weather, and wine; gods of war, peace, victory, and healing; in

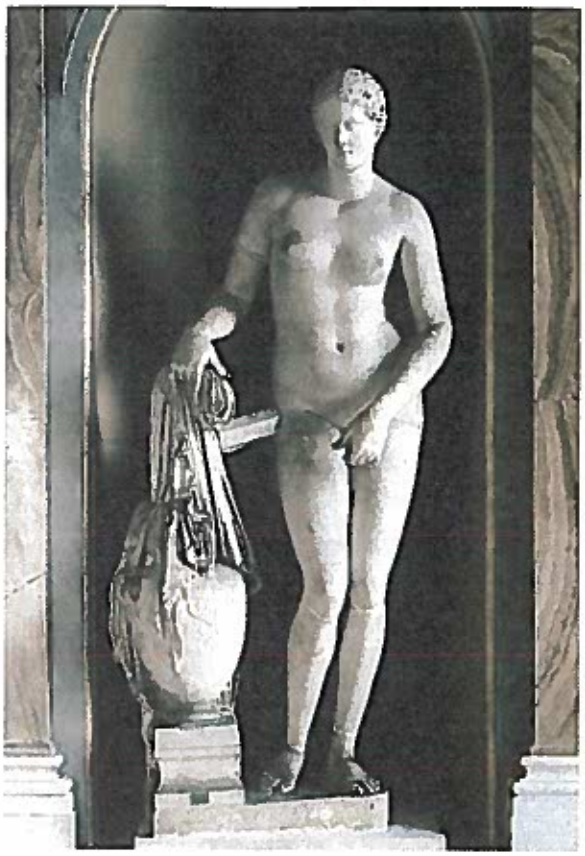
God	Concept or Entity
Zeus	The sky; king of the gods
Hera	Marriage; wife of Zeus
Apollo	Music, plagues, healing
Artemis	Goddess of the hunt; childbirth
Hephaestus	Crafts, especially metal-smithing
Hermes	Messenger of the gods; god of thieves
Athena	Wisdom, guardianship, invention
Ares	War
Demeter	Agriculture
Poseidon	Brother of Zeus; god of the sea and horses
Aphrodite	Love, beauty
Hestia	Hearth, home
Dionysus	Wine, fertility
Hades	God of the Underworld

short, there were gods for all aspects and stages of life. There were also more important gods, most of whom were thought to reside on Mt. Olympus. It was to these gods that the Greeks built their beautiful temples and sanctuaries.

All the gods were thought to have human forms and characters. This is an important idea to understand, since it explains the Greek attitude toward the gods. People honoured the gods with festivals, and offered sacrifices of honey-cakes, terracotta figurines, or sacrificed animals. In exchange, they expected the gods' blessings, or at least to avoid the gods' punishments.

Myths and Legends

In order to explain the many rites and cults, stories were told about significant events in the lives of the different gods. These stories, which we now regard as myths, were firmly believed by most Greeks. Myths had the weight of tradition behind them, and the support of great poets like Homer and Hesiod. Many stories, creations of fertile imaginations, arose as late as the sixth century BCE. They



The Aphrodite of Cnidus, the first known Greek female nude statue. This change in artistic attitude came with a somewhat greater freedom for women in the fourth century BCE.

then became fixed and written down, less easy to change or embellish.

There were also several cycles of stories, what we might call legends, surrounding great heroes of the past and the foes they fought: Herakles, Jason and the Argonauts, Perseus and the Gorgon, Theseus and the Minotaur, and great warriors such as Ajax, Achilles, and Hector. These heroes accomplished superhuman deeds, often with the direct help of the gods who were their patrons and sometimes even their parents. Such legends helped explain the tradition of a glorious past, the remains of which could still be seen in places like Mycenae,

Tiryns, and Knossos. The belief in the greatness of these heroes and their connection with the gods was so strong that many cities had hero shrines where people could worship a local hero and ask for help in their lives.

Temples, Oracles, and Curses

Temples were built as houses for the gods. The richer the city, the greater the temples. Temples were symbols of the wealth and power of the community and of its protecting patron deity. Temples themselves, however, were not places of worship. Virtually all rituals took place around altars outside the temples. In fact, in most sanctuaries there was only an altar and no temple at all.

The Greeks believed strongly that the gods communicated with them; this might take place through the songs of birds, the rustling of leaves, the entrails of animals, or the voice of a special person like a prophet. The sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi became famous because the oracle (prophet) there was regarded as reliable. Apollo spoke answers to inquiries through his priestess, an old woman called the Pythia.

It was also possible for people to address their concerns to the gods. The normal way was through prayers accompanied by gifts, but in popular black magic and sorcery, it was also possible to cast spells and put curses on people. A curse on an enemy might be invoked by scratching the enemy's name and the desired curse on a sheet of lead, often scrambling up the letters, then folding up the sheet and driving a bronze nail through it. This could then be buried in a grave or in a sanctuary to the goddess Persephone, who dwelt in the Underworld for three months of the year.

Festivals

Most festivals included a procession of priests, worshippers, sacred objects, and animals for sacrifice. The more popular festivals had competitions in poetry, music, dance, and athletics, with valuable prizes for the winners. The Olympic Games, held at Olympia, in the Peloponnese, were part of a five-day festival in honour of Zeus. Athletic contests were held on the second and fourth days of this festival as well as on the afternoon of the third day. The first, third, and fifth days were otherwise given over to processions, sacrifices, and prayers to Zeus. No music or poetry contest interfered with the athletic games here, and although the reward at Olympia was a simple wreath, the home city of a winner usually gave its winners prizes equal to tens of thousands of dollars.

Religion and Political Life

The Greeks were generally quite tolerant of the religious beliefs of others, probably because Greek religion did not have rigid rules. So, for example, the sophists in fifth-century Athens could discuss their serious doubts about the existence or knowability of the gods. The Greeks could also be deadly serious about religion, especially at times when they thought their city was being threatened or the gods were angry with them. In 414 BCE, in the dark days of the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath, a number of wealthy young men of Athens were tried and executed on the charge of impiety. Protagoras the sophist is said to have fled Athens after being convicted on a charge of atheism in 411 BCE. Socrates was executed (by drinking poison) in 399 BCE on twin charges of corrupting the youth of

Athens and introducing new gods. The concept of separation of church and state was unknown in the ancient Greek world, so the temples and cults were readily supported with public money. Since political leaders were often also religious leaders, threats to religion might also be regarded as threats to the state.

Ancient ODDITIES

At the festival of Zeus in Athens, a very peculiar ritual known as the *Bouphonia* (from the Greek word for ox or cow) was performed. An ox would be killed, then the person who had done the deed would drop the axe and run away. The axe was put on trial and convicted, then thrown into the sea. At the culmination of this mysterious and odd ritual, the hide of the animal was stuffed with grasses, and the dummy ox was yoked to a plough!

Trade and Coinage

In Greece, trade over any great distance or in any bulk product was carried out by ship since overland travel by pack animal was difficult and expensive. It seems probable that Phoenician ships first visited Greek shores during the Dark Ages for trading purposes. These encounters may have encouraged Greeks to make voyages in their own ships, perhaps built especially for the purpose, though more likely used for fishing or island raiding. As underwater archaeological expeditions have revealed, these ships were small, able to accommodate a crew of four or five and a capacity of several tonnes.

Profits from a successful voyage could be substantial, as much as two or three times the cost of the cargo. However, these voyages were not without risks, from storms and pirates, as well as the great cost of hiring a ship to carry the cargo. A normal venture began when a merchant borrowed money from a banker at a rate of 25 to 60 percent for the term of the voyage. The money would be used to purchase a cargo. The merchant would then make a contract with a shipowner for space on his ship to carry the cargo, for example, copper ingots from Cyprus, back to Piraeus (the main port for Athens). The shipowner presumably would have a contract with another merchant to carry a cargo outbound from Athens, for example, olive oil and fine pottery, to Cyprus. The first merchant would accompany the ship in order to make the best deal possible for the copper. In Piraeus, he then had to find a buyer for his cargo, pay the shipowner, and pay his banker with the necessary interest. If demand for copper were high, as in wartime when armour was needed, the merchant could make a considerable profit.

The most common trade goods shipped to and from Greece included:

- grain from south Asia, Sicily, or Egypt in exchange for Greek olive oil and wine
- luxury goods like glass, alabaster, perfumes, and ivory from Phoenicia and Egypt in exchange for Greek silver or white marble
- timber and pitch for shipbuilding from the North Aegean in exchange for Greek olive oil and finished goods like pottery, furniture, jewelry, or textiles

Clearly, Greek merchants and sailors travelled to every corner of the Mediterranean and far inland from its ports in order to find trade opportunities and satisfy their natural curiosity about the world. These traders, together with Greek mercenaries, were no doubt the major force for spreading Greek culture abroad before the time of Alexander. These

same traders, on their return to their homeland, brought back the natural resources, goods, and most importantly, the ideas that they acquired in distant places. Many foreigners in turn came to visit and live in Greece, either freely as traders or as ambassadors, or in captivity as slaves.

For centuries, trade depended on a system of bartering where traders made deals to exchange so much of one product for so much of another — there was no money involved because money did not exist yet. Two hundred kilograms of salt might be traded for 150 kg of grain, and so on. Days might be spent arguing over amounts and types of compensation. Eventually, traders recognized that small amounts of precious metals might be conveniently accepted almost anywhere in exchange for most products used in daily life. Precious metals like copper, bronze, silver, electrum (an alloy of silver and gold), and even pure gold, could be carried in small chunks, weighed by the traders and used as a form of exchange.

Chunks of different sizes always had to be weighed against different standards, which was awkward, and there were widely varying standards of purity for metals, or percentages of metals in alloys. To bring some uniformity to this process, beginning in the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, the chunks of precious metal were stamped with a symbol indicating their weight and purity. The stamps of certain traders came to be trusted more than others. Eventually, the uncertainty of this state of affairs was resolved when governments began stamping their own metal chunks, and so put the reputation of the state or monarch behind the quality of the metal and its standard of weight. This was the first coinage of the Western world.

The first mints, dating to the seventh century BCE, were in Lydia and the East Greek states, but coinage quickly spread to the trading cities of Athens, Corinth, Aegina, and Chalcis in the Western Aegean. Silver became the most commonly used metal. By the time of the Athenian Empire in the fifth century BCE, the so-called owls of Athens — coins with an owl on one side and the head of Athena on the other — became the most common coinage in the Mediterranean area.

A silver "owl of Athens." The goddess Athena was associated with the owl. The letters on this coin spell "Athe...."

Review...Recall...Reflect

1. Briefly describe how daily life in rural areas differed from life in the cities in ancient Greece. Your response should compare daily routines.
2. Describe the relationship between religion, superstition, and medicine in ancient Greece. Would you have been comfortable visiting a sanctuary of Asclepius if you were feeling ill? Explain your answer.
3. Explain the origins of coinage in ancient Greece by tracing developments from the barter system to the creation of the first mints in the seventh century BCE.

THE GREATNESS OF THE GREEKS

Why were the Greeks able to accomplish so much during the Classical Age? The answer to this question is not such a mystery. The system of farming, with slaves and tenants doing the work, and the mercantile interests of many Greeks, produced both wealth and leisure time. This in turn gave freedom and time to many individuals for other areas of human interest — literature, philosophy, music, and art. As a consequence, a very large portion of the male population of Greece had the freedom and encouragement to exercise their natural talents and curiosity. Imagine what might have been accomplished had all Greeks — men and women, slaves, and foreigners — been given the same opportunities!

It is hard to imagine Western civilization without its foundations in ancient Greece:

- **Thought:** When it came time to build on the accomplishment of other cultures, the Greeks used careful, rational thought, to which they added their natural curiosity. This use of logical thinking may partly be credited to the political system. In small city-states, power derived from being persuasive in public argument, and persuasiveness depends in part on rational, logical thought.
- **Language:** Thousands of words used in English and other European languages are derived from ancient Greek, for example: technology, history, evangelist, cyberspace, titan, euthanasia, genetics, photography, economy, and microscope.
- **Politics:** The study of government was first begun by Plato and Aristotle. The very word "politics " is derived from ancient Greek, from polis, the word for a Greek city-state. Many of the words we use to describe our various political systems also come from Greek words: democracy, monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, and so on. The concept of democracy took its first breath in ancient Greece, albeit in a somewhat different, more limited form compared to what we know today.
- **Philosophy:** It has been said that all later philosophy is merely footnotes to Plato. This is an exaggeration, of course, but it points clearly to the importance of Plato and other Greek philosophers. Not only did these thinkers give rise to the field of philosophy as we know it, but they also introduced many of the philosophical questions that have occupied human minds since.
- **Art and Architecture:** Beginning in the fifteenth century CE in Europe, both sculptors and painters were strongly influenced by Classical art. Using Greek art as a model, problems in creating the human figure were solved, and techniques in foreshortening, light and colour, and perspective were employed just as the ancient Greeks had done. In architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there was a strong revival of Classical art called Neo-classicism. The architectural styles of government buildings, banks, art museums, train stations, and stately mansions imitated those of Classical Greece.
- **Myth and Literature:** Besides the myths and literature of the ancient Greeks that we still read today, there are a great many allusions to Greek myth and literature in our modern world. Sports teams are called Trojans, Spartans, or Argonauts; adventurous travels are called odysseys; and the space program that landed the first human on the moon was called Apollo.

History Continues to Unfold

Thousands of scholars in universities around the world still study the ancient Greeks, mostly through the written works they have left us: books, plays, letters, poems, inscriptions, and graffiti. The ancient Greeks also speak to us through the archaeological remains of their cities, cemeteries, sanctuaries, and ships. Where once we focused on the accomplishments of the most famous Greeks, the most important wars, or the most magnificent temples and statues, there has been a shift toward the study of the lives of the common Greek man, woman, or child, and their daily lives. What was the life of a Spartan boy really like? What supports did Athenian women find as they became wives and mothers? How did the playwright Euripides reach the emotions of his audience? What ran through the mind of a Greek attending an animal sacrifice at a religious festival? Women's lives especially have been looked at more closely so we can appreciate their role in the success of this society. There are thousands of questions yet to ask, even as hundreds of questions are answered each year.

Current Research and Interpretations

Herodotus was dubbed the "Father of History " by the ancient Roman writer Cicero. Herodotus's immediate successor, Thucydides, set the standard for historical research that has lasted through to today. The Greeks were the first to treat the writing of history not simply as the recording of events, but as the rational explanation of those events, an approach that remains one of the primary goals of historians working today.

Chapter Review

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we have seen:

- the importance of trade in the economy of ancient Greece
- how individuals such as Socrates, Sappho, Pheidias, and Plato made important contributions to the development of intellectual thought, artistic expression, and political traditions
- how a variety of factors led Sparta and Athens to develop very different forms of social organization
- how conflict between city-states led to instability and change while the unity of the Greeks brought about by Philip of Macedon ushered in a era of peace and stability within Greece

Reviewing the Significance of Key People, Concepts, and Events (Knowledge/Understanding)

1. Understanding the history of Classical and Hellenistic Greece requires a knowledge of the following concepts and events, and an understanding of their significance in the development of both Greek and later Western society. In your notes, identify and explain the historical significance of three from each column.

Concepts	*Events*
Delian League	Peloponnesian War
Peloponnesian League	Battle of Aegospotami
Parthenon	Classical Moment
Hellenistic Age	

2. Classical and Hellenistic Greece made many significant contributions to the development of artistic forms. Make a chart with the headings Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, and list Greek accomplishments under each heading.

3. Carefully review the section on "Daily Life," and based on the discussion there, complete the chart below in your notes.

Members of Greek Society	*Social, Economic, and Political Roles in Greek Society*
Women	
Men	
Children	
Boys	
Girls	
Slaves	

Doing History: Thinking About the Past (Thinking/Inquiry)

1. The civilization of ancient Greece profoundly influenced later Western societies. Select and explain three major changes that took place in ancient Greece that have continued to influence Western society.

2. Although the ancient Greeks had no fixed theology or set of rules, religion still played a significant role in the governing of Greek city-states. In a paragraph, explain the relationship between religion and politics in ancient Greece.

   Connecting to the *World History Handbook*: Once you have completed your paragraph, transfer some of the main ideas to the graphic organizer "Religion's Influence on Political Structures" in your *World History Handbook*.

Applying Your Learning (Application)

1. Complete a Venn diagram to illustrate the features of Athenian democracy that were similar to and different from our democratic system today.

   Connecting to the *World History Handbook*: Once you have completed your Venn diagram, transfer the ways in which Athenian democracy contributed to the development of modern Western ideas of citizenship to the graphic organizer "The Development of Western Concept of Citizenship" in your *World History Handbook*.

2. The foundations of modern Western society lie in ancient Greek civilization. Complete the graphic organizer "Contributions of Ancient Greece to Modern Western Society" in your *World History Handbook*.

Communicating Your Learning (Communication)

1. Alexander the Great's victory over the much larger Persian army was in part a result of many improvements in Greek warfare. Complete the graphic organizer "Advances in Greek Warfare." Once you have completed this organizer, write one paragraph explaining how advances in warfare contributed to Alexander's victory.

2. Using the data found in the section "Citizens, Slaves, and Foreigners," construct a bar graph that illustrates the ratio of citizens to others living in Athens in the fourth century BCE. Once you have completed your bar graph, in a paragraph, explain the Athenian concept of citizenship and speculate as to why Athens placed restrictions on citizenship.