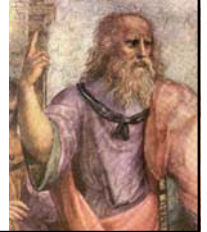


Ancient Greek Civilization



Why study the Ancient Greeks?

- Greek culture has influenced Western culture more than any other:
 - Principles of Art & Beauty (Classicism)
 - Wellspring of Western Philosophy
 - Classical Architecture
 - Democratic Ideals
 - The Study of History
 - Drama: Comedy and Tragedy
 - Mythology



Why do we call them Greeks?

- We call them Greeks because the Romans called them *Graeci*.
- The “Greeks” called themselves *Hellenes* and their land, *Hellas*.

Timeline of Ancient Greece

- Greek Dark Ages (c.1100-750 BC)
 - Loss of writing, time of Homer.
- The Archaic Period (c.750-480 BC)
 - Many small self-governing communities rise, a Greek alphabet is adopted from the Phoenicians. Ends with Greek triumph in the Persian Wars, which begins the...
- Hellenic (Classical) Age (c. 480-323 BC)
 - Peak of Greek power and culture, lead by Athens until Athens was defeated in the Peloponnesian War, then Sparta and Thebes. This age ends with Alexander's conquest of Greece.
- The Hellenistic Period (323-146 BC)
 - From the death of Alexander to Roman conquest.

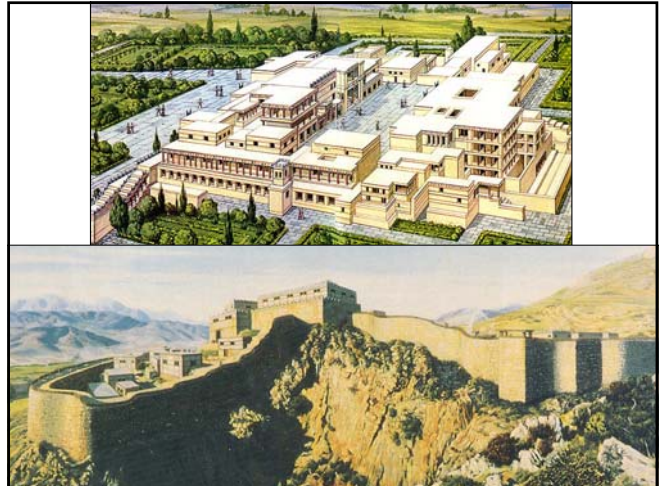
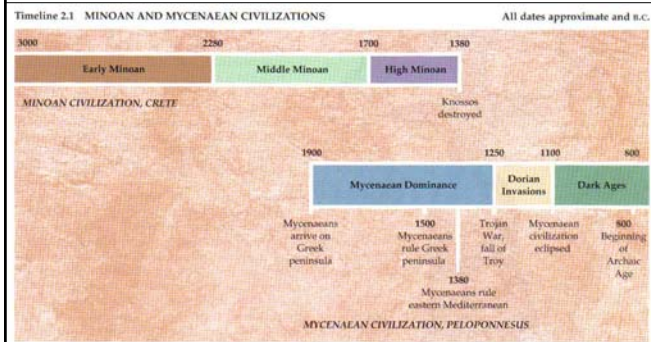
Ancient Greek History in a Nutshell

- Greek poleis emerge during the Archaic Age, lead by Athens and Sparta. Sparta is a military state, politically and culturally conservative. Athens implements a number of political reforms which create democracy; the arts and culture flourish.
- Threatened by Persia, the Greeks unite and win a surprising victory in the Persian Wars. Athens emerges as the dominant polis to lead the Greeks at the beginning of the Classical Age.
- Resentful of Athenian hegemony, Sparta leads an alliance of poleis against Athens in the Peloponnesian War. The Spartan alliance is victorious, but various poleis continue to fight for dominance, further weakening them.
- Alexander the Great conquers Greece, as well as the rest of the known world, and then he dies. His rule is replaced by the Hellenistic kingdoms which last until they are conquered by Rome.



✚ Greece in the Bronze Age. Three distinctive civilizations—Cycladic, Minoan, and Mycenaean—developed around the Aegean Sea in the third and second millennia B.C.E.

Aegean Civilizations: *The Minoans and Mycenaeans*



Minoan Civilization

- 3000 – 1300 BC.
- Contemporaneous with Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilizations.
- Based on the island of Crete.
- Named Minoan after the mythological King Minos.
- By 2000 BC., a prosperous and stable mercantile civilization had emerged.
- Peaked between 1700 and 1400 BC.

Minoan Society

- Complex class system included nobles, merchants, artisans, bureaucrats, and laborers.
- Noble life based in palaces. Communities linked in a loose political federation centered at Knossos.
- Peaceful: No fortified walls around the palaces and no weapons found with remains.

Palace at Knossos

- Large complex of rooms and passageways on several levels.
- Possibly the source of the labyrinth myth.
- Many beautiful frescoes (paint applied directly on wet plaster) on the palace walls
- Impressive plumbing and drainage system.



Palace at Knossos, c. 1750 – 1650 BC.
(partially restored)



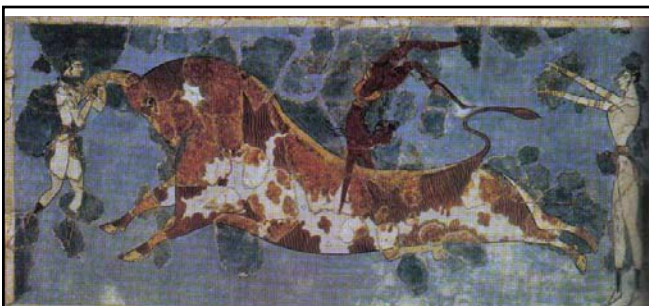
The Minoans developed a pictogram form of writing (Phaistos disc) that was replaced by about 1800 BC with a still undeciphered script known as Linear A.



"Throne room" in the palace of Knossos.



Octopus Vase (Marine Style), c. 1500 BC.



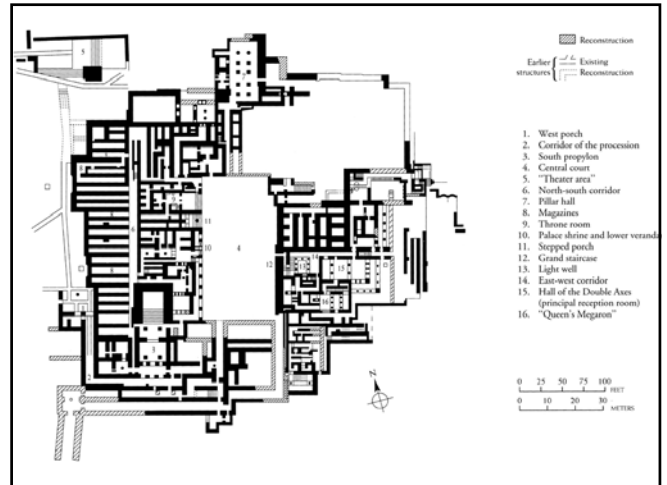
"Toreador Fresco", c. 1500 BC. Fictional scene? Reminiscent of the Minotaur legend, in which 7 youths and 7 maidens were periodically sacrificed to a creature that was half man and half bull, who lived in an underground labyrinth.



The Bull Leaper, an ivory figurine from the palace of Knossos.



Minoan symbolic *labrys* (axe) of gold, 2nd millennium BC.



Minotaur: *Minos* + *tauros*

According to Greek myth, Theseus killed the Minotaur and then followed a thread back out of the labyrinth.

Minoan Religion

- Minoan religion appears to have been matriarchal, centering on the worship of a mother goddess or earth goddess.
- Minoans also honored numerous other household and natural goddesses.
- Near the end of their era, the Minoans began to bury their dead in underground tombs or chambers, but it is unknown why.



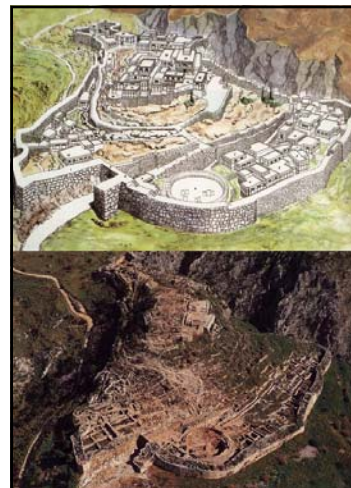
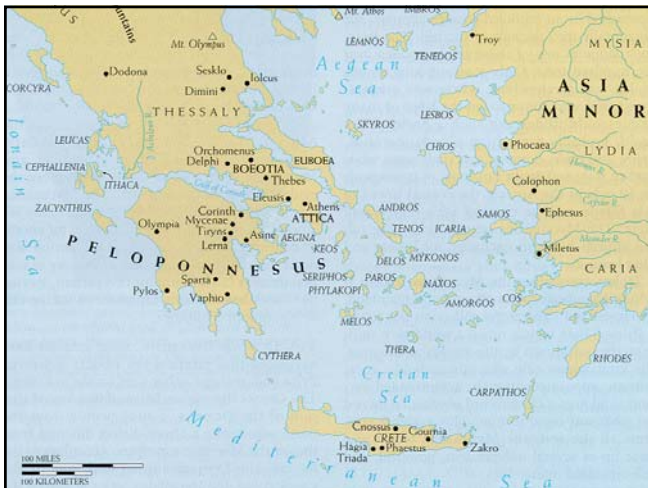
Minoan Snake Goddess figurine, c. 1600 BC.

End of Minoan Civilization

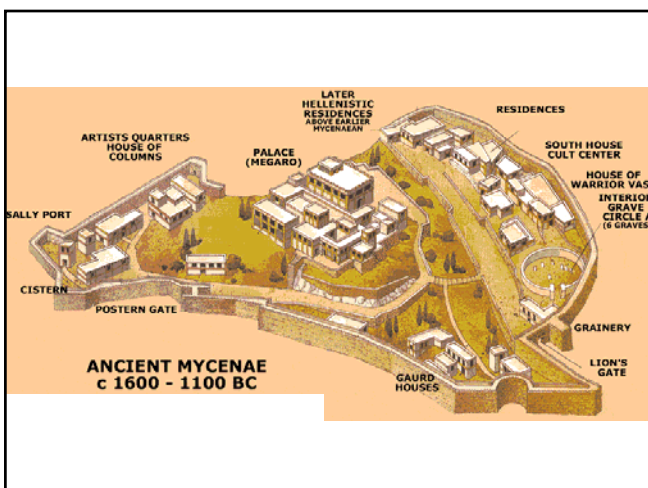
- Minoan trade dominated the eastern Mediterranean until about 1380 BC., when the peaceful civilization suddenly disappeared.
- Although the Greeks had no direct knowledge of Minoan Civilization, elements of Minoan culture lived on in Greek mythology.

Mycenaean Civilization

- 1900 – 1100 BC.
- Named by archeologists after Mycenae, one of its most prominent fortress cities.
- An aggressive warrior people, they arrived on the Peloponnesus peninsula around 1900 BC. and ruled it by about 1500 BC.
- Mycenaean culture lives on through the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

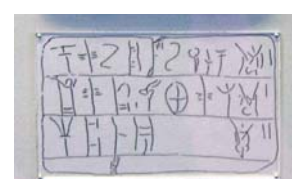


Mycenae. Artist's reconstruction of the palace and the actual ruins.



Mycenaean Writing

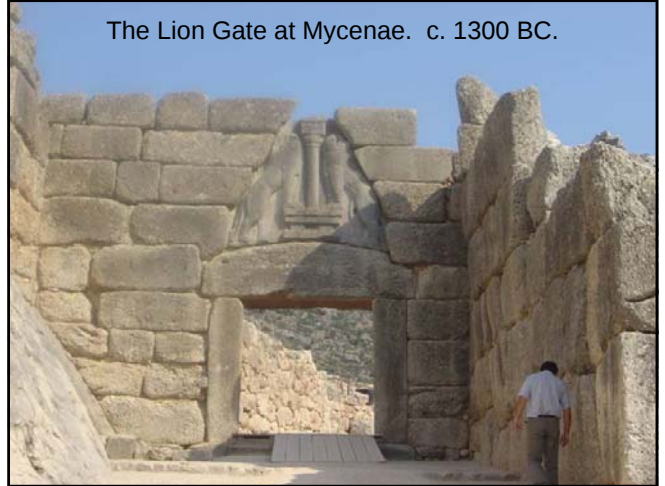
- Linear B was found to be a very archaic form of Greek language.
- Unfortunately, while thousands of samples exist, they were mostly used to record commercial transactions.



Mycenaean Society

- Evidence of the Mycenaean's militaristic society can be seen in their architecture.
- Their fortress-palaces had massive double walls, narrow escape passages, and wide gateways, and were strategically located.
- Imposing structures, such as the Lion Gate, would have been designed to intimidate as well as protect.

The Lion Gate at Mycenae. c. 1300 BC.



Mycenaean Religion

- Syncretism: fusion of Minoan and Mycenaean deities.
- Like the Minoans, the Mycenaeans worshipped numerous household goddesses as well as aspects of nature in caves and natural shrines.
- Mycenaean religion also included deities that were the predecessors of the Olympian gods.

Burial Rites

- Mycenaean graves have yielded fabulous treasures, indicating that they buried their dead with great honor.
- They often buried daggers or other forms of military equipment with the deceased, indicative of a militaristic culture, as well as hero worship.



The Treasury of Atreus (or the Tomb of Agamemnon)



Funeral mask (commonly known as the "Mask of Agamemnon"). Gold, found in grave circle A in Mycenae, c. 16th century BC.



Lion Hunt Dagger, c. 16th century BC. This dagger was buried alongside its owner, likely a Mycenaean warrior, in a funeral mound.

End of the Mycenaeans

- The Mycenaeans attacked the wealthy and strategic city of Troy in about 1250 BC. This was a long, exhausting campaign that probably weakened them, leaving them open to conquest. The siege of Troy lives on in myth and Homer's epic tales.
- Around 1100 BC the Mycenaean civilization collapsed and Mycenae was abandoned.



Today Mycenae is a popular tourist destination a few hours from Athens. The site has been well-preserved, and the ruins of the cyclopean walls and the palaces on the acropolis still arouse the admiration of visitors, particularly when it is remembered that they were built a thousand years before the monuments of Classical Greece.

The Greek Dark Age, 1100-750 BC

- Around 1100 BC, numerous Greek cities were sacked (perhaps by invading Dorians) and the region entered what historians call the Dark Age(s).
- At the beginning of the Dark Age, Greece experienced decreasing population and lost their written language.
- But the Dark Age was relatively peaceful and after about 900 BC, the population began to grow and compete for resources.



The Polis

- Usually translated as "city-state."
- A polis, is an urban core and a rural zone:
Athens + Attica = Athenian polis
Sparta + Laconia = Spartan polis
- The urban area usually had an agora (market area), temples, a building or area where public decisions were reached, and entertainment facilities, such as theaters and stadiums. Some poleis had natural fortifications, an acropolis.
- "Man is a political animal." - Aristotle



Acropolis and Agora

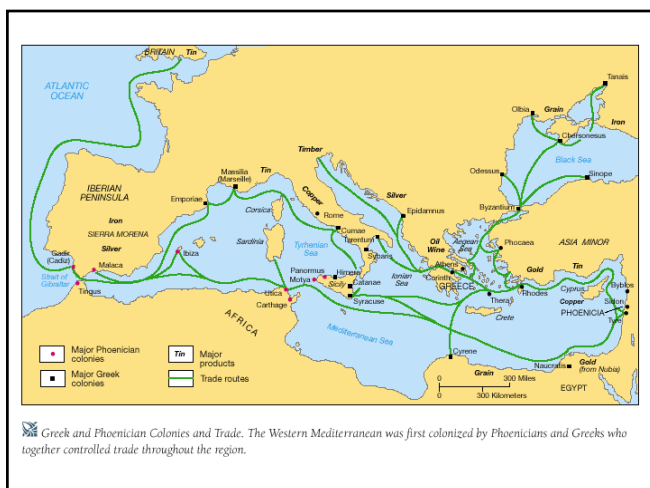
- An acropolis is a fortified hilltop that would have temples or other important buildings.
- An agora is an open area marketplace where citizens assembled, political leaders made speeches, and the populace congregated to conduct business and socialize.



The Acropolis, Athens. The Acropolis was the center of Athenian ceremonial and religious life.

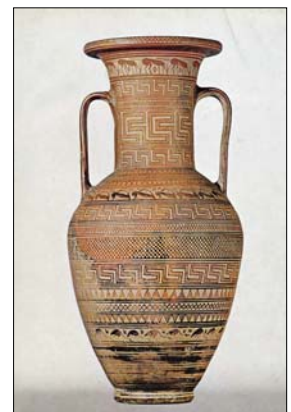
Three responses to the tensions of the age:

1. Trade: Athens engaged in widespread commercial ventures (emulating the Phoenicians).
2. Colonization: Corinth exported surplus population to colonies around the Mediterranean. "Metropolis" comes from the Greek for "mother city."
3. Conquest: Sparta conquered and enslaved their neighbors.



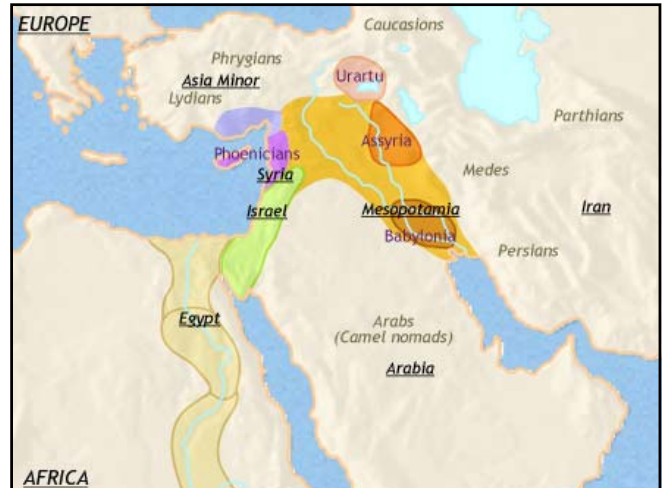
Greek and Phoenician Colonies and Trade. The Western Mediterranean was first colonized by Phoenicians and Greeks who together controlled trade throughout the region.

Geometric Art of the Archaic Period



Phoenicia (1200 – 539 BC)

- Established trading routes throughout the Mediterranean and beyond.
- Developed the alphabet which was later adopted by the Greeks.



Athens and Sparta

- Of all the poleis, Sparta and Athens stand out for their vividly contrasting styles of life and their roles in subsequent Greek history.
- Sparta, the principal symbol of Dorian civilization, governed with stringent and uncompromising policies.
- Athens, the symbol of Ionian civilization, represented the open, artistic, and intellectual society for which the ancient Greeks are most famous.



Sparta

- The earliest Spartans forcibly enslaved the *Helots*, the original inhabitants of the lower Peloponnesus.
- The ruling class, obsessed with keeping social order, passed laws forbidding immigration, limiting material possessions, and restricting creativity.
- To prevent rebellions, Sparta created a rigid hierarchical society of tough, athletic, and well-trained men, women, and children.

Spartan Education, the *Agoge*

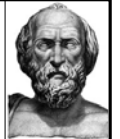
- Babies were inspected at birth and healthy ones were returned to their parents.
- At age seven, boys entered military brotherhoods to which they belonged for the rest of their lives. Rigorous mental, physical, and military training.
- From 18-20, many served in the *Krypteia*, the Spartan secret police.
- Men served in the army until age sixty.

Women in Sparta

- In Sparta, everyone was needed to maintain strict order, so women were given an education, allowed to own land, and engaged in many activities such as men did, making them strong and independent.
- Although men and women could choose who they wanted to marry, marriage was not companionate; its sole function was the production of more equals.



Spartan Constitution



- Lycurgus, a semi-legendary figure, gave Sparta its law/constitution, c. 750 BC.
- All Spartan males of age were "equals" who could vote in the *apella*.
- There was a 30 member senate of 60+ year old men that summoned the *apella*, and could veto its decisions.
- There were two kings who could veto each other's decisions and there were 5 *ephors* who oversaw the kings and broke deadlocks.

The Legacy of Sparta

- By about 550 BC, Sparta had formed the Peloponnesian League, which it used to control the peninsula.
- The Spartan system was still in place when Rome conquered Greece in the second century BC, but there were only a small number of equals left by then.
- Sparta was admired for its skilled, loyal, brave soldiers, and its stable social order, but it contributed little to the artistic enrichment of Greece.

Athens



In contrast to Sparta, Athens was the shining leader of the new age, reaching greater artistic, intellectual, and literary heights than did any other polis.

Political Change

- Athens is famous for being the birthplace of democracy, but like all of the other Greek poleis, it was initially ruled by wealthy, landed aristocrats.
- Change was forced by a number of factors:
 - Athenian soldiers were citizens who risked their lives for the city.
 - Successful trade made a wealthy new class of merchants in the city.
 - Debt slavery destroyed families and caused some Athenians to be sold abroad.

Citizen Soldiers

- New military tactics depended upon large numbers of foot soldiers, called hoplites, armed with long spears, protected by shields and personal armor, and grouped in close ranks called phalanxes.
- Recruited from independent farmers, merchants, traders, and artisans, these commoners demanded a voice in political decisions as their military value became evident.



Political Change

- Expanded trade increased the wealth of the new middle class, but the entrenched aristocracy limited their opportunities.
- Frustrated, in the 6th Century BC., Athens, like many poleis, entrusted tyrants with the power to make sweeping economic and political changes.

Solon – 594 BC

- Solon abolished debts and guaranteed a free peasantry, overhauled the judicial system, and recorded the laws.
- He also gave the lower ranks of free men – those without great name or noble family but with some property or wealth – the right to participate in government. (Timocracy)

Cleisthenes

- Solon's principle successor was Cleisthenes, who established democracy in Athens beginning in 508 BC.
- He broadened the governmental base by opening it to all free male citizens (the *demos*) regardless of property or bloodlines.
- These reforms, which lasted for almost two centuries, created an atmosphere in which civic pride and artistic energy were unleashed, the Hellenic period.

Rights of Others in Athenian Society

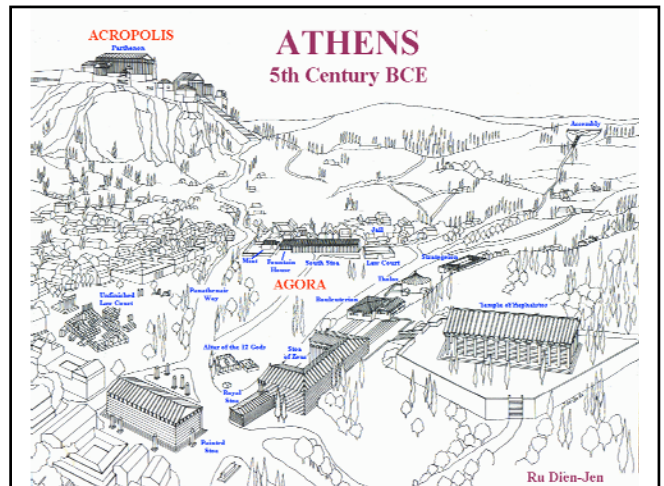
- In Athens, women pursued respectability as an ideal, which meant that they were supposed to marry and stay indoors, overseeing their households and performing domestic chores. Women possessed no legal or economic status and were by law under the control of the males in the household.
- Foreigners were placed in special categories that restricted their personal rights and limited their economic opportunities.
- Slaves had no rights and were treated as property, with little hope of future improvement.

Athenian Democracy

- *demos* = people
- *kratos* = force, power
- demos + kratos = democracy
- Citizens voiced their opinions in the assembly, sat on civil and criminal juries, and defended their polis in times of war.



A view of the Acropolis over the agora.



The Pnyx was the meeting place of the world's first democratic legislature, the Athenian *ekklesia*.

Entering the Golden Age

- The emergence of democracy was the first of two elements necessary for the creation of the Athenian Golden Age.
- The second element was the Greek victory over Xerxes in the Persian Wars...



In the mid-sixth century BC., the Persians ruled a huge empire that included the Greek poleis in Ionia. Ionian revolts against Persian control sparked the Persian Wars.



The Persian Wars - Darius

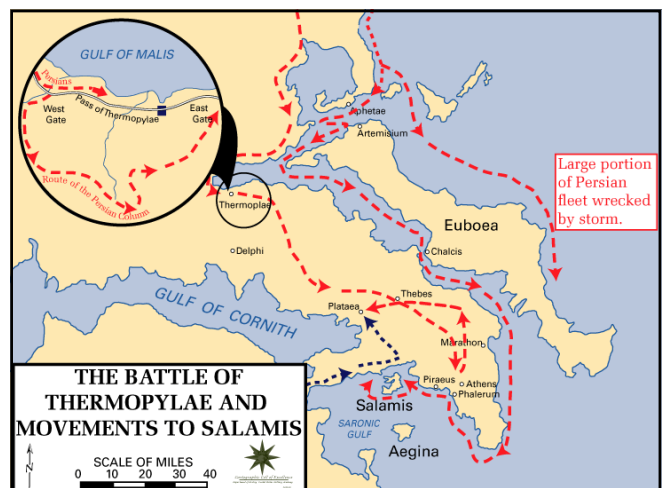
- Darius, king of the Persians in the late sixth century B.C., demanded taxes from the Ionian Greeks. They revolted and were supported by poleis from the mainland, including Athens.
- Darius defeated this expedition, but was in turn defeated when he invaded Greece at the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.



The Persian Wars. Greeks fought on both sides in the Persian Wars, while many others remained neutral.

Persian Wars - Xerxes

- Darius' son, Xerxes, invaded Greece again, defeating the Spartan lead Greeks at Thermopylae, a northern mountain pass.
- With nobody standing between them and the invading Persian army, the Athenians sought counsel at the Oracle of Delphi.



Delphi and the Oracle of Apollo



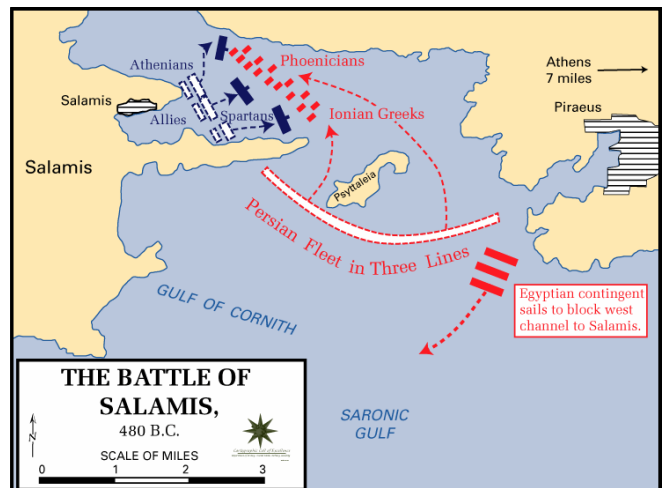
- An oracle is a person or agency considered to be a source of wise counsel or prophetic opinion; an infallible authority, usually spiritual in nature.
- The Pythia was the oracle at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and the most important oracle in Ancient Greece.
- During the Persian War, the oracle advised the Greeks to “trust in their wooden walls.”



Aegeus, a mythical king of Athens, a supplicant to the Pythia, the Delphic Oracle, who sits on a tripod.



<http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/19/science/for-delphic-oracle-fumes-and-visions.html>

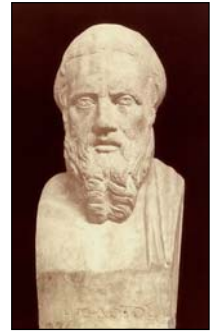


Persian Wars - Salamis

- The Persians sacked Athens, but the Athenians then destroyed the Persian fleet with their swifter ships at the battle of Salamis. Xerxes fled back to Persia, abandoning his army.
- After the remaining Persian army was routed at Plataea in 479 B.C., the mood in Athens was euphoric and the stage was set for the ensuing Hellenic Age.

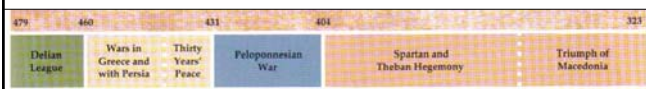
Herodotus (c. 484 -425 BC)

- The "Father of History"
- Wrote *Histories*, which recorded and analyzed the Persian Wars, which he viewed as West (Europe) vs. East (Asia).
- He has been criticized for bias and inaccuracy, but he laid the groundwork for the future of historical study.



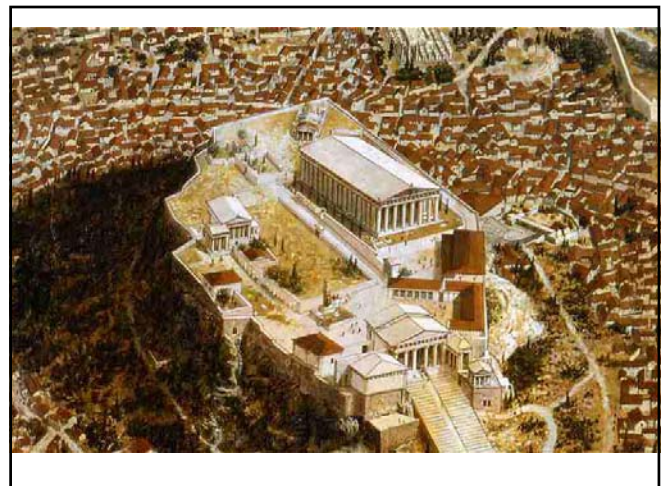
The Hellenic Age

- 479 – 323 BC. Defeating the Persians inaugurated an initial Golden age in Athens.
- Athenian imperialistic tendencies eventually drove the Greek alliance apart and lead to a long, self-destructive civil war, the Peloponnesian War, which Sparta won.
- Decades of fighting between the Greek poleis left them vulnerable. They were all conquered by Alexander the Great, who then went on to conquer Persia and Egypt.



Pericles (c. 495 – 429 BC)

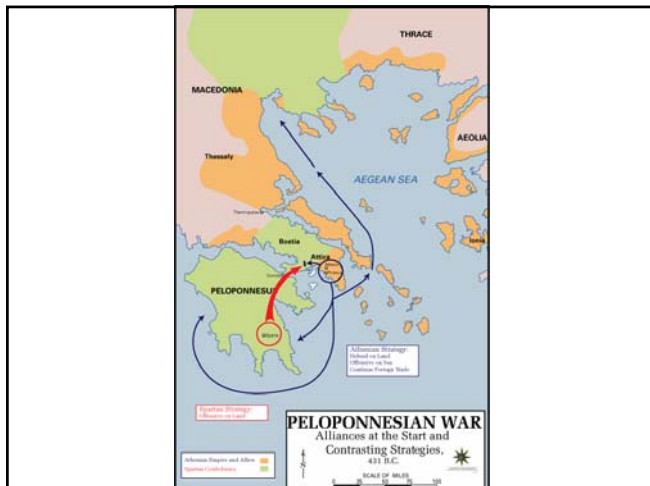
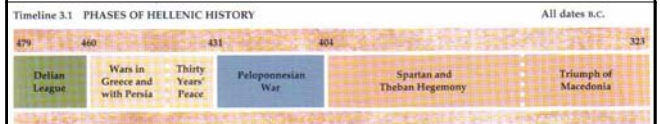
- A statesman of ancient Greece, who tried to unite Greece under the leadership of his own city, Athens.
- His rule is sometimes known as the Golden Age of Greece.
- Many magnificent buildings, including the Parthenon, were built under his administration.





The Peloponnesian War (431-404 B.C.)

- Begun when the delicate alliance of Greek city-states fell out of balance.
- Athens and its allies vs. Sparta and the Peloponnesian League.
- Athens, hurt by plague and overextended by fighting abroad, was eventually defeated.



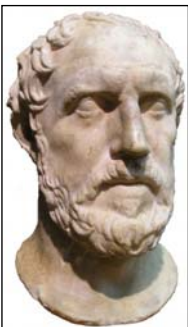
The Massacre of Melos, 416 BC

- The Athenians offered the Melians an ultimatum: surrender and pay tribute to Athens, or be destroyed.
- "Might makes right."
- Every Melian was either killed or sold into slavery.



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Melian_Debate

Thucydides



- Was an Athenian general during the Peloponnesian War
- Wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War*
- He was much more skeptical and inquiring than Herodotus, writing objectively about Athens and human nature.
- He warned that history could repeat itself if lessons from the past were not learned.

Some Practice Questions:

- Would you rather live in ancient Athens or Sparta? What if you didn't know if you would be a man or a woman, a citizen or a slave? Explain your answer.
- Why was Athens (and not Sparta) the source of inspiration and study for most Western cultures since ancient times?