

Chapter 8

The Greek Adventure

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Chapter Chronology

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c. 6500–4500 B.C.E.

Neolithic revolution spreads across Europe
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c. 2500–1500 B.C.E.

European transition to Bronze Age
.....

c. 2000–1400 B.C.E.

Minoan civilization on Crete
.....

c. 1600–1100 B.C.E.

Mycenaean Age
.....

c. 1100–800 B.C.E.

Greece's Dark Age
.....

c. 800–300 B.C.E.

Hellenic civilization in Greece
.....

c. 550–330 B.C.E.

Achaemenid Empire in Persia
.....

c. 500–325 B.C.E.

Classical Age in Greece
.....

336–323 B.C.E.

Alexander the Great's reign and campaigns
.....

c. 300–50 B.C.E.

Hellenistic Age in eastern Mediterranean and Western Asia
.....



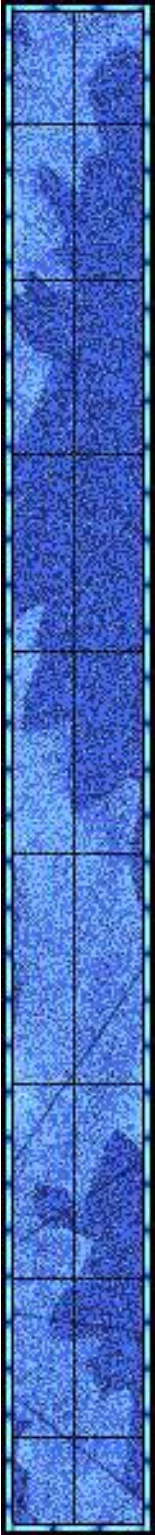
Geography and Political Development

- Greece is shaped by its geography
 - Many small islands
 - Mountainous mainland
 - Little suitable land for large scale farming
 - Abundant coastline and good harbors
- Greeks were expert sailors
 - Travel and trade by sea easier
- Geography encouraged political fragmentation
 - Each area developed own sense of community and identity
 - Only secondarily shared common culture and language



Minoan Civilization (c. 2000-1100 BCE)

- Origins of Greek civilization traditionally traced to Crete
 - Minos – mythical king of Crete
 - Minoans may not have been Greek
- Urbanized
- Written language not deciphered
- Seaborne commercial network
- Socially complex society
- Tiny states with palace-dwelling kings
- Great Palace of Knossos evidence of skill



Mycenaean Civilization

(c. 1600-1100 BCE) (Slide 1 of 2)

- **Mycenaeans**, an Indo-European people
 - Migrated to mainland Greece as nomadic herders
 - Settled c. 1600 BCE
 - Invaded Crete c.1450 BCE and took over trading network
 - Destruction of Minoan Civilization compounded by volcano, earthquakes
- Knowledge of Mycenaeans comes from archaeological excavations and epic poems, like **Homer's Iliad** and **Odyssey**
- Trojan War probably caused by Mycenaeans' trade rivalry with Troy
- Mycenaeans engaged in extensive internal warfare
 - Fell to the Dorians
 - Dark Ages began as culture declined (1100-800 BCE)

Early Hellenic Civilization

- The **Polis** (pl. poleis)
 - Community of free persons making up a town (city-state) with its surrounding farmland
 - Could be any size: Athens 300,000 people
 - Citizens shared sense of community and destiny
- Citizenship limited to free men (women, alien residents and slaves excluded)

Athens and Sparta

- Two poleis dominated Greek life and politics
 - Athens: urban, cosmopolitan, commercial, artistic, democratic
 - Sparta: rural, agrarian, spartan, militaristic, authoritarian
- Four types of government known to the Greeks
 - **Monarchy** (rule by a king)
 - **Aristocracy** (rule by “leading families”, nobility)
 - **Oligarchy** (rule by a few, wealthy landowners)
 - **Democracy** (rule by the people, majority will)

Early Athens

- Athens experienced several types of government
 - Original monarchy forced aside by aristocrats
 - Aristocrats gave way to oligarchs
 - Most important oligarch was Solon
 - Oligarchs gave him supreme power to deal with discontent
 - Solon established a constitution
- Pisistratus made himself sole ruler, gave concessions to common people
 - Tyrant: Ruler who gains power illegally
- **Cleisthenes**
 - Came to power as a tyrant
 - Established political bodies which laid the foundation of Athenian democracy

Athenian Democracy

Features of Athenian Democracy

- **Ekklesia** – town meeting
 - All free male Athenians, met on ad hoc basis
- **Boule**
 - Council of 500 citizens, served 1-year terms
 - Day-to-day legislature, executive
 - All male citizens would serve at least one term
- **Deme**
 - Territorial unit
 - Could select certain number of boule members
- **Ostracism**
 - Ten-year exile of those who did not conform

Spartan Militarism (Slide 1 of 2)

Sparta

- Located in southern Peloponnesus
- Defeated and subjugated neighboring Messenians
 - Reduced them to helots (near slaves)
 - Created highly militarized state to suppress helot rebellions
- Boys entered barracks at age 7 and spent their lives in the army
- Helots worked the fields and engaged in crafts

Spartan Militarism (Slide 2 of 2)

- Spartans held arts in contempt, rejected individualism
 - Public life meant total obedience
 - Government headed by **ephors** (elected officers)
 - Symbolic leadership of dual monarchy
- Most Greeks admired Spartan way of life
 - Self-discipline, courage, rigid obedience, physical vigor
 - Single-minded patriotism
- Sparta was conservative, non-aggressive state
 - Army was large and feared, thus rarely used



Persian Wars (490-478 BCE) (Slide 1 of 2)

First Persian War

- Both Athens and Sparta were concerned with keeping independent of foreign threat (expanding Persian Empire)
- Athens went to aid rebellious Ionian Greek colonies in Asia Minor (now the Turkish coast)
- Persian emperor Darius sent army to Greek mainland
- Athens defeated Persia at Battle of Marathon, 490 BCE

Persian Wars (490-478 BCE) (Slide 2 of 2)

Second Persian War

- Xerxes attempted overland invasion
- Poleis combined in joint effort to defend Greece
- Spartan troops held off Persians at Thermopylae, 480 BCE
- Athenian navy destroyed Persian fleet at Salamis, 480 BCE

Peloponnesian War (431-404 BCE)

- Delian League
 - Athens set up a naval alliance to guard against another Persian attack
 - Athens seemed to be building an empire
- Incident involving Corinth led to conflict between Athens, Sparta, and their allies
- War fought intermittently
- Finally Sparta, with naval help from Persia, defeated Athens



The Final Act in Classical Greece

- After Peloponnesian War city-states fought among themselves -- disunity
- Philip of Macedon
 - Transformed primitive society (Macedonia) to strong aggressive state
 - Built disciplined army
 - Dominated Greek mainland by 340s
 - Defeated Athens-Thebes at Charonea, 338 BCE
- Independence of city-states ended; foreign rule followed



Alexander the Great (336-323 BCE)

- Son of Philip of Macedon
- Carried out plan of his assassinated father to invade Persia
 - Used daring tactics in battle, the source of legends
 - Defeated Persians at Gaugamela (Iraq)
 - Conquered an empire that stretched from Egypt to Bactria and Indus Valley in only 10 years
 - Turned back when his exhausted army mutinied
 - Died in Babylon at age 33



A Mixed Culture

- Alexander the Great founded greatest empire the world had ever seen
 - Founded garrison cities named after him
 - Encouraged Greek emigration and intermarriage
 - Result was a mixture of Greek and Asiatic cultures
- Alexander's empire split into kingdoms (**Hellenistic kingdoms**), each ruled by one of his generals
- Greek participatory polis abandoned for absolutist monarchies
- Indian Hindu/Buddhist world introduced to the Western world
 - Greek realism influenced Buddhist and Zoroastrian plastic arts
 - Direct trade contacts between India and the Mediterranean
 - Influenced formation of Mauryan Dynasty and Kushan Empires in India and Central Asia



Greeks and Easterners in the Hellenistic Kingdoms

THREE MAJOR KINGDOMS:

- **Ptolemaic, Kingdom of Egypt**
 - General Ptolemy captured Egypt and ruled as pharaoh
 - By 100s BCE, Egypt became a hybrid society - Greeks and Egyptians intermixed
- **Seleucid, Kingdom of Persia**
 - General Seleucus ruled from India's borders to the Mediterranean
 - Kingdom began to lose pieces to rebels because of its large expanse
 - Immigrant Greeks mixed with locals especially in Syria and Turkey
 - When Romans invaded the western areas, most of the east was lost
- **Antigonid Kingdom**
 - General claimed the Macedonian homeland and part of Greece
 - Rest of Greece divided into city-states vying for political and economic supremacy
 - Fell to the Romans in the middle 100s BCE