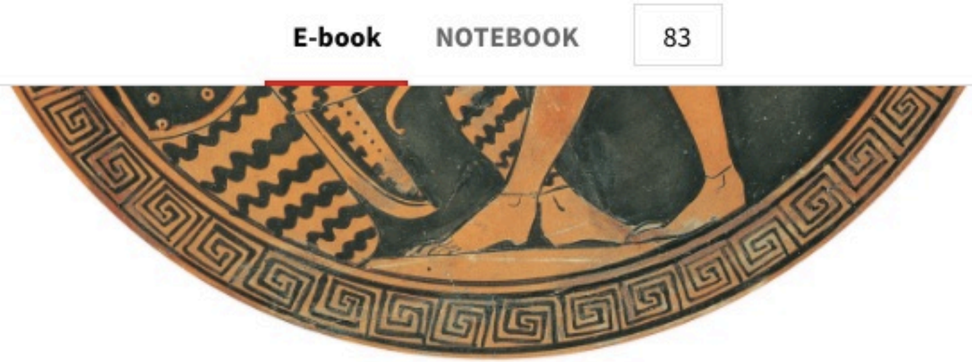
CHAPTER 3

The Greek Golden Age

c. 500–c. 400 B.C.E.

About the Cover Image >



Greek against Persian in Hand-to-Hand Combat (detail) This red-figure painting appears on the interior of a Greek wine cup. Painted about 480 B.C.E. (during the Persian Wars), it shows a Greek hoplite (armored infantryman) striking a Persian warrior in hand-to-hand combat with swords. The Greek has lost his principal weapon, a spear, and the Persian can no longer shoot his, the bow and arrow. The Greek artist has designed the painting to express multiple messages: the Persian's colorful outfit with sleeves and pants stresses the "otherness" of the enemy in Greek eyes, and the soldiers' serene expressions at such a desperate moment dignify the horror of killing in war. Greek warriors often had heroic symbols painted on their shields, such as the winged horse Pegasus, an allusion to the brave exploits of Bellerophon.

Chapter Preview

What factors produced political change in fifth-century B.C.E. Athens?

Tradition and Innovation in Athens's Golden Age

How did new ways of thinking in the Golden Age change traditional ways of life?

The End of Athens's Golden Age, 431–403 B.C.E.

What factors determined the course of the Peloponnesian War?

Fearing a Spartan attack to overthrow their democracy, the Athenians in 507 B.C.E. sent ambassadors to the Persian king Darius I (r. 522–486 B.C.E.) to request military assistance. Athens and Sparta so mistrusted each other that the Athenians chose to appeal to a foreign superpower for help against fellow Greeks. Darius's representative asked, "But who in the world are these people, and where do they live that they are begging for help from the Persians?" Even so, the Persian king offered to aid the Athenians on his standard terms: that they acknowledge his superiority. Darius was eager to dominate more Greek city-states because their trade and growing wealth made them desirable prizes. The voters in the Athenian democratic assembly rejected the deal, unwilling to agree that they were the king's inferiors.

This incident provides the background for the wars that dominated Greece's history throughout the fifth century B.C.E., first with Greeks fighting Persians and then with Greeks fighting Greeks. Conflicting interests and misunderstandings between Persia

Greeks fighting Greeks. Conflicting interests and misunderstandings between Persia and Greece at the start of the century ignited a great conflict: the Persian Wars (499–479 B.C.E.), culminating in a massive Persian invasion of mainland Greece. Thirty-one Greek states united to defeat the Persians, surprising everyone, including themselves. After their victory, however, they once again began fighting one another. Despite nearly constant warfare, fifth-century B.C.E. Greeks created their most famous innovations in architecture, art, and theater. This Golden Age, as historians later named it, is the first part of the period called the Classical Age of Greece, which extends from around 500 B.C.E. to the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.E.

New ideas in education and philosophy that became deeply controversial in the fifth century B.C.E. have had a lasting influence on Western civilization. The controversies arose because many people saw the changes as attacks on ancient traditions, especially religion; they feared the gods would punish their communities for abandoning ancestral beliefs. Political change also characterized what is called the Golden Age at Athens, the city-state about which we know the most. First, Athenian citizens made their city-state government more democratic than ever. Second, Athens grew internationally powerful by using its navy to establish dominance over other Greek city-states in a system criticized as “empire” by modern scholars. Athens’s naval power also promoted seaborne trade, and the profits from its commerce and international power generated unprecedented

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The Golden Age ended when Sparta defeated Athens in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.E.) and the Athenians subsequently fought a brief but bloody civil war (404–403 B.C.E.). The Peloponnesian War and its aftermath bankrupted and divided Athens.

Chapter Focus

Did war bring more benefit or more harm — politically, socially, and intellectually — to Golden Age Athens?

Wars between Persia and Greece, 499–479 B.C.E.

When the envoys from Athens met with the Persian king's representative in 507 B.C.E., they submitted to the monarch's demand: to present tokens of earth and water as symbolic acknowledgment of their city-state's submission to the Persian king. When the Athenian assembly subsequently repudiated their representatives' acceptance of these terms, it failed to inform King Darius. He therefore continued to believe that Athens had agreed to obey him in return for his support. This misunderstanding planted the seed for two Persian attacks on Greece. Since the Persian Empire dwarfed the Greek city-states in size and strength, the conflict pitted the equivalent of a huge bear against a pack of undersized dogs.

From the Ionian Revolt to the Battle of Marathon, 499–490 B.C.E.

In 499 B.C.E., the Greek city-states in Ionia rebelled against their Persian-installed

In 499 B.C.E., the Greek city-states in Ionia rebelled against their Persian-installed tyrants. The Athenians sent troops because they saw the Ionians as close kin. By 494 B.C.E., a Persian counterattack had crushed the revolt (Map 3.1). Darius exploded in anger when he learned that the Athenians had helped the Ionian rebels. He ordered a slave to repeat three times at every meal, "Lord, remember the Athenians."

About the Cover Image

MAP 3.1 The Persian Wars, 499–479 B.C.E.

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Following the example of King Cyrus (r. 557–530 B.C.E.), who founded the Persian Empire, his successors on the throne expanded the empire eastward and westward. King Darius I invaded Thrace (in southeastern Europe) more than fifteen years before the conflict against the Greeks that we call the Persian Wars. The Persians' unexpected defeat in Greece put an end to their attempt to extend their power into Europe.

In 490 B.C.E., Darius sent a force to punish Athens and install a puppet ruler. The Athenians confronted the invaders near the town of Marathon on their eastern coast. The Athenian soldiers were stunned by the Persians' clothing — colorful pants instead of the short tunics and bare legs that Greeks regarded as proper dress (see the chapter-opening photo) — but the Greek commanders had their infantry charge the enemy at a dead run. The soldiers in their heavy armor clanked across the plain through a hail of Persian arrows. In the hand-to-hand combat, the Greek hoplites used their long spears to overwhelm the Persian infantry.

The Athenian infantry then hurried the twenty-six miles to Athens to guard the city against the Persian navy. (Today's marathon races commemorate the legend of a runner speeding ahead to announce the victory — and then dropping dead.) The unexpected success of the Athenians strengthened their sense of community. When a rich strike was made in Athens's publicly owned silver mines in 483 B.C.E., Themistocles (c. 524–c. 460 B.C.E.) convinced the assembly to spend the windfall to double the size of the navy instead of dividing it among the citizens. (See

Themistocles (c. 524–c. 460 B.C.E.) convinced the assembly to spend the windfall to double the size of the navy instead of dividing it among the citizens. (See Environment Matters on page 88 to learn more about the effect of Greek warships on the environment.)

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A Signet of Persia's King Darius Like other kings in the ancient Mediterranean region, the Persian king hunted lions to show his courage and his ability to overcome nature's threats. In this scene from a signet, used to impress the royal seal into wet clay to verify documents, Darius I shoots arrows from a chariot driven for him by a charioteer. He is depicted wearing his crown so that his status as ruler would be obvious. The symbol of Ahura Mazda, the chief god of Persian religion, hovers in the sky to indicate that the king enjoys divine favor.

The Great Persian Invasion, 480–479 B.C.E.

Themistocles' foresight proved valuable when Darius's son Xerxes I (r. 486–465 B.C.E.) assembled an immense invasion force to avenge the loss at Marathon and add the mainland city-states to the lands paying him taxes. So vast was Xerxes' army, the Greeks claimed, that when the invaders began marching on Greece in 480 B.C.E. it took them seven days and seven nights to cross the strip of sea between Asia and Europe.

The thirty-one states that allied to defend their freedom represented only a small portion of the Greek world. This coalition desperately wanted the rich Greek city-states in Italy and Sicily to join. Syracuse, for example, the most powerful Greek state at the time, controlled a regional empire built on agriculture in Sicily's plains and seaborne commerce in the western Mediterranean. The tyrant ruling Syracuse rejected the allies' appeal for help because he was fighting his own war against Carthage, a Phoenician city in North Africa, over control of the lucrative sea trade routes. None of the western Greeks aided their mainland compatriots.

So, left on their own, the allies chose Sparta as leader because of its military excellence. The Spartans demonstrated their courage in 480 B.C.E. when three hundred of their infantry (and a few thousand fighters from other city-states) blocked Xerxes' army for several days at the pass called Thermopylae in central

hundred of their infantry (and a few thousand fighters from other city-states) blocked Xerxes' army for several days at the pass called Thermopylae in central Greece. Told the Persian archers were so numerous that their arrows darkened the sun, one Spartan reportedly remarked, "That's good news; we'll get to fight in the shade." They did — to the death. Their tomb's memorial proclaimed, "Go tell the Spartans that we lie buried here obedient to their orders."

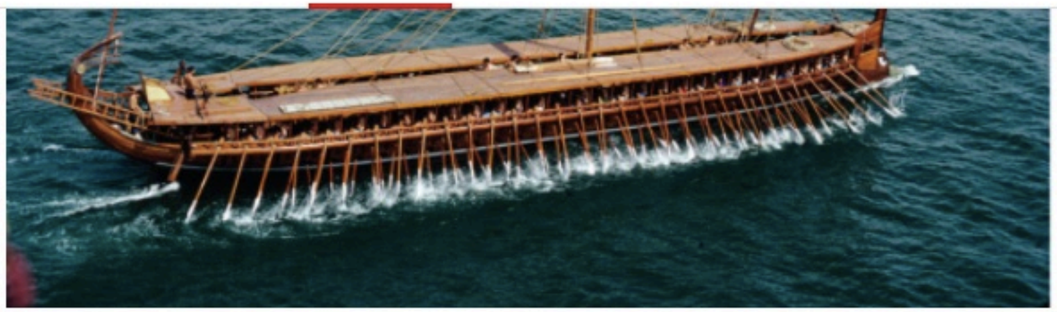
When the Persians marched south, the Athenians evacuated their homeland rather than surrender. The Persians burned Athens. Themistocles and his political rival Aristides (c. 530–c. 468 B.C.E.) cooperated to convince the other allies' generals to fight a naval battle. Themistocles tricked the Persian king into attacking the Greek fleet in the narrow channel between the island of Salamis and the west coast of Athens, where Xerxes could not send all his fleet (twice the size of the Greeks') into battle simultaneously. The heavier Greek warships won the battle by ramming the flimsier Persian craft. The battle of Salamis induced Xerxes to return home. In 479 B.C.E., the Greek alliance won a land battle that sent the Persians home for good. Showing characteristic foresight, Themistocles saw to it that the Athenians rebuilt the stone fortification walls protecting their urban center so that the Spartans could not in the future use their superior infantry to intimidate their wartime ally.

The Greeks won these epochal battles against the Persians because their generals had better strategic foresight, their soldiers had stronger weapons, and their

had better strategic foresight, their soldiers had stronger weapons, and their warships were more effective. Above all, the Greeks won the war because enough of them took the innovative step of uniting to fight for freedom. Because the Greek forces included both the social elites and the poorer men who rowed the warships, their success showed that rich and poor Greeks alike treasured political independence.

Environment Matters

Greek Warships and Deforestation



The development of the warship called the trireme revolutionized international relations among Greek city-states in the fifth century B.C.E. because these wooden ships made previous naval vessels obsolete. Effective national defense required a substantial fleet of high-tech triremes. City-states with enough money to pay the high costs of the prime timber and skilled builders needed to construct triremes and then cover the ongoing cost of training and paying their crews dominated the Mediterranean world militarily; Athens's triremes were the source of its imperial power. The demand for wood for triremes incurred another cost: the deforestation of much of central Greece, including around Athens. Timber then had to be imported by ship from the vast forests of the distant Black Sea region. The loss of trees on the Greek mainland in turn caused changes in the flora and fauna that further reduced environmental diversity.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think fifth-century Greeks could have made different choices that would have avoided the deforestation of their local environments?
2. How can we best think about evaluating and balancing the short-term versus long-term gains and losses of human effects on the environment?

Athenian Confidence in the Golden Age, 478–431 B.C.E.

Victory fractured the Greek alliance because the allies resented the harshness of the Spartans as commanders, and the Athenians now competed with them for leadership. This competition created the so-called Athenian Empire. The growth of Athens's power inspired its citizens to broaden their democracy and spend vast amounts to fund officials and jurors, public buildings, art, and religious festivals.

The Establishment of the Athenian Empire

Sparta and Athens built up separate alliances to strengthen their own positions, believing that their security depended on winning a competition for power. Sparta led strong infantry forces from the Peloponnese region, and its ally Corinth had a sizable navy. The Spartan alliance had an assembly to decide policy, but Sparta dominated.

Athens allied with city-states in northern Greece, on the islands of the Aegean Sea, and along the Ionian coast — the places most threatened by Persia. This alliance, the **Delian League**, was built on naval power. It began as a democratic alliance, but

the Delian League, was built on naval power. It began as a democratic alliance, but Athens soon controlled it because the allies allowed the Athenians to command and to oversee the financing of the league's fleet. At its height, the league included some three hundred city-states. Each paid dues according to its size; Athens determined how the dues were spent. Larger city-states paid their dues by sending triremes — expensive wooden warships propelled by 170 rowers on three levels, some hoplites on deck, and equipped with a battering ram at the bow (Figure 3.1) — complete with trained crews and their pay. Smaller states could share in building one ship or contribute money instead of ships and crews.

Gianni Dagli Orti/REX/Shutterstock.

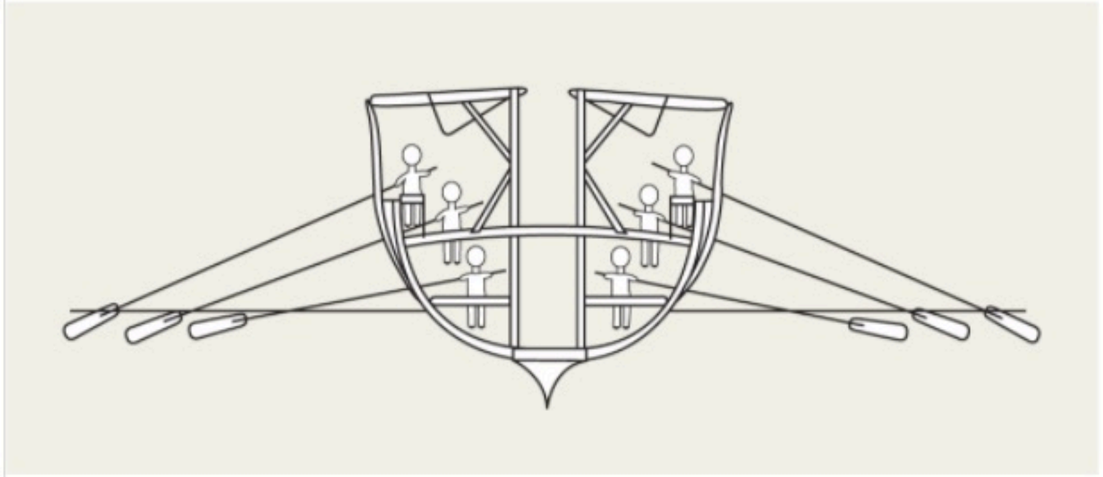


FIGURE 3.1 Triremes, the Foremost Classical Greek Warships

Innovations in military technology and training propelled a naval arms race in the fifth century B.C.E. when Greek shipbuilders designed larger and faster ramming ships powered by 170 rowers seated in three rows, each above the other. (See the line illustration of the rowers from behind.) Called triremes, these ships required great amounts of expensive prime timber to construct and required extensive crew training. Only wealthy and populous city-states such as Athens could afford to build and man large fleets of triremes. The relief sculpture found on the Athenian acropolis and dating from about 400 B.C.E. gives a glimpse of what a trireme looked like from the side when being rowed into battle. (Sails were used for power only when the ship was not in combat.)

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Over time, more and more Delian League members voluntarily paid cash because it was easier. Athens used this money to construct triremes and pay men to row them; oarsmen who brought a slave to row alongside them earned double pay. Drawn primarily from the poorest citizens, rowers gained both income and also political influence in Athenian democracy because the navy became the city-state's main force. These benefits made poor citizens eager to expand Athens's power over other Greeks. The increase in Athenian naval power thus promoted the development of a wider democracy at home, but it undermined the democracy of the Delian League.

The Athenian assembly could use the league fleet to force disobedient allies to pay cash dues. Athens's dominance of the Delian League has led historians to label it the *Athenian Empire*. By about 460 B.C.E., the Delian League's fleet had expelled all Persian garrisons from northern Greece and driven the enemy fleet from the Aegean Sea. This sweep eliminated the Persian threat for the next fifty years.

Military success made Athens prosperous by bringing in spoils and cash dues from the Delian League and making seaborne trade safe. The prosperity benefited rich and poor alike — the poor with good pay, the elite commanders by enhancing their chances for election to high office if they spent their war spoils on public festivals and buildings. In this way, the citizens of Golden Age Athens benefited from what some modern scholars call *imperialism*. (See Terms of History on page 196 in Chapter 6.)

Radical Democracy and Pericles' Leadership, 461–431 B.C.E.

In the late 460s B.C.E., the trireme rowers decided that in their own interest they should make Athens's court system as democratic as its legislative assembly, in which all free adult male citizens participated. They wanted to prevent the elite from rendering unfair verdicts in legal cases. Members of the elite pushed this judicial reform, to win popular support for election to high office; the measure passed in 461 B.C.E. **Pericles** (c. 495–429 B.C.E.), from one of Athens's most distinguished families, became Golden Age Athens's dominant politician by spearheading reforms to democratize its judicial system and provide pay for most public offices.

Historians have labeled the changes to Athenian democracy in the 460s and 450s B.C.E. *radical* ("from the roots") because the new system gave political and judicial power to all adult male citizens (the "roots" of democracy, in the Greek view). Many other Greek city-states had also become democracies by this period, such as Argos, Corinth, Elis, Thebes, and Syracuse. Although few details about their specific political arrangements have been preserved, we do know that a significant number of these city-states had, like Athens, an assembly of male citizens whose majority votes exercised the highest authority in the state. The existence of this kind of direct (as opposed to representative) democracy in classical Greece was something new in world history. It was not the model that large-scale modern democracies adopted, however; the founders of the United States, for example, sharply criticized Athenian democracy as "mob rule," choosing instead to establish a republic inspired by ancient Rome (see Chapter 5, page 160). Since Athens remains the best understood of ancient Greek democracies, the emphasis here is on Athenian history in its Golden Age.

What Would You Do?

If you lived in a direct democracy like that of Athens in the Classical Age, would you advocate for any changes in the political or judicial systems? If so, what changes and why? Do you think citizens of the contemporary democracy of the United States should advocate for changes to align it more closely with institutions and principles of Athenian democracy, for example, wider participation in public

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Athens's **radical democracy** (see Terms of History on page 91) consisted of the assembly, the Council of Five Hundred chosen annually by lottery, nine archons (higher-level officials) chosen by lottery, the Council of the Areopagus of ex-archons serving for life, an executive board of ten "generals" elected annually with political and military responsibilities, hundreds of other annual minor officials (most chosen by lottery), and the court system. This system balanced two competing goals: (1) wide participation by as many male citizens as possible through attendance at the assembly and service in official positions filled by lottery, and (2) effective political and military leadership in elective positions by citizens with education and international experience. These highest-level officials received no pay, only public acclaim — or criticism. All public offices had an annual term limit, but a successful "general" could be reelected indefinitely. Officials exercised power as members of committees, never as sole operators.

The changes in the judicial system strongly supported radical democracy. Previously, archons and the Council of the Areopagus had decided most legal cases. Citizens themselves initiated most arrests and legal actions because Athens had no lawyers, judges, or regular police in the modern sense (only some publicly owned slaves to stand guard at public buildings or assist officials when they needed backup while intervening in citizens' disputes or, rarely, making arrests). Law enforcement largely depended on "self-help," meaning that people depended on their friends, neighbors, and household slaves (if they could afford them) to come to their aid, and on bystanders to be willing to intervene and also serve as witnesses when crimes happened in public. Almost no one ever went out in the streets alone; safety depended on going around in groups. When they went out, those who owned houses left some slaves at home to prevent break-ins.

Court reform happened when, as with Cleisthenes before (see Chapter 2, page 76), an elite man proposed it in support of greater political influence for poorer citizens — to win their votes against his rivals. In 461 B.C.E., it was Ephialtes who convinced the assembly to establish a new system, taking jurisdiction from the archons and giving it to courts manned by citizen jurors. To increase participation and prevent bribery, jurors were selected by lottery from male citizens over thirty years old. They received pay to serve on juries numbering from several hundred to several thousand members. Jurors voted by secret ballot after hearing speeches from the persons involved, with every trial completed in a single day. As in the assembly, a

persons involved, with every trial completed in a single day. As in the assembly, a majority vote decided; no appeals of verdicts were allowed.

In Athenian radical democracy, the majority could overrule legal protections for individuals. In **ostracism**, all male citizens could cast a ballot on which they scratched the name of one man they thought should be exiled for ten years. If at least six thousand ballots were cast, the man whose name appeared on the greatest number was expelled from Athens. He suffered no other penalty; his family and property remained undisturbed. Usually a man was ostracized because a majority feared he would overthrow the democracy to rule as a tyrant. There was, however, no guarantee of motives in an ostracism, as a story about Aristides illustrates. He was nicknamed "the Just" because he had proved himself so fair-minded in setting the original level of dues for Delian League members. On the day of an ostracism, an illiterate citizen handed him a pottery fragment and asked him to scratch a name on it:

> "Certainly," said Aristides. "What name shall I write?" "Aristides," replied the man. "All right," said Aristides as he inscribed his own name, "but why do you want to ostracize Aristides? What has he done to you?" "Oh, nothing," the man muttered, "I don't even know him. I just can't stand hearing everybody call him 'the Just.' "

True or not, this tale demonstrates that most Athenians believed the best way to support democracy was to trust majority vote.

Some socially elite citizens bitterly criticized Athens's democracy for giving political power to the poor. These critics insisted that oligarchy — the rule of the few — was morally superior to radical democracy because they believed that the poor lacked the education and moral values needed for leadership and would use majority rule to strip the rich of their wealth by making them provide benefits to poorer citizens.

Pericles convinced the assembly to pass reforms to strengthen citizens' equality, making him the most influential leader of his era. He introduced pay for all offices filled by lottery and for jury service, so that the poor could afford to serve. In 451 B.C.E., Pericles sponsored a law restricting citizenship to those whose mother and father were both Athenian by birth. Previously, wealthy men had often married foreign women from elite families. This change increased the status of Athenian women, rich or poor, as potential mothers of citizens, and it made Athenian citizenship more valuable by reducing the number of people eligible for its legal and financial benefits. (See Contrasting Views on page 94.)

Pericles convinced the assembly to launch naval campaigns when war with Sparta broke out in the 450s B.C.E. The assembly was so eager to compete for power and plunder against other Greeks and against Persians in the eastern Mediterranean that it voted for up to three major expeditions at once. These efforts slowed in the late 450s B.C.E., after a large naval force sent to aid an Egyptian rebellion against

late 450s B.C.E., after a large naval force sent to aid an Egyptian rebellion against Persian rule suffered a horrendous defeat, losing tens of thousands of oarsmen. In 446–445 B.C.E., Pericles arranged a peace treaty with Sparta for thirty years, to preserve Athenian control of the Delian League.

Terms of History

Democracy

The term *democracy* comes from the ancient Greek word *dēmokratia*, formed from the words *dēmos* ("people, population of a land or region") and *kratos* ("power, strength"). So, *dēmokratia* originally meant something like "the power/strength of the inhabitants of a certain territory."

The first democratic states developed in ancient Greece; monarchy remained the most common form of government in the rest of the ancient Western world. The best known is Athens, whose government was a direct, not a representative, democracy. It is referred to as a "radical democracy" because it was direct rather than representative. Athenian democracy was direct because making law and policy and the power to punish belonged not to a voting body of elected representatives but to the *dēmos*, meeting either in the citizen assembly (*ecclesia*), the institution with ultimate power in political decision-making including the ability to declare war and peace, or convening as juries. Both these institutions made decisions by majority vote of a quorum of the adult male citizens who happened to be participating on that occasion. Since the attendance at an Assembly meeting represented by any standard a statistically significant sample of the population and the size of juries numbered from hundreds to thousands of men, their votes genuinely expressed the majority will of the *dēmos* — thought of as male citizens in the first instance. Decision-making had wider roots, however. Aristophanes' comic plays *Lysistrata* and *Women at the Assembly* provide

size of juries numbered from hundreds to thousands of men, their votes genuinely expressed the majority will of the *dēmos* — thought of as male citizens in the first instance. Decision-making had wider roots, however. Aristophanes' comic plays *Lysistrata* and *Women at the Assembly* provide evidence to be taken seriously, that Athenian women made their opinions on important civic matters known to their male relatives and were seen by men as having the capability to take action.

Finally, most public officials were chosen by lottery, and they as well as the limited number of top officials chosen by election had annual terms limits and were constantly liable for removal from office by prosecution by fellow citizens for malfeasance or incompetence. This meant Athenian democracy was much more in the hands of the *dēmos* than in a modern representative democracy such as in the federal republic of the United States. (See Terms of History in Chapter 5, page 160.)

Contrasting Views

The Nature of Women and Marriage

Greeks believed that women had different natures from men and that both genders were capable of excellence in their own ways. Marriage was supposed to bring these natures together in a partnership of complementary strengths and obligations to each other.

1. Melanippe's Rejection of Men's Criticism of Women

The heroine of Euripides' tragedy (only partially preserved) Melanippe the Captive *was a mother who overcomes hardship and treachery to save her family.*

Men's blame and criticism of women are empty, like the twanging sound a bowstring makes without

Men's blame and criticism of women are empty, like the twanging sound a bowstring makes without an arrow. Women are superior to men, and I'll demonstrate it. They make contracts with no need of witnesses [to swear they are honest]. They manage their households and keep safe the valuable possessions, shipped from abroad, that they have inside their homes. Without a woman, no household is elegant or happy. And then in the matter of people's relationship with the gods — this I judge to be most important of all — there we have the greatest role. For women prophesy the will of Apollo in his oracles [at Delphi], and at the hallowed oracle of Dodona by the sacred oak tree a woman reveals the will of Zeus to all Greeks who seek it. And then there are the sacred rites of initiation performed for the Fates and the Goddesses Without Names: these can't be done with holiness by men, but women make them flourish in every way. In this way women's role in religion is right and proper.

Therefore, should anyone put down women? Won't those men stop their empty fault-finding, the ones who strongly believe that all women should be blamed if a single one is found to be bad? I will make a distinction with the following argument: nothing is worse than a bad woman, but nothing is more surpassingly superior than a worthy one.

Source: Euripides, *Melanippe the Captive*, fragment 660 Mette. Translation by Thomas R. Martin.

2. A Husband Discusses Gender Roles in Marriage

In this fictional dialogue written by the Athenian male author Xenophon, an upper-class friend of Socrates named Ischomachus reports a discussion with his wife, who is represented as needing to be instructed by her husband concerning her full capability as a woman.

> *Ischomachus:* I said to her: … I for my sake and your parents for your sake [arranged our marriage] by considering who would be the best partner for forming a household and having children. I chose you, and your parents chose me as the best they could find. If God should give us children, we will

you, and your parents chose me as the best they could find. If God should give us children, we will then plan how to raise them in the best possible way. For our partnership provides us this good: the best mutual support and the best maintenance in our old age. We have this sharing now in our household, because I've contributed all that I own to the common resources of the household, and so have you. We're not going to count up who brought more property, because the one who turns out to be the better partner in a marriage has made the greater contribution.

Ischomachus's wife: But how will I be able to partner you? What ability do I have? Everything rests on you. My mother told me my job was to behave with thoughtful moderation.

Ischomachus: Well, my father told me the same thing. Thoughtful moderation for a man, as for a woman, means behaving in such a way that their possessions will be in the best possible condition and will increase as much as possible by good and just means … So, you must do what the gods made you naturally capable of and what our law requires … Since the work both outside and inside required effort and care, God, it seems to me, from the start fashioned women's nature for indoor work and men's for outdoor … But since both men and women have to manage things, [God] gave them equal shares in memory and attentiveness … God gave both an equal ability to practice self-control …

Precisely because they have different natures, they have greater need of each other and their yoking together is the most beneficial, with the one being capable where the other one is lacking.

Source: Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 7.10–30. Translation by Thomas R. Martin.

Questions to Consider

1. What evidence and arguments for differing natures for men and women do these documents, both written by men, offer? Why do think they express divergent views?
2. What do you see as the strengths and the weaknesses of Ischomachus' description of marriage as a partnership?

1. What evidence and arguments for differing natures for men and women do these documents, both written by men, offer? Why do think they express divergent views?
2. What do you see as the strengths and the weaknesses of Ischomachus' description of marriage as a partnership?
3. Do you think Athenian women of all social classes would have found these arguments convincing? Why or why not?

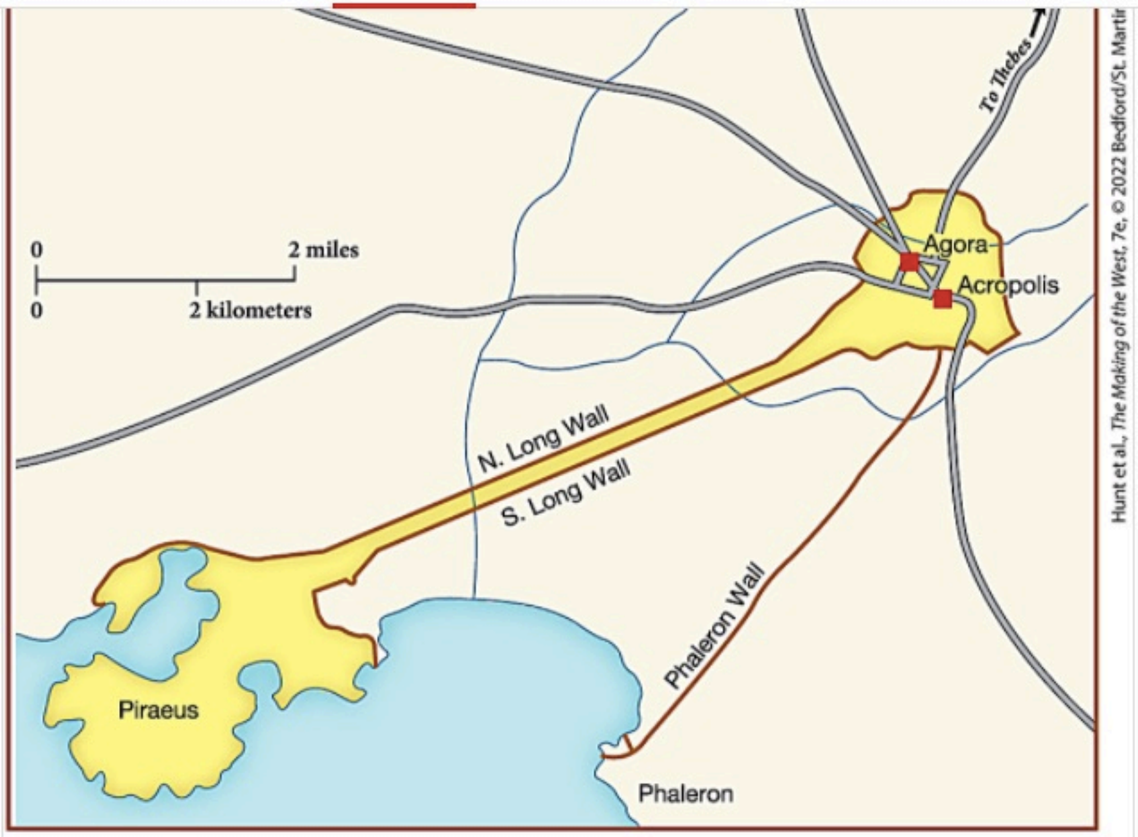
The Urban Landscape in Athens

Golden Age Athens prospered from Delian League dues, war spoils, and profits and taxes from seaborne trade. Its artisans produced goods traded far and wide; the Etruscans in central Italy, for example, imported countless painted vases. All these activities boosted Athens to its greatest prosperity.

Athenians spent their public resources on pay for citizens participating in its democracy and on public buildings, art, and religious festivals. In private life, rich urban dwellers splurged on luxury goods influenced by Persian designs, but most houses remained modest, plain, and crowded together. Archaeology at the city of Olynthus in northeastern Greece has revealed typical homes grouping bedrooms, storerooms, and dining rooms around open-air courtyards. Poor city residents rented small apartments. Toilets consisted of pots indoors and a pit outside the front door. The city paid collectors to dump the waste in the countryside.

Generals won votes by spending their war spoils on public running tracks, shade trees, and buildings. The super-rich commander Cimon (c. 510–c. 450 B.C.E.), for example, paid for the Painted Stoa to be built on the edge of Athens's **agora**, the central market square. There, shoppers could admire the building's paintings commemorating the military achievements of the family of Cimon. This sort of financial contribution was voluntary, but the city-state also required wealthy citizens to pay for festivals and warship equipment. This obligation on the rich was essential because Athens, as usual in ancient Greece, had no regular property or income taxes.

On Athens's acropolis (the rocky hill at the city's center, Map 3.2), Pericles had the most famous buildings of Golden Age Athens erected during the 440s and 430s B.C.E.: a mammoth gateway and also an enormous marble temple of Athena called the **Parthenon** ("virgin goddess's house"). These two buildings cost significantly more than a billion dollars today, a phenomenal sum for even a large Greek city-state. Pericles' political rivals slammed him for spending too much public money on the project and diverting Delian League funds to beautify Athens. Research in surviving financial records reveals this accusation was false: Athens's own revenues financed the building program.



MAP 3.2 Fifth-Century B.C.E. Athens

The urban center of Athens, with the agora (open marketplace) and acropolis (a high rocky plateau) at its heart, measured about one square mile; it was surrounded by a stone wall with a circuit of some four miles. Gates guarded by towers and various smaller entries allowed traffic in and out of the city. Much of the Athenian population lived in the many demes (villages) of the surrounding countryside. Most of the city's water supply

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The Parthenon is the foremost symbol of Athens's Golden Age. It honored Athena, the city's chief deity. Inside the temple, a gold-and-ivory statue nearly forty feet high depicted the goddess in armor, holding a six-foot-tall statue of Nike, the goddess of victory. Like all other Greek temples, the Parthenon was a divinity's residence, not a hall for worshippers. Its design was standard: a rectangular box on a raised platform lined with columns, a plan probably taken from Egypt. The Parthenon's soaring columns fenced in a porch surrounding the interior chamber. They were carved in the simple style called Doric, in contrast to the more elaborate Ionic and Corinthian styles (Figure 3.2).

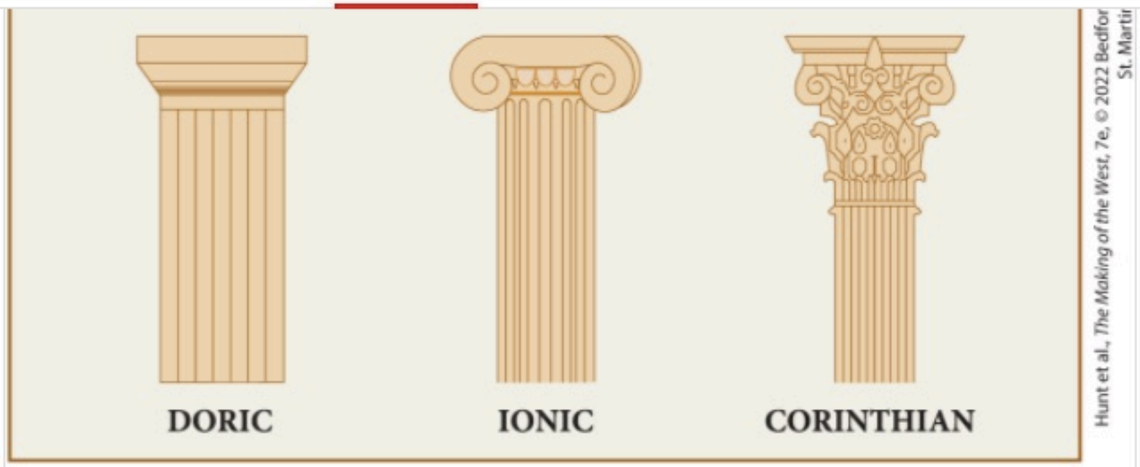


FIGURE 3.2 Styles of Greek Capitals

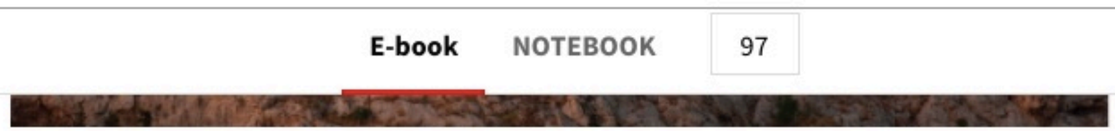
The Greeks decorated the capitals, or tops, of columns in these three styles to fit the different architectural "canons" (their word for precise mathematical systems of proportions) that they devised for designing buildings. These styles were much imitated in later times, as on many U.S. state capitols and the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C.

The Parthenon's massive size and innovative style proclaimed the self-confidence of Golden Age Athens and its competitive drive to build a monument more spectacular than any other in Greece. Constructed from twenty thousand tons of local marble, the temple stretched 230 feet long and 100 feet wide. Its complex architecture demonstrated the Athenian ambition to use human skill to improve nature: because

demonstrated the Athenian ambition to use human skill to improve nature: because perfectly rectilinear architecture appears curved to the human eye, subtle curves and inclines were built into the Parthenon to produce an illusion of completely straight lines and emphasize its massiveness.

Tom Pfeiffer/VolcanoDiscovery/Getty Images.

The Acropolis of Athens Most Greek city-states, including Athens, sprang up around a prominent rocky hill, called an acropolis ("height of the city"). The summit of the acropolis usually housed sanctuaries for the city's protective



The Acropolis of Athens Most Greek city-states, including Athens, sprang up around a prominent rocky hill, called an acropolis ("height of the city"). The summit of the acropolis usually housed sanctuaries for the city's protective deities and could serve as a fortress for the population during an enemy attack. Athens's acropolis boasted several elaborately decorated marble temples honoring the goddess Athena; the largest one was the Parthenon, seen here from its west (back) side. Recent research suggests that the ruins of a temple burned by the Persians when they captured Athens in 480 B.C.E. remained in place right next to the Parthenon. The Athenians left its charred remains to remind themselves of the sacrifices they had made in defending their freedom.

The Parthenon's many sculptures communicated confident messages: the gods ensure triumph over the forces of chaos, and Athenians enjoy the gods' goodwill more than anyone else. The sculptures in each pediment (the triangular space atop the columns at either end of the temple) portrayed Athena as the city-state's benefactor. The metopes (panels sculpted in relief above the outer columns around all four sides) portrayed victories over hostile centaurs (creatures with the body of a horse but torso and head of a man) and other enemies of civilization. Most strikingly of all, a frieze (a continuous band of figures carved in relief) ran around the top of the walls inside the porch and was painted in bright colors to make it more visible. The Parthenon's frieze was special because usually only Ionic-style buildings had one. The frieze showed Athenian men, women, and children parading before the gods, the procession shown in motion like the pictures in a graphic novel today.

No other Greeks had ever adorned a temple with representations of themselves. The Parthenon staked a claim of unique closeness between the city-state and the gods, reflecting the Athenians' confidence after helping turn back the Persians, achieving leadership of a powerful naval alliance, and accumulating great public wealth. Their city-state's success, the Athenians believed, proved that the gods were on their side, and their fabulous buildings displayed their gratitude.

Like the unique Parthenon frieze, the innovations that Golden Age artists made in representing the human body shattered tradition. By the time of the Persian Wars, Greek sculptors had begun replacing the stiffly balanced style of Archaic Age statues that resembled ancient Egyptian sculpture with statues in motion in new poses. This style of movement in stone expressed an energetic balancing of competing forces, echoing radical democracy's principles. Sculptors began carving anatomically realistic but perfect-looking bodies, suggesting that humans could be confident about achieving beauty and perfection. Female statues now displayed the shape of the curves underneath clothing, while male ones showed athletic muscles. The faces showed a more relaxed and self-confident look in place of the rigid smiles of Archaic Age statues.

Freestanding Golden Age statues, whether paid for with private or government funds, were erected to be seen by the public. Privately commissioned statues of

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Freestanding Golden Age statues, whether paid for with private or government funds, were erected to be seen by the public. Privately commissioned statues of gods were placed in sanctuaries as symbols of devotion. Wealthy families paid for statues of their deceased relatives, especially if they had died young in war, to be placed above their graves as memorials of their excellence and signs of the family's social status.

Review Question

What factors produced political change in fifth-century B.C.E. Athens?

Tradition and Innovation in Athens's Golden Age

Golden Age Athens's prosperity and international contacts created unprecedented innovations in architecture, art, drama, education, and philosophy, but the drive to innovate conflicted with traditional ways. In keeping with tradition, women were expected to limit their public role to participation in religious ceremonies. The controversial ideas of philosophers and teachers called Sophists and the Athenian philosopher Socrates' views on religion, morality, and personal responsibility upset many people, who feared the gods would become angry at the community for harboring these radically nontraditional thinkers. The tragic and comic plays presented in publicly funded drama festivals reflected the clash between innovation and tradition by examining problems in city-state life before large audiences.

Religious Tradition in a Period of Change

Greeks maintained religious tradition as salvation from life's dangers. They participated in the city-state's sacrifices and festivals and also worshipped privately. Different gods were worshipped with different rituals, from animal sacrifices to offerings of fruits, vegetables, and pastries. There was no official dogma about what

offerings of fruits, vegetables, and pastries. There was no official dogma about what to believe, but there was a social expectation for attendance at and respect for public religious functions such as sacrifices and festivals. Sacrificing large animals, funded by the public, gathered the community to reaffirm its ties to the divine world and to feast on roasted meat from the sacrificed creature. For poor people, this free food was often the only meat they ever ate.

The biggest festivals featured parades and contests in music, dancing, poetry, and athletics. Laborers' contracts specified how many days off they received to attend such ceremonies. Some festivals were for women only, such as the three-day festival for married women in honor of Demeter, goddess of agriculture and fertility.

Families marked significant events such as birth, marriage, and death with prayers, rituals, and sacrifices. They honored their ancestors with offerings made at their tombs, consulted seers about the meanings of dreams and omens, and paid magicians for spells to improve their love lives or curses to harm their enemies. Hero cults included rituals performed at the tomb of an extraordinarily famous man or woman because their remains were thought to retain special power to provide oracles, heal sickness, and protect the army. The strongman Herakles (or Hercules, as the Romans spelled his name) had cults all over the Greek world because his superhuman reputation gave him international appeal. **Mystery cults** initiated members into "secret knowledge" about the divine and human worlds.

initiated members into "secret knowledge" about the divine and human worlds. Initiates believed that they gained divine protection both while alive and after death.

The Athenian mystery cult of Demeter and her daughter Persephone at Eleusis, west of the urban center, was internationally famous. The cult's central rite was the Mysteries, a series of initiation ceremonies. They were so popular that an international truce — as with the Olympic Games — allowed people to travel from distant places to participate. The Mysteries were open to any free Greek-speaking individuals — women and men, adults and children — if they were clear of ritual pollution (for example, if they had not committed sacrilege, been convicted of murder, or had recent contact with a corpse or blood from a birth). Some slaves who worked in the Eleusinian sanctuary were also eligible to participate. The main stage of initiation took more than a week. A sixth-century B.C.E. poem explained the initiation's benefits: "Richly blessed is the mortal who has seen these rites; but whoever is not an initiate and has no share in them, that one never has an equal portion after death, down in the gloomy darkness."

Women, Slaves, and Metics

Women, slaves, and **metics** (foreigners granted permanent residence status in return for taxes and military service) made up the majority of Athens's population,

Women, Slaves, and Metics

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Women, slaves, and **metics** (foreigners granted permanent residence status in return for taxes and military service) made up the majority of Athens's population, but they lacked political rights. Citizen women enjoyed legal privileges and social status, earning respect through their family roles and religious activities. Upper-class women managed their households, visited female friends, and participated in religious cults. Poor women worked as small-scale merchants, crafts producers, and agricultural laborers. Slaves and metics performed a variety of jobs in agriculture and commerce; some metics started their own successful businesses.

Warden Fund/Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Bridgeman Images.

About the Cover Image

William Francis Warden Fund/Museum of Fine Arts, Boston/Bridge

Vase Painting of Women Fetching Water (detail) This vase painting shows women filling water jugs at a public fountain to take back to their homes. Both freeborn and slave women fetched water for their households, as few Greek homes had running water. Cities built attractive fountain houses such as this one, which dispensed fresh water from springs or piped it in through small aqueducts (compare the large Roman aqueduct on page 175). Women often gathered at fountains for conversation with people from outside their household.

About the Cover Image

Bearing children in marriage earned women public and family status. Men were expected to respect and support their wives. Childbirth was dangerous under the medical conditions of the time. In *Medea*, a play of 431 B.C.E. by Euripides (c. 480–406 B.C.E.), the heroine shouts in anger at her husband, who has selfishly betrayed their marriage: "People say that we women lead a safe life at home, while men have to go to war. What fools they are! I would much rather fight in battle three times than give birth to a child even once."

Wives were partners with their husbands in owning and managing the household's property. Rich women acquired property, including land — the most valued possession in Greek society because it could be farmed or rented out for income — through inheritance and dowry. A husband often had to put up valuable land of his own as collateral to guarantee repayment to his wife of the amount of her dowry if he squandered it.

Like fathers, mothers were expected to hand down property to their children to keep it in the family through male heirs, since only sons could maintain their father's family line; married daughters became members of their husband's family. The goal of keeping property in the possession of male heirs shows up most clearly in Athenian law about heiresses (daughters whose fathers died without any sons, which happened in about one of every five families): the closest male relative of the

which happened in about one of every five families): the closest male relative of the heiress's father — her official guardian after her father's death — was required to marry her. The goal was to produce a son to inherit the father's property. This rule applied regardless of whether either party was already married (unless the heiress had sons); the heiress and the male relative were both supposed to divorce their present spouses and marry each other. In real life, however, people often used legal technicalities to get around this requirement so that they could remain with their chosen partners.

Tradition restricted women's freedom of movement to protect them, men said, from seducers and rapists. Men wanted to ensure that their family property went only to their biological children. Well-off city women were expected to avoid contact with male strangers. Research has discredited the idea that Greek homes had a defined "women's quarter" to which women were confined. Rather, women were granted privacy in certain rooms under their control. In their homes women would spin wool to make clothes (there were few clothing shops), converse with visiting friends, direct their children, supervise the slaves, and express opinions on everything, including politics, to their male relatives. Poor women had to leave the house, usually a crowded rental apartment, to sell vegetables, bread, cloth, or decorative objects they had made.

A woman of wealth left home for religious festivals, funerals, childbirths at the

A woman of wealth left home for religious festivals, funerals, childbirths at the houses of relatives and friends, and shopping. Often her husband escorted her, but sometimes she took only a slave, setting her own itinerary. Most upper-class women probably viewed their limited contact with men as a badge of superior social status. For example, a pale complexion, from staying inside much of the time, was much admired as a sign of an enviable life of leisure and wealth.

Women who bore legitimate children gained increased respect and freedom, as an Athenian man explained in his speech defending himself for having killed his wife's lover:

> After my marriage, I at first didn't interfere with my wife very much, but neither did I allow her too much independence. I kept an eye on her.... But after she had a baby, I started to trust her more and put her in charge of all my things, believing we now had the closest of relationships.

Bearing male children brought a woman special honor because sons meant security. Sons could appear in court to support their parents in lawsuits and walk with them to protect them in the streets of Athens. By law, sons were required to support elderly parents.

Some women escaped traditional restrictions by working as a **hetaira** ("companion"). Hetairas, usually foreigners, were unmarried, physically attractive,

("companion"). Hetairas, usually foreigners, were unmarried, physically attractive, witty in speech, and skilled in music and poetry. Men hired them to entertain at a symposium (a drinking party to which wives were not invited). Their skill at clever teasing and joking with men gave hetairas a freedom of speech that "proper" women did not exercise in public. Hetairas nevertheless lacked the social status and respectability that married women possessed.

Sometimes hetairas sold sex for high prices; they could control their own sexuality by choosing their clients. Athenian men (but not women) could buy sex as they pleased without legal hindrance. Men (but not women) could also have sex freely with female or male slaves, who could not refuse their masters.

The most skilled hetairas earned enough to live in luxury on their own. The most famous hetaira in Athens was Aspasia from Miletus, who became Pericles' lover and bore him a son. She dazzled men with her brilliant talk and wide knowledge of society and politics. Pericles fell so deeply in love with her that he wanted to marry her, despite his own law of 451 B.C.E. restricting citizenship to the children of two Athenian parents.

Wealth freed a woman from traditional restrictions. The most outspoken rich Athenian woman was Elpinike. She once criticized Pericles to his face by sarcastically remarking in front of a group of women who were praising him for an

sarcastically remarking in front of a group of women who were praising him for an attack on a rebellious Delian League ally, "This really is wonderful, Pericles.... You have caused the loss of many good citizens, not in battle against Phoenicians or Persians ... but in suppressing an allied city of fellow Greeks."

Slaves and metics were considered outsiders. Both individuals and the city-state owned slaves, who could be purchased from traders or bred in the household. Some people picked up unwanted newborns abandoned by their parents (in an accepted practice called infant exposure) and raised them as slaves. Athens's commercial growth increased the demand for slaves, who in Pericles' time made up around 100,000 of the city-state's total of perhaps 250,000 inhabitants, the majority of whom lived outside the urban center in small villages. Slaves worked in homes, on farms, and in crafts shops; rowed alongside their owners in the navy; and toiled in Athens's dangerous silver mines. Unlike those in Sparta, slaves in Athens almost never rebelled, probably because they originated from too many different places to be able to unite.

Golden Age Athens's wealth and cultural activities attracted metics from all around the Mediterranean. By the late fifth century B.C.E., they constituted perhaps 50,000 to 75,000 of the city-state's estimated 150,000 free men, women, and children. Metics contributed to Athens's economy by creating businesses, but they could not usually become citizens.

Innovative Ideas in Education and Philosophy

Thinkers in the Greek Golden Age developed innovative ideas in education, philosophy, sculpture, history, and medicine. These innovations angered some people, who worried that these departures from tradition would undermine society, especially in religion, thereby provoking punishment from angry gods. Eventually, these changes promoted the development of scientific study as an enduring characteristic of Western civilization.

Education and philosophy provided the hottest battles between tradition and innovation. Parents had traditionally controlled their children's education, which occurred in the home and included hired tutors (there were no public schools). Controversy erupted when men known as Sophists appeared in the mid-fifth century B.C.E. and offered, for pay, classes to young males on nontraditional religious ideas and moral philosophy plus new techniques for persuasive public speaking. The philosopher Socrates' views on personal morality provoked another fierce controversy. In writing history, innovators created novel models of interpretation to explore human experience; medical specialists developed scientific methods to investigate the human body.

Disagreement over whether these intellectual changes were dangerous for Athenian society added to the political tension that had arisen at Athens by the 430s B.C.E.

society added to the political tension that had arisen at Athens by the 430s B.C.E. concerning Athens's harsh treatment of its own allies and its economic sanctions against Sparta's allies. (Athens and Sparta had not been on good terms since the 460s.) Athenians connected philosophic ideas about the nature of justice with their decisions about the city-state's domestic and foreign policy, while also experiencing anxiety concerning the gods' attitude toward the community.

Wealthy families sent their sons to private teachers to learn to read, write, play a musical instrument or sing, and to develop athletic skills. Physical training was considered vital because it made men's bodies handsome and prepared them to fight in the city-state's citizen-militia infantry, cavalry, and navy (all males from eighteen to sixty could be summoned to war anytime). Males exercised nude in gymnasia, public open-air facilities paid for by wealthy families. The daughters of wealthy families usually received instruction at home from educated slaves. Young girls learned reading, writing, and arithmetic to be able to help their future husbands by managing the household. Their learning how to turn raw wool into clothes was especially important to the family's flourishing in Athens's variable weather because most clothing had to be produced at home. It had high value because it took so much time to produce; most people had only a couple of outfits. The cloth women made was so valuable that stealing clothes was viewed as assault and carried the death penalty.

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About the Cover Image

Woman Playing with Wool This vase painting shows a woman apparently taking a break from working by juggling balls of wool taken from the basket at her feet, whose distinctive shape shows it was used in preparing wool to be made into clothing. Most of this labor took place in the home, with women in charge, whether doing the work themselves or overseeing slaves doing it. Wool was the primary material for Greek clothes, which were expensive despite their home production. (Clothing stores did not yet exist.) Therefore, except for the rich, most people owned only a couple of outfits. Stealing clothing counted as a very serious crime.

Poor girls and boys learned a trade and perhaps a little reading, writing, and arithmetic by assisting their parents in their daily work or by serving as apprentices to skilled craft workers. Most people probably were weak readers, but they could always find someone to read written texts aloud. Oral communication remained central to Greek life, in political speeches, songs, plays, and stories about the past.

Rich young men learned to participate in public life by observing their fathers, uncles, and other older men as they debated in the Council of Five Hundred and the assembly, served in public office, and spoke in court. Often an older man would choose an adolescent boy as his special favorite to educate. The teenager would

choose an adolescent boy as his special favorite to educate. The teenager would learn about public life by spending time with the older man. During the day the boy would listen to his mentor talking politics in the agora, help him perform his duties in public office, and work out with him in a gymnasium. They would spend their evenings at a symposium, whose agenda could range from serious political and philosophical discussion to riotous partying.

This older mentor/younger favorite relationship could lead to sexual relations between the youth and the older (married) male. Sex between mentors and favorites was considered acceptable in elite circles in many city-states, including Athens, Sparta, and Thebes. Some city-states banned this behavior, believing it reflected an adult man's shameful inability to control his lustful desires.

By the time radical democracy emerged in Athens, young men could obtain higher education in a new way: paying expensive professional teachers called **Sophists** ("men of wisdom"). Sophists challenged tradition by teaching new skills of persuasion in speaking and new ways of thinking based on rational arguments. Sophists became notorious for using complex reasoning to make what many people considered deceptive arguments.

By 450 B.C.E., Athens was attracting Sophists from around the Greek world. These entrepreneurs competed with one another to attract students able to pay a high

By 450 B.C.E., Athens was attracting Sophists from around the Greek world. These entrepreneurs competed with one another to attract students able to pay a high tuition. Sophists strove for excellence by offering specialized training in rhetoric — the skill of speaking persuasively. Every ambitious man wanted rhetorical training because it promised power in Athens's assembly, councils, and courts. The Sophists alarmed those who feared their teachings would destroy the tradition that preserved democracy. Speakers trained by silver-tongued Sophists, they believed, might be able to mislead the assembly while promoting their personal interests.

The most controversial Sophist was Protagoras (c. 490–c. 420 B.C.E.), a contemporary of Pericles. Emigrating to Athens from Abdera, in northern Greece, around 450 B.C.E., Protagoras expressed views on the nature of truth and morality that outraged many Athenians. He argued that there could be no absolute standard of truth because every issue had two irreconcilable sides. For example, if one person feels a breeze is warm but another person finds it cool, neither judgment can be absolutely correct because the wind simply is warm to one and cool to the other. Protagoras summed up this subjectivism — the belief that there is no absolute reality behind and independent of appearances — in his work *Truth*: "The human being is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are, and of the things that are not that they are not."

The subjectivism of Protagoras and other Sophists contained two main ideas: (1) human institutions and values are matters of *nomos* ("statute law, tradition, or convention") and not creations of *physis* ("nature"), and (2) since truth is subjective, speakers should be able to argue either side of a question with equal persuasiveness and rationality. The first view implied that traditional human institutions were arbitrary and changing rather than natural and permanent, while the second seemed to make questions of right and wrong irrelevant. (See Primary Source Analysis on page 106.)

The Sophists' critics accused them of teaching moral relativism that threatened the shared values of the democratic city-state. Aristophanes (c. 446–c. 386 B.C.E.), author of comic plays, satirized Sophists for harming Athens by instructing students in persuasive techniques "to make the weaker argument the stronger." Protagoras energetically responded that his doctrines were not hostile to democracy, arguing that every person had a natural capability for excellence and that human society depended on the rule of law based on a sense of justice. Members of a community, he explained, must be persuaded to obey the laws, not because laws were based on absolute truth, which did not exist, but because rationally it was advantageous for everyone to be law-abiding. A thief, for example, who might claim that stealing was a part of nature, would have to be persuaded by reason that a man-made law forbidding theft was to his advantage because it protected his own property and the

forbidding theft was to his advantage because it protected his own property and the community in which he, like all humans, had to live to survive.

Even more disturbing to Athenians than the Sophists' ideas about truth were their ideas about religion. Protagoras angered people with his agnosticism (the belief that supernatural phenomena are unknowable): "Whether the gods exist I cannot discover, nor what their form is like, for there are many impediments to knowledge, [such as] the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life." He upset those who thought he was saying that conventional religion had no meaning. They worried that his words would provoke divine anger against the community where he now resided.

Other fifth-century B.C.E. philosophers and thinkers also proposed controversial new scientific theories about the nature of the cosmos and the origin of religion. A philosopher friend of Pericles, for example, argued that the sun was a lump of flaming rock, not a god. Democritus, who visited Athens, invented an atomic theory of matter to explain how change was constant in the universe. Everything, he argued, consisted of tiny, invisible particles in eternal motion. Their random collisions caused them to combine and recombine in an infinite variety of forms, with no divine purpose guiding their collisions and combinations. These ideas seemed to invalidate traditional religion, which explained events as governed by the gods' will. Even more provocative was a play written by the wealthy Athenian

gods' will. Even more provocative was a play written by the wealthy Athenian aristocrat Critias that denounced religion as a clever but false system invented by powerful men to fool ordinary people into obeying moral standards through fear of divine punishment.

Many poorer citizens saw the Sophists and the philosophers as threats to Athenian democracy because only wealthy men could afford their classes or spend time conversing with them, thereby gaining yet more advantages by learning to speak persuasively in the assembly's debates or in court speeches. Moral relativism and the physical explanation of the universe struck many Athenians as especially dangerous to religion. These ideas so infuriated some Athenians that in the 430s B.C.E. they sponsored a law allowing citizens to bring charges of impiety against "those who fail to respect divine things or teach theories about the cosmos." Not even Pericles could prevent his philosopher friend from being convicted on this charge and expelled from Athens.

Socrates (469–399 B.C.E.), the most famous philosopher of the Golden Age, became well-known during this troubled time of the 430s, when people were anxious not just about new ways of thinking but also about war with Sparta. Socrates devoted his life to questioning people about their beliefs, but he insisted he was not a Sophist because he took no pay. Above all, he rejected the view that justice in fact amounted to power over others. Insisting that true justice was always better than

amounted to power over others. Insisting that true justice was always better than injustice, he created an emphasis on ethics (the study of ideal human values and moral duties) in Greek philosophy.

Socrates lived an eccentric life attracting constant attention. Sporting a stomach that he called "a bit too big to be convenient," he wore the same cheap cloak summer and winter and always went barefoot no matter how cold the weather. His physical stamina — including both his tirelessness as a soldier and his ability to outdrink anyone — was legendary. He lived in poverty and disdained material possessions, though he supported a wife and several children by accepting gifts from wealthy admirers.

Socrates spent his time in conversations all over Athens: participating in a symposium with friends, strolling in the agora, or watching young men exercise in a gymnasium. He wrote nothing. Our knowledge of his ideas comes from others' writings, especially those of his famous follower Plato (c. 428–348 B.C.E.). Plato portrays Socrates as a relentless questioner of his fellow citizens, foreign friends, and leading Sophists. Socrates pushed his conversational partners to examine their basic assumptions about life. Giving few answers, Socrates never directly instructed anyone. Instead, he led people to draw conclusions in response to his probing questions and refutations of their unexamined beliefs. Today this procedure is called the Socratic method

called the **Socratic method**.

Socrates frequently outraged people because his method made them feel ignorant and baffled. His questions forced them to admit that they did not in fact know what they had assumed they knew very well. Even more painful to them was Socrates' fiercely argued view that the way they lived their lives — pursuing success in politics or business or art — was merely an excuse for avoiding the hard work of understanding and developing genuine *aretê* ("excellence"). Socrates insisted that he was ignorant of the definition of excellence and what was best for human beings, but that his wisdom consisted of knowing that he did not know. He vowed he wanted to improve, not undermine, people's ethical beliefs, even though, as a friend put it, a conversation with Socrates made a man feel numb — as if a jellyfish had stung him.

Socrates especially wanted to use reasoning to discover universal, objective standards for individual ethics. He attacked the Sophists for their relativistic claim that conventional standards of right and wrong were merely "the chains that handcuff nature." This view, he protested, equated human happiness with power and "getting more." Socrates insisted that the only way to achieve true happiness was to behave according to a universal, transcendent standard of just behavior that people could understand rationally. The most desirable human life was concerned

people could understand rationally. The most desirable human life was concerned with excellence and guided by reason, not by dreams of personal gain.

Unhappiest of all with Socrates were the fathers whose sons, after listening to Socrates' questions reduce someone to utter bewilderment, came home to try the same technique on their parents, employing the Socratic method to criticize their parents' values as old-fashioned and worthless. Men who experienced this reversal of the traditional educational hierarchy — the father was supposed to educate the son — felt that Socrates was undermining the stability of society by making young men question Athenian traditions. Socrates evidently did not teach women, but Plato portrays him as ready to learn from exceptional women, such as Pericles' companion Aspasia.

The worry that Socrates' ideas presented a danger to conventional society inspired Aristophanes to write his comedy *The Clouds* (423 B.C.E.). This play portrays Socrates as a cynical Sophist who, for a fee, offers instruction in Protagoras's technique of making the weaker argument the stronger. When Socrates' school transforms a youth into a public speaker arguing persuasively that a son has the right to beat his parents, his father burns the place down. None of these plot details was real, but people did have a genuine fear that Socrates' radical views on individual morality endangered the city-state's traditional practices.

Primary Source Analysis

How to Argue Both Sides of a Case

The Sophist Protagoras taught his students to argue both sides of any case, but he insisted he did not teach this skill for immoral purposes. Some teachers following in his footsteps were less ethical. This excerpt comes from an anonymous handbook of the late fifth century B.C.E. entitled Double Arguments, which provided examples of how Sophists could make arguments in the fashion of Protagoras.

Greek philosophers put forward double arguments concerning the good and the bad. Some say that the good is one thing and the bad another, but others say that they are the same, and that a thing might be good for some persons but bad for others, or at one time good and at another time bad for the same person. I myself agree with those who hold the latter opinion, which I shall examine using as an example human life and its concern for food, drink, and sexual pleasures: these things are bad for someone if the person is sick but good if the person is healthy and needs them. And, further, overindulgence in these things is bad for the one who overindulges but good for those who make a profit by selling these things. And again, sickness is bad for the sick but good for the doctors. And death is bad for those who die but good for the undertakers and makers of grave monuments.… Shipwrecks are bad for the ship owners but good for the ship builders. When tools are blunted and worn away it is bad for others but good for the blacksmith. And if a pot gets smashed, this is bad for everyone else but good for the potter. When shoes wear out and fall apart it is bad for others but good for the shoemaker.… In the *stadion* race for runners, victory is good for the winner but bad for the losers.

Source: *Dissoi Logoi* 1.1–6. Translation adapted from Rosamund Kent Sprague, ed., *The Older Sophists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 279–280.

Questions to Consider

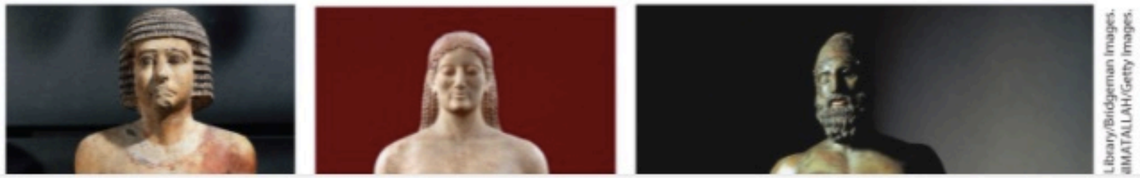
death is bad for those who die but good for the undertakers and makers of grave monuments.... Shipwrecks are bad for the ship owners but good for the ship builders. When tools are blunted and worn away it is bad for others but good for the blacksmith. And if a pot gets smashed, this is bad for everyone else but good for the potter. When shoes wear out and fall apart it is bad for others but good for the shoemaker.... In the *stadion* race for runners, victory is good for the winner but bad for the losers.

Source: *Dissoi Logoi* 1.1–6. Translation adapted from Rosamund Kent Sprague, ed., *The Older Sophists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), 279–280.

Questions to Consider

1. Do you think it is possible ever to reach a firm conclusion about whether something is good or bad? Why or why not?
2. Do think it could be harmful to teach people to make arguments of this kind in law or politics or business? Why or why not?

Transformations in Sculpture, History, and Medicine

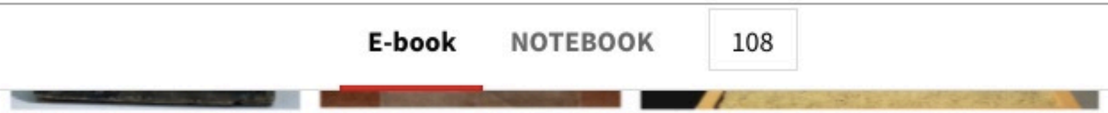


Transformations in Sculpture, History, and Medicine

Left: Musee de Louvre, Paris, France/G. Dagli Orti/DE Agostini Picture Library/Bridgeman Images. middle: DEA PICTURE LIBRARY/Getty Images. right: DEA/G. NIMATALLAH/Getty Images.

The Evolution of Greek Sculpture as Cultural Expression These statues illustrate the importance of sculpture as a mode of cultural expression. The image at the left portrays the Egyptian government official Kaemheset from

About the Cover Image



The Evolution of Greek Sculpture as Cultural Expression These statues illustrate the importance of sculpture as a mode of cultural expression. The image at the left portrays the Egyptian government official Kaemheset from about 2400 B.C.E.; the middle one is a Greek warrior named Croesus from about 530 B.C.E.; the one at the right is an unnamed Greek male warrior/athlete from about 450 B.C.E. The two Greek statues originally had color added that has been lost over time. The resemblance of the pose of Croesus reveals that Greek sculptors originally took inspiration from Egypt. The relaxed, asymmetrical pose of the second Greek statue shows how sculptural style evolved in the classical age of Greece. That both these statues show nude males with perfect physiques reflects the tradition of idealizing the male human form at this point in Greek history. What do you think this evolution in sculptural style might mean in terms of cultural expression?

Sculptors' new representations of the human form paralleled this departure from tradition. Instead of creating images of people displaying the stiff, frontal poses derived from Egyptian art that had characterized Archaic Age statues, Golden Age sculptors crafted figures with their limbs in more relaxed positions. They still carved their physiques as ideally beautiful and fit, but the fluidity of the poses diverged from past standards, aligning with the transition in modes of thought that thinkers like Socrates were promoting.

The men who first wrote Greek history similarly created controversy because they took a critical attitude in their descriptions of the past. Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c. 485–425 B.C.E.) and Thucydides of Athens (c. 455–399 B.C.E.) became Greece's most famous historians and established Western civilization's tradition of writing

most famous historians and established Western civilization's tradition of writing history. The fifth century B.C.E.'s unprecedented events — a coalition Greek victory over the world's greatest power and then the longest war ever between Greeks — inspired them to create history as a subject based on strenuous research. They explained that they wrote histories because they wanted people to remember the past and to understand why wars had taken place.

Herodotus's work *The Histories* ("Inquiries" in Greek) explained the Persian Wars as a clash between the cultures of the East and West. Herodotus — who by Roman times had become known as the Father of History — made the justifiable claim that he took an in-depth and investigative approach to evidence, examining the culture of non-Greeks as well as Greeks, and expressing explicit and implicit judgments about people's actions. Because Herodotus recognized the necessity (and the delight) of studying other cultures with respect, he looked for long-standing cultural differences to help explain the Persian-Greek conflict. He showed that Greeks and non-Greeks were equally capable of good and evil. Unlike poets and playwrights, he focused on human psychology and interactions, not the gods, as the driving forces in history.

Thucydides innovated — and competed with Herodotus — by writing contemporary history and creating the kind of analysis of power that today underlies political

history and creating the kind of analysis of power that today underlies political science. His *History of the Peloponnesian War* made power politics, not divine intervention, history's primary force. Deeply affected by the war's brutality, Thucydides used his experiences as a politician and failed military commander (he was exiled for losing a key outpost) to make his narrative vivid and frank in describing human moral failings. His insistence that historians should energetically seek out the most reliable sources and evaluate their testimony with objectivity set a high standard for later writers. Like Herodotus, he challenged tradition by revealing that Greek history included not just glorious achievements but also shameful acts (such as the Athenian punishment of the Melians in the Peloponnesian War — see page 115).

Hippocrates (c. 460–c. 370 B.C.E.) of Cos, a contemporary of Thucydides, challenged medical tradition by grounding diagnosis and treatment in clinical observation. His fame continues today in the oath bearing his name (the Hippocratic oath), which doctors swear at the beginning of their professional careers. Previously, medicine had depended on magic and ritual. People believed that evil spirits caused diseases, and various cults offered healing to patients through divine intervention. Competing to refute these earlier doctors' theories, Hippocrates insisted that only physical factors caused illnesses. He may have been the author of the view, dominant in later medicine, that four humors (fluids) made up the human body: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. Health depended on keeping the proper

blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. Health depended on keeping the proper balance among them; being healthy was to be "in good humor." This system for understanding the body corresponded to the division of the inanimate world into four elements: earth, air, fire, and water.

Hippocrates taught that the physician's most important duty was to base his knowledge on careful observation of patients and their responses to different treatments. Clinical experience, not abstract theory or religious belief, was the proper foundation for establishing effective cures. By putting his innovative ideas and practices to the test in competition with those of traditional medicine, Hippocrates established the truth of his principle, which later became a cornerstone of scientific medicine.

The Development of Public Drama: Tragedy and Comedy

Katia Singletary/AGE Fotostock.

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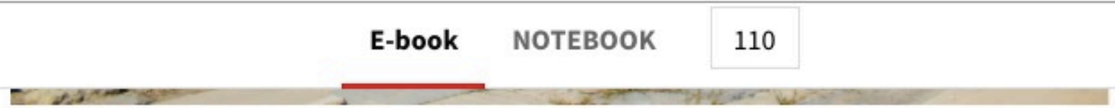
Theater of Dionysus at Athens Around 14,000 spectators packed this theater in Athens on the southern side of the acropolis as the audience for plays (tragedies and comedies) presented as part of multiday festivals honoring the

About the Cover Image



Theater of Dionysus at Athens Around 14,000 spectators packed this theater in Athens on the southern side of the acropolis as the audience for plays (tragedies and comedies) presented as part of multiday festivals honoring the god Dionysus. Originally the theater had only a few permanent seats in the front rows for VIPs, but eventually stone seating was built on the slope of the hill, curving around the flat circular area down front where the chorus would dance and sing; the actors appeared on a temporary stage set up at the edge of this area.

Ideas about the problematic relationships between gods and humans and between humans and other humans inspired Golden Age Athens's most prominent cultural innovation: publicly funded tragic and comic plays presented before mass audiences. Public revenues and mandatory contributions by the rich paid for Athenian dramas (called tragedies) and comedies, which were both presented in a contest for playwrights held before large audiences as part of multiday festivals for the god Dionysus.

The competition in presenting tragedies began with an official choosing three authors from a pool of applicants about a year before each festival. Each of the finalists then prepared four plays to be presented on a separate day of the festival: three tragic plays in a row (a trilogy), followed by a semicomic play featuring satyrs (mythical half-human, half-animal beings) to end the day on a lighter note. Tragedies were written in verses of solemn language, and many were based on stories about the violent possibilities when gods and humans interacted. The plots often ended with a resolution to the trouble — but only after enormous suffering

often ended with a resolution to the trouble — but only after enormous suffering and loss.

At Athens, as in many other cities in Greece, plays were presented during the daytime in an outdoor theater. The one at Athens was built into the southern slope of the acropolis and held about fourteen thousand spectators overlooking an open, circular area in front of a slightly raised stage. A tragedy had eighteen cast members, all of whom were men: three actors to play the speaking roles (both male and female characters) and fifteen chorus members. The chorus performed in the circular area down in front of the stage, called the orchestra, dancing and singing about themes of the play; its designated leader could exchange dialogue with the actors up on stage.

A successful play offered a vivid spectacle. The chorus wore elaborate costumes and presented intricate musical routines. The actors wore masks, using broad gestures and booming voices to reach the upper tier of seats. A powerful voice was crucial to a tragic actor because words represented the heart of the plays, which featured extensive dialogue and long speeches. Special effects were popular. Actors playing the roles of gods swung from a crane to fly suddenly onto the stage. Actors playing lead roles, called the protagonists ("first competitors"), competed to win the "best actor" award. A skilled protagonist was so important to a play's success that actors were assigned by lottery to the competing playwrights so that all three had an equal

were assigned by lottery to the competing playwrights so that all three had an equal chance to have a winning cast. Great actors became enormously popular.

Playwrights came from the social elite because only men with wealth could afford the amount of time and learning this work demanded. They served as authors, directors, producers, musical composers, choreographers, and occasionally actors for their own plays. As citizens, playwrights fulfilled the military and political obligations of Athenian men. The best-known Athenian tragedians — Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.E.), Sophocles (c. 496–406 B.C.E.), and Euripides (c. 485–406 B.C.E.) — all served in the army, and Sophocles was elected to Athens's board of "generals." Authors of plays competed from a love of honor, not money. The prizes, determined by a board of judges, awarded high prestige but little cash. The competition was regarded as so important that any judge who took a bribe in awarding prizes was put to death.

Tragic plots set out the difficulties of telling right from wrong when humans came into conflict and the gods became involved. Even though most tragedies were based on stories that referred to a legendary time before city-states existed, such as the period of the Trojan War, the plays' moral issues were relevant to the society and obligations of citizens in a city-state. The plays suggest that human beings learn only by suffering but that the gods could, if they wished, provide justice in the long

only by suffering but that the gods could, if they wished, provide justice in the long run. For example, Aeschylus's trilogy *Oresteia* (458 B.C.E.) explains the divine origins of democratic Athens's court system through the story of the gods finally stopping the murderous violence in the family of Orestes, son of King Agamemnon, the Greek leader against Troy.

Sophocles' *Antigone* (441 B.C.E.) presents the story of the cursed family of Oedipus of Thebes as a drama of harsh conflict between a courageous woman, Antigone, and the city-state's stern male leader, her uncle Creon. After her brother dies in a failed rebellion, Antigone insists on her family's moral obligation to bury its dead in obedience to divine command. Creon, however, takes harsh action to preserve order and protect community values by prohibiting the burial of his traitorous nephew. In a horrifying story of raging anger and suicide that features one of the most famous heroines of Western literature, Sophocles exposes the right and wrong on each side of the conflict. His play offers no easy resolution of the competing interests of divinely sanctioned moral tradition and the state's political rules.

Tragedies did not explicitly refer to current politicians or policies, but by basing their plots on difficult moral dilemmas, authors of tragedies stimulated spectators to consider the dangers to democracy from ignorance, arrogance, and violence. Audiences reacted strongly to the messages of these tragedies. For one thing, spectators realized that the plays' central characters were people who experienced

spectators realized that the plays' central characters were people who experienced disaster even though they held positions of power and prestige. The characters' reversals of fortune came about not because they were absolute villains but because, as humans, they were susceptible to a lethal mixture of error, ignorance, and **hubris** (violent arrogance that transformed people's competitive spirit into a self-destructive force).

The Athenian Empire was at its height when audiences at Athens attended the tragedies written by competing playwrights. Thoughtful playgoers could reflect on the possibility that Athens's current power and prestige, managed as they were by humans, might fall victim to the same kinds of mistakes and conflicts that brought down the heroes and heroines of tragedy. Thus, these publicly funded plays both entertained through their spectacle and educated through their stories and words. In particular, they reminded male citizens — who governed the city-state in its assembly, council, and courts — that success created complex moral problems that self-righteous arrogance turned into community-wide catastrophes.

Golden Age Athens developed comedy as its second distinctive form of public theater. Like tragedies, comedies were written in verse and performed as spectacles with a chorus in publicly funded festivals honoring the god Dionysus. Comedies commented *directly* on public policy and *bluntly* criticized current politicians and intellectuals. They also portrayed women as powerfully concerned with the fate of

intellectuals. They also portrayed women as powerfully concerned with the fate of their city-state. The plots and casts of comedies presented outrageous fantasies of contemporary life. Comic choruses, which had twenty-four dancing singers, could be colorfully costumed as talking birds or dancing clouds, or an actor could fly on a giant dung beetle to visit the gods.

Authors competed to win the award for the festival's best comedy by creating beautiful poetry, raising laughs with constant jokes and puns, and mocking self-important citizens and political leaders. The humor, delivered in a stream of imaginative profanity full of "dirty words," frequently concerned sex and bodily functions. Well-known men of the day were targets for insults as cowards or weaklings. Women characters, when portrayed as figures of fun and ridicule, seem to have been fictional to protect the dignity of actual female citizens.

Athenian comedies often mocked political leaders. As the leading politician of radical democracy, Pericles was the subject of fierce criticism in comedy. Comic playwrights ridiculed his policies, his love life, even the shape of his skull ("Old Turnip Head" was a favorite insult). Aristophanes (c. 455–385 B.C.E.), Athens's most famous comic playwright, so fiercely satirized Cleon, the city's most prominent leader early in the Peloponnesian War, that Cleon sued him. A citizen jury ruled in Aristophanes' favor, upholding the Athenian tradition of free speech.

In several of Aristophanes' comedies, the main characters are powerful women who force the men of Athens to change their policy to preserve family life and the city-state. These plays even criticize the assembly's policy during wartime. Most famous is *Lysistrata* (411 B.C.E.), named after the female lead character of the play. In this fantasy, the women of Athens and Sparta unite to force their husbands to end the Peloponnesian War. To make the men agree to a peace treaty, they first seize the acropolis, where Athens's financial reserves are kept, to prevent the men from squandering them further on the war. They then use sarcasm and pitchers of cold water to beat back an attack on their position by a top official accompanied by public slaves as enforcers and a group of old men (the chorus) who have remained in Athens while the younger men are away at war with Sparta. Above all, the women steel themselves to refuse to sleep with their husbands returning from battle. The effects of their sex strike on the men, portrayed in a series of explicit episodes, finally drive the warriors to make peace.

Lysistrata presents women acting bravely and aggressively against men who seem bent on destroying traditional family life — the men are absent from home for long stretches while on military campaigns and ruin the city-state by prolonging a pointless war. Lysistrata insists that women have the intelligence and judgment to make political decisions: "I am a woman, and, yes, I have brains. And I'm pretty good in my judgment. My education hasn't been bad: it came from my listening

good in my judgment. My education hasn't been bad: it came from my listening often to the conversations of my father and the elders among the men." Lysistrata's old-fashioned training and good sense allow her to see what needs to be done to protect the community. Like the heroines of tragedy, Lysistrata is a conservative — even a reactionary. She wants to put things back the way they were before the war fractured family life. To do that, she has to act like an impatient revolutionary. That irony sums up the challenge that fifth-century B.C.E. Athens faced in trying to resolve the tension between the dynamic innovation of its Golden Age and the importance of tradition in Greek life. At the same time, the plot of this comic play, like that of others by Aristophanes such as *Women at the Assembly*, reveals that men blocked women from direct political participation because they felt defensive about women's capabilities in thought and action. (Compare the speech by Melanippe from a tragedy by Euripides quoted in Contrasting Views on pages 94–95.)

The remarkable freedom of speech of Athenian comedy allowed frank, even brutal, commentary on current issues and personalities. It is significant that this energetic, critical drama emerged in Athens at the same time as radical democracy, in the mid-fifth century B.C.E. The feeling that all (male) citizens should have a stake in determining their government's policies evidently fueled a passion for using biting humor to keep the community's (male) leaders from becoming arrogant and aloof.

The End of Athens's Golden Age, 431–403 B.C.E.

A prolonged war between Athens and Sparta (431–404 B.C.E.) ended the Golden Age. This conflict is called the Peloponnesian War because it matched Sparta's Peloponnese-based alliance against Athens and the Delian League. The war started, according to Thucydides, because the growth of Athenian power made the Spartans afraid that they were losing their international preeminence. (This example of fear causing disastrous war among rival nations is now called the "Thucydides Trap" in political science.) Pericles, who deeply distrusted the Spartans, persuaded Athens's assembly to take a hard line when Sparta demanded that Athens ease restrictions on city-states allied with Sparta. Corinth and Megara, crucial Spartan allies, complained bitterly to Sparta about Athens. Finally, Corinth told Sparta to attack Athens, or else Corinth and its navy would change sides to the Athenian alliance. Sparta's leaders therefore gave Athens an ultimatum — stop mistreating our allies. Pericles convinced the Athenian voters to reject the ultimatum on the grounds that Sparta had refused to settle the dispute through the third-party arbitration process called for by the 446–445 B.C.E. treaty. Pericles' critics claimed he was insisting on war against Sparta to revive his fading popularity. His supporters replied that he was defending Athenian honor and protecting foreign trade, a key to the economy.

was defending Athenian honor and protecting foreign trade, a key to the economy. By 431 B.C.E., these disputes had shattered the peace treaty between Athens and Sparta that Pericles had negotiated fifteen years before.

The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.E.

Lasting longer than any previous war in Greek history, the Peloponnesian War (Map 3.3) took place above all because Spartan leaders feared that they had to fight *now* to keep the Athenians from using their superior long-distance offensive power — the Delian League's naval forces — to destroy Sparta's control of their Peloponnesian League. Sparta made the first strike of the war, but the conflict dragged on so long because the Athenian assembly failed to negotiate peace with Sparta when it had the chance and because the Spartans eventually made a deal with Persia to secure money to build a fleet to win the war.

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MAP 3.3 The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.E.

For the first ten years, the Peloponnesian War's battles took place largely in mainland Greece. Sparta, whose armies usually avoided distant

MAP 3.3 The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.E.

For the first ten years, the Peloponnesian War's battles took place largely in mainland Greece. Sparta, whose armies usually avoided distant campaigns, shocked Athens when its general Brasidas led successful attacks against Athenian forces in northeast Greece. Athens stunned the entire Greek world in the war's next phase by launching a huge naval expedition against Spartan allies in far-off Sicily. The last ten years of the war saw the action move to the east, on and along the western coast of Anatolia and its islands, on the boundary of the Persian Empire. Feeling threatened, the Persian king helped the Spartans build a navy there to defeat the famous Athenian fleet. Look at the route of Athens's expedition to Sicily; why do you think the Athenians took this longer voyage, rather than a more direct route?

Dramatic evidence for the emotions that fueled the war comes from Thucydides' version of Pericles' stern oration to the Athenian assembly about not yielding to Spartan pressure:

> If we do go to war, have no thought that you went to war over a trivial affair. For you this trifling matter is the assurance and the proof of your determination. If you yield to their demands, they will immediately confront you with some larger demand, since they will think that you only gave way on the first point out of fear. But if you stand firm, you will show them that they have to deal with you as equals.... When our equals, without agreeing to arbitration of the matter under dispute, make claims on us as neighbors and state those claims as commands, it would be no better than slavery to give in to them, no matter how large or how small the claim may be.

When Sparta invaded Athenian territory, Pericles advised a two-pronged strategy to

Athens. A feud between Sparta's two most important leaders paralyzed the Spartans, and they failed to send decisive help to the Athenian collaborators. The democratic rebels defeated the forces of the Thirty Tyrants in a series of bloody street battles in Athens.

Democracy was restored, but the citizens still seethed with anger and unrest. To settle the internal strife that threatened to tear Athens apart, the newly restored democratic assembly voted the first known amnesty in Western history, a truce agreement forbidding any official charges or recriminations from crimes committed in 404–403 B.C.E. Agreeing not to pursue grievances in court was the price of peace. As soon became clear, however, some Athenians harbored grudges that no amnesty could dispel. In addition, Athens's financial and military strength had been shattered. At the end of the Golden Age, Athenians worried about how to remake their lives and restore the reputation that their city-state's innovative accomplishments had produced.

Review Question

What factors determined the course of the Peloponnesian War?

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MAPPING THE WEST

About the Cover Image

MAPPING THE WEST

Greece, Europe, and the Mediterranean, 400 B.C.E.

No single power controlled the Mediterranean region at the end of the fifth century B.C.E. In the west, the Phoenician city of Carthage and the Greek cities on Sicily and in southern Italy were rivals for the riches to be won by trade. In the east, the Spartans, confident after their recent victory over Athens in the Peloponnesian War, tried to become an international power outside the mainland for the first time in their history by sending campaigns into Anatolia. This aggressive action aroused stiff opposition from the Persians because it threatened their westernmost imperial provinces. There was to be no peace and quiet in the Mediterranean, even after the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian War.

Analyzing the Map: The city of Syracuse is located on which large Mediterranean island?

Making Connections: To judge from the territories indicated on the map, why would it have been unexpected for a coalition of Greek city-states to defeat the Persian Empire?