ally. First, across Greece, communities began to organize themselves and exercise authority over their own limited geographical regions, which were defined by natural boundaries—mountains, rivers, and plains. The population of even the largest communities was largely dedicated to agriculture, and agricultural values—a life of hard, honest work and self-reliance—predominated. The great pastoral poem of the poet Hesiod [HE-see-ud] (flourished ca. 700 BCE), *Works and Days*, testifies to this. *Works and Days* was written at about the same time as the Homeric epics in Boeotia [be-OH-she-uh], the region of Greece dominated by the city-state of Thebes. Particularly interesting is Hesiod's narration of the duties of the farmer as the seasons progress. Here are his words regarding the farmer's obligation to plow his fields (**Reading 4.3**):

READING 4.3

from Hesiod, *Works and Days*, (ca. 700 BCE)

Autumn

Mind now, when you hear the call of the crane
Coming from the clouds, as it does year by year:
That's the sign for plowing, and the onset of winter
And the rainy season. That cry bites the heart
Of the man with no ox.
    Time then to feed your oxen
In their stall. You know it's easy to say,
"Loan me a wagon and a team of oxen."
And it's easy to answer, "Got work for my oxen."
It takes a good imagination for a man to think
He'll just peg together a wagon. Damn fool,
Doesn't realize there's a hundred timbers make up a
    wagon
And you have to have 'em laid up beforehand at home.
Soon as you get the first signs for plowing
Get a move on, yourself and your workers,
And plow straight through wet weather and dry,
Getting a good start at dawn, so your fields
Will full up. Work the land in spring, too,
But fallow turned in summer won't let you down.
Sow your fallow land while the soil's still light.
Fallow's the charm that keeps wee-uns well-fed.
Pray to Zeus-in-the-ground and to Demeter sacred
For Demeter's holy grain to grow thick and full.
Pray when you first start plowing, when you
Take hold of the handle and come down with your stick.
On the backs of the oxen straining at the yoke-pins.
A little behind, have a slave follow with a hoe
To make trouble for the birds by covering the seeds.
Doing things right is the best thing in the world,
Just like doing 'em wrong is the absolute worst.
This way you'll have ears of grain bending
Clear to the ground . . .

In this extract, Hesiod gives us a clear insight not only into many of the details of Greek agricultural production, but into social conditions as well. He mentions slaves twice in this short passage, and, indeed, all landowners possessed slaves (taken in warfare), who comprised over half the population. He also mentions the Greek gods Zeus [zoos], king of the gods and master of the sky, and Demeter, goddess of agriculture and grain (see *Context*, page 112). In fact, it was Hesiod, in his *Theogony* [the-OG-uh-nee] (*The Birth of the Gods*), who first detailed the Greek pantheon (literally, "all the gods"). The story of the creation of the world that he tells in this work (**Reading 4.4**) resembles the origin myths from the Zuni emergence tale (see Reading 1.1) and the Japanese Shinto *Kojiki* (see Reading 1.2):

READING 4.4

from Hesiod, *Theogony*, (ca. 700 BCE)

First of all the Void[1] came into being, next broad-bosomed Earth, the solid and eternal home of all,[2] and Eros [Desire], the most beautiful of the immortal gods, who in every man and every god softens the sinews and overpowers the prudent purpose of the mind. Out of the Void came Darkness and black Night, and out of Night came Light and day, her children conceived after union in love with Darkness. Earth first produced starry Sky, equal in size with herself.

[1]The Greek word is *Chaos*; but this has a misleading connotation in English.
[2]Omitting lines 118–19. "the immortals who live on the peaks of snowy Olympus, and gloomy Tartarus in a hole underneath the highways of the earth."

Behavior of the Gods

Of particular interest here—as in Homer's *Iliad*—is that the gods are as susceptible to Eros [er-oss], or Desire, as is humankind. In fact, the Greek gods are sometimes more human than humans—susceptible to every human foible. Like many a family on Earth, the father, Zeus, is an all-powerful philanderer, whose wife, Hera [HAIR-uh], is watchful, jealous, and capable of inflicting great pain upon rivals for her husband's affections. Their children are scheming and self-serving in their competition for their parents' attention. The gods think like humans, act like humans, and speak like humans. They sometimes seem to differ from humans only in the fact that they are immortal. Unlike the Hebrew God, who is sometimes portrayed as arbitrary, the Greek gods present humans with no clear principles of behavior, and the priests and priestesses who oversaw the rituals dedicated to them produced no scriptures or doctrines. The gods were capricious, capable of changing their minds, susceptible to argument and persuasion, alternately obstinate and malleable. If these qualities created a kind of cosmic uncertainty, they also embodied the intellectual freedom and the spirit of philosophical inquiry that would come to define the Greek state.

THE POLIS

Although Greece was an agricultural society, the **polis**, or city-state—not the farm—was the focal point of cultural life

It consisted of an urban center, small by modern standards, often surrounding some form of natural citadel, which could serve as a fortification, but which usually functioned as the city-state's religious center. The Greeks called this citadel an **acropolis** [uh-KROP-uh-liss]—literally, the "top of the city." On lower ground, at the foot of the acropolis, was the **agora** [AG-uh-ruh], a large open area that served as public meeting place, marketplace, and civic center.

Athens led the way, perhaps because it had become something of a safe haven during the Dark Ages, even flourishing as a result, and it thus maintained something of a civic identity. However, by 800 BCE, several hundred similar poleis [POL-ays] (plural of polis [POL-us]) were scattered throughout Greece. Gradually, the polis came to describe less a place and more a cultural and communal identity. The citizens of the polis, including the rural population of the region—the polis of Sparta, for instance, comprised some 3,000 square miles of the Peloponnese, while Athens controlled the 1,000 square miles of the region known as Attica—owed allegiance and loyalty to it. They depended upon and served in its military. They worshipped and trusted in its gods. And they asserted their identity, first of all, by participating in the affairs of the city-state, next by their family (*genos*) [jee-nus] involvement, and, probably least of all, by any sense of being Greek.

In fact, the Greek poleis are distinguished by their isolation from one another and their fierce independence. For the most part, Greece is a very rugged country of mountains separating small areas of arable plains. The Greek historian Thucydides [thoo-SID-ih-deez] attributed the independence of the poleis to the historical competition in earlier times for these fertile regions of the country. His *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*, written in the last decades of the fifth century and begun during the wars (he served as a general in the Athenian army), opens with an account of these earlier times, tracing the conflict in his own time to that historical situation (Reading 4.5):

READING 4.5

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*

[I]t is evident that the country now called Hellas had in ancient times no settled population; on the contrary, migrations were of frequent occurrence, the several tribes readily abandoning their homes under the pressure of superior numbers. Without commerce, without freedom of communication either by land or sea, cultivating no more of their territory than the exigencies of life required, destitute of capital, never planting their land (for they could not tell when an invader might not come and take it all away, and when he did come they had no walls to stop him), thinking that the necessities of daily sustenance could be supplied at one place as well as another, they cared little for shifting their habitation, and consequently neither built large cities nor attained to any other form of greatness. The richest soils were always most subject to this change of masters; such as the district now called Thessaly [THES-uh-lee], Boeotia, most of the Peloponnese, Arcadia excepted, and the most fertile parts of the rest of Hellas. The goodness of the land favored the aggrandizement of particular individuals, and thus created faction which proved a fertile source of ruin. It also invited invasion.

HEAR **MORE** Listen to an audio feature on the *Peloponnesian War* **www.myartslab.com**

While Greek poleis might form temporary alliances, almost always in league against other poleis, few of the invasions Thucydides speaks of resulted in the domination of one polis over another, at least not for long. Rather, each polis maintained its own identity and resisted domination.

But inevitably, certain city-states became more powerful than others. During the Dark Ages, many Athenians had migrated to Ionia [eye-OH-nee-uh] in southwestern Anatolia [an-uh-TOE-lee-uh] (modern Turkey), and relations with the Near East helped Athens to flourish. Corinth, situated on the isthmus between the Greek mainland and the Peloponnese, controlled north–south trade routes from early times, but after it built a towpath to drag ships over the isthmus on rollers, it soon controlled the sea routes east and west as well.

Life in Sparta

Of all the early city-states, Sparta was perhaps the most powerful. The Spartans traced their ancestry back to the legendary Dorians, whose legacy was military might. The rule of the city-state fell to the *homoioi*,]hoh-moh-YOY] or "equals," who comprised roughly 10 percent of the population. The population consisted largely of farm laborers, or *helots* [HEE-luts], essentially slaves who worked the land held by the *homoioi*. (A third class of people, those who had inhabited the area before the arrival of the Spartans, enjoyed limited freedom but were subject to Spartan rule.)

Political power resided with five overseers who were elected annually by all *homoioi*—excluding women—over the age of 30. At age 7, males were taken from their parents to live under military discipline in barracks until age 30 (though they could marry at age 20). Men ate in the military mess until age 60. Women were given strenuous physical training so that they might bear strong sons. Weak-looking babies were left to die. The city-state, in short, controlled every aspect of the Spartans' lives. If the other Greek poleis were less militaristic, they nevertheless exercised the same authority in some fashion. They exercised power more often through political rather than militaristic means, though most could be as militaristic as Sparta when the need arose.

CONTEXT

The Greek Gods

The religion of the Greeks informed almost every aspect of daily life. The gods watched over the individual at birth, nurtured the family, and protected the city-state. They controlled the weather, the seasons, health, marriage, longevity, and the future, which they could foresee. Each polis traced its origins to a particular founding god—Athena for Athens, Zeus for Sparta. Sacred sanctuaries were dedicated to others.

The Greeks believed that the 12 major gods lived on Mount Olympus, in northeastern Greece. There they ruled over the Greeks in a completely human fashion—they quarreled and meddled, loved and lost, exercised justice or not—and they were depicted by the Greeks in human form. There was nothing special about them except their power, which was enormous, sometimes frighteningly so. But the Greeks believed that as long as they did not overstep their bounds and try to compete with the gods—the sin of **hubris**, or pride—that the gods would protect them.

Among the major gods (with their later Roman names in parentheses) are:

Zeus (Jupiter): King of the gods, usually bearded, and associated with the eagle and thunderbolt.

Hera (Juno [JOO-no]): Wife and sister to Zeus, the goddess of marriage and maternity.

Athena (Minerva): Goddess of war, but also, through her association with Athens, of civilization; the daughter of Zeus, born from his head; often helmeted, shield and spear in hand, the owl (wisdom) and the olive tree (peace) are sacred to her.

Ares (Mars): God of war, and son of Zeus and Hera, usually armored.

Aphrodite [af-ra-DIE-tee] (Venus): Goddess of love and beauty; Hesiod says she was born when the severed genitals of Uranus, the Greek personification of the sky, were cast into the sea and his sperm mingled with sea foam to create her. Eros is her son.

Apollo (Phoebus [FEE-bus]): God of the sun, light, truth, prophecy, music, and medicine; he carries a bow and arrow, sometimes a lyre; often depicted riding a chariot across the sky.

Artemis [AR-tuh-mis] (Diana): Goddess of the hunt and the moon; Apollo's sister, she carries bow and arrow, and is accompanied by hunting dogs.

Demeter [dem-EE-ter] (Ceres [SIR-eez]): Goddess of agriculture and grain.

Dionysus [dy-uh-NY-sus] (Bacchus [BAK-us]): God of wine and inspiration, closely aligned to myths of fertility and sexuality.

Hermes [HER-meez] (Mercury): Messenger of the gods, but also god of fertility, theft, dreams, commerce, and the marketplace; usually adorned with winged sandals and a winged hat, he carries a wand with two snakes entwined around it.

Hades [HAY-deez] (Pluto): God of the underworld, accompanied by his monstrous dog, Cerberus.

Hephaestus [hif-ES-tus] (Vulcan): God of the forge and fire; son of Zeus and Hera and husband of Aphrodite; wears a blacksmith's apron and carries a hammer.

Hestia [HES-te-uh] (Vesta): Goddess of the hearth and sister of Zeus.

Poseidon [po-SI-don] (Neptune): Brother of Zeus and god of the sea; carries a trident (a three-pronged spear); the horse is sacred to him.

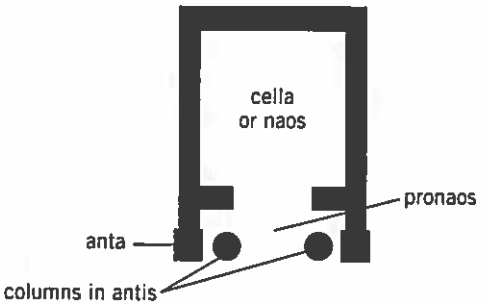
Persephone [per-SEF-uh-nee] (Proserpina [pro-SUR-puh-nuh]): Goddess of fertility, Demeter's daughter, carted off each winter to the underworld by her husband Hades, but released each spring to restore the world to plenty.

THE SACRED SANCTUARIES

Although rival city-states were often at war with one another, they also increasingly came to understand their common heritage. As early as the eighth century BCE, they created sanctuaries where they could come together to share music, religion, poetry, and athletics. The sanctuary was a large-scale reflection of another Greek invention, the symposium, literally "drinking together" by men (originally of the same military unit) meeting to share poetry, food, and wine. At the sanctuaries, people from different city-states came together to honor their gods and, by extension, to celebrate, in the presence of their rivals, their own accomplishments.

Delphi The sanctuaries were sacred religious sites. They inspired the city-states, which were always trying to outdo one another, to create the first monumental architecture since Mycenaean times. At Delphi [DEL-fie], high in the mountains above the Gulf of Corinth, and home to the Sanctuary of Apollo [uh-POLL-oh], the city-states, in their usual competitive spirit, built monuments and statues dedicated to the god, and elaborate treasuries to store offerings. Here, the Greeks believed, Earth was attached to the sky by its navel. Here, too, through a deep crack in the ground, Apollo spoke, through the medium of a woman called the Pythia [PITH-ee-uh]. Priests interpreted the cryptic omens and messages she delivered. The Greek author Plutarch [PLOO-tark], writing in the first century CE, said that the Pythia entered a small chamber beneath the temple, smelled sweet-smelling fumes, and went into a trance. Modern scholars dismissed the story as fiction until recently, when geologists discovered that two faults intersect directly below the Delphic temple, allowing hallucinogenic gases to rise through the fissures, specifically ethylene,

Fig. 4.17 The Athenian Treasury, Delphi, and plan. ca. 510 BCE. The sculptural program around the Treasury, just below the roof line, depicts the adventures of two great Greek mythological heroes, Theseus and Herakles.



which has a sweet smell and produces a narcotic effect described as a floating or disembodied euphoria.

The facade of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi consisted of two columns standing *in antis* (that is, between two squared stone pilasters, called **antae** [an-tie]). Behind them is the **pronaos** [pro-NAY-os], or enclosed vestibule, at the front of the building, with its doorway leading into the **cella** [SEL-uh] (or *naos* [NAY-os]), the principal interior space of the building (see the floor plan, Fig. 4.17).

We can see the antecedents of this building type in a small ceramic model of an early Greek temple dating from the eighth century BCE and found at the Sanctuary of Hera near Argos [AR-gus] (Fig. 4.18). Its projecting porch supported by two columns anticipates the *in antis* columns and pronaos of the Athenian Treasury. The triangular area over the porch created by the pitch of the roof, called the **pediment**, is not as steep in the Treasury.

The Temples of Hera at Paestum From this basic form, surviving in the small treasuries at Delphi, the larger temples of the Greeks would develop. Two distinctive **orders**—systems of proportion that include the building's plan, its **elevation** (the arrangement and appearance of the temple's foundation, columns, and lintels), and decorative scheme—developed before 500 BCE, the **Doric order** and the **Ionic order** (see *Closer Look*, pages 114–115). Later, a

Fig. 4.18 Model of a temple, found in the Sanctuary of Hera, Argos, mid-eighth century BCE. Terra cotta, length 4 ½". National Archaeological Museum, Athens. We do not know if later temples were painted like the model here.

third **Corinthian order** would emerge. Among earliest surviving examples of a Greek temple of the Doric order are the Temples of Hera I and II in the Sanctuary of Hera at Paestum [PES-tum], a Greek colony established in the seventh century BCE in Italy, about 50 miles south of modern Naples (see Fig. 4.16). As the plan of the Temple of Hera I makes clear (see *Closer Look*, 114), the earlier of the two temples was a large, rectangular structure, with a pronaos containing three (as opposed to two) columns and an elongated cella, behind which is an adyton [AD-ee-tun], the innermost sanctuary housing the place where, in a temple with an oracle, the oracle's message was delivered. Surrounding this inner structure was the **peristyle** [PER-uh-style], a row of columns that stands on the **stylobate** [STY-luh-bate], the top step of the platform on which the temple rests. The columns swell about one-third of the way up and contract again at the top, a characteristic known as **entasis** [EN-tuh-sis], and are topped by the two-part capital of the Doric order with its rounded **echinus** [EH-ki-nus] and tabletlike **abacus** [AB-uh-kus].

Olympia and the Olympic Games The Greeks date the beginning of their history to the first formal Panhellenic ("all-Greece") athletic competition, held in 776 BCE. These first Olympic Games were held at Olympia. There, a sanctuary dedicated to Hera and Zeus also housed an elaborate athletic facility. The first contest of the first games was a 200-yard dash the length of the Olympia stadium, a race called the *stadion* (Fig. 4.19). Over time, other events of solo performance were added, including chariot-racing, boxing, and the *pentathlon* (from Greek *penta*, "five," and *athlon*, "contest"), consisting of discus, javelin, long jump, sprinting, and wrestling. There were no second or third prizes. Winning was all. The contests were conducted every four years during the summer months and were open only to men (married women were forbidden to attend, and unmarried women probably did not attend). The Olympic Games were held for more than 1,000 years, until the Christian Byzantine Emperor Theodosius [the-uh-DOH-she-us] banned them in 394 CE. The Games were revived in 1896 to promote international understanding and friendship.

The Olympic Games were only one of numerous athletic festivals held in various locations. These games comprised a defining characteristic of the developing Greek national identity. As a people, the Greeks believed in *agonizesthai*, [ah-gon-ee-zus-TYE] a verb meaning "to contend for the prize." They were driven by competition. Potters bragged that their work was better than any other's. Playwrights competed for best play, poets for best recitation, athletes for best performance. As the city-states themselves competed for supremacy, they began to understand the spirit of competition as a trait shared by all.

Male Sculpture and the Cult of the Body

Greek athletes performed nude, so it is not surprising that athletic contests gave rise to what may be called a "cult of the body." The physically fit male not only won accolades in athletic contests, he also represented the conditioning and strength of the military forces of a particular polis. The male body was also celebrated in a widespread genre of sculpture known as the ***kouros*** [KOOR-os], meaning "young man" (Figs. 4.20 and 4.21). This celebration of the body was uniquely Greek. No other Mediterranean culture so emphasized depiction of the male nude.

Several thousand *kouroi* [KOOR-oy] (plural of *kouros*) appear to have been carved in the sixth century BCE alone.

Fig. 4.19 Euphiletos Painter. Detail of a black-figure amphora showing a foot-race at the Panathenaic Games in Athens. ca. 530 BCE. Terra cotta, height 24 1/2". The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.12). Image copyright © The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY. Greek athletes competed nude. In fact, our word *gymnasium* derives from the Greek word for "naked," *gymnos*.

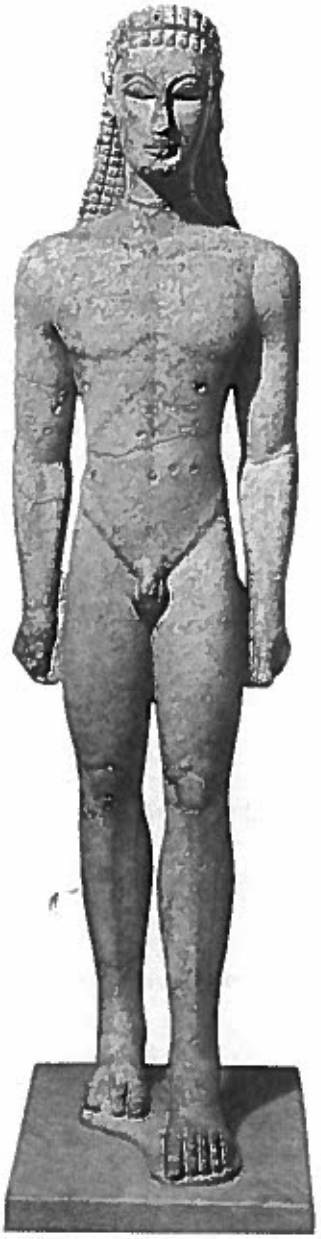


Fig. 4.20 ***New York Kouros.*** **ca. 600 BCE.** Height 6′ 4″. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.11.1). Image copyright ©The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 4.21 ***Anavysos Kouros,*** **from Anavysos cemetery, near Athens. ca. 525 BCE.** Marble with remnants of paint, height 6′ 4″. National Archaeological Museum, Athens. The sculpture on the left is one of the earliest known life-size standing sculptures of a male in Greek art. The one on the right represents 75 years of Greek experimentation with the form. Note its closed-lip "Archaic smile," a symbol of liveliness and vitality.

They could be found in sanctuaries and cemeteries, most often serving as votive offerings to the gods or as commemorative grave markers, embodying the best characteristics of the aristocracy.

Egyptian Influences Although we would never mistake the earlier figure for the work of an Egyptian sculptor—its nudity and much more fully realized anatomical features are clear differences—still, its Egyptian influences are obvious. In fact, as early as 650 BCE, the Greeks were in Egypt, and by the early sixth century BCE, 12 cooperating city-states had established a trading outpost in the Nile Delta. The Greek sculpture serves the same funerary function as its Egyptian ancestors. The young man's arms drop stiffly to his side. His fists are clenched in the Egyptian manner. His left foot strides forward, though both heels remain unnaturally cemented to the ground, altogether like the Old Kingdom Egyptian *ka* statue of Menkaure with his queen (see Fig. 3.10), which is nearly 2,000 years older. The facial features of the kouros, with its wide, oval eyes, sharply delineated brow, and carefully knotted hair, are also reminiscent of third-millennium BCE Sumerian votive statues (see Fig. 2.4).

CONTINUITY & CHANGE

Menkaure with a queen, p.77