COURSE GUIDEBOOK

Ancient Greek Civilization

Part I

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Course No. 321

Ancient Greek Civilization, Part I
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Ancient Greek Civilization
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Scope:

The Greeks enjoy a special place in the construction of western culture and identity. Much of what we esteem in our own culture derives from them: democracy, epic poetry, lyric poetry, tragedy, history writing, philosophy, aesthetic taste, all of these and many other features of cultural life enter the West from Greece. The oracle of Apollo at Delphi had inscribed over the temple, "Know Thyself." For us, that also means knowing the Greeks.

In these lectures we will cover the period from the late Bronze Age, c. 1500 B.C., down to the time of Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, in the late fourth century B.C., concentrating on the two hundred year interval from 600 to 400 B.C. The lectures will proceed chronologically and draw on the rich literary and archaeological sources of Greek history, from Homer's majestic *Odyssey* to Schliemann's excavations and Troy and Mycenae, from Aeschylus' *Oresteia* to the wealthy Greek colonies of Sicily. Lectures introduce the audience to the world of classical Athens, described in the histories of Herodotus and Thucydides and the dialogues of Plato.

The lectures explore the similarities and differences between Greek culture and our own. In a variety of areas, such as in religion and gender, the Greeks seem alien, approaching the world in ways utterly different from our ways. In other facets of social life, on the other hand, such as in politics and war, we find a culture perhaps not very unlike our own. We will examine each of these aspects of Greek culture in an attempt to understand better how Greek culture developed as it did, and why it still resonates for us today.

Lecture One

Greece and the Western World

Scope: This lecture introduces the audience to the role and importance of the Greeks in the formation of Western culture. We will look at the rediscovery of Greek culture in the modern period and discuss how identifying with a classical culture often means ignoring real differences between the Greeks and ourselves. We state the theme of the course, which is to examine both the similarities and differences between ourselves and the Greeks, in order to understand how their culture was formed and how we are connected to it.

Outline

I. Introduction

- **A.** In a host of different ways—in the areas of democracy, poetry, theater, history writing, philosophy, aesthetic taste, and architecture and sculpture—the cultural life of the West derives from Greek models. A good example of this connection is Freud's use of the Oedipus myth to explain a central feature of psychoanalytic theory: the Oedipus complex.
- **B.** Nevertheless, there are crucial differences between the ancient Greeks and modern Western society, difference that have often been glossed over because of the deep attachment we feel to Greek culture. Two areas illustrate the complex relationship between the modern and ancient worlds: democracy and theater.
  - **1.** Unlike modern *representative* democracy, ancient Athenian democracy involved the direct participation of every adult male citizen.
  - **2.** Although modern theater finds its antecedents in Greek drama, the two also had important differences.
    - **a.** Only a few dramatic performances were given in ancient Greece each year.
    - **b.** Greek drama was performed in the setting of a religious festival in honor of the god Dionysus.
  - **3.** Our versions of both of these institutions are different in important ways from their Greek models.

- **C.** The theme of the course, then, is to explore the complex relationship between the Greeks and ourselves. What made the culture of ancient Greece one to which we feel such affinity? In what ways was it also really quite different from our own?

II. The Rediscovery of the Greeks

- **A.** Even in the Renaissance, classical culture was primarily equated with Roman culture and Latin literature. The rediscovery of the Greeks was the product of German historian and art critic Johannes Winkelmann and the "philhellenic movement" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
- **B.** Early travellers such as Dodwell and Leake also helped create the Romantic image of an ideal, perfect, classical Greece by describing and drawing its architectural ruins.
- **C.** Since then, Greek culture has helped to define, for better or for worse, a Western canon: a body of thought and art that somehow defines the West.
  - **1.** Many have sought to retrieve this ideal image of a beautiful Greece by studying and trying to imitate the ancient Greeks and their culture.
  - **2.** Following the battle of Jena, the Prussian minister of education announced that he would reconstruct Prussian society on the ancient Greek model. There was a tendency in German thought to seek perfection by returning to the Greeks.
  - **3.** In many respects, the Greeks are the idealized version of what we seek to become. However, they were just as human and imperfect as we are.

III. *Alterité* and Greece as a Forerunner of Western Culture

- **A.** During the last two centuries Western countries, including the United States, have developed national identities through a dual process: seeing themselves as the cultural descendants of the classical Greeks, and as the opposites of other societies, especially those of the East, which are regarded as different and opposite.
  - **1.** All too often, classical studies have been put to the service of helping a given society justify its own sense of cultural superiority over other societies.
  - **2.** This tendency is evident in our own architecture, poetry, drama, political life, and even popular

entertainment. The television sitcom, for instance, has its roots in the "new comedy" of the Greek playwright Menander.

B. To break this temptation to venerate the Greeks as enlightened demigods, we should try to understand them on their own terms. Their accomplishments remain impressive, and our connections to them remain fundamental, but we may better understand both their culture and our own if we study the Greeks as they actually were rather than as we would like them to have been.

Suggested Reading

Marchand, S.L. (1996) *Down from Olympus. Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cartledge, P. (1993) *The Greeks. A Portrait of Self and Others.* Oxford: Opus Books. ch. 1.

Questions to Consider

1. What do we mean by the term "classical"?
2. In what sense are we indebted to the Greeks?
3. Is it possible to study Greek culture dispassionately, or must we always suffer under what one historian has called "the dead hand of the Past"?

Lecture Two
Minoan Crete

Scope: The second millenium BC witnessed two extraordinary civilizations in Greece: Minoan Crete and the Mycenaean culture of the mainland. In this lecture we examine the first of these two, the civilization of Bronze-Age Crete. The distinctive nature of Minoan sites at Cnossos, Mallia, Phaistos and Zakro has led archaeologists to dub this culture a palatial society, in which the magnificent Minoan palaces served as the administrative, religious, and economic centers of a society that was highly complex and hierarchically structured.

The fact that this society has left no literature and is known entirely through the work of archaeologists poses questions for us. To what extent can archaeology alone recreate the story of a culture? Minoan Crete also demonstrates the degree to which we remain indebted to the work of ninteenth-century archaeologists like Sir Arthur Evans, amateurs in the true sense of the word.

Outline

I. Before the Greeks. As in other parts of the world, a succession of societies of increasing complexity has left traces across Greece.

- **A.** At the Franchthi Cave, excavations reveal a society of hunter-gatherers in contact with the islands.
- **B.** Sesklo and Dimini, Neolithic settlements in central Greece, display complex social organization in the fifth and fourth millennia BC.
- **C.** Cycladic culture, located in the Greek islands, has left evidence of specialized trade and manufacturing in the form of exquisite marble figurines. We know very little about the culture that produced these artifacts.

II. Crete in the Bronze Age.

- **A.** Palatial Society.
  1. The scale of architectural complexity in Bronze-Age Crete, from 1900 - 1400 BC, is unlike anything previously seen in the Greek world, and it has earned the label of "palatial society."

2. The palaces share similarities of design and construction, including a throne room, a ceremonial court, private chambers, storage magazines, controlled points of entry, and multiple levels.
3. Taken together, these point to a highly complex, centralized, and hierarchical society.

B. Minoan religion. The palaces were also part of a complex religious system that included cave sanctuaries, house sanctuaries, and mountain sanctuaries.

1. The belief system behind these structures remains difficult to reconstruct, since we have no sacred texts. However, the figurines, shrines, and cult objects suggest a profound reverence for the forces of the natural world.
2. The paucity of evidence can lead to imaginative conclusions. For instance, the presence of goddess figurines and frescoes has led some to suggest that the Cretans held Chthonic beliefs, although very little hard evidence supports this view.
3. We can say with assurance that Minoan culture was sensitive to human beauty and to the beauty of the natural world.

C. Redistributive Economy.

1. At the same time, palatial society depended on a firm control of economic production, both in the sphere of staples such as grain, wool, and oil, and in more specialized areas such as perfume, metalwork, and international trade.
2. By controlling production, storage, and redistribution, Minoan palaces placed themselves at the very center of every aspect of daily life.

III. A Bronze-Age Commonwealth?

A. The objects found in excavations, such as seals, scarabs, and rings, show that the Cretans were in contact with many other cultures to the east, notably the Egyptians.

B. Cretan influence can also be seen in the Aegean islands, especially Thera, where the Cretans traded and perhaps established colonies. Between 1700 and 1500 BC, the Cretans were the western-most segment of a Bronze-Age world that connected the entire eastern Mediterranean.

C. The Minoan palaces were unfortified, which supports the view that the Cretans relied for their defense on naval power, not on land forces.

IV. Sir Arthur Evans and the rediscovery of Minoan Crete.

A. The discovery of Cretan culture results from the work of one man, Sir Arthur Evans. Fascinated by clay tablets with an undeciphered script, Evans excavated at Cnossos in central Crete, where his workmen immediately began uncovering the remains of the largest and most important Minoan palaces.

B. Evans' discoveries are an excellent example of nineteenth-century archaeology. Like Schliemann at Troy and Layard at Nineveh, Evans was not a professional scholar. Instead, he was guided by Greek traditions that remembered Crete as the home of a powerful naval empire that existed long before the classical age.

C. Evans' work continues to pose questions for archaeologists. To what extent must the archaeologist rely on written sources? Can archaeology recover the history of a society that has left no literature? Or, as many archaeologists now claim, is archaeology a completely separate discipline from history, with its own methods and discourse?

Suggested Readings

Warren, P. (1989) *The Aegean Civilizations*. New York.

Marinatos, N. (1984) *Art and Religion in Thera*. Athens: Ekdotike Athenon.

Question to Consider

1. In what ways is the civilization of Minoan Crete comparable to other Bronze-Age cultures of the ancient Near East?
2. Is there sufficient evidence to regard Minoan Crete as a theocratic society?

Lecture Three
Schliemann and Mycenae

Scope: The second great Bronze Age culture of Greece takes its name from the site of Mycenae, excavated first by Heinrich Schliemann. Taking Homer as his guide, Schliemann uncovered the traces of a powerful warrior society. Unlike the Cretan palaces, the site of Mycenae and other sites of the same period—Tiryns, Gla, and Orchomenos, for example—were protected by massive walls of Cyclopean masonry. Grave goods from Mycenaean sites point to a warrior élite whose trading contacts reached to Crete and beyond, to Egypt and Syria.

At many of these sites, tablets in a script known as Linear B were found. In 1954 Michael Ventris demonstrated that the language of Linear B was a form of Greek. This discovery was of enormous importance, since it helped to establish, after more than fifty years of debate, the relationship between the civilization of Minoan Crete and the Mycenaeans.

Outline

I. Mysterious Origins
- A. When in 1876 Schliemann uncovered traces of a wealthy society at Mycenae, he believed that he had found the homeland of Homer's Achaians, the Greeks who had sacked Troy.
  1. Subsequent work has shown that he had brought to light a civilization whose roots go back to the middle of the second millennium BC.
  2. Schliemann's Mycenae, like Homer's, was "rich in gold." The origins of this gold, as well as the power of the Mycenaeans, remains mysterious.
- B. It is likely that the Mycenaeans' ancestors first entered the Greek peninsula around 1900 BC, but the early phases of the culture's development are hard to trace. By the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries BC they were already burying their chieftains in deep shaft graves with rich grave goods, including gold death masks and ceremonial swords of bronze inlaid with silver.

II. An Elite Culture
- A. The material culture left by the Mycenaeans evokes a world dominated by an élite class.
  1. Massive fortifications, swords, and gems showing warriors in battle or hunting lions point towards the martial prowess of the Mycenaeans.
  2. Their grave goods also show a taste for luxury. Finely worked jewelry in gold and precious stones and sumptuous drinking vessels illustrate the wealth of the Mycenaean world.
- B. Since Schliemann's time, excavations have added to our knowledge of the Mycenaeans in two important respects.
  1. In the first place, we now know that many Mycenaean sites functioned like Minoan palaces. Artisans crafting luxury items in precious metals and workers making perfume lived either within the fortresses or directly below, making the Mycenaean sites proto-towns.
  2. Furthermore, many of the vessels, jewels, and frescoes enjoyed by the Mycenaeans reveal the influence of other, older cultures, especially Crete.

III. Cultures in Conflict
- A. The deep influence of Minoan culture on the Mycenaean world prompted a long debate.
  1. According to Sir Arthur Evans, it was the Cretans who had colonized the mainland. Mycenae was an off-shoot of Crete.
  2. Others argued that the Mycenaeans had an indigenous Greek culture that came under the influence of Cretan style through trade and eventually through the conquest of Crete.
- B. This debate was finally resolved by the translation of Linear B, the script used in the Mycenaean fortresses to keep accounts of property, such as sheep, chariot parts, and slaves. In 1954 Michael Ventris demonstrated that Linear B was a form of Greek.
- C. The relationship between Crete and Mycenae is now clearer.
  1. Around 1450 the Cretan palaces were destroyed. Only Cnossos was rebuilt; it flourished for another seventy-five years.
  2. The records from Cnossos during this last occupation were recorded in Linear B, not the script used earlier on Crete, which we call Linear A. Since Linear B is

Greek, it looks as if Greek speakers occupied Cnossos in its last phase. These Greeks from the mainland invaded and occupied Cnossos and stayed for three generations, long enough to learn the practice of a centralized palatial economy.

D. Other data confirm the theory that Greeks from the mainland overwhelmed the Cretans.

1. At Miletus and on Rhodes, Cretan colonies founded by the Minoans shortly after 1600 BC had come into the hands of the Mycenaeans by 1400 BC.

2. The myth of Theseus and the Minotaur may be a distant memory of this conflict between the mainland and Crete.

Suggested Reading

Traill, D.A. (1993) *Excavating Schliemann.* Illinois Classical Studies, Supplement 4. Atlanta: Scholar's Press.

Questions to Consider

1. Can Greek myths be used to reconstruct the world of the Bronze Age?

2. What is the significance of Ventris' discovery that Linear B is a form of Greek?

Lecture Four

The Long Twilight

Scope: Shortly after 1200 BC, Mycenaean power declined rapidly. The abrupt end of the Bronze Age in Greece has been a vexed issue in Greek archaeology for more than a century. In this lecture, we review the major explanations that have been put forward. The most dramatic explanation is natural disaster. Did a cataclysm, such as a volcanic eruption or tidal wave, cause the collapse of Bronze-Age civilization? Or did invasions and military conquests bring an end to the cultures of Crete and Mycenae? A third possibility is that internal revolts toppled societies that were too fragile to resist. Finally, we should ask whether we can find an explanation by looking beyond Greece and Crete to the other cultures of the Bronze-Age Mediterranean.

Outline

I. Thera and the Theory of Volcanic Destruction

A. The most romantic explanation for the destruction of Minoan Crete is that it was devastated by a volcanic eruption on Thera.

1. Thera lies 200 miles northeast of Crete. It was wiped out by a single, massive volcanic eruption.

2. The excavator Spiridon Marinatos argued that Minoan coastal sites showed evidence of inundation by a massive tidal wave.

3. Plato's later stories of Atlantis seem to recall a civilization destroyed by a natural cataclysm.

B. But there is strong evidence that counts against the volcanic theory.

1. Scientific evidence now dates the eruption close to 1600 BC, rather than around 1400, when the Cretan palaces were destroyed.

2. Marine-style pottery, not found on Thera, is found on Crete and appears to postdate the Thera eruption.

3. Coastal sites on the Cretan coast at Pseira and Mochlos show signs of habitation after the eruption.

C. Minoan culture was not wiped out by natural disaster overnight. However, if the Minoan palatial system was

weakened by the eruption, it may have been susceptible to a Mycenaean takeover.

II. The End of the Bronze Age on the Mainland

A. A common explanation for the sudden collapse of the Mycenaean world shortly after 1200 BC is an invasion by the Dorians from the northwestern part of Greece.
1. This theory is supported by the distribution of the Greek dialects.
2. Greek myth recalled a population movement into the Peloponnese, the "Return of the Heraclidae."

B. There are, however, strong arguments against the Dorian Invasion.
1. Linguists doubt that the distribution of the Greek dialects in classical times is a reliable guide to population movements during a much earlier period.
2. The material evidence for a Dorian invasion is poor.
3. Only one segment of the Dorian population claimed to be the descendents of Heracles.

C. Internal breakdown
1. A more recent explanation claims that the Dorians were already present as serfs. Linguists point to Dorian elements already to be found in the Greek of Linear B.
2. The Dorian "Invasion," then, is not an external invasion, but the internal collapse of the Mycenaean social order. In this view, the Dorian servile element in Mycenaean society arose and overthrew the warrior élite.

D. The theory of an internal collapse is attractive, and it fits with an historical explanation of the Trojan War.
1. Greek tradition recalled a massive campaign mounted by the Achaians (the Greeks) against the wealthy city of Troy.
2. The strategic position of Troy at the mouth of the Dardanelles would make sense of a campaign to capture it.
3. Archaeology has demonstrated successive destruction levels at Troy, one of which (Troy VI) would be consistent with a siege.
4. Greek tradition also recalled that few of the Achaian princes returned safely to their kingdoms.

5. If the myth has a historical kernel, it may recall an expensive campaign that left the Mycenaean homeland weakened and subject to a wave of revolts.

III. The Sea Peoples

A. The collapse of the Mycenaean world corresponds to the widespread breakdown of civilizations throughout the eastern Mediterranean.
1. The Amarna Tablets (Egypt) speak of invasions by the Sea Peoples c. 1225-1215, and they recall a time of upheaval.
2. The collapse of the Hittite empire in Asia Minor occurs at about the same time.
3. The Amarna Tablets mention tribes known as the Ekwesh and Akewasha, as well as the Denyen, names that seem to echo Homer's names for the Greeks: Achaians and Danaans.

B. Many Mycenaeans may have left Greece during this period of turmoil and joined marauding bands to attack parts of Anatolia and Egypt.
1. The Greek dialect of ancient Cyprus was closest to the Greek spoken in Arcadia, in the heart of the Peloponnese. This curious connection would make sense if Mycenaean Greeks had settled on Cyprus.
2. One of the Sea Peoples, the Peleset, settled southeast of Cyprus. The Bible knows them as the Philistines, and they gave their name to the region of Palestine. The pottery found at the earliest levels of the Philistine cities is Mycenaean.

Suggested Reading

Wood, M. (1985) *In Search of the Trojan War*. London.

Questions to Consider

1. How reliable are the Homeric poems as a guide to the world of the Bronze Aegean?
2. Should the collapse of Myceneaen power be explained by internal factors or is it part of an historical movement affecting the entire eastern Mediterranean?

Lecture Five

The Age of Heroes

Scope: With the passing of the Bronze Age between 1200 and 1100 BC, Greek culture underwent profound changes. Central authority collapsed, to be replaced in most areas by the more humble power of chieftains and clan leaders. The society that emerged during these so-called Dark Ages was organized around neither the palace nor the fortress, but around the *oikos* or household. This would become the principal social unit of the Greeks, and it would underpin the rise of the *polis* or city-state.

All was not chaos and destruction, however. In the last generation, archaeology has supplied surprising evidence of a more rapid recovery than was previously suspected. This was a critical period for the Greeks in another respect, since it was at this time that epic poetry arose. The Greeks would return to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* endlessly. Their codes of honor, their notions of the relation between god and human, man and woman, parent and child—in short, their entire mentality—was conditioned by the imaginative world created by Homer and the epic tradition.

Outline

I. The World of the *Oikos*

- **A.** The evidence of material culture suggests a serious decline in the number and the size of settlements throughout Greece in the period from 1200-900 BC.
- **B.** Population decline is not the only, or even the best, answer. Instead it seems that many people had resumed herding in the hills in order to escape the dangers of an unsettled time.
- **C.** Many of the massive Mycenaean fortified sites were either totally abandoned or occupied by squatters.
- **D.** Replacing the Bronze-Age world was a new type of society, structured around smaller social units dominated by chieftains and clan leaders. The household, known as the *oikos*, was the central unit of Dark-Age society.

II. Signs of Recovery

- **A.** Despite the grim picture of Greece after the Mycenaeans, recent archaeology has demonstrated that in some places recovery came faster than expected.
  1. At Lefkandi, a monumental apsidal building dating to the tenth century was used as a massive funerary structure for a royal pair.
  2. At Elateia, tombs excavated during the 1990s reveal a community already producing fine pottery and metal work, and engaged in trade that went beyond Greece.
  3. At Kalapodi, a sanctuary that goes back to Mycenaean times continued in use down into the Sub-Mycenaean period and throughout the Dark Ages.
- **B.** It is probably no coincidence that these sites are close together in central and eastern Greece. They lie on the outer edges of the Mycenaean world. The worst collapse had been in the Peloponnese, the Mycenaean heartland, but recovery began on the periphery.
- **C.** It is hard to find explicit continuities between the Bronze Age and the Dark and Iron Ages in Greece.
  1. Greeks in both periods spoke Greek, but their writing systems were completely different.
  2. Certain gods and goddesses appear in both Mycenaean and classical records, but other classical-era gods have no Mycenaean roots.
  3. Certain locations remain sacred over time, even though the religious systems t hat endow the spot with sacred meaning might change.
  4. Bronze-age royal palace often became classical-era temples, evidencing continuity of a sort.

III. Epic and the *Polis*

- **A.** Aside from the material recovery that occurred during the Dark Ages, another crucial development took place: the rise of epic poetry.
  1. Epic consisted of cycles of songs concerning the deeds of great warriors.
  2. The songs were highly formulaic, allowing some sections to be reused and newer parts to be composed orally.
  3. Wandering poets performed these songs all over Greece, incorporating the accomplishments of local heroes.

4. The greatest of the poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, were written down around 725 BC. The previously flexible oral tradition thus became solidified in a single, monumental version.
5. By then, the poems had created a consistent legendary world that connected the Greeks to a heroic past, centered on the Trojan War and the return of the heroes.
6. The importance of the poems is that they nurtured a sense of Greek identity even as the Greeks remained politically fragmented.
   a. The poems upheld a heroic code of behavior for superior men, as illustrated by the exchange between the Trojan heroes Sarpedon and Glaucus.
   b. They also link heroism with steadfast adherence to duty in the face of overwhelming odds, as shown by Hector's response to Andromache.

B. From the eighth century on, the political development of the Greeks was focused on the city-state (*polis*) and the tribal-state (*ethnos*).
1. These states emphasized their own autonomy and separateness.
2. The Greeks showed no interest in founding a Greek nation. They were united only in times of crisis.
3. By providing a powerful statement of Greek values, epic made possible the central paradox of ancient Greek culture: being Greek meant being like other Greeks in cultural terms while remaining completely distinct from other Greeks in political terms.

Suggested Reading

Desborough, V.R. d'A. (1964) *The Last Mycenaeans and Their Successors, An Archaeological Survey, c. 1200-c.1000 BC.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

_____ (1972) *The Greek Dark Ages.* New York: St Martin's Press.

Snodgrass, A.M. (1971) *The Dark Age of Greece.* Edinburgh: The University Press.

Questions to Consider

1. How important is a shared sense of the past to the development of a national identity?
2. What are the values that Homer's poems reinforce?

Lecture Six
From Sicily to Syria:
The Growth of Trade and Colonization

Scope: From a very early date the Greeks vigorously colonized both the Mediterranean and Black Seas. The first wave of colonization, from the mainland to the Ionian coast (the eastern seaboard of the Aegean) occurred shortly after 1000 BC, and it reflected the upheavals occurring in the unsettled period following the end of the Mycenaean world. Then, during the seventh and sixth centuries, a fresh wave of colonization took place. This resulted in Greek colonies being established as far away as Olbia in Ukraine, and Massilia on the south coast of France.

In this lecture we consider the causes of this colonization. Did Greece suffer from massive overpopulation which was then siphoned off by dispatching unwanted sons to new lands? Did land hunger drive many Greeks to abandon a homeland where good soil was at a premium? Or did trade open new vistas to the Greeks as they searched for raw materials and markets?

We will also consider the impact on the Greeks of becoming colonists. Many of the colonies grew much richer than their "mother-city." What was the impact of this wealth on the colonies and the homeland? Colonies also had a profound influence on the Greek world, being responsible, among other things, for the introduction of writing to Greece.

Outline

I. Where, When, and Why?
- **A.** The Greek colonies established during the Archaic period (c. 700-480 BC) where not dispatched at once but in successive waves.
- **B.** The Greeks planted their colonies wherever conditions were favorable and local resistance could be overcome. Since much of the eastern Mediterranean was unavailable, they concentrated on the Black Sea, the western Mediterranean and parts of North Africa.
- **C.** Most of the colonies were founded close to the sea, not inland, invariably close to reliable sources of fresh water and large stretches of fertile land.
  1. By contrast, in Greece, mountains reduce the amount of fertile land in the plains to a minimum.
  2. Colonies were therefore a useful way of easing the hunger for good land in Greece.
  3. Inheritance by eldest sons encouraged younger sons to seek their fortunes overseas.
  4. Colonies were also a safety-valve for mounting pressure and conflict (*stasis*) within many emerging city-states.
- **D.** Although a single city provided the official founder of the colony, most colonies were a mixture of Greeks from different towns and regions. Foundation legends and the approval of the Delphic Oracle helped establish a common identity for the colonists.

II. The Role of Trade
- **A.** While land-hunger and social pressure in Greece spurred the growth of colonies, trade also played an important role. At sites such as Pithecoussae (Italy), Al Mina (Syria), and Naucratis (Egypt), Greeks traded with, and settled next to, non-Greeks, especially traders from the Phoenician cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage.
- **B.** Trade therefore established routes along which the Greeks sailed and helped determine where the Greeks looked to colonize.
  1. The Greek colonies of southern Italy and Sicily demonstrate this confluence. The earliest Greek settlements in the Bay of Naples were at the intersection of trade routes from west and north. Soon they were followed by agricultural colonies established in Sicily and southern Italy (Magna Graecia).
  2. In Magna Graecia the rich opportunities for trade and colonization resulted in a region of phenomenal wealth that would far outstrip old Greece.

III Colonization and Culture Contact
- **A.** Colonies are usually modeled on the society from which they originate. Through contact with other cultures, however, colonies can exert a profound influence on their homeland. The close connection between trade and colonization

confirmed this. Through trade, the Greeks came in contact with other cultures.

1. This is illustrated by the introduction of writing. The Greek alphabet is adapted from a Semitic script, and the earliest examples of written Greek came from the Greek colonies in southern Italy.
2. It is likely that the Greeks acquired their alphabet from contact with Phoenician traders whom they met in the eastern Mediterranean (Al Mina) and in the west (Pithecoussae and the Bay of Naples).

B. Colonies exposed the Greek world to new ideas and religious systems, as well as new styles of art. The influence of Near Eastern, particularly Syrian culture, on the Greeks is so profound that this period is often referred to as the Orientalizing Period.

1. This influence can be seen in the poetry of Hesiod (c. 700), who incorporates Near Eastern myths and religious ideas into his treatment of the Greek gods.
2. This is also evident in Greek vase-painting and the plastic arts, both of which borrow heavily from Syrian models.

C. For the past fifty years, the most fruitful area of classical Greek studies has been the examination of Greek linkages to the civilizations of the ancient Near East.

Suggested Reading

Graham, A.J. (1964) *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece*. New York: Barnes & Noble.

Malkin (1987) *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece*. Leiden: Brill.

Dougherty, C. (1993) *The Poetics of Colonization. From City to Text in Archaic Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Questions to Consider

1. In what ways did contact with non-Greek cultures influence the subsequent development of the Greeks?
2. What role do indigenous peoples play in the world of the Greek colonies?

Lecture Seven
Delphi and Olympia

Scope: The two most important institutions to emerge in Greece before the Classical period were the oracle of Apollo at Delphi and the Olympic Games. Both were Panhellenic institutions, open to any person or community identified as Greek. Such institutions were crucial in fostering a Greek identity in the face of political fragmentation.

At the same time, both institutions reinforced the strong tendency towards separatism among the Greeks by favoring a highly competitive, "agonistic" environment. The *agon*, or contest, became a dominant feature of the Greek experience. It influenced the Greek conception of both personal relations and political life.

Together these institutions fundamentally shaped what it meant to be a Greek.

Outline

I. Delphi and the Oracle of Apollo

A. The sanctuary of Apollo was far more than a single temple or altar.

1. It was not comparable to a church. Rather, it was a sacred space that included both temple and altar, as well as temples of other gods, treasuries, dedications, and offerings.
2. The Greeks regarded Delphi as the center of the universe.
3. The god possessed and spoke through the priestess.

B. After 800 BC, the number and value of the offerings at Delphi increased dramatically, demonstrating that the sanctuary was quickly gaining prestige beyond its immediate area. Treasuries were established there to store the goods contributed by various Greek communities.

C. Located in the center of Greece, Delphi attracted suppliants from all over the Greek world. As city-states grew and colonies were established, Delphi came to play the role of mediator in Greek affairs.

1. Official embassies requested oracles on behalf of their states. The oracle shaped the policies of state officials who consulted it.
2. Delphi grew in status and authority as it authorized the founding of colonies.
3. Delphi offered judgments in interstate disputes and settled quarrels over borders.

D. This mediation was made possible by Delphi's neutrality. The sanctuary was administered by the priestly clans of Delphi in conjunction with a religious confederation of the Greek states. Delphi served the entire Greek community, not just one particular state.

II. Olympia and the Panhellenic Games

A. The Olympic Games were the first of a series of four Panhellenic contests, founded in 776 BC and open to all Greeks.

1. Like Delphi, Olympia was a religious sanctuary (to Zeus) and therefore neutral. It grew into a religious and athletic complex. The Games were protected by a Sacred Truce.
2. The modern Olympics, by contrast, have a nationalist focus, and they are heavily affected by international politics.

B. Although less tied to the foundation of colonies or the settling of disputes, Olympia became Delphi's equal in prestige for its athletic competitions.

C. The Olympic Games express the agonistic spirit of the Greeks at both the individual and communal level.

1. Athletes competed to display their *arete* or excellence, the same quality valued by Homer's warriors. Athletes sought the Homeric prize of *kleos aphthiton*—undying glory—for themselves, their families, and their communities.
2. The games were originally the venue for aristocratic competition between men (and boys) who explicitly modeled themselves on Homer's heroes.
3. As city-states emerged, athletes competed on behalf of themselves and their community.
4. As with Homeric heroes, the deeds of these victors are commemorated in verse, winning them "undying glory." The Boeotian poet Pindar wrote odes celebrating Olympic victors and the exploits of their relatives. The odes connected the contemporary winner to an antique "golden age."
5. The Homeric code was enacted and displayed at Olympia.

III. Unity, Competition and Strife

A. The Panhellenic Contests allowed Archaic Greek society to define itself not as a nation, but as a culture made up of separate and distinct political units, united by their participation in these common contests.

1. The Greeks became Greek by competing with other Greeks. Inclusion in the Games confirmed one's Greekness.
2. According to Herodotus, those are Greek who share a common blood, language, religion, and customs. Only the first of these, however, is exclusive. The idea gradually emerged that to be Greek, one must live and act as a Greek—especially by engaging in competition with others.
3. Hesiod distinguished between "good" *eris* or strife, which encourages one to do well for himself in a way that does not hurt others, and "bad" *eris*, which encourages envy. Both are at the core of Greek life.
4. The Greeks needed to find institutions and cultural forms that would help them to move beyond their addiction to competitive strife. They failed to develop these institutions at the international level.

B. Delphi represents the reverse of the coin. The oracle at Delphi was the only permanent institution of the Greeks capable of mediating the permanent state of conflict that existed among the Greeks.

Suggested Reading

Morgan, C. (1990) *Athletes and Oracles. The Transformation of Olympia and Delphi in the Eighth Century BC*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rolley, C., Jacquemin, A. and Laroche, D., eds (1990) *Delphes. Oracles, Cultes et Jeux*. Les Dossiers d'Archaeologie 151 Dijon.

Questions to Consider

1. What is the relationship between the panhellenism implicit in Homer's poems and the agonistic spirit institutionalized at Olympia?
2. How successful was Delphi in providing mediation to the interstate conflicts of the Archaic period?

Lecture Eight
The Spartans

Scope: From the eighth century onwards the Greek world underwent many far-reaching changes: colonization, panhellenism, and the growth of city-states shaped the future course of Greek civilization. These rapid and dramatic developments also led to profound tensions within many Greek communities. Conflicts between regional groups, clans, and even entire classes led to political violence often bordering on civil war.

Different communities found different solution to the threat of *stasis* (civic violence). In many parts of Greece tyrants, unelected leaders, seized power and quelled political conflict by imposing autocratic rule. Sparta followed a different course. By creating a rigidly hierarchical society dominated by a warrior elite, and by enslaving the neighboring region of Messenia, Sparta fashioned a society unique among the Greek states. In this lecture we will examine Spartan society and attempt to explain how it took shape.

Outline

I. Early Sparta
   A. Down to the sixth century, Sparta had all the hallmarks of a vibrant, open society. The arts flourished and displayed sophistication in many genres.
      1. The poetry of Tyrtaeus and Alcman shows that the Spartans composed beautiful hymns and that Spartan choruses of young girls participated in choral contests.
      2. Terra-cotta masks from the temple of Artemis Orthia point to a lively tradition in the plastic arts.
      3. Funeral *stelae*—grave markers—from Sparta show men and women sitting side by side as partners and equals.
   B. Over a long period from the late eighth century down to the middle of the seventh, Sparta engaged in a protracted struggle with the neighboring region of Messenia.
      1. This struggle culminated in the subjugation of the entire Messenian population c. 650-600 BC.
      2. The Spartans became the masters of Messenia and reduced the native population to the rank of helots, or

serfs. The Messenians thenceforth worked the land on behalf of their Spartan overlords.

C. The conquest of Messenia constitutes the defining episode of Spartan history.
   1. By incorporating Messenia within the area of their direct control, the Spartans made themselves masters of a vastly larger servile population.
   2. Subsequently, fear of the helots encouraged the Spartans to develop a close-knit social order directed mainly toward maintaining the status quo. All Spartan institutions were devoted to keeping the helots in subjection.

II. *Eunomia* and the Foundation of the Spartan State
   A. Traditionally associated with the legendary law-giver, Lycurgus, the Spartan constitution was regarded by conservative Greeks as an example *eunomia*, good order. This social order was enshrined in the Rhetra.
   B. The Spartans had distinctive political institutions.
      1. Alone among the various Greek states, the Spartans retained a dual kingship.
      2. Administration was handled by 5 *ephors*.
      3. A Council of 30 Elders advised the kings and served as a court.
      4. All adult male citizens deliberated in a general assembly.

III. Spartiates, Perioici, and Helots
   A. Sparta had a more exclusive definition of citizenship than other Greeks had. Full citizenship was restricted to the élite, known as the Spartiates. The other inhabitants of the region, known as Laconia, were relegated to a variety of inferior statuses.
   B. Other social groups had subordinate political status.
      1. Many neighboring communities, the *Perioici*, were allowed local autonomy but were subject to service in the Spartan army.
      2. Spartiates unable to meet their obligations to the community were relegated to the status of Inferiors, without citizen rights.
      3. Supporting the entire Spartan system was a class of serfs, the helots. Each Spartiate was allocated helots who worked his land, leaving him free to train for war. The Spartiate's helot would accompany him into warfare.

IV. The Institutions of the Spartan State
   A. After the enslavement of Messenia, Sparta became a closed society. Social cohesion was maintained by raising boys away from their families and in age-cohorts.
      1. The *agoge*, or educational system, trained boys to grow up as warriors.
      2. The *cryptaea*, or secret commission, dispatched boys to live off the land and learn physical endurance. During this period, the boys could kill with impunity any helot they came across.
      3. Men continued to live with their peers, dining together in common messes called *syssitia*. Every member was required to contribute the produce of his own land to the mess; those who failed to keep up their contributions were removed from the *syssition*.
      4. The ideology of equality within the Spartan élite is summed up by their collective name: *homoioi*, or equals. Their own equality was supported by the dramatic inequality prevailing throughout the rest of Spartan society.
   B. The closing of Spartan society is also demonstrated by other changes.
      1. On various occasions the Spartans formally expelled all foreigners (*xenelasia*), probably in order to prevent infection by new ideas.
      2. Commerce was severely restricted by the use of cumbersome bars instead of coins. The Spartans feared that international trade would introduce new ideas into their state.
      3. Laconian pottery was soon eclipsed by Attic pottery.
      4. The vigorous tradition of choral poetry in Archaic Sparta failed to develop in the classical period, unlike at Athens.

Suggested Readings

Cartledge, P. (1979) *Sparta and Lakonia: a Regional History 1300-362 BC*. London: Routledge.

Questions to Consider

1. To what extent is it correct to describe ancient Sparta as a totalitarian society?
2. How did Sparta avoid the civil strife and tyranny that afflicted most other Greek states in the sixth century?

Lecture Nine

Revolution

Scope: The sixth century BC was a period of rapid change throughout Greece. More manufacturing, increased wealth, and a greater volume of trade fueled the growth of towns such as Athens and Corinth. These changes also contributed to social upheaval and widespread instability. Factional strife (*stasis*) was rife in many towns. Regionalism and clan-based conflicts produced anarchy and in many places made it possible for tyrants to seize power.

In Athens the population attempted to forestall such a crisis by electing one man to overhaul the existing laws and to mediate between the various groups in conflict. Solon would be remembered as the father of the Athenian constitution. As we shall see in this lecture, he met with mixed success, but he deserves nevertheless to be regarded a great statesman.

Outline

I. Conflict and Class

- **A.** In the sixth century we begin to hear of entire groups calling themselves *aristoi*, the "best men."
  - **1.** This occurs at a time when the constant theme of Greek poetry is *stasis*, civil conflict. For Marxist historians, this suggests that the Archaic period was a time of class struggle.
  - **2.** But where we have details of this *stasis*, it usually turns out to involve competing groups of aristocrats and their friends.
- **B.** Although the Archaic period was not a time of class warfare, the growing wealth of a few and the impoverishment of many poor farmers fueled agitation for political and economic change. The tensions of the period operated both horizontally (between competing factions) and vertically (between classes).

II. Solon and the *Seisachtheia*

- **A.** In Athens we have evidence of such a crisis in the poems of Solon. Elected *archon* in 594, he claimed to stand as a shield protecting both the people and the powerful.

1. Solon refers to removing the marker-stones that enslaved the land. This statement probably refers to his abolition of a system by which land was mortgaged, causing many farmers to fall into debt.
2. Solon claims to have freed many who had been enslaved by the rich.
3. He also claims to have brought back Athenians who had been sold abroad in slavery.

B. His reform program was called the *Seisachtheia* or the "Shaking-Off of Burdens."

1. Many poor farmers had been reduced to the status of tenant-farmers, owing a share of their produce to the wealthy land-owners to whom they were in debt.
2. If land were inalienable, as many suppose, the poor secured their debts with their own person, and were subject to seizure if they defaulted.
3. It was this system of serfdom and the real threat of slavery that Solon abolished.
4. There is no evidence that Solon redistributed land, but he did cancel debt-bondage, reduced or cancelled existing debts, and probably confirmed the ownership of land by the poor.

III. Constitutional Reform

A. Although he had been elected to deal with an economic crisis, Solon used his time in office to promulgate a series of far-reaching constitutional reforms designed to strengthen the rule of law.

B. Solon attempted to formalize the rights and privileges of each class according to its wealth. Wealth, not birth, would be the criterion for a citizen's access to public office. Four census ratings were created (or perhaps more clearly defined) based on the produce of the citizen's land.

1. Pentacosiomedimni > 500 measures (wet and dry)
2. Hippeis (Knights) > 300
3. Zeugitae (Yeomen) > 200
4. Thetes (Labourers) < 200

C. A second constitutional reform was the publication of Athens' laws. As with the census ratings, some of which may have existed before Solon, this codification introduced regularity and clarity. There now existed a comprehensive code of Athenian law.

IV. Taking advantage of his authority, Solon introduced a slew of reforms designed to contribute to Athens' prosperity.

A. He supported the agricultural sector by banning the export of all agricultural produce from Attica except olive oil.

B. He supported the manufacturing sector by offering citizenship to foreign craftsmen who moved to Athens.

C. He adopted the Euboean system of weights and measures, making it easier for Athens to trade throughout the Aegean.

D. He formalized the distinction between public and private law.

V. Revolution and the Rule of Law

A. If Solon's work was meant to be a revolutionary response to the crisis of Archaic Athens, then it was a moderate revolution. It can be viewed in terms of its short-term goals and long-term effects. As a solution to *stasis* and conflict, Solon's reforms were a failure, since in the immediate aftermath Athens underwent a further period of faction-fighting, anarchy, and eventually tyranny.

B. In the long term, Solon's reforms set Athens on the road to democracy by strengthening the rule of law. Public life, public office, the legal system, and many areas of economic life as well had been given a more formal basis, making possible the emergence of a strong Athenian state, and finally, the Athenian democracy.

Suggested Reading

Hignett, C. (1952) *A History of the Athenian Constitution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Questions to Consider

1. Is there a consistent theme running through all the reforms attributed to Solon?
2. How compelling is the evidence for class conflict in Archaic Athens?

Lecture Ten
Tyranny

Scope: The term "tyranny" conjures up images of cruel despots terrorizing a frightened population. In the world of ancient Greece, especially in the sixth century, tyranny meant something quite different. Tyrants were ambitious men who took advantage of the upheavals of the age to seize power. Some, like Policrates of Samos, were great builders. Many, like Cypselus of Corinth, ruled during a time of prosperity. By ending the factional disputes that afflicted the city-states of Greece, many of them brought stability.

The Athenians were ruled by the tyrant Pisistratus and his sons for half a century. Far from being a time of fear, this was a period during which the Athenians enjoyed peace at home and growing influence abroad. In this lecture we will examine the tyranny of Pisistratus and its legacy for Athens.

Outline

I. After Solon

- **A.** The period after Solon's departure from Athens (593 BC) saw no improvement in the bitter factional fighting that had afflicted the city.
  - **1.** For two years the violence was so bad that no archon was elected, causing Athens to lapse into a period of literal anarchy.
  - **2.** A leading politician named Damasias was elected and refused to give up office. He was expelled after two years.
- **B.** In the next generation, three factions emerged in Athenian politics: the Men of the Shore, the Men of the Plain, and the Men from Beyond the Hills.
  - **1.** Each corresponded loosely to one of the regions of Attica.
  - **2.** Each faction was dominated by aristocratic leaders.
  - **3.** The leader of the Hill faction, from the eastern part of Attica, was Pisistratus.

II. Pisistratus made three attempts to establish himself as tyrant. The details of these attempts shed light on the weakness of the Athenian state.

- **A.** In 561 Pisistratus made his first attempt to become tyrant.
  - **1.** Appearing in the marketplace dishevelled and bruised, he claimed to have been attacked by his enemies.
  - **2.** Given permission to raise a bodyguard, he occupied the Acropolis, the citadel of Athens.
  - **3.** Shortly thereafter, he was driven out.
- **B.** In 558 he made his second attempt at establishing a tyranny by means of a marriage alliance with another leading family.
  - **1.** His young wife complained that Pisistratus was uninterested in properly consummating the marriage.
  - **2.** They separated, the alliance ended, and Pisistratus withdrew from Athens to the region of Thrace, where he enriched himself by opening gold and silver mines.
- **C.** In 546 Pisistratus returned to Athens richer, better equipped, and supported by the goddess Athena.
  - **1.** Accompanied by a six-foot-tall Athenian girl called Phye dressed as Athena, Pisistratus and a private army marched on Athens.
  - **2.** His opponents were defeated at the battle of Pallene, and Pisistratus finally became the tyrant of Athens.

III. Pisistratus' Accomplishments

- **A.** Fifty years after the expulsion of the last of Pisistratus' family, Herodotus investigated the tyranny and came to the conclusion that Pisistratus had ruled mildly, had obeyed the law, and had generally done a great deal to benefit the Athenians.
- **B.** Some modern historians would go further and say that Pisistratus was actually more important for the establishment of democracy than Solon. Consider his record:
  - **1.** He maintained existing laws and allowed elections to take place every year.
  - **2.** He appointed rural magistrates so that poor farmers could get legal redress without having to quit their farms.
  - **3.** He embarked on a building program that included construction of a temple to Athena on the Acropolis, a fountain house in the market-place, and the temple of Olympian Zeus
  - **4.** He made loans to the poor at low interest.

5. He introduced a 10% tax on produce to give the Athenian state financial revenues.
6. He expanded the mining of silver at Laurium and in Thrace, helping to make Athens the center of a trading and mercantile realm that encompassed the Aegean.

IV. Pisistratus and the Creation of Athens

A. Along with this impressive record, Pisistratus was responsible for the cultural transformation of Athens. Festivals such as the Dionysia and Panathenaia, which involved athletic and musical contests, made Athens into the preeminent cultural center of the Greek world.

1. Archaic sculpture in Athens reached a new level of excellence.
2. Attic Black-Figure vases now outstripped Corinthian pottery as a luxury item and were traded as far away as Etruria.

B. Pisistratus conducted an aggressive foreign policy that added to Athens' prosperity.

1. He conducted peaceful relations with other tyrants such as Lygdamis of Naxos and Policrates of Samos.
2. Under Pisistratus' leadership, the Athenians annexed the island of Delos, acquiring control of the prestigious sanctuary of Apollo.

C. The effect of all this was the creation of Athens.

1. Before Pisistratus, Athens consisted of warring clans competing for political power just as they competed in war and in Olympic competition.
2. Although Pisistratus was himself an ambitious aristocrat, he managed to bequeath to the Athenians a state that had a far more clearly defined sense of Athenian identity.

D. After the death of Pisistratus (528/7 BC), his sons continued to hold power, probably through alliances with some of the leading families. The sons, however, were not the equal of the father. In 514, one of Pisistratus' sons, Hipparchus, was assassinated, and four years later his brother, Hippias, was driven from the city.

V. The man who emerged from the next round of civil *stasis* would be the man who profited from Pisistratus' legacy, the man who would recognize that the common Athenian was a more potent political force than the most powerful aristocrat. His name was Cleisthenes, and it was he more than any other who finally established the Athenian democracy.

Suggested Reading

Andrewes, A. (1956) *The Greek Tyrants*. London: Methuen.

Questions to Consider

1. Was tyranny a necessary stage for the political development of the Greek states?
2. Was the Panathenaia the most important legacy of the Pisistratid tyranny?

Lecture Eleven

The Origins of Democracy

Scope: Although Solon and Pisistratus paved the way for Athens to become a full democracy, it was the aristocratic leader Cleisthenes who devised the democratic system under which Athens flourished for two centuries. In this lecture we examine the conditions under which democracy came into being. We then look in detail at the complex system set in place by Cleisthenes. By creating new tribal and local divisions, he forever weakened the aristocratic hold on Athenian politics. We will review some of the major interpretations that have been advanced to explain the Cleisthenic system.

Outline

I. The End of the Pisistratid Tyranny
   A. Popular tradition maintained that two Athenian aristocrats—Harmodius and Aristogeiton—slew Hipparchus in 514 BC and ended the tyranny. In fact, Hippias continued to hold power for four more years.
   B. Certain leading Athenian families—especially the Alcmeonidae—claimed to have opposed the tyrants throughout their rule. This, too, is false. Epigraphic evidence discovered in 1939 demonstrates that supposed opponents of the tyrants were in Athens holding office in the 520s, in the midst of the period of tyrannical rule.
   C. It is likely that Hippias, the other son of Pisistratus, ruled with a heavy hand only in the years after his brother's assassination, in 514.
      1. Resistance to the tyranny began to solidify only during the regime of Hippias.
      2. In 510 Hippias was driven out by the Spartans.

II. The Ascendancy of Cleisthenes
   A. Newly liberated, the Athenians faced the question of how to conduct their own affairs. At first, they returned to the same factional strife that had marked the period before the tyranny.
   B. Two leaders emerged in 510: Isagoras and Cleisthenes.
      1. As tension increased, Isagoras called for the banishment of Cleisthenes and his clan.
      2. Isagoras also called on the Spartans to assist him, but the Athenians resisted this external interference and rose up against the Spartan force led by Cleomenes. The Spartans were allowed to withdraw, and Isagoras went into exile with them.
   C. Cleisthenes' success was due to the fact that he had proposed a popular plan to reform the Athenian constitution.
      1. Cleisthenes was a demagogue who appealed directly to the people.
      2. Herodotus says that Cleisthenes took "the people into his political club," which suggests that Cleisthenes promised the whole Athenian population a more direct voice in political affairs.
   D. The plan called for redrawing the political map of Attica.
      1. Four existing tribes were replaced by ten new tribes (*phylai*).
      2. Each tribe was divided into three thirds (*trittyes*).
      3. Each of these thirds was located in one of the three regions of Attica: coast, inland, and city.
      4. Each third was composed of a varying number of demes, i.e., villages or municipalities, of which there were a total of 140. These demes varied widely in size.
   E. Cleisthenes also created a Council of 500 to supervise and prepare the work of the popular Assembly.
      1. The composition of the Council changed every year.
      2. Each tribe supplied fifty councillors who served for one month.
      3. Each deme was allocated a quota of council positions which it filled by lot each year.
      4. In this way, every Athenian was likely to serve on the Council at least once, and usually not more than once, in his life-time.
   F. The reforms were intended to break the dominance of the old aristocratic clans and spread power as widely as possible throughout Athenian society. Both the tribal reform and the composition of the new Council reflect important principles that remained central to the democracy:
      1. The annual rotation of power.
      2. The sharing of power.
      3. The preferability of sortition (choice by lot).

III. The Cleisthenic system looks and is complicated. Historians are compelled to ask, what plan lies behind this? Who profited from it? There are three main theories:

A. Military Levies
   1. Many scholars note that Cleisthenes' reorganization of the political boundaries of Attica has military implications. Athenians fought in tribal regiments; their officers were elected as tribal officers; and so, the argument goes, the Cleisthenic system resulted in a more regular, reliable muster.
   2. Yet this seems to confuse results with intention. The division of the army into ten tribal units hardly requires or explains the extraordinary complexity of the Cleisthenic system.

B. A second theory is that Cleisthenes, an Alcmeonid, designed an elaborate system to spread the influence of the Alcmeonid family over three separate tribes.
   1. The theory is based on extremely suspect evidence concerning the deme affiliations of the Alcmeonidae.
   2. Nor is it clear that spreading the family's members across three tribes would mean three times as much influence. It may have had the opposite effect—i.e., diluting the family's influence.

C. The third argument is that Cleisthenes' plan was to break the political power of the old, regionally based clans. By mixing up different demes in a trittys, breaking old ties, and connecting trittyes from different parts of the state, he was making it harder for old families to organize their supporters into a coherent political faction.

IV. The Result

A. The democracy, therefore, was not simply created by chance, nor did it involve the simple shedding of aristocratic influence. It required something both more dramatic and complicated, a revolutionary new order in which every man could be proud of his birth and proud of his citizenship.

B. If you asked an Athenian of the democracy his name, he replied in three parts: his given name, his father's name, and the name of his Cleisthenic deme. The Athenians were now forced to identify themselves by their place, literally, in the democracy.

Suggested Reading

Eliot, C.W.J. (1962) *Coastal Demes of Attika: A Study of the Policy of Kleisthenes*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bicknell, P.J. (1972) "Kleisthenes as Politician: An Exploration," in *Studies in Athenian Politics and Genealogy* (= *Historia Einzelschriften* Heft 19).

Questions to Consider

1. Is it necessary to look for a partisan motive behind the reforms of Cleisthenes?
2. How important for the emergence of a full democracy was the creation of the Council of 500?

Lecture Twelve
The Persian Empire

Scope: Throughout the Archaic period, contact between Greeks and non-Greeks occurred as a result of trade and colonization. By the late sixth century, however, the Persian Empire had grown so vast and powerful that the Greeks of the Ionian Coast came into direct contact with the Persians, in some cases even becoming tributary states to the Persians. This set the stage for the epic confrontation between Persia and the Greeks which would change Greek history forever.

In this lecture, we will look at the Persian Empire, its origins under Cyrus the Great, and its territorial expansion. We will discuss the accomplishments of the Persians, attempting to avoid the bias of the Greek sources. What emerges is a great and sophisticated society, which, by historical accident, became a negative image of the Greeks' view of themselves.

Outline

I. The Origins and Development of the Persian Empire
   - A. From the fourth millennium before Christ onwards, Mesopotamia (the region of modern Iraq) produced a succession of complex civilizations, including Sumer, Akkad, and the Assyrians. Cycles of growth, invasion, destruction, and regeneration followed each other for two thousand years.
   - B. The Persians came from the periphery of this cultural zone.
     1. Their language was Indo-European, unlike the Semitic languages of Mesopotamia.
     2. Originally semi-nomadic, they came out of the great open steppes of southern Russia. Mesopotamia was neither their origin nor the heartland of their eventual empire.
     3. They settled in the high Iranian plateau early in the first millennium BC, and they achieved political unification only in c. 700 BC.
   - C. In 558 BC Cyrus the Great came to the throne. Soon he established the basis of the Persian empire by conquering the Medes, a neighboring people. From here he continued the aggressive expansion of Persian power east and west.
     1. With the conquest of Babylon, Cyrus transformed the Persians from outsiders into the greatest imperial power of the ancient Near East.
     2. At the time of his death in 530, the Persian domain reached from Afghanistan to the Ionian coast.

II. Territorial Expansion Under the Achaemenid Dynasty
   - A. Cyrus' conquests brought the Greeks of Asia Minor into direct contact with Persian power. With the conquest of Lydia, Persian control extended virtually to the Aegean.
     1. As illustrated by Herodotus, many Greeks sought to derive moral lessons from the rise of Persian power.
     2. Asia Minor was divided into a series of *satrapies* or provinces, often corresponding to the territory of the various pre-Persian kingdoms.
     3. The Persian King usually assigned the *satrapy* to a friend or relative. These governors, or *satraps*, enjoyed a great deal of independence.
   - B. Cyrus was succeeded by Cambyses (530-522), much of whose reign was taken up with the conquest of Egypt.
   - C. After the death of Cambyses, Darius came to the throne.
     1. According to Herodotus, the death of Cambyses was followed by a constitutional debate over possible new forms of government for the Persian empire. This debate among various regimes—aristocracy, democracy, and monarchy—was more relevant to fifth-century Greece than to sixth-century Persia.
     2. Darius renewed the western expansion of the Persians. By c. 514, the Persians had reached the islands of the Aegean.
     3. The Greek cities along the Ionian coast came under Persian control.
     4. The Persians were generally content to leave the cities under the control of a cooperative tyrant.
     5. Persian rule was, for the most part, neither cruel nor onerous.
   - D. The final confrontation of Persia and Greece, in 490 and 480-79 BC, should be seen as the culmination of Persian territorial expansion.
   - E. The idea that the wars represented a grand cultural clash between East and West emerged in fifth-century hindsight.

At the time, the Greeks and Persians did not view their systems as antithetical.

1. In the sixth-century context, the Greeks were insignificant vis-à-vis the Persians in terms of territory, empire, and power.
2. Many Greeks lived and worked in the Persian empire and did not view the Persians as alien.
3. At the time, few if any Greeks thought that Greece and Persia were bound inevitably to clash.

III. Iranian Culture and Society under the Achaemenids

A. The Achaemenids favored the traditional Persian religion centered on the worship of the elements and natural forces, principally the sky, sun, moon, earth, fire and water. The Achaemenid kings especially honored the great Sky God, Ahura-Mazda, with whose authority they identified their own.

B. The Achaemenids were also tolerant of other religious systems. A letter of Darius to one of his *satraps* threatens him with punishment for cutting down trees sacred to Apollo.

C. Persian society was hierarchical.

1. This was demonstrated by the act of obeisance, performed before a superior. Equals were greeted with a kiss.
2. The King's friends and relatives constituted the ruling class. This mixed, Persian-Median aristocracy ruled over an empire that embraced tribes and peoples that differed greatly in speech, culture and manners.
3. An imperial post and a system of roads crossing the empire created the finest communications network of the ancient world.

D. Military prowess was highly prized, with hunting and archery considered the proper training for warriors.

1. Major military expeditions drew on contingents from all over the empire: the Phoenician fleet, horsemen from the Steppes, Greek and Carian heavy infantry, Assyrian chariots.
2. Commanders invariably came from the ranks of the King's Friends.

E. The quality and refinement of Achaemenid jewelry, especially in gold, recalls something of the Persians' nomadic origins. At the same time, Achaemenid art synthesizes earlier Iranian traditions with the styles and techniques of the areas conquered. The Persians borrowed freely, and they employed artisans from all over their empire. Many Greeks, for example, from Ionia served as doctors, engineers and masons in the Persian royal city of Susa.

F. Before the Achaemenid kings the Persians had virtually no tradition of monumental architecture. Under the Achaemenids, however, extraordinary palaces at Persepolis and Susa were built to express the majesty of this ambitious people. The Persians bring together much that is best in the long cultural development in the ancient Near East.

Suggested Reading

Cook, J.M. (1983) *The Persian Empire*. London.

Questions to Consider

1. To what degree has understanding of the Persian Empire been skewed by our reliance on Greek literary sources?
2. What elements in Greek and Persian culture contributed most to the confrontation which resulted in the Persian Wars?

Ancient Greek Civilization
Time-Line

c. 6000-2800	Neolithic Period
c. 2300-1900	Early Helladic Period (mainland)
c. 1900-1600	Middle Helladic Period (mainland)
c. 1900-1700	First Palatial Period (Crete)
c. 1700-1450	Second Palatial period (Crete)
c. 1600-1100	Late Helladic Period (mainland); Mycenaean civilization
c. 1450-1375	Mycenaean occupation of Cnossus
c. 1100-1000	Sub-Mycenaean Period.
c. 1000-900	"Dark Ages," but signs of recovery at Lefkandi and Elateia
c. 900-700	Geometric Period
c. 800-700	Orientalizing Period
776	First Olympic Games
c. 750	Beginning of Greek colonization of Sicily, Italy, and the Black Sea
c. 725	Homer's poems written down
c. 700	Composition of Hesiod's poems
c. 650	Second Messenian War
594/3	Solon's archonship in Athens
561/0	Pisistratus' first attempt at tyranny
545-28/7	Pisistratus' tyranny at Athens
525	Cleisthenes' archonship
514	Assassination of Hipparchus, son of Pisistratus
510	Expulsion of Hippias, son of Pisistratus
508/7	Democratic reforms of Cleisthenes
490	Battle of Marathon
480	Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis
479	Battle of Plataea

478/7	Formation of the Delian League
472	First production of Aeschylus' *Persians.*
471	Ostracism of Themistocles
464-61	Earthquake in Sparta and ensuing Helot Revolt
461	Democratic reforms of Ephialtes; pay for jury service.
460-445	First Peloponnesian War
460-457	Construction of "Long Walls" from Athens to Piraeus
c. 454	Transfer of Delian League Treasury to Athens
449	Peace of Kallias (?)
447-438	Construction of the Parthenon
445	Thirty Years Peace between Athens and Sparta.
437-432	Construction of the Propylaea
431-404	Peloponnesian War
430/29	Plague in Athens; death of Pericles
421-408	Construction of the Erechtheum
415-413	Athenian invasion of Sicily
405	Battle of Aegispotami
404	Athens surrenders
404-403	Thirty Tyrants at Athens
399	Death of Socrates (born 469)
395-387	Corinthian War
386	Foundation of Plato's Academy
382	Sparta seizes Cadmeia, citadel of Thebes
378	Second Athenian Confederation founded
371	Thebes defeats Sparta at Leuctra; end of Spartan hegemony
362	Battle of Mantinea; end of Theban hegemony
359-336	Reign of Philip II of Macedon
347	Death of Plato (born 429)
338	Battle of Chaeronea; Philip conquers Greece
336-323	Reign of Alexander the Great

Biographical Notes

Alexander the Great: Son of Philip II and remembered for the Greek conquest of the Persian Empire before his sudden death in 323 BC.

Aristotle: Student of Plato and third of the great Greek philosophers, influential in a variety of areas, from ethics to biology.

Cimon: Leading politician in Athens in the generation after the Persian Wars.

Cleisthenes: Constitutional reformer whose innovations included the Council of 500, the ten tribes and system of demes and trittyes.

Cleon: the leading Athenian politician from c. 429 - 422 BC.

Cyrus the Great: Persian king who ruled from 558-530 BC, conquered the neighboring Medes and brought about the expansion of Persian power from Afghanistan to the Ionian coast.

Darius I: Persian king whose army was defeated at Marathon in 490 BC.

Darius III: Persian king defeated by Alexander the Great. The last Achaemenid king of Persia.

Dionysus: God of Ecstasy, known to the Greeks as the One who Binds and Releases. Tragedy was performed in his honor.

Evans, Sir Arthur: British excavator of Cnossus and proponent of the view that Minoan Crete had colonized the mainland, giving rise to Mycenaean civilization.

Hippias and Hipparchus: Sons of Pisistratus. Hippias ruled from 528/7 to 510 BC.

Isagoras: One of the leaders of the factional strife afflicting Athens from 510-508 BC. Isagoras was supported by the Spartans, but defeated by his rival, Cleisthenes.

Leonidas: Spartan king at the time of the Persian invasions, he died at Thermopylae (480 BC).

Lycurgus: Legendary law-giver of Sparta.

Menander: Popular late 4th century playwright whose New Comedy blended romance, comedy and domestic situations.

Nicias: Unwilling and unlucky Athenian commander during the Sicilian Expedition (415-13 BC).

Pisistratus: Sixth century tyrant of Athens, responsible for unifying the Athenians and encouraging prosperity.

Pericles: Leading Athenian politician and general from c. 450 - 429 BC.

Philip II: King of Macedon, 359-336 BC, and responsible for the unification of Macedon, its expansion and the conquest of southern Greece.

Plato: Student of Socrates and perhaps the most influential of the Greek philosophers, especially associated with the theory of forms.

Protagoras: Best known of the sophists, he advocated a form of agnosticism.

Schliemann, Heinrich: German excavator whose work on Ithaca and at Troy and Mycenae constituted the first major excavations of the Aegean Bronze Age.

Socrates: Provocative Athenian philosopher who was executed in 399 BC on charges of impiety and corrupting the youth of Athens.

Solon: Athenian lawgiver responsible for wide-ranging political and economic reforms.

Themistocles: Athenian leader at the time of the Persian invasions, he was remembered for convincing the Greeks to stay and fight at Salamis.

Xenophon: Athenian gentleman, soldier, and writer whose literary works included history, biography, and political pamphlets, as well as instruction manuals on cavalry tactics, hunting and household management.

Xerxes: Persian king whose invasion of Greece in 480-79 BC was defeated at Salamis and Plataea.

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