Chapter 3 – Ancient Greece: 100-400 B.C.E.

The Polis:

- a *social collectivity* more so than a *place*

- emerged from the reintroduction of commerce after the collapse of Mycenaean civ., influenced by the Phoenician culture & economy

- surrounding the *asty*, or urban settlement, was the *Khora*, or land that was farmed or worked to support the large polis & several smaller poleis

- sometimes built around a hilltop fortress, sometimes around a temple precinct
The Polis, cont’d:

- organized around a social center, the *agora*, (Romans called it the Piazza), where markets & meetings were held
Piazza @ Schmidts – Northern Liberties, Phila – similar to the Greek agora
The **Hoplites:**

- a standing militia of men from the polis
- term comes from the round shield they bore, the *hoplon*, used as part of the *phalanx* fighting formation
- Poleis came to rely on hoplites, was forced to offer hoplites more political power

- formerly, aristocrats were the only ones with the $ to afford armor and chariots, the preferred tools of war in previous era
The *Hoplites* cont’d:

- Increased reliance on citizen soldiers led to increased influence of hoplites & demands for political inclusion, democratic philosophy
Archaic Greece – 800-480 B.C.E.

- Rise of the aristocracy

- Evolution of the hoplite - tyrants who attempted to satisfy hoplite demands

- Emergence of democratic principles – many shortcomings

- Depended on slave labor

- Reduced female participation

- Frequent fighting/competition among the elite
Archaic Greece (800–480 B.C.E.)

- Aristocratic culture and the rise of tyranny
  - A new elite—problems
    - Violence between aristocratic groups
    - *Tyrannos*—someone who seized power and ruled outside traditional framework
    - The tyrant had to satisfy the hoplites
    - Important path from aristocracy to democracy
Athens
Athens:

- **Government organization**
  - controlled by *Archons* (“first men”) – 9 aristocrats who served for 1 year, & then became permanent members of the *Areopagus* (council of elders) who apptd. *archons*

- **Ekklesia** – Athenian assembly – incl. all free-born men over 18 – voted for the archons

- Diverse agricultural economy, traders

- Cleisthenes (c. 570–c. 508 B.C.E.)
  - Championed the cause of the demos (the people)
  - Reorganized the population into ten tribes
  - Introduced ostracism
A Modern Replica of an Athenian Trireme
Sparta
Sparta: Laconians, of the Peloponnesus:

- Organized for war

  The *Spartiate* (the “Equals”)—professional soldiers of the phalanx

- Political patronage system

  The *apella*—the citizen assembly of *Spartiate* males over thirty years old

The helots - slaves who were ruled by the Spartiate
Map 3.2 The Persian Wars with Greece
The Archaic Polis in Action

• Miletus
  – Commercial, cultural, and military power of Ionia (Asia Minor)
  – Strong Hellenic identity shaped by Near Eastern influence
  – Ionia and Lydia—cross-cultural exchange
  – Ionians Hellenize interior of Asia Minor
  – Strong trading interests (Black Sea and Egypt)
Greek Colonization, c. 550 B.C.E
The Persian Wars:

- **Greeks** – politically disunited – each city-state politically independent, rivalry between them

- **Persians** – larger, more populated, more united empire

- Milesians were Greek culturally, but located in the sphere of Persian power – Rose up in rebellion against Persians in 501 BCE
  
  - Athens & Eritria help out, win temp. victories, go home

  - Persia avenged losses @ home, decided to pay Athens back
Battle of Marathon:

- Sparta refused to help Athens, but outnumbered Athenians defeated Persians through strategy & geography

Xerxes’ invasion:

- Wanted to avenge his father Darius’ defeat

- Athens, Sparta, Corinth, 30 other poleis formed Hellenic League – unprecedented unification for mutual defense

- Battle of Thermopylae – Spartans’ 300 hold off Xerxes, Athenian fleet inflict heavy damage on Persians

- Athens evacuated, city torched, but Greeks eventually win war
Greek Forces Defeat Persians
Greek Comedy and Tragedy

Purpose - to replicate the tensions of democracy & issues of the day

**Tragedy** – personal desire vs public duty, consequences of power
Aeschylus, Sophocles

**Comedy** – dealt with “too hot to handle” issues – sex scandals, moral depravity, political corruption
Aristophanes

- Authors were harassed by leaders whom they were targeting

- Authors usually escaped punishment due to the popularity of their work

- Modern examples?
Herodotus & Thucydides: Historiography

- Legal & commercial transactions demanded non-lyrical writing

- Athens encouraged rise of prose as distinct literary form

- H & T developed new way to study the past & present:
  - Focus on human agency as driving force, not divine intervention
  - required multiple, diverse sources of info
  - historian’s role distinct from that of storyteller
  - Goal of History – to investigate & critically reflect on the past and present
  - What was the theme, purpose, & method of earlier historians?
Herodotus

Thucydides
Women’s Rights in Athens:

- Mycenae – women viewed as courageous, wise – Female Greek goddesses cemented this image

- Rise of Hoplites changed women’s status:
  
  - Women essential to replenish Hoplite ranks – giving birth became primary role

  - Became legal property of husband at marriage

  - Demands of modesty & motherhood kept women @ home, increased need/tasks of slave labor

  - Male sexual promiscuity acceptable, condemned for wives
The Peloponnesian War:
- Athens & Co. vs Sparta & Co.

Background:
- Hellenic League defeated Persia, **Delian League** arranged by Athens to keep pressure on Persia – Led by Athens under Pericles
- Athens became imperialistic, pressuring DL members
- Pericles cut deal w/ Persians, ending purpose of DL, but still bullied member states to accept Athenian exploitation
- Sparta & Corinth, chiefs of the Peloponnesian League, resisted Athenian Hegemony
The Peloponnesian War
The Peloponnesian War cont’d:

- Sparta – unbeatable army vs Athens – unbeatable navy
- Athens besieged, Spartan towns victims of raids
- Pericles died of disease while besieged, Athenian dearth of leaders
- Spartans request aid, training from Persians
- Athenian in-fighting contributed to eventual defeat
- 27 years of war greatly weakened Greek Poleis, left them vulnerable to outside threats
Pythagoras:

- Fled to Italy when Persians warred w/ Miletus

- Believed essence of the universe could not be understood through study of the physical world, but through study of abstractions

- Established concept of even and odd numbers

- Geometry – Pythagorean Theorem

Pythagorean theorem |pəˈθagəˈrēən; pī-|
a theorem attributed to Pythagoras that the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.
For any right triangle with sides $a$ and $b$ and hypotenuse $h$, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides.

$$h^2 = a^2 + b^2$$
**Sophists & Protagoras:**

- Sophists = “Wise Men” – From the Greek mainland

“Man is the measure of all things” – what does it mean?

- Beliefs – there were no absolute standards of right & wrong – truth, justice, goodness were relative & adaptable to the needs and interests of human beings

**Empiricism** – “facts” could only be arrived at through perception of the senses – since each person experiences the world differently, truth is subjective (RELATIVISM)

- Why did many Athenians view this as dangerous?
Socrates:
- Feared that sophist relativism undermined society itself – who could rule, and by what laws, if truth is relative?

- A hoplite, not a teacher – fought in Peloponnesian war for Athens

- Socratic method – teaching method of arriving at conclusions through dialogue

- We know of him through the writings of his followers, Plato

- “The unexamined life is not worth living.” “I know nothing.”

- Said the goal of philosophy was to help humans understand and apply standards of absolute good

- Condemned to death by Athenian court for denying the gods, disloyalty to the Polis, and “corruption of the youth”