The Age of Pericles

Part I

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Dr. McInerney was the recipient in 2000 of the Ira Abrams award for excellence in teaching in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania and, more recently, received a Lindback award, the university's top teaching prize.

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The Age of Pericles

Scope:

Athens in the 5th century B.C. witnessed a cultural flowering of extraordinary power and importance for Western culture. In this series of 24 lectures, we will use the career of Pericles as the prism through which to examine the achievements of Athens in its golden age. Pericles first appeared on the public stage shortly after the Persian Wars, seminal events that saw the Greeks defeat the numerically superior Persians. In the generation that followed, Athens rapidly transformed the alliance of Greek states dedicated to taking the war back to Persia into an Aegean empire, dominated by the Athenians and their fleet. At the same time, this dramatic increase in power and prestige was accompanied by the growth of full participatory democracy. We examine the daily working of that democracy, asking how an Athenian was trained for citizenship. What did democracy mean in practice? What did freedom and autonomy mean to a society that relied on slaves and was ruthless in its treatment of its subjects?

To answer these questions, we juxtapose the breathtaking accomplishments of the Athenians, in fields such as philosophy, tragedy, comedy, sculpture, and architecture, with the exclusion of women from public life, the torture and abuse of slaves, and the execution of other Greek populations. We will follow the Athenians from the height of their power to defeat at the hands of the Spartans. The picture that emerges is a portrait of a complex people and a complicated culture. Restless, adventurous, sophisticated, crude, pious, the Athenians are a people whose culture has a special significance for us. The ties between us are not casual, but deeply meaningful.

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Lecture One

The *Agora*—An Ancient Marketplace

Scope: In the heart of Athens lay the *agora*, or marketplace. This was the center of the commercial, religious, and political life of Athens. This lecture surveys each of these categories, with special attention to the buildings on the western side of the agora, where the Athenian council met, where the state archive was housed, and where officials entertained state visitors and ambassadors. Laws were put on display in the Royal Stoa, and legal cases were often first investigated by magistrates here. Because the agora was home to moneylenders, traders, and a wide variety of manufacturers, we will also look at the economic activity that took place on a daily basis in downtown Athens at the time of Pericles. In this space, hundreds of stalls were set up, and the range of economic activities taking place suggests that the agora was like a huge bazaar. Sausage-sellers, moneylenders, metalworkers, perfumers, shoemakers, and potters all congregated in parts of the agora. These activities were watched by state officials who ensured that fair weights and measures were used and that grain was sold at fair prices. Finally, we will consider the agora as a religious complex. Within the boundaries of the agora, altars, small sanctuaries, and even temples were dedicated to the various gods who oversaw the welfare of the state. Reconstructions, plans, photographs, and literary descriptions allow us to paint a vivid picture of daily life in the bustling heart of Athens.

Outline

I. The agora before Pericles.

A. Graves and wells excavated in the agora and the slopes to the south show that people have lived and died in this area as far back as the Neolithic period. Most traces of their habitation prior to 600 B.C. have been effaced by later occupation and building.

B. Around 600 B.C., the Athenians began to lay out systematically the large public square that would serve as the religious, commercial, and political heart of the city.

1. The earliest public buildings lay on the western side of the agora.
2. At least one of these may be the council house, built to accommodate a Council of Four Hundred that was founded by Solon shortly after 600 B.C.
3. The earliest laws of Athens were displayed on the Acropolis but were later transferred to the agora and displayed also on the west side in the Royal Stoa.

C. The early expansion of the agora continued under the tyrant Peisistratus and his sons, who ruled Athens during the second half of the 6th century.

1. The Pesisitratids built a fountain house on the southeast side of the agora.
2. A building in the southwest corner of the agora may have been the Peisistratid palace.
3. The first public law court was built in the same area.

II. Early in the 5th century, the boundaries of the agora were fixed and marked by boundary stones. As Athens rose to power after the Persian Wars, when the city was sacked twice, the agora would become the heart of the city and an empire.

A. The western side of the agora housed a cluster of buildings where the political and judicial affairs of Athens were conducted.

1. The Old Bouleuterion was the senate house. Five hundred men were selected to serve each year in 10 groups of 50. As a result, there was an executive body of officials serving every day of the year.
2. Late in the 5th century, the Athenians built a New Bouleuterion close to the old building. It served the same function, housing the Council of Five Hundred.
3. The Old Bouleuterion was then dedicated to the mother of the gods, was dubbed the Metroon, and became the public archive of Athens.

B. The 50 councillors serving at any given time were housed and fed at state expense. Other buildings in the southwest corner are associated with the functioning of the daily government of the Athenians.

1. The councillors ate and slept in a round building called the Tholos located south of the Metroon.
2. They displayed important information nearby at the Monument of the Eponymous Heroes. This was a long base with 10 statues, one for each of the tribal heroes of Athens.

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        3. Law courts and the state prison were also located nearby.
        4. Athenian generals had a meeting house nearby, the Strategeion.
    C. At the northern end of the west side were two buildings that were also important to the public and legal life of Athens.
        1. The Royal Stoa housed the offices of the king archon, the chief official in charge of state cults.
        2. The laws of Solon were inscribed and put on display here.
        3. It was to the office of the king archon here that Socrates presented himself upon being indicted for impiety.
        4. A second stoa nearby was famous for its painting depicting a cavalry engagement.
        5. Socrates, Plato, and other intellectuals frequently met here, at the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherius.

III. The agora was also the hub of commercial activity in Pericles's Athens.

- **A.** The south side of the agora was bordered by a stoa, where many committees of public officials met.
    - **1.** These included the *metronomoi*, who inspected weights and measures.
    - **2.** Both liquid and dry measures have been found in the vicinity, along with inscriptions showing that trade in wine, oil, grain, olives, and nuts took place in this part of the stoa.
- **B.** In addition to the trade in staples, luxury items also came to Athens and were traded by merchants both here and in the Piraeus, the port of Athens.
    - **1.** Prized foodstuffs, such as fish, eels, honey, and vintage wines were on sale.
    - **2.** Imported luxuries, such as ivory, spices, bronze mirrors, alabaster vessels, and perfume, could all be purchased in the agora.
    - **3.** Manufactured goods from near and far were also on sale. Aside from the famous Attic vases, all sorts of goods were sold. Boot makers, silversmiths, lamp makers, even toy makers all worked close to the agora and sold their goods at stalls in the open square.
    - **4.** It is not surprising that the temple looming over the agora was the temple of Hephaestus, patron of metalworkers.

IV. The religious importance of the agora cannot be underestimated. Those guilty of treason, murder, or parental mistreatment, as well as cowards, were formally barred from the agora, which was understood to be the heart of the community. Although Athena does not figure prominently in the agora, perhaps because her worship dominated the Acropolis above the city, a wide variety of other gods and goddesses were worshipped in the agora, both as patrons of particular groups and as guardians of the entire city.

- **A.** The Sacred Way entered the agora in the northwest corner, crossing to the southeast before climbing to the acropolis. Nearby, a number of small shrines have come to light.
    - **1.** The Altar of the Twelve Gods was located here. All distances from Athens were measured from this point.
    - **2.** A small crossroads enclosure nearby has yielded hundreds of minor offerings and dedications. Perhaps those entering the agora made a small offering as they passed by.
    - **3.** An altar of Heavenly Aphrodite has recently been excavated in the same corner of the agora.
- **B.** Apollo was worshipped in the agora. He was believed to have saved Athens from the plague at the time of the Peloponnesian War, although his cult may have preceded that.
- **C.** Zeus was worshipped as Eleutherios, "the Liberator," and Euboulaios, "Good Counselor."
- **D.** Later, in Roman times, a temple of Ares was moved from rural Attica to the agora, and a number of other altars and temples were either imported or built anew for the agora. Unfortunately, many of these were placed in what was formerly the open space of the agora. Under the Romans, the heart of the ancient city was transformed into a museum.

Suggested Reading:

Camp, J. M. *The Athenian Agora: Excavations in the Heart of Classical Athens*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1986.

Thompson, D. B. *An Ancient Shopping Center. The Athenian Agora*. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens, 1971.

Questions to Consider:

1. What was the effect of clustering the civic buildings of Athens along the west side of the agora?

2. In what sense can the buildings of the agora be used to interpret the democracy of Pericles's day?

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Lecture Two

Athens and the Persian Wars

Scope: In this lecture, we take a close look at the two invasions by the Persians that stimulated the fabulous growth of Athens in the 5th century. From the Persian point of view, Athens and the rest of Greece were insignificant territories on the far western borders of a great empire. Yet the Athenians successfully resisted the Persians in 490 at Marathon, and when the Persians returned in greater numbers 10 years later, the Greeks defied overwhelming odds to defeat the Persians at sea in 480 at Salamis and, again, a year later at Plataea. The descriptions of Herodotus reveal the impact on the Greeks of their victory. Heaven had decreed that Persia should not rule the west. In this lecture, we examine the beginning of a split between east and west that still overshadows the modern world.

Outline

I. The Persians were originally a nomadic people who entered the Iranian plateau some time before 700 B.C. Under Cyrus the Great, the Persians conquered their neighbors and extended their rule across Central Asia.

- **A.** The Persians controlled the east as far as modern Afghanistan.
- **B.** Late in the 6th century, they probed the area north of the Danube.

II. By 500 B.C., the Persian expansion had reached the Aegean. Greek cities up and down the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey) had fallen under Persian control.

- **A.** The Persians installed governors, many of them Persian nobles related to the king. In other areas, they favored local dynasts. In some instances, they put Greek cities into the hands of Greek tyrants who owed their power to Persia.
  - **1.** In 499, two such Greek leaders, Histiaeus and Aristagoras, sensed that their positions were threatened.
  - **2.** They helped foment a revolt throughout Ionia and called on Athens for help.
  - **3.** The Ionian revolt fizzled out, but not before the Athenians participated in the burning of Sardis, a provincial capital, in 494.
- **B.** Incensed by the behavior of the Greeks, the Persian king, Darius, prepared a punitive expedition against Athens. In 490, Darius disembarked on the coast of Attica at Marathon, 26 miles from Athens. Against all expectations, the Athenians were victorious, driving the Persians back into the sea.
  - **1.** The hero of Marathon was Miltiades, whose son Cimon would emerge as the major Athenian leader of the next generation.
  - **2.** It is quite likely that the Persian numbers recorded by Herodotus are wildly inflated.
  - **3.** The men who fought at Marathon were instantly feted as heroes.
  - **4.** Those who fell were buried in a tumulus on the battlefield.

III. After the victory at Marathon, it was only a matter of time before the Persians returned. After the death of Darius, however, his successor, Xerxes, was occupied with revolts and was unable to prepare for the invasion of Greece until approximately 485.

- **A.** Our source for this campaign is Herodotus, a Greek historian from Halicarnassus, on the edges of Persian-occupied territory.
  - **1.** He lived for some years in Athens and was crowned for his work, which the Athenians rightfully saw as both a historical inquiry and a work in praise of the Athenian record in the war.
  - **2.** Herodotus remarks candidly that, after heaven, the Athenians were most responsible for the Greek victory.
- **B.** Herodotus's history is an unusual combination of firsthand descriptions of the wonders he has seen, especially in such exotic places as Egypt, and ethnographic reporting. He believed that "custom is king." Despite this modern anthropological outlook, he also brought a very traditional religious sensibility to his work. For Herodotus, if a man behaved arrogantly and foolishly, he would suffer because heaven inevitably punished such "hubris." The punishment of the gods might extend across generations.
  - **1.** The career of Croesus exemplifies the outlook of Herodotus.
  - **2.** In his arrogance, Croesus misinterprets Apollo's oracle and ends up being defeated.

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3. Croesus also pays for the sins of his ancestor Gyges, who came to the throne after killing his master, Candaules.
4. History, then, for Herodotus involves the working out of a divine plan, in which individuals, paradoxically, both act freely, yet are part of a predetermined plan.

C. The decision to invade Greece allows Herodotus to demonstrate his understanding of history. He describes a series of visions that inspire Xerxes to invade. After dreaming of a chariot drawn by two women, submissive Asia and indomitable Greece, the king at first decides to follow his uncle's advice and call off the invasion, but a phantom appears to him and bids him invade. After testing the vision by dressing his uncle in his robes and having him sleep on the throne, Xerxes becomes convinced that the invasion has been ordained by heaven and proceeds.

1. We know that the invasion will fail, which raises the question: Why does heaven prompt the Persians to invade if they are destined to fail?
2. The answer is precisely that they are destined to fail. They must, therefore, make the attempt, even if that means being goaded by the gods.

IV. Once the invasion was underway, the Greeks had plenty of warning. News reports from Asia Minor told of a vast army being assembled from all over the empire. In addition, a fleet from Phoenicia came north to follow and supply the vast army as it moved around the Aegean coast.

A. Herodotus again reflects the opinions of Pericles's generation in depicting the resistance to Persia as coming from two quarters, Athenian naval power and Spartan military might.

B. The stand at Thermopylae by the Spartan king Leonidas halted the Persian advance for only a couple of days, yet gave a clear demonstration of the resolve Sparta would bring to any military confrontation.

C. A naval battle at Artemision fought at the same time as Thermopylae was inconclusive but also illustrated the size and prowess of the Athenian naval force.

D. For Herodotus and his contemporaries, Themistocles was the Athenian who typified Athenian cunning and was responsible for the Athenian victory at Salamis.

1. It was Themistocles who persuaded the Athenians to accept that the "wooden wall" mentioned in Apollo's oracle referred to the navy, not the palisade on the Acropolis.
2. He arranged for the evacuation of the city and was believed to have threatened that he would move all the Athenians to Sicily if the Greeks abandoned Salamis.
3. He was also said to have tricked the Persian king into leaving his boats at sea all night so as to keep the Greeks blockaded.
4. For a Greek audience, a cunning commander such as Themistocles would have reminded them of Odysseus.

V. The Greek victory at Salamis did not end the war, despite the impression one receives from such works as Aeschylus's *Persae*, in which news of the Greeks' naval victory is brought back to the Persian court. In fact, Athens would be sacked a second time, the following year, before the Persian army withdrew north of Athens.

A. It was at Plataea in 479 that the combined forces of the Greeks, led by the Spartans, defeated the Persians on land. The remnants of Xerxes's army fled north and were eventually driven completely from the Aegean.

B. The Greeks erected a tripod, a cauldron supported by three serpents, at Delphi in thanks to the gods for their victory. On the tripod were inscribed the names of the city-states who fought Persia. The inscription survives, testimony to the bravery of men who fought and defeated the greatest empire of their day. It would remain their finest hour.

Suggested Reading:

Herodotus. *The Histories*. Trans. by J. Marincola. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2001.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Playing the game of speculative history, what do you imagine would have happened had the Greeks lost the Persian Wars?
2. Can Herodotus be read as if he were writing a prose version of Homer? That is, do Leonidas and Themistocles represent types like Hector and Odysseus?

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Lecture Three
The Athenian Empire

Scope: In this lecture, we tackle the difficult question of how and when Athens was transformed from the victor of the Persian Wars into the imperial power of the Aegean. Using Thucydides as our guide, as well as key Greek inscriptions, we will examine the record of Athenian campaigns. At first, they were designed to drive the Persians from the Aegean, but soon, the Athenians were compelling smaller Greek states to join their alliance and punishing those who resisted or tried to secede. The allies paid tribute to Athens, money that was used to equip a vast fleet and, later, helped finance the building of the great temples of Athens, such as the Parthenon. We will also examine a lively debate among historians that concerns the more restrictive measures imposed by the Athenians. Garrisons, Athenian colonists, and the use of Athenian weights and measures were all mandated by law, but some historians see these as late developments, while others interpret the Athenians' empire as coercive from an early date. The dating of inscriptions, therefore, influences the entire interpretation of the Athenian Empire.

Outline

I. The aftermath of war and the origins of freedom.

- **A.** Freedom is a concept for us rooted in a notion of individual rights. We expect freedoms to be guaranteed, whether these are the freedom to assemble, to write and say what we please, or even to carry a weapon. We approach freedom as a two-sided phenomenon: We assert the freedom to act a certain way and demand the freedom not to be prevented from acting in the ways we choose.
- **B.** The Persian Wars transformed the Greeks' understanding of freedom. Previously, the Greeks had drawn a simple distinction between being free and being a slave. There were no rights that came with this status. One simply was or was not free. The Persian Wars, however, raised the specter of all Greece losing its independence to Persia. Freedom now became equated with the independence of the entire community.
  1. According to Herodotus, the Persian general Mardonius offered to forgive the Athenians if they came over to his side after Salamis. "Continue free, and make an alliance with us," urges the Persian.
  2. The Spartan advice to the Athenians is couched in similar terms: "It would be intolerable if the Athenians, who have always been known as a people to whom many owed their freedom, should now become the means of bringing all other Greeks into slavery."
- **C.** The war fostered a spirit of defiance among the Greeks. Henceforth, freedom would be synonymous with independence. Given that Persian garrisons were still stationed in the Aegean and some Greek city-states in Asia Minor were still under Persian control, the Greeks convened at the end of the war and made the decision to take the war to Persia.
  1. This campaign was designed to sack Persian holdings in Asia Minor, but it is unlikely that any Greeks intended to march deep into Persian territory.
  2. The campaign could be justified as a war of liberation, which it was for the Greek cities on the coast, but the simple aim of taking booty in revenge for the sacking of Greece was probably just as concrete a motive.

II. From League to empire: A key debate in the history of Athens is the question of the transformation of Athens from one of the leading states in the Greek resistance to an imperial power. Pericles well understood that Athenian power was like a tyranny, but how did Athens come to exert such an overwhelming influence over the Aegean states?

- **A.** If we take Thucydides, the Athenian general and historian, as our source, it would seem that the transformation began early. According to Thucydides, it was the Spartans who originally held the leadership of the newly founded Hellenic League. He records campaigns waged by the Greek forces under Spartan leadership in the region of the Hellespont. The Spartan king Pausanias was in command of operations but quickly lost popularity.
  1. It may be that Pausanias was beginning to think of himself as a potential ruler of all Greece, but details are lacking.
  2. The allies approached Athens to assume general command.

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3. The Athenian decision to do so was seen by Thucydides as proof that the allies had brought about their own subjugation.

B. Athenian leadership was vigorous. In 478, Pausanias was disgraced, and the Athenians created the new naval alliance of Aegean Greek states, free of Spartan influence. This new alliance was known as the Delian League. Two years later, in 476–475, they had expelled the Persian garrison from Eion in the Thrace region and enslaved the island of Scyros, making it an Athenian colony. Already the alliance was beginning to look like a tool of Athenian policy and was showing a willingness to resort to force even against other Greeks. In 473, the city of Carystos on Euboea was forced to join the alliance; then, in 470, came the first revolt by an allied state, Naxos, which was besieged and captured. Some time around 468, the Athenians won a victory against the Persian fleet at the Battle of the Eurymedon River, successfully driving the Persians from the Aegean Sea, but in the 10 years the alliance had been in existence, it had already been reduced to a tool of the Athenians. More revolts followed, notably the island of Thasos, in revolt from 465–462, which was rich in trees valuable to the Athenian navy.

1. Athenian control of the empire was helped by the tribute paid by each state.
2. Most states preferred to pay money instead of contributing ships.
3. Where necessary, the Athenians imposed garrisons.
4. They frequently supported democratic groups against aristocratic rivals.
5. Some land of the allies was given to Athenians who chose to colonize.
6. All of this made Athens an increasingly unpopular mistress. As Cleon says, “You possess your empire as a tyranny.”

III. The Athenian Empire in practice: Although Thucydides provides an outline, inscriptions add a great deal of detail to our picture of the Athenian Empire.

A. Inscriptions primarily found in Athens demonstrate that the Athenians often dictated terms to their allies, stipulating, for example, that an ally could not pass any laws or take any decisions detrimental to Athenian interests. Perhaps even more galling were practical intrusions, such as the Athenian decision to make Athenian weights, measures, and coinage the standard for all members of their alliance. In modern terms, we would see this as a positive step toward facilitating free trade among the Aegean states, but the decision was made unilaterally by Athens and demonstrates the city’s imperial power.

B. Such is the state of our knowledge of Greek inscriptions that it was long assumed that these decisions, representing aggressive imperialism, dated to the middle of the 5th century. Now, however, many scholars believe that these measures were taken in the 420s, when Athens was at war with Sparta and when tightening control of its allies and its resources might be regarded as less sinister.

1. The high date for these inscriptions fits with the Athenian decision to move the treasury of the Delian League to Athens shortly before 454 B.C.
2. The low date makes better sense of the numismatic evidence, because many states continued to mint their own coins on non-Athenian standards in the 440s and 430s.
3. Much of the debate hinges on the letter forms of inscriptions. Some key letters, such as sigma, were once thought to change significantly in the 440s, providing a diagnostic tool for dating.
4. Infrared photography and other techniques of enhancing what can be seen on the stones’ surfaces have recently shown that these early letter forms continue for at least another generation, making it possible, even probable, that the aggressive imperialism of the Athenians should be dated to the time of the Peloponnesian War.

Suggested Reading:

Meier, Christian. *Athens: A Portrait of the City in Its Golden Age*. New York: Metropolitan, 1993.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should the freedom won by the Greeks be seen as the key ingredient in the cultural flowering of the 5th century?
2. Can Athens’ campaigns in the 470s be taken as a natural continuation of the war with Persia, or do they represent the first moves towards empire?

Lecture Four

The Career of Pericles

Scope: Now that we have formed a better idea of the power of Athens and understand the world into which Pericles was born, it is time to look at the details of his family and career. In this lecture, we look at the Alcmaeonidae, one of the great clans of Athens, to whom Pericles was related on his mother's side. We then follow his early days, beginning with his first notable public role, as patron of the first performance of Aeschylus's *Persians* in 472. By the middle of the 5th century, we find Pericles successfully commanding Athenian expeditions to the nearby island of Euboea. During the period 445–430, Pericles was reelected general every year, effectively making him more powerful than any archon or judge. From this position of dominance, he not only led the army but shaped a new Athenian foreign policy that turned away from the Persian threat and, instead, addressed Sparta. The contradictions of Pericles will be emphasized: a well-born man who flourished in a democracy, a career of influence in a democratic system where men usually rotated out of power every year, and finally, a man who advised the Athenians to be cautious yet did more than any other to prepare them for war with Sparta.

Outline

I. The idea of studying history through the biography of a single great man is sometimes referred to as *Kaisargeschichte*, or "Caesar history."

- **A.** It is still a popular approach, although in most cases, we have so little personal information about the individual lives of people in antiquity that it can be dangerous to generalize from the career of a single man to the broader society of 5th-century Athens.
- **B.** In the case of Pericles, however, his career is so intertwined with the development of the Athenian democracy that it is legitimate to examine his career as a way of entering the world of Athens in its golden age.

II. By birth, Pericles was connected to the leading families of Athens. His father, Xanthippus, was a successful general who had defeated the Persians at Mycale in 479 B.C. His mother, Agariste, was the granddaughter of Cleisthenes, the great reformer who had championed democracy at the time of the expulsion of the tyrants in 510 B.C.

- **A.** The family of Cleisthenes was known as the Alcmaeonidae. Its members were controversial, known for their influence in the new democracy. It was said that when the tyrants ruled Athens, the Alcmaeonids had gone into exile and bribed the Delphic oracle to support the expulsion of the tyrants.
- **B.** It is unusual to have details of the education of individuals in antiquity, but we know the names of the teachers who molded Pericles. They were among the leading sophists of the day, the philosophers and wise men who thronged to Athens.
  1. He was taught music by Damon, a man eventually ostracized as an enemy of the democracy.
  2. He was also trained in *eristics*, the art of debate, by Zeno, who could famously disprove any proposition.
  3. His most important teacher was Anaxagoras, an Ionian philosopher who proposed that the universe was governed by a single rational intelligence, *nous*.

III. The early career of Pericles follows the traditional path of an aristocrat seeking to gain a reputation in Athens.

- **A.** In 472, he served as *choregos*, or producer, of Aeschylus's play *The Persians*. The play was innovative in that it was one of the first dramas to deal with contemporary events, in this case, the Persian invasions, rather than to draw on early stories taken from myth.
  1. The play was also unusual in that it presented the events of the Persian Wars from the Persian point of view.
  2. Providing the money for the training of the chorus and the outfitting of the actors was an obligation that fell upon the rich in Athens but also brought them credit and prestige.
- **B.** In the 460s, Pericles's career took a turn toward a more populist and radical position and brought him into conflict with Cimon, the leading politician of the day.

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1. Like Pericles, Cimon was from an aristocratic background. He championed a policy of vigorous campaigning against the Persians. Cimon's father, Miltiades, was the victor of Marathon, and like his father, Cimon favored fighting the barbarian.
2. Despite these differences, Pericles refused to take part in the prosecution of Cimon in 463 B.C.

C. A turning point for the two men and Athenian policy came in the mid-460s when an earthquake rocked Sparta. Cimon proposed sending an Athenian army to help the Spartans suppress an uprising by their slaves. When the Athenians were dismissed by the Spartans, who feared they would infect their own people with democratic ideas, the Athenians were outraged. Although Cimon was awarded another command, to Cyprus, the radical reformer Ephialtes stirred up discontent against Cimon, and he was ostracized in 462–461.

D. Pericles was associated with Ephialtes, who used the absence of Cimon to strip the old Areopagus Council of its privileges, transferring power to the democratic law courts.

1. Details of these reforms are disputed.
2. Ephialtes may have prevented archons from giving verdicts, thus increasing the power of juries.
3. Alternatively, he may have redefined the process of reviewing magistrates and left this power to the courts instead of the Areopagus council.

IV. Following the expulsion of Cimon and the death of Ephialtes, Pericles emerged as the leading figure shaping Athenian policy. A great many developments both in internal and external policy can be attributed to his influence.

A. Externally, the Athenians became more aggressive in their approach to affairs on the Greek mainland. They formed new alliances in central and northern Greece, often with states hostile to Sparta. This led to an outbreak of war with Sparta that saw successes on both sides and eventually was resolved by a negotiated peace treaty in 446–445 B.C.

B. Beyond the Aegean, the Athenians conducted a war in Egypt in support of the rebel Inaros, leading a revolt against Persian control. This campaign ended in disaster in 454, with the destruction of two Athenian fleets in the Nile delta.

C. The Egyptian disaster precipitated a crisis among the allies of Athens, some of whom now went into revolt. Not only did the Athenians put down these revolts, but they often installed governments friendly to their interests, dictated the terms of their constitution, left garrisons behind, and even gave land over to Athenian settlers.

D. Pericles is associated with many of these changes. For example, he led 1,000 settlers to the Chersonese in 449 B.C. Soon after, he was in charge of the Athenian forces that put down a revolt on Euboea in 446. He was also responsible for a new law limiting Athenian citizenship to those born of two legitimate Athenian parents. His proposal to give pay for jury service was an important step along the road to full-time democracy for Athens.

E. In the 440s, as Athens recovered from the Egyptian disaster and after the treasury of the Delian League had been moved to Athens, Pericles was responsible for the ambitious building plan that transformed the Acropolis from a loose-knit array of temples to a planned and architecturally unified sanctuary.

F. Even after the death of Cimon in 451–450, there were other critics who emerged. Thucydides, son of Melesias, criticized Pericles for the extravagance of the building program but was ostracized circa 443. It is from that date that we can trace the extraordinary run of 15 successive elections to the generalship, the position that remained the official basis of Pericles's power. This is the period to which Thucydides refers when he claims that in what was nominally a democracy, power was really in the hands of one man.

G. Even so, Pericles's friends and associates were targeted in attempts to curb his popularity and influence.

1. The sculptor Phidias was prosecuted and quit Athens.
2. Aspasia was criticized for supposedly convincing Pericles to declare war on Samos in 441 B.C.
3. Pericles himself was once charged with and acquitted of embezzlement.

H. Pericles must certainly bear some of the responsibility for the war with Sparta, the Peloponnesian War. He was confident of the ability of Athens to supply itself by sea. He was sure that Athenian control over its allies and the sea was secure and unassailable. He surely believed that the Spartans were fine fighters but not prepared to engage in a protracted campaign that amounted to total war. In all these estimations, he was

wrong. Sparta did stick out the war, the naval empire of Athens was not enough, and in the end, the Athenians surrendered rather than starve. Pericles, however, did not live to see this. He died, a victim of the plague, in the war's second year.

Suggested Reading:

Plutarch. *Life of Pericles*. In *Plutarch's Lives: The Dryden Translation*. Ed. by A. H. Clough. New York: Modern Library, 2001.

Questions to Consider:

1. Pericles was described by Thucydides as cautious. Do his career and policy justify this conclusion?

2. Had Pericles lived, can one imagine the Peloponnesian War having a different outcome?

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Lecture Five
Aspasia

Scope: No discussion of the age of Pericles would be complete without a look at the great man's mistress and the mother of his sons, Aspasia. This lecture tries to separate myth from fact and examines the various rumors surrounding Aspasia, especially the politically motivated charge that she wrote Pericles's speeches. A closer examination reveals that Aspasia is not merely an example of the *hetaira*, or courtesan, a familiar figure in many societies, but that her brilliance and sophistication reveal many of the contradictions in Athenian society. This is a society dominated by men, where women are prized as wives and mothers. Even so, men flocked to the company of such women as Aspasia for music, entertainment, and conversation. Sometimes, the attachment between a man and his *hetaira* became permanent, the equivalent of a marriage, yet thanks to Pericles's laws, the children of such relationships could not inherit their father's citizenship. Aspasia's situation reveals the peculiar intersections of gender, marriage, and citizenship in Athenian society.

Outline

I. One of the complications we face in studying the history of Athens in its golden age is our desire to know the major figures, such as Pericles, as well as we may know contemporary leaders, such as President Bush. But the characters of ancient history come to us through a filter of biography and history writing that often blends fact and fiction in ways hard to untangle. The case of Aspasia is an excellent example of this.

- **A.** The principal source we have for the few details of her life to survive in the record come from Plutarch, a Greek writer who flourished some 500 years after the age of Pericles. These details consist of a handful of facts about her origins outside of Athens and the conditions of her life in Athens.
  - **1.** She came from Miletus, Asia Minor, and was the daughter of a man named Axiochus.
  - **2.** She became Pericles's partner after he divorced his wife and is thought to be the mother of his child, also named Pericles.
  - **3.** After Pericles's death, she is supposed to have lived with another Athenian politician, Lysicles, with whom she had another son.
- **B.** These scant details can be filled in by two sets of other sources. A funeral marker from Athens carrying the names of her relatives has allowed scholars to reconstruct more of her family's history. In this reconstruction, she was born sometime after 470 and came to Athens around 450 following the death of her father. This funerary evidence connects Aspasia to an aristocratic Athenian family, making her the sister-in-law of a leading Athenian politician.
- **C.** The third body of evidence is the most controversial. Aspasia was the target of a great deal of criticism, some mild, some not, in the comic plays of the 5th century. She is depicted as a whore, castigated for unduly influencing Pericles, even writing his speeches, and is said to have been tried on a charge of impiety.

II. Is it possible, then, to sort through this mish-mash and arrive at some plausible conclusions about Aspasia?

- **A.** We can begin by dismissing the most outrageous remarks. Born at least 20 years after Pericles, it is highly unlikely that she wrote his speeches or dictated policy behind the scenes. This is the kind of invective used to attack public figures, and as we have seen, Pericles was frequently attacked through his friends and associates. Some scholars have doubted whether there was ever a trial for impiety and conclude that this was just a comic exaggeration.
- **B.** It is also easy to dismiss the charges that she was a prostitute. We can link her to leading families in both Athens and Miletus, and her son Pericles had a public career. Furthermore, the tradition that she was responsible for training men as public speakers, a popular notion in the 4th century, runs completely counter to the idea that she was a simple whore.

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III. The key to understanding Aspasia is to look more closely at Athenian attitudes to citizenship, and ironically, the key to this is Pericles himself.

A. In 451–450, the Athenians changed the laws regarding citizenship and introduced a new stipulation. From now on, any citizen would have to be the legitimate child of the marriage of a citizen father and a mother from an Athenian citizen family. It is usually thought that the Athenian population had swelled after the Persian Wars and many of the new citizens were the product of marriages between citizens and *metics*, the resident foreigners who lived in Athens and contributed so much to the city's economic prosperity.

B. If Aspasia came to Athens after this date, then her union with Pericles could never be regarded as a proper marriage. In any case, Pericles had sons by his first marriage and, therefore, had no reason to marry Aspasia in the formal sense. Instead, this was a union between a citizen and a *metic*; therefore, she probably had the status of *pallake*, a term used in Athens to cover loosely what is sometimes called a concubine or what we might call a common-law wife.

1. The only reason she was not his legitimate wife was that she was foreign born.
2. Pericles's decision to name their son Pericles is a powerful statement that he acknowledged the boy as his own.
3. The younger Pericles did not receive citizenship automatically, because his mother was not of a citizen family.
4. Instead, after the death of his elder sons, Pericles petitioned to have his namesake enfranchised so that he would have a legitimate heir.

IV. We have a famous case from the Athenian law courts that sheds light on the situation of Aspasia. The same issues underpin the trial of Neaera, a woman in the 4th century who was charged with living with an Athenian husband as a lawful wife when, in fact, she was an alien, an ex-slave, and a prostitute.

A. Neaera was the wife of a certain Stephanus, who had been engaged in a legal feud with Theomnestus and Apollodorus for years. There had been a slew of suits and countersuits, ranging from charges of unconstitutional proposals in the council to murder. Finally, Theomnestus and Apollodorus attacked their opponent by trying to present his wife as non-Athenian.

B. They recounted in lurid detail Neaera's upbringing, from the time she was purchased as a child along with seven other children, through her training as a child prostitute, up to the time when she was purchased by a group of Corinthians to be their slave and sex worker. Finally winning her freedom by paying these men off, she came to Athens, where after many more sordid adventures, she began living with Stephanus as his wife.

C. Perhaps the most shocking part of the case, as far as the audience of Athenian men was concerned, was that Stephanus and Neaera passed off Neaera's children as the children of a legitimate Athenian marriage. One of these, a girl named Phano, was married and gave birth to a son whose father, of course, thought that his child was legitimate and freeborn, though the child was subsequently struck off the citizen lists.

D. Phano also married a high-ranking Athenian who served as the chief priest of Athens. His duties included a performance of the Sacred Marriage, in which his wife was supposed to have intercourse with the god Dionysus. That this wife should turn out not to be Athenian, to be, in fact, the child of an ex-slave and whore, was a scandal that involved not just the family but the entire state.

E. We do not know how the case ended, and we have no way of knowing how much of the speech against Neaera is true. What is significant, though, is that we can see how jealously the Athenians guarded the privilege of citizenship and how precarious was the position of any outsider in this restricted club. As women and as foreigners, Aspasia and Neaera labored under a double disadvantage, and it is this that is reflected in the surviving traditions so hostile to them.

Suggested Reading:

Henry, M. *Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Demosthenes. "An Illegal Union: Against Neaera." In Freeman, K. *The Murder of Herodes*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible to recover the actual life of Aspasia?
2. Why did Aspasia provoke such hatred among her contemporaries and later generations?

Lecture Six
Parthenon and Acropolis

Scope: This lecture concentrates on the glorious building program associated with Pericles. By the end of the 5th century, the Acropolis of Athens, previously home to a motley assortment of shrines, temples, treasure houses, statues, and altars, had been transformed into an artistically integrated sanctuary dominated by three buildings: the Propylaea, the Parthenon, and the Erechtheum. The first of these was a monumental gateway, flanked by such landmarks as the small temple to Athena Nike. In the Propylaea was housed a picture gallery, containing masterpieces of 5th-century painting, now all lost. Through its gateway, visitors, often as part of the stately Panathenaic procession, made their way onto the great rock that overlooked the city of Athens. To the left as one enters the Acropolis lies the Erechtheum, an extraordinary and unique building that housed half a dozen separate cults inside its walls, on its porches, and even in its foundations. South of this lies the Parthenon, the most glorious temple ever built by the Greeks. By pictures, plans, and reconstructions, we will examine the architecture of these buildings, as well as their decoration, showing how they combined to serve as the religious capitol of the new Athenian Empire under Pericles.

Outline

I. The Acropolis before Pericles.

- **A.** By the time of the Persian invasions, in 480 and 479 B.C., the Acropolis was already the center of Athenian religious life. There had been a Mycenaean palace here in the Bronze Age, and a monumental wall, built in the 13th century B.C., traces of which still survive, added to the site's natural defenses. A cistern on the north side, graves, and the stone foundations of mud-brick houses all attest to occupation of the Acropolis in the Bronze Age.
- **B.** After the Bronze Age, the Acropolis underwent a transformation and came to be a dominated by a series of cults.
  - **1.** The principal cult was in honor of Athena, the tutelary deity of Athens.
  - **2.** An olive tree growing on the Acropolis was regarded as sacred, Athena's gift to the Athenians.
  - **3.** It was believed that Poseidon had competed with Athena. His gift to the Athenians was a pool of brackish water also located on the Acropolis.
  - **4.** Other Olympian gods were worshipped here. Zeus, Hephaestus, and Artemis all received cult honors on the Acropolis.
  - **5.** A number of lesser heroes and heroines were also venerated. Erechtheus, the first king of Athens, was honored, as were the virgin daughters of Cecrops: Pandrosus, Aglaurus, and Herse.
- **C.** By the time of the Persian Wars, the Acropolis housed the most important cults of the Athenian state.
- **D.** On the north side, a succession of temples occupied the area where today can still be seen the foundations of the 6th-century Old Athena Temple.
- **E.** To the south, a succession of even larger temples would be built. The current Parthenon is actually the third temple to occupy that spot; its predecessor was still being built when Athens was sacked by the Persians.

II. After the liberation of Athens in 479 B.C., the Greeks took an oath not to rebuild the temples that had been destroyed. In the generation that followed, the Athenians remained active abroad, and it is unclear to what extent, if any, they were active on the Acropolis.

- **A.** Pericles's predecessor, Cimon, extended the fortification walls on the south side of the Acropolis. Some scholars believe he also rebuilt the Propylaea, the monumental entrance gate on the western side of the Acropolis.
- **B.** By the middle of the 5th century, Cimon was dead, Pericles was in charge, and the Athenians were at peace with Persia. The treasury of the Delian League was moved to Athens circa 454 B.C. The Periclean building program began shortly after.

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III. The buildings of the Periclean building program: 1. The Parthenon.

- **A.** This was the first building in the new program, constructed between 447 and 438. At 17 by 8 columns along its long and short sides, the Parthenon is rightly regarded as one of the masterpieces of Western architecture. The building is especially notable for many architectural refinements.
  - **1.** The curvature of the stylobate gives the building a lighter feel.
  - **2.** The entasis of the columns also creates the subtle impression of a plastic, flexible building.
  - **3.** Yet, in many ways, the building is an anomaly.
    - **a.** Both porches were exceptionally shallow.
    - **b.** One approached the building from the west, which is, in fact, its back side, forcing the pilgrim to walk the entire length of the building to reach its main entrance, at the eastern end.
    - **c.** The layout of the interior is odd. The building was both a shrine to the cult of Athena and a massive treasure chamber, filled with the gold, silver, and ivory dedications made by pious individuals. These two rooms did not communicate.
- **B.** The crowning glory of the building is its decoration, consisting of pedimental sculpture, metopes, and an Ionic frieze.
  - **1.** The metopes, running around the outside of the building, showed scenes of Greeks fighting traditional enemies, such as drunken Lapiths, Amazons, and Trojans. These scenes represented both the victory of order over chaos and the Greek victory over the Persians.
  - **2.** The west pediment showed the victory of Athena over Poseidon for control of Athens. The east pediment probably depicted the birth of Athena.
  - **3.** The frieze, running around the top of the interior colonnade, depicts a procession of some sort. Most scholars interpret it as the Panathenaic procession.

IV. The buildings of the Periclean building program: 2. The Propylaea.

- **A.** The building that attracted the most attention in antiquity was the Propylaea. Built over an archaic predecessor, the Propylaea was regarded as the grandest example of what was, in essence, nothing more than an entry gate.
  - **1.** Designed by Mnesicles, it covered the entire western portion of the Acropolis rock.
  - **2.** It was built in five years, between 437–432.
- **B.** The exterior columns are of the Doric order. After coming up the huge staircase, one entered a passageway flanked by six Ionic columns, taller and more slender, so that the interior of the gate complex seems lighter and less massive than it appears from outside.
  - **1.** This mixing of the orders is characteristic of the Parthenon, as well; thus, the Propylaea was in harmony with the building one saw as one passed through the gateway.
  - **2.** Although it did not carry sculptures or reliefs, the building was famous for its marble ceiling, decorated with golden stars set on a blue backdrop.
- **C.** Flanking this entranceway were two wings. The one on the south gave access to a terrace on which stood the small temple dedicated to Athena Nike, goddess of victory. To the north, the other wing housed the *pinakotheke*, or picture gallery.

V. The buildings of the Periclean building program: 3. The Erechtheion.

- **A.** The Erechtheion is perhaps the oddest building to survive from Pericles's Athens. It housed a number of separate cults and used architecture to synthesize the various precincts into a single complex.
- **B.** The building was named for Erechtheus, legendary king of Athens.
- **C.** The most venerable cult was that of Athena. Worship centered on the ancient wooden image believed to have dropped from heaven.
- **D.** Both Poseidon and Zeus received cult here.
  - **1.** Zeus was believed to have descended in a lightning bolt. A coffer was left out of the ceiling to mark the spot where Zeus came down.
  - **2.** Poseidon was associated with the salt spring found within the precinct.
- **E.** Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the building is a huge lintel block found on the west wall. It appears that the wall of the sanctuary was designed to bridge the sacred olive tree of Athena.

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F. As a group, the buildings of the Acropolis transformed the heights above the city into a vast religious precinct. The buildings testify to the might of imperial Athens.

Suggested Reading:

Hurwit, J. M. *The Athenian Acropolis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Topper, R. J. *The Acropolis*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is it possible to experience the Acropolis as Pericles's contemporaries did?
2. Are there areas in modern cities that function in ways comparable to the Acropolis?

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Lecture Seven

Panathenaea—The Festivals of Athena

Scope: In this lecture, we examine closely the great religious procession that dominated Athenian religious life every four years: the Panathenaea. We will look at the question of Athena's position as guardian of the city and discuss the importance of celebrating the goddess's role by assembling the entire community to process across the center of Athens. We will look at the organization of the procession, the roles played by the young, the old, those in the army, and the position of priests and priestesses. The procession is, in fact, a significant event that dramatically brings to life the social relations that bind the community together. We will examine the route of the Sacred Way across the city and up to the Acropolis. In the 5th century, as Athens became an imperial city, each of the allies was ordered to send a suit of armor and a cow for sacrifice. These joined the parade, as a stately procession of cattle wound its way to the Acropolis, where it was slaughtered and distributed to the populace. The procession also figured on the frieze on the Parthenon, emphasizing the importance once again of this majestic building to the entire community.

Outline

I. We are used to living with a single calendar, one that combines economic features (the 5-day work week) with religious features (Sundays and Sabbath, as well as religious holidays). In Pericles's day, the Athenians used a 10-month civic calendar but also a 12-month religious calendar.

- **A.** The religious calendar stipulated a set of festivals to be held at various times of the year. Some of these festivals were connected with the seasons, and many were agricultural in origin.
- **B.** A good example is the festival known as the Anthesteria, held in February, to celebrate the new vintage of wine.
  - **1.** The first day was the *Pithoigia*, named for the opening of the jars in which the last season's grape juice had been left to ferment.
  - **2.** The second day, named *Choes* after wine jugs, included a celebration in honor of Dionysus and the coming of spring.
  - **3.** The day's celebrations ended in an unusual ceremony, the "Holy Wedding" between Dionysus and the wife of the king archon of Athens.
  - **4.** The final day of the festival was something like Halloween. A meal was held to placate the spirits of the dead; then, members of the household would shout at the doorway of the house, "Spirits be gone! The Anthesteria is over."

II. The greatest festival of the Athenian religious calendar, however, was the Panathenaea. Held in the month of Hecatombaion, near the end of July, this was the festival that became the great celebration of the power of Athens and her tutelary goddess, Athena.

- **A.** It is possible that the festival goes back to Mycenaean times. The festival was reorganized around 566 B.C., and by the middle of the 5th century, had become possibly the grandest religious celebration in Greece.
- **B.** The cult activity associated with the festival is shrouded in mystery. For example, our sources tell us that on the night before the great procession, two of Athena's attendants, young girls known as the *Arrhephoroi*, "the basket carriers," performed some secret activity on the Acropolis. Even in antiquity, commentators were unclear about this ceremony.
- **C.** One of the central acts was the presentation to Athena of her new robe, or *peplos*, a massive garment that was then draped on the colossal statue. The robe was woven by maidens who spent nine months working on the task and was brought to Athena in a procession that began in the northwest corner of the city. All the tribes of Athens participated; the frieze on the Parthenon depicts the procession being marshaled and dispatched up to the Acropolis with the new *peplos*.
  - **1.** Eventually, the robe was so big that it was hoisted like a sail and conveyed across Athens on a ship-cart before being folded and presented to the goddess.
  - **2.** The old robes were stored on the Acropolis as sacred objects.
  - **3.** Over the east door of the Parthenon the central portion of the frieze shows figures holding a folded *peplos*. They may be about to present the garment to Athena or her priestess.

D. The procession included others besides the young Athenian men and women parading across the center of the city. In addition, each allied state of the Delian League and any Athenian colony was expected to send a panoply of armor and an ox to the procession. Given that the number of Athenian allies and colonies was in the hundreds, there were literally hundreds of animals to be led across the city and up to the Acropolis. Here, they would be sacrificed in honor of the goddess, and the meat would be distributed to the Athenian populace. In this way, the Athenians demonstrated the scale of their empire, the grandeur of their city, and the wealth that the city shared with its patron goddess.

III. A feature of the Panathenaea that is typical of religion in Pericles's day but is unusual in our eyes is the close connection between the worship of Athena and athletic and musical contests. Whereas we treat religion, culture, and athletics as quite distinct categories, for the Athenians, they were closely intertwined.

A. At each of the great Panhellenic sanctuaries—Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia—athletes, singers, and musicians competed in a cycle of games every four years in honor of major gods, such as Zeus and Apollo.

B. The games associated with the Panathenaea reveal that Athens aspired to match the great Panhellenic shrines in importance.

1. Athletes and singers would congregate in the city of Athena to compete for valuable prizes, especially the great Panathenaic amphorae full of olive oil.
2. About 10 years ago, a scholar calculated the value of winning the 200-meter race at Athens, which brought the winner 120 amphorae of sacred olive oil, at about $67,000. Add to that the value of the vases themselves, and a winner took home a decent paycheck for a single victory.
3. The vases won by victors and taken home all carried on them the words "from the games at Athens." Thus, Athens advertised the status of the games and of the city that could afford such lavish rewards.

C. The games included athletic events, such as boxing, wrestling, and horse and chariot racing. These were the events whose winners were awarded amphorae. In addition, there were musical contests for choruses, flute players, and singers of epic poetry, whose winners were paid in gold. Finally, shields were awarded to the young men considered best at the *pyrriche*, a war dance done in honor of Athena's part in defeating the giants in the early days of the rule of Zeus and the Olympians.

D. The games were a mixture of the popular, the athletic, the old-fashioned, and the obscure. Nevertheless, they lasted for close to 1,000 years and remained an integral part of the festival that most fully expressed the Athenians' pride in the glory of the city and empire.

Suggested Reading:

Burkert, W. *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Neils, J., ed. *Worshipping Athena. Panathenaia and Parthenon*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Parke, H. W. *Festivals of the Athenians*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977.

Questions to Consider:

1. What events in modern life serve the same function for us as the Panathenaea did for Pericles's Athens: the Olympics, the Rose Bowl parade, the Super Bowl?
2. Why are large public spectacles so important in the life of a community?

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Lecture Eight

Paideia—Education in Ancient Athens

Scope: How did childhood differ in antiquity from today? What constituted the education of young Athenians in the age of Pericles? In this lecture, we will recreate the experience of childhood among the Greeks, with special attention to ways children were prepared for their lives as citizens. Basic levels of literacy and numeracy were expected then as now, so that young men could read, write, and count, but a great deal more emphasis was placed on memorizing poetry, especially Homer. Many leading men composed verses, if not entire plays, and were often capable of playing musical instruments, so that poetry and music played a much fuller role in education than today. Physical education was also considered central to the training of a boy. This was not only to guarantee strength and endurance, but to prepare the youth for formal training as a soldier. Part of the young Athenian's education was, therefore, spent in the *ephebeia*, patrolling the borders of Athens and learning about the discipline of hoplite warfare before becoming a full-fledged member of the Athenian army. Hunting was always a popular diversion, well regarded because it put food on the table and was a suitable pastime for both men and boys not engaged in warfare. Young adults who had received elementary training in letters and sports graduated to training in the gymnasium and *palaestra*, where wrestling and boxing kept the body fit and lectures kept the mind nimble. As a rule, girls in Athens received little formal training beyond the skills needed for running a household after their marriage.

Outline

I. All societies recognize that infants require care and protection, but societies have very different attitudes toward childhood and different ways of preparing their young for life as an adult.

- **A.** There are significant differences in the Greek world between Athenian and Spartan practices, and there are also very different approaches to the raising of boys and girls in both societies. Although the Spartans permitted the training of girls, this was primarily done in order to guarantee their health and vigor as the mothers of future Spartans. Theirs is a distinctly eugenic approach to families and child rearing.
- **B.** Many of the attitudes toward children in Pericles's Athens stand in marked contrast to modern attitudes to childhood and education. The family's interests were always paramount. Accordingly, small families were preferred so that inheritance would not be split between too many sons. Similarly, girls were much less preferable than boys, because they had to be provided with a dowry, thus diminishing the family's wealth.

II. Childhood in Athens.

- **A.** Childbirth was a dangerous business. Doctors tended not to be involved, being more concerned with matters of disease. Instead, the Greeks relied on midwifery. For uncomplicated births, this worked well, but the Greek understanding of hygiene and anatomy was rudimentary in the 5th century, and mortuary data from the ancient world suggests a spike in deaths among women in their late teens, at the time of the first confinement of many. Cesarean sections were unknown, and the death of mother and child was more commonplace than now.
  - **1.** Childbearing was associated with Eileithyia, a goddess to whom pregnant women prayed and who was connected with Artemis.
  - **2.** Abortifacients, magic spells, and exposure were all used in an attempt to control fertility.
- **B.** The birth of a child was a significant event for the whole family and had to be marked accordingly. The child was not just an individual but a member of the family and was accepted by the father, who lifted the child up and bestowed upon it a name.
  - **1.** The child was accepted into the family at a ritual called the *amphidromia*, about a week after birth.
  - **2.** The house and all those associated with the birth were washed to rid them of pollution.
  - **3.** When the child was 10 days old, he or she was named. Boys were often named for their paternal grandfathers, attesting to the strong intergenerational bonds within the family.

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III. Athenian education in the age of Pericles was much less formally structured than the education of later periods.

A. Usually, a girl received little formal education unless trained by her mother, grandmother, or perhaps, a slave. This is one reason why, aside from Sappho and Corinna, there are so few female poets in Greece.

B. Boys were supposed to be trained by their fathers, although basic lessons in reading, writing, and counting were probably left to a slave tutor. Basic literacy was taught through the study of poetry, especially the work of Homer. Long passages were committed to memory. Music was also taught, especially the playing of the lyre, *cithara*, and pipes.

1. Different musical modes were associated with different meters of poetry.

2. Young men were trained both to compose and to critique the work, whether musical or poetic, of others.

C. Professional education was in the hands of learned men, sophists, who taught for a fee. The most common subjects were rhetoric and *eristics* (debate), but astronomy, linguistics, and natural philosophy were also popular. Because these men provided an expensive education, their customers tended to come from the more well-off families. The less well-to-do were trained by their fathers to take over the family trade or farm.

D. Physical training was absolutely central to the education of boys and youths. The gymnasium was an important institution in this respect. Here, boys wrestled, boxed, and practiced many of the Olympic events, such as discus. Reliefs from Athens also show boys playing ball games. The gymnasium was where older boys and young men listened to lectures and discussed philosophy and poetry. Accordingly, the gymnasium was more than a wrestling ground but really a school, a lecture hall, and a sports complex all rolled into one. The training gained here was called *paideia*.

IV. Although education was less uniformly constructed than in modern society, the preparation for adulthood was just as carefully managed. A combination of rituals and social institutions marked this important transition.

A. In the case of girls, the transformation was rapid. Around the time of puberty, girls were regarded as ready to move from childhood to adulthood, but in Greek society, this was actually seen as a transition to eligibility for marriage. In Athens, this was signaled for many girls by participation in the cult of Artemis at Brauron. Here, dressed in the saffron robes of initiates, they would don a bearskin and reenact the killing of a she-bear sacred to the goddess. This ritual death suggested the end of their childhood, and upon leaving the sanctuary, they would be regarded as now eligible for marriage.

1. Actual marriage probably did not occur before the onset of menstruation.

2. Many women made dedications to Artemis of their handmade garments later in life, probably as tokens of thanks for successful births.

B. For boys, the passage to manhood was marked in a variety of ways. At many festivals of the city, competitions were held in athletics and music. Often, these contests included a boys' category. Of greatest significance was the Apatouria festival. Here, fathers presented their legitimate sons to the members of their *phratry* ("brotherhood") when they reached the age of 16. This was a vital moment in the boy's coming of age. Shortly after, the boy was introduced to his father's *demesmen*, the men in the smallest political unit of Athenian life. Once the boy's status as a full citizen had been attested, he was eligible for service as an *ephebe*, a cadet who served for two years in the border garrisons of Athens.

C. A comparison of the various rites of passage tells us a good deal about Periclean Athens. The state and the family had similar goals and similar ways of perpetuating themselves. In both cases, girls were viewed as potential mothers whose virginity at marriage had to be assured and whose sphere of action was the household. Boys were potential citizens, landholders, and soldiers, whose training was an attempt to replicate the status and performance of their fathers.

Suggested Reading:

Lacey, W. K. *The Family in Classical Greece*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Jones, N. F. *Ancient Greece: State and Society*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Some of the differences between ancient and modern approaches to childhood refer to a notion of "parental indifference." Is this a legitimate way of understanding the attitudes of the Greeks toward their children?
2. Is there any evidence that the Greeks thought of adolescence as a separate stage of life from childhood or adulthood?

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Lecture Nine

Marriage in Pericles's Athens

Scope: One of the most dramatic legal cases to survive from the classical age is the speech *Against Neaera*, in which the speaker, Theomnestus, claimed that Neaera deserved to be prosecuted, convicted, and sold into slavery because she was not the legal wife of Stephanus but, in fact, a former slave and prostitute. The case illustrates the enormous anxiety that surrounded marriage in Pericles's day. Wives had to be from guaranteed citizen families; otherwise, the children of these marriages were regarded as illegitimate. In this lecture, we will contrast the case of *Neaera* with the anonymous wife who figures prominently in the handbook written by Xenophon, *On Household Management*. In this text, Ischomachus makes it clear that a good wife should stay inside the home managing the servants and weaving. Being seen outside, even being spoken about, is regarded as a threat to the woman's reputation. Marriage for love, therefore, is not a common practice. Marriage in Pericles's Athens is a contractual arrangement between father-in-law and son-in-law. In fact, marriages were often contracted within the family, between cousins or uncles and nieces, in order to keep the family's property intact.

Outline

I. Pericles was responsible for one of the most important changes in Athenian law regarding family matters, a change that reveals a good deal about the purpose of marriage in Athenian society. In 451, the Athenians voted to restrict citizen rights to only those who were the children of citizens on both the father's and mother's sides. Although many Athenians were descended from families in which the mother was of alien birth, from now on, legitimate Athenians would be descended exclusively from Athenians.

A. The reasons for this restriction are not clear. Some have argued that the Athenians wished to assert their superiority to the other Greeks whom they had come to dominate. Others associate it with the long-standing claim that the Athenians were autochthonous, the original inhabitants of Attica, separate and distinct from all other Greeks. Still others have seen it as a move to guarantee marriages for Athenian girls and to prevent the daughters of the poor from becoming old maids, as Demosthenes put it.

1. It had long been a feature of Athenian politics to claim that one's opponent was either the son of a foreign woman or a slave, or both.

2. Themistocles was said to be the son of a Thracian woman, and both Aeschines and Demosthenes disparaged the family background of the other.

B. The marriage was a contract between two families in which a girl, a virgin, was transferred from the control of her father to that of her husband. Pericles's citizenship increased the value of such girls, because it was only through them that citizenship and legitimacy could be passed on to a new generation of citizens. This is most dramatically illustrated in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, in which the speaker Ischomachus explains how he introduced his wife to the business of running a household. He remarks, without a hint of irony, that he could easily have found a more attractive wife but that he made the marriage alliance with the girl's father because he believed that it was in the interests of both their families.

1. The father and, then, the husband were referred to as the *kyrios*, or master of the young woman.

2. Also important in the betrothal was the agreement of a dowry.

3. Though the husband received the use of this, legally it remained the property of the girl and was supposed to be returned in case of divorce.

C. The groom was usually aged about 30. Men normally had served in the military for at least 10 years, and by the age of 30, they were considered ready to hold office. Many would by now have inherited an estate as well, so that 30 was an optimal age. The man was ready to marry, to father children, and to see to the continuation of the family.

D. Girls, by contrast, were often in their mid-teens at the time of marriage. They could be betrothed at an even earlier age, although the marriage was not conducted until the girl was ready to bear children.

1. Demosthenes's sister was betrothed at age 5, but this may have been unusual and was precipitated by the death of Demosthenes's father and the need to settle on a guardian for the young girl.

2. Funerary data from the ancient Mediterranean often reveal a spike in the deaths around the age of 15 for girls, probably caused by deaths in childbirth.

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E. These differences help to explain why we hear of many second marriages, often the cause of complications in matters of inheritance. Although many Athenian marriages were conducted within the kinship group, these groups included stepbrothers and half-sisters and even relatives who might be both a grandfather and an uncle.

F. In the wedding ceremony, the girl was conducted by her father in a chariot to the house of her groom. The event was witnessed publicly and accompanied by songs and religious rites. The consummation of the marriage was regarded as important, the first step in the continuation of the *oikos*, thanks to the couple's fertility.

1. Many Athenian women dedicated garments to Artemis after successfully accomplishing their first childbirths.
2. It appears that women were still thought of as brides until they had given birth. Only then were they referred to as women.
3. Euripides's Medea famously says that she would rather stand in the battle-line three times than give birth once.

II. If the Athenians of Pericles's day placed restrictions on marriage and eligibility, they also recognized that there were other forms of union between men and women.

A. Many Athenian men openly kept mistresses. These women were referred to as *pallakai*, often translated as "concubines." There were restrictions on passing such women off as citizens, but no moral qualms about maintaining both a concubine and a wife.

B. Athenian men also had a variety of sex workers available to them, ranging from *pornai* ("prostitutes") to *hetairai* ("courtesans"). There seems to have been little stigma associated with frequenting either group.

C. In fact, an assertion made by Demosthenes suggests that the key issue was always the clear definition of boundaries. He remarks, in the speech *Against Neaera*, "We have courtesans for our pleasure, concubines for the daily care of our bodies, and wives to bear us legitimate children, and to take care of affairs within the household." According to this formula, the wife's primary function was to procreate and to run the household. In this respect, Demosthenes confirms that Xenophon's explanation in the *Oeconomicus* was typical of how the household was expected to run.

1. This division of tasks was reinforced by the virtual exclusion of citizen women. They remained within the household, delegating to slaves and old hags the business of going into the marketplace.
2. In a famous court speech on the murder of an adulterer, the defendant goes to some lengths to explain how his wife was ever even able to meet a lover. The audience clearly expected the good woman to be cloistered within the women's quarters.

D. Like geishas, however, courtesans could be seen outside the women's quarters and in the company of men. This behavior, scandalous for a citizen woman, was what contributed to the notoriety of Pericles's mistress, Aspasia.

Suggested Reading:

Freeman, K. *The Murder of Herodes*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

Jones, N. F. *Ancient Greece: State and Society*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996.

Lacey, W. K. *The Family in Classical Greece*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Winkler, J. J. *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. London: Routledge, 1990.

Questions to Consider:

1. What explains the apparent increase in anxiety about citizenship and legitimacy in the Athens of Pericles's day?
2. Did the distinctions among wife, concubine, and courtesan protect women in Periclean Athens in any way?

Lecture Ten
Family and Property

Scope: One of the most abundant sources of information from the Athens of Pericles is the large number of surviving legal speeches. These are not all about matters of politics or international policy. The majority, in fact, are examples of the many suits generated in the Athenian courts by property disputes between or even within families. In this lecture, we will use speeches by Lysias, Demosthenes, and Isaeus to investigate the complex web of family ties and property ownership. In the case of Diogeiton's family, the members of one branch of the family sued their relatives, claiming that trust funds had been embezzled by their own grandfather! More typical was the dispute in which two families came to blows over a wall erected along the property line preventing runoff water from reaching one of their farms. In a third case, disputes arose when Ciron died, leaving descendants from two marriages to battle over the inheritance. These cases give a fascinating glimpse into the lives of ordinary families of 5th-century Athens, for whom the land was the supreme measure of wealth.

Outline

I. The Athens in which Pericles grew up was an example of a face-to-face society, a small world in which the ties of family and clan were central to every aspect of life.

- **A.** As early as the Homeric poems of the 8th century, the distinctive institution of social life in Athens was the *oikos*, or household.
  - **1.** The *oikos* was not just the nuclear family but could also include daughters-in-law, unmarried daughters, and dependents, especially slaves. These households could be multigenerational, with perhaps three generations of the same family living under one roof and dozens of people in the same family compound.
  - **2.** Although the Homeric poems do not record the details of a single historical society, the depiction of Priam's family, comprised of dozens of sons and daughters all living in one palace, would have struck Pericles's generation as a heroic version of the family life they recognized.
- **B.** In addition to the *oikos*, there were other kinship groups that fixed an Athenian's position in society. An Athenian was part of a network made up of cousins, called the *anchisteia*, and was usually a member of a religious brotherhood called the *phratry*. Many Athenians, especially among the elite, were proud to be part of a clan (*genos*), an exclusive group that was often a subset of the *phratry*.
  - **1.** Pericles, for example, was related to the famous clan known as the Alcmaeonidae on his mother's side.
  - **2.** Clans would support their members in political matters, and intermarriage between the clans was a common way of cementing political alliances.

II. Although these institutions were important in creating the social identity of the Athenian, they also served a more concrete role. The institutions of family and kinship groups were supposed to guarantee the prosperity of the family into the next generation. This prosperity was measured in property, and to safeguard the family's property, the Athenians shaped marriage and adoption practices to keep inheritance in the family.

- **A.** In the first place, it was common for first cousins to marry; in this way, property that might have been divided between brothers, then partially lost in the form of dowries for daughters, would be folded back into a single inheritance. Speech 10 by Isaeus, on the estate of Aristarchus, reveals that when Aristarchus died, his brother Aristomenes arranged the marriage of his daughter to Cyronides, the son of Aristarchus. In this way, the daughter's dowry was simply transferred from one branch of the family to another.
- **B.** Another strategy designed to simplify the control of property was adoption. Unlike our institution, which is primarily concerned with orphaned children and childless couples, Athenian adoption was designed to prevent property being lost to the family.
  - **1.** In speech 6 of Isaeus, on the estate of Philoctemon, we learn that Philoctemon had adopted his nephew Chaerestratus. After Philoctemon died, Chaerestratus claimed his inheritance, but this was disputed by a certain Androcles, who maintained that Philoctemon had a number of legitimate children who all had a legitimate claim to the property.

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2. The case turns on issues of legitimacy. According to one side, Philoctemon had no legitimate children and had, therefore, adopted his nephew. According to the other side, he had numerous children and Chaerestratus's adoption was bogus, invented to give him a claim he did not deserve.

C. The third peculiarity of Athenian family and property law was an institution called the *epikleros*.

1. When a man died with no male heirs, Athenian law assumed that his property was inherited by a daughter. However, she was not supposed to have the use of this inheritance; instead, she became the vessel by which it was transferred. In practice, this meant that cousins or even uncles would marry their close female relatives, cousins or nieces, to guarantee that the inheritance stayed in the family.
2. So powerful was the pressure on the family to keep property from leaving its control that if an *epikleros* was married, she would be divorced from her husband so that she could be married to her closest agnate relative, thereby keeping her inheritance in the family.

D. The Athenians also appointed guardians for minors, whose job it was to protect the inheritance until the minor could take possession of it. The guardian was, again, a close male relative, usually an uncle of the minor.

III. Ironically, the measures taken by Athenians out of concern for family property only created more complications. A large proportion of the private lawsuits brought by Athenians revolved around property disputes, and virtually all of these intersected with family disputes.

A. The legal case involving the family of Pyrrhus illustrates how the marriage of cousins failed to simplify matters. In this case, Pyrrhus married his first cousin, the daughter of his uncle Lysimenes, but after his death, two sets of claimants to his property emerged: on one side, the children of Phile, his alleged legitimate daughter, and on the other, his nephew. In other words, the attempt to keep property intact by marrying first cousins only led to counterclaims between the second cousins of the next generation.

B. Adoption, too, could be a nightmare. In one complicated case, involving the estate of a certain Apollodorus (Isaeus 7), the legal complications of a three-generation property dispute were further complicated by the fact that one of the parties to the dispute, named Thrasyllus, was in the process of being adopted when the property holder, Apollodorus, died.

1. Thrasyllus could bring witnesses to the fact that Apollodorus had taken him around to the members of his *genos* and his *phratry* and that, at a religious festival, Apollodorus swore in front of witnesses that Thrasyllus was now his adopted heir.
2. Unfortunately, Apollodorus died before Thrasyllus was introduced to the members of Apollodorus's *deme*. His adoption was incomplete.
3. Thrasyllus's cousins opposed his *deme* registration, but Thrasyllus was successful and was accepted by Apollodorus's *demesmen* as a legitimately adopted heir.

C. Even the position of the heiress created more complications than it solved. Not only could marriage to an *epikleros* precipitate a divorce, but the heiress herself might become the focus of competing claims to the inheritance attached to her. In the case of Philoctemon and Chaerestratus, the latter expected to inherit from his uncle after being adopted, only to be blocked by a counterclaim lodged by a distant cousin who claimed that the proper heir was Philoctemon's sister. She was the *epikleros*, and Androcles, the distant relative, claimed that he was obliged to marry her and receive the contested property.

D. Potentially the most fraught legal relationship came from guardianship. Because the guardian was usually a family member, the distinctions between the guardian's and the minor's property were easily confused. Furthermore, because property and investments were liable to failure, a young man coming into his majority faced the prospect of receiving far less than he had inherited on paper.

1. The most famous example of a legal dispute involving a guardian was brought by the orator Demosthenes against his cousins and guardians, Aphobus and Demophon.
2. Demosthenes showed in court that his father left him an estate worth 13 talents, a considerable fortune consisting of more than 50 slaves, a factory, a house, and cash. Demosthenes was 7 at the time of his father's death.
3. Aphobus and Demophon were named guardians. Aphobus was to take Demosthenes's mother as his wife and receive her dowry, while Demophon would receive Demosthenes's sister and 2 talents.
4. By the time Demosthenes was 17, the estate had shrunk to 14 slaves, the house, and small change. The guardians had defrauded him and failed in their obligations by the terms of the will.

IV. The Athenian family, therefore, was a very different institution from our own. Whether judged in terms of marriage patterns or property and inheritance rules, the family was a unit that required constant legal maneuvering, thanks to the overarching concern for its prosperity and the integrity of its property.

Suggested Reading:

Freeman, K. *The Murder of Herodes*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

Jones, N. F. *Ancient Greece: State and Society*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1996.

Lacey, W. K. *The Family in Classical Greece*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1968.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do Athenian approaches to inheritance differ in theory and practice from contemporary ideas regarding families and property?
2. In the speeches from the Athenian law courts, which created greater complications for the Athenian family: adoption, female inheritance, or problems of legitimacy?

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Lecture Eleven
Coins, Trade, and Business

Scope: Coinage first entered the Greek world in the 6th century, making possible rapid development in trade and commerce. Athens was especially wealthy in silver, mined at Laureion south of the city and minted as the famous "owls," small silver coins with Athena's symbol, the owl, on one side. This coinage was famous throughout the Aegean, although other states also took pride in minting coins with their states' gods or distinctive symbols: the rose of Rhodes, the nymph Syracusa, the winged pegasoi of Corinth. The distribution of Greek coins confirms that the Greeks of the 5th century did not rely solely on a barter economy. Trade brought in grain from Ukraine, as well as luxury items from as far away as the Baltic, Africa, and the Near East. Pericles's Athens was not only a religious and political capital city but also the greatest emporium of the Greek world. Goods flowed into the port of Athens at the Piraeus before transportation to the agora in the city. In this lecture, we'll see some of the goods brought to Athens and look at how the Athenians responded to the increasing mercantile activity of the Periclean age: Banking, investment, and insurance were all developments new to the Greek world in the 5th century, as was the greater emphasis on regulating the market against fluctuations of supply (leading to fluctuations of prices). The increase in economic activity both reflected and reinforced the supremacy of Athens under Pericles.

Outline

I. From the point of view of trade, Pericles's Athens was a paradoxical society. On the one hand, the Athenians appreciated the importance of trade both for feeding the city and as a source of wealth. Aristotle maintained that the city engaged in trade to help it acquire what it could not produce itself. At the same time, Athenians tended to invest their profits in land, which was always seen as the supreme measure of wealth and status.

A. Athens was a society in which the citizen farmer was the ideal. Even the most powerful measured their wealth in terms of the size of their landholdings and its produce. When Cimon, Pericles's older rival, wished to demonstrate his liberality, he opened his estates to allow anyone to come and help themselves to his produce.

B. Property lay at the heart of the family's prosperity. We glimpse the importance of this in Xenophon's essay on how to run a household, the *Oeconomicus*. The real gentleman, for Xenophon, is a farmer. He fulfills his obligations to the state, but he doesn't hang around the city wasting time. In fact, Xenophon's ideal model of the gentleman, Ischomachus, spends most of his time managing his estate. He teaches his wife how to run the household and the domestic servants, while he himself rides off to the country every day to supervise the bailiffs and workers who farm his land, tending his crops and herds.

C. We know that most Athenians kept some reserves of cash, jewelry, and metal objects as movable wealth in their houses, but most of their money was invested in land and slaves to work it on behalf of the family. This evidence comes from the records of the public auctioneers at Athens and is comparable to bankruptcy records today.

1. One well-to-do Athenian, Axiochus, owned a piece of land, a tenement house, and three houses in the country, as well as farms, some close to the city and others in the Mesogeia plain east of Athens, one of them equipped with a house and garden.

2. Another Athenian, Panaetius, listed property and goods that included a donkey driver, wine produced on one of his plots of land, 2 oxen, 84 sheep, 67 goats, and the land on which they were grazed.

3. The property of Cephisodorus included five foreign women, mainly from Thrace; nine foreign men, from as far away as Ukraine (Kolchis) and Albania (Illyria); and worst of all, valued at 72 drachmai: a little Carian child.

II. Even though any wealth acquired by an Athenian gentleman was likely to end up being transformed into land, there is evidence that trade as a source of wealth steadily increased during the 5th century. The evidence comes in a variety of forms.

A. Archaeology offers evidence of Athenian pottery going well beyond Attica. The tombs of the Etruscans in central Italy, in particular, show that Attic pottery was popular outside of Athens.

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B. Peisistratus the tyrant and his sons ruled Athens throughout the second half of the 6th century and encouraged the rule of law, moderate taxation, regular elections, and the expansion of Athenian trade overseas.

C. As the Athenian Empire grew, it introduced legislation making Athenian weights and measures the standard for all Aegean trade. Even though ancient coins had a value based on their metal content, Athenian coinage emerged as the dominant currency of the Aegean in what was an Athenian trade zone.

D. Cephalus, a wealthy non-Athenian businessman, was invited, according to his son Lysias, to move to Athens. Such policies encouraged wealthy traders and manufacturers to bring their capital to Athens and settle there as resident aliens (*metics*).

E. Calculations regarding the productivity of Athens suggest that the city relied on grain grown elsewhere to feed its growing population. As a result, a mercantile fleet grew up to guarantee the grain supply from as far away as Sicily and the Black Sea. Piraeus grew into a thriving port servicing the city of Athens.

III. The powerful attraction of the land as the truest measure of wealth and prosperity helps to explain why Athens placed less emphasis on other forms of business activity. Their goal was the creation of large, productive estates, guaranteeing the family's autonomy and prosperity. Nevertheless, there were other forms of business known to Pericles's contemporaries.

A. Investment: The most common form of investment was the maritime loan, used to raise money to buy into a trading venture. These were risky, because they were structured in such a way that if a boat foundered, the lender lost his loan. Accordingly, rates as high as 30 percent were charged on these loans, making credit expensive.

B. Development: In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, Ischomachus points out that his father used to buy and sell properties. He would purchase what we would call unimproved lots (the word in Greek is "wild") and invest in improving them by installing irrigation, leaving the soil fallow to boost its quality, planting a rotation of crops, and weeding and hoeing the crops as they grew, then selling the land at a profit.

C. Leasing: The majority of leases known to us concern the silver-producing land south of Athens. According to these contracts, the lessee paid to the Athenian state a little over 4 percent of the return from a silver mine. Although this is a modest burden, mining was a risky venture and was dominated by the wealthy families who could afford to invest in many leases and put an army of slaves into the mines to maximize their returns.

D. Manufacturing: Even the poorest citizens might purchase a slave in order to live off the slave's work. The wealthy used larger teams of slaves, not only to work their estates, but also as metalworkers, fullers and dyers, or leather workers. Factories of such slaves produced everything from spears and shields to shoes and aprons.

E. Banking and money lending: All other forms of business relied, to some extent, on capital investment. If the family's wealth was insufficient, Athenians could borrow from moneylenders and bankers, whose own wealth, in a few instances, became phenomenal. The fact that many of these bankers began as *metics* and even slaves demonstrates the bias against banking as a source of wealth.

IV. There is a gap between the actual conditions of trade, business, and the creation of wealth, on the one hand, and the ideology of wealth on the other. Landowners referred to each other as *kaloi k'agathoi*, "gentlemen," or as *Chrestoi*, "the best." Manufacturing, however, was referred to as *banausia*, a term that had overtones of vulgarity. The Athenian ideal, therefore, was to own enough land and enough slaves so that someone else did the actual work.

A. The system depended entirely on slave labor. Captives in war or foreigners captured by pirates and slave-traders ended up in the fields, the mines, and the households of Athenians, performing the vast majority of the tasks that generated wealth.

B. The omnipresence of slaves and the ideology of wealth combined in curious ways. Increasingly in the age of Pericles, the mark of a free man was that he enjoyed time he could devote to the cultivation of his character and body, through exercise, poetry, philosophy, and politics. The Athenians called this *schole*.

C. Another curious feature of this social system is that the wealthiest Athenians were expected to employ that wealth in the interests of the community. Taxation was low, but so were expenditures.

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1. Dramatic festivals were paid for directly by the wealthy.
2. The upkeep of *triremes* was also undertaken by the rich.
3. These direct payments were known as *liturgies*.
4. Thus, the power of wealth was put into the service of the entire community.

Suggested Reading:

Davies, J. K. *Wealth and the Power of Wealth in Classical Athens*. New York: Ayer, 1981.

Jones, N. F. *Ancient Greece: State and Society*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1997.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways do the Homeric poems reflect a different set of ideas about wealth and labor from the values current in Pericles's day?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the liturgical system used by the Athenians?

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Lecture Twelve

Death and Burial

Scope: Close to the agora of Athens lies the Ceramicus cemetery, where both private and public burials took place. In this lecture, we will examine not only attitudes toward death but also the practices associated with commemorating the dead. At the Ceramicus, more and more elaborate funerary sculptures were erected to memorialize the dead. Special attention was given to the young, in particular men who had died in battle on behalf of Athens. Eventually, the monuments grew so grand that the Athenians passed legislation limiting the amount of money that could be spent on funerary markers. Before the age of Pericles, burials had been marked by huge amphorae half buried in the ground. On them, we see scenes of the *prothesis*, or laying out of the body, and the *ekphora*, or funeral procession, in which the dead person was taken from the house to the burial ground. The expense of these ceremonies, as well as the graves themselves, testified to the status of the dead person's family. Death itself was regarded as a gloomy affair. Descriptions of the underworld make it sound dreary, and as in many cultures, the Athenians took pains to placate the spirits of the dead, afraid that otherwise, they might be haunted by them.

Outline

I. An encounter with the dead.

A. In the *Odyssey*, Homer describes the visit of Odysseus to the underworld. In Hades, he meets some of the heroes he once knew in the Trojan War. When Achilles tells him that he would rather be the poorest day-laborer than king of all the dead, he expresses the Greek view of death.

1. In general, the underworld was inhabited by souls who were described as uncaring or heedless.
2. The only ghost to keep his wits was Teiresias the seer.
3. Some evil-doers were actually punished, but dead spirits existed in a kind of limbo.
4. In Euripides's *Alcestis*, the heroine gives her life that her husband may live and was probably present on stage as an entirely mute ghost in the final act.

B. As in many cultures, the Greeks mingled respect and fear in their attitudes toward the dead. In fact, the dead received different treatment according to whether they were ordinary folk or heroes. In the case of ordinary folk, death and burial was generally simple. Funeral chambers and mounds were rarely used. Instead, simple inhumation or cremation was preferred. Both techniques existed in classical times.

1. Before Pericles's time, Athens had already established an area largely given over to burial. This was the Ceramicus (Potters' Field), northwest of the agora.
2. From 900 B.C. onward, the Athenians increasingly relied on simple pit inhumations.
3. By 750 B.C., they were marking burials with large amphorae half buried at the head of the grave.

C. In the 5th century, burials in Athens were quite simple, with a few grave goods left in a small trench cut across the top of the grave. One distinctive form of pottery, the white-ground *lekythos*, is particularly associated with such burials. The markers naming the deceased were still also simple. Around 425, spending on burials and grave stelai increased dramatically. Most of the elaborate grave monuments to survive from Athens date from the late 5th century until legislation was introduced in 317 to curb spending; these monuments feature excellent sculpture in deep relief.

II. The change in commemoration practices is probably linked to the dramatic increase in casualties caused by the Peloponnesian War and the plague.

A. The most common motif on these monuments is the so-called *dexiosis*, or handshake. Some interpret this to be a reunion scene, looking forward to the time when the recently departed will be reunited with loved ones.

B. By the end of the 5th century, public and private commemoration took place side by side. Just beyond the Dipylon Gate, one entered the area called the most beautiful suburb of Athens. Here was located a *demosion sema*, or public tomb, where the war dead were buried. In the same area, many family plots have come to light.

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C. More important than the monuments, however, were the funeral rites practiced by the living. Correct treatment of the dead is a profound social obligation in most societies, and the Greeks were no different. Rituals were used to ease both the living and the dead through the painful separation of death and to avert the pollution associated with death.

D. The first stage of burial was the *prothesis.* This began with the washing of the body, after which it was laid out. Inscriptional evidence suggests that the body was dressed in new clothes and laid on a mattress and coverlet specially purchased for the burial procession.

   1. Geometric amphorae from about 750 B.C. depict scenes of the *prothesis*.
   2. Mourners can be seen weeping and tearing their hair.
   3. The body appears to be lying under a *baldacchino*.

E. The second stage was the *ekphora*. This was the procession escorting the funeral bier to the place of interment. Legislation limiting the amount of mourning and the number of attendants involved suggests that even before Pericles's time, the funeral procession had become noisy, costly, and disruptive.

   1. These processions are also shown on the Dipylon vases from Athens.
   2. The processions were led by armed men. Female family members walked close to the corpse, with other women following behind.

F. The final stage was the burial of the body or, in the case of cremation, the deposition of ashes. We are less well informed about this. For example, we do not know what formal words or prayers were said over the grave. In the offering trenches cut along some classical burials, the remains of animals, birds, and shells suggest that a meal may have been left for the dead.

   1. The meal may have been burned as a sacrifice to the dead. The remains are often found with carbonized wood.
   2. Literary sources often refer to libations poured for the dead. Wine was probably used, perhaps being poured on the ashes of the smoldering sacrificial meal.

III. The treatment of heroes was altogether different. Heroes were often associated with the founding or saving of the city or a colony.

A. Heroes, and some heroines, received cult offerings at their tombs, which were often located at strategically important points: by the walls of the city, in the town square, or on the outer edges of the state's territory. Such a tomb was often a chamber covered by a mound.

B. Heroes might receive sacrifices in the form of animals butchered and burnt, but more common was a blood sacrifice.

   1. At some hero shrines, a terracotta tube was built into the mound from the top to the chamber and was used to allow mourners to pour a libation into the tomb.
   2. Heroes, like other dead spirits, were thought to feed on blood.

C. The Athenians of Pericles's day honored the 10 eponymous heroes who gave their names to the tribes of Athens. In addition, Theseus was regarded as the special founder hero of Athens. His importance grew as the power of Athens grew, and he served as an Athenian answer to the major Peloponnesian hero, Heracles.

   1. Athenian monuments, such as the Athenian Treasury at Delphi, showed both the labors of Heracles and the deeds of Theseus.
   2. A generation before Pericles, Cimon enhanced his own reputation and that of Athens by bringing the bones of Theseus back to Athens from Scyros.

D. Many of the tombs where heroes were worshipped were actually Bronze Age or earlier tombs that had been disturbed. The Greeks were able to combine the hero saga of myth with the physical remains of earlier "heroic" society to establish holy and powerful markers in the landscape.

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Questions to Consider:

1. Do the practices of the Greeks regarding death resemble those of modern societies in any way?
2. Why did heroes play so vital a role in the religious life of the Greeks?

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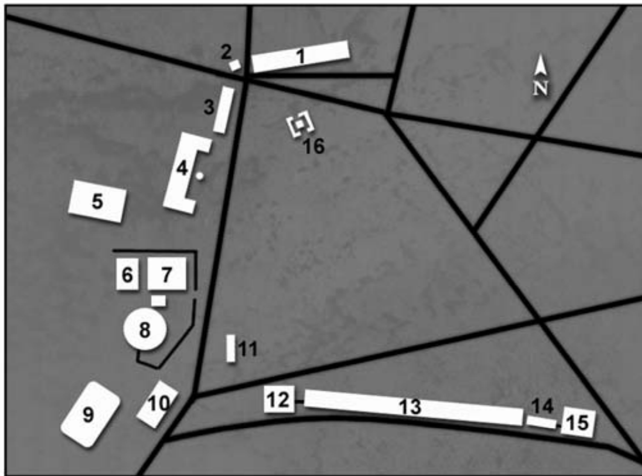

The *Agora:* the ancient marketplace

1. Painted Stoa
2. Crossroads Sanctuary
3. Royal Stoa
4. Temple of Zeus
5. Temple of Hephaestus
6. Old Bouleuterion
7. New Bouleuterion
8. Tholos
9. State Prison
10. Strategeion
11. Monument of Eponymous Heroes
12. Heliaia
13. South Stoa
14. Fountain House
15. Mint
16. Altar of the Twelve Gods

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Greece, the Peloponnese, and their surroundings.

Fifth Century B.C.

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Timeline

776 .... First Olympic games.

c. 750 .... Beginning of Greek colonization of Sicily, Italy, and the Black Sea.

c. 725 .... Homer's poems written down.

594/3 .... Solon's archonship in Athens.

545–28/7 .... Peisistratus's tyranny at Athens.

525 .... Cleisthenes's archonship.

510 .... Expulsion of Hippias, son of Peisistratus.

508/7 .... Democratic reforms of Cleisthenes.

490 .... Battle of Marathon.

480 .... Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis.

479 .... Battle of Plataea.

478/7 .... Dismissal of Pausanias; formation of the Delian League.

476/5 .... Persians expelled from Thrace.

473 .... Carystos compelled to join the Delian League.

472 .... First production of Aeschylus's *Persians*.

470 .... Revolt of Naxos from Delian League.

468 .... Defeat of Persians at the Battle of the Eurymedon River.

465–63 .... Revolt of Thasos.

464–61 .... Earthquake in Sparta and ensuing Helot Revolt.

461 .... Ostracism of Cimon; democratic reforms of Ephialtes; pay for jury service.

460 .... Athenian campaigns in Egypt and Cyprus.

460–445 .... First Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta; construction of "Long Walls" from Athens to Piraeus begins.

457 .... Cimon recalled from exile.

454 .... Defeat of Athenian forces in Egypt.

c. 454 .... Transfer of Delian League treasury to Athens.

450 .... Death of Cimon in Cyprus; completion of the Long Walls.

449 .... Pericles leads 1,000 Athenian settlers to the Chersonese.

447–438 .... Construction of the Parthenon.

445 .... Thirty Years' Peace between Athens and Sparta.

443–429 .... Pericles reelected Athenian general each year.

442 .... First production of Sophocles's *Antigone*.

440 .... Revolt of Samos; suppressed by Athenians led by Pericles.

437–432 .... Construction of the Propylaea.

431–404 .... Peloponnesian War.

430 .... Plague in Athens.

429 .... Second season of plague; death of Pericles.

428 .... Birth of Xenophon.

427 .... Birth of Plato.

421 .... Peace of Nicias.

421–408 .... Construction of the Erechtheum; Sicilian expedition.

411 .... First production of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*.

411–10 .... Oligarchic revolution at Athens.

404 .... Defeat of Athens; rule of the Thirty Tyrants.

403 .... Restoration of democracy at Athens.

399 .... Trial of Socrates.

359 .... Philip II becomes king of Macedon.

355–322 .... Public career of Demosthenes.

338 .... Battle of Chaironeia; defeat of the southern Greeks by Philip II of Macedon.

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Glossary

Note: Many key Greek names and terms have come into English through Latin, and these familiar forms are retained in these booklets. For example, the spelling *Pericles* is used instead of *Perikles*, and the Latinized form *Erechtheum* is used instead of the more correct *Erechtheion*. Some terms, however, are not familiar even in their Latin forms; in these cases, the booklets follow current academic practice and keep the terms closer to the Greek. Hence, the spelling *metronomoi* is used, not *metronomi*. Some people refer to this practice as being consistently inconsistent. Unfortunately, clarity and consistency don't always go hand-in-hand, and where there is a choice to be made, the former is preferred here to the latter.

Acropolis: Great outcrop of rock in the middle of Athens on which were built the major temples and sanctuaries of the city, including the Parthenon.

Agora: The marketplace and heart of ancient Athens.

Amphidromia: Ritual acceptance of a newborn child into the family.

Anchisteia: Extended family group consisting of cousins.

Anthesteria: A wine festival at which evil spirits were expelled from the household.

Apatouria: Religious festival at which boys were introduced to the *phratry* (religious brotherhood) of their fathers.

Archon: Title of the chief Athenian magistrate, elected to serve for one year only.

Banausia: Greek term for manufacturing and artisanal work but also synonymous with vulgarity.

Boule: The Council of Five Hundred, which supervised the Ecclesia's business.

Bouleuterion: Council house located on the western side of the agora.

Brauron: Rural sanctuary of Artemis where girls participated in rites marking the transition from childhood to marriageability.

Carystos: Euboean city compelled to join the Delian League (473 B.C.).

Catharsis: Aristotle's term, meaning "cleansing," used to describe the effect of watching tragedy.

Ceramicus: Potter's Field, a district of Athens outside the agora given over to graves and funeral monuments, including the Public Tomb.

Chaironeia: Battle in central Greece (338 B.C.) in which Philip II of Macedon defeated the Greeks and established the Macedonian domination of Greece.

Delian League: The alliance of Greek states originally designed to avenge the destruction caused by the Persian Wars; it gradually transformed into an Athenian empire.

Demes: Villages or municipalities in the territory of Attica, constituting the basic unit of the Athenian democracy.

Demosion sema: Public tomb, located in the Ceramicus district, where remains of the Athenian war dead were kept.

Dexiosis: The handshake, a characteristic gesture depicted on Athenian funerary monuments.

Dionysia: Annual festival to Dionysus at which dramatic competitions were held.

Dipylon vases: Larger amphorae used as funerary markers in 8th-century Athens.

Ecclesia: The assembly of all adult male citizens in Athens.

Ecphora: Formal procession in which the body of the dead was taken from the household to the burial site.

Eleutheria: Freedom, especially in the sense of an entire community's freedom from the domination of a foreign power.

Epikleros: Technical expression for a girl who has inherited an estate and who was usually compelled to marry a near relative.

Epics: Poems, composed orally and transmitted over generations, that told of the deeds of heroes, especially in relation to the Trojan War.

Erechtheum: Sanctuary on the north side of the Acropolis named in honor of the first king of Athens, Erechtheus, but housing many cults, including the most revered cult of Athena.

Genos: Clan, often serving as the exclusive group at the heart of a *phratry*.

Helots: The enslaved population of Sparta and nearby Messenia.

Hetaera: A courtesan, higher in status than a prostitute, perhaps best compared to Japanese geisha.

Hippeis: The second rank in Solon's census system.

Hoplite: Heavily armed Greek infantry soldier.

Isonomia: Equality before the law, a claim linked to democracy.

King archon: Chief priest of all Athenian state cults.

Kouros: Life-size statue of a young man, commonly dedicated to Apollo.

Laurium: District south of Athens rich in silver and extensively mined during the 5th century.

Liturgies: Expenses of dramatic productions and naval costs taken on by the rich on behalf of the state.

Marathonomachoi: The veterans of the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.).

Metics: Resident aliens living in Athens.

Metronomoi: Officials responsible for ensuring the accuracy of weights and measures in the agora.

Metroon: Originally the building in which the Boule met, later used to house the archives of Athens.

Nous: Intellect or intelligence; sophistic term for the rational principle at work in the cosmos.

Oikos: The household, including the family, dependents, slaves, and property.

Ostracism: The expulsion for 10 years of unpopular politicians or generals, named for the pottery shards (*ostraca*) on which candidates' names were written.

Paideia: The training or education of the young, including physical training and lessons in poetry.

Panathenaea: Yearly festival celebrating the patron goddess of Athens. Every four years, a more elaborate festival took place, with athletic and poetic contests.

Parthenon: Magnificent temple built in honor of Athena on the Acropolis at Athens; part of a building program financed by the treasury of the Delian League.

Peloponnese: Name applied to the large portion of southern Greece beyond the Isthmus of Corinth.

Peloponnesian War: Catastrophic conflict between Athens and Sparta (431–404/3 B.C.).

Pentakosiomedimnoi: The super rich of Athens, whose property yielded more than 500 measures of produce (grain, oil, and wine combined).

Peplos: Robe woven for Athena and presented to the goddess at the Great Panathenaea every four years.

Phratry: Religious brotherhood to which most Athenian men belonged.

Propylaea: Monumental gateway leading to the Acropolis.

Prothesis: Laying out and preparation of the dead for burial.

Royal Stoa: Portico located on the western side of the agora used to house and display the laws of Solon.

Sacred Way: Term applied to any road used as part of a ceremonial procession in honor of a god but particularly used in Athens to refer to the track crossing the agora and leading up to the Acropolis.

Salamis: Naval battle of 480 B.C. in which the fleet of Xerxes was destroyed.

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Satrapies: Provinces of the Persian Empire, often enjoying great independence and usually ruled by friends and relations of the Persian king, known as satraps.

Sicilian expedition: Athenian naval expedition to Sicily from 415 to 413, ending in the capture and destruction of Athenian forces.

Sophists: Professional teachers and philosophers who came to Athens in the second half of the 5th century. They accepted payment and lectured on a variety of topics: linguistics, metaphysics, but especially rhetoric and eristics, the study of argumentation.

Stoa: Any rectangular building with a solid back wall but with columns along the front side and the interior, providing relief from the weather in both summer and winter.

Strategeion: Meeting house of the generals of Athens, located in the southwestern corner of the agora.

Syracuse: Largest and wealthiest of the Greek city-states in Sicily, it was invaded by the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War.

Syssitia: The public mess-halls to which Spartan men belonged.

Thasos: Major Athenian ally, source of timber for the fleet, and an early defector from the Delian League (465–462 B.C.).

Thermopylae: A narrow pass between the cliffs and the sea in central Greece where 300 Spartans denied the Persian army entry to southern Greece for three days in 480 B.C.

Thetes: The fourth and lowest rank in Solon's census system.

Trireme: Swift warships powered by sail or by three banks of rowers.

Trittyes: Literally, "thirds." Each Cleisthenic tribe consisted of three such units, each drawn from a different region of Attica.

Tyrant: A ruler neither elected nor bound by constitutional law.

Biographical Notes

Aeschylus: Eldest of the three great Athenian tragedians, remembered for his thunderous poetry.

Alcibiades: Controversial and flamboyant Athenian politician of the generation after Pericles.

Alcmaeonidae: A leading Athenian family whose members included Cleisthenes and, later, on his mother's side, Pericles.

Antigone: Heroine of Sophocles's play dealing with conflicting obligations to the family and state.

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

Aspasia: Mistress of Pericles and mother of his son, but the subject of brutal invective directed at her and her supposed influence over Periclean policy.

Cimon: Son of Miltiades, the Athenian victor at Marathon; leading statesman of Athens in the generation after the Persian Wars.

Cleisthenes: Constitutional reformer whose innovations included the Council of Five Hundred, the 10 tribes, and the system of *demes* and *trittyes*.

Cleon: the leading Athenian politician from circa 429–422 B.C.; regarded by Thucydides as a violent rabble rouser.

Darius I: Persian king responsible for the Persian invasion of 490 B.C.; his army was defeated at Marathon in the same year.

Dionysus: God of ecstasy; known to the Greeks as the "One Who Binds and Releases." Tragedy was performed in his honor.

Eileithyia: Goddess of childbirth, often assimilated to Artemis.

Ephialtes: Radical reformer of the mid-5th century who transferred power from the old Areopagus Council to the people.

Euripides: Youngest of the three great Athenian tragedians and sometimes charged in antiquity with misogyny.

Hephaestus: Patron god of metalworkers, whose temple overlooks the agora from the west.

Leonidas: Spartan king at the time of the Persian invasions, who died heroically at Thermopylae (480 B.C.).

Mardonius: Persian commander of the army of Xerxes.

Medea: Heroine of Euripides's play; abandoned by Jason and driven to kill her children in revenge.

Miltiades: Athenian general at Marathon, father of Cimon.

Neaera: Wife of Stephanus and the subject of a lengthy legal speech detailing the rigid boundaries between legitimacy and illegitimacy of birth and citizenship in Athens.

Nicias: Unwilling and unlucky Athenian commander during the Sicilian expedition (415–413 B.C.).

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

Pericles: Leading Athenian politician and general from circa 450–429 B.C. Dominant figure in Athenian politics and culture in the 5th century B.C.

Phidias: Sculptor of the great gold and ivory statue of Athena in the Parthenon and friend of Pericles.

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

Prometheus: Hero of Aeschylus's play dealing with the relationship between gods and men, as well as resistance to arbitrary rule.

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

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

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

Sophocles: Second of the three great Athenian tragedians and author of *Antigone*.

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, son of Darius, whose invasion of Greece in 480–479 B.C. was defeated at Salamis and Plataea.

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The Age of Pericles

Part II

Professor Jeremy McInerney

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Jeremy McInerney received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1992. He was the Wheeler Fellow at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and has excavated in Israel, at Corinth, and on Crete. Since 1992, he has been teaching Greek history at the University of Pennsylvania, where he held the Laura Jan Meyerson Term Chair in the Humanities from 1994 to 1998. He is currently an associate professor in the Department of Classical Studies and chair of the Graduate Group in the Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World. Professor McInerney also serves on the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens.

Professor McInerney's research interests include topography, epigraphy, and historiography. He has published articles in a variety of academic journals, including *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, the *American Journal of Archaeology*, *Hesperia*, and *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*. In 1997, he was an invited participant at a colloquium on ethnicity in the ancient world, hosted by the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington. His book, *The Folds of Parnassos: Land and Ethnicity in Ancient Phokis*, is a study of state formation and ethnic identity in the archaic and classical periods, and it was published by the University of Texas Press in 1999.

Dr. McInerney was the recipient in 2000 of the Ira Abrams award for excellence in teaching in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania and, more recently, received a Lindback award, the university's top teaching prize.

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Part II

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The Age of Pericles

Scope:

Athens in the 5th century B.C. witnessed a cultural flowering of extraordinary power and importance for Western culture. In this series of 24 lectures, we will use the career of Pericles as the prism through which to examine the achievements of Athens in its golden age. Pericles first appeared on the public stage shortly after the Persian Wars, seminal events that saw the Greeks defeat the numerically superior Persians. In the generation that followed, Athens rapidly transformed the alliance of Greek states dedicated to taking the war back to Persia into an Aegean empire, dominated by the Athenians and their fleet. At the same time, this dramatic increase in power and prestige was accompanied by the growth of full participatory democracy. We examine the daily working of that democracy, asking how an Athenian was trained for citizenship. What did democracy mean in practice? What did freedom and autonomy mean to a society that relied on slaves and was ruthless in its treatment of its subjects?

To answer these questions, we juxtapose the breathtaking accomplishments of the Athenians, in fields such as philosophy, tragedy, comedy, sculpture, and architecture, with the exclusion of women from public life, the torture and abuse of slaves, and the execution of other Greek populations. We will follow the Athenians from the height of their power to defeat at the hands of the Spartans. The picture that emerges is a portrait of a complex people and a complicated culture. Restless, adventurous, sophisticated, crude, pious, the Athenians are a people whose culture has a special significance for us. The ties between us are not casual, but deeply meaningful.

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Lecture Thirteen

Aeschylus and Early Tragedy

Scope: We remember the Greeks for the searing dramas first composed and performed in the age of Pericles by the three geniuses of Attic tragedy: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Each was interested in the clash of systems, in particular, dilemmas that left the individual caught between different obligations. In this lecture, we will begin with Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound*, a play that has been translated and performed thousands of times. The hero is the figure who gave humans fire but was punished by Zeus for helping humankind. In the play, we witness the power of the gods, and it is awful. These gods are greater than we are and compel obedience. In *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus explores the pettiness of power and the powerlessness of the weak. Staged at a time when the Athenians had newly become powerful, the play may be the product of anxieties they felt concerning their own strength and privileges. Like the other great plays of the 5th century, Aeschylus's masterpiece may be significant precisely because it is both universal and very much the product of Athenian power in the 5th century.

Outline

I. Aeschylus's life and reputation.

- **A.** The first of the three great Athenian tragedians, Aeschylus, was born in 525 B.C. and died in 456. He comes, therefore, from the generation before Pericles. In his lifetime, his plays won first prize 52 times and, after his death, the Athenians voted to pay for the chorus of any production of his plays.
- **B.** To Pericles and his contemporaries, the poetry of Aeschylus seemed grand and elevated, even in some ways old-fashioned. In the age of Pericles, Aeschylus's work was the measure of great drama.
- **C.** Aeschylus fought at Marathon in 490 and chose to commemorate that fact, not his success as a dramatist, on his tomb. This reveals something of the man's values and priorities.
- **D.** Aeschylus was remembered for dramatic poetry that captured the spirit of war and battle. He was famous for an elevated style, which the Greeks called *semnotes.* He used this high style, full of formal diction and metaphor, to explore the complex relations between humankind and the gods. He believed completely in the gods and their power and was quite conventional in his religious outlook.
  - **1.** His plays are not really about character or individuality, but explore issues of morality and justice.
  - **2.** As with so much Greek drama, his plays often turn on a dilemma. How should a person act when faced with contrary obligations?

II. In *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus explores issues of power and justice in ways that reflect contemporary ethics.

- **A.** The play concerns the punishment of Prometheus, the titan who stole fire from heaven and gave it to mortals. Zeus is omnipotent but not a sympathetic character. He acts through two underlings, Strength and Force, who lead Prometheus to a barren and desolate plain, where he is to be pinned to a rock. Aside from Zeus, the play also speaks of *Moira* (Destiny) and *Ananke* (Necessity). In this respect, Aeschylus reflects the influence of Homer: Any wrongdoing must be punished.
- **B.** In Aeschylus's plays, it is often the *Erinyes*, or Furies, who pursue the wrongdoer, crying out for blood. They represent the primal spirit of vengeance. Even so, our sympathies in this play are with the titan, Prometheus. His wrongdoing was to steal fire and give it to mortals. We are the beneficiaries of his crime.
- **C.** While chained to the rock, Prometheus is visited by the daughters of Ocean, Ocean himself, Io, and Hermes.
  - **1.** The Oceanids explain that Zeus rules with new laws and is answerable to none, while sympathizing with Prometheus's suffering.
  - **2.** Ocean, a fellow titan, represents the spirit of compromise. The gods have a new ruler, he explains, so Prometheus should learn to know himself and accommodate the new ways.
- **D.** Io's arrival signals a shift in the play's direction.
  - **1.** Like Prometheus, she suffers at the hands of the gods, loved by Zeus and driven mad by Hera. Her fate and that of Prometheus are linked: He prophesies her eventual release, and from her line of descendants will come Heracles, who will release Prometheus.

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2. The Io episode is interwoven with a long digression in which the wanderings of Io are described. This is an example of the mythic geography that fascinated the Greeks.

E. The final important scene involves Hermes, the messenger of the gods, who comes to order Prometheus to divulge the details of his prophecy to Io, a prophecy foretelling a threat to Zeus's rule.
   1. Prometheus will not bend to the will of Zeus.
   2. He dismisses Hermes as a lackey and declares defiantly, "I would not exchange my misfortune for your servitude."
   3. Hermes promises that Zeus will send an eagle to tear out Prometheus's liver every day.
   4. The play ends with Prometheus hurling defiance. His last words, as he is swallowed by howling winds and waves, are, "I suffer unjustly."

III. Interpreting *Prometheus Bound*.

A. The play has often been read as an assertion of personal integrity. Prometheus refuses to repent and will not be persuaded or cajoled into submitting. Although the play does call for this reading, we must keep in mind that it was part of a trilogy and that the other two plays do not survive. It is difficult to say how we would react to Prometheus and Zeus if we had the complete trilogy.

B. Two features, however, stand out in the work. The first is that the rule of Zeus is often compared to a new regime. Aeschylus grew to manhood in the early days of the Athenian democracy, when Athenian power was newly established and still growing. The play may have been intended as a statement in support of conservatism.

C. Although we may sympathize with the suffering of Prometheus, his intransigence is ugly and unseemly. The play may also be read as an illustration of the dictum that learning comes through suffering.

D. If we leave aside allegorical readings and take the play as a treatment of the myth that explains the origins of human culture, we are, perhaps, left with something more compelling: a view of the universe in which the gods and their actions are beyond human comprehension. Zeus, after all, never appears in the play. Prometheus, like us, may defy heaven, but he must suffer.

E. Any reading of the play should consider the rest of the Prometheus myth. Fire made it possible for human beings to cook food, and it is the burning fat, the smell, and the smoke of cooking meat that we offer to the gods in sacrifice. The myth of Prometheus, therefore, concerns the complicated relationship between ourselves and the gods. Thanks to Prometheus, we are connected to the gods in ways that no other mortal creature can be, yet, entreat them as we may, their world is beyond ours. Goodness and justice are human dilemmas—they are not the concern of the gods.

Suggested Reading:

Rosenmeyer, T. G. *The Art of Aeschylus*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982.

Griffith, M. *The Authenticity of Prometheus Bound*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Prometheus deserve his punishment?
2. What is the effect of *Prometheus Bound* having so little action?
3. How do the Oceanids, who reappear throughout the play, affect our reactions to Prometheus and his predicament?

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Lecture Fourteen

Sophoclean Tragedy

Scope: In this lecture, we examine *Antigone*, written by Sophocles. The play explores the agony of a young woman who must choose between obeying the orders of the state or the dictates of family honor. Will she bury her brother, killed in the assault on Thebes, or will she obey Creon's injunction forbidding burial to Polyneices as a traitor and enemy? This clash of systems is characteristic of Greek tragedy and reflects the ethical complexity of Athenian culture in the age of Pericles. This is a community capable of recognizing the necessities of family loyalty while also contemplating the needs of the state. These do not necessarily overlap, and the conflict between them is at the heart of this drama.

Outline

I. The life and reputation of Sophocles.

- **A.** The second of the three great Athenian tragedians, Sophocles, was born in 497 B.C. and died in 406. He comes, therefore, from the same generation as Pericles. In his lifetime, he wrote more than 123 plays and won first prize 72 times.
- **B.** Stylistically, his plays were less formal and elevated than the poetry of Aeschylus, and his diction was closer to that of daily speech, but he was still highly regarded.
- **C.** Both Aristotle and Virgil regarded him as perfect. Modern poets and playwrights from Racine to Shelley also revered him. Matthew Arnold described him as the poet "who saw life steadily, and saw it whole."
- **D.** His plays were notable for dealing with moral choice and the often-painful consequences of such decisions.
- **E.** His first victory in the drama contest was in 468, and he continued to win regularly after that. He also held a series of senior posts in the Athenian state.
  - **1.** In 440, Sophocles was elected general and joined Pericles in the campaign that put down a revolt on Samos .
  - **2.** Later, he was appointed one of the *Hellenotamiai*, the treasurers in charge of the tribute from the allies of Athens.
  - **3.** In 413, he served on the special council appointed to keep order in Athens following the failure of the Sicilian expedition.

II. In *Antigone*, first produced in 442, Sophocles deals with part of the cycle of myths centered on Thebes and the house of Oedipus.

- **A.** Following his disgrace, Oedipus, now blind, quit Thebes and sought refuge in Athens. His sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, then assumed power, taking turns to rule. The brothers quarreled, and Polyneices was expelled. Polyneices returned, invading Thebes with the aid of six other heroes. Both he and Eteocles died in battle before the walls of the city.
- **B.** Sophocles's play turns on the dilemma created by Creon, the new ruler, who has decreed that Polyneices may not be buried. His body is left to rot outside the city.
- **C.** As the play opens, Antigone and her sister Ismene debate their plans.
  - **1.** Ismene reminds Antigone of the terrible fate of their family.
  - **2.** "We are in the grip of those stronger than ourselves," cries Ismene.
  - **3.** For Antigone, the choice is clear. "Do as you think best," she tells her sister. "As for me, I will bury him, and if I die for that I am content."
- **D.** The arrival of Creon draws our attention to the problem of power.
  - **1.** Creon is called by the chorus the new ruler, by virtue of the new turn the gods have given affairs.
  - **2.** He confirms his proclamation, that Polyneices's corpse shall be eaten by the dogs.
  - **3.** A messenger comes to announce that the body has been buried with full funeral rites.
  - **4.** Creon orders that the person responsible must be found.
- **E.** The action is then interrupted by a famous ode sung by the chorus, celebrating the glories of mankind.
  - **1.** The theme of this ode is the power of humans to bend nature to their will.

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2. Sailing, farming, and hunting all demonstrate man's dominion over nature.
3. Politics and statecraft are included in the list.
4. The final note of caution expresses a typical Greek sentiment: "Yet in his rashness often he scorns the ways that are good."
5. Should we read this as subverting Creon's authority?

F. The play moves toward its central confrontation as the guards return with Antigone. In the battle of wills that follows, Antigone remains steadfast in her insistence that family and natural law required her to bury Polyneices. Creon, however, weaves two themes together in his condemnation of Antigone:
1. He insists on the primacy of law. Antigone disobeyed and must be punished.
2. He is also threatened by her resistance. "But I am no man, she is the man, if she can carry this off unpunished," he exclaims.

G. Two other characters now enter. Ismene, Antigone's sister, represents a less extreme resistance. She is the voice of conciliation and compromise. Haemon, Creon's son and the man to whom Antigone is betrothed, also points out the fatal stubbornness of his father.
1. The play maps the personal onto the political. As Creon says, "Only a man who rules his own household justly can do justice to the state."
2. The exchange with Haemon undercuts Creon's appeal to law and authority. "Then no one but yourself may speak, you will hear no reason?" asks his son.

H. From this point, the play winds inexorably down. Haemon flees. Creon orders Antigone to be locked in a cave: her prison and her tomb. Teiresias, the blind seer, appears to condemn Creon for his impiety: leaving the dead unburied and burying the living. The play comes to a conclusion with a rash of deaths.
1. News comes that Antigone has hanged herself.
2. Haemon, too, has killed himself at the feet of Antigone.
3. In despair, Creon's wife, Eurydice, kills herself after cursing Creon.
4. Creon is left to contemplate the disasters he has wrought.

III. Interpreting *Antigone*.

A. The play clearly hinges on the confrontation of Antigone and Creon. Each is unbending in a commitment to either family or state. These appear to be contradictory and utterly at odds with each other. One can either obey the dictates of family honor or the orders of the state.

B. Yet, in actuality, these two spheres are shown to overlap and reinforce each other. We can detect this by examining audience response.
1. To contemporary eyes, Antigone's fate is dreadful and undeserved and proves that she is right. Creon becomes a villain undone by his own inflexibility.
2. In terms of the audience in Pericles's day, however, it is the cost to Creon that is critical. As father of a household, he learns that it is his intransigence that has brought down disaster on his family. His son is dead, his wife is dead, and all this has occurred because of his mistreatment of his niece. The true measure of disaster is not the death of Antigone, as terrible as that may be, but the dissolution of Creon's household that her death precipitates.

Suggested Reading:

Linforth, I. M. *Antigone and Creon*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do either Antigone or Creon exhibit *hamartia*, the tragic flaw of character described by Aristotle?
2. What is the role of Haemon in the ethical problems behind the drama?
3. How does Sophocles use the chorus to influence the audience's response to the drama?

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Lecture Fifteen

Euripides

Scope: In *Medea*, Euripides explores the questions of blood and membership in the community. These were concerns that troubled the Athenians as their empire grew and their power made them both envied and hated. Yet, whatever the general context for the play's production, it is the horrific power of the story told by Euripides that continues to appeal to audiences. How could a mother slaughter her own children? The enormity of the crime and the revulsion it causes in the audience make *Medea* one of the most compelling tragedies produced for the Athenian stage. In this lecture, we will examine the play closely and explore the ways in which Euripides dissects one of the most potent of human feelings: the desire for revenge. The play is both universal in its appeal and also very much a product of the grim reality of Athenian power.

Outline

I. The life and career of Euripides.

A. Euripides was the third of the great Athenian playwrights. Born a generation after Aeschylus, he was also younger than Sophocles. More important, he was raised in the atmosphere of the new learning. He associated with sophists, such as Protagoras, and was satirized for believing, like Socrates, in his own gods, rather than those of the state.

B. His reputation changed a great deal in the classical period. During his lifetime, Euripides won first prize only four times, a low figure given that he seems to have written close to 70 plays. Comic references to Euripides portray him as a misogynist, although comedy was necessarily exaggerated.

C. He became much more popular in the 4th century, and many of his plays were revived after his death. Aristotle criticized aspects of his dramaturgy, such as poorly managed plots, but often used Euripides as a model for other dramatists to follow. Athens in the 4th century was perhaps less shocked by the extreme *pathos* of Euripides's plays.

II. The story of Medea, like many of the plots in classic Attic tragedy, was well known to its audience.

A. Medea had fallen in love with Jason while he was on the quest for the Golden Fleece. Helping him steal the fleece and escape from her homeland, Colchis, a barbarian kingdom on the Black Sea, she had committed a hideous crime, killing her brother Apsyrtus and throwing his butchered body into the sea to slow down their pursuers.

B. In the next installment of the story, Medea had tried to help Jason win the throne that had been unjustly taken from him by his uncle, Pelias. Medea, who was regarded as a witch, promised to use a magic potion to rejuvenate Pelias. Instead, she slaughtered him. Jason and Medea were banished and wound up in Corinth.

C. This is the background to the story that will be told in Euripides's play. His audience would have been familiar with these stories and would come to the play with ideas about Medea as a foreigner, a sorceress, and a woman who had already committed murder. For the ancient audience, much of the anticipation surrounding a play arose from the simple question: How will this poet give a fresh spin to the material we already know?

III. The play begins with the nurse lamenting the change in her mistress's fortunes. Now she is an exile, dependent entirely on the goodwill of others. Jason has abandoned her and their children, contracting a marriage alliance with the king of Corinth. The news gets worse: Creon threatens to exile Medea and the boys from Corinth entirely.

A. Throughout these first scenes, the poet continually emphasizes the threat to the children. The nurse fears for them, afraid that Medea's anger will be directed at them. And Medea does call them the accursed children of a hated mother.

B. Medea goes on to call down destruction on the heads of Jason and his new bride. In a lengthy speech, she explains her situation to the women of Corinth, emphasizing the weakness of her position as an outsider. She also generalizes from her own vulnerability to that of all women.

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1. "When we marry our happiness depends upon our partners. If he finds the marriage agreeable, our life is enviable. If he does not enjoy the marriage, then the woman's lot becomes intolerable."
2. She then presents her lot as even worse than that of the average woman. Without a family, she has no relatives or city to protect her.
3. Medea represents that which men fear most, not just a woman angered, but a person with no place in society.

C. The first battle of wits in the play is between Medea and Creon. The king places the protection of his family before any claim Medea may have on him, saying, "I do not love you more than my own house." He does, however, consent to her staying for the rest of one day before going into exile.

1. The confrontation of powerful male and headstrong woman is a staple of the Athenian stage.
2. Such confrontations brought conflicting sets of values into sharp focus.

D. Medea gloats that she will use the day to take revenge on her enemies: "The father, his daughter and my husband." But again, immediately, her thoughts turn to exile and her isolation. Her lament is answered by the chorus, singing of the reversal of the natural order of things.

1. Honor will now come to women.
2. Oaths no longer hold.
3. Shame is departed.
4. Medea's isolation—her status as an exile, without home, family, or fatherland—represents to this audience the ultimate source of despair.

E. The exchange that follows is the confrontation of Medea and Jason. Medea recalls the many ways she helped Jason while, to our ears, Jason's justifications sound specious. He claims he married the Corinthian princess to guarantee the family's prosperity. He blames Medea for reducing the entire issue to a matter of sex, claiming: "You women reduce everything to sex, so that if it is going all right you think everything else is also fine, but if something goes wrong in bed you hold everything which is fine and good as actually against you."

1. Jason's remarks probably play on contemporary stereotypes about women and sex, but it is hard to imagine the audience being convinced.
2. The exploration of both sides of the issue is the characteristic feature of plays such as this. There is no easy solution.
3. Lurking behind the confrontation is the chorus's desire for moderation, avoiding either passion or anger.
4. The sentiments of the chorus strike us as odd, shifting to the theme of patriotism: "There is no greater affliction than to lose one's fatherland."
5. In fact, this is central to the play. These dramas are about what threatens the cohesion of society. Central among these threats are extreme human emotions.

F. The play moves in an unexpected direction with the arrival of Aegeus, king of Athens. He is traveling, seeking help in understanding an oracle he has received. Upon hearing Medea's story, he agrees to accept her supplication that she should be allowed to live in Athens and promises never to give her up. After his departure, Medea vows to kill her own children. How can Athens allow itself to be the refuge for a woman who has killed her children?

G. Another exchange with Jason ensues, but now, Medea has launched her plan. She lies that she has seen the wisdom of Jason's plan, accepts her fate, and merely asks that the children be allowed to stay. To win over Jason's new bride to her side, Medea sends her a garment as a gift, but it is a dress that will kill the bride and begin the awful final act.

1. Before the last scene, the chorus sings a lament to the grief that having children brings.
2. We worry about raising them and providing for them.
3. Worse still is the tragedy of losing a child.
4. Here, Euripides is both heartbreaking and traditional. For him, as for many in his audience, life brought many woes, and all mankind could do was face them with resignation.

H. The final scene unfolds like the climax of an opera. Medea receives news and a lengthy, detailed description of the death of Creon and the princess. Thereupon, she goes into the palace and we hear the screams and cries of her sons as she slaughters them. Finally, Jason enters to confront Medea, only to find

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that she has murdered their children to avenge the betrayal she has suffered. Leaving him distraught, she is born aloft in a chariot and departs.

1. The play has no happy ending, and Medea is not punished for her deed.
2. The horrors are enacted offstage, but the descriptions are graphic and vivid.
3. The play, like many of Euripides's plays, involves an investigation of extreme emotion. The play constantly affirms moderation, loyalty, humility, and the established order by exploring what happens when any of these qualities is ignored or abandoned. There are no heroes here, only villains and worse villains.

Suggested Reading:

Burnett, A. P. *Catastrophe Survived: Euripides' Plays of Mixed Reversal*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.

Conacher, D. J. *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme and Structure*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is there any way in which our sympathy for Medea's treatment modifies the shock of her decision to murder the children?
2. Could a Greek audience listen to Jason's justifications and accept any of his arguments?

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Lecture Sixteen

Comedy in the Age of Aristophanes

Scope: The Athenians of the time of Pericles were remarkable for the pleasure they took in comedies that, by our standards, might seem crude, vulgar, and sexually explicit. In fact, the so-called Old Comedy of Aristophanes testifies to the vigor and openness of Athenian society. Politicians and even the gods could be mercilessly lampooned. In this lecture, we will examine two plays of Aristophanes to illustrate the breadth and depth of Athenian humor. In *Lysistrata*, the women of Athens go on a sex strike to force the men to make peace. The humor is rich and ribald, and the Athenian addiction to war is openly mocked. In *Birds*, we see a wonderful fantasy of escaping from wartime Athens, except that Athenian imperial bureaucracy can follow you anywhere, even to Cloudcuckooland. In each of these plays, Aristophanes combines lethal wit with a scabrous vulgarity that the Athenians loved.

Outline

I. The life and career of Aristophanes.

A. Aristophanes lived from about 447 B.C. until approximately 387 B.C. He was about 18 when Pericles died. His career spanned close to 40 years, during which he often won first prize at the city Dionysia or the Lenaia, the festivals at which comedies were presented. Eleven of his plays survive.

B. During his lifetime, Aristophanes appears to have known many of the leading Athenians, including Socrates and Plato. He figures as a character in Plato's *Symposium* and satirized Socrates in his play *Clouds*. In the small world of Athenian politics, he probably also knew Cleon, the politician who succeeded Pericles and whom Aristophanes loved to ridicule.

1. His criticisms of Cleon provoked a prosecution of Aristophanes on a charge of slandering the city.

2. Socrates refers to the caricature of the *Clouds* in the *Apology* and, perhaps, felt that it had contributed to the Athenian reaction against him.

3. The speech Aristophanes delivers in Plato's *Symposium* reflects the extraordinary fertility of his comic vision. He argues that the original humans were eight-limbed butterballs split by the gods into separate creatures always in search of their missing halves.

C. Aristophanes's plays are the only surviving examples of Old Comedy. This was the style of comedy prevalent in Pericles's day and is typical of the democracy itself.

1. The plays are full of slapstick, farce, scatological humor, and word play.

2. The plays demonstrate a vigorous and open attitude toward political life, in which every policy and every politician is open to criticism.

II. Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* is a superb illustration of Old Comedy at its funniest and most biting. The central idea of the play is that the Peloponnesian War has been going on for so long—the play was produced in 411 B.C.—that the only way to achieve peace is for the women to force the men into negotiations by going on a sex strike.

A. In the first scene, female ambassadors from Sparta, Thebes, and Corinth assemble with the Athenian women and agree to forswear sex until a peace has been signed.

1. The scene contains some lurid descriptions of the women's bodies and the powers of seduction.

2. The scene also plays with the notion that women are sexually voracious. Giving up sex will be as hard for them as for the men!

3. The scene on stage would have been doubly funny, because the actors portraying the female characters were all male.

B. The women seize the Acropolis in order to lock up the money used to finance the war. In the meantime, there is a confrontation between the men's and women's choruses, in which the men are drenched, the police are beaten, and a magistrate is ridiculed. A remarkable feature of the play, and this scene in particular, is the confidence with which Aristophanes mocks not just Athenian politicians but also the city' s most sacred traditions.

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III. The victory at Marathon and the expulsion of the tyrants are both the subjects of jokes.

A. In the second act, the opening scene is extremely risqué. Cinesias comes to the Acropolis to convince his wife, Myrrhine, to break her vow and have sex with him. After an elaborate build up, she leaves him, aroused and angry.

B. When the ambassadors from Sparta arrive, it is clear that they, too, are suffering from sexual starvation. The play reveals some of its more serious concerns as Lysistrata addresses both the Athenians and Spartans. She laments the passing of the cooperation of the past.

1. Both sides had fought together against the Persians.

2. The Athenians helped the Spartans when an earthquake precipitated a revolt of the helots.

3. The play finishes with both sides ratifying a treaty and, in return, getting their wives back.

C. The play is an astonishing mixture of high farce and a deep desire for peace. Despite its ribald comedy, the play shows a respect for the Spartans and expresses a love of Athens, as well.

IV. *Birds* is another of Aristophanes's masterpieces, and one that is important for understanding Pericles's world, because it deals directly with the empire he created and the war he helped bring about. The play was first produced in 414 B.C., during the Peloponnesian War, and debate has raged for years about how the play reflects the atmosphere in Athens at the time of its production.

A. The central conceit of the play is that Pisthetaerus and Euelpides have decided that life in Athens is unbearable; they flee to Cloudcuckooland, only to find that even this paradise is infected with all the evils that afflict Athenian life: priests, poets, oracle-sellers, inspectors, officials, lawyers, and various other pests.

B. Some scholars have seen the play as an expression of an Athens grown weary with the burden of empire, tired of war, and desperate for peace. At the time of the play's performance, thousands of Athenians were in Sicily on campaign, and that expedition would end disastrously the following year.

C. On the other hand, the Sicilian disaster lay in the future, and the Athens that dispatched the expedition was full of hope and enthusiasm. The play was a comedy, not a tragedy, and the depiction of bureaucrats and state officials is affectionately satirical, not mordant or despairing.

D. As with all of Aristophanes's plays, this one contains elements of scatological and sexual humor. There are also lines that puncture the pride of the Athenians.

1. At one point, scared that the vast assembly of birds will attack them, Pisthetaerus remarks that they will be buried in Athens with a tombstone reading: "Here lies a soldier who battled for Greece./He gave his dear life fighting off geese."

2. This is a sly dig at the epitaphs given to those who died on behalf of Athens and Greece in such wars as the Persian invasions.

E. The heart of the play involves the succession of officials who come to disturb the peace of our heroes in the newly founded Cloudcuckooland. The priest creates a racket with his prayers and music; the poet is a blowhard who recites doggerel at the drop of a hat; and the prophet provides a prophecy that, conveniently, says that he should be given a new pair of shoes. After religion, Aristophanes next takes a swipe at official bureaucrats.

1. A surveyor called Meton wants to lay out the city according to impenetrable mathematical principles.

2. An inspector armed with an Athenian decree next appears and is only too ready to be paid off by a juicy bribe to leave the birds alone.

3. A lawyer then arrives bringing more decrees from Athens regarding weights and measures, a reference to the imposition of Athenian standards on the allied states. He has to be physically driven out.

F. All these episodes share a particular outlook, and it is not the disgruntled point of view of those disillusioned by war. Rather, the play reflects the capacity of the Athenians to rule an empire with their eyes wide open, recognizing that it is an empire based on the coercive rules made by the Athenians themselves. Cloudcuckooland is an escapist fantasy, but all that the heroes are escaping from is the corruption and pettiness of bureaucracy. That's a fantasy we can all share.

Suggested Reading:

Dover, K. J. *Aristophanic Comedy*. London: B.T. Batsford, 1972.

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MacDowell, D. M. *Aristophanes and Athens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Questions to Consider:

1. Some scholars have seen a deeper significance in Aristophanes's plays, suggesting, for example, that *Birds* explores "the anatomy of Nothingness." Are such interpretations legitimate?
2. Both *Lysistrata* and *Birds* display attitudes toward religion that seem to us shocking. How are we to explain the Athenian tolerance of such scabrous wit?

Lecture Seventeen

Athenian Courts and Justice

Scope: The Athenians were justifiably proud of their legal system and saw it as the basis of their democracy. In this lecture, we investigate the history of Athenian law and examine how the system differed from modern law codes and practices. Beginning with an examination of Draco's law on homicide, an early law that the Athenians upheld for hundreds of years, we find that Athenian law was based on the principle of self-help. With no state prosecutors or defense lawyers, plaintiffs and respondents were expected to prosecute and defend their own cases. The family was important, and many cases, including murder and rape, which we would see as crimes against the individual, were regarded as crimes involving the entire family. By the time of Pericles, judges in some cases conducted preliminary hearings, but most cases were decided by massed panels of jurors numbering in the hundreds. In this lecture, we will examine a typical legal case involving assault and battery. We will see how rules of evidence and standards of testimony were far less regulated than they are today. The emphasis was not on the truth, but on shaping the opinion of the jurors and convincing them that the speaker was a man of the middle way, a moderate, as opposed to the violent, unrestrained, and "unAthenian" opponent.

Outline

I. The codification of law is one of the distinguishing features of civilized life. A law code reflects the values of a society and, until laws are written down, individuals must rely on custom and the decisions of rulers. With the writing of law, it becomes possible for a community to decide collectively by what laws it will be governed.

- **A.** The Greeks, accordingly, placed a great deal of emphasis on their traditional lawgivers. Such men as Draco, Lycurgus, and Solon were remembered as the first lawgivers, the men who established the distinctive patterns of life in Athens and Sparta.
- **B.** The Athenians may have begun writing down their laws as early as the 7th century B.C. There were still new laws being added in the time of Pericles, in the 5th century, but we know of at least one important law, Draco's law on homicide, that remained in force hundreds of years after it was first promulgated.
- **C.** Draco's law is valuable as a source of information about the connection between Athenian law and the family. Although we approach the law as a question of individual rights, the Athenians saw the individual as part of a larger family unit and wrote their laws accordingly.
  1. The law on homicide stipulates that the dead man is to be represented by his nearest relatives.
  2. If no close kin exist, then cousins and more distant relations represent his interests.

II. By the time of Pericles, the Athenians had a well-developed system of law.

- **A.** A variety of courts existed to hear different types of cases, ranging from religious affairs to treason to violence to land disputes.
  1. Lysias, for example, wrote a speech for a defendant who was prosecuted on a charge of sacrilege for having cut down a sacred olive tree.
  2. The trial was held in front of the Areopagus Council, originally an influential council of aristocrats but stripped of its powers in Pericles's day and left as a court primarily dealing with homicide and sacrilege.
- **B.** Most trials in Pericles's time were held in courts presided over by a magistrate, with decisions left to large juries, numbering in the hundreds, selected by lot.
  1. Speakers were allowed a fixed amount of time, measured by a water clock, to deliver their speeches.
  2. Prosecutors and defendants delivered the speeches themselves and were not represented.
  3. It was permitted to employ a speech writer, then deliver the speech written by this professional.

III. A speech written by Demosthenes on behalf of Ariston is a typical example of a legal case from the classical age. The case concerns an assault that took place when Ariston was serving in the Athenian army as a border guard at Panacton.

- **A.** The speech begins with a narrative dealing with the background to the episode. The injured man and the defendants had served at the same time and had a history of disagreements in camp. The defendants were

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often drunk, ignored reprimands from their senior officers, and had assaulted the injured man's servants, even urinating on them.

1. By mentioning his military service, Ariston wins the goodwill of the jury. He presents himself as a man wronged while doing his civic duty.
2. By cataloguing past instances, he reveals a pattern of wrongdoing and shows that he has been patient. This is a legitimate complaint.

B. The next step is to offer a set of depositions demonstrating that Ariston's version of the events that took place while he was on service is accurate. This is followed by an account of the assault that took place in Athens, when Ariston was attacked and beaten by Conon, Ctesias, and Theogenes. He was stripped, punched, and left in a pool of mud, semiconscious, with his lip split and eyes swollen.

1. The depositions include not only eyewitness accounts of the attack but also medical reports on his condition.
2. Ariston suffered a fever, as well as pain in the chest and abdomen, and was treated for a hemorrhage.

C. It is common practice for participants in Athenian trials to call for the clerk of the court to read statute laws aloud. Ariston discusses the general nature of assault and robbery before calling on the clerk to read the relevant laws.

1. By doing so, Ariston links his case more closely to the democratic notion that Athens was characterized by the rule of law.
2. Finding on his behalf is an opportunity for the jury to affirm their democracy and the rule of law.
3. In many ways, Athenian law is less about proof or rules of evidence than presenting a reasonable case that links the speaker's interests to the values of the jury.

D. As in many modern cases, the original matter became immersed in a tangle of depositions, countersuits, and failed arbitration. Ariston was forced, therefore, to recount the legal history of his dispute with Conon and to challenge the legal maneuvers used by Conon to avoid prosecution.

1. Ariston charges that Conon relied on false testimony from his friends to provide him with an alibi.
2. He then resorts to character assassination of his enemy's friends. The charge that they affect Spartan manners is a typical example of an irrelevant detail used to appeal to the jury's prejudices.
3. Ariston introduced more depositions and assertions to suggest that Conon was a member of a gang that flouted convention and stole from graveyards.

E. The speech winds to an end with a direct challenge to Conon and contrasts the piety of Ariston and the reliability of his oath with the untrustworthiness and generally scabrous behavior of his opponent. What had begun as a case of assault becomes, finally, a judgment of the character and sobriety of the two sides.

Suggested Reading:

Freeman, K. *The Murder of Herodes*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does Athenian law employ the principle of self-help?
2. What are the major differences in principle and practice between Athenian and modern legal systems?

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Lecture Eighteen

Democracy and Government

Scope: Because the Athenians of Pericles's day lived in a democracy, it is easy to assume that their political life was like our own. In fact, the Athenian democracy was very different. The emphasis was on rotating offices annually, so that no person could accumulate power. As well, power was divided between members of various groups: Nine archons served as magistrates, not one. Similarly, the Council of Five Hundred actually served as 10 tribal units of 50 men in succession, not 500 all at once. To spread power even more effectively, many key officials were selected by lot from a list of candidates, rather than elected. The effect was to keep any one individual from accruing enough power to become a potential tyrant. The fear of tyranny meant that the Athenians emphasized participation in government by as many people as possible. In the Assembly, any person could respond to the herald's summons, "Who wishes to speak?" In many ways, Pericles was the exception to this pattern. As general, he was eligible for election as often as he wished. His reelection over the course of 15 years allowed him to influence policy in a way that few of his contemporaries could ever hope to match.

Outline

I. Because we live in a democratic society, we often assume that our political system resembles that of the Greeks. In fact, most modern democracies are much closer to the Roman republican system, in which power tended to be exercised by a political elite, the Senate.

A. The voting system of the Roman Republic meant that, in practice, ordinary men had little say in the running of the state. Similarly, the framers of the American Constitution instituted checks and balances to weaken the prospect of direct power being exercised by the people.

B. The democracy enjoyed by Pericles and his contemporaries, however, did not elect representatives. They voted directly on matters ranging from taxes and finance to foreign policy.

II. Athenian democracy was, in some ways, unusual even in the Greek world. The region of Attica was large by the standards of the Greek city-states, but it was dominated by the city, Athens, that grew to become a mercantile and cultural center in the century before Pericles. The growth of democracy was helped not only by Athens's important contributions to the defense of Greece in the Persian Wars, but also by a series of constitutional changes associated with leading men in the 6th century.

A. Around 594 B.C., Solon, the lawgiver, settled disputes between the wealthy and the poor farmers who were lapsing into debt-bondage. The cancellation of this system, which had led to the enslavement of the poor, coincided with the creation of census categories that subtly shifted the emphasis from birth to wealth as the basis for preeminence in Athenian life.

B. Peisistratus the tyrant and his sons ruled Athens throughout the second half of the 6th century and encouraged the rule of law, moderate taxation, regular elections, and the expansion of Athenian trade overseas.

C. By the end of the 6th century, when Cleisthenes championed democracy, he did so as Athens was threatened by civil war between aristocratic factions. The people (or *demos*) rallied to his support, and overnight, the Athenians created a new system that remained the basis of the Athenian democracy for hundreds of years.

III. The basic elements of the Athenian democratic system can be divided into these categories: institutions, procedures, and principles.

A. The institutions of the democracy included a popular assembly, open to all adult male citizens, that met 40 times per year. Another key institution was the Council of Five Hundred, which functioned as a senate but was drawn from 500 Athenians chosen by the 10 tribes that made up the citizen body. Also important were the law courts, with juries numbering in the hundreds. Magistracies included three archons, or rulers, who handled civil and religious law, as well as warfare, and six judges in charge of the various courts of the city.

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B. The procedures that underpinned the democracy included registration on the citizen rolls through the *demes*, or local municipalities, of Athens; service in the Athenian army; the widespread use of secret ballots; and in the case of many elections, the use of sortition, or election by lot, drawing on a preselected list of candidates.

C. The underlying principles were that power should be distributed across as many offices and institutions as possible and among as many men as possible. Accordingly, most magistrates served on boards with colleagues so that no one individual would dominate. Similarly, magistrates and council members rotated out of office after one year to ensure that no one would remain in office long enough to accumulate power.

D. What lay behind the principles of rotation, annuality, and collegiality was a fear of tyranny, the emergence of a single powerful man who could simply override the laws and rule arbitrarily. It is a supreme irony that Pericles, as a general, was able to serve for 15 years consecutively and that he amassed enormous personal power and prestige.

1. Thucydides remarked that in what was nominally a democracy, power was really in the hands of one man.
2. Pericles was as close as Athens came to having an elected tyrant.

IV. We take it for granted that democracy is the best form of government, but in Athens, democracy had fierce critics. It was often claimed that the democracy was little better than mob rule, that it depended on maintaining a costly fleet, and that it encouraged every ordinary man to regard himself as an expert on important issues of policy.

A. Critics claimed that the Athenians were so egalitarian that you couldn't tell slave from freeman in Athens. They all dressed the same way.

B. Many of the first philosophers to write about political science were conservative and oligarchical in their outlook, and their works tend to reflect the intellectual tradition that was hostile to democracy.

1. Plato records Socrates's opinion that the democracy had replaced temperance and justice with fortifications and ship sheds, a dig at the public cost of maintaining the Athenian Empire.
2. A host of pamphlet writers produced a steady stream of invectives aimed at discrediting the democracy.

C. The hostile tradition can even be glimpsed in Thucydides, although he revered Pericles and was himself an Athenian general. When Thucydides discusses a revolution that temporarily replaced the democracy with an oligarchic regime in 411–410, he remarks that at this time, Athens was better ruled than at any other time under the democracy. It is likely that this opposition to the democracy came from those farmers who constituted the backbone of the Athenian hoplite class, the heavily armed infantry who were generally more conservative than the rowers of the navy.

Suggested Reading:

Meier, Christian. *Athens: A Portrait of the City in Its Golden Age*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Thucydides emphasize the temperamental difference between Pericles and Cleon?
2. Is Thucydides's presentation of Pericles to be taken as an accurate description of the man, or is Pericles a voice for Thucydides's own ideas on leadership, in the same way that some have seen Plato's Socrates as a literary portrait?

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Lecture Nineteen
The Age of Moderation

Scope: In the famous funeral oration recorded by Thucydides, Pericles praises the Athenians for the moderation they showed in their daily lives. What did the Athenians mean by moderation, and why was this virtue so highly regarded? The importance of moderation goes back to the Delphic maxim "Nothing in excess," but the concept had a broad application to the political life and culture of Pericles's Athens. Conservatives spoke of temperance as a traditional aristocratic and oligarchic virtue, while decrying the laxity of the democracy. Speakers in the democratic assembly always appealed to the "moderates," the men of the middle way. Each side tried to make moderation a characteristic of its political stance. At the same time, the Athenians liked to think that they were moderate in their pursuit of pleasure and able to balance hard work with a reasonable cultivation of culture. In this respect, they saw themselves as different from the Persians, who were regarded as soft and pleasure-addled, and the Spartans, who emphasized physical strength at the cost of any intellectual or artistic pursuits. Moderation was an ideal for the Athenians, who saw themselves as the very model for how a society should function. This ideal also found expression in the sculpture of the classical age.

Outline

I. The funeral oration was delivered at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War. In this speech, Pericles offers the clearest statement of Athenian values to come down to us. The speech amounts to a declaration of Athenian ideology, and the theme of moderation underscored by Pericles can be traced to a variety of cultural forms in Athenian life, most notably sculpture.

- **A.** Pericles begins by observing that the actions of those who died in defense of Athens should be a surer guarantee of their glory than his words, yet the funeral oration is a time-honored custom, and he vows to follow that custom.
  1. "To speak in due proportion is difficult where grasp of the truth is hardly assured," says Pericles.
  2. He is concerned that people unaware of the facts might think either that he exaggerates or does not assign enough praise to the dead.
- **B.** The speech consciously avoids the usual recounting of the glorious myth-history of Athens. Pericles will not tell fabulous stories of Amazons and even deals with the real past, such as the Persian Wars, in only the broadest outlines. For him, the speech is really an occasion to sing the praises of Athens itself.

II. When Pericles claims, "We have a form of government that does not emulate the practices of our neighbors, setting an example to some rather than imitating others," he makes clear that the funeral oration will really be about what makes Athens unique.

- **A.** He goes on to describe an ideal version of democracy, in which individuals advance through merit, where public service is valued, and where the privacy of the individual is respected.
  1. He links this balanced political system, with its emphasis on equality before the law, to the Athenian taste for games and festivals and the attractive surroundings provided by the city.
  2. Public and private, wealth and hard work, leisure and recreation—all are combined into a single harmonious whole, complemented by the city's importance: "Because of the importance of the city, everything is brought in from every land, and it is our fortune to enjoy things from other people with as much familiarity as what comes from here."
- **B.** The speech includes an extended, explicit critique of Sparta. In contrast to the Spartan habit of driving out foreigners, Athens remains open and accessible. While the Spartans train hard from childhood, the Athenians pursue a more relaxed way of life, yet the men trained this way are just as daring. They exhibit bravery that owes as much to character as law, observes Pericles.
- **C.** It is remarkable that this eulogy to Athens should give such emphasis to aesthetics and taste: "We love beauty while practicing economy, and we love wisdom without being enervated." Here, then, is the ideal citizen: a man ready to fight for his community, a man who appreciates the beautiful, a man who values learning as much as military skill. Pericles links this vision of the balanced citizen to a notion of political participation that values debate and discussion not as empty rhetoric but as the lifeblood of real democracy.

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D. The vision is no doubt idealized, but the confidence underpinning it is remarkable. Pericles claims that Athens is an education for Greece and that each Athenian represents the ideal of the self-sufficient individual, best suited to face any contingency.

III. This set of values, a combination of moderation and self-sufficiency, complemented by a sense of restraint and proportion, is deeply rooted in Greek culture.

A. Such writers as Aristotle and Xenophon were concerned with the self-sufficiency of individuals and states. Xenophon believed that the Athenian man was supposed to feed and clothe his family from the produce of his own land, while Aristotle applied the same thinking to cities.

B. Trade was an acceptable pursuit for the city because through trade, the city acquired the necessities it could not produce on its own. The same concept underlay the fierce independence of the Greek city-states, which sought to ensure their autonomy by treaty or warfare.

IV. We also find these values on display in Greek sculpture. Here, too, there is an emphasis on restraint and moderation presented as the ideals to which the free and noble man aspires.

A. Few sculptures depicted women, but those that do generally emphasize modesty. Goddesses were sometimes shown, such as Athena or Aphrodite joining in battle against the Titans, but the only women commonly portrayed in early Greek sculpture are either figures cut in relief on funeral monuments or the so-called *korai*, or maidens, whose statues seem linked either to their marriage or death. In all cases, they are depicted fully clothed, and extremities of emotion, whether grief or joy, are avoided.

B. Men, on the other hand, appear heroically nude and may be young and athletic or older. The younger *kouroi* are hard to distinguish from statues of Apollo and suggest that the men who dedicated these statues wished to be seen as resembling the god.

1. The statues of the tyrannicides, known from Roman marble copies, grew out of the tradition of the *kouros* but employed the male nude in the service of commemorating a political event: the killing of Hipparchus, son of the tyrant Peisistratus.
2. Despite the bloodthirsty episode behind the sculptures, the figures stride forward purposefully, with no sign of doubt or fear on their faces.
3. Another pair of sculptures found only in the 1970s, the so-called Riace bronzes, may have been sculpted by Phidias, the friend of Pericles. Here, too, the emphasis is on the ideal form, on beauty, and on only the subtlest expressions of emotion.
4. Though majestic, the figures are not over developed or grotesque in the manner of body-builders. Rather, they represent a notion of perfection based on balance.
5. Through subtle differentiations in volume, gesture, and posture, the artist has given expression to an ideal that combines grace, restraint, and sobriety in a way that is not somber or heavy.
6. They truly embody the Periclean notion of moderation.

Suggested Reading:

Boardman, J. *Greek Sculpture: The Classical Period*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1985.

Stewart, A. *Art, Desire and the Body in Ancient Greece*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Questions to Consider:

1. The pedimental statues from the temple of Zeus at Olympia can be read as a battle between human emotions and Olympian calm. Are the same battles fought in the sculpture that survives from Athens?
2. The famous statue of Zeus hurling a thunderbolt captures the figure at the very moment he sets himself to fire his weapon. It is a moment of equilibrium. Is this another way of using sculpture to capture an idealized notion of perfection?

Lecture Twenty

Freedom, Equality, and the Rights of Man

Scope: We associate the Greeks with concepts such as freedom and equality and often assume that our understanding of these ideas derives from the Greeks. A U.S. senator once wrote, for example, "The historical and philosophical roots of the Constitution run very deep. We have been nourished by a long tradition of thought reaching back to the ancient Greeks." But freedom and equality can mean different things to different people. In this lecture, we'll examine how the Athenians in the time of Pericles used such terms as *freedom* and *equality*. What did these mean to them, and how did they reconcile these ideals with the reality of slavery and imperialism? We shall find that democracy was then, as now, a complex phenomenon and that Athenian attitudes to freedom were in many ways quite alien to our own.

Outline

I. In modern society, freedom is usually seen as either a set of rights guaranteed by law or as the absence of unfair restraints. Accordingly, we divide freedom into such areas as freedom of expression, the right to privacy, freedom from search and seizure, and so forth. Freedom is often, in practice, a juggling act. When does your right to free expression become inflammatory? When does your right to carry a weapon become a threat to the community? Thus, modern societies wrestle with freedom, an absolute in theory, which in practice involves competing rights and responsibilities.

II. For the Athenians of Pericles's day, freedom was not a right, neither on its own nor as part of a larger conception of human rights. Instead, freedom was defined by a more immediate and pressing fact of life. Freedom was simply the opposite of slavery. One was either free or existed in some unfree condition. In other words, freedom was not a right but a status.

- **A.** This idea is perhaps best illustrated by examining the Athenian notion of *isegoria*, often translated as "freedom of speech." Although the Athenians used this term a great deal to describe their democracy, they never claimed that it was an inherent right. Instead, it was the mark of a free man that he spoke as he thought and was not constrained, as a slave was.
  - **1.** In Euripides's *The Phoenician Women*, one character remarks that the worst part of exile is that one must play the part of a slave: One cannot speak openly.
  - **2.** Jocasta replies that it is characteristic of a slave that he does not say what he thinks.
- **B.** Slaves existed everywhere in the Greek world, and the supply of slaves was constantly replenished, by war, by capture, and by breeding. Right from the earliest times, Hesiod had maintained that the first things a man needed were a house, a plough ox, and a slave woman to drive it. Homer, too, sees slavery as a possible fate awaiting those who lost in war, especially the womenfolk.
  - **1.** Hector laments the day his wife will be taken to Greece and end up a slave.
  - **2.** On another occasion, he taunts Patroclus for expecting that he would sack Troy and take its women as slaves back to Greece.
  - **3.** Achilles also taunts Aeneas, boasting of the times he has sacked cities and taken women as slave booty.
- **C.** It did occur to some thinkers that men were either free or slave only by convention and that, in nature, they were the same, but Aristotle dismissed such thinking. For him, some men were naturally servile.
  - **1.** Aristotle believed that nature consists of a series of agonistic relations: human versus animal, male versus female, free versus slave. Each of these has a *telos*, a function, that is best served when the superior partner dominates the inferior. Thus, a domesticated animal is better than a wild animal because it has come under the domination of a human master.
  - **2.** The same principle applied more broadly justifies the male domination of the female and the free man's domination of the slave. That is, slavery is not only not a problem, but potentially, it is part of an ideal relationship in which a fully realized man, the free man, who uses his mental capacities, controls the slave, a human tool that is capable of reason but does not use it.
- **D.** If certain people were free and others were slaves, either because of bad luck or because (in the Aristotelian conception) they deserved it, then it was impossible for the Athenians of Pericles's day to

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think of freedom as a universal right. Rather, it was a privilege that they had inherited and were bound to preserve. When this community of free men defined itself, it claimed other qualities, which, like freedom, were not universal but were restricted to the privileged class.

III. In practice, those who shared the privileged status were those free adult males who were descended from Athenian parents and who had served as soldiers or sailors on behalf of Athens. In short, they were citizens. The wealthy might try to assert their special status by calling themselves *kaloi k'agathoi* ("gentlemen"), but the Athenians of more moderate means emphasized *isonomia* ("equality"). This term, like *eleutheria* ("freedom"), did not assert a universal right. Rather, it was the mark of a free man, a full member of the community.

A. When Athenians sang the praises of the men who rid Athens of tyranny, they praised them for making Athens *isonomos*, a city of equality before the law.

B. Despite the democracy's emphasis on equality, these free and equal Athenian citizens were further divided into at least two distinct groups by the time of Pericles. The wealthier, hoplite class was made up of landowners with sufficient land to provide a prosperous income, measured in their ability to equip themselves with hoplite armor. In the one census record in classical times, they constitute 43 percent of the citizen population. Below them, constituting more than half the citizen population, were the owners of small farms (estimated at less than 5 acres). These were subsistence farmers.

1. These poorer citizens were briefly disenfranchised by revolutions in 411–410 and in 403.

2. Their tenacious assertion of citizenship reveals how seriously these ordinary farmers took the idea of equality.

3. On each occasion, they overthrew the oligarchic groups who had tried to disband or modify the democracy.

4. Equality may have been denied to anyone outside the citizen body, but within it was a privilege jealously defended.

IV. If equality was a claim made for inclusion within the citizen body, there were still real threats to the freedom of Athenians and other Greeks. These threats were external. In 490 and again in 480 when the Persians invaded, the democracy of Athens was still only in its infancy. To have withstood the shock of invasion and defeated the Persians were experiences that transformed Athens. The Athenians had guaranteed their own freedom and autonomy, and they remained understandably proud of that feat.

A. We can measure the impact of the victory in Aeschylus's *Persai*, first produced only eight years after Salamis, in 472, with Pericles as producer.

1. The Persian queen Atossa asks about the Athenians: "Who shepherds them? What master do their ranks obey?"

2. The chorus replies, "Master? They are not called slaves to any man."

3. The Greeks cannot contemplate freedom separate from its shadow, slavery; thus, the biggest threat of enslavement, a Persian conquest, necessarily results in a deeper emphasis on Greek freedom.

B. Shortly after this time, we begin to find the term *eleutheria* ("freedom") being used as the name of Athenian ships. Some of these *triremes* were involved in subjugating other Greek cities and bringing them into the Athenian Empire, but the Athenians were clear about what freedom meant to them. They had defeated Persia and secured their own freedom.

C. According to this understanding, freedom was not a matter of personal rights or spiritual integrity, as it would later become in the hands of philosophers and martyrs. Instead, freedom was closely linked to *autonomia*, the ability of a state to be governed by its own laws and free of interference.

1. Ironically, it was the interference of superpowers, such as Athens, that led more Greek communities to assert their autonomy.

2. A further irony is that when states beyond Athens did assert their autonomy in the 4th century, it was the Athenians who were among the first to recognize autonomy as a legitimate claim for an independent state.

D. Although the Athenians did not assert universal rights of freedom or equality, they did introduce these terms to Western discourse and forever connected them to democratic aspirations.

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Suggested Reading:

Ober, J., and C. Hedrick, eds. *Demokratia: A Conversation on Democracies Ancient and Modern*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Hansen, M. H. *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Questions to Consider:

1. How similar are modern and ancient notions of freedom and equality?
2. Citizenship at Athens has been likened to membership in a club. Are freedom and equality the credentials that come with that membership?

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Lecture Twenty-One

Athens after Pericles

Scope: No sooner had the inevitable war between Athens and Sparta broken out than Athens was rocked by two disasters: The city was hit by the plague, and Pericles died. The consequences were catastrophic. With refugees flooding into the city and the dead literally piling up in the streets, Athens was demoralized and plunged into chaos. Perhaps worse, with the death of Pericles, the Athenians lost the one commander best equipped to lead them through the long war of attrition now facing them. In his place, the Athenians were now led by men eager for popularity and quick to seize any opportunity, no matter how reckless. The most notable of these was Cleon, but it was after Cleon's death that the Athenians undertook the most daring campaign of the war: the Sicilian expedition of 415–413. The expedition ended in disaster for the Athenians and ushered in the final phase of the war, during which the Athenians were faced with the logical strategic response to their defensive capabilities: The Spartans built a navy large enough to threaten the Athenian supply of grain from the Black Sea. Although defeat did not come quickly, because the Athenians were superior seamen and defeated larger Spartan navies, nevertheless, by 404, the Spartans were able to choke off Athens's supply line and force the city to capitulate. Was defeat inevitable? Could Athens ever have won? We face the jarring possibility that Pericles, for all of his brilliance as a leader, may have doomed the Athenians to an unwinnable war.

Outline

I. The funeral oration, we have seen, represents Athens at the high point of its power and confidence. Yet the war would end in disaster for the Athenians. Pericles must bear a great deal of responsibility for the war and certainly engineered the Athenians' strategy at its outset.

- **A.** His campaigns had aggressively asserted Athenian power throughout the Aegean, and it was this growing power that scared the Spartans and their allies.
  - **1.** Under Pericles's leadership, the Athenians had suppressed revolts and imposed Athenian garrisons from Euboea to Samos.
  - **2.** Thucydides claims that the growth of Athenian power and the fear it caused in Sparta were the primary causes of the war.
  - **3.** The Corinthians complained just before the war that the Spartans stood back and did nothing while Athenian power continued its inexorable expansion.
- **B.** Pericles's policy seems clear. As Thucydides tells us, Pericles warned the Athenians to keep quiet, look to their fleet, and not extend the empire. As the Spartans were about to invade, he advised the Athenians to move their property into Athens and their herds to Euboea. This has sometimes been seen as a defensive policy: The fleet would supply the city even if the countryside of Athens were pillaged, and the Long Walls to the Piraeus guaranteed that Athens could hold out if put under siege. But the opening campaigns of the war suggest that Pericles had something more aggressive in mind.
  - **1.** In the first campaigning season, the Athenians sent armed forces both to the north, to lay siege to Potidaea, and to the Peloponnese, in an attempt to capture Epidaurus.
  - **2.** There was a Spartan army outside Athens, but the threat to the Peloponnese caused them to withdraw.
  - **3.** At first, Pericles's strategy was successful. The ability of Athens to withstand a Spartan invasion was complemented by the Athenians' ability to take war into their enemy's territory.
- **C.** The turning point was the outbreak of the plague in Athens. This occurred near the beginning of the second year of war, just as the Spartans undertook their second invasion of Attica. Pericles died in the plague, and at one stroke, the balance of power in Athens and Greece shifted. Thucydides, who himself recovered from the plague, signals the importance of the event by juxtaposing his graphic description of the symptoms—fever, thirst, fetid breath, coughing, bile, convulsions, discharges, blisters, ulceration, diarrhea—with the funeral oration in the preceding chapter. By doing so, he alerts us to the dramatic change in Athens's fortunes, as the ideal Athens of Pericles, the wise and cautious, is replaced by the Athens of sickness and death.
  - **1.** Thucydides's account of the plague allows him to demonstrate his ability to write like a scientist or doctor, using the language of Hippocrates and speaking of diagnosis and prognosis.

2. He also uses the physical decay of Athens to suggest the moral breakdown of the city. Funeral customs were ignored, bodies were dumped, funeral pyres were hijacked, and in general, the city collapsed into near chaos.

D. It is tempting to think that after Pericles's death, the Athenians' chances of winning collapsed. Certainly Thucydides, an eyewitness and a participant, believed that Pericles was the key to success. In a famous passage, he claims that in what was nominally a democracy, power was really in the hands of one man. This democratic tyrant presided over the city in peacetime and moderately prepared for war by advocating a prudent policy, emphasizing the Athenians' resources in gold and manpower.

II. Part of Thucydides's case depends on presenting the successors of Pericles as inferior, both morally and intellectually.

A. The next generation of leaders did the opposite of following the Periclean plan. Motivated by personal ambition, his successors tried to curry favor with the people; made strategic mistakes, such as sending an expedition to Sicily; and squandered the advantages of the city.

B. The special object of Thucydides's ire is Cleon, the son of Cleaenetus. Two episodes demonstrate how Thucydides saw Cleon as an example of the failure of leadership.

1. In 428, Mytilene on Lesbos revolted from Athens. The Athenians succeeded in putting down the revolt, then held a public debate on the fate of the city. Cleon came forward and argued for the execution of the entire male population and the enslavement of the women and children. When the Athenians experienced a change of heart, Cleon came before them and upbraided them for what he perceived as their weakness. "Punish them now," he said, "as they deserve, and show the other allies by a clear example that death will be the penalty for anyone who revolts."
2. On another occasion, Cleon humiliated the Athenian generals, claiming that he could easily accomplish the capture of an island held by the Spartans if he were given the command. He was successful, but Thucydides presents Cleon's victory as the cause of the Athenians' decision to reject a peace offer from Sparta.

III. It was in Sicily that the Athenians most completely abandoned the defensive policies of Pericles. Prompted by greed, the Athenians succumbed to an invitation from the people of Segesta to send an army to Sicily, thereby opening a second front in their war against the Spartans. The two leaders most prominent in the decision to mount an expedition to Sicily were Alcibiades and Nicias, who represent the opposite ends of the Athenian character.

A. Alcibiades was rash and hotheaded. Boasting of his Olympic victories and his expensive tastes, he claimed that all of these had brought credit to Athens.

B. Nicias, like Pericles, represents reason and caution, but perhaps errs too much in that direction.

C. Alcibiades never reached Sicily, being disgraced and tried in absentia after a mysterious desecration of statues in Athens was blamed on him.

D. Nicias did sail to Sicily, but his caution led him to a series of fatal strategic errors, culminating in the destruction of the Athenian forces.

IV. Much of the Thucydidean narrative of the Peloponnesian War, therefore, seems to bear out his argument that the Periclean policy was the right one for Athens and that the defeat of Athens in 404 was the result of the incompetence of Pericles's successors. However, other factors deserve consideration.

A. Pericles's policy depended on the impregnable defense of Athens. Although the walls of Athens were strong and the fleet was dominant, this plan also relied on the Spartans ravaging the land only sporadically and returning to Sparta. Alcibiades, after fleeing Athens and joining the Spartans, suggested that they seize Decelea in Attica and leave a permanent garrison on Athenian soil. In one blow, the Athenians lost control over much of their own territory.

B. The Athenians had often fought campaigns in five or six theaters of war in any given season. Some scholars have suggested that to expect them not to take on campaigns beyond the Peloponnese was unrealistic.

C. The plague was a factor that no one could have predicted or prepared for. Its effects, however, were exacerbated by the crowding in the city of Athens, brought about by the flight of refugees into the city.

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D. Periclean policy was based on the notion of Athenian superiority at sea. Although this was true at the outset of the war, in time, the Spartans constructed large fleets that ranged over the Aegean, thus challenging Athenian maritime strength and weakening Athens's hold over its allies.

E. Pericles's policy was also based on an understanding of the Spartans, which saw them as slow and unadventurous. Over the course of the war, however, enterprising and resourceful commanders, such as Brasidas and Gylippus, proved more than a match for their Athenian counterparts.

F. Finally, the duration of the war, from 431 to 404, shows that even without Pericles, the Athenians were capable of recovering from many disasters, in the form of the plague, the disaster in Sicily, the defection of allies, and the loss of Attic territory, without immediately losing the war.

G. Pericles's reputation grew, thanks to the fact that his memory was revered by Thucydides.

Suggested Reading:

Meier, Christian. *Athens: A Portrait of the City in Its Golden Age*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998.

Munn, M. *The School of History: Athens in the Age of Socrates*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should we privilege Thucydides's portrait of Pericles, given that it is the work of an eyewitness?
2. Was Pericles's war policy a realistic approach to the conflict between Athens and Sparta?

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Lecture Twenty-Two

Socrates and the Sophists

Scope: The defeat of Athens had enormous repercussions beyond simply the political life of the Athenians. This emerges with clarity in an examination of the career of Socrates. Before the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, Socrates was thought of as an absent-minded professor. He was the Athenians' own version of the new breed of intellectual, known as the *sophist*. Though he did not take pay for his teaching, to most Athenians, Socrates was just like Protagoras and Gorgias, men who taught moral philosophy, linguistics, and eristics (the study of debate). Aristophanes, for example, shows him swinging from a basket and using hopeless academic jargon to create an exotic aura about his intelligence. All this would have been harmless, but for the fact that Athens underwent a period of upheaval after the defeat by Sparta. First, a repressive, pro-Spartan regime was installed; then, after a short civil war, the democracy was restored. Although the official policy was amnesty (literally, a "non-remembering" of misdeeds during the time of trouble), there were still many who had suffered when the democracy was suspended. Unfortunately, Socrates was the teacher of some of the men responsible for the suspension, and his trial should be seen as an act of political score-settling. Events at the end of the 5th century transformed Socrates from a harmless professor into a political scapegoat.

Outline

I. The trial of Socrates grows out of a set of crosscurrents in the intellectual history of Athens in the late 5th century. The first of these currents was the emergence of a class of intellectuals known as the *sophists*.

- **A.** Such men as Protagoras of Abdera, Hippias of Elis, and Gorgias of Leontini came to Athens to teach classes in a variety of disciplines, ranging from linguistics to moral philosophy. Prominent in their teaching was an emphasis on rhetoric and eristics, or the systematic study of argument.
- **B.** In the minds of many, these intellectuals were close to charlatans. They relied on fanciful critical language, accepted money for their teaching, and undermined traditional morality by subjecting everything to questioning.

II. A second current feeding into the phenomenon of Socrates's trial was a renewed interest in piety and religion.

- **A.** On the one hand, there was a fresh wave of religious fervor in Athens in the later 5th century. The state religion was concerned with regulating the calendar of sacrifices in order to guarantee the continuing prosperity of the state. In addition, sacrilege, such as the profaning of the mysteries, was punished by exile and execution. New gods who might add to the prosperity and health of Athens, such as Bendis and Asclepius, were welcomed to the state.
- **B.** On the other hand, some of the sophists continued in the agnostic tradition of Greek thinking. "As to the gods, I know not whether they exist or do not exist," claimed Protagoras. Sophists, therefore, could contribute to anxieties about religious belief exactly at a time when many were turning more to religion in the anxious period of the Peloponnesian War.

III. The third factor concerned the political conditions in Athens at the end of the 5th century.

- **A.** In 403–404 B.C., Athens finally succumbed to the Spartans and surrendered. Following their defeat, the Athenians were humiliated by the suspension of democracy. The fleet and the walls of Athens were both destroyed.
- **B.** The Thirty Tyrants who ruled Athens were installed by Sparta. They seized the property of citizens, especially wealthy *metics* living in Athens. After only a few months in power, they were opposed by a democratic uprising. Loyal democrats assembled north and south of the city, marching on Athens and eventually driving out the Thirty and their supporters.

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IV. At the intersection of all these currents stands Socrates. He was seen by many as a sophist. Whether this is accurate or not—and given that he took no pay for his teaching, it probably isn't—he was associated with the new philosophy.

- **A.** One of the funniest exchanges to occur on the stage in Pericles's day was the interview recorded in Aristophanes's *Clouds* between the Athenian everyman, Strepsiades, and the philosopher Socrates. The portrayal of Socrates, even if affectionate, reveals many of the biases of the Athenian audience. Socrates is lampooned as a windbag, full of his own importance and prone to using the jargon of the sophists.
  - **1.** When Strepsiades first sees Socrates, he is hanging from a basket above the stage.
  - **2.** Asked what he is doing, Socrates airily replies that he is mixing his cognitive powers with the ether, a send-up of sophistic notions of *nous* (intelligence) and *aether* (the upper airs).
- **B.** Socrates also worried those Athenians who felt that religion was under fire.
  - **1.** He spoke of a *daimonion*, or spirit, who guided him, and he appears to have a mystical streak that set him apart from others.
  - **2.** In the hands of his accusers, this personal piety could be used against him. The charge against Socrates was framed as follows: "Socrates commits the offense of not acknowledging the gods acknowledged by the state and of introducing other new divinities. He commits further the offense of corrupting the young."
- **C.** Socrates also had the misfortune of being the teacher of such men as Critias, one of the leaders of the antidemocratic Thirty. Accordingly, he could be seen by many as the intellectual instigator of the antidemocratic movement in Athens.
  - **1.** Socrates had refused to sanction collective trials earlier when serving as a councilor; thus, he may have already been cast as an enemy of the *demos* before his trial.
  - **2.** He had also served the city as a soldier and office holder but chose to defend himself in a manner that was provocative, exposing his opponents as fools.
- **D.** We know little about Socrates's philosophy beyond what Plato records for us, and even then, it is hard to distinguish between the ideas of Socrates and those of Plato. With his death, however, Socrates was able to demonstrate one of the central tenets of his belief, namely, that death need not be feared.

Suggested Reading:

Meier, Christian. *Athens: A Portrait of the City in Its Golden Age*. New York: Henry Holt, 1998.

Plato. *The Apology*. Trans. by Hugh Tredennick. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993.

Munn, M. *The School of History: Athens in the Age of Socrates*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

Questions to Consider:

1. In the *Apology*, how does Socrates justify the activities that his opponents equate with sacrilege: denying the gods and corrupting the young?
2. What distinguishes Socrates from the philosophers and teachers conventionally called sophists?

Lecture Twenty-Three

Plato

Scope: The same events that brought about the death of Socrates also molded the career of his star student, Plato. Plato witnessed the defeat of Athens and the turmoil surrounding the brief civil war. For him, the execution of Socrates, whom he regarded as the best and wisest man he had ever met, was proof that politics had been hijacked by morally corrupt men of inferior intellect and judgment. Accordingly, he quit Athens for a time, going to Sicily and the court of Dionysius at Syracuse before returning to Athens to teach. His career had two overarching goals: to vindicate the life of his mentor and to explore the trajectories of Socrates's philosophy further. It is often difficult to know where Socrates stops and Plato begins, especially given that Socrates is the protagonist in so many of Plato's dialogues. To achieve that first goal, Plato wrote movingly of the trial of Socrates, in the *Apology*, and set some of his most moving pieces in the prison where Socrates faced execution. The *Phaedo*, for example, explores the nature of the soul and the question of death even as Socrates is given the cup of hemlock that will seal his doom. Although Socrates did not himself write down his philosophy, Plato's exploration of his ideas suggests that there are two major tenets to their joint work: The first is that, beyond this world of imperfect copies, there lies a perfect world of ideal forms, and the second is that all virtues—goodness, piety, truth, courage, and the like—are, in essence, the same. Together, Socrates and Plato provide Western thought with a moral compass and a metaphysical outlook that sustain and define us.

Outline

I. In a lengthy passage in Letter VII, Plato describes how, as a young man, he assumed that he would go into a life of politics. That assumption was confounded when civil war broke out in Athens in 403 B.C. Plato was disgusted by the prevailing wickedness of the oligarchic regime that seized power for nine months, but the democracy's victory in 403 did not improve matters.

- **A.** Socrates was tainted by association with the oligarchs—one of their leaders, Critias, had been his student—and in 399, Socrates was charged with impiety and corruption of the young. He was executed.
- **B.** The restored democracy had publicly vowed not to remember crimes committed during the reign of the Thirty, but the charges against Socrates were clearly politically motivated. The trial of Socrates, whom Plato called "the best man then living," could only add to Plato's disillusionment.
- **C.** His decision was to go into self-imposed exile. Although he did not characterize the coup of the 30 oligarchs as an attack on democratic liberty, he plainly felt that both sides in the civil war had betrayed goodness, as personified by Socrates. The rest of Plato's career can be read as an attempt to exonerate Socrates's reputation and to explore his philosophy.

II. The first of these aims is most clearly demonstrated in the *Apology*. Socrates plays the role of the good citizen. He does this by actively participating in his own defense right up to the sentencing phase. (Convicted defendants facing execution were more likely to flee than risk the alternative.) Further, he bases his defense on a summation of his career, in which he argues that his questioning has always served the higher civic purpose of unmasking his fellow citizens' ignorance.

- **A.** It was a defense strategy that was as irritating as the behavior that had gotten him into trouble in the first place and deliberately so. He claims that his exposure of others' foolishness was a response to the Delphic oracle, which had confirmed that no one was wiser than Socrates. His actions, therefore, are religiously sanctioned and civically motivated.
- **B.** Plato deals explicitly with the execution of Socrates in two dialogues: the *Crito* and the *Phaedo*. In the former, Socrates imagines the laws of Athens as a single voice advising him on how to act when faced with the condemnation of the court. In making the laws of Athens an interlocutor, as it were, Plato reflects the first glimmerings of a concept of the state, a phenomenon that is greater than simply the Athenian community. The dilemma Socrates faces concerns his obligations, not his freedoms.
- **C.** In the *Phaedo*, Plato's Socrates tackles the question of how to face death. Here, the issue of civic obligation is not central to the disquisition. Instead, the underlying theme is that the search for goodness is

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a moral imperative and that death need not be feared because it is no more than a release of the body from its mortal shell. The image of the shackled prisoner, most famously employed in the allegory of the cave, is also used in the *Phaedo* (83a) to suggest the liberation offered by philosophy.

III. In a series of dialogues not set around the time of Socrates's death, Plato carried out the second part of his project, to explore and extend the work of his master. Socrates had famously believed in the unity of virtues; courage, justice, and goodness were all refractions of a single virtue, according to Socrates, and Plato explored the nature of these ethical qualities in a series of beautifully written dialogues featuring Socrates as the main interlocutor.

- **A.** Chief among these works is the *Republic*, a 10-book treatise dealing with the question of justice.
  - **1.** Having first dealt with popular and erroneous conceptions of justice, Socrates begins to outline an ideal state and the manner of education that would bring it about.
  - **2.** This section is famous for Plato's decision to banish poetry from the ideal state, a proposition that some see as evidence for a deeply pro-Spartan outlook and others regard as humorous and ironic.
- **B.** The midsection of the work is no less controversial, arguing for a form of primitive communism and the disbanding of the family. Wealth will be shared; children, raised in common; and philosophy, the only guiding principle.
- **C.** Toward the end of the work, Plato deals with the enlightenment of the guardians, the protectors of this ideal state. Here, Plato gives full vent to the transcendental side of his philosophy, especially the famous theory of forms. According to this theory, the world in which we live is merely a set of imitations of the perfect world beyond the apprehension of our senses.
  - **1.** Parts of this philosophy are consistent with the earlier traditions of Greek philosophy, which explored the essential unity of the cosmos.
  - **2.** It is difficult to know how much of this philosophy goes back to Socrates. It seems to be a theory more fully articulated by Plato himself.
- **D.** The entire effect of the *Republic* is unsettling.
  - **1.** If read straight, the work would seem to be an indictment of the world of the Greek city-states. It also seems to reflect the influence of Sparta, or at least the Athenian image of Sparta, as a well-ordered society. There are also strong overtones of the philosophy of Pythagoras, who demonstrated a knack for combining a mystical philosophy with an actual planned community (in southern Italy, visited by Plato during his travels).
  - **2.** Yet the humor and grace of the work are at odds with the deliberate and humorless proposals advocated, leading many to see the work, not as a utopia but a dystopia, a warning against the attempt to create a joyless, fixed society in which philosophy has become tyranny. If that reading is correct, then the *Republic* may be more relevant today than at any time since it was written.

Suggested Reading:

Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. by B. Jowett. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1997.

Questions to Consider:

1. Should the *Republic* be read as a criticism of contemporary Greek life in the early 4th century?

2. Are there clues in the text that undercut the apparent message of the *Republic*? In other words, is it to be read seriously or as a parody of political science and utopian thinking?

Lecture Twenty-Four
An Elegy to Athens

Scope: At a time when cultures appear to be moving toward more open conflict, it is worth asking what our connections are with the Athenians. Do they deserve our continuing attention? Should we venerate them, or do we put on a pedestal those who were slave owners, imperialists, and finally, killers? Is there a balance sheet according to which we can evaluate the Athenians and our debt to them?

Outline

I. There is no point hiding the very negative aspects of classical Athens. A persuasive case can be made that the classical democracy was like an exclusive men's club. If you were a member, life was pretty good. If you were not, then all the talk of the glory that was Greece or the shining city on the hill would seem pretty hollow. There were four groups on whom the democracy relied for its survival: slaves, women, foreigners, and allies.

- **A.** The most obvious victims of this social and political system were the slaves. The work done by them in the fields, the households, and especially, the mines clearly provided the labor, produce, wealth, and free time that permitted citizens to participate in the democracy.
- **B.** Women's lives were rigidly controlled, with clear separations between the spheres of female and male activity and in the rights, privileges, and prerogatives of citizen women, courtesans, mistresses, prostitutes, and slaves.
- **C.** Few foreigners were ever given citizenship, though they paid taxes and were expected to serve the state in ways that paralleled the commitments and responsibilities of citizens.
- **D.** The allies of Athens were transformed over the course of the 5th century into subjects.

II. There is also no point ignoring what was good. The Athenians themselves were clear-eyed about their empire, and we should also recognize its flaws and evaluate the democratic achievement in light of these.

- **A.** Democracy itself is an extraordinary accomplishment. Though aristocratic in temper, Athenian culture nevertheless managed to produce a system of government that embraced notions of equality before the law and the sovereign power of the *demos*.
- **B.** In practice, the democracy tenaciously defended the inclusion of as many Athenian men as possible. Surrounded by a world of kings, aristocrats, tyrants, and oligarchs, the Athenians did not concede to any pressure, internal or external, to give up the democracy.
- **C.** The culture of the age of Pericles exhibits an honesty that is breathtaking, especially in stage plays that commiserate with the weak, the defeated, and the powerless.
- **D.** It is a culture that emphasizes respect for the gods and pride in the accomplishments of humans, with a particular concern for moderation and introspection.
- **E.** It also placed a premium on inquiry, whether in scientific speculation, moral discourse, or the writing of history. It is a restless, energetic culture that impresses us with its sheer vitality.

III. If we are going to judge Athens, then, what criteria do we use? We cannot fairly compare it to any modern nation, because it is vastly different in scale and historical experience. We can judge it only on its own terms, compared to other ancient societies.

- **A.** If we accept the Athenians of Pericles's day with both their flaws and their accomplishments, we may, therefore, ask what our relationship is to the Greeks.
- **B.** We can glorify them as the founders of Western culture, but this often ignores the connections between the Greeks and the earlier cultures of the ancient Mediterranean, to whom we are also related. It also ignores some of the significant differences between ourselves and the Athenians.
- **C.** It may be that the connection between the Athenians and ourselves is more like a family relationship, fraught with tension and anxiety but simply undeniable.

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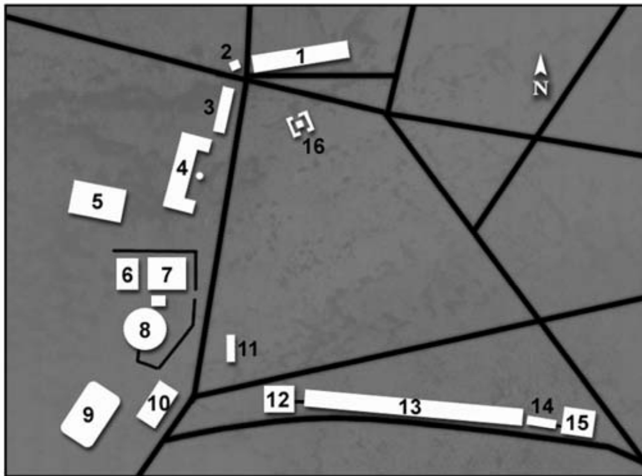
D. The Greeks are, culturally speaking, our models and, in some ways, our great-grandparents. We are descended from them, we are like them, but we are also different. By knowing them better, we know ourselves better.

IV. In the world after September 11th, we have come to realize that there are those who loathe and despise Western culture. If that is so, then it is worth asking what is valuable about the idea of Western culture. The Greeks demand that we learn about our own history, the roots that connect us to the past, the avenues by which the past has become the present. If our culture has real meaning and if notions of justice, freedom, and equality are to be a reality, then we cannot live in a vacuum in which history is forgotten. We must be aware of the past and engage with the living dialogue that is history.

Question to Consider:

1. Do the Greeks deserve the privileged place we accord them in our culture?



The *Agora:* the ancient marketplace

1. Painted Stoa
2. Crossroads Sanctuary
3. Royal Stoa
4. Temple of Zeus
5. Temple of Hephaestus
6. Old Bouleuterion
7. New Bouleuterion
8. Tholos
9. State Prison
10. Strategeion
11. Monument of Eponymous Heroes
12. Heliaia
13. South Stoa
14. Fountain House
15. Mint
16. Altar of the Twelve Gods

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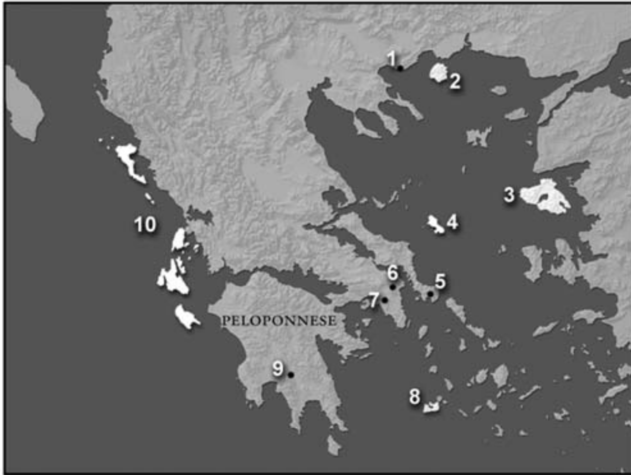

Ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C.

1. Eion
2. Thasos
3. Lesbos
4. Scyros
5. Carystos
6. Marathon
7. Athens
8. Melos
9. Sparta
10. Ionian Islands

Timeline

776 .... First Olympic games.

c. 750 .... Beginning of Greek colonization of Sicily, Italy, and the Black Sea.

c. 725 .... Homer's poems written down.

594/3 .... Solon's archonship in Athens.

545–28/7 .... Peisistratus's tyranny at Athens.

525 .... Cleisthenes's archonship.

510 .... Expulsion of Hippias, son of Peisistratus.

508/7 .... Democratic reforms of Cleisthenes.

490 .... Battle of Marathon.

480 .... Battles of Thermopylae and Salamis.

479 .... Battle of Plataea.

478/7 .... Dismissal of Pausanias; formation of the Delian League.

476/5 .... Persians expelled from Thrace.

473 .... Carystos compelled to join the Delian League.

472 .... First production of Aeschylus's *Persians*.

470 .... Revolt of Naxos from Delian League.

468 .... Defeat of Persians at the Battle of the Eurymedon River.

465–63 .... Revolt of Thasos.

464–61 .... Earthquake in Sparta and ensuing Helot Revolt.

461 .... Ostracism of Cimon; democratic reforms of Ephialtes; pay for jury service.

460 .... Athenian campaigns in Egypt and Cyprus.

460–445 .... First Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta; construction of "Long Walls" from Athens to Piraeus begins.

457 .... Cimon recalled from exile.

454 .... Defeat of Athenian forces in Egypt.

c. 454 .... Transfer of Delian League treasury to Athens.

450 .... Death of Cimon in Cyprus; completion of the Long Walls.

449 .... Pericles leads 1,000 Athenian settlers to the Chersonese.

447–438 .... Construction of the Parthenon.

445 .... Thirty Years' Peace between Athens and Sparta.

443–429 .... Pericles reelected Athenian general each year.

442 .... First production of Sophocles's *Antigone*.

440 .... Revolt of Samos; suppressed by Athenians led by Pericles.

437–432 .... Construction of the Propylaea.

431–404 .... Peloponnesian War.

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430 .... Plague in Athens.

429 .... Second season of plague; death of Pericles.

428 .... Birth of Xenophon.

427 .... Birth of Plato.

421 .... Peace of Nicias.

421–408 .... Construction of the Erechtheum; Sicilian expedition.

411 .... First production of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*.

411–10 .... Oligarchic revolution at Athens.

404 .... Defeat of Athens; rule of the Thirty Tyrants.

403 .... Restoration of democracy at Athens.

399 .... Trial of Socrates.

359 .... Philip II becomes king of Macedon.

355–322 .... Public career of Demosthenes.

338 .... Battle of Chaironeia; defeat of the southern Greeks by Philip II of Macedon.

Glossary

Note: Many key Greek names and terms have come into English through Latin, and these familiar forms are retained in these booklets. For example, the spelling *Pericles* is used instead of *Perikles*, and the Latinized form *Erechtheum* is used instead of the more correct *Erechtheion*. Some terms, however, are not familiar even in their Latin forms; in these cases, the booklets follow current academic practice and keep the terms closer to the Greek. Hence, the spelling *metronomoi* is used, not *metronomi*. Some people refer to this practice as being consistently inconsistent. Unfortunately, clarity and consistency don't always go hand-in-hand, and where there is a choice to be made, the former is preferred here to the latter.

Acropolis: Great outcrop of rock in the middle of Athens on which were built the major temples and sanctuaries of the city, including the Parthenon.

Agora: The marketplace and heart of ancient Athens.

Amphidromia: Ritual acceptance of a newborn child into the family.

Anchisteia: Extended family group consisting of cousins.

Anthesteria: A wine festival at which evil spirits were expelled from the household.

Apatouria: Religious festival at which boys were introduced to the *phratry* (religious brotherhood) of their fathers.

Archon: Title of the chief Athenian magistrate, elected to serve for one year only.

Banausia: Greek term for manufacturing and artisanal work but also synonymous with vulgarity.

Boule: The Council of Five Hundred, which supervised the Ecclesia's business.

Bouleuterion: Council house located on the western side of the agora.

Brauron: Rural sanctuary of Artemis where girls participated in rites marking the transition from childhood to marriageability.

Carystos: Euboean city compelled to join the Delian League (473 B.C.).

Catharsis: Aristotle's term, meaning "cleansing," used to describe the effect of watching tragedy.

Ceramicus: Potter's Field, a district of Athens outside the agora given over to graves and funeral monuments, including the Public Tomb.

Chaironeia: Battle in central Greece (338 B.C.) in which Philip II of Macedon defeated the Greeks and established the Macedonian domination of Greece.

Delian League: The alliance of Greek states originally designed to avenge the destruction caused by the Persian Wars; it gradually transformed into an Athenian empire.

Demes: Villages or municipalities in the territory of Attica, constituting the basic unit of the Athenian democracy.

Demosion sema: Public tomb, located in the Ceramicus district, where remains of the Athenian war dead were kept.

Dexiosis: The handshake, a characteristic gesture depicted on Athenian funerary monuments.

Dionysia: Annual festival to Dionysus at which dramatic competitions were held.

Dipylon vases: Larger amphorae used as funerary markers in 8th-century Athens.

Ecclesia: The assembly of all adult male citizens in Athens.

Ecphora: Formal procession in which the body of the dead was taken from the household to the burial site.

Eleutheria: Freedom, especially in the sense of an entire community's freedom from the domination of a foreign power.

Epikleros: Technical expression for a girl who has inherited an estate and who was usually compelled to marry a near relative.

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Epics: Poems, composed orally and transmitted over generations, that told of the deeds of heroes, especially in relation to the Trojan War.

Erechtheum: Sanctuary on the north side of the Acropolis named in honor of the first king of Athens, Erechtheus, but housing many cults, including the most revered cult of Athena.

Genos: Clan, often serving as the exclusive group at the heart of a *phratry*.

Helots: The enslaved population of Sparta and nearby Messenia.

Hetaera: A courtesan, higher in status than a prostitute, perhaps best compared to Japanese geisha.

Hippeis: The second rank in Solon's census system.

Hoplite: Heavily armed Greek infantry soldier.

Isonomia: Equality before the law, a claim linked to democracy.

King archon: Chief priest of all Athenian state cults.

Kouros: Life-size statue of a young man, commonly dedicated to Apollo.

Laurium: District south of Athens rich in silver and extensively mined during the 5th century.

Liturgies: Expenses of dramatic productions and naval costs taken on by the rich on behalf of the state.

Marathonomachoi: The veterans of the battle of Marathon (490 B.C.).

Metics: Resident aliens living in Athens.

Metronomoi: Officials responsible for ensuring the accuracy of weights and measures in the agora.

Metroon: Originally the building in which the Boule met, later used to house the archives of Athens.

Nous: Intellect or intelligence; sophistic term for the rational principle at work in the cosmos.

Oikos: The household, including the family, dependents, slaves, and property.

Ostracism: The expulsion for 10 years of unpopular politicians or generals, named for the pottery shards (*ostraca*) on which candidates' names were written.

Paideia: The training or education of the young, including physical training and lessons in poetry.

Panathenaea: Yearly festival celebrating the patron goddess of Athens. Every four years, a more elaborate festival took place, with athletic and poetic contests.

Parthenon: Magnificent temple built in honor of Athena on the Acropolis at Athens; part of a building program financed by the treasury of the Delian League.

Peloponnese: Name applied to the large portion of southern Greece beyond the Isthmus of Corinth.

Peloponnesian War: Catastrophic conflict between Athens and Sparta (431–404/3 B.C.).

Pentakosiomedimnoi: The super rich of Athens, whose property yielded more than 500 measures of produce (grain, oil, and wine combined).

Peplos: Robe woven for Athena and presented to the goddess at the Great Panathenaea every four years.

Phratry: Religious brotherhood to which most Athenian men belonged.

Propylaea: Monumental gateway leading to the Acropolis.

Prothesis: Laying out and preparation of the dead for burial.

Royal Stoa: Portico located on the western side of the agora used to house and display the laws of Solon.

Sacred Way: Term applied to any road used as part of a ceremonial procession in honor of a god but particularly used in Athens to refer to the track crossing the agora and leading up to the Acropolis.

Salamis: Naval battle of 480 B.C. in which the fleet of Xerxes was destroyed.

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Satrapies: Provinces of the Persian Empire, often enjoying great independence and usually ruled by friends and relations of the Persian king, known as satraps.

Sicilian expedition: Athenian naval expedition to Sicily from 415 to 413, ending in the capture and destruction of Athenian forces.

Sophists: Professional teachers and philosophers who came to Athens in the second half of the 5th century. They accepted payment and lectured on a variety of topics: linguistics, metaphysics, but especially rhetoric and eristics, the study of argumentation.

Stoa: Any rectangular building with a solid back wall but with columns along the front side and the interior, providing relief from the weather in both summer and winter.

Strategeion: Meeting house of the generals of Athens, located in the southwestern corner of the agora.

Syracuse: Largest and wealthiest of the Greek city-states in Sicily, it was invaded by the Athenians during the Peloponnesian War.

Syssitia: The public mess-halls to which Spartan men belonged.

Thasos: Major Athenian ally, source of timber for the fleet, and an early defector from the Delian League (465–462 B.C.).

Thermopylae: A narrow pass between the cliffs and the sea in central Greece where 300 Spartans denied the Persian army entry to southern Greece for three days in 480 B.C.

Thetes: The fourth and lowest rank in Solon's census system.

Trireme: Swift warships powered by sail or by three banks of rowers.

Trittyes: Literally, "thirds." Each Cleisthenic tribe consisted of three such units, each drawn from a different region of Attica.

Tyrant: A ruler neither elected nor bound by constitutional law.

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Biographical Notes

Aeschylus: Eldest of the three great Athenian tragedians, remembered for his thunderous poetry.

Alcibiades: Controversial and flamboyant Athenian politician of the generation after Pericles.

Alcmaeonidae: A leading Athenian family whose members included Cleisthenes and, later, on his mother's side, Pericles.

Antigone: Heroine of Sophocles's play dealing with conflicting obligations to the family and state.

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

Aspasia: Mistress of Pericles and mother of his son, but the subject of brutal invective directed at her and her supposed influence over Periclean policy.

Cimon: Son of Miltiades, the Athenian victor at Marathon; leading statesman of Athens in the generation after the Persian Wars.

Cleisthenes: Constitutional reformer whose innovations included the Council of Five Hundred, the 10 tribes, and the system of *demes* and *trittyes*.

Cleon: the leading Athenian politician from circa 429–422 B.C.; regarded by Thucydides as a violent rabble rouser.

Darius I: Persian king responsible for the Persian invasion of 490 B.C.; his army was defeated at Marathon in the same year.

Dionysus: God of ecstasy; known to the Greeks as the "One Who Binds and Releases." Tragedy was performed in his honor.

Eileithyia: Goddess of childbirth, often assimilated to Artemis.

Ephialtes: Radical reformer of the mid-5th century who transferred power from the old Areopagus Council to the people.

Euripides: Youngest of the three great Athenian tragedians and sometimes charged in antiquity with misogyny.

Hephaestus: Patron god of metalworkers, whose temple overlooks the agora from the west.

Leonidas: Spartan king at the time of the Persian invasions, who died heroically at Thermopylae (480 B.C.).

Mardonius: Persian commander of the army of Xerxes.

Medea: Heroine of Euripides's play; abandoned by Jason and driven to kill her children in revenge.

Miltiades: Athenian general at Marathon, father of Cimon.

Neaera: Wife of Stephanus and the subject of a lengthy legal speech detailing the rigid boundaries between legitimacy and illegitimacy of birth and citizenship in Athens.

Nicias: Unwilling and unlucky Athenian commander during the Sicilian expedition (415–413 B.C.).

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

Pericles: Leading Athenian politician and general from circa 450–429 B.C. Dominant figure in Athenian politics and culture in the 5th century B.C.

Phidias: Sculptor of the great gold and ivory statue of Athena in the Parthenon and friend of Pericles.

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

Prometheus: Hero of Aeschylus's play dealing with the relationship between gods and men, as well as resistance to arbitrary rule.

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

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

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

Sophocles: Second of the three great Athenian tragedians and author of *Antigone*.

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, son of Darius, whose invasion of Greece in 480–479 B.C. was defeated at Salamis and Plataea.

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