

GREECE AND ROME



Introduction

Two nations on the Mediterranean Sea achieved greatness. Greece came first; Rome followed. Much of Western civilization today has been strongly influenced by the things these people learned and did many years ago.

The people of these two civilizations had many great ideas. They also made some mistakes. When you are reading about these people, watch for both. Learning about mistakes that the Greeks and Romans made 2,000 years ago might keep us from repeating them.

The Early Greeks

When trading ships sailed from Egypt and Phoenicia, they often stopped at the island of *Crete*. This large island in the Mediterranean Sea was where one of the greatest nations in the ancient world began. Ships from Crete carried goods to other settlements along the Mediterranean. The sailors from Crete observed the customs and ways of other nations. They remembered useful ideas and took them home.

It wasn't long before the people of Crete developed their own kind of writing. They learned to make *pottery* and used new ideas to improve it. They learned to work with gold and ivory. Their jewelry was popular everywhere.

Just as the Phoenicians had done, the people of Crete started colonies around the Mediterranean. Some of their colonies were

in Greece, which later became the center of one of the greatest civilizations in the world. The people of Crete did well trading and prospered.

Most good things seem to end, however. For Crete, the end came when the stronger navy from Greece defeated the navy of Crete. By about 1000 B.C., the *Dorians* from Greece were using iron weapons and were very strong.

Think About It:

Why did Crete have a large navy but almost no army?

Just like Sumer, Crete and Greece began with city governments. The mountains of Greece divided the country into small areas. Each city had its own government and army. Some Greek rulers were kind, and some were harsh. Many Greek rulers forced the farmers to pay high taxes. Those who couldn't pay sometimes lost their land and were sold as slaves.

Some Greek states, such as *Sparta*, became very warlike. Men and boys in Sparta were trained to be soldiers able to withstand great hardships. Boys began military training when they were seven and stayed in the army until they were about thirty. The word "Spartan" today means "disciplined" or simple to the point of being uncomfortable.

Athens, another Greek state, started a kind of government called a *democracy*. Every voter helped rule the city. Free men over eighteen years old could vote. Women, children, and

slaves couldn't vote in Athens. Even so, the government of Athens was something like today's democratic government in the United States.

Greece's Golden Age

About 500 B.C., Greece went to war against Persia. Athens eventually defeated Persia and began to change in a number of ways. The result is known as the *Golden Age* of Greece.

Nearly 200 city-states turned to Athens for leadership. Just as Sumer had brought city-states together, so did Greece. Athens protected smaller city-states and for a time was the center of one of the most advanced civilizations the world had ever known.

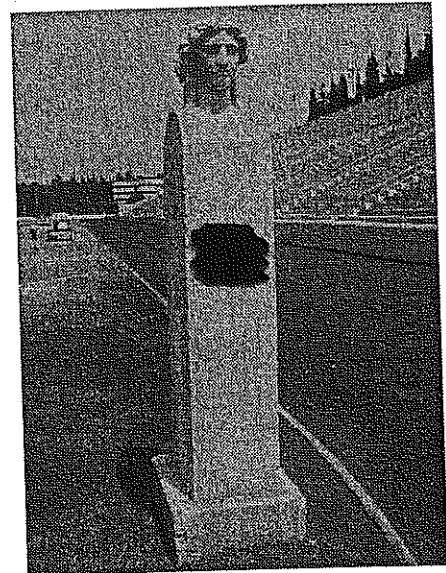
Laws were written out, and everyone knew what they were. People who owed money could not be sold as slaves. The rich no longer took land forcibly from the poor. A powerful navy protected Greece from other nations. Greek merchants sailed, looking for trade.

Under the leadership of Athens, life in Greece got better and better. Greek schools improved and taught such things as reading, math, music, and sports to boys. Girls didn't attend public school.

Great thinkers, called *philosophers*, begin to teach. *Philosopher* means "lover of wisdom." *Socrates* was a philosopher who thought one could discover the truth by asking the right questions. Others set up plans for government or studied science and medicine.

Many of the most beautiful marble buildings in the world were built by the Greeks of Athens. Statues we still wonder at today were carved during this time. Plays written and performed for the citizens of Athens are still read and enjoyed today. Other Greek authors

wrote poetry, social commentary, and books on education.



Greek
Olympic
Stadium

The *Olympic Games* started during this time. Every four years, *athletes* from all over Greece took part in running, jumping, wrestling, and other sports. If sports were ever more popular than they are today, it must have been in ancient Greece.

The people relied on the gods for help. The Greeks thought of their gods very much as people. Greek gods were supposed to have fought each other and to have had fun, just like the humans they controlled.

Life during Greece's Golden Age was wonderful if you were a rich citizen of Athens. However, slaves weren't as well off. Many suffered from overwork. Only a few were able to buy their freedom and become citizens. Women had few rights. The poor worked hard and had few pleasures. But all things considered, Greece's Golden Age provided its citizens with a good life.

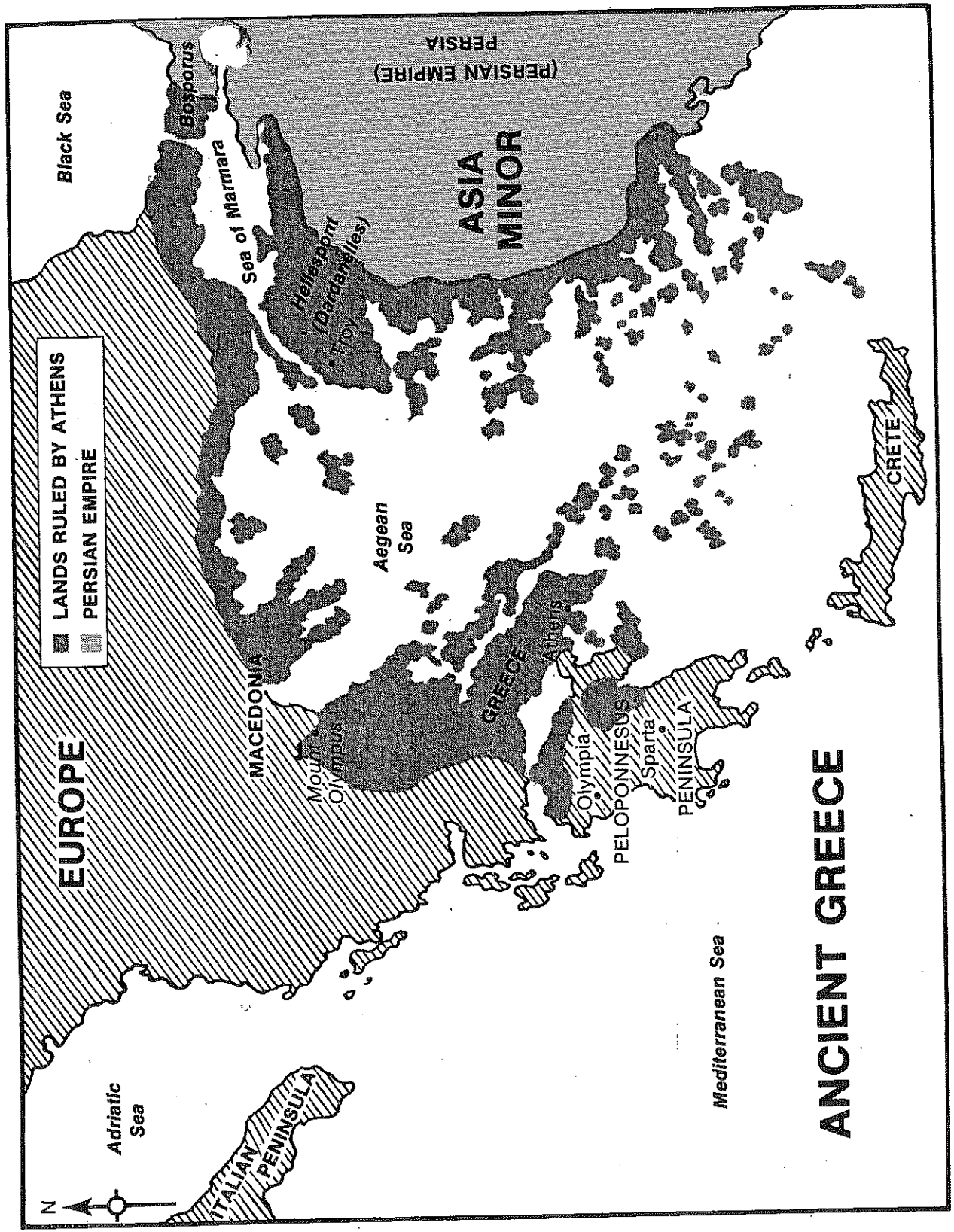
Once again, war changed things. While the people of Athens had learned to enjoy a cultured life and good government, Sparta had stayed warlike. Finally war broke out between the two city-states of Greece. It took

Ancient Greece

Answer these questions with the help of the map on page 23. Put your answer in the blank to the left of the question.

When you've answered all the questions, try to locate the places again in the maze on page 24. Put a circle around each name in the maze. The words can go up or down. They may go across, and sometimes they are written backwards. Be careful! They can be tricky!

- _____ 1. Five different seas are shown on the map. Look carefully at each one to find the smallest.
- _____ 2. This sea is found in the northwestern corner of the map.
- _____ 3. This narrow channel, or strait, separates the Black Sea from the Sea of Marmara.
- _____ 4. If you travel from the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara, you go through a narrow channel, or strait. This strait is called the Dardanelles today. What did the Greeks call it?
- _____ 5. Most of Asia Minor was not controlled by Greece. Who did control Asia Minor?
- _____ 6. The Olympic Games are held every four years. They were first started in Greece. Find the city whose name will tell you that the Olympic Games started there.
- _____ 7. The city of Sparta is found on this peninsula.
- _____ 8. South of Greece is a large island. What is the island's name?
- _____ 9. West of Greece is part of another peninsula. Name this peninsula.
- _____ 10. If the people of Athens traveled to the city of Troy, they would have gone over this sea.



Now, here's the letter maze. Can you find all the answers in it?

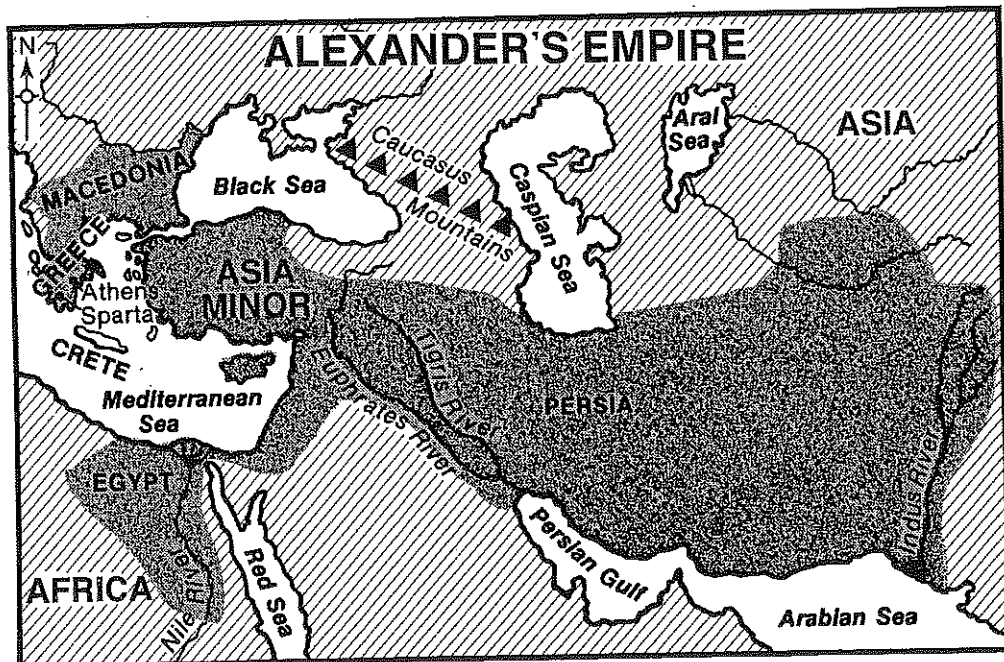
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Alexander the Great

Follow Alexander the Great in his conquests. Fill in the answers to the questions about Alexander by looking either on the map on page 25 or in the reading.

- Alexander was born in the country of Macedonia. (Find Macedonia on the map.)
South of Macedonia is the country of _____. Two important Greek cities shown on the map are _____ and _____.
- After capturing Greece, Alexander moved into Asia Minor. What body of water is north of Asia Minor? _____ What country controlled Asia Minor until Alexander took it away? _____

3. The country of Persia lies between a sea and a gulf. What are the names of these two bodies of water? _____ and _____.
4. While Alexander was conquering Persia, he also captured two of the areas where civilization first started. These two river valleys around Persia were the _____ on the east and the _____ on the west. Both of these, as well as Persia, are on the continent of _____.
5. After defeating Persia, Alexander conquered a third ancient civilization. This one grew up west of the Red Sea, along the _____ River. This civilization was called _____.
6. If Macedonia is on the continent of Europe, Alexander controlled land on how many continents? _____ These continents are named _____, _____, and _____.
7. The mountains that seem to stretch from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea are called the _____.



Pericles

Pericles was born in Athens, Greece, about 495 B.C. His father was a famous warrior. His mother was the niece of a famous statesman named Cleisthenes.

Cleisthenes brought many democratic reforms to Athens. He had given the assembly and courts the power to govern. Pericles wanted to continue these reforms. He joined the popular party and began his work.

In 463 B.C., Pericles was a state prosecutor who helped try Cimon, a powerful general. Cimon wanted Athens to join with its enemy, Sparta. Pericles lost the trial but became famous among the people of Athens.

Pericles helped the people gain power by giving power to the Council of Five Hundred, the popular court, and the assembly. When the party leader was killed, Pericles took his place.

Pericles was elected one of the ten generals of Athens. Each year for nearly 30 years, he was reelected.

Pericles brought about changes in the government of Athens. He decided government officers should be paid. This meant poor people could afford to hold office.

Pericles' goal was to make Athens a powerful democracy. Athens had a strong navy, but Pericles wanted it to have a strong army as well. Pericles started a series of wars to gain more land. He did not always win. As a result, Cimon took charge of the



armies. Cimon defeated Persia in 449 B.C. and died soon afterwards.

Three years later Athens signed a 30-year peace treaty with Sparta. This gave Athens control of a league of Greek cities that joined together for trade. Pericles used money from the league to build up the navy and make Athens beautiful. The Parthenon was built at this time.

War with Sparta came in 431 B.C. Much of the land around Athens was lost. Then a year later, plague broke out and killed many people. Pericles was blamed for the troubles of Athens and removed from power.

He was reelected the next year but did not rule long. Pericles died of the plague soon after his reelection.