Greek Rivals: Athens vs. Sparta
Rivals

• 2 leading city-states = Sparta & Athens → very different from one another
Sparta

- Founded by descendants of Dorian invaders (from “dark ages”)
- Located on the Peloponnesus Peninsula (southern Greece)
- Invaded neighboring city-states & enslaved people
  - Slaves were called helots
  - Slaves farmed the estates of the Spartans
Sparta

- Spartans developed a militaristic society to keep control over the people
  - Started this after they suppressed a 30 year revolt by the helots
A Military Society

• All life revolved around the army
  – Only healthy babies were allowed to live
  – Boys entered the military at age 7
  – Stayed in the military until age 60
Role of Women

- Women, like men, were expected to exercise and be strong
  - Spartan women trained in gymnastics, boxing, and wrestling
  - Needed to produce healthy babies
  - Had more freedoms than other Greek women
  - Could go shopping in the marketplace, express political opinions, own property, etc. → could NOT take part in government though
Sparta’s Government

- 2 kings ruled Sparta, but had little power
  - Led the army & conducted religious services – that’s it
- Assembly had most power = group of male citizens over age of 30
- Council of Elders served as Supreme Court and proposed laws to the Assembly = 28 men over age of 60
Sparta’s Government

• Sparta was behind other city-states in economics, philosophy, science, and arts
  – Rulers afraid of change; afraid of outside influence
Athens

- Founded by descendants of Mycenaeans
- Lived on Attica peninsula (northeast of Peloponnesus)
- Named after the goddess Athena
Athens

• Athens’ citizenship included more people than Sparta’s did
  – Constitution (plan of government) = said that all free, Athenian-born men were citizens, whether they owned land or not
  – Reduced friction between social classes
Athenian Rulers

- **Draco = 621 BCE**
  - Issued an improved code of laws with very harsh penalties
  - Because the laws were written down, everyone knew what they were
  - *Draconian* = word that has come to mean harsh or severe
Athenian Rulers

- Solon = 594 BCE
  - Cancelled all land debt & freed debtors from slavery
  - Placed limits on how much land a person could own
  - Promoted trade by making farmers grow cash crops
  - Required fathers to teach their sons a skill
  - Allowed all citizens to participate in the Assembly & courts of law
Athenian Rulers

- Peisistratus = 546 BCE
  - Divided large estates among landless farmers
  - Helped the poor → loaned them money; gave them public works jobs
Athenian Democracy

• Cleisthenes (ruler – 508 BCE) established democracy in Athens

• Assembly became the most powerful political body
  – Members were chosen by a lottery system – limit of 500 people
  – Open to all citizens
Athenian Democracy

- Note: Citizens still only 20% of population → excluded slaves, women, and foreign-born
- Citizens considered equal before the law; granted freedom of speech
Athenian Democracy

- Jury system established
- System of Ostracism = Athenians could get rid of undesirable politicians
Athenian Education

• Depended on social & economic status
• Athenian citizens were required to educate their sons
• Girls didn’t receive a formal education – were trained in household duties
Athenian Education

• Main textbooks were *the Iliad* and *the Odyssey*

• Learned arithmetic, geometry, drawing, music, gymnastics, and **rhetoric** (art of public speaking)

• At 18, boys entered the military for 2 years
War, Glory, and Decline
Quick Overview

• 400s BCE → Persian Empire had strongest military in the world
• Persian Empire wanted to invade Europe and expand
• Greek city-states cooperated in resisting Persian attacks
• After victory against Persia, the Greeks enjoyed a “golden age”
• Then – Greek city-states began to fight each other
The Persian Wars

- Persians took over the Greek city-states in Ionia (in Asia)
- Ionians revolted against Persians, with help from other city-states like Athens
- Persians (led by King Darius) defeated the Ionians & decided to punish the other city-states on mainland Greece for helping the Ionians
Battle at Marathon

- Darius sent a Persian fleet across the Aegean Sea to city of Marathon
- Persians waited for the Athenians, but the Athenians were outnumbered and didn’t move
Battle at Marathon

- Persians decided to attack Athens directly
  - Loaded cavalry & infantry on ships and went north to Athens
  - Athens decides to strike
  - Athens sends foot soldiers to attack Persian troops while they are in shallow water waiting to board ships
Battle at Marathon

- Persians were caught off guard and lost to the Greeks in this battle
Battle of Salamis

- 10 years later → Darius’s son Xerxes invades Greece from the north
- Xerxes brought 200,000 troops – couldn’t live off the land so offshore supply ships came with them
- Greeks under the leadership of Sparta this time
Battle of Salamis

- Oracle at Delphi said Greeks would be safe behind a “wooden wall”
  - Athenian General Themistocles believed “wooden wall” meant fleet of ships & that they needed to challenge the Persians at sea
  - Greek army had to set up a distraction on land to build this fleet at sea
  - Greeks chose Thermopylae as place for distraction
The 300

• At Thermopylae – 7,000 Greeks led by King Leonidas stood firm for 3 days

• Greek traitor showed Persians a trail they could use to attack the Greeks
  – Leonidas sent home most of his troops to save them
  – He and 300 Spartans stayed to fight
  – They lost, but gave Themistocles time to carry out his plan at sea
Battle of Salamis

- Themistocles drew the Persian fleet to the Strait of Salamis
  - Greek navy destroyed Persian fleet in the strait
- Persians never came back → Greeks won the Persian Wars
- Athens emerged as a powerful city-state
Golden Age of Athens

- Athenian general Pericles rebuilt Athens to become the most beautiful city in Greece
- Public buildings = fancy; Athenian homes = simple
- Most famous building built = Parthenon atop the Acropolis
The Golden Age of Athens
Quest for Beauty & Meaning

- Greek civilization reached its peak in the mid-400s BCE, particularly in Athens
  - Known as the Golden Age
  - Artists created beautiful architecture, sculptures, paintings
  - Artistic style was **classical** = simple, graceful, and balanced
  - Advancements in philosophy, literature, and drama
Building for the Gods

• Each city-state tried to turn its acropolis into an “architectural treasure”
• Parthenon best exemplified Greek architecture
• Greeks didn’t need large sanctuaries = places of worship
  – Worshipped at home or at outdoor altars
Building for the Gods

- Temples were where deities could live
- Greek architects understood illusion and **perspective** = the artistic showing of distances as they appear to the eye
- Created the impression of perfection
Greek Arts

• Excelled at portraying the human form

• Some ancient Greek vases still exist
  – Different shapes for different purposes
  – Krater = two-handed vase with a wide mouth --> good for mixing water and wine
  – **Amphora** = large vase for storing oil & other supplies --> decorated with art showing mythology
  – Kylix = drinking cup --> decorated with scenes of everyday life
Greek Arts

• Myron = one of Greece’s greatest sculptors
  – Sculpted what he thought people SHOULD look like
  – Sculpted the “Discus Thrower”
Greek Arts

• Phidias = another great Greek sculptor
  – Created statues for inside the Parthenon, including one of Athena

• Praxiteles = sculptor who carved more realistic human sculptures
Drama and Theater

- Greeks = 1st to write and perform plays
- Earliest Greek plays = tragedies
  - Had unhappy endings after main character struggled against the fates
  - Aeschylus = Greek tragedy writer who wrote 90 plays
Aeschylus

- His trilogy of plays called *Oresteia* shows how the consequences of one’s actions are carried down from generation to generation
- Law of community, not personal revenge, should decide punishment
Sophocles

- General in Athenian army
- Wrote tragedies
- Accepted human suffering as an unavoidable part of life
- Wrote *Oedipus Rex* = deals with King Oedipus’s struggle to beat the fates, but he can’t win against them
Euripides

- Wrote tragedies
- Hated war and his plays often showed the misery of war
- Focused on human behavior that brought disaster
Comedies

- Had humorous plots and happy endings
- **Aristophanes** = most famous writer of Greek comedies
The Olympic Games

- Ancient Greeks stressed athletics in school
- Greek men often spent their afternoons exercising
- Olympic games were held every 4 years in Olympia
  - To honor Zeus
  - Fighting and trade stopped
The Olympic Games

• Only males were able to participate
  – Women weren’t even allowed to watch
  – Greek women had their own games honoring Hera
The Olympic Games

- Individual, not team, events
  - Footrace, broad jump, discus throwing, boxing, wrestling, pentathlon
- Winners = crowned with olive leaves; parades held in their honor
- Olympic athletes often given special privileges, like not having to pay taxes
The Greek Mind

- Greek philosophers = thinkers --> produced some remarkable ideas
- Their philosophy laid the foundations for history, political science, biology and logic (science of reasoning)
The Sophists

- Higher education was provided by professional teachers, called Sophists
- Traveled from polis to polis, but usually gathered in Athens because more freedom of speech there
- Said they could find the answers to all questions
The Sophists

• Rejected the idea that gods could influence human behavior
• Challenged traditional Greek beliefs
• Believed “truth” was different for each individual
• Criticized by Socrates and Plato
Socrates

- Sculptor by trade, but spent most of his time teaching
- Believed in absolute truth vs. relative truth
- Interested in the process by which people learn to think for themselves
Socratic Method

- Developed a teaching method called the Socratic Method
  - Asked students questions, then argued with their answers
  - Forced students to clarify their thoughts
Socrates

- Accused of corrupting the young & not worshipping Greek gods
  - Jury found him guilty and sentenced him to death
  - Killed himself by drinking poison and died among his followers
Plato

• Born an aristocrat
• Became a teacher and opened an academy
• Recorded conversations between Socrates and his followers from memory
Plato

- Wrote the earliest book on political science = “The Republic”
  - Outlined his plan for what he considered ideal society and government
- Disliked Athenian democracy, preferred the government of Sparta
- Said the community should come before the individual
Plato

• Too much freedom = social disorder
• Disliked lower classes
• Thought only most intelligent and best-educated should participate in government
• Rejected the senses as a source of truth
• The real world was constructed from ideas
Aristotle

- Wrote more than 200 books ranging from astronomy to political science
- Started a school known as the Lyceum
- Taught the Golden Mean = to live moderately and avoid extremes
Aristotle

- Unlike Plato, Aristotle believed in knowledge gained through the senses
- First person to observe facts, then classify them into categories, and make generalizations
- Some of his ideas were incorrect (ex: Earth is center of the solar system)
Aristotle

• Compared the political structures in different Greek city-states

• Wrote a book called “Politics”
  – Idea form of government is a balance between a monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy
  – Middle class is the best suited to rule because they know how to command AND obey
Writers of History

• Herodotus = “father of history”
  – Wrote about the Persian Wars in “Historia”
  – Sometimes accepted statements that weren’t true and exaggerated numbers
  – Sometimes offered supernatural explanations of events
Writers of History

• Thucydides
  – Wrote about the Peloponnesian War
  – Rejected the idea that deities played a role in history
  – Writings were accurate and impartial
  – Believed that future generations could learn from the past
The First Scientists

- Greeks made scientific discoveries through observation and thought
Mathematics

- Seen as a pure science
- Believed they could find absolute knowledge through math
- Thales = studied astronomy and mathematics
  - Could foretell a solar eclipse
  - Said water was substance from which everything was made
Mathematics

- Pythagoras = tried to explain all of life in mathematical terms
  - Pythagorean Theorem = relationship of sides of a right-angled triangle
  - Said the world was round

\[ a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \]
Medicine

• Hippocrates --> “father of medicine”
  – Believed that diseases had natural causes
  – Body can heal itself
  – Strongly advocated proper **hygiene** (health care), a good diet, and plenty of rest
  – Wrote a code for ethical medical conduct = Hippocratic Oath --> still used today
Daily Life in Athens

- Men worked in the morning as artisans, farmers, or merchants
- In the afternoon – men attended the Assembly or exercised
Daily Life in Athens

- Slaves (1/3 of population) = did heavy work in craft production and mining
  - Many slaves = also teachers and house servants
  - Slaves = prisoners of war; foreigners; debtors
Daily Life in Athens

• Women stayed at home → cooked and made wool cloth

• Poor women worked in markets as food sellers and cloth weavers
Daily Life in Athens

- Upper-class men & men from other city-states participated in symposiums
  - **Symposium** = drinking session following a banquet
  - Discussed public affairs, philosophy, literature
  - Entertained by dancers, singers, magicians, acrobats
Athenian Women

• Many restrictions – but still some progress
• Many learned to read & write
• Many participated in city festivals
The Peloponnesian War

• Persian threat remained even though they lost the Persian Wars
• Most city-states (but not Sparta) joined together in Delian League to protect themselves from the Persians
The Delian League

• They freed Ionia from Persian rule
• Got rid of pirates in the Aegean Sea
• Made Greece rich because trade grew
The Delian League

- Athens began to dominate the other city-states
  - Several city-states formed an alliance against Athens
  - Led by Sparta
  - Threatened by Athens’ economic and political power and influence
  - Sparta was afraid and jealous of Athens
The Conflict
[431 BCE - 404 BCE]

• Peloponnesian War = fought between Athens (and its allies) and Sparta (and its allies)
• Sparta allied itself with Persia -- made a deal for their help
The Conflict
[431 BCE - 404 BCE]

- Plague hit Athens -- killed 1/3 of its people (including General Pericles)
  - After Pericles died, some Athenians wanted to surrender and others wanted to keep fighting
  - No decision made -- fighting continued for many years
The Conflict
[431 BCE - 404 BCE]

• Several city-states switched sides and joined Sparta

• Spartans then destroyed Athenian navy
  – Athens surrendered in 404 BCE
Effects of the War

• War brought disaster to Greek city-states:
  1) Fields destroyed
  2) Unemployment high
  3) Populations declined
  4) Many men left and became mercenaries (hired soldiers) in Persian Army
Effects of the War

5) Lost ability to govern themselves
6) Increased tension between aristocrats and commoners
7) Limited democracy and free political discussion
8) Continual fighting among city-states
9) Unable to resist the invasion of the Macedonians (with Alexander the Great)
Alexander the Great
Rise of Macedonia

• Macedonians descended from the Dorian
• Lived just north of Greece
• Greeks looked down on them – saw them as backward mountain people
Rise of Macedonia

• Philip II became King of Macedonia in 359 BCE
  – Determined to do 3 things:
    1) Create a strong army
       – used Greek-style phalanxes
    2) Unify the Greeks under Macedonian rule
    3) Destroy the Persian Empire
Rise of Macedonia

• Pursued his ambition for the next 23 years:
  – Sometimes conquered a polis
  – Sometimes bribed a polis’s leader to surrender
  – Sometimes made allies with a polis through marriage (had many wives)
Rise of Macedonia

- Greek city-states wouldn’t cooperate with one another to fight off the Macedonians
- By 338 BCE = Philip II had conquered all of Greece except Sparta
Rise of Macedonia

• Just as he was preparing to conquer Persia, Philip II was murdered
  – Possibly by a Persian or an assassin hired by his 1\textsuperscript{st} wife Olympias
  – Olympias and Phillip II’s son = Alexander the Great – became king
Alexander’s Conquest [336-323 BCE]

- Only 20 when he took over the empire
- Highly respected for his courage and military skill
- Tutored by Aristotle
- Conquered Persian territories – including Egypt and Mesopotamia
- Conquered India
Alexander’s Conquests

• Died at 33, probably of malaria
• Wanted to unite Europe and Asia under 1 empire and combine the best of Greek and Persian cultures
Divided Domain

- 3 of Alexander’s general divided his empire into separate **domains** = **territories**
  1) Ptolemy ruled Egypt, Libya, and party of Syria
2) Seleucus ruled the rest of Syria, Mesopotamia, Iran, and Afghanistan

- Forced to give up all by Syria
- Lost Jerusalem to the Jews = an event that’s now remembered by the Jewish holiday Hanukkah
3) Antigonus ruled Macedonia and Greece
   - Would eventually be conquered by the Romans
Hellenistic Culture

• Greek language and culture spread in the lands Alexander had conquered
• Greek (Hellenic) ways of life mixed with Persian culture of Middle East to form a new culture = Hellenistic
• Hellenistic culture was concentrated in cities
Hellenistic Culture

- Largest and wealthiest city was Alexandria in Egypt
  - Had a double harbor with a lighthouse
  - First ever museum
  - Large library
  - Scientific research institute
  - Zoo and botanical garden
  - It was here that Jewish scholars translated the Bible into Greek
Hellenistic Culture

• Social status of upper-class Greek women improved
  – Could move about freely, learn how to read and write, have certain jobs
  – Commoners’ status didn’t improve
Hellenistic Philosophers

• 3 systems of thought:
  1) Cynicism = live simply and avoid materialism
  2) Epicureanism = accept the world as it is, avoid politics, and live simply
  3) Stoicism = ignore emotions and follow reason
Hellenistic Art & Literature

• Art often showed people in the grip of emotions
• Wrote comedies about everyday life
Science, Medicine, and Math

- Performed experiments and developed new theories
- Eratosthenes estimated the circumference of the Earth within 1%
- Dissected corpses to learn about human anatomy
  - Learned how to use drugs to relieve pain
Science, Medicine, and Math

- Euclid organized a book about geometry
- Archimedes invented the compound pulley (used for lifting heavy objects) and the cylinder screw (for irrigation)