

I. THE CIVILIZATIONS OF THE NEAR EAST - 2. Egypt (p. 20)

2.2 Economic, social and political organization (pp. 21-23)

Economy

➤ **Agriculture, livestock farming, fishing**

- **Life in Egypt was directly linked to the Nile and its floods.** Irrigating the fields and maintaining the ditches was a laborious and continuous task that taught cooperation to the inhabitants, but it also created the need for state supervision.
- In the fertile Egyptian land, which was fed by the river, flax, fruit trees and vegetables were cultivated, in addition to wheat and barley.
- On the banks of the Nile, the Egyptians collected papyrus and lotuses.
- At the family level, they made a type of beer from the fermentation of barley bread.
- They were engaged in animal husbandry and fishing in the waters of the river.

➤ **State supervision**

- **The basis of the economy in Egypt was agriculture.**
- Its systematic organization was under the direct supervision of the state, that is, the pharaoh.
- Royal officials monitored agricultural work and collected the percentage belonging to the pharaoh from the harvest.

➤ **Crafts and construction**

- The people worked in parallel on the **construction of the great works**, temples, palaces, funerary monuments which the pharaohs constructed.
- A large number of **specialized craftsmen**, metalworkers, carpenters, ceramicists, shipbuilders, architects, etc., manufactured various products for a sophisticated society.
- Several craftsmen worked in private workshops, but most and the best worked in the palace workshops, because the bulk of artisanal production, as well as trade, was controlled by the pharaoh.

➤ **Trade**

- Trade was based on the export of surplus goods produced in Egypt, such as cereals, papyrus, or raw materials, such as gold, and the import of materials that were lacking in the country, such as wood, copper, silver, etc.

➤ **Administration and service provision**

- The **provision of services** was another economic sector that employed a fairly large number of citizens. The administration needed educated citizens with specialized knowledge:
 - **priests** to meet the needs of a theocratic state,
 - **scribes**, who knew the difficult hieroglyphic script to operate the state machinery
 - and **professional soldiers** to maintain and develop the empire, all contributed to the better organization and functioning of the state.

Society

➤ Social classes in Egypt

The participation of the Egyptians in the production process had its consequences on the structure of society:

- At the top was the **pharaoh**, who embodied the earthly god and the state.
 - People placed in him their hopes for the success of their collective efforts.
 - He was inaccessible and his will was law for the subjects.
- In the social hierarchy below him were the **priests, the highest state officials and the scribes** who formed **the class of the powerful**.
- A special social group was the **professional military**, who inherited the profession and to whom the pharaoh granted areas of land for cultivation.
- However, the largest part of Egyptian society was made up of **free citizens, farmers or artisans**, who worked hard for the greatness of the pharaoh.
- Finally, **slaves** came from wars or were purchased from merchants.
 - There were private slaves, who rarely exceeded two in each family
 - and state slaves, who belonged to the pharaoh and worked in state workshops, temples, mines, quarries, etc.

➤ Social flexibility

However, in the hierarchical Egyptian society we can see some **social flexibility**. Especially in the New Kingdom period, the system of social classes was not strictly closed, since, even on a limited scale, there was the possibility of moving from one class to another. It is known that people of humble social origin rose to important positions and played an important role in their time.

Political organization

➤ Theocratic character of the state

The organization of the state from the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC was based on the idea of the **deification of the pharaoh**. The role of religion in the life of the Egyptians, as in the life of the peoples of Mesopotamia, was decisive. Numerous inscriptions mention the pharaoh as a god, while there are also texts that treated him as a man. However, they did not in any way diminish his divine status, given that the gods were presented with human qualities in Egyptian myths. The organization of the state had a **theocratic character***. (= the exercise of political power and the regulation of social life are carried out by a ruler who is attributed divine qualities or by a powerful priesthood).

2.4 Culture (pp. 27-30)

Religion

➤ Polytheism - Main gods

- From the beginning of Egyptian history, when there was still no unified state, each city had its own patron god. However, **polytheism** characterized the Egyptians in the remaining periods of their historical course.
- They presented their gods with a human body and the head of an animal.
- The greatest god was Ra, the Sun god, whom the pharaoh represented on earth.
- The most popular gods were Isis, Osiris and Horus.

➤ Akhenaten's failure to impose monotheistic religion

- Pharaoh Amenhotep IV, also called **Akhenaten**, tried to eliminate polytheism.
 - He turned against the priests and the worship of Ammon, the patron god of Thebes.
 - His attempt to impose the worship of Ra, the Sun god, as the only god, met with resistance from the priesthood and ended in failure.

➤ Perceptions of death – embalming – funerary monuments

The Egyptians' laborious lifestyle and hardships had created **the deep belief that life continued after death, if the body of the deceased was not destroyed.**

Due to the fear of this that sealed their civilization, the Egyptians **embalmed the dead** and buried them in funerary monuments along with all the utensils they needed for the afterlife.

This perception, which was widespread in all social classes, including the pharaoh, led to the **construction of large funerary monuments** with exquisite decoration, which contained unimaginable riches. The precious vessels and luxurious adornment of the dead, pharaohs and nobles, became the reason for systematic tomb excavations since antiquity.

The writing

➤ Hieroglyphic writing

Crucial to the knowledge of the history of Egypt was the deciphering of **hieroglyphs**, that is, the character symbols used by the country's inhabitants in writing since the 4th millennium BC.

- The invention and use of writing is without a doubt one of the elements that indicate their cultural level.
- The difficulty in rendering and learning hieroglyphic writing required specialization and continuous employment. A simple citizen during the New Kingdom had the

opportunity to train as a **scribe** and follow a career as a civil servant, a fact that gave him **prestige**.

- Scribes recorded the works and actions of the pharaohs on papyrus,
- while the walls of many monuments, temples and tombs were covered with hieroglyphs designed by specialized craftsmen under the guidance of scribes.

➤ **Deciphering hieroglyphs**

- Their **decipherment** is due to the French Egyptologist J. Champollion, who in 1822 read the text of a trilingual inscription, which was engraved on a stele with hieroglyphs. with simplified hieroglyphs of the Hellenistic period and with Greek elements. The Rosetta Stone, as it is known from the name of the city where it was discovered, had a text engraved praising Ptolemy V, king of Egypt.

Letters

➤ **Literature**

- Most Egyptian texts refer to the actions and achievements of the pharaohs;
- Literary texts are few, perhaps due to the difficulty of writing, which did not allow many people to express themselves in writing. What has been preserved are religious and lyrical poems, as well as folk tales.

Sciences

Astronomy: Monitoring the floods of the Nile and the movement of the stars provided the opportunity to develop empirical astronomical knowledge, such as the establishment of the 365-day calendar, the division of the year into months and weeks, and the determination of time based on the sun's shadow.

Mathematics and Geometry: The need to measure the arable land areas that were lost due to floods contributed to the development of practical geometry. However, it seems that mathematical knowledge was more sophisticated, as at least we can assume from the construction of the pyramids.

Medicine and Anatomy: The embalming of the dead helped to acquire knowledge of anatomy and medicine. From papyrus texts that have survived, we read about the diagnoses they made and the methods of treatment they applied. The reputation of Egyptian doctors was great and widespread even in the Greek world.

The arts

Architecture, sculpture and painting in Egypt were **at the service of the pharaohs**. The aim of the artists was to showcase the life and activities of the pharaohs.

▪ **Architecture:**

- Artistic achievements, of a monumental nature, were **imposing** with their **dimensions**. The vast flat surfaces of the Egyptian land, combined with the need of the rulers to impose themselves through their works, led to the construction of monuments that were imposing with their **volume**.
- The **pyramids** of Cheops, Khafre and Menkaure in Giza,
- The great **temples** in Luxor and Karnak with the multitude of columns that supported peristyles and hypostyle halls are indicative examples of architecture.

▪ **Painting:**

- The surfaces of most temples and the funerary chambers of tombs were filled with painted or relief representations that recounted the actions of the pharaohs as well as aspects of daily life.

Sculpture and miniature:

- In addition to the large statues that decorated temples and funerary monuments,
- smaller ones were also made of wood or stone, truly elegant works of art.
- Many miniature works made of metals, precious or semi-precious stones complement our knowledge of the artistic choices and achievements of the Egyptians.

II. THE ANCIENT GREEKS: FROM PREHISTORIC TIMES TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT

1. Greek prehistory: 1.2 The Mycenaean civilization (pp. 65-73)

In mainland Greece, during the Late Bronze Age (1600-1100 BC), the first great Greek civilization was formed and developed. It has been conventionally called Mycenaean by researchers, because its most important center was "multi-purpose Mycenae", as mentioned in the Homeric epics.

The country

- This civilization was a creation of **Greek tribes**, known by various names from the sources: Achaeans, Danaeans, Ionians, Argives, etc.
- These Greek tribes, after consolidating their settlements on the mainland, accepted the **influences of other Aegean civilizations**, particularly the **Minoan**.
- They then **spread to the Aegean area**, the islands, Crete and the coasts of Asia Minor.
- During the period of great prosperity, they **exceeded the limits of the Aegean** and settled, sometimes permanently and sometimes occasionally, **in Cyprus and the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean**.
- **The most important centers of the Mycenaean world** were Mycenae, Argos, Tiryns in Argolis, Pylos in Messinia, Amyclae in Laconia, Orchomenus, Thebes and Glas in Boeotia, Athens, Eleusis, Marathon in Attica and Iolkos in Thessaly.
 - Most centers were founded in selected locations which facilitated the supervision of a large area.
 - Their foundation was in most cases combined with the construction of a palace and strong fortifications.

The sources

- We had the first information about the Mycenaean world from the **Homeric epics**.
- Until the last century, however, historians and researchers believed that the characters and, in general, the image of life presented in the epics were creations of Homer's imagination.
- His stories acquired historical substance when a wealthy merchant, **Heinrich Schliemann**, **conducted the first excavations in Mycenae (1876)**. Establishment and spread of the Mycenaean civilization Mycenaean centers Sources: Homeric epics – Archaeological research – Linear B
- Since then and until today, **archaeological research** in many parts of Greece and the study of their findings have shed much light on the knowledge of this era.
- The culmination of all research concerning the Mycenaean civilization was the **decipherment of Linear B' script** by M. **Ventris** and J. **Chadwick** (1952).

- Linear B' was used by specialized scribes in the Mycenaean palaces. ○ The reading of the tablets found in Pylos, Knossos, Mycenae and Thebes showed that Linear B' is a **syllabic script**.
- The most important thing, however, is that **it validated the Greekness of the Mycenaean civilization. It was shown that its symbols represent words of the Greek language.** They actually represent an early form of the Greek language, older than that of the Homeric epics.
- The information, however, that the tablets give us has an **accounting content**, that is, they are lists of objects and assets of rulers or merchants of that era.
- **Names of gods and people** known to us from the epics have also been read.
- It should be noted that to date **the tablets have not given us a continuous text.**

Historical science partially includes the Mycenaean civilization in Greek prehistory or, to be precise, considers it to constitute Greek proto-history.

Economic, social and political organization of the Mycenaean world

➤ **Economy**

- **Trade:** The closed agricultural economy of the settlements of the Middle Bronze Age was followed, as it seems, by a form of economic relations based on trade. Commercial development, especially after 1500 BC, followed a rapid pace and resulted in the Mycenaean exodus to the Aegean. A series of **palaces (sing: megaron – pl: megara)**, built on fortified citadels, confirm the economic development of the Mycenaean world. The center of economic activities was the **palaces**.
- The majority of the subjects were engaged in **agriculture** and **animal husbandry**
- A large group consisted of specialized **craftsmen** (tile makers, carpenters, shipbuilders, coppersmiths, goldsmiths, perfumers, doctors, etc.)
- and another, also numerous, were **merchants** and **sailors**.

➤ **Social organisation**

In the **social hierarchy**, a special place was occupied by:

- the **priests** and
- the **army**, which consisted of professional soldiers.
- The **ruler** of each palace managed the wealth of the region he ruled. He was a political and military leader, with judicial and at the same time religious power. However, there is no indication that suggests the existence of a theocratic organization and a powerful priesthood.
- At the base of the social pyramid were the **slaves**. They were servants who worked for the ruler, officials, priests and ordinary citizens.

➤ **Political organization: not a unified state**

The **common characteristics that the Mycenaean world** presents throughout its area of expansion and which confirm its **cultural cohesion** would be an indicative element for the organization of a unified state. However, it seems that this did not happen.

It has been suggested that the country must have been **divided into four or five larger and about the same number of smaller "federal" states**, corresponding to the large palaces.

It is not excluded that the individual Mycenaean states were **subordinate** to the largest palace center, **Mycenae**.

We do not have sufficient data for the organization of each Mycenaean state, with the exception of the information given to us by the tablets from the palace of Pylos.

- The supreme ruler, according to the information on the tablets, was the **anaktas** (wa-na-ka), master of the palace from which all power emanated.
- Subordinate to him were local rulers, governors of regions. The title by which we recognize them on the tablets is **laagetas** (ra-wa-ke-ta) [from la-os + ígoumai].
- The class of nobles includes the **epetes** (e-qe-ta) [from epomai], that is, the followers.
- Important figures in the regional administration seem to have been the **telestes** (te-re-ta).
- Among the Mycenaeans, the title of **king** (qa-si-re-u) was less honorific. This was the name given to the head of any group, even the chief craftsman of a group of coppersmiths. On the contrary, in the Homeric epics, that is, in the following centuries, the word "king" in the Greek language denotes the supreme ruler.

The spread of the Mycenaean world

The main source of wealth and development of the Mycenaean world was **trade**, the pursuit of which turned the Mycenaeans to the sea. Until the middle of the **15th century BC**, the Cretans played a leading role in the Aegean.

At the end of the same century, however, the Mycenaeans **dominated Crete** and occupied **Knossos**. They displaced the Cretans from the Aegean and imposed their own **sea-based monarchy**. Excavation data prove the existence of Mycenaean settlements or trading posts throughout the Aegean.

In the next two centuries, their spread extended **beyond the Aegean**:

- In the **13th century BC** systematically **colonized Cyprus**, which belonged to the sphere of influence of the Phoenicians and Egyptians, contributing to its Hellenization.
- They founded a Mycenaean colony in the **Phoenician city of Ugarit** and expanded their commercial activities further south, to **Palestine** and **Egypt**.

- The Hittite sources also inform us about the spread and power of the Mycenaeans. Tablets found in **Hattusa** refer in an honorific way to the king of the “Ahiyavas”, whom the Hittite king calls his brother. It is possible that the Achaeans are behind the Ahiyavas of the tablets. If this is true, then we must accept, as the tablets inform us, that the relations between the Achaeans and the Hittites were friendly. However, there were also periods during which the Hittite king complained to his brother about the raids of the Ahiyavas in his country. Some Mycenaeans must have been the “Ahiyavasa” (Achaeans) who, as mentioned in the Egyptian inscriptions, invaded Egypt together with the Sea Peoples at the beginning of the 12th century BC.
- It is certain that the Mycenaeans also expanded towards the **western Mediterranean**. Their products have been found on the Italian peninsula, Sicily, Sardinia and the eastern coast of Spain.
- Their ambitions also turned to the **north**. Contacts with the Black Sea, from where they were supplied with raw materials and mainly metals, connect them with the famous **Trojan campaign**.
 - It is possible that with this war the Achaeans sought **control of the straits of the Hellespont**.
 - Ancient Greek tradition dated the campaign to 1184 BC., the time when the crisis of the Mycenaean world began. It is most likely that it occurred towards the end of the 13th century BC, when the Mycenaeans were at the height of their power.
 - The lack of Mycenaean settlement in the Troad region leads us to think that reasons of insecurity led the Greeks to return to their homelands.
 - However, the Greeks had already realized the **pan-Hellenic character of the Trojan campaign** since antiquity.

Decline

The expansion of the Mycenaeans during the 14th and 13th centuries BC and their economic development are evidence that confirm the **importance of trade** for the Mycenaean world.

However, from the beginning of the 12th century BC, **trade contacts with the countries of the East were made with difficulty**. The Hittite state was dissolved, the continuous attacks that Cyprus, the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean and Egypt received resulted in their economic weakening. These disasters, according to Egyptian testimonies, are attributed to the peoples of the Sea, among whom were the Achaemenids. Regardless of the assumption that some Achaeans may have been among these peoples, the result of the raids was probably fatal for the Mycenaeans as well.

Although the Aegean and the Mycenaean centers were not directly affected by the attacks, the devastation of the coastal regions of the Near East limited and eventually **ended the trade contacts** that were vital to the Mycenaeans. **The loss of the Eastern markets** seems to have shaken the palace economy and contributed gradually but steadily to the dissolution of the Mycenaean world.

The destruction may have been completed by **internal conflicts, dynastic disputes and conflicts between the Mycenaean centers.**

Culture

The Mycenaean world, although fragmented, nevertheless exhibits unifying characteristics that confirm its cultural cohesion. The most important are:

- ◆ **The common language.** It is the early form of the Greek language attested by the reading of the tablets of Linear B script.
- ◆ **The common religious beliefs.** The first cults and the names of deities are presented, which later composed the Greek Olympic pantheon.
- ◆ **The uniformity in all aspects of material life.** At any point of the Mycenaean spread, from the Peloponnese to Cyprus and the coasts of the Eastern Mediterranean, their works of art, their military equipment, their clothing, and even their adornment present uniformity.

Art

- Mycenaean art, in contrast to Minoan, has characteristics of strict organization.
- The majority of craftsmen and artists depended on the palaces and served the palace needs, ideologically and aesthetically.

Architecture

Examples of Mycenaean architecture are: the **fortified acropolises** with palaces and the **burial structures.**

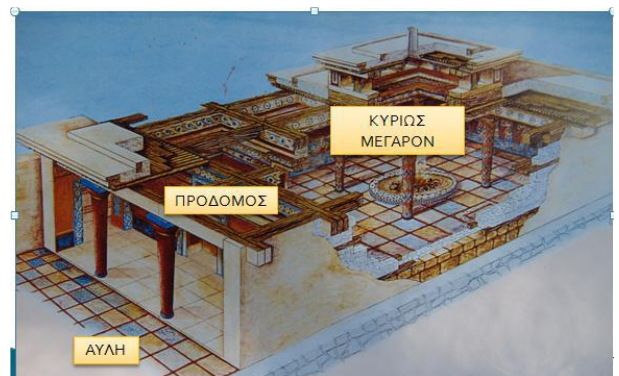
➤ Palaces

The palaces were built in selected locations surrounded by strong walls. The palace was simple in its structure.

Its core was the **mansion**, that is, a rectangular building divided into three parts:

- an open space in front that communicates with a large **courtyard (ΑΥΛΗ)**,
- a vestibule - the **prodomos (ΠΡΟΔΟΜΟΣ)** -
- and the **main mansion (ΚΥΡΙΩΣ ΜΕΓΑΡΟΝ)** with a large **hearth (ΕΣΤΙΑ)** in the center and four columns around it to support the ceiling. On the right side of this room, the **throne** must have been placed.

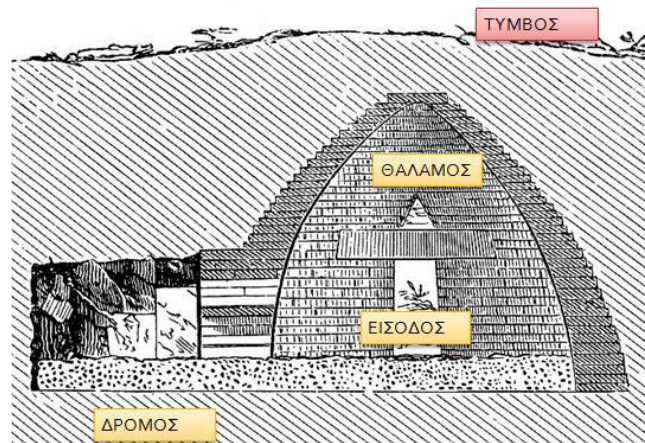
To the left and right of the courtyard and the mansion, several apartments spread out.



➤ Vaulted tombs

Among the funerary structures, vaulted tombs constitute the most important achievement of Mycenaean architecture. They were formed by:

- a **chamber** (ΘΑΛΑΜΟΣ) entirely built in the shape of a beehive.
- On one side of the chamber, a large **entrance** (ΕΙΣΟΔΟΣ) with a triangular end at the top opened.
- A **long corridor** (ΔΡΟΜΟΣ) with brick walls led to the entrance. The entrance was probably closed with a wooden door.



After the burial of the deceased, **the entire chamber and the corridor were covered with soil**. Thus, the entire structure presented the image of a **small hill**. The most important example of a vaulted tomb is the “**treasure of Atreus**” in Mycenae.

Painting

The frescoes that decorated the palaces and the vase representations indicate the work of **experienced artists**.

It seems that at first they had accepted the **Minoan influence**. Minoan naturalism was, however, limited by Mycenaean artists. The depiction of scenes from nature was replaced by **ritual scenes** and mainly by **war** or **hunting scenes**.

In the 12th century BC, plant and animal themes were stylized, lost their substance and became simply decorative designs.

The perceptions of the Mycenaean artists and the way they lived influenced their aesthetics and created the Mycenaean artistic style.

2. Ancient Greece (from 1100 to 323 BC)

2.1 Homeric Age (1100-750 BC) (pp.76- 83)

The decline of the Mycenaean centers was followed by a period of upheaval, which lasted about three centuries. The **constant movements** of the Greek tribes constituted a **transitional era**, towards the end of which, after acquiring permanent settlements, the Greeks formed the conditions for their reconstruction.

The **main source of information** for this period, apart from archaeological research, is the **Homeric epics**. For this reason, researchers conventionally call it the **Homeric Age**.

It has also been characterized as the **Greek Middle Ages or the Dark Ages**, because in the past it was considered an era of decline and our knowledge about it was limited. Today, historical research now speaks of a period of reconstruction and organizational creation, during which the foundations of Greek civilization were laid.

The first Greek colonization

The Greek tribes from about the middle of the 11th century BC until the 9th century BC spread, using the Aegean islands as a bridge, to the western coasts of Asia Minor. These migratory movements are known as **the first Greek colonization**.

- **Aeolians:** Greek tribes who spoke the Aeolian dialect moved from Thessaly to the northeastern Aegean and settled on the islands of Tenedos and Lesbos and on the opposite coast of Asia Minor, in the area called Aeolis.
- **Ionians:** The Ionians, another Greek tribe, from the northeastern Peloponnese, Attica, and Euboea, dragging along "many other nations" (Herod., A, 146), such as Dryopes, Molossians, Arcadians, Phocians, Magnetes, etc., moved across the Cyclades to Samos, Chios, and the opposite coasts of Asia Minor, where they founded twelve new cities.

These cities then formed a **religious union**, the **Panionium**, centered on the sanctuary of Poseidon, at the cape of Mycale. **The Ionians gradually spread to the detriment of other tribes, with the result that the entire western coast of Asia Minor became known by the name Ionia.**

- **Dorians:** Finally, the migration of the Dorians followed. The Dorians did not move as refugee groups, pressured by other tribes. They were probably the first Dorian groups to know the sea. They left Laconia, Epidaurus, Troezen and settled:
 - in Milos, Thira, Crete
 - and then in Rhodes, Kos
 - and on the southwestern coasts of Asia Minor. The cities of Ialysos, Kamiros and Lindos in Rhodes, the city of Kos, as well as Cnidus and Halicarnassus in Asia Minor, subsequently formed a religious union, known as the Doric Hexapolis, centered on the sanctuary of Apollo, at the Triopio cape of Cnidus.

All the Greek tribes that migrated to the islands of the eastern Aegean and to the coasts of Asia Minor:

- quickly acquired permanent settlement in the new places
- and progressively expanded inland.
- In some cases they mixed
 - with each other
 - and also with the native populations.

Economic, social and political organization

a) The economy

- At this time, the main source of economic development was **land**.
- Production was based on a form of **closed agricultural economy**. ☞ That is, the members of each family, together with other individuals who were economically dependent on the family, formed a household and performed all the productive tasks.
- There was no scope for labor specialization on a large scale and by extension there was no artisanal development.
- All produced goods, mainly agricultural and livestock,
- were consumed within the household.
- **Exchanges?** Often there was a shortage of goods, which were replenished in other ways such as:
 - with limited barter trade between households,
 - with the exchange of gifts,
 - with war
 - and piracy.
- **Currency?** The reference measure for the evaluation of exchanged goods was the ox or animal skins, metals and even slaves.
- At this time, foreign trade, mainly for the supply of metals and slaves, was carried out by the Phoenicians.

b) Society

In these early societies, the house seems to have functioned as a unit of social organization. With the termination of the movements of the Greek tribes and the acquisition of permanent settlements:

- **The nobles:** the members of the house, who were connected by kinship ties, became landowners and acquired economic power. They were the nobles (nobles), whom we know from Homer's stories.
- **The multitude:** Within the framework of the house, however, many people lived who did not have direct kinship ties with the nobles. They constituted a numerous social group known as the multitude.

- **Creators:** Independent of the house but economically dependent on the houses of a wider area, they were those whose work required some specialization, such as the carpenter, the potter, the coppersmith, etc. They were called creators and practiced their work to meet the needs of a community that included the houses of a region.
- **Slaves:** Finally, slaves were an asset of the house. Most had been acquired through wars or piracy.

c) Political organization

The first Greek societies were organized along tribal lines, that is, they formed tribal states*.

- Each tribe, which was structured into
 - tribes,
 - phratries and
 - genera based on kinship ties, could form a state.
- A tribal state could also arise
 - from the division of a tribe or even
 - from the union of several tribes of the same tribe.

However, the need to address the problems within tribal states will progressively lead to their political organization.

Thus, the tribal leaders of the era of migrations evolved into **hereditary kings**, after the tribes acquired permanent settlements.

- **King:** The king of the Homeric societies, that is, those that emerged after the migrations of the Greek tribes, was
 - the leader of the army in times of war
 - and the governor with religious and judicial power in times of peace.
- **House of Elders:** Next to the king there was a council consisting of the leaders of the powerful clans, who were also called kings. This council of nobles (council of elders) gradually limited royal power.
- **Assembly of the People (Εκκλησία του Δήμου):** When the king made an important decision, he would convene a meeting of the multitude, mainly the warriors, to ask for their opinion (ecclesia of the city)

It is characteristic that within the framework of Homeric societies all those institutions were formed that led from the middle of the 8th century BC to the political constitution of Greek societies. Here we encounter the first stage of political organization, which would later develop within the framework of the Greek city-states.

d) The civilization.

➤ **Greek alphabet**

- After the fall of the Mycenaean palaces, the difficult Linear B script, which few scribes knew how to use, was forgotten.
- For about three centuries, the Greeks did not use writing.
- However, at the end of the 9th century BC or the beginning of the 8th century BC, writing reappeared in Greece.
- The symbols of writing no longer represented syllables but phonemes.
- The Greek alphabetic script emerged in an assimilationist manner from the Phoenician alphabet. The Greeks adapted the symbols to the phonetic values of the Greek language and also added the vowels that were missing from the Phoenician alphabet. This is how they became the creators of the first real alphabet.

➤ **Religion**

- **Shrines.** In the Homeric era, the first sanctuaries were created, which gradually acquired a pan-Hellenic character.
- **Dodecatheon:** Along with local cults, the religious concepts that formed the Olympic dodecatheon were consolidated.

The cultural achievements of the period include the oral formation of the first Greek poetry, epic poetry, and works of art, mainly ceramics and miniature art.

➤ **Epic poetry**

- Songs with heroic content must have been created in Greece as early as the Mycenaean era.
- These songs seem to have formed the background, which the Greeks of the colonies of Asia Minor later used to compose the Homeric epics around two different themes.
- The content of these songs was known to the poets of the Homeric era, the rhapsodists, who sang them, often adding new elements to entertain the people at festivals or the nobles in their palaces.
- Tradition attributes the authorship of the two epics to Homer, who in all probability composed the Iliad in its original form around the middle of the 8th century BC. The composition of the Odyssey is placed at the end of the 8th century BC or at the beginning of the 7th century BC.

➤ **The art of the Homeric period** was conventionally called geometric by researchers. The same name is often used to characterize the era itself, due to the geometric designs that dominated

- the decoration of vases and
- the construction of miniature works.

2.2 Archaic era (750-480 BC) (pp. 84 – 97)

Researchers of Greek antiquity conventionally call the period from approximately the middle of the 8th century BC until the first twenty years of the 5th century BC archaic, because this was the era of preparation and the beginnings of the economic, political and cultural development of the Greek world.

The socio-economic crisis that arose at the end of the Homeric era was addressed from the middle of the 8th century BC:

- within the framework of the organized city-states
- and with the establishment of colonies (second Greek colonization).

The 7th and 6th centuries BC were the era of spiritual pursuits and the formation of ancient Greek civilization. The archaic era ended with the struggles of the Greeks against the "barbarians". From these struggles the Greeks emerged victorious, strengthened their national consciousness and validated the effectiveness of the organization provided by the institution of the city-state.

The genesis of the city-state

Historians used the term city-state to denote the concept of space and at the same time of the organized community of people under a power. The organization presupposes the sovereignty over a specific space, which corresponds to the limits of a gate or a wider area together with the city, and the formation of power to address common problems.

Thus, the **city-state** presents the following **components**:

◆ From a **geographical point of view**, it was usually formed:

- in a space, a center of power, most often walled, called a **polis** or **asty**,
- and in a wider area around it, cultivable with scattered smaller settlements, the **komes**, which was the **countryside**.

◆ From an **organizational point of view**:

- the inhabitants of the city-state, that is, the **citizens**, participated in the management of the commons and took a smaller or larger part in decision-making.
- Thus, the way in which power was exercised and the participation or non-participation of the citizens in it defined its other constituent element, the **regime**.

Regardless of the way the regime functioned, it is understandable that the citizens had **three basic aspirations** that were also **prerequisites for the existence of the city-state**: **freedom, autonomy** and **self-sufficiency**.

- **Freedom:** That is, the citizens fought for their independence by defending the freedom of the city,
- **Autonomy:** they contributed to governance with laws that they themselves had established to achieve its autonomy and
- **Self-sufficiency:** they participated in production to meet their needs and strengthen the self-sufficiency of their city.

The crisis of the Homeric world

Towards the end of the 9th century BC, the Homeric communities experienced a gradual population increase, which subsequently caused an economic crisis due to:

- the limited areas of arable land,
- the limited means of exploitation, due to the concentration of land in a few,
- the absence of labor specialization and the lack of other resources beyond the exploitation of the land.

This economic situation is combined with:

- the limitation of royal power and
- the increase in the power of the nobles.

The lack of an organized army perhaps gave the **nobles** the opportunity to challenge the king's power.

- Their power was based on the possession of land.
- They were known by the names agathos, aristos, eupatrides, esthlos, etc., names that indicated their origin and social status.
- They dedicated most of their time to physical exercise and the cultivation of the spirit. They raised horses and were in constant combat readiness - for this reason they were also called horsemen.

In the city-states, citizens were not only the nobles but also a **large number of small or medium-sized cultivators or even landless people**. These were known by the names **plithos**, ochlos, kakoi, etc. **Many of them subsequently engaged in crafts, trade, shipping and became rich**. However, they were not politically equal to the nobles from the beginning.

The first stages of the historical course of the city-states were connected with the development of **slavery**.

- The development of the institution of slavery is directly linked to the perception that the citizen should be free from work in order to deal only with the affairs of the city, with the commons.

- Of course, the number of slaves in other cities increased due to debts to the nobles, as was the case in Athens until the beginning of the 6th century BC, and in others due to wars of conquest, as happened in Sparta.

Dealing with the crisis

The economic crisis of Homeric times continued in the early stages of the organization of cities, as it was not possible to deal with it from the existing system of the closed agricultural economy. The solutions that were given were the following:

- development of crafts and trade,
- wars of conquest and territorial expansion,
- establishment of colonies.

Some city-states implemented one of the aforementioned solutions, some others combined them to deal with their problems.

- Thus, Athens overcame the crisis by developing crafts and trade
- Sparta, Argos, Elis, etc. by conquering their neighboring regions,
- while Corinth, Megara, Chalkis, Miletus, etc. combined these solutions with the establishment of colonies.

Those parts of the Greek world that remained isolated and did not have constant contacts with other Greeks, such as the Arcadians, the Aetolians, the Acarnanians, the Epirotes, the Macedonians and others, did not follow the same economic course and maintained the tribal organization.

The second colonization (8th-6th centuries BC)

Colonization: The term comes from the Greek word **apikizo** (to send away from home, from one's homeland) and denotes forced displacement, settlement in another region and the creation of a new city.

This phenomenon differs from the spread of Greek tribes to the Asia Minor coast (11th-9th centuries BC). The establishment of colonies in the archaic era was an enterprise organized entirely by the mother city (metropolis). The colonies, however, were new city-states, autonomous and self-sufficient. Their ties with the mother cities were loose, in some cases non-existent, while in rare cases the relations were hostile.

The causes that contributed to the establishment of the colonies were:

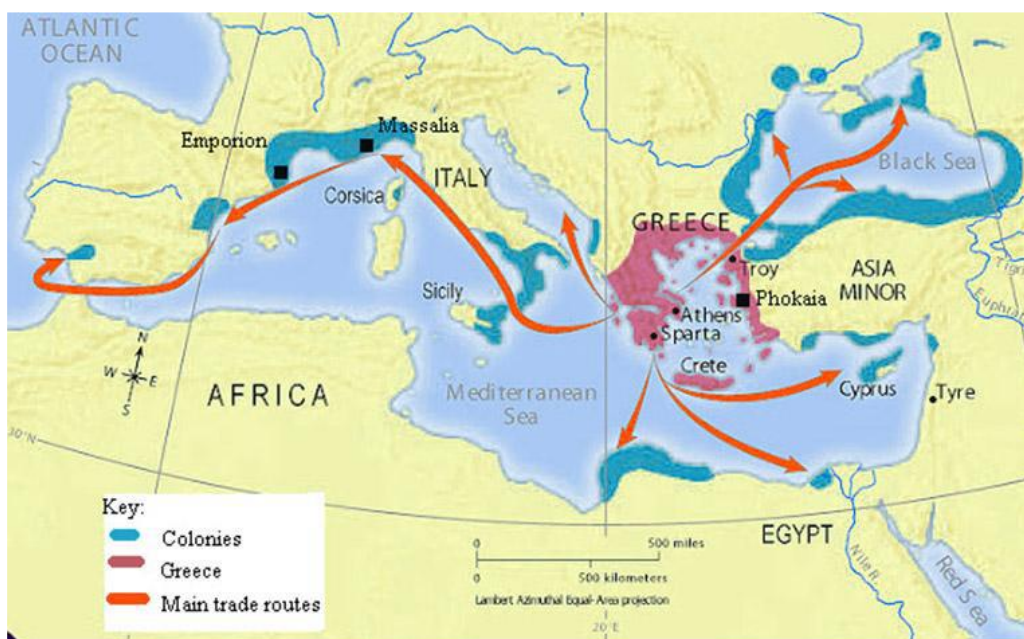
- a) 'distress' (meaning 'lack of space' here), as mentioned by ancient writers, that is, the problem that arose from the increase in population and the limited areas of cultivable land;
- b) the lack of raw materials, especially metals
- c) the search for new markets for the supply and sale of goods

- d) the internal political crises that led to the isolation of a group of the inhabitants
- e) the knowledge they had about the sea routes and the areas of settlement;
- f) the risky character of the Greeks of that time, as reflected in the Odyssey.

From the mid-8th century BC until the mid-6th century BC, the Greeks spread across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, to the limits of the then known world, thus limiting the activity of other peoples, especially the Phoenicians. The colonial expansion essentially reconnected the Greeks with the Mediterranean and had significant impacts on the economy, society and cultural development of this period.

The Greeks transferred all the elements that define Greek culture, such as religious beliefs, political practices, aesthetic perceptions and, more generally, the way of life, to their new homelands. The colonies evolved into experimental spaces for Hellenism. In their contacts with the native populations, they gave cultural elements and took them. The most characteristic case is the spread of writing; the **Chalcidian alphabet**, a form of the Greek alphabet, was spread by the Chalcidian colonists to the Italian peoples and subsequently became the model for the formation of Latin.

The economic crisis was addressed outside the boundaries of the city-states, in a broader economic space with the development of the secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy. Trade was not limited to the exchange of goods; it acquired a commodity-money character with the **minting and use of currency**. The invention of currency was not a simple innovation that facilitated the economic relations of that time. Currency now became the main means of transaction. Economic changes also had consequences for the society of the city-states. A new category of citizens, those who became rich, claimed a share in the exercise of power. Thus, the aristocratically organized society went through a crisis. Finally, slavery developed due to the need for more and cheaper hands. For the first time in this era, slaves who were paid in silver, that is, purchased, were used as a factor of economic development.



Political Systems / Regimes

The city-state was the basic institution of political organization in antiquity. Through this institution, social antagonisms functioned and power was exercised by the powerful social classes at that time. It is understandable that social conflicts and political changes had a different development in each city-state. The course of change of the polities is presented by the following theoretical scheme:

monarchy → aristocracy → oligarchy → tyranny → democracy

The creation of city-states is linked to the decline and fall of the monarchy. Monarchies remained only in regions that maintained the tribal way of organization and did not create city-states, such as Epirus, Macedonia, etc. The historical life of the city-state institution began with the dominance of the nobility and the establishment of aristocratic regimes. In aristocratic regimes, power was in the hands of the elite, that is, those who derived their power from their origin and the possession of land.

The economic developments caused by colonization with the development of trade and crafts brought to the surface new social groups, artisans, merchants, sailors and craftsmen. The new social groups sharpened social competition and claimed a share in power through conflicts. Another factor contributed to the crisis of the aristocratic structure of society, the **hoplite phalanx**. It was a **new military body, to which belonged those citizens who acquired the status of warrior and had the financial means to arm themselves at their own expense**. The phalanx of hoplites led to the development of the idea of equality even in the exercise of power.

In the late 7th century BC and early 6th century BC, the differences became more acute and the struggles between the nobles on the one hand and the rich and the masses on the other became particularly fierce. The situation was partly addressed in many cities by the codification of unwritten, customary law. The recording of laws was entrusted to persons of common acceptance, mainly from the noble class. These were the well-known **legislators** or **eisymnetes**, such as Zaleucus and Charondas in the colonies of the West, Pittacus in Mytilene, Lycurgus in Sparta, Draco and Solon in Athens. With the recording of laws in most cities, the political base was broadened, since participation in the governance of the state was made dependent on the economic situation of the citizens, as happened in Athens with the legislation of Solon. The regime was thus transformed into an oligarchic or, as it was otherwise called, a **tymocratic** (ἡ ἐκ τιμάτων πολιτεία), because the criterion for distinguishing citizens was the “**timimats**”, that is, income.

However, the dominance of the “few” did not provide solutions to the problems of the multitude. The contradictions persisted and in some cases were incited by individuals who wanted to exploit social unrest to impose their own power. Such individuals were usually nobles who had emerged as leaders of the lower social groups, with whose support they managed to seize power. The personal power they imposed was called tyranny. The word

"tyrant" was probably of Lydian origin. Some of the tyrants emerged as good leaders, who took care of the development of their city and the improvement of the living conditions of the citizens. Typical cases of tyrants were Polycrates in Samos, Periander in Corinth, Theagenes in Megara, Peisistratos in Athens, etc. Most tyrants had a violent end. The assassination attempts against them clearly express the moods of the citizens.

After the fall of the tyrannical regimes, around the end of the 6th century BC, oligarchic regimes were re-imposed in most cities, but in others, such as Athens, reformative legislative efforts were made that paved the way for democracy (Cleisthenes' reform).

In the democratic system, the dominant state organ was the city assembly, that is, the assembly of all adult residents who had political rights. Every citizen was given the opportunity to speak, to freely express his or her opinion (**isegoria**), and to participate in the formulation and passage of laws (**isonomy**).

During the archaic period, each city-state consolidated a system of government through social reorganizations and "stances". The most characteristic cases are those of Sparta and Athens. Sparta in the 7th century BC formed an oligarchic regime, which it maintained until the Roman conquest in the 2nd century BC. In contrast, Athens went through the entire spectrum of political developments, from aristocratic organization in the 7th century BC to the foundation of democracy at the end of the 6th century BC.

Culture

In the archaic era, poetic speech acquires a personal style, expresses experiences and emotions. Prose speech, through the thought of the first philosophers (natural philosophers), attempts to explain the creation of the world but also to narrate the customs and traditions of peoples, creating the first examples of historical writing. Art, at first, was influenced by Eastern models (orientalizing phase*), but then it developed characteristics that highlighted Greek aesthetic perceptions. In the archaic times, **two basic architectural styles** were created, the **Doric** and the **Ionic**, the **first large statues**, the **kouroi** and the **kores**, were constructed, and **ceramic art** with the **black-figure** and **red-figure styles** developed to an impressive point.

The first intellectual and artistic concerns are mainly found in Ionia, where philosophy was born; however, they quickly spread to the rest of the Greek area, metropolitan and colonial. At this time, religious beliefs and the way of worshiping the gods have now crystallized. The characteristics of the form of each god become common on a pan-Hellenic level and certain places of worship develop into pan-Hellenic sanctuaries with fame beyond Greek borders, as is the case with Delphi, Olympia, Delos, etc.

The Persian Wars

During the first twenty years of the 5th century BC, the Greeks were forced to confront the expansionism of the Persian kings. The unfortunate revolt of the Greeks of Ionia (Ionian Revolt, 499-494 BC), who were vassals of the Persian Empire, gave rise to a series of Persian operations against Greece.

- The first attempt by the Persians to expand into Greek territory did not have a happy ending. It resulted in the destruction of their fleet, due to rough seas, at Cape Athos. However, their army forced the Greeks of Thrace and Macedonia into submission (492 BC).
- The first organized Persian campaign was a naval operation and aimed at punishing the Eretrians and the Athenians, because they had helped the Greeks of Ionia in their rebellion. It ended with **the battle of Marathon**, where **the Persians were defeated by the Athenians and the Plataeans** (490 BC). The **contribution of Miltiades** was of decisive importance.
- The second systematically organized campaign was led by **Xerxes** with the concentration of numerous sea and land forces and **aimed at the conquest of the entire Greek territory**. The Greek cities, faced with the Persian danger, convened a congress in Corinth (481 BC), where they decided to form a defensive alliance against the Persians. Through a series of conflicts – **Thermopylae (Leonidas)**, **Artemisium**, **Salamis (Themistocles)**, **Plataea (Pausanias)**, **Mycale** – **the Greeks confronted the Persians and forced them to abandon Greek territory with the remnants of their army** (480-479 BC).

At the same time, the Greeks of the West also victoriously confronted the expansionism of the Carthaginians in Sicily (Battle of Himera, 480 BC).

The successful outcome of the Persian Wars not only highlighted the dynamism hidden in the city-state as an organizational institution, but mainly the idea that these struggles were a common task of the Greeks. Two forces had not clashed, one claiming vital areas of expansion and the other their survival. In essence, two different ways of life, two systems of values, two cultures had clashed. The Persian Wars (the Median Wars), without a doubt, contributed to the creation of a common historical memory: they were **the first “national” wars of the Greeks**. The struggle of the Greeks to defend their independence, their land, their sanctuaries and above all the “Hellenic” (nation), consciously echoes for the first time the idea of a pan-Hellenic spirit. Herodotus’s narrative, which refers to the Athenians’ response to the Spartan envoys, is revealing.

"It is human that the Lacedaemonians were afraid that we would compromise with the barbarian. But it is bad that you come here with fear of the Athenians' mind, since you know that there is no gold anywhere on earth so much, nor any place superior to ours in beauty and virtue, that we would accept it and want, in vain, to enslave Greece. Even if we wanted to, there are many and great things that would prevent us from doing so. First and foremost

are the statues and temples of our gods that have been burned and demolished and call on us to punish the cause as much as we can rather than compromise with it. But there is also the Greek nation of the same blood and with the same language as us, with whom we have common sanctuaries of the gods and common sacrifices and common customs, and it would not be right for the Athenians to become traitors. Learn, then, the following, if you did not know before, that even if a single Athenian remains, he will never reconcile with Xerxes.”
Herodotus VIII, 144 after Agg. Vlachos

2.3 Classical era (480-323 BC) (pp. 98 – 114)

The Delian alliance – Athenian hegemony.

After repelling the Persian threat, Athens regrouped and developed into a great naval power. It placed itself at the head of a large part of the Greek cities, founding the First Athenian alliance (478/7 BC). This action was perfectly in line with its aspirations and interests, which aimed at its emergence as a great power.

The headquarters of the alliance was designated Delos (Delicallian alliance), where the alliance treasury was located and the representatives gathered every year. The members that formed it had, at least at the beginning, the same rights and the same obligations. The tax was determined in ships or money¹².

The Athenians used the alliance as a means of dominance and domination; as a means of dominance over the Persians and the rest of the Greeks and as a means of imposing their dominance over the allies themselves. The war against the Persians continued with several interruptions, due to political opposition in Athens. The Greeks who had not joined the alliance, although they did not view the increase in Athenian power favorably, nevertheless did not openly express their opposition. Even the Spartans were cautious and only when given the opportunity did they try indirectly to weaken the growing power of Athens.

Cimon, a representative of the aristocratic faction, was in favor of cooperation with Sparta. As commander-in-chief of the alliance, he worked to consolidate Athenian power and confront the Persians. The most important of his military actions was the victorious confrontation with the Persians at the mouth of the Eurymedon River on the Asia Minor coast (around 467 BC). However, the pro-Laconian policy he followed resulted in his political defeat and the severance of friendly relations between Athens and Sparta, when the Lacedaemonians expelled an Athenian military force that had been sent to assist them during a revolt of the helots of Messenia (Third Messenian War, 464-455 BC).

In Athens during this period, political upheavals occurred. The democrats prevailed, led by **Ephialtes**, and limited the activities of the aristocrats¹³. Cimon was ostracized (461 BC) and

his pro-Laconian policy was definitively abandoned. After Cimon's ostracization, Ephialtes was assassinated and **Pericles** emerged as the leader of the democrats.

Athens, despite its competition with Sparta, managed to expand the alliance among the Greeks.

It imposed itself dynamically by transforming the alliance into a **hegemony**. This change was formally achieved by transferring the allied treasury from Delos to the Acropolis of Athens (454 BC), but in reality it was manifested by armed interventions by the Athenians in the allied cities that showed intentions to withdraw from the alliance.

Cimon returned after a ten-year exile (451 BC) and became once again the master of the political situation. He signed a five-year truce with Sparta and turned against the Persians in Cyprus, where he died during the siege of Kition (450 BC). The Athenian fleet, however, the following year managed to defeat the Persians at Salamis in Cyprus.

The Athenians are said to have concluded a **peace treaty with the Persians**, forcing them to recognize the independence of the Greek cities of Asia Minor. This **treaty** is known as the **Kalliian** after the name of the leader of the Athenian mission to Susa. Many historians call the peace the **Kimoneian**, arguing that Cimon was its main factor with his victories against the Persians. After the death of Cimon, political action was taken by Pericles, who concluded a peace for thirty years (*triakondouteis spondei*) with the Spartans (445 BC).

The era of Pericles.

The period of thirty years of peace, which in reality lasted only fifteen years, is identified with the development of Athens within itself and the absolute dominance over its allies. The main factor in the situation was undoubtedly Pericles. The personality of this charismatic leader essentially sealed the era with his actions, so that many scholars rightly characterize the entire 5th century BC for Athens as the "**golden age of Pericles**".

He himself established himself in Athens after the murder of Ephialtes and the death of Cimon. He was elected general every year through democratic procedures. Thucydides informs us precisely about the political regime that prevailed at that time, "what is done by word of mouth in democracy, what is done by deed under the authority of the first man" (B, 65.9), without of course implying the imposition of tyranny. Elsewhere in his history he states that Pericles imposed himself on the multitude without restricting their freedoms. The fact is that the conditions were there – social, political, economic – and Pericles had the political acumen of a gifted leader, so that Athens could reach the peak of its political and cultural development.

The strengthening of the democratic regime was achieved by the establishment of financial compensation for the elected rulers, the deputies and the popular judges. This measure

aimed at financially supporting the popular strata that did not own property and had to participate in the administration of the state. The financial benefits were also extended to expenses for the cultural development of the Athenians. "**Theorika**" was the price of free entry for citizens to the theater, which was a place of education for the Athenians.

Having secured the dominance of Athens among the allies, Pericles sought to extend the commercial influence of the Athenians to the West. He allied with Egesta, the Leontines, Rhegium and contributed to the establishment of the colony of Thurii (444/3 BC). Thus, Piraeus developed into a major commercial port. The port of Athens, built according to the urban plans of Hippodamus of Miletus, quickly developed into the main commercial center of the entire Mediterranean.

The income of the Athenian state during this period came from the exploitation of the mines, taxation, the tax of the allies and extraordinary contributions. The state itself leased the metal mines to private individuals for a certain period of time. The work in the mines was mainly carried out by slaves. In the time of Pericles, direct taxation did not exist in Athens; it was perhaps applied in times of great crisis. Only those who settled in Athens from other cities paid a tax, the **metikio**, 12 drachmas per year for men and 6 drachmas for women, if they had income. However, an important source of income for the state was indirect taxation, which was imposed on products imported and exported from the Athenian ports and mainly from Piraeus.

The contributions of the allies, when the allied treasury was transferred to Athens (454 BC) amounted to a reserve of 8,000 talents*, in 445 BC to 9,700 talents and before the start of the Peloponnesian War (431 BC) to 6,000 talents. However, in addition to these regular contributions, the Athenians often imposed extraordinary taxation on the allies, mainly in the form of war reparations.

The main source of income from extraordinary contributions was the institution of the **liturgies (public services)**. These were expenses for military and religious events undertaken by the wealthiest citizens. These were mandatory and had an honorary character at the same time. The most important of these were:

- **Choregia (sponsorship)**, according to which the sponsor was obliged to provide the money for the teaching of a theatrical work;
- **Trierarchy**, according to which the trierarch was obliged to maintain and equip a trireme;
- **Architheoria** for the expenses of the official mission (theory) to panhellenic festivals;
- **Estiasi** for the expenses of a tribe's dinner at religious festivals;
- **Gymnasiarchy** for the holding of torch relays at the Panathenaia.

The Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC)

The local conflicts between the Athenians and their opponents, mainly the Spartans, Thebans, and Corinthians, which ended with the signing of a thirty-year peace (445 BC), did not provide solutions to their differences.

The two great alliances, namely the Athenian and the Peloponnesian, which were behind Athens and Sparta, fueled the antagonisms and led to an open rupture. The confrontation, moreover, had its roots in other factors:

- In the racial difference: Athenians – Ionians and Spartans – Dorians;
- in the political constitution of the two opponents, namely democratic Athens and oligarchic Sparta;
- in the hegemonic tendencies of Athens.

Almost the entire Greek world before the outbreak of the war had been divided into two opposing camps; the reasons remained for the beginning of the harshest civil conflict of the ancient Greek world. **The war lasted about thirty years.** Its events were the subject of research by two historians of antiquity, Thucydides and Xenophon. Modern historians have distinguished the events of the war into three separate periods: the Archidamian or Ten Years' War (431-421 BC), the Sicilian campaign (415-413 BC) and the Decelean or Ionian War (413-404 BC).

The Peloponnesian War was devastating for all Greek cities, especially those that became battlefields or those that suffered the consequences of the confrontation with one of the two great powers, as happened with Plataea, Mytilene, Milos and others¹⁵. The consequences were decisive for the future of the Greek cities, because in addition to the material destruction and the depravity of the people, the conditions were also created for the Persians to interfere in the internal affairs of the Greek world. The direct and obvious consequence of the war was the defeat of the Athenians and by extension the recognition of Spartan hegemony by the Greek cities (404 BC). However, the indirect consequences determined the fate of the city-states during the following century.

The crisis of the city-state

In the 4th century BC, the city-states faced internal problems of economic and social crisis. Externally, competition between them intensified and conflicts multiplied, often instigated by Persian intervention. Persian policy aimed at dividing the Greek forces by providing money, sometimes to one city and sometimes to the other.

After the Peloponnesian War and the dominance of the Spartans, the Persian factor took care to create an anti-Spartan coalition from Thebes, Corinth, Argos and Athens and to

instigate a series of conflicts that became known as the **Boeotian** or **Corinthian War** (395-386 BC)¹⁶. This war was sealed by a peace that was detrimental to Hellenism.

With the Treaty of Basileus, also known as the Antalcidas Peace, the Spartans now agreed with the Great King to impose the terms of the end of the war. Thus, they handed over the Greek cities of the coasts of Asia Minor and Cyprus to the king of Persia, proclaimed the autonomy of all Greek cities – with the exception of the islands of Imbros, Lemnos and Skyros which remained with the Athenians – and became themselves the guardians of peace in mainland Greece. In this way, they became instruments of Persian politics. The Thebans would claim hegemony after the Spartans for a short period of time.

Two important battles for Hellenism, one at **Leuctra** (371 BC) and the other at **Mantineia** (362 BC) would determine **the rise and fall respectively of the Theban hegemony**. The wars between the Greek cities, the political and social unrest within the cities themselves and the interventionist role of the Persians were the symptoms of the decline of the Greek city-states.

The Panhellenic idea

The symptoms of decline and evil that plagued the Greek world occupied some intellectuals, visionaries of a Panhellenic coalition.

The Panhellenic idea was a new political expression that was first formulated at the end of the 5th century BC by the sophist Gorgias, in a speech at the sacred site of Olympia. The main exponent of this policy was the Athenian rhetorician **Isocrates**. At first, in his "Panegyric" speech (380 BC), he expressed the view that Athens could undertake the common struggle against the Persians by re-establishing its hegemony. Later, Athens' inability to inspire confidence and impose itself turned him to the idea that a strong monarch would unite the Greeks and lead them against the Persians. Personalities whom he believed could implement the pan-Hellenic idea were Evagoras, king of Salamis in Cyprus, Jason, tyrant of Pherae in Magnesia, and Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse. In his old age, he looked with hope to the rise of Philip II of Macedonia.

Isocrates was one of the personalities who managed to break free from the localist spirit that still fanaticized his contemporary politicians. Opposing this policy, always faithful to the idea of the leading role of Athens, was the orator **Demosthenes**.

Philip II and the unification of the Greeks

Philip II, after he managed to stabilize his position on the throne of Macedonia, set as his policy goals first the strengthening of the Macedonian state and then the expansion of his power. He achieved the strengthening of Macedonia with the following actions:

- He effectively confronted the raids of the Illyrians and the Paeonians on the northern borders.
- He organized a strong army. The main military body was the Macedonian phalanx, consisting of foot soldiers in a formation 16 rows deep and armed with a long spear 6 m long, the **sarissa**. The **cavalry** was manned by the **nobles**, the **eteri** as they were called. The army was supplemented by bodies of javelins, archers and peltasts.
- He created a strong economy. After he succeeded in capturing the gold mines of Pangaeus, he minted a coin, the gold staters. This coin gradually displaced the Persian Dardics from Greek territory.
- He followed an expansionist foreign policy. At first, this policy was linked to military organization, because it secured new areas of land for the men of the Macedonian army. However, after Philip's intervention in central and southern Greece, his policy aimed at uniting the Greeks under his leadership.

In the first stage, Philip, after capturing cities in Chalkidiki and territories in Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, reached the western shores of the Black Sea.

In the second stage, on the occasion of problems with the Delphic oracle, he intervened in Thessaly and southern Greece. In one of his campaigns, **he victoriously faced the combined forces of the Thebans and the Athenians at Chaeronea (338 BC)** and thus established himself as the undisputed leader who had the ability to unite the Greeks and lead the common struggle against the Persians.

The Panhellenic union became a reality at a **congress in Corinth in 337 BC**, where all cities except Sparta participated and where the following were agreed upon:

- Conflicts between Greek cities and the violent change of their regimes were prohibited;
- free navigation was protected and piracy was condemned;
- a pan-Hellenic alliance, defensive and offensive, was established, with Philip II as its leader for life.

The Congress of Corinth, after the assassination of Philip II, was repeated the following year **(336 BC)** by **Alexander**. At this, the delegates renewed the oath they had given to his father in the person of the new leader.

The work of Alexander the Great

With the conquest of the East, Hellenism was led to the ends of the then known world; thus the conditions were created for its universal development. Researchers and historians of this period have used various concepts to attribute the activity and characterize the work that Alexander accomplished in such a short period of time.

In the military field, for which the picture we have is more complete, the characterization of Alexander as a far-sighted general with brilliant thinking does not correspond only to the work of conquering certain regions, but mainly to the implementation of appropriate planning to deal with the opponent, both in frontal conflicts and in the sieges of cities.

As regards his political action, the view has been expressed that his actions aimed at mixing the Greek with the Asian world and uniting them under a strong administration. He accepted local customs, traditions and the different way of exercising power for each people. He maintained the institution of satrapies by entrusting their administration to Greek or Persian rulers. In this way, he sought to create a new administrative tradition.

In the economic sector, he promoted the system of monetary economy and abandoned the idea of the imperial treasury. The satraps were no longer concerned with the collection of taxes and the management of public wealth. In place of the satrapy, which was until that time also a tax unit, he created the tax district with more than one satrapy. The treasures that were collected were converted into gold currency. Thus, a single monetary system was created in the vast empire.

Finally, in the cultural sector, with the spread of the Greek language and Greek culture, the adoption of cultural elements from the tradition of the peoples of the East, the founding of new cities that developed into commercial and intellectual centers, the exploration of regions, the desire for research – as demonstrated by the participation in the campaign of philosophers and researchers – the conditions were formed that gave Alexander's campaign the dimension of **armed exploration**.

Despite the limited period of his reign (336-323 BC) and his young age – he was thirty-three years old when he died – Alexander the Great remained alive in the memory of the peoples. His work left indelible traces for the following centuries and constituted the turning point for a different course of the peoples of the East and the Mediterranean. His form and action were intertwined with the popular imagination and created the legend of a mythical hero in the tradition of many peoples.

Culture of Classical Period

Philosophical thought from the mid-5th century BC placed man at the center of interest and attempted to interpret phenomena on the basis of logic (rationalism). At first, the Sophists and Socrates, and in the 4th century BC Plato and Aristotle, sought practical applications with their philosophical views that would improve man and his life.

Historiography was represented by Herodotus but mainly by Thucydides, who with his work laid the foundations of scientific historical writing²¹. The historian Xenophon moved in this direction in the 4th century BC.

Poetic art, mainly through the work of the three tragedians (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides), evolved into a theatrical discourse of high thought ("imitation of a great and perfect act"), while with the comedies of Aristophanes into a critique of everyday political life. Tragedy and comedy are intellectual offerings capable of justifying the debts of modern civilized humanity to the cradle of their creation, the Athens of the classical era.

The democratic regime and the organization of justice in the interest of the citizen, in the 4th century BC, contributed particularly to the cultivation of **rhetorical discourse**, mainly through the great orators Lysias, Isocrates and Demosthenes.

The **rationality** of philosophical thought contributed to the development of science. During this era, knowledge about nature and man was systematized. Most philosophers, from the archaic era to the 4th century BC, were also specialist researchers who dealt with mathematics, astronomy, physics, botany and other sciences. In **astronomy** and **mathematics**, the Athenian **Meton** distinguished himself, in the **spatial organization of cities** with a prescribed plan **Hippodamus** from Miletus and in **medicine Hippocrates** from Kos. The progress that Hippocrates brought to medicine is due to his theory that all diseases, even the "sacred disease", i.e. epilepsy, have natural causes. Thus, the starting point of medical research now becomes the study of the human body.

The high level of inspiration and creativity had its impact on all forms of art.