

THE GOLDEN AGE

5th and 4th Century Greek Culture

POETRY

- Epic poetry, e.g. Homer, Hesiod
 - (Very) long narratives
 - Mythological, heroic or supernatural themes
 - More objective
- Lyric poetry, e.g. Pindar and Sappho
 - Originally written to be sung
 - Much shorter
 - More personal
 - More subjective

GREEK DRAMA

- Form of religious ritual
 - Festival to Dionysus
- Only male actors, wearing masks
- Use of CHORUS



TRAGEDY

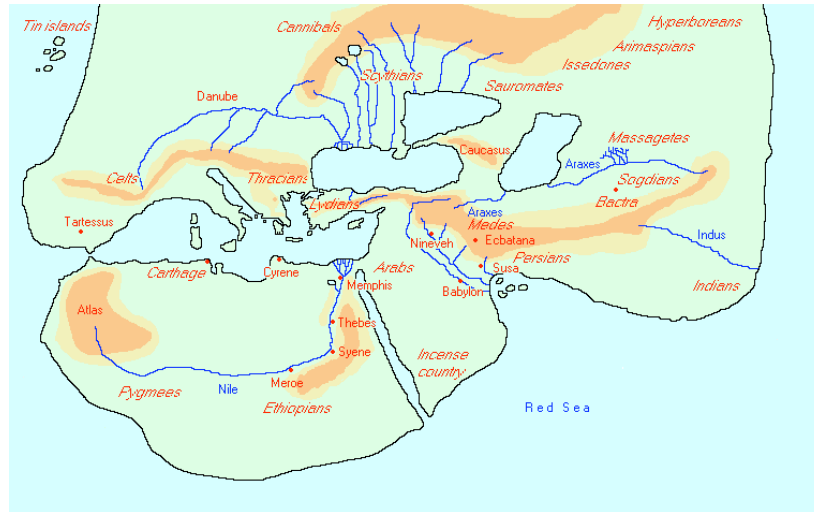
- Not necessarily tragic
- Better than average people
- Suffering bad fortune
- Popular myths or heroic Greek past
- Three great playwrights:
 - Aeschylus: *The Oresteia*
 - Sophocles: Oedipus Trilogy
 - Euripides: *Medea*, *Electra*

COMEDY

- Not necessarily funny
- Average or below average people
- Enjoying good fortune
- Everyday language
- Aristophanes: poking fun at everyone
- Menander: more personal

HISTORY

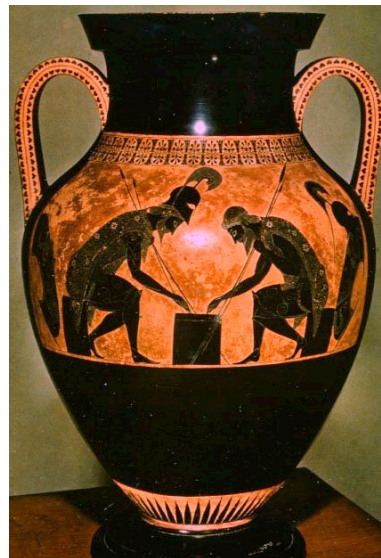
- Herodotus
 - “Father of History”
 - Also an ethnographer and geographer
 - *History of the Persian Wars*
- Thucydides
 - *History of the Peloponnesian Wars*



The World According to Herodotus

POTTERY

- Spread very widely through trade
- Battle, hunting and mythological scenes



SCULPTURE

- Perfection achievable through aesthetics
 - Proportion, harmony, unity
- Naturalistic figures
 - Often portrayed real people, very personal
- Idealized types
 - Veneration of the perfect human form
 - Great muscles, no body hair





Phidias



- friend of Pericles
- Oversaw construction of the Parthenon
- works included celebrations of Marathon & vast statues of gods

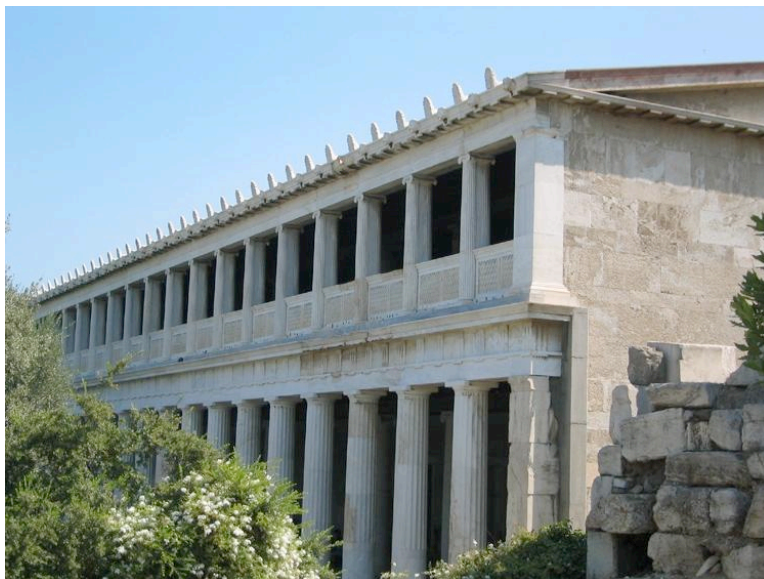
Praxiteles

- Aphrodite of Cnidos
- First monumental female nude in classical Greece



ARCHITECTURE

- Same principles of AESTHETICS
- Shared characteristics of public buildings:
 - limestone dressed with marble
 - rectangular floor plan
 - portico of stone columns on 2 or 4 sides
 - tiled, gabled roofs (no domes)
- E.g. Temples, Markets



Theaters



- public meetings and drama
- semi-circular tiered seating around a central performing area

PHILOSOPHY

- CORNERSTONE OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY
- Transmitted via Rome and Islam to the Medieval West
- Built upon earlier civilizations
- Rejected mythology and religion
- Emphasized LOGIC and REASON

SOCRATES

- executed 399 BC
- The “Father of Ethical Philosophy”
- Believed that:
 - All men should strive to do the right thing
 - All men should strive for JUSTICE
 - All men should strive for TRUTH
 - The truth could be reached through REASON
 - Important to acknowledge IGNORANCE

The Socratic Method

- DIALOGUE between two people, one leading, one responding
 - Leader states a thesis
 - Responder asks questions challenging assumptions and details
- Still used in modern law schools
- E.g. Plato’s *Socratic Dialogues*

SOPHISTS

- Taught skills for a price
- E.g. crafts, oratory
- Used rhetoric and language for PERSUASION & DECEIT not TRUTH
- Condemned by Socrates and Plato

PLATO

- Student of SOCRATES
 - Founded the ACADEMY
- Used Socratic Method for a variety of subjects:
- Ethics:
 - Metaphysics: The nature of reality
 - Theory of FORMS
 - Everything in (our) material world is just a SHADOW of an ideal reality of universals
 - Universals: the ideal form of a particular item or concept

- Political Philosophy
 - What is the ideal state?
 - Oligarchic:
 - Caste based:
 - Philosophers and seekers for truth should rule using REASON
 - Supported by warriors and workers
 - Meritocratic, not based on birth
 - Ideal was SPARTA, not Athens
- Mathematics, including geometry



ARISTOTLE

- Student of Plato
- Became a tutor to ALEXANDER the GREAT
- SYSTEMATIZED philosophy and science
 - observation (EMPIRICISM), reasoning and logic
 - Precursor to the SCIENTIFIC METHOD
- Practical not just theoretical ETHICS:
 - “We are not studying in order to know what virtue is, but to become good, for otherwise there would be no profit in it”

MATHEMATICS & SCIENCE

- Astronomy
- Trigonometry, e.g. Pythagoras' Theorem
- Geometry
 - Euclid
 - AXIOMATIC SYSTEM: Logical examination of assumptions (axioms) to derive a theorem
 - Golden ratio
 - Archimedes
 - Geometry and Arithmetic
 - Physics: Fluid mechanics; the lever
 - Technology: screw pump, siege engine, catapult

MEDICINE

- Emphasis upon a healthy lifestyle: good diet and hygiene
- Hippocrates
- “Father of Medicine”
- Theory of the “Four Humors”
 - Accepted for physical traits until 1858!
 - Used in psychology until the 20th century

Hippocratic Corpus

- Descriptions of many conditions
- Categorization of conditions
- Definition of many medical terms
- Hippocratic Oath
 - Ethical behavior of doctors

Hippocratic Medicine dominated medicine through until the early medieval period