

## EPILOGUE

# THE GREEK LEGACY

And so the Greek world was transformed. A small group of people from central Italy became the next rulers of the region when they outgrew their little village on the Tiber River. They conquered Macedonian Egypt and most of the rest of the Mediterranean area, including Greece. We now call these people the Romans.

The Romans came to love Greek culture. That's fortunate for us, because it means that they passed on Greek art. The Romans copied Greek sculptures endlessly—in fact, very few Greek originals remain and most of what we call “Greek statues” are really Roman copies of Greek originals. The little we know of Greek painting (aside from vase painting) is thanks to the Romans, since their wall paintings were inspired by Greek styles. They transformed Greek

*The Altar of the Fatherland in Rome, Italy, built between 1885 and 1911, was inspired by the Altar of Zeus at Pergamum. Most Romans dislike this huge bright-white building in the middle of their city and call it “the wedding cake” or “the typewriter.”*



### FUNNY, IT DOESN'T SOUND GREEK

The meanings of many Greek words changed when they entered English. Here are some:

“Atlas” was a Titan who supported the world. Now, an atlas is a book of maps because some very early printed atlases (from the 16th century) had an illustration of the Titan on the cover.

“Cosmestic” comes from *cosmos*. This is because in Greek, the same word means both order and beauty.

“Europe” is named after the nymph Europa who was kidnapped by Zeus. He took the form of a bull to visit her and she decided to go for a ride on him. He galloped off into what is now called Europe in her honor.

Psyche was a girl who married the god Eros, the god of love. Her name means “soul,” and psychology originally meant the study of the soul. Now, it means “the study of the mind.”

architecture, too, by mentally taking Greek buildings apart, adding some new elements—most notably the dome and the arch—and putting them back together in a new way.

It became fashionable for wealthy Romans to send their sons to study in Greece for a year or so. These sons would come back with new Greek hair styles and with a taste for Greek literature, art, philosophy, food, architecture—if it was Greek, they loved it.

A new religion, Christianity, grew from humble beginnings in the Middle East and spread throughout the region, replacing, in most of Europe, the worship of deities such as Zeus, Hera, and their family. The Christian St. Paul was well trained in Plato and other Greek authors. He was able to bring Christian ideas to people who spoke Greek and were familiar with the way of thinking of the earlier writers.

In the 15th century, the Italians rediscovered Greek art and philosophy, and the era called the Renaissance (French for “rebirth,” although classical culture had never really died, and so was not really *reborn*) gave us magnificent works of art, philosophy, and literature.

We can see ancient Greek things everywhere in our lives today. Familiar names like Nike, Apollo, and worldwide events like the Olympics, near-universal symbols like the masks of comedy and tragedy—they all come from Greece. Many Greek mathematical and astronomical methods and discoveries are still in use today. But you might not be aware of the Greek origin of many other familiar things in your life.

Almost every day, someone is voting. People are elected to office, and laws and other regulations are approved or rejected. Immigrants become citizens for many reasons, one of the most important being that they want to vote. If the Greeks had not come up with the idea of democracy, where all the citizens have an equal voice in the government, who knows what political system would be running many countries today?

Before Greek was written, alphabets represented only consonants, and the reader had to guess what vowel-sound was supposed to supply the missing vowels. The Greek alphabet was the first to use symbols for vowels as well. The Romans adopted the Greek alphabet and adapted it to their

own language. Most of the western world still uses that alphabet today, and many English words come from Greek.

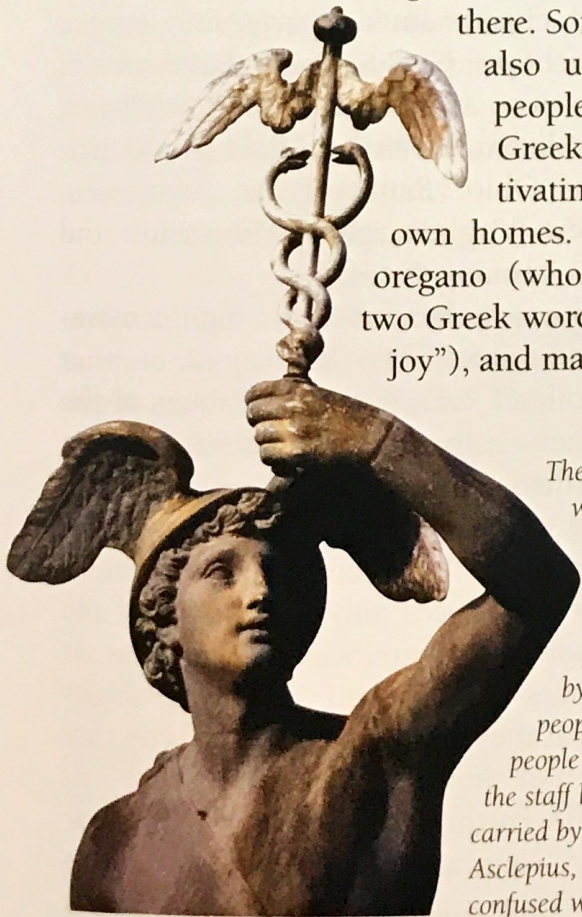
Most people are familiar with the story of the tortoise and the hare, but not everyone knows that it was one of the many stories told by the Greek slave Aesop. The story tells us the familiar saying, “Slow and steady wins the race.” Aesop also gave us the expression “sour grapes.”

The universal symbol for “doctor” is the *caduceus*, originally a staff carried by Hermes. Most new physicians swear an oath of behavior modeled on the one first written by the Greek physician Hippocrates.

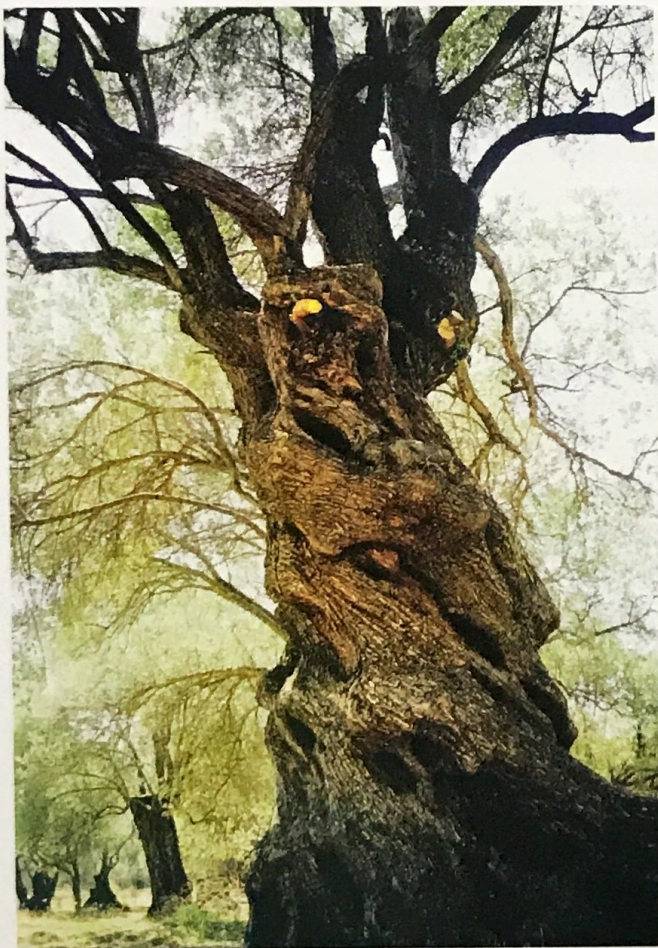
Look at the public buildings or old banks in your town. Do they look similar to the buildings on the Acropolis or Greek temples with tall-standing columns?

The next time you’re in the store, check out the herbs and spices. Many of them come from Greece and nearby regions and were used in cooking

there. Some of these herbs were also used in medicine. As people tasted and enjoyed Greek food, they started cultivating these herbs in their own homes. Examples are thyme, oregano (whose name comes from two Greek words meaning “mountain joy”), and many others.



*The caduceus, a winged staff with two snakes intertwined around it became the symbol of medicine by mistake. It originally stood for peace, and was carried by ambassadors and other people who needed to deal with people who might be hostile. But the staff looks very similar to the rod carried by the god of healing, Asclepius, and was confused with it.*



According to legend, Athena, the patron deity of Athens, gave the olive tree as a gift to her city. In return, the Athenians dedicated the Parthenon to her.

You probably see many varieties of olive oil. Olive trees were exported from Greece to Italy and then all throughout the Roman Empire, and olive oil is a favorite cooking ingredient today. Grape vines also were imported from Greece into the rest of Europe.

Do you know anyone named Melissa, Nicholas, Andrew, Cassandra, Sophie, Alexander, Marissa, Jason, Christopher, Chloe, Cynthia, Gregory, George, Angela, Alexis, Catherine, or Stephanie? These and other names are Greek in origin.

If you live in the United States, your state probably has some cities with Greek names. You'll find cities named Sparta in Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Wisconsin. There are cities named Athens in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Maine, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin, and counties named Athens in many states.

The *polis* of Athens was so famous for its high achievements in culture that some cities boast that they are another Athens. Edinburgh, Scotland, calls itself "the Athens of the North." Nashville, Tennessee, has so many universities that it's referred to as "the Athens of the South." Nashville's symbol is its Parthenon, the world's only full-scale replica of the temple to Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis (there's another one in Germany, but it reproduces only the outside of the Greek original). The doors at the entrance are the biggest set of matching bronze doors in the world. Each one weighs seven and a half *tons!* But they are balanced so perfectly that you can push them open or shut with just one finger.

Inside the Nashville Parthenon is the largest indoor sculpture in the Western Hemisphere, a 42-foot high statue of Athena Parthenos. It's not an exact copy of the original

made by Pheidias. First of all, the Greek sculpture was made of ivory, and nobody today could slaughter dozens of elephants to get the material to make a statue, even if they could afford it. Instead, Nashville's version is made of cement. This material is so strong that the artist, Alan LeQuire, decided to do without the column that originally supported Athena's outstretched hand. Pheidias needed to add it because his material wasn't strong enough for the arm to stick out far by itself, but LeQuire thought the statue looked better without it.

Also, the original was covered with one ton of gold. The gold that highlights the hair, dress, sandals, and other parts of Nashville's Athena is in such thin sheets that it took just over eight pounds of it to cover a large part of the statue.

With all these references to ancient Greece in Nashville, no wonder their football team is called the Tennessee Titans.

But even if you don't live in the Athens of the South, or the North, or the East, or the West, once you start looking, you will see evidence of ancient Greece. This great civilization has not died; it has just changed and mixed with other cultures to help produce the world we live in today.

*Just like the original, Nashville's Parthenon houses a huge statue of Athena Parthenos. The goddess Athena is in full armor and holds the figure of Nike, the goddess of victory, in her hand.*



# TIMELINE

## B C E

**3200–1200**

Greek Bronze Age

**2000**

Cretans build first palaces in Crete

**1800**

Minoans develop Linear A writing

**1600**

Small Greek kingdoms develop like that of Mycenae; shaft graves are dug at Mycenae

**1500–1450**

Mycenaeans conquer Crete

**1450**

Linear B syllabary writing develops

**1400–1200**

Mycenae is at the height of its power

**1200**

According to Homer's *Iliad*, a war occurs in Troy; Bronze Age civilizations collapse throughout Mediterranean; Egyptian records report trouble made by those they call "Sea Peoples"



**1200–900**

Early Dark Age; bronze gives way to iron as iron technology develops

**900–750**

Late Dark Age; Greece's population grows; trade and manufacture expand; art of writing is recovered, but this time as the Greek alphabet we know today; first temples are built

**776**

Greeks, according to tradition, hold their first Olympic games

**753**

According to legend, Rome is established

**750–490**

Archaic Age

**750–550**

Age of colonization begins

**750–700**

The *polis* emerges; Homer composes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* possibly in this period



**594**  
Solon reforms laws at Athens

**560–510**  
Peisistratus and sons rule in Athens

**525**  
Aeschylus is born

**499–494**  
Ionian Greeks rebel against Persian King

**498**  
Sardis is destroyed

**496**  
Sophocles is born

**490**  
Athenians defeat Persians at Battle of Marathon

**489–323**  
Classical Age

**486**  
Darius of Persia dies and is succeeded by Xerxes

**482**  
Athenians ostracize Aristides

**480**  
Persians defeat Spartans at the Thermopylae pass; King Leonidas of Sparta dies; Greeks defeat Persians at naval battle at Salamis

**478**  
The Delian League is founded

**472**  
Aeschylus's play *The Persians* is performed at Athens



**470**  
Socrates is born

**460–429**  
Pericles is the most prominent politician in Athens

**460–446**  
Intermittent fighting occurs between Athens and Sparta

**458–456**  
The “Long Walls” are built connecting Athens to its port Piraeus

**455**  
Aeschylus dies

**450**  
Aristophanes is born

**446**  
Athens and Sparta sign the Thirty Years’ Peace treaty

**442**  
Sophocles’s play *Antigone* is performed at Athens

**431**  
Peloponnesian War breaks out

**430**  
Plague hits Athens



- 429**  
Pericles dies
- 428**  
Plato is born
- 424**  
Thucydides is exiled
- 421**  
Peace is signed between Athens and Sparta
- 415**  
Mutilation of sacred statues at Athens;  
Athenians set out to attack Sicily;  
Alcibiades is recalled for trial and defects  
to Sparta
- 413**  
Athenian forces are defeated in Sicily
- 411**  
Aristophanes's  
*Lysistrata* is per-  
formed
- 408**  
Alcibiades is  
permitted to return  
to Athens
- 406**  
Alcibiades is deposed from generalship,  
possibly exiled; Sophocles dies
- 405**  
Lysander defeats Athenians at sea; 3,000  
Athenians are executed
- 404**  
Athens surrenders to Sparta



- 399**  
Socrates is tried  
and executed
- 388**  
Aristophanes dies



- 387**  
Plato's Academy is founded
- 384**  
Aristotle is born
- 367–347**  
Aristotle studies at Plato's Academy
- 359**  
Philip becomes King of Macedon
- 357**  
Philip of Macedon marries Olympias
- 356**  
Alexander, son of Philip and Olympias  
is born
- 347**  
Plato dies
- 338**  
Philip of Macedon defeats Greek forces at  
Battle of Chaeronea
- 336**  
Philip is murdered at his daughter's wed-  
ding; Alexander becomes king
- 335**  
Thebes revolts and is destroyed by  
Alexander; Aristotle founds Lyceum in  
Athens



- 334**  
Alexander crosses over into Asia
- 333**  
Alexander cuts knot at Gordium
- 331**  
Alexander founds Alexandria in Egypt
- 326**  
Alexander campaigns in India
- 325**  
Alexander leads his troops on deadly homeward march through desert
- 323–30**  
Hellenistic Age
- 323**  
Alexander dies in Babylon at age 32
- 322**  
Aristotle dies
- 315**  
Olympias is executed
- 310**  
Zeno founds Stoic school at Athens
- 305–282**  
Ptolemy I reigns in Egypt and establishes Mouseion and Library at Alexandria
- 30**  
Cleopatra VII commits suicide after her defeat by Rome, and Egypt is incorporated into the Roman empire; all territory of former Hellenistic kingdoms falls into Roman hands



## C E

- 330**  
Roman emperor Constantine founds new capital of Roman empire in Byzantium, calls it Constantinople

**330–1453**  
Byzantine era in Greek world

- 394**  
Roman emperor Theodosius calls for end to Olympic games

**1453**  
Turkey conquers Greece

**1821–1832**  
Greeks rebel against Turkey; the state of modern Greece is established

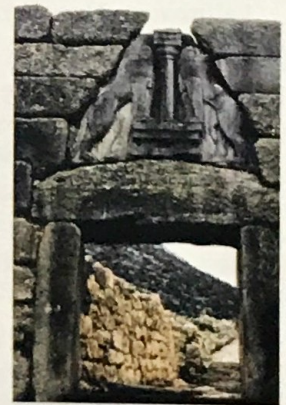
**1870**  
Heinrich Schliemann begins digging at Troy

**1894**  
Olympic games are revived; Sir Arthur Evans begins to excavate at Knossos

**1896**  
First modern Olympic Games are held in Athens

**1953**  
Michael Ventris deciphers Linear B script

**2004**  
Olympic Games return to Athens



# FURTHER READING

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# WEBSITES

## GATEWAYS

### Hellenic Culture

[www.culture.gr](http://www.culture.gr)

Links to museums, monuments, and archaeological sites in Greece and provides information on cultural organizations and events.

### The Perseus Digital Library

[www.perseus.tufts.edu/](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/)

Compiles works of classical literature and art and various aspects of daily life.

## WEBSITES

### Aesop's Fables On-Line Collection

[www.aesopfables.com/](http://www.aesopfables.com/)

Contains texts of fables of the Greek slave Aesop.

### Alexandria: The Submerged Royal Quarters

[www.underwaterdiscovery.org/english/projects/alexandria/](http://www.underwaterdiscovery.org/english/projects/alexandria/)

Provides detailed reports on diving excavations of the submerged royal palace of Alexandria.

### A Digital Archive of Architecture

[www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/fnart/arch/greek\\_arch.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/arch/greek_arch.html)

Shows Greek architectural elements and provides examples.

### Athenian Daily Life

<http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/classics/dunkle/athnlife/index.htm>

Contains links to pages about different aspects of Athenian life.

### Maecenas: Images of Ancient Greece and Rome

[http://wings.buffalo.edu/AandL/Maecenas/general\\_contents.html](http://wings.buffalo.edu/AandL/Maecenas/general_contents.html)

This is a very full collection of images of art and architecture.

### Odyssey

<http://mkatz.web.wesleyan.edu/cciv110x/odyssey/>

Features an index of images pertaining to Homer's *Odyssey*.

### Sparta: War and Valor

[www.sikyon.com/Sparta/sparta\\_eg.html](http://www.sikyon.com/Sparta/sparta_eg.html)

Shows images and information on many aspects of Spartan society.

### The Ancient Greek Theatre Page

<http://anarchon.tripod.com/indexGREEKTH.html>

Provides a history of Greek drama and dramatists, with images of Greek theaters.

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