

THE ANCIENT
GREEK
— WORLD —



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A [66] marks each chapter's primary sources—ancient writings and artifacts that “speak” to us from the past.

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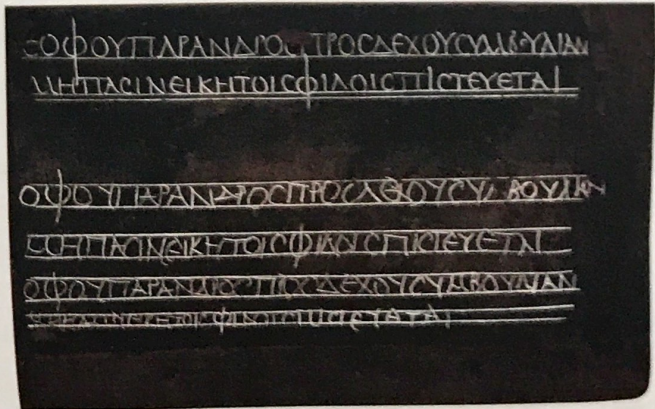
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Because The World in Ancient Times covers many cultures, we use the abbreviations CE for “Common Era” and BCE for “Before the Common Era.” The traditional equivalents are BC for “Before Christ” and AD for “Anno Domini,” Latin for “In the Year of Our Lord,” referring to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Achilles (uh-KIL-eez) Mythical Greek warrior in the Trojan War

Aeschylus (ES-kuh-lus), about 525–456 BCE Athenian playwright

Aesop (EE-sop), sixth century BCE Greek slave and storyteller

Agamemnon (AG-uh-MEM-non) Mythical king of Mycenae



Alcibiades (AL-suh-BY-uh-deez), about 450–404 BCE Athenian general and politician

Alexander, 356–323 BCE King of Macedon (ruled 336–323 BCE); son of Philip of Macedon

Antigone (an-TIG-uh-nee) Mythical daughter of Oedipus

Aphrodite (AF-ruh-DIE-tee) Mythical goddess of love

Apollo (uh-PA-low) Mythical god of the sun, archery, and prophecy

Archimedes (AHR-kuh-ME-deez), about 285–212 BCE Mathematician and engineer; developed system of measuring area and volume

Ares (EHR-eez) Mythical god of war

Aristagoras (ar-i-STAG-uh-rus), fifth century BCE Tyrant of the polis of Miletus

Aristides (ar-i-STEE-deez), fifth century BCE Athenian statesman and general; helped to found the Delian League

Aristophanes (ar-i-STAHF-uh-nee), about 450–388 BCE Athenian playwright who wrote comedies

Aristotle (AR-i-stah-tl), 384–322 BCE Philosopher and teacher; founded the Lyceum

Artemis (AHR-ti-mus) Mythical goddess of hunting and the moon

Artemisia (AHR-ti-MIZ-ee-uh), fifth century BCE Queen of Halicarnassus

Athena (uh-THEE-nuh) Mythical goddess of war and wisdom, patron deity of Athens

Athenaeus (ATH-i-NEE-us), about 200 CE Writer who wrote about banquets and food

Bacchylides (buh-KIL-i-deez), fifth century BCE Poet who wrote about the Olympic games

Callimachus (kuh-LIM-uh-kus), about 305–240 BCE Poet who wrote during the Hellenistic period

Cleomenes (klee-AH-muh-nee), about 520–490 BCE King of Sparta

Clytemnestra (KLIE-tim-NES-truh) Mythical wife of King Agamemnon

Creon (KREE-ahn) Mythical king in Sophocles' play *Antigone*

Cronos (KROH-nus) Mythical king of Titans

Daedalus (DED-l-us) Mythical architect who made wings out of birds' feathers and wax

Darius (duh-RYE-us) 550–486 BCE Persian emperor (ruled 521–486 BCE); he fought the Greeks after the revolt of the Ionians

Demeter (di-ME-ter) Mythical goddess of the harvest

Democritus (di-MOK-ruh-tus), about 460–370 BCE Philosopher and scientist; he theorized the world is made up of atoms

Demosthenes (di-MOSS-thuh-neeZ), 384–322 BCE Athenian orator

Diodorus Siculus (die-uh-DAWR-us SIK-yuh-lus), first century BCE Historian; he wrote *Library of History*

Dionysius (DIE-un-EYE-shus) I, about 430–367 BCE Tyrant of Syracuse

Dionysus (DIE-un-EYE-sus) Mythical god of wine

Eratosthenes (EHR-uh-TAHS-thuh-neeZ), about 276–194 BCE Scientist who calculated the earth's size

Eros (EHR-oas) Mythical god of love

Euripides (yoo-RIP-i-deez), about 484–406 BCE Playwright; he wrote *Iphigenia Among the Taurians* and *The Trojan Women*

Evans, Sir Arthur, 1851–1941 Archaeologist; he excavated the palace of Knossos

Gorgo (GAWR-goh), fifth century BCE Daughter of King Cleomenes of Sparta who married King Leonidas

Hades (HAY-deez) Mythical lord of the underworld

Haemon (HE-mun) Mythical son of King Creon

Hector Mythical Trojan prince who fought in the Trojan War

Helen of Troy Character in Greek mythology viewed as the most beautiful woman in the world and the cause of the Trojan War

Hera (HAIR-uh) Mythical queen of the gods

Heracles (HAIR-uh-kleeZ) Mythical demigod, son of Zeus and a mortal, known for superhuman strength and cunning

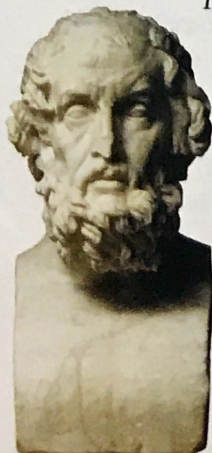
Hermes (HER-meeZ) Mythical messenger of the gods, who carried caduceus

Herodotus (huh-RAH-duh-tus), about 484–420 BCE Historian who wrote his *Histories* about the Persian wars

Hesiod (HE-see-ud), about 700 BCE Early poet

Hippocrates (hi-PAHK-ruh-teeZ), fifth century BCE Physician who believed there is reason for illness; credited with the Hippocratic Oath.

Homer, eighth century BCE Epic poet; he wrote the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*



Hypatia (Hi-PAY-shuh), about 400 CE Scientist and mathematician; she lectured in Alexandria

Isocrates (eye-SAHK-ruh-teeZ), 436–338 BCE Athenian statesman who wrote the *Antidosis*

Leonidas (lee-AHN-i-dus) King of Sparta (ruled 490–480 BCE) who died fighting at Thermopylae

Lycurgus (lie-KUHR-gus), seventh century BCE Spartan lawgiver; he was credited with establishing the Spartans' war-centered life

Minos (MY-nus) Mythical king of Minoans whose son the minotaur was kept in a labyrinth below the king's palace

Odysseus (oh-DIS-ee-us) Mythical Greek hero of Homer's *Odyssey*

Olympias (uh-LIM-pee-us), about 375–316 BCE Wife of Philip of Macedon

Paris Mythical Trojan prince who agreed to give a golden apple to Aphrodite in exchange for Helen

Pasion (PAHZ-ee-ohn), fourth century BCE Former slave at Athens who became a wealthy banker

Pausanias (paw-SAY-nee-us), d. 336 BCE Assassinated King Philip of Macedon

Pausanias (paw-SAY-nee-us), second century CE Travel writer; he wrote *Description of Greece*



Peisistratus (pi-SIS-truh-tus), sixth century BCE Athenian tyrant who increased trade, minted coins, and encouraged arts in pottery and vase painting

Penelope (puh-NEL-uh-pee)
Mythical wife of Odysseus

Pericles (PAIR-i-kleez), about 495–429 BCE Athenian statesman who reformed laws to give lower classes more power for a more democratic society

Pheidias (FID-ee-us), fifth century BCE Sculptor

Philip of Macedon (MASS-i-don), King of Macedon (ruled 359–336 BCE) and conqueror of Greece

Phintys (FIN-tis), about 200 BCE
Writer; she wrote about differences between men and women

Plato (PLAY-toh), about 427–347 BCE
Philosopher and teacher who founded the Academy and wrote the *Republic*

Plutarch (PLOO-tark), 46–after 119 CE
Biographer and essayist who wrote in Roman times

Polykleitos (PAH-li-KLIE-tus), 460–410 BCE
Sculptor

Polyphemus (PA-li-FEE-mus)
Cyclops, mythical figure, who imprisoned Odysseus and his sailors in Homer's *Odyssey*

Poseidon (puh-SIDE-un) Mythical god of ocean and earthquakes

Protagoras (proh-TAG-uh-rus), about 485–410 BCE
Philosopher and Sophist; he said “Man is the measure of all things”

Ptolemy (TAL-uh-mee), 323–285 BCE
General under Alexander; governor and later ruler of Egypt; he built the Mouseion and Library at Alexandria

Pythagoras (pi-THAG-uh-rus), about 580–500 BCE
Mathematician who discovered the Pythagorean theorem

Sappho (SAF-oh), seventh to sixth century BCE
Poet who was so admired by her contemporaries that she was sometimes called “the tenth muse”

Schliemann (SHLEE-mahn), **Heinrich**, (HINE-rikh), 1822–1890
Archaeologist who claimed to have found the site of ancient Troy

Semonides (se-MAH-ni-deez), about 650 BCE
Poet who wrote satire comparing women to animals

Simonides (see-MAH-ni-deez), about 556–468 BCE
Poet

Socrates (SOCK-ruh-teez), about 470–399 BCE
Philosopher who invented a question-and-answer format called the Socratic method

Solon (SOH-lun), about 630–560 BCE
Athenian poet, politician, and lawgiver who is known as one of the “Seven Wise Men of Greece”

Sophocles (SOFF-uh-kleez), about 496–406 BCE
Playwright who wrote Greek tragedies including *Antigone* and *Oedipus*

Themistocles (thuh-MIS-tuh-kleez), about 524–460 BCE
Athenian politician and general

Theseus (THEE-see-us) Mythical Athenian prince who killed the Minotaur

Thucydides (thoo-SID-i-deez), about 460–after 404 BCE
Historian; he wrote *The History of the Peloponnesian War*

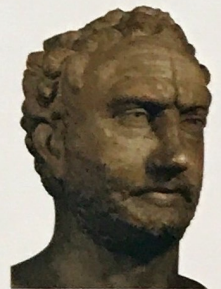
Tyrtaeus (tur-TEE-us), seventh century BCE
Spartan poet

Ventris, Michael, 1922–1956
English architect who deciphered Linear B tablets

Xenophon (ZEN-uh-fun), 431–after 350 BCE
Historian

Xerxes (ZURK-seez), 486–465 BCE
King of Persia who defeated the Spartans led by Leonidas at Thermopylae

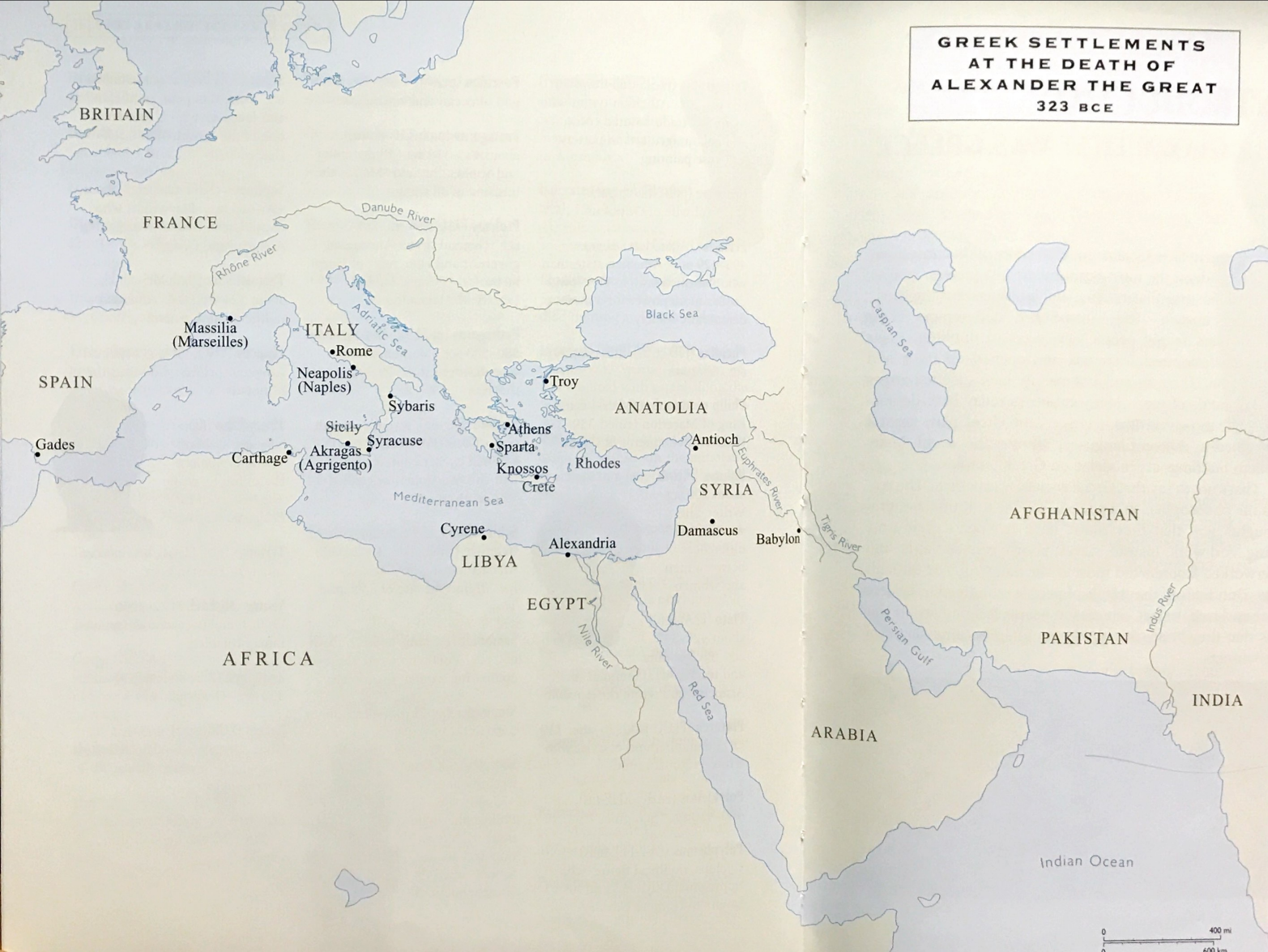
Zeus (zooose) Mythical son of Cronos and chief god of the Greeks



**GREEK SETTLEMENTS
AT THE DEATH OF
ALEXANDER THE GREAT
323 BCE**

SOME PRONUNCIATIONS

- Akragas (uh-KRAH-gus)
- Anatolia (an-uh-TOE-lee-uh)
- Antioch (AHN-tee-ock)
- Babylon (BA-buh-lun)
- Carthage (KAHR-thij)
- Crete (kreet)
- Cyrene (sigh-REE-nee)
- Damascus (duh-MASS-cus)
- Euphrates (yoo-FRAY-teez) River
- Gades (KAY-deez)
- Indus (IN-dus) River
- Knossos (NAHS-us)
- Massilia (mass-SILL-ee-uh)
- Neapolis (nee-A-puh-lis)
- Sybaris (SEE-buh-rus)
- Syracuse (SEER-uh-kyoos)



INTRODUCTION

THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE

philos + sophia =
“love” + “wisdom”

Originally, “philosophy” meant “love of wisdom,” but now it means a set of beliefs or the study of the truth. Philosophers search for meaning in life: some by studying ethics, others by studying the nature of reality.

The ancient Greeks came up with some of the most interesting ideas, the most beautiful art, the greatest stories, and the most magnificent cities and buildings that the world has ever known. They introduced democracy. Their philosophers taught people new ways of thinking. Their ships revolutionized sea travel and opened up trade and exploration. Their art and architecture have inspired artists for thousands of years. Many countries today have democracies like those invented in Greece, and Greek plays are still performed in different languages all over the world. Many modern buildings are modeled on Greek temples.

That’s not to say that Greek society was perfect. The reason the philosophers and poets were able to think beautiful thoughts was that they didn’t have to spend their time doing hard work. Instead, slaves, poorly paid servants, and overworked laborers did most of the dangerous or difficult jobs. Hundreds of thousands of people who lived in Greece were enslaved. In fact, one reason people fought hard in war was that they knew that the losers often became slaves of the winners.

Every two years, women walked to the mountains to perform religious rituals to honor the god Dionysus with dances and music. On this stone coffin, worshipers (center) are dancing with satyrs, mythological creatures that were supposed to be half goat, half human.



Aside from enslaving people, the Greeks waged many wars that might strike people of today as unjustified. They were sometimes prejudiced, looking down on non-Greek people. Women weren't allowed anything close to the same rights and freedom as men.

Still, the Greeks achieved extraordinary things. And they knew they were special. Early on, they started writing about themselves. They were the first people in the ancient western world to write what we now call history: a narrative of what happened to the people, and what the people did. Other ancient peoples centered their histories around the gods or around their ruler.

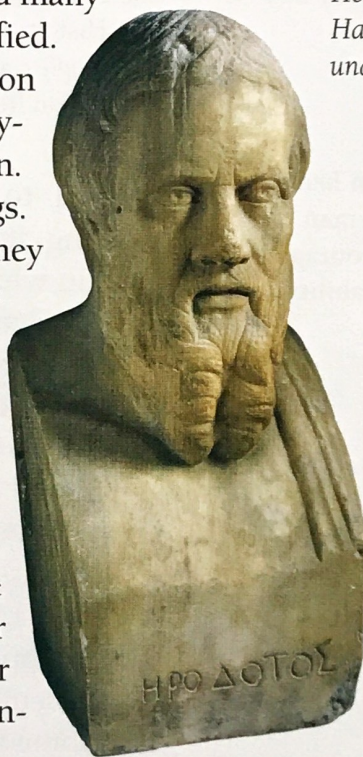
One of the earliest Greek historians, Herodotus, lived in the fifth century BCE. He was eager for future generations to remember the great things his own people and the other peoples living nearby did. So he says at the beginning of his *Histories*,

This is where Herodotus of Halicarnassus has set forth the fruits of his research, a project he undertook so that the great and wonderful achievements of both Greeks and **barbarians** should not go unrenowned.

Another great Greek historian, Thucydides, also thought it was important for others to appreciate his people's greatness, and wrote in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*:

I, Thucydides of Athens, wrote the history of the war that was fought between the Spartans and the Athenians. I began the history as soon as the war broke out, in the belief that it would be the most important, most interesting war of any that had gone before. . . . This was the greatest movement ever to sweep the Greeks and many of the barbarians—in other words, the majority of the human race.

But Thucydides had another reason for writing history. He was sure that he could do it better than anyone else, and would get the facts straight. He was distressed that people



Herodotus's hometown was Halicarnassus, a Greek city under Persian control.

“ Herodotus, *Histories*, mid-fifth century BCE

“ “Barbarian” comes from *barbaros*, which means “a foreigner.”

“ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, 431 BCE

The Greek historian Thucydides wrote The History of the Peloponnesian War so that people could learn history from facts, rather than from myths and legends.

“Hero” comes from *heros*, which means “a man of unusual strength, courage, or ability.”

seemed to be more interested in exciting stories and tales of heroes than in what really happened.

Thucydides was right to worry that people might look to myths and legends to find out about the past. This has happened for a long time, and still goes on today. People can get so caught up in a myth that they believe that it tells the “real story.”

And it’s true that some myths are loosely based on real events. The Trojan War, or something like it, might really have happened. It’s possible that people made up stories about centaurs—half man, half horse—the first time they saw someone on a horse.

But most Greek myths aren’t history. Instead, they are stories that teach a lesson, or give an explanation for why something exists in a certain way in nature, or just entertain and amuse an audience. The Greeks were master storytellers, and the tales of their gods and goddesses, their nymphs and satyrs, and their interactions with human beings have lasted for millennia. Even if the Greeks had not

given us anything else, their myths and legends are enough to make us appreciate their creativity and imagination.

Some centaurs got drunk and tried to kidnap women attending a wedding. Sculptures of the battle that erupted between these unruly guests and their hosts filled spaces on the outside wall of the Parthenon in Athens.

