

Lesson 2- The cities of Greece

● I. Protection from a “wooden wall”

A. A Hidden Message

- 1. Oracle = a place or person that a god uses to reveal hidden knowledge
 - a. Athenians believed that oracles gave messages from gods.
 - b. Athenians asked oracles for advice because danger threatened their city.
 - c. Xerxes = Persian Emperor
 - 1.) invaded Greece
 - 2.) Athenians tried to stop Persians at Thermopylae (mountain pass), it failed
 - 3.) Persians took Athens & burned it.
 - 4.) All men, women, and children of Athens escaped to the island of Salamis.

2. Oracles messages were like riddles.

- a. Acropolis = high hill in the midst of city; a wooden wall had at one time surrounded it
- b. Themistocles = Athenian leader; insisted “wooden wall” was ships and they would depend on the fleet for protection.

B. Battle of Salamis

- 1. Themistocles felt the Athenians would have a chance if they could fight in the narrow bay of Salamis.
- 2. Themistocles played a trick.
 - a. Sent Greek posing as a deserter into the Persian camp.
 - b. told Persians that Athenians planned to slip out of the bay of Salamis at night.
 - c. Persians believed him and sailed into the bay.
 - d. Xerxes watched from hill waiting for victory.

- e. Persians were confused and lost the greater part of their fleet.
- f. Athenians win battle & Xerxes returned to Asia leaving an army behind
- g. Next year Greeks defeat Persian forces at the battle of Plataea.

II. Fighting the Persians

- 1. **Persia** – foreign land ruled by one all-powerful person called a **despot**.
- 2. Despots often abused their great powers – Greeks feared this type of ruler.
- 3. Xerxes
 - a. ordered engineers to build a bridge of boats across the **Hellespont**.
 - b. **Hellespont** = straight connecting the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara. (Hellespont is now called **Dardanelles**)
 - c. 1st bridge breaks and Xerxes orders the engineers to be killed
 - d. second group succeeded
 - e. **despotism** = means “cruel and unjust government”

III. The Military State of Sparta

● A. **Spartan Government**

- 1. Greek states consisted of **city-states** which each one was completely free of the others.
- 2. **3 types of government used in the Greek city- states**
 - a. **Oligarchy** = ruled by a small group
 - b. **democracy** = ruled by the people
 - c. **monarchy** = government by one ruler

3. United States is a democracy.

BB. Military Life

- 1. Spartan boy at age 7; trained to be a soldier.
- 2. Boys lived together in military troops
- 3. When married, he would continue to live with his fighting men for another 10 years.
- 4. Spartan Girls

- a. expected to become wives and mothers of warriors
 - b. took part in vigorous sports to make them strong
 - c. learned to manage household affairs
- 5. Sparta didn't welcome visitors and few Spartans traveled. Feared citizens might become interested in other ways of life.
- 6. Didn't take part in business. Outsiders traded for them.
- 7. Sports – games were soldier's games
- 8. Why a strong army?
- a. afraid of the slaves revolting
 - b. slaves were called helots
 - 1) worked the land
 - 2) outnumbered the Spartans
- IV. Democracy in Athens
- A. Pericles
- 1. Leader of Athens –30yrs
 - 2. Declared Athens a democracy
 - 3. Democratic at the time/today undemocratic
- a. citizenship was based on birth; only the child of a citizen could be one
 - b. If parents came from another place, children were not considered citizens.
- B. Citizen's Roles
- 1. Woman had no voice in city's affairs.
 - 2. Said all citizens should take an active part but there was not room for all of them
 - 3. Citizen could serve for one year on the Council of Five Hundred (in charge of city's day to day business)
 - a. chosen by lot rather than election
 - 4. Selected juries by lot; decided by majority of votes

C. Slavery

- 1. Common in Ancient times
- 2. Some slaves were enemies who were captured.
- 3. Slaves by birth

D. Sparta and Athens are Rivals

- 1. Delian League – formed by Athens
 - a. alliance with other greek cities
 - b. was to be a partnership but Athens ruled the league
 - c. Sparta feared Athens power/formed another league
 - d. Cities tried to withdraw but Athens forced them to stay. Cities complained that the Alliance turned into an Athenian empire.

2. Peloponnesian War

- 1. 431 B.C. war began bet. Sparta & Athens
- 2. Sparta – more powerful on land – elephant
- 3. Athens – controlled sea - whale
- 4. Both tried to get Persian support.
- 5. Persians supported the Spartans and they defeated the Athenians.

3. History Book

- 1. Thucydides
 - a. wrote history of Peloponnesian War
 - b. unlike Herodotus, he did not mix history and fictional stories