

TIMELINE OF ANCIENT GREECE

3300-1000 BCE The earliest known prehistoric civilizations occupy the **AEGEAN** world. This period marks the rise and fall of the **MINOAN** and **MYCENAEAN** civilizations

2200 BCE Indo-European invaders, speaking the earliest forms of Greek, enter the mainland of Greece, and the **MYCENAEAN CIVILIZATION** (named after the leading Greek city on the peninsula, from 1600-1200 BCE) emerges.

2000-1500 BCE **MINOAN CIVILIZATION** (named after the Cretan ruler Minos) reaches its height with its central power in Knossos on the island of **CRETE**. This culture is apparently more female orientated and peaceful than others at the time.

1400 BCE **MYCENAEAN** civilization replaces **MINOAN** civilization after the destruction of Knossos. Bronze weapons, war-scenes on art, Cyclopean defense walls, and the fact that male warriors were buried with their weapons provide evidence that the Mycenaeans were militaristic. The horse-drawn chariot emerges around this time. The Mycenaeans dominate the Aegean world for about 200 years.

1250 BCE Stories state that the Mycenaeans wage war against the Trojans of western Asia Minor, and are successful.

1100 BCE The Mycenaeans are again at war with the Trojans but lose and are taken over by these Dorian invaders who possess iron weapons.

1100 BCE-800 BCE Greek culture enters the Dark Ages, characterized by the disappearance of writing, a decline in architecture and other aspects of material culture.

800 BCE Greece begins to emerge from the Dark Ages. **HOMER** - The two Homeric epics, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are written. Trade increases. The establishment of Greek City-States such as **Athens**, **Thebes** and **Megara** begin the development of Greek political life.

800-500 BCE This is the Archaic Period, marking the developments of Literature, the arts, politics, philosophy and science. The Peloponnesian City of **Corinth** and the Greek city of **Sparta** and other cities on the coast of the Aegean Sea flourish.

700 BCE Greece's second poet, **HESIOD** begins composing *The Theogony* and *Works and Days*. (First poet is Homer)

640 BCE Sparta's form of government, which is adapted from the Dorians, is militarism. The Messenian Wars begin Sparta's change and they remain isolated, ban trade and travel outside of the Sparta territory.

612 BCE Sappho, the Female Greek lyric poet of Lesbos is born. Her poetry explores female sexuality and values in a male dominated society.

585 BCE In the city of Miletus, **THALES** predicts a total eclipse of the sun. Thales teaches that all things are composed of moisture; he is the first to create a rational explanation of the cosmos.

530 BCE Pythagoras and his followers found the city of Croton and combine philosophy and literature with political activity as the foundation for their community. Pythagoras is known for the **Pythagorean Theorem** and the **Pythagorean Table of Opposites** (the “dualism” that underlies Greek thought). **508 BCE Cleisthenes**, the **father of Athenian democracy**, rules Athens. His reforms grant full rights to all free men of Athens.

500 BCE The era of Greek sculptures begins. One of the first creators is **PHIDIAS** whose masterpieces include that statue of **ATHENA** in the **PARTHENON** and the statue of **ZEUS** in the Temple of Olympian Zeus. The second most important sculptor, **MYRON**, is renowned for his statue of “**the discus thrower.**”

490 BCE The **PERSIAN WARS** begin, ending in 479 BCE. **PERSIA** is the most powerful civilization in western Asia and establishes rule over Greek-speaking cities in Asia Minor. **DARIUS THE GREAT** is defeated at the **BATTLE OF MARATHON** in 490 BCE and the Greeks emerge victorious.

485 BCE The high point of Greek Democracy, the **INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION**, with its beginnings in **SOPHISM**. The **SOPHISTS** mix ethics and politics with philosophical language and discourse. The leading Sophist, **PROTAGORAS** states “Man is the Measure of All Things.” Their leaders of the opposition to the sophists are **PLATO** and **ARISTOTLE**.

487 BCE Athens joins with other Greek City-States in the formation of the **DELIAN LEAGUE**. It continues after the Persian Wars and transforms the naval empire with Athens as its leader.

469 BCE SOPHOCLES is born (Dies in 406 BCE). The greatest of the Greek dramatists. His works include *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*. **SOCRATES** is born (Dies in 399 BCE when condemned to death for corrupting the youth and introducing new gods into Greek thought). Socrates is a philosopher of ethics and a major critic of popular belief in Athens. He leaves no written philosophy.

461-429 BCE The **AGE OF PERICLES** when Athenian democracy reaches perfection and the court systems are completed. A jury system is put in place with the jury serving as absolute authority in judicial matters.

431-404 BCE The **PELOPONNESIAN WAR** between Athens and Sparta is caused by Athens' growth in imperialism and economic and cultural differences between the two City-States. The political supremacy of Athens ends, their trade is destroyed, Athenian democracy is overthrown and Athens is forced to surrender becoming a Subject-State of Sparta. Sparta replaces many democracies with oligarchies.

427 BCE **PLATO**, Socrates' most distinguished student is born. (Dies in 347 BCE). Considered the most important of the Greek philosophers. Among his works are *The Apology*, *The Symposium*, *The Phaedo*, *The Phaedrus* and *The Republic*.

384 BCE **ARISTOTLE** is born (Dies 322 BCE). Plato's most distinguished student. He enters Plato's Academy at the age of 17. He spends several years as the personal tutor to **ALEXANDER THE GREAT**. He then returns to Athens and founds the **LYCEUM**. He writes on issues of logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, rhetoric and the natural sciences.

350 BCE **HELLENISTIC GREECE** witnesses the new philosophy of the **CYNICS**. Their leader, **DIOGENES**, proposes the first argument against conventional life. The Cynics believe that people should live naturally and strive for self-sufficiency.

338 BCE **PHILIP OF MACEDON (Macedonia)**, (father of Alexander the Great) conquers Greece. He is succeeded by his son two years later. At 22 Alexander begins his campaign to acquire new territory in Asia. Within four years Alexander conquers the entire **PERSIAN EMPIRE** (including Asia Minor, Egypt, Persia, Syria and Mesopotamia). Alexander was the ruler of the largest empire ever seen. **HELLENISTIC GREECE**, a combination of Greek and Western Asian cultures lasts from Alexander's time until the beginning of the Christian era. Alexander dies from a fever during his return home in 323 BCE in the city of Babylon.

323 BCE Alexander The Great has no heirs so his generals fight for his territories. The empire becomes divided into four major states under the separate rules of Seleucus, Lysimachus, Cassander and Ptolemy. Greek cities revolt against Macedonian rule but their rebellions are put down by the generals. The next 400 years sees the growth of large cities and Hellenistic international trade.

310 BCE Hellenistic **astronomy** is founded by **Aristarchus of Samos**. His major contribution to Hellenistic thought is his theory that the earth and all other planets revolve around the sun, contrary to Aristotle.

146-30 BCE Between these years, nearly all Hellenistic territory become subject to **ROMAN RULE**.