

Lecture 11 Birth of Classical Athens



Leo von Klenze Reconstruction of the Acropolis and Areus Pagus in Athens (1846) HIST 225 Fall 2011

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Persian advances after Thermopylae

- population of Attica evacuate to Peloponnesus
- Xerxes enters Athens unopposed
  - burns it to the ground in revenge for Sardis
- Persian fleet at Phaleron
- Greek fleet at Salamis
- Xerxes sets up his throne on a bluff over the Bay of Salamis to watch the final destruction of resistance




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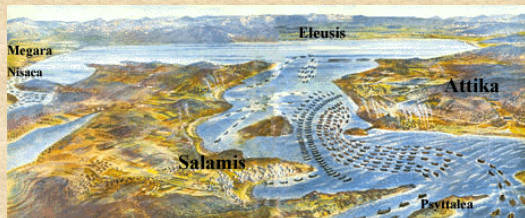
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Battle of Salamis (Sept. 23 480 BCE)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~366 Allied ships                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Athens 180</li> <li>– Corinth 40</li> <li>– Aegina 30</li> <li>– Allies (remainder)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~800-1,000 ships                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Phoenicians</li> <li>– Egyptians</li> <li>– Ionian Greeks</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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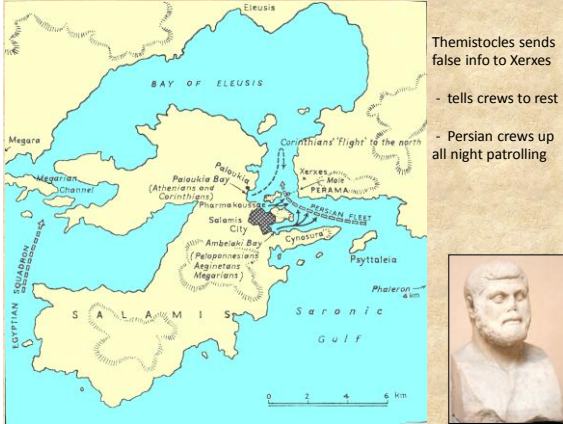
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Themistocles sends false info to Xerxes

- tells crews to rest
- Persian crews up all night patrolling

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### Battle of Salamis: Victory for Greeks

- **Reasons for Greek Victory:**
  - Heavier Greek trireme better suited for narrow channel
  - Persian ships crowded and lighter
  - Persian forces “heart not in it”
- **Persians could not continue campaign without naval logistics**
  - forces return to Asia
  - leave smaller force of 50,000 led by Mardonius

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**Persians:**

- General: Mardonius
- 40,000 infantry
- 10,000 cavalry
- Strong position on field
- running low on water

**Greeks:**

- General: Pausanius (Sparta)
- 38,700 infantry (Herodotus)
- strong position on field
- running low on water

The map shows the Greek army (red dashed lines) and the Persian army (blue dashed lines) positioned on the plain of Plataea. Key regions like Aetolia, Achaea, Arcadia, Boeotia, Attica, and Euboea are labeled. A small inset map shows the location of the battle in the context of the entire Greek world.

### Battle of Plataea (479)

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### Aftermath of the Persian Wars

The old system of mutually exclusive, independent *poleis* seemed to hold BUT...

– was freedom of Greece as a whole compatible with freedoms of disparate city-states?

DID a single *polis* need to lead?

- **Sparta** (logical choice) was protective and insular
  - could not be away from farms too long
- **Athens** had resources and was located logically to continue the defense

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### Classical Greece (480-358 BCE)

Persian Wars was transformative for Greece

- Flowering of art, culture, literature, drama, architecture
- Out of the ashes of Athens rises a new city
- Athens becomes the leader of a defensive league to protect “all of Greece”

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### Delian League (478 BCE)

- offensive/defensive alliance of Greek city-states
  - Sparta did not join
  - Athens controlled the decision process
- deliberations and treasury at Delos
  - Aristides “the Just”
- Some *poleis* could contribute ships, not money
  - Chios
  - Lesbos
- all take a binding oath

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### From Voluntary League to Empire

- 460s Delian League has 200 members
- led by Cimon
- Over time fiscal burdens become onerous
- some island poleis ask to leave Delian League
  - Athens refuses to allow them
- Rebellions forcibly put down
- 468 Naxos
  - enslaved, forced to tear down its walls, lose its fleet and its vote in the League
- 465 Thasos
  - After two years Thasos surrendered to the Athenian leader Cimon
  - fortification walls were torn down

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### Athens Takes Advantage

- 460 war between Megara and Corinth
- both members of Peloponnesian League
- Change in Athenian foreign policy**
- Athens neglects alliance with the Spartans and instead ally with her enemies:
  - Megara defects to Delian League
  - Argos also joins Athens
- 454 Athens moves Delian treasury to Athens
  - facade of equity between members broken

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## “Age of Pericles” (461-429 BCE)



Bust of Pericles  
Roman copy of Greek original  
Tivoli, Italy (ca. 430 BCE)

### Pericles

- Athenian statesman
  - populist social policy
- Athens sponsors civic art and architecture
  - drama
  - public buildings
  - Long Walls

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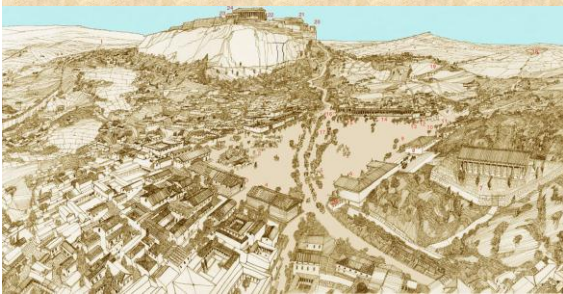
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## Athens Rebuilt



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## ACROPOLIS



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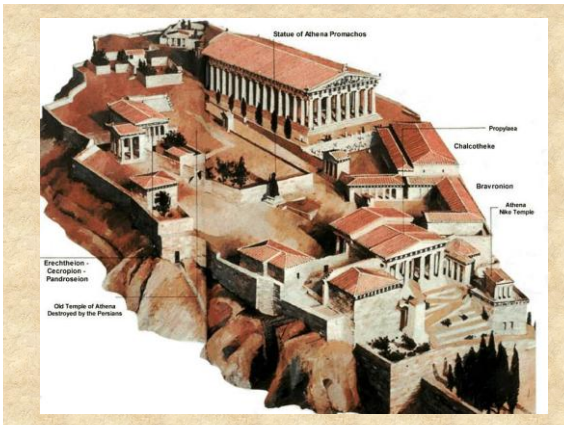
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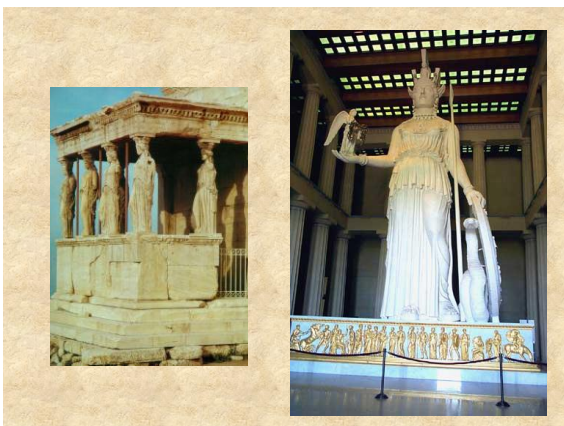
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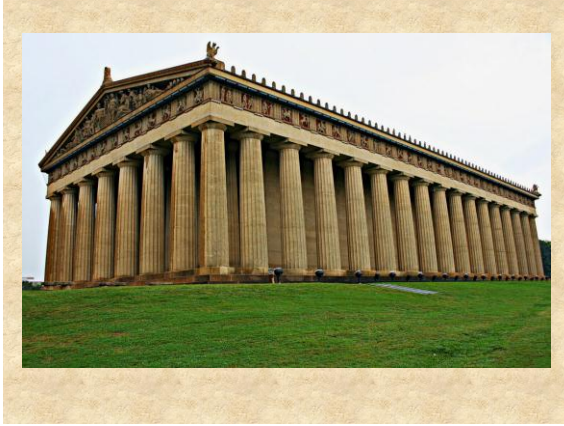
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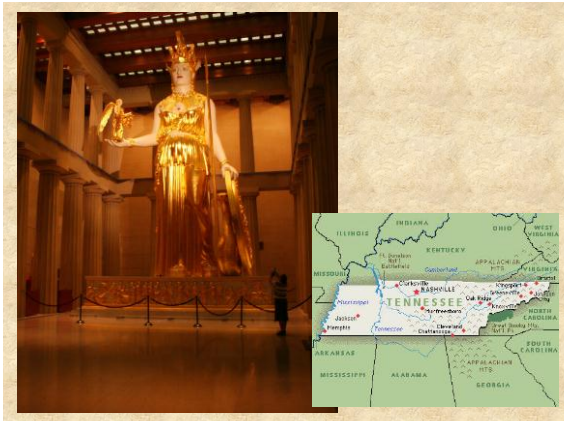
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### Mathematically pleasing

- Principle of mathematical proportionality
- number of pillars
    - similar to others around Greek world
  - Pythagorean belief
    - numbers and mathematical harmonies the foundation of beauty and order in the universe

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## Parthenon: Apogee of Culture

- started in 448
- completed in 432 BCE
- Parthenon considered the “highpoint” of Greek Art
- attests to political self presentation
- spoils of Delian League
- demonstrates mastery over barbarians
  - those without Greek culture

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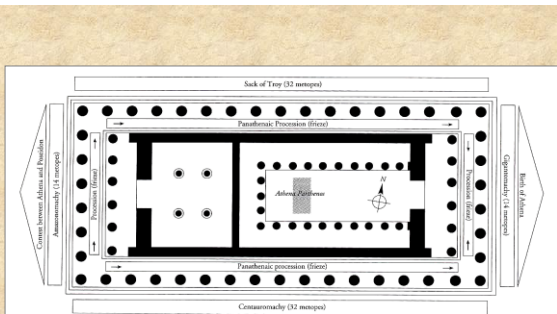
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<http://www.dkv.columbia.edu/vmc/acropolis/index.html>

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### Parthenon Frieze



Poseidon, Apollo and Artemis, East frieze of Parthenon

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### Amazonomachy (west frieze)

- part of the frieze dealing with warlike women



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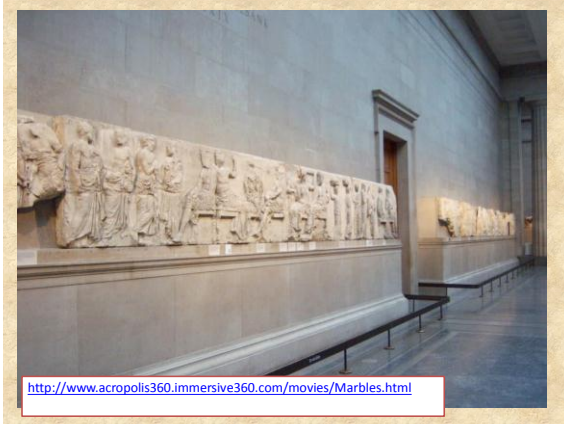
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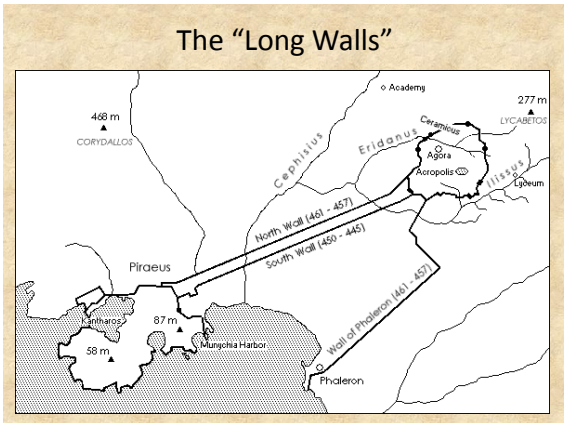
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