Classical Greece

Announcements
(Mon, 17 Sept. 2012.)

• Primary Sources for Wed, 19 Sept.:
  • “Ideal & Reality in Classical Athens” (Wiesner, chap 3)

• Classical Greece agenda
  • Significance
  • 3 Themes
  • Philosophy
  • Gender
  • Athens vs. Sparta

Why Greece Matters

• In groups of 3-4, brainstorm for 3 minutes about why Ancient Greece is important in the history of Western Civilization. Both broad themes and specific examples:
  – E.g., “Olympics: discus, marathon, javelin, heptathlon; int’l festival every 4 years.”
• DON’T use your textbook; DO discuss it with each other.
Legacy of Greece
(Classroom summary)

- Language
  - Fraternity names; beta version; Alpha Omega watches
- Mathematics
  - Pythagorean theorem; Euclid's geometry
- Architecture
  - Neo-classical; columns
- Drama
  - Tragedy & Comedy; Oedipus Rex, Sophocles, Aristophanes
- Epic literature
  - Iliad, Odyssey
- Astronomy
  - Zodiac signs
- Democracy
  - Assembly; citizens; referendum; ostracism
- Athletics
  - Olympic; heptathlon; 26.2 miles
- Cuisine
  - Spanakopita; baklava; gyros
- Philosophy
  - Plato, Aristotle, rational

3 Themes in Classical Greece

- Public Life:
  - Agora; Assembly; Chorus; Male Space
- Rationalism
  - Emphasis upon logic, balance
  - Aristotle and scientific analysis; Thucydides and historical analysis;
- Individualism/Heroism
  - Homeric heroes; geographic determinism; Sophocles on individual vs. community

Philosophy

- Rational > spiritual
- Natural science and humankind = focus
- Socratic, Platonist, Aristotelian, Epicurean, Hedonist, Cynic, Stoic, etc.
Philosophy in Ancient Greece

- Abstract > divine explanations
- Archaic (natural) vs. Classical (human)
- Philosopher = one who seeks knowledge; scholar, thinker
  - “philo” = strong attraction to something (e.g., philharmonic, bibliophile)
  - “sophia” = knowledge (e.g., sophomore, sophisticated)

Socrates (469-399 BC)

- “Socratic method” of teaching
- Gadfly
- Teacher of Plato & other young men
- Poisoned by hemlock

Plato (427-348 BC)

- Ideal > real; “forms”
- The Republic = utopia
  - Communal property
  - No nuclear family
  - Guardians = philosophers
- “platonic relationships”
- The Academy
  - Aristotle’s teacher
Aristotle (384-322 BC)

- Systematic thinker in range of fields
  - Physics, metaphysics, biology, botany, zoology, maters, politics, logic, music, astronomy, chemistry, geology
- Analytical, empirical
- Favors hierarchy & function
- Tutor of Alexander the Great
- Founder of Lyceum
- Influences Aquinas, Dante, Machiavelli, Copernicus, Galileo, John Locke, et al.
- Still relevant today....

“School of Athens”

Plato & Aristotle
Gender in Classical Greece

• What was the status of women?
  – Domestic sphere
  – Fertility and submissiveness
  – Aristotle: “imperfect men”, polarity
  – v. limited inheritance, no suffrage
  – Yet Sparta offers a visible contrast...

Gender in Classical Greece

• Amazon/Aphrodite = uncontrolled woman
• Persephone/Penelope = ideal wife.
Gender in Classical Greece

- Aristotle's polarity:
  - Male/female
  - Hot/cold
  - Good/evil
  - Light/dark
  - Odd/even
  - One/many
  - Rest/motion
  - Civilization/nature
  - Rational/irrational

Athens vs. Sparta

Sparta vs. Athens

- What do you already know of these two societies?
Sparta vs. Athens

• An eternal debate….
  – Liberty vs. security
  – Freedom vs. equality
  – Individual vs. community
  – Creativity vs. stability
  – Free market vs. safety net

Sparta

• Pro and con
• Spartan families
• Spartan soldiers
• Spartan women
• Spartan state

Athens

• "birthplace of democracy"
• "locus of classical civilization" (theatre, literature, architecture…)
• Yet also a greedy imperialist power….
• Solon (archon)
• Pisistratus (tyrant)
• Cleisthenes
• Pericles (orator)