

Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece is the civilization belonging to the period of Greek history lasting from the archaic period (c. 700 to 480 centuries BC to 336 BC) and the Hellenic conquest of Persia after the Battle of Salamis. At the center of this time period is Classical Greece, which flourished during the 5th to 4th centuries BC, at first under Athenian leadership, eventually repelling the military threat of Persian invasions. The Peloponnesian War ends with the defeat of Athens at the hands of Sparta in the 430s-400s BC. Following the conquest of Alexander the Great, Hellenistic civilization branched from Central Asia to the western end of the Mediterranean Sea.

In the 5th century BC, Greece begins to emerge from the Dark Ages which followed the fall of the Mycenaean civilization. Literacy returns first with Mycenaean script forgotten, but the Greeks adopted the Phoenician alphabet, modifying it to create the Greek alphabet. From about the 5th century BC, mathematics began to appear. Greece was divided into many small and powerful communities, a pattern largely dictated by Greek geography, where every island, valley, and plain is cut off from its neighbors by the sea or mountain ranges.

Greek History

The Peloponnesian War (c. 431-404 BC) was an ongoing conflict with the distinction of being the earliest documented war of the ancient Greek period. It was fought between the important poleis city-states of Athens and Sparta over the battle of Salamis (480 BC) and Plataea (479 BC). Both cities came to have control of a decline in wealth of the long war, though Athens was the eventual victor.

A significant change came in the third half of the 5th century, driven by the introduction of coinage in about 480 BC. This came to have widespread impact in many city-states. The aristocratic regime which generally governed the poleis were threatened by the rise toward wealth of merchants, who in turn consolidated power. From 480 BC onwards, the aristocracy began to give way to the middle class and replaced by populist leaders.

A growing population and shortage of land also caused to have created tension with between the poor and wealthy in many city-states. In Sparta, the