

GIMNAZIJA: “STEVAN JAKOVLJEVIĆ“, Vlasotince

Social Life in Ancient Greece

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ABSTRACT

This essay is about the life of people in Ancient Greece. Greece is the cradle of civilization. The earliest Greek civilizations thrived nearly 4.000 years ago. Yet, their culture still impacts our lives today in the arts, philosophy, science, math, literature, and politics. Thoughts and inventions of their philosophers have greatly facilitated the life of today. Progressiveness of Greek civilization is amazing even now. Its development and prosperity has fueled some of the finest minds of modern culture. Greek Mythology is an inexhaustible source of inspiration, and inspiration. Greece has been and will remain a subject of our time.

Key words: Social life, beliefs, political beliefs, interests

REZIME

Ovaj esej je o životu ljudi u Staroj Grčkoj. Grčka je kolevka civilizacije. Najstarija grčka civilizacija cvetala je pre skoro 4.000 godina. Pa ipak ona još uvek utiče na naše živote danas u oblasti umetnosti, filozofije, nauke, matematike, književnost i politiku. Misli i izumi njihovih filozofa veoma su olakšali današnji život. Naprednost Grčke civilizacije je zadivljujuća čak i sada. Njen razvoj i prosperitetnost je podstakla neke od vrhunskih umova moderne kulture. Grčka mitologija je neiscrpan izvor inspiracije i nadahnuća. Grčka je bila i ostaće predmet proučavanja današnjice.

Ključne reči: Društveni život, verovanja, politička shvatanja, interesovanja

Introduction

Greece, a mountainous country in the far south of the Balkan Peninsula was inhabited in prehistoric times. Its history begins at the beginning of the second millennium BC, the arrival of Indo-European tribes who called themselves Hellenes, Romans and Greeks. During the second millennium BC in the Hellenistic world, the two civilizations flourished: the island of Crete and Mycenae. There were many independent kingdoms that would eventually unite under the rule of the king of Knossos, while on the Peloponnesian peninsula and central Greece Mycenaean civilization developed.

Ancient Greece refers to the civilization that began to rise during the eighth century BC and the period which followed the collapse of the Mycenaean civilization, and that developed in continental Greece, Asia Minor, the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts. The main four-Hellenic tribes from that time were Dorci, Eolci, Jonci and Achaeans. After unsuccessful attempts to conquer Persia, Greece, early 5th century BC Hellenic civilization experienced a peak in mid-fifth century BC. This particularly declared in Athens, which became the cultural center of the Hellenic world. The growing rivalry between Athens and Sparta led to the Peloponnesian War which divided and weakened the Hellenic world.

Ancient Greece is today regarded as the cradle of Western civilization and the civilization of the most significant contribution to the history of mankind. The ancient Greeks considered to be credited with the discovery in the fields of philosophy, literature, mathematics, physics, biology, astronomy, architecture, history and to bill the basic norms of modern society. The ancient Greeks were responsible for the issuing of democracy and free speech. The influence of Hellenic civilization had particular impact of the Renaissance and Enlightenment.

In modern times the influence of Hellenic civilization expressed particularly through the cultural power of neoclassicism in the 18th and 19th century. In the old world that emerged around the Mediterranean Sea, the Greeks were good sailors. They sailed around the Mediterranean, setting up the colony and set sail wherever it was possible. Hellenistic era is known as a period of general prosperity. East coast of Alexander's kingdom was constantly splashing waves of Greek and Macedonian settlers. Among them were soldiers, traders, and educated people. They brought with them and helped spreading of Greek customs, language and culture. On the other hand, were acquainted with the culture and lifestyle of the people of the old East. By mixing and intertwining of the two cultures, Hellenistic and Eastern - a rich Hellenistic culture developed.



1. State and social system

Greece is mostly mountainous country, intersected by river valleys and fertile plains. This kind of landscape conditioned its political fragmentation. The Hellenes had never created a single state, but they lived in independent cities, Polis. The Greek cities were originally monarchies. In a country always short of farmland, a small number of landowners had the power. They formed a warrior aristocracy fighting frequent petty inter-city wars in small wars around the country. But the rise of a mercantile class shown by the introduction of coins introduced class conflict into the larger cities. From 650 BC onwards, the aristocracy was overthrown and replaced by populist leaders called tyrants, a word that did not have the modern meaning of oppressive dictators. The population was divided into tribes, clans and lineages, families were in fact the germ of aristocracy. The head of each community there was a king in governing his country helped the National Assembly.

1.1 The Development of polis

The most important Greek polises were Sparta, Athens and Corinth. Sparta was long the most powerful Doric polis. In ancient times it was thought that the power of Sparta rested on a good and harmonious social furnishing. Its population was divided into Spartiates (full citizens), perijekes (merchants and farmers) and heklotas (slaves of the state). It had the oligarchic system of government, and was ruled by two kings. Thanks to strict education and way of life, the Spartans were exceptional soldiers. Athens, the Ionian polis, was established in Attica. It was shaken by conflicts of the aristocracy and the people; the struggle finally gave birth to democracy. Barbarians were acquainted with the colony through the Greek language, religion and lifestyle. Many of them received the Greek customs and culture. This process is called Hellenization

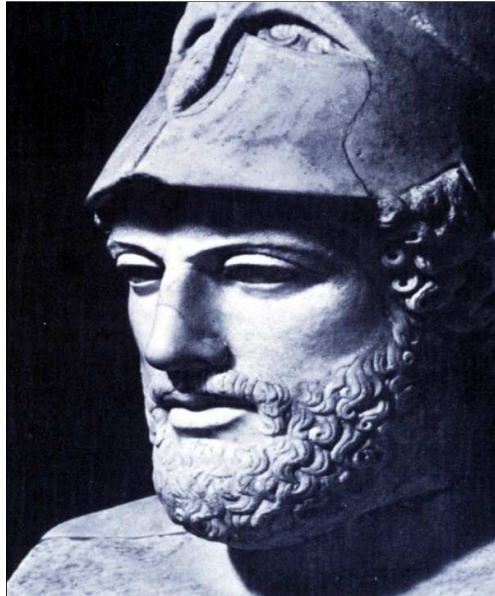


1.1 Democracy

“Democracy... is a charming form of government, full of variety and disorder; and dispensing a sort of equality to equals and unequals alike.” Plato

Democracy is a system of government in which power belongs to the demos, that is people. Most often it is considered that Herodotus first used the word democracy. The first step towards democracy was Solon's reforms. The time of the expulsion of the Persians from Hellas to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War was the golden age of Athens. For its rise, the

military leader and statesman Pericles was largely credited. He came from a distinguished aristocratic family. Athens, under his wise leadership, became the most powerful, richest and most beautiful polis. Pericles as a great orator and a wise politician quickly gained the support of the demos. Pericles promoted the arts and literature; it is principally through his efforts that Athens holds the reputation of being the educational and cultural centre of the ancient Greek world. He started an ambitious project that generated most of the surviving structures on the Acropolis (including the Parthenon). This project beautified the city, exhibited its glory, and gave work to the people. Pericles also fostered Athenian democracy to such an extent that critics call him a populist.



1.2 Law

Solon was one of the archons (a Greek word that means "ruler" or "lord") in ancient Athens. In 594 B.C. Solon made several important reforms, which loosened the tension of civil war breaking out. Solon also published all the laws of the Athenian Society. Solon's solutions were, of necessity, compromises. Because of these reform compromises and other legislation, posterity refers to him as Solon the lawgiver. Solon, a lyric poet and the first Athenian literary figure whose name we know, came from an aristocratic family which traced its ancestry back 10 generations to Hercules, according to Plutarch. Aristocratic beginnings did not prevent him from fearing that someone of his class would try to become tyrant. In his reform measures, he pleased neither the revolutionaries who wanted the land redistributed nor the landowners who wanted to keep all their property intact. He wrote laws that required that people who lived a certain distance from public wells needed to dig their own, laws that forbade the export of agricultural goods except olive oil, laws that restricted the amount of land a man could own, laws that allowed venders to charge any kind of interest rate they wanted to, and even laws that prohibited dealing in perfume. Solon also created many family laws, which were laws that regulated the behavior of men and women. He wrote laws on allowances in marriage and adoption, as well as laws concerning inheritances and supporting roles of parents. Men if they were not training in military, or discussing politics, went to the

Theatre for entertainment to watch dramas that they could relate to, including tragedies and comedies. These often involved current politics and gods in some form.

It is thought that women were not allowed to watch theatre or perform at the theatre, although male actors did play women roles. Lives of women in Ancient Greece were closely tied to domestic work, spinning, weaving and other domestic duties. They were not involved in public life or in politics. Their lives were normally quite confined to the house although one public duty was acting as a priestess at a temple.

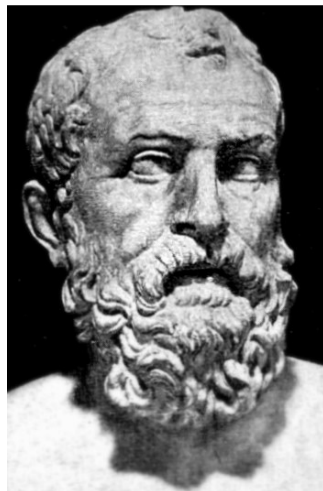
The ancient Greeks considered their children to be "youths" until they reached the age of 30! When a child was born to ancient Greek family, the father carried his child in a ritual dance around the household. Friends and relatives sent gifts. The family decorated the doorway of their home with a wreath of olives (for a boy) or a wreath of wool (for a girl).

Slaves were very important to the ancient Greek way of life. Slaves cleaned and cooked, worked in the fields, factories, shops, in the mines, and on ships. Even the police force in ancient Athens was made up of slaves! Most slaves' lives were not that different from a poor Greek citizen's life.

Solons reforms, even though important, did not solve the problem of poverty in Athens. Because of this, Pisistratus was able to seize power and become a tyrant. He ruled from 545 B.C. to 527 B.C. He did though continue the work of Solon by reducing the power of the traditional ruling class.

Cleisthenes was the founder of democracy in Athens. He proposed the constitution in 508 B.C. The constitution made Athens a democracy. The curious thing about the constitution was that it stayed intact for several hundred years. This may not seem strange, but it was because the constitution was unwritten. The ideology was based on Solon, but it also provided conditions that greatly developed them.

According to the new constitution all men of 18 years or older were registered as citizens and were members of the village which they lived in, which gave each person a vote in the society. 500 of the people made the decisions in the city and those officials were elected each year. Each citizen had a chance to run the city. Women were not considered citizens thus they could not vote.



1.4 Daily life

The majority of Ancient Greek people made their living from farming. Citizens often had land outside the city which provided their income. The Greek landscape and climate made it difficult to farm. Olives were a holy plant for the Greek population. Olives were

either picked by hand or knocked out of the tress with wooden sticks. Some were crushed in a press to produce olive oil and some eaten. This was an important product to the Greeks that had many uses including cooking, lighting, beauty products and for athletic purposes. It is also believed that uprooting an olive tree was a criminal offence. Ancient Greeks usually ate bread (barley or wheat) and porridge, accompanied with food such as cheese, vegetables, fish, eggs and fruit.

Farmers were usually men; women were closely tied to domestic work, spinning, weaving and other domestic duties. They were not involved in public life or in politics. Their lives were normally quite confined to the house although one public duty was acting as a priestess at a temple.

Greek clothing was very simple. Men and women wore linen in the summer and wool in the winter. The ancient Greeks could buy cloth and clothes in the *agora*, the marketplace, but that was expensive. Most families made their own clothes, which were simple tunics and warm cloaks, made of linen or wool, dyed in a bright color, or bleached white. Clothes were made by the mother, her daughters, and female slaves. They were often decorated to represent the city-state in which they lived.



2. Architecture

Religious conceptions of the Greeks were closely associated with the visual arts. The Greek concept of beauty was based on a pleasing balance and proportion of form. Many myths served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration to sculptors and painters. Builders built magnificent temples where, it was believed, gods lived. We can say that the ancient Greeks laid the foundations of European art.

Greek Temple

The design of graceful columned Greek temples has influenced architecture from the Renaissance to modern times. Greek sculpture established an ideal standard for the human form that served as a model for artists in ages to come. After about 600 B.C., the Greeks began building temples to honor their gods. Greek temples were built in three different styles, or orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian. Each of these styles is best identified by the distinctive design of its columns and capitals (the decorated tops of the columns). The Parthenon was built between 447 and 432 B.C. on the ruins of an earlier temple destroyed by

the Persians. It is considered the greatest example of the Doric order. Although now a ruin, the Parthenon still stands today, dominating Athens' Acropolis (the highest point of the city)

Greek Theater

The Greek Theater was a central place of formal gatherings in ancient Greece. Not only did the structure serve as the stage for Tragedies and Comedies, but it also provided a forum for poetry and musical events.

Greek Stadiums

Athletic events provided the opportunity for all the city-states of Greece to gather and to strengthen their common bonds through competition. Athletic events were a great spectacle in antiquity and for many a peasant the only form of grand entertainment. The Olympic Games were born in these stadiums, while wars and disputes among countries were put aside while the games were on.

Palaces

Most known to us are the palaces of Minoan Crete, the Mycenaean palaces of Peloponnese, and the Macedonian Palaces of northern Greece. As Greek society developed to be democratic during Classical times, there was no need to build palaces for the leaders.



2.1 Education

For most of Greek history, education was private, except in Sparta. During the Hellenistic period, some city-states established public schools. Only wealthy families could afford a teacher. Boys learned how to read, write and quote literature. They also learned to sing and play one musical instrument and were trained as athletes for military service. They studied not for a job but to become an effective citizen. Girls also learned to read, write and do simple arithmetic so they could manage the household. They almost never received education after childhood. Boys went to school at the age of seven, or went to the barracks, if they lived in Sparta. The three types of teachings were: grammatistes for arithmetic, kitharistes for music and dancing, and Paedotribae for sports.

Boys from wealthy families attending the private school lessons were taken care of by a paidagogos, a household slave selected for this task who accompanied the boy during the day. Classes were held in teachers' private houses and included reading, writing, mathematics, singing, and playing the lyre and flute. When the boy became 12 years old, the

schooling started to include sports such as wrestling, running, and throwing discus and javelin.

In Athens some older youths attended academy for the finer disciplines such as culture, sciences, music, and the arts. The schooling ended at age 18, followed by military training in the army usually for one or two years. Until age 6 or so, boys were taught at home by their mother or by a male slave. From age 6 to 14, boys went to a neighborhood primary school or to a private school. Books were very expensive and rare, so subjects were read out-loud, and the boys had to memorize everything. To help them learn, they used writing tablets and rulers.



2.2 Painting and Sculpture

The practice of fine art in Ancient Greece spans three basic eras: the Archaic Period (c.600-500 BCE), the Classical Period (c.500-323 BCE) and the Hellenistic Period (c.323-27 BCE). To Greek artists the human form was the most important subject for artistic representation. Even their Gods were portrayed in human form. Their works were very realistic; the realism is reflected in the portraits. Painting had the same significance as sculpture. Sadly, most original Greek sculpture, and most mural and panel paintings from Greek antiquity, as well as architecture, have been lost, leaving us almost entirely dependent upon copies from Roman art and Greek pottery.



2.3 Literature

The Hellenistic golden age occurs under the leadership of Alexander the Great, who conquered an empire stretching from the Greek mainland all the way to the Indus River Valley. Hellenistic society was a blending of Greek, Egyptian, Persian, and many other cultures that gave rise to advancements in math, science, art, and literature.

Early Greek literature was in the form of plays developed for religious ceremonies. Famous writers, such as Aeschylus and Sophocles, wrote tragedies and comedies about human conflict and interaction between the gods and man. These stories were very popular, and became the basis for modern literature. The Greeks were also the first historians. Herodotus, known as the Father of History, wrote books chronicling historical events, such as the Persian War.

The most important library was located in Alexandria, Egypt. According to some sources, it contained 700 000 books and it was the greatest library in the world at that time. The library contained the science, civilization, and books of two remarkable periods: The Pharonic and the Greek. Hellenic literature was very rich and diverse. The Greeks wrote a great deal, and a surprising amount of what they wrote is still available to us today, 2500 years later. Their writing is traditionally divided into types:

- 1) the epic: Around 700BC, Homer wrote two connected epics, the Iliad and the Odyssey.
- 2) the poem: Two early Greek examples are Hesiod's Theogony and Works and Days, both from around 700BC. There are also a number of shorter poems by Archilochus and Sappho from the 600s BC, among others. Sappho's poems are the only surviving literature by a Greek woman.
- 3) the play: Plays are divided into tragedies and comedies. The oldest tragedies that we still have were written by Aeschylus around 500 BC. We also have tragedies written by Sophocles (around 450 BC) and Euripides (around 425 BC). The oldest comedies that we still have are by Aristophanes, and were also written around 425 BC. Some later comedies were written by Menander around 350 BC. Plays are also written in verse, like poems.
- 4) the history: Two major histories that we still have are those by Herodotus and Thucydides. About 450 BC, Herodotus wrote a history of the Persian Wars. About 400 BC, Thucydides wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War. After the Peloponnesian War, Xenophon wrote about his adventures as a mercenary soldier for the Persians. During the Roman takeover of Greece, Polybius wrote a History of Rome in Greek. These are all written in prose (not in verse).
- 5) philosophical dialogues and treatises: The first written philosophy was written by Plato around 380BC in the form of a kind of play, two or more people talking to each other. Later on both Plato and his student Aristotle wrote regular philosophical books, in prose without dialogues.
- 6) legal speeches and political speeches: The first speeches we have surviving are from the 300s BC. The three most famous speechwriters were Lysias , Isocrates, and Demosthenes.



2.4 Philosophy

Greek philosophers, or "lovers of wisdom," used observation and reason to study the world around them. This spirit of inquiry led to advancements in the arts and sciences, as well as examining the best form of government for men to live under. Famous philosophers include Democritus, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

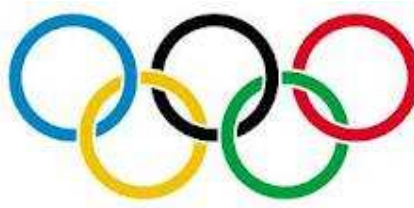
The Ancient Greek philosophical tradition broke away from a mythological approach to explaining the world, and it initiated an approach based on reason and evidence.

Democritus believed that the whole world was made of atoms - literally 'uncuttables' — small primary bodies infinite in number, indivisible and imperishable, qualitatively similar, but distinguished by their shapes. Moving eternally through the infinite void, they collide and unite, thus generating objects which differ in accordance with the varieties, in number, size, shape, and arrangement, of the atoms which compose them.

Socrates dealt with issues of morality, good and evil. He was interested in ethics. It was his axiom that no one would knowingly do a bad thing. So knowledge was important, because it resulted in good behavior. Socrates was an enormously magnetic figure, who attracted many followers, but he also made many enemies. Socrates was executed for corrupting the youth of Athens and for disbelieving in the gods of the city.

The Athenian philosopher Plato (427-347) is usually called a pupil of Socrates. Plato accepted the world of the phenomena as a mere shadow of the real world of the ideas. In Plato's political philosophy, only wise men who understand the dual nature of reality are fit to rule the country.

The most important among Plato's disciples is Aristotle. Philosophy to him meant science, and its aim was the recognition of the purpose in all things.



3. The Olympic Games

The Greeks took games of all kinds very seriously, but especially physical athletic competition. The Greeks believed that their gods particularly loved to see strong, fit, graceful human bodies, especially boys' and men's bodies. So, one way to get on the good side of the gods was to exercise, to eat right, to oil your skin, to create a beautiful body that the gods would love. Because of the Greek tendency to turn everything into an agon - a competition, this also meant that there were a lot of athletic competitions in Greece. The most famous of these is the Olympic Games. The Olympics were not the only competition games held in ancient Greece, but they were the most popular.

The first Olympics games are usually given the start year of 776 BCE, but they probably began even sooner. The Olympics were part of a religious event. They were held in honour of Zeus, the father of the gods and were a big celebration. The Games were held in a

village called Olympia. No women were allowed to watch the games and only Greek nationals could participate. The events were the same kind as in the Olympics today: running, jumping, throwing a javelin, and throwing a discus.

Young men (from richer families who didn't have to work) in most Greek cities spent a lot of their time training for these competitions, and the best of them were chosen to compete against the best young men from other cities. Then they would all meet, at the Olympic Games and compete for prizes and for the favor of the gods. Of course these games also served as good training for the army, because all these men would be soldiers as well.



4. Theatre

In ancient Greece, theater was a really big deal. Crowds of 15,000 people would gather to see a play. Theatre was so important to the ancient Greeks that prisoners would be released from jail temporarily, so they could also attend. Every town had at least one theater.

The ancient Greeks were always bragging about the wonderful performances in their city-state. The ancient Greeks held drama competitions with winners for Playwriting and performing. These competitions were held not only in their own towns, but also in competition with other towns. Because so many people came to see the plays, the Greeks built huge outdoor theaters on hillsides, so that people could be seated in a way that let them see what was going on down in the orchestra pit - the stage area.

The entire seating section was called the Theatron, which is the origin of our word "theater". The theaters were originally built on a very large scale to accommodate the large number of people on stage, as well as the large number of people in the audience, up to fourteen thousand. Mathematics played a large role in the construction of these theaters, as their designers had to be able to create acoustics in them such that the actors' voices could be heard throughout the theater, including the very top row of seats. The first seats in Greek theaters (other than just sitting on the ground) were wooden, but around 499 BC the practice of inlaying stone blocks into the side of the hill to create permanent, stable seating became more common. They were called the "prohedria" and reserved for priests and a few most respected citizens. Greek theaters also had tall arched entrances called parodoi or eisodoi, through which actors and chorus members entered and exited the orchestra. Some theaters also had a raised speaking place on the orchestra called the logeion.

Tragedy (late 6th century BC), comedy (486 BC), and the satyr play were the three dramatic genres to emerge there. Tragedy and comedy were viewed as completely separate genres. Satyr plays dealt with the mythological subject in comic manner. Thespis is considered to be the first Greek "actor" and originator of tragedy which means "goat song", perhaps referring to goats sacrificed to Dionysus before performances, or to goat-skins worn by the performers. The most important writers of tragedy were Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. Comedy was also an important part of ancient Greek theatre. Comedy plays were derived from imitation. Aristophanes wrote most of the comedy plays. Out of these 11 plays survived - Lysistrata, a humorous tale about a strong woman who leads a female coalition to end war in Greece.



5. Religion

Religion was important to the ancient Greeks because they believed that it would make their lives better while they were living. They also believed the gods would take care of them when they died. Religion in ancient Greece was based on belief. And, each even had a god associated with it. That is how there were gods of love, war, sea, farming and so on and so forth. The ancient Greeks believed that the gods were physically and intellectually similar to the mortals.

It was important to please the gods; happy gods helped you, but unhappy gods punished you. People had special places in their homes where they could pray to the gods. The Greeks, to show the gods how important they were, built temples in every town for one god or goddess. The temples were not like modern places of worship, for ordinary people to pray in. They were homes for statues of gods, which were cared for by priests. Religious ceremonies and festivals went on outside the temple. Priests were important people in the community. They were believed to have the power to talk to the gods and so were respected and trusted.



5.1 The Hellenic gods

The Greeks believed that twelve most important gods and goddesses lived at the top of Mount Olympus. They were a family and, just like a human family, they argued as well as looking after each other.

Zeus was the King of Gods and the gods fought and planned for dominance either under Zeus or against him. Zeus was the king of the gods. He could control the weather. The ancient Greek poet, Hesiod, called him the 'cloud-gatherer' and the 'thunderer'. His most powerful weapon was the thunderbolt. The ancient Greeks believed that when lightning struck earth, it was a sign of Zeus being present.

Zeus was also concerned with hospitality. If you treated a guest or stranger badly you could outrage Zeus.

Hera was the wife of Zeus and the queen of the gods. She is the goddess of weddings and marriage. She was extremely jealous of the many affairs of her husband Zeus. She took terrible revenge on the girlfriends and illegitimate children of her husband.

Athena is the goddess of war and cunning wisdom. She is also the goddess of pot-making and wool-working. She is associated with the city, and almost every town in Greece had a sanctuary dedicated to Athena.

She invented the chariot, the bridle and built the first ship. The olive tree is sacred to her.

Apollo was the god of the sun, truth, music, poetry, dance and healing. Poets and bards put themselves under his protection.

Poseidon was the god of the sea and horses. He was the brother of Zeus. He was known for his bad temper and was greatly feared because of his ability to cause earthquakes. He was believed to be able to make fresh water gush forth from the earth.

Aphrodite is the goddess of love and beauty. She was the wife of Hephaistos but was in love with the war god Ares.

Hermes was the god of travel, business, weights and measures and sports. He was the messenger of the gods and guided the souls of the dead to the underworld. He was also the patron of herdsmen, thieves, graves and messengers. His staff caused men to fall asleep instantly.

Artemis was the goddess of hunting, archery and childbirth. She was also the goddess of wild animals and was normally portrayed as living in the countryside. She had the ability to send plagues or sudden death to mortals, but she could also heal them. She was the twin sister of the god Apollo.

Ares was the god of war. However, unlike Athena, he was not very cunning in battle. He was not a popular god. In 'The Iliad' Zeus complained that Ares was the most hated of all his children.

Hephaistos was the god of fire, volcanoes, blacksmiths and craftworkers. He was lame and this led to him being thrown out of Mount Olympus. He was married to the goddess Aphrodite. He was the father of Erechtheus the legendary king of Athens.

Dionysos was the fun loving god of high spirits, strong emotions and wine. He is also closely associated with drama and the theatre.



5.2 Heroes and fantasy creatures

The Greek heroes were playing a significant part in the Greek myths and folk tales. They usually were characters with a daring personality and extraordinary abilities, mostly arising from the Trojan War.

Achilles was the most handsome, capable and worthy of all the heroes that participated in the Trojan War. He was born in Farsala in southern Thessaly (Central Greece) as the son of Peleus, the King of Pithia in Thessaly, and the silver footed sea goddess Thetis. Heracles was the strongest and most worshipped hero of Ancient Greece. Odysseus was a main hero of the Trojan War and the protagonist in Homer's Epos "Odyssey". Agamemnon was the King of Mycenae and leader of the Greek forces at Troy. Agamemnon is mostly mentioned in Aeschylus' play, "Agamemnon" and in Homer's epos, the "Iliad". Theseus was the most important king of Athens and after Heracles the most popular hero in Ancient Greece.

The Centaurs were half- horse creatures of ancient Greece and the spirits of the storm. The Cyclopes were giants with only one round eye in their forehead. The giants were huge, frightful monsters that tried to attack the Olympian gods. The Satyrs were divine, half-man and half-goat creatures of Ancient Greece.

6. Conclusion

The Greeks had a very organized way of doing things, they were very skilled craftsmen, some of their buildings, and at least the ruins have remained all this time. Their philosophers influenced later writers, including Christians. Their mythology, while no longer seen by most as a 'religion' has left a lot of stories that are still told, Heracles, for example. The Olympics, while much different today, are inspired by ancient Greece. Greece also had a profound and more direct affect on the Roman Empire, which in turn had a great deal of influence on European history and the Christian Church.

Personally, I admire them because:

They were the first Democracy.

They were a literate people.

They believed in using their brains.

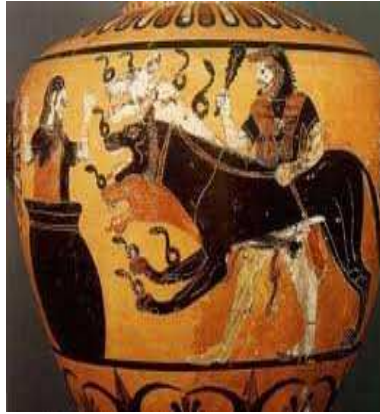
They were great sculptors.

They had a very advanced civilization.

Their Philosophers are still quoted.



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