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# GREECE

THE AGE OF GODS AND HEROES



BY JON F. ZEIGLER

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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*GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised* and *Compendium I: Character Creation* are required to use this supplement in a *GURPS* campaign. The information in this book can be used with *any* game system.

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G U R P S®

# GREECE

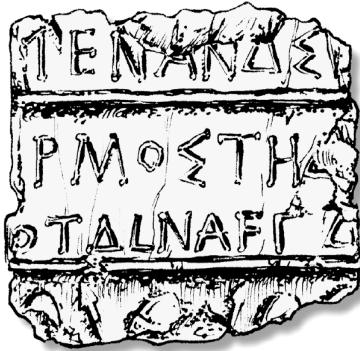
## THE AGE OF GODS AND HEROES

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Cover by Jeff Koke

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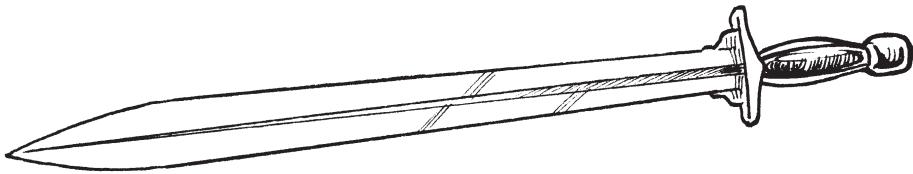
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**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

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# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid/](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid/)). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9"×12" SASE – please use two stamps! – or just visit [www.warehouse23.com](http://www.warehouse23.com).

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: [rec.games.frp.gurps](http://rec.games.frp.gurps).

*GURPSnet.* This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to [www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l](http://www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l).

The *GURPS Greece* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/greece/](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/greece/).

## PAGE REFERENCES

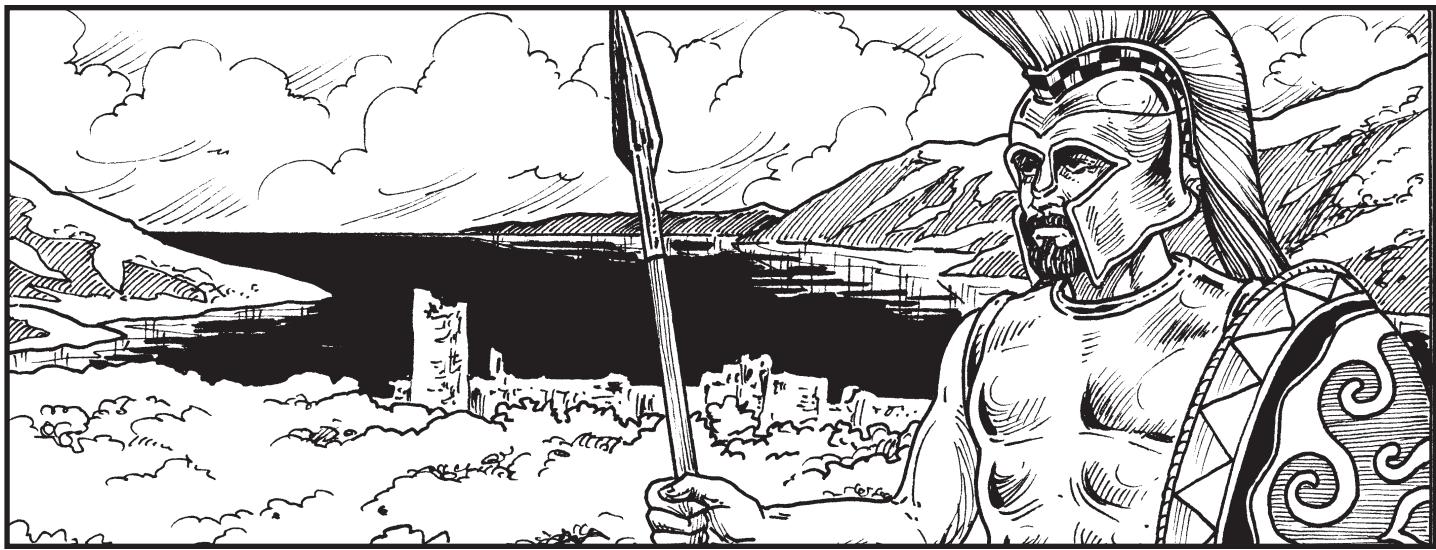
Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are MA to *GURPS Martial Arts*, M to *GURPS Magic*, and R to *GURPS Religion*. The abbreviation for this book is GR. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).

*Sing to me now, all ye Muses who dwell in the halls of Olympus,  
Sing of the deeds of the Hellenes, who mastered both battle and wisdom.  
Once tall Agamemnon, the monarch of men, and Achilles the godlike  
With bronze-armored comrades sailed eastward, to topple the towers of Ilium.  
Well-founded ships carried men on the wine-dark waves washing the shoreline,  
Seeking new country for trade and for building the wealth of their cities.  
Pericles, statesman of Athens, rebuilt his city's high places,  
Raising its temples to heaven to stand as great beacons forever.  
Citizens lowly and noble debated alike in assembly,  
Every man's right was unquestioned to help in the weighty decision.  
Sagest of Hellenes was Socrates, best of all questioning teachers,  
Earning both hatred and love by his unequalled humor and wisdom.  
Muses, sing of their lives so today's men and women may know them,  
And live them again for a moment, for pleasure and also for learning.*

This worldbook covers two important periods in Greek history. The *Heroic Age* runs from about 1600 B.C. to 1150 B.C. The fantasy roleplayer will find all his favorite trimmings here – meddlesome gods, terrible monsters and epic wars. While the modern fantasy genre owes much to the Greek mythos, the world of the Heroic Age has its own unique twists. The heroic myths are also rooted in the actual events of the late Bronze Age, a time we have few records from but have learned much about from archeology.

The book also examines the Hellenic culture known to us through architecture, literature and philosophy. The era this book calls the *Classical Age* stretches from the emergence of the Greek city-state, about 800 B.C., to the death of Alexander in 323 B.C. Historical times were less romantic than the Heroic Age, but roleplayers need not fear boredom on that account. A bold and talented individual could make his mark in philosophy, in politics, or on the





field of battle (and often did all three). There is plenty of latitude for both thoughtful and action-driven roleplaying.

Most of the problems that the Greeks wrestled with still plague us today. They did not find all the answers, but they were the first to even ask many of the questions. In doing so they began European civilization as we know it. So enjoy the dawn of Western history, when the Greeks saw the world as if everything was new.

#### A NOTE ON SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION

The Greeks used a script of their own, and there are at least two ways to transliterate any Greek word into English. Many Greek words come to us by way of the Romans, who transliterated them using the Latin alphabet. English speakers in turn apply English pronunciation rules to the Latin transliterations.

In this book, proper names are written using the familiar Latin forms. Make most consonant sounds hard rather than soft. *G* is usually pronounced as in *game*, never as in *general*. *C* is always pronounced as *k* when alone, never as *s*. The double consonant *ch* is usually pronounced as in the German *ach*. Some vowel sounds should be pronounced differently as well. The diphthong represented by *ae* should be pronounced *ai* as in *aisle*. The letter *-e* is not silent when it ends a Greek name, and does not change the pronunciation of any other vowel sound in the name. Say the letter *-y* like the French *u* or the German *ü* (try saying *ee* and *ooh* at the same time). Pronounce *a* as in *father*, and make *e* short, as in *get*; pronounce both *i* and *j* as in *meet*. *U* is “*ooh*” as in *loot*.

For example, the name *Mycenae* should be pronounced “muh-keh-neye” and not “mye-see-nee.” *Centaur* should be pronounced “ken-tawr” rather than “sen-tawr.” *Achilles* should be pronounced “a-khee-lehs” and not “a-tchi-lees.” *Aphrodite* is pronounced “a-fro-dee-teh” and not “a-fro-dye-tee” or “a-fro-dite.”

Greek words other than proper names are written using a transliteration common in modern studies of the classics. Essentially the spelling is phonetic and can be pronounced as it appears. Remember that final *-e* is not silent. Hence *arete* is pronounced “a-reh-teh” and not “a-reet.”

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

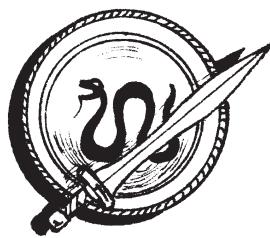
Jon F. Zeigler is a science-fiction writer and amateur historian. He and his wife and two children live in Maryland, where he works as a computer security consultant. He has written or contributed to a dozen books for *GURPS* or *GURPS Traveller*, and currently serves as the *GURPS Traveller* Line Editor for Steve Jackson Games. *GURPS Greece* was his first published book.

#### ACHAEANS, HELLENES, OR GREEKS?

What did the Greeks call themselves? In the beginning of their history, there is no evidence that they had a name for themselves as a nation. Homer calls the Greeks “Achaeans,” “Argives,” or “Danaans,” all names belonging to individual tribes or regions.

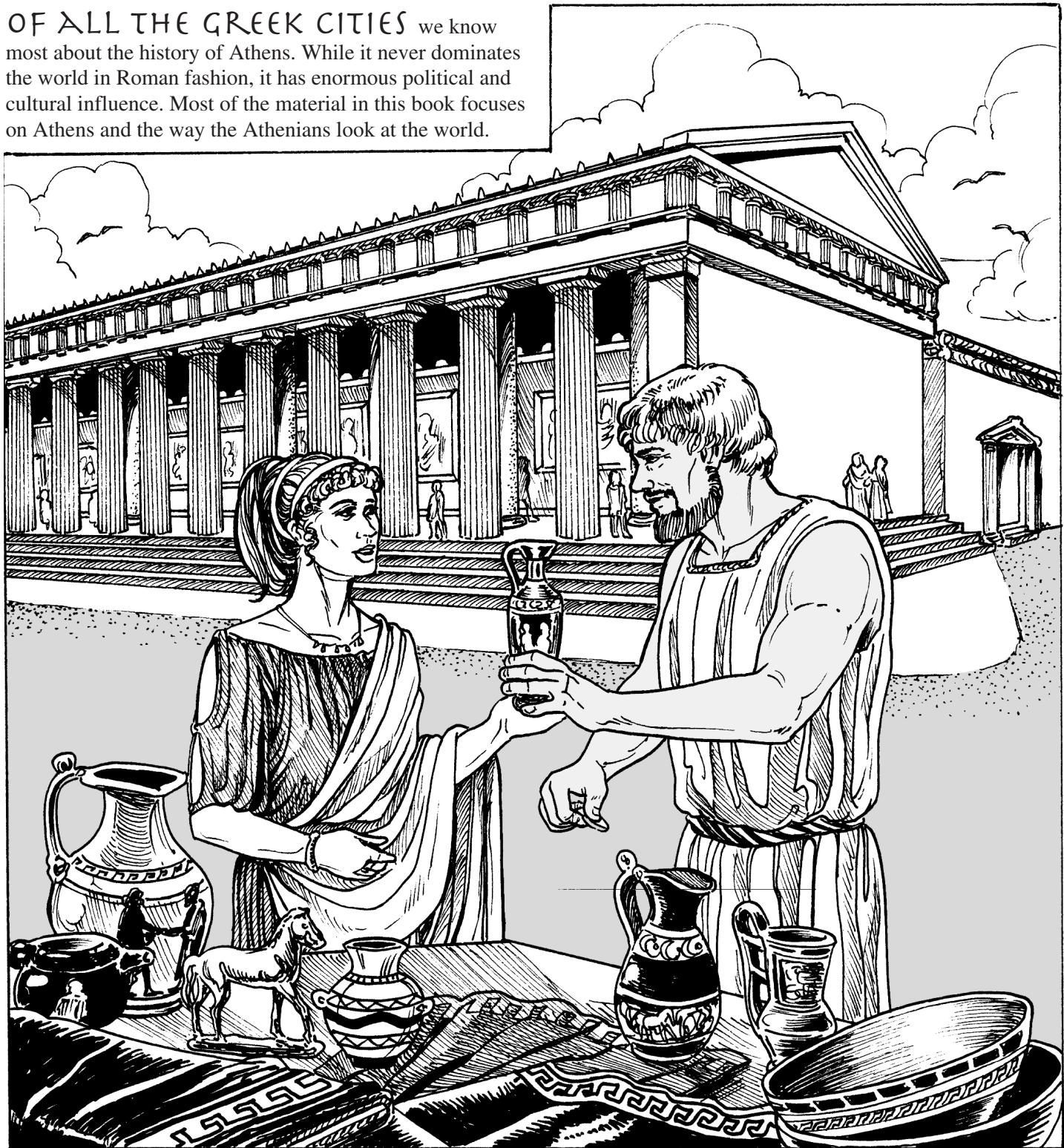
During the Greek Dark Ages and the overseas migrations, the Greeks came into contact with other peoples all over the Mediterranean basin. In southern Italy, the colonists included a number of tribesmen from an obscure Thessalian district called Hellas. The Italian hillmen came to call all Greeks “Hellenes.” This name, given them by a foreign people, apparently gave the Greeks their first sense of national identity. Within a few generations, all the Greeks were proudly calling themselves “Hellenes,” claiming the formerly-obscure hero Hellen as the ancestor of their whole people. The whole Greek homeland therefore became “Hellas.”

The name “Greek” also comes from Italy. One of the small colonial towns in central Italy was called Graeae, and the early Latin tribes called the inhabitants “Graeci.” Later, the Latins and Romans applied this name to all Hellenes.



# LIFE IN ANCIENT GREECE

OF ALL THE GREEK CITIES we know most about the history of Athens. While it never dominates the world in Roman fashion, it has enormous political and cultural influence. Most of the material in this book focuses on Athens and the way the Athenians look at the world.



Many other cities play important parts in Greek society. Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, Argos, each has its own unique character. Meanwhile, Greeks have settled at great distances from the homeland. Southern Italy and Sicily are Greek. Other Hellenic cities sit all along the coast of Asia Minor. Small colonies exist on the northern coasts of the Black Sea as well. Finally, after Alexander destroys the Persian Empire, Greek settlers will flood into Asia, establishing thriving communities in Egypt, Syria and as far inland as Bactria (modern Uzbekistan). This process of settlement, and the spread of Hellenic culture, will create a Greek world that stretches from Spain to central Asia.

## THE CITY-STATE

Greek culture during the Classical era centers on the institution of the *polis* or “city-state.” A *polis* is a small independent country, often truly tiny by modern standards. At its height, Athens covers only about a thousand square miles and has no more than 40,000 adult male citizens. Most of the 200 or so city-states are far smaller, perhaps ten miles across with a citizen population of a few thousand. Natural barriers, such as rivers, mountains or the sea, often form the borders of a *polis*. Every state has a center of population, a town or city where most of the state’s business takes place and most of the important shrines stand. Larger city-states include secondary towns and villages, but people who live in these smaller settlements are also citizens of the overall *polis*.

Even the smallest states are fiercely independent. Every *polis* has its own laws, officials, customs and religious observances. The citizen of a *polis* is just as patriotic, just as committed to the life of his own city-state at the expense of all others, as any citizen of a modern nation.

All activity centers around the city. Every citizen conducts his social life in the city’s market, worships the gods in the city’s temples, takes part in the city’s religious festivals, has some voice in city politics, and takes up arms to defend the city in wartime. The ancient Greek’s attitude toward his city-state is the most important part of his self-image, the key to understanding him as a human being.

## THE HELLENIC HOMELAND

Bleak and barren, separated into isolated fragments by mountains and arms of the sea, the Greek homeland breeds a tough, stubborn, quarrelsome people.

### THE PELOPONNESE

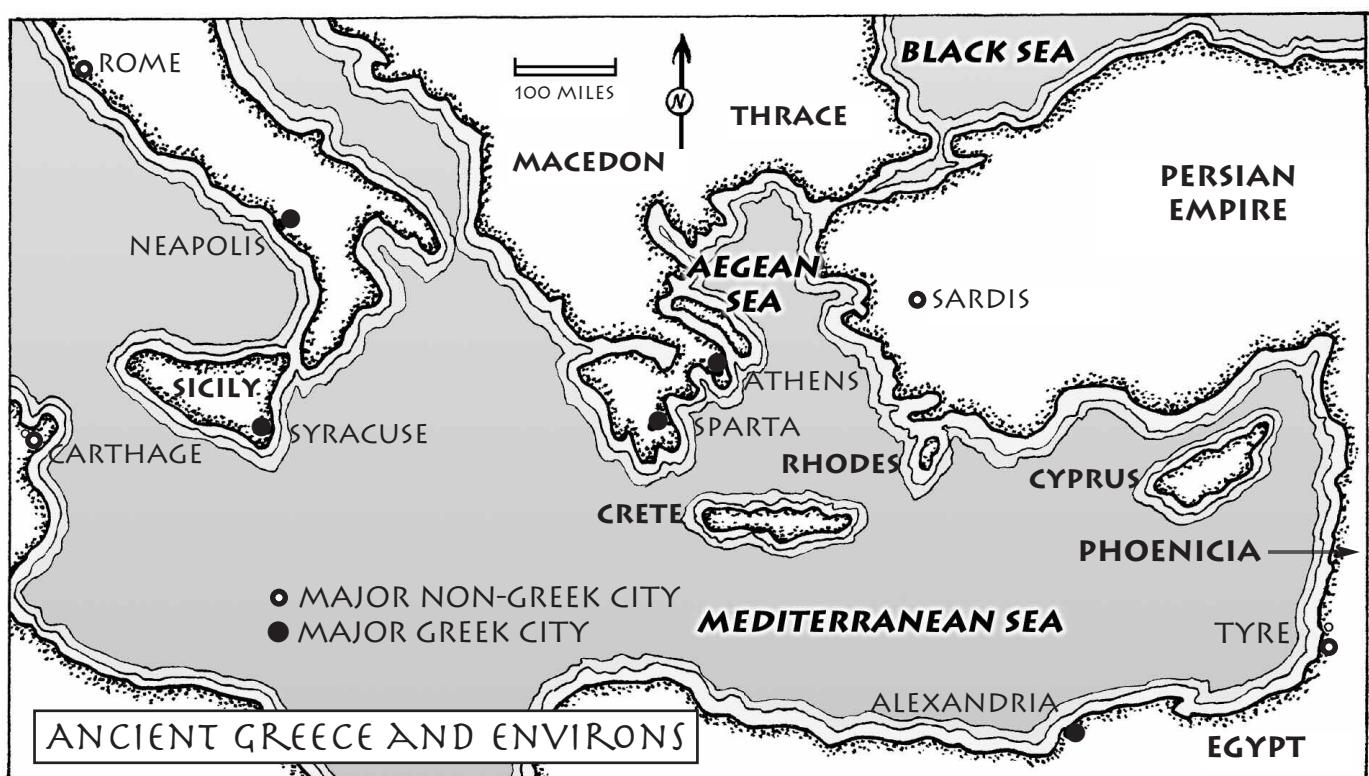
West of Attica is the Isthmus of Corinth, a bridge of land about ten miles wide separating the Gulf of Corinth from the Aegean Sea. The Isthmus is under the control of the cities of Corinth and Megara. Near Corinth, a slipway allows ships to traverse the Isthmus.

At the western end of the Isthmus is the Peloponnese (the “Island of Pelops,” named after a legendary king). This near-island is over a hundred miles across, roughly rounded but with three peninsulas thrusting southeast into the Mediterranean. On three sides, the Peloponnese is surrounded by open ocean. On the north is the Gulf of Corinth, a long, narrow bay that separates the Peloponnese from the bulk of Europe.

On the east coast of the Peloponnese is the Argolid, a district centered around the ancient city of Argos. The ruins of fabled Mycenae (see p. 26) are here as well.

Old peoples and customs hold sway in Arcadia, the mountainous central portion of the Peloponnese. This district has no major cities, and most of the people live in small towns or herding villages.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## THE HELLENIC HOMELAND (CONTINUED)

In the south, several wide river valleys allow relatively good farming. Here are the districts of Laconia in the east, and Messenia in the west. The capital of Laconia is the famous city of Sparta, where dwell the best warriors in Greece. Sparta dominates both Laconia and Messenia much of the time.

The northern coast of the Peloponnese is a district called Achaea, where the locals claim descent from ancient heroes. No major city-states exist here. To the northwest is the small city of Elis, famous because of its control of the religious center, Olympia – the site of the Olympic Games.

### CENTRAL GREECE

North of the Gulf of Corinth is the European mainland. Just north of the Gulf are the districts of Aetolia and Phocis. The only major site in this area is the temple-village of Delphi, location of the most famous of the Greek oracles.

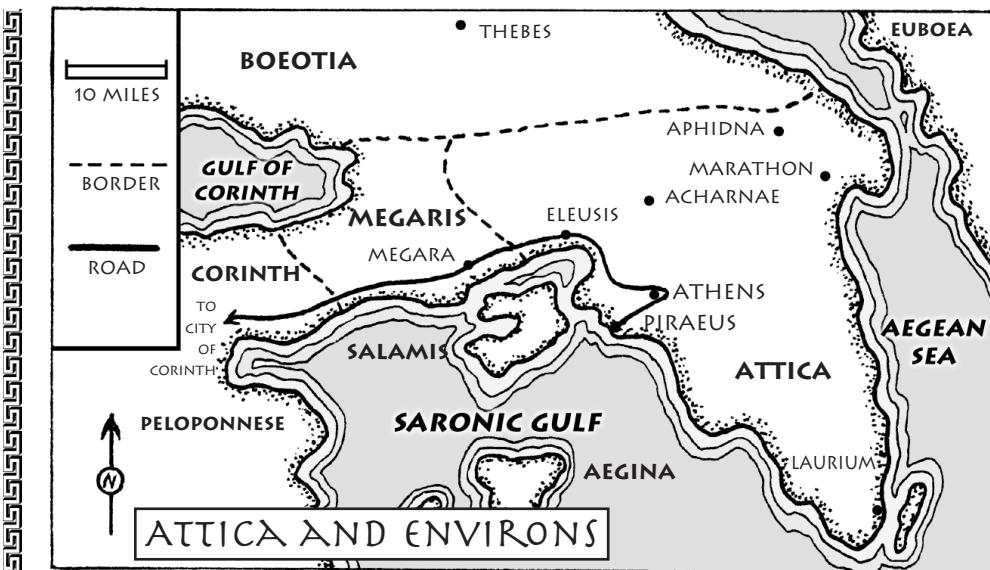
East of Phocis, bordering on Athenian territory, is the district called Boeotia ("Cowland"). This area is unusually fertile for Hellas, with good soil and plenty of water. There are a number of small towns here, dominated by the city of Thebes.

North of Boeotia is another good agricultural district, the region called Thessaly. Thessaly is ruled by a king, and there are no city-states here. Large herds can be kept here, and the kings of Thessaly become very rich by breeding horses.

### THE NORTHERN FRONTIERS

North of Thessaly, Greece shades off into the European hinterland. This region is wild and barbarous. The kingdoms of Epirus and Macedon accept parts of Greek culture and do their best to hold back the complete barbarians further north. There are few Greek colonies in this area, along the Macedonian and Thracian coasts.

One wholly barbarian region of interest is the country called Thrace, northeast of Macedon. The Thracians are a fully non-Greek people, with a language and culture all their own. The Greeks think of them as wild and uncanny, with a love for war and a tendency toward witchcraft.



### ATTICA

Athens is the *polis* of a district called Attica (the "Long Coast"), a wedge-shaped peninsula about ten miles across at the base and 20 miles long that juts southeast into the Aegean Sea. A healthy Athenian can walk the length of the entire nation in a day. Attica is a bleak land, with forests in the highlands but almost bare of vegetation in the inhabited plains.

Athens lies about five miles inland from the coast, connected to a port called Piraeus by a fairly good road. Fortifications called the Long Walls protect Athens, Piraeus, and the road between them. Several other significant towns exist in Attica, although none of them approach the size of Athens. The Athenians celebrate the famous Mysteries at the religious center of Eleusis, a few miles to the west along the coast (see sidebar, p. 83). In the uplands behind the city lie the towns of Acharnae and Aphidna. Toward the point of the peninsula is the famous silver-mining village of Laurium. Smaller towns and villages lie scattered throughout the country.

### CITY LAYOUT

A traveler visiting Athens from the northwest will approach the city along the Sacred Way. This road follows the coast from nearby Eleusis, entering the city through the famous Dipylon Gate. Any visitor entering the city will soon find himself in the *agora*.

### THE AGORA

The *agora* or "place of assembly" is the heart of any Greek city, its "downtown." It consists of an open space near the center of town, irregular in shape, several hundred feet across. Most of the buildings housing local government surround this area. In any campaign set in a *polis*, the *agora* will be a center of action, so the GM should define what buildings visitors can find there, and what people they will encounter there at any given time.

On most days, the Athenian *agora* is full of people. Farmers and craftsmen set up booths and sell their wares here. It is also the center of social life, a constant whirl of voices. Every Athenian man comes to the *agora* often to visit with friends, make business deals, take part in court cases, or listen to politicians and philosophers speak. The place is so important that an Athenian might refer to the time of day as "full *agora*," referring to the morning hours when the market fills up, or "empty *agora*," the early afternoon when most people go inside to get out of the sun.

The most important buildings on the edge of the Athenian *agora* are the Bouleterion and the Tholos. The former is the meeting place of the *boule* or Council, a 500-man group that handles most legislative functions (see p. 12). The latter is a round building, where the executive committee of the Council meets continuously. In front of the Bouleterion stands a monument to ten Athenian heroes, a popular spot because it is also the location of the city's public notice board. All these buildings sit on the southwestern corner of the *agora*. As with most Athenian public buildings, they are of white stone, with red tile roofs.

### STOAI

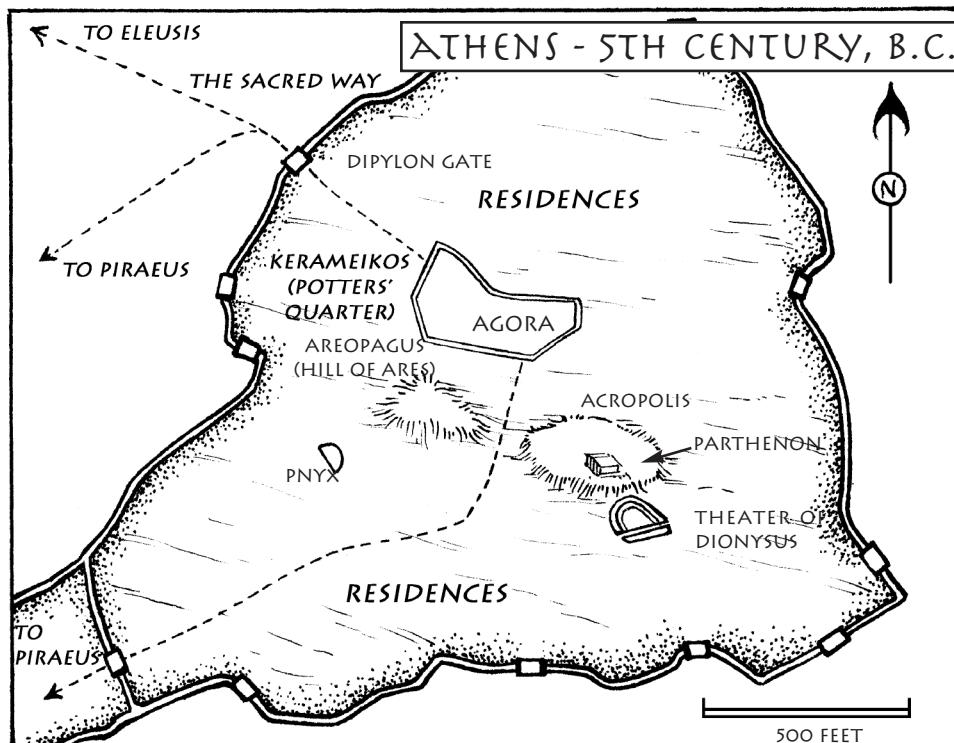
North of the government complex is the Stoa of Zeus. A *stoa* is a long, narrow building with one colonnaded side, open to foot traffic and the elements. Religious ceremonies sometimes take place in them, but usually shops and meeting areas occupy the shaded colonnade. Socrates spent many hours speaking with his followers in the Stoa of Zeus. Adjacent to the Stoa of Zeus is the Royal Stoa, a smaller building where Socrates was indicted and sentenced to death.

There are other *stoai* on the Agora, including the long South Stoa that defines the southern border of the marketplace. The most magnificent is the Painted Stoa on the northern edge of the Agora. Many artists have painted murals on the walls of this *stoa*, depicting great Athenian victories of the past.

### THE ACROPOLIS

After crossing the Athenian *agora*, one comes to the northwestern slopes of the Acropolis, an immense flat-topped stone outcropping rising several hundred feet above the plain of Attica. In the distant past, the original city was located atop this outcropping.

Most Greek cities have an *akropolis* or "high city." It is a defensible place, where the populace can retreat if the rest of the city falls to attack. An *akropolis* also serves as a sacred district, where the city can build its greatest temples close to the heavens where the Olympian gods live. Athens keeps its treasury in the Acropolis temples, protecting the city's wealth both by fortifications and by the gods' presence. Other cities use their central strong points in similar ways.



## THE AEGEAN AND ASIA MINOR

From early days, Greek culture has looked out to sea. The Greeks have a *littoral* culture, one based almost entirely on coastal regions. Greeks settle in coastal cities, trading and interacting with non-Greek cultures inland.

### THE ISLANDS

To the east of the Greek homeland is the Aegean Sea, a body of water about 200 miles across from east to west, and twice that north to south. The Aegean is full of dozens of islands of all sizes. The Greeks have settled all of them, to use as stepping stones to colonies in distant countries.

The largest island in the Aegean is Euboea ("Good Cattle"). Long and narrow, this island parallels the coast of Boeotia and Attica for about a hundred miles. Its major cities are Chalcis and Eretria.

Southeast of the tip of Euboea and the Attica peninsula lie the Cyclades or "Circling Islands." Except for the island-state of Naxos, these islands are poor backwaters. The southernmost of these is volcanic Thera, the probable origin of the Atlantis legend (see p. 28). Many miles south of the Cyclades is the great island of Crete, once home to a pre-Greek civilization but now void of important city-states.

To the east, along the coast of Asia Minor, are a number of important islands. Rhodes is a major trading nation and naval power. Samos is another naval power often allied with Athens. Chios exports wine and dye. Lesbos is the site of the major city-state of Mytilene, once home to the famous poetess Sappho. Samothrace is a minor island with a strange role in Greek myth and religion (p. 89). Other minor islands include Cos, Lemnos, Imbros, and Thasos.

### THE ASIAN COAST

Asia Minor is a center of Greek culture, although strong native peoples inland force settlers to stay close to the coastline. In the south is the district called Doris, where many Doric Greeks live among the native Carians. The major city-states of this region are Cnidus and Halicarnassus. Many Doric cities ally themselves with Sparta and Corinth.

North of Doris is the district of Ionia. The Ionian Greeks claim to be related to the Athenian people. Their accent differs as much from Doric Greek as American and Australian English do. Athens keeps close ties with these cities, even when they are under non-Greek rule. The major cities of this area are Miletus, Ephesus, and Smyrna. Nearby is the non-Greek city of Sardis, once center of a great kingdom and later a provincial capital of the Persian Empire.

The sparsely-populated region of Aeolia is north of Ionia. Pergamon is the only major city-state of this area, destined to be a political power during the early Roman period. Also in this area, near the straits leading to the Black Sea, is the site of ancient Troy.

## SICILY AND ITALY

The Greeks who colonized to the west have found no powerful native peoples to resist them or rule over them, so they are usually able to go their own independent way.

### SICILY

The greatest of all Greek colonies is the city of Syracuse, located on the eastern coast of Sicily. Syracuse tends to dominate the island's Greek population, although there are many other small cities along the Sicilian coasts. Sicily is destined to be a major battle zone between Greeks and barbarians, as the Greeks struggle for survival against the power of Carthage (and, later, Rome).

### ITALY

While many colonists have gone on to Sicily, even more have settled the shores of southern Italy. So many Greeks live in the region that southern Italy is often called "Greater Hellas." There are numerous city-states in this area, the most famous being Neapolis, an important trade center that will become the modern city of Naples.

The western colonies rarely involve themselves in the affairs of the homeland except when their ties to mother-cities force such involvement on them. Instead, they pursue struggles of their own. They also interact with the natives of Italy, an interaction critical to later European history because it exposes European peoples to Greek and Eastern culture.

On the Athenian Acropolis, the most important building is the Temple of Athena *Parthenos* ("Athena the Maiden"), otherwise known as the Parthenon. The temple contains a gigantic gold-and-ivory statue of the goddess and an elaborate sculptural frieze, making it the most beautiful temple of the Greek world.

Near the Parthenon is a smaller temple, the Erechtheum, dedicated to several gods and Athenian heroes. A small temple to Athena *Nike* ("Athena of Victory") stands at one end of the Acropolis. Heavy fortifications protect the entire hill, with a great gate complex called the Propylaea at the eastern end.

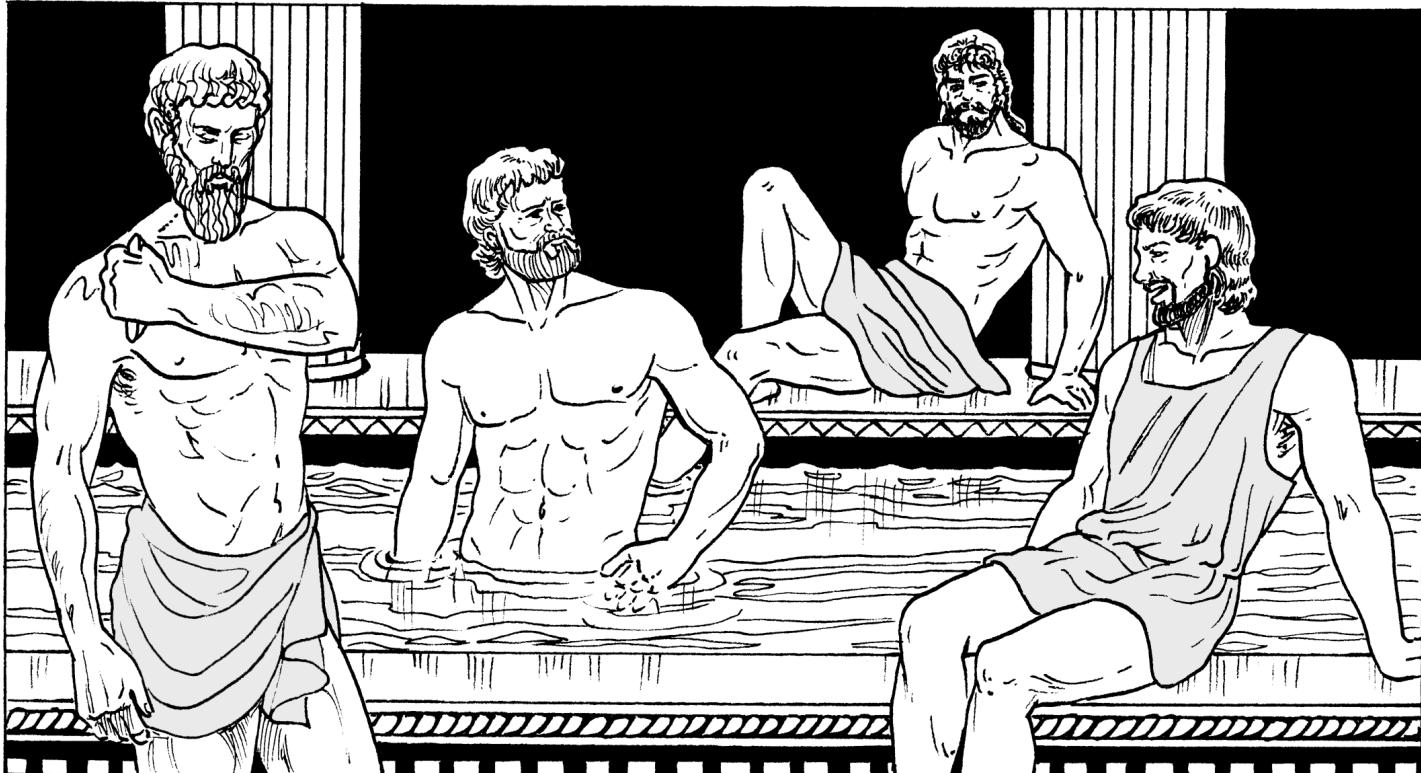
### OTHER IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

Every major city has institutions devoted to athletic training and competition. These include baths, *gymnasia* and *palaistrai*.

Baths are available for both public and private use. A Greek usually cleanses his body by spreading oil over his skin and then using a scraper to remove dead skin and dirt. Hot and cold water is also available for bathing. One can exercise or wrestle at the baths.

The *gymnasion* and *palaistra* are more devoted to athletic competition, with race tracks, wrestling rings and areas for *diskos* or javelin throwing. These are popular meeting places, where men of all ages exercise, compete, or simply converse. *Gymnasia* are usually public, but upper-class families reserve the *palaistrai* for their private use. As with most major institutions, they center around shrines to local heroes or gods. Athens has two famous *gymnasia*, one just outside the city at a shrine for the hero Academus, and one dedicated to Apollo *Lykaios* ("Apollo the Wolfslayer"). These are the sites for two great institutions of higher learning: the Academy and the Lyceum.

Another important building in Athens is the Theater of Dionysus, a spacious outdoor amphitheater southeast of the Acropolis. Its stone seats face the mountains and the sea, so that the stage has a stunning natural backdrop. Up to 15,000 people can crowd into the theater for a performance. This theater is the center of Greek drama (see p. 16), although other cities have similar theaters.



## CITY GOVERNMENT

Greek city-states are not run with elaborate bureaucracy or codes of law. Even the largest, such as Athens, are small enough to run on a personal basis. Most of the important citizens know each other, and almost every man will hold office at some point in his life (see below). This makes politics more free-wheeling and more intense than in most periods of human history.

The exact form of government varies from city to city (see sidebar, p. 15), but the officials of Athens are typical for a democratic city.

### ARCHONS

In Athens, the primary day-to-day work of administration falls to a board of nine officers called *archontes* (singular, *archon*), each with a different role in city government. The Athenian calendar names each year after the man who holds the office of *archon eponymos* ("name-giving"). This supreme *archon* takes charge of law enforcement and the court system.

The role of the second of these officials, the *archon basileus* or "king archon," is primarily religious. He personally conducts religious events that the king of Athens once led, and also oversees other civic religious events. The *archon polemarchos* is the commander-in-chief of the city's military. The other six are the *archontes thesmothetai*, who play a variety of roles in city administration.

The people choose a new slate of *archontes* every year. The job is difficult and unglamorous. At the end of his term, each *archon* must present the assembly with an accounting of his year in office. If his accounting does not satisfy the people, they may try him at once for misuse of his office.

The *archontes* demonstrate a feature of Athenian democracy that seems very odd to modern people. During elections, the people choose most office-holders by lot, at random from among the eligible citizens! The Council will excuse citizens who cannot spare the time from their business, although most people regard this as bad citizenship. The Council examines each citizen chosen for an office, to make sure he is of good character and has any special qualifications that are needed. Since there are so many offices to fill each year, few citizens can avoid serving in government at some point in their lives.

### MAGISTRATES

Aside from the *archontes*, there are ten *astynomoi* (singular, *astynomos*) or "magistrates." These officials have independent duties and also assist the *archontes*. Five of the *astynomoi* work in the city itself, while five more work in Piraeus. They enforce laws on a day-to-day basis, collect fees, inspect goods in the market, direct construction gangs and so on. The people select these officials at random, like the *archontes*.

Numerous lesser officials support the *archontes* and *astynomoi*. Any public-works project has city-appointed foremen and inspectors. The harbor at Piraeus has a number of inspectors to inventory imports, make sure duties are paid and prevent smuggling. Inspectors also work in the marketplace, making sure weights and measures are honest and coins aren't being "clipped" to reduce their precious-metal content.

### GENERALS

One of the most important offices is that of *strategos* or "general." Responsible for leading the army or navy in time of war, the generals have broad powers to run the city's foreign affairs. They set trade policy, decide on treaties and alliances and so on. Since foreign policy affects everything, they are very influential in the assembly and in the city's bureaucracy.



### CLIMATE, AGRICULTURE AND DIET

Greece has a typical eastern Mediterranean climate. The summers are hot, with temperatures averaging around 80 degrees in coastal regions. Winters are mild, with temperatures rarely falling below freezing. Of course, in inland and mountain districts temperatures can be much lower. In the upland areas temperatures can reach freezing, frosts are common, and snow can occur.

Almost all of Greece is dry. Around Athens rain is uncommon in the fall and winter, nonexistent in summer. In upland regions and in the north, rain is more common, although only in Macedon and Thrace is it likely to rain in summer. What few rivers and streams exist in mainland Greece tend to dry up in summertime.

Hellas is an agriculturally poor country. Greek agriculture has to deal with a scarcity of good soil and water, although the mild winters help somewhat by making the growing season long. Barley is the only grain grown in any quantity. Olives are common and highly prized, eaten as fruit and also pressed for oil used in cooking and as a condiment. Where the soil allows it, vineyards yield grapes. Herds-men raise sheep and goats. Larger cattle and horses are rare and expensive, since only certain districts have any good pasture. Timber is expensive, since most parts of the country were stripped of forest during the Bronze Age.

A Greek's diet consists mostly of barley, olives, cheese and wine. Some other vegetables are available in limited quantities. In coastal areas, fish and other seafood are obtainable. The Greeks sometimes eat small birds, alone or stuffed with other items. While they enjoy red meat, it is expensive and they almost never eat it except in a religious feast, after a sacrifice. The Greek diet is quite healthy, as long as there is enough of it.

Other parts of the Greek world have similar conditions. In particular, the climate in Italy and Sicily is similar to that of Greece although the land is much richer, better for both farming and herding. The western colonies are generally wealthy and prosperous compared to cities in the Hellenic homeland.

## A TYPICAL GREEK HOME

A Greek house would look strange to a modern observer. The outside walls are smooth featureless plaster over mud brick. There is a front door, and possibly a side door for entry directly to the working area of the house. There are also a few narrow window slits for air and light. Most houses have two stories with tile or thatch roofs.

Inside, the house is arranged around a rectangular courtyard. Cobblestones may cover the floor of the courtyard, and there may be plantings or a fountain. The courtyard is the primary source of light and ventilation for the whole house. All the rooms open out on it. If the weather is pleasant, much of the day's activity takes place there.

The most important room is the *andron* or "room of men." Here the family entertains guests, or dines together if there are no guests. A kitchen and storerooms are adjacent. The women and slaves of the family perform their daily tasks in working rooms elsewhere on the first floor. Women's and slaves' quarters are separate from the public area of the house, probably on the second floor if there is one. The master of the house can lock these as a security measure.

Most Greeks build their homes on this basic plan. Wealthier families have larger homes, better-decorated with mosaics and hangings. The general poverty of Greece (see p. 20), and the customary crowding in cities, preclude mansions or palaces. In the country, a villa will have a similar structure, but the house will be part of a walled compound, possibly with one or more rectangular corner towers for defense.

Each year, the people elect ten generals, one from each tribe (see p. 21). Since these *strategoi* are elected rather than appointed, a man can hold office year after year as long as he can win re-election. This allows influential statesmen to stay in positions of power for long periods. Pericles became the virtual dictator of Athens while holding the office of *strategos*.

## THE ASSEMBLY

Aside from the administrative offices, the Athenians have a citizen legislature. All authority comes from the *ekklesia* or "assembly." Every male citizen can take part in assembly meetings and vote on issues. On a day-to-day basis the *boule* or Council represents the assembly. The Council is composed of 50 men from each of the ten tribes, selected at random from among the citizens.

The Council prepares issues for the assembly to discuss, makes decisions that do not require the whole assembly to meet and decides when to call the assembly into emergency session. The Council also audits the records of all city officials. The Council breaks down into groups by tribe. Each group presides for one-tenth of the year at a time. This *prytany* or "presidency" is in charge of managing meetings of the Council and the assembly.

## OTHER CITIES

The Athenian democracy is only one governmental type among many, although other democratic cities work similarly. Non-democratic cities have different organization, generally keeping power in fewer hands and away from the people.

If a GM wishes to design a city-state's governmental structure, he should use his imagination. Decide first what general form the government has – democracy, oligarchy, or monarchy (see sidebar, p. 15). Then decide what officers the city needs: administrators, law enforcement officials, military leaders, caretakers of religious shrines and so on. Decide how these officials are chosen. Some officers might be elected, possibly from a small subset of the citizen population. Others might be selected at random, or some central authority (a council or monarch) might appoint them.

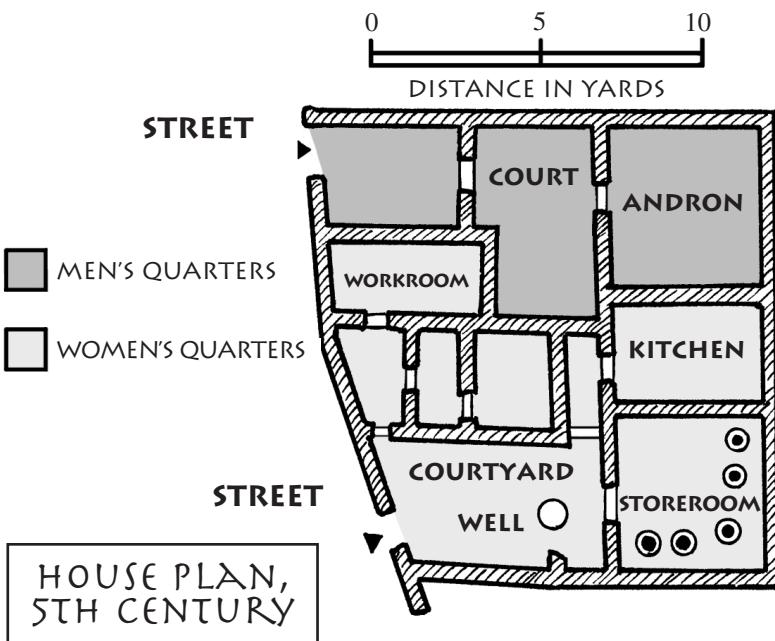
Greeks do not trust each other with power, so few offices exist without checks on their authority. Any given person may only hold office for one year.

Other officials may have to ratify the decisions of the office-holder. Or the official's performance may be under constant scrutiny.

## ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

Most Greek cities have modest budgets, and can raise the necessary funds with a simple structure of fees. This money funds public building projects, temples, fortifications, stocks of warships or weapons and so on. Athens is exceptional for its ambitious program of public building. The temples on the Acropolis, the civic buildings around the *agora*, the great theaters, the Long Walls that protect the city, the port with its great harbors – all of this requires huge amounts of money to construct and maintain.

Athens is fortunate in that it is a major trading center. This enables the Athenians to



levy fees on ships coming into their harbors, and on imported goods. It is the responsibility of the *archontes* and lesser city officials to collect and administer these fees. Athens has some other unusual sources of income as well. The state owns the richest silver mine in Greece, at Laurium in Attica. The Athenian mint strikes silver coins of unusual purity and beauty. Traders all across the Mediterranean accept their four-drachma piece, with its characteristic “owl” design.

Regular taxes on wealth, such as the modern “income tax,” are very rare in Greek cities. Wealthy citizens prevent any such taxes politically. On the other hand, in Athens there is an *informal* income tax. Each wealthy resident must sometimes contribute a *leitourgia* (“public service” or “liturgy”) to the city-state, financing a specific state activity at his own expense. This obligation is legally enforceable, but it is also performed out of a sense of duty, and because it brings prestige to the person performing the liturgy. For example, wealthy citizens vie to sponsor the dramas performed at the Dionysian festivals each year (see p. 82). In wartime, owners of armories contribute equipment free of charge to the city’s army, and the wealthiest citizens finance warships, even commanding these ships in person. Other cities may require their citizens to contribute to the treasury in similar ways.

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

### POLICE

The Athenian justice system is simple. No organized force investigates crimes or arrests perpetrators. Any citizen who sees a crime in progress is within his rights to try to restrain the offenders by force. The chief *archon* does administer a kind of police force – a group of slaves. These slaves patrol the city streets at night in Scythian costume – light armor, bows or cudgels and a style of cap associated with the nomads. They also keep order during public meetings.

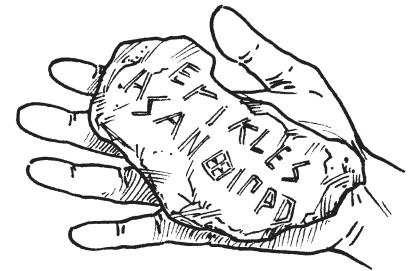
If one Athenian wishes to accuse another of a crime, he brings the case before the chief *archon* or a lesser magistrate. The *archon* decides whether the evidence is sufficient for a trial, and sets the trial date. Leaving the process of accusation up to individual initiative causes a serious problem in Athenian society. Many people make a living as *sykophantoi* or “blackmailers.” If they find evidence of wrongdoing on the part of a wealthy citizen, they will demand money in exchange for their silence. The *sykophantoi* sometimes operate on very flimsy evidence, counting on the fact that many upper-class citizens would rather pay blackmail than have their good names blackened by rumor (or expose themselves to political enemies by going on trial).

### THE COURT SYSTEM

Trials are different from what we might expect. The *archon* or another official presides over the trial, interpreting city law as necessary. There are no attorneys, so both the accuser and the accused have to present their cases on their own. The most an outside assistant can do for one of the parties is to help him study the law, write speeches that he can memorize for the trial, and coach him in effective delivery. Some speechwriters become wealthy and famous working on high-visibility cases for pay.

Both parties may call witnesses, but there is no cross-examination. Instead, witnesses give their evidence in a pre-trial deposition. During the trial, they simply attest under oath that their depositions are truthful.

While the judge interprets existing law and maintains orderly proceedings, the decision of the case rests solely with the jury. The *dikasteria* is composed of ordinary citizens chosen at random. The size of the jury depends on the importance of the case. Most cases use juries of 51 or 101 people, but some famous



## GOING ON TRIAL

If a PC is involved in a court case (see main text), as either the plaintiff or defendant, the GM may want to play it out as an adventure. If the case is not of great importance, though, he can use a few skill rolls to decide the case.

The trial is decided on the basis of a Quick Contest of Bard skill, determining which party did the better job of convincing (and entertaining) the jury. If a speaker does not have Bard, he must use the default. A number of factors may modify the rolls, however.

First, any reaction bonuses or penalties that the GM thinks appropriate will apply. These should include Voice, personal Appearance, Charisma and Reputation. Social Status may come into play as well, depending on the case.

Second, the GM needs to decide the merits of the case. If the PC is bringing the case to an *archon*, the GM can take the role of the official and judge how good his case is. If the citizen is the target of an accusation, the GM should decide how sound the accuser’s evidence is. This will apply a modifier to both Bard rolls in the Quick Contest. The side with the better evidence will get a bonus, while the other side will get an equal penalty. For example, Thrasymachus is a miserable *sykophant* who is making a wild accusation of embezzlement against Aristides, a well-respected citizen. Aristides can produce records showing that he has stolen nothing. Aristides will get a +3 to his Bard roll, while Thrasymachus gets a -3.

Finally, each side will have to prepare its speeches ahead of time. This requires a roll against Law or Writing, whichever is *worse*. A participant may hire a speechwriter to take care of this (the GM will have to fix the fee based on the person’s wealth and the importance of the case). A critical success will give a +2 bonus to the Bard roll, but a failure will give a -1 penalty and a critical failure will give a -3 penalty.

Whoever wins the Quick Contest wins the case, and the appropriate penalties will be applied to the loser if he was the one accused of a crime. If the party bringing the accusation makes a critical failure on his Bard roll, he will automatically lose, and the jury will fine him for making such baseless accusations!

## OSTRACISM

Greek politics involve some institutions that seem very strange to us today. For example, the Athenian democratic system includes an institution called *ostrakismos*, from which we get our word “ostracism.”

Every year, the assembly votes on whether to hold an *ostrakismos*. If the measure passes, a few months later the assembly will gather again. Each citizen votes by bringing a potsherd (an *ostrakon*) to this meeting, with someone’s name scratched on it. If there are enough votes cast in this special election, the “winner” will be exiled from Athens for ten years. The person exiled is not a criminal and suffers no dishonor as a result of the vote. The state protects his property and will return it to him in full at the end of the period.

The *ostrakismos* protects the Athenian republic from dangerous citizens, powerful men who might try to take over the state or lead it into disaster. It also weakens some of the dangerous personal animosity that springs up in Athenian politics.

## A CAMPAIGN SLOGAN BACKFIRES

The following story from Plutarch reveals a lot about Athenian politics.

Aristides was an aristocratic statesman in the years leading up to the Persian Wars. Although he was wealthy and represented the old nobility, he was popular among all classes for his impeccable honesty. He was widely known as “Aristides the Just,” a nickname his political allies were careful to spread.

Aristides’ main opponent was Themistocles, an outgoing and cunning politician who represented the Athenian commoners. The two men argued over class politics and over the proper response to the Persian threat. Eventually their rivalry came to a head and an ostracism was called for.

On the day of the ostracism, Aristides was walking through the *agora* when an illiterate citizen noticed him. The man didn’t know who he was, but saw that he was well-dressed and probably literate. He handed Aristides his *ostrakon* and asked the statesman to write on it.

“What name shall I put down?” asked Aristides.

“Aristides,” the man said.

Aristides obediently wrote his own name on the potsherd, but asked the man why he wanted to vote that way.

“I don’t know him, and he’s never done anything to me,” replied the man. “I’m just tired of hearing him called ‘the Just’ all the time.”

Apparently he wasn’t alone; Aristides was exiled.

trials have as many as 501 jurors! Once the jury has heard all arguments, it votes as it pleases on the verdict. Actual guilt or innocence is the major factor, but jurors also vote according to the polish of the speeches given, or even according to the bribes they receive. If the jury finds the defendant guilty, it will further decide on a sentence or fine. In later Athenian history, the jurors receive pay, and being a juror becomes a desirable position for retired men. The pay is enough to live on, and court cases are always entertaining.

There is little distinction between criminal and civil cases in Athenian law. In each, some citizen has to accuse the defendant of an offense. Even crimes against the state, such as treason, come to trial only after a single citizen makes the accusation and becomes the prosecutor. Many a great politician first makes his name by prosecuting an important case.

## PUNISHMENTS

Sentences are not too harsh. A defendant might pay a fine to the state or to the people he injured. Imprisonment and enslavement are possible for serious crimes. The most severe penalty is usually exile. Executions are rare but they do happen. Unless the criminal is convicted of truly horrendous crimes, he is executed by being forced to drink hemlock, a painless poison. In capital cases, the convicted criminal has the opportunity to suggest a lesser sentence, which the jury will often accept.

Other cities have similar justice systems. The Athenian system is unusual mostly for the way it selects juries and gives them the final decision. Justice is harsher in less democratic cities, involving less deliberation and more severe punishments. Sparta, for example, is infamous for the harshness of its justice.

## LIFE IN THE CITY

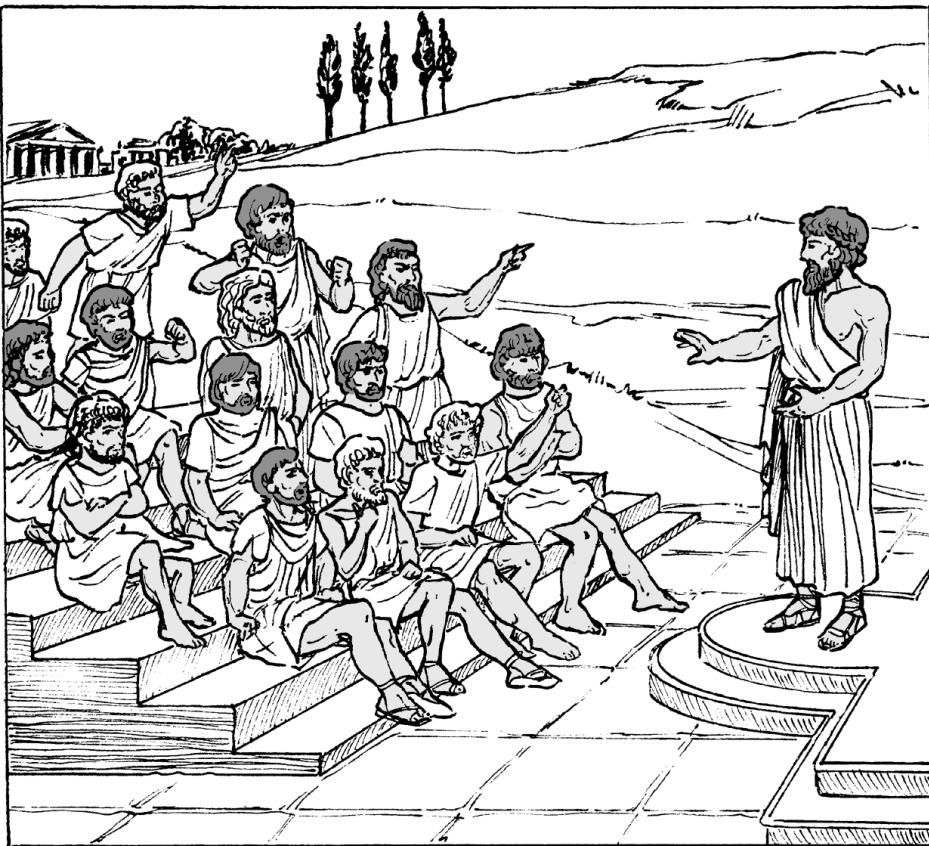
Hellenic culture includes a real zest for life. The Greeks work hard, play hard, and gossip and socialize constantly in between. A prosperous city like Athens is constantly bubbling with activity.

## MAKING A LIVING

The Greeks believe in work, but some occupations fit the Greek concept of an ideal life better than others. To a Greek, the ideal person is a free man who depends on no one, who has time to devote to the social and political life of the city, and who gets plenty of outdoor exercise leading to a healthy physique. Occupations that allow all this are regarded as the most respectable.

The first occupation open to any Hellene is agriculture. Even in the most sophisticated cities, farmers have a great deal of respect. Most people consider agriculture the finest possible occupation, because it best fits Greek ideals. In Attica, independent landholders do most of the farming. Most live in the country and walk into the city from time to time, to transact business or take part in politics. Wealthier farmers live in the city and hire men to manage their farms from day to day. Farmers who live in the mountainous uplands tend to be herdsmen rather than tillers of the soil.

Many free craftsmen live and work in individual quarters of the city. For example, the *kerameikos* or “potters’ quarter” is a hub of commercial activity since Athens exports a large amount of pottery. Other districts specialize in smithcraft, stonecarving, or carpentry. Most people do not consider the crafts a prestigious profession, since craftsmen do not have much independence or free time. Many skilled craftsmen are *metics*, resident non-citizens (see p. 23). Some types of crafts are more respectable, particularly those that require a great deal of artistic skill. Vase-painters and shield-makers, for example, are much sought-after for their wares and earn respect, at least to their faces.



People without skills can still make a reasonable living. In most Greek cities, there is always some sort of construction going on: old buildings being torn down, public works going up, new houses being built. Much of the work requires nothing more than a strong back and the ability to follow directions. A standard wage is paid for such work. In Athens, even slaves and metics earn the same wage as free citizens on the same projects.

### PUBLIC DEBATE

The Greeks, especially the Athenians, love talk and argument. Since the city is democratic, much of the talk centers around politics. The Athenian citizen is probably far better informed about political issues than most modern people. For example, when Athens was planning its Sicilian invasion (see p. 58), men debated foreign policy, military strategy and tactics all over the city – in the *agora*, in craftsmen's workshops, in barbershops, everywhere.

The people make decisions at the assembly, which meets four times a month and holds emergency sessions in times of crisis. For important meetings with high attendance, the assembly meets in the *agora* or at a number of possible alternative sites. Ordinary meetings are held in a small amphitheater called the Pnyx. The city uses an unusual method to gather citizens for meetings. A team of men deploys at the end of the *agora* farthest from the Pnyx, stretching out a long rope smeared with purple dye. The team then walks across the *agora*, herding the citizens into the amphitheater as they try to avoid staining their clothes.

A presiding officer from the current *prytany* opens each meeting (see p. 12). He presents a proposed law that has been examined by the Council, with the Council's recommendation as to whether the assembly should pass it. In times of crisis, the assembly may debate possible decrees for immediate action. The president calls on those who wish to speak, in order of their age if there is more than one. Theoretically every male citizen has equal right to speak, but in practice only trained speakers take advantage of this. The assembly is a tough audience, mercilessly laughing or shouting down speakers who say foolish things.

### TYPES OF GOVERNMENT

Greek city-states have a variety of governmental structures. The philosopher Aristotle developed the best system for classifying them.

Most city-states are *oligarchies*. In these, a closed circle of people runs everything, allowing no one else any voice in politics. The wealthiest people in the city, or members of the old aristocratic families, form the ruling body. There may be a citizen assembly, but it has no real power and may only ratify decisions the rulers have already reached. Oligarchies are usually unpopular among the lower classes, especially if they use force or terror to maintain their control.

Some cities, like Athens, are *democracies*. In these, the mass of the citizenry makes decisions in open assembly. Even here, aristocrats and the wealthy tend to have a large share of power, but at least the ordinary citizen has a vote and a chance to take part in genuine debate. Democracy is a popular form of government in the Classical period, but declines after the Peloponnesian War.

A few city-states are *monarchies*. True hereditary monarchy is rare. Most monarchies are the result of a military coup, putting a single man in power. Such governments are called *tyrannies*, after the Greek word for a despot of this type (*tyrannos*). The tyrant rules with an armed bodyguard and the support of the army, which usually means the support of the middle classes who form the largest part of the army. Tyrants are common in cities under foreign rule. A talented, relatively benevolent tyrant, who promotes the city's power and takes care to respect the civil rights of the citizens, can be quite popular. On the other hand, an incompetent tyrant, or one who uses terror to rule, can find himself expelled or murdered.

Interestingly, even with such a variety of governmental types, almost every city-state has one institution in common: the citizen assembly. Even the most non-democratic states, such as Sparta, have an assembly which plays a nominal role in government. The difference is in where real power lies.





## THE GREAT FESTIVALS

Greeks take their religion very seriously. Part of their worship involves great festivals, held at regular intervals to celebrate holidays in honor of the gods. These include patriotic events and contests of poetry and athletic prowess, as well as religious ceremonies. The Greeks see nothing strange about worshipping the gods while expressing pride in their city and engaging in furious competition, all at the same time. Some festivals are “pan-Hellenic,” events which Greeks from all over the world attend.

Some of the great international gatherings include the Olympic Games near Elis, the Isthmian Games near Corinth, the Panathenaic Games in Athens, the Pythian Games at Delphi, the great feast of Apollo on the island of Delos, the Panionian festival in Asia Minor, and the Nemean Games near Argos. The Olympic Games are the greatest of these festivals, but all of them attract athletes, poets, statesmen and spectators. Non-Greeks often come to watch, although they are not allowed to participate in most events.

Every city has major religious events, that have not reached international status. These may include any or all of the same events, but in general people do not come from other cities to take part.

Athens, for example, has the Thesmophoria in the early fall. In this festival, women honor Demeter through a variety of odd ceremonies and processions. Another major feast is the Anthesteria, a festival of Dionysus where the whole city gets gloriously drunk. The Great Dionysia is another festival for the same god, where plays are staged in a great dramatic competition. Finally, the Greater and Lesser Mysteries are festivals wherein much of the city goes in procession to the nearby religious center of Eleusis.

Other cities have their own festivals, and in fact anywhere in Greece one can expect a major holiday to take place at least once a month, with lesser holidays every few days (see p. 16).

Voting is by a show of hands unless the proposed law or decree directly affects a single individual in some way. In this case, the assembly uses a secret ballot so that nobody can hold a grudge.

## RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS

Religious events are a common diversion (see sidebar, this page). Festivals involve contests, feasts and plenty of socializing. In fact, religious events are some of the few occasions when women leave the house and mix socially with men.

Aside from the greater festivals, there are dozens of minor events throughout the year. About one day in six is a holiday of some sort, when few people work and some or all of the populace take part in religious celebration. Any Greek campaign should make use of all these events as opportunities for role-playing.

## SYMPOSIA

Men often give *symposia*, or “drinking parties,” in their homes. The invited guests recline on couches in the *andron* (see sidebar, p. 12), eating dinner and drinking watered wine. After dinner, there is a set of prescribed rituals, libations (see p. 85) and hymns to Zeus or some other god. The guests then elect a “king of the banquet” or *symposiarch*, who chooses the evening’s entertainment and the amount of wine everyone has to drink in the course of the evening. The



*symposiarch* is usually the host of the party. The evening's entertainment varies. The men might sing and dance in a circle, they might take turns reciting poetry, or they might play *kottabos* (see p. 75). The host may hire entertainers, including acrobats or "flute-girls."

Educated gentlemen often have parties focusing on conversation after the meal. Instead of introducing other entertainment, the *symposiarch* declares a theme for the evening's conversation, and calls on the guests one at a time to speak. The speeches and argument can be of very high order. Philosophers and Sophists are popular in such settings. One of Plato's most famous dialogues centers on the events at a *symposion*, where Socrates and the poet Aristophanes are honored guests (and where the famous rogue Alcibiades breaks in, drunk, at the end).

If PCs are taking part in a *symposion*, they should make one or more skill rolls to avoid making a poor contribution to the evening's entertainment. The appropriate skill depends on the party. Savoir-Faire is always appropriate, or Carousing for parties that involve heavy drinking. Singing, Bard, Poetry, Literature, Theology, or Philosophy are appropriate for more cultured affairs.

## ATHLETICS

Athletics holds a high place in society. Any man of good health spends a great deal of time exercising outdoors. Exercise can also be a social event, as amateurs and experts mingle at the baths, the *gymnasia* and the *palaistrai*. The most popular sports are running, wrestling and throwing the *diskos* and javelin. The city chooses talented athletes to represent it at the pan-Hellenic festivals, like the Olympic Games (see sidebar, p. 18).

## THEATER

Drama is an Athenian invention from the Classical period. Poets base their plays on stories from mythology or history, and present them at the Great Dionysia (see sidebar, p. 16) as part of a great annual competition in drama. Playwrights such as Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides write dramatic plays, presented in sets of three with a vulgar comedy called a "satyr play" following. Other writers, such as Aristophanes, write comedies heavy in earthy humor and sharp political satire. The winners of the competitions earn great honors and can become famous everywhere in the Greek world. Other city-states sponsor plays as well, sometimes spending large sums to build theaters and attract the best poets and actors.

The theater is a significant entertainment for the citizens of Athens. Most of the great plays take place at the Theater of Dionysus. This is another time for women to mingle freely with men, although women may not attend the comedies since the humor is very coarse. During the great dramatic competitions, the audience spends days watching one play after another.

The design of the theater helps the audience see and hear the play, but from the back rows features and lines can be very hard to pick out. Actors wear large masks with exaggerated features. These have small megaphones cunningly concealed in the mouth so as to project the voice.

When a poet wishes to produce a play, he presents the script to one of the *archontes*, who decides if it is good enough to compete in the festival. The official then appoints a *choregos* or "choir-master." This is a wealthy patron, who agrees to pay all the costs of the production in return for the prestige of the position. Singers and actors are sometimes professionals, but they are usually amateurs recruited from among the choir-master's friends and acquaintances. Thus any Athenian with a good build and voice might become an actor. Men play all parts; female actors are unheard-of, even for female roles.



## TECH LEVEL

During the Classical period, most of Greece is at TL2. Ironworking is common, and iron weapons are used by all armies, although most armor is made of bronze. Horseback riding is well-known, but stirrups have not yet been developed. Simple sailing ships are used, and the rowed galley reaches its highest point of development. Navigation has not advanced much, in spite of Thales (p. 88): most Greeks will only sail out of sight of land if they are following routes they know well and the distance is not great. Herbal medicine and simple surgical techniques are commonly practiced. Some developments noted in the *GURPS Basic Set* are not part of the Greek repertoire. The arch was known to the Greeks, but not much used in their architecture. Windmills are unknown.

In the earlier Heroic Age (see Chapter 2), Greece is still at TL1, almost exactly as detailed in the *Basic Set*. Weapons and armor alike are of bronze, and in fact armorers are capable of producing even elaborate plate armor out of bronze. Horseback riding is known, but not well-developed, and horses are used to pull wagons and chariots instead. Both sailing and rowed ships are in use, though both are smaller and simpler than in later eras.

## THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The great Games for the Olympian Zeus are held every four years, at the temple complex of Olympia in the western Peloponnese. These Games are typical of the largest Greek festivals, and provide a model for other celebrations.

This feast of Zeus is an international holiday, with a truce imposed on all wars during the month of the festival. The city of Elis, which administers the event, imposes a fine on any city in whose territory a pilgrim is injured. Even infamous tyrants will pay such a fine without argument.

Only freeborn Greeks are allowed to participate in the Games, although anyone can watch. Each city selects its own athletes, who train for months before the Games. The officials at Olympia examine each athlete to make sure he is eligible to compete. If he passes, the athlete swears an oath to obey all the rules of the competition. Breaking such an oath, or competing when ineligible, is terribly dishonorable.

Once the festival begins, the athletes parade into the stadium by city, announced by a herald. The athletes parade naked, and compete in almost all the events naked as well. Olympia suffers from over-crowding, oppressive heat, bad sanitation, foul water and insects. Sacrifices are regularly made during the Games to Zeus Averter of Flies.

The Games last five days. The most important event is the *pentathlon* or “five struggles.” This includes a broad jump, throwing a *diskos*, throwing a javelin, a 200-yard sprint, and wrestling. This event is important because it shows all-around ability. Anyone entering the event must compete in all five contests.

Various martial arts competitions are also important. Wrestlers fight naked, and win by throwing their opponent out of the ring. Boxing is bare-knuckle, with fighters wearing only strips of soft leather on their fists and forearms. Blows are only to the head, and there are no rounds. The match lasts until one man cannot continue. A related event is *pankration* or “all-powers” (see p. MA70). Over the years this became a very brutal martial-arts contest, with no protection for the body and almost no rules. Many victors in the *pankration* win by breaking their opponents’ fingers or even killing them.

Several foot races are part of the Games, including a 400-yard sprint and a run of 24 *stadia* (just under three miles). Another sprint is run in armor, carrying a heavy shield. There is no “marathon race”; that event only appearing in the modern Games. The climax of the Games is chariot racing, in which two-horse and four-horse teams compete. These races are almost as dangerous as the Roman version, with collisions and missed turns common.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## THE CITY AT NIGHT

Athens is dangerous after nightfall. As with most ancient cities, the streets are narrow, crooked and *dark* at night. Anyone who goes out carries a torch, or takes along slaves who carry light. A gentleman always goes out with a walking stick, which is a weapon of self-defense and serves as a badge of good status in case the police stop him. People out at night should make Vision rolls, at anywhere from -3 to -10 if not carrying light. These rolls should be made occasionally even when simply moving through the streets, to avoid stumbling (when running, further penalties might apply).

Travelers might encounter criminals in the streets, especially in dangerous sections of a city such as Piraeus. Some miscreants are professional thieves, while others are bands of drunken youths out after a party. A well-armed group of pedestrians is unlikely to suffer attack, but single travelers might be beaten and robbed. Women and children out at night are in genuine danger of assault. Some criminals attack poorly-guarded or unoccupied homes, hoping to dig through the walls and steal valuables. Since most house walls are of simple plaster, they have a good chance of success. Such burglars are called “wall-breakers.”

The “Scythian” police force (see p. 13) patrols the streets at night, although it is not too hard to avoid them. They travel in groups, carrying lights and armed with cudgels and bows. If they see a crime in progress, they will intervene, but they rarely look for trouble. Anyone facing danger in the streets will probably have to fend for himself.

## GREEK SOCIETY

Athenian society is rich and complex. Each citizen will know his social class (based on wealth and family status), his tribe and district, and the social ties imposed on him by profession and political alignment. Since the citizen population is small, it is very possible for someone to know every citizen of consequence.

## THE FAMILY

In the city, the Greek family is monogamous and nuclear. A man has only one wife, and lives with her in his own house rather than living with his or his wife’s relatives. The family is regarded as the basic unit of both social and economic life. Each household is a source of new citizens for the *polis*, a center of religious worship, and an economic support for those who live in it.

## HEAD OF THE HOUSEHOLD

In all the family’s endeavors, the male head of the household is the dominant party. He has absolute power over his household and everyone in it. Women, children and slaves are all subject to his whims. He controls all the property, even that supposedly owned by his wife. He manages the household finances, possibly with the help of an educated slave. He represents the household in public life, since women and children are not allowed to go out unsupervised. Therefore he (with his slaves) does all the shopping and public business for the household.

## THE ROLE OF WOMEN

In Athens, women are considered citizens, but they have second-class status and no political rights. Men think of them as irrational creatures, like children or animals, needing care and guidance. Each woman has a *kyrios* or “guardian,” her father or another male relative before marriage, her husband or one of her husband’s family afterward. The *kyrios* manages the woman’s property, and if

she is unmarried, must also make sure she marries as well as possible. He chooses her husband for her, and has to come up with her dowry. Widows are often remarried within their husband's family, so as to keep family property undivided.

Within the household, women fulfill an important role. They are in charge of the household's day-to-day management. Every household is an industrial center, with spinning, weaving, cooking, some small-scale crafts and so on. The lady of the house works at these tasks, and supervises the slaves on a daily basis.

The *gynaikon* or "women's quarters" is separate from the public areas of the house, and can be locked. Whenever male guests enter the home, women and children go to the *gynaikon*. A woman rarely sees any men but her own male relatives, until she enters her husband's household – after which she rarely sees any men but her husband's male relatives.

Most women have strictly limited involvement in public society. Only during important civic occasions or religious festivals can women freely leave the house to participate. They are never permitted out in the streets alone, and must be escorted by at least a slave or a child. In public, women are always fully covered by their clothing, and are normally veiled so that their faces are hidden.

Some women find ways to evade these restrictions. A woman might have a sympathetic *kyrios* who allows her more freedom. Other women simply risk the disapproval of their *kyrios* and society by sneaking out. Furthermore, these close restrictions are only for Athenian citizens. Foreigners keep their own customs.

The city has one class of relatively free women: its prostitutes. This group includes low-class *pornai* who provide crude services, and *aulerides* or "flute-girls" who entertain at parties. The most renowned prostitutes are the high-class *hetairai* or "companions." These aristocrats of vice are well-educated, and often socialize with philosophers and poets. Some become the mistresses of wealthy men, and earn positions at the heart of city society. Most *hetairai* are foreign-born and therefore exempt from Athenian customs regarding proper behavior for women. Some citizen women also become prostitutes, either secretly or after deliberately getting their families to disown them.

Classical Athens is unusual in the restrictions it places on women. In other times and places, women reach near-equality with men in society. Doric cities, such as Sparta, allow women to inherit and manage property on their own. Doric women have much more freedom to move about the city, leaving their homes whenever they please. They still have no political rights, but in many cases they enjoy more freedom and luxury than the men. Similarly, in the Asian cities women are more free, and at least a few women manage to take part in politics from behind the scenes. If the GM wishes to allow women more freedom of movement in a historical campaign, he can place events in a city where customs are not so restrictive.

## MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

Greeks regard the institution of marriage as a business transaction, not a romantic occasion. Weddings are not performed by a priest. When a betrothal is to take place, the prospective wife's *kyrios* presents her to her intended before a city magistrate. The groom accepts her as a legitimate wife, and accepts the dowry offered by her *kyrios*, all before witnesses. The couple are married as soon as the dowry is delivered. There are religious ceremonies associated with the bride's arrival in her new home, and the marriage is not legally complete until it is consummated, but these are usually formalities.

Infant mortality rates are very high. When a baby is born, parents invest little affection in it until it seems certain to survive. If the family feels it cannot



## THE OLYMPIC GAMES (CONTINUED)

The major athletic events are interspersed with others: races and wrestling for boys, religious sacrifices, feasts and so on. The Olympic Games do not include contests in poetry or choral music, but these are part of other great competitions (especially the Pythian Games).

At the end of the Games, the officials of Elis hold an awards ceremony in which each winner receives a crown of wild olive. These crowns are the only prizes, but once winners return to their cities they often receive greater rewards. Proud cities vote their victorious athletes extraordinary honors, give them the right to eat at public expense, commission famous poets to write songs in their honor, and so on. In democratic cities, many a political career begins with a victory at Olympia.

The competitions themselves may be only part of the event. On occasion, officials detect and severely punish attempts at cheating. Between events, political intrigue takes place among the gathered representatives of many cities.

A clever GM can center a whole series of adventures around the Games, with some PCs chosen to compete, while others attend as spectators.

## POVERTY

Ancient Greece is a poor country, even at its height. The Greeks themselves are good at getting by with little. In a Hellenic campaign, this can be brought out in two ways.

First, the environment that Greeks move through should be austere. Their diet will be meager but healthy. Their clothing will be simple. Their homes will not be full of useless objects, and when they travel they will carry few possessions with them. When Greeks adventure they will take little but the clothing on their backs, a few days' worth of rations, and their weapons. They will also not come into large fortunes as a result of single adventures.

Second, how Greeks interact with other cultures will help emphasize their relative poverty. In the East, civilizations are older and have greater natural resources, and so have amassed tremendous wealth. The proudest house in Athens is a hovel compared to the palaces of Persia and Egypt. Thousands of Greeks go east to earn their fortunes by serving fabulously wealthy kings. If they are successful, they are able to own elaborate clothing, accumulate beautiful works of art, eat plenty of rich food every day, and so on. Some Greeks will disdain this wealth, while others will "go native" and revel in it.

The exception to the rule of poverty is for campaigns set in Alexander's time and afterward. When Greeks gain access to the treasure-houses of Persia and Egypt, a great deal of wealth becomes available and many Greeks gain a taste for luxuries.

afford another child, the infant is exposed, abandoned in a lonely place to die (or to be adopted by anyone who comes across it). This practice is regarded as wrong, but it is widespread.

Assuming a child is healthy and the family can afford to raise it, the parents take great care of it. On the tenth day after birth, it is formally accepted into the family in a simple ceremony, in which its name is given. After this, it can no longer legally be exposed. Greeks lavish attention on their children, providing them with toys and investing time in their education.

## EDUCATION

Athens has no system of state-financed public schools. Instead, professional teachers set up small schools of their own, and are paid by parents to teach their children. Most citizen boys begin going to school at the age of six, and continue until they are teenagers, depending on the means of their families. Along with the teacher, families who can afford it assign their boys a *paidagogos*, a male slave who escorts the boy to and from school and helps the teacher provide moral instruction.

Citizen boys learn three major subjects. Literacy is most important, and boys learn to read and write by reading and copying scrolls. The usual text is heroic myth, since every educated Greek must be able to quote Homer fluently. Music is the second subject, including poetry, singing and instrumental music. This enables the educated youth to take part in music at social occasions and during religious rites. Finally, every boy learns "gymnastics," a broad course of athletic training taught at the *gymnasion* or *palaistra*. This includes swimming, wrestling and the use of simple weapons.

Later education, for boys, depends on the ability of the family to afford it. It involves training in horsemanship, and the use of an adult's weapons and armor. Athens has a mandatory two-year course of study for all citizen *epheboi* ("youths"). This *ephebic* period involves strict military training, during which the youths live in barracks. They prepare for political life by electing their own officers and administrators, and also receive daily lectures in tactics and the humanities. In their second year, the *epheboi* are the primary standing army of the city, garrisoning the walls and fortifications scattered through Attica.

Private teachers, such as the Sophists and philosophers (see p. 88), provide a kind of higher education. For pay, these teachers instruct students in geometry, natural science, political science, law and other subjects. Of particular importance is the science of rhetoric, which involves ways to deliver effective speeches. These professors teach individually in the *agora* or in the *gymnasia*. Major philosophers sometimes establish actual universities, where many teachers and students can meet. Usually, only youths from wealthy and aristocratic families have a chance to take part in higher learning.

Education for citizen women is much more limited. A girl learns the "domestic arts" from her mother and from the household slaves. Girls also learn basic levels of literacy and music. Respectable women need no more than this, although *hetairai* often pick up considerable education in poetry and other arts, in order to be more interesting to their clients.

## SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Not all of a city-state's institutions are strictly political or religious in nature. Some are primarily social organizations. The citizens of a city-state are divided into groups by social class, and hold membership in a wide variety of clubs during their lives.



## TRIBAL DIVISIONS

City-state society is arranged around family, clan and tribe. A family means a single line of descent: grandfather and father, perhaps, with their dependent women and children. Nuclear-family relationships are common.

Families with common ancestors form a clan. A clan claims a hero as a famous ancestor, and has religious rites and festivals of its own. Several clans together can form a larger group. Groups of clans can gather to form *phratriai* (singular, *phratra*) or “brotherhoods.” Several *phratriai* form a *phyle* or “tribe,” again claiming some hero as a common ancestor and reinforcing a sense of tribal identity through common religious rites and social events.

A tribe has a great deal of self-government, with its own officials. Usually, the older and wealthier members are the most influential. In time of war, the men of each tribe muster together, electing their own military officers and marching as a unit in battle. Both the *phratriai* and the tribes also act as mutual-support societies. Members assist each other in political matters, and help each other in difficult times, even if they are only distantly related.

In early Athens, there were four *phylai*, but in the course of political reforms the tribal structure was rearranged. Classical Athens has ten tribes, each of which is divided into a varying number of *demoi* or “peoples” for administrative purposes (see p. 11). Old clan structures still exist, although they are less important than they once were. In other cities, similar patterns exist. Clan and tribal divisions exist everywhere in Greece, and any Hellene knows the ancestry and history of his clan and tribe. Rearrangements of old systems may take place in other cities as well, as part of political reforms.

Every Greek takes part in the religious ceremonies, social gatherings and internal politics of his clan and tribe. The defining rites of passage for a boy involve his *phrateres* or “clan-brothers.” His first sacrifice is on the altar of Zeus maintained by his *phratra*. Upon coming of age he is presented to the other members of his *phratra*, after which he is considered a full citizen. Marriage ceremonies take place before the *phrateres* of the groom. Clansmen or members of the same *phratra* often gather socially, for *symposia* or other feasts.

Greeks will have strong attachments to their clan, brotherhood, or tribe. A significant part of the Greek campaign is the web of associations between PCs and NPCs . . . not just tribes and clans, but social and business connections as well.



## HELLENIC SUPERIORITY

While the Greeks have little race prejudice as such, they are very chauvinistic about their culture. Anyone who is unable to speak Greek fluently, or who can't quote Homer or the heroic myths, is a *barbaros* or barbarian. On the other hand, a non-Greek who *can* speak Greek well and is familiar with Greek culture is not a barbarian, and is accepted as a cultured foreigner.

Barbarians are certainly looked down on. To a Hellene, barbarians are uncultured, boorish, perhaps a bit simple. Those from Eastern civilizations are especially despicable because they allow themselves to be ruled by kings and despots. This is something a Greek, conscious of his rights as a citizen of a *polis*, would never tolerate.

None of this means that the Greek cannot admire the barbarian or his culture. Educated Greeks are capable of appreciating the virtues of other cultures. Indeed, there is no contradiction in the Greek mind between being a barbarian and being civilized. The barbarian's culture is simply lacking that one attribute needed for complete acceptance – it isn't Greek. GMs portraying Greek characters should use this attitude whenever possible, and good role-players will apply it with their Greek PCs.

## GREEK IDEALS

The Greeks have a strong set of ideals, derived from the aristocratic ethics of the early Classical Age. The most admired Greeks are *kalokagathoi*, “noble and good men” who follow these ideals.

To the Greeks, the first ideal is the concept of *arete*. The Greek word doesn’t translate well into English. It originally meant “manliness” or “martial virtue,” but was later taken to mean general excellence within the individual. A Greek who exhibits *arete* is a fully-developed person, completely fulfilling his role in society. He tries to excel at everything he decides to do. He is physically attractive, talented, wealthy, passionate, self-confident and courageous. He is *not* necessarily humble. Important to the concept of *arete* is the goal of “knowing yourself.” A good Greek understands his own abilities and motivations, and does not pretend to be less accomplished than he is.

The second ideal is *moderation*. It is admirable to be well-rounded, pursuing a wide variety of skills and trying to be at least competent in all of them. A respectable Greek is moderate in his pleasures, enjoying food, drink and sex but not allowing any of them to control him. Likewise, his emotions are kept under control. “Nothing in excess” is an important proverb.

The Greeks are inspired by the ideal of *arete*, driven to excel and win fame for themselves. However, their passions and zest for life tend to break through the barriers of self-control, making it difficult for them to practice moderation. The tension between these two ideals gives rise to the idea of *hubris*, or excessive pride. It is good to have confidence in one’s abilities. Every man is expected to do the best he can at every task. But self-knowledge also means understanding one’s own limitations. Pride, like all things, has to be taken in moderation. A man can be too proud and self-important. This is considered a challenge to the gods, who are sure to notice and work to bring about the downfall of an over-proud man. This is thought of as practically a natural law; the idea runs throughout Greek literature and mythology.

In the heroic myths, many people come to grief by exhibiting *hubris*. Bellerophon (sidebar, p. 39) and Jason (p. 34) are two examples of heroes who destroy themselves through overconfidence. Only Heracles (p. 32) manages to get away with such pride, but then Zeus can forgive Heracles anything. In Classical times, the idea of *hubris* is alive in political thought. Many statesmen in the greater city-states are cast down after appearing too ambitious.

## ASSOCIATIONS

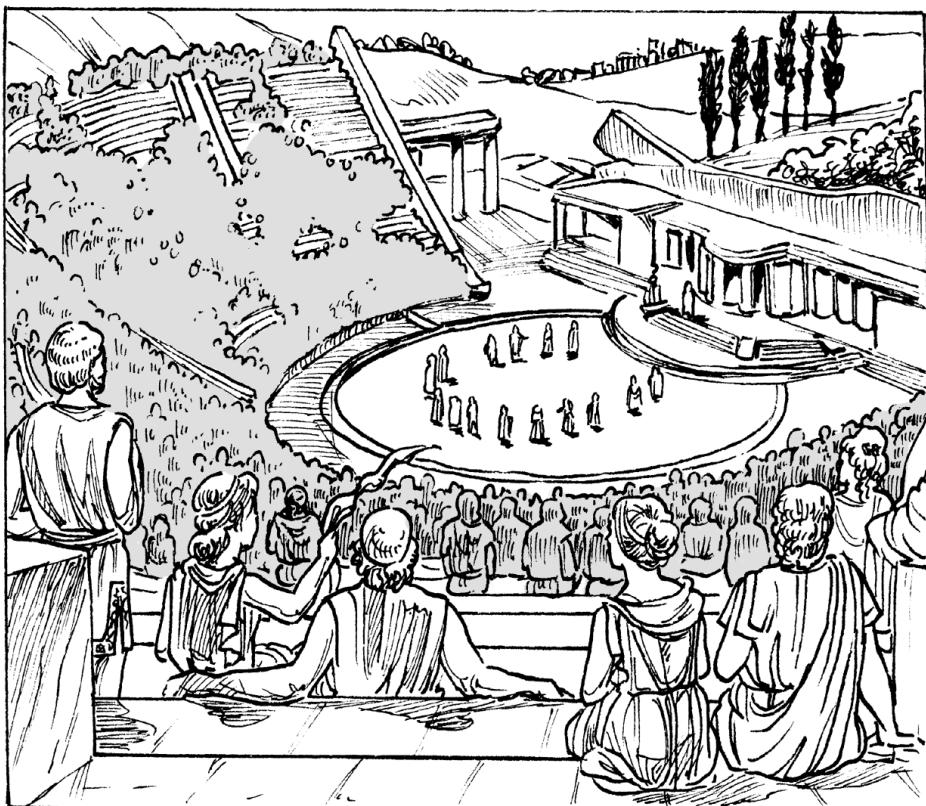
Membership in a variety of clubs and other social organizations provides a path to social status or political clout, since they are a source of contacts and reputation.

Some clubs are religious in nature. Such a society raises the money to maintain certain shrines, and chooses priests for those shrines from among its members. Major city temples usually have clan-like organizations called *genetai*, made up of aristocrats. Similar clubs exist at all levels of society, centered around shrines to lesser gods or heroes.

Aristocratic youths form other sorts of clubs. Some are drinking clubs: the members take turns hosting *symposia* at their homes, or carouse together at city wineshops. After such drunken parties, the young men often go out into the streets at night to harass passersby, or to indulge in destructive vandalism. Other youth clubs are formed around the *palaistrai*, encouraging the youths to exercise and compete together. All these clubs are infamous for the hell-raising behavior of the members. They are also hotbeds of aristocratic politics. When oligarchic parties take over a city-state, armed youths from the city’s drinking and athletic clubs usually provide the necessary muscle.

Other clubs are intended for mutual support. Some are funerary clubs, whose members help each other raise the money to finance funerals and burial. Other mutual-support clubs include trade guilds, associations of sailors (or even pirates) and intellectual organizations like the schools founded by Plato and Aristotle.

All of these clubs share some common elements. Each is allowed to make any rules it wishes, as long as there is no conflict with city law. Each has a religious focus, even if it is only a small shrine at which the members sacrifice before meetings. Each owns property in common, to be managed according to club rules, and each elects its own officers. All sorts of clubs are opportunities for the membership to socialize as well as to get the organization’s business done. Members feast and converse together, and help each other out in time of need as clansmen would.



## SOCIAL CLASSES

Athenian society is very class-conscious. The status and wealth of one's family are critical to one's place in society. This is true in almost any city-state. On the other hand, society in wealthy cities like Athens is always in ferment. There are plenty of opportunities for people to rise (or fall) in status.

### ARISTOCRACY

Most Greek cities have an aristocratic upper class. This is composed of a group of ancient families, who have held high position since the foundation of the city. Aristocrats are usually wealthy, although some aristocratic families have lost their wealth over the years. Many aristocrats consider it beneath them to actually involve themselves in the details of business. Although they supervise their own farms, they normally hire (or buy) managers to run any money-making ventures they own in town. An aristocrat might be one of the wealthiest men in the city, without ever seeing the pottery or shield-making workshop that gives him his income!

Aristocrats are likely to be conservative, following old ideals and maintaining old customs. They are also the most likely to be statesmen. Even under democratic regimes, these families remember a time when they ruled, and often involve themselves in city politics. Some are champions of the common man. Others intrigue to overthrow democracies and regain their power.

Athens divides its upper class into two ranks by level of wealth. The *pentakosiomedimnoi* or "500-bushel men" are the highest class, owning land that produces 500 bushels of grain annually, or the equivalent in other income-producing property. The next highest class are the *hippeis*, or "knights," who are less wealthy but can afford to own horses of their own.

### THE COMMON FOLK

Most citizens of a *polis* are commoners. Some middle-class Greeks become quite wealthy by running businesses or factories. Others are small landholders, farm workers, craftsmen, unskilled laborers and so on. Unlike the aristocrats, commoners tend to involve themselves directly in business affairs.

Commoners have considerable political clout, because they form the bulk of the city's army and navy. The common folk are the force behind any movement toward democracy. Occasionally, great statesmen come from their ranks, especially in democratic cities such as Athens. For example, one of the most important Athenian statesmen was a man named Cleon, who in private life was a tanner (a very unfashionable occupation).

In Athens, commoners are divided into two classes, just as the aristocrats are. The *zeugitai* or "teamsters" are wealthier, defined as those who can afford to own a wagon and team of oxen. The *thetes* or "hired laborers" are the lowest class of free citizens, the poorest landholders and city craftsmen.

### METICS

In every prosperous city-state, there lives a large class of resident "foreigners" – Greeks from other cities or non-Greeks who have taken up residence to find a living. These are called *metoikoi*, and the usual English term for them is "metics." Many of the skilled tradesmen in Athens are metics, and most of the businessmen as well: factory owners, agents, bankers and moneychangers. Some foreign women make places for themselves as successful *hetairai*.

Metics have an ambiguous place in Athenian society. They are free men and women, with certain rights in civil courts. They are fully accepted in polite society, although citizens tend to look down on their professions. But they are forbidden to marry into citizen families, they cannot buy land in Attica and they



## HOMOSEXUALITY

One aspect of ancient Greek society is particularly controversial today: male homosexuality. As with many other aspects of Greek life, the truth is not much like the stereotype we hold.

Greeks believe that women are not the intellectual equals of men. To an extent, they have reason: few women get anything like a real education. In many Greek cities, particularly Athens, women have no chance to see the world outside their father's or husband's house. Real friendship exists in many marriages, but men do not usually regard women as interesting enough to be potential lovers.

Meanwhile, men are accustomed to intellectual discussion with other men. Men share pursuits and tasks in the life of the city, from which women are excluded. Also, there are few social forces preventing attraction between males. The Greek ideal of physical beauty does not distinguish between female and male bodies. Both are considered equally attractive if healthy and well-formed. So romantic and sensual love does occur between men. Generally, young men who have just entered adulthood will accept the attentions of more mature men. If a relationship begins, the younger man can expect his partner to act as a mentor and social contact.

There are limits. It is every citizen's duty to add to the city's strength by creating a healthy household, so society considers exclusive homosexuals to be bad citizens. Men who pursue *much* younger men are regarded as foolish, in much the same way as we regard an elderly man who pursues young women. Men who persist in their advances after being turned down are also disdained. Finally, pederasty (sexual relations with children) is considered a heinous offense under any circumstances.

Homosexuality between women is rarely mentioned – there is one reference in Plato's *Symposium* – although historians believe that the poetess Sappho, who lived about 600 B.C. on the island of Lesbos, was bisexual (she had a husband and a daughter). In cities like hers where women are more free, they have a relatively independent status in society and can get a full education. As a result, romantic love between men and women is more common, as are (probably) homosexual relationships between women.

In any roleplaying game, it is probably a good idea to keep characters' sexuality out of the picture, *unless* the GM and players are all comfortable with the notion. Considering the controversy surrounding homosexuality in today's society, this is doubly true for the idea of "Greek love." Still, if GM and players are willing to include homosexuality in their Greek settings, it can be done with restraint and without prejudice.



have no part in the religious or political life of the city. They must pay the same fees and liturgies as citizens, and they serve in the army and navy, all without political rights. Still, metics move to cities like Athens in droves. Economic opportunity more than makes up for a lack of political rights.

## SLAVERY

Ancient Greece is a slave-holding society. Slaves come from many sources. Greeks do not enslave Greeks, except in wartime; instead, many slaves are captured overseas, and brought to Greece for sale. In a large city, one might find slaves of almost any background: Celts, Germans, Indians, Egyptians, Syrians and so on.

Slaves are rare in the countryside, and large-scale slave-run plantations are unknown. Instead, most male slaves do heavy work around the house, or they do unskilled labor on public works for the city. Female slaves work in the home under the supervision of the lady of the house. Few slaves are well-educated, but those few are highly prized. Many clerical workers, administrators and managers are slaves. Slave labor is normally demanding but not dangerous. The major exception is in the mining industry, where thousands of slaves are worked to death in hellish conditions.

Slave-holding is universal in Athenian society. Only the very poorest citizens are without a slave or two, and wealthy families have as many as 50 household servants. A master has broad powers over his slaves. He can be quite harsh and demanding if he chooses. Slaves are rarely allowed families, it being cheaper to buy a slave than to raise one from childhood. Slaves are considered to be continual liars and are always tortured if their testimony is required in court. A master can beat or flog his slaves if he wishes.

The slave has a few rights of his own. It is illegal to kill a slave outright, and if a master is too harsh a slave can attempt to flee into a temple and claim sanctuary. If he is caught, he is in grave danger, but if he makes it his owner is required to sell him. Most masters are fairly firm but kind to their slaves. A loyal slave is treated almost as part of the family, and in many cases slaves are allowed to go into business on their own, paying a portion of their earnings to their masters. It is not uncommon for a slave to be freed after saving his own purchase price, as a reward for loyal service, or upon the death of his master. In this case, he becomes a free man, the equal of a metic.

# 2 THE HEROIC AGE



SERIOUS HISTORIANS ONCE ignored Greek mythology, considering it only the imaginings of bards and poets. Then, in the 19th century, archeologists discovered the ruins of Troy and Mycenae. Digs on Crete located the great palace at Knossos, decorated with double-axe and bull motifs as if it were the Labyrinth of the Theseus legend. Suddenly the great myths appeared in a new light.

Today there seem to be two worlds to explore: the purely historical world of the late Bronze Age, and the epic Age of Heroes. The two worlds reflect one another, sometimes in surprising ways.



## MINOAN CRETE

Greek culture had its roots in the first great civilization to take shape in Europe. Based on Crete, this culture is today called “Minoan” after the legendary King Minos of Crete (see sidebar, p. 27). Minoan culture is poorly understood. Its few written records have never been deciphered and the underlying language is unknown. Almost everything we know about it is the result of archeological investigation.

The Minoans arrived on Crete by the beginning of the Bronze Age, about 3000 B.C. They came from somewhere to the east, possibly from Asia Minor or the Middle East. Early Minoan settlements were small and placed in defensible positions. Later, full-scale towns were built around natural harbors in eastern Crete.

The era of the “palace society” began about 2000 B.C. Minoan palaces were unfortified clusters of buildings, sprawling over several acres, indicating that the inhabitants were peaceful and secure from attack. The earliest palaces were destroyed around 1700 B.C., probably by earthquakes, but the Minoans rebuilt them. Each palace was the home of a local king, a storehouse for trade goods, an administrative center and probably a temple. Minoan rulers were probably priest-kings on the Middle Eastern or Egyptian model. In fact, early Minoan culture shows many Egyptian influences.

The greatest palace was at Knossos, about five miles from the northern coast of Crete. As time passed, Knossos apparently became the capital of a domain that influenced all of Crete, most of the Cyclades and possibly parts of the mainland. Minoan power was reinforced by control of the seas. The empire was run by a central administration, like that of the Egyptian New Kingdom. Knossos was damaged by earthquakes several times, but each time it was rebuilt.

This period was the height of Minoan civilization. Knossos was prosperous, due to its control of trade with Egypt and the East. Painting and architecture were very sophisticated. Religion involved the worship of a great Earth Goddess, and a male god who died and was reborn each year. Society was apparently very open. Individuals had a great deal of freedom, women had equal status in society, and there was little danger of war or civil disorder. In the busy ports, one could meet Egyptians, Hittites, Greeks, Celts, or people from even farther afield.

Historians once thought that the Thera eruption (see sidebar, p. 28) wrecked Minoan power and left Crete open to Greek invasion. Today, however, the evidence seems to suggest that Minoan culture survived and even flourished for some time after the disaster. How Minoan civilization ended, and how Greeks came to rule on Crete, is not yet clear.

## MYCENAEAN GREECE

Neanderthal remains indicate that human beings have occupied the Greek mainland since Paleolithic times. The Greeks called the original inhabitants of Greece “Pelasgians.” These people, like the Minoans (see sidebar), spoke a non-Greek language, had a relatively nonviolent culture, and worshipped nature deities.

### THE FIRST GREEKS

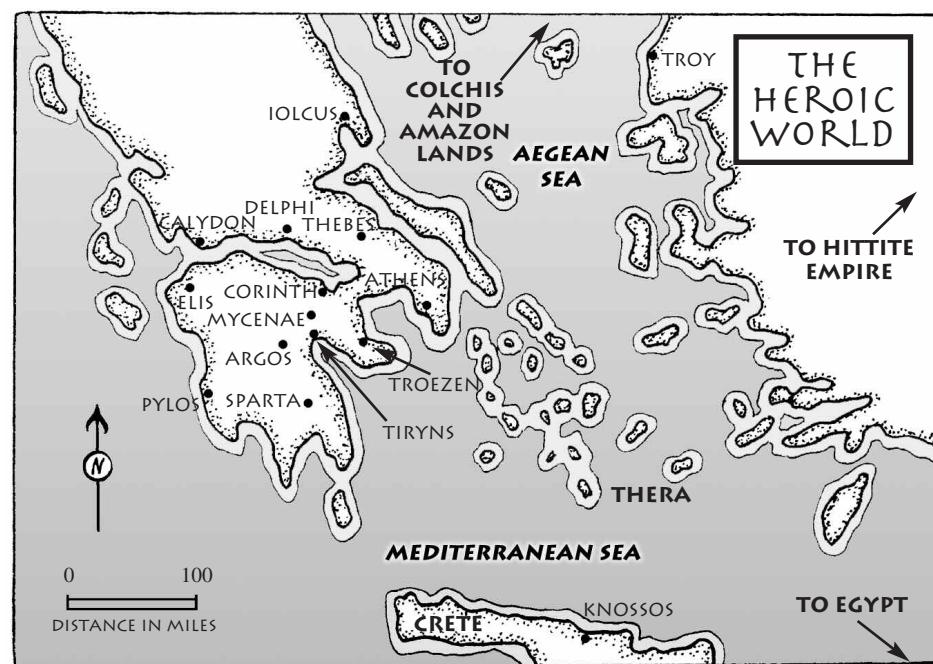
Various tribes began migrating south into Greece as early as 2000 B.C. No one knows which, if any, of these people spoke Greek. Other immigrants may have come across the Aegean or from as far away as the Middle East. All these newcomers settled among the Pelasgians, for the most part peacefully. The newcomers may have worshipped early versions of the Olympians, and probably had a male-dominated society.

Within a few centuries, the newcomers’ cultures absorbed that of the Pelasgians, creating a hybrid culture which historians recognize as Greek. These early Greeks are called “Mycenaeans,” after their foremost town, or “Achaeans,” a name often used in the heroic myths.

### MYCENAE

Mycenae had been built by 1600 B.C. in the eastern Peloponnese. It had its own palace and mighty stone walls. In time it became the center of early Greek culture. Archeologists have learned about the inhabitants of Mycenae from their graves, dug in deep pits or shafts. The Mycenaeans left a wide variety of bronze weaponry in these graves, indicating that they were a warlike people. The graves also include jewelry and pottery in the Minoan style, probably obtained through trade or plunder.

The Greeks seem to have imitated Minoan culture at this time, importing Minoan goods and craftsmen and consciously taking up the palace-administration system. Mainland chieftains may have paid tribute to Knossos. Other Greeks settled among the Minoans on Crete. Most of the palaces and towns on Crete were destroyed by 1450 B.C. Knossos was an exception, continuing to prosper in a smaller way for several decades. By this time, the rulers at Knossos were Greek. The next few centuries were the “Heroic Age,” source of the great myths.



## MYCENAEAN SUPREMACY

Greece was not unified during this period. There is evidence of warfare between Mycenaean cities. Knossos was destroyed for the last time about 1375 B.C., possibly by invaders from the mainland who wanted to remove a rival. Towns in mainland Greece show signs of attack later in the century. The destruction of some of the towns may have been an attempt at consolidating power under Mycenae.

Once Minoan naval power declined, Mycenaean influence stretched a long way overseas. In the late Bronze Age, trade connected all the lands of the eastern Mediterranean. Mycenaean pottery has been found as far away as Italy and the Middle East. Mycenaeans built at least one trading post in Syria, and may have also set up a trading post in Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Akhenaton.

Piracy often accompanied trade. The myths show that Mycenaean states continually raided one another for cattle or slaves. This principle extended naturally to the sea. Often, the same ships performed both legitimate trade and piracy, depending on what the crew thought it could get away with.

In this period, the Greeks were only semi-civilized, little more than barbarians on the fringes of the known world. They had absorbed a great deal of Minoan culture. They were also in contact with the powerful Hittite empire in Asia Minor. Hittite records indicate dealings with the “King of Ahhiyawa,” probably an Achaean lord of Rhodes or some of the Aegean islands. Finally, the Mycenaeans were in communication with New Kingdom Egypt, which was at the height of its glory and power.

## THE DARK AGES

Beginning about 1250 B.C., the mainland Greeks began to improve the fortifications protecting their towns. This coincided with a general breakdown of order all around the Mediterranean. Just what was happening is uncertain, but the evidence points to a large-scale movement of barbarians in central Europe.

## BARBARIAN MIGRATIONS

About 1225 B.C., raiders destroyed the city of Troy. This may have been the event that gave rise to the Trojan War myth, although archeologists are not certain that the attackers were Greek. By 1200 B.C., the barbarian migrations were well under way. Barbarians invaded the civilized lands, and refugees from their assaults put pressure on other lands farther on. The Hittite empire, already undergoing a civil war, collapsed entirely. Invaders apparently attacked the Mycenaean citadels, first raiding, then methodically sacking them.

The wave of migration continued after Mycenaean society was completely disrupted. Mycenaean Greeks and refugees from the Hittite collapse moved east and south, settling in Cyprus and Syria and attacking Egypt about 1180 B.C. Here the wave stopped. The Egyptians drove back the “sea peoples” without much difficulty. The survivors, Greeks among them, settled in Palestine, possibly becoming the “Philistines” of the Bible. The Kingdom of Israel, under the legendary King David, may have absorbed some Mycenaean Greeks.

## AFTERMATH

Back in Greece, the destruction was nearly total. Towns and fortifications were reduced to ruins. The palace society vanished, and survivors fell back into a peasant lifestyle. Even the art of writing was lost, the earliest Greek script vanishing almost completely. With no written records, we can only guess at what went on from about 1150 B.C. to about 800 B.C. The collapse into barbarism was complete, the Age of Heroes over.

## KING MINOS

In the myths, Crete was ruled for generations by the great King Minos, son of Zeus and a mortal princess. The myths are vague about how the king lived as long as he did – his life span seemed to cover most of the Heroic Age. It is possible that “Minos” was not a name, but a title held by successive kings of Crete.

In any case, the legendary Minos had a glorious palace at Knossos. He was a wise and just king, and his fleets absolutely controlled the Aegean Sea. His control of trade made him fabulously wealthy. He mounted several military expeditions, especially against Athens after the Athenians ambushed and killed his son Androgeus.

Minos’ fatal flaw was his pride. On one occasion, he promised to make a great sacrifice to the god Poseidon, if the god would provide a great bull for the sacrifice. The god heard and caused such a bull to rise up from the sea, but Minos failed to sacrifice it. Instead, he introduced it to his herds, thinking that the god loved him so much that he would be forgiven. This mistake proved to be Minos’ downfall, years later. The god exacted immediate revenge by driving the bull mad. He also got Aphrodite to cause Queen Pasiphae to fall in love with the bull.

Living in Knossos was the great Athenian artificer Daedalus, exiled from Athens after having killed a kinsman. Pasiphae convinced Daedalus to build a wooden heifer, which she could hide inside to mate with the bull. She later gave birth to the Minotaur, a ferocious monster with a man’s body and a bull’s head. Daedalus designed the Labyrinth to be the Minotaur’s prison (see p. 100).

After Theseus escaped from Crete, Daedalus was imprisoned in the Labyrinth for helping him. Daedalus built great wings (see p. 94) for himself and his son Icarus, and flew to safety. Icarus was careless, however, and flew too near the sun, causing the wax in the wings to melt. He drowned in the Aegean Sea.

Minos, who had grown quite old, decided to pursue Daedalus. His fleet set out and followed the architect to Sicily. There, the king tracked Daedalus down to a local lord’s home, but the architect had Minos assassinated before he could be captured. After the great king’s death, his son Deucalion ruled Crete. Cretan power now declined, and within a generation the kings of Athens and Mycenae were able to break Crete’s control of the sea.

## ATLANTIS

According to Greek tradition, the statesman Solon heard ancient tales of Atlantis from the local priests while he traveled in Egypt. From this obscure beginning comes one of the most mysterious legends of the ancient world.

Atlantis was supposedly a great island in the Atlantic Ocean. Its first ruler was Atlas, a son of Poseidon. Atlantis was a rich country, full of mineral and agricultural resources. Its kings built great cities. Unfortunately, as the years passed the Atlantean kings began to deny the gods proper worship. They also became warlike, even fighting a war with Athens. Finally, when their king attempted to conquer the world, the gods overthrew him and overwhelmed Atlantis utterly with a great flood. The destruction supposedly occurred 9,000 years before Solon's time.

The Greeks never gave this story much importance. Plato used it in two dialogues only to espouse a hypothetical society and make some philosophical points. Today, however, the Atlantis legend has become very popular. Many attempts have been made to prove its truth, and it is a part of many occult theories and works of fiction. Even Tolkien used the Atlantis story.

Unfortunately, the original story has some serious problems. Nine thousand years before Solon's time, Egypt had no literate culture to record the destruction of Atlantis. There was no Athens in the late Ice Age to fight a war with the Atlanteans. And there is no evidence that an island continent has existed in the mid-Atlantic Ocean any time in the last million years.

On the other hand, it is relatively easy to add decimal places when reading numbers in hieroglyphics, reading 9,000 for 900, for example. If Solon made such a mistake and we correct it, the destruction of Atlantis happened at about 1500 B.C. At that time, the Minoans (see sidebar, p. 26) were great seafarers, trading with Egypt. Egyptian culture was well-developed, and could easily have recorded some great natural disaster. As it turns out, such a disaster occurred at about the right time.

In the Aegean Sea, between the Greek mainland and Crete, lies the volcanic island of Thera, a Minoan colony, possibly an important one. Sometime in the Bronze Age, a volcanic explosion of incredible strength pulverized Thera. There is some dispute over the date of the explosion. Geologists favor a date of 1628 B.C., based on studies of ancient tree rings and ice cores. On the other hand, some archeologists use evidence based on pottery styles to place the explosion around 1500 B.C. In any case, it destroyed the Minoan settlement on Thera. Volcanic ash covered much of Crete, and tsunamis hammered many coastal areas around the Aegean.

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## THE HEROIC WORLD

The world of the Heroic Age is the world of the late Mycenaean period – almost. Most of the myths have Mycenaean roots, but the versions available today are from much later. All the myths were subjected to centuries of reinterpretation. Also, much of what we know of heroic myth is from the poets and dramatists, who were not above rewriting the myths to please their patrons. For example, the Mycenaean culture was based on the palace-state, like Minoan and Middle Eastern cultures of the time. Yet the society portrayed in the myths is a society of aristocratic warriors and bards, typical of the early Classical period when the myths were recorded.

So the heroic world outlined here is one attempt at a consistent setting for fantasy gaming. Feel free to do your own research, and rewrite any of the material to better fit your conception of the Heroic Age.

### THE HERO-KING

Almost every hero is a king or nobleman, and is also very likely to be descended from the gods. Many of the greatest heroes are sons of Zeus himself, fathered by him on the wives or daughters of mortal kings. Most of the other Olympians have mortal children as well.

The hero is mortal himself, but a cut above the ordinary folk around him: stronger, more intelligent, more attractive, faster, better at fighting. His divine parent may work in his favor, usually from behind the scenes. On the other hand, the god might punish his heroic children more severely than most mortals, if they break divine law. Finally, the gods are sometimes antagonistic toward each other's children. For example, Hera is jealous of Zeus' love affairs with mortal women. Since she can't get back at Zeus, she makes life miserable for his mortal lovers and children.

### MILITARY DUTIES

The hero's main duty is to fight. The king is in charge of the military of his city. Nobles who owe allegiance to the king also lead their own soldiers under the king's overall command. The army centers on noble warriors, trained to fight from chariots. The rest of the soldiers fight on foot, either as archers or as lightly-armored spearmen. Officers wear bronze corselets, helmets and greaves, or even full suits of bronze plate armor. Aside from the warrior-nobility, the army is not "professional." Most soldiers are farmers or craftsmen in everyday life. There are mercenary companies; Heracles was apparently a freelance mercenary captain for much of his life.

The hero-kings use their forces to raid one another, seizing cattle, slaves or goods. Full-scale wars also take place, usually to remove the ruler of a kingdom and put someone else in his place, either the commander of the invaders or one of his friends. Wars lasting more than one season are very rare.

Between battles, the hero trains for war in a variety of ways. Many heroes particularly enjoy hunting. They hunt for food for their households, or to eliminate dangerous animals from their lands.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

The hero has a variety of other duties. When other heroes come to visit, the host is honor-bound to provide them with hospitality and gifts. In return, he can expect certain rights as a guest-friend if he or any of his family return the visit later. Heroes take this obligation very seriously, and the gods will punish those who break it. Hospitality can be very lavish, including very costly gifts.

In peacetime, the king administers the commerce of his realm. Royal palaces are not just living space for the king and his dependents, but storage

## ATLANTIS (CONTINUED)

The destruction of Thera may well have been recorded in Egypt and told to Solon as the Atlantis story. After the passage of so much time, no one remembered the historical facts behind the story. If so, Atlantis may have been real, even if it wasn't the fabulous kingdom that has fascinated so many through the centuries.

## HISTORY BEHIND THE MYTHS

Mythographers are careful not to suggest that any of the Greek legends have much basis in historical fact. Still, GMs using a Bronze Age setting may want to review evidence for the myths, or speculate on what historical grounding they have.

### PERSEUS

The Medusa story is apparently a simple folk tale, complete with monsters and a princess. Mycenae was established centuries before the most likely time for Perseus. Still, he may be the mythical counterpart of a Mycenaean king who made the town powerful on the Greek mainland. If Perseus were real, he must have lived about the time of the final destruction of Knossos by mainland Greeks. Might he have led the expedition?

### HERACLES

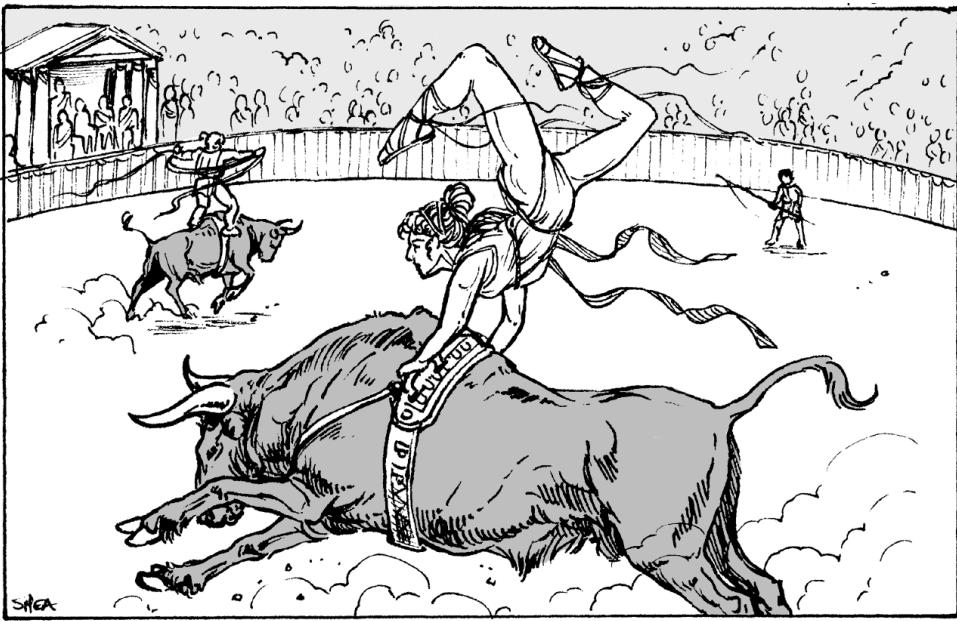
The Heracles stories could be based on the exploits of a famous mercenary captain or explorer, who served Mycenae for a number of years before going into business on his own. Such a legend would grow with many additions in later centuries. It is interesting that Troy was apparently devastated some 50 years before its final destruction. Although the evidence indicates an earthquake, this may reflect Heracles' raid on Troy in the time of King Laomedon.

### JASON

The story of the *Argo* may reflect an expedition into the Black Sea by Mycenaean Greeks. Such a trip would not have been easy. Troy controlled the passage into the Black Sea, and the small ships of the time would have had difficulty with the strong current in the straits. Still, such an expedition might have been very profitable, opening new lands up to trade. Interestingly, there are hints that a league of cities in Thessaly and Boeotia was the foremost naval power among the Bronze Age Greeks, after the collapse of Crete.

Even the Golden Fleece might have had some basis in reality. To this day, the local people on the eastern shore of the Black Sea sometimes mine gold by putting fleece in gold-bearing streams. As water runs through the wool, particles of gold become entangled and can be combed out later.

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houses for tribute goods. A number of craftsmen and artists also live and work in the palace, and their products belong to the king. Even the royal family contributes. The women of the household produce clothing, and many of the heroes are craftsmen as well. The king and his retainers handle almost all trade with other kingdoms, under the guise of "gifts" to other kings. Mercantile trade, for a profit, is virtually unknown.

The king is the judge for his community. Heroic law isn't complex. If injury occurs (an item stolen, a boundary disputed, a kinsman injured or accidentally killed) a person who believes he has been wronged can take his dispute to the king. The king's judgment is at his whim, but the respect people hold for him enforces his decrees. The wronged person can also take matters into his own hands, stealing the item back or injuring or killing his opponent. This often leads to blood feud, which the king has to straighten out.

Deliberate murder is an exception to this. A murderer has to accept whatever punishment the victim's relatives and the king might impose: a blood-price, exile, or death. Killing one's own kin is a particularly heinous crime, and will be punished by the gods as well as men.

Anyone who kills another, whether accidentally or deliberately, has to undergo ritual purification before the gods or society will accept him again. Purification is necessary even if the killing was justifiable! The mere act of killing pollutes the killer and he must be cleansed. Purification requires a second person to assist in the ritual, and a particularly foul murderer might have difficulty finding anyone to help. None of this applies during war, of course. Killing in honorable battle incurs no blood-guilt.

The king is the religious leader of the community. Any dealings the community has with the gods are carried out through the king. As the community's representative, he must make sure that all appropriate sacrifices and rituals take place. Also, the king must obey divine law. If the gods are angry at him they may well take it out on his subjects, through plague, famine or some other natural disaster.

### ADVENTURING

Heroes often leave their communities for long periods of time. This might happen in the course of an ordinary adventure, in which case the hero's position will usually still be waiting for him when he returns. On the other hand,

## HISTORY BEHIND THE MYTHS (CONTINUED)

### THESEUS

The Cretan portion of the Theseus myth is an interesting reflection of Minoan society. The Labyrinth is almost certainly the great palace at Knossos, which was probably a confusing maze of corridors to unsophisticated Greek visitors. The foremost sport of Minoan Crete was bull-dancing, where young men and women taunted bulls and leaped between their horns. Minoan kings apparently wore bull-masks as part of religious rituals. Bulls and the *labrys*, or double-bladed axe, were important symbols in Minoan religion. Finally, the legend of Minoan sea-power was doubtless based in reality.

The problem with this picture is that Knossos was destroyed long before the earliest possible date for Theseus. However, some mythographers list *two* kings of Crete named Minos, one a descendant of the other. Perhaps the first Minos was a Greek king who unified Crete after the Thera explosion, while the second Minos lived in the time of Theseus. In the time of the second Minos, the old palace was abandoned, and might well have been a dark and frightening place where monsters were said to lurk.

Another possibility is that the Theseus legend includes parts of the story of an earlier hero, something that often happens when myths are told and retold. The GM should choose which interpretation of the myth is appropriate for his Heroic-Age campaign, and adjust the Timeline accordingly.

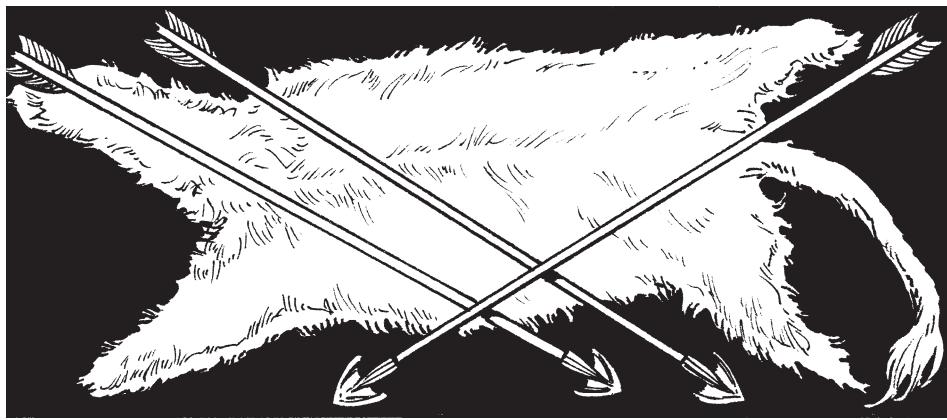
### THE TROJAN WAR

Archeology actually supports the story of the Trojan War to some extent. Apparently the city of Troy was destroyed by violence at about the correct time, in the early stages of the barbarian migrations that ended the Mycenaean kingdoms and the Hittite empire, so the destroyers need not have been Greek. Still, there is nothing to disprove the actuality of the Trojan War, and no reason to suspect that it was invented.

Much of the *Odyssey* may be a work of deliberately-contrived fiction, the first romantic novel in history. The troubles Odysseus met, and the raid on his island that killed him, may simply reflect the unsettled conditions of the time.

hero might be forced into exile. In this case, all is not lost. The exiled nobleman or deposed king can settle wherever he has friends or the locals are willing to take him in. He might regain a high position in his new city, through luck or heroic deeds.

The hero's fate is unique. His life is guaranteed to be full of adventure and opportunities to earn glory. He may also have a specific fate foretold for him, which is more than likely violent or tragic . . .



### HEROIC SOCIETY

Society is feudal in nature. Each town centers on the palace of a local king or nobleman. Fortifications protect the palace itself, forming a castle. A powerful king has personal relationships with lesser kings and nobles around his territory, like medieval bonds of fealty (but easier to break). Each noble maintains a group of heavily-armed charioteers, just as medieval nobles maintain knights. Urban craftsmen, country peasantry and slaves all pay tribute to their local lord and to the king. This provides the nobility and king with the wealth necessary to protect the territory.

Heroic-Age Greece has several major feudal kingdoms and a patchwork of minor holdings. The most important kingdom centers around Mycenae and takes up much of the Argolid, including the lesser towns of Argos and Tiryns. The second most powerful kingdom is Thebes, an important town founded in these (Mycenaean) times. Another kingdom dominates Messenia from its capital at the town of Pylos. The "Minyan" kingdom, famous for its wealth, controls much of Boeotia and Thessaly. The kingdom of Calydon is north of the Gulf of Corinth, and is involved in many myths. Other, less important states include early Athens, Sparta and Corinth. In the Aegean, each island has its own king. Crete was until recently the site of a major non-Greek civilization (see sidebar, p. 26), and is still wealthy and powerful.

Relations between these states depend entirely on the attitudes of their rulers. Kingdoms ruled by personal friends are friendly, while those ruled by men who hate each other are at odds. There are no treaties or even long-lasting alliances, as relationships are made or broken at the whim of the kings involved.

### THE LOWER CLASSES

Heroic society has several lower classes. These take almost no part in the myths, which focus on the doings of the heroic nobility. The Heroic-Age GM is free to use these social classes as much or as little as he wishes. Note that some heroes start out ignorant of their parentage, and spend part of their lives as commoners.

Mycenaean towns are commercial centers, supporting a wide variety of craftsmen, farmers and traders. These commoners are subject to the heroic nobility, but are free men nonetheless. Some are administrators, who help the king keep records and manage commerce. Others are carpenters, potters, masons, painters and artists, makers of wine and olive oil, hunters and so on. Aside from the administrators, few commoners are literate.

Slaves are captured in wars or bought, and may have been freemen or even nobility before being enslaved. They may be highly skilled and often have a great deal of personal freedom. Slaves mix with the upper classes freely, and their inferior status does not make them despised. There is no particular stigma to having been a slave, although the heroes naturally avoid it if at all possible. Many of the heroes have children by slaves, and these children sometimes become heroes themselves.

At the bottom of the social pyramid is a class of “beggars.” These are men without any attachment to a noble household, living outside the bounds of normal society. They might make a living by begging or scrounging, but can also turn to banditry. Even here, there is some social mobility. Heroes are sometimes forced to spend time as houseless beggars, and it is possible for a beggar to regain social status if he can convince a nobleman or king to take him in.

## THE HEROIC MYTHS

The major myth cycles are outlined here. Notice that many events are dated in the Timeline. A few events of the Mycenaean period can be deduced from archeological evidence. Using clues from the myths, a chronology for the Heroic Age can be constructed. Naturally, this assumes that the myths have a basis in historical fact, something that is completely unproven in most cases.

Another difficulty is that the Greeks went to little effort to make their myths *consistent*. Even the major myth cycles often have two or three variations which differ in important details. Worse, the myths contradict one another constantly. Of course, the GM can use this ambiguity to exercise creativity and keep his players guessing.

### PERSEUS

The first great hero of the age was Perseus. He was an ancestor of many famous heroes of later years.

#### BIRTH

Acrisius was a son of the king of Argos, who had to fight a civil war to gain the throne after his father’s death. He had no sons, only a daughter named Danae. One day an oracle told him that his grandson would kill him. In response, he locked his daughter up in a dungeon. There, Zeus visited her in the form of a shower of gold. When Acrisius found that Danae had given birth to a son, named Perseus, he sealed them both into a chest and threw them into the sea.

Danae and Perseus did not die. Instead, they washed ashore on the island of Seriphos in the Cyclades. There, they were taken in by King Polydectes.

#### THE MEDUSA QUEST

When Perseus reached manhood, he found it hard to protect his mother from Polydectes, who was pressuring her to marry him. One day, Polydectes pretended that he was going to marry a mainland princess, and asked his friends for gifts. Relieved that his mother was no longer in danger, Perseus rashly swore to bring any gift the king wanted, even the head of the Gorgon Medusa. Polydectes held him to that promise, hoping that Perseus would die on the quest.

## THE AMAZONS

The Amazons were an all-female tribe, who the myths claimed lived to the north of Greece, on the shores of the Black Sea. They were mighty warriors, defending themselves without any need for men. They occasionally slept with men from more ordinary tribes, keeping only the girl babies. Some legends claimed they removed one breast so as to be better able to use bow and sword, which may have given rise to the name (*amazon* means “breastless”). The Amazons were devoted servants of the goddess Artemis.

The Amazons took part in several of the major myth cycles. Heracles raided them, killing one of their queens. Theseus kidnapped an Amazon named Antiope, who became his mistress for several years. He was forced to defend Athens against a great invasion, led by the Amazons who were trying to rescue Antiope. Belleroophon fought a military campaign against them as well. Finally, some of the Amazons fought for the Trojans in the last year of the Trojan War. They were always said to be fierce warriors, impossible to tame or enslave.

Historical evidence for the Amazons is slim. Some of the tribes of southern Russia may have had a tradition of female warriors. Herodotus claims that the Sarmatian tribe had a law forbidding any girl to marry unless she had killed an enemy in battle, a custom he thought had been handed on from the Amazons. Another possibility is that the Amazons are a confused memory of the Hittites. Hittite warriors had a habit of shaving and wearing their hair long, and were called “effeminate ones” by the Egyptians.



## HERACLES

Age 50; 5' 9", 160 lbs.; powerful build, brown eyes, curly red hair and beard with streaks of gray, wears rough clothing.

ST 30, DX 14, IQ 13, HT 14.

Basic Speed 7, Move 7.

Dodge 8, Parry 8.

Magical armor (lionskin); no encumbrance.

Point total: 500

*Advantages:* Ally (Deianeira on a 9 or less); Ally Group (mercenaries on a 9 or less); Animal Empathy; Combat Reflexes; High Pain Threshold; Language Talent +1; Literacy; Reputation +3 (as a mighty hero); Status 6 (important hero); Strong Will +2; Toughness (DR1); Unusual Background (Divine Birth).

*Disadvantages:* Bad Temper; Enemy (Hera on a 6 or less); Enemy (King Eurystheus on a 9 or less); Lecherousness; Sense of Duty (to family and followers); Stubbornness.

*Quirks:* Appreciates intellectual arts; Enjoys helping people; Lives life with gusto; Mixes with all social classes; Uneasy about his own strength.

*Skills:* Animal Handling-16; Axe/Mace-15; Bard-12; Bow-16; Brawling-16; Carousing-14; Climbing-14; Cooking-13; Driving (Chariot)-15; Fast-Talk-13; Knife-16; Leadership-13; Musical Instrument (Lyre)-11; Navigation-12; Savoir-Faire-16; Scrounging-13; Seamanship-14; Shield-16; Shortsword-16; Singing-14; Spear-15; Spear Throwing-17; Stealth-14; Survival (Mountain)-13; Swimming-15; Tactics-13; Theology-11; Tracking-14; Wrestling-15.

*Languages:* Amazon-13; Greek-14; Hittite-13; Thracian-13.

*Weapons:* Huge club (treat as a mace), 5d+5 crushing; longbow, 3d+2 impaling (plus poison damage).

*Equipment:* Wears the skin of the Nemean Lion, and carries arrows dipped in the venomous blood of the Lernaean Hydra (see p. 95 for descriptions of these items).

Here, Heracles is nearing the end of his career but is still very powerful and experienced. He is living in Calydon with his new wife Deianeira (see sidebar, p. 34) and his band of mercenary warriors. Most of his adventures are behind him, and for the moment he is content to enjoy the quiet life. His personality is bluff and cheerful, though when he is thwarted he can fly into a black rage. At times like this he is dangerous to those around him and to himself.

The goddess Athena had heard Perseus' promise, and decided to help him. She advised Perseus not to look directly at the Gorgon, and gave him a shield polished to a mirror finish. The god Hermes gave Perseus a magic sickle to cut off Medusa's head. Perseus still needed several more magic items before he could face Medusa, so he went on a quest for them. Once he was completely armed, he flew to Medusa's home. Watching the Gorgon's reflection in his shield, he struck with the sickle and decapitated the monster.

## RETURN TO GREECE

Perseus then flew back to Greece, Medusa's head in his magic bag. On the way home, he spotted a naked woman chained to a rock and landed to investigate. She was Andromeda, the daughter of King Cepheus and Queen Cassiopeia of Ethiopia. The queen had arrogantly compared Andromeda's beauty to that of the Nereids (see p. 103), who complained to their protector Poseidon. To punish Cassiopeia for her arrogance, the god sent a sea monster, which would devastate the country unless Andromeda was sacrificed to it.

When the monster appeared, Perseus flew into the air and decapitated it with his sickle. He then landed to claim Andromeda, but found that her parents had brought in another prince to kill him. In the battle, he brought out Medusa's head and turned the entire court to stone. He and Andromeda flew back to Greece as husband and wife.

On Seriphos, Perseus found that his mother had taken refuge in a temple to avoid King Polydectes. He again used Medusa's head, turning the king and his nobles to stone while they were feasting. His quest over, Perseus gave Medusa's head to Athena, and asked Hermes to return the other magic items to their owners.

Perseus and Andromeda sailed to Argos, where he fulfilled prophecy by killing Acrisius accidentally with a thrown *diskos*. He then became king of Tiryns, and later of the whole Argolid. He was credited with founding Mycenae and the High Kingship, in which other kings were subject to his rule; his descendants were kings in Tiryns and Mycenae for several generations.

## HERACLES

The greatest of Perseus' descendants was Heracles. Almost alone among the heroes, Heracles lived a long life and became a god after his death. He was worshipped by almost all the later Greeks.

## EARLY YEARS

Heracles' parents, Amphitryon and Alcmene, were descendants of Perseus, members of the royal house of Mycenae. They went into exile after Amphitryon accidentally killed the king, his kinsman. By the time Heracles was born, they were living in Thebes.

Zeus seduced Alcmene and fathered Heracles on her, swearing never again to sleep with a mortal woman once this greatest of heroes was born. Insanely jealous of Alcmene when Zeus bragged about the great hero she was to bear, Hera made him promise that the first descendant of Perseus born before nightfall would become the king of Mycenae. Delaying Alcmene's labor and hurrying that of the Mycenaean queen, Hera saw to it that Heracles was born second. Zeus was enraged when he learned of Hera's deception, but his promise was irrevocable. Heracles was fated never to be a king anywhere.

Even in his cradle, Heracles was exceptional, strangling two great poisonous serpents Hera sent to destroy him. He soon grew to be a huge, powerful man. He was quite intelligent, and learned many civilized arts from his tutor, the centaur Chiron. In his youth, he saved Thebes from conquest by the Minyans (see p. 30). In return, Heracles was named protector of Thebes and

given a princess of the royal house to marry. During his time in Thebes, he accompanied the *Argo* partway to Colchis, although he abandoned the quest before it reached its destination. When the giants attacked Mount Olympus, the gods brought Heracles in to play an important part in the battle, even saving his enemy Hera from attack.

### THE TWELVE LABORS

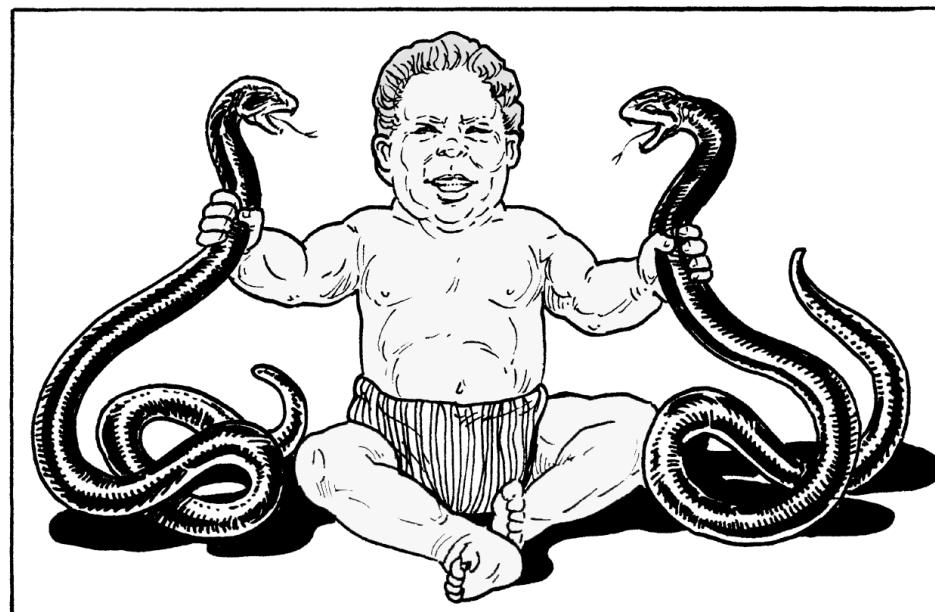
Hera was not grateful. One year she drove Heracles mad, so that he killed several of his own children. He fell into deep despair at this hideous crime. Searching for atonement, he consulted the oracle at Delphi, which told him to put himself in the service of his cousin, King Eurystheus of Mycenae. If he served Eurystheus for 12 years, and performed whatever ten tasks the king set for him, he would be purified of his guilt and rewarded with immortality as well.

While in the service of Mycenae, Heracles performed those tasks that are known as his Twelve Labors. Eurystheus feared Heracles, and did his best to keep the hero occupied with dangerous quests. The first eight Labors involved the hunting of fierce beasts, which Heracles had to capture or kill without help. Each Labor was harder, longer, and more dangerous as Eurystheus tried to keep Heracles away. Finally, Eurystheus began to send Heracles away from Greece altogether. The Ninth Labor forced Heracles to travel to the country of the Amazons, and during the Tenth, Heracles traveled to what is now Spain.

At this point, Eurystheus disallowed two of the first ten Labors, since Heracles had accepted help in them. In the Eleventh Labor Heracles went to the very edge of the world, to recover golden apples guarded by nymphs called the Hesperides. Last came the Twelfth Labor, the most difficult of all. Heracles descended into Hades and captured the three-headed dog Cerberus. He then returned to Greece, his Labors completed and his term of service over. He was not permitted to settle permanently in Mycenae, however. King Eurystheus banished Heracles, still fearing that he had designs on the throne.

### HERACLES THE CAPTAIN

Soon thereafter, Heracles murdered a prince named Iphitus, after falsely accusing him of theft. To atone for this deed, Heracles allowed himself to be sold into slavery in Asia. He spent three years as the personal slave of Queen Omphale of Lydia.



### HEROIC WOMEN

The Greek legends were decidedly male-dominated in tone, just like Greek society. Often, women were merely passive prizes for an ambitious hero to win. On the other hand, a few myths included active, independent women, heroes in every sense of the word.

Also, in spite of women's secondary role in Greek society and myth, almost all of the powerful magic-users in the tales were women. This may be a holdover from pre-Mycenaean times, when women were in charge of religious observances and were believed to have strange powers.

### ATALANTA

Atalanta was the central heroine in the myth-cycle of Calydon. Her father wanted only sons and abandoned her at birth, but a she-bear nursed her until some huntsmen adopted her. When she reached womanhood, she became the fastest runner in Greece, and a skilled wrestler as well. She won acceptance in the all-male heroic society by being a better athlete and warrior than most men.

Atalanta took part in the great Hunt for the Boar of Calydon, as did most of the great heroes of the time. Atalanta brought the boar down with the help of the hero Meleager, son of King Oeneus. The two fell in love, but Meleager died soon afterward in a battle.

Atalanta was a devotee of Artemis, and refused to marry because of a terrible prophecy by the Oracle at Delphi. She forced her father to promise that she would only be wed to a man who could beat her in a foot race. She disposed of many of her suitors by allowing them a head start, then catching up with them and killing them. This went on for some time, until her cousin Melanion tricked her by dropping three golden apples in her path as she ran. Stopping to pick the apples up slowed Atalanta, and she lost the race. The prophecy came true after the two were married. Aphrodite, angry at Melanion's lack of gratitude for her help in winning Atalanta, prompted the couple to make love in a temple of Zeus. Zeus was so angry at this sacrilege that he turned the lovers into lions.

### CASSANDRA

Cassandra was the daughter of King Priam of Troy. She gained the power of prophecy from the god Apollo when he fell in love with her. Because she refused to sleep with him, however, he laid a curse on her so that no one would ever believe her prophecies. She was a mighty prophetess, foretelling the fates of Troy, of her brothers the princes and of Agamemnon.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## HEROIC WOMEN (CONTINUED)

### CIRCE

Circe, a skilled alchemist, had only one real magical power: that of changing men into animals. That was enough to defend her island, until Odysseus landed there and the gods helped him to resist her power.

### CLYTEMNAESTRA

Clytemnaestra was something of an anti-heroine. The conquering hero Agamemnon killed her first husband and carried her off. She loved and respected him, bearing him several children. Yet Agamemnon went too far, sacrificing their eldest daughter to Artemis just before the Trojan War. Her love destroyed, Clytemnaestra plotted revenge for 10 years, and arranged for his murder on the day he returned from Troy.

### DEIANEIRA

Deianeira was the wife of Heracles, the daughter of King Oeneus and the half-sister of Meleager. She was famous for charioting, hunting expeditions and skill with weapons. She was also known for rejecting many suitors. She made a good wife for Heracles, but was accidentally the cause of his death (see main text, this page).

### MEDEA

The most powerful spellcaster in the Greek myths, Medea was descended from the sun-god Helios and inherited some of her magical powers from him. As the wife of Jason and later of King Aegeus of Athens, she played a part in several of the heroic myths (see pp. 35 and 91). She was primarily an alchemist, preparing potions and elixirs for her companions and husbands. When she was aiding Jason, she was able to give him protection from fire and weapons. She was also the wisest woman in the myths, giving excellent advice to any who sought her out. Unfortunately, Medea was betrayed by one husband after another; but she always took her revenge.

### THETIS

Thetis was a Nereid, a sea-nymph who was tamed by the hero Peleus and became his wife. She was a powerful sorceress, with magical powers due to both her semi-divine nature and her personal pursuit of knowledge. She was a shapeshifter, and in trying to elude Peleus she transformed into a variety of beasts and monsters. She also understood how to give mortals the gifts of immortality and invulnerability, but the rituals involved immolation and Peleus prevented her from completing them on their son, Achilles.

Once Heracles returned to Greece, he took up the role of a commander of men. First, he gathered a force and attacked Troy, seeking to avenge an insult King Laomedon had paid him during his Labors. He sacked the city, killing Laomedon and most of his children but putting Prince Priam on the throne. He then moved to the Peloponnese, where he attacked Elis but failed to conquer it. While in Elis, he established the Olympic Games. Later Heracles sacked Pylos. He also raided Sparta, where a noble family had driven out the rightful king, Tyndareus. Heracles won the battle and restored Tyndareus to the throne. After these campaigns, Heracles settled for several years in Arcadia.

### DEATH AND DEIFICATION

Heracles had been unmarried for many years, and now that he was settled in one place he felt the lack. By this time, he had gathered a fairly large company of men. He and his troops moved to Calydon, where he married Deianeira, the daughter of King Oeneus.

A few years later, Deianeira was briefly abducted by the centaur Nessus, who attempted to rape her. Heracles shot Nessus with one of his poisoned arrows. To avenge himself, Nessus lied to Deianeira as he lay dying. He gave her some wool soaked in his blood, and told her that it was a powerful love potion. If Heracles was ever unfaithful to her, she was to make a shirt with the wool and give it to him, and he would then fall in love with her again.

One day, Heracles left to claim a woman who had been promised to him years before. Deianeira, fearing she would lose her husband's love, made a shirt of Nessus' wool and sent it to Heracles. The hero fell in searing agony, poisoned by the centaur's blood. To escape the pain, he immolated himself on a funeral pyre. His mortal shade descended to Hades, but Zeus caught up his immortal part and took it to Olympus. There, Heracles reconciled with Hera at last and became a god.

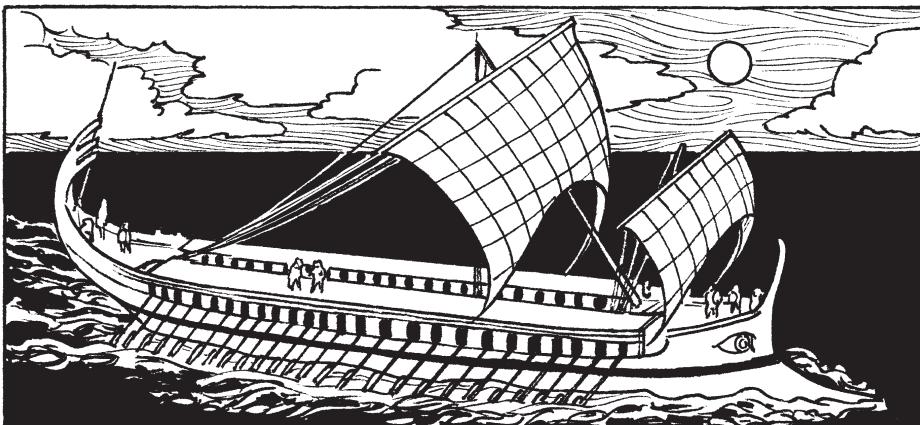
### JASON

While Heracles was a hero for all Greeks, many lesser heroes were associated with specific cities or regions. Jason was one of these, tied to Thessaly and Corinth.

### BIRTH

Jason was native to the city of Iolcus, in Thessaly. Shortly before he was born, his uncle Pelias seized the Iolcan throne from Jason's father Aeson. Aeson's supporters smuggled Jason out of the city soon after his birth, and sent him into the mountains to be raised by the centaur Chiron.

Pelias was an arrogant ruler, who omitted the appropriate sacrifices to Hera. The goddess swore to destroy him, and sent him an oracle warning that a man wearing only one shoe would depose and kill him.



## THE VOYAGE OF THE ARGONAUTS

When Jason reached manhood, he came down out of the mountains to Iolcus, losing a sandal along the way. He appeared on a beach where Pelias was sacrificing. Pelias did not know who Jason was, but seeing that the youth had only one shoe he confronted him. He trapped Jason into agreeing to fetch the Golden Fleece from Colchis.

Colchis was a country on the far shore of the Black Sea. There, the fleece of a golden ram was guarded as one of the great treasures of the kingdom. Jason built a great ship, the *Argo*, and gathered heroes from all over Greece to man it. Heracles, Odysseus' father Laertes, the bard Orpheus and many others came to take part in the quest. When all was ready, the *Argo* sailed out into the Aegean Sea. Once Pelias saw that the ship had gone, he was certain that Jason would never return.

The voyage of the *Argo* was long and dangerous. The crew landed at a number of different points in the Aegean, dealing with many dangers. The passage into the Black Sea was dangerous and nearly wrecked the ship.

Arriving in Colchis, the Argonauts found the kingdom well-armed and on guard. King Aeetes listened to Jason's request for the Fleece, then threatened to send the Greeks home mutilated. However, at Hera's request Aphrodite intervened, causing the king's daughter Medea to fall in love with Jason. She convinced her father to deal fairly with the Greeks. Aeetes promised Jason the Fleece, provided he could perform a series of seemingly-impossible tasks.

Meeting Medea at night, Jason planned how to meet the king's demands. Swearing by all the gods, Jason promised that if Medea would help win the Fleece, he would marry her and remain forever faithful to her. Medea agreed, and gave Jason good advice and magical assistance. Soon, Jason had accomplished all the tasks Aeetes had set him.

The king had no intention of keeping his promise, and threatened to destroy the *Argo*. Medea led Jason to where the Fleece rested, guarded by a great fire-breathing serpent. After Medea put the dragon to sleep with magic, Jason was able to seize the Fleece. In a running fight, the Argonauts defeated King Aeetes' men and escaped in the *Argo*. The Colchian navy, commanded by Medea's half-brother Aspyrtus, pursued the *Argo*. Medea and Jason tricked Aspyrtus and murdered him, enabling the *Argo* to escape back to Greece.

## JASON IN CORINTH

When the *Argo* reached Iolcus, the Argonauts found that King Pelias had disposed of Jason's parents. Jason and Medea stole into the city at night and killed Pelias in revenge. The city held funeral games in honor of Pelias, a famous occasion which many heroes attended. Afterward, Jason willingly left Iolcus, to avoid the vengeance of Pelias' kinsmen.

Jason and Medea traveled to Corinth. The last king of the city had died at Pelias' funeral games, but Medea was related to the royal house, so the people of Corinth offered them the throne. Jason and Medea lived there as king and queen for ten happy years. By the end of that time, however, Jason had grown arrogant, assuming that the people respected him rather than Medea. He broke the oath he had sworn, divorcing her to marry a Theban princess.

Enraged, Medea set a magical fire which destroyed most of the palace, killed the princess and most of the wedding guests, and nearly killed Jason. She then fled the city. Her children by Jason were also murdered at about this time, either attacked by a Corinthian mob or killed by Medea in her rage. Medea eventually made her way to Athens, where she was briefly married to King Aegeus.

Jason found that the Corinthian throne was Medea's and not his, as the people angrily ejected him. Even the gods had come to despise him for breaking



## JASON

Age 18; 5' 9", 150 lbs.; athletic build, well-tanned skin, blond hair, blue eyes, clean-shaven.

ST 14, DX 13, IQ 11, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6.25, Move 6.

Dodge 6, Block 7, Parry 6.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 200

*Advantages:* Ally Group (the Argonauts on a 9 or less); Appearance (Handsome); Charisma +2; Literacy; Patron (Hera on a 6 or less); Status 4 (minor nobleman).

*Disadvantages:* Enemy (King Pelias on a 9 or less); Impulsiveness; Poverty (Struggling); Vow (recover the Golden Fleece).

*Quirks:* Enjoys the company of warriors; Rarely understands the consequences of his actions; Self-centered; Uncomfortable in cities; Unsure of his own abilities.

*Skills:* Bow-12; Brawling-13; Diplomacy-9; Fast-Talk-10; Knife-13; Leadership-12; Navigation-10; Savoir-Faire-14; Seamanship-12; Shipbuilding-11; Shield-14; Shortsword-12; Spear-13; Spear Throwing-14; Survival (Mountain)-11; Swimming-14; Tactics-10; Tracking-11.

*Weapons:* Stabbing sword, 1d impaling, 2d crushing; spear, 1d+2 impaling.

*Equipment:* Hide shield.

Jason is the commander of the *Argo*, at the beginning of its epic journey and the beginning of his own heroic career. He is young and charismatic, but inexperienced. Fate has made him the captain of a great ship, leader of many of the greatest heroes of his time, and he often feels unequal to the task. He is nevertheless determined to succeed and get the better of King Pelias.

## OEDIPUS

Age 43; 5' 5", 130 lbs.; thin and weather-beaten, graying hair and beard; wears a cloth over his ruined eyes.

ST 11, DX 13, IQ 15, HT 11.

Basic Speed 6, Move 6.

Dodge 6.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 200

**Advantages:** Acute Hearing +5; Ally (Antigone on a 15 or less); Ally (Ismene on a 12 or less); Destiny (will protect the place where he is buried after death); High Pain Threshold; Literacy; Rapid Healing; Strong Will +3; Toughness (DR 1); Voice.

**Disadvantages:** Blindness; Poverty (Poor); Reputation -4 (as an accused criminal, recognized on 10 or less); Status -2 (beggar).

**Quirks:** Always polite, even to enemies; Despises his sons; Regrets his crimes and fate; Still carries himself like a king; Tries not to accept charity.

**Skills:** Bard-19; Brawling-15; Diplomacy-18; Driving (Chariot)-13; Fast-Talk-16; Hiking-10; Knife-14; Leadership-16; Savoir-Faire-20; Scrounging-17; Shield-14; Shortsword-13; Spear-14; Spear Throwing-15; Streetwise-16; Survival (Mountain)-19; Swimming-14; Tactics-15; Theology-17; Tracking-15.

**Weapon:** Dagger, 1d-2 impaling.

Once, Oedipus was the fortunate king of Thebes. Now, fate has caught up with him and he wanders through Greece as a blind beggar. Few people are willing to take him in, knowing of his past, so he has learned to fend for himself despite his handicaps. His daughters Antigone and Ismene spend most of their time with him, guiding him and helping him survive. At first glance, he appears to be a simple beggar, but anyone who looks closely will realize what he is – the wreck of a great man, once the most brilliant and talented hero in Greece.

his oath to Medea. He spent the rest of his days wandering through Greece as a drunken outcast, only occasionally rousing himself to take part in some heroic enterprise. He returned to Iolcus at one point and drove out Pelias' son, putting his own son on the throne. On another occasion he took part in the hunt for the Calydonian Boar (see p. 97). Finally, weary of life, he came to the wreck of the *Argo* on the beach near Corinth. He was preparing to hang himself from the prow when the beam came loose and crushed him.



## OEDIPUS

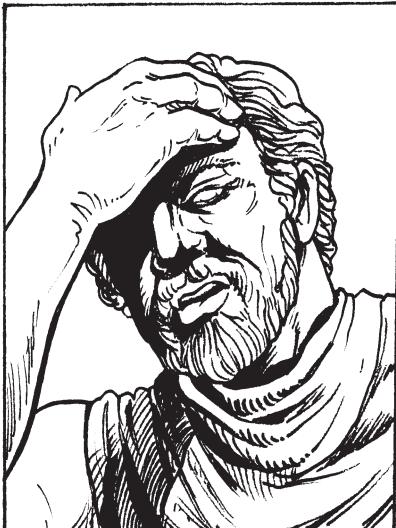
The most tragic myth cycle deals with the trials of the royal house of Thebes, especially of King Oedipus. Many poets and dramatists of later times retold the story.

### BIRTH

Laius, the king of Thebes, was childless. When he consulted an oracle to discover why, he learned that any son born to his wife Jocasta would be his murderer. When she finally bore a son, he drove a spike through the infant's feet and ordered a shepherd to expose the child. The shepherd could not bring himself to perform the task, and instead gave the baby to another shepherd on the mountainside. The boy was taken to Corinth, where the childless noble Polybus adopted him. Polybus called his new son Oedipus, or "Swollen-foot," for the injury that had been done to his feet.

### RETURN TO THEBES

One day after Oedipus had grown to manhood, a drunken companion accused him of not being his father's son. Confused, he traveled to Delphi to find the truth. The oracle angrily ordered him away, cursed by the gods, doomed to murder his father and marry his mother. Shocked, Oedipus decided never to return to Corinth, so as not to bring such a fate down on his beloved parents.



Leaving Delphi, he traveled toward Thebes. At a crossroads, he encountered a chariot bearing King Laius, who ordered him aside and attacked him when he proudly refused. Unaware of the king's identity or of their relationship, Oedipus killed Laius and his entire retinue.

When Oedipus approached Thebes, he found the city besieged by a monster called the Sphinx. This monster killed everyone who tried to enter or leave the city, unless they could answer a riddle. Oedipus answered the riddle correctly, and the mortified Sphinx leaped to its death on the rocks below its cliff. Oedipus then entered Thebes, a hero. Soon it became apparent that Laius was not going to return, so Oedipus was chosen king and married to Queen Jocasta. Both halves of the prophecy had been fulfilled.

### THE ACCURSED KING

All seemed well for several years. Eventually, however, the gods became disgusted with Oedipus' prosperity and inflicted a terrible plague on Thebes. Oedipus sent his wife's brother Creon to Delphi to learn what should be done, and discovered that the murderer of Laius had to be exiled from the city. No one knew who had killed Laius, but Oedipus turned his brilliant mind on the problem, and soon discovered that he himself was the culprit. Worse, he discovered that he was not the son of Polybus, but the son of Laius and Jocasta. Realizing that he had committed the two most horrible crimes imaginable, kin-slaughter and incest, he blinded himself and went into exile from Thebes.

Oedipus spent many years wandering through Greece as a homeless beggar, unable to find any place to rest. Knowing of his terrible crimes and curse, no one would take him in. Eventually, when his daughters Ismene and Antigone grew old enough, they began to escort him and see to it that he was cared for.

Eventually, Oedipus came to Attica and took refuge at a shrine in the town of Colonus. At first, the citizens of Colonus refused to accept him, but King Theseus intervened and offered him sanctuary. Now, an oracle had become widely known, saying that wherever Oedipus was buried his spirit would act as a powerful defender, protecting that kingdom from invasion. The Thebans therefore wanted him back, and sent a force under Creon to seize him. When the Thebans arrived, Theseus fought them and turned them back. In gratitude, Oedipus told Theseus to bury him in Attica, in a spot where no man would disturb him. He then died, at peace with himself at last.

## THESEUS

Athens had a patron hero of its own, the legendary King Theseus. Since Classical Athens was a powerful and influential city, the fame of Theseus spread throughout Greece. The Athenians never managed to make their hero the equal of Heracles, however, or win divine honors for him.

### EARLY YEARS

King Aegeus of Athens had no sons. One day, as he was visiting the town of Troezen in the Argolid, the local king tricked Aegeus into sleeping with his daughter Aethra. The same night, Aethra lay with Poseidon, but the sea-god generously yielded the paternity of any son to Aegeus. When Aegeus awoke, he left his sword and sandals under a great rock and told Aethra that any son of his should take the items and come to Athens. Theseus was born nine months later and raised in the court of Troezen.

When Theseus reached adulthood, he learned of his parentage and retrieved Aegeus' sword and sandals. He then set out along the coastal road between Troezen and Athens, killing many monsters and bandits along the way. When he arrived in Athens, he was hailed as a hero but did not yet reveal his parentage.



## THESEUS

Age 30; 5' 10", 160 lbs.; athletic build, gray eyes, close-cropped black hair, clean-shaven, usually wears fine clothing.

ST 18, DX 15, IQ 13, HT 13.

Basic Speed 7, Move 7.

Dodge 8, Parry 9.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 400

*Advantages:* Ally (Antiope on a 12 or less); Ally (King Pirithous on a 9 or less); Animal Empathy; Appearance (Attractive); Charisma +1; Combat Reflexes; Literacy; Patron (Poseidon on a 6 or less); Reputation +2 (as a wise and just king); Status 6 (important king); Unusual Background (Divine Birth); Wealth (Wealthy).

*Disadvantages:* Enemy (the Amazons on a 6 or less); Overconfidence; Sense of Duty (to Athens); Stubbornness.

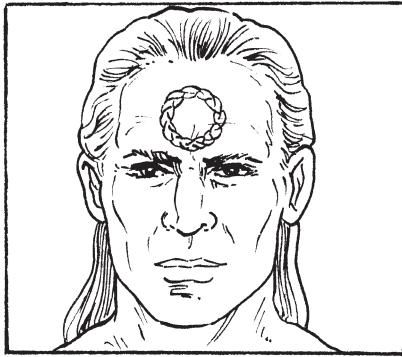
*Quirks:* Compassionate toward outcasts and beggars; Enjoys the company of ordinary folk; Enjoys traveling; Intellectual; Ruthless toward enemies.

*Skills:* Administration-12; Animal Handling-15; Axe/Mace-16; Bow-13; Boxing-15; Carousing-12; Climbing-14; Dancing-14; Diplomacy-11; Driving (Chariot)-16; Fast-Talk-12; Knife-16; Law-11; Leadership-14; Musical Instrument (Lyre)-11; Navigation-12; Running-12; Savoir-Faire-16; Seamanship-14; Shield-16; Shortsword-16; Spear-15; Spear Throwing-16; Stealth-14; Survival (Mountain)-13; Swimming-16; Tactics-12; Theology-12; Tracking-13; Wrestling-16.

*Languages:* Amazon-11; Greek-13; Minoan-11.

*Weapon:* Bronze-bound war club (treat as mace), 3d+3 crushing.

This is Theseus as king of Athens, after he has already had a number of adventures. He is at the height of his power and reputation, with friends everywhere in Greece, the Amazon Antiope as his mistress and little opposition at home. He travels a great deal, leaving the Athenian state in the hands of ministers. He is unusual in his intellectual leanings and his willingness to understand other cultures. He is also atypically compassionate, giving hospitality to poor travelers and sanctuary to outcasts. The Athenian people often don't know quite what to make of their king . . .



## SEMI-HISTORICAL CREATURES

Greek myth is full of well-developed nonhuman races, with personalities of their own and unique roles in the stories of the heroes. Many of these will be found in Chapter 6, for GMs who want a more “traditional” interpretation of the myths.

Interestingly, some of these legendary nonhumans may have historical roots. GMs who set their campaigns in a more “realistic” Bronze Age might want to develop their own unique interpretations of these creatures. This may be a particularly effective surprise for players who *think* they know the myths well...

For example, rather than being human-horse hybrids, centaurs might simply be a human tribe possessing unusual skill with horses. The earliest Greeks were not great horsemen, and normally used their horses to pull carts and chariots. If, as they migrated through Thessaly, they saw tribes of more primitive hillmen who *had* mastered horseback riding, they might have thought of them as a kind of half-human, half-horse creature. The native Americans who first saw Europeans on horseback made a similar mistake.

Another example is the Cyclopes. The myths sometimes portray Cyclopes as enormous one-eyed giants. There was another type of Cyclopes, however. These were a race of master-masons and smiths, who made many weapons for the gods and who also built fortifications for heroic kings. Later Greeks thought that the walls of many ancient cities, such as Mycenae, Argos and Troy, were “cyclopean.” In the myths, these Cyclopes are often confused with the brutish one-eyed giants, even being called by the same names.

In reality, the Cyclopes might have been a tribe of more-or-less normal humans, coming from either Sicily or southern Asia Minor. They would have specialized in the crafts and kept many secret techniques of smithwork and architecture. They may have been connected with the Hittites (who were the first people to develop ironworking on a large scale). The name “cyclops” means “circle-eyed,” and may be derived from a tribal mark tattooed on the forehead of these people.

Medea was married to Aegeus by this time, and was jealous of the young stranger. She convinced Aegeus to have Theseus pursue the Bull of Marathon, a wild, fire-breathing animal that Heracles had brought from Crete. Theseus managed to trap the Bull, and sacrificed it to Athena on the Acropolis. Medea then convinced Aegeus that the stranger was a danger to the throne who should be killed by poison. At the feast that evening, Aegeus noticed Theseus’ sword, recognized the clan markings on it, and realized who Theseus was. He struck the poisoned wine out of Theseus’ hand and embraced him as his son. Medea then fled Athens.

## THE CRETAN EXPEDITION

Theseus’ heroism was soon tested again. Many years before, a son of King Minos of Crete had been assassinated while traveling in Attica. In revenge, Minos forced the Athenians to send seven youths and seven maidens to Crete every nine years, to be sacrificed to the monstrous Minotaur. One such occasion fell soon after Theseus arrived in Athens, and Theseus decided to end the tribute for good. He pretended to be part of the tribute, and sailed for Crete.

In Knossos, he befriended the princess Ariadne and the architect Daedalus, who had designed the Labyrinth that was the Minotaur’s prison. Theseus entered the Labyrinth and slew the Minotaur, finding his way back out by using a magical thread Ariadne had given him. He then fought a sea-battle in the harbor of Knossos and escaped with the rest of the Athenians and Ariadne. On the trip back to Athens the ship stopped at the island of Naxos, where Theseus lost or abandoned Ariadne. When the ship reached Athens, Theseus forgot to signal success to shore, and King Aegeus assumed that Theseus had been killed. The king cast himself into the sea, which was later named the Aegean after him.

## THESEUS THE KING

Theseus now became king in Athens. After ruthlessly putting down a revolt among his kinsmen, he proved to be a wise and clever ruler. He reorganized the country of Attica and introduced the first democratic ideas in his government.

Theseus’ greatest friend was King Pirithous of the Lapith tribe in Thessaly. The two heroes went on a variety of adventures together. They fought against the centaurs when the horse-men attacked the Lapiths, and took part in the Calydonian Boar Hunt. Theseus also had a series of adventures involving the Amazons.

Late in Theseus’ life, he and his friend Pirithous made a pact to get new wives for themselves. For Theseus, they went to Sparta and kidnapped Helen, who was only 12 years old but already famous as the most beautiful girl in Greece. Later, Pirithous reminded Theseus of the other half of their agreement, and chose Persephone, the wife of Hades. Theseus was appalled at his friend’s arrogance, but had to go through with it. Together, the friends descended into the underworld but fell into a trap laid by Hades. They were held and tormented for four years.

While Theseus was away, the Spartans learned where Helen was being held. The Dioscuri led an army against Athens to rescue their sister (see sidebar, p. 39). When the Athenians learned what had brought this calamity on them, they angrily renounced Theseus. With the support of the people, the Spartans placed an exiled Athenian nobleman, Menestheus, on the Athenian throne. Menestheus agreed to let Helen go and made a peace treaty with Sparta.

Theseus was finally freed by Heracles, who descended into Tartarus to rescue him. He returned to Athens a broken man, aged and weakened by his torments in Tartarus, only to find that the Athenians had turned against him. He went into exile, wishing to have nothing more to do with Athens. While traveling in the Aegean, he visited the court of King Lycomedes of Scyros, who assassinated him by hurling him off a cliff.

# THE TROJAN WAR

The culmination of the heroic myths is the epic cycle of the Trojan War. These stories revolve around Homer's works, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but a number of other stories are associated with the War and its aftermath.

## CAUSES OF THE WAR

### THE MARRIAGE OF PELEUS

The story of the Trojan War begins at a wedding. Zeus had been in love with the sea-nymph Thetis, but he dared not sleep with her because she was fated to bear a son who was mightier than his father. Zeus was afraid that any son of *his* by Thetis would be strong enough to depose him as he had deposed his own father. So Zeus found a mortal hero, Peleus, to marry Thetis. When the two fell in love, Zeus was pleased enough to invite all the Olympian gods to attend the wedding.

The occasion proved disastrous. Eris, the goddess of Discord, threw a golden apple among the wedding guests. Inscribed "For the Fairest," it was immediately claimed by Hera, Athena and Aphrodite, who fell to arguing over it, and eventually came to Zeus, who refused to judge the dispute. The matter remained in contention in Olympus for many years, causing arguments among the gods, but Zeus continually refused to award the apple to any of those claiming it.

Meanwhile, in Troy, a prophecy claimed that Paris, the son of King Priam, would be the destruction of the city. He was exposed at birth, but an old shepherd found him and raised him. He grew to be a handsome and clever youth. One day, he impressed a watching god with his fairness of judgment, so Zeus sent Hermes, Hera, Athena and Aphrodite to where he was herding cattle on the mountainside. Hermes told him to judge the beauty of the three goddesses and award the apple. All three goddesses tried to bribe Paris, but he ended by choosing Aphrodite, who promised to help him win the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta (see below).



## CASTOR AND POLYDEUCES

These twin brothers were the national heroes of Sparta. They were the sons of King Tyndareus and Queen Leda of Sparta, just as Helen and Clytemnestra were their twin daughters. Strangely, the myths also call both Helen and Polydeuces the children of Zeus.

The twin brothers were inseparable and went on many adventures together. As a pair they were known as the *Dioscuri*, or "sons of Zeus." Castor was a master of weapons, a tamer of horses and a charioteer. Polydeuces, on the other hand, was famous as a boxer. Both brothers took prizes at the Olympic Games that Heracles established. The brothers also acted as the protectors of Sparta, marching on Mycenae and Athens when their sisters were molested by Agamemnon or Theseus.

Unfortunately, the twins were bitter rivals of another pair of twins: Idas and Lynceus, sons of the king of Messenia. Eventually their rivalry erupted into violence, and three of the four heroes were killed. Polydeuces was the only survivor. As the son of Zeus, he had a claim to immortality, but he refused to be separated from his brother Castor. Zeus arranged a compromise, allowing the twins to spend a day on Olympus for each day in the underworld. Interestingly, the *Dioscuri* became favorite demigods in the Roman pantheon, under the names Castor and Pollux.

## BELLEROPHON

Bellerophon was a prince of Corinth, son of King Glaucus. He was exiled from Corinth after killing one of his kinsmen. After many misadventures, he ended up at the court of Iobates, a king in Asia. Iobates disliked Bellerophon but did not want to kill him outright, since the renegade prince was a guest. So he sent Bellerophon on impossible quests instead.

Bellerophon's first quest was to slay the Chimera (see p. 99), a three-headed monster which was ravaging Iobates' kingdom. To accomplish this, Bellerophon had to tame the winged horse Pegasus (see p. 98). He was helped in this by Athena, who gave him a magical bridle. Once the horse was tamed, Bellerophon used him to attack the Chimera from the air.

Bellerophon also used Pegasus in military campaigns against Carian pirates, the Amazons and a tribe called the Solyrians. Eventually, he won Iobates over, married the King's daughter, and became his heir.

His rogue nature was his downfall, however. One day he decided to challenge the gods by flying on Pegasus to the top of Olympus. Zeus struck Bellerophon with a thunderbolt, leaving him to die a lonely cripple. Pegasus was taken to Olympus, where Zeus put him to work carrying thunderbolts.

## ORPHEUS

Orpheus, the greatest bard in Greek myth, was born in Thrace. He played both the lyre and *kithara*, and sang with such sweetness that wild beasts followed him everywhere. Even storms calmed themselves at the sound of his voice. He was known for odd religious beliefs, having been initiated into the rites of the mysterious gods of the island of Samothrace.

Orpheus took part in the expedition of the Argonauts. On at least one occasion, his singing calmed a storm that threatened the *Argo*. When the expedition sailed past the rock on which the Sirens sang (see p. 101), he defeated the threat by singing more beautifully than the monsters could.

The most famous myth about Orpheus tells how his wife, Eurydice, was killed when she stepped on a venomous snake. Orpheus found he could not live without her, so he descended into the underworld to bring her back. His singing charmed Cerberus, who allowed him to pass. Many of the dead who were being punished for their sins found relief for a short time as they listened to Orpheus' singing.

Hades and Persephone agreed to allow Eurydice to return to life, but on one condition: Orpheus must return to the world without looking back, until his wife reached the light of day. Orpheus agreed and set out, but just as he reached the upper world again, terrible doubt seized him. He had heard no footstep of his wife all along the path. What if the gods had tricked him? He turned, saw his wife just inside the threshold, and lost her forever.

Orpheus founded a new religious movement in Thrace after returning from the Underworld (see p. 89). The women of Thrace killed him, although the reason is unknown. Some say that Aphrodite drove the women to murder him in revenge for his refusal to have any other woman after Eurydice's death. Another possibility is that Orpheus spoke out against the cult of Dionysus, after which the god released his Maenads to tear the singer to bits.



Hera and Athena withdrew, plotting the destruction of Troy. Aphrodite, however, saw to it that Paris appeared at the Trojan court, where he won the immediate love of Priam and Queen Hecuba.

## HELEN

Helen of Sparta was now a grown woman, the most beautiful in Greece. King Tyndareus knew that whoever married her would be envied by every other king in Greece, causing no end of trouble. Eventually, Tyndareus invited suitors from everywhere in Greece, and began the difficult task of choosing someone powerful enough to protect her. The best prospect was Menestheus of Athens, who had been a friend of the Spartans. On the other hand, Prince Menelaus of Mycenae was wealthy, and his brother King Agamemnon was already married to Tyndareus' other daughter. Other suitors had their good points as well.

Tyndareus treated all the suitors with lavish hospitality, but remained unable to decide. Finally Odysseus, the young and crafty ruler of Ithaca, offered to help in exchange for Tyndareus' aid in winning another bride for him. At Odysseus' suggestion, Tyndareus called all the suitors together and made them swear a terrible oath: whoever married Helen would be protected in his rights as a husband by all the others. The suitors agreed and swore the oath. Tyndareus then awarded Helen to Menelaus. More, he abdicated the throne of Sparta in favor of Menelaus, since his own sons the Dioscuri (see sidebar, p. 39) were dead.

A few years later, Paris visited Sparta as the Trojan ambassador, while King Menelaus was away on business. Rewarding Paris for his judgment in her favor, Aphrodite made Helen fall in love with him. Soon Paris had taken Helen back to Troy.

## THE SIEGE OF TROY

The oath the suitors had sworn forced all of them to take action to recover Helen for Menelaus. Agamemnon also saw an opportunity to seize the fabled wealth of Troy. He sent messages to all the heroes who had sworn the oath. A thousand ships gathered at Aulis in the Euboean straits, ready to sail for Troy, with Agamemnon in command.

The fleet was unable to sail at first, as contrary winds pinned it to the beach. The army became restless, and Agamemnon feared for his command over the Greeks. Finally, he learned that he had offended Artemis, and that she would continue to send contrary winds until he sacrificed his oldest daughter, Iphigeneia, to her. Unwillingly, he did so, earning his wife Clytemnaestra's undying hatred but freeing the fleet. The Greeks sailed across the Aegean, landed on the beach below Troy, and besieged the city.

The war lasted for ten long years. Troy was a mighty citadel, reinforced since Heracles sacked the city almost 50 years before. There were also years of food and a source of fresh water inside the city walls, so Troy could not easily be starved into submission. The Greeks could not take the city by storm and had no siege equipment. On the other hand, they outnumbered the Trojans and could not be driven off. Skirmish after skirmish was fought on the broad plain before Troy, but all were inconclusive. Meanwhile, the Greeks led many expeditions up and down the Asian coast, raiding cities and tribes allied with Troy. Achilles, the son of Peleus and Thetis, distinguished himself in these raids, sacking over a dozen of Troy's allied cities.

Zeus was neutral in the war and forbade any of the gods to fight, but they broke this rule many times. Athena and Hera were on the Greek side, hating Paris for their loss of the golden apple. Poseidon, too, helped the Greeks as best he could. On the other hand, Aphrodite was on the Trojan side, for Paris and for her own son, the Trojan hero Aeneas. Apollo and Artemis also favored the

Trojans, since Agamemnon had offended them both. Ares fought on both sides, loving battle no matter whose side he was on.

## THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

The story of the “wrath of Achilles” is the subject of the greatest epic of Greek literature, the *Iliad*. For all its length the poem only deals with the events of a few days in the ninth year of the war. At this time, the Greeks had abandoned their strategy of raids on the Asian coast, concentrating their forces in front of the walls of Troy. Here, they faced not only the Trojans, but a variety of Trojan allies who had come to avenge the loss of their cities.

The greatest quarrel among the Greeks began over a woman. Agamemnon had seized the daughter of Chryse, a Trojan priest of Apollo, but Chryse prayed to the god to send a plague to afflict the Greeks. Agamemnon soon returned the girl to her father to end the plague, and arrogantly recouped his loss by seizing one of Achilles’ captured women. Achilles angrily withdrew from the battle. He and his men remained in their tents by the ships, and would not fight.

With Achilles out of the way and the Greeks weakened by the plague, the Trojans finally had the upper hand. Led by Prince Hector, they won day after day of the fighting. One day, they even broke through the palisade around the Greek camp, shattered the defending line, and nearly reached the ships. At the last moment, Poseidon slipped onto the battlefield and helped the Greeks to hurl the Trojans back. In the fierce battle, Achilles’ friend Patroclus fought almost like a god, but was killed by Apollo and Hector as night fell.

The death of Patroclus ended Achilles’ neutrality. The next day, Achilles and his men led the Greek charge, breaking through the Trojan line. Mad for revenge, Achilles chased Hector across the battlefield, defeating even a river-god who tried to bar his way. Finally, Achilles trapped Hector and killed him. In his rage, Achilles tied Hector’s body behind his chariot and dragged it three times around the city walls. Afterward, however, he became remorseful. When Priam came to claim the body of his son, he took pity on the old king and gave up Hector’s corpse with full honors.



## ODYSSEUS

Age 42; 5' 7"; 145 lbs.; powerful, brown eyes; hair and beard black but going gray.

ST 12, DX 13, IQ 14, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6.25, Move 6.

Dodge 6, Parry 7.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 250

*Advantages:* Ally Group (Ship crew, on a 12 or less); Literacy; Patron (Athena on a 6 or less); Status 5 (minor king).

*Disadvantages:* Destiny (fated not to return home until 20 years after leaving); Enemy (Poseidon on a 6 or less); Jealousy; Reputation -1 (as crafty and untrustworthy); Sense of Duty (to followers).

*Quirks:* Crafty; Dislikes being away from home; Enjoys manipulating even his allies; Plays peacemaker when others argue; Vengeful when insulted.

*Skills:* Bard-13; Bow-13; Carousing-12; Carpentry-16; Climbing-13; Diplomacy-13; Driving (Chariot)-14; Fast-Talk-15; Knife-15; Leadership-15; Navigation-13; Running-10; Savoir-Faire-17; Seaman-ship-15; Shield-15; Shipbuilding-14; Shortsword-14; Spear-14; Spear Throwing-15; Stealth-13; Survival (Mountain)-14; Swimming-14; Tactics-16; Wrestling-15.

*Languages:* Greek-14.

*Weapons:* Stabbing sword, 1d impaling, 2d-1 crushing; spear, 1d+2 impaling.

*Equipment:* Hide shield.

This is Odysseus just after the Greek victory over Troy. Other heroes regard him with mixed feelings – his cunning makes him a valuable friend, but also a ruthless and dangerous enemy. Instrumental in ending the war, he has also gained vicious revenge on other Greeks who insulted him. Right now he wishes only to return home to the island of Ithaca off Greece’s western coast. Unfortunately the gods will not have it so. All the perils of the *Odyssey* lie before him.

## THE CHILDREN OF HERACLES

Heracles’ children, called the Heraclidae, were all in danger after Heracles died, particularly Hyllus, his oldest son by Deianeira. King Eurystheus of Mycenae still feared Heracles, and wanted revenge on his children. Pursued by Eurystheus’ men, they fled to Athens, where they settled under Theseus’ protection.

Over the next few years, the Heraclidae gathered men around them. After Hyllus reached manhood, Eurystheus declared war on Athens and attacked. Hyllus slew him in battle. Three years later, Hyllus led his followers in an attack on the Peloponnese, responding to an oracle that prophesied that they would conquer it. They met the army of Mycenae, led by the new king Atreus. A king allied to Mycenae killed Hyllus in single combat, and Atreus won the battle. The Heraclidae withdrew into the far north, bidding their time. Years later, they returned as the leaders of the Doric tribes (see p. 43).

## THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES

The death of Oedipus did not end the tragic story of his family. His sons Eteocles and Polyneices became co-kings of Thebes after Oedipus was exiled, the agreement being that they would alternate ruling the city for one year at a time. The agreement fell through at the end of only one year, when Eteocles refused to give up the throne and banished Polyneices instead.

After Oedipus died, Polyneices gathered an army in Argos and attempted to seize Thebes. There were seven heroes in command of the army, including Polyneices, King Adrastus of Argos and five other chieftains from the Argolid. The conflict became known as the War of the Seven against Thebes.

The seven great heroes each led a detachment of men and blocked one of the seven gates of Thebes. Anyone who tried to enter or leave was challenged to single combat. The city appeared to be doomed, but the blind prophet Teiresias predicted that if a member of the royal house sacrificed his own life, the city would be saved. Creon's son Menoeceus at once killed himself before the gates as a sacrifice to Ares. The prophecy proved true. The Thebans were defeated in the first skirmish but were able to kill several of the Seven when they tried to scale the walls. The gods also intervened on behalf of the Thebans. During the final battle, Eteocles and Polyneices were both killed, and King Adrastus and the survivors among the Seven fled.

Creon seized the throne for himself, and turned out to be a cruel and tyrannical ruler. To punish the Seven he decreed that the bodies of the invaders would be left unburied to rot. This was a terrible fate, as the Greeks believed that an unburied man would have no peace in the afterlife. Oedipus' daughter Antigone defied Creon and scattered earth on Polyneices' corpse. Creon punished her by burying her alive under the walls of Thebes. Hearing of Creon's cruelty, King Theseus of Athens invaded Theban territory, defeated Creon, and forced him to allow the burial of his enemies.

Even this did not end the trials of the house of Oedipus. Years later, a group called the "Epigoni" gathered in Argos. These sons of the Seven, along with other adventurers, planned to attack Thebes again. This time, they managed to take the city, doing tremendous damage in the process. A descendant of Oedipus named Thersander became king, and eventually led the Theban contingent in the Trojan War.

## THE END OF THE WAR

After his victory, Achilles' arrogance became unbearable to the gods. One day as he charged the Trojan gates, Apollo guided Paris' arrow to strike Achilles in the heel, the only place he could be wounded. The arrow was poisoned, and Achilles died.

Without their greatest hero, the Greeks began to lose ground again. By the spring of the tenth year the war seemed almost over, but Odysseus tried one last stratagem. It was said that Troy would never fall so long as the Palladium, a rough stone image of Athena which was said to have fallen from heaven, remained within the walls. Odysseus crept into the citadel at night, and single-handedly stole the Palladium. This success heartened the Greeks.

Soon, Odysseus tried another trick. He suggested that the Greeks pretend to depart for home, leaving a great wooden image of a horse behind as a sacrifice to Athena. The horse would be hollow, so that a number of men could hide inside it. The horse was built, the Greek camp burned, and the fleet apparently set sail. The Trojans, delighting in their victory, brought the horse within their walls, despite the warnings of several seers.

That night, the Greeks hiding inside the horse emerged, slew the guards at the city gates, and threw the gates open. The returning Greeks from the fleet were able to enter the city without meeting resistance. The Greeks took Troy by surprise and slaughtered the Trojans. The treasures of the city were looted, every male inhabitant put to the sword, and the women taken as slaves. As dawn broke, the city itself was burned to the ground.

The Greeks did not long enjoy their triumph at Troy. On their way home, a storm arose, scattering the fleet. Since the gods were angry with so many of their leaders, many of the Greeks never reached home again, or wandered for years.

## ODYSSEUS

Odysseus was king of the island of Ithaca, off the western coast of Greece. He was renowned for his cleverness. The story of his return after the Trojan War is told in the second great work of Greek literature, the *Odyssey*.

Odysseus was fated not to return to his kingdom until 20 years after he left. At first, his ships seemed safe, but a storm blew up and forced him across the Mediterranean. There his famous adventures began: a stay in the country of the Lotus-Eaters, a battle with a Cyclops that earned Odysseus the wrath of Poseidon, an encounter with the sorceress Circe, a passage past the Sirens and so on.

For years the fleet wandered, encountering one strange country and monster after another. At each encounter, Odysseus lost men and ships. Finally, Odysseus' men committed a terrible sacrilege, killing and eating a herd of cattle that belonged to the god Helios. In retribution, the god slew all of Odysseus' men and shipwrecked him on a lonely island. There he lived for seven years with the sea-nymph Calypso.

Eventually, Odysseus' homesickness grew too great to be borne. With Calypso's reluctant help, he built a raft and sailed toward Ithaca. Upon arriving, he found his household in deep trouble. A horde of men had besieged his wife, Penelope, hoping to win her hand in marriage. She had done her best to delay them, hoping that Odysseus would return, but nothing she or Odysseus' son Telemachus could do would get rid of them. The noble suitors were staying in Odysseus' house, hunting on his lands, spending his wealth and reducing Penelope to near-poverty. Odysseus was badly outnumbered, but he managed to trick the suitors with the help of Telemachus. He trapped them all in his own hall, and killed them with arrows.

Odysseus finally managed to reconcile with Poseidon, and lived with Penelope in peace for many years. Finally, Telegonus, his son by Circe, raided Ithaca by mistake and killed him on the beach without knowing him.

## THE ATREIDAE

Unlike most of the Greeks, Agamemnon had no trouble sailing home; the gods sped him toward his fate. He arrived at Mycenae with the loot of Troy and Priam's daughter Cassandra in his train.

He found that things had changed in his absence. His wife, Clytemnaestra, was living adulterously with his cousin Aegisthus (see sidebar), who had become king of Mycenae in all but name. When Agamemnon entered the palace, Clytemnaestra murdered him. Aegisthus then seized the throne, brushing aside the claim of Agamemnon's son Orestes.

Eight years later, Orestes returned from exile and met his sister Electra at Agamemnon's tomb, where they plotted revenge. Orestes and his friend Pylades entered the city, made their way into the palace by stealth, and murdered Aegisthus. Later, Orestes killed his own mother. In one sense, this was a correct act by custom, revenge for a father's death. Still, the death of Clytemnaestra was kin-murder, and the gods punished it by sending the Furies to drive Orestes mad (see p. 87).

Orestes wandered through Greece for a year, pursued by the Furies. He visited Delphi, where Apollo was sympathetic but could do nothing. Finally, he came to Athens, where Apollo and Athena made the Furies promise to let Orestes go if he were put on trial and acquitted. They agreed, and Orestes was tried before a court of Athenian elders. The arguments of Apollo and Athena for the defense won the day, but the Furies threatened to lay Attica waste in return. Instead, Athena persuaded them to take up residence in Athens, as patron deities of the law-court. They agreed, and Orestes went free.

When Orestes returned to Mycenae, the people forgave him for his crimes and offered him the kingship. He accepted, and ruled as High King of Mycenae for the rest of his days.

## THE END OF THE HEROIC AGE

As the stories of the returns of the heroes show, Greece was restless during and after the Trojan War. Civil disorder and war weakened the Achaean kingdoms. Many of the heroes had died at Troy or in the storms afterward. The gods seemed to become distant, disgusted at the savagery exhibited in the Trojan War. They no longer had love affairs with mortals, and no more heroes were born.

So it was that, a generation after the Trojan War, the descendants of Heracles (see sidebar, p. 41) returned to Greece to find a weakened country. They brought with them a great horde of men from the far north of Greece. As had long been prophesied, they conquered Greece and destroyed all the old citadels. The Heroic Age was over, the Dark Ages begun.

## THE FAMILY OF PELOPS

Pelops immigrated from Asia Minor to Greece early in the Heroic Age, and won the throne of Elis. He had a large family, and many of his sons became kings of the surrounding cities. He became so famous that the Peloponnese was named after him. Pelops was a particular favorite of Poseidon, and many of his descendants were favored by the god. Unfortunately, in generation after generation, some of Pelops' descendants committed terrible crimes and suffered the wrath of the gods. At times, the family seemed to be laboring under a curse.

Atreus and Thyestes were sons of Pelops. Pelops exiled them from Elis, and they took up residence in Mycenae. The two brothers hated one another fiercely. After King Eurystheus was killed in battle, the Mycenaeans decided to ask one of the brothers to take the throne. Atreus received signs of divine favor, but Thyestes stole the evidence and was chosen to be king. At Atreus' request, Zeus performed a miracle, convincing the Mycenaeans to change their minds and proclaim Atreus king. For the attempt at deception, Atreus took a horrible revenge on his brother – he killed Thyestes' sons and served them to him in a meal. Thyestes fled into exile, but Atreus did not enjoy his victory long. Aegisthus, another son of Thyestes, assassinated Atreus and helped Thyestes take back the throne.

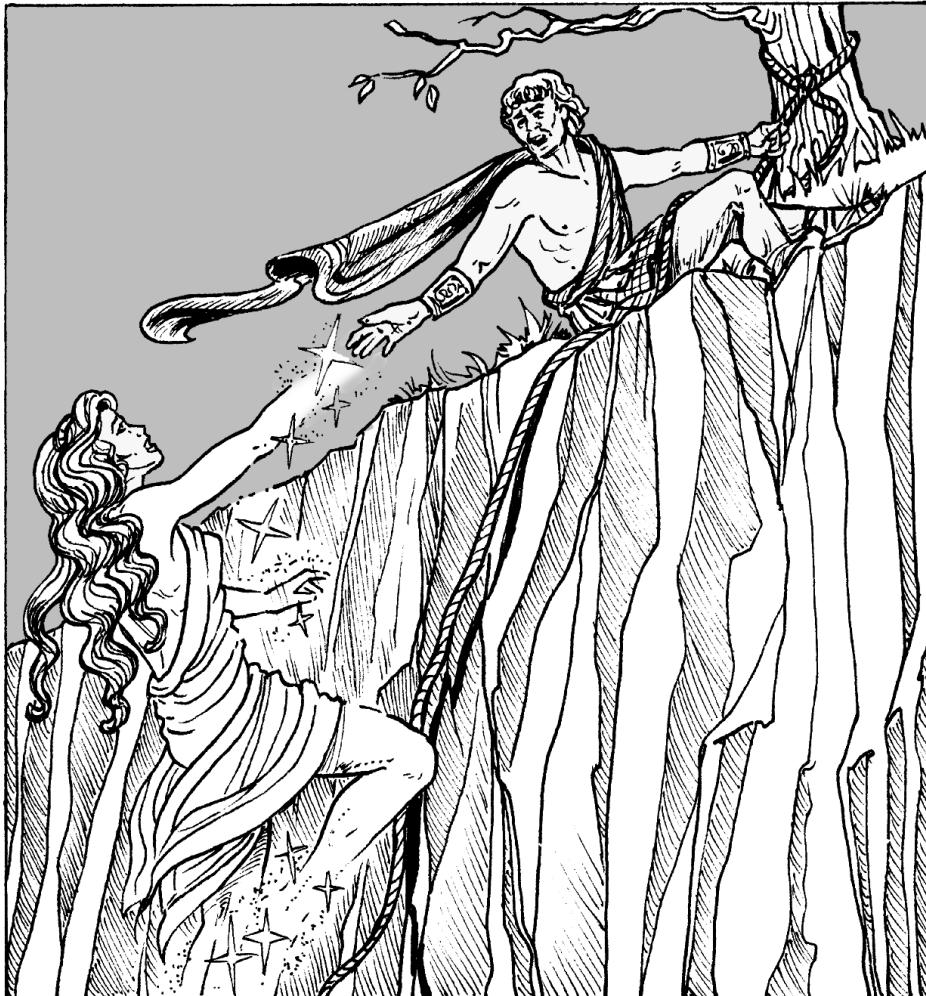
Agamemnon was the eldest son of Atreus. When Aegisthus killed his father, he took refuge in Calydon and gathered allies. Soon, with Spartan support, he was able to return and oust Thyestes. Agamemnon became king of Mycenae, and was later able to place his brother Menelaus on the throne of Sparta. For a time Agamemnon was the most powerful king in Greece. Yet his own arrogance prolonged the agony of the family of Pelops (see p. 41). Only with his son Orestes did the curse finally seem ended (see main text, this page).



# HEROIC AGE TIMELINE

This timeline covers the late Bronze Age, to about 1100 B.C. Events marked with an asterisk are fairly well-established by archeology. Everything else is speculation. All dates are B.C.

- c. 3000 – Beginning of the Bronze Age. Minoans and related people settle on Crete, displacing the earlier Neolithic peoples there.\*
- c. 2500 – Minoans dominate the Aegean.\*
- c. 2200 – First full-scale Minoan towns. Minoans are colonizing the Aegean islands and establishing trade links.\*
- c. 2000 – First palaces are built on Crete. Proto-Greek peoples are migrating south into Greece.\*
- c. 1700 – Earthquakes damage or destroy major Minoan palaces, but they are rebuilt. Knossos becomes the foremost palace-state on Crete. Golden Age of Minoan culture begins.\*
- c. 1650 – First shaft graves at Mycenae.\*
- 1628 – Destruction of Thera. Minoan culture is damaged but recovers. Greek legend refers to a great flood, possibly reflecting the flooding of coastal areas by tsunamis after the eruption.\*
- c. 1600 – Second ring of shaft graves begun at Mycenae. The town is apparently becoming a major center of mainland culture. Mycenaean Greeks begin to settle at Knossos.\*
- c. 1500 – Mycenaean Greeks displace the Minoan dynasty at Knossos. The transition is probably fairly peaceful, since the palace is undamaged.
- c. 1450 – Destruction of the lesser palaces on Crete, presumably by Greek attack. The island is unified under the Greek dynasty at Knossos.\*
- c. 1425 – Foundation of Athens and Thebes. Minos I is king at Knossos.
- 1413 – Birth of the god Dionysus.
- 1403 – Birth of Perseus.
- 1390 – Dionysus begins the introduction of his cult to Greece. Many heroes resist and are defeated or killed by the god or his followers.
- 1384 – Perseus goes on the Medusa Quest.
- 1383 – Perseus returns to Greece and becomes king of Tiryns. He defeats Dionysus when the god comes to Mycenae.
- c. 1380 – Knossos is destroyed by mainland Greeks.\* Perseus leads the expedition.
- 1376 – Perseus establishes the High Kingship at Mycenae.
- 1324 – Pelops, an Asian immigrant, becomes king of Elis. Among his descendants are Theseus and Agamemnon.
- 1313 – Birth of Oedipus, in Thebes. He is fostered in Corinth after being exposed.
- 1309 – Birth of Heracles, in Thebes.
- 1307 – Pelias usurps the throne of Iolcus. Birth of Jason.
- 1296 – Minos II seizes power in Crete.
- 1291 – Oedipus returns to Thebes and becomes king after driving off the Sphinx. Heracles defeats the Minyans and is named Protector of Thebes.
- 1290 – Bellerophon is exiled from Corinth. Jason returns to Iolcus and is confronted by Pelias.
- 1289 – Voyage of the *Argo*. The Golden Fleece is recovered. Prince Androgeus of Crete is assassinated while travelling in Attica.
- 1288 – Jason and Medea depose Pelias and then take up residence in Corinth. Minos II campaigns in Greece, imposing tribute on Athens and other coastal cities.



1287 – Birth of Theseus.

1286 – Orpheus descends into Hades to recover his wife Eurydice, but fails.

1280 – Death of Orpheus.

1278 – Jason betrays Medea and is exiled from Corinth. Medea flees to Athens.

1277 – Heracles begins the Twelve Labors.

1276 – Oedipus discovers his own crimes and exiles himself from Thebes.

1271 – Theseus arrives in Athens. Medea flees Greece.

1270 – Theseus voyages to Crete on the Minotaur Quest.

1269 – Theseus returns to Athens and becomes king.

1268 – Heracles completes the Twelve Labors. He goes into exile in Asia after the murder of Iphitus.

1266 – Death of Minos II. Deucalion becomes king of Crete.

1264 – Heracles campaigns against Troy.

1263 – Heracles campaigns against Elis. He establishes the Olympic Games.

1262 – Theseus befriends Pirithous the Lapith. Calydonian Boar hunt. Heracles campaigns against Pylos and Sparta.

1261 – Death of Oedipus, in Athenian territory. Campaign of the Seven against Thebes. Birth of the Dioscuri.

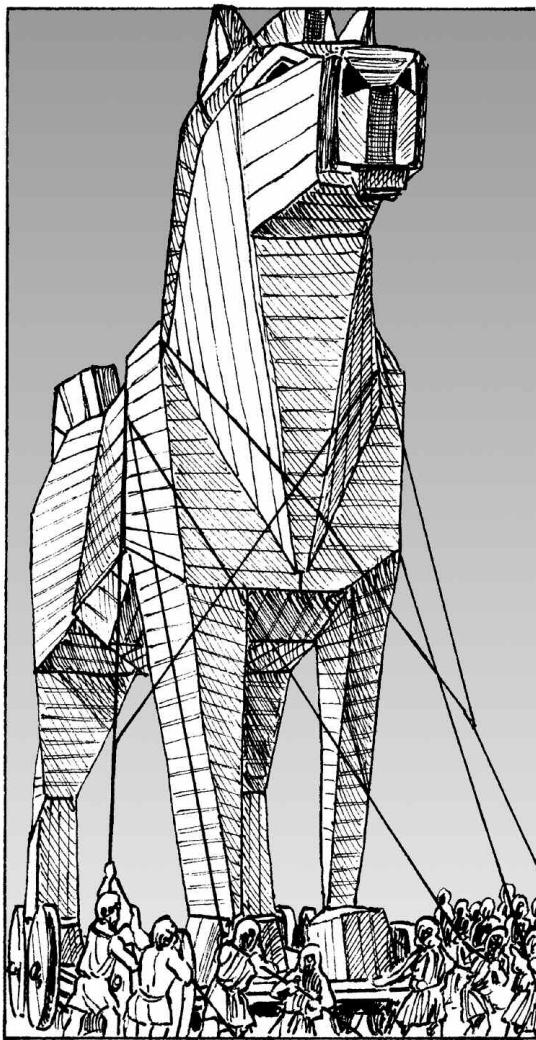
1260 – Heracles settles in Calydon.

1259 – Theseus voyages to the Amazon country. He captures Antiope, who becomes his mistress in Athens.

1258 – Campaign of Theseus against Thebes.

1251 – Death of Jason, near Corinth.

1250 – Amazons invade Greece, attacking Athens. Theseus defeats them but Antiope is killed in the battle.



1235 – Theseus vanishes. The Spartans, led by the Dioscuri, make Agamemnon the High King at Mycenae.

1234 – The Dioscuri invade Attica and rescue Helen. Menestheus becomes king of Athens.

1231 – Theseus returns to Greece. He leaves Athens and is killed while visiting the island of Scyros. Death and apotheosis of the Dioscuri.

1230 – Marriage of Helen and Menelaus. Menelaus becomes king of Sparta.

1221 – The Judgment of Paris. Aphrodite promises him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world.

1219 – Paris abducts Helen. Trojan War begins.

1210 – The Achaeans gather their forces before Troy. The Wrath of Achilles (events of the *Iliad*).

1209 – Sack of Troy. Storms and disasters scatter the heroes. Agamemnon returns home to Mycenae and is assassinated by Aegisthus.

1206 – Odysseus is shipwrecked on Calypso's island.

1201 – Orestes, son of Agamemnon, returns to Mycenae and avenges his father. He is driven into exile by the Furies. Helen and Menelaus return to Sparta.

1200 – Orestes returns to Mycenae after being purified of blood-guilt. He becomes High King.

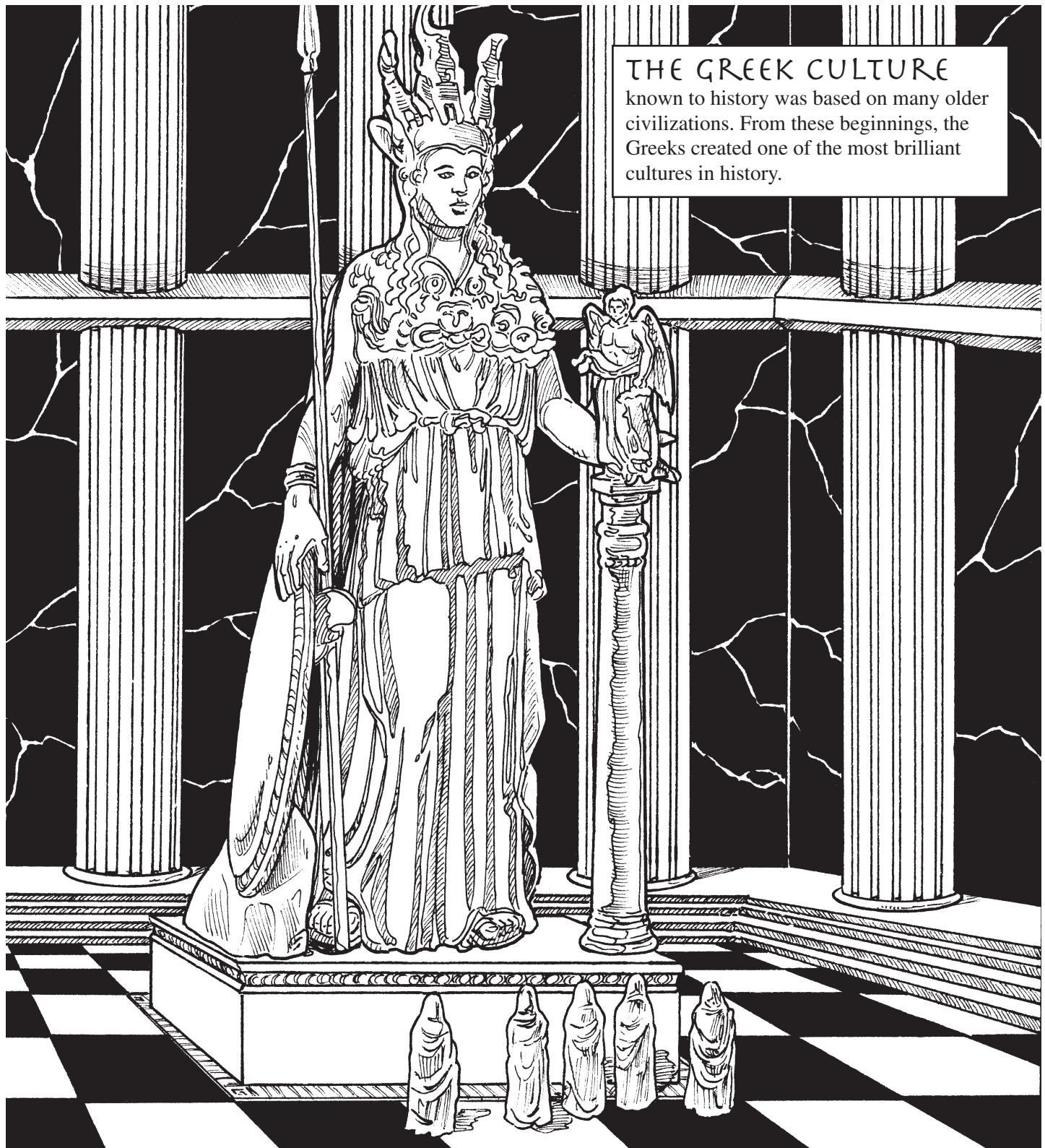
1199 – Odysseus returns to Ithaca.

c. 1190 – Invasion of barbarian peoples from the North begins. The Mycenaean citadels come under attack. Many Greeks begin to migrate overseas.\*

c. 1180 – Attack of the “Sea Peoples” is recorded in Egyptian annals. The invaders are easily driven off.\*

c. 1150 – Final destructions of the Mycenaean citadels. End of the Heroic Age.\* The Dark Ages begin.

# 3 CLASSICAL GREECE



## THE GREEK CULTURE

known to history was based on many older civilizations. From these beginnings, the Greeks created one of the most brilliant cultures in history.

# THE EARLY CLASSICAL PERIOD

The first record Olympic Games took place in 776 B.C. This date was the traditional starting point for Greek history, and it is as good a point as any to mark the end of the Dark Ages. We have little direct evidence of events in the previous four centuries. That doesn't mean that nothing interesting was going on – it was during that period that the Greek culture we know began.

## THE DARK AGES END

During the Dark Ages, the Greeks established the institution of the *polis*. Once the barbarian invasions were over, conditions improved and the population began to grow. Villages banded together for self-defense, and began to observe common religious rites. Neighboring villages moved closer together and began to fortify their settlements. The result was the first city-states.

At first, kings ruled these states, but as time passed local aristocracies moved to limit royal power. For example, the two kings of Sparta became simple war-leaders, while most governing functions were given to other officials. In Athens, the king's power dwindled very quickly and the aristocracy forced the abolition of the kingship. Only out-of-the-way places like Thessaly or Epirus retained absolute monarchy in the old style.

As peace and prosperity began to return, writing reappeared. The Phoenician characters formed the basis for the new script, which was essentially the Greek alphabet as we know it today. Writing allowed the recording of history and myth. Late in the 8th century B.C., Homer and Hesiod created their famous works (see the Bibliography).

## THE EUBOEAN RENAISSANCE

Some of the first Greeks to recover were on the island of Euboea. Archaeologists have excavated a settlement at Lefkandi, about halfway between the Classical cities of Chalcis and Eretria. The barbarian migrations did not badly damage the Lefkandi settlement. Digging there has uncovered a very rich warrior's grave dated to about 975 B.C., indicating that even at this early date the Lefkandi settlement was stable and prosperous.

By 800 B.C., the islanders had founded the cities of Chalcis and Eretria and Lefkandi was in decline. Greeks were beginning to move overseas again. A small colony on the Syrian coast reopened the major trade route between Greece and the East. Another trading post appeared at Pithecusae on the west coast of Italy, opening trade with the Etruscans. Later, the Euboean cities began to plant full-fledged colonies overseas. Many were built in southern Italy. The first colony in Sicily was established sometime around 735 B.C. Incidentally, the traditional date for the foundation of Rome was in the same period.

## THE LELANTINE WAR

At about this time, however, Chalcis and Eretria quarreled. Historians know the prolonged struggle that followed as the Lelantine War. No one knows why the two cities came to blows, but the strongest possibility is a dispute over control of the Lelantine Plain between the two cities. Whatever the cause, the two cities fought intermittently for several decades. Other Greek cities entered the war as both sides looked for allies. In the end, Lefkandi was abandoned and the other Euboean cities had lost their foremost position in Greece.

The Lelantine War did not stop colonization. Greeks were returning from the first colonies with tales of opportunity. There were fortunes to be made in trade, ores to be mined, rich lands to be farmed, foreign princes to serve as mercenaries. Meanwhile, the war was probably making many Greeks in the homeland hope to find greener pastures. As the war began, Corinth founded its two

## HOW COLONIES WERE FOUNDED

When civil war or starvation threatened a city, it would found a colony to relieve population pressure or to weed out troublemakers. The government of the mother city examined volunteers to make sure they were physically healthy and could survive the first years in the new settlement. If not enough people volunteered, the city drafted colonists, with severe legal penalties for abandoning the new colony.

The choice of site was critical. The colonists questioned travelers and merchants as to the qualities of possible sites. Climate, the fertility of the soil, access to water, the nature and mood of native peoples, were all factored in the decision. Often, colonists consulted the oracle at Delphi, since the priests heard travelers' tales from everywhere and their advice was valuable.

Every colonial venture had a leader, the *oikistes* or "colonist." He was usually an aristocrat, possibly one who had failed in politics at home and wanted a fresh start elsewhere. He was responsible for leading the new city, making sure things got done and allocating land fairly. If the colony succeeded, later citizens would worship him as an ancestral hero.

Aside from the usual goods (tools, seed, livestock, weapons), each colony carried a fire from the home city's main altar. Once the colonists arrived in their new home, they would put up a first wall, build crude houses, and allocate the land for farming. They built shrines to the new colony's patron deities, usually those worshipped in the home city. The first years were likely to be rough. No further support would come from home.

Each colony was a completely independent *polis*. While there would always be religious and social ties with the mother city, the two were politically separate from the moment the colonists set out. This relationship could be fairly hostile even in the early days. The home city might pass laws forbidding any of the colonists to return under pain of death, and once the colony was established new settlers were rarely allowed in, since more mouths, especially of those who chose to stay behind, were not welcome in the early years, when starvation threatened.



## SPARTA

In the early Classical period, Sparta was much like any other Greek city-state of the time. Its society had similar structure, its arts and literature showed the same signs of promise. Then something changed, and Sparta embarked on an evolutionary path that would permanently set it apart from the rest of Greece.

Sparta faced familiar social problems as the early Classical period passed. Sparta's population was growing beyond its ability to feed itself, and the lower classes resented the rule of the aristocracy. Sparta also had a handicap; landlocked, it could not easily send out colonies to relieve social pressure.

Sparta's response was unique. The legendary lawgiver Lycurgus supposedly drew up the essential reforms, although no one knows for certain when. Instead of sending its excess population elsewhere, the Spartans chose to live by ruthless conquest of all their neighbors, forcing them to feed and support Sparta. The city transformed itself into a communistic military state.

In Sparta, every citizen was an Equal (*homoios*), with identical rights and privileges. Every citizen was constantly at the service of the State. When a child was born, a government committee inspected it and killed it at once if it were imperfect in any way. Every citizen boy left his mother at the age of seven, to live with other boys his age in a barracks.

Spartan men had only one profession open to them: soldier. They could not take part in any craft or trade, and could not be farmers. They obeyed a moral code that was inhuman in its strictness. At home, at least, they were absolutely truthful, honest and incorruptible.

A Spartan male had to marry before the age of 30, and might not get to choose his bride if he put the matter off too long. Yet he could not leave the barracks and set up his own household until he was 30. Until then, he had to sneak out of the barracks to visit his wife secretly.

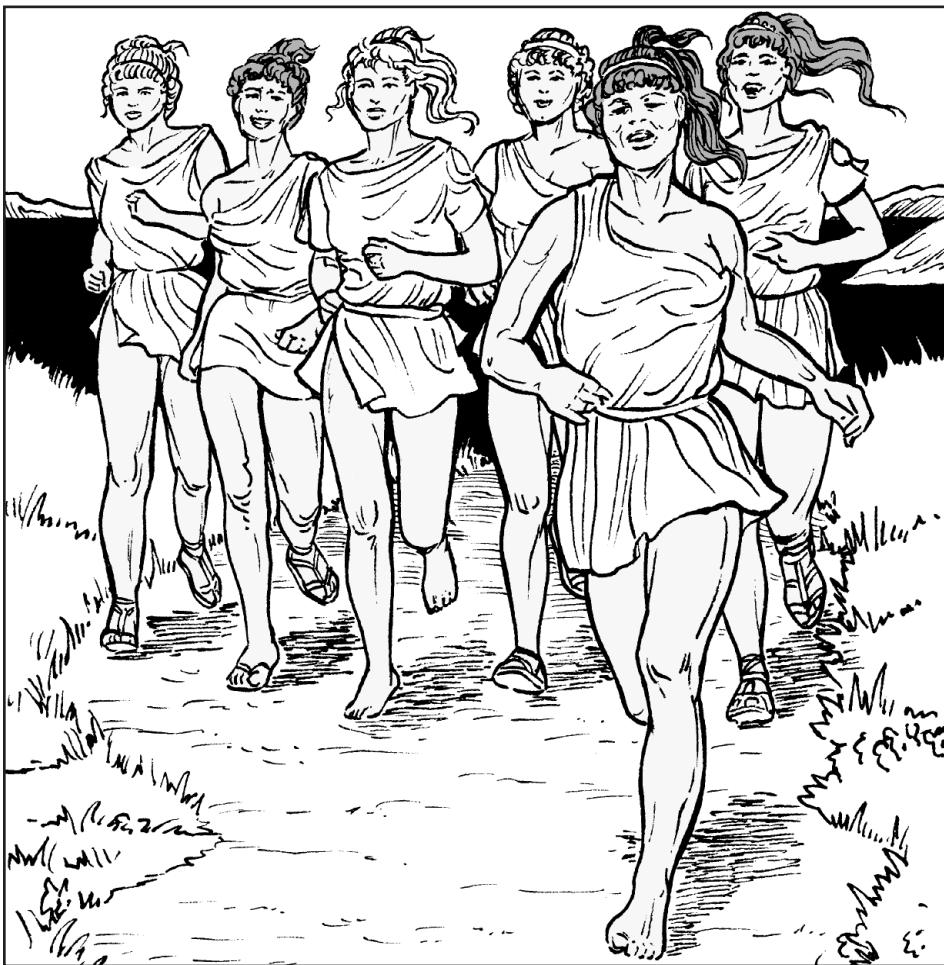
Spartan women received athletic and military training along with the men, on the grounds that physical training made them better mothers. Women could own property, and were exempt from the laws against luxurious living that bound men. Society expected them to produce children, however. If a Spartan had to leave the city for any length of time, his wife was legally widowed and free to remarry until he returned. If a Spartan was unable to produce healthy children, his wife could legally sleep with other men who could.

*Continued on next page . . .*

great colonies of Corcyra and Syracuse. About 720 B.C. there was a great flood of colonization from Euboea – so many cities were founded by Chalcis in one small portion of northern Greece that the district came to be called Chalcidice. More colonies developed around the Hellespont, the narrow straits that led to the Black Sea. Still others sprang up on the southern coast of Asia Minor.

Another force behind the colonial movement was overpopulation in the homeland. By the end of the Dark Ages, conditions were enough improved to allow a rapid growth in population. This caused a problem in soil-poor Greece, especially as growing populations deforested and overcultivated the land. Many farmers, unable to maintain themselves, fell into debt and poverty. Famine also became a real possibility. In more than one case, colonists were driven out of their home cities by force and forbidden to return home upon pain of death.

At this time, the Spartans began their own response to the population problem. They attacked Messenia and conquered part of it, sharing out the land and reducing the Messenians to helot status (see sidebar, p. 49). The unique Spartan social system was already forming. Rather than colonize overseas, the Spartans would concentrate on military excellence, forcing their neighbors to support them.



## THE AGE OF TYRANNY

The colonial movement was not enough to bring peace to Hellas. Even the aristocracies began to lose control as time passed. This was caused not only by overpopulation and widespread poverty, but also military technology. Metal for weapons was becoming more common, and more people were able to afford them. Instead of bands of aristocratic warriors, the growing city-states came to rely on hoplite troops: large numbers of heavily armed and armored soldiers,

who trained and fought in disciplined formations. Hoplite tactics made the defense of the *polis* a matter for the mass of the citizens. It was natural for more citizens to want a share in power, and they now had the weapons to enforce their desires. The usual result was a form of government known as “tyranny” (see sidebar, p. 15).

## THE FIRST TYRANTS

The ancient city of Argos was one of the first to undergo revolution. Pheidon was king of that city, but he became a typical *tyrannos* about 680 B.C. by beginning to support the middle class against the aristocracy. Later Greeks thought of Pheidon as an arrogant and insolent man, but he was apparently a capable ruler. His example probably led many others to become *tyrannoī* in their own cities, whether they had royal ancestry or not.

Corinth was the next major city to fall to a tyrant. Cypselus, a member of the aristocratic Bacchiadae clan which had ruled Corinth for generations, took power with army backing after killing or exiling the rest of the clan. Cypselus was succeeded by the famous tyrant Periander, who promoted trade and made Corinth a wealthy city.

Athens was not immune to the pattern of tyranny. A nobleman named Cylon married the daughter of the tyrant of Megara. With Megaran support he tried to seize power by force, but failed. He and his supporters sought refuge in the temple of Athena until the city promised to spare their lives. The *archon* Megacles, of the Alcmaeonid clan, seized them in the temple and had them executed, a sacrilegious act which put Athens under a curse until the Alcmaeonidae were exiled. This “curse” played a significant part in later Athenian history.

## LAWGIVERS

Not all tyrannies were oppressive. In fact, some of the tyrants were an important part of the evolution toward democracy. Aristocratic regimes were arbitrary; none of the citizens but the aristocrats had any rights. Many of the tyrants took power with the understanding that they would at least give legal rights to more of the citizens. Some went farther, constructing codes of law for their cities which even they had to follow. Once laws that protected the rights of all citizens were in place, democratic reforms were possible. The tyrants were also patrons of the arts. In some ways, the 6th century B.C. (the period of the tyrants) was more brilliant in art and literature than the next (the Periclean period).

The best example of this process was Athens. In 621 B.C. the aristocracy elected a man named Draco as a kind of special legislator. He created Athens’ first code of laws, a code so strict that to this day we refer to overly-severe laws as “Draconian.” Still, the existence of a written code made the law open to change.

In 594 B.C. the city chose Solon as *archon*. Solon produced a new code of laws which set up an open and democratic form of government. The new law prevented the poor from being exploited or sold into slavery for debt. Everyone who owned property (and could therefore afford weapons) now shared in the power of the aristocracy. All citizens became responsible for bringing their disputes before a court of law.

Solon earned deep respect for his wisdom, especially since he refused to set himself up as a tyrant. In fact, once the laws were in place, Solon deliberately exiled himself from Athens so that he could not be pressured into changing them. Still, Solon’s reforms were not perfect. Serious rivalry continued between aristocrats, who resented Solon’s reforms, and the middle class, who approved of reform. This rivalry led to a great deal of political infighting.

## SPARTA (CONTINUED)

This system was supported by constant low-level warfare. Early in Spartan history, the city conquered its own district and the neighboring district of Messenia. Most of the people of these areas became “helots.” Helots had no freedom and no civil or political rights. They were slaves of the Spartan community, each assigned to an individual Spartan citizen, to work his land and give him half of all it produced. The young men of the *krypteia*, the Spartan secret police, constantly spied upon the helots. Every year, the Spartan government declared war on the helots, so that any Spartan could kill any helot at that time, for any reason or no reason, without fear of reprisal, and without the need for purification from blood-guilt.

There were free people in the Spartan state, who were neither Spartans nor helots: the “Neighbors” (*perioeci*). These people lived in their own towns and villages, and although they had no political rights they were free to live and follow whatever trades they chose. Their own obligations to Sparta were to serve in its army as auxiliary troops, and to remain unquestioningly loyal to the state.

Sparta had an unusual government. The state was nominally led by *two* kings, one from each of two royal families. The kings were war leaders and had some religious duties. Real power rested in the hands of the *ephori*, a group of five older men who were elected each year by the citizen assembly. An *ephoros* had considerable power to enforce the laws and state policy. There was a citizen assembly, although it had no real authority to make laws; it could only pass laws that were put in front of it. Most lawmaking power rested in the *gerousia*, a “senate” of 30 older men.

The Spartan system was successful for centuries. Spartans were the best soldiers in Greece, their constant training and iron discipline making them feared everywhere. Spartan military power kept control over most of the Peloponnese until well into the fourth century B.C. Greeks admired the Spartans themselves for their courage, honesty and incorruptibility.

Unfortunately, the system had its weaknesses. The constant threat of helot revolt meant that Spartan soldiers could almost never travel abroad. The emphasis on military training at the expense of all else made the Spartans brutal and crude, with no art, literature, or philosophy of their own. Spartan society was utterly conservative, unable to adapt to changing times. Worse, the very discipline that made Spartans models of morality at home allowed them to be corrupt and decadent once they were away from Sparta. This eventually made the Spartans despised, and led to the downfall of the city.

## THEBES

Thebes was an ancient city, built in Mycenaean times and playing an important part in the heroic legends. In the historical era, Thebes was the largest city of Boeotia, although it never unified the district as Athens did Attica. The city itself was unremarkable, laid out around an *akropolis* called the Cadmea. There were no world-famous shrines or temples here.

Athenians tended to look down on the Thebans. In general, Boeotians had a reputation for being dull and stupid, good for little but farming. Thebes also earned the hatred of many Greeks through its actions during the Persian Wars (see p. 51). It was the only major city of Greece to actually ally with the Persian invaders, although to be far to the Thebans they probably had little choice when the overwhelming Persian force was brought to bear against them. Thebes was a Spartan ally during much of the Classical period, although this was due more to dislike for Athens than any love of Sparta. After the Peloponnesian Wars, Thebes enjoyed a very brief period of predominance in Greek politics (see p. 59).

Belying its reputation, Thebes actually produced a number of notable intellects. Pindar, one of the greatest Greek poets, was Theban (see sidebar, p. 51). Epaminondas, the general who led Thebes against Sparta, was a philosopher as well as a military genius. Theban culture was different from that of Athens, but probably no less rich.

Thebes was known for the number of homosexual relationships among the city's men. These were so prevalent that Epaminondas actually made use of them when he worked to build the Theban army into a force to be reckoned with. He took 150 pairs of homosexual lovers and welded them into a "Sacred Band." Each pair shared its equipment, one man carrying a large shield to protect both while the other wielded a spear. Since no self-respecting Greek would show cowardice in front of his lover, the Sacred Band became renowned for its iron courage. This elite unit played an important part in the astonishing Spartan defeat at Leuctra (see p. 60) and was the keystone of the Theban army until Philip of Macedon destroyed it.



## ATHENIAN TYRANNY

Solon lived long enough to see a tyrant succeed in seizing power in Athens. The nobleman Peisistratus formed a third political faction, composed of inland peasants who wanted even more radical democratic reforms. Peisistratus tricked the assembly into granting him a troop of armed bodyguards, after which it was easy for him to seize power. Although he was twice driven out, he returned both times and was able to hand the tyranny over to his sons Hippias and Hipparchus.

Peisistratus was a patron of the arts, inviting many poets and sculptors to Athens. His reign established drama as a serious art form. He had many of Athens' temples renovated. Under his patronage, poets compiled the first collection of Homer's verses, leading to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as they are familiar to us today. Athens was peaceful and prosperous, and the tyranny did much to smooth over the factional fighting of the previous decades.

Elsewhere in Greece, Sparta spent the period expanding its territory. Sparta's military society was well-established, and the Spartans now began to prove their military superiority over their neighbors. In a series of campaigns, Sparta became the dominant power in the Peloponnese. About 550 B.C. Sparta established the Peloponnesian League, a loose alliance dominated by Sparta which eventually included almost the entire Peloponnese. Sparta used its dominant position to discourage democratic movements in the cities of the League.

## CLASSICAL GREECE

### THE DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

In Athens, the tyranny eventually began to unravel. A jealous lover assassinated Hipparchus in 510 B.C. After his death, his brother Hippias became a heavy-handed dictator. As unrest grew, the Alcmaeonid clan used its influence to involve Sparta in Athenian politics. A Spartan army commanded by King Cleomenes invaded Attica. With Spartan help, the people of Athens first besieged Hippias and his supporters on the Acropolis, then forced them into exile.

After the tyranny was deposed, the Alcmaeonid statesman Cleisthenes enacted sweeping democratic reforms. Cleisthenes redivided the people of Attica into ten tribes (see p. 21). Many city offices had to be filled through election or selection from the new tribes. The new arrangement received religious backing, since each tribe and subtribe had its own ancestral hero and shrine. Each tribe consisted of equal numbers of people from inland, urban and coastal districts. The reforms thus broke up the old factions. People from different parts of Attica found they had to cooperate to maintain their political power. Cleisthenes also set up the institution of "ostracism" at this time (see sidebar, p. 14).

The Spartans soon became worried about the new radical democracy. Part of their army was still in the city, and in 508 B.C. they put their support behind an aristocratic faction that had disapproved of the new reforms. Cleisthenes fled the city, but the Spartans had not reckoned on his popularity. The people rose up and besieged the Spartans on the Acropolis. After King Cleomenes agreed to leave, Cleisthenes returned to a hero's welcome.

The new democracy had to survive several crises before it was secure. Cleomenes returned to Attica with a larger Spartan Army. Chalcis and the Boeotians allied with him and invaded as well. The odds looked steep at first, but the invaders did not cooperate well. The Athenians defended their city with unprecedented ferocity, now that all of them had a stake in its political system. By 506 B.C. Athens had successfully defended itself against all comers.

# THE PERSIAN WARS

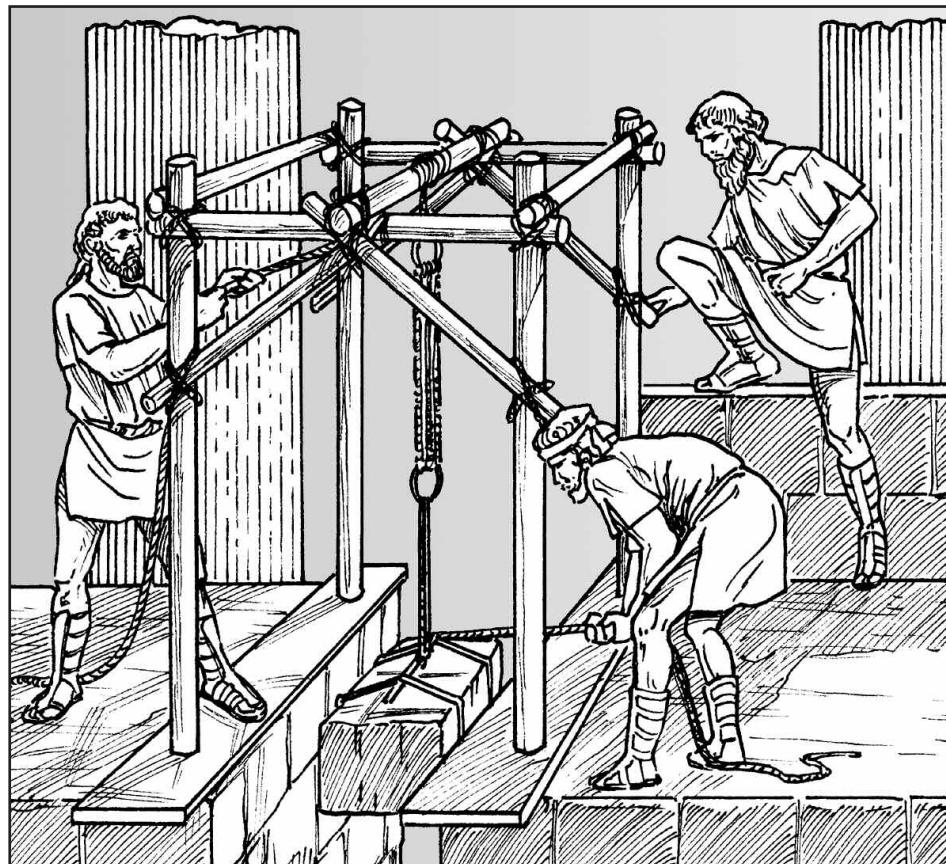
While Greece surged with colonial expansion and social revolution, the outside world was not idle. After the barbarian invasions at the end of the Bronze Age, a succession of empires ruled the Middle East. The last and most successful of these was the Persian Empire (see sidebar, p. 56).

## PERSIA ON THE AEGEAN

In Asia Minor the kingdom of Lydia was the most powerful successor to the Hittite empire. By 560 B.C. King Croesus of Lydia managed to bring almost all the Asian Greeks under his control. Croesus, who was renowned for his wealth, was friendly to the Greeks and made many large gifts to Greek temples.

Croesus was too ambitious for his own good. He decided to attack Persia before the new empire could grow too strong. According to Herodotus, Croesus consulted the oracle at Delphi and asked whether it would be wise to attack Persia. The oracle told him that if he did so, he would "destroy a great empire." Encouraged by this answer, he declared war in 546 B.C. Cyrus had the larger army and defeated Croesus. The Persians then seized the Lydian capital at Sardis, capturing Croesus himself. The arrogant king had indeed destroyed a great empire – his own.

The conquest of Lydia brought Persia in direct contact with Greece. The Greek cities of Asia Minor fell under the control of a Persian *satrap* who set up his capital at Sardis. At first, the relationship was not unfriendly. The Persians respected local customs and allowed a great deal of self-government. Persia had many times the manpower and wealth of the Greek city-states. Even if the Greeks cooperated perfectly (which they never did), they were outmatched. Besides, Greece was small, poor and far from the center of the empire. Persia had no motive for conquering the Greeks, for the moment.



## PINDAR

Age 40; 5' 6", 140 lbs.; average build, brown eyes and hair.

ST 11, DX 11, IQ 13, HT 12.

Basic Speed 5.75, Move 5.

Dodge 5.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 160

*Advantages:* Literacy; Musical Ability +4; Reputation +1 (as a talented poet, recognized on a 10 or less); Status 3 (minor aristocrat); Strong Will +3; Wealth (Comfortable).

*Disadvantages:* Honesty; Overconfidence.

*Quirks:* Enjoys watching athletic contests; Modest about poetic talents; Pious; Political conservative; Strict moral beliefs.

*Skills:* Bard-13; Carousing-12; Dancing-10; Diplomacy-13; Fast-Talk-13; First Aid-13; History-12; Knife-11; Law-11; Literature-13; Musical Instrument (Kithara)-18; Performance-14; Poetry-17; Politics-12; Riding-11; Running-10; Savoir-Faire-17; Shield-12; Shortsword-11; Singing-18; Spear-11; Spear Throwing-12; Swimming-12; Tactics-11; Theology-14; Writing-13.

*Languages:* Greek-15.

Pindar is a Theban aristocrat and an amateur poet. Presently he is unknown outside his own social circle, but in the coming years he will become famous as the most talented lyric poet in Hellas. He writes poetry for many occasions, but he specializes in composing heroic odes for the winners of pan-Hellenic athletic contests. He is a very conservative man, believing in traditional morality and Homeric ideals.



## THE IONIAN REVOLT

In the last years of the 6th century B.C., the Persian king Darius I installed a tyrant named Histaeus in Miletus, one of the Ionian cities. Darius forced Histaeus to remain at the Persian court, where the king could keep an eye on him. In Histaeus' absence, his son-in-law Aristagoras ruled Miletus. When Aristagoras lost favor with his Persian superiors, he and Histaeus engaged in an elaborate plot to incite a revolt among the Ionian Greeks. They probably knew that the revolt would fail, but they hoped it might give them an opportunity to demonstrate their value to Persia.

The Ionian Revolt began in 499 B.C. and was far more successful than anyone expected, including the conspirators. An appeal to the Greek homeland found support in newly-democratic Athens, which sent a small but powerful fleet to assist the rebels. The rebel forces marched forth, capturing and burning Sardis before the Persians could react.

The reaction, when it came, was overwhelming. Aristagoras was defeated near Ephesus, fled, and died in Thrace. Histaeus was sent by Darius to put down the rebellion. He immediately switched sides but was unable to win, and died in 493 B.C. after acting as a pirate for several years. The Persians subdued Miletus and enslaved or deported its population.

Meanwhile, Athens had reconsidered its anti-Persian policy, but it was too late. Darius was furious at the Greeks, and particularly at Athens. He still had no reason to conquer Greece, but he resolved to punish those cities which had aided the revolt. In 492 B.C., the Persians sent an expedition into Europe. The expedition conquered Thrace and Macedon, but failed to attack Greece due to a storm which wrecked the Persian fleet.

## MARATHON

In 490 B.C., the Persians tried again. Darius sent a massive expedition directly across the Aegean. With the Persians was Hippias, the last tyrant of Athens, now an old man who hoped the Persian forces would place him back in power. Island after island fell to the Persians as they advanced toward Athens.

Apparently at the advice of Hippias, the Persian fleet landed at a wide marshy plain on the east coast of Attica, near the town of Marathon. Hippias may have known of friends within the city, who would betray Athens to the Persians.

Athens sent a runner named Phidippides to Sparta to beg for help, but the Spartans refused to come at once due to a religious taboo. So the Athenians, led by the general Miltiades, faced the armed might of Persia with only a few allies from small city-states. The size of the Persian army is unknown, but it is certain that the 10,000 Greeks were badly outnumbered. Regardless, once the armies were drawn up, the Greeks charged to the attack. Despite their numbers, the Persians were forced to retreat to their ships in disorder. Herodotus, in one of his more reliable passages, claims that 6,400 Persians were killed as opposed to only 192 Greeks.

According to legend, after the battle Phidippides ran the 26 miles to Athens to tell the assembly of the victory. He was exhausted, and died immediately after revealing the news (modern "marathon" races commemorate his run). If there had been any traitors in Athens, they decided not to act. When the Persian fleet sailed around the coast to Athens, it was faced by the Athenian army once more. With no signal from within the city, the Persians lost heart and sailed for home. Practically single-handed, the Athenians had saved Greece.

## THE GREAT INVASION

The Marathon campaign ended the immediate threat to Greece. Elsewhere in the Persian Empire, revolt and unrest prevented Darius from sending any more expeditions before his death in 486 B.C.

Athens was galvanized by the victory. With its new democracy and the glory won at Marathon, Athens had suddenly snatched the leadership of Greece from Sparta. During the next few years, the Athenians worked like madmen to strengthen their city. They found new silver mines in Attica, leading to a debate over what to do with the new wealth. At the urging of the statesman Themistocles, the city used the money to finance an ambitious ship-building program. The Athenian fleet quickly became one of the largest and best in Greece, gaining valuable experience in a war with the island-state of Aegina.

It was none too soon. In 480 B.C., the new Persian king, Xerxes, turned his attention to Greece. This time, the Persians intended to conquer the whole of the country. A huge army and supporting fleet crossed into Europe. Herodotus claims that the Persian forces numbered nearly a million, drinking whole rivers dry wherever they camped. Herodotus was prone to exaggerate, but it is certain that the Persian forces were huge for the time.

The Greek cities held the first pan-Hellenic conference in history, to decide how best to meet the Persian menace. Many northern states argued against resistance, fearing that the southern Greeks would not try to defend them. Sparta, conservative as always, tried to persuade the others to build a wall across the Isthmus of Corinth and defend the Peloponnese. Eventually, Athens convinced Sparta and its other partners to defend Greece actively. To avoid further debate, the Athenians agreed to allow Sparta command of the entire defense of Greece, even at sea where the Athenians were supreme. Meanwhile, Athens recalled all of its exiles and ostracized citizens, to stand with their city in its crisis.

## THERMOPYLAE

The Spartan king Leonidas commanded a Greek army that moved to hold a critical pass at Thermopylae, in Thessaly. The “Hot Gates” were famous as the place where Heracles died, in a narrow pass between mountains and the sea. There, Leonidas hoped to delay the Persians indefinitely. The Spartan elders kept most of the Spartan army at home, again (it was claimed) for religious reasons. Of the 7,000 Greeks at Thermopylae, only 300 were Spartans. All were fathers of grown sons, as Leonidas refused to leave any child fatherless.

The Spartans and their allies held the pass for several days against everything the Persians could throw at them. Eventually, however, the Persians found a track through the mountains. The track led down into the Spartan rear, and using it the Persians were able to cut Leonidas off from retreat. Leonidas held the western end of the pass long enough for the bulk of the army to get away. Leonidas himself, and two of Xerxes’ brothers, fell in the fierce fighting. Finally, the Spartans died almost to the last man, in one of the most famous “last stands” in history.



## CORINTH

Corinth was a Doric city like Sparta, although it had a significant place in the heroic myths and may have existed in Mycenaean times. Its location made it one of the wealthiest cities in Hellas. It sat on the Isthmus of Corinth, and controlled the land trade into the Peloponnese. It also kept harbors on both sides of the Isthmus, and had a famous slipway over which ships could be dragged between the Aegean Sea and the Gulf of Corinth. Many a merchant captain paid tolls to the Corinthians rather than risk the passage around the capes of the Peloponnese.

The city itself was renowned for its beauty. In some ways it resembled Athens, positioned well back from the sea with “Long Walls” surrounding the city, the harbor road, and the harbor itself. The city’s *akropolis* was situated atop a great peak, 2,000 feet high. There stood the most famous shrine of the city, a temple of Aphrodite.

For much of the early Classical period, Corinth was the most important city in Greece. It founded many colonies, and dominated trade in Greek waters. Its famous tyrants, Cypselus and Periander (see p. 49), carefully built Corinth’s power and wealth. About 550 B.C. the Spartans deposed the last tyrant and put an aristocratic oligarchy in power, a government that remained in place for centuries. The Corinthians were usually Spartan allies, although the Spartans never trusted them. The city’s greatest enemy was its rival in trade, Athens.

Corinth was never famous for its art or literature – it was a city that pursued money more than culture. Aside from being a trade center, the city put on a pan-Hellenic festival, the Isthmian Games, each year. The city was also famous for its prostitutes. It was common practice in Corinth for female slaves to be given to the Temple of Aphrodite as offerings to the goddess. These women became a tourist attraction of sorts. Travelers and merchants visited them, and were likely to spend their money freely elsewhere in the city. In this way, both temple and city increased their wealth. The courtesans of Corinth were so famous that prostitutes everywhere were sometimes called “Corinthian girls.”

## SYRACUSE

Syracuse was the most important Greek colony, and by far the most influential Greek city in the west. Corinthian colonists built it on a promontory on Sicily's eastern coast, about 733 B.C. It prospered due to the richness of the Sicilian soil and its location near the trade routes to Italy and the western Mediterranean. Most of the city was on the Sicilian mainland. A small island called Ortygia in the Syracusan harbor was also settled.

At its height, Syracuse was the largest Greek city, with almost half a million inhabitants. The populace was mixed, with Greeks, Phoenicians, native Sicels and Italians all intermarrying. This gave Syracusan society a simmering energy that sometimes erupted into violence.

Syracusan politics were always volatile. There was a brief period of democracy in the early 5th century B.C., but it was overthrown and a long series of *tyrannoi* ruled the city. These tyrants made Syracuse rich and held back the Carthaginians, who often tried to conquer all of Sicily. They were not gentle rulers – they controlled Syracuse with naked force and terror when they had to. The later tyrants fortified Ortygia heavily, making it an impregnable strong point that could be held by well-paid mercenaries.

The tyrants, even the more bloodthirsty ones, were often patrons of the arts and philosophy. Artists, poets and actors were imported from the homeland to entertain the tyrants and their friends. One of the more bizarre stories involved the philosopher Plato. One tyrant invited Plato to Syracuse to advise him, and when his son became the city's ruler the invitation was renewed. Plato hoped to teach the tyrants how to be enlightened philosopher-kings, and in the attempt he put up with all manner of insults and mistreatment from them. Finally, in the midst of a civil war in Syracuse, he gave up and returned to Athens.

Syracuse played little part in the history of the Greek homeland. Only when Athens dragged it into the Peloponnesian War (see p. 57) did Syracuse interfere.



## SALAMIS AND PLATAEA

With no more obstacles between him and Athens, Xerxes moved down the Greek coast, pursuing the Greek army and navy. He reached Athens, and destroyed the city utterly, burning even the temples on the Acropolis. Finally, he cornered the Greek navy in the Bay of Salamis, a few miles from Athens. He fully expected to trap the Greek fleet, but with cunning strategy and superb seamanship, the Greeks won a decisive victory.

Fearing that the Greeks would now be able to cut off his retreat to Persia, Xerxes took a portion of his army and withdrew to Sardis. Most of his army remained behind in Thessaly to regroup. In the following year (479 B.C.) the Persians again advanced into Greece. This time the Greeks had no choice but to meet the enemy on open land. Once again, the Spartans attempted to hang back, but at a critical moment Athens was approached by a Persian emissary, offering very favorable terms. Fearing the consequences if Athens should make a separate peace with Persia, Sparta moved to assist the rest of the Greeks. A Spartan prince named Pausanias took supreme command, meeting the Persians outside the city of Plataea. After a fierce battle, the Greeks had the victory.

At the same time, the western Greeks faced a crisis of their own. Possibly at the order of their Phoenician home cities, the Carthaginians invaded Sicily and tried to conquer Syracuse. The Syracusians defended themselves and finally defeated Carthage at the battle of Himera. Later legend claimed that the battles of Himera and Salamis were fought on the same day.

In 478 B.C., Pausanias led the Greeks across the Aegean. An expedition liberated Cyprus, and two Persian-held cities in Asia Minor were besieged. Finally, the Greeks had taken the offensive. Never again would Persia invade Europe.

## THE AGE OF PERICLES

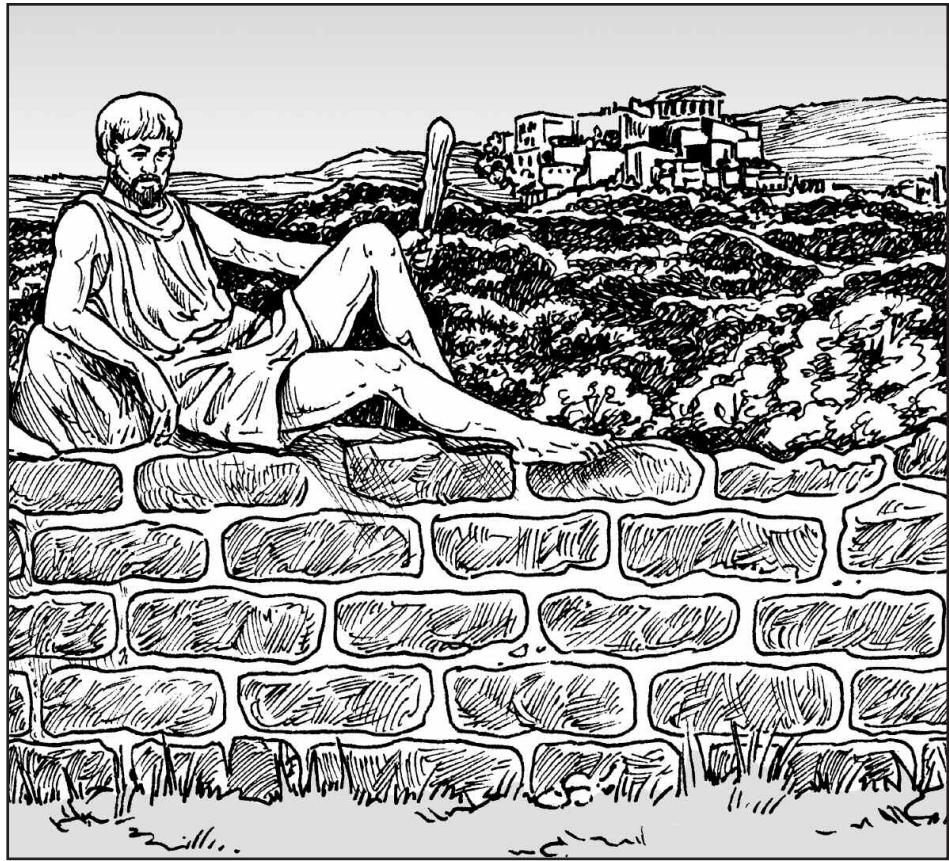
After the Persian Wars, Sparta had a chance to re-establish its dominant position within Greece. Spartan generals were in supreme command throughout the second war, and Spartan soldiers wiped out the shame of not having helped in the first. However, Pausanias acted tyrannically while in command of Greek forces, and many suspected him of secretly negotiating with the Persians. The *ephoroi* at Sparta recalled him disgrace and condemned him to death. Sparta sent out other generals, but the damage was done. The newly-freed Ionian cities, recalling their old relationship with Athens, turned to that city for leadership.

## THE DELIAN LEAGUE

After the Persian Wars, Themistocles and the Athenians schemed to strengthen their city. Even before the city itself was restored, the Athenians quickly built new walls to protect themselves. Knowing that the Spartans would object, Themistocles stalled them while the frantic building took place. The sudden walls increased Spartan mistrust of Athens.

Athens also established the Delian League as an alliance against Persia. Euboea, the cities along the Thracian coast, most of the Aegean islands, and almost all of the Asian cities either joined the League, or were conquered from Persia by the League. Sparta and its allies refused to join, regarding this as another reason to mistrust the growing Athenian power.

In 470 B.C. Themistocles faced an accusation of treason and fled into exile rather than face trial. After Themistocles, Cimon was the principal statesman in Athens and the leader of the Greeks against Persia. Over the next few years, Cimon won several victories against Persian forces in Asia. Cimon also led expeditions against Greek cities which were not members of the Delian League, on the grounds that anyone not supporting the League must be collaborating with Persia.



In 464 B.C., the Spartans faced a serious helot revolt in Messenia. Cimon was pro-Spartan, and saw the chance to smooth over tensions between Sparta and Athens. He led an Athenian army to Messenia, offering to help the Spartans in besieging the rebels. The Spartans chose to send the Athenians home, offering a flimsy excuse which fooled no one; the real reason was Spartan mistrust of Athens. This was the final break between Sparta and Athens, and the also the end of Cimon's political career. In 461 B.C. he was ostracized and the alliance with Sparta formally ended. Instead, Athens entered into an alliance with Argos, Sparta's worst enemy in the Peloponnese.

### PERICLES

While Cimon was away at war, a new faction appeared in Athenian politics, led by the democratic politician Ephialtes. This faction pushed through democratic reforms, and reached the height of its power with the ostracism of Cimon. However, in one of the very few political assassinations in Athenian history, Ephialtes was murdered soon after Cimon went into exile. This left the position of greatest influence in the hands of a relatively young politician: the Alcmaeonid Pericles.

Pericles was elected many times to the post of *strategos* for his tribe; he effectively ruled Athens for over 30 years. He led almost entirely through persuasion and cunning political maneuver, losing popularity only in the last few years of his life. Unlike many major Athenian statesmen, he was never successfully ostracized.

Athens now embarked upon full-scale opposition to Sparta. Beginning in 460 B.C., the famous "Long Walls" were built around Athens, its major port at Piraeus, and the road between the two cities. Since Greek siege machinery was very crude, no enemy could now assault the city by land. Any attempt to starve Athens would also fail, since the Athenian navy could protect the supply lines that brought money and grain from the Delian League cities.

### THE PHOENICIANS

Just as the Persians were the Greeks' greatest rivals on land, their greatest rivals at sea were the Phoenicians.

The Phoenician homeland was on the Mediterranean coast in what is now Lebanon. Phoenicia was in a narrow strip of fertile land about ten miles wide backed by the Lebanon hills. There were several city-states, loosely allied by common culture: Arados, Byblos, Beirut, Sidon and the great city of Tyre. The Phoenicians were mostly Semitic, related to the Hebrews and Syrians, although some of them may have had European ancestors from the time of the barbarian migrations.

The Phoenicians never tried to conquer the mountain country behind their strip of territory. Instead, they relied on it as a protective barrier, and turned to the sea. They did not stick close to shore, as most other people did. They struck out across open water, sailing the length of the Mediterranean and beyond. They exported oil, cloth dyed a special "Tyrian" purple, metal tools and weapons and glassware. Phoenicians were notorious for sharp trading. They drove a hard bargain and would cheat whenever they could. Backward peoples were simply robbed or enslaved.

The Phoenicians colonized widely, especially in western Sicily and North Africa. Carthage was their greatest colony, built as early as 814 B.C. in what is now Tunisia. Others settled in Spain, ruthlessly exploiting the natives and their silver mines. Expeditions traveled as far as the British Isles, to trade and mine tin in Cornwall. At least one Phoenician expedition may have circumnavigated Africa, sailing down the east coast and arriving back in Egypt three years later!

The Phoenician religion was somewhat darker than the Greek. Some cults were said to involve temple prostitution or human sacrifice; the most notorious of these involved a war-deity called Molech who required the sacrifice of children.

Their culture created little that was new, but the Phoenicians were masters at assimilating techniques from others, and spreading those ideas wherever they traveled. Their most famous contribution to later civilization is the alphabet, which the Greeks adapted to their own use.

GMs running a historical Greek campaign should certainly include Phoenicians, as the "barbarians" the PCs are most likely to come into contact with. The GM should portray their ways as strange and a little distasteful to the Greek way of thinking, but as sailors and traders they may prove useful.

## THE PERSIANS

The Persians first appear in history as a mountain people, living in the highlands of what is today Iran, and subject to their cousins the Medes. Their greatest king, Cyrus II, rebelled against the Median kingdom, founded his own realm about 550 B.C., and soon afterward conquered Lydia (see p. 51).

Persia's conquests were not finished. Cyrus conquered Babylon and Judea, and expended his empire deep into Asia before dying in battle in 529 B.C. His grandson Darius I conquered Egypt and parts of India. Darius also crossed into Europe and attempted to conquer the Scythians, without much success. Still, Cyrus' conquests, and those of his heirs, created the greatest empire the world had ever seen. Stretching from Egypt and Asia Minor to India, the empire included a tremendous variety of peoples, all living peacefully under a benevolent Persian rule.

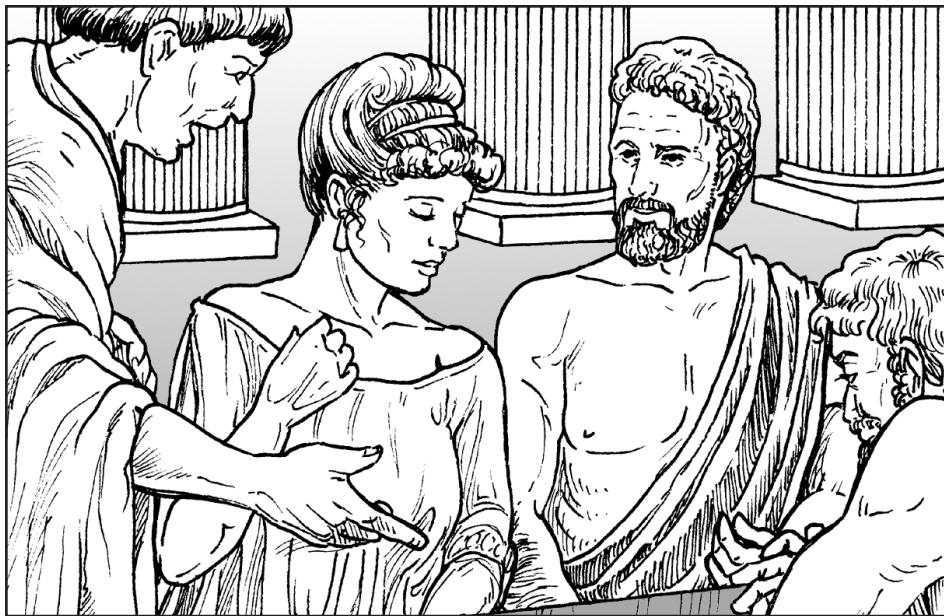
The Persians called their emperor the King of Kings, the Great King. He was the pharaoh of Egypt, the priest-king of Babylon, the foremost tyrant of the Ionian Greeks. He spent most of his time at the four imperial capitals: Babylon, Susa, Echbatana or Persepolis. His power was absolute in theory although not in practice. The interests of powerful noblemen, an elaborate court ritual and the imperial bureaucracy all restricted his actions. The Great King's harem ran the bureaucracy; eunuchs managed it, and the king's wives and concubines often dominated it.

The Great King appointed provincial governors, called "satraps," to reward good service or to placate factions among the nobility. A satrap maintained order in his province and a continuous flow of tribute to the Great King. Generally, the Persians tolerated local customs and religions, and as a matter of policy the Great King often participated in local religious rites.

Persian politics were full of intrigue and backstabbing. Cyrus the Great's son Cambyses was a psychopath who murdered his own brother. His reign was ended by an attempt at a palace coup, during which he either was murdered or committed suicide. Darius I was a strong king, but he only reached the throne through a palace coup of his own. Later kings tended to be weak, and rarely died natural deaths. Through it all, noble factions contended for influence, and the Great King's wives and eunuchs squabbled over real control of the empire.

Despite all this, civil wars were relatively rare and not too destructive. The satrapy system worked well, generally allowing peace and preventing many revolts against Persian power. It took a Greek-Macedonian force under the command of someone as talented as Alexander to bring Persia down at last.

*Continued on next page . . .*



### RIVALRY WITH SPARTA

Events outside Athens made this a wise move. Athens had quarreled with Corinth and the island of Aegina, both Spartan allies. Sparta eventually declared war. Athens had considerable difficulty in this First Peloponnesian War, since it was fighting both Persia and Sparta. Athens won a campaign in Boeotia and conquered the island-state of Aegina, but these victories were costly and indecisive. Then, in 454 B.C., Athens lost a large portion of its fleet while assisting an Egyptian revolt against Persia.

When Cimon returned from exile in 451 B.C., he reconciled with Pericles and managed to negotiate a five-year truce with Sparta. He then went on a campaign against Persia before dying in 449 B.C. Soon afterward, a peace treaty was finally signed with Persia. The Asiatic Greeks technically remained within the empire, but they were allowed to rule themselves without Persian interference.

Now Athens could turn its attention to Sparta. Unfortunately, it faced difficulties within the Delian League itself. Now that the threat from Persia was over, many allies saw no more need for the League. On the other hand, the Athenians found that they needed the League for their own security. The League became an Athenian Empire, largely due to Pericles' policies. Cities were not permitted to leave, and more than one ally was kept in the League by force. Payments to the League treasury became outright tribute. Athens moved the treasury from the island of Delos to Athens itself, making it available for whatever purpose the Athenians chose.

This change was not popular. Within Athens, an anti-Periclean faction appeared, arguing that the League treasury should not be turned to Athens' own use. There was even the threat of widespread revolt within the League. Sparta took advantage of these problems and invaded Attica. In 445 B.C., Athens agreed to Spartan terms and signed the "Thirty Years' Peace."

### ATHENS' GOLDEN AGE

With peace finally achieved, even on unfavorable terms, Pericles could turn to other matters. Athens had never completely rebuilt its temples and public buildings after the Persian invasions. Pericles used the League treasury to finance an ambitious building program. Most of the famous temples on the Acropolis were begun at this time. Athens also became a wealthy trading city, one of the great seafaring powers of the Mediterranean world.

During this period, Athens reached its cultural height. An influential circle grew up around Pericles and Aspasia, his mistress from Miletus. Artists, historians, poets, playwrights and theologians migrated to Athens, where they found the financial support and appreciative audiences they needed to make their names. This was also the period when Athens became the center of philosophy, as Sophists flocked to the city and Socrates began his career (see Chapter 5).

During this time Athens had little trouble maintaining control over the Delian League. There was one serious revolt on the island of Samos, but Pericles quickly led a naval expedition and crushed the rebellion.

## THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

During the period of peace, Athens offended several cities of the Peloponnesian League. It sided with the Corinthian colony of Corcyra in a dispute with Corinth itself, and it placed a strict economic embargo against the city of Megara. In 432 B.C. Athens sent a military force against the city of Potidaea, in Chalcidice. Potidaea was a member of the Delian League, but was also a loyal colony of Corinth. When it rebelled against Athens, the Corinthians saw a chance to take their grievances to Sparta.

Athens had acted within its rights all along, according to the customs which governed Greek diplomacy. The Spartans did not feel that Athens had broken the Thirty Years' Peace, and were reluctant to start a war. However, Corinth managed to play on Spartan distrust and envy of Athenian power. After heated debated, the Peloponnesian League declared war on Athens. The Second, or "Great," Peloponnesian War was on.

### FIRST MOVES

Pericles' strategy was simple. The Athenians could never face the Spartan army on land, but they didn't have to. The Spartans could certainly invade Attica, but if all the people of Attica moved inside the Long Walls of Athens, the Spartans could do nothing but destroy Athenian property. Meanwhile, the Athenian navy could easily keep the sea lanes open and raid the Peloponnesian coast. Grain and money would continue to come in from the cities of the Delian League. Eventually, the Spartans would tire of the war and negotiate.

At first, the plan seemed a good one. When the Spartan army invaded Attica for the first time (in 431 B.C.), the people all moved within in the Long Walls as planned. The Spartans destroyed everything the Athenians were forced to leave outside the walls. This made Pericles unpopular, but he managed to control the people and prevent them from doing anything rash. Meanwhile, the Athenian fleet repeatedly moved to devastate the enemy's coastal areas.

Then things started to go wrong. During another Spartan attack in 429 B.C., while the people of Attica were again crowded into the city, a virulent plague broke out. Within four years, a third of the population of Attica had died, including Pericles himself.

Then the first cracks began to show in the Delian League. The island of Lesbos rebelled against Athens but was defeated. The people of Athens were desperate, and felt they needed to make an example of the rebels. In assembly, they voted that the entire population of the rebel city should be slaughtered. Fortunately, the people voted to rescind the order the next day, and the ship carrying the original orders was slow in arriving at Lesbos. The massacre never occurred, but the incident was an example of the kind of viciousness the warring cities were coming to. At about the same time, the Athenian ally Plataea was captured by the Spartans, and every inhabitant killed.

In 425 B.C., the Athenian general Cleon managed to trap and capture some Spartan soldiers on the island of Sphacteria, near Pylos. This unprecedented

## THE PERSIANS (CONTINUED)

The Persian character was blunt and honest. Herodotus claims that every Persian nobleman learned to do three things: ride a horse, shoot a bow, and speak the truth. They had a strong sense of natural superiority to all other nations. Persians particularly despised Greeks, whom they regarded as crude, arrogant and dishonest.

The core of the Persian army was the Royal Guard, a unit of 10,000 infantry called the "Immortals." The Immortals were typical of Persian infantry in their equipment: padded armor, a thrusting spear and a Persian short bow. Troop quality varied, although most Persian units were well-trained. Immortals troops were more highly trained, and thus of higher quality.

Persian cavalry was much better and more numerous than the Greek, since much of the empire was good horse-breeding country. Persian cavalry would wear padded armor, carrying either javelins or a bow and arrows. Such cavalry was mostly well-trained, with troop quality similar to the infantry.

Persian troops were only a small portion of the Persian army, however. Literally any kind of soldier could be found in Persian army, however: heavier cavalry from Phrygia or Lydia, light camel cavalry from Arabia, hoplites from the Ionian cities, light infantry and slingers from Egypt or Nubia, archers from India and so on. In the later years of the empire the Persians often hired large numbers of Greek mercenaries. Alexander fought many of these, and his most dangerous opponent was the Greek mercenary general Memnon. The Persians, an inland people, were never seafarers. Their navy was almost entirely Ionian Greek and Phoenician.

A *Greece* campaign set in the Classical period must take the Persian Empire into account. Many Greeks traveled through Persia, offering their services to the Great King or asking for Persian intervention in Greek disputes. Many a Greek adventurer made a place for himself at the Persian court, or with one of the satraps. If the GM wishes, he can set the entire campaign in Persia, with some or all of the PCs being Persian in origin. The Bibliography (p. 125) includes several good references for Persian background, although most of them are Greek in origin (and therefore biased).



## ALCIBIADES

Alcibiades was possibly the greatest Greek adventurer in history. Few Greeks could match him for brilliance, treachery, or luck both good and bad.

Alcibiades was born about 450 B.C. in Athens. His father died in battle when he was quite young. Alcibiades was the nephew of Pericles, who took the boy into his own household and raised him. Alcibiades was known for brilliant intellect, astonishing physical attractiveness and great charisma. He was also utterly amoral.

Even in his youth, Alcibiades had many lovers of both sexes. He was a heavy drinker and often caroused at *symposia*. He was arrogant, but also very charming. People often suspected him of atheism. He was generous, often giving money or political help to his friends or to strangers. He was close to Socrates, enjoying the intellectual stimulation the philosopher gave him.

*Continued on next page . . .*

event encouraged the anti-war faction in Sparta, but it took four more years and a costly Athenian defeat at Amphipolis before negotiations could begin. In 421 B.C., the statesman Nicias negotiated a peace with Sparta, ending the first phase of the war.

## THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION

Had Pericles still lived, there is little doubt that this would have ended the matter. But Pericles was years dead, and the Athenian people made several fatal mistakes. Diplomatic maneuvers among the Peloponnesian cities led to a war between Sparta and Argos, and by 418 B.C. Athens intervened on the side of Argos. As if this were not enough, in 416 B.C. the Athenians voted to send a massive military expedition to Sicily. The goal was the conquest of Syracuse, by now one of the wealthiest Greek cities. Syracuse had taken no part in the war to this point, but it was another Corinthian colony, and Athens feared that it would enter on the Peloponnesian side.

The Sicilian expedition proved the destruction of Athens. The Athenians did well at first, but soon got bogged down in years of ineffective campaigning in Sicily. A second expedition was sent to reinforce the first, and then a third. Finally, in 413 B.C. the siege of Syracuse failed and the Athenian forces (under the incompetent command of Nicias) were slaughtered almost to a man.

## THE FALL OF ATHENS

By now, Athens was in desperate trouble. One of her best generals, the flamboyant Alcibiades, had been driven into exile and was now working for the Spartans (see sidebar, p. 58). Allies and Delian League members were seceding on all sides. Worse, the Peloponnesians were beginning to challenge Athens at sea. Sparta had come to an agreement with Persia, selling out the Asiatic Greeks in exchange for the money to hire a mercenary fleet.

By 411 B.C., there was an anti-democratic coup in Athens itself. A council of 400 men set itself up to rule Athens through terror and murder. It was a golden opportunity for Sparta, but the Spartans failed to act. Within a few months, the Athenian fleet rebelled against the Four Hundred and restored the democracy.

In 405 B.C., Athens suffered a crippling defeat at sea at the battle of Aegospotami. This final defeat sealed Athens' fate. The empire was gone, the grain route from the Black Sea cut, tens of thousands of men were dead. Athens itself was besieged and starved into submission. Corinth called from the complete destruction of Athens, but at the last minute Sparta exercised restraint. Instead, the Athenians agreed to pull down the Long Walls, turn over the remaining ships of the fleet to the Peloponnesians, and give up all of their foreign possessions. The victors forced Athens to join the Spartan alliance system, and put an oligarchic government (the Thirty Tyrants) in place. The war was over, and Sparta was supreme.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY

Following the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans soon became intolerable to the rest of Greece. Sparta had a habit of forcing aristocratic governments on minor Greek cities. Each oligarchy had the support of a Spartan governor called a *harmost*, who could call on a garrison of Spartan soldiers. Sparta had claimed to be fighting Athens "to liberate Greece." Now it was clear that Sparta would be a far worse master than Athens had been.

By 400 B.C., all Hellas was buzzing about the news of the march of the Ten Thousand (see sidebar, p. 62). The time seemed right for a new war against Persia. Sparta organized an expedition and began to free the Ionian cities from Persian control. However, while Sparta's soldiers were abroad the other Greek cities took the chance to attack Sparta at home. Athens, with a newly democratic government, allied with Thebes, Corinth and Argos. With Persian support, the allies attacked Sparta in 395 B.C.

At first, the allies did well, destroying the Spartan fleet, defeating the Spartans on land and bottling them up inside the Peloponnese. The cities of Asia Minor threw out their Spartan governors and appealed to Persia for protection. There the war remained stalemated for years. Eventually Athens drew the mistrust of its allies by rebuilding the Long Walls and trying to re-establish the Delian League. Sparta and Persia allied and forced a second Athenian surrender in 387 B.C.

## THE HEGEMONY OF THEBES

In 396 B.C., the Persian king suggested a general peace which everyone agreed to at first. The cities in Asia returned to Persian control, and Sparta guaranteed the "independence" of the rest of the Greek cities. The new situation pleased no one but the Spartans.

In 382 B.C., a Spartan force occupied the Cadmea, the Theban *akropolis*. Within a few years, however, the people of Thebes rebelled and threw the Spartan garrison out. Meanwhile, the Athenians had formed yet another defensive league, this time making membership entirely voluntary so no one could accuse them of trying to renew their empire. Thebes and Athens allied against Sparta.

## ALCIBIADES (CONTINUED)

During the first stages of the Peloponnesian War, Alcibiades fought as an ordinary soldier. In a famous incident during the battle of Amphipolis, Alcibiades fell but was saved by Socrates. This only strengthened the friendship between the two men.

The Peace of Nicias allowed Alcibiades to enter public life in his usual style. Young as he was, he quickly gathered a following. He pushed the assembly into aggressive foreign ventures. In 415 B.C., he managed to convince the city to send an expedition to the conquest of Sicily – the fatal overextension that ruined Athens.

Had Alcibiades commanded the expedition, it might have succeeded. He showed as much talent for military leadership as for everything else. But just before the expedition was to leave, a disaster happened. Outside most Athenian homes were crude statues of the god Hermes, which supposedly kept evil spirits out. One night, someone mutilated hundreds of these *hermae*, breaking or defacing them. Non one knew who had done it, but Alcibiades was a prime suspect.

Alcibiades avoided the accusations at first. After the ships left, however, the assembly called Alcibiades back to stand trial for the crime. Instead, Alcibiades abandoned the expedition and turned up in Sparta. He made himself a place by advising the Spartans on how to fight Athens.

This was only the first of Alcibiades' misadventures. A few years later, during an earthquake in Sparta, Alcibiades and one of the queens were seen fleeing her house together. The queen later bragged that her son, heir to one of the Spartan thrones, was actually the son of Alcibiades. Alcibiades soon found it wise to flee Sparta, and became an advisor to the Persian satrap at Sardis.

As Athenian fortunes in the renewed war declined, the Athenians looked for a savior. Astonishingly, they turned to Alcibiades. The rogue was instrumental in the defeat of the oligarchic Four Hundred (see main text). He then became supreme commander of Athens' forces, and won a number of victories against Sparta and her allies. Before long, however, the assembly turned against him again, and he fled into exile. When Sparta won the war, Spartan agents sought out Alcibiades in Asia and murdered him.

## TYPICAL MILITARY UNITS

In the Bronze Age, the most common soldier was the armored footman, fighting with spear and shield. Noblemen might be very well-armored, even to the point of wearing full bronze plate armor. Lesser soldiers would be less well-armored. Chariots were used to bring soldiers to battle quickly, but were not used much in the fighting.

Bronze Age armies were probably fairly undisciplined. The heroic legends tell of battles that are nothing more than masses of single combats, with no serious attempt at fighting in formation.

In Classical Greek armies, the most common type of soldier was the hoplite, who fought on foot with heavy armor, shield and spear. Philip of Macedon welded these heavy infantry into the *phalanx*, a very tight formation bristling with long spears.

Classical Greek cavalry was only useful for scouting and skirmishing duty. Cavalrymen wore very little armor, carried only a spear, and were without stirrups. Good horses were rare, and so cavalry units tended to be small relative to the size of the army. Macedonian cavalry were heavier, useful as shock troops. They were more heavily armored than Greek cavalry, and used a heavier spear, almost a lance.

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The next few years are referred to as the “Hegemony of Thebes,” since Thebes was the dominant power in the anti-Spartan alliance. The leader of the alliance was Epaminondas, a Theban intellectual and general. After years of fighting, the allies soundly defeated a large Spartan force at Leuctra in 371 B.C. and freed Messenia from Spartan domination. They also organized the scattered villages of Arcadia into a city-state, Megalopolis or “Great City,” as a check on Spartan power. They were only turned back from a conquest of Sparta itself when the Spartans broke with tradition, promising freedom to 6,000 helots in exchange for military service.

As soon as Sparta was removed from the equation, the alliance again fell apart, this time due to Athenian hatred of Thebes. Athens allied with Sparta in 369 B.C. Epaminondas died a few years later, while pursuing a joint Athenian-Spartan force near Mantinea. Without him, the Theban Hegemony collapsed.

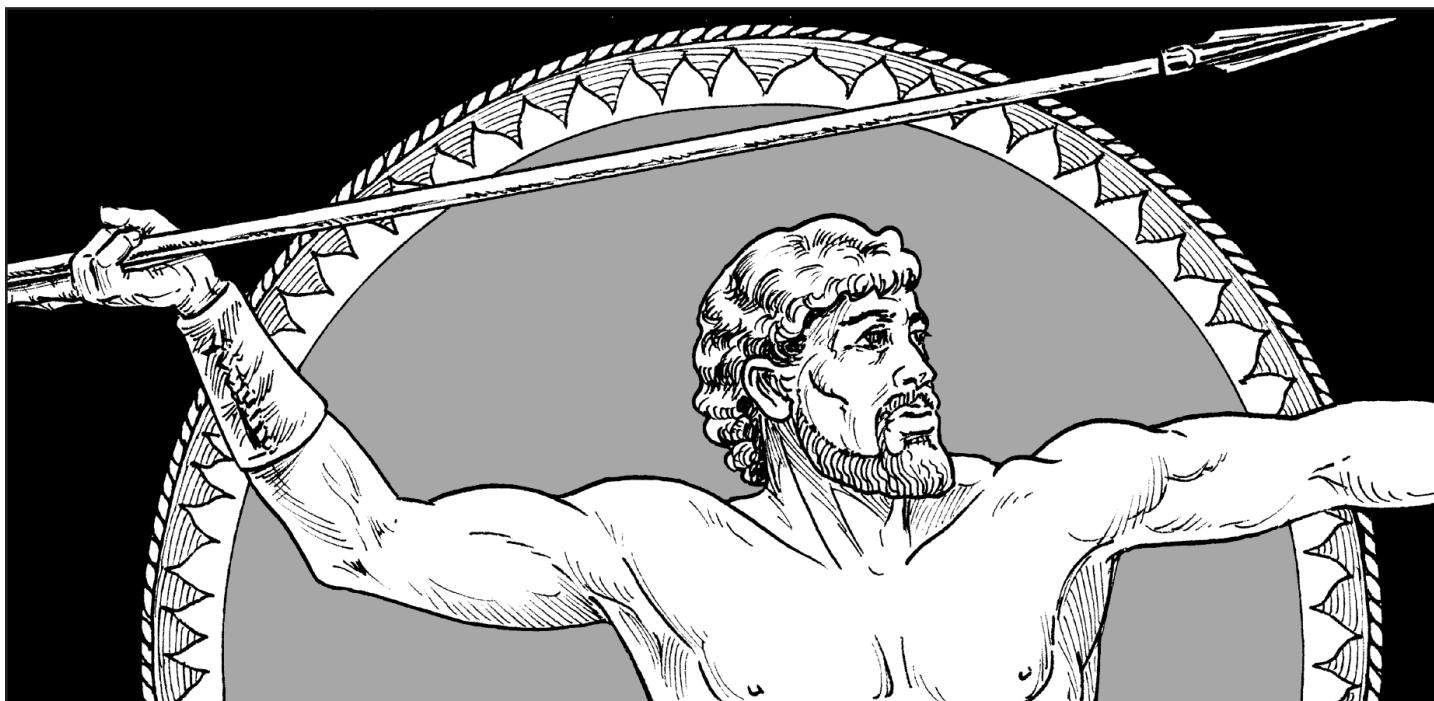
## THE RISE OF MACEDON

Thebes was powerless without its greatest leader. The loss of Messenia and Arcadia had reduced Sparta to impotence. Athens was only slowly returning to major-power status. In short, all of the major city-states of mainland Greece had been ruined politically. Only an outsider could now unify Hellas. Such an outsider presented himself: Philip, the king of half-barbarian Macedon, the last place any Greek would have expected.

## PHILIP OF MACEDON

The Macedonians were a barbarian people living on the fringe of the Greek world. The kingdom of Macedon included a few coastal towns, where the kings and major nobility lived, and mountain hinterlands. In the 4th century B.C. the mountain country was still backward, full of small farms, clans of herdsmen and brigands. The royal court, on the other hand, had accepted a great deal of Greek (especially Athenian) culture.

The court of Macedon was notorious for its intrigues. Each new king usually murdered any of his relatives who might have a claim to the throne. Many kings of Macedon fell in battle against rebels or usurpers, and others succumbed to poison or assassination. Few died of natural causes.



In 359 B.C., Illyrian tribes annihilated a Macedonian army. King Perdiccas of Macedon died in the rout. Perdiccas' son was only two years old, so the real power in the kingdom was now Perdiccas' younger brother, Philip. Philip was only 24 years old, had no army and was surrounded by enemies. The wealth of Macedon was very tempting to the mountain tribes. Worse, Thebes and the reappearing power of Athens were ready to fill any power vacuum in the north.

Fortunately, Philip was a superb leader and general. He quickly eliminated all his rivals for the throne. He rebuilt the army and began to campaign against his foreign enemies. Philip crushed the Illyrians, divided and defeated the Thracians, and reduced the other mountain tribes to vassals of Macedon. Then he made an audacious move. In 357 B.C., he took the Greek city of Amphipolis and its associated gold mines. This was a direct challenge to Greece, especially to Athens, which had once controlled Amphipolis.

### PHILIP TURNS SOUTH

Fortunately for Philip, all the major powers of Greece were having problems of their own. Thebes, having lost its greatest general, was no longer a major power. Sparta was embroiled in futile attempts to regain control of Messenia. A revolt among Athenian allies in the Aegean had become a full-scale conflict called the Social War. When the fighting was over, the war had ruined the last Athenian attempt at an empire.

Philip was able to consolidate his power and wait for an opportunity to enter Greek politics on his own terms. Greek politics being what they were, he did not have to wait long. The council of minor cities that traditionally protected Delphi was essentially controlled by Thebes. At Theban urging, this council declared war on the small district of Phocis. The Phocians did remarkably well, however, seizing Delphi and holding out against the Theban alliance. The subsequent war was called the Sacred War, since the objective was control over one of Hellas' holiest shrines.

For Philip, the Sacred War was a perfect opportunity. He intervened against the Phocians in 352 B.C. and restored Delphi to its original protectors. From that point on, there was no stopping Philip. Chalcidice fell, despite a strong of ineffective Athenian protests. Macedon also conquered Thrace once and for all.

### PHILIP THE HEGEMON

By this time, Athens had become aware of the danger Philip presented to Greece. In a series of fiery speeches, the Athenian politician Demosthenes roused the city against Philip. But it was too late. In 338 B.C., when another quarrel over Delphi broke out, Philip swept down into central Greece, seized the pass at Thermopylae, and conquered the cities on the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth. Thebes and Athens frantically gathered an army, which Philip annihilated at the battle of Chaeronea. Philip was now master of Greece.

Philip dictated his terms at a pan-Hellenic peace conference. He set up a loose federation of Greek cities, with himself as *hegemon* or "leader." He guaranteed the independence of all Greek cities, preventing them from warring on each other. Only Sparta stayed away from the conference, and remained an enemy of Macedon. Philip also announced that he would fulfill an old Greek dream, leading a crusade against Persia.

Before Philip could organize his next campaign, however, he made a fateful mistake. Early in his career, Philip had married Olympias, the daughter of a barbarian king. Philip divorced Olympias and prepared to marry a Macedonian princess. Soon afterward, a dagger-wielding nobleman murdered Philip, possibly at the behest of his ex-wife. Now Greece was in the hands of the son of Olympias and Philip: Alexander.



### TYPICAL MILITARY UNITS (CONTINUED)

Missile troops were common as auxiliaries. Hillmen might be recruited as slingers, and Cretan troops were known for their use of the bow. Units of javelin-men were common, such as Thracian *peltastes* or Greek *ekdromoi*.

Some auxiliary troops were *psiloi*, peasant recruits used as skirmishers. *Psiloi* wore no armor at all, and might have no weapons other than rocks, but on occasion they played an important part in battle. These should be considered irregulars, but they might have considerable battle experience.

In Classical times, tactics and leadership were still crude, but the armies themselves had better organization and discipline. The major city-states made a conscious effort at universal military training, allowing for any level of troop quality. Most Spartan units, and some highly-trained units from other cities, were of very high quality.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

Alexander had been born in 356 B.C. and was now about 19 years old. He had had an unhappy childhood and a rocky relationship with his father. Still, he was a talented boy, trained in the arts of war and raised on the stories of the Greek heroes. His tutor was the philosopher Aristotle, possibly the greatest genius of the Classical world. Alexander had fought in his father's campaigns, and was well-liked by the army.

Many people suspected that either Alexander or Olympias was behind the assassination of Philip, but no proof ever appeared. When Alexander claimed his father's throne, the army supported him and there was little opposition within Macedon.

Outside of Macedon it was a different story. Alexander was at war practically from the day he took the throne. The mountain tribes rebelled at once, forcing him to crush them. In these first campaigns, he showed almost supernaturally good generalship.

Meanwhile, the cities of Greece became restless. When a rumor of Alexander's death came south, Thebes rebelled. Alexander stormed south, crushed the rebellion, and destroyed Thebes utterly. The entire population of the city was massacred and the city itself smashed to rubble. The Athenians had been preparing to rebel as well, but now they simply bowed to the inevitable. They even sent Alexander a letter congratulating him on his victory. Alexander had secured peace with blinding speed, and was now free to begin his father's crusade against Persia.



### FIRST CAMPAIGNS

Alexander and his army crossed into Asia in 334 B.C. Alexander himself reenacted many of the legendary events of the Trojan War: he sacrificed at Aulis before sailing, and upon arriving at Troy he performed more religious rites. This was doubtless due to his infatuation with the heroic myths, but it also made good propaganda back in Greece. Religious duties over, Alexander quickly turned to the war. A large Persian army faced him at the river Granicus, under the command of the Greek mercenary Memnon. The Persians were soundly defeated.

## XENOPHON AND THE TEN THOUSAND

As the population of the Greek homeland grew, and wars became longer and more frequent, many men turned to the mercenary life. Professional soldiers, and even professional generals, sold their services to the highest bidder.

After the Peloponnesian War, the Athenian soldier Xenophon went looking for work. He joined a force of about 10,000 Greek mercenaries, hired by the Persian prince Cyrus to "keep order" in the satrapies under his control. In 401 B.C., Cyrus decided to seize the Persian throne from his brother, Artaxerxes II. He gathered troops, including the Ten Thousand, and marched inland. At this time, Xenophon was a minor officer.

The Greeks were suspicious. Their contracts were for work in the coastal regions, not inland. Still, Cyrus promised them great rewards if they followed him, and they soon agreed. Cyrus' army marched all the way to Mesopotamia, not far from Babylon. The Greeks fought for Cyrus at the critical battle of Cunaxa, where Cyrus came within a hair of victory before being killed in the fighting. This left the Ten Thousand trapped hundreds of miles inside Persian territory, with their patron dead and his enemies on all sides. At this point, Xenophon and the other officers stepped forward and took command of the Greek force. Instead of surrendering, the mercenaries decided to stick together and fight their way out.

The voyage was long and incredibly difficult. The Persians negotiated at first, but then turned to attack the Greeks. The Ten Thousand had to move through the heart of the Persian Empire, fighting almost constantly, foraging for their own supplies. Eventually the Greeks managed to march up into the mountains of Kurdistan and Armenia. Here, the Greeks had to contend with raids from mountain tribesmen, who knew the country and used guerrilla warfare against them. With stubborn persistence and superior discipline, the Ten Thousand held together and overcame all obstacles.

Finally, in the midst of yet another battle against the mountain peoples, the front of the column sighted the Black Sea. The mercenaries had escaped. Xenophon later recorded the story of the Ten Thousand. His *Anabasis* or "Journey Out" is one of the greatest pieces of military history ever written. It was also a "best seller" at the time, spreading throughout Greece and convinced many people that Persia could be beaten with Greek military skill and discipline.

Alexander then began a long march along the coast, capturing the cities of Ionia and systematically denying the Persian fleet its bases. When he was finished, he turned inland. At Gordium, Alexander saw a wagon which had long ago been tied to a post with an incredibly complex knot. The prophecy was that whoever could untie the knot would rule all of Asia. Alexander solved the problem with his usual directness – drawing his sword, he sliced through the knot.

## THE FALL OF PERSIA

In 333 B.C., Alexander reached Syria. The new king of Persia, Darius III, had spent the previous months gathering a massive army. Now Alexander and Darius faced off on the coast of the Gulf of Issus, a bay of the Mediterranean. The battle was close, but at a critical moment Alexander and his elite cavalry charged down on Darius' chariot. The Persian king lost his nerve, turned, and fled. The Persian line broke, and Alexander smashed the Persian army. Among the spoils were the Persian royal family, including Darius' queen, who was treated with great respect by the Macedonians.

Alexander then turned south, intent on breaking Persian control over the Mediterranean coast. In a series of sieges (including those at Tyre and Gaza, 332 B.C.) Alexander conquered Syria and Phoenicia. He then moved into Egypt, facing almost no resistance. There he founded the city of Alexandria.

In the same year, Alexander marched for Mesopotamia, having secured the last possible bases for the Persian fleet. After crossing the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, he faced Darius and yet another Persian army near the town of Gaugamela. Once again, Alexander charged the Persian center at a critical moment. Once again, Darius fled the battlefield, and once again the Persian army was crushed.

This proved the end of the Persian resistance. The Persians could raise no more armies to stand between Alexander and the imperial capitals. In 330 B.C., Alexander entered Persepolis, seized the royal treasury, and burned the city. A few months later, Darius was assassinated by a Persian traitor.

## ALEXANDER'S EMPIRE

The capture of Persepolis did not end Alexander's wars. First to secure the rest of the Persian Empire, then to extend it, Alexander fought campaign after campaign for four more years. His army marched through what we know as eastern Iran, Afghanistan, the southern ex-Soviet republics and Pakistan. Alexander fought only one more great pitched battle (at the Hydaspes river in India, 326 B.C.) and otherwise met no serious resistance.

Alexander's imperial policy was unusually foresighted. His ultimate goal was an alliance of Greeks, Macedonians and Persians, using the skills and strengths of each to create a true world empire. He did not intend to unify their cultures, but he wanted all three peoples in imperial administration. He founded cities all through his empire, encouraging Greek emigrants and retired Macedonian soldiers to settle everywhere. He even ordered many of his Macedonian officers to marry Persian noblewomen.

His plans failed, however. The eternal marching beyond the edge of the known world demoralized his army, which mutinied more than once. Alexander's assumption of Persian protocol in his court, including semi-divine honors and prostration before the king, offended the Greek and Macedonian members of his staff. Alexander himself lost his health through his many battle wounds and his habit of wild drunkenness. His very sanity was shaky when he fell sick and died at Babylon, in 323 B.C. He was 32 years old.



## XENOPHON

Age 30; 5' 5", 140 lbs.; average build, brown eyes, black hair, short beard.

ST 11, DX 14, IQ 12, HT 12.

Basic Speed 6.5, Move 6.

Dodge 7, Parry 8.

Bronze Corselet (PD 3, DR 5), pot-helm (PD3, DR 3); medium encumbrance. Point total: 150

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Literacy; Reputation +2 (as a competent officer); Status 3 (minor aristocrat).

*Disadvantages:* Duty (to the Ten Thousand on a 15 or less); Honesty; Intolerance (toward lower classes and Sophists); Jealousy.

*Quirks:* Disdainful of democracy; Moralist; Pro-Spartan; Thinks of himself as a philosopher; Vindictive toward rivals and enemies.

*Skills:* Bard-13; Diplomacy-11; Hiking-12; History-11; Knife-15; Lance-15; Leadership-13; Literature-11; Musical Instrument (Lyre)-10; Philosophy-11; Riding (Horse)-15; Savoir-Faire-15; Shield-16; Shortsword-15; Singing-12; Spear-15; Spear Throwing-15; Strategy (Land warfare)-11; Survival (Mountain)-12; Swimming-14; Tactics-11; Theology-10; Tracking-12; Wrestling-15.

*Languages:* Aramaic-12; Greek-12.

*Weapons:* Shortsword, 1d+1 cutting, 1d-1 impaling; Spear, 1d+1 impaling.

*Equipment:* Cavalry horse; camping gear.

Here, Xenophon is in the midst of the great adventure of his life – the march of the Ten Thousand out of Persia (see sidebar, p. 62). He is an Athenian aristocrat by birth, fairly well-educated and trained in battle as a member of the Athenian cavalry. His intellect has been further stimulated by the hours he spent in the company of Socrates. Now, after the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War (see p. 57), he is working as a mercenary soldier. Xenophon is not a brilliant man, but he is a competent soldier and will become a famous writer and historian later in life. He is very conservative, dislikes democracy and has much admiration for Sparta. He is usually calm and polite, but he can be vindictive when others cross him or seem to be hogging the limelight.

# HISTORICAL TIMELINE

This timeline covers the historical period, from 1100 B.C. to 323 B.C. All dates are B.C.

- c. 1000 – Lefkandi settlement begins recovery.
- c. 800 – First Greek trading post in Syria.
- 776 – First recorded Olympic Games.
- c. 775 – First Greek trading posts in Italy.
- 735 – First Greek colony begun in Sicily.
- 734 – Lelantine War begins between Chalcis and Eretria.
- 733 – Foundation of Syracuse.
- c. 730 – Sparta begins conquering Messenia. Homer and Hesiod are composing. Hoplite tactics become widespread.
- c. 680 – Pheidon, king of Argos, becomes a *tyrannos*. Lycurgan reforms take place in Sparta. Lelantine War ends.
- 621 – First code of laws made in Athens, by the legislator Draco.
- c. 600 – The poet Sappho, known as the “Tenth Muse,” is composing on the island of Lesbos.
- 594 – Solon reforms the Athenian law code.
- 585 – Thales of Miletus, one of the first philosophers, correctly predicts an eclipse of the sun.
- 560 – Peisistratus seizes power in Athens and becomes a *tyrannos*.
- 559 – Cyrus II establishes the Persian Empire.
- 556 – Peisistratus is forced into exile from Athens.
- c. 550 – Sparta becomes the dominant city in the Peloponnese. Peloponnesian League established.
- 546 – Peisistratus returns to Athens and retakes control.
- 545 – King Croesus of Lydia attacks Persia and is defeated. Cyrus II conquers Lydia and the Ionian Greeks.
- 534 – First tragedies performed at the Dionysian festivals in Athens.
- 528 – Death of Peisistratus. His son Hippias becomes *tyrannos* of Athens.



- c. 525 – Pythagoras is active in southern Italy as a mystic, philosopher and teacher.
- 510 – Expulsion of the tyrants from Athens. Cleisthenes begins democratic reforms.
- 506 – Sparta and its allies invade Attica but are driven off by the new democracy.
- 499 – Ionian Revolt begins.
- 494 – Persians defeat Ionian rebels.
- 492 – Persian expedition into Europe. Thrace and Macedon are conquered.
- 490 – First Persian invasion of Greece. Battle of Marathon. Aeschylus, the first great tragic poet, fights in the battle.
- 482 – Ostracism of Aristides. Themistocles is the dominant statesman in Athens.
- 480 – Second Persian invasion of Greece. Battle of Thermopylae.
- Athens is sacked but the people escape by sea. After the battle of Salamis the Persians fall back. Aeschylus is writing in Athens.
- 479 – Battle of Plataea.
- 478 – Establishment of the Delian League. First campaigns against Persia.
- 470 – Exile of Themistocles. Cimon is the dominant statesman in Athens.
- 467 – Battle of the Eurymedon River. Cimon defeats the Persian navy and ends any threat of renewed Persian invasion of Greece. Sophocles is writing in Athens.
- 464 – Helot revolt in Messenia. Cimon leads a force of Athenians to help Sparta but is rebuffed. Open rivalry begins between Athens and Sparta.
- 461 – Ostracism of Cimon. Ephialtes is assassinated, leaving Pericles the leader of the democratic faction. First Peloponnesian War begins.

454 – Major portion of the Athenian fleet lost in Egypt.

450 – Cimon returns from exile and leads the Athenians against Persia. He wins peace with Persia before his death. The tragic poet Euripides is writing in Athens.

445 – Thirty Years' Peace signed between Athens and Sparta, ending the First Peloponnesian War.

c. 440 – Periclean Golden Age in Athens. The Acropolis temples are rebuilt, including the Parthenon. The historian Herodotus becomes famous reading his works to Athenian audiences.

432 – Revolt of Potidaea. Confrontation between Athens and Corinth, leading to tensions with Sparta.

431 – Second Peloponnesian War begins.

430 – Socrates begins his philosophic career.

429 – Plague in Athens. The Athenian population is ravaged; one in three die.

425 – Battle of Sphacteria. Athenians defeat Sparta on land, taking hostages. The comic poet Aristophanes is writing.

421 – Peace of Nicias begins. Athens supports Argos against Sparta. Thucydides begins his historical writing.

418 – Sparta defeats Argos and Athens at the battle of Mantinea.

415 – Major Athenian expedition to Sicily. Alcibiades goes into exile and begins working for Sparta.

413 – Destruction of the Sicilian expedition. Sparta renews the war against Athens.

411 – Oligarchic coup in Athens (the government of the Four Hundred). Democracy is restored within a few months with the intervention of Alcibiades.

405 – Battle of Aegospotami, the critical Athenian defeat. Athens is besieged.

404 – Athens surrenders to Sparta, ending the Second Peloponnesian War. Government of the Thirty Tyrants

installed.

403 – Democracy restored in Athens.

401 – Expedition of the Ten Thousand into Persia. Civil war in Persia, ending in the battle of Cunaxa. The Ten Thousand march out of Persia, led by Xenophon the Athenian.

399 – Trial and execution of Socrates.

396 – Spartan campaigns in Asia. Persia backs an alliance of Greek cities in opposition to Sparta.

395 – Athens rebuilds the Long Walls. The Persian-backed alliance attacks Sparta. Plato is teaching in Athens.

387 – Anti-Spartan alliance breaks down. Second Athenian surrender.

386 – Persia imposes a peace settlement on Greece. Xenophon is active as historian and essayist.

382 – Spartans occupy the Theban *akropolis*.

379 – Thebes expels the Spartans and allies with Athens. Hegemony of Thebes begins.

371 – Battle of Leuctra. Spartan power is broken.

362 – Battle of Mantinea. Death of Theban leader Epaminondas, and end of the Theban Hegemony.

359 – Philip II becomes king of Macedon. Aristotle is active in Athens and elsewhere.

357 – Philip seizes Amphipolis, a direct challenge to Athens. Athens is involved in the Social War against its former allies.

356 – Sacred War begins, over the control of Delphi.

352 – Philip intervenes in the Sacred War, conquering much of northern Greece.

338 – Philip defeats the Greeks at the battle of Chaeronea. He becomes *hegemon* of most of Greece (except for Sparta).

336 – Death of Philip. Alexander becomes king of Macedon and master of Greece.

335 – Thebes rebels against Alexander and is destroyed. Alexander begins plans to invade Persia.

334 – Alexander crosses into Asia. Battle of the Granicus River and conquest of Asia Minor.

333 – Battle of Issus, first defeat of the main Persian army.

331 – Foundation of Alexandria in Egypt. Alexander defeats the Persians again at Gaugamela, ending effective Persian resistance.

330 – Alexander burned Persepolis. He begins campaigns in central Asia and India.

323 – Death of Alexander at Babylon.

# 4 CHARACTERS

CHARACTERS SHOULD BE BUILT on the standard base of 100 points, with no more than 40 points of disadvantages and 5 points of quirks. In a campaign with powerful characters (politicians or epic heroes, for example), higher limits may be appropriate. (See Chapter 8 for details.)



# CHARACTER TYPES

Most Greeks, particularly in the wealthier city-states, have a fairly extensive education. Soldier, athlete and aristocrat types are specifically listed below, but almost all Greeks get at least some training in military, athletic and cultural skills.

## AMBASSADOR

Greek city-states do not exchange ambassadors as modern nations do. Instead, each city is represented abroad by its *proxenoi*. The *proxenos* is a native of the city he lives in, but has business or family connections with the city he represents. A *proxenos* is normally of high Status and involved in politics in his home city. If relations go sour with the city he represents, he might become less than popular with his fellow citizens.

*Advantages:* Status 3+. Other possibilities include Charisma, Empathy, Reputation, Voice and Wealth.

*Disadvantages:* Honesty and Sense of Duty (to represented city) are appropriate.

*Skills:* Acting, Administration, Bard, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Heraldry, History, Law, Merchant, Politics and Savoir-Faire. A number of others might be useful, particularly other Social skills.

## ARISTOCRAT

Even in the most democratic cities, the old aristocracy remain important all through the Classical period. Society expects good aristocrats to serve the *polis* faithfully and live morally upright lives in exchange for their wealth and privileges. Some fail to live up to this ideal, of course, and live lives of luxury and vice. Many aristocratic youths are notorious for their freewheeling lifestyles.

*Advantages:* High Status and Wealth. "Good" aristocrats will have Strong Will. Younger aristocrats who have not yet inherited might have their fathers as Patrons instead of a great deal of Wealth. All aristocrats have Literacy.

*Disadvantages:* Sense of Duty (to the *polis* or the family) and Honesty are appropriate for "good" aristocrats. Decadent aristocrats could have Alcoholism, Compulsive Carousing, Compulsive Gambling, Greed, Lecherousness, or other character flaws.

*Skills:* The usual Combat/Weapon skills (see p. 74), one or more athletic skills (see below), Literature, Musical Instrument (Lyre) and Singing are practically required in an aristocratic education. Aristocratic youths also learn Riding and Lance, Administration, Bard, History, Leadership, Philosophy, Politics, Savoir-Faire and Tactics are also appropriate. Carousing, Fast-Talk and Gambling are good for decadent aristocrats.

## ATHLETE

The Greeks love athletic competitions of all kinds. Between events, everyone who can spare the time exercises to keep fit. Those who excel in sports become famous all over the Greek world, and often win great honors in their home cities. Almost all Greeks have basic athletic skills.

*Advantages:* A good Reputation is quite common for successful athletes. Highly successful ones might have their home city's governments as Patrons (providing stipends and other support). Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold and Toughness are appropriate for practitioners of the martial arts. Strong Will would also be appropriate, for any sport.

*Disadvantages:* Depending on the time period, *pankration* practitioners may have bad Reputations as bloodthirsty brutes.

Bloodlust or Sadism fit if this reputation is deserved. Many athletes had Overconfidence or Glory Hound.

*Skills:* The primary athletic skills are Boxing, Driving (Chariot), Jumping, Riding (Horse), Running, Swimming, Spear Throwing (for the javelin), Throwing (for the *diskos*) and Wrestling. Many athletes will have some Theology, since they must take part in religious ceremonies and offer sacrifices after winning. Social skills are also appropriate. (See also Pancratium, the Roman form of *pankration*, p. MA94.)

## BARBARIAN

To the Greeks, anyone who doesn't speak Greek is a *barbaros*. In game terms, this character type represents *non-civilized* non-Greeks. Such folk often enter Greek society as slaves, but occasionally free barbarians visit the great cities or serve as mercenaries. The usual barbarians encountered in the Greek homeland are Macedonians, Thracians and Scythians.

Macedonians are a sturdy coastal people, living north of mainland Greece. Their language is closely related to Greek, and their society resembles that of the Greek Heroic Age. They are warlike, often defending themselves against less-civilized tribes.

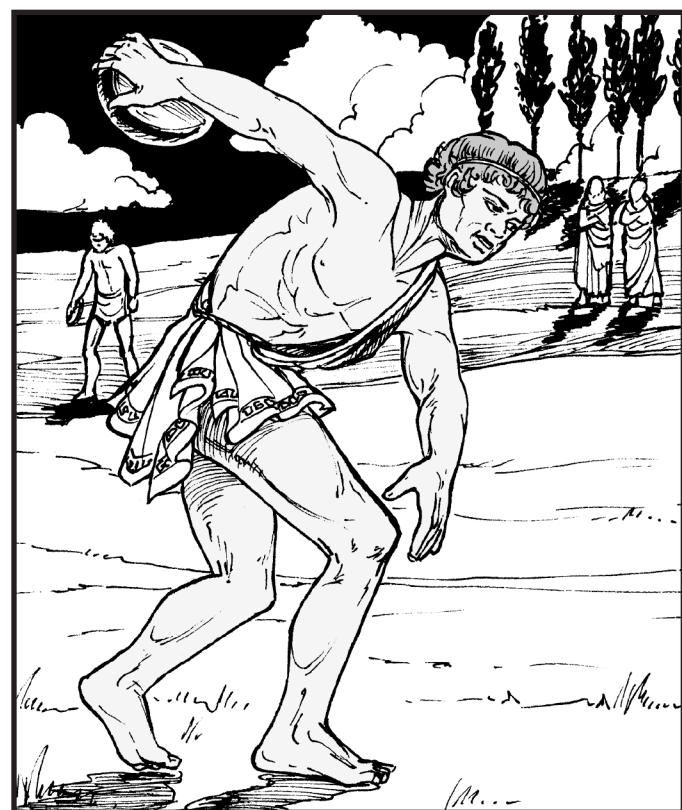
Thracians are a non-Greek people who live in the hills and forests northeast of Macedon. Greeks despise them for their brutality and warlike nature. They often provide light-armed mercenaries for Greek armies. Other hill tribes in Macedon and the surrounding country are similar.

Scythians are horse nomads, living in the vast open plains of Eurasia. The Greeks have many odd legends about these nomads, although they are seldom seen in Greece itself.

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold and Toughness are all common in stereotyped barbarians. Leaders might have Ally Groups.

*Disadvantages:* All non-civilized barbarians have Social Stigma: Barbarian for -15 points while in Greek society.

*Skills:* Survival skills and the Combat/Weapon skills appropriate to the home culture. Thracians and Scythians probably have Riding even if they are not of the upper classes.



## COURTESAN

In a society where women are little more than property, the courtesan has unusual freedom and respect. Some are highly educated in literature and philosophy. Such professionals can make a fortune, entertaining guests with conversation, poetry and music. They also take part in some religious festivals, as musicians and dancers. These *hetairai*, or “companions,” are sometimes foreigners or even ex-slaves, but bear less social stigma than either.

**Advantages:** Good Appearance, Charisma and Voice are all quite useful. Many of the better-off *hetairai* have Literacy, good Reputations and even above-average Wealth. An influential Patron is also a possibility.

**Disadvantages:** All *hetairai* carry a 5-point Social Stigma, as women or as foreigners. However, even in those cities where citizen women are closely restricted, *hetairai* have unusual freedom, and stay at the 5-point level. Poverty fits a poorly-educated courtesan.

**Skills:** Sex Appeal is a must. Bard, Carousing, Dancing, Fast-Talk, Literature, Musical Instrument (Flute), Philosophy, Professional Skill: Courtesan, Savoir-Faire, Singing, Streetwise and Theology are all appropriate.

## CRAFTSMAN

The bulk of the urban middle class must make a living with one craft or another. This is particularly true in wealthy trading cities like Athens, where goods are produced for export as well as for local use. This class includes sculptors and painters, what we would call “artists.” Many of these craftsmen are metics (see p. 23).

**Advantages:** Reputation and Wealth might be appropriate for a well-known and highly-skilled craftsman. Jewelers, painters, potters and sculptors are most likely to reach such status.

**Disadvantages:** Poor or ordinary craftsmen are somewhat looked down on and hold Status -1. Poverty is common in the ordinary trades. Metics have a 5-point Social Stigma as second-class citizens.

**Skills:** The most common craft skills are Armoury, Blacksmith and Pottery. Artists would have Artist or Sculpting skill. The other Craft skills are all present as well. Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Merchant and Streetwise all help sell wares in the market.

## FARMER/HERDSMAN

Outside the cities, the free peasantry of Greece pursue a lifestyle that has changed little for thousands of years. Farmers till their plots of soil, and herdsmen tend flocks of sheep and goats. Most farmers work for themselves, although wealthy landowners often employ workers to run their country estates. Herdsmen often retain ways of speech and cultural traits going back to the Heroic Age and before. Such hill people serve as

auxiliaries in organized armies, using slings or even thrown rocks against the enemy.

A special case of this character type is the Spartan helot. These people are the remnants of tribes long since conquered by Sparta, now reduced to slavery in their own country. They are forced to farm and herd to raise food for the Spartans, none of whom perform any such work.

**Advantages:** Toughness is appropriate for those who live outdoors most of the time. Common Sense fits the uneducated but canny freeholder.

**Disadvantages:** Farmers and herdsmen may be Poor, sometimes desperately so, and usually have Illiteracy. They may have low Status. A helot has extremely low Status, no money at all, and a 15-point Social Stigma.

**Skills:** Agronomy, Animal Handling, Naturalist, Survival, Tracking and Weather Sense are all useful. Weapon skills include Bow, Knife, Shield, Sling and Throwing (for rocks).

## HERO

This character type is only appropriate to a Heroic-Age campaign, and in fact it is almost the *only* type appropriate for such a campaign.



A hero is a member of the warrior aristocracy of Bronze Age Greece. He is often the offspring of a deity, and almost always has a great destiny before him. His life will be full of quests, wars, piratical raids and divine interference. The details of a heroic setting can be found in Chapter 2.

**Advantages:** Combat-oriented advantages are most appropriate. In addition, the Ally Group, Destiny and Heroic ST (see p. 73) advantages will be useful. Heroes may have gods as Patrons, or, with the Divine Birth Unusual Background, as parents. Good Appearance, Charisma, a good Reputation, high Status, Strong Will and Wealth all fit as well.

**Disadvantages:** Many of the heroes enjoy fighting, perhaps too much. Bad Temper, Berserk and Blood-lust are all appropriate. Others include Impulsiveness, Jealousy, Lecherousness, Overconfidence and Stubbornness. Almost every hero has another hero or even a god as an Enemy. Sense of Duty (to family and servants) is very appropriate. An evil Destiny is also common. In general, heroes are larger than life, both in their virtues and their flaws.

**Skills:** The usual Combat/Weapon skills are appropriate (see p. 74), with the addition of Bow. Driving (Chariot) rather than Riding (Horse) is the normal means for getting around. Most heroes have one or more athletic skills, and many are craftsmen as well as warriors. Other skills include Carousing, Climbing, Leadership, Seamanship, Strategy (Land Warfare), Survival, Swimming, Tactics and Tracking.

## PHILOSOPHER

Philosophers – thinkers devoted to understanding the natural world and human society – will appear in a Classical setting. They often earn a living tutoring the sons of aristocrats.

Philosophers are particularly popular in Athens, where the greatest of them live, but they live elsewhere as well.

**Advantages:** Literacy is a must. Eidetic Memory, Mathematical Ability and Voice (for teaching) are helpful. Philosophers often become Wealthy, have good Reputations, and earn above-average Status.

**Disadvantages:** Absent-Mindedness, Bad Temper and Stubbornness are all common. Those who teach unpopular things or take unpopular stands on principle might gain bad Reputations or even Enemies.

**Skills:** Astronomy, Bard, History, Law, Literature, Mathematics, Naturalist, Philosophy, Physics, Physiology, Psychology, Savoir-Faire, Teaching, Theology and Writing are all possible. In campaigns with magical elements, Occultism will be appropriate, although philosophers claim no magical powers.

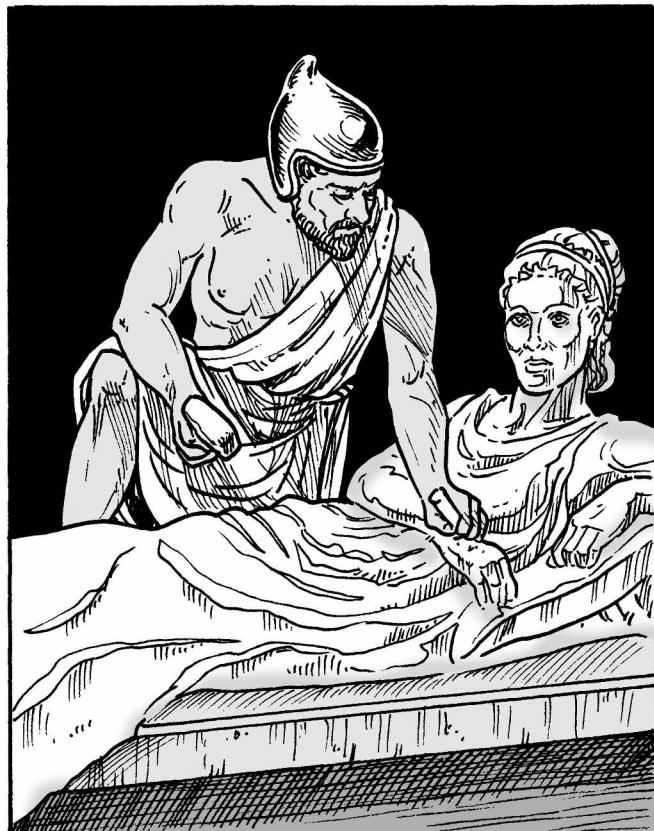
## PHYSICIAN

Although Greek medicine is rather backward, physicians are much in demand. The best use scientific methods to study physiology and the healing properties of herbs. Most physicians are devotees of Apollo or Asclepius, the gods most interested in healing.

**Advantages:** Empathy and Strong Will are important. Many physicians are employed by *polis* governments or armies, and this might imply a Patron. In Heroic-Age campaigns, and those with magical elements, Apollo or Asclepius might be divine Patrons.

**Disadvantages:** Pacifism and a 10-point Sense of Duty (to the sick and injured) are particularly appropriate.

**Skills:** Diagnosis, Physician, Physiology, Naturalist and Surgery are likely to be useful. Theology helps with knowledge of what sacrifices to offer on behalf of the sick. Fast-Talk and Diplomacy are invaluable for dealing with patients and their families.



## POET

The Greeks value the literary arts above all others, and poets are highly admired. In early times, poets are bards and minstrels, performing traditional epics for the entertainment of the nobility. In the Classical period, poets create new works for the public. These include not only songs and epic poems, but also the dramas and comedies that will establish European theater as an art form. Some poetry, such as victory odes for successful athletes, is written on commission. The Athenian dramas, too, rely on wealthy patrons for the money necessary to mount a performance at the festival.

**Advantages:** Successful poets will have Reputation and Status. Wealth or a Patron are necessary to make a living at poetry. Heroic-Age bards usually have Apollo (the god of poetry and music) as a divine Patron.

**Disadvantages:** Heroic-Age bards often have Blindness. Classical poets might have Absent-Mindedness, Bad Temper or Stubbornness as ill-tempered artists.

**Skills:** Acting, Bard, History, Literature, Performance, Poetry, Theology and Writing are all necessary. Solo artists who perform their own works will need Musical Instrument (Kithara) and Singing. Diplomacy, Fast-Talk and Savoir-Faire will help one get along with patrons and officials.

## PRIEST

The government of a *polis* usually chooses priests to maintain the city's temples, administer temple property, lead rituals and sacrifices, and teach the public about the gods. This office may be hereditary, or associated with particular families or clans. A council of cities might administer major temple complexes, such as those at Delphi and Olympia. Thus, priests are not part of any church hierarchy. Some priests are also seers or physicians. Players and GMs may wish to refer to *GURPS Religion* to flesh out priestly characters.

**Advantages:** Clerical Investment (granted by the *polis*) is necessary. Seer-priests have an Unusual Background and possibly some Magery (see p. 94). Charisma and Voice are useful.

**Disadvantages:** The most common are Duty (to the temple) or Sense of Duty (to worshippers and fellow priests).

**Skills:** Theology is required, possibly at a high level. Administration, Animal Handling (for maintaining control of sacrificial beasts), Bard, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Literature and Singing will help in priestly duties. Some priests have Diagnosis and Physician. Priests at oracular temples might have Poetry.

## SAILOR

The Greeks use the sea a great deal. Fishing, trade and colonization of distant lands all require good sailors. Greek sailors are free men rather than slaves. In wealthy cities the profession is important, because the merchant and war fleets need many men. Sailors can easily find employment in legitimate trade or as pirates.

**Advantages:** Absolute Direction, High Pain Threshold and Toughness are useful for withstanding the hard life of a sailor.

**Disadvantages:** Most sailors are of Status -1 and have below-average Wealth, although few are desperately poor. Pirates might have bad Reputations or Enemies. Long-time sailors may have physical disadvantages due to accidents or combat: One Eye, One Hand and Lame are likely.

**Skills:** Boating, Seamanship and Swimming are required. Combat/Weapon skills are very useful, and sailors are more likely to have skill with missile weapons than landbound soldiers. Most sailors have some level of Shipbuilding, since they build and maintain their own ships. Other skills include

Carousing, Gambling, Navigation, Strategy (Naval Warfare), Streetwise and Tactics (Naval). Sailors may pick up languages other than Greek. Fishermen will need Fishing.

## SLAVE

Slaves can be found in every area of Greek life. Many are household servants, while others are craftsmen or unskilled laborers. Slaves accompany the armies, and can earn their freedom if they fight well during a crisis. Some cities even use slaves as police, putting them under the command of a city magistrate and arming them to keep order and arrest criminals.

*Advantages:* Common Sense and Intuition will help in anticipating the desires of one's master. High Pain Threshold and Toughness will also help in surviving a slave's life.

*Disadvantages:* Slaves will have low Status and a 10-point Social Stigma. They will likely have Poverty, although slaves close to earning their freedom may have average Wealth.

*Skills:* Agricultural, craft, or domestic skills are appropriate to fit the slave's job. Slaves captured in war may have military skills. Most slaves are non-Greek, and speak languages of their own. Acting, Fast-Talk, Savoir-Faire (Servant) and Streetwise are helpful in keeping on the master's good side.



## SOLDIER

War is a constant fact of Greek life. Yet in many Greek settings, the *professional* soldier will be rare. In Classical times, mercenaries become common only after the Peloponnesian War. Before then, armies are made up of civilians, who train for war only in their spare time. In a way, soldier's skills are everyone's secondary field of interest. Almost every other character type will be encountered in the army, armed and ready to fight for his city.

*Advantages:* Combat-oriented advantages will help the soldier survive battle. Military Rank is not really appropriate for a Heroic-Age or Classical Greek campaign (see p. 117). Instead, a talented soldier or general might have a good Reputation.

*Disadvantages:* Sense of Duty (to the city or Heroic-Age kingdom) is common. Duty would only fit a military-only campaign.

*Skills:* The usual Combat/Weapon skills (see p. 74), plus Hiking. Aristocrats will have Riding (Horse). Everyone will have picked up some Strategy (Land Warfare) and Tactics, from battles and from debates beforehand. Other skills include Scrounging and Survival. More senior or professional fighters may have Leadership and Savoir-Faire.

## SORCERER

Greek myth is full of magic-using characters. These always gain their abilities by being descended from the gods or by earning the favor of a god. Many magic-users are female, and these are likely to be the powerful, well-rounded types familiar from fantasy fiction. Male spellcasters usually specialize in Divination. Diviners might appear even in a historical campaign, and charlatans are always possible. No type of magic-using character should be *common*, however.

*Advantages:* If magic actually works, the Magery advantage is required, as is an Unusual Background cost (see p. 73). Spellcasters may have a divine Patron. Sorcerers need not have Literacy.

*Disadvantages:* A bad Reputation and one or more Enemies are appropriate. One of the Enemies may even be a god. If the spellcaster is a charlatan, this could be a Secret.

*Skills:* Spells and Occultism skill, of course. Many magicians had Alchemy. The most common spell would be Divination. Acting, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk and Theology are all helpful.

## SPARTAN

Spartan society in the Classical Age is so unusual as to require a character type all its own. Spartan citizens are devoted to the art of war, and have no other professions. Farming and crafts are taken care of by noncitizens and helot slaves. Spartan soldiers are probably the fiercest and most skilled in the world. At home, they are perfectly disciplined and virtuous, but once away from Sparta and its strict social order, they become brutal, arrogant and corrupt.

Note that the Sparta of the heroic myths is much like any other kingdom. The military state represented by this character type appears only in the Classical period.

*Advantages:* Almost all Spartans have one or more combat-oriented advantages, especially Strong Will and Toughness. Spartans are often of above-average Appearance and might have Charisma.

*Disadvantages:* Spartans will almost always have Duty, Intolerance (of all non-Spartans) and some level of Poverty. Many will have Fanaticism (regarding their social system and its requirements). Stereotypical Spartans will have one or more of Bad Temper, Bloodlust, Bully, Greed, Miserliness, Overconfidence, or Stubbornness. Spartans should *not* have Combat Paralysis or Cowardice, and should have no serious physical disadvantages that were not acquired as battle wounds.

*Skills:* Spartans will have the usual military and athletic skills, at high levels. In fact, many will have no other skills. Leadership, Strategy (Land Warfare) and Tactics are common. Spartans will almost never have artistic skills, and will have few Social skills.

## THIEF

Greek thieves can be bandits or burglars. The former survive by raiding settlements and waylaying travelers. In the Heroic Age the hills are infested with bandits. Burglars, in Classical cities, are called "wall-breakers" since their usual method is to dig through the plaster walls of a house. Thieves have no organized police force to worry about. On the other hand, homeowners have every right to use force in apprehending them.

*Advantages:* Alertness, Danger Sense, Luck and Night Vision will help a thief prosper.

*Disadvantages:* Enemy (previous victims or the law), Greed, Kleptomania, Poverty and low Status are appropriate.

*Skills:* Any Thief skills would fit. Bandits should have Area Knowledge, Combat/Weapon skills and Survival. Burglars will have Carousing, Fast-Talk and Gambling. They may also have a low level of Architecture skill (to know which walls to attack).

## FEMALE CHARACTERS

Greece is a sexist society. Female characters in all periods and places will have a 5-point Social Stigma as second-class citizens. Their ability to control property is limited, and they have no political rights. In Classical Athens and other restrictive cities, citizen women have a 10-point Social Stigma as "valuable property." They are kept secluded, in separate quarters in the home. They cannot go out without escort, and must wear veils. They have even fewer property and civil rights than elsewhere in Greece, and are entirely under the control of a male guardian (father, brother, or husband).

None of this means that female characters will be impossible to play, of course. Greek myth and history are full of stories of women who run their lives on their own terms and have the respect of men.

In a Heroic-Age campaign, women have both freedom and respect. Most of the great magic-users of the myths are female, Circe and Medea being the foremost examples. Some women, like Atalanta, become renowned as heroes in their own right. A female PC might also be from a non-Greek culture where women have equal social standing, such as Minoan Crete or the country of the Amazons. Such characters will encounter prejudice, but by and large they will do as they please.

In Classical times, Athens is unusual for the restrictions it places on its women. Other cities, particularly those in the Peloponnese, treat women with more respect. In Sparta, women have almost full rights, and are only barred from politics and war. Liberal inheritance laws mean that women are often wealthier than men. Even in Athens, foreign women run their own businesses and act independently of men.

All in all, players should feel free to create female adventurers. Overcoming barriers, even social ones, is pleasing to the gods . . .

## APPEARANCE

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Ancient Greeks tend to be short by modern standards, five inches shorter than the Height/Weight table indicates for a given ST. Their coloring is pale, although men are usually well-tanned from exercising and working near-naked in the sun. Hair color is normally brown or black. Blondes are rare and regarded as very attractive. Most Greek men wear beards, and keep their hair short. Spartan men wear their hair shoulder-length, and take pride in keeping it well-groomed even on the battlefield. Women wear their hair long but often tie it in a bun behind the head (the "Psyche knot"). The Greek physical ideal is a strong and well-proportioned body, neither flabby nor too muscular, with clear skin.

In Mycenaean times, Greece is inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups who have not yet intermingled much. Physical appearance tends to be more varied at this time. Blondes are more common, for example.

### CLOTHING

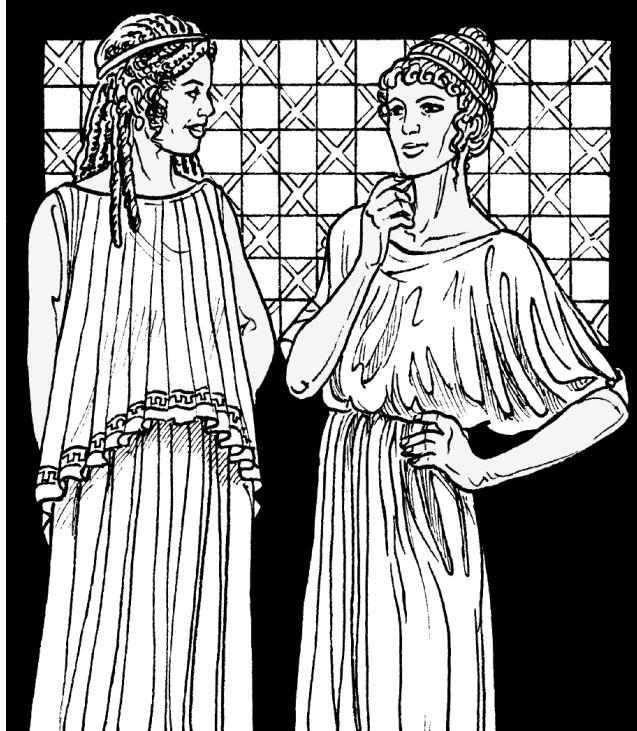
The basic item of Greek clothing is the *chiton*, a kind of light rectangular wrap which forms both a tunic and a short skirt. Men and women both wear the *chiton* belted, and may fasten it at the shoulders with a clasp or button. Men generally wear no sleeves. A woman's *chiton* is longer, reaching down to the ankles, and normally has sleeves. The *chiton* is usually white but can be dyed.

The *chiton* is supplemented by the overcloak or *himation*. This item is made of heavier cloth, and hangs down the back to the legs. It is held at the shoulders with a brooch or clasp. Men sometimes wear it without the *chiton*. Aristocrats might wear a circular cape called a *chlamys* rather than the *himation*. A woman's cloak can be drawn up over the head and face, and might have a veil attached to it. The *himation* is often colored; the working classes wear dark colors, while aristocrats wear brighter colors.

Purple is a rare color and highly prized. Spartans often wear a blood-red *himation* as a military uniform, so that the blood from their wounds will not show in battle and encourage the enemy.

Few Greeks wear hats, although cavalrymen and some hillmen wear a wide-brimmed cap called a *petasos*. Sandals are the usual footwear. If needed fully-enclosed shoes or boots are available. Being in public without shoes is acceptable. The Greeks wear a variety of jewelry and ornaments.

Nudity is common in Greek society, at least among men. There is no modesty taboo among Greek men, and in fact the Greek ideal of physical beauty encourages nudity. Men exercise in the nude, and often work wearing little or nothing. Women, on the other hand, are expected to be modestly clothed.



# NAMES

Greek names often come from very old dialects. Most Greeks have only one name, but give their father's name and their home district for official purposes, or if there is any possibility of confusion.

Following is a list of Greek male names.

Agathon	Dion	Lampon	Polygnotos
Aeson	Ephialtes	Lydos	Polycleitos
Anacreon	Epilycos	Lysias	Protagoras
Aristagoras	Euboulos	Megacles	Simon
Aristippus	Euripides	Melanippides	Solon
Aristophanes	Euthydemos	Melissos	Sotades
Brasidas	Glaucon	Myron	Syriscos
Callias	Gorgias	Myronides	Teisias
Callicles	Heraclides	Nearchos	Thrasymachus
Charmides	Hermippus	Nicias	Timodemos
Cimon	Hippocrates	Paralos	Xanthippus
Critias	Hypereides	Parmenides	Xenophon
Damonides	Ictinos	Pasion	Zeno
Democritos	Isocrates	Periander	
Demosthenes	Lamachos	Phintias	

Many of the above names have female forms as well. Normally, where the masculine form of a name ends in *-os*, *-ios*, or *-ias*, the feminine form will end in *-a*, *-ia*, or *-is*. Where the male name ends in *-ides*, the female name ends in *-e*. Thus, *Melissos* becomes *Melissa* and *Melanippides* becomes *Melanippe*.

Here are some names found more often in the feminine form than in the masculine.

Aerope	Cleothera	Harmonia
Aethra	Clytia	Parthenope
Alcmena	Danae	Penelope
Arisbe	Deianeira	Phryne
Aspasia	Galatea	Polyxena
Chryseis	Hilaeira	Thargelia

Nicknames are very common, and in fact they sometimes replace the given names entirely. For example, the philosopher Aristocles was nicknamed for his broad shoulders, and is known to history as *Platon* (Plato). Nicknames can also be unkind. The politician Theramenes, who was infamous for changing sides frequently, was nicknamed *Kothornos*, after a type of work boot that could fit either foot.

# ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES AND SKILLS

Many character attributes will work differently in a *Greece* campaign. Furthermore, there is a new advantage which is appropriate for this setting.

## ADVANTAGES

### ALLIES

In a campaign with a lot of political maneuvering, it may be common to lose Allies, or even to see them become Enemies when alliances shift. A GM may allow a PC who has lost an Ally through no fault of his own to take a new one in replacement. This new Ally should be of equal value, or possibly even higher value if the old Ally has become an Enemy. If the PC himself betrays or alienates one of his Allies, he does not get this option.

### ALLY GROUP

Anyone can have an Ally Group instead of a single Ally, especially if he is powerful. Possibilities include soldiers or mercenary followers, members of a political faction, a philosopher's students and so on. The above rule for Allies also applies to Ally Groups.

### BLESSED

This advantage is very appropriate in any *Greece* campaign with magical elements, even one set in historical times. Such a person is considered to be a *mantis*, an individual to whom the gods have granted prophetic and minor magical powers, for whatever reason. The *mantis* is not necessarily a priest, but may have otherwise won a god's attention.

### CONTACTS

This advantage is particularly useful in campaigns involving a great deal of political maneuvering. Statesmen and lesser political figures will want a number of good Contacts to gather information for them.

### DESTINY

The Greeks recognize destiny, which they call *moira* or fate, as an important force in everyone's life. Many stories

### SEE P. B23

from myth and history deal with the role fate has played in the lives of great men. A Destiny advantage (or disadvantage) is more appropriate for a Heroic-Age campaign, although creative Destinies have their place in historical campaigns as well.

### SEE P. B232

### LITERACY

### SEE P. B21

Before about 600 B.C., Greece is essentially an illiterate society, so Literacy is a 10-point advantage for everyone. This especially applies to the Heroic Age. In later periods, however, education is more widespread and many people are literate. Assume that male characters with Status 1 and above are literate with no point cost. Lower-class Greeks, women and slaves may have Literacy for 5 points, or Illiteracy as a 5-point disadvantage. Civilized non-Greeks may have similar access to Literacy. Uncivilized barbarians must pay the full 10 points, and get no points for Illiteracy.

Anyone in any period may be *semi-literate* for 5 points less than the cost of full Literacy. Semi-literate people read very slowly. They require several minutes to read an average *sentence*, and then need to make an IQ-2 roll to understand its meaning! In case of failure, base the amount of misunderstanding on how much the roll was missed by. The GM should make the roll in private, and convey false information on a critical failure. Some words are *always* unintelligible to a semi-literate person, including many in this paragraph.

### SEE P. B233

### MAGICAL APTITUDE

### SEE P. B21

A person must have the "Divine Birth" Unusual Background (see p. 73) in order to have Magery or buy any spells beyond Divination.

### SEE P. B234

### MILITARY RANK

### SEE P. B22

In most periods, the Greeks do not have standing armies. Military rank is temporary and gives little advantage in civilian life. Even in mercenary companies, officers are elected by the soldiers. The GM may therefore disallow this advantage as

inappropriate. Characters who are regarded as good military officers in wartime, or who have served with distinction, may have good Reputations instead.

## PATRON

In any campaign with magical elements, mortals may have gods as Patrons! The divine Patron does not interfere often, and is never available more often than on a roll of 6 or less. Further, the deity will often require that the hero go on quests, avoid certain behaviors and so on. Finally, the divine Patron's assistance will be limited in scope. The impossible quest will still be difficult even with the god's help. Most divine Patrons cost, as a base, 20-25 points. (This modifies to 10-15 points.)

## REPUTATION

## SEE P. B17

In a Heroic-Age campaign, Reputation may be accompanied by a heroic *epithet*, a tag-phrase or nickname that epic poets use in referring to a person's qualities or accomplishments, to make the lines easier to memorize and easier to give the proper meter. For example, the epic poems refer to "Agamemnon, ruler of men" and "the godlike Achilles." The GM may require that any hero with a good Reputation use an appropriate epithet, or give him one.

Greeks of all eras made up nicknames for each other, and these nicknames could play a part in someone's Reputation. Anyone with a significant Reputation may want to choose a nickname – or may get stuck with one! (See sidebar, p. 14, and *Names*, p. 72.)

## UNUSUAL BACKGROUND

## SEE P. B23

One Unusual Background which may allow a heroic Greek PC a variety of unusual abilities is the *Divine Birth* advantage. The PC is the son or daughter of a god. This status is quite common in the heroic myths, but is not appropriate for historical campaigns. The divine parent need not be one of the Twelve Olympians, but can be a minor deity instead. In any case, this advantage is necessary before the character can use the Heroic ST advantage (see below), or purchase any magical abilities beyond Divination. Divine Birth is sometimes a secret. When it is known, it can lead to either a good or bad Reputation, depending on the circumstances and the god. This Unusual Background costs 25 points.

## NEW ADVANTAGE

### HEROIC ST

In general, the Greek heroes are not superhumanly fast, intelligent, or healthy. They may be above average, but they are within the human range. Their strength, however, is often superhuman.

Heroic ST is *only* available to someone who has paid the Unusual Background cost for Divine Birth. The cost for Heroic ST is 60 points for ST 15, plus 10 per point of ST from 16 to 23, plus 5 per point of ST from 24 to 30, plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  point per point of ST from 31 up. This is identical to the Enhanced ST advantage from *GURPS Supers*.

*Examples:* ST 18 costs  $60 + (3 \times 10) = 90$  points. ST 30 would cost  $60 + (8 \times 10) + (7 \times 5) = 175$  points. ST 50 costs 185 points.

Fatigue is calculated normally from the character's ST.

GMs should exercise caution in allowing this advantage. The Unusual Background cost *must* be charged, but even so ST becomes cheaper to buy at a level of 18 with this advantage. It is strongly suggested that GMs place a cap of about 30 on Heroic ST. If the GM doesn't want many super-strong PCs in his campaign, he should raise the cost of the Divine Birth Unusual Background, or disallow Heroic ST entirely.



## DISADVANTAGES

### ADDICTION

## SEE P. B30

The only addictive substance easily available to Greeks is alcohol. Given the Greek practice of watering wine, Alcoholism is rare.

### ENEMY

## SEE P. B39

Just as a Greek hero can have a god for a Patron, he can offend a god and make an Enemy! As with a Patron, the god's interference will be rare (on a roll of 6 or less) and never completely decisive. The divine Enemy may strike at the hero through his friends or family, drive him mad, trick him into committing crimes, send monsters, stir up the elements against him and so on. The hero will always be able to overcome the god's wrath, although he may suffer greatly before he does so. Of course, if the hero *deliberately* provokes or insults the gods, he may find himself on the receiving end of a thunderbolt! This is at base a -40-point disadvantage (which modifies to -20). (See p. 86.)

**SECRET**

Common Secrets include cowardice on the battlefield (if discovered, this will seriously undermine anyone's reputation), profanation of religious rites or defacement of divine images (which could lead to exile or even death), or misuse of power while in public office. A twist on a Secret is the mildly illegal or dangerous act which has been detected by a *sykophant* or professional blackmailer. In this case, protecting the Secret means keeping the *sykophant* paid off (or arranging his death).

**SEE P. B238****SENSE OF DUTY**

Many if not most Greeks have a Sense of Duty toward their *polis* or, in the Heroic Age, toward their clan or tribe. This is a 10-point disadvantage.

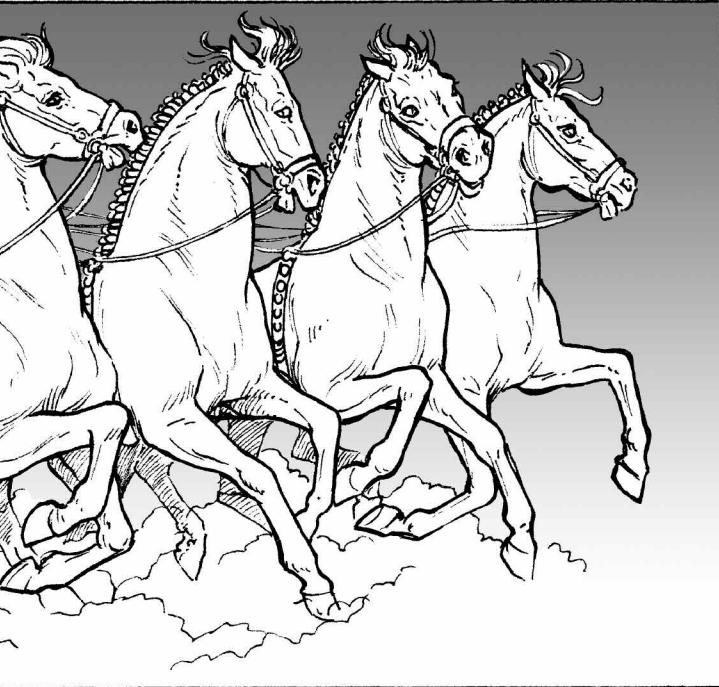
**SEE P. B39****SOCIAL STIGMA**

There were a variety of these:

*Second-class citizen* (-5 points): Women in most periods and areas, resident foreigners or metics (see p. 23).

*Valuable property* (-10 points): Citizen women in Classical Athens and other highly restrictive cities. Slaves also have this level of Social Stigma.

*Outsider/outlaw/barbarian* (-15 points): Most non-Greeks, if they do not have a civilization of their own by Greek standards. This especially includes Macedonians, Thracians and other northern tribes. Runaway slaves and outlaws come under this category, as will a Spartan helot (see p. 49).

**SEE P. B27****SKILLS****BOXING**

Pugilism, a scientific form of bare-hand boxing, is an invention of the Greeks. It, and its cousin *pankration*, are common and much-admired sports. Any Greek athlete or aristocrat might know this skill as his primary hand-to-hand fighting style. (*Pankration* began as a sport requiring quick wits and reflexes, but later practitioners turned to brute strength and ruthlessness.)

**SEE P. B242****COMBAT/WEAPON SKILLS**

The most common armed combat skills in Greece are Knife, Shield, Shortsword, Spear and Spear Throwing. Classical-Age charioteers use missile weapons; before then, they are used mostly by hillmen or foreign auxiliaries. Bow, Sling and Throwing (for rocks) fall in this category. Classical-Age aristocrats learn Lance to use in the cavalry. Almost all Greek men learn at least some combat skills, since everyone is liable for military service.

**SEE P. B49****DRIVING (CHARIOT)**

Common among the Mycenaean nobility (and the legendary heroes), this skill takes the place of horseback riding, a skill not well developed at the time. In the Classical period, it is much less common, although athletes often learn it for the Games.

**SEE P. B68****GAMES****SEE P. B243**

The Greeks play a number of boardgames and gambling games. Boardgames are Mental/Easy skills, while games for stakes should be handled under the Gambling skill.

**LANGUAGE SKILLS****SEE P. B54**

Few Greeks learn any language other than their own. Greek has many dialects, although they are quite close and Greeks rarely have any trouble understanding each other. A few voyagers or traders might learn other languages. The most likely ones are Aramaic (the "common language" of the Persian Empire) and Punic (the language of Phoenician or Carthaginian traders). In Mycenaean times, one might learn the Minoan language, Hittite, or Egyptian.

**LITERATURE****SEE P. B61**

For Classical Greeks, this skill includes knowledge of Greek mythology and the heroic legends, particularly the works of Homer. Almost everyone has at least a low level of this skill. No one is considered quite Greek unless he can recite at least a little Homer from memory, or recall the most important myths.

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

The Greeks use a variety of instruments. The *lyra* or lyre is a harp-like instrument, with a sounding box and several strings stretched on a light frame. The *kithara* is similar, but larger and heavier. There is also an early form of flute, and various horns and trumpets. The lyre and *kithara* are used to accompany poetry and song; amateurs tend to use the lyre, while professional performers use the *kithara*. The flute is a common instrument for courtesans and entertainers. Horns are used in religious rites and for military signals.

## PHILOSOPHY

The Classical Greek world has a number of schools of philosophy. See Chapter 5 for a quick summary of philosophical history. Many educated Greeks adopt one system of belief, and try to pattern their lives according to its tenets.

## RIDING (STIRRUPLESS)

## SEE P. B245

Stirrups are unknown in Ancient Greece. Mounted warriors are much less effective without stirrups, as they cannot anchor themselves in the saddle to deliver blows. All combat rolls while fighting stirrupless are at -2. All Riding rolls are at -3, and rolls to stay seated (see p. B137) are at -6!

## SPORTS

## SEE P. B49

Most Greek athletic events are covered under other skills. One common indoor amusement, popular in Greek (and later Roman) society, is the game called *kottabos*. The details of the game are not known today. It involves flinging the dregs of one's wine at a target or basin. Points are scored for accuracy, or for the shape of the splash pattern. The game is often played by those who attend *symposia* and will be known to any convivial Greek.



## SURVIVAL

## SEE P. B57

Greece is a mountainous country. Any character with Survival will learn that version first. In the Heroic Age, Greece is still heavily forested, so Survival (Woodlands) may be appropriate for heroic characters – as well as Survival (Island/Beach) after shipwrecks!

## THEOLOGY

## SEE P. B62

This skill covers knowledge of the rituals and sacrifices owed to the gods, as well as the names and natures of even the more obscure deities. Most well-educated Greeks, not just priests, have some of this skill. If anyone is required to take a leading position in a religious ceremony, he should roll against Theology. (Remember that a failed roll may offend a god!)

## WRESTLING

## SEE P. B243

Scientific wrestling is another Greek invention, even more highly regarded than boxing. As with Boxing, any Greek with athletic training, especially an aristocrat, may have this skill.

## SEE P. B47

## SOCIAL STATUS

In all periods, Greek society is fairly egalitarian and political organizations are small. No Greek may have Status above 6. Powerful people from other cultures may have higher Status in their own societies, but this is very unlikely to impress Greeks.

### Heroic Age Status

Level		Monthly Cost
6	Important hero or king	\$10,000
5	Minor hero or king, important nobleman	\$5,000
4	Minor nobleman	\$2,000
3	Wealthy merchant, important administrator	\$1,000
2	Average merchant, administrator	\$500
1	Bard, minor military officer or scribe	\$200
0	Free craftsman or warrior	\$150
-1	Poor craftsman or farmer, herdsman	\$100
-2	Freed slave, beggar, unskilled laborer	\$75
-3	Valuable slave	\$60
-4	Slave	\$60

### Classical Status

Level		Monthly Cost
6	Important statesman, tyrant or king	\$10,000
5	Minor statesman, wealthy aristocrat	\$5,000
4	Average aristocrat	\$2,000
3	Wealthy businessman, famous poet or athlete	\$1,000
2	Average merchant, rich farmer, or minor poet	\$500
1	Minor landowner	\$200
0	Free citizen landholder, prominent craftsman	\$150
-1	Ordinary craftsman	\$100
-2	Freed slave, unskilled laborer	\$75
-3	Valuable slave	\$60
-4	Slave	\$60

## WEALTH AND ECONOMICS

In the Classical Age, almost every Greek city-state uses its own coinage, so Greeks will have to deal with a bewildering variety of coins of different sizes, mintings and metal content. What matters is the metal content of a coin, not its face value. Merchants and moneychangers keep scales, and know several ways to test the weight and content of any coin. Any coin from outside the local city is carefully examined and tested, and its value is part of the haggling.

The Athenian coinage system includes the following denominations, with the estimated equivalents in *GURPS* \$:

8 chalkoi . . . . 1 obol (\$1)
6 oboloi . . . . 1 drachma (\$6)
4 drachmai . . . . 1 stater (\$24)
25 stater . . . . 1 mina (\$600)
60 minae . . . . 1 talenton or "talent" (\$36,000)

The *chalkos* is a bronze coin, the *obol*, *drachma* and *stater* silver. The *mina* and "talent" are units of weight, not types of coinage; they are made up of so much weight in silver, whether coined or not. Other coins exist and are commonly accepted. In particular, the gold Persian coin called the "darek" (*dareikos*) is considered equivalent to 25 *drachmai* or about \$150.

In the Mycenaean period, there is no coinage, as the concept of coined money has not yet been invented. All trade is by barter. Consider the costs of living and equipment to be the same, but remember that no actual money is changing hands.

Any purchases must be made in kind. In the heroic legends, money almost never plays any part. The heroes never carry much equipment in any case, and they seem able to get anything they needed.

## STARTING WEALTH

The average starting wealth in a *Greece* campaign should be \$5,000. This assumes that the character is from a major trading city like Athens, Corinth, or Syracuse. If the campaign is to be centered in a minor city-state, the average wealth should be adjusted downward.

As always, starting wealth is mostly in the form of immovable property: a house, farmland, slaves and so on. Only 20% of most characters' starting money will be in the form of cash-on-hand or "adventuring" goods. Spartan characters will have almost no cash-on-hand, since the currency of Sparta was in the form of clumsy iron bars accepted nowhere else. Also, any property "owned" by a Spartan will be his only in practice.

Legally, all land and helots were owned by the Spartan state and parceled out to the citizens.

Bandits, outlaws and barbarians might be classed as "wanderers" and able to use all of their starting wealth for equipment. Heroic-Age campaigns should be flexible on the whole question of money and property. Any hero might be of high social standing and yet spend most of his time adventuring. In such a case, the GM may wish to allow him to carry a good assortment of equipment even if it violates the 20% rule.

## JOB TABLE

In most Greek cities, even slaves earn wages, often exactly the same wages as free men working on the same job. The difference is that a slave is not allowed to *keep* what he earns; it goes to his master. If a slave holds a job, assume that he can keep \$60 per month (subsistence wages). If he has a generous master (GM decision, or on a good Reaction Roll) he may be allowed to keep a bit more than this. A few of the jobs below are only held by slaves.

### Job (Required Skills), Monthly Income

#### Poor Jobs

Job (Required Skills), Monthly Income	Success Roll	Critical Failure
Beggar* (no qualifications), \$45	10	-1i/3d
Dole recipient (citizen), \$30	10	-1i/LJ
Juror (citizen), \$60	10	-1i/LJ
Street vendor* (Merchant-10), \$50	PR	-1i/2d
Street walker* (Streetwise-10, Sex Appeal-10), \$60	Worst PR	-1i/2d
Unskilled servant (slave, ST 11+), \$60	10	-1i/1d

#### Struggling Jobs

Barber* (Professional Skill: Hair Cutting-12), \$75	PR	-1i/-1i,1d
Burglar* (ST 11+, Stealth-12), \$100	Worst PR	-1i/2d,T
Flute-girl* (Musical Instrument (Flute)-12, Sex Appeal-11), \$75	Worst PR	-1i/2d
Household servant (slave, Domestic skill-11), \$75	PR	-1i/1d
Poor farmer* (\$1,000 in land, Agronomy-11), \$90	PR	-1i/-2i
Small store owner* (\$1,000 investment, Merchant-10), \$80	PR	-1i/-2i
Smith (Blacksmith-11), \$120	PR	-1i/-2i
Stonemason (Sculpture-11), \$120	PR	-1i/-2i
Unskilled laborer (ST 11+), \$120	10	-1i/2d

#### Average Jobs

Architect* (Architecture-12, Leadership-12), \$150	Best PR	-1i/-3i
Athletic trainer (Athletic skills-12, Teaching-12), \$10/pupil	Worst PR	-1i/-1i,1d
Citizen soldier (Combat skills-12), \$150	PR	1d/3d
Farm hand (ST 10+, Agronomy-10), \$150	Worst PR	-1i/-2i
Farmer* (\$3,000 in land, Agronomy-12), \$200	PR	-1i/-2i
Hetaira* (Savoir-Faire-12, Sex Appeal-12), \$120	Worst PR	-1i/LJ
Mercenary soldier (Combat skills-13), \$180	PR	1d/3d
Minor priest (Theology 11+), \$100	PR	-1i/LJ
Potter* (Pottery-12), \$135	PR	-1i/-2i
Sailor (Seamanship-11), \$150	PR	1d/2d
Sculptor* (Sculpting-12), \$135	PR	-1i/-2i
Sycophant* (Fast-Talk-12, Streetwise-10), \$165	Worst PR	-1i/LJ,T
Teacher* (Literature-13, Musical Instrument-12, Teaching-12), \$15/pupil	Worst PR	-1i/-2i
Weaponsmith (Armoury-12), \$150	PR	-1i/-1i,1d
Work gang foreman (ST 11+, Leadership-11), \$135	Leadership	-1i/3d
Vase-painter (Artist-12), \$200	PR	-1i/-2i

#### Comfortable Jobs

Army officer (Leadership-12, Combat skills-13), \$240	Best PR	1d/2d
Investor (see below)		
Naval officer (Leadership-12, Seamanship-13), \$200	Best PR	1d/2d
Poet* (Literature-13, Poetry-13), \$220	Poetry	-1i/-3i

**Job (Required Skills), Monthly Income****Comfortable Jobs (Continued)**

Poet* (Literature-13, Poetry-13), \$220	Poetry	-1i/-3i
Temple priest (Animal Handling 11+, Theology 12+), \$250	Best PR	-1i/LJ
Sophist* (Bard, Law, or Philosophy-13, Teaching-13), \$40/pupil	Best PR	-1i/-2i
Speech-writer* (Bard-12, Writing-12), \$250	Best PR	-1i/-2i
Young aristocrat (Social Status 3+), \$300	12	-1i/cut off

**Wealthy Jobs**

Wealthy investor (see below)		
Well-known sophist* (Reputation +2 or higher, Bard, Law, or Philosophy-14, Teaching-14), \$150/pupil	Best PR	-1i/-2i,T

\* Freelance occupation. See p. B193.

PR = prerequisite; LJ = lose job; T = go on trial for some crime (theft, slander, impiety and so on); “d” means dice damage from an accident or punishment (the GM may opt to play this out as an adventure); “i” means months of income lost.

**COMMON INVESTMENTS**

Certain classes of investment have a fairly constant return throughout the Classical Age, even during wars and other upheavals. In lieu of a formal job from the Jobs Table, the GM may assume that anyone of at least Comfortable Wealth has money invested in one of the following areas.

Investors should have the listed skills at 13+ to get the most out of their money, but this is not a requirement. The GM may adjust the return somewhat if the investor is unusually competent (or unusually incompetent) in the appropriate skills.

**Banking:** about 25% return on investment per year (2.1% per month). Bankers need Accounting, Administration and Economics skills. Most professional bankers are ex-slaves and metics, but many citizens loan money out as part of an investment strategy. Bankers might take the risky step of financing trading ships on their annual voyages overseas. Return might be somewhat higher if the ship comes back. If not, then the banker will have to sue the shipowners (or their heirs) to get anything.

**Farmland:** about 20% return on investment per year (1.7% per month). Landowners need Administration and Agronomy skills.

**Manufacturing:** about 30% return on investment per year (2.5% per month). Factory owners will need Administration and Merchant skills. Most citizen factory owners have as little to do with the factories themselves as possible. As a result, hired or slave managers might cheat them. Metic or ex-slave entrepreneurs tend to involve themselves more and are harder to cheat.

**Rental Property:** about 8% return on investment per year, in rents (0.7% per month). This is fairly secure income, as a respectable landlord can watch over his own property, and rental property never goes empty. Administration is the necessary skill.

**Slaves:** about 40% return on investment per year (3.3% per month). Some very wealthy men go into the business of buying hundreds or even thousands of slaves, leasing them to the city to work in the mines or quarries. This is a very lucrative investment, but it requires high Status and Contacts within the city government (mining concessions are hard to come by). Administration is the appropriate skill.

**WEAPONS AND ARMOR**

During the Heroic Age (TL1), almost all weapons are made of bronze. A very few items might be made of meteoric iron. Also, the Hittites develop ironworking techniques late in the period, and a few Hittite weapons might fall into Greek

hands. During the Classical Age (TL2), iron weapons are commonplace but steel is not yet known. The following rules modify the Weapon Quality rules in the **Basic Set** (see sidebar, p. B74). It is suggested that they apply to any game in which bronze, iron and steel weapons may appear together.

Bronze or iron weapons may be of any cost, but those which cost more than the listed price are still of *good* quality; they are simply more lavishly ornamented than normal. They do no extra damage and have a  $\frac{1}{2}$  chance of breaking when used to parry a very heavy weapon that is also bronze (see pp. B99 and B111). Any weapon, no matter what its price, is considered of *cheap* quality and has a  $\frac{1}{2}$  chance of breaking when used to parry a heavy weapon of superior metallurgy (bronze against iron or steel, iron against steel).

Weapons of rare metal (iron during the Bronze Age, or steel in Classical times) are considered one class higher than their actual quality when figuring their cost. Weapons of the common metal cost as listed in the **Basic Set**.

**WEAPONS**

**Javelins:** Many Greek troops, both cavalry and light infantry, carry javelins for stabbing and throwing. These function exactly as laid out in the **Basic Set**.

**Spear:** Heroic Age warriors and Classical hoplites alike use a seven- or eight-foot spear. Its only unusual feature is a pointed metal shoe on the butt, to make the spear easy to stick in the ground and to provide a second point if the shaft breaks. If the shoe is used as a weapon, the spear does -1 damage. The spear can be thrown, but hoplites rarely do so when in ranks.

**Kamax:** Without stirrups, cavalrymen cannot seat themselves, couch a lance and use their horse's momentum to punch through enemy armor. Instead, Classical cavalry use a long spear called a *kamax*. It is very similar to the infantryman's spear and has the same pointed shoe, but is somewhat longer. The horseman grips the *kamax* near the butt and uses it to stab down at infantry on the ground. The *kamax* does normal two-handed spear damage (thrust+3 impaling) but has a two-hex reach when used from horseback against targets on the ground.

**Xyston:** Macedonian heavy cavalry use a kind of lance, a 12-foot spear called a *xyston*. This is not couched, but is used to stab at unprotected portions of an enemy, such as his face or his horse. It often shatters in combat, so a second complete spearhead is on the butt and can be used if the shaft breaks. Treat the *xyston* as a lance, but use the rider's ST rather than the horse's to compute damage.

**Swords:** Bronze-Age warriors use a stabbing sword, leaf-shaped with no edge. Treat this weapon as a normal

shortsword, but a swinging attack using it will do only crushing damage. In historical times, there are a number of styles of iron shortsword. These vary in size from a “large knife” to a full “shortsword” in terms of the **Basic Set**. Longer swords are rare.

## ARMOR

**Dendra panoply:** Wealthy Bronze Age warriors use this style of armor in battle. The armor is made of heavy bronze plates, covering the torso (front and back) and upper arms. A kind of half-turret rises to protect the neck and lower face. The armor covers locations 5, 9-11 and 17-18 with PD 4, DR 6. \$3,000, weighs 50 pounds.

**Bronze corselet:** Most heavy infantry or cavalry of the Classical Age wear heavy bronze corselets, with wide armholes to give the arms complete freedom of movement. A skirt of metal plates or hard leather strips protects the groin. Some corselets are sculpted to give a naturalistic appearance,

mimicking the contours of the chest and belly. Such armor covers locations 9-11 and 17-18 with PD 4, DR 5. \$1,300, weighs 40 pounds.

**Bronze greaves:** Protection for the lower leg. These are plates of bronze, with soft cloth beneath to prevent chafing. They cover the leg from knee to ankle (areas 12-14) but leave the upper leg uncovered. On any hit to the leg, roll 1d and ignore the armor on a 1-2. Greek greaves are two-plated or wrap fully around the leg, so they also protect against attacks from behind. PD 3, DR 3. \$300, weighs 17 pounds (per pair).

**Helmets:** A variety of helmet styles are used throughout the period. The most common is the “Corinthian” helmet, essentially a bronze pot-helm with wide cheek-pieces to protect the face. This variety of helmet can be pushed back on the head when danger is not imminent, for greater comfort and wider vision. Covers areas 3-5 with PD 3, DR 3. \$160, weighs 7.5 pounds.

Some helmets are more standard pot-helms. These have the same PD and DR, cost half as much, and weigh 5.5 pounds, but only cover areas 3-4.

**Shields:** Mycenaean warriors use a tall, narrow shield, roughly in the shape of a “figure eight” to allow use of a spear around the sides. In Classical times, the most common shield is the *hoplon*, a sturdy round shield used by hoplite infantry. Treat both of these as medium shields. If the Damage to Shields rules are in use (sidebar, p. B120), treat Mycenaean shield as Small for this purpose.

## EQUIPMENT LIST

The following list of items is not intended to be exhaustive, but to indicate the kind of prices one could expect to find in Classical Athens.

### Real Estate

Mediocre farmland	\$750/acre
Average farmland	\$1,000/acre
Vineyard	\$3,000/acre
City house	\$3,000–\$20,000
Country house	\$3,000–\$50,000
Large building	\$50,000–\$100,000

### Household Goods

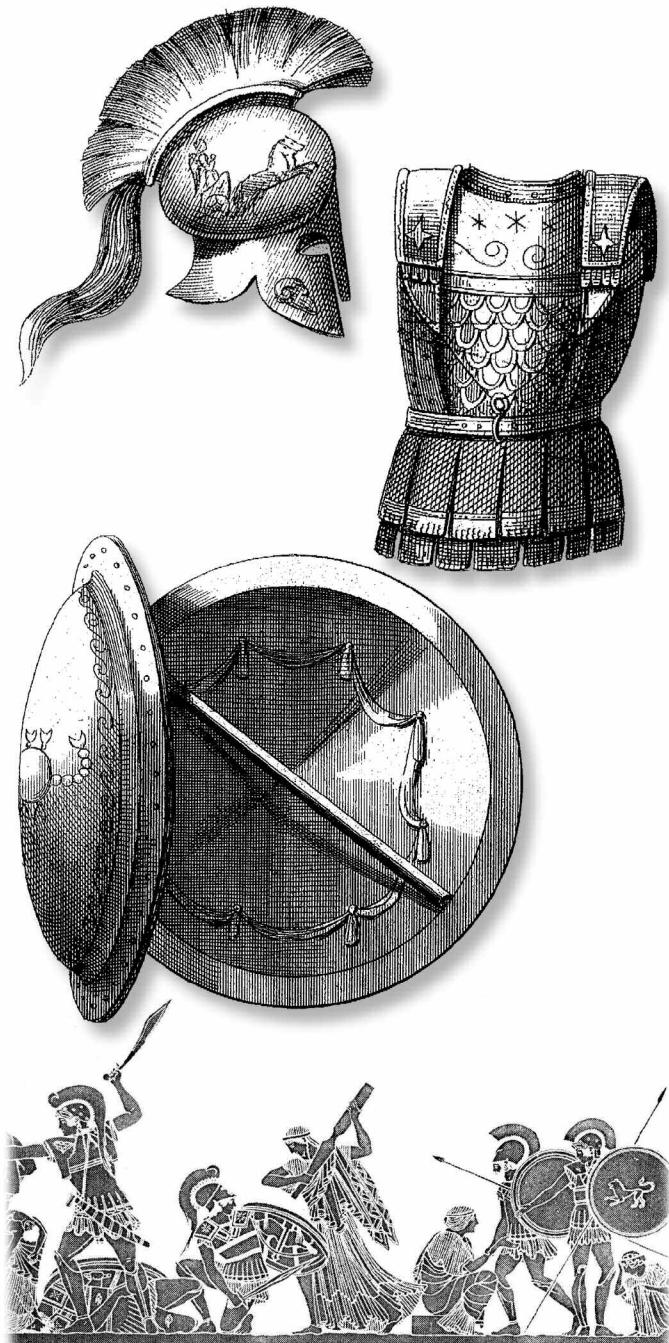
Small pot or wine jar	\$2
Amphora	\$3
Large storage jar ( <i>pithos</i> )	\$180–\$300
Large woven basket	\$20
Tool (drill, saw, hammer)	\$10–\$15
Chair	\$6–\$12
Table	\$12–\$24
Bed	\$24–\$48

### Livestock

Goat	\$60
Ox	\$300–\$500
Horse	\$2,000–\$4,000

### Slaves

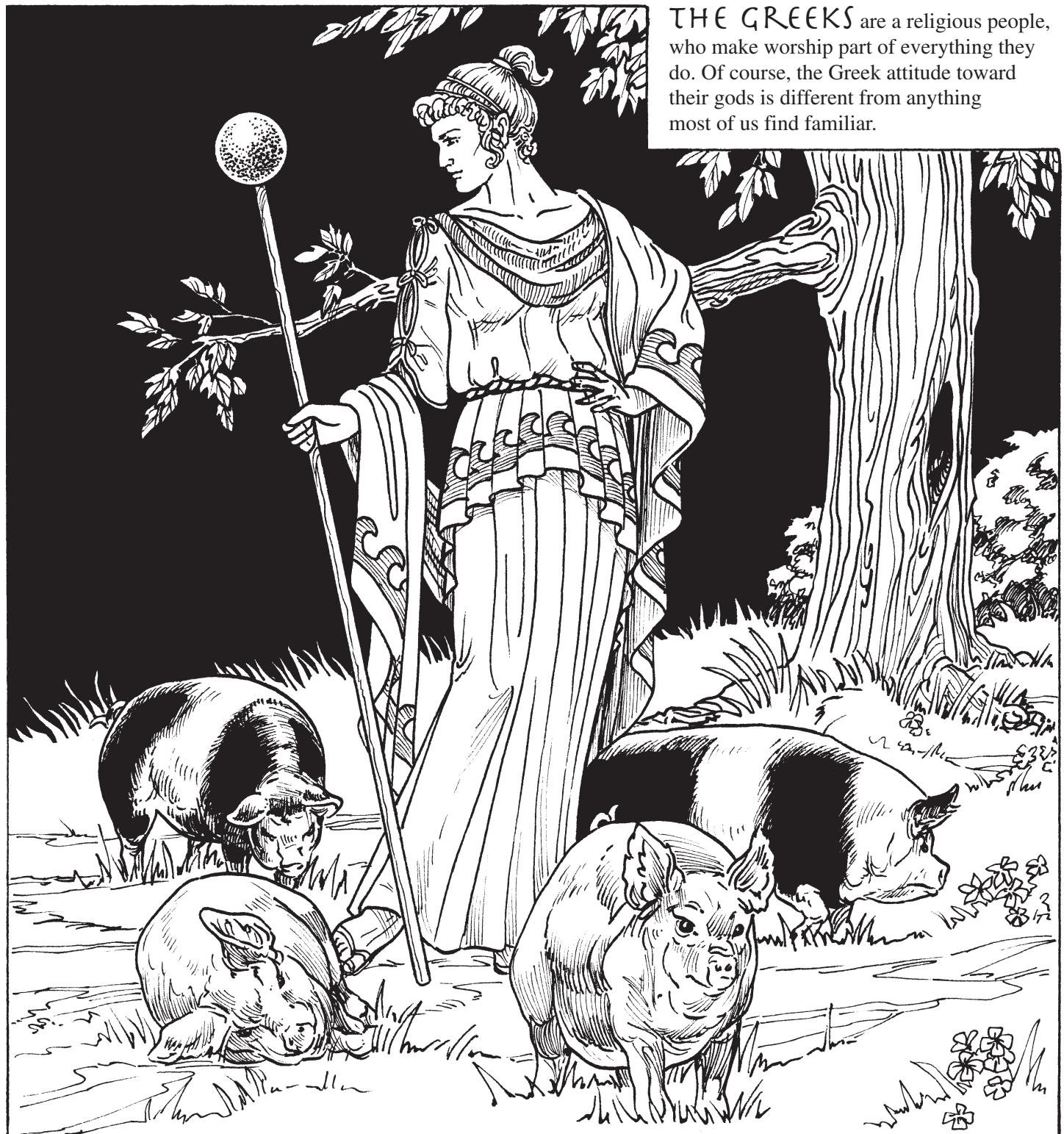
Untrained child	\$300
Ordinary adult slave	\$800–\$1,200
Highly skilled slave	\$1,400–\$2,200
Maintaining a slave	\$60/month or more



## 5

RELIGION  
AND MAGIC

THE GREEKS are a religious people, who make worship part of everything they do. Of course, the Greek attitude toward their gods is different from anything most of us find familiar.





## THE TITANS

The Olympians are not the first generation of gods in Greek myth. Before them came the Titans, a whole pantheon of deities independent of the Olympians and much older. The Titans may be a remnant in myth of the nature-deities of the Minoans, or of the pre-Greek population of the mainland.

In the myths, the Titans were the children of Gaea and an early sky-god, Uranus. Their leader Cronus deposed and crippled his father to become the king of the gods. He married his sister Rhea and made her his queen. Cronus and Rhea were nature-gods, deities of the sky and earth like their parents before them. Other major Titans included Oceanus and Tethys, male and female gods of the sea, and Hyperion, a god of light associated with the sun. All in all, there were 12 major Titans, six gods and six goddesses.

There were many minor Titans. Oceanus and Tethys had a number of children who became spirits of oceans and rivers. Hyperion sired Eos, Helios and Selene, deities of the dawn, the sun and the moon. Iapetus and Asia were the parents of Atlas, Prometheus and Epimetheus, ancestors of all humanity.

Gaea prophesied to Cronus that a child of his by Rhea would overthrow him. Fearing for his power, he swallowed each of his children as they were born. Hades, Demeter, Hestia and Hera all met this fate. Rhea eventually learned how to trick Cronus, and so Zeus escaped and was raised in hiding. Some myths claim that Poseidon escaped earlier and joined his brother in exile. Zeus eventually returned and rebelled against Cronus. He tricked his father into vomiting up his siblings, who appeared fully grown and ready to fight. Eventually, Zeus deposed the Titans and took the kingship of the gods. Some of the Titans, particularly those of the second generation, helped Zeus and were left free after the war. The older Titans were all exiled into Tartarus.

This whole complex of myths echoes the replacement of pre-Greek religions by the Olympian cult, as the Greeks migrated down into the Aegean region. GMs setting adventures in the historical Bronze Age may want to use the Titans as the dominant pantheon among the Pelasgians or Minoans (possibly under different names).

The Greeks recognize and worship many gods. This means that they do not fight over which god is the “right” one to worship, nor do most people devote themselves to one deity alone. In fact, the Greeks go to great lengths to make sure that they never *overlook* any gods in worship.

Even a single deity can be thought of in a number of ways. The Greeks use *epithets*, special names which describe the same god in different aspects. For example, in his role as guardian of a city, Zeus is worshipped as Zeus Polieus. As the patron deity of all the Greeks, he is Zeus Hellanios or “Zeus of the Hellenes.” In his capacity as god of weather, he is Zeus Brontes, “Zeus the Thunderer.” Priests and poets often refer to the gods by epithet only.

Another aspect of Greek religion is *syncretism*, the ongoing process by which new gods and new ways of worship enter Greece. New religious ideas are always being imported. The overall effect is a level of religious tolerance that we would find unusual. The only thing that is really unacceptable is atheism!

## THE GODS ON OLYMPUS

The foremost Greek deities are the twelve gods of Olympus. In Greek belief, the Olympians are living beings, as much a part of the natural world as humans. They are stronger and wiser than mortal men, although a great hero can *sometimes* get the better of them for a short time. Each Olympian has responsibility for certain aspects of the world, and has great powers relating to that sphere of influence. These gods have very human personalities, differing from humanity mostly in their supernatural power and their immortality.

The Olympians are best known through the poetry of Homer and Hesiod and from the cycles of heroic myth. These stories are almost a Bible for the Greeks. They are not regarded as infallible, but they shape how the Greeks think about their gods. Here we discuss the major Olympian deities, as the myths present them and as the Classical Greeks worship them.

## ZEUS

Zeus is the king of the gods. He has control over clouds, rain, thunder and lightning. He is also a great shapeshifter, and has taken the forms of many animals, humans and natural forces. His weapon is the lightning bolt, the one power that no human or god can stand against. As king of the gods, Zeus is the personification of rulership and justice. He enforces customs such as oaths, the laws of hospitality and obligations toward the helpless. He is the wisest of the gods. Some myths even claim that Zeus controls fate, or at least is in charge of implementing fate’s decrees.

Zeus is not the first king of the gods. He gained that position after overthrowing his father Cronus (see sidebar). Zeus is ruthless when it comes to keeping his throne. He has never been in serious danger of losing power, despite a few futile attempts by Titans, giants and the other gods to depose him.

Zeus is wise and thoughtful. On the other hand, if he is thwarted, his rage can be terrible. As the most masculine of the gods, he has had a huge succession of mistresses and lovers. Several of the Olympians as well as many of the greatest heroes are Zeus’ children. Zeus rarely intervenes in the affairs of mortals. Sometimes he orders the other gods to assist his own heroic children, but this does not happen often. Usually he stays aloof, and prevents the other gods from interfering as well.

Zeus is worshipped everywhere in Greece as the supreme god. He is the patron of no single city, but the largest temples are built to him. He is majestic and physically powerful in appearance, with a handsome face, curly hair and beard. His temple images are almost always humanlike statues, sometimes of awesome appearance.

## HERA

Ox-eyed Hera is the wife of Zeus and queen of the gods. The patroness of marriage, she is responsible for enforcing marriage vows. Strangely, although she controls childbirth, she is not a goddess of motherhood or fertility.

Hera is also the child of Cronus and Rhea, and therefore Zeus' sister. Cronus swallowed her, but after Zeus defeated Cronus he rescued her (and all their siblings) from their father's belly, and then married her. In the myths, Hera spends most of her time acting the jealous wife while Zeus has affairs with mortal women and other goddesses. Hera often schemes to harm Zeus' mortal lovers and children, by driving them mad or raising up fierce monsters against them.

Some of the oldest and most important Greek temples are dedicated to Hera, both alone and in conjunction with Zeus. Hera is beautiful but mature in appearance. Hera's cult images are sometimes statues, but some of her most famous images are crudely carved wood, or even simple wooden planks.



## POSEIDON

Poseidon was originally a god of the deep earth, but later he became famous as a god of the sea. He is a popular deity, the patron of sailors and fishermen. Worship of Poseidon has an element of fear as well, since he commands powerful natural forces. He is both the Lord of the Sea and the Earth Shaker, and both storms and earthquakes are his to command. He commands all the creatures of the sea, including terrible sea monsters. Strangely, Poseidon is also the god of horses, and is often connected with charioteers and riders.

Poseidon is another son of Cronus and Rhea. After Zeus deposed Cronus, he and his brothers divided the world between them. Poseidon was allotted the seas to rule. He rarely comes to Olympus, preferring instead to live in his palace in the Aegean Sea off Euboea.

In the myths, Poseidon is a stern god, who can sometimes be terrible in his rage. He is unrelenting in his pursuit of heroes who offend him. He uses his command of natural disasters and sea monsters to harass heroes or cities, although he rarely follows this to the point of complete destruction. On the other hand, he is honest, steadfast and trustworthy.

Poseidon has many temples throughout Greece. He is handsome and stern, with curly hair and beard like his brother Zeus. He always carries his famous trident and often appears on horseback or in a chariot.

## HOW TO PLAY THE GODS

The Hellenic gods are rather different from those in the usual fantasy campaign. Here are some points to keep in mind when using the Olympians in a campaign with fantastic elements.

*The gods are not there for the heroes' convenience.* The gods may help or instruct their favorite mortals, but only in their own time. If a hero makes sacrifices to a god, prays quite sincerely, and has never insulted the god in the past, then the god may lend a hand – but the god will choose the methods, and will *not* simply remove all difficulty from the hero's path. Gods, like Game Masters, enjoy watching even their favorites overcome obstacles.

*The gods are neither all-powerful nor all-knowing.* The gods have many powers, but none are omnipotent. Each has his own limited sphere of influence. Mortals can sometimes get the better of the gods through trickery or force, although this is difficult and always invites retribution. The gods also do not know everything, although they are more intelligent and wiser than most mortals.

*The gods have no moral alignment.* None of the gods, even Zeus, are particularly good. None of them, even Hades, are particularly evil. Any of them can be gracious and helpful, or malicious and destructive, depending on their mood. This means that the gods don't require their followers to follow any sort of moral code – in fact, the gods rarely seem to behave morally themselves.

*The gods do not war against each other.* This is not to say that they live in eternal peace on Olympus. Like any large family full of strong personalities, the Olympians have their petty squabbles and ongoing feuds. These are often about things one might think too trivial for gods to worry about. No god will ever insist that he be worshipped exclusively, nor will he demand that his followers fight *en masse* against those of another god. The gods may try to recruit individual heroes to take part in their quarrels, of course.

*The gods do not see humans as worthless pawns.* They value human beauty, which is why so many of them take mortal lovers. They appreciate human courage, which is why they follow the activities of heroes and help them out from time to time (and also why they never help too much). They like thrilling spectacles, which is why they sponsor athletic events and festivals. They also value free will, which is why they never use their powers to enslave human minds.

## THE DIONYSIAN CULT

Dionysus can be one of the darkest of the Olympian gods. The Greeks believe that he is a god of irrationality and madness, but rather than avoid him they make him an important part of their religion. They feel that giving way to madness on occasion helps them stay rational and sane the rest of the time. Many of the myths about Dionysus involve mortal kings who resist the god, and are punished when their families or subjects succumb to his madness.

Some of the Dionysian festivals are fairly ordinary. The Athenian Dionysia is the occasion for great dramatic competitions each year. A more informal way to worship the god is to cast aside all civilized restraints. Worshippers take wine out into the countryside. On the hillsides they drink heavily, dance and run, tear their clothes, make music with voice or flutes, make love, and generally act as wildly as they please until the wine overcomes them. Sleeping heavily, they wake the next morning and return to their everyday lives.

Dionysus was thought of as a Thracian god, and his cult may have originated there.



## APOLLO

Apollo is a powerful but enigmatic deity. His arrows inflict plague and disease, but he is also a god of healing. He is the patron of music, song and poetry, and also a master of prophecy and the interpretation of omens. He is the deity responsible for the purification of blood guilt.

Apollo is the son of Zeus and the minor goddess Leto. He is a mighty slayer of monsters, particularly famous for destroying the great dragon called Python who once lived near Delphi. Delphi was a shrine of the Earth until then, but after Apollo destroyed Python he took over the shrine and made it his foremost oracle.

In Hellenic belief, Apollo is an idealized god, remote and a little frightening. He is not married, but takes lovers among lesser deities and mortals. Aside from this, he rarely intervenes in mortal affairs, although he can be generous to those who attract his notice with music or poetry. He often grants the gift of prophecy to favored mortals. His remoteness from human concerns has a dark side. Apollo can be coldly ruthless when pursuing his enemies or inflicting plagues on humanity.

Apollo is a handsome, beardless young man, nude or lightly clad, and usually carries a bow. He often wears a crown of laurel leaves, and is accompanied by an animal, usually a lion, wolf, or stag. His temple images are usually statues, sometimes very beautiful ones.

Interestingly, Apollo was apparently not worshipped by the Mycenaean Greeks. His cult entered Greece from the East sometime during the Dark Ages. In Classical times his greatest temple is at Delphi, although the island of Delos is also sacred to him. Of course, Apollo plays a major role in the heroic myths, and any fantastic campaign should certainly include him.

## ARTEMIS

Artemis, like Apollo, has a wide variety of responsibilities. She is the Mistress of Animals, the goddess of the hunt, of animal sacrifices, and of the natural world.

Artemis is Apollo's twin sister, Zeus' daughter by the goddess Leto. She is definitely a goddess whose darker side predominates. She loves animals but can also be cruel in hunting them. She is a virgin, ruthless in the defense of chastity. Mortal men who catch a glimpse of her nakedness can suffer horribly. Artemis loves bloody sacrifices, and is infamous for accepting human sacrifice on occasion. Popular belief holds that women who die in childbirth were killed by Artemis.

Despite this fierce nature, Artemis can sometimes be generous. Although she has nothing to do with marriage itself, she is the patron and protector of maidens, and can help with childbirth if she chooses. She can also help hunters, especially if they devote themselves to her ideal of chastity.

Like Apollo, Artemis was originally an Eastern deity, and in the East she is worshipped in many strange ways. Her foremost temple is in the Ionian city of Ephesus. Artemis appears as a young woman, lightly clad and carrying a bow, and is usually accompanied by a doe or stag.

## ATHENA

Gray-eyed Athena is the goddess responsible for the arts and ideals of civilization. She is a goddess of wisdom and a patron of crafts, particularly weaving and carpentry. She invented a wide variety of items used in everyday life. She is also responsible for the arts of lawmaking and politics. Finally, she is a war-goddess, but rather than delighting in battle, she is in charge of wise strategy and the re-establishment of peace after battle.

The myths about Athena's origin conflict, but in the best (and most unusual) story she is the daughter of Zeus and the Titaness Metis, born from Zeus' forehead after he swallowed Metis whole. Athena's personality is cool and thoughtful. She is a virgin goddess like Artemis, but this is the result of simple disinterest rather than active hostility toward physical love. Athena is rarely vindictive, and often appears to give mortals advice or to subtly alter the outcome of battles in their favor. When doing this, she usually shapeshifts into the appearance of someone the favored hero knows.

Athena is worshipped throughout Greece, but the Athenians consider her their special patron. She is a coolly beautiful woman, who usually wears a war-helmet and carries a spear. She sometimes carries a shield as well.

## LESSER OLYMPIANS

Six more deities are part of the circle of 12 Greater Gods on Olympus, and one other, it is said, stepped aside that one of them might take her place there.

### DEMETER

Demeter rarely takes part in the heroic myths, but her cult is very important in Classical Greece. The goddess of agriculture, particularly the cultivation of grain, she is also responsible for human fertility. She is one of the Olympians, but her roles as the Earth Mother and mother of Persephone connect her to chthonic worship (see p. 87); this gives her an uncanny aspect.

### ARES

Ares is the god of violent battle. In the heroic myths, he loves to take part in the wars of mortals, although he sometimes loses when facing other deities or mighty heroes. Since few of the Greeks enjoy battle for its own sake, they dislike Ares and erect few temples to him.

### HERMES

Hermes is a complex deity. He oversees boundaries, and the crossing of boundaries. He is the herald and messenger of the gods, and the patron of mortals with those occupations. He is also the patron of herdsmen and thieves, as people who often cross boundaries. His connection with thievery makes him a trickster god, who plays jokes on the other gods or on mortal heroes. Finally, he is the guide of those who cross between life and death, both the dead and those living heroes who need to cross into the underworld.

The worship of Hermes is very old, stretching back into Mycenaean times. His oldest images are very crude, simple cairns or stone pillars at boundaries. Even in the Classical era, images of the god can be simple stone pillars, sometimes with no features beyond a crudely-carved beard. Hermes sometimes appears in temple art as a lightly-clad young man.

### APHRODITE

Aphrodite is one of the simplest of the deities, responsible for passionate love and the delights of sex. Her personality is generous and even-tempered,

## THE MYSTERIES AT ELEUSIS

There are many "mystery cults" in Greece – religious movements characterized by secret rituals and teachings. The secrecy surrounding these cults is taken very seriously. The most popular of these cults is centered on the town of Eleusis, about ten miles west of Athens along the coastal Sacred Way.

The Eleusinean Mysteries revolve around the worship of Demeter and her daughter Kore (or Persephone). Kore represents the eternal cycle of planting and harvesting of grain. Similarly, the Mysteries are thought to be the gateway to personal resurrection. People initiated into the Mysteries believe that they have earned immortality after death.

The Mysteries take place in two stages. The Lesser Mysteries are held near Athens every spring. Candidates for initiation purify themselves by bathing in a stream. The Greater Mysteries take place in the early fall. All the potential initiates walk from Athens to Eleusis in a solemn procession, with most of the population of Attica accompanying them. First-year candidates are taught the lesser rituals of Demeter and take part in many rites of purification, bathing and fasting. Those who learned the rites the year before are now initiated.

The initiation involves a kind of communion, where the initiates eat and drink sacred cakes and water. They are then led into hidden chambers, where the secret rituals take place. We know little about these rites, but it is likely that a passion-play depicting the abduction and return of Kore is performed, after which the initiates are led through dark underground caverns into a hidden chamber filled with brilliant light. There they are shown holy objects which symbolize death and resurrection. By all accounts, the initiation is a very moving experience. Once the participants leave the caverns, they are *mystai* or "initiates" forever.

Almost anyone can take part in the Mysteries, as long as they are free of blood-guilt. PCs may wish to take part in them, and if so the GM should make the final rituals a very solemn occasion. In a campaign with fantastic elements, characters who undergo the initiation will be guaranteed a pleasant afterlife. There is no other game effect, although *mystai* may have a slight bonus on Reaction Rolls from other initiates.

## MINOR GODS

Greek religion involves literally thousands of deities. Every important prayer or ritual includes invocations of both major and minor divine beings. While no list can be complete, here are a few examples of the lesser gods venerated by the Greeks.

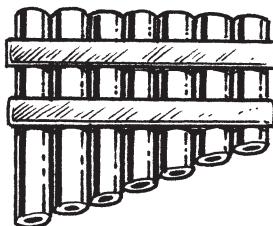
*Eros*, the son of Aphrodite and Ares, is a god of love, usually capricious or destructive love. At his mother's request, he often shoots his golden or lead-tipped arrows at mortals to provoke sudden or inappropriate love affairs.

*Helios*, *Selene* and *Eos* are deities of light and the sky. The myths claim they are "cousins" of the Olympians, lesser Titans who supported Zeus when he rebelled against his father and were left free when the rest of the Titans were imprisoned. Helios is the god of the sun, Selene the goddess of the moon. The Greeks believe that both drive chariots through the sky, carrying their lights. *Eos* is a goddess who personifies the light of dawn.

The *Muses* are nine goddesses who personify the arts. They are the daughters of Zeus and the Titaness Mnemosyne. They serve Apollo, and often sing at great celebrations held by the gods. Each is the patron of a specific art or science. Their names and spheres of influence are: Calliope (epic poetry); Clio (history); Erato (choral poetry); Euterpe (flute); Melpomene (tragedy); Polyhymnia (mime); Terpsichore (light verse and dance); Thalia (comedy); and Urania (astronomy). The Muses have a famous shrine on Mount Helicon, in the Peloponnese. They are invoked by poets and artists when beginning a performance.

*Nemesis* is an example of a personified abstraction, the goddess of vengeance. Zeus sends her to punish mortals who overstep their bounds, breaking divine law or exhibiting *hubris* (see sidebar, p. 22).

*Pan* is a god for shepherds, popular in mountain regions like Arcadia. He resembles a satyr: ugly face, human torso, goat's legs. He has many strange powers. Some legends claim that the god Apollo learned the art of prophecy from him. He hides in cover most of the time, to sleep or watch nymphs during the heat of the day. It is dangerous to disturb him, for when awoken suddenly he can make a great shout in his surprise – anyone hearing this shout suffers "panic" and flees in unreasoning terror.



although she is rather vain and can become angry if her beauty is disparaged. She usually exacts revenge by causing the object of her anger to fall in love with someone dangerous to him or her. Aphrodite is married to Hephaestus, but has affairs with other gods and mortals, particularly Ares. She always appears as a young and beautiful woman.



## HEPHAESTUS

Hephaestus is the smith of the gods, a master inventor who builds many intricate devices for them. He is unusual in that he is lame, and often a comic figure among the gods. He is married to Aphrodite, whose affairs with others humiliate him, but he sometimes manages to get the better of her through cleverness. In the myths, he is portrayed as bad-tempered and unforgiving. Occasionally he intervenes in mortal affairs by giving his inventions away as gifts. This might be at his own initiative, or at the request of another god.

## DIONYSUS

Dionysus is a god of fertility, second only to Demeter in that role. His power is felt in living juices: blood, sap and especially wine. He is also a god of ritual dance, and thus the patron deity of the theater. He is wildly unpredictable, able to provide joy and relief from suffering, but also able to inflict violent madness. He wanders over the Earth, often followed by a train of maddened women called Maenads, who attack and tear apart anyone who resists him.

Dionysus is a new god. The son of Zeus by Semele, a Theban princess, his mother died after six months of pregnancy. Hermes sewed him up in Zeus' thigh for the last three months. When he reached adulthood, he wandered through Greece and far beyond with his Maenads, forcing those he met to accept his worship. Once his cult was widely established, he ascended to Olympus to become one of the 12 Olympians. Dionysus appears as a mature, bearded man, carrying a vine-wrapped staff, tipped with a pine-cone, called a *thyrsos*.

## HESTIA

Hestia is a modest and unassuming goddess, responsible for the hearth in every Greek home and, by symbolic extension, for the happiness and prosperity of the household. She takes no part in the struggles of gods or mortals. In fact, according to myth, she gave up her place as one of the 12 Olympians to make way for Dionysus, once the wine-god had established his cult among humanity.

## MINOR DEITIES

The Olympian religion also includes a tremendous variety of minor deities: river-gods, lesser gods of the sea and the winds, servants of the gods on Olympus and so on. Even abstractions are personalized and worshipped as gods. Many of these have temples and local cults of their own, and are often included in sacrifices for the major deities. Examine any good reference on Greek mythology for detailed information on these (and see sidebar, p. 84).

## OLYMPIAN CULTS

### TEMPLES

Worship of the Olympians centers around a sanctuary or *temenos*, a tract of land set aside as sacred. This area is marked off from the outside world by boundary stones or a wall. Inside the sanctuary, certain activities are forbidden: sex, childbirth, and violence other than in the course of a sacrifice. This gives rise to the idea of “sanctuary.” Since violence is not allowed inside the *temenos*, it can be a refuge for those who are in danger of arrest or murder. Only the most hardened of foes will risk the god’s anger by seizing or killing someone inside a *temenos*.

Inside the sanctuary is an altar, where worshipers perform sacrifices. This altar is always outside, where the smoke from burnt offerings will not damage any buildings. A cult image might stand behind the altar. The image is often enclosed in a temple, although this is not necessary.

### SACRIFICE

The institution of sacrifice is the heart of Greek cult. The largest sacrifices involve a cow or ox, but on lesser occasions worshippers use smaller animals. The poor sacrifice what they can afford. The priest kills the beast amid elaborate ritual, and splashes its blood on the altar while prayers are spoken aloud. Priests and attendants then butcher the animal, placing the inedible portions on the altar to be burned. The participants in the sacrifice cook and share the meat.

Lesser sacrifices are common. At certain festivals, worshippers offer up a portion of the harvest (the “first fruits”) by turning it over to the local temple. Another common sacrifice involves wine. Whenever the Greeks drink, they make a libation by pouring a small portion out on the ground for the gods. Finally, in order to ask a favor of a god or thank him for past favors, a pious Greek may dedicate valuable objects to one of the god’s temples. Such dedications are always carefully inscribed with the worshiper’s name and the reason for the gift.

### PRAYER

The Greeks do not pray quietly and humbly. Instead of kneeling or bowing, they stand upright and spread their arms out to the god’s image or toward the dwelling place of the god. Instead of praying silently, they speak aloud, possibly very loudly if they are in public. This is in keeping with the Greek attitude toward religion. Conscious of human dignity, they never abase themselves before the gods.

### FESTIVALS

Large-scale religious events are very common. Any Greek will take part in a number of these each year. The most common examples are religious processions and community sacrificial ceremonies.

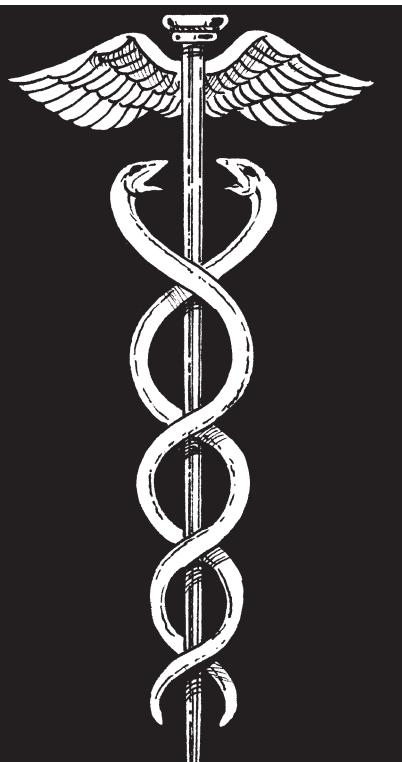
In a procession, the people gather in a line behind the priests or privileged citizens, who carry cult images. The parade moves along, the people chanting

## ASCLEPIUS

Asclepius was the son of Apollo by a mortal woman. He spent his youth in the care of a Centaur named Chiron, who taught him medicine. He inherited a great talent for healing from his divine father, and upon reaching adulthood was given gifts of Gorgon’s blood by the gods. He performed many miracles of healing, even raising the dead on a number of occasions. Finally, Zeus feared that Asclepius would reverse the natural order of life and death, and killed him with a thunderbolt.

Asclepius was deified after his death, and became the focus of an important healing cult. The foremost temple of this cult is in Epidavros, on the coast of the Argolid peninsula. The temple is run by a clan called the Asclepiads, who claim descent from the demigod himself. In a way, it is the Lourdes of the Greek world, the place where the hopelessly ill and crippled go for miraculous healing.

At the Epidavros temple, the petitioners are met and examined by the priest-doctors. After a time of fasting and purification, the worshipper makes a sacrifice and then spends a night sleeping in the temple. The god appears to the patient in a dream, performing a miraculous cure or prescribing a course of treatment. Many Hellenes believe these cures work, and leave inscriptions of thanks at the temple. Another way of expressing thanks is to present the temple with a small votive offering, a model of the affected portion of the patient’s body in clay or precious metals.



## ANGERING THE GODS

The Olympians are, in many ways, people. They have amusements, they fall in love, they like to talk and argue with each other. And sometimes they get angry.

The gods always respond if sacred things are treated lightly. If a mortal breaks an oath, violates the sanctuary of a shrine, omits a sacrifice or fails to show proper respect to a god, he can expect to incur divine wrath. Also, specific deities enforce aspects of divine law. For example, Zeus avenges injustice to the weak and courtesy to guests, and Hera punishes those who violate marriage vows. Finally, all the gods hate *hubris* (p. 22). A mortal who boasts, or who in any way compares himself to the gods, will be punished.

Each god vents his anger in a different way. Some are quite direct, inflicting physical punishment. Zeus can kill a sinner outright with a thunderbolt. Poseidon uses earthquakes or storms, or sends sea monsters. Apollo's arrows infect mortals with disease. Other gods work more subtly, affecting a sinner's mind or bringing him bad luck. Hera, for example, can drive a mortal mad. Aphrodite often causes her victims to fall in love with someone they shouldn't, or encourages those they love to turn elsewhere.

The gods can be petty, especially when they take a transgression personally. Still, they usually tie the severity of a punishment to the level of the crime. This can lead to cooperation among the gods, especially if the offended deity's usual method of punishment doesn't seem appropriate in a specific case.

If a mortal survives his punishment, he can try to placate the offended god. This involves prayer and sacrifice, although the sinner must be completely sincere and the ritual should be elaborate. Simply engaging in routine worship is not enough to wipe out sin. A god can also impose special acts of contrition – a hero, for example, would be sent on a dangerous quest that serves the god's purposes. What will suffice is always up to the god. For minor offenses, a god may relent as soon as the wrongdoer sincerely demonstrates contrition. A major evil, on the other hand, can result in lifelong retribution. Very serious crimes can even taint a mortal's children, leading to a family curse.

In game terms, a player should roll against Theology skill if he wants to know whether a given action will offend a deity. The Common Sense advantage should also apply here. Theology can also be used to determine which god is angry at someone, if this isn't clear in context. Finally, one can roll against Theology to determine what actions might make up for a minor sin. The gods are sometimes hard to understand, however. The GM may rule that a person must visit a temple or even an oracle, to get expert advice as to how to regain the gods' favor.

or singing hymns to the god. When the procession reaches its destination, the crowd takes part in a ritual involving the cult objects.

Community sacrifices are usually offered on behalf of the people by a government official or important priest. After the sacrifice, the entire crowd takes part in the feast and celebration.

Many religious festivals include contests of poetry or music, dramatic performances, even races and other sporting events. The religious character of the festival is never forgotten, however. The winners often dedicate their prizes to the god who sponsors the event, and their exertions during the competition are assumed to please the god as well. The Greeks believe that the gods enjoy the same kind of entertainment that mortals do.



## ORACLES

One of the more unusual aspects of Greek religion is the institution of oracles. Zeus and Apollo have the most oracles, but other gods have them as well. These oracles are a means for the Greeks to peer into the future. Individuals come with questions, either for themselves or on behalf of their cities. The methods vary. Sometimes the priests cast lots and interpret the result. Other oracles are mediumistic. Here, a priestess goes into an ecstatic trance, the state of *enthousiasmos* ("inspired by the god"). The priestess cries out, usually in gibberish, whereupon the priests interpret her "words" and frame the oracle's response in poetic form. The famous oracle at Delphi was of this kind, although there was a lot-oracle there as well.

Greeks believe that the gods speak through their oracles, and use them instead of holy writings to interpret the gods' will. Most oracles are hard to interpret, however. Their words almost always have more than one meaning. If the petitioner takes the oracle's advice but things go wrong, it usually seems that he simply misinterpreted the oracle's words.

# THE CHTHONIOI

The Olympian cult makes up only one aspect of Greek religion. Before the Greeks arrived, the inhabitants worshiped an array of gods and spirits of the Earth and the underworld – *chthonic* deities. The Olympian cult absorbed parts of this nature-religion, and probably “acquired” Hera, Demeter and Artemis in this way.

Some aspects of the Earth-religion remain separate, giving Greek religion a dark and mysterious component. Some deities are Earth-gods, or *chthonioi*. The Olympians are usually gods of the city-state or of civilized arts; the *chthonioi* are gods of fertility, agriculture, death and decay. Most Greeks pay attention to both aspects of their religion – the two cults are never in conflict.

## GAEA

In Greek myth, Gaea is a great goddess of the Earth, the first of all things to emerge from primal Chaos, the Mother of all things. Gaea has many children, including the Titans (see p. 80), the immediate forefathers of both gods and men.

Gaea is not much worshipped by later Greeks, but she is very likely related to the foremost goddess of the pre-Greek culture. The Greeks do occasionally pour libations for her.

## HADES AND PERSEPHONE

According to the myths, Hades is the brother of Zeus and Poseidon, who received the rule of the underworld after the downfall of the Titans. He is fierce and brooding, the embodiment of death. He is also the lord of riches, since all wealth comes from the Earth and all graves include grave-goods. He rarely visits the upper world, and protects his realm carefully, not allowing the living to enter or the dead to escape. Hades is an integral part of Greek religion, but the Greeks do not worship him so much as they make sacrifices to keep him away. He is often referred to as the “other Zeus” or the “Zeus of the underworld,” Zeus Chthonios.

The most famous myth involving Hades tells how he came to the upper world and fell in love with Persephone, the daughter of Demeter. He abducted Persephone and carried her off to the underworld to be his wife. Eventually Demeter discovered the truth, and demanded that her daughter be returned, but Persephone had eaten while in the underworld and so was part of the underworld forever. Hades made a bargain with Demeter, allowing Persephone to spend half of each year in the upper world with her mother. And so, when Persephone is in the upper world, Demeter is happy and everything blooms and grows. When the Maiden returns to Hades, however, growth stops and all life withers.

Like Hades, Persephone is dark and fearful, but she occasionally helps mortals. She is usually referred to by an epithet: she is simply Kore, or “the Maiden.”

## LESSER CHTHONIOI

Hades and Persephone are not the only chthonic gods. The Titans remain confined in the underworld, and are sometimes invoked in oaths and curses. Other spirits live in the underworld as well, and have power to harm mortals.

## THE FURIES

The Erinyes, or “Furies,” are a trio of goddesses who punish the murderers of kinsmen, hosts who harm their guests, and powerful people who abuse the weak. The Erinyes punish their victims by pursuing them relentlessly, whipping them, and eventually driving them mad. They are said to be older than the Olympians. Many Greeks, especially the Athenians, refer to them ironically as the Eumenides, or “Kindly-Minded Ones.”

# THE UNDERWORLD

The Greek underworld is called “the house of Hades” or simply “Hades,” after the god that rules it. Greeks believe that everyone has an existence after death, as a “shade” of his mortal form. The shades of the dead go to the house of Hades for eternity to be the god’s subjects, and almost never return to the living world. This underworld has several sections.

When souls or living heroes descend into the underworld, they must cross the river Styx. A ferryman named Charon carries passengers, but requires a price of all who come. Pious mourners bury their dead with a coin to pay Charon for passage. On the far shore of Styx is the entrance to the underworld, a great gate guarded by a hideous three-headed dog named Cerberus. This beast guards the gate in both directions, keeping the dead from escaping and the living from invading.

When the dead arrive, they come to a crossroads. There the shade of King Minos stands, delivering judgments. He sends the dead to different portions of Hades, depending on how evil or virtuous they were in life.

The gloomy portion of Hades is where most of the dead spend eternity. Here the shades of the dead have a pale and cheerless existence, aware but deprived of all the experiences of life, and unable to accomplish anything. Most of the dead do not suffer, but they are always sad at having lost the zest that life gave them. A few of the dead who committed terrible sins in life are given eternal punishments that symbolically match their sin.

The chasm of Tartarus is as far below Hades as Hades is below the mortal world. No mortals suffer here – instead, Zeus has confined his immortal and divine enemies in the bottomless pit. Here the Titans are imprisoned, and various giants who rebelled against Zeus.

Elsewhere in Hades is a pleasant region called the Fields of Elysium. There the dead who are favored by the gods have a pleasant existence, full of the pleasures and pursuits of eternal life. Unlike most of the dead, they can enjoy food, wine, love, companionship and worthwhile activity. Many mythical heroes supposedly live here, as do those who have undergone initiation into a mystery cult.

Of course, to get into *any* part of the underworld requires that proper funeral rites be performed after death. Without a proper burial or cremation, a Greek can only look forward to a wandering, ghost-like existence trapped on Earth, with no home for his spirit. This is everyone’s worst fear, and one of the worst punishments imaginable involves execution and refusal of any funeral rites (see p. 42).

*Continued on next page . . .*

## THE UNDERWORLD (CONTINUED)

Living heroes occasionally descend into Hades while on quests. The trip is always dark and fearful. An entrance to the underworld must be found on the surface of the Earth, usually in a cave or some other deserted place. The hero must pass guardians such as Cerberus. Hades and Persephone do not take kindly to invasions of their realm, and may trap the hero there forever if he does not win their support. Such a quest is the most dangerous that any hero can undertake.



### HEROIC CULTS

Along with the Olympian and chthonic cults, the Greeks engage in the veneration of heroes. A hero is considered a kind of lesser deity, local in scope. Any hero who is venerated by all the Greeks (such as Asclepius or Heracles) is considered to have ascended to Olympus and become a full-fledged god.

Hero cults are like the cult of saints of the European Middle Ages. Every town, no matter how small, is likely to have at least one hero shrine. Important cities have patron heroes among the mightiest figures in Greek myth. In fact, the heroes we know are probably famous because they are worshiped at important cities, and not the other way around.

Where tribal or clan distinctions are made, each clan has its own ancestor hero, worshiped by his descendants. Even professions have heroes – for example, physicians pay devotion to Asclepius. All these forms of hero-worship occur side by side. At Athens the city venerates the national hero Theseus. Each tribe in Attica has its own ancestor hero, with his own festival. And small towns in Attica have their own hero shrines, such as the shrine of Oedipus at Colonus.

Worshippers believe a hero shrine to be the tomb of the hero. Such shrines are often found at the site of ancient (that is, Mycenaean) ruins. The worship of a hero involves sacrifices of a chthonic nature, since the hero is known to be dead. Prayers are said invoking the hero's aid. In a way, the cult of heroes is taken more seriously than the Olympian cult. A hero is specific and personal. Also, heroes were once human and can be expected to understand human concerns.

### HECATE

Hecate is a goddess usually regarded by the Athenians as chthonic in nature. They regarded her as a goddess of crossroads and pathways, darkness, the moon, magic and sorcery, who can grant mortals any gift she wishes, including magical powers (although these gifts are often double-edged). In other parts of Greece, she rules the wildernesses of land, sea and air (and is therefore the patron of hunters and deep-sea fishermen).

Hecate is closely related to Artemis, and often appears similarly as a youthful maiden, carrying torches rather than Artemis's bow. She is always accompanied by a pack of great hounds. Sometimes she is shown as having three bodies and three heads.

One tradition says it was Hecate who told Demeter where Persephone was.

### CROSSOVER DEITIES

Several of the Olympian gods have chthonic aspects. The distinction between Zeus and Hades is often blurred, for example. Demeter has chthonic aspects, through her natural sphere of influence and her connection with Persephone. As a guide of the dead to the underworld, Hermes crosses back and forth between Olympian and chthonic realms.

Despite these crossovers, the Greeks maintain a strict contrast between the Olympians and the chthonic gods. The Olympians are bright and immortal, while the *chthonioi* are gods of darkness, death, decay and fertility. One god might perform in both realms, but they are always differing aspects of the god, denoted by different epithets, worshipped at different times and in different ways. Yet, in the end, both aspects of the world are always present in Greek religion. One cannot exist without the other.

### CHTHONIC CULTS

The chthonic powers are worshipped in many of the same ways that the Olympians are. There are sacrifices and libations, and sanctuaries that sometimes include oracles.

There are also important differences between the two aspects of Greek religion. Temples to the Olympians are built high, and usually have raised altars associated with them. Chthonic temples are usually low and rounded, like tombs, and the offering-places are usually pits into which the sacrifice's blood is allowed to flow. Olympian sacrifices usually take place during the day, while chthonic sacrifices take place in the evening or at night.

Chthonic oracles are different as well, usually located underground, possessed of dark and frightening natures. The most famous of these is an oracle of Zeus Trophonios ("the Nourisher"). The oracle is in a deep cave, and the questioner must be led into the chamber at night. He is magically drawn through a low opening into a second cave, where he invariably loses consciousness. The oracle's information is revealed in his dreams, and is always uncanny and dark. The successful questioner supposedly loses the ability to laugh for some time afterward.

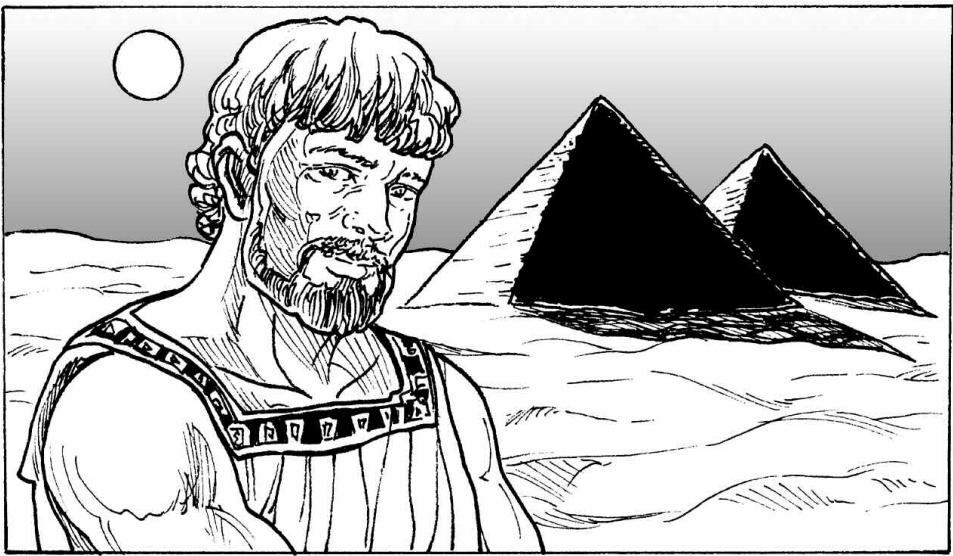
### PHILOSOPHY

The term *philosophia* literally means "love of wisdom." Even at its beginnings, the philosophic movement was important to Greek history and society.

### PRE-SOCRATIC PHILOSOPHY

#### IONIAN PHILOSOPHERS

The first recorded philosopher was a man named Thales, a merchant who lived in the city of Miletus in the early 6th century B.C. Thales traveled a great



deal, and came into contact with both Babylonian and Egyptian civilization. There he learned geometry, basic mathematics and astronomy. He became famous by predicting an eclipse of the sun, accurate to the day. Since eclipses can be dated precisely, this is one of the earliest historical events we can place, on May 28, 585 B.C.

Like most of the later philosophers, Thales was interested in a variety of subjects. The Ionian cities consulted him on political matters, and he made improvements in the art of navigation and the calendar. Most importantly, he was interested in how the universe was made up and how reality worked. He believed that he could find answers through reason and investigation rather than seeking them in mythology. He theorized that the universe was composed of one substance (water) and was able to argue logically in favor of the idea.

### THE FIRST SCHOOLS

Many philosophers followed Thales. Interestingly, most of these appeared in the colonies, in Ionia or southern Italy, rather than in the Greek homeland.

In Ionia, the Milesian school continued Thales' speculations about the origins and makeup of the physical universe. Democritus suggested the existence of fundamental particles called *atomoi*. Empedocles and Anaxagoras developed the idea of physical elements. Anaximander proposed a theory of evolution which claimed that humans had developed from fish.

Meanwhile, in southern Italy one of the great mystic philosophers attracted a huge following. Pythagoras believed the universe was ordered by mathematical principles, so humans could attain power and enlightenment by studying mathematics. He was apparently influenced by Indian religious ideas, teaching a doctrine of reincarnation. Pythagoras established the first university in Europe, where the students learned theology, mathematics and natural science. The Pythagorean school accepted women as teachers and students, and there were rumors that its highest initiates learned magic.

The intellectual climate these ideas brought about was unique in human history. For the first time, human beings were seriously trying to explain the world in non-religious terms.

Around the turn of the 5th century, the eastern and western extremities of the Greek world lost the independence that had led to this intellectual progress. Ionia fell under Persian rule, while the colonies in Sicily and Italy suffered from inter-city warfare and came under the domination of Syracusan tyrants. Philosophy now moved to the Greek homeland. Under Peisistratid tyranny and the democracy, intellectuals found a ready audience in newly-wealthy Athens.

### IMPORTED CULTS

Polytheism doesn't consider it strange to find new gods to worship. A great many new religious ideas were probably absorbed during Greek prehistory, giving rise to myths of pre-Olympian gods. Other cults enter Greece throughout Hellenic history.

In the few records from Mycenaean times that have been deciphered, some Olympians are conspicuously missing; for example, Apollo and Artemis are not mentioned. However, these deities are well-known by Homer's time centuries later. So at some point during Greece's Dark Ages, cults of Apollo and Artemis were probably introduced to the Greeks from somewhere in the East. The myths give these deities an Eastern origin, and in Classical times they are worshipped in Asia in strange, ancient ways. Aphrodite, too, is said to have come from the island of Cyprus, and may be related to the Phoenician goddess Astarte.

One example of a cult imported during Classical times is the worship of Adonis. Adonis is a god of youth, a god who actually dies: a strangely un-Greek notion, considering that all the other the gods are immortal. The women of Athens worshipped Adonis in annual ceremonies that involve ritual mourning for the dead god.

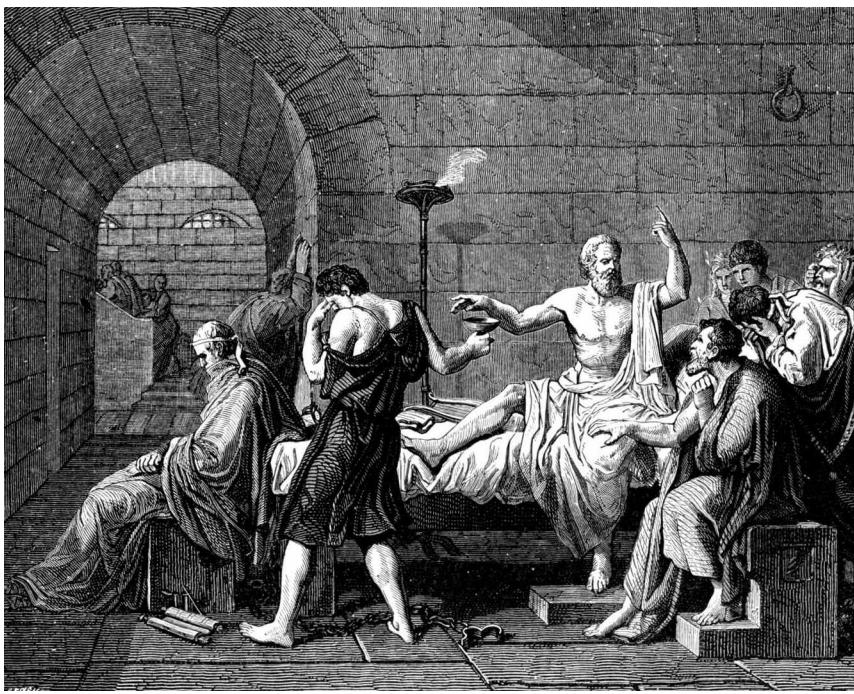
### ORPHISM

One cult supposedly imported from Thrace is the religious movement called "Orphism." Supposedly started by Orpheus after his return from Hades, it teaches one to win passage to a blessed afterlife through magical rituals and the purification of sin. Many of its rituals involve the memorization of poems or the burial of poetic texts with the dead, almost like the funeral-book customs of New-Kingdom Egypt. The initiate avoids the hazards of the afterlife with these poems, and wins passage to the Elysian Fields where he will live in bliss forever.

Orphism is popular at times, although it has its excesses. Many wandering Orphic teachers extort money by selling magical charms and prayers, threatening the reluctant with eternal punishment in Hades if they refuse. Orphism influences the mystic-philosophic school of the Pythagoreans, in Italy. By Classical times the cult has dwindled in influence, although it still has followers.

### SAMOTHRACE

Another imported mystery cult, which remains popular into Roman times, is based on the island of Samothrace. On the island, initiates take part in ancient rituals that probably predate Greek settlement. The gods of Samothrace are unusual in that even their names are kept secret from the public. Initiation into the cult supposedly gives one good luck at sea, protection from shipwreck and drowning.



## SOCRATES

Age 44; 5' 5", 145 lbs.; stocky and overly muscled, bright brown eyes, balding with a fringe of gray hair, long beard, dresses very plainly.

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 15, HT 11.

Basic Speed 5.75, Move 5.

Dodge 5.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 180

Advantages: Fearlessness +2; Literate; Reputation +4 (among intellectuals, as a wise and honest man); Strong Will +3; Toughness (DR 1).

Disadvantages: Appearance (Unattractive); Honesty; Odious Personal Habit -1 (relentless questioning); Reputation -2 (among conservatives, as a questioner of tradition); Status -1 (ordinary craftsman); Struggling.

Quirks: Lazy craftsman; Quirky sense of humor; Strong moral principles; Thinks a spirit asks him questions and gives him advice; Uninterested in money and possessions.

Skills: Bard-15; Carousing-12; Detect Lies-15; Diplomacy-14; Fast-Talk-19; Hiking-11; History-14; Knife-13; Law-14; Literature-15; Philosophy-18; Savoir-Faire-16; Scrounging-16; Sculpting-13; Shield-13; Shortsword-12; Singing-12; Spear-12; Streetwise-16; Survival (Mountain)-15; Swimming-13; Tactics-14; Teaching-17; Theology-16; Wrestling-12.

This is the famous philosopher during the early years of the Peloponnesian War, when he is most admired. He is probably the wisest and most persuasive man in Hellas, although his habit of pestering people with questions causes some to dislike him. Others become his fast friends and compete to spend time in his company.

of the few things the Greeks would not tolerate. The Sophists also believed in a distinction between fixed natural law and mere human custom, which was artificial and could be changed. Some rejected the idea of a moral code altogether, teaching that people should do as they please as long as they had the strength. These teachings implied a criticism of long-standing traditions, and offended many.

## CLASSICAL PHILOSOPHY

While the Sophist movement approached its peak, another philosopher became famous in Athens.

### SOCRATES

Socrates was born about 470 B.C. He was an ugly and eccentric man, a stonemason by profession and poor throughout his life. He left Athens only to fight in the Peloponnesian War, displaying great courage in battle.

Like most Athenians, Socrates loved to spend his time in conversation with his friends. It was during these talks that he gained a reputation as the wisest man in Greece, a reputation that the oracle at Delphi confirmed. He was extremely influential in Athens and beyond.

Unlike the Sophists, Socrates wrote nothing and accepted no money for his "teaching." His method was relentless questioning. He claimed to be ignorant about all things, and challenged anyone who professed knowledge. Questioning their assumptions and definitions, he would invariably snarl them into logical contradiction and absurdity. Socrates believed that everyone had the ability to answer questions correctly, so he taught by questioning and leading others down the logical trails he wanted to demonstrate.

Not everyone loved Socrates. He was a man of rigid moral principle, which sometimes led him to take unpopular stands in public life. His habit of questioning authority and tradition irritated the political leaders of Athens, and laid him open to charges of atheism. Most Athenians thought of him as a Sophist, so as the Sophists became less popular so did Socrates. Worse, some of Socrates' students did vast harm to the Athenian democracy in the turbulent times around the Peloponnesian War.

## THE SOPHISTS

About 450 B.C., a man named Protagoras appeared in Athens and introduced himself as *sophistes* or "wise." He quickly became the leader of a major intellectual movement. The Sophists were teachers, who believed that educated people were better citizens and better human beings. They concentrated on logic and speaking technique, which allowed their students to perform well in democratic assemblies and law-courts. The scientific theories of earlier philosophers were also part of the curriculum. Sophists usually charged for their lessons, and if they had good reputations they could make their fortunes teaching the sons of wealthy and powerful men.

The Sophist movement was controversial. Some Sophists believed that human beings could know nothing for sure about the gods. This came very close to atheism – one

When the democracy was restored after the war, Socrates was put on trial and convicted of atheism and corrupting the youth of Athens. He had an opportunity to plead for a light sentence or exile, but refused on principle and was sentenced to death. Surrounded by his friends, he drank hemlock in 399 B.C.

## PLATO

One of Socrates' students was a young man named Aristocles, known by his nickname of Platon or Plato. He was born about 430 B.C. to an aristocratic family. In his youth he was a well-known athlete, and with his family background he seemed destined for a career in politics. He was disgusted at the events around the turn of the century, however. The execution of Socrates, whom he loved and admired greatly, particularly revolted him. He therefore gave up all political ambitions and spent his life as a teacher, writer and philosopher.

Plato's written work is in the form of 26 written "dialogues," philosophical discussions put into the mouths of historical figures. Socrates appears as the protagonist in most of these, although it is hard to know how much they reflect Plato's own thinking as opposed to Socrates' teachings. Plato was primarily interested in metaphysics, psychology and politics rather than natural science.

Plato traveled widely, and spent a great deal of time in Sicily. There, he was an associate of the tyrants of Syracuse, and tried in vain to persuade them to rule according to ethical and philosophical ideals. Plato established a world-famous university outside Athens, the Academy. He died about 350 B.C.

## ARISTOTLE

Aristotle, the third of the great Classical philosophers, was a student and later a teacher at Plato's Academy. He was born about 385 B.C. in the small town of Stagira, in northern Greece. He was famous as the tutor of Alexander the Great, and as the founder of a second school in Athens. He was probably the greatest scientific genius of the ancient world.

Aristotle's interests were wide-ranging. He was an excellent logician; he built a system of logic which still dominates Western thought. Like Plato, he took an interest in ethics and political science, publishing careful studies of both disciplines which are still used today. He published treatises on rhetoric, poetry and drama. He also revived interest in natural science. He studied physics and was the founder of the science of biology, carefully investigating the anatomy and behavior of animals.

Aristotle's main contribution to philosophy was careful organization. He worked to collect all of human knowledge into one great system, which could then be expanded by later researchers without losing its cohesion.

## MAGIC

The presence of magic, and its power level, does much to determine the tone of an Ancient Greece campaign. The GM must determine how much and what kind of magic he will allow. The guidelines below will help the GM to recreate the tone of the Greek myths – full of artifice, herbalism and alchemy, rather than the kind of magic usually presented in fantasy campaigns.

In general, magic should be rare. The GM should assess an Unusual Background cost for any human with the Magical Aptitude advantage (see p. 72). This does not apply to divine beings, of course. Such creatures not only use magic routinely, but also have a wide variety of magical powers that human mages never use.

## OMENS AND DIVINATION

Divination is the most common form of magic. The Greeks have no holy writings to tell them what the gods want, so they use omens and oracles to foretell the future and ask questions of the gods.

## MEDEA

Age 25; 5' 2", 120 lbs.; blonde hair, hazel eyes.

ST 10, DX 11, IQ 15, HT 12.

Basic Speed 5.75, Move 5.

Dodge 5.

No armor; no encumbrance.

Point total: 250

*Advantages:* Alertness +1; Appearance (Very Beautiful); Literate; Magical Aptitude +3; Status 5 (important noble); Unusual Background (Divine Birth); Wealth (Wealthy).

*Disadvantages:* Bloodlust; Enemy (King Aeetes on a 6 or less); Enemy (kinmen of Pelias on a 9 or less); Reputation -2 (as a vicious murderer); Social Stigma (second-class citizen).

*Quirks:* Enjoys traveling; Loyal to friends; Rarely wears shoes; Very independent; Vindictive when angered.

*Skills:* Acting-15; Alchemy-15; Bard-16; Dancing-11; Diagnosis-14; Diplomacy-14; Driving (Chariot)-10; Fast-Talk-16; Knife-12; Naturalist-15; Occultism-16; Physician-14; Savoir-Faire-18; Singing-13; Swimming-12; Theology-15.

*Languages:* Colchian-15; Greek-15.

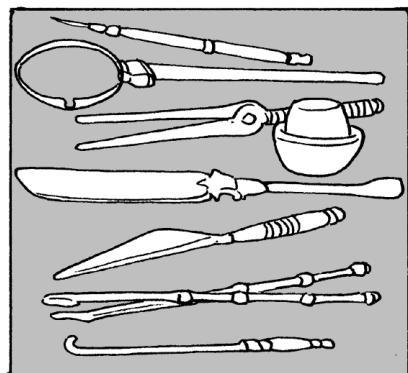
*Spells:* Blur-16; Continual Light-16; Create Fire-16; Darkness-16; Daze-16; Detect Magic-16; Foolishness-16; Ignite Fire-16; Light-16; Sleep-16.

*Weapon:* Dagger, 1d-3 impaling.

*Equipment:* Alchemist's tools, various alchemical preparations.

Medea grew up in the court of King Aeetes in Colchis. She is the granddaughter of the sun god Helios, and inherits her magical talents from him. She is primarily an alchemist rather than a spellcaster. See *GURPS Magic* for an extensive discussion of the Alchemy skill (pp. M98-102).

Here, Medea is at the height of her powers, living as Jason's wife and the queen of Corinth. She is proud and fiercely independent, although for love of Jason she is willing to act the dutiful wife for him. She is definitely the mind and determination behind Jason's success. The people of Corinth don't trust her, knowing that she has committed terrible murders on Jason's behalf.



## MANA LEVELS AND SPELL LISTS

The GM should carefully consider what mana level to apply to his setting. In the myths, magic is rare and generally subtle. For a campaign with many fantastic elements, a normal mana level is probably most appropriate. A more historical campaign should probably have low or no mana, making magic much more difficult and unreliable if it exists at all.

In a fantastic campaign, the GM may wish to have scattered areas of high mana, possibly aspected toward some category of magic (see p. M94). A common example would be famous caves, desolate riverbanks, or entrances to the underworld.

The magic of the Greek myths has a specific flavor, which a GM can match by controlling what spells are available in his campaign. Spells listed in the *Basic Set*, *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Grimoire* are appropriate in varying degrees.

**Animal spells:** The spells in the *Basic Set* are appropriate. The gods have access to powerful versions of the Shapeshifting spells, but human shapeshifters are very rare.

**Body Control Spells:** Various divine and monstrous creatures may have any or all of these spells. Human spellcasters should not have access to most.

**Communication and Empathy Spells:** Human spellcasters, especially seers, may have some of these spells. The exceptions are Control Person, Possession, Permanent Possession, Exchange Bodies and Exorcism. Not even the gods should have spells which could rob people of free will.

**Earth, Air, Fire and Water Spells:** Most of these spells are appropriate to the genre, although only the gods should have the more powerful spells from *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Grimoire*. Chthonic gods or their worshippers might have Earth spells. Weather magic from the Air and Water colleges is particularly appropriate. The exception is the Elemental Spirit group (Summon Elemental, Control Elemental and Create Elemental), which does not fit the setting and should not be used.

**Enchantment Spells:** These spells should generally not be available to human spellcasters. In the myths, magic items were almost always gifts from the gods. Only one or two humans in the entire body of myth could create enchanted items; the proper flavor for their creations should usually include some sort of mechanical or alchemical work.

**Food Spells:** These spells do not appear in the myths, but are not inconsistent with the setting. The GM may allow them to human spellcasters.

**Gate Spells:** These should not be available to human spellcasters. The gods may use them, although they tend to travel by flying through the air rather than use instant teleportation.

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Omens are everywhere. Sky phenomena like lightning, clouds, wind, comets or meteors provide signs. The path taken by flying birds, or the calls of birds, have special significance. Priests often examine the entrails of sacrificial animals for portents. Even a sneeze, a twitch, a stumble, or the sound of a name heard by accident can be an omen.

The correct interpretation of omens may be a special gift, the gift of the *mantis* or "seer." In *GURPS* terms, the *mantis* has the Blessed advantage (see p. 72) and can use Divination even without knowing the prerequisite spells.

In general, the use of the Divination spell yields the answer to one question or a hint about the immediate future. For example, omens are always taken before a battle. If the army is fated to lose, the sacrificial animal will behave strangely and its entrails will look wrong.

The GM should roll secretly against the Divination skill. On a failed Divination roll, the answer will be incorrect. In any case, there is always room for uncertainty. The most favorable-appearing omens can be misinterpreted and lead to disaster.

Common elements of all the Divination spells are as follows.

**Cost:** 10.

**Time to Cast:** 1 hour (unless specified otherwise).

**Prerequisite:** History spell (see p. M54) and elemental spells as listed for each method of divination.

**Astrology** is divination through examination of the heavens, including the weather. Observation of the sky is necessary; the caster must be outside, and is at -5 unless it is a clear night, away from city lights. Without a reference library (cost \$2,000; weight 200 lbs.) all rolls are at -5. If the divination involves an individual, the place and date of his birth must be known, or all rolls are at -5. These penalties *do* add! **Prerequisite:** 10 Air spells. In Classical times, this method is known only to Babylonian and Persian diviners, and the Greeks regard it with some disdain.

**Augury** is divination through a variety of signs, particularly the flight or behavior of birds, chance-heard sounds, or the fall of lots. A Vision roll must be made first (the GM should roll in secret); if the roll fails, the Augury roll will be at -5. **Prerequisite:** 5 Earth and 5 Air spells. This was by far the most common form of divination.

**Enthusiasm** is divination through a medium. The medium puts herself into a trance, and begins to shout and sometimes convulse. During this period, a god is speaking through the medium. If the medium has the Epilepsy disadvantage and is able to induce a seizure in herself, her roll will be at +5. A Poetry roll should be made by the interpreter (the medium is unaware of what she said and cannot perform this function). If this roll fails (again, the GM should roll in secret) the Divination roll is at -5. **Prerequisite:** 5 Earth and 5 Fire spells. The priestesses of major oracular temples use this method. Men may not use it, although they may perform the Poetry roll. The answers are usually in vague, ambiguous poetry, and can be interpreted in more than one way.

**Haruspication** is divination through examining the entrails of a sacrificed animal, which must weigh at least 20 pounds. Only one question can be asked per animal. **Prerequisite:** 10 Earth spells. This is a common method in Greece, and in particular is always used before battles.

## OTHER COMMON MAGICS

### BLESSINGS AND CURSES

These forms of divine intervention can be very elaborate. The GM may allow the Bless, Curse and Remove Curse spells (see pp. M62 and M63), but these do not wholly reflect the myths.

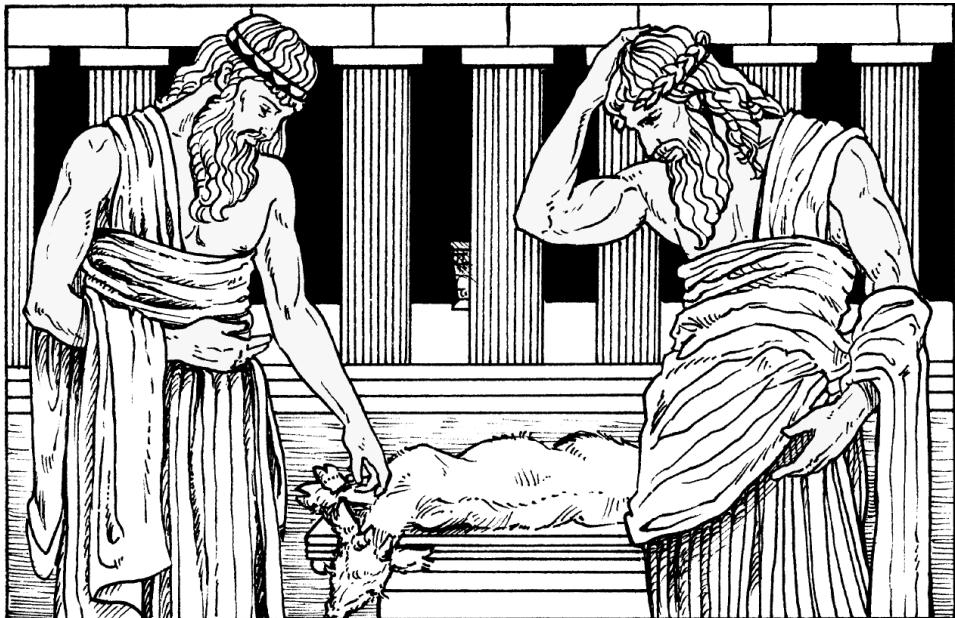
In Greek myth, a mortal can be blessed with good luck or some other ability as a result of divine favor. Likewise, either on his own initiative or at the request of a worshipper, a god might curse someone with bad luck, disease or madness. Requests for curses can be made to the chthonic deities; this usually involves blood sacrifices at night, the inscription of the curse on sheets of lead and chilling prayers. Serious oaths invoke both Olympian and chthonic gods, who will curse oathbreakers.

Such blessings and curses can be very powerful. They are outside the scope of the **GURPS** magic system, and belong under GM control. The GM should use such intervention sparingly, and always within the context of an ongoing story. If used carefully, blessings and curses can add greatly to the drama of the story, or provide plot hooks for further adventure.

## TRANSFORMATIONS

Shapeshifting is another type of magic that is usually the province of the gods. The gods transform themselves into a variety of animal shapes: stags, bulls, birds, wolves, big cats and so on. They also transform mortals. These uses can be gamed using the Shapeshifting and Shapeshift Others spells (p. M25).

The gods are able to transform themselves and others into very unusual shapes, going beyond the scope of the Shapeshifting spells. The gods can become wind or water, or transform mortals into hideous monsters, trees, rocks, or flowers. Many of these transformations are permanent. Again, this level of magic is under GM control.



## NECROMANCY

The legends are full of occasions when ghosts are summoned up to talk with mortals. This can be gamed using the Sense Spirit and Summon Spirit spells (p. M72). Interestingly, this is a case where even non-spellcasting people sometimes use magic. A hero might find an entrance to the underworld and perform chthonic sacrifices there, calling up the spirits of the dead for consultation. In **GURPS** terms, such a location is a high-mana area, possibly aspected toward death magic (see p. M94).

## SPELLS

Other magic appeared in the myths. At his discretion, the GM may allow the use of spells from the **GURPS** magic system (see sidebars).

## MANA LEVELS AND SPELL LISTS (CONTINUED)

**Healing Spells:** These spells are appropriate for human spellcasters. Some human healers are very powerful, capable even of resurrecting the dead. Such spells will almost always offend the chthonic gods, however.

**Illusion and Creation Spells:** Illusion spells are very appropriate to the genre, and may be used by human mages. Creation spells should probably be limited to the gods.

**Knowledge Spells:** These are very appropriate to the genre, especially the Divination spells (see above).

**Light and Darkness Spells:** These are appropriate to the setting and may be used by human mages.

**Making and Breaking Spells:** These may be available to human mages.

**Meta-Spells:** These may be available to human mages, with several exceptions. The Bless, Curse and Remove Curse spells do not quite fit the setting (see p. 92). The Pentagram spell is completely unavailable. And the Greek myths do not include the concept of "mana," so the Drain Mana and Restore Mana spells should not be available.

**Mind Control Spells:** While the gods sometimes drive mortals mad or "make" them fall in love, not even the gods use spells that deprive the subject of free will. Spells may certainly influence decisions or exaggerate a tendency. Some of these are very appropriate to the setting, and are available to human mages. The exceptions are the spells Charm, Enslave, Lesser Geas and Great Geas. Oath is allowable, since it requires a willing subject.

**Movement Spells:** These spells should be unavailable to human mages, although the gods may use them. The spells are very appropriate for incorporation in magic items.

**Necromantic Spells:** Certain of these are very appropriate to the setting. The spells dealing with demons (Banish, Planar Summons, Summon Demon and Summon Minor Demons) are inappropriate and should not be available, although the gods could create monsters and other creatures almost at will.

**Plant Spells:** Some of the less powerful of these might be available for human mages, while the gods can use the rest.

**Protection and Warning Spells:** These are appropriate to the setting and may be used by humans.

**Sound Spells:** These do not appear much in the myths, but are not inconsistent with them. The GM may allow the gods or even human mages to use these.

**Technological Spells:** Since Greece is a pre-industrial setting, none of these spells are appropriate for human spellcasters. GMs who want to surprise their players may give the gods high-tech abilities, which might include these spells.

## CLERICAL MAGIC

GMs who have a copy of *GURPS Religion* may wish to use aspects of the clerical-magic system in that book. If so, it should be kept in mind that Greek cults are not well-organized above the community level. Every community worships the gods independently. In general, any rule in *GURPS Religion* which assumes an organized church will not apply.

One possible exception to this is the pre-Greek religion practiced by the Minoans during the Bronze Age. It is possible that these goddess cults were organized across the Minoan culture's territory. If the GM decides this is so, actions taken by one priestess may be recognized by all the others.

If the Clerical Investment rules from *GURPS Religion* are used, few cults will have more than one rank of priest. Only the largest and most important temples will have "high priests" who would be of second rank (10-point advantage).

Any of the non-shamanistic systems (pp. R100-R115) would probably be appropriate to a Greek setting. The major exception is the Excommunication spell (and the corresponding character disadvantage). Greek cults were not organized enough to make an excommunication stick.

As with normal spellcasters, priests should not generally have long spell lists. Most priests, even in a highly-magical setting, will likely have no Power Investiture at all.



## MAGIC ITEMS

The heroic myths are full of enchanted objects. Here are some of the more famous items. Many more exist – consult a reference of Greek legends for ideas.

### APHRODITE'S GIRDLE

The goddess of love wears this magical sash to enhance her already-stunning beauty. Any goddess or mortal woman wearing it becomes irresistible to the opposite sex. No change of appearance takes place, but the wearer gains a +3 bonus to her Sex Appeal skill. Only women can use this item, and it can only be used to enhance Sex Appeal against men.

*Component Spells:* Unknown.

*Asking Price:* If this item ever fell into mortal hands, it might fetch as much as \$40,000.

### ATHENA'S SHIELD

This magical shield, also known as the *aegis*, actually belongs to Zeus. He usually entrusts it to Athena's care, however, and it has been loaned to mortal heroes on occasion. The *aegis* is a goat-hide shield, fringed with golden tassels. After Perseus's great adventure (see p. 31), the Gorgon's head was placed on its face. The Gorgon's face is usually covered. The shield acts at all times as a medium shield, and has Deflect cast on it for +4 to PD. When the shield's cover is removed, however, the Gorgon's image can be used to cast the Flesh to Stone spell (see p. M32). This casting can be done at range, with the usual skill penalties, and has the usual energy cost to the shield's user.

*Component Spells:* Deflect, Flesh to Stone (variant).

*Asking Price:* This item might sell for as much as \$250,000.

### DAEDALUS' WINGS

Daedalus used these great wings to escape from Crete after being imprisoned by King Minos. They are real wings, made of birds' feathers attached to a frame by wax and thread. The user straps the wings to his arms and flaps them like bird's wings. He controls his own flight and has a flying Move of 10, reduced by encumbrance. He cannot effectively fight or cast spells while flying, since he must continually flap or spread the wings. The wings are large enough to use in soaring, however, so their use is not too fatiguing. The flyer loses 1 Fatigue for every 5 minutes in flight. The wings are rather delicate, and will not work if they get wet. Worse, if the wearer flies higher than about 1,500 feet, the sun's heat will melt the wax that holds the feathers together, and the wings will fall apart with disastrous consequences.

*Component Spells:* Flight (variant).

*Asking Price:* If Daedalus could be persuaded to create another pair of wings for someone, he would charge about \$50,000.

### GORGON'S BLOOD

The blood of a Gorgon is a powerful substance. When Perseus slew the Gorgon, Medusa, the gods saved much of her blood and occasionally gave it out to mortals. The blood has different properties, depending on where in the Gorgon's body it came from, and on how it was treated afterward. Two of the possible uses are as follows:

*Poison* – when this form of the blood is ingested or injected into a victim, he immediately takes 4d of damage (2d if he makes a HT roll).

*Resurrection* – if this form of the blood is dribbled between the lips of a newly-dead person (within 1 hour of death), it restores him to life and heals all

wounds and damage. It will not restore missing parts, nor will it work if the head has been destroyed, the body has been burned, or more than  $HT \times 10$  damage was taken.

*Component Spells:* Unknown, “alchemical” preparation.

*Asking Price:* Depending on the form of the blood, a vial (one dose) could fetch up to \$50,000.

### HERACLES' ARROWS

After Heracles slew the Lernaean Hydra (see p. 100), he cleverly dipped his arrowheads in the monster’s venomous blood. As a result, they became incredibly deadly. If one of these arrows hits a target and does damage, the poison on the arrowhead does an additional 4d beyond the damage due to the arrow itself (or 2d with a successful HT roll). The corpse of any creature slain with one of these arrows gives off a tremendous stench while decomposing. Not even burial will prevent this effect, and burning the carcass will create a great reeking smoke that lingers for days. The arrowheads are permanently poisoned; the Hydra’s blood never wears off.

*Component Spells:* “Alchemical” preparation.

*Asking Price:* If Heracles could be convinced to part with any of his arrows, each arrowhead could bring as much as \$1,200.

### HERACLES' LIONSKIN

Heracles habitually wore the skin of the Nemean Lion, which was nearly invulnerable to all kinds of weapons. The lionskin is very light, and provides PD 4, DR 12 on the torso and head (hit locations 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 17 and 18). Unfortunately, it is not very close-fitting, and may leave areas uncovered during the violent motion of battle. Whenever an attack strikes a hit location that may be protected by the Lionskin, roll 3d. On a 16 or less the protection is effective; otherwise the blow slips through.

*Component Spells:* “Alchemical” preparation.

*Asking Price:* This item could fetch as much as \$500,000 if it were sold.

### MEDEA'S OINTMENT

The sorceress Medea prepared this ointment to protect Jason when he faced a pair of fire-breathing bulls. One dose of this ointment is enough to cover one person’s entire body, weapons and armor. He then becomes immune to the effects of ordinary fire and combat fire magic for 1d+1 hours. Even fire-breath, from a dragon or similar monster, will do no damage. Very great heat, such as that of a star, nuclear explosion, or Zeus’ lightning, will still destroy the user.

*Component Spells:* “Alchemical” preparation.

*Asking Price:* This ointment might bring as much as \$2,000 per dose if sold.

### PELEUS' SWORD

Daedalus forged this sword, and gave it the ability to make its wielder victorious in battle and successful in the hunt. It was given to the hero Peleus as a wedding gift (see p. 39), along with several other items. It is a shortsword of very fine quality to begin with, and has Accuracy +2 and Puissance +2 cast on it. It can also be used to cast the Beast Seeker spell (see p. M23), so that the wielder can determine the whereabouts of the nearest example of a given species that is usually hunted (deer, boar, or possibly lion, for example). The sword itself fulfills the requirement that the wielder have “something associated with the species.”

*Component Spells:* Accuracy, Beast-Seeker (variant).

*Asking Price:* Should this sword ever come onto the market, it might bring as much as \$70,000.



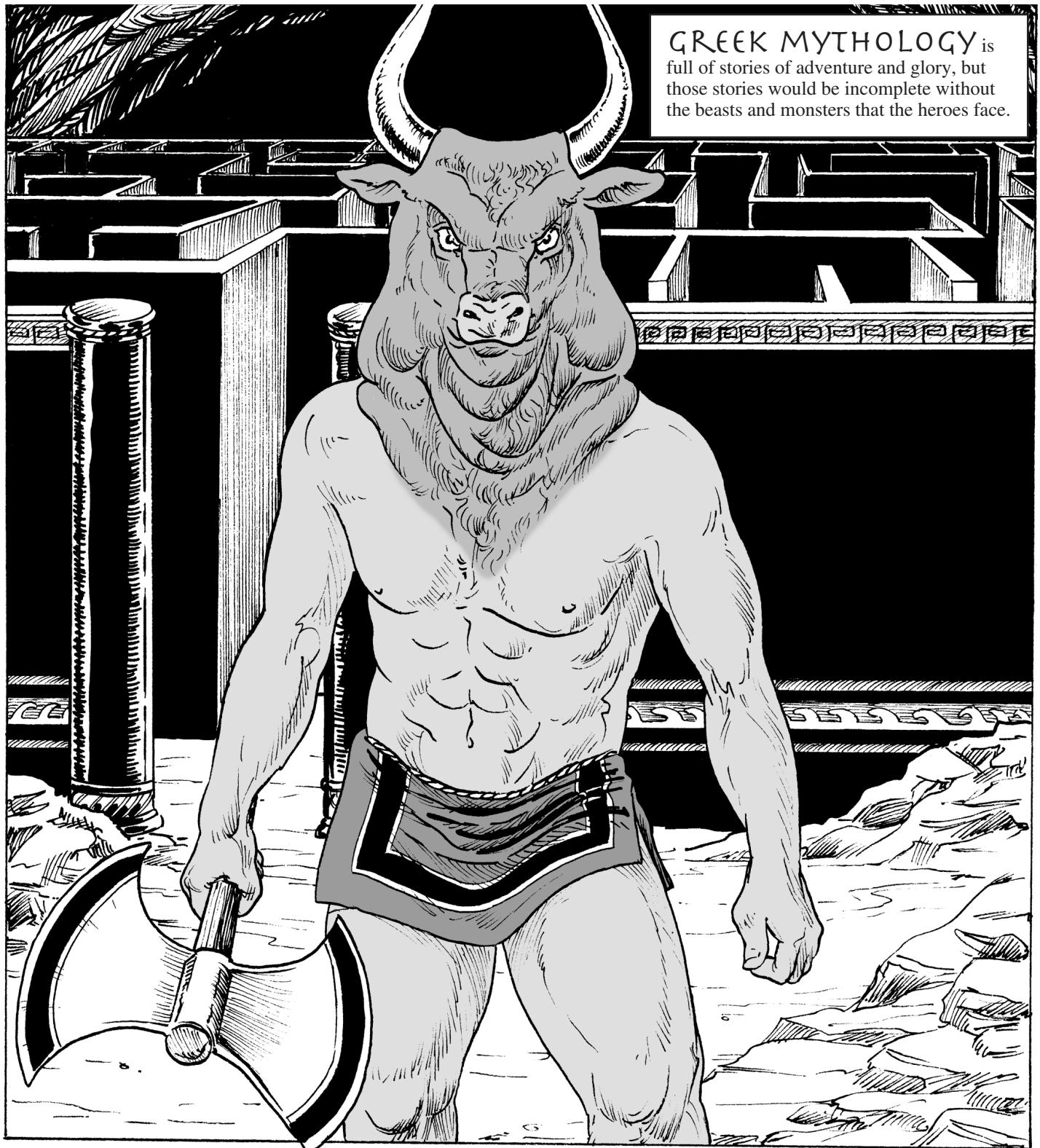
### MAGICAL TREASURE

The GM must be careful what kinds of magical treasure confront the PCs in a fantastic campaign. Almost all magic items in Hellas are produced by the gods or by very rare mages such as Daedalus or Medea. These items are usually given to the heroes for specific purposes, and tend to drop out of the story once the hero no longer needs them. As a general rule, no PC should have more than one magic item.

One exception to this rule lies in the area of “natural” magic items. In many cases, when a hero defeats a beast or monster with magical abilities, he may find that parts of the beast’s body retain their magical properties and can be used later. Heracles was famous for this. He used the skin of the Nemean Lion as armor, and for many years kept arrows that had been dipped in the Lernaean Hydra’s blood. GMs running a Heroic-level campaign should allow clever players to create “treasures” of this kind – *after* defeating the monster!

## 6

## BESTIARY



**GREEK MYTHOLOGY** is full of stories of adventure and glory, but those stories would be incomplete without the beasts and monsters that the heroes face.

# NATURAL BEASTS

## BOAR

See p. B144. In the Bronze Age, when many parts of Greece are still forested, wild boars are common. Their flesh is considered a delicacy, and even their tusks are put to use to reinforce war-helmets. Many heroes hunt boars, but boars are very dangerous game animals, and have killed more than one hero. Normally teams of boarhounds are sent into the under-brush to flush them out, after which the hunters strike with special boar spears. A boar spear is strongly built, and has an iron crossbar just behind the spearhead. This prevents the beast from running up the spear for a tusk-slash even after being impaled!

## BULL

ST: 48-60	Speed/Dodge: 8/4	Size: 3
DX: 9	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: ½-1 ton
IQ: 4	Damage: 1d+2 imp#	Habitat: Domestic
HT: 13-16	Reach: C	

This sort of cattle is essentially the same as the prehistoric *aurochs*, the ancestor of all modern cattle. Like modern cattle, cows are usually gentle and patient, but bulls can have fierce tempers. Most bulls are castrated as calves, and are called oxen.

All cattle are valuable. Their meat, dairy products, skins, and horns are all put to use. They are also the most common sacrificial animal at important religious events. In Mycenaean times, a wealthy man is one who owns a large herd. Expensive items are priced according to how many head of cattle they are worth. Even in Classical times, cattle are regarded as the foremost form of wealth in areas that have little coined money.

Bulls attack with a charge. The initial attack is treated like a slam, which also does a base damage of 1d+2 impaling. After knocking its foe down, the bull tramples with its hooves for 1d+1 crushing, halved for running through the hex. It will then turn and gore the prone victim, this time doing only half goring damage because the speed of the charge is missing. If there is anything left, the bull will toss the remains: treat this as falling damage from 5 yards (see p. B131).



## HORSE

See pp. B143 and B144. Horses available to the Greeks tend to be small or of low quality. Full-fledged warhorses are completely unavailable.

## LION

See p. B143. Lions exist in Hellas in the Bronze Age, but disappear by historical times. European lions are somewhat larger and more dangerous than the African subspecies. They live in groups called prides, which average three or four in size. In the relatively poor hunting grounds of Greece, male lions are often loners.

Lions tend to be diurnal, but if hunted by humans will adapt to a nocturnal lifestyle. They will usually not confront humans, although they will gladly attack a human's herd animals. Wounded lions will turn and charge, attempting to kill anyone in their way.

## BEASTLY MONSTERS

Many monsters of Greek myth are *almost* believable, things one might expect to find in a secluded marsh or mountain valley. Greek heroes constantly face wild beasts that are larger and more cunning than the norm, with magical abilities to make them a challenge.

## STYMPHALIAN BIRDS

ST: 8-10	Speed/Dodge: 10/6#	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 2/3	Weight: 30-50 lbs.
IQ: 3	Damage: 1d+1 cut	Habitat: Marsh
HT: 13/8-10	Reach: C	

These birds resemble large cranes or herons, and live in the Stymphalian Marsh in Arcadia. They were hunted by Heracles as part of his Fifth Labor. Their beaks and claws are made of razor-sharp bronze. Their wing feathers, too, are edged bronze, and the birds are able to fling feathers at anyone who disturbs them.

Their main attack in close combat is a swipe with their talons, doing 1d+1 cutting damage. They may also use their beaks to stab, doing 1d impaling damage on a hit. When in flight, they fling wing-feathers at their targets, each bird throwing 1d feathers per turn. The GM may wish to treat these as an "automatic fire" attack for the purposes of determining how many hit (see p. B120). Feathers which hit do 1d-4 impaling damage (minimum 1 hit point). This attack has a half-damage range of 3 yards and a maximum range of 8 yards. Stymphalian birds normally mob attackers, overwhelming them with a shower of feathers. They fly using the Move and Dodge scores given above. When on the ground, they walk with a Speed of 4 and Dodge at 6.

## CALYDONIAN BOAR

ST: 28	Speed/Dodge: 8/7	Size: 2
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/2	Weight: 600 lbs.
IQ: 6	Damage: 1d+2 cut#	Habitat: Forest
HT: 15/30	Reach: C	

This particular boar is the specimen hunted by many of the great heroes in the famous Calydonian Boar Hunt. The goddess Artemis sent it to ravage Calydon when its king neglected her in a sacrifice. It is a normal wild boar except for its size, cunning and ferocity. Its tactics are normal, allowing it 1d+2 cutting damage for its tusks (plus possible infection) and 1d crushing damage from any trample.

## CRETAN BULL

ST: 64      **Speed/Dodge:** 8/5  
DX: 10      **PD/DR:** 1/1  
IQ: 4      **Damage:** 2d imp#  
HT: 18      **Reach:** C

**Size:** 3  
**Weight:** 2,800 lbs.  
**Habitat:** Domestic

This great bull ravaged Crete at one point, although stories disagree on why. It did great damage until Heracles sailed to Crete and trapped it as part of his Seventh Labor. Heracles was able to capture the bull without much difficulty, transporting it back to Hellas and releasing it. Theseus later captured it again and sacrificed it in Athens.

The Cretan Bull does 2d impaling damage with its initial head butt, and 1d+3 crushing damage (halved) on the trample. Worse, it has a special attack, belching flames when approached. This fire breath costs the bull 2 Fatigue, and does 1d+1 fire damage in a line of two hexes immediately in front of the animal.

## DIOMEDEAN HORSE

ST: 35      **Speed/Dodge:** 12/6  
DX: 9      **PD/DR:** 0/0  
IQ: 4      **Damage:** 1d+2 cut#  
HT: 14      **Reach:** C

**Size:** 3  
**Weight:** 1,200 lbs.  
**Habitat:** Domestic

These horses (described as mares) were owned by Diomedes, the king of Thrace, who fed them on human flesh. The horses are vicious when hungry but can be mastered when well-fed. Heracles was sent to capture them as one of his Labors. He succeeded by defeating King Diomedes in battle and feeding him to the horses, after which they submitted to being bridled and led.

The Diomedean horses are ordinary saddle horses except for their unusual attack: their teeth are carnivore-sharp and do 1d+2 cutting damage on a bite. Like most horses, they can also kick into front or rear hexes for 1d+2 crushing damage.

## NEMEAN LION

ST: 40      **Speed/Dodge:** 10/6  
DX: 13      **PD/DR:** 4/12  
IQ: 4      **Damage:** 2d+1 cut  
HT: 16/26      **Reach:** C

**Size:** 2  
**Weight:** 750 lbs.  
**Habitat:** Mountains

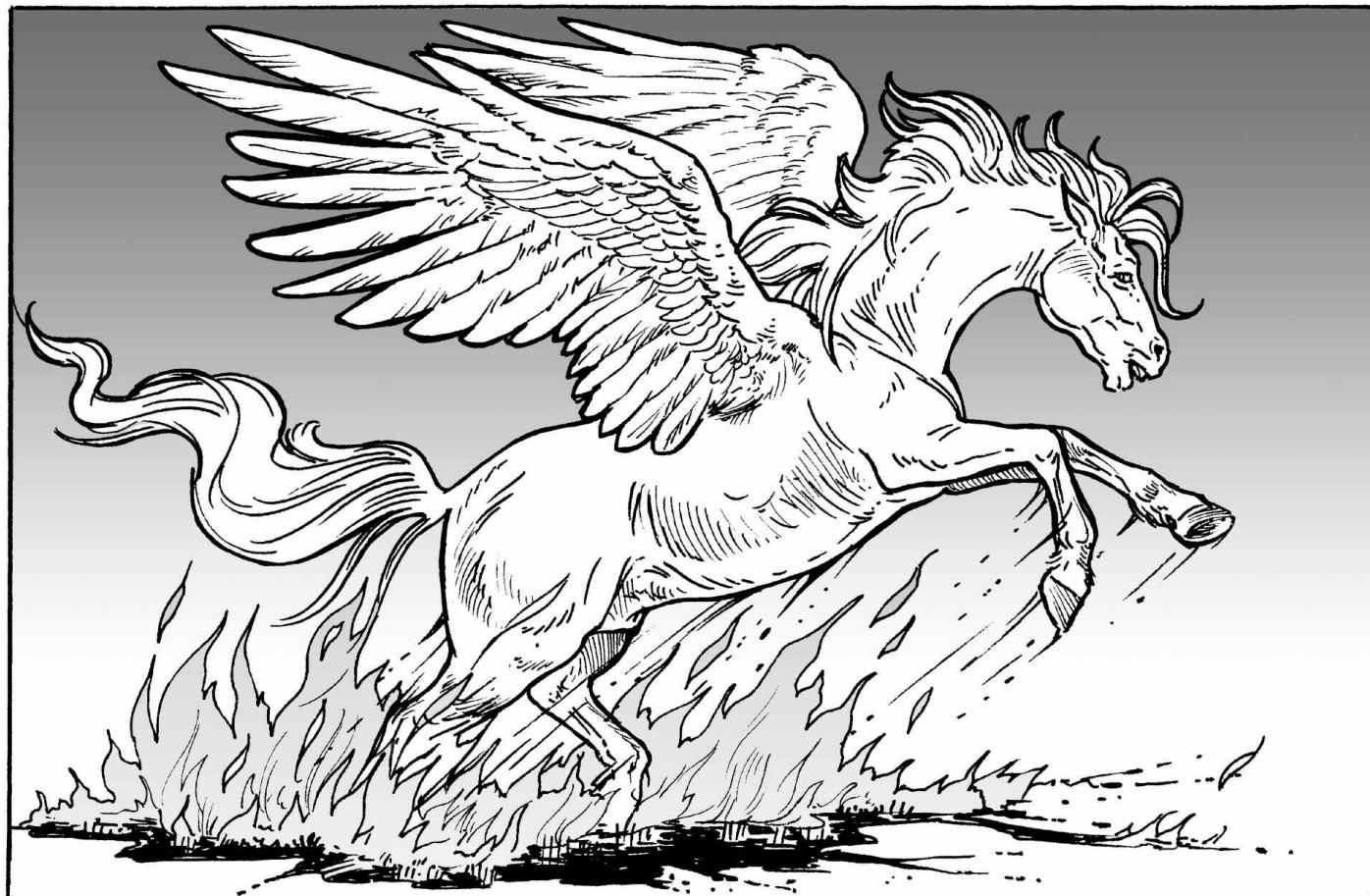
The famous lion killed by Heracles in his First Labor was sent by the gods to punish the people around the town of Nemea for omitting a sacrifice. It is essentially a normal lion, although of tremendous size. Its unusual quality is its invulnerability to all weapons, even when wielded by Heracles. The hero was only able to kill it by grappling, seizing its head, and strangling it. Even then, the lion wounded Heracles by biting off a finger – more than most opponents managed against that hero.

## PEGASUS

ST: 40      **Speed/Dodge:** 16/8#  
DX: 14      **PD/DR:** 4/12  
IQ: 7      **Damage:** –  
HT: 15      **Reach:** –

**Size:** 3  
**Weight:** 1,400 lbs.  
**Habitat:** Mountains

Pegasus is a winged horse which sprang from the blood of Medusa after Perseus slew her. It is completely unaggressive, and will always flee rather than fight. However, it cannot be tamed without divine assistance. The minor hero Bellerophon used Pegasus to win many battles, but the horse was also his downfall (see p. 39).



Pegasus moves on the ground with the Speed and Dodge given above. It can also fly, with a Speed of 20 and a Dodge of 10. Flying, it can carry up to medium encumbrance. Reduce Speed by 4 for light encumbrance, and 8 for medium. Pegasus will never strike to damage; if threatened, it will simply fly away.

## HOW TO CREATE NATURAL MONSTERS

Creating new “natural” monsters is easy. Begin with any ordinary animal native to Europe from the *Basic Set* or *GURPS Bestiary*. Appropriate animals are variations on domestic species, or wild animals from mountain or forest habitats. The chosen beast need not be particularly aggressive in its normal state.

The unique monster will always be of unusual size for its kind. Examine the ST and HT ranges given for the beast and set values somewhat larger than the top of the range. If its natural IQ is less than 4, raise it to that level to reflect unusual cunning.

Once the basic beast has been designed, pick one supernatural feature from the following list to make it a real challenge.

*Magical Attack:* This is usually some sort of fire-breathing ability, roughly comparable to its natural attack in damage. Alternatively, the beast can throw lightning or corrosive venom. Or the beast can be given the ability to cast one offensive spell from *GURPS Magic* or *GURPS Grimoire*. Spell-casting should cost the animal some fatigue, or it should only be able to cast the spell a limited number of times per day.

*Regeneration:* The beast is able to regenerate any damage done to it at an unusual rate. It will recover one hit point of damage per turn. It may be able to regrow severed limbs or other parts as part of this process.

*Supernatural Defenses:* The beast has an unusually tough hide, and may be all but invulnerable to weapons. Increase its natural PD by 2 to 3 and its natural DR by 8 to 12. The beast’s hide will look normal.

*Unusual Physical Attack:* The beast has natural weapons more dangerous than most of its kind. An herbivore may have sharp teeth that do cutting damage, or a carnivore’s claws may be astonishingly long and razor-sharp. Substitute cutting for crushing damage for the animal’s bite (see sidebar, p. B140) and/or increase the animal’s normal claw or bite damage.

## MYTHICAL BEASTS AND MONSTERS

Aside from the nearly-natural monsters faced by the heroes, some creatures were completely uncanny. These included nature-spirits, demons and one-of-a-kind monsters created by the gods. These were very rare and presented the heroes with their greatest challenges.

### CERBERUS

ST: 50	Speed/Dodge: 10/7	Size: 2
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/2	Weight: 2,000 lbs.
IQ: 6	Damage: 2d+2 cut#	Habitat: Underworld
HT: 16/35	Reach: 1	

Cerberus is one of the most horrible beings in Greek myth, a hideous black three-headed dog of tremendous size. Posted at the entrance to Hades (see sidebar, p. 86), it prevents the dead from escaping and the living from entering. Some heroes have managed

to get past the beast, and Heracles even captured it as part of his Twelfth Labor, but for the most part it is an invincible guardian.

In combat, Cerberus will bite into its front hexes for 2d+2 cutting damage. The beast can bite with all three heads in the same round (only two can be brought to bear on any one target, however).

Cerberus will use its biting attacks only as a last resort. Its usual tactic is to frighten its opponents into retreat. It can cast the Panic spell (see p. M65) at a skill level of 15, by barking with all three heads at once. This costs Cerberus no fatigue. Anyone who fails to resist using IQ will flee in mindless terror, for up to one minute. Also, as an immortal magical creature Cerberus can regenerate 1 hit of damage per round.

### CHIMERA

ST: 50	Speed/Dodge: 10/7	Size: 2
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/2	Weight: 2,000 lbs.
IQ: 5	Damage: 3d+1 cut#	Habitat: Mountains
HT: 15/35	Reach: C	

This mixed monster is a beast with the body of a goat, the head of a lion, and the hindquarters of a snake. Some versions of the legend claim that it has two heads (lion and goat) or even three (including a serpent’s head on the tail). Bellerophon destroyed this monster by riding Pegasus above it, peppering it with arrows and then forcing a lump of lead down its throat on the end of his spear. The lead melted in the monster’s flame and seared its vitals from inside.

In combat, Chimera will claw or bite for 3d+1 cutting damage. It has a special attack, breathing flame into the two hexes immediately to its front for 2d+2 fire damage. This costs it 4 fatigue. Chimera is a fierce combatant, raiding flocks and herds and willingly attacking men.

### EMPUSA

ST: 12-15	Speed/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 13	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 150-250 lbs.
IQ: 8	Damage: *	Habitat: Forest
HT: 12-15	Reach: C	

Empusae are greedy female demons. In their natural forms, they resemble women from the waist up but have the hindquarters of asses. One leg is that of an ass as well, while the other is made of brass. Empusae are supposedly the evil children of the goddess Hecate, with a vicious taste for human blood.

Empusae can shapeshift for a limited time each day, disguising themselves as female dogs, cows, or attractive human women. An Empusa will attempt to lure a man or child into a lonely place and try to get close. If it succeeds, it returns to its natural form, grapples the prey, and bites his throat to drink blood.

Empusae can cast the Charm spell (see p. M68) at a skill level of 15. The spell takes no time or fatigue to cast, is at a -1 for every hex of distance to the target, and is resisted by IQ. Its effects last for one minute or until the target is bitten, whichever comes first. The subject will follow any orders, no matter how dangerous, and will protect the caster even without orders. Empusae can use human language.

If an Empusa manages to Charm her target, the grapple and bite succeed automatically; otherwise close combat must take place. Once the teeth are in the target’s throat, no further rolls need be made, although the target may use a Contest of ST each round to break free from both grapple and bite. The bite does 3 hit points per turn as the demon drains her prey’s blood.

Some of the legends about these monsters describe one weakness: they cannot stand the sound of angry voices, and flee in terror when insults are shouted at them. If the GM rules that this is true in his campaign, assume that an Empusa will make a Will Roll of 12 or less when insulted. Failure means that the demon will abandon her hunt and run. If the prey is a PC, have the *player* make up colorful insults. The Empusa's Will Roll may be at a penalty if the player is creative . . .

One of the more famous of these creatures was named Lamia. She was originally a mortal woman rather than a daughter of Hecate, but she was cursed by the gods. She later turned to cannibalism and blood-drinking with the other Empusae.

## HARPY

ST: 12-17	Speed/Dodge: 20/10#	Size: 1
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 100-200 lbs.
IQ: 8	Damage: 1d cut	Habitat: Mountains
HT: 13-16	Reach: C	

Harpies are half bird and half woman, filthy and hateful creatures who love to torment humans. Their usual tactic is to snatch food and drink, fouling whatever they cannot carry off. This gives the food a terrible stench and makes it totally unusable. Anyone who ingests harpy-fouled food or drink must make a HT roll. On a success, he will simply lose 2 HT and feel ill for several hours. On a failure, he will lose 1d+1 HT immediately and will be seized by painful stomach cramps. He will be at -3 to all skills and attributes until the lost HT is restored.

Harpies are not aggressive in combat and will flee if attacked. If cornered, they may plead for mercy (they speak human language, badly). Or they may attack with their claws for 1d cutting damage. When on the ground, they move with Speed 3, Dodge 7.

## LERNAEAN HYDRA

ST: 25	Speed/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 3
DX: 12	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 800 lbs.
IQ: 3	Damage: 1d+1 imp	Habitat: Marsh
HT: 16/30	Reach: C,1	

The Lernaean Hydra was a marsh-dwelling monster that lived near the town of Lerna, in the Argolid. Its blood was a potent venom, and its presence blighted the entire region. Heracles killed it during his Second Labor.

The Hydra has a huge doglike body and some number of heads (nine in the most common form of the myth). Each turn, the Hydra may attack into front or side hexes with up to three heads, each one doing 1d+1 impaling damage. Each head is considered an independent hit location, with 6 hit points of its own (the HT above is for the body alone). The heads are at -4 to hit, and damage done to a head does not affect any other head or the body.

The Hydra can never be stunned or knocked unconscious, only killed by killing the body or all of the heads. Unfortunately, it has the capacity to grow two new heads for every one it loses. When a head dies, it withers and falls off, and new heads immediately begin growing in its place. In ten seconds, the new heads will be full-grown and can be used to attack. However, 6 points of flame damage applied to the neck stump (-4 to hit) will permanently cauterize it and neither new head will develop.



## MEDUSA

ST: 11	Speed/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1
DX: 12	PD/DR: 3/5	Weight: 140 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: 1d+2 cut#	Habitat: Mountains
HT: 13	Reach: C,1	

Medusa was one of the three Gorgons, semi-divine sisters. Two of the three Gorgon sisters were beautiful and immortal, but Medusa ran afoul of the goddess Athena and was transformed into a hideous monster. She was covered with hard scales and had a nest of snakes for hair. Anyone who looked directly at her face was turned to stone. She was slain by Perseus, who managed to look at her only in a shield polished to mirror brightness.

Consider Medusa to have an automatic Flesh to Stone spell (see p. M32). This costs her no fatigue and is always in effect. Her inherent skill with the spell is 15, resisted by the target's HT. Anyone who looks directly at Medusa and fails to resist the spell becomes completely petrified. This requires no action on her part. The effect is permanent unless countered by another spell.

The Flesh to Stone spell does not affect anyone looking at Medusa in a mirror. Fighting while looking in a mirror puts an attacker at -5 penalty to skill, while attacks with eyes closed are at -10. If necessary, Medusa can attack with claws for 1d+2 cutting damage.

## MINOTAUR

ST: 18	Speed/Dodge: 8/6	Size: 1
DX: 13	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 250 lbs.
IQ: 8	Damage: 1d-1 imp#	Habitat: Domestic
HT: 25	Reach: C	

The Minotaur was the bastard son of the queen of Knossos and a bull. He had the body of a man, but a bull's head and horns. King Minos imprisoned him in the Labyrinth and gave him young men and women to devour, until Theseus killed him.

The Minotaur's main attack is with his horns, which he can use in a head butt or as part of a slam. He can also use his great fists to do 1d crushing damage. He is not too intelligent, but very cunning. He has very sharp hearing and sense of smell, and can fight in total darkness with no penalty.

## PYTHON

<b>ST:</b> 80	<b>Speed/Dodge:</b> 8/6	<b>Size:</b> 8
<b>DX:</b> 13	<b>PD/DR:</b> 2/3	<b>Weight:</b> 1 ton
<b>IQ:</b> 3	<b>Damage:</b> 4d imp#	<b>Habitat:</b> Forest
<b>HT:</b> 16/50	<b>Reach:</b> C, 1-6	

Python is one of several large serpents in Greek myth. Snakes were apparently sacred to the Minoans, and their worship carried over in a number of ways. In this case, myths say that the beast lived at Delphi when that site was a shrine to an Earth goddess. Apollo slew it to make the shrine his own. Even in historical times, the high priestess at Delphi was called the Pythia.

Python coils its 8-hex snake-like body into a 3-hex pile. From there, the serpent can easily strike up to 6 hexes away. Python's long, sharp fangs do 4d impaling damage. A human tangled in Python coils may take 4d crushing damage per turn from constriction. The prey must win a Contest of ST to escape.

## SCYLLA

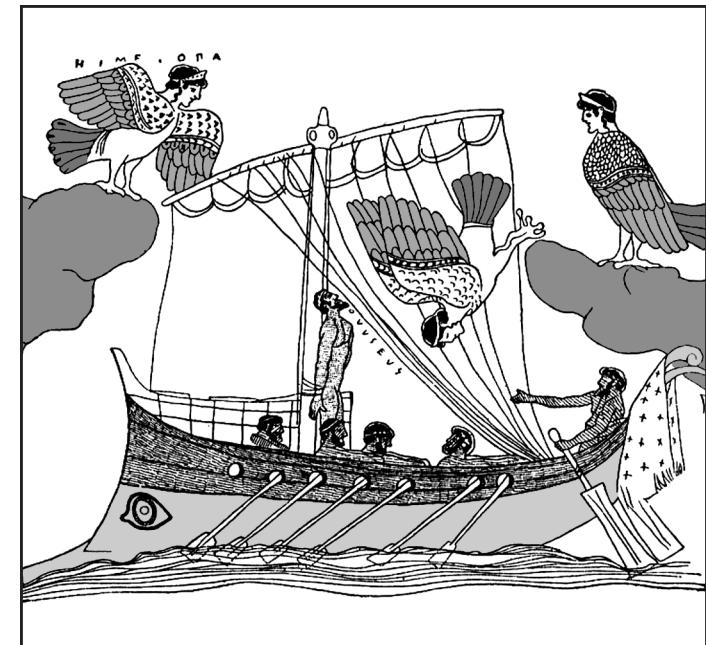
<b>ST:</b> 65	<b>Speed/Dodge:</b> 0/7	<b>Size:</b> 13
<b>DX:</b> 15	<b>PD/DR:</b> 4/6	<b>Weight:</b> 3 tons
<b>IQ:</b> 6	<b>Damage:</b> 3d imp	<b>Habitat:</b> Coastal
<b>HT:</b> 17/240	<b>Reach:</b> C, 1-12	

Scylla is one of the most powerful monsters in Greek myth. She was originally a beautiful woman, but was transformed into a great monster by Circe in a fit of jealousy. She is



permanently stationed in the straits between Italy and Sicily, where she plucks sailors from passing ships. Opposite her is the whirlpool Charybdis, so any ship passing the strait has a choice between capsizing and facing Scylla. Odysseus chose Scylla and lost a number of his men as a result.

Each turn, Scylla can attack with any or all of her six heads. Each head has the creature's full ST and does full damage. On the turn after she has bitten a victim, she will hoist him into the air if she wins a Contest of ST. In subsequent turns she will swallow the victim, taking 5 turns and doing her biting damage again each turn. The victim, if he's still able to act, may try to break free by rolling a Contest of ST each turn, with a cumulative -2 for each turn of swallowing. After 5 turns, the victim is completely consumed and the head can strike again. Each head can take one-sixth of Scylla's total hit points in wounds. Any excess is lost.



## SIREN

<b>ST:</b> 10-12	<b>Speed/Dodge:</b> 20/10#	<b>Size:</b> 1
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>PD/DR:</b> 1/1	<b>Weight:</b> 100-200 lbs.
<b>IQ:</b> 8	<b>Damage:</b> 1d-1 cut	<b>Habitat:</b> Coastal
<b>HT:</b> 12-14	<b>Reach:</b> C	

Sirens are another sort of hybrid creature, with the heads of women and the bodies of large sea-birds. They live in groups, choosing open beaches with well-concealed reefs just offshore. They are a danger to all ships who pass their shores, because they can sing with incredible sweetness. Sailors frantically turn in toward shore to be with the Sirens, but run aground on sharp rocks and are wrecked. The Sirens then attack the survivors and feast.

Consider the singing to be a Mass Suggestion spell (p. M68). Anyone who hears the singing will feel a compulsion to swim or sail toward the Sirens' beach, resisted by IQ. If there is obvious danger involved (for example, if the tide is low and the rocks are visible), the targets resist at +5.

In combat, the Sirens can use claws for 1d-1 cutting damage. They fly as above, but on the ground they are slow and clumsy (Speed 3, Dodge 6). They will flee if their prey shows any ability to resist.

## Sphinx

ST: 26      **Speed/Dodge:** 8/6#  
DX: 13      **PD/DR:** 1/1  
IQ: 12      **Damage:** 2d-2 cut  
HT: 14/22      **Reach:** C

This monster was sent to punish the city of Thebes. Waiting by the side of the road, she asked each passerby riddles. If the victim could not answer, the Sphinx leaped to the attack. She enjoyed this game, and had so much success that when Oedipus answered the riddle, she killed herself in frustration.

The Sphinx has a lion's body and the head and breasts of a woman, with eagle's wings. She is intelligent and can speak. GMs who use the Sphinx' riddle-game can ask actual riddles, or can play out the game as a set of Contests of IQ between the Sphinx and the PCs. Whether the monster will react to a defeat by destroying herself is up to the GM.

The Sphinx is a fierce and cunning opponent in combat. The Speed and Dodge given above are for ground combat. In the air, she flies with a Speed of 20 and a Dodge of 10. She claws and bites for 2d-2 cutting damage in close combat.

## NONHUMAN RACES

Greek myth includes several "races" of nonhuman creatures. Most of these are nature-spirits. Some may be suitable as characters in a campaign with fantastic elements. As always, the GM should be careful which of these character types he allows into his game.

### CENTAURS

### 51 POINTS

The mythical centaurs are hybrid creatures, with the head, arms, and torso of a human and the lower body of a horse. They live in the mountains above Thessaly, as well as in other mountain districts north of the Gulf of Corinth. They keep to themselves and are rather primitive, even compared to the Bronze-Age Greeks. They are backward and bestial, prone to violent rages when insulted or attacked. They are completely unfamiliar with alcohol and become violently unpredictable after

drinking even a moderate quantity of ordinary wine. Unfortunately, they are *very* fond of wine when they can get it.

Several individual centaurs are important in Greek myth. The greatest of them is the healer Chiron, who is intelligent, educated and self-restrained. Chiron serves as a teacher to many heroes, including Achilles and Jason.

*Advantages and Disadvantages:* Centaurs have ST +3, HT +2, and IQ -1. A centaur's lower-body ST is 13 greater than his upper-body ST. Upper-body ST is used for figuring weapon damage and throwing ability, while the centaur's Fatigue score is based on his lower-body ST.

They have DR 1, and Alertness +1. Their maximum running speed is twice normal on any relatively flat, straight surface.

They have the following disadvantages: Berserk (only when drunk), Overconfidence, Phobia (Mild Claustrophobia), Primitive (TL0), and Stubbornness. They have the Quirk "Loves to Drink Wine to Excess." Their large, awkward forms are inconvenient in city environments. All centaurs have the Animal Handling and Survival (Mountains) skills at IQ, and the Running skill at HT.

To determine a centaur's height at the top of his head, use the height given by the ST table and add 8 inches. His weight will be eight times normal for a human of his height.

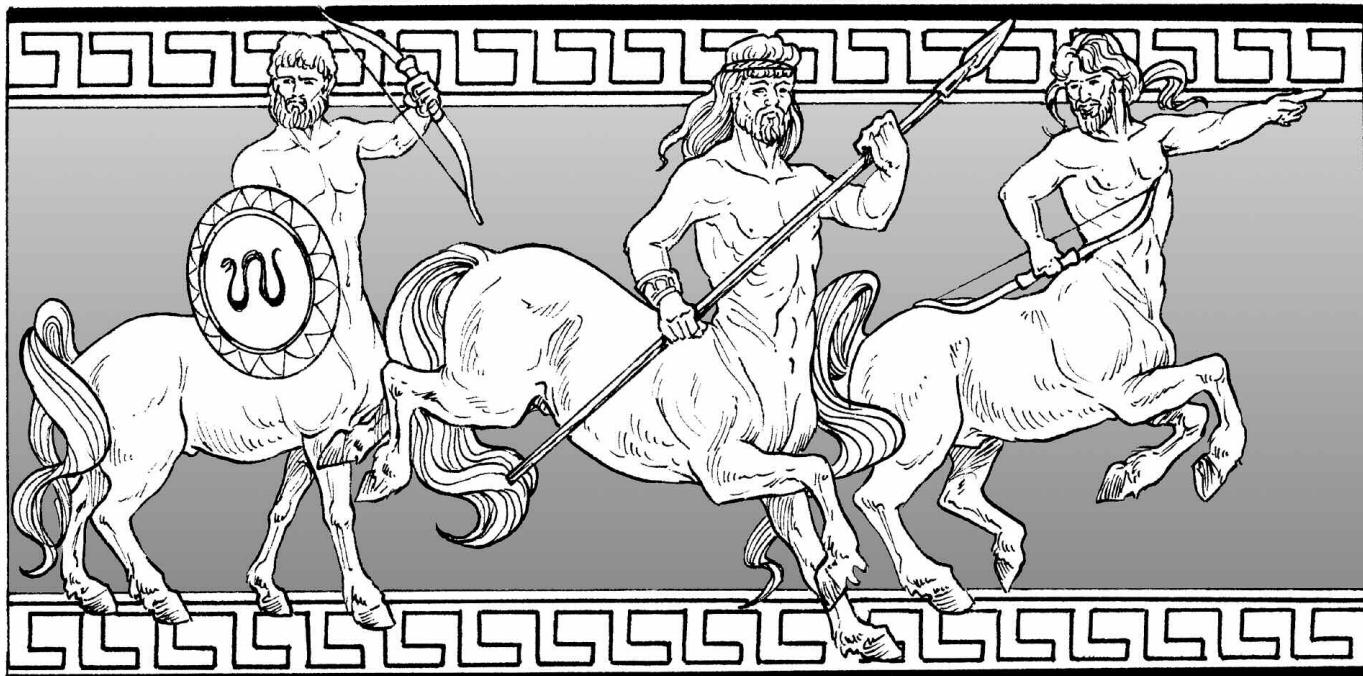
*Friends and Enemies:* Centaurs have no friends or enemies as a race. They do tend to quarrel with human tribes that live near their territory, leading to nasty long-term blood feuds. On the other hand, human tribes that offer them respect can earn their friendship.

*Likes and Dislikes:* Centaurs dislike any sort of civilized environment, even relatively unspoiled farmland. They prefer their lives of quiet hunting and herding in the highlands. They do not look for trouble, but react at -2 to those who intrude on their territory.

### GIANTS

### 270 POINTS

Giants, in Hellenic myth, were cousins to the Titans and the Olympian gods, offspring of the Earth-goddess Gaea. She raised them to avenge the Titans, whom the Olympian gods had imprisoned in Tartarus. They rose up in revolt against the gods



and were only defeated after Heracles was brought to Olympus to help fight them. After the revolt, the giants were decimated. Some might have survived to live alone, on deserted islands and in isolated areas of wilderness.

Giants are huge, fierce creatures, resembling enormous humans except that their legs are like the bodies of great serpents. They are not stupid brutes, and can plan strategy carefully. Many of them have powerful Destinies, ensuring that they cannot be killed unless they receive fatal wounds from a god and a mortal simultaneously. This makes them fearsome enemies.

GMs should probably not permit giants in their campaigns as PCs, unless the campaign is set in the Heroic Age and is very high-powered. Any PC party with a giant as a member should have a good reason for him being there, especially since the gods are the giants' racial Enemies . . .

*Advantages and Disadvantages:* Giants have +20 to ST (less expensive due to Divine Birth) and DX -1. They have +4 HT and 6 extra Hit Points. They have PD 1, DR 2, and High Pain Threshold. Their reach is 2 hexes and they have twice normal Move when running on an open, flat surface. They also have the Divine Birth Unusual Background, and (in many cases) a major Destiny which decrees that they can only die if wounded by both a god and a mortal in the same round. If the two wounds are not mortal, a giant will not necessarily die; this is simply the only circumstance under which a wound will, in fact, kill him.

To offset this incredible set of Advantages, all giants have racial Enemies: the Olympian gods, appearing on a 6 or less. They also have the Bad Temper, Overconfidence and Stubbornness disadvantages. No giant may have better than Average Appearance.

To determine a giant's height, take his ST (before the +20 bonus) and then increase it by 80%. A giant's weight will be about six times the normal weight for his base height (before the 80% increase).

*Friends and Enemies:* As above, the Olympian gods are racial Enemies for all giants. Almost all mortal beings (including centaurs, nymphs and satyrs) react to giants at -3, fearing and distrusting them. Giants had a wide variety of personalities, however, and some may have been friendly and helpful to mortals.

*Likes and Dislikes:* Giants tend to live close to the Earth, and dislike being separated from it for any length of time (as by going to sea). They are shy of people, fearing the renewed attack of the gods. It is hard to gain their trust. Anyone venturing into their territory is more likely to be attacked without mercy.

*Cyclops:* To draw up the usual concept of a Cyclops, work from a giant template. A Cyclops will have normal human legs, and a single large eye in the center of his forehead. Cyclops have -2 to IQ and have the Bloodlust and One Eye disadvantages. They do not have the giant Destiny and can be killed normally. Otherwise, they are exactly as normal giants. It costs 215 points to play this type of Cyclops, assuming that the GM will allow one in the campaign.

## NYMPHS

Greek myth is full of stories of minor goddesses called *nymphs*, who are the spirits of wild places. These stories are probably holdovers from pre-Greek religion, which may have involved a variety of female nature-spirits. In Greek legend, nymphs live in isolated places of natural beauty: lonely fields, ash-groves, springs, grottoes or small islands. Their nature and

## VARIABLE



kind depend on their preferred dwelling. Sometimes senior nymphs or goddesses are attended by lesser nymphs; Artemis, for example, often travels with a company of wood-nymphs.

Nymphs are not immortal, but they are very long-lived, very wise, and often have magical abilities. They are always lovely and wild in appearance. They are shy and tend to flee from humans, but sometimes a man who falls in love with one can tame her and make her his wife. Many myths about the ancestral heroes of tribes or cities include stories of their marriage to nymphs.

*Advantages and Disadvantages:* Nymphs are always at least of Attractive Appearance (many are even more beautiful), and have Alertness +2 and the Unaging advantage. All nymphs have the Sense of Duty (to nature) and Shyness (severe) disadvantages. They also have the Quirk "Dislikes

Settled Environments." They will always have both the Area Knowledge skill and the appropriate Survival skill for the immediate area of their home at IQ level, and Stealth at DX level. Specific types of nymph will have other modifiers, as listed below. Also, powerful or long-lived nymphs can have many magical abilities not listed here, either Knacks or actual lists of spells. Some are even shapeshifters. Use the *GURPS Magic* rules to help construct characters of this kind.

*Friends and Enemies:* Nymphs are solitary, unless they join the retinues of more powerful supernatural beings. They have no real enemies, although they will punish those who despoil the wilderness they live in and protect. Human males, satyrs and centaurs all tend to pursue nymphs.

*Likes and Dislikes:* All nymphs love the natural world and the innocent creatures that live in it. They spend their time living simply, dancing and singing alone in the wilderness. Little upsets them, except for humans and others who treat nature with disrespect. They dislike urban or cultivated areas.

## TYPES OF NYMPHS

*Wood Nymphs (Alseids and Meliads):* Woodland spirits. Alseids are associated with sacred groves in the midst of the forest. Meliads are particularly associated with ash trees, but are not bound to individual trees like the Hamadryads. These nymphs usually have no special abilities beyond those listed above. It costs 18 points to play an Alseid or Meliad.

*Tree Nymphs (Hamadryads):* These forest spirits are strongly bound to individual trees, and live only as long as their trees do. They are fiercely protective of trees and will punish anyone who harms or destroys them. They have the special ability to *merge* with their particular tree at a cost of 3 Fatigue points. In this state, the Hamadryad can sense anything that happens in the vicinity of her tree, but will take immediate damage if the tree is harmed. A Hamadryad's tree is considered a helpless Dependent, appearing all the time. Few Hamadryads ever leave the immediate vicinity of their trees. It costs 5 points to play a Hamadryad, although they should probably not be allowed as PCs. They appear most often in the myths as secondary characters, asking the help of heroes to protect their trees.

*Freshwater Nymphs (Naiads):* These spirits live in clear springs and freshwater streams, and are often the daughters of river-gods. They are particularly common in the Peloponnese. All Naiads can breathe normally both underwater and in air, paying 2 Fatigue when changing between the two environments. They automatically have Swimming at DX+2. It costs 50 points to play a Naiad. Many Naiads have powerful magical abilities that go beyond this basic package. They may be able to heal the sick and wounded who drink from their spring, or drive men who catch glimpses of them mad.

*Saltwater Nymphs (Nereids):* These spirits live in shallow ocean water, sometimes in grottoes (sea-caves). Most of them are attendants at the court of Poseidon in the deep waters. Indeed, one of them, Amphitrite, is Poseidon's wife. Like Naiads, all Nereids can breathe normally both underwater and in air, paying 2 Fatigue when changing between the two environments. They automatically have Swimming at DX+2. It costs 50 points to play a Nereid.

*Mountain Nymphs (Oreads):* These creatures live on high, windswept mountains. Little is known about them, as they are particularly reclusive. It costs 18 points to play an Oread, assuming they have no special magical abilities.

## SATYRS

## 13 POINTS

Satyrs are nature-demons, irrational and bestial, believed to be the sons of the god Pan. They are attendants of the god Dionysus, and otherwise live in wild regions in small groups. Like the mythical centaurs, they are hybrid creatures. Their upper bodies are human, although their heads have small horns. Satyrs are bipedal, but their legs are like a goat's hind legs, complete with cloven hooves. They have long thick tails, like those of horses.

Satyrs have crude and lecherous personalities. A few prominent satyrs overcome their nature and show unusual wisdom or ability in the arts. They are particularly good musicians. They are not shy, but they are cautious and never enter combat if they can help it.

*Advantages and Disadvantages:* Satyrs have HT +2. They also have a Musical Ability bonus of +3, and are Unaging. Satyrs cannot be of better than Average appearance. Many are outright ugly. They have the racial disadvantages of Cowardice and Lecherousness.

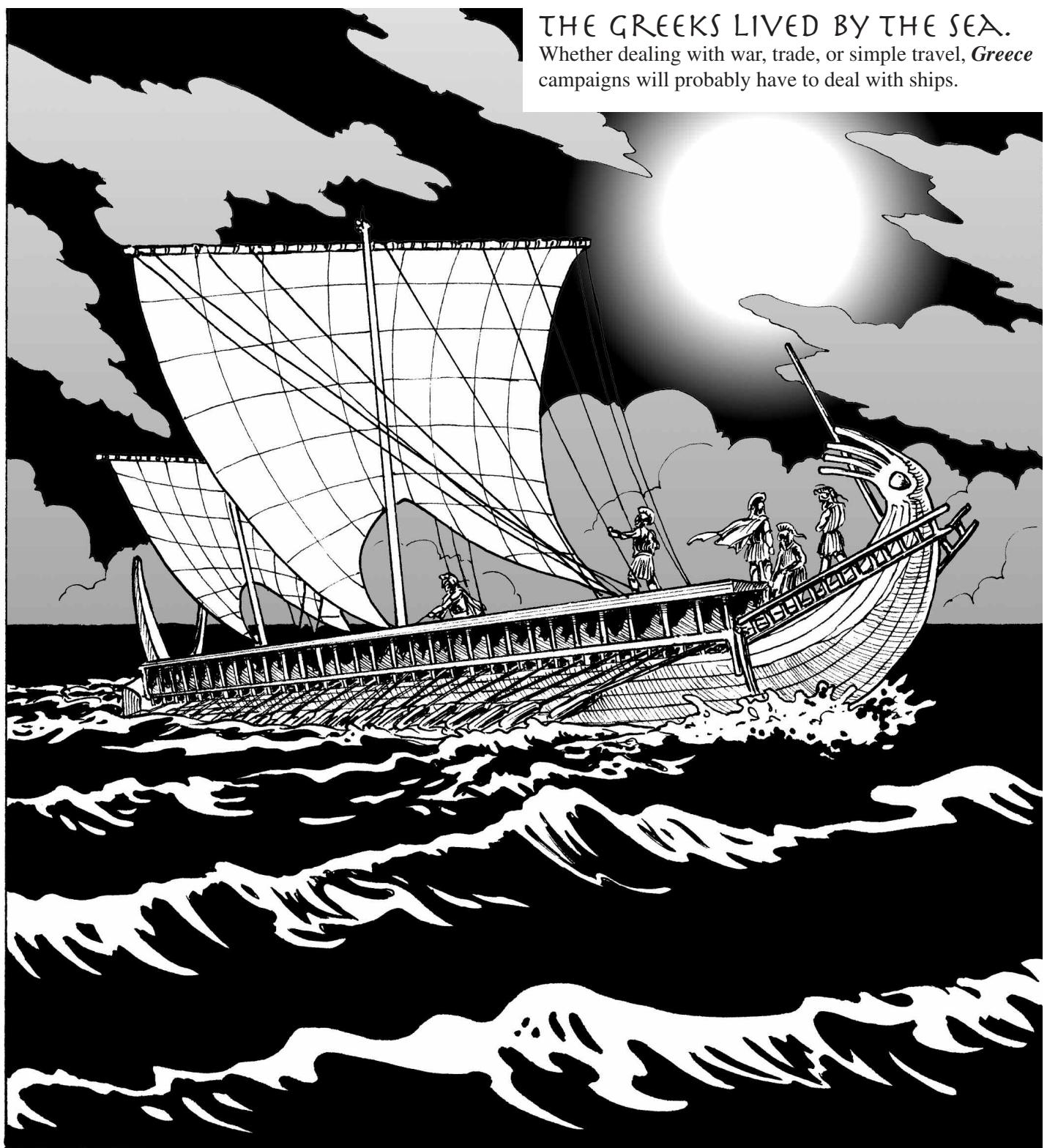
*Likes and Dislikes:* Satyrs have primal appetites. They spend their time pursuing nymphs or mortal women, drinking, and dancing wildly to the music of pipes. They have no particular enemies and get along well with others, although they distrust humans who might be violent. Like many nature-spirits, they dislike crowds and "civilized" areas, preferring the deep wilderness.



## 7

THE  
WINE-DARK SEA

THE GREEKS LIVED BY THE SEA.  
Whether dealing with war, trade, or simple travel, *Greece* campaigns will probably have to deal with ships.



## SAMPLE SHIPS

These ship designs use *GURPS Vehicles* rules. However, conversions (V2) are included for use with the second edition, due in 1996. Speeds under sail are *top* speeds with a strong following wind, while the speeds discussed in the text are *average* speeds, allowing for varying wind conditions.

### TRIREME (TL2)

**Body:** 12,500 cf extralight wooden body (2,000 hit points) with fine hydrodynamics and a 600-sf top deck.

**Propulsion:** 170 oars (generate 34 kW at top effort). 60' mast (PD 2, DR 2, 300 hits) with 1,800 sf of sail (produces 5.4 kW in 20 mph wind).

**Accommodations and Crew:** 170 seats.

**Crew Requirement:** Six officers, 24 deck crew and 170 oarsmen. Minimum five crewmen to work the sails, plus a helmsman and a lookout.

**Accessories:** Anchor; 4-5 days provisions.

**Cargo:** 245 cf cargo under oarsmen's benches.

**Armor:** Front, back, right, left PD 3, DR 6. Top, underside, PD 2, DR 3. Armor is flammable wood.

**Statistics:** Cost \$50,500. Design mass 55,600 lbs., maximum payload 131,900 lbs., maximum cargo load 3,700 lbs., maximum deck load 6,300 lbs., current payload 38,000 lbs., loaded mass 93,600 lbs. (46.8 tons). Size Modifier +7, Radar Signature +8, IR Signature +7, Acoustic Signature +1.

**Water Performance:** Water speed factor 8 (20 under oars), under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 10 mph, top speed under oars 15 mph. Acceleration 0.5 mph/s under sail, 0.25 mph/s under oars. Deceleration 10 mph/s. MR 0.25, SR 1. Draft 7.2 feet.

**V2:** Hydrodynamic drag 137, Aquatic motive thrust 2,880 lbs. under sail in moderate breeze, 850 lbs. under oars. Top speed 5.5 under oars (11 mph), 8 (16 mph) under sail. MR .01, SR 2, Accel 0.3 (sails), 0.1 (oars). Decel 0.1 (0.2 mph). Draft 3.9'.

## SHIP TYPES

The following ship classes are typical of Greek naval design. All are appropriate for the Classical period, and some are appropriate for Heroic-Age adventuring as well.

### THE TRIREME

Almost all warships of the ancient world are galleys, vessels which rely on massed oarsmen for power in battle. The foremost warship of the Classical era is the *triremes* or “thrice-fitted ship,” known to us as the “trireme.” According to Thucydides, triremes were first built by the Corinthians, sometime after 700 B.C. Almost all the important naval battles of the period are essentially clashes between trireme squadrons.

### SIZE

The standard trireme is about 120 feet from prow to stern, and about 12 feet between the gunwales. The ship has very shallow draft, with only eight to ten feet between the keel and the top deck. There are small top decks fore and aft, and a strip of top deck that runs down the center of the ship.

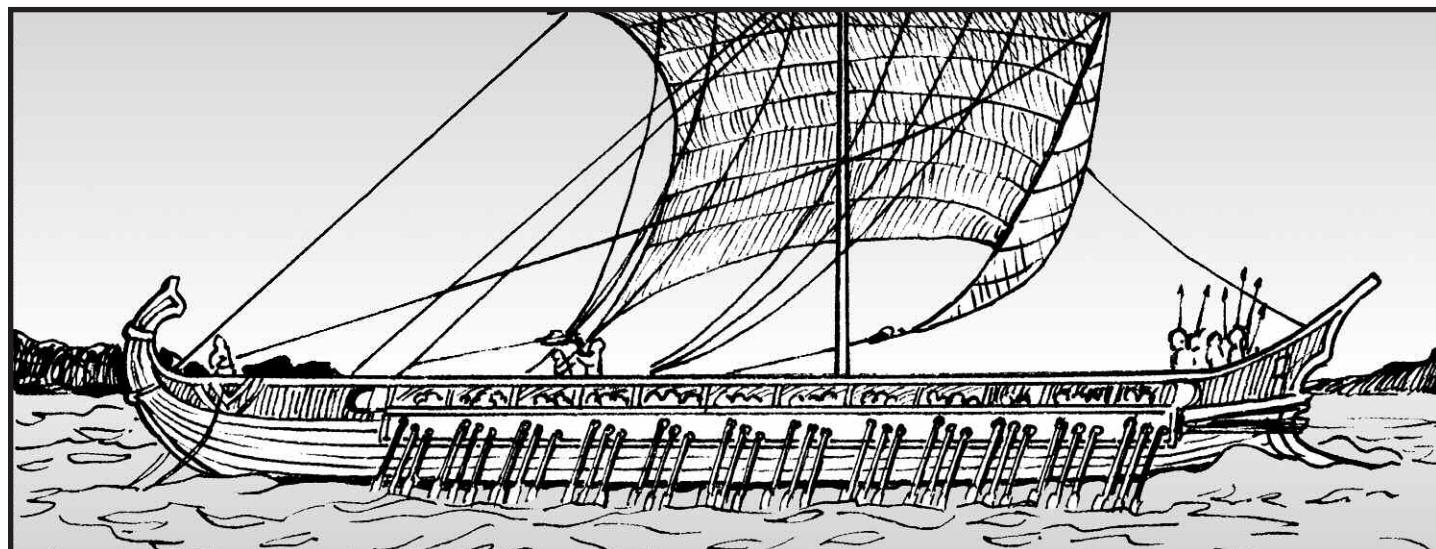
How the oars are arranged is no longer known for certain, but in the most likely arrangement each side of the ship has three banks of oarsmen, each man with his own bench and his own oar. Two banks are within the ship's hull. The lowest bank of oarsmen (the *thalamites*) sit barely above the waterline, and are protected from sea splash by a leather seal around their oarlocks. The middle rank (the *zygites*) are staggered above and behind these.

The top rank (the *thranites*) sit level with the top deck and are partially exposed to the elements (or enemy missile fire). Their oars are at a steeper angle to the waterline, making rowing more difficult. As a result, they are paid more.

The trireme has one mainmast, rigged amidships, which can be unstepped. The sail is large and square. In battle, the ship moves exclusively on oar power, and the mast and mainsail are stowed or even left ashore. Later triremes have a small steering sail mounted forward, and there might be a small “emergency” mast and sail kept aboard in case the ship has to abandon its mainsail and run.

### OFFICERS

The nominal commander of an Athenian trireme is the *trierarchos*, or “trierarch” for short. This officer is a wealthy citizen, who is responsible for



maintaining the trireme, and may even have financed its construction. He also makes sure the ship is supplied and the crew is paid.

The actual captain of the ship is the *kybernetes* or helmsman. He is an experienced sailor and tactician, chosen by the trierarch or assigned to him when the Assembly ordered him to finance the ship. In the heat of battle, the *kybernetes* is in charge. A wise trierarch listens to his suggestions and follows them.

Other officers include the *proreus*, whose station is in the ship's prow. He is in charge of the forward parts of the ship and also serves as lookout. The *keleutes* is in charge of the rowers. His assistant is the *trieraules*, a musician who pipes time for the oarsmen on a flute. The final officer is the *pentekontarchos*, who has a variety of tactical and administrative tasks.

## CREW

Deck crew numbers about 24. These include sailors and at least one carpenter, to handle the rigging and supervise any repairs. The rest of the deck crew are soldiers, armored marines or archers. The soldiers also assist in ship operations when battle is not expected.

The trireme's main crew are its 170 oarsmen. On each side, there are 27 each of the *thalamites* and *zygites*, and 31 *thranites*. There is a class distinction between the three banks of oarsmen, those posted in the higher banks not only earning more pay but having a bit more status. One can literally "rise through the ranks," moving to higher oar banks and then earning an officer's position in the course of one's career. The oarsmen are highly-trained professionals. It takes great skill for so many men to row in perfect unison, changing speeds, raising oars or even reversing direction at a command.

## PERFORMANCE

A trireme is essentially a long, narrow racing shell, designed for high speed and maneuverability under oars. With a skilled crew it can be a deadly war machine. Its top speed under oars assumes full crew and a straight course with smooth seas. Even then the crew is exhausted within half an hour. The crew can maintain a battle speed of about half the top speed for several hours before they grow too tired to continue.

The Classical trireme usually lasts about 20 years, given constant maintenance and repairs. Older ships are sometimes converted into military transports. Most of the oar benches are torn out, giving the ship considerable cargo space belowdecks. In this configuration, a trireme can carry troops (100 soldiers at a time), or horses (30 at once).

## OTHER WARSHIPS

The Greeks sail a variety of other warships. A number of smaller ship classes are built, especially in the early Classical Age and the Heroic Age.

## THE PENTECONTER

The second most common warship in Classical times is the *pentekontoros* or "fifty-oared ship," known to us as the "penteconter." As the name implies, it is designed around 50 oarsmen, who are arranged in banks of 14 and 11 on



## PENTECONTER (TL2)

**Structure:** 4,000 cf extralight wooden body (1,000 hit points) with fine hydrodynamics and 100 sf top deck.

**Propulsion:** One mast (height 40 feet), 800 sf of sail (mast PD 2, DR 2, HT 200). Sail produces 2.4 kW of motive power per mph of wind (48 kW in strong 20 mph wind). Oars for 50 oarsmen, producing 10 kW of motive power at top effort.

**Accommodation:** 50 seats.

**Crew Requirements:** Three officers, 7 deck crew, 50 oarsmen. Requires two crewmen to work the sails, plus a helmsman and a lookout.

**Accessories:** Anchor; provisions for 6 days.

**Weaponry:** Bronze or iron ram.

**Cargo:** 320 cf, mostly under oarsmen's benches.

**Armor:** Front, back, right, left PD 3, DR 5. Top, underside PD 2, DR 2. Armor is flammable wood.

**Statistics:** Cost \$17,500. Design mass 18,200 lbs., maximum payload 41,800 lbs., maximum cargo load 4,800 lbs., maximum deck load 1,500 lbs., current payload 11,600 lbs., loaded mass 29,800 lbs. (14.9 tons). Size Modifier +6, Radar Signature +7, IR Signature +6, Acoustic Signature +1.

**Water Performance:** Water speed factor 8 (20 under oars), under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 12 mph, top speed under oars 15 mph. Acceleration 0.5 mph/s under sail or oars. Deceleration 10 mph/s. MR 0.25, SR 1. Draft 4.9 feet.

**V2:** Hydrodynamic drag 64, Aquatic motive thrust 1,280 lbs. under sail in moderate breeze, 250 lbs. under oars. Top speed 5 under oars (10 mph), 8 (16 mph) under sail. MR .02, SR 1, Accel 0.4 (sails), 0.08 (oars). Decel 0.2 (0.4 mph). Draft 2.7'.



## HOMERIC GALLEY (TL1)

**Structure:** 2,000 cf light wooden body (1,000 hit points) with average hydrodynamics and 60 sf top deck.

**Propulsion:** One mast (30'), 450 sf of sail (mast PD 2, DR 2, HT 150). Sail produces 1.35 kW of motive power per mph of wind (average power in 20 mph wind 27 kW). Oars for 20 oarsmen, producing 4 kW of motive power at top effort.

**Accommodation:** 20 seats.

**Crew Requirements:** Two officers, two deck crew, 20 oarsmen. Requires one crewman to work the sails, plus a helmsman.

**Accessories:** Anchor; a week's provisions.

**Weaponry:** Bronze ram.

**Cargo:** 555 cf.

**Armor:** Front, back, right and left PD 3, DR 5. Top, underside PD 2, DR 2. Armor is flammable wood.

**Statistics:** Cost \$12,900. Design mass 13,900 lbs., maximum payload 36,100 lbs., maximum cargo load 13,900 lbs., maximum deck load 1,500 lbs., current payload 4,700 lbs., loaded mass 18,600 lbs. (9.3 tons). Size Modifier +5, Radar Signature +6, IR Signature +5, Acoustic Signature +1.

**Water Performance:** Water speed factor 5 (17 under oars), under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 6 mph, top speed under oars 12.5 mph. Acceleration 0.5 mph/s under sail, 0.5 mph/s under oars. Deceleration 10 mph/s. MR 0.25, SR 1. Draft 4.2 feet.

**V2:** Hydrodynamic drag 70, Aquatic motive thrust 720 lbs. under sail in moderate breeze, 100 lbs. under oars. Top speed 3.5 under oars (7 mph), 6.5 (13 mph) under sail. MR .02, SR 1. Accel 0.4 (sails), 0.05 (oars). Decel 0.2 (0.4 mph), Draft 2.3'.

each side. The ship is about 60 feet in length and 8 feet in the beam, with lines almost as sleek as those of the trireme.

Aside from the 50 oarsmen, the penteconter has ten deck crew and officers. The captain is the *pentekontarchos*, similar in rank to the underofficer aboard a trireme. The penteconter is somewhat faster than the trireme under sail, but is less powerful under oars.

### THE HOMERIC GALLEY

The *Iliad* often mentions the ships brought to Troy by the Achaeans. Such ships are meant for 20 oarsmen, and carry provisions and war booty as well as troops. The statistics in the sidebar reflect such a small galley, not really meant for large-scale naval battles, but perfect for pirates or seaborne raiders.

The Homeric galley only has two officers: the commander (probably a hero or king) and the helmsman. Deck crew is small since the sails and other equipment require few hands to manage them. The 20 oarsmen store armor and weapons in the hold, ready to fight on land when the ship reaches its destination. The hold itself is larger in proportion to that of Classical warships, and the body more sturdy.

### MERCHANT VESSELS

Whereas warships are always rowed galleys, merchant vessels in Bronze Age and Classical times are always sailing ships. Speed and maneuverability are not a concern, and merchant crews can't afford to feed or pay large crews of highly-trained oarsmen.

### CLASSICAL MERCHANTMEN

The large merchant ship in the sidebar on p. 109 is typical of the larger merchantmen used by Athens and other major trading cities. It might be about 100 feet in length and 16 feet wide, wider and deeper in draft than a warship of the same length. Its primary purpose is to haul large quantities of food, trade goods, precious metals or military hardware.

A large vessel like this relies on its sails for power. Its oars are primarily to help maneuver the ship in approach to a harbor. The deck crew includes a number of men with varying roles. They pull the oars if necessary, load or unload cargo in port, or act as a lightly-armed guard against pirates. Officers include relief crew for the lookout and helm positions, since this type of large merchantman sails through the night in good weather. The ship is very slow when fully loaded.

## BRONZE AGE MERCHANTMEN

The smaller merchant ship in the sidebar on p. 110 is more typical of the Athenian merchant fleet, and is also the kind of vessel that plies the Mediterranean trade routes during the Bronze Age.

## SHIPBOARD LIFE

### THE SAILING SEASON

Ships almost never go to sea during the winter. Wind and weather patterns in the Mediterranean are fairly consistent from year to year, so it is well-known when ships can put out safely and when they should plan on being back in port. The “sailing season” runs from late February to mid-October, after which the autumn gales begin. The best sailing weather is from mid-May to mid-September.

Ships sometimes brave the autumn and winter storms. In time of war, expeditions might put out in the last weeks of winter so as to be occupying some strategic point when the sailing season began. Merchant ships rarely try this, however. The sailing season is long enough for all but the most long-range trading journeys.

Sometimes expeditions go into uncharted waters, or for very long distances. Voyages of exploration during the early Classical Age, for example, might stay at sea through the winter, in waters where there are no known places to buy provisions. Under these circumstances, the ship’s crew chooses a stretch of coastline along the way, goes ashore and plants wheat and barley from the ship’s stores. They then sail on, returning to their chosen harbor in the late summer to harvest the grain and camp through the winter. In later years, colonies are usually established in such places, to give sailors a chance to reprovision.

## FOOD AND QUARTERS

Food on ship is even simpler than the usual diet on land. Generally, grain and vegetables are purchased every few days on shore. Water is a serious problem, since no way is known to preserve fresh water for more than a few days. Merchant vessels carry provisions for a couple of weeks at a time, supplementing them with fish caught while under way, but they must periodically go ashore for water. Warships generally carry no more than two or three days’ provisions and water for one day, replenishing their supplies every night.

Aboard ship, there are no “quarters” as such. Warships beach every night, allowing the crew to camp on shore. Merchant ships may beach or cast anchor in a sheltered bay. The largest merchantmen often sail through the night if no bad weather is expected. If the crew must spend the night on board ship, they simply stretch out on the deck. Some crewmen go down to the cargo hold to sleep, propped against large storage jars or curled up on sacks of grain. All the crew and officers “rough it” in this way; even the ship’s captain or owner spends the night with his crew in the open.

Interestingly, many merchant vessels maintain a small altar on the top deck, for daily devotions or for prayers and sacrifices in times of emergency.

## PORTS OF CALL

During the Bronze Age, the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean are linked together by trade routes. Ebony and ivory from Egypt, glass from Canaan, tin and bronze from Syria, and pottery from Greece are transported on the small merchant

## LARGE MERCHANT SHIP (TL2)

**Structure:** 16,000 cf light wooden body (4,000 hit points) with 650 sf top deck.

**Propulsion:** One mast (80’), 3,200 sf of sail (mast PD 2, DR 2, HT 400). Sail produces 9.6 kW of motive power per mph of wind (192 kW in 20 mph wind). Oars for 20 oarsmen, producing 4 kW of motive power at top effort.

**Accommodation:** 20 seats.

**Crew Requirements:** Five officers, 23 deck crew. Requires five crewmen to work the sails, plus a helmsman and a lookout. Most deck crew perform multiple roles.

**Accessories:** Anchor; 2 weeks’ provisions.

**Weaponry:** None.

**Cargo:** 13,680 cf.

**Armor:** All sides are PD 2, DR 3. Armor is flammable wood. **Statistics:** Cost \$84,800. Design mass 88,100 lbs., maximum payload 311,900 lbs., maximum cargo load 311,900 lbs., maximum deck load 16,300 lbs., current payload 8,400 lbs., loaded mass 96,500 lbs. (48.25 tons) without cargo, 400,000 lbs. (200 tons) with full cargo hold. Size Modifier +7, Radar Signature +8, IR Signature +7, Acoustic Signature +0 (+1 with oars in use).

**Water Performance:** Water speed factor 4 (16 under oars). Without cargo, under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 6 mph, top speed under oars 1.5 mph. With full cargo hold, under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 3 mph, top speed under oars trivial. Acceleration 0.5 mph/s under sail, trivial under oars. Deceleration 10 mph/s. MR 0.25, SR 2 (SR 3 with full holds). Draft 7.3 feet (11.7 feet with full holds).

**V2:** Hydrodynamic drag (fully loaded) 1,085, Aquatic motive thrust 5,120 lbs. under sail in moderate breeze, 100 lbs. under oars. Top speed (fully loaded) 1.5 under oars (3 mph), 5 (10 mph) under sail. MR .01, SR 4. Accel 0.12 (sails), 0.0025 (oars), Decel 0.1 (0.2 mph), Draft 5.4’.



## SMALL MERCHANT SHIP (TL2)

**Structure:** 5,000 cf body light wooden body (2,000 hit points) with mediocre hydrodynamics and 330 sf top deck.

**Propulsion:** One mast (height 50 feet), 1,250 sf of sail (mast PD 2, DR 2, HT 250). Sail produces 3.75 kW of motive power per mph of wind (average power 37.5 kW). Oars for eight oarsmen, producing 1.6 kW of motive power at top effort.

**Accommodation:** Eight seats.

**Crew Requirements:** Five officers, eight deck crew. Requires two crewmen to work the sails, plus a helmsman and a lookout. Most deck crew perform multiple roles.

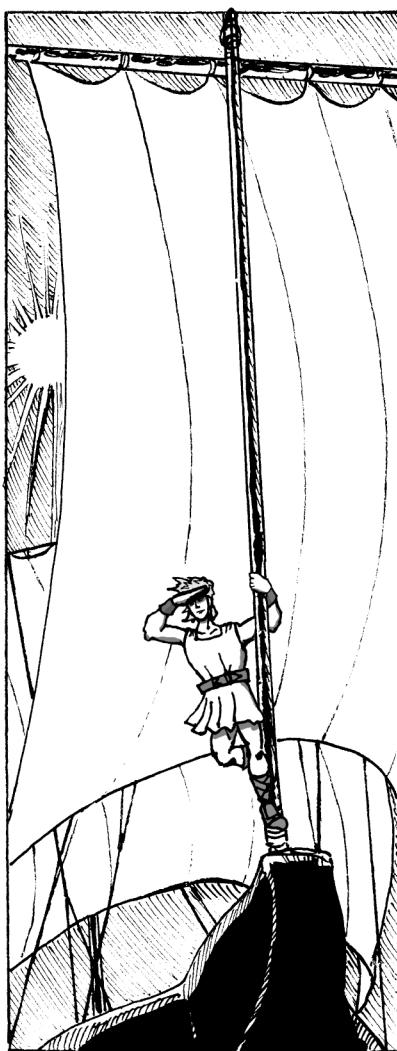
**Accessories:** Anchor; two weeks' provisions.

**Weaponry:** None.

**Cargo:** 4,145 cf.

**Armor:** PD 2, DR 3 on all sides. Armor is flammable wood.

*Continued on next page . . .*



ships of the time. Some expeditions go as far west as Sicily and Italy, trading for copper from local deposits or acquiring amber that is traded south in a trickle from the Baltic region.

During Classical times, ships trade in staples. Athens requires large imports of grain, and exports pottery and olive-oil products to pay for it. The foremost source for grain is the Black Sea, where the local peoples of the Crimea and southern Russia sell great quantities to Greek ships. Other ships bring grain from Egypt, the ancient world's greatest exporter of food. Another trade product is slaves; many come from overseas to the great slave-markets of Delos and Athens. Passenger service is rare, since most Greeks do not go in for tourism. Groups of passengers are probably on their way to settle in a new city or even to colonize virgin country. Passengers might also be on their way from the colonies to a pan-Hellenic festival.

There are two recognized classes of merchant in Classical times. The *naukleros* is a merchant captain, a man who owns his own ship and stands to make profit for himself. The *emporos* owns no ships, but rents space on board a merchant ship for his own goods. Also, many landbound investors make single-voyage loans to merchants, hoping for a high return if the voyage is profitable.

## TRAVEL TIMES FAVORABLE WINDS

How long it takes to get anywhere depends largely on the wind. In most of the Mediterranean, the summer winds tend to be from the north or northwest. With a good wind and an empty hold, merchant ships can count on making an average speed of 4 or 5 miles per hour. Warships, working the oarsmen in shifts, can match this speed.

Based on these speeds, times from Athens to the islands of the Cyclades are no more than 2 days. Crete can be reached in about 3 days. Rhodes and the cities of Ionia are about 4 days away. Striking out across the Mediterranean, ships can reach Egypt or Syria in 7 to 10 days. Warships would take longer to make the same journeys, since they generally do not sail through the night.

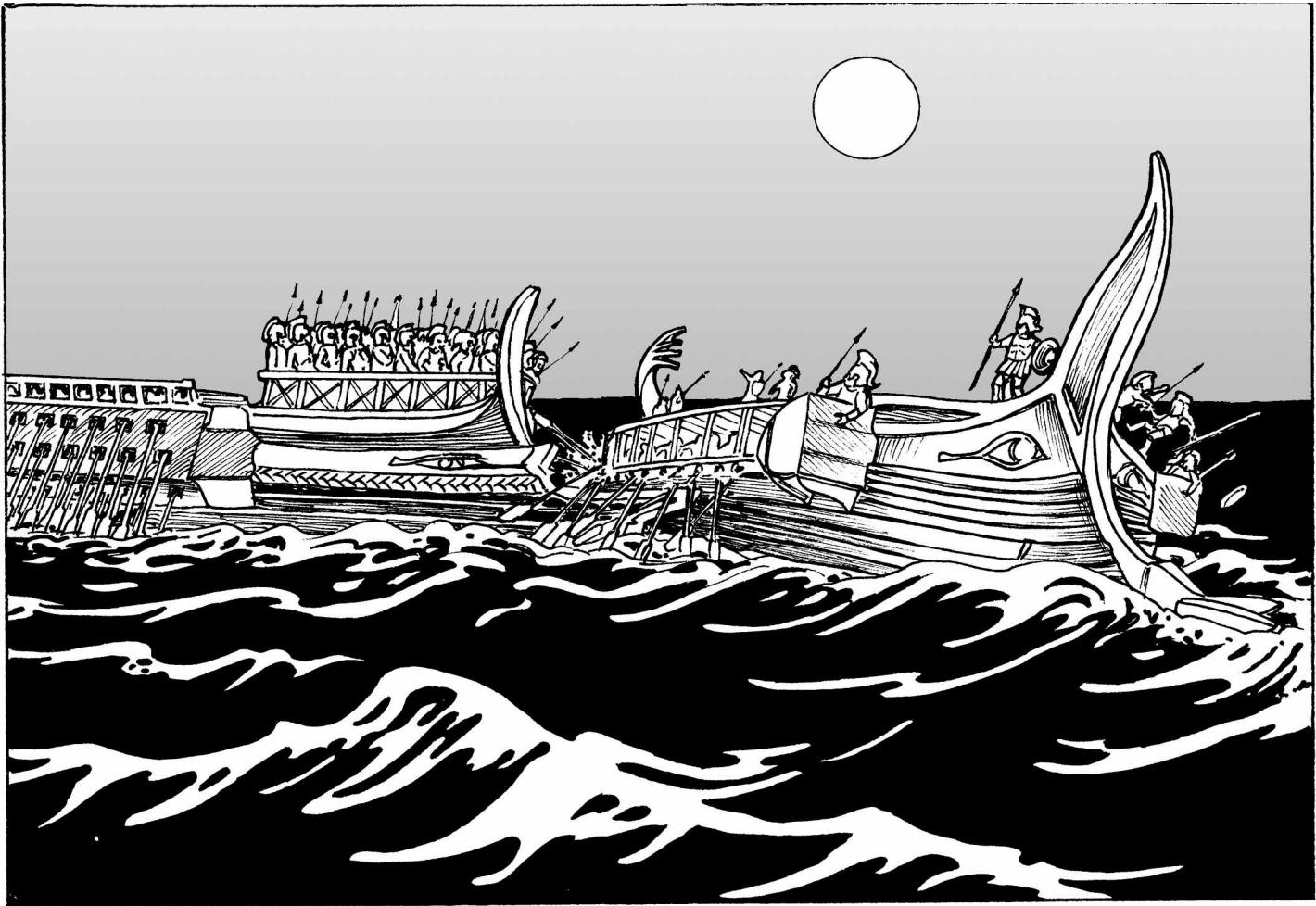
## UNFAVORABLE WINDS

Moving against the wind, to the west or northwest, is considerably more difficult. Tacking is not well-developed, so if the wind is against a ship it may be impossible to proceed. Here warships do better, lowering the sails and moving under oars alone. Merchant ships with unfavorable winds average no more than about 2 miles per hour.

Based on these speeds, times from Athens around the Peloponnese are 3 to 5 days. Reaching Sicily or southern Italy takes 10 to 12 days. The far western colonies, in southern France or Spain, are 20 to 24 days from Athens. Returning to Athens from one of the destinations named in *Favorable Winds*, above, would be similarly slow. Even an empty merchant ship returning from Egypt would take two weeks or more to do so, and a full ship might take months.

## SHIP COMBAT

Campaigns centered around the sea may involve naval combat. If the battle is small, with no more than one or two ships on a side, the GM may game the event out using the basic combat system and the *GURPS Vehicles* rules. Large-scale battles, such as the great naval engagements of the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, can be played out with the *GURPS Mass Combat* system. This will require some modifications to the basic system, which is designed to handle land battles.



## TACTICS

Ancient land warfare is relatively simple: the opposing lines simply clash until one side's morale breaks, after which the victors pursue the enemy. Naval warfare, on the other hand, is an art of maneuver and deception. A ship moves to gain an advantage over enemy ships, relies on the crew to seize that advantage in a devastating attack, and then pulls away quickly to repeat the process. The fluid nature of battle puts a premium on the training of ships' crews, and on the skill of naval commanders.

## PREPARATIONS

Naval forces rarely meet by accident. Lookouts can spot enemy ships up to 12 or 14 miles away. More importantly, since war fleets beach every night, spies and informants on land can help naval commanders determine where enemy forces might be waiting. On the night before a battle, special care is taken in choosing a place to beach the ships. The beach has to be defensible so that the enemy cannot raid overland, and it has to be situated so that the enemy has no advantage in the wind or current. If the enemy's fleet manages to deploy first and trap you against the shoreline, it is a disaster in the making.

Warships generally take down their masts and sails before battle. These might be stowed in the hold, or if the commander feels confident he might order them to be left on the beach to be collected after the battle. Of course, this leaves them vulnerable if the enemy lands a raiding party. Ships with small sails usually keep these on board, and can use them to run before the wind in a pinch.

## SMALL MERCHANT SHIP (TL2) (CONTINUED)

*Statistics:* Cost \$28,100. Design mass 28,600 lbs., maximum payload 96,400 lbs., maximum cargo load 96,400 lbs., maximum deck load 8,300 lbs., current payload 2,800 lbs., loaded mass 31,400 lbs. (15.7 tons) without cargo, 125,000 lbs. (62.5 tons) with full cargo hold. Size Modifier +6, Radar Signature +7, IR Signature +6, Acoustic Signature +0 (+1 with oars in use).

*Water Performance:* Water speed factor 4 (16 under oars). Without cargo, under sail top speed 5 mph, top speed under oars 4 mph. With full cargo hold, under sail with 20-mph wind top speed 4 mph, top speed under oars trivial. Acceleration 0.5 mph/s under sail, trivial under oars. Deceleration 10 mph/s. MR 0.25, SR 2 (SR 3 with full holds). Draft 5' (7.9' with full holds).

*V2:* Hydrodynamic drag (fully loaded) 250, Aquatic motive thrust 2,000 lbs. under sail in moderate breeze, 40 lbs. under oars. Top speed (fully loaded) 5.5 under oars (11 mph), 6 (12 mph) under sail. MR .01, SR 4. Accel 0.16 (sails), 0.0032 (oars), Decel 0.1 (0.2 mph), Draft 3.7'.



## TWO MISCONCEPTIONS

*In the hold, sweaty, fearful slaves haul at their oars. The captain stands on deck, his steely gaze checking the range to the enemy vessel. He orders more speed, and the slaves groan as they pick up the pace. Suddenly, the enemy fires a catapult, heaving a ball of flame at the ship's deck or vulnerable sails . . .*

Unfortunately, this scene is more Hollywood than historical.

For one thing, the oarsmen in Greek galleys are always free residents of their cities. Most Athenian oarsmen are citizens, respected for their profession. In fact, since Athenian power rests so heavily on its navy, the sailors as a group have a great deal of clout in city politics.

On a few occasions, desperate city-states may crew a ship with slaves, promising them freedom in exchange for service. However, the very notion of a slave-galley, with helpless oarsmen chained to their benches, is unthinkable to the Greeks. Warship crews must be skilled and highly motivated, or the ship will be helpless in battle. A warship crewed by poorly-trained, sullen slaves would be a serious liability to any city foolish enough to launch one.

Another problem with the Hollywood vision is the on-deck catapult. Greek warships are not stable enough to serve as platforms for indirect fire weapons – it is almost impossible to hit a moving target from the deck of a rolling ship. A heavy catapult is also too heavy, and the force of its throw too strong, to be used safely in a light-construction trireme. In Alexander's time and later, technology will improve enough to make on-board artillery safe and effective in battle, but the Classical Greek city-states cannot do this.

## ATTACK STRATEGIES

When the battle is about to begin, both sides take up formations, usually wide lines of ships facing the enemy. This standard maneuver is the first step in a *periplous* strategy, where one tries to encircle the enemy and restrict his ability to maneuver. This is most commonly used when one side has an advantage in numbers and can sweep around the enemy's flanks. If there are enough ships, a second line might be held back as a mobile reserve.

An alternate strategy is to approach the enemy in column formation. This is the first step in the *diekplous* strategy, where one attempts to drive into the enemy's formation and break it up. Great skill is necessary to succeed at this.

## DOING DAMAGE

When ships engage, they use a variety of different tactics to disable each other. At close approach, the archers and marines on board use bows and javelins to strike at the enemy. Their usual targets are enemy officers or marines, but if none of these are available they strike at deck crew or exposed oarsmen.

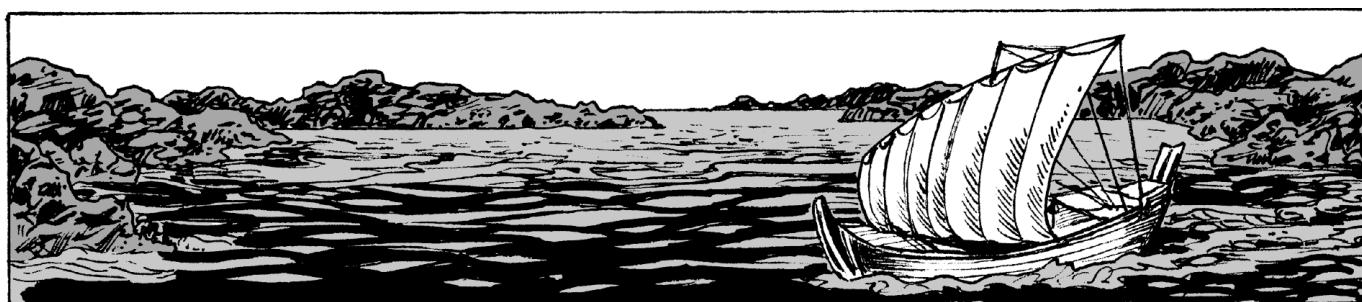
Serious attacks are made by ramming. The trick is to maneuver around the target, ending with a full-speed run directly at some vulnerable point. An effective ram attack will almost certainly hole the enemy vessel, killing oarsmen and threatening to sink the ship itself. If there is enough of a size difference, the ramming ship might break its target apart entirely. The drawback to this is that the ramming ship might take some damage as well, and will probably lose momentum. If the target ship does not break up, the rammer will become entangled in the enemy's hull, and must "back water" immediately, using its own oars in reverse to pull away.

A different attack is the "oar rake." Instead of colliding with the enemy's hull, the ramming ship strikes a glancing blow, trying to shear off as many oars as possible. This is most effective when there is little warning. If the target is caught by surprise, its crew will be unable to "up oars" in time, raising them above the hull of the ship to avoid damage. A successful oar rake is devastating. Not only will most of the oars on one side be broken, crippling the ship, but the clubbing action of the oars as they break will injure or even kill many of the oarsmen.

Grappling and boarding are Roman techniques, designed to put their superior soldiery to use. It is little used by the Greeks at their height. Greek warships rely on their ability to ram and cripple the enemy, after which ships and men are helpless.

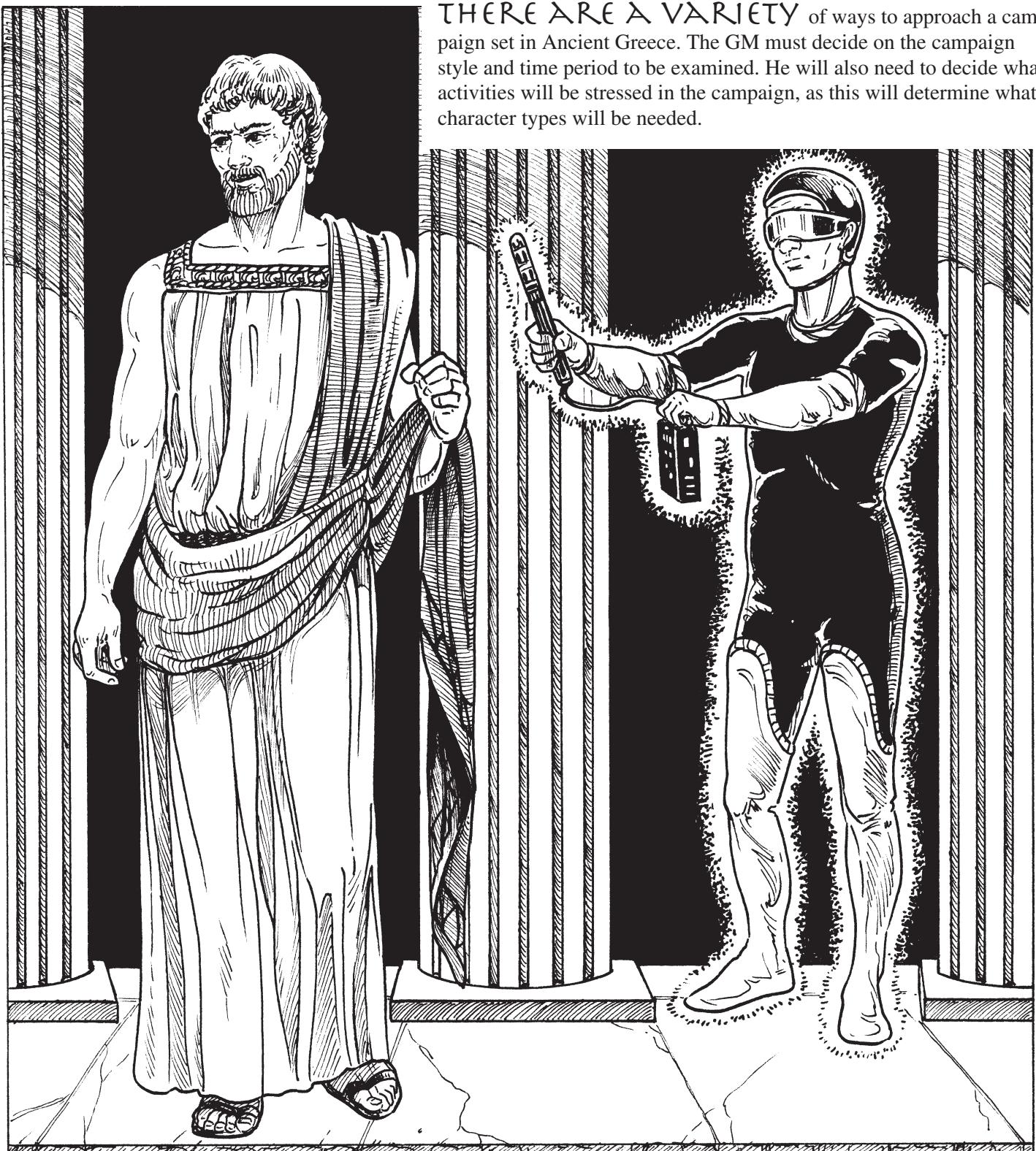
## DEFENSE METHODS

The only defense against ramming is speed and maneuverability. One strong defensive strategy is the *kyklos* formation, in which warships deploy with sterns together, like the spokes of a wheel. Ships in a formation like this cannot easily be attacked from the sides or rear, and cannot be taken by surprise for an oar rake. Unfortunately, it is difficult to go on the offensive from the *kyklos* without breaking up the formation completely.



# 8 CAMPAIGNS

THERE ARE A VARIETY of ways to approach a campaign set in Ancient Greece. The GM must decide on the campaign style and time period to be examined. He will also need to decide what activities will be stressed in the campaign, as this will determine what character types will be needed.



## HIGH-POWERED CAMPAIGNS

Sometimes, forcing PCs to start on a 100-point base is overly restrictive. For example, it is nearly impossible to design plausible statesmen or epic heroes on so few points. On the other hand, allowing a starting base of 150 or more points can cause problems with play balance. Many players will be tempted to manipulate the gaming system and to design unbalanced PCs, who are *very* good at some small set of things (usually combat) but not very interesting to roleplay.

To avoid this, the GM must sometimes step in and place a few restrictions on character design. Here are some suggestions for maintaining balance in a high-powered campaign.

*Require some points to be spent on certain things.* For example, in a Statesmen campaign, the PCs will need good interpersonal skills, possibly some military skills, high Status, Wealth and so on. A mere 100 points is probably not enough for all of this, so the GM may allow a 150-point base. It is reasonable for him to require that the extra 50 points be spent on some small set of benefits, such as Allies, Status, positive Reputation, Wealth, Voice, Charisma, or improved Appearance.

*Place limits on attributes.* Some players will try to spend a pile of character points on one extremely high attribute score. To avoid this sort of abuse, the GM may want to place an arbitrary ceiling on attributes, either by banning any attribute scores over a certain level (for example, 15) or by restricting the number of points that can be spent on attributes (100 points is reasonable).

This sort of restriction can be relaxed somewhat in a heroic campaign, where it is not unreasonable for a player to buy *lots* of ST. On the other hand, even mythic heroes never seem to be too much faster or more intelligent than the average person, so attribute ceilings on DX and IQ are still appropriate. Note that PCs with Heroic ST are already required to pay an Unusual Background cost. The GM may want to charge a similar cost for unusually high scores in attributes other than ST.

*Require diverse skill lists.* The GM can enforce diversity in skill purchases. Remember, Odysseus was a skilled carpenter as well as a pirate and warrior. Besides Socrates's "work" as a philosopher, he fought in the army of Athens and took part in city administration. Diversity in skills is thus not only good roleplaying, but realistic as well. Of course, the GM should allow the PCs to *use* these skills from time to time, or the players will rightfully resent being forced to buy skills that are useless in the campaign . . .

## CAMPAIN STYLES

The level of magic and divine action in the campaign will largely determine its nature. Campaigns set in the Classical Age should be more realistic, with rare magic and distant gods, while magic will be more common and the gods more active in Heroic-Age campaigns.

Four distinct campaign styles will be described here. Each has a characteristic tone, determined by the level of supernatural involvement, the power level of PCs and their opponents, the appropriate period setting, and so on.



### THE REALISTIC CAMPAIGN

In a realistic campaign, there is no working magic and the GM will not treat the gods as active characters. This is not to say that the player characters and NPCs will not *believe* in magic and the gods. Quite the contrary – worship of the gods will be sincere and common; belief in the myths and in magic will be widespread. People will believe in oracles and omens and will go to great lengths to interpret and live by them. It's just that, in the context of game mechanics, the GM will not treat any of it as "real."

The action will focus on relatively mundane things, such as making a living, engaging in city-state politics, or serving in a city's army. Violence will probably be uncommon except when the campaign focuses on a war or other disturbance. Social skills will be at a premium. The prizes will be social status, political power, fame and wealth.

Characters for a realistic campaign should be drawn up on a base of 100 points, with a limit of 40 points of disadvantages and five quirks. No one should be permitted to purchase magical abilities, Divine Birth or Heroic ST. If the PCs are to be more influential than the norm (statesmen or generals, for example), then a base of 150 points may be appropriate.

The best setting for this sort of campaign is the Classical Age, since much more information is available about the societies and history of that time. The campaign may or may not follow history as it happened. If the GM wants to keep the players guessing, or the PCs themselves become powerful enough to affect the course of events, then history can take a different course.

## THE REALISTIC FANTASY CAMPAIGN

A GM of this style campaign treats magic and the gods as real. They are not common. Spellcasters are few and their abilities unpredictable. The gods are distant, and almost always make their wishes known through oracles and omens rather than direct action. PCs will have little or no control over the supernatural forces around them.

This sort of campaign might be particularly effective if the GM never makes it clear to the players whether or not the supernatural is objectively real. Bear in mind that if magic is not understood or controlled by the PCs, they may fear it rather than regard it as a tool. Supernatural elements in a realistic fantasy campaign will therefore involve an element of horror.

Characters for a realistic fantasy campaign should again be drawn up on a base of 100 points, with a limit of 40 points of disadvantages and five quirks. No one should be permitted to purchase magical abilities or any of the “mythic” advantages such as Divine Birth or Heroic ST. Once again, if PCs are to be more powerful or influential than normal, a base of 150 points will be appropriate.

The action in a realistic fantasy campaign will resemble that of a realistic campaign. The party’s concerns will be fairly down-to-earth, even if they occur against the backdrop of an occasionally-magical world. The Classical Age is the appropriate setting for this style of play. Indeed, this style might be closest to the way that the Classical Greeks actually looked at the world.

Another possibility might be a realistic fantasy campaign set in the Heroic Age. As before, the action is more or less realistic and the supernatural is uncontrollable. In this case, though, the campaign centers around the actual events that sparked later Greek legends. For example, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* probably echo real events that happened just before the Mycenaean collapse – romanticized and blown out of proportion, but with a kernel of historical truth. Some players might find it interesting to take part in events like these, interacting with a “historical” Theseus or Agamemnon.

## THE FANTASTIC CAMPAIGN

The fantastic style is probably closest to the “generic” fantasy role-playing setting. Here, the gods are undeniably real and take an active part in mortal affairs. Magic is common and may be available to the players, if the GM wishes.

The action in the fantastic campaign will be more dramatic and violent than in the preceding styles. Adventures will include quests and monster-hunts. The GM should take care not to fall into the clichés of “generic” fantasy roleplaying. Treasures will be fairly small and usually involve goods rather than piles of coinage and magic items. The gods may not be what the players might expect (see sidebar, p. 81). Monsters are smart and *tough*; there are no disposable little gremlins running around to be slaughtered by the dozen before lunch. And, finally, there are few if any underground catacombs stocked with treasures and monsters.

Characters for a fantastic campaign should be set up on the 100-point base, although magic-using PCs are now acceptable. People in the heroic mold may use “mythic” advantages and be set up on a base of 150 or even 200 points, although the GM may want to place restrictions on how those points can be spent (see sidebar, p. 114).



## ADVENTURE SEEDS

### THE GOLDEN BOUGH (ABOUT 1300 B.C.)

The king has fallen sick, cursed by Apollo for the sin of blasphemy. Unless a cure is found for him, he will die slowly, after a long period of suffering. To avoid this horrible fate, the king sends a company of heroes to Delphi, to beg the god for a cure. But the god's anger is still strong, and the heroes are given an impossible task – to recover a bough from the Golden Tree of the East, a magical plant guarded by a powerful kingdom far away.

The adventurers are minor heroes from the stricken king's realm and elsewhere. They will have to get as much information as they can from the oracle, and then go on a quest for the Tree. There is a time limit, since the king will die before long. One possibility is for the king himself to be a PC, possibly with the Terminally Ill disadvantage (see p. B239). He may start with a higher point total than the other PCs, but as time passes he will lose his physical abilities.

### DELUGE (ABOUT 1100 B.C.)

The great heroes are all dead. Mycenae has been sacked. The kingdom is small, tucked away in the mountains of the Peloponnese. So far the barbarian invaders have left it alone, but this luck can't last. Sooner or later the Doric tribes, led by the descendants of Heracles, will come to claim the kingdom.

The PCs can be royalty and nobility of the kingdom, or they can be minor heroes fleeing the sack of other areas. They will have to gather men, keep the kingdom in good order despite the barbarian threat, and find a way to throw the Dorians back. If they are lucky, they may be able to sustain a shadow of the Age of Heroes, a place where the old glories still survive.

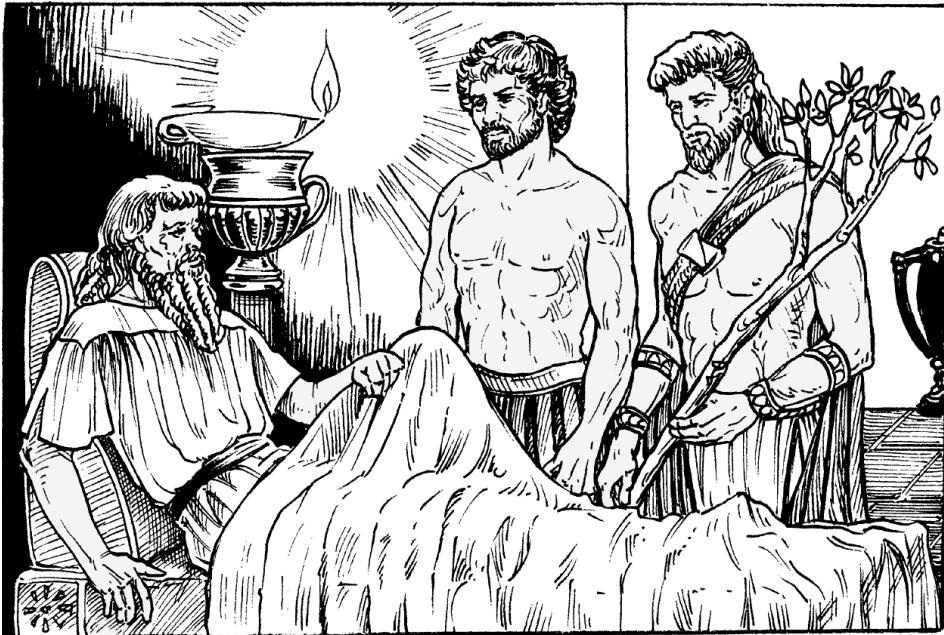
### GO TELL THE SPARTANS (479 B.C.)

The Great King's army is bearing down on Greece. King Leonidas is leading an army of elite Spartan soldiers to Thermopylae to stem the tide. As he passes through the small city of Thespis, the Thespians send troops to join the allied army. But some of them become aware that there is treachery in their ranks, and that the battle may well be hopeless.

The protagonists are members of the Thespian army. They will be interacting with Leonidas and the Spartans as well as detachments from other cities. They will have to uncover the seeds of treason among their own fellow-citizens, and root them out in time to prevent a disaster and keep the honor of their city intact. Herodotus mentioned that the Thespians were the only detachment to choose to stand with the Spartans in the last battle . . .

*Continued on next page . . .*

The best setting for a fantastic campaign is probably the Mycenaean period, with plenty of intrusions from the heroic legends. A fantastic campaign set in the Classical Age would not really fit the tone of the literature. On the other hand, if the GM is willing to play fast and loose with the historical record, it might work.



## THE MYTHIC CAMPAIGN

This resembles the fantastic style, only more so. The gods are constantly meddling in the affairs of the PCs, who are great heroes themselves. The characters will find some gods watching over them and helping at critical moments, and other gods acting to thwart their plans. Magic is common, with spellcasters and enchanted beasts wandering the countryside.

In the mythic campaign, characters should be built on a base of *at least* 150 points, and have full access to magical abilities and the mythic advantages. Some of the heroes of legend were much more powerful than this. Heracles, for instance, was a full 500-point super at the very least! If the campaign is to be truly epic in scope, then the GM may permit PCs up to the *GURPS Supers* limit of 100 points of disadvantages.

The action of a mythic campaign will resemble that of a fantastic one, but on a much larger canvas. The heroes will become involved in the affairs of the gods, go on truly epic quests, slay hideous monsters, and so on. The mythic campaign is only suited for the Heroic-Age setting.

## CAMPAIN SETTINGS

The next decision the GM will have to make is the time period. Every era had its own historical flavor, which will determine what kinds of campaign work best in it.

### PREHISTORIC GREECE (TO 1600 B.C.)

Virtually nothing is known about very early Greek history. One might explore the Paleolithic Period using Greece as a backdrop (see *GURPS Ice Age*). Or the GM might center his campaign on Minoan culture, which is largely unknown and leaves lots of room for creativity. One possibility is a campaign dealing with the tension between Minoan-Pelasgian culture and the invading proto-Greeks.

## THE HEROIC AGE (1600 B.C. – 1100 B.C.)

This is the best period for fantastic or mythic campaigning. Players may take the roles of famous heroes, or lesser heroes who never made it into the known myths. Campaigns set early in the Heroic Age will have a bright tone, with gods and heroes having things more or less as they please. Later in the Age, as the gods grow more distant and the barbarian incursions approach, campaigns might take a darker, fatalistic tone. The players will have a sense of struggling to win glory even as inevitable night falls.

## DARK AGES AND THE EARLY CLASSICAL AGE (1100 B.C. – 500 B.C.)

This is a period of rebuilding and exploration. The heroes may try to salvage something from the barbarian onslaught, or they may migrate overseas for a fresh start. Those who stay in the homeland may also take part in the rise of city-state culture, with the social upheaval this process involved.

## THE PERSIAN WARS (500 B.C. – 450 B.C.)

People caught up in this turbulent period will become involved in the wars themselves. Greece needs to be defended against overwhelming odds. This does not prevent the various city-states from intriguing among themselves. Also, Persia is always trying to divide the Greeks.

## THE TIME OF TROUBLES (450 B.C. – 350 B.C.)

Persia is no longer making much effort to conquer the Greeks. The intrigue and constant warfare going on between the Greek city-states more than make up for this. Campaigns can involve warfare, city politics, cloak-and-dagger intrigue, or all these things combined. This is also the period of the greatest Greek intellectual brilliance, so players wanting a more cerebral campaign can involve themselves in the philosophical and scientific discoveries of the age.

## ALEXANDER (350 B.C. – 300 B.C.)

A much quieter period, except for Alexander's men. Greece is pacified and the constant bickering of previous years is (for the most part) gone. The period is ripe for military adventuring, as players take the part of soldiers under the command of Alexander or one of his secondary generals.

## TIME TRAVEL TO HELLAS

Ancient Greece was a pivotal place and time in history. Time travelers will want to observe every stage in Greek development. If observation isn't enough, there are many artifacts and works of art that are known of, but long since lost. Imagine what modern scholars or collectors might pay for an intact copy of the *Aphrodite of Melos* (the "Venus de Milo"), photographs of the intact Parthenon, or copies of lost works by Euripides or Aristotle.

Also, there are any number of places where history might have taken a radically different course. What if the Minoan culture had survived into historical times? Suppose Persia had conquered Greece? The Greek city-states were influential even though they were divided for so long – what if they had learned early to work together? The Time Corps (see *GURPS Time Travel*) will certainly be interested in the possibilities. And so will Stopwatch. After all, the Greeks were the foremost proponents of democracy and individualism. If those ideas were cut off at the source, it would be a terrible blow to the Corps.

Infinity Unlimited (also in *GURPS Time Travel*) would be interested in alternate timelines springing from events in Greek history. And some of those alternates could be *strange*. Outlined here are two alternate histories which GMs can use for *Time Travel* campaigns, or for full-fledged campaign settings of their own.

## ADVENTURE SEEDS (CONTINUED)

### THE PERICLES INCIDENT (429 B.C.)

A Time Corps agent (see *GURPS Time Travel*) returns to Headquarters, dying of the Athenian plague of 429 B.C. This seems strange, since agents are given strong panimmunity. Upon investigation, it turns out that the plague was genetically engineered! The plague and its consequences, such as the death of Pericles, were always thought to be "real" history. Now it seems to have been the result of temporal manipulation, although nobody knows how Stopwatch reached the period without being detected.

The PCs will be Time Corps agents, sent back to correct history by saving Pericles from the plague. The Corps hopes that a longer-lived Pericles will help avert the worst consequences of the Peloponnesian War. Stopwatch, of course, will try to prevent this. And what if the plague was *not* caused by Stopwatch? Could there be a third force at work in Periclean Athens?

### WITH FRIENDS LIKE THESE (CLASSICAL AGE)

The city is at war, and times are hard. A major expedition is about to be sent out. Just before it leaves, however, the commander of the expedition is discredited by rumors that he violated religious law. Without him, the expedition is sure to fail, but the Assembly is calling for his arrest!

The PCs are mid-level citizens and statesmen, who must find out what is really going on in time to save the general's reputation and the city. Are the rumors true? Or are they being spread by a faction in the city? Are there agents in the pay of the enemy? No one can quite be trusted, possibly not even all the PCs.

Astute readers will note the similarity to the situation in Athens in 416 B.C. The GM may use that specific point in history, and mine historical references for characters and ideas.

### SIDE TRIP (ABOUT 320 B.C.)

The PCs are mid-level leaders in Alexander's army. After the defeat of Persia, Alexander sends a portion of his force off to conquer an isolated mountain kingdom. The PCs must deal with disaffection in the ranks, strange local customs and hostile terrain. Will they add to Alexander's empire, or will they be a mere footnote to history?

## CAMPAIGN CROSSES

The Hellenic environment can also be used to expand other kinds of campaigns. Many campaigns in the following *GURPS* worldbooks would cross over nicely with *GURPS Greece*.

### GURPS CHINA

This may seem an odd mix, but the Classical Age of Greek history is parallel to the Warring States period in Chinese history. Chinese adventurers, exiles from the losing side in a war, may work their way west to the Mediterranean basin. Or things might move the other way. Alexander marched almost two-thirds of the way from Macedonia to what was then the Chinese frontier.

### GURPS CLIFFHANGERS

Pulp archeologists spend a lot of time digging up Greek antiquities. The Lost World scenario fits, too. In a hidden valley deep in the jungles of Africa or the mountains of the Middle East, a Greek settlement might be found, having hidden from history for thousands of years. Or it might be Atlantean . . .

### GURPS FANTASY

Aside from the obvious possibility of setting a campaign in the Heroic Age of Greece, one might use *GURPS Greece* as a “culture pack” when building other fantasy worlds. Events from Hellenic history and legend, with the names changed as necessary, will spice up any fantasy campaign with a more-or-less European flavor.

### GURPS HORROR

In the Greek myths, magic and the supernatural often have a horrific twist. Travel through the underworld and the raising of ghosts provide some of the most hair-raising episodes in Greek myth. Even the Olympian gods exhibit inhumanly cruel and frightening aspects, and the chthonic deities seem utterly alien at times. A slant toward the darker side of the supernatural fits the Hellenic mythos perfectly.

### GURPS IMPERIAL ROME

Some interesting historical adventures could be set up around the two major sources of European civilization. Greeks might visit the small city-state of Rome in its early days, while Greek culture is at its height and the Roman Empire is centuries away. Likewise, once Rome became a great power it grew fascinated with the declining culture of Greece. It was common for Roman aristocrats to journey to the East for higher education, business opportunities, or just for sightseeing.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## RETURN OF THE OLYMPIANS

Late in the Classical Age, many educated Greeks were having severe doubts about their religion. The Sophists were teaching doctrines that came close to atheism, claiming that the Olympian gods did not exist or were not interested in human affairs. Imagine their surprise when the gods suddenly *came back* . . .

In this timeline, Greek history is unchanged until about 450 B.C. At that time, the Olympian gods return to Earth after an absence of several centuries. Prayers to them become effective. They begin appearing to mortals again, to give them gifts or carry on love affairs. Children are born who are brilliantly talented or superhumanly strong. “Magic” even starts working again.

The GM will need to decide: just what *are* the Olympians? Aliens using high technology or psionic talent, who visited Earth in the Bronze Age and are coming back to stay? Manifestations of the Greek cultural unconscious? Magical beings who are exactly what they claim to be? Also, why did they leave Earth, and why (and how) did they return?

The gods remember the Trojan War and its aftermath. They will probably not interfere in small-scale conflicts between city-states, but if something like the Peloponnesian War begins they will put a stop to it. They have worshipers on both sides, after all. Wars against barbarians will be acceptable.

The GM will have to decide how the Olympians react to the intellectual climate of Classical society. The Sophists, for example, will probably displease them, but they may tolerate philosophers like Socrates who are genuinely pious.

Finally, the Olympians will react differently to an urban culture than they did to the sparsely-populated Greece of the feudal Bronze Age. They may approve of the changes or not be concerned with them, in which case relations between mortals and the Olympians will probably be relatively smooth. Only once in a while will a capricious or angry god cause mortals to suffer.

The Olympians may *prefer* the Bronze-Age society, in which case they may try to bring it back. This might lead to wars, plagues and natural disasters, as the gods try to reduce Greek numbers. This might be a “war against the gods” campaign, where Greek characters must overcome their piety, discover what the “gods” really are, and try to defeat them.

## ALEXANDER XXIII

In this world, Alexander the Great manages to avoid dying young. He consolidates his empire, and adds to it with campaigns in Arabia, Europe and India. A unified Greek-Macedonian-Persian ruling class runs the widespread domains. Before Alexander dies of old age, he establishes a strong dynasty of heirs to rule securely. History from that point is very different.

It is now the year 575 of the *Oikoumene*, the “world-state” established by Alexander (244 A.D. by our reckoning). The Empire stretches from Spain to India. There have been civil wars and disruptions of the imperial succession, but by and large the last few centuries have been peaceful. The current ruler is Alexander XXIII, a distant descendant of the Empire’s founder.

Trade brings prosperity, and the imperial armies keep the Chinese and other barbarians safely behind the frontiers. Revolts and civil war are relatively rare. In the great intellectual capitals of Athens, Alexandria, Pergamon and Syracuse, scientists have been making great discoveries. First came the invention of the horse collar, a device which allowed horses to do much more work. With horses now more efficient than slaves for heavy labor, slavery has begun to dwindle. Steel and advanced metallurgy followed. Then Heron of Alexandria invented the steam engine, about the year 310. An Indian scientist demonstrated the production of gunpowder and its use in weaponry about 380. Other inventions followed . . .



The idea of applied technology has been slow to spread, since the slave economy remains strong and the ruling class is conservative. Still, today a recognizable Industrial Revolution is under way in many parts of the Empire. The foremost achievement is the web of railroads that has recently come to link the major cities, allowing goods and troops to move quickly anywhere in Alexander's domain.

The time is one of great intellectual and social upheaval, much like the corresponding period in our own timeline. Slave unrest is common, and democratic revolution is a real possibility. The old religions, based on Greek, Persian, Egyptian and Hindu pantheons, are not very satisfying to many people. Some people are turning to Buddhism or Mithraism (a religion of Persian origin similar to Christianity), while the educated upper classes develop a secular philosophy that mostly ignores the gods.

GMs using this setting have free rein to extrapolate the changes in Greek culture over centuries of Alexandrian rule. Campaigns might involve soldiers keeping order on the frontiers or in the restless cities, statesmen and bureaucrats involved in the constant intrigue of Imperial politics, traders and merchants moving goods or investing in new industrial ventures, explorers uncovering new parts of the Earth (possibly the Americas), and so on.

## CAMPAIN THEMES

Once the GM has chosen the campaign style and setting he desires, he must narrow the focus. The historical literature and mythology allow a variety of campaign themes, and the GM is free to choose one or more to concentrate on. This choice will, of course, affect the choices the players make when designing characters, and will also govern the most appropriate point base for the PCs to be built on.

### CITIZENS

This theme focuses on the social and political activity of a Greek city-state, with the players taking the roles of ordinary townsmen. PCs will succeed by acting within the Hellenic social system to gain wealth, fame and status.

## CAMPAIN CROSSOVERS (CONTINUED)

### GURPS MARTIAL ARTS

The Greeks have their own martial arts style – *pankration*. Practitioners claim certain superhuman abilities, although the style has no immediate attachment to any philosophical school as do some of the more famous Oriental styles. Still, *pankration* is common and is included in the great athletic festivals. And, of course, there are always those possible Chinese visitors...

### GURPS RIVERWORLD

PCs might well meet the “real” heroes of myth in the course of their travels up the River. The banks of the River are also similar to the geographic conditions of Hellas, where isolated valleys gave rise to small, fiercely-independent states. The establishment of a neo-Hellenic *polis* is inevitable, even if the technological base is different.

### GURPS SPACE

The Greek myths appear frequently in science fiction. The Greek gods might be advanced aliens who visited Earth during the Bronze Age, and they might still be out there somewhere. Many science fiction stories retell the Greek myths in an interstellar setting. After all, the expanses of space and the new worlds to be found Out There are much like the prospect the Mycenaean Greeks faced when they set out across the wide sea: incredible dangers, mysteries to be explored, strange peoples to encounter, monsters, and even gods.

*Continued on next page...*

## CAMPAIGN CROSSES (CONTINUED)

### GURPS SUPERS

The idea of including the heroes or even the gods of Greek myth in a *Supers* world is not new. Heracles seems to turn up fairly frequently, as do the Olympians and even the Titans. On the other hand, superheroes may travel back in time and interact with the people of the Heroic Age face to face.

### GURPS TIME TRAVEL

Naturally, the Classical Age is a critical period in European history, so the Time Patrol will be particularly careful to guard it from tampering. On the other hand, time-hopping tourists, historical researchers and collectors will find much to occupy themselves. All kinds of alternate worlds might also be spun off from Greek history (see p. 117).



### GURPS VAMPIRE/WEREWOLF/ MAGE

Greek myth is full of monsters, both fierce beastlike creatures and sinister demons who drink the blood of the unwary. A Heroic Age campaign can easily cross over with the World of Darkness. Likewise, in historical times vampires will find it congenial to take up residence in the larger Greek cities, such as Athens or Alexandria. Garou will doubtless resist the expansion of Greek culture into what was once virgin wilderness. Finally, Greek mages may exist – or the Olympians, with their command over reality, may themselves be mages.

Making a day-to-day living will be a major concern. PCs will take part in the political intrigues of the city, but only as bit players.

Such a campaign would work best in the Classical Age, when society was more egalitarian than at any previous time in Greek history. If the city chosen for the center of the campaign is a pivotal one like Athens, then people will be coming from all over the known world with their problems, ambitions and plots. Furthermore, wars will be regular occurrences, requiring even ordinary citizens to take up arms to defend their homes.

The GM should draw up the home city of the campaign in considerable detail. He will need large numbers of well-developed NPCs and many locations within the city. Setting the campaign in Athens will allow the GM to ransack a great deal of historical material for characters and ideas. GMs who set things elsewhere will have more freedom in designing the city's society.

### STATESMEN

This campaign will again focus on the social system of a Greek city-state, but this time the players will take the parts of more influential citizens. Such people will be opinion-shapers and political leaders rather than common citizens. In a war, they will maneuver to gain military command as officers or even as generals. Statesmen should be built on more than 100 points, with much of the excess devoted to Status, Wealth, Allies and the other trappings of influence and power (see sidebar, p. 114).

Statesmen will be less concerned with the everyday affairs of the citizenry, and more concerned with political intrigue. They will get ahead by using their knowledge of the social and political system to win status and wealth, but this time the stakes are higher. PCs will be in constant competition to promote their own ambitions, while cooperating to advance the interests of their city. Of course, in Greek political life, being *too* influential and ambitious is dangerous. Someone who seems to gather too much power into his own hands might find himself in exile.

This theme again works best during the Classical Age. Society during the Mycenaean period was not democratic enough to allow the existence of politicians.

A variation would feature one influential politician surrounded by his associates and friends. Such a scheme might be more realistic, since Greek politicians did not cooperate as large teams unless some significant external threat loomed. If the players are not comfortable with the idea of having one of their own characters noticeably more powerful than the others, then the leading figure can be made an NPC Patron.

In any case, as with a Citizens campaign, the GM will need to develop the populace and layout of the campaign's home city, in detail. Here, he will need to emphasize wealthy and influential characters more heavily.

### SOLDIERS

The campaign will focus on life in the army, during one of the many wars that plagued Greece. Most of the armies of Classical Greece were citizen militia, so this campaign will resemble a Citizens or Statesmen campaign. The emphasis is different, however. PCs must deal with the perils of the battlefield, perhaps made worse by poor leadership on the part of their commanders. Between battles, they must interact with their fellow soldiers. Any quarrels between the generals will be reflected by friction between the soldiers under their respective commands, especially if the contingents come from different cities that are allied only for the moment. The division of spoils is another possible area of contention.

This theme will also work nicely in the Heroic Age, although armies of that period are not as well-trained or disciplined as those of the Classical Age. Still, if anything, battles were more dramatic, being composed of many individual duels rather than an impersonal mass slaughter. Between battles the contingents under the various noble commanders often take part in the squabbles of their leaders.

A variation on this theme deals with mercenaries. In this case the reason for fighting is different. A mercenary fights for pay, and feels more loyalty to his leaders than to any given city or nation. A mercenary army may be composed of rootless men from all over Greece. Such armies are much sought after for their discipline and toughness. A Greek mercenary may be faced with all manner of strange cultures, environments and opponents.

Another variation is the “sailors” campaign. Here, the PCs are sailors, marines and generals who spend most of their time at sea during war. Such a campaign might well be more intense than a land-based one, and would also allow the GM to explore more of the Greek world.

The GM should develop a stable of NPCs, mostly soldiers and leaders in the same army as the PCs. Since armies were highly mobile, developing one city is less necessary. The GM can develop the cities and locations in the campaigning area to a lower level of detail.

## TRADERS

Greek traders go everywhere during the Classical Age. They not only handle the major imports and exports of the maritime city-states, but are also always on the lookout for lucrative cargoes to handle on their own behalf. The trader is constrained by the laws of his own city-state, which sometimes make it difficult to turn a profit. He has to deal with the strange customs and laws of faraway lands, and the cunning of rival traders and local merchants who stand ready to cheat him. Finally, there are the hazards of the sea: storms, pirates and imprecise navigation.

A campaign set in the Classical Age will be easiest to arrange, since much is known about the patterns of trade and the various cultures with which the Greeks traded. Such a campaign would also work well in the Heroic Age. There is plenty of evidence for a thriving sea trade during the late Bronze Age, and there is no reason why trading ships can't have one or more Greek crewmen.

Traders can also be pirates. In this case the PCs are going to be on the delivering end of any violence. Pirates naturally prey on shipping, stealing merchant cargo and selling it or using it for their own ends. Usually, however, they raid coastal settlements for booty and slaves. Piracy is frequent during the Classical Age, and many pirates of the time are Greek or influenced by Greek culture. During the Heroic Age, the Greeks are notorious pirates.

The GM should choose a trade route for the PCs to be involved in. Are they trading into the Black Sea for grain? Or do they spend their time in the East, trading a wider variety of goods? In any case, the party will probably have regular ports of call, which he will need to draw up and populate with NPCs. The home port must be developed in detail, since this is where the party will spend its time between trips.

## EXPLORERS

The Greeks were great explorers and colonizers. PCs might take part in exploratory journeys, discovering new lands for later settlement or contacting new peoples with which trade might be possible.

## REPEATING THEMES

The Greek myths include certain themes that occur in story after story. A GM working in the Heroic Age may want to incorporate some of these themes into his plot lines.

*Impossible Quests:* Sometimes a king sees a visiting hero as dangerous, and wants to be rid of him. For some reason, he doesn't want to kill the hero – perhaps there are bonds of family or hospitality between them. So the king tricks the hero into going on an impossible quest, hoping the hero will die far away. Of course, this rarely works out well for the king. Many of the greatest quests of Greek myth began this way: the Medusa Quest, the voyage of the Argonauts, even the Twelve Labors of Heracles (one impossible quest after another).

*Inevitable Fates:* Many of the myths involve a hero trying to avoid a terrible prophecy. This is impossible, of course. Indeed, a hero's efforts to avoid fate may bring it more surely to him. For example, had Oedipus remained in Corinth, he might have avoided killing his father and marrying his mother. Instead, he fled to avoid harming the only parents he knew – his *foster* parents – and ended by fulfilling the prophecy.

*Hidden Identities:* Some myths involve heroes who conceal their identities, or who do not even know them. This can lead to tragic confusion. For instance, Theseus concealed his relationship to King Aegeus when he first arrived in Athens, and as a result the king nearly had him murdered as a threat to the throne.

A hidden identity often occurs in conjunction with an inevitable fate, as above. Many a myth involves an infant who is exposed after an oracle reveals that he will kill an important person or bring ruin to a city. Invariably the infant survives and grows to be a hero, who may not know his true identity. Even so, the hero fulfills the oracle, out of revenge or even by accident. This theme appears in the Perseus, Jason and Oedipus myths, along with many others, including Paris of Troy!

*Moral Conflicts:* Sometimes any action a hero takes will earn him the wrath of the gods. He may have bound himself by oath to a rash promise (this is one way that impossible quests start). Or he may simply be in a moral bind that has no good solution. His heroism may express itself in the way he lives with the consequences. The classic example of this is the story of Orestes (see p. 43).

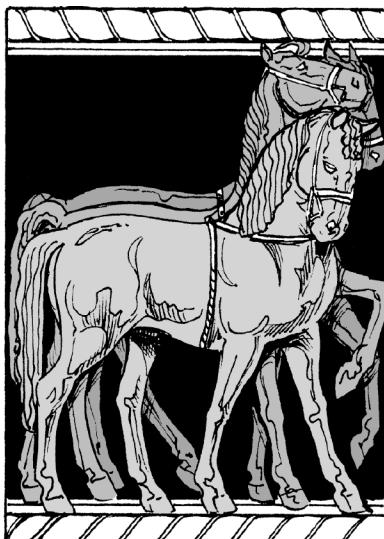
## INSPIRATIONAL READING

The bibliography (see p. 125) includes a great deal of ancient and modern literature centered on the Hellenic setting. The best works are listed in this sidebar.

Any GM hoping to run a Hellenic campaign should read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Even if the campaign is not to be set during the Heroic Age, these two epic poems, as literature, influenced all of future Greek culture to a tremendous extent. The *Iliad* shows just how much drama can be realized from the interactions of soldiers between battles as well as on the field. The *Odyssey* includes views of life in the courts of the Greek hero-kings, as well as the prototypical Explorers story. There are plenty of translations and prose adaptations of both works.

GMs hoping to run a more historical and realistic campaign should read the Greek and Roman historians. For a Citizens, Statesmen, or Soldiers campaign, Herodotus' history of the Persian Wars and Thucydides' history of the Peloponnesian War are important sources. Herodotus is given to tall tales, but his work is full of digressions and odd bits of trivia that will do wonders for fleshing out a historical campaign. Thucydides, on the other hand, is a serious historian concerned with facts. Any GM planning a Mercenary campaign should read Xenophon's *Anabasis*, one of the finest and most readable pieces of military history ever written. Finally, Plutarch's famous set of biographies includes those of many prominent figures of the Greek Classical Age, giving a great deal of insight into the workings of Greek political and social life.

Modern historical novelists have often worked in the Hellenic setting. Mary Renault and Gene Wolfe have probably produced the best work in the genre. Their novels are rich with atmosphere and superb characterizations.



An entire campaign might center around the establishment of a new city-state on a distant shore. PCs leading such an expedition must deal with local politics while gathering colonists and the necessary ships and equipment. The gods must be consulted, and their oracles can be hard to interpret. The sea journey itself will be hazardous, as will contact with the natives once the destination is reached.

Most colonial ventures take place in the early Classical Age. Exploratory journeys and colonization are also common during the Mycenaean period, complicated by the fact that seafaring technology is less advanced. The same idea of “exploring distant lands” also fits well in the Heroic Age, especially with the addition of supernatural elements. After all, who is Odysseus but an (unwilling) explorer?

Explorers campaigns will require fewer NPCs, but the area being explored or colonized must be set up in detail. The GM will need to decide on climate, soil, water, mineral wealth, the native culture, rivals such as the Phoenicians . . .

## TOURISTS

During the Classical Age, Greeks often travel abroad simply out of curiosity, interested in investigating other cultures and societies. Most of the great historians and several of the great statesmen spend years of their lives abroad, often as a result of exile from their home cities. A fascinating campaign might be set up around a group of Greeks traveling around the Mediterranean to see the world.

Such a campaign should be fairly realistic, but need not be lacking in action. There are, of course, the usual perils of traveling among barbarians, and one might be caught up in hazardous events such as wars or revolutions, far from home. Then too, if the party is not too well-off (or loses its funds somehow) the PCs might have to do some interesting things to pay their way.

The GM may have to do considerable outside research, depending on the region being visited. The point of a Tourists campaign is to explore the interactions between Greek and barbarian cultures, so the GM will want to portray the “natives” as fully as possible.

## THE EPIC QUEST

Finally, no discussion of Hellenic adventure can be complete without touching on the many heroic quests of Greek legend. Greek heroes might go on a quest for a great variety of reasons (see Chapter 2, or the sidebar on p. 121, for some ideas). In each case, some nearly-impossible goal appears for one or more heroes to strive for. The quest often involves travel to a distant land and includes many unrelated adventures along the way. The goal itself always challenges the prowess and the cleverness of the heroes. What more could any roleplayer (or any Game Master) ask?

The epic quest makes for an excellent mini-campaign – a limited number of sessions with a definite climax and wrap-up. On the other hand, a fully open-ended campaign can also be set up, as the PC heroes take part in one quest after another. Many mythic heroes participate in several major quests and dozens of minor adventures in the course of their careers.

This theme is perfect for the Heroic Age, but not at all suited for the less-romantic Classical Age. The genre requires the full presence of magic and divine action, implying a fantastic or mythic style.

GMs will need to draw up any “sidekick” NPCs that follow the PCs regularly. Other NPCs can appear and then vanish from the story without being developed fully. The GM will want to develop the gods as strong NPCs, since they will often interact with the party. ***GURPS Religion*** will be useful in this endeavor. Finally, in this sort of campaign the GM will want to spend some time coming up with original monsters (and treasures) for the PCs to deal with.

# GLOSSARY

**Agora:** “place of assembly”; the marketplace, center of every Greek city.

**Akropolis:** “high city”; the fortified height most Greek cities use as a strongpoint.

**Andron:** “room of men”; the main dining and social room of a Greek home.

**Apotheosis:** the raising of a human to divine status.

**Archon:** the highest public officials in Athens and other cities.

**Arete:** “martial virtue”; later, the excellence of a man or any other thing.

**Astynomos:** a magistrate, lesser public official.

**Auletride:** “flute-girl”; a prostitute who entertains at parties.

**Barbaros:** barbarian, one who does not speak Greek.

**Basileus:** “king”; part of the title of one of the Athenian *archontes*.

**Boule:** 500-man council that handles legislative functions.

**Chalkos:** “bronze”; a small coin.

**Chiton:** the belted tunic worn by most Greeks.

**Chlamys:** a circular cape worn by aristocrats over the *chiton*.

**Choregos:** “choir-master”; producer of a drama or musical performance.

**Chthonios:** “under the earth”; a god or spirit of fertility or the underworld.

**Dareikos:** “daric”; a gold coin of Persian minting, popular in Athens.

**Deme:** “people”; one of the administrative divisions of the ten Athenian tribes.

**Diekplous:** a naval strategy involving breaking up an enemy formation.

**Dikasteria:** the whole panel of jurors in the Athenian court system; also a single jury.

**Diskos:** a flat stone thrown during athletic competition.

**Drachma:** a silver coin.

**Ekdromoi:** “runners-out”; spearmen who leave the ranks to hurl javelins at the enemy.

**Ekklesia:** “assembly”; the supreme legislature in the Athenian democracy.

**Emporos:** “merchant”; one who rents space on board a ship to transport his cargo.



**Enthousiasmos:** the ecstatic state attained by a mediumistic oracle.

**Ephebe:** “youth”; a young man; also a young Athenian in the last few years of his military education.

**Ephor:** “judge”; one of the five officials who wield executive power in the Spartan government.

**Epynomos:** “name-giving”; applied to a person whose name is attached to something (for example, a year or a tribe).

**Gennetai:** clanlike organization in Athens, associated with a major temple.

**Gerousia:** “senate”; the main lawmaking body in the Spartan government.

**Gymnasion:** “gymnasium”; a place where athletic training and other social activities take place. Usually open to the public.

**Gynaikon:** “women’s quarters”; the secure rooms where women and children spend most of their time in a Greek home.

**Harmost:** a Spartan governor imposed on a conquered city.

**Helot:** a serf; one of the Messenians conquered by Sparta.

**Hermae:** crude stone statues of the god Hermes, posted at doors and cross-roads as a guardian against evil spirits.

**Hetaira:** “companion,” comrade-in-arms; also a high-class courtesan.

**Himation:** the heavy cloak worn by most Greeks over the *chiton*.

**Hippeis:** “knights”; the second class of Athenian citizens, those who can afford to own horses.

**Homoios:** “equal”; a title applied to any Spartan citizen.

**Hoplite:** “shield-bearer”; a heavily-armed soldier, trained to fight in formation, typical of Classical Greek armies.

**Hoplion:** “shield”; the large round shield used by hoplite infantry.

**Hubris:** excessive pride or overconfidence.

**Kalokagathos:** “noble and good man”; an admired man or gentleman.

**Kamax:** a spear used by Greek cavalry.

**Keleustes:** a naval officer in charge of the oarsmen on a warship.

**Kerameikos:** “potter’s quarter”; an important industrial district.

**Kithara:** a type of stringed instrument, like a lyre or harp.

**Koine:** the “common tongue” of the last few decades of the Classical Age, based on the Athenian dialect of Greek.

**Kore:** “maiden”; also a title for the goddess Persephone.

**Kothornos:** a type of work shoe that could fit either foot.

**Kottabos:** a party game involving the dregs of wine.

**Krypteia:** “secret ones”; the Spartan secret police, designed to keep the helot masses under control.

**Kybernetes:** the helmsman, usually the commanding officer on a warship.

**Kyklos:** a wheel-like defensive formation used in naval warfare.

**Kyrios:** “guardian”; the man assigned to care for an Athenian citizen woman.

**Metoikos:** “metic”; a free foreigner residing in a Greek city.

**Mina:** a measure of weight in precious metals, also a measure of cost.

**Moira:** “fate”; the inevitable destiny of a man or thing.

**Mystes:** “initiate”; one who has undergone initiation into a mystery cult.

**Naukleros:** “ship-master”; a merchant captain who owns his own ship.

**Obol:** a silver Athenian coin, equivalent to \$1 in *GURPS* terms.

**Oikistes:** “colonist”; especially the leader of a colonial venture.

**Oikoumene:** the world, also implying all the peoples of the world.

**Ostrakismos:** “ostracism”; the Athenian institution whereby a citizen could be legally exiled without being charged with a crime.

**Ostrakon:** “potsherd”; a piece of broken pottery used as a ballot in an *ostrakismos*.

**Paidagogos:** a slave assigned to escort a child to and from school, and to help provide moral instruction.

**Palaistra:** a place where athletic competition and other social activities take place. Usually reserved for wealthy families.

**Pankration:** “all-powers”; a martial arts form, invented in Greece, which becomes brutal as time passes.

**Parthenos:** “virgin,” a title of the goddess Athena.

**Peltast:** “light shield-bearer”; a type of light infantry typical of the Thracians.

**Pentakosiomedimnos:** “five-hundred-bushel man”; member of the wealthiest class of Athenian citizens.

**Pentekontarchos:** captain of a penteconter (*pentekontoros*), or a lesser officer on a larger warship.

**Pentekontoros:** “fifty-oared”; a type of warship with 50 oarsmen. Penteconter.

**Perioikos:** “neighbor”; one of the free villagers who lived in Spartan territory but were not Spartan citizens.

**Periplous:** a naval strategy involving surrounding the enemy.

**Petasos:** a type of wide-brimmed hat, worn by horsemen and herdsmen.

**Philosophia:** “love of wisdom”; philosophy.

**Phrateres:** “clan-brothers”; members of the same clan.

**Phratra:** “brotherhood”; a clan.

**Phyle:** “tribe”; a collection of several clans.

**Polemarchos:** supreme commander of an army; also one of the Athenian *archontes*.

**Polis:** “city”; a Greek city-state.



**Porna:** “whore”; a cheap prostitute who provides only crude services.

**Proreus:** an officer on board a warship, a lookout.

**Proxenos:** an ambassador, a representative of another city to his own people.

**Prytan:** “presidency”; the section of the Council currently presiding over the Athenian government.

**Psiloi:** light irregular troops, usually peasants or herdsmen.

**Satrap:** a provincial governor of the Persian empire.

**Stater:** a silver coin. Also called a *tetradrachm*.

**Stoa:** “porch”; a long, colonnaded building used for shops or meetings.

**Strategos:** “general”; a commander of army or navy forces.

**Sykophant:** blackmailer.

**Symposiarch:** “king of the banquet”; the guest at a *symposion* chosen to decide on the evening’s entertainment.

**Symposion:** “drinking party”; a banquet.

**Talanton:** “talent”; a measure of weight in precious metals, or a measure of value.

**Temenos:** “sanctuary”; the sacred precincts in a temple area.

**Thalamite:** oarsman in the lowest bank on a warship.

**Thesmoothetai:** “tradesmen”; title of the lesser *archontes* in the Athenian government.

**Thetes:** “beggars”; hired laborers and tradesmen, the lowest class among Athenian citizens.

**Thranite:** oarsman in the highest bank on a warship.

**Trierarchos:** “trierarch”; a wealthy citizen responsible for building and outfitting a trireme, and its nominal commander.

**Trieraules:** an officer aboard a warship, responsible for piping the oarsmen’s beat on a flute.

**Trieres:** “thrice-fitted ship”; a warship class. Trireme.

**Tyrannos:** “tyrant”; a dictator typical of city government during the Archaic period.

**Xyston:** heavy horsemen’s lance.

**Zeugitai:** “teamsters”; the middle class in Athenian society.

**Zygite:** oarsman in the middle bank of a warship.

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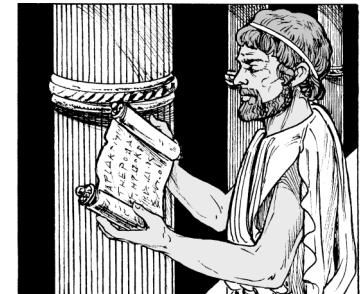
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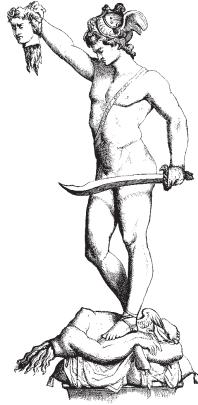
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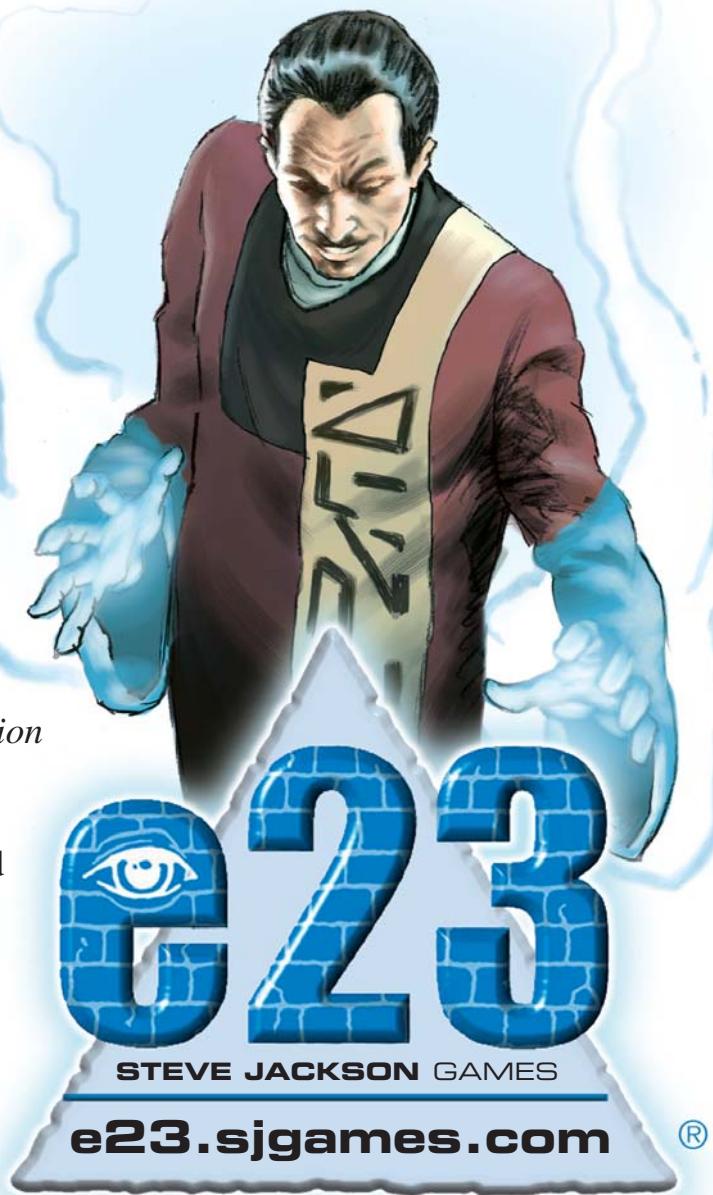
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