THE GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE: IMPERIAL DEMOCRACY 500-400 B.C.

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 6-12

By
Peter Cheoros
Jan Coleman-Knight
Rhoda Himmel
Linda Symcox

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

I. Approach and Rationale

The Golden Age of Greece: Imperial Democracy, 500–400 B.C. is one of over sixty teaching units published by the National Center for History for the Schools that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of World History. They represent specific issues and "dramatic episodes" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying a crucial turning point in history the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected issues and dramatic episodes that bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, private correspondence, literature, contemporary photographs, and paintings from the period under study. What we hope you achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

II. Content and Organization

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, and 5) Documents. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain issues and key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 6–12, they can be adapted for other grade levels. The teacher background section should provide you

with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific "dramatic moment" to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The Lesson Plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

Teacher Background Materials

I. Unit Overview

This unit explores Greece's most glorious century, the high point of Athenian culture. Rarely has so much genius been concentrated in one small region over such a short period of time. Students will discover in studying Greece's Classical Age many aspects of their own heritage. Present-day ideas of government, philosophy, literature, science and aesthetics can be linked directly back to Ancient Greece. Without an awareness of this remarkable heritage and an appreciation for the creativity of the period, along with an appreciation of other ancient civilizations, students cannot begin to understand enduring values and the creative power of humankind.

While studying the "Glory that was Greece," students will also become aware of the conflicts in human values which are an enduring and unavoidable part of human society. For example, within the brilliant tradition of Greek theatre students discover the moral and religious conflicts which divided Antigone and King Creon. While learning about the rebuilding of the Acropolis, students discover the imperial nature of the project. When reading the beautiful "Funeral Oration" of Pericles and the "Melian Dialogue" of Thucydides, students see both sides of war: glorious defense of the sacred homeland, and naked imperial aggression. And, last but not least, students study the heroism of Socrates as an individual confronting the might of the state. In the Golden Age, as in all ages, creative inspiration coexisted with tension and conflict often erupting into violence.

II. Unit Context

This unit follows chronologically the origins of Greek civilization during the Bronze Age in Crete and Troy, the Homeric legends describing that heroic period, and the rise of the Polis during the seventh century B.C. The unit precedes chronologically a study of the Hellenistic period of Greek history in which Alexander the Great spread Hellenic culture throughout his empire. The unit focuses on political, aesthetic and cultural aspects of the Golden Age, but it should be presented in the context of the scientific and philosophical innovations of that period as well.

III. Correlation to National History Standards

The Golden Age of Greece: Imperial Democracy, 500–400 B.C. provides teaching materials that address *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996), **Era 3** "Classical Traditions, Major Religions and Giant Empires." Lessons within this unit specifically address **Standard A**, "The achievements and limitations of the democratic institutions that developed in Athens city-states," and **Standard 2B**, "The major cultural achievements of Greek civilization."

This unit likewise integrates a number of specific Historical Thinking Standards including: reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical

developments have unfolded (**Standard 1** "Chronological Thinking"); draw upon visual and literary sources (**Standard 2** "Historical Comprehension"); examine the influence of ideas (**Standard 3** "Historical Analysis and Interpretation"); formulate historical questions and obtain historical data from a variety of sources (**Standard 4**, "Historical Research"); and marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances (**Standard 5**, "Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision Making").

IV. Unit Objectives

1. To appreciate the profound cultural and political flowering of the Golden Age of Greece.

2. To understand that these creative achievements were sometimes made at the expense of others, both inside and outside of Greece.

3. To recognize the continuity of our culture with the political and cultural developments of Ancient Greece.

4. To understand the complex relationships between religion, democracy, imperialism, mythology, philosophy, drama and aesthetics and how these components often relate to one another.

V. Introduction to Imperial Democracy: The Golden Age (500–400 B.C.)

Geography is about maps and History is about chaps, according to an old English schoolboy proverb[1]. Modern historians would rightly point out the omissions in this definition, particularly the lack of any mention of women, children, slaves, etc. But until the fifth century B.C. Greek history largely lacks even chaps, and for good reason. The period before 500 B.C. still belongs more to prehistory than history. Because written documents are few and relatively uninformative, the historian has to rely on archaeology for much of his or her evidence. Only the publication in the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. of the first histories in the western tradition, (those of Herodotus and Thucydides), allows ancient historians to construct a detailed narrative account of the history of Greece and its neighbors.

The origins of Greek historiography are complex, being rooted in Greek philosophy and literature. From philosophy it drew its concern for the rational analysis of human events and its skepticism of the value of myth as evidence for study of the past. The epics of Homer gave the first historians both guidance in their organization of a narrative account of a complex series of events and their idea of the proper historical subject, a

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Source: Frank J. Frost, *Greek Society*, 3rd ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1987), p. vii.

great war and its causes. Not surprisingly, therefore, western historiography begins with accounts of the two great conflicts that define the historical framework for the Golden Age of Classical Greece, the Persian Wars that opened the fifth century and the Peloponnesian War that concluded it.

The tiny Greek city states *(poleis)* developed in an environment uniquely free of external threat thanks to the absence of a single dominant imperial power in the eastern Mediterranean for much of the first half of the first millennium B.C. That freedom ended with the sudden appearance in the mid-sixth century B.C. of the Persian empire. Its first three rulers, Cyrus I (559–530), Cambyses (530–522), and Darius I (522–486), created the greatest of all ancient Near Eastern Empires, one that stretched from the Aegean to what is now Pakistan. Attempts to extend Persian rule to mainland Greece in 490 and 480/79 B.C. failed. Athens bore the brunt of the Persian assault in both invasions: in 490 B.C., Athens faced the invaders virtually alone at Marathon. A decade later, Athens was destroyed. But together with Sparta and her allies, Athens' fleet made possible the key Greek naval victory at Salamis.

Athens emerged from the shadow of the Persian threat at the head of an alliance of island and East Greek poleis, the so-called Delian League, and intent on vengeance and the liberation of Persia's remaining Greek subjects. In the next half century the Delian League grew to almost two hundred members, but as the Persian threat receded the Delian League gradually changed from an association of free allies into an Athenian empire. Along with the growth of Athens' imperial power, tension increased between Athens and Sparta, her chief rival for preeminence in Greece, until war broke out in 431 B.C. The twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian War did more than result in the defeat of Athens and the dissolution of her empire. It devastated Greece and left it again vulnerable in the next century to foreign threat, not this time from Persia in the east but from a newly unified and invigorated kingdom of Macedon in the north. During the half century of imperial glory between the Persian and the Peloponnesian Wars, however, a prosperous and confident Athens was the political and cultural center of the Greek world and her democracy a spur to revolution and reflection.

All Greek **poleis** were in a sense democratic in that sovereignty rested with the citizenry that elected its own officials and could meet in assembly to decide issues of concern to the community. What differentiated poleis was the identity of the citizens and the extent to which the assembly could take the political initiative. Reduced to its essential element, citizenship implied the ability to serve the poleis as a warrior. In practice this meant that in most poleis the assembly's powers were limited. Full citizenship and, therefore, the right to attend the assembly, was restricted to those wealthy enough to equip themselves as hoplites, heavily armed soldiers. Sparta overcame these limitations and created her unique military democracy by using her Helots to provide all Spartiates with a minimum income sufficient to allow them to serve in the hoplite line . But the

powers of even Sparta's assembly were limited to approving or rejecting questions pre-selected for it by a council dominated by the Spartan rich. Athens took a different road to democracy.

The Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. was the product of two distinct but convergent series of events. The first was the transformation, through a series of reforms initiated by the reformer Solon in the early sixth century B.C., of the institutional structure of Athenian political life so as to concentrate decision-making power in the Athenian political assembly. This encouraged participation by a broad spectrum of the Athenian male population in political activity at all levels. The second was the enhancement of the military value, and, therefore, the political value of even the poorest Athenians who rowed the city's triremes. This came as a result of the essential contribution made by the Athenian navy to the Greek victory over Persia in 480 B.C. and to the acquisition and maintenance of the Athenian empire in the following decades. The linkage of democracy and empire is evident in every area of fifth century B.C. Athenian life and culture. The tribute of the allies financed the great building program on the Athenian Acropolis that is one of the enduring glories of Athenian culture and subsidized the participation of the citizen body in the political life of the democracy. In a prosperous Athens luxuries of all kinds from the whole of the world known to Greeks could be found. And not only luxuries. Intellectuals such as the philosopher Democritus, the originator of both the atomic theory of matter and the social contract theory of the origin of society, and the Sophist Protagoras, the greatest Greek exponent of cultural relativism, also came to Athens. The atmosphere of vigorous and contentious debate created in Athens by their presence and that of other equally innovative thinkers can still be felt in the vivid dialogues Plato wrote about his master, Socrates and Euripides, and the biting satire of the comic playwright, Aristophanes.

In this unit students will explore various aspects of the remarkable culture of imperial Athens. They will study the origin of Athenian naval power during the Persian Wars, learn how Athenians passed laws, contemplate the brilliance of Athenian imperial culture as reflected in the Parthenon, examine its decline in the Peloponnesian War, and consider the nature of Athenian citizenship and its problems as illustrated by the institution of ostracism, Sophocles' play *Antigone*, and the trial of Socrates.

V. Lesson Plans

1. **The Persian Wars**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: High School

2. **Athenian Democracy At Work**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: Junior High or High School

3. **The Story Of Aristeides The Just**
   By Jan Coleman
   Grade Level: Upper Elementary or Junior High School

4. **Daily Life on Greek Pottery**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: Upper Elementary or Junior High School

5. **Greek Drama: Antigone**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: Middle School and High School

6. **The Rebuilding Of The Acropolis**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: High School

7. **Pericles' Funeral Oration**
   By Rhoda Himmell
   Grade Level: Junior High or High School

8. **The Melian Dialogue**
   By Peter Cheoros
   Grade Level: Junior High or High School

9. **The Last Days Of Socrates**
   By Linda Symcox
   Grade Level: Junior High or High School

Timeline
Greece, "The Golden Age," ca. 750–400 B.C.

	Politics		Culture
499	Ionian Greeks revolt against Persian rule. Athens sends aid.	**ca 500**	Philosopher Heraclitus in Asia Minor
494	Ionian revolt crushed.		
490	1st Persian invasion of mainland Greece: Marathon	**484**	Herodotus born (dies ca. 430/424)
480	2nd Persian invasion: Thermopylae and Salamis	**480**	Athenian Acropolis destroyed by Persians.
		ca 480-45	Sculptor Myron at work. (Athens)
479	Plataea: Persians expelled.		
478	Formation of the Delian League to continue war with Persia, under Athenian leadership.	**472**	Aeschylus' *The Persians.*
		468	Sophocles' first plays produced.
464-2	Revolt of Helots at Sparta.		
462	Pericles (b. 495) assumes leadership of Athens.	**460**	Hippocrates born.
	Athenian expansion begins to alarm other states.	**458**	Aeschylus' *Oresteia.*
		456	Death of Aeschylus. Temple of Zeus at Olympia.
454	Delian League treasury moved to Athens symbolizing conversion of League into Athenian empire.	**455**	Euripides' first plays produced.
	Athens drifts into war with Sparta and a coalition of other states.		

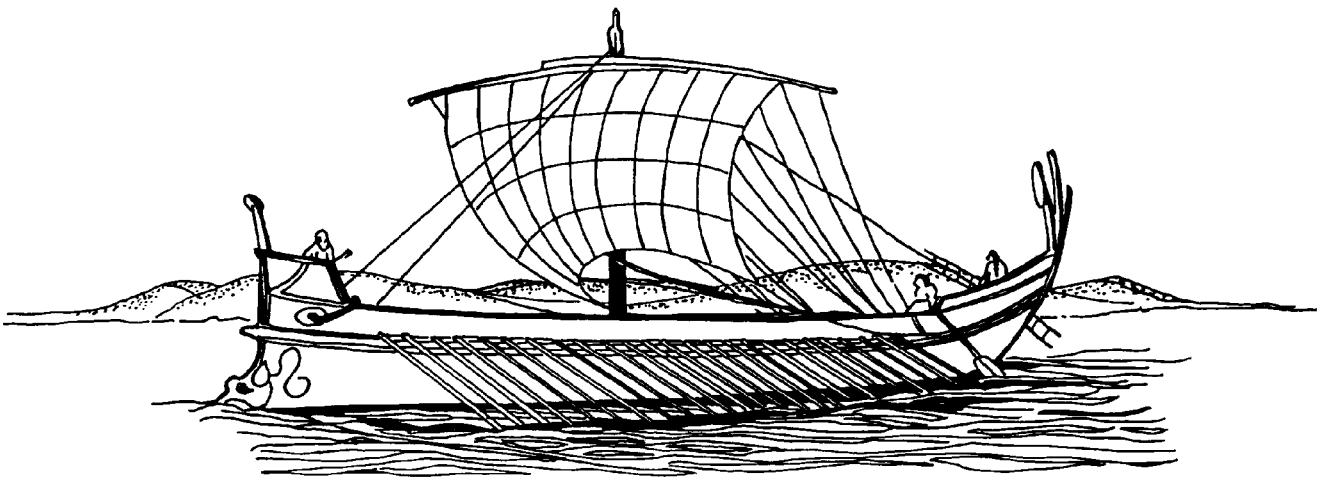
	Politics
449	Peace between Athens (and Delian League) and Persia.
445	Peace between Athens and Sparta. Increasing rivalry between Athens and other Greek states (notably Corinth) for domination of Western Mediterranean trade routes.
431	Outbreak of War between Athens and Sparta's Peloponnesian League. Plague at Athens.
429	Death of Pericles.
421	Peace of Nicias between Athens and Sparta End of first phase of Peloponnesian War.
416	Athenians conquer Melos.
415-413	Athenian expedition vs. Syracuse ends in disaster. Sparta resumes war vs. Athens.
405	Athenian fleet defeated at Aegospotami: Athens besieged.
404	Surrender of Athens. Delian League dissolved. Sparta installs 30 Tyrants as Athenian government.
403-401	30 Tyrants overthrown. Athenian democracy restored.

	Culture
450 onwards	Emergence of Sophists.
447	Rebuilding of Acropolis begins: Parthenon started (finished 438).
442/441	Sophocles' *Antigone.*
437	Propylea on Acropolis begun.
431	Thucydides begins his *History of the Peloponnesian War.*
429/27	Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*
415	Euripides' *Trojan Women*
399	Execution of Socrates

Dramatic Moment
Herodotus: The Athenians Reject the Persian Offer of Peace
(Primary Source)

Not all the gold that the whole earth contains—would bribe us to take part with the (Persians) and help them to enslave the Greeks. Even could we anyhow have brought ourselves to such a thing, there are many very powerful motives which would now make it impossible. The first and chief of these is the burning and destruction of our temples and the images of our gods, which forces us to make no terms with their destroyer, but rather to pursue him with our resentment to the uttermost. Again, there is our common brotherhood with the Greeks: our common ancestry and language, the altars and the sacrifices of which we bear—did the Athenians betray all these, of a truth it would not be well. Know then now, if you have not known it before, that while one Athenian remains alive we will never join alliance with Xerxes.

Source: Herodotus; M. I. Finley, ed. *The Portable Greek Historians* (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 215.



Trireme

Illustrated by
Carole Collier Frick

Lesson One
The Persian Wars

A. Objectives

- To identify and describe the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae (thur-MOP-uh-lee), Salamis and Plataea.
- To report on the outcome and significance of these four battles.
- To appreciate Herodotus (hih-ROD-uh-tus) as the "first historian."
- To describe the difference between Persian cavalry and Greek Hoplite warfare.
- To appreciate the magnitude of what was at stake during the Persian Wars.
- To appreciate the decisive importance of planning, strategy, topography, morale and the whims of nature in determining defeat or victory during war.
- To understand how victory led to Athenian imperialism and to the great cultural flowering of the 5th century.

B. Lesson Activities (Two Days)

1. Review the map of the Greek city-states and the Persian Empire (**Document A**). Have students note significant locations such as Marathon, Thermopylae, the Bay of Salamis, Plataea, Boéotia, Athens, Sparta, Delos, the Hellespont, etc.
2. Have students read **Document B** "The Persian Wars." Discuss Herodotus as a source and discuss the battles with the students.
3. Pass out "Student Chart: Persian Wars" (**Student Handout One**). Have students work in pairs to fill in their chart on the four most significant battles of the Persian Wars. Start by using Herodotus's passage describing the Battle of Marathon.
4. Continue filling out the chart for the battles at Thermopylae, Salamis and Plataea, referring back to Herodotus' descriptions as needed.

5. When students are finished the whole class meets to reconstruct the chart on the blackboard.

6. Discuss the land bridge at the Hellespont built by Xerxes using both the illustration and the second quotation by Herodotus.

7. Discuss the epitaph on the Spartan memorial at Thermopylae: *"Go tell the Spartans that we lie here, obedient to their command."* Hold a discussion on duty to one's country.

C. Discussion Questions

1. What were the obvious differences in the tactics used by the Persians and the Greeks?
2. What advantages did the Greeks have over the Persians in fighting these battles? (Fighting on known territory, defending their homeland, high morale, etc.)
3. Under what disadvantages were the Persians fighting?
4. What makes one battle decisive and another not?
5. Why is Herodotus called the "first historian?"
6. What was the significance and the major outcome of the Greek victory over the Persians?
7. How did this victory lead to the formation of the Delian League?
8. Why have these three battles served as an inspiration for men fighting for their freedom throughout the ages?

D. Vocabulary

Aeschylus
Boéotia
cavalry
Darius
flanks
Herodotus
Marathon
Miltiades
Persian Empire
Plataea
revolt
Salamis
Strategos
Themistocles
Thermopylae
Xerxes

E. Extended Activities

1. Make a diorama/mural of one of the battles.

2. Illustrate battle weapons, armor, ships, horses, a Hoplite soldier, etc.

3. Write about what might have happened if the Greek city-states had lost the Persian Wars.

4. Write a poem about one of the battles. Use Byron's poem called "Marathon" written in the 19th century as a model. This could be written on the blackboard:

   The mountains look on Marathon —
   And Marathon looks on the sea;
   And musing there an hour alone,
   I dream'd that Greece might still be free;
   For standing on the Persians' grave,
   I could not deem myself a slave.

5. Find out why the "Marathon" is included in the modern Olympics.

6. Debate this statement: "The Greek victories at Marathon, Salamis and Plataea allowed Greek culture and language to develop and spread. The Western world owes its civilization to these victories."

7. Compare photographs of a Greek *Kouros* (male figure) sculpted before the Persian Wars and after. (Use art slides or textbook.)

8. Make a classroom newspaper reporting on the Persian Wars.

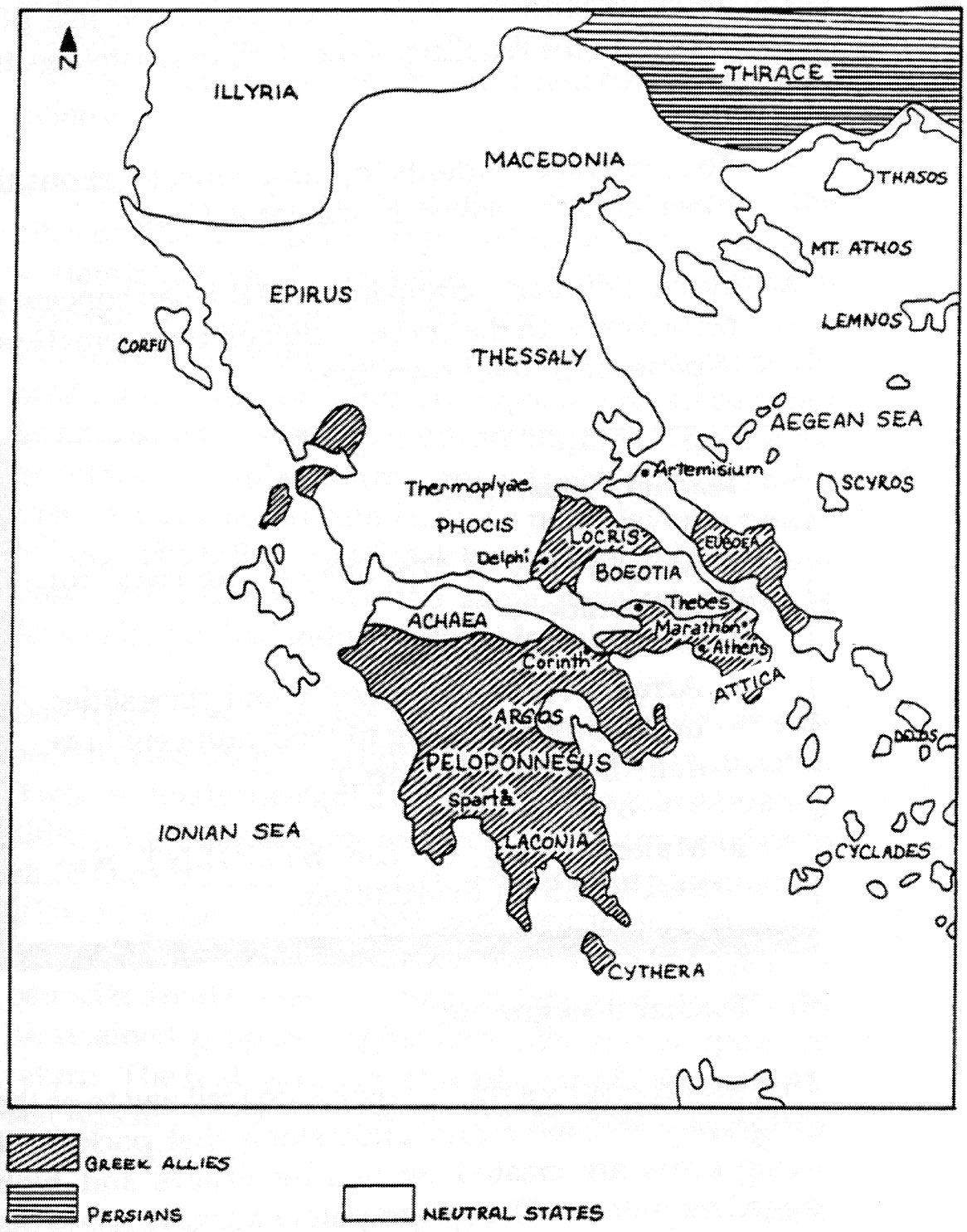
F. Evaluating The Lesson

1. Informal evaluation of discussion.

2. Evaluation of students' chart work.

3. Evaluation of students' written work.

Map of Greece During the Persian Wars



The Persian Wars

Until 490 B.C. most Greek city-states had fought only small, local battles against their neighbors. But at this time, they were suddenly threatened by the vast Persian Empire, one of the largest empires ever known. It extended from Egypt to the borderlands of India, and from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea, an area of over 2,000,000 square miles.

Our story about this very dramatic and glorious period in Greek history comes from **Herodotus** (hih-ROD-uh-tus), who is considered to have been the first historian (484-425 B.C.). He is the first western writer to use the word *historia* (inquiry). Remember, however, as our story unfolds, that in spite of his attempts to chronicle Greek history accurately, that he is our only source for this period and many historians today believe that he often exaggerated the disadvantages of the Greeks in the battles which he describes. In addition, he believed that the gods had a strong role in determining outcomes.

Our story begins like this. In 492 B.C. **Darius** (DUH-ry-us), Emperor of Persia, sent messengers to all the Greek city-states demanding that they submit to his authority. He did this because he had been facing a revolt by the Greek cities in Asia Minor which already had been conquered and made part of his empire. Athens and a few other Greek cities sent them aid, which angered Darius. After he had crushed the revolt in Asia Minor, he demanded token gifts of "earth and water," (to symbolize obedience), from each of the Greek states on mainland. According to Herodotus, the Athenians threw the Persian messengers in a pit, suggesting that they collect their own earth, and the Spartans threw them into a well, suggesting they collect their own water!

The Battle Of Marathon

Darius was understandably displeased with all this and in 490 B.C. he struck. He sent an army escorted by a fleet of 600 ships to the plain of **Marathon**, just 26 miles outside of Athens. At the battle which ensued, the Athenian army, without the aid of Sparta which was engaged in religious ceremonies and refused to send aid, defeated the mighty Persians and routed them back into the sea. How did this little city defeat one of the world's largest empires? The story has it that **Miltiades**, the Athenian **strategos** (general), created a last minute, but brilliant and flawless, plan. He persuaded the Athenians to seize the initiative and march to Marathon before the Persian cavalry could get there. The Athenians, realizing that they had only the Plataeans as allies, and that the Spartans would not make it in time, attacked the Persian troops at dawn rather than waiting for the Spartans to join them. Not only did they rush in and surprise the Persian cavalry, but Miltiades's strategy of surrounding the Persians from the flanks and thinning his center ranks threw the Persians into mass confusion.

Herodotus
(Primary Source)

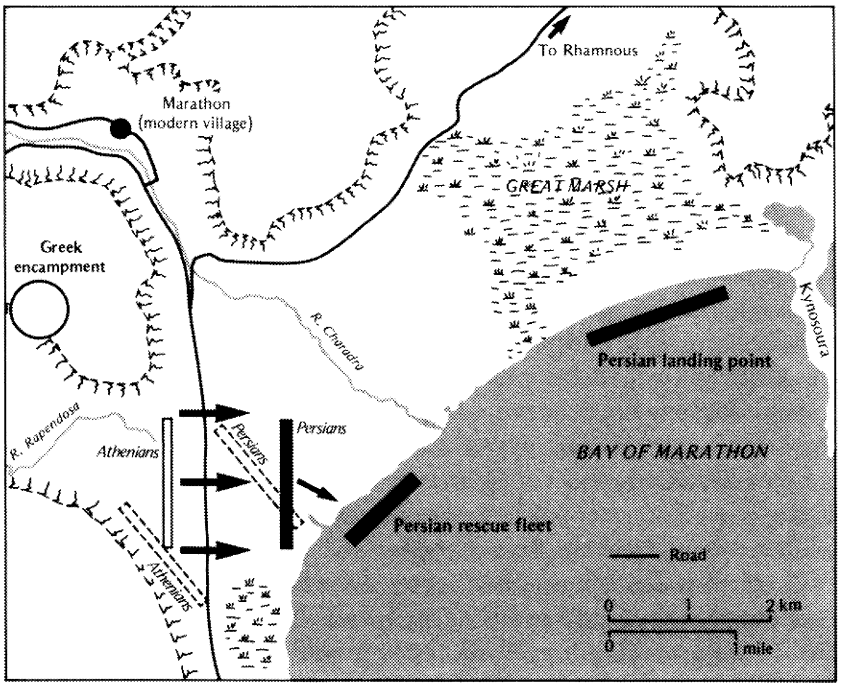
The word was given to move, and the Athenians advanced at a run towards the enemy, not less than a mile away. The Persians, seeing the attack developing at the double, prepared to meet it confidently enough, for it seemed to them suicidal madness for the Athenians to risk an assault with so small a force—at the double too, and with no support from either cavalry or archers. Nevertheless, the Athenians came on; closed with the enemy all along the line, and fought in a way not to be forgotten. . . .

The struggle at Marathon was long drawn out. In the center . . . the advantage was with the foreigners, who were so far successful as to break the Greek line and pursue the fugitives inland from the sea; but the Athenians on one wing and the Plataeans on the other were both victorious. Having got the upper hand, they left the defeated Persians to make their escape, and then, drawing the two wings together into a single unit, they turned their attention to the Persians who had broken through in the center. Here again they were triumphant, chasing the routed enemy, and cutting them down as they ran right to the edge of the sea.

In the battle of Marathon some 6400 Persians were killed; the losses of the Athenians were 192. (Plataeans were killed as well, but Herodotus was Athenian and only glorified the Athenian dead in his account of the battle.)

Supposedly, a messenger called **Pheidippides** was sent to Athens to spread the word about this extraordinary victory and the messenger, having run the 26 miles with such urgency and excitement, dropped dead after telling his story. (From this incident, the founders of the modern Olympics created the famous marathon run of 26 miles.) In addition, the dead of Marathon were buried in a great commemorative mound, which can be seen today.

After this enormous victory, the Greeks had a ten year respite from Persian attack. **Themistocles** (thuh-MIS-tuh-kleez) now became the leading figure in Athenian democracy. He felt that the future of Athens lay in sea-power. When a rich vein of silver was found in the Southern part of Attica, he persuaded the Athenian Assembly to expand the navy with this money, rather than divide the new wealth among themselves which was the usual custom. Fortunately for the Greeks, this was accomplished before **Xerxes** (CERK-seez), son of Darius, made a fresh attempt to conquer them in 480 B.C.



The Battle of Marathon

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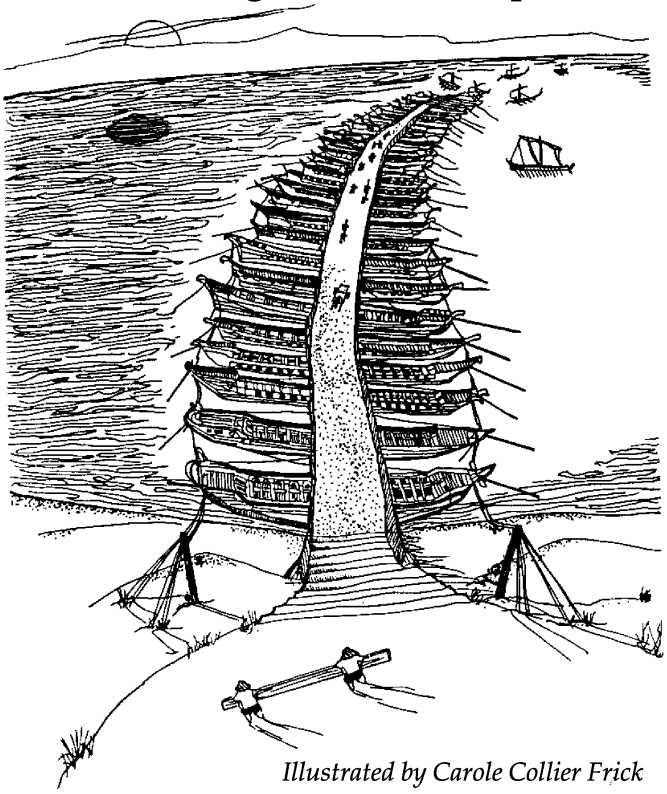
THE BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

Xerxes had devised an elaborate plan for conquering Greece. He constructed two pontoon bridges made up of over 300 boats lashed together, so that his huge army could cross the straits of the Hellespont.

Herodotus
(Primary Source)

The method employed was as follows; galleys and triremes were lashed together to support the bridges - 360 vessels for the one on the Black Sea side, and 314 for the other. They were moored head-on to the current in order to lesson the strain on the cables. Gaps were left in three places to allow any boats that might wish to do so to pass in or out of the Black Sea. Once the vessels were in position the cables were hauled taut by wooden winches ashore. The next operation was to cut planks equal in length to the width of the floats, lay them edge to edge over the taut cables and then bind them together. That done, brushwood was put on top and spread evenly, with a layer of soil, trodden hard, over all. Finally a paling was constructed along each side, high enough to prevent horses and mules from seeing over and taking fright at the water.

Xerxes Bridge at the Hellespont



Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

When news of these elaborate invasion plans reached the Greeks, they met and agreed to give Sparta command over the land forces and Athens command over the naval forces. Together they decided to withdraw to a pass called **Thermopylae** (thur-MOP-uh-lee), just 75 miles northwest of Athens. Here, again, the Greeks fought one of the most heroic battles in history. Again Herodotus describes the battle. A Persian spy reported to Xerxes that the Spartans were practicing gymnastics and combing their hair. Xerxes was puzzled by such behavior and when he asked for an explanation he was told that:

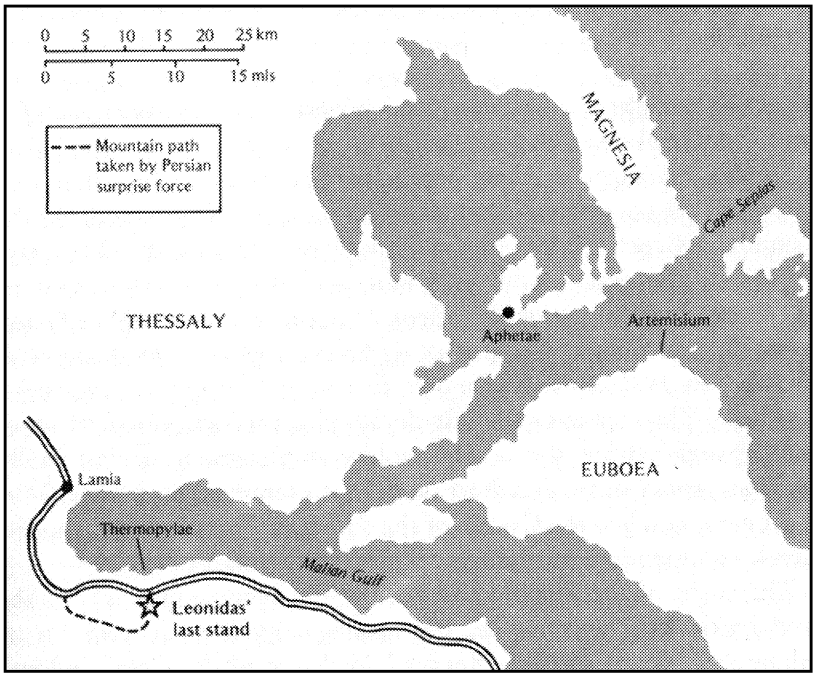
Herodotus
(Primary Source)

These men have to fight with us for the pass, and are now preparing themselves to do so; for such is their custom, when they are going to hazard their lives, then they dress their heads; but be assured, if you conquer these men, and those that remain in Sparta, there is no other nation in the world that will dare to raise their hand against you, O king; for you are now to engage with the noblest kingdom and the city of all among the Greeks, and with the most valiant men.

Source: George Rawlinson, trans. "Herodotus" in Francis R. B. Godolphin, ed., *The Greek Historians* (New York, Random House, 1942).

However, a Greek traitor showed the Persians a way through the mountains and they struck the Spartans from the rear. Leonidas, the Spartan general, fought with 300 Spartans and their allies. In this battle Leonidas and all of his troops were slain. Xerxes now ordered his army to occupy Athens, while the fleet followed along the coast. Thermopylae has always been a symbol of heroic struggle against overwhelming odds.

The Battle of Thermopylae



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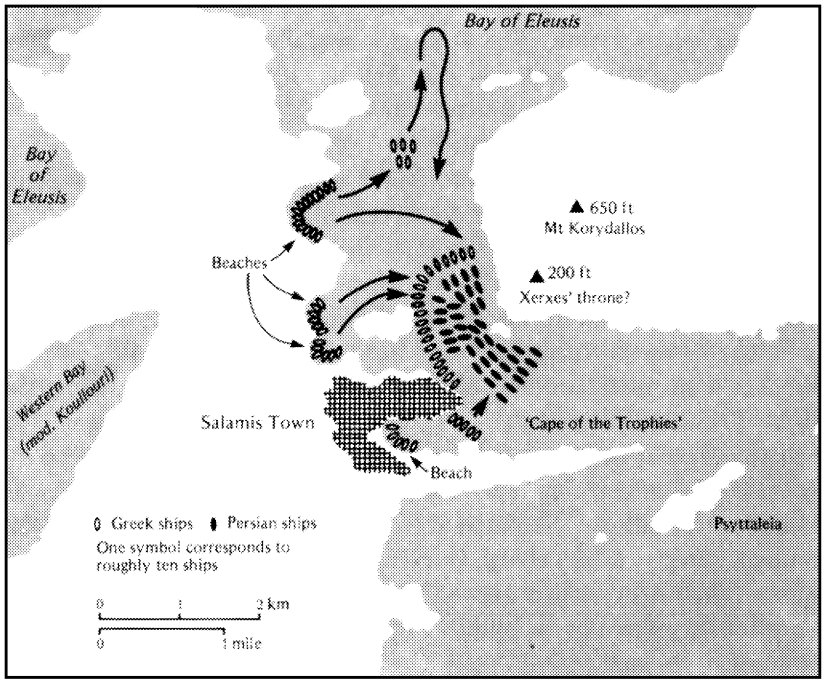
THE BATTLE OF SALAMIS

Themistocles decided to evacuate Athens of women and children. He proposed this time to engage the enemy at sea. He tricked the Persians into attacking the Greeks off the island of **Salamis** (SAL-ah-mis), near Athens. The Persian ships greatly outnumbered the Athenians' and their ships were much larger. However, in this small bay with storms blowing, these were disadvantages for the Persians. The Persian ships hit up against each other and their oars became entangled. This led to confusion and the Persians were eventually forced to retreat. Greek losses numbered 40 ships while 200 Persian vessels were sunk. Also, high morale and defending one's own territory were huge advantages for the Greeks. Themistocles said it the most poetically:

> "Their rowers are slaves seeking freedom and our rowers are Greeks seeking to preserve their freedom. We know the inlets and the coastline, the waters and the winds."

The dramatist **Aeschylus** (ESS-kih-lus), an Athenian playwright who was born in 525 B.C. and fought at Marathon and Salamis, gave account of the battle of Salamis in his play, *The Persians* (see facing page).

The Battle of Salamis



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The Persians
(Primary Source)

When at last the sun's bright chariot rose,
then we could hear them—singing; loud and strong
rang back the echo from the island rocks,
and with the sound came the first chill of fear. . . .
Then trumpets over there set all on fire;
then the sea foamed as oars struck all together,
and swiftly, there they were! The right wing first
led on the ordered line, then all the rest
came on, came out, and now was to be heard
a mighty shouting: 'On, sons of the Greeks!
Set free your country, set your children free,
your wives, the temples of your country's gods,
your father's tombs; now they are all at stake.'
And from our side the Persian battle-cry
roared back the answer; and the time was come.
Then ship on ship rammed with her beak of bronze;
but first a Greek struck home; full on the quarter
she struck and shattered a Phoenician's planks;
then all along the line the fight was joined.
. . . those Greek ships,
skilfully handled, kept the outer station
ringing us round and striking in, till ships
turned turtle, and you could not see the water
for blo and wreckage; and the dead were strewn
thickly on all the beaches, all the reefs;
and every ship in all the fleet of Asia
in grim confusion fought to get away.

The Battle Of Plataea

After the Battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., Xerxes himself returned home to take care of his empire. However, he left a large army under his general, Mardonius, occupying central Greece and Boéotia on the Athenian border. Mardonius attempted to divide the League of Greek States in order to defeat them. He sent an ambassador to Athens offering the Athenians all the territory they wanted if they would join him. He assumed they might because Athens was in the most vulnerable position of all the Greek states. However, the Athenians refused his offer for the following reasons given so eloquently by Herodotus:

Herodotus
(Primary Source)

. . . Not all the gold that the whole earth contains—would bribe us to take part with the (Persians) and help them to enslave the Greeks. Even could we anyhow have brought ourselves to such a thing, there are many very powerful motives which would now make it impossible. The first and chief of these is the burning and destruction of our temples and the images of our gods, which forces us to make no terms with their destroyer, but rather to pursue him with our resentment to the uttermost. Again, there is our common brotherhood with the Greeks: our common ancestry and language, the altars and the sacrifices of which we bear—did the Athenians betray all these, of a truth it would not be well. Know then now, if you have not known it before, that while one Athenian remains alive we will never join alliance with Xerxes. . . .

The Athenians then called upon the Spartans and their other allies for aid. The Spartan armies marched northwards to join the Athenians and the combined army of all the Greek states advanced to attack the Persians at Plataea. Mardonius was killed and the Persians were finally defeated in this summer campaign of 479 B.C. The Persians were forced to withdraw from Greece and the Persian invasion of Greece was finally over.

The battles of Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis and Plataea have for 2500 years represented humankind's never ending quest to be free. Having finally rid themselves of the Persian threat, the Athenians now entered into a period of such pride that they embarked upon one of the greatest flowerings of philosophy, culture and the arts ever known to mankind. At the same time their pride led them to persuade 350 of the Greek city-states to form an alliance to continue the war against Persia, based on the island of Delos, which came to be known as the Delian League. In 454 B.C. the League's treasury was moved to Athens and the League was transformed into the Athenian Empire.

The Battle of Plataea

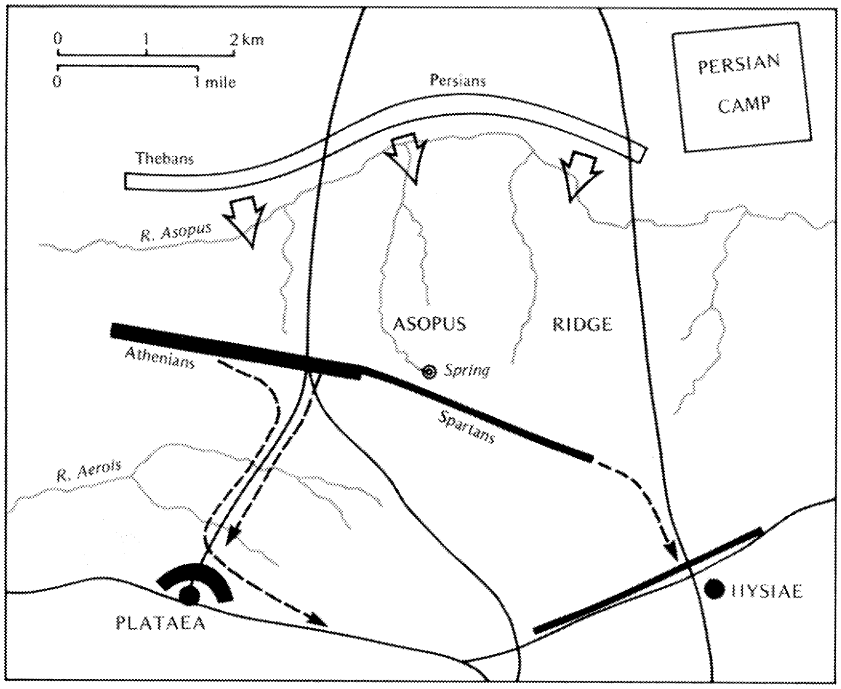

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Chart: Persian Wars

	Marathon	Thermopylae	Salamis	Plataea
Date				
Topography				
Combatants				
Strategy				
Who Won?				
Why?				
Consequences				

Lesson Two
Athenian Democracy at Work

A. Objectives

- To identify the "Assembly" and the "Council of 500" as the legislative and executive institutions of Athenian democracy.
- To describe the selection, composition and functions of the Athenian Assembly and the Council of 500.
- To distinguish between the institutions of **direct** democracy in ancient Athens and the institutions of **representative** democracy in modern western societies.
- To understand the necessary preconditions for direct, participatory democracy.
- To understand the role of sortition (random selection by lot of council members and officers), and the role of rotation in office, in preventing seizure of power by any one group.
- To describe the procedures used for enacting a law or a decree in 5th-century Athens.
- To analyze the measure proposed by Themistocles (theh-MIS-to-kleez) in July 480 B.C. concerning preparations for the Battle of Salamis and evacuation of Athens during the Persian War.

B. Lesson Activities (Two Days)

1. Poll students to see if they think we have a direct, participatory democracy in America. Hold a discussion and draw a distinction between **direct democracy** where the citizens themselves make the laws, administer and judge them, and a **representative democracy** where citizens elect professional politicians to do these jobs for them. Discuss the feasibility of a direct democracy in large, modern societies.
2. Describe the scene of the Scythian Guards rounding up citizens at dawn in the Agora in order to make sure that they attend the day's meeting of the Assembly.

3. Read and discuss **Document A** "Athenina Democracy at Work: Background Information" describing the selection and duties of the Assembly and the Council of 500.

4. Practice or illustrate the "bean method" of selecting Council members and officers.

5. Look at Themistocles' "Measures to Meet Xerxes' Invasion" (**Document B**).

6. Review with students the historical context for this bill proposed during the Persian Wars.

7. Brainstorm as a group about how this bill would be passed.

8. Brainstorm as a group exactly what the bill is proposing. Where are the women, children and the elderly to go? How are the trierarchs selected? How are marines, archers and crews selected? Is the process democratic?

C. Discussion Questions

1. What are the preconditions of a direct, participatory democracy? (e.g. small size of population, reasonable wealth and leisure time.)

2. Who got to participate in the direct democracy? Who did not? Who were the citizens?

3. How did a large slave population in ancient Athens make direct democracy possible?

4. Why did members of the Council rotate? What evils did this prevent? How did rotation of Council members and of officers guard against incumbency and the usurpation of power by individuals or groups? What problems did it cause? (Lack of continuity, experience, etc.)

5. How were members of the Council selected? How was the Prytany and its president selected ?

6. How does election by allotment (lot) differ from election by vote? What present-day activity is similar to this allotment process?

7. What jobs did the Assembly and the Council perform? How did this represent the legislative and executive functions of a government?

8. How did the decree by Themistocles mirror the democratic organization of society and its emphasis on being fair?

9. What were the provisions of the decree as far as men, women, children and the elderly were concerned?

10. How would an Athenian of the 5th century B.C. criticize our present-day representative democracy? What would he/she approve of in it?

D. Vocabulary

allotment (lot)
amphitheatre
archer
Assembly
Boule
complement
Council Of 500
decree
direct democracy
disenfranchised
marine
Pnyx
Prytany
representative democracy
sortition
tribe
trierarch
trireme

E. Extended Activities

1. Hold a mock council meeting and demonstrate the procedure for passing a law. Perhaps pass a law that would be useful for this class.

2. Work on a newspaper which will continue throughout the unit on the Golden Age of Greece. The newspaper can report on the battles of the Persian Wars, the decree for the Battle of Salamis, the Ostracism of Aristeides (Aristides), the "new" play Antigone, the Dionysian Festival, the foundation of the Delian League, the rebuilding of the Acropolis by Pericles, the Melian Dialogue, the Funeral Oration, and the Trial and Death of Socrates. Include a "Dear Abby" section, advertisements, sports pages, etc.

3. As an independent research project or as a class project, learn about and design an allotment machine (Kleroterion) similar to the machines used in the 3rd and 2nd century B.C.

4. A group of students might want to research the reforms of Cleisthenes which established democracy in Athens.

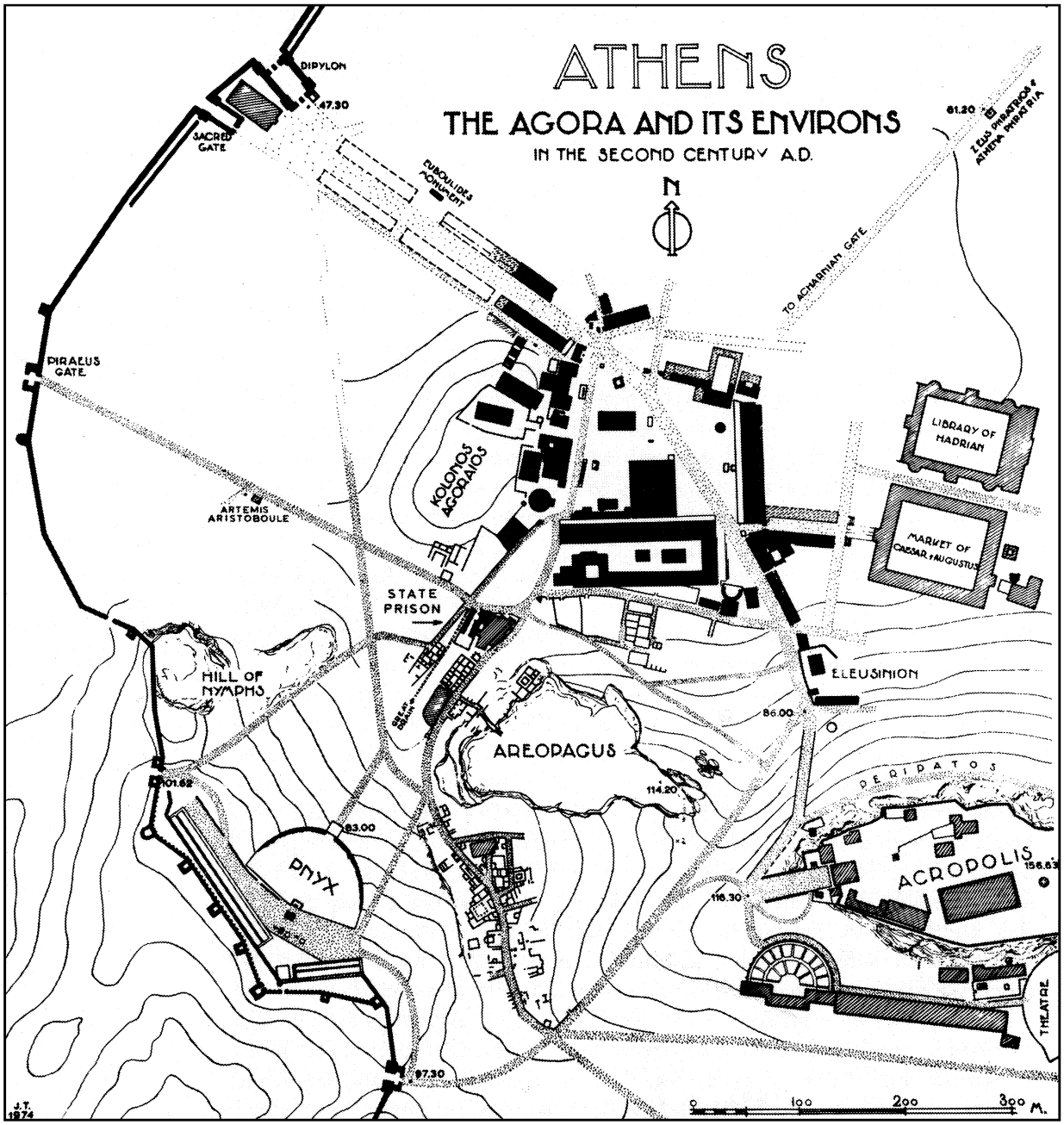
5. Students may want to research the court system, which is not specifically covered in this lesson.

F. Evaluating The Lesson

1. Informal evaluation of discussion.

2. Evaluation of student analysis of the document by Themistocles.

Athens: The Agora and its Environs



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Athenian Democracy at Work
Background Information

Athenian government in the fifth century B.C. was perhaps the first true **democracy**. The government was of the people and for the people, like ours, but it was also **by** the people to a much greater degree than the large **representative** democracies of modern times. But their definition of the "people" was far narrower than ours today, excluding everyone but free adult males. In Athens, all male citizens from the age of 18 were expected by law to participate in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. We rely on elected politicians to run our government for us, but we have a far broader electoral base.

To a considerable extent, this **direct, participatory democracy** was a function of the relatively small size of the population. Athens at that time had approximately 300,000 inhabitants, about 100,000 of whom were unenfranchised slaves and 100,000 of whom were unenfranchised women. About 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants were **metics**, or resident aliens. Out of the 100,000 or so males left, perhaps 50,000 or 60,000 were over the age of 18. This limitation of political rights makes participation much more feasible than in the mass societies of the twentieth century.

The supreme political body was the Athenian **Assembly**. It was open to all free males over 18 whose mother and father were Athenian. All males falling into this group were citizens, regardless of income or class, and every male citizen was subject to universal political service as well as universal military training. The Assembly met about 40 times per year at the **Pnyx**, (see Illustration One), a natural **amphitheatre** on one of the hills west of the Acropolis. Their main task was to enact legislation. Attendance was normally about 2,000 or 3,000 men, for it was difficult to take four days per month off from work. Mostly craftsmen and artisans attended the assemblies, farmers being too busy and aristocrats seeing it as beneath their station in life. Usually a summons and an agenda had to be posted at least 5 days before a meeting.

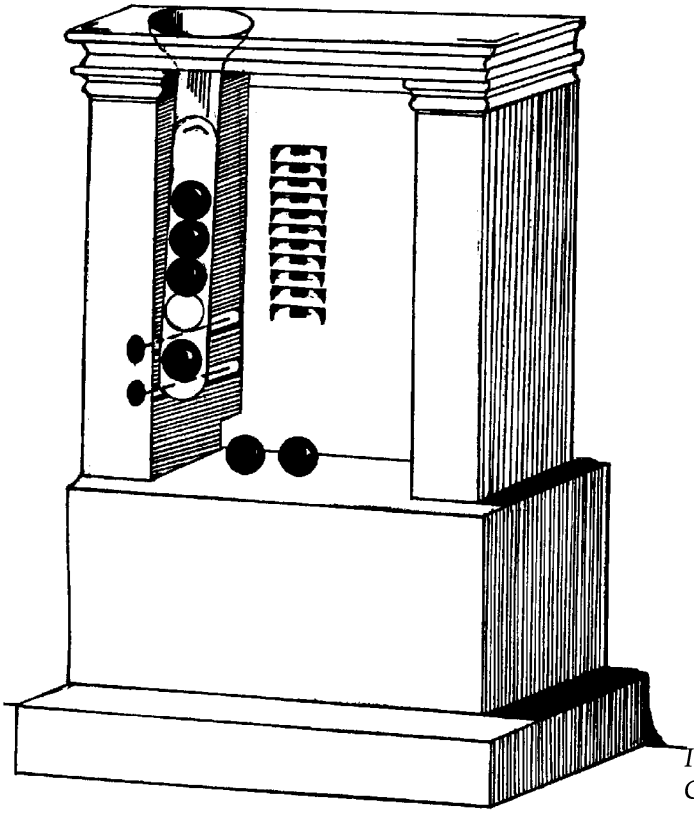
Meetings convened at dawn and the sometimes reluctant citizens were swept up from the **Agora**, (See "Athens: The Agora and its Environs" on page 28), by slaves holding the ends of a long rope wet with red paint, which would mark their clothes and thus make liable for a fine anyone who lingered or attempted to escape the call of duty. Once in the Pnyx, voting was usually taken by a show of hands. This prevented secrecy and encouraged people to follow group leaders in their choices.

In addition to votes on many specific matters, the assembly set aside 9 scheduled meetings per year in which members would approve or disapprove of how magistrates were handling their jobs. They would dismiss them for mismanagement of funds, etc. After all normal business was finished, the Assembly voted on the measures initiated by the **Council of 500**, called the **Boule**.

The Council of 500 prepared the official agenda for the meetings of the Assembly. The Council was made up of 50 men selected from each of the ten Attic tribes. These tribes corresponded to local villages or territories and were of different sizes. Council members were chosen by lot from a list of volunteers, all of them being male citizens over 30 years of age. A Council member could serve only two years in his lifetime, and only one year at a time. They were always paid for their services, which helped to compensate for lost wages on their jobs.

The way in which Council members, jurors, and office holders were chosen is called **allotment** or **sortition**. In the fifth century B.C. this was often done by placing a number of white and black beans in a box equal to the number of candidates who volunteered. The white beans would match the number of offices to be filled and the black beans would match the extra candidates. Each candidate would reach in to the receptacle and pull a bean out, white indicating that he was chosen and black that he was not. This system guaranteed absolute fairness in the selection of council members, jurors or office holders. In the fourth century B.C. much more elaborate voting machines were developed, but they followed the same random principle.

Allotment Machine



Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

The 50 members selected from each tribe acted as a unit in the Council and held the collective presidency (called the **Prytany**) of the Council for one-tenth of the year. This reduced the amount of time men had to be away from work. The members of the Prytany met every day and in effect **administered** the government. The Prytany changed 10 times a year and its chairmanship changed daily. Thus 365 citizens each year would serve as head of state: an adult male, if he lived long enough, would have a good chance of holding the highest office. The Prytany prepared legislation, tried magistrates accused of misdeeds, and inspected cavalry and ships.

By rotating the Prytany every tenth of a year, by not allowing anyone to sit on the Council for more than one year and through the system of allotment, no man was in office long enough to entrench himself and to establish a following. However, in reality, the 10 generals representing the 10 tribes could be reelected year after year and they often were. In addition, they were voted in by ballot, not by the random drawing of beans. Thus they played a continuing role in nonmilitary affairs and they did establish a strong following.

As you can see, the Athenian system of direct democracy was not perfect. Another serious flaw was its extensive reliance on slavery. Many craftsmen, farmers and shopkeepers who participated in the Council and the Assembly had slaves to do their work while they were away running the government. This dependence on slaves allowed free men the time to participate actively in their government and to perform their naval service. Perhaps in this context we should raise the question of whether or not modern representative democracy is more just than the direct democracy of ancient Athens.

You have read about the Persian Wars and about Xerxes' planned invasion at Salamis. Please read the following bill which was passed by the Assembly putting into effect the plan of Themistocles, the Athenian general, for the defense of Athens. Keep in mind that this bill had to be proposed and approved in the manner described above. Also, take note of the attention paid to justice in the selection of **trierarchs, marines, archers and complements** for the ships. (See **Document B**.)

The Themistocles Decree

(Primary Source)

Gods. Resolved by the Council and the People. Themistocles, the son of Neokles from Phrearrhoi, made the motion.

The city shall be committed to Athena, the guardian of the Athenians, and to all the other gods to guard against and ward off the barbarian on behalf of the land; and all the Athenians and the foreigners living at Athens shall deposit their children and women at Troezen…; and they shall deposit their elders and property on Salamis; and the treasurers and the priestesses shall remain on the Acropolis to protect the possessions of the gods.

All the other Athenians and foreigners who are of age shall embark on the two hundred ships that have been made ready and ward off the barbarian on behalf of their own freedom and that of the other Greeks together with the Spartans, Corinthians, Aiginetans and the others who are willing to share in the risk; and beginning tomorrow the generals shall appoint two hundred trierarchs, one to each ship, from those men who possess land and a house at Athens and have legitimate children and are not more than fifty years old, and they shall assign ships to them by lot; and they shall enlist marines, ten to each ship, from those between the ages of twenty and thirty years of age and four archers; and they shall assign by lot these units whenever they allot the trierarchs; and the generals shall write the names of the rest of the crews on whitened boards, the Athenians being drawn from the deme registers, and the foreigners from those registered with the polemarch; and they shall list by name those who have been assigned to two hundred crews, one hundred men per ship, and they shall note at the head of the list of each crew the name of the trireme, its trierarch and its specialists in order that each crew may know onto which trireme it should embark. When all the crews have been formed and assigned by lot to the triremes, the Council and the generals shall man all two hundred ships after making a propitiatory sacrifice to Zeus the All-Powerful, Athena, Victory, and Poseidon the Securer.

When the ships have been manned, one hundred of them shall go to Euboean Artemisium and one hundred shall take up station around Salamis and the rest of Attica and defend the land. In order that all Athenians may be of one mind in warding off the barbarian, those who had been exiled for ten years shall go away to Salamis and they shall remain there until the People decide about them and the disenfranchised. . . .

Source: Russell Meiggs and David M. Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions to the End of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 48-49. Translation by Stanley M. Burstein.

Lesson Three
The Story Of Aristeides, The Just

A. Objectives

- To have students experience the Greek use of a chorus in the retelling of the story of Aristeides, the Just.
- To encourage students to think critically about the role ostracism played in ancient Athens.
- To have students compare the Athenian concept of ostracism with the social exclusion they sometimes experience in their own lives.

B. Teacher Background

This lesson assumes that students are well aware of the geography of Greece and understand that pockets of living areas are created by narrow valleys and high jagged mountains. This geographic factor gave rise to the development of the polis (city-state). The polis of Attica barely covered 700 square miles. It was a triangle of rocky, hill scarred land, thrusting out into the Aegean Sea. The soil was stony and generally infertile with only a shallow layer of good soil. Bordered by hills to the west and seas to the northeast and south, Attica was geographically distinct. Attica could best be invaded by sea. Athens, therefore, developed a navy as a response to these geographic conditions and relied heavily on it for defense.

A silver strike at the Laurion silver mines presented the citizens of Athens with a grave yet enticing choice. Two leaders joined hands in resisting the Persians yet were in opposition with regards to the distribution of the silver. Themistocles advanced the position that the silver should fund the building of Athenian ships, whereas Aristeides favored distributing the wealth among the citizens. Aristeides was a member of a recognized noble family. Themistocles, was a social climber and a new player in power politics. His father was Greek but his mother was Thracian. He did not have the same social standing as Aristeides yet had gained a considerable following.

Ostracism was exercised when an individual was suspected of wanting to set himself up as a tyrant or dictator. It was originally designed as a safeguard against tyranny although it was practiced as a weapon in party warfare to eliminate political opponents. The process of ostracism relieved political pressures and contributed to social stability. Ostracism was an honorable exile. The person ostracized had to leave the country for

up to ten years, yet he retained property rights and civic rights upon his return. The first ostracism took place in 487 B.C. and the last was in 417 B.C. It was during this time that Athens reached its greatness.

What ever happened to Aristeides? With the Persians advancing in 480 B.C., Athenians saw that they must unite and recalled all ostracized citizens. Aristeides fought in the battle at Salamis. He commanded a group of Greek hoplites which attacked and destroyed Persian soldiers at Psyttaleia. Later Aristeides was elected a general and helped organize the Delian League, the forerunner of the Athenian Empire. As for Themistocles, he eventually suffered ostracism himself. Plutarch is known for his bias in favor of Aristeides. Although the following quote should be held in that light, it is clear that Plutarch goes well beyond a simple distrust of Themistocles. "But if you praise Pausanias, or Xanthippus or Leotychides, I commend Aristeides, declaring that he is the best man who came from sacred Athens, since the goddess Lato hates Themistocles, the liar, cheat and traitor, who bribed by filthy lucre, did not restore his guest friend, Timocreon, to his native Rhodes, but taking three silver talents went sailing off to perdition." (Plutarch on Themistocles, from Maurice N. Kelly, *View From Olympus* [Melbourne: Cheshire, 1987]).

Historical fiction can be a useful teaching tool. A good example is Plutarch's dramatic story of the ostracism of the Athenian politician Aristeides in 483–82 B.C. The facts, so far as they can be determined are set out below.

Plutarch's dramatic account of Aristeides' falling victim to unjustified envy at his sobriquet "the Just", a title he actually gained in the 470s, is fiction, but fiction that highlights an important truth about **polis** life, the subordination of the individual citizen to the community. Plutarch's story, therefore, offers students the opportunity to consider the differences between ancient Greek and modern conceptions of citizenship.

C. Lesson Activities

1. Ask students to read and discuss **Document A** as an introduction to the lesson.

2. Ask students to become the Greek chorus and answer in unison the chorus lines of the *Story of Aristeides* (**Document B**). The teacher will read the narration and the students will read the chorus.

3. Have students read "Plutarch's Reflections on Ostracism" (**Document C**) and then ask them to complete the written exercise "Decision Point" They should refer to the Greek alphabet to complete their ostracon (**Document D**).

4. Discuss the Plutarch passage from his *Life of Aristeides* (**Document E**). Use the follow up questions (**Worksheet One**) to guide the discussion as an extended in-class activity or as assigned homework .

D. Vocabulary

Aristeides
Attica
Eretria
Hellenic League
ostraca
ostracism
Plataea
Plutarch
Polis
Themistocles
trireme

E. Evaluating The Lesson

1. Check for understanding after the introduction and the retelling of the *"Story of Aristeides, the Just."*

2. Evaluate the written answers to the questions included in the activity.

3. Collect and evaluate the students' "Decision Point."

The Process of Ostracism

In ancient Athens a process called ostracism was established to remove officials or private citizens who threatened the harmony or balance of the polis (city-state). If the citizens agreed with the Athenian council that there was a need for an ostracism, then this event would take place that year.

All citizens, which referred to free males over 18 years of age, were given the option to write the names of officials or private citizens they disapproved of on "ostraca" or pieces of broken pottery.

Illustrated by Adrian Symcox

At least 6,000 votes must be cast. The person who received the greatest number of ostraca was ostracized. He would be required to leave the polis (city-state) and would be forbidden to reenter the boundaries of Attica for a period of time (perhaps 10 years). There was no loss of property or rights, and the family was not affected. There was no need to justify the ostracism, and the individual had no means of appeal. The Athenian society accepted this process as a way to relieve feelings of jealousy and to prevent the rule of a tyrant, therefore maintaining social and political stability.

The Story of Aristeides, the Just

At the opening of the fifth century B.C., the Greeks found themselves in face to face mortal combat with the invading Persian forces. Macedonia was occupied by the Persians, but a storm destroyed the Persian Fleet and the first invasion was halted.

In 490 B.C., the Persians attacked again! They attacked Eretria and it quickly fell. Next, they landed at Marathon, a beach not far from Athens. Only Plataea sent aid to Athens but the Athenians won a great victory at Marathon.

The Hellenic League was formed to defend against future Persian attacks. Sparta and Athens joined forces with other city-states to defend against the common enemy.

SILVER !! A rich new bed of silver is found in the government owned mines at Laurion. The Athenian Assembly will decide whether to equally distribute the new wealth among the citizens or spend it on the navy.

Two names rise in unison against the Persian threat: Themistocles and Aristeides. Aristeides is a leader from the noble wing. Themistocles is a leader from the popular wing. Themistocles does **not** come from one of the recognized noble families of Athens. His mother was **foreign born** and came from Thrace. The two men are divided on the use of the Laurion silver. Themistocles supports the building of triremes to oppose the Persians. Aristeides wants to distribute the wealth equally among the citizens.

Chorus

Aristeides, the Just, the Just.
He wants to give the citizens the silver.
Aristeides, we trust you.
Silver for me, or ships to fight the Persians?
Aristeides, are you just?

Athens, 482 B.C. Over 6,000 Athenian citizens fill the agora. The noise of idle chatter and political opinions hum in the still air. The philosophy of the greatest good for the greatest number warms under the beating sun. The cry for harmony and unity falls among the rising voices of argument. Themistocles supports the building of three oared ships (triremes); Aristeides supports sharing the new wealth among the citizens. Feelings are strong.

Debate draws lines between the old recognized noble families and the emerging powerful new leaders.

Chorus

Aristeides, . . . Aristeides, the Just . . .

His decision gives me silver.

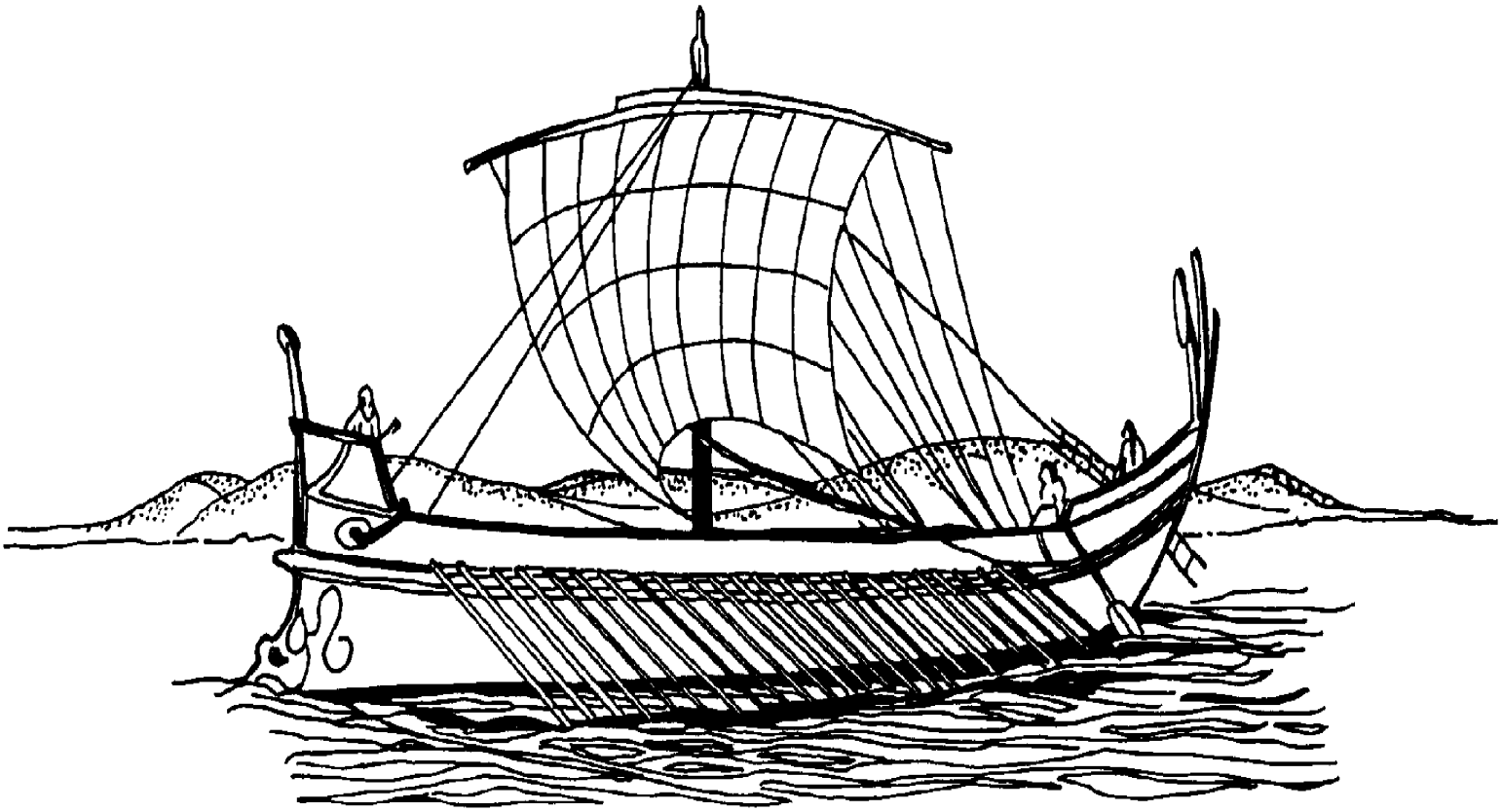
Silver for me or ships to fight the Persians?

Who is the enemy of Athens?

(Whisper) . . . Aristeides, the Just . . . Aristeides, the Just. ... Aristeides, the Just.

A vote is called for ostracism. Who is promoting practices hostile to the welfare of Athens?

Who is the enemy of Athens?



Trireme

Illustrated by
Carole Collier Frick

Plutarch's Reflections on Ostracism

Plutarch, a Greek writer, reflected upon the issue of ostracism in the retelling of the story of Aristeides, the Just.

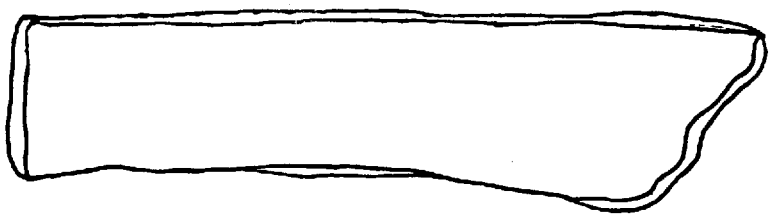
Read the following story from Plutarch's *Aristeides*.

> "Anyway, on the occasion of the ostrakismos (ostracism) of Aristeides, the story goes that, as the voters were writing on their ostraka (ostraca), an illiterate and thoroughly boorish fellow handed his to Aristeides, as if to any ordinary Athenian, and asked him to write 'Aristeides' on it! Aristeides was amazed, and asked the man how on earth Aristeides had ever injured him. 'He has not; not at all,' was the reply. 'I don't even know the man. But I do know that I'm sick and tired of always hearing him called The Just!"

You are Aristeides. Remember, this man cannot read or write. He is illiterate, (il = not and literate = to read or write). He is also boorish, which according to Plutarch's account means that he is an Athenian male citizen at the low end of the social scale, and he is rude and clumsy in manners.

Decision Point

One piece of ostraca (ostracon) is in your hand. Will you write your name or another's name?



Write a paragraph supporting and defending your choice.

The Greek Alphabet

Capitals	*Small*	*Pronunciation*	*English Equivalent*
Α	α	alfa	a as in apple
Β	β	veeta	v as in vera
Γ	γ	ghama	no equivalent but similar to w as in wool
Δ	δ	dhelta	th as in those
Ε	□	epsilon	e as in essay
Ζ	ζ	zeeta	z as in zebra
Η	η	eeta	ee as in cheese
Θ	ϑ	theeta	th as in think
Ι	ι	iota	i as in pick
Κ	κ	kappa	k as in kite
Λ	λ	lamdha	l as in lake
Μ	μ	me	m as in meet
Ν	ν	ne	n as in need
Ξ	ξ	ksee	x as in axe
Ο	ο	omikron	o as in orange
Π	π	pe	p as in peter
Ρ	ρ	ro	r as in rot
Σ	σ	sighma	s as in signal
Τ	τ	taf	t as in toffee
Υ	υ	eepsilon	ee as in cheese
Φ	ϕ	fe	f as in fire
Χ	χ	he	h as in heel
Ψ	ψ	pse	ps as in psalm
Ω	ω	omega	o as in open

You will find that the English letters C, D, G, J, and W do not occur in the Greek alphabet.

To make the English letter		
	B	put together the Greek M and Π (ΜΠ)
	C	is either K or Σ
	D	put together the Greek N and T (NT)
	G or J	put together the Greek T and Σ (ΤΣ)
	W or U	put together the Greek O and Y (OY) as in you
	For Q	you must use K

Courtesy of the Embassy of Greece, Press and Information Office.

Plutarch's Life of Aristeides (Aristides)

(Primary Source)

6. Of all his virtues it was his adherence to justice that especially brought him to the attention of the people, since that virtue's exercise is the most persistent and general. And this is how a poor man and a man of the people acquired that most kingly and divine appellation, The Just, a title which no king or tyrant ever coveted. They delighted instead in being addressed by names like The Besieger, The Thunderbolt and The Conqueror, or like The Eagle and The Hawk, apparently preferring a reputation based upon violence and power to one based upon virtue. And yet it is generally thought that the divine, with which these men strive to identify and associate themselves, is transcendent by reason of three characteristics, eternal existence, power and virtue, the last being the most lofty and divine. For eternal existence is an attribute of space and the elements also, while vast power is exhibited by earthquakes and thunderbolts, by blasts of wind and torrents of rushing water, but nothing partakes of justice and right except that which is divine by virtue of reason and understanding. Thus it seems that, of the three responses, envy, fear and reverence, that the gods evoke among the general public, envy and the consciousness that they are exquisitely happy result from their immortality and everlasting existence, awe and fear from their authority and power, and affection, reverence and respect from their justice . But, despite this attitude, men covet immortality and power, though our nature does not admit of the one and the other rests for the most part with fortune, while virtue, the lone admirable feature of the gods which we can attain, assigned to last place. This is a mistake, for it is justice that renders divine the life of a man involved in power and great fortune and positions of authority, while injustice renders such a life brutish.

7. At any rate, Aristeides found that, while his nickname at first inspired affection, it later gave rise to jealousy. The principal reason for this was that Themistocles was going around to the people, saying that Aristeides, by pronouncing judgment and adjudicating in all matters, had abolished the courts of law and had surreptitiously set himself up as dictator, lacking only the bodyguard. But it seems that the Athenians, puffed up by their victory and thinking nothing too good for themselves, were already becoming irritated by those whose names and reputations marked them out from the crowd. And so they came into town from all over and ostracized Aristeides, nominally from fear of despotism, but in fact because they were jealous of his reputation. For ostracism was not a

punishment for wrongdoing. Rather, while it was ostensibly a means of abasing and curtailing oppressive pride and power, it was in reality a humane method of assuaging envy, which could direct its malicious desire to injure, not toward some irreparable harm, but toward a penalty consisting of a ten-year expulsion. But they ceased the practice of ostracism when some men began inflicting this punishment on low and lawless individuals. Last of all was Hyperbolus, who was said to have been banished for the following reason. Alcibiades and Nicias, the most powerful men in the state, were the leaders of rival factions. So, when the people were about to impose ostracism, and when it was clear that they were going to decree the banishment of one or the other of them, the two men called a conference, reconciled their respective factions and brought about the banishment of Hyperbolus. As a result of this, the people, upset because the institution of ostracism had been abused and debased , entirely gave up the practice and abolished it. Here, in outline, is the procedure. Each person would take a potsherd, write the name of a citizen whom he wished to remove from the city, and bring it to a particular spot in the market place that was encircled by a railing. First the archons would count up the total number of potsherds for, if those voting were fewer than six thousand, the ostracism was inconclusive. Then, after separating out each of the names, they would make proclamation that the man receiving the largest number of votes was to be banished for a period of ten years, while still enjoying the income from his estate. Now, we are told that, on that occasion, while the potsherds were being inscribed, some illiterate and ill-bred peasant held up his potsherd to Aristeides and demanded, as if he were just anybody, that he write the name of Aristeides on it. When he expressed surprise and asked what harm Aristeides could possibly have done him, the man replied: "None I don't even know the man. But I can't stand hearing everyone call him 'The Just.'" When he heard this, Aristeides, without saying a word, wrote his name on the potsherd and handed it back. At last, when he was taking his departure from the city, he raised up his hands toward heaven and made a prayer quite different from that which Achilles is supposed to have made, namely that no crisis overtake the Athenians such as to remind them perforce of Aristeides.

Source: Plutarch, *Plutarch's Themistocles and Aristides*, Bernadotte Perrin, trans. (New York: C. Scribner's, 1901).

Follow up Questions

Name_____

1. Underline the sentences in Plutarch's retelling of the story of Aristeides that indicate the force of rumor in the man's decision to name Aristeides.

2. The process of ostracism was used to maintain the stability of the polis. Explain how this occurred.

3. Do you think we should reintroduce the process of ostracism today? How would it relieve political and social pressures?

4. Have you ever been excluded from a group? Has a group made you feel unwelcome? How is this the same and different from the ancient Athenian practice of ostracism?

5. In Ancient Athens, a person could be called back after an ostracism. Aristeides was called back to Athens after only two years.* Are modern day Americans as forgiving after a person has been ostracized from a social group?

6. Have students consider whether Plutarch's account of Aristeides' ostracism is pro- or anti-democratic.

* Aristeides was called back to Athens right before the Athenians won the sea battle at Salamis. The silver from the Laurion silver mines financed the building of 200 sea vessels that struck the decisive victory.

Lesson Four
Daily Life on Greek Pottery

A. Objectives

- To understand our reliance upon artifacts (especially pottery) as historical evidence, particularly in the case of ancient history.
- To appreciate that the scenes depicted on pottery are the main source of information we have about daily life in ancient Greece.
- To learn about daily life in ancient Greece.
- To develop an understanding of the evolution in pottery styles from Mycenaean times to the end of the "Golden Age." (Approximately from 1200 to 400 B.C.)

B. Teacher Background

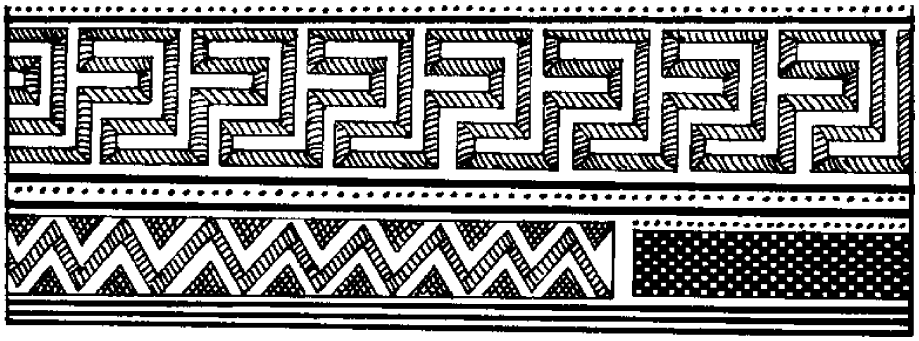
In the absence of written histories about daily life in ancient Greece, painted pottery has taken on a profound importance as the main surviving historical record of how ordinary citizens lived. These artifacts have survived in quantity and portray a vivid picture of Greek life from about 800 B.C. to Hellenistic times. They provide a unique insight into a brilliant culture and they are a source which children can readily comprehend and which excites their imaginations.

The Greeks did not see the portrayal of gods and the aristocracy as the only subjects worthy of depiction. They broke loose from this limited view of worthy topics depicted by many earlier civilizations, and they were free to glorify ordinary men and women with abandon. The subjects which craftsmen (and perhaps craftswomen) painted range from mythology to the most humble domestic scenes. Just as important as vase paintings depicting the exploits of Zeus, Dionysus, Achilles or Ulysses, were pieces depicting hoplite soldiers, women performing household tasks, children playing, marriage ceremonies, drinking parties and music lessons.

The pottery varied tremendously depending on price and purpose. Humble cups, flasks, bowls and storage jars were to be found in most homes and exquisite luxury ware was to be found in the homes of the rich or the winners of prizes at festivals. Pottery production became a thriving export industry contributing to economic prosperity.

Pottery styles evolved dramatically over the period from 800 B.C. to the height of the Golden Age (500 to 400 B.C.) The stylistic period from about 1000 to 720 B.C. is referred

to as the **Geometric** period. This actually represents a setback in artistic style from the earlier Mycenaean times. Zigzags, circles, triangles and schematic forms typify the decorative motifs of the Geometric period. Figures, when they occurred, were static and two-dimensional. (See ***Drawing One*** below).



Drawing One: Pattern from the "Geometric" Period
Carole Collier Frick

The period from 720 to 550 B.C. is called the **Orientalizing or Archaic** period. Trade and colonization with Egypt, Mesopotamia and Phoenicia introduced more naturalistic subjects, free-flowing motifs, and the depiction of monsters. This was a definite change from the more stilted style of the Geometric period. (See ***Drawing Two***)

Drawing Two: Pattern from the "Orientalizing" or "Archaic" Period
Carole Collier Frick

Following the Archaic period, until around 530 B.C., we see the development of **Black-Figure** pottery, the type of pottery which we associate with the "Golden Age." The potter painted black figures on a red terra-cotta background. He/she depicted mythology and daily life. At this point it became the ceramic center of the Greek world. Attica had outstripped her formal rival, Corinth, and now exported pottery as far as the Black Sea, Southern Italy and Southern France. This ascendancy in the ceramic industry

coincided with her growing political importance in the region. (See *Figures One* through *Three* in **Document A** for examples of black-figure pottery.)

After 530 B.C., the potter shifted techniques to the style known as **Red-Figure.** Here he or she glazed the background in black and left the figures standing out in the bare terra-cotta. He or she would then be able to pick out more detail with fine black lines on the red figure. The decoration became ever more sophisticated, three-dimensional and stylistically free. (See *Figures Four* through *Nine* in **Document A** for examples of red-figure pottery). Look for this evolution in styles with your students as you go over the illustrations provided, or your own choice of slides and books **.**

C. Lesson Activities (One Day)

1. Show students slides or pictures of ancient Greek pottery emphasizing the pictures which depict daily life (See *Figures One* through *Nine* in **Document A**).

2. Discuss our reliance upon archaeology as the main source of knowledge for ancient history.

3. Explain to students why painted pottery is our main source of information on daily life in ancient Greece.

4. Divide students up into cooperative groups and have each group figure out what daily activity is being depicted on the various pottery pieces being viewed. After they write down their observations, brainstorm group responses and then have students read a description of the activity.

5. Ask students to draw inferences about the role of women, slaves, children, and male adults as depicted on Greek pottery.

6. Have students read the "Background Information" in **Document A**.

7. Discuss the "Background Information" incorporating the information given by each of the nine pictures.

8. Have students make a notebook or journal, entering their observations about daily life and illustrating each entry. To extend this activity, have students compare each ancient activity with its present-day counterpart. For example, compare the olive harvest scene with today's agricultural techniques (See *Figure One* in **Document A**).

9. Get students to draw contemporary activities (e.g. baseball), in the style of Greek black or red-figure painting.

10. Compare today's pottery to that shown in this lesson. What does it say about our culture?

D. Vocabulary

archaeologists
artifact
black-figure
chiton
distaff
red-figure
spindle
symposium

E. Extended Activities

1. Have students research the firing and glazing techniques used in producing ancient Greek pottery.

2. Have students make individual drawings of Greek pottery using red and black-figure images.

3. Have students make a group mural of daily life as depicted on Greek pottery. Again, make sure they use red and black-figure imagery.

4. A parallel mural on the other side of the room could depict daily life in the 1990s, matching the opposite wall scene for scene.

5. Have students make a black-figure Grecian amphora out of a plastic two-liter soda bottle. Paint the bottles with a rust color tempera paint and let dry. Draw figures with a fine black marker.

6. In committee, have students prepare a time capsule filled with artifacts that would provide a future historian or archaeologist similar evidence about our culture. What artifacts would they choose?

Daily Life on Greek Pottery

How does a historian learn about the way that ordinary people lived 2,500 years ago? Written descriptions and records are few and far between. You can imagine that writers of the time would focus their attention on major political figures such as Pericles or Socrates, ignoring the ordinary life of most citizens, especially that of women or slaves. A few plays, poems and court cases survive which mention activities of daily life but they are not our main source of information. Rather, the remains of painted pottery, dug up by **archaeologists** over the years, are our main historical record of daily life in ancient Greece. In fact, the pictures painted on the pottery depict many daily activities.

Look at the following pictures of pottery and see if you can figure out what daily activity is painted on each piece. Then read the description which follows after the pictures and compare the description to your own ideas.

Carole Collier Frick prepared the illustrations on pages 49 through 53 based on actual pieces of Greek pottery.

Figure One

Black-figure vase, c. 500 B.C.

Figure Two
Black-figure drinking cup, c. 550 B.C.

Figure Three
Black-figure jug, c. 520 B.C.

Figure Four
Red-figure vase, c. 450 B.C.

Figure Five
Red-figure plate

Figure Eight
Red-figure drinking cup, c. 490 B.C.

Figure Nine
Black-figure **epinetron** c. 500 B.C.

Figure Six
Red-figure plate

Figure Seven
Red-figure, c. 5th Century B.C.

Background Information

Figure One: The Olive Harvest
Description of Daily Activity

This was a typical olive harvest. A boy is seated in the tree. Two bearded men stand near the tree beating the branches with sticks to make the olives fall. As they reach the ground another boy gathers them up and puts them in the basket. The Greeks exported olive oil all over the Mediterranean region and became very wealthy off this trade. They shipped the oil abroad in this beautiful pottery.

Figure Two: A Hunter With His Dog
Description of Daily Activity

The huntsman is returning with his catch. The animals that he has caught are a fox and a rabbit, tied by their paws to a hunting-stick balanced over his shoulder. A dog on a leash is running by his side. Meat was a luxury, rarely eaten except as a sacrifice to the gods at a festival. Maybe if you lived in the country and would hunt, you would eat meat more often.

Figure Three: Women at a Fountain-House
Description of Daily Activity

Before women were married, they were rarely allowed outside of the house except to do tasks like fetching water from nearby fountains. (There was no plumbing for fresh water in ancient Greece.) Notice the center spout is a lion's head and the side spouts are men mounted on horseback. The water is gushing from each spout into a jug placed beneath it. The girls are dressed in traditional tunics. You can imagine that the girls would want to stay for a while to socialize with friends given the restrictions placed on them.

Figure Four: Hoplite Warrior Bidding Farewell
Description of Daily Activity

Here is a hoplite soldier carrying his shield. The young soldier bids farewell to the bearded man on his far left (probably his father) and to the woman directly on his left (probably his wife.) Notice that his wife is holding a vessel used for carrying wine. The soldier is offering some wine to the gods, called a libation, spilling it on the ground in the traditional fashion. This act was meant to bring good luck in battle and a safe return. On his right stands another woman (probably his mother.)

Figure Five: Boy Fishing
Description of Daily Activity

Notice that the boy is fishing much as we do today, with a rod and a line. He also has a trap ready, perhaps to catch the octopus. Fish were the main source of protein for the Greeks, and they were readily available given that Greece is largely surrounded by the sea.

Figure Six: A Carpenter
Description of Daily Activity

This young carpenter is planing the surface of a beam with an adze (hand axe). Each craft or trade was located in a different part of the town. Thus you would go to "Carpenter's Street" to find a carpenter to do work for you.

Figure Seven: A Potter at Work
Description of Daily Activity

The potter is beginning to paint a water jug. In front of him you can see two more vessels waiting to be painted. Next to him, on the 3-legged table, are vessels holding his paints. A muse is about to honor him with a wreath.

Figure Eight: A Symposium
Description of Daily Activity

This is the scene of a drinking party, called a **symposium**. Symposia consisted of a feast and a drinking session. Many of the famous philosophers such as Plato or Xenophon developed their ideas during intellectual discussions at symposia. Symposia were attended by males only, with the exception of slave women, musicians or courtesans who were there merely to serve or amuse. Wives and daughters were kept in their own quarters and were not allowed at the party. In this illustration you can see the men reclining on couches enjoying their wine and food as the slave woman plays the double-pipes.

Figure Nine: A Woman Spinning Thread
Description of Daily Activity

This scene is painted on an **epinetron.** The instrument fits over the woman's knee. She uses one hand to roll the wool across its upper surface and the other to draw it out. The scene painted on the epinetron depicts women preparing wool for spinning. They keep their wool in baskets known as kalathoi. Greek households tried to be self-sufficient in the spinning and weaving of textiles. Landowning households produced raw materials like wool from their own sheep, and spinning and weaving were regarded as proper occupations for women in the home. Thus the household produced its own clothing from the raw materials to the finished product, which was usually a simple garment draped around the body.

Lesson Five
Greek Drama: Antigone

A. Objectives

- To identify the role of drama in Classical Greek society.
- To describe a Greek theatre.
- To identify and describe the Dionysian Festival in Classical Greece.
- To distinguish between comedy and tragedy.
- To examine the dilemma in which Antigone found herself.
- To distinguish between laws of the state and laws of nature or conscience.
- To analyze the play *Antigone* as a historical document.

B. Lesson Activities (One Day)

1. Hand out and have students read **Document A, Part One**: "Greek Drama: Antingone; Background Information."
2. Discuss Greek theater and its function in the Greek democracy.
3. Now read **Document A, Part Two**.
4. Have students read selections from the play, with several students reading the dialogue and the rest serving as the chorus. Two versions of the play are included: a version for older readers (**Document B**) and a children's version (**Document C**).
5. Discuss the play. Poll students for their opinions: Did Antigone do the right or wrong thing? Should she have obeyed the laws of the state or the laws of her own conscience?
7. Write an essay justifying both Antigone's and King Creon's positions.
8. Write definitions of vocabulary words.

C. Discussion Questions

Document A, Part One

1. What political and architectural events were going on simultaneously with the great age of Greek theater?
2. Discuss the Dionysian Festival. What time of year was it held and how did people celebrate? Which people participated in the festivities?
3. Why do you think poor people were encouraged to attend?
4. How did the play competition function? Who paid for the plays, who directed them? What does this tell you about citizenship?
5. Describe what a typical Greek theater looked like.
6. What was the purpose and function of masks?

Document A, Part Two and Documents B or C

1. What tragic dilemma did Antigone face?
2. Which laws were more important to Antigone, the laws of the state or the laws of her own conscience and the gods?
3. Was King Creon justified in his decision not to bury Antigone's brother?
4. What makes Antigone a heroic character? How would you define heroic?
5. Are there other examples from history which involve the same or similar issues as those in Antigone?
6. Do you think that there are situations under which public rules can be violated? Explain.

D. Vocabulary

Antigone
Chorus
comedy
dilemma
Dionysus
heroic
King Creon
Sophocles
tragedy

E. Extended Activities

1. Show students some or all of the BBC series on the Thebean plays of Sophocles: *Oedipus the King, Oedipus in Colonus* and/or *Antigone*.
2. Have students read the chorus on page 69, which begins "Wonders are many, but the greatest of all is man." Hold a discussion or write an essay on how Athenians viewed themselves and their world.
3. Research other plays by Sophocles or plays by other playwrights. (For example, Aeschylus or Euripides.)
4. Find out all you can about one of the Greek playwrights. How many plays did he write? Did he win many prizes? Which of his plays are still performed?
5. Research the various techniques of play production used in Greek theaters and research the various roles played by actors.
6. Illustrate one or more aspects of Greek theater such as masks, costumes, stages, scenery, theaters, etc.
7. Make a mask, comic or tragic, out of papier-maché.
8. Rewrite and perform a short version of the play.

F. Evaluating The Lesson

1. Informal evaluation of discussion.
2. Evaluation of essay on Antigone and King Creon.
3. Evaluation of key vocabulary words.

Greek Drama: Antigone
Background Information
Part One

In 468 B.C., the year the playwright **Sophocles** wrote his first play, Athens was still on its way to becoming the wealthiest and most powerful state that the Greek world would ever know. By 406 B.C., the year Sophocles died, Athens was on the verge of total defeat by the Spartans and their allies in the Peloponnesian War. During this period, Pericles defined democracy, the monuments of the Acropolis were built and all but two of the surviving Greek tragedies were written. This was a glorious time.

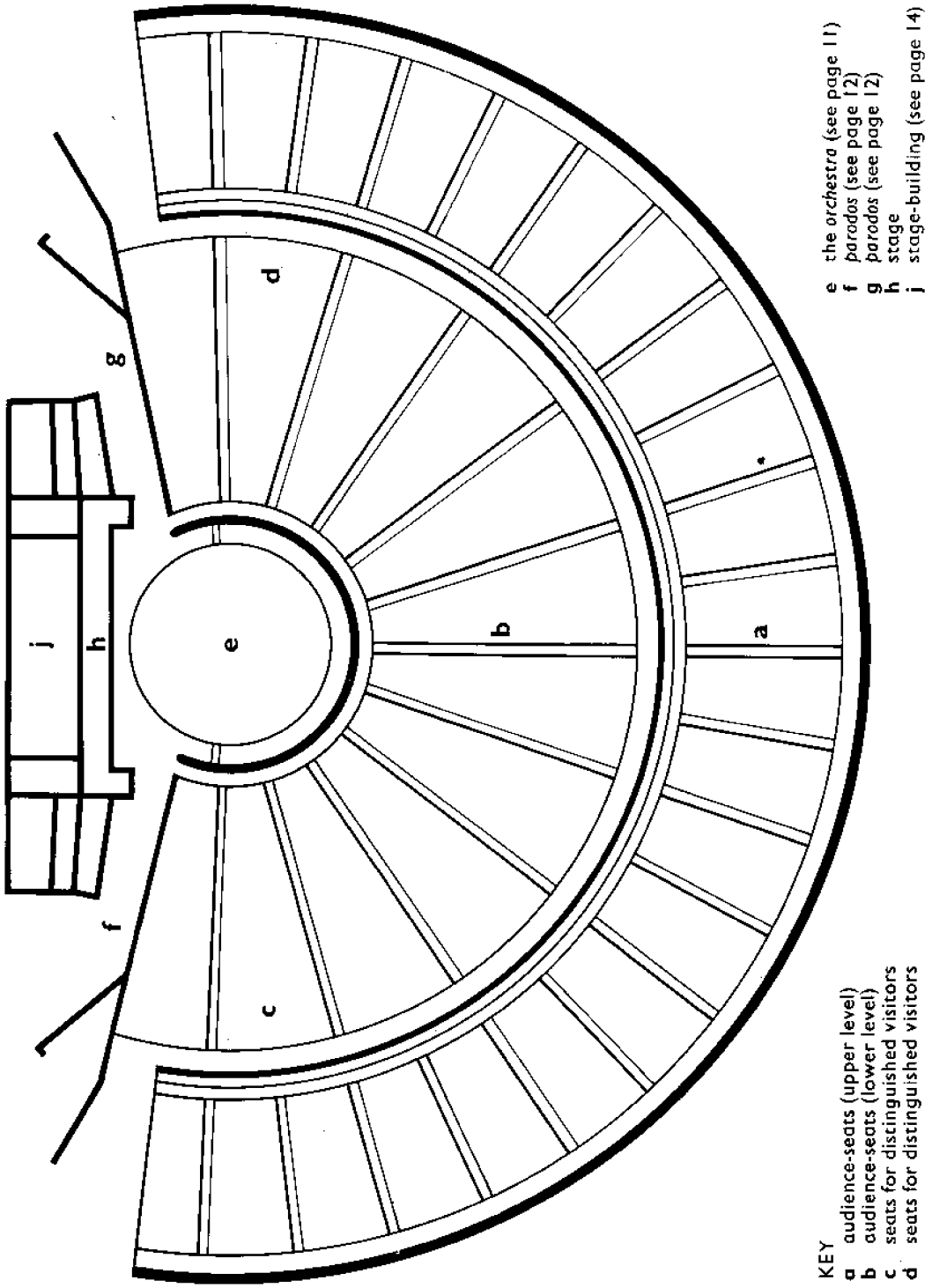
Let's take a look at this wonderful peak of Greek theater and see why it was so unique. Every year in March, the people of Athens believed that the god Dionysus brought spring back to Greece. **Dionysus** was the god of wine, music and drama. Thus people held a great spring festival which lasted seven days. Everyone was off work, even the slaves. But the most important part of this celebration was the play competition. For each of four days of this competition, people got up at dawn and watched five new plays performed. Prizes were awarded to the best playwrights and the best actors.

Performances were considered to be such an important part of community life that poor Athenians who could not afford admission were considered guests of the state. People would be reimbursed for the loss of wages and all businesses were closed, even law courts were closed and prisoners were released from jail. It was believed that theater was a part of every Greek's education. In fact, the festivals were a major civic occasion in which even allies and resident-aliens were invited to attend. Allied tributes were displayed in front of the people and orphans of Athenians killed in battle received their first suits of honor publicly.

These plays were held in huge open-air theaters, the arenas on which today's football stadiums are modeled. They were very large and held up to 18,000 people. The ancient builders of theaters found a site on a hillside that had just the right size and shape and then leveled off a stage at the bottom and leveled seats going up the hill. This was much more logical than trying to build the theater up from ground level.

At the great Dionysus Festival, mostly **tragedies** were performed. Several months before each festival, a selection committee met to choose the plays to be performed. Each tragic playwright sent four plays to be performed on the same day and comic playwrights sent one play each. The committee selected the plays as well as a leading actor for each one. The leading actors, whose salaries were paid by the state, had to find actors for smaller parts and were responsible for rehearsing the play. The chorus would be hired and trained by a separate, wealthy Athenian who was chosen by the officials. This chorus of 15 had to sing and dance in honor of the gods.

Greek Theater



The rich man who provided the chorus also had to provide costumes and masks, arrange rehearsals and train musicians. He often hired a professional producer to do these jobs for him and this was often the playwright himself.

During the competition, the judges would, at the end of each day, write their choices for winner down on clay tablets. The first play to be chosen by five judges was the winner. The best actor would also receive an award.

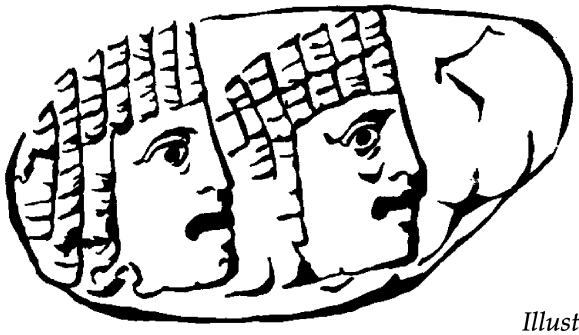
Masks were always worn so that the vast audience could see facial expressions of sadness or happiness more clearly. Some actors had up to 6 parts each and by changing masks instead of changing whole costumes, they could change roles more rapidly. The masks were made of thin clay or stiffened fabric. They had huge mouths which helped amplify the actors voices.

All Greek actors were men. Some became very famous for their skill in playing female roles. Second and third actors would have to shift from playing the role of dancing young girls in one scene to old wise men in another. Most of these actors aspired to starting their own companies and becoming leading actors themselves.

Theatrical Masks

Comic Mask

Tragic Masks



Illustrations by Carole Collier Frick

Greek Drama: Antigone
Background Information
Part Two

Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) was one of the great tragic playwrights of Greek theater. He wrote 123 plays, seven of which survive. One of these plays, *Antigone*, was probably written in about 442 B.C. It deals with the enduring theme of drama and philosophy: whether to observe the laws of a state or the laws of one's own conscience. Antigone's brother, who is considered a traitor to the state, has been killed. **King Creon** orders that no one is to bury him: he is to be left on the plain to rot. But Antigone disagrees: the gods say that people must honor their brothers, whatever they do. So she buries the body. She is arrested and brought before King Creon.

Sophocles' Antigone

A Greek Tragedy

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ANTIGONE, daughter of Œurydice and Focasta, late King and Queen of Thebes.
ISMENE, her sister.
CREON, their uncle, brother of Focasta, now Ruler of Thebes.
HÆMON, Creon's son, betrothed to Antigone.
ŒURYDICE, wife of Creon, mother of Hæmon.
TEIRESIAS, a blind prophet
A SENTRY
TWO MESSENGERS
CHORUS OF THEBAN ELDERS

SCENE: Before the Palace at Thebes.
TIME: Early morning.

SCENE: *Courtyard of the Royal Palace at Thebes. There are three entrances—one into either wing, and central doors into the palace. Enter* ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE *from the palace door. Time—early morning.*

ANTIGONE: Ismene, my own sweet sister, can you imagine any suffering, any humiliation worse than we have already endured together? Of all the curses heaped upon the house of Œdipus, do you think there is a single curse that the gods will not work out upon us before we die?

And now comes this new edict which I hear our king has issued to the whole city. Surely you have heard that the punishment which our enemies have brought upon themselves is threatening those we love?

ISMENE: No, Antigone, I have heard no news—good or bad—about anyone we love, since the day our brothers killed each other.

Nothing since the Argive army fled last night—nothing to bring me either joy or sorrow.

ANTIGONE: So I thought; and that is why I have been trying to bring you outside to talk to you alone.

ISMENE: What is it? What dark thought thunders in your mind?

ANTIGONE: You know that Creon has granted one of our brothers the honour of a state funeral, but has insulted the other by denying him the right of burial? They say that Creon buried Eteocles with all traditional ceremonies so that he should be honoured by the dead. But he has decreed that the wretched Polynices *(looks to right)* must not be mourned, but shall be left, unwept, unburied, for vultures to batten upon.

This is the order of our gracious King—an order that binds you, yes—and binds me too. And should anyone not have heard it, he is on his way now to proclaim it, as he counts it no light matter.

Anyone who dares to disobey shall die— die by stoning in the marketplace. There! Now is your chance to show the mettle of your royal blood.

ISMENE: If things are as bad as this, how could my meddling help them now?

ANTIGONE: Are you prepared to help?

ISMENE: What is it? Is it dangerous? What do you mean?

ANTIGONE: Will you help to give Polynices—

ISMENE: You mean—bury him *(looking in the direction of the corpse.)* In defiance of the order?

ANTIGONE: He is my brother—and yours—

unless you disown him. I cannot be false to him.

ISMENE: You are mad. Creon has forbidden it.

ANTIGONE: But he has no right to shut me away from what is mine.

ISMENE: Think back, Antigone. Think first how our father died, detested and disgraced. Think how he stabbed out his eyes with his own hands, when he discovered the full horror of his guilt. Then his mother who became his wife—his mother-wife— one person—took a rope and hanged herself in shame. And now, our two brothers—poor wretched men—have died on the same day, each at the other's hand.

We two that alone are left, how much more dishonourable will be our end if we break the law and defy the King's decree! We must remember that we are women, and women are not meant to fight with men. Our rulers are stronger than ourselves, and we must obey them in this, and in things more bitter still.

And so I shall obey those in power, since I am forced to do so, and can only ask the dead to pardon me, since there is no wisdom at all in going too far.

ANTIGONE: I will not press you to do it. Even if you should decide to help me, you would not do it with a good grace, nor would your help be welcome to me. Be true to yourself. I shall bury him. I could not die better than in doing this. Resting with the one I love, who loves me, I shall be a criminal most holy.

I owe a longer allegiance to the dead than to the living; for with them I shall sleep for all eternity. But you, dishonour the laws of heaven if you must.

ISMENE: I am not dishonouring them, but defy the country's laws I cannot.

ANTIGONE: Make this your excuse, if you wish. I am going to bury the brother that I love.

ISMENE: Poor girl—how I fear for you!

ANTIGONE: Don't fear for me. Look to your own fate.

ISMENE: At least, Antigone, tell no one of this. Breathe no word of it, and neither will I.

ANTIGONE: Oh! shout it from the housetops! They'll hate you all the more, if you keep it quiet.

ISMENE: You are all on fire to do a deed that chills my blood.

ANTIGONE: But I know, Ismene, I am only serving where my duty lies.

ISMENE: If you can, then do. But you are in love with the impossible.

ANTIGONE: I shall only give up when my strength fails.

ISMENE: Why pursue the impossible at all?

ANTIGONE: Say that, and I shall hate you. The dead will hate you too—and justly. Go, leave me and my folly to suffer what you fear. That way I shall not die in disgrace.

ISMENE: Do it, if you must. But remember this at least, that foolish though you are, there'll be some who still will love you.

(ANTIGONE *goes (right) to bury the corpse.* ISMENE *pauses and returns into the palace.)*

(Chorus of Theban Elders enters from left and takes up position in front of the stage.)

CHORUS: Ray of the sun, the fairest light that ever shone on the gate of Thebes,

we hail you, eye of the golden day, Rising over Dirce's streams. You have scattered in flight the Argive foe, the panoplied host with their long white shields. You have driven away in galloping rout.

LEADER: Polynices led this host angered by the claim refused him. Down they swooped like screaming eagles shielded with wings as white as snow, tossing their crests of horsehair plumes that fluttered from a thousand helms they swooped upon our land.

CHORUS: Over our roofs he paused, flashing spears athirst for blood, ravening round our seven gates. But ere the torch had burnt our towers, or his jaws with our blood were glutted, he fled, and loud was the roar of war of the Theban dragon behind him.

LEADER: Zeus, who hates a braggart's tongue, saw that mighty host approaching in the pride of clanging gold. One he struck with lightning bolt, as he scaled the wall and moved his lips to raise the shout of "Victory."

CHORUS: Down he swung to earth with a crash, with torch ablaze—madman! to breathe against us blasts of flaming hate in vain his threats! And thousands more were sent to their deaths by the havoc-making War-god, our Protector.

LEADER: Their seven chiefs at our seven gates stood matched with ours, but they left to Zeus the tribute of their brazen arms; all save two brothers, who face to face, and spear to spear, went down in a common death.

CHORUS: The Goddess of Victory has come to share the joy of glorious Thebes. Let us now, the war forgotten, thank our gods with dance and song. All night long let Bacchus lead us, lead the dance till he shake the earth.

LEADER: Look! the King of our land is here—King Creon, newly crowned by the new fortunes that the gods have sent. What thoughts are in his mind, that he has summoned us to this conference?

(Enter CREON *from the centre door of the palace. He is dressed as a king and preceded by attendants.)*

CREON: My friends, the gods have brought our ship of state safely to port after wild tossing on the stormy seas. We have summoned you here, of all our people, because we know how firm was your allegiance to King Laius, and how loyal you were to his successor, Œdipus, and when he died, to his children after him. As you know, his two sons killed each other, staining their hands with a brother's blood. So we now hold the throne and the supreme power as kinsman of the dead.

A man's character and ability can only be judged when he has been tried as a ruler. Him we will hold base, and always have done so, who when in charge of the state spurns the best advice, and through fear closes his lips. And if he put friends before his country, we have for him nothing but contempt.

Zeus, who sees all, knows that we cannot be silent, if we see our country heading for disaster. Our country's enemy could never be our friend. For we know well that this country is a ship that bears us safely, and, only if we steer her straight, shall we make real friends.

By such principles we will make this city

great, and in accordance with them we have published a decree about the sons of Œdipus. Eteocles, who died fighting for his country, shall be given a soldier's funeral and honoured with all the ceremony that the brave and glorious deserve.

But his brother Polynices, that runaway who came back to destroy with fire and sword the city of his fathers and our ancient shrines, who came to taste his brother's blood and make our people slaves, this man, we have decreed, shall be left unburied and unmourned. His corpse shall lie without a grave, for dogs and vultures to mangle and devour.

This is our decision. Never through an act of ours shall a traitor share the honours of the brave. But whoever loves his country, him will we honour in life or death.

LEADER: If this is your decision, King Creon, about our country's friend and our country's enemy, we must accept it. You have the power to order what you will, both for the dead and for us, the living.

CREON: See then that you keep well our commands.

LEADER: Give that responsibility to younger men.

CREON: We have already chosen sentries to guard the body.

LEADER: What further order do you wish to give?

CREON: To give no ear to anyone who breaks my law.

LEADER: No one but a fool would want to die.

CREON: Yes, death will be his wages. But bribes have often led men to disaster.

(A SENTRY *enters from right)*

SENTRY: Please sir, it is not from running that I am out of breath—no, I am not, for I've stopped lots of times to think, and I kept looking back and wondering if I should come at all. I kept saying to myself, "Don't be a fool! Why go and look for trouble?" I said. And then again, "Why stand there like a fool?" says I, "if this gets round to Creon before you get there, you'll pay for it."

What with worrying over all this I dawdled, and a short road turned into a long one. In the end I made up my mind to come, and here I am, even if I've nothing so say, I'll say it. I've come hanging on to the hope that . . . after all, as I said to myself, what's coming to me is coming.

CREON: Yes—yes—but what is the trouble?

SENTRY: First let me speak for myself. I didn't do it—I didn't see who did it. It isn't right that this should get me into trouble.

CREON: How cleverly you hedge! You cover yourself well. You must have something very strange to say.

SENTRY: I have, sir. A man does not rush into trouble.

CREON: Well, let me hear it, and then be off.

SENTRY: Right, I'll tell you—it's the body—someone has just buried it and gone off—he sprinkled dust on it, and performed the rites.

CREON: What did you say? What living man would dare to do such a thing?

SENTRY: I don't know, sir. There was no mark of a pick-axe, or earth thrown up by a spade. The ground was hard and dry, unbroken, and there were no wheel tracks. Whoever did it left no clue.

When the first day-sentry showed us

this, we were all too stunned to speak. The body was concealed not by a mound, but by a light layer or dust thrown on it, as if someone wanted to escape the curse of leaving a corpse unburied. There was no sign that any dog or wild animal had been near to maul it.

Then we started arguing—each sentry accused the other. We nearly came to blows, as there was no one there to stop us. We all blamed each other, and we couldn't prove who had done it; each one said that he knew nothing about it. We were ready to take red-hot iron in our hands, or to walk thro' fire, or to swear by all the gods in heaven that none of us had either done it or had any part in it.

In the end, when all our questions got us nowhere, one of us said something, and after what he said, we didn't dare look up. We didn't know how to contradict him, nor, if we followed his advice, how we could escape trouble. His advice was to report the matter to you and not to hush it up.

So we drew lots to decide who should tell you, and my luck was out. So here I am to bring you the news, which I do not want to tell, nor you to hear. No one likes a man who brings bad news.

LEADER: O King, I have been wondering, could this not be the work of the gods?

CREON: Enough! before I burst with rage, and you show yourselves foolish old men. Your suggestion is fantastic! That the gods should care about this corpse, that they should bury and honour as a patriot—a man who came to burn their temples, to destroy their sacred treasures, to scorch their land, and tear up their laws! Have you ever known the gods to honour evil men?

I have long known there are men in the city who murmur against me, shaking their heads in secret, and chafing with discontent under my yoke. These are the men, I know, who have bribed my guards to do this deed.

Nothing has brought more evil to mankind than money. Money brings cities to the dust and drives men from their homes. Money corrupts honest souls and lures them on to wickedness. Money leads men to crime and to every kind of sin.

But the men who have been hired for this deed have made their death inevitable.

Therefore, as Zeus lives, the god in whom I trust, I swear, that unless you find the man who carried out this burial and bring him here before my eyes, death alone will not be punishment enough for you. You shall be strung up alive, and left hanging until you reveal the author of this monstrous outrage. You shall learn the folly of hoping to profit from evil-doing and of seeking wealth by shameful practices. Ill-gotten gain brings not happiness but misery.

SENTRY: (subdued.) May I speak, or shall I go now?

CREON: Do you not see that every word you speak is torture to me?

SENTRY: Torture to your ear, or to your conscience?

CREON: It is no concern of yours where my trouble lies.

SENTRY: The one who did it troubles your mind, I only offend your ears.

CREON: You are a born chatterer.

SENTRY: That may be so, but I am innocent of this charge.

CREON: Indeed? When you have sold yourself for money!

SENTRY: It is a pity that your opinion of me is so mistaken.

CREON: Quibble about opinions if you will, but if you fail to discover the culprit, you shall find that treachery leads only to disaster.

*(*CREON *goes into the palace.)*

SENTRY: I hope they find him, but whether he is caught or not (fate will settle that), you may be sure you won't see me here again. And now I thank the gods I am still alive. I never expected it.

*(*SENTRY *goes out right.)*

CHORUS: Wonders are many, but the greatest of all is man.

The foaming windswept sea is his conquest.

His ships cleave through engulfing waves.

He has conquered the earth,

Earth, the unwearied and everlasting, with ploughs that never rest from year to year.

He ensnares the carefree birds, and nets the fishes of the deep, and traps the savage beast. Man, the ingenious, has mastered the mountain beast, has bridled the rough-maned horse, and yoked the mighty bull. He has found wind-swift thought, he has learnt speech, and taught himself to live with other men. He has sheltered himself from frost, and the shafts of rain. Man, always resourceful, can escape all—but death. Even disease he can master. He has science beyond his dreams, which he uses for good or ill.

And when he lives by the laws of gods and men, his country prospers. But if he chooses evil and defies the gods, he destroys his country.

Such a man shall never cross my threshold, never shall I share his thoughts.

(The SENTRY *reenters with* ANTIGONE *as a prisoner.)*

LEADER OF CHORUS: What devil's work is this?

I do not understand. It cannot surely be Antigone? How comes she to be under arrest, unhappy girl? She could not be so foolish as to defy the King's decree?

SENTRY: Here's the one who did it. I caught her at it. Where's Creon?

*(*CREON *appears, preceded by soldiers.)*

LEADER: Here he comes—just when we need him.

CREON: What is this? What has happened that my return should be so opportune?

SENTRY: Your majesty, there is nothing a man should ever swear he will not do, for often second thoughts belie the first. I vowed it would be a long time before I ever came here again, buffeted by your threats as I was before.

But there's nothing like an unexpected success. And so I've come—although I swore I wouldn't—with this girl I found preparing a burial. We didn't draw lots this time. It was my own find, no one else's. And now, your majesty, cross-examine her, and deal with her as you will. But I am cleared now. You cannot charge me with this crime again.

CREON: Where did you find her? How? Where did you catch her?

SENTRY: She was burying the body. That's all there is to it.

CREON: Do you know what you're saying?

Is it the truth?

SENTRY: To put it plainly—I saw her burying the body which you said was not to be touched.

CREON: How did you come to see her? Did you catch her in the act?

SENTRY: It happened like this. When I got back to my companions with those terrible treats of yours still in my ears, we brushed away all the dust that covered the corpse, and laid the clammy body quite bare. Then we sat down on some high rock out of the wind, away from the smell. There we were, nagging each other to keep awake, in case any of us should neglect his watch.

So we stayed until the sun was at its highest, and its heat grew fierce. Then suddenly a whirlwind raised a mighty storm from the earth, which blotted out the sky, swept the plain, and stripped the low-lying wood bare of its foliage. The wide expanse of heaven was black with dust. We shut our eyes to avoid this affliction sent by the gods.

And when at last the storm was over, we saw this girl. She was uttering shrill cries, as a bird in pain when it sees its nest empty and robbed of its young. When she saw the bared corpse, she sobbed bitterly and cursed the one who had done it. Then at once she brought dry sand in her hands, and three times poured a libation on the body from a bronze pitcher.

The moment we saw it, we dashed forward and caught her. She was calm and not afraid. We cross-examined her about the burial, and also about the first one. At this she stood her ground and denied nothing. In a way I was glad to see this, in a way I was sorry—glad to get myself out of trouble, sorry to lead others into it. But what did all this matter as long as I could save my own skin?

CREON: *(to* ANTIGONE.*)* Do you deny or admit this? Look up and answer me.

ANTIGONE: I admit it. I will not deny it.

CREON: *(to the* SENTRY.*)* You may go where you like—you are cleared from blame.

(Exit SENTRY.*)*

CREON: *(*to ANTIGONE.*)* Tell me at once, and keep to the point. Did you, or did you not know that my order had forbidden this?

ANTIGONE: I knew it well enough. The whole city knew.

CREON: And yet you dared to disobey my law?

ANTIGONE: It was not the gods who made that edict; this is not the kind of law that divine Justice, who rules among the dead, ordains for men. I did not think that a mere mortal could make decrees of such power that they could override the unwritten and eternal laws of heaven. For these live not today nor yesterday, but for all time, and no man knows when first they came.

I could not bring myself, through fear of one man and one man's pride, to incur the punishment that falls on those who break the laws of Heaven.

That I must die sometime I knew—edict or no edict. And if I am to die before my time, that I count a gain. When one lives, as I do, in the midst of sorrow, surely one were better dead? So this fate is no calamity to me. But if I had allowed my own brother to lie in death unburied, that would indeed have been sorrow beyond words. This

brings me no sorrow. And if what I do now seems foolishness to you, perhaps he who condemns my folly is . . . a fool?

LEADER: The girl is as headstrong as her father. She does not know how to bend before misfortunes.

CREON: Do you not know that stubborn spirits are most often broken? The toughest steel, hardened in the fire, is most often snapped. I have seen the wildest horses tamed by the lightest curb.

Proud thoughts are not for slaves. This girl was already a practised hand in insolence when she transgressed my established law, but this is insolence redoubled when she laughs and gloats over what she's done.

Now she will be the man, not I, if she wins this victory and goes unpunished. Though she is my niece, and bound to me more close than all who worship at our family hearth, she shall not escape a death most shameful—no, nor her sister either. I accuse her, too, of plotting this burial.

Go, bring her out. I saw her just now within, hysterical and wild beyond control. When men plot evil in the dark, their thoughts often convict them before the deed is done. How I abhor the man who, when caught in evil-doing, tries to glorify his crime.

ANTIGONE: Now that you have caught me, do you want to do more than kill me?

CREON: Nothing more. Having that, I have everything.

ANTIGONE: Why delay then? Your words are displeasing to me as mine must be to you. God forbid this should ever be otherwise. And yet how could I have won greater glory than by burying my own brother? All here would admit this, if their mouths were not gagged by fear. But kings are most fortunate. They can say and do what they like.

CREON: No one in Thebes but you holds this opinion.

ANTIGONE: Oh yes, they do. But they cower before you and curb their tongues.

CREON: Do you presume to ignore their wisdom?

ANTIGONE: There is nothing shameful in honouring a dead brother.

CREON: Was not the one who died for Thebes your brother, too?

ANTIGONE: Yes, they both had the same mother and father.

CREON: Then why insult the one by honouring the other?

ANTIGONE: Eteocles in his grave would not think that I insulted him.

CREON: Indeed he would, if you pay the same honour to a traitor.

ANTIGONE: Polynices was his brother, not his slave.

CREON: He attacked his country. Eteocles gave his life for it.

ANTIGONE: May be, but there are rights that every dead man is entitled to.

CREON: Yes, but not the same for traitors as for patriots.

ANTIGONE: Who knows what the gods regard as good, and what as evil?

CREON: A traitor is a traitor, even in death.

ANTIGONE: To those who love me I give love, to those who hate me I return not hate.

CREON: If love you must, then go and love them in the world below. No woman shall rule me while I'm alive.

(Enter ISMENE *from the palace under escort.)*

LEADER. See! Here Ismene comes.

Her clouded eyes drop tears—tears

of a sister's love.

Those cheeks are deeply flushed that were just now so fair.

CREON: You viper! lurking secretly in my house, sucking my life-blood! Little I knew that I was nurturing two pests—rebels against my throne. Answer me—do you admit you took a share in this burial, or will you swear on oath that you knew nothing of it?

ISMENE: I did it . . . *(aside)* if she will let me stand with her.

Part of the blame is mine, and I will bear it.

ANTIGONE: You? Truth will not allow you to say that.

You never offered, nor did I ask your help.

ISMENE: But now that you are in this trouble, I am not ashamed to brave the tempest at your side.

ANTIGONE: The dead know, and the gods who rule the dead know, whose deed it was. A friend who only talks is no friend of mine.

ISMENE: Sister, don't turn away from me. Let me but die with you and pay honour to the dead.

ANTIGONE: Die with me? Never! How dare you claim a deed you've never done. My death will be enough.

ISMENE: What life is worth living for me when you are dead?

ANTIGONE: Ask Creon. *(Sarcastically)* He's the one you really care for.

ISMENE: Antigone, why do you laugh? Why hurt me so? It does you no good.

ANTIGONE: I hurt myself, Ismene, if I laugh at you.

ISMENE: Then tell me how I can help you even now.

ANTIGONE: Save yourself. I don't grudge you your escape.

ISMENE: I beg you, Antigone, I beg you, let me share your fate.

ANTIGONE: No. You chose to live, I chose to die.

ISMENE: I did all I could to warn you first.

ANTIGONE: Warn me? Well, some may think you the wiser, but others will think I am.

ISMENE: But the guilt falls equally upon us both.

ANTIGONE: Take heart! You are alive. I died long since when I gave my life to help the dead.

CREON: These women are both mad; one has just become so, the other has been mad since she was born.

ISMENE: Misfortune makes fools of us all, O King, even the wisest.

CREON: A fool of you, when you chose to join criminals in crime.

ISMENE: But how could I go on living, were she not here?

CREON: "She"—"here?" Enough! She is as good as dead.

ISMENE: Will you kill the girl your own son loves?

CREON: My son can find another field to plough.

ISMENE: No, not another love like his and hers.

CREON: I want no shameless woman to wed my son.

ANTIGONE: Hæmon, dearest! How your father wrongs you!

CREON: Enough of you and your marriage!

LEADER: Will you really rob your own son of his bride?

CREON: No, not I, but Death himself will end for me this love affair.

LEADER: So her death-warrant, it seems is signed.

CREON: Yes, by you, as much as by me. *(To the sentries)* You men there, quick! take

them inside and put them in chains. Women like these must not go out into the streets. When death comes near, even the brave are apt to run.

(The sentries take ANTIGONE *and* ISMENE *into the palace.* CREON *stays thinking.)*

CHORUS: Blest are they whose day have never tasted sorrow.
When a house quakes that the gods have shaken,

The curse never leaves it. Like a mountainous surging wave, rolled on by blasts from Thrace over the darkness of the deep, it passes to each generation.

While the ooze is stirred from the ocean bed, and the billows break on the wind-swept cliffs, and the herdlands echo the roar.

Mine eyes have seen from ages past the curse on the house of Œdipus mounting woe upon woe from the dead.

No generation can free the next, but each is stricken by heaven, and no respite comes to the race. A ray of hope late shone in that house as the last shoot quickened but the light has been quenched by the gods below, by a sprinkle of dust, and a foolish tongue,

And a mind deranged.

Thy power, O Zeus, no pride of man can shake; tis stronger than sleep that ensnareth all, more tireless than moons that wax and wane.

Age cannot touch thee, King enthroned in the dazzling light of Olympus. Thy law prevails till the end of time the over-proud and the over-great are caught in the end in the toils of Fate.

Hope roaming afar to some brings blessing, but others it tempts with vain desires, and a man walks blindly till his feet are caught in the flame. Wise was he of old who said: "He whom the gods draw on to ruin sees good as evil, evil good.

Few are his days without sorrow."

LEADER: See, Hæmon comes, the last of your sons. Does he come in grief for the doom of Antigone? Is he angry at being cheated of his promised bride?

(Enter HÆMON *from left.)*

CREON: We shall soon know—more surely than any prophecy could tell us. You have heard, my son, that your bride is sentenced to death. Have you come to rail against your father? Or can I trust you to be loyal whatever I do?

HÆMON: Sir, I am yours and I will follow the wise guidance which you, my father, have always put before me. No marriage could ever mean as much to me as your good opinion.

CREON: Well said, my son! For a man's most heartfelt wish should be to bow before his father's judgment. It is for this that a father prays to have obedient children, who will strike his enemies blow for blow, and honour the same friends. The man who begets worthless children, what has he gained but trouble for himself and derision from his enemies?

Oh my son, do not abandon reason through a passing fancy for a woman. Remember that the embraces of a worthless wife soon grow cold. Wickedness in one you love rankles more deeply than any running sore. So send

away this girl as one you loath, to find herself a husband in hell. She alone of all the city defied my decree, I will not betray my people. She shall die.

No prayer to God, no tie of family, will help her. She can expect no mercy from me. How can I expect obedience from my subjects if I nurse rebellion in my own house? Surely the man who deals justly with his household will also be found just in affairs of state. He, I am sure, would acquit himself well as ruler or as his subject, and, amid the hail of spears, would stand ground, a good soldier and a loyal comrade. I have no patience with a man who breaks the law and tells his rulers how to rule. The man whom the people put in power must be obeyed in matters great and small, just or unjust.

What evil is greater than anarchy? Anarchy destroys cities; anarchy desolates homes; anarchy breaks up armies in the stress of battle. Good lives are only made and saved by discipline.

So we must defend the laws with all our strength and not allow ourselves to be flouted by a woman. If fall I must, then let it be a man that casts me down. Never let it be said of me that I was conquered by a woman.

LEADER: I am old; my age confuses me; yet I feel that there is wisdom in your words.

HÆMON: Father, the greatest gift that the gods implant in man is reason. I would not dare—far be it from me—to deny that all you say is right, and yet another's counsel might be of value. Your part is not to keep watch on what men say or do, what they find to criticise. Your dread frown deters the citizens from speaking words that would not please your ear.

But I hear whispers in the dark, murmurs among the people in pity for this girl. "No woman," they say, "ever less deserved such a doom. None was ever condemned to die so shamefully for a deed so noble."

When her own brother fell in battle, she would not leave him unburied for carrion curs and vultures to devour. Is that a crime? "Does she not rather deserve," they say, "a crown of gold?"

Such are dark rumours that are spreading through the city. No treasure, father, is more precious to me than your welfare. What pleases a son more than his father's good name, or what delights a father more than his son's reputation?

*(*CREON *sneers.* HÆMON *changes his tone—finding every appeal useless.)*

Must you always nurse this one idea in your heart, that what you think, and nothing else, is right? If you look into the heart of a man who thinks that he alone is wise, wise in all his thoughts and words, wise above all others, you will find nothing but emptiness.

It is no disgrace even for a wise man to be willing to learn and yield at times to reason. Look at trees in a wintry torrent, how those that bend keep safe every bough and twig, but those that resist the raging flood are destroyed root and branch. So, too, a sailor who keeps his sheet taut and never slackens it ends his voyage by capsizing.

So, father, stay your anger. Allow your mood to change. Though a younger

man, may I offer you my counsel? I say that best by far is that in all things man should avoid folly. But if he cannot always be wise (and who of us always can?) it is good to learn from those who speak wisdom.

LEADER: Sir, it is right that you should profit by your son's words, if he has something opportune to say. And for you too, Hæmon, to listen to your father. For in both there is good sense.

CREON: Am I, at my age, to be taught by a youngster like this?

HÆMON: Only if what he says is right. If I am young, you should consider not my years, but the merits of what I say.

CREON: Merit, is it, to respect law-breakers?

HÆMON: God forbid that anyone should respect a scoundrel.

CREON: But that is precisely what she is.

HÆMON: The people of Thebes think otherwise.

CREON: Shall Thebes dictate to me how I shall rule?

HÆMON: Who is talking like a youngster now?

CREON: Am I to rule this city at another's dictation?

HÆMON: A city is no city that is ruled by one man.

CREON: Does not the city belong to the ruler? I *am* the city.

HÆMON: A one-man city! It's a desert you should be ruling.

CREON: Champion a woman, would you, boy?

HÆMON: Who's the woman? You? It's you I have at heart.

CREON: Villain, how dare you wrangle with your father?

HÆMON: Only because I see you sinning against the light.

CREON: Against the light! A sin! To respect my own prerogative?

HÆMON: Respect! You talk of respect when you trample underfoot the reverence due to the gods!

CREON: You poor fool! You woman's slave!

HÆMON: You will never find me a slave to what is base.

CREON: In every word you utter, you plead for her.

HÆMON: Yes, and for you too, and for myself, and for the gods below.

CREON: Never shall you marry that girl in this life.

HÆMON: *(thinking of himself, but* CREON *misunderstands him.)* If she dies, her death will cause . . . another's death.

CREON: How dare you threaten me? What insolence!

HÆMON: Threaten? Is it a threat to oppose your nonsense?

CREON: You shall pay for this—daring to teach me wisdom.

HÆMON: In another man I should have counted it madness—but—you *are* my father.

CREON: You woman's plaything! Don't try and wheedle me.

HÆMON: Do you want to do all the talking, and hear nothing in reply?

CREON: Indeed? By all the gods on Olympus, you shall pay for your jeering. *(To the guards)* Bring out that hateful thing, that she may die before her bridegroom's eyes, nay, at his very side.

HÆMON: Before my eyes! no, never! My face you shall never see again. Go, rave among your friends, if they can endure a madman.

(HÆMON *goes out right, unseen by* CREON)

LEADER: See, King, your son has gone in anger.

Beware a young mind brooding on its pain.

CREON: Gone? Let him go, and try to do what no man can. He shall not save these girls from their fate.

LEADER: Do you intend to put them both to death?

CREON: No, not the one who took no part. You are right.

LEADER: And what death do you intend for the other?

CREON: I will take her to a desolate spot where man's foot never treads, and there seal her up alive in a rocky cavern, with only as much food as custom prescribes to absolve the city of her death. There let her pray to the gods below, the only ones she worships, and *(sarcastically)* maybe they will rescue her from death. And if they do not, she may learn at last, though late, that to revere the dead is wasted toil.

(CREON *goes out left.)*

CHORUS: Love invincible, love irresistible, matchless in fight, love that sleeps in a girl's soft cheek, keeping vigil, love that riots among the flocks, over the sea Love seeks his prey, in lonely cabins among the hills, no one can escape you—god or man—not deathless gods not mortal man, and he you enslave is mad.

You warp the minds of the good to sin, and lure them to disaster. Strife you sow in peaceful homes, embroiling sons and fathers. The shaft of desire from a maiden's eyes who can resist? She sits enthroned beside the eternal laws triumphant—man-mocking Aphrodite. *(Pause.)*

(Enter ANTIGONE *under escort. Quiet music is heard.)*

LEADER: Now this tempts me beyond the law, and I can scarce hold back my tears, when I behold Antigone going to Death's bridal-bower where all must sleep a sleep unending.

ANTIGONE: Behold me, citizens of my land, going upon my last journey. Never shall I see the sun again. The King of Death, who puts all to sleep, leads me alive to Acheron's cold shore.

No marriage-son for me, no wedding-marches there for the bride of Death.

CHORUS: With honour and praise you go to the dark, deep vault of the dead, smitten not by wasting disease, tasting not the sword's keen edge. Tis of your own free will you go—no other mortal has gone this way alive.

ANTIGONE: I have heard men tell of Niobe. Daughter of Tantalus, Queen of Thebes, turned to stone on Phrygia's mount. Stone grew round her like ivy clinging. From her eyelids drop sad tears, tears of everlasting rain—

On her frozen bosom lie drifts of everclinging snow.

So must I lie, turned to weeping stone like Niobe.

CHORUS: Yet she was a goddess and child of a god, while we are mortal, mere children of men. Glorious is the name of woman who shares in life and shares in death the lot of a suffering god.

ANTIGONE: Ah, you mock me—to my face. Can you not wait till I am dead?

City mine, and your mighty sons, Springs of Dirce, bear witness all! thou sacred plain where chariots race, Bear witness, by what cruel law unwept by friends I go condemned to a prison-tomb—a prison strange—a rock-built tomb—an outcast among the living, homeless among the dead.

CHORUS: In daring you climbed to the utmost height, climbed too high, before the altar-steps of Justice you fell, my child, and lost and lay. It must be for your father's sin that you are paying now.

ANTIGONE: You have touched my most bitter pain—

My father's sin, and the doom it brought
On the whole of our ancient house.
Oh! the horror of that incestuous bed
Where my mother slept in her son's embrace—
Her son . . . my father! Where I was conceived, I and my hell! To them I must go accursed, unmarried, a homeless girl to share their home in the world below.
Oh brother, ill-starred in your marriage,
'Tis your dead hand that has murdered me.

CHORUS: Respect should be paid where respect is due, but he who rules must guard his laws and punish the transgressor.
But you—you ruin springs from your own self-will.

ANTIGONE: I am ready. No tear, no friend, no marriage-hymn, to cheer me on my miserable road. On me no more the sun will shed his holy light.
Alone I go—no friend, no tears.

*(*CREON *returns impatient.)*

CREON: Would men ever cease moaning and wailing, if moans and wails could postpone death? *(To the guard)* Take her away at once. Wall her up, as I have told you, in the vault, and leave her there alone, to die if she likes, or go on living in a tomb. Our hands are clean of this girl's blood. But all I deny her is the right to live on this earth.

*(*CREON *goes into the palace.)*

ANTIGONE: O grave, my bridal-chamber! O rock-prison, my eternal home! To you I go, to meet again mine own, all those whom Persephone has welcomed among the dead. Of them I am the last, and the most miserable of all, taken before my life's allotted span. But as I come, one hope sustains me that my coming will be dear to my father, and dear to you, mother, and dear to my brother Eteocles. For with my own hands I washed your dead bodies and shrouded them, and poured libations on your graves.
And now Polynices, for tending your dead body my reward is death.

Yet against what law of God have I offended? Why should I in my sorrow look to heaven again? To what friend can I appeal, when I am condemned as unholy for doing a holy deed?

If my doom is held among the gods to be right, when I have suffered death, I shall become conscious of my sin. But if the sin is with my judges, may nothing worse befall them than the wrong they do to me.

*(*CREON *returns.)*

CHORUS: Look! the storm still rages in her soul.

CREON: Those who are guarding her shall pay for this delay.

ANTIGONE: Ah! those words bring death very near.

CREON: Yes, there shall be no reprieve.

ANTIGONE: *(as the guards lead her away.)*
O city of Thebes, my native land! Ye gods of my ancestors, see! They take me away! My hour has come! Look

on me, princes of Thebes, the last of the royal house, see what I suffer, and at whose hands, because I gave the gods their due and would not disobey the laws of heaven.

(Exit ANTIGONE *and guards.)*

CHORUS: So too, the lovely Danae was hidden from the light of day, imprisoned in a brazen room for a bridal bower. Yet she came of a royal line like yours, my child, my child, and in her womb was the seed of Zeus that fell in the golden rain. Terrible is the power of Destiny, mysterious, invincible, man cannot escape it. No wealth, nor arms, nor guarded tower, nor dark-prowed ship that fights the sea Can save him when Fate calls.

(The blind prophet, TEIRESIAS, *enters from left, led by a boy.)*

TEIRESIAS: Rulers of Thebes, we have come, with one to see for both of us, for this is the way the blind walk, with the help of a guide.

CREON: Aged Teiresias, what news have you brought?

TEIRESIAS: Harken, my son, and mark well the prophet's words.

CREON: Have I ever in the past spurned your counsel?

TEIRESIAS: That is why thou steerest aright this ship of state.

CREON: Your help I know, and will admit as much.

TEIRESIAS: Know that once more thou standest on the razor-edge of doom.

CREON: What is this? Your words make me shudder.

TEIRESIAS: Thou shalt learn all as thou hearest the warnings that my art reveals. As I took my place at the ancient seat of augury, where all the birds gather round me, I heard a strange noise among them, a weird and horrible jangle. As they screeched in frenzy, I knew that they were tearing at each other with murderous claws, for the whirring of their wings made it plain.

Straightway in fear I made trial by sacrifice on an altar fully kindled, but no flame rose from my offerings. Only a dripping moisture oozed from the thigh bones and smoked and sputtered among the embers. The gall shot into the air, and the streaming bones lay bare of the fat that covered them. But no flame!

So failed the rites by which I vainly sought a sign. I have it from this boy, for he is guide to me as I am to others. The state I say is sick, sick through your folly. All our shrines and altars are tainted and polluted by vultures and dogs with carrion flesh torn from the corpse of the ill-fated son of Œdipus. No longer do the gods accept our prayers and sacrifices. Our burnt offerings they abominate. No more does a bird's clear note give a fair omen, for all are gorged with the thick blood of a slain man.

Ponder then on these things, my son. All men at times do wrong, but wrongs can be repaired, if men will overcome the folly of their stubborn will. For obstinacy often proclaims the fool.

So give the dead his due, and do not stab a corpse. Is it bravery to kill a man who is dead?

I have sought thy good, and for thine own good I speak. 'Tis sweet to learn from one who brings good counsel—the more so, if therein lies gain.

CREON: Aged priest, you and your kind

shoot at me like archers at a target, and now you dare to try your fortune-telling on me. For years I have been bought and sold like merchandise by your tribe of prophets. Go, do your trading, drive your bargains in silver from Sardis or gold from India, but that man's burial you shall never buy, no, not even if the eagles of Zeus should bear him morsel by morsel to their master's throne. No, not even fear of such a pollution will make me bury him. For I know full well that no mortal man can pollute the gods. Terrible is the fall, aged Teiresias, of even the wisest of men, when he disguises wicked thoughts in eloquence for the sake of gain.

TEIRESIAS: Oh! does no man know, does no man pause to think...

CREON: What platitude is this?

TEIRESIAS: How precious beyond gold is good counsel?

CREON: As much as folly is the worst of evils.

TEIRESIAS: That is the very disease thou art tainted with.

CREON: I do not wish to cast your insults in your teeth.

TEIRESIAS: But thou dost, when thou sayest that my prophecies are lies.

CREON: The prophet tribe is always out for gold.

TEIRESIAS: Ill-gotten lucre is the curse of tyrants.

CREON: Do you know you are speaking of your king?

TEIRESIAS: I know it. For 'tis through my counsel thou hast kept thy kingdom safe.

CREON: Wise you may be in counsel, but treacherous at heart.

TEIRESIAS: Take heed, lest I reveal the locked secret in my soul.

CREON: Out with it! Speak, but let not bribery sway you!

TEIRESIAS: Bribery! Is this your thought of me?

CREON: Know this. You cannot make me sell my fixed resolve.

TEIRESIAS: Now hear the truth and mark it well. Thou shalt not see many more courses of the chariot of the sun before one born from thine own loins shall be sent to death, a life for a life, a corpse for a corpse, paid in due requital, for the life thou didst deny to her who still should live—thou who didst so shamefully entomb her, a living soul.

Nay more, there is another whose soul thou keepest imprisoned on this earth, whose corpse lies naked, unblessed, without a tomb. Thou hast no right to keep him so. Wouldst thou set thyself up as a god? For this affront to heaven the Avenging Furies lie in wait for thee to entrap thee in the net that thou hast spread for others.

Now consider well whether I have been bribed to speak these words. Before many days have passed, thy palace will re-echo to the cries of men and women's wailings. Already a league of hate is formed against thee of all those cities whose mangled sons were not buried save by dogs or beasts, or by some winged bird that brought pollution to the dead men's hearths and homes.

These barbs I discharge against thy heart, for thou hast provoked my wrath; yea and they fly true; thou shalt not escape their sting.

(To the boy.)

Boy, lead me home, that this may vent

his wrath on younger men, and learn to keep a tongue more bridled, and in his breast to nurse better thoughts than now he holds.

*(*TEIRESIAS *goes out right, led by the boy.)*

LEADER OF CHORUS: O King, the man has gone. His prophecies affright me.

Through all the years in which my hair has turned from dark to grey, I have never known him prophesy falsely to this city.

CREON: I know that, too, and am troubled. My pride forbids me to yield, but if I stand by my decision and so bring ruin on my head... To have to make the choice is terrible.

LEADER: Creon, son of Menoeceus, listen to wise counsel.

CREON: What would you have me do? Tell me, I will listen.

LEADER: Go, free the girl from her rocky prison, and make a tomb for the outcast dead.

CREON: Is this your counsel? You would have me yield?

LEADER: Yes, King, and at once. Swift are the feet of the gods upon the path of foolish men.

CREON: Ah me! 'tis hard. I will give up my heart's resolve. It is vain to fight with destiny.

LEADER: Go now, and do these things yourself. Leave them not to others.

CREON: I will go as I am. Quick, my servants, wherever you are, take axes in your hands, and hasten to that hill you see yonder *(pointing.)*

I have reversed my will. I imprisoned her; I will set her free. Fear impels me, for 'tis best to keep the eternal laws, even to the last day of life.

*(*CREON *goes out right.)*

CHORUS: *(joyfully.)* Dionysus, god of many names,
Child of loud-thundering Zeus,
The pride of Theban Semele,
Thou guardest Italy's famous land, and hast thy throne beside Eleusis bay
That welcomes all to Queen Demeter's shrine.
This is thy city, where thy Mænads dwell,
And Ismenus' stream glides softly,
Where the dragon's teeth were sown.
Where the smoking torches glare
Above the double-crested rock,
The nymphs have seen thee, as they dance
Above Castalia's spring.
From Nysa's ivy-mantled slopes
Thou camest, from Euboea's shore
Green with many-clustered vines,
Thou art hymned with strains divine
Through the streets of this thy city.
As of old thou lov'dst this city,
Thou and thy mother whom the lightning slew,
Come thou to succour us plague-stricken,
Come with healing feet from Parnassus's height,
Fly over the moaning strait.
Thou leader of the stars whose breath is fire,
Lord of wild voices of the night,
Appear, O Zeus-born, King;
Come with thy frenzied Mænad band,
Who dance before thee all night long,
Giver of life, Iacchus, come.

(Enter MESSENGER *from right.)*

MESSENGER: Listen, you who dwell beside the palaces of Cadmus and Amphion. There is no condition of human life

which I would consider fixed or stable, be it good or bad, for fortune raises up and fortune throws down the prosperous and unfortunate alike. There is no sure way for a man to foretell his destiny. Once I thought Creon a King to be envied, when he saved this land of Cadmus from its foes, and took into his hands the rule of the city, absolute and supreme. Proud father, too, was he of noble children. And now he has lost all. When life is robbed of joy, I count it but as living death. Even if a man amasses in his house great wealth, and lives in royal pomp—if gladness once is gone, the rest compared with it is but a puff of smoke.

LEADER OF CHORUS: What further evil has beset our royal house?

MESSENGER: They are dead. The guilty still live.

LEADER: Dead? Who? At whose hand? Speak!

MESSENGER: Hæmon is dead, and by a hand he knew too well.

LEADER: What mean you? By his father's or his own?

MESSENGER: By his own, in anger at this father's murderous deed.

LEADER: Oh prophet! how fearfully your words come true.

MESSENGER: These are the facts. The rest must lie with you.

(Enter EURYDICE *from the palace.)*

LEADER: I see Eurydice, the Queen, coming forth from the palace. Is it by chance, or has she heard about her son?

EURYDICE: Citizens of Thebes, I was on my way to pray in Athene's temple, when I overheard your words. As I drew back the bolt to open the door, news of evil to our house fell upon my ears. Terrified I reeled into my servants' arms and swooned. Tell me again what the new is—my ears are used to sorrow.

MESSENGER: Look, Madam, I will tell you the whole truth. I was there and saw it all . . . why should I comfort you by saying things that may prove to be untrue? The truth is always best. I attended your lord as his guide to the edge of the plain, where the corpse of Polynices lay unpitied, mangled by dogs. We bathed it with holy water. We prayed to Pluto and the Goddess of the Crossways to be merciful, and restrain their wrath. Then we cut fresh wood and burnt his poor remains, and over his ashes we built a high mound of his native earth. This done, we went straight to the vault, Antigone's stony bridal-bower. From afar we heard a noise of wailing from the unhallowed chamber, and ran to tell the King. As he drew near, there reached him faint sound of a bitter cry. At this he groaned and cried aloud, "Ah me! can my fears be true? Am I treading the most unhappy road of all that I have ever trod? It is my son's voice that greets me. Haste my servants, go near, past the place where the stones are torn away. Look into the mouth of the vault and tell me, if it is Hæmon's voice I hear, or if some god is cheating me."

We looked, as the unhappy king bade us, and saw Antigone at the far end of the tomb, a noose of fine linen about her neck. Hæmon lay embracing her, mourning his dead love, the bride of Death, and cursing his father's cruel deed. When his father saw him, he

uttered a terrible cry, and went in and called to him. "What have you done, my son? Why did you do it? What calamity has unhinged your mind? Come forth, my child, I beg, I implore you." But the boy stared at him, glowering with angry eyes, he spat in his face, and without a word drew his double-edged sword, and made to strike his father. But he ran out and escaped the blow. Then Hæmon, angry with himself, drove the sword into his own side, and as he breathed his life away, his red blood gushed forth and splashed upon her white cheek.

There they lie, two bodies side by side, wedded in death, witnesses before all mankind, that of all the curses that can fall on man, the worst curse is his own folly.

*(*ŒURYDICE *retires into the palace.)*

LEADER: What do you understand by this? The Queen has gone inside again, without a word.

MESSENGER: I, too, am troubled, but I hope she has only gone within to share her bitter sorrow with her women beneath her roof, rather than make a public show of grief for a death so tragic. She is not without wisdom, and will do nothing that is not fitting.

LEADER: I do not know, but to me this silence is not natural. 'Tis more ominous than this sound of wailing.

MESSENGER: Yes, you are right. Unnatural silence may bode no good. I will go in, and find out if in her distraction she conceals within her heart some secret purpose.

*(*MESSENGER *goes into the palace.)*

(The body of HÆMON *is brought in.* CREON *walks by its side.)*

LEADER: Lo! here comes the King himself. This burden tells too clear a tale. This deed of frenzy is no stranger's doing: nay—dare I say it?—the crime is his and his alone.

CREON: Alas for the sin of a blinded soul,
A deadly, stubborn sin.
Here you see a murdered son, the murderer his father.

Oh! the blindness of all my wisdom!

Alas, my son, so young to die, the guilt is mine, not yours, but mine.

LEADER: Too late, too late, you see the right.

CREON: Yea, taught by bitter sorrow,
On my head has fallen
A crushing blow from heaven,
God drives me along a cruel road,
Trampling on what I hold most dear,
Heavy are the sufferings of mortal man.

(Enter SECOND MESSENGER *from the palace.)*

MESSENGER: Sir, sorrow enough your hands bear already, but you are soon to find more within your house.

CREON: What is this? Can anything the more cruel than what is now cruel enough?

MESSENGER: The Queen is dead—your dead son's mother has stabbed herself.

CREON: Oh! jaws of Death, inexpiable,
Will you engulf me now?

(Turning to the MESSENGER)

Thou herald of evil, what new tale of woe is this?

I was as dead—would'st kill me again? What sayest thou, boy? My wife dead? Death heaped on death?

LEADER: See for yourself.

(The doors of the palace are opened, disclosing the body of the Queen within.)

CREON: Oh! agony still greater.
What further woe can yet await me.
My son, my wife! Oh son, your mother!

MESSENGER: There at the altar she fell upon a sword,
And closed her eyes in darkness, crying aloud for her elder son long dead, and then for Hæmon, and lastly on you—the slayer of her child—She breathed a curse.

CREON: *(groaning and terror-struck.)* Will no one draw a sword and strike me to the heart? My cup is full.

MESSENGER: Yes, she who lies here laid all the blame on you, for the deaths of both.

CREON: Tell me how she died.

MESSENGER: When she learned her dear son's fate, with her own hand she stabbed herself to the heart.

CREON: Ah me! the guilt is mine, I know it.
I blame no other.
Lead me away servants away with all speed. My life is now as death.

LEADER: You speak rightly, if there can be any right 'mid so much wrong. Briefest is best, when ills are past enduring.

CREON: Let it come, ay, let it come—
Death, the blessed doom to end my sufferings—
Let it come, that I may never see the sun again.

LEADER: Let be what may be. The present concerns us now.

CEON: That prayer of mine holds all that I could wish.

LEADER: Then pray no more. Man has no escape from destiny.

CREON: Lead me away, a poor, rash fool,
Who killed his son unwittingly, and killed his wife. I know not where to look, or where to turn. All is gone amiss. A fate intolerable has leapt upon my head.

(As CREON *is being led into the palace, the* CHORUS *speaks the closing lines to the audience.)*

LEADER: Wisdom is the key to happiness,
The wise know how to bow the will to God. Proud men, chastened, pay the price for their proud words, and in old age alone do they learn wisdom.

(Curtain.)

Sophocles'
Antigone

A Greek Tragedy

A children's translation
adapted by
Albert Cullum
School of Education, Boston University

Introduction

Staging *Antigone* is very simple. There are three vital factors within the play: Creon, the royal power, the individuals who oppose him, and the Greek chorus. These three factions can be designated, identified, and located by using three platforms. The royal power has the highest platform and is in the center, the people who speak to him in opposition are on a lower platform to the right, and the Greek chorus is on a still lower platform to the left of center. The platforms will eliminate the confusion of staging and make the cast feel secure. Of course it is not necessary for the actors to stay on their respective platforms all the time. A striking contrast in the height of the platforms will make your stage setting most effective. It will be even better to have a set of steps leading up to the highest platform . . . just two or three steps are enough. Wooden blocks from the kindergarten can be used for this purpose.

As for costumes, use large pieces of solid colored cloth with a hole cut out for the head. Anyone designating royalty can have a tinge of yellow or gold around the edges of his robe. The soldiers can wear shorter tunics that come to the knees. The wider the material, the more folds the costumes will have.

Vocabulary

abhorrence
accusations
advice
advise
amends
appointed
approve
arrogant
authority
avengers
banished
behold
borne
bribed
brief
burial
calamity
cease
chariot
claim
concerns
confirm
confronts
content
convince
decreed
defiant
desperate
destruction
direst
disaster
disgrace
dishonor
dismays
disobedience
distinct
doom
edict
embraced

ensnare
enterprise
entombed
evident
exile
fetch
folly
forbidden
government
grief
guilt
hence
honor
intolerable
issued
judgment
kinship
lament
lamentations
launch
loathsome
lurking
misery
moans
mourn
muttering
necessity
ordained
outrage
override
penalty
perilous
perplexed
possess
prey
proclaim
proclamation
profit
prophesied
prophet
rage
recklessres
rejected
remorse
resist
resolved
resource
rite
royal
sacred
scorn
scorn
senseless
sentinel
serpent
shrill
shudder
slain
solemn
suffice
summoned
swerved
swoop
swoop
task
temperate
tomb
train
traitor
tyranny
unnatural
vile
villain
wearisome
will
wisdom
yield

Antigone

Characters

CREON, King of Thebes
EURYDICE, Creon's wife
HAEMON, Creon's son
ANTIGONE
ISMENE
TEIRESIAS, a blind prophet
Messenger
Sentinels
Chorus Leader
Chorus
A Boy

ANTIGONE: Oh sister Ismene? Unhappiness, calamity, disgrace, and dishonor have fallen upon us. Our brothers are dead, and now King Creon has issued a proclamation to all the city. Do you understand? Or do you not know what outrage threatens one of those we love?

ISMENE: Antigone, I have heard nothing . . . nothing since our two brothers were killed in battle.

ANTIGONE: I sensed as much, and that is why I have brought you outside the palace to tell you secretly.

ISMENE: There's trouble in you looks, Antigone. What is it? Some dark shadow is upon you.

ANTIGONE: It concerns our brothers' burial. King Creon has ordained honor for one and disdain for the other. Eteocles is to be entombed with every solemn rite and ceremony to do him honor, but as for Polyneices, King Creon has ordered that none shall bury him or mourn for him. Polyneices must be left to lie unwept and unburied, for hungry birds of prey to swoop and feast on his poor body! So King Creon has decreed to all the citizens and to you and to me. He who disobeys King Creon shall be put to death. Will you join hands with me and share my task?

ISMENE: What dangerous enterprise have you in mind?

ANTIGONE: To lift his body! Will you join me?

ISMENE: Would you dare bury him against Creon's law?

ANTIGONE: My brother I will bury, and no one shall say I failed.

ISMENE: You are too bold! King Creon has forbidden it.

ANTIGONE: He has no right to keep me from burying my own brother.

ISMENE: Antigone, please remember that we are but women and not made to fight with men. I yield to those who have the authority.

ANTIGONE: I will not attempt to convince you, but I shall bury him. If I have to die for this pure crime, I am content, for I shall rest beside him. But you, if you so choose, may scorn the sacred laws of burial that heaven holds in honor.

ISMENE: Nay, I do not scorn, but against King Creon's will I am too weak.

ANTIGONE: Make that your excuse. I go to heap earth upon the brother I love.

ISMENE: I fear for you. I tremble for your life.

ANTIGONE: Look to yourself, but do not fear for me!

ISMENE: Your heart is full with fever.

ANTIGONE: I will face the danger that so dismays you for it cannot be so dreadful as to die a coward's death.

ISMENE: Then go if you must. Your task is senseless and blind folly, but remem-

ber that I love you dearly, sister Antigone.

(Exit Antigone and Ismene in opposite directions.)

(Enter the chorus.)

CHORUS: Here comes Creon, the new King of Thebes.
Why has he called this gathering?

CREON: By royal edict I have summoned you here. Upon a single day two brothers, Eteocles and Polyneices, killed each other. I now possess the throne and royal power by right of nearest kinship with the dead. Of the two brothers who died in battle I proclaim the following edict. Eteocles, none more valiant than he who fought gloriously for his country and so laid down his life, shall be entombed with every grace and honor. But Polyneices, who returned from exile to fight against us, shall be left unburied until the birds of the air and the dogs have picked his bones. Such is my will!

CHORUS: Such is your will, my lord.

CREON: Look to it then and see that you defend the law now made. I have appointed guards to watch the unburied body.

CHORUS: What further orders do you lay on us?

CREON: That you resist whoever disobeys!

CHORUS: None are so foolish as to long for death.

CREON: Death is indeed the price!

(Enter sentinel.)

SENTINEL: Creon, my King, I am out of breath with running. I am here to tell you all. It may be nothing, still I'll tell you. I can suffer nothing more than what is my fate.

CREON: Is your news unpleasant?

SENTINEL: Aye, and fear makes a man pause long.

CREON: Make an end to it. Tell your story and be gone.

SENTINEL: Then here it is. The body, the unburied body of Polyneices, has been sprinkled with dust and given the sacred rites!

CREON: What man has dared a deed so rash?

SENTINEL: I know not. There was no sign of digging, the earth was hard and dry and undisturbed. There was no track of chariot wheels. He who had done such a deed left no trace at all.

CHORUS: Perhaps this deed was ordered by the gods?

CREON: Silence! Cease your chatter or my wrath will fall upon you. I know that a man could be bribed to do this act. Of all vile things on earth, none is so vile as money. I speak to you plainly and confirm it with this oath - unless you find the author of this burial rite, mere death shall not suffice. You shall be hanged alive until you spit forth the doer of the crime.

SENTINEL: I am not the one who did it!

CREON: Then bring forth the man who did!

SENTINEL: May the gods grant that he be found!

(Exit Creon to the palace and the Sentinel to the burial grounds.)

CHORUS: Many are the wonders of the world, and none so wonderful as man. Full of resource against all that comes to him is man. Against death alone is he left with no defence.

(Enter Sentinel with Antigone.)

CHORUS LEADER: What strange sight is this? I doubt my eyes!

CHORUS: Antigone! Antigone! What have you done? Unlucky daughter of an unlucky father. It cannot be you who has

disobeyed King Creon?

SENTINEL: We caught her in the act of burying her brother! Where is King Creon?

(Enter Creon.)

CHORUS: Back from the palace in good time he comes.

CREON: Why do you bring this girl? Where was she taken?

SENTINEL: Burying her brother we captured her! All was evident.

CREON: Is this the truth?

SENTINEL: I saw her burying the body you had forbidden to be touched. Is that distinct and clear?

CREON: Speak you who look down at the earth. Are these accusations true or false?

ANTIGONE: I admit to all. I do not deny it!

CREON: Sentinel, you may go. *(Exit Sentinel.)* But tell me, and let your speech be brief, had you not heard of my edict forbidding such a deed?

ANTIGONE: I heard and knew.

CREON: And you dared to disobey my law?

ANTIGONE: It was not Zeus who issued this decree, nor did I believe that you Creon, a man, could override the laws of heaven!

CHORUS: Antigone shows her father's temperament, fierce and defiant. She will not yield to any storm!

CREON: Those who are most obstinate suffer the greatest fall. I have seen the wildest horses tamed and only be a tiny bit. This girl is insolent, and she boasts of what she did. Even though she be my niece, she shall not escape the direst penalty, and neither shall her sister escape such penalty.

(A sentinel exits to fetch Ismene.)

ANTIGONE: Would you do more than simply take and kill me?

CREON: I desire no more.

ANTIGONE: Why do you delay? I have no pleasure in hearing you speak. What greater glory could I have presented to heaven than to bury a brother!

CREON: You are the only one in the city to think so.

ANTIGONE: The people think as I do but hold their breath for fear of you.

CREON: You honored a traitor.

ANTIGONE: It was a brother who died, not a slave.

CREON: Down then to death! No woman while I live shall master me.

CHORUS LEADER: See, here comes Ismene.

(Enter sentinels holding Ismene.)

CREON: You, lurking like a serpent in my house, draining my blood, do you confess you shared this burial or will you swear you had no knowledge of such a deed?

ISMENE: I share the blame and do not shrink.

ANTIGONE: No! Justice forbids your claim. You refused, and I gave you no part of it!

ISMENE: I am glad to share your danger at your side.

ANTIGONE: I love not those who love in words alone.

ISMENE: Sister, let me spill my blood with yours.

ANTIGONE: Leave me to die alone. Remember, you would not help me. You cannot claim as yours what you rejected.

ISMENE: What joy have I to live when you have gone?

ANTIGONE: Ask Creon. It was Creon whom you cared for!

ISMENE: Oh mighty Creon! Antigone is Haemon's bride. Can you kill her, the bride of your son?

CREON: Are there no women in the world but she? An evil wife I like not for my son.

ANTIGONE: Oh Haemon, hear not your

father's scorn.

CREON: You, Antigone, have become wearisome to me!

ISMENE: Oh mighty King, he is your son! How can you take her from him?

CREON: It is not I, but death that stops this wedding.

CHORUS: It seems then, oh Creon, that you are resolved that she must die?

CREON: Delay no more! Take them away!

(Sentinels drag out Antigone and Ismene.)

CHORUS: Thrice happy are those who have never known disaster!

CHORUS LEADER: See! Here comes Haemon, your son.

CREON: Do you come in anger, Haemon, or are you still my loyal son, whatever I may do?

HAEMON: Father, I am your son, and may your wise judgment rule me.

CREON: In all things be guided by your father. All men pray that they will have obedient children. So, think this woman Antigone your enemy and spit on her. There is no greater curse than disobedience. This brings destruction upon a city.

HAEMON: Father, it is the gods who give us wisdom, but it is my duty as your son to report to you what the people of the city are saying. The city mourns this girl, and they are saying that she does not deserve death for burying a brother. They say she deserves a crown of gold. Such is the muttering that spreads everywhere. Father, the man who thinks that he alone is wise, is often proven to be empty. There's no disgrace in learning more and knowing when to yield, even if one is king. Oh father King, let your anger cool and profit from the wisdom of another.

CHORUS: Oh King, your son has not spoken foolishly. You can learn wisdom from another.

CREON: I, King of Thebes, should take a lesson from a boy?

HAEMON: Think of what should be done and not of my age.

CREON: To honor disobedience? Is that what should be done?

HAEMON: This is not government but tyranny!

CREON: Villain! Do you oppose your father's will?

HAEMON: Only because you are opposing justice.

CREON: You shall be sorry for this talk! Bring out that loathsome creature named Antigone, that abhorrence, that she may die before Haemon's very eyes!

HAEMON: You shall from this hour not look again upon my face! *(Exits.)*

CHORUS: In anger he has gone, my lord. The young when they are greatly hurt, grow desperate.

CREON: He shall not save these women from their doom.

CHORUS: Are you prepared to destroy both sisters?

CREON: Not Ismene, for she has not sinned against me.

CHORUS LEADER: What of the other? How is she to be slain?

CREON: Into a deserted cave she will be thrust. There let her pray for death! *(Exits.)*

CHORUS: Behold! They bring Antigone here. We cannot keep back our tears, which rise like a flood.

(Enter sentinels holding Antigone.)

ANTIGONE: Friends and my countrymen, now do I make my last journey, now do I see the last sun that ever I shall behold. Never another! Ah, cruel doom to be banished from earth.

CHORUS: You were too bold, too reckless. Now kingly power takes terrible vengeance!

ANTIGONE: Unwept and unfriended, cheered by no song they drag me to death! Never again shall I see the sun in the heavens.

(Enter Creon.)

CREON: Enough of this! Hence with her! Into her tomb prison as I commanded. She shall live no more among the living.

ANTIGONE: Why should I look to heaven for help if this is what the gods approve?

CREON: You end has arrived. The sentence is passed. I have no comfort to give you!

(Sentinels drag out Antigone.)

CHORUS: Behold! Teiresias, blind but seeing all men, enters our land.

(Enter Teiresias guided by a boy.)

TEIRESIAS: My lord, King of Thebes, my journey is shared with this lad for the blind need someone to guide their steps.

CREON: What tidings, old Teiresias, do you bring?

TEIRESIAS: Hear then the prophet. You will do well to listen.

CREON: Have I ever from your wisdom swerved?

TEIRESIAS: You now tread the razor's edge.

CREON: Your words make me shudder. Speak more.

TEIRESIAS: Before the sun has set you will give a child of your own body to make amends for murder. The gods are aroused against you. They are avengers, and they lie in your path to ensnare you. Not many hours will pass before your house moans loudly with lamentations. Hatred for you is moving in the city. These are the arrows that I launch at you! But now, lad, lead me home that he may vent his rage on younger men, that he may learn to keep a tongue more temperate and find more understanding within himself.

(The boy leads Teiresias out.)

CHORUS: Teiresias has prophesied dread things, oh Creon? Every prophecy he has spoken has been fulfilled.

CREON: Yes, this I know and am perplexed.

CHORUS: Oh mighty Creon, listen to his advice.

CREON: Advise me and I will listen. What shall I do?

CHORUS/LEADER: Release Antigone from her cave of death and lay the unburied Polyneices in a tomb.

CREON: You would have me yield?

CHORUS: We would and quickly. The gods are ready to punish the foolishness of men.

CREON: How difficult it is to yield, and yet I cannot fight against necessity. Yes, I will yield!

CHORUS LEADER: Quickly, go then and do it. Leave not this task to others.

CREON: Sentinels, make quick your speed and release Antigone from her tomb of death.

(Sentinels run out followed by Creon.)

(Enter a messenger.)

MESSENGER: Listen, you people of Thebes. All is lost! Nothing is firm. You have no happiness.

CHORUS: What is the weight of this heavy news you bring?

MESSENGER: I bring you death!

CHORUS LEADER: Death? Who is dead?

MESSENGER: Haemon is dead!

CHORUS LEADER: Slain by himself or by his father's hand?

MESSENGER: He killed himself.

CHORUS: Oh Teiresias, how your prophecy comes true!

CHORUS LEADER: But look, Eurydice, the Queen, comes forth from the palace. Has she heard about her son?

(Enter Eurydice.)

EURYDICE: Good people, all, I heard. But tell it to me once more for I am no stranger to bad news.

MESSENGER: Dear mistress, I will tell you what I saw. I went with Creon up the hill to where Polyneices' body still lay, and we gave it holy washing and prayed to the gods that they would restrain their anger and be merciful. Then from the cave we heard a shrill lament! We rushed to the cave and saw the body of Antigone hanging in death. Strips from her dress had served as a rope. But Antigone was not alone in that cave of death for Haemon was there too. In remorse we saw him lean on his sword and drive half its length into his body. Hanging on to a slender thread of life, he embraced Antigone spilling his royal blood upon her. Dead with the dead he lies!

(Exit Eurydice into the palace.)

CHORUS: What can we think of this? The Queen, without a word, has gone hence.

MESSENGER: It is strange.

CHORUS LEADER: I know not, but her too much silence seems perilous.

MESSENGER: It is most unnatural. I'll follow her. *(Follows Eurydice into the palace.)*

CHORUS: Look! Creon comes!

(Enter Creon.)

CREON: You behold, people of Thebes, the slayer of his very own son. My own stubborn ways have borne bitter fruit. My son is dead. Haemon torn from me so young. The fault was mine!

CHORUS: Oh, how too late you discern the truth!

(Messenger enters from the palace.)

MESSENGER: Oh King, more sorrow upon your head! Within your house a second store of misery confronts you.

CREON: What? More? What worse evil yet remains?

MESSENGER: Queen Eurydice, your wife and true mother of Haemon, is dead! In grief she plunged a blade into her heart.

CREON: In one fell swoop my son and wife! Oh gods, are you merciless?

(Sentinels carry in the body of Eurydice.)

CHORUS: Behold and see. There is her lifeless body!

CREON: Where will it end? What else can fate hold in store for me? Is there no one here who with one deadly thrust will end my life? My grief crushes me.

MESSENGER: The Queen cursed you as she died!

CREON: The guilt of slaying my wife and my son is mine alone. Even though I touched them not, I killed them both. Come night with no dawn. I pray for death.

CHORUS: Then pray no more. You cannot escape your suffering as decreed by the gods.

CREON: I know not which way to look. All things are crooked that I handle. My life has become intolerable.

(Creon exits into palace. Sentinels carry in Eurydice.)

CHORUS: Proud words of arrogant men in the end meet punishment. Old age learns too late to be wise.

(Chorus exits slowly.)

Reprinted from Albert Cullum, *Greek Tears and Roman Laughter* (New York: Citation Press,1970), courtesy of the author.

Lesson Six
The Rebuilding of the Acropolis

A. Objectives

- To understand why Pericles wanted to rebuild the Acropolis.
- To realize that this rebuilding of the Acropolis represented the glorification of Athenian culture and that the temples were the focal point of civic life.
- To understand that Athenian imperialism was footing the bill for this massive project.
- To describe the buildings and their purpose.
- To understand the relationship between great architectural and artistic achievements, and the power of the state.
- To develop an aesthetic appreciation for the lasting beauty of these structures.
- To recount the ongoing history of the Acropolis after its time of glory and its present vulnerability.
- To analyze photographs and slides as historical sources.

B. Lesson Activities (One Day)

1. Read to students the quotation by Pericles, taken from Plutarch: Thus said Pericles in 447 B.C.:

   > "Mighty indeed are the marks and monuments of our empire. Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now."

2. Discuss with students the meaning of this quotation.

3. Have students read **Document A**, "The Rebuilding of the Acropolis: Background Information."

4. Have students read **Document B**, Plutarch's description of the work done. Then discuss the reading.

C. Discussion Questions

1. Why did Pericles decide to rebuild the Acropolis at this time and in such splendor?

2. How was the Delian League forced to pay directly for this Athenian building project?

3. For what purpose were the Parthenon, Propylea and the Erechtheum built? Take a look at Plutarch's description of the "public works project" in the passage from "Life of Pericles" (See **Document B**).

4. What has happened to the Acropolis over the centuries?

5. In what way is the Acropolis in jeopardy today?

6. How is it possible that the Acropolis still inspires us, even after all the wreckage it has suffered?

7. Think of some modern parallels (for example, the building of Washington D.C.).

D. Vocabulary

Acropolis
architecture
Athena
Delian League
Erechtheum
Panathenaic Procession
Parthenon
Pericles
Propylea

E. Extended Activities

1. Make a diorama or model of the Acropolis or of one of its buildings.

2. Draw or build a Greek temple.

3. Report on the building of Greek temples. Describe the structure, building materials, transport and quarrying of materials, roofing, proportions, techniques, workers, etc.

4. Draw a sketch of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders used to decorate the capitals of columns. Explain when and where you might find these orders.

5. Write an account of the Acropolis after classical times. Describe the ongoing history of the site down to the present day.

6. Report on buildings in this country which were inspired by Greek architecture.

7. Report on how Lord Elgin "saved" the Parthenon frieze and transported it back to England. Should it be kept there or given back? (N.B. teachers may want to show their classes a recent PBS documentary called *Some Stones of Little Value*. It was produced by the BBC and presents both sides of the argument.)

8. Students can do a research activity on how the Panathenaic Procession is unique in classical Greek art. It is almost totally concerned with "ordinary" citizens and the gods are relegated to a minor position. Some say the frieze shows the heroes of the Battle of Marathon being presented to the gods. Explain this in terms of the "democratic" nature of Athens or perhaps the "imperial" nature of Athens.

F. Evaluating the Lesson

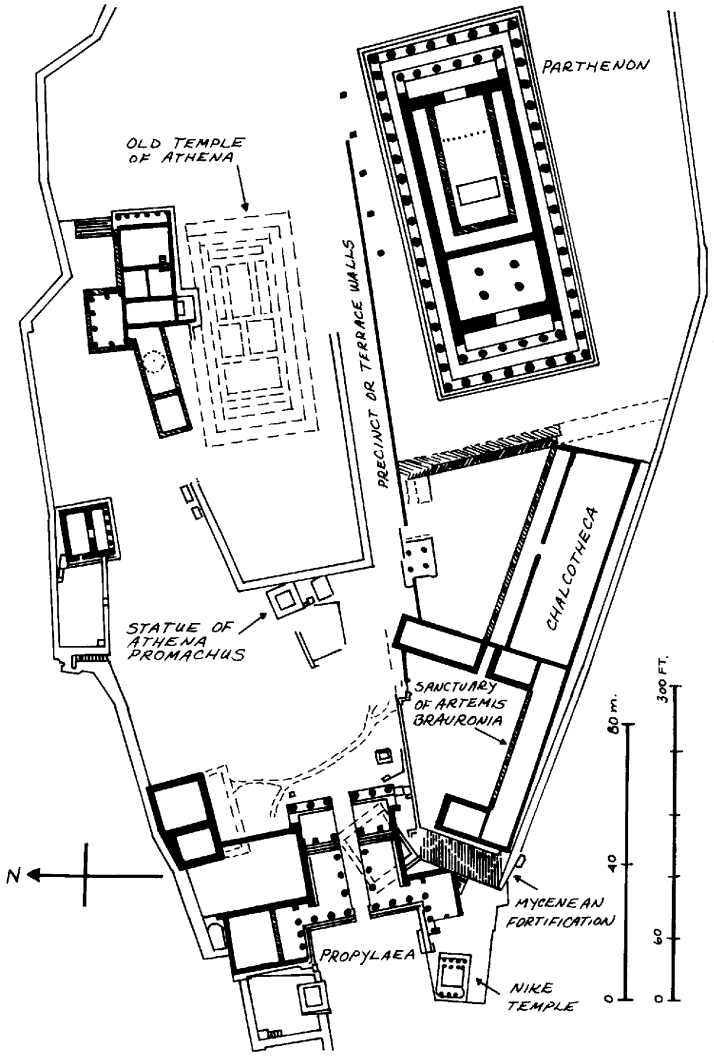
1. Informal evaluation of discussion.

2. Evaluate drawings of various architectural concepts.

The Rebuilding of the Acropolis
Background Information

In the moment of their triumph over the Persians in 490 B.C. at Marathon, the Athenians decided to build a wonderful new temple on their **Acropolis** or hilltop citadel (*Figure One*). This temple was to honor their patron goddess **Athena** whom the Athenians believed had helped them win the battle, and it was also to be a memorial to those men who had died at Marathon.

Figure One: The Classical Acropolis



Illustrated by
Carole Collier Frick

However, as the foundations were going up, the Persians returned to Athens in 480–79 B.C., destroying the city and burning the Acropolis. The Athenians wisely decided to evacuate their city and to battle the Persians at sea, winning the decisive victory at the Bay of Salamis. When the Athenians returned to Athens, they took the damaged ruins of the temple and set them into the walls of the Acropolis as a memorial.

Under the leadership of Athens, a league was now formed among Greek city-states to keep the Persians at bay. The meetings and treasury were held at the island of Delos, and thus they called themselves the **Delian League**. As time went on, most cities chose to give money to the league, relying on Athens to maintain a navy strong enough to fight the Persians. So, with time, Athens became the leader of an empire, rather than a member of an alliance of equal city-states.

In 454 B.C. the Athenians transferred the Delian treasury to Athens and **Pericles**, the most powerful speaker and leader of the Athenian democracy, decided to use part of the League's funds to rebuild the once-great Acropolis. The new Acropolis would glorify the power and culture of Athens and it would inspire men throughout the generations just as Pericles had predicted. It would also provide years of work for skilled craftsmen and artisans. The passage from Plutarch's *Life of Pericles* describes both motives (see **Document B**).

The first and most important building to go up was the **Parthenon**, the temple which housed the statue of Athena. This structure was overseen by Pericles' friend, the sculptor **Pheidias**. It was built to glorify both Athena and the people of Athens. An example of this

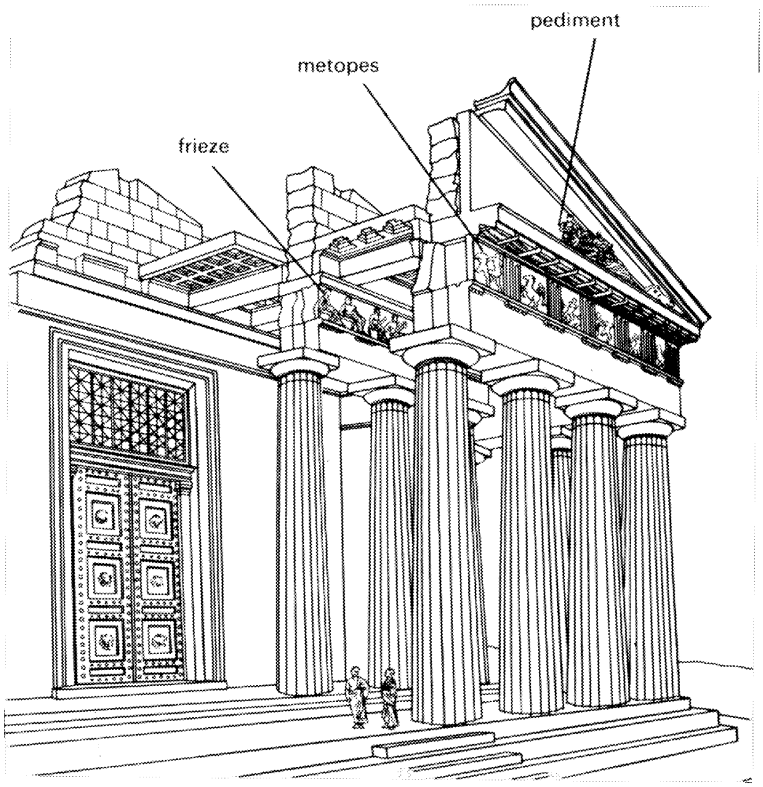


Figure Two:
The Parthenon—
Location of Sculptures

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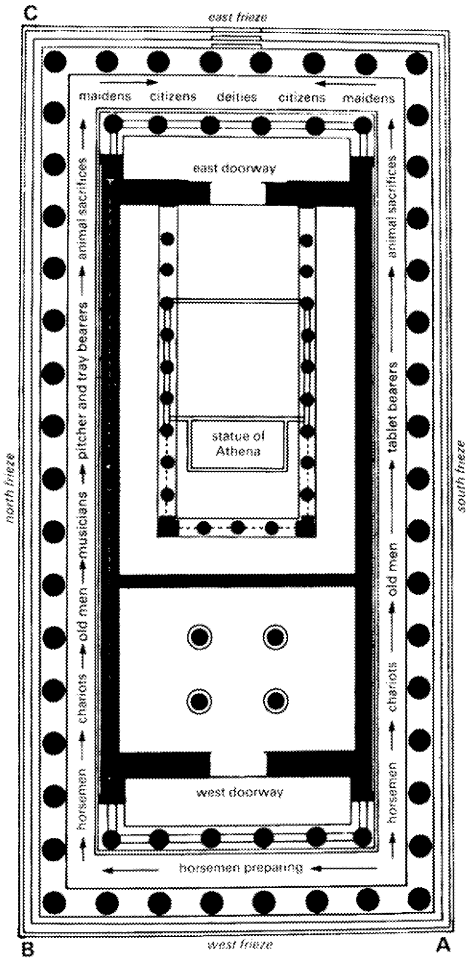
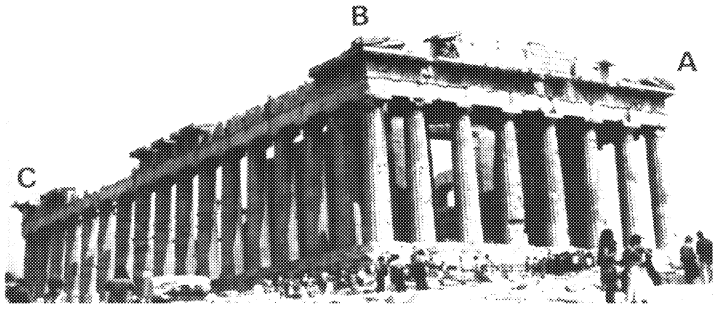
civic pride is the Parthenon **frieze**, the **statuary** work done over the porches of the building (***Figure 3***). This series of sculptures may depict the **Panathenaic Procession** in which citizens marched up to the temple annually to honor Athena. Originally the statues would have been painted in bright colors.

Figure Three: Plan of the Parthenon with the order of *Frieze* Procession





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The Parthenon was built according to strict mathematical proportions and most of its structural elements were at a ratio of 9:4. This led to a great beauty and symmetry in its design. Yet at the same time, the columns were made to bulge in the middle and to lean slightly inward to produce a less severe appearance and to please the eye (*Figure Four*).

After the Parthenon was finished (about 437 B.C.) the hundreds of skilled and experienced sculptors and stone masons went to work on the **Propylea**, or entry gate. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 432 B.C., the beautiful refinements being carved on the outside of the building were never completed. You can

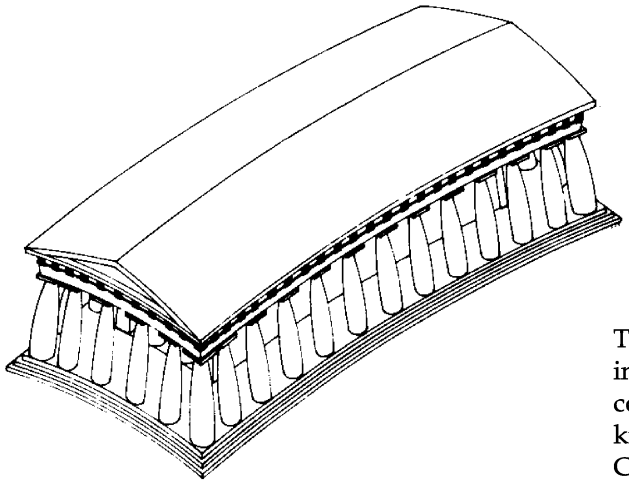
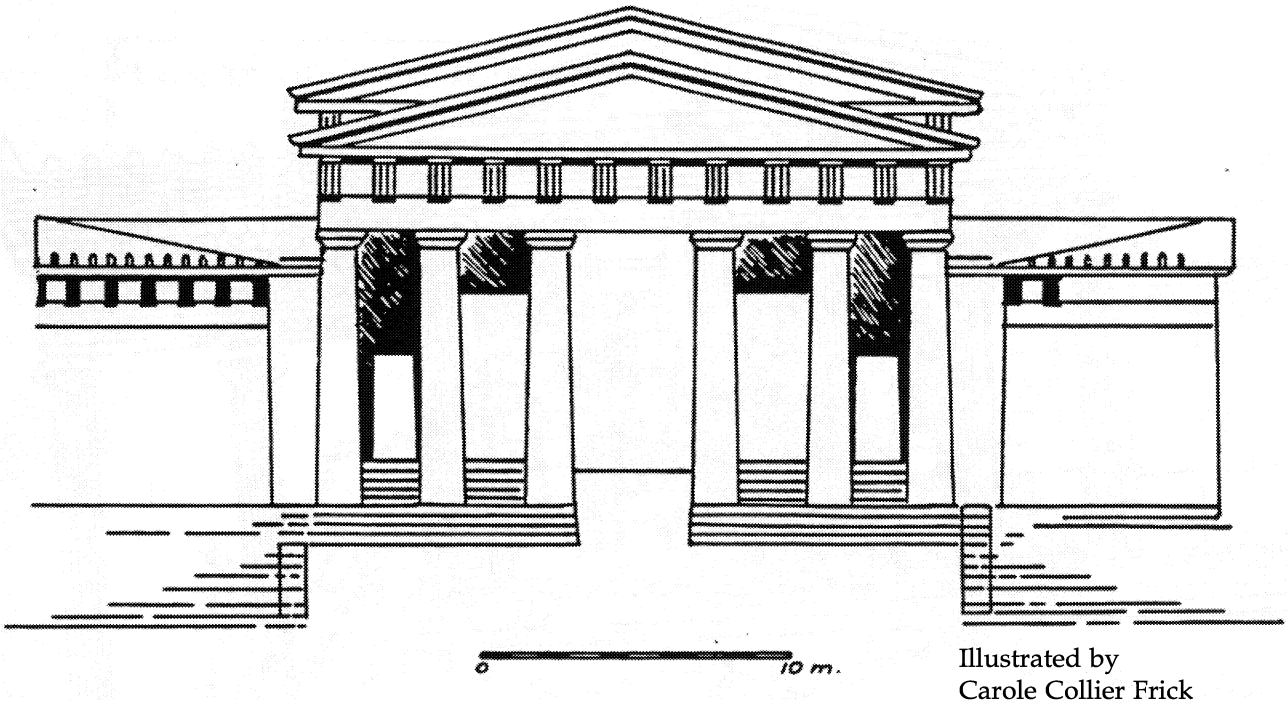


Figure Four: The Parthenon

still see today, 2,500 years later, where the stone masons who were doing the fine detailed carvings on the columns had to put their chisels down and stop work (*Figure Five*).

Figure Five: The Propylaea



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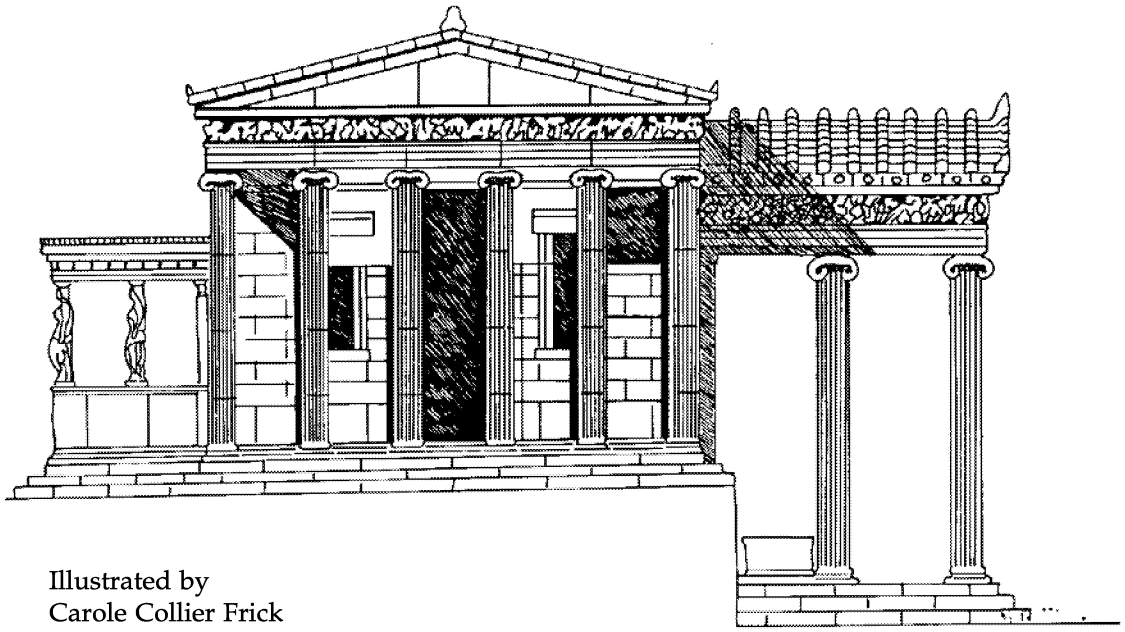
The **Erechtheum** was the last major temple to be built on the Acropolis (*Figure Six*). It was begun in 421 B.C. and finished in 405 B.C. It was built in honor of Erechtheus, the mythical king who had founded ancient Athens. He had judged a contest between Athena and **Poseidon** (god of the sea) to see who would be head deity of the city. Poseidon launched a thunderbolt, leaving a hole in the rock on top of the Acropolis. Athena offered the olive tree, which she made grow out of the hole. Erechtheus chose

Figure Six: The Erechtheum



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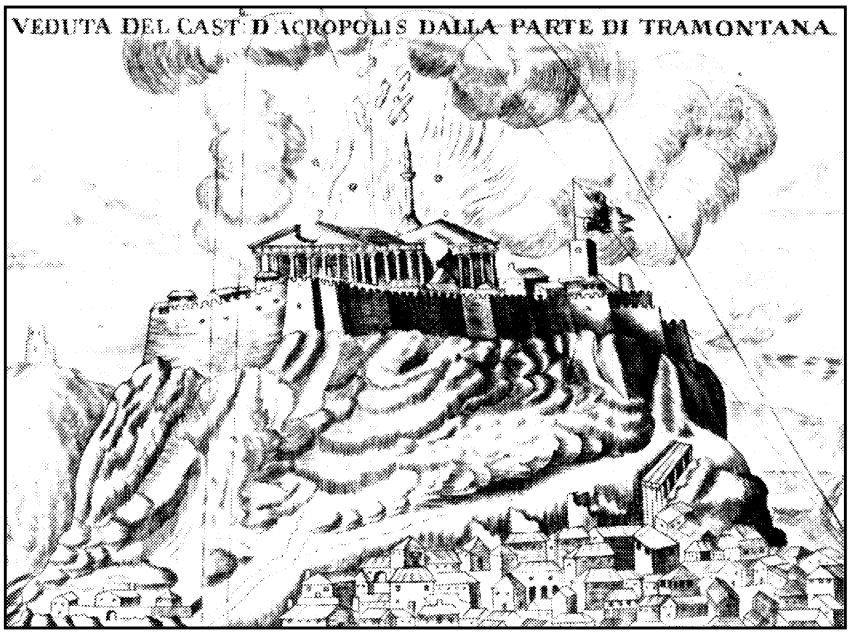
her. Her gift was truly valuable. Much of Athens' wealth came from olive cultivation and the export of oil. This building contained the gifts that Poseidon and Athena had given the city. In a courtyard of the temple was the gnarled olive tree, the first of all time. Legend says that the tree, destroyed by the Persians, sprang to life again after they left.

The Acropolis dominated Athens in every sense: it loomed high over the **Agora**, the political and commercial center of the city. Citizens went up alone or in procession to pray and offer sacrifice in the temples. The giant statue of Athena in front of the Parthenon could be seen miles out to sea. Plays were performed in the theaters just below. The assembly met on a hill (the Pnyx) a stone's throw away.

If you go to Athens today, high above the city you will still see the buildings of the Acropolis. However, these buildings which inspire us today, have suffered centuries of pillage and neglect. It is extraordinary that they still stand out in such grandeur. In the sixth century A.D. Christianity took over in Greece. The Parthenon was at that time

transformed from a temple into a church. After the conquest by the Ottoman Turks ca. 1460 A.D., it became a mosque. Minarets were added at this time. Later it was used as a storage place for gun powder by the Turks. During the siege of the Turkish garrison by the Venetians in 1687 a shell blew the entire structure up (*Figure Seven*). Ruins that we see today are largely due to that as well as earthquakes. Other buildings were allowed to fall into ruin and some were used as stone quarries. (Lord Elgin in 1801 saved

Figure Seven: Gun Powder Explosion in the Parthenon



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the Parthenon sculptures from being broken up and used for building materials). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries archaeologists had to reconstruct these buildings like a jigsaw puzzle. And even here, they used iron clamps and braces which are rusting and swelling and today causing further damage.

What two millennia of earthquakes, war, abuse and plunder have not accomplished may yet be achieved by Athenian smog. The marble of the Acropolis's buildings today is rapidly crumbling under the assault of atmospheric pollution and the Greek government is working on ways to preserve the Acropolis, a site which to this day inspires awe at the splendor of Periclean Athens.

Plutarch's Life of Pericles

(Primary Source)

XII. But that which brought most delightful adornment to Athens, and the greatest amazement to the rest of mankind; that which alone now testifies for Hellas that her ancient power and splendour, of which so much is told, was no idle fiction,—I mean his construction of sacred edifices,—this, more than all the public measures of Pericles, his enemies maligned and slandered. They cried out in the assemblies: "The people has lost its fair fame and is in ill repute because it has removed the public moneys of the Hellenes from Delos into its own keeping, and that seemliest of all excuses which it had urge against its accusers, to wit, that out of fear of the Barbarians it took the public funds from that sacred isle and was now guarding them in a stronghold, of this Pericles has robbed it. And surely Hellas is insulted with a dire insult and manifestly subjected to tyranny when she sees that, with her own enforced contributions for the war, we are gilding and adorning our city, which, for all the world like a wanton woman, adds to her wardrobe precious stones and costly statues and temples worth their millions."

For his part, Pericles would instruct the people that it owed no account of their moneys to the allies provided it carried on the war for them and kept off the Barbarians; "not a horse do they furnish," said he, "not a ship, not a hoplite, but money simply; and this belongs, not to those who give it, but those who take it, if only they furnish that which they take it in pay. And it is but meet that the city, when once she is sufficiently equipped with all that is necessary for prosecuting the war, should apply her abundance to such works as, by their completion, will bring her everlasting glory, and while in process of completion will bring that abundance into actual service, in that all sorts of activity and diversified demand arise, which rouse every art and stir every hand, and bring, as it were, the whole city under pay, so that she not only adorns, but supports herself as well from her own resources."

And it was true that his military expeditions supplied those who were full of vigour of manhood with abundant resources from the common funds, and in his desire that the unwarlike throng of common labourers should neither have no share at all in the public receipts, nor yet get fees for laziness and idleness, he boldly suggested to the people projects for great constructions, and designs for work which would call many arts into play and involve long periods of time, in order that the stay-at-homes, no whit less than the sailors and the sentinels and soldiers, might have a pretext

for getting a beneficial share of the public wealth. The materials to be used were stone, bronze, ivory, gold, ebony, and cypress-wood; the arts which should elaborate and work up these materials were those of carpenter, moulder, bronze-smith, stone-cutter, dyer, worker in gold and ivory, painter , embroiderer, embosser, to say nothing of the forwarders and furnishers of the material, such factors, sailors, and pilots by sea, and, by land, wagon-makers, trainers of yoked beasts, and drivers. There were also rope-makers, weavers, leather-workers, road-builders, and miners. And since each particular art, like a general with the army under his separate command, kept its own throng of unskilled and untrained labourers in compact array, to be as instrument unto player and as body unto soul in subordinate service, it came to pass that for every age, almost, and every capacity the city's great abundance was distributed and scattered abroad by such demands.

XIII. So then the works arose, no less towering in their grandeur than inimitable in the grace of their outlines, since the workmen eagerly strove to surpass themselves in the beauty of their handicraft. And yet the most wonderful thing about them was the speed with which they rose. Each one of them, men thought, would require many successive generations to complete, but all of them were fully completed in the heyday of a single administration. And yet they say that once on a time when Agatharchus the painter was boasting loudly of the speed and ease with which he made his figures, Zeuxis heard him, and said, "Mine take, and last a long time." And it is true that deftness and speed in working do not impart to the work an abiding weight of influence nor an exactness of beauty; whereas the time which is put out to loan in laboriously creating, pays a large and generous interest in the preservation of the creation. For this reason are the works of Pericles all the more to be wondered at; they were created in a short time for all time. Each one of them, in its beauty, was even then and at once antique; but in the freshness of its vigour it is, even to the present day, recent and newly wrought. Such is the bloom of perpetual newness, as it were; upon these works of his, which makes them ever untouched by time, as though the faltering breath of an ageless spirit had been infused into them.

His general manager and general overseer was Pheidias, although the several works had great architects and artists besides. Of the Parthenon, for instance, with its cella of a hundred feet in length, Callicrates and Ictinus were the architects; it was Coroebus who began to build the sanctuary of the mysteries at Eleusis, and he planted the columns on the floor and yoked their capitals together with architraves; but on his death

Metagenes, of the deme Xypete, carried up the frieze and the upper tier of columns; while Xenocles, of the deme Cholargus, set on high the lantern over the shrine. For the long wall, concerning which Socrates says he himself heard Pericles introduce a measure, Callicrates was the contractor. Craninus pokes fun at this work for its slow progress, and in these words:

"Since so long now

In word has Pericles pushed the thing; in fact he does not budge it."

The Odeum, which was arranged internally with many tiers of seats and many pillars, and which had a roof made with a circular slope from a single peak, they say was an exact reproduction of the Great King's pavilion, and this too was built under the superintendence of Pericles. Wherefore Cratinus, in his "Thracian Women," rails at him again:—

"The squill-head Zeus! lo! here comes, The Odeum like a cap upon his cranium, Now that for good and all the ostracism is o'er."

Then first did Pericles, so fond of honour was he, get a decree passed that a musical contest be held as part of the Panathenaic festival. He himself was elected manager, and prescribed how the contestants must blow the flute, or sing, or pluck the zither. These musical contest were witnessed, both then and thereafter, in the Odeum.

The Propylaea of the acropolis was brought to completion in the space of five years, Mnesicles being its architect. A wonderful thing happened in the course of the building, which indicated that the goddess was not holding herself aloof, but was a helper both in the inception and in the completion of the work. One of its artificers, the most active and zealous of them all, lost his footing and fell from a great height, and lay in a sorry plight, despaired of by the physicians. Pericles was much cast down at this, but the goddess appeared to him in a dream and prescribed a course of treatment for him to use, so that he speedily and easily healed the man. It was in commemoration of this that he set up the bronze statue of Athena Hygieia on the acropolis near the altar of that goddess, which was there before, as they say.

But it was Pheidias who produced the great golden image of the goddess, and he is duly inscribed on the tablet as the workman who made it. Everything, almost, was under his charge, and all the artists and artisans, as I have said, were under his superintendence, owing to his friendship

with Pericles. This brought envy upon the one, and contumely on the other, to the effect that Pheidias made assignations for Pericles with free-born women who would come ostensibly to see the works of art. The comic poets took up this story and bespattered Pericles with charges of abounding wantonness, connecting their slanders with the wife of Menippus, a man who was his friend, and a colleague in the generalship, and with the bird-culture of Pyrilampes, who, since he was the comrade of Pericles, was accused of using his peacocks to bribe the women with whom Pericles consorted.

And why should any one be astonished that men of wanton life lose no occasion for offering up sacrifices, as it were, of contumelious abuse of their superiors, to the evil deity of popular envy, when even Stesimbrotus of Thasos has ventured to make public charge against Pericles of a dreadful and fabulous impiety with his son's wife? To such degree, it seems, is truth hedged about with difficulty and hard to capture by research, since those who come after the events in question find that lapse of time is an obstacle to their proper perception of them; while the research of their contemporaries into men's deeds and lives, partly through envious hatred and partly through the fawning flattery, defiles and distorts the truth.

Plutarch. *Plutarch's Cimon and Pericles, with the Funeral Oration of Pericles.* Bernadotte Perrin, trans. (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1910).

Lesson Seven
Pericles' Funeral Oration

A. Objectives

- To acquaint students with an important classical Greek document, "Pericles' Funeral Oration" from Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War.*
- To identify the basic elements of Athenian democracy as described by Pericles.
- To compare and contrast the Athenian and Spartan systems of government with reference to degree of participation, citizenship rights and responsibilities.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Have students read **Document A** either as a homework assignment or aloud in class.
2. Use the suggested questions to direct student attention to the important concepts in the reading.

C. Discussion Questions

1. Why does Pericles begin by referring to the glorious deeds of Athenian soldiers in earlier wars?
2. What is Pericles' definition of democracy?
3. In what ways does the way of life in Athens differ from that of other Greek cities?
4. What are the responsibilities of Athenian citizenship?
5. Can you identify passages in which Pericles is directly or indirectly making verbal attacks on Sparta?
6. Do we in the United States define democracy in the same way that Pericles did?
7. Why does Pericles seem to need to defend the Athenian system?

8. Is a funeral oration a reliable source for information about a culture?

9. This is not the entire speech of Pericles. He continued with the idea that Athenians fight better than the Spartans. Speculate as to why the Athenians are willing to fight to the death.

E. Vocabulary

citizen
constitution
democracy
deportations
direct democracy
extravagance
institution
oration
representative (indirect) democracy
sepulchre

F. Extended Activities

1. Direct students to write a similar speech describing the American system.

2. Have students prepare a Spartan funeral oration for the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War.

3. Assign students individually or in small groups to write a letter to Pericles that either supports or refutes his definitions of Athenian democracy and his description of Athens as a democratic state. Students must back up their position with examples.

F. Evaluating the Lesson

Students may be evaluated informally during the questioning activity. This lesson also lends itself very well to essay questions: Example: Was Athens a democratic state? Compare the governments of Athens and Sparta in terms of the participation of the citizens. (Students could be directed to use Xenophon's *Polity of the Spartans, Plutarch Lives, "Lycurgus," or* "The Melian Dialogue" from Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* for comparison.

Funeral Oration of Pericles
from *History of the Peloponnesian War*
by Thucydides

Background Information

Many of the principles and practices of Western democracy were born in the city-states of ancient Greece. To these tiny principalities we can trace the origins of many of the most cherished principles in our own political system. Athens was the heart of this early democratic tradition. Its people, its institutions, and its spokesmen blazed a trail that the rest of Western mankind has followed down to present day.

The reading for today is from the writings of the Greek historian, Thucydides, who wrote during the last half of the 5th century B.C. He participated as a general in the long struggle between Athens and Sparta. He was a staunch advocate of the Athenian system, although he was in exile when he wrote the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The reading reveals Athens in a time of both greatness and crisis. Pericles, the famous Athenian statesman, while praising the men who died defending their native city, describes the beliefs, institutions, and the customs for which they fought. His speech is one of the most famous defenses of the democratic way of life in the history of man.

It was customary among the Greek city-states to hold a mass funeral service at the end of the first year of a war to honor those men of the city who had died defending their polis. Everyone would attend with the families of the slain occupying a place of honor. In 430 B.C., Pericles, the strategos and great statesman of Athens, was requested by the Assembly to deliver the oration at the mass funeral marking the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War. At first Pericles declined, stating that he did not consider himself worthy to deliver a speech on this occasion. However, he did finally accept and his speech was eventually set down by Thucydides in his famous account of the long war between Athens and Sparta.

Funeral Oration of Pericles
from *History of the Peloponnesian War*
by Thucydides
(Primary Source)

[Ancient Greece 400s B.C.]

I will speak first of our ancestors, for it is right and becoming that now, when we are lamenting the dead, a tribute should be paid to their memory. There has never been a time when they did not inhabit this land, which by their valor they have handed down from generation to generation, and we have received from them a free state. But if they were worthy of praise, still more were our fathers, who added to their inheritance, and after many a struggle transmitted to us their sons this great empire. And we ourselves assembled here today, who are still most of us still in the vigor of life, have chiefly done the work of improvement, and have richly endowed our city with all things, so that she is sufficient for herself both in peace and war. Of the military exploits by which our various possessions were acquired, or of the energy with which our fathers drove back the tide of war, Hellenic or Barbarian, I will not speak; for the tale would be long and is familiar to you . But before I praise the dead, I should like to point out by what principals we rose to power, and under what institution and through what manner of life our empire has become great. For I conceive that such thoughts are not unsuited for the occasion, and that this numerous assembly of citizens and strangers may profitably listen to them.

Our form of government does not enter into rivalry with the institutions of others. We do not copy our neighbors but are an example to them. It is true that we are called a democracy, for the administration is in the hands of many and not of the few. But while the law secures equal justice for all alike in their private disputes, the claim of excellence is also recognized; and when a citizen is in any way distinguished, he is preferred to the public service, not as a matter of privilege, but as the reward of merit. Neither is poverty a bar, but a man may benefit his country whatever be the obscurity of his condition. There is no exclusiveness in our public life, and in our private intercourse we are not suspicious of one another, nor angry with our neighbor if he does what he likes; we do not put on sour looks at him which, though harmless, are not pleasant. While we are thus unconstrained in our private intercourse, a spirit of reverence pervades

our public acts; we are prevented from doing wrong by respect for authority and for the laws, having an especial regard to those which are ordained for the protection of the injured as well as those unwritten laws which bring upon the transgressor of them a reprobation of the general sentiment.

And we have not forgotten to provide for our weary spirits many relaxations from toil; we have regular games and sacrifices throughout the year; at home the style of our life is redefined; and the delight which we daily feel in all these things helps to banish melancholy. Because of the greatness of our city the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us; so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as our own.

Then, again, our military training is in many respects superior to that of our adversaries. Our city is thrown open to the world, and we never expel a foreigner or prevent him from seeing or learning anything of which the secret if revealed to an enemy might profit him. We rely not upon management or trickery, but upon our own hearts and hands. And in the matter of education, whereas they from early youth are always undergoing laborious exercises which are to make them brave, we live at ease, and yet are equally ready to face the perils which they face. And here is the proof. The Lacedaemonians [Spartans] come into Attica not by themselves, but with their whole confederacy following; we go alone into a neighbor's country ; and although our opponents are fighting for their homes and we on a foreign soil, we have seldom any difficulty in over coming them. Our enemies have never yet felt our united strength; the care of a navy divides our attention, and on land we are obliged to send our own citizens everywhere. But they, if they meet and defeat a part of our army, are as proud as if they have routed us all, all when defeated they pretend to have been vanquished by us all.

If then we prefer to meet danger with a light heart but without laborious training, and with a courage which is gained by habit and not enforced by law, are we not greatly the gainers? Since we do not anticipate the pain, although, when the hour comes, we can be as brave as those who never allow themselves to rest; and thus too our city is equally admirable in peace and in war. For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without a loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a great use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace: the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the state because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged

in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who take no interest in public affairs, not as harmless, but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators, we are sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance but hesitant upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger. In doing good, again, we are unlike others; we make our friends by conferring, not by receiving favors. Now, he who confers a favor is the firmer the friend, because he would fain by kindness keep alive the memory of an obligation; but the recipient is colder in his feelings, because he knows that in requiting another's generosity he will not be winning gratitude, but only paying a debt. We alone do good to our neighbors not upon calculation of interest, but in the confidence of freedom and in frank and fearless spirit.

To sum up: I say that Athens is the school of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace. This is no passing and idle word, but truth and fact; and the assertion is verified by the position to which these qualities have raised the state. For in the hour of trial Athens alone among her contemporaries is superior to the report of her. No enemy who comes against her is indignant at the reverses which he sustains at the hands of such a city; no subject complains that his masters are unworthy of him. And we shall assuredly not be without witnesses; there are mighty monuments of our power which will make us the wonder of this and of succeeding ages; we shall not need the praises of Homer or of any other panegyrist whose poetry may please for the moment, although his representation of the facts will not bear the light of day. For we have compelled every land and every sea to open a path for our valor, and have everywhere planted eternal memorials of our friendship and of our enmity. Such is the city for whose sake these men nobly fought and died; they could not bear the thought that she might be taken from them; and every one of us who survives should gladly toil on her behalf. . . .

Lesson Eight
The Melian Dialogue of Thucydides

A. Objectives

- To identify the various arguments presented by the Athenians and Melians in their dialogue.
- To evaluate the logical basis of each argument.
- To compare the ideals stated in the Funeral Oration of Pericles with the actions of the Athenians at Melos.
- To synthesize the information and to prepare present these arguments in written report.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Divide the class into four equal groups: Athenians, Melians, Spartans, and Athenian allies. Have a student or group of students read the **Document A**, the Background Information section, then alternate reading the dialogue portion of the document as the rest of the class takes notes on the arguments presented by both sides. NOTE: do not have the students read the outcome section, nor tell them what it was.

2. When the reading of the dialogue is complete, have the four groups meet and evaluate the various arguments presented by the two sides. In this first evaluation the students should take the role of neutral observers. There are a number of issues that the students should raise as a result of these discussions. Among the more basic ones are: Who had the strongest arguments? Why? Who is "right"? What should the Melians do?

3. When each group has reached some form of consensus, have them reevaluate their position in terms of the group which they represent. What arguments would most sway their group? Would the effect on the Athenian allies be as proposed? Why or why not should Sparta send aid to the Melos? How would the war aims of Athens be helped or hurt by either crushing Melos or showing mercy? The possibilities are numerous. There are no correct answers, rather the key is to see how well the students can form a hypothesis and defend it.

4. When each group is finished with their evaluations, they are to report back to the class on their conclusions. Special consideration should be given to whether or not they changed their position from the first evaluation and after the second one and the reasons for the changes.

5. At this point read the outcome section to the class. In the discussion that follows, ask the students if they would have chosen different positions if they had known how the struggle would end. This would be the point to introduce questions of much greater significance. A few of these are:

    a. Did the outcome of the battle change their view of the Athenians or Melians?

    b. If the Melians were "right," why did they lose?

    c. Should people compromise their beliefs if faced with stronger power?

    e. Does "might make right"?

    e. What is justice?

6. As a culminating activity (either here or following one or more of the related activities) have the students write a paragraph (elementary grades) or a page or more (middle and high school) on one or more of the following topics:

    a. What is the nature of justice?

    b. What constitutes moral behavior?

    c. To what extent should one resist injustice; to themselves; to others?

    d. Why is it important to stand up for one's beliefs?

    Or choose any similar topic which requires students to synthesize the information they have acquired.

C. Extended Activities

1. A complementary teaching strategy would be to have some, or all students read the *Funeral Oration of Pericles* (Thucydides, Book 2: 34-46). They should attempt to compare the ideals of the Athenian democracy as stated there with the realities as practiced on the Melians. In section IX are some key phrases that students may wish to pay special attention to. These are only a few ideas. The key element is to see if students can evaluate why the Athenians came so far from the noble sentiments of 431 to the massacre of 416.

2. Have some or all of the students read Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, either a synopsis or the entire play. Inform them that this drama was written as a protest against the actions at Melos. In addition to the obvious moral questions which it explores, the author raises the issue of how should an individual react to actions of his government with which he violently disagrees. Some topics for student consideration might include:

    a. To what degree should a citizen support his country's actions even when he/she does not approve of them?

    b. In what ways are the conditions of the Trojan Women similar to those of the Melians? How are they different?

    c. What are some modern parallels to this action? (e.g. Ledice, the bombings of Rotterdam and Dresden, the Holocaust, to mention only a few).

    d. How does one account for this recurring theme in history?

3. Have the students read Sophocles' *Antigone* (see **Lesson Five**). Here the theme is the individual against her own government. The students should attempt to draw comparisons between the dilemma of Antigone and that faced by the Melians.

The Melian Dialogue
Background Information

In 431 B.C. Athens and Sparta, the two major powers of ancient Greece, began a final struggle for leadership of the Greek city states. However, as Athens was a naval power and Sparta relied on the strength of its army, neither side was able to score a decisive victory. After a short period of "Peace" from 422–420 BC, the war resumed again. In Athens the protracted nature of the war was having its effect on its people and their leaders. Endless skirmishes and mounting casualty lists were taking their toll. Also the islands under its control were becoming rebellious and many began looking for a way to throw off the imperial yoke. As their naval empire grew restive, the Athenians become increasingly intolerant of dissent. In the sixteenth year of the war, Athens decided to crush one of the last vestiges of insular freedom, the small island of Melos. While a colony of Sparta, the Melians had done everything in their power to stay neutral; they wanted no part of this war.

In 416 a naval expedition was sent to Melos to gain the submission of the people. Thucydides, an exiled Athenian general, recorded the outcome of that struggle at the end of the 5th book of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The Melian Dialogue is his reconstruction (perhaps imaginary) of the negotiations that took place between the Athenian leaders and the elders of Melos. This debate deals not only with the fate of this island and its people, but with problems of a universal importance. Central to the dialogue is the concept of justice. Melos, an insignificant military power, would seem to have "right" on its side. However Athens, with its superior strength, certainly had the "might ."

As you study this unit, notice how Thucydides develops the arguments on both sides.

"The Melian Dialogue"
Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*
Chapter XVII
(Primary Source)

B.C. 416: Athenian expedition to Melos. Discussion of envoys. Melians refuse to submit. Siege of Melos. Melians massacred and made slaves.

The next summer Alcibiades sailed with twenty ships to Argos and seized the suspected persons still left of the Lacedæmonian faction to the number of three hundred, whom the Athenians forthwith lodged in the neighboring islands of their empire. The Athenians also made an expedition against the isle of Melos with thirty ships of their own, six Chian, and two Lesbian vessels, sixteen hundred heavy infantry, three hundred archers, and twenty mounted archers from Athens, and about fifteen hundred heavy infantry from the allies and the islanders. The Melians are a colony of Lacedæmon that would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders, and at first remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using violence and plundering their territory, assumed an attitude of open hostility. Cleomedes, son of Lycomedes, and Tisaias, son of Tisimachus, the generals, encamping in their territory with the above armament, before doing any harm to their land, sent envoys to negotiate. These the Melians did not bring before the people, but bade them state the object of their mission to the magistrates and the few; upon which the Athenian envoys spoke as follows:

Athenians.—'Since the negotiations are not to go on before the people, in order that we may not be able to speak straight on without interruption, and deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive arguments which would pass without refutation (for we know that this is the meaning of our being brought before the few), what if you who sit there were to pursue a method more cautious still! Make no set speech yourselves, but take us up at whatever you do not like, and settle that before going any farther. And first tell us if this proposition of ours suits you.'

The Melian commissioners answered:

Melians.—'To the fairness of quietly instructing each other as you propose there is nothing to object; but your military preparations are too far advanced to agree with what you say, as we see you are come to be judges in your own cause, and that all we can reasonably expect from this

negotiation is war, if we prove to have right on our side and refuse to submit, and in the contrary case, slavery.'

Athenians.—'If you have met to reason about presentiments of the future, or for anything else that to consult for the safety of your state upon the facts that you see before you, we will give over; otherwise we will go on.'

Melians.—'It is natural and excusable for men in our position to turn more ways than one both in thought and in utterance. However, the question in this conference is, as you say, the safety of our country; and the discussion, if you please, can proceed in the way which you propose.'

Athenians.—'For ourselves, we shall not trouble you with specious pretenses—either of how we have a right to our empire because we overthrew the Mede, or are now attacking you because of wrong that you have done us—and make a long speech which would not be believed; and in return we hope that you, instead of thinking to influence us by saying that you did not join the Lacedæmonians, although their colonists, or that you have done us no wrong, will aim at what is feasible, holding in view the real sentiments of us both: since you know as well as we do that right, as the world goes, is only a question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.'

Melians.—'As we think, at any rate, it is expedient—we speak as we are obliged, since you enjoin us to let right alone and talk only of interest—that you should not destroy what is our common protection, the privilege of being allowed in danger to invoke what is fair and right, and even to profit by arguments not strictly valid if they can be got to pass current. And you are as much interested in this as any, as your fall would be a signal for the heaviest vengeance and an example for the world to meditate upon.'

Athenians—'The end of our empire, if end it should, does not frighten us: a rival empire like Lacedæmon, even if Lacedæmon was our real antagonist, is not so terrible to the vanquished as subjects who by themselves attack and overpower their rulers. This, however, is a risk that we are content to take. We will now proceed to show you that we are come here in the interest of our empire, and that we shall say what we are now going to say, for the preservation of your country; as we would fain exercise that empire over you without trouble, and see you preserved for the good of us both.'

Melians.—'And how, pray, could it turn out as good for us to serve as for your rule?'

Athenians.—'Because you would have the advantage of submitting before suffering the worst, and we should gain by not destroying you.'

Melians.— 'So that you would not consent to our being neutral, friends instead of enemies, but allies of neither side.'

Athenians.—'No; for your hostility cannot so much hurt us as your friendship will be an argument to our subjects of our weakness and your enmity of our power.'

Melians.—'Is that your subjects' idea of equity, to put those who have nothing to do with you in the same category with peoples that are most of them your own colonists, and some considered rebels?'

Athenians.—'As far as right goes they think one has as much of it as the other, and that if any maintain their independence it is because they are strong, and that if we do not molest them it is because we are afraid: so that besides extending our empire we should gain in security by your subjection; the fact that you are islanders and weaker than others rendering it all the more important that you should not succeed in baffling the masters of the sea.'

Melians.—'But do you consider that there is no security in the policy which we indicate? For here again if you debar us from talking about justice and invite us to obey your interest, we also must explain ours, and try to persuade you, if the two happen to coincide. How can you avoid making enemies of all existing neutrals who shall look at our case and conclude from it that one day or another you will attack them? And what is this but to make greater the enemies that you have already, and to force others to become so who would otherwise have never thought of it?'

Athenians.—'Why, the fact is that continentals generally give us but little alarm; the liberty which they enjoy will long prevent their taking precautions against us; it is rather islanders like yourselves, outside our empire, and subjects smarting under the yoke, who would be the most likely to take a rash step and lead themselves and us into obvious danger.'

Melians.—'Well then, if you risk so much to retain your empire, and your subjects to get rid of it, it were surely great baseness and cowardice in us who are still free not to try everything that can be tried, before submitting to your yoke.'

Athenians.—'Not if you are well advised, the contest not being an equal one, with honour as the prize and shame as the penalty, but a question of self-preservation and not of resisting those who are far stronger than you are.'

Melians.—'But we know that the fortune of war is sometimes more impartial than the disproportion of numbers might lead one to suppose; to submit is to give ourselves over to despair, while action still preserves for us a hope that we may stand erect.'

Athenians.—'Hope, danger's comforter, may be indulged in by those who have abundant resources, if not without loss at all events without ruin; but its nature is to be extravagant, and those who go so far as to put their all upon the venture see it in its true colours only when they are ruined; but so long as the discovery would enable them to guard against it , it is never found wanting. Let not this be the case with you, who are weak and hanging on a single turn of the scale; nor be like the vulgar, who, abandoning such security as human means may still afford, when visible hopes fail them in extremity, turn to invisible, to prophecies and oracles, and other such inventions that delude men with hopes to their destruction.'

Melians.—'You may be sure that we are as well aware as you of the difficulty of contending against your power and fortune, unless the terms be equal. But we trust that the gods may grant us fortune as good as yours, since we are just men fighting against unjust, and that what we want in power will be made up by the alliance of the Lacedæmonians, who are bound, if only for very shame, to come to the aid of their kindred. Our confidence, therefore, after all is not so utterly irrational.'

Athenians.—'When you speak of the favour of the gods , we may as fairly hope for that as yourselves; neither our pretensions nor our conduct being in any way contrary to what men believe of the gods, or practise among themselves. Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law, or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us, and shall leave it to exist for ever after us; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do. Thus, as far as the gods are concerned, we have no fear and no reason to fear that we shall be at a disadvantage. But when we come to your motion about the Lacedæmonians, which leads you to believe that shame will make them help you, here we bless your simplicity but do not envy your folly. The Lacedæmonians, when their own interests or their country's laws are in question, are the worthiest men alive; of their conduct towards others much might be said, but no clearer idea of it could be given than by shortly saying that of all the men we know they are the most conspicuous in considering what is agreeably honourable, and what is expedient just. Such a way of thinking does not promise much for the safety which you now unreasonably count upon.'

Melians.—'But it is for this very reason that we now trust to their respect for expediency to prevent them from betraying the Melians, their colonists, and thereby losing the confidence of their friends in Hellas and helping their enemies.'

Athenians.—'Then you do not adopt the view that expediency goes with security, while justice and honour cannot be followed without danger; and danger the Lacedæmonians generally court as little as possible.'

Melians.—'But we believe that they would be more likely to face even danger for our sake , and with more confidence than for others, as our nearness to Peloponnese makes it easier for them to act, and our common blood insures our fidelity.'

Athenians.—'Yes, but what an intending ally trusts to, is not the goodwill of those who ask his aid, but a decided superiority of power for action; and the Lacedæmonians look to this even more than others. At least, such is their distrust of their home resources that it is only with numerous allies that they attack a neighbour; now is it likely that while we are masters of the sea they will cross over to an island?

Melians.—'But they would have others to send. The Cretan sea is a wide one, and it is more difficult for those who command it to intercept others, than it is for those who wish to elude them to do so safely. And should the Lacedæmonians miscarry in this , they would fall upon your land, and upon those left of your allies whom Brasidas did not reach; and instead of places which are not yours, you will have to fight for your own country and your own confederacy.'

Athenians.—'Some diversion of the kind you speak of you may one day experience, only to learn, as others have done, that the Athenians never once yet withdrew from a siege for fear of any. But we are struck by the fact, that after saying you would consult for the safety of your country, in all this discussion you have mentioned nothing which men might trust in and think to be saved by. Your strongest arguments depend upon hope and the future, and your actual resources are too scanty, as compared with those arrayed against you, for you to come out victorious. You will therefore show great blindness of judgement, unless, after allowing us to retire, you can find some counsel more prudent than this. You will surely not be caught by that idea of disgrace, which in dangers that are disgraceful, and at the same time too plain to be mistaken, proves so fatal to mankind; since in too many cases the very men that have their eyes perfectly open to what they are rushing into, let the thing called disgrace, by the mere influence of a seductive name, lead them on to a point at

which they become so enslaved by the phrase as in fact to fall willfully into hopeless disaster, and incur disgrace more disgraceful as the companion of error, than when it comes as the result of misfortune. This, if you are well advised, you will guard against; and you will not think it dishonourable to submit to the greatest city in Hellas, when it makes you the moderate offer of becoming its tributary ally, without ceasing to enjoy the country that belongs to you; nor when you have the choice given you between war and security, will you be so blind as to choose the worse. And it is certain that those who do not yield to their equals, who keep terms with their superiors, and are more moderate towards their inferiors, on the whole succeed best. Think over the matter, therefore, after our withdrawal, and reflect once and again that it is for your country that you are consulting, that you have not more than one, and that upon this deliberation depends its prosperity or ruin.'

The Athenians now withdrew from the conference; and the Melians, left to themselves, came to a decision corresponding with what they had maintained in the discussion, and answered, 'Our resolution, Athenians, is the same as it was at first. We will not in a moment deprive of freedom a city that has been inhabited these seven hundred years; but we put our trust in the fortune by which the gods have preserved it until now, and in the help of men, that is, of the Lacedæmonians; and so we will try and save ourselves. Meanwhile we invite you to allow us to be friends to you and foes to neither party, and to retire from our country after making such a treaty as shall seem fit to us both.'

Such was the answer of the Melians. The Athenians now departing from the conference said, 'Well, you alone, as it seems to us, judging from these resolutions, regard what is future as more certain than what is before your eyes, and what is out of sight in your eagerness, as already coming to pass; and as you have staked most on, and trusted most in, the Lacedæmonians, your fortune, and your hopes, so will you be most completely deceived.'

The Athenian envoys now returned to the army; and the Melians showing no signs of yielding, the generals at once betook themselves to hostilities, and drew a line of circumvallation round the Melians, dividing the work among the different states. Subsequently the Athenians returned with most of their army, leaving behind them a certain number of their own citizens and of the allies to keep guard by land and sea. The force thus left stayed on and besieged the place.

About the same time the Argives invaded the territory of Philius and lost eighty men cut off in an ambush by the Philiasians and Argive exiles.

Meanwhile the Athenians at Pylos took so much plunder from the Lacedæmonians that the latter, although they still refrained from breaking off the treaty and going to war with Athens, yet proclaimed that any of their people that chose might plunder the Athenians. The Corinthians also commenced hostilities with the Athenians for private quarrels of their own; but the rest of the Peloponnesians stayed quiet. Meanwhile the Melians attacked by night and took the part of the Athenian lines over against the market, and killed some of the men, and brought in corn and all else that they could find useful to them, and so returned and kept quiet, while the Athenians took measures to keep better guard in the future.

Summer was now over. The next winter the Lacedæmonians intended to invade the Argive territory, but arriving at the frontier found the sacrifices for crossing unfavourable, and went back again. This intention of theirs gave the Argives suspicions of certain of their fellow-citizens, some of whom they arrested; others, however, escaped them. About the same time the Melians again took another part of the Athenian lines which were but feebly garrisoned. Reinforcements afterwards arriving from Athens in consequence, under the command of Philocrates, son of Demeas, the siege was now pressed vigorously; and some treachery taking place inside, the Melians surrendered at discretion to the Athenians, who put to death all grown men whom they took, and sold the women and children for slaves, and subsequently sent out five hundred colonists and inhabited the place themselves.

From Thucydides. "Sixteenth Year of the War—The Melian Conference—Fate of Melos" *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Chapter XVII, Book 5. Trans. Richard Crawley (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1874), pp. 396-404.

Lesson Nine
The Last Days of Socrates

A. Objectives

- To identify Socrates as one of the greatest philosophers of all times.
- To identify the writings of Plato as our main historical source on Socrates.
- To identify Plato's *Apology, Crito,* and *Phaedo* as sources on the trial and death of Socrates.
- To describe Socrates' method of cross-questioning people in order to gain an understanding of truth ("The Socratic method").
- To define Socrates' belief that knowledge is virtue and ignorance is vice.
- To relate Socrates' defense of his own death as told in *Crito* and *Phaedo*.
- To explain the political reasons and background for the Athenian conviction of Socrates.
- To identify the heroic choices that Socrates made in refusing to escape from prison and in refusing to plead guilty to the accusations.
- To draw analogies between the death of Socrates and the death of Antigone.

B. Lesson Activities (Two Days)

1. Hand out **Document A** ,"The Last Days of Socrates: Background Information." Also pass out the passages by Plato from the *Apology* (**Document B**), *Crito* (**Document C**), and *Phaedo* (**Document D**).
2. Read the Background Information first and discuss Socrates' life, trial and death.
3. Have students break up into committees or pairs and read and analyze Plato's works on the last days of Socrates. This could be reading for homework.

5. Divide the class in half and hold a debate over whether or not Socrates should have been convicted by the Athenians. Debate whether or not he should have fled from prison when the opportunity presented itself. Poll students for their opinions on these two issues.

6. Write an essay comparing Socrates to Antigone. What issues were they grappling with? Did they take a similar position? What heroic qualities did they share?

C. Discussion Questions

1. What was Socrates' background and upbringing?
2. What were Socrates' basic beliefs and teachings?
3. What was Socrates' method of cross-questioning? Why, where and when did he use it?
4. Why did Socrates refuse to take money for his teaching?
5. What was Socrates on trial for? What was he convicted of?
6. Did the state have a valid reason to condemn Socrates to death?
7. What was Socrates' defense?
8. Why didn't Socrates escape from prison when the chance presented itself?
9. Compare Socrates with Antigone in terms of their beliefs, their arguments with the state and their bravery.

D. Vocabulary

circa	*Crito*
Socrates	*Phaedo*
Socratic Method	Alcibiades
Plato	philosophy
virtue	Thirty Tyrants
vice	hemlock
knowledge	morality
Apology	ethical

E. Evaluating the Lssson

1. Informal observation of discussion.
2. Informal observation of debate.
3. Evaluation of essays comparing Socrates and Antigone.

The Last Days of Socrates
Background Information

Socrates (c. 470 B.C.– 399 B.C.) was one of the greatest **philosophers** of all times. He laid down the foundation for modern logic, and he was the first western philosopher to deal with the concept of the soul. Yet he never wrote a book nor did he establish a school of philosophy. We know him through the writings of this brilliant student and admirer, **Plato**.

Socrates was born **circa** 470 B.C., the son of a prosperous sculptor and stonemason. His mother was a midwife. He had the usual elementary education of his social class, consisting of literature, music and gymnastics. He was known to have fought bravely as a **hoplite** soldier in three battles of the Peloponnesian War. For a while, he followed in his father's footsteps to become a sculptor. He is supposed to have executed the group of clothed Graces which stood on the Acropolis for centuries.

Later in life, however, Socrates turned his labors towards his love of philosophy. He had a brilliant mind and he taught young and old alike, asking for no money in return. In fact, he claimed that he was ignorant and therefore had no right to ask for money. He was said to embrace poverty, and to walk about barefoot all seasons of the year.

Socrates would circulate around the marketplace and other public sites and engage willing citizens in dialogue. He was famous for saying that everyone knew nothing but that he knew he knew nothing. In other words, he was aware of his own ignorance. He hoped to teach people to question their deepest beliefs in order to achieve wisdom. His method of finding truth was to entice people into putting forth their beliefs and then to refute them by a series of questions. (This became known as the **"Socratic method"** of questioning.) With this method Socrates was asking men to question their own judgements and he is, along with the earlier biblical prophets, among the first thinkers to turn men's minds towards questions of **morality** and **ethical** conduct. While many sought Socrates' teachings and debate, others thought his penetrating questions were undermining traditional values.

Socrates believed that no person ever does wrong willingly but only out of **ignorance** of what is right. Thus, if a person spent their life searching the depths of their soul and achieving true knowledge of self, they would eventually become virtuous. This however, would not be an easy task. Bad behavior and vice came from human ignorance of what is right, not from choice.

In 404 B.C. the Peloponnesian War, in which Socrates had fought bravely for Athens, came to an end. Athens was defeated and the Spartans occupied the city, placing in power the **Thirty Tyrants**, who brutally persecuted the democratic party. However in 403 they were overthrown and Athens' democratic constitution was restored.

In this bitter climate of defeat, suspicion and revenge Socrates was accused by various democratic leaders of not believing in the gods of the state and of corrupting the morals of youth. These were in fact cover-ups for Socrates' friendships with **Alcibiades** and **Critias**. The first was a traitor who had brought defeat upon Athens during the wars with Sparta and the second was the leader of the despised Thirty Tyrants. Anyone who was considered an influence and a friend of these men was considered an enemy of the state.

The trial and death of Socrates make up one of the most dramatic and heroic stories in all of history. In Plato's ***Apology***, he describes Socrates' self-defense at his trial. He had only been condemned by a majority of 61 votes and he could probably have talked his way out of a death sentence by asking for exile. (The vote was 281 against and 220 in his favor.) However he refused to acquiesce in any punishment, evading the issue of whether or not he had committed the crimes of which he had been accused. He claimed that he had a higher calling as his justification and demanded that the state grant him a pension for the rest of his life and allow his perpetual dinner at the town hall which was a citizen's highest honor. His frivolous speech so angered the judges, that they condemned him to death now by an even greater majority of 80 votes.

In ***Crito*** Plato relates a conversation which Socrates supposedly had with Crito, a faithful follower who tried to persuade him to escape from prison. In fact, his friends planned his escape and the jailor left a door open but Socrates preferred obeying the law and to die for his cause. He explains all of this to Crito in Plato's eloquent work. He felt that he owed it to the state to obey its laws, even if he was unjustly accused.

Socrates' last days were spent in prison with his friends and faithful admirers.

In ***Phaedo***, Plato describes these last days and how Socrates, when the evening of this sentence came, calmly drank his cup of **hemlock**. He then walked around until his legs grew heavy. Then he lay down on his bed, reproaching his friends for weeping. 'It was mostly for this that I sent the women away, so that there might not be this kind of disturbance; for I have heard that one ought to die in peace.' Soon the attendant pinched his leg and asked if he felt anything; Socrates said no. Gradually the numbness spread upwards. When it reached his abdomen, he covered his face and said to Crito: 'I owe a cock to Asclepius; do not forget, but pay it.' These were his last words, and 'this was the end of our comrade, a man who was the best, wisest and most just of all we had known.' (Phaedo 117d-118). Socrates died, as he had lived, bravely, honestly and with dignity.

Unfortunately, along with Socrates died many of the great ideals of the Golden Age of Greece.

The Apology

by Plato

The Apology

By Plato
(Primary Source)

In 399 B.C., twenty-five years after Aristophanes' comedy, *The Clouds*, Socrates stood before the great popular court of Athens. He was accused of much the same charges that had been leveled at him by Aristophanes, specifically "that Socrates is a doer of evil, who corrupts the youth; and who does not believe in the gods of the state, but has other new divinities of his own." The charges were brought by three fellow Athenians, Meletus, Lycon, and Anytus. Although only one of the accusers , Anytus, was a man of any importance, and he only a minor political figure, the charges carried the death penalty if the court so decided. Indeed, this was the intent of the accusers.

The man, now seventy years old, who rose to speak in his own defense was not the pettifogging buffoon of *The Clouds*. Perhaps that man never really existed. By the same token, did the speaker at the trial ever exist? The trial is Socrates', but the account of it is Plato's. *The Apology*, from the *Dialogues of Plato*, is the "defense" of Socrates at his trial.

> HOW YOU, O Athenians, have been affected by my accusers, I cannot tell; but I know that they almost made me forget who I was—so persuasively did they speak; and yet they have hardly uttered a word of truth. But…first I have to reply to the older charges and to my first accusers, and then I will go on to the later ones. For of old I have had many accusers, who have accused me falsely to you during many years; and I am more afraid of them than of Anytus and his associates, who are dangerous, too, in their own way. But far more dangerous are the others, who began when you were children, and took possession of your minds with their falsehoods, telling of one Socrates, a wise man, who speculated about the heaven above, and searched into the earth beneath, and made the worse appear the better cause. The disseminators of this tale are the accusers whom I dread; for their hearers are apt to fancy that such enquirers do not believe in the existence of the gods. And they are many, and their charges against me are of ancient date, and they were made by them in the days when you were more impressible than you are now—in childhood, or it may have been in youth—and the cause when heard went by default, for there was none to answer. And hardest of all, I do not know and cannot tell the names of my accusers; unless in the chance case of a Comic poet. . . .
>
> I dare say, Athenians, that some one among you will reply, 'Yes, Socrates, but what is the origin of these accusations which are brought against you;

there must have been something strange which you have been doing? All these rumours and this talk about you would never have arisen if you had been like other men: tell us, then, what is the cause of them, for we should be sorry to judge hastily of you.' Now I regard this as a fair challenge, and I will endeavour to explain to you the reason why I am called wise and have such an evil fame. . . .

. . . I will refer you to a witness who is worthy of credit; that witness shall be the God of Delphi—he will tell you about my wisdom, if I have any, and of what sort it is. You must have know Chærephon; he was early a friend of mine.... Well, Chærephon, as you know, was very impetuous in all his doings, and he went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him whether—as I was saying, I must beg you not to interrupt—he asked the oracle to tell him whether any one was wiser than I was, and the Pythian prophetess answered, that there was no man wiser. Chærephon is dead himself; but his brother, who is in court, will confirm the truth of what I am saying.

Why do I mention this? Because I am going to explain to you why I have such an evil name. When I heard the answer, I said to myself, What can the god mean? and what is the interpretation of his riddle? for I know that I have no wisdom, small or great. What then can he mean when he says that I am the wisest of men? And yet he is a god, and cannot lie; that would be against his nature. After long consideration, I thought of a method of trying the question. I reflected that if I could only find a man wiser than myself, then I might go to the god with a reputation in my hand, then I should say to him, 'Here is a man who is wiser than I am; but you said that I was the wisest.' Accordingly I went to one who had the reputation of wisdom, and observed him—his name I need not mention; he was a politician whom I selected for examination—and the result was as follows: When I began to talk with him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several who were present and heard me. So I left him, saying to myself, as I went away: Well, although I do not suppose that either of us knows anything really beautiful and good, I am better off than he is,—for he knows nothing, and thinks that he knows; I neither know nor think that I know. In this latter particular, then, I seem to have slightly the advantage of him. I went to another who had still higher pretensions to wisdom , and my conclusion was exactly the same. Whereupon I made another enemy of him, and of many others besides him. . . .

This inquisition has led to my having many enemies of the worst and most dangerous kind, and has given occasion also to many calumnies. And I am called wise, for my hearers always imagine that I myself possess the wisdom which I find wanting in others: but the truth is, Omen of Athens, that God only is wise, and by his answer he intends to show that the wisdom of men is worth little or nothing; he is not speaking of Socrates, he is only using my name by way of illustration, as if he said, He, O men, is the wisest, who like Socrates, knows that his wisdom is in truth worth nothing. And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make enquiry into the wisdom of any one, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise; then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise, and my occupation quite absorbs me, and I have no time to give either to any public matter of interest or to any concern of my own, but I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god.

There is another thing:—young men of the richer classes, who have not much to do, come about me of their own accord; they like to hear the pretenders examined, and they often imitate me, and proceed to examine others; there are plenty of persons, as they quickly discover, who think they know something, but really know little or nothing; and then those who are examined by them instead of being angry with themselves are angry with me: This confounded Socrates, they say; this villainous misleader of youth—and then if somebody asks them, Why, what evil does he practise or teach? they do not know, and cannot tell; but in order that they may not appear to be at a loss, they repeat the ready-made charges which are used against all philosophers about teaching things up in the clouds and under the earth, and having no gods and making the worse appear the better cause. . . .

[Turning to the formal charges against him, Socrates dismisses them almost contemptuously, returning to the main charges as he sees them and his lifelong "argument" with his city and its citizenry.]

And now, Athenians, I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours, that you may not sin against the God by condemning me, who am his gift to you. For if you kill me you will not easily find a successor to me, who, if I may use such a ludicrous figure of speech, am a sort of gadfly, given to the state by God; and the state is a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions owing to his very size, and requires to be stirred into life. I am that gadfly which God has attached to the state, and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing

and persuading and reproaching you. You will not easily find another like me, and therefore I would advise you to spare me. I dare say that you may feel out of temper (like a person who is suddenly awakened from sleep), and you think that you might easily strike me dead as Anytus advises, and then you would sleep on for the remainder of your lives, unless God in his care of you sent you another gadfly. When I say I am given to you by God, the proof of my mission is this: if I had been like other men, I should not have neglected all my own concerns or patiently seen the neglect of them all these years, and have been doing yours, coming to you individually like a father or elder brother, exhorting you to regard virtue; such conduct, I say would be unlike human nature. If I had gained anything, or if my exhortations had been paid, there would have been some sense in my doing so; but now, as you will perceive, not even the impudence of my accusers dares to say that I have ever exacted or sought pay of any one; of that they have no witness. And I have a sufficient witness to the truth of what I say—my poverty. . . .

[The jury returns the verdict of guilty.]

There are many reasons why I am not grieved, O men of Athens, at the vote of condemnation. I expected it, and am only surprised that the votes are so nearly equal; for I had thought that the majority against me would have been far larger; but now, had thirty votes gone over to the other side, I should have been acquitted. And I may say, I think, that I have escaped Meletus . I may say more; for without the assistance of Anytus and Lycon, any one may see that he would not have had a fifth part of the votes, as the law requires, in which case he would have incurred a fine of a thousand drachmæ.

And so he proposes death as the penalty.

Some one will say: Yes, Socrates, but cannot you hold your tongue, and then you may go into a foreign city, and no one will interfere with you? Now I have a great difficulty in making you understand my answer to this. For if I tell you that to do as you say would be a disobedience to the God, and therefore that I cannot hold my tongue, you will not believe that I am serious; and if I say again that daily to discourse about virtue, and of those other things about which you hear me examining myself and others, is the greatest good of man, and that the unexamined life is not worth living, you are still less likely to believe me. Yet I say what is true, although a thing of which it is hard for me to persuade you. Also I have

never been accustomed to think that I deserve to suffer any harm. Had I money I might have estimated the offence at what I was able to pay, and not have been much the worse. But I have none, and therefore I must ask you to proportion the fine to my means. Well, perhaps I could afford a mina, and therefore I propose that penalty: Plato, Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, my friends here, bid me say thirty minæ, and they will be the sureties. Let thirty minæ be the penalty; for which sum they will be ample security to you….

[Socrates is condemned to death.]

And now, O men who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who are my murderers , that immediately after my departure punishment far heavier than you have inflicted on me will surely await you. Men you have killed because you wanted to escape the accuser, and not give an account of your lives. But that will not be as you suppose: far otherwise. For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now; accusers whom hitherto I have restrained: and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. If you think that by killing men you can prevent some one from censuring your evil lives, you are mistaken; that is not a way of escape which is either possible or honourable; the easiest and the noblest way is not to be disabling others, but to be improving yourselves. This is the prophecy which I utter before my departure to the judges who have condemned me.

Friends, who would have acquitted me, I would also like to talk with you about the thing which has come to pass, while the magistrates are busy, and before I go to the place at which I must die. Stay then a little, for we may as well talk with one another while there is time. You are my friends, and I should like to show you the meaning of this event which has happened to me. O my judges—for you I may truly call judges—I should like to tell you of a wonderful circumstance. Hitherto the divine faculty of which the internal oracle is the source has constantly been in the habit of opposing me even about trifles, if I was going to make a slip or error in any matter; and now as you see there has come upon me that which may be thought, and is generally believed to be, the last and worst evil. But the oracle made no sign of opposition, either when I was leaving my house in the morning, or when I was on my way to court, or while I was speaking, at anything which I was going to say; and yet I have often been

stopped in the middle of a speech, but now in nothing I either said or did touching the matter in hand has the oracle opposed me. What do I take to be the explanation of this silence? I will tell you. It is an intimation that what has happened to me is a good, and that those of us who think that death is an evil are in error. For the customary sign would surely have opposed me had I been going to evil and not to good. . . .

Wherefore, O judges, be of good cheer about death, and know of a certainty, that no evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death. He and his are not neglected by the gods; nor has my own approaching end happened by mere chance. But I see clearly that the time had arrived when it was better for me to die and released form trouble; wherefore the oracle gave no sign. For which reason, also, I am not angry with my condemners, or with my accusers; they have done me no harm, although they did not mean to do me any good; and for this I may gently blame them.

Still I have a favour to ask them. When my sons are grown up, I would ask you, O my friends, to punish them; and I would have you trouble them, as I have troubled you, if they seem to care about riches, or anything, more than about virtue; or if they pretend to be something when they are really nothing,—then reprove them, as I have reproved you, for not caring about that for which they ought to care, and thinking that they are something when they are really nothing. And if you do this, both I and my sons will have received justice at your hands.

The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better God only knows.

Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato.* Benjamin Jowett, trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1892).

Crito

by Plato

Crito

(Primary Source)

SCENE: *The prison of Socrates*

SOCRATES: Why have you come at this hour, Crito? Is it not still early?

CRITO: Yes, very early.

SOCRATES: About what time is it?

CRITO: It is just day-break.

SOCRATES: I wonder that the jailor was willing to let you in.

CRITO: He knows me now, Socrates, I come here so often; and besides, I have done him a service.

SOCRATES: Have you been here long?

CRITO: Yes; some time.

SOCRATES: Then why did you sit down without speaking? Why did you not wake me at once?

CRITO: Indeed, Socrates, I wish that I were not so sleepless and sorrowful. But I have been wondering to see how sweetly you sleep. And I purposely did not wake you, for I was anxious not to disturb your repose. Often before, through your life, I have thought that your temper was a happy one; and I think so more than ever now, when I see how easily and calmly you bear the calamity that has come to you.

SOCRATES: Nay Crito, it would be absurd if at my age I were angry at having to die.

CRITO: Other men as old are overtaken by similar calamities, Socrates; but their age does not save them from being angry with their fate.

SOCRATES: That is so: But tell me, why are you here so early?

CRITO: I am the bearer of bitter news, Socrates: not bitter, it seems, to you; but to me, and to all your friends, both bitter and grievous: and to none of them, I think, is it more grievous than to me.

SOCRATES: What is it? Has the ship come from Delos, at the arrival of which I am to die?

CRITO: No, it has not actually arrived: but I think that it will be here to-day, from the news which certain persons have brought from Sunium, who left it there. It is clear form their news that it will be here to-day; and then, Socrates, to-morrow your life will have to end.

SOCRATES: Well, Crito, may it end fortunately. Be it so, if so the gods will. But I do not think that the ship will be here to-day.

CRITO: Why do you suppose not?

SOCRATES: I will tell you. I am to die on the day after the ship arrives, am I not?

CRITO: That is what the authorities say.

SOCRATES: Then I do not think that it will come today, but to-morrow. I judge from a certain dream which I saw a little while ago in the night: so it seems to be fortunate that you did not wake me.

CRITO: And what was this dream?

SOCRATES: A fair and comely woman, clad in white garments, seemed to

come to me, and call me and say, "O Socrates—

The third day hence shall thou fair Phthia reach."

CRITO: What a strange dream Socrates!

SOCRATES: But its meaning is clear; at least to me, Crito.

CRITO: Yes, too clear, it seems. But, O my good Socrates, I beseech you for the last time to listen to me and save yourself. For to me your death will be more than a single disaster: not only shall I lose a friend the like of whom I shall never find again, but many persons, who do not know you and me well, will think that I might have saved you if I had been willing to spend money, but that I neglected to do so. And what character could be more disgraceful than the character of caring more for money than for one's friends? The world will never believe that we were anxious to save you, but that you yourself refused to escape.

SOCRATES: But, my excellent Crito, why should we care so much about the opinion of the world? The best men, of whose opinion it is worth our while to think, will believe that we acted as we really did.

CRITO: But you see, Socrates, that it is necessary to care about the opinion of the world too. This very thing that happened to you proves that the multitude can do a man not the least, but almost the greatest harm, if he be falsely accused to them.

SOCRATES: I wish that the multitude were able to do a man the greatest harm, Crito, for then they would be able to do him the greatest good. That would have been well. But as it is, they can do neither. They cannot make a man either wise or foolish: they act wholly at random.

CRITO: Well, be it so. But tell me this Socrates. You surely are not anxious about me and your other friends, and afraid lest, if you escape, the informers should say that we stole you away, and get us into trouble, and involve us in a great deal of expense, or perhaps in the loss of all our property, and, it may be, bring us some other punishment upon us besides? If you have any fear of that kind, dismiss it. For of course we are bound to run those risks, and still greater risks than those if necessary, in saving you. So do not, I beseech you, refuse to listen to me.

SOCRATES: I am anxious about that Crito, and about much else besides.

CRITO: Then have no fear on that score. There are men who, for no very large sum, are ready to bring you out of prison into safety. And then, you know, these informers are cheaply bought, and there would be no need to spend much upon them. My fortune is at your service, and I think that it is sufficient: and if you have any feeling about making use of my money, there are strangers in Athens, whom you know, ready to use theirs, and one of them, Simias of Thebes, has actually brought enough for this very purpose. And Cebes and many others are ready too. And therefore, I repeat, do not shrink from

saving yourself on that ground. And do not let what you said in the Court, that if you went into exile you would not know what to do with yourself, stand in your way; for there are many places for you to go to, where you will be welcomed. If you choose to go to Thessaly, I have friends there who will make much of you, and shelter you from any annoyance from the people of Thessaly. And besides, Socrates, I think that you will be doing what is wrong if you abandon your life when you might preserve it. You are simply playing the game of your enemies; it is exactly the game of those who wanted to destroy you. And what is more, to me you seem to be abandoning your children too: you will leave them to take their chance in life, as far as you are concerned, when you might bring them up and educate them. Most likely their fate will be the usual fate of children who are left orphans. But you ought not to beget children unless you mean to take the trouble of bringing them up and educating them. It seems to me that you are choosing the easy way, and not the way of a good and brave man, as you ought, when you have been talking all your life long of the value that you set upon virtue. For my part, I feel ashamed both for you, and for us who are your friends. Men will think that the whole of this thing which has happened to you—your appearance in court to take your trial, when you need not have appeared at all; the very way in which the trial was conducted; and then lastly this, for the crowning absurdity of the whole affair, is due to our cowardice. It will look as if we had shirked the danger out of miserable cowardice; for we did not save you, and you did not save yourself, when it was quite possible to do so, if we had been good for anything at all. Take care, Socrates, lest these things be not evil only, but also dishonourable to you and us. Consider then; or rather the time for consideration is past; we must resolve; and there is only one plan possible. Everything must be done to-night. If we delay any longer, we are lost. O Socrates, I implore you not to refuse to listen to me.

SOCRATES: My dear Crito, if your anxiety to save me be right, it is most valuable: but if not right, its greatness makes it all the more dangerous. We must consider then whether we are to do as you say, or not; for I am still what I always have been, a man who will listen to no voice but the voice of the reasoning which on consideration I find to be truest. I cannot cast aside my former arguments because this misfortune has come to me. They seem to me to be as true as they ever were, and I hold exactly the same ones in honour and esteem as I used to: and if we have no better reasoning to substitute for them, I certainly shall not agree to your proposal, not even though the power of the multitude should scare us with fresh terrors, as children are scared with hobgoblins, and inflict upon us new fines, and imprisonments, and deaths. How then shall we most fitly answer the question?

Shall we go back first to what you say about the opinions of men, and ask if we used to be right in thinking that we ought to pay attention to some opinions and not to others? Used we to be right in saying so before I was condemned to die, and has it now become apparent that we were talking at random, and arguing for the sake of argument, and that it was really nothing but play and nonsense? I am anxious, Crito, to examine our former reasoning with your help, and to see whether my present position will appear to me to have affected its truth in any way, or not; and whether we are to set it aside, or to yield assent to it. Those of us who thought at all seriously, used always to say, I think, exactly what I said just now, namely, that we ought to esteem some of the opinions which men form highly, and not others. Tell me, Crito, if you please, do you not think that they were right? For you, humanly speaking, will not have to die to-morrow, and your judgment will not be biased by that circumstance. Consider then: do you not think it reasonable to say that we should not esteem all the opinions of men, but only some, nor the opinions of all men, but only some men? What do you think? Is this not true?

CRITO: It is.

SOCRATES: And we should esteem the good opinions, and not the worthless ones?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: But the good opinions are those of the wise, and the worthless opinions are those of the foolish?

CRITO: Of course.

SOCRATES: And what used we to say about this? Does a man who is in training, and who is in earnest about it, attend to the praise and blame and opinion of all men, or of the one man only who is a doctor or a trainer?

CRITO: He attends only to the opinion of the one man.

SOCRATES: Then he ought to fear the blame and welcome the praise of this one man, not of the many?

CRITO: Clearly.

SOCRATES: Then he must act and exercise, and eat and drink in whatever way the one man who is his master, and who understands the matter, bids him; not as others bid him?

CRITO: That is so.

SOCRATES: Good. But if he disobeys this one man, and disregards his opinion and his praise, and esteems instead what the many, who understand nothing of the matter, say, will he not suffer for it?

CRITO: Of course he will.

SOCRATES: And how will he suffer? In what direction, and in what part of himself?

CRITO: Of course in his body. That is disabled.

SOCRATES: You are right. And Crito, to be brief, is it not the same, in everything? And, therefore, in questions of right and wrong, and of the base and the honourable, and of good

and of evil, which we are now considering, ought we to follow the opinion of the many and fear that, or the opinion of the one man who understands these matters (if we can find him), and feel more shame and fear before him than before all other men? For if we do not follow him, we shall cripple and maim that part of us which, we used to say, improved by right and disabled by wrong. Or is this not so?

CRITO: No, Socrates, I agree with you.

SOCRATES: Now, if by listening to the opinions of those who do not understand, we disable that part of us which is improved by health and crippled by disease, is our life worth living, when it is in a crippled ? It is the body. Is it not?

CRITO: Yes.

SOCRATES: Is life worth living with a body crippled and in a bad state?

CRITO: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: Then is life worth living when that part of us which is maimed by wrong and benefited by right is crippled? Or do we consider that part of us, whatever it is, which has to do with right and wrong to be of less consequence than our body?

CRITO: No, certainly not.

SOCRATES: But more valuable?

CRITO: Yes, much more so.

SOCRATES: Then, my excellent friend, we must not think so much of what the many will say of us; we must think of what the one man, who understands right and wrong, and of what Truth herself will say of us. And so you are mistaken to begin with, when you invite us to regard the opinion of the multitude concerning the right and the honourable and the good, and their opposites. But, it may be said, the multitude can put us to death?

CRITO: Yes, that is evident. That may be said, Socrates.

SOCRATES: True. But my excellent friend, to me it appears that the conclusion which we have just reached, is the same as our conclusion of former times. Now consider whether we still hold to the belief, that we should set the highest value, not on living, but on living well?

CRITO: Yes, we do.

SOCRATES: And living well and honourably and rightly mean the same thing: do we hold to that or not?

CRITO: We do.

SOCRATES: Then, starting from these premises, we have to consider whether it is right or not right for me to try to escape from prison, without the consent of the Athenians. If we find that it is right, we will try: if not, we will let it alone. I am afraid that considerations of expense, and of reputation, and of bringing up my children, of which you talk, Crito, are only the reflections of our friends, the many, who lightly put men to death, and who would, if they could, as lightly bring them to life again, without a thought. But reason, which is our guide, shows us that we can

have nothing to consider but the question which I asked just now: namely shall we be doing right if we give money and thanks to the men who are to aid me in escaping, and if we ourselves take our respective parts in my escape? Or shall we in truth be doing wrong, if we do all this? And if we find that we should be doing wrong, then we must now take any account either of death, or of any other evil that may be the consequence of remaining quietly here, but only of doing wrong.

CRITO: I think that you are right, Socrates. But what are we to do?

SOCRATES: Let us consider that together, my good sir, and if you can contradict anything that I say, do so, and I will be convinced: but if you cannot, do not go on repeating to me any longer, my dear friend, that I should escape without the consent of the Athenians. I am very anxious to act with your approval: I do not want you to think me mistaken. But now tell me if you agree with the doctrine from which I start, and try to answer my questions as you think best.

CRITO: I will try.

SOCRATES: Ought we never to do wrong intentionally at all; or may we do wrong in some ways, and not in others? Or, as we have often agreed in former times, it is never either good or honourable to do wrong? Have all our former conclusions been forgotten in these few days? Old men as we were, Crito, did we not see, in days gone by, when we were gravely conversing with each other, that we were no better than children? Or is not what we used to say most assuredly the truth, whether the world agrees with us or not? Is not wrong-doing an evil and a shame to the wrong-doer in every case, whether we incur a heavier or a lighter punishment than death as the consequence of doing right? Do we believe that?

CRITO: We do.

SOCRATES: Then we ought never do wrong at all?

CRITO: Certainly not.

SOCRATES: Neither, if we ought never do wrong at all, ought we to repay wrong with wrong, as the world thinks we may?

CRITO: Clearly not.

SOCRATES: Well then, Crito, ought we do evil to any one?

CRITO: Certainly I think not, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And is it right to repay evil with evil, as the world thinks, or not right?

CRITO: Certainly it is not right.

SOCRATES: For there is no difference, is there, between doing evil to a man, and wronging him?

CRITO: True.

SOCRATES: Then we ought not to repay wrong with wrong or do harm to any man, no matter what we may have suffered from him. And in conceding this, Crito, be careful that you do not concede more than you mean. For I know that only a few men hold, or ever will hold this opinion. And

so those who hold it, and those who do not, have no common ground of argument; they can of necessity only look with contempt on each other's belief. Do you therefore consider very carefully whether you agree with me and share my opinion. Are we to start in our inquiry from the doctrine that it is never right either to do wrong , or to repay wrong with wrong, or to avenge ourselves on any man who harms us, by harming him in return? Or do you disagree with me and dissent from my principle? I myself have believed in it for a long time, and I believe in it still. But if you differ in any way, explain to me how. If you still hold to our former opinion, listen to my next point.

CRITO: Yes, I hold to it, and I agree with you. Go on.

SOCRATES: Then, my next point, or rather my next question, is this: Ought a man to perform his just agreements, or may he shuffle out of them?

CRITO: He ought to perform to them.

SOCRATES: Then consider. If I escape without the states consent, shall I be injuring those whom I least ought to injure, or not? Shall I be abiding by my just agreements or not?

CRITO: I cannot answer your question Socrates. I do not understand it.

SOCRATES: Consider it in this way. Suppose the laws and the commonwealth were to come and appear to me as I was preparing to run away (if that is the right phrase to describe my escape) and were to ask, "Tell us, Socrates, what have you in your mind to do? What do you mean by trying to escape, but to destroy us, the laws, and the whole city, so far as in you lies? Do you think that a state can exist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law are of no force, and are disregarded and set at nought by private individuals?" How shall we answer questions like that, Crito? Much might be said, especially by an orator, in defence of the law which makes judicial decisions supreme. Shall I reply, "But the state has injured me: it has decided my cause wrongly." Shall we say that?

CRITO: Certainly we will, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And suppose the laws were to reply, "Was that our agreement? Or was it that you would submit to whatever judgements the state should pronounce?" And if we were to wonder at their words, perhaps they would say, "Socrates, wonder not at our words, but answer us; you yourself are accustomed to ask questions and to answer them. What complaint have you against us and the city, that you are trying to destroy us? Are we not, first, your parents? Through us your father took your mother and begat you. Tell us, have you any fault to find with those of us that are the laws of marriage?" "I have none," I should reply. "Or have you any fault to find with those of us who regulate the nurture and education of the child, which you, like others, received? Did we not do well in bidding your father to educate you in music and gymnastics?" "You did," I should say. "Well

then, since you were brought into the world and nurtured and educated by us, how, in the first place can you deny that you are our child and our slave, as your fathers were before you? And if this be so, do you think that your rights are on level with ours? Do you think that you have a right to retaliate upon us if we should try to do anything to you? You had not the same rights as your father had, or that your master would have had, if you had been a slave. You had no right to retaliate upon them if they ill-treated you, or to answer them if they reviled you, or to strike them back if they struck you, or to repay them evil with evil in any way. And you think that you may retaliate on your country and its laws? If we try to destroy you, because we think it right, will you in return do all that you can to destroy us, the laws, and your country, and say that in so doing you are doing right, you, the man, who in truth thinks so much of virtue? Or are you too wise to see that your country is worthier, and more august, and more sacred, and holier and held in higher honour both by the gods and by all men of understanding, than your father and your mother and all your other ancestors; and that it is bounden duty to reverence it, and to submit to it, and to approach it more humbly than you would approach your father, when it is angry with you; and either to do whatever it bids you to do or to persuade it to excuse you; and to obey in silence if it orders you to endure stripes or imprisonment, or if it send you to battle to be wounded or to die? That is what is your duty. You must not give way, nor retreat, nor desert your post. In war, and in the court of justice, and everywhere you must do whatever your city and your country bid you do, or you must convince them that their commands are unjust. But it is against the law of God to use violence to your father or to your mother; and much more so is it against the law of God to use violence to your country." What answer shall we make, Crito?" Shall we say that the laws speak truly, or not?

CRITO: I think that they do.

SOCRATES: "Then consider, Socrates," perhaps they would say, "If we are right in saying that by attempting to escape you are attempting to injure us. We brought you into the world, we nurtured you, we educated you, we gave you and every other citizen a share of all the good things we could. Yet we proclaim that if any man of the Athenians is dissatisfied with us, he may take his goods and go away whithersoever he pleases: we give that permission to every man who chooses to avail himself of it, so soon as he has reached man's estate, and sees us, the laws, and the administration of our city. No one of us stands in his way or forbids him to take his goods and go wherever he likes, whether it be to an Athenian colony, or to any foreign country, if he is dissatisfied with us and with the city. But we say that every man of you who remains here, seeing how we administer justice, and how we govern the city in other matters, has

agreed, by the very fact of remaining here, to do whateverso we bid him. And, we say, he who disobeys us, does a threefold wrong: he disobeys us who are his parents, and he disobeys us who fostered him, and he disobeys us after he has agreed to obey us, without persuading us we are wrong. Yet we did not bid him sternly to do whatever we told him. We offered him an alternative; we gave him his choice, either to obey us, or to convince us that we were wrong: but he does neither.

"These are the charges, Socrates, to which we say that you will expose yourself, if you do what you intend; and that not less, but more than other Athenians." And if I were to ask, "And why?" they might retort with justice that I have bound myself by the agreement with them more than other Athenians. They would say, "Socrates, we have very strong evidence that you were satisfied with us and with the city. You would have been content to stay at home in it more than other Athenians, unless you had been satisfied with it more than they. You never went away from Athens to the festivals, save once to the Isthmian games, nor elsewhere except on military service; you never made other journeys like other men; you had no desire to see other cities or other laws; you were contented with us and our city. So strongly did you prefer us, and agree to be governed by us: and what is more, you begat children in this city, you found it so pleasant. And besides, if you had wished, you might at your trial have offered to go into exile. At that time you could have done with the State's consent, what you are trying now to do without it. But then you gloried in being willing to die. You said that you preferred death to exile. And now you are not ashamed of those words; you do not respect us the laws, for you are trying to destroy us: and you are acting just as a miserable slave would act, trying to run away, and breaking the covenant and agreement which you made to submit to our government. First, therefore, answer this question. Are we right, or are we wrong, in saying that you have agreed not in mere words, but in reality to live under our government?" What are we to say, Crito? Must we not admit that it is true?

CRITO: We must, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then they would say, "Are you not breaking your covenants and agreements with us? And you were not led to make them by force or by fraud: you had not to make up your minds in a hurry. You had seventy years in which you might have gone away, if you had been dissatisfied with us, or if the agreement had seemed to you unjust. But you preferred neither Lacedæmon nor Crete, though you are fond of saying that they are well governed, nor any other state, either of the Hellenes, or the Barbarians. You went away from Athens less than the lame and the blind and the cripple. Clearly you, far more than other Athenians, were satisfied with the city, and also with us who are its laws: for who would

be satisfied with a city which had no laws? And now will you not abide by your agreement? If you take our advice, you will, Socrates: then you will not make yourself ridiculous by going away from Athens.

"For consider: what good will you do yourself or your friends by thus transgressing, and breaking your agreement? It is tolerably certain that they, on their part, will at least run the risk of exile, and of losing their civil rights, or of forfeiting their property. For yourself, you might go to one of the neighbouring cities, to Thebes or to Megara for instance—for both of them are well governed—but, Socrates, you will come as an enemy to these commonwealths; and all who care for their city will look askance at you, and think you are a subverter of the law. And you will confirm the judges in their opinion, and make it seem that their verdict was a just one. For a man who is a subverter of law, may well be supposed to be a corrupter of the young and thoughtless. Then will you avoid well-governed states and civilised men? Will life be worth having, if you do? Or will you consort with such men, and converse without shame—about what, Socrates? About the things which you talk of here? Will you tell them that virtue, and justice, and institutions, and law are the most precious things men can have? And do you not think that that will be a shameful thing in Socrates? You ought to think so. But you will leave these places; you will go to the friends of Crito in Thessaly: for there is most disorder and license: and very likely, they will be delighted to hear of the ludicrous way in which you escaped from prison, dressed up in peasant's clothes, or in some other disguise which people put on when they are running away, and with your appearance altered. But will no one say how you, an old man, with probably only a few more years to live, clung so greedily to life that you dared to transgress the highest laws? Perhaps not, if you do not displease them. But if you do, Socrates, you will hear much that will make you blush. You will pass your life as the flatterer and the slave of all men; and what will you be doing but feasting in Thessaly? It will be as if you had made a journey to Thessaly for an entertainment. And where will be all our old sayings about justice and virtue then? But you wish to live for the sake of your children? You want to bring them up and educate them? What? Will you take them with you to Thessaly, and bring them up and educate them there? Will you make them strangers to their own country, that you may bestow this benefit on them too? Or supposing that you leave them in Athens, will they be brought up and educated better if you are alive, though you are not with them? Yes; your friends will take care of them. Will your friend take care of them if you make a journey to Hades? You ought not to think that, at least if those who call themselves your friends are good for anything at all.

"No, Socrates, be advised by us who

have fostered you. Think neither of children, nor of life, nor of any other thing before justice, that when you come to the other world you may be able to make your defence before the rulers who sit in judgement there. It is clear that neither you nor any of your friends will be happier, or juster, or holier in this life, if you do this thing, nor will you be happier after you are dead. Now you will go away wronged, not by us, the laws, but by men. But if you repay evil with evil, and wrong with wrong in this shameful way, and break your agreements and covenants with us, and injure those whom you should least injure, yourself, and your friends, and your country, and us, and so escape , then we shall be angry with you while you live, and when you die our brethren, the laws in Hades, will not receive you kindly; for they will know that on earth you did all that you could to destroy us. Listen than to us, and let not Crito persuade you to do as he says." Know well, my dear friend Crito, that this is what I seem to hear, as the worshippers of Cybele seem, in their frenzy, to hear the music of flutes: and the sound of these words rings loudly in my ears, and drowns all other words. And I feel sure that if you try to change my mind you will speak in vain; nevertheless, if you think that you will succeed, say on.

CRITO: I can say no more, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then let it be, Crito: and let us do as I say, seeing that God so directs us.

Source: Plato. *Selections*: *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Being the Euthyphron, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato,* 2nd ed. F. J. Church, trans. (New York: Macmillan, 1895).

Phaedo

by Plato

Plato's Phædo

(Primary Source)

SCENE: The prison of Socrates.

When he had finished speaking Crito said, "Be it so, Socrates. But have you any commands for your friends or for me about your children, or about other things? How shall we serve you best?"

"Simply by doing what I always tell you, Crito. Take care of your own selves, and you will serve me and mine and yourselves in all that you do, even though you make no promises now. But if you are careless of your own selves, and will not follow the path of life which we have pointed out in our discussions both today and at other times, all your promises now , however profuse and earnest they are, will be of no avail."

"We will do our best," said Crito. "But how shall we bury you?"

"As you please," he answered; only you must catch me first, and not let me escape you." And then he looked at us with a smile and said, "My friends, I cannot convince Crito that I am the Socrates who has been conversing with you, and arranging his arguments in order. He thinks that I am the body which he will presently see a corpse, and he will asks how he is to bury me. All the arguments which I have used to prove that I shall not remain with you after I have drunk the poison, but that I shall go away to the happiness of the blessed, with which I tried to comfort you and myself, have been thrown away on him. Do you therefore be my sureties to him, as he was my surety at the trial, but in a different way. He was surety for me then that I would remain; but you must be my sureties to him that I shall go away when I am dead, and not remain with you: then he will feel my death less; and when he sees my body being burnt or buried, he will not be grieved because he thinks that I am suffering dreadful things: and at my funeral he will not say that it is Socrates whom he is laying out, or bearing to the grave, or burying." "For, dear Crito," he continued, "you must know that to use words wrongly is not only a fault in itself; it also creates evil in the soul. You must be of good cheer, and say that you are burying my body: and you must bury it as you please, and as you think right."

With these word he rose and went into another room to bathe himself: Crito went with him and told us to wait. So we waited, talking of the argument, and discussing it, and then again dwelling on the greatness of the calamity which had fallen upon us: it seemed as if we were going to lose a father, and to be orphans for the rest of our life. When he had bathed, and his children had been brought to him,—he had two sons quite little, and one grown up,—and the women of his family were come, he spoke with them in Crito's presence, and gave them his last commands; then he sent the women and

children away, and returned to us. By that time it was near the hour of sunset, for he had been a long while within. When he came back to us from the bath he sat down, but not much was said after that. Presently the servant of the Eleven came and stood before him and said, "I know that I shall not find you unreasonable like other men, Socrates. They are angry with me and curse me when I bid them drink the poison because the authorities make me do it. But I have found you all along the noblest and gentlest and best man that has ever come here; and now I am sure that you will not be angry with me, but with those who you know are to blame. And so farewell, and try to bear what must be as lightly as you can; you know why I have come."

With that he turned away weeping, and went out.

Socrates looked up at him, and replied, "Farewell: I will do as you say." Then he turned to us and said, "How courteous the man is! And the whole time that I have been here, he has constantly come in to see me, and sometimes he has talked to me, and has been the best of men; and now, how generously he weeps for me! Come, Crito, let us obey him: let the poison be brought if it is ready; and if it is not ready, let it be prepared."

Crito replied, "Nay, Socrates, I think that the sun is still upon the hills, it has not set. Besides, I know that other men take the poison quite late, and eat and drink heartily, and even enjoy the company of their chosen friends, after the announcement has been made. So do not hurry; there is still time.

Socrates replied, "And those whom you speak of, Crito, naturally do so; for they think that they will be gainers by doing so. And I naturally shall not do so; for I think that I should gain nothing by drinking the poison a little later, but my own contempt for so greedily saving up a life which is already spent. So do not refuse to do as I say."

Then Crito made a sign to his slave who was standing by; and the slave went out, and after some delay returned with the man who was to give the poison, carrying it prepared in a cup. When Socrates saw him, he asked, "You understand these things, my good sir, what I have to do?"

"You have only to drink this," he replied, "and to walk about until your legs feel heavy, and then lie down; and it will act of itself." With that he handed the cup to Socrates, who took it quite cheerfully, without trembling, and without any change of colour or of feature, and looked up at the man with that fixed glance of his, and asked, "What say you to making a libation from this draught? May I, or not?" "We only prepare so much as we think sufficient, Socrates," he answered. "I understand ," said Socrates. "But I suppose that I may, and must, pray to the gods that my journey hence may be prosperous: That is my prayer; be it so." With these words he put the cup to his lips and

drank the poison quite calmly and cheerfully. Till then most of us had been able to control our grief fairly well; but when we saw him drinking , and then the poison finished, we could do so no longer: my tears came fast in spite of myself, and I covered my face and wept for myself: it was not for him, but at my own misfortune at losing such a friend. Even before that Crito had been unable to restrain his tears, and had gone away; and Apollodorus, who had never once ceased weeping the whole time, burst into a loud cry, and made us one and all break down by his sobbing and grief, except only Socrates himself. "What are you doing, my friends?" he exclaimed. "I sent away the women chiefly in order that they might not offend in this way; for I have heard that a man should die in silence. So calm yourselves and bear up." When we heard that we were ashamed, and we ceased from weeping. But he walked about, until he said that his legs were getting heavy, and then he lay down on his back, as he was told. And the man who gave the poison began to examine his feet and legs from time to time: then pressed his foot hard, and asked if there was any feeling in it; and Socrates said, "No." And then his legs, and so higher and higher, and showed us that he was cold and stiff. And Socrates felt himself, and said that when it came to his heart, he should be gone. He was already growing cold about the groin, when he uncovered his face which had been covered, and spoke for the last time. "Crito," he said, "I owe a cock to Asclepius: do not forget to repay it." "It shall be done," replied Crito. "Is there anything else that you wish?" He made no answer to this question; but after a short interval there was a movement, and the man uncovered him, and his eyes were fixed. Then Crito closed his mouth and his eyes.

Such was the end of our friend, a man, I think, who was the wisest and justest, and the best man that I have ever known.

Source: Plato. *Selections*: *The Trial and Death of Socrates: Being the Euthyphron, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato*, 2nd ed. F. J. Church, trans. (New York: Macmillan, 1895).

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