

Fourth Edition

A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric



James J. Murphy, Richard A. Katula,
and Michael Hoppmann

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Continuing its tradition of providing students with a thorough review of ancient Greek and Roman rhetorical theory and practices, *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric* is the premier text for undergraduate courses and graduate seminars in the history of rhetoric. Offering vivid examples of each classical rhetor, rhetorical period, and source text, students are led to understand rhetoric's role in the exchange of knowledge and ideas. Completely updated throughout, Part I of this new edition integrates new research and expanded notes and bibliographies for students to develop their own scholarship. Part II offers six classical texts for reading, study, and criticism, and includes keys to the text in Part I.

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Introduction

Ideal voices, the beloved voices
of those who have died or of those who are
lost to us as if they were dead.

Sometimes they speak to us in dreams;
sometimes, in thought, the mind hears them,

And with their sounds for a moment return
sounds from our life's first poetry –
like music at night, far off, fading out.

Excerpt from C. P. Cavafy, *Voices*

In this passage the celebrated modern Greek poet Cavafy praises the ancient writers of Greece and Rome whose ideas live on even though they themselves are gone. They were, indeed, the first “poets” of our world, the world of western civilization. Today their words revive in us the culture of classicism, a body of ideas that has penetrated American and European society even though at times their voices seem to us like quiet music in the night, far off and fading out.

We seldom recognize that so much of what we observe around us—our art, architecture, literature, our political system, even our alphabet—derives from ancient Greece and Rome, where, during brilliant flashes of insight and transformation, western culture was created. Guided by no deity, the ancient Greeks constructed their own society, one uniquely human in its origin. It is from this body of knowledge, in fact, that we get the word “Humanities.” Some of these thinkers, Plato and Aristotle, for instance, stand today beside the great minds of other periods in our history—Aquinas, Locke, Hegel, Jefferson, Einstein, to name a few. Moreover, their ideas survive as the seminal principles of all democratic societies. And why? As G. W. Bowersock writes, “The main reason that classicism survives in America and elsewhere is precisely that it is so porous and multiform. It can instruct and delight according to many different moral and political systems” (*New Republic*, November 4, 2002, p. 31).

Representative democracy did not spring full blown from the heavens. It is a system for governing human relations that evolved out of the experience of the Greeks as they settled the islands and coastal areas around the Mediterranean, Aegean, and Ionian seas particularly from the 8th century BCE until the 4th century BCE. Democratic forms such as laws, and democratic institutions such as assemblies and courtrooms,

all of which we take for granted today, arose from the age-old fact that people, when living together in complex societies, quarrel with one another. Such disputes must be resolved in order that the society may remain stable. When we observe our judicial, legislative, and executive branches engaged in the difficult task of resolving human disputes in accord with the wishes of the public, we see in them a reflection of the model devised for this purpose by the ancient Greeks. For instance, even as early as Homer's *Iliad* (8th century BCE), we find passages in which judgments about disputes are made by a king or by the elders of the tribe, but always with the consent of the public gathered together and serving as the conscience of the community. It was this deliberative principle which ultimately led them to invent democracy, and by the end of the 8th century there had emerged the idea of the *polis*, the city-state, as the principal form of social organization, with its centerpiece the urban center and with its culmination in the 5th century BCE in the full-blown democracy of Athens.

Enlightened thinkers in every age since, from Thomas Aquinas to Abraham Lincoln, have looked to the classical world for guidance as they crafted the essential ideas upon which the societies of the world would govern themselves. America's most essential documents, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address, were written by students of the Classical Age. In its formative period in the early 19th century, America's first intellectuals brought classicism from Europe to the American university to be studied, not as abstract philosophy or philology, but as a practical model for culture and civilization. The ideals of ancient Greece, the ones Cavafy romanticizes about, were the source of the original ideals upon which America was built. Students in 18th and 19th century America and Europe studied Greek and Latin as a regular part of their education, and they recited the orations of Greek and Roman statesmen as a way of developing their own public speaking. In fact, the study of language and expression that is so central a part of our educational system today is modeled after the schools in ancient Athens and Rome. Once they have a chance to read them, university students today remain drawn to classic texts such as Pericles' *Funeral Oration*, Socrates' *Apology*, and Cicero's *Catalinian Orations*, not only because they capture moments of supreme human drama, but also because they evoke universal ideas and images that speak to us even today.

History tells us that the impulse toward self-government was driven by the emergence of a rhetorical self-consciousness. It was through the arts of expression, both spoken and written, that democratic and republican forms of government were nurtured. As far as one may judge from surviving evidence, the Greeks were the first people of the ancient world who endeavored to analyze the ways in which human beings communicate with each other, the *logos*. Greece is, therefore, the birthplace of the arts of discourse, which includes not only rhetoric but also logic, grammar, and poetry. Although many other ancient civilizations produced literature, only the Greeks produced analytic, expository treatises, and attempted to discover the bases of human communication. Written treatises for the purpose of teaching argument and persuasion led to the formation of a body of precepts that guided speakers for centuries thereafter. This body of principles forms the basis of the rhetorical theory that explains the art of human discourse.

Nevertheless it is also true that each age is threatened by the entropic forces of inarticulate and coarsened speech, or sloppy and hackneyed writing. Slippage into linguistic babble remains but one generation away. As always, to maintain the precision

in language that advanced civilizations require, we turn to the Classical Age. As the philosopher Karl Jaspers reminds us:

each great uplift of selfhood has been brought about by a fresh contact with the classical world. When that world has been forgotten, a barbarism has always revived. Just as a boat cut loose from its moorings drifts aimlessly hither and thither, at the mercy of the winds and waves, so do we drift when we lose touch with antiquity. Our primary foundation, changeable though it may be, is invariably the classical world.

It has been frequently observed that our modern epoch seems detached from its roots. Decisions we make about our society and our own lives often seem based upon fads or trends, upon what is socially or politically correct or current at the moment. An ordered knowledge seems to elude us. Concepts such as freedom, heroism, justice, happiness, and persuasion lose their meanings as they are detached from the times in which they were forged on the twin anvils of individual thought and public debate. Through the study of classical rhetoric we revive and sharpen the meaning of these foundational notions, learn how to find common ground, and discover the way forward.

A *Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric* thus provides a clear understanding of the classical roots of rhetoric. While no single volume can account for every idea developed in ancient Greece and Rome, it does concentrate on the key concepts that have shaped the field for centuries. The book begins with a chapter providing an overview of the historical context in which the study of rhetoric emerged, including the contributions of women and the Presocratics.

Chapter 2 provides an extensive review of the rise of the “sophists,” those first teachers of the art of speaking and writing persuasively. The lives and ideas of important sophists are reviewed, and the chapter describes and evaluates the debate that raged in the 5th century BCE between the sophists and their indefatigable critic Socrates.

Chapter 3 provides a thorough review of the most important rhetorical treatise of the Classical Age, Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. It also introduces the concept of “metarhetoric,” that is, the set of knowledges Aristotle demands of his speaker (*rhetor*). This chapter has been revised from the third edition with a more readable format, more extensive commentary on key concepts such as the *Enthymeme* and the *Topics*, and a more consistent and detailed development of Aristotle’s 28 common forms of argument. The chapter includes boxed presentations of key concepts for more focused reading. Finally, while retaining much of the material that has made this chapter so successful with teachers and students for four decades, the revised chapter incorporates new ideas about Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric published in recent years.

Chapter 4 provides an introduction to standardized Roman rhetoric, with synopses of three pragmatic handbooks. It has also been extensively revised to include fuller development of two important topics: *stasis* theory and *figures of speech* (*Topos* and *Figura*). With regard to Figures of Speech and Figures of Thought first found in Book IV of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (c.87 BCE), the authors have focused on those figures most commonly used in ancient and modern oratory in an effort to balance the focus of this chapter between theory and pedagogy.

Chapter 5 provides synopses of six major treatises on rhetoric composed during the era of the Roman republic by Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the most influential orators and rhetoricians of the ancient world. Roman rhetoric and its educational background is studied further in Chapter 6, a comprehensive review of the life of Quintilian and his educational and rhetorical theory as developed in his 12-volume *Institutio oratoria* (*The Education of the Orator*). This chapter also notes the influence of the *Institutio oratoria* down through the ages.

We welcome Michael Hoppmann as a co-author of this fourth edition. Michael brings his knowledge of *stasis* theory to the text as well as his broad European education in the classics.

We have many people to thank for this fourth edition. First, all of you who used the preceding editions of *Synoptic* and sent us your comments and criticisms. They have made the text much stronger. We thank Linda Bathgate, the publisher at Routledge, for her guidance and support throughout this process. We thank our respective institutions for their support in completing this work.

On a more somber note, we lament the passing of Forbes I. Hill and Donovan J. Ochs, each of whom contributed so much to previous editions of this book.

We return, then, to ancient Greece and Rome, to discover the roots of our civilization and to review the first investigations into the art of public discourse—rhetoric—to keep alive the “Voices” Cavafy so loved, and to keep, as Jaspers put it so well, “our boats moored.”

Part One

Theories of Rhetoric

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The Origins of Rhetoric in the Democracy of Ancient Greece

Whoever does not study rhetoric will be a victim of it.

Ancient Greek wall inscription

Introduction: The Urge to Study Rhetoric in Ancient Greece

It may be said that rhetoric is the handmaiden of democracy. Whether in the courtroom, the legislature, or the public forum, free and intelligent speaking and writing are the lubricants that keep the gears of democracy running smoothly. Instruction in the arts of discourse affords each one of us the opportunity to participate in the public debate and thus to feel invested in the decisions that are made. In his treatise *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle notes four advantages to studying this practical art for citizens living in a democracy: (1) to help truth prevail in the world of human affairs; (2) to help us understand how people are moved to action through speech; (3) to help us see both sides of an issue; and (4) to help us defend ourselves against the arguments of others. To understand democracy, then, as a lively exchange of ideas among the people living in it, one must understand rhetoric; and to understand rhetoric, one must understand democracy. This chapter details how democracy emerged as a form of government and how the art of rhetoric facilitated the practices that allowed it to flourish in ancient times, especially in Athens.

The Rise of Democracy in Athens

The transformation of institutions of government into democratic forms created the need for expertise in speaking and writing. Prior to the 8th century before the Common Era (BCE),¹ ancient Greece was predominantly an oral culture.² Although forms of writing with symbols (rather than with pictures such as in hieroglyphic writing) known as Linear A and Linear B existed in Minoan and Mycenaean times, the emergence of alphabetic writing on papyrus during the Homeric Age in the late 8th century triggered a significant advance in literacy, especially in Athens, the most progressive of the Greek city-states. By the 5th century, Athens had evolved from a *mythic* society created, ordered, and governed by gods into an oral *and* written culture characterized by its focus on *logos*, or the search for order in the universe through speech and rational argument.³ It was during this time that language came to be categorized and studied as a body of principles. Speaking and writing lessons soon became accessible

to ordinary citizens in Athens, giving them the practical skills they would need to participate more effectively in the public institutions they had created. These two parallel developments, democracy and literacy in both spoken and written forms, created the need for, and the possibility of, an artful and strategic theory of communication: the art of rhetoric.

Democracy (from the Greek words *demos*, “the people,” and *kratein*, “to rule”) emerged as a response to changing conditions among the Greek people in the Attic, or southeastern, region of that country. During the period between approximately 3,000 and 850 BCE, kings such as King Minos in Crete and King Theseus in Athens ruled the various tribes throughout Greece. The king was considered a descendant of God, usually Zeus, and he ruled with omniscience. As Botsford notes:

His honor [the King] was from Zeus, lord of counsel, who cherished him, granted him glory, and furnished him even with thoughts. His sceptre, the sign of his power, was made in heaven, and given by a god to the founder of his dynasty. The people, therefore, prayed and hearkened to him as a god.⁴



Figure 1.1 Ancient Greece hand drawn set

Kings were commanders on the battlefield. Although during Minoan times there were long periods of peace, war remained a constant threat during these centuries, and kings were needed to order the troops into battle and to lead the defense of the villages when outside forces invaded. Thus, while the throne was inherited, kings remained in place to the extent that they were successful in preserving the peace and defending the tribe against enemies.

During these early periods encompassing the Minoan and Mycenaean Ages, people settled their disputes in various ways. According to the poet Homer in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, it was common for two men or two families to meet in a field and fight to settle a land dispute or a domestic feud, perhaps over a seduction or a property dispute. But the early Greeks also often preferred to talk out their differences, and they often consulted a third party who represented the voice of the community to sit in judgment of their arguments. These “*istors*” or “knowers” were the kings. Thus it was that kings became judges, because it was accepted that they alone knew what was right and they alone who could find the truth in competing stories.⁵ Rather than laws as we might think about them today, there emerged a “code” of customs and traditions rooted in myth, tribal history, and kingly decrees that provided guidance for daily living. While the king might consult tribal elders during his deliberations over disputes, his was the first and last word. Since writing had not advanced to the linear alphabetic script used by Homer, records were kept on clay tablets or walls when they were kept at all, and justice was often a capricious undertaking since precedents did not accumulate on record. Justice at the hands of a king was often justice denied.

BCE	
3000–1400	The Minoan Age
1600–1150	The Mycenaean Age
900–700	Age of Homer
700ca	Unification of Athens and the Attica region
650–500	Oligarchies overthrown by Tyrants
630	Dracon establishes written code of laws—The Laws of Blood
593	Solon reforms legal code
492–479	Persian wars
	Defeat of Persians at Marathon, 490
	Defeat of Persians at Salamis, 480
	Defeat of Persians at Plataea, 479
462–429	Periclean Age, Golden Age of Athenian Democracy
462–322	The Classical Age
431–404	Peloponnesian War
	Sparta destroys Athenian navy, 405
404–371	Spartan dominance of Greece
403	Democracy restored to Athens
377	Second Athenian Confederacy
	Athens defeats Spartan navy, 376
359–336	Reign of Philip of Macedon
336–323	Reign of Alexander the Great
323–276	The Hellenic Age; last flowering of Athenian culture
276	The Roman Age; Greece conquered by the Roman Empire

Figure 1.2 The rise and decline of democracy in Athens: a chronological timeline

In civil affairs, the king was also supreme ruler. But during the Homeric Age councils emerged to administer the daily activities of the people and the king often deferred to the council in civil matters. The idea of the “state” began at this time as a crude institution. There were no administrators (bureaucrats) and the council of elders worked through the monarchy to maintain civil order. In matters of civil dispute, the king would often defer to an appointed magistrate. Legislative issues were usually discussed by a council of elders that submitted its decisions to the king for his approval or disapproval. Because the state did not function as an official intermediary in civil affairs, the family was the usual source of strength and support for the individual.

As groups of people settled into culturally distinct tribes and began to develop more involved forms of interaction with one another, civil affairs became more complex and kings by necessity were forced to heed the voice of their councils. Indeed, wise kings began to call councils into session regularly to seek their advice and respond to their needs. Some monarchies were actually close to aristocracies with a ruling class often holding sway in civil and military decisions, particularly when the king was weak. In matters of dispute, it became common for one of the disputants to make a speech in the presence of others, appealing for justice, we might say, by swaying public opinion. As MacDowell notes:

Appealing to public opinion is something different from appealing to the king. A king may have special expertise as a judge, from talent or experience or divine inspiration. The general public can hardly be said to have such special expertise. But what they do have, if they care to use it, is power.⁶

This power is the power to influence the decision-makers, even if with no other means than their “cheers” or “boos” for the speakers or the verdicts of the judges.

Monarchies eventually gave way to more popular modes of decision-making, councils became more dominant in civil affairs so that by the late 8th century a transition began to aristocratic forms of government, oligarchies. Oligarchies were either powerful families or groups of powerful individuals who seized control of a city by wresting power from the king. Oligarchies were not always oppressive, but they served predominantly the needs of those in power. Oligarchies began to fail during the later years of the 7th century because they began making political decisions on a purely economic basis; that is, those individuals who could make a contribution to the treasury were favored.

Considering the state of affairs during the Homeric Period, it is clear to see why the urge for democracy arose. Those who fought the battles desired a greater voice in military decisions. In matters of state, magistrates too often used customs and traditions for personal benefit. Even a shift from a pure monarchy to an oligarchy or an aristocracy resulted in an abuse of power. Oligarchies were soon replaced with tyrannies; that is, forms of government where one powerful person ruled with the power of the military. Tyrannies differed from monarchies because the tyrant ruled not by the divine grace of the gods, but by his own political and military power.

The Homeric Age witnessed, then, an evolution in forms of government from monarchy to oligarchy to tyranny, and shortly thereafter, as we will see, to democracy. These changes, while both subtle and complex, can be seen most clearly in the light of

human nature; that is, the natural desire human beings have for freedom, justice, peace, and community.

As noted earlier, and especially from the Mycenaean Age forward, warfare was a constant reality for the villages and cities of Greece. The most famous of these wars was the ten-year-long Trojan War (the war fought over Helen of Troy) thought by archaeologists to have been waged during the 12th century. It was common, indeed, for city-states to be at war for years at a time until one either retreated or was conquered. Since the penalty for military failure was enslavement or death, governments existed principally to insure victory in war. Democracy, in fact, arose first in the Attic region when it became a form of government capable of insuring domestic tranquility through triumph on the battlefield. Its value as a mode of associated living among people, as we shall see, is a later occurrence.

It was during the waning years of the Mycenaean Age that Attica was unified. The powerful King Theseus brought the tribes that inhabited the area under one kingdom so that by 700 Attica was one nation with the city of Athens as its center. About the year 700, the last dynasty to rule Attica, the Medontidae, was deposed for failure to lead successful military campaigns. In its place, an *Archon* (usually an ordinary citizen) was appointed to lead the nation in war. The Archon ruled with the aid of magistrates, the Areopagus, originally appointed to ten-year terms by the Archon, but later, around 683, to appointments of one year, and beginning in 487 through yearly election. Later, the term of the Archon was reduced to ten years. Thus, by the middle of the 7th century Attica was ruled by an Archon who served for ten years and an annually appointed council of magistrates. The final transition from oligarchic to representative government occurred near the end of the 6th century with the fall of the tyrant Hippias (510) and the democratic reforms of his successor Cleisthenes who reorganized the citizenry of Athens into villages (*demes*), thus breaking up the territorial domains of the oligarchs and creating a representative assembly of 500 citizens, 50 from each of the ten demes.⁷

While the Archon's chief function was military and the council of magistrates' chief function was civil, a group of six magistrates chosen from the noble classes, the *Thesmothetae*, served as judges in matters of civil offense. As the Thesmothetae evolved, it soon became an institution in itself taking on the role of managing the courts and administering justice in all its forms. There were now three branches of government: the Archon serving as the Executive primarily in charge of foreign affairs but also involved in some civil matters; the Areopagus or Council of Magistrates serving as the Legislative branch; and the Thesmothetae serving as the Judicial branch of government.

During this same period, essential reform became necessary in the military. Increasing warfare with neighboring city-states and increasing costs for military operations required the rulers of Athens to appeal to all classes of citizens for money and service. One group in particular, the hoplites or footsoldiers, came to bear much of the burden of battle. As Athens succeeded in her military ventures, the hoplites and later the naucraries (sailors) began making demands for more personal and political power.⁸

In the year 630, the last Archon to serve as tyrant of Athens, Cylon (or Kylon), seized the Acropolis, the seat of government in Athens, and established himself as the

ruler of all Attica. His reign was short-lived for within weeks he was deposed by the citizenry in an uprising led by farmers and the hoplites. Cylon's followers were stoned or butchered in the center of Athens; only a few escaped to the hills around the city. Frightened by this occurrence, the nobles in Athens realized that their security lay in the hands of the citizenry. Athenian democracy was born in this violent turn of events.

Establishment of the Athenian Court System and Legislature

In 621, following the overthrow of Cylon, the citizens of Athens commissioned Dracon (Draco), an elder citizen considered to be the wisest of the Greeks, as “thesmothete with extraordinary power.” His task was to transform the oral code of customs and traditions into a body of written “laws” (*nomos*). By writing down the laws, Dracon gave them a new permanence in language, making them accessible to all citizens and less subject to self-interested interpretation and abuse by those in power. Dracon was concerned only with criminal offenses, which until this time had been settled through blood feud or rulings by the king or Archon. He used what had been places of sanctuary in Athens for the establishment of tribunals or courts complete with magistrates drawn from the ruling classes or from the council to hear cases of homicide, assault, and robbery. By regularizing the code for criminal offenses, Dracon began the tradition of justice, where complaints are resolved through clearly enunciated crimes and where laws are applied equally to all.⁹

The Code of Dracon served the Athenians well, and it constituted a surge in the evolution of democracy from which there would be no retreat. Dracon was revered by the people of Athens. His laws were later to become known as the “Laws of Blood,” however, since the penalty for almost any offense was death, whether the crime was murder or theft, even of an apple or a cabbage. Though Dracon was simply transcribing the existing oral code into written form and was thus not responsible for the penalties incurred, his name has become synonymous with harsh or severe treatment; i.e., “draconian.”

In 594, the wise man, poet, and legislator Solon was appointed as Chief Magistrate to reform the Code of Dracon. Solon had earned the trust of all Athenians, and his legal reforms would be adopted and used in Athens for the succeeding three centuries. Solon's chief accomplishment was to abolish existing debts secured with personal freedom, thus saving many Athenians from slavery or certain exile. He also restored all mortgaged land to the original owners. While Dracon had relied on magistrates chosen from the upper classes to administer his system of justice, Solon reformed the court system to allow for juries numbering between 501 and 2,000 citizens chosen by lot to hear all cases except those involving homicide and certain religious offenses (these were heard by the Council of the Areopagus composed of all former Archons). The emergence of the concept of a “trial by a jury of one's peers” is a critical step in the evolution of democratic forms of government, because, as we learn from the *Athenaion Politeia*, the most frequently cited ancient text on the matter of laws, “when the people control the vote, it controls the constitution.”¹⁰

Solon's Code was written onto a wooden wheel that was placed in the center of the marketplace (*Agora*) so that everyone had access to the laws. Solon also established

courts throughout Athens, many of them outdoors. Here is a list of some of those courts and the crimes for which they were established:

The Areopagus—Cases of Bloodshed and Religious Offenses

The Palladion—Involuntary Homicide

The Delphinion—Homicide Involving Justification

The Phraetto—Exiled Citizens Later Accused of Murder

The Prytaneion—Creatures or Objects Condemned for Crimes

The Heliaea—All Other Cases Except Arson and Bloodshed

The courts soon became the social center of Athenian life as citizens came to enjoy the drama of the courtrooms (*agôn*). Jurors heard litigation on a complete range of offenses, both criminal and civil. Citizens delivered their own speeches, one to present the case and one to rebut the other person's. Witnesses were also allowed to testify in most cases. A waterclock was used to time the speeches, and jurors voted by placing a clay ballot in a voting box, one ballot signifying innocent and one signifying guilty. Cases were usually decided by a simple majority. Passions often ran high, and to come before the court was, Freeman tells us, "Like addressing a public meeting."¹¹ As we shall see in the next chapter, the institution of the courts created the need for training in rhetoric as a citizen's very freedom often depended on his ability to speak persuasively.



Figure 1.3 Ancient Greek waterclock

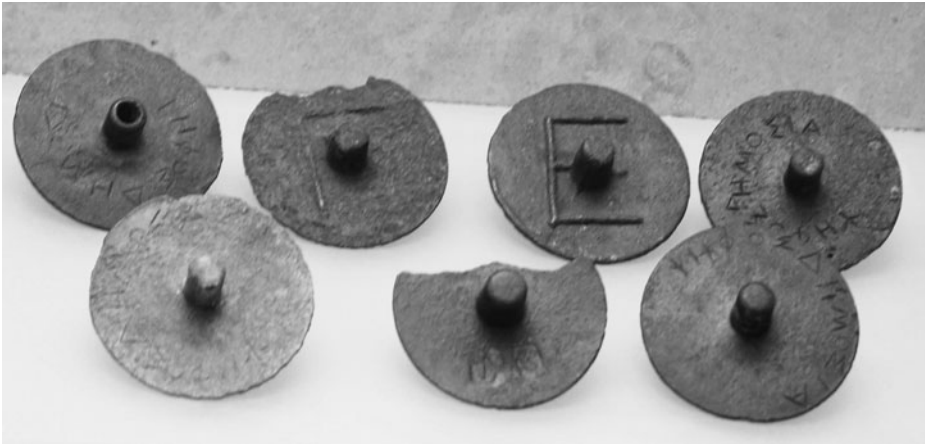


Figure 1.4 Ballots

Through his legal reforms, Solon introduced the first form of popular democracy into Athens, and his judicial system remained relatively intact for the next 200 years. Solon's courts became the model for the Romans and centuries later for England and America. The Code of Solon was frequently challenged and occasionally reformed; however, its essential ingredients were never altered. Solon's reforms mark the unalterable impulse toward popular government in western civilization.

The period of democratization included legislative as well as judicial reform. Reforms in the military that gave social power to the hoplites and naucraries were also responsible for reform in the assembly. As noted earlier, the legislative branch of government had evolved from a king's council, to a decennial council of appointed members who had some power independent of the king, to an annual council of 500 citizens appointed by lot. During the period between the demise of Cylon and the reforms of Solon, the military took on much greater power and became themselves an assembly for the election of magistrates and for other business. Soon, the military assembly became an official body of 401 "councillors," representing the tribes that made up the Attic nation. The Council of Areopagus now became the aristocratic council denuded of its political power while the Council of 400 became a more popular assembly, a Senate and House of Representatives to use contemporary terminology.

For the rest of the 6th century, from a few decades following Solon's reforms in 594 to the year 510 Athens was ruled by the Archon Peisistratus, himself from 560 to 527, and then until 514 by his two sons, Hippias and Hipparchus. The reign of the *Peisistratidae* ended in 510 following which Athens was ruled by the benevolent Archons Cleisthenes and Themistocles and by democratic assemblies such as the Council of Areopagus. In the year 492, a war erupted with Persia that would last until

the Athenians achieved victory in the year 479. The victory over the Persians would change forever the character of ancient Athens.

Cultural and Intellectual Traditions in Athens: Writing, Self-Restraint and the Golden Mean, the Place of Women, and Slavery

Before turning to the period following the Persian War, it is important to review the cultural and intellectual awakening occasioned by, and running parallel to, the political evolution just discussed.

The Evolution of Reason and Rationality as Guides to Understanding the Universe

Ancient Greece, beginning in the 6th century, is distinguished in western thought for being the first culture to speculate about the universe from a purely human perspective. Early Greek thinkers such as Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes ushered into history a new way of thinking about the world around them. Prior to these thinkers, and the speculations of other “Presocratics” as they are known, it was accepted belief that the gods controlled the universe, and that human life was dominated, somewhat capriciously, by the actions of the gods. In other words, it was the *mythology*, first of Mother Earth and then of the Gods of Olympus, through which people sought to understand and see order in the world around them.

Presocratic thinkers asserted that the world can be understood and comprehended by the human mind alone, through rational thought and argumentation about that world (*logos*). In assigning what had been the functions of the gods to natural phenomena such as air, water, fire, and other forms of energy (*dynamis*), Presocratic thinkers began to shift the answers given to questions such as “What is the nature of reality?” “Where do human beings fit into the nature of things?” and “How does that peculiarly human gift of rationality guide us to the truth of things?” Moreover, they began to think of the universe as a place of balance and harmony. As Waterfield writes:

The Greeks had long believed, except in their more pessimistic moments, that there was a law of compensation in human affairs – that the gods would, sooner or later, belittle a man who rose too high or too fast, but Anaximander extended this law to the world at large, making it a cosmic principle – and, importantly, one that was governed by “necessity,” an abstract and unchanging force, not a bunch of fickle gods. His vision of a universe ordered by cosmic justice was potent, and soon took hold of the Greek imagination.¹²

From ideas such as these a paradigm shift in human thought followed, one that led gradually to the first “self-reflective” society, governed by *logos* or reasoning through speech, and accessible to the human mind of even the most common peasant. Of course, belief in the gods remained popular, and we must think of the Presocratic shift in thinking as a slow but gradual evolution of ideas, at times existing parallel to

traditional thought, but slowly gaining preeminence, especially in the intellectual world that would come to Athens during the time of Pericles. Presocratic thinking would provide the philosophical foundations for the urge toward democracy and the preeminence of rhetoric as the appropriate vehicle for moving that society forward. In the next chapter, we will see how Presocratic thinking catalyzed the rise of the sophists, those first teachers of speech and rhetoric who dominated education and political life in Athens during its Golden Age.

The Development of Writing and Prose

In addition to the revolution of thought about the nature of the universe, it was largely due to advances in the technology and the teaching of writing that Greek culture established both permanence and continuity. Through the technology of writing, it became possible to keep records of civil, military, and legal matters. Richard Leo Enos notes, for instance, that,

As democracy stabilized political procedures in Athens, the need for writers to record specific events of oral and civic functions increased. Writing was also helpful in recording the oral deliberations necessary in the operations of the *polis*; it was used to record events that had immediate and pragmatic impact.¹³

Writing also made possible the development of a tradition in literature and art, and a systematic approach to commerce. Writing for the purpose of performing Homeric literature and for inscriptions on works of art became a significant means through which Greek culture would become self-reflective. As Gomperz notes, through the development of scrolls from the pulp of the papyrus shrub in the 7th century,

The circulation of thought was accelerated, the commerce of intellect enlarged, and the continuity of culture guaranteed, in a degree which can well-nigh be compared with that which marked the invention of the printing press at the dawn of modern history.¹⁴

The various tribes in the Attic region adopted a simple alphabet in the late 8th century and they began immediately to establish a literary tradition and a history of themselves as a people. It was principally through the epic poems of Homer, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, that people in the Attic region began to see themselves as a community. Through their struggles, defeats, and victories as chronicled by Homer, and in succeeding centuries by the rhapsodists who performed Homeric literature in the villages and city-states throughout Greece, heroes and villains were celebrated and vilified, forms and styles of expression in poetry and oratory were ensconced in theory and practice, and appropriate modes of interaction such as between the individual and the gods and between the sexes were established. When such a history is present in drama and writing, it is more easily passed from generation to generation, thus becoming part of the dialogue between people and between generations that is, in fact, culture. As we will see in the next chapter, writing also played a critical role in the development

of rhetoric, both as practiced in the courtrooms, legislatures, and in public ceremonies, and as studied on a more theoretical basis in the schools.

The Ideal of Harmony, Proportion, and Balance: Preference for the Mean

As noted earlier, even in Presocratic times Greeks believed that there was harmony and balance in the universe. In the Attic region, Greeks also developed a penchant for self-restraint, living as they did in a pluralistic society composed of numerous tribes, aliens, slaves, and temporary visitors. This traditional mode of behavior would be transformed into a philosophy of moderation and balance in living that would later become a hallmark of their society, expressed most clearly, although centuries later, in Pericles' "Funeral Oration," and in Aristotle's philosophy of the Golden Mean (described in his treatise, *Nichomachean Ethics*).

For the Greeks, a beautiful spirit was expressed in a beautiful body. The Olympic Games, held at Olympia beginning in 776, were a celebration not just of athletic ability but of the mental discipline that athletic prowess represented. Contests such as wrestling were often conducted in the courtyards of temples and they were surrounded with festivals featuring music, dance, and poetry. This balance between the physical and the aesthetic became the ideal to which Greeks aspired. As Dickinson notes:

Body and soul, it is clear, are regarded as aspects of a single whole, so that a blemish in the one indicates and involves a blemish in the other. The training of the body is thus, in a sense, the training of the soul, and gymnastic and music, as Plato puts it, serve the same end, the production of a harmonious temperament.¹⁵

Similarly, Greek tradition favored moderation in food and drink, and in most social activities. "Nothing in excess" was a motto inscribed above the entrance to the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, and the proper citizen aimed at this ideal, often giving in to temptation, but always remaining faithfully devoted to the pursuit of the ideal. It is this ideal of harmony, balance, and proportion in all things that we see in Greek literature, art, and architecture that prepared the way in later centuries for Athenians to debate both sides of an issue and to assimilate opposing ideas into their decision-making. The rhetorical admonition to consider your opponent's arguments as carefully as your own was, then, consistent with other cultural practices in Athens.

Women in Classical Times and in the Rhetorical Tradition

From Homeric times to the middle of the 5th century, a male person was a citizen if his father was a citizen. The mother did not have to be Greek. This law was changed in 451 at the request of the Athenian Archon Pericles (who, ironically, had a foreign mother), and henceforth all persons claiming citizenship had to prove that both the mother and father were Greek.¹⁶

The "idea" of citizenship, as opposed to the "ideals" of citizenship that we will discuss shortly, evolved with the establishment of the laws and the courts. Citizenship under Solon's Code determined who had rights, both legal and political. The women

of Athens were not given legal rights, but they were given some political rights. While they could not serve on the legislative council or the juries, they were protected by the laws and they had religious privileges. As a result, women did not play a public role in Athenian society as it embraced democracy, but they were fully vested in its existence and preservation.

The role of women in Athenian society was to produce children and run the household. We should not conclude from these roles, however, that women were depreciated in the classical period in Athens since bearing children was considered a sacred duty, and managing a household meant supervising domestic slaves and often a large holding of land and property.

Greek society during the period of the rise of democracy and the study of rhetoric in Athens had a clear image of the ideal woman. She was a private person engaged in the domestic affairs of Greek family life, devoted to her husband (he could have an affair, for instance, while she could not), and valued for her appearance. Ideal images of women were represented in female goddesses such as Aphrodite (goddess of love), Artemis (goddess of the hunt and protector of young women), and Athena, after whom was named the city of Athens and who symbolized victory in war, civilization, wisdom, strength, and justice. The same Greek society also had negative stereotypes of women, as in Plato's *Republic* where women are variously seen as nagging, weaker,



Figure 1.5 Diotima

purely sexual creatures, and prone to gossip. Female goddesses also represented negative qualities such as temperament (Demeter) and jealousy (Hera).

Because they were excluded from the public sphere, women did not engage in public speaking. Thus, women had no need to study or use rhetoric. Or did they? If we think of rhetoric strictly as the study of speaking in public such as in the courtrooms or assemblies, it is true that women did not speak in these public forums. But they did engage in persuasive discourse and study *logos* or reasoning through speech. Aristotle, for instance, in his seminal treatise on rhetoric that we shall study in Chapter 3, uses examples from the 6th century female poet, Sappho, in his development of *epideictic* or ceremonial rhetoric in Book I, and in his explanation of *arguments from induction* or *from previous judgments* in Book II.¹⁷ In addition, females such as Pericles' wife Aspasia were highly regarded students of rhetoric, and it has been asserted that Aspasia wrote Pericles' most famous speech, "The Funeral Oration."¹⁸ Further evidence of the contribution of women to the study of speech or *logos* occurs in the Platonic Dialogue "Symposium." In this treatise on love, Socrates recounts a conversation he had with a priestess, Diotima of Mantinea, from which he claims he learned the real meaning of love. Love, according to Diotima, is the culmination of a searching between two human beings for a spiritual (as opposed to a purely physical) connection or communion. Each stage of this awakening to the power of love is guided by speech,



Figure 1.6 Aspasia

beautiful speech that brings the lovers to the essence of this most aesthetic experience: love. As Johnstone tells us, the erotic process as explained by Diotima, “centers on the uniqueness of the souls who seek fusion with one another through dialogue.”¹⁹

Such examples lead to the conclusion that Aristotle and Plato/Socrates considered that rhetoric was not limited only to males engaged in public speaking, but to other forms of discourse such as dialogue and narration. Women engaged in such rhetorical activities, and thus studied the art of speaking in order to master it. Women may also have been involved in the study of writing, and the revolution in literacy that it produced.²⁰ It is important to note that in our world women need to understand the art of rhetoric and learn the skill of public speaking as much as men, and that female scholars are engaged in the study of rhetoric equally with male scholars. In ancient Greece, we can say with surety that women studied philosophy, wrote poetry, and engaged in verbal discourse in notable ways.

Not all of the traditions regarding women as passed down from the Homeric Period to the end of the Persian War in 479 are laudable, at least by today’s standards. Relations between the sexes, for instance, begin in Homer as idealistic and romantic. Men go off to war and the women wait faithfully at home. Men are wounded and battered and women come to their rescue, bathing them and nursing them back to health. As Dickinson writes:

Readers of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* will find depicted there, amid all the barbarity of an age of rapine and war, relations between men and women so tender, faithful, and beautiful, that they may almost stand as universal types of the ultimate human ideal.²¹

During the 6th and 5th centuries, this view is replaced with one that often sees women as equal to children and slaves, confined to the home and with few legal rights. We could even say that marriage relations were subordinated to the ideal of consenting romantic relations between adult men and younger boys. While some dramatists such as Euripedes and some sophists such as Gorgias defended women through accurate depictions of their struggles, the status of women in Athens during the 6th and 5th centuries was generally inferior to male citizens.

The Institution and Tradition of Slavery

Ancient Greek civilization is often criticized in our times for its practice of slavery. Slavery was an accepted institution throughout ancient Greece, and in Athens slaves made up approximately 50–75 percent of the population during the 6th and 5th centuries (200,000 free persons and 200,000–400,000 enslaved persons). Slaves were mostly non-Greeks who were acquired through war, kidnapping, and purchase. Slave labor was used in the fields and mines in order to free citizens to participate in civic affairs or wars. Slaves were also used for most domestic activities such as shopping and housekeeping. Slaves were sometimes treated poorly such as in the mining operations around Athens, but other slaves were treated with kindness and legal protections were established for domestic slaves to prevent their being abused. In Athens, slaves were sometimes manumitted (freed for a fee) to the status of foreign alien (*metic*) and slaves who practiced a skilled trade such as carpentry or pottery were usually allowed

to keep a proportion of their earnings.²² During the Age of Pericles, when Athens flowered into the greatest civilization yet known to history, slaves played a minor role in the construction and industrialization of the city, and many of those who were impressed were treated as regular laborers.²³

Today we look with condemnation at the institution of slavery. By the traditions of the time of ancient Greece, however, slavery was a common and accepted practice.

The Emergence of the Humanities in Greek Culture Through Rhetoric

As with any culture, the developing Athenian culture was a mixture of good and bad. By the end of the 7th century, Athenian culture had produced great art, literature, music, philosophy, and science—hallmarks of advanced civilizations. On the other hand, it was burdened by war, and a growing *hubris* (arrogance of pride) occasioned by its successes. As the first truly self-reflective society, however, Athenian citizens were the first to scrutinize themselves, to engage in debate and discussion about themselves, and to evolve into a better society through their reflections.

The ancient Greeks were the first civilization to invent a society through the search for a purely human wisdom rather than through the study of received wisdom in texts such as the Bible or mythology. When we say that in ancient Greek civilization, particularly Athenian society, lies the foundation of what we think of as the “humanities,” we mean that it was the ancient Greeks who constructed their world through their own purely human meditations about it. Johnstone calls this the search for “wisdom,” both practical (*phronesis*) and theoretical (*sophia*) through speech. “Human wisdom,” he writes,

involves a kind of knowing ... Wisdom is both a grasping of the “way things are” – of the patterns and regularities in human experience and of how these fit into the *kosmos* – and an appreciation of the truths thus grasped ... It is generated by apprehensions of the truths of human nature, by one’s realization and understanding of how humanness “fits into” the nature of things.²⁴

It was through their inventiveness, self-restraint, and reflective nature that Athenians of the 5th century BCE reached a point in their development where they would flower into a great civilization. We turn now to that period, the Age of Pericles.

The Persian Wars and the Reign of Pericles

The war with Persia lasted for 13 years from 492 to 479. Persia was an oriental nation bent on the conquest of the territory to its west, that is, Greece. Citizens of the many Greek city-states that had been developing along with Athens during the previous centuries understood the Persian aggression as no less than a struggle for their very existence. The city-states united in their defense of Greece, and led by Athens they secured victory. The Battle of Marathon (490) was the first and one of the most important military victories of the Persian Wars. This victory over the Persian invaders gave the Greek city-states confidence in their ability to defend themselves and the conviction that theirs was the superior culture. The battle is considered a defining



Athenian Empire Fifth Century, B.C.E.

Figure 1.7 Athenian Empire

moment in the development of western culture. Ten years later, at the decisive battles of Thermopylae (480) Salamis (480) and Plataea (479) the Persian forces would be driven for the final time off the Greek mainland back to Asia Minor, where they would not challenge Greek hegemony for the next 100 years.

For the next several years, the struggle would be for supremacy of the mainland itself, a struggle chiefly between the Spartans and the Athenians. Due to its naval superiority and its cultural dynamism, Athens would achieve the status of an empire with allied states as far away as Egypt and Sicily. The Spartans, masters of fighting on land, would also establish an empire with allies across the Greek mainland and its islands. In the years following the Persian Wars, and because of its invincible navy, Athens would become the more powerful of the two city-states, and the Persian Wars would prepare the way for the emergence of the greatest of all the Greek leaders, the Athenian general Pericles.

The historian Thucydides tells us that Pericles was the most brilliant man of his time, the ablest ever to lead the Athenian democracy. He was a brilliant political strategist, but perhaps even more importantly, he was the foremost orator in Greece, a man able to persuade others to accept his policies through the polish of his public speaking. Pericles spoke directly to the Athenian people once each week

from the hill of the Pnyx near the Acropolis. His teacher, Anaxagoras, tells us that Pericles had,

a lofty spirit and an elevated mode of speech, free from the vulgar and knavish tricks of mob-orators, but also a composed countenance that never gave way to laughter, a dignity of carriage and restraint in the arrangement of his clothing which no emotion was allowed to disturb while he was speaking, a voice that was evenly controlled, and all the other characteristics of this sort which so impressed his hearers.²⁵

Pericles' rhetorical skills endeared him to the masses and the aristocrats. He won election every year for three decades, making him one of the most successful politicians of his or any time.

It was during the reign of Pericles that Athens achieved its greatest glory. From his ascendance to power in 462 to his death from the plague in 429 Pericles oversaw the establishment of a vast military empire, the maturation of a pure democracy the likes of which the world had never seen, and the flowering of all the arts and sciences that we know today as the basis of western civilization. No 30-year period in history can compare to it.

Pericles constructed his empire principally on two complementary policies: imperialism and popular democracy. About 478 at the conclusion of the Persian Wars, the city-states in the Aegean region formed a confederacy, the Delian League, to repel further invasion by Persian forces. Upon taking control of Athens, Pericles seized the leadership of the League by superior military might, and he coerced the surrounding city-states to a tax to pay for military protection from the Persians. Athens now became a protectorate for neighboring states that were required to lay down their arms and to rely on Athens for their defense.

At the same time, Pericles installed a direct democracy to maintain popular support, both at home in Athens and in the city-states he had subdued. Solon's judicial reforms had extended civil rights, but the reforms had not completely enfranchised all citizens. Pericles liberalized the judicial system to include popular juries chosen by lot, a system he supported with grants to the poorer citizens so that they could serve. By running for office each year, Pericles eliminated fears of a tyranny. He also established a popular legislative assembly, the Five Hundred, which reviewed on a yearly basis all laws established by the Thesmothetes. In addition, any citizen could propose or oppose a law during the time of the assembly. Grants were provided to the Five Hundred so that they could serve in the assembly, thus completing Pericles' reform of Athens into a pure democracy.

Pericles instituted laws to protect artists and craftsmen from sanctions on their work; they were now allowed to write, speak, or build freely. He brought jobs to Athenians in the form of shipbuilding and produced the largest navy of the time. He established colonies as far away as Sicily, Egypt, and Spain, an accomplishment leading to increased trade, commercial relationships, and the movement of talented people to and from Athens. Pericles also provided price supports to the farmers so that food could be purchased inexpensively in the marketplace. These and other initiatives created the conditions through which Athens thrived with commerce and creativity.

In 458 Pericles concluded the construction of a massive "long walls" project begun by Themistocles and intended to connect the central city of Athens to the coastal area,

the Peiraeus, thus insuring a route to the sea and trading lines with western colonies. The walls ran parallel to one another about four and a half miles in length and 550 feet apart. The construction of the long walls provided jobs for the Athenian working class and for soldiers who were idle between military engagements.

Pericles initiated numerous other construction projects, most notably many of the temples that still mark the Athenian landscape today. The Parthenon, for instance, was begun in 447 and soon thereafter the Areopagus court was constructed. Shrines and palaces dedicated to the gods were built throughout the city, as were schools, theatres, courts, and marketplaces. Such a massive number of projects kept stonemasons, architects, and miners immersed in work, thus assuring domestic tranquility.

Athens soon became the crossroads of the world, a place where ideas flourished and discussion thrived. Citizens flocked to the *Agora*, the civic center and marketplace to attend court sessions, legislative assemblies, theatres, sporting events, and festivals. Rhapsodists played music and recited poetry, and dramatists presented their plays, both celebrating Athenian life and lampooning its excesses. Religious festivals such as the January and March festivals of Dionysus, one of the gods most revered by the peasants, were the occasion for musical celebrations and poetic compositions. Dancing was a favorite activity and dancing floors were built around many of the temples. Athens was the center of western civilization, noted for the life of leisure and elegance, of refined amusements, privacy, and reflection. As Smith notes:

All these aspects of civilization had been anticipated in the Greek cities of the sixth century and before, in the developments of archaic art and architecture, of the festivals and games, of lyric poetry, and of Ionian philosophy. But except for the public buildings and the festivals, they had been chiefly for the aristocrats. The economic development of Athens and the exploitation of her empire now afforded a modicum of wealth and leisure to a middle class of perhaps twenty thousand of Athens' citizens, their wives, and families. These, concentrated in the one city, created a new sort of demand for a more economical elegance and for the cheaper luxuries, including individualism and reflective thought.²⁶

Athens, it must be remembered, became a community in which the freedoms granted by Pericles to artists, philosophers, and ordinary citizens were directed toward the maintenance of the state. Athenian society, while protecting individual freedom, placed the state above the individual. Individuals were expected to subordinate their interests to the interests of the community, or, perhaps more precisely, to accommodate and fulfill their needs within the rights and responsibilities granted to them as citizens. To a citizen of Athens the state was more than a political machine or a bureaucracy; it was a spiritual bond. Dickinson concludes that, "In the Greek view, to be a citizen did not merely imply the payment of taxes, and the possession of a vote; it implied a direct and active cooperation in all the functions of civil and military life."²⁷ During Pericles' reign, approximately 500,000 people lived in Attica, most of them in Athens. Of the inhabitants, 30,000 were male citizens vested with the power to vote and serve as jurors, another 30,000 were women, and perhaps double that number, or 120,000, were children. The rest of the population was composed of approximately 15,000 foreign aliens (*metics*) and 200,000 slaves. Citizens were expected to arm themselves for battle and at times to arm an entire naval vessel or

infantry unit. Eligible citizens were expected to serve on juries and in the legislature; they were also expected to speak and vote on all the critical issues of the time. Civic virtue, then, was more than an ideal; it was a practical necessity and a requirement in this pure democracy.

It should be emphasized that the Greeks saw no contradiction between individual freedom and the needs of the state; the two concepts were not opposites; rather, they were seen in harmonious balance, a symbiosis. Preparing one's self fully, developing one's body and spirit, was to prepare one's self to participate in the activities of the state. The philosopher Aristotle would later define the state as "an association of similar persons for the attainment of the best life possible."²⁸ The clearest expression of the relationship between the individual and the state comes from Pericles himself in his "Funeral Oration": "We do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say that he has no business here at all." Individualism was later to become a problem for Athens, a source of the breakdown of traditional values and unity in time of war, but during the time of Pericles it was the liberation of the individual spirit to create and express that defined the Age.

The Peloponnesian War

The Age of Pericles continued until his death from a plague in 429. From 431 to 404, Athens would be engaged in the Peloponnesian War, a devastating struggle between Athens and its allies and the city-states of Lacedaemon led by Sparta. The war, undertaken reluctantly by Pericles (who died after the first year of the conflict), led to the fall of the Athenian empire. There were intermittent truces during the war and shifting alliances that would lead at one point to cooperation with Sparta and at another point to war. It was a period of intrigue, betrayal, heroism, and suffering, relieved infrequently by brief respites of peace. Athens fell to a cabal of oligarchs (the Council of 400) in 411, and was ultimately conquered by the Spartans in 404 although in 403 self-rule was restored. In 399, as revenge for his life's work and for his actions during the war, Socrates was put to trial for atheism and for corrupting the youth of Athens. He was found guilty, and was put to death by drinking poison hemlock.

In the ensuing decades, Athens would rise and fall as her military and political fortunes dictated. At one point, in 387, Persia regained a foothold on the Greek mainland and controlled the governments of the city-states. Statesmen such as Isocrates would plead for unity among the city-states against the encroaching Macedonians from the north, and for the peace that had so long eluded Greece. In ensuing decades, orators such as Demosthenes would attempt to rally Athenian citizens to arm themselves against those he considered enemies, primarily Philip of Macedon. Throughout this period, Athenians would continue to produce great works of art, philosophy, literature, science, and engineering. By this time, however, the city-states were exhausted by their enmities, and their hatreds were of such long duration that any chance for a union of the "Hellenes" (all those bound together by Greek culture) was doomed by history. The decades of the 370s and 360s were marked by warfare as one city-state sought to impose its rule on the other. In 362, all the forces of Hellas engaged in a pitched battle at Mantinea, a final bloodletting to gain ultimate control of Greece. No army was victorious. The world of Greece was forever sundered. As Botsford concludes, "It was inevitable that the chaos should last long and wreak manifold

injury upon the Greek world.”²⁹ So weakened were the city-states by the decades of war that aggressors saw their chance to conquer the Athenian empire. In 359, Philip of Macedon mounted the throne of the Macedonian kingdom and began his conquest of the world.

The Reign of Philip of Macedon

Philip of Macedon (located in northeastern Greece) was a man of extraordinary physical and mental power. He had been educated in Greece and he had assimilated Greek ideals. As he attained power, Philip began a lifetime of conquest, plundering surrounding territories and gathering up the gold and other precious possessions of those he conquered. With his newly amassed wealth and his military genius, he set out to conquer the world. He organized a huge army, the largest ever conceived of at that time, and struck out for the city-states to the south. Between diplomatic ventures and military might, he gradually gained victory. In 349–348, Philip engaged the city-states of the Olynthian Confederacy, of which Athens was not a member. The Olynthians asked Athens for help, and the orator Demosthenes presented the third of his memorable series of orations, “the Philippics,” urging Athens to respond to the call. His pleas went unheeded as many Athenians welcomed Philip to their soil, and soon he had a foothold in the southern part of Greece. Athens would now fight Philip on its own, a losing battle from the start. In 346, Athens proposed peace with Philip (the Treaty of Philocrates), a peace he accepted but never intended to keep. In the ensuing years, as the peace of Philocrates brought down the Athenian guard, Philip crept closer to Athens. Those who had bartered the Treaty were brought to trial, often prosecuted by Demosthenes. Demosthenes’ oratorical genius almost kept Athens and her neighbors united against Philip, but ultimately the Macedonian general prevailed and Athens became a part of the Macedonian empire following Philip’s victory at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338.

Philip of Macedon died by assassination in the year 336. He was a philanderer who married a new woman in each city he conquered. This practice was eventually to catch up with him as one of his wives, Olympias, plotted successfully to have him killed during a festival. It fell to Philip’s son, Alexander the Great, to complete his empire.

The Reign of Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great set out in the year 334 to complete the Macedonian conquest of the world. Alexander, who had been educated by the Athenian philosopher Aristotle and raised on the heroic tales of Achilles in the *Iliad*, would come to believe that he was the son of the god, Zeus. He moved first through Greece, and then through what is today Iraq (Persia), Iran (Mesopotamia), Egypt, Syria, and India. He settled in the Egyptian city of Alexandria and there he oversaw his vast empire. Before his thirtieth birthday, Alexander the Great controlled most of the known world.

In Greece, although Alexander’s appointees controlled the city-states, some such as Athens were allowed to continue living according to their traditions. In fact, because he had been educated as a Greek by Aristotle and raised on the exploits of Athenian warriors and gods, Alexander sought to assimilate Athenian ways into his entire empire, forcing many of his subjects to speak Greek and to study Greek ideas. What Pericles had

produced with his money and patronage, Alexander disseminated with his conquests. In an ironic way, by conquering Athens, Alexander assured the historical and cultural legacy of the Athenian empire by spreading its ideas throughout the entire known world.

As Alexander pursued new victories while maintaining his hold over already conquered peoples, he became aloof and arrogant. Having proclaimed himself a god, Alexander forced those who approached him to prostrate themselves at his feet. Such behavior undermined his support. In addition, he was given to drinking and carousing to excess, and soon he was unable to fight in his campaigns. He died from a fever in the year 322 at the age of 33, ruler of all he surveyed but hated by most and spent by his own indulgences.

Upon Alexander's death, Athens aligned itself with many of the other city-states to regain her freedom from Macedon, but in 322 Athens was subdued by the Macedonian general, Antipater. Many of her citizens were imprisoned, enslaved, or expatriated. During the next 20 years Athenian generals would regain and then lose control of the city, but the last vestiges of Athenian military hegemony were crushed.

The Enduring Athenian Empire

It is often thought that Athenian preeminence terminates with its defeat by the Macedonians in the Lamian War in 322. In another sense, however, the next two centuries are an age of dissemination and assimilation of Athenian culture equal to the Age of Pericles in importance for western civilization. Philip conquered Athens only in the military sense; his son, Alexander, deferred to Athens in all matters of culture. Rather than destroying the ideals of the Athenian empire, he sought to assimilate them into his empire; in fact, to spread them throughout the world. Connor asserts that:

It was not the weakness of Greece that drew Philip, but the strength of a culture he could not help but admire. The combination of sensuousity and intellect, of individual freedom and corporate order, of beauty and manliness which Pericles praised ... converted one of its earliest and one of its most important devotees in Philip of Macedon.³⁰

The demise of Athens as the political center of the universe was a prelude to the ascendancy of its cultural forms to the place they hold yet today; that is, as the fountainhead of western civilization.

Perhaps the most important ideal deriving from the Classical Age is the ideal of freedom of expression. As we shall see in the next chapter, Athenians were taught to believe that the power of persuasion through speech, the logos, is the most enduring force in a culture, one that must not and cannot be stifled. It is the ideal upon which individualism is founded, the ideal upon which civilized communal action is founded, and the ideal upon which justice is founded. Throughout the Classical Age and the ensuing 100 years after Pericles' death Athenians studied rhetoric, and rhetoric played a critical role in Athenian social and political life. From the patriotic orations of generals and statesmen, to the pathetic appeals of the courtrooms, to the political

pamphleteering of patriots such as Isocrates, rhetoric served as the handmaiden of democracy. Now that we understand the broad context of the times, we can turn to an examination of this important and practical art, the art of rhetoric. We will learn how it was taught and practiced in Athens, and how it was advanced through the invention and assimilation of writing into the educational system. We will explore in particular the controversies resulting from the arrival of the first teachers of rhetoric, the sophists.

References

4 From Greek to “Roman” Rhetoric, with Synopsis of Three Pragmatic Handbooks

rhetoric. The mature Cicero is the subject of our next chapter.