WHI.5 Ancient Greece- Part 2

**Athens and Sparta**

There were literally hundreds of city-states, or poleis (the plural of polis) in Greece

Each city-state, or polis, was politically independent from another, as Greece was not unified

Two of the most important, and different city-states were Athens and Sparta

While both Greek, they develop different ideas of government and social structure

**Athens**

Athens is most famous for being the world’s first democracy.

Democracy: Government where all citizens vote on every matter, and the majority rules

However, while Athens was the first democracy, it didn’t happen overnight.

Athens evolved into a democracy slowly over time

**Evolution of Athenian Democracy**

Stages in the evolution of Athenian government:

* Monarchy- Rule by a hereditary king
* Aristocracy- Rule by the rich landowning nobles
* Tyranny- Rule by a powerful single individual who usually appealed for the poor, and sometimes uses violence or force
* Direct Democracy- ruled by the people

**Tyrants: Not Always Bad**

Today, the word “tyrant” is negative. However, in its original meaning, a tyrant wasn’t necessarily a bad ruler, just a powerful one.

Two important tyrants of ancient Athens who worked to reform government and give more power to the people were Draco and Solon.

**Draco and Solon**

Draco created the first code of law for Athens, which was very harsh.

The punishment for many crimes, both minor and serve, was death.

Solon came along later and loosened up the law, so death was only for the most severe crimes.

He also eliminated the debts of the poor and ended debt slavery.

Finally, he gave more power to the assembly, and walked away from power on his own.

**Athenian Democracy**

Athenian democracy may have been limited to its male citizens, but it did allow for a legislature to publicly debate laws before their approval, or rejection.

It emphasized the duties of citizens

It gave decision-making power to more people than any other ancient civilization

As the world’s first democracy, it paved the way for the Roman Republic, and eventually the United States!

**Sparta**

Instead of a democracy, Sparta’s government was an oligarchy.

An oligarchy is a government ruled by a few powerful people.

Sparta was a military state governed by 2 kings and a council of elders. Major decisions were approved by the citizens, who were male, native-born Spartans over 30 years old.

Sparta set up a rigid social structure to control its’ citizens, and the people they conquered and made slaves, called helots.

**Spartan Life**

Spartan society focused on the military and aggressiveness

At birth, babies are inspected for strength or signs of weakness. Defective children are left on a hillside to die.

Boys started difficult military training at age seven, when they were taken from their homes.

Girls were brought up to strengthen their bodies so they could later bear children for the army.

Service to the state, Sparta, came before love or family.

Spartans did not value individual expression nor artistic expression.

“Come home carrying your shield or on it” Sparta would never surrender or retreat in battle, even if greatly outnumbered.

Military Service: At the age of 20 men started regular military service. They were allowed to marry, but had to live in the barracks with the other men until the age of 30.

At age 30, they were allowed to vote and live at home.

Retirement: Men stayed in the military until the age of 60.

**Spartan Women**

Women in Sparta had more rights than women in most of the rest of Greece.

Women were trained in physical fitness and expected to exercise and bear strong children, especially sons.

Women were expected to mount a fierce defense of their homes if they were attacked while the men were away.