

Greece & Turkey
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Athens: Cradle of Western Civilization and Democracy

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The Athens Story

Athena
says it all!



- I. What was her Golden Age?
- II. Why did her culture spread?
- III. What were her contributions to West?
- IV. Why did she decline?

Goddess of wisdom, courage, inspiration, civilization, law and justice, just warfare, mathematics, strength, strategy, the arts, crafts, and skill, namesake virgin patroness of Athens and honored by Parthenon

Significance to us

"A great city, whose image dwells in the memory of man, is the type of some great idea. Athens embodies the pre-eminent quality of the antique world, Art. Benjamin Disraeli

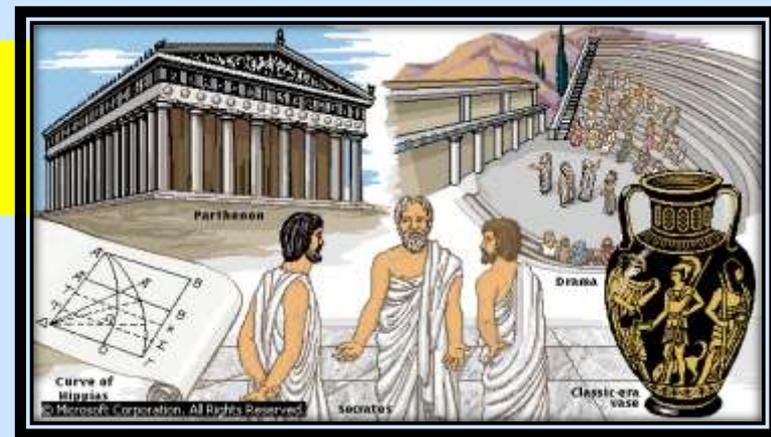
"All our religion, almost all our law, almost all that sets us above savages, has come to us from the shores of the Mediterranean." Dr. Johnson

"The most vigorous place of interaction between different societies on the face of this planet". Abulafia, *Middle Sea*

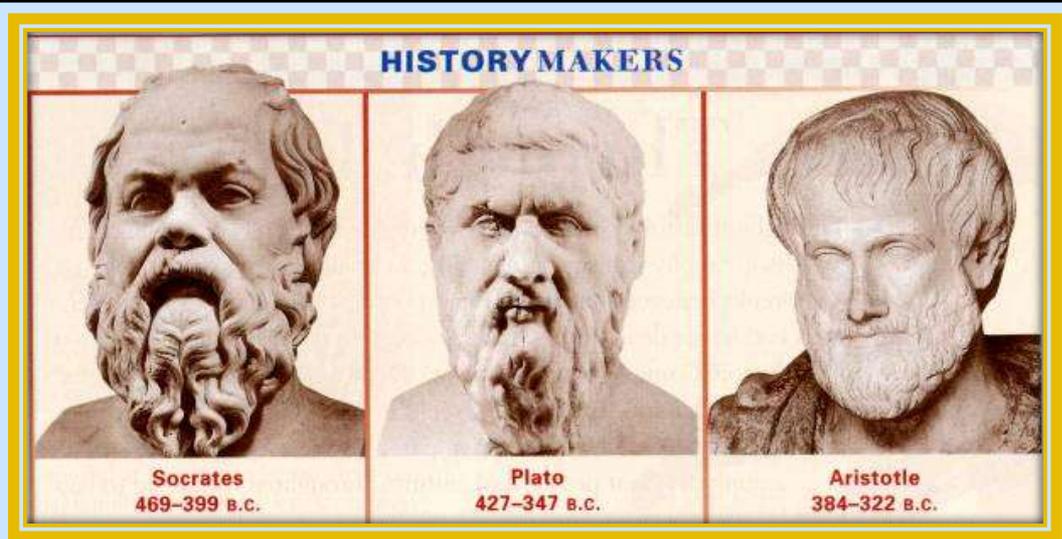
"Excepting machinery, there is hardly anything secular in our culture that does not come from Greece," and conversely "there is nothing in Greek civilization that doesn't illuminate our own". Will Durant

Athens' contributions

- Democracy (Pericles)
- Philosophy – (Aristotle, Socrates, Plato)
- Architecture - Ionian, Doric and Corinthian
- Literature -Iliad & Odyssey, myths, fables, poetry
- Math and Science - Geometry (Euclid), astronomy, atomic theory, history
- Words – 1,000s Greek words in modern languages
- Hippocratic Oath
- Drama, acting, tragedy, and comedy
- Olympic games



History of Athens



- One of world's oldest named cities – 7,000 years
- Leading city of Ancient Greece
- Laid foundations of western civilization
- Declined in Dark Age
- Recovered under later Byzantine Empire
- Relatively prosperous during Crusades
- Shrunk to small village under Ottomans
- Re-emerged in 19th century as Greek capital

Golden Age of Athens (5th & 6th C. BC)



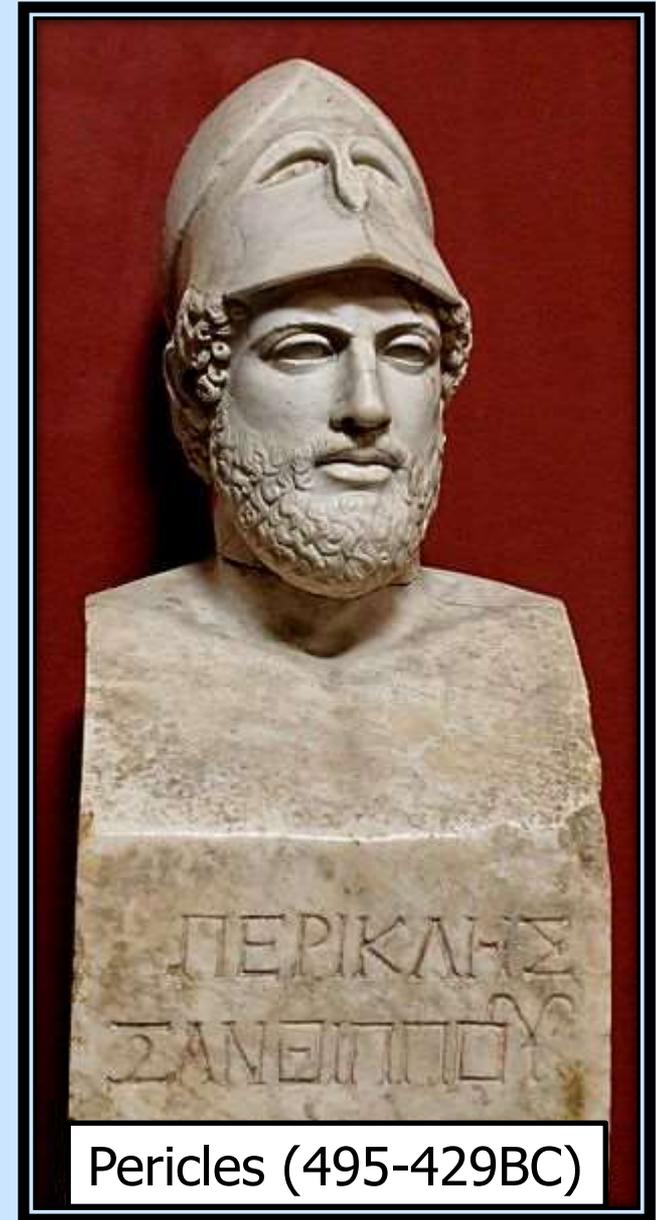
- Athenian political hegemony, economic growth and cultural flourished
- Built Acropolis
- Guided by Pericles
- Age of Great Greeks
 - Play rights: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides
 - Historians: Herodotus and Thucydides
 - Philosophers: Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle
- Military & external affairs citizen controlled

Pericles: 1st Democrat

"Our polity ...is called a **democracy**, because not the few but the many govern.

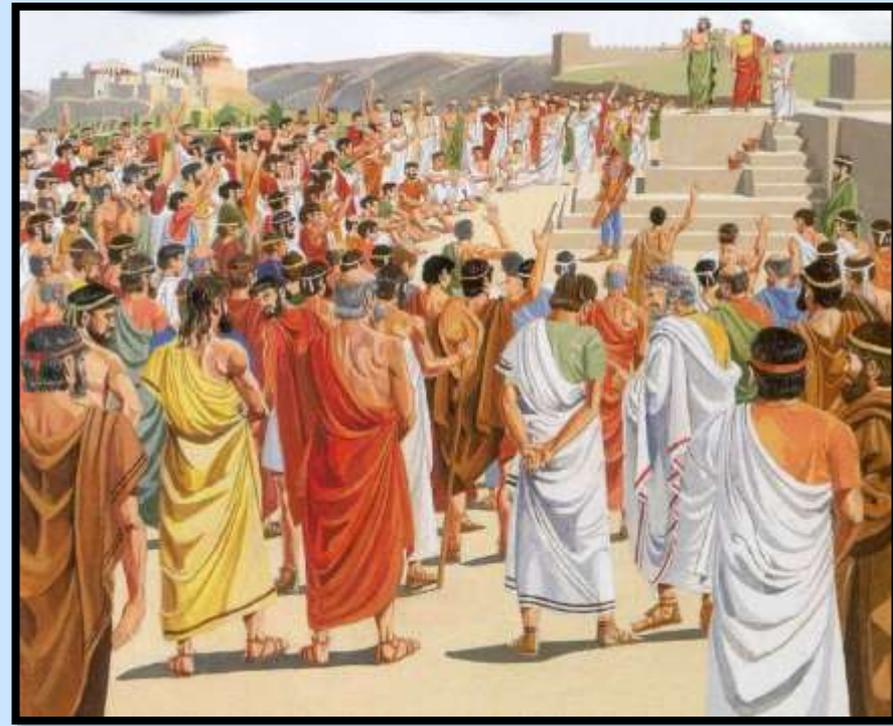
...[A]fford equal justice to all...; class considerations not being allowed to interfere with merit; nor again does poverty bar the way ..."

Pericles' Funeral Oration as recorded by Thucydides

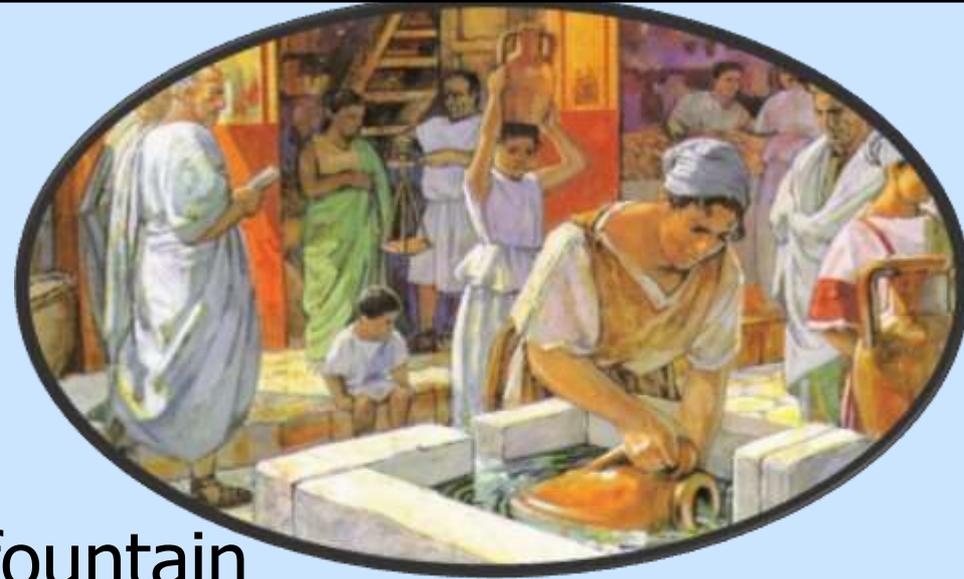


Ancient Athenian society

- Athenian constitution of 507-8 BC, fully democratic
- Law supreme & revered
- Athenian Empire based on naval supremacy
- Areas brought in told to adopt democracy
- All adult males born within city free full **citizens**
- Much of menial work still done by slaves
- Citizens farmed their own land, traders or craftsman



Daily lifestyle of ancient Athens



- Narrow, winding streets
- Water fetched at public fountain
- Clothing made on loom in home
- Small, poorly constructed often one-room houses
- Perfume, poor woman's sword, boiled flower petals
- Dining had social importance; two meals per day
- Olive oil widely used; evaluated like wine
- Sugar unknown; honey & dried figs sweetener
- Wine diluted and artificially sweetened

Contrast of Democracy and Autocracy

Democracy

1. **Open:** citizens can express choices for policies and leaders
2. **Constraints:** limits on power of the executive
3. **Liberty:** civil liberties to all citizens in daily life and political participation

Autocracy

1. **Closed:** restricted political participation
2. **Unconstrained:** chief executive from the elite, few constraints on power
3. **Control:** Much control over social and economic activity

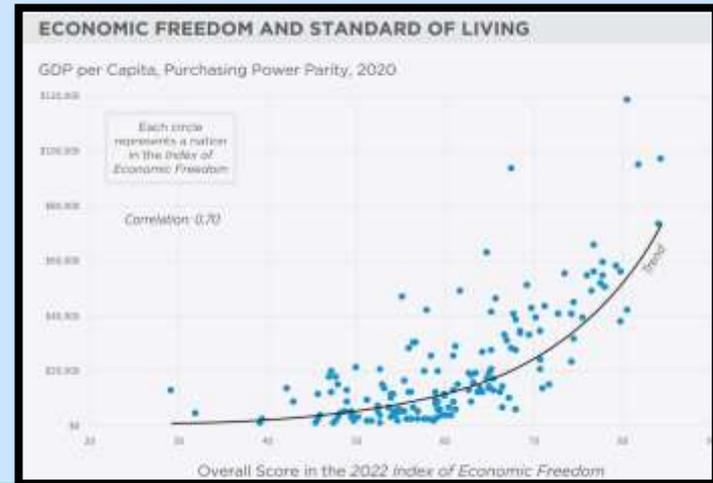
Democracy from Greek means "rule of the people" - (dêmos) "people" and (kratos) "power" or "rule"

Why Democracy? Freedom & Prosperity

Economic Freedom & Democracy



Economic Freedom & Prosperity



“[D]emocracy has done less harm, and more good, than any other form of government. It gave to human existence a zest and camaraderie that outweighed its pitfalls and defects. It gave to thought and science and enterprise the freedom so essential to their operation and growth. It broke down the walls of privilege and class, and in each generation it raised up ability from every rank and place.” -- Will Durant

“It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.” - Winston Churchill

How Athens achieved Golden Age? Pericles' Leadership of **Inclusiveness**

- Those without wealth could occupy public office
- Salary for jurors – so no financial hardship
- Equality of speech in Assembly
- Jobs and public assistance
- Rotation of political jobs
- Public administrators subject to public control
- Public safety, accurate weights and measures
- Magistrates chosen by lot – reducing favoritism

Greatest Glory of Greece's Golden Age



Acropolis

- Citadel high on rocky outcrop
- Built during **Golden Age of Pericles** in 5th Century CE
- Symbol of Greek legacy and Democracy
- Parthenon – Greek Temple/Christian Church/Treasury/Ammo depot/Ottoman Mosque

Open Athens



Ancient Agora - Athens Center (6th century BC)

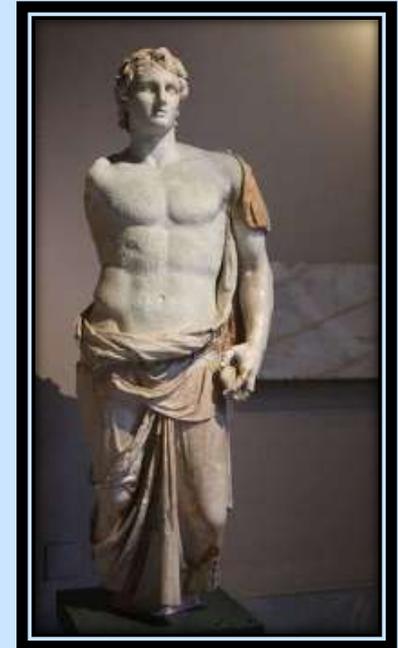
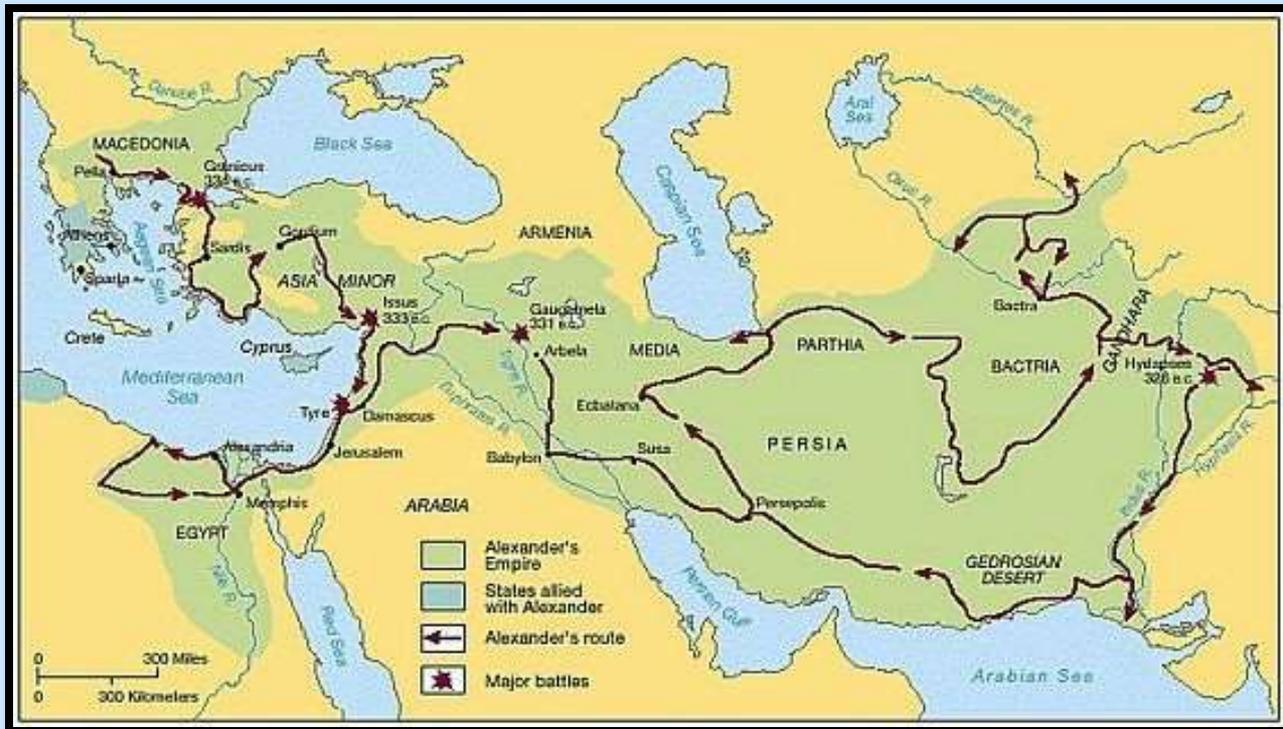
- Gathering place
- In 480 BC, Athens destroyed, by Persians but rebuilt after defeating Persians in 478
- Until 267 CE, center of political and public life

Why ancient Athens declined?



- Not unified - conflict with other city-states
- Philip of Macedonia (Alexander's father) strong monarchy conquered Greek city states in 338 BC
- Rome outgrew and in 146 BC conquered
- Though Greece declined its culture survived
 - Ancient Greeks spread colonies across region
 - Alexander the Great named cities far as India & Africa
 - Romans adopted and spread Greek culture

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) spread Greek Culture



- Student of Aristotle and precocious general
- Undefeated; vision of East-West unity
- Founded over 20 cities that bear his name

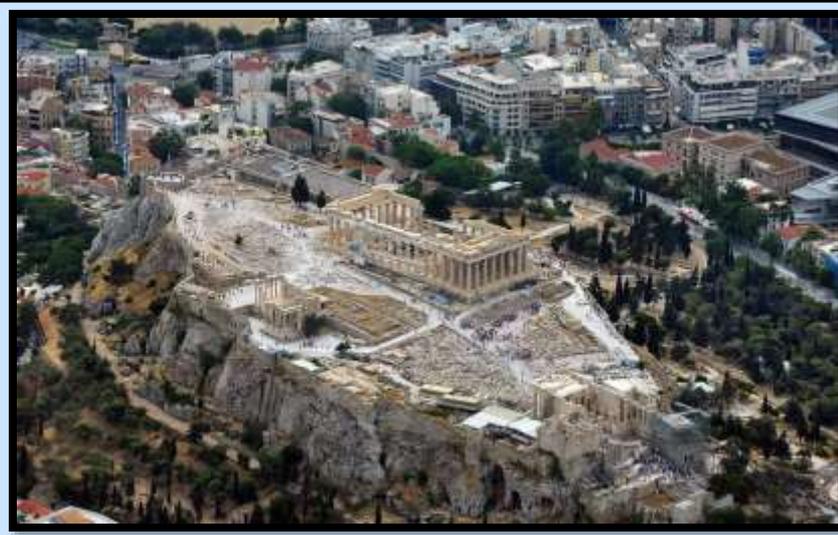
Love-Hate of Athens & Rome



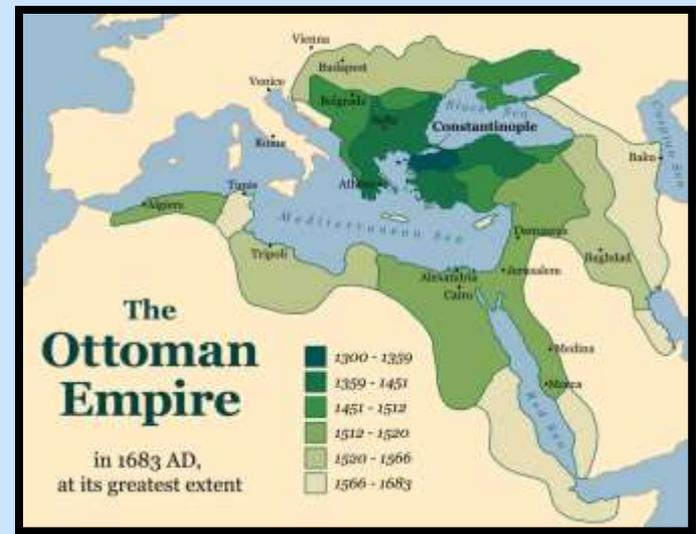
- Greeks settled in Southern Italy 700 BC & influenced Roman culture
- Romans, still society of peasants, saw Hellenistic culture and life superior
- Athenians had reason to hate Romans: devastated their cities and took many to Rome as slaves
- Romans eventually matched Athenian culture, aided by many Athenians in Rome
- Greek cities like Ephesus and Athens flourished during *Pax Romana* (27 BC-180 CE) saw Roman rule beneficial

Athens survived existential threats

- Culture admired & adopted
- Alexander took Athens and spread it's culture
- Rome attacked and absorbed into their Empire
- Constantine co-opted Byzantine and ruled Greece
- Ottomans ruled for centuries
- After WW I defeat by Turkey, population exchanged
- Nazis occupied 1941-44 – heavy loses
- Able to stay outside Iron Curtain
- Survived 2010 financial crisis

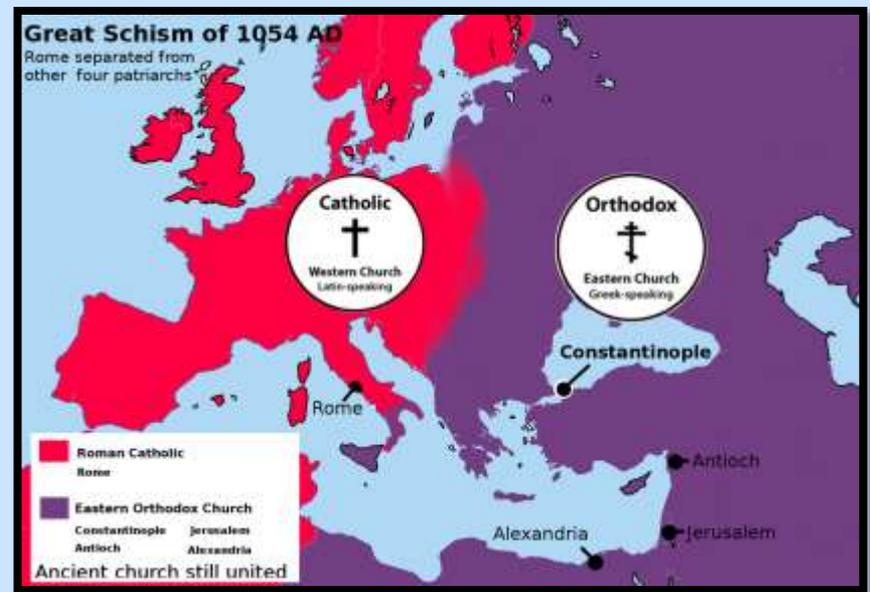


Byzantine 4-15th Century Greece



- 4-8th centuries, devastated by Barbarians, Goths, Huns and Slavs but government held Athens
- Byzantine recovered in 8th century
- 11-12th centuries, stability resulted in growth
- 1261 re-establishment of Byzantine in Constantinople led to Greece's recovery
- After 1460 Ottoman conquest of Greece, many Greeks fled West and contributed to Renaissance

Split of Orthodox & Catholic Church



- 1054 - Great Schism of Roman Catholicism in Latin vs. Eastern Orthodoxy in Istanbul and Greek
- Differences in language and distances led to differences in theology and organization
- Catholicism modernized but Eastern Orthodox didn't
- Catholicism headed by pope at Vatican, but Orthodox without head (acephalus)

Athens suffered under Ottomans (1460-1821)



- Initially peaceful occupation
- Parthenon converted to mosque & powder magazine
- During siege by Venetians, in 1687 accidentally exploded powder magazine and destroyed Parthenon
- After Venetians left, life in Athens reached bottom under despotic rule (1775-95)
- Greek merchants became major traders
- But Athens isolated by Ottomans from Reformation, Enlightenment and ideals of French Revolution

Athens shrunk to village under Ottomans

- 1801-5 sculptures taken from Parthenon by Brits
- In 1822, Greek insurgency captured
- But in 1826 but fell again to Ottomans
- In 1833 Ottomans withdrew leaving a village of 400 houses around Acropolis



But Athens revived after Ottoman exit

- Athens flourished after its 1830 independence
- In 1843, created a Constitution
- Athens' metro population now 4 million – over 1/3 of Greece's 11 million
- National Capital and political center of Greek-speaking world

Athena, patron goddess of Athens



Ancient Athens

Summary & Conclusions



- I. **What was Athens' Golden Age?**
 - 5th C. BC era of great cultural & political advances
- II. **Why did Athens culture spread so widely?**
 - Admired & adopted by Romans, spread by Alexander
- III. **Athens' contributions to Western civilization?**
 - Art, literature, medicine, philosophy, athletics, warfare, democracy, drama....
- IV. **Why did Greece decline?**
 - **Ancient:** Squabbles with rival states, internal focus
 - **Modern:** Losses to Ottomans & Germans, instability

Thanks for Coming. Hope to see you at my future presentations

Recommended Books for Athens

- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, 2012
- Roderick Beaton, *The Greeks: A Global History*, 2021
- Roderick Beaton, *Greece: Biography of a Modern Nation*, 2019
- Niall Ferguson, *Civilization*, 2011
- John R Hale, *The Great Tours: Greece and Turkey, from Athens to Istanbul*, 2011
- Ian Morris, *Why the West Rules-For Now*, 2010