

Lesson 4 Sparta and Athens

MAIN IDEAS

Government Sparta built a state in which every part of life was organized around the need to have a strong army.

Government Athenian citizens were expected to participate actively in government.

Government A Persian invasion endangered Greece, so some city-states united to fight their enemy.

Sparta's Military State

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What did Spartan society emphasize the most?

Spartan Society Changes

- **Athens'** main rival was **Sparta**—city-state in Peloponnesus
- Sparta changed after conquering neighboring area around 715 B.C.
 - forced defeated people to become slaves called **helots**
 - helots were forced to farm and give Sparta half their crops
- Helots outnumbered Spartans; often rebelled but were defeated
 - fear of helot revolts led Spartan state to build strong army

Government and Society

- Two kings ruled Sparta; five elected supervisors ran government
 - Council of Elders proposed laws
 - assembly of citizens elected officials, voted on Council's laws
- Three social groups: citizens lived in city, trained to be soldiers
 - free noncitizens lived in nearby villages, had no political rights
 - lowest group—helots—grew food so citizens could be full-time soldiers

Education

- Boys lived in **barracks**—military houses—from age seven
 - were taught discipline, duty, strength, military skill; little reading
- All male citizens entered army at age 20, served until 60

Women

- Emotionally, physically tough; were taught strength, athletics
- Family life less important in Sparta; husbands, wives usually apart
- Women had more freedom than elsewhere, allowed to own property

REVIEW QUESTION

How did Spartan education support the military?

Athens' Democratic Way of Life

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was the government of Athens like?

Government and Society

- Athens had two governing bodies
 - Council of Four Hundred ran daily life; Assembly voted on policies
- Citizens had to serve in army, on juries when needed
 - juries had several hundred people; in courts, all citizens were equal
- Slaves—noncitizens, a third of population, worked in homes, on farms
 - some earned money, were able to buy freedom

Education

- Boys of wealthy families started school at age six or seven
 - prepared for citizenship; learned logic, debate for future in Assembly
 - also studied reading, writing, poetry, arithmetic, music

Women

- Expected to be good wives, mothers; some were priestesses
- Had less freedom than in Sparta—did not attend school
 - only inherited property if father had no sons

REVIEW QUESTION

What were the duties of an Athenian citizen?

The Persian Wars

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What happened when Persia invaded Greece?

The First Persian Invasion

- Persia conquered Anatolia in 500s B.C.—area had many Greek colonies
 - Athens supported failed Greek revolt in Anatolia in 499 B.C.
- Persia wanted to punish Athens, so arrived near Athens in 490 B.C.
- Athenians met Persians at plain of Marathon; had no Spartan help
 - Athenians were outnumbered but won battle by clever military tactics
 - legend says soldier ran 25 miles to Athens to deliver victory message

Greek Victory

- Persians invaded again in 480 B.C.; city-states united against them
- 300 Spartans fought to last man at narrow Thermopylae pass
 - gave Athens time to prepare for battle
- Athenians left city, fought nearby naval battle against Persians
 - narrow body of water helped more mobile Greek ships win battle
 - this victory ended the war

REVIEW QUESTION

How did the Persian Wars bring the Greek city-states together?

Lesson Summary

- Sparta organized its state around its strong army.
- Athens valued democratic government and culture.
- Some Greek city-states united to defeat the Persians.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Defeating the Persians allowed Greek democracy and culture to continue. This culture greatly influenced later world civilization.