

Module 4: Ancient Greece
Topic 2 Content: City-States – Athens vs. Sparta

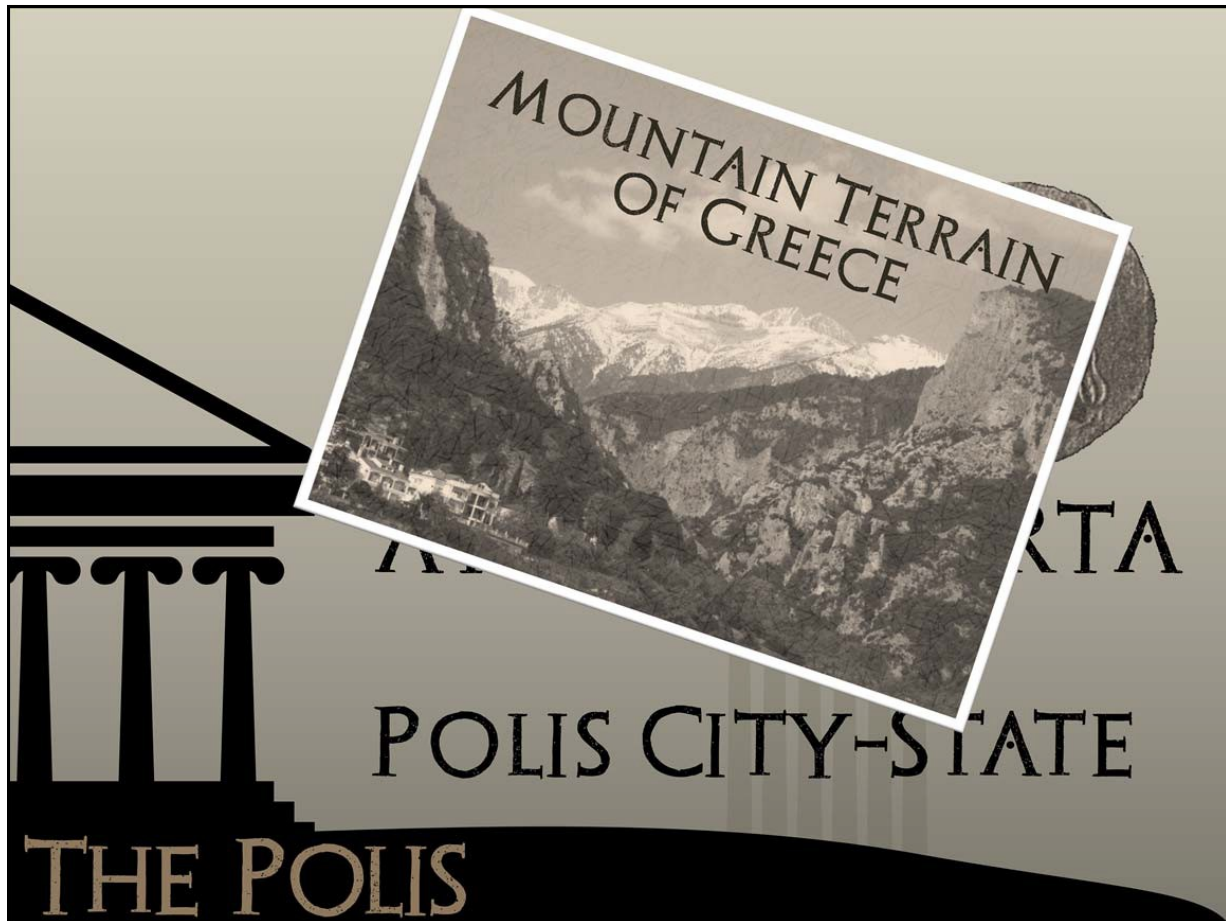
Introduction



City-States: Athens versus Sparta

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The Polis



Greece's mountain terrain encouraged Greeks to form independent city-states around areas that were more livable with fertile land and other natural resources. Each city-state, or polis, included the town and its surrounding land. A polis had its own identity with its own government, coinage, patron god, and social and political structures. Two of the major poleis in ancient Greece were Athens and Sparta.

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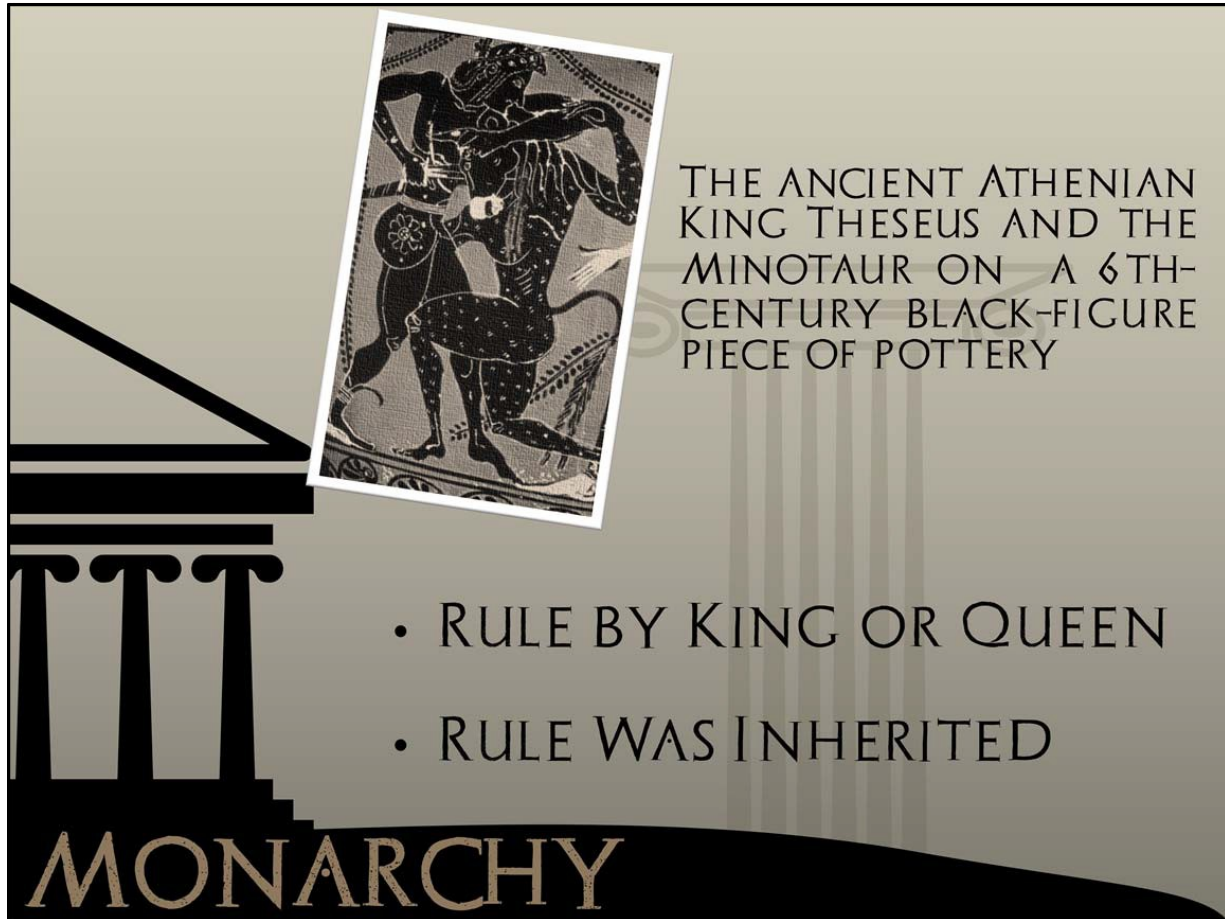
Athens



Around 700 B.C. (B.C.E.), Athens became a unified polis. Athens was, and still is, located on the mainland of Greece. There are several characteristics of Athens that set it apart from Sparta; however, the most notable is its philosophy on government.

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Monarchy



THE ANCIENT ATHENIAN KING THESEUS AND THE MINOTAUR ON A 6TH-CENTURY BLACK-FIGURE PIECE OF POTTERY

- RULE BY KING OR QUEEN
- RULE WAS INHERITED

MONARCHY

Prior to the 7th century B.C. (B.C.E.), the Athenian government was a monarchy, in which a king or queen inherited rule of a kingdom from his or her parent. Normally, the right to rule was passed from father to son through heredity rule.

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Aristocracy



- LAND OWNERS RULE
- BASED ON FAMILY TIES
- ECONOMIC CRISIS FOR MANY AT THE TIME

ARISTOCRACY

However, by the 7th century B.C. (B.C.E.), a few nobles, or rich land owners with large estates, ruled in an aristocracy. At this time, Athenians faced an economic crisis and many people were unable to pay debts. Some were sold into slavery.

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Tyranny and Draco

TYRANNY - GAINING POWER BY APPEALING TO THE POOR MAJORITY OR THROUGH FORCE


- HARSH LAW CODE
- FORMALIZED CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS
- MURDER VS. INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER
- DEBT-SLAVE LAW

TYRANNY: DRACO

The political turmoil associated with the economic crisis led Athens to a period of tyranny, in which one person gains power by appealing to the poor majority or through force. Around 621 B.C. (B.C.E.), the tyrant Draco came to power and passed a harsh law code with most crimes punishable by death. Prior to his rule, Greek law had been oral and disputes were settled by individuals. His written law code formalized crime proceedings into courts and distinguished between the crimes of murder and of involuntary manslaughter. Also, Draco passed a debt-slave law that forced people who were in debt to spend time in prison or slavery. This was unpopular among the people. Today, the term “draconian” means something harsh or severe, much like Draco’s laws.

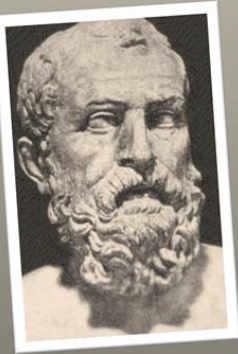
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Tyranny and Solon



- REPEALED LAWS OF DRACO
- OUTLAWED DEBT SLAVERY
- EXTENDED DEMOCRACY
- MAINTAINED CLASS STRUCTURE
- POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC STRIFE

A BUST OF SOLON FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM IN NAPLES, ITALY



TYRANNY: SOLON

In 594 B.C. (B.C.E.), the Athenian aristocracy gave power to a man named Solon. During his rule, he repealed most of Draco's laws and set free many of the people that had been put into slavery based on their debts. Solon also helped to extend democracy and participation in government to more people, including citizenship to some foreigners; however, he maintained the class structure in Athens which provided the poor with very little chance of obtaining wealth. This led to further political and economic strife.

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Democracy

- 510 B.C. ATHENIANS REBELLED AGAINST TYRANNY
- 508 B.C. CLEISTHENES
- COUNCIL MADE SUGGESTIONS FOR LAWS
- ATHENIAN ASSEMBLY DEBATED WHETHER TO PASS LAWS
- FORMED BASIS FOR EARLY DEMOCRACY

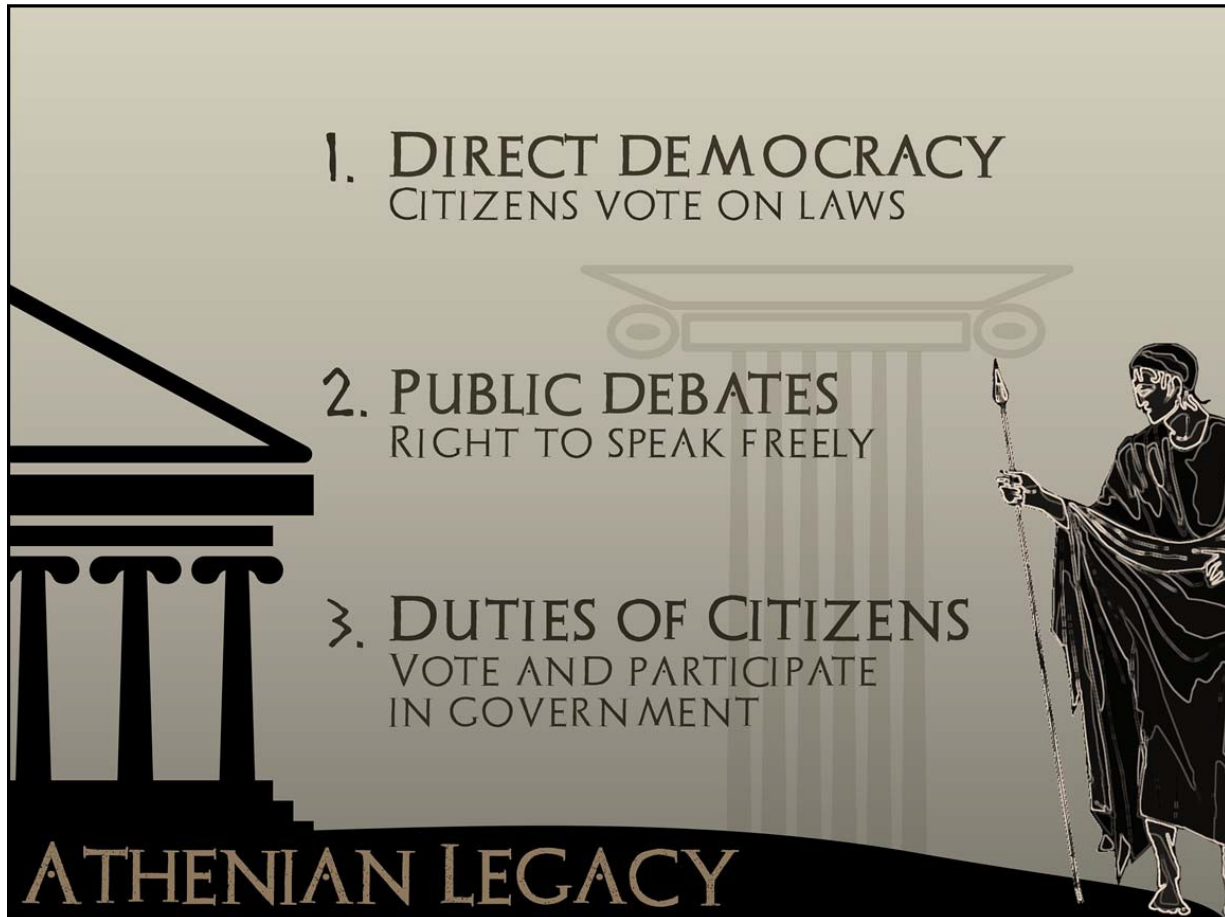
CLEISTHENES - THE FATHER OF DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY

Around 510 B.C. (B.C.E.), the Athenian people rebelled and shrugged off years of tyranny. In 508 B.C. (B.C.E.), Cleisthenes came to power and created a council composed of five hundred people who oversaw the treasury, managed foreign affairs, and made suggestions for laws. Then, the Athenian assembly, which included male Athenian citizens, could debate these laws and decide whether or not to pass them. These important structural changes made to the government by Cleisthenes was the basis for early democracy in Athens.

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Athenian Legacy



The democratic government in ancient Athens provided a foundation for many of today's modern democracies. Many of the most valued democratic principles first became established during this time period. Athens' assembly of citizens was a direct democracy, which is a form of government in which citizens vote on the laws directly instead of electing officials to do so for them. While citizens in the United States elect representatives to make laws through the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives, many states also provide the ability for citizens to make or change laws through a referendum process, which is reflective of a direct democracy. Other rights and responsibilities of citizens in Athens were the basis for modern democracies, including the right to speak freely and debate issues in public as well as the duty of citizens to vote and participate in government. Unlike most of today's democracies, participation was limited to male citizens and did not include women or slaves.

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Women in Athens



- WOMEN HAD FEW RIGHTS
- MAINTAINED HOUSEHOLD AND RAISED CHILDREN
- NOT ALLOWED TO OWN PROPERTY
- NOT PROVIDED FORMAL EDUCATION

WOMEN IN ATHENS

In Athens, not everyone was able to participate in government. While women were included in religious festivals, their primary responsibilities included maintaining a household and raising children. They were not allowed to own property and were always associated with a male guardian who was either a husband, father, son, or other male relative. Women were expected to remain at home and were not provided with any formal education.

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Slavery

An infographic with a light beige background. On the left, there is a black silhouette of a classical Greek temple with columns and a pediment. At the bottom left, the word "SLAVERY" is written in large, bold, black letters. In the center, there is a list of four bullet points. On the right, there is a black silhouette of a man carrying two large baskets on a yoke across his shoulders. The background features faint, light-colored outlines of classical architecture.

- SLAVERY WAS COMMON
- MOST HOMES HAD AT LEAST ONE SLAVE
- THE STATE KEPT SLAVES FOR PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS
- PROHIBITED FROM PARTICIPATING IN GOVERNMENT

Slavery was extremely common in Athens and in the classical world in general. Slaves were brought to Athens as conquered people defeated in wars and through theft or trade. In the 5th century, roughly 100,000 slaves lived in Athens and most homes had at least one slave. Wealthy homes often had large numbers of slaves, and the state owned a number of slaves to assist with public works projects. Like women and foreigners, slaves were prohibited from participating in government.

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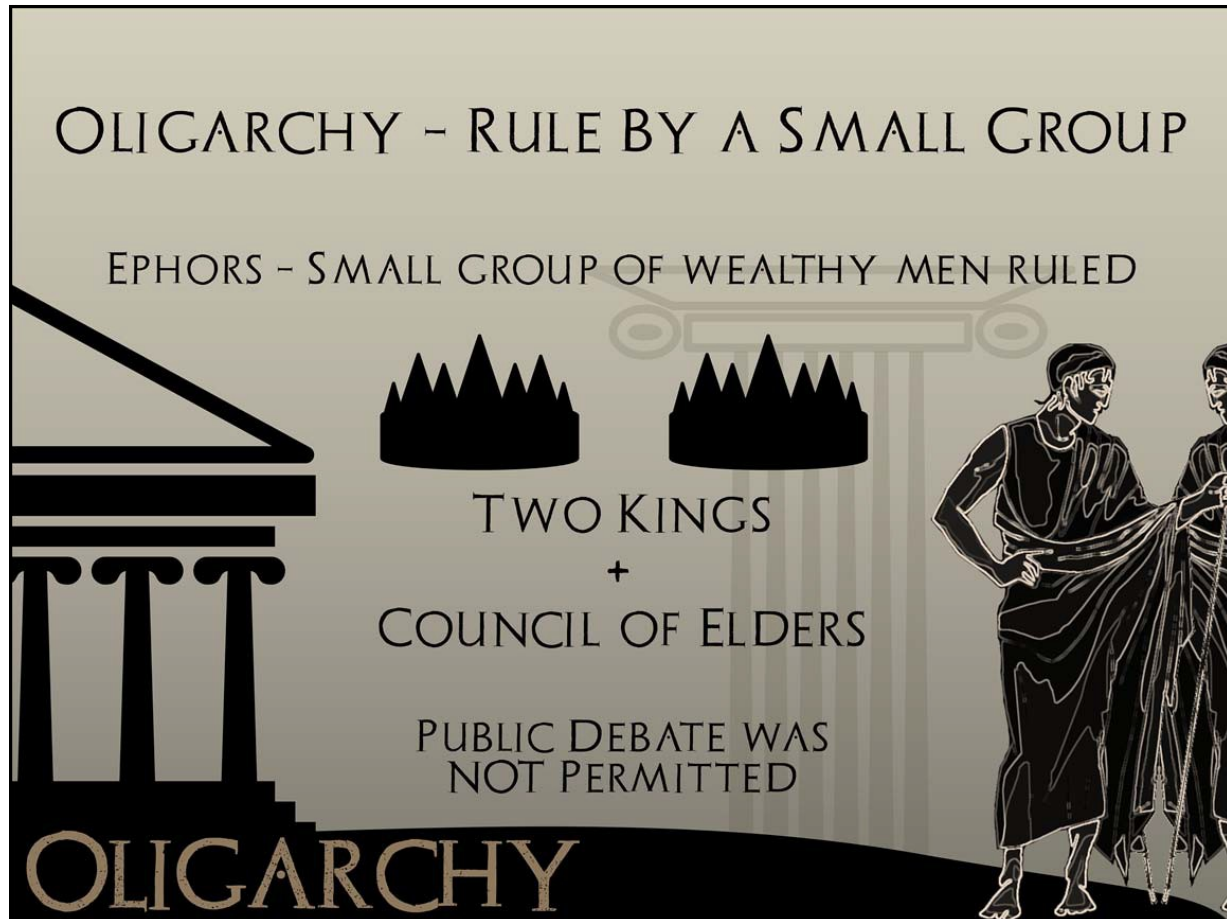
Sparta



Located in Peloponnesus, Sparta arose as a political unit during the 10th century B.C. (B.C.E.). Its people lived under a different political and social structure than the people of Athens.

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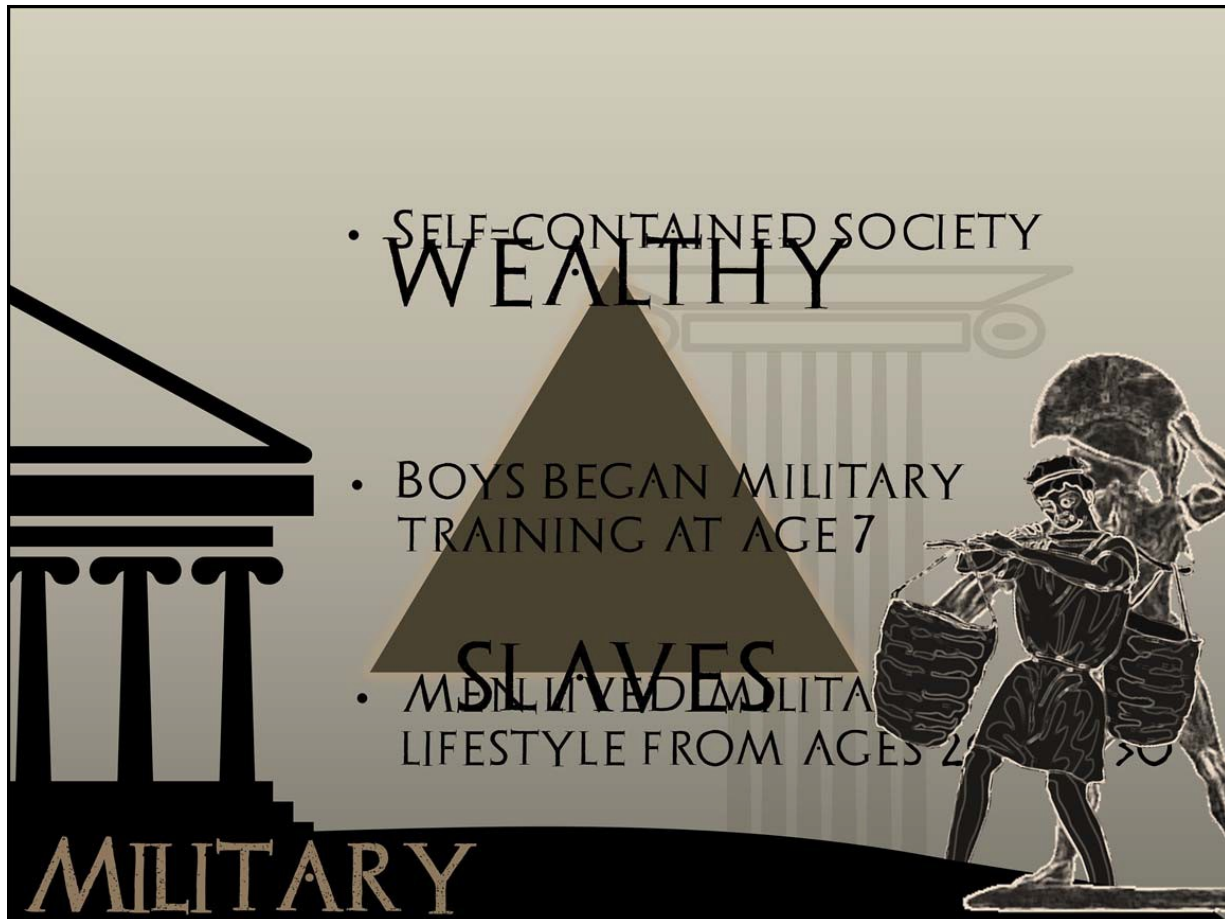
Oligarchy



Along with two kings, a small group of wealthy men ruled Sparta under an oligarchy. An oligarchy is rule by a small group. The members of the small group in Sparta were known as the ephors and they were responsible for education in Sparta, along with presiding over criminal or civil cases. The two kings were part of a council of elders that decided what issues would be discussed and voted upon by the Spartan assembly, a small group composed of male Spartan citizens. Unlike the Athenian assembly, public debate and discussion were not permitted. In ancient Sparta, women, foreigners, and slaves had no political rights.

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Military



Spartans lived under a rigid social hierarchy with the wealthy at the top and slaves at the bottom. The military was the most important aspect of Spartan life. Spartans were discouraged from any travel that was not associated with the military, and foreigners were not welcome in the polis. This created a very insulated and self-contained society.

This militaristic and aggressive society sent boys to military academies at the age of seven to rigorously train to become soldiers and to serve Sparta. They did not receive a formal education in literature or the arts since that was thought to encourage free thought and would detract from time spent on military studies. After completing their studies, men enrolled in the military at the age of twenty and lived a military lifestyle, including living in barracks, until they were thirty years old. While they were permitted to marry, Spartan soldiers lived independently of their families while they were in the military, even eating meals with fellow soldiers.

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Women in Sparta



- HAD MORE FREEDOM
- RECEIVED FORMAL EDUCATION
- MAINTAINED EXCELLENT PHYSICAL SHAPE

WOMEN IN SPARTA

Since Spartan women maintained the household without their military husbands, they did have slightly more freedom than other women in classical times. Unlike other classical cultures, Spartan women were provided with formal education. In order to serve the military society, Spartan women were expected to maintain excellent physical shape in order to produce healthy babies and children, especially sons who would later join the military.