* Chapter 4
* Ancient Greece
* The island of Crete, located in the Aegean Sea, was home to a brilliant early civilization.
* Archaeologists call these people the Minoans after Minos, a legendary king of Crete.
* Minoan civilization reached its height of success between 1600-1500 BC.
* Their success was based on trade, not conquest. Minoan traders set up outposts throughout the Aegean world. Through contact with Egypt and Mesopotamia, they acquired ideas and technology in fields such as writing and architecture that they adapted to their own culture.
* The rulers of this trading empire lived in a vast palace at Knossos (NAHS us). It housed rooms for the royal family, banquet halls, and working areas for artisans. It also included religious shrines, which were areas dedicated to the honor of gods and goddesses.
* The walls of the palace at Knossos were covered with colorful frescoes, watercolor paintings done on wet plaster. These frescoes are important because they tell us much about Minoan society.
* HOW? Leaping dolphins reflect the importance of the sea, religious images indicate that the Minoans worshiped the bull as well as a mother goddess, the paintings also suggest that women appeared freely in public and may have enjoyed more rights than women in most ancient civilizations.
* By about 1400 BC, Minoan civilization had vanished. Archaeologists are not sure why they disappeared but there are a few possible explanations:

1. A sudden volcanic eruption on a nearby island
2. An earthquake may have destroyed the palace followed by a tsunami that took out the entire island.
3. The most likely explanation is that invaders played some role in the destruction of the Minoan civilization. These intruders were the Mycenaeans, the first Greek speaking people of whom we have a written record.

* The Mycenaeans spoke an Indo-European language.
* They conquered the Greek mainland before overrunning the island of Crete.
* Mycenaean civilization dominated the Aegean world from about 1400-1200 BC.
* Like the Minoans, the Mycenaeans were sea traders. They reached out beyond the Aegean to Sicily, Italy, and Mesopotamia.
* The Mycenaeans learned many skills from the Minoans, including the art of writing.
* They lived in separate city-states on the mainland. In each, a warrior-king built a thick-walled fortress from which he ruled the surrounding villages. Mycenaean rulers accumulated great wealth.
* The Mycenaeans are best known for their part in the Trojan War, which took place around 1250 BC. The conflict may have originated in economic rivalry between Mycenae and Troy, a rich trading city in present-day Turkey, that controlled the vital straits, or narrow water passages connecting the Mediterranean and Black seas.
* In Greek legend, however, the war had a more romantic cause. When the Trojan prince, Paris, kidnaps Helen, the beautiful wife of a Greek king, the Mycenaeans sail to Troy to rescue her. For the next 10 years, the two sides battle until the Greeks finally seize Troy and burn the city to the ground.
* Not long after their victory over Troy, the Mycenaeans themselves came under attack from sea raiders and also from another Greek-speaking people, the Dorians, invading from the north.
* Much of what we know about the Trojan War and life during that period comes from 2 great epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey.
  + These epics have been the work of many people, but they are credited to the poet Homer, who probably lived about 750 BC.
  + According to tradition, Homer was a blind poet who wandered from village to village, singing of heroic deeds. Homer’s tales were passed on orally for generations before they were finally written down.
  + The Iliad is full of gods and goddesses and even a talking horse, but it is the chief source of information about the Trojan War. At the start of the poem, Achilles, the mightiest Greek warrior, has withdrawn from battle because he has unfairly treated and insulted by his commander. The war soon turns against the Greeks, but Achilles stubbornly refuses to listen to pleas that he rejoin the fighting. Only after his best friend is killed does he return to battle.
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  + The Odyssey tells of the many struggles of the Greek hero Odysseus on his return home to his faithful wife, Penelope, after the fall of Troy. On his long voyage, Odysseus encounters a sea monster, a race of one-eyed giants and a beautiful sorceress who turns men into swine.
  + The Iliad and Odyssey are important because they reveal much about the values of the ancient Greeks. The heroes display honor, courage, and eloquence (persuasive and vivid speech).
  + After the Dorian invasions, the land of Greece had several centuries of insignificance. The people lived in small isolated villages and had few encounters with the outside world.
* Greece is part of the Balkan Peninsula, which extends southward into the eastern Mediterranean Sea.
* Instead of building a massive empire, the Greeks built small, individual city-states that were cut off from one another by mountains or water. This unique version of a city-state was called a polis.
  + The polis was made up of a major city or town and its surrounding countryside.
  + Typically, the city was built on 2 levels:
    - *On the top hill stoop the acropolis, or high city, with great marble temples dedicated to different gods and goddesses.*
    - *On the lower ground lay the walled main city with its marketplace, theater, public buildings and homes.*
  + The population of each polis was fairly small. This is important because it helped the citizens share a sense of responsibility for its victories and defeats.
  + In Greece, men held all of the political power.
* The Greeks’ contact with the sea provided a vital link to the outside world. With its hundreds of bays, the Greek coastline offered safe harbors for ships. The Greeks became skilled sailors and traded extensively.
* Rapid population growth forced the Greeks to establish colonies across the Aegean Sea. (Map on P. 119)
* Between 750-500 BC, different forms of government evolved in Greece. At first, the ruler of the polis was a king. A government in which hereditary ruler exercises central power is called a monarchy.
* Slowly, however, power shifted to a class of noble land owners. Because only they could afford bronze weapons and chariots, these nobles were also the military defenders of the city-states.
* At first these land owners defended the king. In time, however, they won power for themselves. The result was an aristocracy, or rule by a hereditary landholding elite.
* As trade expanded, a new middle class of wealthy merchants, farmers, and artisans emerged in some cities. They challenged the landowning nobles for power and came to dominate some city-states. The result was an oligarchy, where power is in the hands of a small, wealthy group.
* Changes in military technology increased the power of the middle class.
  + By about 650 BC iron weapons replaced bronze ones. Since iron was cheaper, ordinary citizens could now afford weapons and armor.
  + Also a new method of fighting emerged called the phalanx—a massive tactical formation of heavily armed foot soldiers. It required long hours of drill to master. Shared training created a strong sense of unity among citizen-soldiers.
* By putting defense in the hands of ordinary citizens, the phalanx reduced class differences.
* However, the new type of warfare caused the 2 most influential city-states, Athens and Sparta, to develop very different ways of life. While Sparta stressed military virtues and stern discipline, Athens glorified the individual and extended political rights to more citizens.
* Sparta
  + The Dorians conquered Laconia in the southern part of the Peloponnesus, where they settled and established Sparta.
  + The Dorians turned the conquered people into state-owned slaves called helots, and made them work the land.
  + The Spartan government included 2 kings and a council of elders who advised the monarchs. An assembly made up of all citizens approved their major decisions. Citizens were male, native-born Spartans over the age of 30.
  + From childhood, a Spartan prepared to be part of a military state. Officials examined every newborn, and sickly children were abandoned to die. Spartans wanted future soldiers and the future mothers of soldiers to be healthy.
* Sparta
  + At the age of 7 boys began training for a lifetime in the military. They moved into barracks where they were toughened by coarse diet, hard exercise and strict discipline. This made Spartan youths excellent soldiers.
  + At the age of 20, a man could marry, but he continued to live in the barracks for another 10 years and to eat there for another 40 years. At the age of 30 he took his place in the assembly.
  + Girls also had a rigorous upbringing. As part of a warrior society, they were expected to produce healthy sons for the army. They were therefore required to exercise and strengthen their bodies.
  + Spartan women had to obey their fathers and husbands. They did have the right to inherit property and because men were occupied with war, some women took on responsibilities such as running the family’s estate.
  + The Spartans isolated themselves from other Greeks. They looked down on trade and wealth, forbade their citizens to travel and had little use for new ideas and the arts.
* Athens
  + Athens was located in Attica, just north of the Peloponnesus.
  + Athenian government evolved from a monarchy into an aristocracy. By 700 BC, land owners held power. They chose chief officials, judged major court cases and dominated the assembly.
  + Under the aristocracy, Athenian wealth grew. However, merchants and soldiers resented the power of the nobles. They argued that their service to Athens entitled them to more rights. *This growing discontent moved Athens slowly toward a* democracy, or government by the people.
* Athens
  + Solon, a wise and trusted leader, was appointed archon, or chief official in 594 BC. Athenians gave Solon a free hand to make needed reforms:
    - *He outlawed debt slavery and freed those who had already been sold into slavery for debt.*
    - *He opened high offices to more citizens*
    - *Granted citizenship to some foreigners*
    - *Gave the Athenian assembly more say in important decisions*
    - *He introduced economic reforms such as encouraging the export of olive oil and wine…this policy helped merchants and farmers by increasing demand for their products.*
  + Despite all these reforms, many were still unhappy. This led to the rise of tyrants, or people who gained power by force. Tyrants often won support from the merchant class and the poor by imposing reforms to help these groups.
* Athens
  + A tyrant named Cleisthenes (KLYS thuh neez) broadened the role of ordinary citizens in government. He set up the Council of 500, whose members were chosen by lot from among all citizens over the age of 30. The council prepared laws considered by the assembly and supervised the day-to-day work of the government. Cleisthenes made the council a genuine legislature, or lawmaking body, that debated laws before deciding to approve or reject them.
  + Women, noncitizens and slaves were excluded from government participation, making Athens a limited democracy. Still, Athens gave citizens more say in decision making than any other ancient civilization.
  + Women played their most significant public role in religion. Their participation in sacred processions and ceremonies was considered essential to the city’s well-being.
  + Women managed the entire household. They made clothes, cooked meals, but were rarely seen in public. Slaves and children were sent to buy food and fetch water from the public well.
  + Unlike girls who received no formal education, boys attended school if their families could afford it. They learned to read and write, studied music, poetry, and public speaking. They received military training and participated in athletic competitions, but not to the extent of the Spartans.
* Greek city-states shared common culture. They spoke the same language, honored the same ancient heroes, participated in common festivals, and prayed to the same gods.
* Three factors led to fighting among the Greek city-states:
  1. Strong local identification
  2. Independent spirit
  3. Economic rivalry
* The Greeks were polytheistic.
  1. Their gods lived on Mt. Olympus in northern Greece.
  2. The most powerful god was Zeus, who presided over the affairs of the gods and the humans. His children included:
     + *Ares-god of war*
     + *Aphrodite-goddess of love*
     + *Athena-goddess of wisdom*
  3. Greeks honored their gods with temples and festivals, which included processions, sacrifices, feasts, plays, choral singing, and athletic competitions.
* As trade and colonies expanded, the Greeks came into contact with people from foreign lands with different languages and customs.
* The Greeks called them barbaroi, people who did not speak Greek, and the Greeks felt inferior to them. These “barbarians” even included the Egyptians and the Phoenicians, who the Greeks borrowed ideas and inventions from.
* This sense of uniqueness and superiority would help the Greeks when they were threatened by the mightiest power in the Mediterranean—the Persian Empire.