

Essential Readings
for the Study of History

Humanitas

Ancient Greece

BOOK
2



Peloponnesian War to Alexander the Great

Rick Trumbo, Volume Editor • Christopher Maiocca, Series Editor
David Diener, Managing Editor



Humanitas: Ancient Greece Book 2, Peloponnesian War to Alexander the Great

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Contributors:

Rick Trumbo; Jonathan Kirkpatrick, DPhil; Lloyd DeWitt, PhD;
Nathanael McGarry

Classical Academic Press
515 S. 32nd Street
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www.ClassicalAcademicPress.com

Cover and book design: David Gustafson
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In the spring of 2020, Chris Perrin of Classical Academic Press contacted me to ask if I would be interested in writing for a volume on early American history. That led to my working under Chris Maiocca, the author of that volume and the series editor for Classical Academic Press's Humanitas line. I am indebted to Chris Perrin for the opportunity, and to Chris Maiocca for his patient mentoring in how to write the historical anecdotes that appear in several volumes. I would be remiss not to mention Laurie Gustafson, the wise and kind senior editor for Classical Academic Press, who has guided this entire project, and who invited me to edit the volume on Greece.

I also owe an inexpressible debt of gratitude to my wife, Linda. She proofreads most of what I write for any venue, and her thoughtful advice is invaluable. She has also endured many absences when I attended institutes and seminars on classical topics over many decades. She has been a partner in many conversations and the friend C. S. Lewis described as "a second self" for nearly half a century.

I am grateful to Keith Nix, my headmaster at Veritas School in Richmond, Virginia, for his leadership and encouragement in deepening my familiarity with classical education. My many colleagues at Veritas have engaged me in conversations and occasional debates which have stimulated my thinking about Greek culture, teaching, and many other topics. I do not have room to thank everyone, but I have especially benefited from conversations and forwarded readings from Michael Dicken, Laurie Howell, and Nate George over many years. Scholarship ought always to be a communal endeavor, and this is true at Veritas.

One of the best ways to learn is through good questions. I have been singularly blessed over four decades by students at two schools who have peppered me with excellent questions. My common response has been, "I don't know, but I'll try to find out." This has led me to explore some odd and interesting details about Greek and Roman history and language. For the past seventeen years, the students at Veritas have compelled me to grow as a teacher and as a classicist, and I gladly recognize my debt to these intellectually curious young learners.

One of the best things to happen in my work on this volume was the privilege of working with my editor, Nate Antiel. We have argued, discussed, and rewritten much together. Nate went the extra mile in patiently adapting to my own Luddite inabilities to use computer programs such as Google Docs, which made his work more difficult but freed me from technological stresses. Some of the chapters and even many of the phrasings have been his suggestions. I could not ask for a better editor, particularly because of his own expertise in teaching Greek literature. The shortcomings of this book are mine, but his input has made it vastly better, for which I thank him.

Rick Trumbo

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A long, long time ago, I thought it would be possible to complete the *Humanitas* series mostly on my own. This was folly. Our project—to bring a source-based story of humanity into homes and classrooms around the world—now has dozens of essential contributors, some of whom I have never personally met or worked with directly and thus I cannot formally thank.

If you had told me, even a few years ago, that I would be working with a team of scholars from Oxford, Princeton, Yale, and Duke to tell the story of Western history, I would have thought you were mad. Thus, it goes without saying that I am deeply grateful to Christopher Perrin, CEO of Classical Academic Press, for gathering the most tremendous team of scholars an editor could ever ask for. CAP has invested many precious resources into this series, and I am truly humbled by their faith in the vision of this project.

Few people in the classical renewal have had the staying power of Rick Trumbo, the architect and author of these two Greek volumes. For over forty years, he has been in the classroom, unlocking the riches of the ancient world for students. It is safe to say that he has forgotten more about Greece and Rome than I will ever know. I am extremely thankful that a lifetime of knowledge and wisdom will now be preserved for another generation of students through these volumes. Rick is a gentleman and a scholar—eminently humble and always a joy to work with.

As the series editor of *Humanitas*, it is my job to work alongside the volume architects, providing guidance, editorial feedback, and ensuring that the vision of this series is brought to fruition. Alas, completely inundated with the American volumes, I was unable to give Rick the help he needed to get these books to the printers. The happy result of my incapacitation was Dr. Perrin making the hire of the century by bringing Nate Antiel on as the in-house editor of the *Humanitas* series. When Nate is not receiving invitations from Harvard to speak on surgery and medical ethics in Rome, he is providing unprecedented, selfless, and humble guidance to me in every possible area of this project. Without him, the Greece volumes may have never seen the light of day. With him, the series has reached levels of scholarship and mastery that I could not have pulled off. Nate, I look forward to gleaning from your wisdom and expertise for years to come.

Behind the scenes is a host of contributors too numerous to mention. To them I say, thank you. I am grateful to David Diener. He has brought some much-needed human resources to the *Humanitas* project and has been a voice of calm and reason when I have felt overwhelmed.

Thank you also to Laurie Gustafson and David Gustafson. These volumes do not get to the presses without you.

Finally, I am grateful to my family for their sacrifices as well. Robin, Hannah, Christopher, Phoebe, and Jeremiah. In a very real sense, it is for you that I labor and strive.

—Christopher John Maiocca
All Saints Day, 2023

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The classical tradition of education has regularly emphasized the importance of approaching the great ideas of human wisdom *ad fontes*, going “to the fountains or sources” themselves. The reasoning for this is that, though secondary sources certainly have their place, we ought not make what is secondary primary.

Consider, for example, that students are reading about Plato’s dialogue, the *Republic*. While reading about Plato and this influential dialogue can be a pleasure, reading Plato himself is an even greater delight. Plato is one of the greatest minds of Western civilization, and this almost always means he is a better writer than his commentators. Going directly to the fountain of Plato himself should always be preferable when given the choice. Regarding Plato, the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said:

The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. I do not mean the systematic scheme of thought which scholars have doubtfully extracted from his writings. I allude to the wealth of general ideas scattered through them.¹

Plato is a great source of wealth and critically important for understanding our philosophical tradition, even today. Why not hear directly from him?

The *Humanitas* series attempts to bring the wealth of primary source writings to high school students so that they may hear from the great authors themselves, thus gaining an understanding of history from those who lived it. Put another way, this series seeks to keep what is primary, primary.

As much as we believe that students should hear directly from original sources and writers, we also know that it is very helpful to provide some orientation to these sources as well as some practical guidance throughout their reading. In this series, we have carefully arranged the sequence of readings but also included brief introductions to each reading as well as many explanatory annotations to provide clarity and context for students. Our goal has been to create just the right blend of the primary (original source readings) and the secondary (introductions, annotations, time lines, questions).

We are convinced that students who study the sources in this series will be led through a rich collection of important ideas and questions that have shaped our past and present. This journey will impart the prudence and wisdom students will need to lead and serve future generations. Our great hope is that students will come to understand humanity well, and therefore serve it well in the years to come.

—Christopher J. Perrin,
Publisher & CEO

1. A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 39.

A NOTE FROM THE SERIES EDITOR

The need for a series like *Humanitas* first occurred to me in the summer of 2014. As the newly appointed Humanities Chair at a small, classical school in San Diego, my dean requested that we transition our history classes from a lecture model to a Socratic or discussion-based format. To accomplish this, three changes needed to take place.

First, the architecture of our classrooms had to be altered. Instead of students lined up in rows before a lectern, they were now seated with their teacher around a long, oval table. Second, we understood that students and teachers would need to enter these classrooms with a different mindset. The former would now be active participants in their education, while the latter would lead conversations instead of simply reciting lectures. Finally, we would have to find a curriculum that could facilitate this type of learning.

Traditional history texts were designed to distill large epochs of time into easily digestible paragraphs, helping students become familiar with the important people, events, and ideas of a particular era. We were after something much different. Rather than reducing history to a series of facts that could be recorded on flashcards, our mission was to help students experience these events through the people who lived them, and to interact with great ideas by directly engaging the geniuses who first articulated them. In short, our aim was to enable students to cultivate wisdom rather than simply memorize facts.

Though we all understood that this meant “going back to the sources,” collecting and organizing primary texts into a three-ring binder proved much more difficult than we could have imagined. For starters, one had to be a scholar in all the different epochs of history to know what documents should be read, or even where to look. And while it is true that there are scores of online sourcebooks, we found that they were often disorganized messes of broken links, terrible translations, and cumbersome redactions.

Furthermore, even when these sources could be secured, we soon discovered there was a big difference between teaching a good class and creating a comprehensive course. In other words, while it is true that we had many wonderful discussions, at the end of the year, I knew my students were not getting a sense of having been exposed to an unfolding, cohesive, and chronological narrative. In that sense, we were still falling short. These were, after all, courses in history.

Then came the great supposal: What if we could create a resource that had all the accoutrements of a traditional text—beautiful art, helpful annotations, clear prose, explanatory essays, and an obvious, historical progression—yet that was completely built around the source documents? That is, what if we could get the

sources to tell the story and send the pedagogue into the background where he belongs? If this could happen, then students will have received, in the truest sense of the word, an education.

In this vein, we humbly offer you the *Humanitas* series. We designed the books so students and teachers can experience unfettered delight in discussing the most profound specimens of firsthand knowledge in the Western historical canon. This is the story of humanity, told in an unfolding narrative, through primary sources. This, in the simplest terms, is *Humanitas*.

—Christopher John Maiocca
Series Editor



Christopher Maiocca received a Master of Arts from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Since graduating, he has taught at three classical schools and currently resides in Boise, Idaho. He is married to Robin, his wife of twenty years, with whom he has four children—Hannah, Christopher, Phoebe, and Jeremiah.

Welcome to *Humanitas*

The emphasis on the importance of firsthand knowledge has been traditionally communicated by the term *ad fontes*, a Latin phrase meaning “to the fountains.” This phrase was used as a banner by both humanist scholars and reformers of the High Medieval and the Early Modern periods to describe their renewed interest in studying the primary documents that contained the ideas most responsible for precipitating the civilizations and cultural milieus in which they found themselves. While this approach to education fell out of vogue in the twentieth century, the *Humanitas* series seeks to return *ad fontes*, to provide high school students and educators with a comprehensive course in the Western story, told through primary sources.

Why is “going back to the sources” so important? As Emerson observed, “We, as we read, must become Greeks, Romans, Turks, priest and king, martyr and executioner; must fasten these images to some reality in our secret experience, or we shall learn nothing rightly.” The hope, then, is that our reading becomes our lives, that our own experience will be enriched because it contains something of the best of ancient Greece and Rome. At the very least, the old authors enable us to live our lives with remarkable freshness, to encounter our days in light of the past. Thoreau, Emerson’s great student, likewise observes, “Men sometimes speak as if the study of the classics would at length make way for more modern and practical studies; but the adventurous student will always study classics, in whatever language they may be written and however ancient they may be. For what are the classics but the noblest recorded thoughts of man? They are the only oracles which are not decayed, and there are

such answers to the most modern inquiry in them as Delphi and Dodona never gave. We might as well omit studying Nature because she is old.” As Emerson and Thoreau knew, the texts in these volumes transcend time: they are ever new. They not only offer adventure in themselves—who has not been excited at the prospect of journeying with Odysseus or encountering Plutarch’s lives?—but they also equip students to lead adventurous lives of their own, to meet joy and sorrow, love and death, the sublime and the mundane having been shaped to desire the true, the good, and the beautiful.

While the early humanists and reformers might not appear to have much in common with the American transcendentalists, both approached the primary sources of the past with awe and expectation. In the middle of the last century, however, C. S. Lewis noticed that a profound change had occurred. Many of his students now preferred to pick up technical books of modern scholarship about the Greeks rather than to read the old authors themselves. He went on to note that, in his experience, students often avoided the old authors out of humility. Plato’s *Republic*, after all, is hard. Yet Plato is accessible and pleasurable in a way that modern scholarship, unfortunately, often is not. Thus, we agree with Lewis when he observed: “The simplest student will be able to understand, if not all, yet a very great deal of what Plato said; but hardly anyone can understand some modern books on Platonism. It has always therefore been one of my main endeavors as a teacher to persuade the young that firsthand knowledge is not only more worth acquiring than secondhand knowledge but is usually much easier and more delightful to acquire.” For Lewis and

nearly every other person living in Europe and America, Greece and Rome are the fountainheads of our civilization, and it is to these sources we must return, if we hope to become “educated” in the classical sense of the word.

For example, it is in ancient Greece and Rome that you will encounter the beginning of Western poetry in Homer and Hesiod, Ovid and Virgil. They were the founts to which all subsequent European and British letters would return, wrestle with, and imitate. They inspire the tradition and keep it alive. Having read these volumes, when the student comes to Milton, she will not only encounter the greatest epic in English, she will also hear echoes of Hesiod’s *Theogony* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*. She will begin to overhear the great conversation between poets, and to participate in that conversation by how she lives her own life.

Moreover, here is where students will encounter the first writers of history—Thucydides and Herodotus, Livy and Plutarch—who themselves provided the education of the American founders and models of virtue for countless figures throughout history. This, perhaps more than anything else, is the particular value of *Humanitas*. It is by reading and wrestling with the authors themselves, with living texts, that our students can experience not only a quickening of their minds but also of their *thymos*. Classical education, after all, aims to develop virtue in the student. By participating in the great conversation that *Humanitas* presents to students, the reader can enter into that experience, not merely to read *about* the Greeks and Romans, but to read the Greeks and Romans themselves, to count them as friends and attempt to understand them from the inside out.

Humanitas then not only offers students the fountain of Western culture, the delight of reading primary texts, and the broadening of experience properly called “education,” it also encourages them to develop a charitable hermeneutic. This

approach to history *animates* it, that is, etymologically, gives it soul. History becomes a living thing to engage and study rather than a desiccated relic of which we are embarrassed because it lacks modern sensibility.

As you open these volumes of *Humanitas* and encounter the sources of Western civilization for yourself, we believe that you will get to know the Greeks and the Romans—how they thought, lived, worshipped, and fought—better than you could through the conventional textbooks that have occupied our classrooms for more than a century. Here you will march into Gaul with Julius Caesar, sit with Socrates as he drinks the hemlock, and discover what daily life was like on a Roman farm. In short, we believe that this is as close as we can take students into the classical world without traveling back in time and seeing it for themselves.

—Christopher Maiocca and Nate Antiel

Introduction to *Ancient Greece, Book 2:* *Peloponnesian War to Alexander the Great*

These volumes are the first in a series of books introducing students to the history of Western civilization by means of primary source readings. Book 1 begins with the remote mythical past of Greece and takes students through the rise of classical Greek civilization with the magnificent accomplishments of the Greeks of the fifth century BC. Book 2 then examines the internal political conflicts that divided and demoralized the Greeks at the end of that century. Following the wars among the city-states of Greece, the volume leads students to the rise of the Macedonians under Alexander the Great, which united much of the known world in a synthesis of Greek and local cultures known as the Hellenistic age. The *Ancient Greece* books conclude with the exploration of Hellenistic civilization, ending just prior to the Roman conquest of the East.

UNIT VI: *Greek Culture*

This unit explores the heyday of Athenian life in its everyday aspects. Hesiod's manual on farming described the life of peasants and Theocritus's pastoral idylls idealized nature. The great philosophic debate of the fifth century regarding the nature of reality emerged from the works of Heraclitus and Parmenides. On a darker note, the ethical application of Heraclitus's theory of constant flux led to the teachings of the Sophists, who espoused relativism and self-interest. Plato and Aristotle, however, responded to the agnosticism and indifference to truth of the Sophists in their writings on education, developing one of the earliest models of classical education. Finally, the unit leads students through the popular religion of the Greeks with readings about folk customs and practices across Greece. The unit concludes with a chapter about the religious games that played such an important role in Greek life.

UNIT VII: *The Greek World War*

The ascension and splendor of the Athenian Empire led, with the inevitability of a Greek tragedy, to a war that divided the Greek world into opposing sides at the end of the fifth century. The unit examines the causes of the war and then presents Pericles's famous defense of Athenian democracy. This highlight of democratic ideals is immediately followed by an account of the plague that devastated Athens, killing almost one-fourth of its population and demoralizing the city. The following military disaster of an unprovoked sneak attack against neutral Sicily later crippled Athens. As the war dragged on, both sides indulged in lawless brutality and partisan rhetoric. The unit concludes with excerpts from the Athenian comic poet Aristophanes, who denounced the war.

UNIT VIII: *The Aftermath of the War*

The consequences of the Peloponnesian War further traumatized the contending Greeks. The trial of Socrates found Athenian democrats ordering the death of one of the greatest philosophers in history. The ongoing rivalries culminated in the battle of Leuctra, where the brilliant Theban general Epaminondas crushed the Spartan army, ending a generation of Spartan domination of Greece. While the stubbornly locally minded Greeks weakened themselves through jealous rivalries and wars, Philip II of

Macedonia was building a powerful state to the north. Demosthenes, the greatest orator of Greece, foresaw the ambitious intentions of Greece's neighbor and warned the Athenian Assembly in a series of speeches. Yet his warnings were in vain, as some Greek states even supported the Macedonian despot against their fellow Greeks because of self-interest and short-sighted rivalries, ultimately allowing Philip to conquer the Greeks piecemeal.

UNIT IX: *Plato and Aristotle*

The two most outstanding philosophers of ancient Greece, if not all of history, offered significant political, social, and ethical commentary upon the Greek way of life. The unit begins with a survey of the two philosophers' beliefs about government. For both thinkers, virtue was the necessary prerequisite for freedom. Aristotle in his *Politics* also discussed the nature of and justification for slavery, a social arrangement that was almost universal in the ancient world. While most people took slavery for granted, Aristotle posed some intriguing questions about when slavery would be legitimate. Finally, our unit leads students through Aristotle's *Ethics*, in which he argued that virtue is a mean between extremes.

UNIT X: *Alexander and the Hellenistic Age*

Our survey of Greek political history concludes with the narrative of Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, a crusade of the Greek world against their traditional foreign enemy. In Plutarch's essays on Alexander's virtues, we encounter Alexander portrayed as a philosopher-king. After the young conqueror's untimely death just before his thirty-third birthday, the world empire he created descended into decades of conflict among various competitors who sought to succeed him. The result of this free-for-all was the establishment of three powerful monarchies: the Antigonids in Greece and Macedonia, the Ptolemies in Egypt, and the Seleucids in Syria. Rivalry among these vast kingdoms dominated the political history of the Hellenistic east, reaching from Greece to India, until Roman expansion united the entire Mediterranean world under their rule. Hellenistic civilization saw remarkable advances in science and other branches of learning, epitomized by the inventive genius of Archimedes of Sicily. The unit concludes with the Hippocratic tradition in medicine, one of the few areas of ancient science that elevated empirical observation and experimentation over speculation.

UNIT XI: *The Turn Inward*

The survey of ancient Greek civilization prior to the Roman conquest ends with an examination of three Hellenistic philosophies. The individualism of the epic and mythical world had long been displaced by the Greek city-state, which gave priority to the community in the Archaic and Classical periods. The consolidation into absolute monarchies, however, excluded ordinary people from participation in politics, which had been the center of the "good life" in previous centuries. Under the consolidated monarchies, philosophers thought less about public issues and politics, and more about individual happiness. Cynicism and Epicureanism encouraged abandonment of the public sphere. Each of the Hellenistic philosophies offered a different understanding of happiness. For the Cynic, happiness meant conformity to nature. Epicureans taught happiness comes from embracing a materialistic outlook, rejecting the soul's immortality, and advocating a rational pursuit of simple pleasures as the highest good. Stoicism, which would have significant impact upon later Roman and medieval thinking, contradicted Epicureanism. For Stoics, happiness came from fulfilling one's duty to the great Mind that governs the world, allowing us to embrace whatever a good Providence sends our way. In the end, the life and thought of Greece would enjoy a continued influence in the civilization of Rome, which adopted many elements of Greek culture.

CHRONOLOGY

c. 2500 BC	The first proto-Greek tribes begin to migrate into Greece from the northeast.	1194–1185	The Trojan War is fought; Troy falls to Mycenaean attackers after ten years of fighting.
c. 2000 BC	Palace-centered cities appear on Crete marking the rise of the Minoan civilization.	c. 1150 BC	The Mycenaean civilization collapses; three centuries of Dark Ages follow with no evidence of writing. Cities are abandoned. New Greek tribes from the north migrate into Greece.
c. 1800 BC	The Minoans unite under the city of Knossos and their empire spreads among Aegean Islands and at various outposts in Greece such as Mycenae, Athens, and Corinth. The Minoans introduce their writing system, Linear A, to Greece.	1100 BC	The Late Bronze Age collapse cripples Egypt. The Hittite Empire disappears. Much of western Asia falls under pressure from invaders known as the Sea Peoples.
c. 1650 BC	The island of Thera explodes in a volcanic eruption; resulting tsunamis hit the north coast of Crete, disrupting the Minoan fleet.	1000 BC	Israel and Phoenicia enjoy a period of wealth and political power following the collapse of the great empires of the Near East.
c. 1600–BC	The first Greek civilization appears at Mycenae and other cities; the Greeks begin writing with Minoan characters, known as Linear B.	c. 800 BC	Writing reappears in Greece with the adoption of a modified form of the Phoenician alphabet.
1458 BC	Thutmose III expands Egypt into the most powerful empire of the era. Egypt controls Libya, Ethiopia, Palestine, and much of Syria.	776 BC	The first Olympic Games are celebrated in honor of Zeus.
1450 BC	Earthquakes devastate the palace at Knossos in Crete, severely weakening the Minoans.	735–715 BC	Sparta defeats Messenia in the First Messenian War, beginning the conquest of Messenia.
1400 BC	Greeks invade and overtake Crete. A Mycenaean empire spreads across islands of the Aegean Sea.	753 BC	Rome is founded in central Italy.
		c. 750–700	Homer is performing his epics about Troy, the <i>Iliad</i> and the <i>Odyssey</i> , for audiences.

750–700 BC	Hesiod composes his creation epic, the <i>Theogony</i> , and his epic about farming, the <i>Works and Days</i> .		the island of Samos in the Aegean Sea.
750–500	Greek colonists settle in Italy, Macedonia, North Africa, southern France, and the coast of the Black Sea.	560 BC	Pisistratus becomes Athens's first and greatest tyrant. He keeps power by appealing for support from the lower classes against rival nobles.
687 BC	The term of office for archons, heads of state, in Athens is reduced from ten years to one year, opening access to this position to more citizens.	546 BC	The Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great conquers Greek cities on the coast of Ionia in western Turkey.
650 BC	Sparta crushes a Messenian revolt and enslaves the population, who become helots working Spartan farms so that Spartan citizens can become full-time soldiers.	539 BC	The Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great conquers Babylon, making Persia the unrivaled master of the entire ancient Near East from the Aegean Sea to India.
621 BC	During Draco's archonship, Athens receives her first written law code. Citizenship is expanded to anyone who can furnish a suit of bronze armor.	539 BC	Etruscans and Carthaginians form an alliance to halt further Greek colonization west of Sicily.
612 BC	Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, falls to Babylonian and Mede attackers. The Assyrian Empire comes to an end.	525 BC	Aeschylus, the first of the great trio of Greek tragic poets, is born.
594–592 BC	Solon is given emergency power in Athens to prevent a civil war between rich and poor. He abolishes debt slavery, cancels all debts, and redistributes landholdings.	522 BC	Darius I succeeds to the throne of Persia and expands Persian power into Europe by conquering Thrace.
c. 624 BC	Thales, the first philosopher in recorded history, is born in Miletus near the coast of Turkey.	510 BC	Pisistratus's son Hippias is expelled from Athens by a democratic revolt, ending the period of tyranny in Athens.
570 BC	Pythagoras, the great musician, philosopher, and mystic is born on	510 BC	Under the leadership of Cleisthenes, Athens adopts democratic reforms and becomes the world's first recorded democracy.
		509 BC	The Romans drive out Tarquinius Superbus, their last king, and become a republic.

499–492 BC Greek cities in Ionia, on the western coast of modern Turkey, unsuccessfully revolt against Persian rule. Athens sends help to these cities, arousing Persian hatred for Athens.

496 BC Sophocles, the second of Athens's great tragic poets, is born. He adds a third speaker to scenes, allowing for more complicated dialogue. He also invents the decoration of the *skene*, the structure at the back of the stage for scenery, for his plays. His life would span almost the entire fifth century.

490 BC Emperor Darius I of Persia sends a fleet with 20,000 soldiers to attack Athens in revenge for her intervention in the Ionian Revolt. Ten thousand Athenians defeat this invasion at the battle of Marathon.

486 BC Xerxes becomes emperor of Persia upon the death of his father Darius I. He begins to plan revenge for the defeat at Marathon.

c. 484 BC Euripides, the third great tragic poet of Athens, is born. His often cynical plays are regarded by many critics as the most “modern” of ancient dramas.

483 BC The Athenians discover a rich vein of silver at Laurium in southern Attica. Themistocles persuades them to use this money to build 200 ships, which marks the beginning of Athenian naval power.

480 BC Emperor Xerxes invades Greece with a massive army of roughly 400,000 men.

480 BC In August, a tiny Greek force led by 300 Spartans stops the Persian advance at Thermopylae for six days. The Spartans act as a rear guard and are all killed after inflicting great losses upon the Persians.

480 BC In late September or early October, the allied Greek navy inflicts a crippling defeat upon the Persian navy at the battle of Salamis. With control of the sea, the Greeks are able to force Xerxes to withdraw from Greece.

479 BC An allied Greek army destroys the Persian rear guard at the battle of Plataea, the last battle of the Persian Wars fought in Greece.

478 BC The victorious Greeks form a defensive alliance against Persia, the Delian League, led by Athens. This will eventually become an Athenian empire.

469 BC Socrates, one of the greatest philosophers of antiquity, is born in Athens.

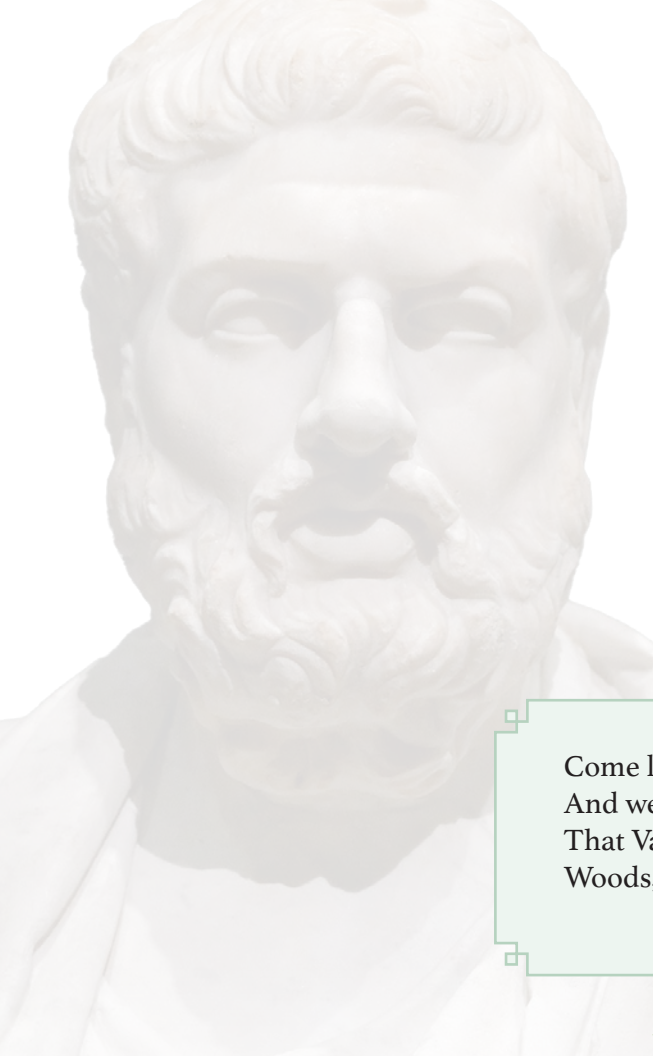
461 BC After aristocratic leader Cimon is exiled, Pericles becomes the leader of Athens and advances further democratic measures in the city.

460 BC Democritus, founder of the first Atomic Theory, is born.

460 BC Hippocrates, the “father of medicine,” is born.

454 BC	Pericles moves the treasury of the Delian League from Delos to Athens, symbolically showing that Athens is now the master of this empire.	415–413 BC	Athens, persuaded by the rascal Alcibiades, launches an invasion of Sicily. The disastrous expedition loses half of Athens's army and fleet, decisively weakening Athens for the remainder of the war with Sparta.
c. 450 BC	Aristophanes, Athens's greatest comic poet, is born.	412 BC	Diogenes of Sinope, a leading figure in Cynic philosophy, is born.
449 BC	After several Greek cities in western Asia are liberated from Persian rule, the Persians end their wars with Greece by signing the Peace of Callias with Athens.	404 BC	With the surrender of Athens, the Spartans install the Thirty Tyrants as an aristocratic regime in Athens.
447–432 BC	The Parthenon is built on the Athenian Acropolis, a measure by Pericles to glorify his city.	399 BC	In a democratic reaction to the hated aristocrats, Socrates is put on trial and executed because he criticized Athenian democracy.
431–404 BC	The devastating Second Peloponnesian War pits Athens and her allies against Sparta and her allies. Almost all of the Greek world is drawn into this conflict.	384 BC	Aristotle, student of Plato and the second great philosopher of antiquity, is born in Stagira north of Greece.
c. 430 BC	Herodotus publishes his <i>Histories</i> , an account of the war between the Greeks and the Persians.	387 BC	Plato founds his Academy in Athens, the first “university” in Europe.
430–426 BC	A plague ravages Athens, killing Pericles and approximately one fourth of the population of Athens. This plague further demoralized the Athenians.	371 BC	Thebes, led by general Epaminondas, decisively defeats Sparta at the battle of Leuctra, ending Spartan domination of Greece.
c. 428 BC	Plato, arguably the greatest philosopher in history, is born.	362 BC	Sparta and Athens join to fight Thebes at the battle of Mantinea. The battle is a draw, but Epaminondas is killed, and Thebes declines without his brilliant leadership.
427 BC	Gorgias, a Sophist from Leontini in Italy, moves to Athens and begins to teach public speaking there. Sophism would become increasingly influential in Athens during the terrible years of the Peloponnesian War.	359 BC	Philip II becomes king of Macedonia and begins to plan his conquest of Greece.

356 BC	Alexander the Great is born to Philip of Macedon and his wife Olympias.	306 BC	Greek philosopher Epicurus establishes a community/school on the outskirts of Athens to advance the Epicurean philosophy.
351 BC	Demosthenes delivers what comes to be known as his “First Philippic” speech, warning the Athenian Assembly against Philip’s intention to dominate Greece.	264–201 BC	Rome defeats Carthage in the First and Second Punic Wars. Rome effectively becomes the dominant power in the western Mediterranean.
347 BC	Plato dies, leaving leadership of the Academy to his nephew, a mathematician.	168 BC	Rome defeats Macedonia at the battle of Pydna, reducing Macedonia to a subject ally. This begins Roman advances into the eastern Mediterranean world.
342 BC	Aristotle becomes the tutor of Alexander the Great.	c. 150 BC	Greek historian Polybius writes his <i>Histories</i> , explaining how Rome’s republican government resembles the mixed constitution of Sparta, featuring checks and balances to limit power.
338 BC	Philip of Macedon defeats an allied Greek army at the battle of Chaeronea. This completes his conquest of Greece.	146 BC	Rome conquers Greece, making the Greeks subjects of her empire for the rest of antiquity.
334 BC	Alexander the Great launches a Macedonian and Greek invasion of Persia.	133 BC	Rome inherits the kingdom of Pergamum in the region of ancient Troy, giving the Romans a foothold in Asia Minor.
331 BC	Alexander conquers Egypt, and then goes on to defeat the Persians under Darius III at the battle of Gaugamela in Mesopotamia. Alexander is recognized as emperor of Asia after this victory.	c. AD 46	Greek historian, biographer, and essayist Plutarch is born.
323 BC	In June, Alexander dies in Babylon just before his thirty-third birthday. His death touches off a series of wars between rivals who wish to succeed him.	AD 55	Epictetus, one of the leading figures in Stoic philosophy, is born in Asia Minor.
310 BC	Roxana, the widow of Alexander, and their young son Alexander IV are killed. Alexander’s empire becomes permanently divided into three successor kingdoms.		



25

Peasant Life, Shepherd Songs

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.
—Christopher Marlowe”

INTRODUCTION

The fifth century BC in Greece was dominated by wars abroad and at home, and yet the average person in Athens had little involvement with such events. The Persian Wars and Delian League occupied the aristocrats, kings, tyrants, and generals of Greece’s leading cities, but approximately four out of every five ancient Greeks lived by farming small plots of land. Most of their time and thought were devoted to providing a living for their families through constant work.

We do not read much about farmers, however, because the literature of the age was concerned with other things. Philosophy sought first principles as it pursued questions about the good life, and scientists wrote about the cosmos, trying to understand its workings. Sages offered pithy, practical wisdom, and the historians concerned themselves with virtue and vice, examining the lives of prominent citizens and seeking out patterns in the rise and fall of cities and empires.

Most of these texts were written by and for wealthy aristocrats. Even poetry was largely aristocratic. Pindar wrote lyrics in honor of Olympic victors, who were usually well-to-do men with the money and leisure to invest in horses, chariots, and extensive training. Sappho’s poems (see *HAGI*, chapter 13) were the work of a young woman who came from one of the leading families of Lesbos. Homer’s poems celebrated the deeds of heroic warriors, scarcely mentioning common soldiers, let alone farmers. And yet, in the midst of Homer’s *Iliad*, we find a vivid description of pastoral life.

Book 18 of the *Iliad* marks a turning point in the epic, when Hephaestus forges a new set of armor for Achilles, which is highly decorated with many scenes of life. Here, in the middle of an epic about war, we see that in Hephaestus’s depiction of the entire cosmos, only a small section involves a city at war. Homer’s poem almost single-handedly shaped the Greek imagination and outlook, but at a significant point in this song of Achilles’s wrath,

we find a description of a fair field, men at the plough driving oxen, workers harvesting corn, and a vineyard full of grapes that would soon become new-made wine, perhaps to be drunk at the wedding celebration that also adorns the shield. Homer depicted shepherds defending their herds from prowling lions, and a beautiful pasture set beneath a mountain dell. Perhaps in honor of the Muse and his fellow poets, he also set a bard with a lyre, around which men and women danced and played. In an epic full of war and bloodshed, the wrath of Achilles, and a contest among kings, the poet paused to praise pastoral life. This has long fascinated scholars, and the shield has often been interpreted as a microcosm of the Greek way of life. It is almost as if the shield offers a critique of the Trojan War that so occupied the Greeks, reminding Achilles of the real meaning of life.

While Homer devoted a small, but important, handful of verses to shepherds and the common farmer, one outstanding literary exception to the general aristocratic emphasis in ancient Greek poetry is an epic poem by Hesiod. We have previously explored his tales of the beginnings of the world (see *HAGI*, chapters 1 and 2), which align with the typical aristocratic outlook. Another of his epics, *Works and Days*, is remarkably different. Throughout this poem we find the point of view of a typical small farmer. The work presents itself as a response to Hesiod's brother Perses, who had charged the poet with claiming more than his fair share of the land they had inherited from their father. The poet advised his brother not to take this dispute to court and instead began to instruct him about Strife, offering two myths to explain how suffering and toil came about, the loss of the Golden Age of man, and the importance of labor and farming.

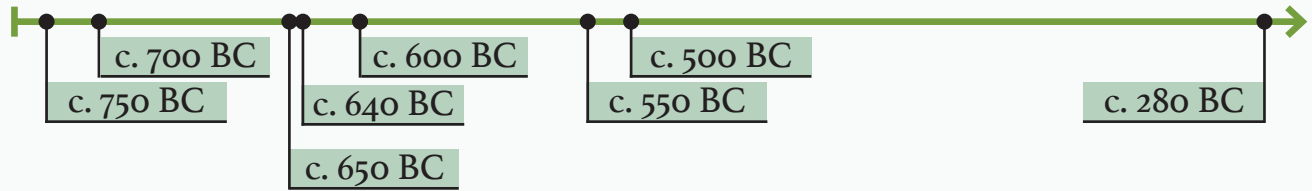
The greater part of the epic described the agricultural arts and offered practical advice about how to succeed in farming. As a didactic poem, one that aims primarily to instruct, Hesiod's advice ranges freely across various topics. In addition to describing the tasks which had to be performed according to the seasons—there was always something to do in the busy agricultural cycle—Hesiod also offered

conventional advice about relationships. The poem is almost unique in allowing modern readers a glimpse of the busy life of work for the overwhelming majority of people in ancient Greece.

In the third century BC, almost five hundred years after Hesiod, a Hellenistic poet named Theocritus drew inspiration from the *Works and Days* to develop a new genre of poetry, the pastoral idyll. By the time Theocritus wrote, Alexander had conquered the world and established Hellenistic cities throughout his empire. Life had changed much since the days of Hesiod, with most Greeks living in and around cities. The older, pastoral way of life acquired a sort of nostalgic appeal, and Theocritus idealized the life of shepherds and rustics in his poems. His poems recall the golden age Hesiod wrote about and often feature shepherds and their loves, whether mortal women or nymphs. The poems are set in the countryside and often celebrate the delights of life and love in rural areas. While Hesiod's farmer sought to instruct, Theocritus's rustic shepherds possess a simple but insightful wisdom that comes from living with the land. The poems are characterized by frequent references to mythological and legendary figures who help set the mood of romantic simplicity and enchantment. Our selections for this chapter present the origin and the formalization of the pastoral form through the verse of Hesiod and Theocritus.



Time Line



c. 750 BC — Homer sings the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* before audiences.

c. 700 BC — Hesiod composes the *Works and Days*, containing advice and instruction for farmers.

c. 650 BC — Archilochus of Paros writes poems in various meters. He wittily denounces his enemies and admits to his own sometimes outrageous behavior in a flippant tone.

c. 640 BC — Spartan poet Tyrtaeus writes elegiac poems praising obedience to the laws and government of the city and exhorting Spartans to bravery in battle. His patriotic songs will be sung by Spartans for centuries as they marched into battle.

c. 600 BC — Sappho writes her emotionally intense lyrics on the island of Lesbos.

c. 550 BC — The elegiac poet Theognis of Megara in Greece writes many short poems. Some of his poems are sung at banquets and drinking parties; he also writes numerous love poems.

c. 500 BC — Pindar of Thebes writes lyrics on the Greek mainland; he becomes celebrated for his odes honoring Olympic victors.

c. 280 BC — The Syracusan poet Theocritus develops the pastoral idyll, celebrating the country life of shepherds and the beauties of nature. Many of his fictional shepherds sing the praises of nymphs or maidens.

Works and Days

Hesiod
c. 8th century BC

TWO TYPES OF STRIFE

There has never been only one kind of **Strife** alone. But all over the earth there have always been two. As for the one, a man would praise her when he came to understand her, but the other is blameworthy: and they are wholly different in nature. For the one fosters evil war and battle, being cruel. No man loves her, but through the will of the deathless gods, men pay harsh Strife her honor due. But the other is the elder daughter of dark Night, and the son of Kronos who sits above and dwells in the sky set her in the roots of the earth. She is far kinder to men. She stirs up even the lazy to toil. For a man grows eager to work when he considers his neighbor, a rich man who hastens to plough and plant and put his house in good order, and neighbor competes with neighbor

Strife

See HAG1, chapter 1, for Hesiod's genealogy of the personified Strife in the Theogony, daughter of Night and Nemesis.

Perses

Hesiod's brother, who threatened to go to court over the division of their inherited land

mallow and asphodel

Both plants were symbolic of the common man. Mallow was used regularly as food and medicine, while asphodel was associated with the resting place of common people in the Underworld.

Prometheus

For Aeschylus's account of Prometheus's punishment, see HAGI, chapter 4.

MERCURY SLAYING ARGUS

One of many mythological scenes Rubens painted for the King of Spain's hunting lodge, it shows the culmination of the story of Zeus's love for Io, whom Hera changed into a heifer. She charged the shepherd Argus to guard her, but Zeus sent Mercury to lull Argus to sleep and kill him. Rubens chooses the most dramatic moment to depict, when Mercury raises his sword to strike.

as he hurries after wealth. This Strife is wholesome for men. And potter is angry with potter, and craftsman with craftsman, and beggar is jealous of beggar, and minstrel of minstrel.

So, **Perses**, lay up these things in your heart. Do not let that Strife who delights in mischief hold your heart back from work while you peep and peer and listen to the wrangles of the courthouse. Little concern has he with quarrels and courts who has not a year's food stored up, even that which the earth bears, Demeter's grain. When you have got plenty of that, you can raise disputes and strive to get another's goods. But you shall have no second chance to deal so again. So let us settle our dispute here with true judgment dividing our inheritance. You seized the greater share and carried it off, greatly swelling the glory of our bribe-swallowing lords who love to judge such a case as this. Fools! They know not how much more the half is than the whole, nor what great advantage there is in **mallow and asphodel**.

PANDORA

For the gods keep the means of life hidden from men. Otherwise you would easily do work enough in a day to supply you for a full year. Soon would you put away your rudder, and the fields worked by the ox and sturdy mule would run to waste. But Zeus, in the anger of his heart, hid the means of life because **Prometheus** the crafty deceived him. Therefore, Zeus planned sorrow and mischief against men. He hid fire, but the noble son of Iapetus stole it again for men, hiding it in a hollow fennel-stalk so that Zeus who delights in thunder did not see it. But afterwards, Zeus who gathers the clouds said to him in anger: "Son of Iapetus, surpassing all in cunning, you are glad that you have outwitted me and stolen fire—a great plague to you yourself and to men that shall be. But I will give men as the price for fire an evil thing in which they may all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction."





And he bade famous Hephaestus make haste and mix earth with water, to put in it the voice and strength of humankind, and thus to fashion a sweet, lovely maiden-shape, like to an immortal goddess in face. And he bade Athena to teach her needlework and the weaving of the varied web, and golden Aphrodite to shed grace upon her head and cruel longing and cares that weary the limbs. And he charged Hermes the guide, the Slayer of **Argus**, to put in her a shameless mind and a deceitful nature. And they obeyed the lord Zeus the son of Kronos, and the divine Graces and queenly Persuasion put necklaces of gold upon her, and the rich-haired Hours crowned her head with spring flowers. And he called this woman **Pandora** because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift, a plague to men who eat bread.

But when he had finished the sheer, hopeless snare, the father of gods and mortals sent glorious Argus-Slayer, the swift messenger of the gods, to take it to **Epimetheus** as a gift. And Epimetheus did not think about the warning Prometheus gave him, bidding him never take a gift from Olympian Zeus, but to send it back for fear it might prove to be something harmful to men. But he took the gift, and afterwards, when the evil thing was already his, he understood. Before this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sickness, which now the Fates bring upon men, for in misery men grow old quickly.

But the woman took off the great lid of the **jar** with her hands and scattered all these and her thought caused sorrow and mischief to men. Only Hope remained within, under the rim of the great jar, and did not fly out. But the rest, countless plagues, wander amongst men, for the earth is full of evils and the sea is full of them also. Of themselves diseases come upon men continually by day and by night, bringing mischief to mortals silently. So is there no way to escape the will of Zeus.

You princes, you also mark well this punishment, for the deathless gods are near among men and notice all those who oppress their fellows with crooked judgments and do not consider the anger of the gods. Keep watch against this,

BOY WITH PLOW AND OXEN

The visionary British artist William Blake imagines a scene from Virgil's *Georgics* in this woodcut. Unlike neoclassical artists, the Romantic Blake shows the ecstatic joy of the boy's encounter with nature, exploiting the simple, raw graphic language of woodcut prints to bring out the primitive purity of country life.

Slayer of Argus

Argus was the hundred-eyed watchman Hera set over Io when she was transformed into a calf. Hermes charmed Argus to sleep and killed him at Zeus's command, letting Io escape.

Pandora

literally "all-gifted"

Epimetheus

brother of Prometheus, his name means "afterthought"

jar

Pandora had been sent to Epimetheus with a jar that contained all the evils in the world.

you princes, and make straight your judgments, you who devour bribes—put crooked judgments altogether from your thoughts.

FIVE AGES OF MAN

If it will please you, I will say the same in another **tale**, well and skillfully told—take this to heart. The beginnings of things were the same for gods as for mortals.

First of all the deathless gods who dwell on Olympus made a golden race of mortal men who lived in the time of Kronos when he was reigning in heaven. And they lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and **free from toil** and grief. Old age was not miserable for them, but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died, it was as though they were overcome with sleep, and they had all good things, for the fruitful earth bore for them fruit abundantly and without effort. They lived in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods.

But this generation died out. Then the gods made a second generation of silver that was less noble by far. It was like the golden race neither in body nor in spirit. At a **hundred years old** a person was still a child at his mother's side, playing innocently in his own home. But when they were full grown and were come to the full measure of their prime, they lived only a little time in sorrow because of their foolishness. They could not keep from wronging one another, nor would they serve the immortals, nor sacrifice on the holy altars of the blessed ones as it is right for men to do wherever they dwell. Then Zeus the

tale

Plato adapted this legend in his “noble lie” in the Republic, where Socrates tells his friends the gods mix different metals into human souls. This determines the class hierarchy: those with gold in them are the natural rulers, those with silver are the warriors, and those with bronze and iron in their souls are the merchants, craftsmen, and farmers who provide food and implements for the ruling classes.

free from toil

Although Hesiod and other poets generally characterized Kronos as cruel and despotic, the ancient tradition also preserved legends of a time of idyllic bliss for humans when he was king of the universe before he was overthrown by Zeus.

hundred years old

The Greeks, like many ancient cultures such as the Sumerians, Chinese, and Hebrews, had traditions that humans once lived for much longer spans than we do today.

BACCHUS AND CERES

Bread is the reward of the hard worker, Hesiod tells his brother. Ceres here appears with Bacchus, attended by Venus and Cupid, who are often paired because food and drink help the progress of love.



son of Kronos was angry and destroyed them because they would not give honor to the blessed gods who live on Olympus.

After this generation died out, Zeus made a third generation of mortal men, a brazen race, sprung from ash-trees. It was in no way equal to the silver age, but terrible and strong. Fearful men, they loved the grim works of **Ares** and deeds of violence. They ate no **bread**, but had hearts like hardest stone. Great was their strength and their arms were unconquerable. Their armor was of bronze, and their houses of bronze, and their tools of bronze: there was no black iron as of yet. These were destroyed by their own hands. Passing to the dank house of chill Hades, they left no name. Terrible though they were, black Death seized them, and they left the bright light of the sun.

But when this generation had died out as well, Zeus the son of Kronos made yet another, the fourth, upon the fruitful earth. This was nobler and more righteous, a god-like race of hero-men who are called demi-gods, the race before our own, throughout the boundless earth. Grim war and dread battle destroyed a part of them, some in the land of Cadmus at seven-gated **Thebes** when they fought for the flocks of Oedipus, and some, when it had brought them in ships over the great sea gulf to Troy for rich-haired Helen's sake: there death came to a part of them. But to the others father Zeus the son of Kronos gave a living and an abode apart from men and made them dwell at the ends of earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the islands of the blessed along the shore of deep swirling Ocean, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit three times each year, far from the **deathless gods**. Kronos rules over them, for the father of men and gods released him from his bonds. And these heroes have honor and glory.

Yet again far-seeing Zeus made another generation of men, the fifth, who are now upon the bounteous earth. I wish I were not among the men of the fifth generation, for now truly we are a **race of iron**, and men never rest from labor and sorrow by day or from perishing by night. The gods lay sore trouble upon them. But even these shall have some good mingled with their evils. And Zeus will destroy this race of mortal men also some day. At the end the father will not agree with his children, nor the children with their father, nor guest with his host, nor comrade with comrade. Nor will brother be dear to brother as before. Men will dishonor their parents as they grow quickly old, rebuking them with bitter words, not knowing the fear of the gods. They will not repay



DAPHNIS AND CHLOE

The poetry of Hesiod and Theocritus praises the pastoral life, especially in the conventional figures of Daphnis and Chloe. Both had been abandoned at birth and raised by herders in an idyllic state. Daphnis was the supposed inventor of pastoral.

Ares

The god of war; these warlike humans likely represented a memory of Bronze Age men from the Mycenaean period in Greece between about 1800 and 1150 BC, when cities were fortified with mammoth walls because of the frequent wars.

bread

Bread was the ordinary food of people in antiquity, known as the "staff of life"; presumably the Bronze Age warriors ate mostly meat, such as the meal described in book I of the Iliad. Meat was too expensive for common people to enjoy in pre-modern times, except on special occasions such as sacrifices.

Thebes

A reference to the attack on Thebes by seven champions from Argos to restore Polynices to the throne which his brother Eteocles would not surrender; see HAG1, chapter 17.

deathless gods

For the Greeks, paradise for humans was separate from the presence of the capricious gods.

race of iron

This would correlate to people living after the collapse of the late Bronze Age, after 1100 BC. Interestingly, archaeologists have confirmed iron began to replace bronze around this same time.

Aidos and Nemesis

Shame and fear of retribution were qualities that restrained human wickedness. Early in book 24 of the *Iliad*, Apollo criticizes Achilles's mistreatment of Hector's corpse, saying, "He has none of that Shame which does great harm to men as well as good"—i.e., Achilles's anger had made him indifferent to others.

stingless drones

Plato adapted this simile to his account of how democracies would become corrupted by idle, envious poor men in book 8 of the *Republic*.



BLACK-FIGURE AMPHORA WITH FARMERS HARVESTING OLIVES

This amphora may have informed the viewer of what was inside, showing slaves beating the branches of an olive tree. The black-figure method, the strictly profile figures and their Archaic period hairstyles and long beards, is typical of late sixth-century works. The imagery has a charming naturalism proper to lower-status workers but also heralds the naturalism of the Classical period.

their aged parents the cost of their nurture, for might shall be their right and one man will sack another's city. There will be no favor for the man who keeps his oath or for the just or for the good. Rather, men will praise the evil-doer and his violent dealing. Strength will become right and the wicked will hurt the worthy man, speaking false words against him, and will swear an oath upon them. Envy, foul-mouthed, delighting in evil, with scowling face, will accompany wretched men one and all. And then **Aidos and Nemesis** will depart from the earth and forsake mankind to join the deathless gods, and bitter sorrows will be left for mortal men. And there will be no help against evil.

THE VALUE OF WORK

As for you, Perses, listen to justice and do not practice violence. You should work, always remembering my charge, high-born Perses, in order that venerable Demeter, richly crowned, may love you and fill your barn with food. For hunger is a companion for the sluggard. Both gods and men are angry with a man who lives idly, for in nature he is like the **stingless drones** who waste the labor of the bees, eating without working. Let it be your care to order your work properly, that in the right season your barns may be full of food. Through work men grow rich in flocks and substance, and working they are much better loved by the immortals. Work is no disgrace—it is idleness which is a disgrace. But if you work, the idle will soon envy you as you grow rich, for fame and renown attend on wealth. And whatever be your lot, work is best for you, if you turn your misguided mind away from other men's property to your work and attend to your livelihood as I bid you. An evil shame is the needy man's companion, shame which both greatly harms and prospers men: shame is with poverty, but confidence with wealth.

If you do not work, you may come to be in need and go begging to other men's houses—but without success, as you have come to me. But I will give you no more nor give you further measure. Foolish Perses! Work the work the gods ordained for men, lest in bitter anguish of spirit you and your wife and children must seek your livelihood among your neighbors who shall not heed you.

Do you wish for wealth? He who adds to what he has, will keep off bright-eyed hunger; for if you add only a little to a little and do this often, soon that little will become great. What a man has by him at home does not trouble him. It is better to have your stuff at home, for whatever is abroad may mean loss. It is a good thing to draw on what you have, but it grieves your heart to need something and not to have it, and I bid you mark this. Take your fill when the cask is first opened and when it is nearly spent, but midway be sparing. Let the wage promised to a friend be fixed. Be pleasant when dealing with your brother—but get a witness, for trust and mistrust alike ruin men. Do not let a flaunting woman coax and deceive you: she is merely after your barn. The man who trusts womankind trusts deceivers. There should only be one son, for so wealth will increase in the home. If you have more than one, you must work

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Epic Contest

Hesiod made it clear in the *Works and Days* that he did not like to travel overseas. Despite this, he crossed the sea to participate in a singing contest on the island of Euboea at the funeral of Amphidamas of Chalcis. Tradition says that he won a tripod in this contest, which he dedicated to the Muses. There is an ancient narrative, *The Contest of Homer and Hesiod*, which said that Hesiod defeated the great poet Homer in this competition. The account dates from the second century AD, but it appears to be based upon an earlier story told by the Sophist Alcidas in his work the *Museum*. In the version that has survived, Hesiod wins the prize because the judges rule that his *Works and Days*, with its portrayal of peace and agriculture, is of greater value to the community than Homer's stories of warfare and slaughter.



◆ Encounter with a God

Critics believe one of Theocritus's pastorals, "The Harvest Home," is semi-autobiographical. In this poem, a young man named Simichidas, who functions as a proxy for Theocritus himself, meets a handsome goatherd on the island of Cos in the Aegean Sea, renowned for his singing. The goatherd, Lycidas, challenges the young man to a singing contest, offering his crook of wild olive branches as the prize. Simichidas is awarded the prize even though his song is far inferior to the work of the mysterious goatherd. By the end of the poem, we can infer that the goatherd Lycidas is actually the god Apollo, patron of poetry, in disguise. Critics have been particularly interested in this account, noting the parallels to Hesiod's encounter with the Muses on Mount Helicon.



◆ Pastoral Prophecy

By far the greatest pastoral poet of Rome was Virgil. While he has been celebrated for his epic story of Rome's founding, the *Aeneid*, he also composed pastoral poems known as eclogues. The most famous of these pastoral poems is the *Fourth Eclogue*. In this intriguing poem, Virgil predicts the coming birth of a child who will restore the Golden Age to mankind. Virgil's depiction of the earthly paradise resembled Hesiod's description of the Golden Age in the *Works and Days*, with people enjoying long life, abundance of food without work, and peace. Virgil wrote this prophetic pastoral within a half century of the birth of Jesus Christ, and throughout the Middle Ages Christians regarded the *Fourth Eclogue* as a pagan prediction of the Messiah's birth.

long and die old. Yet Zeus can easily give great wealth to a greater number. More hands mean more work and more increase.

THE FARMER'S CALENDAR

Pleiades

This constellation rises in the autumn between October and November, and sets in early May.

strip

Because clothing was difficult to launder, and most people only had one set, farmers would strip down to perform the most strenuous tasks of farming. Hesiod is advising Perses to work hard and not avoid the labors that would require him to get dirty.

ERATO, MUSE OF LYRIC POETRY

Of the nine Muses who accompany Apollo, Erato inspired lyric poetry. In this neoclassical painting, Meynier imagines the Muse inspiring love poetry, accompanied by Eros, god of love, whose arrow she uses as a stylus for her lines. The billowing cloak is found very often in Roman sculptures of the Greek gods, especially Venus.

Begin your harvest when the **Pleiades**, daughters of Atlas, are rising, and your ploughing when they are going to set. Forty nights and days they are hidden and appear again as the year moves round, when first you sharpen your sickle. This is the law of the plains, and of those who live near the sea, and who inhabit rich country far from the tossing sea: **strip** to sow and plough and reap if you wish to harvest all Demeter's fruits in due season. First of all, get a house, and a woman and an ox for the plough—a slave woman, not a wife, to follow the oxen as well—and make everything ready at home, so that you may not have to ask of another. For if he refuses you, because you so lack, the season pass by and your work come to nothing.

When the piercing power and sultry heat of the sun abate—and almighty Zeus sends the autumn rains, and men's flesh comes to feel far easier—the wood you cut with your axe is least liable to worm. Remember to cut your timber: it is the season for that work.

Get two ploughs ready. Work on them at home, one all of a piece, and the other jointed. It is far better to do this, for if you should break one of them, you can put the oxen to the other. Poles of laurel or elm are most free from worms, and a share-beam of oak and a plough-tree of holm-oak. Get two oxen, bulls of nine years, for their strength is unspent and they are best for work. They will not fight in the furrow and break the plough and then leave the work undone. Let a brisk fellow of forty years follow them, with a loaf of flat bread for his dinner, one who will drive a straight furrow and keep his mind on his work. No younger man will be better than he at scattering the seed and avoiding double-sowing, for a youth gets distracted, searching out fun with his comrades.



As soon as the time for ploughing is proclaimed to men, make haste—you and your slaves alike. Whether it is wet or dry, you must plough in the season for ploughing, and bestir yourself early in the morning so that your fields may be full. Plough fallow land in the spring, for come summer it will not disappoint your hopes. Sow fallow land when the soil is still getting light. Fallow land is a defender from harm and a soother of children.

Pray to Zeus and to pure Demeter to make Demeter's holy grain sound and heavy when first you begin ploughing. Pray when you hold the end of the plough in your hand and when you bring down your stick on the backs of the oxen as they lean and pull. Let a slave follow a little behind and make trouble for the birds by hiding the seed, for good management is the best for mortal men as bad management is the worst. In this way your ears of grain will bow to the ground with fullness if the Olympian so wills it. And you will sweep the cobwebs from your bins, and you will be glad as you take of your harvest. And so you will have plenty till you come to early springtime, and will not look wistfully to others, but another shall be in need of your help. And while it is yet midsummer command your slaves: "It will not always be summer, build barns."

Pass by the smithy and its crowded lounge in wintertime, when the cold keeps men from field work. For then an industrious man can greatly prosper his house, lest bitter winter catch you helpless and poor and you chafe a swollen foot with a shrunk hand. The idle man who waits on empty hope, lacking a livelihood, lays to heart mischief-making. It is not a wholesome hope that accompanies a needy man who lolls at ease while he has no sure livelihood.

fallow

land that has been plowed but left unseeded for a growing season

LANDSCAPE WITH A PIPING SHEPHERD

The myth of Arcady and the bucolic lifestyle of its shepherds inspired artists for millennia. Here French baroque artist Claude Lorrain shows the lonely shepherd playing his pipe at dusk. An unspoiled nature had great appeal in seventeenth-century Europe, which was increasingly urbanized and dominated by trade and crop farming. Lorrain consistently painted ideal dusk-lit gentle landscapes that were perfectly composed.



Lenaeon

the end of winter, late January and early February

Boreas

the god of the north wind, bringer of winter storms

firstling kids

the first animal offspring of the year

grown up

i.e., reached the age of menstruation

the fifth

In most Greek states women married in their early teens. Hesiod advises not to consummate the marriage until she has matured into her late teens, perhaps eighteen to twenty years old.

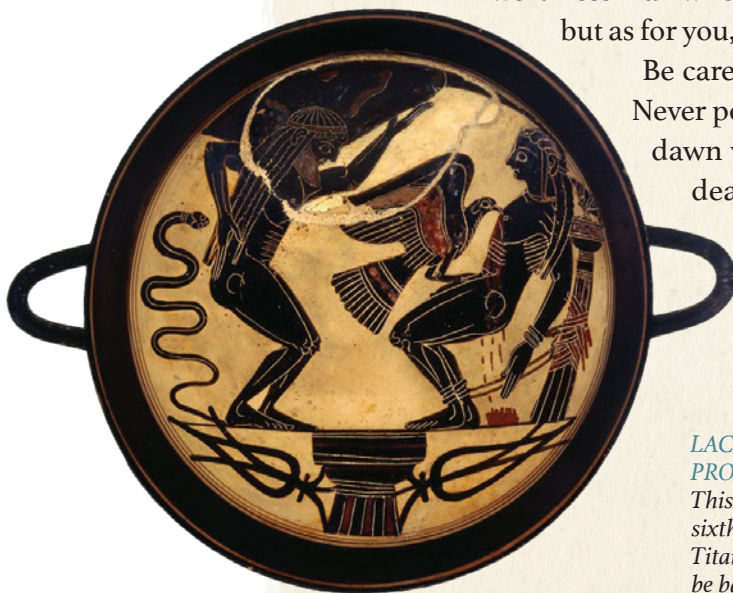
Avoid the wretched days of **Lenaeon**, when the weather is fit to skin an ox and the frosts are cruel as **Boreas** blows over the earth. Then put on, as I bid you, a soft coat and a tunic that reaches your feet to shield your body. So clothe yourself that your hair may keep still and not bristle and stand on end all over your body. Lace close-fitting boots on your feet, made of the hide of a slaughtered ox, thickly lined with felt inside. And when the season of frost comes on, stitch together skins of **firstling kids** to put over your back and to keep off the rain. On your head above wear a shaped cap of felt to keep your ears from getting wet, for the dawn is chill when Boreas has once made his onslaught, and at dawn a fruitful mist is spread over the earth from starry heaven upon the fields of blessed men. Finish your work and return home ahead of him, and do not let the dark cloud from heaven wrap round you and make your body clammy and soak your clothes. Avoid it—for this is the hardest month, wintry, hard for sheep and hard for men. In this season let your oxen have half their usual food, but let your man have more, for the helpful nights are long. Observe all this until the year is ended and you have nights and days of equal length, and Earth, the mother of all, bears again her various fruit.

TRADITIONAL CUSTOMS

Bring home a wife to your house when you are of the right age, while you are not far short of thirty years nor much above, for this is the right age for marriage. Let your wife have been **grown up** four years, and marry her in **the fifth**. Marry a maiden, so that you can teach her careful ways, and especially marry one who lives near you. But look well about you and see that your marriage will not be a joke to your neighbors. For a man wins nothing better than a good wife, and, again, nothing worse than a bad one, a greedy soul who roasts her man without fire, strong though he may be, and brings him to a raw old age.

Do not make a friend equal to a brother, but if you do, do not wrong him first, and do not lie to please the tongue. But if he wrongs you first, offending either in word or in deed, remember to repay him double. But if he asks you to be his friend again and is ready to give you satisfaction, welcome him. He is a worthless man who makes now one and now another his friend, but as for you, do not let your face put your heart to shame.

Be careful to avoid the anger of the deathless gods. Never pour a libation of sparkling wine to Zeus after dawn with unwashed hands, nor to others of the deathless gods, else they will not receive your prayers but spit them back.



LACONIC BLACK-FIGURE KYLIX WITH PROMETHEUS AND ATLAS

This Spartan drinking cup from the mid-sixth century BC shows the two brother Titans punished by the gods and seems to be based directly on Hesiod's Theogony.

Idylls

Theocritus
c. 3rd century BC

IDYLL I—THE LAMENT OF DAPHNIS

Country-song, sing country-song, sweet Muses—

'Tis **Thyrsis** sings, of **Etna**, and a rare sweet voice has he.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when **Daphnis** pined? Ye Nymphs, O
where were ye?
Was it **Peneios**'s pretty vale, or **Pindus**'s glens? 'twas never
Anapus's flood nor Etna's pike nor **Acis**'s holy river.
When Daphnis died the foxes wailed and the wolves they wailed
full sore,
The lion from the green plain wept when Daphnis was no more.
O many the lusty steers at his feet, and many the heifers slim,
Many the calves and many the cows that made their moan for him.

Country-song, sing country-song, sweet Muses—

Came Hermes first, from the hills away, and said "O Daphnis tell,
Who is it that troubles you, my son? Whom do you love so well?"
The cowherds came, the shepherds came, and the goatherds him
beside,
All eager to hear what ailed him. **Priapus** came and cried:
"Why peak and pine, unhappy lad, when you might bed a bride?
For every wood and water has seen her footsteps flee
In search of thee. O a fool in love and a feeble is here, I see!



Thyrsis

The singer of the idyll, he sang
to entertain a shepherd with
whom he was conversing.

Etna

a volcanic mountain in
Sicily, beneath which Zeus
bound Typhon the Titan
(see HAGI, chapter 2)

Daphnis

A mortal son of Hermes
and a nymph, Daphnis. He
was raised by shepherds
and regarded as the inven-
tor of pastoral poetry.

Peneios

a river that ran
through Thessaly

Pindus

a mountain range in
northern Greece

Anapus

a river that flowed
through eastern Sicily

Acis

A rival of the Cyclops Poly-
phemus for the love of a
nymph, he was crushed by the
Cyclops. As his blood gushed
forth it was transformed into
a stream that flowed near the
base of Mt. Aetna in Sicily.

Priapus

a rural god of fertility
associated with livestock,
fruit trees, and gardens

SHEPHERD'S SONG

The postimpressionist artist
Puvis de Chavannes creates
an ideal vision of Arcadian
country life that recalls
Theocritus, showing a group
of women drawing water
interrupted by a shepherd's
beguiling song. Puvis's works,
in pastel colors that resemble
Renaissance frescoes, offer an
escape from the real world
into an idealized, simple past.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS



◆ Lyric Epics

Stesichorus was a lyric poet in the first half of the sixth century BC. He wrote lengthy lyric poems, most of which survive only in fragments or by their titles. Greatly influenced by Homer, both in subject matter and even in his language, the Sicilian poet creatively blended lyric style with epic material. One of his poems was said to be thirteen hundred lines long, far longer than most lyric poems. He composed poems on events at Troy (“Helen,” “Wooden Horse,” and “Sack of

Troy”), on the deeds of Heracles (“Cerberus”), and about the house of Oedipus at Thebes. Some of his poems may have been sources for variants on these legends that the tragic poets of Classical Greece used. Stesichorus was also the first known poet to write about Daphnis, the shepherd who became a standard figure in the pastoral tradition.

◆ Quality, Not Quantity

Theocritus and other Hellenistic poets did not seek to imitate the epic scale of Homer and Hesiod. Instead, they sought to produce short works that were as perfect as possible. Theocritus was known for his tightly organized, carefully polished short compositions. As pastoral poetry often reflects on the nature of poetry itself, it seems that Theocritus may have provided a metaphor for his aims in the midst of Idyll 1. In that poem a young boy ignores everything else in order to weave a tiny cage for a singing cricket. Critics have suggested that this functions as an image for the Hellenistic emphasis, characteristic of Theocritus, on perfecting a short poem on a small scale.



◆ Muses

Greek tradition recognized nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory) as divine inspirers of artistic creativity. Calliope was the Muse of epic poetry, while Terpsichore was associated with lyric poetry and especially dancing—her name comes from *terpo*, or “delight,” and *chorus*, or “dance.” Other poetic Muses were Erato, who inspired lyric poets, Melpomene, Muse of tragedy, and Thalia, Muse of comedy. There was even a Muse of history, Clio, since history was considered more of a literary art than a science in antiquity. Later, other creative thinkers claimed the Muses as their patrons. Pythagoras was the first philosopher to claim help from the Muses, but many later philosophers regarded themselves as especially guided by the goddesses.



His eye grows soft, his eye grows sad, because he's born a man!
So you, when you see the lasses laughing in gay riot,
Your eye grows soft, your eye grows sad, because you share it not."

Country-song, sing country-song, sweet Muses—

But never a word said the poor cowherd, for a bitter love bore he;
And he bore it well, as I shall tell, to the end that was to be.
But the **Cyprian** came to and smiled on him full sweetly,
For though she wished to foster wrath, she could not choose but smile
And cried "Ah, braggart Daphnis, who would cast off Love so easily!

Thou art thrown yourself by Love's so grievous guile."

Country-song, more country-song, ye Muses—

Then out he spoke; "O Cypris cruel, Cypris vengeful yet,
Cypris hated of all flesh! Do you think all my sun is set?
I tell you even among the dead Daphnis shall work you ill.
Men talk of Cypris and the deer, gone to Ida hill,
Gone to trap **Anchises**—sure bedstraw there does thrive
And fine oak-trees and pretty bees all humming at the hive.
Adonis too is ripe to woo, for he tends his sheep on the **lea**
And shoots the hare and a-hunting goes of all the beasts there be.
And then I'd have you take your stand by **Diomed**, and say
'I slew the cowherd Daphnis, fight me thou today.'"

Country-song, more country-song, ye Muses—

"But 'tis wolf farewell and fox farewell and bear of the mountain den,
Your cowherd here, your Daphnis dear, you'll never see again,
By glen no more, by glade no more. And 'tis farewell to thee
Sweet **Arethuse**, and all pretty waters down **Thymbris** vale that flee.
For this, O this, is that Daphnis, your cattle to field did bring,
This Daphnis he, led stirk and steer to you a-watering."

Country-song, more country-song, ye Muses—

"And Pan, O Pan, whether at this hour by Lycee's mountain-pile
Or Maenal steep your watch you keep, come away to the Sicily isle,
Come away from the knoll of **Helice** and the grave mound lift high
in the lea,

The mound of **Lycaon**'s child, the tomb that gods in heaven envy.
Come, Master, and take this pretty pipe, this pipe of honey breath,
Of wax well-knit round lips to fit, for Love calls me to my death."

Country-song, leave country-song, ye Muses—

"Now you violets bear briars, you thistles violets too,
Daffodil may hang on the juniper, and all things go askew.
Pines may grow figs now Daphnis dies, and deer tear hound if she will,
And the sweet nightingale be out sung in the dale by the scritch-owl from the hill."
Such words spoke he, and then kept still—and O, the Love-Lady,

Cyprian

Aphrodite, who came ashore on Cyprus after her birth at sea

Anchises

Father of Aeneas by Aphrodite, who disguised herself as an innocent maiden to woo him. See HAG1, chapter 3.

Adonis

a mortal lover of Aphrodite who was killed by a wild boar

lea

grassland or pasture, a meadow

Diomed

Diomedes, a Greek champion in the Trojan War; in the Iliad, Athena enabled him to see and wound Aphrodite during a battle.

Arethuse

She was a nymph who fled from Arcadia in Greece and came up as a freshwater fountain on the island of Ortygia, just south of Syracuse in Sicily.

Thymbris

A nymph, the mother of Pan. In this poem, she, too, has become a river.

Helice

Mt. Helicon, the peak sacred to the Muses in Boeotia

Lycaon

A mythical king of Arcadia who tried to trick Zeus into eating human flesh. Zeus responded by sending the flood that wiped out all humans except Deucalion and Pyrrha. Lycaon had fifty sons, several of whom founded cities in Greece.

*SHEPHERD GRAZING HIS
FLOCK BEFORE ATHENIAN
ACROPOLIS*

The Swiss photographer Boissonas's remarkable early photograph of the Athenian Acropolis makes it appear timeless. He likely did not have to stage the shot, as this was how Athens still appeared in 1903. He exploited the effects of telephoto lenses to collapse space and make for more dramatic photos. He traveled throughout Greece, and his albums of famous sites from antiquity captured the imagination of classically educated audiences in Switzerland and beyond.



River

Acheron, the river of death

Amaryllis

Traditionally, Amaryllis was a shepherdess who suffered unrequited love. Every day for a month she pierced her heart with a golden arrow and shed drops of blood on the path to her beloved's house. He became her lover, and the red drops became beautiful flowers. Theocritus has reversed the story—she is hard-hearted to his passionate shepherd speaker.

Tityrus

a generic name for a shepherd in poetry

She wished to have raised him where he lay, but that could never be.

For the thread was spun and the days were done and Daphnis gone to the **River**,

And the Nymphs' good friend and the Muses' mate was drowned in the whirl forever.

Farewell, you Muses, and again fare you well, and I'll sing you even a sweeter song another day.

IDYLL 3—SERENADE FOR AMYRALLIS

I go courting **Amaryllis**, and my goats go browsing on along the hill with **Tityrus** to drive them. My well-beloved Tityrus, pray feed my goats, pray lead them to watering, good Tityrus, and beware—or the buckgoat, the yellow Libyan yonder, will be butting you.

Beautiful Amaryllis, why do you peep no more from your cave and call me in? Do you hate your sweetheart? Can it be a closer look has shown me snub-nosed, Nymph, and over-bearded? I dare swear you'll be the death of me. See, here have I brought you half a score of apples plucked yonder where you bade me pluck them, and tomorrow I'll bring you so many again.

Look, ah! look upon me—my heart is torn with pain. I wish I were yon humming bee to thread my way through the ivy and the fern you adorn your cave with and so enter in! O now I know well what Love is. 'Tis a cruel god. I bet he nursed at a she-lion, and in a forest was reared, so badly does he slow-burn me, yes, pierce me to the very bone. O Nymph of the pretty glance, but all of stone—O Nymph of the dark, dark eyebrow, come clasp your goatherd that so yearns to be kissing you. Even in an empty kiss there's sweet delight. You'll

make me tear in pieces the ivy-wreath I have for you, dear Amaryllis, twined with rosebuds and fragrant parsley leaves.

Alas, what's to become of me? Ah, me! you will not answer. I'll take off my plaid and go to the cliff and leap from it into the waves—and if I do not die, it will be through no fault of yours. My thoughts were of you and whether or not you loved me, and when I played slap to see, the love-in-absence that should have stuck on, shriveled up against the soft of my arm. Agroeo too, the sieve-witch that was out the other day gathering herbs beside the harvesters, she spoke true when she said you made me of no account, though I was all wrapped up in you. See, a white twinner-goat have I to give you, which that nut-brown little handmaiden of Mermnon's wishes to get from me—and get her she shall seeing you choose to play me the fool.

Lo there! a **twitch** of my right eye. Shall I be seeing her? I'll go lean me against yon pine tree and sing awhile. It may be she'll look upon me then, if she's not made of stone.

When **Schoenus's bride-race** was begun, apples fell from one that run;

She looks, she's lost, and lost doth leap, into love so dark and deep.

When the **seer** in his brother's name with those kin to Pylus came,

Bias to the joy-bed hastens from which sprang **Alphesibee** the wise.

When Adonis o'er the sheep in the hills his watch did keep,

The Love-Dame proved so wild for wooers, even in death she clips him to her.

O I wish I were **Endymion** that sleeps the unchanging slumber,

Or, Lady, knew thy Jason's glee which profane eyes may never see! . . .

My head aches sore, but 'tis nothing to you. I'll make an end, and throw me down, yes, and stir not if the wolves devour me—the which I pray be as sweet honey in the throat to you.

IDYLL 8—A COUNTRY SINGING MATCH

One day the fair Daphnis, out upon the long hills with his cattle, met Menalcas keeping his sheep. Both had **ruddy** heads, were fine young men, played music, and knew how to sing. Looking towards Daphnis, Menalcas first says, "What, Daphnis, watchman of bel-lowing cattle, are you willing to sing me something? I guarantee, when it is my turn, I shall outdo you by far." And this was Daphnis's answer: "Shepherd of woolly sheep, you mere piper, never shall the likes of you beat me in song, no matter how hard you try."

MENALCAS. Do you want to bet?

DAPHNIS. Certainly! I'll match whatever you propose, too.

MENALCAS. And what shall our wager be?

DAPHNIS. Mine shall be a calf, and let yours be that big sheep yonder.

MENALCAS. But who is to be our judge? Who's to do the hearing for us?

DAPHNIS. Perhaps that goatherd yonder, the lad with that spotted dog barking near the baby goats.

twitch

an old superstition that if the right eye twitches, you will soon see a close friend

Schoenus's bride-race

Schoenus, the father of Atalanta, required her suitors to race her and forfeit their lives if they lost. Hippomenes fell in love with Atalanta and, aided by Aphrodite, was given three golden apples from the Hesperides. As he raced, he threw out the apples, one at a time. Atalanta was diverted, stopping to gather them, allowing Hippomenes to win the race.

seer

The prophet Melampus won the king of Pylus's daughter for his brother, Bias.

Alphesibee

the daughter of Bias who married Pelias, the Greek king who sent Jason on the quest for the Golden Fleece

Endymion

A shepherd in Aeolia who lived at Olympia; he fell in love with the moon, and eventually Zeus put him into an eternal sleep so that he could love the moon without aging.

ruddy

a healthy red

Naïs
the nymph who was
Daphnis's lover

Pelops's wealth
The legendary grandfather
of Agamemnon; according
to legend he came to Greece
from Asia Minor and brought
great treasure with him.

Croesus's trove
Croesus was a historical king
of Lydia in the sixth century
BC; coins were first invented
there, and Croesus became
fabulously wealthy from
his country's gold, which he
coined. The phrase "rich as
Croesus" is still used today.

White-tail
the goatherd's dog

THEOCRITUS
The nineteenth-century French
artist Jean Charles Cazin
worked in a realist style and
shows Theocritus as a brilliant,
honored poet wreathed in gold
and robed in white, visiting
the lovesick goatherd that
is the subject of one of his
Idylls, his bucolic poems.



So the two singers called, and the goatherd came to hear them. The lads sang and the goatherd was their judge. Menalcas, loud-of-voice, began the country-song and Daphnis was to follow. Menalcas thus began:

MENALCAS. O woods and waters, wondrous race, listen of your grace;

If ever my son was your delight, feed my lambs with all your might;

And if Daphnis's herd comes this way, make his calves as fat as they.

DAPHNIS. O darling wells and meadows dear, sweets of the earth, come lend an ear;

If like the nightingales I sing, give my cows good pasturing;

And if Menalcas ever you see, fill his flock and give him glee.

MENALCAS. Where sweet Milon sports there are fuller hives and loftier trees;

Wherever those pretty footings fall, goats and sheep bear twins all;

If elsewhere those feet are gone, the pasture's lean and shepherd's alone.

DAPHNIS. Where sweet Naïs comes a-straying, there the green meads go a-maying;

Wherever her pathway lies along, there's flowing teats and growing young;

If elsewhere she be gone, cows are dry and herd fordone.

MENALCAS. I'd not desire Pelops's wealth untold nor all Croesus's trove of gold,

Nor yet to outrun the storm-wind's breath, if I may sit this rock beneath,

Pretty pasture-mate, with you, and gaze on the Sicilian sea.

DAPHNIS. Wood fears the tempest storm, water fears fire in the heat of summer,

Beasts fear the net and birds the snare. So
man dreads the love of maiden fair;

Not I alone am captive to love; Zeus him-
self has often fallen prey.

So the lads sang back and forth, stanza by
stanza, until they drew near the conclu-
sions—and Menalcas began:

Spare, good wolf, the goats you see, spare
them mother and kid for me;

If the flock is great and the herder small, is
it reason you should wrong us all?

Come, White-tail, why so sound asleep?

Good dogs wake when boys tend sheep.

Fear not, ewes, to eat your fill; for when the
new blade sprouts still,

Then you shall nothing lack. Take to it, do
not be slack,

Feed till every udder teems with milk for
lambs and cream for me.

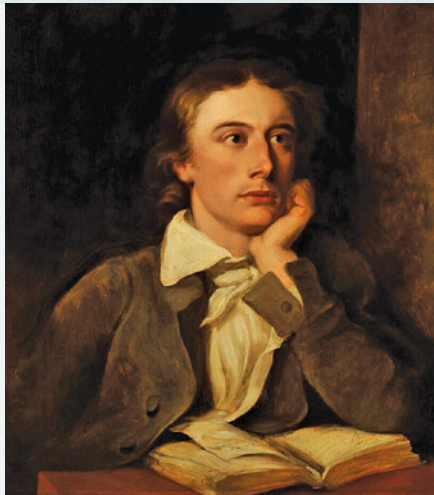
Then Daphnis, for his final passage, lifted
up his tuneful voice, singing:

Yesterday a dark-eyed maid, spying from a
rocky shade

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Often Imitated

In 1599, playwright and poet Christopher Marlowe composed a pastoral called “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love.” It consists of six stanzas, each made up of two rhyming couplets. The speaker, a shepherd, pleads earnestly with a nymph to become his lover in an idealized country paradise. The famous first line is the shepherd’s invitation: “Come live with me and be my love.” The poem inspired a sequel by Sir Walter Raleigh, in which the nymph rejects the shepherd’s invitation, rebutting the pastoral idealism of the shepherd. Since then, many poets have written similar pleas and responses, and the poem has also been frequently parodied.



◆ Romantic Pastoral

Another famous pastoral elegy was composed by English Romantic Percy Bysshe Shelley. When he learned of the death of fellow poet John Keats, who died at the age of twenty-five, Shelley penned a lament entitled “Adonais.” Shelley mourned his dead friend with an allusion to the myth of Adonis, a beautiful youth who had been Venus’s lover and was killed at the prime of his life by a boar. Shelley also employed the pastoral tradition, drawing upon an ancient poem by Statius, Virgil’s *Tenth Eclogue*, and John Milton’s “Lycidas” as models. The author referred to his 495-line poem as his “least imperfect” poem.

Cow and cowherd passing by, cries “What a pretty boy am I!”
Did that pretty boy the maid embrace? No—he bent his head and
fled the place.
Sweet to hear and sweet to smell, god knows I love a heifer well,
And sweet also beneath summer sky to sit where brooks go babbling
by;

But acorns and oak-trees, these are beloved by my cattle and me.

Thus sang those two youths, and this is what the goatherd said of their songs: “You, good Daphnis, have a sweet and delightful voice. Your singing is to the ear as honey to the lip. Here’s a fine **nine-stop pipe** I have made, with good white beeswax from top to bottom. Take it—your song has fairly won it for you. And if you are willing to teach me how to sing while I share pasture with you, you shall have the little she-goat yonder as reward, and I warrant you she’ll fill your pail up to the brim and further.”

From that day forth Daphnis was the greatest of the shepherds, so that he won and married that Naïs of whom he sang when he first entered manhood.

nine-stop pipe
a shepherd’s pipe, or flute,
with nine holes for pro-
ducing different notes

AFTERWORD

Hesiod's *Works and Days* shares the humble life of the common farmer, for whom the struggle for his own survival overshadowed the larger public concerns of partisan politics and empire. We see the importance of neighbors, and several stanzas prescribe how to maintain friendships and hospitality in the farming community, as well as personal advice about marriage. Farmers, as we have seen, devoted themselves to scratching a living out of small plots of land, vulnerable to the weather and living by the regular cycle of the seasons. Over time, as city life became more and more common in Greece, the simple life of the country, especially among shepherds, became idealized by pastoral poets like Theocritus. This type of poetry would enjoy a long history, finding welcome audiences not only in Rome but throughout the Renaissance and early modern periods. Authors ranging from Virgil

in antiquity to Milton and later neoclassical and Romantic writers such as Alexander Pope and Percy Bysshe Shelley all contributed to the elaboration of the pastoral idyll or elegy.

Meanwhile, a quiet revolution in the outlook of the Greeks was shaped by two men. Early in the fifth century, two philosophers offered opposing views in what seemed a rather abstract philosophical discussion. While most ordinary people were either unaware of or paid little attention to this controversy, the two opinions about the nature of reality would profoundly shape education, foreign policy, ethics, and history in the second half of the century. In the next chapter we will consider the arguments of Parmenides and Heraclitus, two thinkers whose beliefs played a decisive role in the life of ordinary Greeks through their impact upon social and political leaders.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Why are there two kinds of strife? If “they are wholly different in nature,” why do they share the same name?
2. Is the second kind of strife a good thing? The first is identified as evil while we are told the second is “kinder to men.” It seems, however, to provoke jealousy, envy, and covetousness—are these positive things?
3. Hesiod surprises us when, near the beginning of the text, he says that those who take the greater share are fools. He goes on to say that “they know not how much more the half is than the whole”? How could “the half” be much more than the whole?
4. Why does Zeus free Kronos and allow him to rule over the demigods on the far-off islands? What marks Kronos's reign? What is it to be ruled by Kronos and no other of the immortals?
5. What hope is there for us, the iron race of men? Are we indeed so inferior to our forebears? Is life so much worse? Are we the iron, or worse still, are we the fulfillment of Hesiod's prophecies? Do his predictions seem likely?
6. People today tend to view work as a necessary evil, or perhaps even punishment, the result of a curse. What seems to be Hesiod's attitude toward work?
7. How and why does Daphnis die? Who are his mourners, and what are their various reasons for sorrow at his passing?
8. In Idyll 3, does the line about the twitch undermine what has come before?
9. Why does the goatherd pronounce Daphnis the winner? In what ways are his songs superior?

A faint, artistic background image of Plato's Academy, showing various figures in classical attire engaged in study and discussion. The figures are rendered in a soft, painterly style, with some standing and others seated, creating a sense of a bustling intellectual environment.

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The Crucial Debate

Heraclitus was lofty-minded beyond all other men,
and overweening.

—Diogenes Laertius

High-souled Parmenides, of no diverse opinions,
introduced thought instead of imagination's deceit.

—Timon of Phlius

INTRODUCTION

Most of the surviving documents from fifth century Greece concern large public affairs: defense from Persian attack, creation of an empire, rivalries among the Greek states, and partisan political conflicts within a city. The poets, however, offer us a view into what daily life looked like for most Greeks. In addition to the mythological origins of human troubles and strife, Hesiod provided practical advice on the topics that affected the common man, such as farming. Theocritus, in turn, idealized life beyond the city walls, placing shepherds in a world that more closely resembled the golden age Hesiod sang about, full of leisure, song, and beautiful nymphs and women.

Amid political upheaval and warfare, the poets sang, farmers cultivated their land, craftsmen produced goods such as pottery for trade, and two philosophers argued opposing views of Reality that would contend for the minds of the Greeks of the fifth century, influencing their beliefs and actions. Even commoners who did not know their works were profoundly affected by these thinkers. As

Richard Weaver famously observed, “ideas have consequences.”

Pre-Socratic natural philosophy had raised questions about the nature of Reality and about the origins of the universe. Many of these men, such as Thales and Pythagoras, were monists, believing that there was one single substance that accounted for the whole of material Reality. The basic ingredient of all material things, this substance could be arranged in different ways and thus account for the appearance of difference. For Thales, this was water; for Pythagoras, it was number. Others, noting the change and multiplicity of the world, posited that there were multiple elements that combined in various ways. Anaxagoras taught that the elements of all things were present in each individual object, that every particular physical thing was a sort of microcosm of the whole, but that varied appearance and qualities depended upon which element was present in the greatest amount. For most of the early natural philosophers, nature consisted of one or more elements that interacted for a time and then separated, leading to the dissolution

of individuals and objects. Most Greek scientific thought after Empedocles in the middle of the fifth century accepted his theory that four elements—earth, air, fire, and water—combined and dissolved to make up the many parts of the observable world. The debate about the nature of Reality continued in the fifth century BC, but it began to diverge some from previous arguments.

Heraclitus, an aristocrat from Ephesus in Asia Minor, was in his prime around 500 BC. Like Hesiod and Theocritus, as well as the Seven Sages, he expressed his ideas in verse. The poetry of philosophers, however, was beginning to move further away from the work of the epic poets. Unfortunately, all we possess of his epic poem *On Nature* are fragments and occasional quotations that were preserved by other authors. Because of the fragmentary nature of what survives, as well as the philosopher's penchant for paradox and difficult sayings, the selections from Heraclitus will pose unique challenges to readers. Heraclitus believed that philosophical truth was beyond the capacity of most people, who are bound by conventional ideas and speech. His mystical statements were perhaps intended to exclude the common reader. The text

should not be read quickly, but pondered slowly and deliberately.

In many ways, Heraclitus continued the debates of earlier natural philosophers. Thales had said water was the ultimate component of all things; Heraclitus believed in a primal fire. Unlike some of the inert substances of Empedocles, fire is always active and constantly moving. Heraclitus taught that Reality is characterized by multiplicity and change. One inference from Heraclitus's teaching was a form of agnosticism—the claim that we cannot truly know anything, from the Greek *gnosis*, or “knowledge,” and *a-*, a prefix that means “not.” Since Reality is constantly changing, nothing remains permanent and knowable.

Parmenides, a late contemporary of Heraclitus, was opposed to his older peer's claims. Born around 500 BC in Elea, a Greek colony in southern Italy, he lived close to the community that Pythagoras had established at Crotona, Italy. Like the great mathematician and philosopher, he would make a case for man's ability to know Reality and to recognize unchanging, eternal principles. Parmenides also wrote an epic poem entitled *On Nature*. Like Heraclitus's work, we have only fragments of the younger



PHILOSOPHERS FROM SCHOOL OF ATHENS

One of the greatest pieces of the Italian Renaissance, Raphael's fresco includes most of the famous philosophers of antiquity. Raphael included his rival Michelangelo as the weeping philosopher Heraclitus, isolated on the steps and deeply melancholic. Michelangelo was busy working on the Sistine Chapel nearby, and Raphael may have secretly drawn his portrait while he was at work. Parmenides engages others and stands to the left of Heraclitus, holding a tablet, peering at the inspiring work of Pythagoras.

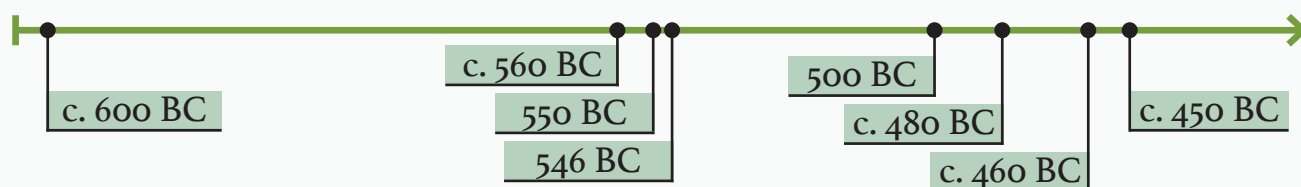
philosopher's composition. While Heraclitus wrote cryptic verse, Parmenides wrote more in the style of Hesiod. His poem was an allegory, a story seemingly about a man's journey that actually represented the soul's pursuit of knowledge and justice. The journey begins with a young man, the author and speaker of the text, riding a chariot drawn by the daughters of the Sun. These divinities conduct him to the home of divine Justice, located beyond the gates of Day and Night, which represent the limits of man's daily experience. For the rest of the poem, Justice instructs Parmenides on the true nature of Reality.

Parmenides claimed that Reality consists of Being—things that are One and Eternal. Justice, for example, has always been one thing and never changed. This could also be said of human nature as individual people and particular acts of justice are real only insofar as they participate in or reflect

the eternal Being. Because true Reality is characterized by oneness and permanence, our minds can know Truth. Even though Parmenides and Heraclitus disagreed about the nature of Reality, they were both scornful of everyday opinion. In Parmenides's case, he rejected the common notion that the world consisted of many, changing things that came into existence and later ceased to exist. He believed, instead, that all Reality was unified in Being itself.

In this chapter, we will see the lines drawn between two contradictory understandings of the world. Is Being real and coming-to-be an illusion? Are universal ideals such as Justice or Beauty permanent and real? Or is everything subject to change—is the only constant thing change itself? Is it possible to know anything with certainty? Let's consider the arguments on each side.

Time Line



c. 600 BC — Thales, the first philosopher, says that water is the fundamental element of reality.

c. 560 BC — Anaximander declares the Infinite is the source of reality.

550 BC — Pythagoras of Samos teaches that everything is ultimately number.

546 BC — Anaximenes teaches that air is the true source of everything.

500 BC — Heraclitus of Ephesus denies permanence and asserts that reality is in a constant state of change or flux.

c. 480 BC — Parmenides writes that change is an illusion; only Being, characterized by unity and permanence, is real.

c. 460 BC — Zeno of Elea, following Parmenides, creates a series of paradoxes to prove that motion is logically impossible.

c. 450 BC — Protagoras of Abdera, the most famous Sophist, teaches throughout Greece.

c. 450 BC — A young Socrates meets Parmenides in Athens.

Fragments from *On Nature*

Heraclitus
c. 500 BC

IGNORANCE ABOUNDS

universal Reason

Heraclitus believed Reason, logos in Greek, was both the divine principle that arranged and structured the universe and a capacity present in people. It thus enables mankind to discern truth and reality.

honor

Heraclitus is willing to consider sensory evidence so long as it is interpreted correctly by human reason.

ever-living fire

According to Heraclitus, an eternal and constantly changing fire accounts for the world as we know it.

It is wise for those who hear, not me, but the **universal Reason**, to confess that all things are one.

To the universal Reason that I unfold, although it always exists, men make themselves insensible, both before they have heard it and when they have heard it for the first time. For although all things happen according to this Reason, men act as though they had never had any experience regarding it when they attempt such words and works as I am now relating, describing each thing according to its nature and explaining how it is ordered. And some men are as ignorant of what they do when awake as they are forgetful of what they do when asleep.

The majority of people have no understanding of the things they daily meet. Nor, when instructed, do they have any right knowledge of them, although they deceive themselves into thinking that they have understanding.

Nature loves to conceal herself.

Whatever concerns seeing, hearing, and learning, I particularly **honor**.

The eyes are more exact witnesses than the ears.

This world, the same for all, neither any of the gods nor any man has made, but it always was, and is, and shall be—an **ever-living fire**, kindled in due measure and in due measure extinguished.



THE WEeping PHILOSOPHER

European Collectors in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries loved gathering images of the philosophers of antiquity. Baroque artists were especially interested in drama and emotion, and in this painting an artist uses dramatic contrasts of light as well as gesture and expression to show the grief with which Heraclitus viewed the world.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Everything Is Beautiful

Heraclitus had a notion of the *Logos*—often translated as “word” or “reason,” though for Heraclitus it meant much more. In his understanding, the *Logos* was the source of all change, embodying conflict and strife. He criticized Homer, who expressed a desire that conflict and strife would disappear; the philosopher argued that these are necessary to the constantly changing essence of reality. One curious statement Heraclitus made about the *Logos* is that to it, “all things are beautiful and good and just, but men have supposed some things to be unjust, others to be just.” He appeared to mean that the distinctions we draw between beauty and ugliness, good and evil, and justice and injustice are false. Therefore, there can be no meaningful use of such terms. There is no “truth” in such notions, only appearance or opinion.



◆ Fabled Author

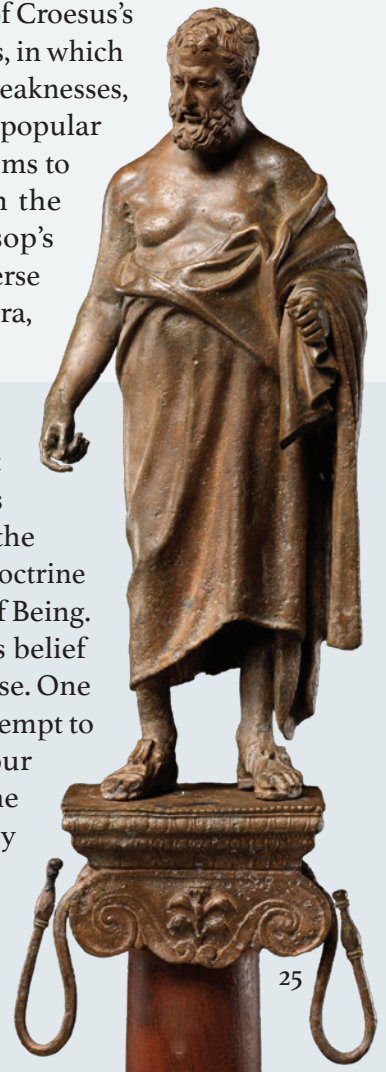


While some historians debate whether he ever lived, ancient sources such as Herodotus tell us that Aesop was a slave on the island of Samos in the sixth century BC. He entertained his master with his imaginative stories, and eventually his master set him free. Tradition says that he became an advisor to King Croesus of Lydia, who later sent him to Delphi to offer sacrifices on his behalf. Supposedly he was murdered by the angry people of Delphi because he refused to allow them to embezzle part of Croesus’s gifts for Apollo. Many popular animal fables, in which the animals take on human behaviors and weaknesses, were attributed to him. These stories were popular throughout antiquity. Though Socrates seems to banish poetry from his imagined city in the *Republic*, he made an exemption for Aesop’s fables and even set some of the fables into verse

on his deathbed. They enjoyed a revival of popularity during the early modern era, where they have been read for their moral outlook and instruction.

◆ A Philosopher’s Philosopher

Parmenides greatly influenced the course of Western philosophy. As the first thinker to explicitly address ontology, the study of the nature of Reality, his ideas helped shape the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. His view that Being, or the things that exist, is one, unchanging, and eternal probably contributed to Plato’s doctrine of the Forms, which are the ideal models of everything that exists in the realm of Being. Similarly, Aristotle’s idea of God as the Unmoved Mover reflects Parmenides’s belief that Being is eternal and motionless, as well as being the source of everything else. One might well interpret Plato’s “Myth of the Cave” in book 7 of the *Republic* as an attempt to synthesize Parmenides and Heraclitus. The world inside the cave reflects our ever-changing everyday world of perceptions and is very Heraclitan, while the realm of Forms outside of the cave, the sphere of true Being, is very Parmenidean.



transmutations

Meaning “the changes”; the primal fire actually transforms into other things.

War

Heraclitus viewed the conflict between opposites as the source of the different parts of Reality as we know it.

poet

Homer; see book 18 of the Iliad. Heraclitus sees strife as a motive force, initiating change in things.

differences

The reconciliation of differences creates a harmony.

bow and of the lyre

The musical instrument and the device that plays upon it are very different, yet together they make music.

THE TRIUMPH OF MARS

This late mannerist work by French artist Caron shows Mars in a victory procession, surrounded by symbols of power from classical antiquity. The women are allegorical figures of Famine, Blasphemy, and Cruelty. Fury drives two horses: Destruction and Devastation.

THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE

The **transmutations** of fire are, first, the sea. And of the sea, half is earth and half the lightning flash.

All things are exchanged for fire and fire for all things, just as wares for gold and gold for wares.

The sun is new every day.

Cold becomes warm, and warm becomes cold; wet becomes dry, and dry becomes wet.

You cannot step into the same river twice, for the waters are always flowing.

EVERYTHING ARISES FROM STRIFE

War is the father and king of all and has produced some as gods and some as men; war has made some slaves and some free.

And Heraclitus blamed the **poet** who said, “Would that strife were destroyed from among gods.”

And Heraclitus says, “The unlike is joined together, and from **differences** results the most beautiful harmony, and all things take place by strife.”

The hidden harmony is better than the visible.

EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE

Donkeys would choose stubble rather than gold.

Sea water is very pure and very foul. For while to fishes it is drinkable and conducive to health, to men it is hurtful and unfit to drink.

The harmony of the world is a harmony of oppositions, as in the case of the **bow and of the lyre**.



Good and evil are the same. And good and evil are one. The physicians, cutting, cauterizing, and in every way torturing the sick, complain that the patients do not pay them fitting reward for thus effecting these **benefits and sufferings**.

They would **not know** the name of justice were it not for conflicts and disagreements.

They say that it is unfitting that the sight of wars should please the gods. But it is not so. For noble works delight them, and while wars and battles seem to us terrible, to **God** they do not seem so. For God in his dispensation of all events, perfects them into a harmony of the whole, just as, to God all things are beautiful and good and right, though men suppose that some are right and others wrong.

Immortals are mortal, and mortals are immortal, living in their death and dying in their life.

The way upward and downward are one and the same.

Time is a **child throwing dice**, a child's kingdom.

In change is rest.

A mixture separates when not kept in motion. Mortals exist only to live and die, or rather to find rest, and they leave behind them children who will also die.

LIMITS OF REASON

The Law of Reason is common to all. Those who speak with intelligence must hold fast to that which is common to all, even more strongly than a city holds fast to its law. For all human laws are dependent upon **one divine Law**, for this rules as far as it wills, and suffices for all, and over all abounds.

Although the Law of Reason is **common**, the majority of people live as though they had an understanding of their own.

For human nature does not possess understanding, but the divine does.

The wisest of men compared with God **appears an ape** in wisdom and in beauty and in all other things.

For men to have **whatever they wish** would not be well: sickness makes health pleasant and good; hunger, satiety; weariness, rest.

It is hard to contend against passion, for whatever it craves it buys with its life.

It pertains to all men to know themselves and to learn self-control.

Self-control is the highest virtue, and wisdom is to speak truth and consciously to act according to nature.

It is better to conceal ignorance than to expose it.

For what sense or understanding have they? They follow minstrels and take the multitude for a teacher, not knowing that many are bad and few good. For the best men choose one thing above all—immortal glory among mortals. But the masses stuff themselves like cattle.

benefits and sufferings
Pain can be good when it heals or bad when it harms; it all depends upon the context.

not know
We cannot know something without comparing it to its opposite.



TERRACOTTA AMPHORA
This superb black-figure amphora shows a chariot being prepared to take Heracles to Mount Olympus. Parmenides uses the imagery of being taken up in just such a chariot toward the light to illustrate his journey toward knowledge.

God
Where capitalized, the Greek reads ho theos, which signifies "the god" as opposed to a generic divine being.

child throwing dice
Heraclitus is saying that the universe lacks an overall purpose or goal.

one divine Law
This divine law is more like a scientific law such as gravity than the idea that there is a personal logos who gives structure to the universe.

common
i.e., communal, meaning the same for all people

appears an ape
Beauty and wisdom are relative to what is being compared; Heraclitus here anticipates Socrates's statement in the Apology that human wisdom is nothing, that "God alone is wise" (see HAG2, chapter 37).

whatever they wish
We come to appreciate what is good by experiencing the opposite.

do not know

Heraclitus calls those who would criticize his philosophy dogs, claiming they criticize because they do not understand.

Homer . . . Archilochus

Not because they portray the gods as acting wickedly, as Plato claimed, but because they opposed conflict and strife.

Dogs, also, bark at what they **do not know**.

Homer deserved to be driven out of the lists and flogged, and **Archilochus** likewise.

On Nature

Parmenides

c. 480 BC

JOURNEY TOWARD KNOWLEDGE

The chariot carried me as far as ever my heart desired when it had brought me and set me on the renowned way of the goddess. I was carried along on that path, for on it the wise steeds carried me, drawing my chariot, and the daughters of the Sun showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket—for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at each end—sounded like a shepherd's pipe. Then the daughters of the Sun, rushing to convey me into the light, threw back their veils from off their faces and left the abode of Night. The gates of the pathways of Night and Day are at the end of the world, with a lintel above and a threshold of stone below. They themselves, high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and Avenging Justice keeps the keys that fit them.

The maidens entreated Justice with gentle words and cunningly persuaded her to unfasten the bolted bars from the gates. Then, when the doors were

thrown back, they disclosed a wide opening. Straight through them, on the broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the chariot, and the goddess greeted me kindly, took my right hand in hers, and spoke to me these words: "Welcome, O youth, who comes to my abode on the chariot that is tended by immortal charioteers! It is not misfortune but right and justice that sent you forth to travel on this way. Far, indeed, does it lie from the beaten track of men! It is right that you should learn all things, both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth and the opinions of mortals, where there is no true

seem to be

i.e., he must distinguish between appearances—the way the world seems to be—and what is actually true

TIME UNVEILING TRUTH

In this late baroque allegorical painting by Italian artist Batoni, the aged Kronos pulls away the white cloak from the beautiful young woman embodying naked Truth, accompanied by Justice with her scales. The evil Envy and Falsehood, with mask, flee the light emanating forth from her unveiled body.



belief at all. Yet none the less you shall learn these things also—how passing all things one should judge the things that **seem to be**. But restrain your thought from inquiring about **appearances**, nor let habit by much repetition force you to cast a wandering eye or sounding ear or tongue upon appearances. Judge by Reason the proof uttered by me. There is only one way to truth that can be spoken of.”

THE WAY OF TRUTH

“Look steadfastly with your **mind** at far away things as if they were nearby. For Being neither **scatters itself** abroad nor comes together. It does not matter to me where I begin, for I shall end at the same place I began. Come now, I will tell you the only two ways of searching for truth—listen to my saying and carry it away with you. The first, namely, is the way of true Being: it is **impossible** for



it not to exist. This is the way you should follow, for truth is its companion. The other way pursues **Non-Being**, claiming that a thing does not have to be. This, I tell you, is a path that none can learn about at all. For you **cannot know** what does not exist—that is impossible—nor can you utter what does not exist.

“This is what I bid you ponder. I hold you back from this first way of inquiry, and from the second also, upon which mortals knowing nothing wander two-faced; for helplessness guides the wandering thought in their breasts so that they are carried along stupefied like men deaf and

blind. **Undiscerning crowds** contradict themselves, holding that Being and Non-Being are both equally real. You cannot prove the existence of things that are not real, so restrain your thought from this way of inquiry. One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, the way of Being. This path contains much evidence that Being is **uncreated and indestructible**, it is complete, immovable, and without end. Nor has it ever begun, nor will it begin; it is, all at once, a continuous One. For what kind of origin for it will you look for? In what way and from what source will it come into existence?”

appearances

While Parmenides must know what the incorrect opinions are, Justice warns him against giving them too much attention, lest he be deceived. Experience and interacting with external differences, appearances, may lead one to believe there are many different things rather than one unified Being.

mind

For Parmenides, Truth is known through the mind, not through the senses.

scatters itself

i.e., there is no motion, or change, in true Being

impossible

i.e., Being necessarily exists

Non-Being

i.e., change and motion, the opposite of Being, which is unity

cannot know

Since something that does not exist is not real, it cannot be known. Only unified Being exists for Parmenides, not the many and varied things spoken of by the many.

CUPID AND CENTAUR

This wonderful Roman marble copy reproduces a second century BC Greek bronze of Eros, whom Parmenides named one of the earliest contrived gods, conquering a Centaur. It was paired with a sculpture of the Centaur laughing at Eros's wounds. The struggle for sophrosyne was frequently shown through conflicts between gods in human forms and the baser creatures like satyrs and centaurs.

Undiscerning crowds

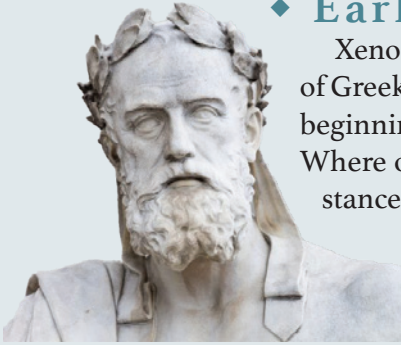
This is the basis for Parmenides to claim that most people are misguided in their opinions: they regard Being and Non-Being as equally real.

uncreated and indestructible

For Parmenides, Being is timeless, eternal, and unchangeable.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

♦ Early Greek Monotheist



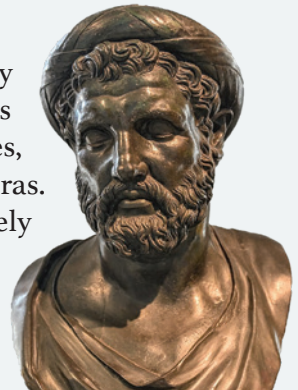
Xenophanes of Colophon was born fifty miles north of Miletus, the birthplace of Greek philosophy. He later taught Parmenides in Elea, Italy. Despite his Greek beginnings, he departed from Greek tradition both in religion and in philosophy. Where others had tried to explain reality by “the Unlimited” or by a single substance such as water or air, Xenophanes asserted that there must be one eternal

God who was the source of everything. Xenophanes’s God was an invisible, omnipresent, and unmoving spirit—wholly different from humans and the poets’ gods. His will set everything in motion and ultimately caused everything that happened. Xenophanes rejected the stories about the gods from Homer and Hesiod as unworthy of the true

God, and he regarded the popular gods of religion as mere superstitions. Historians recognize his clear influence upon his pupil Parmenides, as well as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

♦ Pythagorean Influence

Parmenides lived in Elea, a Greek colony in southern Italy, placing him relatively close to the center of Pythagoreanism in Croton, another Italian colony. Historians have traced several Pythagorean influences upon the philosophy of Parmenides, perhaps mediated through a close friend of his who was a follower of Pythagoras. Both Pythagoras and Parmenides were monists, believing everything was ultimately unified in one being and substance. Pythagoras believed that all of reality was ultimately number, while Parmenides believed that only perfect Being is reality. Both distrusted the everyday sensory observations of ordinary life. While the senses could not give Truth, both thinkers believed that abstract thinking could grasp reality itself. Pythagoras’s doctrine that the human soul is eternal and unchangeable resembled Parmenides’s idea that true Being—the only reality—is eternal and unchanging. Both Pythagoras and Parmenides seem to have had significant influence upon Plato in these regards.



♦ Key to Translation

Scholars in the early nineteenth century learned to read Egyptian hieroglyphs when they discovered the Rosetta Stone. The slab of rock contained the same text, written in two different languages: Greek and Egyptian, with the Egyptian inscriptions written in hieroglyphic and demotic scripts. Because scholars could read Greek, they were able to translate the other two texts. Similarly, shortly after 522 BC Darius I

of Persia had a monumental inscription carved on a cliffside 330 feet above ground level. The writing, known as the Behistun Inscription, was forty-nine feet tall and spread across the cliff for eighty-two feet. The text celebrated the triumph of Darius over rebels who opposed his taking the throne. It was written in cuneiform in three languages: Old Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian. Since modern scholars could read Old Persian, this trilingual proclamation enabled Sir Henry Rawlinson, a British archaeologist, and a team of linguists to decipher the Elamite and Akkadian writing. This was particularly significant because Akkadian had been the international language of the Near East for nearly two thousand years, so many older documents could now be translated as well.



HERACLITUS AND DEMOCRITUS

The Flemish baroque artist Jacob Jordaens excelled at images of dramatically contrasted characters, and the meeting of Heraclitus and Democritus, the weeping and laughing philosophers, respectively, was a perfect subject. Jordaens's fleshy figures and swirling painterly style give his paintings a comic and unstable, theatrical quality.

ONLY BEING IS REAL

"I cannot let you say nor think that Being came from nothing, for Non-Being can neither be conceived of in the mind nor spoken about. And, if Being came from nothing, what need could have brought it into existence at one time rather than another? Therefore, it must either exist eternally or not exist at all. Nor will the force of truth allow anything to begin to exist from nothing. Therefore, Justice does not loose her restraints and let anything come into being or pass away, but **holds it fast**.

"Our judgment on each thing depends on this: 'Does it exist or not?' Surely, we are to set aside the belief that Being and Non-Being are equal. This is unthinkable and nameless, for it is no true way. But the eternal nature of Being is real and true. How, then, can something that eternally exists begin to exist at any point in time in the future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into existence, then it did not exist before; nor does it exist now if it is going to be in the future. Thus nothing either comes into existence nor ceases to exist.

"Nor is Being **divisible**, since it is all alike. And there is no more Being in one place than in another, but everything is full of Being. Therefore it is wholly continuous, for everything that exists is in contact with Being. Moreover, it is **immovable** in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end, since coming into being and passing away have been cast away by true belief. Being is the same and remains where it is. Thus, it is not permitted to Being to be infinite, for Being is in need of nothing. If it were infinite, Being would stand in need of everything.

holds it fast

i.e., there is no Becoming; things that are remain, and things that are not do not come into being

divisible

A central claim of Parmenides is unity—he sees everything as being one, despite external differences.

immovable

Parmenides also denied motion. One of his followers, Zeno, later attempted to prove that motion is impossible, highlighting the difference between appearance and reality.

invented

Parmenides denies the reality of our experience of things that begin and end or change in any way.

deceptive

Parmenides ends his allegory with a beautiful poetic rendering of false belief.

fire of heaven

For some philosophers, fire was the prime element. But it has an opposite—darkness.

Eros

Probably alluding to the well-known mythological stories of origins—Parmenides echoes the first line of Hesiod's Theogony—see HAG1, chapter 1.

HOMÈRE

Leloir creates an ideal image of the blind poet in a severe, symmetrical, neoclassical style. He strums a lyre while reciting his epic poems to a group of admirers of all ages and walks of life, anachronistically set before a Doric temple of sixth-century style.



“Therefore all these things are but names **invented** by mortals, believing them to be true: coming into Being and passing away, Being and Non-Being, change of place and change of bright color.”

THE WAY OF COMMON OPINION

“Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth. Learn what ordinary people think, giving ear to the **deceptive** arrangement of my words. Mortals have made up their minds to name two forms, one of which they should not name—that is where they go astray from the truth. They have distinguished them as opposite in form and have assigned to them marks distinct from one another.

“To the one they allot the **fire of heaven**: gentle, very light, in every direction the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is just the opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body. Now that all things have been named “light” and “night,” and the names which belong to the power of each have been assigned to opposing things, everything is full at once of light and dark night—both equal—since neither has anything to do with the other. You shall know, too, the heavens that surround us from where they arose and how Necessity took them and bound them to keep the limits of the stars. How the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympus, and the burning might of the stars arose.

“The narrower bands were filled with unmixed fire, those next them with night. And into the middle of these their portion of fire rushed. Among these is the divinity that directs the course of all things; for she is the beginner of all

painful birth and all begetting, driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to embrace the female. First of all the gods she contrived **Eros**. Thus, according to men’s opinions, did things come into being, and thus they are now. In time they will grow up and pass away. To each of these things men have assigned a fixed name.”

HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ The “Dark Philosopher”

Heraclitus was known to later thinkers as “the dark philosopher” because his writings were so difficult to understand. He deliberately wrote in a vague, confusing way; he reportedly spoke this way as well. Ancient sources alleged that he was dark in yet another sense. He felt contempt for ordinary people, saying that they were “asleep” in their understanding of the nature of life and of purpose. He was also contemptuous of those who wrote before him, such as Hesiod and other philosophers. Ancient writers said that he died either because his contempt for others led him to suicide, or else that he did not trust doctors and spoke to them in such an obscure way that they could not treat him. Either way, he was truly a “dark” man, despising everyone else as inferior.



◆ Medical Philosopher



Alcmaeon of Croton, the Greek city in southern Italy, was a philosopher who pioneered the study of human anatomy. He was a pupil of Pythagoras and, like his master, believed in the immortality of the human soul. As a natural philosopher, he was interested in the human senses and studied the relation of the nerves to the brain, reportedly even performing dissections—it is unclear whether these were on animals or people. He was the first observer to identify the Eustachian tubes, which connect the middle ear to the throat and help maintain air pressure throughout the ear. As a natural philosopher, Alcmaeon said that health is the result of a balance of forces such as hot and cold, moist and dry in the body. When there is a “monarchy” of one force, he said, the body becomes ill. These ideas would be further developed and persist into the Middle Ages in the theory of the body’s four humors, or liquids.

AFTERWORD

We have now read the fundamental argument about Reality that unfolded in the same era as the Persian Wars. Parmenides taught that Reality is One, permanent, and knowable through reason. Heraclitus claimed that Reality is multiple, constantly changing, and therefore not stable enough to yield lasting knowledge. He believed the constant strife between opposites shaped the world we experience through our senses, while Parmenides asserted that the universe experiences no change because of its unity with itself.

The rest of the fifth century would see intense arguments about education, rhetoric, foreign policy, and ethics being debated by thinkers. Many disputes in Greek society ultimately originated in the underlying, contrary views about Reality we have encountered in this chapter. The ideas of Parmenides and Heraclitus were not confined to the learned few but exerted a profound influence on the direction of Greek thought and culture.

Everyday people in Greece found their outlooks and morality challenged in disturbing ways by the

application of Heraclitus's agnosticism and relativism to particular issues of personal conduct. Our next reading follows the teachings of Sophists or "wise ones," highly paid professional educators,

who sought to apply Heraclitus's interpretation of Reality to social and political ethics, transforming the Greek understanding of virtue and rhetoric.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Heraclitus believed that Reason was a divine principle that arranged and structured the universe as well as the unique human capacity of thought. What follows from this? What does this imply about the nature of man? Of the universe?
2. What would it mean to suppose that all that exists is one substance? What implications would follow from this premise?
3. What does it mean that "nature loves to conceal herself"? Does this seem to be true? Does the inherent intelligibility of the universe undermine this notion? Or support it?
4. Heraclitus says that one cannot step into the same river twice. How would you support this claim? How would you contradict it? Does it even make sense to speak of "a river" as a unified entity, or to refer to "the Nile" or "the Mississippi" as individual things that persist through time? What is a river?
5. To what extent is War, sometimes rendered as "strife" or "conflict," a principle of the physical universe? Could it be equally claimed that Love (or attraction, affinity) is a fundamental force of reality? Why is strife viewed as having priority over affinity?
6. How does Heraclitus's concept of War or "strife" compare to Hesiod's?
7. "In change is rest." What is the meaning of this paradox? Is it rhetorically effective to wrap ideas in apparent absurdities?
8. Is it true that we only know things by their contraries? Do we need to know shadow to understand light? Does shadow even exist, or is it merely the absence of light?
9. Parmenides's text opens with an extended metaphor—but to what does the metaphor relate? What are these chariots and roads? Why is metaphor helpful for understanding what he has in view instead of more literal language? Why is metaphor conducive to philosophical thinking and writing?
10. It's difficult to think about, but let's examine Parmenides's arguments: (1) only Being exists, and only Being is real. (2) Non-Being does not exist, and is not real, by definition. Therefore, (3) whatever is Being (whatever exists) only comes from Being, and (4) it must always have existed, since nothing can come from nothing. But then (5) all change is an illusion, since all Being is, was, and always will be Being. It seems we are left with two choices: find a way to resolve this paradox, or simply shrug our shoulders and ignore it, trusting in our senses instead of trusting in Reason. What ability is there for a response? What is a potential resolution?
11. Parmenides asserts that Being is one and immobile, while Heraclitus posits that Being is one and constantly changing. What reason do they have to take for granted that all Being is one?