

1. An introduction to the Greek Landscape.

When you take the train, boat or airplane to Greece, You will probably end up in Athens. Athens is the capital of the country Greece as we know it, like Amsterdam is of the Netherlands. The Greeks have a government like the Dutch have one. This wasn't always like this. Athens used to be one of many cities in the Greek World. Greece wasn't one country; there were just a number of cities that controlled themselves and the surrounding land. There was even a time when there were hardly any cities. The People then lived around palaces or near the rich villas of landowners. In this chapter we shall see where and when these palaces, villas and cities emerged and what life was like in these places.

Source 1

'Imagine you were a bird and you would fly over the Greek lands. You would immediately see that the land consists of mainland and islands. The land is divided in different areas by huge mountains. In the small plains and valleys between the mountains were small villages. In these villages people led an agricultural life. Few plants grew on the barren soil and the Greek farmers were often hungry. After a while the small villages grew and became small cities that operated independent. We call those cities 'city-states', because each city was an independent state.

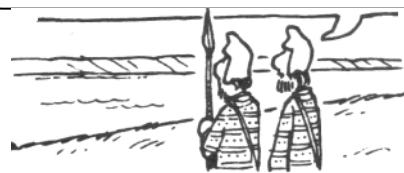
If you wanted to travel in ancient Greece, you would not take the mountain paths. Greece is almost completely surrounded by sea. Those who wanted to travel, took to the sea.'



1. Read source 1.
 - a. What are the main geographical features of Greece?
 - b. Explain why Greece was not one country but was divided in different small cities.
 - c. Explain why nowadays Greece does not consist of many small city-states, but is one big state.

2. Imagine that you were a Greek chieftain. You are the head of a Greek tribe and you are looking for a good place to build a city.
 - a. Look on source 2 and write down (draw in the source) three spots where you would build a city for your tribe.
 - b. Explain for each place why you think this is a good place to build a city.

*No, a little bit to the right,
Yes one inch back...OK,
Stop and start building
right there...*



Source 2



Your very own Greek city-state!

3. When everybody is finished with looking for suitable spots for a city. You are going to make groups of three people.
 - a. Compare each others spots on the map (so nine in total) and decide which three are the best areas to found a city.
 - b. Put these three in order of preference (so which is first, second and third).
4. With your group, think of a name for your city, and don't forget to make it sound very Greek. Famous already existing cities are Mycenae, Knossos, Thebes, Delphi, Athens, Sparta, Epidaurus, Corfu, Epirus, Olympia and Corinth.

2. The Greek Gods

Source 3

The Greeks had many gods and goddesses, that each had its own task. Zeus was the supreme god, god of heaven and thunder and lightning. His brother Poseidon ruled the seas and his other brother, Hades, controlled the underworld, where the shadows of the deceased wandered.

All the Greek gods were immortal and decided over the life of the humans. They interacted like normal people: they were happy or sad, in love or jealous; they could be angry and loved to party. They would then gather at the mount Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece, where Zeus lived.

For centuries the Greeks told each other stories about their gods, half-gods and heroes, and every time they put something extra in the stories to make them sound ever more heroic. These stories about the gods are called **myths**. All these stories together form Greek **mythology**.

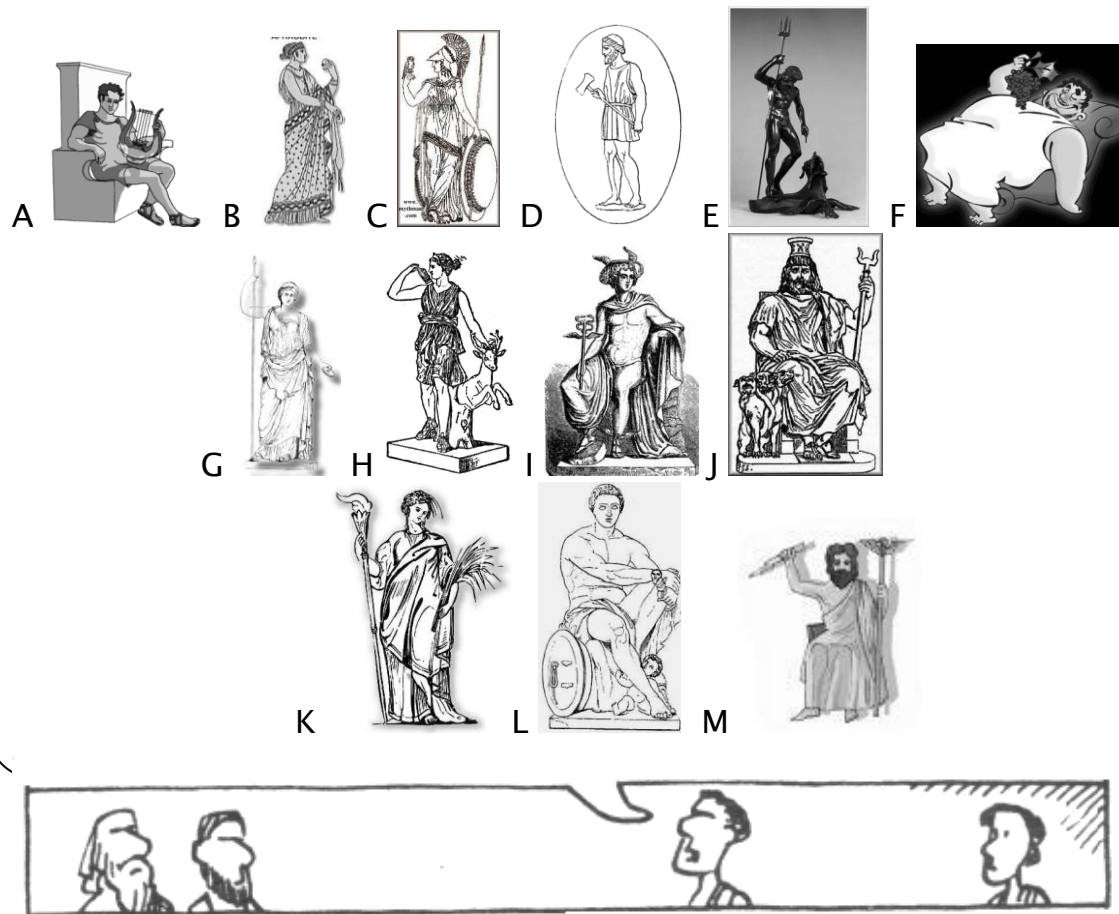
The Greeks worshipped their gods in different ways. They built temples and made beautiful statues of their gods. They sacrificed wine, animals, fruit and even gold and silver to favour the gods. They also organised festivals and games. The Olympic Games, held in the honour of Zeus in the city of Olympia, became the most important games. From 776 BC these games were held on a yearly basis.

The Greeks thought the gods expressed their opinion about certain things with signs. One of these signs could be a flood or a severe tempest. But also the direction the birds were flying could mean something, or the smoke of a sacrificed animal. In the different temples there were **oracles** to ask for advice. Here priests and priestesses predicted the future. They acted very mysterious and their explanations could often be interpreted in more than one way.

The Greek people wanted to understand the world. For things they didn't understand they turned to the gods for explanation.



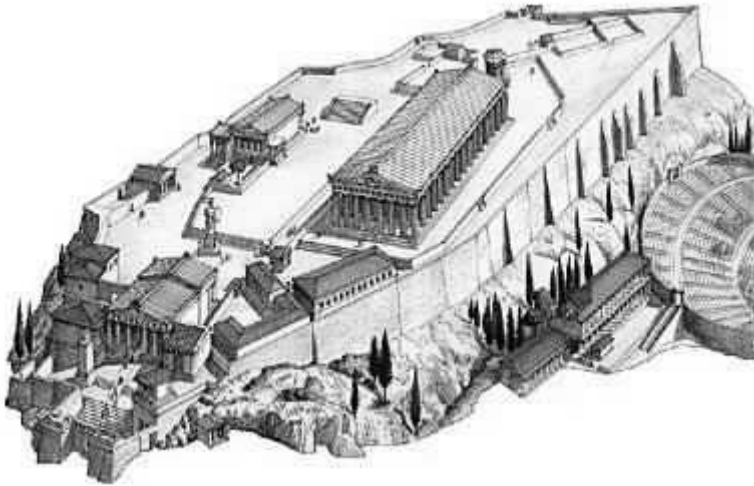
Source 4. Images of the Greek Gods



1. Look at source 4 and complete the schedule below.

Name	Letter	Attribute	God(dess) of...
Zeus	....	Lightning	Heaven, thunder, lightning
Demeter	....	Grain	.....
Dionysos	....	....	Wine and parties
Hephaistos	....	....	Blacksmith of the gods
Hermes	....	....	Messenger of the gods
Aphrodite	B	Mirror	.....
Hades	....	3-headed Dog	.....
Apollo	A	....	Future, Music, Arts
Athena	....	Owl, Helmet	Wisdom
Ares	...	...	Warfare
Hera	G	staff	Family
Poseidon	....	...	Sea
Artemis	...	bow, deer	.....

Source 5. The Acropolis of Athens



3. In many cities temples were dedicated to the different gods.
 - a. Look at source 5. Which building do you think is dedicated to Zeus?
 - b. Explain/motivate your answer.

Source 6. The ferry-man takes the dead across the river Styx to the underworld.



4. Look at source 6. The Greek thought that after your death your soul would go to the underworld, on the other side of the river Styx. Why do you think the dead took with them a coin (on their tongue)

Source 7. Olympic Sports



5. The Greek people loved sports very much. The games they played were automatically training for war. Look at source 7. What similarities do you see between sports and warfare?
6. Near the city of Delphi was the temple of Apollo, god of the future. His priestess, the Pythia, gave advice when people had difficult decisions to make. The 'oracle of Delphi' was the most famous of the 250 oracles in Ancient Greece.
 - a. Why did people go to the oracle?
 - b. Explain why the priestess of Delphi was very powerful.
 - c. What do people do nowadays to know more about the future?

Back to your very own Greek city-state

Every city-state in Ancient Greece had its own protection god. In this city, people thought that they had a special connection with a certain god. Athens for instance was called after the goddess of wisdom, Pallas Athena. The people of Delphi had Apollo as their protection god.

7. Your newly found city-state also needs a protection god. Look at the gods in source 4 and choose a protection god. Motivate your answer.
8. Cities don't just choose any god to protect them, but they choose a god they trust, a god they need or a god that has helped them before. Everyone in the cities knows the story about how this god or goddess became the protection god of this city.
It is now time for your city to make up your own mythological story about how you got your protection god.

3. The government

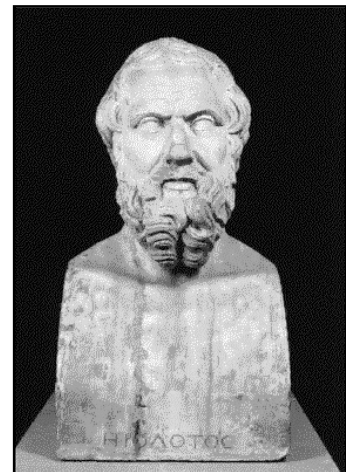
Ancient Greece was not one country with one government, but it consisted of 'poleis'. 'Poleis' are city-states and every city in Greece (with the surrounding villages and land) had its own government. They did not have to listen to a higher government and therefore every city-state was independent.

Not every city-state however had the same kind of government. There are different ways to rule a country, and many people had different opinions on how to rule your country best. Some people thought that only the rich should decide what happened, or only the people with noble or royal blood (nobility), other thought that only one man should decide what would happen.



A picture of Herodotos. He was a greek writer and wrote a book about different types of government. In his book he let three people from Persia have an argument about the best way to govern a country. In the next three sources you see a part of this dialogue:

Aristocracy: *government by the a small group, the best or most distinguished*
Autocracy: *government by one single person*
Democracy: *government by the people*
Monarchy: *government by a king*



Source 8

'I think we should not appoint a king, it is not right. You know that former king in history always did what they wanted without consulting other people. A king rules alone and once he is king, he thinks he can do anything. Even if the best man becomes king, once he is king, he thinks he can do everything and starts to become jealous. And that is why he starts doing things wrong. He listens to the wrong people. And when people admire him, they think they want something from him. But the worst is that this tyrant abolishes old customs and kills people when he wants to.

But if the people control the government, this would not happen. Then the governors will be elected. Everything they do will be checked by the people and all decisions will be taken by the people.'



Otanes

Source 9

'I agree with the arguments of Otanes against the autocracy. But I do not agree with giving the power to the people. People that do not want a king, should also not agree to a government by the people. What can the ordinary people know about how it is best to govern a country, if they have never learned that? A democracy would take decisions too quickly without thinking it through.

No, a democracy is not suited for Persia. Let us choose a government of outstanding man and give them the power. The best men will also make the best decisions.'

Source 10

'What Megabyzos says about the people is correct. But I do not agree with the idea of an aristocracy. I think an autocracy is the best way to govern a country. The one man who is the best, should govern. He can lead the people and unite them. It is the best way to keep plans against an enemy secret. In an aristocracy the leaders can easily fight amongst themselves, because everyone wants his ideas will to become real. This causes fights and than you have different factions and parties. And these factions in their turn cause strife and killings.

In the end there will be an autocracy. That alone already proves it is the best way to govern a country.

But also when the people have the power, things go wrong. Because not only good, but also bad people become governors. Those bad people start working together and do bad things to the people to profit themselves. This will last until one man will take over and becomes the leader. Because of that he wins the trust of the people and becomes dictator. This example also proves that an autocracy is the best type of government.'



Megabyzos Darius

3. Read source 8.
 - a. Why does Otanes not like a monarchy?
 - b. Why does Otanes want a democracy?

4. Read source 9.
 - a. Why does Megabyzos not like a democracy?
 - b. Why does Megabyzos want an aristocracy?

5. Read source 10.
 - a. Why does Darius not like an aristocracy?
 - b. Why does Darius want a autocracy?

Below is a list with the different kind of governments that were used in Ancient Greece. Behind the different types are written the explanation you find in a dictionary.

Source 11.

<i>name</i>	<i>explanation</i>	<i>advantage</i>	<i>disadvantage</i>
anarchy	no government	.....	.....
aristocracy	government by the distinguished, the nobility	.....	.....
autocracy	government by one single person	.....	.....
democracy	government by the people	.....	.....
monarchy	government by a king or queen	.....	.....
plutocracy	government by the rich	.....	.....
tyranny	government by a tyrant	.....	.....

1. Write behind every type of government at least one advantage and one disadvantage of this type of government.
2. Sometimes a country has a government that is a combination of more than one government types. What kind of a government does the Netherlands have nowadays?

Back to your very own Greek city-state

3. Your city-state needs a government as well. Look at source 11 and choose a type of government for your city-state. Explain why you chose this government.
4. Every type of government has disadvantages, so also the one you chose. What are you going to do about these disadvantages?