

Ancient Greece  
A Very Short Introduction  
By Paul Cartledge

#### Questions for thought and discussion

- Why should we care about what we owe to the ancient Greeks?
- Was there such a thing as 'ancient Greece'?
- Who was Minos, and is it helpful to call an entire civilisation after one supposed man?
- Was there a Trojan War, and were there real historical equivalents of Homer's Agamemnon, Achilles and so forth?
- Why did Homer call the Greeks at Troy 'Argives'?
- Why did the Greeks call their alphabet 'Phoenician letters'?
- We derive our 'politics', 'political' 'politicians' etc from the ancient Greek word polis - but is there anything very much in common between our politics and that of the ancient Greeks?
- Was Thales of Miletus the Western world's first true intellectual?
- Was ancient Sparta totalitarian?
- Did the ancient Athenians invent democracy?
- Why did the handful of Greek cities succeed in repelling the Persian invasion of 480-479 BC?
- Does Athens today still stand in the shadow of the Parthenon?
- How significant is the Atheno-Peloponnesian War of 431 to 404 BC?
- What are the claims to greatness of Epaminondas of Thebes?
- Was it a coincidence that a man from Greek Massalia (Marseille today) put Britain on the map?
- How significant for the history of Western learning was the foundation of the Library at Greek Alexandria in Egypt?
- Did 'captured Greece take its fierce (Roman) conqueror captive', as Horace claimed?
- What difference to the idea of Greekness did the triumph of Christianity make?
- How like the ancient Games are the modern Olympics?
- What would be the modern equivalent(s) of the prophetic Pythia priestess at ancient Delphi?

#### Other books by Paul Cartledge

P. Cartledge *The Greeks: A Portrait of the Self and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)  
P. Cartledge *Ancient Greece: A History in Eleven Cities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)  
P. Cartledge ed. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

#### Further reading

Charles Freeman *The Greek Achievement. The Foundation of the Western World* (London, Penguin, 2010)

Christian Meier *A Culture of Freedom: Ancient Greece and the Origins of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Internet Ancient History Sourcebook: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/asbook.asp>