

The golden age of athens



The Golden Age of Athens, the Age of Pericles, and Pentekontaetia are all names for the time period when Athens reached its height of power and prosperity. It began in 478 B. C. and lasted for approximately fifty years until 431 B. C. In the beginning of its so-called “ Golden Age”, Athens was just coming out of the Persian Wars as leader of the Delian League, and they were beginning their rise to power. At the end of this prosperous era, Athens had made huge advancements in their government, architecture, art, literature, science, and philosophy. Their accomplishments in these areas influence essentially every aspect of society today.

Before the Golden Age, Athens was like other city-states in Greece. They were not the “ superpower” of the country; in fact, they were not very significant at all during this time. Athens was located on the peninsula of Attica, and it was the only part of mainland Greece that remained Ionian and did not submit to the Dorian invasion. After the Dorian invasion, Athens did not have a Democracy; they had an oligarchy like many of the other city-states in Greece. In Athens, the Acropolis which was the highest part of the city, was the first site of settlement because it was easily defendable with its steep slopes. Eventually, a central fortress was built, and it encompassed the city.

The first law code of Athens was created in 621 B. C. by Athenian nobleman Draco. However, this law code was harsh and only favored the oligarchs, and there were rules such as: a creditor could enslave a debtor if they didn't repay the debt, and the death penalty was given for the smallest crimes. Eventually, in 594 B. C., Solon changes Athens' laws. He abolished all of Draco's harsh rules, and he gave citizens a larger voice. Solon created the

first Assembly; however, poor citizens were not allowed to hold government jobs. He also helped establish the idea of Democracy, although Athens would not become a full Democracy until 5th Century B. C.

The Greeks fell under Persian rule, but although they were not enslaved, they had to pay taxes and annual tributes to the Persians. In 499 B. C, the Ionian Greeks, led by Aristagoras, revolted against Persian rule. There were several battles between the Greeks and the Persians before they were independent once again. The first major battle was the Battle of Marathon fought in 490 B. C, and it was essentially between Athens and Persia. At this time, Athens did not have the strong fleet that it had during its Golden Age. The Athenians needed help, so they sent Phidippides, a professional runner, to ask Sparta for help. Yet, the Spartans did not send soldiers until well into the war, and the battle's outcome looked bleak for the Greeks.

However, hope was not lost for the Athenians; they received help from Plataea, who sent 9, 000 men to join the Athenians at Marathon. The Greeks used the hoplite formation to defeat the Persians. At the end of the battle, 6, 400 Persians died, whereas the Athenians only lost 192 men. Phidippides was then sent from Marathon to Athens to alert the Athenians of their victory. The run was a little over twenty-six miles long, and he died immediately after giving the good news. Today, the marathon races run today represent Phidippides' journey and they are held in honor of him. " It was David versus Goliath, with little David winning. Furthermore, for the first time, a battle was fought on which our whole modern way of life seemed to depend... If the Athenians had lost at Marathon, Athens would have been destroyed, and then (many people think) Greece might never have gone on

to develop the peak of its civilization, a peak whose fruits we moderns have inherited” [Isaac Asimov, pg. 104].

Another important battle of the Persian Wars was the Battle of Thermopylae, which was fought in 480 B. C. 7, 000 men were led by King Leonidas of Sparta, and his 300 Spartans were the “ backbone” of the army. This battle was mostly between the Greeks (led by Sparta) and Xerxes, the Persian leader. The Greeks lost the battle because of a Phocian traitor that told Xerxes a way around the mountain pass they were stuck in. Although every soldier died fighting, their valiant battle inspired the Greek lovers of freedom, who continued fighting against the Persians. There were other battles like Salamis, Himera, Mycale, and Plataea, and all of these were victories for the Greeks. Finally, in 478 B. C, the Persian War ended, and the Greeks were free from Persian rule.

After the Persian War, Sparta and Athens emerged as the two most powerful city-states in Ancient Greece. However, Sparta became extremely jealous of Athens because the Athenians had received most of the credit for the victory against the Persians. The Confederacy of Delos, or the Delian League, was an alliance of Greek city-states formed during the Persian War that was headed by Athens. Yet, although many of the city-states were involved in the alliance, most of the money from the Delian League was used to glorify Athens. The Spartans were upset that Athens was using all of the money, and also because of the fact that they were not the head of the League, so they formed their own alliance called the Peloponnesian League. In time, Sparta’s jealousy and growing dislike of Athens became so great that a civil war broke out, which led to the downfall of Athens’ Golden Age.

Athens' great Golden Age began in 478 B. C. and lasted for Fifty Years. This period of peace, prosperity, and progress in every aspect of culture and science flourished under the leadership of Pericles. Pericles was an aristocrat from a " pro-democratic family", so it was natural that he believed in and supported democracy. He was a good speaker and planner of Athens' policies. He commanded the military and carried out foreign policies of the people; he was not only respected by the people, but also by his colleagues. Pericles encouraged the arts and built great public buildings, such as the Parthenon. The Greeks, specifically the Athenians, were happy with what Pericles was doing with Athens. By making Athens seem more beautiful to other countries, Greece seemed to be more respected by the world.

Pericles seemed like somebody who would be comfortable around others, especially because he was such a charismatic figure. However, he avoided social activities and had very few friends. His one passion in life was for politics; he never mentioned gods or any sort of piety. Pericles was a well-educated and honest man that did not accept bribes or abuse his power. This led the Athenians to like him even more, and he had more power than a king or a tyrant would have had. It was this power that allowed him to bring Athens to its height and turn it into the foundation of Western Civilization.

Pericles favored equality for all in Athens, excluding women of course. He passed a bill that gave a salary to jurors, which allowed the poor to serve. He also eliminated laws that allowed only the rich to hold a high office and paid officials, which permitted all citizens of all social classes to participate in the government. Pericles strengthened Athens by building walls from the city to Piraeus in order to safely move food and supplies. These walls became

known as the Long Walls, and it was completed in 458 B. C. He was the very basis of Athens' Golden Age and “ after his passing, life in Greece would never be the same. Their most glorious age had reached a sudden end, and their most terrible ordeal was about to begin” [Don Nardo, pg.].

While leading Athens during its Golden Age, architecture was very important to the Greeks. Pericles believed the city's greatness should be seen by the world, so he supported major construction of great structures. He had the Acropolis built, and its buildings contained Doric and Ionic columns. These were made of marble, and they represented the strength and grace of the Athenians. On top of the Acropolis was the Propylaea, or entrance way. The Propylaea incorporated traditional, Doric, and Ionic styles. It was designed by architect Mnesicles circa 437 B. C. Another structure on top of the Acropolis is the Erechthium, which is the “ Temple of wingless victory”.

Perhaps the most famous building from the Golden Age was the Parthenon. This structure was built in 447 B. C., and was the spiritual center of Athens. It was designed and built by architect Ictinus, Callicrates, and sculptor Phidias. The Parthenon was a temple dedicated to Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, and it was Doric in style. The building was a symbol of Athens' power, and demonstrated the blessing the city received from the Gods. It is 237 feet long, 110 feet wide and 60 feet tall. It denotes harmony and symmetry in the way that the building is completely symmetrical. According to Greek Scholar John Miliadis, the Parthenon is “ more the work of inspiration than of calculation. It is a new vision of life, the vision of classical Athenians”.

Phidias was a friend of Pericles, and died in prison because of the aristocrats of Greece that disliked him. He was believed to be the greatest sculptor during Pericles's Age. He carved a 525 foot frieze, which is a band of sculptured figures, around the perimeter of the Parthenon. He also sculpted a statue of Athena Parthenos, which stood 40 feet tall, and was composed of wood, ivory, and over 2, 500 pounds of gold.

The appearance of Athens was extremely important to its people, and this was clearly displayed through its architectural projects. The Parthenon, the Erechthium, and the Propylaea were all clear examples of Athens' power and greatness. Pericles believed that Athens was the " leader" of the Greek World, and therefore, they had the responsibility of showing the world how cultured they were. Much of the money from the Delian League went into the building projects of Athens. Most members of the League were not upset about this however; on the contrary, they were somewhat glad that Athens was representing Greece well.

Art was also a significant part of Athens' Golden Age. The purpose of their art was to preserve something visible, such as an idea or a feeling, by revealing its most prominent component. Greek sculpture was intended to be displayed in public places, which meant that it had to be " worthy of the gods". The style of art shifted from Archaic to Classical. The most important change in the art style may have been in the poses of the sculptures. Before, the sculptures were a bit in stiff, unrealistic poses, and the faces of the people always seemed very calm.

However, in Classical art, the poses of the sculptures were much more natural, and their faces depicted various kinds of emotion. This style of art focused on balance, completeness, proportions, and realism. Sculptors would try to create the “ perfect person” that would be almost god-like. The ancient Greeks believed that the closest thing to perfection was the young athletic human body of a male. There were fewer structures of women than men, and their bodies would always be clothed. The mindset of the average Greek from this time period was: women are not equal to men; therefore, women cannot be anywhere near perfection. This kind of attitude was the reason why there were fewer works of art of women.

Like architecture, Greek art during the Golden Age was very important in representing their country to the world. The phenomenal artwork heightened the world’s respect for the Greeks, which was what any country wanted. The Greeks, particularly the Athenians, believed that if they showed the world how cultured and sophisticated they were, their country would be seen as superior and more powerful. The sculptures of Athens’ Golden Age also captured the beliefs and ideas that people had at the time. They believed in beauty, balance, and harmony, which were clearly depicted in their art.

Drama and literature was another area that flourished during the Golden Age. During this time, tragedies and comedies emerged, along with poems and epics. Poetry was regarded as almost a “ second religion”, in the way that many people respected this type of literature. Poets would write about anything that they believed was appropriate to write about. The epics usually featured a hero, and its plot was both exciting and tragic. Famous epics

include The Iliad and The Odyssey which were written by the blind poet, Homer.

Two of the most prominent types of ancient Greek plays were tragedies and comedies. Tragedies were very serious and intense, and they often showed man as uncertain, fragile, and dangerous. The relationship between God and man's relationship was often seen in tragedies. These tragic plays were based on serious themes which came from history and mythology, such as Aeschylus's The Persians. The greatest writers of tragedies were Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Aeschylus lived around 525 B. C., and he fought at the Battle of Marathon, Salamis, and Plataea during the Persian War. He was the first person to use dialogue in plays, and he was also the first to use costumes, high shoes, and masks. Aeschylus wrote well over 90 plays, however only seven of them have survived. It was through his experience in the Persian Wars that he was able to write The Persians. Sophocles lived around 495 B. C., and his most famous play was called Oedipus Rex. He wrote over 100 plays, but like Aeschylus, only seven of them exist today. Euripides lived circa 484 B. C., and he was interested in human psychology. He had his characters talk in everyday language unlike Aeschylus and Sophocles. Although he wrote over 92 plays, only 18 of them have survived.

Tragedies usually had very dreadful endings, with the main characters punished for any action they choose. These plays were performed in an amphitheater, where the acoustics amplified the actors' voices. They used masks not only to portray their expressions, but because the mouthpiece of

the mask was shaped like a megaphone, which further magnified their voices. More tragedies have survived than comedies, and they all contain universal themes such as love, hatred, revenge, duty, and morality.

On the other hand, comedies were optimistic plays that usually focused on human flaws and allowed the audience to laugh at their own mistakes. They were full of slapstick gags, and they “lacked cultivation by today’s standards” [Don Nardo, pg. 75]. Comedies usually involved music and dancing, and they would often include current events. Comedies were also performed in amphitheaters, and they would also be performed at festivals celebrating Dionysus, God of Wine, along with several tragedies.

Aristophanes lived in roughly 448 B. C., and he wrote most of the surviving Greek comedies. “His weapon was biting wit and sharp satire against the weaknesses of the time and against individuals of whom he disapproved...” [Isaac Asimov, pg. 135]. These individuals included everybody from rich people to poor people, and even extended to politicians as well. He wrote approximately 40 to 50 comedies, but unfortunately, like all of the other Greek dramatists’ works, only a number of them have not perished; 11 to be exact.

Greek drama was the main form of entertainment for the ancient Greeks. They had no televisions or movie theaters to go to, so they watched plays instead. Not only were these dramas entertaining, they were both informative and a way for people to express themselves. Greek drama taught valuable lessons such as what the most important things in life really are, and they also taught people about human flaws. Ancient Greeks also

learned to have a “ voice” because of drama, which correlates to the type of government they had.

The Golden Age of Greece also brought the first known historian in the world, besides its other accomplishments. This man is also referred to as the “ father of history”, and his name is Herodotus. Herodotus began the system of writing down history texts, and if it were not for this historian, much of ancient Greece’s history may not be known. Herodotus’ goal was to “ preserve the memory of the past by putting on record the astonishing achievements both of our own and of other peoples; and more particularly, to show how they came into conflict” [Don Nardo, pg. 76].

Science made great advances during the Athens’ Golden Age. The progressions in science provided a hypothetical basis for all happenings. Science was necessary for many things such as architecture; matter, space, and motion; math-specifically geometry; and even music. Scientists and mathematicians were the first Greeks to not rely on Mythology to explain the happenings of the world, and they used information from ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians to help them. However, the Greeks did not use experiments to find out how things work. Rather, they investigated the world around them and observed, guessed, and discussed their ideas with each other in order to reach a conclusion.

One of the most famous scientists was Hippocrates of Cos. He lived in 460 B. C. and introduced medicine into 5th Century B. C. Hippocrates collected data and made inferences. He also experimented on animals to learn physiology, which helped the Greeks deal with fractures and head wounds that resulted

from wars. Hippocrates “founded the first rational theory of medicine, one that did not depend on gods and demons. It is for this reason that he is often called the ‘father of medicine’.” [Isaac Asimov, pg. 136]. He believed that illnesses were not caused by gods, but that these were excuses doctors used when they were too embarrassed to admit that they didn’t know the cause of a disorder such as epilepsy.

There were also many other scientists and mathematicians of ancient Greece that accomplished many things. One of them, Leucippus, believed that matter was composed of tiny particles, and not substances that could be divided infinitely. He was the first person to ever suggest this, and his views were carried on by his student, Democritus. Democritus then began to call these tiny particles “atoms”, and his views on atoms were very similar to modern views on them. However, other Greek scientists were not yet ready to accept his ideas, so naturally, they shot them down.

There was also Eudoxus, who established that a year was not exactly 365 days long, but was six hours longer. Heraclides, a Greek astronomer, was a student of Plato that was the first person to believe in the rotation of the Earth. Aristarchus was also another astronomer, and he suggested that Earth and all other planets revolved around the Sun, but this too, like Leucippus and Democritus’ views, was unaccepted by other astronomers. Pythagoras was a mathematician that lived in the 6th Century B. C. He introduced the Pythagorean Theorem, which is used to find the length of a side of a right triangle if two lengths are given. He also believed that what separated humans from animals was reason.

Science changed Athens and the Greek world by allowing people, for the first time, to realize that not everything depended on the gods and goddesses of their myths. People began to question everything around them, instead of leaving everything up to the will of the gods; and this would eventually reach out to other parts of the world. As a result, of science becoming more prominent in Athens, people were more educated about themselves and the world that they lived in.

One of the most important achievements Athens made during its Golden Age was in its government. Athens created the first democratic government the world had ever seen. Meanwhile, other Greek city-states such as Sparta had an oligarchy. Their oligarchy consisted of a small group of aristocrats that made important decisions for Sparta, and the rest of the citizens were “equal”. The main difference between these two types of government was that in Athens’ democracy, all citizens had the right to vote, and each vote counted as much as anybody else’s vote.

Athens’ democracy was a direct democracy, meaning that its citizens spoke for themselves and not through representatives. Their type of government valued law, order, and freedom. Every citizen, from the poorest man to the richest one, was allowed to hold office. All decisions were made by the Assembly, which consisted of any Athenian citizen that wished to participate. This group met 40 times a year, and they made decisions like fees for public service, which allowed the poor to hold office. There was also the Boule, which was a 500 man council that met daily to discuss issues that were urgent, and they also prepared the Agenda for the Assembly.

As a result of Athens change in government to democracy, more Athenians gained equal rights-besides women and slaves, though, they were not considered citizens of Athens. The differences in rights between the social classes in Athens grew very small, which naturally angered those in the upper class. The important matters of the city were decided by its people; however, some people doubted the judgment of those who were less educated. Nonetheless, Athens' democracy continued to expand and strengthen as the Golden Age went on. The Greeks idea of liberty was “ the freedom to do or realize his full potential, speak freely, and make decisions without interference” [C. M. Bowra, pg. 12].

However, the beginning of the Peloponnesian War brought an abrupt end to the Golden Age. It began with Sparta declaring war on Athens in 431 B. C. and ended with Athens' surrender in 404 B. C. Sparta's hatred towards Athens increased over time, until finally; they could not contain their animosity anymore. Greek city-states did not get along very well; they were separated by their mountainous geography, which resulted in different governments, cultures, and customs. The difference was particularly great between Athens and Sparta in everything from their government to what they valued the most. What angered Sparta the most was that Athens received all the credit for defeating the Persians during the Persian War; and this further increased tensions between the two city-states.

The war began when Athens imposed a trade embargo on Megara, an ally of Sparta. They refused to let any Spartan ally trade in any ports belonging to the Delian League. Most of the ports were controlled by the Delian League, which meant that Spartan allies essentially had nobody to trade with. The

Megarians began to starve as a result of this embargo. Pericles' goal when imposing the trade embargo was to discourage the Spartans from war. However, his plan was disastrous, and resulted in Sparta declaring war on Athens.

Sparta was in control of the greatest army in Greece, and they decided to use this to their advantage. The Spartans did not want a long and drawn-out war because that would result in many casualties and put a great strain on their city-state. They marched an army of 35, 000 hoplites into Attica, and destroyed the entire countryside, leaving people in fear and chaos. Sparta cut off Athens' grain supply, hoping to force them to surrender, but the Athenians were well supplied behind the Long Walls. The Spartans wanted to keep the war on land because of their strong military, and they continued to attack Attica relentlessly every year.

Athens, meanwhile, had a better navy and treasury than Sparta. While Pericles was in charge during the Peloponnesian War, he ordered all people to retreat behind the Long Walls. He was aware that trying to defeat Sparta on land was near impossible, so he planned to fight on the water. By having all of the Athenians behind the Long Walls, they would be able to receive supplies from cargo ships and hopefully tire out the Spartan army. Pericles' plan worked throughout the first summer of the war, and when the Spartans left in the winter, the Athenians went back to their homes. The enemy attacked in the spring of 430 B. C., and the Athenians were forced to retreat behind the Long Walls once again.

However, this time, there was something far more dangerous than the Spartan army that was attacking Attica; and this was disease. A fast-spreading plague struck the Athenians and killed approximately 20% of the population. The plague lasted for four years, and after many people had died, the Athenians decided to leave the protection of the Long Walls and fight the Spartans. Unfortunately, Pericles was a victim of the plague as well, and his death in 429 B. C. left Athens weak and divided.

Pericles' death left several people vying for power over Athens. Among these people were Cleon and Nicias. Cleon wanted to fight Sparta until the Athenians reached a total victory. Nicias, on the other hand, favored peace. Cleon won power over Athens, but soon died in battle. Nicias saw this opportunity to influence Athens to make peace, but Sparta and its allies refused peace and they continued to fight Athens without mercy.

Eventually, Athens surrendered to Sparta in 404 B. C. after its fleet was destroyed at Thrace. The Spartan fleet cut off Athens remaining lifeline, which forced the Athenians to put an end to the war. The Spartans were not happy with just winning the war, though. They forced Athens to give up its fleet and foreign possession, take down the Long Walls, and change their cherished democracy into an oligarchy. After a while, the Athenians were allowed to restore their democracy, but the damage was done-their Golden Age came to an end.

The Peloponnesian War left Athens devastated; the land was completely destroyed, the food supply was scarce; and the physical resources were nearly completely gone. The war is best known through Thucydides, an

Athenian general. He wrote about the war in great detail, and was not biased; he wrote only about the facts of the war. “ No one could have guessed that the conflict would bring about Pericles’ downfall, the end of the Fifty Years, and the exhaustion and cultural decline of all the city-states,” [Don Nardo, pg. 80]. The Peloponnesian War stripped Athens of its power and greatness, and left Greece vulnerable to any foreign invasions.

With the end of the Peloponnesian War, the Athenians were faced with the grueling task of rebuilding their city-state. People began to look for a principle that explained why things are the way they are, which began the rise of philosophy. The ancient Greeks believed that philosophy and science came from the same branch of study; which is why scientists proved things using logic and reason. Philosophers were travelling teachers that wanted to learn the truth and sought wisdom through different methods. The three most famous philosophers of ancient Greece were Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Socrates was the earliest of the Greek philosophers, and participated in the Peloponnesian War. He was born in 469 B. C. and he lived as a very plain and poor man. During the Peloponnesian War, he came to the conclusion that Man-not the universe-was the enemy of man. He believed that everybody knew more than they thought they knew, and he also believed that man’s conscience was a better guide to right conduct than what society said. His method of teaching was by asking questions, and has come to be known as the Socratic Method.

Socrates was proclaimed the wisest man in Greece by the Oracle of Delphi after stating, “ All I know is that I know nothing.” Despite being the wisest man, he was unpopular among the Athenians. He was arrested on three charges at the age of 70. The first charge was for corrupting the youth; the second charge was for not believing in the city’s gods; and the third was for introducing new deities to society. He was brought before a 501-man jury in 399 B. C., convicted of corrupting the youth, and then sentenced to death. He was convicted by the slim majority of 281 to 220 Athenians. Socrates had several opportunities to break out of jail, and yet, he refused to do so. He did not want to break the law by breaking out of jail, so he stayed in his cell, drank the poison hemlock, and died. Many people today believe that the unjust death of this wise philosopher, which was the result of a vote of the people, is an example of the dangers of a direct democracy.

Plato was another famous philosopher of Greece. He was Socrates’ student, and wrote down all of his teachings, for Socrates did not record anything. Plato believed that all souls were immortal and knew all truths, but as they grew up, they forgot everything. He believed that it was his job to help students remember these truths through the power of logic and reason. In 387 B. C., he founded the Academy, the first school for higher education in Athens, and he also wrote a book called *The Republic*. *The Republic* describes his “ Utopia” which was a state ruled by philosophers. In this “ ideal state” there were three classes: the Guardians who governed the state, the Auxiliaries who were the military, and everybody else. In his book, he expressed his strong dislike for democracy, which he believed was the reason why his teacher, Socrates, had died.

Plato also wrote The Dialogues, which displayed Socrates' ideas along with his own. The Dialogues were composed of discussions that Socrates would have with other students while he was alive. In Plato's eyes, Socrates was "the wisest and most just and best man" [C. M. Bowra, pg. 138]. So naturally, his death was an extreme loss to Plato. One of his philosophies, Platonism, stated that physical beings were imperfect, and that the spirit, soul, and body of a person were separated. These ideas passed into Christianity later on, where they influenced certain beliefs. "Plato's philosophical system and marvelous language make him one of the most gifted men who ever lived," [C. M. Bowra, pg. 140]. Over time, his ideas spread over Europe, and they eventually reached across the Atlantic Ocean, where it helped form the basis of Western Philosophy.

Aristotle was the last, and perhaps the most influential, philosopher from the ancient Greek world. He attended Plato's Academy at the age of 17, and he studied there for 20 years. He was born in 384 B. C., and he travelled to Athens to attend the Academy. There, he studied science, ethics, politics, and mathematics. Aristotle, unlike his teacher Plato, believed that research was the method people should use to investigate the world. His philosophy consisted of the power of direct observation to draw conclusions. He relied on the five senses, while Plato believed that they were not reliable.

Evidently, these two philosophers did not agree with each other, yet they respected each other's ideas.

Aristotle was particularly interested in "natural philosophy" which was the study of natural phenomena in the world, which includes many fields of science. Here, he made great advances, and was the most successful in his

studies of biology. He classified animal species, and also concluded that dolphins were not fish, which proved that he was a full 2000 years ahead of his time. Aristotle also ways of observation to find a solution influenced Francis Bacon, who founded the scientific method.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were all famed philosophers that changed their times. Their philosophies helped the Greek population to become more educated, and their ideas provided some guidance in rebuilding Athens after the Peloponnesian War. However, despite their great efforts to revive Athens' former state of glory, the Peloponnesian War had indeed brought the end of the Golden Age of Athens. Their ideas and philosophies, although taught in vain, have become a great addition to Western Philosophy.

The achievements that occurred during the Golden Age of Athens continue to affect the modern world. Although most people do not realize it, more than half of what is taken for granted, can be attributed to the Athenians. Pierre Leveque stated, " One need only to look closely at our own language, our political institutions, and our culture, to discover to what extent the Greek experience lives on." Despite the fact that Athens' Golden Age was over 2000 years ago, all of its accomplishments have not been forgotten, and they are being lived through Western Civilizat