



A Brief History of Ancient Greece

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Originally published in 1897 in “Junior Encyclopedia Britannica,” this Kindle edition, equivalent in length to a physical book of approximately 30 pages, recounts the history of Ancient Greece, and includes a discussion of ancient Greek literature, drama, science, philosophy, and art.

About “Junior Encyclopedia Britannica” (from the reference work’s editor): “In the ‘Junior Encyclopedia Britannica’ we have endeavored to reproduce the quality of the larger ‘Encyclopedia Britannica’ and at the same time reduce and simplify the quantity, so as to furnish a set of reliable and handy reference books, which would be not only within the intellectual reach of all, but also easily accessible to the great masses of the people who are striving for a higher intellectual development.”

Sample passage:

While Pericles thus failed to secure land supremacy for Athens, he established her maritime dominion, and in his vast schemes for beautifying the city he gave her the wonderful monuments of architecture and sculpture that have made Athens the marvel of the ages. At this time was erected the famous Parthenon. These great works were paid for with the moneys of the Delian Confederacy. To improve the condition of the poorer classes, he equalized the privileges and pleasures of social and political life. This was partly effected by introducing the custom of paying soldiers, jurymen, legislators, magistrates, and even minor civil officers.

The very measures that were at first so advantageous laid the foundation of future corruption and decay, and the splendid luxury and supremacy were destined gradually to work the ruin of Athens, even as they had worked the ruin of an earlier empire in the East, and would in a few centuries undermine a still mightier empire in the West. Babylon, Athens, Rome—their three object lessons for all posterity.

The element of weakness in the Athenian fabric lay in the relation of the other states to their leader. Reduced from proud confederates to defenseless subjects, they watched eagerly for a chance to revolt, and this came with the outbreak of the fatal struggle between Athens and Sparta known as the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.). The war was brought on by the interference of Athens in a quarrel between Corinth and her Corcyraean colony, and afterward by the punishment inflicted on Potidaea, a Corinthian colony but a member of the Delian League, who attempted to secede.

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