The Early Development of the Polis: Boundaries, Balance, and Unification

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ABSTRACT

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The polis is a unique ancient entity which most scholars argue about. What is it? How can we define it? How did it start? What sources are valid? Is it constant in different time periods? The polis, a newer and larger version of the oikos, is a settlement structure that is not fixed in its government or size. There are hundreds of poleis and they are located all over ancient Greece. The creation of the polis did not rely, as some scholars might argue, on any one factor but stability between many. The one thing that remains a constant between all poleis is “balance”. The polis represents a figurative and literal (in the case of physical structures) fulcrum that balances external and internal influences in order to facilitate growth and development. Physical structures, such as walls, extra-urban and urban sanctuaries, and harbors, create protection for the polis and its citizenry while also connecting them to local and foreign entities. Procedural laws, which were public
and formal, create an equality between different levels of the citizenry while maintaining power for wealthy families.

Early poetry of the Archaic period, archaeological surveys of the Bronze Age to the Classical period, Classical histories, and linguistic theories describe how the polis first began, what ideologies were initially emphasized, and how the polis, both physically and theoretically, interacted with other ancient entities. There are four types of poleis which corresponded to different time periods and definitions: “Homeric”, Archaic, Classical, and Aristotelian. Case studies of Athens, Corinth, Thebes, and Sparta illustrate a similar early development, but each maintains different governments.

The polis is a textual, linguistic, physical and philosophical entity which has intrigued scholars for decades. It is only through a better understanding of its early development and concept of “balance,” as well as a comprehensive discussion of contemporary scholarship, that we will be able to fully comprehend and define a polis.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction ..............................................................................................1
   Methodology and Types of Poleis .................................................................6
   Early Law .......................................................................................................26
   Mythology: Olympus as a Model .................................................................37

Chapter 2: Theories ....................................................................................................48
   Balance ...........................................................................................................48
   Sanctuaries and Boundaries ...........................................................................58
   Colonization ...............................................................................................64
   Hoplite Tactics .............................................................................................69

Chapter 3: Case Studies .............................................................................................71
   Athens ............................................................................................................72
   Corinth ...........................................................................................................80
   Seven-Gated Thebes ......................................................................................83
   Sparta: The Outlier .........................................................................................89

Chapter 4: Destruction and New Definitions .............................................................111
   Herodotus and the Persian Wars .................................................................111
   Thucydides .....................................................................................................114

Chapter 5: Conclusions ..............................................................................................122

Bibliography ..............................................................................................................125
Appendix A ................................................................................................................132
Appendix B ................................................................................................................134
Chapter One

Introduction

As a rule, historians are attracted to mysterious and eccentric concepts in ancient history. The underpinnings of these theories are difficult to solve with generalities, but that does not mean that historians will (or can) stop theorizing. Unfortunately, modern scholars tend to see things introspectively, and, as Martin Ostwald states, we are “captives of our own conceptual framework.” The rise of the polis as the predominant social structure at the end of post-Mycenaean (Dark Age) period is an enigmatic and difficult entity to discuss. The polis, however, has clues to its origins in mythology, history, archaeology, and linguistics.

The question of how the polis began has been a matter of contention among historians for decades. A discussion of how different facets of seventh and sixth century

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1 The Greek in this paper is provided by Tufts University’s Perseus Digital Library unless otherwise noted (see citation below). When the actual Greek is provided, I am the translator. If the Greek is not provided, usually because an excerpt is merely chronological, or because it does not deal with technical or vocabulary discussions, I use a translation. Please see footnotes for details on translators. “Perseus Digital Library Project,” Tufts University, edit. Gregory R. Crane, Last Modified October 22, 2010, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu.


3 Carol Thomas & Craig Conant, Citadel to City-State: The Transformation of Greece, 1200-700 B.C.E. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), xxi on a definition of the ‘Dark Age’: “Between the latest Mycenaean material and the adoption of the alphabet lay a four-century-long hiatus- chronological and cultural blank.”; Paul Cartledge, Ancient Greece: A History in Eleven Cities (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30: “There ensued from the eleventh century to the ninth BCE something of a Greek ‘Dark’ age, dark to us not least because it was illiterate…but also dark objectively speaking, in the sense that there were many fewer settlements, with much smaller populations, more widely scattered and technologically impoverished.”
BCE Greece, as well as Bronze Age associations, facilitated the rise of the *polis* is essential to understand any definition.⁴ I have tried to avoid the challenging and obviously thorny question of “What is a *polis*?”, but the concept of the *polis* must, somehow, be defined. This, of course, is not an easy question to answer and the answer itself has many different parts to it. Some historians have a very specific formula to categorize *poleis*, while some, according to John Camp II, “know them when they see them”. I argue that the *polis* is a fulcrum that balances external and internal influences in order to facilitate growth. Physical structures, such as walls, sanctuaries and harbors, protected the citizenry from enemies while joining them together into a centralized unit. Procedural laws, as well as social and governmental entities which allowed for an adhesion to the state, shaped symmetry among the citizenry in order to create a semblance of equality among the many groups of a *polis*.

I shall first discuss what I believe is meant by a *polis* and how its aspects are different from other social organizations available in this period. Next, I shall analyze different scholarly theories concerning early *polis* development, presenting various inconsistencies and possible problems. Finally, I intend to argue that, while a *polis* was not created by any one thing, its physical development, such as the building of protective walls and harbors, and the implementation of procedural laws, allowing a semblance of equality for all classes of the citizenry, created a metaphorical and literal equilibrium in which the *polis* was able to form. While Chester Starr might disagree with this procedure,  

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⁴ As Moses Finley states, “Neither then [Herodotean] nor at any other time in the ancient world was there a nation, a single national territory under one sovereign rule, called Greece (or any synonym for Greece).” M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (New York: The New York Review of Books, 2002), 15. Whenever the term “Greece” is used in this paper, it refers to the ancient region of Hellas, or modern (for the most part) Greece, and some Greek-settled areas around the Mediterranean Sea; it should not be confused with any kind of overarching system of governing.
stating that “the polis must always be approached as a psychological and spiritual, not physical bond,” I believe that this procedure will not only dichotomize certain physical aspects of poleis and how those physical aspects, or the establishment of them, affected the citizenry, but will discuss the theoretical realm as well.  

The most difficult aspect of the term polis itself for modern scholars is deciding upon an overarching definition. The fact is, unfortunately, that a general definition is impossible to create. The polis has roots as far back as the Bronze Age and continues, at the very least, to Pausanias (I refer here to 10.4 when he mentions what does not constitute a polis). Because of the term’s longevity, it is impossible to create a cohesive definition that reflects every time period in which the term is used. Modern scholarship is, therefore, uncertain because some scholars define the polis in a general way and some define it as it corresponds to a certain time period. In more recent years, scholars have been dissecting the polis using historical, anthropological and archaeological evidence in an effort to join definitions with textual material. I shall be using these disciplines in order to understand and describe the early foundations of the polis, as well as to illustrate that the primary function of the polis was to facilitate a balance between external and internal influences in early development.

When I first began this project, I came across a passage in the Iliad (22.511) where Andromache runs from her home to the city walls when Hector is killed. If the polis is an evolution of the oikos, and if walls and other physical structures are, in fact, indicative of poleis, I believe this scene relates to the fundamental shift from an oikos-structure to a polis-based society.

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How did the *polis* first develop? Though a difficult question to answer, I believe etymology can paint a greater picture of the *polis* in its early stages rather than anthropological or sociological methods. Jerzy Kuryłowicz proposed the Fourth Law of Analogy, a way of defining language change through a series of analogies during different time periods. When two forms come into competition for one function, the newer form may take over that function while the older form may become relegated to a subcategory of its earlier function. For example, many words refer to a “covering” in Latin coming from the root -*teg*. The early form that denoted a covering was *toga*, which was replaced by *tegmen* at a later date. *Toga* then took on a more specific meaning, “garment”, though still operating within the same generalization of “covering”. A newer word, *tegmentum*, eventually replaced *tegmen* and *tegmen* became more specific, now meaning “bark” (i.e., the bark on a tree). All these words once meant the same thing at the most general level, i.e., “covering”. Over time, the older words have taken on more specific meanings.

The first communal structure was based on the *oikos* or “household system” which encompassed not only the head of the family (*kyrieia*) that oversaw it but also the people working on it as well. Moses Finley states that members of these *oikoi* were not slaves but “retainers (*therapontes*)”, exchanging their service for a proper place in the basic social unit…”

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7 See Footnote 53 for a discussion on *kyrieia*.

8 Finley, 54. This notion of working for acceptance in a social unit is one of the fundamental cornerstones of the reciprocal relationship which will be discussed at length later in this section.
IE word for that same thing) came into competition with oikos and takes over the primary function (i.e. settlement), while the oikos gets demoted to a subcategory of it (i.e., household). Therefore, the polis and oikos can be used to define each other and further a definition of the polis.

The question after this discussion is, what, other than “new social structure”, does the polis denote? Physical structures can provide a glimpse into an answer to this question. The histories of Herodotus and Thucydides will be vital in the discussion of physical polis structures, especially in the Classical period, and I shall be specifically focusing on the destruction of a polis to determine the importance of those structures.

With the fall of Mycenaean centralized monarchies, the oikos, “dominated by an aristocrat and his family,” would eventually emerge from the post-Mycenaean period as the principal form of social cohesion and would eventually “produce the historical phenomenon of the city-state”.\textsuperscript{9} Rather than discussing categories that accommodate poleis, which Mogens Herman Hansen has already gone to painstaking lengths to produce, I believe it is more productive to discuss certain major poleis that embody these categories but that might not fit into a more general definition.

The polis was neither likened to a specific type of government, nor was it fixed in its associations. To illustrate this, I have chosen four major poleis to discuss, all of which encapsulate different governments but are similar in early development. Athens (democracy), Corinth (tyranny), Thebes (oligarchy and federation), and Sparta (dual monarchy) are all poleis but demonstrate different generalities. Sparta tends to violate any generalization about ancient Greece, while Thebes usually seems underdeveloped

and Athens seems overly developed. Corinth represents more of a “norm” in Greek *polis* development, yet it is a perfect example of a continuous tyranny controlling a *polis*. Each of these *poleis* adopts a balance between external and internal influences as it evolves into a more specified type of government.

After a discussion of these case studies, sections of Herodotus and Thucydides, and scholarship concerning early development, I shall prove that the *polis* was created not by any one thing but a combination of factors that facilitated its growth through the concept of balance. It was, in essence, a further development of the *oikos* that grew because of increases in population after the post-Mycenaean period. While population facilitated growth, the *polis* could only be created through the adaptation of physical structures (i.e., walls, sanctuaries, etc…) and a balance between external and internal influences.

**Methodology and Types of Poleis**

When discussing the meaning of the *polis*, scholars hit a proverbial wall when questioning what ancient Greeks thought a *polis* really was. One of the earliest meanings of a *polis* is “stronghold” or “citadel”, though it is usually equated to a “city-state”. The term “city-state”, however, was used to describe Roman *civitas*. Only then was city-state used retroactively to describe the Greek *polis*. The term *polis* itself, however, most

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10 The concept of a tyranny in control of a *polis* will be discussed in the introductory section of Chapter 3, and in the sections named “Athens” and “Corinth”.


likely had older roots, deriving from the Mycenaean term *ptolis*.\textsuperscript{13} According to Mogens Herman Hansen of the Copenhagen Polis Centre, who undertook the daunting and admirable task of finding and categorizing all *poleis* in ancient literature, the term *polis* was used in ancient literature when: waging war, making peace, having entered into an alliance, striking coins, passing a law, making a judicial ruling, founding a colony, defraying expenses, repairing city walls, when discussing the territory of an altar or *polis* in general and in protecting a divinity.\textsuperscript{14} Chester Starr wrote, “The ideal for a *polis* was autonomy, that is, the right to establish its own laws and to administer justice without outside interference.”\textsuperscript{15} Notice, however, that Hansen’s list does not contain the concept of autonomy unless a territorial debate led to overall dominion, and, in many cases, *poleis* were under the control of larger *poleis*. For example, Mykalessos was thought of as a *polis*, though it was dependent on Tanagra in certain historical periods.\textsuperscript{16} Tanagra maintained dominion by making decisions which could reduce the autonomy of another. Dominion relates to autonomy but also confines itself to the city which maintains the power. Autonomy, therefore, might indicate a *polis* but a *polis* would not necessarily demand autonomy.

Hansen divides possible *poleis* into three types. Type A is called a *polis* by Archaic or Classical sources to 323 BCE and has common characteristics such as a *boule* and city walls. Types B and C might have certain *polis*-like characteristics but are not called *polis* by ancient sources. *Polis*, a term used in ancient literature thousands of times,

\textsuperscript{13} Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 24. For more information on the Mycenaean dialect see Anna Morpurgo, *Mycenaeae Graecitatis Lexicon* (Rome: Edizioni dell’Ateneo Roma, 1963); *Ptolis* is also used in the *Iliad* (6.327), illustrating a further association in the Archaic period.
\textsuperscript{14} Hansen, 11.
\textsuperscript{15} Starr, *Individual and Community*, 87.
\textsuperscript{16} Hansen, 10.
is employed in the sense of a “citadel” fewer than 100 times and as a “country” fewer than 200 times. In the remaining 98%, the term *polis* is used to represent a town, city or both.\(^{17}\) Whenever *polis* is used to describe a territory, it refers to the political territory of the city; it is not used to denote any town, but only an urban center of a territory or a “political community”.\(^{18}\) This is where the modern term of “city-state” came from: a “city” as the urban center and the “state” as the political community.

M.M. Austin and P. Vidal-Naquet discuss the *polis* in economic terms, though they run into the same difficulties as other scholars. The *polis*, according to Austin and Vidal-Naquet, “represents an ‘ideal type’, and all depends on what criteria one adopts”.\(^{19}\) This is fine as a generalized statement but is arbitrary. Austin and Vidal-Naquet later liken the *polis* to urbanization and the “unification of city and countryside” as Hesiod implies in *Works and Days*. They undermine this, however, when stating that “urbanization does not automatically imply the development of the polis”, urbanization being a very slow process except in Asia Minor (specifically citing Old Smyrna).\(^{20}\) Generally, colonies adopt their mother city’s institutions, but this is far from a constant. Colonization is a result and not a precursor to the *polis* (i.e., concerning Sparta and Taras) and, therefore, must be treated as such.

John K. Davies exchanges the term *polis* for “microstate” because it “begs no questions, includes all Greek *poleis*, and is greatly preferable”.\(^{21}\) This term, however, overlooks references in ancient literature. A “microstate” is too general, encompassing

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 15.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 17.
\(^{20}\) Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 49, 90: Sparta is an atypical *polis* because of a lack of an urban center and fortified acropolis since Sparta consists of five villages. Smyrna will be discussed further in the section “Colonization”.
\(^{21}\) Davies, “Origins”, 27.
areas that might not have all the political or physical characteristics that a city-state would. Starr also describes the *polis* in terms of size, though in his discussion there is not one characteristic size which could be applied generally to all *poleis*. Starr, *Individual and Community*, 46-48.

Peter Wells, a prehistoric historian, describes the differences between “town” and “city” in terms of population, using a maximum of 5000 people to denote a town, though he admits this seems arbitrary. He does note, however, that a site called a “city” in the European prehistoric period might not be called a “city” in other places in the world. An urban, centralized environment, classified by size, as Wells argues, is the one thing that divides what constitutes a city and a town, which, as will be discussed later, seems similar to the characterizations between Greek *poleis* and *ethne*.

Jeremy McInerney, in agreement with Francois de Polignac, bypasses the theory of size and asserts that the *polis* is “a dynamic relationship between the city and countryside”. McInerney, however, deconstructs the *polis* into its most basic form, defining the *polis* not as a ‘state’ but as an *astu* facing a *chora*, which does not coincide with textual evidence. While this definition is somewhat vague and perhaps too modest, a separation of spaces and the interaction between them (i.e., urban, rural, and hinterland

23 Peter S. Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities: Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 15-16. While it might seem uncharacteristic to use European prehistoric data in order to define the *polis* which had roots in the Bronze Age, a history of other areas, especially an area similar in proximity, closely related in migration patterns, and maintaining similar institutions, may lead to realizations concerning the *polis*.
24 Wells, 16: Wells mentions that sites in Europe in this time period were “different in character from those of the Near East and the Aegean region, partly because of environmental differences and partly because commercial and industrial patterns developed differently…” In the Bronze Age specifically, European towns depended upon trade with these areas, usually based on an Eastern need for metals, and grew in accordance with a need for more metal. Some highly populated European towns became incredibly specialized around what Eastern regions wanted. For more information on European cities during the Bronze Age and post-Mycenaean period, see Wells, 97-101.
26 Ibid., 37.
(wilderness)) most definitely facilitated certain aspects of the *polis*, using urban and extra-urban sanctuaries to create a semblance of social cohesion within or across territorial lines. The most general term, as well as the most politically-based definition, of “city-state” to denote a *polis*, which had a political, urban center, regardless of its physical size, seems appropriate for this discussion on early *polis* development.

Most scholarship on the early *polis* is derived from the Homeric material even though it depicts a period (the Bronze Age) in which the *polis*, especially the well-evolved *polis* of the Classical period, did not exist; the poems supplemented (or even substituted) archaic institutions for Bronze Age ones. Moses Finley astutely states, however, that “…the institutional and psychological accuracy is easily separable from the demonstrable inaccuracy of palaces and similar material elements of the culture…” 27 The *polis* as an institution is as flexible as it is eclectic. While different time periods have different criteria for what constitutes a *polis*, the *polis*, being eclectic, has the “capacity…to bridge the cultural diversity of various areas…” 28 There are four different types of *poleis* according to the textual evidence: “Homeric” 29, Archaic, Classical and Aristotelian.

The *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and Homeric hymns define the Homeric *polis*. The question now becomes how the Homeric corpus defines the *polis* when the *polis* did not exist in the Bronze Age. Stephen Scully has done rather in-depth work on this subject and mentions in his book *Homer and the Sacred City* that a combination of walls, the polity,

27 Finley, 43.
29 This term is in quotation marks because the Homeric world, as will be later discussed, does not “fit into the framework of the Mycenaean world but belong in fact to a later period”. The Homeric poems, however, do “seek to portray this lost world [Mycenaean World]” (Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 37).
and surrounding territory, like the Archaic polis, defined the Homeric polis even though the Homeric polis (specifically discussing the sacredness of Troy) “is not a historical portrait of a polis at any one period in Greek history but rather an amalgam, or pastiche, of old and new, its vision an essentialized, poetic creation”. Austin and Vidal-Naquet state further that there was no such thing as a Homeric society at all; there was only “the society of the Iliad and that of the Odyssey”. The Iliad represents a “more archaic and less open world”, while the Odyssey illustrates an economic world at relative peace. Annette Giesecke suggests that the Iliad tries to define an “ideal citizen” while the Odyssey is more concerned with describing the perfect city. While Giesecke has rightly distinguished between these two epics, she overestimates how much these stories were specifically about the “perfection” of anything.

Homeric Hymns are particularly difficult to apply in almost every respect, though especially in applying them to uncover historical aspects of ancient Greek life. Too much is left unknown. Who was the author? Was there more than one? Why were they created? Are they meant to be read as a single unit or individually? In what time period were they

30 Ibid., 3, 89: Because of the significance of circuit walls and because the Iliad reflects a contemporary time period, Scully posits correctly, though perhaps too egocentrically, that Old Smyrna and the Mycenaean citadel “neutralizes historical difference”; Andrew Dalby, Rediscovering Homer: Inside the Origins of the Epic (New York: Andrew Dalby/W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006), 79: “The poet of the Iliad and the Odyssey has played no such role and sees city politics from the perspective of a nonparticipant. No wonder that the ancient poet and modern historians look at the polis very differently.” Though using Dalby as a source might seem suspect since he popularizes much Homeric scholarship, I tend to use his views for opposing scholarship; Starr, Individual and Community, 23: “At times, as on the shield of Achilles, it [the polis] is an inhabited site, sometimes with walls, which is often translated as “city”; but the post-Mycenaean age lacked true cities in the historical sense of centers possessing significant commercial and industrial sections, and urban walls appear as a rule only in the colonies down to classical times; the Homeric polis rather is a rural agglomeration with at most a few smiths and potters.” Starr’s definition, while informative, tends to overlook Ionian settlements, with walls or not, that actually thrived in the post-Mycenaean age.
31 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 39.
32 Ibid., 39-40.
written and what time period do they reflect? While classics, as a discipline, would love to have a detailed, unbiased account of the Bronze, post-Mycenaean and Archaic periods, these types of works simply do not exist. In a kind of academic-MacGyver fashion, classicists and other disciplines have to use what sources are available to piece together temporally undistinguishable periods of time. While the Homeric Hymns, as well as the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, might be difficult in their application, they are certainly important in their content.  

Since the poet who wrote the Homeric epics wrote in a later time period, he was “recreating the world as he imagine[d] it”  

Before written epics, however, there were only oral renderings of these stories and, therefore, there was most likely knowledge about the Homeric epics before they were actually written. This is, however, one of the most difficult problems to come to terms with when looking at the Homeric corpus as a valid source. There was no Homer who wrote these epics in the Bronze Age and, therefore, the material we can derive from the epics belongs to a larger body of evidence generally known in the Archaic period. What does this mean for Homeric validity? Should scholars catalog this information under ‘corrupt’ and throw this information away? In a discussion with Jeremy McInerney, the Director of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, when he asked me why I was trying to extrapolate religious

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35 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 39.

36 G.S. Kirk, *Myth: Its Meaning & Function in Ancient & Other Cultures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 32: “Much of the *Iliad* is obviously historicizing in content…there is certainly a great deal of exaggeration, but even those least confident in the existence of a ‘Trojan War’ concede that some attack took place, and that some Achaeans were among the attackers. The point is that the story is based on some memory of the past, and that its progress is described in largely realistic terms.”; Finley, 40, 44.
information from Homeric texts as it is not the best source to do so, I told him that the Homeric corpus and other poems are what classicists have. While some might question the historicity of the Homeric corpus, Homeric texts, as well as other poems and mythological references, responds to its own environment and can, at the very least, grant a glimpse into both the Bronze Age and the Archaic period.

The Homeric cities, even though classified as *poleis*, resemble *oikoi* rather than *poleis*. The Homeric *polis*, then, resembles an early social structure while reflecting newer institutions of eighth century conditions. When the Mycenaean civilization came to an end, the “center (royalty) was the first to wither”, and life switched from a highly centralized center to a village-based lifestyle. This village existence was a precursor to the Archaic *polis*, retaining *oikos*-institutions while gradually inventing new ones to deal with a rising population. The post-Mycenaean period is difficult to discuss with any certainty, though scholars tend to date it to after the destruction of Mycenaean palaces (late eleventh century-mid ninth century). Anthropological and archaeological studies on settlement patterns fill in some of the gaps, but much is still left up to interpretation. Settlement densities seem to be greater in the Cycladic islands and Crete during this period, implying that isolationist societies free from migrations thrived. Settlements

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37 Scully, 82; Finley, 27: Finley notes that the *polis* is visible in the Homeric poems but it has nothing to do with the Classical political *polis*.
38 Scully, 83. There is some speculation about Mycenaean cultures continuing and emerging from the post-Mycenaean period coalescing into the *polis*. While the *polis* does have linguistic and archaeological Bronze Age roots, Mycenaean sites were very rarely continued, usually only around a large sanctuary site. Even then, however, there seems to be a break in pottery between certain periods; Thomas & Conant, 19: Mycenae was reoccupied even though it was at a much lower density. This reoccupation, however, used the existing space for a different purpose, illustrating the “administrative structure[’s]…partial collapse”.
39 Scully, 84; Thomas & Conant, 37: There were some areas on the mainland that did thrive in post-Mycenaean conditions. Thomas and Conant introduce the case-study of Nichoria in Messenia where population actually increased from 975-850 BCE (‘Dark Age II’). As with many emerging *poleis*, in the ninth century people began to coalesce together into a ‘central structure’ with a “great reliance on pastoral resources” which “offers several advantages in an unstable environment”. Archaeological evidence relates that certain families were most likely more important than others, illustrated by larger buildings in the area.
usually did not employ walls unless using already existing Mycenaean architecture. In the eighth century, newer settlement patterns began and agriculture increased (in place of the formerly employed animal husbandry), indicating that the “oikos had begun to lose its central hold”.

These new settlements started around older Mycenaean remnants, not implying continuity in settlement sites but only that these were likely areas to settle because of their strategic and agricultural benefit. Ionian and Cycladic villages produced the first circuit walls in the ninth century, most likely for protection against pirates. Scully states that mainland poleis did not erect walls until the seventh century, though he does not specify which poleis specifically.

While Scully mentions somewhat definitive characteristics of the polis, these characteristics are, at some times, incompatible primarily because of conflicting archaeological and textual evidence. The polis means more than just one thing, as its Archaic and Classical usages suggests, but the Homeric polis is more closely related to a “village” or “citadel”. There is, however, a distinction between different parts of the region which the polis overlooks, usually retaining the term astu to denote a lower

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40 Scully, 84.
41 Ibid., 85: “Excavations at Athens, Corinth, and Eretria, for example, indicate that ‘poleis’ here during the eighth century were little more than hamlets, unfortified and loosely grouped. At Argos there is some evidence that its population was coagulating during this period into something of a village community near the site of its later agora, but there is no evidence of a concentrated urban center at any one of these three locations.”
42 Ibid. Scully mentions Old Smyrna and its walls in 850 BCE though this is actually the second, “reorganized walls”. The first walls were built about 100 years earlier. Smyrna will be further discussed in the section “Colonization”. Scully also mentions others at Iasos, Melie, Emporio, and Andros, most having been very hastily erected “rubble constructions” around 800 BCE; Snodgrass, 429: Settlements on Chios, Andros, Siphnos, and Rhodes are either “fortified or easily defensible”.
43 Scully, 86.
44 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 39: Aside from other inconsistencies, they state that Homer “recreates this world as he imagines it to have been, and for this purpose he deliberately exaggerates the wealth of the kings.” While this statement does seem logical, this is another theory e silentio, referring to the lack of archaeological evidence to support Homeric descriptions.
portion of a city while using the term *polis* to denote the highest or “royal” area, corroborated by later archaeological remains which indicate a hierarchical city design centered on the “megaron of the *wanax*.”45 This hierarchical city design suggests centralized, bureaucratic kingdoms rather than controlling regional city-states.46

Walls, according to Scully, were very important to the Homeric *polis* even though walled *poleis* were not among the majority mentioned in the Homeric corpus.47 “No single feature,” according to Scully, “contributes more to the definition of a Homeric city than its city wall.”48 Scully further qualifies this definition as *sine qua non* for *poleis* under attack; his theory focuses on walls in order to qualify them as “sacred”, specifically focusing on Troy and its divinely built walls.49 In the *Odyssey*, there are three places that illustrate possible *poleis*, though these areas were far from perfect. The island of Aeolia had ornate walls and a palace, but nothing else is mentioned (10.3-20).50 The Laestrygonian city of Telepylus (10.94-148) had a harbor and was positioned on high ground, but did not have a wall or agriculture. The Phaeacians, however, have all of the

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45 Scully, 8, 82. The hierarchical archaeology of an area will be discussed later in section “Mythology: Olympus as a Model”. Scully cautions (p.89) that, though certain observations can help with the theoretical design of the Homeric *polis*, “no one historical model should be considered the prototype from which Homeric Scheria or any other Homeric polis was modeled.”

46 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 36: “…Mycenaean Greece in the Bronze Age [was] a history not of cities, but of kingdoms, which although small scale were centralized and bureaucratic in character…Greek history in the classical period was not to be the history of accounting and bureaucratic palaces, but became the history of cities.”

47 Scully, 41-42.

48 Ibid., 47-48.

49 Though some scholars might not think Troy should be classified as a *polis* because of its geography, it is important to note that Hector’s name itself, as Scully mentions, means “the one who holds” which is “an abbreviation from Hekhepolis, ‘the one who holds the polis’” (p.59). Stephen Scully has compiled massive amounts of information on epithets in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and his theory, that epithets do illustrate certain aspects of the *polis* such as the importance of walls, is very well-founded. For more information see Scully, chapters 4 and 5; Kirk, *Myth: Its Meanings*, 39: Referring to Scully’s work on epithets, Kirk notices that “many ‘folktales’ do not give particular names to their characters, but generic or typical names…This practice reflects at once the range of their appeal, their lack of specific local reference, and the importance of situation at the expense of the character”; Finley, 22.

50 Giesecke, 26: Giesecke mentions that Aeolia did not have an agora and, therefore, no public business, though she seems to be inferring too much from a short section in the *Odyssey*.
physical aspects that would later define the Archaic *polis*: walls, an agora, a palace, a group of leading men, and, even though Akinoos is a king, he seems to be a moderate one.

It is also important to note byproducts of the Homeric *polis*, mostly because it is from these derivatives that later scholars define the Classical *polis*, but also to illustrate the differences between the Homeric and Archaic *polis*. The most important derivative is *politai* (people of the *polis*) which, in later time periods, denoted a politicized citizenry. In the Homeric *polis*, however, the *politai* only exemplified a common identity, or what Scull calls a “body polis” and not a “body politic”. The Homeric corpus also uses the word *demos*, a Mycenaean term closely associated with democracy and frequently used by later classical authors, to denote the citizenry. Austin and Vidal-Naquet note, however, that the content of these words (*polis*, *politai*, and *demos*), while used in the Homeric corpus, was less substantial than it was in later periods.

As noted above, I believe that there was a shift from the *oikos* to the *polis*. While the *polis* is essentially a larger, newer version of the *oikos*, they exemplify different moralities as well as different allegiances. If later authors such as Tyrtaeus, Herodotus, Solon and Thucydides illustrate specificities of Archaic and Classical *poleis*, then the Homeric corpus surely relates specificities of the *oikos*. The *oikos*, however, was more than just a “household”; it was, I posit, one of the first reciprocal relationships (the fundamental mechanism of exchange) in which a prominent family (or individual

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51 Scully, 56.
52 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 40, 54-55: the *demos* in the Archaic period refers to urban manufacturing, though that is not the primary meaning; Giesecke, 12: Giesecke defines the *Odyssey* as identifying not *polis*-structures but utopian city elements.
[kyrieia]) would recruit clients to further family interests.\textsuperscript{53} Troy itself, as Scully astutely states, was more like one “single oikos rather than a collective polis,”\textsuperscript{54} and that “the identification of the city lies with the genealogy of one house and one family…”\textsuperscript{55} Austin and Vidal-Naquet define the oikos in more economic rather than kinship terms as a unit of consumption. Clients depended on wealthy family leaders for their well-being, and the production of family lands would increase with an increase in the number of clients.\textsuperscript{56} This theory mainly assumes mixed agriculture which was probably a secondary function to raiding and piracy, which rely upon the constituency of a kyrieia.\textsuperscript{57} Therefore, in the Homeric epics, the oikos and the polis are at odds, necessitating a need not only to come to terms with each other, but also facilitate a shift from old to new.\textsuperscript{58}

In the period after the post-Mycenaean (Dark Age) era, which Raphael Sealey defines as the end of certain migratory patterns, there were two types of settlements: the

\textsuperscript{53} Thomas & Conant 10: “Such storage facilities [Mycenaean and Minoan Palaces], containing the hoarded wealth of the community, became the nucleus of the future palace center and the focus of a new economic and social system which temporarily submerged the old demos, essentially a settlement consisting of a few families, each led by a family head. It is likely that one of these heads (kyrieia), by any of a variety of means, established a patronage over his fellows, and thus was in a position to initiate or further the process of nucleation, thereby gaining control over the pooled surpluses.” While this theory seems plausible, Thomas and Conant assume that Mycenaean citadels had the same function as Minoan redistribution palaces; Starr, \textit{Individual and Community}, 27: “Besides the community as a whole, the tribe or ethnos, ‘there was only the oikos’, the basic structure for ensuring the survival of a society, the building block with which Aristotle began his analysis in the \textit{Politics}.”; Thucydides, \textit{History of the Peloponnesian War}, trans. Jeffrey Henderson, \textit{Books I & II} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1.5: “…they [Hellenes and the Barbarians who dwell on the mainland near the sea]…turned to piracy, under the lead of their most powerful men, whose motive was of their own private gain and the support of their weaker followers…even at present day…”.

\textsuperscript{54} Scully, 57; Starr, \textit{Individual and Community}, 27: “…whenever this encouragement to bravery is stated more precisely, it commonly becomes one’s father…and estates. The oikos thus embraced both the biological family and animals, slaves, retainers…”

\textsuperscript{55} Scully, 62.

\textsuperscript{56} Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 41; Finley, 57, 106: Finley relates that retainers can also be guest-friends of a family which further adds to the power of the oikos ; W.K. Lacey, \textit{The Family in Classical Greece: Aspects of Greek and Roman Life} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 15: “A further essential element in the oikos was its means of subsistence…An oikos that could not support its members was, to the Greeks, no oikos at all.”

\textsuperscript{57} Starr, \textit{Individual and Community}, 22.

\textsuperscript{58} Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 40; Starr, \textit{Individual and Community}, 51: “[The polis]…was a reaction to the increased need for the strengthening of communal unity.”
polis and the ethnos.\textsuperscript{59} The polis, according to Sealey, had two main features. First, it was a sedentary society, dependent on agriculture. Because of this dependency, the urban area was most likely protected by walls so that citizens could farm during the day and come back to the city at night. The interconnection between agricultural territories and a centralized settlement led to the polis becoming the political center of the region.\textsuperscript{60}

Second, most poleis had a citadel for protection, which reverts back to its original definition. An ethnos was a tribal-village construction, which was not protected by walls. These villages were linked by some type of hereditary and homogeneous alliance system. The polis, however, might have referred to geographical and, in more specific areas, tribal units in which people claimed association.\textsuperscript{61} In the Archaic and Classical periods, because an ethnos system was “less advanced,” many villages became cities.\textsuperscript{62} Austin and Vidal-Naquet state that the ethnos and the polis are fundamentally opposed to each other, so much so that poleis usually did not occur in areas where an ethnos was the primary construction, mostly in “north-western parts of Greece which had not been penetrated by Mycenaean civilization”.\textsuperscript{63} Since the etymology of the word polis itself has Bronze Age roots, primarily illustrated through the Fourth Law of Analogy and the


\textsuperscript{60} This notion of a connection between urban and rural areas will be discussed in the section “Sanctuaries and Boundaries”.


\textsuperscript{63} Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 79.
relationship of *oikos* to *polis*, it logically follows that *poleis* starting right after the post-Mycenaean period would begin in areas where Mycenaean civilization was predominant.

When a group became agrarian and therefore sedentary, the roles of a king and a judge became more wide-ranging than just military leadership, these roles soon resting with the authority of one person in order to facilitate an immediate link between government and the people. As the population of a group expanded, the council, made up of powerful *kyrieia* and families, assumed an advisory role and an assembly of adult males heard judicial cases. As time progressed, more affluent families became more powerful and the power of the *basileus* was reduced, though retaining religious and minor judicial functions in later stages. These families, in times of economic or military hardships, attracted men (client) who needed their assistance.

The reciprocal relationship is an important concept, not only for the development of the *polis* but for history in general, and it has its literary beginnings in Greek mythology and literature. In this relationship, the family leader guaranteed the social security of the client and the client promised to support and adhere to the family’s wishes. In Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Zeus promised to uphold any immortal’s position as currently held who would fight with him against the Titans. He also promised to honor any immortal that had not been honored by Cronos in an effort to gain supporters, such as with Styx and her children. These immortals promised that “they would aid Zeus’

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64 Sealey, 24.
65 Snodgrass, 387.
supremacy in terrible strife/ by fighting the Titans in fierce combat (ῥυσόμεθα κράτος ὑμὸν ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι/μαρνάμενοι Τιτῆσιν ἀνὰ κρατερὰς ύσμίνας)”. 68 In Hesiod’s Works and Days, wealth or an abundance of grain was the primary way of becoming a basileus. With wealth, a basileus could “promote disputes over other men’s property”, and could use deified Right to give “crooked verdicts.” If, however, he gives “straight judgments” (δίκας…ιθείας) then the “polis can bloom (τοῖσι τέθηλε πόλις…)”. 69 The basileus, therefore, became a leader and judge because of an abundance of materials, “[his] personality, and ultimately his utility to his followers”.70

In the Archaic period, the phratria, a subdivision of a hereditary tribe, arose as a sub-unit of political culture. 71 Though I believe Starr correctly states that both Trojans and the Achaeans “were formally grouped in phratries…,” phratria are only mentioned in the Iliad once. Starr’s statement, therefore, seems more instinctive than substantive. Nevertheless, phratria remained influential even after the Classical period, specifically reinforcing the complex and subjective definition of citizenship. 72 As wealth increased from trade and agriculture, certain families became richer and competed for superiority with other families. Since this was an “estate-centered” economy and the aristocracy owned most of the land, disputes about who was sovereign over the legal system were

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68 Theogony, Perseus, 662-663.
70 Starr, Individual and Community, 18.
71 To be clear, people could, and usually were, members of multiple groups. Lacey (p.16) remarks that members of an oikos were usually members of both phratries and demes, as well as citizens of a polis (if they were in fact living in a polis).
72 Starr, Individual and Community, 28; Snodgrass, 387-388; Rhodes, The Greek City States, 27 in reference to Iliad, 2.360-366.
inevitable though not immediate.73 Early poleis did not have many mechanisms for coercion or force, and it would take some time for social gradations to become prevalent. Nevertheless, the tension between rich, glory-driven land owners and a larger community of men marred the Archaic period, and this tension will become more and more frequent over time.

The polis, as stated earlier, was not the only social structure in the Archaic period; the ethnos, the opposite structure of the polis, was prevalent in many regions. Between the eighth and fifth centuries, large geographical areas usually under the command of a large or influential polis unified a region, perhaps consisting of ethne or other independent poleis, using a method named synoikismos (“unification”). Two different types of synoikismos existed: unification with violence or without. Sparta combined their villages into one state using similar tribal associations in respect to cults and governmental offices (a tribal association to one of their two kings), but this only created the original polis. To unify the region of Laconia, they mainly used violence.74 Athens mainly used nonviolent methods (for the most part) to unify Attica, bringing in rural, foreign cults to the Athenian urban environment, making Athens the religious and social center of the region.75 This type of synoikismos which revolves around the placement of regional sanctuaries was very effective in places like Rhodes and, to a certain extent,

73 Starr, Individual and Community, 43, 63: Starr also states that not all areas in the Archaic period were in turmoil. There are inscriptions from Chios that both mention the basileus and the ‘council of the demos’ which were drawn from tribal units, stating that “here [Chios] and elsewhere non-aristocratic elements were increasing in strength...”
74 Sparta’s unification will be discussed in the section named “Sparta: The Outlier”.
75 Athenian unification will be discussed in the section named “Athens”.
Argos.\textsuperscript{76} Most \textit{poleis} had undergone \textit{synoikismos} by the end of the sixth century; a few, such as Elis in the Peloponnese (dating to around 470 BCE), unified later.\textsuperscript{77}

While many writers reflect the Archaic period in their writings, Herodotus mainly illustrates what constituted the \textit{polis} in this period. During the second Persian War, when the Greek \textit{poleis} were discussing a plan to defeat the Persians, Adeimantos, a Corinthian, chastised Themistocles for advising the committee when he did not have a city. Themistocles stated that, as long as they had their navy of 200 ships, they had a city and a city greater than other \textit{poleis} because no Greek would be able to repulse them.\textsuperscript{78}

Herodotus wrote later than Tyrtaeus and other poets, as this statement illustrates. In the early Archaic period, physical structures and regional supremacy defined the \textit{polis}. Herodotus starts to define the \textit{polis} as the people within a territory, in this case people willing to coerce to retain a territory, rather than a territory’s physical structures.

Thucydides best exemplifies the Classical \textit{polis} in 7.77.4. After a staggering defeat at the hands of the Syracusans, Nicias explains to his soldiers, as Themistocles explains to Adeimantos, that:

\begin{quote}
\textit{λογίζεσθε δὲ ὅτι αὐτοὶ τε πόλις εὐθύς ἐστε ὅποι ἂν καθέξιςθε καὶ ἄλλη οὐδεμία ὑμᾶς τὸν ἐν Σικελίᾳ οὔτ᾽ ἂν ἐπιόντας δέξατο ῥάδιος οὔτ᾽ ἂν ἱδρυθέντας ποιεῖν ἐξαναστήσεις.}
\end{quote}

But remember, wherever you establish yourselves you are at once a city, and that in all of Sicily there is no other city which could either sustain an attack from you or drive you out if you once made a settlement anywhere”.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{76} Regional sanctuaries will be discussed in the section names “Sanctuaries and Boundaries”.
\textsuperscript{77} Rhodes, \textit{The Greek City States}, 215 in reference to Diodorus Siculus, 9.54.
More specifically, in Nicias’ same speech, Thucydides writes ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τείχη οὔδὲ νῆες ἄνδρῶν κεναί, or “men are the polis, but not walls nor ships without men”. This is not surprising since most of Greece’s population lived in urban areas (or poleis) rather than rural areas, differing from earlier periods of development on the mainland. In actuality, the physical structures that have been so important in defining the polis in earlier periods do not matter much in the Classical period; the polis had evolved over the last two to three centuries, allowing for a new sense of citizenship and civic duty. John Bintliff defines the polis in this period as not a city at all, “but a nucleated settlement of moderate size, yet one in which an unusual degree of politization had developed, such that despite its unimpressive geographical proportions, the inhabitants of such poleis believed and acted as if they were in an Isolated State at odds with all the world”. This definition coincides with classical conditions but overestimates the requirement of size, because poleis ranged in size from the enormous size of Sparta to the small, walled settlement of Plataea.

The Aristotelian model, discussed by Aristotle in his Politics in the fourth century BCE, is the latest version of the polis, equating a polis to a community which “does the highest good”. Aristotle, not only a philosopher but also a budding anthropologist, believes that to discuss aspects of the community, one must first dissect early aspects of the polis, with which I agree. Two different associations, between men and women, and

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80 Bintliff, 22: “…75-80% of regional populations were living in the cities of classical Greece, with a mere 25-20% in those numerous but proportionally small farms and villages in their choras.” Athens seems to be an anomaly as Bintliff compares these figures with Athens whose populace mainly reside outside of the city-proper; Irene Polinskaya, “Lack of Boundaries, Absence of Opposities: The City-Countryside Continuum of a Greek Pantheon”, in City, Countryside, and the Spatial Organization of Value in Classical Antiquity, edit. Ralph M. Rosen & Ineke Sluiter (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), 78: Polinskaya quotes Kurt Raaflaub in stating that the polis was “people rather than place”.
81 Bintliff, 24.
men and slaves, created the family or “households (οἰκία)”. Several families will eventually unite in order to produce a surplus of goods, and this formation is called a “village (κώμη)”. Aristotle relates that the village is, in its most natural form, a “colony (ἀποικία)” of the household. While this statement seems unclear, if the polis is a newer and larger social structure of the oikos, then a village is to an oikos as a colony is to a polis. When several villages unite, they become a polis (or, logically, many households create the polis). Aristotle was most likely referring to larger poleis that held large amounts of power in his time, such as Sparta, Athens, Corinth and Thebes.

To create a balance in the state, a “community”, or the “fullest possible unity of the state (τὸ μίαν εἶναι τὴν πόλιν ὡς ἀριστον ὅν ὅτι μάλιστα πᾶσαν…)” must create a constitution since a citizenry tends to have different things in common (i.e., ethnic groups, tribal associations, economic statuses). The interest of the community, however, should remain the same. Aristotle, however, qualifies this description by warning against too much unity; an abundance of unity would transform the polis back into a family because a polis is made up of many different people. Economically, which is a defining principle of the Aristotelian model, an oikos is more self-sufficient than an individual and a polis is more self-sufficient than an oikos.

Aristotle continues his discussion of government structures with a discussion of certain constitutions, evaluating the merit of each structure. The Spartans maintain all

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84 Politics, Perseus, 1.1252b.
85 Politics, Perseus, 1.1252b: ἡ δ᾽ ἐκ πλειονὸν κοινονία τέλειος πόλις…; Politics, Perseus, 1.1253b: ἐξ ὧν μορίων ἡ πόλις συνέστηκεν…
86 Politics, Perseus, 2.1261a.
89 Politics, Perseus, 2.1261b: οἰκία μὲν γὰρ αὐταρκέστερον ἐνός, πόλις δ᾽ οἰκίας…
three forms of government because they employ elements of an oligarchy, monarchy, and democracy.\footnote{Politics, trans. Jowett, 2.1265b.} Possibly relating Sparta to Athens’ \textit{seisachtheia}, Aristotle mentions that the “equalization of property” was essential to the initial Spartan state because it “prevents the citizens from quarreling”. The nobles, however, will be dissatisfied, thinking that they would be entitled to more, and, therefore, should be trained not to desire more but prevent the lower classes from getting more.\footnote{Politics, trans. Jowett, 2.1267a-2.1267b.} While elevating some Spartan ideals, Aristotle criticizes the Spartan Council because of the age of its members.\footnote{Politics, trans. Jowett, 2.1270b: “…for the mind grows old as well as the body.”} He also criticizes the Spartan mess system because poor Spartans, who might not be able to contribute to their mess-halls, would not be able to participate in the citizenry.\footnote{Ibid.} With Athens, Aristotle focuses more on actual legislators, beginning with Solon who “created the democracy” with the advent of “law courts”; the state communicating to lower classes through state-run institutions concretely illustrates a democracy.\footnote{Politics, trans. Jowett, 2.1274a.} Later, with the legislation of Ephialtes and Pericles, Athenian lower classes gain an immense amount of power in the state (or at least more than any other \textit{polis} had).\footnote{This will be discussed further in the section “Athens”.} The issue of lower-class power in the \textit{polis}, as well as earlier historical accounts of the \textit{polis} (primarily by Herodotus and Thucydides), led Aristotle to the opinion that people \textit{were} the state (πόλιν δὲ τὸ τῶν τοιούτων [people who participated in the government] πλῆθος).\footnote{Politics, Perseus, 3.1275b.} While Aristotle never mentions what a viable limit might be, the boundary of state control was no longer the city-wall as it had been in earlier periods.\footnote{Politics, trans. Jowett, 3.1276a.}
Early Law

Law itself is not easy to define. Michael Gagarin and his work on early Greek law, I feel, describes, as completely as possible, the definitions and ramifications that law had on the *polis*. Early law, or procedural law, creates an internal balance within a *polis* so that wealthy, influential families and poorer citizens could live under the same procedural regulations. These procedural laws were not substantive, nor did they shift power away from wealthy families. Early law defined formal authority and was made public in order to create a semblance of equality between classes, as well as to incorporate lower classes into the state.

According to Gagarin, there were three stages of law in early Greek society which related to the establishment of legal procedures: pre-legal, proto-legal and legal. For a procedure to be considered a law, it had to be public and formal. Having a public procedure asserted special authority over an individual or group, though this does not necessarily have anything to do with the enforcement of the resolution. A formal procedure adheres to current traditions concerning the law process.\(^98\)

What is normally seen as a formal element of ancient law is the use of a *skeptron* or scepter, from which individuals received the ability and authority to speak in an assembly. Only in the legal stage, however, with the development of writing, do rules and procedures start to become recognizable.\(^99\)

These two characteristics of a legal society are found in countless ancient sources, though Gagarin makes a point of expressing the unreliability of using poems and discussions of oral tradition as source material. Starr also notes that “the objective of


\(^{99}\) Ibid.
these bards was not to write history but to explore human capabilities and limitations”.

Nevertheless, the Homeric corpus, as well as Hesiod’s *Theogony* and *Works and Days*, are invaluable to the process simply because they encompass most of the written sources concerning this time period.

The concept of a supreme commander and formal authority in the *Iliad* is unclear because Agamemnon, while he led the Greeks into the Trojan War, did not have supreme command in a modern sense. Most of the decisions made by the Greeks were made in assembly, which was only occasionally summoned by Agamemnon. Achilles actually called the first assembly to discuss the cause of the plague (Agamemnon’s refusal to return Chryses) and *not* to discuss tactics. Calchas, a bird-reader, even asked Achilles to guarantee his safety before he testified, fearing reprisals from Agamemnon, illustrating Achilles’ power over the supposed supreme commander. The assembly eventually turned into an argument between Achilles and Agamemnon while Nestor acted as a mediator; Agamemnon was supposed to be honored above any Greek because he is allowed to distribute other heroes’ spoils. He did not, however, have the sole power to call an assembly or the ability to silence another leader. What is most peculiar about this particular assembly is that the scepter was only used towards the end and for a function other than allowing a person to speak.

After Agamemnon decided to take Briseis, Achilles’ captive, Achilles swore a formal oath upon a scepter not to fight in the war until his honor was restored. The

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101 Andrew Dalby states, the time in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are set represents the archaic period itself “when Greek cities were self-governing units, with trade and colonization and political faction” (4). For more information on the dating and representation of the Homeric world, see Andrew Dalby, *Rediscovering Homer: Inside the Origins of the Epic* (N.P.: Andrew Dalby, 2006).
scepter, in this case, is not only a formal authority but also a religious one because oaths and councils were sacred to Zeus. According to Hesiod’s *Theogony*, Zeus was able to punish immortals that violate oaths by inducing a coma for a year and exiling them from the immortal council for nine years. Nestor later tried to stop the argument, urging Agamemnon not to take Briseis and Achilles not to question Agamemnon’s authority. The reason he gave was that “a scepter-holding king has honor beyond the rest of men, power and glory given by Zeus himself” (ἐπεὶ οὔ ποθ’ ὁμοίης ἐμμορε τιμῆς/ σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, ὃ τε Ζεὺς κόδος ἔδωκεν). This implies that Achilles, while the leader of the Myrmidons, relinquished his authority so that Agamemnon could maintain sole authority of the combined army.

While Agamemnon’s scepter does retain a certain amount of divine authority, the skeptron, Easterling proposes, is usually used for speech-making and oath-taking. This is, however, not always the case as will be demonstrated later in this section. The scepter, then, “articulate[s]…the authority of the king”, reinforcing Agamemnon’s authority. Even if the scepter was only an emblem of regal authority, Agamemnon could not possibly use it to its fullest capacity: only Zeus could. While Zeus might have given the scepter to Agamemnon, Zeus himself is the embodiment of ideal authority which no mortal could emulate.

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107 Easterling, 106.
108 Ibid., 110, 114.
109 Ibid., 111.
This notion of aristocratic council members having the ability to question Agamemnon’s command is demonstrated again in Book 9 of the *Iliad*. Again Agamemnon called an assembly and related that Troy could not be taken. This time, Diomedes questions Agamemnon’s behavior and reactions, which was his natural right in assembly.\(^{110}\) Even though Zeus gave Agamemnon “honor” and the scepter, Diomedes said that Agamemnon was not given “strength to stand in battle, which is real power”.\(^{111}\) Leadership therefore was not only the ability to command other kings by formal (or, in the case of the *skeptron*, divine) authority, but also the ability to fight bravely. This directly correlates to Agamemnon’s status as a *basileus* whose power, though he was the leader of the largest contingent and inherited a great deal of both mortal and divine power, relied upon bravery in battle.\(^{112}\)

The *skeptron* is also associated with another source of formal authority: the oath. Agamemnon swore a formal oath upon his scepter to give reparations to Achilles. These reparations, which were numerous and extravagant, demonstrate the degree of his wealth.\(^{113}\) In Book 4, the Trojans broke their oath after attacking Menelaus during a cease-fire for a duel between himself and Paris. Its subsequent breaking did not only start a massive battle but also was sacrilegious because of an oath’s relationship to Zeus.\(^{114}\) Oaths, therefore, enhance the authority of things associated with the *skeptron*, while also becoming a source of formal authority themselves.

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\(^{112}\) Finley, 73.

\(^{113}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 9.120-165.

\(^{114}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 4.170ff; 4.251: “Father Zeus will not aid Trojan perjury.”
Agamemnon did call assemblies, but speakers did not normally use the scepter as a way of speaking in the council. Nestor, for example, in Book 2, simply stands\textsuperscript{115}, though Agamemnon rose with his “ancestral staff”. It is more likely then that the “staff”, given to him by the immortals, was a regal authority and did not necessarily represent a procedural characteristic, while the act of standing itself represented the authority to speak.\textsuperscript{116} This regal authority, while perhaps very powerful, is not complete because of the nature of Greece itself.\textsuperscript{117} Agamemnon might have been first among kings, but kings still held regional authority either through past glory, their position in the aristocracy, or by the regions they ruled over. In Book 2 of the \textit{Iliad}, containing the \textit{Catalog of Ships}, Diomedes was the chief commander of the forces from the Argolid, though he was subject to the command of Agamemnon.\textsuperscript{118} In Book 4 of the \textit{Odyssey}, Menelaus told Telemachus that he would have given Odysseus a city in Argos, after clearing it out completely, settling his entire family and people there.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Iliad}, trans. Lombardo, 2.81.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Iliad}, Perseus, 2.101-107: “…Then among them Lord Agamemnon/holding a staff that Hephaestus had crafted./Hephaestus had given it to Zeus, son of Cronos,/and Zeus in turn gave it to Argeiphontes [Hermes] and Hermes to Pelops, the horse-driver/and Pelops handed it on to Atreus/and when Atreus died he left it to Thyestes/ and Thyestes left it for Agamemnon to bear/ in order to rule over many islands and all of Argos.”
\textsuperscript{117} Even though many kingdoms in Greece during the Mycenaean Age were subject to Mycenaean rule, they were individual kingdoms (as they would be in later periods as well), and as such had their own customs; Finley, 9; Finley states that Homer describes “the Greeks” with multiple names, illustrating Greece’s cultural diversity.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Iliad}, trans. Lombardo, 2.624ff; Andrew Dalby mentions that parts of the \textit{Catalog of Ships} were added in different time periods. It had a “geographical arrangement: a clockwise spiral around central and southern Greece; a counterclockwise spiral from Crete via Rhodes and Kos to Karpathos; a short counterclockwise spiral in part of northern Greece. This is why it is unlikely that the \textit{Catalog} started out as a list of contingents that sailed from Greece or that fought at Troy, because if it did, why would they be listed in geographical order of origin?” It is not clear, however, why it necessarily would not have been done in this way nor does this assortment seem to suggest a general “geological arrangement”. He suggests that the \textit{Catalog} relates to later lists of “ambassadors from a major shrine” but does not discuss it further. See Dalby, 39-40.
In Book 2 of the *Iliad*, Odysseus tried to calm the frightened Greek troops after Agamemnon had said that the army should return to Greece. He took Agamemnon’s scepter and told the “ordinary” (non-aristocratic) soldiers, who were not in the council, that they were “nothing in battle and in council (οὔτὲ ποτ’ ἐν πολέμῳ ἐναρίθμιος οὔτ’ ἐνί βουλῇ),” and that:

οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη: εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω,
εἰς βασιλεύς, ὃ δόκει Κρόνου παῖς ἄγκυλομήτεο
σκῆπτρόν τ’ ἤδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισί βουλεύησι

“The rule of many is not a good thing: let there be one ruler, one king, the one whom Zeus, son of Cronos the crooked in counsel, has given the *skeptron* and law, in order to hold counsel over them.”  

After Thersites, a common soldier, spoke disrespectfully to Agamemnon and the other troops in the assembly, Odysseus used the *skeptron* to beat him.  

The Trojans similarly had assemblies, though a central authority is more difficult to identify. While Priam is the king of the Trojans, Hector, Priam’s son, makes many of the military decisions. He also, like Achilles, has the authority to call and dismiss assemblies. Hector’s name itself, as Scully argues, even translates to “the one who protects the *polis*”.  

The *Odyssey* is much more procedural in its assembly process, possibly because assemblies in the *Iliad* were called during a state of war and involved different political entities. A formal assembly was called by Telemachus, Odysseus’ son and heir (though merely to his *oikos*, not the kingship), to discuss a gathering of Ithacans to combat the suitors who were consuming his fortune. Succession in Homeric poetry is a complex

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120 *Iliad*, Perseus, 2.204-206.
121 *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 2.286-287; It is not certain whether Odysseus beat Thersites because he spoke in the assembly (which is more likely) or because he spoke ill of Agamemnon.
122 *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 2.923-924.
123 Scully, 59.
subject. Even when Odysseus is missing-in-action, Telemachus does not receive governing power over either Ithaca or, as it seems by the suitors’ persistence, over his father’s home. The power of Ithaca does not revert back to Laertes, Odysseus’ father, either. Finley correlates Ithaca to a “hiatus in political leadership” during this post-Trojan War period, though whether this means “regal leadership” is unclear.\(^{124}\)

At the assembly, a herald named Peisenor gave a staff to Telemachus to speak, but Antiphus, an aristocrat, spoke first to ask who called the assembly.\(^{125}\) This implies that, while the staff does relate to procedural authority, it is not necessarily the only thing relating to authority, such as prominence. Later, in Book 11, Odysseus travels to the Underworld and sees Minos, Zeus’ son and king of the Minoan Empire, judging disputes while “holding a golden scepter (χρύσεον σκῆπτρον ἔχοντα)”\(^{126}\). While we might expect to see Hades, the ruler of the underworld, sitting as judge, Minos was a king and a son of Zeus.\(^{127}\) Theorists might infer from other events in ancient history that, though Telemachus might not immediately receive governmental power upon Odysseus’ death, he was, at the very least, preferred above others. Zeus, in relation to a polis, will be discussed in the next chapter, but it would logically follow that Minos, one of Zeus’ sons, would inherit some of Zeus’ powers (in this case his power of good counsel), just as Telemachus would inherit some of Odysseus’. In Book 1 of the Odyssey, for example, Eurymachus, a suitor, states:

\(^{124}\) Finley, 47.
\(^{125}\) Odyssey, trans. Lombardo, 2.40ff.
\(^{127}\) While there were many sons of Zeus that were kings, Minos was one of the only “judges”. Minos should not be discussed inclusively with his siblings merely because of his presence in this scene, but his lineage and Zeus’ relationship to judgment is applicable to this discussion. Zeus, as an immortal, will never die but his powers can be transmitted to his sons, such as immortality.
“Τηλέμαχ’, ἦ τοι ταῦτα θεοῖν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται, ὃς τις ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκη βασιλεύσει Ἀχαιών: κτήματα δ’ αὐτὸς ἔχοις καὶ δώμασιν οἷσιν ἀνάσσοις. μὴ γὰρ ὁ γ’ ἔλθοι ἀνήρ ὃς τίς σ’ ἀέκοντα βήριν κτήματ’, ἀπορραίσει, Ἰθάκης ἔτι ναιετοώσης…”

“Telemachus, these things, in truth, are those on the knees of the gods, Who of the Achaeans will rule sea-girt Ithaca: But may you hold your possessions and be lord of your house. For may no man ever come who steals your possessions by force or unwillingly, While men live in Ithaca.”

In Book 3 of the Odyssey, Nestor is described as “holding a scepter (σκῆπτρον ἔχον)” while Telemachus spoke to him. Nestor is not mentioned as holding a scepter, either physically or by epithet, in the Iliad, but is in the Odyssey. Perhaps regal authority was given back to him after Agamemnon was killed by Clytemnestra and Aegisthus or perhaps authority reverted back to him after the Trojan War was over?

While authority might have reverted to individual kings after the Trojan War, it did not mean they could not still be subjugated to a higher power. When Odysseus arrived in Phaeacia, King Alcinous led him to the assembly area, which, in this case, was a formal public spot, built next to the harbors. After Alcinous’ decision to aid Odysseus, Alcinous said, “He led the way, followed by/the sceptered men (ὅς ἄρα φωνήσας ἡγήσατο, τοὶ δ’ ἄμ’ ἔποντο/σκηπτοῦχοι…).”

Law cannot merely be procedural. It must be enforced. Enforcement implies that society recognize some kind of authority, even though a central authority in early literature is unclear. These authorities, as previously discussed, assumed the role of “judge”. But how were these authorities chosen to settle disputes? In Herodotus’

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128 Odyssey, Perseus, 1.400-404.
129 Odyssey, Perseus, 3.412.
130 Odyssey, Perseus, 8.46-47: σκηπτοῦχοι literally translates to “scepter-holding” but, since people who are sceptered are described as leaders or kings, a more substantially translation might be “sceptered kings” as Lombardo accepts in his translation (Odyssey, trans. Lombardo, p. 107, 8.50).
Histories, Deioces was chosen by the litigants of cases and, because he settled disputes fairly, his reputation grew. Eventually, he was elevated to the position of king and the way in which he administered justice changed. Instead of hearing cases in public, he gave written decisions to litigants from his palace.¹³¹ Herodotus described a similar ascension in Egypt, by a man named Mycerinus.¹³² Society only required that Deioces focus on procedure and fairness, rather than punishment for an infraction. The same basic theory is evident in Book 18 of the Iliad concerning Achilles’ shield which depicted two men arguing at a marketplace. After consulting a council of elders, they promised to submit to arbitration and pay two measures of gold to the elder whom they thought to have the most “straight forward” decision.¹³³

Law emerged from the post-Mycenaean era in a privatized form. Since the main social unit was the oikos, the law was in the hands of wealthy families, especially homicide law.¹³⁴ As the society grew, however, and acquired new complexities, the legal system became inadequate, leading to civic turmoil. Writing became fundamentally important in this stage of development. While there are many theories which discuss the political implications of having written laws, the importance of written law was not only the fact that they were written and therefore fixed, but the fact that laws were made public.¹³⁵ Presumably, writing appropriated power from the magistrates and noblemen, who would have administered the law inequitably to the lower classes; laws, then, were publicly displayed in order to assert the authority of the polis rather than an individual

¹³² Ibid., 2.129.
¹³⁴ Finley, 74.
¹³⁵ Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 52: “The norms which governed society were defined and removed from the arbitrary interpretation of powerful men, and justice became a matter of public concern.”
group. A newer assembly (i.e., not “Homeric”) soon followed, instigated by the *demos*, in order to incorporate other social elements of society, but for its creation, as Finley states, the assembly required a “relatively settled, stable community made up of many households and kinship groups…”\(^{136}\) In the Mycenaean period, the army acted as a kind of assembly, only approving or disapproving of a matter brought to them as a classical assembly would.\(^{137}\) The “assembly” was not an active participant in decision-making (unlike its classical counterpart), though the notion of having an assembly at all reflected a later evolution. Later in the Archaic and especially in the Classical periods, an assembly coupled with a “council” of older, more aristocratic men and higher governmental positions, such as the archons in Athens or the kings in Sparta, were the instrument of decision-making measures.

The people who wrote down the laws, or “lawgivers,” were not necessarily part of the aristocracy but were often associated with lower classes or foreigners to the specific *polis*. Since competition among families increased with the availability of men and wealth, they could not agree among themselves who would write down the laws, and the lower classes clamored for some kind of equality. Oswyn Murray states, “The figure of the lawgiver is a response to this double need to curb the power of the aristocracy and maintain the force of customary law.”\(^{138}\) Lawgivers represented the importance of reform and the emergence of political strife.

This theory illustrates problems of continuity. For instance, no evidence exists before the fifth century that the laws were under the control of one social group or that written laws are more or less “fair” than oral ones. More importantly, there was not

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\(^{136}\) Finley, 76.


\(^{138}\) Murray, *Early Greece*, 173; for more information on different lawgivers see Lacey, 19-21.
necessarily any widespread democratic or participatory sentiment by lower classes when these laws were made. While some of the laws enacted might have prima facie benefited lower classes, laws themselves were made to lessen the severity of civil strife and shift the responsibility of the law from the private to the public sphere. Unfortunately, the power of the aristocracy remained somewhat unchecked, demonstrated by the establishment of tyrannies, as in Corinth. In the mid-eighth century, trade with foreign countries made individual poleis rich. Because of wealth and an increase of population, it was inevitable that as the citizen body would increase, regulation concerning the lower classes would increase. From this situation Gagarin correctly states, “Formal judicial procedures went hand in hand with the establishment of the polis itself.”

The polis also transformed the law into something compulsory for citizens from the older voluntary version in Herodotus’ discussion of Deioces. Increasing its regulative role over citizens, the polis decreased the power of the archaic family system and established itself as a sovereign entity. Through procedural law and the inadequacies of an older system, the polis now controlled economic activity, decreased the political importance of the family, and defined a person’s identity through an obligatory political community.

139 Gagarin, 123.
140 Murray, Early Greece, 65.
141 Gagarin, 135.
Mythology: Olympus as a Model

Myth, evident in both the Homeric and other corpora, was central to almost every aspect of ancient Greek life. In fact, the gods, being anthropomorphic, described all aspects of Greece, including aspects of the polis. According to Stephen Scully, mythology can also define the polis, describing it as “immortally and mortally constructed as well as divinely and humanly defended”. Even specific characteristics of the polis, such as city walls and the agora, in which trials were held, were divinely protected and sacred.

But what is the validity of mythological references as source material? A myth, in general, is not a uniform story; it is “multiform” and “imaginative” and should be treated as such. G.S. Kirk states, “Greek myths provide no better an instance of what myths quintessentially are than other extensive cultural sets. In some ways they are less informative than most…” While Kirk is skeptical about how myths are used to recognize aspects of ancient societies, he does not disregard them but attempts to define and reorganize mythological dogma. Myths do contain “clear functional relevance” and, therefore, mythological references are important but should not be used without some kind of knowledge concerning their origins and nature.

The gods, according to Kirk, “represent in the Iliad the metaphysical aspect” and are not rooted in ‘legend’, but are depicted with the least amount of fantasy possible.
Myths take place in “a timeless past”, and though “certain details of contemporary life may intrude”, these intrusions are “superficial, unless the myth has been strongly complicated by legend”. While Kirk’s dissection of general mythology seems plausible, his theory’s main flaw is not in its thought process but in its application. Myth (muthos), like polis, is a difficult term to define, let alone apply. Kirk relates that he believes Greek myths “are quite heavily polluted in the form in which we know”, showing marks of “progressive remodeling”. So what does this mean for mythology? While Kirk’s disdain for an anthropological use of mythology does have merit, he also relates that if the reader “remains aware of this complexity, the general qualities of Greek myths are more likely to emerge from a synoptic assessment than from precarious attempts at piecemeal restoration”. Mythological references do have their downfalls in terms of validity, but these references, as well as Homeric and other poetry, do have merit simply for the amount of textual material if nothing else.

Ancient poets constantly represent Zeus as the central authority in assemblies and trials, and he was often compared to Odysseus (or Odysseus to Zeus: …Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος) as “good in council”. Most of Zeus’ judgments were designed to maintain
the status quo among factions of gods. When Achilles’ honor was called into question by Agamemnon, Thetis, Achilles’ mother as well as Zeus’ former love interest, asked for justice for her son and Zeus promised to maintain Trojan victories until Achilles was honored. This angered Hera because she had allied herself with the Greeks. Later, Hera asked Zeus to let her interfere with the war so that the Greeks would not be destroyed and so Achilles could keep his honor. He agreed but told Hera that, in allowing this, if he himself wanted to destroy a city, even if it was loved by her, she could not interfere. This judgment allowed Zeus to keep his pact with both Thetis and Achilles, while also appeasing Hera and Athena. In the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, Apollo brought Hermes to Zeus and Olympus, “Where the scales of justice lie (κεῖθι γὰρ ἀμφοτέροις δίκης κατέκειτο τάλαντα)”. On Olympus, an assembly was called, though it is not stated by whom, and Zeus heard both sides, demonstrating his judicial power. His ruling for both Apollo and Hermes to look for Apollo’s stolen cattle was not essential, but was made to protect the status quo of, or mediate between, the power among the gods by, ironically, changing the status quo, introducing a new god into the divine hierarchy. Similarly, when Persephone and Aphrodite both wanted control of Adonis, Zeus judged that Adonis’ year should be divided into three parts: a third spent by himself, a third with Persephone and a third with Aphrodite.

\[\deltaικαζέω, ός ἑπωικές).\] Iliad, Perseus, 1.174: “…with me [Agamemnon] are other men/that will honor me, like Zeus, greatest in counsel (#pάρ ἐμοιγε καὶ ἄλλοι/οἵ κέ με τιμήσουσι, μάλιστο δὲ μητίετα Ζεύς.)”

Iliad, trans. Lombardo, 1.367ff.


In Book 8 of the *Iliad*, Zeus called an assembly to reaffirm his hegemony by challenging other gods to a feat of strength.\(^{153}\) This passage represents Zeus as the central authority but, like other kings that still held a kingship under Agamemnon, other gods still held authority in other areas of life. Later, in Book 20, Zeus called an assembly to allow the gods to participate in the war so that Achilles might not overwhelm Troy and cause its destruction. The *Iliad* even represented Zeus as an aristocrat, driving a chariot and taking it to his sanctuary on Mt. Ida.\(^{154}\)

Zeus was not the only one who governed laws. Gods, in mythology, frequently mingled among humans, trying to discover which mortals were behaving decently and which were not. Antinous in the *Odyssey* illustrates this behavior when he harms Odysseus who was disguised as a beggar and traveler. The other suitors replied:

> Ἀντίνου, οὐ μὲν κάλ ἐβαλες δύστην ἀλήτην,
> οὐλόμεν, εἰ δὴ ποῦ τις ἐπουράνιος θεός ἔστιν.
> καὶ τε θεοὶ ξεινοισιν ἑοικότες ἀλλοδαποῖσι,
> παντοῖοι τελέθοντες, ἐπιστρωφόσι πόληας,
> ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἑφορῶντες.

> “Antinous, you did not do a good thing, hitting that miserable beggar,
> Doomed, if he, perhaps, is a heavenly god.
> And the gods often resemble foreign strangers,
> Being counted as all kinds, haunting different cities,
> Seeing the ones that [live by] hubris and [by] good law.”\(^{155}\)

A good king, therefore, has an authority over the lands he governs, as Zeus does, but must also adhere to the laws of the gods and the authority of Zeus. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* also represent substantive laws, but which seems mostly practical; an authority should

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\(^{153}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 8.1ff.

\(^{154}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 8.44-50.

\(^{155}\) *Odyssey*, Perseus, 17.483-487.
treat people according to class, while upholding respect and honor.\textsuperscript{156} This theory of justice will evolve to be defined as a balance between lower and upper socio-economic classes so that court decisions are fair, not necessarily for each side but overtly generalized for each class.

Olympus even had similar physical characteristics of a \textit{polis}. Like a walled city, Olympus had limited access, represented by “automatic gates (\textit{αὐτόμαται πύλαι})” which were controlled by “the Hours”. When the gates opened, Zeus was “sitting separate from the other gods/on the highest peak of many-ridged Olympus (\textit{εὗρον δὲ Κρονίωνα θεῶν ἄτερ ἡμένον ἄλλων/ἀκροτάτη κορυφῆ πολυδειράδος Οὐλύμποι})”.\textsuperscript{157} Architectural finds at Dimini and in the Mycenaean megaron on the Athenian Acropolis supports this hierarchical structure seen in Homeric texts.\textsuperscript{158} While the system of government represented by the megaron was quite different from that of a \textit{polis}, its hierarchical manifestation was similar. These hill sites demonstrate different levels of hierarchical groups, ending with the king who occupied the top of the site.

The Homeric hymns themselves were most likely composed by multiple authors, as the differences in language and structure among the hymns suggests. Though it was thought in antiquity that Homer wrote the hymns, this was not unanimously accepted nor was the Homeric corpus used as such.\textsuperscript{159} The gods are the subjects of the hymns, but the

\textsuperscript{156} This theory says nothing about the notion of “justice” and that is because the term “justice” is inherently unclear. Does it mean the balance between classes? Does it have to be fair to one side, either side or the state? While I do agree that this is a significant topic, it is not the focus of this discussion and will, therefore, be respectfully excluded. For more information, see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, \textit{The Justice of Zeus}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Iliad}, Perseus, 5.753-754.
\textsuperscript{158} For more discussion on the subject of Dimini, see Donald Preziosi & Louise A. Hitchcock, \textit{Aegean Art and Architecture} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 33-44; For more discussion of the Athenian Acropolis, see John Camp, \textit{The Archaeology of Athens} (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 14-20.
\textsuperscript{159} Cora Angier Sowa, \textit{Traditional Themes and the Homeric Hymns} (Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 1984), 2, 4: dates the hymns generally to 700-500 BCE; Calame, 20.
god or goddess themselves might not be what is being discussed. When discussing Greek mythological references, Kirk remarks that “most of the gods engage in few actions that are unique and memorable, but perform those routine duties of protection…to which attention has been drawn”.  

Personality, or what their character allows them to do, and function is central to the hymns, as well as mortal invocation in order to gain favor from divinities.

In terms of descriptive function, the hymns themselves can be divided into “long” versus “short” hymns. The long hymns, such as the hymns to Hermes and Apollo, represent an extended narrative in order to enhance a general meaning of the subject matter as well as to entertain. The short hymns are mere invocations or limited summaries of mythical references that reinforce deified spheres of influence and describe typical activities. As Sowa indicates, the hymns were somewhat formulaic in their structure but, when a formula for “expressing a particular idea” does not exist, the poet can “create a new phrase ‘by analogy’ with one that does exist in his repertoire”. In other words, because of the differences in each performance, the poet can decide for himself new ways of descriptive dialogue taken from older versions or those already in existence. Using this theory can explain why certain hymns are so similar to each other in form but not necessarily content. Again, as Sowa states, the hymns are formulaic and therefore “share certain similarities…particularly in their formulae of beginning and ending”.

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162 Sowa, 5.
163 Ibid., 7. While Sowa’s work on the Homeric Hymns is invaluable, she begins to describe them in terms of plot types, seemingly negating or undermining shorter hymns that relate to invocations.
Ares is a paradoxical god with relation to the *polis*; he was feared yet revered, abhorred yet required. The *Hymn to Ares* is particularly problematic because of its dating, ascribed to Proclus in the fifth century CE, though a date as early as the third century BCE has been suggested. Though its dating is very late, and though Martin L. West calls the hymn’s “migration” into this collection an “accident”, this hymn was added to the corpus in the first place because it reflects certain aspects of the other hymns, linking it to its counterparts. Sowa explains that, in trying to identify characteristics of deities, immortals are not the “sum total of all themes of which he or she is the subject, but has as its nucleus a basic concept that determines which themes will gravitate to it”. In other words, the gods determine the way the story will turn out, not the other way around. Who they are as characters will determine the theme, such as Hermes as a thief or Zeus as a judge. Ares, therefore, as a character in the Homeric Hymns, promotes this safeguarding and upright depiction of himself and the *polis*. There is, however, always a “catch” when discussing someone as paradoxical as Ares. In many of the hymns, role similarities between different deities prove to be complicated; the similarities between Athena and Ares seem paramount and are even explicit in *Hymn 11* to Athena, though these two

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166 Sowa, 30.
167 Rayor, p.90, *Hymn to Athena 2-3; Hymn to Athena (11)*, “Perseus Digital Library,” Tufts University, edit. Gregory R. Crane, Last Modified October 22, 2010, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0137%3Ahnym%3D11, lines 2-3: “Terrible she is, together with Ares, she loves the deeds of war/ the sacking of cities, the battle and battle-cries...(*δεινήν, ἥ σὺν Ἄρηι μέλει πολεμήμα ἔργα/περθόμεναι τε πόλεις ἀυτῆ τε πτόλεμοι τε*”). This tactic of “linkage” is a constant theme throughout the hymns. Often different gods are joined to one another through story, epithet or governing realms in order to provide a necessary justification for either an act or story. For example, in Hymn 2 to Demeter, Hades uses the patronymic “son of Cronos” that Zeus usually monopolizes. While Hades is indeed the son of Cronos, this was most likely used to promote his position as a powerful ruler and as a suitable husband for Persephone, daughter of Demeter who is the daughter of Cronos.
figures are usually at odds in ancient literature. As Sowa states, “Similarity and interchangeability of role are not in themselves sufficient to prove identity.”\textsuperscript{168} Even though similar, Athena and Ares are individual characters and should not be thought of as an interchangeable unit. While Ares is a personification for strength in \textit{Hymn 8}, he, as Rayor states, represents “manly strength (using six different words for ‘strong’ alone)”.\textsuperscript{169} Another pair, Hestia and Hermes, also seem very dissimilar, Hestia the goddess of the hearth and fixed, domestic life, while Hermes is the god of travel and trickery. Hermes, however, was also the protector of the home at night and of dreams, linking both of these deities together.\textsuperscript{170} Even though both of these pairs of deities seem fundamentally at odds with one another, each illustrating opposing aspects of life, their interconnectivity between certain realms should not be overlooked.

In the \textit{Hymn to Ares}, Ares is described as the guardian of cities, the “rampart of Olympus”, and a leader “of the most just”.\textsuperscript{171} The juxtaposition of the cities of men to Olympus implies that the two are, at the very least, similar. As previously discussed (Diomedes’ speech in the Greek assembly at Troy), justice or being proficient in council and strength in battle (which is Ares’ primary function) were frequently connected; Ares represented part of what a mortal should aspire to. Though normally portrayed as a bloodthirsty marauder, Ares can also defend and submit to laws. When Ares’ daughter, Alcippe, was being raped by Halirrhothios, Poseidon’s son, Ares caught Halirrhothios and killed him. In response, Poseidon brought Ares to a trial of the twelve gods, in which

\textsuperscript{168} Sowa, 32.  
\textsuperscript{169} Rayor, 139.  
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 148.  
\textsuperscript{171} Cashford, \textit{Hymn to Ares}, 1-6. See Appendix A for Greek.
Ares was acquitted.\(^{172}\) The area, in which the trial was held, became known as the “Areopagus” after Ares himself. From these two texts, Ares seems to be the embodiment of a *polis*. He is just, adheres to laws, is brave, and is a defender of the city.

Unfortunately, he normally had a chaotic side to his personality, favoring war over peace. In fact, the *Iliad* even describes Hector as “having the eyes of a Gorgon or of Ares, plague of men (Γοργοῦς ὀμμὰτ᾽ ἔχων ἤδὲ βροτολογοῦ Ἀρηος)”.\(^{173}\) Ares’ warlike and vicious attitude certainly did not make him a sympathetic character in the epics, even hated by Zeus\(^{174}\), but *Hymn 8* and Apollodorus’ depiction are complementary sources to those of the Homeric epics; because of Ares’ dual natures (protector versus marauder), he is a paradoxical god which can be defined by multiple sources instead of just the Homeric epics.

Demeter too had an attractive role to the *polis*. She had dominion over farmland of a community which, as will be discussed later, is one of the two major boundaries of a *polis*. The countryside was where most people made their livelihoods through agriculture. Deified Wealth was a child of Demeter, and, without “wealth”, communities would not be able to build walls, common sanctuary sites or create political units based on socio-economic classes.\(^{175}\) In a reciprocal relationship, wealth allowed families to gain political and judiciary prestige. Demeter and Ares, then, represented two boundaries of the *polis*.

Law, the metaphysical boundary of a *polis*, is divided between Zeus and Athena. Athena was born from Zeus’ head and therefore, the two are many times inseparable.

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\(^{172}\) Apollodorus, 3.14.2.
\(^{173}\) *Iliad*, Perseus, 8.349.
\(^{174}\) *Iliad*, Perseus, 5.889-891: After Ares was wounded by Diomedes, Zeus responded, “Do not sit here in any way by me and whine./Of all the gods Olympus holds, you are the most hateful to me:/for strife and war and fighting is dear to you (μή τι μοι ἄλλοπρόσαλε παρεξόμενος μινορίζε/ἐχθιστος δέ μοι ἔσσι θεῶν οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχοισιν/ἀεί γάρ τοι ἔρις τε φίλη πόλεμοι τε μάχαι τε.).”
\(^{175}\) *Theogony*, trans. West, 969-974.
While the other gods and goddesses (with the exception of Zeus) seem to be less closely related to the *polis*, Athena is the obvious choice for a *polis* protector, just from her epithet *Polias*. She is just, strong, and cunning: all the things a Classical *polis* needs to protect and further its ambitions. But did Athena have this role in the Bronze Age? Archaeological evidence does not argue for a “public cult of Athena Polias…who protected the Mycenaean *wanax*”. Optimistically, Scully mentions that, just because archaeological evidence does not exist, does not mean that Athena did not have this function, citing a passage in the *Odyssey* (7.81) that refers to Erechtheus in Athens.

Zeus’ primary role in the *polis* was as a mediator and administrator, assigning the power of other gods. While he might not be directly involved with every peace and wartime decision, poets describe him as the bringer of peace and of victory. This theory is best illustrated in Book 24 of the *Odyssey* after Odysseus and Telemachus have killed the suitors. Ithaca was in danger of war by supporters and family members of the suitors and Odysseus did not have enough men to fight them. Zeus, convinced by Athena to aid him, told the gods that they would “have them [fathers and clients of suitors] forget the killing of their sons and brothers (ἡμεῖς δ᾽ αὖ παίδων τε κασιγνήτων τε φόνοι/ἐκλήσιν θέωμεν:…),” and proposed to “let them live in friendship as before and let peace and prosperity abound (…τοί δ᾽ ἀλλήλους φιλεόντων/ώς τὸ πάρος, πλοῦτος δὲ καὶ εἰρήνη ἄλις ἔστω)”. While it was Athena who physically helped Odysseus throughout the *Odyssey*, Zeus was the central authority who allowed for stable peace. In the *Theogony*, Hesiod describes Zeus as “the king in heaven” and:

\[
\begin{align*}
\ldots \text{oí dé te λαοί} \\
\text{πάντες ἐς αὐτὸν ὀρῶσι διακρίνοντα θέμιστας}
\end{align*}
\]

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176 Scully, 34.
177 *Odyssey*, Perseus, 24.484-486.
“…everyone looks to him
While he decides causes with right judgments: His word is secure and
He skillfully puts an end to even the greatest argument at once:
For, therefore, the princes are thoughtful (prudent), for when people
Are harmed in their dealings they bring retribution
Easily…”  

As a king, Zeus was also proficient in war, defeating Cronos and the Titans. A kingship, however, also has a weakness. As a judge, Zeus was a punisher, who could, according to Hesiod:

...ἄλλοτε δ’ αὖτε
η τῶν γε στρατῶν εὕρετο ἀπώλεσεν ἢ ὁ γε τεῖχος
η νέας ἐν πόντῳ Κρονίδης ἀποαίνυται αὐτῶν.

“But, at another time,
The son of Cronos destroys their [bad men] wide army or city-walls, or takes away their ships at sea”.  

In other words, Zeus watches over and can destroy all aspects of a polis-- its boundaries (walls), citizens (army) and fleet.

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178 Theogony, Perseus, 84-90.
Chapter 2
Theories

The polis has been one of the most researched subjects in classics over the last 100 years, and because of this, there are many theories that scholars assert as the primary factor in the development of the polis. Combining a theoretical and concrete approach, I argue that a balance between external and internal influences facilitated the creation of the polis. Physical structures--such as urban and extra-urban sanctuaries, walls, and harbors--protected, divided, and connected the citizenry of a polis with its outlying territory, as well as provided a local identity in order to legitimate boundary disputes or village incorporation. Other theories, such as colonization and hoplite tactics, are applicable for creating an overall picture of the early polis, but are less applicable when discussing the initial development of the polis.

Balance

I argue that, besides its modern meaning of a “city-state”, a polis can be described as “balance”. In other words, to form a polis, a society needed a certain amount of freedom from external wars and internal strife. Though ancient authors do relate that some areas are poleis which were not “free”, logically, to have any kind of thriving community, such a community must have a balance between internal and external strife.
The *polis* is linked with three important physical characteristics: a wall, procedural laws and a harbor. External strife (i.e., regional disputes, wars, tribal clashes, etc.) was reduced, and sometimes completely dissolved, by the use of walls. Internal strife (i.e., political or socio-economic strife) was stabilized by procedural laws, in which different socio-economic classes collaborated in order to create a relatively balanced political society. Another characteristic was the implementation of harbors, which were, at least somewhat, physically connected to the *polis*. Harbors, in theory, facilitated trade and communication with other societies, while also employing the sea as a source of wealth and stability.

Heraclitus, an ancient philosopher of the late sixth/early fifth century, wrote about strife, balance, and the effect they had upon the *polis*. Modern theorists have only fragments of his writings, making it difficult to speculate on the topic without the benefit of context or complete text. His fragments can reflect significant concepts in the time period in which he wrote, such as political obedience and disobedience, as well as moral philosophy.

According to Heraclitus, “The people [citizens] should fight on behalf of the law as they would for their city wall (μάχεσθαι χρὴ τὸν δῆμον ὑπὲρ τοῦ νόμου ὅκωσπερ τείχεος).”\(^{180}\) This fragment describes, not only the importance of a city wall but the protection of the populace by the law; the city wall was the embodiment of physical protection, while laws personified procedural impartiality. Heraclitus, however, was somewhat erratic because, in a later fragment, he described human nature as “not having the right understanding; divine nature does (حقيقة γὰρ ἀνθρώπων μὲν οὐκ ἔχει γνώμας,\(^{180}\)"

\(^{180}\) T.M. Robinson, trans., *Heraclitus’ Fragments* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), Fragment 44.
Since Fragment 44 is a definitive statement about human nature, humans received the compulsion to “fight on behalf of laws as they would for their city-wall” from the gods themselves. This interpretation is supported by Fragment 114 which states, “[law] Which is common to all…For all human laws are nourished by one law, the divine law…”¹⁸² The phrase “common to all (τῷ ξυνῷ πάντων)” refers to prescriptive rather than descriptive laws, which are laws that correspond to the balancing of classes. Laws were even described paradoxically because they were the representation of strife which bonded things together.¹⁸³ Political strife is then necessary in order to create an equal protection for classes under the law.

Under first inspection, harbors might seem of secondary importance to a Greek polis. Their importance, however, can be traced back to Homeric texts. In Book 7 of the Odyssey, Odysseus arrived at Phaeacia and:

θαύμαζεν δ᾽ Ὀδυσσέας λιμένας καὶ νῆας ἐσας αὐτῶν θ᾽ ἡρώων ἀγορὰς καὶ τείχεα μακρὰ ύψηλα, σκολόπεσσιν ἁρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

“…marveled at the harbors and the shapely ships, At the meeting grounds, and the long tall walls Topped with stakes, a wonder to be seen.”¹⁸⁴ Harbors, corroborated by Thucydides, together with walls and an assembly, are physical characteristics of a successful society. Miletus, for example, was one of the biggest and most successful poleis in the entire Greek world (until the Persians burned it after the

¹⁸¹ Ibid., Fragment 78.
¹⁸² Ibid., Fragment 114.
¹⁸³ Ibid., Fragment 125: “Even the barley-drink separates if not stirred.” The barley-drink represents the political unification of a polis, balanced after being “stirred.” Metaphorically, laws are the “spoon” stirring the society into chaos and eventually into balance.
¹⁸⁴ Odyssey, Perseus, 7.43-45; Scully, 46.
Ionian Revolt) and it maintained no less than four harbors at its inception.\(^{185}\) In the

*Odyssey*, Nausicaa instructed Odysseus:

> ὄφρ᾽ ἂν μὲν κ᾽ ἀγροὺς ἱομεν καὶ ἔργ᾽ ἀνθρώπων, τόφρα σύν ἄμφιπολοισι μεθ᾽ ἡμίόνους καὶ ἄμαξαν καρπαλίμως ἔρχεσθαι: ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὄδὸν ἡμεμονέσσῳ. αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν πόλιος ἐπιβήμεν, ἢν πέρι πύργος ὑψηλός, καλὸς δὲ λιμήν ἐκάτερθε πόλης, λεπτὴ δ᾽ εἰσίθμη: νῆες δ᾽ ὄδόν ἄμφιέλλονται εἰρύσται: πᾶσιν γὰρ ἐπιστίον ἐστὶν ἐκάστῳ. ἐνθά δὲ τέ σφ᾽ ἁγορὴ καλὸν Ποσιδήιον ἀμφίς, ρυτοῖσιν λάεσσι κατωρυχέεσσ᾽ ἀραρυκα.\(^{186}\)

> “While we are going through the countryside and tilled farms of men, Go with my handmaidens behind the mules and wagon Quickly: I will lead the way. When we are about to go into the city, which has a high wall around it, A good harbor is on either side of the city, The entrance is thin: The curved ships are drawn up on the road: For all have dock-yards [for their ships], one for each [man]. There is also an assembly around the good temple to Poseidon, Fitted with large stones, fit in deep.”\(^{186}\)

Phaeacia therefore, as de Polignac describes it, was a land which maintained a boundary between an urban and rural community, while preserving an urbanized cult. This separation between urban and rural was actually seen as commonplace, illustrated by Alcinous when he asked Odysseus, “…Tell me your country,/your city, and your land, so that our ships/may take you there…”\(^{187}\) In contrast, the anti-*polis* was the island of the Cyclopes which had no harbors, assemblies or laws.\(^{188}\)

While some harbors were physically connected to a city, others were completely separate, such as the harbors of Ithaca or Sparta. Athens had a detached harbor until a

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\(^{185}\) Cartledge, *Ancient Greece*, 52.

\(^{186}\) *Odyssey*, Perseus, 6.259-267.

\(^{187}\) *Odyssey*, trans. Lombardo, 8.600-602.

\(^{188}\) *Odyssey*, trans. Lombardo, 9.106-115; Starr, *Individual and Community*, 24; Giesecke, 11: Giesecke argues that Ithaca was actually the “ideal society” because of the poet’s lack of interest in the island and because of the contrast of Ithaca to the island of the Cyclopes.
new one was made under the direction of Themistocles, which was physically connected to the city by the Long Walls in the fifth century. At the very least, harbors allowed ships to visit other cities, and, together with the physically defining walls and the social order represented by the agora, were a vital entity of development.\footnote{Scully, 46.}

Ancient sedentary societies normally relied upon agriculture to support their communities. This could, however, be difficult to accomplish because of migrations and raids into fertile lands, which made it complicated for a community to maintain a surplus of wealth.\footnote{Thucydides, 1.2.} Some groups, already being established in fertile lands, were constantly overthrown by internal quarrels.\footnote{Ibid.} Piracy was commonly practiced and supported by Greek and barbarian aristocracies, especially in island societies, in order to increase personal wealth and gain clients. While raids and piracy were common, coastal cities without walls were normally the most affected because of their accessibility.\footnote{Ibid., 1.5.}

Individual citizens of communities without walls carried arms to protect their lands, instead of merely defending the entire community.\footnote{Ibid., 1.6.}

Before the advent of walls, the placement of townships was a struggle. Older towns were founded further inland, removing the possibility of sea raids. This, however, also hindered trade and communications with other societies. Newer townships, especially on islands, as walls were becoming prominent, were founded closer to the sea to facilitate commerce. For example, Aeolia is described in the \textit{Odyssey} as “…a floating island, surrounded by a wall/of unbreakable bronze, running up sheer rock”.\footnote{\textit{Odyssey}, Perseus, 10.3-4: \textit{πλωτῇ ἐνὶ νῆσῳ: πᾶσαν δὲ τέ μιν πέρι τεῖχος/χάλκεον ἄρρηκτον, λισσὴ δ’ ἀναδέδρομε πέτρη.}
Regardless of walls, piracy remained an ancient and respectable practice through the post-Mycenaean period. Menelaus, for example, after the battle of Troy, wandered the Aegean Sea for eight years, pillaging and gaining “shiploads” of treasure from Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt and Libya. Though discouraged about losing Agamemnon, he gloated about “amassing wealth” as he spoke to Telemachus. Odysseus too contributed to piracy and, as he was returning to Ithaca from Troy, he pillaged a town on Ismaros, killed all the men of the town and divided the captured women and other wealth among his men.

According to Thucydides, as societies gained more wealth, a wall encircling a city became a necessity. The reciprocal relationship, as discussed earlier and as epic poetry and mythology alludes to, was somewhat important in the Bronze Age. Some factions or “families” became so powerful that they were able to subjugate “lesser cities”. Pelops, the grandfather of Agamemnon, brought “great wealth” back from Asia to the Peloponnese and became a leader. Atreus, Pelops’ son, won the favor of the “people” and became king over the Mycenaeans. Agamemnon, together with his younger brother Menelaus, inherited his father’s empire, increased the navy and was able to subjugate lesser areas as clients. Unfortunately for Agamemnon’s empire, 80 years after the Trojan War, other factions began appearing in other cities, most likely because of the increase in fortunes of the last generation. Some of these rivals were exiled from their cities and, in turn, founded new ones until the arrival of the Dorians and Heraklids.

197 Thucydides, 1.8.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid., 1.9.
200 Ibid., 1.12.
While the *Iliad* clearly defines the importance of walls as a defensive mechanism of the *polis*, only nine cities are said to have been walled, which seems to downplay their importance. This small list is limited because walls are not mentioned at Mycenae or Athens in the Homeric corpus, though archaeological evidence clearly defines them.\(^{201}\) In fact, all central cities which are represented in the *Odyssey* or *Iliad* are walled.\(^{202}\) Troy, while at odds with the Greeks, was also described as a *polis* by physical characteristics and by the Greek language itself. It had walls and an assembly, which Prince Hector was able to call and dismiss. Their walls even had a mythical foundation, built by Apollo and Poseidon, and were given the epithet of “sacred walls”.\(^{203}\) In fact, according to Scully, “all dramatic scenes that concern the welfare of Troy are staged either upon the walls or at the city gates, not within the city at Priam’s palace or Athena’s temple”.\(^{204}\)

Walls themselves were seen as divine extensions of the gods. Linguistically, as Scully explains, a wall (*teikhos*) gains its importance in the *Iliad* from Poseidon after he states that he “cited Troy (*πολίσσαμεν*)” after building its walls.\(^{205}\) The Greeks built walls around their ships but did not sacrifice to the gods, which was considered irregular and somewhat impious.\(^{206}\) Not defending a divine wall was also considered cowardly as Hector indicates in this diatribe to Paris in Book 6:

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\(^{201}\) Scully, 41.
\(^{202}\) Ibid., 48.
\(^{203}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 21.543, 8.529: “...all around the city on our god-built walls.”; For more discussion of the building of Troy’s walls see Apollodorus (1997), 2.5.9; Finley, 53: Finley associates both Poseidon and Apollo with *thetes*, tethered through servitude to Laomedon though having no political or kinship association.
\(^{204}\) Scully, 42.
\(^{205}\) *Iliad*, trans. Lombardo, 7.452f; Scully, 48.
\(^{206}\) *Iliad*, Perseus, 7.448-450: Poseidon expresses his disgust to Zeus, saying, “Do you not see that the long-haired Achaeans/ have built for themselves a wall on both sides and trench around their ships/without offering famous hecatombs to the gods? (οὐχ ὁράεις ὅτι δ’ αὖτε κάρη κομώσασθε Ἀχαιοὶ/τεῖχος ἐτειχίσαστο νεῶν ὑπὲρ, ἄμφι δὲ τάφρον/ηλασαν, οὐδὲ θεοῖς δόσαν κλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας;)”
δαιμόνι᾽ οὐ μὲν καλὰ χόλον τόνδ᾽ ἔνθεο θυμῷ,
λαοὶ μὲν φθινύθουσι περὶ πτόλιν αἰπύ τε τείχος
μαρνάμενοι…

“This is not a good time to be nursing your anger, you idiot!
The people [of Troy] are dying around the polis and steep wall
In fighting…”207

In fact, the primary objective of the Trojan War, as related by Agamemnon, was the
destruction of their walls.208 This demolition was symbolic of a complete capitulation.
The defensive ability of a polis was, therefore, destroyed and the people, if surviving,
would be, once again, subjected to raids and poverty. This will be discussed further in
Chapter 4.

A wall’s strength was so important that being equated with it was a metaphor for
being courageous and powerful, such as Ajax. In Book 7:

Αἴας δ᾽ ἐγγύθεν ἐλήθε φέρων σάκος ἠὕτε πύργον

“Ajax came near carrying a shield like a turreted wall”.209

In Book 6:

Αἴας δὲ πρῶτος Τελαμώνιος ἔρκος Αχαιῶν
Τρώων ῥήξε φάλαγγα, φόως δ᾽ ἐτάροισιν ἔθηκεν

“Ajax, son of Telamon, the wall of the Achaeans,
Broke the phalanx of the Trojans, and gave light to his comrades”.210

The metaphor was also used to express destruction. In Book 4, when Antilochus killed
Echepolus, “darkness enveloped him [Echepolus] as he fell like a wall (τὸν δὲ σκότος
δόσε κάλυψεν./胬ipe δ᾽ ός ὅτε πύργος…”).211 Destruction, characterized by the

207 Iliad, Perseus, 6.326-328.
208 Iliad, trans. Lombardo, 2.120ff: “Zeus is a hard god, friends. After all his promises and nods my way,
that I’d raze Ilion’s walls before sailing home.”
209 Iliad, Perseus, 7.219.
210 Iliad, Perseus, 6.5-6.
211 Iliad, Perseus, 4.461-462.
In the *Odyssey*, founding a city went in tandem with building walls. Nausithous led his people to the island of Scheria where he first “walled off a city (ἀμφὶ δὲ τεῖχος ἐλασσε πόλει...)”, and then “built houses and shrines and parceled out the fields (...καὶ ἐδείματο οἶκους, καὶ νηοὺς ποίησε θεῶν, καὶ ἐδάσσατ᾽ ἀρούρας)”. These people became known as the Phaeacians and their land was, possibly, the purest example of a city-state in the *Odyssey*. Poseidon, angry at the Phaeacians for helping Odysseus, wanted to encircle their land with a mountain wall, cutting them off from the sea completely. The Phaeacians sacrificed bulls to Poseidon after he turned one of their ships into stone to have mercy on their city.

Thucydides began his history with the period of colonization, by stating that it began when Greece was “permanently tranquil and its population was no longer subject to expulsion from their homes”. Just as before, when a surplus of wealth had been amassed, some of the richer men began to gain control of cities, setting up tyrannies. In order for this to happen, however, a city, as Thucydides explains, was at peace from both external and internal strife. Irene Polinskaya states that “nucleated walled settlements” started to emerge around 700 BCE (though Smyrna began almost 200 years earlier) in Argos, Thebes, Syracuse (though Syracuse is a colony of Corinth), Eretria, and Megara.
Hyblaia. This is not an exhaustive list; many walled settlements existed on Crete in this time period, such as Gortyn. These specific sites, however, shall become large and influential poleis in the Classical period. John Camp II, as well as Stephen Scully, describes walls as a *sine qua non:* without walls, a polis could not have been created. I agree with this opinion because, without walls, the balance between external and internal influences would have been disrupted, causing a static centralized environment rather than an environment which would have facilitated development.

Walls are large and expensive, which implies that there was already an established political unit that could undertake such a monumental project. It also implies that the citizenry would be receptive because they would, logically, comprise the workers. Camp related a passage of Diodorus Siculus (14.18), in which Dionysios, the tyrant of Syracuse, “gathered peasants from the countryside (60,000) and parceled out to them the space to be walled.” This example, while informative, does not necessarily imply a “balanced” polis because tyrants dissolved any original internal balance a polis maintained and shifted the balance to them; tyrants became the mediator between the state and the citizenry instead of procedural laws. Tyrants might take power through the will of the people, as indicated by the etymology of their name, but they still take power illegally. A polis, however, is typified by the citizenry (using the Thucydidean model), which were equal to other classes through the law, instead of one man maintaining rule.

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215 Polinskaya, 74. Polinskaya also states (p.77) that John Camp discusses “early historical” walled settlements on Crete, though remarks in a footnote that P. Ducrey in a Copenhagen Polis Centre report argues “the opposite for the early period”.
216 Ibid., 75: Polinskaya also believes that walls are a *sine qua non* though she admits that local variations prevent a panhellenic definition.
218 Rhodes, *The Greek City States,* 45 in reference to Aristotle’s *Politics,* 5.1310 for the characteristics of tyranny; Cartledge, *Ancient Greece,* 55: “The word ‘tyrant’ (Greek: *tirannos*) is non-Greek and probably of Lydian origin.”
over his subjects. Procedural laws and walls, however, reflected a balance between internal and external strife, in which a polis was able to be created. Of course, there are societies that built walls which were not poleis, but this discussion only focuses on the development of societies which became poleis.

Sanctuaries and Boundaries

Boundaries can define the polis as they are used not only to maintain equilibrium between certain areas within and outside of a domain of a polis, but also to create a social cohesion between different groups of people. What creates these boundaries is debatable. Walls create a boundary between external forces and the polity, while sanctuaries, both urban and extra-urban, create a social cohesion between ‘the rural’ and ‘the urban’. Hansen, however, states that walls did not constitute a boundary between the countryside and the urban area. Polinskaya, however, remarks that if walls did not constitute a boundary then sanctuaries as boundaries lose all meaning.\textsuperscript{219} Since sanctuaries did create physical boundaries between different areas of the domain of a polis, walls could very well have had the same prescriptive function. After all, Greeks did differentiate between urban, city areas and rural, outlying areas with different words even if, assuming Hansen’s theory is correct, they did not distinguish between them with physical structures. I find it difficult to accept that, although this differentiation, as well as walls and sanctuaries, existed, these entities had nothing to do with one another when Greeks were notorious (at least philosophically) for ordering a disorderly world. Hansen’s theory

\textsuperscript{219} Polinskaya, 77; Jennifer Clarke Kosak, “The Wall in Aristophanes’ Birds”, in \textit{City, Countryside, and the Spatial in Classical Antiquity}, edit. Ralph M. Rosen & Ineke Sluiter (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, 2006), 177: Kosak remarks that many historians, such as Stephen Scully and John Camp, state that “the wall” is a “fundamental marker of the city”.
that walls did not create limits between or, in some cases, connect areas does not seem to have any textual support as well, as many ancient authors, such as Thucydides, describe walls as essential for *polis* development.

Francois de Polignac, defines the *polis* as a “new representation of space” or city territory and “the elaboration of a new civic community”.\(^{220}\) While I do not subscribe to de Polignac’s entire theory, I do agree that a *polis* adapts its boundaries to define a civic identity and territory, which Scully partially corroborates. A *polis*, according to Scully, is a “spatial and architectural entity, that place which nurtures, by enclosing civilization…”\(^{221}\) The advent of a physical or divine barrier also provided protection to the citizenry, and temples and sanctuaries were, from a very early period, important for both protection and civic cohesion.\(^{222}\) Divine boundaries usually employed religious centers to define a territory, and walls were eventually synonymous with divination either from epic poetry or from cults and shrines connected to the walls themselves.\(^{223}\)

Before this defining movement, maritime trade supported religious areas surrounding an urban environment. Objects, which had previously been used for functional purposes, such as small pieces of pottery and certain metals, became solely used for votive offerings.\(^{224}\) A “sacred space” evolved from these occurrences, containing an altar, a temple and a precinct wall that defined the boundaries between the “sacred” and the “mortal”.\(^{225}\) As these religious sites became more and more prominent, they, naturally, grew physically. These resources either came from a collection of *poleis* acting

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\(^{221}\) Scully, 47.
\(^{223}\) Scully, 51.
\(^{224}\) Polignac., 14-15.
\(^{225}\) Ibid., 16.
in concert or by one polis that held dominion over the area in which the site was located.\textsuperscript{226} Therefore, according to de Polignac, “…the formation of the polis was accompanied by the development of large extramural [non-urban] sanctuaries…”\textsuperscript{227} Scully, however, explains that a temple alone cannot explain the sacredness (which he relates to the definition of a territory) of an entire city.\textsuperscript{228} McInerney decomposes the polis into both the astu (urban area) and the chora (rural area). Regardless of physical religious presence, McInerney, I believe correctly, deduces that, as the astu grew, the need for more rural territories for grazing (since it is difficult for an area to mix animal husbandry and agriculture) arose which, in turn, facilitated the need for defined boundary lines.\textsuperscript{229}

Religious unity, such as villages claiming association with a larger inclusive entity because of their common association with a sanctuary site, facilitated the rise of the polis, especially when it related to a larger polis controlling a weaker one. Very few religious sites, however, were resettled after the Bronze Age, which, as de Polignac concedes, poses a large problem for continuity between the Bronze and Archaic periods.\textsuperscript{230} This “problem,” however, demonstrates that, by a site’s discontinuity, a society chose which religious rituals to use and emulate, illustrating that a site’s religious function was secondary to a society’s desire for religious association; the citizenry of a

\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 19.
\textsuperscript{227} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{228} Scully, 17.
\textsuperscript{229} McInerney, 46. For more information on McInerney’s integrated economic model, see McInerney, pp. 53-56; Polinskaya, 76: Polinskaya does seem to accept McInerney’s decomposition of the area controlled by a polis, though she relates that the Greeks never physically marked the difference between urban and rural areas with boundary markers. There was some kind of relationship between them, but the boundary lines must have been symbolic rather than physical. Polinskaya’s theory, however, seems to overlook physical religious authorities as physical markers.
\textsuperscript{230} Davies, “Origins”, 25; Snodgrass, 394-395: Snodgrass relates that “a place of worship in the Bronze Age Aegean was a very different thing from the great sanctuaries familiar from historical times. Both Minoan and Mycenaean religion tended to favor either natural sites, or others that were insubstantial architecturally, for their cult”.

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polis chose which site would best personify its identity and this choice usually related to an Archaic institution with Bronze Age associations.\textsuperscript{231}

All these theories presuppose that a “community” controlled an entire area. There may have very well been a communal effort in building monumental architecture, but what de Polignac defines as “community” is never clear. Nevertheless, a non-urban site normally marked “the limit of a city’s control over the terrain.”\textsuperscript{232} Extra-urban sites (farther beyond the city) marked the end of the agrarian society controlled by the polis, such as the temples of Artemis at Brauron and of Poseidon at Sunion in Attica. The sanctuary acted as a boundary between a controlled, civilized land and unclaimed areas or neighboring territory.\textsuperscript{233} In essence, a sanctuary which is tantamount to a “religious system” not only provided a boundary from and a connection to boundary territories, but facilitated extra-urban activities through connecting the hinterland with an urban site and “resolved potential disputes over the land” because of its religious authority.\textsuperscript{234} For example, the Heraion of the Argolid, between Argos, Mycenae and Tiryns, was in a “central spot…of the entire region”, and, because of its central location, it became a “symbolic representation” of Argos’ regional supremacy.\textsuperscript{235} If a city was not strong enough to hold the territory, several cities might share a religious site.\textsuperscript{236} The temple of

\textsuperscript{231} Polignac, 31.
\textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 34.
\textsuperscript{233} Ibid., 35.
\textsuperscript{234} McInerney, 33: differentiates between the more ‘wild’ landscape and the urban area in order to facilitate control over boundary territories; McInerney, 49.
\textsuperscript{235} Polignac, 37: It is theorized that Argos gained supremacy of the Argolid after the destruction of Asine in 720/10 BCE; Chester G. Starr, \textit{The Birth of Athenian Democracy: The Assembly in the Fifth Century B.C.} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 7; W.G. Forrest, \textit{A History of Sparta 950-192 BC} (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968), 36; McInerney, 34: McInerney argues that these border sanctuaries facilitated cohesion through an area by means of border treaties linked to the god(s) of the border sanctuary; Cartledge, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 41: Cartledge asserts that the building of this extra-urban sanctuary, as well as settlements in Larissa, “constituted a key to the formation of Argos’s original identity as a polis”.
\textsuperscript{236} Polignac, 38: \textit{Artemis Limnatis} by the Spartans and the Messenians, and \textit{Poseidon Onchestos} by Thebes and Orchomenos.
Zeus Atabyrios at Rhodes, for example, was placed amid Ialyos, Lindos and Kamiros “in the center of the island”. Soon, boundary disputes, usually in correlation with an increase in population, began as settlements wanted to control boundary sanctuaries which had once served as a symbolic limitation of society.

The Spartans took the use of extra-urban sanctuaries to the extreme, using them to balance, first, the relationship between themselves and Messene, second, between themselves and less enfranchised people living within their borders, and, third, between themselves and the non-Dorian component within the city proper. The sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis, which stood between the highly opposed Messenians and Lacedaemonians, exemplified an “understanding” of peace between two different peoples. Sparta, according to Kennell, used another extra-urban sanctuary, the Menelaion, to “mark the extent of the territory controlled directly by Spartans, as opposed to land under the jurisdiction of the perioeci”. Spartans placed the sanctuary of Apollo Hyakinthos, a Dorian cult, at Amyklai in order to balance their newer Dorian elements with their Bronze Age population. Since Sparta refused to build city walls for protection, these sanctuaries have been compared to “a less efficacious wall-substitute”, further dividing city and citizen territory from outer territories.

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237 McInerney, 50.
238 Ibid., 50-51.
239 Nigel Kennell, Spartans: A New History (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 39. The relationship between Sparta and perioikic villages will be discussed in the section “Sparta: The Outlier”.
240 Michael Pettersson, Cults of Apollo at Sparta: the Hyakinthia, the Gymnopaidiai and the Karneia (Stockholm: 1992), 96: The cult at Amyklai is a continuation of Mycenaean practices, such as burning animals for sacrifice. Later (p.106), Pettersson mentions that burning animals for sacrifices was used as a social bond between participants in the feast and as sacral legitimacy through sacrificing to the gods; Paul Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia: A Regional History 1300 to 362 BC, 2nd Edition (New York: Routledge, 2002), 33: Amyklai was settled in the Early Helladic period. Apollo Hyakinthos will be discussed in the section “Sparta: The Outlier”.
241 Cartledge, Spartan Reflections, 15-16: Cartledge discusses the function of the “limitary sanctuary” which was used to “articulate the necessary organic relationship between the countryside (the economic basis) and urban center (the political superstructure), or to mark ritually the symbolic passage of citizens.
Territorial boundaries themselves were important in distancing one type of people from another. In Plutarch’s *Lives*, Theseus was described as the first to erect a giant pillar on the Isthmus of Corinth. One side read, “Here is not the Peloponnese, but Ionia,” and the other, facing the West, read, “Here is the Peloponnese, not Ionia.”242 This “pillar” might not be a sanctuary, but it did maintain a boundary function.

Sanctuaries not only focused on territorial boundaries, but also political ones. People from all classes gathered together in one place to participate in processions. The Panathenaia, an Athenian festival made to celebrate Athena’s birthday, reinforced “political homogeneity and integrity of the entire polis territory…”243 These processions would lead the citizenry from the extra-urban sanctuary to the city, clearly defining the urban territory (within the walls) and the territory controlled by the *polis*. In effect, processions acted as a procedural unity, normally found in law.244

At the end of the Geometric Period, military offerings in processions became more prominent, illustrating new war-like, societal desires.245 Eventually, farming became more important for supporting the citizenry and people needed a constant defense against raids.246 Hoplite tactics were adopted, in which a group took a “collective action” to defend their territory and attack others.247 When cities were defeated, new cult centers

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244 Polignac, 40; Bintliff, 30: He describes the differences between town and country, defining them as only differences in communication and time rather than “distinctive attitudes and lifestyles”. These two areas, however, do relate to different lifestyles-urban and rural-especially in Athens and especially during the Classical period, best described in the Periclean plan for the Peloponnesian War.
245 Polignac, 46.
246 Finley, 41.
247 Polignac, 49.
were built in them with a corresponding site located in the city proper.\textsuperscript{248} Political unions could also bring extra-urban sanctuaries into an urban environment, such as the Athenian cult of Artemis at Brauron. This incorporation of either foreign or extra-urban religious entities should not be overlooked. Because \textit{poleis} incorporated foreign religions into their urban environment, those \textit{poleis} became a “social centrality” in their region.\textsuperscript{249} Citizens at these centralized sanctuaries performed certain rites of passage which were no longer hierarchical.\textsuperscript{250} Cults were created and citizenship increased so that all citizens in and beyond a controlled territory might participate in state-sanctioned religious practices. Urban sanctuaries, representing the patron god or goddess, became the “political constitution” and physical religious representation of the city.\textsuperscript{251} Therefore, the religious elements and citizenship in a \textit{polis} became a “formal expression” of cohesion, creating a new identity of the community.\textsuperscript{252}

\textit{Colonization}

The colonizing movement, beginning in the middle of the eighth century, is a clear demonstration of an organized movement by a \textit{polis}. These colonies or \textit{apoikiai} normally mimicked the institutions of their mother-city; \textit{poleis} sent out colonies which

\textsuperscript{248} Ibid., 54: When Asine and its temple were destroyed in 720/10 BCE, a new temple of \textit{Pythian Apollo} was built there and in the urban center of Argos.
\textsuperscript{249} Polinskaya, 62: Polinskaya also relates that, depending on a sanctuary’s placement, the god(s) associated with sanctuaries were designated as either “orderly”, referring to urban sanctuaries, or “disorderly”, referring to extra-urban sanctuaries. Later (p. 64), however, she mentions that no god or goddess can be defined as predominately urban or rural. “It is the local evidence”, she claims, “that constantly throws off any attempt to outline overall, panhellenic rules and regularities in Greek religious practice. This is no less true for the classification of deities into city and country gods…” (pp.65-66). McInerney states that sanctuaries near or in the hinterland (which can be defined as “disorderly”) usually are associated with the “feminine,” though this is not an overarching principle.
\textsuperscript{250} Polignac, 60.
\textsuperscript{251} Polignac, 87; Starr, \textit{Individual and Community}, 30: “Far more influential were the links to neighbors by tight, almost unconscious bonds, including religious ceremonies at local shrines…”
\textsuperscript{252} Polignac, 78.
became poleis. While this might prove the existence of the polis, colonization only verifies a result of early development, not primary development. Colonies also do not necessarily correlate to a balance between both internal and external influences, nor are they reflections of their mother poleis. Colonies, therefore, are applicable to the early development of the polis because modern scholars can date the results (and perhaps the early stages) of organized polis movements, creating a valid timeline of events.

While many did begin in order to relieve the internal stress of a society, whether it was because of overpopulation, poverty, famine or political instability, they were rarely sent out because of external strife, such as war. After the First Messenian War, the allegedly illegitimate Spartan sons became increasingly distressed by their lack of political involvement and were eventually sent away as colonizers, freeing the Spartans from political unrest. In the East, Atys, Lydia’s king, sent out a colony to relieve the

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253 Starr, Individual and Community, 36: “…it is difficult to see how the succeeding colonies…could have been undertaken or have sunk in lasting roots unless the participants were united in a firm political system, i.e., a polis.” Starr’s statement seems logical but undermines other ethnic associations. Thurii, for example, was settled by a mix of different citizens.

254 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 50.

255 Starr, Individual and Community, 41-42: Starr states that colonies were “independent political entities” only claiming the religious rites of their mother city. But how far does this independence go? Starr’s definition might be correct but not overwhelmingly. He is correct; most colonies accepted the rites of their mother city but that is not the only thing they accepted. Colonies might have also been independent but (with few exceptions like Corcyra) usually adhered to the foreign policies and political institutions of their mother city, while expecting aid (military or otherwise) from them; Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 8.

256 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 63: “The search for new land, then, was the principal cause of archaic colonization.”; Starr, Individual and Community, 38-39: In keeping with Austin and Vidal-Naquet’s statement, Starr remarks that “…the demographic that a rural landscape tends to remain in balance unless the mode of production changes drastically and that no area can ever truly be overpopulated-if it is, people starve or are weakened enough to fall victim to disease-but that maldistribution of land and power can be influential in encouraging emigration” (italics mine); Snodgrass, 417 on the reasons for colonization; Wells, 104: “…population growth and strain on available resources…” Wells also relates that it was in this period when trade in European towns skyrocketed, as well as an influx of new building techniques and cultural institutions from the Mediterranean; Rhodes, The Greek City States, 31.

257 Murray, Early Greece, 158; Forrest, 43: Forrest remarks that Thera (a possible Spartan colony) adopted the Spartan office of ephor, and posits that the number of them (3) related to the original number of ephors at Sparta which correlated to the number of Dorian tribes. While the Spartan office employed 5 ephors in the Classical period, Forrest theorizes that it correlated to the number of Spartan obai; Pettersson, 110: Spartan colonists brought the Apollo Karneia cult to Thera. Sparta’s colonization effort will be further discussed in the section “Sparta: The Outlier”.
strain on resources.\textsuperscript{258} Thera was forced to send out a colony to Libya because of famine.\textsuperscript{259} Corinthian colonists established Syracuse in 733 BCE, confirmed by early homes on Ortygia, because of poverty in the Corinthia.\textsuperscript{260} One theory, which seems to me the most logical, is that colonization began in societies that embraced maritime trade as a search for new raw materials, such as copper and tin, which were used for war.\textsuperscript{261} These aspects, such as a desire for metals and territory, as well as embracing seaborne trade, made the Greeks very attractive to Phoenician merchants of the tenth-eighth centuries. From this “bond”, an influx of ideas would occur such as the advent of the alphabet in the eighth century.\textsuperscript{262}

Looking at colonization as a factor in the rise of the\textit{ polis} is tempting; it is, in essence, a controlled experiment in which colonizers had only the structure of the mother-\textit{polis} to build on. Colonization did facilitate the development of the\textit{ polis} through an influx of political ideologies and trade to mother-\textit{poleis} on the mainland. They also supported religious identities of their mother-\textit{poleis} because they normally adopted the same or similar institutions.\textsuperscript{263} Taras, for example, adopted the Dorian Hyacinthius and

\textsuperscript{258} Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 1.94: “They [Lydians] also claim to have invented the games which are now commonly played both by themselves and the Greeks. These games are supposed to have been invented at the time when they sent a colony to settle in Tyrrenia...the whole of Lydia suffered from a severe famine...and [the king] determined by lots which should emigrate and which should remain at home.”

\textsuperscript{259} Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 4.151; Rhodes, \textit{The Greek City States}, 32, 34: Rhodes cites a fourth-century document stating that, if the colonists are able to establish a colony, Thera would grant them citizenship rights, but if they were not able and they were not able to support themselves, the colonists could come back. If, however, a colonist picked to go with the colony refused to leave Thera, he would receive the death penalty and his property would be confiscated. This document illustrates the dire situation at Thera at the time the colony was sent.

\textsuperscript{260} Cartledge, \textit{Ancient Greece}, 115-116.

\textsuperscript{261} Polignac, 6; Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 65.

\textsuperscript{262} Finley, 9-10; he does remark though (p.29) that, even after the advent of the alphabet, the Greek world around this time was generally “unlettered”.

\textsuperscript{263} Polignac, 91.
Spartan Dioscuri. Unfortunately, the damaging questions to this theory are, when did a “colony” become a *polis*, and how did this affect the territory in which the colony was established? Oswyn Murray wrote that the concept of the *polis* was not originally Greek and therefore, should be equated with the arrival of the Phoenicians, from whom writing and trade originated. But Murray’s assessment lacks textual evidence. The *polis* might have had Eastern influences, but the Greeks certainly molded it to their own specifications, as is evident in the evolution of the *polis*.

When dealing with generalities, some instances do not fit the general model, such as Smyrna, whose mother-city, Colophon, did not have walls. Smyrna was established around 1000 BCE, far before other known colonies in the eighth century, and was reorganized later around 800 in order to deal with population increases and natural disasters. At first glance, Smyrna embodies a “pure” representation of a Greek *polis*, but, again, is a colony and should, in theory, adhere to colonial generalities or be labeled an extremity. As it happens, Smyrna, like Abdera, Stageira and Thasos, is not

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264 Kennell, 37.
265 Murray, “What is Greek”, 237.
266 Starr, *Individual and Community*, 42: Starr states that it would be “too easy” to label the *polis* as an Eastern phenomenon and that the “forces at work in the eighth century Aegean were principally native in origin”. While I disagree with the way in which Starr chooses to structure his statement, he is correct that, by the eighth century, native elements would be perfectly capable of creating the *polis*.
267 Camp, “Walls”, 48; Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 1.16; Snodgrass, 435: Because the Homeric epics used contemporary examples, Snodgrass posits that he could have come from Smyrna because of the similarities with Aeolia in the *Odyssey*.
268 Murray, *Early Greece*, 64f; Scully, 83: “By 750 B.C., Old Smyrna, densely built up with four or five hundred houses of mud brick and stone foundations, held approximately two thousand people, with perhaps half that many off the peninsula along the coast...these communities were considerably less stratified, and monarchical, than the Mycenaean kingdoms.”; Starr, *Individual and Community*, 35: “There are still efforts to locate the origins of the *polis* in Ionia, partly because Old Smyrna had been a walled nucleus by the ninth century...”; Snodgrass, 298: “…the discovery of the early fortifications at Old Smyrna, the first of which dates to the mid-ninth century, the second about a hundred years later, was a revelation in that it finds no counterpart on the Greek Mainland...”; Snodgrass, 415: Snodgrass theorizes that the act to fortify Smyrna “cannot have been taken by a chance confederation of aristocrats and their followers...”, implying that there was a *polis*-structure in place before the walls were built. I agree that some governing structure would have to be in place before the building of walls, which is a large and expensive undertaking, could be possible, but I am not convinced that Smyrna was a *polis* yet. Just because a colony (which Smyrna is) usually adopts its mother-city’s institutions, Smyrna does seem to be atypical of the time period.
commonplace and should be examined with caution when relating to the early
development of the *polis*, if at all.\(^{269}\)

Colonies had the same problems as some of the first cities in Greece: placement.
They were, in essence, migrating groups, trying to settle in a place relatively free from
raids and harassment. Unlike the older stage of settlements in Greece, however, these
areas were normally already occupied or near the boundaries of existing native, non-
Greek settlements. So a question then arose of how to be in agreement with the societies,
similar or dissimilar in nature, around them. Colonies, as well as mainland Greek states,
had two options for *synoikismos*. The simplest option was subjugation through conquest,
while the other was unification through similar objectives, closely resembling the
Athenian hegemony, although this was more difficult to accomplish in non-Greek
territories. Many times colonies were sent out to a specific area by their mother-city (after
collaborating with the Delphic Oracle, although this occurred after the eighth century)
even though native tribes occupied either the area or region in which the colony wished
to settle. These natives were either pushed out of a colony’s desired boundaries, defeated
the colonists and expelled them, or the colonists “reduced the natives to the status of
dependents”.\(^{270}\) Colonies in Sicily, especially Syracuse,\(^ {271}\) would seem to be perfect
examples of this third option, but Austin and Vidal-Naquet, a great cynic of
archaeological evidence, state that while it is possible to interpret the lack of evidence
with enslavement of a native population, a lack of evidence does not necessarily
corroborate to this interpretation. On the mainland, Sparta most radically demonstrates

\(^{270}\) Polignac, 99; Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 65: Austin and Vidal-Naquet qualify this phenomenon stating that
it was “doubtful that the same was true everywhere”.
\(^{271}\) Cartledge, *Ancient Greece*, 119.
this option, which conquered all outer territories around Laconia in the Peloponnese and enslaved them. Colonizers could also threaten the identity of an existing polis, establishing a separate aristocracy and religion.\footnote{Polignac, 124.}

**Hoplite Tactics**

Another modern theory of the rise of the polis is based on hoplite tactics acting as a social agent to transform procedural law. Like the importance of harbors, hoplite tactics can also be traced to the *Iliad*, but hoplites are a secondary reaction to the early development of a polis, much like colonization.\footnote{*Iliad*, Perseus, 3.8-9: “While the Achaeans moved forwards breathing in silence/ being eager at heart to ward off for one another (οἳ δ᾿ ἀρ᾽ ἔσαν στῆ μένα πνείοντες Ἀχαιοί ἐν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλεξέμεν ἄλληλοισιν).” This quotation does not imply the Bronze Age tactic of individual duels but a unification of all troops fighting for one cause- a sentiment of a hoplite formation; *Iliad*, Perseus, 4.446-449: “When they met and came together into one place/they slammed together shields and spears and fury of breast plated men/ but the studded shields/closed with each other and a noise arose (οἳ δ᾽ ὅτε δὴ ἡ ῥ ἐς χώρον ἕνα ξυνιόντες ἱκόντες, σύν ἡ ἐβάλον ῥινοὺς, σύν δ᾽ ἔγχεα καὶ μένε ἀνδρῶν χαλκεοθωρηκόν· ἀπὸ ἀσπίδας ἀρχαλόσσωσιν ἐπιπληντ ἄλληλημει, πολλὸς δ᾽ ὄρμαγδος ὄρωρει.).” Two sides of men, smashing against each other in a line formation, was a common tactic of hoplite warfare; Cartledge, *Ancient Greece*, 45: “Between about 750-650 BCE a new mode of fighting properly styled ‘hoplite’ was developed that no longer depended on the prowess of a mighty individual warrior….”}

Hoplite tactics, however, are more applicable for certain areas, such as Sparta. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, hoplite tactics in Sparta can be used to chronologically date a functional polis, as well as define later Spartan ideology. Sparta, however, is (as the section title illustrates) an “outlier” and should not be taken as a generality for all Greece concerning hoplite tactics.

As the solidarity of religious bonds increased, the cohesion of the citizenry increased. These citizens, who were able to provide their own armor and other means for sustaining themselves during war (i.e., hoplites), were unified by fear of raids and forced to interact for the protection of their city. Because of their function and importance in the polis as its defenders, hoplites created a new political hierarchy. Tactics, in which men
stood in a phalanx formation creating a “wall” of shields, and, more specifically, their shields (ὅπλον, pl. ὅπλα) characterized hoplites (ὅπλίτης, pl. ὅπλίται). These tactics were adopted by 669 BCE. According to Pausanias, the Argives defeated the Spartans at the Battle of Hysiai, probably because the Spartans had yet to acquire hoplite tactics, while the Argives had.

Rivalries between different aristocratic families abated (though still remained) and shifted to rivalries between different poleis. Aristocrats, whose earlier prominence as cavalry was diminished by the new hoplite tactics, used politics and athletics in the polis system to advance themselves by providing feasts and recreational events for the civic community. The military role of the declining basileus (or archon depending on the polis) altered with the advent of the phalanx and was made into an annual office (the archonship), completely changing the roles of the political administration. Similarly to colonization, however, for hoplite tactics to reinforce the development of a polis, its ruling body would have to make a definitive decision to adopt these tactics.

274 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 59.
275 Starr, Individual and Community, 65.
Chapter 3

Case Studies

The *polis* was neither likened to a specific type of government, nor was it fixed in its associations. To illustrate this, I have chosen four major *poleis* to discuss, all of which encapsulate different governments yet similar in their early *polis* development. Athens (democracy), Corinth (tyranny), Thebes (oligarchy and federation), and Sparta (dual monarchy) are all *poleis* but demonstrate different generalities. Each of these *poleis* adopts a balance between external and internal influences to assist in its specific government. Athens uses physical structures, such as walls, urban, and extra-urban sanctuaries, to protect its citizenry, create a balance between both tribal and socio-economic entities, and establish boundaries between the region which it controls and its neighbors’ dominion. To construct an internal balance, Athens adopted formal procedural laws which created certain equality between high and low classes. Thebes, an oligarchy, similarly used physical structures and procedural laws, but, unlike Athens, was originally, and operated in tandem with, *ethne*. Sparta used extra-urban sanctuaries but did not build walls, preferring instead to use their hoplites as a moveable wall to protect its citizenry and expand its empire. Corinth began in much the same way as Sparta and Athens, but was eventually taken over by a tyrant (τύραννος). There were many *poleis* that were ruled by tyrants, but tyrants created an extra-legalism, shifting the balance of internal
influences from procedural laws and governmental entities that created a certain equality between classes to themselves.

_Athenos_

Athens itself was one of the most populated _poleis_ in the Greek world, possibly because invasions, historically, did not touch the “autochthonous” Athens or possibly because of Athenian acceptance of local cultures into an overarching system of governing.276 Some ancient sources ascribe the Athenian dominion of Attica to mythological figures, such as Theseus. Aristotle, for example, wrote that Theseus made Athens the political center of Attica by resettling all 12 Attic cities.277 Whether Theseus had anything to do with the _synoikismos_ of Athens, or if he was a real person at all, is suspect. Nevertheless, Athens, through _synoikismos_, enveloped smaller areas (either tribal areas or _polis_) into a centralized Athenian unit.278 Thucydides relates that the Athenians celebrated a festival every year called the _Synoikia_ to celebrate their newfound association with other areas.279 Athens remained inhabited and hegemonic through the post-Mycenaean era, a notion which is supported by archeological evidence, and procedural laws can be formally dated to 683/2 BCE.280 Additionally, “internal quarrels”

276 Thomas & Conant, xviii, 79.
278 P.J. Rhodes, “General Introduction,” in _Athenian Democracy_, edit. P.J. Rhodes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1; Thomas & Conant, 62-63: “The territory of Attica is more conducive to unification than are many other parts of the mainland.”; Bintliff, 17: Athens was less like a _polis_ and more like a _megalopolis_. Because of Athens’ expansive size, Athenian unification can be attributed to _sympoliteia_ rather than _synoikismos_.
279 Starr, _The Birth of Athenian Democracy_, 7: Starr relates that “the institutions mentioned by Thucydides existed in early Attica may be doubted…he is an unsafe guide when he looked back into the past”. This statement, however, seems far too harsh. If we cannot trust Thucydides’ interpretation of practices that he most likely witnessed, he, as a source, is useless.
280 _Athenian Constitution_, p.40: The office of archon was reduced to a one-year term, “the first annual archon being Creon (683/2).”
did not plague Athens because of Attica’s isolation and poor arable land. In fact, other people migrated to Athens because, according to Thucydides, it was a “firmly settled community” and not because of agriculture.281 Concerning internal polis development, Athens had four stages equating to four famous Athenians: Theseus for Athenian synoikismos, Solon for the initial development of laws and organization of the citizenry, Peisistratus for the further amalgamation of the oikos with the polis, and Kleisthenes for the reorganization of Athens after the Peisistratid tyranny.

Theseus, a regional hero whose mythology strongly resembled Heracles’, killed evil men and murderous animals that plagued Attica and its boundary areas. After applying mortal “law” to areas that were untamed, he began to unify the villages of Attica under the Athenian banner.282 Dating the unification of the region to this mythical (and therefore extremely early) period, however, is not rooted in any discernible fact other than Athenian religious and civic sentiment. The “autochthony” myth was to “reinforce an invented, artificial sense of close genetic community among a people of in fact very diverse origins and backgrounds”.283 According to Plutarch, this early period contained three different classes of people: the eupatridai (“well-born”), the geomoroi (“land owners”), and the demiourgoi (essentially the rest of the population).284

Before Solon, Athens was arranged in numerous villages.285 Between 800 and 700 BCE, the population of Attica increased exponentially, marking the end of the post-

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281 Thucydides, 1.2.
282 Apollodorus, 3.16-Epitome 2 for Theseus’ labors and subsequent battles.
283 Cartledge, Ancient Greece, 94.
284 Rhodes, The Greek City States, 30 in reference to Plutarch, Theseus 25.2. Rhodes also mentions that the geomoroi and the demiourgoi, unlike the eupatridai, were most likely “the product of classical Greek speculation”.
285 Starr, Individual and Community, 70: cemeteries separated these villages from one another.
During the Archaic period, certain families became increasingly powerful while clients became extremely poor and dependent. Debt increased enormously, to the point where wealthy families sold clients into slavery in repayment of their debt. There was a shift from a “village” lifestyle to “private property,” affirming Starr’s statement that “the State is consciously evolved to defend privileges of a dominant class and the sanctity of private property”. Since wealthy citizens were not only in charge of debts, but also the court system and the highest judicial powers, as seen in the Athenian archonship, the lower classes received very little “justice”. Laws and punishments themselves were also privatized, leaving “blood-revenge” as the only option of punishment, even though a demand for public justice grew among the populace. A revolt seemed inevitable without some kind of balance between classes which a strong centralized government could provide. In other words, as Starr states, there was a “need for increased integrative mechanisms in larger and more complex structures”.

Under Solon, the second “lawgiver” of Athens (Drako being the first), debts were erased, laws were modified from a private realm to a public system, and different socio-economic classes, rather than just the highest classes and most wealthy, were able to access the court system. Laws were also made to prevent internal strife in order to protect new institutions. Solon’s most important regulation was the right of “the masses”

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286 Scully, 84; Murray, *Early Greece*, 65-66; Snodgrass, 404: Snodgrass relegates the political unification of Attica to around the late tenth century, but, as he admits, pottery styles are not consistent throughout Attica.
290 Nilsson, 45.
291 *Athenian Constitution*, 7.1ff.
to appeal to the “jury court” in order to seek retribution for a perceived wrong.\textsuperscript{292}

Herodotus stated, “Athens went from strength to strength, and provided, if proof was needed, how noble a thing equality before the law is, not in one respect, but in all; for while they were oppressed under tyrants, they had no better success in war than any of their neighbors…”\textsuperscript{293} These laws, having been made both public and accessible to all classes, ensured the fighting spirit of the hoplite citizenry and the survival of their \textit{polis}.

Unfortunately, the lower classes expected that Solon would redistribute property, while the aristocracy expected to retain their original positions of power. The new structure erased or, at the very least, mitigated debt, and allowed lower classes to participate in the government. It also allowed the aristocracy to maintain a large part of their original power. But neither side was satisfied; Solon’s laws were made to prevent civil unrest, not to give either side dominion over the other. Soon, wealthy kyrieia rose to power again and Peisistratus eventually seized control of Athens. Though a τύραννος (tyrant), Peisistratus did not change the Solonic laws but enforced them. He not only delegated power to magistrates to settle disputes, but also judged conflicts himself while touring Attica and established a system of traveling judges, further connecting rural Attica with central Athens.\textsuperscript{294}

Though the initial Solonic laws were not applied as first conceived (as a tyrant “ran” the state), these laws would eventually lead to the democracy that Athens would be famous for. The reason this democracy retained its shape from its initial stages was not necessarily because of Peisistratus’ willingness to accept Solonic law. Athens in this time period was desperate for reform. The only political option for stability was a balancing

\textsuperscript{292} Ibid., 9.1; Starr, \textit{The Birth of Athenian Democracy}, 45.
\textsuperscript{293} Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 5.78.
\textsuperscript{294} \textit{Athenian Constitution}, 16.5; Starr, \textit{The Birth of Athenian Democracy}, 11.
between socio-economic classes, allowing the lower classes to participate in government
while also granting prestige to higher classes. Democracy, as Josiah Ober correctly states,
works “by balancing political equality against social inequality,” and it was this fact that
stabilized Athens internally.295 While the Peisistratid tyranny lasted for two generations
and made Athens very powerful and distinct, Peisistratus himself could be likened to
nothing more than a head of an oikos, a powerful kyrieia, which, in effect, conquered
Athens. Without some kind of legislation in place that alleviated political upheaval
between classes, the Peisistratids would not have been able to rule as long as they did.296

The Athenian polis, which is famous today for its direct democracy, began after
the Peisistratid tyranny. This is not to say that Athens was not a polis before. If balance,
both external and internal, typifies a polis, then Athens was surely one. A certain amount
of legality, however, is present in a polis and, therefore, while a polis in name, Athens
was not a polis in spirit. Athenian stability not only came from a balance between Solonic
classes, but also from a balance between older entities and newer entities of the state. By
definition, as Ober states:

“[A] society is the sum of all participants in the overall set of rules, norms, and
practices whereby social rights (e.g., rights, privileges, powers, property) are produced
and distributed. This larger society will encompass subsocieties with specialized rules
and norms; the interaction between subsocieties helps to determine the structure of the
whole society.”297 (italics mine)

295 Ober, 119, 173: “…the polis is not to be preserved through equalization of material goods but rather
through just and consensual inequality…”
296 Ibid., 182. Ober states that Athens did not employ a reciprocal relationship because wealthy families
were “unable to control Athenian society through the matrix of reciprocal and interfamilial…obligations
that typifies the society based on patronage.” This might be true for post-Kleisthenic Athens but not, by any
means, pre or even post-Solonic Athens before 508 BCE. Wealthy families such as the Alcmaeonids
struggled for power against other families. The Peisistratid tyranny only worked because of family
reputation, influence, respect, and, specifically for Peisistratus, luck. Ober’s statement is only valid after the
Athenian democracy was truly enforced, but this institution does not imply that everything before it was
“null and void”.
297 Ibid., 164.
In order to maintain stability after the tyranny (and indeed during it as well), an effort had to be made to incorporate earlier “subsocieties,” in other words tribal factions, into Athenian government. Athens had Ionic roots and already had four established Ionic tribes. After the coup of 508 BCE where the Spartans first helped to end the tyranny and then tried to establish a friendly government under Isagoras, Kleisthenes reformed the tribal structure, raising the number and naming each tribe after eponymous heroes. Though the Kleisthenic reforms changed the tribal structure, it incorporated, in essence, a newer version of an older entity that would be invaluable in the reorganization of the state at local levels.298 Instead of tribal structures linking citizens to the government, the Kleisthenic reorganization linked citizens to geographical units, further connecting rural Attic entities with centralized Athens while keeping the tradition of tribes alive. Instead of a much earlier and direct function, the tribes were used to generate prytanies which formed the new Council of 500.299

Further measures were also established to dismantle the older oikos-system in an effort to bind wealthier families to the state, encouraging a subsidization of poorer citizens which wealthier classes used in order to gain prestige, such as paying for plays and making triremes.300 In fact, the new formation of the navy under Themistocles, which became the groundwork for poorer citizens to associate themselves with the government, was not the work of the assembly as one might think, because of its association with lower classes, but of the council, comprised of the wealthier socio-economic classes. Though thetes rowed the triremes, the ships’ captains were wealthier citizens, illustrating the advantage wealthier citizens still had even in the cornerstone of the Athenian lower

299 For further information on prytany-formation, see Starr, The Birth of Athenian Democracy, 14-15.
300 Ober, 184.
classes, but also the advantage the navy and, therefore, poorer citizens had in shaping Athenian policy (especially foreign policy).\textsuperscript{301} To dismantle oikos institutions completely, however, would have been a disaster; when making a new governmental structure it is best to keep older traditions alive rather than outlawing their existence in order to facilitate a \textit{gradual} association with the new structure.\textsuperscript{302} With a dismantling of these two older systems while incorporating certain facets of them into Athenian culture, Athens would be stable. In essence, Athens changed from a large geographical area in which various classes were disconnected into various sub communities. These classes, while different economically, adhered to the state through citizenship.\textsuperscript{303}

The direct assembly may have been Athens’ crowning achievement. This governmental entity that many \textit{poleis} had was possibly the most used and fully-functioning assembly in all Greece. The Assembly’s beginning history, however, is uncertain, but Starr relates that it had roots as far back as the \textit{Iliad}.\textsuperscript{304} While Starr mentions Athenian entities that might have had the characteristics of an assembly, the assembly only gained the distinct characteristics that divided it from the council when the \textit{thetes}, the lowest Solonic economic class, were granted admission to it and to the law

\textsuperscript{301} Starr, \textit{The Birth of Athenian Democracy}, 42, 44.
\textsuperscript{302} John K. Davies, “Athenian Citizenship: The Descent Group and the Alternatives,” in \textit{Athenian Democracy}, edit. P.J. Rhodes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 24: certain oikos ceremonies, especially that of the \textit{amphidromia} that legitimized a son after birth which admitted the child to the “\textit{hiera} [‘sacred rites’] of the oikos”, and other “descent” rituals that legitimized the “proper status” of government officials.
\textsuperscript{303} Davies explains the criteria for citizenship in Athens in terms of descent: “…[citizens] were male; were sons of a citizen father; were born from a woman who was the daughter of a citizen father; were born from a woman who was ‘pledged’ (\textit{engyete}); and had been accepted as members of their father’s (phratry and) deme.” While the criteria for citizenship changed through the fifth century, citizenship in Athens primarily concerned descent. Though citizenship is an important aspect of the \textit{polis} concerning class representation, it is not a central issue in this section. For more information see Davies, “Athenian Citizenship”, 18-39.
\textsuperscript{304} Starr, \textit{The Birth of Athenian Democracy}, 5. While the Homeric and classical assemblies might have similar characteristics, similar to the distinctions in the Homeric \textit{polis} and Archaic \textit{polis}, they are not the same governing structure because of the latter’s far greater jurisdiction.
While the assembly could vote “yes” or “no” on a certain initiative, the council retained probouleutic powers. It used to “screen” legislation before it went to the assembly for a vote. The Areopagus, an ancient court that was always granted mythic origin, remained a guardian of the laws though its power decreased as the assembly’s power increased. Eventually the assembly became the “ultimate authority” in Athens concerning public matters, allowing the entire citizenry and not just the highest socio-economic classes that comprised the council, Areopagus and archonship, to control the Athenian polis.

Athens, while occasionally viewed as the epitome of the polis, is somewhat problematic in its fulfillment of polis development. Like Sparta, no other polis was like Athens concerning either its application of laws or its balance among different segments in its citizenry. Athens also maintains the largest written record of its historical upbringing, making it extremely difficult to evaluate because of a lack of material to compare it to.

Athenian early history is vague, especially concerning polis foundations. While archaeology supports the existence of Cyclopean walls around the Acropolis and other Bronze Age walls around the city, ancient sources are mysteriously silent. In the Catalogue of Ships, Athens is described as a “well-founded citadel,” implying the semblance of walls around the Acropolis, but not the city proper. In proportion to literary evidence of other ancient sites such as Thebes or Troy, the evidence of walls surrounding Athens is very slight. The Athenian hegemony over Attica can be seen as a symbiotic

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305 Ibid., 9: “From a sixth-century inscription, it appears that Chios also had a ‘democratic’ council of 50 members from each of its tribes alongside an older aristocratic council, and it was thought that Solon drew his idea from Ionia...”
306 Ibid., 40. It should be noted that the archonship and local neighborhood groups, what Starr calls the “fundamental matrix of Athenian society”, did retain certain powers over sacrifices and cult.
relationship between Athens and certain cults, which helped unite and control the region, and not by the development of walls. This relationship, however, also facilitated polis development by providing a link between urban and extra-urban areas. Archaeological evidence of Mycenaean walls around the acropolis (and the sheer height of the acropolis itself), while not mentioned in Homer or Hesiod, is also vital for the early Athenian polis and, therefore, should not be excluded.

**Corinth**

As with most discussions of early poleis, few primary sources exist that describe Corinth; archaeological remains and anthropological theories, therefore, must be used to piece together an early history. Though Corinth was an extremely important polis in the period of colonization and is a perfect example of a polis that was continuously ruled by tyrants, I shall limit my discussion of Corinth because it represents more of a norm among Greek polis development than other case-studies (which Mogens Herman Hasen has already discussed).

Corinth, which also had Mycenaean roots, was absolutely essential to Greek development, especially in the period of colonization.\(^{307}\) Largely uninhabited during the post-Mycenaean period, Corinth seems to have undergone synoikismos in the eighth century, resulting from “regionalism,” a “natural growth of population,” and “an increase in larger estates controlled by some more fortunate families.”\(^{308}\) In the late post-

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\(^{307}\) Thomas & Conant, 117: “...the region [the Corinthia] appears to have been linked to Mycenae: remains of a road system extend northward from Mycenae into the Corinthia, and the Catalogue of Ships in the Iliad assigns the ships of the Corinthians to Agamemnon’s command.” Mycenaean societal remains, such as coexisting dialects, after the Mycenaean palace destruction also illustrates a dimension of continuity.

\(^{308}\) Ibid., 118, 120: “The evidence of wells and graves attests expansion from the mid-eighth century and there are signs that individual settlements, especially those around Corinth itself, were drawing closer together.”
Mycenaean period, three villages, like Sparta, merged into one because of land restrictions, creating historical Corinth. This population increase and “limited space” led to a hereditary kingship, but this type of rule became inefficient because of an overwhelming increase in diverse populations, and political power was eventually usurped by a clan, the Bacchiads. Cypselus, a member of the Bacchidian aristocracy, seized power in Corinth in 657 BCE, creating an oligarchical tyranny. Tyrants can rule poleis but, as a rule, take power through illegal means. The polis has a certain legality to it, maintaining a balance between both socio-economic classes and tribal entities through procedural laws. Tyrants, when they take power illegally, undermine this balance, creating the balance for the state in them. Though tyrannies have a negative undertone, they were useful, as their existence is usually an argument for political reform. According to Thomas and Conant, “This change from the leadership of one man to [the] control [of] many peers is of signal importance for on-going development in the Archaic and Classical periods, for it marked the extension of political power to more members of the community.” While this statement does not apply to every polis, this development was a “natural, gradual occurrence” throughout Greece.

In order to facilitate growth, Corinth, in accordance with Polignac’s theory, created extra-urban sanctuaries to make definitive claims on border territories. In fact, Corinth’s association with the worship of Aphrodite represented a social cohesion in the Corinthia and throughout the Greek world, since Corinth was one of the goddess’

309 Ibid., 130.
310 Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 5.92; Thomas & Conant, 121.
311 Thomas & Conant, 122.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid., 124: “When the northern promontory of the isthmus known as Perachora was absorbed by Corinth around the middle of the eighth century, an apsidal building was erected there in honor of Hera.”
“principle centers of worship”.\textsuperscript{314} Economically, during the tyranny, Corinth sent out many colonies to grow food, secure supplies of goods, and relieve political stress.\textsuperscript{315} This was, according to Thomas and Conant, “a community response”,\textsuperscript{316} but this theory seems to put too much emphasis on population pressure rather than on a tactical plan to gain resources and strategic water passages for trade. It was also in this period that Corinth nearly dominated the pottery market and created a highway (\textit{diolkos}) across the isthmus from the Corinthian to the Saronic Gulf.\textsuperscript{317}

Corinth was, at least in the period of colonization, an economic juggernaut, controlling essential trade routes, many strategic resources in the western Mediterranean, and passage into the Peloponnese. Though ruled by a tyranny, its formation was not unlike many other \textit{poleis}. As populations grew after the post-Mycenaean period, villages began to unite and transform into larger urban centers. Rule-by-one (i.e., a king) became unsatisfactory because of an increase in population and in influential families, and these families took power, creating tyrannies that usually resulted from the need for political reform, such as in Athens. Even though the type of government changed in Corinth, the Bacchiads created a new balance between the polity and the state, facilitating political stability through colonization and the creation of extra-urban sanctuaries.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{314} Ibid., 140.
\item \textsuperscript{315} Thomas and Conant refer to Plato’s \textit{Laws}, 740e which describes the land situation as \textit{stenochoria} (“narrowness of land”) and how to alleviate population pressures; See Thomas & Conant, 125-126 for specific Corinthian colonies.
\item \textsuperscript{316} Thomas & Conant, 134.
\item \textsuperscript{317} Rhodes, \textit{The Greek City States}, 191.
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Thebes is a difficult case because it is not like Athens or Sparta in its isolationism or like Corinth in its mutual trading ties to other cities. Boeotia, as a region, had very few harbors, and the ones it did have were not very impressive. Thebes did not send out colonies in the period of colonization nor did it have any tyrants. It was a *polis* that has continuously been controlled by people who were not its original founders. Thebes, however, did sustain some kind of hegemony over their region, maintained walls and had procedural laws. In the introduction, I mentioned that the *ethnos*, a tribal-village construction that did not build walls, and the *polis*, which used walls to protect its citizenry and facilitate agriculture, were fundamentally opposed to each other; Thebes was the personification of this conflict. It was, as Robert J. Buck states, “on a crossroads for the spread of ideas”. Boeotia has Mycenaean roots and untouched native villages, which, at least mythologically, date to before Mycenaean rule. Thebes, the largest urban area in Boeotia, might have been a *polis* but surrounding areas were not. In fact, Boeotia did not maintain tribes or phratries, only village-settlements (*ethne*).

When Thebes established its hegemony over the region, the *ethnos* “gave way” to the *polis*; this “unity…was imposed by the most powerful city”. Nevertheless, the “political” *synoikismos* of Boeotia, led by Thebes, was secured by the sixth century, archaeologically demonstrated by a fairly cohesive regional coinage and the domination

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319 Ibid., 1.
320 Dalby, 41: Dalby relates that “Thebes was the center of a major Achaian realm” on the basis of Linear B tablets found there.
322 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 79.
of the *Apollo Ismenios* cult, which other, smaller Boeotian cities celebrated.\(^{323}\) Later, Boeotia would transform, under the leadership of Thebes, into the most well-known federal state in Greece, offering “an original and alternative mode of political organization to the single polis”.\(^{324}\) In its infancy, however, Thebes, and many other towns in Boeotia, were oligarchies, significantly differing politically from other surrounding *poleis* in that Thebes did not maintain an assembly.\(^{325}\) Because it did not have an assembly, a balance between socio-economic classes would have been difficult to achieve. Procedural laws and walls, however, which Thebes employed, created a balance regardless of an assembly. Also, unlike Athens or Sparta, Thebes had many different tribes and, therefore, an assembly would not necessarily have been as essential to balance as it might have been in Sparta or Athens.\(^{326}\)

Many ancient poets and artists called Boeotia, if not Thebes itself, home, such as Hesiod and Pindar, but they did not overtly discuss Boeotian political organization. While Thebes was mentioned numerous times in the Homeric epics, we know very little about Thebes’ social or historical development. Thebes, as with many ancient cities, has city-foundations rooted in mythology, and Athens, possibly the Boeotian League’s most hated

\(^{323}\) Polignac, 79f; Cartledge, *Ancient Greece*, 133: In the late seventh century, the Boeotians had “a common silver coinage bearing the obverse device of an infantryman’s [hoplite’s] shield” which “attests a form of political unity”. There was also a common religious cult, the Pamboeotia, “celebrated annually at Onchestus”; Buck, *Boiotia and the Boiotian League*, 5; Barclay V. Head, “The Coins of Ancient Boeotia: A Chronological Sequence,” in *The Ancient Boeotians and the Coinage of Boeotia*, edit. W. Rhys Roberts and Barclay V. Head (Chicago: Ares Publishers, Inc., 1891), 3: Barclay divides Boeotian history into different time periods of coinage. Orchomenus, Thebes’ biggest Boeotian rival, put a stalk of grain on their coinage while Thebes put a shield of Heracles. By the sixth century, Orchomenus stopped producing large silver coins, indicating its “independence…was not complete” (p.18).

\(^{324}\) Cartledge, *Ancient Greece*, 132; For more information on the Boeotian League and Federal state, see Buck, 1994.

\(^{325}\) Buck, *Boiotia and the Boiotian League*, 5; Though Buck maintains that Thebes did not actually maintain an assembly, he does not mention any archaeological or textual evidence to argue in favor of it.

enemy, immortalized Theban legends in Athenian tragedy.\textsuperscript{327} Pausanias, writing much later, discusses the mythical foundations of many city-states, and his work is invaluable to this discussion, if only for its references to the advent of walls.\textsuperscript{328}

According to Pausanias the first inhabitants of Thebes were the Ectenae who were ruled by Ogygus, a native of Thebes itself. These peoples were destroyed, not by an army, but by a plague.\textsuperscript{329} Two Boeotians, not Thebans, led their people to Thebes and inhabited it. After their settlement, however, they were conquered by Cadmus, a Phoenician. The myth of Cadmus is complicated, but Euripides (\textit{The Bacchae}) Apollodorus, Pausanias, and Ovid are in agreement that he was a Phoenician. Europa, Cadmus’ sister, had been abducted by Zeus, and Cadmus’ father ordered him to find her, threatening him with exile if he failed. When he could not find her, Cadmus went to the Delphic Oracle for guidance, and it told him to follow a heifer until it lay down to rest, and, where it rested, build city walls and call the land “Boeotia”.\textsuperscript{330} Cadmus followed the cow and claimed the area of Thebes for his city. The site, however, was guarded by the serpent of Ares, who killed many in Cadmus’ party before Cadmus found it. After killing the serpent, Athena came to Cadmus and told him to sow the teeth of the fallen serpent in the earth which would, literally, become the “seed of future people.” After Cadmus planted these teeth, men sprouted from the ground, fully armed, and started to fight each other. Athena called for a truce, but only five men were left, and these men constructed the walls of Thebes.

\textsuperscript{327} Roberts, 42.
\textsuperscript{328} While I am aware that many of Pausanias’ writings are subject to criticism because of the late date of his writings, his mythological discussions are some of the only ones available.
Ancient literature constantly mentions Theban walls with the epithet of “Seven-Gated Thebes (ἕπταπύλῳ Θήβῃ)”\textsuperscript{331} The length, illustrated by the many gates the wall possessed, symbolizes the strength and superiority of the Theban city-state. After all, could a city become so large without first subduing, in some fashion, the areas surrounding it?

Ancient myths of Thebes differ on one very important aspect: was Cadmus a founder or a conqueror? Pausanias did not even hint at the idea that Cadmus was a “founder” of Thebes. He mentioned that Cadmus came to Thebes with his army, “by the command of the Oracle,” following the “heifer” until it rested,\textsuperscript{332} and attacked Thebes, vanquished the inhabitants and built the Cadmea.\textsuperscript{333} I am more amenable to Pausanias’ story than others, but Cadmus was, as all authors agree, a foreigner. How can a foreigner gain legitimacy as a founder? The answer is, by divine intervention, and, in this case, through the Delphic Oracle. If anything, Cadmus was a conqueror who might have been told by the Delphic Oracle, for one reason or another, to settle where the Thebans were. After Cadmus, there were many other rulers of Thebes. Most importantly, Antiope’s sons, Zethos and Amphion, joined the lower and upper halves of Thebes, creating a completely new city.\textsuperscript{334}

Thebes, according to myth and later comedies, also maintained procedural laws within this period.\textsuperscript{335} After the death of Oedipus, Polyneices and Eteocles, Oedipus’ sons,

\textsuperscript{331} Works and Days, Perseus, 160-163: “Demi-gods, the race before our own, through the boundless earth./Bad war and grim battle/destroyed them, some below seven-gated Thebes, the Cadmean land,/as they fought for Oedipus’ flocks…”
\textsuperscript{332} Pausanias, 9.12.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 9.5.
\textsuperscript{334} Pausanias, 9.5; Odyssey, trans. Lombardo, 11.265-270: “Amphion and Zethos, who founded seven-gated Thebes and built its walls…”; Apollodorus, 3.5.6.
\textsuperscript{335} Thebes is a difficult area to discuss because of a lack of historical evidence. While archaeology can help, the best textual evidence is mythological or dramatic.
made an agreement to rule in alternating years, but Eteocles refused to give up his throne. Polyneices withdrew into exile, but joined with the Argives and attacked Thebes. They were unsuccessful and both Polyneices and Eteocles were killed in the battle. Creon decreed that Polyneices, because he had attacked Thebes, could not be buried but Eteocles could. Antigone, sibling of both Eteocles and Polyneices, secretly performed burial rites for Polyneices, but was caught. Antigone, by Sophocles, demonstrates the importance of procedural law which Creon administered, as well as a continuing conflict between the entities of the oikos and polis. This law, which stated that Polyneices could not be buried, was not so much substantive as it was procedural. Should enemies of a territory be given the same treatment as the territory’s citizenry? It was impious not to give a body the right to burial but, logically, Creon’s ruling made sense. The law of Creon should not be called into question when discussing Antigone, but the impiety of Creon’s resolve. Burying Polyneices benefited only his immediate family and his clients. Not burying him might have sent a forceful message to future invaders, but the “pollution” because of Creon’s decision threatened the piety of the entire polis.

After the destruction of Oedipus’ children and the capturing of Thebes by the allied army of Athens and Argos, the kingship eventually passed to Thersander, the son of Polyneices. Thersander had a son named Tisamenus, but the reign of Thebes was given to Peneleus because of Tisamenus’ young age. This reign marked the invasion of

336 Apollodorus, 3.6.1; Pausanias, 9.5: Pausanias wrote that Polyneices was not exiled but ran from Thebes because he was scared that his father’s curse would come to fruition. He returned to Thebes later after his brother had asked him to but was then exiled because of a “disagreement” with Eteocles.
337 Apollodorus, 3.6.7-8: The “Cadmeans” were pushed back to their walls but Zeus struck one of the Argive heroes down with a thunderbolt which caused panic in the Argive ranks and they fled.
339 Pausanias, 9.5.
340 Ibid.
Troy. In the Catalogue of Ships, the Boeotians were led by Peneleus and Leitus.\textsuperscript{341} This corresponds to Pausanias’ description of Peneleus’ reign and also demonstrates that Thebes was at least partially under Argive control. In the Catalog of Ships, however, only lower Thebes is listed as a contributor to the expedition.\textsuperscript{342} Since Zethos and Amphion had already joined upper and lower Thebes, why was the city not just named Thebes? And if they did not unite, why was lower Thebes not named Cadmea? Pausanias, citing the Odyssey, only complicates things, recording that Zethos and Amphion were actually the first inhabitants of Thebes, separating the city-proper from “Cadmea”.\textsuperscript{343} Yet, the Odyssey only mentions that Antiope bore Zethos and Amphion and that they founded Thebes by building the wall; the Homeric corpus says nothing about connecting one unit of the city to another.\textsuperscript{344} The only thing that is constant is Peneleus’ reign, but not necessarily the formation or even the political unity of the city.

Buck has done extensive work on Boeotian history and divides Boeotia into three traditions corresponding to three different authors, none of which are Pausanias. Even though Pausanias is not used as a main source, he is used to refute other arguments. The first tradition, written by Hecateus, states that Boeotia, and therefore Thebes, was first occupied by barbarian tribes, which migrated from Attica.\textsuperscript{345} The “barbarian tribes” were the people who came after the first plague that wiped out Ogygus’ people. Cadmus then entered Boeotia and founded Thebes by constructing walls around it. Soon after this, Zethos and Amphion seized control and Laius eventually took over. After Oedipus, the

\textsuperscript{341} Iliad, trans. Lombardo, 2.535f.
\textsuperscript{342} Iliad, trans. Lombardo, 2.538-561.
\textsuperscript{344} Odyssey, trans. Lombardo, 11.264-267.
\textsuperscript{345} Robert J. Buck, A History of Boeotia (Alberta: The University of Alberta Press, 1979), 45.
Cadmeans were expelled to Thessaly but returned under the leadership of Thersander. This explains the capturing of the city by the Argives and corresponds to the Trojan War.\textsuperscript{346} All traditions maintain similar connections: a link with Attica, a stranger or foreigner fortifying the city, the Argives defeating the Thebans, and all maintain a record of the Trojan War.

Thebes is “on a crossroads for the spread of ideas”. Boeotia’s early organization was primarily made of oligarchic \textit{ethne} that were in direct opposition to the Athenian \textit{polis}. While Boeotia was largely composed of \textit{ethne}, Thebes coalesced into a \textit{polis}, similarly to Athens, after the absorption of surrounding territories, by means of city walls and procedural laws. This rivalry reached its pinnacle in the Persian Wars when Thebes capitulated to Persian demands for “earth and water”. After the Persian Wars (and even before it), Athens used Theban legends in tragedy and even took over the rule of Boeotia from Thebes, setting Thebes apart from most Greek \textit{poleis} as traitors and barbarians. Nevertheless, Thebes remained a major force in Boeotia, eventually creating the first successful federal state and destroying Spartan hegemony in the fourth century.

\textit{Sparta: The Outlier}

Sparta was fundamentally different from any other classical city-state in Greece while, at the same time, remaining remarkably similar; it is a paradoxical and supremely tantalizing entity for historians. What little we know about Sparta’s enigmatic and difficult past is clouded by what many historians have fittingly named the ‘Spartan

\textsuperscript{346} Buck, \textit{History}, 51.
Mirage′. As Nigel Kennell states, “The image of the historical city gradually became transformed through the work of philosophers, biographers, historians, and romantics into that of a radically unique state unlike any other in Greece and often in seeming contradiction to fundamental laws of human behavior.”

But was the image of Sparta clouded in bias or was it descriptive of real conditions? Like the creation of the polis, there is no one correct answer. Ancient authors constantly define Sparta as a polis, yet it sustained no walls or fortifications. It did, however, maintain a disconnected harbor. Thucydides wrote that, if later societies were to look at Sparta in order to discover how powerful it was, they would say that it was a meager and weak city, devoid of large building projects. If they looked at Athens, however, it would be seem more powerful than it actually was because of its grandiose physical characteristics. But appearances can be deceiving. While Thucydides′ statement might seem to refute my argument (that a polis does maintain physical structures in order to create a sense of balance for its citizenry), it actually confirms it because, looking back through history as Thucydides suggests, Sparta did maintain certain ideals that generated a certain equilibrium. Even though ancient and modern theorists alike have glorified the austerity and military prowess of Sparta, while also sometimes demeaning its politics and way of life, Sparta′s early development was not unlike other poleis. The physical aspects of a polis or lack thereof, however, can, at the very least, aid in describing what a society was like and how it was structured.

347 Cartledge, Spartan Reflections, 26: Cartledge mentions that F. Ollier (1933-1943) first coined the term ‘le mirage spartiate’.
348 Kennell, 9.
349 Thucydides, 1.108: “And the Athenians…sailed round the Peloponnesus, burned the dockyard of the Laecadaemonians [Gytheum]…”; Harbors, as described by Stephen Scully, are very important entities of the early development of the polis. See section “Balance” for further information.
350 Ibid., 1.10.
These differences from other poleis, while different by definition, can also yield similarities. Physical structures themselves do not necessarily typify the polis; whatever creates and facilitates polis development makes the polis. At the risk of sounding self-contradictory, I pose (as Plutarch did) that the Spartans did not need walls because they perfected hoplite tactics in which soldiers linked their shields together and made a movable wall. With these tactics, the Spartans forcefully unified the areas of the Peloponnese under their rule and were able, with external forces quelled, to create their society using a “virtual” wall.

Their coinage, a later indicator of a central authority, was made of iron and was seen as worthless by other city-states that relied upon silver and gold to guarantee currency. Scholars reported them as maintaining good laws and a stable rule through a communal society for over 400 years, although other poleis described Sparta as brutal and even “backwards”. Contrary to the general political statement that written laws created a stable basis for a harmonious society, Spartan laws, for the most part, were traditional, oral laws, and only a very few early laws were ever written down. For hundreds of years, by maintaining relationships with other Greek cities in the Peloponnese either by subjugation or through alliances, Sparta was normally seen as an

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352 Plutarch (2005), Lycurgus 9; Starr maintains that coinage was a consequence and not an instigator to the beginning of the polis. “Greek” coinage began around 600 in Aegina, possibly 100-200 years after the first foundations of the polis. For this reason, while I realize that coinage is an important symbol of centralized leadership and a civic emblem, I shall not discuss it further. For more information on this subject, see Starr, The Economic and Social Growth of Early Greece, 108-117; Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 56-57: “The invention and spread of coinage would have to be placed in the framework of the development of social relations and the definitions of values...when laws were codified and published in order to remove them from arbitrary interpretation.”; Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 57: “The absence of small denominations in the coinage of many cities implies that the invention of coinage did not aim initially at facilitating local trade...and long distance trade need not have been one of the factors in the creation of coinage [with the exception of Athens].”; Rhodes, The Greek City States, 37-38.

353 Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 49.
isolationist society. Because of its laws, Sparta’s citizenry and even its women were
given more freedom in the state than any other city in Greece. Therefore, while its
core character might be completely different from other poleis, the goals of Sparta were
similar to, if not the same as, others: to have good laws, a stable society, a self-governing
assembly, and to maintain a defense of and for its citizenry.

Sparta has had many names over the centuries, most of which do not denote the
city of Sparta proper, but the region in which it is situated, Laconia. The territory which
Sparta controlled varied depending upon the time period discussed. Paul Cartledge
designates Sparta’s territory as the area east of Mt. Taygetos, dividing Laconia from
Messenia, because it was in this area that the Spartans “experimented with the system
whose essentials they later transferred to Messenia.” While the boundaries of Laconia
are somewhat fluid geographically, and since Laconia’s frontiers were not fixed until
after the Battle of Champions in 545 BCE, Cartledge’s definition of Laconian boundaries
seems to be the most definite while also the most constructive. In the East and South,
Laconia is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea, and also by Messenia and other plains in
the West. The northern boundary-line, however, was nearly always in contention with
Sparta’s neighbor Argos. This fact brought Spartan and Argive interests into conflict
frequently, both poleis vying for control of and around the Peloponnese.

The terrain itself is difficult to traverse, and therefore communication was easiest
by sea. Even before the sixth century, Sparta used Gytheum in southern Laconia as a
disconnected port which did not support its own city-state. As stated in earlier chapters,
many inland poleis had disconnected harbors, such as Ithaca. Because of Laconia’s
difficult terrain, a single road was used to connect Sparta and Gytheum and this

354 Ibid., 5.
connection allowed for sea access. Cartledge states that the terrain “militated against the political unification of the area,” but unification was nevertheless achieved. If one were to characterize Sparta as completely different from other poleis, I would have to disagree specifically because of this point. Though Sparta was “strange” in its organization, it is surprisingly similar to Athens in this respect. Athens also maintained a disconnected port, though the Piraeus was located closer to Athens than Gytheum was to Sparta. The conquest and pacification of the region to promote increased and more beneficial communications was paramount. Even with northern and western border disputes, Laconian isolation, while perhaps not most convenient in terms of communications, enabled the populace to create a well-ordered society in an early period. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate Laconia’s early development in order to further discuss Sparta’s unification and polis creation.

Not unlike its overall history in other periods, Sparta’s Mycenaean period, situated in the Late Hellenic (LH) period, is unclear. Forrest states that the Eurotas valley was united into one kingdom by the time of the Trojan War. Cartledge asserts that Laconia was probably divided into princedoms because of the lack of archaeological evidence. One should be cautious of this theory, however, not only because it is not substantiated in Homeric texts but also because it is an argument e silentio. He even goes so far as to say that Sparta “had not been of any importance” during the Bronze Age

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356 Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 13.
357 G.L. Huxley, Early Sparta (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), 13; Fitzhardinge, 23.
358 Forrest, 24.
because of this same lack of evidence.\textsuperscript{360} This again seems to be overreaching because
Menelaus, king of Sparta and one of the main protagonists in the \textit{Iliad}, as well as Helen, most definitely held important roles in cult according to archaeological remains, and, in turn, the lands associated with them had important roles in myth if nothing else. At the end of the Mycenaean Age, however, 1100/1050 BCE, there was a large depopulation of the region. What lead to this depopulation is a point of contention among classicists, but drought followed by famine was most likely a primary cause.\textsuperscript{361}

Actual settlements decreased but foreign trade increased, illustrated by trade goods in shaft graves. Cartledge states that this decrease is in direct relation to not finding enough pottery from the period and does not indicate any kind of social change.\textsuperscript{362} I am cautious about accepting this view, however, because the same could be said for any period that scholars have trouble defining. First, from this point on, the Spartan Basin will be the centre of Laconian society. Second, Spartan culture will become just as progressive as other areas in the Peloponnese. Towards the end of the LH period, however, sites begin to depopulate and are not resettled until much later, demonstrating a lack of continuity. Some sites yield such a small amount of LH III pottery that they were probably of little importance. This indicates a new, high-density settlement pattern in the thirteenth century BCE, in which settlements were “regularly spaced at intervals of five kilometers so as to exploit the adjacent terrain with maximum efficiency.”\textsuperscript{363} The settlement pattern drastically changes in the LH IIIC period (Late eleventh century) as the

\textsuperscript{360} Ibid., 28.
\textsuperscript{361} Cartledge, \textit{Sparta and Lakonia}, 9.
\textsuperscript{362} Ibid., 36.
\textsuperscript{363} Ibid., 58.
number of inhabited sites decrease by 62.5%, while Amyklai, which will eventually become the fifth _oba_ of Sparta, increases in size.\textsuperscript{364}

Fitzhardinge states that the cult near Amyklai remained active but the area around Amyklai “was virtually without people and certainly without any organized community” for nearly two centuries.\textsuperscript{365} Cartledge, however, makes a very good argument for deforestation leading to depopulation. Because of the “intensification of settlement, large-scale pasturage and expansion of overseas trade during LH IIIB had led to extensive forest-clearance and the exhaustion of marginal land…[which] had a critically deleterious effect on the vegetation climax.”\textsuperscript{366} Cartledge recognizes that this theory is insufficient because it does not explain the destruction of political centers. What is perhaps more peculiar is that evidence of new cultural institutions does not directly follow these destructions.\textsuperscript{367} These “invaders”, described as Heraklids and Dorians, left no real material record of their society and were therefore either Mycenaeans themselves or people who had already attained Mycenaean goods.\textsuperscript{368} While this remains a viable theory, if these invaders were in fact Mycenaeans, perhaps these destructions can be likened to some kind of political upheaval between a ruling class and its subjects.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{364} Ibid., 61; Fitzhardinge, 24: “…LH IIIB [pot] sherds are plentiful, those of LH IIIC are almost non-existent.”
\item \textsuperscript{365} Fitzhardinge, 24; Pettersson, 91-99; Snodgrass, 395: “…there is no ceramic continuity between the Mycenaean and the Protogeometric…[though] in the ninth and eighth century, some vague memory of the sanctity of the place survived.” For more archaeological discussion of Amyklai, see Snodgrass, 130-131.
\item \textsuperscript{366} Cartledge, _Sparta and Lakonia_, 62; Thomas & Conant, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{367} Snodgrass, 311.
\item \textsuperscript{368} Cartledge, _Sparta and Lakonia_, 62; Kennell, 26: All signs point to the ‘squatters’ on the former palace sites being Mycenaeans themselves, who in some places attempted to restore their old way of life; Starr, _Individual and Community_, 12: “…the most economical explanation of the collapse…still remains an invasion led by Dorian-speaking peoples”; Thomas & Conant, 19: ‘Handmade Burnished Ware’ either resembled pottery from the Balkans or was produced “by survivors of a disaster who were suddenly forced through circumstances to produce their own pottery”; Snodgrass, 305-307: Snodgrass indicates that though there were certain warfare instruments that were “closely connected with the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces”, some of these instruments such as certain sword types were used by the Mycenaeans before the invasions. Snodgrass also relates that a Dorian identification with cist graves as a new burial practice is too “loose” an assumption (p.315).
\end{enumerate}
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Fitzhardinge counters this argument, stating that there was a new type of pottery (Protogeometric), having evolved earlier from eastern Greece, that had greater links to the West or northwest, meaning that these migrations could have truly been invaders from northern Greece and not people who were already living there, as Cartledge stated. There were areas all over Greece, the North included, however, that were under Mycenaean control, and therefore the theory set forth by Cartledge, that the migrants had access to Mycenaean goods, is still viable. Forrest seems to agree with the original theory of a Dorian invasion but states that there was no Dorian settlement in Sparta or in the region, and that “no warrior-elite crushed an earlier population and established at one blow a Dorian Sparta as a mistress of an enslaved Laconia. The invaders of 1200, or the vast majority of them, moved on”.  

While this theory does essentially agree with a Dorian invasion, it does not define the overall depopulation or its consequences. Thomas and Conant’s “top-heavy” theory seems plausible, illustrating the effects of overextending resources, but it relies primarily on anthropological and theoretical evidence from later periods. Regardless of which theory holds more weight, these population movements and depopulations would have greatly hindered “ordered society”.

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369 Forrest, 26; Snodgrass, 312-313: This theory was first proposed, as Snodgrass discusses, by “Miss Sandars in discussion of Desborough’s book”. For more information concerning a failed invasion attempt resulting in a retreat, see Snodgrass, 311-313.

370 Thomas & Conant, 24: “…the maintenance of an extensive mechanism of management, a large royal palace, and possibly a standing army would have rendered the political structure top-heavy and the lines of communication sclerotic.” Thomas states that the balance between the ‘peasantry’ and the administrators who had control over the walled areas of Mycenae was paramount. This balance was unhinged when labor on the walls was no longer needed or crop production was at a low.

Who the Dorians actually were or if they were these “invaders” at all is tentative. Mythically, the “Dorians” were led by the offspring of Heracles, who were expelled from the Peloponnese generations before. But, as many historians, ancient and modern, relate, the myth of the returning Heraklids was not the reflection of historical events, but an attempt of the new ruling class to gain legitimacy. Kennell states, “It is quite possible that the stories of the Heraklids and Dorians were developed independently in the Argolid and in Laconia respectively before being adopted and combined by peoples throughout the Peloponnese who adapted them to their own needs.”

Huxley describes the Dorians in definite terms, perhaps giving more credence to subjective theories than one would hope, stating that they were semi-nomadic warriors, maintained tribal assemblies and were “ill-suited to settle agriculture or centralized palace government”. There were, however, Doric-speaking peoples who were significantly different from the Mycenaeans in language and pottery styles, and, if the theory related above is correct, these Doric-speaking peoples were already diffused throughout Laconia and could have waged a civil war against their Mycenaean lords.

The Dorian cult of Hyakinthos, though supported by literary evidence as starting in 668 BCE, was most likely a continuation of a Bronze Age cult. Though belonging to a pre-Dorian hegemony, Apollo Hyakinthos is a Dorian god and, together with the Hyakinthia month, “[is] found widely and almost exclusively in Dorian cities.”

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372 Kennell, 23.
373 Huxley, 15.
374 Kennell, 31: “Words with the suffix -nth- are considered remnants of a pre-Greek linguistic substratum dating back as far as the early Bronze Age which has recently and convincingly been identified as coming from Anatolia”; Pettersson, 14, 96.
375 Kennell, 31; Cartledge, Ancient Greece, 40-41: “Dorianization refers, apart from common dialect, to the sharing of certain institutional arrangements (three identically named pseudo-kinship ‘tribes’) and religious customs (an annual festival in honor of Apollo known as the Carneia).” The difference between Dorians
pottery continuation from LH IIIC to Laconian proto-geometric pottery styles also suggests that there was a lack of continuation in Mycenaean civilization, and, even more disconcerting, a lack of occupation (in general) or external communication. Later this cult, along with two others, the Gymnopaidiai and the Karneia, would be the basis for the cult worship towards Apollo in Sparta, and their cult festivals would promote unity, piety, marriage and warfare, the basis for Spartan society. These public festivals in later periods, “mobilizing the whole population”, created a common identity among all levels of the citizenry (Homoioi [Spartans], Perioikoi, and Helots), perhaps used as one of Sparta’s many “initiation rituals”, making them integral to the “Spartan-mechanism”. The social elite facilitated these feasts, which would have been large and expensive affairs, as meat would have been served to all in attendance, and, in doing so, created another type of balance between different socio-economic groups and more aristocratic elements of the state. In essence, Spartan cults both generated and facilitated Spartan society.

that settled throughout Greece was a difference, as Cartledge relates, in patron gods or goddesses. Argos, for example, chose Hera while Sparta chose Athena and Messene chose Artemis. Argos, for example, chose Hera while Sparta chose Athena and Messene chose Artemis. Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 74-75; 79.

Pettersson, 73, 77: “…the three cults constituted a coherent whole, the symbolism of which expressed the basic pattern of a rite of passage, with the periods of separation, liminality and aggregation.”

Cartledge, Spartan Reflections, 14: To become a full Spartan citizen (homoioi), the Spartiate would have to successfully complete the Agoge, be elected to a syssition, and pay a certain amount of their household production (referring to the production of wheat) to the syssition. Marriage also seems like a prerequisite for citizenship though we mostly hear of punishments of those who are not married. While the Spartan citizenry is a fascinating topic, it is only applicable for this argument to mention the homoioi in the Spartan political hierarchy; Pettersson, 117: Pettersson also states that citizens had to participate in state cults as well.

Ibid., 15-16: The names of donors at the Hyakinthia would be announced during the aiklon or “second meal”. Even though donor names would be announced, these feasts would have been served in the mess halls, further joining together an older, individual kleos with a newer, polis-based loyalty.

Refer to section “Sanctuaries and Boundaries” for more information on Spartan cult.
The settlements that survived the conquests, destruction and famine became nucleated settlements, situated “some distance from one another”.\textsuperscript{382} It was during the late eighth century BCE that Dorian Sparta began to assert its dominance over other settlements. Like Athens, though two centuries earlier, individual Laconian settlements of perioikic status (free-dweller) submitted to Spartan rule via political agreements, while some were forced under Sparta’s dominion through military submission. While there is some discrepancy about when the stratification of the Spartan state occurred, it was firmly established by 775 BCE.\textsuperscript{383} Pausanias provides the best description of Spartan dominance in this period (Book 3 of his \textit{Description of Greece}) which is potentially suspect testimony. Nevertheless, logically, after the uprising in the LH period and the political and military assimilation of other communities, the Spartan state expanded to incorporate a larger area and, therefore, would have needed a strong central government. This new \textit{polis}, which was not firmly established until after the First Messenian War, was not based on the usual balance between socio-economic classes as was the case in other areas, but would be based on internal security for which every free inhabitant, both Spartan and \textit{perioikos}, was liable.

Herodotus wrote on the specific powers of the Spartan kings.\textsuperscript{384} They were taken from the Agiads, the elder royal house, and the Euryptids. Since the kings did not go through the \textit{agoge}, they were not \textit{homoioi} like other Spartan citizens. Kennell states that they “were not really even members of the polis itself;” maintaining some kind of

\textsuperscript{382} Kennell, 30.
\textsuperscript{383} Cartledge, \textit{Sparta and Lakonia}, 86; While many ancient sources differ on the amount of space that Sparta subjugated in their growing empire, A.H.M. Jones (I think correctly) states on logical grounds that it was more likely that the Spartans “first reduced their immediate neighbors in the valley of the Eurotas to serfdom, and then extended their political sway over the mountains to the East & West.”
\textsuperscript{384} Herodotus, trans. Purvis, 6.52-58.
“exalted status’. After the post-Mycenaean age, many areas dissolved the kingship and transferred the king’s power to other governmental entities. Spartan kings, however, maintained a special status; not only were they exempt from the agoge, but they were also the high priests of Zeus Ouranios and Zeus Lacedaemon. Before Dorian Sparta became one polis, it was four separate villages with tribal allegiances, each boasting loyalty to one of the two royal houses. The making of Sparta then was cooperation among all four autonomous villages; the Agiads led Pitana and Mesoa while the Eurypontids led Limnai and Kynosoura. While Amyklai, the fifth oba, was definitely used as a cult area at the very least, Forrest places Amyklai’s incorporation into Sparta proper around 750 BCE.

Sparta, in this century, also adopted a new form of pottery, the Geometric style, relating to Corinthian wares but retaining its own nuances. This type of handmade terracotta, specifically depicting horses, cattle and men, dating to around 750 BCE, is typical of earlier societies that are focused primarily with mixed farming. A terracotta relief of a woman’s head in the Daedalic style, which was gradually becoming commonplace, was also found on the Spartan acropolis. This could signify a change in political sentiments which began around 750, but that is merely speculation. While the Spartan state was becoming more powerful, its citizenry was becoming more restless. Though Sparta did send out colonies, Taras at the very least, it maintained a land-locked society and would, therefore not consider colonization as a feasible solution to alleviate

385 Kennell, 95.
386 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 78: The ethnos or tribal elements were just transforming into a polis or urban center.
387 Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 90; Pettersson, 109.
388 Forrest, 32; Cartledge, The Spartans, 57: Cartledge theorizes that the reason Sparta never actually built a wall around their territory was because doing so would have excluded Amyklai.
389 Fitzhardinge, 45.
390 Ibid., 47.
political pressures except in the most extreme instances. The solution to this problem was, in effect, the First Messenian War, in which the Spartans captured a significant amount of territory that was then redistributed. At the beginning of this section I mentioned that the Laconian territory ended at the Taygetos Mountains. The First Messenian War signaled Spartan expansion into the Taygetos valley in the East, towards Messenia as a whole. This war increased the amount of available land and riches, which, in turn, created publicly-built temples and encouraged specially-crafted votive offerings. The Menelaion was built most likely to retain Achaean legitimacy over the southern Peloponnese, but also to express the theme of a “veneration of the heroes of the past”.

During the First Messenian War, the Spartans endorsed the office of the ephorate in order to administer law in the city proper, while the kings were leading the army in Messenia. Ephors were constant in most Doric states, and even Spartan colonies, such as Taras, retained the office. The adoption (or existence at all) of this office suggests an earlier-discussed association with the mother-polis, as well as an overall relationship with Doric-speaking peoples. In actuality, as with most Spartan political offices, the ephorate is likened to the kosmoi in Crete. When the monarchy was abolished in Crete, the kosmoi absorbed its military function, much like the archons in Athens. It logically follows then that, with the king(s) frequently away at war, the ephorate would assume rule at

392 Ibid., 103.
393 Cartledge, Sparta and Lakonia, 105; Kennell, 28: “… ‘origin stories’ [were] not only [used] to construct a viable past but to reinforce contemporary social and political relationships.”; Cartledge, The Spartans, 28: “By the middle of the eighth century, the new Spartans felt confident enough to try to spread their influence and control further south in Laconia…transforming Therapne into a major cult-centre devoted to Menelaus…”; Drews, 24; For more theories on the Menelaion, see Pettersson, 92-94.
394 Huxley, 39; Rhodes, The Greek City States, 40-41.
home in their stead. This group was also able to propose laws to the Gerousia (Senate), infringing on a monarch’s role as judge or legislator.395

The Second Messenian War, a desperate attempt for the Messenians to regain their freedom, subjugated the whole of Messenia, elevating Sparta to the leading power in the lower Peloponnese. During this time, however, social unrest stressed the Spartan state. Possibly the best source for this time period is the poet Tyrtaeus, who wrote about the eunomia and societal influences in Sparta during the second half of the seventh century.396 His poem Eunomia (Fr.3) discussed the new Spartan political system.397 Also in this time period, Sparta adopted hoplite tactics. Tyrtaeus mentions in a later fragment that soldiers “advance fenced behind hollow shields”,398 marching “shoulder to shoulder (Fr. 8, ἄλληλοισι μένοντες)” to “save the people (Fr. 8, σαοῦσι δὲ λαὸν ὀπίσσω)”. While Tyrtaeus never uses the term “phalanx” in his poetry, and Bowra indicates that there is some speculation over whether the phalanx truly existed in this period, Tyrtaeus is describing, in some sense, a “phalanx”.399 His poetry also denotes a new morality in Sparta, one primarily concerned with courage and honor for the polis (Fr. 9, ξυνὸν δ’ ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληι τε παντὶ τε δήμῳ), marking a major shift from individual Homeric virtues to collective concerns. With this shift and the consolidation of the Spartan-controlled lands, a new Spartan “state” began to form.

395 D.M. MacDowell, Spartan Law (Edinburgh: Scottish Classical Studies, 1986), 6-8; The role of early leaders as a judge, as explained in earlier sections, was not to propose substantive laws but merely to preserve the status quo between socio-economic classes. These non-substantive or procedural laws can be seen later in this section during the discussion of the Great Rhetra.
396 C.M. Bowra, Early Greek Elegists (Cambridge: W.Heffer & Sons LTD., 1960), 40-41: Tyrtaeus could have been an Athenian who had Spartan citizenship. Bowra states, however, that Tyrtaeus might have been a “full” Spartan because of his rank as a Spartan general and that Tyrtaeus himself was the “very voice of this [hoplite] class” who “speaks with authority” which was “improbable for a foreigner”.
397 See Appendix B for Greek.
398 Bowra, 48.
399 Ibid., 57; Rhodes, The Greek City States, 44.
Taras, mentioned above, was established in 706 BCE by the Partheniai, either the offspring of unmarried Spartan women or Spartan citizens who did not fight in the First Messenian War. This group represented a potential social revolution among the citizen body and was, perhaps, sent to alleviate possible conflict. The site of Taras itself was not the original destination of the Partheniai, but it does maintain one of the best natural harbors in southern Italy. The Iapygians, however, already occupied Taras, meaning that these traveling Greeks had to force their way onto the land, where they firmly established near 700 BCE according to pottery evidence. With Taras and other lands established as lands for “undesirables”, and the conquest of Messenia, the Spartans did not need to send out more colonies as other poleis did. Sparta now maintained the largest territory in all Greece. Perioikic settlements, scattered throughout the Spartan-controlled region, were “fertile enough to produce sufficient food for their inhabitants to survive, but not to enable the development of large regional centers.” These were still dependent poleis which maintained internal hegemony but adhered to Spartan foreign policy decisions. Most only maintained 400-600 inhabitants on farmlands around an “urban center containing communal cult sites that also functioned as a local market…under the control of a small, landed elite”. Scholars originally thought that perioikoi sustained merchant and artistic aspects of Spartan society, yet pottery and other art forms were well established before the seventh century BCE (illustrated by votive finds at the sanctuary of

400 Kennell, 35.
401 Ibid., 42: Kennell states that the population of Lakonia was constant because there was no actual evidence that supported an abundance of Spartan population for the settling of Messenia.
402 Ibid., 33; Jones, 8: “They paid rent for certain lands belonging to the Spartan kings in their territories and their citizens had to serve in the Spartan army. They had in fact no foreign policy of their own, but managed their internal affairs.”
403 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 84: “…these communities [perioikoi] enjoyed some degree of local autonomy, but were entirely subordinate to the government of Sparta for war and the whole field of foreign policy.”
404 Kennell, 91; Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 82.
According to Forrest, Messenians, like perioikoi, probably “tended to their own affairs” because of the low population of Spartans and therefore a loose Messenian administration. The tripartite hierarchy of Spartans, perioikoi and helots was complete, creating a balance between different peoples while also creating a link between the centralized Spartan government and people controlled by Sparta. With the advent of this system, Sparta maintained hegemony through its region and into others, and it also allowed them to focus solely on warfare.

Though I have discussed the Messenians briefly so far in this section, I do not wish to underplay the role that they had in the Spartan state. In effect, Messenia became an occupied territory, and the Spartans, in terms of population, were heavily outnumbered by their captives. The Messenians became the helots that allowed the Spartan state to operate. Messenia represented three things. First, it represented agricultural wealth because of its fertility. Second, it represented economic and therefore political stability because, when it was conquered, its lands were divided among Spartan citizens, alleviating political pressures at and around Sparta and providing greater food production. Third and most importantly, Messenia represented fear. Sparta, a polis that believed itself to be based on eunomia, used this fear of upheaval to fuel a military state and culture whose sole purpose was to protect Spartan interests in and around the Eurotas river valley. This fear was so deep-seated in Spartan minds that the Spartans even created a secret police, the Crypteia, which murdered those whom they thought to be

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405 Austin & Vidal-Naquet, 85: perioikoi “were not bound by the aristocratic values of the Spartan warriors. They could therefore engage in all those economic activities which the Spartans rejected”. As historians normally posit, the primary duty of the perioikoi was to provide Spartans with weapons, but Austin and Vidal-Naquet widen this scope economically.

406 Forrest, 38.

407 For more information of helots see Stephen Hodkinson, Property and Wealth in Classical Sparta (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2000), 113-149.
“troubling Helots”. Without these things, agricultural stability, economic prosperity and a centralized military state, Sparta could not function.

Since Sparta’s need for land was alleviated, Sparta focused its gaze north towards the disputed boundary between themselves and Argive-controlled land. After Argos destroyed Asine for aiding the Spartans in raiding the Argolid, the Spartans resettled the survivors in southern Messenia, illustrating a fundamental opposition between the two territories. This resettlement does suppose Spartan supremacy in and around the area of resettlement, illustrating the political unification they must have had in Messenia. In 669 BCE, according to Pausanias, the Argives defeated the Spartans at the Battle of Hysiai, probably because the Spartans had yet to acquire hoplite tactics, while the Argives had. This did not bode well for a state functioning on coercion and military tactics to maintain a balanced social equilibrium.

In the seventh century BCE, after the Battle of Hysiai, “Sparta” of the Spartan Mirage was created. Ironically, a polis that boasted no written laws managed to maintain a rhetra explaining Spartan state function (at least, according to Plutarch). The Great Rhetra itself is one of the most difficult ancient Greek texts to translate, and, because of certain textual realities, philologists deduce that it is actually an excerpt from a larger document. The items in the Great Rhetra are as follows (as translated by Paul Cartledge and Nigel Kennell):

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408 Cartledge, *The Spartans*, 32.
409 Forrest, 37.
411 Kennell, 47: “The appearance of participles in the accusative case and infinitives in the main clauses show that the text is in indirect discourse, which, together with the absence of any explicit subject, indicates it is an extract from a longer text.”
412 The Great Rhetra is a very difficult document to date, making its historicity equally problematic. If it does date to the seventh century, then it as a historical document is applicable to this discussion. If it can only be dated to later sources such as Plutarch, then this document is not applicable; Plutarch (2005),
1) Establish a cult of Syllanian Zeus and Athena (implying that they had not existed before). If these had existed before, and due to the nature of the document, they would have been allied aristocratically and therefore, these cults would illustrate the power of the demos.

2) “Tribe and Obe the citizens,” or divide the citizenry into tribes and obes. This division distinguished the homoioi from other Perioikic peoples in Laconia.

3) Establish the Gerousia (Council) of 28 nobles and the 2 kings.

4) “Season in and season out, they are to hold Apellai between Babyka and Knakion.” This item permanently fixes assembly times and takes away from the kings the power to call assemblies.

5) The Gerousia introduces proposals and “stands aloof.”

6) The demos votes on the issues which are introduced by the Gerousia.

7) If the demos “speaks crookedly,” the Gerousia and kings have the power of veto (‘αὶ δὲ σκολιὰν ὁ δᾶμος ἕλοιτο, τοὺς πρεσβυγενέας καὶ ἀρχαγέτας ἀποστατήρας ἥμεν…). This is also called “Plutarch’s Rider”.

Because of this act of legislation the demos gained moderate political recognition. The Gerousia, similar to the Athenian council, seems to have enormous power illustrated by its probouleutic function, but the rhetra does guarantee a popular assembly.413

More must be said of denotation of oba and tribe because the wording and actual meaning of this item is relevant. An oba is descriptive of a kinship group and is usually evident in lands where Mycenaean ties are strong. This geographical association illustrates a Mycenaean survival. The obai correspond to the tribal arrangement of people and increase as the population increases, incorporating new citizens into one of the obes (five with Amyklai).414 In the beginning of Sparta’s history after the “Dorian Invasion”,

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_Lycurgus 6;_ The actual Greek is not parcelled out as it is above, but, because of the complexity of the document, I thought it best to organize it as such. For Greek see Plutarch, _Lycurgus_, “Perseus Digital Library,” Tufts University, edit. Gregory R. Crane, Last Modified October 22, 2010, http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0047%3Achapter%3D1%3As ection%3D1, _Lycurgus_ 6.

413 _Cartledge, The Spartans_, 66.
414 _Huxley, 24; Forrest, 42._
Sparta, which was separated into various villages at this time, was first organized in three Dorian phylai (these phylai are normally present in other Dorian areas). This number became inconvenient, Pettersson states, when hoplite reforms were enacted because of more people were eligible for the citizenry. The obai referred to the number of villages and the phylai to the population within them. The rhetra, of course, leaves many things out of its discussion, such as the office of the ephorate. More importantly, there must have been, as Cartledge states, a separate land redistribution document because of the redistribution of citizens into tribes and obai and because of past conflicts over the subject.

Forrest suggests that Lycurgus was the first to recognize the obe structure and gave it a greater part in political policy. To accomplish this there would have to be two criteria for citizenship: one from birth (tribes), and one from proximity around Sparta (obai). Cartledge also suggests that Lycurgus, because of his “lawmaker role”, introduced the “earliest system of Greek citizen self-government”, that, because of his reforms, loyalty and citizenship switched from a family relationship to a state-based relationship. In other words, the state became the enlarged and newest form of a reciprocal relationship, encompassing all family and village units. These theories presuppose that there was in fact a Lycurgus and that he changed the political structure of the citizenry to a more polis-based loyalty system. Whether Lycurgus existed or did not, the obe structure must have been more inclusive to the common citizenry than exclusive since the rhetra created formal governmental offices and organized the entire citizenry regardless of class.

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415 Pettersson, 116; The Spartan army, for example, was separated into six morai (though its organization was far more complex than that).
416 Forrest, 43.
417 Cartledge, The Spartans, 32-33.
Luckily for the aristocracy, the defeat at Hysiai allowed the Gerousia to limit the promises of the Great Rhetra to the hoplite class (common citizenry) using Plutarch’s Rider (Lycurgus 6.4; number 4 in list above). They were able to do so, not only because Argos was victorious but because the helots, enslaved in the First Messenian War, were beginning to revolt. Without the helots under the yoke of Spartan subjugation, Sparta’s new military-based society would not work. Cartledge likened this transformation to a kind of voluntary “internal mutation,” and this was the point that “transformed Sparta into a special kind of Greek city.” While many things most likely led to Sparta’s “transformation”, it is difficult to disagree with Cartledge’s description.

Pottery finds also illustrate a new shift in the seventh century, bearing eastern scenes as well as specialized potters. Fitzhardinge suggests that pottery, usually seen as a profession of perioikoi, might have even become a superior profession in which potters shared similar interests of the upper class. He also mentions the discovery of a kiln inside the city proper, suggesting that “at least until the sixth century the craft [pottery] was carried on inside the town and so probably by or on behalf of Spartans in the narrow sense”. This contradicts Herodotus’ remarks that Lacedaemonians hated craftsmen. Pettersson mentions that Laconian pottery (specifically Protogeometric) “was not used in social contexts to express status, but served to transmit a message of order and stability”. Pettersson, perhaps somewhat narrow-mindedly, focuses on the cult aspects of Laconia rather than the historical phenomena, which may explain this reference to pottery influencing “state” affairs.

418 Cartledge, Ancient Greece, 71.
419 Fitzhardinge, 41.
420 Ibid.
422 Pettersson, 100.
Cartledge calls Sparta a “repressive utopia,” whose community was completely focused on war for “self-preservation”.\(^{423}\) I do not necessarily disagree with the later part of Cartledge’s statement but, according to the above discussion, Sparta was not oppressive to its own citizenry; quite the contrary in fact. Sparta did rule and oppress many peoples but was always decent to its citizenry relative to the time period. In Sparta’s early history, Sparta experienced drastic fluctuations in population, it divided its political functions between political and socio-economic classes, it sent colonies to alleviate internal pressures, and it used political and military means to unify the region. Archaeologically, the “ Spartan way of life”, or extreme austerity, was not truly illustrated until after the Peloponnesian War when, according to Fitzhardinge, regional sculpture stopped.\(^{424}\) Contrary to general assumptions about Spartan isolationism, Sparta was concerned with sea trade, communications, and even craftsmanship. It remains an outlier because, unlike other poleis, it did not use “written” laws\(^{425}\) (unless you accept Plutarch’s rhetra as what was accepted) nor did it use city walls for protection or as a balance between external influences. Instead, Sparta used tradition and quick political action to alleviate pressures and provide laws, while also subjugating a whole group of people (helots) in order that the Spartans themselves, with the entirety of its citizenry, might defend their state. In essence, Sparta began as many different villages and unified these villages into an effective, lethal military camp. In effect, then, the Spartan polity functioned, according to Plutarch’s Lycurgus, as a moving wall that not only protected

\(^{423}\) Cartledge, The Spartans, 24.
\(^{424}\) Fitzhardinge, 88.
\(^{425}\) Plutarch (2005), Lycurgus 13; Herodotus often praises Spartan ‘law’, yet there is a difference between written law and unwritten law, as Gagarin would argue.
Laconia from external pressures in the North, but also absorbed the areas to the South, West and East, in turn creating a “balanced” polis.
The Archaic and Classical periods signified a new definition of the *polis*. After an initial balance had been established between external and internal influences, the *polis* started to be associated with its citizenry rather than an idealized fulcrum of physical structures and procedural laws. Physical structures had not completely lost their significance, but safety of the citizenry took precedence. Walls, which once illustrated safety and balance, were now abandoned with the city itself in order to escape mass persecution and war. When a citizenry abandoned its *polis*, however, the *polis* was not destroyed because the people would establish a new one elsewhere. While modern scholars can look at new settlements to describe entities of *poleis*, the destruction of a *polis* illustrated the specific physical structures that were emphasized in an earlier period. Herodotus and Thucydides both discuss these phenomena, though Thucydides better emphasizes the destruction of a *polis*.

*Herodotus and the Persian Wars*

Herodotus, hailed as the first historian by ancient and modern scholars, wrote *The Histories*, concerning the periods before the Peloponnesian War. While there are many writers that demonstrate entities of the *polis*, Herodotus is, in my opinion, the author that best illustrates the Archaic *polis*, focusing specifically on the creation and the abandoning
of poleis. He relates (although he might not have intended to) a shift between the older “physical” polis (walls, a surrounding territory, etc…) and a newer “citizen” polis. Law, among other things, facilitates this change. While Herodotus wrote extensively on cultures surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and beyond, I am more concerned with the ability of poleis to abandon land and physical structures while still remaining strong political units. This polis-evolution will reach its pinnacle in the late fifth century when Thucydides relates that men are the polis.

As I discussed in the earlier section entitled “Early Law,” Deioces became king of the Medes after holding the title of judge. His first act as king was to build a palace and a capital on top of a hill which was named Ecbatana. Walls were made around the city, similar to those of many Greek settlements, and the city itself was hierarchical in structure, the king’s territory occupying the two inner walls on top of the hill.426 While urban unification, defended by walls, was paramount in this circumstance, urbanization did not necessarily lead to a polis structure. The formation of one political center in a given territory, however, did.

The Ionians were a very powerful group in ancient Greek history. Ancient sources do account for Ionian migrations but none are definitive. Most, however, do at least agree that they have some foundation in Athens. The Ionians have their own poleis, are normally colonizers from the Greek mainland and have a very loose alliance with each other, comparable to the mainland Peloponnesian League. According to Herodotus, “The name [Ionians] applies to all who originate from Athens and keep the festival of the Apaturia (except Ephesus).”427 This festival acted as a religious bond between Athens

426 Herodotus, trans. Séïnecourt, 1.98f.
427 Ibid., 1.147.
and other Ionian cities. Their alliance of twelve poleis met at a sanctuary called the Panionium, dedicated to Poseidon, when the whole of Ionia was threatened by a large force (in most cases by an Eastern entity). 428 The Dorians, another migratory race situated on the mainland, had a similar practice with the Pentapolis at their temple named the Triopium.

Cyrus the Great subjugated many cities as his armies traveled further West. After their defeat, the Ionians met at the Panionium to discuss their options of capitulation, the first of which was for all Ionians to travel to Sardinia and establish a city and the second to establish a centralized government from the island of Teos, which the Teians had recently vacated. Darius, possibly the most influential expansionist Persian king, also conquered many cities in his expansion westward. Samians, from a large Ionian polis, abandoned their city to settle an area of Sicilian which was already inhabited by natives, rather than being slaves to Persia. A war was being waged in the area when they arrived and the Samians were fortunate enough to capture the city of Zancle when its inhabitants were unaware. 429 As Darius expanded the empire, he subjugated Thasos, in the same way the Athenians would before the Peloponnesian War, and ordered them to dismantle their fortifications and surrender their fleet. 430 The Eretrians, who inhabited some of the island of Euboea, were not persuaded by Darius’ threats and decided to defend their walls. 431

Physical structures under the threat of attack became less and less relevant for the continuity of a society, and for safety and function of the citizenry. These citizens, however, abandon their old polis to establish new physical structures which illustrates the

428 Ibid., 1.141.
429 Ibid., 6.22f.
431 Ibid., 6.101.
continuous necessity for a physical identity. While the importance of original physical identity decreases, the requirement of a new definition to define what a *polis* is seems paramount, developing into the Classical period.

*Thucydides*

Thucydides wrote that, before the Peloponnesian War, “never before had so many cities been taken and left desolate,” and these “cities” are termed as “poleis”. Does destroying a *polis* destroy the citizenry’s identity? Does destroying political cohesion equate to the destruction of the *polis*? If a *polis* is, as Thucydides states, its citizenry, then, by destroying the ability of a *polis* to protect its citizenry and possibly even the citizenry itself, a *polis* can be destroyed. This method of illuminating important aspects of the *polis* by examining its destruction provides an invaluable division of important characteristics.

The rivalry between the Peloponnesians and the Athenians had been around for nearly a century, each side accepting alliances to further its own personal needs. In 480/79, the Athenians, under command of Themistocles, decided to abandon Athens because of the likelihood it would be destroyed by the Persian army. This decision was made after the interpretation of the Delphic Oracle’s response that the Athenians’ “wooden walls” would not fall. Some politicians thought this response related to the wooden Mycenaean wall surrounding the Acropolis, but Themistocles correctly translated its meaning as the Athenian navy. The Athenians then proclaimed that all families in the city and in the countryside should move to Troezen, Aegina and

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432 Thucydides, 1.23.
433 Herodotus, trans. Sélincourt, 7.141-143.
Salamis.⁴³⁴ When Themistocles was trying to gain Peloponnesian support, a Corinthian told him that “he was a man without a city (ἀπόλι).” Themistocles replied, “So long as Athens had 200 warships in commission, she had a city and a land much stronger than theirs.”⁴³⁵ This statement illustrates that having a navy or “wooden walls” corresponds to preserving power and the ability to begin or subjugate a city.

Soon after the Athenian departure, the Persians entered and burned the city, including the Acropolis which was the embodiment of Athenian cult and hegemony. Later, the Persians were defeated in a naval battle at Salamis and were eventually expelled from Greece. Themistocles told the Athenians to rebuild the city walls as fast as possible, using any kind of stone, public or private, while he went to Sparta and delayed their delegation. The Spartans were fundamentally against any city having walls, possibly because Sparta itself, while a polis, was still configured as a village confederacy with no walls or because they were ineffective in siege warfare and having no walls would guarantee their dominance. They therefore sent an embassy to Athens to ask them not to rebuild their walls but to come with them on a campaign to pull down other cities’ walls so that no other foreign army might use them as a military base.⁴³⁶

Using every citizen, the Athenians elevated the wall “to such a height as was absolutely necessary for defense,” and Themistocles, still at Sparta, relayed the information that “the city was now walled and therefore, in a position to protect its inhabitants.”⁴³⁷ The personification of the polis in this situation, I believe, truly exemplifies a political community’s role as the primary defender of its citizens in the

⁴³⁴ Ibid., 8.41.
⁴³⁵ Ibid., 8.61.
⁴³⁶ Thucydides, 1.90.
⁴³⁷ Ibid., 1.89f; Plutarch (1960), Themistocles 19: “No sooner were these great achievements behind him, than he immediately took in hand the rebuilding and fortification of Athens.”
Classical period. The significance of speed in constructing the wall illustrates the extreme importance a defending wall might have for a polis. Twenty years later, the Athenians finished the “Long Walls” that connected the Piraeus, Athens’ harbor, to the city. Now all aspects of the polis were solidified: a defending wall, procedural laws that protected its citizenry and a physical connection with the sea through the fortified harbor.

After the Persian Wars ended in the early fifth century, former Persian-allied cities joined either the Athenians or the Spartans. Before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431, some Athenian allies were becoming intolerant of Athenian bureaucracy and resented the tribute they had paid to the alliance. When they tried to leave the alliance, the Athenians forced them to surrender and changed their status to tributary states, dependent on Athenian naval power for protection. While the Peloponnesian allies did destroy city-states, it was the Athenians that made it into a common practice, which actually began before the war. When a polis capitulated, normally after a siege, the Athenians would first pull down its walls and induce them to pay tribute.

One of the first casualties of the new Athenian resolve was Scyros, which the Athenians resettled with their own colonists after enslaving its people. Thasos, a former ally of Athens, was besieged for three years and surrendered. The Athenians pulled down their walls, took their fleet and then seized their very lucrative mines. In this situation, the walls were pulled down instead of resettling the territory with Athenian colonists. Why the sudden change? The distance from Athens most likely played a considerable role, but it could also be seen as a symbolic gesture. In taking away a city’s defenses, the Athenians took away the primary objective of a city-state, which was to

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438 Ibid., 1.18.
439 Thucydides, 1.98.
440 Ibid., 1.101.
protect its inhabitants. Making them dependent on Athenian military power for protection and Athenian law to settle disputes, the Thasians were assimilated into the Athenian Empire and, at least publicly and politically, ceased to maintain their communal identity.

In 456 the Athenians won a land battle against the Boeotians at Oenophyta, which gave them control of the entire region of Boeotia. After the battle, the Athenians pulled down the walls of a powerful Boeotian city named Tanagra and took hostages from the aristocratic Opuntian Locrians to ensure peace. In 455, the island of Aegina also capitulated to Athens, pulled down their walls, relinquished their fleet and became a tributary entity of the Empire. In 440, a major revolt of Ionian islands against the Athenians began. On the island of Samos, the Athenians made three counter walls to besiege the city while also blockading them by sea. This not only took away Samos’ access to their countryside but also made their harbor nearly irrelevant. The aspects of a polis that the Samians retained, since the walls were made equally useless by counter-siege works, were laws, and laws could easily be overturned by angry political parties, depending upon the length of the siege. The Samians surrendered nine months later: their walls were pulled down, their fleet was relinquished, hostages were given to the Athenians and they promised to pay the Athenian cost of the siege.

In 431, Pericles, a prominent political leader of Athens, proposed that they should relinquish their countryside and take refuge in the city-proper in order to prepare for the Peloponnesian War and diffuse Spartan military power on land. This proposal is not unlike the proposal made by Themistocles to abandon the city of Athens upon the Persian invasion of Attica. The difference is the aspects of the polis which were upheld. In the

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441 Ibid., 1.108.
442 Ibid., 1.117.
443 Ibid., 1.143.
second Persian War, the city of Athens was physically destroyed, taking away the role of the *polis* as a protector. The Athenians, however, retained their connection to the sea and their political identity, which is demonstrated in their communal resolve against the Persian threat and their fortification of the city. In Pericles’ proposal, the *polis* retained its primary role as “defender” and Athens preserved its connection to the sea and its laws. The regional boundary lines, however, were changed, taking away Athens’ hegemony over Attica and use of its farmland, if only temporarily, which was the main source of Athenian wealth in Attica.

The War itself focused on smaller city-states, which either revolted or were forced out of neutrality. After the Athenians and Corcyraeans defeated the Corinthians in a large sea battle in 434, the Athenians ordered the Potidaeans to pull down their walls, connecting them to the Pallene Isthmus, break colonial ties with Corinth and send hostages to Athens.444 When the Potidaeans were under siege by the Athenians on land and sea, Perdiccas, King of Macedon, persuaded all the Chalcidians to destroy all their cities and settle in one urban center at Olynthus.445 In 432, Athens instituted the Megarian Decree, which banned all Megarians from using Athenian ports. Since Megara was situated on an isthmus that had very little arable land, this decree, in effect, destroyed Megara’s economy and forced them into starvation. With the implementation of this decree, one of Megara’s fundamental *polis* features, a functioning harbor, was circumvented.446

The city of Plataea was of great military importance to the Boeotian Confederacy, though allied with Athens. In 431, an opposing political party in Plataea betrayed the city

444 Ibid., 1.61.
445 Ibid., 1.63.
446 Ibid., 1.67.
to the Thebans at night, but the people of Plataea rose in defense of the city and either killed, captured or chased out the invading Thebans. The Theban army was told by the Plataeans that, if the Theban army ceased hostilities outside the walls and left the territory, the Plataeans would return the captured Thebans to them. Once the Theban army was out of Plataean territory, however, the Plataeans broke their oath and killed all the captives. After a four-year siege by Thebes’ Peloponnesian allies, Plataea surrendered; over 200 men inside were killed and the few women were sold into slavery. The city itself was given to the Megarians after their expulsion by the Athenians from Megara. Eventually, the Peloponnesians razed the entire city to the ground and built a large inn for the sanctuary precinct of Hera.

In 427, the island of Lesbos, led by the city of Mytilene, revolted from the Athenian Empire. When Peloponnesian aid did not arrive, an aristocrat armed the “commoners,” intending to attack the Athenians, but the commons turned on the aristocrats and persuaded them to surrender to the Athenian army. Later, a debate ensued at Athens over the punishment of Mytilene. At first, the Athenian assembly voted to execute every person in the city, but the vote was overturned the next day and instead the Athenians pulled down their walls, took their fleet and killed 1000 of the anti-Athenian party.

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447 Ibid., 2.1-6.
449 Ibid., 3.27-29.
450 Ibid., 3.49f.
In 416, the small island of Melos in the Cyclades, a colony of the Lacedaemonians but an Athenian ally, was besieged by Athens.\(^{451}\) Thucydides’ *Melian Dialogue* in Book 5 illustrates a complete destruction of a *polis*, as well as the philosophical problem of “might vs. right”. After speeches were made by both the Athenians and the Melians, the Melians refused to surrender and the Athenians started a siege. Being a small city-state, the Melians soon surrendered, and the Athenians killed all the men, enslaved the women and children and resettled the town with 500 of their own colonists.

The theme of resettlement, demonstrated in many cases, before and during the Peloponnesian War, raises difficult subjects. If a *polis* was resettled, were the colonists a part of their original *polis* or a new *polis*? Corcyra, in terms of colonization, is atypical because it did not give Corinth the normal rights a mother-city deserved. If an area was resettled, it was difficult for the new group of colonists to completely shed their mother-city’s institutions or the expelled inhabitants’ customs (if they survived). A colony therefore, became an amalgamation of both the former and the latter.\(^{452}\)

While a good deal of destruction can be attributed to the Athenian Empire during the Peloponnesian War, Athens, after the Sicilian Expedition and other disastrous events, surrendered in 404 BCE to the Peloponnesian Allies. Xenophon, Thucydides’ successor, wrote that, while the Corinthians and other allies wanted to destroy the Athenians completely, the Spartans “would not enslave a Greek city which had done such great

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\(^{452}\) For more information on colonization see section “Colonization”. 

120
things for Greece at the time of her supreme danger.\textsuperscript{453} They therefore resolved to pull down the Long Walls and the fortifications of the Piraeus, seize the Athenian fleet, recall the political refugees whom the Athenians had exiled and, most importantly, bind Athens to the Peloponnesian League through the foreign policy and military command of the Spartans.

Sparta might not have called themselves an “empire” like the Athenians, but they did have control over the Peloponnesian League, in which every member agreed to submit to have the same allies and enemies as the Spartans, as well as submitting to Spartan military command while on campaign. If these acts (pulling down a city-state’s walls, taking their fleet and having them be dependent on another political entity) were not considered “slavery” by the Spartans, then what was? Other states of the Peloponnesian League wanted to destroy Athens, yet Sparta said they would not “enslave” another Greek state. Does this statement mean that destroying a city equals slavery? Were the Melians, for example, “slaves” of the Athenians after the Athenians resettled Melos with its own settlers? Reverting back to the example of Thasos, which the Athenians subjugated, what the Spartans did to Athens was exactly what they said the Athenians were doing to other poleis. In fact, the final attempt at peace was made by the Lacedaemonians to Athens by stating, “The Lacedaemonians desire peace, and there will be peace if you [Athens] give the Hellenes their independence.”\textsuperscript{454} Whether by poetic justice or mercy, the Spartans subjugated the Athenians in the same manner in which they had subjugated their empire.

\textsuperscript{454} Thucydides, 1.139.
Chapter 5
Conclusions

The *polis* is an extremely diverse and complex subject. The definition of a *polis* adheres to the way one chooses to approach it, whether archaeologically, philologically, or anthropologically. Starting from the “beginning,” as Aristotle did, and dissecting formations of physical structures and political ideas will aid in defining this topic. The *polis* itself has Bronze Age roots and Archaic continuation, illustrating its importance as a word as well as an idea. The *oikos*, the first unit of social organization, was dominant through many early periods. After the post-Mycenaean age, however, when regional populations began to rise, the *oikos*-system of government became unacceptable. Almost from necessity, especially seen through morphological models, the *polis* emerged, combining older *oikos*-archetypes with newer notions of incorporation into the state.

The *polis* was only able to become fundamental to social life because it created equilibrium between internal and external influences. Internally, people in areas all over Greece, from a very early period, had very little communication with the government under which they lived. Leaders of large and influential families controlled most land and wealth, a factor which was not conducive to a balanced and efficient society. In order to “keep the peace” between different socio-economic, as well as tribal, levels of a *polis*, wealthier people implemented procedural laws which protected the *status quo*. Physical
structures, such as walls and extra-urban sanctuaries, protected the *polis* from invaders while also creating a boundary between a *polis*-dominated territory and a neighbor’s territory. Religion played a larger role than this, however, as extra-urban sanctuaries also were the embodiment of a legitimate claim over an outlying territory, as well as a statement of political cohesion within a territory. As populations increased, *poleis* were starved for more land, either sending out colonies or forcefully annexing surrounding territories in order to alleviate internal pressures and combine regional, social entities into a centralized unit. Even though Athens, Corinth, Thebes, and Sparta are different in later periods, their initial formations closely resemble such a process.

The concept of the *polis* changed over time, meaning something different in four different periods; however, it has a recurring theme in all these periods: balance. Physical structures in the “Homeric” and Archaic periods provided a foundation on which to allow more people to participate in government. By the Classical period, the definition of the *polis* shifted from incorporation and balance through physical structures to the citizenry itself. “Men,” according to Thucydides, “were the *polis*”; Herodotus had discussed this relating to the Archaic period and Classical periods, but this definition of a *polis* was most prevalent in the Peloponnesian War. Physical structures were still important for characterizing the *polis*, however, which is evident through the destruction of *poleis*, specifically during the Peloponnesian War.

At the beginning of this paper, I said that I was trying to avoid defining the *polis*. Is it a citadel? A large town? Is it an urban entity? Does it incorporate rural or even hinterlands? The *polis* is a physical entity while also a cultural value. It means different
things in different time periods and in different regions. What can be applied generally to poleis is the theme of balance, evolving from early social and physical structures.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


129


APPENDIX A

Homeric Hymn 8: Hymn to Ares

Herēs ὑπερμενέτα, βρισάρματε, χρυσεοπήληξ,
obrimōthyme, fēraspi, polissoe, xalkokorustā,
kartepōcheir, āmōgyte, doresthenez, ērkoz Oλύmpo,
Nīkhe eüpolēmou pāter, sūnaraγhe Θémiostos,
ántibiosi τūرانne, dīkaiotātov āgē fωtōn,
ēnōrēhe sκηpτouχe, puranγēa kūklon ēλīsson
aiθérōs ēptapōrōs ēnī teīresiν, ēnθa se pōlōi
ζαφλεγέεz tritātēs ūpēr āntugos aiēn ēoxusi:
kλūthi, brotōn ēpīkoure, dotēr eūtharssēz ḫbhs,
prihe katastulβion sēlaζ υψόθεn ēς biiōttata
ēmetēρhe kai kārtoz ārhion, ōζ ke dūnaiṁhe
sēuasθai kakōttata pīkrēn ἀp’ ēmōio karīνou,
kai pugxēs ἀpataθlōn ύpogνāmpsi φresiν ōrmēn,
θυμων aū mēnōs ōζū kaiθiōsθemēν, ōζ m’ érēθhs
φυλόπιδος κρυερῆs ēpibainēmeν: āllā σū θάρσοζ

δός, μάκαρ, εἰρήνης τε μένειν ἐν ἀπήμοσι θεσμοῖς
dυσμενέων προφυγόντα μόθον Κῆράς τε βιαίους.
Τύρταεο όρθρος ἀναξ ἐκαέργος Ἀπόλλων ἀρχεῖαι μὲν βουλῇ θεοτιμήτους βασιλῆας,
πρεσβυγενεῖς τε γέροντας. ἔπειτα δὲ δημότας άνδρας εὐθείην ρήτρας ἀνταμειβομένους:
μυθεῖσθαί τε τὰ καλὰ καὶ ἔρδειν πάντα δίκαια,
νίκην τε δήμου καὶ κάρτος ἕπεσθαι.
Φοῖβος γὰρ περὶ τὸν ὤδ' ἀνέφηνε πόλει.