

## Greece textbook page

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Learn about Ancient Greece's formations, warriors, and weapons in this 4 page assignment.

### Greece warriors

To be a strong warrior in Greece you had to be rich. Rich citizens became heavily armoured **hoplites** (heavily armoured soldiers with spear and shield). Poorer people became weakly armoured archers. Their warriors are regular Greek citizens except for the highly skilled army of Sparta. The mounted cavalry of Greece used curved sword blades designed to deliver a heavy slashing blow. The hoplites most valuable piece of armour is their shield; they used it to bash the enemy as well as for protection. The hoplite is the main soldier of Greece. Rich citizens would afford better quality armour than others. Many people believed Greek warriors were some of the best fighters. Hoplites carried a short iron sword to use if the spear was lost.



Figure 1: Hoplite warrior

#### Did you know?

Greeks had to buy their own armour.

### Sparta



Figure 2: Spartans

Sparta was a little strange and frightening city. In Sparta people trained for war every day. They looked fierce and killed any **helots** (captured people from defeated lands) found outdoors after dark. Sparta was very warlike with great power so its army wasn't all Greek farmers willing to fight. It had fixed soldiers. There is a legend saying it was founded by **Lacedaemon**, son of **Zeus**. Sparta also reached the best of its power when they defeated **Athens** in the Peloponnesian War in 431-404 B.C. When they are 7, Spartan boys start training to become a warrior. Spartan women are not allowed in the military but

they get more freedom than most Greek women because Spartans

are professional soldiers and all labour work is done by captured slaves. Unfortunately their dominance didn't last long, in 371 B.C. Sparta was conquered by **Thebes** at the battle of Leuctra. Sparta's population was three main groups: Spartans- full city citizens, Helots- slaves



who did all the work, and *Perioeci*- neither of them, people who dwell around the city. Sparta's way of life would have been impossible without Helots to do all the labour and hard work. Another thing is that Spartans were outnumbered about seven to one by helots so they treated them brutally to prevent them from attacking.

## Weapons

The favourite weapon of the Greeks is the spear, also called the *Dory*. Their second preferred weapon is the special sword *Xiphos*. Greeks avoided long-range weapons like bows and arrows as much as possible because they were considered cowardly. There was a sharp spike at the butt of a spear if the top was broken off. The spear is 7-9 feet long. Later on the Macedonians developed their own type of spear that was twice as long as the original and was wielded with two hands. Another thing is that the most successful



Figure 3: Xiphos

sword design came from the Greeks. The Xiphos is a double edged, 1-handed, straight short sword. It is also 50-60cm type of sword called *Kopis*. blade meant for thrusting only had one edge and is with a curved blade. The knife with forward cutting shield Apsis. The shield is diameter. Another weapon was used as a long- range length of about 3 feet. It

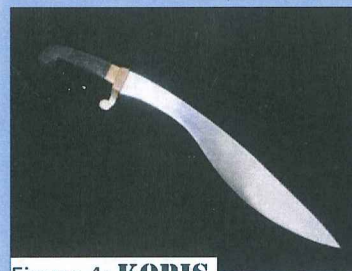


Figure 4: KOPIS

handedly. Kopis regularly had a 48cm blade and it looked like it got bent toward the front. Horsemen used Kopis so they could deliver a heavy slashing blow. One of the most powerful weapons of Greece was the *Ballista*; it was most effective in a siege.

Greeks also used a Kopis had a long curved and cutting in battle. Kopis kind of like a large knife meaning of Kopis is "heavy blade", and called their about 3-3.5 feet in they used was the javelin; it weapon to throw with a was wielded single-

## Battle Formations

The most famous battle formation for the Greeks is called the *Phalanx*. The Phalanx is a wall of shields with spear points sticking out. Warriors in the first few ranks held their spears sticking out while the rest of the army held them up slightly slanting toward the front. If the Warriors in the first few ranks were killed then the ones in the next lines put them down. If the Phalanx was broken, the battle was lost.

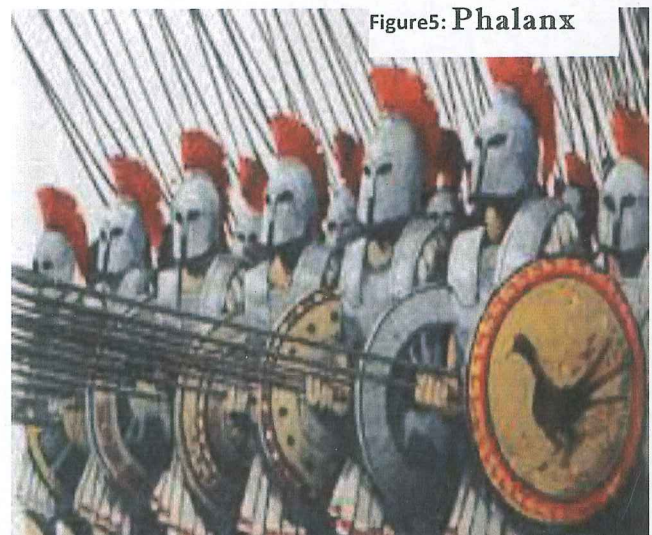


Figure5: Phalanx



In the Phalanx every troop fought together as a group. Since a Phalanx was very tightly packed, it was hard to turn.

### Warships

The fastest Greek warship there ever was is the **Trireme**. The trireme required 170 oarsmen to row it who sat on three different levels. It had a large brass ram used to smash enemy ships. The ram was at water level. Most Triremes had two linen sails. Athens had 400 Triremes in its navy. The length of a Trireme is about 37 meters. It is meant to be a warship but sometimes people used it to carry cargo. The Trireme also has an eye painted at the prow of the boat to scare away bad spirits that could mess up the voyage. The long and thin structure of the boat enables it to go six knots every hour (1knot=1852meters). The crew of a Trireme is 197 men, the captain, 10 dignitaries, 2 archers, 14 soldiers, and 170 oarsmen. It is made of fir-tree so it could be lighter. The boat was very effective at that time because it could travel at speeds that weren't available at that time. It was pretty unreliable in rough seas because of its light weight but it is most effective near shore. It is meant for short trips because the light wood can get waterlogged so it is beached for the night.

Figure 6: Greek trireme



Did you know?

**Wow!!!**

Spartans reduced Athens massive navy to 20 in the Peloponnesian war.

### Athens

Athens was also like Sparta, one of the most powerful cities in Greece. It was also famous for its famous acropolis, the most famous and sacred place of Athens. In the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC it was a great place of learning, art, and theater. It was also named after **Athena**, goddess of wisdom and warfare which is obvious from the name. You were only considered a citizen if you were male, all women were excluded and not treated properly. Women were also not allowed to have some rights to do things that men did. In 490 BC Sparta and Athens teamed up to take down the vast army of Persians only to become complete enemies and have a war at 431 BC

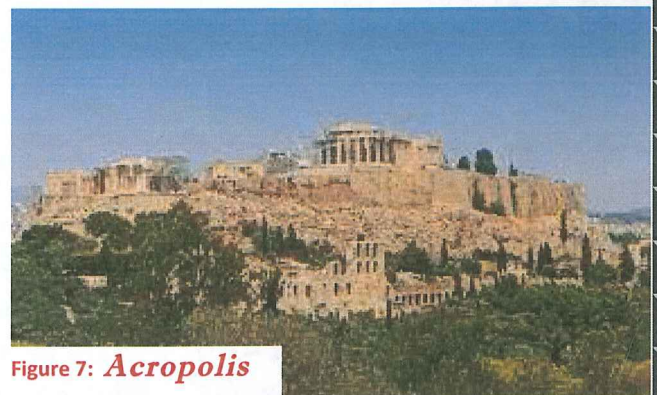


Figure 7: **Acropolis**



which resulted in Athens 400 trireme navy becoming reduced to about 20. When at age 18, boys joined the army for 2 years and then became a citizen.

### **Most important battles of ancient Greece**

- Peloponnesian war in 431-404 BC (Athens vs Sparta)
- Battle of Thermopylae, 480 BC (Greeks vs Persians)
- Macedonians take over Greece
- Later Romans defeated Macedonians for control of Greece.

Figure 8: **Persian war**



### **Questions**

1. How big is the crew of a Trireme?
2. What was the most famous battle formation of ancient Greece? Describe it.
3. What is the ancient Greek name of their spear?
4. Who conquered Sparta?

#### **Answers**

1. 197 men.
2. The Phalanx. It is a wall of shields with spear points sticking out.
3. The Dory.
4. Thebes.

#### **Did you know?**

Even though it was the most warlike, Sparta was the city with the most freedom in Greece.

**OMG!!!**

#### **Did you know?**

The eye on a trireme is meant to scare away evil spirits.

**COOL!!!**

### **Conclusion**

I hope you have learned a lot about Greece's weapons, formations, and warriors in this 4 page project. In the end the Macedonians took over Greece and then they were taken over by Romans and the interesting life of the Greeks came to an end. No matter how unbelievable something may sound its true.