

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Classical Age as a Historical Epoch

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## 1 Introduction

To call the epoch in Greek history between the end of the great Persian War in 479/8 and the death of Alexander the Great in 323 the ‘Classical Age’ poses a problem. This is, admittedly, not a problem waiting to be solved and then set aside – rather, this problem is provocative, insolubly imprecise and perhaps still a challenge. The use of the term ‘Classical’ for a particular epoch in Greek history and ‘Classics’ for a branch of higher learning, and the term ‘Classical Studies’ for an entire discipline, makes one thing unmistakably clear: modern study of ancient history was at the very outset, for a long time continued to be, and indeed has ever since been inextricably associated with aesthetic, qualitative and normative ideas. When in the middle of the eighteenth century, i.e., long before the major archaeological excavations in Greece, Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–68) began his study of ancient art, far fewer remains of this art existed or were accessible than is the case today. The relatively few pieces of sculpture which had not become buried – all Roman copies of original Greek masterpieces – were for Winckelmann, however, not only the remains of a bygone era, but above all examples of a consummate artistic view of man. His description of the Apollo Belvedere begins with the sentence: ‘The statue of Apollo represents the highest artistic ideal of all the surviving works of antiquity.’ In his *Reflections on Painting and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1755, English trans. 1765), Winckelmann formulated the credo of a new Humanism: ‘The only way for us to become great, or even inimitable if possible, is to imitate the Greeks’ (on all this in general, Marchand 1996).

The rediscovery of Greece, fostered primarily by the drawings and descriptions of buildings in Athens by James Spratt and Nicholas Revett (*The Antiquities of Athens*, 4 vols, 1762–1808), and the championing of freedom by the Philhellenes increased the feeling of affinity with the ancient Greeks. This was expressed most succinctly in the famous words of the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822): ‘We are all

Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their roots in Greece' (on Shelley, Wallace 1997). When in the wake of the French Revolution in Europe political parties began to take shape, they all sought and found their political and cultural guarantors in the Greeks (Morris 1994: 29–30). From the perspective of conservatives, Greece stood for order, tradition and self-discipline, while for liberals like George Grote, the ancient Athenians in particular were the ideal of the active citizen, whereas for radicals like Shelley, the Hellenes represented the combination of republicanism, liberty and living life to the full. Even kings could attain self-glorification by formal recourse to the Greeks: in 1802, Antonio Canova created a colossal nude marble portrait statue of Napoleon, in a Greek pose, holding Victory on a sphere in his outstretched hand, striking the same pose as Pheidias' Athena in the Parthenon (Boardman 1993: pl. IV).

This power of the Greek ideal exerted a very significant influence on the study of the Hellenes, at least at the outset. For instance, Ernst Curtius (1814–96), the excavator of Olympia and author of a widely read *History of Greece* (English ed. in 5 vols, 1868–73), in a public lecture in 1844 still emphasized completely in this spirit the importance of the Akropolis in Athens: 'The breath of new life has crossed from there into our art *and scholarship* [my emphasis].' To this very day every serious definition of the term 'classical' (for a general discussion, Porter 2006, intro., with further bibliography) must place this idea of impulse and dynamics in the foreground. 'Classical' means something old, which has stood the test of time and speaks to every generation as if it had been designed for precisely that generation. It is obvious, however, that not all previous eras could be regarded as equally creative in this sense. The Apollo Belvedere, Winckelmann's model, was produced about 330–320 (Figure 1.1; Boardman 1993: no. 133), and the buildings on the Akropolis in the second half of the fifth century – accordingly, both in the 'Classical Period' of Greek art and Greek history. In connection with the structures from the time of Perikles – not only those on the Akropolis – Plutarch offered the following comment in the second century CE:

For every particular piece of his work was immediately, even at that time, for its beauty and elegance, antique; and yet in its vigour and freshness looks to this day as if it were just executed. There is a sort of bloom of newness upon those works of his, preserving them from the touch of time, as if they had some perennial spirit and undying vitality mingled in the composition of them. (Plutarch *Perikles* 13.2; trans. J. Dryden)

By contrast, in modern study of classical antiquity, especially in Greek and Roman history, this value-laden affinity between classical Greece and our own time is cited as a mere convention or vigorously denied. A statement by the German ancient historian Christian Meier may suffice for the first position:

In describing the characteristic features of Greek civilization, it is customary to invoke the concept of the 'classical' – a model for many, the attraction of which lay in all that had been achieved, experienced and represented, within the narrow confines of the world of the polis, in terms of accomplishments, of intellectual questions and matching up to the questioning, of human greatness and commensurability with events. (Meier 1990: 25)

In opposition to this convention, it is currently fashionable to emphasize precisely the strangeness of the Greeks. According to Cartledge, the object is 'to defamiliarize

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**Figure 1.1** The Apollo Belvedere, c. 330–320 BCE. Ht. 2.24 m. Roman marble copy of the original bronze. Vatican Museums, Rome. Photo: Hirmer Verlag München.

Classical Greek civilization, to fracture that beguilingly easy identification with the ancient Greeks which reached a climax in post-Enlightenment Germany, Second Empire France, and Victorian Britain, and which still has its residual adherents today, partly no doubt for political rather than purely academic reasons' (Cartledge 1993: 175). This historicizing often takes on the character of vigorous iconoclasm, in which exclusion and suppression of slaves, women, foreigners and the underprivileged in everyday life and in the mentality of the Greeks are emphasized (e.g., Cohen 2000; von den Hoff & Schmidt 2001). Moreover, the concerted efforts since the mid-1980s to conduct a 'more realistic discourse which treats Greek and Eastern Mediterranean history as a continuum and thereby begins to dissolve the intrinsically racist distinction between "Greek" and "oriental"' (Davies 2002: 235–6) point in this direction. The relevant specialized studies admittedly concentrate rather on the Archaic Period. More recent general introductions to Greek history, in which the word 'classical' appears in the title (e.g., Davies 1993; cf. Osborne 2000), are not, however, essentially different in their conceptual orientation from those studies which avoid the term and indicate their subject by means of simply a neutral date (e.g., Hornblower 2002; *CAH*<sup>2</sup> 5 and 6). In the political and 'realistically' written grand narrative histories of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by George Grote, Karl Julius Beloch and Eduard Meyer, and even in Jacob Burckhardt's four-volume *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (1898–1902; Burckhardt 1998), the term 'classical' is not found in either the title or the chapter heading of a single one. For these authors, however, the principal importance of ancient history and culture was still completely self-evident. Then, however, within the context of the new intellectual approach after the First World War, scholars adopted the concept of 'classical' (see Jaeger 1931; Reinhardt 1941; Borbein 1995).

## 2 Classical – Primarily as a Feature in Literature and Art

The word 'classic', which means 'regarded as representing an exemplary standard' and 'outstanding of its kind', is derived from the Latin adjective *classicus*, 'member of a tax class (*classis*)'; *classicus* belongs to the vocabulary of Roman social hierarchy. The learned Roman writer Cornelius Fronto (second century CE) used it in an evaluative and superlative sense to designate outstanding writers (*classicus, assiduusque scriptor, non proletarius*: 'a high-ranking and authoritative writer, not one of the common herd', Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 19.8.15). In the sense of 'first class', and therefore by inference also 'exemplary', the word appears for the first time in French. In 1548, Thomas Sébillet (1512–89), in his *Art poétique françois*, spoke of *les bons et classiques poètes françois* ('the excellent and classic French poets'); he had in mind a number of the 'exemplary' poets of the Middle Ages. Since only ancient writers, however, were regarded as exemplary within the context of humanist education, the adjective 'classical' was soon reserved only for them – and referred almost exclusively to non-Christian writers. Accordingly, the term 'Classical antiquity' refers to the pagan Greeks and Romans from Homer to late antiquity. The concept 'classical' retained its qualitative meaning, but could be identified with a very specific period or several periods, whose cultural achievements were regarded as outstanding and exemplary. Voltaire (1694–1778), accordingly, called the era of Perikles, the Age of Augustus

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**Table 1.1** The Classical Age

Art				Political History			
	Epoch	Style	Significant sculptures and buildings	Epoch	Significant events		
490	Early Classical	'Severe style'	Critian Boy (c. 485–480) Tyrannicides (476) Temple of Zeus in Olympia (c. 465–460)	Persian Wars (499–479)	Battle of Marathon (490) Battle of Salamis (480)	490	Bipolar Greece (478–404)
480				Pentekontaetia (478–432)	Rise of the Athenian Empire (since 478)	480	
470						470	
460						460	
450						450	
440	High Classical	Parthenon (448–432) Doryphoros (c. 440) Kresilas' portraiture of Perikles (c. 430)	'Age of Perikles' (450–429)			440	
430			Peloponnesian War (431–404)	430			
420				420			
410				410			
400				400			
390	Late Classical	'Rich style'	Eirene of Ke-phi-so-do-tos (c.375)   Apollo Belvedere	Sparta Struggle for hegemony Thebes (404–338)	'King's Peace' (387/6) Battle of Leuktra (371) Battle of Mantinea (362)	390	Multipolar Greece (394–361)
380						380	
370						370	
360						360	
350						350	
340				Macedonian hegemony	Battle of Chaironeia (338) Alexander in Asia (since 334)	340	Greece dominated (since 338)
330						330	
320						320	
				HELLENISM			

### HELLENISM

and that of Louis XIV each a 'Golden Age' – and associated with them 'classical' authors who were a characteristic feature of each of these cultural high-points. In the nineteenth century this emphasis in terminology, which was at the same time accompanied by a narrowing in meaning, entered the field of Classical Studies. Now works written in the fifth and fourth centuries, chiefly in Athens and in the Attic dialect, were designated as 'classical Greek literature'. While the nature of our sources, mostly written in the Attic dialect, determined the Athenocentricity of the Classical model, it was only too easy to corroborate it by quoting from the ancient authors. The historian Thucydides (c. 460–400) called Athens the 'School of Hellas' (*paideia tes Hellados*) (Thuc. 2.41.1), and Plato (428–347) praised his home town as the 'very sanctuary of the wisdom of Greece' (Plato *Protagoras* 337D).

As could already be learned from Winckelmann, Stuart and Curtius, Greek antiquity of the fifth and fourth centuries did not exert a lasting influence in art in only the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is not the place to discuss the periods and the problem of Classicism (for a succinct overview, see *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Deluxe Edition CD-ROM 2001): entries 'Classicism' and 'Neoclassicism'). In all the branches of Classical Studies, however, it is probably Classical archaeology that is most profoundly characterized by the 'Classical' ideal of form and expression. At the same time, it was influenced by literature on the history of art, and again by Winckelmann, who was exclusively engaged in clarifying the development of styles in the various art genres. Since the 1920s the normative, and therefore, strictly speaking, the timeless notion of 'classical' simultaneously denotes a specific phase in a historical development (the fifth and fourth centuries) – a phase which is regarded as the qualitative pinnacle. Scholars attempted to explain the outstanding virtues of Classical art – harmony, balance and



**Figure 1.2** The Critian Boy, c. 485–480 BCE. Athens Akropolis Museum. Ht. 1.17 m. DAI, Athens. Neg. No. 1972/2938. Photographer: Hellner.

general validity – by claiming that the Classical Period lay between an Archaic era mired in tradition and a Hellenistic Period characterized by individualism. In the Classical Period the tensions between tradition and self-determination, between adherence to the polis and individualism, self-control and striving for power, it was argued, developed into a dialectic process. Sculpture no less than tragedy, historiography and philosophy strove to express these tensions, to reflect them, and to overcome them (see Pollitt 1972; Borbein 1993). Such explanations may be of interest as documents of a meta-historical character. No one nowadays, however, would consider the Archaic Period merely as an epoch of departure rather than fulfilment (a stage that could by definition be reached only during the Classical Period), or see Hellenism as the dissolution and decay of the zenith reached by the classical forms.

Archaeologists, however, believe themselves to be on firmer ground when it comes to working out an internal division of the Classical Period on the basis of prominent works of sculpture. The diagnostic starting point was contraposition, which gave a more natural appearance than the stiff poses of the older figures. By shifting the weight to the supporting leg, the figure created the impression of actually moving. Contraposition affected the entire figure, so that it now emerged as a unified organism. In this sense the Critian Boy (Figure 1.2; Boardman 1993: 88) represents a decisive step from the Archaic to the Classical Period.

Classical art strives for perfection, but at the same time provides scope for change and creative competition. On the one hand, this quality corroborates Winckelmann's idea and that of the Neo-Humanists, but, on the other, it warns against the danger of inertia which threatens everything Classical. The Classical archaeologist John Boardman describes this feature as follows:

The 'classical orders' of architecture carry connotations of fixed rules and forms which, however, as study shows, were not blindly followed as a pattern-book, but which served as models within which subtleties of design and proportion could be exercised. In 'classical art' there are rules too, including a certain agreement to observe realistic rendering of the human figure, but generally in terms of ideal forms which might be rendered with as great precision as the architectural forms, and yet leave the artist the fullest scope for individual expression. What the neo-classicists did not realize was that idealization and a degree of truth to nature were not incompatible, and had been successfully reconciled in the Classical Period... This was the message of the Parthenon marbles. In some ways there were more rules in classical art than in arts of other cultures, but they were not restrictive. Indeed, they provided a basis for the development of the widest range of expression, both formal and humane. They guaranteed continuity without stifling change, and herein must lie their strength and durability, the reason why time and again artists have returned to them for inspiration and guidance (Boardman 1993: 8–9).

### **3 Could the Greeks of the Classical Period have Known the Concept We Describe as 'Classical'?**

Although, as noted above, 'classical' is essentially a modern concept, the actual phenomenon already existed much earlier – i.e., in the 'Classical Period' itself. It is therefore legitimate to continue to use the term, and this not simply for reasons of

convention. Already in the second half of the fifth century at least one artist and one historian each boasted of having created a work that could claim to be a model and would be a standard for future activity far beyond their own day. First, the sculptor Polykleitos of Sikyon produced exclusively statues of a single type – the nude standing youth. He perpetually produced works characterized by pose, rhythm and vivid articulation. Polykleitos was also the first artist ever to discuss this type in a (lost) work entitled *Kanon*. This treatise probably gave guidelines on the proportion of the ideal male body on the basis of a mathematical ratio designed to guarantee a supernatural beauty. Second, the historian Thucydides of Athens claimed that with his *History of the Peloponnesian War* he was writing a practical manual for statesmen, ‘compiled not for a contest of the moment, but as a possession for all time’ (*ktema es aiei*: Thuc. 1.22.4). It is no accident that Polykleitos and Thucydides were sooner or later to become the centre of the discussion on Classicism.

In retrospect, especially after the turning point of the Peloponnesian War (431–404), the extraordinary achievements of the three preceding generations were readily acknowledged, although in general there was no let-up in creativity, and in some areas, e.g., in rhetoric and philosophical prose, the greatest achievements still lay in the future. In respect of tragedy, the view soon became widespread that after Aischylos, Sophokles and Euripides, only second-rate poets were still active, who were no longer able to hold a candle to the three great tragedians (cf. Aristophanes *Frogs* 71–2; 96–7, written in 405).

From 386 the staging of earlier plays was also permitted in the tragic competitions, and in 338 Lykourgos, one of the leading politicians in Athens, took it upon himself to ensure that official texts of these ‘classical’ plays were established and stored in the state archives. These texts were to be mandatory for future re-runs. Otherwise, statues of the three tragic poets were erected in the newly renovated Theatre of Dionysos. This measure, along with others, was designed both to preserve Athens’ great past and also to rekindle it (Hintzen-Bohlen 1996). Then, in the Hellenistic Period, it was the great schools and libraries, especially the Mouseion in Alexandria (from 280 BCE), where inventories and texts were drawn up of those Greek authors who were regarded as most representative of each category: the nine lyric poets, the three tragedians, the ten Attic orators, etc. These authors, ‘who had stood the test of time’ (*qui vetustatem pertulerunt*, Quintilian *Institutio* 10.1.40), became ‘canonical’, and much of the scholarship of the time was devoted to their preservation, classification, and exegesis (Easterling 2002). In combination with the concept of *paideia*, the Alexandrians presented themselves, as a certain Andron puts it, as ‘educators of all the world, of both Greeks and barbarians’ (*FGrHist* 246 F 1; on *paideia*, still fundamental, Jaeger 1954–61).

In Attic sculpture, too, there were already in the fourth century stylistic references back to the fifth century, which conveyed a political statement. Thus the Eirene (the goddess of peace), produced by Kephisodotos about 370, was designed to celebrate Athens’ rise once again after the defeat of 404 (Figure 1.3; Stewart 1990: 173–4, 275–6, plates 485–7). The arrangement of the drapery recalls the style of Pheidias, who in the heyday of Athens, between 460 and 430, produced, among other works, the bronze statue of Athena Promachos, at least seven metres high, and the chryselephantine Athena Parthenos, more than twelve metres high (for a reconstruction of the latter, see Boardman 1993: no. 106A). Otherwise, it is precisely in the most

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**Figure 1.3** The Peace Goddess Eirene and the Boy Pluto. Ht. 2.01 m. Roman marble copy after a statue by Kephisodotos the Elder, active c. 375 BCE. Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, Munich. Photo: akg- images.

advanced works by the artists of the late Classical Period, like Praxiteles and Lysippos, that there is an unmistakable flashback to works of the fifth century. These were viewed as models – in other words, ‘classical’. Lysippos is said to have regarded the famous Doryphoros (‘spearbearer’) of Polykleitos (Figure 1.4; Boardman 1993: no. 93) as his model (Cicero *Brutus* 296).

From the last third of the fifth century the Athenians regarded their own exploits in the legendary past and in the period of the Persian wars as exemplary. Within a short time the orators who extolled the ancestors in the funeral speeches (*epitaphioi logoi*) at the annual public burial of those who had fallen in battle developed a canon of exploits which were repeated over and over (Loraux 1986). Lavish praise was heaped in particular on the generation of those who fought at Marathon. Despite the great pride which these orations evoked, it is possible to detect a certain regret that the great former days were probably no longer attainable, at least morally.

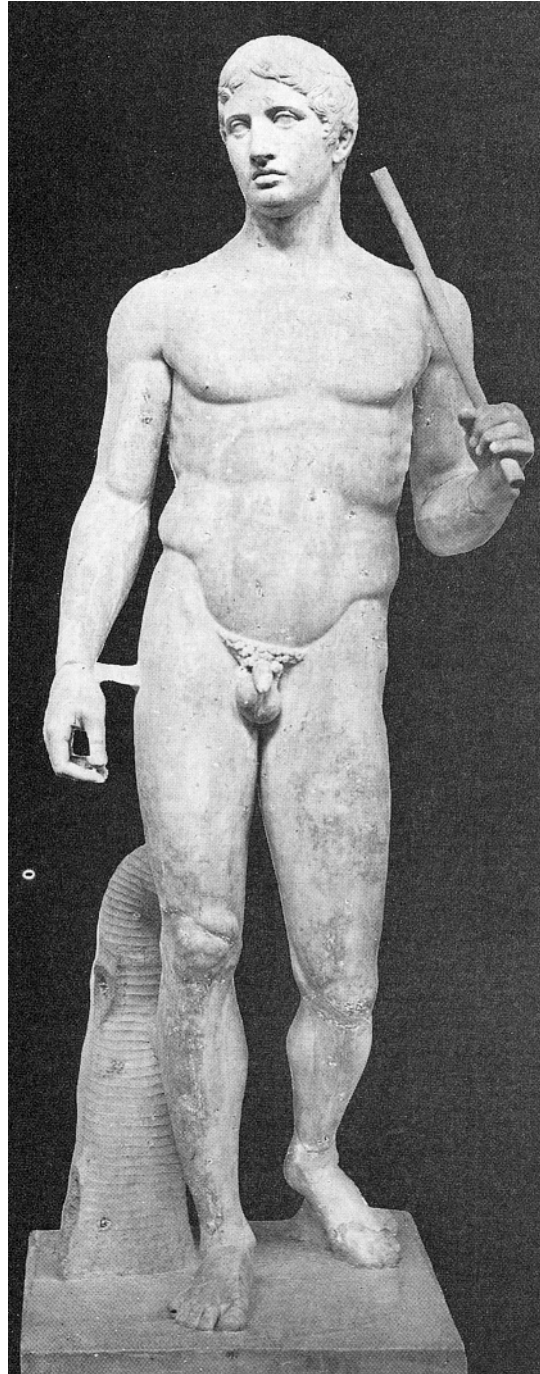
In political philosophy it was possible to go a step further, and not seek the ‘classical’ model in a superlative past, but construct it rationally, and this in an ideal form. It is noteworthy that in this context ideas which were also definitive in art played an important role, i.e., the striving for proportion, the mean and proper balance. A polis, too, or a specific constitution, could gain a ‘classical’, i.e., an appropriate form in this discussion, which can be illustrated by analogies in art. As the following passage from Aristotle’s *Politics* aptly illustrates, ‘suitable’ or ‘appropriate’ does not mean ‘perfect’:

Neither should we forget the mean (*to meson*), which at the present day is lost sight of in perverted forms of government; for many practices which appear to be democratical are the ruin of democracies, and many which appear to be oligarchical are the ruin of oligarchies. Those who think that all virtue is to be found in their own party principles push matters to extremes; they do not consider that disproportion destroys a state. A nose which varies from the ideal of straightness to a hook or snub may still be of good shape and agreeable to the eye; but if the excess be very great, all symmetry is lost, and the nose at last ceases to be a nose at all on account of some excess in one direction or defect in the other; and this is true of every other part of the human body. The same law of proportion equally holds in states. (Aristotle *Politics* 5,1309b19–31; trans. B. Jowett)

There were similar connections between art and politics in other areas. For instance, Damon of Athens, who was a member of the Periklean circle, reflected on the effect which the different styles in music had on ethical and political behaviour. The ideas of Hippodamos of Miletos were concerned with the connection between the form of a city and socio-political organization.

## 4 The Significance of the Classical Period

As in art, literature and philosophy, so also in the sphere of politics Athens unquestionably made the greatest contribution in the Classical Period. This polis was not only larger in population than all the others, and territorially the second largest (after Sparta), but the citizens of Athens were ever intent on undertaking something novel,



**Figure 1.4** The Doryphoros ('spearbearer') by Polykleitos, c. 440 BCE. Ht. 2.12 m. Roman marble copy of the original bronze. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples. © Scala/Art Resource, NY.

and exploiting all possibilities in order to attain power, fame and prosperity for themselves. At least that is how Thucydides saw it – as he permits a Korinthian envoy in 432 to portray Athenian mentality, granted critically, but by no means wide of the mark:

The Athenians are addicted to innovation, and their designs are characterized by swift-ness alike in conception and execution; you have a genius for keeping what you have got, accompanied by a total want of invention, and when forced to act you never go far enough. Again, they are adventurous beyond their power, and daring beyond their judgment, and in danger they are sanguine; your wont is to attempt less than is justified by your power, to mistrust even what is sanctioned by your judgment, and to fancy that from danger there is no release. Further, there is promptitude on their side against procrastination on yours; they are never at home, you are never from it: for they hope by their absence to extend their acquisitions, you fear by your advance to endanger what you have left behind. They are swift to follow up a success, and slow to recoil from a reverse. Their bodies they spend ungrudgingly in their country's cause; their intellect they jealously husband to be employed in her service. A scheme unexecuted is with them a positive loss, a successful enterprise a comparative failure. The deficiency created by the miscarriage of an undertaking is soon filled up by fresh hopes; for they alone are enabled to call a thing hoped for a thing got, by the speed with which they act upon their resolutions. Thus they toil on in trouble and danger all the days of their life, with little opportunity for enjoying, being ever engaged in getting: their only idea of a holiday is to do what the occasion demands, and to them laborious occupation is less of a misfortune than the peace of a quiet life. To describe their character in a word, one might truly say that they were born into the world to take no rest themselves and to give none to others. (Thuc. 1.70.2–9; trans. R. Crawley)

There was unquestionably a close link between political developments in Athens and the manner in which new ways of thinking and new expressions were created in this city, which were then regarded as 'classical'. For instance, one can cite in particular the monumental buildings on the Akropolis. These could scarcely have been possible without the revenues which the Athenians obtained from their naval empire (Kallet 1998).

The identification of 'classical' with Athens must not, however, mislead one into missing the fact that in the 'Athenian Century' Hellas was also much more than this one city. There was a world 'beyond Athens and Sparta' (Gehrke 1986; Brock & Hodkinson 2000); Greek history in the fifth and fourth centuries was the history of more than 1,000 states, mostly small, which placed great importance on their political independence (*autonomia*), but at the same time had close ties with each other (for a comprehensive inventory, see Hansen & Nielsen 2004). Thus the Peloponnesian War was due chiefly to the conflict between Sparta and Korinth, on the one hand, and Athens, on the other – but the grounds of complaint (*aitias kai diaphoras*: Thuc. 1.23.5), which led to the outbreak of the war, were spread over a large geographical area. These 'grounds of complaint' included Epidamnus on the Illyrian coast (Roman Dyrrhachium, today the Albanian port city of Durrës), Poteidaia on the Chalkidike peninsula in northern Greece, and Megara, wedged between Korinth and Athens. The decisive events of this war, however, took place outside the Peloponnese – and in its very last phase, in 404, even before the gates of Athens. The principal theatres of conflict were Central Greece and Thrace, Sicily and the region of the Hellespont, as

well as the Aegean Sea between Asia Minor and mainland Greece. Poleis like Argos and Korinth, Chios and Samos, and also regions like Boiotia and Messenia played more than a secondary role in political and military events in the fifth and fourth centuries.

The world of Greek states was also polycentric in the Archaic Period. But it was in the fifth and fourth centuries that the Greeks in their citizen-states (*poleis* and *koina*: see below) ‘were prominent players’ (Heuß 1963: 23–4). In this period the Greeks were on an equal footing with the great powers of the day, i.e., in the first instance with the Persian empire, the only world power up to that time. Before 500 Greece was confined to the margins of larger events. At that time, only a few individuals exerted an influence beyond the confines of their own polis. After 338, when Philip II of Macedon had conquered most of the Greek states and used the Korinthian League to secure their dependence on him (Harding 99), the Greeks as individual states no longer initiated any major action – rather, henceforth they had to relinquish this to the monarchs. On occasion, within the framework of a new political configuration, that of the federal state, which had admittedly already come about in the Classical Period (see below), some of them could still play along with the great figures – until, in the second century, the whole of Greece was conquered (and pacified) by the Romans.

## 5 Chronology and Subdivisions within the Period

On the basis of these considerations we can also determine the chronological boundaries of the Classical Period, for which I would like to set different dates from the ones separating the ‘Blackwell Companion’ volumes on the Archaic and Classical Ages. The military conflict between the Greeks and the Persian empire began with the Ionian revolt, 499–494 (Murray 1988). The first direct attack on the Greek mainland occurred in 490: the Persians were defeated in the battle of Marathon by the Athenians and the Plataians. The Persian wars reached their climax in the invasion of the Great King, Xerxes, but he was decisively defeated in the naval battle of Salamis in 480 (Strauss 2004). In 479 the Persian army was defeated in the land battle at Plataiai, and driven out of Greece (Lazenby 1993; Green 1996). At the same time, the Persian wars formed the catalyst for Athens’ rise to become a great power. As rowers, it was broad sectors of the poorer population that made possible the victory of the Greek ships. As a consequence, they gained self-confidence and an interest in politics. Thanks to Athens’ position as a great power, there were now substantially more things to discuss and decide in the Athenian assembly: politics became much more important and much more interesting than hitherto. These were the reasons why the citizen-state of Athens, whose intellectual founder was Solon and institutional creator was Kleisthenes, could now, within a short time, become an egalitarian democracy – thanks to intensive participation on the part of virtually every citizen. Consequently, there are many grounds for regarding the sixth and fifth centuries as a unit, at least in the case of Athens (Stahl 2003a: 228–66; 2003b: 13–63; for a summary of Archaic Athens, Stahl & Walter (forthcoming)). Apart from this, there was much afoot in Greece at the latest by the time of the Persian wars, but in fact already in the previous decade, as is also attested by a decisive break in sculpture: the Critian Boy (Figure 1.2) dates from before the great Persian War of 480/79.

The battle of Chaironeia in 338, in which a coalition led by Athens and Thebes was crushed by the Macedonian king, Philip II, is a reasonable date for the lower limit of the Classical Period. The Hellenistic Period began with the conquest of Asia by Philip's son, Alexander III (beginning in 334). George Grote's arguments for placing the break at this point in his monumental *History of Greece* (1846–56) have therefore not been superseded:

Even in 334 B.C., when Alexander first entered upon his Asiatic campaigns, the Grecian cities, great as well as small, had been robbed of all their free agency, and existed only as appendages of the kingdom of Macedonia. Several of them were occupied by Macedonian garrisons, or governed by local despots who leaned upon such armed force for support. There existed among them no common idea or public sentiment, formally proclaimed and acted on, except such as it suited Alexander's purpose to encourage. The miso-Persian sentiment – once a genuine expression of Hellenic patriotism . . . – had been converted by Alexander to his own purposes, as a pretext for headship, and a help for ensuring submission during his absence in Asia. (Grote 1907, vol. 12: 199)

By comparison, the subdivisions within the Classical Period are less controversial. The Persian wars (499 or 490–479) were followed by the Pentekontaetia (the period of 'fifty years' between the two great wars, i.e., 478–431) (Badian 1993). The Pentekontaetia was followed by the Peloponnesian War (431–404). The fourth century was characterized by attempts on the part of various Greek states to establish or re-establish separate hegemonies, by renewed Persian influence on Greek affairs, and by the rise of Macedonia as the dominating power (cf. Tritle 1997; Buckler 2003). The major turning points in the political culture of democratic Athens are disputed. Did the so-called fall of Kimon and the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1 constitute a revolution that resulted in radical democracy (Stahl 2003b: 64–86; bibliography Boedeker & Raaflaub 1998: 349 n. 36)? Was Athenian fourth-century democracy qualitatively different from that of the fifth century, as a consequence of both the changes in its laws and constitution, and because it could no longer call on the imperial resources of its first (the 'Delian') naval alliance (bibliography Boedeker & Raaflaub 1998: 345 n. 4)?

## 6 The Significance of the Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War took place precisely in the middle of the Classical Period. Thanks to the nature of the conflict, the phase which preceded and the one which followed the war appear at the same time to be connected with and yet separated by it. The war meant a serious blow for many Greek states. For instance, it could come about that a small polis could lose its entire citizen levy in a single battle (Thuc. 3.113.6: Ambrakia in Epeiros). Thucydides gives vivid examples of the process of moral decay precipitated by the war, which became particularly evident in the civil wars (Thuc. 3.69–85, especially 82–3: Kerkyra). Immediately after the end of the war the Thirty Tyrants established their despotic rule in Athens: 'For the sake of their private gain [they] have killed in eight months more Athenians, almost, than all the Peloponnesians in ten years of war' (Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.4.21; trans. C. L. Brownson (Loeb)) – i.e.,

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about 1,500 citizens (Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 35.4). Nor was any mercy shown in conducting war. For instance, in the summer of 414 a force of 1,300 Thracian mercenaries under an Athenian general struck down the undefended Boiotian city of Mykalessos:

The Thracians bursting into Mycalessus sacked the houses and temples, and butchered the inhabitants, sparing neither youth nor age but killing all they fell in with, one after the other, children and women, and even beasts of burden, and whatever other living creatures they saw... Everywhere confusion reigned and death in all its shapes; and in particular they attacked a boys' school, the largest that there was in the place, into which the children had just gone, and massacred them all. In short, the disaster falling upon the whole town was unsurpassed in magnitude, and unapproached by any in suddenness and in horror. (Thuc. 7.29.4–5; trans. R. Crawley)

Fighting with light armed troops, and no longer exclusively with hoplites; mercenaries alongside traditional citizen levies; virtually continuous warfare, which all but totally feeds on itself, in place of short-term warfare, in which it was possible for even the vanquished to survive – these developments, alongside increasing professionalism, were the most noteworthy ones in the wake of this great conflict, triggering what was perhaps the most significant transformation in the conduct of war. Mercenaries were roving about everywhere. The first manuals on strategy and tactics appeared. Even commanders of a citizen levy often acted like warlords, i.e., largely independent of instruction and control by political panels of their poleis (Hornblower 2002: 189–97). Their model was the Spartan Lysander. The individual who destroyed the Athenian fleet in the final battle of Aigospotamoi (405) had a sculptural group erected at Delphi as a victory monument. In contradistinction to the other naval commanders, on this monument he alone appeared amongst the gods, in the act of being crowned by Poseidon (Pausanias 10.9.7). The inscription on the base illustrates a mentality of victory and power which forms an essential prerequisite for such a thirty-year war: 'He dedicated his statue [upon] this monument, when, victorious with his swift ships, he had destroyed the power of the sons of Ke[k]rops (i.e., Athens), Lysandros (is his name), having crowned unsacked Lacedaemon, his fatherland with its beautiful dancing-grounds, the acropolis of Greece' (Harding 4).

## 7 The Persistent Problems of Power and Freedom

As decisive as the effects of the Peloponnesian War were (excellent on this topic, Hornblower 2002: 184–209), there were, on the other hand, many features that demonstrate continuity. Accordingly, even after the defeat of Athens, the 'tyrannical city-state' (*polis tyrannos*, Thuc. 1.124.3; 2.63.2), war and reckless ambition did not diminish. Indeed, many Greeks expected that the world of two opposite camps would come to an end and usher in a great longing for freedom (Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.2.23). In fact, however, Sparta's victory did not even produce a lasting peace. The new hegemon had to concede that it was more difficult to establish a stable postwar state of affairs than it was to defeat the enemy. And the attempt, as the new champion of the freedom of the Greeks in Asia Minor, to resume the war against Persia was too much for a state which had a total of only slightly more than 2,000 full citizens fit for

military service (Cartledge 1987, convincingly). The Spartans, however, lacked not only adequate resources, but also the ‘know-how’ and imagination necessary for successfully playing the role of a great power. They had too little knowledge of the world they wanted to govern. Moreover, their own institutions were scarcely exportable abroad. Nor did they possess a trained bureaucracy by which an empire could be administered. The leaders in Sparta were well aware that they were overstretched for running an empire, but were incapable of coming up with a satisfactory solution. But most importantly, it was impossible to stop. This characteristic feature linked the period before with the one after 404. The Spartans, no less than the Athenians (e.g., Walter 2003), fell under the spell of the thirst for power.

We shall advance some abstract considerations in an attempt to explain the structural ‘inability of the Greeks to carry out foreign policy’ (Stahl 2003b: 253–60), as this became particularly evident in the Classical Period. Three fixed objectives characterized the policies of all protagonists – hegemony, autonomy and peace with other states. The combination of all three factors was impossible under the prevailing circumstances. From time to time two of the objectives could be harmonized, but at no given time could the third be combined with the other two. By considering the three possibilities that arose from this configuration, the multifarious nature of events can be construed and explained in the form of patterns:

- 1 All states strove for freedom (*eleutherieia* and *autonomia*) vis à vis other poleis, with the larger states at the same time also striving for power (*hegemonia* or *arche*) over as many other states as possible. Since these two principles were diametrically opposed to each other, they could only be pursued at the price of continual discord.
- 2 Peace and hegemony would have been reconcilable if a sufficiently strong power could have established itself on a permanent basis. But even Athens, whose naval empire encompassed only part of the Greeks, was never free from attack; in any event, her empire collapsed in 404, and, despite all her efforts, she could not restore her power to its former state. The idea of autonomy continued unabated, and became even stronger through the rise of new powers, such as Thebes. The following attempts to establish and maintain hegemonic power were therefore of even shorter duration. Despite at least thirty years as hegemon, Sparta went down in a single battle (Leuktra 371), and Thebes after no more than nine years, through the death of Epameinondas, the ‘architect’ of the Theban hegemony (Mantineia 362). After this the last major battle between two contenders for hegemony had been fought, the historian Xenophon stated with resignation that, despite the military victory of Thebes, no clear decision had been reached; confusion and disorder, he maintained, were even greater than hitherto (Xenophon *Hellenika* 7.5.27).
- 3 The fundamental idea behind the so-called Common Peace (*koine eirene*) was the attempt to blend autonomy and peace (Jehne 1994), but the existence and efforts of hegemonic powers were still a factor. Furthermore, it was the demand that the principle of autonomy should be unconditionally observed which repeatedly gave the powers acting as ‘guarantors’ of the peace accords, above all Sparta, a pretext to intervene in the affairs of other states. Compared with this, the instruments devised to regulate inter-state relations with a view to peace remained underdeveloped and ineffective in real conflicts.

## 8 The Obstacles to Integration

In the case of domestic affairs in the Classical Period it is possible to note a development which was probably closely connected with the *cul-de-sac* delineated above. Compared with the Archaic Period, citizens in the Classical Period identified considerably more with the citizen-states to which they belonged. The feeling of being part of their state and of integration with it was very strong. This was naturally most conspicuously the case in democratic Athens. There, the daily involvement of the *demos* in politics ensured that the awareness of being a citizen superseded all other identities. Jochen Bleicken has elucidated this relationship in his fundamental study on Athenian democracy, and at the same time emphasized the Classical position of this ancient political culture compared with ours today:

There is no doubt that the greatest achievement of Athenian democracy lies in the realization of a society of citizens enjoying equal rights. The idea of equality may have already existed amongst the Greeks and other nations, but the organization of the whole body of the free-born inhabitants of a polis as a community of equals and their practical fulfilment is an original Athenian achievement. Nor was it only the idea, nor merely a lofty declaration of equality, but also the fact that it was formally implemented by hundreds of officially sanctioned regulations. Every governing body in Athens, and every norm of community life, demonstrate nothing less than a fanatic determination to anchor the notion of equality in the organizational structure of the citizenry. Since the notion of political equality was inextricably interwoven into the very implementation of this equality, it included at the same time responsibility on the part of the individual for the common good. Participation in politics and public spirit were part and parcel of this democracy, and this was so intertwined with it, and implemented to such a degree that it can still operate as a model today – and not least in light of the political apathy in our popular democracies. The public expression of politics can also be viewed as a result of the notion of equality. What many critics of antiquity as well as their modern counterparts found so repugnant, strange and even ridiculous, the drive of the Athenians, the hustle and bustle in the Agora and on the Pnyx, the dynamic energy of the masses – these are much more the unique characteristics of Athens' democracy and amongst her greatest achievements: accountable and public involvement in the rough-and-tumble of politics... Such a degree of civic involvement has never occurred again down to the present day, and is probably no longer possible. (Bleicken 1994: 411–12; trans. from the German original)

Athenian citizens had untold opportunities to experience their community life – in conversations and in collective actions in the Agora and in the Theatre, and in celebrations and festivals. This applied to the polis as a whole as well as to the smaller units of this 'grass-roots democracy', i.e., in the *phylai*, the *phratriai* and the *demoi* (bodies like these were part of the official organization in all Greek states: Jones 1987). In this context, the buildings of the Classical Period, especially of the fifth century, also had political significance: 'to say that the Athenians built the Parthenon to worship themselves would be an exaggeration, but not a great one' (Lewis *CAH*<sup>2</sup> 5 139). On Perikles' initiative a new Citizenship Law was passed in 451/0, spelling out that only those children whose parents were both full citizens could legally claim to be also Athenian citizens (Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 26.4). Although the motives behind

this bill are controversial (bibliography Boedeker & Raafaub 1998: 355 n. 146), the acute political identity which distinguished Athenian citizens as citizens from foreigners and metics may have played a role.

As a result of the steady decrease in the number of full citizens, Sparta was from the end of the fifth century compelled to draw increasingly on very different groups within her population for military service and civic duty – such as the *perioikoi*, *neodamoi* and mercenaries. The Spartans did not, however, abandon the idea of involving the ‘Spartiates’, who actually formed the very core of the Spartan state. The national legends and the ‘Return of the Herakleidai’, the lawgiver Lykourgos and Leonidas, the hero of Thermopylai, further bolstered solidarity.

Elsewhere, the development of statehood had not been completed before the Classical Age. For example, Elis in the Peloponnese was constituted as a polis as late as 471 BCE (Roy 2002).

In a number of regions of Greece in which the autonomous city-state (polis) did not come about, the small village communities and cities formed larger unions, whose purpose was to enable them to conduct foreign policy and undertake military defence. The federal states (*koina*: Beck 2000: 612–13; also Beck 2003) were actually very modern creations, since in them civic duties were shared: each member state had control of its own domestic affairs, whereas foreign policy was in the hands of a federal board, in which all members enjoyed proportional representation. Accordingly, there was also such a thing as double citizenship. Integration of the populace, however, took place not only at the political level, but acceptance of a common ancestry and common festivals also played a major role, as did religious games and mythical topographies. The oldest (from 519) and most important federal state emerged in Boiotia under the leadership of Thebes. But it is at the same time also precisely in the case of Boiotia that the limits of this ‘alternative to a polis’ become evident, for the actual hegemon, Thebes, repeatedly sought to exploit the league for its own ends – i.e., to transform it into a hegemonic league. The reason why the federal states failed in the Classical Period was primarily because the bond of the individual citizen with his native polis remained as strong as ever. It was not until the Hellenistic Period that two federal states emerged which succeeded for a considerable period of time and were able to wield a certain measure of power in the shadow of the great powers: the Aitolian League in Central Greece, and the Achaian League in the Peloponnese.

The great extent to which citizens identified with their state in the Classical Period brought to the fore yet another threat to peace and stability: the fact that the citizenry was split up into a number of interest groups, each of which claimed political power for itself. In this respect the polis resembled a joint-stock company. In the world of large and small shareholders the consciousness of belonging to a common enterprise was accompanied by repeated efforts to gain control and sideline the other shareholders or squeeze them out of the enterprise altogether (cf. Ampolo 1996: 322). The concomitant of a deeply rooted determination to win a victory at any price or to seek revenge for wrongs (McHardy 1999) repeatedly resulted in fierce *stasis*, civil war (Gehrke 1985), which led to banishments, expropriations and massacres. Since the warring factions regularly appealed to other states for help, internal conflicts also destabilized inter-state relations.

## 9 A Common Past and a Better Future

The Greeks themselves were well aware of the actual military and political developments in the fifth and fourth centuries as sketched above (for a further excellent discussion, Schulz 2003). Historical memories of the Archaic Period as collected and recounted by Herodotos in the first part of his *Histories* featured individual poleis such as Sparta, Athens, Korinth, Kyrene or Samos, and certain prominent nobles and tyrants. It was not until the great military conflicts of the Classical Period, the Persian wars and the Peloponnesian War, that all, or virtually all, Greeks became involved in a single event. Moreover, poleis no longer joined in these wars singly, but for the most part as members of an alliance (*symmachia*). Of these, only the Peloponnesian League under Spartan leadership had already come about in the Archaic Period. In contrast, the Hellenic Alliance of 481 and especially the Delian League of 478 were new creations (succinct overview: Beck 2000: 1055–7). The conflict with Persia, the Hellenic Alliance and the subsequent division of a large part of the Greek world into allies of Sparta and allies of Athens created the awareness that there was a history of all Greeks, and that such a history had also to be written. Accordingly, Herodotos recounted ‘the great and marvellous deeds, some displayed by the Hellenes, some by the Barbarians’ (Hdt. 1.1). The Western Greeks, who for the most part marched to a different beat from those of the motherland, were at a notable juncture drawn into the united struggle. While the Hellenic Alliance triumphed over the Persians at Salamis in the summer of 480, the Western Greeks under the command of Gelon ostensibly at the same time defeated Carthage (Hdt. 7.166).

Thucydides regarded the Peloponnesian War as the greatest armed conflict ever – for:

He could see the rest of the Hellenic world taking sides in the quarrel; those who delayed doing so at once having it in contemplation. Indeed this was the greatest movement (*kinesis*) yet known in history, not only of the Hellenes, but of a large part of the barbarian world – I had almost said of mankind. (Thuc. 1.1.1–2; trans. R. Crawley)

Authors like Xenophon and Theopompos, who began their accounts where Thucydides’ narrative breaks off in the middle of 411, and followed events down into the fourth century, simply called their accounts *Hellenika* (‘Greek Affairs’). At the end of the Classical Period this focus disappeared again – initially from titles, and then also from subject matter. The later *Histories* concentrated on either the new rulers (thus the *Philippika* of Theopompos and the works of the various Alexander historians), or broadened their perspective into that of ‘universal histories’ (‘Universalgeschichte’ in scholarly parlance). Thus even in terms of historiographical productions (for a brief overview, Hornblower *OCD*<sup>3</sup> 714–15, entry ‘Historiography, Greek’) we witness the end of that period during which the Greek poleis themselves were the movers and shakers in grand political schemes, in alliance with or – more often than not – in opposition to each other.

*Ta Hellenika*, ‘Greek Affairs’, were also the object of a political utopia in the minds of some intellectuals in the fourth century. This utopia was called panhellenism.

The idea of panhellenism in this period rested on a specific perspective. Great importance was to be placed on that which united the Greeks as Greeks rather than on what divided them and brought them into conflict. Panhellenism therefore began from the premise of a fundamental antithesis between Greeks and Barbarians. At the same time, it contained a Classical idea at the historical-political level: one ought to begin with the (alleged) unity of the Greeks in the great Persian wars. Isokrates in particular in his political pamphlets cast in the form of speeches (Rhodes, below, Chapter 2, Section 3) vigorously championed this notion, which also promised to alleviate the economic and social ills of the severely battered Hellenes. Thus in his *Panegyrikos*, published in 380, he claims:

One may best comprehend how great is the reversal in our circumstances if he will read side by side the treaties which were made during our [viz. Athens'] leadership and those which have been published recently [viz. especially the so-called King's Peace of 387/6], for he will find that in those days we were constantly setting limits to the empire of the King, levying tribute on some of his subjects, and barring him from the sea; now, however, it is he who controls the destinies of the Hellenes, who dictates what they must each do, and who all but sets up his viceroys in their cities. For with this one exception, what else is lacking? Was it not he who decided the issue of the war, was it not he who directed the terms of peace, and is it not he who now presides over our affairs? Do we not sail off to him as to a master, when we have complaints against each other? Do we not address him as 'The Great King' as though we were the captives of his spear? Do we not in our wars against each other rest our hopes of salvation on him, who would gladly destroy both Athens and Lacedaemon? Reflecting on these things, we may well be indignant at the present state of affairs, and yearn for our lost supremacy. . . . So whenever we transport thither a force stronger than his, which we can easily do if we so will, we shall enjoy in security the resources of all Asia. Moreover, it is much more glorious to fight against the King for his empire than to contend against each other for the hegemony. It were well to make the expedition in the present generation, in order that those who have shared in our misfortunes may also benefit by our advantages and not continue all their days in wretchedness. (Isokrates 4.120–2; 166–7; trans. G. Norlin)

For the Athenian patriot Isokrates, it was self-evident that, thanks to her earlier services on behalf of the Greeks, Athens should play a leading role in the panhellenic expedition against the Persian king. Here the propaganda and ideological character of the slogan became very clear (Vatai 1984: 99–111). Consequently, panhellenism could not but remain a mere formula and a utopia, because it would have meant a radical change on the part of the Greek poleis – i.e., in their habits and objectives (Baynes 1955: 144–67; Perlman 1976).

Another slogan was also employed to recall the past – which was seen as a model, and therefore worthy of resurrecting. The 'ancestral constitution' (*patrios politeia*) played a central role in the polemics of the oligarchs against the abuses and alleged failure of the 'radical' democracy in Athens since the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (e.g., Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 29.3; 34.3; Xenophon *Hellenika* 2.4.20–21; Finley 1971). The revolutionary attempt to overthrow the democracy gave promise of a better state of affairs. It was only in the time of Drakon (c. 620) or Solon (traditionally, 594/3, but more likely c. 580/70) or Kleisthenes (c. 510), at any rate before Perikles, that Athens allegedly had had a good constitution, because then the 'have-not' masses did not make all the decisions. The bloody excesses of the Thirty Tyrants

(404/3), however, put paid to the propaganda – but it was revived during oligarchic rule after 322, and played a certain role in the Early Hellenistic Period. Demetrios of Phaleron, the ‘strong man’ in Athens under Macedonian supremacy between 317 and 307, even characterized himself as the third great lawgiver of the polis – after Theseus and Solon (Lehmann 1997: 72)!

## 10 What Went Before and What Came After the Classical Period

In the case of the Ancestral Constitution, its champions looked back from the time of 400 and 300 to the early period of the Athenian polis, i.e., back to the late seventh and early sixth centuries, and even to a remote mythical age. This demonstrates that certain features of Greek history and culture in the Classical Period did not begin and end with it. One of these features was the citizen-state as the cardinal form of Greek community life in all of its various aspects. The beginnings of the polis are already perceptible in the Homeric epics, while the federal states enjoyed their best days in the third century (see above). *Stasis* (civil strife) and striving for hegemony over other states, as Sparta began to organize along these lines in the Peloponnesian League from the middle of the sixth century, were also features of this continuity.

In an impressive example, albeit in a completely different sphere, Hornblower underscores the importance of such phenomena, i.e., overlapping epochs, which represent a structure in the sense of Braudel’s *longue durée*, but are at the same time subject to changes:

No treatment of the main period of Greek civilization should end without emphasizing the continuity both with what went before and with what came after. Continuity is clearest in the sphere of religion, which may be said to have been ‘embedded’ in Greek life. Some of the gods alleged to have been relatively late imports into Greece can in fact be shown to have Mycenaean origins. For instance, one Athenian myth held that Dionysus was a latecomer, having been introduced into Attica from Eleutheræ in the 6th century. There is reference to Dionysus (or di-wo-no-so-jo), however, on Linear B tablets from the 2nd millennium BC. Looking forward, Dionysus’ statue was to be depicted in a grand procession staged in Alexandria in the 3rd century BC by King Ptolemy II Philadelphus. (The iconographic significance of the king’s espousal of Dionysus becomes clear in light of the good evidence that in some sense Alexander the Great had identified himself with Dionysus in Carmania.) Nor was classical Dionysus confined to royal exploitation: it has been shown that the festivals of the City Dionysia at Athens and the deme festival of the Rural Dionysia were closely woven into the life of the Athenian empire and the Athenian state. Another Athenian, Euripides, represented Dionysus in a less tame and ‘official’ aspect in the *Bacchæ*; this Euripidean Dionysus has more in common with the liberating Dionysus of Carmania or with the socially disruptive Dionysus whose worship the Romans in 186 BC were to regulate in a famous edict. The longevity and multifaceted character of Dionysus symbolizes the tenacity of the Greek civilization, which Alexander had taken to the banks of the Oxus but which in many respects still carried the marks of its Archaic and even prehistoric origins. (*Encyclopedia Britannica* (Deluxe Edition CD-ROM 2001): entry ‘Ancient Greek Civilisation’)

As an epoch, the Classical Period – not surprisingly – bears the image of a Janus figure, for it is an integral component in the continuum of Greek history. What began in the Archaic Period, e.g., the citizen-state or the panhellenic games at Olympia and elsewhere, continued in the Classical Period, when it also acquired its definitive form. What was later to become the hallmark of Hellenism, i.e., the spread of Greek culture into many non-Greek regions, would not have become possible without the sense of identity and the general awareness which had developed hitherto. There still remains the question of what was by definition Classical. In conclusion, I should like to formulate a clear position. Deconstruction and inversion, whether motivated by political correctness or by the desire to be intellectually avant-garde, do not bring a clearer focus – rather they breed indifference and a callous attitude to the question of what it is in the Greek heritage that is worth being studied and internalized by us in today's world.

### Further reading

Only the more general books are mentioned here. Davies (1993) is a good introduction, although its main focus is Athens. Different in design is Hornblower (2002), where equal weight is given to the most important regions and to the Persian empire; it is rich in detail, with many ideas, and so more suited for the advanced student. Indispensable are *CAH*<sup>2</sup> 5 and 6; the latter volume, covering the fourth century, is much more comprehensive and also more modern. Although the 'classical' works of Grote (1846–56/1907) and Burckhardt (1898–1902/1998) are distinctly dated, they are still worth reading.

When approaching the history of Classical Greece, readers with some knowledge of German will find Heuß (1963: 214–400) particularly stimulating, thanks to its profound intellectual level. Schulz (2003) deserves to be translated into English, especially because of its clear presentation and style; this little volume also compellingly dispenses with a number of current theories. The same holds true for Stahl (2003b), which concentrates solely on Athens. The thoughtful book by Meier (1998) has been translated into English; it covers Athens from Solon to 404, and is particularly strong on the correlation between politics and culture. On Sparta, Cartledge (1987) is much broader in scope than the title implies. Buckler (2003) meticulously depicts the multipolar world of the fourth century – an 'Iron Age', as it were, compared to the 'Golden Age' of the fifth century.

The recent debate on the quality of Classical Greece is reflected in Heilmeyer (2002): it contains a wealth of material and many perspectives, but is heavily influenced by the destructive approach criticized above. Therefore, older works such as those by Jaeger (1954–61), Langlotz (1956) and Schefold (1967) are still indispensable as a corrective to the new orthodoxy; for the American context see Knox (1993).

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