



THE ORACLE

The Socratic Trial

**By Heidi Smith,
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In 399BCE, the city of Athens put philosophy itself on trial, and history was made when one of Greece's greatest thinkers was condemned to death after daring to challenge the democratic system.



Socrates, a man known as the father of Western philosophy, was not as respected by the people of Athens as he is by the modern world. This may be

a strange concept, as the philosopher is regarded as a pioneer of the field, and a staple of the country's renowned academic prowess. However, at the time he was viewed as a corrupter of the youth; from his pursuits to influence young people to question the authority of the democracy, to his so-called impious questioning of the traditional Greek Hellenistic gods.

This led to the illustrious Socratic Trial, which took place before a jury of 500 Athenian citizens – a typical representation of the notorious democratic system which Socrates dared to question. He defended himself through a process of questioning now known as “The Socratic Method”, which challenged the validity of the charges he was under. Socrates was a true man of philosophy and saw his actions as an act of charity towards Athens. Not only did he not apologise nor justify his actions, but to the incredulity of the Athenian court, he actually suggested that he should be rewarded for his service to Athens when asked to choose his punishment.

Socrates' seemingly arrogant behaviour sparked the unfortunate ire of the jury, who sentenced him for his defiance to the fate of death by hemlock. Socrates calmly accepted his punishment; the true role of a philosopher when stood in the face of death. In choosing death over silent resignation, Socrates cemented his legacy as a martyr for those who seek to uncover the truth, leaving behind revolutionary philosophical foundation that inspired the minds of philosophers across the world.

The Importance of Kleos

**By Emma McGilvery,
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Kleos, meaning glory, was one of the most important Greek qualities, no matter who you were. A Greek hero would gain kleos through accomplishing heroic deeds and often devote their lives to pursuing it, whether it was through slaughtering the entirety of the Trojan army like Achilles, or finally reaching home after 10 years at sea like Odysseus. It is thought to have been passed down through generations from father to son, and the son was thought to be responsible for building on the 'glory' of his father. Kleos was the only way of securing your immortality, as the memory of your glory was the only thing you could leave behind after death, and it would be the responsibility of your descendants to keep your memory alive. These heroes would have lived on through the poems and songs created by ancient Greek poets,

with the memory of heroes such as Diomedes and Ajax being kept alive through Homer and his epic, the Iliad. Greek heroes



would have boasted of their achievements to anyone who would listen, and hero worship was such an important part of their day-to-day lives that it was unthinkable for a man to disregard his desire for kleos. In modern society, most people would see bragging as arrogant, vain, and egotistical, and are more likely to laugh and think of the person as desperate for attention rather than trade stories of their life for centuries to come. In my opinion, this trait, even with all its selfishness, allowed people to take pride in their actions and without the desperate longing which men held to be forever remembered, we would not have the captivating stories of heroes which we love today.



Dance in the Ancient World

By Kevin Turner, A Level Classical Civilisation

From ancient religious practices to modern day entertainment, dance has made its mark on the world. Dance is a form of creative expression through physical movement, guided by music which is and was, adored by many, with its origins dating back to around roughly 8000 BCE. By the time it had reached the ancient Greeks,



they had incorporated it into some of their most prestigious events, such as religious festivals, and it continued to be a fundamental part of their culture for thousands of years. There were many occasions in Ancient Greece where dances were performed, such as weddings, symposiums, and theatre which brought to life choreographed performances done by the chorus.

Artefacts found by archaeologists had led them to the impression that there was a fundamental relationship between religion and dancing within the classical world.



For example, anthropomorphic figures have been discovered inside and around many different tombs which has helped attest to the existence of dancing in the ancient world. As well as this, excavator Professor Peter Warren has discovered three circular platforms in Knossos which alludes to the possibility that these platforms were used for dancing. During this same period on Crete, iconographical evidence for circular dances comes from the site of Palaikastro. The model shows three small terracotta women in long dresses dancing in a circle around a lyre player, their arms held out from the shoulders.



The Role of Women in Ancient Rome

By Sebastian Handley,
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In ancient Rome, women's rights varied depending on their social status and roles within society. Generally, Roman women had more rights and freedoms compared to women in ancient Athens. While they were not considered equal to men, Roman women had certain legal rights, could own property, inherit wealth, and engage in business transactions. However, their rights were still limited compared to men, and they were under the authority of their fathers or husbands.

One notable exception to the typical restrictions faced by Roman women were the Vestal Virgins. These priestesses held a unique position of power and influence in Roman society. Chosen from noble families, the Vestal Virgins were dedicated to the goddess Vesta and maintained the sacred fire in her temple. They enjoyed privileges such as financial independence, the ability to make legal agreements, and exemption from certain social norms like wearing the traditional Roman stola.



The Vestal Virgins were revered for their purity and devotion to Vesta, and their role symbolized the connection between the divine and the Roman state. While the majority of Roman women did not have the same rights and freedoms as the Vestal Virgins, these priestesses represented an exception to the typical limitations placed on women in ancient Rome.

Overall, women in ancient Rome had a complex set of rights and restrictions that were influenced by social norms, cultural practices, and individual circumstances. The Vestal Virgins, with their unique status and privileges, serve as a fascinating example of the exceptions to the traditional roles of women in ancient Roman society.

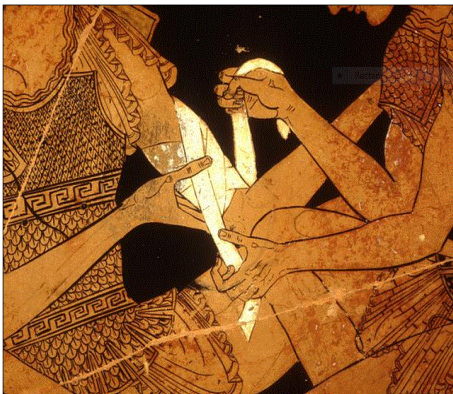
Ancient Greek Medicine

By Evie Clark

A Level Classical Civilisation

The ancient Greeks had a major influence on how we live today in many ways, including science, maths, philosophy, astronomy, literature, theatre, and especially medicine.

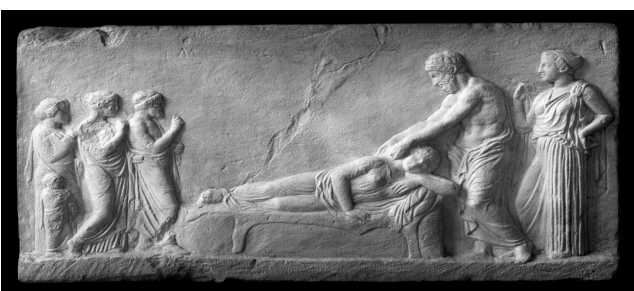
From the earliest times, treatments involved incantations, invoking the gods, and the use of magical herbs, amulets, and charms. In ancient Greece and Rome, Asklepios was revered as the patron god of medicine. Two of the most famous healing sanctuaries sacred to the god were at Epidaurus and on the island of Kos. Those who sought a cure in the temples erected to him were subjected to ritual purifications, fasts, prayers, and sacrifices. Medical professionals still take the oath of the ancient Greek doctor Hippocrates of Kos, preserved along with his medical treatises.



Ancient Greek doctors performed some surgical procedures on patients. For example, a doctor set broken bones, amputated

arms or a leg, drained fluid from the lungs, and performed bloodletting. Bloodletting involved the draining of blood from a patient; doctors thought that having too much blood contributed to illness. A lot of surgeries happened due to war, and therefore doctors had to deal with war injuries without the equipment or technology to support them.

Greek doctors became expert herbalists and prescribers of natural remedies. An example of a natural remedy is for chest diseases they would prescribe barley soup plus vinegar and honey to bring up phlegm.



Labour and Childbirth in the Ancient World

By Evie Clark, A Level Classical Civilisation

Childbirth in ancient Rome was considered the main purpose of marriage. There were many risks involved during pregnancy both for mother and child



During labour, a mother-to-be usually lay on a hard, low bed. There were cloths soaked in warm olive oil and were applied to her abdomen to bring her comfort and a bladder (like a water bottle) was also filled with

warm oil and placed by her side. When it was time to deliver the baby, the pregnant woman was moved to a birthing stool. It was believed that a safer natural delivery was more likely when the woman was in the upright position. The design of the chair allowed the pregnant woman to grasp the handles and allowed surrounding assistants to her during her labour pains. The midwife would kneel and place her hands under the hole in the chair to support the head of the child being born. Caesarean sections did sometimes take place but at the detriment of the mother's life. Opium was used by doctors and midwives as pain relief on occasions.

After the birth of the newborn there was a ritual called 'tollere liberos', this is when the father lifted the newborn from the ground and up into the air in a symbolic gesture signalling his agreement to raise the baby. After this the infant was washed by sprinkling amounts of fine and powdery salt or natron or aphronitre mixed

with whey, olive oil, or juice of barley to make it more moisturising. Then the baby was swaddled. Woollen bands were used to wrap the body until it was fully covered with the arms held at the sides to prevent scratching. The



reasoning of this was to mould the baby's body into the 'ideal' shape.

Aristotle's Teachings on Eloquent Communication and How it Relates to the Success of Alexander the Great

By Max Burke, A Level Classical Civilisation

When you look back in the history of humanity, every few hundred years we come across someone who changes the perspective of the time, catalysing innovative ideas, insight and enlightenment and often invoking a claim of power by force. Rarely do two people achieve this and more seldom do they interact in the same era. This precisely depicts the relationship between Aristotle and Alexander the Great, a relationship that would mark all human history.

I and countless others attribute Alexander's Greatness to the time he spent under Aristotle's tutelage. I have condensed Aristotle's teachings to Alexander on powerful communication into four key parts.

Trust is achieved by vulnerability. Despite that fact many of us connote vulnerability with weakness Aristotle postulated that to command men in their hearts and mind, one must "lay themselves bare" to earn trust. This trust formed in his passionate and radically open speeches constructs a power with its foundation in a unity in understanding.

Rich literature nurtures communication. Aristotle believed poetry and prose shaped speech, more fervently powerful, effective, and eloquent speech. To highlight this point Aristotle famously said, "the limits of your speech are the limits of your world." And therefore, a rich and broad understanding of literature is the key to expansion and success, which irrefutably played a role in the conquests of Alexander.



The dynamic between Aristotle and Alexander could not have been more perfect in the formation of his success. Aristotle sculptured his raw power, ambition undeniable formidable nature. He taught Alexander communication, which I believe was his most powerful and lethal weapon.

Words carry weight. Aristotle believed words had an intrinsic musicality and being fluent in this musicality in its entirety had the power to move mountains and men.

Alexander achieved this and perfected it with the help of Aristotle's prolific understanding of persuasive writing and rhetoric, the topic of which many of his books are based on which creates connections to themes of transcendence. Alexander often talked about glory, forces of nature, death and often referencing his quests as going to the "ends of the earth." In doing this he tethered his material desire with a universal truth, a higher truth. He undoubtedly would have acquired this knowledge through Aristotle's understanding of metaphysics and the world as a whole.

