

The Golden Age: Still Going Strong

Most people don't realize that the small country of Greece has had a significant history that has actually gotten some of their culture into our lives. Greek culture flourished in the great city of Athens way back almost 2500 years ago. Numerous Americans think of Greece from the Olympics and the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding", but if you look around, there is much influence from the Ancient Hellenes around today that came from a time of prosperity. Welcome to the golden age of Athens.

Countless pieces of art today that we revere have taken a page from the Greek ways. Think of the towering Doric and Corinthian Pillars at the University of Virginia or the buildings that resemble Ancient Greek temples. Other famous buildings also have used Greek pillar styles to beautify their appeal. The Greeks also orienteered another great part of our lives: Drama. Plays have been around for thousands of years, but if you look back 2500 years ago, it all comes back to the Greeks. The brilliant minds of Sophocles and Aristophanes paved the way to modern Broadway. We have hundreds of art museums. A lot of the art styles and materials came from the Greeks. They did wall paintings like many ancient civilizations. Uniquely, they made beautiful frescoes that used watercolor on wet plaster. Along with the paintings, they had sculptures of great precision and beauty, sometimes in the trademark Hellenistic style without arms, and sometimes, without heads. The Greek art has traveled far and is still lasting today.

We have democracy and we feel so free, but most of us don't know or appreciate where our system of government truly came from. It came the Greeks. We are not even a true democracy. The Greeks had a direct democracy. It was run completely by the citizens. It all started from various leaders such as Draco, Solon, and Cleisthenes. This is still alive in the US today. We are a nation by the people, of the people, and for the people. That is democracy.

Another Greek influence that we have today is sports. One of the largest worldwide events to date is the Biannual Olympic games. We think of them as an event

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that the world crafted, but they are truly of Greek origin. The Olympics now are very different than they were back then, but they are still recognized as a Greek event. A few relations between the two were the facts that crowns of olive branches are still given out to date, and the recent 2004 Olympics were in Athens, Greece. We also get the modern dice game craps and the running event “the marathon” from the Hellenes.

Ancient Greece’s great golden age has impacted our lifestyles. If it weren’t for the ancient Greek’s prospering minds, we might not have had democracy or great art or knowledge. Not just America, but the whole world should realize and show gratitude toward the ancient Greek discoveries, minds, and the golden age!