

Internal and External Political Organizations in Ancient Greek Civilization

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ABSTRACT

As known, Greek cities it is taking an independent form that independent cities are considered politically, and therefore every city with their own systems of governance, legislation and the military and human group, and even economic organization, has been tracking the nearby villages, including the city and the plains may be some cities countries a wider area, and even the small Greek states that follow of the surrounding rural areas and this will bring contradictions between the interests of rural civilization and political interests. Greek citizens in the cities is the only one who has the right to participate in political life, other people do not play any formal role in the political life of a case of foreign women and children slaves, Athenian citizen, for example, a person born to a father and mother Athenian. Every the Athenian cities in terms of style of governance and the nature of political life, for example, the system Spartan, which controls the amounts politics in Athens and make it city-state like Esparta but politically and economically different where I knew several types of rule of monarchy and aristocratic then democratic then went to Covenant chaotic. This research provides a brief about the nature of the political administration, both internal and external that existed in ancient Greece eras.

Keywords: Internal Political Organizations, External Political Organizations, Ancient Greek Civilization.

1. Introduction

Greece is a peninsula branching off the Balkan Peninsula and encompassing a number of small islands. It is located to the south of the European continent, overlooking the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas. This location placed it close to the continents of the ancient world and the civilizations of Egypt, Iraq, Syria, and ancient Asia Minor, opening up horizons for political and economic exchange, migration, and even warfare on a large scale. Greece is approximately 400 km long and 300 km wide. Mountains and highlands cover approximately 80% of Greece, and mountain ranges cut across it in all directions, dividing it into small, isolated regions. Meanwhile, the rivers are short and fast-flowing, further isolating the regions from one another. Rivers became a means of separation rather than a means of communication, as rivers naturally do. Consequently, the highlands and rivers greatly influenced the Greeks, forcing them to live in small, independent cities. This made it difficult to form large political units, and city-states spread throughout. This system prevailed in Greece for a long period of its history. Scholars divide the history of ancient Greece into three stages and three main eras, namely (1):

A- The Early Period (3000-1100 BC)

The region later known as Greece witnessed cultural activity during this historical period. This era represents two civilizations:

1- The Cretan civilization (2400-1200 BC). The Cretan civilization was both Greek and non-Greek. It has been proven that there were influences in all Greek cities, and it has been proven that there were connections and relations between Egypt and Greece.

2- The Mycenaean civilization: This civilization, which spanned the period from 1600 to 1100 BC, followed the Cretan civilization. It was a purely Greek civilization that spread throughout all Greek cities. It established connections and relationships between Greece, Italy, the Mediterranean islands, and Syria. The Mycenaean civilization ended at the hands of the Dorian tribes, who came from the north and invaded Greece in 1100 BC. Greece returned to tribal life until the eighth century BC.

B- Greek Migration and Settlement Abroad

Following the Dorian invasion of Greece, Greek migrations and settlements occurred outside their country. This was due to geographical, political, economic, and social factors. These migrations represented a Greek expansion movement outside their country, the most prominent of which were:

- 1- The Aeolians, the inhabitants of northern Greece, migrated across the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor and settled on its western coast, which became known as Aeolia.
- 2- The Ionians migrated across the Aegean Sea to Asia Minor and settled in the south, giving their region the name Doris.
- 3- The Dorians also migrated to Asia Minor and settled in southern Ionia, giving their region the name Doris.

The most prominent results of this migration and settlement movement outside their country were:

- Greek interaction with other nations led to the development of their national spirit.
- The expansion of trade activity between regions and its impact on the wider society.
- The emergence of the Greek merchant and artisan class, who became an influential force.
- The development of the Greek system of government in the new societies.

2. The Political Structure of Ancient Greece

Ancient Greece consisted of several hundred or more independent states (nodes). This situation was in contrast to most other contemporary societies, which were either tribal or kingdoms ruling over relatively large territories. The geography of Greece, divided and almost divided by hills, mountains, and rivers, undoubtedly contributed to the fragmented nature of ancient Greece. On the one hand, there is no doubt that the Greeks were 'one people'; they had the same religion, the same basic culture, and the same language. Moreover, they were fully aware of their tribal origins; Herodotus was able to classify states broadly by tribe. Even now, although these relationships exist at the highest level, they rarely seem to have played a major role in Greek politics. There

was a staunch defense of the independence of the nomes; the idea of unification was something the ancient Greeks rarely contemplated. Even when, during the second Persian invasion of Greece, a group of states allied themselves to defend Greece, the vast majority of the provinces remained neutral. After the Persian defeat, the allies quickly relapsed into internal fighting (2).

Thus, the main characteristics of the ancient Greek political system were, first, its fragmented nature, which does not appear to have a tribal origin, and second, its particular emphasis on urban centers within otherwise small states. The characteristics of the Greek system are also evident in the colonies established throughout the Mediterranean, which were considered completely independent of the founding state, although they may have considered some Greek provinces their motherland (and remained sympathetic to them). Some large states may have dominated smaller neighboring provinces, but invasion or direct rule by another state appeared to be very rare. Instead, the provinces grouped themselves into federations, and their membership was constantly changing. Later, in the Classical period, leagues became smaller and larger, dominated by a single city (notably Athens, Sparta, and Thebes), and provinces were often forced to join under threat of war (or as part of a peace treaty). Even after Philip II of Macedon "conquered" the heart of ancient Greece, he made no attempt to annex the territories, or unite them into a new province, but simply forced most of the provinces to join his Corinthian League.

3. The Greek Legislative and Political Systems

1. Legislative Institutions:

- The Ecclesia: (the People's Assembly - the General Assembly) is a decision-making authority and a body that brings together all citizens regardless of their social status. This body is empowered to discuss issues presented to the rulers in regular or extraordinary meetings in a council that brings together citizens and gives them the right to intervene before a decision is made. The discussion must end with a public



vote by at least 5,000 citizens, and the opinion of the majority present must be taken into account, regardless of the total number of citizens (3).

- Its duties: To elect and supervise the ten military commanders, as well as to elect and supervise the nine city governors, and to prosecute in cases of high treason against the state.
- The Council of Representatives: (the Council of 500 - the Specific Council) consists of 500 members, each tribe represented by 50 members over the age of 30, chosen by lot. It is a preparatory body for business projects submitted to the Ecclesia.

2. Executive Institutions:

- The Council of Ten Leaders
- The Arachne City Rulers
- Officials, Judges, and Administrators

3. Judicial Institutions:

- The General Court
- The Court of Supervision

By highlighting the role of these institutions, we understand that the Ecclesia possessed all powers and was the highest authority in the hierarchy of civil authority. It delegated its powers to the various bodies that comprised the Athenian political system. It can also be said that the 5th century BC witnessed the emergence of democracy in Athens, a city-state inhabited by 200,000 residents who lacked the same rights and duties. Only 40,000 of these residents enjoyed the rights of citizenship and thus held civil and political rights. Meanwhile, certain groups were excluded from citizenship based on their origin, gender, or class. Consequently, the equality advocated for by democracy was squandered because it deprived certain groups of people of political participation. At the same time, we cannot deny the giant stride taken by the Athenians. For the first time in history, an organized state adopted a political system based on the decision-making power of the people, thus establishing



the foundations of a modern democracy. The emergence of democracy in Athens is due to the circumstances that surrounded it. The Greek interest in studying systems allowed them to reach an applied or practical truth, as experience revealed a truth represented in the corruption of systems or their deviation from the basic goal. Monarchy can turn into tyranny, and in this case it is not based on laws but on the whims of the rulers, and aristocracy, the rule of the best, turns into Pluto the Chair.

Any government of the rich and democracy, the rule of all, turns into chaos, which is the rule of the mob. In addition to this transformation, each model succeeds the next, forming a cycle of development or cyclical evolution. Monarchy is replaced by aristocracy, which is replaced by democracy, then monarchy. To avoid the differences caused by cyclical evolution, the Greeks established a government that combined the three forms of government (monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy). This solution expresses the wisdom of achieving balance and stability. The ruler Solon is considered the first to implement this in Athens. Among the reforms Solon experimented with was a constitution that divided citizens into four main classes:

1. The wealthy class: owned a certain amount of money.
2. The middle class: owned agricultural land.
3. The equestrian class: their mission was to defend the city.
4. The class of immigrants and workers

These classes varied in wealth, as did their political rights and social functions. The Solonian constitution stipulated that the first three classes enjoy all public functions, while the fourth class was denied these privileges, but had the right to participate in the general assembly of the ecclesiastical assembly (4).

Political life in the city-state witnessed development with the ruler Cleisthenes, who abolished aristocratic privileges and transferred power to the popular assembly. Democracy was further implemented with the ruler Pericles in the 5th century BC, who established the constitution of true democracy and opened the door for citizens to participate in political affairs of all kinds, and equalized all citizens in rights and



duties. In light of this life, a political thought emerged that expressed the need for the individual to take his or her role in political life, based on his oratory abilities, which allowed him to influence the masses and gain a majority within the ecclesiastical assembly. Sophistic thought: This school emerged in Athens in the 5th century BC, focusing on teaching the art of rhetoric and courtesy. Its most prominent pioneers were Protagoras, Gorgias, and Antiphon. The most important sophistic ideas are based on the individual as the starting point and foundation of all matters, and they believe that the state is based on the cooperation of individuals.

- They reject discrimination between people on the basis of gender and origin.
- They reject the system of slavery and demand equality because they share a common origin.
- They glorify and advocate for power.
- They do not adhere to the law and claim to disrespect it, because they believe it is the law of the weak, invented to subjugate the strong. They are the proponents of the idea: "Impose yourself, prove yourself" through the art of rhetoric.

• **Socrates' political thought:**

In fact, Socrates did not leave behind books from which we can derive a set of political ideas, but he left behind students who conveyed his ideas either in their writings or by attributing them to him. His ideas can also be identified through the political positions he adopted in the city-state. It is noted from these positions that Socrates refused to be freed from the laws or attempt to change them, and he also opposed the idea of democracy, which opened the door to discussing everything and raised the value of some classes within the city. Socrates expresses a great difference between himself and his contemporaries in that he considered the laws to be issued by the mind, expressing a form of education and virtue and the secret of stability in the shadow of systems based on change (democracy). For Socrates, wisdom is knowing yourself, the purpose of your existence, and your qualifications. Based on this idea, the ruler is a captain of a civilization. He must deeply understand his art, just as a ship's captain knows his craft, and must learn it until he masters it. This is because the

most difficult art (doesn't come by itself, unlike other arts). Therefore, the ruler should not be chosen by lot. The choice may fall on a cobbler, a builder, a craftsman, or a fisherman, all of whom don't understand politics. According to Socrates, the solution is intellectual aristocracy. The ruler must be a philosopher who cares less about his own personal interests than about the common good. Socrates' ideas would influence his students, especially Plato and Xenophon.

• **Plato's Political Thought:**

All of his ideas are summarized in making virtue knowledge, that is, knowledge of the common good, and this is carried out by philosopher kings.

He speaks of the philosopher ruler who is not bound by law.

The Origin of the State According to Plato: He believes that justice is imposed by the powerful, and justice is linked to the origin of the state. The emergence of the state is a necessity resulting from human weakness and need for others. Accordingly, the emergence of the state is determined by the division of labor and the nature of each individual, which, accordingly, requires specialists (4).

Division of the Social Classes:

- 1) The Working Class: Producers who meet consumer needs.
- 2) The Soldiers and Guards Class: Protect the state.
- 3) The Ruling Class: Administration and governance.

Education According to Plato: This serves the theory of justice and is limited to the upper class.

The First Stage: From childhood to age 20: Includes physical education through sports and music.

The Second Stage: Includes the education of the senses and philosopher kings, who are chosen from among their assistants after age 20.

4. The City-State Era (800-500 BC) and the Features of Internal Politics

A system known as the city-state system (free city) emerged in Greece. Greek society was characterized by being composed of independent political units due to its geographical nature. Each city had the characteristics of a state (city-state) or a small city-state. Their country was known for its system of small city-states. Each state had its own ruling dynasty, army, and borders. The most prominent of these city-states were Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and Argos. As a result of the Greek migration and expansion movement, the system of government and the political system of the Greek city-states developed. Systems emerged and evolved from the tribal system to popular (democratic) rule. This political development of the city-states passed through the following systems (5):

- 1- The Tribal System: This system prevailed before the emergence of the Greek city-state system. The leader of the tribe with the largest share of agricultural and pastoral land played the role of ruler.
- 2- The Monarchy: This was the first system known to the Greek city-state and was based on the authority of the king, assisted by a council of notables. This system continued until it was replaced by the Aristocratic.
- 3- The Aristocratic System: This system represented the transfer of power to the landowners. Thus, the individual rule represented by the king was transformed into a collective rule, represented by the aristocratic class.
- 4- The Oligarchic System (Rule of the Minority): When trade flourished between Greece and the rest of the world, the merchant class emerged. With its great wealth, it was able to compete with the aristocratic class, the landowners. The merchant class (the minority) succeeded in attaining power and rule, and the system became known as the rule of the minority (oligarchy).
- 5- The Rule of Tyrants: The rule of the minority (the merchant class) did not last long, and the common people began to seek a political role in government. Popular revolutions emerged in Greek cities, led by the sons of the wealthy. The common



people succeeded in attaining power, and the rule of the minority ended. When the sons of the wealthy ruled, it was called the rule of tyrants because they came to power on the shoulders of the common people. 6- The Popular (Democratic) System of Government: Popular revolutions erupted against the rule of tyrants, many of whom were killed, and others fled. This marked the end of tyrant rule, and the emergence of a popular system of government, known as democratic rule, to replace absolute rule. The system of government became a system of parliamentary assemblies in which citizens participated and effectively exercised all powers. The popular system of government succeeded, exercising its functions with complete efficiency and freedom.

We note here that not every city-state in Greece experienced these five systems in the development of its governance system. Some Greek city-states experienced all five systems combined, while others experienced four systems. Other city-states experienced only three or two systems, depending on the circumstances of each Greek city-state.

We also note that it is possible for a Greek city-state to experience all five systems in the development of its political system within a hundred years, another city-state within a period of fifty years, and so on. The Greek city-states (polia)—despite their differing systems of government—had some distinct characteristics and features found in all Greek city-states. These were:

- The Acropolis: the seat or palace of government
- The Royal Palace: the residence of the ruler or king and his family
- The residences of the aristocratic class: the headquarters of princes, nobles, and aristocrats
- The residences of the common people: merchants, craftsmen, and artisans
- The public market: located in the center of the city and containing spaces for trade, theatrical performances, speeches, and the announcement of rulers' decisions
- The Chora: the agricultural lands surrounding the city
- The Wall: Each city had a wall surrounding it to protect it from enemies.



A trend toward a national alliance emerged among the Greeks, and under its leadership, Athens was able to form an alliance that united several Greek city-states, known as the Delian League. This alliance increased Athens' influence among the Greek city-states, and popular or democratic rule prevailed among the cities of this alliance. In contrast, Sparta succeeded in forming an alliance under its leadership that brought together the cities located in the Peloponnese Peninsula, known as the Peloponnesian League. The prevailing system of government was the rule of the minority, a military system characterized by cruelty and strictness. Therefore, one of the causes of the Greco-Palatin wars was the fundamental difference between the democratic system of government implemented in the Delian League states, led by Athens, and the military oligarchy implemented in the Peloponnesian League states, led by Sparta (6).

The city of Corcyra gained independence from the city-state of Corinth, an ally of Sparta, and declared its desire to join the Delian League, which implemented a democratic system, in order to protect it from the brutality of the city-state of Corinth. Athens rushed to the aid of Corcyra, and Sparta then moved to stand with Corinth. Thus, the civil war broke out among the Greeks in 431 BC. It lasted approximately 27 years and ended with the victory of the Spartan alliance over the Athenian alliance after the Battle of Aegospotami in 404 BC. Athens' leadership over the Greek world ended, and Sparta assumed the leadership of the Greek world. However, the military system of government led the Greek cities to rebel against Sparta's leadership. Thebes succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat on Sparta and seizing leadership of the Greek cities. These internal wars weakened the Greek cities, helping the Macedonians gain control of the Greek world.

5. Ancient Greek Foreign Policy

Greek policy at the time relied on ambushing other empires, both large and emerging. For example, Carthage controlled the western Mediterranean commercially and

politically, with Carthaginian colonies on the coasts of North Africa since the ninth century BC, as well as on the southern coasts of Europe. The conflict between the Greeks and Carthaginians was due to economic factors, which led to war in 408 BC and again in 409 BC. The focus of the conflict between the two sides was the island of Sicily, and these wars ended with a Greek victory.

The Greco-Persian Wars were caused by the expansion of the Persian Empire into Asia Minor and its control of the Greek city-states in western Asia Minor. The Persians also attempted to control Greece and the European Greek city-states. The Greco-Persian Wars went through two stages (7):

1- The first stage: The Persians succeeded in controlling the Greek cities of western Asia Minor in 548 BC.

The Asian Greek cities of western Asia Minor, led by the city of Miletus, formed an alliance against the Persian occupation and launched an armed revolution to overthrow it. The city-state of Athens sent (20) military ships, and the city-state of Eretria sent military aid to assist the Asian Greek cities in their war against the Persian occupation. However, the Persians regained control of the Asian Greek cities, and the Persians destroyed the city of Miletus in retaliation for its leadership of this armed movement. The Persians also decided to punish Athens and Eretria for their support of the armed revolution of the Greek cities of western Asia Minor, which marked the second stage.

2- The second stage: Direct wars between the Persians and the European Greek city-states encompassed land, sea, and outside Greece.

The Persians decided to prevent the possibility of a military alliance between the Greek city-states of western Asia Minor and the Greek city-states of Greece. A massive Persian military campaign (land and sea) moved toward Athens. The first military confrontation between the Persians and Athens occurred at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC. This ended in a crushing defeat for the Persians at the hands of Athens, despite their small numbers. After that, the Greek city-states realized the danger posed by the Persians and formed a military alliance under the leadership of



Sparta. The clash between the Persians and Sparta occurred in the Battle of Thermopylae, which ended in a valiant resistance from the Spartan army. The battle ended in a limited and meager victory for the Persians. A military confrontation followed between the Athenian and Persian fleets, known as the Battle of Seleucid Island, in 480 BC. The Persian fleet was defeated by the Athenian fleet, and the Persians withdrew to Asia Minor. The Persian advance toward Greece was halted. The Battle of Scylla Meis was a turning point in these wars, as the Persian threat to the Greek city-states receded. The Greeks launched a counterattack against the Persians in 479 BC. A naval battle took place at the Gulf of Mycale and a land battle at the Plain of Plataea. Both the naval battle of Mycale and the land battle of Plataea ended in a Greek victory and a crushing Persian defeat. The latter two battles permanently removed the Persian threat from Greece and the European Greek city-states. The Persian occupation of the Greek cities in western Asia Minor remained, and they were not liberated until Alexander the Great (8). Macedonia emerged as a prominent power, located in southeastern Europe on the Balkan Peninsula. The Argive dynasty seized the throne of Macedonia in the 7th century BC, then fell under Persian control in the 5th century BC. In the mid-4th century BC, King Philip II ascended the throne of Macedonia, successfully unifying Greece into a single political entity. Philip II exploited Macedonia's economic strengths, its geographical location in northern Greece, and the weakness of the Greek city-states as a result of the Greek civil wars. He succeeded in expanding the territory of the Kingdom of Macedonia, capturing Greek cities one by one. In 338 BC, he defeated Athens and Sparta at the Battle of Chaeronea, effectively ending the Greek city-state system. This effectively ended Greece's system of city-states, and Greece was united into a single political entity for the first time in its long history: the Kingdom of Macedonia. This entity was the cornerstone of Alexander's empire. King Philip II was assassinated in the summer of 336 BC, and was succeeded by his son, Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great was born in the summer of 356 BC. His mother was a princess from the region of Eros named Olympias. When he was thirteen years old, his father brought the scholar



and philosopher Aristotle to Macedonia to educate and educate his young son, Prince Alexander. Aristotle spent three years tutoring Alexander in the royal palace, teaching him the arts of government, politics, geography, philosophy, Greek literature, and the poetry of Homer. Alexander was influenced in his behavior and culture, and was imbued with the ideas of his teacher, Aristotle. He also learned the arts of war and fighting techniques from his father, King Philip II, and fought with him in several battles when he was sixteen years old. When he was twenty, he took over one-tenth of Macedonia after his father was killed. After taking the throne, Alexander the Great eliminated all attempts at secession and independence made by the Greek cities, and he destroyed the city of Thebes to the last detail. The other cities feared him and submitted to him, and after that he directed his efforts and preparations towards his military campaign towards the East (9).

6. Alexander the Great and Power Politics and Reality

Alexander the Great began his campaign against the Persian Empire as a key to his campaign in the East, with the following objectives:

A. Objectives of the Campaign:

- Eliminating the Persian Empire
- Liberating the Greek cities on the western coast of Asia Minor
- Establishing a global empire uniting diverse peoples, cultures, and civilizations

B. Campaign Preparations:

- 40,000 soldiers
- 160 warships
- A group of scientists, experts, and technicians

C. The Campaign's Line and Phases:

1. The First Phase: The campaign began in 334 BC towards Asia Minor. The Battle of the Granicus River was the first confrontation with the Persians, inflicting a crushing defeat on them. He succeeded in liberating the Greek cities in Asia Minor.

2. The Second Phase: Alexander moved from Asia Minor and took control of Syria after the Battle of the Issus Plain in 333 BC. After the defeat of the Persians, he headed south towards Phoenicia and took control of Sidon and Tyre after a six-month siege until Tyre surrendered. He then headed to Palestine, and Gaza fell in 332 BC, making it open (10).

3- The third stage: Alexander the Great entered Egypt and liberated it from the Persian occupation. The Egyptians welcomed him, and Alexander the Great admired Egyptian civilization. He spent several months there, establishing the city of Alexandria. He then left Egypt for Mesopotamia and Iran.

4- The fourth stage: Alexander the Great's army first clashed with the Persian army in Iraq on the Kauka Mela Plain, ending in a crushing defeat for the Persians in 331 BC. The Persian king, Darius III, fled, and Alexander the Great pursued him south. He continued to achieve victories over the Persians until he reached the city of Babylon in central Iraq. Babylon was famous for its fortifications, castles, and walls, but he was welcomed and treated the Babylonians well. He then headed toward Iran and captured the capital of the Persian Empire, Persepolis. The Persian king fled to the province of Bactroia, where the Persian king, Darius III, was killed by the Persian governor of Bactroia in 330 BC. This marked the end of the Persian Empire.

5- The Fifth Stage: After Alexander the Great achieved his goal of eliminating the Persian Empire, he continued his military campaign into Central Asia and India, subjugating them in 327 BC. He reached as far east as the Indus River, after which he decided to turn back. He returned by land until he reached Babylon in 323 BC. His military campaign took 12 years. The Death of Alexander the Great and the Fate of the Macedonian Empire:

Alexander the Great died in Babylon in 323 BC, after ruling for 12 years and eight months, before he turned thirty-three. He left behind an empire spanning three continents, from Greece in the west to the Indus River in the east, and between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea in the north, to northern Arabia in the south, including Egypt. His empire encompassed diverse peoples, cultures, and civilizations (11).

After his death, Alexander the Great's army commanders held a conference in Babylon, where the following decisions were made:

- To preserve the unity of the empire under the rule of the family of Philip II.
- To divide the empire into 24 political units administered by his military commanders.
- Commander Craterus became regent, and Commander Perdicas became commander-in-chief.

Matters did not settle according to the decisions of the Babylonian Council. Military clashes and conflict soon began between Alexander the Great's generals (323-301 BC), leading to the division of the empire into three Greek states:

- A. The Ptolemaic state in Egypt (323-30 BC)
- B. The Seleucid state in Syria, Asia Minor, Iraq, Iran, and India (312-64 BC)
- C. The Macedonian state (Antigone) in Greece (312-148 BC).

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