

GOLDEN AGE OF GREECE 756 TO 300 BC:

Maturing of the *HELLENIC ETHOS!*

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Apogee of Greece; World Cultural & Trade Epicenter; Democracy Protagonist!
900s ~ **War Anathema:** Tropism to Despots, Tyrants; Chaos, Diaspora! **WINTER!**
700s ~ Apotheosis of **Explorers:** Hercules, Jason, Odysseus, Theseus, Pytheas! **SPRING!**
400s ~ **Epiphany** in: Crafts, Arts, Philosophy, Science, Letters, Drama! **SUMMER!**
300s ~ Apotheosis of **Apostles** of Hellenism: Protean Alexander! **AUTUMN!**

The coalition Agamemnon built for the Trojan War collapsed with his gruesome murder. A debilitated and divided Peloponnesos falls prey to the iron panoply of the *Dorians* of N. Greece. **Iron** replaces **Bronze**. Argos replaces Mycenae as the seat of power; Corinth becomes rich through trade and **prostitution**; Elis grows as the training center for the Olympics; Sparta rises as a military state [*like the Soviet Union in our time*] enslaving its neighbors. **Persia** invades **Europe**; **Alexander** conquers **Asia!**

Piously religious, Greeks ineffably create 12 omnipotent Gods in their own image, 6 men and **6 women**, but, unlike others, remove religious functions from royal duties.

The seeds disseminated by that first ever **age of information** became the roots that sprung the Golden Age of Greece. **Therefore, it is befitting to laconically examine this part of our history [prolegomena] as we embark on the quest of Athens [legomena], and Macedonia [epilegomena; Issue #4]!**

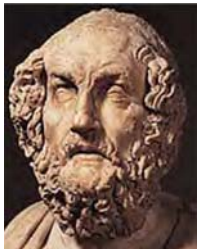
The invention of the Greek alphabet [750 BC] begins the **Age of Information**. Touring **bards** [*read story on our Columbus bard*] spread the stories of the enterprising **Jason and the Argonauts**; of gallant **Theseus** and his slaying of the Minotauros in Crete plus his encounters with the **Amazon** women warriors of Pontos; of the fascinating meanderings of cunning **Odysseus** whose idea of wooden horse ended the Trojan War and spawned the "**beware of Greeks bearing gifts**"; of Olympic hero **Hercules** who travels widely and saves Prophet **Prometheus** from the wrath of the gods; of **Pytheas** the **first literate man** to visit the barbarian tribes of North Europe. These stories stimulate the **Hellenes** [*called so by Herodotus for the first time*] to **explore** the world and **wonder** about the **mind**, the way the

exploits of Galileo and Columbus engendered the Renaissance Age in Italy in the 15th century.

EXPLORATION ETHOS What the **Lewis and Clark** expedition did for the USA in discovering the riches of the \$11 million **Louisiana Purchase** of the untamed **West**, Jason [Ἰάσων], the first ever Explorer, did 3000 years earlier for Greece in the discovery of the mysterious **East**. It was a brilliant feat for Jason and his Argonauts to sail without the aid of **GPS** through pirate-infested islands, by **Lemnos** where the **women** ruled after banishing the men, by the **Hellespont** crashing rocks and perilous **Bosporus**, across the tempestuous **Black Sea** to reach **Colchis** [*Caucasus Mountains in Pontos, where even today there is violence, as locals and outsiders are trying to fleece the region's natural resources of oil, gas, timber, grains, minerals, gold*].

With the help of the daughter of the local chief, **Medea** [*she was for Jason what indigenous squaw Sacagawea was for Lewis and Clark; and was treated just as badly at the end; abandoned*], Jason retrieved the **Golden Fleece** and returned it to Greece via **Europe!**

But it was not only Jason that brought back to Thebes and Corinth thrilling stories of his travels but so did his 50 sailors [Ἀργω-ναυτες] on the ship Argo, some of them elite heroes like **Laertes**, the father of Odysseus, **Peleus**, the father of Achilles, **Orpheus** from Peloponnesos, **Castor** and **Pollux**, brothers of Helen of Sparta, **Zetes** and **Calais** from Athens, brawny **Hercules**, *et al.* Imagine all the tales those sailors recounted to the local bards who, in turn, embellished them and spread them all over Greece!



GREEK ETHOS Nikos Kazantzakis novels and his 33,333-verses long poem, a modern sequel to Homer's *Odyssey*, caught the essence of **Greek Ethos** of the 20th century just as blind **bard HOMER** captured the **Ethos** of ancient Greeks with his classic poems that are considered world's best epic poems to this day touching on the sanctity of hospitality [φιλοξενια], honor [φιλοτιμο], virtue [αρετη], lust [ερως], justice [δικαιοσυνη], friendship [φιλια], hope [ελπις], moderation [παν μετρον αριστον], gratitude [ευγνωμοσυνη], charity [ελεημοσυνη], greed [πλεονεξια], ambition [φιλοδοξια], filial piety [υικη αφοσιωση], homecoming [νοστος], love [αγαπη], *strive for excellence* [αιεν αριστευειν]!

HOSPITALITY ETHOS Through his 12 exploits and his worldwide travels, **peripatetic Hercules** was the beneficiary of sacrosanct hospitality exemplified in the following story. On his way from **Peloponnesos** to **Thrace**, he called on his friend **Admetus**, king of **Thessaly**, who came out to meet him wiping tears from his red eyes. The king got a servant to serve Hercules dinner with wine but to keep secret the real reason for the mourning. He begged to be excused for a **funeral wake** without hinting that it was for his wife **Alcestis**, who had died trying to save the king. Hercules got drunk, became boisterous, demanding. The servant decided to break his vows of silence revealing that Greek **hospitality etiquette** had prevented the king from burdening Hercules with the sad truth. Ashamed for not being sensitive enough, Hercules **atoned** for his dreadful behavior by wrestling **Hades** and bringing **Alcestis** back to life.

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