

Notes 5.2 - The Greek Origins of Democracy

Geographic features separated Greece into small regions called **city states**.

The Greek word for city state = **polis**

Most city states were small and it caused people to form small communities.

The largest city states were Athens and Sparta.

Each city state had its own culture and form of government.

Greek governments first started out with **monarchy** (Greek for “rule by one”) but eventually Greeks came up with another idea known as **democracy** (Greek for “power of the people”)

In the 5th century AD (CE) people of **Athens** experiment with the idea of **direct democracy**. **Citizenship** was given to free adult male citizen born in the city-state and they voted on **every** issue. It worked because most citizens lived within walking distance of the city and showed up to debate issues and **vote**. The also had time because most citizens owned slaves who did most of the work. Other Greek city-states copy the idea from Athens and it spreads to Greek colonies.

Democracy was seen in a military innovation known as the **hoplite**. Greek hoplites were made up of citizens who practiced the marching formation together. Athens added a **navy** and free citizens rowed at the oars. Citizens were expected to serve in the military, and this gave power to the voice of the people. Wars had to have the support of the people.

Citizens of Athens were expected to fulfill the **duty of citizenship**:

- Vote in the **assembly** (ecclesia).
- Stay informed in the issues.
- Serve (when elected) on various councils (boule).
- Help administer the city for a month.
- Serve as a military general (if elected).
- Serve as an accountant of tax monies (if elected).
- Serve as an official in the administration of the city.
- Serve (when selected) on **jury** for trials.
- Vote on **ostracisms**.