**Vocabulary List for the Athenian Acropolis**

**Art and Architectural Terms**

**Architrave** - the lowest part of the entablature that rests directly on top of the column capitals.

**Chryselephantine -** made of gold and ivory as was the case with the Athena Parthenos.

**Corinthian** - one of the Greek orders (styles) of architecture. Corinthian columns have acanthus leaves decorating the capital, or top portion of the column.

**Cornice** - the top most portion of an entablature.

**Doric -** one of the Classical orders (styles) of architecture. Doric columns have a simple circle at the top or capital portion of the column.

**Cyclopean masonry** - enormous stones and stonework as seen in Mycenaean architecture. It is known as “cyclopean masonry” because they were supposedly built by the mythical one-eyed giants or Cyclopes. It was thought only they would have the strength to move the heavy stones.

**Doric** - one of the three Greek orders (styles) of architecture. Doric columns have a simple circle at the top or capital portion of the column.

**Entablature -** the horizontal section of a classical building that rests on top of columns, generally broken into three sections: the architrave, frieze and cornice.

**Frieze** - the middle section of an entablature, often decorated.

**Hexastyle** - when a building has a row of 6 columns across the front.

**Ionic** - one of the three Greek orders (styles) of architecture. Ionic columns have a scroll-like shape at the top or capital.

**Metopes** - in classical architecture the square or rectangular recessed spaces on a Doric frieze between triglyphs that are often decorated as on the Parthenon.

**Parapet** - a low protective wall.

**Pediment -**  a triangular space that forms the gable of a roof of a building. In classical architecture, it is usually filled with relief sculpture.

**Propylon -** a ceremonial gate.

**Stylobate** - the top step or platform of a temple on which the columns rest.

**Temenos -** a sacred precinct, enclosure, or area of land designated for official purposes like a temple.

**Triglyphs** - in classical architecture the square or rectangular spaces that alternate with metopes on a Doric frieze. Triglyphs have three (hence tri) vertical grooves.

**Architectural Landmarks**

**Acropolis** - a generic term in the Greek language and not specific only to Athens. The ancient Greek term “acropolis” is a compound word composed of “acro” and “polis,” which translate in English as “highest” and “city,” respectively. Many cities were founded on hills for defensive purposes, such as Mycenae and Thebes, and a typical Greek city had an acropolis, or highest point which was fortified to serve as a place of refuge in the event of an enemy attack.

**Altar of Athena** - an altar on the western side of the Acropolis. One of the most important events at the altar occurred during the Panathenaic Festival. During this festival, the Altar of Athena was the climax of the procession and the scene of a hecatomb, or the sacrifice of an entire herd of 100 oxen. The meat that resulted from the sacrifice would be roasted and distributed to celebrating Athenians.

**Arrephorion** - a small square building just past the Erechtheion, built against the north wall of the Acropolis that was the home of the Arrephoroi. The Arrephoroi were two aristocratic girls who served in the cult of Athena and performed the Arrephoria festival in mid-summer. During this festival, the girls carried unknown items (“unspoken things”) up and down the Acropolis.

**Athena Parthenos** - “Athena the Virgin” refers to the colossal chryselephantine (gold and ivory) sculpture of Athena designed by the famous sculptor Pheidias in the mid fifth century BC that was housed in the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena Parthenos. It was dedicated in 438 BC.

**Athena Promachos -** “Athena the Defender '' refers to a colossal bronze sculpture of the goddess Athena with a shield and spear designed by the famous sculptor Pheidias in the mid fifteenth century BC. The Athena Promachus stood between the Propylaia and the Parthenon.This sculpture was likely known more appropriately only as the “Great Bronze Athena'' when it was constructed.

**Chalkotheke** - a colonnaded building that intersects the west steps of the Parthenon. Chalkotheke—literally, “a place of bronze” (from the Greek “chalkos”). The building functioned as an arsenal and a storeroom for objects dedicated to Athena. Its contents were listed on an inscribed stone slab dating to the fourth century BC.

**Dipylon Gate -** Greek for “two-gated,” the Dipylon Gate was the main gate into the city of Athens in Classical times.

**Diskobolos,** or Discus-thrower - a sculpture of a discus thrower made by Myron, a fifth-century BC Athenian sculptor who created many iconic bronze statues that remained famous throughout antiquity. The Diskobolos is perhaps his most famous.

**Hellenotamiai** - the financial officers of the Delian League in charge of the tribute allies paid them.

**Hekate Epipyrgidia statue** - a sculpture with three images of the goddess Hekate combining the bodies of three draped women into one. This, as well as the sculptures placement, near the Athena Nike bastion captured her role of controlling places of intersection and crossing. This location also gave it the nickname Epipyrgidia (“on the tower”). It is attributed to the sculptor, Alkamenes, a fifth-century sculptor, student of Phedias, known mostly for his work in bronze.

**Karyatid Porch** - the south porch of the Erechtheion, facing the Parthenon, which consists of six pillars in the form of women with elaborately carved dresses and hairstyles. These maidens are perhaps the daughters of Kekrops.

**Korai -** “maidens.” Can refer to archaic statues of young women in long loose robes.

**“Sanctuary of Pandion”** - located southeast of the Parthenon, this small, open-walled sanctuary was built against the wall of the Acropolis and divided into two parts. Now known commonly as the “Sanctuary of Pandion,” it was likely a space used for a festival honoring Zeus.

**The Trojan Horse Sculpture** - a sculpture made by Strongylion was a dedication that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis. This bronze sculpture was dedicated in 420 by a man named Chairedemos and represented the famous mythological Trojan Horse. The story of the horse was told in the epic cycle which recounted the long battle between the Greeks and the Trojans. Although alluded to in Homer’s “Iliad,” the most famous account of the horse is found in the Roman poet Vergil’s “Aeneid,” where he describes how the Greeks penetrated Trojan fortification walls by hiding in a massive wooden horse disguised as a gift.

**People/Notable Figures**

**Aeschylos** - a Greek playwright of the late 6th - early 5th century BC. He wrote tragedies, including *The* *Eumenides*, *The Oresteia*, and *Agamemnon*.

**Aglaophon** - a famous painter of the Classical period. He was the father of fellow painter Polygnotos. They both had paintings included in the Pinakotheke, or “Paintings Gallery” of the Propylaia.

**Akamas** - a Greek soldier who pears out from inside the Trojan Horse sculpture. The sculpture was a dedication that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis.

**Alkamenes -** a fifth-century BC sculptor, student of Phedias, known mostly for his work in bronze, including the Hekate Epipyrgidia.

**Archilochos -**  an architect who was part of the last stage of the construction of the Erechtheion.

**Aristophanes** - a late 5th to early 4th-century Greek playwright who wrote comedies, including

*The Birds* and *Lysistrata.*

**Argives -** another term for the Greeks.

**Arrephoroi** - the name for the two young aristocratic girls between the ages of 7 and 11 who were chosen each year to serve the cult of Athena. At the Arrephoria festival, the girls reenacted a sacred ritual that involved carrying “unspoken things” up and down the Acropolis.

**Chairedemos** - in 420 BC dedicated a sculpture representing the famous mythological Trojan Horse that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis.

**Cleisthenes** - 570 - c. 508 BC an aristocrat and Athenian statesman who is considered the father of Athenian democracy. He established the foundations of the Athenian democratic constitution, which became a model for other democracies to this day.

**Demosthenes** - 384 - 322 BC an Athenian statesman and orator.

**Euripides** - 380 - 306 BC a Greek playwright who wrote tragedies including *The Trojan Women* which debuted at the Theater of Dionysus at the Acropolis.

**Darius I** - 550 - 486 BC commonly known as “Darius the Great” was king of the Persian Empire from 522 - 486. He was a member of the Achaemenid dynasty and attempted to conquer Greece more than once. He and his troops were defeated at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC by Athenian forces.

**Demetrios of Phaleron** - *c.* 350 - *c.* 280 an Athenian statesman and orator who became governor of Athens. He was critical of the money the Greek statesman Perikles spent on the Propalaia of the Acropolis.

**Demophon** - a Greek soldier who pears out from inside the Trojan Horse sculpture. The sculpture was a dedication that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis.

**Herodotus** - a 5th century Greek historian, often regarded as the “Father of History”. His accounts of the Greek wars with Persia were documented in his most famous work *Histories*.

**Hesiod** - an early Greek poet who was most likely active in the mid 8th century to roughly the mid 7th century BC. He is known most for *Theogony*, an account of the creation of the world and myths of the gods and goddesses.

**Hippias** - c. 570 - 490 BC the son of the tyrant Pesistratus who, along with his brother Hipparchos continued the development of the Acropolis after their father’s death. The brothers ruled the city jointly until 514, when Hipparchos was assassinated. Hippias continued to rule alone, until 510, when he was expelled from the city by a Spartan army. He was the last tyrant of Athens.

**Hipparchos** - c 555 - 514 BC the son of the tyrant Pesistratus who, along with his brother Hippias continued the development of the Acropolis after their father’s death. The brothers ruled the city jointly until 514, when Hipparchos was assassinated.

**Homer -** waspresumed author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* perhaps composed in the 9th or 8th centuries BC. Although these two epic poems of ancient Greece have always been attributed to Homer, there is very little known about him and his life, beyond the fact that his was the name given by the ancient Greeks themselves as the author of these poems. The two epics provided the basis of Greek education and culture throughout the Classical age and formed the basis of humanities education through the Roman Empire and beyond.

**Lakedaimonios** - one of the horsemen mentioned in an inscription on The Cavalry Monument on the Acropolis. In the middle of the fifth century BCE, the number of horsemen in the Athenian cavalry was increased from 100 to 300. To commemorate their first victory after this change, they set up this bronze statue group of a man on foot leading a horse. The inscription reads: “The horsemen dedicated this from the spoils of the enemy; the commanders of the horse were Lakedaimonios, Xenophon, and Pronapes. Lykios son of Myron from Eleutherai made it.”

**Leaina** - a famous courtesan (or prostitute) who was the mistress of one of the two men who assassinated the tyrant Hipparchos in 514 BC. This event led to the establishment of democracy at Athens, the first instance of that form of government. When she was interrogated about the conspiracy, Leaina refused to speak and was tortured to death. Because her name means “she-lion,” the grateful Athenians reportedly commissioned a statue of a tongue-less lioness. This story may simply be an urban legend devised to explain the presence of a statue of a female lion missing her tongue on the Acropolis.

**Lykios** - one of the horsemen mentioned in an inscription on The Cavalry monument on the Acropolis. In the middle of the fifth century BCE, the number of horsemen in the Athenian cavalry was increased from 100 to 300. To commemorate their first victory after this change, they set up this bronze statue group of a man on foot leading a horse. The inscription reads: “The horsemen dedicated this from the spoils of the enemy; the commanders of the horse were Lakedaimonios, Xenophon, and Pronapes. Lykios son of Myron from Eleutherai made it.”

**Kallikrates** - c 470 - 420 BC a Greek architect who was one of the architects responsible for the design of the Parthenon along with Iktinos and may have been involved with other building projects on the Acropolis.

**Konon** - an Athenian general, who along with his father, Timotheos, were commemorated in a statue group on the north side of the Parthenon. This father and son duo were protagonists in the revival of Athens’ fortunes following the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431 - 404 BC).

**Kresilas** - 480 - 410 BC a well-known Classical Greek sculptor who made a sculpture of the statesman Perikles that is now lost. Roman copies of the head survive and it is assumed accurately reflect Kresilas’ lost original, however no evidence survives of the rest of the body. It is likely Kresilas depicted Perikles with heroic nudity and wearing a Corinthian helmet that stresses his prowess in war, as does the spear he holds in his left hand. Visitors to the Acropolis emerging from the Propylaia, would be greeted by Perikles’ portrait and was the first one of a mortal that we see atop the Acropolis.

**Menestheus** - a Greek soldier who pears out from inside the Trojan Horse sculpture. The sculpture was a dedication that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis.

**Metic** -an ancient Athenian term for free people without citizen rights; metics included Greeks from cities other than Athens as well as formerly enslaved people.

**Mnesikles** - 460 - 429 Bc a Greek architect responsible for the Propylaia, or entranceway to the Acropolis.

**Myron** - a well-known Greek sculptor who created many iconic bronze statues that remained famous throughout antiquity. The most famous was—and still is—the Diskobolos, or Discus-thrower. Although the original is lost, it is easily recognizable from many Roman marble copies. Myron also made group sculptures like the Athena and Marsyas and Theseus and the Minotaur, both of which were dedicated on the Acropolis.

**Myrrhine** - the first priestess of Athena Nike who held the office for life. A verse epitaph from ca. 410 BCE states that Myrrhine was the first to tend the temple and statue and was chosen by lot from all Athenian women. We know about this from the Decrees for Athena Nike, one of which is a marble inscription, dated to about 450-445 BCE, that delineates the process of selecting and paying the priestess.

**Pausanius** - a Greek travel writer active in the late second century AD. Pausanias was born in the early second century AD, probably in Asia Minor (modern-day western Turkey). Nothing is known about his life and career, but he spent the years between approximately 150 and 180 CE traveling around the heart of ancient Greece: the Peloponnese and adjoining areas such as Attica. He visited hundreds of cities and sanctuaries and recorded information about the history, form, decoration, and religious significance of the structures and features he encountered. He published the results of this project as *A Description of Greece*. This work is generally considered a minor work of Greek literature, but is the only surviving first-hand description of many important Greek sites, such as the Acropolis and Agora of Athens, Delphi, and Olympia, as they appeared at the height of their development, in the late second century. Archaeology has broadly confirmed the accuracy of his account in excavations. Pausanias is particularly helpful for virtual tourism because he concentrates mostly on monuments of the Archaic, Classical, and early Hellenistic periods, often ignoring features added after the middle of the second century BCE, when Greece came under Roman control.

Pausanias’ *Description* is the only major surviving example of ancient travel literature, and it is also a critical bridge between ancient literature and modern archaeology.

**Peisistratos** - c 600 - 527 BC was an Athenian who established himself as tyrant of Athens in the 560s. In Greek political thought, a tyrant was a king-like ruler, usually from an aristocratic family, who typically subverted the constitutional order with a private army and maintained political stability by accommodating opponents, or intimidating and even killing them. Tyrants also liked to indulge in public building projects as a demonstration of their supreme power and great wealth. Peisistratos used his power and the wealth generated by sound fiscal policies to develop the Acropolis as the most significant destination for religious pilgrimage in Attica. Upon his death in 527 his rule and policies—presumably including the development of the Acropolis—were continued by his sons Hippias and Hipparchos.

**Perikles** - Perikles was born around 495 BC, five years before the start of the Persian Wars. His parents both came from aristocratic families and his great uncle was Kleisthenes, who is credited with having established the democratic constitution of Athens in 508/507. Around 460, Perikles became prominent in politics and military affairs, actively crafting Athenian foreign policy in Greece and abroad and leading armed expeditions to further Athenian interests. With his numerous successes, by the early 440s he was arguably the most respected and influential Athenian citizen. He was never elected archon, or chief magistrate of Athens (a kind of annual president of the city). Instead, he made a reputation for himself as a gifted orator and as a military leader, being elected one of the ten generals in charge of military operations almost every year until his death. This intense contact with the Athenian citizen body in the public arena and on campaign gave him a “soft power” that was greater than even the political power of the archon. He used his power to redirect the wealth accumulated by the Delian League under Athenian leadership to the reconstruction of the Acropolis on a magnificent scale as a symbol of the Greek victory over Persia, whose soldiers had left the Acropolis in ruins in 480. Perikles lived to see the completion of only the Propylaia and the Parthenon, but his example inspired the reconstruction of the Athena Nike temple and the construction of the Erechtheion.

**Pheidias** - c 480 - 430 BC was a famous sculptor most well-known for his colossal sculptures of Athena Parthenos that stood in the Parthenon and the Athena Promachus, which stood between the Propalaia and the Parthenon. He also designed the sculpture of Zeua at Olympia that has been described as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

**Philokle**s - an architect who was part of the last stage of the construction of the Erechtheion.

**Plutarch** - c 46 - after 119 AD a Greek historian, philosopher and writer who is most well-known for his work called *Parallel Lives*, which paired the lives of famous Greek men with famous Roman men. One of the Greeks he wrote about was Perikles.

**Polygnotos** - a famous painter of the Classical period. He was the son of fellow painter Aglaophon. They both had paintings included in the Pinakotheke, or “Paintings Gallery” of the Propylaia.

**Praxiteles -** a well-known Greek 4th century BC sculptor who made the Cult Statue of Artemis that stood in the small temple of Artemis was added to the sanctuary of the goddess by the middle of the fourth century BC. Perhaps the most well-known sculpture he made was the Aphrodite of Knidos.

**Pronapes** - one of the horsemen mentioned in an inscription on The Cavalry Monument on the Acropolis. In the middle of the fifth century BCE, the number of horsemen in the Athenian cavalry was increased from 100 to 300. To commemorate their first victory after this change, they set up this bronze statue group of a man on foot leading a horse. The inscription reads: “The horsemen dedicated this from the spoils of the enemy; the commanders of the horse were Lakedaimonios, Xenophon, and Pronapes. Lykios son of Myron from Eleutherai made it.” Pronapes won many chariot races and also dedicated a life-size bronze chariot with four horses, a charioteer, a groom, and himself on the Acropolis, a very expensive and prominent offering to Athena for his victories.

**Pyrrhos** - a sculptor who made an image of Hygieia (Health) that stood at one corner of the Propylaia. The base for a bronze statue reads “The Athenians dedicated this to Athena. Pyrrhos made it, an Athenian.” The shrine with which this sculpture was associated was also likely dedicated to the deity Hygieia herself, the daughter of the healing god Asklepios. Written accounts tell us that Athena was worshiped with the epithet “Hygieia” on the Acropolis since the Archaic period and that the Panathenaic Festival included a sacrifice to the goddess in this guise.

**Strabo -** c 64/63 BC - 21 AD a Greek geographer whose work *Geography* is important as it captures accounts of the different peoples living under the Roman Empire during the time of Augustus (27 BC - 14 AD).

**Strongylion** - a 5th century Greek sculptor who made the dedicatory sculpture of *The Trojan Horse* that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis. The bronze sculpture was dedicated in 420 by a man named Chairedemos and represented the famous mythological Trojan Horse. The story of the horse was told in the epic cycle which recounted the long battle between the Greeks and the Trojans. Although alluded to in Homer’s “Iliad,” the most famous account of the horse is found in Vergil’s “Aeneid,” where he describes how the Greeks penetrated Trojan fortification walls by hiding in a massive wooden horse disguised as a gift.

**Teuker** - a Greek soldier who pears out from inside the Trojan Horse sculpture. The sculpture was a dedication that stood in the precinct of the Sanctuary of Artemis.

**Themistocles** - c. 524 BC - c 460/59 BC an Athenia general and politician, who, in September of 480 BCE, led the allied Greek fleet to a decisive victory over the Persians at the Battle of Salamis.

**Theodosius** - 347 - 395 AD was a Roman Emperor of the eastern empire from 379–392 AD and both the eastern and western empires from 392–395 AD. He banned public expression of all religions except Christianity in the 4th century AD.

**Thucydides** - c. 460 - c. 400 BC was a Greek historian who wrote *History of the Peloponnesian War* that chronicled the roughly 30 years war between Athens and Sparta.

**Timotheos** - an Athenian general, who along with his son, Konon, were commemorated in a statue group on the north side of the Parthenon. This father and son duo were protagonists in the revival of Athens’ fortunes following the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (431 - 404 BC).

**Trojans -** a people who lived in western Anatolia and most famously fought with the Greeks in The Trojan War, captured in Homer’s *Iliad*.

**Vergil** - 70 - 19 BC a Roman epic poet who composed *The Aeneid* that told the story of the hero Aeneas’s journey from Troy to Italy.

**Xanthippos** - an early 5th century Athenian aristocrat active in politics and military affairs. He was the father of Perikles.

**Xerxes I** - 519 - 465 BC was a king of Persia, commonly known as “Xerxes the Great.” He was son and successor of Darius I. Partially in revenge for his father’s defeat at The Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, he launched an invasion of Greece by land and sea in 480 BC. The Persian forces defeated the Greek defenses in two critical battles, at Thermopylae on land and at Artemision by sea, and proceeded towards Athens. Ultimately, the Persians suffered two major defeats at The Battle of Salamis in 480 BC and The Battle of Plataea in 479 BC, which was the last battle of the Greek and Persian wars.

**Xenophon** - one of the horsemen mentioned in an inscription on The Cavalry monument on the Acropolis. In the middle of the fifth century BCE, the number of horsemen in the Athenian cavalry was increased from 100 to 300. To commemorate their first victory after this change, they set up this bronze statue group of a man on foot leading a horse. The inscription reads: “The horsemen dedicated this from the spoils of the enemy; the commanders of the horse were Lakedaimonios, Xenophon, and Pronapes. Lykios son of Myron from Eleutherai made it.”

**Gods, goddesses, and mythical figures**

**Achilles** - a Greek hero and considered the greatest warrior most well-known for fighting in the Trojan War. He was the son of a mortal king Peleus and a Nereid (a sea nymph) named Thetis. He was known to have one weak spot, his heel. He was killed by the Trojan Prince Paris’s arrow to his heel.

**Aegisthus** - an important figure in Greek mythology. He was the lover of Clytemnestra, wife of King Agamemnon of Mycenae. Upon Agamemnon’s return from the Trojan War, Aegisthus and Clytemnaestra murdered Agamemnon and Aegisthus becomes king of Mycenae. He is later murdered by Orestes, son of Agamemnon. These events are captured in the trilogy *The Oresteia* by Aeshylus.

**Alcibiades** - 450 - 404 BC an important Athenian statesman and general. He was assassinated in 404 BC.

**Amazons** - a race of eastern warrior women famed for their skill in battle and conflicts with the Greeks. They are frequently depicted in art, including the 14 metopes on the west side of the Parthenon that depict the Amazonomachy, or battle between the Greeks and the Amazons.

**Aphrodite** - the Greek goddess of love and beauty; the equivalent of Roman Venus. Aphrodite had her own shrine on the slopes of the Acropolis.

**Apollo** - the god of music, poetry, healing, prophecy and the Sun. He is son of Zeus and Leto and twin brother to Artemis.

**Asklepios** - the Greek god of medicine and healing; his daughter was Hygieia.

**Athena** - the goddess of war, handicrafts, and wisdom among other things. She was the patron goddess of the city of Athens, hence the name, but was widely worshiped across the Greek and Roman world. In Roman mythology, she takes the name Minerva. Her symbol was the owl.

**Athena Nike** - Athena Nike was a version of Athena combined with Nike, the personification of Victory. She was typically depicted as a winged figure floating down to place a wreath on the head of the winner of a competition or setting up the spoils of war as a trophy.

**Athena Polias** - “Athena of the City” an aspect of the goddess that was worshiped from archaic times. The Erechtheion was formally known as the Temple of Athena Polias and it housed her oldest and most important cult image on the Acropolis, which was made of wood and allegedly fell to earth from the sky. This was considered the most important of all of those images worshiped on the Acropolis.

**Athena “Promachos”** - an aspect or manifestation of Athena“Athena the Defender.” This aspect of Athena was captured in the colossal bronze sculpture of the goddess designed by the famous sculptor Pheidias in the mid fifteenth century BC. The Athena Promachus stood between the Propylaia and the Parthenon.However, it was likely known more appropriately only as the “Great Bronze Athena” when it was constructed.

**Artemis** - the goddess of the hunt, equivalent to the Roman goddess Diana. Artemis, like Athena, was often associated with virginity and chastity. She is typically shown with a bow and arrow and hunting dogs. She was the daughter of Zeus (Jupiter) and Leto, and twin sister of the god Apollo. Her main cult center was at Brauron.

**Artemis Brauronia** - Artemis as worshipped at the sanctuary of Artemis as at Brauron, a city located 25 km east of Athens. A sanctuary of Artemis of Brauronia was established on the Acropolis in the mid-fifth century BC.

**Centaurs** - mythological creatures which were half-man and half-horse and symbolized those who were unable to control their vices or behave moderately. Centaurs were known for drinking profusely and attacking women. On the south side of the Parthenon, there are 32 relatively well-preserved metopes depicting the Centauromachy, or the battle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths. The battle highlights the disparity between the rationality and self-control displayed by the Lapiths, a Greek people who lived in the region of Thessaly in mythological times, and the untamed nature of the Centaurs.

**Cyclopes** - mythical one-eyed giants (singular cyclops) that feature in many mythological stories, including *The Odyssey* of Homer.

**Daidalos** - architect of the labyrinth of king Minos of Crete where the Minotaur was imprisoned. His son was Icarus.

**Demeter** - Greek Demeter is equivalent to Roman Ceres, the goddess of agriculture and grain. Her daughter was Kore, or Persephone.

**Dionysos** - also called Bacchus, was the god of wine, theater, revelry, madness and fertility among other things.

**Erechtheus -** a cult figure that was worshiped on the Acropolis in the Erechtheum. Erechtheus was the child of the blacksmith god Hephaistos and the Earth goddess Gaia. He was one of the most important early kings of Athens and became associated with Poseidon, Athena’s rival in the contest for the patronage of the city.

**Gaia** - was goddess of the Earth. One of her many offspring was Erechtheus.

**Gorgon** - a mythological creature, generally referring to three sisters who had live snakes for hair, whose gaze could turn those who looked at them to stone. Medusa is the most well known Gorgon.

**Hekate** - the goddess of crossroads, and also magic and spells. She is often shown holding torches and accompanied by dogs.

**Helios** - the sun god who drove his chariot across the sky from the east to the west.

**Hephaistos -** Greek Hephaistos is equivalent to Roman Vulcan,the god of metal-smiths and son of Zeus (Jupiter) and Hera (Juno).

**Hermes -** Greek Hermes is equivalent to Roman Mercury, the messenger god who was also associated with boundaries and borders. He is shown with winged sandals.

**Hygieia** - goddess of healing, or health personified. She was the daughter of the god of healing Asklepios. Written accounts tell us that Athena was worshiped with the epithet “Hygieia” on the Acropolis since the Archaic period and that the Panathenaic Festival included a sacrifice to the goddess in this guise.

**Kekrops** - a legendary Athenian hero, who was the first king of Attica and founded the city of Athens. He is considered “double-natured” having the upper body of a man and lower body of a serpent.

**Kore** - Greek Kore or Persephone corresponds to Roman Proserpina, the goddess of spring. The myth of Kore’s abduction, by Hades (Pluto), god of the Underworld, explains the transition of the seasons.

**Lapiths** - a Greek people who lived in the region of Thessaly in mythological times. They are frequently depicted in art in their battle with centaurs.

**Marsyas -** a famous character in Greek mythology. He was a half-goat, half-human creature known as a satyr. Satyrs lived in the woods and wilds and are closely associated with the wine-god Dionysos. On the Acropolis, he is shown in a bronze sculpture group by Myron that depicts the myth about Athena’s invention of the double flute. When she saw her reflection and how disfigured the instrument made her look when she played it, Athena threw it to the ground with a curse. The satyr Marsyas found it, and, unaware of the curse, was delighted to claim it. Not surprisingly, he eventually met a grisly end in a battle with the god Apollo, whose musician prowess he challenged.

**Medusa** - a Gorgon, a monster who had live snakes for hair and whose gaze could turn those who looked at her into stone. Medusa was beheaded by the hero Perseus.

**Minerva -** Roman Minerva is equivalent to Greek Athena, goddess of wisdom, war and handicrafts. Her symbol was the owl.

**Minos** - a legendary king of the Island of Crete. He was the son of Zeus and Hera and was responsible for building the Labyrinth that held the Minotaur.

**Minotaur** - the half-man half-bull creature that was imprisoned in the labyrinth of King Minos of Crete. The minotaur fed on human victims until the hero Theseus killed him. The Minotaur was the son of Minos’s wife Pasiphaë and a bull. A sculpture of Theseus and the Minotaur made by Myron was dedicated on the Acropolis.

**Muses -** goddesses who provided inspiration for the arts and sciences. There were typically nine of them and they are generally considered the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne (memory).

**Nike** - the winged goddess of victory. She is often combined with other gods and goddesses like Athena, becoming Athena Nike, representing an important manifestation of Athena and her association with victory. Athena Nike was a version of Athena combined with Nike, the personification of Victory. She was typically depicted as a winged figure floating down to place a wreath on the head of the winner of a competition or setting up the spoils of war as a trophy.

**Orestes** - in Greek mythology, the son of King Agamemnon who avenges his murder by his mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus. These events are detailed in the trilogy *The Oresteia* by playwright Aeshylus*.*

**Pandion** - a legendary king of Athens from which the Sanctuary of Pandion took its name. This small, open-walled sanctuary was built against the wall of the Acropolis and was likely used in a festival honoring Zeus.

**Persephone** - also known as Kore or corresponds to Roman Proserpina, the goddess of spring. The myth of Kore’s abduction, by Hades (Pluto), god of the Underworld, explains the transition of the seasons.

**Perseus** - a Greek hero most famous for his beheading of the Gorgon Medusa which he brought to king Polydektes.

**Polydektes** - mythological king of the island of Seriphos who charged Perseus with slaying Medusa.

**Polyxena** - During the Trojan War, Polyxena, the youngest daughter of King Priam and Queen Hecuba of Troy. She lured Achilles, the Greek hero, to his death. She was abducted by Achilles’ son, Pyrrhus in revenge and sacrificed at the grave of Achilles.

**Poseidon -** the god of the sea, equivalent to Roman Neptune. He is generally shown with a trident, or three-pronged spear. He fought with Athena over patronage of Athens; each one provided the Athenians with a gift, Poseidon struck the ground with his trident creating a salt-water spring, Athena’s gift was an olive tree. The Athenians chose Athena’s gift and she became the patroness of the city. Their fight is captured on the Parthenon’s west pediment.

**Pylades** - was the cousin of Orestes and helped his cousin revenge his father, Agamemnon’s murder, by killing Aegisthus and Clytemestra.

**Selene** - goddess of the moon, sister to Helios, god of the Sun and Eos, goddess of the dawn.

**Theseus -** Theseus was a legendary king of Athens who performed many heroic deeds, just like his counterpart Herakles. One of them was to accompany 14 boys and girls from Athens on an annual sea voyage to Crete. There, the wicked king Minos would feed these children to the half-man, half-bull monster known as the Minotaur, who was contained by a maze called the Labyrinth. With the help of Minos’ daughter Ariadne, the hero Theseus managed to slay the Minotaur and save the young Athenians. The sculptor Myron reputedly made a bronze statue group of Theseus and the Minotaur that once stood on the Acropolis.

**Zeus** - the king of the gods, equivalent to Roman Jupiter. He is a mature male with a full head of hair and a beard. His symbol is the eagle and his attribute the staff. He was worshiped in various ways on the Acropolis.

**Zeus Hypatios or “Zeus Most High**” - an aspect of Zeus worshiped at the Pandrosion altar on the Acropolis.

**Zeus Polieus, or “Zeus the Protector of the City ”** - an aspect of Zeus worshiped on the Acropolis. He had an important sanctuary there, but, unfortunately, nothing of it remains. The sanctuary was the scene of an unusual sacrificial ritual called the Bouphonia.

**Places/Geographic Locations**

**Agora** - Greek for 'open place of assembly' and agora was the public square that acted as a city center and public meeting space. The Athenian Agora lies at the foot of the Acropolis on its northwest side. It was where much of the city’s governance and administration took place, as well as housing markets.

**Aigaleos** - a mountain lying just west of Athens.

**Areiopagos** - a hill or rocky outcropping to the northwest of the Acropolis. The Areiopagos was the site of the oldest and most prestigious court in Athens, the Areiopagos Council, which deliberated in cases of murder, sacrilege, and arson. The hill and the court are immortalized in the tragic play *Eumenides* staged by Aeschylos in 458 BC.

**Asia Minor -** also known as Anatolia inmodern day western-Turkey. The Greeks had many settlements in this area including Ephesos, Miletos, and Halikarnassos.

**Attica** - an ancient district in east-central Greece, Athens was its main city.

**Boeotia** - a region in central Greece.

**Brauron** - a city in Attica, where the main cult center to the goddess Artemis existed. Brauron is about 25 kilometers east of Athens.

**Delphi** - in antiquity, an ancient sanctuary dedicated to the god Apollo located on the slopes of Mt. Parnassus. Delphi was considered to be the center of the world by the Greeks.

**Kerameikos** - the cemetery which was named for the potters’ quarter located behind it, where Athens’ famed black-figure and red-figure ceramics were produced.

**Laureion** - a town near Athens famous in the Classical period for its silver mines.

**Marathon** - a town in Greece which was the site of The Battle of Marathon in 490 BC in which an outnumbered Greek alliance defeated the Persians.

**Mycenae** - an ancient, late Bronze Age era (c. 1600-1100 BC) city on the Peloponnese. Mycenae was the largest and most important center of the civilization that was named "Mycenaean" after the city's citadel. The Mycenaean culture dominated mainland Greece, as well as the Aegean islands, and the parts of Asia Minor during the late Bronze Age.

**Mt. Hymettos** - a mountain range near Athens.

**Mt. Lykabettos** - a limestone hill and the highest point in central Athens.

**Mt Pentelikon** - a mountain in Greece northeast of Athens where much of the marble for the buildings on the Acropolis was quarried.

**Olympia** - located near the western coast of the Peloponnese, Olympia was the site of an ancient religious sanctuary dedicated to Zeus that was the host of the Olympic games, held every 4 years.

**Parnes** - a mountain range in Attica.

**Peloponnese** - the large peninsula in southern Greece, connected to the rest of Greece by the Isthmus of Corinth.

**Plataea** - an ancient city in Boeotia Greece, well-known as the site of The Battle of Plataea in 479 BC in which an alliance of Greek city-states defeated the Persian forces.

**Pnyx** - a low hill near the Agora that was the site of the *ekklesia*, the assembly of citizens which was at the heart of the Athenian democracy

**Salamis** - a Greek island in the Saronic Gulf and well-known as the site of the Battle of Salamis in 480 BC in which an alliance of Greek city-states defeated the Persians.

**Saronic Gulf** - a gulf of the Aegean Sea between Attica and Argolis.

**Seriphos** - a Greek Aegean island where Perseus traveled with the head of the Gorgon Medusa, after slaying her.

**Sparta** - a city-state in the Laconian region of ancient Greece known for their military skill. Sparta was at times allied with the Athenians, as in the Greco-Persian wars, or their rivals like during the Peloponnesian War (431 - 404 BC) between the two city-states.

**Thebes** - a city in the Boeotian region of Greece.

**Thermopylae** - a narrow pass of land between the sea and mountains that is best known as the site of the Battle of Thermopylae in 480 BC, in which an alliance of Greek city-states, led by the Spartans held off the Persians for days, before being ultimately defeated.

**Thessaly** - a region in northern Greece.

**Troy** - an ancient city in western Anatolia (modern Turkey) and most famously the site of the Trojan War, a battle between the Greeks and Trojans. THe most famous account of this ten-year war is found in *The Iliad* of Homer.

**Temples and Monuments**

**Erechtheion** - The Erechtheion was formally known as the Temple of Athena Polias or “Athena of the City.” It housed her oldest and most important cult image on the Acropolis, which was made of wood and allegedly fell to earth from the sky. This modest wooden cult statue remained the most important representation of Athena on the Acropolis, even after erecting the enormous bronze “Athena Promachos'' and the colossal gold and ivory Athena Parthenos, both designed by the famous sculptor Pheidias.

Like the Parthenon, the Erechtheion had an Archaic predecessor from the sixth century which was likely destroyed by the Persian sack of the Acropolis in 480 BCE. Parts of the older temple were reused in building the Acropolis fortification walls, along with elements of the so-called Pre-Parthenon. The fifth-century version of the Erechtheion that we see now was likely conceived at the same time as the rest of the Classical building program on the Acropolis in the 430s BCE. Construction, however, likely began around 421 and continued through the Peloponnesian War, although work was interrupted, probably in 415, only to be resumed again six years later, eventually bringing the project to completion in 406/405 BCE. Although this building’s primary purpose was as a temple to the city goddess, its modern name—the Erechtheion or Temple of Erechtheus—stems from the fact that this building housed other ancient cults, although there is still some uncertainty as to the location of all of the individual components housed in the building. The collection of deities and heroes honored here also included Erechtheus, one of the most important early kings of Athens, from which the building’s modern name derives. Erechtheus was the child of the Olympian blacksmith god Hephaistos, who, in an unsuccessful attempt to rape the virgin goddess Athena, accidentally impregnated the earth goddess Gaia. When the child was born, literally from the earth, he was reared on the Acropolis by Athena. This conception story, although quite unusual, explains the worship of the god Hephaistos inside the Temple of Athena. At some point in history, Erechtheus became closely linked with the god Poseidon, Athena’s rival in the contest for the patronage of the city, and there was said to be an altar of Poseidon-Erechtheus in the precinct.

**Pandrosion** - a temple dedicated to Pandrosos, one of the three daughters of Kekrops, the mythical first king of Athens. There was an altar dedicated to Zeus Hypatios or “Zeus Most High.”

**Parthenon** - built between 447 - 432, with efforts led by the Athenian statesman, Perikles, the Parthenon was one of the largest and tallest temples in Greece, and its architecture was innovative. Also known as the Temple of Athena Parthenos, (Athena the Virgin) it was in antiquity—and remains today—the most famous and conspicuous building on the Acropolis. The Parthenon replaced an earlier, unfinished temple destroyed by the Persians in 480 BCE. Inspired by Perikles, the architects Iktinos and Kallikrates and the master artist Pheidias oversaw its completion in just 15 years. It housed the massive chryselephantine sculpture of Athena by Pheidias.

The Athenians decided to fund the construction of the Parthenon with the financial contributions of their allies in the Delian League, a mutual-defense association led by Athens and aimed at preventing another Persian invasion of Greece. As the first building completed in a larger renovation of the Acropolis, the Parthenon was the centerpiece of what is sometimes known as “Perikles’ building program.”

**Pinakotheke** - a large hall in the north wing of the Propylaia in which pictures painted by famous artists were displayed. The paintings do not survive.

**Propylaia** - built between 437 - 432 BC BC , it served as the monumental gateway to the Acropolis. It was built by the architect Mnesikles and named for the five passageways or “gates” that led to the sanctuary of Athena. It is a unique structure which cleverly responded to a number of topographic and architectural challenges. The central door was designed for pedestrians and sacrificial animals, while the smaller side doors were intended for pedestrians only. The experience of passing through the Propylaia signaled to the ancient visitor that they were crossing into Athens’ most sacred space. It visually prepared them for the “thauma” (or wonder) that would have surely accompanied the associated change in scale, building material, and grandeur. The orientation of the Propylaia matched that of the Parthenon, and it was aligned with the giant bronze sculpture of Athena, suggesting that the Propylaia was designed to frame and introduce both of these features.

After visiting the Pinakotheke (paintings gallery) and sitting on its couches or waiting under the enormous roof of the central hall, visitors moving through the Propylaia had two options. Either they could continue through the central hall onto the Acropolis plateau itself, passing by the so-called “Hermes of the Gateway,” or they could pass through the three Doric columns of the south wing in order to access the bastion of the Temple of Athena Nike.

It is the only major secular building of the Classical Acropolis, and lacks sculptural adornment and so seems more austere than the other marble buildings, all of which are temples.

**Shrine of Athena Hygieia -** a shrine dedicated to Athena in this role that was incorporated in the Propylaia. At one corner stood a bronze statue of Hygieia (“Health”) by the sculptor Pyrrhos. Popular memory associated the statue with a deed of the statesman Perikles, but in reality it was probably related to the plague of 429 BCE

**Temple of Athena Nike** - a small but elegant temple honoring another manifestation of Athena dear to the Athenians: Athena Nike. In this guise, Athena granted victory in battle. The marble temple was built around 420 BCE. It replaced a limestone version built around 468, which in turn replaced a first version built of wood in the mid-sixth century and probably destroyed in the Persian sack of the Acropolis in 480. The small scale and extensive sculptural adornment of this temple stood in stark contrast to the Propylaia. Athena Nike was a version of Athena combined with Nike, the personification of Victory. She was typically depicted as a winged figure floating down to place a wreath on the head of the winner of a competition or setting up the spoils of war as a trophy. The temple housed a wooden cult statue of the goddess, which depicted her seated and holding a helmet to represent peace won through military success and a pomegranate to represent fertility. Although combined with the deity Nike, the cult statue was wingless, “so that the goddess would never leave Athens,” in the words of Pausanias.

**Theater of Dionysos** - the world’s first theater that was built on the south slope of the Athenian Acropolis. Originally begun in the mid to late 6th century, it was the site of festivals dedicated to the god Dionysos, the god of theater. Many famous plays debuted here at one of the Dionysian festivals.

**Roads**

**Panathenaic Way** - a ceremonial road which led worshippers into the city. The Propylaia marked the end of the Panathenaic Way. The road began at the northwest edge of the city at another gate known as the Dipylon or “Double” Gate, its path bisected the central marketplace known as the Agora, at the foot of the Acropolis on its northwest side. After winding towards the Acropolis and passing a sanctuary to Demeter and her daughter Persephone (or Kore), the Panathenaic Way terminates with a stone-stepped ramp measuring an impressive 21 meters across, the Classical-period ramp was designed to be able to transport a huge number of animals and people up to the Acropolis for sacred festivals. The impressive stone roof of the Propylaia provided shelter from the elements.

**Religious Festivals**

**Arkteia** - a series of initiation rites into the cult of the goddess Artemis for young Athenian girls. Part of the rites involved the girls dressing as bears and wearing saffron robes. It likely took place at the sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron.

**Arrephoria** - a mid-summer festival dedicated to Athena where two young girls, the Arrephoroi, reenacted a sacred ritual that involved carrying “unspoken things” up and down the Acropolis.

**Bouphonia or “Ox-Slaying”** - an unusual sacrificial ritual that was held at the sanctuary of

Zeus Polieus, or “Zeus the Protector of the City.” For the sacrifice, an ox was lured to the altar with grain; a priest struck the sacrificial ox with an ax, then immediately dropped it and ran away; bystanders then “arrested” the ax and took it to the law courts to be put on trial for murder. Although this sacrifice was an outlier, scholars of ancient religion have been fascinated by the way it blurred the lines between sacrifice, butchery, and murder and expressed some ambivalence and guilt over killing domesticated animals.

**Greater Dionysia** - also known as The City Dionysia was a spring festival dedicated to the god Dionysos involving theatrical performances. Many plays by famous playwrights like Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides and others debuted at this festival. It was held in the sacred enclosure of Eleuthereus on the south of the Acropolis.

**Panathenaia** - The Panathenaia, or Panathenaic Festival, was an annual religious celebration that honored Athena’s role as the city’s patron goddess. Every fourth year a larger version of the festival attracted visitors from all over the Greek world. The other years in between were known as the “Little Panathenaia.” The name “Panathenaia” in ancient Greek clearly expresses the idea that the festival was meant to involve all (pan) of the Athenian community. The “Little Panathenaia” was celebrated by the Athenians alone. Worshippers processed along a broad street called the Panathenaic Way which began at one of the city gates, the Dipylon Gate in the Kerameikos district, passed through the Agora (the public square that was the city’s center), and led up to the Acropolis. The participants drove sacrificial animals and brought gifts for Athena. They also competed in a limited number of athletic contests to honor the goddess. The climax of the procession occurred when it reached the Great Altar of Athena, which can be visited at another stop on this tour. There the sacrificial victims were slaughtered, an act that gave the month its name – hekatomb in ancient Greek signifies a sacrifice of 100 animals. The meat resulting from the sacrifices was distributed to the citizen body.

The Great Panathenaia had all of these features, but in contrast it attracted both Athenian and foreign participants, and it was more spectacular, with a larger number of athletic contests as well as musical contests spread over several days. The Great Panathenaia was intended to make Athens as important as the major Greek sanctuaries which hosted sacred games, such as Olympia, Delphi, and Nemea. Winners of these competitions received cash prizes or ceramic vessels known as amphorae filled with Athenian olive oil The purpose of the rites held in both editions of the Panathenaia was to celebrate the Olympian gods’ victory in the Gigantomachy, a mythical battle they fought against the Giants. Athena played a leading role in securing victory for the Olympian side, so it is not surprising that the Gigantomachy is a theme we encounter in several key places on the Acropolis: the metopes on the east side of the Parthenon, the interior of the shield of Athena Parthenos inside the Parthenon, and on the peplos, or robe draping the cult statue of Athena Polias in the Erechtheion.

**Plynteria -** a festival during which the robe or peplos of Athena was cleaned. During the Great Panathenaia, the robe was replaced with a brand new one and was one of the gifts brought to the goddess during the procession to her cult statue on the Acropolis.

**Political Positions and Organizations**

**Archon -** a ruler, a chief magistrate of a city-state. In Athens there were nine archons by the middle of the 7th century BC. They shared the religious, military, and judicial functions.

**Delian League** - formed in 478 BC after defeating the Persians at Salamis and Plataea in 480 and 479 BC, it was an alliance of Greek city-states that banded together and agreed to defend each other if attacked by Persia again. The league’s power was mostly in the hands of Athens, which supplied the largest navy. Cities paid into a central fund either in ships or in money, although over time very few continued to provide ships; the Athenians and their now expanded navy gradually took over this alliance and suppressed any revolts from disgruntled member states. In the year 454/3 BC the treasury was transferred to Athens, and the transition from the Delian League to Athenian Empire was complete. The enormous accumulated wealth was kept on the Acropolis and League money was used in part, to rebuild the Acropolis.

**Ekklesia** - the assembly of citizens which was at the heart of the Athenian democracy: every male citizen had the right to vote directly on issues of domestic and foreign policy.

**Tyrant** - in Greek political thought, a tyrant was a king-like ruler, usually from an aristocratic family, who typically subverted the constitutional order with a private army and maintained political stability by accommodating opponents, or intimidating and even killing them. Tyrants also liked to indulge in public building projects as a demonstration of their supreme power and great wealth.

**Plays and Literature**

**Aeneid** - the epic poem written by Vergil that tells the story of the Trojan, Aeneas, who, after the Trojan war, led the surviving Trojans to central Italy. Here, transplanted from their home, they mixed with the native people and became the ancestors of the Romans.

**The Birds** - a play by the Greek comic playwright Aristphanes. It was first performed in 414 BC at the City Dionysia.

**Eumenides** - a tragedy by Aeschylos written in 458 BC.

**Iliad -** an epic poem attributed to Homer. It is the story of the Trojan War and centers on the last 10 days of battle in the 10 year war between a Greek alliance and Troy.

**Theogony** - a poem by the Greek poet Hesiod composed in approximately the mid 8th century BC. Theogony describes the origins and genealogy of the gods

**“The Trojan Women”** - the third tragedy in a trilogy written by Euripides in 415 BC.

Hellenistic 323 - 31 BC

**Battles and Wars**

**Peloponnesian War** - fought between 431 and 404 BC, this was a conflict between the city-states of Athens and Sparta.

**Battle of Artemision** - a sea battle that took place in 480 BC in which the Persians defeated Greek forces. This was the Persians second invasion of Greece and once the Greeks were defeated at both Thermopylae on land and Artemision by sea, the Persians captured Athens and sacked and burned the Acropolis. The Athenians evacuated their city and sought refuge in the Peloponnese and on the islands of the Saronic Gulf, but less than a year later, would rally and ultimately defeat the Persians at The Battle of Salamis and The Battle of Plataea.

**Battle of Sphacteria** - a battle in 425 BC in the Peloponnesian War (431 - 404 BC) between the Athenians and Spartans, in which the Athenians were victorious. This victory may be commemorated in shields hung on the bastion of the Nike temple as they may have been the ones that the Athenians captured from the Spartans from the battle.

**Gigantomachy** - a mythical battle between the Olympian gods’ and the Giants. The Panathenaia celebrated the Olympian gods’ victory. Athena played a leading role in securing victory for the Olympian side, so it is not surprising that the Gigantomachy is a theme represented in several key places on the Acropolis: the metopes on the east side of the Parthenon, the interior of the shield of Athena Parthenos inside the Parthenon, and on the peplos, or robe draping the cult statue of Athena Polias in the Erechtheion.

**Battle of Marathon -** 490 BC battle in which the Persians set out to exact revenge on the Athenians for their support of uprisings in 499 BC against Persian rule in Ionia, part of modern-day Turkey. While much of the Persian fleet was destroyed at sea by a storm, some forces landed on the eastern shore of Attica at Marathon (26 miles from Athens). The Athenian army confronted the Persians there and overcame their own fears in the face of overwhelming enemy numbers to win a decisive victory. The Persian forces retreated back to Persia, and Darius died before another expedition could be organized.

**Battle of Plataea -** 479 BC one of the last of the Greco-Persian wars. A Greek alliance of city states defeated Persian forces on land at Plataea (a city in Boeotia), effectively ending the war with the Persian Empire.

**Battle of Salamis** - a battle that took place as part of the Greco-Persian wars in 480 BC on the Greek island of Salamis in which an alliance of Greek city-states defeated the Persians.

**Battle of Thermopylae** - one of the battles of the Greco-Persian wars took place in 480 BC at Thermopylae, a narrow pass of land between the sea and mountains. In the battle, an alliance of Greek city-states, led by the Spartans, held off the Persians for days, before being ultimately defeated.