

Sparta v. Athens Sample Essay

Ancient Greece is a land of many city-states, called poleis. Each polis had its own government, laws, rulers, and customs, although they did have certain things in common such as their language and religion. As a rule, though, the city-states did not get along. Two of the most famous and influential city-states were Sparta and Athens. If anyone today were given the opportunity to travel in time to live in one of those two city-states, Sparta should definitely be the one they chose. Sparta is far superior to Athens because their army was fierce and protective, girls received some education and women had more freedom than in other poleis.

First, the army of Sparta was the strongest fighting force in Greece. Beginning at the age of 7, young boys were sent from their families to live in military barracks (Spielvogel, 2006). They were treated harshly to make them tough so that they would be a fierce fighting force when they turned 20 (Bartel). These soldiers then stayed and fought until they were 60 so the army was always ready to go to war (Spielvogel, 2006). This made Sparta one of the safest cities to live in.

Secondly, in Sparta girls were able to learn a lot more than in other places. Spartan girls were not taught just by their mothers like in Athens. They received training in sports, such as the javelin and running (Spielvogel, 2006). The Spartans believed this made them strong and better mothers.

Lastly, Sparta is the best polis of ancient Greece because women had freedom. By freedom, I mean that they could own property and run their own businesses (Bartel). They could also leave the house without their husbands' permission unlike the poor women of Athens. This is most likely because Spartan husbands were off to war so often that the women could never find them to ask permission. Women in Sparta had to be strong and in charge in order to keep the city going while the men were off fighting in all the wars.

Those who choose Athens often argue that it was the best city in ancient Greece because it had amazing art and culture. These people fail to remember, though, that Athens would never have survived to have all of that amazing art without the Spartans. When the Persian army tried to take over all of Greece, the Spartans are the ones that did most of the fighting. In the Battle at Thermopylae, for example, 300 Spartans stopped the Persians from entering Greece (Gill). Athens has a lot to thank the Spartans for and is, therefore, not as important to visit as Sparta.

In conclusion, Sparta is the city-state that a time-traveler should choose to visit. Although it is not as amazing as our world today where women are equal to men, and people are not forced into the military, it is still better than any other polis, including Athens. Sparta is the premier city-state of ancient Greece.

Citations

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Bartel, N. *The Greeks*. *PBS: Public Broadcasting Service*. Web. 13 Apr. 2011.
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