

Time Travel, Smyrna, 590 B.C.

Historical Facts

Introduction

Smyrna was an Aiol Eastern Grek city. Aiols were the leading community in auditory and expressive arts such as religion, mythology, literature, poetry, music and also architecture. In this period Smyrna was a trade center at the peak of its strength. However in 600s B.C. it was invaded by Lidians just like many other Greek cities. Some parts of the city, houses, part of the Temple of Athena and citywalls were demolished in the invasion of Lidians. Some nobles who died in the attack were buried outside of the city wall.

After the attack of the Lidian King Alyattes, the damage in the city started to be removed. A new citywall was constructed in order to foster the defense of the city while the first city wall of the city was repaired. Some houses were built better and more sound. There was also improvement in the architecture of the city. For instance in this period the first “Stone-paved street” was made. Also the construction of the Temple of Athena was completed.

About City Life

The nobles of the city used to live within the city walls whereas the public used to live outside of the citywalls. Houses are generally adjacent and the streets of the city are narrow. People from different social groups were able to use the fountain outside of the citywall. We have no certain information on the population of the city. However, it is known that tradesmen, craftsmen, farmers and fishermen used to live here.

The public used to make a living through farming and fishing. They were producing sweet wine from their vineyards, breeding vegetables and fruits. Every family used to produce their own bread and olive oil. They got the food products like milk, butter, cheese which are necessary for them from shared animal trails. Clothes for family members were sewed in the weaving looms in houses.

Like other Greek cities, there were social class differences in Smyrna. However, it was a democratic city. The political leaders of the city were called Basileus and this leader had assistants. It is known that there was freedom of thought and a democratic environment in Smyrna. However, in this period women are not part of this democracy and political life. Men have a say in administrative and political issues and they are the leaders of the family. Women usually work in the house. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that women get actively involved in social and political life. Some women chosen among the nobles of the city were able to take part in only religious ceremonies. Girls used to get married at an early age.

In this period, modern philosophy and natural sciences have come to occurrence in the Aegean world. Philosophers questioned the role of gods and made calculations about the nature and the universe. Poets wrote poems and songs about the period. Troubadours told stories to people embellished with legends going to villages with their string instruments. These are indications that people were aware of each other and life in that period. Poet Alkaios, one of the most famous of that period, wrote mostly plain and emotional poems, sometimes he attracts attention with his harsh style. Besides what he wrote for gods and heroes, there are also political songs, songs on drinking and love. An example is given below:

” Anlayamıyorum rüzgarın durumunu,
Bir buradan yuvarlanıyor zira dalga
Bir oradan, biz de arada
Kara gemiyle sallanıyoruz.
Güç bela ayaktayız azgın fırtınada,
Gömülmüş direğin ayağı sulara,
Yırtılmış iyice artık yelken
Büyük parçalar sallanmada. ”

“I cannot understand how the winds are set
against each other. Now from this side and now from that the waves roll.
We between them run with the wind in our black ship
driven hard pressed and laboring under the giant storm.
All around the mast-step washes the sea we shipped.
You can see through the sail already, where
there are opening rents within it the forestays slacken.”

Sopho who proved herself and went down in history as the first woman poet lived in this period and was appreciated a lot, although women were not involved in social and political life. This poet used to teach dancing and music to the girls coming from different places, islands and Anatolia in the school she founded in Mytilene to Aphrodite’s honor. She read her lines with her Aiol dialect accompanied by the “*seven string Lyra*” which was found in this period for the first time and which is a string instrument, in the feasts of dance and music which she usually organized when her students got married and left school. Her students liked her a lot and they didn’t want to leave school.

In addition to these poets, Alkman from Sardes, Anakreon from Teos and Hipponaks from Klazomenai are important poets too.

In this period, nature philosophers moved away from religious concerns, in other words departed from mythological beliefs and they turned the knowledge they got from Mesopotamia and Egypt into science with an objective research method. Thus, Aegean nature philosophers founded the first principles of math, astronomy, geometry and later on medical sciences. The most important ones among these are the famous mathematician Thales from Miletos, the famous intellectual and nature philosopher Anaksimenes from Miletos and the important intellectual and nature philosopher Anaksimandros from Miletos again who discovered sundial and made the first explanations on substance. Also three among seven sapient persons of the Hellen world are Aegean.

On the origin and protection of human rights, nature philosopher Pratozar led the protection of human rights based on his principle of “human is the measure of everything”.

There are also intellectuals and troubadours in Smyrna who lived there or who visited the city. The most important among these is the famous author and poet Homeros who lived 200 years before this period and is known to be from Smyrna. Homeros is the creator of İlyada and Odyssea which are known all around the world and considered as the first great works of Western Literature.

About trade and business contacts

Smyrna was a trade city where tradesmen came from the East and the West. The peaceful attitudes of people of Smyrna and the fact that they offered high quality products for low prices attracted the attention of the regions nearby and it helped the development of the trade network. In the harbor, there were usually ships loading on or off goods. Among these goods there were fabric, pottery, wine, souvenirs, and sometimes goods that were brought from far away, Mesopotamia and Egypt. Trade had brought welfare to the city and gathered people and new ideas. Eastern Hellens in Smyrna and Anatolia created a competitive environment not through guns like in Hellens in their homeland, but through trading the best, cleanest and cheapest products. The competition in the field of trade helped the development science and freedom of thought in the cities.

About politics

The community governed by kings in Ion and Aiol cities consisted of aristocrats and middle class citizens. The nobles lived with the king, when there was a war they were with the king with horse cars and riders. The nobles obtained their fortune through middle class citizens and the natives they used as slaves. The fact that the nobles are extremely rich and the middle class citizens are very poor caused a struggle between social classes. Then someone among the middle class citizens or nobles overthrew the king with a coup and replaced him. It is known that the city of Smyrna was governed by a man called "Basilius". One of the important events for the city of Smyrna is the Lydian attack. As explained by the famous ancient historian Herodotos, the Lydian king II. Alyattes sent away Kimmers and occupied Smyrna as soon as he accessed the throne. During the occupation of the ancient Izmir city by the Lydian King II. Alyattes, part of the Athena Temple was demolished as well as the city. However, later Alyattes had to return due to the events in the east of his kingdom. After this attack, people of Smyrna restored the city and especially the temple and had quite a rich and bright period until the mid 6th century B.C. In this period, social and cultural life developed as well as trade. The people had times of peace and happiness in these periods. However, peace and happiness continued until the Persian attacks.

The Persian Empire was growing rapidly in the east. The Persians destroyed Meds in the north in 550 B.C. under the leadership of Great Kiros (or II. Kiros or II. Keyhüsrev) and became a state. After that Keyhüsrev started invasions. He invaded rich cities like Babel, Fenike and turned the country into a rich kingdom. He occupied Armenia, Lydia and the fortune of Krezus and integrated the whole Anatolia under his ascendancy. During the Anatolian attacks, the Persians came nearby Smyrna and caused the demolition of the city of Smyrna in 545 B.C. After the demolition, the city was moved to the skirts of Pagos mountain or today's Kadifekale. The Persians attacked Babel after occupying Anatolia and they occupied Babel too. After that, they started preparations for attacking Egypt and Great Kiros died in the wars with Egypt.

About belief

For Hellens, gods are in human's clothing and they do good and bad things like humans. They have feelings like humans.

The goddess of the city of Smyrna Athena is the goddess of wisdom, art, strategy, peace and war in Greek mythology. Her symbols are shield, spear, olive branch and owl. The spear represents war, the olive branch represents peace and the owl represents wisdom. Athena is the goddess and protector of the city of Athens. The city was named after her. Athena and the features she symbolizes are found in many cultures in similar forms. Also, Athena helped

Akhas in the Trojan war and helped the construction of the wooden horse. Athena carries a special shield. This shield is called Aegis. There is the picture of Medusa's head with various other decorations on the shield. Even the strongest armies are defeated in front of this shield.

The naming of the city after Athena and her adoption as the most important goddess has an interesting story too. The city of Athens is just being founded and the question of who will be the god of the city is being discussed. All Olympos gods came together. After some competitions, all but two gods are eliminated. These two gods are Poseidon and **Athena**. The jury states that whoever gave the greatest present to this city would be chosen as the god of the city. First, Poseidon tries confidently. He hits his three headed spear to the ground and the ground cracks and a horse comes out. Poseidon, showing the horse to everyone, says "This is a domestic horse, it takes the person to wherever he wants without getting tired, and he carries his load". All gods were fascinated by this horse. However, Athena smiles and plunges her famous spear on the ground. An ore comes out of where the spear is plunged; it grows up and becomes a very beautiful olive tree. The clever goddess says, "This is an olive tree. Olive which is the fruit of this tree has countless features. People can eat olive; they can put it in their food. They can extract its oil and burn it to have light at night. They put its oil in their food, they obtain very good tastes. At the same time, it doesn't get rotten, and by using it they keep the food fresh. And there are more uses to be counted". All gods stood in bewilderment for this tree. They all congratulate Athena, the city belongs to her now. The city will be called Athens afterwards. Poseidon throws away his three headed spear to the mountain with the anger of being defeated by a goddess. The spear gets plunged in the mountain. It is said that the trace of the spear is still there. Also, it is believed that the famous tree of Athena is the olive tree in the acropolis near the portico in Athens.

Athena whose main features are related to the city is the opposite of the wilderness goddess Artemis in many respects. It is assumed that Athena is a goddess who existed before Hellen civilization and adopted by the Greeks afterwards. However, the Hellen economy depended on a military basis to a great extent. Therefore, Athena turned into a war goddess in time despite the fact that she protected her domestic functions.

Athena is the most important goddess of Smyrna. This goddess is very important to the people of Smyrna. Eastern Hellenes who came to Smyrna from continental Greece brought their goddess Athena with them and they built a temple in Smyrna to her honor. This temple is the earliest temple known in Anatolia, Athena Temple. However, the temple was destroyed in the Lydian attack in 600s B.C. and the people of Smyrna repaired the damaged parts of the Athena Temple.

Every year a great festival was held to Athena's honor and the people organized sports activities and competitions and sent their good wishes to Athena. The well-known cult rituals were Panatheneia feasts. These are sports games organized in the name of the goddess. These games had an important role in Greek life and art in religious, cultural and social terms. Those who won the games were awarded wine and olive garlands in specially produced panatheneia amphoras. Some young girls chosen among the nobles of the city sewed new clothes for Athena and had the honor of making wishes for her. As a result of the excavations, various gold ornaments, pottery, figurines and ceramic bowls were found.

Scenario

Smyrna preparing for the festival in honour of the new Athena temple, ten years after the Lydian conquest

Smyrna has had a hard time after the Lydian attack ten years ago. Parts of the city were destroyed, including houses, the city wall and the Athena temple. The last years have been a time of renovation and rebuilding. Houses have been restored, some have been made bigger and more modern; one of the streets have been paved with stones; a new wall around the city is built. And there have been big efforts to rebuild the Athena temple, to make it even grander than before. The restoration of the city has followed a certain plan made up by the leaders of the city, Basileus and his assistants.

But still there is some work to do, to renovate a few of the houses and to finish the erection of the new city wall.

The last years life has improved for most people and the trade has increased. The craftsmen are doing the best of products and the tradesmen sell more and more. People start to believe in the future again. But there are social differences, some seem to be richer than others.

Today is a big day for the city; the restoration of the Athena temple is finished. The new temple for the goddess of Smyrna can be used for the first time. A festival is going to be held and there are lots of preparations to be done.

People are curious to see the restored city, the new temple and take part in the feast. Several trading ships are coming into the harbour. People are called in from neighbouring farms to prepare for the festival and to bring food products. One of the potters in the city needs help. He must have new pottery to sell to all the tradesmen coming.

People are expecting music, singing, poetry, sport events and lots of food. And of course the highlight will be the sacrifice to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, art, peace and war, and to dress her up in her new garment.

Basileus and his assistants lead and organize all the preparations. It is a big day for the city. There is a rush, and also hopes and expectations.

Key questions

- How to make Smyrna the top city again - economically, socially and mentally?
How to rebuild the city after the war and make it flourish once again?
- Trade brings wealth to the city – but is it wealth for everyone?
Is it correct/hubris to question the social differences or the roles of the women?
- Do the gods have all the explanations for the structure of the world and making my life meaningful?

Roles

The students are sons and daughters of surrounding farmers coming into the city.
At least one of the groups is English speaking (grade 10,11?)

Adults:

Teachers are farmers and relatives of the students.

Other adults are craftsmen, tradesmen and women in the city.

Fisherman?
(One or two are (city) slaves)
Basileus

The Swedes are tradesmen?

One person from Kalmar and one from Karsiyaka are the driving persons in the time travel.

Male names
Female names

Activities

- Preparing for the sacrifice – finish the new robe for Athena, arrange the food in baskets, olive branches etc. Girls
- Making the meal *What?* Girls
- Making pottery – Boys, *how many at the same time?* Pottery kiln
- Dyeing pottery – Boys/Girls?
- Making jewelleries – Girls?
- Making musical instrument-lyra – Boys/Girls?
- Building of the wall/new wall – Boys
- Sport activities and games – Olympic games, spears, running, backgammon? Boys and girls?
- Read poems (Homer, Alkaios?, Soppo?, Alkmar?, Anakreon?), singing (Alkaios?), dancing, philosophic discussions (Thales?, Pratoogar?)
- Collecting of water (is done together with a leader). Boys and girls?

Time Plan

09.00 Students arrive, short history walk of Smyrna 590 B.C./reading the landscape
09.20 Dress up, presenting of characters
Initiation outside of the walls
10.00 A cityguard takes the group to Basileus at the temple. Ceremony
10.15 Activities, girls/boys
11.00 A Phoenician tradesman is coming.
Activities continues
12.00 Procession to the temple. Sacrifice. Music. Poems.
Meal. Inside the wall
Performance. Singing (Alkaios?), Dancing. Making a wish.
13.30 End, short evaluation
14.00 Students leave

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The Karsiyaka time travel group together with Ebbe Westergren, Daniel Serlander and Helen Eklund, Kalmar läns museum, Sweden