Atlantis

By Vickie Chao

A long, long time ago, Poseidon, a Greek god, established a kingdom on a large island. There, he fell in love with a local woman. She bore him five sets of twins -- all boys. Poseidon made his eldest son, Atlas, the ruler of the entire island and the ocean around it. He called the island Atlantis and the ocean the Atlantic.

As the story goes, Atlantis was a rich and beautiful country. From a bird's eye view, the empire consisted of several concentric circles. Its capital was at the innermost circle, atop a hill. Radiating from that pivotal point were alternating rings of canals and fields. There was also a huge channel that cut across them all. It served as the link between the capital and the ocean. For thousands of years, Atlantis was a formidable force. It conquered many nearby kingdoms. As the empire continued to expand, its citizens became very greedy and corrupt. Their wicked ways made the Greek gods very angry. To punish the Atlantians, the deities resorted to using earthquakes and floods. In a single day and night, Atlantis sunk to the bottom of the sea. It would never be seen again!

The story of Atlantis is fascinating. It captivates our imagination. For centuries, people have had rounds of debates over the tale. They wondered if Atlantis really existed. And if it did, where was it exactly? To answer those questions, scholars poured through Plato's writings page by page. They carefully examined every clue and tried to solve the puzzle. So far, nobody has found Atlantis yet.

By all accounts, Plato was the first person in history to bring up the name Atlantis. Around 360 B.C., this famous Greek philosopher published two dialogues -- Timaeus and Critias. In Timaeus, Plato recorded a supposed conversation involving Socrates, Timaeus, and Critias. In it, Critias broached the topic of Atlantis briefly. He said an Athenian lawgiver named Solon (638 B.C. - 558 B.C.) once visited Egypt. He heard about Atlantis from Egyptian priests. When he returned to Greece, he relayed the story to Critias' great-grandfather, Dropides. The tale had since then passed on in his family. Later on, Plato wrote another supposed conversation among the same three men in his work titled Critias. This time, Critias gave detailed accounts about Atlantis. He described vividly the island and its people.

According to Plato, Atlantis disappeared 9,000 years before he was born.

Nine thousand years was a very long period. Amazingly, throughout it all, the word "Atlantis" was never documented anywhere. Plato was the first to write about it. Because of the lack of other evidence, most scholars considered the story made-up. They positioned it as a legend. Their views -- however unfavorable -- were only one theory. There were still many scholars who wanted to find Atlantis. Plato said in his Timaeus that Atlantis was larger than Asia and Libya put together. He also said that it lay west of the "Pillars of Hercules." Today, we know that the "Pillars of Hercules" is really the Strait of Gibraltar. It connects the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Suppose Atlantis did exist. It could be anywhere between Europe/Africa and the Americas. The choices are simply unlimited. To complicate the matter further, some scholars thought Atlantis was not in the Atlantic Ocean at all. Rather, it was in the Mediterranean Sea. Some thought Atlantis did not disappear 9,000 years before Plato's time. Instead, it sunk to the bottom of the sea 900 years earlier. For centuries, people have debated the existence of Atlantis. They could neither disprove nor prove Plato's story. So did Atlantis really exist? Only time may tell. Until then, the search is on!
Atlantis

Questions

1. Which of the following about Atlantis is true?
   A. Plato said Atlantis lay south of the "Pillars of Hercules."
   B. Plato said the Greek gods destroyed Atlantis.
   C. Today, all scholars believe that Atlantis is a myth.
   D. Solon was the first person to write about Atlantis.

2. Which Greek deity built Atlantis?
   A. Poseidon
   B. Apollo
   C. Zeus
   D. Hades

3. How long ago was Atlantis destroyed?
   A. About 90 years before Plato was born
   B. About 9 million years before Plato was born
   C. About 9,000 years before Plato was born
   D. About 90,000 years before Plato was born

4. What is the "Pillars of Hercules"?
   A. The Strait of Dover
   B. The Strait of Malacca
   C. The Strait of Gibraltar
   D. The Gulf of Panama

5. According to Plato, who first told the tale about Atlantis?
   A. Solon
   B. Dropides
   C. Critias
   D. Egyptian priests

6. According to Plato, Atlantis was larger than _____ and _____ combined.
   A. Asia and Libya
   B. Libya and Rome
   C. Egypt and Greece
   D. Asia and Egypt

7. Which of Plato's works carried extensive conversation about Atlantis?
   A. The Laws
   B. The Apology of Socrates
   C. Critias
   D. The Republic

8. According to Plato, how much time did it take the Greek deities to destroy Atlantis?
   A. Three days and three nights
   B. One day and one night
   C. Two days and two nights
   D. Seven days and seven nights
Pericles

By Vickie Chao

In studying ancient Greece, there is one name that anybody who pursues the topic must know by heart. That name is Pericles.

Pericles was born around 495 B.C. He came from a very prominent family. In more ways than one, his impeccable lineage gave him many advantages over other Athenians. For one, he could afford an excellent education. For another, he had enough connections to give him an early boost in his political career. But in the end, heredity could only go so far. What made Pericles so important was his work, his achievements. It was not his ancestry.

Pericles rose to power and became the leader of a democratic movement around 461 B.C. At the time, his faction often locked horns with the conservative party, championed by Cimon (also spelled as Simon). Eager to get rid of the man, Pericles accused Cimon of being a sympathizer to Sparta (Athens' main rival) and managed to get him ostracized for ten years. With Cimon gone, Pericles could finally pursue the policies he had in mind. One of his earliest edicts was to let the government pick up the tab so the poor could come and watch theatrical plays free of charge. In addition, he also pushed through legislation which allowed the government to pay its citizens for their time spent on public services (such as being a juror). Needless to say, these two measures, plus many more, made Pericles hugely popular among the Athenians. Throughout his time in office, he put his democratic ideals to the test. Thanks to him, the Assembly (represented by all male citizens) grew increasingly powerful. For the first time since the concept of democracy was introduced by Solon more than a century before, the term finally had true substance behind it. Of course, in today's viewpoint, Pericles' society was a far cry from a real democratic one because only male citizens could take part in politics. Women, foreigners, and slaves were not allowed to join the Assembly and cast their votes. Furthermore, in one of his various directives, he made the requirement of citizenship more stringent. Before the change, anyone born of a single Athenian parent would automatically become an Athenian citizen. The new law passed in 451 B.C., however, demanded that only children with two Athenian parents could become Athenian citizens. The move was quite controversial at the time. Ironically, it was eventually overturned shortly before Pericles passed away in 429 B.C. so his half-Athenian son could become his legitimate heir.

Apart from bringing democracy into full swing, Pericles also wanted to rebuild Athens' acropolis. The acropolis, which literally means "city at the top" in Greek, was a centerpiece in the layout of every Greek city. It always stood atop a hill or on elevated ground, serving the dual purposes of defense and religious worship. In the case of the acropolis at Athens, it was completely destroyed during the Persian War (or the Greco-Persian War, circa 492 B.C. - 449 B.C.). After the conflict was over, Pericles decided to give Athens a brand new look. The entire project took more than a decade to complete. When it was finally unveiled, it took everybody's breath away. The whole complex, guarded by an imposing entrance (Propylaea), featured many grandiose structures. The crown jewel of it all was, of course, the world-renowned Parthenon. It was a temple dedicated to Athena, the city's patron deity.

Radical political reforms. A successful city makeover. Those were the high points of Pericles' career. At the surface, nothing seemed to be amiss. But beneath it, troubles, especially those concerning Sparta, were brewing. In the end, it was indeed Sparta that was Athens' undoing.

Sparta and Athens had always been in a competition of some sort. As both sought to become the regional powerhouse, a conflict between the two was bound to happen. In 433 B.C., Athens and another city-state, Corinth, were at war. About a year later, heeding Pericles' urgings, the Assembly passed through a resolution known as the Megarian Decree. The law, which was really meant to punish Megara for aiding Corinth but used some other pretenses instead, barred Megarian merchants from doing any business in Athens or at ports controlled by Athens. This ban, similar to our modern-day trade embargo, completely disrupted the Megarian economy. It also strained the already fragile relationship between Athens and Sparta because the latter was an ally of Megara.
At first, Sparta tried to resolve the issue through diplomatic means. It sent envoys to Athens threatening to go to war and demanding the Megarian Decree be retracted and Pericles expelled. But upon seeing that all of its requests had fallen on deaf ears, Sparta decided to turn words into actions and launched a military strike in 431 B.C., setting off the Peloponnesian War. Right from the beginning, the Athenians and the Spartans adopted two very different strategies. The Athenians knew that their navy was their strength, so they sent out fleets to attack the allies of Sparta. The Spartans, however, had more soldiers and wanted to fight on land. Because neither camp engaged in an open, face-to-face confrontation, it was rather difficult to tell which side was winning. The following year, an epidemic broke out in Athens. The spread of the disease, plus the loss of land and personal properties during Spartans' lootings, upset a lot of Athenians. Their frustration and anger forced Pericles to step down from his post of the general or *strategos* for a very brief period of time. Shortly after he was re-elected in 429 B.C., he succumbed to the epidemic and passed away.

Known for his integrity and eloquence of speech, Pericles was an influential figure dominating the political landscape of ancient Greece for more than 30 years. As a *strategos*, he transformed Athens from a mere city-state to a budding empire. Under his leadership, art and literature flourished. Historians often refer to this era as the Age of Pericles or Athens' Golden Age. But in the last two years of Pericles' reign, troubles began to boil and soon got out of hand. By the time that this prominent statesman died in 429 B.C., Athens was already in turmoil. Nearly a quarter of a century later, it surrendered to its archenemy, Sparta. Never again could it rise up and reclaim the glory it had once enjoyed.

**Pericles**

**Questions**

1. Which of the following about Pericles is true?
   - A. Pericles died of an epidemic in 429 B.C.
   - B. Pericles loosened the requirement of citizenship in 451 B.C.
   - C. Pericles was the first emperor of the Athenian Empire.
   - D. Pericles was the leader of a conservative political faction.

2. Which of the following events took place first?
   - A. Athens went to war with Corinth.
   - B. The Parthenon was unveiled to the public for the first time.
   - C. Sparta defeated and conquered Athens.
   - D. The Assembly passed through the Megarian Decree.

3. Which of the following groups could vote in the Assembly at Athens?
   - A. Both male and female citizens
   - B. All males, citizens or not
   - C. Female citizens only
   - D. Male citizens only

4. Who destroyed Athens' acropolis that later prompted Pericles to propose a complete makeover?
   - A. The Spartans
   - B. The Persians
   - C. The Egyptians
   - D. The Megarians
5. Who won the Peloponnesian War?
   A. The Corinthians
   B. The Megarians
   C. The Spartans
   D. The Athenians

6. Which of the following was NOT an accomplishment of Pericles?
   A. Putting more power in the hands of people
   B. Allowing the poor to watch plays free of charge
   C. Paying citizens to take part in public services
   D. Introducing the concept of democracy to the Athenians

7. Of what crime did Pericles accuse Cimon to get this opponent of his ostracized?
   A. Pro-Sparta
   B. Bribery
   C. Embezzling public funds
   D. Murder

8. Which Greek deity was the Parthenon dedicated to?
   A. Athena
   B. Dionysus
   C. Zeus
   D. Demeter
Cleisthenes

By Vickie Chao

Once upon a time, Cylon, a former winner of the Olympic Games, wanted to become the tyrant of Athens. To realize that dream, he sought help from his father-in-law, the tyrant of Megara, and staged a coup around 632 B.C. But the uprising was an unsuccessful one. Knowing that defeat was imminent, Cylon and his supporters took refuge in the temple of Athena. After they got the assurance that their lives would be spared, they came out of their hideout and were ready to stand trial for their crime. But they were ultimately betrayed by an archon (chief magistrate), Megacles, who broke the promise and had them killed. The circumstance was so unspeakable that the Athenians decided to send him and his entire clan (the Alcmaeonids or the Alcmaeonidae) into exile. It was said that the descendents of this powerful family carried a curse or a miasma ("stain") for generations to come.

Now fast forward to circa 510 B.C. Athens was then in the hands of a bitter, cruel ruler named Hippias. Seeing how unpopular the tyrant was, Cleisthenes (also spelled as Clisthenes or Kleisthenes) -- a descendent of the Alcmaeonids -- took a chance and overthrew the man. But he soon locked horns with Isagoras. The latter brought up the curse and used it as an excuse to banish Cleisthenes from Athens. After getting rid of his opponent, Isagoras decided to clean house. He uprooted hundreds of people on the pretext that they, too, were cursed. He then sought to dissolve the Boule (Council of Four Hundred). Both decisions made the Athenians very angry. Hence, they banished Isagoras and recalled Cleisthenes.

Upon his triumphant return to Athens around 507 B.C., Cleisthenes launched a series of reforms. One of his earliest moves was to divide the country into three regions -- city, coastal, and inland. Each region was then further divided into ten groups called trittyes (singular: trittys). Every trittys consisted of several demoi (districts or villages; singular: deme) and was named after its chief deme. Now taking one trittys from each region, Cleisthenes forged them into a tribe. Once all was said and done, Athens had a total of ten new tribes, and the Athenians began to identify themselves not by their ancestry or family ties, but by their new tribes. This particular innovation was very critical in Greek history because it helped to dilute the influence of powerful clans, which had been the root cause of tyranny in the first place.

Following the restructuring of the Athenian society, Cleisthenes proceeded to expand the membership of the Boule from four hundred to five hundred (fifty per tribe). He declared that any male citizens above the age of thirty could serve on the Boule for a year. Under the law, they could not be on the Boule more than twice in their lifetime or for two consecutive years. Being a member of the Boule might sound glamorous, but the job was actually unpaid! Luckily, the lack of monetary compensation did not necessarily mean that the chosen ones had to quit their jobs and go starving for a year. That was because the representatives from each tribe became the executives (or prytaneis) of the Boule for only one-tenth of a year. During their time in office, they took turns acting as the day leader. Once picked to be the day leader, the man could not become one ever again.

Apart from setting up new tribes and re-organizing the Boule, Cleisthenes was also said to be the one who introduced the concept of ostracism which permitted the Athenians to vote and send a fellow citizen into exile for ten years. The idea was to cast off anybody deemed a threat to the democracy. Even if the practice had really been a work of Cleisthenes, it was never used during his time. The first victim, to the best of our knowledge, was Hipparchos. He was sent into exile in 487 B.C.

With all things considered, Cleisthenes' reforms were absolutely essential for the development of democracy in Athens. But, sadly, we know only of his accomplishments, not of the man himself. As a matter of fact, we do not even know when he died or how he died. For some odd reason, there was no more mention of this great statesman after he put his ideals to the test. Where did he go? Did he pass away in 507 B.C.? Well, for now, it seems that the answers to both questions will forever remain a mystery!
Cleisthenes

Questions

1. Which of the following about Cleisthenes is correct?
   A. Cleisthenes used wealth to divide the society into ten tribes.
   B. Cleisthenes was once a tyrant of Athens.
   C. Cleisthenes' reforms helped to pave the way for democracy in Athens.
   D. Cleisthenes was ostracized after he broke the promise and killed Cylon.

2. What criteria did Cleisthenes use to set up different tribes?
   A. a person's familial lineage
   B. a person's race
   C. a person's wealth
   D. a person's place of residence

3. How many trittyes did Cleisthenes establish for his reforms?
   A. 5
   B. 30
   C. 10
   D. 50

4. Which of the following could become a member of the Boule?
   A. a 40-year-old citizen regardless of gender
   B. a 50-year-old female citizen
   C. a 35-year-old male citizen
   D. an 18-year-old male citizen

5. What was the Boule also called before Cleisthenes rose to power?
   A. The Council of Four Hundred
   B. The Areopagus
   C. The Senate
   D. The Council of Five Hundred

6. Who supposedly instituted the practice of ostracism?
   A. Isagoras
   B. Megacles
   C. Cleisthenes
   D. Pericles

7. Up to how many times could a person serve on the Boule?
   A. two
   B. one
   C. four
   D. three

8. In Cleisthenes' restructuring of the Athenian society, what was the smallest unit?
   A. Region
   B. Tribe
   C. Trittys
   D. Deme
The Hippocratic Oath (Original Version)

I SWEAR by Apollo the physician, AEsculapius, and Health, and All-heal, and all the gods and goddesses, that, according to my ability and judgement, I will keep this Oath and this stipulation.

TO RECHON him who taught me this Art equally dear to me as my parents, to share my substance with him, and relieve his necessities if required; to look up his offspring in the same footing as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they shall wish to learn it, without fee or stipulation; and that by precept, lecture, and every other mode of instruction, I will impart a knowledge of the Art to my own sons, and those of my teachers, and to disciples bound by a stipulation and oath according the law of medicine, but to none others.

I WILL FOLLOW that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; (next phrase omitted for purpose of these questions)

WITH PURITY AND WITH HOLINESS I will pass my life and practice my Art. I will not cut persons laboring under the stone, but will leave this to be done by men who are practitioners of this work. Into whatever houses I enter, I will go into them for the benefit of the sick, and will abstain from every voluntary act of mischief and corruption; and, further from the seduction of females or males, of freemen and slaves.

WHATEVER, IN CONNECTION with my professional practice or not, in connection with it, I see or hear, in the life of men, which ought not to be spoken of abroad, I will not divulge, as reckoning that all such should be kept secret.

WHILE I CONTINUE to keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted to me to enjoy life and the practice of the art, respected by all men, in all times! But should I trespass and violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot!

Document Caption: This is believed to be the original wording of the Hippocratic Oath, minus one omission. More modern wording is used today, although the basic ideas remain true to the original.

1. The Hippocratic Oath would be taken by _____.
   A. physicians
   B. teachers
   C. the president
   D. actors

2. An oath is a (n) _____.
   A. promise
   B. license
   C. lottery
   D. fee

3. Which part of the oath speaks to keeping things confidential?
   A. "I will impart a knowledge of the Art to my sons."
   B. "I will not cut persons laboring under the stone."
   C. "...all such should be kept secret."
   D. "I swear by Apollo the physician."

4. "I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked" would be a promise to prevent _____.
   A. euthanasia
   B. high expenses
   C. strep throat
   D. flu
5. An individual taking the oath promises to follow a regimen which will benefit his/her _____.
   A. high expenses
   B. the rich
   C. teachers
   D. patients

6. Write a modern day Hippocratic Oath.

_________________________________________________________________________
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7. Explain three promises one makes when taking the Hippocratic Oath.
The Hippocratic Oath was created a long time ago. How does it ring true today? How is it outdated?
Aesop and His Fables
By Vickie Chao

Aesop was a famous Greek storyteller. But he was also a legendary figure. For centuries, scholars have tried to figure out if he had actually existed. Some believe he did. Others think he did not. For those who believe he did, they could not say for sure where he had come from. They also could not say for sure when he was born. Among the various theories, one claimed that Aesop was once a slave in the 6th century B.C. After he was freed, he became an advisor to Croesus, the King of Lydia. One day, Croesus sent Aesop to a city called Delphi. He gave the famous storyteller a large sum of gold and asked him to distribute it among the citizens there. But for whatever reason unknown to us, Aesop did not give out the money. Filled with anger, the citizens of Delphi killed him.

Mysterious as he was, Aesop was the rumored author of hundreds of fables. His stories were always very short. And they always ended with a moral lesson. Of his works, there were several that were so popular that they have since become part of our vocabularies. For example, we use the term "sour grapes" to describe a person who belittles something simply because he could not get it. That term was derived from Aesop's story "The Fox and the Grapes." We use the phrase "cry wolf" to blame a person for raising a false alarm. That phrase was borrowed from Aesop's story "The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf."

For thousands of years, children everywhere have enjoyed reading Aesop's fables a lot. They like them because they are easy to understand. Their parents like them, too, because the tales offer good advice. The advice never goes out of style.

As a tribute to this remarkable yet mysterious writer, here is my favorite Aesop's fable. It is called "The Ant and the Grasshopper":

On one fine summer's day, a grasshopper was hopping about and having a grand time. As it was chirping and singing, it saw an ant carrying an ear of corn on its back. The grasshopper said, "My friend, come and play with me. The weather is nice. Let's not waste it."

The ant replied, "Sorry, but I can't. I am collecting food for the winter right now. You should do the same."

"Why worry about the winter? We have plenty of food right now!" snickered the grasshopper.

Upon hearing that, the ant bid the grasshopper good-bye and went on its way. Several months later, the grasshopper found itself starving. It was now the wintertime, and there was no food anywhere! As the grasshopper was slowly dying of hunger, it saw the ants distributing corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the grasshopper knew: It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.
Aesop and His Fables

Questions

1. Which of the following about Aesop is true?
   A. Aesop was a famous Greek storyteller.
   B. Aesop was the confirmed author of hundreds of fables.
   C. Aesop was probably from the 6th century A.D.
   D. Aesop was the king of Lydia.

2. What is the usual ending of an Aesop's fable?
   A. A poem
   B. A song
   C. A moral lesson
   D. A picture

3. In Aesop's "The Ant and the Grasshopper," why was the grasshopper dying?
   A. Because it ate too much
   B. Because it did not prepare food for the winter
   C. Because a storm destroyed its home
   D. Because it lost its wings

4. According to legends, who killed Aesop?
   A. The citizens of Delphi
   B. The citizens of Athens
   C. The citizens of Samos
   D. The citizens of Sparta

5. According to legends, what did Aesop do before he became the advisor to Croesus?
   A. He was a slave.
   B. He was an actor.
   C. He was a rich businessman.
   D. He was a teacher.

6. What was the original source of the phrase "sour grapes"?
   A. Aesop's "The Fox and the Grapes"
   B. Aesop's "The Lion and the Mouse"
   C. Aesop's "The Shepherd's Boy and the Wolf"
   D. Aesop's "The Bundle of Sticks"

7. What will happen when a person keeps "crying wolf"?
   A. Everybody will come and beat that person up.
   B. That person will have more friends than everybody else.
   C. That person will eventually get what he wants.
   D. Nobody will come when that person really needs help.