



POLIS PROFILE: ARGOS - 1

The Greek Polis

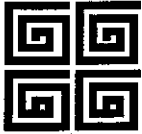
Most Greeks in the classical era of their history (700-300 B.C.) lived in a city-state called a *polis*. A polis was a city with a fortified region in which several thousand Greeks lived and to which they paid allegiance. Most of these city-states were fiercely independent and offered their citizens a full and abundant life. To most Greeks banishment from their polis was worse than death. (Socrates had the choice!) A strategic hill called an *acropolis* ("above the city") was the focal point for Greek life. It was a defensive position when the city was under attack; it was a place to discuss affairs of state; and it served as a shrine to honor and worship GREECE'S many gods and goddesses.



About your polis

Your allegiance is to the polis of Argos; therefore, you are an Argive (**ahr-giv**). Although you have much to be proud of as a citizen of Argos, the power and influence of your polis never rivaled Athens in cultural achievement or Sparta in military strength. Yet, Argos has an illustrious past and made its mark in Hellenic history. Unlike neighboring Corinth, Argos was not blessed geographically. The plain was not especially fertile, and the climate tended toward cold, wet winters and dry, hot summers. Argives trace their beginnings to Pelasque Argus, the hero with a hundred eyes. Others came to Argos and taught the inhabitants to irrigate the fields with wells. But it was under a man named Temenus that Argos grew into one of Greece's most powerful poleis. By 680 B.C., a tyrant named Pheidon seized the government of Argos. He took measures which began a lengthy progressive era in which Argos became renown for musicians and poets. All over Hellas the poet Lasus of Argos won accolades, and he taught his skills to one who became more famous, Pindar, the poet of athletes. Sculpture also flourished in Argos. The work of Polycleitus was prized almost beyond price. He, like Lasus, but in stone, chose athletes as his subject, and few since have captured powerful, muscular men of action as well as Polycleitus. Drama in Argos reached new heights; plays were performed in open-air theaters before perhaps 20,000 eager Argive patrons. Nearby statues of Hera continue to elevate beauty in stone as the patroness god was honored.

Pheidon's descendants were not as effective in maintaining the glory of Argos, and, after a series of wars with Sparta, a new power on the Peloponnesus, she lost her leadership in the region to this young military upstart. Years later Argos suffered an embarrassment that left



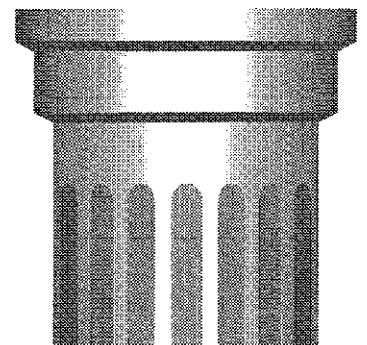
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a bitter legacy. When Athens and Sparta asked Greek poleis to send supplies and troops to fight the Persian hordes after Thermopylae in 480 B.C., Argive leaders refused. For this decision, Argos became a disgrace in the Greek world.

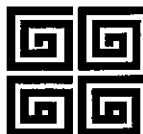
Argive goals in this simulation

1. Your embarrassing and disgraceful action in the Persian War (not to support Athens against the oncoming Persian barbarians) will give you a great incentive to reverse the negative reputation that decision evoked. It amounts to this: Argive citizens will have to work very, very hard to show all Greeks that they deserve respect and that your city-state's athletes, scholars, architects, soldiers, orators, students, poets, dancers, and others are equal if not superior to other Hellenes in competitive activities.
2. Try to win as many events as you can, complete all tasks, and be model students. Be consistently excellent. Your aretes are on the line.
3. Be proud to be an Argive. Your glorious past should outweigh a few negatives. As Argives, show unity by wearing similar clothing. Develop, make, and wear a clever logo on nametags and badges. Come to class together. Compose a hypnotic chant for Argos.

Show your pride
in being
Argives!



4. Make sure Athens and Sparta, those two very powerful poleis, don't win. That means that Argos must try to accumulate the most Hellaspoinits by winning, or Argives must throw support (in the latter stages of the simulation) to Megara or Corinth, who have a similar goal to blunt the influence of the "Big 2."



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How Argives should act

1. Show unity. Clever costumes, logos, and chants will help. Encourage your citizens to be in class each day and on time. Call them at home to inspire them.
2. Be model Greeks. Be respectful and cooperative. Question authority if you like (as all Greeks seem to have done), but support and carry out obediently the directions of your teacher, and your daily archon (leader).
3. Cheer Argive victories. Learn the Greek names of your citizens and use their adopted names whenever you can. (Extra Hellaspoinis are given for success in this area.)
4. Don't try to outdo the loud and unruly Spartans or the obsessively productive Athenians. Just be Argives—hard working, loyal, competitive, and superior! Specifically, try to capture any events which have to do with art, sculpture, or architecture. Try extra hard in these categories.