

The ancient city of Megara was built in a fertile region with easy and rapid access to two fortified ports, Nisaea on the Saronic Gulf and Pagae on the Gulf of Corinth. It extended around the two acropolises of Alkathos and Karia. Megara flourished from the 8th to the 7th c. BC, developing significant commercial and colonizing activity.

The 6th c. BC was a difficult period for the city, since it experienced the tyranny of Theagenes which was followed by the troubled periods of "moderate regime" (*periodos sofrosynis*) or oligarchy and "radical democracy" (*akolastos dimokratia*), as they are called in the ancient sources.

The Persian wars were followed by the period of the *Pentecontaetia*, during which the city became allied with the Athenians, acquired a fortification wall, and with the Athenians' help built the Long Walls linking Megara with the harbour of Nisaea.

During the Peloponnesian War, the city suffered serious destruction because both the Athenian and Spartan camps employed violence in an attempt to compel Megara, as a bastion against the enemy. In order to gain their independence, the Megarians sided with either Athenians or Spartans.

Despite the destruction, in the 4th c. BC a significant growth in all sectors is observable. This is the era of the Megarian School of Euklid and Stilpon, of the sculptor Theocosmos, of extensive trade and the issuing of coinage. When the Megarians encountered the threat of Philip of Macedon, they once again turned for assistance to the Athenians. The general Phocion hastened to the city, took over Nisaea and the Long Walls that had been destroyed during the Peloponnesian War were rebuilt.

Near the end of the 4th c. (307 BC), the Megarians suffered the greatest disaster in their history at the hands of Demetrius Poliorcetes, who, although he restored the city's autonomy, removed all its slaves and deprived the city's cottage industries of their workforce.

The 3rd c. BC was characterized by economic and demographic decline. The city again passed into Macedonian control until 243 BC, when it joined the Achaean League. The fact that two of the important coastal cities of Megaris, Aigosthena and Pagae, became autonomous was also a big loss.

During the Roman period, Megara also suffered from raids by the Roman army and was destroyed by Caesar. During the age of Adrian it flourished once again and was adorned with public buildings. Several of the monuments that embellished the city were described by Pausanias in the 2nd c. AD. It was finally destroyed in AD 395, when all the Greek cities were plundered by the Goths of Alaric.

The **Archaeological Museum of Megara** presents objects that have come to light from rescue excavations by the former III Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities in the city of Megara and the surrounding region. The finds date from the 8th c. BC to the 2nd c. AD. The exhibition is housed in the Old City Hall, a 19th c. building which the Municipality of Megara has temporarily ceded to the III Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. The two-storey building has four exhibition halls.

GROUND FLOOR. Marble finds are presented on the building's ground floor.

GALLERY A. Monumental sculptures and votive reliefs are exhibited in this room, with background information from excavation research and the literary sources on monumental sculpture and reliefs from Megara from the Archaic to the Roman period. There is also a reconstruction drawing of the Nike of Megara, a copy from an 1847 engraving.

GALLERY B. This gallery displays inscriptions containing information about public life, chiefly during the Classical period. It also displays Classical, Hellenistic and Roman funerary stelai, framed by related texts and photos.

FIRST FLOOR. On the first floor finds from the city's cemeteries and objects of daily use are presented.

GALLERY Γ. This gallery presents objects selected from grave groups of the 8th to the 1st c. BC. Visual material, photographs, plans and texts related to the place of the ancient cemeteries in the topography of the modern and the ancient city and its burial customs give information related to the exhibit.

GALLERY Δ. Objects – primarily clay and bronze – connected with daily life in antiquity are displayed in this room. The deposit from an Archaic sanctuary at the site of Bouri in Alepochori is of particular interest; from among its hundreds of finds, representative examples of cult and the local pottery workshop are presented. There is a brief presentation of the excavation, with the assistance of visual material.

COURTYARD AREA. Inscriptions, statue bases, and architectural members from various periods are presented in the courtyard area.



ΑΡΧΑΙΟΛΟΓΙΚΟ ΜΟΥΣΕΙΟ ΜΕΓΑΡΩΝ ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF MEGARA

ΑΤΤΙΚΗ / ATTICA

