

3 Greek colonisation

Review activity: Read, then complete activities 1+10, 11, 20, 21, 22 in notebook.

How did the Greeks colonise the Mediterranean?

GLOSSARY

bond: a connection
embers: hot, red fragments from a fire
keep: to continue or maintain
reach out to: to try to communicate with
rival: to compete with or be equal to

The colonies were the cities the Greek settlers founded in the new territories they arrived in. They were generally located on the coast and were surrounded by fertile land to be used for farming.

Between the 8th and 6th centuries BC, in the Archaic Period, the Greeks began colonisation along the Mediterranean and Black seas. This colonisation process was due to a shortage of farmland and an increase in population. Also, many historians think there was a long period of drought and epidemic diseases which motivated the Greeks to emigrate.

The metropolis and the colonies

During this period, Greek colonisation was based on a system of a metropolis and its colonies. There was an intense relationship between parent poles and their colonial cities. Greek settlers took a handful of soil before leaving home to keep with them and they also kept live coal embers burning throughout their journey so that they could use them for a sacred fire when they later reached their destination.

GREEK COLONISATION DURING THE ARCHAIC PERIOD



Southern Italy and Sicily, known as Magna Graecia, was the area with the most Greek colonies. Some of them, like Syracuse, prospered in time and even finally rivalled many Greek poles.

A metropolis was the home or parent city of the Greeks who left in search of new land.

The colonisation process

1 The Greeks consulted their oracles through the Delphi before making important decisions. The gods appointed a leader to guide the colonists.



2 Then they searched for an area. They carried out expeditions to locate fertile areas near the sea and to make initial contact with the natives.



3 Once a place was selected, the metropolis created a set of laws. Future settlers were chosen and given boats and supplies. The leader was also given full authority and power.



4 Once they arrived in their new colony, the leader gave each colonist a plot of land (kleros) and building began. The leader organised the settlement and created laws. They also encouraged colonists to reach out to the natives of the local area.



LET'S PRACTISE!

19. What was the relationship between a metropolis and its colonies?