



Individual and Community: The Rise of the Polis, 800-500 B.C.

Chester G. Starr

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During the three centuries from 800 to 500 B.C., the Greek world evolved from a primitive society--both culturally and economically--to one whose artistic products dominated all Mediterranean markets, supported by a wide overseas trade. In the following two centuries came the literary, philosophical, and artistic masterpieces of the classic area. Vital to this advance was the development of the polis, a collective institution in which citizens had rights as well as duties under the rule of law, a system hitherto unknown in human history. In this study, the first systematic exploration of the forces that created the political framework of Greek civilization, Chester Starr shows how the Greeks emerged from a Homeric world of individuals to the polis of 500 B.C. The age-old conflict between the self-serving demands of human beings and the less vocally-expressed needs of the community serves as the backbone of Starr's interdisciplinary analysis of the rise of the polis.

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