

“Classical Era” in the West

Ancient Greece, Persia, and Rome

Ms. Anderson – World History

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The “Classical Era” in the West

- ❖ During the “Classical Era,” early civilizations spread beyond river valleys. Some of these civilizations achieved enough power to conquer their neighbors and create giant empires. This was a time when civilizations also began to reflect more on morality and the meaning of life. As a result, many of the world’s major religions emerged.
- ❖ These same civilizations developed institutions, systems of thought and cultural styles that still influence us today. Their art, music, and literature set the standards against which later works would be judged. People still admire the marble statues of Greek sculptors and read Greek playwrights and philosophers, more than 2,000 years later. For these reasons, we refer to these as the “classical” civilizations, meaning of the highest class or rank.

The Persian Empire

2000 B.C. – 100 B.C.

- ❖ The Medes and the Persians lived in the Middle East on the Iranian Plateau between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf.
- ❖ In 550 B.C., the Persian ruler, **Cyrus the Great** united these two peoples. He then expanded Persia's territory westward by conquering Lydia and Babylonia and eastward by conquering territories as far as the Indus River.

Building an Empire

- ❖ The son of Cyrus the Great conquered Egypt. The next ruler, **Darius**, unified the Persian Empire by building a network of public roads, introducing a uniform set of weights and measures, and establishing several capital cities. Persia was now larger than any empire up to that time. It stretched more than 3,000 miles from the Nile to the Indus River. The Persians controlled this vast empire by dividing it into provinces, each ruled by a group of local officials loyal to the Persian King. The Persians collected tribute (*a payment made as a sign of submission*) and taxes from these provinces. Although they paid tribute, the provinces profited from extensive trade throughout the Persian Empire.

The Persian Empire



Stretching more than 3000 miles across, the empire was larger than any empire up to that time.

Religion

- ❖ At first, the Persians worshipped many gods. In 570 B.C., a new religion was introduced into the Persian Empire by the Religious leader Zoroaster. **Zoroastrianism** taught that there were only 2 gods: the god of truth, light and goodness and the god of darkness and evil. The whole universe was a battleground between these two forces. Those who lived good lives would eventually go to heaven, and those who were evil would be doomed to a fiery hell.

ZOROASTER



Persia's Accomplishments

- ❖ From the Lydians, Persians learned the practice of using coins. Under the rule of Darius, citizens were encouraged to use coins to purchase goods. Persians were now able to move from bartering to a “money economy.” The use of coins improved trade throughout the empire.
- ❖ The Persians also built hundreds of miles of roads, using gravel and stone. The Persian Royal Road was 1500 miles long with more than 100 stations holding fresh horses. These roads fostered a feeling of unity within the Persian Empire.
- ❖ Darius established a postal service within the Empire to make communication easier. Couriers carried letters over the new roads.



Civilization gradually spread from Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Persia to other places in the Mediterranean region, including Phoenicia, Israel, and Greece.

Ancient Greece – the Geography

Ancient Greece consisted of a large mountainous peninsula, the islands of the Aegean Sea, and the coast of present-day Turkey.

Because of Greece's hilly terrain, farming the land was quite difficult. Much of Greece is stony and suitable only for pasture.

Its people came to rely on trade. Greeks produced wine, olive oil and pottery, which they traded with other peoples of the Mediterranean.

Through these contacts, the Greeks became exposed to key achievements of other ancient civilizations, such as the **alphabet**, a way of writing, invented by the Phoenicians. In an alphabet, each sound has its own symbol or letter.

Greece



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Early Greek Civilization

The Minoan Civilization flourished on the island of Crete from 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C. The Minoans developed their own form of writing, used copper and bronze, and were skilled at ship building. The Minoan civilization mysteriously collapsed around 1400 B.C.

A second ancient Greek civilization thrived around Mycenae (on mainland Greece) and the coast of Asia Minor from 1400 to 1200 B.C. when the Dorians, a group of people from northern Greece, conquered the Greek mainland.

The Rise of Greek City-States

Mountains and the sea caused Greek centers of population to be cut off from one another. As a result, separate **city-states** developed, each with its own form of government and system of laws. In Greek, the word for city-state was *polis*.

At the same time, Greeks also shared in a **common culture**, based on their language, religious beliefs, traditions, and close economic ties. For example, all Greeks believed in the same gods and goddesses, including Zeus, Athena, and Apollo, who were believed to live on Mount Olympus. Their myths, such as the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece, and the siege of Troy, still thrill us today. Citizens from all Greek city-states participated every four years in Olympic games in honor of Zeus and the other Greek gods. The Greeks believed their gods were pleased by strong, graceful human bodies.

Thalassocracy is the name for a state with primarily maritime realms. With the Greek words *thalassa*, meaning “sea” and *kratein*, meaning “to rule.”

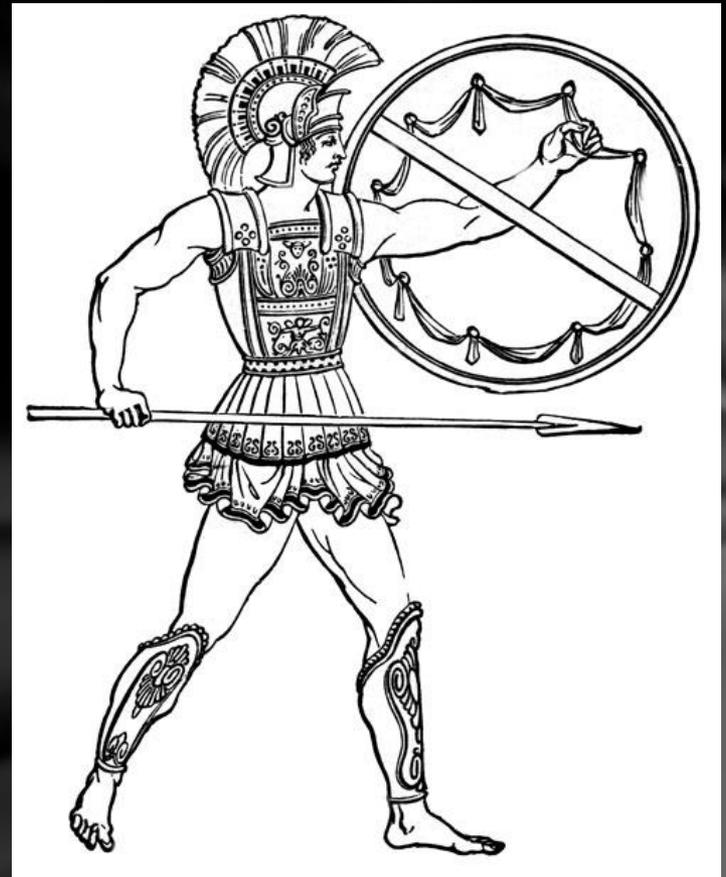
The Greek city-states tried different forms of government. At first, city-states were ruled by kings (monarchy).

Eventually, the landholding elite won power and created an aristocracy (government ruled by land-holding elite).

Some city-states, the middle class (merchants, farmers, artisans) came to power. This is called oligarchy.

Military Sparta

- ❖ One of the most important city-states was **Sparta**. Sparta is located in the Southern part of Greece, called the Peloponnesus. In 725 B.C., the Spartans conquered their neighbors. They forced these people, known as **helots**, to farm for them. The Spartans constantly had to use force to maintain control over the helots. Due to this threat, life in Sparta was organized around military needs. Individualism and new ideas were discouraged. Strict obedience and self-discipline were highly valued. For example, if a newborn Spartan baby was found to be unhealthy, it was left on a hillside to die.



- ❖ At age seven, Spartan boys left their families to train for battle. They served in the army until age 60.

This is Sparta



Democratic Athens

The city-state of Athens developed a unique system of government. Every citizen could participate in government directly by voting on issues to be decided by the city-state.

The main governing body of Athens was the **Citizens Assembly**. It was open to all citizens, but only the first 5000 or so citizens who gathered could attend its meetings. It met regularly, at least ten times a year. The assembly directed foreign policy and made laws for Athens. Citizens who served on a council, jury, or as magistrates, were paid a reimbursement for lost earnings. This ensured that even poor citizens could participate in government.

This type of government, which Athens was the first to introduce, is known as a **democracy**. In a democracy, ordinary citizens participate in government, either directly or by elected representatives. Democracy means “rule of the people” in Greek.



In Athens, only a minority of residents were actually citizens. Women, foreigners and slaves were not citizens and could not participate in government.

The Golden Age of Greek Culture

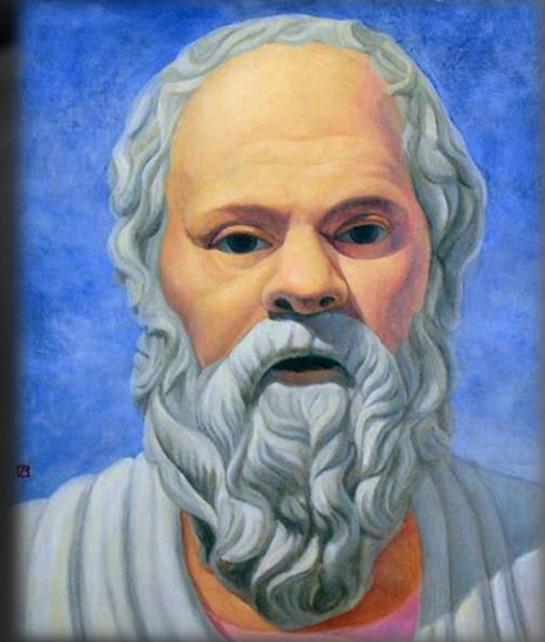
- ❖ In the 5th century B.C., the Persian Empire tried to conquer the Greek city-states. Surprisingly, the Persians failed.
 - ❖ After the war, the Greeks enjoyed a “Golden Age.”
 - ❖ **Pericles** championed democracy. He collected revenues from other city-states to rebuild Athens. This time is often called “The Age of Pericles.”
 - ❖ Art, literature, and philosophy all flourished.



Persian King Xerxes

Philosophy

- The Greeks believed that human reason was powerful enough to understand the world and solve its problems.
- A series of three philosophers – *Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle* asked important questions and tried to find answers. Socrates questioned his students about the use of moral terms: What is goodness? What is morality and justice?
- In 399 B.C., Socrates' enemies persuaded the Athenian Council to condemn Socrates to death for corrupting the young.



- Plato, a student of Socrates, took Socrates' method of questioning a step further.



- He concluded that values like goodness, beauty and justice actually exist as independent ideas that are more real than the changing “appearances” we see in daily life. In *The Republic*, Plato described an ideal city-state ruled by philosopher kings. He defined justice as a rule of reason over appetite (our desires).

- ❖ Aristotle was Plato's most famous student and was less concerned with abstract topics. He collected and classified things from animals to city-state constitutions and studied their relationships.
- ❖ He felt that people should live balanced lives.



Art and Architecture

- Greek sculptors and architects tried to design statues and paintings with ideal proportions. Greek buildings and statues were not the white marble you see today. They were brightly painted with bold colors.



- The ***Parthenon***, a splendid marble temple with beautiful columns, was constructed on the hill known as the ***Acropolis***. Inside was a giant statue of Athena, patron goddess of the city.

Science and Mathematics

- ❑ Geographers like **Eratosthenes** showed the Earth was round and calculated its circumference. He also created a device (*sieve*) for discovering all prime numbers up to any limit.
- ❑ **Archimedes** is considered one of the greatest mathematicians of antiquity. His contributions in geometry revolutionized the subject. He was also a practical man who studied levers and pulleys, measured volume and density, designed catapults, and invented a large screw-like device inside a cylinder to pump water.

Music and Literature

- ❑ Greeks listened to choral music and instruments like the stringed lyre and flute, and developed musical scales.



- ❑ Greek Historians like **Herodotus** and **Thucydides**, told the story of the past.
- ❑ Greek playwrights, like **Sophocles**, completed the first known comedies and tragedies. Greeks watched these plays in giant open-air amphitheaters.

Peloponnesian Wars

432 B.C. – 404 B.C.

- ❖ **A Rivalry developed between Athens and Sparta.** The Athenians had used their power to force some other city-states to pay them taxes.
- ❖ **Sparta finally declared war on Athens in the Peloponnesian Wars.**
- ❖ **After 30 years of fighting, Sparta emerged as the victor.**
- ❖ **The Peloponnesian Wars greatly weakened the Greek city-states.** Economic costs were considerable. Poverty became widespread, and **Athens was completely devastated.** Sparta emerged as the leading city-state.



Women in Ancient Greece

- ❑ In Ancient Greece, men generally regarded women as inferior and excluded them from public life. Women managed the home, subject to their husband's will.
- ❑ Spartan women enjoyed greater status than elsewhere in Greece. Many were given education and physical training.
- ❑ Athenian women could own clothing and slaves, but they could not own land or enter into contracts.



Greece – your Greek city-state map

Label and divide your map of Greece into the different city-states from the map. Choose 5 colors to represent those city states and NEATLY color them. Create a key that represents the colors of each city-state. This map will be due on test day. You have 10 minutes.



Alexander the Great

- In 338 B.C., the King of Macedonia, an area located North of Greece, brought all the Greek city-states under his control.
- His son, **Alexander the Great** was taught by Aristotle.
- Alexander went on to conquer most of the Mediterranean world, including Egypt and Persia. His conquests took him as far as the Indus River Valley.
- Alexander died at a young age and his empire quickly fell apart.

Empire of *Alexander* the Great, 323 B.C.



Greatest Extent of Empire



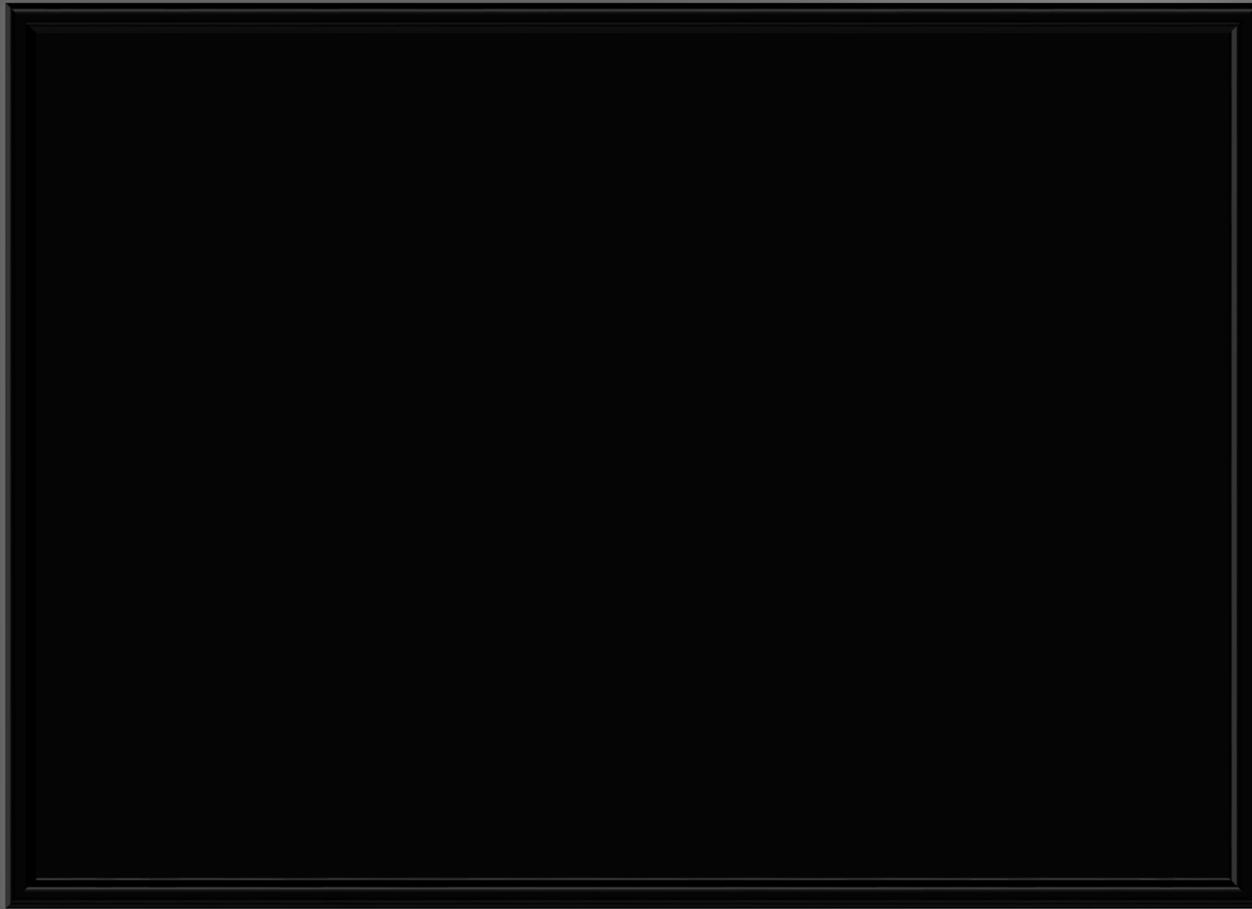
Greatest Extent of Empire



Hellenistic Culture

- ❑ Wherever Alexander went, he spread Greek culture. His followers also absorbed Eastern ideas and styles. **Hellenistic culture** refers to the fusion of Greek culture with the cultures of the Middle East and India.
- ❑ The greatest Hellenistic **achievements were in mathematics and science**. Alexander's construction of a **great library at Alexandria** encouraged scholarship.
- ❑ Hellenistic sculptors aimed at more emotional representations in art. **Statues of the heads of ordinary people with their imperfections became common** during this period.
- ❑ Many **wealthy members of society, including women, began to study philosophy** and to attend lectures of popular philosophers.

Hellenistic Culture



Ancient Greek Achievements

Democracy

Athens developed the first known democratic government – a system in which citizens take part in governing.

Art and Architecture

The Greek ideal of beauty was based on harmony and proportion. In architecture, the Greeks built temples with beautiful columns, such as the Parthenon in Athens.

Literature and History

The Greeks developed the first known dramas and historical writings.

Ancient Greek Achievements, cont'd

Science and Mathematics

Key advances were made by Pythagoras, Euclid, and **Archimedes** – mathematicians who are still studied today.

Philosophy

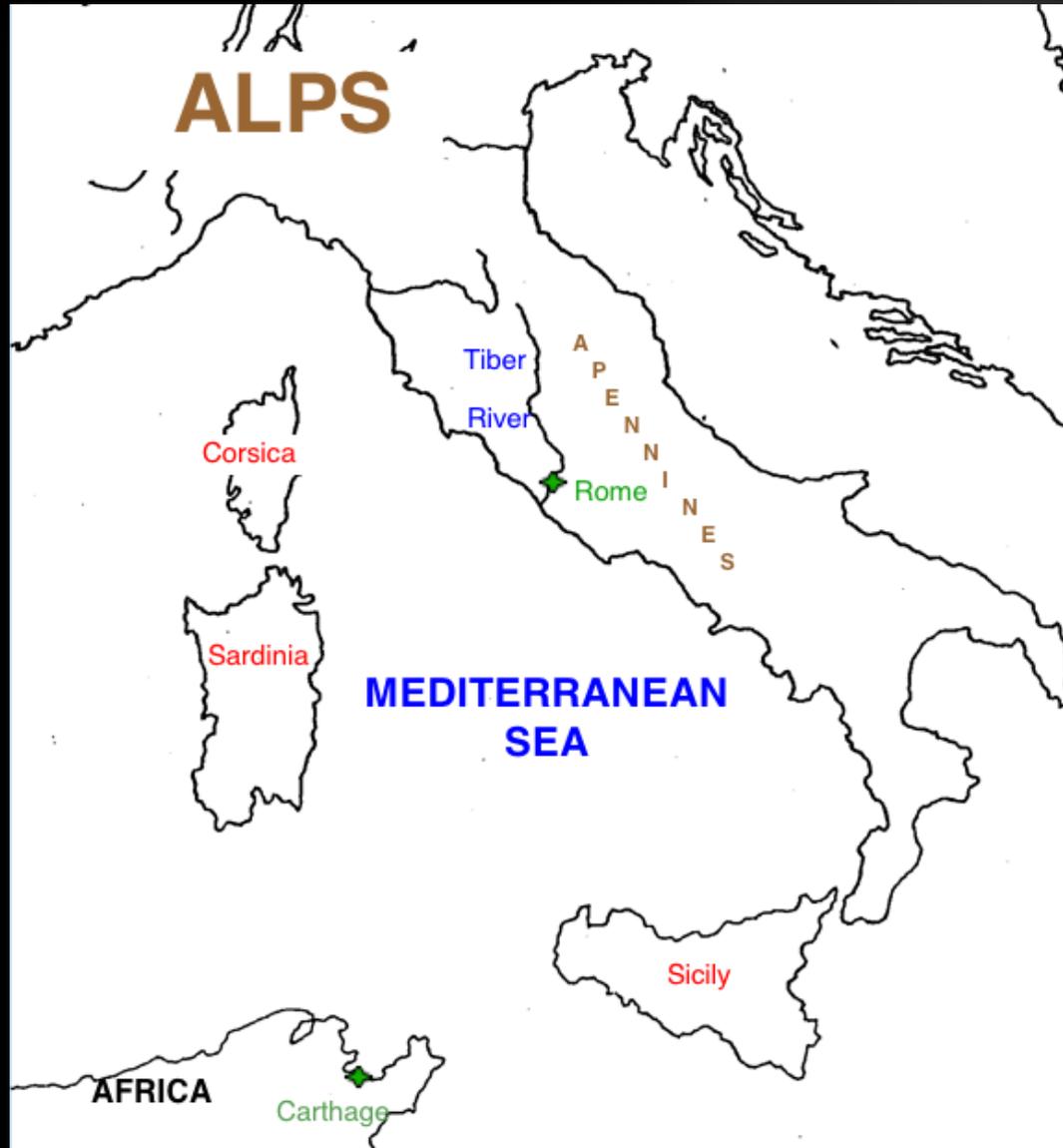
Greeks believed in the dignity of the individual. Through the use of reason, they believed humans could understand how the world worked. Greek philosophers included Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

The “Grandeur” of Rome

The Geography of Rome

- ❖ One of the most influential civilizations to emerge in the ancient world was Rome. Rome was located on a fertile plain in the center of Italy, close to the west coast. To the north, the Alps Mountains protected Rome from most invaders. To the west, the sea provided further protection, while serving as a route for trade and expansion.
- ❖ The Romans were heirs to Greek culture. They believed in the same gods and goddesses as the Greeks, although they gave them Latin (*Roman*) names. The Romans also studied and imitated Greek achievements in science, art, history, and literature. They delighted in making copies of famous Greek sculptures.

Rome



The Roman Republic

Early Rome contained two main social classes: the **patricians** (wealthy landowning families) and the **plebeians** (small farmers, craftsmen, and merchants). In early times, the Romans overthrew their king and made Rome into a **republic** – a system of government by representatives. Rome was then governed by a patrician assembly known as the **Senate**, and by elected officials, known as **Consuls**. The plebeians chose **tribunes**, speakers who represented them.



The Twelve Tables

Rome flourished, in part, because it strongly supported the “**rule of law**.” Government officials were not above the law, nor could they act outside the law. The Roman Republic issued the **Twelve Tables** to protect the plebeians. These written laws were placed in public meeting places, for all to see. The Twelve Tables covered civil, criminal, and religious law, and provided a foundation for later Roman law codes. Under Roman law, all citizens were “equal under the law” – meaning they were subject to the same rules and laws.



Some Rules From the Twelve Tables

- IV.1 A badly deformed child shall be killed.
- VIII.2 If a person has injured another's limb, let there be retaliation in kind, unless he agrees to make compensation to him.
- VIII.21 If a patron shall defraud his client, his life must be forfeited ("killed")
- VIII.23 Those convicted of speaking false witness shall be flung from the Tarpeian Rock.
- IX.3 The penalty for a judge who has been found guilty of receiving a bribe for giving a decision shall be capital punishment. (death)
- IX.6 The putting to death ... of any man who has not been convicted is forbidden.
- XI.1 No marriage shall take place between a patrician and a plebeian.

The Twelve Tables, cont'd

Romans contributed the important concept of a **contract** – the idea that a private agreement can be enforced by the government once people have entered into it. The Romans also established rules for the ownership of property.

The Romans also established important legal processes to promote justice. If people had a legal dispute, they went to an official to argue their case. The official then made a judgment, which the parties could appeal. People accused of crimes had the right to a trial in court. The accused person was considered innocent until proven guilty. We still use these same practices today.



Rome Expands to an Empire

By 275 B.C., Rome already ruled the entire Italian peninsula. After uniting Italy, Rome defeated its main trading rival, **Carthage**, located just across the Mediterranean in North Africa. The victory made Rome the leading power in the Mediterranean. Rome next acquired territories in Spain, North Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean. Roman generals like **Julius Caesar** completed the conquest of Spain and Gaul (*present day France*).



The Roman Report

Rome Expands to an Empire, cont'd

When Caesar's enemies in the Senate recalled him to Rome, Caesar returned with his army and made himself "dictator" for life. Leading Roman officials feared the loss of their freedom. They assassinated Julius Caesar on the floor of the Senate in 44 B.C. His heir, **Augustus Caesar**, eventually emerged as

Rome's next ruler. Although Augustus assumed monarch-like powers, he also preserved Rome's republican institutions. He removed corrupt officials and tried to revive the "old" Roman values of responsibility and self-discipline. His successors became known as "Emperors" and were worshipped as gods. They made conquests to the north and east, greatly expanding Rome's frontiers.



Pax Romana: The “Roman Peace” (27 B.C. – 395 A.D.)

Augustus brought a long period of peace, known as the **Pax Romana**, to Europe and the Mediterranean world. Rome’s centralized political authority, trained officials, and traditions of law allowed it to rule effectively over this large area. Romans saw their culture as superior. They generally respected local customs, provided a system of laws, promoted trade, and offered Roman citizenship to people throughout the empire.

ROMAN TOILETS



Pax Romana, cont'd

The Romans were great engineers. They developed concrete for their large buildings. To run their huge empire, they built a network of almost 5,000 miles of roads. Rome became the center of communication, commerce, trade, politics, culture, and military power for Western Europe and the Mediterranean world. New cities became outposts of Roman culture.

Pax Romana, cont'd

The expansion of the city-state of Rome changed its basic character. The Roman army became a professional force obedient to its general instead of a citizen's army. Although Romans established the "rule of law," they also recognized the ancient institution of slavery. A large force of slaves performed much of Rome's labor.

Rome itself became the scene of blood-thirsty games, such as contests between gladiators. Later Roman emperors maintained their popularity by providing these games at no expense to the citizens of Rome in the **Colosseum**, an immense concrete stadium. Roman Senators became corrupt, while generals developed political ambitions and fought against each other for wealth and power.



Women in Rome

Romans adopted a traditional view of gender roles, in which women were responsible for household chores and men represented the family in public life. Under Roman law, women passed from the authority of their fathers to that of their husbands. Women were not allowed to hold office, but it was acceptable for men to seek their wife's advice in private. Nevertheless there was generally more equality in Roman society between men and women than there had been in earlier Greek society.

Romans placed a high value on marriage, home, and the family. This strongly influenced their treatment of women. Women could own property and make wills. Among the lower classes, many women worked outside the home.

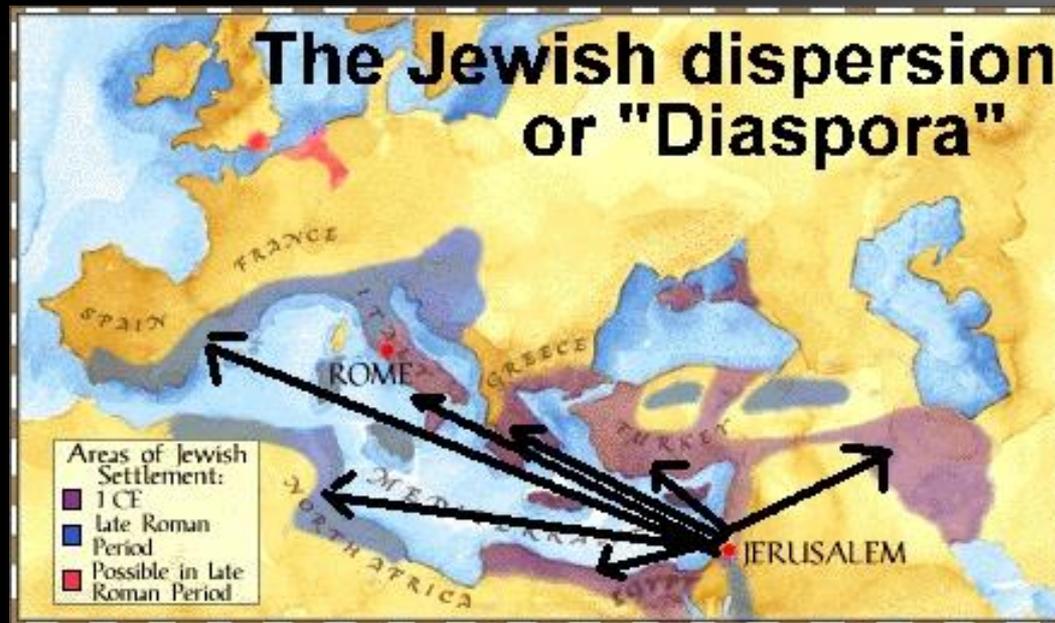


ROMAN TABLE MANNERS



The Jewish Diaspora (dispersion)

The Romans permitted the existence of different religions throughout the empire, but expected people to worship the emperor as divine. Jews refused to recognize the emperor as a god. Jews revolted against Roman rule in 66 A.D. and again in 135 A.D. Romans crushed these rebellions, destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and drove the Jews out of Israel. Many fled north and west into Europe, while a large number settled in other areas of the Middle East. Even though they faced exile, Jews refused to abandon their religion.



Christianity

Christianity began about 2,000 years ago. It is based on the teachings of **Jesus**, a Jew born in Bethlehem who preached forgiveness, mercy, and sympathy for the poor and helpless. The Romans crucified Jesus for claiming he was the **Messiah** or Savior. After his death, a band of his followers, known as the **Apostles**, believed Jesus rose from the dead to redeem mankind. The promise of an afterlife in which all believers, including the poor and humble, would be rewarded, helped the new Christian religion to spread.



Major Beliefs of Christianity

Role of Jesus

Christians believe Jesus was the son of God and sacrificed himself to save humankind from punishment for their sins. Christians believe that after his death, Jesus was resurrected and rose to Heaven.

Christian Conduct

Christians believe they will be saved and will go to Heaven after death if they have faith in Christ as their savior and treat others with love and respect. Christians believe in the Golden Rule - "do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

The Christian Bible

The sacred book of Christianity consists of the **Old Testament** (*the Jewish Bible*) and the **New Testament**, which describes the life of Christ and the works of the Apostles.

Christianity, cont'd

Because they refused to worship the emperor, Christian martyrs were murdered in the Colosseum. Despite attempts by the Romans to eliminate Christianity, the new religion slowly began to spread.

Unlike Jewish leaders, Christians wanted to spread their faith to non-believers. They also did not require believers to follow strict dietary rules and other religious laws. Christianity's simple message of love, hope, and salvation inspired many living in the Roman Empire. In the 4th century, **Emperor Constantine** had a vision right before an important battle. This convinced him to convert to Christianity. Soon after, Constantine proclaimed freedom of worship for Christians. By the end of the 4th century, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.



The Fall of The Roman Empire

Starting in the third century A.D., the government in Rome began to weaken. Historians offer several explanations for this decline:

Political Weakness

Roman Government depended on the abilities of the emperor, but many later emperors were corrupt and ineffective leaders.

Economic Problems

The costs of defending and administering the empire led to high taxes. Inflation and unemployment led to economic difficulties.

Military Decline

Later Roman armies relied on paid soldiers. These soldiers were often recruited from non-Roman peoples, who were less loyal than Roman citizens.

Invasions

Rome was under continual attack by fierce tribes from Northern Europe and Central Asia, such as the Goths and Huns. The Romans considered these tribes **barbarians**. Eventually, these tribes successfully invaded Rome.

The Fall of The Roman Empire, cont'd

Later emperors tried to reverse the decline of the empire. In 284 A.D., the empire was split into two parts so it could be governed more efficiently. The eastern part consisted of Greece, Asia Minor (Turkey), Egypt, and Syria; the Western part consisted of Italy, Gaul (France), Britannia, Spain, and North Africa. Constantine temporarily reunited the empire and moved its capital to Constantinople in the east.



The End of the Roman Empire

In the late 300s, a nomadic group from Asia, known as the **Huns**, began to move westward. They pressured the **Goths**, another tribe outside the empire. The Goths and others began entering the Roman Empire.



A period of great turmoil and chaos followed. Rome was finally sacked. In 476 A.D., the last Roman emperor was overthrown in the West. The eastern empire, known as the **Byzantine Empire**, survived for another thousand years.

Constantine

The Enduring Legacy of Rome

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish what the ancient Romans invented themselves and what they copied from other cultures. The Romans often took the best from other cultures and adopted it as their own. For example, the Romans worshipped the ancient Greek gods, but renamed them. Romans delighted in making copies of Greek sculptures. They read Greek poems, plays, and philosophers.



Achievements of the Roman Empire

The Romans also made lasting contributions that influenced later cultures:

Law

Roman concepts of justice, equality before the law, and natural law based on reason shaped later European legal systems.

Language

Latin was the language of Rome. Several European languages evolved from it, including Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, and Romanian.

Engineering

The Romans built thousands of miles of roads to connect distant parts of the empire with Rome. They built bridges and aqueducts to supply water to their cities. They developed concrete and the use of arches and domes.

Christianity

The adoption of the Christian religion by the Roman Empire was a major turning point in the spread of Christianity.