

## Mediterranean Society: The Greek Phase

### Ø Homer and His Works

- § (a man that possibly never existed) Homer was the man that wrote the two epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. However scholars currently know that the two poems were recited before Homer lived (the mid 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E). Today there are beliefs the Homer was just a name for many scribes of the poems. Others believe that Homer had a say in writing while others contributed to his work. Homer was very influential to the classic Greek society. The *Iliad* is a Greek perspective on the "campaign" against the city of Troy (in Anatolia) by Greek warriors (during the 12<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E). The *Odyssey* is the written story of the Greek hero Odysseus on his journey home after the Trojan War (involved "challenges" by deities, monsters, and his own mind).
- § The two poems offer examples of traveling, communication, and interactions throughout the Mediterranean Basin during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> millennia B.C.E. Both men in the poems are portrayed as fearless and willing to venture into the "wine-dark sea". These poems illustrate that maritime links reached people throughout the Mediterranean Basin

### Ø Trade and Society

- § In the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.E. Phoenician merchants created trade links between land and people at the far coasts of the Mediterranean Sea. Slowly the area became integrated with Greeks and later Romans, who organized commercial exchange and sponsored interactions. The Mediterranean served as a link between Anatolia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, North Africa, and southern Russia (with routes through the Black Sea).
- § Greeks lived in independent, autonomous city-states. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. those states began to play a role in the large, centralized empire created by their neighbors in Macedon. The Greeks profoundly influenced other areas (Mediterranean Basin, Europe, and southwest Asia) by way of the shipping lanes that linked them all together.

## Early Development of the Greek Society

### Ø Early Greeks

- § Early on humans had inhabited the Balkan region and the Greek peninsula, however in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia B.C.E. They began to increasingly interact with others peoples/societies that traded in the region. These early inhabitants built their society under the great influence of Mesopotamians, Egyptians, and the Phoenicians. Starting in the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. the Greeks began to organize city-states.

### Ø Minoan and Mycenaean Societies

- § In the late 3<sup>rd</sup> millennia B.C.E. a complex society emerged on the island of Crete. It is referred to as the Minoan society after a king named Minos has once ruled the island. Between 2000 and 1700 B.C.E. the inhabitants build a series of elaborate temples notably the Knossos. These palaces were homes to rulers, and they served a storage for collected taxes. The palace officials created a script known as Linear A (symbols stood for syllables) in which they kept records of economic and commercial interactions.
- § Between 2200 and 1450 B.C.E. Crete was the center for Mediterranean commerce. Its location alone played a role in influences from Phoenicia and Egypt. By 2200 B.C.E. Cretans were traveling aboard an advanced ship of Phoenician design. The Minoan ships sailed to Greece, Anatolia, Phoenicia, and Egypt where they exchanged various goods like wine, olive oil, textiles, and manufactured goods.
- § After 1600 B.C.E. the Cretans had created colonies on Cyprus and many other islands in the Aegean Sea in order to mine copper ores and gain access to better tin markets.
- § After 1700 B.C.E. the Minoan society experienced a series of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and tidal waves. The most destructive volcanic eruption was around 1628 B.C.E. on the island of Thera (Santorini) north of the island of Crete.
- § Between 1600 and 1450 B.C.E. the Cretans started their journey of reconstruction by building luxurious complexes with indoor plumbing and drainage systems, and some even had flushable toilets.
- § After 1450 B.C.E. the wealth of the Minoan society attracted invaders and by 1100 B.C.E. Crete had fallen under foreign rule.
- § Around about 2200 B.C.E. migrating Indo-European people filtered into the Balkans and the Greek peninsula. By 1600 B.C.E. they had begun to trade with their Minoan neighbors and went to Crete where they learned about writing and large-scale construction. They eventually adapted the Minoan Linear A and developed their own language (an early form of Greek) and also created a scrip, Linear B. After 1450 B.C.E. they built stone palaces and fortresses throughout the southern Greek peninsula know as Peloponnesus. These sites attracted settlers that created agricultural communities. This society is known as Mycenaean, after Mycenae which was one of their most important settlements.
- § From 1500 to 1100 B.C.E. The Mycenaean expanded their society by overpowering the Minoan society. They established settlements in Crete, Anatolia, Sicily, and Southern Italy.
- § Around 1200 B.C.E. the Mycenaean's engaged in a conflict with the city of Troy in Anatolia. This Trojan War consisted of invasions of the Mycenaean homeland. From 1100 to 800 B.C.E. the Eastern Mediterranean was chaotic. Many Greek societies crumbled, linear scripts disappeared and people fled their homes to islands in the Aegean Sea. (These events illustrated in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.)

### Ø The World of the Polis

- § The absence of centralized empire allowed local institutions to lead in restoring political order in Greece. The most important of these institutions was the city-state or polis. (The term *Polis* meaning fortified site offered a refuge for local communities during times of war and other various emergencies). These sites attracted increasing populations that grew into commercial centers, taking on an urban character and extending their authority over neighboring regions. They levied taxes and created an appropriate portion of surplus agriculture to support the population. By about 800 B.C.E. many of the poleis had grown into great

- city-states that served as important centers of Greek society. A few poleis developed small monarchies but most were under the rule of local notables. Some poleis fell under the rule of politicians called "tyrants" that gained power by irregular means (tyrants were not oppressive. The term *tyrants* referred to their routes of power.) The most important poleis were Sparta and Athens (showed the various political styles)
- § Sparta was located in a fertile region of the Peloponnesus. Their population and economy expanded during the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. The expanding Spartans reduced their neighbors to the status of *helots* servants of the Spartan state. They were not chattel slaves, but they were not free. They could form families, but they could not leave the land. Their role in society was agricultural labor and to keep Sparta supplied with food. During the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E the helots outnumbered the Spartan citizens by more than ten to one. Having a large subject population the Spartans were able to cultivate the land and they faced the threat of rebellion. As a result, they devoted their resources to maintaining their military.
  - § There were no social classes recognized in the Spartan society. They did not wear jewelry or fancy clothes, nor did they pamper themselves with private wealth on a large scale. They circulated iron bars for money. (Spartan refers to a life style of simplicity frugality and austerity)
  - § Distinction among the Spartans came by prowess, discipline, and military talent. All boys from Spartan families left home at age seven to live in military barracks where they underwent physical training. At age twenty they became active in the military service until they retired. Spartan girls also endured a physical regimen in hopes that they would bare strong children. At age eighteen to twenty years old, women married, but did not live with their husbands. At age thirty, men left the barracks to start their families. By the fourth century B.C.E Spartan society had changed. Families began to accumulate wealth and develop a taste for luxury. Military was still very important, in fact they created a military state that could eliminate any threat.
  - § In Athens, growth and development caused strain that was released by creating a government based on democratic principles. Athens sought to negotiate order by considering the interest of other governments. Citizenship was not open to all residents: only free adult males from Athens could play a role in society. Athenians opened government offices to all citizens.
  - § During the seventh century B.C.E maritime trade brought prosperity to Attica. The people that benefited from this trade were aristocratic land owners. As they grew wealthier they bought more land and cultivated it efficiently (this pushed small land owners into debt and slavery).
  - § In the early sixth century B.C.E. the people of Attica had become unhappy and were ready to go to war against their wealthy neighbors. The poleis had already been dealing with the civil wars between the wealthy and poor classes. In Athens and aristocrat named Solon created a solution to this conflict, a compromise between the classes. Aristocrats could keep their land and he canceled debts forbade slavery and freed those already enslaved. To ensure this compromise he opened the councils of the polis to any citizen wealthy enough to devote their time. (Fifth and sixth centuries B.C.E. Athens increased opportunities for the commoners in government roles).
  - § Athens transformed into a democratic state under the leadership of Pericles. He was of aristocratic birth and was popular from 461 B.C.E. until his death in 429 B.C.E. He had a great personal influence in the government making the Athens poleis the most complex, a community of scientists, philosophers, architects, and artists. He boasted that Athens was "the education of Greece".

## Greece and the Larger World

### Ø Greek Developments

- Greeks became increasingly known in the Mediterranean Basin where they established colonies, also on the shores of the Black Sea. Eventually, the Greek society came into conflict with the expanding Persian Empire. During the fifth century B.C.E a war broke out between them, but in the next century Alexander of Macedon had overthrown the Achaemenid Empire, expanding his empire from India to Egypt and Greece.

### Ø Greeks Colonization

- Around 800 B.C.E the poleis were becoming centers of politics in Greece. Increasing population forced the Greeks to establish more colonies in the basin, in the eighth and sixth centuries B.C.E they founded over 400 colonies. The first of which they established in the early eighth century B.C.E., in areas such as Sicily and South Italy (Naples) a Greek colony called Neapolis "new polis". These new colonies provided more opportunities for agriculture and trade. By the sixth century B.C.E. more Greeks lived in colonies than on the Greek peninsula itself. By 600 B.C.E. there was a Greek colony in Massalia (South France). Colonies also arose on islands in the Aegean Sea and in Anatolia. In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Greeks settled on the shores of the Black Sea which offered them access to grain, fish, furs, timber, honey, gold, wax, and amber and slaves from South Russia. Colonization was not controlled by the government. Colonization spread Greek language and cultural traditions to the region. Clan leaders built small states in Sicily, Italy, France, Crimean peninsula and Russia.

### Ø Conflict with Persia

- During the fifth century B.C.E. the Greeks came into direct conflict with Persia in a struggle known as the Persian Wars (500 to 479 B.C.E). As the Persian emperors Cyrus and Darius tightened their rule in 500 B.C.E. the Greek cities on the Ionian coast revolted and expelled the Achaemenid administrators. This rebellion was defeated by 493 B.C.E. In 490 B.C.E. Darius sent an army/ships to attack Athens. Ten years later, the new emperor Xerxes (480 B.C.E.) sent an army back to Athens where they succeeded in capturing and burning Athens but were later defeated at the battle of Salamis. The conflict between Greece and Persia continued intermittently for over a century.
- The Greek poleis created an alliance called the Delian League to discourage Persian actions in Greece. Athens supplied the leagues military force and contributed financial support. Other poleis did not like to make contributions because they seemed to benefit only the Athenians. Eventually this resulted in a civil

war known as the Peloponnesian War (431 to 404 B.C.E.). Greece divided into two armed camps under the leadership of Athens and Sparta. In 404 B.C.E. Sparta claimed victory over the Athenians.

#### Ø The Macedonians and the Coming of Empire

- § Until the fourth century B.C.E. the kingdom of Macedon was just a state north of Peninsular Greece. The Macedonian population was cultivators and sheepherders. They did recognize a king yet small clans controlled political affairs. In the seventh century B.C.E. Greek cities traded with Macedon, importing grain, timber, and other natural resources in exchange for olive oil and wine. Macedonian political and social elites controlled trade from their side of the boarder and were familiar with Greek merchants. Under the reign of king Phillip II (359 to 336 B.C.E.), Phillip built a powerful military to overthrow the small clans and make himself the ruler (military force included small land owners and aristocrats holding large estates). By the fourth century B.C.E. the army was nearly invincible. Phillip then turned his attention to Greece and the Persian Empire. After 350 B.C.E. he began to move through Greece and by 338 B.C.E. he had conquered it. Before he could invade Persia, he was assassinated in 336 B.C.E. which left the invasion to his son Alexander of Macedon (Alexander the Great). Alexander became ruler at age 20 and began to assemble his army of 37 thousand people to invade Persia. By 333 B.C.E. he had Ionia and Anatolia under his control, a year later he had Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. By 331 B.C.E. he controlled Mesopotamia. He conquered Pasargadae and the Achaemenid palace in Persepolis in 331 B.C.E. He established himself as the new emperor of Persia in 330 B.C.E. In 327 B.C.E. his troops were in India entering the Punjab but his troops refused to go any further, so in 324 B.C.E. they returned to Susa in Mesopotamia. In June of 323 B.C.E. he suddenly fell ill and died at age 33. He had established many cities in his conquered lands of which he named 70 of them Alexandria in his honor. (A scheme to create a new ruling class of Greek Macedonian and Persian ancestry).

#### Ø The Hellenistic Empires

- § By 275 B.C.E. Alexander's general had divided the empire into three large states. Antigonos took Greece and Macedon which was ruled by his ancestors until the second century B.C.E. Ptolemy took Egypt which was ruled by his ancestors until thirty once B.C.E. Seleucus took the largest section the former Achaemenid Empire (Bactria to Anatolia) which his ancestors ruled until the second century B.C.E.
- § The reign of Alexander was known as the Hellenistic age an era when Greek culture expanded their influence to the outside world. Emperors governed cosmopolitan societies and sponsored interaction between the people of Greece to the people of India. China and India had an influence on nearby cultures.
- § The Antigonid realm of Greece and Macedon was the smallest Hellenistic empire that benefited from the new order. There was tension between these rulers and the Greek cities who only wanted to keep control of the Greek peninsula. Deals were made to recognize the Greek rule. Athens and Corinth flourished due to trade and Greece sent colonists into areas like the Seleucid Empire.
- § The wealthiest of the Hellenistic empires was Ptolemaic Egypt. They organized efficient agricultural industry and tax collection and also maintained irrigation networks. They created royal monopolies over industries such as textiles, salt making, and brewery of beer. The capital was Alexandria located at the mouth of the Nile River. It served as an administrative headquarters. The harbor could accommodate 1200 ships at the same time making it the most important harbor in the Mediterranean. The wealth attracted many immigrants from nearby areas. The city was an early megalopolis, a melting pot of people. It became the cultural capitol of the Hellenistic world. It was a spot for the famous Alexandria museum, a state financed institute of higher learning. In the first century B.C.E. it boasted a collection of over 700 thousand works.
- § Main channel of influence came from the cities of the former Persian Empire. These cities were attractions for Greek and Macedonian bureaucrats and administrators, creating an urban society. In the Seleucid realm emperor Ashoka of India had his edicts translated into Greek and Aramaic, the two most common languages of the Hellenistic empires.

Excavations discovered a Hellenistic colony at Ai Khanum on the Oxus River in ancient Bactria which was founded by Alexander or Seleucus. Bactria was in constant communication with the Mediterranean world. Around 250 B.C.E. Bactria withdrew from the Seleucid Empire and became an independent Greek kingdom. The people adapted all Greek customs and some Persian and Asian deities. (Some Greeks converted to Buddhism). King Menander who ruled Bactria (from 160 to 135 B.C.E.) was a significant conversion

## **The Fruits of Trade: Greek Economy and Society (245-255)**

### **Trade and the Integration of the Mediterranean Basin**

#### **I. Trade**

A. Greek's mountainous terrain and rocky soil brought in small harvests of grain, and the southern Balkan mountains limited travel and communication.

B. Greek merchants traded olive oil and wine around the Mediterranean, receiving abundant supplies of grain and other items.

1. Grain came from Egypt, Sicily, and Macedon.

2. Tin came from Anatolia.

3. Slaves came from Egypt and Russia.

C. By the early 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., trade had caused considerable prosperity, merchants and mariners linking Greek communities throughout the Mediterranean world.

D. Some cities, such as Athens and Corinth, relied more on commerce than on agriculture for the livelihood and prosperity.

#### **II. Commercial and Economic Organization**

A. Large volumes of trade promoted commercial and economic organization in the Mediterranean basin.

1. For example, shipowners, merchants, and money-lenders routinely formed partnerships to spread the risks of

commercial ventures, a merchant normally borrowing money from a banker or person to purchase cargo and rented space from a shipowner, who transported goods and returned the profits to the merchant.

2. If a ship wrecked, the contract became void, leaving the merchant and the lender to absorb their losses.

B. Manufacturers usually operated on a small scale, but there are records of pottery workshops with upwards of sixty employees.

### III. Panhellenic Festivals

A. Trade links strengthened the sense of a larger Greek community, and colonists even recognized the same gods as their cousins in the Greek peninsula, spoke Greek dialects, and maintained commercial relationships with their native communities.

B. Greeks from all parts gathered periodically to participate in panhellenic festivals that reinforced their common bonds.

C. These festivals even featured athletic, literary, or musical competitions.

### IV. The Olympic Games

A. According to tradition, in 776 B.C.E. Greek communities sent their best athletes to the polis of Olympia to engage in contests of speed, strength, and skill, contests including footracing, long jump, boxing, wrestling, javelin tossing, and discus throwing.

B. Winners received olive wreaths, and they became celebrated heroes in their home poleis.

C. The Olympic games took place every four years for more than a millennium before disappearing.

D. Caravan trade, linking Persia and Bactria, were dependent on horses and donkeys, and couldn't transport heavy or bulky good, but rather carried luxury products such as gems, jewelry, perfumes, and aromatic oils.

1. These goods were priced relative to the weight so merchants could feed themselves and their animals, pay the high costs of overland transport, and still make a profit.

## Family and Society

### I. Patriarchal Society

A. With the establishment of poleis in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the nature of Greek family and society became clearer and Greek poleis adopted strictly patriarchal family structures.

B. Male family heads ruled their households, and fathers even had the right to decide whether or not to keep infants born to their wives, although they couldn't legally kill infants, but they abandoned them in the mountains or countryside where they would soon die of exposure.

C. Greek women fell under the authority of their fathers, husbands, or sons, even upper-class women spent most of their time at home, and only went outside accompanied by servants or chaperones and had to wear veils discourage male attention.

D. Women couldn't own landed property but could operate small businesses; the only public position open to Greek women was that of priestess of a religious cult.

E. In Sparta, women could participate in athletic events, went out by themselves, joined in public festivals, and sometimes even joined the 'army'.

### II. Sappho

A. Literacy was common among upper-class women, and a few earned reputations for literary talent, such as the poet Sappho, who was active around 600 B.C.E.

B. She was probably a widow from an aristocratic family, invited young women into her home for instruction in music and literature.

C. She was charged with homosexual activity, and her surviving verse speaks of her strong physical attraction to young women.

D. Greek society tolerated sexual relationships between men, not women, and as a result, Sappho fell under a moral cloud and only fragments of her poetry survive.

E. Aristocratic families with extensive landholdings could afford to give girls an education, but in less privileged families, all hands contributed to the welfare of the household.

1. Men performed most of the outside work while women took care of domestic chores and wove wool textiles.

### III. Slavery

- A. Some slaves were formerly Greeks who couldn't pay off their debts, many were prisoners of war, and a large number came from trade: slave markets at Black Sea ports sold semi-nomadic Scythians captured in Russia, while Egyptians provided African slaves from Nubia and other southern regions.
- B. Greek law regarded all slaves as the private property of their owners, and the conditions of the slaves' lives depended on the needs and the temperament of their owners.
- C. Physically powerful slaves with no special skills provided heavy labor, while other unskilled slaves worked as domestic servants or caretakers of their owners' children.
- D. Educated and skilled slaves were often regarded as economic investments by their owners, provided with shops, and allowed to keep a portion of their earnings as incentive and reward for efficient work, and some even won their freedom.
- E. A slave named Pasion worked first as a porter, then as a clerk at a prominent Athenian bank during the late 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E., and eventually his owners entrusted him with larger responsibilities and rewarded him for his efforts and he eventually won his freedom, took over management of the bank, outfitted five warships from his own pocket, and won a grant of Athenian citizenship.

## The Cultural Life of Classical Greece

### Rational Thought and Philosophy

#### I. Socrates

- A. The essential person in the development of philosophy was Socrates (470-399 B.C.E.), a thoughtful and reflective Athenian wanting to understand humans and human affairs in all their complexity.
- B. Socrates began by studying the ideas of Greek scientists who pursued the interests of their Mesopotamian and Egyptian predecessors, but gradually became uninterested with their efforts to understand the natural world, regarding it as less important than human affairs.
- C. Socrates didn't write down his thoughts and ideas, but his disciple Plato later composed dialogues that represented Socrates' views.
- D. He didn't explain his views assertively, but posed questions that encouraged reflection on human issues, particularly on matters of ethics and morality.
- E. He suggested that humans could lead honest lives and honor was far more important than wealth, fame, or other superficial traits.
- F. He believed that humans had an obligation to strive for personal integrity, behave honorably toward others, and work toward the formation of a just society.
- G. Socrates often played a pest who subjected traditional ethical teachings to critical scrutiny, but didn't please fellow citizens.
- H. He was brought to court on charges that he encouraged immorality and corrupted Athenian youths who joined him to discuss moral and ethical issues.
- I. He was found guilty, condemned to death, and died in 399 B.C.E. after drinking a potion of hemlock sap.

#### II. Plato

- A. Inspired by his mentor's reflections, Plato (430-347 B.C.E.) developed a systematic philosophy of great subtlety, and presented his thoughts in a series of dialogues in which Socrates figured as the principal speaker.
- B. Plato largely represented Socrates' views, but gradually devised his thought into an methodical vision of the world and human society.
- C. Plato couldn't gain satisfactory intellectual control over the world: virtue and honesty meant different things in different situations, as did courage, truth, and beauty.
- D. He developed a belief that this world isn't the only world-wasn't the world of genuine reality, but only a pale and imperfect reflection of the world of Forms or Ideas.
- E. The secrets of this world were available only to philosophers, who applied rational faculties to the pursuit of wisdom.
- F. Though abstract, Plato's thought had important political and social implications: he sketched an ideal state that reflected his philosophical views, and because philosophers were in the best position to understand ultimate reality, and hence to design policies in accordance with the Form or Idea of justice, he believed that the best state was one where kings were philosophers.
- G. Plato promoted an intellectual aristocracy: the philosophical elite would rule, and other, less intelligent classes would work at functions for which their talents best suited them.

#### III. Aristotle

- A. Aristotle began as Plato's disciple but came to distrust the theory of Forms or Ideas, thus believed that philosophers could rely on their senses to provide accurate information about the world and then depend on reason to sort out its mysteries.
- B. He explored the nature of reality in subtle abstract works, but also wrote on biology, physics, astronomy, psychology, politics, ethics, and literature.
- C. Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century C.E., most European philosophers were considered the Greeks as intellectual authorities.
- D. Christian and Islamic theologians alike went to great lengths to harmonize their religious convictions with the philosophical views of Plato and Aristotle and thus, they provided a powerful intellectual framework that shaped thought about the world and human affairs for two millennia and more.

## Popular Religion and Greek Drama

### I. Greek Deities

- A. Greeks' Indo-European ancestors attributed supernatural powers to natural elements such as sun, wind, and rain, and over centuries, personified these powers and came to think of them as gods.
- B. Greeks constructed myths that related the stories of the gods, their relations with one another, and their roles in bringing the world to its present state.
- C. In the beginning, they believed there was the formless void of chaos out of which emerged the earth, the mother and creator of all things.
- D. The earth then created the sky, night, day, sun, moon, and other natural marvels.
- E. Struggles between the deities led to bitter heavenly battles, and ultimately Zeus, grandson of the earth and sky gods, emerged as supreme ruler of the divine realm.
- F. Zeus's heavenly court included scores of subordinate deities who had various responsibilities.
  1. The god Apollo promoted wisdom and justice
  2. The goddess Fortune brought unexpected opportunities and difficulties.
  3. The Furies wreaked vengeance on those who violated divine law, etc.

### II. Religious Cults

- A. Greek myths sought to explain the world and the forces that shape it, and also served as foundations for religious cults that contributed to a powerful sense of community.
- B. Many cults conducted ritual ceremonies that were open only to initiates, and some only allowed women because women weren't able to participate in legal and political life.

### III. The Cult of Dionysus

- A. Women were the most prominent worshipers of Dionysus, the god of wine, also known as Bacchus, although men sometimes joined in his celebration.
- B. During the spring, worshipers retreated to the hills to celebrate Dionysus with song and dance.
- C. The dramatist Euripides wrote a play about the Dionysus celebration called *The Bacchae*.
- D. Euripides was a skeptic of much Greek religion but he recognized the powerful emotional bonds that held the Dionysian people together.
- E. During the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., the poleis strengthened their grip on public and political life, religious cults become progressively more tame.
  1. The cult of Dionysus became thoroughly domesticated, the place of rituals moved from the mountains to the polis, and the nature of the rituals changed dramatically: instead of emotional festivals, they presented plays that honored the traditions of the polis, examined relations between humans and the gods, or reflected on problems of ethics and morality.

### IV. Tragic Drama

- A. This transformation of Dionysus's cult aided the emergence of Greek dramatic literature as dramatists composed plays for an annual theatrical festival.
- B. The great tragedians-Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides-whose lives spanned the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., explored the possibilities and limitations of human action.
- C. Comic dramatists such as Aristophanes dealt with serious issues of human striving and responsible behavior, taking savage delight in lampooning the public and political figures of their time.
- D. Comedians aimed to influence popular attitudes by ridiculing the imperfections of prominent public figures and calling attention to the absurd consequences of ill-considered action.

## Hellenistic Philosophy and Religion

### I. The Hellenistic Philosophers

- A. The most popular Hellenistic philosophers-the Epicureans, Skeptics, and Stoics-addressed individual needs by searching for personal tranquility and serenity.
- B. Epicureans identified pleasure as the greatest good, and that didn't mean hedonism but a state of quiet satisfaction that would shield them from the pressures of the Hellenistic world.
- C. Skeptics refused to take strong positions on political, moral, and social issues because they doubted the possibility of certain knowledge, so rather than engage in fruitless disputes, they sought equanimity and left hostile issues to others.
- D. The most respected and influential were the Stoics, who believed all humans members of a single, universal family, and didn't seek to withdraw from the pressures of the world.
- E. Instead, they taught that people had the duty to aid others and lead virtuous lives, and that people could avoid anxieties caused by the pressures of Hellenistic society by concentrating their attention strictly on the duties that reason and nature demanded of them.

### II. Religions of Salvation

- A. While the philosophers' doctrines appealed to educated elites, religions of salvation enjoyed surging popularity in Hellenistic religions, promising eternal bliss for initiates who obeyed their rites and lived in accordance with their doctrines.
- B. The Egyptian cult of Osiris became popular because it promised salvation for those who led honorable lives.
- C. Many of the mystery religions involved a savior whose death and resurrection would lead the way to eternal salvation for devoted followers, and some philosophers and religious thinkers believe that a single, universal god might rule the entire universe and that this god had a plan for the salvation of all humankind.
- D. Like the Hellenistic philosophies, religions of salvation addressed the interests of individuals

## The Etruscans and Rome

### 1. *Romulus and Remus*

a. In 753 B.C.E. Romulus founded the city of Rome and established himself as the king.

### 2. *The Etruscans*

- a. Etruscans migrated to Italy from Anatolia.
- b. They built cities and established political and economic alliances between their settlements.
- c. Etruscans manufactured high-quality bronze and iron goods and worked gold and silver into jewelry.
- d. They traded actively in western Mediterranean.
- e. In late 6<sup>th</sup> century Greek fleets defeated the Etruscans at sea while Celtic peoples attacked them from Gaul (modern France.)

### 3. *The Kingdom of Rome*

- a. Rome was a monarchy in its early days and several Roman kings were Etruscans.
- b. Roman kings that ruled through 7<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century provided Rome with paved streets, public buildings, defensive walls, and large temples.
- c. Merchants drew a lot of traffic to Rome because of its easy access to the Mediterranean by way of the Tiber River. Trade routes from all parts of Italy unite in Rome.

## The Roman Republic and Its Constitution

### 1. *Establishment of the Republic*

- a. In 509 B.C.E. the Roman nobility deposed the last Etruscan king and replaced the monarchy with an aristocratic republic.
- b. In the center of the city they built the Roman forum (a political and civic center with temples and public buildings where gov. business was handled.)
- c. Romans instituted a republican constitution with two consuls. Consuls were elected by an assembly of aristocrats and wealthy classes (patricians). They served one-year term.
- d. The Senate (aristocrats with extensive political experience) advised consuls and ratified all major decisions.
- e. The consul and the Senate both represented the interests of the wealthy people, so there was tension between the wealthy classes and common people (plebeians).

### 2. *Conflicts between the Patricians and Plebeians*

- a. Because the plebeians threatened to start a rival settlement, the patricians granted them the right to elect officials (tribunes) to represent their interest in the Roman gov.
- b. The 10 tribunes had the power to intervene in all political matters and they could veto measures, but the patricians still dominated Rome and tensions continued.
- c. Eventually plebeians could hold all state offices, had one consul be a plebeian, and they won the power to make decisions on all of Rome this helped ease class tensions.
- d. When faced with a civil or military crisis the Romans appointed an official (dictator) who had absolute power for six months which helped maintain a stable society.

## The Expansion of the Republic

### 1. *Intro*

- a. During the 5<sup>th</sup> and early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E. the Romans founded a large regional state in central Italy at the expense of the declining Etruscans which gave them access to the iron industry and expanded the land under their control.
- b. Instead of totally ruling the conquered people, the Romans exempted them from taxation, allowed them to govern their own government affairs, gain citizenship, marry Romans, and hold positions in Roman society.
- c. To put down rebellions and to dominate affairs throughout Italy the conquered people couldn't make military or political alliances with anyone but Rome.

### 2. *The Punic Wars*

- a. The Romans fought three conflicts with the Carthaginians (Mesopotamians) known as the Punic Wars.
- b. The rivalry ended after Rome subjected Carthage to a siege, conquered the city, and forced about 50,000 survivors into slavery.
- c. Conflict between Rome and eastern Mediterranean arose because pirates and ambitious local lords ignored the weakening Hellenistic rulers and threatened regional stability.
- d. Rome fought five major wars, but Rome didn't immediately annex the lands in the eastern Mediterranean but entrusted them to allies in the region.
- e. By the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. Rome clearly ranked as the preeminent power in the eastern as well as western Mediterranean.

## From Republic to Empire

## Imperial Expansion and Domestic Problems

### 1. *The Gracchi Brothers*

- a. The Gracchi brothers worked to limit the amount of conquered land that any individual could hold.
- b. Fearing the brothers might gain influence over Roman affairs, their enemies had them both assassinated Tiberius in 132 B.C.E. and Gaius in 121 B.C.E.
- c. Formal political power remained in the hands of a small, privileged class of people in Rome, and their policies often reflected the interest of their class rather than the concerns of the empire as a whole.

### 2. *Civil War*

- a. During the first century B.C.E. Rome fell into a civil war.
- b. In 83 B.C.E. Sulla seized Rome and killed people he considered enemies of the state this lasted for 5 years and some 10,000 people were killed.

- c. Poverty in the cities, especially Rome, led to periodic social eruptions when the price of grain rose or the supply fell.
- d. The urban poor joined the personal armies of ambitious generals who themselves posed threats to social and political stability.

## **The Foundation of an Empire**

### **1. Intro**

- a. Sponsoring public spectacles kept Julius Caesar in the public eye and helped publicize his interest in social reform.
- b. Caesar led a Roman army to Gaul which he conquered and brought into Roman empire.
- c. By early 46 B.C.E. Caesar made himself master of the Roman state and named himself dictator which he claimed for life.
- d. Caesar's policies pointed the way toward a centralized, imperial form of government for Rome, but Caesar's rule alienated many members of the Roman elite classes, who in 44 B.C.E. organized a plot to assassinate Caesar and restore the republic. They attacked Caesar and stabbed him to death which plunged Rome into a round of civil conflict that persisted for 13 years.

### **2. Augustus**

- a. When the struggles ended power belonged to Octavian (a nephew, protégé, adopted son of Julius Caesar)
- b. In 27 B.C.E. the Senate called him Augustus which suggests the divine or semi divine nature of its holder. He ruled for 45 years and guided Roman affairs for the next three centuries.

### **3. Augustus's Administration**

- a. Augustus's government was a monarchy disguised as a republic.
- b. Augustus preserved traditional republican offices and forms of government and included Roman elite in his government, but at the same time fundamentally altered the nature of that government.
- c. He reorganized the military system and placed individuals loyal to him in all important positions.
- d. Augustus served emperor until his death in 14 C.E.

## **Continuing Expansion and Integration of the Empire**

### **1. Intro**

- a. At its highest point, during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E., the Roman empire embraced much of Britain as well as a continuous belt of possessions surrounding the Mediterranean and extending to rich agricultural regions inland, including Mesopotamia.
- b. When Roman soldiers, diplomats, governors, and merchants began to arrive in large numbers, they stimulated the development of local economies and states in sparsely populated lands such as Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Spain.
- c. Local elites allied with Roman representatives and used wealth that came into their communities to control natural resources and build states on a much larger scale than ever.

### **2. The Pax Romana**

- a. Augustus's reign started the era known as the pax romana (Roman peace) that persisted for 2 and a half centuries.
- b. The Pax Romana facilitated trade and communication throughout the region from Mesopotamia to the Atlantic Ocean.

### **3. Roman Roads**

- a. The Romans integrated their empire by building networks of transportation and communication.
- b. The roads and postal system permitted urgent travel and messages to proceed with remarkable speed.
- c. Roads linked all parts of Rome.

### **4. Roman Law**

- a. Romans began a tradition of Roman law about 450 B.C.E. when they promulgated the Twelve Tables as a basic law code for citizens of the early republic.
- b. Jurists established the principle that defendants were innocent until proven guilty, and they ensured that defendants had a right to challenge their accusers before a judge in a court of law.
- c. They also permitted judges to set aside laws that were inequitable or unfair.
- d. Like transportation and communication networks, Roman law helped to integrate the diverse lands that made up the empire, and the principles of Roman law continued to shape Mediterranean and European society long after the empire had disappeared.

## **Rome Page 271-284**

### **Economy and Society in the Roman Mediterranean**

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The expansion of the Roman influence and power welcomed economic and social changes to the people that lived in the Mediterranean basin. Cities benefitted immensely because of the trade that took place between them. That was possible only because of the Pax Romana, along with the good roads that were developed.

#### **Trade and Urbanization**

Agriculture went through a tremendous change. Trade increased there substantially. Instead of them putting the crops immediately for local use, the owners of the latifundia would focus on exporting them. The crops came all the way from Africa and eventually went to consumers in Rome and other large cities.

Since it was very cheap to import grain from areas where it grew in surplus; the other areas were able to focus in cultivation of other fruits and vegetables, or manufacture items. For example, Syria and Palestine produced



fruits, nuts, and wool fabrics while Spain produced oil, horses, wine and precious metals. This increased trade because they would become dependant on each other. Trade overseas also increased. Due to the military of Romans they were able to rid the water of most of the pirates. That allowed large amounts of cargo to be transported over long distances even while the weather was bad. They called the sea *mare nostrum* which means "our sea". They referred to it as their sea because they had so much control over it. The Mediterranean region became a well-integrated area of communication and exchange.

The wealth accumulated was tremendous for the region but was greater for Rome than anywhere else. The cities promoted trade and social change for their own benefits because of profit they would make. The trade helped increase Rome's urban development. Just in the first century C.E. they had over 10,000 statues, 700 pools, 500 fountains, and 36 marble arches that celebrated achievements they made. The Roman state would pay for nearly all public buildings along with the aqueducts that brought fresh water into the cities. They used concrete which they also invented. Because construction was becoming such a big industry, it created numerous jobs. It created hundreds of thousands of jobs. The population surged and the economy was growing even faster. It also attracted a lot of migrants which most stayed with low-wage jobs, but some of the people became craftsmen or business men.

There was development of not only Rome but other big cities as well. Spain, Greece, Syria, and other lands accumulated wealth because of the trade and economic development. Some cities were founded based on what the benefits were. The wealth in the cities caused the residents to expect more than they would from rural cities. When merchants came by they sold a variety of fine goods coming from Spain, Greece, Syria, Gaul, Britain, along with other places. The cities had an abundant source of water. Most cities would have public baths, swimming pools, and sometimes gymnasia. For the waste water they had underground sewers.

The entertainment there was also advanced. They had huge circuses, stadiums, and amphitheaters. Circuses were races between chariots being pulled by horses. One in Rome held over 250,000 people. In stadiums gladiators would fight to the death or fight animals. They would flock to the event. The Roman Colosseum could have over 50,000 people and you could flood it and stage mock naval battles.

### **Family and Society in Roman Times**

The Roman family included the whole family along with slaves, free servants, and close relatives. The head of the house was usually the eldest male. He had many rights including choosing his offspring's marriage partner; choose their work; sell them into slavery; and also to execute them. Even though the law states head of the house makes all the decisions, it was not all true. It was not enforced so women had power in domestic affairs of households. In the middle ages they had enough power to make a difference in the families. They could help pick the marriage partners for their children and occasionally helped with the financial affairs. The law prevented women from getting inheritance but some found a hole in the law and were smart enough to get it. By the first century B.C.E. some women had power over the financial affairs of family businesses and wealthy estates. Because of the wealth, social classes began to immerge more. Some merchants, landowners, and construction contractors became filthy rich. They held lavish parties with exotic foods and displays in houses with beautiful gardens. They incorporated statues and many types of art in their houses showing off the amount of wealth they had. All the while cultivators and urban masses had regular food like porridge and vegetables.

By the first century, the gap between the rich and the poor was increasingly big. Urban masses were often unemployed and rioted to show that they were not happy with the conditions. The government tried to keep them happy with the minimum of basic food and public entertainment. The masses often tried to fight back by recruiting private armies led by volunteers. Slavery was a big part of Roman society. By second century C.E. slaves could have made up over a third of the population. Slaves lived in harsh conditions especially rural ones. They were often chained together working either on *latifundia* or in mines and quarries. The harsh conditions led to several revolts, especially in the second and first century B.C.E. One of the most famous slaves, Spartacus led 70,000 slaves in 73 B.C.E. against the Roman army who had 40,000 well equipped soldiers.

In cities the conditions were not as bad as the rural area. Females often worked as domestic servants while male servants were laborers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, or business agents for their masters. Slaves who had some sort of education could have led a much simpler life and a better one. Some slaves became philosophers who went on to become great speakers. City slaves could be freed. It was not required but it was common that someone release their slave at around 30 years of age. Until then the master could do anything he wanted to the slave.

### **The Cosmopolitan Mediterranean**

Trade wasn't the only thing that spread over the Mediterranean region, religion also spread. When migrants moved over to large cities they not only went there but their ideas also went with them. Within time popular religions spread very quickly and also the culture spread. The most popular religion was Christianity and in just three centuries it became the official religion of the Roman Empire and the predominant religion.

### **Greek Philosophy and Religions of Salvation**

In the early days the Romans believed in multiple gods including Jupiter who was the head of all the gods, Mars who is the god of war, and Vesta who was the god of the hearth. They also believed in small deities who they believed would protect their homes.

As the Romans expanded they encountered many ideas and religions. They adopted them for their own purposes and uses. For example, they took the god Juno, goddess of the moon from the Etruscans as well as Minerva, the goddess of wisdom. They also adopted religious practices. They would examine the internal organs of ritually sacrificed animals for divination. The Romans also were inspired by the Greek's rational thought and philosophy. The most established school of thought in the eastern Mediterranean was Stoicism when the Romans established political hegemony. They thought that they lived in a large and independent world and they sought to identify a set of universal moral standards that would erase local ethical codes. It appealed strongly to a lot of

people, especially Marcus Tullius Cicero. He readily accepted the philosophy. He studied both the classic and Hellenistic stoicism. He was a good writer and because he incorporated Hellenistic thoughts into Roman needs, he used the morals and ethical teachings immensely. He said that you have to live in accordance to nature and reason. He also said that those who accumulate wealth through immoral, illegal or unjust means are living with reason. The religions that appealed to the masses of people were the ones of salvation. It appealed to them because it gave the sense of purpose and hope for a better future. It reflects the political and social conditions of the times. The religions start to emerge more during Hellenistic times and they were obvious because when the migrants came to settle in the capital they brought their culture and religion. The religions flourished in Rome and the Mediterranean basin. Merchants, soldiers, and administrators carried their cults as they did their business, and alongside them went missionaries so the highway was used for business but it was also used for religions of salvation which traveled to almost to all ports and large cities in the empire.

One of the most popular religions of salvation was the cult that worshipped Mithras. Mithras was the god that was close to the sun and light in Zoroastrian mythology. Roman soldiers in the Hellenistic world adapted it to their own interests. They associated the god with military virtues like courage, discipline, and strength. It became popular among soldiers soon.

The religion brought together people of the like-minds. It was sanction for purposeful moral behavior and human life. During the late republic, alters and temples started to appear in military garrisons. Rulers started to become enchanted by Mithras along with merchants and other people. The cult did not admit women, but there were other cults that included the ones dedicated to the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele, and other deities that men and women could go to. The Egyptian goddess Isis was one of the most popular deities in the Roman Empire before Christianity.

### **Judaism and Early Christianity**

After the Kingdom of David and Solomon had been over the Jewish people kept their religion through the regimes of the: Babylonian, Achaemenid, Alexandrian, Seleucid, and Roman. Most of the regimes didn't care that they were there except that they had to pay taxes and have no rebellious activities. To encourage the empire sometimes, the empires would create a cult that worshipped the king. They had people participate in the cult but the strict monotheistic Jewish only believed that Yahweh was their god. That is when they rebelled against the empire. The Jewish people in Palestine formed a resistance that went against the Roman Empire because they were having some troubles cooperating. That started the Jewish war which lasted from 66 to 70 C.E. Some Jews fought the Roman while the others just went to another sect. The Essenes were formed in first century B.C.E. They had a strict moral code and practiced rituals you they feel like a whole: new members were admitted after a rite of Baptism in water, and then they took part in a ritual community meal. They also looked for a savior who would rid them of Roman rule. The early Christians had little contact with the Essenes but they shared the same thoughts. They formed a community viewing Jesus Nazareth, a Jewish teacher as a savior. Jesus was born in 4 B.C.E. He was peaceful and attracted handfuls of people because of his wisdom and miraculous powers. The Romans feared him because they thought that he would take down their kingdom since he had so many followers and people that supported him. They felt that he was threat to their kingdom. They crucified him.

When he died Christianity did not die out but instead it grew stronger. They said that they felt presence of Jesus. They called him Christ and said that he was the son of god. They also said that he had lifted the sins off their shoulders so that he would lead individuals into heaven. The early Christians followed a strict code and devoted themselves uncompromisingly to God. They compiled a set of writings- the life of Jesus, letters outlining Christian teachings, reports of his follower's works which is the New Testament. The Old Testament is Jewish Hebrew scriptures. The Old and the New Testament make up the Bible.

Jesus' early followers were all Jews. Some Christians started to look for more followers in non-Jewish communities. Paul of Tarsus went around spreading Christianity as the principal figure. He traveled each road many times and went to Greece, Spain, Palestine, other cities. He taught Christianity a way that it attracted masses of other people. He taught to observe high moral standards and to place faith ahead of interests. He also explained how the world came to be because of God's purposeful activity so that it provided a framework for meaning for individual's lives. There was still no authority for the fledging church. Rather, they selected a bishop which oversaw the priest. Soon there were many communities of Christianity, all being unique. Some taught that Jesus had risen from the dead while others taught that he had risen spiritually. Sometimes women would have roles in church and even be priest. Early Christianity was diverse and only gradually did they recognize certain texts like the New Testament and use them to live their lives. The Christians wouldn't honor Roman State cults so the Romans launched campaigns against Christianity. Even then Christianity spread really fast. Christianity found its way to almost every corner of the Roman Empire and greatly rose continuously. Christianity also reached Iran and Mesopotamia along with other places.

Christianity appealed to many people because of the fact that they were oppressed. The religion gave them a way of life and freedom. They thought that being rich in religion was better than being rich in money. It was not a sexist religion so it appealed to men and women. Those who did not like standing in the high ranks of Romans were welcomed into this religion because it was about equality.