



**UNIT TWO:
ORGANIZATION AND
REORGANIZATION OF
HUMAN SOCIETIES,
c. 600 B.C.E. TO c. 600 C.E.**

By 600 B.C.E. the old river valley centers of civilization in the Middle East had been eclipsed by many factors, including the devastating collapse of trade and cultural connections around 1200 B.C.E. No such event had occurred in eastern Asia, where the Zhou Dynasty remained strong, and civilizations continued to develop in Mesoamerica and the Andes Mountains region. Most significantly, some major changes began to usher in a new era in the world's story: the development of large states and empires that lasted through the middle of the 1st millennium C.E. and connected to one another through transregional trade networks. Religious and cultural systems were also transformed so that belief systems provided the "glue" that held large empires together. Shared beliefs reinforced political and economic structures and practices, and in some cases insured that civilizations would continue even after their governments fell.

No single "marker event" started the new era, so it is easy to argue that the era actually began or ended a little earlier or later. However, by 600 B.C.E. some clear changes were occurring, including the shift of civilization centers away from the older centers in the Eastern Hemisphere. For example, on the Indian subcontinent, human activities were focused on the Ganges River Valley to the east of the Indus River Valley. In China, the Huang He (Yellow) River remained active, but farming became more intense and cities began to grow along the Yangze River Valley to the south. By the mid-1st millennium B.C.E. Persia, a new empire in the Middle East, was stirring. In the area around the Mediterranean Sea a new civilization was emerging from the ashes of Mycenae in Greece by about 800 B.C.E.

These new civilizations differed from earlier ones in several ways:

- **Size and political strength** – Empires developed as a political form as rulers strengthened governmental and military organizations to allow them to rule larger land areas. New systems of rule – called states – mo-

bilized surplus labor and resources that made it possible to expand territory and conquer surrounding states. For example, Rome controlled areas that stretched from northern Europe to western Asia to northern Africa. The Mauryan Empire on the Indian subcontinent was far larger than the area controlled earlier by the Harappans. Whereas Han China was not larger in land space than the old Zhou Dynasty, the emperors generally had more centralized control of the area.

- **More complex cultures** – During this era several of the world's great religions emerged as forces determining the course of world history, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. In China the important philosophy of Confucianism emerged as a powerful cultural influence. Even though Hinduism and Judaism have roots in the earlier era, all these belief systems diffused to lands outside their areas of origin so that their overall impact on world history became enormous. Many civilization areas produced art and literature that remain influential today.
- **More numerous and better written records** – We know more about these civilizations than we know about the river valley civilizations partly because they were more recent, but also because their written records were more numerous and systematic. All developed sophisticated forms of writing, and some began to use a simplified system of symbols (alphabets) that allowed literacy to become more widespread, though not universal.
- **More complex long-distance trade** – During this era great trade routes connected the civilizations by land (the Silk Road) and by sea (the Indian Ocean trade). Although trade was still confined by hemisphere (west was not trading with east), the trade contacts and distance travelled grew tremendously. These trade routes increased the prosperity of the empires and spread ideas, including belief systems, as well as material goods.
- **More contacts between nomads and sedentary people** – Partly because of the extended trade routes, the boundaries of the empires expanded, and people from urban centers came in contact with those living on the periphery. In central Asia nomadic groups took over the transport of goods across vast plains, and in some cases settled into communities that grew into great trade cities along the Silk Road. Attacks of nomadic groups on civilization centers grew, although a great deal of the contact was peaceful as all benefitted from growing trade routes.

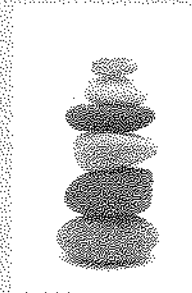
- **More direct influence on modern civilizations** – Many modern beliefs and practices may be traced much more directly to the civilizations of this era than to the earliest civilization era. This is true partly because we have more knowledge of the later era, but also because their beliefs and practices were more similar to those of the modern era. For example, modern law codes are much more similar to Roman law codes than they are to Hammurabi's Code of early Mesopotamia. Religious beliefs that developed during this era are still intact today, whereas the religions of Ancient Egypt and Sumeria have not survived the years.



**THE BIG PICTURE:
TECHNOLOGICAL AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
TRANSFORMATIONS
(to 600 B.C.E.)**

Be sure to keep up with these broad trends and themes for the period before 600 B.C.E.:

- 1) During the Paleolithic era, hunters and gatherers gradually migrated from their origins in East Africa to Eurasia, Australia, and the Americas, adapting their technology and cultures to the new areas.
- 2) Interactions among different groups of people on the planet were usually limited to groups that were geographically nearby, but interactions increased steadily throughout the time period, both in frequency and distance.
- 3) Physical geography and the natural environment interacted with human activities to shape changes and continuities during the time period.
- 4) This period is made up of two time periods that are distinguished by big changes in human lifestyles, including these "marker events": the development of agriculture and early agricultural communities, and the appearance of the earliest urban-based societies.



**CHAPTER THREE:
EMPIRES AND TRANSREGIONAL
TRADE NETWORKS,
600 B.C.E. TO 600 C.E.**

During the time period from 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E., large empires appeared in Eurasia and the Americas and expanded their boundaries to govern increasingly diverse cultural and ethnic groups. As the empires grew, they developed powerful militaries and governments, but eventually they encountered problems with holding their vast domains together. Even though all of the big empires collapsed before 600 C.E., the long-distance trade routes allowed a vibrant exchange of goods, people, technology, and religious and cultural beliefs that connected regions as never before.

New empires emerged in several areas:

- 1) **The Mediterranean** – The Greeks emerged as an influential civilization of the Mediterranean area, followed by the Romans.
- 2) **Southwest Asia** – The Persian Empire rose to control territory that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River.
- 3) **The Indian subcontinent** – Two empires rose on the Indian subcontinent: the Mauryan Empire and the Gupta Empire.
- 4) **East Asia** – China emerged from the Warring States Period that followed the Zhou Dynasty to form the Qin Dynasty, followed by the much longer lasting Han Dynasty.
- 5) **The Americas** – In Mesoamerica, Teotihuacan and the Maya city-states emerged, and the Moche controlled Andean South America. (discussed in Chapter Seven).

MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS: GREECE

Settled agricultural communities had developed along the Aegean Sea in the eastern Mediterranean area by about 2000 B.C.E., probably first on the island of Crete. Although these communities were not far away from Mesopotamia and Egypt, their environmental conditions were quite different. Greece is mountainous with little suitable land for farming and no broad river valleys or level plains. The sea is ever-present, since much of the main land is surrounded by water inlets, and the sea itself is filled with small islands. One geographical advantage the early Greeks had was good access to water through natural harbors, navigable bays, and calm waters with islands that served as multiple docking places for ships. Land travel was difficult because of the mountains and the deep water inlets, so the early Greeks became some of the most skilled sailors of their day.

The **Minoan** civilization on the island of Crete controlled most of the area by about 1600 B.C.E., and was replaced by the **Mycenaeans**, who almost certainly were part of the great trade network of the Late Bronze Age that fell apart by about 1200 B.C.E. The Mycenaeans were often at war with others around them, and by 1200 B.C.E. they were at war with the city of Troy on the other side of the Aegean Sea (in Anatolia). Their cities were invaded about this time by people from the north, so the times were chaotic, eventually ending in destruction, with inhabitants abandoning the area. After the fall of the Mycenaean civilization, the Aegean area entered into a "Dark Age" that lasted till about 800 B.C.E., when Greek cities began to reemerge as important urban centers.

From the fall of Mycenae until about 800 B.C.E. the Greeks were isolated from others around them. This isolation ended when another seafaring group from the eastern Mediterranean, the **Phoenicians**, visited the Aegean, reestablishing contact between Greece and the Middle East. Soon Greek ships were traveling across the Mediterranean, and the trade that they established brought new prosperity to the Aegean.

Political Development

The geographic features of the Greek homeland encouraged the development of the **polis**, or the city-state. Each city was separated from others by mountains, inlets, or the sea itself, so each came to dominate the countryside around it. At its peak, Greek civilization was made up of about 200 poleis, each a separate political and cultural unit, independent of every other. Some were stronger and more influential than others, and at key times they cooperated with



PERSPECTIVES: ALTERNATIVES TO SEDENTARY LIFE

Whereas the focus of historical study during the era from 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E. is on the great civilizations, most of the earth's landspace was occupied by nomadic or migratory people. Two alternatives to sedentary agriculture were:

Shifting cultivation – Sometimes called "slash and burn" agriculture, this practice predominated in the rainforests of Central and South America, west Africa, east and central India, and much of south China and Southeast Asia. Shifting cultivators burned off the rain forest undergrowth, but left the large trees to protect the soil. They used the ash from the burned undergrowth to fertilize the crops before depleting the nutrients from the soil and moving on to another area to begin the process again.

Pastoral nomadism – This practice continued from earlier days across the vast plains of central Eurasia, the central Arabian Peninsula, and areas south of the Sahara Desert in Africa. The animals the pastoralists herded were domesticated, but they required frequent movement in search of good pastures. Animals included horses, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and reindeer. During this era, trade routes across central Asia were controlled by pastoral nomads, although many settled into sedentary lives in the trade cities along the Silk Road.

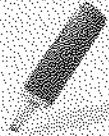
one another in inter-city organizations called leagues, but they were never united under one government. Often when we refer to Ancient Greece, we are thinking about one city-state: Athens. Although its politics and culture dominated other city-states for much of the time period, Athens was always its own city-state, and its main rival was Sparta, a city-state south of Athens with very different values and practices. Each city-state had its own patron god or goddess, and held regular rituals to celebrate and maintain the patron's protection.

The poleis took different political forms, including **monarchies** (hereditary rule by one), **oligarchies** (rule by a few), **aristocracies** (rule by leading families), and **democracies** (a new form of popular government). One outcome of these conflicting governing styles was the emergence of **tyrants** by the 6th century B.C.E. These tyrants were often military leaders who won popular support against the aristocracy, and though they were not necessarily oppressive (as the

modern term implies), the idea of one-man rule contradicted traditions of community governance.

Early Athens

Athens went through all of these forms of government in the period between 800 and 400 B.C.E. with democracy emerging during the 5th century. The original monarchy was gradually forced aside by the aristocrats, who in turn gave way to oligarchs in the 500s. The most important oligarch was Solon, a reformer early in the 6th century, who set up laws that could be written and revised, rather than just passed down through tradition. A rebellion in 510 B.C.E. put **Cleisthenes**, an aristocrat, in control, but the instability of the times encouraged him to experiment with democracy.



MARKER EVENT: THE PHOENICIAN ALPHABET

The Phoenicians originated along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and since they were unable to expand because of surrounding mountains and desert, they took to the sea to widen their horizons. They were the most significant Mediterranean traders and seafarers until they roused the Greeks in the 600s B.C.E. Phoenicia was eventually absorbed by the Assyrian Empire, but its legacy lived on in a whole series of colonies established in the western Mediterranean.

The Phoenicians are best known for their use of a **phonetic alphabet**, a system of 22 written marks ("letters") that each corresponded to a sound in the spoken language. Their alphabet was much simpler than any other written language of its day, and was much easier to learn and use for trading. The Greeks built on the Phoenician alphabet by adding signs for vowels, which the original system did not have. This alphabet – with a change in letter formats – became the basis for the development of many modern languages, so the Phoenicians certainly made their "mark" on history.



HISTORICAL EVIDENCE: HOMER'S *ILLIAD* AND *ODYSSEY*

Epic poetry may be an important source of information about societies from the distant past, as is illustrated by Mesopotamia's *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Epic poetry, in the form of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, also provides us with much of our knowledge of the early Greek period. No one knows whether or not Homer was an actual person, but both poems were probably written down during the 8th century B.C.E., more than 400 years after the events actually occurred.

The *Iliad* tells the story of the Greek war against Troy (about 1200 B.C.E.) from the Greek point of view. The *Odyssey* recounts the adventures of a Greek hero, Odysseus, as he returned home after the Trojan war was over. Both stories illuminate Greek attitudes toward their "wine dark sea," and depict their heroes as the great mariners that they were.

At the heart of Athenian democracy was the "town meeting" of all free males, who were called together to make decisions affecting the future of the polis. All could speak freely, and citizens often tried to sway others to their opinions, and the collective vote determined political actions. Also present was the Council of 500, citizens chosen by lot for one-year terms who were responsible for making and implementing policy under the supervision of the town meeting. Since Athens was at its height of political power during the 5th century B.C.E., it is probable that other city-states also practiced democracy as well. It is notable that these democracies consisted of only free males, so women and slaves had no political power.

Early Sparta

Before the 7th century B.C.E. the two city-states of Sparta and Athens probably were similar in many ways, but major rebellions in and around Sparta apparently influenced a highly militaristic society to develop there. In the 700s the Spartans had defeated a neighboring city-state, Messenia, and had taken their

people as servants, called **helots**. Although they were not slaves, they could not leave the land, and their role in society was to provide agricultural labor. During the 600s the Messenians rebelled over and over again, encouraging the Spartans to emphasize military control. The rebellions were put down, and the helots met the society's economic needs, while Spartan men were warriors. The Spartans were self-disciplined and rigidly obedient, and put a great deal of emphasis on physical fitness.

Economic Characteristics

In their settlements on the western edge of Anatolia, an area the Greeks called Ionia, rivers formed broad and fertile plains near the coast, but no other areas had large rivers. As a result, Greek farmers on the mainland depended entirely on sparse rainfall to water their crops. The soil was poor, and so they could only raise a limited number of crops. They usually planted barley (which was hardier than wheat) on the flat plains, olive trees at the edge of the plain, and grapevines on the lower slopes of the foothills. Sheep and goats were raised in most areas, and cattle and horses in northern Greece. Natural resources included building stones such as marble, and clay for pottery, but very few metal deposits. They traded across the Aegean for timber, gold, iron, copper, tin, and grain to allow them access to basic needs for building a civilization. The significant invention of coins (probably in western Anatolia) facilitated trade because it replaced an inefficient system of weighing gold, silver, or bronze in exchange for goods. Coins were much smaller and easier to store, and also made bookkeeping and storage of wealth more efficient.

In early Greek history, farmers were part-time soldiers who were called up by the government of their city-state for brief periods to meet military needs. Campaigns took place when farmers were available, which meant that military actions were generally not planned during planting and harvesting seasons. These Greek farmer soldiers served as **hoplites**, heavily armored infantrymen who fought in very close contact and cooperation together. Each soldier was protected by a helmet, breastplate, and leg guards, and held a shield that protected half of his body and half of the soldier next to him. The shields were arranged in continuous formation in front of the men, who moved together so no gaps appeared between shields. When two hoplite lines met, the fighting was brutal and short with a clear victor, a convenient fighting style that allowed the survivors to get back to their crops quickly.

Colonies, such as Ionia and those areas settled along the northern Aegean, formed partly because the Greek mainland's limited land space could not support a growing population. Eventually, Greeks formed colonies far away, including Marsalia, now called Marseille, in southern France. This colonization

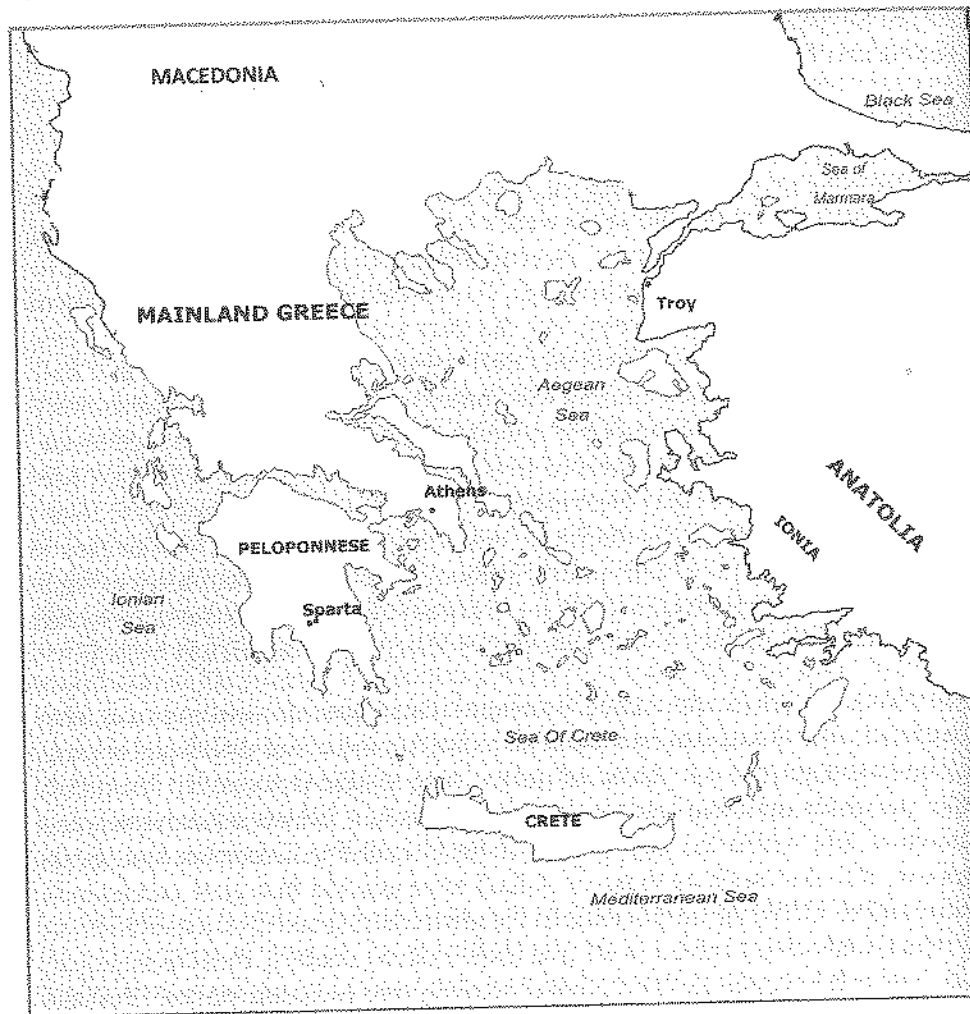
served to spread Greek culture far and wide, as well as create new trading partners across the seas.

Social Distinctions

An important social distinction in most city-states was between citizens and non-citizens. In Sparta, the helots were a large subject-people that outnumbered citizens by perhaps ten to one. Beyond that basic distinction, all Spartan citizens were theoretically equal in status. To maintain this equality, Spartans wore simple clothing and no jewelry, nor did they accumulate possessions. Their houses were equally unadorned, and their lifestyle overall was frugal and austere. Distinctions among citizens were based on athletic prowess and military talent, and the Spartan educational system prepared boys, starting at age seven, to be soldiers. They were removed from their families, placed in military barracks, and trained until they were ready at age twenty to join the military. Spartans also maintained self-sufficiency, believing that trade and the luxuries it brought were harmful to their purity. Although the Spartans lost some of their zest for equality over time, with their aristocracy succumbing to luxuries by the 4th century B.C.E., they still maintained a society based on military values.

In Athens, the basic distinction between citizens and non-citizens was also important, but Athenians had no disdain for luxuries, and developed a clear urban-based aristocracy. Most Athenians were simple farmers that lived outside the urban area, but aristocrats made differences between themselves and common folk within the city. These distinctions led to discontent and, in response, reforms (such as those of Solon) were enacted that gave commoners more rights, including membership in the town meeting and Council of 500. As a result, democracy spread to all free male citizens, making them more equal, but ironically deepening the division between free men and slaves. Perhaps 30% of the total population was enslaved, although by most accounts slaves were generally well treated. Only in the silver mines near Athens were they abused on a regular basis. Most others were personal servants, and some were craftsmen who worked for pay but were not free to seek employment from anyone other than their owners. Slaveholders usually did not own more than one or two slaves, and friendships often formed between slaves and non-slaves. However, slaves had no political rights, nor could they serve in the military.

In regard to gender relations, Sparta and Athens provide an interesting contrast. Spartan women were free and equal with men, and they were encouraged to be as physically fit as the men, especially so they could have strong, healthy babies. Wives did not live with their husbands (who were away at war), so Sparta in many ways was run by women, who were left at home to take care of everything else except fighting. In Athens, gender inequality was much more clearly defined.



Ancient Greece. Geographically, the Greeks settled all around the Aegean Sea, establishing colonies in Ionia, a region in Anatolia. Travel by land was difficult because of mountainous terrain and long distances to get around bodies of water, so the fastest and cheapest way to travel was by water.

Respectable Athenian women were confined to the home and only ventured outside under the guardianship of slaves and servants. One or two rooms of a home were reserved for women, always located away from the street. Rural women probably had more freedom of movement because of their many farm chores. However, no Athenian women had political rights, nor could they own property or businesses. Women were citizens, since it was important that citizenship be passed down to their children, particularly the males. Besides respectable women, others were prostitutes who did not follow the same rules and had even lower status.

Cultural Characteristics

Like most other ancient people, Greeks were polytheistic. The main gods were Zeus and his wife Hera; Poseidon, god of the seas; Athena, goddess of wisdom and war; and Apollo, god of the sun. Greek gods, however, were not omnipotent, and they were quite capable of deceit, playfulness, jealousy, and anger. Neither did the Greeks have a priestly class, although priests served as informal leaders of religious services. Most educated Athenians did not take their gods very seriously, nor did they believe that the gods controlled human destiny. The Greek emphasis on **secularism**, or affairs of this world, led them to seek answers to the dilemmas of human existence in philosophy, in much the same way that the ancient Chinese embraced Confucianism.

The Greek word *philosophy* means “love of wisdom.” The early philosophers were mainly interested in investigating the physical world. They did not believe that the gods caused natural phenomena. Instead, they invented **natural law**, or forces in nature that cause phenomena to occur. **Socrates** (470-399 B.C.E.) was the first philosopher to focus on ethical questions and truth-seeking regarding human nature, understandings, and relationships. He particularly emphasized the rational in human nature, or the ability of individuals to reason for themselves. We know about Socrates through the writings of his student, **Plato**, who wrote about his mentor’s arrest, conviction, and forced suicide for “poisoning” the minds of Athens’ youth. In many ways, the trial of Socrates represents the clash between traditional religious values and the new emphasis on human capabilities, particularly independent thinking. **Aristotle** was Plato’s student who was interested in practically every field of human endeavor, including the natural and social sciences.

The Greeks also developed at least three major art forms:

- 1) **Drama** – This Greek invention arose in the 600s, probably in Athens, as a presentation of myths about the gods and their interventions in human affairs.
- 2) **Lyric poetry** – This style of poetry has the form and musical quality of a song that often expresses personal feelings. Aristotle contrasted lyric poetry to drama and epic poetry, whose intentions are to tell a story.
- 3) **“Classical” architecture** – Greek temples, including the Parthenon atop the **Acropolis** (hill) in Athens, were widely copied by the Romans, and still provide basic building principles for modern architecture.

Greek sculpture reflected a strong belief in the worth of the individual, and reveled in human capabilities, both physically and intellectually. The bodies



EVIDENCE: PLATO ON THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

Almost everything that we know about Socrates comes from his student, Plato, who could hardly have been objective about the conviction and death of his teacher. However, Socrates's ruminations about the philosophical nature of death reinforces our knowledge of the Greeks' strong belief in human rationality. Notice, though, that Socrates makes a bow to religion in the end.

"And if we reflect in another way we shall see that we may well hope that death is a good thing. For the state of death is one of two things: either the dead man wholly ceases to be and loses all sensation; or, according to the common belief, it is a change and a migration of the soul unto another place. And if death is the absence of all sensation, like the sleep of one whose slumbers are unbroken by any dreams, it will be a wonderful gain... But if death is a journey to another place...that all who have died dwell there, what good could be greater than this, my judges?"

"...But now the time has come, and we must go hence: I to die, and you to live. Whether life or death is better is known to God, and to God only."

Reference: F. J. Church, trans. The Trial and Death of Socrates, 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 1886, pp 76-77 (slightly modified).

depicted in the sculpture influenced later concepts of beauty and perfection, and their facial expressions were individualized. Greek ceramics were in great demand throughout the Mediterranean world, and craftsmen also worked in metal, leather, and wood. The overall achievement of the Greeks during their "Classical Age" (c. 500-300 B.C.E.) is termed **Hellenic culture**, based on the Greek name for their homeland, *Hellas*.

THE RISE OF PERSIA

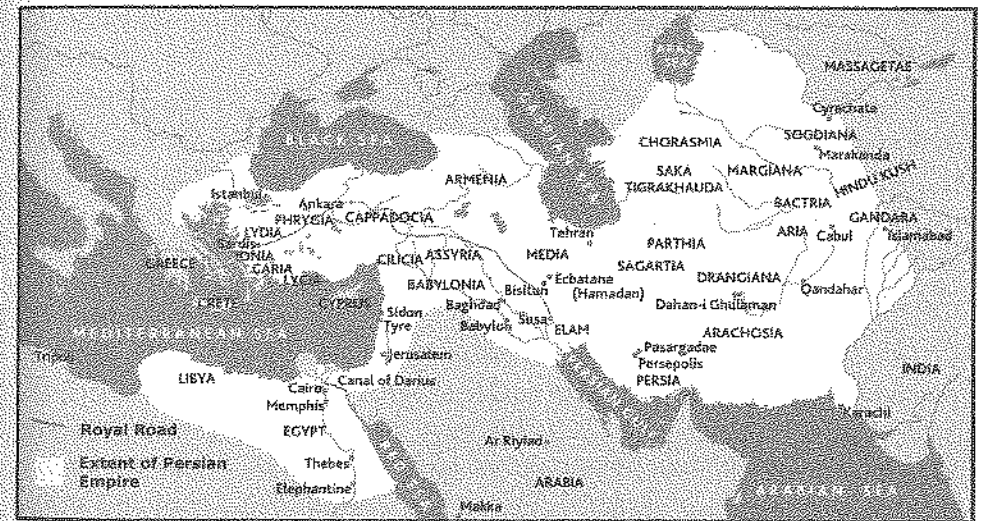
Ancient Persia rose in the area that is now Iran, mostly a high, dry plateau surrounded by mountains to the north, east, and west, and by the Indian Ocean to the south. Its location was in between the population centers of the Indian subcontinent and southwest Asia, so traders had crossed the area for many years before its people were organized under the first Persian warrior-king, **Cyrus the**

Great. He overcame other rulers, such as the king of Medes, to extend his territory from the edge of India to the Mediterranean Sea. The empire continued to expand under his successors, and reached its maximum extent under Darius I, extending into Egypt, and an area north of Greece called Macedonia.

The success of the empire was due partly to superior military leadership and organization, but Cyrus also should be credited with the political system that he left in place after he conquered various territories. He allowed his subjects to retain their own customs and laws under the supervision of his Persian representatives, the **satraps**. These governors were responsible for collecting tribute (such as precious metals), providing soldiers, and keeping order. The satraps had miniature courts that mimicked that of the Persian king ("The Great King, King of Kings, King in Persia, King of countries") in Persepolis, and their positions tended to become hereditary. Persians intermarried with locals, and strong ties between Persepolis and the provincial courts were possible. Darius I also established a law code based on earlier Mesopotamian codes that governed the empire.

The Greeks v. the Persians

Most of what we know about the Persians comes to us from the Greeks, who faced them in battle throughout the early 5th century B.C.E., so their accounts are hardly objective. The wars occurred because both civilizations were ex-



Ancient Persia. This empire was larger than any other that preceded it, reaching its maximum extent during the rule of Darius I (522-486 B.C.E.). The king kept in touch with his subjects and moved his armies along the **Royal Road** that stretched from the heart of the empire to its outlying provinces. Notice how much larger it is than its arch rival, Ancient Greece.

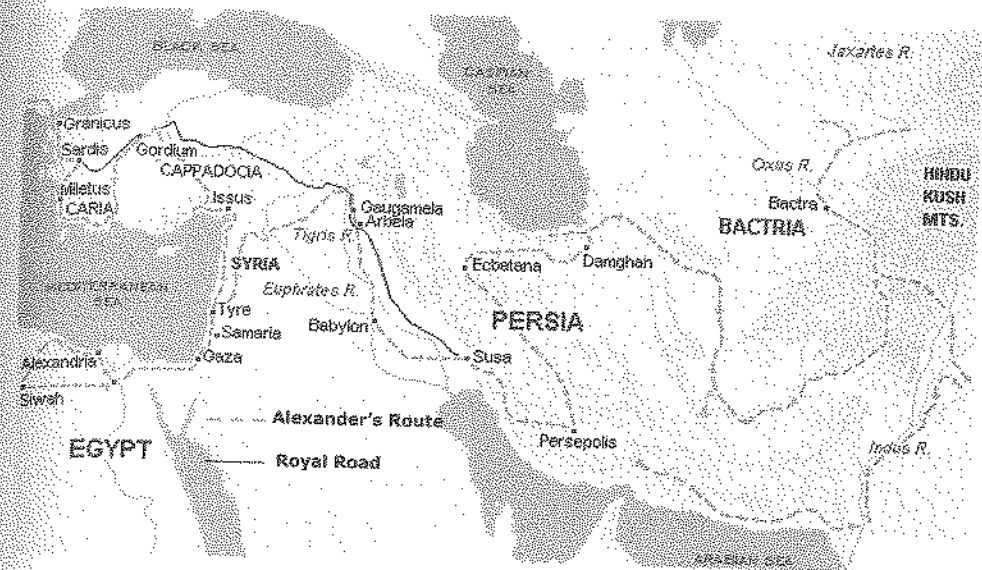
panding in Anatolia, and their clash was probably inevitable. The wars were sparked by rebellions in Ionia, an area governed by the Persians but inhabited by people with Greek backgrounds and sympathies. When Darius I sent his troops to put down the rebellion, Athens went to aid fellow Greeks in Ionia. In order to punish the impudence, Darius then sent an army to mainland Greece, where the Greeks defeated the Persians at the legendary battle of **Marathon** in 490 B.C.E. A second series of battles began under Darius's successor, **Xerxes**, who was defeated even more decisively at the battle of Thermopylae in 480 and again at Platea in 479. Some historians see this clash between Athens and Persia as the trigger event that set "West" (Greece) v. "East" (Persia) as a defining concept for modern day international politics. Following this line of thinking, today's clashes in the Middle East are framed in the mind set that "West" and "East" have been natural enemies since these ancient days.

The Persian Wars were significant not only for sparking the decline of Persian power, but for the boost they gave to Athens as the premier city-state in Greece. They formed an alliance with other city-states called the **Delian League**, and under the leadership of **Pericles**, they offended the Spartans by attacking Sparta's ally, Corinth. What followed was the highly destructive **Peloponnesian War** (431-404 B.C.E.) between Athens and Sparta. Although Sparta eventually won, the war set off a series of quarrels among the city-states, fueled by their long-established independence and individuality. All were weakened in the end, leaving them vulnerable to conquest by a new power to the north, Macedonia.

The Hellenistic Synthesis

Until the 4th century B.C.E., the kingdom of Macedon was a sleepy frontier state in the northern part of the Greek mainland. Some Macedonians were farmers, others were pastoral nomads who migrated seasonally between the mountains and valleys, and others made a living trading with Greek city-states. King Philip II (359-336 B.C.E.) transformed Macedonia by building a powerful military of farmer infantrymen and aristocratic cavalry. After he consolidated his power by subduing local Macedonian clan-based leaders, he turned his attention to the quarreling Greek city-states to the south. Philip was able to conquer the poleis one by one, since they were unable to agree with one another enough to form an alliance against him. In a little more than ten years, he brought all of Greece under his control. He was poised to invade Persia when he was assassinated in 336 B.C.E., so that task fell to his 20-year-old son, known in history as **Alexander the Great**.

In his short career (13 years), Alexander conquered most of the world known to the Greeks, and his feats became legendary. He inherited a well-equipped, disciplined army from his father, and his ambition drove them to conquer one



Alexander's Path of Conquest. After his father's death, Alexander marched his army into Anatolia, then south through the lands on the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, to Egypt, across the great Persian Empire all the way to the Indus River, and back to Babylon where he died in 323 B.C.E. His route reflects some geographic curiosity as well as a desire to conquer. For example, he was curious to know whether the Caspian Sea was connected to a great northern sea, as the Greeks had speculated. Alexander decided that it was not, since he found no salt-water marine life on the southern end of the sea.

area after the other, starting with Anatolia, and then Egypt, now a mere regional state, where he was greeted as pharaoh. Persia was weaker than it had been, and he dared to press his troops on till they had defeated the mighty old empire. Alexander's army made its way all the way to the Indus River Valley, where the troops refused to go any farther. He planned to merge Greek and Asian institutions under his control, naming many cities *Alexandria* in his honor, and forcing his men to marry Asian women to forge the new, blended civilization. Alexander himself married multiple daughters of conquered princes. His dream of consolidating the empire was cut short by his untimely death of a fever at the age of 33 in Babylon. Without his leadership, the empire fell apart. Although his political ambitions failed, his conquests had a huge cultural impact on the course of world history.

Historians call the epoch following the conquests of Alexander the **Hellenistic Age** (323-30 B.C.E.) because of the spreading of Greek culture to northeastern Africa and western Asia. After Alexander's death, his empire was divided among his generals into three large states: Antigonos took Greece and Macedonia; Ptolemy took Egypt; and Seleucus took the bulk of the old Persian Empire. Many Greeks left their overcrowded homeland to settle in the new lands, and they took their culture with them, where it blended in a **Hellenistic synthesis**

with many other cultures, creating cosmopolitan societies connected by trade and Greek culture. Recent archaeological expeditions have unearthed Greek shrines and inscriptions in far away Bactria and India. In the urban centers many individuals spoke Greek, dressed in Greek fashions, and adopted Greek customs. Without Alexander's conquests, little Greece probably would have remained just that. Instead, its beliefs, values, and material culture spread, so that its legacy has reverberated through the ages to make it one of the most influential civilizations in all of world history.

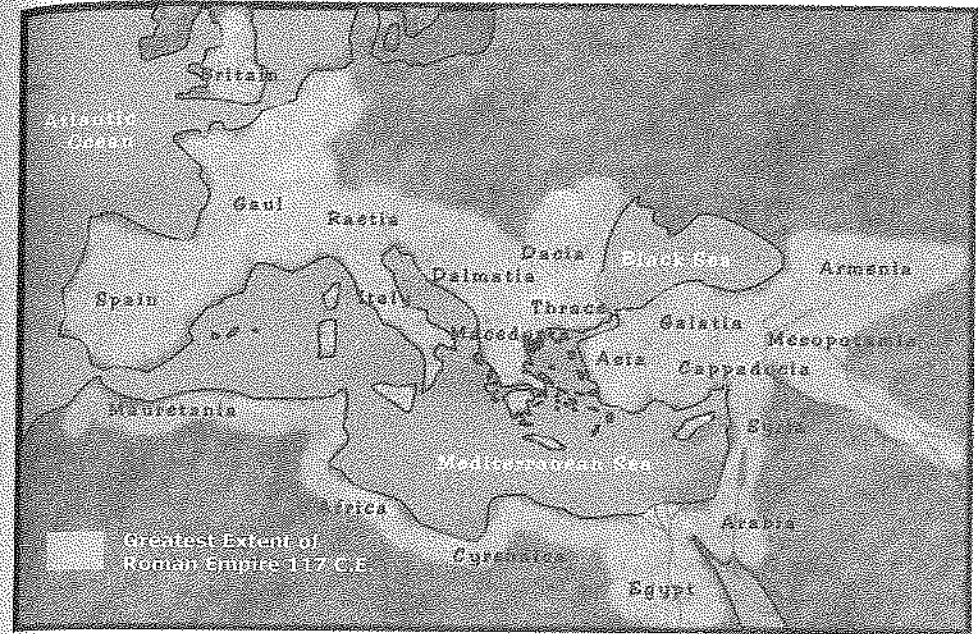
MEDITERRANEAN CIVILIZATIONS: ROME

While Greece and then Alexander held the focus of civilization around the Mediterranean Sea, a new city-state was rising to the west on the Italian peninsula. Rome was heavily influenced by the Greeks but developed its own unique characteristics, including the Latin language. Roman influence spread gradually, first on the peninsula, and eventually to an area that stretched from northern Europe to southwest Asia to northern Africa. Roman history went through many phases, encompassing more than 2000 years from start to finish, and dominating the area for more than 700 years. Rome brought many diverse people together under its rule, and came into contact with nomadic peoples who eventually contributed to its downfall.

Political Development

The **Etruscans** came into Italy about 800 B.C.E., where they established a series of small city-states that ruled the native people. Exactly where they came from isn't known because they left only a small amount of writing that has never been deciphered. A federation (central government with smaller subunits) headed by Etruscan kings who managed local leaders existed from about 750 to 509 B.C.E. One of its subject communities was Rome, founded according to legend by twin brothers Romulus and Remus. In 509 B.C.E. Rome gained its independence from Etruscan rule, and established itself as a **republic**, or a state without a monarch (*res publica*). The republic lasted until the rule of the first emperor, Augustus (31 B.C.E. -14 C.E.), when it became an empire that fell in 476 C.E., although the eastern part of the empire existed until 1453 C.E.

Under the republican form of government, Rome was not a democracy, even though it was not ruled by a monarch. Instead the most important ruling body was a **Senate** composed of **patricians**, or aristocrats who passed their positions down to their sons. The **plebeians**, commoners who made up about 90% of the population, were represented by an elected General Assembly. Even though this political structure looks democratic on the face of it, the General



The Roman Empire. Rome began as a small city-state on the Italian peninsula during the 8th century B.C.E., and reached its greatest extent during the 2nd century C.E., when it stretched from Britain to Armenia to Egypt, and completely dominated the Mediterranean Sea.

Assembly had little power, and the patricians of the Senate controlled political decisions. The executive was headed by two **consuls**, elected from among the members of the Senate for one-year terms that were not to be repeated. Each consul had veto power over the other, and because they were usually military generals, they were often fiercely competitive and keen to challenge each other's power. These generals came to have great sway over the republic, especially after the Senate discontinued the practice of replacing the consuls every year. The plebeians protested their lack of political power, and managed to get the government to allow them representatives called **tribunes**, who at first were elected by the people, but eventually came to be controlled by the Senate by the mid-1st century B.C.E.

The Senate's power was challenged by **Julius Caesar**, a charismatic patrician general with great sway over his soldiers, and a **Triumvirate** (rule of three) was formed: Caesar, Crassus (for his wealth), and Pompey, a rival general to Caesar. Caesar eventually declared himself dictator, only to be assassinated by senators on the Ides of March (March 15), 44 B.C.E. His nephew Octavian battled a general, Mark Antony, for control of Rome. Octavian defeated Antony in the **Battle of Actium** in 31 B.C.E. and the Senate declared him **Augustus** ("revered one") Caesar, establishing the Roman Empire.



PERSPECTIVES: WHO WAS CLEOPATRA?

How does Queen Cleopatra fit into the story of the world? Cleopatra VII was the last queen of Egypt, a direct descendant of Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy, who took control of Egypt after Alexander's death.

Cleopatra was a Greek by descent, language, and culture, and she was supposedly the first member of her family in their 300-year reign to have learned the Egyptian language.

Cleopatra played a role in the history of Ancient Rome through her maneuverings to form alliances with powerful Romans. She bore Julius Caesar's child, whom she wished to have named as his father's heir. After Julius Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C.E., she sided with Mark Antony in his struggle against Octavian for control of Rome. She married Mark Antony and had several children with him, but of course, Octavian defeated Antony, and Cleopatra ended up on the wrong side of history. Quite famously, she committed suicide by convincing an asp (a snake) to bite her, ending her ambitions forever. Our main source for the details of her death is the Roman scholar Plutarch, who wrote them down about 130 years after the event occurred.

Augustus Caesar did not change the old political structures of the Roman Republic. He retained the title of "consul," but in effect became consul for life. The Senate remained intact, and for the remainder of the empire's history, the Senate technically named the new emperor. In reality, though, the Senate had no real power because they gratefully gave it to Augustus for saving Rome from destruction. Augustus Caesar was a clever politician and an effective ruler, always catering to the Senate, while he made all real policy decisions. He preferred to be called **princeps** ("first citizen"), but in his forty-year rule, he overhauled the military, the economy, and the government, putting in place a system that would last for another 250 years without substantial changes.

One of the many accomplishments of Augustus was a new civil service that managed the large empire with considerable efficiency and honesty. The officials were **equites**, a class of Italian merchants and landowners who helped run the Roman Empire. The provinces were ruled by governors appointed in Rome but allowed a great deal of freedom in local affairs. Augustus studied and

codified Roman Law, adding onto the code from the days of the republic – the **Law of the Twelve Tables**. He also set up a network of officials to hear cases and administer the law. A new class of legal experts rose, whose opinions and interpretations often were given the force of law. His reforms to the military included reducing its unwieldy size, so that all that remained were professional soldiers. The army also became an engineering force to build roads and public works all over the provinces. The army was made up of twenty-eight legions, each with about 6000 infantrymen supported by cavalry. The navy was reorganized effectively to combat pirates, who had been disruptive to shipping on the Mediterranean Sea and the rivers.

These reforms ushered in the **Pax Romana**, or the "Roman peace," that lasted until the late 2nd century C.E. The empire reached its largest extent during that era, and settled into a long period of peace and prosperity in which Roman strength was generally unchallenged. After that, Rome settled into a decline that eventually ended in its conquest in 476 C.E. One continuing problem was the uncertainty concerning the emperor's successor. Although heredity was important, the emperor had the right to name a non-relative to replace him, a situation that often led to intrigue, competition, and conflict.

Economic Development and Social Distinctions

The early Roman economy resembled that of Greece about three centuries before. Aristocrats controlled large plots of land that were worked by tenant farmers, but there were many independent farmers who also served in the military. The elite were called patricians, and the commoners were known as plebeians. The basic unit of Roman society was a multi-generational family with domestic slaves. The oldest living male, the "paterfamilias," had complete authority over his family, and he was tied to other family heads through **patron-client** relationships. Patrons were men of wealth who clients turned to for help and protection. A senator had many clients who depended on his political power, and in return they gave him military service, labor, and political support. The Roman Forum was the center of business for these networks, and senators with large throngs around them held high prestige. Some of the senators' more prosperous clients might in turn be patrons of poorer men, so Rome's citizenry were tied to one another in a web of inequality. Tensions existed between the classes as long as the republic lasted, as evidenced by the patricians' concession to allow plebeians political representation through tribunes.

Women in the upper classes were generally treated like children under the strict scrutiny of the men of their family. During a woman's life cycle, first her father supervised her, then her husband, and finally her son. However, compared to women in Ancient Greece, Roman women probably had more freedom, with

some economic rights. By the first century B.C.E., many women supervised family businesses and the financial affairs of wealthy estates. Roman literature describes women who appeared to be well educated and vocal.

As the Roman Republic expanded on the Italian peninsula, Romans began to play a large role in the Mediterranean Sea trade. Their economic and political power increased tremendously after their victory in the **Punic Wars** fought with Carthage between 264 and 146 B.C.E. Carthage, a former Phoenician colony, located on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, controlled the western Mediterranean before its defeat. The Romans burned the city of Carthage to the ground, salted the earth to keep anything from growing again, and took control of the lands, rich in grain, oil, wine, and precious metals. These resources fed the expansion that continued after the founding of the empire by Augustus Caesar.

With expansion came the issue of how to incorporate conquered people into the republic. Some gained Roman citizenship, wealth, and respect through military accomplishments, but others were taken as slaves. Although slaves existed in most ancient societies, Rome was one of the few in which slave labor was indispensable. Some worked in households or craft production, but gangs of slaves were used in mining and on the great agricultural estates. Slaves worked longer and harder than hired laborers, and their numbers grew to probably about two million people by the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.E.

During the Pax Romana from 31 B.C.E. until 180 C.E., the empire prospered. Its borders stabilized, giving economic relief to the strains of constant expansion. Trade thrived, with transport across land and sea protected by the Roman political and military structures. Economic problems returned in the **3rd century crisis** (C.E.), after a series of weak emperors, and under pressure from a growing number of raids by nomadic people across Roman borders.

Roman Culture

Although the Romans borrowed heavily from the Greeks in philosophy, science, and the arts, they had their share of independent inventions as well. Most of their contributions were in law, bureaucratic administration, finance, and engineering. The size and diversity of the Roman civilization called for a flexible system of laws that combined effective central control with local autonomy. The Roman legal system developed pragmatically as the republic grew, and continued to change during the years of the empire. Some legal inventions include:



CHANGE OVER TIME: ROMAN REPUBLIC TO EMPIRE

Why did the Roman Republic fail, and why was it replaced with an empire? The Republic first emerged in an ethnically homogeneous city-state controlled by an agricultural aristocracy who came to dominate the Senate. As Rome expanded, many diverse people came under its control, largely through conquests by a military force that relied on citizen-farmers to fight its battles. Military service required men to be away from their farms for long periods of time, and when they returned, often their land had been seized by large landowners or given as a reward to military officers. With no place to go, poor farmers poured into urban areas, and without enough work, demanded reform. Conservative aristocrats refused to change traditions, others pushed for change, and charismatic military leaders attracted the support of the poor.

Julius Caesar appeared in the midst of this social and economic crisis to claim the power to restore law and order, and even though he did not succeed, his nephew Octavian did, and as Augustus Caesar, he eased Rome through the transition from troubled republic to a stabilized empire.

- 1) The concept of precedent, or court decisions that help to determine how courts rule in subsequent cases
- 2) The belief that equity among all citizens should be the goal of the legal system
- 3) Interpretation of the law, or the responsibility of judges to decide what a law means and how it should be applied
- 4) Natural law, an idea that would be a foundation block for later European and North American societies; the belief that all human beings have basic rights in nature that cannot be abridged

Roman Arts, Literature, and Religion

Greek art and literature shaped the everyday lives of the Roman elite so deeply that their influence sparked a debate in the early days of the empire about what Roman values actually were. Cultural diffusion from Greece was facilitated by a large number of Greek servants who worked for wealthy Romans. Most were well educated and often served as tutors for Roman children. Imitation of Greek culture also was promoted by the similarity between the religions of the two civilizations, since both had essentially the same gods and goddesses with different names.



Roman Architecture. This magnificent arch is among the ruins left by the Romans in Vaison-la-Romaines in southern France. The Romans were unsurpassed in their ability to construct elaborate arches, which allowed buildings to carry great structural weight. In this example, the arch rests on columns clearly influenced by Greek architecture.

Rome's literary contributions are not as numerous as those of Greece, partly because the Greeks were generally better read. However, the Roman poet **Virgil** linked great epic poetry like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to Roman history in his *Aeneid*, which became the official version of the founding of Rome. Roman literary works also spread its language – Latin – far and wide, so that poetry written by Ovid and history written by Livy could be read in many areas of the world long after the Roman Empire was gone. Romans valued oratory skills

and ethical philosophy, although they tended to value the practical more than the philosophical. This preference is reflected in the fact that they did little beyond copying Greek sculpture, and yet they made significant advances in architecture that served a particular purpose. Roman roads were built for marching armies and facilitating trade, and great aqueducts were built to carry water to the urban areas. Roman genius was unmatched when the task was to solve a practical problem.

The Decline of Rome

Reasons for the decline of Rome are numerous, and in most ways it was a slow process. A common problem of all the large empires was defense of a very long border, far from the capital city. This difficulty was sensed by Germanic tribes in the north, and their constant attacks meant that defense costs went up significantly. Unfortunately these attacks increased during the 3rd century C.E.



COMPARISON: GREEK AND ROMAN RELIGION

Like the Ancient Greeks, Romans did not look to their gods for ethical guidance. Neither civilization believed (as did Gilgamesh in early Mesopotamia) that gods could grant humans immortality. Both Greeks and Romans thought of an afterlife as an open question, as reflected in Socrates's ruminations as he contemplated his own death. Most Greeks and Romans believed that even if there was an afterlife, the gods would have nothing to do with what happened to humans after they died. The Romans, more than the Greeks, believed in stoicism, or the idea that service to the state and community was the highest calling.

Greek and Roman gods had different names, although they were essentially the same:

Greek Name	Roman Name
Zeus	Jupiter
Poseidon	Neptune
Aphrodite	Venus
Athena	Minerva
Ares	Mars

during a time when Rome had a string of incompetent, often corrupt emperors. Although the strong emperor **Diocletian** stopped the slide temporarily, the problems continued. As in the waning days of the republic, the empire by the 3rd century C.E. was rife with class struggles over land, since large estates that used slave labor had taken up most free land. Contact through easy trade and transportation had its downside as well, in the form of devastating epidemics that followed the trade routes, killing large numbers of people as they spread.

In the 4th century C.E. the Roman Emperor **Constantine** established a second capital city in the east that he named "Constantinople" in order to have better connections in that part of the empire and to escape the threatening attacks of Rome by nomads. This move had the effect of gradually sacrificing the western provinces to the Germanic groups, including the Franks, Saxons, Angles, Vandals, Visigoths, and Ostrogoths. By the early 5th century, Rome itself was sacked by the Visigoths, and the last Roman emperor was deposed in 476 C.E.

QIN AND HAN CHINA

At the same time that Rome was increasing its influence around the Mediterranean Sea, China was recovering from the **Warring States Period** at the end of the Zhou Dynasty. The Warring States Period was a time of political turmoil, with regional warlords constantly challenging the authority of the Zhou. However, it was also a period that prompted much debate about how to solve China's many problems, resulting in the origins of three influential belief systems:

- 1) **Legalism** – Legalist thinkers believed that humans were naturally evil and would only obey authority through force. They advocated strict laws, harsh punishments, and sacrifice of personal freedom for the good of the state.
- 2) **Daoism** – A philosopher named **Laozi**, who reputedly lived during the 6th century B.C.E., reacted to the constant warfare by encouraging people to avoid useless struggles by following the **Dao**, or the "path." He shunned political and military ambitions as lacking morality and meaning, and guided his followers toward nature for comfort and understanding. Daoism emphasizes acceptance and individual retreat from society.
- 3) **Confucianism** – The philosopher Confucius emphasized the importance of hierarchical, harmonious relationships in the creation of an orderly society. Everyone has a place in society, from the ruler to his lowliest subject, and all have responsibilities in their relationships with others. Confucius believed that the family was the foundation of society that served as a model for benevolence, duty, and courtesy.

The Qin Dynasty

Legalism met an enthusiastic response from the Qin leaders, who used the philosophy of harsh, strict rule to dominate their neighbors in western China. The Qin army was well organized and equipped with the best available iron weapons, and it defeated one state after the other, until finally it controlled China. Since the Qin government had much stronger centralized authority than the previous dynasties had, the king declared himself "The First Emperor," or **Shi Huangdi**, who ruled from 221-210 B.C.E. The dynasty only survived for a few years after his death, but its brevity does not reduce its significance in the development of the Chinese state.

Shi Huangdi ruled his empire through a centralized bureaucracy from his capital near the modern city of Xi'an. The tenets of legalism served him well as he stripped the nobility of power and divided China into administrative provinces governed by administrators that served at his pleasure. He built roads to facilitate communications and move his armies. He also forced his subjects to contribute their labor to build public works, including the first fortifications of the **Great Wall** of China. Confucians widely criticized the harsh rule of the emperor, who responded by sentencing them to death. Quite famously, he demanded the burning of all books of philosophy, ethics, history, and literature, and only allowed books of practical use (such as medicine and agriculture) to be spared.

Despite his harshness, Shi Huangdi strengthened China in many ways. He standardized laws and currencies, so that they were the same across all regional states. An important step in the unification of China was his mandate that the Shang version of Chinese script be used all over the empire. The regions continued to speak their own languages, but the common script enabled people across China to communicate with one another through writing.

Although Shi Huangdi today is seen as one of the greatest figures in Chinese history, his strict rule made him quite unpopular. Shortly after his death, revolts began, resulting in the overthrow of the dynasty in 207 B.C.E., when state buildings were destroyed and government officials killed, paving the way for the Han Dynasty.

The Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.)

Instead of falling into years of chaos, as had happened during the Warring States Period at the end of the Zhou Dynasty, China was brought under control quickly by Liu Bang, who was not a particularly talented military commander, but was a strong ruler, partly because he picked able bureaucrats who organized the new dynasty efficiently.