

# PERIOD 2: Organization and Reorganization of Human Societies, c. 600 B.C.E. to c. 600 C.E.

**Chapter 3** Classical Civilizations in Greece and Persia

**Chapter 4** The Roman World

**Chapter 5** Classical Civilizations in India and China

**Chapter 6** Early American Civilizations

## Period Overview

The 1,200 years between 600 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. saw the rise of great empires that became the core foundations of later civilizations in much of the world. The Roman and Byzantine and Persian in western Eurasia, the Maurya and Gupta in South Asia, the Qin and Han in East Asia, the Maya in Mesoamerica, and the Moche in the Andes provided security for merchants and several built roads so trade flourished, linking people across regions. Goods and ideas flowed along land routes, such as the Silk Roads crossing Eurasia and the Trans-Saharan routes in Africa, and across sea routes in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Trade fostered the growth of great cities, such as Rome and Alexandria on the Mediterranean, Chang'an in China, and Teotihuacan in Mesoamerica.

However, the strength of these empires brought challenges. Empires grew so large that governing distant lands became difficult and defending long borders became expensive. Trade provided pathways for devastating diseases to move from one region to another. Population growth increased demand for food, and the resulting expansion of agricultural land caused soil erosion and deforestation. Prosperity produced intense concentrations of wealth. Each great empire eventually declined, suffering from decentralization of political power, reductions in trade, and lower urban populations.

No other period in history had such influential developments in belief systems. Judaism and Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire. In India, the evolution of the Vedic beliefs that would eventually form Hinduism also included the development of a caste system. In China, three systems of thought became widespread and continue to this day: Buddhism, with its emphasis on understanding human suffering; Confucianism, with its emphasis on social harmony and rituals; and Daoism, with its emphasis on the interplay between humans and nature. In Greece, philosophers emphasized logic and observation rather than faith as ways to understand the world.

## Key Concepts

### 2.1 The Development and Codification of Religious and Cultural Traditions

- I. Codifications and further developments of existing religious traditions provided a bond among the people and an ethical code to live by.
- II. New belief systems and cultural traditions emerged and spread, often asserting universal truths.
- III. Belief systems affected gender roles. Buddhism and Christianity encouraged monastic life and Confucianism emphasized filial piety.
- IV. Other religious and cultural traditions continued parallel to the codified, written belief systems in core civilizations.
- V. Artistic expressions, including literature and drama, architecture, and sculpture, show distinctive cultural developments.

### 2.2 The Development of States and Empires

- I. The number and size of key states and empires grew dramatically by imposing political unity on areas where previously there had been competing states.
- II. Empires and states developed new techniques of imperial administration based, in part, on the success of earlier political forms.
- III. Unique social and economic dimensions developed in imperial societies in Afro-Eurasia and the Americas.
- IV. The Roman, Han, Persian, Mauryan, and Gupta empires created political, cultural, and administrative difficulties that they could not manage, which eventually led to their decline, collapse, and transformation into successor empires or states.

### 2.3 Emergence of Transregional Networks of Communication and Exchange

- I. Land and water routes became the basis for transregional trade, communication, and exchange networks in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- II. New technologies facilitated long-distance communication and exchange.
- III. Alongside the trade in goods, the exchange of people, technology, religious and cultural beliefs, food crops, domesticated animals, and disease pathogens developed across far-flung networks of communication and exchange.

Source: AP World History Course and Exam Description

## Classical Civilizations in Greece and Persia

The purpose of [my research] is to prevent the traces of human events from being erased by time, and to preserve the fame of the important and remarkable achievements produced by both Greeks and non-Greeks. . . .

—Herodotus, *The Histories*, Trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (New York: Penguin Group, 1972)

While Egypt was in its Middle Kingdom, Babylon was rising in Southwest Asia; the Harappans were giving way to the Aryans in India, and the Shang dynasty was on the horizon in China. At the same time a distinctive Greek culture was developing at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The origins of this culture were in the Minoan and Mycenaean kingdoms. Many centuries later, as the Greek historian Herodotus wrote in his *Histories*, Greek culture would flourish in several city-states, giving rise to a Golden Age of innovative ideas in philosophy, literature, and art. After the Golden Age ended, two powerful military leaders emerged: Philip II and then Alexander the Great. Each spread Greek culture as they conquered lands in and around the Mediterranean and Southwest Asia. These areas, influenced by classical Greek culture, became known as the Hellenistic kingdoms.

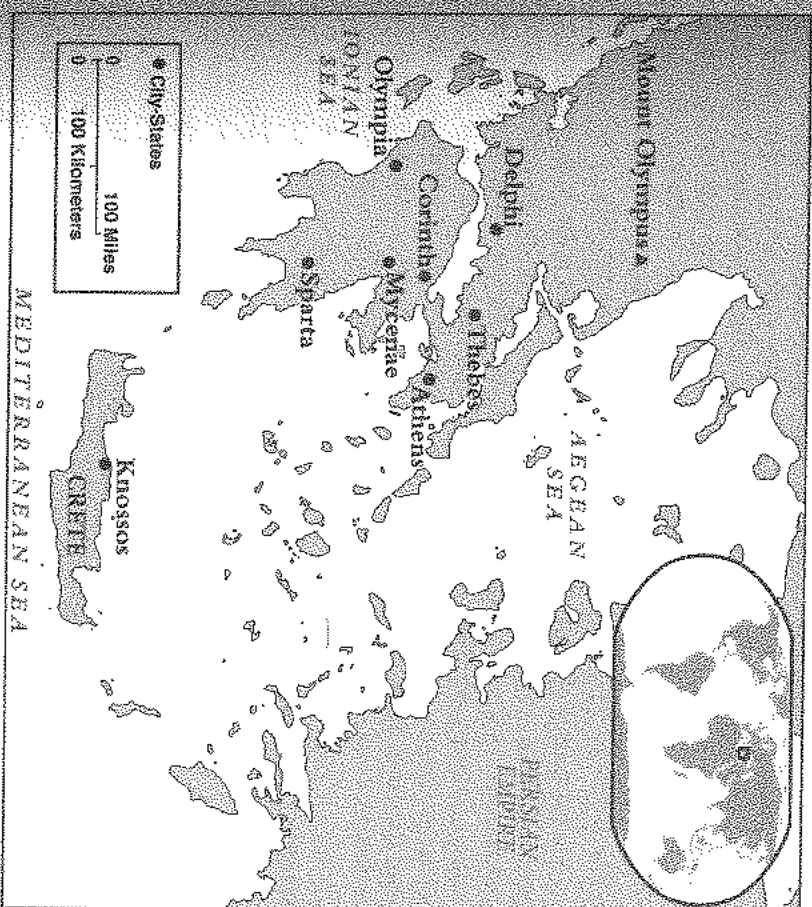
### Early Mediterranean Civilizations

Two cultures that emerged on the islands and along the northern coast of the eastern Mediterranean Sea had long-term impact. They provided a foundation for later developments in Greece.

**Crete** The Minoans lived on an island in the Aegean Sea called Crete. Because they had many harbors but little fertile soil, they relied on trade, and grew rich through trade with Greece, Phoenicia, Egypt, and Asia Minor. They decorated their homes with paintings and other decorations. The Minoans built a beautiful city on Crete called *Knossos*—for a while, the wealthiest city on the Aegean. No writing from the *Minoan civilization* in Crete has been deciphered, but the existence of artifacts all around the Mediterranean testifies to Crete's influence in the period around 2000 B.C.E. The wealth of the Minoans, their skill as builders, and their experience as seafarers gave rise to stories of a legendary King Minos in Knossos and of Daedalus and the maze.

Mycenae The city of *Mycenae*, on the mainland of Greece, was probably never conquered by the Minoans, yet it contained artifacts revealing a number of Minoan cultural influences. In addition, the presence of amber from the north and ivory from Syria are testimony to Mycenae's widespread trade in the area. Both the Minoan and the Mycenaean civilizations declined in what is sometimes called a "dark age," starting around 1100 B.C.E. and lasting until about 750 B.C.E. However, their arts and culture, as exemplified in frescoes, statues, jewelry, and even the presence of indoor plumbing at the *Knossos Palace* complex, continued to spread to the Greek mainland, Southwest Asia and North Africa. This spread of culture would become an ongoing example of continuity, not only in the Mediterranean area and Southwest Asia, but also throughout emerging Europe.

### CRETE, MYCENAE, AND GREEK CITY-STATES



He created the Council of 500, which served as an ongoing government or Athens, and he developed the People's Courts, which ruled on charges of legal violations.

**Women** For women and slaves in Athens, life was hard. They were excluded from government service and from voting. Women could not own any property beyond personal items. They did not receive an education. If women had matters to settle in court, they had to employ a male guardian. Upper-class women always had to be accompanied by a man when they left home. Early marriages and exclusion from most of public life kept women isolated. Women were believed to be intellectually inferior to men and thus incapable of being satisfying relationship partners. (Test Prep: Create a chart comparing the treatment of women in Greece with their treatment in Egypt and China. For Egypt see page 27; for China see page 101.)

### Athenian Philosophy

Perhaps as a result of having seaports and welcoming trade connections with the outside world, new ideas flourished in Athens. The arts, mathematics, and literature created by Athenians formed the basis of academic disciplines still studied in schools worldwide. Two epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, have been recited, read, and studied every since they were presumably composed by a Greek poet named Homer around the ninth century B.C.E.

**Socrates** One influential Greek thinker was *Socrates*. His emphasis on continually asking questions to systematically clarify another person's ideas and to identify the core of them became known as the *Socratic Method*. Socrates was eventually put to death by the Athenian government for questioning the state religion.

**Plato** A student of Socrates, *Plato*, kept his teacher's ideas alive. Plato opened a school called the *Academy*, where he taught students to question the nature of ideas such as good, evil, justice, and beauty. Departing from the oral tradition of philosophy, Plato wrote *dialogues*, teachings presented as discussions between Socrates and his pupils. In the dialogue known as *The Republic*, Plato described an ideal society ruled by a government that rested upon a concept of justice and ethical values. While many Athenians advocated democracy, Plato did not. Instead, in *The Republic*, Plato envisioned a society composed of workers, warriors, and "philosopher kings." This last group would be intelligent and rational enough to make decisions for the good of the whole state.

**Aristotle** One of Plato's students, *Aristotle*, also became a famous Athenian philosopher. Aristotle wrote on a range of topics, from how to organize government to the qualities of good literature. He might be best known for his ideas about ethics. Aristotle believed in avoiding extremes in behavior. For example, moderate courage was a virtue. Too little courage made one a coward; too much made one fool-hardy. Aristotle called this emphasis on moderation the *Golden Mean*.

Aristotle emphasized gaining knowledge through *empiricism*, trusting what one learned from observation and evidence of the senses, rather than emphasizing intuition or religious beliefs. Aristotle also focused on *logic*, the science of the formal principles of reasoning. However, unlike modern scientists, Aristotle and other Greeks did not emphasize experiments. An additional contribution by Aristotle was his work *Poetics*, which for the first time set down definitions of tragedy and comedy in the theater, as well as definitions of epic and lyric poetry. Such systematic writings about philosophy, literature, and the arts constituted a new development in the Mediterranean world. The ideas of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other Greek thinkers provided the foundation for European thought for centuries. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing Greek philosophers with influential thinkers in other cultures. See page 100 for Confucius and page 9 for Zoroaster.)

### Athenian Religion and Culture

Greek religion was based on an influential set of myths. Through these stories, rather than through specific teachings about ethics, most Greeks expressed their ideas about right and wrong behavior and the role of gods in their lives. Books and movies about Zeus, Hercules, Odysseus, and other Greek mythological figures remain popular today. Over time, as contact increased between Greeks and other groups, such as Persians and Egyptians, Greek religion became more *syncretic*, combining ideas from different sources. For example, the deity Serapis combined elements of the Greek Zeus, the Egyptian Osiris, and other deities into one.

Greek religion and literature were closely connected. Attendance at religious functions, of which theater was often a part, was considered a civic duty. Some Greek playwrights, including *Euripides* and *Sophocles*, used the myths of the gods as convenient literary devices for their plays. Although the term "satire" comes from a later Roman form of drama, there were certainly satirical sections in the Greek *comedies*, plays in which a character triumphs over hardship. The most prolific author of comedies was *Aristophanes*, who wrote 40 plays, including *Lysistrata* and *The Birds*.

*Aeschylus* and Euripides wrote *tragedies*, dramas that deal with death, war, justice, and the relationships between gods and ordinary people. For example, *Prometheus Bound* by Aeschylus tells the tale of how Prometheus steals fire from Zeus, gives it to humans, and then suffers eternal punishment. *The Trojan Women* by Euripides describes how Athenians slaughtered people they captured in the Trojan War. Greek tragedies and comedies influenced William Shakespeare of the sixteenth century and continue to influence modern playwrights today.

**Architecture and Art** Religion was also connected to the distinctive Greek architectural style, a style exemplified by the *Parthenon* in Athens. This massive stone building, rectangular but elegant, featured rows of tall columns on all sides and was topped by a slanted roof. In a panel sitting along the top of the columns, artists carved friezes illustrating Greek myths.

**The Olympic Games.** Religion also provided the context for athletic competitions. Unlike modern sports, which emphasize keeping records of who ran the fastest and who jumped the farthest, Greek sports emphasized rituals. For example, before competing, athletes would provide offerings to show their respect for the gods. Beginning around 776 B.C.E., the Greeks held Olympic games every four years. Athletes from all the city-states gathered in one spot, Olympia, to compete in various sports. Wars among the city-states commonly would be suspended for the duration of the games so that athletes and spectators could assemble. Thus, even though there was not a centralized state of Greece, the Olympic Games helped create a common feeling of "Greekness." The games continued for over one thousand years, ending around 400 C.E. The games were restarted in 1896.

## Greek Colonies

Starting around the eighth century B.C.E., the Greek city-states began establishing colonies around the Mediterranean, partly because the Greeks' population growth was outstripping the food supply. Some Greeks moved willingly to the colonies, others less willingly. The reluctant ones drew lots to see who would emigrate.

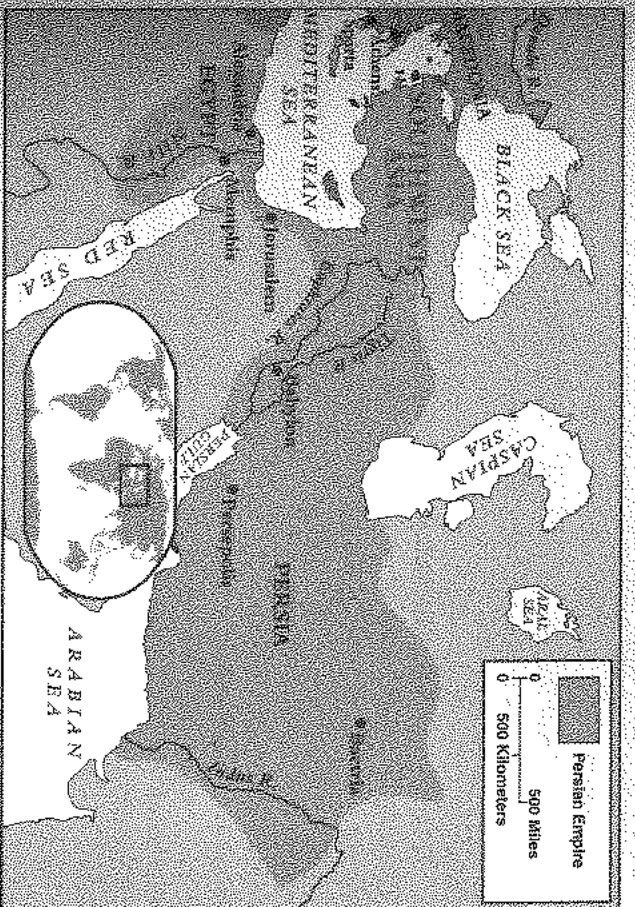
In a typically Greek spirit of independence, the colonies were allowed a large measure of autonomy, but each maintained a shared culture with its home city-state. Some of the largest of these colonies were located on the island of Sicily at *Syracuse* and *Agrigento*, on the Italian Peninsula at Naples, on the coast of France at Marseilles, and on the western coast of Asia Minor.

Geography had a decided impact on the Greek city-states, as it has on every state. French historian Fernand Braudel wrote that "the poor, precarious soils along the Mediterranean, combined with an uncertain, drought-afflicted climate, spurred ancient Greek and Roman conquest." Additionally, the arid climate, sparse climate of Greece allowed for outdoor teaching in the schools and temperate climate of Greece allowed for outdoor teaching in the schools of philosophy such as Plato's Academy. Further, the climate provided an ideal setting for outdoor theater competitions where highly developed literary genres such as tragedy and comedy appeared. Access to the sea encouraged colonization and trade, interactions that exposed the Greeks to new ideas that brought change while maintaining elements of Pan-Hellenic continuity.

## Persian Empire

Beginning in 559 B.C.E., under the leadership of *Cyrus the Great* (ruled 559–529 B.C.E.) the *Persians* conquered most of the lands from the Aegean Sea (west of Turkey) to the borders of India. After 30 years of rule, Cyrus was succeeded by his son *Cambyses*, who conquered Egypt and parts of Southeast Europe. Their empire became known as the *Achaemenid Empire*, sometimes called the First Persian Empire. It united three of the earliest centers of civilization—Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India—into one powerful empire, covering a territory almost the size of the United States. It was the largest, most diverse empire in world had yet seen, including more than 70 distinct ethnic groups.

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE UNDER THE ACHAEMENIDS



**The Reign of Darius.** Like rulers in Egypt and China and other places, Persian rulers supported their legitimacy with claims that they ruled by divine right. However, their power rested upon their own abilities to build and hold an empire. Ruling such a large empire in an era when transportation and communication were so slow required new ways of thinking about power. Under *Darius I* (ruled 522–486 B.C.E.), Persia divided lands it conquered into provinces so that the king's policies announced in the capital of Persepolis could be administered throughout the empire. Then, rather than simply demand the loyalty of rulers who were selected locally, Darius created a new position—*sarapa*, a ruler of a province who was responsible to the emperor, not to local leaders. Finally, inspectors, called "The Eyes and Ears of the King," traveled to each province and reported to the king on the behavior of the satraps. The provincial structure, with satraps and inspectors, created an efficient administrative bureaucracy.

To pay for this bureaucracy, Darius instituted regular tax payments. The flow of tax dollars into the government enabled the Persians to fund several magnificent projects under Darius.

- The capital city, *Persepolis*, which was located in what is now Iran, became a celebrated city, featuring an impressive royal palace and celebrating the artistic traditions of several groups in the empire.

- The *Royal Road*, which spanned some 1,500 miles across the empire, was the most famous of the network of roads built to encourage trade. Darius added an efficient courier service with postal stations along this road.

\* Darius also instituted the construction of *caravanserais*, which were combination inns and markets for people traveling the Royal Road by camel caravan.

\* The empire instituted a *common currency* that was accepted across the empire. This made trade simpler thereby uniting the empire and promoting prosperity.

**Tolerance** While Persians centralized political power, they did not try to enforce religious and cultural uniformity in their empire. Darius I, in particular, allowed ethnic groups to retain their cultural identity and tolerated religious diversity as long as people paid their taxes and contributed soldiers to the military force to maintain the empire. His successor, Xerxes (519–465 B.C.E.) built a Gate of All Nations (also called Gateway of Xerxes) at an entrance to Persepolis to show that he was honoring all his subjects. Persian toleration of diversity was an unusual policy; one that made the Persian Empire unlike other empires of its time. (Test prep: Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting religious toleration under the Persians with later examples of the policy. See page 152 for Islamic rule in Spain.)

**Religious Beliefs** One of the most important legacies of the Persians was the spread of *monotheism*, the belief in only one god. Although monotheism also appeared in other cultures, most people in Southwest Asia were polytheistic before the Persian prophet *Zarathustra* (c. 660 B.C.E.–583 B.C.E.) began teaching a new faith, *Zoroastrianism*. This faith was based on belief in only one god, Ahura Mazda, or the “wise lord.” The religion also believed in a god of darkness and other lesser gods, none of which were to be worshipped. Zoroastrianism also taught the concepts of *heaven and hell*. After death, good people would be rewarded in heaven, while the evil ones would be punished in hell. Originally, priests called *magi* had passed Zarathustra’s teachings orally from generation to generation. Then later, a collection of written texts based on Zarathustra’s beliefs, the *Avestas*, was produced, which helped spread the religion. Zoroastrianism’s monotheistic principle and other teachings may have shaped the development of Judaism and Christianity.

**Society** Persian society had much the same social stratification as earlier empires of the region. However, because of its size, it had a larger class of educated, well-paid government workers. This bureaucracy included accountants, administrators, tax collectors, and translators.

Similarly, the number of slaves in Persia was much greater than in other empires. Farmers owned slaves, using them as agricultural laborers, and their numbers increased as agricultural production increased. Other slaves were servants to city-dwellers, and still others were owned by the government and used to build roads, large buildings, and irrigation systems throughout Persia. Even though Persian society was patriarchal, women were allowed to own and manage property, and if they worked in a shop, they were allowed to keep their wages. Common Persian women engaged in economic activities

including weaving textiles and trading them for food for their families. Divorce was possible. Some aristocratic Persian women wore veils, mainly to advertise their social status.

**Environment and Technology** The Persians irrigated their fields, as did other civilizations in Southwest Asia. The Persian method, however, was innovative: underground canals, called *qanat*, were used to reduce the evaporation of the water as it traveled to the fields. *Qanat* were especially common in the arid Iranian Plateau of central Persia.

**Trade** The Persians conducted much trade along the Persian Road and other land routes. They also conducted trade by sea. For example, ivory and gold came from Turkey; cedar and woolen fabrics from Phoenicia; wine and oil from Greece; and grain, textiles, and papyrus from Egypt.

## Persia vs. Greece

As the Greek city-states expanded east and the vast Persian empire expanded west, the two clashed over territory. The conflict began in Asia Minor. In Asia Minor, Persians occupied several Greek colonies. Around 499 B.C.E., some of these conquered Greek areas rebelled in campaigns known as the *Persian Wars*. Athens and Sparta formed an alliance to help the rebel colonies. In 490 B.C.E., at the city of *Marathon*, in mainland Greece, an outnumbered Athenian army defeated the Persian forces of Darius, who then withdrew from Greece.

Xerxes again tried to push westward. He organized a force of thousands and attacked Greece, defeating a few hundred Spartans and their allies at the *Battle of Thermopylae*. After their victory, the Persians captured and burned Athens. In reaction, the Athenians and their allies formed the *Delian League*. When the Persians later met the Athenians at sea, the Athenians won the naval *Battle of Salamis*. Soon, the Greeks won other sea and land battles, forcing the Persians to retreat to their homeland.

**Decline of Persia** The cost of the battles with the Greeks severely weakened the Persian Empire. Further, Xerxes began to take a less tolerant attitude toward non-Persians in the empire. Together, these forces began to undermine the strength of the Persian Empire.

**Athens-Sparta Rivalry** The alliance among Greek city-states did not last. Athens expected other city-states to pay taxes to it, which the latter resented. One among these was Sparta, which revolted against Athens, beginning the *Peloponnesian War* (431–404 B.C.E.). With the help of its Greek allies in the *Peloponnesian League*, Sparta defeated Athens and became the dominant power in Greece.

## The Rise of Macedonia

As Persia weakened and the Greeks divided, a new power arose in Macedonia, a region on the northern edge of the Greek world. *Philip II* resolved to conquer Macedonia, unite the Greek city-states and then conquer Asia Minor. He quickly

conquered all of the Greek city-states except Sparta. However, Philip II's further plans were cut short when he was assassinated in 336 B.C.E. He was succeeded by his son Alexander, who immediately began the conquests that would earn him the name *Alexander the Great* and extend Greek influence all the way to India.

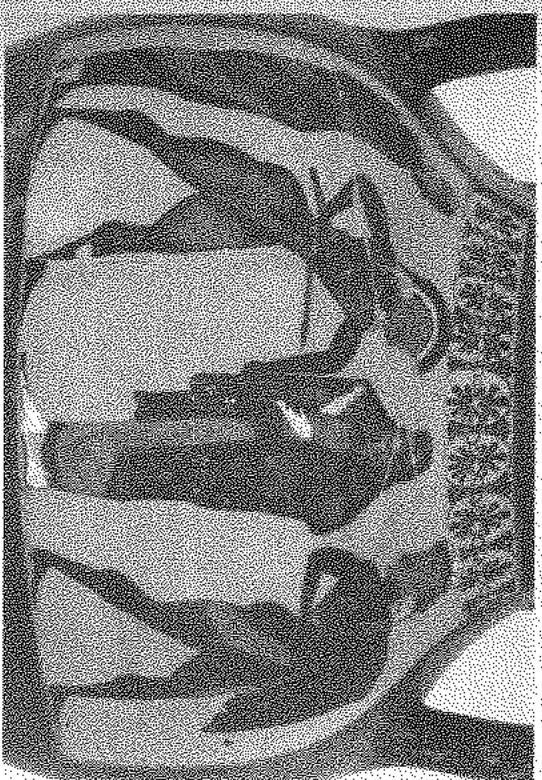
**Alexander and the Hellenistic World** During Alexander's 13-year campaign, he governed his far-flung conquests by picking native residents to help him rule. For example, in present-day Iran he allowed local Persian administrators to run that part of the empire. Alexander cemented his relations with leaders in the area by marrying several Persian women and urging his leading generals to do the same. In Egypt, he founded the great city of *Alexandria*, which would become a center of Hellenistic culture and a major seaport. (The historical *Hellenistic Period* takes its name from the Greek word *Hellenes*, meaning "Greeks.")<sup>x</sup> The *Ptolemy dynasty* eventually built a library at Alexandria, the largest library of the ancient world, as well as the Alexandrian Museum, a place where scholars did research.

As a result of Alexander's conquests, Greek language, architecture, mythology, and philosophy became widespread. Small colonies of Greeks were established all over the Hellenistic world, even as far as Bactria, a region in what is now Afghanistan. The continuity of Greek culture held strong even as Greek governmental unity declined. An example of such continuity can be seen in the Greco-Buddhist art from the areas in South Asia, another region visited by Alexander's forces. Temples show influences in Greek columns and some statues show the Buddha in Greek clothing.

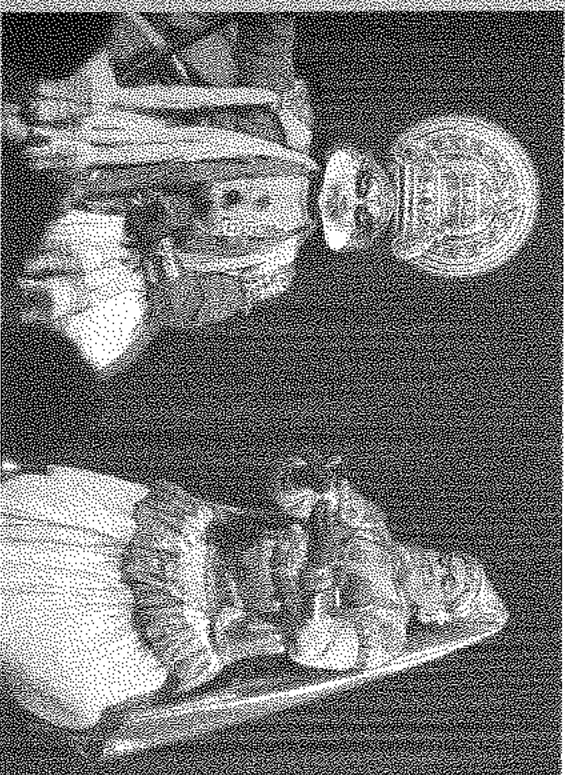
**Formation and Fall of the Kingdoms** Alexander's death in 323 B.C.E. at the age of 32 ushered in a time of chaos. The central administration of the empire collapsed. Alexander had failed to designate an heir, so his generals battled with one another to establish their own kingdoms. Instead of one powerful empire, the Greek-influenced lands became divided into several Chief among the generals/rulers were the *Seleucids* in Asia and the *Ptolemies* in Egypt. Smaller monarchies controlled Pergamum in Asia Minor, the area around Sparta, and the area around Athens. These regions would eventually fall to the Roman Empire. For example, Athens and other city-states fell to the Romans in the first century B.C.E. The break-up of the Greek empire did not mean the end of Greek culture. Much of it was adopted by the Romans. Greek teachers and doctors were highly prized as slaves in Rome because they transmitted a culture admired by the Roman upper classes. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing and contrasting Alexander Darius. See page 59.)

## Other Empires in Persia

Though the great Achaemenid empire of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes ended, their ideas lived on. The later rulers of Persian lands kept many of their innovations in administration.



Source: Walters Art Museum / Wikimedia Commons



Source: Thinkstock

Greeks, along with India, developed some of the first forms of drama. Greek plays (upper) were often simple productions that taught that people had to suffer to learn. In contrast, Indian drama (lower) often used dance and frequently had happy endings.

**Seleucids** The *Seleucids* who ruled Persia from 305 to 83 B.C.E. encouraged Greeks and Macedonians to settle there as colonists. They kept Achaemenid's bureaucratic system, but the satraps often revolted against their Macedonian rulers. The Seleucids governed Persia, but they lost control of Iran and northern India to the Parthians and were finally replaced by the Romans.

**Parthians** Originally nomadic peoples from Central Asia, the *Parthians* ruled over what is now Iraq, Iran, and much of the land bordering western India, beginning in 247 B.C.E. Their capital city was Ctesiphon. They kept the Achaemenid's satrap system of governing. In the first century C.E., they prevented the Roman Empire's army from marching east beyond Syria. Neither side could conquer the other. Border towns and surrounding areas would change hands as victories were won by one side or the other. In 224 C.E., the Parthians were defeated by the *Sassanids*.

**Sassanids** During the Sassanid dynasty (224–651 C.E.), the government promoted Zoroastrianism and persecuted Christians, whom it suspected as being sympathetic toward the Christian Roman Empire. The Sassanid Empire was large but not as large as the Parthian Empire had been. For example, it did not control Armenia (to the north) nor Bactria (to the east).

## Comparing the Greek and Persian Empires

Persia and Greece established the two great empires of the eastern Mediterranean area. They shared many similarities. Both empires covered large territories. They had wide cultural influence. They allowed most women few rights, although some women did become influential in Achaemenid court.

The two empires had very different religious traditions. Darius of Persia had the following inscription carved in three languages on a monument: "I am Darius, the great king . . . from antiquity . . . by the grace of Ahuramazda." Note that he attributed his reign to Ahuramazda, the one deity of the Zoroastrians. In contrast to the Persians' monotheism, the Greeks had a pantheon of gods. They had gods and goddesses for each aspect of life.

Greeks and Persians also viewed unity within their empires differently. The Persians showed high tolerance for diverse customs and traditions throughout their empire. They had one emperor in control, though they allowed for local autonomy. In contrast, the Greeks were more united culturally through language, religion, and traditions such as the Olympic games. However, the Greeks were less united politically. The city-states fought one another and joined together only when threatened with invasion.

The two empires demonstrate the power of syncretism. They became more alike during the Hellenistic period. For example, when Alexander the Great conquered territories from the Persians, he adopted their system of local administration. In addition, the excellent postal system of the Persians combined with the use of coins that developed around the Mediterranean facilitated trade that made the entire region more prosperous. Trade helped form a cultural synthesis of Persian astronomy and Zoroastrianism with Greek language, literature, gods, mystery cults, and various styles of government. The blending of these elements shaped the context for the next great empire of the Mediterranean world: the Roman Empire.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WAS ALEXANDER GREAT?

Whether historians consider Alexander great or not depends on which aspects of his life strike them as most important. Victor David Hanson, reviewing several recent books on Alexander, described the range of views from "drunken . . . psychopath" to "the Aristotelean who tamed Asia . . . with gentle firmness and romantic élan." One of the first historians to write about Alexander was the Macedonian historian Arrian. Flavius Arrianus, who was impressed by the Macedonian's conquests, Arrian lived about four centuries after Alexander in an empire that inherited much of its culture from the Greeks. To Arrian, Alexander was a great leader who united people under his rule, created a large area where trade could flourish, and brought peace between long-time rivals Greece and Persia. Like many Romans, Arrian seemed little bothered by the costs of creating a large empire.

But these costs did bother English historian George Grote. Writing in the late 1800s, Grote was appalled by the bloodshed that resulted from Alexander's drive to win personal glory. Alexander executed thousands of conquered soldiers or villagers at a time. Maybe hundreds of thousands of people died in the wars Alexander carried out. To Grote, Alexander and his father, Phillip, were simply "brutalized adventurers."

More recently, Paul Cartledge combined aspects of both Grote and Cartledge in his evaluation of Alexander. Alexander was certainly brutal, but his brutality was common for his times. And his conquests, once completed, offered the possibility, according to Cartledge, of a peaceful, multi-ethnic coexistence."

Two other British historians were less forgiving than Cartledge. Peter Green pointed out that many of the benefits brought by Alexander vanished upon his death. "The empire he built collapsed the moment he was gone, he came as a conqueror and the work he wrought was destruction." Alexander brought peace and unity, but only briefly. After his death, his generals fought one another and broke up his empire. Whatever the benefits that Alexander brought, they did not survive long enough to be worth the costs. And John Keegan, the preeminent military historian of the past century, concluded that Alexander's "dreadful legacy was to enable savagery—to which all who opposed his will were subject—in the name of glory."

**KEY TERMS BY THEME**

CULTURE: WRITERS & LITERATURE	ENVIRONMENT	STATE-BUILDING: KINGDOMS AND WARS
Herodotus The Histories Homer <i>Iliad</i> Odyssey Plato The Republic Aristotle Poetics Avestas Aristophanes Aeschylus The Trojan Women Euripides Sophocles	qanat STATE-BUILDING: LEADERS Cyrus the Great Delian League Cambyses Darius I Xerxes Peloponnesian League Philip II Alexander the Great Solon Pericles Ptolemies STATE-BUILDING: GOVERNMENTS Poleis (polis) monarchias aristocracy oligarchy tyrants democracy direct democracy representative democracy	Crete Knossos Minoan civilization Mycenae Syracuse Agrigentum Persian Wars Marathon Battle of Thermopylae Battle of Salamis Persians Achaemenid empire Seleucids Parthians Sassanids Athens Sparta Alexandria Hellenistic Period SOCIAL STRUCTURE hoplites archons helots satraps aristocrats merchants Spartan women ECONOMICS caravanserai common currency Royal Road
CULTURE: PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION Socrates Socratic Method Academy Golden Mean logic empiricism syncretic Zoroastrianism Zarathustra		

**MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS**

- One of the main reasons for the prosperity of Minoan civilization was that it
  - adopted the alphabet of the Mycenaeans
  - developed a strong trade network
  - was heavily influenced by Greek culture
  - defeated the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War
- Geography most affected the development of the *poleis*, or Greek city-states, in which of the following ways?
  - The geography provided an urban center for a region surrounding it.
  - The mountains separated the regions so that they did not unite under one government.
  - The unnavigable seas made development difficult due to the lack of agriculture and trade.
  - The geography assured that there was no contact with other Mediterranean cultures.

Question 3 refers to the excerpt below.

Conor, therefore, not condolence, is what I have to offer to the parents of the dead who may be here. Numberless are the chances to which, as they know, the life of man is subject; but fortunate indeed are they who draw for their lot a death so glorious as that which has caused your mourning, and to whom life has been so exactly measured as to terminate in the happiness in which it has now passed.

—Pericles, *The Funeral Oration*, 431 B.C.E.

- The quote above is intended to convince parents of those who died in the Peloponnesian War that
  - their children died for the worthy cause of defending Athens
  - they should protest the war to save the lives of young Athenian men
  - there is no glory in death, even in war
  - the Peloponnesian League is winning the war