

**Persian Tradition:** Greeks and Romans had contacts with and were influenced to some degree by the Persian Empire and its descendants. Persians absorbed many attributes of earlier Mesopotamian societies. Zoroastrianism, early monotheistic, came from within the empire. After being toppled by the Greek leader Alexander the Great, another empire arose—the Sassanid—during Rome’s imperial era.

**Patterns of Greek and Roman History:** Rise of the dynamic city-states of classical Greece began around 800 B.C.E., reaching a high point in the fifth century B.C.E. with the leadership of the Athenian Pericles. The next major era came under the expansionist Alexander who briefly united Greece and the Persian Empire. The legacy of the combination of the two civilizations was called Hellenism. Rome’s development as a republic began as Hellenism waned. As Rome gained more territory by challenging regional powers and lesser developed cultures, it grew into an empire.

**Greek and Roman Political Institutions.** Greece and Rome featured an important variety of political forms. Both emphasize aristocratic rule, there were significant examples of democratic elements. Politics was very important in classical Mediterranean civilizations and offer similarities to Confucian values. No single Greek political style, democracy is most famous. Classical Mediterranean political theory involved ethics, duties of citizens, and skills, such as oratory. Governments supported official religion, tolerance of other faiths was normal. Exception, Christianity under Roman Empire, occurred as Christians refused to place state first in devotion. Greatest political legacies of Mediterranean cultures were an intense loyalty to state, preference for aristocratic rule, and the development of a uniform set of legal principles.

**Religion and Culture:** Greeks and Romans did not create a significant world religion. Their religions derived from complex set of gods and goddesses, seen as regulating human life. Both Mediterranean and Indian religious lore reflected common heritage of Indo-European invaders. Greco-Roman religion tended toward an of-this-world approach with lessons that illustrated human passions and weaknesses but offered little in regard to modeling ethical behavior. Separate models of moral philosophy were developed, by men as Aristotle and Cicero, like Confucius, taught importance of moderation and balance in human behavior. Socrates taught his followers to question conventional wisdom by using rational inquiry. In sciences, Greek work in geometry and anatomy were important. Greatest Roman contribution to sciences, engineering. In arts and literature, Greeks had few equals, particularly in sculpture, architecture, and plays. Romans mimicked, rarely surpassed Greek innovators in these fields.

**Economy and Society in the Mediterranean:** Most Greeks and Romans were self-sustaining farmers, there was great deal of commercial agriculture, in turn fueled establishment of empire. Extensive trade. Slavery, important economic and social institution in Mediterranean civilization. Family, tight social structure, with men in firm control, women were often active in business and sometimes controlled property. Overall, status of women in Mediterranean world was better than China.

**Fall of Rome:** Differed from China's and India's declines. No single civilization rose to replace Rome, although several smaller governments claimed to be its inheritor. In addition, Rome's fall was fragmentary, collapsing in the Western empire long before the Eastern side did.

**Global Connections: Greece, Rome, and the World:** The Greeks set up a widespread colonial and trading network, peaking with Alexander, but it did not last. The much bigger world of the Romans was well aware of the Asian, African, and northern European world outside their realm. Chinese goods were traded in the city of Rome itself, but interest in the Middle Kingdom seems to have been strictly out of a desire for material goods, rather than because of China's technology or system of governance.

**Pax Romana or Golden Age?** Pax Romana came first. Trade and communication were easier with safer roads to travel. Without internal violence, business was safer with a legal system and could run more efficiently. Less money spent on war could be spent entertaining the masses.

Pax Romana refers to the period of time in the first and second centuries AD, during which the Empire reached the height of its power. Good governance, minimal military expansionism, and a flourishing of the arts made this a golden age for the Roman Empire.

### *Important Key Terms*

**Cyrus The Great:** Established a massive Persian Empire across the Northern Middle East and into northwestern India. The son of a Persian chieftain and a Median princess, united the various Persian tribes and overthrow the Median monarch sometime around 550 B.C.E.

**Zoroastrianism:** Developed by Persians, a new religions and a lively artistic style. Religion, the god of the religion is Ahura Mazda

**Olympiad Game:** Regular celebration of Greek city states, athletic games.

**Pericles:** Most famous Greek political figure, dominated Athenian politics. Aristocrat, but was part of a democratic political structure in which each citizen could participate in city-state assemblies to select officials and pass laws. took last steps in the evolution of Athenian democracy.

**Peloponnesian War:** Political Decline, Athens and Sparta vied for control of Greece. Ambitious kings from Macedonia, in the northern part conquered it.

**Philip II-** Won the crucial battle 338 B.C.E

**Hellenistic Period:** Merging of Greek art and culture with other Middle Eastern forms. Little political activities under the autocratic Hellenistic kings. Trade flourished and important scientific centers were established.

**Alexandria:** City where trade flourished and important scientific centers were established.

**Roman Republic-** Extended influence over the Italian peninsula, among other things conquering

the Greek colonies in the south.

**Punic Wars:** Roman conquest spread more widely, fought the armies of the Phoenicians city of Carthage.

**Carthage:** Phoenician city, situated, situated on the northern coast of Africa.

**Hannibal:** Carthaginian General, whose troops were accompanied by pack- laden elephants.

**Julius Caesar:** Led a victory to Civil Wars between two generals. Became a dictator.

**Augustus Caesar:** Caesar's grandnephew, seized power in 27 B.C.E. Adopted Heir