

THE AGE OF EMPIRES: PERSIA AND GREECE



Chapter 5: 500 BCE - 400 CE

Domination of Two Great Societies: Persia & Greece

▢ Persian Influence:

- ! Multiethnic imperial state
- ! Mutual tolerance
- ! Skilled bureaucracy
- ! Good roads
- ! Zoroastrianism

▢ Greek Influence:

- ! Democracy
- ! Philosophy – emphasis on reason, critical thinking
- ! Science

Hellenistic era combined Persian ideas of government with Greek arts & philosophy

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

490 B.C.

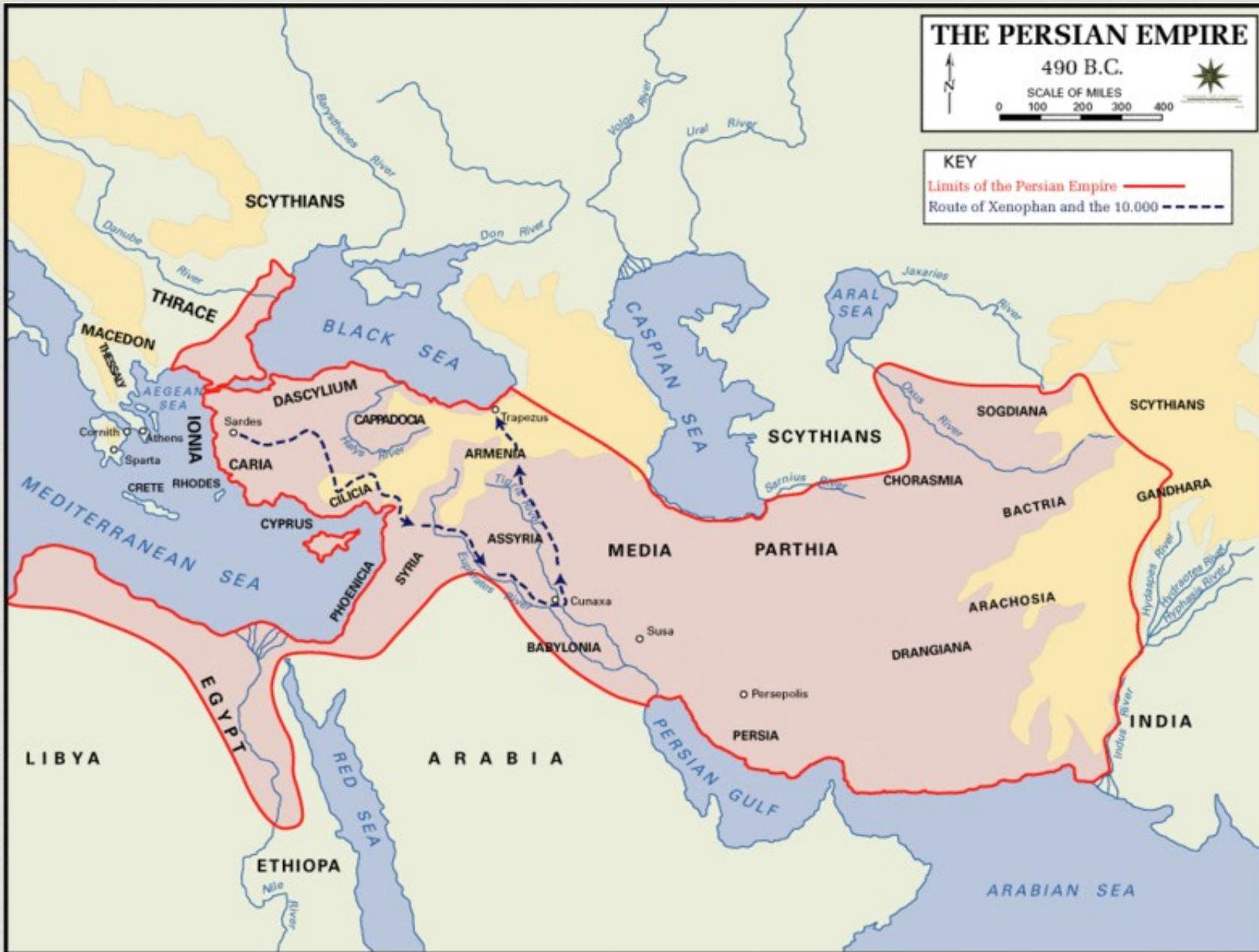
SCALE OF MILES



KEY

Limits of the Persian Empire ———

Route of Xenophon and the 10,000 - - - -



Kings of Imperial Persia

Achaemenids



- ▢ Persia first ruled by Assyria then Babylon
- ▢ Cyrus II “the Great”
 - ❖ 550 BCE - conquered Medes & surrounding lands
 - ❖ Released Jews back to Palestine (Ezra 1:1 - 2:2)
 - ❖ First to treat people fairly, no ravaging of cities conquered
 - ❖ Returned statues of gods to temples
- ▢ Cambyses II
 - ❖ Conquered Egypt
- ▢ Darius I (*pictured*)
 - ❖ Expanded empire into India; military campaigns
 - ❖ First Suez Canal
- ▢ Xerxes I
 - ❖ Military campaigns
 - ❖ Defeated in Greco-Persian wars (480BCE)
 - ❖ Book of Esther (1:1; 1:22)

Persian Wars: 546 - 479 BC

- Greek colonies in Asia Minor fell to Persians
- Persia came against Athens in 490 BC
- Greek League banded together to fight foe
- Final battle at sea against Athens - Persia defeated



Contributions of Persian Government

- 23 provinces ruled by satrap – laws set; taxes
- 1700 mile long Royal Road – 19 day journey
- Conquered peoples kept own religion & customs
- Languages incorporated
- Heavy taxation led to weakening of empire before conquered by Alexander in 330 BCE when he was 26
- ❗ Burned down Persepolis –
- ❗ Carried off treasures on 20,000 mules & 5000 camels



Persian Royal Road

- ▮ Merchants – especially gold merchants travelled
- ▮ Common coinage; standardized weights & measures
- ▮ King travelled road, crowds on side to see him
- ▮ Armies to put down uprising or protect
- ▮ Taxes could easily be collected



The Persians



- ▢ Armies consisted of people from conquered lands + Persians
- ▢ Customs & religions allowed to continue
- ▢ Adapted clothing from Medes & Egyptians
- ▢ Herodotus: Persians taught sons to ride a horse, use bow & arrow & speak truth
- ▢ King was not considered to be a god, but people had to prostrate themselves before him

Zoroastrianism

- ▣ Founded by Zoroaster
- ▣ Monotheistic
- ▣ Official religion of Persia (Iran) 600 BC – 650 AD
- ▣ Supreme god Ahura Mazda
- ▣ Dualism: Battle between good and evil
- ▣ Fire represents god's wisdom





Map 3.1 Classical Greece

Questions that engaged Greeks:

- What is the good life?
- What are the duties of a citizen?
- Is there a god? & if there is, how then should we live?
- Is there an order to the world? Or is it all just chance?
- What is important in life? What are our priorities?

Society in Sparta

□ Social structure

- ! All land shared equally among the homoioi – the equals, had no other profession than to be excellent soldiers (8 – 9,000 of population)
- ! Helots – slave/captive population, from conquered countries; lived only to serve captors, Sparta ran on their labor

□ Military State

- ! Children taken at 7 to be placed in camps, remained there til they were 30
 - Given 1 cloak to wear year round, taught to fend for selves in woods, walk barefooted year round – sole goal, to be the perfect soldier
 - Only a headstone if they died in battle, if women died in childbirth

Society in Athens

- Women in Athens:
 - ❗ excluded from public life
 - Not permitted in public during daylight hours - collected water at dawn
 - ❗ no political involvement
 - ❗ subject to authority of male guardian
 - ❗ marriages were arranged
 - ❗ production of male heirs of prime importance
 - ❗ woman could inherit if no males in family - would marry one of relatives



Society in Athens



- ▮ Slavery
 - ❗ Sparta - Helots
 - ❗ serfdom
 - ❗ chattel slavery
 - ❗ often resulting from debt
 - ❗ probably 1/3 of Athenian households included slaves

Men in Athens



- Citizens = free males over the age of 30
 - ❗ Young men admired for strength, older men admired for wisdom
- Believed all men had been granted by the gods an equal portion of justice & concern for fellow men; each could judge fairly
- Those who did not participate usefully in Athenian life were labeled “idiotai”
- Daily military training in Agora to be fit for battle

Forms of Government



- Demos = people; rule of people = democracy
- Oligos = few; arche = power; oligarchy = rule of the few
- Tyrant = oppressive power; absolute ruler unrestrained by law or constitution
- Aristos = best; kraten = rule; aristocracy = rule by the best

Citizens in Athens



- Only about 20% of population were members of the polis
- Men over 18 could attend Assemblies and voice their opinion
- Men over 30 could hold public office
 - ❗ Elected by lot – highest office for 1 year, others for one day
 - ❗ Public records were displayed on stone tablets & papyrus around the city

Court System

- Chief magistrate offered opening sacrifice
- Jurors were chosen by placing their metal disc, inscribed with their name & deme, in the kleroterion
- Black & white marbles were sent down the side, when a marble lined up with your name, you were chosen - marble indicated the courtroom assignment; paid for duty
- Between 500 - 200 chosen for each trial
- Voting discs cast in ballot box at end, hollow = condemnation; filled = acquittal - secret ballot

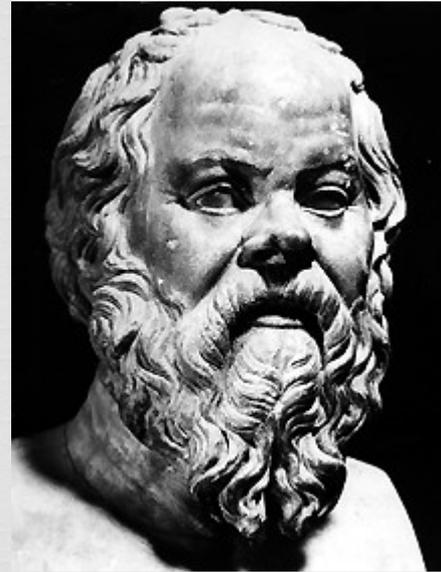
Trials



- Once in courtroom, men sat on reed mats or cushions they brought with them
- No lawyers – prosecution & defense were citizens
- Each had 3 hours by the water-clock to make their case
- Once decision was reached, immediate release, imprisonment or death

Philosophers: Socrates

- Lived 469 - 399 BC
- Wrote nothing
- committed to the search for truth
- method: questioning
- Wandered the streets of Athens seeking truth
- Condemned for not believing in the gods and for corrupting the youth



Socrates



- “An unexamined life is not worth living”
- Sought care of the soul – only thing that is really important
- Lived at the time when liberty and democracy were being conceived
- “what could be less democratic, after all, than the use of force to sustain power and impose policy?”
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5n6YCodbNqI>
- [START AT 23:00](#)

Death in Greek Society

- Death in home with family, family cared for the dead
 - ! 1st stage of passage: Women wash body and cover with olive oil, winding cloth over body
 - ! 2nd stage of passage: Body taken to tomb, either on pallet or chariot outside the city walls
 - ! 3rd stage of passage: cremation for wealthier (ashes gathered in vase & buried); grave marker installed; memorial banquet at the home; gods not present
- Greek coin put in mouth for travel to Hades
 - ! No judgment – everyone met same fate; except murderers
 - ! After 6th century BC, mystery religions (Eleusinian) promised “more blessed afterlife”- open to all equally
 - ! Relatives visited grave to celebrate with food & drink; connection between life and death



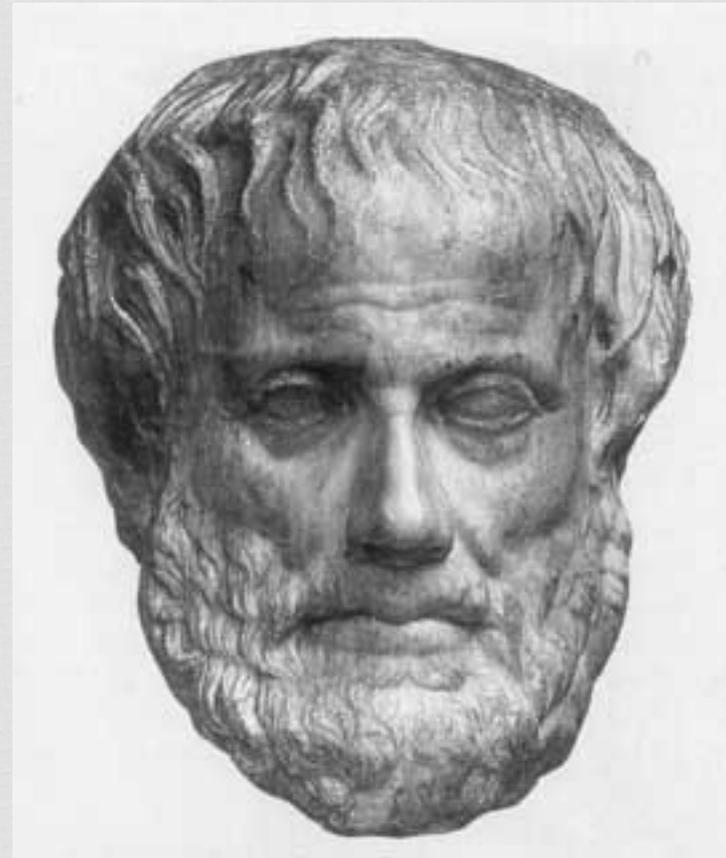
Philosophers: Plato



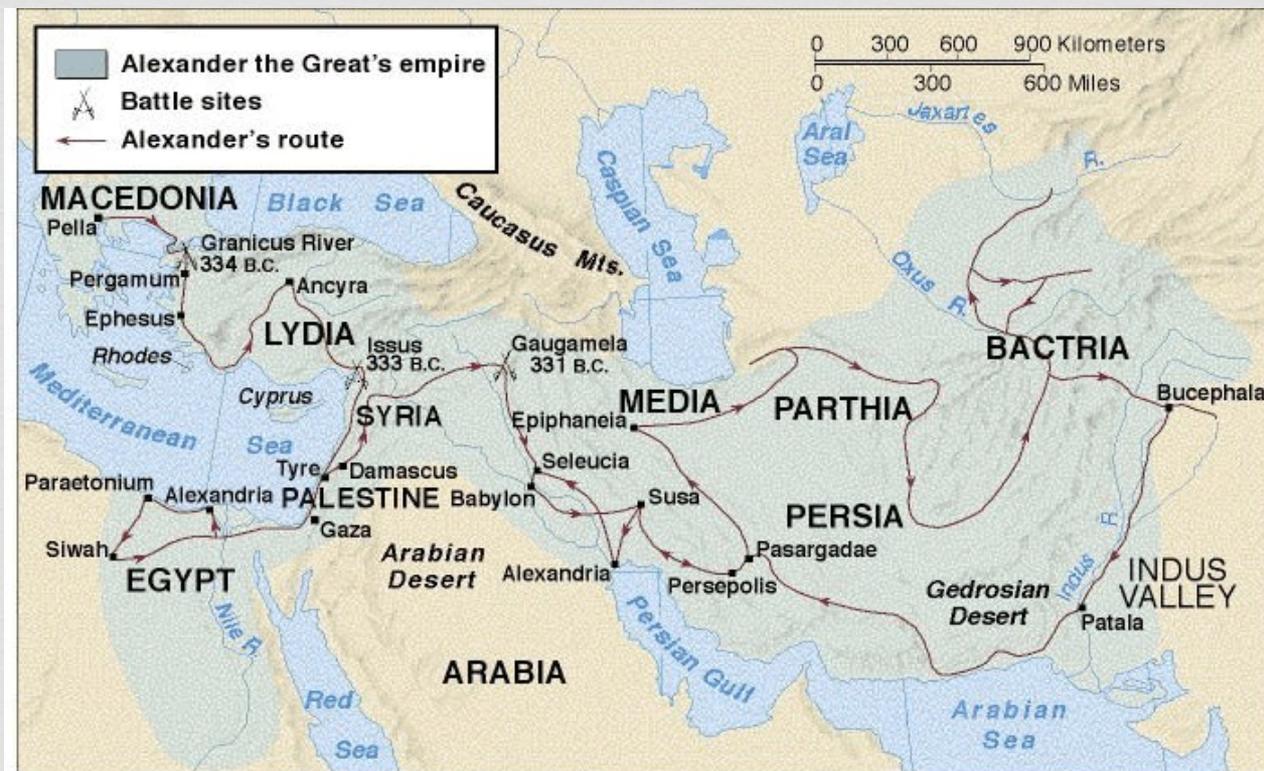
- Lived 429 - 347 BC
- Socrates' pupil who wrote his teachings
- first systematic philosopher
- founded Academy in 386
- believed in polis: order, harmony, justice = goal to produce good people
- justice = each should do only thing to which nature is suited

Philosophers: Aristotle

- 384 - 322 BC
- pupil of Plato
- school - Lyceum
- concerned with gathering, ordering & analyzing knowledge
- good life = contemplative life
- life of virtue & morality



Conquests of Alexander



Map 4.1 The Conquests of Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great



- ▢ Pupil of Aristotle
- ▢ Son of Macedonian king
- ▢ Conquered “world” by time he was in 20s
- ▢ Married Persian princess, encouraged army to intermarry
- ▢ City of Alexandria in Egypt was burial place
- ▢ Died in 323 BC

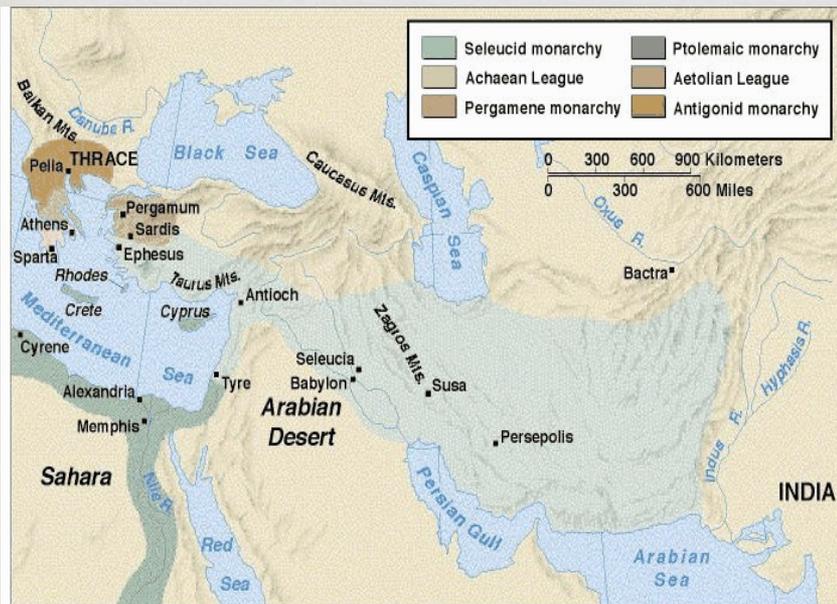
Hellenistic World



- ▢ New age created, all civilizations brought under one official language – Koine Greek - common language
- ▢ Remained many local cultures, same gods/goddesses
- ▢ New political unity based on monarchs
- ▢ Art, architecture, literature and language united ancient Mediterranean world
- ▢ Most beautiful city – Alexandria
 - 100' Canoptic Way – parades, festivals, army
 - Large Jewish settlement, synagogue, Septuagint

Hellenistic Kingdoms

Division of the lands after the death of Alexander



Map 4.2 The World of the Hellenistic Kingdoms

- In the four new kingdoms, Greco-Macedonian ruling class and native populations in tension
- Agricultural standards remained the same, trade shifted more to eastern lands
- Alexandria, largest center of manufacturing
- Trade throughout the Mediterranean world

Hellenistic Society

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- In the four new kingdoms, Greco-Macedonian ruling class and native populations in tension
 - Agricultural standards remained the same, trade shifted more to eastern lands
 - Trade throughout the Mediterranean world



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- Alexandria – center of Hellenistic world
 - Egypt still had pharaoh, now Greek; mixing of gods; Nile revered
 - Large Jewish population in Alexandria; Septuagint translated here; strong Christian population later

Religion in Hellenistic World

- Old pantheon of god/goddess waning
- Mystery religions
- Philosophies
- Cults of Isis and the Great Mother
- Incorporation of religions from various parts of the empire

New Opportunities for Women

- Most women retained traditional roles
- Some upper class women were accepted into institutions of learning; more poets, writers and musicians emerged in this era
- More economic opportunities in larger world of trade
- Queens more active in monarchies

Hellenistic Culture



- ▣ **Alexandria & Pergamum were centers**
- ▣ **Library in Alexandria**
- ▣ **Artistic ventures supported by monarchs**
- ▣ **Beautiful cities created**
- ▣ **Emotion now used in sculpture**
- ▣ **Statue of “winged victory” or “Nike” at left**

Hellenistic Philosophy

□ Epicureanism

- ! Athens
- ! Happiness was goal of life
- ! Pursuit of pleasure was only true good
- ! Freedom from worry and emotional torment
- ! Private communities devoted to friendship and harmony

□ Stoicism

- ! Most popular philosophy of era
- ! Finding happiness = finding supreme good by living in harmony with divine will
- ! Nature was also expression of the gods
- ! Acceptance of whatever one received in life as good
- ! Led to inner peace, one could bear whatever came