

## Western Civilization -- Midterm Study Guide

### Ancient Greece

#### Important Terms relating to Greek Government & Society:

**Polis:** a city state; separated from other city states because of geography; examples include Athens and Sparta

**Athens:** life in this city-state was characterized by an emphasis on education and the arts, literature and architecture. Democratic ideas were employed and the people had a voice in choosing their leaders.

**Sparta:** life in this city state was characterized by an emphasis on military strength; Spartans had many slaves (Helots) and were constantly concerned about controlling the slave population.

**Peloponnesian War** – fought between Athens (greatest sea power) and Sparta (greatest land power)- the war ruined Athens and weakened all of Greece. In 404 BC Athens surrendered.

**Citizen:** in Ancient Greece, only free men who were at least eighteen years old qualifies as citizens.

**Democracy:** a form of government in which the citizens hold the final power, unlike a dictatorship or a monarchy where one person held the power

**Democratic Republic:** a form of government where citizens hold the power but elect representatives to govern.

#### Important Terms Relating to Culture:

**Classical Sculpture:** defined by simplicity, balance of proportion

**Hellenistic Sculpture:** more ornate and having more details

**Acropolis:** a fortified hilltop where all Greek citizens could share in discussions of public matter; the acropolis of Athens was dominated by the Parthenon, a masterpiece temple.

**Hellenism:** the blend of Greek and Persian cultures.

**Agora:** the Greek marketplace

**Pillars:** support for the roofs of Greek temples – THREE styles: *Doric* –most basic, *Ionic*-scrolled top, *Corinthian*-ornate or highly decorated

#### Important People to know:

**Homer:** a Bard (storyteller), his long, heroic poems are called Epics. Homer's two great epic poems are the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*.

**Socrates:** one of Greece's greatest philosophers, he questioned all the accepted values of Athens and his method of teaching became known as the Socratic Method. He was later accused of corrupting the youth with this method and was tried and found guilty.

**Plato:** author of *The Republic*, he believed that only the well educated should be able to rule.

**Aristotle:** one of Plato's students who went on to become the tutor for Alexander the Great, he believed that truth followed logic; he developed the set of logical states known as syllogisms.

**Sophocles:** a playwright and the author of over 100 plays, he wrote the most famous Greek drama of all; *Oedipus*. He also wrote the play *Antigone*, another tragedy.

**Alexander the Great:** the son of King Philip II of Macedonia, he eventually conquered Persia and greatly expanded the Greek culture throughout Persia, an example of cultural diffusion. Alexander studied under Aristotle.

### **Ancient Rome**

**Roman Creation Myth:** According to this legend, Romulus and Remus were the twin sons of the War God, Mars. They were raised by wolves! One day, Romulus killed Remus and that is how Rome was named.

#### **Geography & Origin:**

Rome was located in Italy, on the Mediterranean Sea and separated from the rest of Europe by the Alps.

**Greeks, Latins and Etruscans** were the three dominant groups that shaped the culture of Rome.

The Latins crossed the Alps and entered Italy around 1000 BC, settling on both sides of the Tiber River. Rome began as a settlement of Latin shepherds who lived very simply in round, wooden huts atop the Palatine Hill.

The Greeks settled in southern Italy and Sicily around 750 BC; they were prosperous (rich!) and they brought more trade.

The Etruscans came to northern Italy between 1200 and 800 BC from Asia Minor. They were much more civilized than the Latins, and even had a writing system – an alphabet.

**Cultural Diffusion** - the spread of a people's way of life to new areas: customs, beliefs, religion, government, and language. **For example**, both the Greeks and the Etruscans had a great influence on the development of Roman religious ideas. Knowledge of Greek gods came to Rome through traders and the Romans gave their own names to these gods. The almighty Greek god Zeus became the almighty Roman god Jupiter. The Greek and the Romans were polytheists.

**Polytheism:** belief in many gods

**Monotheism:** belief in one god (Christianity and Judaism are monotheistic)

**Greco-Roman:** this term defines the mix of Greek (Greco) and Roman cultures. Previously, the Greek and Persian cultures had also mixed –cultural diffusion!

*Important terms relating to Roman Government:*

**Monarchy:** rule by a King or Queen; originally Rome was ruled by kings. According to legend, the son of the last king of Rome attacked a woman, Lucretia. Outraged Romans rose in revolt after the Rape of Lucretia and the Romans declared they would never again be ruled by a king.

**Republic:** a form of government, not including a monarch (king or queen), where citizens with the right to vote choose their leaders. Rome became a Republic in 509 BC. The Roman Republic was not a Democratic Republic like the United States today, because not ALL citizens had the right to vote.

Rome eventually combined THREE types of government: Democracy, Republic, Dictatorship. The branches of the Roman government reflected the combination of these types of government.

**Consuls:** instead of a King, Rome had two officials called consuls. Together, they commanded the army and directed the government. Each consul's term was limited to ONE year, and no consul could be reelected for TEN years. Also, each consul had the right to VETO, or override, the other's decisions .

**Veto** – "I forbid" – overruling a vote

**Senate:** aristocratic (wealthy & educated ) branch of the government. Senators were appointed for life and provided continuity and stability in the government.

**Assembly:** the democratic side of the government, all citizen-soldiers were members. In the early years the assembly had little power compared to the Senate and the Consuls, but over time the powers of the Assembly increased. Eventually, its decisions gained the force of law.

**Office of the Dictator:** in times of crisis, the Republic could elect a dictator – a leader who had absolute power to make laws and command the army. However, this dictator's power could last only six months. Dictators were chosen by the consuls and then elected by the Senate.

**Cincinnatus:** in 458 BC, with Rome's army in danger, the Senate elected a farmer named Cincinnatus as Dictator. He left his plow, defeated the enemy, and stepped down as dictator after only fifteen days! Cincinnatus's ideal dictatorship was an example of Gravitas.

**Gravitas:** the qualities of discipline, strength, and loyalty. (The word gravitas translates to seriousness or weighty.)

**Twelve Tables:** the written code of law – carved into the tables- stating that all free citizens had the right to the protection of the law; the Twelve Tables led to greater equality.

Roman Society was divided into classes:

**Patricians:** the upper class (Senate was made up of Patricians)

**Plebeians:** the working class - common farmers, merchants and artisans. They were free citizens with the right to vote but they held less power than the Patricians. **Tribunes** were officials who spoke on behalf of the Plebeians.

Rome fought with Carthage

**Punic wars:** 264 BC Rome and Carthage went to war over control of Sicily and the western

Mediterranean Sea, beginning the first of three Punic Wars. Carthage employed mercenaries – paid soldiers. Rome’s citizen troops were more loyal.

**Hannibal** – military leader from Carthage, trekked from Spain, through France, and across the Alps with elephants! Hannibal won many battles but never captured Rome.

**Scipio** – the Roman General who finally defeated Hannibal in the Battle of Zama

**Proletariat:** soldiers returning from the Punic wars could not afford to rebuild the destroyed farms, homes and villages. New land owners living on huge estates called *latifundias* used slaves instead of hiring the returning soldiers. This group of landless, poor people became known as the Proletariat.

**Julius Caesar:** a Roman Patrician and a member of **The First Triumverate** – the 60 BC alliance of three rulers of Rome: Caesar, Crassus, and Pompey.

Caesar conquered Gaul and declared himself governor of Gaul. Poor citizens loved Caesar and he charmed the crowds with his brilliant speeches. But the Senators feared his power and Pompey ordered Caesar to disband his troops and return to Rome. Caesar defied Pompey’s order and crossed the Rubicon River with his loyal legions (troops) To this day, the phrase “Crossing the Rubicon” means making a decision from which there is no return.

44 BC Senate appoints Julius Caesar Dictator for ten years and Caesar made many changes:

- he expanded the Senate to 900 men, adding loyal followers
- ordered landowners to hire free men instead of slaves
- designed a new calendar w/ 365 days– the Julian Calendar ( month of July is named after Julius Caesar)
- provided land for Rome’s landless poor (the proletariat)

Julius Caesar was assassinated by jealous Senators on March 15<sup>th</sup> 44 BC – the *Ides of March*

**The Second Triumverate:** Octavian (Caesar’s grand nephew), Mark Antony, and Lepidus

Cleopatra – the queen from Egypt who married Mark Antony after he divorced Octavian’s sister – which led to a showdown between Antony and Octavian.

Octavian emerged as the sole leader of Rome and was renamed **Augustus Caesar** by the Senate in 27 BC. He led Rome for 41 years and this time became known as the Pax Romana

**Pax Romana** – “Pax” is the Latin word for “peace.” Augustus built the foundation for this time of peace in Rome with many new changes:

- Coins were created which made trade easier
- Public building programs began- roads and bridges were built using an amazing new material: concrete. Concrete was stronger than wood and was used to build *Aqueducts* - long, bridge like structures that carried water. The Arch was designed to hold up these large structures.
- Civil Service – Augustus pays citizens and even freed slaves to manage Rome (roads, postal system, grain supply)

### The Beginnings of Christianity

**Jesus:** the prophet and Messiah (savior chosen by God) of Christianity. The Roman leaders saw Jesus’ teachings about a Kingdom of God as a challenge to Roman authority and had him crucified in 30 AD.

**Paul :** an apostle, or follower of Jesus, who dedicated his life to the teachings of Jesus. His letters, known as the Epistles, had a great influence and taught Christian beliefs to many people.

**Nero:** a crazy Roman emperor who persecuted the Christians

**Diocletian:** divided the Empire into the Greek speaking East and the Latin speaking West

**Constantine:** the emperor who converted to Christianity, he allowed people to practice any religion. He also moved the capitol to Byzantine, shifting power from West to East. The city of Constantinople, named after him, became the wonder of its age.

**Byzantium** – the Eastern Empire of Byzantium had a great harbor and seaport, strategically located between Europe and Asia with many major trade routes.

**Justinian Code :** Byzantine Emperor Justinian -responsible for ordering the Code of all Roman Laws. (Byzantine Emperors never forgot their Roman heritage.) This Code of Laws updated and combined over 5,000 laws regarding such issues as property, justice, marriage and divorce.

**Icons:** religious artifacts; iconoclasts were people who smashed and destroyed the icons. Disagreement over icons caused unrest between Christians in Rome and those in Constantinople.

### The Decline of the Roman Empire

- Barbarian invasions –Vandals, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Huns and Saxons were groups of people from the North who spoke Germanic languages. Under attack from these groups, Western Europe weakened while the Byzantine Empire flourished (grew stronger).

- Economic factors: *Inflation* – Rome printed money to pay for its expenses and the value of the money dropped; prices of goods rose too high. Romans could no longer afford the expensive items they had become used to having. Trade was disrupted by the attacks.
- Military decline – Roman soldiers fought for money (mercenaries) and were not always loyal.
- Political corruption- high taxes and poor management! Political office was seen as a burden, not a reward and patriotism declined.

## PART II Middle Ages & Renaissance

Dark Ages: although this term is used to describe the Middle Ages, not everything about this period was “dark.”

Dark – refers to the loss of literacy (reading & learning) that occurred because of the many barbarian attacks between 500-1000 AD/CE People were too busy defending themselves and no longer had time to care about learning. Personal safety and personal ties began to replace citizenship.

Nonetheless, *Monasteries* became islands of culture and stability, preserving and creating beautiful manuscripts, and during the later Middle Ages, fairs developed as centers of trade.

Monastery – a religious community in which groups of Christians (Monks) gave up all private possessions and lived very simply. Life was devoted to worship and prayer.

Benedict and the Benedictine Rules: a Monk named Benedict became the leader or Abbot of a monastery and wrote a set of rules.

- Monks could not wander and must stay in the monastery for life.
- Prayer eight times a day
- Seven hours a day devoted to labor
- Two hours a day to study the Bible
- Only two meals a day

Gregory I: became pope in 590 and made the papacy (being the pope) an office of political as well as spiritual power. Gregory protected the Romans from the invading Lombards (fierce Germanic invaders) by using Church revenues (money) to build the army. Gregory also sent missionaries as far as England to spread Christianity. The idea of a churchly kingdom, ruled by a pope, became a central part of the Middle Ages.

**Charlemagne:** son of Pepin the Short, Charles (Charlemagne) became King of the Franks, the German tribe that controlled Flanders and the land that is now France. Charlemagne was named “Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire” by the Pope in 800 AD – he built schools and encouraged artists. Charlemagne enlisted the help of powerful nobles (wealthy landowners) to help strengthen the kingdom. Charlemagne’s descendants were known as the **Carolingian** dynasty.

**Carolingian miniscule:** a beautiful and readable style of lettering – looked much like letters printed in a modern book, made books easier to read and encouraged education.

**Counts:** each *county* was ruled in the king's name by a powerful landowner called a *count*. Other officials, called *missi dominici*, watched the counts to make sure they were staying honest.

**Vikings:** Invaders from Norway, Denmark, and Sweden (Scandinavia), they came on swift, small boats and raided towns. Viking warriors eventually won a rich territory along the coast of France known as Normandy. The Vikings terrorized western Europe for 200 years - the Viking attacks finally ended around 1000 AD for several reasons:

- Many Vikings converted to Christianity
- Climate became warmer and Scandinavian farms prospered (made money); no need to raid others
- Europeans figured out how to defend themselves with local protection and local government, a new political system called feudalism.

**Feudalism:** a political and military system based on the *holding of land*. At the heart of the feudal system was the bond between the lord and the vassal. The lords provided the vassals with land (fiefs) and the vassals pledged loyalty to the lords.

Investiture: the symbolic act or ceremony where the lord transferred control of the fief to the vassal.

Knights: just below the Royal Vassals were the Knights, specialists in military excellence and required to fight to protect the lords.

**Peasants** – the lowest members of the feudal society, most peasants were serfs. **Serfs** were not slaves but they were not completely free as they were bound to the land. Peasants who could leave the land were known as free peasants.

Manors: small estates, these manors were the basic units of feudal life. They were self sustaining (nothing was purchased from the outside – a world unto itself!)

### The High Middle Ages – the Beginning of the Age of Faith

1000-1399 AD a time of increasing material prosperity and interest in many religions.

As farming improved and trade revived, the population began to move from the manors into cities. Fairs and centers of trade developed and Guilds formed.

Guilds: associations of people who worked in the same trade.

Farming improvements included:

- Rotation of crops
- Use of plows

- Use of horses (horsepower!) instead of oxen