7/8 World History

Week 13

Ancient Iran & Greece
Tuesday
Do Now
Who took over the Babylonians, and in what way was this kind of a betrayal?

Objectives
Explore similarities between a new religion and a familiar religion.
Recognize traits of a strong empire.
# Key Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureaucracy</td>
<td>A system of managing a group of people (whether it's a business, school, government, etc.) that includes many different people with many different jobs, and different levels of authority.</td>
<td>When a group of people becomes too large or complex for one person to manage alone, it becomes necessary to create a bureaucracy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dualism</td>
<td>Being divided between two different things; when a religion believes in exactly two gods (in between monotheism and polytheism).</td>
<td>Zoroastrianism is one of the few examples of a dualistic religion.</td>
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</table>
The Achaemenid Empire (pronounced "uh-kim-uh-nid") originated in modern-day Iran, a large mountainous area in between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley.

The land is generally dry and rocky, with high mountain ranges stretching thousands of feet into the air.

Because the land (even the flat parts) are higher in elevation than Mesopotamia or Indus Valley, the climate is cooler and windier but still gets little rainfall.
The *Iranian tribes* originated north of modern-day Iran, from the *same region as the Vedic tribes*. The two groups also spoke related groups of languages.

Like the Vedic tribes, the Iranian tribes began to move south into new territory between 2000 and 1500 BCE.

Once they arrived in Iran, they continued practicing a *mixture of pastoralism and seasonal agriculture*, like the Vedic tribes hundreds of miles east in India.

Unlike the Vedic tribes, the Iranians *did not have a society broken up into different groups based on jobs*.

They established *many small kingdoms* throughout Iran, named after the different tribes, such as the Medes, Anshans, and Persians.

The Iranian kingdoms near the border with Mesopotamia were forced to pay tribute to the Assyrian kings, or else risk being destroyed. They became more independent after they made the alliance with Babylon to conquer Assyria.
• **Cyrus the Great** was born in the small Iranian kingdom of Anshan, where his father was the king. His mother was the daughter of the king of the Medes, a larger Iranian kingdom.

• He became king of Anshan as a young man in 559 BCE, but he refused to pay tribute to the Medes, as his father had done.

• The Medes then sent an army to conquer the small kingdom, but Cyrus not only defended his own kingdom, but took his own army to conquer the Medes within just 3 years.

• After conquering the Medes, he used the new wealth and soldiers to further expand his kingdom, conquering the small kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, to the west.

• Cyrus took advantage of the Babylonians' dissatisfaction with their king to take over the Babylonian Empire just a few years later in 539 BCE, where his armies were welcomed into the city after Cyrus agreed to let them worship their god Marduk again.

• Once he was in control of Babylon, he became the most powerful ruler in the ancient world at that time.

• Cyrus' armies continued conquering in Asia Minor and lands further east until his death in 530 BCE during battle. He is remembered as the **founder of the Achaemenid Empire**, as well as being a kind, just ruler.
Cyrus and the Jews

- Cyrus believed strongly in justice and fairness, and made a point of making friends with small minority groups, like the Jews. He considered it unjust that the Babylonians had destroyed the Jewish Temple and taken thousands of their people back to Babylon after conquering the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- Because of this, Cyrus not only **allowed the captive Jews to return** to Israel, he also **paid for them to build a new temple** to their god in Jerusalem.
- The event is described in the Bible in the book of Ezra:

  In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem: Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid... The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God.
After Cyrus

- Cyrus conquered so much territory that he created a strong bureaucracy to manage the different parts of his empire. The officials in charge of different regions were called satraps, like a governor of a state today.

- Cyrus' son further expanded the Achaemenid Empire by conquering Egypt in the few years of his reign, bringing even more wealth and power to the empire.

- In 521 BCE, the son of a satrap, named Darius, became the new king. He was also a fair, kind ruler, and further expanded the empire by conquering the Indus Valley and parts of northern Greece. After so much conquering, the Achaemenid Empire was now the largest empire that had ever existed, both in terms of land and number of people.
Persepolis

• To commemorate his many victories and the wealth of the Achaemenid Empire, Darius built a beautiful new capital city called **Persepolis**, filled with beautiful new palaces, temples, and art.

• The ruins of Persepolis still stand today, attracting thousands of visitors every year.
Zoroastrianism

- The Iranian tribes practiced a unique religion now called **Zoroastrianism**.
- The name of the religion comes from the writer of its holy book, Zoroaster.
- The holy book, called the **Avesta**, is similar in structure and content to the Vedas, made up of long hymns.
- The many similarities between the Avesta and Vedas, along with the related languages of the Iranian and Vedic tribes, lead scholars to believe that the two groups once shared the same language and religion many years before, and changed as the people moved apart from each other.

Top left: modern portrait of Zoroaster
Top right: front cover of the Avesta
Bottom: symbol of Zoroastrianism, with the name of the supreme god of goodness written below
Unlike the Vedas, which are polytheistic, the Zoroastrians are **dualistic** - believing in two supreme powers, one good and one evil.

The supreme god of goodness, light, and creation is called **Ahura Mazda**.

The supreme god of evil, darkness, and destruction is called **Ahriman**.

The Zoroastrians believe that the **universe is a giant battleground** between Ahura Mazda and Ahriman. They also believe that **one day a savior born of a virgin will come** to finally win the war for Ahura Mazda, the world will be reborn in a perfect form, and the dead will rise to join the living in the new paradise.

Although most Iranians converted to Islam hundreds of years ago, there are **still over 2 million Zoroastrians around the world**.

Unfortunately, most of them now live outside Iran, forced to flee their homeland because the Iranian government today does not allow its people to practice any religion besides Islam, on pain of death.

Right: Ahura Mazda fighting Ahriman
Exit Ticket
What similarities do you see between Zoroastrianism and Christianity or Judaism?

Homework

• Zoroastrianism reading & questions
Block Day
Do Now

What do you know about ancient Greece? What do you want to know?

Objectives
Compare and contrast the early civilizations in Greece to the golden age of Greece. Identify key cultural influences Greece had on modern Western culture.
Reading Quiz

1. What was the name of the founder of the Achaemenid Empire?
2. What two gods do Zoroastrians believe in?
3. What physical element is important in Zoroastrian prayer?
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<td>Monarchy</td>
<td>A system of government with one powerful ruler, with the expectation that a younger family member (ex. son, daughter, nephew, etc.) will become the next ruler.</td>
<td>Kings and pharaohs are both historical examples of a monarchy form of government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>A system of government in which decisions are made based on voting.</td>
<td>Democracy is a more egalitarian form of government because power is not held by just one person, or one family.</td>
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Greek Dark Ages

• After the Dorian Greeks conquered the Mycenaean Greeks around 1150 BCE, the Mycenaean society and economy completely fell apart.
• For over 600 years, Greece fell into a period of political chaos and poverty. Trade networks disappeared, ruined cities were abandoned, and very little art or writing was produced. This period is known as the **Greek Dark Ages**.
• During the Greek Dark Ages, Greek society organized itself in a new way: **city-states**.
• Instead of powerful kingdoms ruling large areas of land (like the Minoans or Mycenes), city-states were small, weak kingdoms consisting of just one city and the surrounding villages.
• Larger city-states were usually monarchies, while smaller ones were sometimes ruled by councils of elders.
City-States

- The Greek term for a city-state was **polis** (meaning simply "city").
- Each polis was similar in design. They were all small in area, with **buildings close together and narrow streets**. And they were all surrounded by **walls and watchtowers** because the city-states frequently fought each other.
- Every large polis was constructed around a hill with a large temple and government buildings on top. This area was called the **acropolis** (meaning "high city").
- The only wide, open space in a polis was the marketplace, called the **agora**.
- The agora was where people could set up temporary booths to sell food or other items, much like a swapmeet today. It was also a place where people frequently gathered to sit, talk, and share news.
- The largest city-states in Greece were **Athens** (a coastal city in central Greece) and **Sparta** (an inland city in southern Greece).
Persian Wars

- Around 500 BCE, the Greek Dark Ages were coming to an end. The city-states were finally starting to become more organized and prosperous, and small trade networks were beginning to start up again.
- In the 490's BCE, the Achaemenid king Darius had already conquered all of Asia Minor, including some Greek towns on the coast of Asia Minor. He began moving west out of Asia Minor, and was beginning to conquer some small city-states in the very northern part of Greece.
- As the Greeks feared, the Achaemenid (later called Persian) armies began to march south, determined to take over the rest of Greece.
- In order to defend themselves, the Greek city-states put aside their disagreements and formed an alliance against the Persians.
- For several years there were major battles against the Achaemenid armies, but in the end the Greeks successfully defended themselves.
Golden Age

- The Greeks' victory against the Persians turned out to be the beginning of a new period of sudden prosperity and creativity throughout Greece, now referred to by historians as the **Greek Golden Age**.
- The Greek Golden Age saw sudden, amazing advancements in architecture, learning, and art, particularly in the city-state of Athens.
With the Greek Golden Age came new and changing forms of government. The Spartan monarchy grew more powerful, conquering small neighboring city-states and making some of them their slaves. Athens developed an entirely new form of government: democracy. Instead of being ruled by a king, as they used to be, Athens allowed every property-owning man to vote on decisions for the city. They used small tokens with their names carved on them to drop into containers - one for yes, one for no. They included their names so that people couldn't make fake duplicate voting tokens. Ancient Athens is the first known instance of a democratic society.
Economy

- The economy of ancient Greece varied from city-state to city-state.
- Athens lived mostly off of trading and a little bit of agriculture, while Sparta was focused mainly on agriculture and occasional conquering.
- City-states in the Greek islands mostly survived off of fishing and trade, while city-states in the mountains mined metals like gold, silver, copper, and iron which they traded for food.
Gods & Goddesses

- The ancient Greek religion was **polytheistic** and a more developed version of Mycenaean beliefs.
- They believed in dozens of gods, goddesses, and magical creatures of all different types.
- Stories about these gods were the **main subjects of their art and literature**.

**Zeus**: chief of the gods, god of thunder & lightning  
Hera: wife of Zeus, goddess of marriage & childbirth  
Apollo: son of Zeus, god of divination, light, & music  
Artemis: twin sister of Apollo, goddess of the moon & hunting  
Athena: daughter of Zeus, goddess of wisdom & courage  
Dionysus: son of Zeus, god of wine & pleasure  
Aphrodite: aunt of Zeus, goddess of love & beauty  
Poseidon: brother of Zeus, god of the sea & earthquakes  
Hades: brother of Zeus, god of the underworld
Religious Rituals

- **Temples** dedicated to the different gods were an important part of ancient Greek religion.
- Dedicated priests and priestesses said prayers to the particular gods they worshipped, and performed rituals for them.
- Ordinary people visited different temples to pray depending on what they were praying about, although they often had one particular god or goddess that they prayed to more often.
- **Divination** (fortune-telling) was also an important part of Greek religion. To hear about their futures, or receive messages from the gods, people visited **oracles**.
- Oracles referred to the buildings people visited for divination, but they also referred to the fortune-tellers themselves. Ancient Greek fortune-tellers did not read bones, like the Shang Dynasty, but instead breathed in smoke or stared into water to receive visions.
- The **Oracle of Delphi** was the largest and most popular Greek oracle, dedicated to the god of divination Apollo.
Art & Architecture

• Some of the most lasting contributions of ancient Greek society to today were their art and architecture.
• Rows of tall stone columns topped by triangular pieces are still common in European and American architecture today.
• The different styles of columns (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian - named after different regions of Greece where they came from) can still be seen across the world today.
• Although the ruins of Greek temples appear empty in the middle today, in ancient times the stone columns surrounded wooden walls and rooms on the inside.
• The ancient Greeks also had a huge influence on European art.
• The Greeks' incredible attention to detail in creating models of ideal human bodies still influences art today.
Theater

- Theater as we know it today **began in ancient Greece**. They were the earliest known civilization to write plays that included sets, costumes, and professional actors.
- The two most popular types of plays were **comedy** and **tragedy**.
- Comedic plays often made fun of city-state rulers or other important members of society. Tragedies followed the misfortunes of people cursed by the gods.
- An important part of ancient Greek theater that is different from today was the presence of the **chorus**.
- The chorus was a large group of actors and actresses who recited the same words at the same time in a musical rhythm. Their role in the play was to explain background information and express common people's feelings.
Music

- While the ancient Greeks were not the first society to have music, they were the first to come up with a system of writing music down.
- This means that ancient Greek music is the oldest known human music, written more than 2,500 years ago.
- The clip above is a selection from a hymn to Apollo.
- The most common instruments were the lyre (a small harp) and the aulos (a two-barreled flute).
Exit Ticket
What elements of Greek culture do you recognize in our culture today? What ideas did we get from them?

Homework
• Sparta reading & questions
Friday

Do Now

Have you heard of the Greeks before? Have you heard of the Persians before? What do you think this can tell us about the history of these two civilizations?

Objectives

Students will identify key ideas in a historical non-fiction text, and effectively annotate.
Reading Quiz

1. What were the two main forms of government for Greek city-states?
2. Who was the chief of the Greek gods?
3. At what age did Spartan boys move out of their homes and into military schools?
• Persian Wars reading
Exit Ticket
How do you think the world would be different if the Greeks had not one the Persian war? Do you think things would be better or worse?