

THE CLASSICAL AGE IN WORLD HISTORY

1200 BCE TO 500 CE



CIVILIZATIONS

- Nile Valley: New Kingdom Egypt
- Africa: Kush-Meroe, Axum
- Mesopotamia: Assyria, Persian Empires
- Mediterranean: Roman Republic, Empire
- Mediterranean: Hellenic, Hellenistic
- Mediterranean: Israelites, Phoenicians
- India: Mauryan, Guptan Dynasties
- China: Late Zhou, Qin, Han
- Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan, Mayans, Moche

DEVELOPMENT AND CODIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS

- Codifications and further developments of existing religious traditions provided a bond among the people and an ethical code to live by
 - Jews
 - Vedic Religion to Hinduism
- New belief systems and cultural traditions emerged and spread, often asserting universal truths.
 - Buddhism
 - Confucianism
 - Daoism
 - Zoroastrianism
 - Christianity
 - Greco-Roman Philosophy
- Belief systems affected gender roles
- Other religious and cultural traditions continued parallel to the codified, written belief systems in core civilizations.
 - Animism
 - Ancestor Worship

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS, INCLUDING LITERATURE AND DRAMA, ARCHITECTURE, AND SCULPTURE, SHOW DISTINCTIVE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

- **Literature and drama acquired distinctive forms**
- **Distinctive architectural styles**
- **The convergence of different cultures affected the development of unique sculptural developments**

DEVELOPMENT OF STATES AND EMPIRES

- The number and size of imperial societies grew dramatically by imposing political unity on areas where previously there had been competing states.
- Empires and states developed new techniques of imperial administration based, in part, on the success of earlier political forms.
- In order to organize their subjects, the rulers created administrative institutions, including centralized governments, elaborate legal systems and bureaucracies
- Imperial governments projected military power over larger areas using a variety of techniques, including diplomacy; developing supply lines; building fortifications, defensive walls and roads; and drawing new groups of military officers and soldiers from the local populations or conquered peoples.
- Much of the success of the empires rested on their promotion of trade and economic integration by building and maintaining roads and issuing currencies.

IMPERIAL SOCIETIES DISPLAYED UNIQUE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- Cities served as centers of trade, public performance of religious rituals, and as political administration for states and empires
- The social structures of all empires displayed hierarchies that included cultivators, laborers, slaves, artisans, merchants, elites and caste groups.
- Imperial societies relied on a range of labor systems to maintain the production of food and provide rewards for the loyalty of the elites, including corvée, slavery, rents and tributes, peasant communities, and family and household production.
- Patriarchy continued to shape gender and family relations in all imperial societies of this period.

COLLAPSE OF CLASSICAL CIVILIZATIONS

- The Roman, Han, Maurya 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.
- Through excessive mobilization of resources, imperial governments caused environmental damage (such as deforestation, desertification, soil erosion or silted rivers) and generated social tensions and economic difficulties by concentrating too much wealth in the hands of elites.
- External problems resulted from security issues along their frontiers, including the threat of invasions

EMERGENCE OF TRANSREGIONAL NETWORKS OF COMMUNICATION AND EXCHANGE

- Land and water routes created transregional trade, communication and exchange networks in the Eastern Hemisphere, while separate networks connected the peoples and societies of the Americas somewhat later.
- Students should know how factors, including the climate and location of the routes, the typical trade goods, and the ethnicity of people involved, shaped the distinctive features of the following trade routes.
 - A. Eurasian Silk Roads
 - B. Trans-Saharan caravan routes
 - C. Indian Ocean sea lanes
 - D. One of the following: Mediterranean sea lanes; American trade routes; or the north-south Eurasian trade routes linking the Baltic region, Constantinople and Central Asia

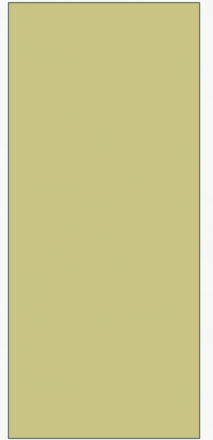
NEW TECHNOLOGIES FACILITATED LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION AND EXCHANGE

- **New technologies Permitted the use of domesticated pack animals to transport goods across longer routes.**
- **Innovations in maritime technologies as well as advanced knowledge of the monsoon winds stimulated exchanges along maritime routes from East Africa to East Asia.**

OTHER EXCHANGES

- 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.
 - The spread of crops, including sugar, rice and cotton from South Asia to the Middle East, encouraged changes in farming and irrigation techniques (such as the development of the qanat system).
 - The spread of disease pathogens diminished urban populations and contributed to the decline of some empires (such as Rome or China).
 - Religious and cultural traditions, including Chinese culture, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, were transformed as they spread.

ESSAYS



COMPARISONS AND SNAPSHOTS

- **Compare and contrast the development of institutions and traditions (political, social, economic, or intellectual) in any two of these classical civilizations:**
 - **China**
 - **India**
 - **Greece**
 - **Rome**
 - **Mesoamerica**
 - **Andes**

COMPARISONS AND SNAPSHOTS

- **Compare major religions and philosophical systems including similarities in cementing a social hierarchy, e.g. Hinduism contrasted with Confucianism.**
- **Compare the role of women in different belief - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Confucianism**
- **Compare and contrast the rise, development and spread of Buddhism and early Christianity.**

COMPARISONS AND SNAPSHOTS

- Understand how and why the collapse of empire was more severe in Western Europe than it was in the Eastern Mediterranean, China, or South India
- Compare the caste system to other systems of social inequality devised by ancient and Classical civilizations, including slavery

COMPARISONS AND SNAPSHOTS

- **Compare the development of traditions and institutions in major civilizations, e.g. Indian, Chinese, Greek**
- **Describe interregional trading systems e.g. the Indian Ocean trade system and the Silk Road**
- **Compare and contrast the intellectual accomplishments of the classical Chinese and Mediterranean civilizations (Hellenic, Hellenistic, and Roman).**

COMPARISONS AND SNAPSHOTS

- **Compare any two of the interregional trading systems:**
 - Mesoamerica
 - Mediterranean
 - Southwest Asia
 - South Asia
 - East Asia
- **Compare and contrast the popular movements and settlement patterns of any two of these peoples: Indo-Europeans/Chariot Peoples, Germans, Polynesian, or Bantu.**