



Pre-AP Notebook Page 2

Major Classical Era Empires

AP World History: Modern – Unit 0

The Persian Empire

The **Persian Achaemenid Empire** emerged in the 6th-century BC as a military and administrative powerhouse that established an extremely successful state system

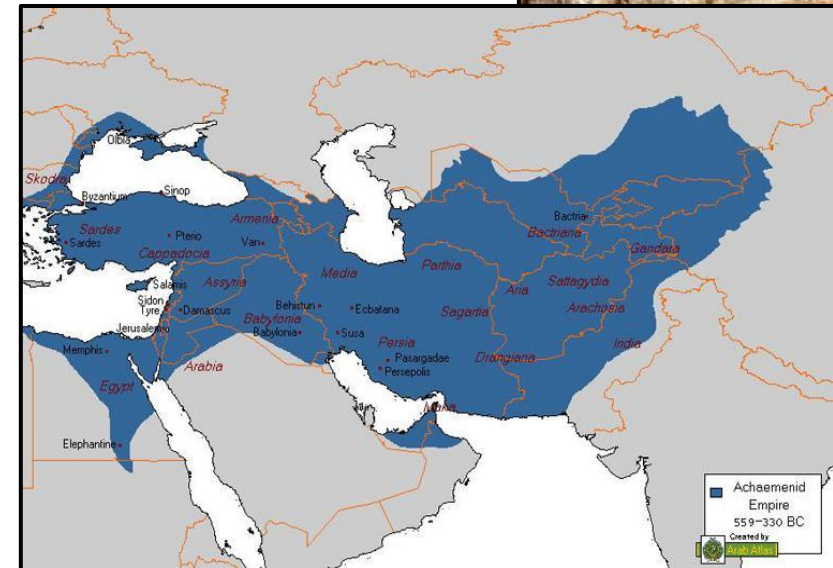
Hailing from modern-day Iran, the Persians, led by Emperor **Cyrus the Great**, formed a massive multi-ethnic empire

Reaching from Central Asia and India in the west to Egypt and Greece in the east, the Persians ruled over more than 35 million people—roughly half the world's population at that time!

Aside from military success, the characteristic that set Persia apart from its first-wave empire predecessors was that it was organized under a single imperial **central administration**

Essentially, all major laws and policies came directly from the 'god' emperor himself; these policies were then enforced by imperially-sanctioned local governors called **satraps**

This was a break from the much-less successful first-wave empire practices which were generally unsuccessful in to establishing a strong or effective centralized government



Persian Administration & Policy

To maintain their centralized state, the Persians setup a **complex bureaucracy** of administrators, tax collectors, record keepers, translators, etc., to effectively govern their massive empire

To facilitate economic activity, travel and communication across their vast empire, they developed **standardized coins, built roads**, and had a **mailing service**

In general, these policies were quite successful, and those who were conquered by the Persians were often better off under Persian administration than prior to conquest

Aside from their effective administration, there were several Persian policies that were successful in ensuring subject loyalty (or at least avoiding resentment)

Perhaps the most important non-administrative policy that encouraged cooperation was the policy of **religious and cultural toleration**

As opposed to most first-wave empires, those under Persian control were often they allowed to maintain their local customs and religious, thus making it far less likely those people would rebel in the future



Greek City-States

Greeks were the polar opposite of Persians: they were a series of local city-states who practiced democracy, citizen participation, & polytheism

Most city-states, such as **Athens**, functioned without a divine monarch, & even those with kings, such as **Sparta**, still had senates

Greek city-states were known for their lack of unity, and frequently warred with one another for power, such as during the **Peloponnesian War** between Athens and Sparta

Regardless of their political differences, they held a common cultural thread through **Greek medicine, science, and philosophy**—all of which that would far outlast their states

Starting first in the Mediterranean, Greeks emigrated to and settled many colonies, stretching as far as modern-day Spain to the west and the Black Sea to the east

Wars with local empires, such as the Achaemenid Persians and Phoenician Carthaginians threatened their existence; however, the Greeks would either prevail or survive



Greek City-States



Ancient Greek Diaspora



The Hellenistic Period

The story of Greece and its city-states would change once the **Macedonian King Phillip II** united most of the Greek mainland following some military reforms, including the **phalanx**

Following Phillip's assassination, his son **Alexander the Great** would continue to lead a dominant Macedon and Greek federation to embark on one of the greatest military campaigns in world history

Alexander marched his army across Egypt, Anatolia, the Levant, and into Persia, ending the Achaemenid Empire, and continuing undefeated in battle to India and Central Asia until his death in 323 BCE

This line of conquest and Greek rule over nearly half of the world's population ushered in the **Hellenistic Era**—an era defined by Greek cultural and political dominance

While the Greek empire lasted less than three centuries, Greek culture was permanently embedded by Alexander the Great through the construction of Greek cities and libraries that housed Greek philosophy and science across **Central Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East**

Many of the main cities established by the Greeks and their settlers were named **Alexandria**



Alexander the Great's Empire



Legacy of the Greeks and Persians

The lasting legacy of Greece and Persia lays in the philosophy and state administration—both of which would impact the cultures of Greece, Persia, Rome, the Muslim world, India, Central Asia, and Western Civilization

Administratively, the Hellenistic states divided amongst Alexander's generals following his death adopted the centralized model of government implemented by the Persians

This governmental form formed the foundation of nearly all major states and powers following the Persian and Greeks, including the Romans, Arabs, and other states in Africa, Asia, and Europe

Regarding knowledge, the Greek approach to knowledge, and its emphasis on **skepticism**, to pursue answers through the use of **logic** and **observation**—the early seeds of empirical scientific thought

Lastly, the writings and concepts of **Socrates, Plato, Aristotle**, and other Greek philosophers would profoundly influence later Arab, Persian, Indian, and Western mathematicians who synthesized Greek science and math to enhance and spur their own innovations in math, science, and medicine



The Roman Republic

With origins as a city-state in modern-day Italy, **Rome** emerged as a local military powerhouse as it conquered local Latin cities in the 500s BCE

Ruled by an elected senate, Rome then turned its gaze to areas of **modern-day Spain**, and **Gaul** (modern-day France), before beginning its conquest of the surrounding **Greek colonies**

After defeating several Greek armies, the regional empires of **Macedonia** and **Carthage** began to act against the Romans militaristically from the east and west respectively

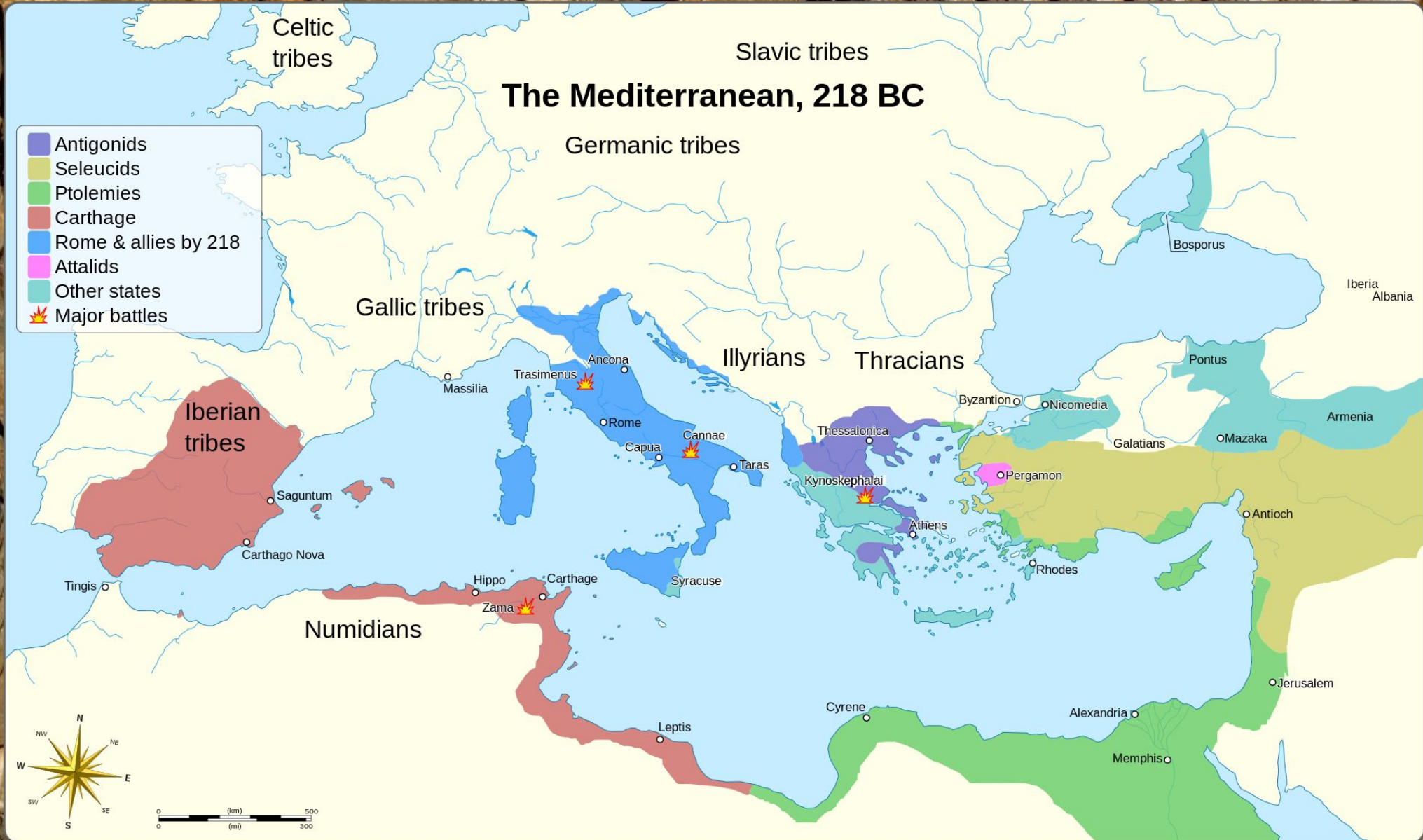
Despite pressure from both empires, Rome was able to eventually defeat Carthage after a series of conflicts in the Punic Wars—all in spite of several crushing defeats at the hands of Carthage

With Carthage vanquished, the Romans turned their attention to the Hellenistic states and, after several grueling campaigns, defeated their Greek opponents by 31 BCE, becoming the unquestionable rulers of the Mediterranean Sea

Despite their military dominance, the Romans would borrow heavily from Greek culture and administration, as many contemporaries noted the similarities and structures between the previous Greek states and Rome itself



Rome, Carthage, and the Hellenistic States



The Punic Wars



The Roman Empire

By 27 CE, however, **Julius Caesar** entered Rome with an army and claimed sole authority as emperor from the Senate, thus initiating the **Empire of Rome**, and continuing its tradition of conquest

After several rounds of military reforms, the Roman Army's size grew substantially with enticing rewards, such as land grants from conquered areas upon retirement

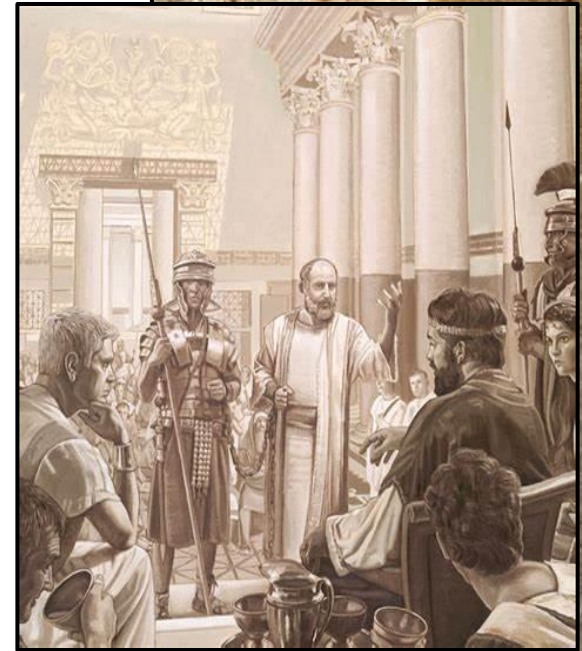
Large estates, tax breaks, and political positions were given to loyal upper-class elites

Also, like the Persians, Rome established a **centralized government and bureaucracy**, complete with local **governors, translators, record keepers, roads**, and a **common currency**

Unique to the Romans, however, was the policy of **Roman Citizenship** which offered full protections and privileges to those it conquered with no strings attached

For those who caused trouble or rebellion, however, Roman reprisal was swift and brutal

Rome grew so large, in fact, the empire split administration in half by establishing a Western and Eastern Roman Empire; while the Western Empire would fall in 485 CE to Germanic invaders, the East would continue under Greek rule until 1453 CE, known today by historians as the Byzantine Empire



Maximum Extent of the Roman Empire



Roads of the Roman Empire

This map shows all the major roads in the Roman Empire. This map was created for Ancient History Encyclopedia using the Antiquity A-La-Carte application by the Ancient World Mapping Center at UNC Chapel Hill under a Creative Commons CC BY-NC 3.0 license.

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Western and Eastern Roman Empires



The Golden Age of India

Following a period of feuding local Indian kingdoms and Kushan and Persian invaders from Central Asia and Iran, a large portion of the Indian subcontinent was once again centralized in 3rd century CE

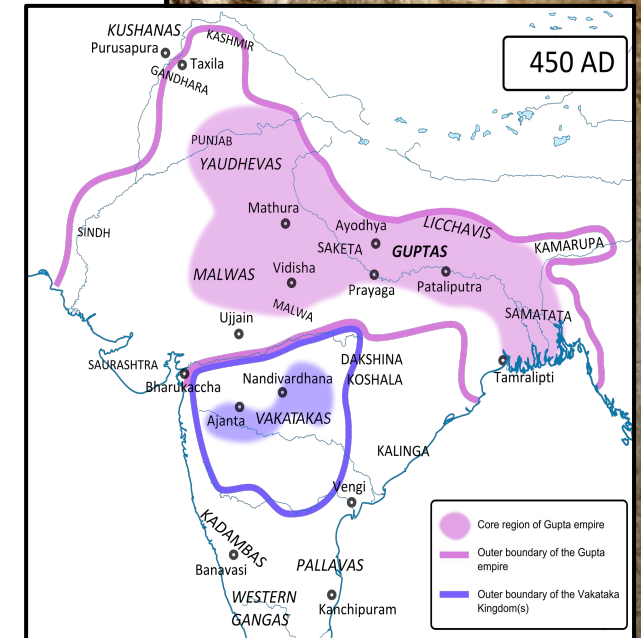
Known as the **Gupta Empire** (350-543 CE), the empire, started by king **Sri Gupta**, ushered in a period referred to historians as the '**Golden Age of India**'

With a centralized imperial state system, political and economic stability allowed trade, knowledge, and prosperity to grow rapidly in the Gupta Empire

During the Gupta Empire, many of the definitive Indian cultural icons were developed, as Indian art, poetry, science, mathematics, and architecture flourished

Innovations such as the **modern algebraic system**, **number system**, **concept of zero**, **theories of a round Earth that rotates on its axis**, and iconic games like **chess** emerged

While the empire itself would end due to internal strike and Hunnic invaders from Central Asia, it left a lasting legacy on Indian and world history that extended well beyond its own time



China: The Warring States Period

Centuries of Chinese unity and relative peace under the Shang Dynasty and Zhou Dynasty were shattered in roughly 475 BCE as the weakening Zhou Dynasty succumbed to the **Warring States Period**, as seven smaller states began to war for power and recognition until 221 BCE

During this era, many rulers justified their efforts by claiming the Zhou had lost the Mandate, and, for more than two centuries, inhabitants of China dealt with constant war, death, famine, and instability

In response to the lack of traditional unity, many reformers began to contemplate new systems of thought to philosophy and law

One such system developed in the Chinese state of Qin as an alternative to previous religious models of thinking and behavior

Known as Legalism, the system emphasized the existence of a strong state built on moral law, strict secular laws and punishments, as well as administrative positions based on individual merit



The Qin Dynasty

The adoption of Legalism allowed **Shi Huangdi of Qin** to grow in efficiency and power, thus tipping the scales in its favor and eventually defeating the other kingdoms and ending the Warring States Period in 221 BCE

A skilled administrator, and adherent of the Legalist system, Shi Huangdi setup an effective central bureaucracy, public roads, a common currency, and established a formal written language

With no known record of contact with the western empires of ancient Persia, Greece, or Rome, the Qin Dynasty had independently created the first successful large-scale centralized empire in East Asia

Centered in the imperial capital city of **Chang'an**, the Qin Dynasty established a foundational state system for later Chinese dynasties, and successfully unified the regional kingdoms into an empire

Shi Huangdi was also able to push back the traditional enemy of China: the pastoralist **Xiongnu Confederacy** to the north, as well as mobilizing peasants to erect the first sections of what is now known as the **Great Wall of China**

The Qin Dynasty was, however, known for its hard-handedness regarding state policy, as well as the suppression of opposing philosophical ideals; the dynasty was weakened substantially following the death of Shi Huangdi



The Han Dynasty

Despite suppression by the hard-handed Qin Dynasty, Confucianism survived the Qin's reign and would eventually be adopted by the second imperial dynasty of China: the **Han Dynasty**

The Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE) emerged after the establishment of the rebel leader **Liu Bang** defeated his rivals and controlled imperial China after the fall of the Qin Dynasty

The Han issued in a Golden Age of imperial Chinese history, expanding territorially, as well as advancing Chinese culture, written language, poetry, art, medicine, technology, and philosophy

The Han state expanded trade, connecting, indirectly, with the Western world and the Roman Empire, developing the world's first trade between the two realms through a network of trade routes known collectively as the **Silk Roads** of Asia

Along with forming the name of China's primary ethnic group, the Han officially adopted Confucianism as the official state philosophy under **Emperor Wu** of Han in the 1st century BCE

Despite defeating and vassalizing a renewed Xiongnu Confederacy in the 2nd century BCE, the Han, repeated steppe raiding, administrative strife, and religiously-inspired rebellions would ultimately lead to the fall of the Han Dynasty by 220 CE

