

THE AGE OF THE POLIS

MOVING TOWARDS THE CLASSICAL GREEK CIVILIZATION

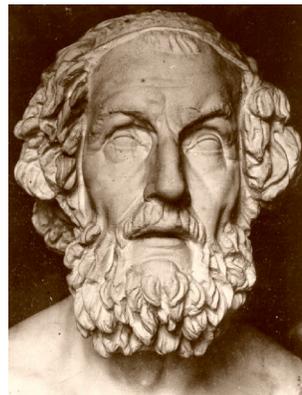
THE TROJAN WAR

- City of Troy (ILION)
 - in IONIA (Asia Minor), present day Turkey
- Long war with Mycenaeans
- Utterly destroyed ca. 1200 BC
- War over trade and resources?



HOW DID THE STORY SURVIVE?

- How do we get from 1200 BC to 800 BC?
 - oral history
 - passed from poet to poet
 - memorization or interpretation?
- Evolution of the story over time



- Whatever happened, it was clearly IMPORTANT and RESONANT to the Greeks
- They kept telling the story, kept transmitting
- the stories of the Trojan War were the DOMINANT CULTURAL ARTIFACT of the Greek Dark Ages.

The Iliad in the Archaic Age and Beyond

- Continued to be popular throughout entire ANCIENT GREEK PERIOD
 - the first UNITED GREEK ACTION
 - ONE PEOPLE, ONE PURPOSE
- sense of GREEK CULTURAL IDENTITY
- defining moment in establishment of GREEK CHARACTER

GREEK LIFE and BELIEFS

- WAR as means of resolving disputes
- All humans are DOOMED to DIE
 - The best that a person can do is to LIVE WELL
 - With GLORY (kleos), BRAVERY and HONOR
 - To win the RESPECT of other men
- BONDS of military companionship
- The importance of FATE
- The dominance of men over women

The GREEK CITY-STATES

- POLIS (pl. POLEIS)
- Fiercely independent
- Small populations
- Core of a man's IDENTITY
- PRIDE in their city's accomplishments
- Strong sense of COMMUNITY

The POLIS

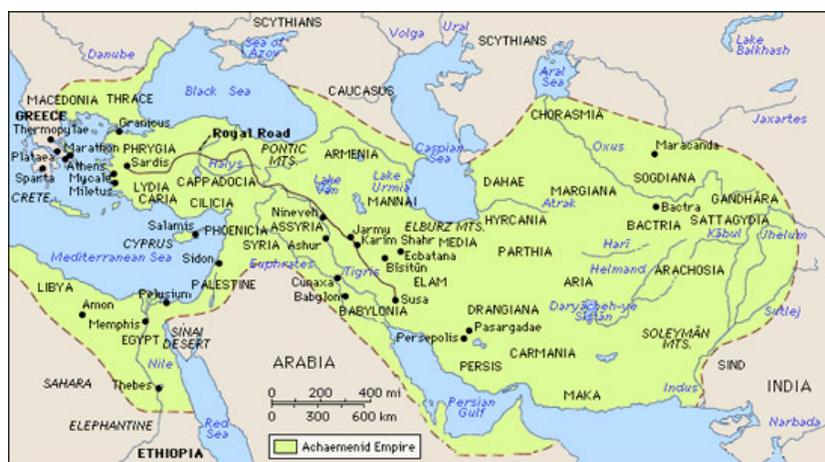
- Their own “patron” god or goddess
 - Main temple dedicated to that deity
 - Communal religious celebrations
 - Honored gods
 - Brought communities closer together
- separate political organization
 - Monarchies
 - Oligarchies
 - DEMOCRACY

GREECE?

- NOT a nation
 - Primary loyalty to city
- BUT men still considered themselves GREEK
 - Shared gods, shared language, shared values
 - They would gather together:
 - Religion, e.g. Oracle at Delphi
 - External threats, e.g. Persian War

PERSIA

- Founded ca. 560 BC by CYRUS the GREAT
- Rapid expansion, e.g. Ionia
- Huge land mass
- Huge population in the millions
- Incredibly VARIED population
 - Religions
 - Ethnicities
 - Languages



Persia in Peace

- Very de-centralized
 - Local administration: tyrants and SATRAPS
 - Tolerant of others' religions and beliefs
 - Only demanded PEACE and TAXES
 - Constructed an infrastructure
 - Road network
 - Courier system for a "royal mail"
- Remarkably stable

ZOROASTRIANISM

- Founded by Zarathustra (Zoroaster)
- DUALISTIC: battle between good & evil
- Supreme God = AHURA MAZDA
- Humans decide their own actions
 - Purity, Truth → salvation
 - Impurity, Lies → damnation
- Emphasis upon ETHICAL behavior