

## PART II THE GRECO-ROMAN AND JUDEO-CHRISTIAN ROOTS

### Chapter 6 The Culture of Rome

1. Before the deaths of Plato and Aristotle, the Greek cities upon which their political writings were based were becoming obsolete.
2. The divided and isolated Greek city-states were easy prey for Philip II of Macedon (382–336 B.C.).

#### I. Hellenistic and Roman History and Thought

##### A. Hellenistic Empires

1. With Alexander of Macedon the West took the offensive against the East.
2. The armies of Macedon and Greece invaded and conquered the Persian east including all of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and even as far as India.
3. Alexander spread the Greek language and culture to these newly conquered territories.
4. Greek culture became more sophisticated and cosmopolitan while remaining Greek.
5. Freedom from the integrated life of the polis made people uneasy and curious about modes of religious and ethical outlook.

##### B. Stoicism

1. Among the many new philosophies of this period, Stoicism had the most promising future.
2. Stoicism was first taught by Zeno (322–264 B.C.) at Athens.
3. Stoicism taught the primacy of *reason*, a divine essence that lies behind everything that happens.
4. Each human being is rational and all are equal, slave and free, according to Stoicism.
5. Early Stoics believed in a doctrine of “apathy,” indifference to all except the pursuit of virtue, regardless of the cost.
6. Stoicism became less stringent and more reconciled to human weakness over time.

##### C. Epicureanism

1. Epicureanism was another Hellenistic philosophy during this period of world empire.
2. Epicurus, a contemporary of Zeno, founded Epicureanism.
3. Fear of gods and anxiety about life after death were the chief causes of strife in the world, according to Epicurus.
4. Epicurus advocated the reasonable pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain.
5. The works of Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Epicurus were widely circulated in Rome during the second century B.C.
6. The Stoicism of Zeno was the most influential philosophy at this time.

##### D. The Rise of Rome

1. The great Macedonian Empire of Alexander was unstable.
2. After Alexander’s death, the empire was divided among his generals and quickly disintegrated.
3. Rome filled the power vacuum in the century following the demise of Alexander’s Hellenistic Empire.

4. Initially Rome was just one of several small city-states on the Italian peninsula.
5. Rome worked out a republican form of government which reluctantly shared power beyond the elite property class.
6. Eventually Rome created a federation of the city-states, subordinated to Rome but sensitive to local customs.

E. Augustus Caesar (63 B.C.–A.D. 14)

1. Augustus tried to restore republican institutions, especially the Senate.
2. He assumed the title of *princeps* (foremost) and controlled the army and the empire's finances.
3. Over the next two centuries, the role of princeps assumed greater power in relation to the Senate.
4. Augustus' reign began two hundred years of peace, the *Pax Romana*.

F. Roman Law

1. The Roman Empire was a myriad of city-states and subject kingdoms with no uniform legal code.
2. A unified system of Roman law was a centuries old work-in-progress from when the empire had fallen to the barbarians.
3. Rome imposed its own basic laws and procedures, the *jus gentium*, throughout its empire.

G. Cicero (106–43 B.C.)

1. Cicero was the most gifted orator of his day and a defender of republican institutions from the threat of both dictatorship and anarchy.
2. Cicero translated Greek philosophers into Latin and wrote numerous philosophical works of his own.
3. A Stoic, Cicero was vitally concerned with moral philosophy.

H. The Questions of Slavery and Women

1. Despite their assertion of the equality of mankind, Romans did not challenge the institution of slavery or advocate for equal rights for women.
2. Women did enjoy greater rights, power, and status during the Roman Empire than in ancient Greece.

II. Roman Art and Architecture

1. The practical and orderly aspects of Roman life are expressed in Roman art and architecture.
2. Roman art and buildings were not motivated by a pursuit of beauty but to proclaim the Roman system to the world.

B. Roman Sculpture

1. Roman sculptures idealized likenesses of actual people.
2. Unlike the Greek, Roman sculpture emphasized the real over the ideal.

C. Roman Architecture

1. Roman architecture was Greek-influenced but largely derived from the Etruscans, a powerful tribe from the Italian peninsula.
2. Rome was less divided between sacred and secular areas compared with Greece or other ancient civilizations.
3. The Romans were among the first city planners.

4. The Roman Pantheon represents the first important interior architectural space.

### III. Roman Literature

1. As with other aspects of their culture, the Romans sought out Greek models for their literature.
2. The Romans were already a great power before they began to develop a literary tradition.
3. The first works were Roman translations of Homer and Greek comedies.
4. Two Roman playwrights whose works survive are Plautus and Terrence (195–155 B.C), who was a slave of African origin.
5. Roman oratory and rhetoric, of which Cicero is the most well known, arose in the first century B.C.
6. The philosophic poetry of Lucretius and Catullus, who admired and imitated Sappho, were Roman works from the first century B.C.

#### A. Virgil (70–19 B.C.) and the *Aeneid*

1. Virgil was Rome's greatest poet.
2. The *Aeneid* is an epic poem in praise of Rome written at the height of its power.
3. The *Aeneid* was influenced by Homer, but it is a written work, meant to be read instead of heard.
4. Virgil's hero is much less individualistic than those of Homer.
5. The cultural values asserted in this epic are clearly Roman.
6. The Romans took pride in their practicality, administrative skills, and system of laws.

#### B. Ovid (43 B.C.–A.D. 17/18)

1. Ovid's most famous work is *Metamorphoses*.
2. *Metamorphoses* recounts two hundred legends and myths.
3. Ovid was a sensual poet with a keen eye for natural beauty.

#### C. Horace (65–8 B.C.)

1. Horace was one of the great poets of the Augustan Age.
2. His later poems celebrate the emperor's policies and ideals.
3. Horace believed a poem should be both pleasing and useful, with patriotic, philosophical, or moral messages.

#### D. Satire

1. The Romans did not invent satire but they developed it into a literary form.
2. In earlier cultures satire and other forms of verbal invective were believed to have magical powers to injure an enemy.
3. Horace and other Roman poets wrote verse satire.
4. Juvenal was one of the great Roman satirists.