

PERSIAN Chart for Classical Civilizations

ERA: 600 B.C.E. to 600 C.E.	Persia (The Achaemenid Empire)
<p><u>POLITICAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders/groups • Forms of government • Empires • State building/expansion • Political structures • Courts/laws • Nationalism/nations • Revolts/revolutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Medes and Persian, Indo-European migrating peoples, first organized themselves into clans and recognized leaders who collected taxes and delivered tribute to their Mesopotamia overlords (Babylonians and Assyrians). • Considerable military power with absolute rule • Achaemenid clan under Cyrus led a rebellion and conquered the Median clan bringing Iran under his control, and spread his empire from India to Egypt. • Darius centralized political administration for the empire. • Appointed governors to serve as agents of the central administration and oversee affairs in the numerous regions • 23 satrapies – administrative and taxation districts governed by satraps • Recruited local officials to fill all administrative posts below the level of satrap • Each satrapy had a contingent of military officers and tax collectors who served as checks on the satraps’ power and independence, and the rulers created a new category of officials (imperial spies) who were the “eyes and ears of the king” to avoid rebellion from the satraps. • Legal system was standardized, but did not abolish the laws of individual lands or peoples.
<p><u>ECONOMIC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural, pastoral • Economic systems • Labor systems/ organizations • Industrialization • Technology/industry • Capital/money • Business organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started off as mainly pastoralists with some agriculture, but agriculture became the foundation of the economy, including barley, wheat, peas, lentils, mustard, garlic, onions, cucumbers, dates, apples, pomegranates, pears and apricots • Formal tax levies and standardized laws – each satrapy had to pay a tribute in silver and a levy of horses and slaves; used tax collectors and record keepers to help manage the economy • Standardized coins modeled after the Lydians • Qanats (underground canals that allowed water to be distributed to fields without losing large quantities to evaporation due to exposure from the sun and the open air) enhanced agricultural production and population growth. • Iron tools helped with agriculture
<p><u>RELIGIOUS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief systems/ teachings • Philosophy • Holy books • Conversion • Key figures • Deities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious toleration (especially Cyrus the Great) • Various religious groups, such as Egyptian, Jews, Greeks, because of the size of the empire • Temple communities – religious sites that also served as economic areas • The earliest religions resembled those of the Aryans, recognizing the same gods and conducted similar sacrifices as those of the Brahmins in India. • Made ceremonial use of an hallucinogenic • Zoroastrianism began to emerge through oral transmission known as the Gathas, not strict monotheists; Ahura Mazda served as the supreme god. • Jewish population lived under the Achaemenid.

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<p><u>SOCIAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family/ kinship • Gender roles/relations • Social and economic classes • Racial/ ethnic factors • Entertainment • Lifestyles • “Haves” & “have nots” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse cultures; respected cultural traditions of the peoples they ruled • Warriors, priests, and peasants gave way to an educated bureaucracy • Free classes included artisans, craftsmen, merchants, and low-ranking civil servants • Large % of population was free individuals but did not have privileges of clan leaders and important bureaucrats. • Slaves were a large portion of the class system; became a slave either through captive in war or failure to adhere to demands or rebelled or as free citizens to pay off their debts.
<p><u>INTERACTIONS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • War/conflict • Diplomacy/treaties • Alliances • Exchanges between individuals, groups, & empires/nations • Trade/commerce • Globalization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possessed equestrian (horse) skills and were expert archers • Cyrus the Achaemenid conquered the weakening Assyrian and Babylonian empires. • Darius extended the empire even more conquering places India to the east, Egypt to the west, and Armenia to the North. • The Persian Wars and their effort to control Greece brought about the downfall of the Achaemenids. • Alexander the Great invaded and dissolved the Persian Empire, destroyed Persepolis, but proclaimed himself the legitimate successor of the Achaemenids.
<p><u>ARTS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art / Music • Writing/ Literature • Philosophy • Math / Science • Education • Architecture • Technology/ Innovations • Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built solid road system • Persian Royal Road stretched from the Aegean port of Ephesus to Sardis in Anatolia, through Mesopotamia to Susa in Iran with an extension to Persepolis. • Organized a courier service with 111 postal stations along the Royal Road (early version of the pony express) • Combination of imperial highways stretched 13,000 kilometers (8,000 miles) which aided in trade and communication • Construction of qanat-underground canals
<p><u>ENVIRONMENTAL</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Physical • Human/environment • Migration/movement • Region • Demography • Neighborhood • Settlement patterns • Disease • Urbanization/ cities (2 major) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arose in present-day Iran • Dug a canal linking the Nile with the Red Sea, which greatly expanded commerce and enriched Egypt • Medes and Persian people migrated from Asia to Mesopotamia, sharing cultural traits with their distant cousins, the Aryans. • Empire included over 35 million people under one state (empire) • Persepolis served as political center for the empire as well as a monument to the Achaemenid dynasty; structures included vast reception halls, lavish royal residences, and a well-protected treasury; the capital bustled with advisors, ministers, diplomats, scribes, accountants, translators, and bureaucratic officers for a variety of functions. Alexander the Great and his troops later conquered the city, confiscated the wealth stored in the treasury, paid his respects to the tomb of Cyrus, and then celebrated, “accidentally” burning the city to the ground.