

## CULTURAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAN

The urge to reproduce and the need to preserve the body are biological priorities. They come from the culmination of billions of years of genetic evolution. Humans share these needs along with most of the other animals and plants on the planet, we are biologically driven creatures. But as humans, we are much more than that, we are social creatures; and in a much more complex manner than any other creature. The ways we treat each other, our personal and public relationships can have as much influence on our behavior as our instincts do. Our cultures did not just spring up out of nowhere, they have undergone thousands of years of cultural evolution. The human mind has also had to evolve in order to keep up with these cultures.

Ancient Greece is known for its architecture, philosophy, poets, mathematicians, and Olympics. Among other things. That ancient Greeks founded a culture that we still identify with today, and many see it as the birthplace for western society. Ancient Greece is perhaps best known for its first practicing democracy. The term democracy comes from ancient Greek *dēmokratía*, meaning “rule of the people”<sup>1</sup> This practice ensured equal voice for all eligible citizens, of course, most of these city-states had some form of slavery.

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<sup>1</sup> [δημοκρατία](#) in Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, "A Greek-English Lexicon", at Perseus

The emergence of the Greek polis (or city-state) occurred during the Archaic age of Greece, around 2700 years ago. . A polis consisted of an urban centre, often fortified and with a sacred centre built on a natural acropolis or harbour, which controlled a surrounding territory (*chora*) of land. the city was usually fortified with a city wall (Sparta being a notable exception) and the agora space was created for civic and commercial activity. The separate polis were believe to be protected by different gods, and ceremonies offering tribute were routine. There were eventually over 1,000 *poleis* in the Greek World, but among the most important were Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, and Syracuse. The people who lived in these cities considered themselves citizens of the cities and not what was called Greece<sup>2</sup>.

Most of these city-states practiced democracy. The sixth century lawgiver Solon is said to have laid the foundations of Democracy with his efforts to “prevent the seizure of power by a single individual,”. In 594 B.C., Solon created the *ecclesia*, the governing body of Athens made up of male citizens over the age of 18 with a minimum of 2 years of military service completed. With the establishment of this governing body, Athenian citizens were guaranteed a say in political decisions, regardless of social class. If you were a citizen, a male citizen, of these cities your opinion was heard and your vote mattered. Excluded from voting were slaves, even freed slaves, women, children, and foreigners; women barely had any rights and had their movements restricted in public and were kept away from men, so everything was not perfect. In theory, male citizens of the Polis had equal political rights, however, in practice, aristocratic families usually dominated political power.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.history.com/topics/ancient-history/ancient-greece>

Sparta was another prominent ancient Greek city-state, it however was nothing like Athens. Sparta was a warrior society and they were looked up to in Greece for their military superiority. At the age of 7 boys in Sparta were sent off to state run barracks to train for the military, even those Spartans who were from elite families were expected to serve. Sparta was not a democracy, it was an oligarchy, Sparta was ruled by kings. The most popular of which may be Leonidas I, who is known for his role in the battle of Thermopylae, and is portrayed in the movie *300*. Women in Sparta could not vote, they held considerably more rights than any other women in Greece at the time. Women in Sparta could own land and their voices held influence over decisions in the family, whereas in Athens women were expected to be silent and obedient to their husbands. The ancient Greek city-states existed in a state of perpetual war, either with forces outside of Greece, or with other city-states. The 30-year Peloponnesian war was fought between Athens and Sparta, with Sparta winning but only at a heavy cost. Not long after all the of the southern Greek city-stes would be conquered by the Macedonian Greek King Philip and his son Alexander (the great).

Rome's history spans more than two and a half thousand years, since its legendary founding in 753 BC. Rome is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Rome has long been known as the "Eternal City", a name the Latin poet Tibullus (d. 19 BC), among others used. Beginning in the eighth century B.C., Ancient Rome grew from a small town on central Italy's Tiber River into an empire

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<sup>3</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rome>

that at its peak encompassed most of continental Europe, Britain, much of western Asia, northern Africa and the Mediterranean islands. Roman citizens were divided into two classes, the patricians, a small group of aristocratic families, and the plebeians, the lower class common folk.

Rome was initially known for its balance in government. The Greek historian Polybius wrote “the three kind of government, monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, were all found united in Rome and it was no easy thing to determine with assurance whether the entire state was a aristocracy, a democracy, or a monarchy.”<sup>4</sup> At the heart of the balanced system was the roman senate, a body of legislators all chosen from group of elite families. The Roman senate was an enduring institution, which lasted from the founding of Rome in 753BC all the way until 603AD.

The main function of the senate in early Rome was to set policy and advice the Consuls, the Consul was the highest elected political office in the Roman Republic. Each year two consuls were elected, there was two so that one could check the others power, also so that one could handle business at home while the other was out conducting military operations.<sup>5</sup> Once you had served as consul you were forbidden from serving for at least ten years. There was also the position of Dictator, which was to be invoked only if the republic was in eminent danger. The dictator was not subject to anyone and could act on his own without the Senate to change any roman law he saw fit. One of these dictators was Cincinnatus, whom the

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/imperialism/readings/polybius4.html>

<sup>5</sup> • Lintott, Andrew (2004). *The Constitution of the Roman Republic*. Oxford University Press. p. 104. [ISBN 0198150687](https://www.isbn-international.org/view/title/198150687).

city of Cincinnati is named after in Ohio. Cincinnatus is seen as a hero and model of Roman virtue because he was elected dictator to defend Rome from invaders, and once he completed his task he gave up the office, a position of absolute authority<sup>6</sup>.

Gaius Julius Caesar was born in 100BC; he would play a crucial role in the transformation of the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire. After a series of civil wars featuring Julius Caesar, and his resulting assassination on the floor of the senate, the Roman Empire was formed. The Empire was one of the largest empires in history, with holdings in Europe, Africa, and Asia encompassing an area of 5 million square kilometers that is divided among forty different modern countries.<sup>7</sup> The empire featured an autocratic form of government, where the emperor was the absolute ruler, this was accomplished with support of the army. Augustus was the founder of the Roman Empire and its first emperor.

The Empire would last from 27 BC to 476 AD, because of the Empire's vast extent and long endurance, the institutions and culture of Rome had a profound and lasting influence on the development of language, religion, architecture, philosophy, law, and forms of government in the territory it governed, particularly Europe, and by means of European expansionism throughout the modern world.

## Rise of Nation States

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<sup>6</sup> <http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/rulersleaderskings/p/Cincinnatus.htm>

<sup>7</sup> • Jo-Ann Shelton, *As the Romans Did* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 58.

Merriam-Webster defines *Nation-State* as a form of political organization under which a relatively homogeneous people inhabits a sovereign state; *especially*: a state containing one as opposed to several nationalities. The nation-state as we know it today is a fairly recent development. Before the 16th century most people didn't think of themselves as residents of a nation. They identified much more with the local town or village that they lived in. The local leader was the only person they had to answer to and people rarely thought of leadership beyond the local powers. The rules of law were often very different from one village to another. This would all change with the formation of the Nation State.

Some historians believe that the formation of the nation-state was a byproduct of 15<sup>th</sup> century map-making advancements. Once people could look at a map and see what part of the world they belonged to they could identify with it. Others believe that the French and American revolutions of the late-eighteenth century gave birth to the modern idea of the nation-state—a sovereign nation with a written constitution, ruled in the name of its equal citizens. During the days of the revolutions, all other states were still governed by some other form of government. For instance autocracy's such as dynastic monarchy, or rule by religious leaders. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> world war most of the planet saw the need for the right for self rule as a universal principle.

There are 4 characteristics of the modern nation-state. They are first territory, they must have ascertained and marked boundaries. They must also have

self-rule, nation-states rule themselves. Next they must have a population; people must live in the territories. Finally they must have an organized government of some sort, to manage all the people.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ask.com/question/four-basic-features-of-a-nation-state>