

## HANDOUT FOR LECTURE 9: 500 BCE, CENTRAL ASIA

### PEOPLE

Neo-Assyrian Empire (934-608 BCE)

Achaemenid Empire (ca. 550-330 BCE)

Darius (550-486 BCE)

Zoroaster (between 1500 BCE and 1000 BCE)

### CONCEPTS

Royal Road of Persians

Zoroastrianism (Ahura Mazda: deity)

Agiary (Gujarati word for 'places of fire')

Fire Ritual

Towers of Silence (*dakhma*)

Agora and acropolis

Stylobate, echinus, frieze, metope, peripetral

### PLACES

Dur Sharukin (700 BCE)

Persepolis (ca. 550-330 BCE)

Apadana and Throne Hall at Persepolis

Tomb of Darius, Persepolis (486 BCE)

Yazd, Iran

Agora of Athens

Parthenon (440s BCE)

Temple of Hephaestus

## ZOROASTRIANISM:

Zoroastrianism: a religion and philosophy based on the teachings of prophet Zoroaster (also known as Zarathustra). The Creator Ahura Mazda is all good, and no evil originates from him. Good and evil have distinct sources, with evil trying to destroy the creation of Mazda, and good trying to sustain it. Mazda is not immanent in the world; his creation is represented by a host of avatars, through whom his works are evident to humanity, and through whom worship of Mazda is ultimately directed.

- Unlike previous religions it was not just for the elites, but for all
  - It organized society by economic activities:
  - A religion of inflexible, hierarchical social organization
  - State Religion of the Persian Empire from about 400 BCE onward
  - Mountain top altars and towers of silence.
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### Ancient Egypt:

Ruled by temple functionaries in relationship to pharaohs.

Linear village along Nile with urban densities around palaces and temples. From 750 BCE onward, ruled more or less by outsiders: Kushites, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans.

Main economy: agriculture

### Persia:

Ruled by clan aristocracy. Cities were few and not seats of power. Power was located in the form of a mega- convention-center-palace.

Main economy: trans-continental trade

### Athens (and Greece in general):

Independent city states: Ruled through an assortment of political types, from republic to monarchy

Main economy: bronze, crafts and Mediterranean trade.

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