



Second Semester
Core Course B.A. History
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Cultural Transformation in Europe

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CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION IN EUROPE

BA HISTORY II Semester
Course Code 2B02 HIS

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UNIT I

ANCIENT GREEK CIVILIZATION

INTRODUCTION TO WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The traditions of Ancient Greece are seen as the beginning of Western Civilisation since it is the earliest example of western culture. The Greeks were the first to place human beings at the Centre of the Universe rather than Gods or Rulers. Much of our culture is based on their ideas. Minoan, Mycenaean and later Greek civilization all started in an area called the Aegean Basin. Which included the Peloponnesian Peninsula and the surrounding lands and islands of the Aegean Sea. Preceding the Greeks in the Aegean Basin were Minoan and Mycenaean civilizations. These two civilizations helped to shape what we would later recognize as Greek Civilization.

RISE AND GROWTH OF CITY STATES

About 800 B.C. the village communities which had been founded mainly upon tribal or clan organization, began to give way to larger political units. As trade and the need for defense increased, cities grew up around marketplaces and defensive fortifications seats of government for whole communities. Thus emerged the city state, the most famous unit of political society developed by the Greeks. Examples could be found in almost every section of the Hellenic world. Athens, Thebes and Megara on the main land; Sparta and Corinth on the Peloponnesus; Miletus on the shore of Asia Minor; and Mitylene and Samos on the islands of the Aegan Sea. They varied enormously in both area and population. Sparta with more than 3000 square miles and Athens with 1000 had by far the greatest extent; the others averaged less than 100. At the peak of their power Athens and Sparta, each with a population of about 4,00,000, had approximately three times the numerical strength of most of their neighboring states.