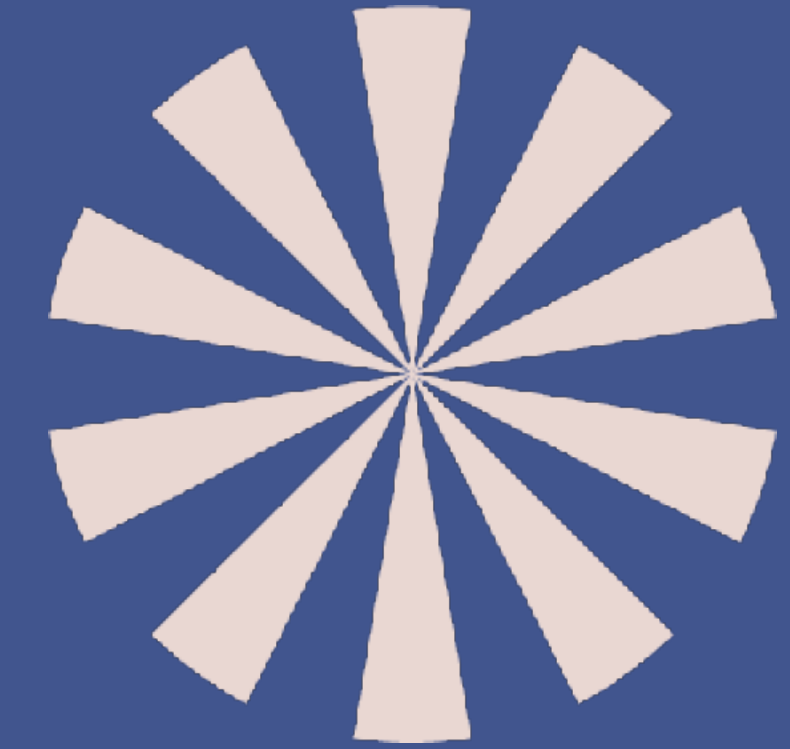

Greco-Roman Period

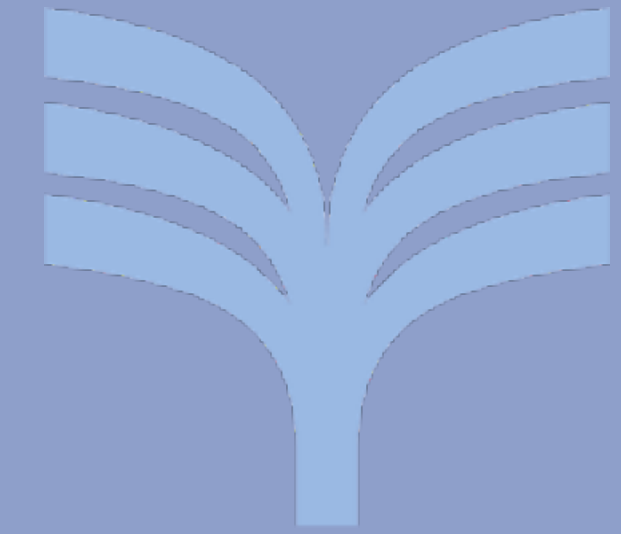


DR. KALYANI VALLATH

25 YEARS OF
EXCELLENCE



VTES IS NOW
Vallath



Greek Classicism

Ancient Greece

Three periods:

Archaic

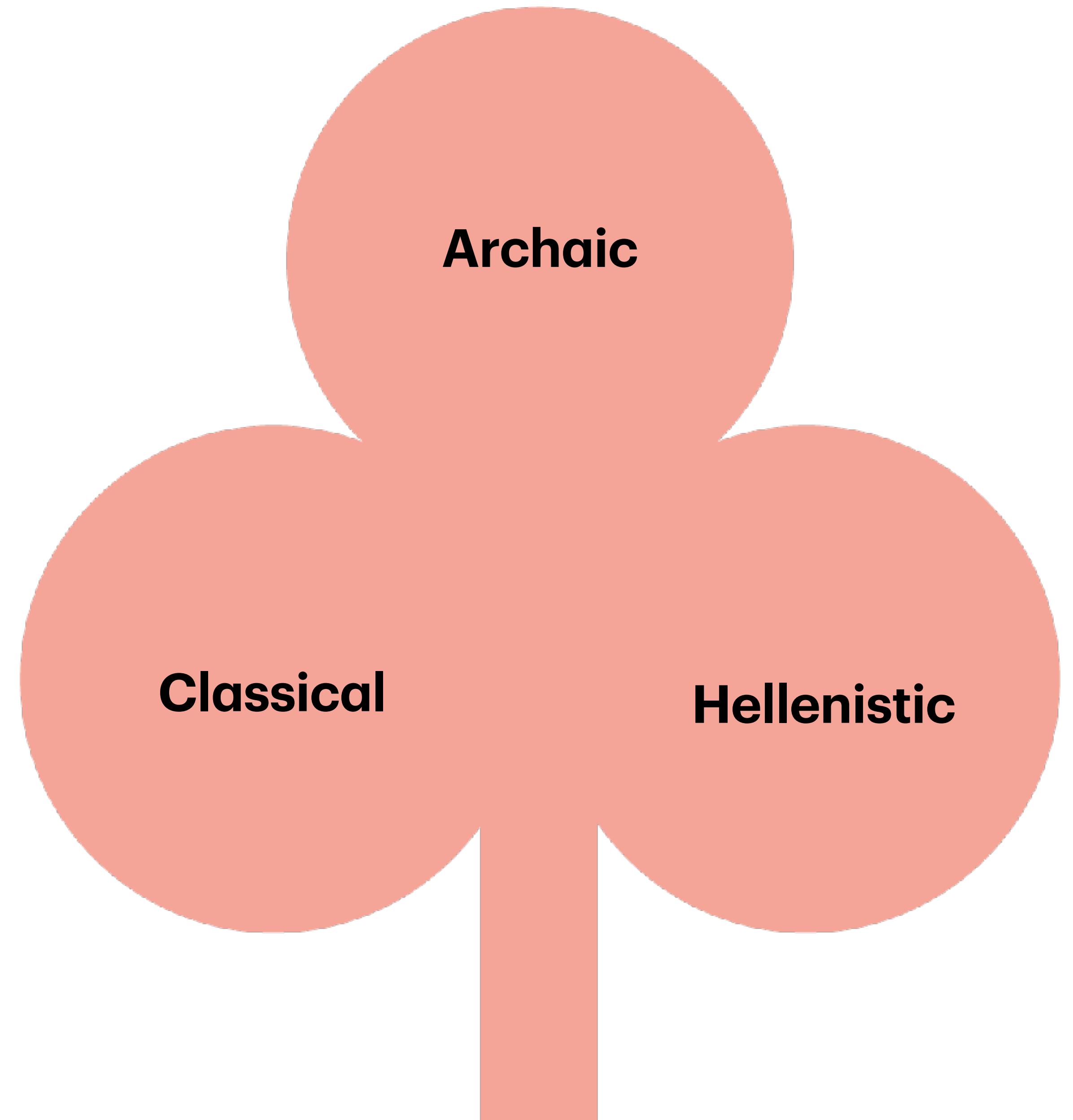
- Time of Homer
- Before this, it was the Greek Dark Ages, marked by ignorance, injustices, and various kinds of misery

Classical

- Flowering of arts and letters

Hellenistic

- Greece politically declined, but culturally dominated



Archaic Period



Period

- About 9th Century BC to 5th Century BC

City-states formed

- Constantly at war with one another
- Ruled by tyrants
- Persians were their common enemy

Poets

- Homer
- Hesiod
- Sappho

Homer (8th century BC)

- Greatest of the Greek epic poets
- Nothing definite known of his life
- Many Lives of Homer have been written from ancient period onwards
- Believed to have been a blind, a wandering minstrel



Works

The Iliad

- Epic
- One of the oldest extant (existing) works in Western literature
- Set against the Trojan War
- Deals mainly with the fighting between Agamemnon and Achilles

The Odyssey

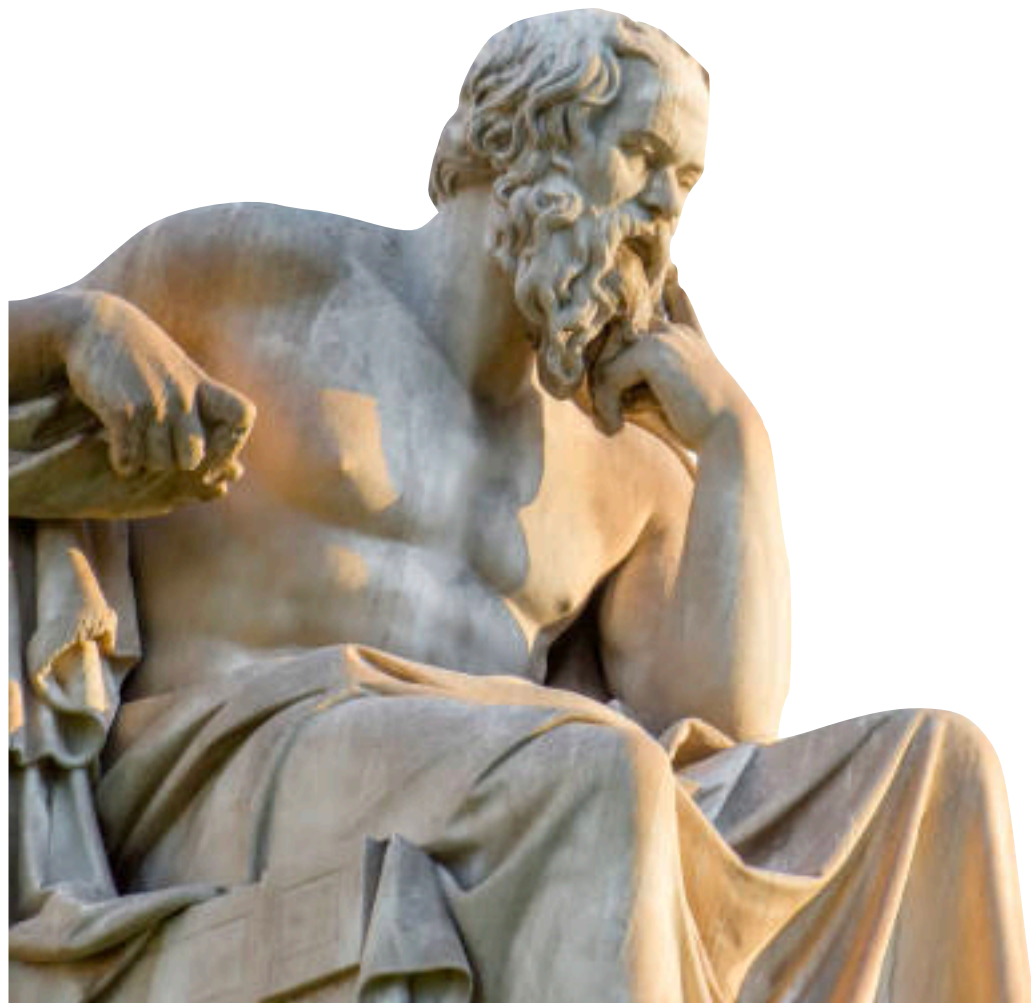
- Sequel to The Iliad
- Depicts the journey of Odysseus or Ulysses back home to Ithaca, after the fall of Troy

Classical Period



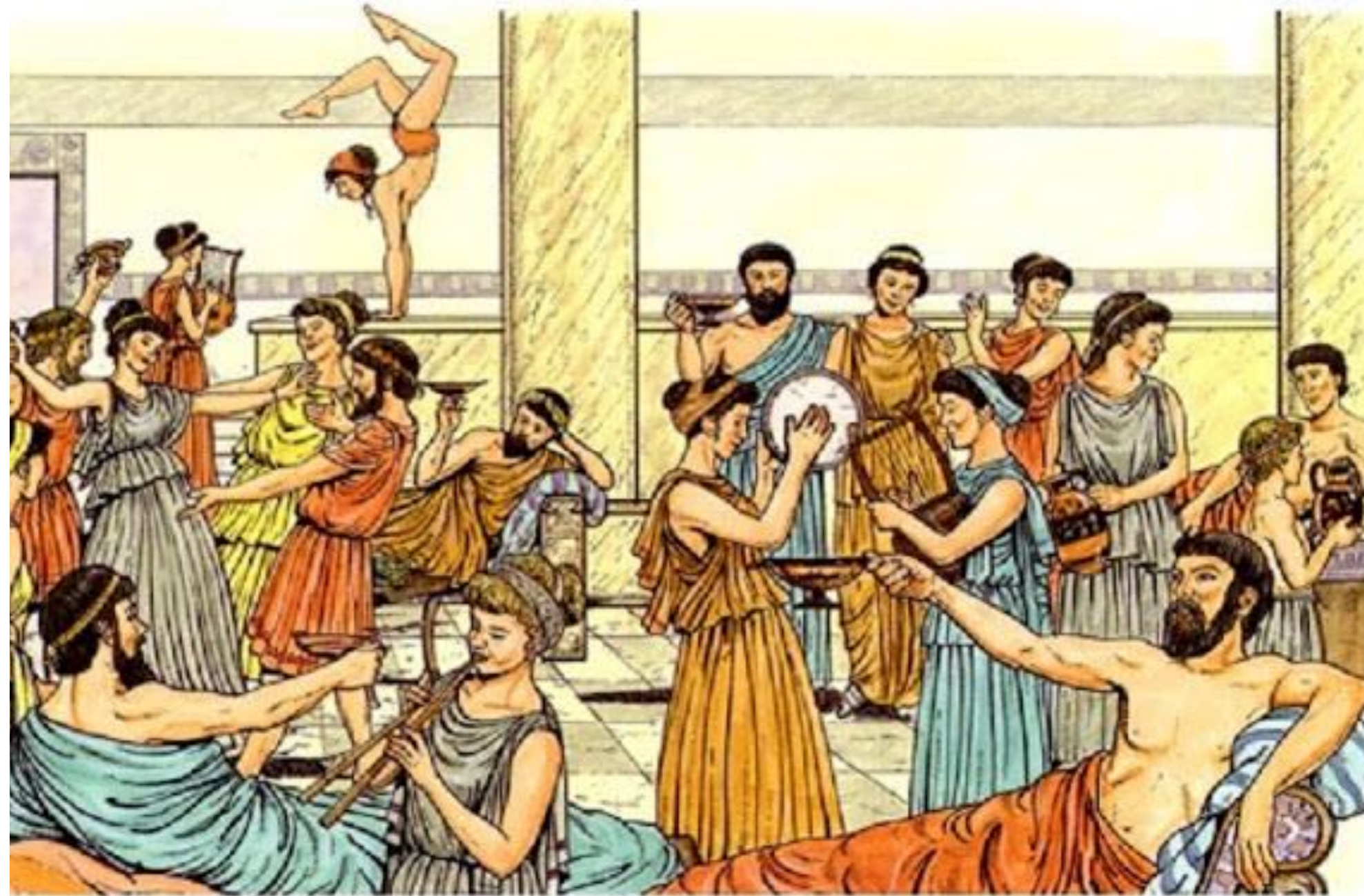
- 5th-4th century
- Athens
 - Athens emerged as the most powerful of the Greek city-states
 - Ruled by the famous ruler, Pericles
 - Tremendous flowering of the arts and letters
 - Disciplines such as political thought, aesthetics, physics, ethics, linguistics, biology, logic and mathematics developed

Rise of Philosophy



- Pre-Socratic philosophers (6th century BC)
 - Thales of Miletus
 - Anaximander
 - Xenophanes of Colophon
 - Pythagoras
 - Heraclitus
 - Parmenides
 - Zeno of Elea
 - The Sophists (founder Zeno of Citium)
- Socrates, Plato, Aristotle

Classical Drama



Tragedy

- Emerged in Athens in the late 6th century BC
- As a part of religious festival Dionysia
 - Dionysus is the god of wine and ecstasy
 - Known as Bacchus among the Romans

Comedy

- Developed later in association with the “satyr play”
- Usually based on mythological subjects

Greek Theatre



- Koilon or Theatron
- Orchestra
- Thymele
- Scene or Skene
- Proscenion or Proscenium
- Diazoma

Greek Tragedy: Structure



- Prologue
- Parados
- Episodes and Stasimon
- Exodus

The Tragedians

- 3 tragedians
 - Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides
- At the beginning, there was only one actor in a tragedy, who interacted with the Chorus
- Aeschylus
 - Introduced the second actor and thus brought variety into drama (says Aristotle in Poetics)
 - Chorus has less importance
 - Made costumes more elaborate
- Sophocles
 - Introduced the third actor
 - No more than three actors were there in Greek tragedy



Aeschylus

(c. 525-c. 456 BC)

- Father of tragedy
- In the competitions held at the festival of Dionysia, Aeschylus always won the first prize
- His plays had a strong moral and religious basis
- Most famous work is the trilogy The Oresteia
- Sons Euphorion and Euaeon became tragic poets



The Oresteia



- A trilogy
 - Agamemnon
 - The Libation Bearers (Choephoroi)
 - The Eumenides
- Satyr Play Proteus
(lost except for two lines)

The Oresteia



- Story of the Greek hero Agamemnon, who is killed by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus
- Clytemnestra is the twin sister of Helen of Troy
- Helen and Clytemnestra were born of the “double egg” laid by Leda, the swan, who was raped by Zeus
- Agamemnon’s children Orestes and Electra take revenge upon her
- Orestes kills Clytemnestra, his mother
- Orestes is haunted by the Eumenides, as a punishment for committing matricide

Other Extant Plays

- The Persians
- The Suppliants
- Seven Against Thebes
- Prometheia
 - Prometheus Bound
 - Prometheus Unbound
 - Prometheus, the Fire-Bringer

Sophocles

- Also won prizes in dramatic competitions
- Believed to have written over a hundred plays; most of them lost.
- Initially imitated Aeschylus, but later developed a style of his own.
- Characters are more developed and individualistic than those of Aeschylus
- Theban Trilogy: Oedipus Rex (Oedipus the King), Oedipus at Colonus and Antigone



Oedipus Tyrannus (Latin, Oedipus Rex)



- When Oedipus is born to Laius and Jocasta, the King and Queen of Thebes, the Delphic Oracle prophesizes that he will kill his father and marry his mother
- Oedipus's parents sent the child to be killed, but he is brought up by a childless couple
- Oedipus eventually comes to know of the prophecy
- One day, he quarrels with a man and kills him, without knowing that he is his father, Laius
- By solving the riddle of the sphinx, Oedipus becomes the King of Thebes, marries the widowed queen, Jocasta, and has children by her
- When the truth is revealed by another prophecy, Jocasta kills herself and Oedipus blinds himself



Oedipus Colonus

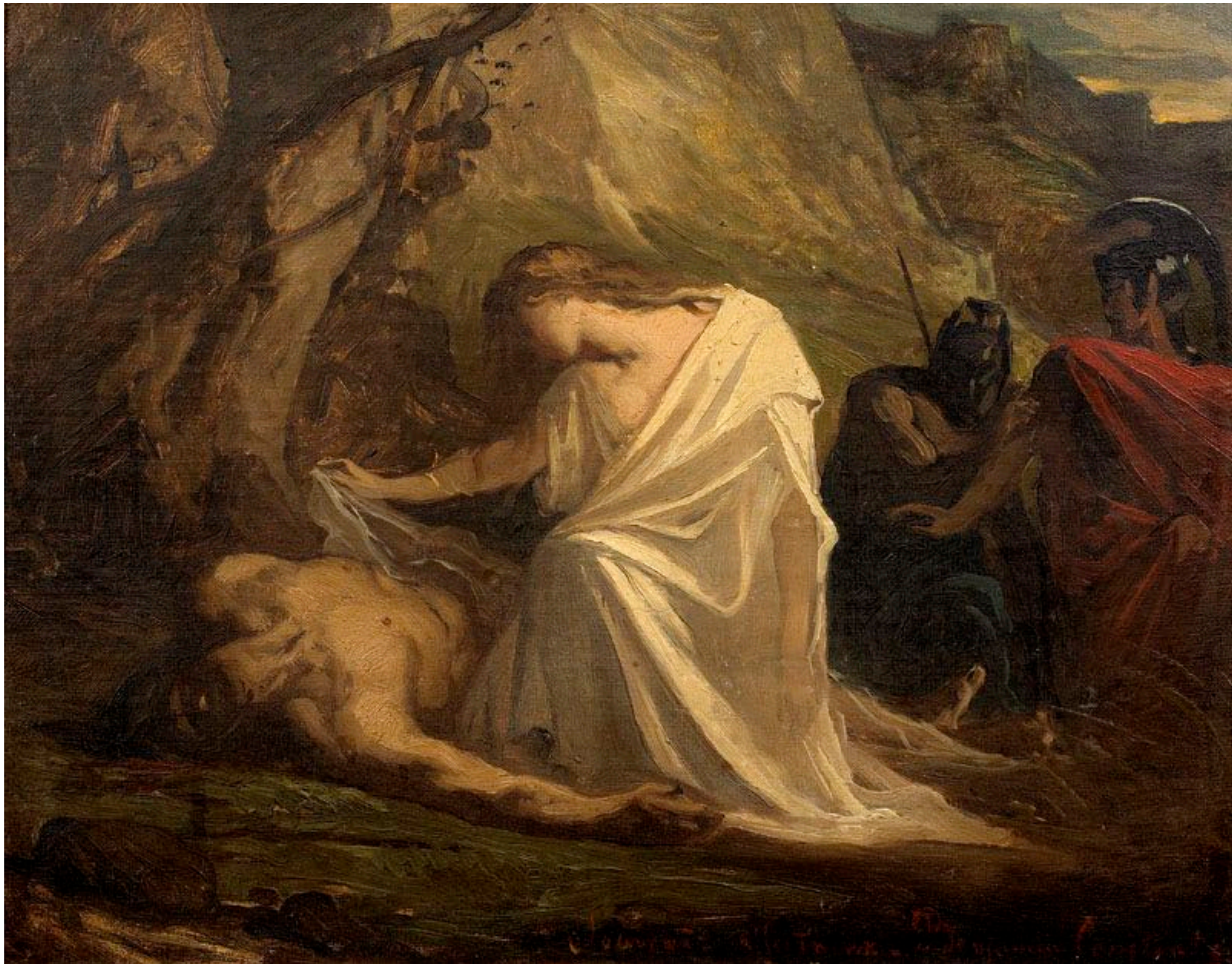


- The last of the Theban plays to be written
- Starts in the grove of the Furies where Oedipus is a miserable beggar dressed in rags living in the company of his daughter Antigone
- King Theseus is kind to him, but he is neglected by his sons who are fighting each other
 - Oedipus knows it is because of his own curse, and will lead to their destruction
- Creon comes and tries to take Oedipus back to Thebes
 - Oedipus's death is prophesied to bring good fortune to the place where he dies and he refuses to leave Colonus
- Oedipus dies and is mourned by his daughters
- Theseus defends Colonus from Creon's army
- Polynices and Eteocles kill each other and Antigone decides to bury Polynices' body

Antigone



- Polynices and Eteocles have killed each other in a civil war
- King Creon gives Eteocles a hero's burial but leaves Polynices's body at the gates of Thebes as a punishment for rebelling against the state
- Antigone defies the law of the state and does her duty—buries her brother's body
- Creon warns Creon against making gods angry, but the king orders for her to be walled up alive in a cave
- Though Creon eventually relents, Antigone hangs herself in the cave
- Creon's son Harmon who loved her kills himself and so does Creon's wife Euridyce
- Creon's stubbornness and pride thus destroys him
- The play shows the conflict between the laws of the gods and the laws of the state



Other Extant Plays

- Ajax
- Women of Trachis
- Electra
- Philoctetes



Euripides

- Author of over ninety plays, much of it lost
- Took the major step of depicting mythical heroes as ordinary people with inner lives and motives
- In his intellectual daring, Euripides is often compared to Socrates. (Neither of them cared much for accepted conventions and advocated unconventional and new ideas)
- Comic poets like Aristophanes lampooned Euripides as well as Socrates in their plays.
- Euripides's most famous play is Medea





Some Extant Plays



- Hippolytus
- Andromache
- The Trojan Women
- Iphigenia in Tauris
- Phoenician Women
- Orestes
- Bacchae
- Cyclops

Aristophanes

- 5th century BC
- Stalwart of comedy, which came to be known as Old Comedy, in contrast with the New Comedy of Menander
- Eleven surviving plays
- **The Clouds**
 - Cruelly caricatured Socrates, which led to the philosopher's trial and death according to Plato
- **The Wasps**
 - Through the character Philocleon, makes fun of the Athenians' excessiveness fondness of lawsuits
- **Lysistrata**
 - A woman ends the Peloponnesian War by getting women of the land to deny sex to their men
- **The Frogs**
 - Here, Dionysus himself, dressed in an absurd fashion, goes to Hades to bring back the best playwright from death
 - There is a famous scene in the play between Aeschylus and Euripides, regarding who is the better poet.



Menander

- 4th century BC
- Associated with New Comedy
- More generalized situations and stock characters
 - In contrast to Old Comedy of Aristophanes, which satirized real individuals and local issues
- Menander's New Comedy eventually led to the development of Comedy of Manners



Plays

- Much of Menander's work was considered lost, except for small fragments
- In 1907, a manuscript called Cairo Codex was discovered which contains large portions of many plays
- **Dyskolos**
- **Samia**
- **Perikeiromene** (The Girl with Her Hair Cut Short)
- **Epitrepontes**

Pindar

- 5th cent BC poet, at the beginning of the Classical Period
- Odes
 - Encomiastic
 - Accompanied by music and dance
 - Bold and formal language
 - Three types of stanzas in each ode, based on choral dance positions: strophe, anti-strophe and epode
- A major group of Pindar's odes are the "Victory Odes"
- A variation of the Pindaric Ode, called Irregular Ode, was developed by Abraham Cowley



Plato

(c. 428 BC-c. 348 BC)

- Born of an aristocratic family in the island of Aegina near Athens in 428 BC
- Real name was Aristocles, which means “glorious” and he was called Plato, meaning “broad-shouldered”
- Received excellent education, which aroused in him a respect for tradition and a keen political sensibility
- By the age of 20, like all young men of Athens, Plato came under the influence of Socrates



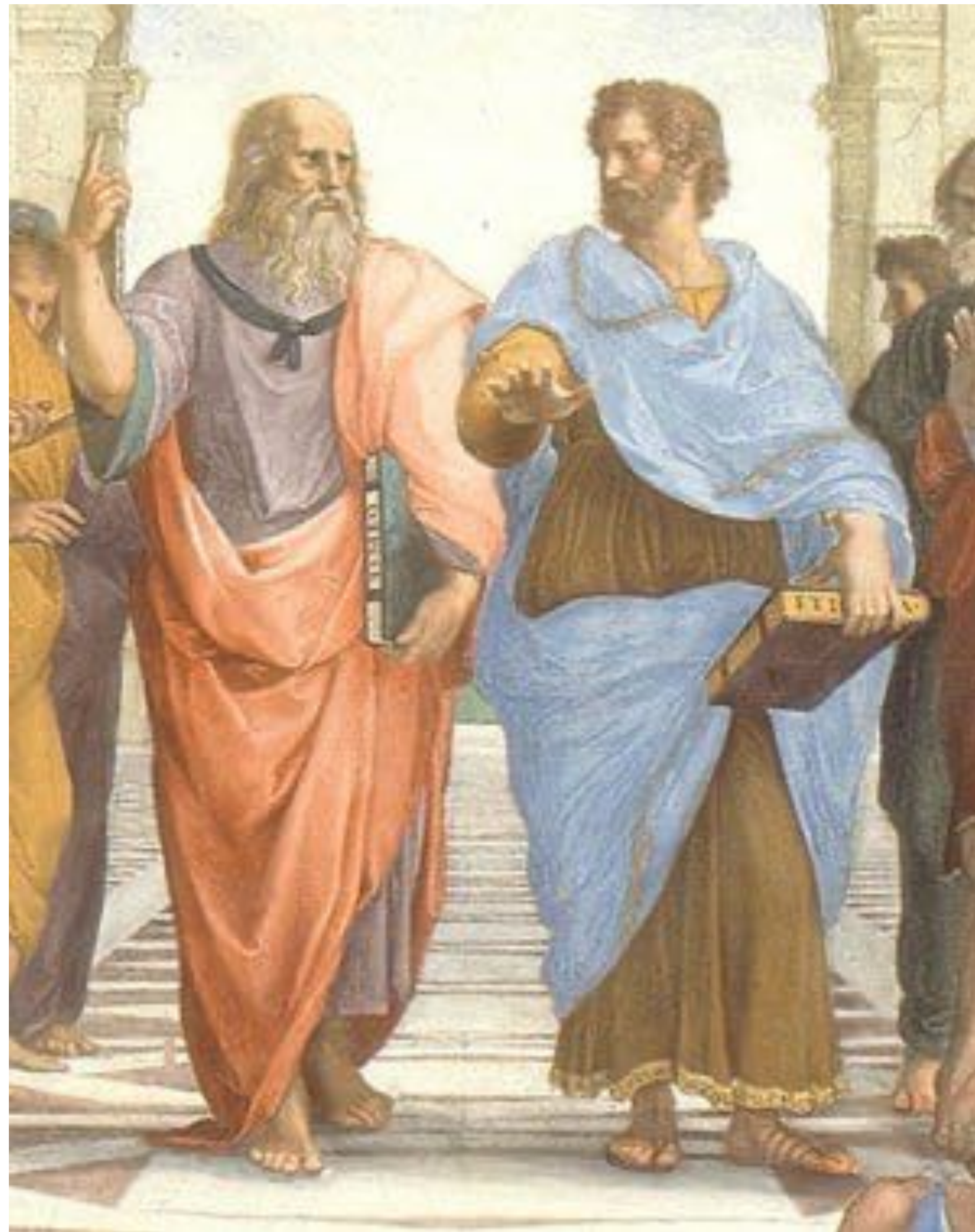
The Academy



- After the death of Socrates in 399 BC, Plato left Athens and travelled to Italy, Sicily and Egypt
- Later, he returned to Athens
- In 387 B.C. Plato, along with the mathematician Thaletus, founded the philosophical school, the Academy
- The Academy became very famous due to the Neoplatonists, and functioned until A.D. 526, when it was closed down by emperor Justinian for its pagan orientations
- At Plato's Academy, subjects like mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, biology and political theory were taught
- At the gate of the academy was written: "Let no one without mathematics (geometry) enter."
- Aristotle was a student at the Academy, and later teacher

The Dialogues

- Much of Plato's philosophy is in the form of dialogues, usually between Socrates and someone else
 - Called Socratic Dialogues
 - Deal with some moral or philosophical problem
- 36 Dialogues, including
 - Republic, Protagoras, Apology, Gorgias, Ion, Phaedrus
- Republic is a vindication of the idea that good life is possible only in an ideal state. And the aim of a good life is justice.
- Never wrote a single work on poetry. His ideas on poetry have to be extracted from various Dialogues



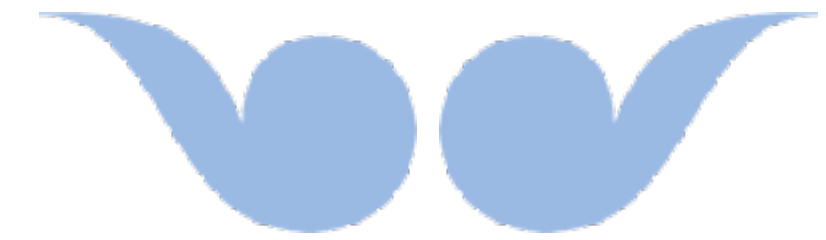
Aristotle

(384 BC-322 BC)

- Aristotle was born to a well-to-do family in the Macedonian town of Stagira in 384 BC
- His father, Nicomachus, was a physician
- In 367, when Aristotle was seventeen, his uncle sent him to Athens to study at Plato's Academy
 - Spent 20 years there, as a pupil and as a teacher
- After Plato's death, Aristotle left the Academy



Life away from Athens



- Joined the philosophical circle of Hermeias in Assos, in Asia Minor, where Hermeias was the tyrant
- When Hermeias was killed by the Persians, Aristotle moved to the island of Lesbos in the eastern Aegean
- Joined another former Academic, Theophrastus in biological studies
- Philip of Macedon invited Aristotle to serve as tutor to his thirteen-year-old son Alexander.

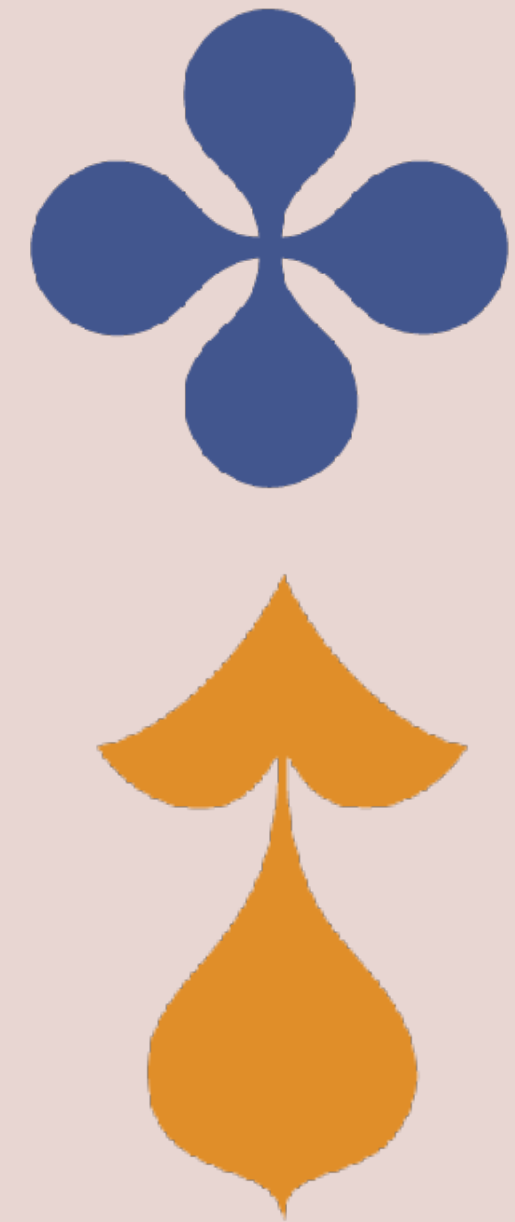
Lyceum and After



- Back in Athens, founded his own school, Lyceum
- Most of his great works written during this period
- Under his direction, his students and associates carried out research on philosophical and scientific topics
- In 323 BC, Alexander died
- Aristotle once again left Athens and took refuge in his mother's birthplace, Chalcis
- He died in 322 at the age of sixty-two

Aristotle's Works

- What the Westerners know of Aristotle today was left to them by Arab philosophers such as Averroes in the twelfth century
- The works known in Aristotle's own lifetime were some 27 dialogues modelled on those of Plato, but these are now lost
- Surviving works include Poetics, Rhetoric and Nichomachean Ethics
- Poetics
 - Written for serious students in the manner of notes for lectures
 - First edited by Andronicus in the first century BC



Greek Historians

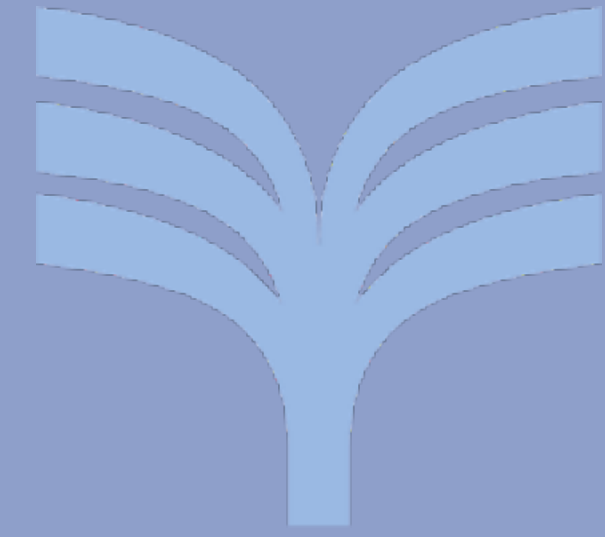


- Herodotus
- Thucydides
- Polybius
- Plutarch
 - Philosopher, teacher, biographer
 - Wrote Parallel Lives

Hellenistic Period

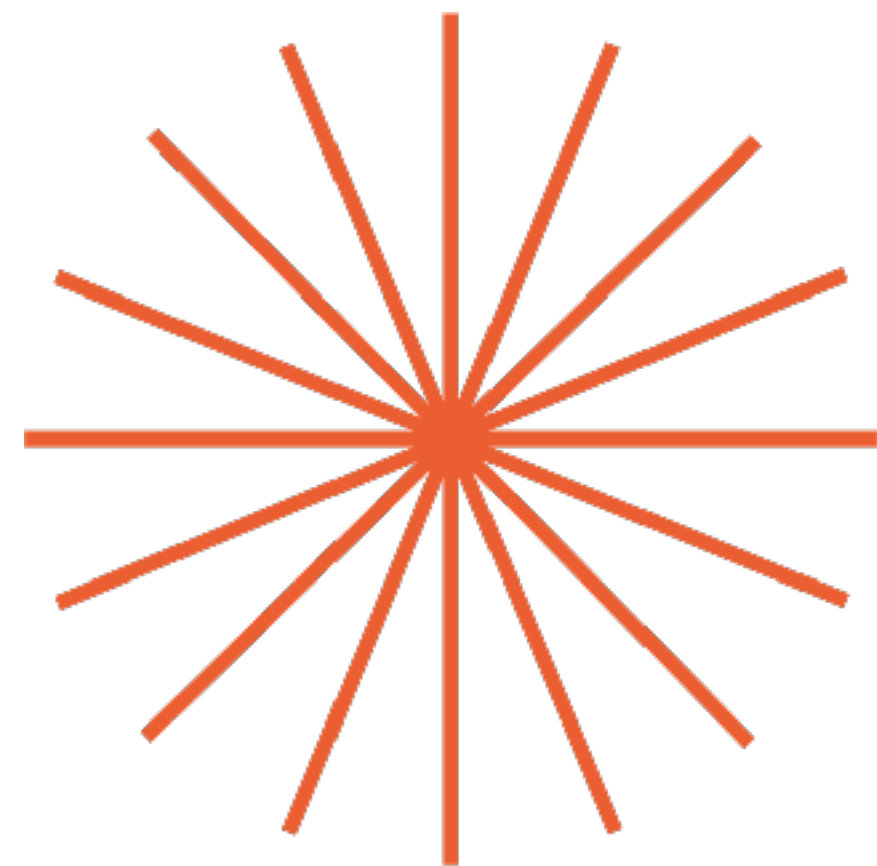


- The period is from the time of Alexander the Great
 - Alexander died in 323 BC
 - Alexander's successors established Greek cities and kingdoms in Asia and Africa
- Upto the Roman annexation of Greece in 146 BC (2nd cent.)
 - After this, the "Roman period" in Greece
- Rise of the Roman Empire during this period
 - Rise of Roman Classicism



Roman Classicism

Early Roman History



- In Rome, monarchy was overthrown and replaced by the republic in the 6th century BC
- 1st cent. BC: Transitional period, Republic was transforming into an Empire
- Caesar, Pompey and Crassus formed First Triumvirate
- Julius Caesar rose to being dictator (equivalent of emperor)
- On the Ides of March, that means the 15th of March, 44 BC, Julius Caesar was assassinated by the republicans (people who supported the republic against the empire)
- Civil War broke out between republicans and Caesar's supporters

Roman Classicism



- Profoundly influenced by Greek philosophy, culture and literature
- **Stoic philosophy**
 - Duty, discipline, political involvement
- **Epicureanism**
 - Pleasures of everyday life
 - As in the expression “Carpe Diem”
- **Skepticism**
 - Loss of belief in higher values
 - Beauty is fleeting
- **Cynicism**
 - The belief that people are motivated purely by self-interest
- Roman Classicism influenced European Renaissance

Virgil

(70-19 BC)

- Father of pastoral poetry
 - Eclogues (or Bucolics)
 - Georgics
- **The Aeneid**
 - Epic modelled after Homer's Iliad and Odyssey
 - Follows the Trojan refugee Aeneas as he struggles to fulfil his destiny and arrive on the shores of Italy, thus founding the city of Rome
 - Makes use of the symbolism of the Augustan regime
 - Strong associations between Augustus and Aeneas, the one as founder, and the other as rebounder of Rome
- Virgil's work has profound influence on Western literature
 - In Dante's Divine Comedy, Virgil appears as Dante's guide through hell and purgatory



Horace

(65-08 BC)

- Roman classicist who lived in the first century BC
- **Odes**
 - Homostrophic (same stanza throughout the ode)
 - Calm, meditative, colloquial
- **Satires**
 - Speaker is an urbane, witty, tolerant man of the world
 - Aimed “to laugh people out of their follies”
- **Epistles (Letters)**
 - Ars Poetica (Epistle to Piso)



Ovid

(43 BC-c. AD 17)

- Witty, sophisticated love poems
- **Ars Amatoria (The Art of Love)**
 - Scientific, didactic work on how to find and keep a lover
 - Humorous satirical style
- **Metamorphoses**
 - Narrative poem beginning with the creation of the world and ending in Ovid's time
 - The greatest source of mythology for Renaissance writers
- Augustus Caesar banished Ovid to an isolated island and he died in exile
 - This is the story of David Malouf's novella *An Imaginary Life* (1978)



Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC-AD 65)

- Roman statesman, dramatist, poet and Stoic philosopher
- Emperor Nero's teacher and confidant
 - It is legendary that Nero played the fiddle while Rome burnt
- Seneca committed forced suicide at Nero's orders
- Upheld the principles of Stoicism, Cynicism & Epicureanism
- Tragedies of Blood
 - Intense, violent melodramas in rhetorical language
 - Famous: Thyestes
- Senecan revenge tragedies rediscovered by Italian humanists in the mid-16th century; became the models for tragedy on the Renaissance stage



Major Plays



- Thyestes
- Agamemnon
- Oedipus
- Phaedra
- Medea

Plautus

(c. 254 BC-184 BC)

- Wrote comedies that are versions of Greek New Comedy
- Stock characters: young men in love with slave girls, mistaken identities, cunning servants, deceived masters
- **Amphitryon**
- **Menaechmi**
- **Cistellaria** (The Casket Comedy)
- **Miles Gloriosus** (The Swaggering Soldier)
- Rediscovered in the Renaissance, Plautine plots furnished the basis for hundreds of comedies in every European language
 - English Restoration Comedy is Plautine in form and spirit



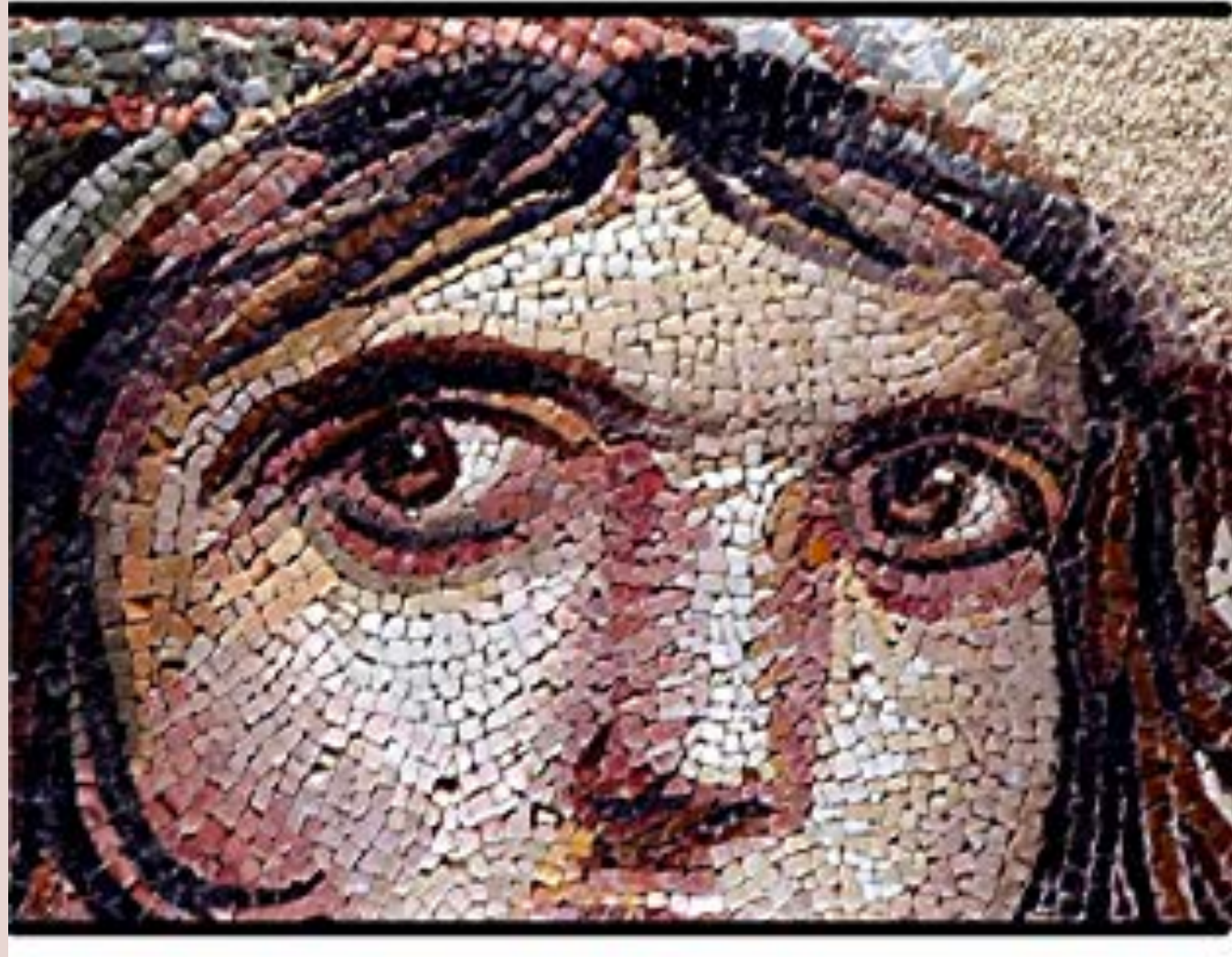
Terence

(c. 195 BC-159 BC)

- Younger contemporary of Plautus, who wrote comedies that are the earliest intact works of Roman literature
- Slave who was later freed
- More refined style of expression
- Plays are Latin versions of Greek plots
- All his 6 comedies have survived



Extant Plays



- Phormio (The Scheming Parasite)
- Andria (The Girl from Andros)
- Adelphoe
- Heauton Timorumenos (The Self-Tormentor)
- The Eunuchs
- Hecyra (The Mother-in-Law)

Cicero

(106 BC-43 BC)

- Statesman, lawyer, scholar, writer and orator
- Upheld republicanism during the final civil war of Roman Republic that killed Julius Caesar
- Founder of Ciceronian rhetoric
 - A kind of dramatic performance where judgment is possible because the speaker and audience assume character roles
- Wrote very famous historical and philosophical works
 - “On Arguments” (De Inventione)
 - “On the Orator” (De Oratore)
 - “On the Commonwealth” (De Re Publica)
 - "On Laws" (De Legibus)

