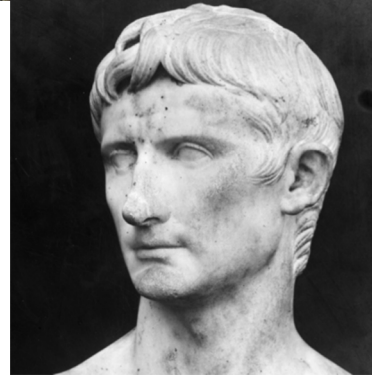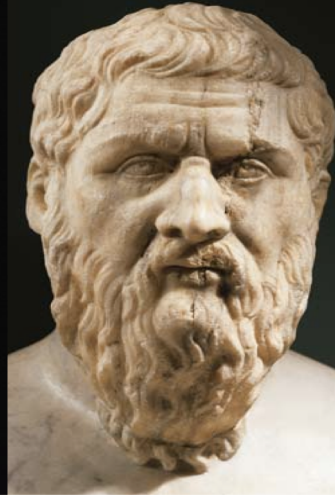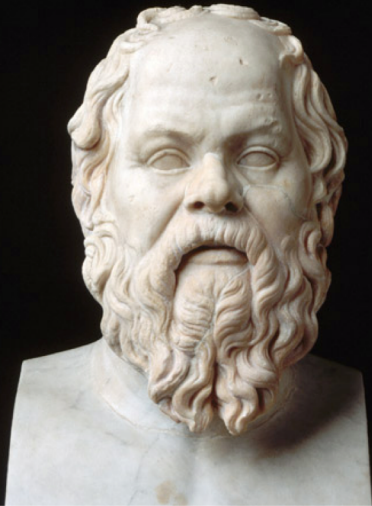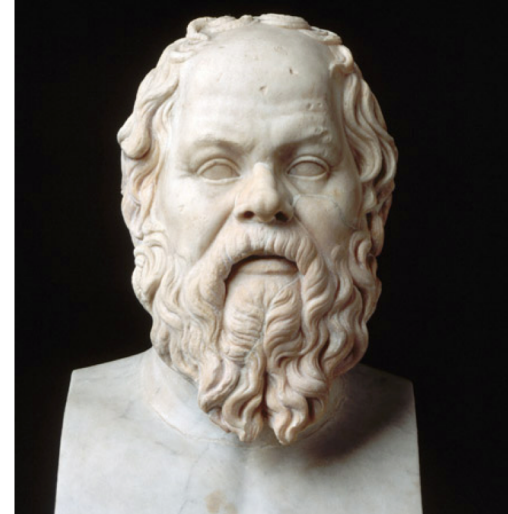# SSWH3: Examine the political, philosophical, & cultural interaction of classical Mediterranean societies from 700 BCE to 400 CE/AD
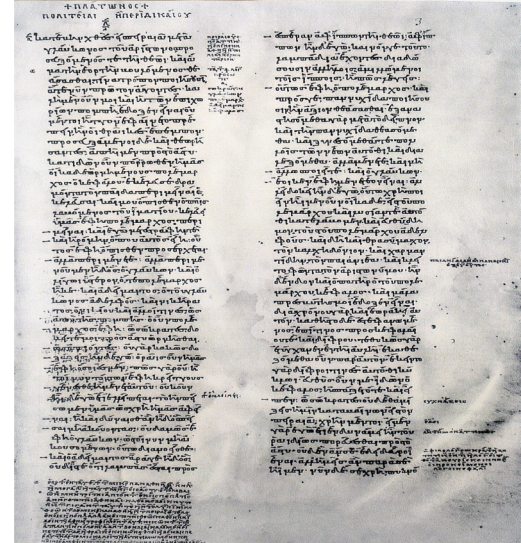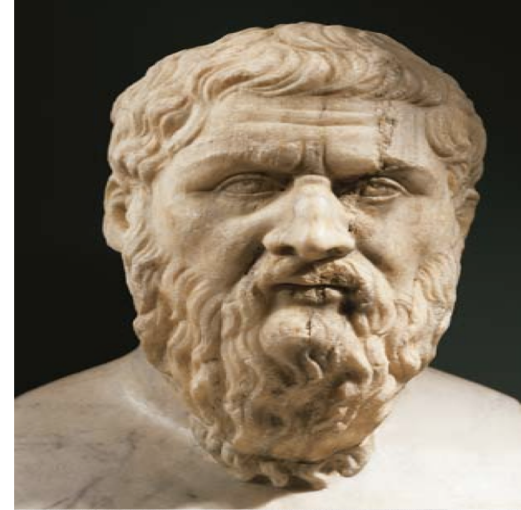


*B. Identify the ideas and impact of important individuals, include: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Augustus Caesar.*

# Socrates



- Socrates was an Athenian philosopher and teacher who lived from 470 to 399 BCE.
- He argued that there were no absolute standards for truth and justice and encouraged his students to question their assumptions, values and opinions.
  - To accomplish this he developed a teaching method in which he would ask students a series of leading questions, now called the Socratic Method.
    - In doing this, he challenged students to think for themselves rather than accept traditional understandings of the world.
    - His work proved to be too much for Athenian authorities; in 399 BCE Socrates was sentenced to death for corrupting the youth of Athens.

# Plato



- ❑ Plato (427 to 347 BCE) was one of Socrates' students and is responsible for recording many of his teachings.
- ❑ Plato continued and expanded the philosophical work of Socrates by continuing to encourage rational thought.
  - ▪ This is perhaps best exemplified by the cave allegory found in his most famous work <u>The Republic</u>, published in 370 BCE.
    - In this brief passage, Plato compares the traditions and superstitions that most people rely upon to understand the world as shadows of the real truth.
- ❑ Plato's The Republic dominated was the dominant philosophical work for 1,500 years.

# **Aristotle**



- Aristotle (384 to 322 BCE) attended Plato's school the Academy and went on to found his own school called the Lyceum after Plato's death.



- Aristotle worked to collect and categorize all of the knowledge from a wide variety of disciplines including politics, philosophy, ethics, poetry, physics, astronomy, meteorology, zoology, and psychology.

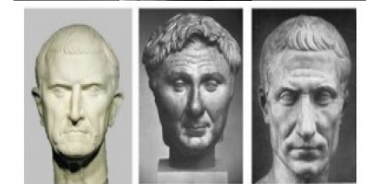- Aristotle's work laid the foundation for the modern study of many of these disciplines.

# Alexander the Great



❑ Alexander the Great was a pupil of Aristotle when he was the prince of Macedonia.

❑ His father, Philip conquered and unified Greece in 338 BCE but died shortly afterwards.

❑ In 336 BCE Alexander became the king of Macedonia and in 334 BCE announced that a unified force of Greeks and Macedonians would invade the Persian Empire ostensibly to extract revenge for the Persian invasion of Greece in 480 BCE.



   ▪ By 326 BCE Alexander's armies had defeated the Persian Empire, taking control of the Middle East and Egypt and crossed the Indus River in northern India.

❑ In his wake, Alexander left a series of new cities inhabited by a mix of indigenous peoples and Greek colonists.



THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER

❑ Alexander died at 32 years old in 323 BCE without an heir.

   ▪ His generals wrangled over the empire, eventually dividing it among themselves.

❑ While the political unity of the empire Alexander created was short lived the cultural legacy endured for centuries as Greek culture blended with indigenous traditions across the Middle East and South Asia.

   ▪ This blending, termed the Hellenistic Synthesis by historians, ushered in an age of vibrate cultural exchange in scholarship, the arts, and literature.
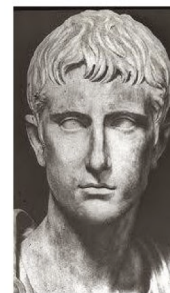
# Julius Caesar



❑ Julius Caesar took advantage of political and economic instability after the Punic Wars to undermine the government of the Roman Republic and accumulate power for himself.

❑ In 60 BCE he unified with two other powerful and ambitious Romans to form the first triumvirate.

- These three men dominated the government of the Republic for ten years.
- During this time, Julius Caesar utilized his military genius to conquer all of Gaul (modern France) for the Romans.
  - His success worried the other members of the triumvirate and the Roman Senate.
  - These fears were well founded as Caesar's soldiers were deeply loyal and he was enormously popular among the people of the Roman heartland.

❑ In an attempt to control Caesar, the Roman Senate ordered him to disband his armies and return to Rome.

- Instead, Caesar marched on Rome with his troops, crossing the Rubicon River in 49 BCE, easily taking the city of Rome.

❑ By 44 BCE, Caesar defeated his political rivals and pressured the Roman Senate to name him dictator for life.

- Many historians mark this as the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the Roman Empire.
- In March of 44 BCE members of the Roman Senate assassinated Caesar in an attempt to restore the republic.



Crassus    Pompey    Caesar

# Augustus Caesar

❑ Augustus Caesar, began his life as Octavian.

❑ He was the adopted son of Julius Caesar and with two other supports of Julius Caesar seized power in Rome after the assassination of his father.

❑ This Second Triumvirate ruled Rome for ten years. But, like its predecessor, it fell apart because of political ambition and jealousy.

   ▪ Octavian managed to force one member into retirement and defeated the other, Mark Antony, in a civil war leaving complete control of Rome in his hands.

❑ In 27 BCE Octavian accepted the title Augustus "exalted one" and became Rome's first emperor, ruling as Augustus Caesar until his death in 14 CE.

❑ Many historians mark the ascension of Augustus Caesar as the beginning of a period called Pax Romana.

   ▪ This 207 year long period is considered the high point in Roman political, economic and cultural dominance.



Octavian     Antony     Lepidus





I FOUND ROME A CITY OF BRICKS AND LEFT IT A CITY OF MARBLE

- AUGUSTUS CAESAR