

What is Western Civilization?  
A FEW DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS.

# What is Western Culture?

- **Culture:**
  - is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.
- **Western Culture :**
  - is a term used very broadly to refer to a heritage of social norms, ethical values, traditional customs, belief systems, political systems, and specific artifacts and technologies that have some origin or association with Europe



# Difference between Civilization and culture is:

- Civilization is bigger than culture – culture exists within a civilization.
- A Civilization needs to have culture in order to be considered one.
- Culture is just a portion of a civilization.
- A culture ordinarily exists within a civilization
- each civilization can contain not only one but several cultures.



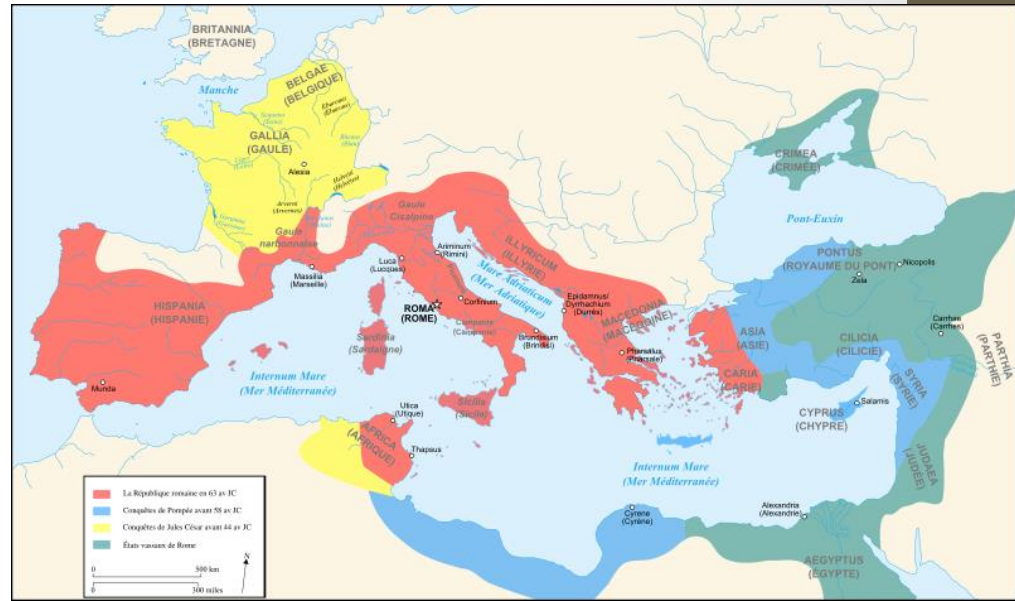
# To Summarize:



- 1.Culture is by definition smaller than a civilization.
- 2.Culture can grow and exist without residing in a formal civilization whereas a civilization will never grow and exist without the element of culture.
- 3.Culture can be tangible or intangible whereas civilization is something that is more tangible because it is what you see as a whole
- 4.Culture can be transmitted through symbols in the form of language whereas an entire civilization cannot be transmitted by mere language alone.



# What is Western Civilization?



This was a term coined only a century ago. Before this people referred to this culture/ civilization as simply Christendom.

Western culture or Western civilization is a term often used to refer to most of the cultures of European origin and most of their descendants.

Ex: Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Iceland, United Kingdom, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, USA and Mexico.

## Various uses of the concept of western Culture have included:

- Materialism
- Industrialism
- Capitalism
- Commercialism
- Hedonism – Pleasure is the most important pursuit
- Imperialism
- Communism
- Nazism
- Fascism
- Racism

# The Origins of Western Civilization lay rooted in three main ideals – The 3 traditions of our culture:

- **1: The classical civilizations of Greece and Rome**

- Republic, empire, Roman Law

## **2: The Christian Faith ( Western Christianity)**

Obedience to a high non-secular ruler

Separation and limitations of power

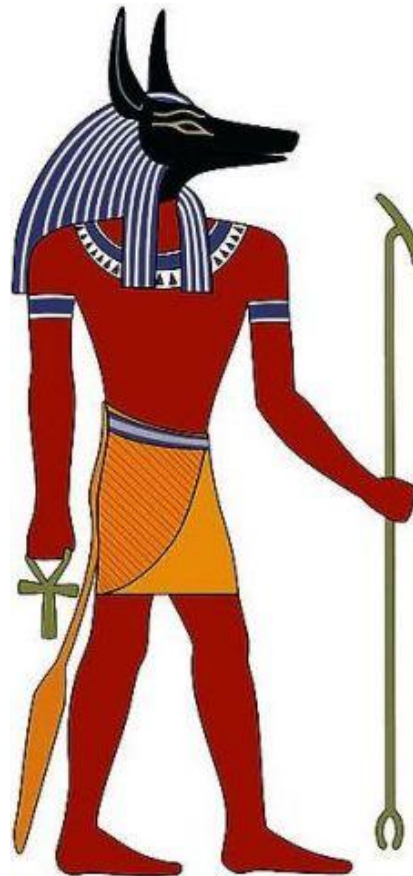
## **3: Enlightenment Ideas**

liberal democracy, free Market, science and reason

# 6 major concepts influencing the development of western societies

- The following 6 concepts are recognized as a thread or theme running throughout the development of Western Civilization:

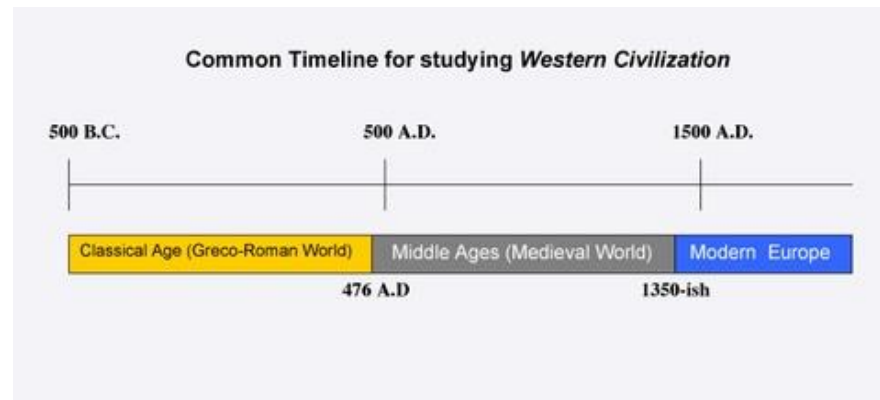
- Religion
- Ideology
- Humanism
- Individualism
- Secularism
- Scepticism





# Time in the History of Western Civilizations:

- B.C - means BEFORE CHRIST – now as society has changed its is referred to as: B.C.E – This means **Before Common Era**
- This is because we recognize that the root of history no longer revolves around Christianity.
- A.D – means Anno Domini it means “ in the year of our Lord” now it is referred to as C.E – **Common Era**
- However year 0 – is still the same and was in referral to the year Christ was born.



# What order do these go in?

- 1340 A.D
- 4000 B.C.E
- 750 C.E
- 300 B.C
- 20 C.E