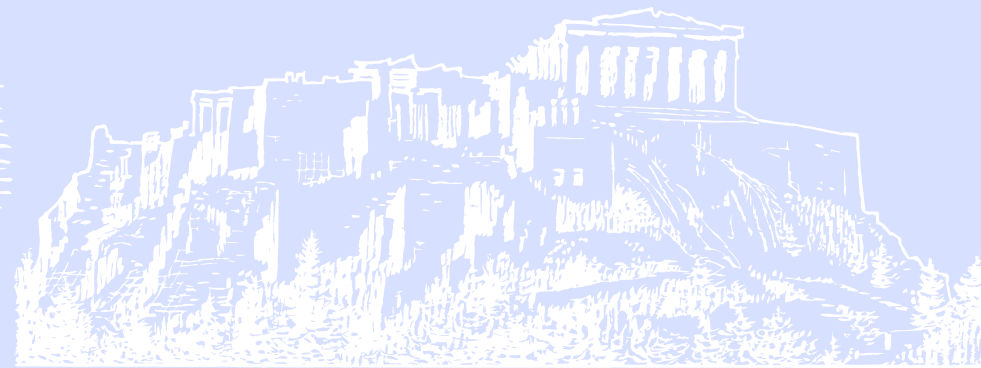




Academus - May Crash Course

The Political Uses of Myths in Ancient Greece and Rome



Welcome to the Crash Course

Thank you so much for signing up for this crash course! Firstly, let me introduce myself and then you all can introduce yourselves too, then we will go through the layout of the session

- **Introductions**
- **Greek Politics**
- **Roman Politics**
- **Mythology**
- **The role of myth in Greek & Roman politics**
- **Activity**
- **Conclusion**

Greek Politics

Ancient Greece was not a single country or empire that was controlled with one government; it was made up of numerous 'City States'. Each city state (polis) was governed by its own set of government. There were 3 main types of

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ent.

Democracy

A government ruled by the people, or assembly. Officials and leaders were elected and all citizens had a say.

Monarchy

A single ruler like a king. In Athens this ruler was called a Tyrant.

Oligarchy

When the government is ruled by a small group.

The word "democracy" originates from two Greek words demos (people) and rule (kratos). The Greek way of democracy was different from present day democracy, due to all adult male citizens having to partake - known as The

Greek Politics

In order to vote you had to be a citizen, but confusingly - not everyone who lived in Athens qualified as a citizen. Only men who had completed military training were counted as citizens. There were also 3 main bodies of government:

The Assembly

Included all citizens who showed up to vote.

The Council

Oversaw much of the day-to-day running of the government.

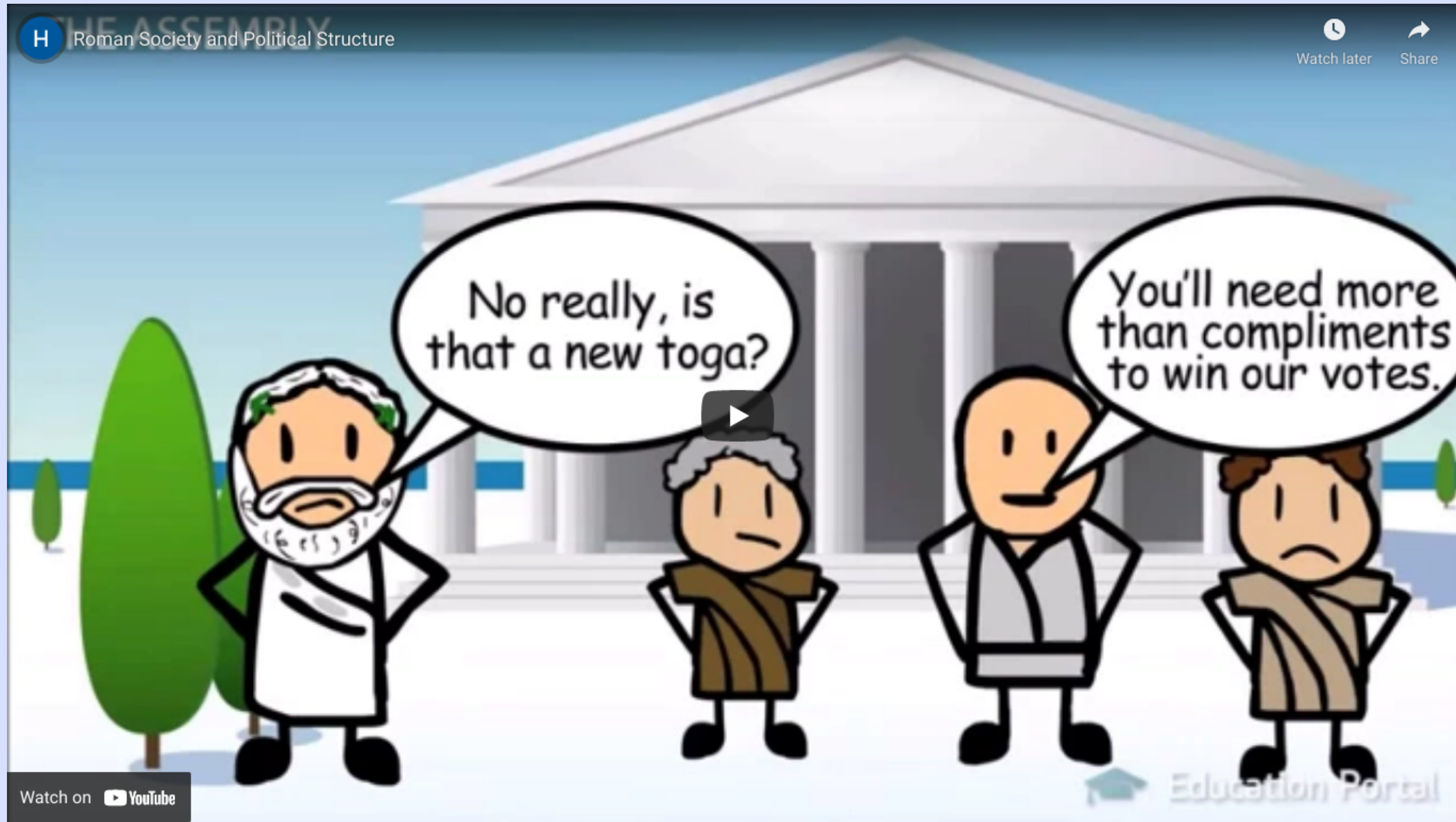
The Courts

Handled lawsuits and trials.

City states would regularly change their form of government. The main example is Athens changing from a Tyranny to a Democracy.

Roman Politics

Watch the video and make notes about Roman society and its political state:



Mythology

What are myths?

A myth is a traditional story or narrative that is concerned with telling the stories of early history: whether that includes the stories of people, natural or social events, religion and many more 'life' functions.

Why are they used?

Myths are used by Classicists and scholars to investigate and answer timeless questions regarding the set up of the ancient world. They give backstories on people and events we would never know about before the study of the myth.

Propaganda & Politics

Myths are key supporters of propaganda and politics as they can be moulded to showcase what a certain individual wants people to take on board. A key example is Virgil using myth within *The Aeneid* to portray Augustus being a descent of Aeneas.

Modern uses

Much of Western culture has been influenced by ancient mythology. Many books, games, films (Disney's *Hercules* for example) are based on mythology. It is also used by modern politicians in their rhetoric.

Greek Politics & Mythology

When reviewing the partnership of politics and mythology within Ancient Greece, two main figures stand out in representing what the partnership stood for. These two individuals are: Themis and Dike.



Themis

Themis was known as the 'Lady of Justice' and was a prominent figure within the realm of Greek politics. The role of Themis was to inspire people to be just and righteous in their daily activities, her teachings can be credited with inspiring today's laws and justice system. Themis was one of the Titan gods - each god held the right over law, however Themis specialised in the order of the natural world (winter into summer etc). Many famous figures are said to have asked Themis for her guidance and support such as Caesar, the Roman Kings and so on. Normal people would ask for her guidance on male concerns, farming, warfare, work, love and marriage.

In Roman mythology, she was known as Justitia. Iconography of Themis/Justitia is found worldwide: Palace of Justice in Italy, Supreme Court of Canada, Shelby Court House in Tennessee - proving how prominent and significant Themis is as an icon around the world.

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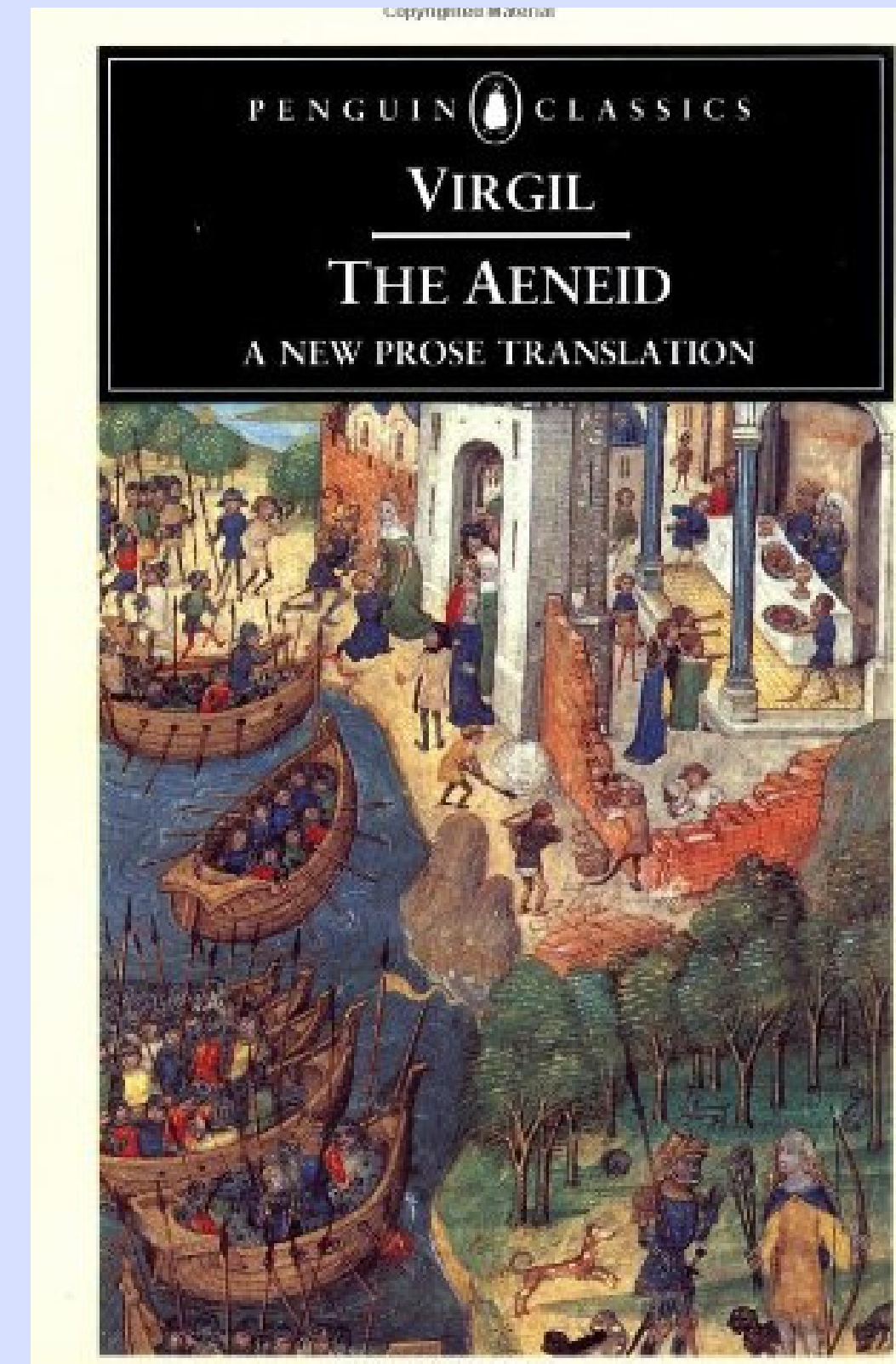
Dike

Dike was the daughter of Themis and Zeus according to Hesiod in Theogony 901. She was the goddess of human laws and rights, and would be the delegated individual who would punish those who committed crimes. Dike regulates her treatment of moral order and fair judgement based on immemorial custom (fitting to the changes). The iconography of Dike is normally a youthful women with a balancing scale (the constellation Libra is classically thought to be a representation, in one hand, and she is often wearing a laurel wreath.

Roman Politics & Mythology

Virgil - The Aeneid

Virgil wrote his epic 'The Aeneid' between 29-19 BC. The epic tells the story of the hero Aeneas and his journey to found Rome. The epic was commissioned by Augustus as a narrative to show him in a godlike light - there are numerous examples of heightened praise for Augustus as a way of propaganda to the Roman people. Therefore, The Aeneid is a key example of the integrating of politics and mythology - a fictional tale that bases its creation and story arc on the needs and desires of a prominent figure's wish to boost their ascendancy.



Roman Politics & Mythology

Romans had always used myth within their political sphere for one main reason: to show how brilliant they were. Due to the Greeks having *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* as their mythological stepping stone into their society, the Romans wanted their equivalent: and Virgil's *The Aeneid* was born. The *Aeneid* was commissioned by Augustus to show the origins of Rome and also his lineage.

Divine Lineage

Arguably, the most prominent example of politics and mythology within *The Aeneid* is the Parade of Heroes. The Parade of Heroes is in Book VI of Virgil's epic and lists of Augustus' ancestors, but conveniently, all the ancestors were either influential figures or fierce warriors that protected Rome. This use of myth in a political realm (not forgetting Augustus commissioned Virgil to write the epic for his own ego), heightens Augustus' ascendancy and uses deification to place him in an untouchable light.

Activity

Now time for an activity! Below are some anagrams based on some key terms used today in the session. Work out the anagram and write the definition for it too. You have 10 minutes. Good luck!

1) camcordey

2) pubrelic

3) apograndpa

4) icejust

5) ehmist

6) edik

7) easena

8) tagususu

9) edification

10) girliv



Activity

Here are the answers for the anagrams! We will discuss the definitions together

Democracy

Republic

Propaganda

Justice

Themis

Dike

Aeneas

Augustus

Deification

Virgil



End of session

Thank you so much for attending and participating in today's session. I hope you have enjoyed it as much as I have!

Before we finish,

Does anyone have any questions?

Thanks again for attending and I hope to see some of you in our upcoming Summer school!

