

THE RAYS OF ANCIENT GREECE & ROME

By Dr. R. F. Newbold

The Tibetan does not give the soul and personality rays of modern Greece. He gives those of modern Italy (Bailey, 1949), with a hint that they may apply to ancient Italy and Rome, though he says that a nation's rays can change. If so, we have a partial explanation of why the history of a nation appears to change course - partial, because we would still like to know why and just when the ray change occurred. A further complication is that the zodiacal signs and planetary rulers of a nation can bring in certain ray energies, and since towns and cities and ethnic sub-groups can have their own rays and signs, the overall tapestry becomes quite intricate. Classical Greece was no nation in the modern sense but a conglomeration of three different ethnic groups, Dorian, Ionian and Aeolic, and hundreds of separate city states, centered on the Aegean Sea and European Greek mainland but stretching westwards to Sicily, Italy and beyond. Nevertheless, the Greeks recognized certain common bonds of language and culture that distinguished them from 'barbarians' and from time to time they banded together to, for example, resist Persian or Macedonian aggression, or lay aside their differences to compete at the Pan-Hellenic games.

The Homeric epic poems, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, were the Bible of classical Greece. Large parts of these works were memorized, and they were thought to provide valuable guidance for proper conduct. The *Iliad* is very much a 4th ray, Harmony through Conflict, work. After a tragic and serious rift within the Greek camp, and fierce fighting between Greeks and Trojans and their

respective heavenly champions, the poem ends in truce and general reconciliation. The *Odyssey* celebrates the adventures of Odysseus on his return from Troy to his home in Ithaca, an archetypal 3rd ray figure, wily, much enduring, resourceful, curious and unscrupulous. His wife, Penelope, is similarly skilled at weaving webs of deceit. The poem has some 4th ray elements, ending in reconciliation after a climactic struggle.

The 3rd ray is the ray of intelligent activity, and it manifests in a capacity for abstract thought, weaving, manipulation, inventiveness, incessant activity, search for novelty and variety, commercial and entrepreneurial activity. The single greatest achievement of the ancient Greeks must surely lie in the realm of philosophy, logic and abstract thought. Here, if anywhere, was the manifestation of their soul purpose. Greek thinkers were able to break free of the entrancing, uncritical spell of mythological thinking and religious dogma, and to objectify parts of the environment, study it and reflect upon it. Theirs was the first culture to be based on the primacy of the intellect. One of their key instruments in doing this was the alphabet, which they developed into a particularly flexible instrument for generating new words and therefore new ideas. Alphabetic scripts permit mass literacy whereas other scripts are more difficult to master and favor limited, craft literacy. At the same time the Greeks developed two other useful tools of the communicative 3rd ray, ships and coins. Since a single coin could buy or be deemed equivalent to 5 of x, 10 of y or 15 of z, it offered transposability of artifacts and services and

represented an abstraction from concrete objects. It, along with ships, also offered commercial opportunities that were eagerly exploited. The Athenians developed several important banking practices. The Greek language met the challenge of providing a new tool for abstract thought and speculation on ideal forms. In the language we see an energetic, enterprising intelligence that delighted in making fine distinctions and tracing lines of cause and effect. Herodotus ("the Father of History"), Thucydides and Polybius produced sophisticated and wide-ranging systems of historical thought. Early Greek philosophers were forerunners of Einstein in their search for a unified field theory, seeking uniformity in the multiplicity of phenomena and variously naming water, air, number and atoms as the basic underlying substance or principle of all. Philosophical enquiry focused not just on the physical environment, but on the social environment, discussing and defining abstract concepts such as justice, truth, virtue and beauty, theorizing about economics and making important advances in mathematics. The major contribution of Greek mathematics was the systematic introduction of deductive reasoning as a means of establishing the truth of mathematical statements. The detached probing of Socrates paved the way for the monumental system of thought constructed by Plato. Subsequent Western philosophy has been described as "footnotes to Plato".

In Greek mythology, Mnemosyne (Memory), was the mother of the 9 Muses that inspire various cultural activities. This fact, and the above paragraphs, recall titles of the Third Ray Lord which seem particularly germane to the Greek achievement: *the Keeper of the Records, the Lord of Memory, the Interpreter of That Which is Seen, the Divine Separator, the Discriminating Essential Life, the Universal Mind and the Builder of the Foundation*. Greek religion encouraged people to make the most of their capacities and opportunities in many fields of activity.

Greek life was intensely competitive. This

reflected the achievement oriented, "be smarter" 3rd ray, but also the 4th. Anything could become a contest -- athletics, song, oratory, poetry, music making, and drama. At the annual Dionysian festivals in Athens, productions of tragedies and comedies competed for prizes. 4th ray agony and ecstasy related both to the Greek word for contest, agon, and the Dionysian stepping outside of oneself, ecstasy. To the extent that Greeks believed that the anguish of struggle was an ennobling pursuit, they manifested a 4th ray quality. Typically 4th ray is the admiration for security, poise and the golden meanwhile at the same time living a life of passion and excitement, conflict and turmoil. "The Greek valued the mean so highly because he was so prone to extremes" (Kitto 1951:252). They thought much about how to reconcile opposites and resolve polarities, to produce beauty from harmony. When warfare ceased at the great festivals, such as the Olympic, contests of a different kind ensued. 4th ray qualities emerge in the brightly colored, exquisitely proportioned sculpture and architecture, the effervescent exuberance of Old Comedy, the powerful imagination of Tragedy, the determination to beautify even things like coins and pots, the centrality of music in education, and the musicality and expressiveness of the Greek language.

Compared with the 3rd and 4th rays, the presence of the other rays in ancient Greece is insignificant. For example, there is a general lack of scientific attention to detailed and accurate observation, although there is more evidence of this in the Hellenistic 3rd and 2nd centuries. Greeks saw physics as philosophy rather than mechanics (so despised by Plato) and their 3rd ray, multi-pronged attack on the great problems of life preferred to operate by theory than by experiment. The Greeks made intellectual and emotional rather than material advances. Repeatedly, we see a blend of 3rd and 4th rays at work, as in the development of a taxonomy of rhetoric (how to speak persuasively and eloquently). The Greek language has a formal elegance, a discipline

and harmony, and a colorful musicality, suggestive of the 4th ray. It also has a variety of word order and a lightness that facilitates rapid speech, 3rd ray qualities. The 3rd ray is much concerned with the expression of beauty, but the 4th ray's presence may have helped to inspire the verdict "The intellectual capacity of Greek is matched by its aesthetic virtuosity" (Bowra, 1357: 17). Plato's dialogues offer not only stimulating ideas, but elegant and dramatic expression of them. The 3rd ray is also known as the Lord of Balance, and the either/or, although/yet, men/de craze of Greek style could be a reflection of this 3rd ray quality as well as of 4th ray reconciliation. The passion for balance and antithesis is often formal, excessive and tedious rather than a mark of insight, but it was part of a drive for order and harmony in the variety of the world.

As the soul ray of a people manifests, there is a temporary and preparatory period of breaking down. In the archaic period (8th-6th centuries), there was a rapid decay of social and political institutions, notably the demise of kingship and aristocracy, to be replaced firstly by tyrannies, and then by oligarchies (where wealth rather than birth was the criterion for office) and democracies. There was a massive expansion of the Greek world view via colonization, and of conceptual power and breadth through increasing coin circulation, literacy, and philosophical, anthropological, geographical and historical enquiry. After the turmoil of the archaic age came a flowering of culture and soul manifestation in the classical period (5th – 4th centuries). The Greeks were consummate traders and the highly monetarized economy of the 4th century B.C. was the nearest ancient approach to 13th Century London. Some major financial practices failed to materialize, partly because of the Greek theorizing tendency to conceive of abstract economic models and prototypes rather than to attend to the practicalities of the market. As well as an increasing power of abstraction, there was resolution of conflict through democratic principles such as isonomia (equality before the law) and isegoria

(equality of opportunity to speak publicly). At the same time, endemic warfare and civil strife threatened moderation and offered opportunities for atrocities and extremism.

The cultural achievement of Greece was, geographically, very uneven. If Ionia and Athens responded to and manifested the 3rd ray soul, other areas hardly responded at all. Sparta remained arrested at the archaic stage, fixated upon and enamored by the 4th ray way of the warrior. "*Sparta was a lost soul*" (Burns 1947:147). Athenians, even by Greek standards, were noted for their ceaseless activity and polypragmosyne ("busybodyness") and it was in Ionia that most of the early advances in abstract thought occurred. A combination of 4th ray soul and 3rd ray personality (the combination of the Orient, incidentally) would manifest in lofty aesthetic tastes and surpassing intellectualism, an urge to create harmony and beauty expressed with active intelligence and adaptability (Robbins 1988: 618), and clearly this could fit ancient Greece. But a 3rd ray soul, 4th ray personality combination, which has features such as emphasis upon the essential pattern of thought behind appearance combined with preoccupation with personal beauty and appeal (the Greeks were notably narcissistic), adaptability and resourcefulness combined with creative imagination and aesthetic sensitivity, business blended with artistic aptitudes, fits even better. Ancient Greek culture offers a good example of the essential conflict between the 3rd ray soul and 4th ray personality as the "*struggler between acute, spiritually-inspired intellectual comprehension and manipulation of energy, and a mind-obscuring, personal captivity to fluctuating and conflicted psychological and physical states*" (Robbins 1988:581). For a time and to a degree the soul brought: intelligence and reason to an hysterical, undisciplined, pugnacious personality. If the Greek achievement truly revealed a soul purpose, the sharpening of intellectual creativity and communicative skills (3rd ray soul) appears a more certain accomplishment than the transforming of

disharmony and discord into beauty and concord (4th ray soul).

The strengths and weaknesses of the 3rd and 4th ray components of the Greek character, singly and in combination, were well observed by the Romans. For example, the Roman satirist Juvenal, writing c. A.D. 100, alleged that the Greek was "*quick of wit and of unbounded impudence, ready and torrential of speech ... adopts any character you please: grammarian, orator, geometrician, painter, rope-dancer, doctor, astrologer ... If you smile, your Greek will split his sides with laughter; if he sees his friend drop a tear, he weeps, though without grieving ... ready at any moment to take his expression from another man's face.*" This jaundiced view accurately describes a 3rd ray soul, 4th ray personality combination, when soul energy, as so often, is appropriated by a selfish personality. A more generous assessment of the Greek achievement, comparing it with the Roman, comes from Virgil, writing c. 20 B.C.: "*(Greeks) shall hammer forth more delicately a breathing likeness out of bronze, coax living faces from the marble, plead causes with more skill, plot with their gauge the movements in the sky, and tell the rising of the constellations. But you, Roman, must remember that you have to guide the nations by your authority, for this is to be your skill, to graft tradition onto peace, to show mercy to the conquered, and to wage war until the haughty are brought low.*"

In *The Destiny of the Nations*, the Tibetan gives details of modern Italy's soul, personality, zodiacal and planetary rulers (Bailey, 1349: 59, 87). Italy has a 6th ray soul, 4th ray personality, is ruled by Leo and the Sun (soul) and Sagittarius and the Earth, Mars, Jupiter (personality). Its capital, Rome, is ruled by Taurus, Venus and Vulcan (soul) and Leo (personality). He points to the dominant influence of Mars in Roman and Italian history (both ray and Sagittarius) and, a propos of Italy's 6th ray soul, comments "*and hence her devotion to the ancient glory that was Rome (for this is closely tied up with the memory aspect of the soul) and to the concept of*

the restoration of the Roman Empire".

This seems to suggest that Rome also had a 6th ray soul, but it need not: it may only be referring to an Italian 6th ray tendency to worship ancient glories. And *a propos* of the 3rd ray influence brought in by the Earth, he comments that this in the past gave Italy her world dominion. This is somewhat puzzling, because the 3rd ray, along with the 2nd, seem to be least salient in the Roman character. A clue is given by Italy's esoteric motto which the Tibetan implies belonged to Rome too: "*I carve the Paths*". The Romans were great road builders and the 3rd ray is closely associated with communication. It is possible to explain the Roman character in terms of the 6th and 4th rays. There is a 6th ray doggedness and devotion to certain ideals such as justice, loyalty and duty, and the 4th ray (distributed by Taurus) could account for much of Roman militarism and her great achievements in architecture and town-planning.

The influence of ray 5 (distributed by Sagittarius), the practical, "*hands-on*" aspect of that ray, could account for the famed Roman common sense, and her engineering achievements. But, to explain the Roman character and achievement in terms of a 6th ray soul and 4th ray personality (the manifestation of highest ideals and yearnings through creative living and artistic expression) is very difficult and ignores what seem to be the overwhelming influence of the 1st and 7th rays.

Writing under the emperor Augustus, c. 25 B.C., Livy, author of a great nationalistic history of Rome, observed in his preface that "*if any country is entitled to sanctify its beginnings by attributing them to divine action, that is true of the Romans. So tremendous is their military glory that ... the nations of the earth must endure it patiently, as they endure Roman rule.*"

It was indeed a mystery why Rome, beginning as a small settlement on the banks of the Tiber, rose to control a Mediterranean-wide empire - why Rome, and not one of the numerous communities in Italy or elsewhere,

many of whom enjoyed just as many or more natural advantages. It was easy for Romans to think they were fulfilling some kind of divine plan, a plan that involved bringing 50-70 million very diverse people under one rule, one law, one language. If the highest expression of the 1st ray is government and statesmanship, Rome expressed her soul purpose for several hundred years. Virgil's great epic of empire, *The Aeneid*, written around the same time as Livy's history, also emphasized Rome's duty to rule. Its hero, Aeneas, a cool, detached servant of fate, sacrificed private passion to public duty and pressed on with unremitting endeavor to refound Troy in Italy, thus inaugurating the great synthesis of East and West, Greek and Latin, and producing Greco-Roman civilization.

One of the features of Roman religion is the presence of abstractions, such as justice, freedom, clemency, security or, particularly amongst farmers, abstract deities of planting, sprouting, ripening, reaping. It was not a speculative, theological religion, nor did it generate imaginative stories about deities in the way Greeks did. It appears cold, formless, narrow. Contact with Greeks eventually gave it a more anthropomorphic quality but Romans never lost the habit of worshipping and celebrating abstractions (on coins, for example). This tendency to abstract activities and characteristics is part of the mental process of the lawyer. The isolation and worship of moral ideas bred a strong sense of duty and righteous will. The Romans were sensitive to the spirit or genius behind a group, activity or concept (*Pax* is not just peace, but the spirit of peace), and the genius of Rome approximates to a protective providence that is overseeing a mission.

Roman roads express the directness of the 1st ray with their tendency to go straight for as long as possible, going through obstacles rather than round them. Their directness typifies some of the destruction and environmental impact Roman rule entailed. Although there was considerable tolerance for local custom and law once pacification had been completed, the conquest stage inevitably

involved much death and destruction. Liberation from the bondage of narrow horizons came at a price and one of the less edifying gifts bestowed by the Romans on subjects was the institutionalized cruelty of the gladiatorial games. The Roman appetite for dominion had, to many, an omnivorous, all-absorbing quality that recalled popular conceptions about the wolf, Rome's totem animal. Two of the titles of the 1st ray Lord are *The Opener of the Door* and *The Great Abstractor*. Other titles that many victims of Roman brutality would have recognized are *The Lord of Death*, *The Will that breaks into the Garden*, *The Breath that blasts*. Nevertheless, the Roman achievement in government was impressive and often innovatory.

The Roman Empire was maintained partly by force, partly by the generous bestowal of citizenship on defeated enemies. Slaves were given full citizenship immediately they were freed, and Roman citizenship was granted to many in the provinces until, in AD. 212, it was granted to all in the empire. Such liberality created an expanded pool of loyalty and patriotism, and a world state featured, at its best, by unity and variety, tolerance and order, and little racial prejudice. Legal and political concepts such as popular sovereignty, the separation of powers, equality before the law, local government and international law were elaborated, and implemented to a degree. Large empires such as those of Alexander the Great and Attila the Hun may have grown more quickly than Rome's but they failed to endure. Rome endured because of an organizational genius, typical of the 7th ray, that found a ready expression in government and law, amongst other fields. A 7th ray personality fits Rome better than any other and, combined with a 1st ray soul, explains the eminence of Roman law. Roman law owes much to the 1st ray ability to enunciate principles and cut through to the essential point - as well as 7th ray exact formulation and codification of those principles.

Roman law has been described as

organized common sense. Its evolution shows how a body of law, founded on common sense, could be constructed and accepted by different peoples at different stages of their development. It always strained towards the rational and the universal, and owed its fertility and flexibility to a range of components: religious custom, statues, plebiscites, senatorial decrees, decisions and edicts by magistrates and emperors, and interpretations by an exceptional line of jurists. Roman law's most signal achievement was to emphasize the state as the fountain of justice, supreme over the group or individual. Individual rights were put into a constitutional form for the first time and given legal immunity from the despotic acts of government, at least in theory. Blending government absolutism with a constitutional guarantee of citizens' rights was an important innovation. Such rights were extended to corporations. Roman lawyers perfected legal procedure and codified legal principles. Romans had a pronounced tendency to formalize their associations. For example, those involved in the many occupational guilds would draw up and inscribe detailed constitution, outlining the rights and obligations of members and prescribing the conduct of meetings and officers. One gets the impression of a people with a deep instinct for regulated living and respect for rules.

One aspect of Roman religion shows a strong 7th ray influence, i.e. a concern amounting to an obsession with the exact performance of ritual. If the slightest irregularity was detected, the entire ceremony would have to be repeated and, if necessary, repeated until all was perfect. By the 1st century B.C. the meaning of certain rituals and invocations was not at all understood but were adhered to fastidiously. All religions can have a bartering, contractual aspect but Roman religion showed an unusual attention to detail and care to do the right thing in order to get the right result. 7th ray practicality and organizational skill is also evident in the Roman contributions to material comfort via

engineering and architecture (for example, under-floor heating). In the field of medicine, their forte lay not in imaginative theory but in the reduction of disease through an abundant water supply, public baths, sewers, and a hospital system. Public buildings such as theatres, gladiatorial arenas and chariot racetracks were built to serve the state or people, not religion. Rome's was the first great secular architecture, monumental in scale, conception and durability. Their development of the arch and their invention of concrete made much of this possible. Concrete recalls the 7th ray of accurate arrangement. Before setting, concrete can be arranged with great accuracy: once set, it endures in perfected form. Romans were unequalled in planning and dividing space through strong axes and rhythmic composition. Such 1st and 7th ray qualities are evident even in temporary structures like their military camps, with their great scale and detailed planning. The Latin language, too, has marked 1st and 7th ray qualities: compact, trenchant monumentality, and dignified sonority.

After the overthrow of the monarchy in 510 B.C., Rome had a Republican form of government, essentially an oligarchy that institutionalized a considerable degree of consensus, consultation and suffrage. By the 1st Century B.C., this consensus had broken down under the impact of individual power hunger and sectional selfishness, as well as the soul manifesting in a greatly expanded dominion. After several decades of civil war, Augustus (31 B.C. A.D. 14), revered re-founder and re-orderer of the Roman state, and a clear combination of 1st ray soul and 7th ray personality, provided a monarchic framework for more equitably upholding the Roman peace. In the 3rd century A.D. there was a resurgence of chaos, civil war and individual disregard for wider interests that: again threatened the viability of the Roman empire. Diocletian (284-305) and his successors rescued Rome with a series of reforms, whose effects illustrate some of the weaknesses of the 1st and 7th rays, such as judicial cruelty, excessive deference to the

rights of the state over the individual, greater use of ceremonial to inflate status and exaggerate hierarchical relationships, bureaucratic standardization and regiment, a futile and draconian effort to restore the values and patterns of the past. By the 4th Century, the 6th, personality, ray of Christianity was making itself felt, and although this brought some new thinking and energy, it also brought reduced respect for form and a loosened will for maintaining structures. The successor state of Rome in the Eastern Mediterranean, theocratic Byzantium, inherited its soul ray from Rome and its personality ray from Christianity.

In sum, Rome well exemplifies a ray combination that shows "great will-power, strength and stamina, the ability to stand firmly on principle and (where necessary) the power to destroy obstacles as well as the power to organize or reorganize, the ability to build a facility for creating or maintaining standards; and the capacity to skillfully manifest ideas through form." (Robbins 1988: 531) s

Bibliography

- Bailey, A. *The Destiny of the Nations*, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1949.
- Bailey, A. *Esoteric Psychology Vols. I & II*, New York: Lucis Publishing Company, 1936, 1942.
- Bailey, C. *The Legacy of Rome*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1923.
- Balsdon, J. (ed.) *The Romans*, London: Watts, 1365.
- Barnes, H., *An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World, Vol I*, New York: Dover, 1965.
- Burns, N. *Western Civilizations*, New York: Norton, 1947.
- Barrow, R. *The Romans*, London: Penguin, 1949.
- Brinton, C. *Civilization in the West*, London: Prentice-Hall, 1964.
- Bowra, M. *The Greek Experience*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1957.
- Finley, M. *The World of Rome*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1960.

- Kitto, H. *The Greeks*, London: Penguin, 1951.
- Robbins, M. *Tapestry of the Gods, Vols. I and II*, Jersey City Heights: University of the Seven Rays Publishing House, 1988.
- Snell, B. *The Discovery of the Mind* New York: Harper and Row, 1960.
- Wilkinson, L. *The Roman Experience*, London: Elek, 1975.

Dr R.F. Newbold is a Professor in the Classics Department at the University of Adelaide in South Australia, and is actively involved with ESCEF (Esoteric Sciences and Creative Education Foundation) and the Fountain Group in Adelaide, South Australia.