

# An Overview of Classical Theatre

## ■ The Major Periods of Ancient Western Theatre (BCE = BC; CE = AD)

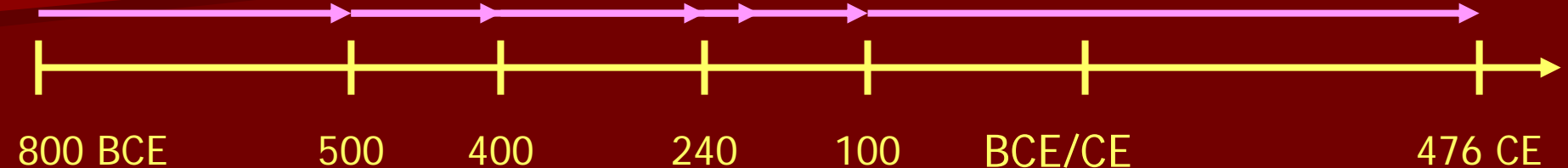
Ancient Greece (800-200 BCE)

- Pre-Classical Age (to 500 BCE)
- Classical Age (500-400 BCE)
- Post-Classical/Hellenistic Age (400-200 BCE)

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Ancient Rome (753 BCE - 476 CE)

1. Early Roman Native Theatre (to 240 BCE)
2. Age of Greek-Based Drama (240-100 BCE)
3. Popular Entertainment (100 BCE - 476 CE)



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## Greek Theatre in the Pre-Classical Age

3000-800 BCE: Egyptian Civilization

800 BCE: Pre-Classical Greek Civilization

800-700 BCE: Homer and Epic Poetry (*Iliad*, *Odyssey*)

700-550 BCE: Lyric Poetry (Sappho)

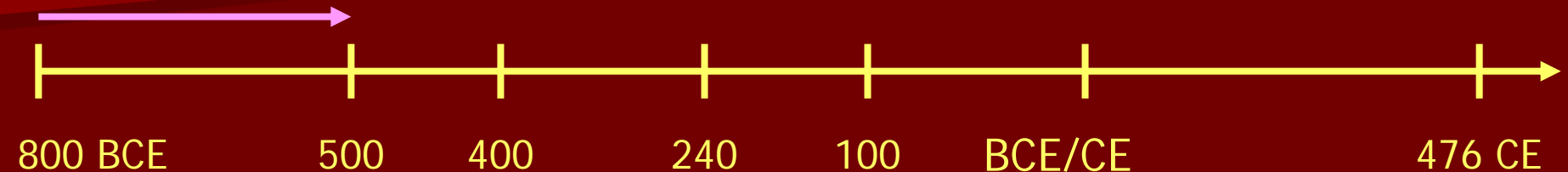
550-529 BCE: The Tyrant Pisistratus rules Athens

534 BCE: The Inauguration of the City Dionysia

529-512 BCE: Pisistratus' son Hippias rules Athens

512-508 BCE: Exile of Hippias and Political Chaos in Athens

508 BCE: Birth of Athenian Democracy



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## Greek Theatre in the Classical Age

### 500-479 BCE: Early Classical Age

490; 481-479 BCE: The Persian Wars

486 BCE: Comedy premieres at the Dionysia

### 479-431 BCE: The Pentakontaetia

472 BCE: Aeschylus produces *The Persians*

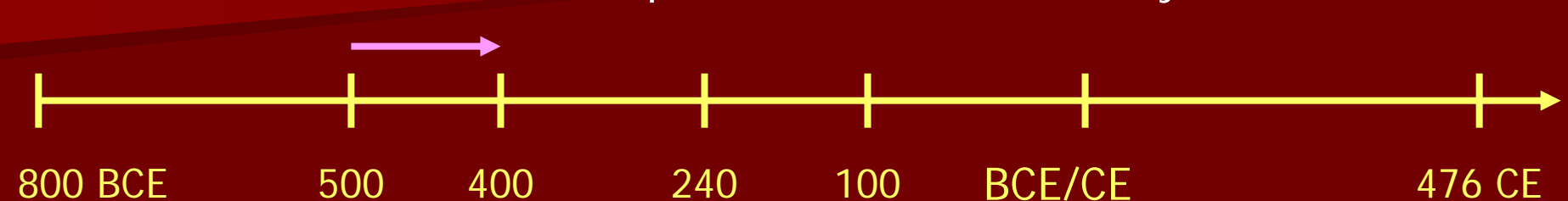
460-429 BCE: Pericles leads Athens

ca. 463-405 BCE: Sophocles' career as a playwright

### 431-404 BCE: The Peloponnesian War

455-406 BCE: Euripides' career as a playwright

427-386 BCE: Aristophanes writes Old Comedy



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## Greek Theatre in the Post-Classical and Hellenistic Age

### 404-338 BCE: Greek Civil War

371 BCE: Thebes defeats Sparta at Leuctra

360-336 BCE: Philip II rules Macedonia

385-325 BCE: Middle Comedy

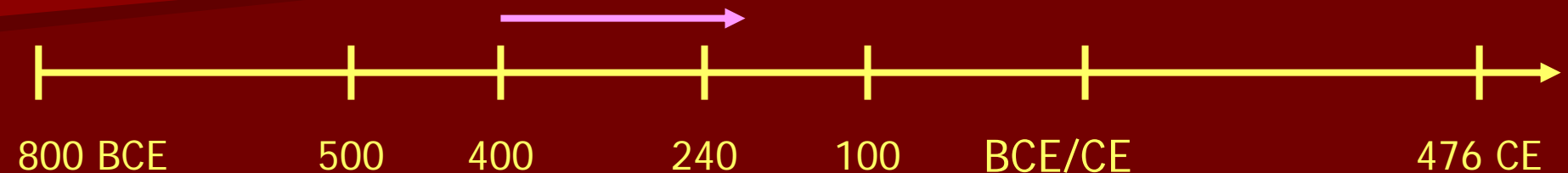
### 338-323 BCE: Alexander the Great

338 BCE: Philip defeats Greek at Chaeronea

336-323 BCE: Alexander conquers much of the ancient world

### 322-200's BCE: The Hellenistic Age

423-391 BCE: Menander writes New Comedy



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## Roman Theatre in the Early Republic

753-510 BCE: Early Roman Kingdom

600-510 BCE: Etruscans rule Rome (gladiators)

510 BCE: Founding of the Roman Republic

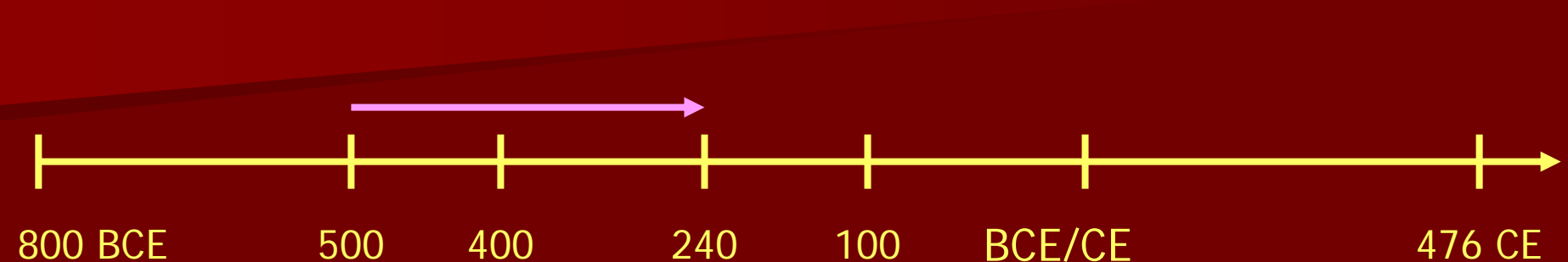
510-264 BCE: Romans conquer Italy

400's and 300's BCE: Early Italian Drama

Atellan Farce, Fescennine Verse, phlyax plays, *hilarotragodiae*

264-241 BCE: The First Punic War (Carthage)

241 BCE: Livius Andronicus translates *The Odyssey* in Latin



# An Overview of Classical Theatre

## Roman Theatre in the Later Republic (The Age of Greek-Based Drama)

241-202 BCE: Early Roman Greek-Based Drama

218-202 BCE: The Second Punic War (Hannibal)

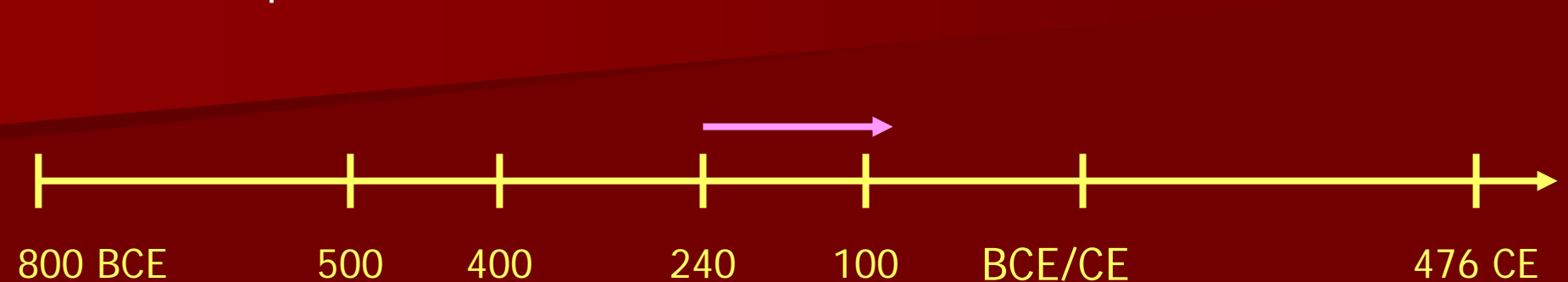
202-100 BCE: The Romans conquer Greece

205-186 BCE: Plautus writes Roman Comedy (*palliatae*)

166-160 BCE: Terence writes Roman Comedy

100's BCE: Pacuvius and Accius write Roman tragedy

133-123 BCE: The Gracchi lead a revolt against the increasingly corrupt Senate



# An Overview of Classical Theatre

## Roman Theatre in the Empire

### (The Age of Popular Entertainment)

#### 100-44 BCE: The Rise of Generals

Marius, Sulla, Pompey and Caesar

#### 44-31 BCE: Civil War between Octavian (later Augustus) and Mark Antony

31 BCE: Octavian defeats Antony at the Battle of Actium

#### 31 BCE - 476 CE: The Roman Empire

ca. 50-65 CE: "Seneca" writes only extant Roman tragedy

Gladiators, chariot races, blood sports, mime, pantomime, ...

