



The Growth of Empires



Liu Bang

Reader



Terra-Cotta Soldiers



Augustus Caesar

Emperor Justinian



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The Growth of Empires

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Chapter 1

The Roman Republic

A Western Power Rises Rome began as a small trading post in central Italy. It grew into a great military, economic, and political power. It left a rich legacy of law codes, languages, ideas about government, forms of entertainment, and ideas of how to live a good life.

Roman civilization arose in the central part of present-day Italy. Italy is in southern Europe on a **peninsula** that juts into the Mediterranean Sea, with the Tyrrhenian Sea to the west, the Adriatic Sea to the east, and the Ionian Sea to the south. The region where the city of Rome formed was called Latium. This is where the word for the Roman language, Latin, comes from. Latium was in a large and fertile plain where hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters supported farming. It was also close to the coast. The city of Rome is located on the Tiber River. Goods could be transported

The Framing Question

What factors helped Rome become a major power?

Vocabulary

peninsula, n. a piece of land sticking out into a body of water so that it is almost surrounded by water



Rome's Colosseum still stands today.

on the river between the city and the nearby coast. Rome's location made sea trade accessible and easy.

Rome had several natural defenses to protect it from invasion. To the north are the Alps, tall mountains that are difficult for large armies to cross. In the center of Italy are the Apennine Mountains. This mountain chain sheltered the city of Rome from rivals to the east. The city was built upon seven hills. These hills also made it difficult to attack and conquer the city.

Early Rome

Around 700 BCE, Rome was just one of many settlements in Italy. Greek civilization influenced the region. Romans adopted many Greek customs. They worshipped gods similar to those

The Roman Republic in 44 BCE



Rome's location contributed to its power.

of the Greeks but gave them Latin names. They created art and architecture that were influenced by Greek styles. Romans adopted the idea of the polis, or city-state. The polis was an independent city with its own government. The Romans also traded products that were known to the Greeks, such as olive oil, a fish sauce called *garum*, wine, and pottery.

The early Romans made many advances in agriculture. The rocky soil had to be loosened to plant crops. To break up the soil, Romans used plows pulled by animals as well as hand tools. Roman agriculture began with small farms that produced food to feed the families who lived there. As Roman farms grew more prosperous, they started to grow crops to trade for other products.

Rise of the Republic

The Roman city-state was initially ruled by kings. The Latin word *rex* was used as the title for a king. Then, in 509 BCE, the Romans overthrew their last king, Tarquin, and formed a new government. The Romans called this government a **republic**. The word *republic* comes from the Latin words *res*, meaning things, and *publica*, meaning people.

Vocabulary

republic, n. a form of government in which people elect representatives to rule for them

During this time, Roman society was divided into two main social classes of free people. This system kept all the power for the members of the wealthiest families, the **patricians**. They had the time, money, and power to focus on learning, debate, and politics.

Vocabulary

patrician, n. a member of one of the wealthiest and most powerful families of Rome

Most free Romans belonged to the **plebeian** class. They had jobs such as farmers, bakers, and craftspeople. At first, plebeians could not hold most of Rome's political and religious offices. Rome also had many enslaved people who had been captured in battle or born to enslaved mothers.

At the beginning of the Roman Republic, the patricians held almost all the power in the Roman government. At the top of the government were two **consuls**. They were elected to serve together for one year. To balance their power, each of the consuls could **veto** the decisions of the other consul. No one else in Rome had this power. Consuls made laws and commanded Rome's army.

The consuls and other patricians were part of the Senate, an assembly of politicians. The members of the Senate did not make laws. They conducted debates and provided guidance on major issues. Patricians could also serve as other types of



Dictator (in times of war)



Roman society was divided into different groups, with different roles and powers.

Vocabulary

plebeian, n. a person who was an ordinary free Roman in the lower social class

consul, n. one of two people elected to rule the Roman Republic

veto, v. to reject or refuse to approve a law

government **officials**. Many of these posts were connected to the Roman religion.

Vocabulary

official, n. a person who carries out a government duty

Plebeian Revolt

The plebeians grew angry about their unequal power. They made up the **majority** of Rome's people and the majority of its soldiers. Yet they had no political rights. In 494 BCE, Rome was at war with its neighbors. Plebeian soldiers decided to go on strike. They demanded representation in government and would not fight until their demands were met. This led to the formation of a new Plebeian Council.

Vocabulary

majority, n. more than one-half

A number of other reforms also gave plebeians more rights in Rome's politics. After about 450 BCE, plebeians could participate in electing consuls and other high officials, although only if they possessed a certain amount of wealth. Conflict between plebeians and patricians remained an ongoing issue in the Roman Republic.

Growth of the Roman Republic

Despite the conflict between the plebeians and patricians, Roman civilization grew and prospered. The Romans conquered their nearby neighbors, taking control over central and southern Italy.

As the Romans defeated other peoples, they generally allowed their new subjects to keep their religions. This made the conquered peoples more likely to accept Roman rule. The acceptance of other religions was partly why the Roman civilization was so strong and lasted so long.

Rome continued to expand its lands. Between 264 and 146 BCE, the Romans fought three wars with Carthage. Carthage was a great city in North Africa founded by the Phoenicians. These conflicts were called the Punic Wars.

When the first war began, Rome had a skilled army but no real naval power. The Carthaginians, however, had an excellent navy. The Romans built more than three hundred new warships. After a series of battles at sea and on land, Rome defeated Carthage in 241 BCE.

In 221 BCE, Hannibal Barca took control of the Carthaginian army and swore to take vengeance on Rome. He marched his army, including war elephants, through Spain and southern France, across the Alps, and into Italy. The Romans were taken totally by surprise. They were defeated by the Carthaginians in 216 BCE.



Roman soldiers feared the elephants when they first saw them.

After the Roman defeat, General Scipio Africanus of Rome decided to invade Carthage in 205 BCE. General Scipio Africanus was victorious, and Carthage was forced to give up its navy and its elephants and was prohibited from making war without Rome's permission. Rome gained control of southern Spain with this victory.

In 149 BCE, Rome once again attacked Carthage by **laying siege** to it, destroying the city and enslaving its inhabitants. The Romans emerged victorious after three years of war. This victory gave Romans control of the western Mediterranean. They went on

Vocabulary

laying siege
(phrase), surrounding enemy buildings or other locations so that those within cannot receive supplies

The Roman Republic



The Roman Republic expanded throughout the Mediterranean region.

later to conquer Greece and the Hellenistic kingdoms that had risen after the death of Alexander the Great.

Life and Culture in the Republic

The people of Rome, and those peoples it conquered, lived a Roman way of life. The family was the basic unit of Roman society. As in many other early civilizations, the father or oldest male relative held the most power in a family. At fourteen years old, boys became citizens and began to wear **togas**.

Vocabulary

toga, n. traditional Roman clothing made of fabric draped around the body

Girls were usually given a feminine version of their father's family name. If there were several girls in a family, they would all have the same name, followed by a number. Parents usually arranged marriages for their children, and girls were usually engaged as young teenagers. Freeborn women were citizens but had few legal rights. They occasionally engaged in public life but mostly interacted with other women and were not permitted in certain parts of public buildings.

Romans created strong infrastructure in their cities. Rome had a sewer system, public toilets, and public bathhouses. Eventually, water was brought to many Roman cities by large structures called **aqueducts**. As the city of Rome grew, people began living in buildings called *insulae*. These buildings had up to seven stories. Poorer people lived on the upper floors. *Insulae* were cramped, dirty,

Vocabulary

aqueduct, n. a raised canal that carries water from one place to another

and dangerous, but they were the only option for poor citizens. And yet, thousands of people came to live in Rome and other major cities.

Rich Romans lived in luxurious homes away from the noise, crowds, and smell of the city. Their homes had private baths, rooms for entertaining guests, and even their own shops. They ate a variety of foods from regions that Rome controlled or traded with.

Enslaved people did all the hard work that supported the comfortable lives of the upper class. This included housework, farming, building, and mining. Some also served as teachers, doctors, and architects. Plebeians worked as farmers, bakers, and craftspeople. They were not paid well, and many were homeless.



Many Romans lived in *insulae*.

The city of Rome had so many poor residents that the city's rulers began giving free grain to everyone who lived there.

Most Romans spoke Latin. Many also spoke Greek. Romans greatly admired Greek culture. Like the Greeks, Romans enjoyed theater, poetry, and writing letters to one another. Upper-class Romans had jobs that

allowed them to use their knowledge of the arts, literature, and the law. They studied how to speak and write elegantly and persuasively. To be an influential and respected Roman, a person had to not only have wealth but also be educated in Roman and Greek culture, including history, drama, art, literature, and philosophy.

Public life was central to Roman culture. Romans gathered in amphitheaters, where people watched events like chariot races and battles between gladiators. Both entertainment and politics happened in the Roman Forum. This was a large public space with temples and a place for political bodies to meet. Powerful Romans went to the Forum to be seen. They liked to be admired and cheered by ordinary people. They also liked seeing their enemies



Roman government meetings and religious practices both happened in the Forum.

booed or attacked. Military leaders who won battles were cheered in a *triumph*—a great parade through the city. Those successful military leaders would process through a triumphal arch, a structure built specifically to celebrate a person or event.

The fact that wealthy Romans cared about popular opinion meant that the plebeians could sometimes influence politics. As the plebeians were the majority, their approval or disapproval could create or destroy a person's career. In many cases, powerful people used their power to gain the favor of the plebeians.

Roman Religion

Roman religion was part of public life. Priests were important public officials. Romans of all social classes would ask the gods to bless them or curse their enemies.

Ancient Roman religion was very similar to ancient Greek religion. Many of the stories told about Roman gods were the same stories told about Greek gods. For example, Jupiter, the god of the sky, was the Roman version of Zeus.

Jupiter was thought to rule every aspect of life. Jupiter's wife and sister, Juno, ruled women. Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, ruled students and craftspeople.



This mosaic on the floor of a Roman house shows Aeolus, the Roman god of wind.

Romans believed that gods were part of the founding of the city of Rome. According to Roman myth, Mars, the god of war, had twin children with a priestess. Priestesses were not allowed to have children. As punishment, the twin boys were thrown into the Tiber River. A mother wolf fished them out and raised them. The boys were named Romulus and Remus. When they grew up, they overthrew the king and founded Rome. Rome is named for Romulus.

The End of the Republic

For hundreds of years, the Roman Republic was a stable and successful power. It was generally able to take care of its problems in a way that allowed it to expand and defeat its rivals. But the expansion of Rome caused strains that would break the Roman system of government.

One of the main problems of the republic was about land ownership. Land was needed to grow crops and raise livestock. A small number of families owned most of the land. As Rome gained more land, wealthy families used their money to buy it up. Eventually, a small group of Roman families came to have great wealth while others had nothing. Politics in Rome became split. Some people wanted to keep Rome's existing laws, but others wanted to change the laws to help the ordinary people of Rome.

As Rome continued to expand its lands, it passed laws that allowed more poor Romans to join the army. This gave ordinary people a chance to gain wealth and power. One general, Sulla, gained so much support that he named himself **dictator** of Rome.

Vocabulary

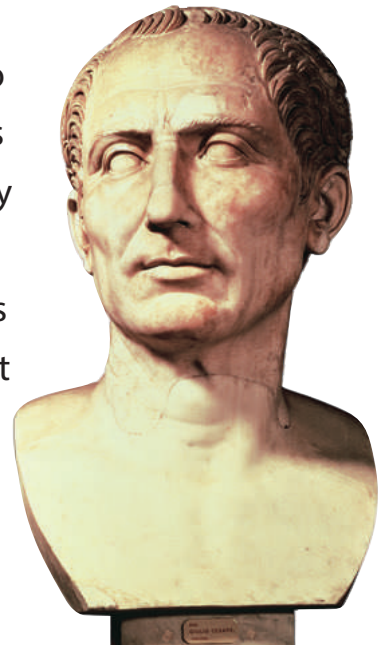
dictator, n. a ruler who has total control

The Roman dictatorship was not well liked, but people accepted having a single person in control in times of crisis. They saw it as a way to restore order when the country faced many serious problems. When the problems were resolved, the dictator no longer had power.

Sulla used his power to make social changes. He limited the powers of military commanders and limited the power of Rome's generals outside of Italy. He also increased the size of the Senate. When Sulla felt his work was done, he gave up his powers and retired.

The First Triumvirate

Major changes came to Rome thanks to a general named Gaius Julius Caesar. Caesar was a patrician. He had a successful, adventure-filled military career in his youth. Caesar was handsome, charming, and driven. He turned his military success into a political career. He was helped in politics by a partnership he made with two other great men of Rome. One was Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, called Pompey. Pompey was a skilled and respected governor and military commander. The other was Marcus Licinius Crassus, who was one of the richest men in the whole world. The three worked together to hold power. They became known as the First Triumvirate. They supported one another's careers and agreed not to get in each other's way.



This is a marble bust of Julius Caesar.

The three men worked together to rule Rome. Caesar was elected consul. He passed laws meant to gain the approval of the Roman people. He continued the Roman tradition of military conquest. He was given command of Roman armies that marched north to Gaul (present-day France). Caesar proved himself as a military leader by conquering this large area between 58 and 52 BCE. He wrote about his adventures in messages back to Rome. Thus, he soon became a popular hero. Caesar's wars brought him wealth, fame, and the loyalty of the soldiers he commanded.

Caesar Starts a Civil War

Crassus was killed while leading a military invasion of present-day Turkey in 55 BCE. This ended the First Triumvirate. Caesar wanted to be elected consul again, but Pompey no longer trusted Caesar. He wanted to block Caesar from power.

Pompey had the support of a majority of the Senate. Its members ordered Caesar to give up his army and return to the city of Rome. Caesar knew that he would be in danger without his soldiers and that Pompey would likely have him arrested. So he commanded his army to come with him to Rome—despite laws that specifically prohibited this. When Caesar crossed the river Rubicon, the northern boundary of Italy, his actions declared war on Pompey. A **civil war** had begun.

Vocabulary

civil war, n. a war between groups of people who live in the same place

Pompey and his supporters did not have enough troops ready to fight Caesar's force, so they fled. Caesar's army chased and



Julius Caesar declared war on Pompey by crossing the Rubicon.

conquered them. Pompey escaped to Egypt but was then killed. When Caesar arrived in Egypt, he made a partnership with Queen Cleopatra. He overthrew her co-ruler, Ptolemy XIII. Rome's influence in Egypt grew, and Cleopatra and Caesar had a child together.

Caesar returned to Rome a hero. He used his power to pass several new laws, including giving land to his faithful soldiers. He tried to end **corrupt** behavior in the government, improve the courts, and stop people from getting into heavy debt. But he also wanted glory. He had coins made with his face on them. He changed the calendar and renamed a summer month after himself. Today, we call it July.

Vocabulary

corrupt, adj.
characterized by
improper behavior,
such as taking bribes

Some people worried that Caesar wanted to become a king and end Rome's proud republican traditions. Their prediction was correct. In 44 BCE, Caesar pushed the Senate to name him dictator for life. This was unheard of in Rome. A dictatorship was supposed to be temporary. Caesar wanted total power forever. His many enemies argued that unless he was stopped, their beloved republic would come to an end. On March 15, known as the Ides of March in the Roman calendar, a group of senators attacked and killed Caesar. The two leaders of the plot, Brutus and Cassius, believed they were saving the republic. They named themselves the new leaders of Rome.



Caesar was attacked and killed on March 15 of 44 BCE. This is known as the Ides of March.

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPT FROM SUETONIUS'S ACCOUNT OF JULIUS CAESAR CROSSING THE RUBICON

When word came that the veto of the tribunes had been set aside and they themselves had left the city, [Caesar] at once sent on a few cohorts [groups of soldiers] with all secrecy, and then, to disarm suspicion, concealed his purpose by appearing at a public show inspecting the plans of a gladiatorial school which he intended building, and joining as usual in a banquet with a large company. It was not until after sunset that he set out very privily [secretly] with a small company. . . . Then, overtaking his cohorts at the river Rubicon, which was the boundary of his province, he paused for a while, and realizing what a step he was taking, he turned to those about him and said: "Even yet we may draw back; but once we cross that little bridge, the whole issue is with the sword."

Chapter 2

The Roman Empire

Rome Enters a New Age After Julius Caesar was murdered, Romans were eager for new leadership. They allowed changes to the government that led to growth and peace at first. Over time, however, Rome grew too large to manage. In the end, Rome lost its reach and its power.

The Framing Question

What caused the fall of the Roman Empire?

When Brutus and Cassius murdered Caesar, they named themselves leaders of the republic. But Caesar's loyal general Marcus Antonius, also known as Mark Antony, and Caesar's nephew Octavian would not let the murderers win so easily. They began a civil war against Brutus and Cassius.

Caesar's adventures had made him very popular with ordinary Romans. This helped Antonius and Octavian turn the people of Rome against Brutus and Cassius. In 42 BCE, Antonius's and Octavian's armies defeated the armies of Brutus, Cassius, and the other senators. Octavian defeated Antonius about ten years later and became the sole ruler.



Augustus Caesar expanded Rome's army and used it to extend Rome's borders.

Octavian ruled under the name Augustus Caesar. Augustus did not wish to meet the same end as his uncle. He wanted to be a great ruler of a great empire. He made many changes to achieve his goals.

Augustus was very careful how he used his power. He wanted others to see him as a humble ruler. But in reality, he was cruel and allowed no challenges to his rule. As time went on, Augustus allowed people to understand his control over Rome. He took the title *imperator*, the supreme commander or **emperor**.

Augustus made changes to the military. He divided the army into two parts. The first part was made up of twenty-seven **legions** of Roman citizens. This amounted to about 165,000 soldiers. Each legion was commanded by a senator who had to report to more powerful senators, who in turn reported to Augustus. This system was meant to stop any one senator from controlling an army large enough to attack Rome. The second part of the army was made up of men who were not Roman citizens. They were organized into smaller fighting groups. They had the opportunity to gain citizenship in return for their military service. This helped bring non-Romans into Roman society. Augustus used his armies to add several new regions to Rome's empire.

This system also changed how the military was funded. In the past, the Roman army had been supported by the riches it gathered

Vocabulary

emperor, n. the ruler of an empire

legion, n. a group or unit of about three thousand to six thousand soldiers in the Roman army

after victories. Augustus set up a central **treasury** that gave out money and supplies to generals. This meant that generals had to depend on Rome for supplies. By making these changes, Augustus was trying to ensure that there would never be another rival to threaten himself or Rome.

Vocabulary

treasury, n. a place where the money and other riches of a government are kept

Under Augustus, Rome entered a time of peace and grew wealthier. Augustus also made changes to Rome itself. He reorganized the **tax** system. He improved Rome with new safety measures, such as systems to protect the city from floods, fires, food shortages, and crime. He also ordered construction of new aqueducts and beautiful public buildings.

Vocabulary

tax, n. money collected from citizens by the government

Many Romans produced and enjoyed art and literature during Augustus's reign. The poet Virgil wrote a great epic poem, the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid* was inspired by the Greek *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It retells the myth of the beginnings of Rome. It also praises Augustus and his rule. Another poet, Ovid, also wrote texts to build up Rome's grand name. His *Metamorphoses* tells the history of the world from a Roman perspective. The text



Virgil wrote the epic poem the *Aeneid*.

includes retellings of many ancient Greek myths. Ovid's writings became some of the best-known versions of these tales.

Even though Rome's armies were still fighting, the period of Augustus's rule and that of the emperors who came after him is known as the Pax Romana, or the Roman Peace. During this period, Rome's power was very great and unrivaled. The Roman army protected people from attacks and invasions. Farms in the Roman Empire produced enough food for everyone, and people could travel and trade safely.

Rome became more stable under the imperial government. The emperor was more powerful than a king would have been, and the people had very little say in their government. There was still the Senate, but it had hardly any power. With the end of republican government and the rise of the emperors, Roman politics weakened, and Roman citizens no longer had any say in their own government through assemblies or elections. Still, the Roman Empire would last for centuries after Augustus's death.

Building the Empire

Under the rule of emperors, Rome expanded its borders. At its height, the Roman Empire controlled a huge territory with millions of people. Permanent military posts were set up at the empire's borders. Massive defensive walls protected against attacks. The ruins of many of these walls still exist. In Britain, Emperor Hadrian had a huge seventy-three-mile-long wall built. It stretched along the border of present-day England and Scotland, protecting Roman lands from outsiders. The most important geographic

The Roman Empire



At its height, the Roman Empire stretched over two million square miles.

border in Europe was along the Rhine River. It protected Roman-controlled Gaul from the Germanic peoples to the east.

To keep the border defense forces supplied and ensure the walls were always in good repair, the Romans needed a good transportation network. Cities across the empire also depended on transportation to keep them supplied with food and other goods.

The Romans had a vast **fleet** of ships to move goods and people by sea. The Romans used the sea so much that they called the Mediterranean *mare nostrum*, or “our sea.”

Vocabulary

fleet, n. a group of ships

On land, the Romans built a large network of roads that ran all across their empire. Roman roadbuilding was very advanced. Roads were built in straight, carefully planned lines, with hard surfaces and regular markers to show distances. The road

system allowed the Romans to move military forces and supplies very quickly.

Romans also built aqueducts, temples, arenas, and other big public projects all across the empire. Roman aqueducts were important to the success of the empire. People in cities needed clean water for drinking and bathing. Aqueducts brought clean water from the countryside to the cities. They also provided running water that was used in public bathrooms to flush away waste. Romans even built water and sewer lines beneath city streets.

Romans used the arch shape in their construction of large and strong aqueducts and bridges. Arches spread the weight of the structure onto supporting columns. These large, sturdy bridges allowed Romans to move troops, military equipment, construction materials, and other goods quickly and easily across their huge empire. Strong roads and bridges meant the empire could continue expanding.



Aqueducts, like this one in modern France, brought clean water to distant parts of the Roman Empire. The arches made the structure very strong.

Roman architects also used domes, which are rounded roofs. A dome's strength comes from the outer walls. It is similar to a curved arch because both support weight from above. The largest of these domed buildings was the Pantheon, a religious structure that still stands today.

The Challenges of the Empire

Even with many improvements like roads and aqueducts, the Roman Empire faced many challenges due to its enormous size. The first was the problem of communicating over great distances. The emperor Diocletian, who ruled from 284 to 305 CE, split the empire into halves, each ruled by its own emperor. The western half was ruled from Italy. The eastern half was ruled from Asia Minor. Diocletian wanted to help the government respond more quickly to problems by making travel distances shorter. He hoped this change would protect Rome from being overwhelmed by a single setback.

The Western and Eastern Roman Empire



Splitting the Roman Empire in two was meant to make it easier to rule such a huge territory.

In addition to outside threats, the empire faced challenges inside the government. Some officials were corrupt, and there were often fights for political power. The emperor Constantine rose to power in 312 CE during one such struggle.

Constantine tried to reunite the two halves of the empire. But the city of Rome was no longer the grand and well-organized center of power it used to be. Constantine decided to move the capital of the empire out of Rome and into Byzantium, in the eastern part of the empire.

Christianity and the Roman Empire

Constantine didn't just move the capital. He was also instrumental in changing the religious beliefs of the Roman Empire. To understand this, we need to go back a few centuries.

In 63 BCE, Judea, in modern-day Israel, came under Roman control. Around 30 CE, a new religion started in Judea and began to spread in the Roman Empire. The new religion was based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, a Jewish figure who attracted many followers. The followers of Jesus believed in one God. The belief in the existence of only one God is called monotheism. The followers of Jesus also believed it was most important to live in God's kingdom after they died.

The Romans did not like the idea of any kingdom being more important than Rome. The Romans were always afraid of angering the gods. They allowed conquered peoples to worship their gods, but they wanted everyone in the empire to worship the Roman gods, too. This way, the Romans thought, no gods would get angry and punish them.

The Jewish community in Judea had a difficult relationship with its Roman rulers. Jesus was one person who challenged the Roman rulers. He was put to death by the Romans, but his followers continued to spread his messages and teachings. Over time, this became the organized religion of Christianity.

Christians welcomed poor people and enslaved people. They promised a better life in God's kingdom, after death. This was appealing to those who suffered in the Roman world. Christianity spread in all parts of the empire. Powerful Romans tried to stop its spread, and they **persecuted** the Christians because of their religious beliefs. Whenever something bad happened in Rome, the Romans blamed the Christians. At times, the Christians were treated as criminals. They were put in prison or killed. It was dangerous to be a Christian. Still, the number of Christians continued to grow.

The treatment of Christians and Christianity completely changed when Constantine became emperor. In 312 CE, Constantine reported seeing a burning cross in the sky. A message with it said, "Under this sign you shall conquer." This happened soon before a battle, and Constantine took

Vocabulary

persecute, v. to treat a group of people unfairly and cruelly



Constantine became the first Christian Roman emperor.

it as a sign that if he adopted Christianity, he would win the battle. He had his soldiers paint their shields with the Christian symbol of the cross. Constantine's forces won the battle, and Constantine became the first Christian Roman emperor.

In addition to ending the persecution of Christians, Constantine's influence eventually led to Christianity becoming Rome's official religion. This began when Constantine ordered church leaders to gather at Nicaea (in present-day Turkey) in 325 CE. He instructed them to write an official statement of Christian beliefs. They produced a **doctrine** that came to be known as the Nicene Creed. As a result, in 380 CE, under emperor Theodosius, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Christianity became an important part of the Roman Empire and influenced much of the world that followed.

Vocabulary

doctrine, n. an official set of beliefs

Byzantium

The Eastern Roman Empire became known as the Byzantine Empire. It was named after the city of Byzantium. Constantine made the city of Byzantium his capital in 330 CE. He renamed the city Constantinople, after himself. Today it is called Istanbul, and is a major city in the country of Turkey. Constantinople was in a **strategic** location—it had rich farmland and good access to sea trade, and it was only able to be attacked by land from the west.

Vocabulary

strategic, adj. very important as part of gaining advantage

Constantine remade his capital with a huge new palace, wide streets, and a great aqueduct. He also built a *hippodrome*, an arena

for racing horses and chariots. The city had a large harbor that housed a huge fleet. Public art such as statues and columns added to the city's beauty.

The Byzantine Empire was the source of other accomplishments. One is due to the emperor Justinian, who reigned from 527 to 565 CE. Justinian created a set of laws that collected and updated the laws of the Romans. It is known as the Code of Justinian.

One of the worst outbreaks of plague the world has ever seen happened during Justinian's reign. Plague is a highly contagious, usually fatal disease that affects large numbers of people. Due to the great number of deaths, food production and trade declined, and many people lost their jobs. The plague also left fewer people alive to serve in the army.



Justinian's court, shown in this mosaic, helped him write the Code of Justinian.

Byzantine rulers would hold on to Constantinople and some surrounding territories for centuries. Yet their power and influence gradually diminished.

The End of the Western Empire

After Constantine died, the empire again divided into east and west. But the western part of the empire grew weaker. It faced political, military, and economic problems.

Some historians believe that the Western Roman Empire became weak because Romans were focused on wealth and power. Another idea is that Rome was weakened by almost-constant outside attacks, especially by Germanic tribes. In 410 CE, the city of Rome itself was

attacked and **sacked** by the

Gothic leader Alaric I. Invasions continued, and the weak Roman army could not stop them. In 476 CE, the last Western Roman emperor was defeated, and the Western

Roman Empire fell. The wealthier eastern half of the Roman Empire existed in some form for almost a thousand years after the fall of Western Rome.



The Gothic leader Alaric I and his men attacked Rome in 410 CE.

Vocabulary

sack, v. to destroy and steal things in a city or building, usually with an army

PRIMARY SOURCE: STATUE OF AUGUSTUS CAESAR



This statue of Augustus Caesar stands in the Roman Forum.

Chapter 3

Imperial China

The First Emperor A strong ruler rose to unite the many warring states of China. He began a dynasty, or series of rulers from the same family, known as the Qin (/chin/).

They ruled over a single, united China. However, his dynasty did not last as long as he hoped. Soon after he died, the Qin dynasty ended, and the Han (/hahn/) dynasty took its place. This new, strong dynasty introduced many changes and advancements, bringing a great deal of wealth and power to China.

The Framing Question

What factors influenced Chinese culture during the imperial period?



Great Wall of China

The first emperor of China frightened everyone. Named Zheng (/jung/) at birth, the emperor came from the northwest Chinese state of Qin.

When Zheng was a young boy, China was not a single, unified country. Instead, many separate states existed, and they fought one another. Zheng became king of the state of Qin when he was thirteen years old. To keep his power, he had to fight wars with his neighbors. After ruling as king for twenty-five years, he defeated all the other states.

Zheng claimed the Mandate of Heaven, a belief that the ruler had heaven's blessing and carried out its wishes. In 221 BCE, Zheng declared himself emperor of all of China and took the name Qin Shi Huangdi (/shee/hwong*dee/), meaning First Supreme Emperor. Shi Huangdi established the Qin dynasty, named after his home state.



Shi Huangdi ruled China from 221 to 210 BCE.

Shi Huangdi struggled to unite the many different states into one nation. Each of the old states had its own particular kind of writing, calendar, and system of weights and measures. This caused great confusion. How could people understand a written command from the emperor if they did not use the same kind of writing as he did? Even the money was different all over China. Some places used coins



Many different kinds of money were used before Emperor Shi Huangdi made everyone use the same round coins.

in the shape of knives, while others used coins shaped like shovels or fish or small scallop shells. Which one was the most valuable?

Shi Huangdi decided to remove these differences. He insisted that all people use the same written language so that everyone in the empire could understand one another. Shi Huangdi declared that all coins must be round with a square hole in the middle. This was done so that coins could be strung together. The emperor established one calendar and one single system of weighing and measuring goods that everyone had to follow.

Shi Huangdi wanted to travel easily throughout his empire, so he ordered the building of canals to connect the great waterways of China. These canals joined with existing ones to make a larger network. Centuries later, in the 600s CE, these would be joined

together into the Grand Canal system. A main purpose of the Grand Canal was to transport grain from the Yangzi (/yang*see/) River valley to feed people in the cities and the armies in the north. Shi Huangdi also commanded that roads be built—four thousand miles of them! Trees lining the roads supplied shade for travelers.

A Cruel Ruler

Such improvements made life easier for the Chinese people. But the emperor could also be very cruel. He hated crime, and people who broke his laws were punished in horrible ways.

Shi Huangdi had learned about ruling growing up in the Qin kingdom. The Qin rulers followed a philosophy called Legalism. This philosophy says that humans are wicked and must be controlled by the government through harsh punishments and strict laws.

Shi Huangdi despised any ideas that were different from his own. He also disliked it when scholars looked back on the past and said life was better back then. He had every book of history, philosophy, and literature in all of China collected and burned. Even the emperor's own son was upset, and he told his father it was wrong to be so cruel. Shi Huangdi became angry at his son and sent him far away—all the way to the northern edge of China.

The Wall-Builder

Shi Huangdi gave his son a job to keep him busy. He told him to supervise the construction of a series of walls in northern China. Some older walls were already there. Shi Huangdi wanted to connect some of these older walls as well as build new ones.

The wall-building did not end with Shi Huangdi. Later dynasties built more walls. However, the Chinese honor Shi Huangdi as the first great wall-builder.

The Great Wall crosses China's mountains and deserts for more than five thousand miles. Why would anyone need such a barrier? Shi Huangdi built the Great Wall to keep out the people who lived beyond the northern border of China.

The Chinese called the people who lived north of their territory the Xiongnu (/syoong*noo/). Europeans referred to them as the Huns. The Xiongnu were **nomads**. They moved around on their great herds of horses. They wandered the open grasslands, called steppes (/steps/), in search of good grass for their horses to eat. When they found a place where they wanted to stay briefly, they would set up large tentlike houses called **yurts** that they could take down quickly when they were ready to move.

Vocabulary

nomad, n. a person who is not settled in one place and who moves around often, usually in search of food and water

yurt, n. a tentlike house used by the nomadic people of the Chinese steppes

In contrast to the nomadic Xiongnu, the Chinese people at that time led settled lives. Most of them were farmers who lived in the fertile valleys of the Huang He (/hwang/huh/), or Yellow River, in the north and the Yangzi River farther south. They rarely left their farms and villages.

The Xiongnu were fierce warriors. They would attack Chinese villages and steal from the people who lived there. Shi Huangdi was determined to protect China from these northern raiders, and so he started building walls.

Geography of China



China's geography kept it mostly isolated from the rest of the world.

He sent three hundred thousand soldiers and workers to the northern border. Many died on the way. Once they got there, there was no food. Half-starved, the men had to work anyway.

Searching for Immortality

In his later years the emperor became worried about dying. Shi Huangdi was determined to find a magic potion that would help him live forever. He sent out several sea expeditions in search of islands that were supposed to hold the secret to immortality. Of course, the expeditions failed. The emperor died while on his way home from a long trip. He was buried in a secret tomb. The tomb was guarded by more than seven thousand warriors and horses



These life-size soldiers were part of the vast terra-cotta army that guarded the entrance to the tomb of China's first emperor.

made of terra-cotta. This terra-cotta army were thought to protect the emperor from grave robbers and unwelcome spirits.

Shi Huangdi had boasted that his descendants would rule for ten thousand generations. But within just a few years of his death, the Qin dynasty collapsed. Another emperor emerged, and another ruling family took over China and founded a new dynasty.

A New Dynasty

The emperor Liu Bang (/lee*oh/bahng/) was a poor, uneducated peasant, but he became a powerful warrior. Liu Bang took control of all of China and declared himself the emperor of the Han dynasty. The Han ruled China for more than four hundred years, from 202 BCE until 220 CE.

The Han dynasty ruled differently from the Qin dynasty. At first, the Han rulers followed Shi Huangdi's Legalism, but in a gentler way. Eventually, they gave up Legalism and followed the ideas of Confucianism. Confucianism emphasizes the family as the basic unit of society. In Confucius's time, hundreds of years before the Han dynasty, the government was seen as an extension of the family. As the head of society, the ruler was like the head of the family. People owed their rulers loyalty and respect, and rulers had a duty to provide the people with a good government. Confucian thinking suggests that the success of a society depends on people living proper, peaceful lives and obeying their superiors.



Liu Bang founded the Han dynasty, which ruled for more than four hundred years.

Seeking Aid

But all was not peaceful in China. Shi Huangdi's walls had not stopped the Xiongnu. Liu Bang and the emperors who came after him made war against the northern horse people, but still the raiders came. What could the Chinese do about them?

A later Han emperor, Wudi (/woo*dee/), had an idea. Maybe other regions would be willing to fight together. But the Chinese didn't know anything about other lands or other peoples.

China had been isolated from the rest of the world because of its geography. The Pacific Ocean lay to the east of China; to the west

lay the Himalayas, with some of the tallest mountains in the world; to the north were vast steppes and the forbidding Gobi (/go*bee/) Desert; and to the south lay more mountains and jungles.

The Chinese believed they were the center of the world. They called their country the Middle Kingdom or “all under heaven.”

In 138 BCE, Emperor Wudi ordered a court official by the name of Zhang Qian (/ahng/yen/) to go out into the wilderness. Wudi commanded this official to find other regions that would help China fight the northern tribe members. The explorer headed west into Central Asia. He discovered amazing things, including the most wonderful horses he’d ever seen.

Zhang Qian went as far as the state of Bactria (/back*tree*yuh/), which is now called Afghanistan. He asked the people of Bactria to help the Chinese fight the Xiongnu. They said no, but many other small states in Central Asia agreed to help China.

Zhang Qian’s stories about the western land fascinated the Chinese. People in China listened carefully when they heard about the magnificent horses in Central Asia. In particular, they became interested in a horse known as the “sweats blood horse.” This horse was viewed as special and exotic.



The Akhal-Teke horse, or Heavenly Horse, also known as the “sweats blood horse,” was a prized possession in China. It was one of the first horses to be brought to China from Central Asia.

The Silk Road

As well as horses, the Chinese loved silk. Silk was a precious, valuable fabric. Have you ever felt silk? It is very soft and beautiful. The Chinese got silk by raising special worms, called silkworms. They'd feed the silkworms mulberry leaves. In the springtime, the worms would spin a cocoon made of delicate threads. The Chinese learned how to unwind those threads and weave them into a beautiful fabric. When foreigners saw the fabric, they immediately wanted to trade for it. The silk trade created wealth for China.



Silk has been made and highly valued in China for more than six thousand years.

The Silk Road began as a **trade route** used by merchants to sell China's highly valued silk to other cultures. The road was really a system of roads that stretched thousands of miles across the mountains and deserts of Central Asia. Traders traveled in groups called caravans. Animals such as camels and **yaks** carried the silk. Following this route, silk traders made it all the way to the countries on the Mediterranean Sea.

Vocabulary

trade route, n. a way across land or sea that is traveled by merchants

yak, n. an oxlike animal that lives in Asia

People of the Mediterranean world were eager to buy China's silk. Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, wore a silk gown to impress her guests. Silk was so popular in Rome that the emperor Tiberius had

The Silk Road



The Silk Road connected China to other parts of the world and allowed the spread of goods and culture.

to forbid men from wearing it so that there would be enough for the women.

Over time, the route extended to India, Persia, Arabia, Africa, and Europe. Traders and travelers who used the Silk Road spread both the goods and the ideas of many cultures to one another. This process is known as **cultural diffusion**.

Vocabulary
cultural diffusion, n. the spread of goods and ideas from one group of people to another

The increased trade and contact with foreigners under the Han brought Buddhism to China. Buddhism developed in India and spread north to Central Asia, where travelers on the Silk Road picked it up. It gradually mixed with existing Chinese religious

traditions, especially Daoism. Different varieties of Chinese Buddhism developed over the centuries.

Making Paper

The Han dynasty not only mastered making silk but also made many other important items as well. These items were often also traded along the Silk Road. One of the great achievements of the Han dynasty was the invention of paper. The Chinese made paper by mashing together a variety of ingredients, including tree bark, **hemp**, rags, and fishnets.

Vocabulary

hemp, n. a type of plant, the fibers of which are used to make such things as rope, fabric, and paper

Before paper was invented, the Chinese used the bones of animals, strips of bamboo, or even precious silk for writing. The invention of paper was a huge advance. It would be another one thousand years before paper would be widely used in Europe.

Woodblock Printing

The Han invented paper, but the ability to print on paper was not developed until hundreds of years later, during the Tang dynasty. The invention of woodblock printing led to the creation of the first books. A worker would carve words and drawings onto a wooden block, cover the block with ink, then press it onto a piece of paper. Presto—a printed page! One worker could produce a thousand pages a day using this technique. The oldest existing book in the world, the *Diamond Sutra*, is a Buddhist text that was printed in China in 868 CE.

Magnetic Compass

The Chinese were also the first to use a magnetic compass to tell direction. The first compasses were made during the Han dynasty

by placing a magnetic rock on a bronze plate. The Chinese knew of magnetite, a naturally occurring magnetic iron ore. They also learned to magnetize iron needles by rubbing them with a piece of magnetite. By the 900s CE, they had realized that the needles always pointed north when placed on water. By the eleventh or twelfth century, they were using their implements to navigate.

Porcelain

Another important invention during the Han dynasty was a type of pottery called **porcelain**. Han dynasty potters created a glaze known as **celadon**. Celadon varies from blue to green in color.

Han dynasty celadon porcelain was so well-made that some of it still exists today and still bears its unique, vibrant colors. Traders from all over Europe and Asia sought the beautiful, durable porcelain made during the Han dynasty.



In early versions of the compass, the magnetic stone was shaped like a spoon and moved on the bronze dish below it.

Vocabulary

porcelain, n. a type of strong ceramic pottery

celadon, n. a pottery glaze that varies from green to blue



Celadon glaze can be green, blue, or any hue in between.

PRIMARY SOURCE: EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF MASTER HAN FEI

Han Fei was a philosopher who lived before China was united. He is known as the "Father of Legalism." His writing influenced government systems until the Han dynasty.

A state cannot be strong forever, nor can it remain weak. When its laws are strictly administered [enforced], the state is strong. When its laws are loosely administered, the state is weak.

*

A state under an enlightened sovereign [ruler] does not provide for trivial [unimportant] documents but promulgates [puts into effect] a code of laws for the guidance of the people; nor does it follow the ways of the early kings but makes the governing officials the people's masters; nor does it tolerate private feuds [conflicts] but gets the people to die fighting in wars. In such a state, everyone abides by the law, works hard for the state, and delights in fighting.

*

One gives and receives for his own selfish purpose. If there is common interest, men, even though they are strangers, will live in harmony. Conversely, if their interests conflict with one another, even they be father and son, they will strive [fight] against one another.

Glossary

A

aqueduct, n. a raised canal that carries water from one place to another (10)

C

celadon, n. a pottery glaze that varies from green to blue (47)

civil war, n. a war between groups of people who live in the same place (16)

consul, n. one of two people elected to rule the Roman Republic (6)

corrupt, adj. characterized by improper behavior, such as taking bribes (17)

cultural diffusion, n. the spread of goods and ideas from one group of people to another (45)

D

dictator, n. a ruler who has total control (14)

doctrine, n. an official set of beliefs (30)

E

emperor, n. the ruler of an empire (22)

F

fleet, n. a group of ships (25)

H

hemp, n. a type of plant, the fibers of which are used to make such things as rope, fabric, and paper (46)

L

laying siege (phrase) surrounding enemy buildings or other locations so that those within cannot receive supplies (9)

legion, n. a group or unit of about three thousand to six thousand soldiers in the Roman army (22)

M

majority, n. more than one-half (7)

N

nomad, n. a person who is not settled in one place and who moves around often, usually in search of food and water (39)

O

official, n. a person who carries out a government duty (7)

P

patrician, n. a member of one of the wealthiest and most powerful families of Rome (5)

peninsula, n. a piece of land sticking out into a body of water so that it is almost surrounded by water (2)

persecute, v. to treat a group of people unfairly and cruelly (29)

plebeian, n. a person who was an ordinary free Roman in the lower social class (6)

porcelain, n. a type of strong ceramic pottery (47)

R

republic, n. a form of government in which people elect representatives to rule for them (5)

S

sack, v. to destroy and steal things in a city or building, usually with an army (32)

strategic, adj. very important as part of gaining advantage (30)

T

tax, n. money collected from citizens by the government (23)

toga, n. traditional Roman clothing made of fabric draped around the body (10)

trade route, n. a way across land or sea that is traveled by merchants (44)

treasury, n. a place where the money and other riches of a government are kept (23)

V

veto, v. to reject or refuse to approve a law (6)

Y

yak, n. an oxlike animal that lives in Asia (44)

yurt, n. a tentlike house used by the nomadic people of the Chinese steppes (39)



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Ilene Goldman

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