Chapter 5 - Roman Empire

PEP

Mr. Lewis
The Fall of the Roman Republic
Roman Empire-followed Roman Republic

Roman Empire - the post-Republican period of the ancient Roman civilization, characterized by an autocratic form of government and large territorial holdings around the Mediterranean in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Pax Romana, 31 BC to AD 180

- Roman Peace

What important event occurred during the Pax Romana?

- Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ was born

Period of Decline, AD 180 to AD 476

What marked the beginning of the Pax Romana?

- Octavian’s victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra

What did Octavian call himself?

- Imperator - Emperor - 1st Emperor of the Roman Empire
- Imperator Gaius Julius Divi Filius Caesar Octavianus Augustus

Reigned from 27 BC to AD 14
The Pax Romana (Latin for "Roman Peace") is a roughly 200-year-long period in Roman history which is identified with increased and sustained inner hegemonial peace and stability (though not meaning without wars, expansion and revolts).

The definition of hegemony is leadership or dominance of one group over another.

Pax Romana is traditionally dated as commencing from the accession of Caesar Augustus, founder of the Roman principate, in 27 BC and concluding in 180 AD with the death of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the "good emperors".

The Principate is characterised by the reign of a single emperor (princeps) and an effort on the part of the early emperors, at least, to preserve the illusion of the formal continuance, in some aspects, of the Roman Republic.

The evil was not in bread and circuses, per se, but in the willingness of the people to sell their rights as free men for full bellies and the excitement of the games which would serve to distract them from the other human hungers which bread and circuses can never appease.

Marcus Tullius Cicero
Pax Romana
Roman roads were built as straight as possible (to accommodate those unarticulated front axles); our ideas about Roman roads are dominated by images like this one of a stretch of the Via Appia. The Umbrella Pines are a recent addition and are planted along the middle of the foot/bridle paths (margines).
Since burials were not allowed inside a city’s pomerium (sacred boundary), which often coincided with the city walls, Roman roads were often lined with tombs just outside the city gates, as seen here on the “Via delle Tombe” outside of Pompeii’s Herculaneum Gate.
The Appia, Anio Vetus, and Marcia were all built during the early Republic, and together they brought almost 400 thousand cubic meters of water per day into Rome.

Appius Claudius Caecus built the Aqua Appia in 312 BC

Rome’s major aqueducts
Catacombs

Catacombs-from Greek kata kumbos “near the low place”

Underground – about a yard wide – 6 or 8 feet tall

Early Christians buried dead rather than cremating them—as pagans did

Felt it was wrong to destroy the body by burning it

Koimeteria-Greek meaning “place of rest” or “sleeping place”

Half a million Christians buried in the catacombs

Catacombs abandoned when Roman Empire collapsed and barbarians took over the Italian peninsula
In 79 AD, Mt. Vesuvius exploded, and a black river of ash ran through the city of Pompeii, destroying everything.
Vesuvius Erupts-Pompeii Disappears
Mt. Vesuvius

Stratovolcano

• Tall, conical volcano built up of hardened lava and volcanic ash
• African plate moves under Italy
  • Magma comes from the African plate as it melts
  • Creates a very explosive volcano
• Located on the Gulf of Naples
Casualties of the Eruption
Greek culture influenced almost every aspect of Roman life

The legal codes of many modern western countries include principles based on Roman law

Latin literature expressed the life and history of the Roman people

Cicero – Master of Latin prose, scholar, author, lawyer and statesman

Poetry of the Augustan Age

- Virgil – Often called the Homer of Rome
- Horace – Poet of the Augustan Age, warned of the dangers of luxury and ease
- Ovid – Wrote about mythology and love

History

- Livy – Wrote a 142 volume Roman history
- Tacitus – loved the Republic, wrote Germania, about the lifestyles of the Germanic peoples
- Plutarch (Greek) wrote biographies that compared the lives of important Greek and Roman men
Roman Culture and Achievement

Art and Architecture

Captured art and Artists were brought back to Rome, Greek art was very popular

Romans excelled in portrait busts, very realistic, showed warts, scars, etc.

Also excelled in relief sculpture

Engineering

Arches and vaults strengthened with concrete enabled Roman engineers to create large indoor spaces enclosed by massive domes (see Pantheon)

Aqueducts were built to supply water to cities

Romans built bridges, extensive road networks, public baths and amphitheatres for entertainment

Roman buildings were distinguished by their large size, durability and practicality (see Colosseum)
Roman Culture and Achievement

Greek Contributions – Alexandria, Egypt

During Pax Romana centers of Greek learning, such as Alexandria flourished

Two good harbors guarded by a 400-foot lighthouse
  • Light reflected by huge mirrors—could be seen 20 miles away

Important center of learning before and during the Roman Empire

Great museum – “seat of the muses”

Library

Eratosthenes of Cyrene was a Greek polymath: mathematician, geographer, poet, astronomer, and music theorist who was once head of the library

Books vs scrolls—The new Technology!

Making the transition from current technology to new ones, have we always had Help Desks?

https://youtu.be/pQHX-SjgQvQ
Roman Culture and Achievement

Religious Beliefs

Early on Romans worshipped the god’s of nature, they were polytheistic.

Later they discovered practical guidelines for living in two Greek philosophies:

Epicureanism

This philosophy may be summed up by the following:

- There is nothing to fear in God
- There is nothing to be alarmed about in death
- Good is easily obtained
- Evil is easily endured

The founder of this philosophy, Epicurus, taught that true happiness comes only as man frees his mind from fear and his body from pain.

Stoicism

This philosophy had a stronger and more lasting impact on Roman society than Epicureanism.
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Stoicism teaches that the highest good is the pursuit of the virtues of courage, dignity, duty, simplicity of life, and service to fellow men.

Stoics believe in the brotherhood of man and the moral responsibility of each individual to his society.

By proper living, man can bring himself into harmony with the divine law that governs the universe and directs his fate.

Marcus Aurelius, the last “good” emperor, was a devoted Stoic.

Emperor Worship

Came from Eastern cultures.

The Roman emperor held the title “Pontifex Maximus” (greatest priest).
Large Jewish Community

When Julius Caesar took the city he decreed that the Jews were:

- To enjoy free exercise of their religion
- Have exemption from civic religious rites (including the ruler cult)
- Have the right of not appearing in court on the Sabbath
- And they had permission to send contributions to the temple in Jerusalem

Emperors after Julius Caesar continued these policies

According to tradition the Septuagint translated at Alexandria by 70 chosen scholars

Septuaginta = Latin = 70
Translation of Hebrew Old Testament into Greek

Many Jews could not longer understand Hebrew

New Testament writers, such as Luke, quote from this version rather than the Hebrew
Greek translation brought hope of coming Messiah to Hellenistic Jews and Gentiles
Introduction of Christianity

God directed the affairs of men and civilizations in ancient times to make the world ready for the coming of his son and the spread of the gospel.

Pax Romana was characterized by safe travel and social stability.

The widely known Greek language made possible the easy exchange of ideas.

Moral decay throughout the empire demonstrated the inability of human religions to fill the God-hole and provide a worthy standard of moral behavior.

Upon return from the Babylonian exile the Jews built centers of worship – synagogues.

Christians used these synagogues to preach the gospel message.

Jesus was born during the reign of Caesar Augustus.

At 30 he began his public ministry, preaching, teaching and working miracles, demonstrating to all by word and deed that he was the promised messiah.

Most Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah.
Introduction of Christianity

The Jews were looking for a Messiah of action, not peace

Jesus came to save people from their sins

His preaching called for men and women everywhere to admit their sinfulness and follow him

The Jewish religious leaders were offended by Jesus’ preaching and they plotted to have him killed

They arrested Jesus and took him before Pontius Pilate, Judea’s Roman Governor

Desiring to keep the peace Pilate gave in to the Jewish demands and had Jesus crucified

You all know what happened next

New sect call Christians, preached salvation through Jesus Christ

The gospel spread, Jews persecuted the new sect

The gospel, rejected by the Jews, was carried to the gentiles by Paul
Who was Pontius Pilate

Roman procurator (civil official) also called governor

Took office in Judea around AD 27

Roman government worked with the Sanhedrin—council of wealthy Hellenizing Jews

Judean became procuratorial district—Sanhedrin administered justice under Jewish law

Pilate not really free to let Jesus go—to release Jesus was to interfere in religious affairs

Pilate send an official report of Jesus’s crucifixion to Rome

Pilate fell from Caesar’s good graces—in political trouble

Went to Rome to answer accusations against him—committed suicide
In 66AD the Jews rebelled against Rome and in 70AD the Romans destroyed the temple, just as Jesus had predicted.

The Christian church was continually persecuted by the Romans until 313 AD when Emperor Constantine issued the Edicts of Milan which made Christianity legal.

In 325 AD the Council of Nicaea presided over by Constantine, affirmed Christ’s deity.

By the end of the 4th century, Christianity became the official religion of the empire.
In the 3rd century a series of political, economic, and social crises shook the empire to its very foundations.

In the 4th and 5th centuries barbarian invaders entered Roman territory but Rome was too weak to expel them.

Political disorder – By the 3rd century Rome did not have a strong and stable government. Inefficiency and waste had accompanied the sharp rise in the size of government.

Rome also suffered from unstable leadership. The army would place generals in the position of emperor.

The army, once protector of the Roman state, controlled the state to satisfy its own greed.
Economic Trouble – Cost of large army plus expenses of a huge government bureaucracy, drained the Roman treasury

To solve this problem, the government tried to raise taxes

They reduced the silver content in coins

As the value of coinage declined, prices rose

This inflation was aggravated by the one sided trade with India and China which depleted the government's gold and silver supplies

Money became almost worthless, the barter system replaced the use of money, the trade slackened shops closed and poverty increased
Collapse of the Roman Empire

Moral decay – self indulgence, people depending on government instead of themselves

Family life disintegrated, divorce and immorality abounded, superstition increased

Barbarian invasions – Germanic peoples moved down from northern Europe and settled along Rome’s borders

Tribes such as the Angles, Saxons, Franks, Vandals and Goths

Romans described them as “barbarians”

A barbarian described all those outside the empire who did not share in the Greek or Roman cultures

Late in the 4th century came a new threat, the Huns, the advance of the Huns prompted many Germanic tribes to seek refuge in Roman territory

The Visigoths settled in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, after being mistreated by the Romans, the Visigoths rebelled
Collapse of the Roman Empire

At the battle of Adrianople in 378 AD, the Visigoths whipped the Roman army and killed the emperor.

In 410 AD, under the leadership of Alaric, the Visigoths moved south and plundered the city of Rome.

The Visigoths eventually settled in what is now Spain.

The Franks moved into northern Gaul.

The Angles and Saxons crossed over into Britain.

The Vandals settled in North Africa – Vandal means a “destroyer of property”.

With the onslaught of the barbarian invasions, the western Roman empire collapsed in 476 AD.

In 476 AD the Army ended Roman rule by placing a non-Roman on the emperor’s throne in the west.