

in 117 AD, at its greatest extent



# Augustus and the “Restoration of the Republic” 27 – 14 BCE

He claimed he'd saved the Republic and charged the senate with safeguarding it. Octavian – who was named—and thereafter always referred to as—Augustus by the Senate (meaning “favored by the Gods”) only saved the Republic in name:

- To preserve the outward appearance, Augustus continued the tradition of the annual election of consuls and other officials, the passing of legislation in public assemblies, and the respect for the Senate.
- Augustus gained the power of multiple offices while only claiming to hold one and in this capacity, he created a *de facto* monarchy called the Principate.



*Augustus: The “First Man” or Princep*



# The Principate

Augustus **enlarged the Senate** (like Caesar) packing it with loyal supporters making a big show of working w/ the senate when in reality he kept them busy with legislation that didn't interfere with his claim to rule or would make his popularity decline while he, in fact, ran the affairs.

## The Power of the Princip:

The Princip exercised supreme power because of their control of the Army and treasury. The military was made the foundation of the power for all future Roman leaders (if the military was behind you, you were politically pretty safe)

Augustus had cut the army's size in  $\frac{1}{2}$  and retained key military posts under his direct command

The army was also made thoroughly professional and used as more than defense or offense as in for engineering efforts – road building and so on...

The soldiers were Romans *and* non-Romans from the provinces

Imposing an inheritance tax on citizens, he used the money to provide the soldiers w/ regular pay and substantial retirement benefits thereby making them even more loyal to their **patron** – the Emperor. Augustus also stationed soldiers in Rome for the first time specifically to guard the emperor – this was the **Praetorian Guard**. They were to prevent rebellion, protect the ruler and to provide a visible reminder of the Emperor's power.

Augustus' goals were to create stability, order and legitimacy after many long years of political battles and intrigues and violence leading to civil war. In this, he was successful; the Empire he created lasted for 2  $\frac{1}{2}$  centuries after he died!

As the famous historian Tacitus pointed out: Augustus managed to change the structure of Roman political power because by the time he died in 14 BCE in his 70s (!!!) no one alive had seen the Republic. He transformed Republican Rome by his long life, his military and financial innovations, his following in Caesar's footsteps of cultivating popularity by his demonstrated care for the capital's poor people and finally his manipulation of the traditional vocabulary of politics to disguise his power and proclaim his legitimacy.



Carving of the **Praetorian Guard** – the personal military protection for the Emperor, stationed in Rome (a new invention of the Principate)

# Augustan Rome

Part of the source of his **Cult of popularity** among the commoners was in his social policies:

He provided the urban poor w/ basic food rations from the state treasuries, supplemented by “gifts” from the consul himself

He instituted huge public works programs - to provide employment and to glorify his government in the structures that were built – aqueducts, roads, bridges...

Another source of his popularity actually came from a return to financial simplicity – this was less successful after his death than other reforms, but he certainly tried to lead by example

- For example, he discouraged the influx of slaves

He tried to revive enthusiasm for the Roman pantheon of gods (a call to tradition) but this was unsuccessful after his death.

- The educated elite, like their Greek counterparts before them turned more toward the rationale found in philosophy
- The commoners turned increasingly toward mystery religions -with their promise of salvation—this would eventually include Christianity

He was a master at cultivating legitimacy and consent through mass culture: hence the gladiator combats, public hunts, chariot races and theater productions. The later often used as a means of indirectly petitioning the emperor for change.



*Temple of Mars in Augustan Forum. For more on this [follow this link](#).*



# The *Pax Romana*

## Challenges to the Principate, 69-193 C.E.

**Augustus's Successors:** The great and wise Augustus was followed by a group of terrible emperors; it is remarkable the government even survived. The following succeeded the paranoid and withdrawn Tiberius:

- **Caligula** (r. 37-41 C.E.): This irrational if not insane emperor pursued extreme pleasures and wanted to be worshiped as a god. The Praetorian Guard assassinated him to preserve order.
- **Claudius** (r. 41-54 C.E.): The Romans viewed him as a weak-willed man possibly controlled by his wives.
- **Nero** (r. 54-69 C.E.): Of the whole bad bunch, he was the most excessive and tyrannical murder. He even murdered his own mother (trying to poison her three times), and suffered from extreme paranoia. His own guard abandoned him so to avoid public execution, he had his slave cut his throat. Nero was the last emperor to have a direct family connection to Augustus.

# The Pax Romana (or Roman Peace)

Perhaps Augustus' most important achievement was the Pax Romana because it allowed for a 2 and a half century's long peace that lasted in the Western world from Syria to Spain and from Belgrade to Britain.

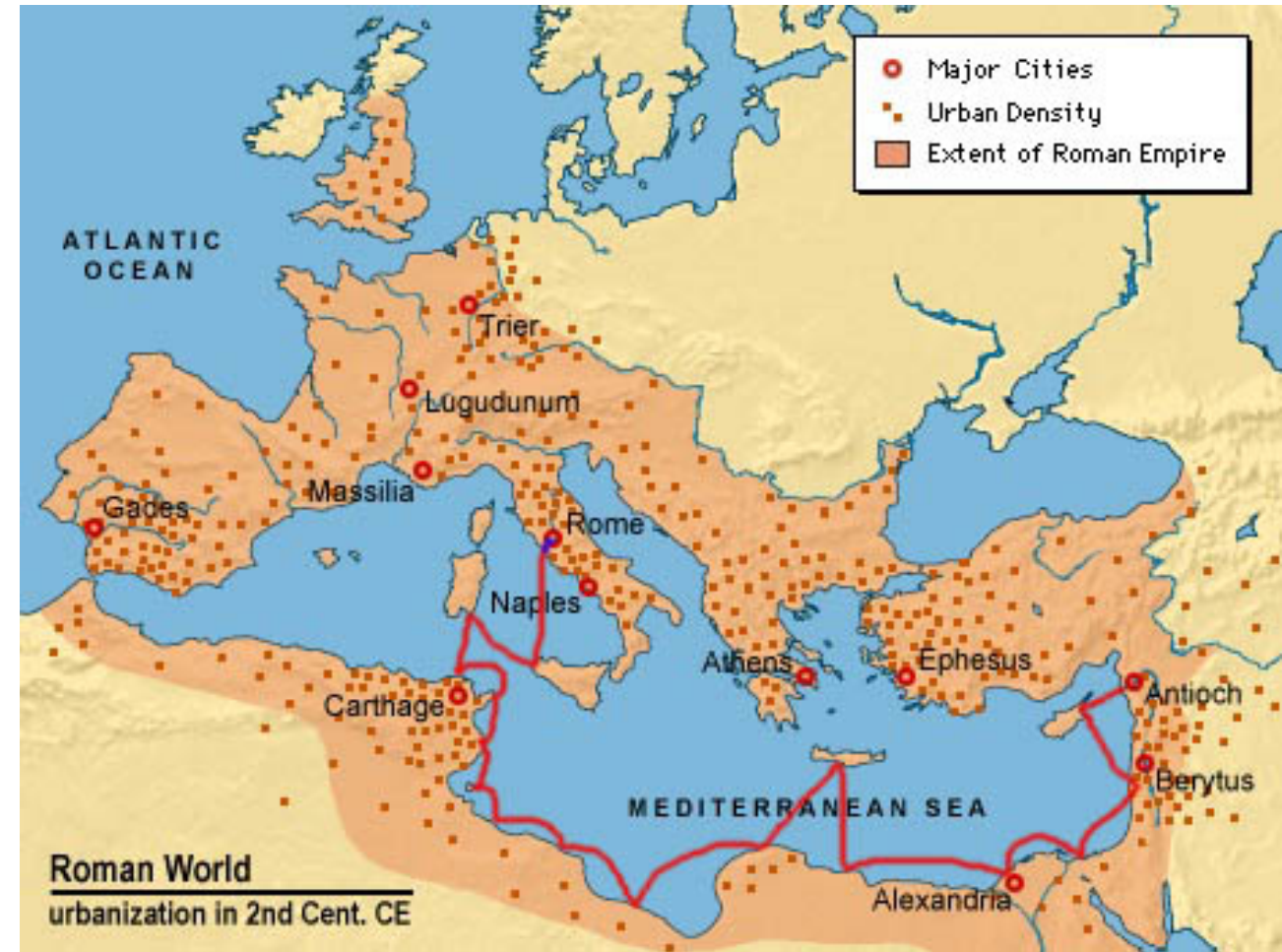
Rome enjoyed 6 generations of peace and this length worldwide and for Italy has yet to be achieved again! The term itself refers to the Empire in its glorified prime. Though the use of the word 'Peace' may be a bit misleading, this period refers mainly to the great Romanization of the western world.

The Roman legal system which forms the basis of many western court systems today brought law and order to the provinces. The Legions patrolled the borders with success, and though there were still many foreign wars, the internal empire was free from major invasion, piracy or social disorder on any grand scale.

The empire, wracked with civil war for the last century of the Republic, and for years following the Pax Romana, was largely free of large-scale power disputes.

Only the year 69 AD, the so-called 'Year of the Four Emperors', following the fall of Nero and the Julio-Claudian line, interrupted nearly 200 years of civil order. Even this was only a minor hiccup in comparison to other eras.

The arts and architecture flourished as well, along with commerce and the economy.





## Romanization – The key to the Pax Romana

The adoption of Roman languages, culture, political structures, knowledge by non-Roman citizens.

- Ambitious local elites adopted Roman customs and languages (Latin the West / Greek in the East, or both if you want to be truly educated) in order to gain power and economic prosperity
- As Roman colonies became romanized, the local people were granted Roman citizenship

# Romanization denotes a continuity in Roman culture throughout the vast span of the Roman Empire

Latin became the common language of the high cultures in the **western half** of the empire and Greek remained the common language in the east.— The government used both languages in dealing w/ the subjects

The government became increasingly centralized – with all territories answerable to Rome (all roads lead to Rome...) and local authorities composed of Roman and local leaders

The government in-fact became increasingly open to non-Romans as soon as their area of origin had been sufficiently Romanized to acquire citizenship

The government was also composed increasingly of able talent – not necessarily (but of course most often) those from the wealthiest or more powerful families...this was more of a meritocracy

Religious differences were ignored -so long as one be willing to submit to undemanding ceremonial tributes to official Roman gods (Neptune, Jupiter, Mars...)



*Ruins of an old Roman road in France (south of the Loire)*



*Ruins of an ancient Roman bath in Paris*



# General Observations

1. Latin was the common language of high cultures in the West and Greek the same for the East (government used both)
2. Roman government was centralized – all territories – like all roads- looked to Rome
3. Government consisted of meritocracy
4. Religious differences were ignored- so long as one be willing to submit to undemanding ceremonial tributes to official Roman gods (Neptune [sea], Jupiter [ruler], Mars [war, spring, growth, nature])
5. Principal source of wealth was agriculture
6. Imperial Administration cost very little and taxes were kept low
  1. Voluntary Public Service by elites in provinces
    - a. Local Officials collected taxes and made up difference when taxes fell short
  2. To discourage rebellion

# Roman Culture and Society

## **Society and Economy –**

- Trade and Manufacturing increased
- Urbanization increased in west
- Farming/Herding remained mainstay
- Rich got richer poor got poorer
- Slavery increased in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when Roman Legions took over so many provinces
  - These slaves were often educated and better skilled than native Italians and slaves from Greece
  - Roman slavery was more harsh than Greek slavery

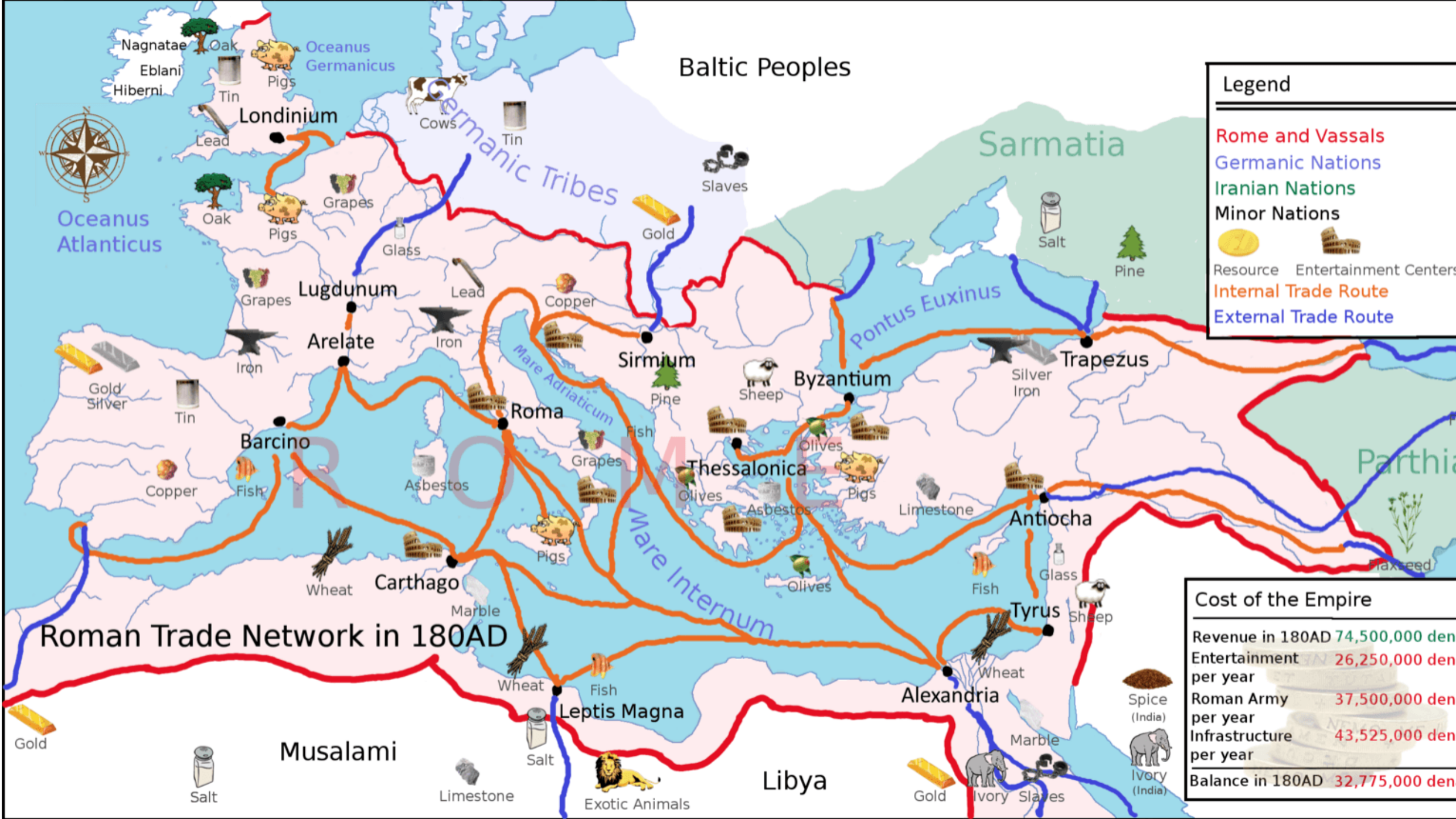


# Trade and Commerce

The expansion of trade made the Roman Empire an economic as well as a political force in the provinces.

The growth in trade and industry linked Europe and western Asia in new ways. In the second century, the Romans tried unsuccessfully to drive out the Parthians of modern-day Afghanistan and Iran, who thereafter became intermediaries between Roman and Chinese merchants. Silk, a major commodity from the east, was traded in exchange for Roman glassware, precious gems, and slaves.

Romans sailed from Egyptian ports to the Indus River, where they traded local merchandise and goods imported by the Parthians. In the late first century, the Chinese emperor sent an ambassador to contact the Roman Empire, but Romans did not have a corresponding interest in China, which remained more of a mythical than a real place.





# Roman Culture and Society

## Gender Relations:

*Patria Potestas* (“Power of the Father”) - father’s had the power of life and death over their children.

Roman law was most concerned w/ property and women were considered property

- By other standards, roman girls married young-13 not being unusual
- Consent necessary

Divorce was legal but harder to obtain for woman than man

- Divorce could be obtained by the removal of consent – the beginning of irreconcilable differences

Abortion was legal until 1<sup>st</sup> century-declared a crime due to matters of property

- Infanticide continued

Women worked in a variety of trades including textiles (most common), as physicians, scribes, and secretaries

# Popular Entertainment

The emperor and other wealthy citizens entertained the Roman populace, often at great expense, with “bread and circuses.”

Gladiatorial combat had begun as a private event during the Republic, sponsored by men honoring their ancestors; by the early empire, it had grown into a public spectacle.

- Men became gladiators in various ways: many were prisoners of war, while others were criminals, especially condemned slaves; by the imperial period, increasing numbers of poor immigrants became gladiators to support themselves.
- All gladiators were trained in gladiatorial schools and were legally slaves, although they could keep their winnings, and a few became wealthy.



The Roman Colosseum showing chambers below the grounds

Modern picture of the ruins of the colosseum

*The Zliten Mosaic from Libya*



# Romanization in the West

## Raised standard of living

- ❖ Roads, bridges, improved trade, communication, and agriculture
- ❖ Peaceful conditions meant trade flourished under watchful eye of soldiers
- ❖ Stationed soldiers also meant customers

Prosperity meant less rebellion and even more acceptance of Roman rule which enabled local cultural traditions to merge w/ Roman traditions

Non-Roman soldiers were granted citizenship after service and took their new knowledge of the Roman laws and customs (and their understanding of Latin) back to their communities and this also assisted in the process of Romanization.



# Improved Standards of Living



Ruins of public bath in Trier, Germany



Ruins of Roman Bridge Merida, Spain



# Approaches to Urban Problems

In the second century, engineers built a system to collect sewage from public baths, the ground floors of buildings, and public latrines; they also built hundreds of miles of aqueducts that brought fresh water into the city from the surrounding hills.

The most important medical researcher and physician was Galen (ca. 129–ca. 200 c.e.), a Greek born in modern-day Turkey who became the personal physician of many prominent Romans and several emperors. Building on the work of Hellenistic physicians, Galen promoted the idea that imbalances among bodily fluids caused illness, and he recommended blood-letting, a treatment that remained the standard in the West until the eighteenth century; he also conducted research on the nervous system and muscles and developed practical treatments for wounds.

The emperor provided the citizen population with free grain for bread and, later, oil and wine, to avoid the danger of starvation and to prevent bread riots caused by shortages and high prices.



*Public toilets in the Roman port city of Ostia once had running water under the seats. Ostia is where the researchers took a soil core sample to analyze lead pollution from pipe runoff.*

## Romanization in the East

- Less of a cultural impact in the east where sophisticated and advanced cultures had already been thriving.
  - For example, Culture in the form of art and literature was more readily blended into the Greek culture of the East than linguistic and legal changes
  - Greek continued to be the language of the east
  - This resilience of Greek / Hellenistic ascendancy carried on long past the Roman empire and can even be seen in the eventual split among Christians between the Latin church in the west and the eastern Orthodoxy of the east.
- Elites were open to Roman governance – and the relationships were like their experience of paternalism and mutual obligation that they'd experienced under Hellenistic Kings.
  - Their acceptance was crucial for imperial stability and prosperity



# Roman Legal Contributions

**Law** – Based on principal of equality even at the expense of the letter of the law itself

- Notion of fairness was formed through ranking of people in “orders” according to wealth
  - So the tradition of hierarchically-based justice continued.
  - The Roman distinction between the popular people and the “better people” became a legal distinction under the Empire

Precedent became coequal to law (a tradition maintained even now in the western legal experience)

Romans introduced: **Jus Gentium Law** – Law of the peoples which was the law code that is the basis for international law today: applied to citizens and non-citizens alike and asserted that the rights of all were worth protecting

- This evolved into the idea of natural law / natural rights

# Roman Laws and Citizenship

In the early empire, Roman law set Romans apart from the bulk of the population who followed their own laws. For example, Jews lived according to Jewish law, Athenians by Athenian laws...so long as they paid their taxes to the Emperor and stayed out of trouble all was well.

However, if a Jew or an Athenian held Roman citizenship, he could also enjoy the rights and benefits this brought in addition to his local citizenship (in other words it operated like a dual citizenship).

A Roman citizen possessed legally defined rights, including the guarantee of freedom from enslavement. Male citizens had the right to compete for public magistracies, vote in public assemblies, serve in the legions, and make an appeal in a criminal trial.

The peace and prosperity of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries encouraged the spread of Roman citizenship and the dominance of Roman law. No matter where they lived, Roman citizens took pride in their legal tradition and rights. Roman law thus helped erode local loyalties and traditions and thereby furthered the process of Romanization.



S.P.Q.R. *Senatus Populusque Romanus*— The Senate and the Roman People was an indication of the Roman emphasis on citizenship. It was placed on everything from city benches to political buildings. Even after the Republic it continued to be inscribed all over the growing Roman Empire. For more on the Roman concept of citizenship [follow this link](#) (the site covers the entirety of Roman history, from the Republic to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Crisis).

The adoption of Roman law **diminished local loyalties and traditions** and then, in **212**, Emperor **Caracalla** issued the **ANTOINE DECREE**

Granted citizenship to virtually all free men and women within the empire (perhaps to increase tax base during the Third Century Crisis on the eve of the Roman Empire's collapse).

Legal uniformity strengthened provincial loyalty to Rome

This, along with Romanization in general, had long-term consequences to Western Legal Practices (distinctions between civil and criminal law; the professionalization of jurists and of course the introduction of the notion of human rights through jus gentium)



# The Emergence of Christianity

## THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY

ca. 4 B.C.	Jesus of Nazareth born
ca. A.D. 30	Crucifixion of Jesus
64	Fire at Rome—Persecution by Nero
ca. 70–100	Gospels written
ca. 250–260	Major persecutions by Decius and Valerian
303	Persecution by Diocletian
311	Gallienus issues Edict of Toleration
312	Battle of Milvian Bridge—Conversion of Constantine to Christianity
325	Council of Nicaea
395	Christianity becomes official religion of Roman Empire

# The Rise of Christianity

The new faith originated among non-Romans in the eastern part of the Empire and thus represents the most significant example that **Romanization was 2-way process of cultural interaction** – as it ultimately became the leading religion among Romans themselves.

It emerged among a splinter group of Jews in Judaea. The spread of Christianity was gradual, 3 centuries after the death of Christ in 30CE Christianity was still a minority religion.

Its appeal came from the message of salvation, the energetic sense of mission, the career of Jesus, a democratic openness in its early congregations and the strong feeling of community that it fostered.

Most Judaeans were angry about Rome's dominance but disagreed on what to do. Some cooperated and others preached and practiced rejection of the non-Jewish world and its spiritual cooperation.

Between 37 – and 4 BCE –the birth of Jesus) the region was ruled by Herod the Great, a local leader installed by the Romans his Greek lifestyle broke Jewish religious laws and despite spending vast sums of wealth rebuilding important sites for Jewish faith and culture, such as the Jewish shrine, he was unpopular w/ his subjects. His death led to a decade of unrest in the region until Augustus installed a Roman provincial government to oversee the region.



# Life and Teachings of Jesus

Jesus was born into a community of Jews that at the time were agitating for independence from Roman rule. His career therefore took place in a troubled region at a troubled time; and his execution was the standard Roman response to anyone they believed threatened peace and social order. The religion emerged in the decades after his crucifixion with his messages being spread by his loyal followers who expanded beyond the Jewish community in Palestine.

Jesus' own religious transformations occurred when he came under the influence of **John the Baptist** in his native town of Galilee. John preached an apocalypticism (or belief that evil powers, divine and human, controlled the present world and that their rule would soon end when God and his agents revealed their plan to conquer the forces of evil by sending a savior to win the great battle...a final judgment would follow, bringing punishment for the wicked and eternal reward for the righteous). John urged people to repent before God's final judgment – which was, he believed, coming soon. John himself was executed by the local Roman ruler who feared that his teachings might set off riots. Jesus continued his message after his death and carried it to more populous regions –including Jerusalem the region's main city.

Jesus' activities created a huge following and huge concern for both Roman leaders and Jewish authorities who were convinced that Jesus aspired to political power. Fearing he might ignite a Jewish revolt, the Roman provincial governor Pontius Pilot ordered his crucifixion in 30 c.e. (*NOTE: going forward into the common era, there will be no such designation after the date*)

Shortly after Jesus' death his followers reported that he appeared to them and, believing that God had raised him from the dead, they began to convince other Jews that Jesus was the promised savior (or **Christ** which is the Latin translation of the Hebrew word for messiah) and would soon return for Judgment Day.



*Third Century fresco of Jesus  
located in the catacombs of Rome.*



# The separation between Jews and Christians

This is the result of the preaching of **Paul of Tarsus** and his execution – Hence, his **Letter to the Galatians** is assigned this week.

Paul was a devout Jew and also a Roman citizen. He originally opposed those who accepted Jesus as the Messiah and his conversion was the turning point in the development of Christianity as a new religion appealing to non-Jews.

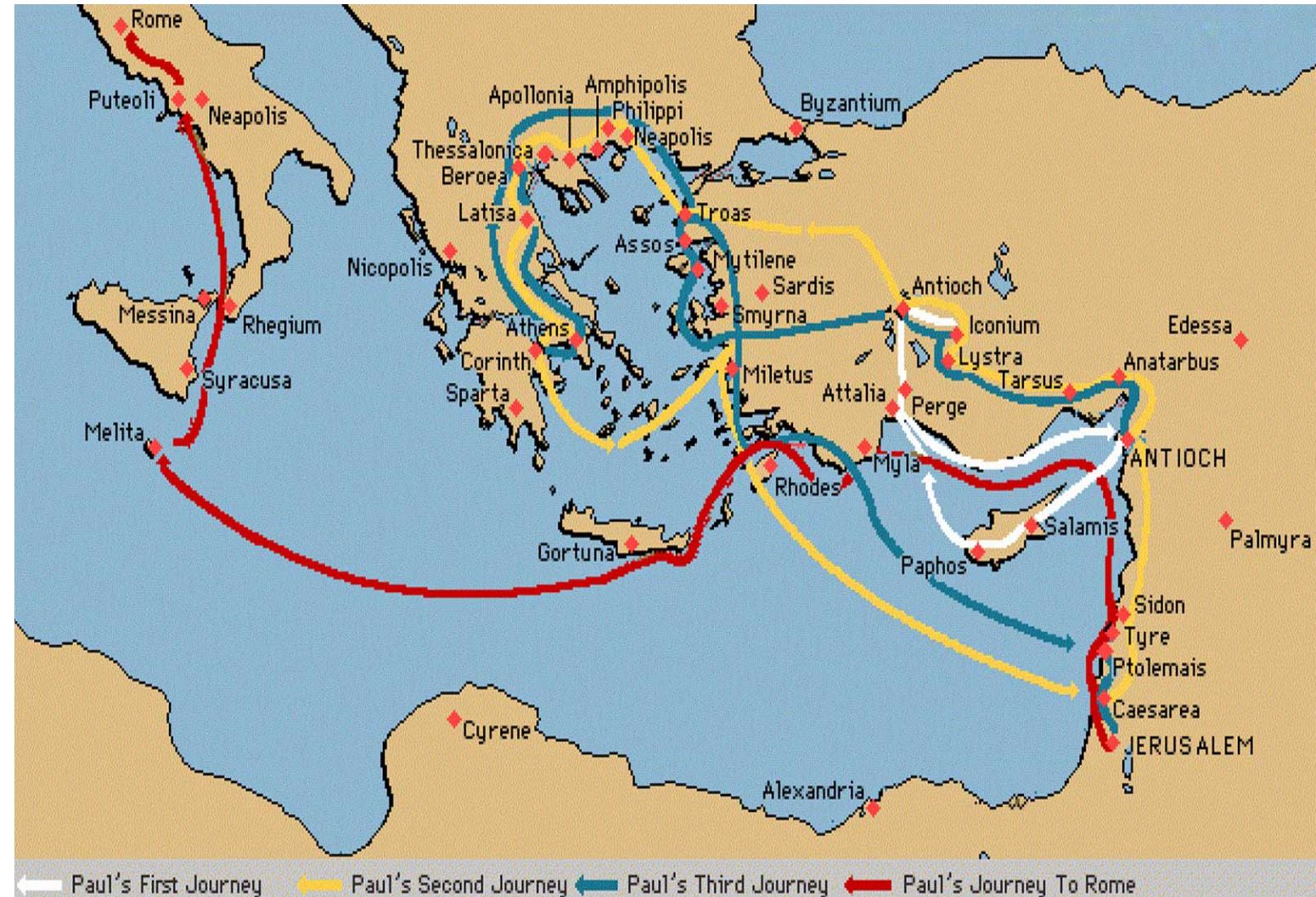
Several years after the death of Jesus, Paul experienced a vision on the road to Damascus in Syria he interpreted this as a divine revelation and was thereafter inspired to become a follower of Jesus the Messiah or Christ. In about 46 CE Paul began to preach to the Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). He was successful in winning converts by not requiring men who became Christian to undergo the Jewish initiation rite of circumcision and he taught that the converts did not need to follow all the Jewish laws, including the observation of dietary restriction.

This made him even more controversial and tensions mounted with Jewish authorities and with Christians who did ascribe to the Jewish laws. Roman authorities arrested and executed Paul for his troublemaking.

Around the same time hatred of Roman rule in Palestine finally erupted into a revolt which by 70 was defeated; the Romans ensured their power was felt by thereafter destroying the Jewish temple in Jerusalem – leading the Jewish community to lose its religious center.

This also led the separation between Judaism and Christianity to become more visible and gain momentum

Paul's impact was felt most in urban areas and the spread of the new faith occurred mainly in these areas as well – this is because teachers such as Paul hoped to reach the larger crowds that gathered here.



*Map showing the travels of Paul of Tarsus*



# Christianity as a new religion

- Christian leaders built their organizations from scratch in order to administer their growing congregations. Most Romans found these people puzzling and irritating – **they were a threat to the social order** more so than even the Jews had been:
- **In contrast to the Jews, Christians proclaimed a new faith altogether not a traditional religion handed down from their ancestors. Anything new, for Roman tradition was immediately viewed as a threat.**
- People also feared that tolerating Christians would offend the Gods of the official Roman religion- the Christian denial of the old gods and of the Emperor's cult seemed capable of provoking natural catastrophes.
- So Romans were quick to blame them when disasters did occur, for example, when a large portion of Rome burned in 64 CE Nero punished the Christians as arsonists.
- In fact, despite the sympathy that his brutal punishment inspired among local Romans – the Christians were nonetheless often used as scapegoats when blame needed to be assigned.
- **Christians also proclaimed their divine king was a man whom the imperial government had crucified as a criminal**
- **Finally they were accused of cannibalism and sexual promiscuity because they symbolically ate the body and blood of Jesus during secret communal dinners called Love Feasts, which men and women attended together.**
- In fact, **women originally held an equitable place within this new religion** – another source of controversy—women could even create their own congregations early on. However, with the creation of the Bishops and with the attempt to blend into mainstream Roman society –they were demoted reflecting the view that in Christianity, as in Roman imperial society, women should be subordinate to men. As a result many women chose not to marry and instead chose celibacy. These women were judged holy and socially superior by other Christians. By rejecting the traditional functions of wife and mother in favor of spiritual excellence, celibate Christian women achieved the independence and authority denied them in the regular world.



*Fresco depicting a “love feast”  
found in the catacomb of St. Peter  
and Marcellinus*



Woman  
depicted at  
prayer, in an  
ancient  
Christian  
mosaic seen in  
the Vatican's  
Pio Cristiano  
Museum



# Nero's Persecution of Christians after Rome's burning (64 CE)



Second Century symbols used by ancient Christians to identify each other while maintaining personal security "Jesus Christ, Son of God Savior"





# Encouraging more Romans to join the Christian Community

Christians professed that Romans had nothing to fear and insisted that **their faith taught strict morality and obedience to authority. They argued it was not some foreign superstition but a true philosophy that combined the best of Judaism and Greek thought and was therefore the perfect hybrid religion for a diverse world.**

Importantly for the longevity of Christianity – when the apocalyptic prediction of the judgment day did not occur as was originally predicted –during the lifetime of first century Christians, believers transformed their faith from an apocalyptic offshoot of Judaism to a unified religion capable of surviving indefinitely

But **unity proved elusive**: Christians disagreed over numerous points including what they believed, how they should live, and who had the authority to decide these questions.

While continuing to disagree on doctrine (core beliefs) they did agree on the need for a more organized structure and therefore created religious officials with the authority to specify true doctrine and proper conduct – they were called **bishops**.

Bishops had the authority to ordain priests with the holy power to administer the sacraments and controlled the congregations' memberships and finances which originally came solely from member donations. They defined what true doctrine was, but Christian disagreements were too strong for the bishops from different regions even when they met periodically.

Such regional disagreements would continue throughout the history of Christianity and this goes far in explaining not only religious differences but also the development of regional political differences.



*The current Pope, Francis. The Pope is technically the Bishop of Rome. Since St. Peter was the leader of the apostles and the founder of the Christian Church of Rome, the Pope is always also the Bishop of Rome (among other titles / positions).*

# Crisis of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century – this is the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire:

The reign of Marcus Aurelius (r. 161–180 c.e.), the last of the “five good emperors,” was marked by several problems: a flood that led to famine, an outbreak of the Antonine plague, and an attack by Germanic-speaking groups along the Rhine and Danube borders.

His son, Commodus was killed in a conspiracy that included his wife, and in 193, five men claimed the throne in quick succession.

Septimius Severus (r. 193–211) restored order, expanded Rome’s borders, invaded Scotland.

So many military commanders ruled between 235 and 284 c.e. that this “crisis of the third century” has become known as the age of the barracks emperors—most of which were killed.

As the emperors increased taxes, many farmers left their lands, agricultural productivity declined, inflation erupted.

By 284 c.e. the Roman Empire had reached a crisis that threatened its downfall; the empire had failed at the top, and the repercussions of the disaster spread throughout the empire with dire effects.

To Recap:

- Foreign Invasions
- Financial Ruin
- Natural Disasters
- Diocletian Splits the Empire and creates a whole new system: The **Dominate**→

