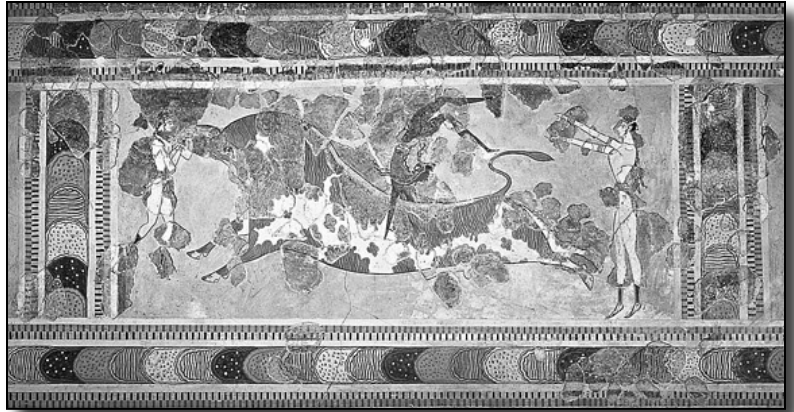


Knossos

Legend of King Minos

There is an old legend about **King Minos**. He lived on the island of Crete. Crete is in the Aegean Sea near Greece. He had a palace at Knossos. At Knossos there was a labyrinth. A **labyrinth** is a maze. Inside the maze lived a mythical beast, called the **Minotaur**. This beast had the head of a bull and the body of a human. Every year, the king of Athens had to send seven boys and seven girls to King Minos to feed to the Minotaur. One year, Theseus went with the young victims. He was the son of the king of Athens. When they got to Knossos, Theseus and his people were helped by Ariadne. She was King Minos' daughter. She gave him a dagger to kill the Minotaur. She also gave him some thread to find his way out of the labyrinth. Theseus was able to kill the beast. He found his way safely out of the maze. After that, Athens did not have to send fourteen youths to Crete.



This fresco depicts the sport of bull-leaping, which was popular with the people of Crete.

Discovering the Minoan Civilization

In the year A.D. 1900, a large palace was discovered at **Knossos**. It was located in north-central Crete. The famous British archaeologist Arthur Evans found the remains of the palace. This palace was part of a culture that Evans called the **Minoan civilization**. He named it after King Minos from the legend of the labyrinth. This civilization was on Crete between the years 2000 and 1450 B.C. (See map on page 18.)

The Minoan civilization had several palaces. The largest palace was located at Knossos. The palace had several purposes. It was the home of the king, his family, and their attendants. The king was the supreme ruler of the Minoans. The palace was also a place where attendants and higher officials carried out the daily business of the palace and the kingdom. Finally, food and trade items were stored there. They could be given out to the common people when needed.

The Minoan people lived in towns and villages. Some were farmers who grew mostly olives and grapes. Others were craftsmen and artisans. They made luxury items, such as finely painted pottery, carved stone vessels, and jewelry. These items were traded as far away as Egypt and the Near East. Trade was an important part of Minoan life.

This civilization was wealthy and had advanced technology. The palaces had drainage systems complete with baths. **Frescoes** were paintings on the walls of the palaces. The frescoes showed scenes of animals, games, and religious festivals. This hints that the Minoans were a peaceful and fun-loving people. The Minoans loved games, such as boxing and bull-leaping. **Bull-leaping** involved jumping onto a bull by grabbing its horns. The person then did a somersault over the bull and landed back on the ground.

The End of the Minoan Civilization

About 1450 B.C., the Minoan civilization ended. The palaces and towns were destroyed. Archaeologists can only guess why this happened. A volcano had erupted on the nearby island of Thera about fifty years before. It brought large amounts of ash and tidal waves to Crete. It is believed this disrupted the Aegean trading system. It may also have stopped Minoans from growing food. Today, only the ancient ruins of this once wealthy and advanced civilization remain.

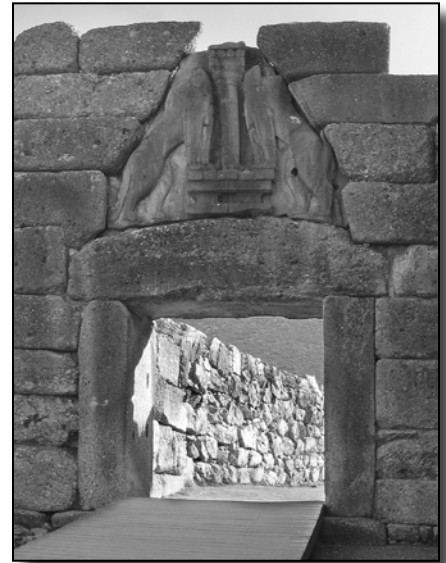
Mycenae

The Mycenaean Civilization

Homer was the first known Greek poet. He lived about 700 B.C. He wrote about the **Mycenaean civilization**. It arose after the fall of the Minoan civilization. Homer wrote an epic poem called the *Iliad*. He described the wealthy palaces of Mycenae. Agamemnon was one heroic king who lived there.

These kings waged war against the people of Troy. Troy was a walled city on the coast of northern Turkey. It was on the east side of the Aegean Sea. The Mycenaeans defeated the Trojans by using a trick. They hid inside a large wooden horse (the **Trojan Horse**). The Trojans brought the horse inside the city gates. Then the Mycenaeans won the battle fought inside the city.

Heinrich Schliemann was a famous German archaeologist. He discovered Mycenae in A.D. 1876. This civilization was named after an important palace. The palace of Mycenae was located in the **Peloponnese** on mainland Greece. (The Peloponnese is the southern region of Greece. It is connected to the rest of the country by the Isthmus of Corinth). (See map on page 18.) The Mycenaeans were Greeks. They came to the mainland about 2000 B.C. By about 1500 B.C., they were as successful as the Minoans on Crete had been.



The Lion Gate at Mycenae

Archaeological Evidence of Mycenae

Large palaces are the main archaeological evidence of the Mycenaean civilization. These palaces served the same purposes as those found on Crete. The Mycenaeans were like the Minoans in some ways. They grew olives and grapes. They traded oil, wine, and painted pottery all over the Mediterranean region.

The Mycenaeans were also different from the Minoans. They were a warlike people. Well-built walls for defense surrounded their palaces. The frescoes on the walls show many scenes of hunting and warfare. **Bronze** weapons and body armor were also found among the artifacts. There were also helmets made of ivory tusks. The Mycenaeans prepared for survival in case of siege (being surrounded). They built underground tunnels leading to water wells outside the palace gates.

Mycenaeans buried their dead in family tombs. The burial chamber of the tomb was dug into a hillside. The long tunnel-like entrance was called a **dromos**. The dead were buried with their belongings. They might be buried with painted pottery, gold jewelry and cups, and weapons.

The End of the Mycenaean Civilization

The Mycenaeans had a written language. It was written on rectangular clay tablets. The script is called "**Linear B**." Its characters were made up of lines. The tablets contain lists of food and other products made, stored, and given out by the palace officials. They do not tell us of any wars or the reason for the end of this civilization.

Disaster struck the palaces between about 1200 and 1100 B.C. They were destroyed by fire. Then the people abandoned their homes. Many causes could have led to the fall of this civilization. There may have been a drought or a civil war. Outsiders from the north may have invaded. These people were called the Dorians. However, there is nothing to tell us exactly what happened.

The Rise of Hellenic Civilization

The Dark Ages

For four centuries after the Mycenaean civilization, Greece was in a period of decline. Greece was no longer rich and prosperous. The arts, great architecture, and knowledge of writing disappeared. Trade declined. The Mycenaean palaces were abandoned. The period is known as the “**Dark Ages**.” It lasted from about 1200 to 750 B.C.

The Greek poet Homer described the social and political events of this dark period. Farming had returned to a simple level of **subsistence**. Every man owned and tilled his own small plot of land for his family’s survival. The king was no longer the supreme ruler. He was told what to do by a small group of nobles or aristocrats. The **monarchy**, where the king was supreme, was gone. It was replaced by a “rule of a few men.” This was called an **oligarchy**. A small group of wealthy nobles had all the power.

Another big change occurred at the beginning of this period. Iron started to be used for making tools and weapons. That is why this period is also known as the “**Iron Age**.”

The Ionian Migrations

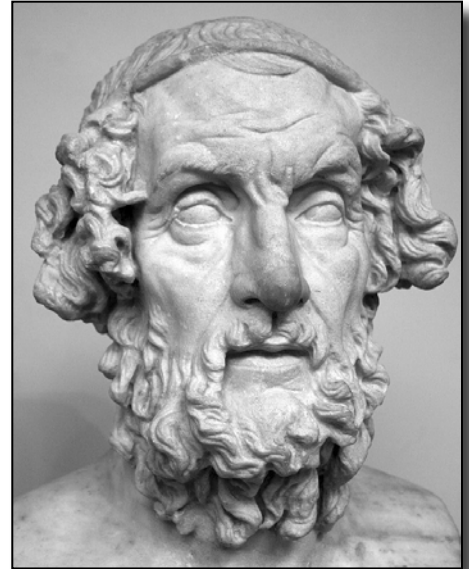
During the “Dark Ages,” there was a movement of Greeks across the Aegean Sea. Thucydides was a fifth century B.C. Greek historian. He called this movement the **Ionian Migrations**. (See map on page 18.) There were three groups of Greeks who moved. They settled on the western coast of **Asia Minor** (modern-day Turkey). They were named based on the dialects of Greek they spoke. The Dorians, who spoke Doric, settled in the southern part. The Ionians, who spoke Ionic, inhabited the middle part. The Aeolians, who spoke Aeolic, went to the northern part of the area. These Greek settlers later caused conflict between the Greeks and the Persians.

Hellenic Civilization

By the middle of the eighth century B.C., Greece had recovered from its darkest period in history. A new civilization emerged. This was called the **Hellenic** civilization. Hellenic means “Greek.” Trade began to flourish again. The Greeks borrowed the idea of an alphabet from Phoenicia. The Phoenicians were a seafaring people based in today’s Lebanon. The original alphabet contained no vowels. The Greeks added vowels to adapt it to the Greek language.

Most importantly, a new political unit emerged. It was called the **city-state** or **polis**. Greece is a very mountainous region. This made it easier to form small independent political units. These units were based around cities. The Greeks did not have one large national political union. The Greeks loved freedom and independence. Each city-state was autonomous. It had its own laws, constitution, leaders, army, and system of taxation. Sometimes a city-state had its own coinage system. The largest and most important Greek city-states were Athens, Sparta, and Thebes.

Until about 650 B.C., the aristocrats ruled most city-states. They had an oligarchic form of government. The political power was in the hands of a few wealthy families. These families owned



Homer wrote about the period in Greek history known as the Dark Ages.

the best land. They abused the majority of the city-state's citizens who were poor farmers. Sometimes these farmers got into debt. They were then forced to work for the aristocrats to pay off their debts. Some even became slaves.

Greek Colonization

Starting about 750 B.C., these poor farmers began to leave their homelands. They were too poor and didn't have enough farming land. They wanted to seek a better life somewhere else. Some of the other reasons for moving were to trade, for personal adventure, and for political refuge. A phase of "**Greek colonization**" was launched. (See inset map on page 18.)

Colonies were set up along the coasts of southern Italy and Sicily. (These were known as Magna Graecia or Greater Greece.) Other colonies were in France, Spain, and along the coast of the northern Aegean and Black Seas. Some important colonies included Syracuse (Sicily), Phaestum and Cumae (Italy), Massalia (modern Marseille, France), and Byzantium on the Black Sea (modern Istanbul). There were several Greek city-states that took part in this colonization process. They included Athens, Corinth, Eretria, Chalkis, and the Greek-Asiatic cities of Miletus and Phocaea. The Greek colonies became city-states of their own. They had their own governments and economies. They did keep cultural and religious ties with their mother city-states. By 600 B.C., Greek people and ideas had spread throughout the Mediterranean and Black Seas regions. Later, this Greek influence would affect Roman culture.

Tyrannies

During the Greek colonization period, a new social class of people emerged. They were called the middle class. They were merchants. They had become wealthy through industry and trade. This new middle class also wanted a share in the political power of the city-states. Tyrants were men from the new middle class. They came to power in many city-states between 650 and 500 B.C. The people supported these tyrants. A Greek **tyrant** was not a cruel ruler like we think of today. A tyrant was a ruler who had not taken power according to the constitution. This type of government is called a **tyranny**. In fact, most Greek tyrants were good rulers. They did good things for their city-states. They brought power and wealth to the city-states. Coinage was introduced. Trade and colonization were encouraged. Athletic, musical, and dramatic contests were established. One notable tyrant was Peisistratus of Athens (560–529 B.C.). He built monuments in the city. He stimulated trade and industry. He also helped the poor farmers. He increased the prestige of Athens.

A very important change took place during this time. It was the development of an infantry army. This may also have helped the rise in power of the tyrants. There was a new type of heavily armed soldier called a **hoplite**. Hoplites were placed within a tight formation called a **phalanx**. This type of soldier fought many successful battles for the next three centuries.

Democracy

The rule of tyrannies did not last very long. Some of the tyrants in power became too authoritarian. Instead, some of the city-states went back to being oligarchies. Some of them changed to a new form of rule called democracy. **Democracy** means "rule by the people." It was first developed in Athens. Sparta kept a form of oligarchic rule. The other Greek city-states followed the lead of either Athens or Sparta.



Hoplite

Lycurgus and Sparta

Lycurgus Establishes Spartan Institutions

Lycurgus was an early leader of the Spartans. In about 700 B.C., he set up a number of social and political institutions. These made Sparta a great power of Greece.

He started an educational system that produced strong and loyal soldiers. It all began at birth. A newborn baby who was weak or sickly was left to die on a mountain slope. At the age of seven, a boy came under the control of the city. His life was controlled by the city until his death.

Boys lived together in a camp. This is where the training process started. The boys learned reading, writing, music, and poetry. Most importantly, they were taught discipline, courage, and virtue. Each boy exercised a lot and competed in violent games and fights. They were forced to steal. If they were caught, the boys were punished for being careless and unskillful. Their training continued into manhood.

The girls were also brought up in a strict manner. They had to exercise their bodies to make them grow strong. This was to make it easier to deal with childbirth.

The Spartan Economy

Sparta did not adopt a **coinage** system like other Greek cities. Wealth was not desirable in Sparta. The rich were not envied or regarded with prestige. Trade was forbidden both within and outside the city. Every citizen had an equal share of land to live on. They were also forbidden to travel. The only time they traveled was on army expeditions during times of war. This was so they wouldn't learn about foreign behaviors and ideas. The Spartans were very patriotic Greeks. They fought for their state until their death. In their system of living, there was little individual freedom. Order and discipline ruled.

Government in Sparta

Lycurgus also set up the government of Sparta. It was a form of oligarchy. A few wealthy aristocrats held the power. However, the city's constitution kept the kings of the previous age. No individual was able to become too powerful. The government consisted of two *kings*. These were the generals of the army. The executive power lay in the hands of five **magistrates**, called **ephors**. The ephors were the judges of the city. They dealt with internal and foreign affairs. They got advice from the **council of elders**. The council consisted of 28 ex-magistrates. A second council of the Spartan people (**Spartiates**) also existed. This was called the **assembly**. The assembly had the right to reject or approve any proposals put before them.

Social Groups in Sparta

Sparta controlled about two-fifths of the Peloponnese. During the eighth century B.C., Sparta conquered Laconia and Messenia and their inhabitants. (See map on page 18.) In the Spartan social structure, these people were divided into two groups. The **helots** were slaves who worked the land to supply food for the Spartiates. The **perioiki** were freedmen but were socially inferior. Both groups would have to join the Spartan army in times of war.



Heavily armed hoplites became the backbone of Greek armies.

Athens and Democracy

Government in Athens

Sparta's government was an oligarchy. A few rich men were in control. This was very different from Athens' government. The Athenians set up a **democracy**. The constitution was not in the hands of the few. It was controlled by the many. **Demos** means "people." The people of Athens controlled the government.

Solon

Four men helped develop democracy in Athens. In 594 B.C., Solon was the first. He made several reforms. This helped lessen the conflict between the rich and poor in Athens. Solon cancelled all debts for citizens. He also abolished slavery. He reduced the power of the wealthy aristocrats. He gave more power to the common people.

The government already had two leaders called **archons**. They held the executive power. An aristocratic council of elders advised the archons. This was called the Council of the Areopagus. (The **Areopagus** was a hill in Athens. The council meetings were held on this hill.) Solon added three new political bodies to the government. They gave more power to the average citizen. A People's Court settled all disputes. All Athenian citizens belonged to the People's Assembly. The Assembly decided on the matters of the state. A Council of 400 prepared business for the Assembly to consider. This was 100 citizens from each of the four tribes of Athens.

Solon's reforms did not please anyone. The common people wanted even more power. The aristocrats didn't like to have their power taken away. Unrest followed.

Peisistratus

Peisistratus became tyrant in 560 B.C. He continued to democratize Athens. He **redistributed** the land. This meant taking land from the rich nobles and giving it to poor farmers. He also made loans to poor farmers. This helped them to start fresh.

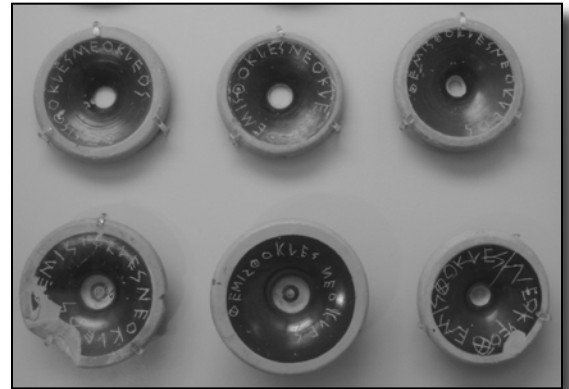
Cleisthenes

In 508 B.C., Cleisthenes came to power in Athens. He did much to develop Athenian democracy. Cleisthenes divided the citizens into ten new tribes. He mixed up the people in the tribes. This was so no one tribe was controlled by the rich. He increased the Council of 400 to the Council of 500. This included 50 citizens from each of the ten tribes. He also introduced the practice of **ostracism**. Every year, the Athenians could banish one man from the city. The citizens could vote for any man they thought was threatening. They voted by writing a name on a potshard or **ostraka**. The man with the most votes was then exiled for ten years.

Pericles

Pericles was in power from 461 to 429 B.C. He was one of Athens' best statesmen. Democracy in Athens became complete. He made all offices in the government payable. All officers were elected by lot rather than by vote. This was like drawing straws. Everyone had an equal chance of winning. Even the poorest citizens could now be in the government.

Ideas from Athenian democracy have shown up in many governments in world history. The American government is just one example.



Examples of ostraka (potshards) cast against Themistocles

The Wars With Persia

The Persians

In about the year 1000 B.C., the Persians moved to the area east of the Tigris River in western Asia. They were an Indo-European people. They became a powerful nation during the sixth century B.C. Their leader was King Cyrus the Great (559–529 B.C.). Cyrus made Persia a strong empire in western Asia. He also expanded Persian rule. It included most of western Asia up to the Indus River. Cyrus also conquered the Greek cities on the western coast of Asia Minor. They became subjects of the Persians. His sons, Cambyses (529–522 B.C.) and Darius (522–486 B.C.), followed him on the throne of Persia. They expanded the empire to include Egypt and northern Greece.

By about 500 B.C., the Persian Empire covered a lot of territory. It went from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the edge of India in the east. The Black Sea was on its northern border. The Persian Gulf was on its southern border. (See map on page 21.) It was organized into 20 provinces called **satrapies**. A **satrap** or governor ruled each.

The **Royal Road** made trade and communication more efficient. This aided in the ruling of the empire. The road ran from the first capital city, Sousa, to Sardis. Not much later, the capital was moved to Persepolis. This was during the time of King Xerxes (486–465 B.C.). He was the son of Darius.

The Ionian Revolt

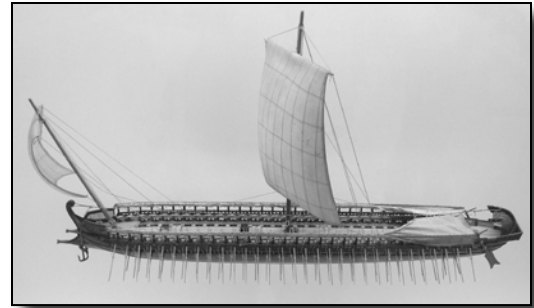
The Greeks in Asia Minor were not very happy under Persian rule. They wanted their freedom. They decided to revolt against their foreign rulers in 499 B.C. Thus began the **Ionian Revolt**. This was the beginning of the fighting between the Greeks and Persians. The fighting would become known as the Persian Wars. The Persian Wars were described in detail by Herodotus. He was the first known Greek historian. He wrote in the fifth century B.C.

Aristagoras started the Ionian Revolt. He was tyrant of the Greek city of Miletus. He convinced the other Ionian cities to rise up against the Persians. (See map on page 18.) The Ionian Greeks realized they needed help from the mainland Greeks. They asked both Sparta and Athens for ships and men. Only Athens and its ally Eretria were willing to help. They sent out 25 manned ships. This was not enough help. After a major defeat, the Greek allies were forced to withdraw. The Persians destroyed Miletus in 494 B.C. The revolt had failed. The Ionian Greeks were back under Persian control. This was just the beginning of trouble for both the Greeks and the Persians.

Persian Wars, Battle of Marathon

Darius was king of the Persians at this time. He wanted to punish the Athenians for helping the Asiatic Greeks. He also wanted to expand Persian rule into Europe. So Darius decided to invade mainland Greece. This first expedition occurred in 492 B.C. It was a disaster for the Persians. The Persian **fleet** was wrecked in a major storm off the Aegean coast in northern Greece.

In 490 B.C., Darius and his Persian troops tried again. They sailed across the Aegean Sea instead of along the coast. They were on their way to take Athens. But they first attacked and captured Eretria in Euboea. Then they sailed across to the east coast of Attica to the bay of Marathon.



Greek trireme

The Greeks went out to meet the Persians at Marathon. They did not wait for them to come to Athens. The Battle of Marathon was the first land battle of the Persian Wars. The Persians outnumbered the Greeks in manpower. However, Athenian battle tactics allowed for a major Greek victory. Then the Persian ships tried to sail around Attica. The Persians wanted to take Athens while the city was unprotected. However, the Greeks were quicker than expected. They returned to defend Athens by that evening.

At this point, the Persians decided to withdraw and return to Asia. Darius's second expedition had failed. Greek morale was high. The victory at Marathon had shown the Greeks that they could withstand the mighty Persians. However, the Persians would return ten years later.

After the victory at Marathon, Athens began to build up a strong navy. They wanted to be prepared in case of another Persian attack. Themistocles was the great politician of Athens at that time. He had 200 new warships called **triremes** built. A trireme was a ship of about 120 feet long and 12 feet wide. It was driven by three sets of oars. Each trireme had a crew of 170 rowers, a boatswain, a helmsman, 20 marines, and a few officers.

Battle of Thermopylae

In 480 B.C., the Persians returned to fight another war. Xerxes was now king of the Persians. He wanted to take revenge on the Greeks. So he decided to invade. He crossed the **Hellespont**. (This is the narrow bit of water that connects the Sea of Marmara and the Aegean Sea.) Then both his army and his fleet moved along the Aegean coast. They made their way down into Greece.

The Greeks and Persians fought both land and sea battles. The sea battle took place at Cape Artemision, north of Euboea. A land battle was also fought at Thermopylae. This was a narrow pass between Thessaly and Boeotia. The Persians had to move through the pass to reach Athens. Three hundred Spartan soldiers met the Persians at the pass. They were led by King Leonidas. The main Greek forces had not arrived in time for the battle. The Spartan soldiers put up a noble fight, but they were all killed. None tried to retreat. They fought till the last man fell. This showed the bravery and courage of the Spartan soldier. This battle is the most "glorious" defeat in Greek history.

After the victory at Thermopylae, the Persian forces were now in control of central Greece. They were getting ready to occupy and destroy Athens.



Monument to the Spartans at Thermopylae

Battle of Salamis

Back in Athens, Themistocles had most of the people leave the city. He gathered the ships of the Athenian fleet at Salamis. This was an island off the coast of Athens. Themistocles had asked the Delphic **oracle** what to do. The oracle was a priestess in Apollo's shrine at Delphi. The Greeks could get advice from the gods by asking an oracle. The answer was given in the form of a riddle. The Delphic oracle had told Themistocles that Athens would be saved by "wooden walls." He took that to mean a wall of ships.

The Persians found the city of Athens deserted. They set fire to it and destroyed it. They soon began fighting the Athenians in the bay of Salamis. The Battle of Salamis was chaotic and bloody. "The sea was full of wreckage and blood. . . . never in one day did such a multitude of men

die.” (Herodotus, VII, 420ff.) The Athenians won the Battle of Salamis. Xerxes ordered his Persian troops to withdraw. He went back to Persia. However, he left behind a Persian land force in northern Greece.

A year later in 479 B.C., the Greek army attacked and defeated the remaining Persian army. This happened at the Battle of Plataea in Boeotia. The Persians were forced to go back to Persia. The last action of the Persian Wars was fought on the same day as the Battle of Plataea. This was a sea battle at Cape Mycale in Ionia. The rest of the Persian fleet was destroyed. The war was finished. The Greeks had succeeded in driving the Persians out of Greece. They had freed their land from the barbarians.

The Peloponnesian War and Its Aftermath

War Between Athens and Sparta

There was another great war in the fifth century B.C. It was a war between Athens and Sparta. These were the two biggest powers of Greece. This period saw the growth of Athenian sea power. Then Athens' control of the seas began to decline. This period in Greek history was reported by Thucydides. He was the second great Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.

The Delian League

Winning the Persian Wars gave the Greeks pride. This new self-confidence led to great achievements. After the war, Athens became the leading Greek city-state. In 478 B.C., Athens set up a group of Asiatic Greek city-states. This was called the **Delian League**. It protected Ionia and the rest of Greece against any further attack from the Persians. Athens was the leader of the league. The other cities had to either pay money or send ships. The purpose of the league was to take revenge on the Persians. It also wanted to free all Greek cities still controlled by the Persians. By 468 B.C., all Greek cities along the Aegean coast were freed. The Persian fleet had also been demolished.

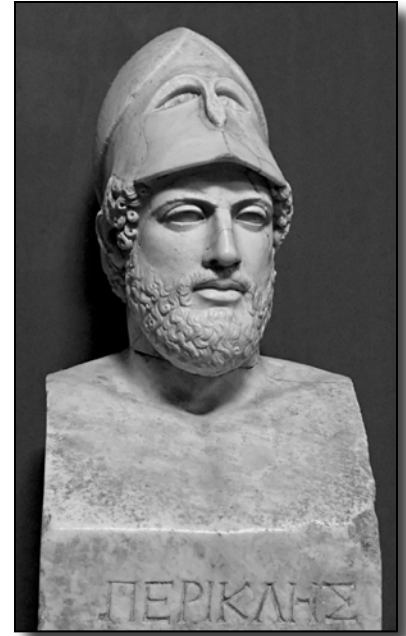
The mission of the league seemed to be accomplished. But Athens did not disband the Delian League. Instead, Athens forced the liberated Greek cities to stay in the league. It also forced other cities to join the league. Athens became the leader of a great sea empire. It was now the greatest power in Greece.

The Athenian leader Pericles (461–429 B.C.) was responsible for Athens' growth in power. He also made Athens the cultural center of Greece. Many great buildings were constructed at this time. The **Parthenon** was built on the Acropolis. This was a temple dedicated to the city's patron goddess Athena. Pericles also connected Athens and its port, Piraeus. Long walls were built to protect the city and port against attacks. He worked to make Athens the greatest Greek power. But this led to Athens and Sparta going to war.

The Peloponnesian League

In the 500s B.C., Sparta had earlier created its own league. This was called the **Peloponnesian League**. It was named after the Peloponnese. This is the southern part of mainland Greece. The league consisted mostly of cities from this region. It was a loose organization of cities. It grew stronger to oppose Athens. According to Thucydides, Sparta was afraid that Athens was getting too powerful. The **Peloponnesian War** broke out in 431 B.C. It continued for 27 years. There was a short break between 421 and 415 B.C. All of Greece was involved in the war. Athens and her allies (the Delian League) fought on one side of the war. Sparta and her allies (the Peloponnesian League) were on the other side. (See map on page 18.)

At first (431–421 B.C.), Sparta continually raided and destroyed the countryside of Attica. This had little effect on Athens. There was no decisive victory on either side. However, **plagues** hit Athens twice during this time. Disease killed a third of Athens' population. One of the victims was



Pericles

Pericles. This was a critical turning point in Athens' destiny. Athens lost one of its greatest generals and most experienced politicians. After that, Athens gradually lost control over its sea empire.

Sparta Defeats Athens

There was a truce between the two powers in 421 B.C. Then war broke out again in 415 B.C. This lasted until 404 B.C. This new fighting began because of a war in Sicily. Both Athens and Sparta and their allies became involved in a war between some of the Greek city-states in Sicily. Athens sent out a big expedition. They fought for two years. Then Athens suffered its greatest defeat in history. Athens lost many men and its whole fleet. This defeat made Athens very weak.

After that, there were only a few successes in battle. Many of her allies revolted. Athens had no funds in the **treasury** for the war. There was a revolution in the government in 411 B.C. An oligarchy was set up. This brought about internal problems. Finally, Sparta received money from the Persians. This helped insure their victory over Athens.

In 405 B.C., Sparta won a decisive battle over the Athenians near the Hellespont. This was called the Battle of Aegospotami. The Athenians surrendered a year later. They had lost the war and their once-mighty sea empire. Peace was declared. Sparta then set up an oligarchic rule in Athens. It was called the **Rule of the Thirty** or Thirty Tyrants. This rule did not last very long. Democracy was restored in Athens in 403 B.C. Sparta was now the leading power in Greece. It took over the empire once ruled by Athens.

Fighting Among the City-States

The Greek historian Xenophon tells about Greece during the fourth century B.C. There was fighting among many of the Greek city-states. Sparta, Athens, and Thebes and their various allies seemed to always be fighting. This conflict between the city-states weakened the Greeks. That made it easier for the king of Macedon, Philip II, to take over Greece in 338 B.C.

Between 395 and 386 B.C., Athens was involved in a war to put down Sparta's growing power. Athens was in an alliance with Thebes and other city-states. They also had the support of Persia. The King of Persia declared a temporary forced peace in 386 B.C. This was called the **King's Peace**. The Greeks had to give all Asiatic city-states back to Persia. The peace did allow Sparta to continue its dominant power in Greece. However, Sparta's arrogance led to more fighting. Finally, Sparta's power was destroyed by the Thebans. This occurred in 371 B.C. at the Battle of Leuctra.

Thebes was under the rule of a very skilled general named Epaminondas. He made Thebes the center of power in Greece for a short time. In 362 B.C., the allied forces of Sparta and Athens fought against Thebes. This was the Battle of Mantinea. The Thebans won the battle, but Epaminondas was killed. There was no one to replace his excellent leadership. So Thebes' brief period of dominance came to an end. Fighting among various city-states continued until 338 B.C. No one city-state was stronger than another.

The Rise of Macedonia

In the meantime, Macedonia was rising to power. It was another state in the north. Its king was Philip II. In 359 B.C., he united the Macedonian state. Philip built up a loyal and professional army. This brought him great successes in battle.

The Greek city-states were quarreling among themselves. This allowed Philip to extend his influence over all of Greece. Only the orator Demosthenes saw that Philip wanted to conquer Greece. Philip eventually conquered the Greeks in 338 B.C. at the Battle of Chaeronea. By then, the Greeks were too weak and disorganized to stand up to him.

Alexander the Great

Alexander Takes Over in Macedonia

Philip II of Macedon conquered all of Greece. He also wanted to conquer the Persians and their empire. He died in 336 B.C. before he could carry out his plan. His son was Alexander. He took over this task and was successful. He became known as Alexander the Great. His achievements are told by the historian Arrian in his *Anabasis*.

Conquering the Persian Empire

Alexander was 20 years old when he became king of Macedonia. He was a very ambitious man. He was also a great general like his father. Just two years later, he set out to conquer the Persian Empire. **King Darius III** was the Persian ruler at the time.

Alexander had an army of about 35,000 men. He entered Asia Minor. Then he moved south through Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. He defeated the Persians in battle at the Granikos River in 334 B.C. He had another victory at the Issos River in the following year. He occupied Egypt in 332 B.C. where he spent the winter.

In 331, Alexander marched to the Tigris River. At Gaugamela that same year, he had a decisive victory over Darius III. Alexander was now “King of the Greeks and the Persians.” Over the next three years, the king continued his march south. Then he proceeded eastward toward the **Indus River**. He subdued the eastern part of the Persian Empire as he went. He passed through the cities of Babylon, Sousa, Persepolis, and Ecbatana. (See map on page 21.)

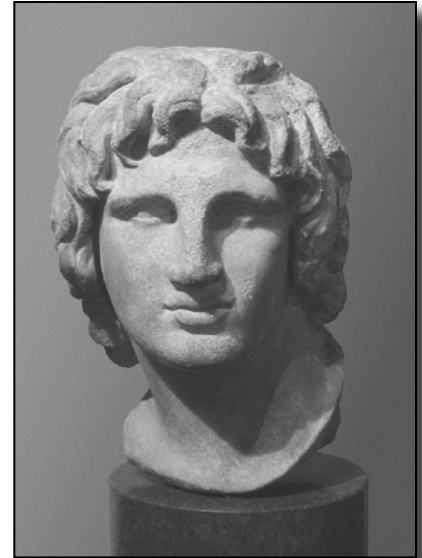
Alexander Forced to Turn Back

In 327 B.C., Alexander planned to invade India. He crossed the Indus River a year later. However, his army was getting tired from the long trek and all the fighting. They revolted against him. Alexander was forced to turn back toward Macedonia in 325 B.C. On his way back in 323, he was staying in Babylon. Alexander died there at the young age of 32. During his long campaign, he had suffered many wounds and sicknesses. This made him weak and vulnerable to malaria. This may have been what killed him. Others say that he was poisoned.

Spread of Greek Culture

Alexander the Great was indeed a great ruler. His dream was to unify East and West. He succeeded in doing this. He ruled his empire well. He included Greeks and Persians in his administration. Most importantly, Greek culture was spread far and wide throughout the East. Many Greeks settled in Persia. These cities were organized along Greek lines. He also founded many cities along the way, all called Alexandria. The finest city was the **Alexandria** in Egypt. It was located on the mouth of the Nile Delta. It became the most important trading port in the Mediterranean. A variety of goods from as far away as India passed through this port. Hence, the **Hellenistic civilization** (336–30 B.C.) was created. This was civilization influenced by the Greeks. It lasted until the Romans conquered the whole area.

Alexander the Great was one of the most powerful figures in history. He is thought of as one of the greatest conquerors in world history. He left behind a legacy that influenced Roman civilization. It also carried over to the Byzantine Empire.



Alexander conquered an empire that stretched from Macedonia to Egypt to the Indus River, but he died at the age of 32.

Greek Art and Architecture

The Architecture of Athens

Athens was the cultural center of ancient Greece. The city shows the best examples of Greek architecture in a city-state.

The **Acropolis** was located above the city of Athens. It was the sacred hill dedicated to Athena. She was the city's patron-goddess. The **Agora** was below the Acropolis. The Agora was the commercial and political center of the city. The trade and government of Athens happened there. The fifth century B.C. was the peak time of Athens' political power. Pericles began a project to build many public buildings. These would replace the ones destroyed during the Persian Wars. Many of these monuments still stand today. They are admired by tourists who visit Greece.

One of the most impressive buildings is the **Parthenon**. This is the temple built to honor Athena Parthenos. It is located on the Acropolis. The technical skill and proportion in design that went into building the temple was nearly perfect. The golden and ivory statue of Athena was kept inside the Parthenon. The famous sculptor Pheidias created the statue.

There were other temples in the city. The **Erechtheion** was also on the Acropolis. It was dedicated to both Athena and Erechtheus (a legendary king of Athens). The **Hephaesteion** was located in the Agora. It was a temple dedicated to the god of crafts, Hephaestus. The **Olympeion** was a temple that honored the almighty king of gods, Zeus. Each city-state had fine temples. However, none were better examples of Greek architecture than those of Athens.

Greek Temples

The Greek temple was the most important public building in any city. Its purpose was to provide a place for the statue of the patron-god or goddess. Sometimes the offerings made to the deity were kept in the temple. The altar was outside and in front of the temple. Worshippers gathered there. Sacrifices were made on the altar. The temples were built of big limestone or marble blocks. They stood on a low stone platform that could be reached by steps. The standard temple plan was rectangular in shape. There was a central windowless room, called the *naos*. The deity's statue stood in this room. The naos opened out onto a porch with columns (*pronaos*). The central part of the temple was surrounded by a row of columns. This formed the *colonnade* or covered walkway. The overall structure of the temple consisted of four main parts: the column, the architrave, the frieze, and the cornice (roof). Today, there are traces of color on some of the building blocks. This shows that parts of the temple were painted in bright colors. Reds, yellows, and blues can still be seen on parts of the temple. (See the diagram on page 24 for more detail on the parts of a temple.)

There were three different styles of decoration in Greek temples as the years went by. The first temples were built in the seventh century B.C. The Doric order was the first style in Greek temples. About 500 B.C., the Ionic order developed. In the fourth century B.C., the Corinthian order



The Acropolis was the sacred hill in Athens where the Parthenon (top right) and other temples stood.

was introduced. One style did not completely replace the other. Builders were still using the older styles along with the new style.

The orders can be identified mainly by their columns. A column was made up of the shaft and the capital. In the **Doric order**, the capital was plain. The capital of the **Ionic order** had a *volute*. (A volute is a decoration in the form of ram's horns.) There was an egg-and-dart pattern below the volute. The **Corinthian order** capital was decorated with acanthus leaves growing from the shaft.

The frieze was the part that lay between the cornice and the architrave. The frieze was decorated with stone carvings. In the Doric order, it was divided into panels (*metopes*). These panels were separated by three vertical grooves (*triglyphs*). In the Ionic order, the frieze was decorated with one long strip. The architrave was plain in the Doric order. In the Ionic order, it was divided into three equal horizontal sections. In the Corinthian order, only the capital was different. The rest of the design was the same as the Ionic order.

The roof of the temple was called the cornice. It was triangular in shape. It included the pediment and the geison. The geison were the outer edges of the roof. The pediment was always filled with sculptures. They were from stories related to the temple's deity. The birth of Athena was sculpted on the Parthenon's pediment. The sculptures were originally brightly painted as well. Throughout the ages, builders have often copied the three styles of the Greeks. Columns in one of the styles are still used in buildings today.

Sculpture

The Greeks were also great sculptors. The temples were decorated with sculpted carvings. A large statue of the deity also stood inside the building. Pheidias was a famous Greek **sculptor**. He made a statue of Athena entirely out of gold and ivory. However, most temple statues were made of marble or bronze. Nothing of this statue remains. There are written descriptions of the statue. There are also Roman copies of the statue.

There were many statues of female and male gods, heroes, and Olympic victors (mostly nude). These were in many of the houses and public buildings. They also lined the streets. The statues were life-sized figures. They were either sculpted from marble or cast in bronze. Detail was stressed. They tried to show natural movement and appearance. Many of the original statues have not survived. They were either broken or melted down and reused. However, Roman copies have survived. The copies provide valuable information about the original Greek works.



Reproduction of Pheidias' Statue of Athena

Pottery

Pottery was another form of Greek art. It was widely traded in the Mediterranean region. There were a variety of shapes. Most pottery was used for practical purposes. Pottery was used to carry goods that might spoil. These included wine, olive oil, grain, or perfume. It was also used in everyday activities such as cooking and eating. It was used in religious ceremonies to carry offerings to the gods. The pottery itself was also used as offerings in temples and tombs. Sometimes it was made and traded just for its artistic beauty.

Pottery provides useful information for the historian. Many of the vases were painted with scenes from Greek life. Pictures of daily life, athletic activities, religious ceremonies, or subjects from myths were placed on pottery. The greatest period for Greek pottery was during the fifth century B.C.

Two popular types of pottery were made in Greece. The clay used to make the pottery turned red when it was fired. This was due to its high iron content. In **Black Figure pottery**, the figures were drawn in black on the red background. In **Red Figure pottery**, the reverse was true. The figures were outlined in black and left red on a black-glazed background. Writing was common on pots. Sometimes this was to mark the potter's name. The writing might also tell the names of mythological or historical figures shown. Or it might describe the story of the scene.

Today, Greek architecture, sculpture, and pottery are highly valued. They serve as historical evidence and as skilled works of art.

Greek Theater and Games

Festivals

Each year the Greeks looked forward to having a good time at several festivals held in honor of the gods. The **festivals** were mainly religious events. Part of the festival was a procession. This was like a parade. There were also sacrifices to the god being honored. It was also a social occasion for the Greeks. They got together and enjoyed plays and athletic events.

The main social event of some of the festivals was the dramatic competition. One example of a festival in Athens was the festival of the City Dionysia. This was held in honor of Dionysus (god of wine and drama). The Great Panathenaic Festival was held in honor of the city's patron-goddess, Athena.



Greek Theater

Drama

The Greeks invented drama. **Drama** involves telling a story with actors and dialogue. It was an important contribution to Western civilization. Greek playwrights produced a large number of high-quality plays. Some of these plays are still known today. The plays were of two kinds: tragedies and comedies. In **tragedies**, the subject matter dealt mostly with mythological stories. Some plays were based on historical events. The themes of the stories consisted of disasters, bloody revenge, or the suffering of the human conscience. The **comedies** made fun of political or social issues at hand.

In a public performance, only three actors played the various characters in a play. Masks were used to tell one character from the other. This made it easier for one actor to play several roles. The **chorus** was important for all plays. The chorus was a group of performers who danced and sang at certain points in the play. They commented on the events of the play.

Playwrights and Plays

Fifth century Greece produced some of history's finest playwrights. **Playwrights** are people who write plays. They include Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. They wrote tragedies. Aristophanes was a comic poet.

One famous Greek tragedy was *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles. It tells of Oedipus, the son of a king. The Delphic oracle told him that he would kill his father and marry his mother. The prophecy came true. At the end, he gouged out his eyes with his mother's (wife's) broach. The play ends with his life in ruins.

One of Aeschylus' plays was called *The Persians*. It dealt with the historical battle of Salamis in 480 B.C. The battle was described very vividly. Aeschylus must have been an eyewitness to the event. He may have even fought in the battle.

Aristophanes is famous for making fun of the other playwrights, philosophers, and statesmen. He also made a mockery of the Athenian democracy. The plots of his plays were outlandish. They sometimes involved talking animals. He used vulgar language and made obscene jokes.

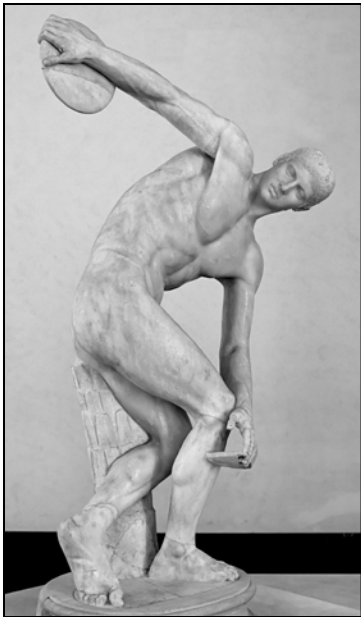
The Theater

Plays were held in a building called the **theater**. The Greek theater was in the shape of a half circle. It was usually built on the slope of a hill. The main feature of a theater was the **orchestra**. This was the central acting area. It was surrounded three-quarters of the way by the seating area. At the open end of the orchestra stood the stage building or **skene**. This is where the actors could change and store their belongings. The first theaters were simple structures made of wood. They were built on the natural slope of the hill. In the fourth century B.C., the structures became permanent. These were made of stone. Many of the stone theaters still stand today. The most famous theater is at Epidaurus. This is in the Peloponnese. It is still used today for performing ancient Greek plays.

The Olympic Games

Athletic games were the main events of other Greek festivals. The **Olympic Games** were the most notable of these festivals. They were held in honor of Zeus, the king of gods. The event took place every four years in the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia. This was in the northwest part of the Peloponnese. The sanctuary of Zeus was a sacred area dedicated to the god and his wife, Hera.

Because of the Olympic Games, the sanctuary grew in size. Temples and altars were erected for the religious activities. A stadium and **hippodrome** (a stadium designed for horse events) were built for the athletic events. In the beginning, athletes and spectators had to camp in the open air. There were no buildings for these people at the sanctuary. Finally, in the fourth century B.C., a guesthouse, a gymnasium, and two bathhouses were built. This helped make the people and competitors more comfortable.



Olympic athletes competed in eight different types of competition.

The Olympic Games were first held in 776 B.C. The Games continue in a modern form today. Like all festivals, religious activities were a main part of the ceremony. This included sacrifices made to the honored god.

There were eight different types of athletic competitions at the Olympic Games. The events took place over a three-day period. The chariot races and the horse races were held in the hippodrome. The chariots had two wheels and were pulled by four horses. Crashes and deaths happened often during the chariot races. The rest of the athletic events took place in the stadium. The stadium was about 200 meters long (600 feet). The natural slopes of a hill served as the seating area for the spectators and the judges. The events consisted of boxing, wrestling, the pankration, track events, a race in armor, and the pentathlon. The **pankration** was a mix of boxing, wrestling, and judo. The **pentathlon** was a five-part contest. It included the discus throw, the long jump, the javelin throw, a 200-meter run, and wrestling. The track events consisted of three running races: the 200 meter, the 400 meter, and a longer race of about 5,000 meters. The race in armor was the final athletic competition. It shows the importance of the **hoplite** (a type of heavily armed soldier) in the Greek army.

There was only one winner for every contest. There were no second- and third-place winners. The winners of the various contests were rewarded with simple garlands of olive leaves. The honor associated with being an Olympic victor was great. At home, the winners might get some money prizes. They might also get free meals for the rest of their lives. Sometimes statues of the victors were sculpted and displayed in public places. The winners were seen as heroes.

Other games were started in Greece, but none were as important as the Olympic Games. The Pythian Games were held every four years at Delphi. The Isthmian Games were held at Corinth. They occurred every two years.

Many Greeks from faraway places flocked to see the festivals. They were very religious people. They did not want to anger the gods by not attending the festivals. At the same time, the festivals were social events that were not to be missed.

The Etruscans and the Beginnings of Rome

Early Settlers of Italy

The peninsula of Italy is located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea region. It became the home of many peoples. It had fertile soil for farming and a pleasant climate. A variety of metal ores were located there. This included copper and iron. Indo-European people moved to Italy from the north in two waves. First, in about 2000 B.C., people who used bronze tools and weapons arrived. Then, about 1000 B.C., Iron Age people moved in. They used better tools and weapons made of iron. These were the ancestors of the different Italic tribes.

The Italic tribes had spread over most of Italy by the ninth century B.C. The **Latins** were the most notable of the Italic tribes. They lived near Rome in the area called Latium. Between 750 and 600 B.C., the **Greeks** settled to the south of Rome. This area was called Magna Graecia (Greater Greece). The **Etruscans** settled to the north of Rome. They were between the Tiber and Arno Rivers. This area was known as Etruria. (See map on page 36.)

The Etruscans

The Etruscans had their own government. They lived in this region from the eighth century B.C. until the Romans conquered them in the third century B.C. It is not known where the Etruscans came from. Some historians claim they came from Asia. Others claim they were native to Italy. They were not Indo-European. They spoke an unknown language. The Etruscans left behind many monuments and artifacts. These tell us that they had a thriving civilization in pre-Roman Italy.

The Etruscans were organized into a group of 12 city-states. Each city-state had its own king. Some of the city-states were Caere, Tarquinia, Chuisi, Populonia, Veii, and Volsinii. Volsinii was the religious center. A religious festival was held there every year. The city-states were built on low hilltops surrounded by strong walls. A road system connected the city-states.

The Etruscans were skilled bronze workers. They made bronze pots, tools, weapons, sculptures, and household items. In their artwork, they used many ideas taken from the Greeks in the south. The Etruscans traded with the Greeks often. They also adopted the Greek alphabet to write their language. In turn, the Etruscans passed the alphabet on to the Romans. They used it to write Latin.

Etruscan **necropoli** (cemeteries) were scattered over the landscape. The Etruscans buried their dead in tombs. These tombs consisted of rock-cut chambers. They were often covered by a large **tumulus** (mound of earth). The local rock was called **tufa**. It was a volcanic rock that was very soft and easy to cut. The Etruscans cut family tombs in the tufa cliffs that looked like the insides of their houses. There were several chambers connected to a main chamber. On stone benches inside the chambers lay carved **sarcophagi** (stone caskets). The dead were laid to rest in these caskets. In tombs found at Tarquinia, there were paintings of scenes of everyday life. The paintings tell archaeologists a lot about how the Etruscans lived. When the Romans conquered the Etruscans, they started cremating their dead. They put the ashes in carved stone urns. Portraits of the dead were sculpted on many of the sarcophagi and urns. They were also carved with the dead person's name, family, and job.



Etruscan Couple Carved on a Sarcophagus

The Etruscans were at their most powerful between the seventh and fifth centuries B.C. They enlarged their territory beyond their homeland of Etruria. They went as far north as Bologna and to the south into Campania. This territory included the settlement of Rome on the Tiber River. Rome was originally a group of separate villages. They had been united into one community by the mid-eighth century B.C. The inhabitants of Rome were Latins. They lived in primitive huts made of thatch and mud. During the time when the Etruscans ruled the area, Rome grew into a successful city. A century later, Rome took the lead in the region. It began, little by little, to take over all the peoples of Italy. This included the Italic tribes, the Greeks, and the Etruscans.

The Romans

According to legend, Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by the twins **Romulus** and **Remus**. Titius Livius (known as Livy) describes the events of the founding and early history of Rome. He tells the story of Aeneas, a Trojan prince. After the Greeks destroyed Troy, Aeneas sailed around the Mediterranean. He eventually landed in Italy, where he settled. Aeneas married the daughter of King Latinus, the king of the Latins. Aeneas' son founded a new city called Alba Longa. It was located near what would become Rome. He and his family ruled the city for 13 generations.

Then a man named Amulius seized the throne from the real king, Numitor. Numitor had twin grandchildren, Romulus and Remus. Amulius ordered a servant to drown the twins in the Tiber River. Instead, the servant left the twins in a basket on the riverbank. A she-wolf nursed them for a while. Then a shepherd found the boys and raised them. A bronze she-wolf from about 500 B.C. can still be seen in Rome today. It is a masterpiece made by an Etruscan artist.

When the boys became men, they killed Amulius. Together they founded a new city on the spot where they had been left behind as babies. However, the brothers quarreled. Romulus killed Remus and became the first king of the newly founded city. The city was named Rome after him.

The Monarchy

Romulus was followed by six more kings. The fifth and seventh kings of Rome were Etruscans. The fifth king was Tarquinius Priscus. This began the period in which the Etruscans ruled Rome and the Latins. During that time, a defensive wall was built around Rome. It had a central marketplace (the **Forum**), public buildings, and temples. Etruscan power began to decline in Latium and Campania during the sixth century B.C. The last king, Tarquinius Superbus, was kicked out by the Roman aristocrats. The traditional dates for the period known as the "**Monarchy**" are 753 to 509 B.C. The date 509 B.C. also marks the beginning of Roman civilization.

The Etruscans are an important part of Roman history. The Romans adopted many inventions and customs from them. Examples include the arch and the layout of the temple in Roman architecture. They used the Etruscan alphabet (adopted from the Greeks) to write Latin. They tried to predict the future by looking at the entrails of animals. The Romans also continued the art of bronze making. Very importantly, some parts of Roman government came from the Etruscans. The Romans were also influenced greatly by the Greek culture. This can be seen in their architecture, sculpture, science, and literature.



This bronze wolf is thought to have been made by an Etruscan artist in about 500 B.C.

The Republic of Rome Part 1: 509–218 B.C.

The Republic

When the last king of Rome was kicked out, a new period in Roman history started. A new form of government replaced the monarchy. The Romans called this new state the **Republic**.

The king was replaced by two men, called **consuls**. They held all the executive power. They also led the army

in times of war. The consuls were advised by a council of ex-judges. This was known as the **Senate**. This council began during the Etruscan rule of the city. It gave advice to the king. Officially, the duties of the Senate stayed the same. But as Rome grew in power, it became a powerful body of government. It made decisions about things inside Rome and dealings with foreign nations. The Senate controlled all matters of great importance. It even decided when to go to war.

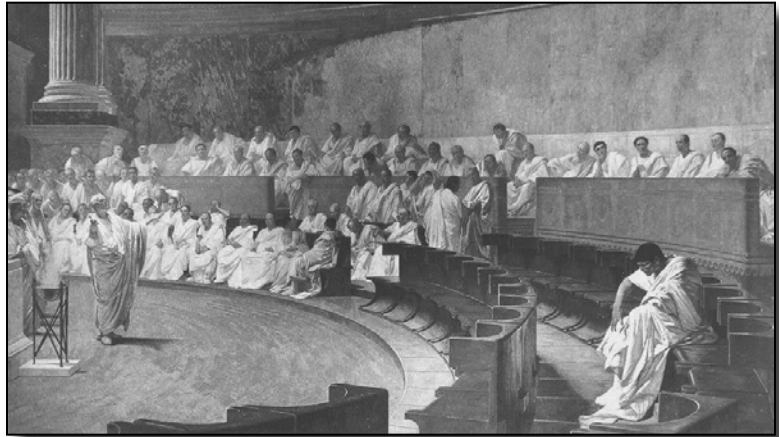
There were other important government offices. The **praetor** was the judge of the city. The **quaestor** was the financial officer. The office of public relations was called the **aedile**. It organized festivals and other events. The **pontifex maximus** was the high priest.

There were two social classes of Roman people. The **patricians** were the rich people who owned land. The **plebeians** were the common people. They were farmers and traders. In the beginning, only the patricians could be a consul or a member of the Senate. They controlled the government. It was also a Roman custom that the patricians become **patroni**. These were protectors of people called **clientes**. The clientes were poorer people, ex-slaves, or newcomers to the city. The patroni helped the clientes with money and with legal problems. In return, the clientes were supposed to help the patroni in their political and private lives. This custom of patron-client relationship kept the leading rich families in power.

The Early Republic

The Early Republic phase was from 509 to 133 B.C. The plebeians were upset during this time. They were not allowed to be in the government. What little land they owned was slowly being taken by the patricians. This meant the plebeians were always in debt. They had to work as servants or slaves to the patricians. There was a struggle between the two classes lasting over 200 years. It was mostly bloodless, however. The plebeians held strikes and refused to perform their duties to the state. They wanted social and political equality.

Little by little, the plebeians were given certain rights. Every year, elections were held for two men called **tribuni plebis** (tribunes of the people). They represented the people in government affairs. The laws of Rome were written on 12 stone tablets and displayed in the Forum. Gradually, plebeians were allowed to hold positions in the government. Finally, a law was passed in 287 B.C. known as the **Lex Hortensia**. It made the People's Assembly official. This plebeian assembly had the force of the law. It could pass or veto any law that was put before it. It could also make decisions on matters of the state. In theory, the people had the power. In practice, it was the Senate who still decided the complex and important matters of the state. This led to more strife between the two classes. Civil war broke out during the second phase of the Republic period (133–30 B.C.)



The Roman Senate

Rome Becomes a World Power

Externally, Rome grew to be a world power during the first three centuries of the Republic. Rome had an efficient army and notable leaders. It spread throughout Italy and the Mediterranean. (See inset map on page 36.) Until 300 B.C., the Romans fought the neighboring mountain tribes. These were the Volsci, the Aequi, and the Sabini. In 390 B.C., Rome drove off the Gauls. They had invaded from the north across the Alps and had ravaged and burnt the city of Rome. Over the next century, the Etruscans of the north were defeated. The other Latin tribes of Latium were also conquered. During the last 30 years of the fourth century, the **Samnites** were the enemy. The Samnites dominated Campania. They were the toughest Italic tribe the Romans had to face. In a series of three wars, the Samnites were finally defeated.

By 280 B.C., Rome had taken over central and northern Italy. The only people left to conquer in Italy were the Greeks who lived in the south. The Greeks of the city of Tarentum were afraid the Romans would invade. They asked for help from the Greek mainland. In 280 B.C., King Pyrrhus of Epirus crossed the Adriatic Sea and landed in Italy. He fought the Romans for five years. The war against the Greeks was called the **Pyrrhic war**, after the Greek king. Pyrrhus was a tough enemy to defeat. He used elephants in his battles against the Romans. The Romans had never seen elephants before, and they were scared. But eventually, the Roman army was able to deal with the elephants. They defeated Pyrrhus in 275 B.C. Pyrrhus went back to Epirus in Greece. By 272 B.C., Tarentum and all the other Greek city-states in Italy had submitted to Rome. Rome made peace agreements with each of the conquered cities. As allies, the cities were independent. However, they had to supply the Romans with men for their army.



King Pyrrhus of Epirus

The First Punic War

In the third century B.C., the Romans were at war with **Carthage**. They were the only other powerful people in the western Mediterranean. Carthage was located on the coast of North Africa. It was a colony set up by the Phoenicians. They were a seafaring people from the Syrian coast (present-day Lebanon). The Phoenicians had dominated the western Mediterranean Sea since the ninth century B.C. They had founded many colonies along the Mediterranean coast. Carthage was the most important of these. Within a century, Carthage controlled the North African and Spanish coasts, Sardinia, Corsica, and western Sicily. Rome fought three wars with Carthage. These were called the Punic Wars. (Punic is Latin for Phoenician).

The **First Punic War** (264–241 B.C.) was fought over the island of Sicily. Fighting was harsh on both land and sea, but the Roman army was strong. Carthage lost, and a truce was made between the two powers. Rome took over Sicily and Sardinia. These islands together became the first province of Rome. A province was controlled by a Roman magistrate. He set up a local government and collected taxes to be paid to Rome.

Carthage, however, would not give up. After the First Punic War, the Carthaginians occupied Spain. They took it over to replace the islands they had lost. Another clash between Carthage and Rome became certain in 218 B.C. A Carthaginian general wanted to get revenge for his country. There was a conflict over the ownership of the Spanish town of Saguntum. The Second Punic War is discussed in the next chapter.

The Republic of Rome Part 2: Hannibal 218–133 B.C.



These coins show Hannibal of Carthage and one of his war elephants.

Hannibal and the Second Punic War

Hannibal was the leading general of Carthage. He was involved in the events leading up to the **Second Punic War** (218–201 B.C.). He was one of the best generals the Romans ever faced.

Invasion of Rome



Hannibal Crossing the Alps

Hannibal decided to lead his army into Italy from the north. (See map on page 39.) His army included elephants. He had a lot of trouble crossing the high, snow-covered **Alps**. He lost more than half of his elephants and soldiers. Even with so many losses, Hannibal beat the Romans during the first two years of the war. He had a smaller army than the Romans. However, he used his leadership and new battle tactics to win a series of battles. Hannibal's last and greatest victory was at the **Battle of Cannae** in 216 B.C. In this battle, a whole Roman army was destroyed.

Scipio

The Romans refused to admit defeat. New and better generals were chosen to fight the Carthaginians. One such general was **Cornelius Scipio**. Hannibal stayed in Italy, waiting for more soldiers from Carthage to arrive in Spain. Scipio led the Roman army to fight the Carthaginians in Spain. The Romans also killed Hannibal's brother in battle. This prevented any more soldiers from reaching Hannibal. Scipio adopted some of Hannibal's battle strategies. He drove the Carthaginians out of Spain in 206 B.C.

From Spain, Scipio invaded Africa. He attacked the city of Carthage itself. This move forced Hannibal to leave Italy. He would have to meet Scipio in a battle in his home territory. The battle took place in 202 B.C. at **Zama**. Scipio won a great and final victory over Hannibal. After this victory, Scipio became known as Scipio Africanus. Hannibal fled to Asia. A peace agreement between the Carthaginians and the Romans was signed in 201 B.C. Carthage was never very strong again. Spain was made into two Roman **provinces**. The Romans became the leading power of the western Mediterranean.

The Roman Provinces

Rome now focused on the eastern Mediterranean. Her sea empire grew larger. In the first century B.C., she became involved in several wars. Rome fought with Macedonia, Greece, and Syria. In 168 B.C., Rome seized the Kingdom of Macedonia. In 146 B.C., a revolt in the city of Corinth was crushed. Then Greece became part of the Roman Republic. That same year Carthage was razed to the ground at the end of the Third Punic War. Macedonia and Greece became one Roman province. Carthage formed the province of Africa.

In 133 B.C., King Attalus of Pergamon in Asia died. He left his kingdom to the Romans. This became the province of Asia. Hence, by 133 B.C., Rome had seven provinces on three continents along the Mediterranean. The provinces were Sicily and Sardinia (one province), Corsica, Spain (two provinces), Africa, Macedonia-Greece, and Asia.

The Republic of Rome Part 3: Civil Wars 133–46 B.C.

Unrest Among the People

The war with Hannibal had harmful effects on Rome and Italy. Much of the farmland was left in ruins. Hannibal's troops had taken everything worth taking. The landowners had to give up the land. They had been called to serve in the Roman army. As a result, many of the **soldier-farmers** were left without property after the war. They became unemployed and poor. Many of them moved to the big cities. The state bought up the small farms. It leased them to the wealthy **upper class**. Farms became larger. Products such as olives and grapes were cultivated on a large scale for trade purposes. This trend made the gap between the rich and the poor even greater. The Senate was made up of wealthy landowners. It remained in full control of the state. The Republic's constitution was not in the hands of the people as it was supposed to be. This led to unrest among the people. Reforms were needed to prevent anarchy from breaking out.



Gaius Gracchus Acting as Tribune of the People

The Gracchi Brothers Propose Reforms

Tiberius Gracchus was a tribune of the people. He proposed social reforms to the Assembly of the People in 133 B.C. The Lex Hortensia allowed this action. However, it was bitterly opposed by the Senate. The reforms included a law setting a maximum amount of property each person could hold. It also allowed for the redistribution of land to the poor citizens of Rome. This would take land away from the rich owners and give it to the poor. Tiberius was trying to increase the number of small landholders in Italy. He also wanted to take care of poverty in the cities. However, the members of the Senate did not wish to lose their property or their power. They reacted violently. They killed Tiberius before the reforms could be carried out. When the Senate had Tiberius killed, it damaged their reputation. It was the turning point in the history of the Roman Republic. It was the beginning of the decline and fall of the Republic.

Ten years later, Tiberius' brother, **Gaius Gracchus**, tried to pass the same laws that his brother had proposed. His attempt failed because he was also killed by the Senate. The struggle between the people and the aristocracy lasted for another century. The people wanted more power. The aristocracy fought to keep all their power. Each side was led by men who tried to rebuild the shattered Republican constitution. The leaders were great generals who had proven their worth in wars in Europe and Asia. But fighting among the leaders became common. Social disorder and civil wars resulted.

The First Civil War

In 107 B.C., **Gaius Marius** came to power as consul of Rome. He created a **professional Roman army**. Poor citizens from the cities were allowed to join the army for terms of 16 years. In

return, the soldiers would be given a piece of land to settle on once their military service was finished. This military reform was key to the rise of powerful generals. The army became more loyal to its generals than to the state. Marius was busy fighting the **Gauls**. These were barbarians who lived in the area north of Italy and much of western Europe. Meanwhile, his lieutenant, **Cornelius Sulla**, also became a powerful general.

In 88 B.C., Rome was facing a rebellion in Asia Minor. A Roman army needed to be sent to the area. The people wanted Marius to lead the war. Instead, the Senate chose Sulla, who was now a consul. As a result, Sulla marched on Rome and declared Marius an outlaw. Marius fled to Africa. Then Sulla went to the east to deal with the rebellion. As soon as Sulla left for Asia Minor, Marius and his supporters took control of Rome once again. Marius died in 86 B.C., but his followers continued the battle. In 82 B.C., Sulla was on his way back from the east. He again marched on Rome with his army. This was the beginning of the first civil war. Marius' followers were supported by the people. Sulla's troops were supported by the Senate. The two armies met in a battle outside Rome. Sulla won the battle and named himself dictator of Rome. He was put in charge to restore the old Republican constitution. He did so by restoring much of the Senate's power and breaking the power of the people. In 80 B.C., he resigned from his dictatorship. Sulla died the following year.

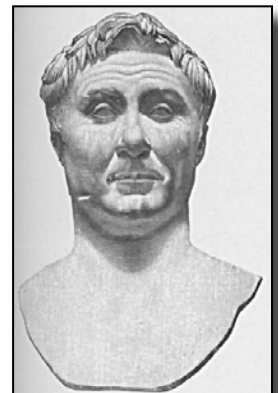
Pompey and Crassus

The new power of the Senate did not last long. Two brilliant generals became powerful leaders. One general was Pompeius Magnus, known as **Pompey**. The other general was Crassus. Pompey had become well known with victories in Spain. **Crassus** was put in command of the Roman army to repress a slave rebellion in southern Italy. The rebellion was led by a professional gladiator called **Spartacus**. After two years of fighting, Crassus was able to capture Spartacus. However, he needed the help of Pompey, who had just returned from Spain. Spartacus was killed, and thousands of his fellow slaves were crucified. Pompey and Crassus decided to run together for the consulship of Rome in 70 B.C.

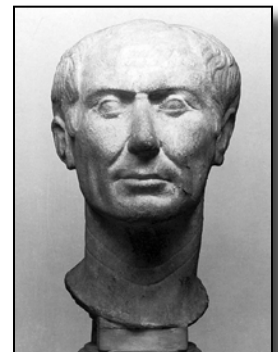
During their consulship, they overturned Sulla's laws. They restored the power to the people. This weakened the power of the Senate. The conflicts between the Senate and the people resumed. While Crassus stayed in Rome, Pompey took his army to the east. He expanded Rome's territories by combining the regions of Pontus and Bythina. This became the Roman province of Bythina in 68 B.C. He defeated the last king of the Seleucid Empire in Syria in 63 B.C. He also enlarged the province of Asia. Lastly, the kingdom of Judaea in Palestine became a client state of Rome.

The First Triumvirate

While Pompey was in the east, **Gaius Julius Caesar** became popular in Rome. He was a general with several victories in Spain. Trouble was also brewing in Rome. A conspiracy in 63 B.C. led by Catiline almost overthrew the state. The Senate increasingly insulted Pompey, Crassus, and Caesar. They finally decided to join forces. They formed a coalition called the **First Triumvirate** (60–53 B.C.).



Pompey



Julius Caesar

All three men shared the power of the state. This did not last long, however. Each man was very ambitious. Each man commanded his own army. Soon another civil war began. Caesar had just finished the conquest of Gaul (58–51 B.C.). Pompey was afraid Caesar was getting too powerful. He forced Caesar to disarm his troops and accept humiliation before returning to Rome. Caesar did not wish to give up everything for which he had fought. He and his army crossed into Italy. This started the second civil war (49–46 B.C.). Due to his brilliant generalship and speed of movement, Caesar won a series of major battles against Pompey's forces. He defeated Pompey himself in 48 B.C. at the Battle of Pharsalus in Greece. (See map on page 39.) He then defeated Pompey's sons and other supporters in Africa and Spain in 46 B.C. Caesar became sole ruler of the Republic. He was appointed dictator of Rome for life.

The Republic of Rome Part 4: Julius Caesar

Conquest of Gaul

Julius Caesar (100–44 B.C.) was one of the best military commanders of all time. His greatest achievement was the conquest of Gaul. Gaul was made a part of the Roman state. The **annexation** of Gaul changed the whole identity of the Roman state. Rome didn't just include the lands around the Mediterranean. It now also had territory in western Europe. (See map on page 39.)

Gaul was made up of a number of Celtic tribes. In 58 B.C. during the First Triumvirate, Caesar became governor of three provinces. These were Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy), Illyricum (east of the Adriatic Sea), and Narbonese Gaul (southern France). He decided to march northward. He wanted to make the whole area into a Roman province. He claimed that the tribes in the north posed a threat to the Gallic provinces. Some think that he only attacked the Gauls to increase his military prestige. So started the **Gallic War** (58–51 B.C.). Julius Caesar gave an account of the war in his book *De Bello Gallico*.

Cleopatra

After the Gallic War, Caesar became involved in the civil war against Pompey. He defeated Pompey in Greece in 48 B.C. In 47 B.C., Caesar went to Egypt. He met **Cleopatra** there. They became lovers. Caesar helped her defeat the king of Egypt. He made Cleopatra queen of the land. Egypt also became a client state of Rome. Then Caesar returned to Italy. He was made dictator of Rome for life in 46 B.C.

Caesar's Reforms

During his **dictatorship**, Caesar was able to do quite a lot. He devoted his career to reforms. One of his most important reforms was setting up colonies in Italy and the provinces. These helped deal with the ongoing problem of the urban poor and the landless ex-soldiers. The **colonies** were small settlements for war veterans intended as a reward for their loyalty. Poor civilians from the cities who had no jobs were also allowed to live there. The colonies became important places of defense. The ex-soldiers could be counted on to defend their homes from invaders. The colonies also helped in the **Romanization** of the provinces. These settlers had come from the heart of Rome. They brought Roman customs and language to the provinces.

Caesar also tackled the long-standing problem of debt. He erected a number of public buildings in Rome. He also revised the Roman calendar. With some minor changes, that calendar is still used today.

Conspiracy Against Caesar

Caesar's reforms mostly helped the poor and the working class people. The upper class and the Senate wanted to do away with Caesar and his reforms. Two leading members of the Senate set up a **conspiracy** against him. Cassius and Marcus Brutus plotted to kill Caesar. Eventually, there were 60 conspirators involved in the plot. The murder happened when the Senate gathered for a meeting in Pompey's theater. There the conspirators cruelly stabbed Caesar to death. Caesar died on the **Ides of March** (March 15), 44 B.C.



In 46 B.C., Gaius Julius Caesar became sole dictator of Rome for life. However, he was killed by a group of conspirators in 44 B.C.

Octavian-Augustus: The First Roman Emperor

The Second Triumvirate

After Caesar's death, another trio of men came to power. These were Mark Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus. **Mark Antony** was Caesar's right-hand man. **Octavian** was the grandnephew and adopted heir of Caesar. He had the support of the Senate. **Lepidus** was another one of Caesar's military commanders. In 43 B.C., the three men began the **Second Triumvirate**. This was the second Republican coalition of three dictators to rule the Roman state.

Both Antony and Octavian went after Caesar's murderers, Brutus and Cassius. They defeated them in 42 B.C. in two battles at Philippi in Macedonia. Then both leaders decided that Antony would control the eastern provinces. Octavian would control the western provinces.

Civil War Between Antony and Octavian

Soon tension between the two men started to grow. Antony was married to Octavian's sister. But Antony had left his wife. He was having an affair with Queen Cleopatra of Egypt. The two dictators were jealous of each other. They each wanted to have more power.

About the same time, the third dictator, Lepidus, tried to contest Octavian's rule in the West. Lepidus was defeated. He was forced to retire and was disarmed.

As the years went by, the rivalry between Antony and Octavian increased. This led to the third and final civil war of the Republic. In 31 B.C., Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra at the **Battle of Actium**. This was a sea battle off the west coast of Greece. Both Antony and Cleopatra fled to Egypt. They committed suicide. Octavian then conquered Egypt in 30 B.C. He made it a Roman province. (See map on page 39.)



Octavian defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra's forces at the Battle of Actium and became the sole ruler of the Republic.

Octavian Becomes Augustus

After the Battle of Actium, Octavian became the sole ruler of the Republic. He planned to restore Rome to its old glory. He wanted to establish peace and stability after a century of war. In order to do this, he had to form a new type of government. He knew it had to be like the old Republic constitution. However, he did not want to include the old weaknesses. Octavian learned from the mistakes of those who had come before him. He did not make himself a dictator. Instead, for his first years as ruler, he hid his power behind republican traditions. In 27 B.C., he pronounced "the transfer of the state to the free disposal of the Senate and the people." This action earned him the reputation of being the restorer of the Republic. The Senate then gave him the title of **AUGUSTUS**. This meant "the revered one." This was to define his new status as leader of the Roman state. He was always known as Augustus after that. Augustus became the first **emperor** of the **Roman Empire**. The Roman Empire lasted from 27 B.C. to A.D. 476.

Thus, there were three important results of the Battle of Actium. (1) It was the end of the Roman Republic. (2) Octavian-Augustus became the master of the Graeco-Roman world. (3) The West dominated the Roman state with Rome as the capital. The East was kept in second place.

Augustus as Supreme Ruler

Augustus kept many of the republican offices. There were still consuls and the Senate. However, he was the supreme ruler of the state. He was the president of the Senate, the leader of the Roman army, and the chief priest. He was granted power over the governors in the provinces. He was also the tribune of the people. The courts, laws, money, and internal and foreign policy were all in his hands.

Augustus took many journeys and reorganized the Roman provinces. He made Egypt into a Roman province. He added the whole **Iberian Peninsula** (Spain and Portugal) to the empire. He made Gaul into three new provinces. In the east, he annexed Galatia in Asia Minor. He made Judaea into a Roman province. Augustus' stepson, Tiberius, took the army north of Italy. He managed to extend the Roman territories to the Danube and Rhine Rivers. The rivers became the natural furthest boundaries of the Roman Empire. (See map on page 39.)

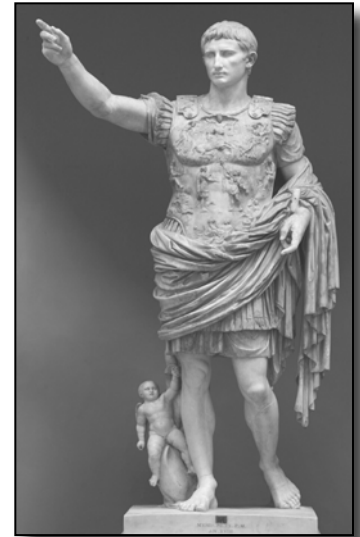
Augustus did many other deeds as well. He created a permanent bodyguard and a city police. These were stationed in Rome. He started a fire brigade. He founded a new military treasury from which he could pay his soldiers. He also beautified Rome with a number of public buildings. He restored old ones and erected new ones. This greatly pleased the people of Rome.

The Roman Peace

Augustus showed himself to be a great general and manager. He was able to effectively reorganize the government and the provinces. He changed the weak Republic into a strong new government. This would last for many centuries. He solved the problem of governing by making the Roman state a one-man rule. He did this while still appearing to uphold the old republican traditions.

Augustus created a durable Roman peace. It lasted for two centuries, until A.D. 180. This was called the **Pax Romana**. During this period, there was no major war and the economy prospered. A network of roads was constructed throughout the empire. This increased the flow of trade. Trade flourished in exports such as wool, olive oil, wine, metal work, and pottery. In return, Italy received goods from the provinces, including slaves, grain, marble, and ivory. Most of Rome's income came from producing agricultural goods, however, rather than trade.

A year before Augustus died, he made a will. It included a summary of the military and financial resources of the empire and a record of his deeds. This testament is called the "Res Gestae Divi Augusti" or "Acts of Achievement of the Divine Augustus." It provides historians with an important document of Augustus' life and actions.



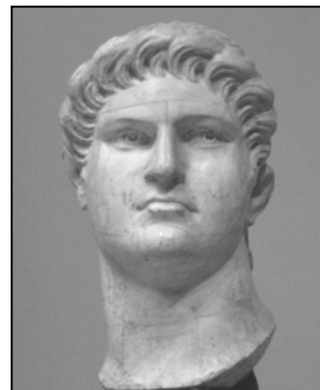
In 27 B.C., Octavian was given the title Augustus and became the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

The Julio-Claudian Dynasty

Augustus wanted to make sure that the next emperor would be someone whom he chose. Augustus arranged his own **successors** to the throne by adopting them as his sons. As the years went by, he chose several candidates. One by one, they either died in battle or were poisoned to death. When Augustus died, the only remaining candidate was his stepson Tiberius. Tiberius became the next emperor.

Augustus ruled Rome for 44 years and died in A.D. 14. For the next half-century, four members of Augustus' family ruled the empire. This was known as the **Julio-Claudian Dynasty**. Augustus' successor was Tiberius (14–37). Then Caligula (37–41), Claudius (41–54), and finally, Nero (54–68) succeeded to the throne.

Notable Emperors: The Early Roman Empire A.D. 14–180



Nero

Claudius

Claudius and Nero were the last two emperors of the Julio-Claudian Dynasty. Claudius (A.D. 41–54) was known for his activities in the provinces. He made Britain a province of the Roman Empire. He also added Mauritania in Africa and Thrace, which was north of Greece, as provinces. (See map on page 39.) Claudius adopted his stepson, Nero. This allowed Nero to succeed him on the throne.

Nero

Nero (54–68) was one of the worst emperors to rule Rome. After he took over the throne (**accession**), he quickly lost interest in public affairs. He only wanted to be involved in pleasure activities. He spent much time enjoying music, drama, races, and sexual activities. His rule is also known as the “reign of terror.” When he thought members of the Senate were conspiring to kill him, he put many of them to death. Nero killed some members of his own family. He even killed his mother. In A.D. 64, a great fire swept through Rome. Nero blamed the small number of Christians in Rome. As a result, many of the Christians were persecuted and killed. Many others thought that Nero had planned the fire. He started building a new palace right after the fire. It was decorated with gold and called the “Golden House.” It stretched over a large part of the city.

Nero became more unpopular in the last years of his reign. He started appearing in public performances. He went on an artistic tour of Greece. He joined in many of the games, winning all the first-place prizes. Nero did not pay any attention to governing. The army felt neglected by the emperor. Finally, they killed Nero.

After Nero’s murder, revolts broke out in the provinces. The fighting was among different Roman armies. This led to a short period of civil war (68–69). Four different emperors ruled the state during that time. Vespasian was the last of the four emperors. He made the empire stable again.

The Flavian Dynasty

Vespasian was followed by his two sons, Titus and Domitian. They all belonged to the **Flavian Dynasty** of rulers (69–96). Vespasian and Titus ruled the empire well. A Jewish revolt in Judaea was put down in A.D. 70. Jerusalem was captured and destroyed. Both emperors tried to rebuild the empire and strengthen its defenses. In Rome, a lot of money was spent on public works. One of the most notable structures was the **Colosseum**. It was a large arena where gladiatorial fights were held.

One noted event happened during the short reign of Titus. This was the eruption of the volcano **Vesuvius** in A.D. 79. It was located near modern-day Naples. Ash from the volcano buried two nearby towns, Pompeii and Herculaneum. The eruption wiped out most of the population.

Vespasian’s other son, Domitian, was not a popular ruler. He was a second Nero. He ruled the empire with a stiff hand. He neglected the Senate. The Senate’s members were not happy with him. Afraid for his life, Domitian killed many of the Senate’s leading members. He became so unpopular that he was killed. A member of his bodyguard and his own wife killed him.

The Golden Age

The next century saw the “**Five Good Emperors**” on the throne. This period of the second century A.D. is called the “**Golden Age**” of the Roman Empire. The most important of the five emperors were Trajan (98–117), Hadrian (117–138), and Marcus Aurelius (161–180).

Trajan

Trajan came from Spain. He was the first emperor to come from a province. This was the start of provincial men rising to power within the ruling classes of Rome. Trajan was popular with both the Senate and the people. He had absolute control of the state. However, he put on a good show toward the Senate. He tried to get along with them.

Trajan is best known for his military conquests and public works in Rome and the provinces. Trajan conquered a region called Dacia, north of the Danube River. He annexed it to the empire. He also fought the Parthians in the east. He annexed Armenia, Mesopotamia, and part of Arabia to the Roman Empire. No emperor had gone this far and none would go beyond. The Roman Empire reached its largest extent during Trajan’s reign. (See map on page 51.) Trajan’s many public works adorned Rome and the provinces. These were paid for by the treasure taken from Dacia. One of these was the Column of Trajan in Rome. The story of Trajan’s actions in Dacia was carved in a spiral around the column. Trajan’s good rule in Rome and abroad earned him the title of “**Optimus Princeps**.” This title meant “Best Ruler.”



Trajan’s
Column
in Rome

Hadrian

Hadrian came after Trajan as emperor. Hadrian dealt with troubles in the provinces. In fact, he spent more than half his reign outside of Rome, traveling throughout the provinces. The provinces of the east that Trajan had just acquired were difficult to hold and defend. Finally, Hadrian gave them up and withdrew back to the Euphrates River. This became the eastern boundary of the Roman Empire.



Hadrian’s Wall in Great Britain

Hadrian also strengthened the Roman boundaries in the west. He built defensive walls along the Rhine and Danube Rivers. He also built a wall in Britain, which was named after him. **Hadrian’s Wall** marked the farthest north that the Romans were able to conquer.

Hadrian’s main goal was to stabilize the Roman Empire. He is also known for constructing public buildings in the provinces. He also built a private palace with gardens and pools in Tivoli, just outside Rome.

Marcus Aurelius

Marcus Aurelius was the last of the “Five Good Emperors.” His death brought an end to the Pax Romana created by Augustus. He was known as the “philosopher-king.” He was deeply involved with philosophical thoughts. He even wrote a book called *Meditations*.

During most of his reign, Marcus Aurelius was involved in the defense of the Roman Empire. He fought against the Parthians in the east. He also fought the German tribes who started to break through the frontier along the Danube River. (See map on page 51.) In addition, a plague struck the empire. This killed many civilians and soldiers. Because so many people died in wars and natural disasters, there was a man shortage. That is why large numbers of Germans were let into the empire as settlers. They also served as **auxiliary** soldiers along the borders. These Germans helped the Romans defend the empire against other German tribes who threatened the frontiers.

In addition to the man shortage, the wars were costly. This meant there were money problems in the empire. Defending the borders of the empire now became the main concern for the emperor and his Roman army. They were not trying to conquer new territory. This meant more money was being spent than was coming into the empire. So now there were economic and political problems in the Roman Empire.

Notable Emperors: The Late Roman Empire A.D. 180–305

Commodus

Commodus came after Marcus Aurelius as emperor (180–192). He was Marcus Aurelius' son. Commodus was like Nero. He was one of the strangest of Rome's emperors. He was addicted to emotional religions and gladiatorial sports. He often fought with the Senate. This led him to execute many of its members. Finally, the head guard of the imperial bodyguard hired an athlete to murder him.

Septimius Severus

After Commodus was killed, there was a civil war for four years (193–197). In 193, three men were all hailed as the emperor of Rome at the same time. These were a rich senator and two provincial governors. Eventually, Septimius Severus defeated his rivals. He became the sole emperor (193–211). He was from North Africa. He had been the provincial governor in the Danube region.

Septimius Severus made many changes in the government. He wanted to secure the position of the emperor. He also wanted to prevent disorder and rebellion within the state. In Rome, he did not fill government positions with senators. He filled them with knights of purely military training. This ended the so-called sharing of power between the Senate and emperor. He also replaced the imperial bodyguard with his own soldiers from the Danube. He doubled the size of this unit.

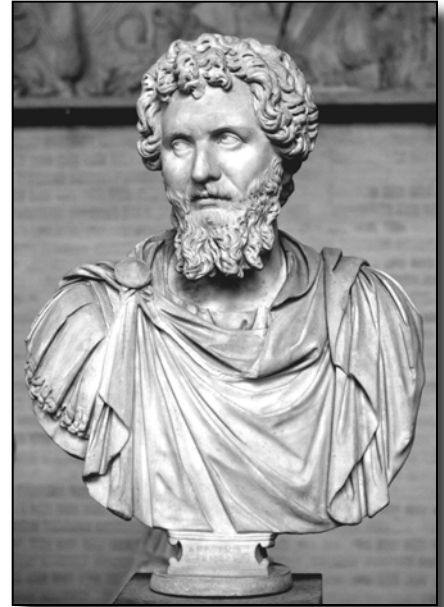
The **defense** of the Roman Empire was the biggest problem of the time. Septimius Severus added more men from the provinces as soldiers in the army. He increased the size of the army. He also started to make the officers of the army a **privileged** social class. He increased their pay and rewards. However, he had to increase the people's taxes to do this. These changes show that the army had become the sole basis of the emperor's power.

Septimius Severus died in Britain while on a military campaign in 211. As he was dying, he gave his sons some advice. He said to "be on good terms with one another, be generous to the soldiers and don't care about anything else." Septimius left the empire to both of his two sons, Geta and Caracalla. They were to rule together. Until 235, the emperors from Severus' family dealt with the increasing problems along the frontiers of the empire.

Barrack Emperors

There was a confusing period of about 50 years (235–284) where the military seemed to be in control. This is called the period of "**barrack emperors**." A series of soldier emperors were appointed and then overthrown by different provincial armies. There were 27 "regular" emperors. Then there were about 50 military usurpers who just took the title of emperor. Rome now faced its most serious problem. The armies were appointing the emperors. The soldiers were more loyal to their generals than to the state. Above all, greed was the motive for changing emperors so often. The soldiers supported whoever could give them more gifts and rewards.

During this 50-year period, the situation along the frontiers got much worse. Germanic tribes continued to invade along the northern border. The new Persian Sassanid Empire posed a



After a period of civil war following the death of Commodus, Septimius Severus became emperor.

threat along the eastern border. As a result, the Romans left Dacia. The boundary was brought back to the Danube River. (See maps on pages 51 and 61.) Both the internal wars and frontier battles damaged Rome's stability.

By 284, the military situation had gotten better. The empire was restored for a while. However, the economy within the empire had fallen apart. The imperial treasury was empty. To raise money, they increased old taxes and began collecting new taxes. Inflation was at an all-time high. Trade declined. Rome relied on imported goods from the east. It hardly exported any goods of its own. Many people gave up on farming. On the farms that were still being worked, there was no increase in crops. No new technology was being developed to make farming better. Rome's social situation also fell apart due to a decline in population. The middle class did not exist anymore. Lower-class farmers suffered greatly.

Diocletian

Diocletian (284–305) became emperor after this 50-year period of civil war. For a while, he was able to make the empire more stable. Diocletian was the greatest imperial organizer since Augustus. He tried to deal with the bad military and economic situations of the Roman Empire. He began a number of reforms.

Diocletian wanted to deal with the military situation. However, he found it was not possible for one emperor to handle it. So he divided the rule of the empire among four people. This was known as the **tetrarchy**. He appointed a second ruler as co-emperor of the state. There were also two Caesars who were secondary emperors. This also made it easier to pass on the power to the next rulers in line. The Caesars would succeed the emperors upon their deaths. He also divided the empire into eastern and western halves. Diocletian and his Caesar, Galerius, ruled the eastern half of the empire. Maximian and his Caesar, Constantius, ruled the western half.

Diocletian also changed how the empire was organized. He increased the number of provinces from 50 to 100. Each province was smaller in size and was ruled by a provincial governor. The provinces were grouped into 13 major units. These were called **dioceses**. They each had a governor. In turn, the dioceses were grouped into four **prefectures**. Each prefecture was administered by a prefect. (See map on page 61.) In doing so, he made the governing of the empire more efficient. There was now little opportunity for internal revolts. Diocletian also changed the Roman army by creating two branches. There was a mobile field force and a frontier force.

Diocletian made an attempt to restore the economy. He fixed the maximum prices on all goods and transportation costs. He also set the maximum wages for all workers in the empire. He made an attempt to stabilize the coinage. He also set up a better system of collecting taxes. However, he was not able to reduce the taxes on the Roman people. He needed the money to carry out his reforms.

To sum up, Diocletian created a **totalitarian** state. This meant he had control over the government, the army, and the economy. He was trying to defend the empire from invaders. He also wanted to stop economic decline. The Senate had disappeared.

In 305, Diocletian stepped down from his throne due to health reasons. He forced Maximian to step down too. Then Galerius and Constantius became co-emperors in their place.



Diocletian divided the rule of the Roman Empire among four people. This was known as the tetrarchy.

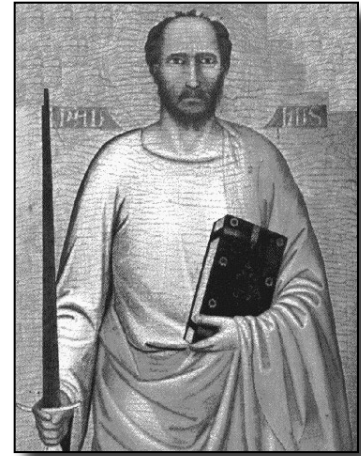
The Rise and Spread of Christianity

Christianity

Christianity began in the first century A.D. It started in the eastern Roman Empire as a part of Judaism in Palestine. This was in the Roman province of Judaea. It centered on the birth and death of Jesus. The life and teachings of Jesus would change the course of western history.

For two centuries, Christianity spread slowly. Paul was the man most responsible for the early spread of Christianity. He was a Jew from the Greek city of Tarsus in Asia Minor. During the first half of the first century, Paul traveled throughout the eastern part of the empire. He spread the story and teachings of Jesus.

Later, there were others who spread Christianity to the rest of the Roman world. It was first adopted by people in big cities. This included Rome. During the third century, Christian communities throughout the empire grew quickly. The people of the Roman Empire had lost faith in the state. It was an unstable time. They were seeking individual and personal salvation. To satisfy this religious quest, the people turned to Christianity. It provided sacred rites, such as baptism and communion. These rites were passed down from Jesus himself. They showed stability in the religion throughout the years. Christianity was also popular because it offered the comfort of religious love. Christians also preached that all people were equal. The religion involved reading the gospel accounts of Jesus' life. It also accepted the Classical culture of the Romans and Greeks. This appealed to the educated people of the empire.



Paul of Tarsus helped spread Christianity to the Roman Empire.

The Roman State Religion

The Roman Empire had an official state religion. It was a **polytheistic** religion. That meant it involved the worship of many gods. It was similar to the Greeks' religion. This type of religion is known as **paganism**. The Romans also worshipped the emperor as a god. The Roman state let other religions exist. They did not want those religions to threaten the peace and safety of the empire. They were allowed as long as the people worshipped the emperor and the other gods. The Christians, however, refused to worship the Roman gods and the emperor. So during the first three centuries A.D., the Christians were thought of as traitors. They were harassed and killed by the Roman emperors.

Persecution

Persecutions of Christians had started under Nero. They were blamed for the big fire of Rome in A.D. 64. Domitian, Marcus Aurelius, and Septimius Severus continued to persecute the Christians on a smaller scale. The "Great Persecution of Christians" was carried out in the reigns of Diocletian and Galerius, between 303 and 311. Christians were harassed, tortured, or killed. They were forced to meet in secret. Then in 311, Galerius issued the **Edict of Sophia**. This was a law saying that Christianity would be tolerated. It made Christianity legal in the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

Constantine the Great

After Diocletian and Maximian resigned, the transfer of power did not go as planned. The tetrarchy broke down in confusion. By 310, there were five emperors ruling the Roman Empire.

Among the rulers was Constantine the Great (306–337). Constantine had taken over for Constantius in 306. He was the ruler of the western half of the empire. Constantine defeated, one by one, the other rival emperors. In 312, he defeated Maxentius at the **Battle of the Milvian Bridge** in Rome. This made him the sole ruler in the West. At this battle, Constantine claimed that his victory over Maxentius was due to a miracle. Just before the battle, Constantine saw a flaring cross in the sky. These words were also written in the sky: BY THIS SIGN THOU SHALT CONQUER. The sign was the Christian XP (Chi-Rho) sign. He put this sign on the shields of his soldiers. In this way, Constantine became the first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire. However, he was not baptized until the moment of his death. In 324, Constantine defeated the last rival in the East, Licinius. Now he was the sole ruler of the whole Roman Empire. (See map on page 61.)



Constantine legalized Christianity throughout the Roman Empire and was baptized a Christian on his deathbed.

Legalizing Christianity

During his reign, Constantine the Great issued laws and orders that helped the Christians. In 313, he issued the **Edict of Milan**. This made Christianity legal throughout the empire. He made it so Christian clergy did not have to pay taxes. Imperial funds were used to build churches in the provinces.

In addition, Constantine took steps to defend Christianity from being changed by new teachings. He took action against heresies (false teachings) that had emerged. In the fourth century, there were separate movements within Christianity. There were arguments over what was the true Christian belief. The most notable of these new beliefs was **Arianism**. Arianism was founded by Arius. He was an Egyptian priest from Alexandria. He disagreed with the Christian view of the Trinity (God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Arius and his followers believed that the three individuals of the Trinity were not equal. In 325, Constantine tried to resolve the dispute by calling a meeting of church leaders. This was called the Council of Nicaea. This meeting produced the **Nicene Creed**. It declared Arianism a **heresy**. Heresies could not be taught. In short, Constantine made it possible for the empire to go from paganism to Christianity.

Constantinople

In other business of the empire, Constantine continued to carry out the reforms begun by Diocletian. He tightened control of the empire. He also increased taxes. He increased the proportion of German troops in the army. He even gave them high positions.

Rome was no longer able to serve as the capital of the Roman Empire. It was too far from the borders where most of the problems were. Constantine founded a new capital. He built the new capital on the Greek town of Byzantium. It was located on the Bosphorus Strait. He renamed the city **Constantinople**. (Today it is Istanbul.) Constantinople was ideally located. From there they could keep an eye on both the northern-Danube and eastern-Euphrates defenses.

Christianity continued to flourish after Constantine's rule. In the reign of Theodosius I (378–395), Christianity took another important step forward. Theodosius became known as “the Great.” He insisted on the strict practice of Christian orthodoxy. He tried to stop any practice of paganism and Arianism. By the end of his reign (394), Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire.

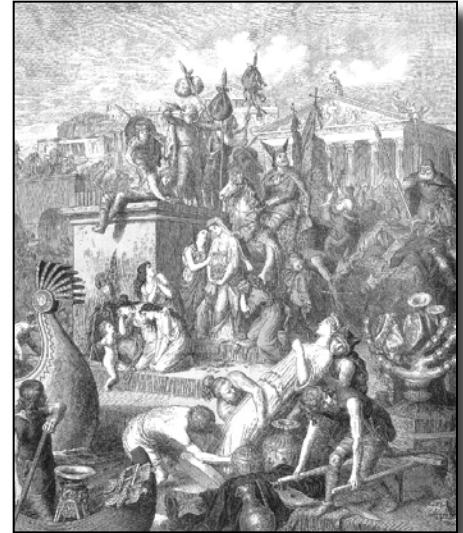
Christianity was one of the most important things the Romans passed down to Western civilization.

The Fall of the Roman Empire

A.D. 337–476

The Western and Eastern Empires

After Constantine died, the Roman Empire fell apart quickly. Theodosius ruled from 378 to 395. After that, the empire was permanently split into two parts. The western half and the eastern half were each ruled by a different emperor. Each emperor acted on his own. They did not consult each other. (See map on page 61.) For this reason, the “fall of the Roman Empire” only means the western half of the empire. The Western Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century. The Eastern Roman Empire survived for a thousand years longer. It was known as the **Byzantine Empire**.



Vandals Plundering Rome

Germanic Invasions

Germanic invasions were the main cause for the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The Romans had battled Germanic tribes for some time. However, during the fourth and fifth centuries things got much worse. The Germans started to cross the borders and invade the empire on a massive scale. (See map on page 62.)

The Germans were a loosely knit group of people. They were organized into a number of different tribes. The Romans then had to fight each tribe individually. There were several tribes along the Rhine River. These were the Franks, the Vandals, and the Burgundians. Along the Danube River, the Goths posed a dangerous threat to the empire. The Goths were divided into two states. The **Ostrogoths** were the eastern Goths. The **Visigoths** were the western Goths.

The massive Germanic invasions were caused by an outside force. The **Huns** were a tribe of barbarians that probably came from northern China. The movement of the Huns forced the other tribes to move or be destroyed. By 370, the Huns had moved west into the Balkan area. Then they entered the Danube River basin. They conquered the Ostrogoths along the way. The Visigoths were terrified they would be next. So they crossed the Danube River into the Roman Empire. The Visigoths settled there in 376.

The Visigoths

The Romans treated the Visigoths unfairly. This led the Visigoths to revolt and ravage northern Greece. In 378, Valens was the Roman emperor. He went to deal with the crisis. He met the Visigoths in a battle at Adrianople in Thrace. For the first time, a Germanic tribe defeated the Roman army. Valens was killed. This battle is regarded as one of the Roman army’s worst defeats. The Battle of Adrianople was a decisive battle. It marked the beginning of the massive Germanic invasions into the Roman Empire. It also showed the Germans that the Roman army was not invincible.

After the battle, the Visigoths and Romans came to an agreement. The Visigoths were allowed to settle within the borders of the Roman Empire. They could live under their own leaders. Alaric was one of the Visigoth leaders. Alaric had the Visigoths move west and invade Italy several times. They finally sacked Rome in 410. The Visigoths eventually moved to Spain. They set up their own kingdom there in 418.

Germanic Tribes Set Up Their Own Kingdoms

The Romans were busy dealing with the Visigoths in 406. That meant the Roman army had to abandon both the Rhine River and British frontiers. This left the borders open. The Vandals, the Burgundians, and the Franks invaded the empire. They looted and destroyed many Roman towns along the way.

At first, the Romans made a treaty with the different Germanic tribes. They granted them **federal status** within the empire. This meant that they were allowed to live under their own rulers. They had to supply the Romans with soldiers and farmers. The tribes became allied to the Romans.

Eventually, the different tribes openly ruled their own states. They tore themselves away from Roman control. The Vandals moved into Spain and then Africa. They set up their own kingdom there in 439. The Burgundians settled along the Rhone River in southern Gaul in the 430s. The Franks inhabited northern Gaul. They unified into the Frankish kingdom in 481.



Attila the Hun was known as the “Scourge of God.”

The Huns

In the meantime, the Romans also had to deal with the Huns. These Asian barbarians had become another threat to the empire. By the early fifth century, the Huns had built up an empire from the Baltic Sea to the Danube River. In 434, **Attila** became their leader. He ruled for 19 years. Attila was known as the “Scourge of God.” He played a large part in the downfall of the Western Roman Empire. In 451, Attila marched into Gaul. There he faced a combined army of Romans and federate Germans. The battle took place at Chalons on the Marne River. Attila was defeated, and he had to leave Gaul. However, the next year, Attila came back. He decided to cross the Alps into Italy and attack Rome. His plan failed, and Attila withdrew from Italy. In 453, he died and his empire fell apart.

The End of the Western Roman Empire

By the middle of the fifth century, the Western Roman Empire was coming to an end. For the last twenty years, the empire was ruled by many different emperors. They were just puppets on the throne. Their election depended solely on powerful German generals in the army. Finally, in 476, the last emperor of the Roman West was **Romulus Augustulus**. He was overthrown by a German general called **Odoacar**. Odoacar was proclaimed King of Italy by his soldiers. Italy became the last Germanic kingdom. The once mighty Roman Empire was gone. It was replaced by several Germanic kingdoms in the west and the Byzantine Empire in the east.

The Roman army always had superior numbers and equipment. They had dealt with the Germans for a long time. They had defeated the Germans in many battles over the years. Why then were the barbarian invasions in the fifth century able to destroy the Western Roman Empire?

The main causes had their roots in the late Roman Empire. Politically, the empire was not united. One of the prime causes of disunity was the failure of emperors to control the army and its generals. This led to many civil wars. The emperors were not able to peacefully hand the throne to the next in line. As a result, the emperors could not defend the imperial borders. Also, there was a man shortage in the army. More and more Germans were recruited as soldiers and generals.

These German recruits were less dependable and loyal to the Roman state than Roman soldiers.

Economically, the Roman Empire was drained. During the last three centuries of rule, the main concern of the emperors was defending the Roman frontiers. They did not expand the empire. This meant that more and more was spent on the army. But there was less and less money coming into the empire. Taxes were raised, which resulted in the rise of inflation. There was no new technology and trade decreased.

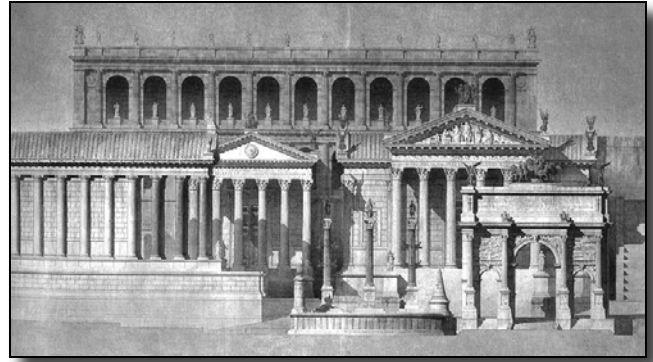
All these factors affected the empire socially. The people became poorer and dissatisfied. This destroyed any loyalty the people felt toward the Roman state. They had no confidence or pride in their government. The Germanic invasions just sped up the process of collapse in the Western Roman Empire.

Roman Architecture

Structures in the City of Rome

There is a lot of architecture that still stands in Rome today from the time of the Roman Empire. Rome was the capital of the empire and was its grandest city. Rome is located on the Tiber River. It is surrounded by seven hills that provide a naturally protected site. Romans controlled the whole Mediterranean world for many centuries from this city.

There were many great buildings that adorned Rome at the peak of its power during the Imperial period. These included theaters, baths, temples, and libraries. There were also imperial palaces. Basilicas were public meeting places. Fora (plural of forum) were the commercial and social centers of the city. Also, there were arenas for public events. Public monuments honored the emperors. These included arches and columns that listed the deeds of the emperors. Bridges, aqueducts, and a strong defensive wall with access gates were also important features of Rome. These types of structures could be found in any Roman city throughout the empire.



The forum was the chief marketplace of Rome. It also contained temples, basilicas, the Senate House, and public monuments to the emperors.

The Forum

The nucleus of a Roman city was the **forum**. This was an area of open space that served as the commercial and social center of the city. People met there to visit, and businesses sold their goods there. Law courts were also located there. A forum consisted of a central, open, rectangular space. This was surrounded by basilicas and a temple. The greatest and oldest forum in the Roman world was the Forum Romanum. This was the chief marketplace of Rome. It was unusual in that it was not built in one phase. It grew in size through the years. It was filled with basilicas, temples, the Senate House, and the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus.

Concrete

During the Late Republic period, the Romans invented a new building material. It worked so well we still use it today. They mixed volcanic dust and lime mortar to produce a cement that hardened into **concrete**. The Romans used concrete as the core for the walls of buildings. Because concrete was boring to look at, they covered it with marble slabs or baked clay bricks. There are many surviving Roman monuments throughout western Europe. These show that concrete is very strong and durable.

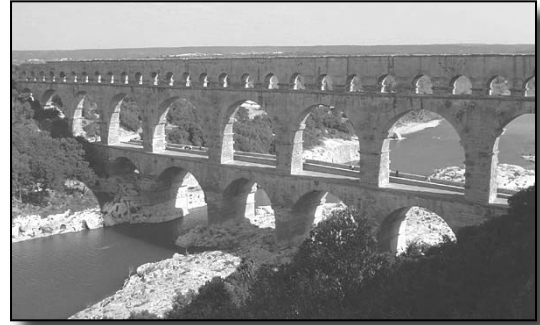
The Romans adopted several architectural features from the Etruscans and the Greeks. They adopted the form of the arch from the Etruscans. From the Greeks, they used the classical orders of the Greek temple. They mostly used the Corinthian order. The Romans used these elements with concrete to form their own unique architectural style.

The Etruscan Arch

The Romans made great use of the Etruscan **arch**. The Etruscans used it as a single stone structure to build gateways in their walls. But the Romans used the arch in various ways. Along with the use of concrete, they created structures of great size and strength. They created the **vault** by putting a series of arches side by side. A **dome** was created by crossing several arches in a circular space. All the arches met in the center of the circle. The use of arches and concrete

brought about great changes in Roman architecture. The Romans found new ways to use the interior space of buildings. This meant they could create very large and complex structures.

There are many examples of arch structures in Rome and the provinces. The simplest use of the arch can be seen in city gates, bridges, and aqueducts. Bridges consisted of a series of arches joined in a line. They were built across valleys and rivers. Many are still in use today.



An **aqueduct** consisted of one to three levels of joining arches. Water was directed through these channels into a city. Vaulted arches were used in triumphal arches. These celebrated the deeds of the Roman emperors. The walls were carved with sculpted reliefs of the emperors' triumphs, sacrifices, and battles. Corinthian columns also decorated the outsides of the archways.

Arches and Greek columns were also used to build theaters and **amphitheaters** (round theaters). The most famous example of such a monument was the Colosseum in Rome. Arches were used throughout the building to support the different levels of the seating area. The outer part consisted of three stories of arches. Greek columns were placed in between each of the arches. Arches, vaults, and domes were used in the construction of the imperial palaces and public buildings, such as baths. This created vast interior spaces.

Greek Columns

The Greek influence in Roman architecture can be seen in the form of columns in many structures. Corinthian-style columns were used to construct basilicas and temples. A **basilica** was a long portico supported by a series of columns. It served as an open-air, public meeting place. A typical **Roman temple** consisted of a closed structure built on a high platform. The temple structure, in most cases, had a deep porch with columns in the front. Sometimes it was surrounded entirely by columns. This was similar to a Greek temple.

The Pantheon is one of the most impressive examples of the Roman use of Greek columns. It shows how the Romans could open up interior space by using columns and arches. The **Pantheon** was built by Hadrian. It was a temple dedicated to all gods. The building was made of solid concrete. It consisted of a round main room topped by a dome. It was fronted by a porch of Corinthian columns. The interior of the temple was richly painted and decorated with gold. The Pantheon is still intact today.

Private Homes

There were two main types of private homes in Rome. The common people lived in tightly packed apartment buildings. This is much like today. The wealthier Romans built large townhouses. These had many rooms and a garden. The center of the typical Roman house was the **atrium** or living room. The other rooms of the house were arranged around the atrium. These included the kitchen, bedrooms, dining room, and store rooms. At the end of the house was a small garden. The houses had very few and small windows. So there was a hole above the center of the atrium in the sloping roof. This was called the **compluvium**. Light and air could enter the home here. The rainwater would be collected in a pool called the **impluvium**. This was the same size as the hole in the roof. It was located in the floor right below the hole. It was common to have shops in the two rooms in the front of the house. These were located on either side of the main entrance and faced the street. The Romans decorated their houses with frescoes and mosaics that showed scenes of everyday life.

Roman Entertainment

The Colosseum

The Roman people enjoyed watching grisly events as entertainment. Many of these events were held in the **Colosseum**. The Colosseum was built in the reigns of Vespasian and his sons. It was a round building of tiered arches. The arches supported seating areas for 45,000–55,000 people. There were underground rooms below the center stage of the structure. Those who participated in the events stayed there before the games began. There were also cages where wild beasts were kept. A water system allowed the stadium to be flooded in order to carry out mock sea battles.



Model of the Circus Maximus and the Colosseum

Gladiators

One of the main events held in the Colosseum was the fighting between **gladiators**. They were trained fighters. Some gladiators were slaves. Others were free men who chose to fight. The custom of gladiatorial fights came from the Etruscans. The fights were part of their funeral rituals. The Romans began using these contests as entertainment for the people. It became an important way for Roman emperors to control the people. The emperors wanted to satisfy the people's lust for action and bloodshed.

At the start of the fights, the gladiators shouted to the Roman emperor: "We who are about to die salute you." Then the fights began. Gladiators usually fought each other until one of them was killed. Sometimes, however, a gladiator would only wound his opponent. The wounded person could ask for mercy from the emperor. The emperor would listen to the pleas of the crowd. Then he decided the fate of the victim with a signal of his thumb. If the emperor gave the **thumbs-up sign**, the victim lived. A thumbs-down meant the victim would be killed.

Executions

Criminals were often executed by wild beasts. Unarmed, helpless human beings were thrown to wild lions and bears. The people watched this as entertainment, too. Many Christians were persecuted during the reigns of Nero, Domitian, and Diocletian. They were also thrown to the wild beasts.

Chariot Races

Chariot races were held at the **Circus Maximus**. This was a 700-yard-long oval stadium. It could hold about 150,000 people. The chariots were small carts drawn by two, three, or four horses. These races were not as bloody as the gladiatorial fights. However, crashes were common. Some charioteers were trampled to death by horses and chariots.

Roman Baths

Romans also relaxed at the Roman baths. These were called ***thermae***. They were not just places to cleanse oneself. The baths were also places for social gatherings. Wealthy Romans often spent whole days at the baths. The Romans did not use soap to wash themselves, like today. Instead their bodies were rubbed with oil. The oil with the dirt was then scraped off with a ***strigil***. This was a blunt razor-like tool. Men and women alike spent the day at the baths. They could be bathed by slaves, exercise, discuss the news, and play games with their friends.

A Roman bathhouse was a large structure. It had a changing room, a swimming pool, and four different kinds of baths. There was a cold room, a warm room, a hot room, and a dry sweating room. The baths were heated by steam from an underfloor heating system. This system was called a ***hypocaust***. By the time of the Roman Empire, there were some very fancy bathhouses. These included libraries, art galleries, shops, gymnasiums or exercise areas, and gardens.

The Roman Army

The Roman army allowed Rome to become a great empire. The Romans were able to conquer most of the ancient world. They controlled vast territories and peoples for nearly a thousand years. This was because of its basic fighting force, the army. The army was the force behind the growth and greatness of Rome.

An Army of Citizens

During most of the Republic period, the Roman army was made up of citizens. This was before the first century B.C. In times of war, citizens were required to fight. The citizens were grouped into units of 100 men. These units were called **centuries**. The army was organized according to social and economic classes. How rich a man was decided in which century he fought. The richest citizens served in the cavalry. They could afford to buy the full armor. The poorest citizens were in the light-armed troops. They could not afford much protection.

The Professional Army

In the first century B.C., the consul Marius reorganized the Roman army. He made it a professional army. All citizens could join the army for a wage and become professional soldiers. They served the Roman state for 16 years. This allowed the poor and those without jobs to make a living. Marius' military reforms made the army more flexible. Each century was just as good as any other. There were no longer rich units and poor units. Every century had a mix of citizens.

The professional Roman army was an organized body of soldiers and officers. It was divided into several units. The largest unit of the Roman infantry was the **legion**. A legion had between 4,000 and 6,000 men. The legion was divided into ten **cohorts**. Each cohort was divided into six **centuries**. Sixty centuries made up a legion. There were between 28 and 33 Roman legions during the Imperial period.

Command of the Army

The commander in chief of all legions was the **imperator**. This was also the emperor during the Imperial period. Each legion was commanded by a **legatus**. This was a commanding general. He was helped by six **tribuni**. The backbone of the legion was the **centurion**. He commanded the centuries (60 in number). Another officer was the centurion's second-in-command. The standard-bearer carried the unit's flag. The **tessarius** was responsible for the watchword.

The legions were drawn up for battle in three lines. The first line consisted of young soldiers (**hastati**). The second line was experienced soldiers (**principes**). The third line was made up of veteran soldiers (**triarii**). The triarii had been in many battles before. Each soldier was armed with a sword and spear for close-range combat. Every legion also had its own corps of specialists and its own cavalry. The cavalry was an auxiliary unit of the Roman army. It provided extra help to the army. The corps of specialists included writers, accountants, engineers, carpenters, and surveyors. These men were used to build roads and bridges, select the camps, and do the accounts.



A Roman soldier was armed with a short sword, a dagger, and a javelin. He was protected by armor, a helmet, and a shield.

Auxiliary Units

The **auxilia** were the auxiliary army units. These were the light-armed troops and the cavalry. Men in the **auxilia** were mostly recruited from the provinces. The **auxilia** were divided into cohorts of 500 or 1,000 men each. These were in turn divided into centuries. These forces supported the legions in battle. The auxiliary infantry unit was used to fight in front of the legions. These soldiers used similar weapons as the legionary soldiers. It also included soldiers with special functions such as archers or slingers. The cavalry cohorts fought on the sides of the legions. They consisted of about 120 men on horseback. These cavalry units were called **alae** or wings. The auxiliary forces also served on the frontiers. They patrolled and defended the empire's borders.

Life in the Army

During the Imperial period, the term of service was changed. A Roman soldier served in the army for 20 years. Life in the army was hard and busy. The soldiers were either fighting or training. The wage was small. Each soldier also had to pay for his own food and clothing. The meals were simple and basic. They consisted of porridge, bread, cheese, beans, and wine.

Uniform and Weapons

A legionary soldier wore a linen vest over a woolen tunic. Over these garments was metal body armor. He wore a brown cloak. This could be used as a blanket during cold periods. On his feet, a soldier wore sandals with hobnails. A helmet and a large shield protected him on the battlefield. The weapons used for fighting were a short sword, a dagger, and a javelin. At the end of his service, each soldier received a retirement payment. He also got a plot of land. This was usually in the colonies along the frontiers. He was still called upon for duty to defend the empire in times of trouble.

The Romans were unbeatable for a long time. They had a well-trained and organized army. They also had siege weapons that they used in siege warfare. This was when an army would surround a city and attack over a long period of time. Mobile towers, ramps, and scaling ladders were used to besiege a city. The most impressive machine of all was the catapult. It was called the **ballista**. It hurled rocks and flaming darts against the enemy. These weapons and machines tried to break down the city's walls or allow the soldiers to get over the walls.

Army Camps

The Roman army set up temporary camps during campaigns. Camp was set up in a square area. A ditch surrounded the camp. Behind this a mound and a rampart, or wall, were built. On top of the rampart stood a palisade. This was a fence of stakes. Two main streets ran north-south and east-west through the camp. The commanding general's quarters was at the center of the camp. This was known as the **praetorium**. The soldiers lived in barracks at the camp. The paymaster's quarters was where prisoners, hostages, and booty were kept. There was also a forum that was the center of camp life.

Along the frontiers in the provinces, permanent camps were set up. These were called **castra**. They were similar in plan to the temporary camps. However, permanent buildings were used. The castrum also included a hospital, storerooms, and baths.

Defending the Borders

During the late Imperial period, defending the frontiers became the sole concern of the emperors. They did not try to expand the empire. It also became harder to get Roman citizens from Italy and the surrounding regions to join the army. Emperors used more and more people from the provinces and German settlers in the legions. By the time of Diocletian's reign, the army was no longer working well. The emperors needed a better way to deal with threats to the borders. Diocletian and later Constantine changed the structure of the Roman army. The army was divided into two major branches. They created a mobile field force. This was mostly cavalry. It could be moved from place to place as needed. There was also a frontier force. It was permanently stationed along the borders.

By the fifth century A.D., the Roman army could not stop the barbarian hordes from invading. The Roman Empire in the West collapsed.