

The leaders of the Roman Empire were given the title of Emperor, and many of them had a lasting impact on the Roman Empire even long after they had died. Below are some of the most impactful Emperors to ever rule the Roman Empire.

Augustus (27 BC-14 AD)

Born Gaius Octavius, Augustus was the great-nephew of Julius Caesar and reigned after Caesar's death. He was highly regarded by the Senate, which eventually gave him the name of Augustus, and during four decades of rule (the longest of any Roman emperor), he helped transform the Roman Republic into a 1,400-year-long empire. Many have touted Augustus's reign as bringing much-needed stability and prosperity after years of civil unrest and war throughout the Mediterranean region by instigating the famed Pax Romana—a relative peace that lasted 200 years. Since that time, the Pax Romana has served as a model of a peaceful, long-term reign, later emulated by the Pax Britannica and the Pax Americana.

During his time as emperor, Augustus was idolized by many Romans for his efforts to rebuild much of Rome with projects such as roads, major highways, aqueducts and temples. Besides physical infrastructure, he was also instrumental in reforming administration by dividing Rome into fourteen administrative regions and 265 vici, or neighborhoods, permanently changing management of water supply and how tasks were delegated. Augustus also changed the laws of taxation so that they were fairer to all citizens; these taxes contributed to increased revenue and expanded trade during his reign. Augustus also pioneered the concept of citizenship, whereby Roman citizens had status, rights and duties that differed from those of noncitizens; a classification still present throughout the world today.

Claudius (41 AD-54 AD)

Claudius, born Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, was crowned emperor later in life after being afflicted with an illness throughout his childhood. He is mostly known for expanding the Roman Empire to include Britain as a province. Claudius also had a keen interest in law and tried many cases during his reign, which led to arguably some of his greatest accomplishments—such as instituting reforms and edicts that protected slaves, which created the groundwork for future laws protecting minorities.

Vespasian (69 AD-79 AD)

Vespasian, born Titus Flavius Vespasian, was the ninth emperor of Rome and started the Flavian dynasty, which lasted twenty-eight years. He was known for his military accomplishments, especially in Britain, and for successfully subverting the Jewish revolts in Judea. He also instituted significant financial reforms and increased taxes while in power. Vespasian used funds gained from taxes for building projects such as the famed Colosseum, then known as the Flavian Amphitheater, which has inspired the building of many modern sports stadiums.

Trajan (98 AD-117 AD)

Appointed by Marcus Cocceius Nerva, Trajan (born Marcus Ulpius Traianus) was the second of the five emperors who led Rome during its Golden Age. Trajan expanded the Roman Empire to the east, pushing into the Sinai Peninsula and Romania (then known as Dacia) through the Dacian and Parthian Wars. He was also known for his many building projects and works, including Trajan's Column, which celebrates the Dacian victories and is still admired to this day. Trajan also expanded Augustus' financial aid and welfare outreach to citizens, constituting the basis for the modern welfare state.

Hadrian (117 AD-138 AD)

Born Publius Aelius Hadrianus, Hadrian was adopted by Trajan, who greatly respected the boy. Like Trajan, he was known for his building works and abhorred war, seemingly unconcerned with expanding the territories of the empire. Instead, Hadrian wanted to consolidate and secure the empire's borders. He notably built a seventy-three-mile wall between the north and south of Britain, which showcased the Romans' advanced technological and engineering skills and transformed building and defense. He also built Rome's famed Pantheon, which revolutionized architecture through the use of innovative shapes built with concrete.

Antoninus Pius (138 AD-161 AD)

The reign of Antoninus Pius is known as one of the most peaceful in the empire. Like Hadrian, Antoninus Pius was not concerned with expansion and instead focused on increasing the prosperity of citizens through infrastructure, and reforming Roman laws to ensure more equality among citizens. The

equitability of the Roman legal system as innovated by Antoninus Pius was one of the main reasons it came to be adopted in subsequent time periods. Rome under Pius first introduced the use of “natural law” and the “law of nations” which later contributed to the development of individual legal systems in Britain, France and Germany.

Marcus Aurelius (161 AD-180 AD)

Marcus Aurelius is one of the most revered emperors in history, known for his intellectual prowess; his personal writings on stoicism are considered some of the most comprehensive of all time. While not a notable Western philosopher, Marcus Aurelius’ contributions centered on bridging the gap between theory and practice, as he advocated utilizing stoic philosophical concepts as a practical guideline for happiness and fulfillment. He also successfully fended off Germanic Marcomanni and Quadi attacks along the northeastern borders of the empire, during which time he is thought to have written his meditations.

While the Roman Empire might seem to be little more than a distant memory, the emperors’ reigns contributed many foundational aspects to Western democracies and civilization, such as the concept of citizenship and definitions of the duties and rights of citizens. They reformed taxes to become more just, equitable and beneficial. They were able to contribute to architecture and built great monuments still revered today, and expanded the Roman Empire to include Romania, Britain and many other territories. Considering the full scope of modern society, it is difficult to pinpoint a field in which Romans did not make a significant and lasting contribution. For this reason, students of history can benefit greatly from the in-depth study of Rome, its emperors and culture, and the ways in which the empire changed the course of human history.

1. Aqueducts

The Romans enjoyed many amenities for their day, including public toilets, underground sewage systems, fountains and ornate public baths. None of these aquatic innovations would have been possible without the Roman aqueduct. First developed around 312 B.C., these engineering marvels used gravity to transport water along stone, lead and concrete pipelines and into city centers. Aqueducts liberated Roman cities from a reliance on nearby water supplies and proved priceless in promoting public health and sanitation.



While the Romans did not invent the aqueduct—primitive canals for irrigation and water transport existed earlier in Egypt, Assyria and Babylon—they used their mastery of civil engineering to perfect the process. Hundreds of aqueducts eventually sprang up throughout the empire, some of which transported water as far as 60 miles. Perhaps most impressive of all, Roman aqueducts were so well built that some are still in use to this day. Rome’s famous Trevi Fountain, for instance, is supplied by a restored version of the Aqua Virgo, one of ancient Rome’s 11 aqueducts.

2. Concrete



Many ancient Roman structures like the Pantheon, the Colosseum and the Roman Forum are still standing today thanks to the development of Roman cement and concrete. The Romans first began building with concrete over 2,100 years ago and used it throughout the

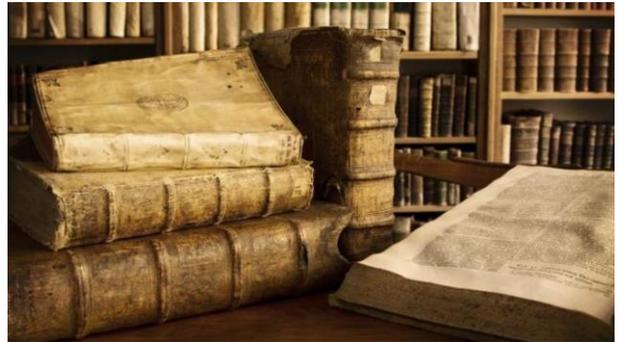
Mediterranean basin in everything from aqueducts and buildings to bridges and monuments. Roman concrete was considerably weaker than its modern counterpart, but it has proved remarkably durable thanks to its unique recipe, which used slaked lime and a volcanic ash known as pozzolana to create a sticky paste. Combined with volcanic rocks called tuff, this ancient cement formed a concrete that could effectively endure chemical decay. Pozzolana helped Roman concrete set quickly even when submerged in seawater, enabling the construction of elaborate baths, piers and harbors.

3. Welfare

Ancient Rome was the wellspring for many modern government programs, including measures that subsidized food, education and other expenses for the needy. These entitlement programs date back to 122 B.C., when the tribune Gaius Gracchus instituted *lex frumentaria*, a law that ordered Rome's government to supply its citizens with allotments of cheaply priced grain. This early form of welfare continued under Trajan, who implemented a program known as "alimenta" to help feed, clothe and educate orphans and poor children. Other items including corn, oil, wine, bread and pork were eventually added to the list of price-controlled goods, which may have been collected with tokens called "tesserae." These generous handouts helped Roman emperors win favor with the public, but some historians have argued that they also contributed to Rome's economic decline.

4. Bound Books

For most of human history, literature took the form of unwieldy clay tablets and scrolls. The Romans streamlined the medium by creating the codex, a stack of bound pages that is recognized as the earliest incarnation of the book. The first codices were made of bound wax tablets, but these were later replaced by animal skin parchment that more clearly resembled pages. Ancient historians note that Julius Caesar created an early version of a codex by stacking pages of papyrus to form a primitive notebook, but bound codices did not become popular in Rome until the first century or thereabouts. Early Christians became some of the first to adopt the new technology, using it extensively to produce copies of the Bible.



5. Roads and Highways



At its height, the Roman empire encompassed nearly 1.7 million square miles and included most of southern Europe. To ensure effective administration of this sprawling domain, the Romans built the most sophisticated system of roads the ancient world had ever seen. These

Roman roads—many of which are still in use today—were constructed with a combination of dirt, gravel and bricks made from granite or hardened volcanic lava. Roman engineers adhered to strict standards when designing their highways, creating arrow-straight roads that curved to allow for water drainage. The Romans built over 50,000 miles of road by 200 A.D., primarily in the service of military conquest. Highways allowed the Roman legion to travel as far as 25 miles per day, and a complex network of post houses meant that messages and other intelligence could be relayed with astonishing speed. These roads were often managed in the same way as modern highways. Stone mile

markers and signs informed travelers of the distance to their destination, while special complements of soldiers acted as a kind of highway patrol.

6. **The Julian Calendar**

The modern Gregorian calendar is modeled very closely on a Roman version that dates back more than 2,000 years. Early Roman calendars were likely cribbed from Greek models that operated around the lunar cycle. But because the Romans considered even numbers unlucky, they eventually altered their calendar to ensure that each month had an odd number of days. This practice

continued until 46 B.C., when Julius Caesar and the astronomer Sosigenes instituted the Julian system to align the calendar with the solar year. Caesar lengthened the number of days in a year from 355 to the now-familiar 365 and



eventually included the 12 months as we know them today. The Julian calendar was almost perfect, but it miscalculated the solar year by 11 minutes. These few minutes ultimately threw the calendar off by several days. This led to the adoption of the nearly identical Gregorian calendar in 1582, which fixed the discrepancy by altering the schedule of leap years.

7. **The Twelve Tables and the Corpus Juris Civilis**

Subpoena, habeas corpus, pro bono, affidavit—all these terms derive from the Roman legal system, which dominated Western law and government for centuries. The basis for early Roman law came from the Twelve Tables, a code

that formed an essential part of the constitution during the Republican era. First adopted around 450 B.C., the Twelve Tables detailed laws regarding property, religion and divorce and listed punishments for everything from theft to black magic. Even more influential than the Twelve Tables was the Corpus Juris Civilis, an ambitious attempt to synthesize Rome's history of law into one document. Established by the Byzantine emperor Justinian between 529 and 535 A.D., the Corpus Juris included modern legal concepts such as the notion that the accused is innocent until proven guilty. After the fall of the Roman empire, it became the basis for many of the world's legal systems. Along with English common law and sharia law, Roman law remains hugely influential and is still reflected in the civil laws of several European nations as well as the U.S. state of Louisiana.

Life in the Roman Empire revolved around the city of Rome, and its famed seven hills. The city also had several theaters, gymnasiums, and many taverns, baths and brothels. Throughout the territory under Rome's control, residential architecture ranged from very modest houses to country villas, and in the capital city of Rome, to the residences on the elegant Palatine Hill, from which the word "palace" is derived. The vast majority of the population lived in the city center, packed into apartment blocks.

Roman Cites & Towns

Most Roman towns and cities had a forum and temples, as did the city of Rome itself. Aqueducts were built to bring water to urban centers and wine and oil were imported from abroad. Landlords generally resided in cities and their estates were left in the care of farm managers. To stimulate a higher labor productivity, many landlords freed a large number of slaves.

Beginning in the middle of the second century BC, Greek culture was increasingly ascendant, in spite of tirades against the "softening" effects of Hellenized culture. By the time of Augustus, cultured Greek household slaves

taught the Roman young (sometimes even the girls). Greek sculptures adorned Hellenistic landscape gardening on the Palatine or in the villas, and much Roman cuisine was essentially Greek. Roman writers disdained Latin for a cultured Greek style.

Roman Religion

As the empire expanded and came to include people from a variety of cultures, the worship of an ever increasing number of deities was tolerated and accepted. The imperial government, and the Romans in general, tended to be very tolerant towards most religions and cults, so long as they did not cause trouble. This could easily be accepted by other faiths as Roman liturgy and ceremonies were frequently tailored to fit local culture and identity.

An individual could attend to both the Roman Gods representing his Roman identity and his own personal faith, which was considered part of his personal identity. There were periodic persecutions of various religions at various points in time, most notably that of Christians. This included a period of time when Christians were fed to lions as a form of entertainment.

Social History & Structure

Many aspects of Roman culture were borrowed from the Greeks. In architecture and sculpture, the difference between Greek models and Roman paintings are apparent. The chief Roman contributions to architecture were the arch and the dome. Rome has also had a tremendous impact on Western cultures following it. Its significance is perhaps best reflected in its endurance and influence, as is seen in the longevity and lasting importance of works of Virgil and Ovid. Latin, the Republic's primary language, remains used in religion, science, and law.

The center of the early social structure was the family, which was not only marked by blood relations but also by the legally constructed relation of patria potestas. The **Pater familias** was the absolute head of the family; he was the master over his wife, his children, the wives of his sons, the nephews, the slaves and the freedmen, disposing of them and of their goods at will, even putting them to death. Roman law recognized only patrician families as legal entities.

Slavery and slaves were part of the social order; there were slave markets where they could be bought and sold. Many slaves were freed by the masters

for services rendered; some slaves could save money to buy their freedom. Generally, mutilation and murder of slaves was prohibited by legislation. It is estimated that over 25% of the Roman population was enslaved.

Education & Language

Following various military conquests in the Greek East, Romans adapted a number of Greek educational precepts to their own fledgling system. Home was often the learning center, where children were taught Roman law, customs, and physical training to prepare the boys to grow as Roman citizens and for eventual recruitment into the army. Conforming to discipline was a point of great emphasis. Girls generally received instruction from their mothers in the art of spinning, weaving, and sewing.

Schooling in a more formal sense was begun around 200 BC. Education began at the age of around six, and in the next six to seven years, boys and girls were expected to learn the basics of reading, writing and counting. By the age of twelve, they would be learning Latin, Greek, grammar and literature, followed by training for public speaking. Oratory was an art to be practiced and learnt, and good orators commanded respect. To become an effective orator was one of the objectives of education and learning. In some cases, services of gifted slaves were utilized for imparting education.

The native language of the Romans was Latin. Although surviving Latin literature consists almost entirely of Classical Latin, an artificial and highly stylized and polished literary language from the 1st century BC, the actual spoken language was Vulgar Latin, which significantly differed from Classical Latin in grammar, vocabulary, and eventually pronunciation. Rome's expansion spread Latin throughout Europe, and over time Vulgar Latin evolved and dialectized in different locations, gradually shifting into a number of distinct Romance languages. Many of these languages, including French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish, flourished, the differences between them growing greater over time. Although English is Germanic rather than Romanic in origin, English borrows heavily from Latin and Latin-derived words.

Roman Arts

Roman literature was from its very inception influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest works we possess are of historical epics telling the early military history of Rome. As the republic expanded, authors began to produce poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy. Virgil represents the pinnacle of Roman epic poetry. His Aeneid tells the story of flight of Aeneas from Troy and his settlement of the city that would become Rome. Lucretius, in his On the Nature of Things, attempted to explicate science in an epic poem. The genre of satire was common in Rome, and satires were written by, among others, Juvenal and Persius. The rhetorical works of Cicero are considered to be some of the best bodies of correspondence recorded in antiquity.

In the 3rd century BC, Greek art taken as treasures from wars became popular, and many Roman homes were decorated with landscapes by Greek artists. Portrait sculpture during the period utilized youthful and classical proportions, evolving later into a mixture of realism and idealism. Advancements were also made in relief sculptures, often depicting Roman victories.

Music was a major part of everyday life. The word itself derives from Greek μουσική (mousike), "(art) of the Muses". Many private and public events were accompanied by music, ranging from nightly dining to military parades and maneuvers. In a discussion of any ancient music, however, non-specialists and even many musicians have to be reminded that much of what makes our modern music familiar to us is the result of developments only within the last 1,000 years; thus, our ideas of melody, scales, harmony, and even the instruments we use would not be familiar to Romans who made and listened to music many centuries earlier.

Over time, Roman architecture was modified as their urban requirements changed, and the civil engineering and building construction technology became developed and refined. The Roman concrete has remained a riddle, and even after more than 2,000 years some Roman structures still stand magnificently. The architectural style of the capital city was emulated by other urban centers under Roman control and influence. Roman cities were well planned, efficiently managed and neatly maintained.

Sports & Entertainment

The city of Rome had a place called the Campus Martius ("Field of Mars"), which was a sort of drill ground for Roman soldiers. Later, the Campus became

Rome's track and field playground. In the campus, the youth assembled to play and exercise, which included jumping, wrestling, boxing and racing. Riding, throwing, and swimming were also preferred physical activities. In the countryside, pastime also included fishing and hunting. Board games played in Rome included Dice (Tesserae or Tali), Roman Chess (Latrunculi), Roman Checkers (Calculi), Tic-tac-toe (Terni Lapilli), and Ludus duodecim scriptorum and Tabula, predecessors of backgammon. There were several other activities to keep people engaged like chariot races, musical and theatrical performances.

Gladiators

A Gladiator (Latin: gladiator, "swordsmen", from gladius, "sword") was an armed combatant who entertained audiences in the Roman Republic and Roman Empire in violent confrontations with other gladiators, wild animals, and condemned criminals. Some gladiators were volunteers who risked their legal and social standing and their lives by appearing in the arena. Most were despised as slaves, schooled under harsh conditions, socially marginalized, and segregated even in death. Irrespective of their origin, gladiators offered audiences an example of Rome's martial ethics and, in fighting or dying well, they could inspire admiration and popular acclaim. They were celebrated in high and low art, and their value as entertainers was commemorated in precious and commonplace objects throughout the Roman world.

The origin of gladiatorial combat is open to debate. There is evidence of it in funeral rites during the Punic Wars of the 3rd century BCE, and thereafter it rapidly became an essential feature of politics and social life in the Roman world. Its popularity led to its use in ever more lavish and costly spectacles or "gladiatorial games". The games reached their peak between the 1st century BCE and the 2nd century CE, and they persisted not only throughout the social and economic crises of the declining Roman state but even after Christianity became the official religion in the 4th century CE. Christian emperors continued to sponsor such entertainments until at least the late 5th century CE, when the last known gladiator games took place.

Christianity founding can be traced back to the Middle East, while it was under the control of the Roman Empire. Its popularity spread the religion throughout the whole empire, and at different times throughout the history of the Roman Empire, Christians were either being persecuted for their beliefs or a big part of the culture that made up the Empire.

Reasons for persecution

Why were Christians persecuted? Much seems to have depended on local governors and how zealously or not they pursued and prosecuted Christians. The reasons why individual Christians were persecuted in this period were varied. In some cases, they were perhaps scapegoats, their faith attacked where more personal or local hostilities were at issue.

Contemporary pagan and Christian sources preserve other accusations levelled against the Christians. These included charges of incest and cannibalism, probably resulting from garbled accounts of the rites which Christians celebrated in necessary secrecy, being the agape (the 'love-feast') and the Eucharist (partaking of the body and blood of Christ).

Pagans were probably most suspicious of the Christian refusal to sacrifice to the Roman gods. This was an insult to the gods and potentially endangered the empire which they deigned to protect. Furthermore, the Christian refusal to offer sacrifices to the emperor, a semi-divine monarch, had the whiff of both sacrilege and treason about it.

Thus, the classic test of a Christian's faith was to force him or her, on pain of death, to swear by the emperor and offer incense to his images, or to sacrifice to the gods.

In the mid-second-century account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, officials begged Polycarp to say 'Caesar is Lord', and to offer incense, to save his life. He refused. Later, in the arena, he was asked by the governor to swear an oath by the 'luck of Caesar'. He refused, and although he was apparently eager to meet his death, beast-fighting had been declared closed for the day and so he was burnt alive instead.

General persecutions tended to be sparked by particular events such as the fire at Rome under Nero, or during periods of particular crisis, such as the third century. During the third century the turn-over of emperors was rapid - many died violent deaths.

As well as this lack of stability at the head of the empire, social relations were in turmoil, and barbarian incursions were on a threatening scale. The economy was suffering, and inflation was rampant. Pagans and Christians alike observed this unrest and looked for someone or something, preferably subversive, to blame.

It was hardly surprising that a series of emperors ordered savage empire-wide persecutions of the Christians.

Toleration?

Although fourth and fifth century AD Christian narratives tend to describe the preceding centuries bitterly as a period of sustained and vicious persecution, there were in fact lulls.

How can we explain this? Well, the Roman empire was in the first few centuries AD expansionist and in its conquests accommodated new cults and philosophies from different cultures, such as the Persian cult of Mithraism, the Egyptian cult of Isis and Neoplatonism, a Greek philosophical religion.

Paganism was never, then, a unified, single religion, but a fluid and amorphous collection. But it would also be a mistake to describe Roman religion as an easy, tolerant co-existence of cults. 'Toleration' is a distinctly modern, secular idea.

The cults of Bacchus and of Magna Mater had also been suppressed.

The very history of Christianity and Judaism in the empire demonstrates that there were limits to how accommodating Roman religion could be, and these were not the only cults to be singled out for persecution.

The cults of Bacchus and of Magna Mater had also been suppressed - by the Roman senate during the Republic, mainly because their behavior was disreputable and 'un-Roman'. Bacchic revels encouraged ecstatic drunkenness and violence, and the cult of Magna Mater involved outlandish dancing and music and was served by self-castrating priests.

Under particular emperors, Christians were less liable to be punished for the mere fact of being Christians - or indeed, for ever having been Christian. Thus under Trajan, it was agreed that although admitting to Christian faith was an offence, ex-Christians should not be prosecuted.

Constantine's 'conversion'

One of the supposed watersheds in history is the 'conversion' of the emperor Constantine to Christianity in, or about, 312 AD. Historians have marveled at this idea.

Emperors had historically been hostile or indifferent to Christianity. How could an emperor subscribe to a faith which involved the worship of Jesus Christ - an executed Jewish criminal? This faith was also popular among slaves and soldiers, hardly the respectable orders in society.

The story of Constantine's conversion has acquired a miraculous quality, which is unsurprising from the point of view of contemporary Christians. They had just emerged from the so-called 'Great Persecution' under the emperor Diocletian at the end of the third century.

The moment of Constantine's conversion was tied by two Christian narrators to a military campaign against a political rival, Maxentius. The conversion was the result of either a vision or a dream in which Christ directed him to fight under Christian standards, and his victory apparently assured Constantine in his faith in a new god.

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Constantine's 'conversion' poses problems for the historian. Although he immediately declared that Christians and pagans should be allowed to worship freely, and restored property confiscated during persecutions and other lost privileges to the Christians, these measures did not mark a complete shift to a Christian style of rule.

Many of his actions seemed resolutely pagan. Constantine founded a new city named after himself: Constantinople. Christian writers played up the idea that this was to be a 'new Rome', a fitting Christian capital for a newly Christian empire.

But they had to find ways to explain the embarrassing fact that in this new, supposedly Christian city, Constantine had erected pagan temples and statues.

How should we characterize Constantine's religious convictions? The differing but related accounts of his miraculous conversion suggest some basic spiritual experience which he interpreted as related to Christianity.

His understanding of Christianity was, at the stage of his conversion, unsophisticated. He may not have understood the implications of converting to a religion which expected its members to devote themselves exclusively to it.

However, what was certainly established by the early fourth century was the phenomenon of an emperor adopting and favoring a particular cult. What was different about Constantine's 'conversion' was merely the particular cult to which he turned – the Christ-cult – where previous emperors had sought the support of pagan gods and heroes from Jove to Hercules.

The 'triumph' of Christianity?

Contemporary Christians treated Constantine's conversion as a decisive moment of victory in a cosmic battle between good and evil, even as the end of history, but it was far from that.

Christianity did increase in numbers gradually over the next two centuries, and among Constantine's successors only one, the emperor Julian in the 360s AD, mounted concerted action to re-instate paganism as the dominant religion in the empire.

But there was no 'triumph', no one moment where Christians had visibly 'won' some battle against pagans. Progress was bitty, hesitant, geographically patchy.

The progress of Christianity was bitty, hesitant, geographically patchy.

Christianity offered spiritual comfort and the prospect of salvation on the one hand, and attractive new career paths and even riches as a worldly bishop on the other. But plenty of pagans, both aristocrats based in the large cities of the empire and rural folk, remained staunch in their adherence to an old faith.

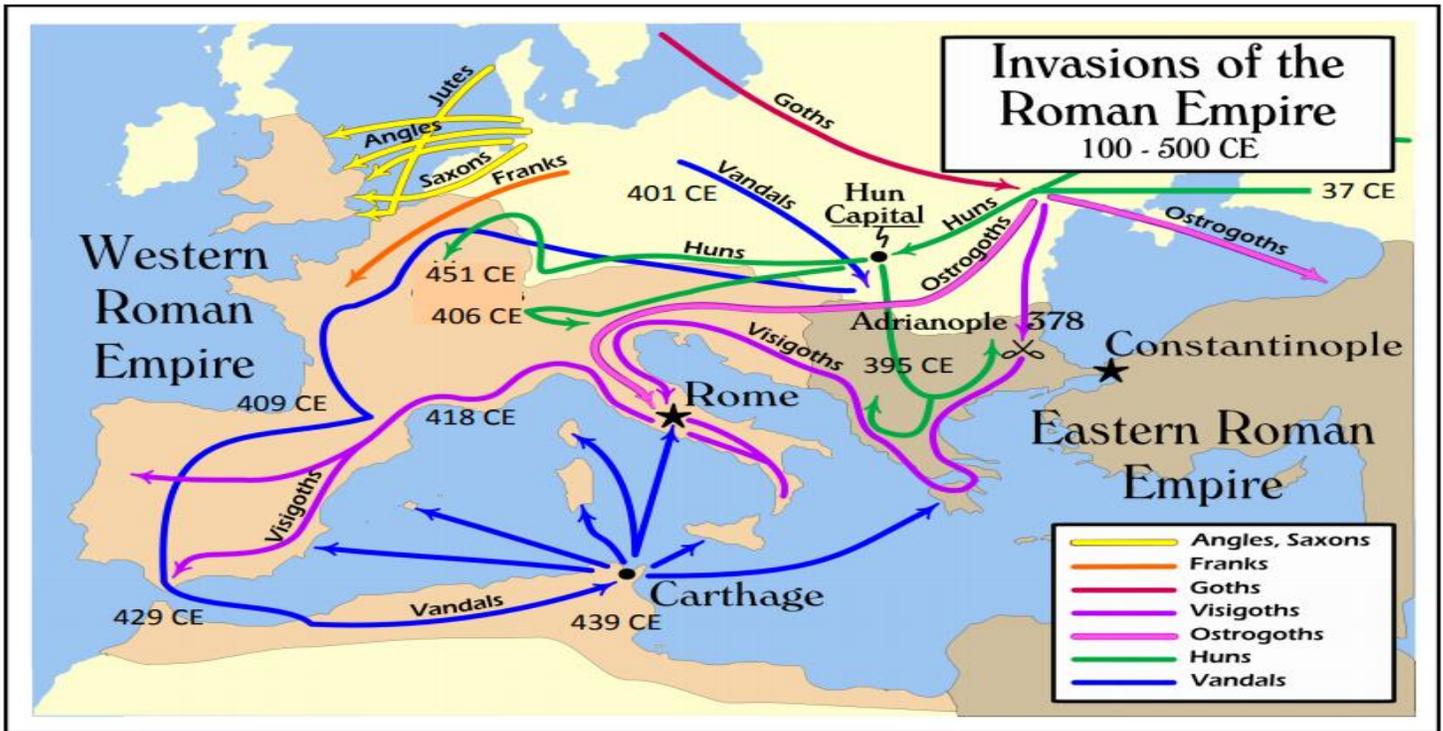
Some hundred years after Constantine's 'conversion', Christianity seemed to be entrenched as the established religion, sponsored by emperors and protected in law. But this did not mean that paganism had disappeared.

Indeed, when pagans blamed Christian impiety (meaning negligence of the old gods) for the barbarian sack of Rome in 410 AD, one of the foremost Christian intellectuals of the time, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, regarded the charge as serious enough to warrant lengthy reply in his mammoth book 'The City of God'.

Paganism may have been effectively eclipsed as an imperial religion, but it continued to pose a powerful political and religious challenge to the Christian church.

Use the sources below to answer the questions about the fall of the Roman Empire on your worksheet.

Source #1



Source #2

Rome, like all great empires, was not overthrown by external enemies but undermined by internal decay. . . .The military crisis was the result of . . .proud old aristocracy's...shortage of children. (Consequently) foreigners poured into the...Roman army [was] composed entirely of German

Source #3

<u>Emperor</u>	<u>Reign</u>	<u>Cause of Death</u>
Maximinus	235-38 CE	Assassination
Gordian I & II (co-rulers)	238	Suicide; killed in battle
Balbinus & Pupineus	238	Assassination
Gordian III	238-44	Possible assassination
Philip the Arab	244-49	Killed in battle
Decius	249-51	Killed in battle
Hostilian	251	Possible plague
Gallus	251-53	Assassination
Aemilianus	253	Assassination
Valerian & Gallienus	253-60	Died as slave of Persians; assassination
Claudius Gothicus	268-70	Plague
Quintillus	270	Assassination or suicide
Aurelian	270-75	Assassination
Tacitus	275-76	Possible assassination
Florianus	276	Assassination
Probus	276-82	Assassination
Carus	282-83	Assassination
Numerian	283-84	Possible assassination
Carinus	283-85	Killed in battle

Source #4

This excerpt, from *The New Deal in Old Rome* by Henry Haskell, blames the decline on the heavy taxation required to support the government expenses....Part of the money went into ... the maintenance of the army and of the vast bureaucracy required by a centralized government...the expense led to strangling taxation... The heart was taken out of enterprising men...tenants fled from their farms and businessmen and workmen from their occupations. Private enterprise was crushed & the state was forced to take over many kinds of businesses to keep the machine running.

People learned to expect something for nothing. The old Roman virtues of self-reliance & initiative were lost in that part of the population on relief (welfare)... The central government undertook such far-reaching responsibility in affairs that the fiber of the citizens weakened.