

Chapter 7 Section 2 --- The Roman Empire

Key Terms:

Pax Romana	-- the period of stability and prosperity in the Roman Empire (Roman Peace)
Province	-- a unit of an empire or a country; area of the Roman Empire ruled by a governor, who was supported by an army
Colosseum	-- a large amphitheater built in Rome around A.D. 70; site of contests and combats between people and animals
Aqueduct	-- a structure that carries water over long distances

Ruling an Empire

When Augustus came to power after Caesar's death, Roman control had already spread for beyond Italy. Imperialism continued under Augustus and the emperors who followed, as Rome gained even more territory. Find the territory controlled by the Romans below.



The Power of Augustus: With the rule of Augustus, a period of stability and prosperity known as the Pax Romana, or "Roman peace" began. The Pax Romana lasted for about 200 years. During this time, people and goods traveled easily within the empire, and trade with Asia and Africa thrived.

Augustus was an intelligent ruler. When he was struggling for power, he often ignored the senate and its laws. But after he won control, he changed his manner. He showed great respect for the senate and was careful to avoid acting like a king. He did not want to have the same fate as Julius Caesar.

Governing Conquered Peoples: The Roman rulers treated conquered peoples wisely. They took some slaves after a conquest, but most of the conquered people remained free. To govern, they divided their empire into provinces. Each **province**, or area of the empire, had a

Roman governor supported by an army. Often, the Romans built a city in a new province to serve as its capital.

Generally, the Romans did not force their way of life on conquered peoples. They allowed them to follow their own religions. Local rulers were allowed to run the daily affairs of government. As long as there was peace, Roman governors did not interfere in conquered peoples' lives. Rather, they kept watch over them.

Rome wanted peaceful provinces in which the conquered people would supply the empire with the raw materials it needed, buy Roman goods, and pay taxes. Many of the conquered people adopted Roman ways. Many learned to speak Latin, the language of the Romans, and to worship Roman gods.

The Five "Good Emperors": In A.D. 14, Augustus died. Although the Pax Romana continued after his death, good, bad, and terrible emperors ruled for the next 82 years. Two of the worst emperors during this time were Caligula and Nero. Caligula was a cruel, unfair ruler. Nero murdered his half-brother, his mother, and his wife, among others.

In A.D. 96, Rome entered what is called the age of the "five good emperors." The five emperors --- Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius --- gained the support of the senate and ruled fairly.

Perhaps the greatest of these five emperors was Hadrian, who ruled from A.D. 117 to 138. He issued a code of laws, making laws uniform throughout the empire. Hadrian reorganized the army so that soldiers were allowed to defend their home provinces. This gave them a greater sense of responsibility. Hadrian also encouraged learning.

The last of the "good emperors," Marcus Aurelius, chose his son Commodus to follow him. Commodus ruled with great brutality, or cruelty. His reign ended the age of peace and prosperity known as the Pax Romana.

The Greek Influence on Rome

The Romans had long admired Greek achievements. Many Romans visited Greece to study Greek art, architecture, and ideas about government.

Religion: Greek religion influenced the Roman religion. Like the Greeks, Romans practiced polytheism and offered prayers and sacrifices to their gods. Many Roman gods and goddesses had Greek counterparts. For example, the Roman god of the sky, Jupiter, shared characteristics with the Greek god Zeus. The Roman goddess of arts and trades, Minerva, can be compared with the Greeks' Athena. The Romans also adopted heroes from Greek mythology, such as Heracles --- Hercules to the Romans. As their empire spread, Romans appealed to and adopted other foreign gods as well.

Building on Ideas: Greeks and Romans both valued learning, but in different ways. The Greeks were interested in ideas. They sought to learn truths about the world through reason. The Romans were more interested in using the ideas of the Greeks to build things. The Romans developed outstanding architecture and engineering skills. With these skills, they built their empire.

Architecture and Technology

Early Roman art and architecture copied the Etruscans. Later, the Romans studied and copied Greek sculpture and architecture. They then developed their own style.

The Roman Style: Roman statues and buildings were heavier and stronger in style than those of the Greeks. Using arches, Romans were able to build larger structures. Most large buildings were built of bricks covered with thin slabs of marble. An important development was a new building material – concrete. Concrete is a mix of stone, sand, cement, and water, which dries as hard as a rock. Concrete helped the Romans construct buildings that were far taller than any built before.

The Colosseum: Possibly the greatest Roman building was the Colosseum, the site of contests and combats between people and animals. This giant arena held 50,000 spectators. It was so well built that the floor of the arena could be flooded for mock naval battles using real people in actual boats. Stairways and ramps ran through the building. There were even elevators to carry wild animals from dens below the floor to the arena.

Roads and Aqueducts: Do you know the saying “All roads lead to Rome”? In Roman times, all the major roads of the empire did lead to Rome. The Roman road system covered a distance equal to twice the distance around Earth at the Equator.

Romans were famous for their aqueducts, structures that carried water over long distances. The aqueducts were huge lines of arches, often many miles long. A channel along the top carried water from the countryside to the cities. Roman aqueducts tunneled through mountains and spanned valleys. Some are still in use today.

The Laws of Rome

Like Roman roads, Roman laws spread throughout the empire. The Roman senator Cicero said that laws “cannot be bent by influence, or broken by power, or spoiled by money.”

A later ruler named Justinian used Roman laws to create a famous code of justice. Here are a few laws from that code. “No one suffers a penalty for what he thinks. No one may be forcibly removed from his own house. The burden of proof is upon the person who accuses. In inflicting penalties, the age and inexperience of the guilty party must be taken into account.”

Roman laws continued to be passed down to other cultures, including our own. Other Roman ideas of justice are also basic to our system of laws. For example, persons accused of crimes had the right to face their accusers. If there were any doubt about a person's guilt, he or she would be judged innocent.

Questions:

- 1. Why was Hadrian considered to be one of the five “good emperors”?**
- 2. What are some characteristics of Roman buildings?**
- 3. Recall two laws from Justinian’s Code?**
- 4. How did Rome handle the difficulties of governing its large empire?**

Guided Reading: These questions are attached to your daily email. 😊