

# Rise of the Roman Empire 753 B.C.E. to 60 C.E.



# Today's Questions

- How was Rome founded?
- What led to the formation of Rome's republic?
- How was the Roman republic organized?
- What events led to imperialism in Rome?
- What problems arose with the Roman Empire?

# Founding of the Roman Republic

- Legend says Romulus and Remus, twin sons of Mars, god of War, founded the city where they were rescued from the Tiber River and cared for by the she-wolf. (753 B.C.E.)



# Etruria the Kingdom: Rome's Early Days (700-500 B.C.E.)

- For two and a half centuries, kings of the neighboring Etruria, the land to Rome's north, ruled the city.
- The Romans learned about city building, art, religion, mythology, and even language from the Etruscans.



# From Kingdom to Republic

## 509 B.C.E.

- 509 B.C.E., the powerful citizens of Rome, all veterans of military service, drove out the Etruscan kings.
- They declared Rome a republic, a government in which power resides in a body of citizens and consists of representatives elected by them.
- Only men with wealth and property could command and rise in the ranks.
- At the heart of the city, they built the Roman forum, a political and civic center with temples and public buildings where leading citizens tended to government business.



# The Roman Republic

- Consuls (at the highest level) held power that extended over the lands Rome ruled.
- At the end of their one-year term, they entered the Senate of Rome, the highest legislative and consultative body of the government.
- Because the consuls and Senate both represented the interests of the patricians (aristocratic, wealthy classes), there was always tension between the wealthy classes and the plebeians, or common people.





# The Republic Expands



Carthage was the dominant political power in north Africa (excluding Egypt), the southern part of the Iberian peninsula, and the western region of Sicily.

Meanwhile, Hellenistic empires dominated the eastern Mediterranean, Macedon, Egypt, Syria, and Anatolia. The Hellenes (Greeks) had a thriving network of maritime commerce in the Mediterranean.

# The Republic Expands



The Carthaginians controlled the north central coast of Africa and the western Mediterranean.

One of their trade networks focused on the mineral wealth of Spain, especially its silver mines. Carthage developed ports and cities in Sicily and Sardinia to protect that route.

# The Republic Expands

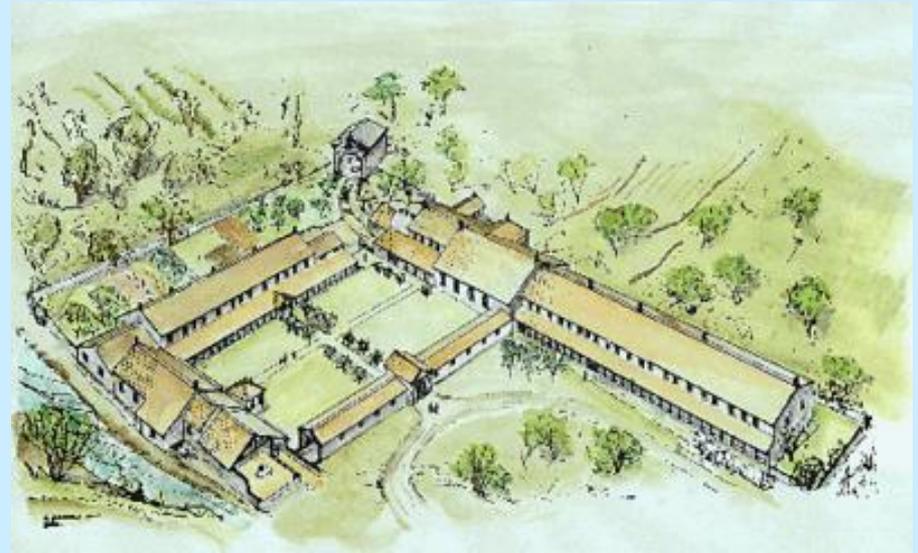
- Between 264 and 146 B.C.E., Rome fought Carthage in three conflicts known as the Punic Wars.
  - Competition for grain in the western Mediterranean (Sicily) (Romans burned Carthage to the ground and forced 50,000 survivors into slavery)
  - Rome seized Carthaginian possessions in north Africa and Iberia (grain, oil, wine, silver, and gold used to finance imperial expansion)

# From Republic to Empire



# Rome's Imperial Expansion Creates Problems

- Rome became wealthy and powerful, but there were problems:
  - Conquered lands fell into the hands of wealthy elites who organized plantations known as latifundia.
  - Owners of latifundia operated at lower costs than did owners of smaller holdings who often were forced to sell their land to wealthier neighbors.
  - Gracchus brothers attempted to reform land distribution policies but were assassinated.
  - The constitution had worked for a small city-state but it would not work for a large empire.



# The Roman Empire

- Military commanders recruited landless farmers for an army and initiated a civil war.
- General Gaius Marius marched on Rome, placed the city under military occupation and hunted down political enemies.
- When Marius died, Sulla seized Rome in 83 B.C.E. and murdered some ten thousand individuals.



# The Roman Empire

- By the time Sulla died in 78 B.C.E., he had imposed policies that weakened the influence of the lower classes and strengthened the wealthy in Roman politics.
- Poverty in the cities increased, while the price of grain rose.
- Social outbreaks were common.
- The urban poor joined the personal armies of ambitious generals.

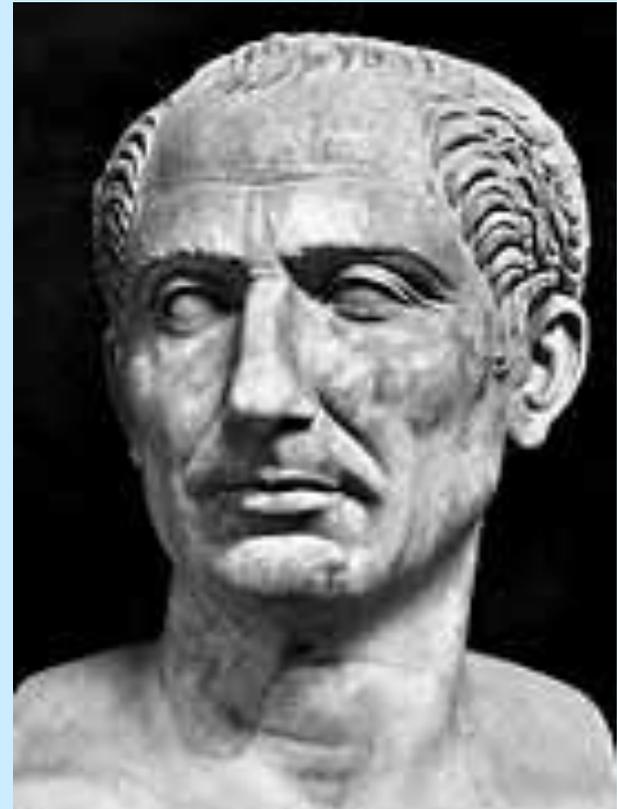
# The Roman Empire is Firmly Established

- Gaius Marius's nephew, Julius Caesar, favored liberal policies.
- He was popular with Romans because he spent sums of money sponsoring battles between gladiators and wild animals.
- This kept him in the public eye and helped to publicize his interests in social reform.
- He led an army to Gaul, which he conquered and brought it into the Roman Empire.
- In 49 B.C.E., he named himself dictator of Rome.



# The Roman Empire is Firmly Established

- Caesar made much needed reforms.
- He relieved debt.
- He used his wealth to promote building and entertainment in Rome which pacified his subjects.
- He confiscated land from his opponents and redistributed among his army's veterans.
- He extended Roman citizenship to people in the conquered provinces.
- In 44 BCE Caesar was assassinated (stabbed to death) in the Roman forum.
- Civil War went on for the next 13 years.



# Finally Peace and Prosperity in the Roman Empire

- Caesar's nephew, Octavian (AKA Augustus) built a monarchy disguised as a republic.
- Augustus initiated the Pax Romana which lasted more than 200 years.
- This was a period of domestic peace and foreign expansion.



# The Roman Empire (117 C.E.)



# The Empire Flourishes

- When Roman soldiers, diplomats, governors, and merchants arrived in sparsely populated sites like Gaul, Germany, Britain, and Spain, they stimulated the development of states.
- They accessed resources like tin and encouraged inhabitants to cultivate wheat, olives, and grapes.
- Local ruling elites joined with Roman representatives and used wealth to control natural resources and build states larger than ever.
- Cities emerged where administrators and merchants conducted their business.

# Intellectual Development

- Around 450 BCE, Roman jurists (judges, attorneys) adopted the Twelve Tables as a basic law code for citizens of the early republic.
- During the late republic, jurists worked to create a body of law that would work for the diverse people of the Empire.
- They established the principle of “innocent until proven guilty” and defendants could challenge accusers before a judge in a court of law.
- Romans adopted many of the cultural aspects of Greek life, i.e. philosophy, mathematics, theatre, etc.

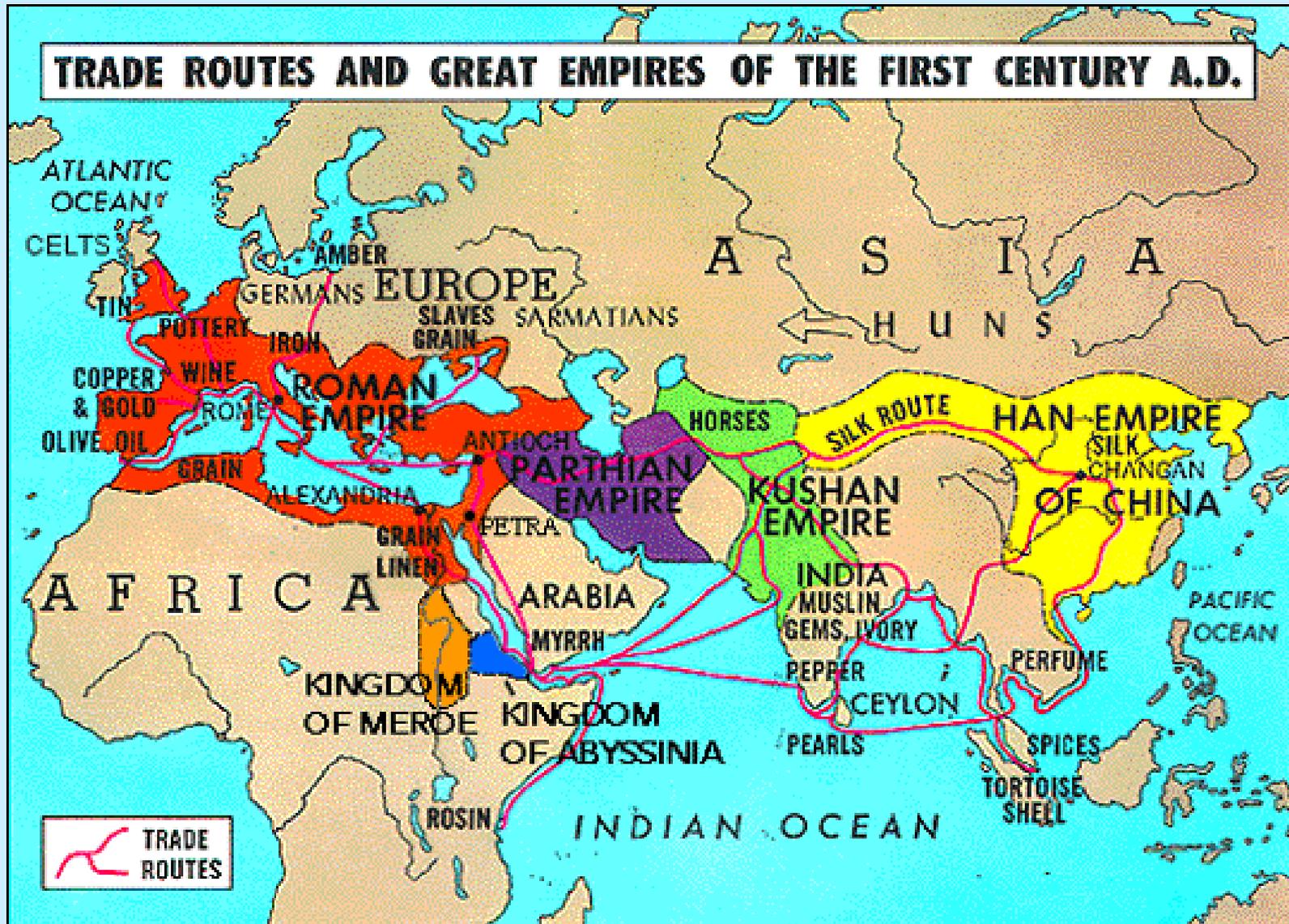
# Technological Development

- Roman engineers prepared deep beds for roads, edged them with curbs, provided drainage and used large, flat paving stones. They developed wide roads for two lanes.
- Temples, bath houses, public buildings, stadiums, and aqueducts.

# Economic Development

- In the early days of the Roman kingdom and republic, agriculture was the foundation of Rome.
- Latifundia concentrated on production for export.
- Because it was possible to import grains at good prices from lands that produced surpluses, other regions could concentrate on cultivation of fruits and vegetables or production of manufactured items, i.e. olives from Greece, wine and olive oil from Spain, etc.
- The Roman military kept the seas free from pirates.

# Trade Routes



# Social Structure

- Pater families – The eldest male ruled the household.
- Women frequently ran the household, playing significant roles in family finances and inheritance.
- Slavery was an essential component of the Roman empire's success.
- By the 2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E., more than 1/3 of the population were slaves.
- Some urban slaves had the potential to lead economically successful lives, even gaining their freedom.

# Development of Religion

- As a result of interaction with the Etruscans and later the Greeks, the Romans developed a polytheistic culture.
- The Jews, who were monotheistic, rebelled. Some openly fought the Romans; others sought salvation through isolation.
- Christianity emerged in this context as some Jews sought to form a community around Jesus of Nazareth, a charismatic leader who taught peace, devotion to God, and love for fellow human beings.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Century C.E. Paul of Tarsus spread the ideas of Christianity using the roads and communication system established by the Roman Empire.

