

CHAPTER 11

MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY: THE ROMAN PHASE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter traces the growth and development of Rome from its humble beginnings on the banks of the Tiber River through its republican phase and its transformation into a sprawling, cosmopolitan empire encompassing much of Europe and northern Africa. A tight administrative structure and organized trade network promoted the movement of people, goods, and ideas throughout the empire. The Romans had a significant impact on later Mediterranean, European, and southwest Asian cultures. These influences include, but are not limited to,

- The concept of a republican form of government governed by a constitution and a fixed body of law that guaranteed the rights of citizens.
- Elaborate transportation and communications networks with sophisticated roads, sea lanes linking port cities, and an imperial postal system.
- Economically specialized regions, either in the development of cash crops for export or in localized industries.
- New cities built throughout the empire with unprecedented levels of sanitation, comfort, and entertainment opportunities.
- Widespread dissemination of philosophical beliefs and values, like Stoicism, and religions of salvation, like Christianity.

OUTLINE

I. From kingdom to republic

A. The Etruscans and Rome

1. Romulus and Remus: legendary twins rescued by a she-wolf; founded Rome in 753 B.C.E.
2. The Etruscans dominated Italy eighth to fifth centuries B.C.E.
3. The kingdom of Rome was on the Tiber River

B. The Roman republic and its constitution

1. Establishment of the republic
 - a) Roman nobility deposed the last Etruscan king in 509 B.C.E.
 - b) Republican constitution included two consuls: civil and military
 - c) Consuls were elected by an assembly dominated by the patricians
 - d) Senate advised the consuls and ratified major decisions
 - e) Both Senate and consuls represented the interests of the patricians

2. Conflicts between patricians and plebeians
 - a) Patricians granted plebeians the tribunes
 - b) Tribunes' power to intervene and veto decisions
 - c) Plebeians' tribunes dominated Roman politics, early third century B.C.E.

C. The expansion of the republic

- a) Rome consolidated its position in Italy, fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.
- b) Conflict with Carthage (Punic Wars) and Hellenistic realms
- c) Rome became preeminent power in eastern and western Mediterranean

II. From republic to empire

A. Imperial expansion and domestic problems

1. The Gracchi brothers supported land redistribution; both were assassinated
2. Military commanders recruited rural and urban poor—intensely loyal armies
 - a) Gaius Marius: general who advocated land redistribution
 - b) Conservative aristocratic class supported General Lucius Cornelius Sulla
3. Civil war

B. The foundation of empire

1. Julius Caesar: very popular social reformer and conqueror (Gaul)
 - a) Seized Rome in 49 B.C.E.
 - b) Claimed the title "dictator for life," 46 B.C.E.
 - c) Social reforms and centralized control
 - d) Assassinated in 44 B.C.E.
2. Octavian brought civil conflict to an end
 - a) Senate bestowed title "Augustus," 27 B.C.E.
 - b) Monarchy disguised as a republic
 - c) Created a new standing army under his control
 - d) The imperial institutions began to take root

C. Continuing expansion and integration of the empire

1. Roman expansion into Mediterranean basin, western Europe, down Nile to Kush
2. *Pax romana*, Roman Peace, for two and a half centuries
3. Well-engineered Roman roads; postal system
4. Roman law—tradition: twelve tables (450 B.C.E.)

III. Economy and society in the Roman Mediterranean

A. Trade and urbanization

1. Owners of *latifundia* focused on specialized production for export

2. Mediterranean trade
 - a) Sea lanes linked ports of the Mediterranean
 - b) Roman navy kept the seas largely free of pirates
 - c) The Mediterranean became a Roman lake
3. The city of Rome
 - a) Wealth of the city fueled its urban development
 - b) Statues, pools, fountains, arches, temples, stadiums
 - c) First use of concrete as construction material
 - d) Rome attracted numerous immigrants
 - e) Attractions: baths, pools, gymnasia, circuses, stadiums, amphitheaters

B. Family and society in Roman times

1. The *pater familias*—eldest male of the family ruled
 - a) Women wielded considerable influence within their families
 - b) Many women supervised family business and wealthy estates
2. Wealth and social change
 - a) Newly rich classes built palatial houses and threw lavish banquets
 - b) Cultivators and urban masses lived at subsistence level
 - c) Poor classes became a serious problem in Rome and other cities
 - d) No urban policy developed, only “bread and circuses”
3. Slavery—one-third of the population
 - a) Spartacus’s uprising in 73 B.C.E.
 - b) Urban slaves saw better conditions and possibility of manumission

IV. The cosmopolitan Mediterranean

A. Greek philosophy and religions of salvation

1. Roman deities: gods, goddesses, and household gods
2. Greek influence—Stoicism
 - a) Appealed to Roman intellectuals
 - b) Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), persuasive orator and writer on Stoicism
3. Religions of salvation gave sense of purpose and promised afterlife
 - a) Roman roads served as highways for religious spread
 - b) Mithraism was popular with Roman soldiers—men only
 - c) Cult of Isis very popular

B. Judaism and early Christianity

1. Monotheistic Jews considered state cults to be blasphemy

2. The Essenes, sect of Judaism; Dead Sea scrolls
3. Jesus of Nazareth
 - a) Charismatic Jewish teacher, taught devotion to God and love for human beings
 - b) Attracted large crowds through his wisdom and miraculous powers
 - c) The teaching "the kingdom of God is at hand" alarmed the Romans
 - d) Crucifixion in early 30s C.E.
 - e) Became "Christ," or "the anointed one"
4. The New Testament and the Old Testament became the holy book of Christianity
5. Paul of Tarsus was principal figure in spread of Christianity
6. Rapid growth of early Christianity
 - a) Strong appeal to lower classes, urban population, and women
 - b) Became the most influential faith in the Mediterranean by the third century C.E.

IDENTIFICATION: PEOPLE

What is the contribution of each of the following individuals to world history? Identification should include answers to the questions *who, what, where, when, how, and why is this person important?*

Aeneas

Romulus

Gracchi brothers

Gaius Marius

Lucius Cornelius Sulla

Julius Caesar

Augustus Caesar

Cicero

Jesus of Nazareth

Paul of Tarsus

Carthaginians

IDENTIFICATION: TERMS/CONCEPTS

State in your own words what each of the following terms means and why it is significant to a study of world history. (Terms with an asterisk are defined in the glossary.)

Etruscans*

Roman Senate

Punic Wars

Twelve tables

Roman roads

Colosseum

Bread and circuses

Patricians*

Plebeians*

Stoicism*

Mithraism*

Cult of Isis

Essenes*

Judaism

Christianity

New Testament

Sermon on the Mount

LATIN TERMS

Identify what each of the following Latin terms means and its significance in the context of Roman history. (Terms with an asterisk are defined in the glossary.)

*Latifundia**

*Pax Romana**

Mare nostrum

*Pater familias**

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What contributions did the Etruscans and the early Roman monarchy make to the Roman republic?
2. How did the republican constitution set the stage for conflict between the patricians and the plebeians?
3. What was the significance of the Punic Wars to the later development of Rome?
4. In general, how did the Romans deal with the people and lands that they conquered?
5. What inherent weaknesses in the political and economic institutions of Rome did the Gracchi brothers' conflicts highlight?
6. Describe the transition from republic to empire in the first century B.C.E.
7. How did the Romans promote trade throughout the empire?
8. What was the status of women during the empire?
9. How did Jesus' message threaten the Roman administration? How did they respond?
10. What was the appeal of the early Christian teachings? What sorts of people were most attracted to it?

INQUIRY QUESTIONS

1. How were the Romans so successful in conquering and holding such a vast territory?
2. Why did Christianity spread so much more rapidly than other religions of salvation?
3. The book refers to Augustus's government as "a monarchy disguised as a republic." What does this phrase mean? Does this disguise continue throughout the empire period?

MATCHING

Match these figures with the statements that follow.

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| A. Sulla | E. Julius Caesar |
| B. Tiberius Gracchus | F. Romulus |
| C. Paul of Tarsus | G. Mithras |
| D. Cicero | H. Spartacus |

1. ___ Legendary founder of Rome, along with his twin brother, Remus.
2. ___ Led most serious slave uprising in Roman history in 73 B.C.E.
3. ___ Ruthless general who seized Rome in 83 B.C.E., slaughtered thousands of his enemies, and strengthened the political power of the wealthy at the expense of the lower classes.
4. ___ General who conquered Gaul, then went on to march on Rome and make himself dictator for life until he was assassinated in the forum.
5. ___ Follower of Jesus who was largely responsible for the rapid spread of Christianity through the Roman Empire.

6. ___ Important god in Zoroastrian mythology who was popular among the Roman soldiers because he became associated with military virtues such as strength, discipline, and courage.
7. ___ Popular Roman tribune who advocated limiting the amount of conquered land that anyone could hold.
8. ___ Persuasive orator and writer who contributed to making Stoicism one of the most prominent philosophies in Rome.

SEQUENCING

Place the following clusters of events in chronological order. Consider carefully how one event leads to another, and try to determine the internal logic of each sequence.

A.

- ___ Senate confers the title of Augustus on Octavian.
- ___ Julius Caesar marches his army into Rome.
- ___ Civil war erupts in Rome as ambitious generals vie for power and threaten political and social stability.
- ___ Octavian defeats Mark Antony in naval battle at Actium.
- ___ Group of wealthy, powerful Romans plot to have Julius Caesar assassinated.

B.

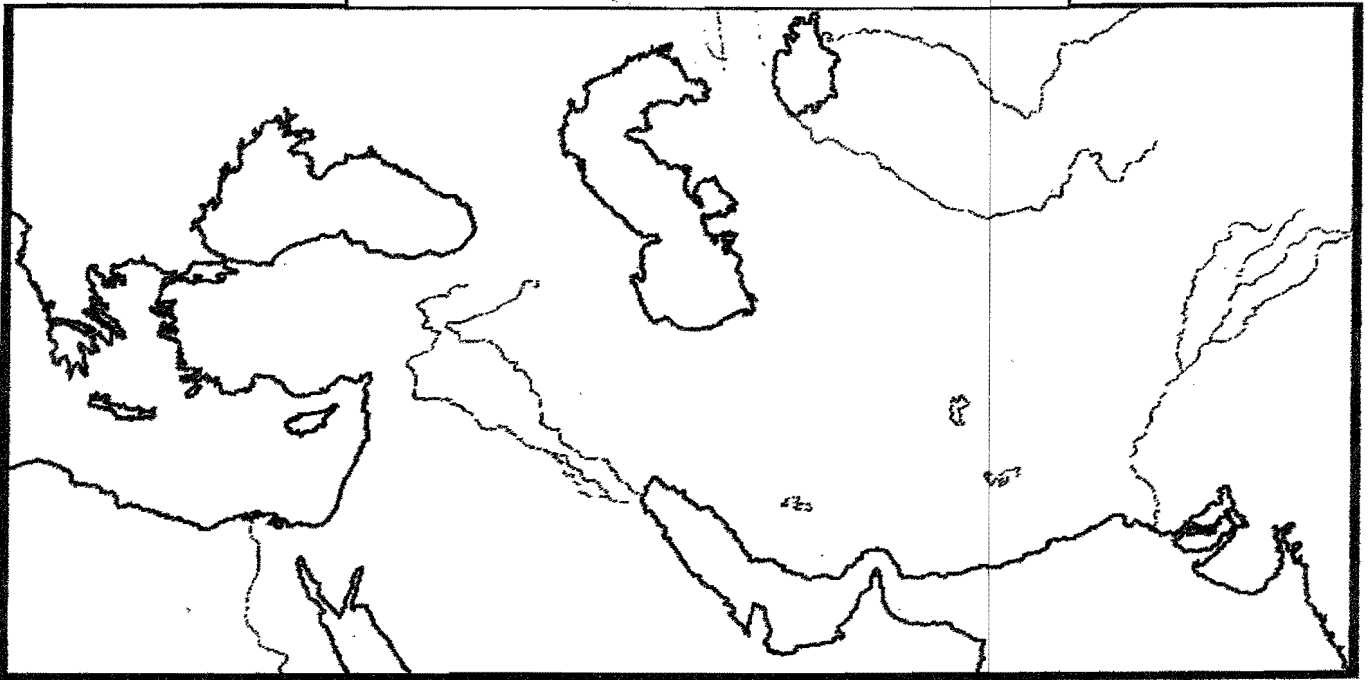
- ___ Romans consolidate their power on the Italian peninsula.
- ___ Julius Caesar and his army conquer Gaul.
- ___ Roman holdings expand to include Egypt, last ruled by Ptolemaic heir Cleopatra.
- ___ Romans fight a series of wars against Carthage.

QUOTATIONS

For each of the following quotes, identify the speaker, if known, or the point of view. What is the significance of each passage?

1. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."
2. "I pursued my studies of every kind. . . . I lodged and boarded at my own house Diodotus the Stoic; whom I employed as my preceptor in various other parts of learning, but particularly in logic."

The Empire of Alexander the Great

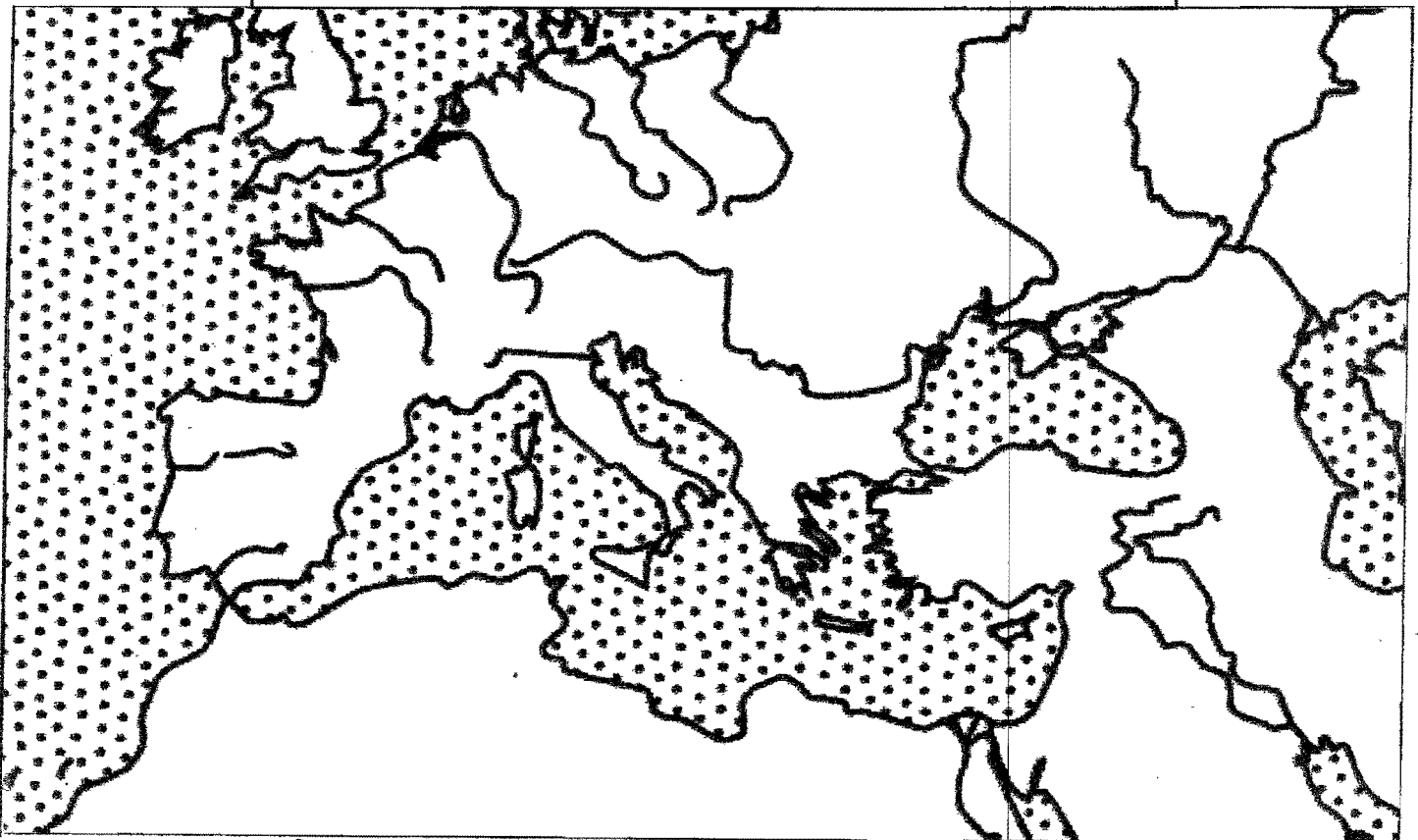


Alexander's Empire, c. 323 B.C.E., and the Hellenistic World

Label ALL REGIONS and ALL BODIES OF WATER. Trace rivers in blue and label these: Nile, Tigris, Euphrates, Indus. Label these cities: Athens, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Damascus, Susa, Persepolis, Patala, Alexandria, Kandahar, Bactria. Color Alexander's Empire green;

PRINT IN BLACK INK.

The Roman Empire by 117 A.D.



REFER TO MAP ON PG. 248. LABEL ALL REGIONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF ROME. COLOR THE ROMAN EMPIRE PINK. PRINT IN BLACK INK.