

## AS THE WORLD TURNS: BEGINNING OF TIME - 450 CE

### Europe - Part 2: Rome

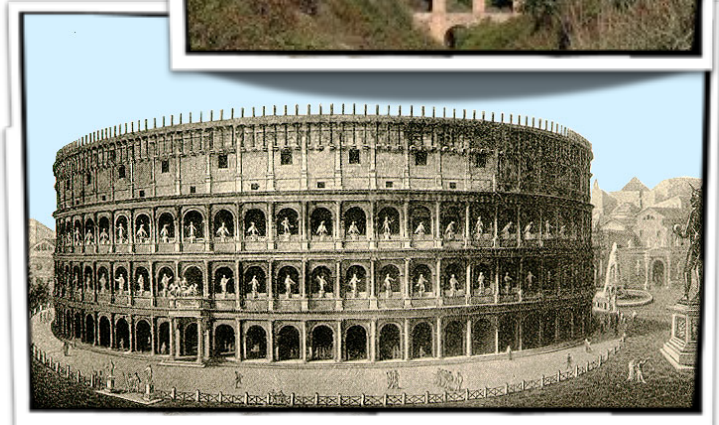
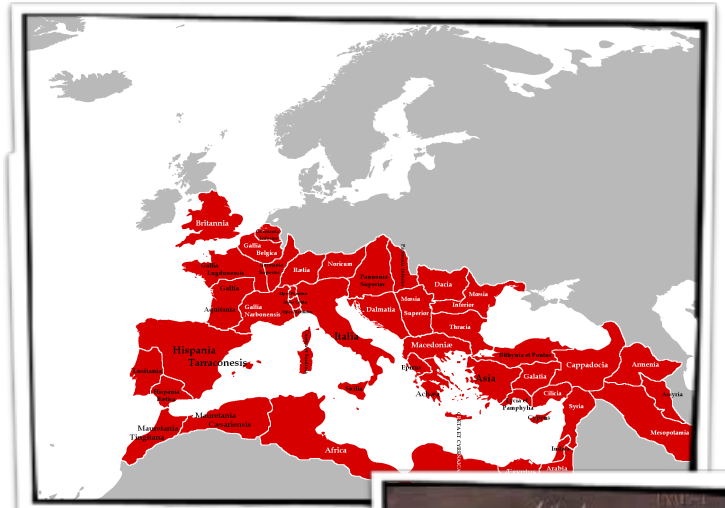
In the history of the world, few empires compare in size and accomplishment to the Roman Empire. In 501 BCE, on the Italian peninsula, the city of Rome was established by a group of warrior-herdsmen took control from a corrupt local king. As the city developed, the Romans established a Republic (representative democracy), where the poor and rich could elect people to represent them and be their voice in the government. They also developed the Twelve Tablets, that setup the rule of law that guided all Roman citizens. During this time, the Romans borrowed heavily from the Greeks (included their gods, law making, and architectural style) and from other Mediterranean civilizations.

By 202 BCE, the city of Rome had conquered all of Italy, most of Spain, and part of North Africa. While the conquest was successfully expanded, the Republic was failing. Around 80 BCE, Julius Caesar, who was a popular general who expanded Rome's territory into France, England and Greece. When Julius Caesar declared himself dictator for life, he was stabbed 23 times. However, Augustus took his uncle's place and effectively killed the Roman Republic. Augustus entered the era of the Roman Empire, ruled by one man: the Caesar. The Caesar was viewed as the son of the gods, who was the savior of the people of earth and whose task it was to rule the empire. By 300 CE, Rome ruled land on 3 continents, completely surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, calling it "The Roman Lake."

Rome's achievements were not limited to their conquest. They carved millions of miles of roads across Europe and the Middle East. The Romans' developed the architectural arch. This, along with the creation of cement, allowed the development of massive buildings. One of these buildings were the aqueducts that brought water in from far rivers/lakes into the their city centers. Culturally, they advanced literature, philosophy and sculptural art. They also promoted the competitive forms of entertainment, like the gladiator games and chariot races. The stadiums held between 50,000 to 150,000 spectators.

#### Christianity

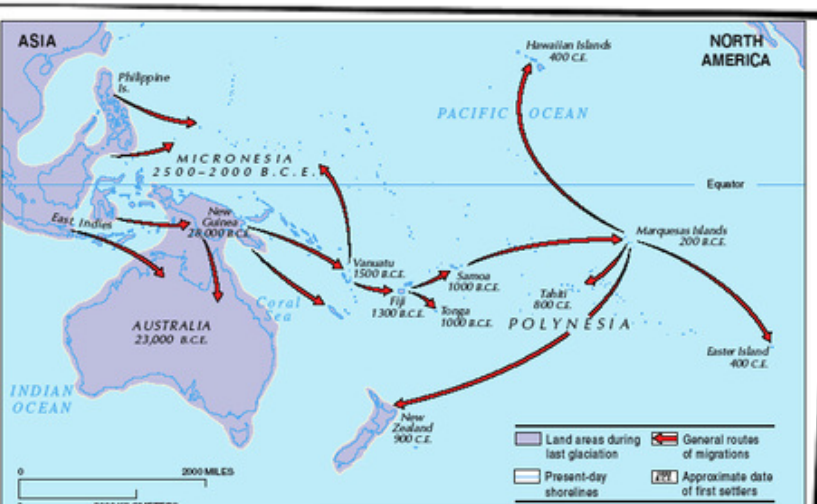
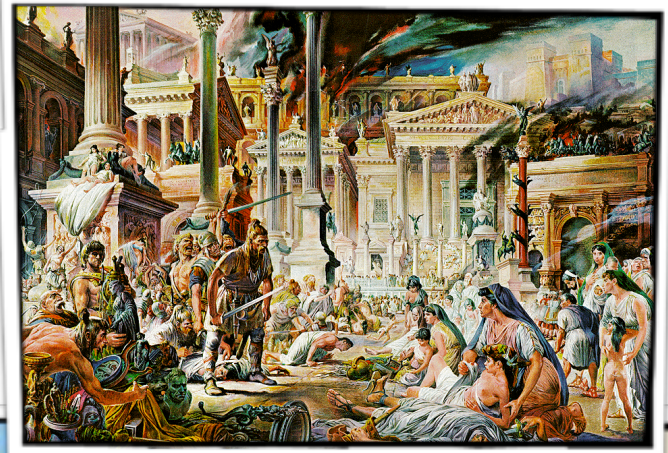
According to tradition - around 30 CE in Jerusalem, Israel, the Jewish faith (Judaism) was undergoing a transformation. A man named Jesus was claiming to be the long-awaited Messiah, the Son of the Jewish God (Jehovah) who was the savior of the world, and restore the connection with Jehovah. His teachings were aimed at reforming the faith back to what Jehovah had intended. The Jewish leaders and the Romans disagreed with Jesus and had him crucified. However, three days later his body was gone, and the followers of Jesus began proclaiming he had come back to life, raised from the dead. They began to evangelize throughout the Roman Empire (thanks to the Roman roads) and their teachings became known as Christianity.





### Fall of Rome

In 285 CE, Rome was in trouble. The massive empire had just been split in two to help with administration. The East half had a new capital called Constantinople, named after Caesar Constantine who had converted to and legalized Christianity in Rome. The Western half held onto Rome as its capital. The problem was that the Eastern half had the trade routes with the east, the better educated population and access to more resources. The Western half was more agricultural and did not possess the natural wealth and resources, nor was it close to any of the great empires with which to trade. The Western half, which already suffered from bad leadership, a lazy population and a famine, was ready to fall. All it took was hungry German Barbarians, or uncultured people, from the north to storm in and take the city in 436 CE. German Barbarian tribes began to conquer large areas of Europe, dividing the Western half of the Roman Empire into warring states.



### **Oceania/Australia**

Oceania is a term that refers to Australia and the surrounding islands (Fiji, New Zealand, etc). Australia was first settled around 40,000 BCE. Its first inhabitants were stone-age hunters and gathers that are referred to as the Aborigines. By 30 BCE, many of the islands had inhabitants that migrated from Southeast Asia and who brought with them agricultural technology. They navigated the Pacific Ocean with wooden boats or canoes, finding and inhabiting these islands; forming the modern Polynesian peoples. However, the climate did not allow for large-scale farming. On a few islands, hybrid societies develop that cultivate bananas and tropical fruit while hunting/fishing/gathering. However, a vast majority of the people in Oceania were hunters and gatherers.





## North America

People first arrived in North America around 10,000 BCE and spread rapidly throughout the continent. Hunting and gathering was the primary food supply in North America. Agriculture first appeared in Mexico around 3000 BCE with the Olmec and Mayan Civilizations. Over the next two thousand years, agriculture spread steadily north and east, eventually reaching the Mississippi River Valley. Around the year 1 CE, there were three distinct areas of agriculture: the Mississippi River Valley, South-West America (present day Nevada/California) and Central Mexico.

Even where there was agriculture, the communities were limited. For example, the Olmec and Mayans developed as a series of independent city-states, similar to the Greeks. These cities were big, with the city of Teotihuacan reaching close to 125,000 people - the 6th largest city in the world. However, the lack of native domesticable plants and large mammals prevented most of the continent from developing and sustaining large scale agriculture. This limited regions from supporting large kingdoms and empires like the Romans, Persians and Chinese.

Despite the lack of size, the members of these societies were able to accomplish impressive technological and architectural feats. The Olmecs used simple stone tools to create large and impressive carved structures. The Mayans built massive temples and city complexes that were among the tallest in the world in this era.



## South America

South America was the last continent to have human habitation. By 3500 BCE humans are living throughout the continent, with small farming communities in the northern half. In 200 BCE, Larger chiefdoms eventually develop along the North-West Coast, by the Andes Mountains (modern day Peru). The Andes Mountains served as a natural barrier between the Andes Highland peoples and those living in the Amazon River Basin (aka Amazonia).

## Conclusion

The Ancient Period was a time of great change and development. Humans settled on all major land masses and created communities that adapted to all types of climates. They expanded from being nomadic hunters and gatherers to establishing massive empires. All the major religions and government styles were developed

during this time, as well as the foundations for our modern languages. Humans went from chiseling stone to crafting metal for tools and weapons. They harnessed the power of animals and used technology to develop new transportation methods. They built enormous buildings. They developed deadlier weapons. It was a great and awe-inspiring period of human history... with Geography having the final say in which areas thrived and which ones failed to even launch.

However, by the 500 CE all of major empires of the Europe and Asia had collapsed into warring states marking the end of the Ancient era.

## ASSIGNMENT

- 1) Read & Update the Content Matrix
- 2) Fill out this chart with the the strengths/positives and weaknesses/negatives of each region.

Region	Strengths	Weaknesses
Europe		
Oceania		
North America		
South America		

- 3) Create an impact chart. As you read you are to evaluate each area on the level of impact the people in that region had on the world culturally, militarily, and economically.
  - Rate each area as to how impactful you believe them to be at the Beginning of Time (**B**), at 300 BCE (■) and at 300 CE (▲).
  - Draw arrows to show whether they grew or shrunk in impact and influence.
  - If there is change, ask yourself “What caused them to grow or shrink or stagnate in their influence?” and make note of it on your chart.

How to rate each region:

- Local: Mainly Hunter/Gatherers and Small Villages; people barely impacting those outside of their small circles.
- Regional: Kingdoms, Small Empires.
- Continental: Large empire(s) that span across/impact/consume most of the continent.
- Inter-Continental: Massive empire(s) that span across/impact/consume multiple continents.
- Global: Massive empire(s) that span across/impact/consume most of the world.

### Examples

