

THE BEST TEST PREPARATION FOR THE

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**Western
Civilization I**

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Chapter 3

ANCIENT ROME

Geography. Rome was founded in the eighth century B.C.E. (traditionally 753) near the mouth of the Tiber River by speakers of the Latin language, who lived in a region called Latium. The location of Rome about halfway down the west side of the Italian peninsula favored its rise to power. Far from the powerful centers of advanced civilization in the Near East, Italy was protected from land invasions by the waters surrounding it on three sides and by the Alps, which provided a barrier that was infrequently crossed by invaders. The Italian peninsula itself is not very mountainous: the range of the Apennines running down the center does not greatly inhibit overland travel. Thus a single state could conquer and control the various peoples of Italy. Rome's central location within Italy gave it an advantage, since its armies did not have to travel far to get to any point on the peninsula, and its situation on seven hills helped them defend the city from attackers. Once the Romans unified Italy, they found that their position in the center of the Mediterranean gave them an advantage in controlling the entire sea. The Romans were also helped by the mild climate of Italy and its good farmland, which spared them the economic troubles that afflicted Greece.

The Etruscans. The early Romans were governed by a neighboring group called the Etruscans, who lived to the north in Etruria. Etruscan kings governed Rome until the Romans rebelled and drove them out in 509 B.C.E. Nevertheless, the Romans were indebted to the Etruscans for many things, including engineering techniques (draining marshes and constructing sewers), the use of the arch in architecture, the alphabet (which the Etruscans had acquired from the Greeks), and many religious rituals, especially techniques of divination by observing omens such as the entrails of sacrificial animals and the flight of birds.

THE REPUBLIC

Having expelled the Etruscan kings, the Romans rejected the institution of kingship, since they believed government belongs to the people, not an individual. They called their new government the “public thing” (*res publica*),

or Republic, which functioned by electing magistrates to hold public office. However, the right to hold office was initially limited to the wealthy, land-owning families of nobles, known as *patricians*, who comprised about ten percent of the population. They controlled policy mainly through the Senate, which was made up of approximately 300 members. In theory the patricians represented the rest of the citizens, known as *plebeians* (or *plebes*), but in practice the two classes were usually at odds. Over the course of centuries, the plebeians managed to expand their political rights, partly by threatening to withhold military service unless they received concessions. Among the earliest concessions was a written code of laws known as the Twelve Tables, published about 450 B.C.E. They were also granted a People's Tribune (a magistrate who could veto the Senate) and the right to hold an assembly, which in 287 B.C.E. no longer needed the approval of the Senate to pass legislation. The plebeians were eventually allowed to hold public office and work their way up the political ranks as the patricians did. Between the patricians and plebeians were the equestrians, a knightly class who initially served as cavalry, but later on assumed financial roles as tax collectors and contractors for the government.

Public Office. Advancement in public office required military service and began with low-ranking positions, such as the *quaestor*, who kept financial accounts, and the *aedile*, who organized public works. Higher positions included *praetor*, who presided at legal trials, and *consul*, whose principal task was to maintain census records (in order to determine who was eligible for military conscription and public office), but who also enforced morals. Consuls were highly respected, for they were drawn from a select pool of officials who had once served as *consuls*, or chief magistrates. Two consuls were elected each year by the assembly and had a range of administrative, judicial, and military functions; since they enjoyed king-like powers (known as *imperium*), each consul had the right to veto the other in order to prevent abuses. In times of crisis, the Senate could appoint a *dictator* who for six months held supreme power that was not subject to veto. Romans who sought election as praetors or consuls wore a special garment called the *toga candidata*, or “whitened toga”; the English word *candidate* is derived from this Latin expression.

Expansion. As Roman population increased, the supply of land became insufficient, and the Romans began to look beyond their borders to settle colonists. They also adopted conquest as a defensive strategy after Rome was sacked in 390 B.C.E. by the Gauls, a Celtic people living in the Po river valley to the north. Early Roman armies, like those of the Greeks, were organized into *phalanxes* of about 8,000 men, but the Romans later devised a more flexible form of organization, the *legion*, which was made

up of about 5,000 men organized into small units called *maniples* that could act independently and take on larger forces by outmaneuvering them. Using this innovation, the Romans steadily conquered their neighbors.

Conquest of Italy. By 265 B.C.E., the Romans united the entire Italian peninsula as far as the Po River. They demonstrated their determination in the 270s B.C.E. when they kept fighting against the defender of the Greeks in southern Italy, King Pyrrhus of Epirus (307–272 B.C.E.), even after suffering several defeats. Dismayed by Roman tenacity, Pyrrhus is said to have remarked, “If we win another battle against the Romans, we shall be utterly ruined,” thereby originating the concept of the Pyrrhic victory (a victory so costly that the victor cannot afford to go on fighting).

The Punic Wars. The Romans soon became embroiled with the Carthaginians over Sicily as the two growing empires collided. Carthage, founded as a Phoenician colony in North Africa (modern Tunisia) around 800 B.C.E., had expanded into an empire that dominated maritime trade. The rivals engaged in three terrible conflicts known as the Punic Wars (*Punicus* in Latin means “Phoenician”) to decide who would control the Mediterranean. The First Punic War (264–241 B.C.E.), which consisted principally of naval engagements, gave Sicily to Rome. The Second Punic War (218–201 B.C.E.) began in Spain and spread to Italy as the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, daringly crossed the Alps with his war elephants. Although Hannibal raided Italy for 15 years, he was unable to conquer the Romans, who changed tactics after the disastrous Battle of Cannae (216 B.C.E.). Their general Fabian refused to fight Hannibal in a pitched battle, but harassed his supply lines. These “Fabian tactics” prevented Hannibal’s occupation from breaking the Roman state. The Second Punic War ended when the Romans opened a new front by invading North Africa under the leadership of Scipio the Elder and defeated the Carthaginians at the Battle of Zama (202 B.C.E.). Over half a century of uneasy peace followed until the conclusive Third Punic War (149–146 B.C.E.), which was instigated by the Roman statesman, Cato the Elder, who ended all his speeches with the phrase, “Carthage must be destroyed.” Carthage was soon reduced to ruins by Scipio the Younger.

Conquest of the Mediterranean. Without a rival to oppose them, the Romans methodically conquered all the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. After fighting four wars with Macedon, in which the Romans demonstrated the superiority of the legion over the phalanx (especially at the Battle of Cynocephale in 197 B.C.E.), they subjugated Greece and moved through Anatolia into the Near East. The Romans did not have to fight for all their acquisitions. The heirless king of Pergamum in western Anatolia willed his kingdom to the Romans in 133 B.C.E., and the kingdom of Bithynia (in northern

Anatolia) was granted to Rome by a similar arrangement in 74 B.C.E. The last major state to resist the Romans was Egypt, which fell in 30 B.C.E.

Unrest. The influx of wealth from the conquered territories, as well as the devastation suffered in Italy during the Second Punic War, altered the character of the Republic. The wealthy profited from new overseas markets that had been opened by conquest, whereas small farmers were ruined. Their farms were bought up by large landowners to form immense estates called *latifundia*. These estates were devoted to raising cattle and were worked by prisoners of war whom the wealthy owners imported as slaves. Harsh treatment of these slaves led to sporadic revolts on a massive scale, most famously the one led by the gladiator Spartacus in 73–71 B.C.E. Yet the greater threat for the Republic came from the dislocation of citizens as class struggle escalated.

The Gracchi. The brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, reform-minded members of the aristocracy who opposed the self-interest and conservatism of the senators, championed the dispossessed plebeians as People's Tribunes. However, their drastic attempts at reform led to their assassination in riots (in 133 and 121 B.C.E., respectively). They tried to redistribute the land, extend Roman citizenship to the Italian allies, and curb the power of the senators over the courts by transferring judicial duties to the equestrian class. Their only lasting measure was to ease the plight of the impoverished by means of a state subsidy for the purchase of bread.

Marius. Constitutional shortcomings which indicated that the Roman Republic was ill-equipped to run an empire became evident when Numidia, a client state in North Africa led by Jugurtha, rebelled and German barbarians (the Teutones and Cimbri) threatened Italy from the north. Both of these threats were overcome by the brilliant general Marius, who won the Jugurthine War in 111–106 B.C.E. and defeated the Germans in southern Gaul in 102–101 B.C.E. However, the extended fighting required him to be elected consul for several years consecutively, which was a major breach of precedent. Marius also found it necessary to reform the Roman army. Since recruits were drawn from among the owners of small farms, the decline of these farms led to a serious shortage of manpower. To deal with this problem, Marius waived the property requirement, paid his troops wages, and provided them with land when they retired. This policy set a dangerous precedent, for soldiers now became loyal to their general, who provided the necessities of life, rather than to the state, which had failed to help them in their need.

Clientage. As order broke down, power shifted from the machinery of government to the client system, whereby a patrician would use his personal wealth to support poor men, who would in return support him politically. As wealthy patricians accumulated private armies, they used their power to oppose the Senate, and the Republic descended into a series of civil wars. The Senate itself became divided between two groups: the *optimates*, who represented the entrenched interests, and the *populares*, who demanded reform.

Extension of Roman Citizenship. Another constitutional challenge arising from tensions imposed by the empire occurred in the Social War (90–88 B.C.E.), named after Rome’s allies (*socii* in Latin) who seceded because the Senate refused to grant their demands for status as full citizens. The Senate finally conceded when threatened by a massive uprising in the eastern provinces led by Mithridates, King of Pontus in Anatolia.

Civil War. The Romans became divided over which general to send against Mithridates: Sulla, favored by the *optimates*, or Marius, favored by the *populares*. When Sulla finally left for the front, Marius used his private army to march on Rome and kill his opponents. Marius died in 86 B.C.E., and when Sulla returned to Italy, he executed Marius’s supporters and broke Roman precedent by serving as *dictator* for more than the maximum of six months. Although he relinquished power in 80 B.C.E., rival generals continued to jockey for position.

The First Triumvirate. The most ambitious men at this time, whose power rested in their private armies, were Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar. Although they were rivals, they established a three-way alliance known as a triumvirate in order to oppose the Senate, which thwarted their designs for personal aggrandizement. This delicate balance was upset in 53 B.C.E. when Crassus died and the two remaining triumvirs could not agree on redrawing their spheres of influence, in part because of Caesar’s stunning conquest of the Celts in Gaul (modern France) during the 50s B.C.E. The situation exploded into civil war (49–45 B.C.E.) when Caesar, returning from Gaul, crossed the Rubicon River on the border of Italy without disbanding his army, as demanded by Pompey and the Senate. Pompey was defeated by Caesar at Pharsalus in Greece (48 B.C.E.) and died a fugitive in Egypt. Although Caesar showed magnanimity to his vanquished opponents, alarmed senators led by conservatives Brutus and Cassius feared he would try to proclaim himself king. In the hope of saving the Republic, they organized a conspiracy that assassinated Caesar on the Ides of March (March 15), 44 B.C.E. Caesar’s supporters were outraged and Rome suffered another round of civil war (44–42 B.C.E.), which ended in the defeat of the assassins. Among Caesar’s achievements, his most far-reaching was the reform of the calendar

by adding leap years. This Julian calendar, with minor adjustments, is still in use.

The Second Triumvirate. Caesar's supporters were led by three men who formed a second triumvirate to dominate affairs in Rome: Marc Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian, who was Julius Caesar's grandnephew. Eventually, Marc Antony and Octavian squeezed Lepidus out, then fought one another for supremacy. Octavian, a shrewd propagandist, undercut support for Marc Antony by drawing attention to his love affair with Cleopatra, the Ptolemaic queen of Egypt, and raising fears that Marc Antony would try to rule Rome as an oriental despot. In 31 B.C.E. he defeated Marc Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium, off the western coast of Greece. With Cleopatra gone, the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms came to an end and the Romans added Egypt to their territorial possessions.

Augustus Caesar. After almost a century of strife, the war-weary Romans looked to Octavian to restore order. A cunning politician, Octavian assured the Romans that his only intention was to restore the Republic, and he maintained the outward forms of traditional government even as he worked behind the scenes to replace it with a political system that served his will alone. In 27 B.C.E., the Senate bestowed on Octavian the title *Augustus* ("revered one"), but he said he preferred the title *princeps*, the traditional republican term which meant "first citizen." He also used the title *imperator* (indicating one who held the power of *imperium*), from which the term "emperor" is derived. For all his deception and cunning, Augustus did institute much-needed reform, for the government of the Republic had been intended for a small agricultural community and was unable to administer an immense empire. Many of his measures were also better for the Roman people than the policies of the Senate had been. He established a civil service that was open to men of talent rather than birth, gave Rome its first police and fire departments, improved the roads, and sponsored a civic building program. In his published memoirs, Augustus boasted, "I found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble." Although Augustus tried to reform Roman morals through laws that were intended to revive the sanctity of marriage and the centrality of the family, this effort was not successful.

THE EMPIRE

The Emperors. The Republic's death and the Empire's birth were never openly proclaimed. One can argue that the conquest of the Mediterranean had killed the Republic about a hundred years before the age of Augustus, since their rise to supremacy brought the Romans more power than their

political machinery could handle; in that sense, the Republic was a victim of its own success. The Senate continued to exert some influence and consuls were still elected, but power now resided in the hands of one man. In order to legitimate the idea of a single prominent man governing the empire, the Romans instituted the cult of the emperor, who was worshiped as a god. As a god, he was above the law; his power to create law thus legitimated his authority. The early emperors were deified only after their death and were worshiped retrospectively, but later emperors were worshiped during their lifetimes. It is a testament to the viability of the new system that it survived even when the holder of power was unstable, like Nero (54–68 C.E.), or even insane, like Caligula (37–41 C.E.). For the most part, however, the early Roman emperors were effective rulers, and the sprawling region under the control of Rome benefited from the ability of a single ruler to make decisions for the entire empire.

Pax Romana. For a period of about 200 years, from the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.E.–14 C.E.) to the death of Marcus Aurelius (161–180 C.E.), Rome enjoyed a period of stability and prosperity known as the *Pax Romana*, or “Roman peace.” Foreign wars of conquest continued on the borders, but Rome was free of civil wars (with the exception of the year 68 C.E., when four rivals claimed the imperial throne upon Nero’s death). Augustus managed to unite the Mediterranean, but his invasion of Germany failed in 9 C.E. The Empire continued to expand elsewhere for over a hundred years, most notably into Britain (43 C.E.) and Dacia in the Balkan peninsula (106 C.E.). It was at its greatest extent in 117 C.E., when Roman legions briefly occupied Mesopotamia.

Bread and Circuses. As the Empire expanded, citizenship was gradually extended to the subject peoples until 212 C.E., when the emperor Caracalla declared all inhabitants of the empire full citizens. The population of the city of Rome expanded to about a million as uprooted farmers drifted to the capital in search of work. Poverty and unemployment consequently rose. Despite the measures instituted by Augustus, the Empire failed to solve these severe problems. The best it could do was to address the symptoms of social dysfunction by providing free grain and entertainment (in the form of gladiatorial games and chariot races) according to a social welfare policy known as “bread and circuses.”

LITERATURE

Early Poetry and Drama. The earliest Roman poet was Ennius (239–169 B.C.E.), who presented the history of Rome in an epic called the *Annales*.

Exceptional poets of the late Republic included Catullus (85–54 B.C.E.), who wrote passionate love lyrics about his unfaithful mistress, and Lucretius (96–55 B.C.E.), who described the Epicurean world view in his philosophical poem *On the Nature of Things*. The early Romans were generally not deep thinkers; they had little interest in tragedy, but greatly enjoyed comedy, which was mastered by Plautus (254–184 B.C.E.) and Terence (c. 190–159 B.C.E.). Their works influenced generations of later playwrights, including Shakespeare.

Prose. The earliest known prose work is Cato the Elder’s manual *On Agriculture*, which gives advice on running a country estate (c. 160 B.C.E.). The most accomplished writer of Latin prose was Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), a senator and lawyer whose massive output included speeches given in the Senate and the courts, letters to friends, and philosophical works, which he wrote during his enforced retirement by Julius Caesar (who was also an accomplished writer, publishing his memoirs on the conquest of Gaul). Cicero popularized Greek philosophy and espoused Stoicism. As a defender of the Republic, he wrote diatribes against Marc Antony known as the *Philippics*, but he was executed for his outspoken opposition.

Golden Age (43 B.C.E.–14 C.E.). Augustus Caesar patronized three poets whose celebrated works represent the golden age of Roman literature. The most famous of them was Virgil (70–19 B.C.E.), whose *Aeneid* (modeled on Homer’s epics) describes the legendary foundation of the Roman state by the fugitive Trojan prince, Aeneas. It was written at the request of Augustus, and in a “prophecy” celebrates his glorious reign. Virgil’s contemporaries were Horace (65–8 B.C.E.), who wrote lyrics on various themes, and Ovid (43 B.C.E.–17 C.E.), who wrote the *Metamorphoses*, which portrays myths of transformation in Greco-Roman mythology, and a long poem *On the Art of Love*, a manual for seduction. Ovid was later exiled by Augustus for his connection to a scandal involving a member of the imperial family. The greatest prose author of the golden age was the historian Livy (59 B.C.E.–17 C.E.).

Silver Age (14–c. 138 C.E.). During the first century of the Roman empire, writers found that they could not afford to offend emperors who ruled with absolute power. This limit on freedom of expression coincided with a general decline in Roman virtues, which led to a pervading sense of pessimism in literature from the reign of Tiberius (14–37 C.E.) to Hadrian (117–138 C.E.). In the *Germania*, the historian Tacitus (c. 55–117 C.E.) deplores the decline of Roman character while ironically praising the heroic simplicity of the barbarians. The Stoic philosopher Seneca (c. 4–65 C.E.) wrote tragedies and was executed by Nero, as was his nephew, Lucan (39–65 C.E.), who wrote the epic *Pharsalia*, which depicts the civil war between

Caesar and Pompey. Satirists vented their frustration at the general decline in morals, most notably Persius (34–62 C.E.), Petronius (d. 66), and Juvenal (c. 65–128 C.E.).

Later Works. The first Latin novel, *The Golden Ass*, was written by Apuleius (c. 125–200 C.E.), a philosopher who had to defend himself in court against an accusation of sorcery. The Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 C.E.) wrote an influential work of Stoic philosophy known as the *Meditations*. Two highly influential scientific authorities appeared during the second century: Galen (c. 129–199) provided a systematic theory of medicine, and Ptolemy (c. 100–170) wrote a book of astronomy known as the *Almagest*, which offered mathematical proofs to support the geocentric theory. In the later period, however, creativity began to wane, and many authors devoted themselves to preserving the literary and intellectual heritage in encyclopedic works. Two influential encyclopedic writers were Macrobius (fourth century) and Martianus Capella (fifth century).

Law. Perhaps the most important contribution of the Romans was their sophisticated body of written law. They constantly added to the original code of the Twelve Tables (c. 450 B.C.E.) as need arose, on the basis of decrees by the Senate, assemblies, judges, and emperors. The later development of Roman law was motivated by the need of the emperors to govern diverse peoples according to a universal code, and it received inspiration from the Stoic concept of natural law. By the second century C.E., the emperors were the only source of law and, beginning with Hadrian, ordered compilations that conveniently formulated existing decisions. Trained legal scholars became vital in this endeavor from the second to the early third century, and produced authoritative textbooks. These formed the basis for the final codification ordered by the Emperor Justinian (527–565) known as the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, or Body of Civil Law. In the interim, the Emperor Theodosius II (408–450) codified imperial legislation in a collection known as the *Codex Theodosianus*, or Theodosian Code (438).

ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND ENGINEERING

The Romans combined elements of Etruscan, Classical, and Hellenistic art. Their art and architecture was often designed to make a political statement, especially in monumental structures that reflected the power of the emperors. Roman engineering was an essential ingredient for maintaining the vast empire.

Etruscan Art. The Etruscans painted frescoes and made sculptures in terra-cotta, most notably to adorn their sarcophagi (tombs), which commonly

depicted a reclining husband and wife in a cheerful attitude. The style is reminiscent of Greek art from the Archaic period (seventh century B.C.E.), particularly with regard to the stiffness of the figures, their formal smiles, and their almond-shaped eyes.

Roman Art. In addition to naturalistic sculpture, carved reliefs, and frescoes, the Romans excelled in mosaics—colored tiles arranged to represent images, commonly of human figures or scenes of marine animals. Romans also sculpted equestrian statues, most famously one representing Marcus Aurelius (c. 175).

Roman Architecture. The Romans made extensive use of concrete (a mixture of cement and stone fragments). From the Etruscans they took the arch and the barrel vault (a curved ceiling made up of a series of arches). By arranging arches in a circle, they constructed domes—an architectural feature that the Greeks did not use. The most impressive example of a domed building is the Pantheon, a temple to all the gods (built in Rome between 118 and 128 C.E.). Roman public buildings were arranged around a *forum*, or square. Their law courts were housed inside large buildings known as *basilicas*, which later became the model for Christian churches. They also constructed massive edifices to celebrate their victories, such as the Arch of Titus, constructed by the emperor Domitian (81–96 C.E.) to commemorate his brother's conquest of Judea, or the Arch of Constantine (built 312–315). Similarly, a pillar carved with figures in relief, known as Trajan's Column, was erected around 106–113 C.E. to commemorate the conquest of Dacia. The Romans used columns as supporting elements in their structures, but, unlike the Greeks, frequently embedded the columns within the walls, as in the Colosseum, an amphitheater built between 72 to 80 C.E. for gladiatorial games. No Roman city was complete without bathhouses.

Engineering. Municipal bathhouses would not have been possible without the extensive use of aqueducts, which supplied fresh water and made sewers possible; Roman sanitation was unequaled until the nineteenth century. One of the most impressive Roman aqueducts is the Pont du Gard, near Nîmes in southern France, which was built around 1 C.E. At one location along its 31-mile course, the aqueduct crosses the Gard River on a bridge some 160 feet high supported by massive rounded arches. The Romans connected their cities with straight roads designed to expedite the movement of armies.

RELIGION

Polytheism and Syncretism. The Romans were polytheists and worshiped many of the same gods as the Greeks, though they often gave them

alternate names (Jupiter for Zeus, Juno for Hera, Minerva for Athena, etc.). The Romans were also very eclectic and practiced syncretism, like the Egyptians. Their techniques of divination reflect Etruscan influence.

Ancestor Worship and State Religion. A central feature of Roman religion was the worship of deceased ancestors and “household spirits” (minor gods who guarded the home), which were commonly represented by idols. The goddess Vesta protected the hearth and was served by twelve Vestal Virgins, whose primary task was to keep her sacred fire burning. The Romans linked religion with politics; priesthoods were, in fact, public offices. The office of chief priest, or *Pontifex Maximus*, was held at one time by Julius Caesar and was later adopted by the emperors. The cult of the emperor arose as an expression of patriotism.

Mystery Cults. State religion, with its emphasis on the here and now, eventually ceased to offer meaningful spiritual satisfaction. While many Romans of the imperial period looked to philosophy (especially Stoicism) for their spiritual needs, others turned to mystery cults, which offered the promise of eternal life. At first the Romans adopted the Greek cults of Dionysos (Bacchus) and Cybele (a mother goddess from Anatolia). Later they accepted the Egyptian cult of Isis and Osiris (popular among women) and the Persian cult of Mithras (popular among soldiers).

Gnosticism and Manichaeism. There were also religions that combined philosophy with elements of the mystery cults, such as Gnosticism and Manichaeism, both of which competed with Christianity for followers. The Gnostics, who were influential during the second and third centuries C.E., claimed that they possessed a secret form of revealed knowledge (*gnosis*). Their elaborate mythological theology and writings known as Gnostic Gospels reflected a dualistic world-view in which spirit was regarded as good while matter was despised as evil. The Manichaeans, followers of a Persian mystic named Mani (c. 216–275 C.E.), were also dualists and believed the world was caught in a struggle between the forces of light and darkness (which were associated with spirit and matter, respectively). In the third century C.E. there was also a very influential revival of Platonic philosophy known as Neoplatonism.

Neoplatonism. Although Neoplatonism was founded by Plotinus (c. 205–270 C.E.) as a school of philosophy, it included a mystical dimension. Later Neoplatonists, such as Porphyry (c. 233–305), Iamblichus (c. 250–300), and Proclus, (c. 410–485), added magical rituals. There were important parallels between later Neoplatonism and Christianity, and the two influenced one another considerably, even though they generally condemned one another’s teachings. Although the Roman Empire finally accepted Christianity in the

fourth century, its attitude toward the Judeo-Christian tradition until then was one of hostility.

THE JEWS IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Roman Rule. Relations between Romans and Jews began on a positive note. Led by the Hasmonean dynasty (the Maccabees), the Jews of Palestine rebelled against the Hellenistic rule of the Seleucids in 175–164 B.C.E. and allied themselves with Rome in 161 and 134 B.C.E. After winning their independence, they began to fight among themselves. When Pompey the Great visited the region in 63 B.C.E., he found two brothers struggling for the throne and intervened to stop the civil war by imposing Roman rule. At first the Romans tried to rule Judea indirectly, through local kings such as Herod (37–4 B.C.E.), but when this approach proved ineffective, they transformed the region from a client state to a province ruled directly by a Roman governor. Jewish society under Roman occupation was deeply divided. There were four major groups. The *Zealots* were violently opposed to the occupation. The *Sadducees* collaborated with the Roman occupation. The *Pharisees* resisted assimilation into Greco-Roman culture by adhering carefully to Mosaic Law. The *Essenes* fled to the wilderness and lived a kind of isolated monastic lifestyle. To maintain peace with the Jews, the Romans granted them certain concessions, such as exemption from honoring the cult of the emperor or performing military service. Yet even such favored treatment was not enough to conciliate the occupied people.

Rebellions. In 66 C.E. Judea erupted in a revolt that was bloodily suppressed after years of fighting; the last isolated Jewish fortress, Masada, was taken in 73 C.E. The Romans destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. and deported many. Later, the emperor Hadrian's attempt to Romanize Judea—particularly his decision to build a pagan temple in the holy city—triggered a revolt under the Messianic leader Bar-Kochba (132–135 C.E.). Many died in the ruthless suppression of the rebellion, and survivors had to flee the devastated area.

Diaspora. The suppression of Bar-Kochba's rebellion marked the end of Jerusalem as the effective focal point of Jewish life. Synagogues replaced the Temple as the center of worship, and Jewish culture endured in the Diaspora. Its theological development continued in the rabbinic schools, which established a comprehensive body of Jewish civil and religious law, known as the Mishnah, around 200 C.E. Over the following centuries until about 600 C.E., the Mishnah received commentary known as the Gemara, of which there are two versions: one compiled in Palestine, the other in Babylonia.

The Babylonian version became authoritative. Together the Mishnah and Gemara are known as the Talmud. This transformation of Judaism after the destruction of the Temple was also partly a reaction to an attempt to reform Judaism by a sect known as the Christians.

CHRISTIANITY

Jesus of Nazareth. Christianity began as a reform movement within Judaism led by Jesus of Nazareth, who was born around 4 B.C.E. and died around 30 C.E. (The modern reckoning of years began to be used in the sixth century C.E., but was based on a miscalculation of the year of Jesus' birth.) Jesus was alive during a time when the Jews eagerly awaited the appearance of a leader specially chosen by God to liberate them from oppression. This individual was called the "anointed one" (*Messiah* in Hebrew, *Christos* in Greek). The followers of Jesus believed he was the Messiah, though his teaching lacked overt political content and instead focused on an enlightened moral code summed up in two commands: first, love God; and secondly, love thy neighbor. Jesus promised that his followers would receive salvation and immortality when he returned at the end of the world to judge all human beings, and he chose twelve disciples called Apostles to spread the Gospel ("Good News") of salvation. He also instructed his disciples to remember him by sharing a special meal of bread and wine which he said were his body and blood, the sign of a new Covenant. Jesus was critical of the Pharisees for failing to live up to the ancient prophets' ideals of social justice. He became seen as a dangerous radical, and around 30 C.E., during the reign of Tiberius (14–37 C.E.), Jesus was arrested, brought before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, and crucified.

Early Preaching. After their leader's death, the followers of Jesus began to proclaim that he had risen from the dead and would soon return. They now believed that the Messiah, or Christ, was not a king who would free the Jews from political oppression but one who would free all people from the oppression of sin and death. Thus they began to preach the Gospel and convert not only Jews, but also Gentiles (non-Jews), having made the crucial decision to remove the requirement of adherence to Mosaic Law. Gentiles who converted to Christianity had to accept only a few simple practices, including baptism and the Eucharist (meaning "thanksgiving"—the ritual meal in memory of Jesus), and to live up to the Christian moral code. The most instrumental missionary was Saul of Tarsus, better known as St. Paul, who regularly traveled the eastern Mediterranean as far as Rome preaching, converting, and guiding the fledgling Christian communities through his letters of advice and reprimand.

The New Testament. The first Christians expected Jesus' imminent return within their own lifetime. Yet as it became clear this would not happen, they began to write down Jesus' oral teaching. Thus the four Gospels, named after the disciples Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were composed around 70–100 C.E. The Gospels became the core of the New Testament, which was regarded as a fulfillment of the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible (renamed the Old Testament). The New Testament also includes letters, known as Epistles, written by early Christian leaders such as St. Paul, who is regarded as the first Christian theologian. The new Scriptures were written in *koine*, a form of Greek that represented everyday speech rather than the literary models of the Classical period.

The Appeal of Christianity. Christianity began as a religion of the oppressed and marginalized. The earliest converts were the poor and slaves. Women found the new faith attractive because it valued the salvation of their souls equally with that of men, unlike the mystery cult known as Mithraism, which was popular among Roman soldiers but excluded women. For three centuries Christianity competed with the mystery cults before it became the official religion of the Roman Empire. During most of this time, it was an underground movement that suffered periodic persecutions.

Persecutions. The earliest communities of the nascent religion blended Jewish and Christian practices. They were persecuted by some Jewish leaders who opposed their religious reforms. Saul of Tarsus initially hunted Christians before he himself became one after a dramatic conversion experience. He then endured the torments that other Christians suffered; according to tradition, he died in Rome in 64 C.E., a victim of the emperor Nero, who blamed a disastrous fire in Rome on the young sect. Nero's persecution was the first official action by a Roman emperor against Christians. Although angry mobs sometimes perpetrated acts of violence against them, it was not until the third century that energetic attempts were made to eradicate their religion. The Empire suffered a series of crises at this time, and Christians were seen as a threat to political order because they refused to worship the emperor—an act that was as much a statement of patriotism as a form of religious observance. Furthermore Christian rituals were misunderstood (the Eucharist was viewed as cannibalism), and Christians were resented for their non-conformism: for example, they opposed violent entertainment such as gladiatorial combats. The most serious official persecution was organized by Diocletian (284–305). Earlier attempts were also made by Marcus Aurelius (161–180) and Decius (249–251), among others. Christians who died in the persecutions were revered as martyrs, or “witnesses,” of the faith and were accorded the status of saints (“holy ones”).

Toleration and Official Status. The emperor Constantine (306–337), who succeeded Diocletian, reversed the policy of persecution by issuing the Edict of Milan (313), which granted toleration to Christians. Although Constantine’s motivations are debatable, he is reported to have had a vision on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 (near Rome) which promised him victory against a rival emperor if he accepted the Christian religion. After the Edict of Milan, the Church received legal rights and soon became wealthy from donations. It was not until later, however, that paganism was forbidden, making Christianity the sole religion of the Empire. The emperor Julian (361–363) tried to revive paganism (using Neoplatonism as its theology), but otherwise all Roman emperors beginning with Constantine were Christians.

Monasticism. The transformation of Christianity from an oppressed faith to the official religion of the empire ensured its survival but also changed its quality. Many people became Christians in order to ingratiate themselves with the imperial family or to take advantage of the wealth that now belonged to the Church. Some devout Christians reacted by fleeing to the wilderness and living lives of prayer in seclusion. These became the first Christian monks, known as the “Desert Fathers.” Although many of them were hermits who practiced a harsh ascetic regimen, such as St. Anthony of Egypt (c. 250–350), or St. Simon Stylites (c. 390–459) who lived on top of a pillar in Syria, others began to live in communities, such as the one organized by St. Pachomius (c. 290–346). All three of these prominent Desert Fathers lived in the Near East; from there monasticism was spread to western Europe by men like John Cassian (c. 360–433).

Heresy and Orthodoxy. Another effect of Christianity’s rise to dominance in the Roman Empire was the politicization of its theological disputes. Differences of opinion over doctrine, always a matter of controversy, now became an occasion for persecution by one Christian group against another. Doctrines that were sanctioned by the imperial government were labeled “orthodoxy” (right teaching), whereas doctrines without such support were called “heresy” (sectarianism). Heresy was regarded not merely as religious non-conformism, but a crime against the state. Orthodoxy generally corresponded to the majority view, as determined by bishops in council, but often emperors pushed their own views against the judgment of bishops, or entire provinces might oppose the official teaching, as a political statement of regionalism. These disagreements sometimes erupted into riots and undermined the unity of the empire. Since Constantine had intended Christianity to be a unifying force within the empire, he was the first to take measures to resolve the theological disputes. The principal mechanism for establishing correct teaching was the general, or “ecumenical,” church council. These

conferences of bishops were initially convened by emperors. The early controversies focused on the Trinity, that is, the three persons of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and generated three main heresies.

Council of Nicaea (325): Against Arianism. Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325 in order to settle the dispute over the nature of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Father. This council established the Nicene Creed, a series of dogmatic statements which assert that Jesus, as the Son of God, is equal to the Father (these two persons are “consubstantial” and “coeternal”). The Council of Nicaea therefore condemned Arianism, the teaching of the theologian Arius that the Son is subordinate. The next council, at Constantinople (381), reaffirmed the Council of Nicaea and added that the Holy Spirit is also equal to the Father and the Son.

Council of Ephesus (431): Against Nestorianism. The third general council focused on the person of Christ and condemned the teachings of the theologian Nestorius, who taught that the two natures of Jesus (human and divine) require that he should be regarded as two persons. The Council of Ephesus defined the orthodox position as follows: Jesus has two natures (human and divine) which are joined in a single person (the second person of the Trinity). Despite persecution, Nestorian Christians continued to exist in Syria.

Council of Chalcedon (451): Against Monophysitism. The fourth general council also focused on the person of Christ. It condemned the teaching, known as Monophysitism, which holds that Jesus has only one nature (*mono-*, one; *physis*, nature). Monophysites claimed that Jesus is divine, but not human. Orthodox thinkers condemned this teaching because it opposed the position defined at Ephesus and seemed to deny the possibility of salvation (which was thought to depend on Christ’s role as mediator between divinity and humanity). Although persecuted, Monophysitism persisted in Egypt and in Syria (where it was known as the Jacobite Church).

Leadership of the Church. During the late Roman Empire, there was tension over the question of ecclesiastical leadership. By the second century, Rome had become the center of Christianity. The bishops of Rome claimed to be the successors of St. Peter, the Apostle designated by Jesus as leader of the Church, who according to tradition was the first bishop of Rome, martyred during the persecutions of Nero in 64 C.E. This concept of *apostolic succession* served as the basis of the claim by the bishops of Rome to spiritual authority over the whole Church. They adopted the title of “pope” (*papa* in Latin, which means “father”) to designate their special status. However, Christians did not agree on the supremacy of Rome. When the capital of the empire was moved to Constantinople, the bishops

(patriarchs) of that city claimed leadership in the east. The patriarchs of other ancient Christian centers—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria—also claimed a certain status of regional leadership. The situation was complicated by the emperors, who often intervened in religious affairs (their claim to church leadership is called “Caesaropapism”). The various conflicting claims to leadership were never resolved but became the cause of later divisions within the Church.

REORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRE

Crisis of the Third Century. After the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180), the Roman Empire faced a series of threats that nearly destroyed it. The barbarians breached the borders in the north while a new Persian dynasty, the Sassanians, launched aggressive campaigns in the east. Military expenditures increased while a period of economic decline set in. Manpower shortages hampered both defense and economics, and they were aggravated by waves of disease that swept through the Empire. To make matters worse, as the military became more prominent, power fell into the hands of the generals, who recklessly fought one another for control of the empire, ruling through puppet emperors who were frequently murdered in coups d’etat.

Diocletian’s Reforms. The turmoil was finally checked by the rise of Diocletian (284–305), who initiated a comprehensive series of reforms that saved the Empire. To prevent future civil wars over imperial succession, and to deal more effectively with invasions on the far-flung borders, Diocletian instituted the Tetrarchy, or rule by four emperors, consisting of two seniors named Augusti and two juniors named Caesars. Each of them was in charge of a quarter of the empire known as a prefecture. Furthermore, to prevent provincial governors from amassing too much power, Diocletian reorganized imperial administration. He broke large provinces up into small ones, thereby limiting the resources that an overly-ambitious governor could use to stage a coup d’etat. The many provinces were organized into twelve units called dioceses (three in each prefecture), and each diocese was managed by a vicar who answered to a Caesar or an Augustus. The new imperial administration improved the centralization of power by streamlining the chain of command. A larger bureaucracy, which was needed to collect increased taxes, likewise diluted the power of individual governors.

Social and Economic Policies. Diocletian took drastic measures to deal with the shortage of manpower and revenue. He required that farmers remain tied to the land (thereby setting the foundation for serfdom in the

Middle Ages) and that sons carry on their father's trade (which foreshadowed the guild system). He tried to stop inflation by fixing prices and wages, but this measure was impossible to enforce and was a complete failure. In order to enforce obedience to his imperial authority, which he structured on the model of oriental despotism, Diocletian severely punished dissent. Frustrated by the refusal of Christians to show their patriotism by worshiping the cult of the emperor, he tried to stamp out Christianity.

Constantine the Great. Diocletian's administrative reforms were successful, but his solution for the imperial succession was not. As long as he governed as the senior Augustus, the other three emperors did as he intended. After he retired in 305, however, the emperors came into conflict. By 312, two remained standing: Constantine in the west and Licinius in the east. They ruled their halves of the empire until 324, when Constantine defeated his rival and became the sole emperor.

New Rome. In 330, Constantine (306–337) abandoned Rome, which had become a strategic and financial backwater, and founded a new capital called Constantinople at a defensible position in the northeast of the Empire, upon the site of the ancient city of Byzantium at the entrance to the Black Sea. He chose this location because it would facilitate the defense of the unstable northern and eastern borders and set the capital in the more prosperous eastern provinces, where revenue could be raised more effectively. The transfer of the capital was nothing new—Diocletian had made the nearby city of Nicomedia in Anatolia his capital for similar reasons, and emperors before them had transferred the capital to Milan in northern Italy. What was new was the decision to transfer the capital permanently to the east. Although this measure was intended to strengthen the empire, it foreshadowed the decline of the city of Rome and the western empire in the following century.

THE GERMANIC INVASIONS

Early Contact. The Romans first encountered Germanic tribes when the Teutones and Cimbri tried to invade Italy but were defeated by Marius in 102–101 B.C.E. Around 50 B.C.E. Julius Caesar challenged the Germans across the Rhine during his conquest of Celtic Gaul. Augustus Caesar later sent three legions to subdue the Germans and add their territory to the growing empire, but the Roman forces were annihilated in 9 C.E. by the German general Arminius (Hermann) in the Teutoburger Forest, ending Roman attempts to subjugate Germany.

Border Wars. Relations between Romans and Germans consisted largely of peaceful trade, but toward the end of the second century C.E. Germanic tribes began to raid the provinces, forcing Marcus Aurelius (161–180) to spend long years campaigning to protect the northern borders. Faced with shortages of manpower, he established a dangerous precedent by conducting alliances with some of the German tribes, known as *foederati* (“federates”), who were allowed to settle within the borders of the empire in exchange for defending it against other Germanic tribes. Over time, more and more tribes became *foederati*, and an increasing percentage of Roman legions were manned by German recruits, eventually with German generals commanding them. Entrusting the empire’s defense to allied barbarians was effective in the short term, but ultimately contributed to the decline of the empire.

The Great Migrations. In the third century Germanic groups seized the Roman province of Dacia and invaded the Balkans, plundering Greece and Anatolia. German pirates even raided Mediterranean shipping for a time, but eventually the invaders were expelled and the borders stabilized. In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, the northern borders effectively disintegrated. German tribes entered the empire at will, and Roman emperors could not force them back. Most of the barbarians were not intent on destruction. They were impressed by Roman civilization and attracted by its wealth, which they hoped to control. The invasions beginning in the fourth century are often described as “migrations” because they involved the movement of entire tribes, including women and children, who wandered through the empire like nomads. They typically would settle in one place for years until supplies were exhausted, then move on to another location. Violence against the Roman population was not continuous, although it did flare up at times. While the number of barbarians wandering through the empire was always a small fraction of the imperial population, their presence strained the economy and weakened imperial administration, even in the absence of violence.

Visigoths. The migrations began with the Visigoths (“West Goths”), who received permission from the Emperor Valens to enter the Balkans in 376 in order to escape the Huns, an Asiatic group of marauding nomads. Abused by Roman administrators, however, the Visigoths revolted and Valens was killed in 378 at the Battle of Adrianople (in the Balkans). The Visigoths then made peace with the Romans and remained in the northern Balkans until 395, when a new leader, Alaric, guided them into the wealthier provinces of Greece and Italy. They plundered Rome in 410—the first time the city was seized by outsiders in 800 years (since the Gauls in 390 B.C.E.). However, the Visigoths did not conduct a general massacre of the

inhabitants. They had already been converted to Christianity by Ulfilas (c. 311–382), an Arian who translated the Bible into Gothic, so they did not destroy churches or harm anyone who sought sanctuary in them. Soon Alaric died, and the Visigoths were led by Alaric's successor into southern Gaul and Spain, where they settled.

Vandals. In 406 a number of tribes, including the Suevi, Vandals, and Alans (a non-Germanic group), crossed the Rhine into Gaul, beginning migrations that brought some of them into North Africa. The movement was led by the Vandals, who passed through Visigoth-occupied Spain and reached North Africa in 429 under their king, Gaiseric (428–477). In 455 they mounted a raid into Italy across the Mediterranean and sacked Rome; the modern term “vandalism” is derived from them. The Vandals, like the Visigoths, were Arian Christians and were therefore despised as heretics. They in turn persecuted Orthodox (Catholic) Christians.

Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. By 410 the Romans had pulled all their legions from Britain in order to defend the provinces on the Continent. For protection against the Picts (ancient inhabitants of Scotland), the Britons asked for help from Germanic tribes, who then turned against the Britons, forcing them into Wales and occupying most of the island. The three principal tribes were the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, who over time became one people. The region of Britain occupied by the invaders was named England after the Angles, who predominated. Unlike the Visigoths and Vandals, the Germanic invaders of Britain were pagan, not Christian.

Burgundians. Around the 440s, a group known as the Burgundians established themselves in southeastern Gaul, which was renamed Burgundy after them. Among their achievements was an early Germanic law code that extended to the Roman subjects within their newly-formed domain.

Huns. A pagan group from central Asia known as the Huns had established an empire over several German tribes in Europe. Under their leader Attila (433–453), known as the “Scourge of God,” they invaded Gaul in 451 but were stopped near Châlons by an alliance of Romans and Visigoths. In 452 Attila threatened to sack Rome, but Pope Leo I (440–461) persuaded him to spare the city. The following year Attila died and his empire disintegrated.

The Last Roman Emperor in the West. When the Visigoths approached Italy early in the fifth century, the western emperor withdrew to the more defensible city of Ravenna on the Adriatic coast. In 476, however, a Gothic general in the Roman army named Odoacer (Odovacar) staged a coup d'état with his German troops, seized Ravenna, and deposed the

youthful emperor, Romulus Augustulus (475–476). This emperor was not replaced by a successor. Instead, Odoacer made himself king of Italy with the acquiescence of the eastern Roman emperor, Zeno (474–491), who was momentarily powerless to affect events in the west. Thus ended the western line of Roman emperors.

Ostrogoths. In 488 Zeno sent his ally Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths (474–526), to overthrow Odoacer in Ravenna. Theodoric thus became king of Italy in 493. Although the Ostrogoths (“East Goths”) initially ruled with the approval of the emperors in Constantinople, Justinian the Great (527–565) launched a war against them and reclaimed Italy in a long and terrible struggle lasting from 535 to 555.

Lombards. Justinian’s reconquest of Italy did not endure. In 568, the pagan Lombards invaded Italy and by 572 established a kingdom in the Po valley, which became Lombardy. Constantinople was able to retain only southern Italy and a few coastal cities in the north, including Ravenna. Rome was claimed by the eastern emperors but not effectively defended by them. The Lombards finally converted to Christianity, but they often threatened the popes, who eventually turned to the Franks for protection. The Lombard kingdom lasted until 774, when it was overthrown by the Frankish king, Charlemagne.

Franks. The most successful of the barbarian groups were the Franks, from whom France gets its name. They were pagan when they entered Gaul, but converted to Catholicism rather than Arian Christianity around 500 under their king Clovis (481–511), thereby winning the goodwill and support of the clergy. The Frankish kingdom was ruled by two dynasties—the Merovingian and Carolingian—whose policies shaped the early Middle Ages in western Europe.

THE LATE EMPIRE

Augustine of Hippo. The period of the Germanic migrations corresponded with a decline in secular learning, but there was a flowering of literature and theology among the Christians, who were enjoying a period of favor after three centuries of oppression. The sack of Rome in 410, prompted pagans to blame Christianity for the disaster, but their criticisms were refuted by the North African bishop, St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430). His response was a theological interpretation of world history entitled *The City of God*, which presents a linear conception of time and a sense of history guided by providence. Augustine argued that disasters like the fall of governments were unimportant compared to the rise of Christianity, for the

former were concerned only with the fate of the body, whereas the latter was also concerned with the fate of the soul. This thesis led Augustine to posit two cities—the city of God, consisting of faithful believers, and the city of Satan, consisting of those who do works of evil (these included hypocritical Christians as well as pagans). Augustine did not condemn all secular philosophy; he urged instead that Christians “despoil the Egyptians”—that is, take what is useful from pagan philosophy and put it at the service of Christian theology. He himself was well versed in Neoplatonism (having also dallied with Manichaeism) and wrestled with all manner of philosophical problems. He revealed the inner struggle that preceded his conversion in his autobiography, *The Confessions*.

Jerome and Ambrose. Two other leading Christian scholars were St. Jerome (c. 347–420), who translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin (called the Vulgate), and St. Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–397) who served as an imperial administrator before he became a bishop. Ambrose challenged the power of the state by forcing the emperor Theodosius (379–395) to do public penance under pain of excommunication (denial of church services) when he had executed a number of citizens for participating in a riot. Thus Ambrose demonstrated the psychological power of the Church and at the same time established that Christian statesmen are not free to ignore the moral injunctions of Christianity for the sake of political expediency.

Doctors of the Church. The vital service rendered by these men in the foundation of the Church was acknowledged during the Middle Ages by identifying them as “Doctors” (teachers) of the Church, of which there are four Latin and four Greek. The Latin doctors include Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome, and Pope Gregory the Great (590–604). The Greek doctors include Athanasius (c. 293–373), Basil the Great (c. 329–379), John Chrysostom (c. 354–407), and Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–389).

Imitation and Preservation of the Classics. While churchmen explored uncharted intellectual territory and laid down principles for a new society, the educational institutions of the empire disintegrated. Apart from theology, little that was written was new. Most literary productions either imitated earlier models or summarized previous learning, and the emphasis was on preservation rather than creation. Yet there were certain innovations. For example, in preserving ancient texts, there was a transition from the use of the papyrus scroll to the *codex*—a book with pages—which is still in use today.

Architecture. Ecclesiastical culture showed vitality in the realm of architecture. For the first three hundred years, when Christianity was an

underground religion, it was practiced either in catacombs or private houses. When it became legalized, there was an explosion of church-building. The characteristic design of Latin churches was established at this time on the model of the Roman court of law (*basilica*). Apart from ecclesiastical structures, however, the Late Empire had relatively little to offer by way of monumental architecture. The best example is the Arch of Constantine, but this structure demonstrates that craftsmanship had declined since the era of the *Pax Romana*.

THE FALL OF ROME

Much has been argued about the reasons for the “fall of Rome” which was actually a gradual process of disintegration. Essentially, the empire in the west disintegrated because the resources needed to defend the entire empire could no longer be raised, and the emperors in the new eastern capital sacrificed it as the less defensible region. It is important to distinguish between the fate of the city of Rome and the fate of the Roman Empire, for the fall of the city did not result in the immediate disintegration of the Empire. Most importantly, the emperors in Constantinople persisted until the end of the Middle Ages, and justifiably called themselves “Romans,” since the Empire they governed was really a continuation of the evolving institution founded by Augustus Caesar. Furthermore, even in the west, the Roman Empire did not come to an end in any clearly identifiable year—the end of the western imperial line in 476 C.E. merely recognized the fact that the office of the western emperor had become a meaningless position some time before it was finally abandoned. The cultural tradition of the Roman Empire continued to exert its influence and blended with the cultural tradition of the Germanic barbarians, resulting in the creation of a distinct, medieval culture.