Ancient Rome and the Rise of Christianity (509 B.C. – A.D. 476)
Document 1
Geography and Rome

- Rome is located in the center of the Italian peninsula. This location helped the Romans expand in Italy and beyond.
- The Apennine Mountains run down the center of Italy but are not too rugged.
- Fertile plains supported a growing population.
- Ancestors of the Romans settled along the Tiber River. These villages eventually grew into Rome.
The Etruscans

- The Etruscans lived in independent, fortified city-states that formed small confederacies.
- They were ruled by oligarchies that governed through a council with elected officials.
- They were mostly agrarian, but had a strong military which they used to force surrounding peoples to do the agricultural labor on their farms.
- They then could devote time to commerce and industry.
- They had an alphabet based on that of the ancient Greeks.

Etruscan couple
Early Romans

- Rome was founded by a tribal, agrarian Italic people from south of the Tiber River around 753 B.C.
- As Romans developed their city, government, & culture, they imitated the Etruscans civilization to the north.
The Story of Romulus and Remus

- According to Roman mythology, the founders of Rome were twin-brothers, Romulus and Remus.
- They were sons of the god Mars and the priestess Rhea Silvia, daughter of King Numitor.
- Numitor was deposed by his brother, Amulius.
- Amulius had the boys placed in trough and thrown into the Tigris River.
- When they came ashore, they were found by a she-wolf who looked after them and suckled them. A woodpecker also helped feed them.
- A shepherd found them and raised them.
- When the boys grew up they killed Amulius and reinstated Numitor to the throne.
- They then decided to build a city, had an argument, and Romulus killed Remus.
- So the city was named Rome after Romulus.
Virgil’s *Aeneid*

- Virgil’s *Aeneid* became the national epic of the Roman empire and the most famous poem of the Roman era.
- Aeneas, the son of Venus and a mortal father, was a hero fighting the Greeks in the Trojan wars.
- He escaped as the great city of Troy was sacked and after quite an odyssey he landed in Latium on the Tiber river.
- Aeneas married the daughter of King Latinus, only to aggrieve King Turnus of Rutuli who had wanted her for himself.
- War broke out between Turnus and Aeneaus, who was by then supported by King Tarchon of the Etruscans.
- Naturally Aeneas, son of Venus, was triumphant.

Aeneas having his wounds dressed in the presence of Venus. From a wall painting in Pompeii. *Museo della Civiltà, Rome*
### Roman Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>WOMEN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The family was the basic unit of Roman society.</td>
<td>Women gained greater freedom and influence over the centuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male was head of household and had absolute authority.</td>
<td>Some women ran businesses. Most worked at home, raising families.</td>
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<th>EDUCATION</th>
<th>RELIGION</th>
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<tr>
<td>Both girls and boys learned to read and write.</td>
<td>Gods and goddesses resembled those of Greeks and Etruscans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education was highly valued.</td>
<td>Religious festivals inspired sense of community.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Romans built many temples for worship.</td>
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</table>
Expansion in Italy

By about 270 B.C., Rome controlled most of the Italian peninsula.

Why was Rome’s expansion in Italy successful?

- Skilled diplomacy
- Loyal, well-trained army
- Treated defeated enemies fairly
- Gave rights to conquered people
Section 2
Warm-up

Slaves, Peasants, and Scribes

Document 2
After the Romans threw out their Etruscan king, they set up a republic, in which Rome was ruled by its Senate and its assembly.

Two consuls were elected for one year terms. They initiated legislation, served as head of the judiciary and the military, and served as chief priests to the nation. Proconsuls were consuls, whose terms were extended due to military campaigns.

Their were two financial officers called, quaestors.

The praetor was a military office.

The two censors drew up the role of citizens in order to assess taxes.
The Roman Republic

- **Imperium**, or power, was concentrated in the hands of the **patricians**, or noble classes, who elected the consuls, quaestors, praetors, and censors from their own class.

- The Senate was also comprised only of patricians and were the principal power in Rome.

- This dominance of Roman law, finances, and foreign policy by the patricians produced resentment among the **plebeians**, or common people.

- After years of conflict, the plebeians won the right to an assembly, headed by tribunes, which could veto any decision by a Roman magistrate or official and could veto any decision or legislation by the Senate.

- The Assembly could also make laws that governed the plebeians.

- In 450 BC, the **Law of the Twelve Tables**, formalized and codified Roman law and its constitution, which was a victory for the rights of citizens under the law.
The Conquest of Italy

- The Romans allied themselves with other Latins and Greeks to drive the Etruscans from the Italian peninsula.

- In 387 B.C., the Gauls crossed the Alps into Italy and defeated the Roman army. They captured and burned Rome demanding tribute, leaving them vulnerable.

- Rome rebuilt and beat back the Gauls and then the other Latins to take control of the entire Italian peninsula.
“Carthage” means in Phoenician, “the New City.”

They became independent when the Assyrians and then the Persians conquered the Phoenicians.

By the time Rome controlled all of the Italian peninsula, Carthage already controlled the much of the North African coast, southern Spain, and the islands of Corsica and Sardinia.

Carthage was the greatest naval power of the Mediterranean in the 3rd century.

They were originally a colony founded by the Phoenicians.
The Punic Wars

- In the **First Punic War** Rome took the Carthaginian cities on Sicily and destroyed their navy.

- Then after signing a peace treaty with the Carthaginians, Rome took the island of Corsica from the Carthaginians.

- In retaliation, Carthage, under the leadership of **Hannibal**, started the **Second Punic War** by crossing the Alps, to invade Italy.

- Poverty begun with Hannibal’s invasion of Italy and continued warfare, led the army to enter politics.
The Punic Wars (cont.)

- The Second Punic War was the defining experience for the Romans. They had faced certain defeat with toughness and determination and had won against overwhelming odds; it turned Rome from a regional power into an international empire.

- In the Third Punic War the Romans attacked the city of Carthage, destroying the city and its harbor and selling its inhabitants into slavery.
Winning an Empire

After gaining control of the Italian peninsula, Rome began to build an empire around the Mediterranean Sea.

- The Romans followed a policy of **imperialism**, establishing control over foreign lands and peoples.

- Carthage, Macedonia, Greece, and parts of Asia Minor became Roman **provinces**, or lands under Roman rule.
The Roman Empire at its Height

By 133 B.C., Roman power extended from Spain to Egypt.
Slaves, Peasants, and Scribes

Document 3
Causes Leading to the Decline of the Republic

1. Conquered people forced to work as slaves
   Huge quantities of grain

2. Small farmers no longer needed to produce food
   New wealth increases corruption

3. Farmers flock to Rome and other cities looking for jobs
   Greed and self-interest replace virtues of simplicity,
   hard work, and devotion to duty

Civil wars
Decline of the Republic

- In 70 B.C., Crassus and Pompey were elected consuls. They allied with the Tribunes and assembly against the Senate and patricians.

- As Pompey became more powerful through military campaigns, Crassus allied himself with the military general, Julius Caesar.

- When Julius returned from Spain he demanded a triumph, or victory parade, through Rome.

- Being denied he convinced Pompey and Crassus to reconcile and forced the Senate to establish the first Triumvirate comprised of Crassus, Pompey, and Julius Caesar.
From Republic to Empire

- Civil wars
- **Julius Caesar** forces the Roman senate to make him *dictator*.
- Caesar institutes reforms to try to solve Rome’s many problems.
- Caesar is killed by enemies who feared that he planned to make himself king of Rome.
- More civil wars break out.
- Octavian defeats Mark Antony in a struggle for power.
- The Roman senate gives Octavian the title of *Augustus*, or Exhalted One, and declares him first citizen.
- The 500-year republic comes to an end. The age of the Roman empire begins.
Roman Empire and Roman Peace

Augustus laid the foundation for a stable government that would function well for 200 years. This period was called the Pax Romana.

**Augustus’ reforms**
- Created efficient civil service to enforce the laws.
- Opened up high-level jobs to men of talent, regardless of race.
- Allowed cities and provinces to govern themselves.
- Ordered a **census**, or population count, in order to make the tax system more fair.
- Set up a postal service and issued new coins.
- Employed the jobless.
From Republic to Empire

Chariot races and gladiatorial games were popular.
The Julio-Claudian Emperors

- **Tiberius** was a great military leader; regulated business to prevent fraud; kept Rome’s economy stable; was depraved and cruel.

- **Caligula** abolished sales tax; allowed people in exile to return; increased court system’s power; was depraved and insane.

- **Claudius** build a new harbor at Ostia and a new aqueduct for Rome; conquered most of Britain; stuttered and had a limp.

- **Nero** constructed many new buildings; gave slaves the right to file complaints; assisted cities suffering from disasters; self-professed actor; accused of burning Rome; committed assisted suicide.
Farthest Extent of Roman Empire
Religious Diversity in the Early Empire

- As long as people honored Roman gods and acknowledged the divine spirit of the emperor, they were allowed to worship other gods as they pleased.

- After the Romans conquered Judea, they excused the monotheistic Jews from worshiping the Roman gods.

The emperor Marcus Aurelius, attended by his family, offers sacrifice outside the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus after his victories in Germany. Late 2nd century AD. Capitoline Museum, Rome
Outward from Jerusalem

- The Roman peace (*Pax Romana*) provided political and social stability, making possible easy movement of people and ideas.

- The pervasive Hellenistic culture provided a common form of Greek language to all learned people under Roman rule.

- People were also becoming dissatisfied with the inherited religions of the Mediterranean.

- Christianity was initially able to take advantage of these conditions.

- The dispersion of Jews from Judea initially provided a base of operations and protection of worship, as they were seen as a branch of Judaism.
The Teachings of Jesus

Some of Jesus’ teachings were rooted in Judaism:

Belief in one God
Ten Commandments
Mercy and sympathy for the poor and helpless
Obedience to the laws of Moses

Jesus also preached new beliefs:

1) Called himself the Son of God
2) Proclaimed that he brought salvation and eternal life to anyone who would believe in him
3) Jesus also emphasized God’s love and taught the need for justice, morality, and service to others.

The Good Shepherd
Agape Feast of Early Christians

This was the early communion in which Christians symbolically remembered the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
The Fall of Jerusalem, A.D. 70: Christianity Stand on Its Own

- In A.D. 66, the Jews were attacked by Greek-speakers in Caesarea while the Roman army stood by passively.
- The Jewish Zealots in Jerusalem were outraged and attacked a Roman garrison killing its defenders.
- Rome soon sent reinforcements to squash the rebellion.
- The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 accelerated the break between Christianity and Judaism.
The Persecution of Christians

- Christians claims about a “crucified messiah” and that gentile converts became “children of Abraham” offended Jews deeply and drew determined opposition down upon the Church.

- Additionally, Rome mistrusted Christians because they refused to make sacrifices to the emperor and insisted that Jesus Christ, not Caesar, was lord.

- As the empire began to decline and was threatened by the Sassanid Empire in Persia, many Romans turned to Christianity in larger numbers, further threatening the Roman leadership.

- Roman persecution of Christians increased under the emperors Nero (from A.D. 64), Domitian (from A.D. 90), and Marcus Aurelius (in 177).

- Roman officials persecuted the Christians. Many Christians became martyrs, people who suffer or die for their beliefs.

- But not even the empires largest and bloodiest persecution of Christians from 303 – 311 under emperor Diocletian succeeded in ending the spread of Christianity.
Christians believed in resurrection, the idea that the body would one day reunite with the soul. For this reason, they would not allow their dead bodies to be burned, which was the Roman custom. Also, Roman law did not allow bodies to be buried aboveground. Therefore, starting in the A.D. 100s, Christians buried their dead beneath the city of Rome in a series of dark, cold, stench-filled tunnels called catacombs.

Each tunnel was about 8 feet high and less than 3 feet wide. Bodies were stacked in slots along the sides of the tunnels. The catacomb walls were painted with images from the Bible or from Greek or Roman mythology.

More than five million bodies were buried under Roman streets and buildings. Many of the Christians buried there were martyrs who had been killed for their beliefs.
San Callisto Catacombs in Rome

Galleria - Area A
© Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra

The Crypt of Saint Cecilia
© Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra
The Cubicles of the Confession
© Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra
Early Christians Took Refuge from Persecutions in the Roman Catacombs

- Jonah Thrown into the Sea
- Fiery Furnace
- Virgen e Niño
The Spread of Christianity

- At first, the **apostles** and disciples preached only in Judea.

- Disciples began to preach in Jewish communities throughout the Roman world. Jews who accepted the beliefs of Jesus became the first Christians.

- Paul spread Christianity beyond the Jewish communities, to non-Jews
The Early Christian Church

- Early Christian communities shared a common faith and a common way of worship.

- A **bishop** was responsible for all Christians in a particular area called a **diocese**.

- Gradually, some bishops became **patriarchs**, with authority over other bishops in their area.

- The Christian Church thus developed a hierarchy.

St. James the Just, Brother of Jesus
Early Christians met to worship in homes and later in the catacombs in Rome to escape persecution.

Believed to be the House of Ananias, an early Christian in Jerusalem
Early Church Hierarchy

- The **patriarch** of Rome became known as the Pope.
- The **Pope** claimed supremacy over the other patriarchs.
- Councils were convened to combat **heresies** as they arose.
- Problems developed between the Eastern and Western churches.
How was the Greco-Roman Civilization Formed?

- The Romans borrowed heavily from Greek culture after they conquered Greece.

- At the same time, Roman generals carried achievements of Roman civilization to conquered lands.

- The blending of Roman, Hellenistic, and Greek traditions produced Greco-Roman civilization.

- Trade and travel during the Pax Romana helped spread this new civilization.
Roman Advances in Literature, History, and Philosophy

**History**

Historians wrote about the rise and fall of Roman power.

**Poetry**

Writers imitated Greek styles in prose and poetry.

Virgil praised Rome’s heroic past in the *Aeneid*.

Poets used verse to **satirize**, or make fun of, Roman society.

**Philosophy**

Roman philosophers borrowed heavily from the Greeks.

**Stoics** emphasized acceptance of one’s fate and concern for the well-being of others.
Roman Law

During the Roman empire, these principles of law fostered unity and stability:

- An accused person was presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.
- The accused was permitted to face the accuser and offer a defense.
- Guilt had to be established through evidence.
- Judges were expected to interpret the laws and make fair decisions.

Centuries later, these principles would become the basis for legal systems in Europe and the Americas.
Roman Advances in Art and Science

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Science</th>
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<td>▪ Built roads, bridges, and harbors throughout empire</td>
<td>▪ Romans left scientific research to the Greeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Built many <strong>aqueducts</strong></td>
<td>▪ <strong>Ptolemy</strong> proposed that Earth was the center of the universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ <strong>Galen</strong> used experiments to prove a conclusion.</td>
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<th>Architecture</th>
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<td>▪ Sculptors stressed realism.</td>
<td>▪ Emphasized grandeur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Artists depicted life scenes in frescoes and <strong>mosaics.</strong></td>
<td>▪ Improved column and arch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Developed rounded dome</td>
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Aqueducts carried water from the mountains to the cities, spilling out into numerous fountains, allowing the cities to grow.
The Pantheon

The interior of the Pantheon in the 18th century, painted by Giovanni Paolo Panini.
### The Empire in Crisis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Problems</th>
<th>Economic &amp; Social Problems</th>
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<td>Emperors were repeatedly overthrown or assassinated.</td>
<td>High taxes to support the army burdened business people and farmers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In one 50-year period, 26 emperors ruled, and only one died of natural causes.</td>
<td>Poor farmers were forced to work and live on wealthy estates.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Over-cultivated farmland lost its productivity.</td>
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The Decline of Rome

- **Diocletian** (284-305) came to the throne after 100 years of disorganization, internal dissent, economic collapse, & foreign invasions.

- A tough and practical soldier, he had one ambition: to retire from the imperiate alive.

- He succeeded, retiring in 305 to farm cabbages.

- **Constantine** (306-337) succeeded to the throne of one half of the empire and in 324 took control of the other half to rule a united Roman Empire.

- He was the first emperor to convert to Christianity.
## Two Reformers

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<th><strong>Diocletian</strong></th>
<th><strong>Constantine</strong></th>
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<td>Divided the empire into two parts to make it easier to govern</td>
<td>Continued Diocletian’s reforms</td>
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<td>Tried to increase the prestige of the emperor</td>
<td>Granted toleration to Christians, in the <strong>Edict of Milan</strong>, which led to the rapid growth of Christianity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed prices to slow <strong>inflation</strong>, or the rapid rise of prices</td>
<td>Built a new capital at Constantinople, making the eastern part of the empire the center of power</td>
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<td>Established laws to ensure steady production of food and goods</td>
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**Diocletian**

- Divided the empire into two parts to make it easier to govern
- Tried to increase the prestige of the emperor
- Fixed prices to slow **inflation**, or the rapid rise of prices
- Established laws to ensure steady production of food and goods

**Constantine**

- Continued Diocletian’s reforms
- Granted toleration to Christians, in the **Edict of Milan**, which led to the rapid growth of Christianity
- Built a new capital at Constantinople, making the eastern part of the empire the center of power
Foreign Invasions

- Constantine divided the empire for his three sons, upon his death.
- After much fighting the empire was again united under Theodosius, who made Christianity the state religion.
- Theodosius I divided the empire into east and west to be ruled by his two sons.
- A weakened Rome could not withstand the forces of Germanic invasions.
- The Huns dislodged other Germanic peoples and, little by little, conquered the Roman empire.
- In 410 B.C., the Visigoth leader, Alaric, sacks Rome further weakening the western empire.
- From 451 to 453 the Huns, under the leadership of Attila, overruns the western empire.
- Finally in 476 Odoacer deposed the Roman emperor and made himself emperor.
Foreign Invasions Map
The Fall of Rome

The Decline and Fall of Rome

Military Causes
- Germanic invasions
- Weakened Roman legions

Political Causes
- Oppressive government
- Corrupt officials
- Divided empire

Social Causes
- Erosion of traditional values
- Self-serving upper class
- "Bread and circuses"

Economic Causes
- Heavy taxes
- Population decline
Comparing the Fall of Two Empires

The Fall of Rome
- Oppressive government
- Corrupt & weak officials
- Famine & disease
- Declining economy
- Heavy taxes on middle & lower classes
- Wealthy fail to pay taxes
- Government fails to keep order → revolts
- Divided empire (West & East)
- Germanic invasions

The Fall of the Han
- Oppressive government
- Corrupt & weak officials
- Floods and famine
- Declining economy
- Heavy taxes on middle and lower classes
- Wealthy fail to pay taxes
- Governments fail to keep order → revolts
- Divided empire (“Three Kingdoms”)
- Hun invasions