

The Pax Romana



I. Augustus's Settlement (31 B.C.–A.D. 14)

A. The Principate and the Restored Republic

1. Octavian used the guise of restoring the Republic.
2. In reality, Octavian created a constitutional monarchy.
3. He called himself princeps civitatis (“first citizen of the state”).
4. Octavian assumed most of the important civil and religious offices of Rome.
5. Much of his power resided in his role as commander of the army.

B. Augustus's Administration of the Provinces

1. Augustus encouraged local self-government and respect for local customs.
2. He also fostered the cult of Roma, goddess of Rome, and of himself deified (in the East). This served as a cultural “glue” for the Empire.

C. Roman Expansion into Northern and Western Europe

1. Rome expanded into northwest Europe (Spain, Gaul, Britain, western Germany).
2. Rome also expanded north from the Mediterranean to the Danube.
3. Roads and military settlements brought Roman culture to newly conquered provinces.
4. Local peoples adopted Roman culture because it was “flexible and convenient” and because it was necessary for upward mobility in the Empire.
5. The city of Lyon exemplified a Roman provincial city, with its amphitheater and other Roman buildings.

D. Literary Flowering

1. This period is generally referred to as the Golden Age of Roman Literature.
2. This age produced well-known writers such as Horace, Virgil, Livy, and Ovid.
3. Roman writers of the Empire celebrated the dignity of humanity and the peace and stability of the Pax Romana.

II. The Coming of Christianity

A. Unrest in Judaea

1. The first century witnessed the rise and spread of Christianity.
2. Christianity originated in Judaea under Roman occupation. The background to Christ's life was frequent and sometimes bloody clashes between Jews and the Roman occupiers.
3. There were two primary responses to Roman domination among the Jews.
 - a. The Zealots aimed to expel the Romans from Judaea by violence and refused to pay taxes to the Romans.
 - b. Other Jews awaited a Messiah who would destroy the Roman Empire and save the Jews.

B. The Life and Teachings of Jesus

1. Jesus of Nazareth was born in Galilee, a stronghold of the Zealots.
2. The principal evidence for the life and deeds of Jesus is the four Gospels of the New Testament.
3. More gospels existed in antiquity than are now included in the New Testament.
4. Jesus's teachings were essentially Jewish.

C. The Spread of Christianity

1. Paul of Tarsus, a Hellenized Jew, asserted that Christianity was universal^{3/4}for Gentiles (non-Jews) as well as Jews.
2. Early Christians were not as systematically persecuted as once believed.
3. Because Christianity reached Rome, capital of the known world, early, it spread rapidly throughout much of the Empire.

D. The Appeal of Christianity

1. Christianity appealed to common people and the poor with its sense of belonging (the Lord's Supper), its offer of salvation in the afterlife, and its insistence on the importance of every human being in the divine plan.

III. The Julio-Claudians and the Flavians (27 B.C.–A.D. 96)

1. Claudius created an efficient bureaucracy of professional administrators.
2. The army and the Praetorian Guard assumed greater power in political affairs and set a negative precedent in the Roman state.
3. Nero's inept rule led to military rebellion and his death in 68 A.D.
4. Vespasian brutally suppressed rebellion in Judaea (68–70 A.D.)

IV. The Age of the "Five Good Emperors"

. The Antonine Monarchy

1. Hadrian further bureaucratized the government and separated civil from military service.

A. Changes in the Army

1. Under the Flavian emperors the frontiers became firmly fixed.

2. By Hadrian's day the Roman army had become a garrison force and many common soldiers were "barbarians," not Romans.
- V. Life in the "Golden Age"
- . Imperial Rome
 1. Rome had a population of between 500,000 and 750,000.
 2. Supplying the city with cheap grain was a constant preoccupation of the imperial government.
 3. The emperor provided entertainment to the city in the form of gladiatorial contests and chariot racing.
 - A. Rome and the Provinces
 1. 1. Latin was used throughout the empire for legal and religious purposes.
 2. A new culture emerged out of the interactions of the communities that made up the Roman Empire.
 3. Cities were centers of interaction between Romans and the people they ruled.
- VI. Civil Wars and Invasions in the Third Century
- . Barbarians on the Frontiers
 1. 1. Civil war in Rome coincided with massive migrations of barbarian peoples on their frontiers.
 2. Migrating peoples took advantage of weakened Roman defenses.
 - A. Turmoil in Farm and Village Life
 1. Imperial officials squeezed peasants hard for taxes.
- VII. Reconstruction Under Diocletian and Constantine (A.D. 284–337).
0. Diocletian reorganized the administration and fixed prices and wages.
 1. Constantine made tax-collecting positions into a hereditary class.
 2. Small farms declined as wealthy landlords reclaimed abandoned land and created great estates farmed by dependent clients (serfs).
 3. Constantine recognized Christianity as a legitimate religion.
 4. Constantine also built a new capital, called Constantinople (on the site of the Greek city of Byzantium).
 5. Despite reforms, decline could not be checked.
- VIII. From the Classical World to Late Antiquity (ca A.D. 200–700).
0. Late Antiquity was simultaneously a world of continuity and change.
 1. By 500 A.D. the Mediterranean had split between the Greek East and the Latin West.
 2. Barbarians and educated Romans in the West needed each other and created a shared culture.