

Chapter Seven - The Roman Emperors



The Appian Way To-Day

Named after the magistrate who began it, the censor Appius Claudius, it was the first and most important of the great Roman roads. It ran from Rome southeast to Capua and Brindisi.

A. Rome Under The Caesars

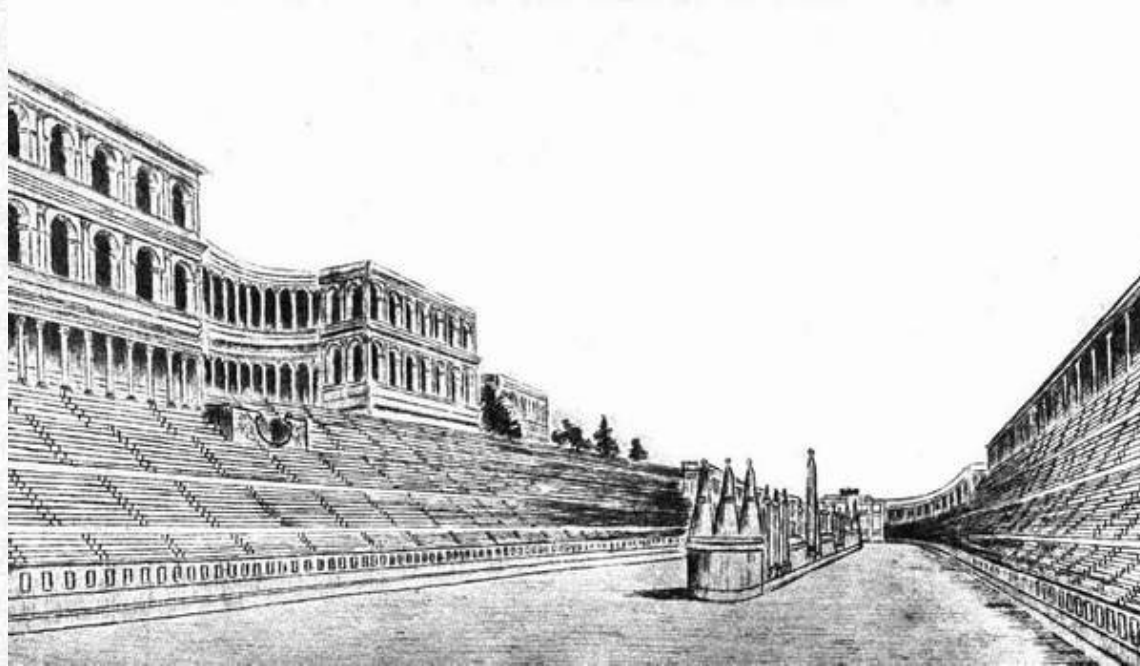
Octavian was descended from a middle-class Italian family, and held the moderate views to be expected from such an origin. He did not altogether agree with his uncle's drastic changes. It seemed wrong to him to have men from the provinces sitting in the Senate, and for officers of humble birth, and ex-slaves, to be given important government posts, however clever they might be. He was a much more cautious man than Caesar, and preferred to pretend that he was being allowed to hold several magistracies for a period of emergency, at the end of which the Roman Senate and People would be restored to their full authority.

Of course this never did happen. There was a Senate and there were consuls for centuries, but they were appointed by the emperors as a compliment and had no real power. One emperor made his horse a consul! The real power always rested with the man whom the army hailed as "Imperator," a title they had long used whenever their general won a great victory. Before long this power was so utterly and terribly beyond control and dispute, that what had recently been the proudest aristocracy in the world cringed like slaves before the frown of the man whom chance had clothed in the royal purple. A curt note from the emperor was enough to make a person even of high position kill himself promptly and without complaint, lest his family should suffer too. There was not much point in keeping the soldiers waiting who brought the dreaded message.

But at first Augustus (as he was called after 27 B.C.) made a show of sharing the rule of Rome and the empire with the Senate. And he took care to keep the rabble of Rome in a good temper, for, next to the army, the emperor's position depended on them. The Senate was allowed to govern the older and more settled provinces, while Augustus took charge of those on the long frontier. By far the biggest problem that the emperors had to face was how to bring that frontier up to mountains and rivers that could easily be defended. On the other side of that boundary were millions of tribesmen of many races, who grew more and more

restless. In the end their terrific pressure broke the barriers and they swept over the empire like a mighty reservoir that has burst the dams.

But during most of the reign of Augustus, which lasted till A.D. 14 (notice the change from B.C. to A.D.), there was peace and prosperity throughout the empire, long overdue and sadly needed. The governors of the provinces were paid a salary, so that they should have no excuse for extortion. If they ruled well, their term was extended for a number of years, or they were promoted to a better province.



The Circus Maximus

The three cones mark the turning point. The emperor's chair and a wing of the palace on the slope of the Palatine hill can be seen on the left.

After a careful survey, the taxation and expenses of each province were fixed. These arrangements were based on those of the kingdom of Egypt, which ended with the death of Cleopatra, when it became a province under direct Roman rule. Augustus encouraged the worship of the old Roman deities, but the Greek "mysteries" (p.167), and the Egyptian rites of Isis and Osiris, appealing to fanatical emotion, spread rapidly among the very mixed population of Rome.



A Chariot Race In The Circus Maximus

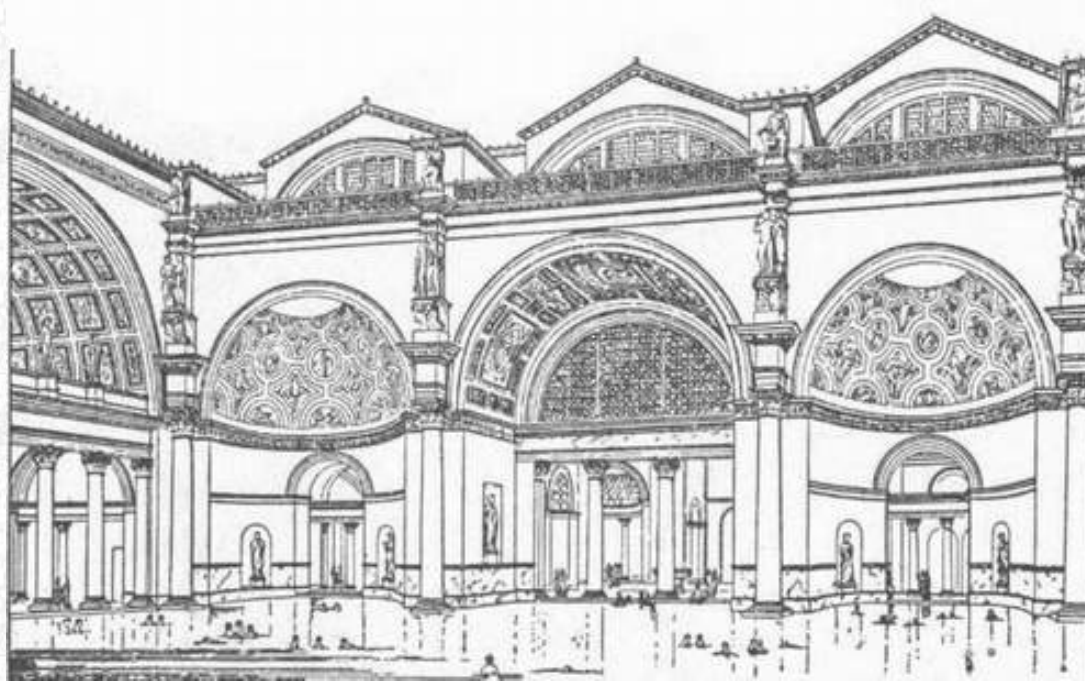
He also tried in vain to restore the simple habits and family life which Roman writers declared were the basis of Rome's! greatness. But every class eagerly indulged in all the luxury and pleasure it could afford. The rabble drew its doles of corn again and was entertained by shows that grew more and more elaborate. In the Great Racecourse, before crowds of 150,000, four chariots (Red, White, Blue and Green), each drawn by four horses, would race seven times round the sixteen hundred yards track. If any of them hit the end of the low wall that ran down the centre, while taking the turn too sharply, that simply provided an extra thrill for the spectators, especially for those who had "backed" the other teams.

On the other side of the Palatine Hill, the high-class residential district at this period, loomed the great oval mass of what we call the Colosseum. It will hold about seventy thousand spectators, and the arena space is eighty-eight yards in length and fifty-two in breadth.



A "Hunting" - Gladiators versus a lion, a panther, and a bear.

This was where the gladiators fought, a favourite contest being between one in full armour with sword and shield, versus one with just a net and a trident. The winner, when he had his opponent at his mercy, usually looked up to where the emperor and the Vestal Virgins sat. Hardly ever would he receive from them the sign to spare his foe. High and low alike, the Romans had a very poor sense of sportsmanship. They took a horrible pleasure in pain, blood and death. The struggles of gladiators with wild beasts, which were known as "Huntings," and the fights between beasts alone, were so popular, that the numbers of the wild animals in the Mediterranean lands were greatly and permanently reduced, and some species were wiped out altogether. Governors in the provinces were constantly being pestered to keep up the supply of beasts, especially panthers. Sometimes the arena was flooded, and slave crews took part in a sham sea-fight, with quite genuine slaughter and drownings.



Swimming Pool In The Baths Of Caracalla

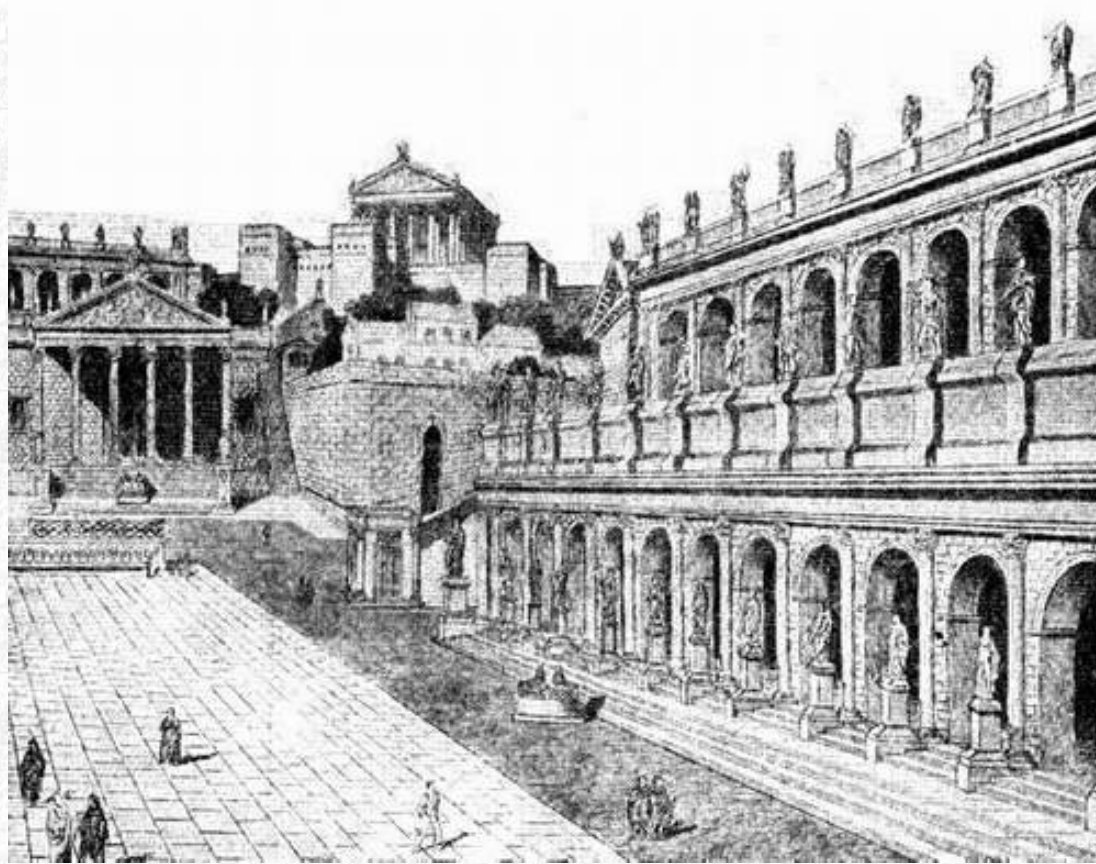
Another way of passing a day pleasantly, especially under the later emperors, was to visit one of the magnificent public baths. Here, free of charge, the pampered Romans could enjoy a hot bath, "showers," a large swimming-pool and a hot-air room. After massage, or exercises in the gymnasium, they could retire to the library or listen to a tenth-rate poet bawling his long and tedious works in the recitation-hall. Every popular place in Rome seems to have been infested by reciters.



Part of The Roman Forum In The Time Of The Early Emperors.

The temple of Vesta is on the left, the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol background.

The Romans did not produce many real poets, for they were not a thoughtful or imaginative race. We need only mention three here—Catullus, who lived about the time of Caesar and who shows a tenderness and a gift of melody unusual among the Romans—and the leading poets of the court of Augustus, Virgil and Horace.



Another View Of The Forum

From the far side of the previous picture. The platform from which the speeches were made is on the left, the staircase and ramparts of the Capitol in the background.

Virgil, considered Rome's greatest poet, preferred to write of country life, but in the "Aeneid," i.e. the story of Aeneas, he tells a legend of Rome's origin, how the Trojan chief, after the fall of Troy, came at last to the Latin coast, and after fierce fighting with the native Italians, married the king's daughter. There are long descriptions of fighting in the Aeneid, which the Romans no doubt enjoyed, but here and there, in a sad phrase, Virgil reveals a quite un-Roman pity for the futile slaughter of young men, and for all the undeserved suffering which bewildered humanity patiently endures. Horace took life much less seriously. His best-known poems are short lyrics in a highly polished style. Most Roman poets imitated Greek rhythms, just as Roman playwrights were content to copy Greek plays.

Meanwhile the appearance of Rome became steadily more magnificent, till it excelled Alexandria or any other city of the ancient world. Its temples, squares, colonnades and statues grew more and more numerous; baths, theatres, racecourses and government buildings were added by one emperor after another. On the Palatine Hill the houses of the rich and fashionable grew larger, and their grounds more extensive; and the emperors built themselves palaces of marble there which were fitting homes for the masters of the world. In these homes very splendid dinner-parties were given. Most of the guests would arrive in closed litters

carried on the shoulders of four or more burly slaves. Although in public a well-to-do Roman always wore a white toga (similar to the himation, p. 163), on these occasions coloured robes were allowed, and the ladies, who, especially if married, moved about with great freedom, wore a good deal of jewellery and "make-up."

At dinner the guests on couches reclined on their elbows round three sides of the tables, one side being kept free for service. There was no cutlery but spoons, so that table manners showed themselves mainly in the delicate use of one's fingers. The air was heavy with the scents of perfumes and flowers, and as wine was freely drunk, there was doubtless a good deal of noisy laughter and loud talk as the evening wore on. The food was varied and costly, but not as well-cooked as it can be nowadays. After the meal there would be entertainment by jugglers, acrobats, dancing-girls, jesters or musicians, or the guests would gamble at dice.

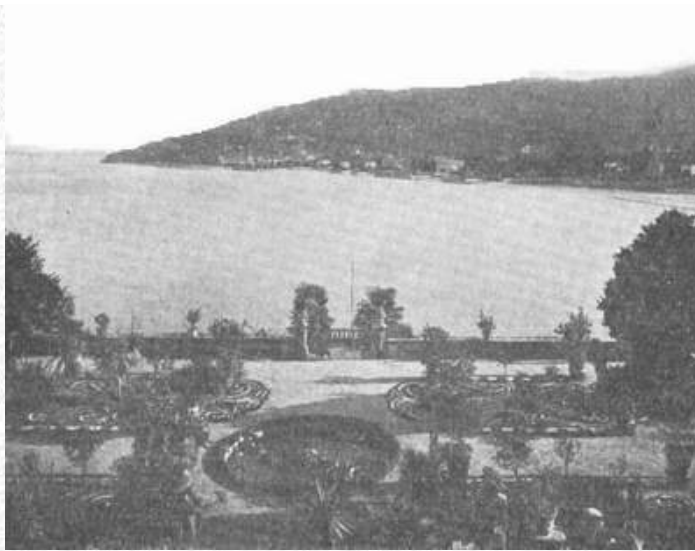


A Roman Lady - Her costume is similar to that of an Athenian lady.



A Roman Gentleman - He is wearing the tunic and the toga.

Even more luxurious perhaps than the town-houses of this age were the villas or country residences. We have mentioned these previously, but by this time they were far more numerous. It was quite a common thing for even a moderately wealthy Roman to own half a dozen of them, and building and selling them was a gentlemanly way of making money.



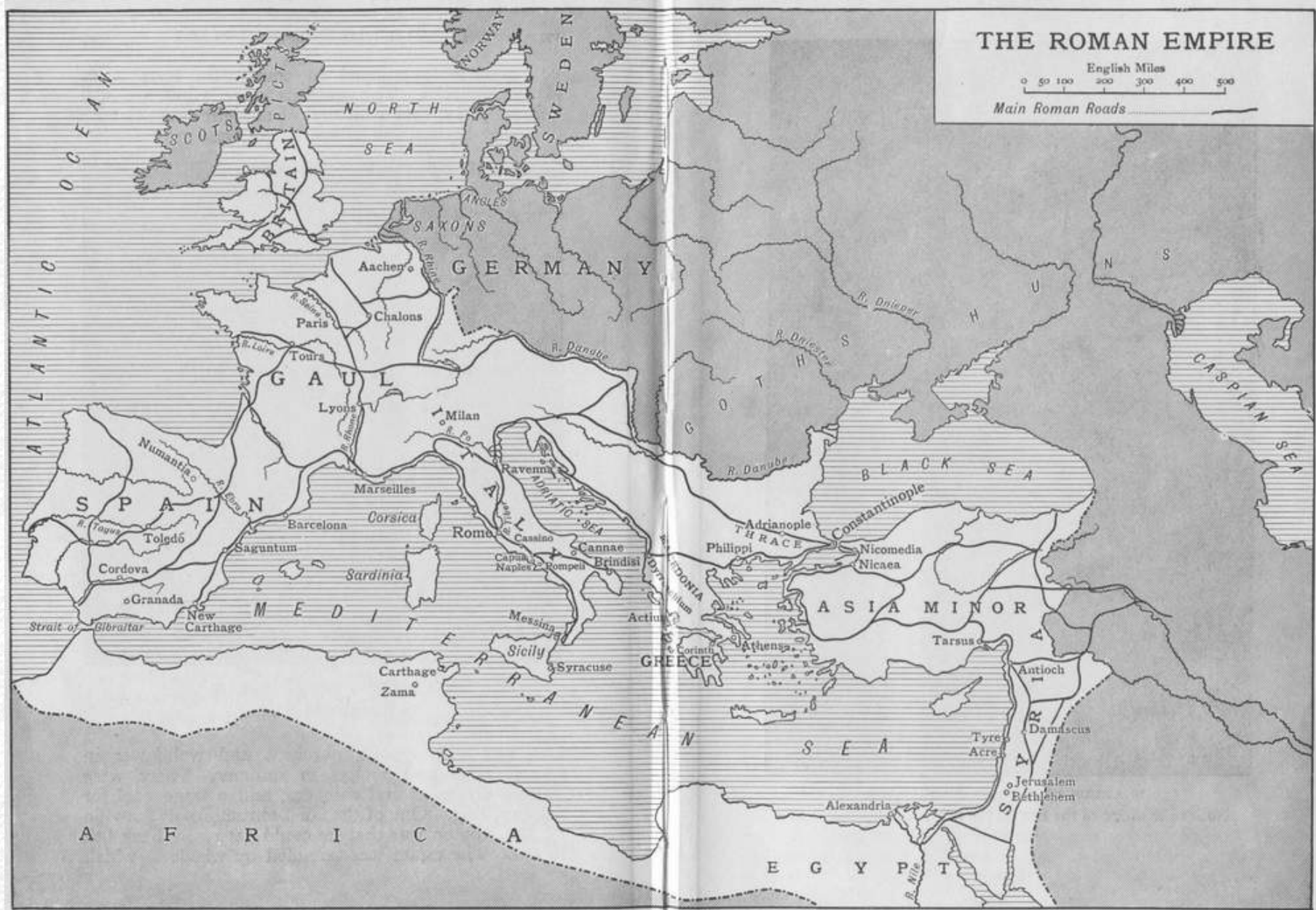
Garden Of A Villa On Lake Maggiore

Then, as now, the romantic beauty of Italy was fully appreciated, and there were as a rule wonderful views from the villa, whether it was on a hill in central Italy, on the coast of Campania, or by the lovely lakes of the north. The general design of the villa was like that of the town-house, and it was just as expensively decorated with mosaics and wall-paintings. But as there was usually more space available, all sorts of pleasant extensions were possible, so that sea or mountain air, winter sunshine or summer shade could be comfortably enjoyed in courtyards, terraces or glazed galleries. The gardens were what we call "formal," i.e. they consisted of straight avenues with flowering shrubs and clipped trees, and neat flower-beds gay with crocus, narcissus and wallflower in spring, roses and violets in summer.



Lady With Writing Tablets - A Roman wall-painting.

There were statues, fountains and cascades, and a large pool for fish breeding. One of the chief attractions of the villa for the Roman was that he could get really fresh fish to eat. The estate was bounded by woods in which deer and boar were hunted after being driven into nets.



Map - The Roman Empire



The Atrium Of A Large Roman House - Notice the shrine of the Lar on the left and the peristyle at the back.

An astonishing amount of money and trouble must have been spent on these luxurious homes. One writer proudly tells us about his two villas on Lake Como, one on the water level and one up on the hillside, perhaps so that he could enjoy the sunsets over the Alps. Horace sneers at the extravagant people who find the coast of Campania too crowded, so that they run a causeway right out into the sea and build a villa on an artificial island.

B. The First Christians

And so to an upper-class Roman the world must have seemed very satisfactorily arranged. But during the reigns of the first two emperors, in Judaea (Palestine), a poor, remote and so, to Roman ideas, unimportant part of their empire, an awe-inspiring Voice had condemned all they were proud of and praised all they despised. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful. ... Blessed are the peace-makers. ... Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake. ... Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. ... Be not anxious what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet what ye shall put on." This is not the place to tell the story of the Jew, Jesus the Christ, and how that wonderful life was on earth ended with lingering death on the cross, the usual fate then of low-class criminals. But we are bound to notice the effects of His teaching on the empire whose success mocked all He stood for.'

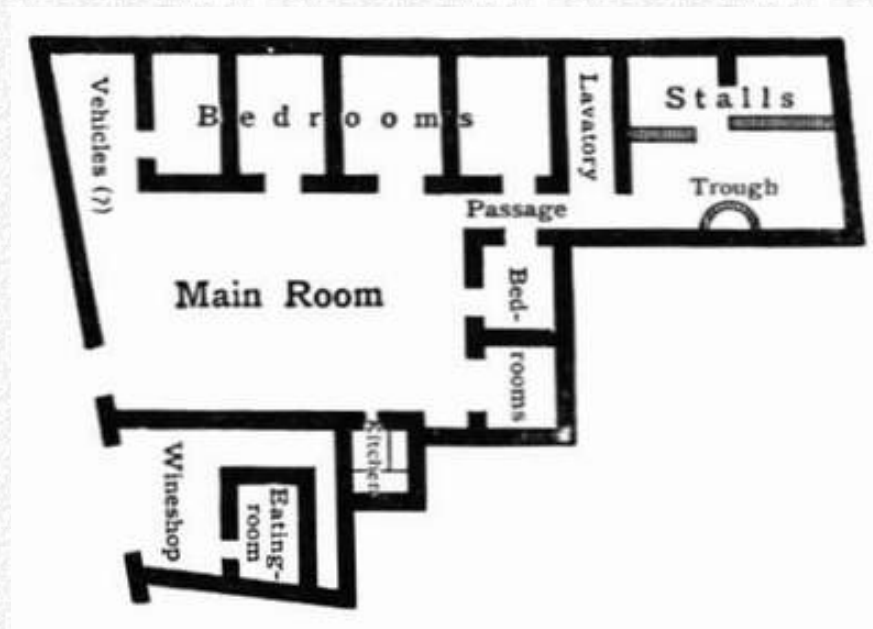
Thanks to the preaching of the disciples, the Word spread quickly through Syria. At Tarsus, in the south-east corner of Asia Minor, near north Syria, lived a very energetic man named Paul (or Saul). He was a Roman citizen, and a Jew, who had prospered at his business as a tent manufacturer and was greatly interested in the different religions to be met with in a city so situated. When he first noticed the Christians, he was annoyed and yet fascinated by them. He had

them put in prison and yet he thought a good deal about their preaching. Till one day as he was on the high road to Damascus, for he went round denouncing Christians, he had a vision of Christ rebuking him. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

That blinding vision settled all his doubts. After that Paul devoted his life and tremendous energy to spreading the new faith and organising the Christians in assemblies which were really the first churches. But he was not satisfied with repeating the teachings of Jesus. He added his own ideas of what Christians ought to believe about the nature of Jesus and of God, and how they ought to worship. So that Christianity, as we know it, is a mixture of the teaching of Jesus and of St. Paul. At this time Greek was understood throughout the eastern part of the empire and by all educated Romans. Because of this and the great highways of the empire, the apostle was able to visit and preach in great cities such as Jerusalem, Antioch, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus, and to argue with Roman officials. One of these arrested him for causing a riot in Jerusalem, and Paul, exercising his rights as a Roman citizen, asked to be tried in Rome. Perhaps you would like to find out for yourselves what happened to him there.

Rome had always been tolerant of eastern religions, and at first no objections were raised against "this new sect of the Jews," though they kept very much to themselves, detested the shows of the Colosseum and prophesied the early destruction of Rome for its wickedness. But what did get them into trouble before long was their absolute refusal to take part in the simple religious ceremony by which everyone was expected to recognise the emperor as superhuman. When the emperor Nero was blamed for the great fire of Rome (A.D. 64), he thought it was a good idea to say that it was the Christians who had started it, to justify their prophecy. Having turned the rage of the mob against them, he had them put in pitch jackets, tied to posts and set on fire to illuminate the palace gardens at night.

That was the first of a series of persecutions that took place at intervals during the next two hundred and fifty years. The more openly the emperors were looked on as gods on earth, the more they resented the "treason" of the Christians in refusing to worship them. Some of the Romans, who watched the "traitors" torn to pieces in the arena by lions, or tormented in other ways, felt that there must be great consolation in a religion which enabled women and children, as well as men, to face horrible deaths so steadfastly. They tried to find out more about it.



Plan Of Inn At Pompeii

Many slaves and poor people found great comfort in the promises of Him who said, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now and then a noble matron would be touched by the sufferings of the martyrs, and perhaps through her a family of influence would be converted. In the latter part of this period, when the persecutions grew worse, the Christians sought refuge in the Catacombs, underground galleries cut in the soft rock outside Rome, where they buried their dead and held their prayer meetings, forbidden by law.

C. "All Roads Lead To Rome"

We cannot describe here the reigns of the various emperors from the death of Augustus in A.D. 14 to the time when Italy was conquered by German and Gothic tribesmen some four hundred and fifty years later. Very few of them were fitted for their position. Most of them died violent deaths. Some were dangerous lunatics, which is not altogether surprising. The temptations and the responsibility of such a position would make it difficult for a man to remain quite sane.

The first emperors could claim some sort of connection, through marriage, with Caesar and Augustus. Nero was the last of these. After him, the most popular and successful generals of the army fought for the imperial purple or bribed the legions to hail them "Imperator." Often the Praetorian Cohort, the emperor's regiment of guards stationed in Rome, decided who was to succeed. We need not study the crimes and follies of the many crazy and wicked emperors, or the virtues of the very few fine men who ever wore the purple. It is more useful to know that during the first two hundred years of the emperors' rule (say, till the death of the philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 180), Roman rule, whatever went on in Rome itself, brought peace and the chance to earn some sort of a living to millions of provincials. Some atonement was made for the mischief done in the later days of the republic, and especially in the West, there was a rise in the level of civilisation, or at any rate of comfort.

Let us first get some idea of the extent of the Roman empire at the end of the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 138), a wise emperor who spent fifteen years inspecting the provinces. He gave up certain areas which he thought could not safely be held. To begin with our own country in the far north-west, the province of Britain included all England and parts of Wales. Crossing to the Continent, we find the lower Rhine and the Danube the northern boundaries in Europe. This includes within the empire the countries we call France and Belgium (with a strip of south Holland and west Germany), Spain, Switzerland, Italy, of course, Austria, western Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece, with all the Mediterranean islands. Crossing to Asia, we find all Turkey and part of Armenia, limited by the upper reaches of the Euphrates, within the empire. Southward the Arabian desert provided a natural land frontier to the provinces of Syria and Judaea. In north Africa, the desert again provided a boundary, while Egypt was held as far as the First Cataract.

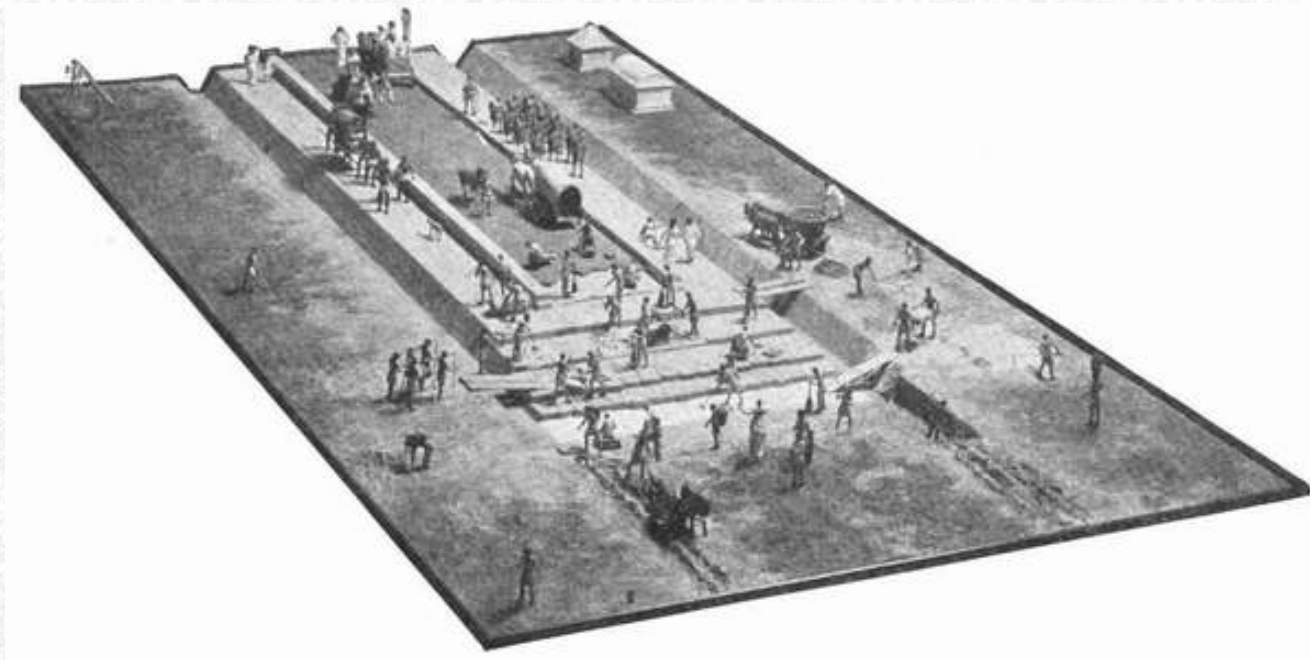
At intervals along the frontier there were forts, and where it was easy for an enemy to burst through, a long wall was built with frequent watch-towers between the forts. One of the most important of these closed the gap between the lower Rhine and the Danube. Another was the wall between the Solway Firth and the Tyne estuary, begun by Hadrian to keep back the Picts of Scotland. Small towns grew up round these forts, as the soldiers stayed there permanently and had families. By this time the army was much larger, and Italians formed a small minority of it. Soldiers were enlisted from every part of the empire now and sent wherever required. So you will understand why the problem of keeping up these expensive forts and large armies was the emperor's chief worry. If ever there should be a general attack of the fighting tribes along any considerable stretch of the frontier, the thin line of "eagles" would not hold them back for long.

It would have been quite impossible to hold such an empire without good roads. The construction of these was the finest work the Romans did for civilisation. Their phrase for building a road suggests a solid causeway, and if you will study the front half of the model you will see why. When the surveyors (working on the left) had decided the exact measurements of a stretch of road, its limits were marked out with the plough and a thick layer of soil was removed in baskets. The surface was then rammed hard and a layer of cement laid down. On this foundation alternate layers of thick square stones and concrete were spread and

pressed together with rollers. Finally down the centre of this causeway the track for wheeled traffic was made, out of irregular blocks of very hard stone. This track, which had a curved surface, was separated from the pedestrians' side-walks by solid kerbs. The causeway was carefully drained, and you can just see one of the drainage holes near the top end of the model.

On the section of the road which is finished you can see some of the normal traffic. On the far sidewalk some soldiers, with a centurion on the kerb, are approaching a mile-post. On the other side slaves are carrying a covered litter. In the centre a pack-mule is being led. Behind him a young man is rapidly approaching in a light two-horsed chariot. Proceeding in the opposite direction are a two-wheeled covered wagon and a four-wheeled open carriage. None of these vehicles had springs. On the extreme right of the model a farmer's cart is shown. It is drawn by oxen, and the body is like a great basket. The driver walked by the side and his dog showed the oxen the way. In the top right-hand corner is the tomb of some important citizen and a pointed monument next to it. At intervals of about twelve miles along the roads there were relay stations, where the emperor's couriers changed horses, and there was an official hostel at the end of each day's stage. It was possible on government service to cover a hundred miles in a day.

In all the more settled parts of the provinces there arose buildings similar to, if smaller than, those in Rome—houses, squares, colonnades, baths, racecourses, theatres, aqueducts and finally, churches.



Building A Roman Road

The richer and more ambitious natives adopted the speech, costume and ways of the Romans and became Citizens. Many of the poorer ones became Romanised through joining the army. It was a great achievement to give so large a part of Europe a higher standard of comfort, a single official language and code of laws, good main roads, freedom from war and, at last, Christianity. For in the reign of Constantine (A.D. 306-337), Christianity was first officially tolerated and then encouraged.

D. The Huns And The Goths

We must bear in mind the good work which the Roman system had performed in those two hundred years, as we read this last section of the story of the Ancient World. For we now have to read the gloomy story of the greatest breakdown in History. This is often referred to as the "Fall of Rome," the result of the defeat of "the Romans" by "the barbarians." But that is only a crude way of putting it. When we talk of "the Romans," say after A.D. 300, we must remember that most of the population of the empire, most of the army, and a good many of the emperors were not Italian. And if the "Fall of Rome" means that a Gothic chieftain became king of Italy, which happened in A.D. 495, this fact becomes less dramatic when we find out that Rome had ceased to be the capital of the empire and that some of the chief officials of the empire were then "barbarians," that is, they were born on the other side of the frontier. But we had better begin the story at the beginning.

We previously fixed, for convenience, on the date A.D. 180 as the end of two centuries of peace and some prosperity. After that time, in spite of occasional improvements, there was a slow but steady decline. Different parts of the army would elect their own emperor, which led to anarchy. Occasionally there was a strong and clever emperor. But he needed so many assistants and officials that his expenses were enormous. This meant very heavy taxation. Small farmers were crushed by this burden and became serfs of great landowners, not much better off than their slaves. So that when the barbarian tribes broke through the frontier and invaded the empire, many "Romans" felt no inclination to fight against them to protect harsh landlords and officials.

It is time we found out who these barbarians were. Several times in this book the phrase "the known world" has been used. That was because most of our story has concerned the lands round the Mediterranean, and we have ignored the great populations of northern Europe because we know very little about them before they invaded the Roman empire. We have also said nothing about the high degree of civilisation which had been reached in India, and even more so, in China, because they hardly affected our European civilisation in its first stages. Now we are compelled to take notice of the Chinese, and the Huns of central Asia whom they caused to drift westwards, and the German and Slav tribes who had to retire before the Huns.

The Chinese built up a strong empire during the same period as the Romans. They too had to face the problem of protecting themselves against hordes of uncivilised tribes. Not content with building a great barrier-wall, hundreds of miles long, they sent out strong expeditions to punish the Huns, the raiding tribes of central Asia. These Mongol hordes then decided to try their luck in the West. Perhaps central Asia was becoming too dry to produce abundant grass. Like other raiding tribes we heard of earlier on, they were wandering herdsmen, ever needing fresh grasslands for their cattle and horses. Their women and young children travelled in wagons drawn by several pairs of oxen. The men and boys rode ponies and hardly ever dismounted.

They were dangerous whether they fought at a distance with arrows and spears, or close at hand with swords. When they found good grass they would settle down for a time and live in large tents of horsehair stretched over dome-shaped frames. When they had to find fresh pastures they would ride great distances, dismounting only to sleep, eating now and then a mouthful of cheese or a strip of raw meat. We know that in 375 A.D. they first crossed the Volga. In time they swarmed over the Russian rivers that flow into the Black Sea. The first Goths who came across them in these western steppes (see map, p. 249), would be astonished to see their black tents covering the plains right to the horizon. Their wonder soon changed to terror when the Huns attacked them. These Mongols were short, thickset men with broad shoulders and curved legs. Their heads were big and ugly, with small, slanting eyes, very flat noses and huge mouths. Their voices were shrill and savage. In peace their ways were kindly, if rough. But in the excitement of battle, a mad lust for blood and destruction possessed them. At first the men of the West wondered if they were apes or fiends.

Before we go on to the retreat of the Goths, we must notice what changes were taking place in the Roman empire. We have already heard of the emperor Constantine under whom the Roman empire began officially to adopt Christianity, so that instead of an eagle at the head of the battle-standard, there now appeared the Greek letters for CHR set in a circle.



A Christian Roman Standard

It was he also who began another change of tremendous importance. Thinking that Rome was too full of pagan temples and memories, and that the eastern part of the empire had become more important, or needed more protection, he selected the old Greek city of Byzantium, on the entrance to the Black Sea, as the new capital of the empire. He greatly enlarged it with magnificent buildings and encouraged people to come and live in it (A.D. 330). The new capital, soon called after him Constantinople ("the city of Constantine"), was a great success. Rome and Italy declined in importance. And though there was no intention of splitting the empire, for convenience the western half had its own governor and in time its own emperor. This division must have weakened Italy and the western empire at the very time when fierce attacks were to be made on it.

This same period saw Christianity triumphant, for in A.D. 392 pagan worship was entirely forbidden, and the old temples were closed. The Christian Church was already strongly organised, rich and powerful, and we begin to hear of bishops. We also hear of Christians fiercely quarrelling among themselves, even to bloodshed, as to what to believe and how to worship. The simple teaching of the Master about the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Man was neglected. The mysteries of the Trinity became much more important than the Sermon on the Mount.

The onset of the Huns caused great stirrings among all the tribes of central and northern Europe, apart from the Goths. They had been restless for a considerable time before. Perhaps the same causes which made central Asia drier had made central Europe colder. We have evidence that Germany was terribly cold in

winter in that age. So that even without the pressure of the Huns, German tribes would have been trying to push their way westwards and southwards. The terror inspired by the Mongol hordes turned slow migrations into panic flights. In A.D. 376 some of the Goths received permission from the Roman authorities to cross the mile-wide, swollen Danube and take shelter behind the frontier in Thrace. The Goths and the Romans had been neighbours for a long time and because of that the Goths were half-civilised.



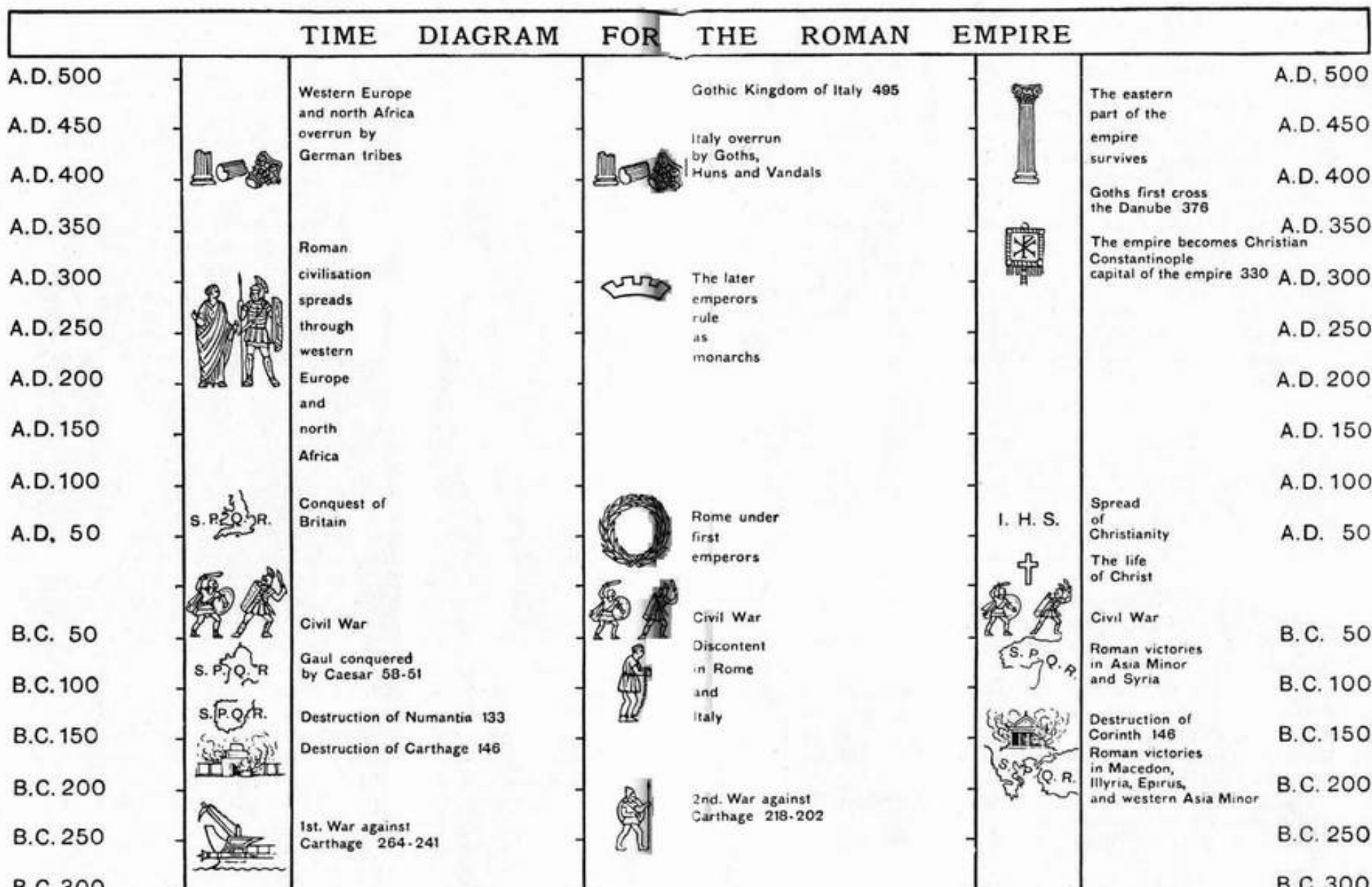
Northern Tribesmen Attacking A Roman Frontier Fort - From Trajan's Column.

But soon more Goths crossed the Danube without permission, successfully defying the emperor's authority. It became plain to all the "barbarians" that they need no longer respect the power of the Romans in the west. We need not follow in detail the bewildering movements of Goths and German tribes between A.D. 400 and 500. Goths conquered and settled in Greece, Italy and Spain. The Vandals, whose name became a by-word for savage destruction, conquered north Africa. The Burgundians took southeast France, the Franks the rest. Angles and Saxons from north-west Germany descended on Britain from the east, Picts from the north. This confusion became worse as a great "tidal wave" of Huns swept right across Europe in 450 A.D. under the dreaded Attila, "the Scourge of God." He was checked in France at Chalons and slowly retired to his capital beyond the Danube, and in time the Huns settled down on the great plains of Hungary. Rome, once the haughty mistress of the world, was sacked by Goths in 410, had to bribe Attila to leave north Italy in 435, was again sacked by Vandals in 455. In 476 a German chief entered Rome and deposed the last of the western emperors, a boy. Italy in 495 became a Gothic kingdom, acknowledging in theory only the authority of the emperor at Constantinople.

Although the eastern empire lasted for about a thousand years after the break-up of the west (Constantinople itself being captured by Turks in 1453), we need say little more about it here. For it was Roman in name only. It was ruled by Greek emperors and officials, and had little to do with the western world, being

fully occupied in fighting first the new Persian empire which had succeeded the Parthians, then the Arabs stirred up by Mohammed, and finally the Turks.

As for western Europe, remember that the Roman system never disappeared entirely. If we think only of the conquests and lootings just described, it seems as if everything Roman must have been wiped out. But that is not so. No doubt, in the first flush of proud conquest, there were orgies of slaughter and destruction. But the new leaders were not simply ferocious savages. As we have noted, many were already half-civilised, and Christian. Though they became undisputed masters of the western provinces, kings, princes and nobles, proud of new titles, they could appreciate what the Romans had achieved.





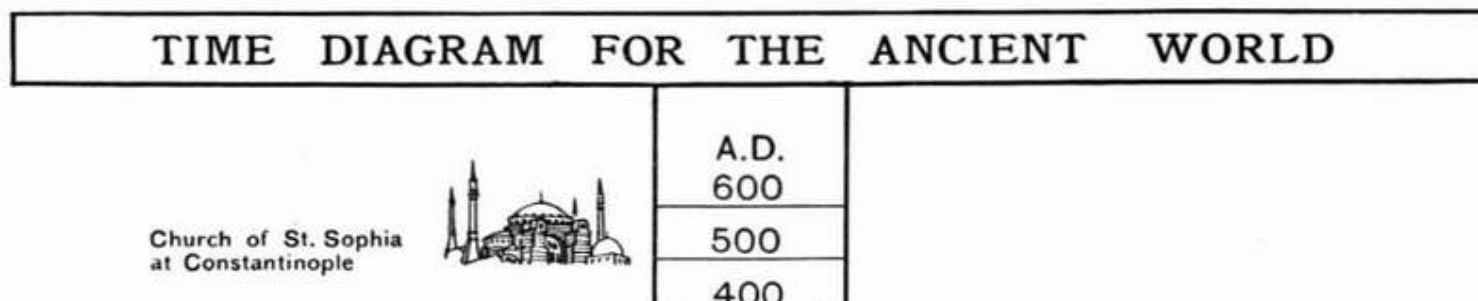
Time Diagram For The Roman Empire

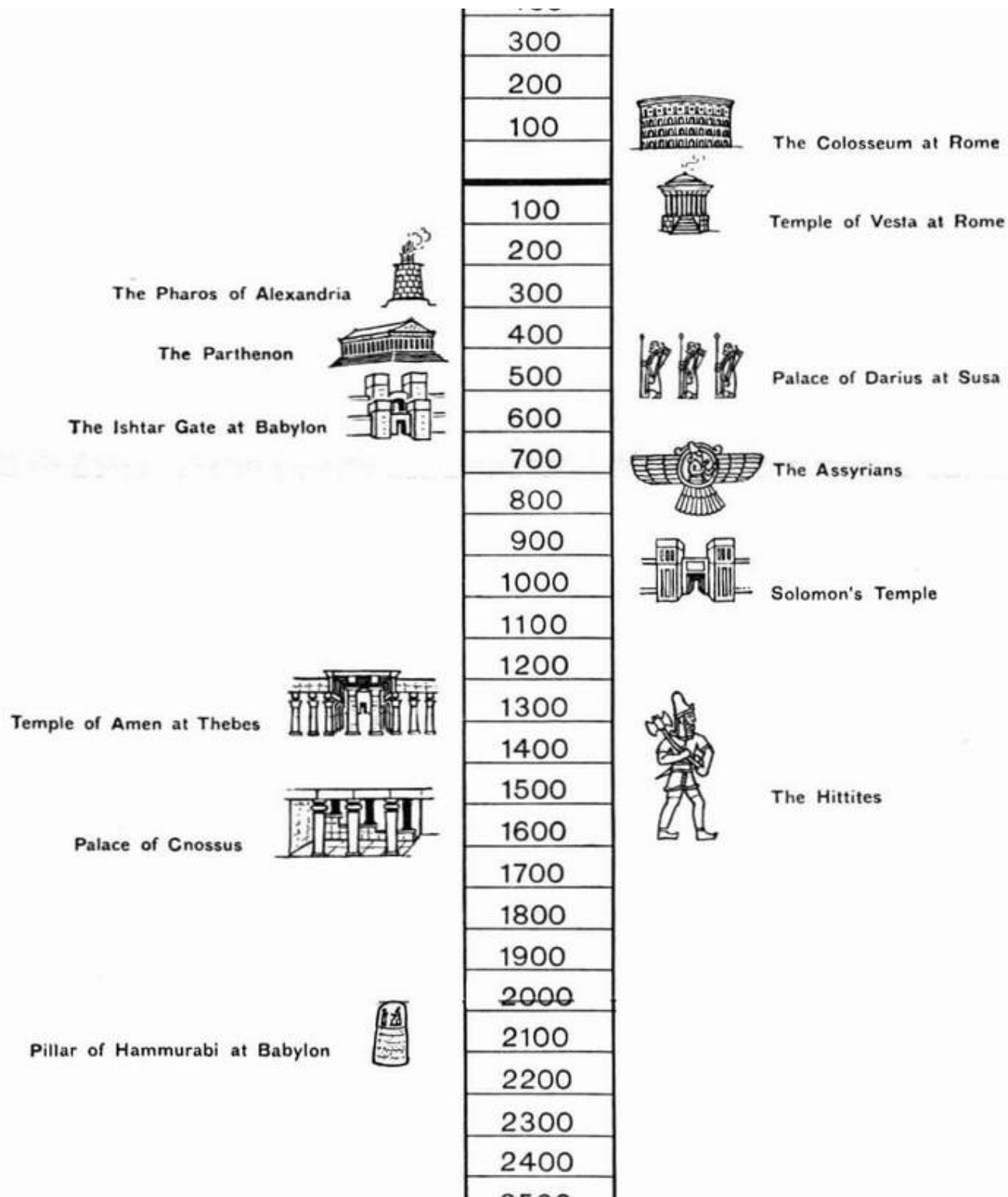
Many Roman officials of lesser rank kept their posts. Roman law was still recognised. In Italy, Spain and France, Latin remained the basis of language. Rome became the headquarters of Christianity in the west, and Popes claimed a power over the new nations which was in some ways like that of the Roman emperors.

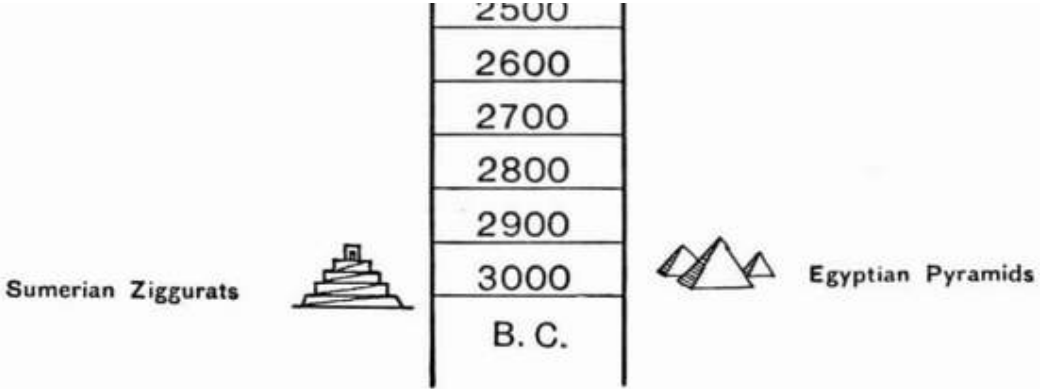
The story of the Ancient World is now told. For the new kingdoms of the west slowly grew into Europe as we know it. Hellas had inherited the science and arts of Babylon and Egypt, and enriched them with the spirit of freedom. They were passed on to us by Rome, together with the Faith that spread from Palestine. On these old, deep foundations the western world is built.

Exercises

1. What is the derivation of: empire, July, August, Kaiser, Czar, apostle, pagan, palace?
2. Would you rather have seen a play at Athens or a show at Rome?
3. What do the endings -Chester and -eter in English place-names and caer at the beginning of Welsh place-names denote? Make a list of twelve names ending with -Chester, six with -eter, and six beginning caer.
4. Find out the Roman camp, road, town-wall, and house nearest to your home.
5. Copy out a Roman inscription and find out what it means.
6. Find out the story of the monk who stopped the gladiatorial games, of the emperor who preferred to grow cabbages, of the emperor who had a pet hen called "Rome." Who "fiddled while Rome burned"?
7. From what parts of the New Testament do we learn of the adventures and opinions of St. Paul?







Time Diagram For The Ancient World



Beware Of The Dog - Mosaic from Pompeii.



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