

Study Guide ZuMUN 2023:
Year of the Four Emperors:
Imperial Rumble



Directed by Melkon Yengibaryan & Amin Tlili



A Letter from the Directors

Dearest Reader,
Esteemed Delegates

It is our great honor to welcome you to this crisis on behalf of the entire Crisis Staff. ZuMUN is the traditional Crisis hotspot in Switzerland thus we are glad to be able to continue this illustrious tradition. For many years the idea of a Roman Crisis has been haunting our minds and now we finally get to put it into reality, well-simulated reality. This year's *Crisis Year of the Four Emperors: Imperial Rumble* intertwines wonderfully with the topic of the Conference on the dangers of Political Extremism, as it shows the first time Rome's imperial system faced a significant challenge not from without but from within. In the wake of the death of the last of the Julio-Claudians, the hated Nero, the empire falls into a power vacuum and the question on every Roman's mind very much is, who's gonna take charge?

By January 1st 69 AD two emperors have risen up, first Galba the Governor of Hispania seemed to be the consensus choice of most of the generals and senators and also currently holds the all-important city and capital of Rome. However just today the first day of the new year the Emperor Vitellius has been acclaimed as Emperor by his legions. This proclamation is sure to tear the empire apart, throwing the entire foundation laid by Augustus into chaos. The choice of heir for the childless elderly Galba could also further drive division within the empire. The Roman Empire has been ever expanding ever since subjugating the Italian peninsula, it reaches from Hispania to Syria. But with territorial expansion also comes disunity amongst the different cultures of the empire, the Romans are especially distrustful of the mystical and superstitious eastern side of their newly gained empire and many worry about the growing power of its governors. But just as the divine Augustus built his empire on the back of legions loyal to him, or his purse, and by politically outmaneuvering his enemies in the senate and on the battlefield, so must every new imperial candidate both gain the hearts of soldiers, the politicians and optionally the people of Rome. The empire has never had to face such uncertainty, what could happen is all up to you the delegates, the empire could crumble or divide or even grow to even unforeseen heights, the destiny of the empire is in your hands.

The Year of the Four Emperors is a historical Crisis where newcomers are able to discover the core aspects of this style of committee while old-timers are faced with new, dynamic challenges. And it being a four cabinet crisis is sure to add all sorts of interesting interplay between all the characters.

Our team and the two of us are eager to meet you soon and look forward to a crisis full of conspiracies, diplomacy, betrayal and brilliance. And we hope you can fully immerse yourself in this crisis, as they say When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Truly yours,
Melkon and Amin
Co-Directors

Table of Contents

- 1) History of Rome Crash Course
- 2) Geography of the Empire
 - a) Political Division of the Empire
 - a) 1. Hispania
 - a) 2. Gaul and Brittania
 - a) 3. The East
 - b) Hydrography
 - c) Relief
 - d) Mobility and Communication
- 3) Military
 - a) Organization
 - b) Battle Tactics
 - c) Technology
- 4) Foreign Powers and Foreign Politics
 - a) Pax Romana
 - b) Persians
 - c) Armenians
 - d) Barbarian Clans
- 5) The Roman Political System
 - a) Emperorship
 - b) Roman Power Structure during the Imperial Period
 - c) Intrigue
 - d) Diplomacy

1. History of Rome Crash Course

The eternal city was reportedly established in the year 753 BC at the Tiber River surrounded by seven hills. After about 200 years of growing pains, also known as the Roman monarchy, the Romans in 509 BC overthrew their last King Tarquin the Proud, and proclaimed the Roman Republic. This new system where the state was ruled no longer by the one, but also not really the many, but the few, made the Roman state unrivaled, first within their region of Latium then on the Italian Peninsula then finally in the Mediterranean. And after the clash with the mighty Carthaginians in the first and second Punic Wars around 146 BC, there was no more power left to challenge you. As great as this republic seemed, there were internal struggles brewing especially in its last century. The republic was plagued by corruption, the senatorial class dominated Roman political society, and only opened the door to social mobility after much social unrest and internal revolts. This constant class struggle between the different castes of Roman public and political society, led to politics within Rome becoming more and more divisive until political violence became an accepted method of gaining power. It is during this turbulent time that the great Gaius Julius Caesar stepped onto the historical stage. After expanding the empire into Gaul, Caesar, unsatisfied with the state of politics and the corrupt Senate, crossed the Rubicon and marched his legions into the eternal city. Caesar's ascension to power would cause even greater rifts in Roman society, and the civil war would continue until it culminated in his assassination on the Senate floor, by people whom he had called his friends. The death of the great Caesar, however, didn't do much to quell the brewing civil wars raging over the empire, the power vacuum became an ever more dangerous maelstrom that threatened to consume the entire Roman world. Into this chaos would step the second great of the Caesarians, Julius' nephew and adopted son, and all-around prodigy, Octavian.



Octavian would quell the rebellions, defeat his rivals on the battlefield, and manage to outmaneuver the senate politically, all to finally grasp power in 27 BC as the republic transitioned to the empire. Octavian now calling himself Augustus, ascended to the role of Princeps, first among equals, but also the man who controlled all the legions, most of the wealth, and most importantly who would get access to which political position including the senate. The Princeps or Roman emperor as we would later know it would unify in his person civil, martial, and even religious power, as Augustus upon his death was declared a god, and the cult of the caesars began. By any measure the divine Augustus had one of the greatest reigns in human history, finding Rome a city of bricks and leaving it a city of marble. His reign was both long and prosperous which granted him a long time to accumulate and stabilize his power position and entrench his family firmly as the now imperial family, at the top of Roman society. Sadly the successors of the divine Augustus would not live up to his legacy, and most of the Julio-Claudians are considered failures. Tiberius was paranoid and lecherous, Caligula was psychotic and genocidal, Claudius was actually decent and expanded the empire into Britannia but he was controlled by scheming influences and worst of all he chose Nero as his successor. Nero was everything a true Roman despised, lazy, lustful, and incapable. He clad himself in martial glory even though he never won a battle once, people even doubted he knew how to hold a sword. He spent most of his time hanging out with actors, considered even lower than prostitutes in the Roman hierarchy, and even worse he acted himself, the emperor an actor!? What was he thinking? He even killed his own mother, with her final words being "Spite my womb". He was truly a debauched creature that brought nothing but ruin to Augustus' great empire, there are even rumors that he was responsible for the great fire just five years ago. But most Romans accept that this new-fangled cannibalistic cult from the East is responsible for this travesty, I believe they are called Christians, and they eat their messiah as a form of worship. Truly a vile religion any true Roman would oppose. Not only on moral grounds but also if Jove and Venus would find out that some Romans no longer worshiped them but worshiped some one god, how barbaric only one god, they would surely avert their divine favor from Rome, and Rome would lose its luster. Thus one of the few widely accepted policies of Nero was to call for a great purge of Christians all through the empire, lands were confiscated, churches were burned and people were forced to convert or die. However, not even this could save Emperor Nero's reign, having annoyed most of the elite in Rome by forcing them to hand over their wives and

daughters or by just generally humiliating them. Having lost everyone who was ever loyal to him, besides his slaves, multiple rebellions broke out and all of them declared



Nero a public enemy, meaning every Roman must do him harm if they can. Nero fled to his country estate with only a small retinue of slaves, however once he heard the hooves of the mounted soldiers approaching, he took his own life in fear, offering one last indicative statement: ‘‘What an Artist the World has the lost’’

The Emperor was dead, the Julio-Claudians were dead, and nobody knew what to do. This situation was unprecedented, would the Romans go back to a republic, maybe even a kingdom? No, Rome would once again move forward, after having already rebelled against Nero, most high-ranking Romans threw their support behind a certain governor of Hispania, Servius Galba. Galba after having been hailed as emperor by his legions marched on Rome together with the governor of Lusitania, Otho, sacking every city on the way there that did not immediately swear fealty to Galba. Most Romans supported Galba not because of his merits, although he certainly was very qualified having served the empire greatly both civil and militarily, but because Galba was an old man with no children, the possibility in every high-ranking Roman family was of course, why shouldn't he choose me. Galba arrived in Rome was hailed emperor by the senate and took it upon himself to fix the mess Nero left behind. However not everybody approved of Galba, most strongly the Rhine legions, they never liked Galba, when he was in charge of them he treated them with nothing but contempt, but these soldiers never forgot or forgave. So on January first, they decided, maybe with the input of some of the higher ranking officers to proclaim their governor, Emperor, it is thus that this new year 69 AD begins not with one but

with two emperors, one in Rome and one at the Rhine. How will this shape the future of the empire, are there more people out there willing to proclaim themselves emperor, it seems that all you need for that is a few loyal legions. Will the powerful generals, governors, and senators rally behind one of these two or will they try to grasp power for themselves, there are even some people that want to return to a republic, even though barely anyone remembers it anymore. The future remains to be written.

2. Geography of the Empire

Roman Territories stretched all the way **from England to Egypt** on the North-South Axis, as well as **from Syria all the way to Portugal and Northern Morocco** on the East-West Axis. Not only all shores of the Mediterranean Sea were under imperial control, but also the entire Balkan Peninsula including Greece, almost the whole of what is today's Turkey, Switzerland, France, Spain, and Belgium as well as Southern Germany and parts of today's Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary. In its apse, some years after "The Year of the Four Emperors", the Empire encompassed an area of **5 million square kilometers**, with a population peak ranging from 70 million to more than **100 million** inhabitants.

The famous saying "**Imperium Sine Fine**" expressed the ideology that neither time nor space could limit the Roman Empire. Each of the three largest cities in the Empire – Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch – was almost twice the size of any European city at the beginning of the 17th century.

In addition to that, the Romans were also considerable sculptors of their environment and directly altered their geography. For instance, entire forests were cut down to provide enough wood resources for an expanding empire.

a) Political Division of the Empire

The capital and economic center of the Empire was **Rome**, la Città Eterna. The rest of the territory (outside the Italian peninsula) was divided into **Provinces**. Those were the administrative regions of Ancient Rome. Each province was ruled by a Roman-appointed

governor. Here follows an overview of three Regions (each one entailing three or more Provinces [see map 1]) of the Empire under the respective sphere of influences of Otho, Galba, Vitellius, and Vespasianus (respectively) as of the situation in 69 AD.



a.1. Hispania

In ancient times Hispania (modern-day Spain and Portugal) was a land with much-untapped mineral and agricultural wealth, limited by the primitive subsistence economies of her native peoples. Occupations by the Carthaginians and then by the Romans for her abundant silver deposits, the region developed into a thriving multifaceted economy. Several metals, olives, oil, salted fish and garum, and wines were some of the goods produced in Hispania and traded throughout the Empire. Gold mining was the most important activity in the northwestern parts of

the peninsula. Concerning its climate, one can state that it was mostly warm and arid, rather similar to that of the Italian peninsula.

Its western part (Lusitania) is under **Otho's** control and its central and northern territories (Tarraconensis) are under **Galba**. However, there were no legions (the military units) under Otho's command. Finally, its southern part (Baetica) was by 69 AD still under common administration emanating from the Senate.

a.2. Gaul and Britannia

Gaul (today's France) was one of the most important provinces of the Empire. Conquered in the first century BC by Julius Caesar, Gauls resisted Roman dominance in the beginning but quickly adapted to Roman culture and became a dominant region. The economy of Gaul was centered on so-called "Villas", which were centers of agricultural production and often closely associated with wine production. The owners were probably mainly local Gallic elites who became quickly Romanised after the conquest, but also Romans and Italians who wished to exploit rich local resources. The villas were also centers of complex relationships within the local area, with much of its work being undertaken by slave labor or by local coloni (tenant farmers).

Julius Caesar did not just conquer Gaul but also led an expedition to the British Isles, which were conquered years later under Emperor Claudius. From AD 43 to AD 410 Britannia (today's England and Wales) was in fact a Roman Province. Following the conquest of the Britons, a distinctive Romano-British culture emerged as the Romans introduced improved agriculture, urban planning, industrial production (especially warfare), and architecture. Britannia was rather a troublesome province. Rebellions had to be suppressed by the Roman Military every now and then.

General **Vittelius** had been the ruler of Gaul and Britannia, as well as Governor of Germania Inferior, before the year 69 AD when he was acclaimed emperor by his troops. And these legions are probably some of the strongest in the empire as they have to regularly repel the barbarian hordes at the border.

a.3. The East

The Roman Provinces of Judea and Syria, are controlled by many people among them **Vespasianus** who is currently fighting an uprising in Judea and controls the largest army in the region.

At that time, the east, and especially Aegyptus was the wealthiest part of Rome apart from Italy. Alexandria, its capital, was the second largest city in the whole Empire. Aegyptus economy was based on grains and cereals. The East as a whole was, in fact, the grain supplier of the Empire. Those were shipped downriver (north) both to feed the population of Alexandria and for export to the Roman capital. There were frequent complaints of oppression and extortion from the taxpayers. As to the military, three Roman legions garrisoned Egypt in the early Roman imperial period. Should this grain shipment ever be cut-off one can only speculate about the riots that would engulf the capital, It also has to be said that through wars with the neighboring Parthian empire (proto-Persia) the eastern legions served alongside the Danubian Legions of the provinces of Raetia and Moesia, they thus share a kinship.

The East is also the origin of many mystical and eccentric cults that entertain the Roman elite, first among them was this weird cult where you'd drink the body of your god's son. All in all the East hold many treasures and many mysteries, not to forget there is the prophecy about the new king of the world emerging from the East.

b) Hydrography

Not just goods, but also soldiers could be shipped to Rome and reach the Tyrrhenian Sea through the Tiber River - the main connection between the capital and the sea. Other rivers, such as the Danube, the Douro, the Seine, and the Rhine played an important role in trade and military displacement across the Empire. Those rivers draining into the Mediterranean were especially important for Roman military operations.

Furthermore, the Mediterranean Sea (or how Romans would call it: **Mare Nostrum**) should rather be understood as a generic term. It is indeed subdivided into several minor seas, all coasting a specific part of the Empire, back at the time. The Italian Peninsula (the Empire's core), for instance, is surrounded by four seas: the Ligurian (on the Northwest), the Tyrrhenian

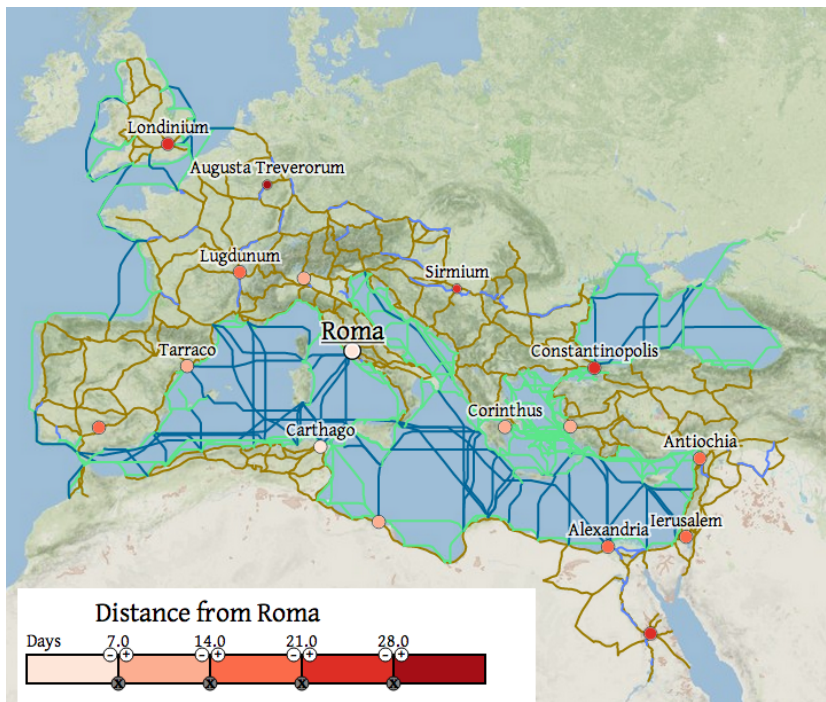
(on the West), the Adriatic (on the East), and, finally, the Ionian Sea (on the South and Southwest).

c) Relief

The Alps and Apennine Mountain Ranges were natural barriers that helped protect Rome from invasions and provided strategic locations during wartime. The Alps provided a roadblock that forced invaders to move through narrow passages which the Romans controlled and allowed the Romans time to prepare and attack. The Apennine Mountains divide the peninsula in half, providing protection against invasions from the East. This allowed Romans to counterattack invaders approaching from either side of the mountains. Covered in a forest, the hills and mountains are made of volcanic rock which is hard and spongy. The Romans used this rock to build the foundations for their military structures. Although they provided Rome with protection, the Alps and mountains isolated Rome from other regions and took up valuable farmland.

d) Mobility and Communication

Transport by water was preferred when possible since moving commodities by land was more difficult. Distances to several parts of the Empire were usually measured from Rome. Galicia (today's France) and Pannonia, for instance, could be reached within a couple of days on horseback. Spain, Greece, and Africa, on the other hand, were reachable by sea. Land transport utilized the advanced system of Roman



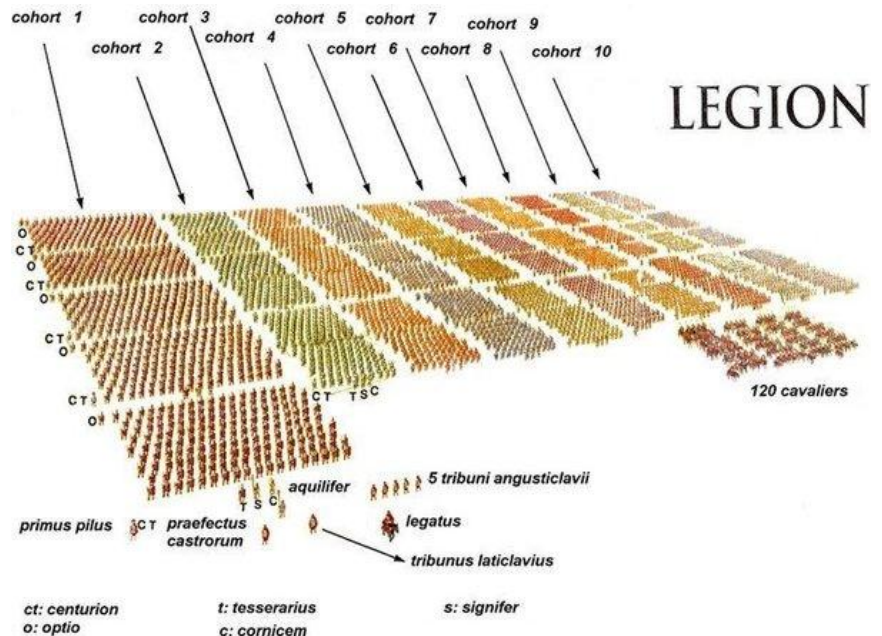
roads, which were called “viae” (see map 2). These roads were primarily built for military purposes but also served commercial ends, such as the “cursus publicus”, the state mail and transport service established by Augustus. At the time, mules were the animal most often used for pulling carts, traveling about 4 mph.

2. Military

a) Organization

The Roman military of the early empire consisted of two types of troops: *Legionaries* - Roman citizens who signed up for a twenty-year contract and formed the bulk of Rome’s heavy infantry - and *auxiliaries*, troops which were often levied from non-roman populations and often fulfilled specialists roles such as archers, cavalry and scouts (Additionally town guards and militias (vigiles) existed which kept watch in towns and were locals with few weapons). As well as the

Praetorians, special bodyguards to the emperor, and quasi-police in the city of Rome. Legionaries were paid more than auxiliary troops, and tended to be more heavily armored with metal sheets, a large square shield, and armed with javelins (throwing spears) and a short sword called a gladius which was made for stabbing enemies with the pointy end. Auxiliary troops could be armed and armored differently depending on their origin and role. For instance, the famous slingers from the Balearic islands near Spain had slingshots, Numidian horsemen from Morocco had short spears, and eastern horse archers sported bows and chainmail armor.



The legionaries were as the name suggests part of a *legion* - Rome's largest military unit comprising approximately 5000 soldiers as well as a cornucopia of support personnel doctors, clerks, slaves, pack animals, etc. Each legion was made of ten smaller units called *Cohorts* (480 men) and they in turn consisted of six *centuries* (80 men) led by a centurion. The leader of a legion is called a Legate, and he commanded both the legionaries and auxiliary troops of the legion, which had a separate organization. The first cohort of each legion had twice as many and the best troops and held the standard, usually an eagle, of the legion. This staff with insignia was the symbol of the legion and losing it in battle brought great shame to all its troops so it had to be protected at all costs. Each night the centurion would verbally give a password to all his troops, so that they may identify each other while on guard duty.

Discipline was extremely important in the Roman army. Roman soldiers would train to stay in formation even when terrified by an enemy charge and used weapons twice as heavy as real ones in their practice fights. The Romans had a very strong sense of duty and were expected to fight to the last man and never question orders. If a legionary abandoned his post, every tenth man in his unit would be killed in a process called decimation. This meant that every man would keep watch that nobody else neglected their duties, for fear of being killed himself. Roman Legionaries were professional full-time soldiers, unlike the citizen hoplites of ancient Greeks and warriors of many other cultures of the time. As such they spent more time training and focused on becoming better soldiers than their enemies could. As Roman citizens, the legionaries were loyal to the emperor, but keenly appointed one



themselves if there was a power vacuum at the center or the emperor didn't act like one (eg. Nero).

b) Battle Tactics

In Combat Roman legionaries would array themselves in rectangular formations in their centuries, forming a long wall of overlapping shields in which each man protected the one to his left. On each flank the Romans would place their auxiliary cavalry, to harass the enemies on the sides and run them down when they fled. Before meeting the enemy battle line, they would throw their javelins, which would go through shields and bend on impact, so they could not be thrown back. The psychological effect of being shot at before even fighting was just as severe as the damage done by the weapons. Then swords would be drawn and the melee began. Throughout the battle, the Romans would cycle fresh troops to the front ranks from reserves and withdraw tired and injured ones from the front. As a result, while the enemy troops grew tired they would always face rested and motivated Romans, hurting enemy morale and sapping their strength.

If the enemy had a lot of archers, or other ranged units, the Legionaries would form the so-called testudo (turtle) formation, in which they would hold their shields above and in front of themselves to overlap them and form an armored box that could move but was difficult to pierce with ranged weapons. The very strong Roman discipline and advanced arms and armor made them a feared opponent that was difficult to counter with ranged or melee attacks. They could hide behind their large shields and strike with precision using their durable short swords. To beat such a Roman army required the element of surprise, laying an ambush and catching them out of formation, or a large force of very well-armored heavy cavalry with spears and light horse archers to break formations and whittle them down.

c) Technology

The Romans were masters of military technology - to the extent that it existed - and excelled especially in engineering. A Roman Cohort could build up a basic fort at the end of a day's march, complete with a small moat and fence that would be easier to defend. They would also build roads where they campaigned to enable easy resupply of food and other goods, and where there were rivers they could build pontoon bridges in a few days to allow themselves to safely cross them. The Roman army had an excellent supply system, with each soldier carrying



weapons, bedding, and cooking utensils as well as basic tools with him. Larger tents and equipment would be carried by pack animals, and food was carefully rationed so each man got his fill. With their good roads and logistics, Roman armies could travel 30 kilometers per day and fight wherever the empire needed them.

In sieges the Romans would often build a second set of walls around an enemy city, ensuring nobody could escape or come to its aid. Then they might build big towers on wheels that could be moved to the enemy walls, or battering rams covered in wet leather so they could not be set on fire. They also knew many types of ranged weapons, from very large catapults (onager) that could fling heavy rocks, dead diseased animals, or balls of fire at enemies, to small “scorpions” which were essentially very large crossbows that fired powerful metal bolts.

In the area of medicine, technology like tourniquets and arterial surgical clamps were used to prevent a wounded soldier from bleeding out. Surgical tools were disinfected in hot water before use, which did not again become standard practice in the West until the 19th century. Diseases historically kill far more soldiers than combat, hence Roman expertise in sanitation technology

such as flowing water from aqueducts were essential to ensuring that an army stayed alive long enough to fight its enemies.

For communicating in the noise and commotion of battle, musical instruments like horns, whistles, and pipes were used. These could be used to transmit basic orders like “fall back” or “advance”. For longer distances, say along the Rhine frontier, a chain of signal fires might be used to communicate quickly and across a long distance that an attack was taking place. For more complex messages, a network of postal stations existed, with messengers riding from one station to the next carrying letters that could be passed on to a fresh messenger and horse at the next station so that news could travel without stopping. It was, however, as today, often difficult to distinguish real from fake news, and rumors spread just as quickly as authentic reports.

4. Foreign Powers and Foreign Politics

a) Pax Romana

The term "Pax Romana" (Latin for Roman Peace) is used to describe the period from 27 BC. to today, 69 AD. It began with the accession of Augustus. This period is characterized as a golden age of increased as well as sustained Roman imperialism, relative peace and order, prosperous stability, hegemonic power, and regional expansion.

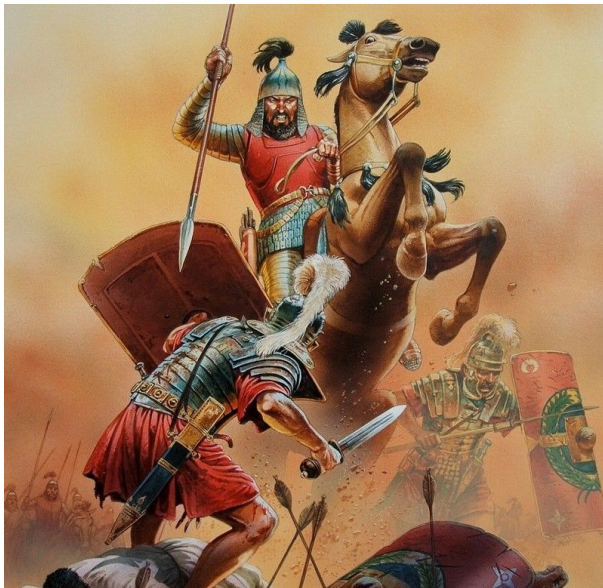
During this period, the Roman Empire achieved its greatest territorial extent, which spanned from England in the north to Morocco in the south and Iraq in the east, and its population reached a maximum of up to 70 million people. Rome's citizens were relatively secure, and the government maintained law, order, and stability. The time was characterized by expansions through military intervention and conquest. Augustus created a new professional army and imposed taxes to finance his ever-growing empire. The raising of Roman trade in the Mediterranean during the Pax Romana generated large profits and incomes.

The Pax Romana saw many advances and accomplishments, such as the building of an extensive system of roads to facilitate the movement of troops and communication and aqueducts. Many of Rome's finest writers (such as Horace, Virgil, Ovid, and Livy) produced literary and poetic

masterpieces. Roman trade increased during the Pax Romana. The Romans sailed East to acquire silk, gems, onyx, and spices.

The emperors who followed Augustus maintained the Augustan Peace by reducing conflict, expanding the borders, and maintaining harmony at home. But how long would this last?

b) Persians



After the expansion into the eastern Mediterranean, the Romans came in contact with the Parthians and Persians, whose respective empires occupied modern Iran and surrounding areas. The first Roman contact with the Parthian Empire came during the Mithridatic Wars which lasted from 82 to 63 BC.

Although the conflict between the Romans and the Persians lasted for seven centuries, the frontier remained largely constant. A game of tug of war originated between the two powers: Territories were regularly sacked, captured, destroyed, and traded. Both sides lacked the logistical strength or manpower to keep up such lengthy campaigns far from their borders and could therefore not put their frontiers to risk. There were conquests beyond the border from both sides, but the balance was almost always restored. It has to be said the Parthian empire in its scope and culture could be said to be the only equal Rome has left in this world.

c) Armenians

The region of Armenia covered the bulk of the lower Caucasus Mountain region, east of modern Turkey, between the Black and Caspian Seas. The region profited from excellent natural resources such as grapes, tobacco, and native fruits as well as gold, silver, iron, granite, and

marble. In general, Armenia served as a buffer zone between Persian culture in the east and Greek or Hellenistic culture in the west.

A conflict with the eastward-moving Romans was inevitable for the Armenians. The Hellenization of Armenia, which had already begun centuries before, continued to develop and tied the nation closer to Rome. During this time, Parthia had emerged as a substantial rival in the Eastern part of the world. Armenia served as a buffer zone between Parthia and Rome, but eventually, a conflict over hegemony over Armenia would be inevitable.

c) Barbarian Clans

The Roman population referred to people groups outside their borders as barbarians. The word originated in Greece and basically means “non-greek speaker”. Many of the groups that attacked and invaded the Roman Empire were Germanic tribes from Northern Europe, such as Arminius’ Cherusci which slew three Roman legions in the Teutenberg-forest.

The Romans were barely interested in conquering barbarian land (such as modern Scotland and Germany) as they were seen as largely unsuitable for civilization. As a whole, the contact between Rome and the barbarians can be described as a combination of peaceful coexistence interrupted by many occasions of brutal violence, wars, and continuous raids. Various tribes would raid Roman territory, usually leading to ruthless Roman reprisals.



Over time, Rome came increasingly to rely on both barbarian troops and on playing allied tribes off against hostile ones. In some instances, barbarians even became part of the Roman Empire, something unthinkable back in the day.

5. The Roman Political System

a) Emperorship

The **Roman emperor** was the ruler and monarchial head of state of the Roman Empire, ever since the granting of the title *Augustus* to Octavian in 27 BC. Another title often used was *Caesar*, used for heirs-apparent, and *imperator*, originally a military honorific. Also, the title Princeps, meaning first among equals. Several titles were used by the emperors - some in correlation with the consular and censorial offices, which however were not an integral part of the Imperial dignity, and were usually held by persons other than the reigning emperor.

The legitimacy of an emperor's rule depended on his control of the army and recognition by the Senate; an emperor would normally be proclaimed by his troops, or invested with imperial titles by the Senate, or both. The Romans considered the office of an emperor to be distinct from that of a king. The first emperor, Augustus, resolutely refused recognition as a monarch. Efforts were made to



portray the emperors as leaders of the republic, fearing any association with the kings of Rome prior to the Roman Republic. The veneration of republicanism was thus very much kept in place.

The legal authority of the emperor derived from an extraordinary concentration of individual powers and offices that were extant in the Republic and developed under Augustus and later rulers, rather than from a new political office. Under the Republic, these powers would have been split between several people, who would each exercise them with the assistance of a colleague and for a specific period of time. Augustus held them all at once by himself, and with no time limits; even those that nominally had time limits were automatically renewed whenever they lapsed. The most important bases of the emperor's *auctoritas* were the greater power of command (*imperium maius*) and tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*) as personal qualities, separate from his public office. The powers of command had two components: consular *imperium* while he was in Rome, and *imperium maius* outside of Rome. While inside the walls of Rome, the reigning consuls and the emperor held equal authority, each being able to veto the other's proposals and acts, with the emperor holding all of the consul's powers, but outside of Rome, the emperor outranked the consuls and could veto them without the same effects on himself. *Imperium maius* also granted the emperor authority over all the provincial governors, making him the ultimate authority in provincial matters, and gave him the supreme command of all of Rome's legions. With *imperium maius*, the emperor was also granted the power to appoint governors of imperial provinces without the interference of the Senate. Also, *imperium maius* granted the emperor the right to veto the governors of the provinces and even the reigning consuls while in the provinces.

b) Roman power structure during the imperial period

After the transition from republic to empire, the power shifted away from representative democracy to centralized imperial authority, with the emperor holding the most power. The emperor wielded significant authority over those who served in lower-level executive positions. No citizen could hold office without the emperor's consent. As a result of this redistribution of power, the popular assemblies that functioned during the Republican period became less important and lost power.

While the assembly became virtually ceremonial, the Senate survived. Primarily, the Senate survived during the early period of the empire as a legitimizer of an emperor's rule. The powers given to the emperor still came from the Senate. Since the Senate was composed of Rome's elite

and intellectual citizens, they impacted public opinion. With this power, the Senate could declare an emperor to be an enemy of the state, or following an emperor's removal or death, the Senate could officially wipe the record of his reign from official history. And it was the Senate who deified dead Emperors. It was therefore very important for an emperor not to get on the Senate's bad side.



Ranking below the Senate in the social order were the *equites*, quite literally the cavalymen of the empire. They were the most influential members of Roman society, except of course the senators. *Equites* were part of the army, and enlisted in the cavalry; they provided their own horses (*equites equo privato*). The senators and the *equites* were part of the patricians, the ruling class of the Empire. One had to be born a patrician, and for this reason, this upper class formed only a small percentage of the population. The rest ranked amongst the plebeians, farmers, craftsmen, laborers, and normal soldiers of Rome. At the bottom of the barrel were the slaves, which were not even considered a part of society. These social distinctions while still important have sort of been eroded over time, there are wealthy and influential plebeians and poor and downtrodden patricians, the ascension of the Julio-Claudians especially opened the door for many new families to rise to senatorial status, so social mobility does somewhat exist, in the grace of the Emperor, of course,

c) Intrigue



Succession in positions of power, and especially to the emperor, was not strictly hereditary: the throne could pass to brothers, stepsons, or even favored courtiers (again: in the case of the emperor, any heir had to be approved by the Senate). As a result, patrician palaces were constantly filled with

political intrigue. Potential heirs and their families always needed to be pushing their names, making their claims, and hustling for positions. They would have to keep an eye on their rivals – including members of their own family – and would need to keep tabs on the many political factions within the Senate and the wider upper class. Ultimately, securing the ultimate prize would often require betrayal, backstabbing, and even murder. It all made for a very stressful life in which only the shrewdest and most determined could survive.

d) Diplomacy

Roman diplomacy consisted of establishing treaties of peace (marking the end of wars), of alliance (in peacetime or during wars), and generals' agreements in the field (during wars); sending and receiving embassies (delegations of high-ranking citizens) to air complaints and congratulations, establish alliances, declare war, investigate matters affecting Roman security interests, settle disputes, and demand satisfaction for (perceived) injuries; and offering and accepting interstate mediations of disputes and wars. Roman diplomatic vocabulary grew out of likely primitive practices overseen by priests, called *fetiales*, who oversaw foreign relations between Rome and other Italian states. The practice of *deditio*, the demand for absolute surrender by another state to Rome's complete discretion, probably had its roots in ancient Italian practice as well. In the historical period, Rome's international partnerships consisted of numerous informal *amicitiae*, “friendships,” and comparatively few formal treaties of alliance. Rome was often a willing broker of interstate mediations, but a less willing participant. As Rome always saw itself as above and a part of the rabble.

If you must break the law, do it to seize power: in all other cases observe it.

- Gaius Julius Caesar

