

NOTES

1. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, in *Readings in Ancient History*, trans. H. G. Dakyns (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1912), p. 266.
2. Attributed to Demosthenes, "Against Neaera." This and much of the other material in this section is drawn from Morton Hunt, *The Natural History of Love* (New York: Knopf, 1967).
3. Quoted in Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
4. Xenophone, *Memorabilia*, III: xi, quoted in Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
5. Sophocles, Fragment 678, quoted in Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
6. H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 57.
7. Sappho, "Ode to Arthis," quoted in Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
8. This and the following selections are taken from Ovid, *The Art of Love*, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957).
9. Pliny, *Letters*, iv: 19, quoted in Otto Kiefer, *Sexual Life in Ancient Rome* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1934), and excerpted in Michael Cherniavsky and Arthur J. Slavin, *Social Textures of Western Civilization: The Lower Depths* (Waltham, Mass.: Xerox, 1972), p. 162.
10. Jérôme Carcopino, quoted in *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, ed. Henry T. Rowell, trans. E. O. Lorimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 89.
11. 1 Cor. 7: 1-9.
12. The story of Ammon is told by Socrates Scholasticus, *Ecclesiastical History* iv: 23; this version is adapted from Morton Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-95.
13. Hunt, *op. cit.*, p. 96.
14. *Kama Sutra*, I, 4:14, quoted in John W. Spellman's introduction to *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana* (New York: Dutton, 1962), p. 16.
15. Quoted in Spellman, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
16. *The Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana*, trans. Sir Richard F. Burton (New York: Dutton, 1962), p. 182.
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War and Society

Empires and Armies in Rome and China

WHAT CAUSES WAR? Are some societies more likely to engage in war than others? Is there any relationship between the size of a society and its capacity for war, or its capacity for avoiding war? Do states with large armies provide longer periods of peace than those with small armies? Are volunteer armies preferable to draft armies? Is an empire safer than a small country? Does a state provide more protection or risk? How does a war change a society?

These are some of the questions that prompt this chapter. They are important questions for us today. There are wars going on in some places in the world almost all of the time. They sometimes threaten to engulf larger areas in conflict. Another world war, especially in the age of nuclear weapons, is said to be unthinkable. But we have not devised a certain peace.

Our own country plays a significant role in the world. Some have compared the role of the United States in the twentieth century with that of the Roman Empire in the classical world. If the United States is an empire, what might we learn from the military experience of Rome and other empires? How might we avoid the problems and eventual decline of such empires?

This chapter will argue that the historical experience of Rome and other empires

has much to tell us. The chapter will argue some of the following ideas. Wars are not inevitable or natural but are caused by certain kinds of warlike or aggressive societies and social situations. One of the most ancient causes of war was the tension between tribes of nomadic herders and settled, civilized states. That principal cause of war in the ancient and classical world has disappeared with the use of gunpowder and the rise of states in the last five hundred years. But another cause of war is the expansion of empires. They tend to expand to the point of resistance, resulting in conflict. Their expansion also tends to transform them internally. The society becomes militarized and socially divided. Eventually, such societies are torn apart internally or are ordered by powerful, repressive states.

There are many subsidiary arguments as well, perhaps too many to name. One is that citizen armies are better than professional ones because citizens will fight only when they have to, and they will fight for their homelands. For the same reason, draft armies are better than professional or mercenary armies. What other arguments do you see in this chapter? What is the evidence for these and other arguments? Do you find the evidence convincing? Is the United States in danger of repeating some of the mistakes of the ancient empires? Has the United States built large concentrations of economic power, like the landed estates of ancient Rome and China, that inhibit efforts for peace or defense? Or does the United States ensure the peace, as the *pax Romana* or Chinese Empire did?

FRONTIERS, SETTLERS, AND HERDERS: THE LONGEST WAR

About three thousand years ago, when the ancient Hebrews speculated about the origins of war they told a story about two brothers—Cain and Abel. To indicate their belief that war had existed a long time they made these two brothers the sons of the first parents. According to the version of the story in what we know as the Bible (Genesis, chapter 4), Eve gave birth to Cain, who became “a tiller of the ground,” and then to Abel, “a keeper of sheep.” “And in process of time it came to pass that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect.” Jealous that the Lord accepted Abel’s animal sacrifice and rejected his agricultural offering, Cain, the farmer, killed his brother Abel, the herder.

As a symbolic account of the origins of war, the biblical tale is very instructive. Cain and Abel are symbols of the two types of life-styles before the rise of cities. Gradually, after the taming of animals by hunting tribes and the domestication of plants by the food gatherers (about ten thousand years ago), the two styles of life—farming and herding—became more and more distinct. While hunting and gathering were often practiced by the same group, often with only a sexual division

of labor, farming and herding became separated ways of life. Herders required vast grasslands for their flocks. Farmers needed river valleys for irrigation or areas with higher rainfall than grasslands. Herders were always on the move in search of new grazing lands. Farmers had to stay with their crops. Herders owned little more than their animals, tents, and what they could carry. Farmers built permanent settlements—villages and eventually cities—which became centers of administration, trade, and numerous occupations.

There must have been almost inevitable tensions between farmers and herders—tensions that had not existed in more primitive hunting-gathering societies. Farming villages were able to accumulate a surplus of food and eventually luxuries that must have been the envy of the wandering herders of the grasslands. At the same time, the settled life of village communities made farmers more vulnerable as they became more “civilized” and prosperous. The herders’ rough life in the open country was not far removed from the rigors of the primitive hunt. Herders valued aggression, strength, and stamina. Their tribes were something of a permanent military force, loyal to their leaders, and ready to move at a moment’s notice. In short, farming communities were an easy prey and contained attractive booty for the wandering tribes of the grasslands.

Peasant farmers and nomadic herders were, as the biblical story suggests, brothers as well as enemies. Every fall when the grass of the pasture was low, and the crops of the field had been harvested, the herders must have brought their animals to feed on the stubble of the harvested grain. Cattle would be traded for the fruits of the vine and the olive trees, and the produce of the cultivated field. The nomads would also offer precious stones, axes, and decorative shells that they had acquired on their wanderings for the perishable goods and manufactured products of the civilized settlements.

The interaction of farmers and herders, settlers and nomads, villages and tribes, farm and pasture, and eventually city civilizations and barbarians—sometimes peaceful but often violent—was probably the main dynamic of world history until only a few hundred years ago. Organized, sustained warfare began in the conflict between the two groups. Nomadic herders have invaded village settlements for almost ten thousand years; city armies have fought barbarian invaders for almost five thousand years; and since the nomads learned to ride horseback habitually about three thousand years ago, the confrontations have often been brutal and frequent. If we exclude the very recent past, the last few hundred years in which the last nomadic tribes have been integrated into the laws and customs of cities and countries, the history of war has been the conflict between the settlers and the people of the frontier.

Much of ancient history can be understood in terms of that conflict. The ancient city civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and India that developed after 3000 B.C. were all overrun after 1700 B.C. by barbarian charioteers (who combined the city invention of wheeled vehicles with their own experience of domesticating horses). The descendants of these invaders had established new empires in Egypt, Mesopo-

tamia, and China when (after 1200 B.C.) a new wave of wandering tribes with iron weapons and infantry organization proved too much for the ruling aristocracies and their few hundred chariots. These tribes (like the Dorians in Greece and the Hebrews) settled down to agriculture and city life and were, in turn, overrun by a new invasion of nomads (after 900 B.C.) whose perfection of horse riding made their cavalries too powerful for the old infantries.

Successive waves of nomads, spurred by horsemen with bow and arrow, raided and sometimes destroyed or conquered city empires from 900 B.C. until the last significant Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century A.D. Most of them came from the vast grasslands of the Eurasian steppe that stretched from Europe to China. These mounted armies were actually no more than the male members of a tribe or tribal confederacy, moving as they had always moved, but in periods of population growth or pressure from other tribes, forced to carve out new grazing lands without their women and children.

Ancient civilizations were forced to adopt their Iron Age infantries to the new cavalry warfare, hire the nomads as mercenaries to protect their flanks, or succumb to defeat. The Assyrian Empire learned the lesson the hard way: they were overrun by the nomads in 612 B.C. The Persian Empire in Iran hired the nomads as mercenaries. The rulers of the small Asian kingdom of Qin [Ch'in] were among the few who were able to adopt cavalry warfare on their own. As a result, they were not only able to stave off the nomadic invasion from central Asia, but they were also able to overwhelm rival Asian states and give the Qin [Ch'in] name to a unified China in 221 B.C. But later nomadic invasions of China proved more successful, and by the fourth century A.D. China was again a series of smaller states.

The Western Roman Empire suffered much the same fate as Han China. For almost 600 years the Romans were able to create a Mediterranean empire while keeping the Scythians and other tribal confederacies at bay. Increasingly, however, the Romans were forced to use nomads as mercenaries. Unlike the Chinese, the Roman infantry officers refused to learn the techniques of cavalry or bow and arrow. By the fifth century A.D. the Western Roman Empire had been overrun by the tribal migrations. The Eastern Romans who combined Latin and Greek culture in Constantinople (which the emperor Constantine had established separate from embattled Rome in the early fourth century A.D.) were able to survive another thousand years. The Eastern Byzantine Empire survived that long primarily because it adopted a new style of cavalry combat that had been developed in Iran to counter the threat from the steppe. Eventually that new style of cavalry—which we know as the armored knight—was to save the very tribes that overran the Western Roman Empire when they, themselves, were threatened by new nomadic invasions in the ninth century A.D.

In many ways, the most dramatic example of the potentialities of nomad warfare—the expansion of the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century—was the last. After 1500 the widespread use of gunpowder and the

complicated technology of firearms put the balance of power on the side of the more complex city-based civilizations. After 1500 these civilizations took the offensive against the nomads. While the Europeans moved to “civilize” the pastoral corners of their own continent and the “Indian” nomads of the Americas, the new Russian state conquered its own eastern frontier and brought the Bible and the law to the very heart of the Eurasian steppe.

It would not be an exaggeration, then, to say that for most of human history (at least the first forty-five hundred of the last five thousand years) the causes of war have been the disparities between settled and nomadic styles of life. The lure of city luxuries and land has exerted an irresistible pull on the ambitions of nomadic warlords and the populations of pastoral society. Perhaps there is some hope that this chief cause of war has come to an end. There are no more barbarians at the gates. Even the conflicts of the American frontier between farmers and cattle herders, or between both and Native Americans, are a hundred years past.

But neither war nor violence has disappeared from our lives. Perhaps a closer look at the Roman Empire will help explain why.

THE ROMAN PHASE OF THE LONGEST WAR: SOME QUESTIONS

In 391 B.C. a band of nomads, called Gauls, under the chieftain Brennus defeated a small army of Roman patricians (or aristocrats) and proceeded to burn the town of Rome to the ground. Eight hundred years later (in A.D. 410 to be exact) a similar tribe of Goths, led by Alaric, destroyed the city of Rome again. These dates offer convenient markers for the beginning and end of Roman history. The greatness of Rome lies in its achievements during those eight hundred years: the town became an empire, which spread its laws, its culture, and its peace from North Africa to England; the capital city of this empire was secure; meanwhile the brutal life of the nomads changed very little. The tragedy is that after eight hundred years of work, Rome was just as vulnerable as it had been before. In fact, it was more vulnerable. The defeat in 391 B.C. had been a cause for revitalization and fantastic development. The defeat in 410 was followed by the “vandalization” of the city again in 455 by another tribe (the Vandals), the murder of the emperor and his son in 476, and the final transformation of the imperial city into pasture land for the herds of any invading tribe. Rome never recovered.

Why was Rome so successful at repelling the barbarians after the defeat of 391 B.C., and so unable to recover after eight hundred years of conquering and civilizing? Why did the imperial armies of the fifth century A.D. fail to provide the security that had been won by the inhabitants of a small town eight hundred years before? Part of the answer may lie with the barbarians themselves. It is possible that the invasions of the fifth century A.D. were much more severe than those of

the fourth century B.C. But that is only speculation. We know very little about the earlier nomadic tribes. They left no records, because they could not write. Therefore, most of their activity is still a mystery to us.

It seems more useful to look at what had changed on the Roman side of the equation. The barbarians were always on the frontier. The Roman armies had always responded to their threat. For eight hundred years that response was successful. Then it failed. What had happened in Rome to cause that failure?

PATRICIAN RESPONSE: REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION AND ARMY

First, what happened after the defeat in 391 B.C.? The invasion of the Gauls convinced the surviving Romans that radical changes were necessary in their military organization. The aristocratic army of patricians was clearly no match for the barbarian tribes, in which all men were warriors. A national citizen army that included the common people (called plebeians) seemed to be the only suitable response to the warrior tribes. The plebeians had previously been excluded from the military because they were not full citizens. Without full political rights, they could hardly be expected to give their lives for the city. But these plebeians had been excluded from full citizenship because they owned little or no land. As in other ancient city-states, the Roman patricians were not willing to trust political decisions to those who had no economic stake in the country.

Only a crisis—especially a military crisis—could force the Roman patricians to bring the plebeians into the army. In order to assure the loyalty of the army, these new soldiers had to be given some political and economic power as well. The total defeat of Rome was such a crisis. The egalitarian barbarian armies forced the Romans to democratize their own armies. The creation of a more democratic army meant the democratization of the society as well.

The changes were gradual, and by no means complete. Plebeians were made full citizens. All of the land-owning *assidui*, or “settled men” (patrician or plebeians), between the ages of seventeen and sixty-five were bound to answer the summons (called *classis*, from which the later meaning of “class” came) for military service. Even the landless men (called *proletarii*) were required to back up the army, and an attempt was made to distribute conquered territory to these landless men and poor plebeians.

According to the new constitution, the popular assembly passed the laws, decided questions of war and peace, and elected the consuls (the executives who were roughly equivalent to later presidents or prime ministers). Plebeians could even become consuls. Further, the officers of the older plebeian assembly, who were called tribunes, were given the right to veto some of the decisions of the whole popular assembly or its consuls.

Despite the maintenance of classes, and despite the existence of landless *proletarii*,

the constitution that emerged after 390 B.C. meant a more egalitarian society with a more representative army than had ever existed before in hundreds of years of patrician rule in Rome. “It is certain,” according to one historian, “that the new organization of the citizen-body infused fresh strength into the community. The common interest now came home to the heart of each citizen: he felt himself responsible for the state and its prosperity.”

Essentially the army had become the people. Since they were all mobilized when war was declared, and since they were the ones who decided when to go to war, they had created the possibility of a peaceful society—able to defend themselves to the last man in the event of an emergency. But as the case of the barbarians (whose solution they had adopted) could show, a nation of warriors might become more accustomed to the discipline of war than the leisure of peace. When the state became the army, the nation could be one of citizens who were also emergency soldiers, or a nation of soldiers who were also part-time citizens. The Romans, like the barbarians, often behaved as a nation of soldiers.

PRESERVING INEQUALITY WITH FOREIGN LAND

The primacy of the army over the state had many causes. It is unlikely that the people simply preferred war to peace. But since the patricians were not about to distribute their own land to the plebeians, military conquest was the least painful way of increasing the citizen base of the army. The poor probably recognized that their own advancement depended on the spoils of war. The more democratic army was necessarily a more imperialistic one. The alternative of genuine economic equality at home may have seemed necessary during the bleak days after the Gauls’ invasion, but the patrician class must have quickly recognized the possibility of an imperialistic, military state as an alternative.

Further, despite the constitutional changes, the patrician class always remained in pretty firm control of the government. Though the popular assembly was opened to plebeians, the votes of patricians were weighted more heavily by a complicated process of voting by groups. The wealthy comprised a majority of these groups, called “centuries,” and each had one vote. Even this device was usually redundant. Plebeians usually voted for patricians anyway. Whether they were used to authority, or felt more secure with the “big names,” or had learned the “chain of command” in their military training, the plebeians consistently elected patricians to be consuls. This was particularly significant because the consuls became increasingly important. (A cynic might say the consuls became more important because patricians were elected.) The consuls served for only a year, but it became customary for them, after that year, to enter an advisory group for future consuls. This group was called the senate. It had a long history as a committee of noble families. It had advised ancient kings as well as the consuls of the recent republic. The reforms that followed 390 B.C. were supposed to force the senate to share some of

actually, the senate became more and more Roman state. The senate changed from a the formal legislative body of Rome. The that were offered by the consuls, and the n approved by the senate.

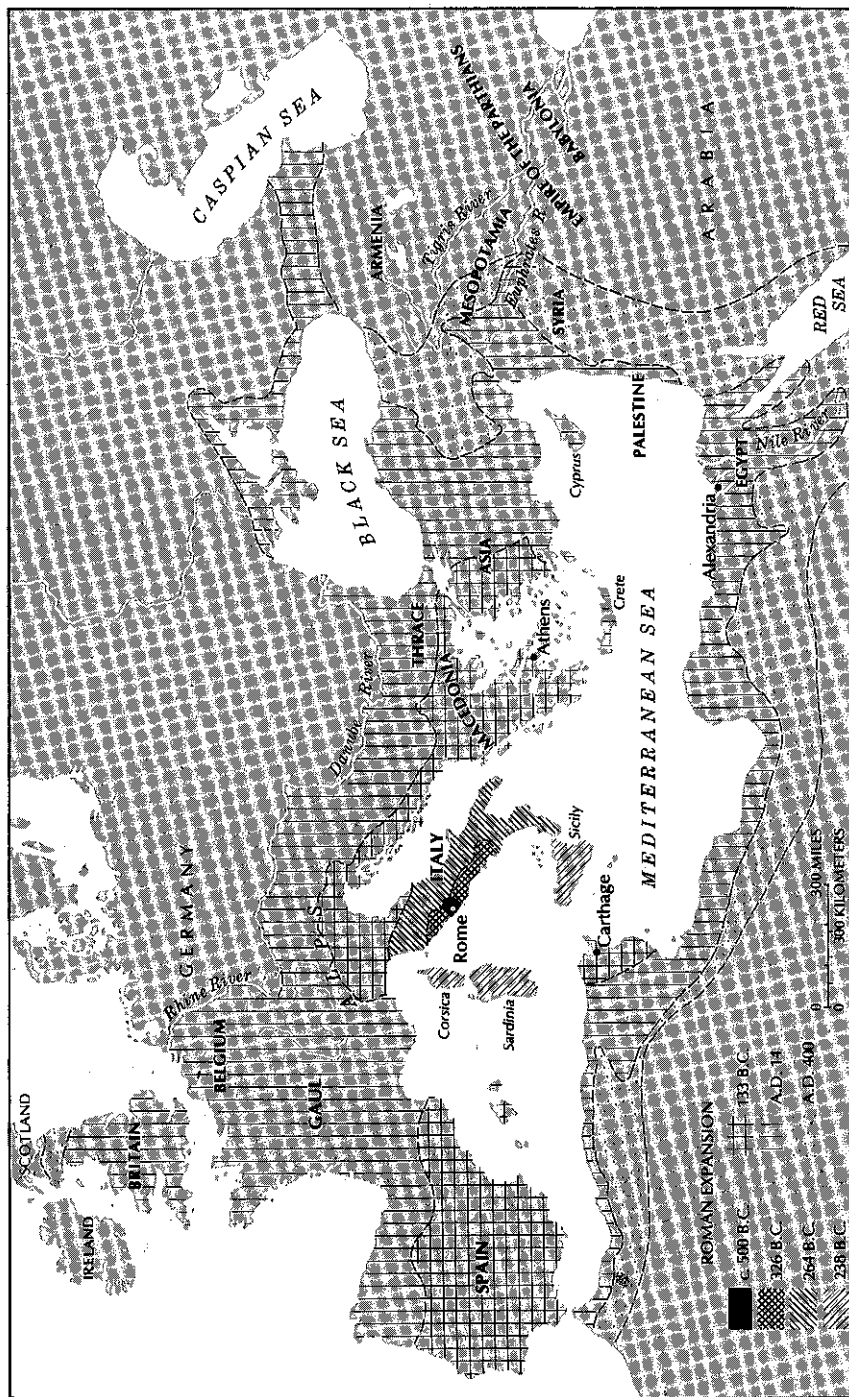
to the invasion of 391 B.C., reflected in the th century B.C., was mixed. An attempt at ding and in politics, but most radically in not constitute a revolution. The patricians lation into the citizenry so that the army Rome and increase her territory. But the an expansion during the next centuries was e implicit understanding that the plebeians ce if they were not satisfied with their role ed in 287 B.C. Then the plebeians won an d to let the patrician-dominated popular war and peace, their exclusively plebeian ass laws that had the same force as the laws

FOR ALL OF ITALY

auls at the beginning of the fourth century B.C., the Romans conquered most of Italy. efensive as they insisted (whose are?), the e protectors of order and city life. They is against the more nomadic and predatory other Italian cities and populations in part o because of its superior military.

s to more rigorous drill and stricter disci- of the commander, which was called the r campaigns. Soldiers who broke ranks or When a whole unit was guilty of serious ation" (executing every tenth man) was a sport, as it was for the aristocratic armies a business that tapped the resources of the

oundaries came new neighbors, new ies. Long before the actual empire tarized society.



ed all of Italy they had adequately secured the 287 B.C. (when the plebeian strike ended, giving war and peace for sharing legislative authorities) were increasingly directed against other Rome's conquest of Italy was completed from the allies of the Greek Hellenistic Empire of Naples and Tarentum in southern Italy with the Carthaginians in North Africa. Rome conquered along with the conflict of all of us. While the Roman frontier had been a few to defend the city only from the Celts, Gauls, when the Roman boundaries became the Alps, it was necessary to defend itself from Greece, in Europe.

TO MAKE NEW ENEMIES: GREECE AND GREECE

the occupied in continual wars with the Carthaginians. Roman historians were fond of viewing the Carthaginian war as an inevitable burden of Roman responsibility. The historian Polybius saw all of Roman history as the divinely ordained Roman Empire (much of it destiny)—another type of divine inevitability. The Romans wanted it both ways: they wanted to believe that the Carthaginians were blameless; but they knew that their Roman ancestors had been more than passive. They pointed out that each act of expansion was the product of Roman ambition. They assumed that these new enemies had been created by Rome (or a Roman province). Consequently, the Carthaginians—to strike first, or when the time was most favorable—were always blameless, since they were in the best interests of Rome, which (every act of civilization).

led the First Punic War) began in 264 B.C. Rome had conquered all of Italy and was in a position to be a power in Africa, Spain, and part of Sicily. According to Polybius, the Carthaginians were encircling the coasts of Italy. Few Romans noted that Rome had conquered all of Sicily after two hundred years, and conquering all of Italy was rather slight. A few

more may have urged defensive precautions against a possible Carthaginian attack from Sicily. But the policy that won the day was an armed invasion of the island.

The war for Sicily dragged on for twenty-two years, from 262 to 241 B.C. The Romans built their first large fleet, conquered a number of Carthaginian cities in Sicily, and, intoxicated by their success, decided to end the war with one final blow. They decided to invade Carthage itself. Success in Sicily increased Roman ambitions and expanded their horizons for "preventive war." But just as success bred more war, so did failure. The Romans were not able to take Carthage, so they kept trying. At the same time, the Carthaginians realized that Rome was their implacable enemy. If the Carthaginians had never before given serious consideration to an invasion of Rome, they now had to mobilize for such a defensive war. Preparations continued after the temporary peace treaty in 241 B.C. that gave Sicily to Rome. The Carthaginian general Hamilcar increased Carthaginian control of Spain, and by 218 B.C. his son Hannibal was able to lead an army into Italy. That invasion, which lasted until 201 B.C., proved as indecisive as the Roman invasion of Carthage. It was possible to do a lot of damage to the countryside, but it was ridiculous to attempt to take the capital city. Hannibal, in fact, failed because the Roman armies harassed him, without confronting him, and the Carthaginian troops and their tribal allies were finally worn down.

The results of the two long wars with Carthage (from 264 to 201 B.C.) were that the Roman citizen army had become a well-trained professional machine, Rome had become a threat to other empires, the Roman senate had become supreme, and the people were tired. The first three results were the ones that mattered.

In 200 B.C. the senate, which had become a virtual dictatorship during the war against Hannibal, saw its chance to defeat the Greek Empire of Macedonia. The time seemed ripe because the king of Macedonia's allies were busy and the Roman war machine was so finely tuned. The fact that the centuries of the popular assembly had almost unanimously rejected the declaration of war made no difference to the senate. The tribune of the plebeians, Q. Baebius, accused the senators of "stirring up war after war to prevent the people ever tasting the fruits of peace." But the senate insisted, had the question restored to the agenda, and finally secured a favorable vote.

If earlier wars had been in any sense "defensive," the wars of the second century were unabashedly imperialistic. Macedonia (in 200 B.C. and in 146 B.C.) was not threatening Rome. There was some talk in the debate that preceded the declaration of war in 200 B.C. about defending the liberties of the smaller Greek city-states from Macedonia. But even that was a projection of a future possibility rather than an immediate threat. Rome had simply become involved in Greek affairs and wanted to prevent the rise of any strong power on its eastern flank. In a sense the wars of the previous century set the stage for further involvement. Between the first and second Punic wars, the Roman armies had pushed eastward in two Illyrian wars, which brought Roman power to the edge of Macedonia. One conquest led to

another. Sometimes they would be called defensive, but after a while it did not matter.

After conquering Macedonia, Rome involved herself more and more deeply in Greek politics. For most of the first half of the second century B.C., the Romans were able to support the Macedonian upper class against lower-class movements that were both democratic and anti-Roman. Finally, a revolt of Macedonian "liberation forces" required Rome to govern the colony with her own governors and standing army—after they decisively defeated the rebels in 146 B.C. All of Greece was placed under Roman martial law, the rich commercial city of Corinth was destroyed, and its territory became the property of the Roman people.

The ancient city of Carthage was similarly destroyed in 146 B.C. without provocation. To put it differently, the best that can be said is that the rich wine, olive, and fig plantations of Carthage posed a potential economic threat to Roman landowners who were developing similar plantations in Italy. Roman historians found a sufficient explanation for the destruction of Carthage in a story they told about the leading statesman of the nationalist, landowning party returning from a trip to Carthage. Cato waved a bunch of figs at the Roman senate, recounted the improvements in Carthaginian agriculture since the last Roman-inflicted defeat in 201 B.C., and declared that the new birth of this prosperous state must be aborted.

The landowning class was in charge of the senate, and the senate was supreme. They voted the death sentence for Carthage, and sent Scipio Aemilianus, the general who had just destroyed Numantia, as executioner. Carthage was destroyed. Most of the population was massacred. The territory of Carthage became Rome's African province, and the land was leased to the wealthy landowners back home.

THE FRUITS OF EMPIRE AT HOME

In a little more than a half a century, Rome had expanded from a coalition of Italian cities into a Mediterranean empire. Her provinces included North Africa, the previous Carthaginian colonies in Spain, all of the former Greek city-states and kingdoms, and (after 133 B.C.) the Asian empire of Pergamum (Turkey today). The fever of empire had become epidemic. The riches of former empires poured into Rome. This accumulated treasure of centuries, the vast land holdings for Roman agriculture, the investment opportunities for Roman businesses, the graft for Roman governors, and the booty for Roman troops were enough to keep the Roman people occupied for another couple of hundred years. They paid for more Roman wars and more provinces. They financed an elaborate material civilization in Rome. But such wholesale banditry was inevitably shortsighted. Relations with the drained provinces deteriorated. Romans learned to rely more on booty than on innovation. War became the governor of Roman politics, and the army its kingpin. And, perhaps most significantly, the Roman people were forced to trade

political participation for trinkets: the plebeians lost their farms, their leaders, their political power, their citizen army, and their concern.

It may seem at least slightly absurd to date the decline of the Roman Empire from this half-century of expansion (from 201 to 146 B.C.), since the empire did not replace the republic for another century and a half and the empire survived for four hundred years after that. But, in this brief period the events were set in motion that made both an emperor necessary and the empire inherently unstable. The empire was, after all, created in this period. Its only further extensions were into barbarian lands in northern Europe—and that cost more than it was worth. The empire was, itself, the cause of Rome's downfall. Its immediate effect in the next hundred years was internal war. Class wars, civil wars, and wars between Romans and Italians were the fruits of the empire. This violence could be controlled (and some peace restored) by the addition of actual emperors, but the root problems were never solved. Rather than dwell on the long agony, let's look at what the empire did to the Roman Republic.

We have already dropped some clues: the lack of any pretenses about "defensive war" after 200 B.C.; the rise of the landowners and the senate; Cato waving the figs. There are some other clues as to what was happening in Rome. Between 230 and 130 B.C. the population of adult male citizens rose from 270,000 to only 317,000—an insignificant increase, considering the expansion of Roman territory. (Compare American population increases in a century of similar expansion. Better yet, imagine the crack troops of something like "the army of the Swiss people" taking over all of Europe, occupying every city from London to Rome, and then looking for troops to send back to Switzerland.) Roman population did not increase at anything like the rate that would have been necessary to maintain even the semblance of a citizen army. There were simply not enough Romans to go around.

To make matters worse, the wealthy senators were not willing to open the Roman army and politics to loyal allies—even those in Italy who were citizens of non-Roman cities or tribes. As in the past, these Italian allies were expected to fight when called by the Roman government, but since they had no voice in declaring war or peace they had little direct interest in a military campaign. The Italian armies were not much more Roman than those of the Greek kingdoms that had assisted the Roman legions in their Asian campaigns.

Not only did Roman citizenship—the basis of the citizen army—increase too slowly to govern an empire, but the character of the citizenry changed as well. The poor and the plebeians were increasingly excluded. The money that poured from the conquered provinces went to those who were already wealthy. Some of it went to the generals and officers of the senatorial class. Some went to the rising business class, which had profited from military contracts. The safest investment for this new money was in buying and developing the huge tracts of land that came to the "Roman people," but were administered, leased, and sold by the officers of the senate.

Wealthy Romans were able to buy counties, even countries, of land for the reasonable prices that their friends in the senate set. The Roman treasury could, thus, turn its new possessions into the cash necessary for government, "defense," and more wars. And everyone was happy: everyone, that is, except the Roman poor, the Italian allies, and the subject foreigners.

The foreigners streamed into Rome as conquered slaves or propertyless noncitizens. Eager for work, they were a cheap source of labor for the agricultural plantations that the wealthy Roman landowners bought. Even former Roman citizens were forced to sell their small farms (which had been neglected after years of war) and become tenants on the new large estates. Others gave up their failing farms for the hope of a job in the city. They too gave up their citizenship (which had become almost worthless anyway) and their military service (which had become an intolerable burden) when they gave up their farms.

In many ways the Roman Republic of 150 B.C. looked more like the declining empire hundreds of years later than like the republic of small landholders a hundred years before. The large estates were devoted more and more to commercial crops. Foreign lands were converted to grain production, while the Romans converted their own lands to the much more profitable production of wine, olives, and figs. (This was the context of Cato's demand for the destruction of Carthage.) The change in landholding meant a change in the army. The senatorial families still provided generals who were eager for honors, governorships, and an armed following. Increasingly they recruited their armies from the poor and uprooted with the promise of booty from foreign wars. As long as they were successful, their armies belonged to them. In 88 B.C. the first of a long chain of these armies marched on Rome itself, and took over the government for its general.

RADICAL REFORM REJECTED

There were a couple of attempts to change the drift toward private armies of paid professional soldiers and the unequal land ownership that made it necessary. One radical reformer, Tiberius Gracchus, a tribune in 133 B.C. with impeccable aristocratic credentials, attempted to win some support in the senate for the idea of military reform. A slave revolt helped underline the problem of a large slave population on the estates, and it was clear to many that the citizen army had been preferable to hired troops. In an attempt to revive the citizen army Tiberius proposed a plan for distributing lands to the displaced peasants who were now tenants on the estates or city *proletarii*. He also proposed shorter military terms so that the people could remain their own soldiers without becoming too attached to war or too absent from their farms. Finally, he urged that the allies in Italy be admitted to citizenship. None of these proposals were popular in the senate. In fact they were so unpopular that Tiberius was murdered, and the senate justified the act as a suppression of a rebellion. Ten years later, Tiberius's younger brother, Gaius

Gracchus, proposed a similar plan for extending land and citizenship, with added urgency and support. This time the senate found it necessary to justify the massacre of over three thousand of the Gracchi followers as part of a "state of war." Then, to divert popular attention from the critical issues raised by the Gracchi, the senate embarked on another series of foreign wars.

The conquest of new territory in North Africa and Gaul (France) in the last quarter of the second century B.C. only intensified the problems. The senate became more venal and dictatorial. The landed ruling class increased its holdings at the expense of the poor. Businessmen, tax collectors, contractors, governors, and generals milked the provinces. The army lost any vestiges of a popular base. Everyone was out for spoils, but the plebeians and allies got the least.

In the midst of these wars, the morale of the allies and peasants who were still called for military service deteriorated to the point of mass desertions. The senate was forced to call on a popular leader, Marius, to put a final end to the myth of a citizen militia and openly to recruit a standing army from the Roman poor. Marius created his professional army with promises of pay and land. To meet these promises he attempted to revive the Gracchi program. The senate refused. Its refusal meant that the standing army they wanted would have to be paid (like everything else) on a "commission basis" through conquest. The same was true for the army of Lucius Cornelius Sulla, a general who supported the interests of the landowners.

PRIVATE ARMIES AND CIVIL WAR

When the Gracchi plans were rejected by the senate, the Italian allies declared war on Rome—first for citizenship, and then for equality. The senate sent the armies of Sulla against them. (Marius was loyal but suspect.) By 88 B.C. the three-year war had become a devastating standoff. The allies were given citizenship for laying down their arms, and Sulla's troops lost the hope of the allied lands in southern Italy. They needed land. A war with Mithradates, the Iranian king of Pontus in northern Asia Minor, loomed as their opportunity. But the popular assembly gave the campaign to Marius. Sulla marched on Rome. The ensuing century of civil wars destroyed everything that was left of the citizen republic.

Sulla, like Marius for a short time before him, brought order to Rome with a vengeance. Thousands were tortured and executed. Whole towns were leveled. Cicero later wrote that he "saw the severed heads of senators displayed in the streets of Rome."

After the deaths of Marius and Sulla the struggle continued. The soldiers of their armies were no longer farmers who needed land. They had known war too long to remember how to run a farm. There were two armies of soldiers in Rome who needed work. The only work they knew was fighting. To keep the fighting outside of Italy, they had to be sent on long campaigns into Gaul, Spain, Africa, or the East. Despite their disagreements with him, Pompey was the most loyal general

the impotent senate could expect. He trusted them enough (and abhorred civil war enough) to disband his troops on entering Rome. The senate took advantage of Pompey's weakness and, forgetting its own, refused to pay his troops. In effect it asked that future generals make their own senates when they had the army to do so. Julius Caesar learned that lesson well. After a campaign in Gaul, he marched on Rome and concentrated the government in his own hands.

The senate no longer governed. By remaining a club for wealthy Roman patricians, it had lost control of the allies and the mass of Roman citizens and *proletarii*. Without the support of any of these groups it could not hope to control an army. A few senators, like Cassius and Brutus, thought they might regain senatorial initiative by killing Caesar. But Caesar had made the government so completely his own that his assassination resulted in a round of civil wars between his own followers: his lieutenant Antony and his adopted son Octavian. The fact that Caesar could designate Octavian as his heir to the government shows his contempt for the senate and its constitution. Octavian had to win his title by defeating the armies of Antony, but when he became the emperor Augustus, Caesar's contempt was justified.

EMPIRE AND EPITAPH

The imperial period of Roman history from 27 B.C. to A.D. 476 was marked by alternating rhythms of chaos and repression. The high point was the reign of the first emperor, Octavian, who was called Augustus. The previous century of civil war had been so debilitating that most Romans and allies willingly gave up freedom for order. Augustus was able to provide peace throughout most of the empire. He was even able to reduce the size of the army by half. But the army became the emperor's personal property, and he gave them land from his personal possessions (among which was Egypt). Augustus decked himself in the trappings of an oriental monarch. The class divisions that had become so great in the preceding centuries were formalized by special symbols to be worn by the senators.

Augustus was followed on his death in A.D. 14 by his stepson (in proper monarchical style) Tiberius. After a wave of violence and assassinations, Tiberius died a madman in A.D. 37, much to the relief of most of his subjects. The next six emperors from 37 to 69 all died by murder or suicide, the last four in the year 68–69 alone.

In 69 Vespasian inaugurated a new line of emperors, reigning until 96, who were not Roman but Italian. Vespasian was able to restore some of the order of Augustus without resorting to an openly military dictatorship. The "five good emperors" that followed from 96 to 180 were actually able to extend the boundaries of the empire slightly, end the worst offenses practiced in the previous century, and restore



Both the public and the underlying meanings of a Roman Empire are unintentionally presented on the top and bottom of the beautiful Gemma Augustea, which was carved in onyx about A.D. 10 to commemorate a victory of Tiberius (who descends from the chariot at the top left). The majestic top panel, where the stars of Capricorn and the goddess Roma sanction the coronation of Augustus, rests above the panel of Roman soldiers taking prisoners and erecting a trophy. Renowned works of art like the Gemma Augustea were also, in a sense, trophies of empire. (Kunsthistorisches Museum)

some confidence with continued peace. But the last of these, Marcus Aurelius, faced renewed frontier warfare that (along with plague and famine) sapped all of his strength.

The year 192, like 68–69, saw four emperors. One was the tool of the palace guard, beheaded by them when he stepped out of line; another was a wealthy senator who was the highest bidder for the crown. From then on the crown was the prize of the strongest army.

With the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211), the emperor became (without

pretensions) the ruling general. "Pamper the army," he told his son, "and despise the rest." Septimius institutionalized the military changes of prior centuries. He outflanked possible Roman rivals by drawing the army from the provinces. By considerably increasing the size and pay of the army he made defense possible but aggravated the heavy tax burden. His son Caracalla (211–217) finally gave citizenship to all free persons in the empire in 212—long after citizenship had ceased to mean anything.

For the rest of the third century the empire was a shambles. From 235 to 285 a total of twenty-six emperors were put up and pulled down by plundering armies. The frontiers no longer held back the nomads. The riches of past campaigns had been exhausted. Whole provinces declared their independence. Rome itself was threatened. Aurelian (270–275) found it necessary to build a wall around the city.

Two Illyrians (the Roman province of Illyria is now Yugoslavia) postponed the inevitable. They were the emperors Diocletian (284–305) and Constantine (306–337). They divided the empire in two—the Western Empire and the Eastern Empire—and secured the more defensible eastern half for themselves. For defense against the barbarians they relied almost exclusively on barbarian armies. They further increased the bureaucracy to collect taxes and pay the army.

The Eastern Empire was able to survive. The capital city, Byzantium (Constantinople after 330), was almost impregnable. But Rome, capital of the Western Empire, was no more defensible than the barbarian frontiers. Its population was depleted, its money was debased, its treasures had been converted to huge plantations, hordes of slaves, and barbarian troops, and there was no one around who much cared if it remained. Augustine, the church father, was shocked when Alaric sacked Rome in 410, but Augustine was in North Africa, and he was much more concerned with "the city of God."

Perhaps the chief problem was that the government in Rome gave the mass of people no reason to be loyal. Hundreds of years after Romans had forgotten that the Roman Republic and its army belonged to the people, Constantine tried desperately to provide a new basis of loyalty with Christianity. But the new religion was more of an admission of the people's desperation. Its very popularity was a sign that many people felt that the "city of man" was of little importance.

After Alaric's invasion few Romans thought seriously of rebuilding their city, as the Roman citizens had eight hundred years before. The imperial city had become one of the two tax collector's offices. It symbolized the oppression as much as the majesty of the empire. Pope Leo I is said to have somehow persuaded Attila and the Huns to leave the city alone, but it is most likely that it offered much less to Attila (especially after Alaric) than the surrounding countryside. A century later the great emperor Justinian of the Eastern Empire (also an Illyrian) attempted to reorganize the remains of the Western Empire, but he found the northern Italian city of Ravenna more suitable than the ancient capital. By the time Rome was not worth ravaging (for Attila) or regaining (for Justinian), it could hardly be worth saving or rebuilding.

CHINA AND ROME

The history of China in the classical period demonstrates some striking similarities to that of Rome. The Chinese Empire was created about the same time as the Roman, the third century B.C. It was wrestled from the same nomadic barbarians of the Eurasian steppe, held about as long, and then succumbed to the barbarians about the same time, the third century A.D.

The Chinese Empire also underwent the same major internal change that the Roman Empire experienced. It too began as a society of relatively equal property holders who were soldiers but through excessive military service lost their lands to wealthy aristocrats. The results of that social transformation were also similar. Like the replacement of the early Roman Republic by the Roman Empire under Augustus, the popular Former Han dynasty was replaced by the aristocracy-dominated Later Han dynasty in the first century A.D. Both later empires had to depend increasingly on barbarian troops to police the barbarian frontier because the class of independent farmer-soldiers had virtually disappeared. How did this occur in China?

QIN CHINA

The Chinese Empire dates from the beginning of the Qin [Ch'in] dynasty, which first unified and gave its name to most of the area we know today as China. But the Qin was a brief dynasty (221–206 B.C.) and was immediately followed by the much more successful Former Han (202 B.C.–A.D. 8) and Later Han (A.D. 25–220).

Like Rome, the state of Qin expanded from a small area around its capital city in 500 B.C. to control much of China by 221 B.C. Its success over numerous rival states was due to a number of factors. Its far western location (like that of the earlier Zhou [Chou] dynasty) put it in close contact with the steppe nomads of central Asia. As a result, the Qin were particularly attentive to matters of defense and the development of a military that would be loyal to the state instead of to the numerous feudal lords that dominated the countryside in the late Zhou period. Thus, they created a class of free peasantry (farmers) who were given their own land in return for taxes and military service to the state. In conquered areas, peasants were removed from the control of aristocrats whose lands were broken up and given to the peasant-soldiers. In some respects this policy was the idea of the philosophers of legalism, Lord Shang (d. 333 B.C.) and Han Fei Zi [Han Fei Tzu] (d. 233 B.C.), who argued for the consolidation of state power over the nobility by means of taxes, laws, and the creation of a centralized bureaucracy. The Qin expansion was also made easier by the improvement of roads and communications. To give just one example, the state of Lu increased the average distance of a diplomatic mission from 112 to 454 miles between the eighth and sixth centuries. But the resemblance of the Qin policy of establishing a free landed peasantry to

that of the Romans after their military crisis of the fourth century suggests broader origins. In both cases, the small states expanded by imitating the rude equality of the nomadic tribes with iron weapons and trained cavalries. The technology of iron mandated a highly motivated, well-trained army of citizens or loyal subjects.

Before the introduction into China of the mounted archer from the Central Asian steppe in the fourth century B.C., Chinese warfare had an aristocratic quality. Peasants were killed in great numbers, as always, but their infantry formations required no special training. In the Spring and Autumn period (722–481 B.C.) and the Warring States period (403–211 B.C.), when the Qin were gaining ascendancy, warfare was common and accepted but governed by elaborate rules of aristocratic politeness (very much like the later chivalry of European feudalism). The story of the battle of Zhengpu [Ch'eng-p'u] in 632 B.C., a decisive early battle for the Qin, is introduced in the historical source the *Zao Zhuan* [Tso-chuan] with a message from the commander of Chu to the marquis of Qin that was pure chivalry. "I request a game with your men. Your lordship may lean on the cross-board of your carriage and look on, and I too will observe." Another story describes the confrontation of the chariots of a son of the duke of Song and an opponent. The opponent swiftly fired an arrow that just missed the Duke and was drawing his bow to fire another when the duke cried out, "If you don't give me my turn to shoot, you are a base fellow." To show he was a gentleman, his opponent held his fire, and the duke shot him dead.¹

In the fourth century B.C., two new weapons were introduced that made warfare more complicated and more expensive. They were the mounted archer and the crossbow. The mounted archer originated among the nomads. While the Qin were able to raise horses and train cavalries, at some considerable expense, they were never as adept as the nomads, who were practically born on horses. Mounted archers could move swiftly and maneuver easily, even over difficult terrain. They were far more threatening than chariots, which easily overturned if pushed too hard. The Chinese invention of the crossbow provided a match for the mobile archer. It was accurate at a longer distance but could not be shot from a moving horse or chariot. As the Qin applied these new military techniques to its process of state building and expansion, it relied increasingly on the construction of defensive walls. Crossbows directed from a protected wall could prove a match for invading horsemen. The Qin dynasty's building of territorial walls, leading eventually to the construction of the Great Wall, required conscripted labor in addition to the military service of cavalry, infantry, and crossbowmen.

As the Qin Empire expanded in the third and fourth centuries B.C., it experienced the same problems as the Roman Empire. The increasingly distant boundaries required greater and more permanent policing, and the burden fell increasingly on those who could not afford to retain their farms because of taxation, military, and labor service. These problems were aggravated in both cases by the growth of a class of wealthy merchants and landowners who could avoid taxation

and service for themselves and offer jobs to the displaced. "These days," Zhao Cuo [Chao Ts'o] said early in the second century B.C.,

a family of five peasants will have at least two persons who are liable for labour-services and conscription. . . . When the time comes that the taxes must be met, those who own something sell it off at half price; and those who own nothing borrow at doubled rates of interest. It is for this reason that some dispose of their lands and houses, and sell their children and grandchildren to redeem their debts.²

As in Rome, latifundia, huge estates owned by merchants and aristocrats but run by tenants or slaves, threatened to swallow up the free peasant-soldiers. According to a modern historian:

Action thus became necessary to preserve the free peasantry as the source of the state's money and manpower. It was also desirable to weaken both the merchants, many of whom had acquired estates rather after the manner of the Italian businessmen in and after the second century B.C., and the regional aristocracy, some of whom had rebelled.³

In Rome this attempt at land distribution was carried out by a series of popular movements, most noticeably those of the Gracchi brothers, toward the end of the second century B.C. As we have seen, those attempts failed, so that by the first century B.C. the urban proletariat could demand only grain, having lost any hope or memory of growing their own. In China the political situation was quite different. The state was not the agency of the aristocracy or merchant class, as the Roman senate was. The Chinese emperor was an independent force, eager to curtail the powers of the regional aristocracy.

FORMER HAN DYNASTY REFORM

Thus, Emperor Wu (140–85 B.C.) of the Han dynasty took a series of drastic steps. He convicted 127 of the 197 Han princes and nobles of crimes or declared that they were without legitimate heirs and therefore confiscated their lands. He took houses, slaves, and cash from wealthy merchants, so that "most of the merchants of the middle grade and above were ruined."⁴ The state became the largest landowner. Public lands were given to the poor, to those who had lost their farms, and to reward officials. "When commoners reach twenty years of age they receive land, and when they are sixty return it," the *Han History* declared, though modern historians do not think such a practice was institutionalized.⁵ New taxes were

who violated the new laws were imprisoned. State monopolies in salt, iron, and wine were now selected from the lower ranks to train candidates for the government. Emperor Wu attempted to decrease the military

nasty, there was an increasing number of kinds of barbarians. If I had not changed been helpless. If I had not sent armies out re would not now be at peace. But, if one d putting a heavy burden on the people. If ave done, they will be following in the f Qin.⁶

successful, we would not hear of the need to t, however, the dispossession of the peasantry became a constant theme in the Han dynasty. g Mang, the usurper who ended the Former ary, much like Julius Caesar, he implemented e forces of the old aristocracy against him. e *Han History*. Under the Qin, he said, "the ed and vice came into being. The powerful ile the weak had not even the space to insert tinued, reduced the land tax to one-thirtieth, easants who had become tenants and had to . The dogs and horses of the rich ate better ould he do?

re shall be designated 'The King's Land'. endents'. Neither may be bought or sold. members, but with more than twelve acres the surplus and give it to rural groups of accordance with this system, those without

dynasty (A.D. 9-23) was no more successful istribution measure was abandoned two years reduce the military presence on the frontiers. ainst the Huns on the frontier with an army . But the diversion of manpower from the possible, along with the disastrous change in

the course of the Yellow River, for famine and peasant rebellions that toppled Wang Mang.

LATER HAN DYNASTY REACTION

In A.D. 25 a coalition of aristocratic families was able to return a member of the Han family as a representative of the large landowners. This later Han dynasty remained true to its founders. Local strongmen ruled as feudal lords, and those few remaining free peasant families became tenants and slaves on the large estates. The system of peasant military conscription collapsed around A.D. 46. From then on Han armies had to rely on mercenary volunteers, personal armies of local lords, released convicts, and barbarian auxiliaries. Such barbarian auxiliaries were decisive in the campaigns against the Huns in the first century A.D. and on at least one occasion, in A.D. 27, were used to quell an internal rebellion of Chinese peasants. Increasingly peasant rebellions became as threatening as barbarian incursions. The peasant uprising of the Yellow Turbans in A.D. 184 tore the country apart so that the Han dynasty ruled in name only until its final demise in A.D. 220.

THIRD-CENTURY CRISIS

Whether or not there was a renewed series of barbarian incursions in the third century A.D., the internal cohesion of the Chinese and Roman empires deteriorated rapidly. The Han Empire was replaced by three kingdoms, and the Roman Empire was divided into Eastern and Western dominions. The unity of both empires was threatened with feudalism as well as invasion. Powerful lords of rich landed estates dominated both China and Rome. A Chinese account can stand for both:

The mansions of the great landowners stretch in rows by the hundred, their opulent domains cover the whole countryside, their slaves can be counted by the thousand, and their clients by tens of thousands. Dealers and merchants move about in their boats and carts in all directions, and the piled-up stocks of speculators fill the towns. The grandest houses are not big enough to contain all their jewels and gems; the hills and valleys are not wide enough to contain all the horses, oxen, sheep, and pigs.⁸

By the third century, the Chinese and Roman empires had become full of vast private estates with personal armies, indifferent to the central government. In earlier times an Emperor Wu or Wang or a Gaius Gracchus might have threatened to divide the great estates and redistribute the land to the poor. But that was no longer feasible. There had to be another way to secure taxes and raise an army in a world dominated by such large economic units.

CAO CAO AND DIOCLETIAN

Two soldier emperors of the third century devised similar means to prevent the fragmentation of their empires into battlefields of feudal lords and barbarians. They were Cao Cao [Ts'ao Ts'ao], the Chinese soldier-poet who founded the state of Wei while imagining himself the last Han, and the Roman emperor Diocletian, who founded the Eastern Roman Empire, which became Byzantium. Both revived the growth of their states by dominating the large estates, instead of trying to break them up.

Cao Cao instituted "state colony lands," public versions of the huge private estates, from which taxes could be collected, and "military households" from which state armies could be directed. Together, they enrolled half of the inhabitants of the state. Excessive private lands were confiscated and added to the state colonies. Private armies were ordered to become part of the military households. When a commander of a private army refused to allow his men to be enlisted in the state system, the magnate himself was conscripted.

Diocletian faced similar problems as Roman emperor from A.D. 284 to 305. Between 235 and 284 there had been no fewer than twenty Roman emperors sanctioned by the senate. Unable to govern the Roman Empire as a single entity, he divided administration in half, taking control of the Eastern half himself and appointing a coemperor for the West. He ensured continuity and coordination by appointing subordinates for each emperor. He created an imperial bureaucracy that limited the power of the great estates. Without taking them over, he practically bound people to their farms and towns, set wages and prices, and ensured the collection of taxes. He also doubled the size of the army, reorganized it, and improved the pay and promotion system.

Many historians have been critical of Diocletian. "The new Roman army was no longer a Roman army," the historian Rostovtzeff has written. "It was a special caste, maintained at the expense of the population to fight foreign enemies."⁹ But, according to another historian, M. I. Finley, "the plain fact about Diocletian's reign, whether we like it or not, is that it was a success. He saved the Roman Empire so completely that in the east it lived on, much along the lines he laid down, for more than a thousand years—for Diocletian may properly be called the first Byzantine emperor. How many states in history have had a longer life?"¹⁰

The answer to that question is "One: China." After A.D. 280 the state of Wei was taken over by the Sima [Ssu-ma] family, which assumed the dynastic title of Jin [Chin] and reunified China. Cao Cao's system of state colonies was dismantled, but its influence continued. Land that had been "state colony land" was retained as state land and allocated for political purposes. Private land was still subject to limitations of size and higher taxes. While later historians sometimes said that the Jin land system did not work well, the failure seems to have been its large number of exemptions rather than the application of the system itself.

EMPIRES, STATES, AND LANDED ESTATES

The early Roman and Chinese empires rested on armies of peasant-soldiers. These were practicable as long as the empires were relatively small and did not require full-time policing. As long as farmers could return to planting and harvesting, or as long as they were called away only for special purposes of defense, the system worked well. Motivation was high because they were protecting their own lands, families, and neighbors. Society in the early Roman Republic and Former Han was also relatively egalitarian.

Two factors conspired to undermine the balance. One was the ever-present, but ever-changing, barbarian side of the equation. The other was the growth of large landed estates and the displacement of the class of small independent farmers. A wealthy class of merchants and aristocrats was able to use its power to avoid taxation and military service for itself and turn formerly independent farmers into tenants, clients, serfs, and slaves. Thus, military needs or ambitions undermined the older system of recruitment and led to the formation of other forms of armies: private feudal, professional mercenary, and barbarian auxiliary. These fragmented the power of the state and relinquished the edge that the state had had over the barbarians. Unchecked, the new social system led to anarchy or feudalism. Both came in the third century to Western Rome, where feudalism remained for over five hundred years. Eastern Rome and China fared differently. They were able to revive the process of state building by seizing control of the large estates and basing state power on them. As a result, they were agrarian states in which the emperor controlled the land and the army, and the nobility came to court. The aristocracies remained significant forces, especially in China, but they stayed subordinate to the emperor.

Western Rome had many more large estates than Eastern Rome. These lords were able to retain their powers in the absence of a Diocletian or Constantine, and possibly as a result of a different barbarian presence. In any case, state formation was delayed in the West until about A.D. 1000. Then when states formed, they developed on a different social base than those of Byzantium and China. They received their greatest support in the emerging cities, from the class of city dwellers rather than landed aristocrats. The result was the growth of urban, burger, or middle-class states in Western Europe that were quite different from those elsewhere.

FOR FURTHER READING

The work of Mikhail Rostovtzeff, the great social and economic historian of Rome, is now a bit dated, fifty years after first publication, but students can still do well with his *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire* in two volumes and his shorter *Rome*. The economic emphasis of his interpretations of Roman expansion has been challenged by

to the second century B.C.) and by E. Badian in for the later period). M. I. Finley has challenged it. Finley's *The Ancient Economy* is also a useful of *Empires*, edited by Carlo Cipolla. nt *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic the later period*) *The Roman Imperial Army* by man Soldier is also valuable. More general studies *Social Conflicts in the Roman Republic* and Ramsay B.C. to A.D. 284.

some of the issues raised in this chapter in Roman tivolume *The Cambridge Ancient History* and the 's *The History of Rome* and Edward Gibbon's *The man Empire*. There are also some good shorter, H. Scullard's *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History* Grant's *The World of Rome*, Lily Ross Taylor's ld Syme's *The Roman Revolution*, and the highly ow.

vin's *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* extremely of *Statecraft in China*, vol. 1, concentrates on the ing things to say about later periods, including udes toward the military. *Chinese Civilization and mber of essays relevant to this subject. A good story of Chinese Civilization.*

he subject of this chapter are Cho-yun Hsu's *Han ese Agrarian Economy*, the same author's *Ancient e and Expansion in Han China*, and N. L. Swann's specialized are Pan Ku's *History of the Former Han ng: A Translation of the Official Account of His Rise* 1 abridged form as *Courtier & Commoner in Ancient er Han* by Pan Ku, translated by Burton Watson. e work of the great historian of Han China Sima nd *Historian of China*, two volumes, also available nd *Historian of China*.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 31, adapted.
8. Cited in Etienne Balazs, *Chinese Civilization and Bureaucracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 219.
9. Mikhail Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 468.
10. M. I. Finley, *Aspects of Antiquity* (New York: Viking, 1969), p. 149.

NOTES

B.C. account based, in part, on the earlier *Spring* tributed to Confucius. These selections are from rreel G. Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, cago Press, 1970), pp. 258-259. f *the Chinese Past* (Stanford: Stanford University

ological Table of lassical World

0 B.C.-A.D. 500

	India	China
		Zhou dynasty 1027-256 B.C.
	<i>Mahabharata</i> c. 600-300 B.C.	Lao Zi c. 600 B.C.
	Buddha c. 500 B.C.	Confucius 551-479 B.C.
		Warring States Period c. 463-222 B.C.
		Mencius 372-298 B.C.
	Mauryan dynasty 321-183 B.C.	
	Ashoka 269-232 B.C.	Rise of Chinese state and first Chinese Empire: Qin dynasty 221-206 B.C.
	Political fragmentation c. 184 B.C.-A.D. 320 and development of salvation (Mahayana) Buddhism	Former Han dynasty 202 B.C.-A.D. 8

= founded r. = ruled

Greece and Rome	Middle East and Africa	India	China
Julius Caesar 102-44 B.C.			Emperor Wu 140-86 B.C.
Augustus r. 27 B.C.-A.D. 14	Jesus c. 3 B.C.-A.D. 30		Wang Mang A.D. 9-23
Ovid 43 B.C.-A.D. 17			
Petronius d. A.D. 66			Later Han dynasty A.D. 25-220
Pliny A.D. 61-113	Romans destroy Jerusalem A.D. 70		Buddhism entered China c. A.D. 100
	Bantu migration in sub-Saharan Africa A.D. 100-500	Kanishka r. c. A.D. 90-110	Paper invented A.D. 105
Diocletian r. A.D. 284-305	Sassanid dynasty of Persia A.D. 224-651	Kushan Empire A.D. 100-240	Rise of Buddhism A.D. 300-500
Constantine r. A.D. 324-337		Gupta Empire A.D. 320-550	Huns destroy Chinese capital at Loyang A.D. 311
Alaric defeat of Rome A.D. 410			Fa Xian's pilgrimage to India A.D. 400
Augustine A.D. 354-430		Aryabhata c. A.D. 499	

c. = circa (about) d. = died f. = founded r. = ruled

ological Table of lassical World

) B.C.-A.D. 500

	India	China
		Zhou dynasty 1027-256 B.C.
s	<i>Mahabharata</i> c. 600-300 B.C.	Lao Zi c. 600 B.C.
of	Buddha c. 500 B.C.	Confucius 551-479 B.C.
s		Warring States Period c. 463-222 B.C.
		Mencius 372-298 B.C.
	Mauryan dynasty 321-183 B.C.	
of	Ashoka 269-232 B.C.	Rise of Chinese state and first Chinese Empire: Qin dynasty 221-206 B.C.
	Political fragmentation c. 184 B.C.-A.D. 320 and development of salvation (Mahayana) Buddhism	Former Han dynasty 202 B.C.-A.D. 8

= founded r. = ruled

Greece and Rome	Middle East and Africa	India	China
Julius Caesar 102-44 B.C.			Emperor Wu 140-86 B.C.
Augustus r. 27 B.C.-A.D. 14	Jesus c. 3 B.C.-A.D. 30		Wang Mang A.D. 9-23
Ovid 43 B.C.-A.D. 17			
Petronius d. A.D. 66			Later Han dynasty A.D. 25-220
Pliny A.D. 61-113	Romans destroy Jerusalem A.D. 70		Buddhism entered China c. A.D. 100
	Bantu migration in sub-Saharan Africa A.D. 100-500	Kanishka r. c. A.D. 90-110	Paper invented A.D. 105
Diocletian r. A.D. 284-305	Sassanid dynasty of Persia A.D. 224-651	Kushan Empire A.D. 100-240	Rise of Buddhism A.D. 300-500
Constantine r. A.D. 324-337		Gupta Empire A.D. 320-550	Huns destroy Chinese capital at Loyang A.D. 311
Alaric defeat of Rome A.D. 410			Fa Xian's pilgrimage to India A.D. 400
Augustine A.D. 354-430		Aryabhata c. A.D. 499	

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