

Military Causes

Legions - lacked training + Discipline
- No desire to defend Rome

mercenaries

- Had to be hired to protect borders
- Expensive Not reliable

Political Causes

Government - oppressive / authoritative
- lost support - Rival commanders
- corrupt officials Fight for power
East vs West
- split under Diocletian
- East rise to wealth West falls

Social Causes

Decline in values

- patriotism > devotion to duty
- discipline > duty
- no one to work
- latifundia w/ slaves produce cheaper goods
- Rich no longer good leaders
- about luxury
- self interest

The Decline and Fall of Rome

Economic Causes

Heavier Taxes - Support military
- Government
Inflation - value of coins ↓
- prices go ↑
- no new gold markets
- without conquering
Farmers - Abandon farms
- move to cities + add to unemployed masses
- No economic progress

Foreign Invasion

Huns - Asian tribes invade Germanic lands
- Germanic peoples over whom Rome.
- 476 B.D. Huns take Rome.

Name _____

Global

Byzantine Empire

When the Roman Empire divided under the Emperor Diocletian in the late 200's, the eastern half of the empire became known as the Byzantine Empire, as its new capital was built on the site of the old Greek city Byzantium. When the western half was overrun in the late 5th century CE, the Byzantine Empire became supreme. Emperor Constantine gave the city of Byzantium the name Constantinople, and this city would become the vital center of the empire.



- Directions:
- Circle the following:
- Constantinople
 - Black Sea
 - Mediterranean Sea
 - Rome
 - Athens

1. Why do you think Constantinople became the vital center of the Byzantine Empire?

The Roman emperors and empresses lived in glittering splendor. They dressed in luxurious silk and attended chariot races. The emperor also had power over the Church. As a Byzantine official once noted: *"The emperor is equal to all men in the nature of his body, but in the authority of his rank, he is similar to God who rules all"*

2. What does this quote tell you about the power of the emperor?

The Age of Justinian

Perhaps the most influential emperor of the Byzantine Empire was Justinian, who ruled from 527 to 565. The Byzantine Empire reached its greatest height under emperor Justinian, who was determined to revive ancient Rome and capture lands lost to foreign invaders. Justinian not only extended the empire, but also brought great advances in law and the arts. Justinian ruled as an autocrat, or sole ruler with complete authority. He had the help of his wife Theodora, who was a shrewd politician, adviser, and co-ruler.

3. Who were Justinian and Theodora?

4. How does this picture depict Justinian's power?



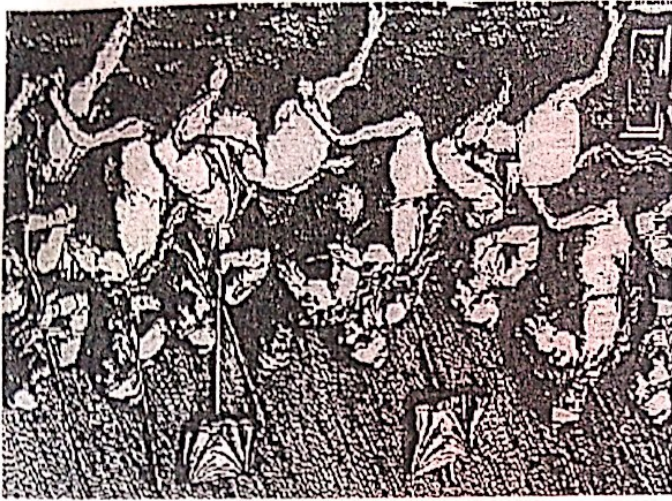
MILITARY CAUSES

The Roman legions of the late army lacked the discipline and training of past Roman armies. In the latter years of the empire, frustrated Romans lost their desire to defend the empire. To meet its need for soldiers, Rome hired *mercenaries*, or foreign soldiers serving for pay, to defend its borders. Such an army was not reliable, and very expensive. Many were warriors, who according to some historians felt little loyalty to Rome.

Read the following excerpt that blames the fall of Rome on problems with the military:

"Rome, like all great empires, was not overthrown by external enemies but undermined by internal decay... The military crisis was the result of... proud old aristocracy's... shortage of children. (Consequently), foreigners poured into this... void (lack of soldiers). The Roman army was composed entirely of Germans."

-Indro Montanelli



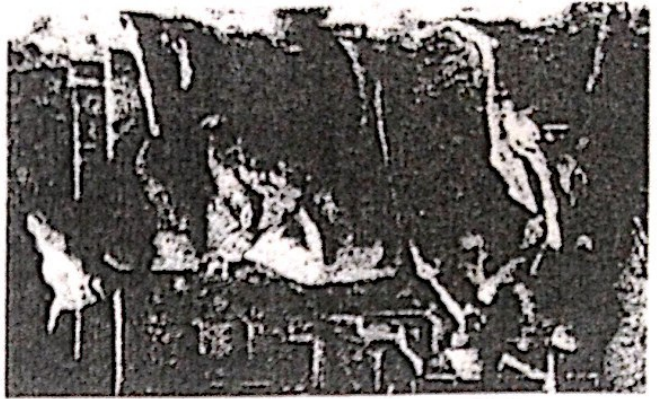
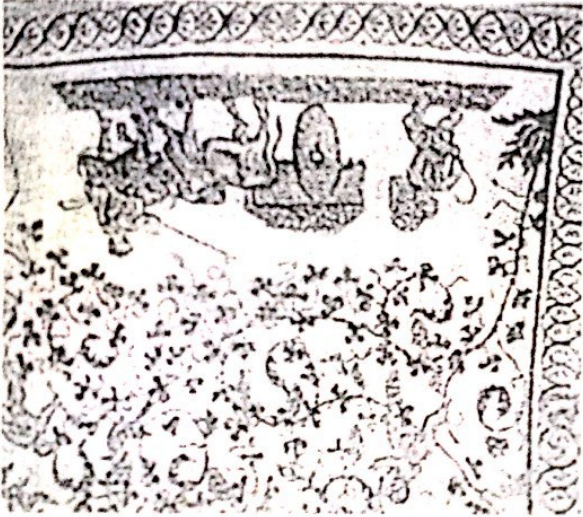
Economic Causes

Economic problems were widespread in the empire. Heavier and heavier taxes were required to support the vast government bureaucracy and huge military establishment. The Roman economy suffered from inflation (an increase in prices) beginning after the reign of Marc Aurelius. Once the Romans stopped conquering new lands, the flow of gold into the Roman economy decreased. Yet much gold was being spent by the Romans to pay for luxury items. This meant that there was less gold to use in coins. As the amount of gold used in coins decreased, the coins became less valuable. To make up for this loss in value, merchants raised the prices on the goods they sold. Furthermore, the wealth of the empire dwindled as farmers abandoned their lands and the middle classes sank into poverty. In addition, the population itself declined as war and epidemic diseases swept the empire.

"First the economic factor... While the empire was expanding, its prosperity was fed by plundered wealth and by new markets in the semi-barbaric provinces. When the empire ceased to expand however, economic progress soon ceased..."

"The abundance of slaves led to the growth of the latifundia, the great estates that... came to dominate agriculture and ruin the farmers, who drifted to the cities to add to the unemployment there. The abundance of slaves likewise kept wages low."

-Herbert J. Muller



FOREIGN INVASION

The Roman Empire experienced many foreign invasions during its fall. In the late A.D. 300s a new nomadic Central Asian people, the Huns, stormed out of the east and sent the Germanic tribes fleeing. Imperial defenses in the east managed to hold, but those in the west were soon overwhelmed. A fierce nomadic people, the Huns lived by looting and plundering. They struck terror in the people they attacked. The Germanic tribes eventually invaded Rome and in 476 A.D. Odoacer (Germanic leader) took over Rome and got rid of the emperor. This was considered the "fall" of Rome.

Read the following excerpts below that blame the fall of Rome on the foreign invasions:

A Germanic historian later described the Hun's appearance: "By the terror of their features they inspired great fear... They had... a sort of shapeless lump, not a head, with pin-holes rather than eyes... They are beings who are cruel to their children on the very day they are born. For they cut cheeks of the males with a sword, so that... they must learn to endure wounds."

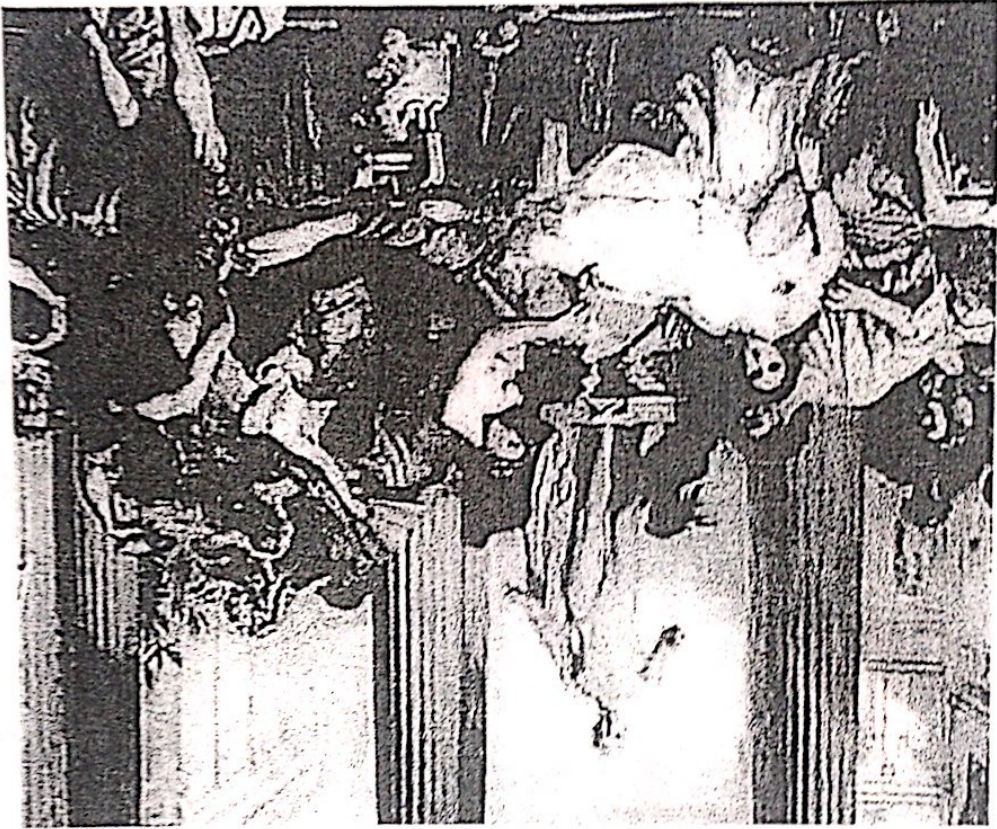
St Jerome- Early Church leader did not live to see the empire's end, but he vividly describes his feelings after a major event in the Rome's decline- the attack and plunder of the city. "It is the end of the world. Words fail me. My sobs break in.. The city which took captive the whole world has itself been captures"



Social Causes

For centuries, worried Romans pointed to the decline in values such as patriotism, discipline and devotion to duty on which the empire was built. The need to replace citizen soldiers with mercenaries testified to the decline of patriotism. The upper class, which had once provided leaders, devoted itself to luxury and self-interest. During the latter years of the Empire, farming was done on large estates that were owned by wealthy men who used slave labor. A farmer who had to pay workmen could not produce goods as cheaply as a slave-owner could. Therefore, slave-owners could sell their crops for lower prices. As a result, many farmers could not compete with these low prices and lost or sold their farms. Thousands of these men filled the cities of the Empire, where there were not enough jobs to accommodate them. Some historians believe that Christianity produced dramatic changes in Roman society at very time when pressure from the barbarians was increasing. They argue that Christianity made its followers into pacifists (those who oppose war), thus making it more difficult to defend Roman lands from barbarian attacks.

"Rome is still looked upon as the queen of the earth, and the name of the Roman people is respected and venerated. But the magnificence of Rome is defaced by the stupidity of a few, who never recollect where they are born, but fall away into error, lavishness, and corruption."
-Ammianus, Marcellus



POLITICAL CAUSES

Political problems greatly contributed to Rome's decline. First, as the government became more oppressive and authoritarian, it lost the support of the people. Growing numbers of corrupt officials undermined loyalty. There were frequent civil wars in Rome over succession to the imperial throne. Again and again, rival armies battled to have their commanders chosen as emperor.

Perhaps the most important political cause of the fall of the Roman Empire was the division of the Roman empire into an eastern empire and a western empire. In 284, Emperor Diocletian decided to divide the empire into two, in order to make it easier to govern the vast empire. The eastern empire became richer, and failed to aid the western empire.

