

THE WORLD AROUND ANNO DOMINI *

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* What does Anno Domini (A.D.), B.C. and A.C. Means?

Anno Domini (Latin: "In the Year of the Lord"), or more completely **Anno Domini Nostri Iesu Christi** ("In the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ"), commonly abbreviated **A.D.** is the designation used to number years in the dominant Christian Era in the world today.

B.C. (Before Christ) or **B.C.E.** to designate Before Christian (or Current) Era and **A.C.** (After Christ) or **C.E.** (Current Era) is now usually used in English.

The World at the beginning of the era

When we look at the borders of the civilized World for the period 100 B.C to 100 A.C. we see the domination of three major states (or Empires), namely Roman, Parthian and Chinese, more or less different by their social, political and cultural formations which in later periods will continue to influence the evolution of other societies.

Why do cultures differ?

Different systems of production depend on ecological and geographical conditions. And different responses of societies in order to adapt to the conditions result with different economic, social and political institutions and cultures.

For example if in a society private property of the means of production is dominant the resulting cultural and political institutions form accordingly.

This approach helps us to explain why Greek and Roman cultures were relatively different then their contemporary Egyptian, Persian or Chinese cultures

These differences go back to the initial establishment of sedentary agricultural communities depending on their geographical and ecological conditions.

In the river valley areas of the Middle East and in other similar areas of the World, the need to control and direct the river flow in order to provide irrigation for the for agricultural production required a centralized political organization: **the state**.

It is the state that could arrange cooperation among communities, distribute supplies of water and seed, and protect the irrigation works while taking a part of the peasant's products as a tax to meet the organizational needs of the state.

During periods of crisis it was the duty of the state to meet the needs of the community and redistribute the accumulated surplus. In that sense the state served as a granary (storehouse).

A well know example is the famous Biblical story of Joseph and his prophecy about the food shortage due to "seven years of draught" after "seven years of abundance".

For his just views and predictions he was brought to a rank of vizier, second to the pharaoh. (Read the passage from the Bible below

On the other hand civilized centers were constantly aware of the potential military threat posed by nomadic groups. So this threat is one of the basic reasons of the tendency towards a strong centralized kingdoms observed in Mesopotamia, Persia or China.

Bible, Genesis

41:53 *And so the seven good years in Egypt came to an end.*

41:54 *Then came the first of the seven years of need as Joseph had said: and in every other land they were short of food; but in the land of Egypt there was bread.*

41:55 *And when all the land of Egypt was in need of food, the people came crying to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to the people, Go to Joseph, and whatever he says to you, do it.*

41:56 *And everywhere on the earth they were short of food; then Joseph, opening all his store-houses, gave the people of Egypt grain for money; so great was the need of food in the land of Egypt.*

41:57 *And all lands sent to Egypt, to Joseph, to get grain, for the need was great over all the earth.*

42:1 *Now Jacob, hearing that there was grain in Egypt, said to his sons, why are you looking at one another?*

42:2 *And he said, I have had news that there is grain in Egypt: go down there and get grain for us, so that life and not death may be ours.*

42:3 *So Joseph's ten brothers went down to get grain from Egypt.*

Rome as the “origin” of the West!

The overall basic characteristic of Greece and Rome is a decentralized political structure in which the citizenship depends on private ownership.

As an example read the brief information about the “Han Dynasty” in China in the text box and compare it with the Greek society.

Feudalism and later Capitalism developed in a region confined to the Western half of Europe where in the background the “private ownership” was in general dominant and central state’s power was weak

The Han Dynasty in China (206 BC – 220 AC)

The Chinese people consider the Han Dynasty to be one of the greatest periods in the entire history of China. As a result, the members of the ethnic majority of Chinese people to this day still call themselves “people of Han,” in honor of the Liu family and the dynasty they created.

The Han dynasty which replaced the Qin ruled for nearly four centuries. Political unity was achieved through the creation of a great civil bureaucracy.

During the Han Dynasty, China officially became a Confucian state and prospered.

According to Confucian ideals superior men were given power to rule in order to preserve harmony among all classes. The interests and welfare of the people were dependent to the decisions of emperors .

Commoners should respect and acknowledge the authority of their superiors. A hierarchy of deference was thus created son to father, younger brother to older brother, wife to husband, subject to ruler, and friend to friend. These relationships became the foundation of social harmony.

The Han era established a foundation from which later Chinese culture largely influenced.

Among the most permanent aspects of this culture was the belief in the unity of imperial China and the desirability of a central government in the hands of an emperor assisted by a professional bureaucracy.

A “slave society” : Rome

General particularities: Greek and Roman societies at the first glance seem to have: A developed city (*polis*) and culture. The political and -cultural universe is centered on cities but the economy is based on agriculture of the rural areas as well as a coastal trade in the Mediterranean Sea. The “citizenship” based on ownership and the existence of a surplus for leisure helped to the development of a city-based philosophy, science, poetry, architecture and arts etc. as well as “democratic” political and economic institutions.

Economic basis and relations: Production

Agriculture throughout all periods is the dominant area of production providing the main income of the cities

City population essentially consisted of agrarian proprietors. Agricultural domination may be shown by the following example: in 4th Century A.C. in Rome, tax on city trades represented not more than 5 per cent of the land tax.

Manufactures: Manufacturing of oil and wine for exportation, and wheat production for subsistence takes place on estates and farms outside the urban perimeter

The range of urban commodity production was narrow like simple textile, pottery, furniture and glassware etc. This was due to the limited nature of demand, and expensiveness of transport.

Trade mostly through marine transport in the Mediterranean Sea was by all means cheaper and thus constituted a unique medium of communication between all coastal areas.

The Mediterranean Sea is the only inland sea serving a big geographical zone with all the best naval shelter possibilities.

It is to be remembered that until the discoveries and the perfection of long distance navigation, The Mediterranean Sea remained to be central in the World trade.

So combination of town and country and their production diffused by a developed trade in the Mediterranean Sea helped further the economic development.

In that respect we can think about the origins of “Renaissance” in Europe in which the “trade rich” Italian city states played the major role.

Slavery as labor

In the eyes of the ancient Greeks and Romans, "labor" was alien to human dignity and contrary to the essence of man.

Thus labor was performed by what the Romans called "*instrumentum vocale*" ("speaking tool" designating slaves) besides *instrumentum semi-vocale* ("half speaking tool"=animals) and *instrumentum mutum* ("unspeaking tool" meaning the ordinary tools of production).

Slavery had existed in various forms in other societies and until recent times (think of the American South in 19th Century). Slavery could also be occasional (debt bondage, captivity, penal labor etc.) or *patriarchal* (that is mainly limited to domestic production)

However the most important difference between those other types of slavery and that practiced in Rome was that the latter constituted an integral part of the daily life and economy. Slavery was in fact the basis of the production system of the Greek and Roman societies.

For example the ratio of slaves to free citizens in Athens was about 3 to 2 or larger, which permitted a "freedom" and "democracy" to a non-laboring population. In other words the miraculous *polis* or city culture of Greece and Rome owes its existence to slave labor.

But this mode of production had its limits and the same system paved the way for the decline of Greece and Rome. Indeed, their paths of development were extensive and lateral that is the main objective of the system was to expand through invasion or the establishment of trade colonies in order to have more slaves. But, as conquests slowed down and stopped, this dependency on slave labor brought about the downfall of the system itself.

In order to maintain control over huge slave populations, to conquer new regions and keep the supply of new slaves high, and to provide a means of employment for displaced farmers, the military expenditures had to be increased and this caused budgetary problems..

Furthermore reliance on slave labor resulted in the hindrance of technological developments in the means of production.

Extent of Rome's influence

The stability that typified certain aspects of Chinese and other "Eastern" cultures was not present in the Mediterranean.

The center of Mediterranean civilization shifted from Greece and its Hellenistic successor states to Rome.

Rome developed during the fifth century B.C. in the Italian peninsula. After consolidating its hold on Italy, Rome expanded into the western Mediterranean, and towards the areas of Hellenistic civilization in the East.

The Roman Empire lasted for four centuries then entered into period of decline due to administrative and financial difficulties created by further expansion and the assaults on its borders - a fate shared by most of the empires in history.

Roman Empire was relatively more centralized and had a more complex bureaucratic organization as compared to the Greeks. On the other hand Roman Empire contributed to the expansion of the elements of Greek culture and thought throughout the Mediterranean and towards the other parts of continental Europe.

Roman Empire was not accepted smoothly everywhere.

Think of the modern French cartoon hero **Asterix** and his tribe's brave defense of their village and the Gallic values used to interpret actual French "nationalist" consciousness.

However, the influence of the Roman Empire and particularly that of the Eastern Roman Empire was felt throughout the centuries.

Remember and think of the fact that the early Ottoman Sultans were also called as **Sultan-i Rum** (Sultan of Rome).



Asterix and Obelix, resistants to the Roman occupation!

Rome's constitution originally based on aristocratic authority, that is the domination of *patricians*, those of the noble families who were assumed to be the founders of Rome.

On the other hand the *plebeians*, ordinary people, were the merchants, manufacturers etc. *Patrician* status was inherited, and intermarriage and even trade between *patricians* and *plebeians* was forbidden.

By time the importance of the distinction between *patricians* and *plebeians* began to weaken. Because *patrician* status was strictly inherited and no new *patrician* families were accepted, the number of the families decreased.

However throughout the whole history the economy continued to be dominated by great landowners among the aristocracy,

Some etymology

The Latin for "patrician" is *patricius* (plural is *patricii*). This comes from *patres* the plural of *pater* meaning father.

During the later periods, patrician status as it had been understood in the Republic ceased to have force and conflict increased between the two classes.

Patricians were slowly forced to abandon their power against the *plebeians* (ordinary people = public!) who were struggling for their right of expression accordingly with their economic power.

The word *plebe* is the origin of the term *plebiscite* meaning public vote or *referendum* whereby the people are asked to vote directly to accept or reject a particular proposal.

In Turkish when we call our fathers as "*peder*", we also use it from the same language source and almost in the same sense as the Roman's did?

And what about the words *patron* used for "the boss" and *patriot* used for the person who loves his country and supports its authority and interests.

A Brief outline

The Roman Republic from the beginning was based on imperial expansion and the conquered regions were either incorporated into the republic or allowed to remain as independent allies.

Rome's greatest rival in the western part of the Mediterranean was the former Phoenician colony of Carthage in northern Africa.

Between 264 and 146 B.C., Rome defeated Carthage in the three Punic Wars and created an empire that extended from Italy to the Iberian peninsula and into northern Africa in the South and Britain in the North..

As the successor states founded after Alexander the Great's short-lived empire weakened, Romans found it easy to penetrate into the eastern Mediterranean region.

Greece, Macedonia, the Anatolian peninsula, Mesopotamia and Egypt, all became Rome's new territories.

Military conquests and the emergence of a wealthy merchant class together with the integration of the new peoples of conquered lands increased the social conflict in the empire.

The conflicts became acute between the growing ranks of the poor and the Roman aristocracy as well as within the ranks of the ruling class.

For example when Julius Caesar took over the government in 49 B.C. and attempted to introduce various reforms menacing the political monopoly of the Roman aristocracy traditionalist senators plotted against Caesar and had him assassinated in 44 B.C.

This resulted with a civil war from which Caesar's adopted son, Octavian, emerged victorious and created an imperial state.

For his success, he was granted the name Augustus from where comes the name of our summer month.

From the Beginnings to the Republic

From a small city-state of the Italian peninsula an Empire will grow to become the dominant factor in Mediterranean civilization for centuries.

Early in the first millennium B.C. Rome began to grow on the banks of Tiber River which since the beginnings was serving as a trade route between the sea and hinterlands. Famous for its "seven hills" the tradition tells of the founding of Rome by Romulus in 753 B.C.

Romulus and Remus were the twins of Roman legend who were thrown into the Tiber River by their great-uncle Amulius, who feared they would lay claim to his title. Fedded by a she-wolf and raised by a shepherd, the twins later deposed Amulius, and founded a city on the site where they had been saved from the river. The city was named for Romulus, who ruled and believing that he had become a deity, in late Republic the Romans worshiped him as Quirinus.



On the right Romulus and Remus on a contemporary stamp!

One of the earliest habitants of Italy is Etruscans. There are several theories to explain the origin of the Etruscans. According to the tradition of Herodotus, Etruscans migrated to Italy from Lydia in the 12th century. Some scholars have argued that the Etruscans are an ancient people, indigenous to Italy. A third theory says that the Etruscans came down from the north. However, it is clear that an “Etruscan” culture evolved about the 8th cent. B.C. and achieved a peak of power and wealth during the 6th century.

During this period the Etruscans were a great maritime power and established colonies on Corsica, Elba, Sardinia, the Balearic Islands, and on the coast of Spain.

The Romans, since the end of 7th century was under the occupation of the Etruscans and their culture had been greatly influenced by them. Became independent around 510 B.C. the Romans attempted to gain over and one Etruscan city after another fell to the Romans. Since then continuous civil wars further weakened Etruscan power. Finally a last social war around 90–88 B.C. eradicated the last traces of remaining Etruscan families.

After the Romans overthrew their “foreign” rulers the Roman administration which lasted four centuries is named the “republic”.

The patrician class controlled the government, but the plebs (who comprised the major portion of the population) was allowed to elect the two patrician consuls, who held joint power. The early constitution allowed aristocrats to control the most important offices. The Senate was the center of political life, with two annually-elected consuls as chief executives. The system balanced the various interests of society, but gave aristocrats most weight.

Aristocrats controlled large estates, while smaller holdings belonged to free, citizen, farmers. Social strife was minimized by written laws, popular participation in government, and patron-client relationships. Rome, without important city-state rivals, and with fewer societal tensions, went on a different military and diplomatic path than the Greeks.

As the majority realized its power and the aristocracy continued its rule, the people demanded (and received) privilege after privilege; the greatest were the election of plebeian tribunes.

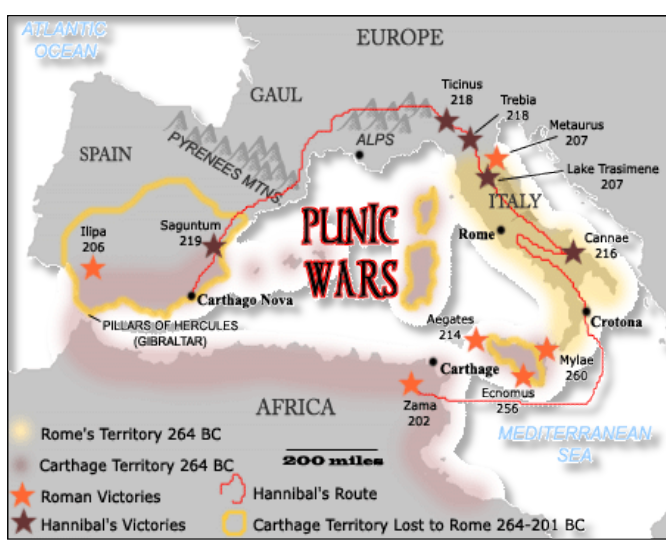
Rome established solid political institutions harmonizing patrician and popular interests and began expanding in Italy and beyond.

One of the first targets was Carthage, which ruled the Western Mediterranean. The wars between them called “The Punic Wars”.



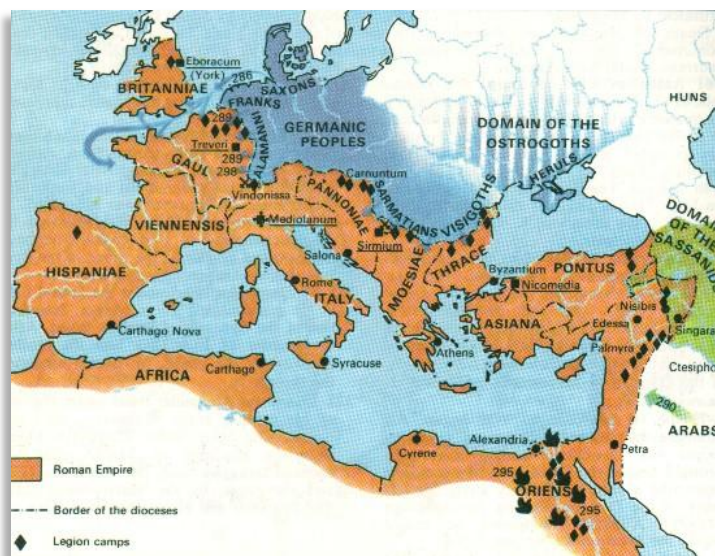
Extent of Carthagian domination

At the start of the first Punic War, Carthage was the dominant power of the Mediterranean, with an extensive maritime empire, while Rome was the rapidly ascending power in Italy. By the end of the third war, after the death of many hundreds of thousands of soldiers from both sides, Rome had conquered Carthage's empire.



The Roman republic turned its attention eastward. Philip V of Macedon was defeated after two campaigns (215–205 B.C., 200–197 B.C.), and Antiochus III of Syria was conquered at Magnesia (190 B.C.); eventually the defeat of Perseus (171–168 B.C.) made Macedonia a Roman province. Greece did not become a Roman province, but the brief opposition of the Achaean League was disposed of, and the Greeks became subject to Rome. Egypt acknowledged the rule of Rome in 168 B.C.

Rome emerged as the dominant Mediterranean power and the most powerful country in the classical world. This was a turning point which meant that the civilization of the ancient Mediterranean would pass to the modern world via Europe instead of Asia or Africa.



Extent of the Roman Empire

The rapid expansion of Roman dominion, however, had contradictory effects at home. The provinces were governed by the new “war rich” senators who used their power exclusively to their own advantage.

Class conflicts began to emerge as masses were becoming more dissatisfied. The slaves rebelled several times. Struggles for rule and supremacy further doomed the sight.

The increasing social tensions caused class conflict on a much larger scale than in Greek society.

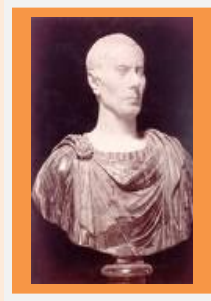
The republic declined as ambitious individuals battled for power. The tribune Tiberius Gracchus attempted to redistribute land, but he was assassinated by conservatives.

Gaius, his brother, tried to introduce land reforms and extend citizenship; the Senate ordered his suicide. Then generals intervened in politics and the succession of generals ended with Caesar taking over the government.

Julius Caesar, an immortal hero of the Gallic Wars conducted in the Western Europe and mostly in today’s France took power in 49 B.C. as the champion of the people and of republican legality.

Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C.E. In the following civil war, Octavian, later called Augustus emerged as victor in 31 B.C.E. and became the first Roman emperor.

At the death (44 B.C.) of Caesar, the territories ruled by Rome included Spain (except part of the northwest), Gaul, Italy, part of Illyria, Macedonia, Greece, W Asia Minor, Bithynia, Pontus, Cilicia, Syria, Cyrenaica, Numidia, and the islands of the sea, and Rome completely controlled Egypt and Palestine. The rule of Caesar marked an epoch, for it completed the destruction of the republic and laid the foundations of the empire.



Gaius Julius Caesar

Caesar is remembered as one of history's greatest generals and a key ruler of the Roman empire. As a young man he rose through the administrative ranks of the Roman republic, accumulating power until he was elected consul in 59 B.C.

Over the next 15 years he led Roman armies against enemies abroad, especially in Gaul, while fighting Pompey and others for political control at home. In 45 B.C. he reached his ultimate success, being named dictator of Rome for life. That rule was short-lived: the next year he was stabbed to death in the Senate by a group led by his follower Marcus Junius Brutus. Caesar's life and death were dramatized in the William Shakespeare play *Julius Caesar*, with Caesar's famous death line: "Et tu, Brute? Then fall Caesar!"

The ruling titles Kaiser and Czar are derived from the name of Caesar... Caesar had a famous romance with Egyptian ruler Cleopatra, and he fathered her son Caesarion. One of Caesar's trusted generals was Marc Antony, who became a lover and ally of Cleopatra after Caesar's death. Caesar's adopted heir was Octavian, who later defeated Antony and became the emperor Caesar Augustus.

He governed through the old institutions, with wisdom and vigor. His territorial additions were the most important ever made, for his conquest and organization of Gaul placed Rome in the role of civilizer of barbarians as well as ruler of the older world. The age of Caesar was a great period in Roman culture, and the cosmopolitan Roman was considered the ideal. Even more influential was Greek thought, which served to open the Romans to the Eastern cults and culture. Cicero, an urbane lawyer and philosopher of broad culture, was typical of the period.

We have also a medical term taking its name from Julius Caesar, *cesarean* meaning the delivery of a fetus by surgical incision through the abdominal wall and uterus (from the belief that Julius Caesar was born that way).

<http://www.answers.com/topic/julius-caesar>

Pax - Romana*

Augustus organized provincial government and the army, rebuilt Rome, and patronized the arts and letters. His rule began a long period (200 years) of peace, called the Pax Romana.

* **PAX** meaning **peace** is used to designate a period of general stability in international affairs under the influence of a dominant military power and generally used in combination with a Latinized name like **Pax Americana**

Augustus maintained republican forms while securing domination of the government.

A building program created new jobs. Augustus reformed provincial control and rewarded the military for loyal service. The basic forms established by Augustus endured for two centuries. Rome's rule rested on tolerance and cohesion through law.

Considerable autonomy was granted to local authorities, thus not requiring the development of an elaborate bureaucracy. Rome's greatest contribution to governing was the development of legal codes. Jurists constructed an extensive legal system based upon general principles - natural law - and case precedents.

The laws focused upon protection of private property and family stability. They evolved to meet changing conditions, providing firm rules to govern social relationships.

During this time the Roman Empire was the largest whose boundaries included Mesopotamia, the Arabian desert, the whole North Africa, the coast of Atlantic Ocean, Scotland, the North Sea, the Rhine, the Danube, the Black Sea, and the Caucasus.

The extensive system of Roman roads made transportation easier than it was again to be until the development of railroads. A postal service was developed closely tied in with the organization of the army. Commerce and industry were greatly developed, particularly by sea, over which grain ships carried food for Rome and the West from the ports of northern Africa.



Foreseeing the future! (According to Selçuk Erdem)

Roman law and state

Roman law, aiming the protection of private property and citizen rights based itself on a concept of universal "natural law" which influenced the later legislations and constitutes the basis of the contemporary civil law.

For the understanding of the "justice" in Rome, please read the box below where a governor asks the emperor the procedure to be used in the prosecution of the Christians. (Underlining is mine)

Pliny's letter and Emperor's answer :

Application of Justice

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, usually known as Pliny the Younger, whose father was Caecilius, known as the elder Pliny, author of the "Natural History." In the year 100 A.C. Pliny became consul and appointed as governor of Bithynia by emperor Trajan. He was in the habit of submitting every point of policy to his master, and the correspondence between Trajan and Pliny is of a high degree of interest particularly on account of the subjects discussed. Bithynia covered Eastern Marmara and Western Black Sea regions of modern Turkey, namely izmit, iznik, Adapazari, and parts of Bursa and Bolu.

To the Emperor Trajan

It is my invariable rule, Sir, to refer to you in all matters where I feel doubtful; for who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning those who profess Christianity, I am unacquainted not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them.

Trajan to Pliny

*You have adopted the right course, my dearest Secundus, in investigating the charges against the Christians who were brought before you. **It is not possible to lay down any general rule for all such cases.** Do not go out of your way to look for them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the **crime is proved**, they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by invoking our gods, let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. **Anonymous informations ought not to be received in any sort of prosecution.** It is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and is quite foreign to the spirit of our age.*

Taken from Pliny, Letters, Books VII-X, Harvard University Press, 1992, pp. 285-291

The Greek and Hellenistic political, cultural, and economic traditions will be carried on by the Romans to the later periods.

In addition Roman society will have an influence with more emphasis on the political and legal framework. Even today "Roman Law" is considered as must in all Law Faculty's curriculum like Law 141 and 142 courses of our university.

The primary role of the state, besides maintaining order, was providing adequate subsistence and maintaining public works. These functions depended on a stable tax income which in turn needs a dependable legal system. The reliability of the system made necessary an understanding of justice and "just administration".

As an example for the concern of public works please read text on the right.

The Roman Identity

One of the dominant features of Roman identity was endorsement of stoicism as a philosophical system of belief and a way of life. Stoicism had originated in Hellenistic Greece. The centerpiece of Stoic philosophy was the concept of the *logos*. The universe is ordered by God and this order is the *logos*, which means "rational order" or "meaning" of the universe. For the Stoic, the meaning (*logos*) of each individual life, action, and situation is determined by its place in a larger whole, which is, of course, the whole course of history.

Along with stoicism, another school of thought, which influenced Roman mentality, though not to the same extent, was Epicureanism.

It upheld that the highest good in life was pleasure and man had to regulate his life according to this principle. However, the 'pleasure' sought by the Epicureans was mental satisfaction and a moderation in all activities of life.

Both these systems of thought derived from Hellenistic culture. Roman cultural identity was characterized by its respect for authority, its sense of duty and its adherence to the ideal of manliness (*virtues*) in the face of adversity and suffering.

End of an Era

When the empire ceased to expand around 200 A.C., a long period of crisis marked the societies of Europe, where no single state or empire remained dominant for a long time.

As a result of the division of the Roman Empire into halves as Eastern and Western Empires, the Eastern

On the other hand, Rome's fall upset the former economic system in the West and stimulated competition among rival powers. Since then no single power and no single culture dominated the Western hemisphere

Two letters of Pliny to Trajan

Letter XCIX, To the Emperor Trajan

The elegant and beautiful city of Amastris (Amasra), Sir, has, among other principal constructions, a very fine street and of considerable length, on one entire side of which runs what is called indeed a river, but in fact is no other than a vile common sewer, extremely offensive to the eye, and at the same time very pestilential on account of its noxious smell. It will be advantageous, therefore, in point of health, as well as decency, to have it covered; which shall be done with your permission: as I will take care, on my part, that money be not wanting for executing so noble and necessary a work.

Trajan to Pliny

It is highly reasonable, my dearest Secundus, if the water which runs through the city of Amastris is prejudicial, while uncovered, to the health of the inhabitants, that it should be covered up. I am well assured you will, with your usual application, take care that the money necessary for this work shall not be wanting.

Letter XLVIII, To the Emperor Trajan

The citizens of Nicaea (İznik), Sir, are building a theatre, which, though it is not yet finished, has already exhausted, as I am informed (for I have not examined the account myself), above ten millions of sesterces;1 and, what is worse, I fear to no purpose. For either from the foundation being laid in soft, marshy ground, or that the stone itself is light and crumbling, the walls are sinking, and cracked from top to bottom. It deserves your consideration, therefore, whether it would be best to carry on this work, or entirely discontinue it, or rather, perhaps, whether it would not be most prudent absolutely to destroy it: for the buttresses and foundations by means of which it is from time to time kept up appear to me more expensive than solid.

This city is also rebuilding, upon a far more enlarged plan, the gymnasium, which was burnt down before my arrival in the province. They have already been at some (and, I rather fear, a fruitless), expense. The structure is not only irregular and ill-proportioned, but the present architect (who, it must be owned, is a rival to the person who was first employed) asserts that the walls, although twenty-two feet in thickness, are not strong enough to support the superstructure.....

I must desire you to send hither an architect to inspect, not only the theatre, but the bath; in order to consider whether, after all the expense which has already been laid out, it will be better to finish them upon the present plan, or alter the one, and remove the other, in as far as may seem necessary: for otherwise we may perhaps throw away our future cost in endeavoring not to lose what we have already expended.

(The same old problems we are used to!)