

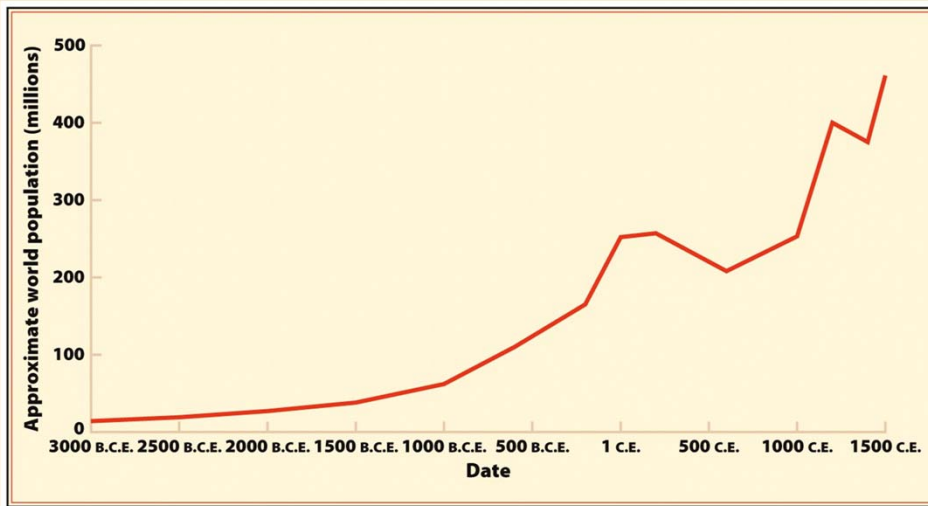
Robert W. Strayer

**Ways of the World: A Brief Global
History with Sources**
Second Edition

Chapter 3

State and Empire in Eurasia/North Africa
(500 B.C.E.–500 C.E.)

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Snapshot World Population during the Age of Agricultural Civilization
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Terra-Cotta Archer
Museum of the Terra Cotta Army, Xian/Visual Connection Archive
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1. Identify this statue. Who does it show, and where is it from?

This male figure in full body armor and rolled-up long hair in a kneeling position is part of the immense funerary complex constructed for the Chinese ruler Qin Shihuangdi, founder of the Qin Dynasty, from about 221 B.C.E. The unearthed complex revealed a Terra Cotta Army of roughly 6,000 soldiers of varying heights. This figure's position—the right elbow resting on the right knee with the right shoulder forward, both hands pointing downward on his left—suggests that he once held a bow as an archer in Qin Shihuangdi's army.

2. Discuss the craft and artistic value of this statue.

The statue is finely detailed with almost lifelike facial features and carefully carved clothing that shows folds in the archer's scarf and sleeves. His position is anatomically accurate and proportionate, making this statue the work of a highly skilled sculptor.

3. Consider the fact that this statue was one of 6,000 similar figures. How does this shape your interpretation of the artifact's significance?

The scale of the Terra Cotta Army turns this individual example of artistic capability into a testimony to the power of empires in the second wave of civilizations. Not only did Qin Shihuangdi lord over a vast army that could bring other Chinese kingdoms under his control; he also commandeered more than 700,000 conscript workers to build a shrine

and an army for his afterlife. This statue is an excellent example of the rise of empire and the god-like self-representations of the heads of these new vast states.

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

A. The Persian Empire

1. King of Kings: Cyrus & Darius
2. Multiculturalism
3. Infrastructure

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

A. The Persian Empire

1. King of Kings: Cyrus & Darius: The great Persian monarchs exercised absolute power over their subjects, including life and death. They also enjoyed a lavish lifestyle of elaborate rituals and palaces. They claimed complete control over their entire domain and saw their centralized state as absolute.
2. Multiculturalism: The Persian monarchs did not rule by force alone. They used an efficient system of regional administrators known as *satraps* and respected the diverse cultures and religions of the various people they conquered.
3. Infrastructure: The empire's sophisticated administrations set the pattern for some 1,000 years for the numerous successor regimes in the region. Of particular note were the empire's 1,700-mile "royal road," its postal system, forms of taxation, court etiquette, and bureaucracy.



I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

B. The Greeks

1. Hellenes
2. City-states
3. Expansion by migration
4. Citizens and *hoplites*

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

B. The Greeks

1. Hellenes: The Greeks had a common identity as *Hellenes*, sharing language, religion, and rituals. Starting in 776 B.C.E., they held the Olympic Games every four years as a festival celebrating their shared identity.
2. City-states: Despite pan-Hellenic ideals, there was endemic rivalry amongst the various city-states and near constant warfare. Many states had very different forms of organization. The contrast between Athenian democracy and Spartan martial communalism illustrated the extremes. Generally these city-states were small with only 500 to 5,000 male citizens, but they did see economic dynamism, which could lead to environmental degradation and soil depletion such as around Athens.
3. Expansion by migration: Like the Persians, the Greeks were dynamic and expansive. However, their expansion came about by waves of migration around the Mediterranean and Black Seas between 750 and 500 B.C.E. These migrations spread Greek culture, language, and architecture.
4. Citizens and *hoplites*: The Greeks pioneered revolutionary political ideas such as viewing the individual as a participant of a larger state system, a citizen. The tradition of *hoplite* warfare existed, where men who could afford armor served as infantry. These *hoplites* soon demanded political rights and challenged elites or tyrants.



Map 3.2 Classical Greece
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I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

C. Collision: The Greco-Persian Wars

1. Ionia
2. Athens: Victorious, democratic, and imperial
3. The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.E.

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

C. Collision: The Greco-Persian Wars

1. Ionia: This was a contested area of western Anatolia where Greek city-states had been annexed by the Persian Empire. When they revolted with the help of Athens, the Persians sought to punish the rebels and their supporters in the Greek mainland.
2. Athens: Victorious, democratic, and imperial: Against all odds, Athens led a coalition of Greek city-states to victory in land and sea engagements in 490 and 480 B.C.E. This was a source of great pride for Athenian citizens who saw their political system as a source of their victory. As a consequence of the victory, citizenship was extended to the lower classes who fought the Persians; Athens pursued a policy of empire building.
3. The Peloponnesian War, 431–404 B.C.E.: Democratic or not, Athenian empire building directly led to conflicts with other Greek city-states. The Peloponnesian War was essentially a civil war between Athens and its allies and Sparta and its allies. In the end, Athens lost and Greece was exhausted, opening the way for a Macedonian invasion.

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

D. Collision: Alexander and the Hellenistic Era

1. Philip II and Alexander
2. Spread of Greek culture
3. Alexandria and Bactria

I. Empires and Civilizations in Collision: The Persians and the Greeks

D. Collision: Alexander and the Hellenistic Era

1. Philip II and Alexander: Philip of Macedonia invaded a weakened Greece and forced unity upon the quarrelsome city-states. His son, Alexander, led a massive Greek invasion of the Persian Empire. In a decade of frenetic activity, Alexander claimed numerous military victories, destroyed the Persian capital at Persepolis, and ventured as far as present Afghanistan and India before his death in 323 B.C.E.
2. Spread of Greek culture: While his empire soon broke into several pieces, Alexander opened the way for Greek culture to spread east. Greek influences can be found as far away as India where the monarch Asoka published some decrees in Greek and a new style of art showed Greek techniques.
3. Alexandria and Bactria: With its large multiethnic population and numerous monuments, Alexandria stands out as the most dynamic symbol of the Hellenistic Era. Bactria, high in the mountains of Central Asia, shows the far flung influences of Greek culture but also the fusion of Greek and eastern cultures, seen in the Greek monarchs who practiced Buddhism. While there was sharing of cultures, ethnic conflict could erupt and some, such as orthodox Jews, tried to resist the Hellenization of their people.



II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

A. Rome: From City-State to Empire

1. An upstart republic
2. An expansionist warrior society
3. Changing gender norms
4. Civil war and the death of the republic

II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

A. Rome: From City-State to Empire

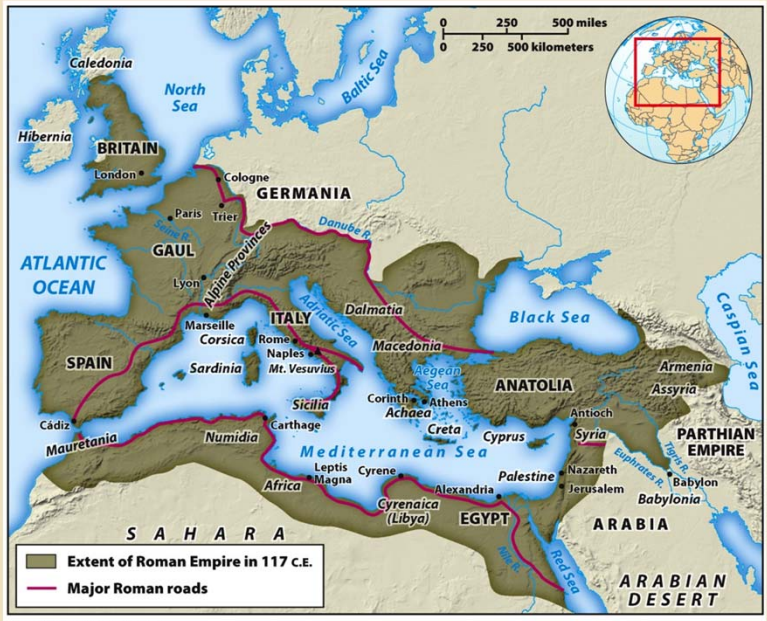
1. An upstart republic: Rome was not geographically predestined to be a super power; indeed, its early years were fairly weak and poor. However, in several centuries of warfare it conquered and incorporated its neighbors and then territories throughout the entire Mediterranean and much of its hinterland, including France, Britain, and Spain and many wealthy areas such as Egypt, Greece, and Mesopotamia. About 509 B.C.E., Roman aristocrats overthrew the monarchy, establishing a republic of the wealthy (known as *patricians*). Eventually, law codes protected the poorer classes (known as *plebeians*).

2. An expansionist warrior society: With its power and wealth coming from near constant warfare and empire building, the Roman army enjoyed a special and privileged status. Poor soldiers sought land, loot, and salaries that could be a path out of poverty, and elites sought large estates and political glory. Conquest also brought many vanquished people into Rome as slaves. While there was no pre-arranged plan for imperial expansion, there were many push factors and much of Roman society enjoyed a variety of war spoils. With each imperial expansion, Romans faced a new set of security issues, requiring what they saw as expansion to create defenses.

3. Changing gender norms: Under the republic, Roman gender norms emphasized the power of the male head of the household, the *pater familias*. However, with the social and political changes brought about by imperial expansion, many elite women found a less restricted life than they had known in the early centuries of the Republic.

4. Civil war and the death of the republic: Unfortunately for social stability, imperial expansion served to widen gaps in wealth. Roman elites acquired larger and larger estates worked by foreign slaves. Free farmers were unable to compete, and growing numbers left the countryside for the city where they found more poverty or joined the army. Elite generals began to recruit from the poorer ranks of society. As conflict grew between traditionalists and those who enjoyed new wealth, civil war soon broke out. After decades of fighting, Octavian gained the title of Augustus and ruled as an emperor. This first emperor

had to play a careful political game, preserving the symbols of the republic despite his near absolute power.



Map 3.4 The Roman Empire
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II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

B. China: From Warring States to Empire

1. Qin Shihuangdi's brutal quest for order
2. The moralistic and moderate Han

II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

B. China: From Warring States to Empire

1. Qin Shihuangdi's brutal quest for order: Empire building in China was not the creation of a new idea but an attempt to go back to the time of coherence and centralization of centuries past. Plagued by generations of warfare amongst the various states, many hoped that one state would establish order. The state of Qin, with its strong bureaucracy and army, took the lead. Qin Shihuangdi, took the title of "first emperor" and united China by force, executing scholars who opposed him and governing by the concept of Legalism, an all-powerful state that imposed harsh penalties as a means of enforcing the authority of the state. He also established a standardized and uniform system of weights, measurements, cart axels, and Chinese characters.

2. The moralistic and moderate Han: Because of Qin Shihuangdi's harsh tactics, the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.E) was short lived, but it did set the key political precedents and patterns for 2,000 years of imperial rule. The Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.) used Qin infrastructure but adopted the moralistic and scholarly ideology of Confucianism in lieu of Qin Shihuangdi's brutal Legalism as a state ideology. Not only were they a much longer-lived dynasty, but they also expanded the empire's territory.



1. Describe this painting. Can you identify the figures?

This image shows two figures wielding swords over their heads while riding a black and a yellow elephant. Their headgear and delicate facial features indicate that both figures are women. This is a painting of the Vietnamese sisters Trung Trac and Trung Nhi, daughters of an aristocratic military family. Accompanied by three men on foot with lances and swords, they appear to be in pursuit of a male figure whose body armor, mustache, and Yin and Yan symbol on his torso indicate that he is Chinese. The elephants have overrun the man's red-hatted fellow soldiers, one of them still holding up a red flag with black tassels and a writing symbol in the center. There are numerous writing symbols in the top corners of the image, probably explaining the figures and the event.

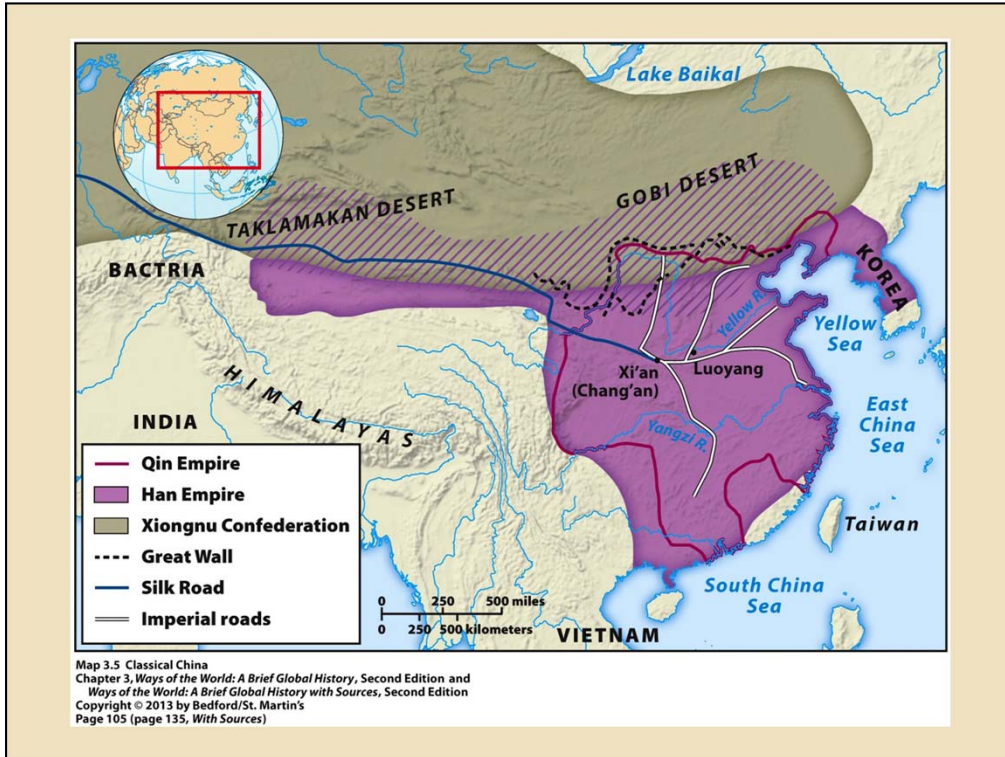
2. What story is this image trying to tell?

This painting portrays the resistance of the Vietnamese Trung sisters against Chinese occupation, which was inspired by the execution of Trac's husband, Thi Sach, the local lord and open critic of Chinese policies. Trac famously wore full military regalia when she addressed some 30,000 soldiers who fought the Chinese under her and her sister Nhi's leadership.

3. What role did the story told in this image play in later Vietnamese history, and what does it highlight for us today?

The story of the Trung sisters became an inspiration for the Vietnamese opposition to a variety of invaders—the Chinese, the Japanese, the French, and Americans. The fact that two women lead this impressive pushback against Chinese dominance was often used to push men to match up. This story breaks familiar gender roles that

assign men the role of military hero and women the position of submission and passivity.



II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

C. Consolidating the Roman and Chinese Empires

1. Supernatural sanctions
2. Absorbing foreign religion
3. Paths to assimilation
4. The use of language
5. Bureaucracy versus aristocracy

II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

C. Consolidating the Roman and Chinese Empires

1. Supernatural sanctions: Both the Chinese and the Roman empires argued that supernatural forces sanctioned their regimes. In Rome, past emperors were revered as gods. In China, the emperors ruled in accordance with the spiritual force known as the Mandate of Heaven. If the Chinese emperor did not rule well, the Mandate of Heaven could be lost and natural disasters and social upheaval might dispose the dynasty.
2. Absorbing foreign religion: Both Rome and China dealt with foreign religions. From the east, Christianity, Persian, and Egyptian faiths entered the Roman empire. Christianity eventually spread amongst the Roman elite, especially women. These faiths spread thanks to Roman transportation systems and the relative peace imposed by the empire. In China, Buddhism came from India and Central Asia via the Silk Roads. The faith gained adherents after the collapse of the Han dynasty.
3. Paths to assimilation: As the Han dynasty grew out of a large cultural heartland that was already ethnically Chinese, it was easy to assimilate the cultures of conquered peoples. Romans, on the other hand, remained a minority in their increasingly multiethnic empire. However, Rome began to grant citizenship to cooperative individuals, families, and whole communities and eventually to all free people of the empire.
4. The use of language: Latin, as an alphabet-based language, spread throughout the west of the empire but later transformed into regional variations that became the Romance Languages (Spanish, French, Italian, and so on). In contrast, Chinese is character based, and pronunciation varied widely throughout the empire. Nonetheless, literate Chinese could read the characters regardless of regional differences in the oral language.
5. Bureaucracy versus aristocracy: The Han state developed a strong and successful bureaucracy based on political and philosophical principles. The Chinese state emphasized the morality of the governing classes. Romans, on the other hand, relied on the aristocracy and military to piece various systems of

rule together and create laws. While Romans desired good laws, the Chinese state wanted good men.

II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

D. The Collapse of Empires

1. Over-extension
2. Rivalries amongst elites
3. Pressures from nomadic people
4. Revival?

II. Comparing Empires: Roman and Chinese

D. The Collapse of Empires

1. Over-extension: The most fundamental reason for the collapse of Han and Roman was over-expansion. The empires simply got too big for the existing infrastructure to hold them together. Unable to control outlying areas or suppress rebellions, the end became inevitable.
2. Rivalries amongst elites: Elite rivalries (between mandarins and eunuchs in China and among elites claiming the throne in Rome) weakened the state and contributed to political collapse.
3. Pressures from nomadic people: Added to these factors were pressures from nomadic people of the steppes and the German lands who pushed into imperial territory, competed for resources, and challenged central authority.
4. Revival?: In both China and Europe, there were memories of empire and the dream of imperial revival. China did see the reconstruction of an imperial state, but Rome was never really rebuilt.



Meeting of Attila and Pope Leo I
National Szechenyi Library, Budapest
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1. Identify the figures in this drawing.

This small painting shows Pope Leo I in an orange robe and white hat on the right, with a group of church officials (presumably cardinals) to the right. They carry large crosses that tower over the group. On the left we see the Hun leader Attila on a white horse next to another rider in red on a brown horse, both stopping short before Leo I. Behind them we see a group of armored warriors. A small red figure is hovering over them in the middle—this may be an angel.

2. What story does this picture tell, and what elements help convey this story?

In 452 C.E., Attila and the Huns invaded the Roman Empire and arrived at the gates of Rome. Pope Leo I convinced the “barbarian” invaders to spare Rome and retreat from Italy. This painting from 1360 idealizes this encounter. The pope’s folded hands, the crosses, and the angel above indicate that Leo persuaded Attila with the power of faith. The Huns on the left look like a solid wall of armed warriors, but Attila’s horse appears to be in an abrupt stop, turning its head away. Attila’s head is tilted upward, looking at the angel.

3. Can you identify the frame of the picture and speculate on where the picture may have appeared?

The picture is framed with a round shape that looks like the letter “O”—say, the first letter of the first word of an opening paragraph. This painting is from 1360, before printing presses were used and when books were elaborately crafted by hand. Only a bible would have received such an elaborate decoration. This makes sense given the religious interpretation of the standoff between Attila and Pope Leo.

III. Intermittent Empire: The Case of India

- A. The Aryan Controversy
- B. Political fragmentation and cultural diversity, but a distinctive religious tradition
- C. Mauryan Empire (326-184 B.C.E.)
- D. Ashoka (r. 268-232 B.C.E.)
- E. Gupta Empire (320-550 C.E.)
- F. Great civilizational achievements without a central state

III. Intermittent Empire: The Case of India

A. The Aryan Controversy: After the decline of the Indus civilization, a wave of Indo-Europeans came into India. There is still much debate on the nature of their history. Did they invade suddenly? Peacefully and slowly migrate? Were they always there?

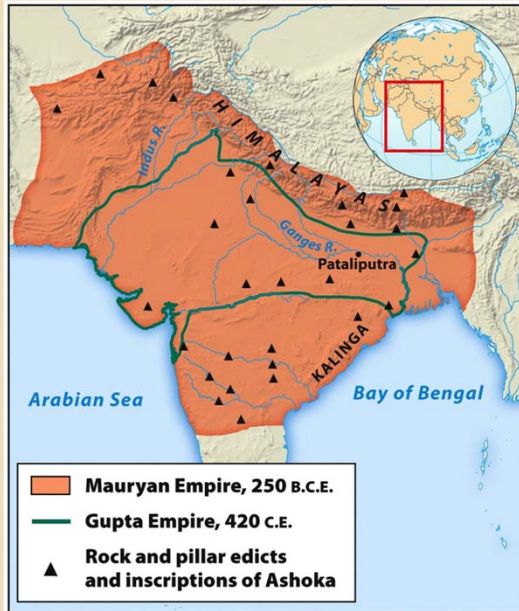
B. Political fragmentation and cultural diversity, but a distinctive religious tradition: Despite the numerous small states and meager imperial tradition and despite the numerous languages and cultural traditions, there were several distinct and significant religious traditions that formed a common core that outsiders would come to call “Hinduism.”

C. Mauryan Empire (326–184 B.C.E.): This first Indian empire may have been inspired by contact with Persia and the Hellenistic kingdoms. While impressive in size and power (50 million subjects and 600,000 infantry soldiers, 30,000 cavalry, 8,000 chariots, and 9,000 war elephants), this empire was not as long lived as Rome or Han.

D. Ashoka (r. 268–232 B.C.E.): The most famous Indian emperor of the age was at first a great conqueror but later converted to Buddhism, adopting a moralistic tone and erecting numerous pillars and rocks carved with his edicts.

E. Gupta Empire (320–550 C.E.): It was well over half a millennium before another state equaled the first empire. The Gupta Empire saw a flourishing of art, architecture, and literature, as well as commerce and the sciences.

F. Great civilizational achievements without a central state: Despite a significant imperial tradition due to political fragmentation and conflict, South Asia was home to the growth of a significant long-distance trade network, major spiritual movements, and recorded impressive work in astronomy.



Map 3.6 Empire in South Asia
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IV. Reflections: Enduring Legacies of Second-Wave Empires

- A. **Mao Zedong and Qin Shihuangdi**
- B. **Ashoka in modern India**
- C. **British imperial and Italian fascist uses of Rome**

IV. Reflections: Enduring Legacies of Second-Wave Empires

A. Mao Zedong and Qin Shihuangdi: Leader of Communist China in the twentieth century idealized the first emperor's brutal path to state building as a revolutionary triumph for progress.

B. Ashoka in modern India: Seeking to promote an image of a peaceful and tolerant India, the leaders of the new nation adopted symbols of Ashoka's reign in 1947.

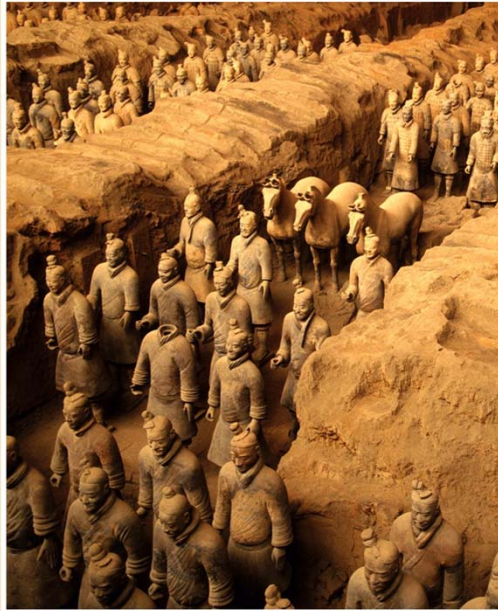
C. British imperial and Italian fascist uses of Rome: Both the British colonial empire and Mussolini's Italy used the Roman Empire as a crucial precedent for rationalizing their rule.



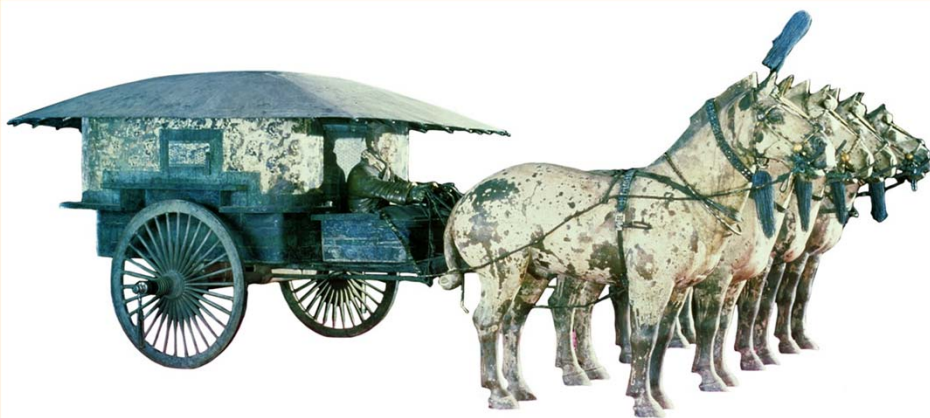
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Visual Source 3.2 Harmodius and Aristogeiton
Museo Archaeological Nazionale, Naples/The Bridgeman Art Library
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Visual Source 3.3a Qin Shihuangdi Funerary Complex
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Visual Source 3.3b Qin Shihuangdi Funerary Complex
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Statue: Scala/Art Resource, NY
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Visual Source 3.4b Augustus
Alinari/Art Resource, NY
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