

The Fall of the Roman Empire



Poll

The Fall of the Roman Empire was entirely the fault of the Barbarians.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Roman Empire

The Romans were excellent engineers, which enabled them to build roads, bridges, aqueducts, and large cities.



These roads and bridges allowed them to easily move their troops and conquer all of their neighbors.

As they conquered these cultures they gathered slaves, new territory, and resources.



This made Rome the greatest empire
the world had yet known—
large, rich, and powerful.



But...

**Rome had some problems which
eventually caused its failure.**

Open Ended Question



What do you think is happening in this picture?



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/8ITVUBXVyR8>

Problem #1



Rome was ruling an extensive empire with a government designed to run a small city-state.

Problem #2

There was no clear system for the passage of power from one emperor to another. After an emperor died, there was no clear heir.



Problem #3

Most of the wealth and money earning possibilities were located in the Roman empire's eastern portion. The western portion of the empire was supported by the wealth of the east.

**In about 330 CE,
Constantine divided
the empire into two
halves, the eastern
and the western.**



Open Ended Question

**What kinds of problems do you foresee for the western half of the empire?
Explain.**

Problem #4

Rome grew rich at first because it conquered other people and took their wealth. When they stopped conquering other people, however, they had to make up for it with heavy taxes. There was never enough money for them to do things like maintain their infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and aqueducts.

Problem #5

Because Rome conquered so many foreign cultures and incorporated their people into its empire, loyalty toward the emperor was diluted by loyalty to one's local leaders.

Among the strengths that allowed Rome to grow as large and strong as it did were the loyalty, patriotism, virtue, work ethic, and devotion to the empire of its people.

Open Ended Question

When those virtues and loyalty were gone (weak leadership), what problems might that have caused for the strength of the empire?

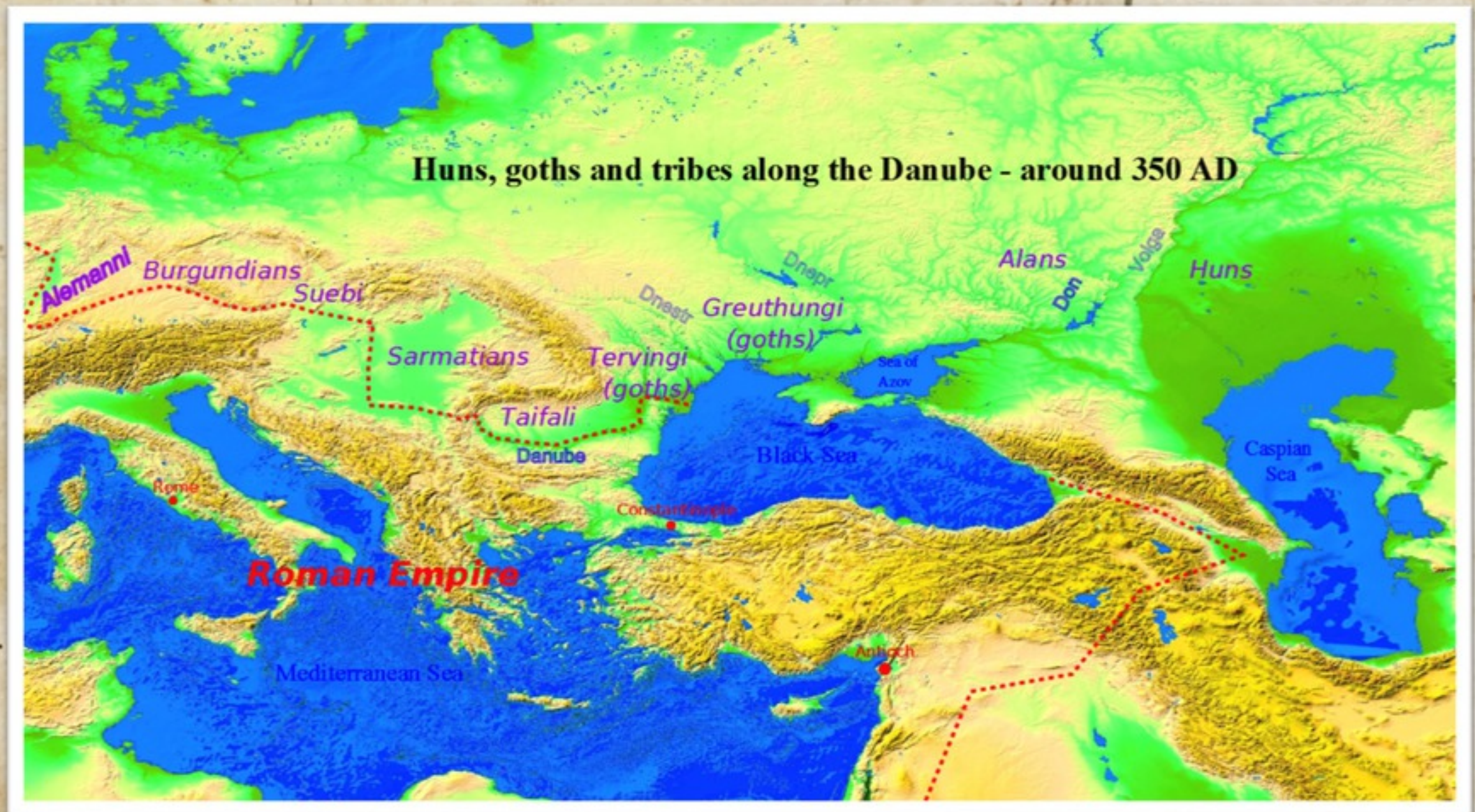
Problem #6

When Rome conquered other cultures, they often took many slaves. Roman society grew to have enormous numbers of slaves, sometimes more than the number of non-slaves in a community.



The Barbarians

For years, along the northern borders of the Roman Empire, there had been tribes of Germanic peoples living as farmers. These people occasionally traded and interacted with the Romans and the Romans called them Barbarians (from the Greek word barbaros, meaning foreign, strange, or ignorant).



Problem #7



The Huns:

In the late 300s, the Huns began to attack some Barbarian communities (Goths) near the Caspian Sea.

The Goths were farmers living in small communities along the northwestern shores of the Caspian Sea.



In 380, Marcellinus described the Huns as follows:



"The Huns exceed any description of savagery...Fired with an overwhelming desire for seizing the property of others, these swift-moving and ungovernable people make their destructive way amid the pillage and slaughter of those who live around them."

Open Ended Question

How do you think the Goths reacted? Explain.

Problem #8

Emperor Valens granted the Goths protection from the Huns within the Roman Empire. However, he only permitted half of the Goth population to enter. The half that entered was never given the land and food that they were promised by the Emperor. In fact, they were held in refugee camps and not given food. Eventually they were sold dog meat in exchange for their children.

Aftermath

- In A.D. 476, the last Roman emperor was removed from power
- This date marks the fall of the western Roman empire
- Roads fell into despair while trade declined
- Germanic kingdoms and barbarians claimed Roman lands
- While the Western empire fell, the Eastern empire continued for the next 1,000 years

Draw It

This painting shows the Goths taking over the city of Rome. Write what you think is going through their minds as they stroll through the city.





Why did Rome fall?

Collaborate!

Why did Rome fall?

Memory Test

