

Doc: 1

"First of all, there's strong evidence of a steady decline in population across the entire Empire from the second century CE on. For example, peaking at around a million or so in the Classical Age, the population of the city of Rome gradually dropped over the course of the next few centuries, reaching a low point of a mere six thousand by the 500's. The reasons for this drastic if incremental reduction in human resources are not clear, though many Romans' luxurious lifestyle and their concomitant disinterest in producing and raising children must have played some part. So did plagues, no doubt, as well as constant warfare on the frontiers..."

Excerpt from <http://www.usu.edu/>

According to this source, what were the basic problems facing the Roman Empire? _____

population decline had been happening for quite some time; people had fewer children; plagues and warfare had an impact.

Doc: 2

"...Rome's fall was an inevitable effect of its grand size...borders became difficult to secure and the amount of gold needed to maintain roads and perform routine maintenance was never enough. It had grown so large it could not take care or protect itself to the level that was needed."

Excerpt from *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1778

According to this source, what problems were facing the Roman Empire? _____

Rome had grown too large to control effectively; borders became too difficult to control and too many roads were needed for maintenance to keep up.

Doc: 3

Emperor	Dates in Power	Cause of Death
Macrinus	217-218 CE	Executed
Heliogabalus	218-222 CE	Lynched by soldiers*
Severus Alexander	222-235 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Maximinus the Thracian	235-238 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Gordian	1/1/238 - 1/20/238 CE	Suicide
Gordian II / Balbinus	238 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Gordian III	238-244 CE	Killed in action
Philippus the Arab	244-249 CE	Killed in action
Decius	249-251 CE	Killed in action
Hostilianus	251 CE	Plague
Trebonian the Gaul	251-253 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Aemilian	253 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Valerian	253-262 CE	Died in captivity
Gallienus	253-268 CE	Murdered by soldiers
Claudius II Gothicus	268-270 CE	Natural causes
Quintillus	270 CE	Lynched by soldiers
Aurelian	270-275 CE	Murdered by his secretary

*lynch = to kill someone by hanging

Compiled from <http://www.livius.org/articles/misc/list-of-roman-emperors/>

Examine this chart closely. What is happening among the Roman Emperors that may have led to Rome's decline?

— **Roman emperors are rarely in power very long before being replaced.** —
 — **Many are being assassinated or killed off (some even commit suicide).** —
 — **Think of the instability in the government if this is going on!** —
 — —

In 193, Septimus Severus defeated his rivals in a civil war to claim the imperial throne and found a dynasty. His line devalued the currency in order to enlarge the army and double the legionnaires pay...Within a century, the Roman coin was completely worthless. By the late third century, the Roman economy was based on barter.

Doc: 4

The Severan Dynasty ruled until 235. Alexander Severus' death triggered a succession struggle which lasted fifty years. Competing generals, politicians, and barbarian kings all vied to rule the empire. As the power struggle continued, the border collapsed allowing barbarians into Roman territory without governmental approval. The civil wars, raids, and accompanying social unrest destroyed trade. Merchants lost safe routes to the east. Transporting goods to market became hazardous. Rather than risk travel, large landowners grew self sufficient. They produced their own goods rather than trade or purchase them.

As trade collapsed, the various governments that attempted to rule...after the crisis created more taxes more funds for the military. However, people could not afford to pay them. As a result, the government eventually confiscated crops from the people...eventually, the poor paid the taxes for the rich.

Adapted from "Rome at War AD 293-696" by Michael Whitby

What economic issues are identified as causes for decline? _____

_____ **The government made a great deal more money, which made the coin worthless; economy reduced to barter system; power struggles and raids led to trade routes drying up; government eventually raised taxes to pay for more military...** _____

Doc: 5

Rome became reliant on hired, foreign soldiers to bolster their military, especially Germanics. Therefore, much of the military was not loyal to Rome, often switching sides in battle. Mercenaries were more loyal to their commander than the government, leading to several civil wars & military coups which ripened Rome for collapse. At the same time, Rome's eastern and northern borders grew so large they became unable to maintain. As the Germanics became more numerous, it was not feasible to maintain large enough legions to prevent infiltration.

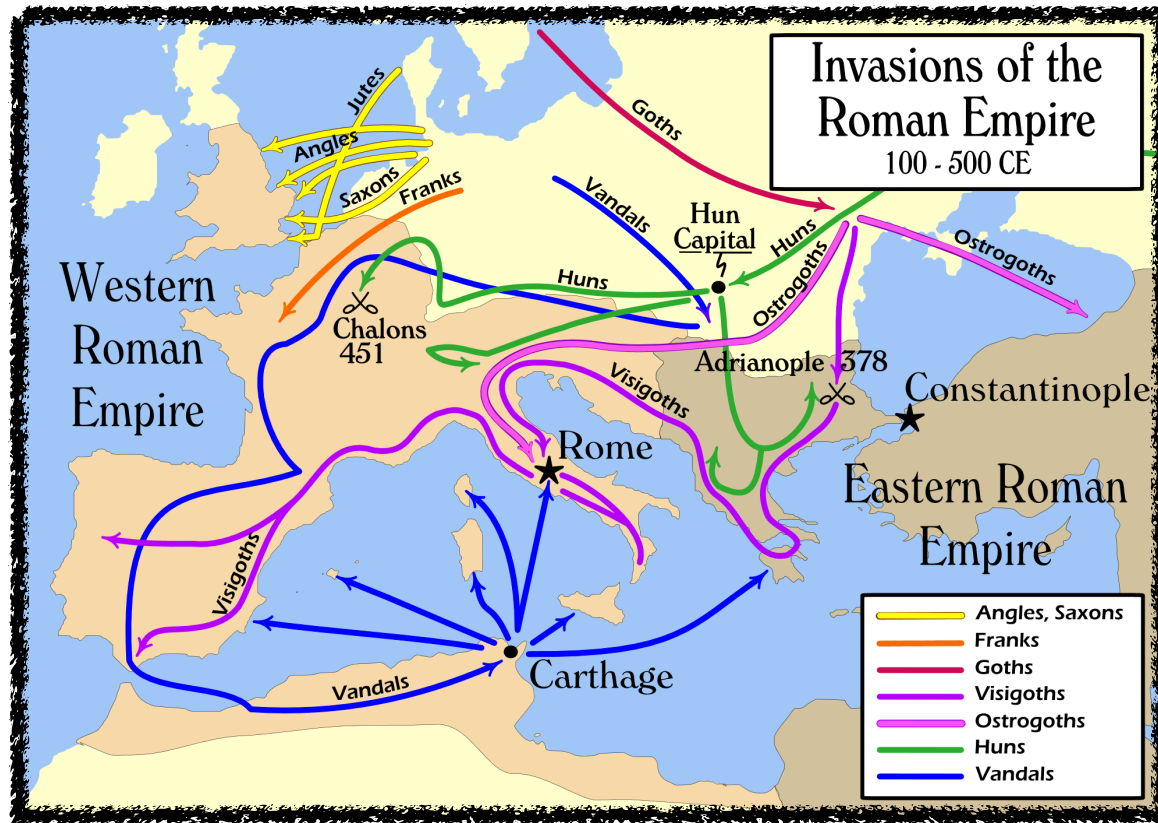
Adapted from *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians*, 2005.

What does this selection tell us about how the military contributed to the fall of Rome? _____

_____ **Rome had to rely on foreign soldiers that were not devoted to Rome and often changed sides in battle; border became impossible to defend...** _____

This map shows the barbaric invasions of the Roman Empire prior to 476

Doc: 6



"Invasions of the Roman Empire" by Nihad Hamzicis licensed under CC-BY-SA-2.5

According to the map above, what caused the Roman Empire to fall? _____

— **Invasions from a variety of tribes and groups.** —

Why might this sort of attack be more difficult than if there were just one enemy? _____

— **Being attacked from multiple different sides, with an already poor** —

— **infrastructure, makes it very difficult to withstand.** —



“The decline of Rome dovetailed with the spread of Christianity, and some have argued that the rise of a new faith helped contribute to the empire’s fall. The Edict of Milan legalized Christianity in 313, and it later became the state religion in 380. These decrees ended centuries of persecution, but they may have also eroded the traditional Roman values system. Christianity displaced the polytheistic Roman religion, which viewed the emperor as having a divine status, and also shifted focus away from the glory of the state and onto a sole deity. Meanwhile, popes and other church leaders took an increased role in political affairs, further complicating governance. Christianity also taught pacifism (to not fight), which discouraged Romans from enlisting in the army and further encouraged Rome to rely on foreign fighters.”

Adapted from www.history.com

In what ways did Christianity lead to the downfall of the Roman empire? _____

Christianity taught people new values, displaced importance of emperor, gave church leaders more power, taught pacifism (which shrank military)

Some dispute that Christianity contributed to the Fall of Rome. Why might they say this? _____

Answers will vary, possible answers may include:

- possibly that the religion was not “against” the Roman Empire or ever sought to end it**
- perhaps there were far more serious problems with the empire that helped it fall**
- maybe its unimaginable to think that a belief system like Christianity could destroy a civilization?**