

As Rome grew into a huge empire, power fell into the hands of a single supreme ruler.

## From Republic to Empire

### 34.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, you learned how Rome became a republic. In this chapter, you'll discover how the republic grew into a mighty **empire** that ruled the entire Mediterranean world.

The **expansion** of Roman power took place over about 500 years, from 509 B.C.E. to 14 C.E. At the start of this period, Rome was a tiny republic in central Italy. Five hundred years later, it was a thriving center of a vast empire. At its height, the Roman Empire included most of Europe together with North Africa, Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor.

The growth in Rome's power happened gradually, and it came at a price. Romans had to fight countless wars to defend their growing territory and to conquer new lands. Along the way, Rome itself changed. Romans had once been proud to be governed by elected leaders. Their heroes were men who had helped to preserve the republic. By 14 C.E., the republic was just a memory. Power was in the hands of a single supreme ruler, the emperor. Romans even worshiped the emperor as a god.

In this chapter, you'll see how this dramatic change occurred. You'll trace the gradual expansion of Roman power. You'll also explore the costs of this expansion, both for Romans and for the people they conquered.



Use this map as a graphic organizer to help you understand how Rome expanded from a republic into a great empire.

## 34.2 From Republic to Empire: An Overview

The growth of Rome from a republic to an empire took place over 500 years. The story can be divided into four major periods.

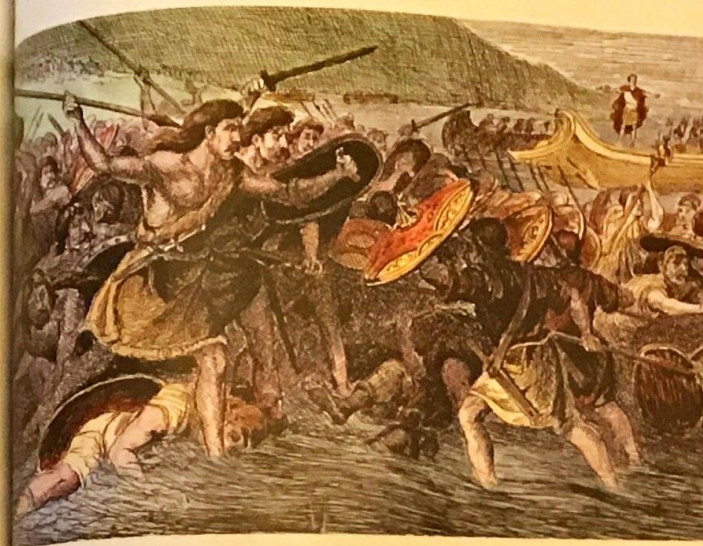
**The First Period of Expansion** The first period began in 509 B.C.E. when the Romans drove the last Etruscan king out of power. At that time, Rome became a republic.

The Romans wanted to protect their borders and to gain more land. This led to a series of wars. During the next 245 years, the Romans fought one enemy after another. They conquered their Latin neighbors in central Italy. They also defeated their old masters, the Etruscans.

Wisely, the Romans eventually made allies, or friends, of their former enemies. By 264 B.C.E., Rome and its allies controlled all of Italy.

**The Second Period of Expansion** Rome's growth threatened another great power, the city of Carthage in North Africa. During the second period of expansion, from 264 to 146 B.C.E., Rome and Carthage fought three major wars. Through these wars, Rome gained control of North Africa, much of Spain, and the island of Sicily. Roman armies also conquered Macedonia and Greece.

Rome gained power over new lands through three savage wars with Carthage across the Mediterranean Sea.



Roman general Julius Caesar helped expand the Roman Empire by conquering Gaul and invading Britain.

**The Third Period of Expansion** During the third period of expansion, from 145 to 44 B.C.E., Rome came to rule the entire Mediterranean world. In the east, Rome took control of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. In the west, a general named Julius Caesar conquered much of Gaul (modern-day France).

Proud Romans now called the Mediterranean "our sea." But the republic was in trouble. **Civil wars** divided the city. Roman generals were becoming dictators. They set their armies against the power of the Senate. Caesar himself ruled as a dictator before he was murdered in 44 B.C.E.

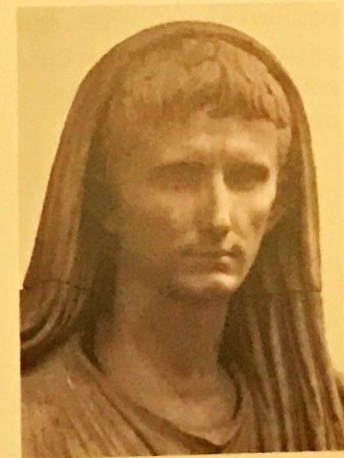
The men who killed Caesar thought they were saving the power of the Senate. However, several more years of civil war followed. Then Caesar's grandnephew, Octavian, seized power. The Senate named him Augustus, or "honored one." Rome was now an empire governed by one supreme ruler.

**The Fourth Period of Expansion** The fourth period of expansion began with the start of the empire. It lasted until 14 C.E. The first emperor, Augustus, added a great deal of new territory by pushing the borders of the empire all the way to natural boundaries, like rivers, to make it easier to defend. Later emperors added more territory. At its height, the Roman Empire stretched from the island of Britain in the west to the Black Sea in the east.

Each period of expansion involved cost and sacrifice. The next four sections give more details about each period of expansion. As you read, ask yourself what Romans of the time might have thought about these events.

**civil war** a war between regions of the same country

Julius Caesar's grandnephew, Octavian, became Caesar Augustus, the supreme ruler of the Roman Empire.





One of the heroes of the Roman republic was Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus. In 458 B.C.E., the Roman Senate made Cincinnatus dictator, or supreme ruler, so that he could rescue the city from an attack by a neighboring tribe. After defeating the enemy, Cincinnatus willingly gave up his power and returned to his farm.

### 34.3 Rome's Conquest of the Italian Peninsula, 509 to 264 B.C.E.

Rome's first period of expansion included more than 200 years of almost constant warfare. During this time, Rome gradually took control of the entire Italian peninsula.

After the last Etruscan king was overthrown in 509 B.C.E., the Romans began to expand their territory and influence. In 493 B.C.E., Roman leaders signed a treaty, or agreement, with their Latin neighbors to the south. The treaty said, "There shall be peace between the Romans and all the communities of Latins as long as heaven and earth endure." The new allies agreed to band together against their common enemies. During the next 100 years, the Romans fought a number of wars against the Etruscans as well as against tribes living in hills in the area around Rome.

Then, in 390 B.C.E., Rome nearly came to an end. A band of Gauls, a warlike people from the north, crushed a Roman army and surged into the city. Most of Rome's people fled into the countryside. The Gauls looted the city and burned most of it down.

Territory Controlled by Rome, About 264 B.C.E.



With the city in ruins, the Romans considered fleeing to some other place. Instead, they bravely decided to start over. They rebuilt their city and surrounded it with walls. They also built up their army. Before long, Roman soldiers were on the march again.

During the 300s B.C.E., Rome conquered the Etruscans and many neighboring tribes. To the south, they battled a people called the Samnites, as well as several Greek cities. By 275 B.C.E., Rome's conquest of the Italian peninsula was complete. Rome now controlled the Italian peninsula. But Rome's expansion came at great cost. Romans had been fighting wars for two centuries. And the Gauls had once destroyed their city.

As Rome's territory grew, the city had to keep a large, permanent army to defend it and the conquered lands. As a result, more and more Romans were forced to serve in the army. Most of the soldiers were plebeians. This was one reason for the struggle between the plebeians and the patricians.

Roman citizens were not the only ones who paid a cost for Rome's expansion. Rome allowed the people of some defeated cities to become Roman citizens. But other cities were not treated as well. Many received more limited privileges, such as the ability to trade with Rome. And Roman allies had to pay Roman taxes and supply soldiers for Roman armies.

By 264 B.C.E., Rome had more citizens and well-trained soldiers than any other power in the Mediterranean world. But very soon, the Romans would face their greatest challenge yet.