

The Classical Period: Directions,
Diversities, and Declines by
500 CE

Chapter 5

EQs: What forces caused civilizations to decline?
What new civilizations/peoples were beginning to
emerge?

Expansion and Integration

- These are the common themes for the great classical civilizations, areas upon which they filtered between 200-500 CE.
- What were the main principles concerning Expansion and Integration in Classical Civilizations?
 - UNITY
 - China emphasized greater central authority
 - India and Mediterranean society promoted diversity
 - India used religion to unify people
 - Mediterranean ideas spread but to less people
 - Integration
 - Territorial issues
 - China used resettlement and language
 - India used the caste system
 - Rome used autonomy (freedom, w/taxation) and economic networks
 - Social classes
 - Inequality between men and women
 - Slavery in Mediterranean
 - Slaves rebel
 - Caste system in India
 - Lower classes rebelled

Other Emerging Civilizations...

- Africa (Chapter 8)
 - Kush
 - Flourished on Upper Nile, influenced by Greece and Egypt (modern day Sudan)
 - Mastered iron working (foundries of Meroe)
 - Eventually fell to...
 - Axum
 - Emerged on Red Sea coast
 - Conquered by Ethiopia
 - Both had active contact with Mediterranean society (Greece)
 - Christianity flourished in isolation
 - Sahel Kingdoms
 - Sub-Saharan African kingdoms that traded across the desert with Roman outposts
 - Ghana

Other Emerging Civilizations...

- Japan
 - Took shape around 200CE after migrations from the East Asian mainland ceased
 - Formulated mainly by migrations from Korea, selectively borrowing ideas from Korea and China
 - Elaborate sea based societies with mastered iron working skills
 - Chinese pictographic writing becomes Kanji in Japan (via Korea)
 - Shinto religion – based on worship of rulers, nature and RICE
- Europe
 - Considerably nomadic with few organized kingdoms
 - These nomads represent the barbaric forces that tear down the Roman Empire
 - Europe would continue to lag behind in terms of civilized society for many years to come

Other Emerging Civilizations...

- The Americas
 - Meso-American culture was considered more advanced during this era than Europe and Africa, despite being isolated from the advances of the Old World
 - Agriculture was based on corn and root crops, limited to domestication of dogs, guinea pigs, llamas, alpacas, turkeys (NO horses or cows)
 - Olmecs – gemology, calendar/astronomy, elaborate cities, BIG stone heads! But disappeared by 400 CE (absorbed/transformed into other Mexican early civilizations like Toltec and Aztecs)
 - Inca – isolated, mountain civilization with vast cities, known early on as Chavin, Nazca, Norte Chico

Other Emerging Civilizations...

- South Pacific
 - Polynesian peoples from Fiji and Samoa
 - Explored the South Pacific on canoes and settled every island (migration), as far as Hawaii by 400 CE
 - Isolated, island societies w/tropical plant agriculture, pigs
 - Tribal kingship w/caste system

Decline in India and China

- What factors led to the decline of Classical Civilization in India and China?
 - Nomadic invasions
 - HUNS invaded both China and India, the Han and Guptas saw their territory picked apart from NW to south
 - Internal bureaucratic corruption or internal shrinking
 - Han rulers get greedy, Confucian bureaucrats become lazy, they taxed the peasants even more, allowing landowners/warlords to regain dominance
 - Indian princes reduce to protecting their own states rather than building a large empire once more
 - Religious fervor (to be discussed)
 - Daoism – Yellow Turbans and their divine magic!
 - Buddhism became one of the few outside influences to impact China, though it was altered by Chinese influences
 - Islam brought greater promises to the poor in India

Decline in Rome

- What factors led to decline in the Roman Empire?
 - IT GOT TOO BIG
 - Population decline of native Romans, diseases
 - Brutal rulers in autonomous areas, weak emperors in Rome
 - Tax collection becomes difficult
 - Defense of the empire became too expensive
 - Class divisions – hedonistic wealthy and suffering poor... basically, a decline in morality but the ruling class
 - Religion (to be discussed) – those darn Christians
- NOMADIC INVASIONS ENDED the Roman empire, they DID NOT cause the long decline

Save the Rome???

- What attempts were made, and by whom, to save the Roman Empire?
 - Diocletian 284 CE – 305 CE
 - Tightened administration, improved tax collection, exerted himself as a god (like Caesar) but it didn't work (like Caesar)
 - Constantine
 - Set-up second capital of Constantinople, used Christianity as his state religion, which he thought would bring strength to his people

The Division of Rome

- Division into Three Zones (Map 5.3)
 - 1. Eastern Roman Empire – Byzantine
 - 2. North Africa – Ptlomeic/Coptic Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania, Vandal Kingdoms
 - 3. The West – converted in Germanic kingdoms

Resulting Empires from the Fall of Rome

- Byzantium (Chapter 9)
 - The Second Rome, founded originally by Constantine, became the refuge for those aristocrats fleeing barbarians elsewhere, based itself largely on Greek traditions
- European Kingdoms (Chapter 10)
 - Kingdom of the Franks, Kingdom of the Saxons, Kingdom of the Burgundians, etc.
- Parthian
 - Tribute empire that existed in Mesopotamia, had little culture of its own, basically ruled in the Persian style
- Sassanid
 - Persians who overthrew the Parthians
 - Was a Persian revival and served as a bridge between East and West
- North African kingdoms
 - Many North African kingdoms emerged, some the broke away even from Byzantium... a coptic Christian kingdom emerged in Egypt under St. Augustine
 - Most were short lived, as a new doctrine, ISLAM would soon sweep the region

The World Around 500 CE

- Developments in many parts of the world by 500CE produced THREE major themes in world history
- 1. Response to collapse
 - Revive, rework, and repel invasion
- 2. Creation of/Reaction to new religions
 - Integrate new religions, or, use them as a catapult for the future (Europe and Christianity)
- 3. Increased agricultural skill and contacts with early civilizations (Japan, Africa, nomadic Europe) spurred future changes
