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| Chapter 4  |   |
| <p data-bbox="151 268 365 300">Lines 308 – 316</p> <p data-bbox="151 342 716 405">1000 BCE-300 CE: An Age of Empires and Interchange</p> <p data-bbox="151 415 800 846">During these 1,300 years, many patterns of change established in the previous era continued, but at a faster pace. The number of cities multiplied, and states appeared in new forms that were bigger, more complex, and more efficient at coercing people and extracting taxes from them. Among the largest states of that era were the Assyrian and Babylonian empires centered in Mesopotamia, the Achaemenid and Parthian empires in Persia, the Kushan empire in Central Asia, the Maurya empire in India, and the kingdom of Kush in the upper Nile River valley</p> | <p data-bbox="816 342 1377 405">1000 BCE-300 CE: An Age of Empires and Interchange</p> <p data-bbox="816 415 1463 846">During these 1,300 years, many patterns of change established in the previous era continued, but at a faster pace. The number of cities multiplied, and states appeared in new forms that were bigger, more complex, and more efficient at coercing people and extracting taxes from them. Among the largest states of that era were the Assyrian and Babylonian empires centered in Mesopotamia, the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sassanian empires in Persia, the Kushan empire in Central Asia, the Maurya empire in India, and the kingdom of Kush in the upper Nile River valley</p>   |
| <p data-bbox="151 867 365 898">Lines 630 – 632</p> <p data-bbox="151 940 800 1077">Eventually, the Hellenistic kingdoms west of Persia succumbed to the greater military power of Rome, which in turn absorbed many aspects of Greek culture.</p>  | <p data-bbox="816 867 1024 898">Lines 630 – 632</p> <p data-bbox="816 940 1463 1518">Eventually, the Hellenistic kingdoms west of Persia succumbed to the greater military power of Rome, which in turn absorbed many aspects of Greek culture. Persia itself was conquered by the Parthians, an Iranian people, who served as the principal political power in western Asia for a little under five hundred years. Serving as the principal rivals for Roman hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean, the Parthians nonetheless maintained some of the Hellenism of their Seleucid predecessors. (Parthian rulers often designate themselves as <i>philhellenes</i>, e.g. on their coinage.) The situation with respect to Rome and its eastern neighbor changed drastically in 224 CE with the accession of the Sassanians, who actively promoted Persian nationalism and Zoroastrianism.</p> |
| <p data-bbox="151 1539 365 1570">Lines 653 – 655</p> <p data-bbox="151 1612 764 1749">Archaeologists have also turned up evidence of active commercial exchange between the Indus River region and Mesopotamia by way of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf.</p>   | <p data-bbox="816 1539 1024 1570">Lines 653 – 655</p> <p data-bbox="816 1612 1463 1938">Archaeologists have also turned up evidence of active commercial exchange between the Indus River region and Mesopotamia by way of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf. This was carried out by way of the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf, but also overland via the Iranian Plateau, large parts of which were ruled by the Elamite civilization. The Elamites have traditionally been associated with Susiana, or the area immediately</p>   |

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|  | <p>adjoining southeastern Mesopotamia, but now are recognized as having controlled much of the Iranian plateau during various periods in their civilization, starting at roughly the middle of the third millennium BCE. They were exporters of wood, copper, lead, silver, tin, semiprecious stone such as alabaster, diorite, and obsidian to the resource poor region of southern Mesopotamia. As middlemen stood to profit from the trade between the Harappan civilization and Mesopotamia.</p>  |
| <p>Lines 665 – 667</p> <p>In this period, a group known historically as Indo-Aryans (also Aryans) came to control much of India. Most scholars argue on the basis of linguistic and archaeological evidence that people speaking languages in the large Indo-European family entered India from Central Eurasia in the second millennium BCE; others have argued against this view. The languages of the Aryans were ancestral to such modern South Asian tongues as Hindi. These newcomers were most likely animal herders at first. They may have arrived in India in scattered bands, later intermarrying with the older populations.</p> | <p>In this period, a group known historically as Indo-Aryans (also Indo-Iranians or Aryans) came to control much of India. Most scholars argue on the basis of linguistic and archaeological evidence that people speaking languages in the large Indo-European family entered India from Central Eurasia in the second millennium BCE; others have argued against this view. The languages of the Aryans were ancestral to such modern South Asian tongues as Hindi. These newcomers were most likely animal herders at first. They may have arrived in India in scattered bands, later intermarrying with the older populations. Another branch of these Indo-Aryans was to settle to the north and east of India (in what is today Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran, giving rise subsequently to the Iranian family of languages. The remarkably close kinship between these two groups of languages can be seen by comparing the Rig Vedas with the Avesta, the holy book of the Zoroastrians.</p> |
| <p>Lines 787 – 789</p> <p>Han emperors extended the reach of the empire far to the north and west, facilitating caravan business on the “silk roads” that extended westward across Central Asia.</p>   | <p>Lines 787 – 789</p> <p>Han emperors extended the reach of the empire far to the north and west. Direct contact with the Parthian empire of Persia occurred at the end of the second century BCE, when the Han emperor Wu-ti (141-87 BCE) exchanged ambassadors with the Parthian ruler Mithradates II (124/3 – 87 BCE), thus facilitating caravan business on the “silk roads” that extended westward across Central Asia, and which was a source of wealth for the Parthians, who acted as middlemen.</p>   |
| <p>Lines 831 – 839</p>   | <p>Lines 831 – 839</p>  |

Expansion around the Mediterranean rim began in the third century BCE, when Rome defeated the maritime state of Carthage in the Punic Wars. By devastating Carthage, Rome gained thousands of square miles of wheat land in Sicily and North Africa, as well as a windfall of Spanish silver. In the decades before and after the turn of the millennium, Rome also conquered the Hellenistic kingdoms of Greece and Egypt.

As a result of **this** expansion, which came to encompass the entire Mediterranean basin, massive wealth from trade and spoils, as well as large numbers of slaves, poured into Italy.

Lines 869 – 876

The Romans granted cities in the empire a high degree of local self-government, including in religious affairs. Religious tolerance, however, did not always extend to Jews or Christians. The Roman authorities regarded Jewish rebellions against the empire as a threat to its integrity. The refusal of the Christians to participate in Roman civic rituals led to charges of disloyalty to the empire. Students learn that both groups suffered from Roman repression. Many Jews were dispersed from their homeland in Judea, obliging them to build new communities far and wide.

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religious tolerance, perhaps hearkening to the religious tolerance of the Achaemenid rulers of Persia. The kings of Adiabene who were vassals to the Parthians converted to Judaism in the first century C. E. Babylonia, which is recognized as an important site of rabbinical scholarship during the subsequent Sassanian dynasty (224 CE- 642 CE), was likely active during this earlier period as well. Babylonian Jews appear to have been supportive of the Parthians against the Romans, most notably during the invasion of Parthia by the emperor Trajan (r. 98 – 117 CE). Christians underwent a series of increasingly systematic persecutions. In the fourth century CE, however, Christianity gained acceptance under the rule of Constantine and later status as Rome's state religion.

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The achievements of Constantine and other rulers of the third to seventh centuries can only be fully appreciated in the context of one of the key features of Roman politics in the "late antique era": the mortal enmity between Rome and its greatest rival, the Sasanian dynasty of Persia. This superpower rivalry was played against a global stage, however – as was the case with the Parthian era – hegemony over Armenia and Mesopotamia, and control of luxury goods traveling along the "silk routes" were important driving factors. Rome suffered a string of military defeats at the hands of the founder of the Sasanian empire, Ardashir I (209 – c. 240 CE) and his son Shapur I (c. 240 – c. 270 CE). The Roman military was thus compelled to undertake an overhaul of its structure and procedures. The senatorial aristocracy was excluded from positions of military leadership. In addition frontier detachments of the Roman army were reinforced by the institution of a heavy cavalry, known as the *comitatus* (or "companions," i.e. of the emperor). These changes were accompanied by a doubling

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|  | <p>in size of the Roman army, increased taxation and an enlarged bureaucracy. With these crucial changes the Romans were able to respond more successfully to military threats by the Persians through the conflict that existed through the ensuing four centuries. The ongoing conflict may have depleted the treasuries of the two superpowers to such an extent that they were only able to offer a limited resistance to the armies of Islam.</p> <p>The student may wish to explore the numerous parallels that existed between the two empires: with regard to development and urbanization (e.g. state sponsored irrigation projects), the state-sponsored religions in each realm (Zoroastrianism and Christianity), and the manner in which these were used to build a sense of national identity (with often deleterious results for religious minorities), the manner in which each state had to contend with nomadic tribes (particularly the Huns and the Hephthalites), fighting and peacekeeping by proxy (the Himyarites and Aksum in south Arabia and the Ghassanids and Lakhmids in Syria/Mesopotamia), and the manner in which each empire responded militarily to the arrival of the armies of Islam.</p> |
| <p>Lines 880</p> <p>Roman culture absorbed much of the Greek and Hellenistic traditions.</p> | <p>Lines 880</p> <p>Roman culture absorbed much of the Greek and Hellenistic traditions. At the same time it should be noted that the bitter conflict between Rome and Parthia and subsequently between Rome and Sassanian Persia had the effect of shifting the focus of Roman culture to the eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia and the ancient and rich cultural traditions of these regions. This cultural imprint can be witnessed in the adoption of various eastern cultic practices (such as Mithraism) as religious systems by the Romans, culminating in the adoption of Christianity (originating as this religion did at the margins of the Roman Empire) as the state religion.</p>  |