

Episode 2: Invasion & Empire

Establishing Peter as the first pope

In a small town called Bethsaida on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee, there was a fisherman named Simon. We don't know much of anything about this man's past or why he would one day become famous. One day, another man, who would go on to be known throughout the entire world, approached Simon and asked him to follow him. According to the story, Simon dropped his nets, left his family, and joined the man. Simon, who would take on the name "Peter" which has its root in the word for "rock" became a close confidante of his leader, Jesus.

After a few years, Jesus was crucified. Peter spent the next few decades traveling, writing, and sharing his story of Jesus to all who would listen. Along with his friend and missionary partner, Paul, this new sect of Judaism spread throughout the Roman world. We know now this to be called Christianity, but in the first century of the Common Era, it was often referred to as "The Way".

Three major church centers would emerge: Alexandria (founded by Mark the Evangelist), Antioch, and Rome. The latter two were both founded by Peter but Rome would emerge as the primary center of the new Christian church. We don't know for a fact that Peter ever went to Rome, but tradition holds that he was crucified under the reign of Emperor Nero around the year 66. Seen as the "bishop of Rome" a long line of bishops would follow Peter; it was not until the 11th Century that this position would be recognized and cemented as the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church.

Dates: 60 BCE-180

Why are we talking about this today: **(open and intro... about 5-6 minutes)**

- As we noted last time, the influence of Rome throughout European history is fundamental and this extends to Britain; today, we talk about how Britain invaded, resisted, and ultimately capitulated to Roman rule
- Everyone has heard of Julius Caesar and nearly every ruler in Europe since him has had some degree of Caesar envy

1. The Gallic Wars and Caesar's first invasions of Britain **(starting around minute 5 or 6; 6-8 Minutes)**

- Brief early history of Casear
 - Nephew of Marius
 - Went into hiding to avoid Sulla; captured by pirates
 - Used debt to become popular -
<https://www.historyhit.com/ways-julius-caesar-used-money-to-amass-power/> -
 - Kenneth Pringle writes at PublicSeminar.org:
 - Running for office was expensive in Rome, as it is in America today, and though Caesar came from an ancient patrician family, the Julii had run into hard times. He borrowed to fund his election campaigns, to stage Olympic-type games, and to dole out free grain and other typical expenses of candidates and officeholders.
 - Caesar found a source of almost endless wealth in Marcus Licinius Crassus, whose fortune and greed were legendary. Rome lacked anything like a modern fire department, so Crassus would dispatch his own private fire brigade to the site of a conflagration – but refuse to extinguish it until the poor owner agreed to sell him the property. Only after the transaction was agreed to would Crassus send in the firefighters.
 - In 61 BCE, Crassus came to Caesar’s rescue with a loan of 830 talents, “an immense sum, amounting to about an eighth of Crassus’ fortune – and he was the richest man in Rome,” writes Caesar biographer Christian Meier. It might be worth around half a billion dollars today.
 - The problem with Crassus, from Caesar’s viewpoint, was that he expected to be repaid. And to do that, Caesar had a bigger prize in mind – the consulship. It was Rome’s highest office, something like president or prime minister, except two men held the job jointly, for a one-year term. If Crassus supported him, Caesar promised to cut taxes. (Sound familiar?)
 - To guarantee victory in the 59 BCE election, Caesar brought a third member into his cabal, Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, the greatest military hero of the day. Pompey the Great, as he has come down to us, would bring votes, senatorial support and even more wealth. But Pompey needed his recent military victories confirmed and land provided for his returning troops. These things Caesar promised, and thus was completed the First Triumvirate, eventually sealed by Pompey’s marriage to

Caesar's daughter, Julia. Caesar was duly elected, and he proceeded to ram through his entire legislative agenda "with an unexpected ruthlessness," Meier writes.

- Political animal and ambitious
 - He was elected military tribune, a first step in a political career. He was elected quaestor for 69 BC; went to serve his quaestorship in Hispania
 - In 65 BC, he was elected curule aedile, and staged lavish games that won him further attention and popular support.[37]
 - In 63 BC, he ran for election to the post of pontifex maximus, chief priest of the Roman state religion
 - In 60 BC, Caesar sought election as consul for 59 BC, along with two other candidates. The election was sordid—even Cato, with his reputation for incorruptibility, is said to have resorted to bribery in favour of one of Caesar's opponents. Caesar won
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Triumvirate - We left here last time; what transpired - how did Caesar accumulate his debt? Buying favors, support, etc.
- Caesar wanted more power and glory and found an excuse to invade Gaul
 - The "triumph";
 - aristocracy tried to limit his future power by allotting the woods and pastures of Italy, rather than the governorship of a province
 - With the help of political allies, Caesar secured passage of the lex Vatinia, granting him governorship over Cisalpine Gaul (northern Italy) and Illyricum (southeastern Europe)--soon "Transalpine Gaul" as well
- In the middle of his Gallic Wars, he makes two attempts at invading Britain (55 and 54 BCE)
- Review of the players:
 - Commius
 - Cassivellaunus as the key British leader ultimately losing and yielding to Mandubracius as a client king
 - He appointed Commius as king of the tribe. Before Caesar's first expedition to Britain in 55 BC, Commius was sent as Caesar's envoy to persuade the Britons not to resist him, as Caesar believed he would have influence on the island.[2] However he was arrested as soon as he arrived. When the Britons failed to prevent Caesar from landing, Commius was

handed over as part of the negotiations.[3] Commius was able to provide a small detachment of cavalry from his tribe to help Caesar defeat further British attacks.[4] During Caesar's second expedition to Britain Commius negotiated the surrender of the British leader Cassivellaunus.[5] He remained Caesar's loyal client through the Gaulish revolts of 54 BC, and in return Caesar allowed the Atrebates to remain independent and exempt from tax, and in addition appointed Commius to rule the Morini.[6]

- Back to the main Gallic War
 - Vercingetorix rallies but loses to Julius Caesar
- 2. Caesar's dictatorship, death, and the establishment of the Empire (**TRANSITION HERE AROUND MINUTE 12-13... Just 3-4 minutes here tops**)
 - Caesar's enemies in the Senate stripped him of his command, but he "crossed the Rubicon" anyways
 - Civil war with Pompey; victorious and declared Dictator for Life
 - Opposition led by Cicero and Cato the Younger
 - Weak opposition
 - Influence on law
 - Assassinated; Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus for the Second Triumvirate
 - Antony has Cicero executed
 - Octavian emerges after more civil war and named "princeps" and "Augustus" establishing the empire de facto
 - Augustus reign builds Empire - reforms, propaganda
- 3. The conquest of Britain and formal establishment of Roman rule, structure of rule under the empire (**TRANSITION HERE AROUND MINUTE 16-18...5-7 minutes; largely on the Boudica War**)
 - Why the conquests? Metal and slaves.
 - Quick review of emperors from Octavian/Augustus to Claudius
 - Octavian (we know)
 - Tiberius
 - Caligula
 - Claudius
 - After a settling period, Claudius invades Britain and establishes a long-term foothold on the island
 - Boudica's War
 - Discussion regarding aspects of Roman political rule, the economy, and defense
 - Establishment of cities, felt impact on the population, daily life.
 - Average life for soldier

4. Hadrian's Wall and end of expansion & the end of Pax Romana (**TRANSITION HERE AROUND MINUTE 22-23...4-6 Minutes**)
- "The Five Good Emperors"
 - From Claudius & Nero through the end of the first century it's a little rocky
 - Court officials conspire to have Domitian assassinated, and Nero, his successor, turns out to be the first of the "Five Good Emperors" with a peaceful transition of power to...
 - Trajan - Trajan is best known for his extensive public building program, which reshaped the city of Rome
 - Hadrian - He visited almost every province of the Empire, accompanied by an Imperial retinue of specialists and administrators. He encouraged military preparedness and discipline, and he fostered, designed, or personally subsidised various civil and religious institutions and building projects
 - Antoninus Pius - an effective administrator, leaving his successors a large surplus in the treasury, expanding free access to drinking water throughout the Empire, encouraging legal conformity, and facilitating the enfranchisement of freed slaves
 - Marcus Aurelius -
 - marked by military conflict. In the East, the Roman Empire fought successfully with a revitalized Parthian Empire and the rebel Kingdom of Armenia. Marcus defeated the Marcomanni, Quadi, and Sarmatian Iazyges in the Marcomannic Wars; however, these and other Germanic peoples began to represent a troubling reality for the Empire
 - Meditations, the writings of "the philosopher" - as contemporary biographers called Marcus, are a significant source of the modern understanding of ancient Stoic philosophy
 - Hadrian's reign and dynamics on the continent leading to a pause on the expansion of the empire
 - The Antonine Wall and the insulating effect on Britain against the north including the economic effects
 - Functioning of the empire at its height

Reading List

Podcasts

- The British History Podcast - <https://www.thebritishhistorypodcast.com/>
- Dan Carlin's Hardcore History 60 – The Celtic Holocaust - <https://www.dancarlin.com/product/hardcore-history-60-the-celtic-holocaust/>
- The History of England - <https://thehistoryofengland.co.uk/>
- The Ancients Podcast - <https://play.acast.com/s/the-ancients/> (Especially the episodes on Boudica and Cicero)
- The History of Rome - <https://thehistoryofrome.typepad.com/>

Video

- Dan Jones - Walking Britain's Roman Roads - https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqtCQJ4CrFxc53D37f_hyIGx7rNsdCpgs
- ROME - the Complete Series on HBO

Books

Duncan, Mike. 2018. **The Storm before the Storm : The Beginning of the End of the Roman Republic**. New York: Publicaffairs. <https://amzn.to/3oC3Gc0>

Holland, Tom. 2013. **Rubicon : The Triumph and Tragedy of the Roman Republic**. London: Abacus. <https://amzn.to/3hGoQV6>

Thorsten Opper, and British Museum (Londen. 2008. **Hadrian : Empire and Conflict**. London: British Museum. <https://amzn.to/3f36yf5>

Sunshine, Glenn S. 2009. **Why You Think the Way You Do : The Story of Western Worldviews from Rome to Home**. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. <https://amzn.to/3uaE6w2>

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Matz, David. 2002. **Daily Life of the Ancient Romans**. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. - <https://amzn.to/33luDRI>

Adamson, Peter. 2018. **Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds**. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. - <https://amzn.to/3bsQLnE>

Frederick Charles Copleston. 2003. **A History of Philosophy. 1, Greece and Rome**. London: Continuum. - <https://amzn.to/3uKl2Wy>

S R F Price, and Peter Thonemann. 2011. **The Birth of Classical Europe : A History from Troy to Augustine**. London: Penguin Books. - <https://amzn.to/3tPlrDe>