

AD 200

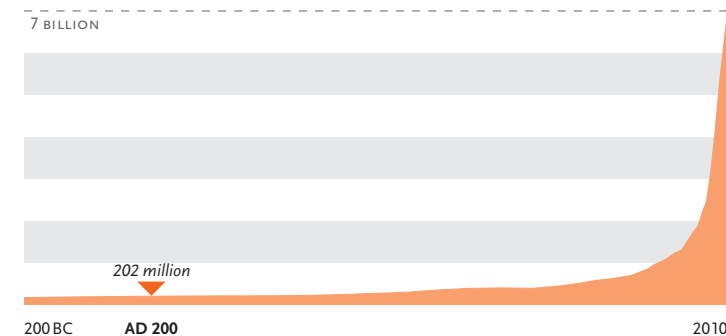


The most significant cultural development of the first two centuries AD was the birth of the Christian religion. Based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, crucified at Jerusalem c. AD 30, the religion spread first among the Jewish diaspora in the Roman empire. Under the influence of St Paul (c. AD 5–67), Christianity made the transition from Jewish sect to a universalist religion which began to win converts among gentiles, despite official hostility and occasional persecution. A parallel thread of Jewish radicalism led in AD 66 to the Zealot revolt against Roman rule: its bloody suppression saw the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the expulsion of many Jews from Palestine.

Christianity was rivalled in popularity in the Roman empire by another eastern religion, the cult of the Persian god Mithras, which won many converts in the army. In India, the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) school of Buddhism developed under the tolerant and eclectic Kushan rulers: it is now the largest branch of the Buddhist faith. It was also under the Kushans that the first representations of the Buddha were made. In China, Confucianism was the state ideology. The Daoist school of philosophy became assimilated with traditional religion. Its supposed founder Laozi was deified.

Important technological developments of the period include the spread of watermills in the Roman empire (which is not usually considered to have been interested in labour-saving technology), the discovery of the magnetic compass in China and the invention of cast steel in India. The codex (a book of sewn pages) began to replace the clumsy scroll in the Roman empire, and paper began to replace bamboo strips as the main medium for writing in China. The Polynesians, however, provide a reminder that technological progress is not guaranteed: they lost the skill of pottery manufacture in this period.

World Population (approximate)



POLITICS & ECONOMY

- 9 Germans defeat Rome at the battle of **Teutoburg Forest**.
- 14 Death of **Augustus**, the first Roman emperor.
- 10 Collapse of kingdom of **Kalinga**.
- 2 First **Chinese census** gives the population of China as 57,671,400.
- 9–23 Han dynasty temporarily overthrown by **Wang Mang**.
- 16–66 **Kujala Kadphises** founds the Kushan kingdom in Bactria.
- 43 Roman conquest of Britain begins.
- 46–59 The **Kushans** invade northern India.
- 48 The **Xiongnu** nomad confederation breaks up.
- 66–73 **Zealot revolt** against Roman rule in Palestine.
- 50–75 **Kushans** conquer the Parthian sub-kingdom of Suren.
- 50–100* Foundation of the kingdom of **Funan** in Southeast Asia.
- 1–100* **Madagascar** is settled by seafarers from Indonesia.
- 40–42 **Mauretania** annexed by the Roman empire.
- 40* Graeco-Roman merchants begin direct voyages from Egypt to **southern India**.
- 100* Roman empire reaches its greatest extent under **Trajan**.
- 115–17 Romans occupy **Mesopotamia**.
- 120–30* **Kushan empire** at its peak under Kanishka.
- 100* Foundation of **Tiwanaku** kingdom in the Andes.
- 122 **Hadrian** begins a defensive wall across northern Britain.
- 132–35 Romans defeat the **Bar Kochba revolt** against Roman rule in Palestine.
- 167–80 The **Marcomannic Wars**: Germans test Rome's Danube frontier.
- 174–203 **Satavahana** at its peak under king Yajna Sri.
- 166 Chinese sources record the arrival of **travellers from Rome**.
- 184 **Yellow Turban peasant revolt** in northern China.
- 190 **General Dung Zhuo** destroys Luoyang and installs a puppet Han emperor in Chang'an.

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

- 1–100 Development of **Mahayana (Great Vehicle) Buddhism**.
- 1–100 **Mithraism** spreads to the Roman empire from Persia.
- 30 **Jesus of Nazareth** is crucified at Jerusalem.
- 47–62 **St Paul** journeys in Asia Minor and the Mediterranean as a missionary.
- 42* **St Peter** becomes bishop of Rome, traditionally regarded as the foundation of the papacy.
- 64 First **persecutions of Christians** at Rome.
- 70 Roman troops destroy the **Temple at Jerusalem**.
- 70–100 Christian **Gospels** written.
- 34–156* Development of religious **Daoism**.
- 58* **Buddhism** introduced to China.
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

- 1–100 **Stern-mounted rudders** used on Chinese ships (previously all ships had used less effective steering oars or side rudders).
- 1–100* Pottery-making skills die out in **Polynesia**.
- 6* Ovid, **Metamorphoses**.
- 27* Architect **Vitruvius** writes *De Architectura*.
- 65* **Codices**, books of sewn pages, begin to replace the parchment scroll.
- 68 Traditional date for the construction of the pagoda of the **White Horse monastery**, Luoyang, one of the earliest in China.
- 50* **Watermills** in use in the Roman empire.
- 36 Date of the earliest known **Maya calendrical inscriptions**.
- 60* Hero of Alexandria invents a simple **steam-powered device**.
- 79 **Pliny the Younger** writes an eyewitness account of the eruption of Vesuvius, which destroys Pompeii, Italy.
- 100* Indian metallurgists invent **cast steel**.
- 105* **Writing paper** invented in China.
- 132 **Earthquake detector** built in China.
- 160* **Wheelbarrow** invented in China.
- 185* Earliest Western treatise on **alchemy** compiled at Alexandria.
- 190* **Abacus** used in China.

ARTS & ARCHITECTURE

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- 72–80 **Colosseum** built at Rome.
- 83 **Magnetic compass** is described in a Chinese book on divination.
- 100* **Tacitus** begins writing his *Histories and Annals*.
- 100–20* Suetonius, **The Twelve Caesars**.
- 100 First **Chinese dictionary** lists over 9,000 characters.
- 100–300* Tradition of **megalithic sculptures** of humans, gods and animals in San Agustin, Colombia.
- 118–25* The **Pantheon temple** in Rome is rebuilt with the largest dome in the world.
- 130* **Gandhara school** of Graeco-Buddhist sculpture flourishes under Kanishka.
- 150* The **Pyramid of the Sun** is built at Teotihuacán, Mexico.

*Approximate date

▲ *Bronze bust of the Roman emperor Trajan, who invaded Mesopotamia.*

▶ *Buddha in the Gandharan style, from the time of the Kushan dynasty, Pakistan.*

▲ *Roman surgical instruments.*

▶ *Han bronze horse from Gansu Province, China, c. AD 200.*