

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ROBERT W.  
STRAYER:**

Chapter 3 explores the powerful empires of the ancient world. Today, no one wants to be called an imperialist. Nonetheless, interest in empire shows no sign of going away. And fascination with the ancient empires of world history, such as those explored in Chapter 3, continues as strong as ever.

In this chapter, you will meet some of the creators of those empires. Alexander the Great, who conquered the Persian empire and carved out a huge Greek empire from Egypt to India-- all before he was 30 years old. And then, according to legend at least, he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Very different was Ashoka, ruler of India's Mauryan Dynasty Empire who actually regretted the bloodshed of his conquests, converted to Buddhism, and turned his attention to advocating morality, peace, and good works.

You'll meet Augustus who consolidated Roman conquests into an empire that encompassed the entire Mediterranean basin all the while pretending that he was not really an emperor. And then there was Qin Shi Huangdi, very much a Chinese emperor-- and proud of it-- who built for himself a mammoth funerary complex that is among the great discoveries of 20th century archaeology.

These empires are no doubt fascinating. They were big, and they were bloody. They also made possible communication and exchange among people of quite different cultural traditions, and they have remained in memory as a source of lessons about our own times. Many have asked-- for example-- if an overextended Roman Empire eventually collapsed, does that predict a similar future for the United States?

This kind of comparison shows clearly that although the past maybe gone, it surely is not dead.