

Religion in the Imperium

The dominant religion of the Imperium Romanum is Buddhism, at least in numerical terms. Buddhist doctrine began its spread West into Greece from the empire of Magadha in the time of the great Emperor Ashoka, Beloved of the Gods. The miracles of the Green and Gold were freely shared with the poor by Magadha Buddhist monks, winning them great popularity among the lower classes. The native priests of Grecia, Egitto, Macedonia and lesser nations failed to actively resist this intrusion; Buddhism did not demand the exclusive devotion of the faithful, and while the monks were willing to heal the sick and feed the hungry, they were not willing to provide the more lucrative services accessible from practitioners of the Black and the grimmer aspects of the White and Green. Buddhist pacifism and fatalism held little appeal for the rich and powerful, especially in a time marked by wars and conflict, but also posed little apparent threat. Things changed after the blessed Ashoka's death (through refusal of the gift of further life) in the year 609 R. Political leaders and rabble rousers increasingly used Buddhism to unite subject peoples against the soaring power of Roma and the still vital power of Grecia and Egitto. Conflicts between the state (itself intimately tied to the priesthood) and Buddhist groups grew ever more violent, until the time of the Divine Caligula. Guided by his great-grandmother, the Divine Livia Augusta, Caligula made peace with the most powerful of the Buddhist sects in the Imperium, offering them the full protections of the state in exchange for a public withdraw from political life. This accorded well with Buddhist teachings, and while Roma Buddhism has continued to be a powerful force in daily and cultural life, since that time it has rarely matched the power of the Imperial Cult in politics. The ties of Roma Buddhism to the Buddhism of Magadha and Shen Zhou remain strong, and movements in each have influenced monasteries across the continent.

The Imperial Cult and the Church of Roma continues to exercise great influence in the lives of the common people of the Imperium. The Mystery Cults continue to thrive, and the majority of Citizens venerate their most prominent ancestors. Religious practice tends to be highly transactional, with priests accepting payment in exchange for promised services from the gods. Thanks to the power of the White, Black, Green and occasionally Gold, these services are delivered just often enough to keep the faithful coming back. It is well known that richer donations or greater services are more likely to find favor from the gods. Mystery cults abound, and conquered peoples are encouraged to continue to follow their own religions, so long as the priests of those religions do not preach rebellion against Roma.

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