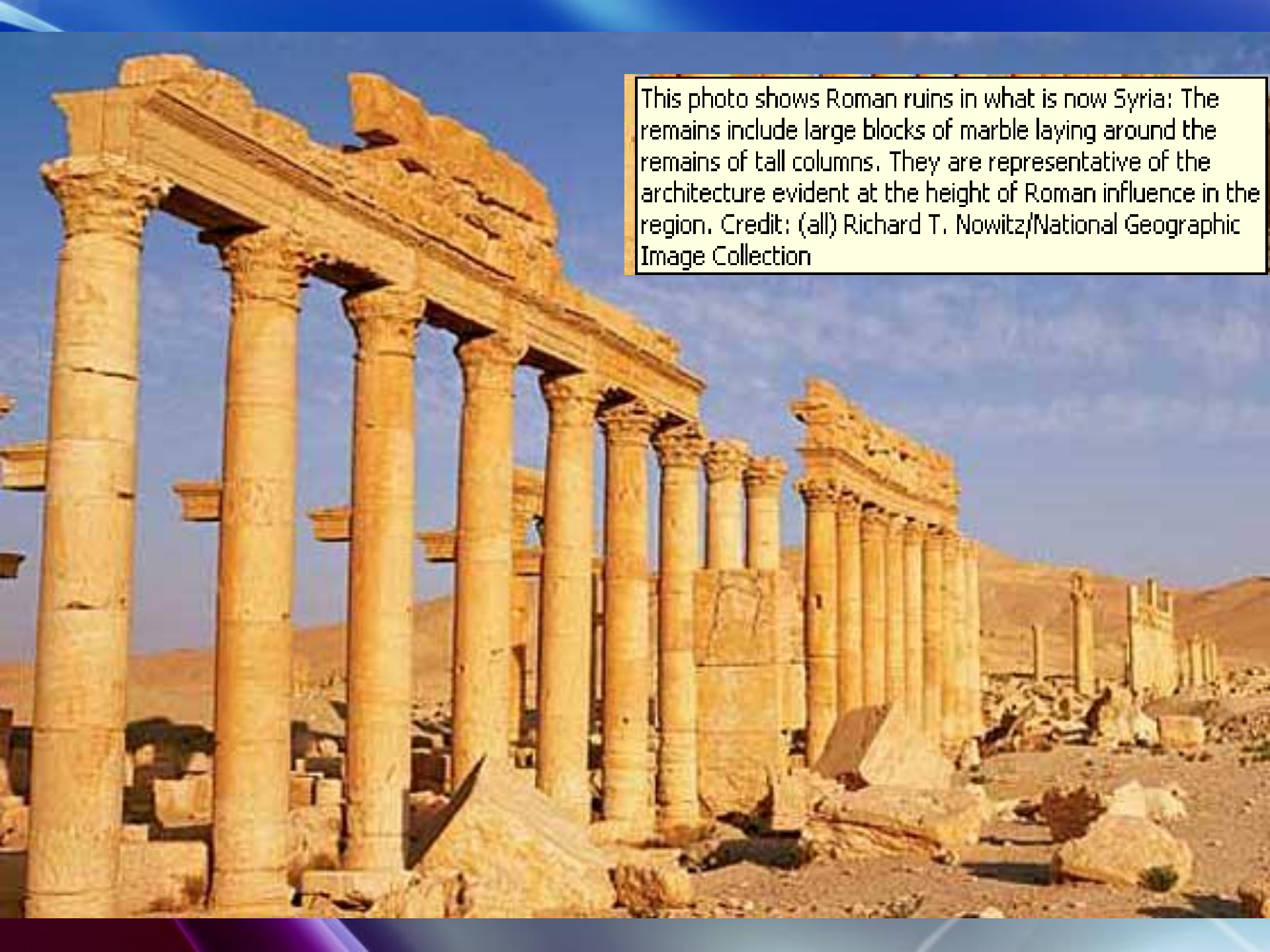


The background is an abstract composition of vibrant blue and purple hues. A prominent diagonal streak of light, transitioning from a bright cyan at the top to a deep purple at the bottom, cuts across the frame. The overall effect is dynamic and modern, with soft gradients and subtle light artifacts.

***Fall of the Western
Roman Empire***



This photo shows Roman ruins in what is now Syria: The remains include large blocks of marble laying around the remains of tall columns. They are representative of the architecture evident at the height of Roman influence in the region. Credit: (all) Richard T. Nowitz/National Geographic Image Collection

Chapter 14 Timeline

CHAPTER EVENTS

200

WORLD EVENTS

220

The Han dynasty ends in China.



293

Diocletian divides the Roman Empire.



410

The Goths sack the city of Rome.

400

c. 320

The Gupta Empire is founded in India.

476

The last western Roman emperor is overthrown.

527

Justinian and Theodora come to power in Constantinople.

500



570

Muhammad, the founder of Islam, is born in Mecca.

600

587

The first Buddhist monastery in Japan is established.



1453 The Byzantine Empire is defeated.

1450

Problems Threaten the Empire

- At its height, the Roman Empire stretched from Britain south to Egypt, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf.
- But by the end of the 100s, emperors had to give up much of that land. The empire was too big to manage well.

The Eastern and Western Empires



Map: The Eastern and Western Empires: The map shows the areas in the two sections of the Empire—both east and west. The Western part of the Empire commanded the areas of present-day Italy, France, Great Britain, North Africa and Spain. The Eastern part of the Empire was from present-day eastern Europe to the Middle East and eastward to southwest Asia. The eastern part of the Empire also included Egypt. Inset is a world map with the area of the main map highlighted.

Difficulties

- Rome had to defend itself constantly. Attacks came from Germany in the north and from Persia in the east. Problems came from within the empire, too.
- Disease killed many people.
- Taxes were high.
- Food was scarce because so many farmers went to war. To increase food production, German farmers were invited to work on Roman lands, but they were not loyal to Rome. Rebellions soon followed.

Diocletian

- The emperor **Diocletian** took power in the late 200s. His solution to Rome's problems was to split the empire into two parts. Diocletian ruled the east. He appointed a co-emperor to rule the west.
- The Emperor Constantine briefly reunited the empire. He moved the capital from Rome to a new city he built in the east.
- He named the city Constantinople, which means "the city of Constantine."



Invasions of the Roman Empire 340-500

Map: Invasions of the Roman Empire, 340-500: The map indicates the paths of various tribes of invaders who conquered portions of the Roman Empire from 340 to 500. The Jutes, Angles and Saxons invaded the northernmost parts of the empire. The Franks and Burgundians moved from eastern Europe further westward, into Gaul. The Vandals moved from eastern Europe into western Europe and down throughout Africa and around the Mediterranean Sea. The Huns came from central Asia and invaded central and southern Europe.

Barbarians Invade Rome

- Once the capital moved to the eastern empire, German barbarians started more attacks on Roman territory in the north.
- During the late 300s, an Asian group called the Huns began attacking a group called the Goths. As the Huns pushed farther into Goth territory, the Goths were forced into Roman territory.
- Eventually the Goths penetrated deep into Italy and destroyed Rome.



The Goths and Huns were just two of the groups that invaded the Roman Empire. In this illustration, a Goth warrior is shown on the right, and a Hun is shown on the left. These invaders also battled each other, as Huns attacked Goths and fought for territory and riches.

Barbarians Invade Rome

- After the destruction of Rome, more groups began invading Roman territory.
- The Angles, Saxons, and Jutes invaded Britain. The Franks invaded Gaul. The Frankish king **Clovis**, one of the most powerful German kings, built a large kingdom in Gaul.
- Meanwhile the east was menaced by a fearsome new Hun leader named **Attila**.

Barbarians Invade Rome

- In 476 another barbarian leader overthrew the Roman emperor and declared himself king. This ended the western empire.



Factors in Rome's Fall

- Barbarian invasions were not the only causes of Rome's fall.
- The empire was too big, making it difficult to rule efficiently. The government also suffered from **corruption**.
- As these problems grew, wealthy landowners left Rome. They preferred to build armies and protect their personal estates. Only the poor were left in the city.
- Rome was no longer the great center it had once been.