Characteristics of Empire

1. **Strong central government**—Empires were very large, so they needed strong governments. Usually the government consisted of a strong leader, an emperor, who had complete power. The emperor typically ruled from the capital city which was located in the heartland or “center” of the empire. He appointed governors of to rule and manage the different provinces, but they were under the emperor’s control.

2. **Bureaucracy**—Non-elected government workers who manage people, resources, and land. The bureaucracy consists of all the people who are employed to do the day-to-day running of the government. They are not politicians.

3. **Militarism**—Empires used their militaries aggressively to get what they wanted. This usually involved conquest in order to expand their territory.

4. "**Global" trade networks**—Trade networks cross world zones in this era. Trade routes connected empires and regions. The entire known world (Europe, Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and the East Indies) were connected by both land and sea routes.

5. **Unification strategy**—Empires were large and had diverse populations (many cultures, religions, within one empire). People who had been conquered were now ruled by people of a different culture, so empires needed to put strategies in place to bring people together and make them feel a part of the empire.

6. **Standardization**—Having a single calendar, currency, system of weights and measures, and set of laws for the whole empire. Running an empire does not work well if people are using different systems for these things.

7. **Infrastructure**—Public works such as roads, aqueducts, canals, irrigation systems, dams, bridges, etc. These items are constructed with the use of tax money.