

CHAPTER
6

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: MOVEMENT

The Roads of the Roman Empire

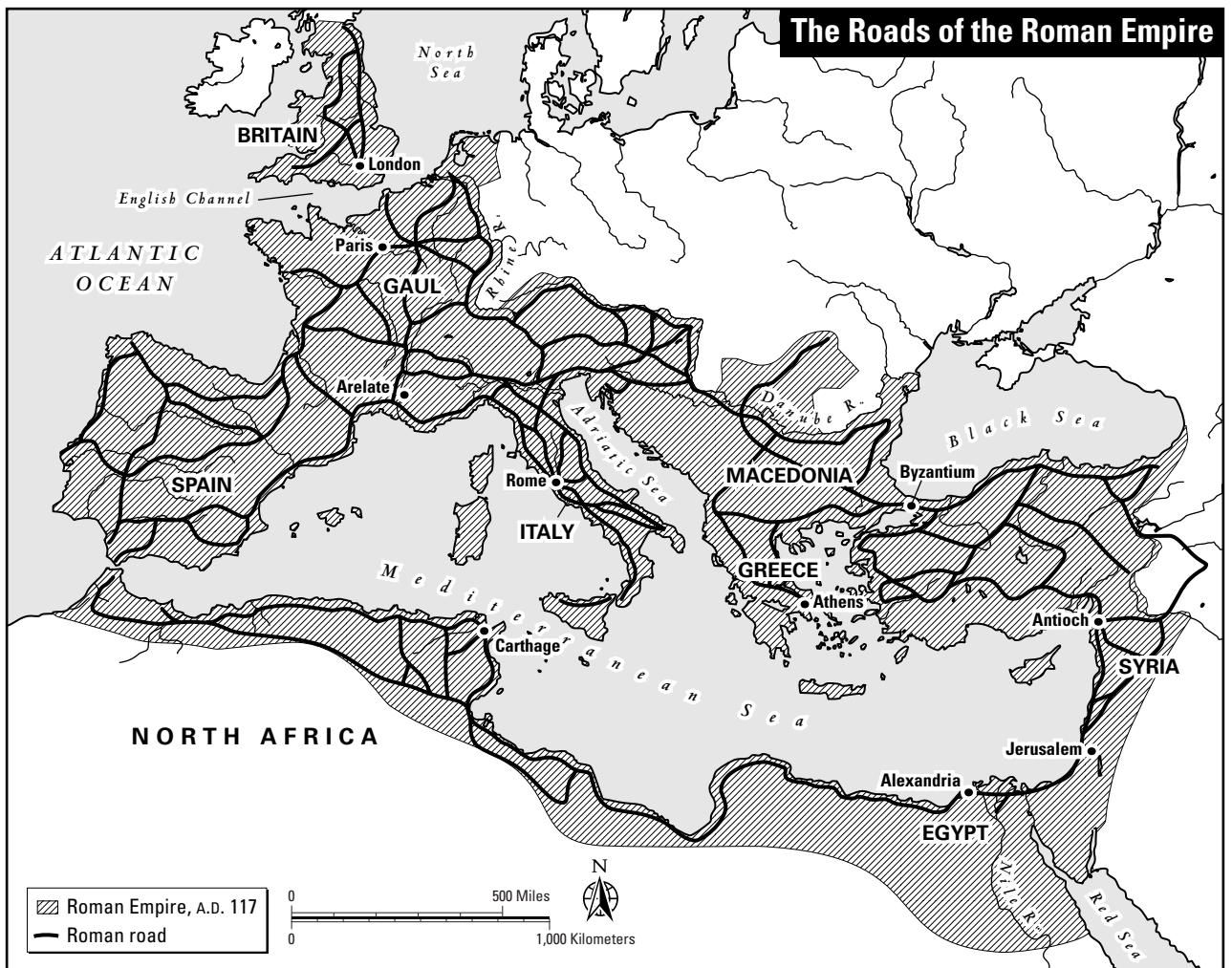
Section 2

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map. Then answer the questions that follow.

The famous Roman roads were a vast network of hard-surfaced roads connecting the city of Rome to the farthest reaches of its empire. The stone-paved highways lasted for more than a thousand years, and some sections are still in use today. Author Isaac Asimov claimed that there was no better mode of transportation in the world until the arrival of railroads close to 2,000 years later. Romans began building roads in 312 B.C. following their first major conquests. The beginning stretch, the Appian Way, trailed 132 miles southeast out of Rome. Thereafter, roadbuilding kept pace with the

empire's expansion. Eventually, Roman roads wound 53,000 miles around the Mediterranean and north-eastern Atlantic regions.

The roads, constructed by slaves and soldiers, were wide enough for large wagons to pass each other. The principal use of the highways was to move Roman armies from one part of the empire to another. However, citizens were free to use the roads. The Roman statesman Cicero once spoke of moving 56 miles in a cart in just ten hours. However, travelers had to be alert for bandits, as people might simply "disappear" while riding on Roman roads.



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Interpreting Text and Visuals

1. How is the area of the Roman Empire shown? _____

What symbol represents roads on the map? _____

2. What is the approximate straight-line distance in miles between Paris and Rome? _____

What is the approximate distance between the two cities along the Roman roads, choosing the route that passes by Arelate? _____

3. Describe the location of the four significant breaks for bodies of water that the map shows in the Roman road system. _____

4. How many miles of roads made up the Roman roads? _____

5. Which two rivers provided a natural path for the Roman roads to follow? _____

6. What was one drawback to the Roman roads? _____

7. Suppose you are a Roman general who must move a legion of soldiers from Rome to Carthage.

Describe your two options. _____

8. “All roads lead to Rome” is a famous saying that originally described the Roman highway system.

Why would the Romans have developed their road network with Rome as its focus? _____
