

The Romans



Rome is Founded

- Legend says Rome was founded in 753 BC by Romulus and Remus, twins sons of the god Mars and a Latin princess. The twins were abandoned on the Tiber River as infants and raised by a she-wolf. They later decided to build a city near the spot
- Rome was actually built on the hills along the Tiber River because of its strategic location and fertile soil



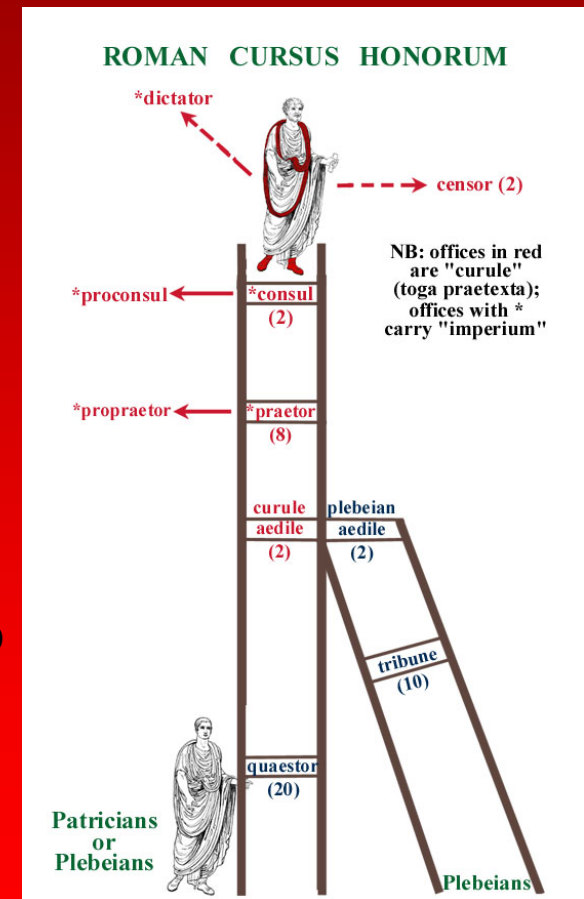
Early Rome

- Last King of Rome was Tarquin the Proud
- Romans rejected the harsh tyrant rulings of kings and instead chose to establish a republic, a form of government in which power rests with citizens who have the right to vote for their leaders
- Roman citizens with voting rights were only granted to free-born male citizens



Roman Government under the Republic

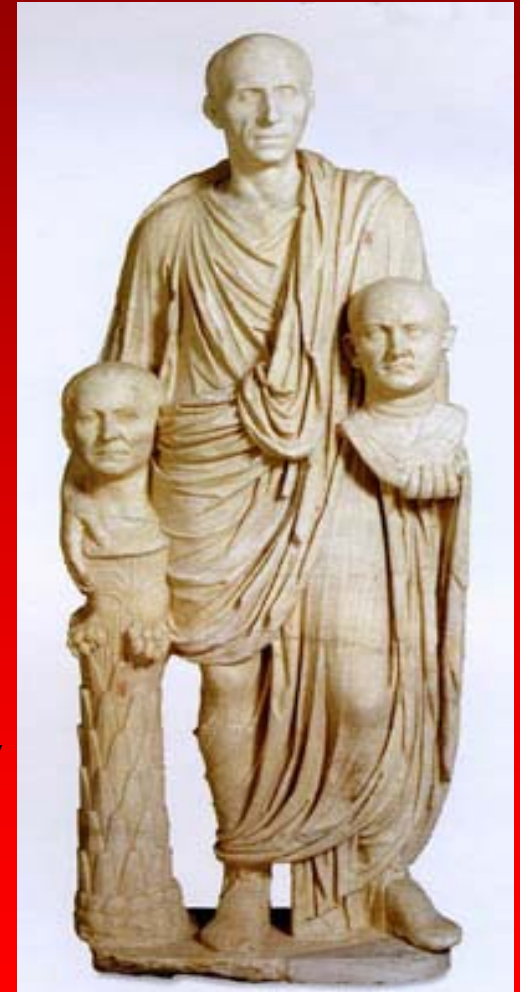
- The Consuls, two of them, commanded the army and civilian government
- Senate, aristocratic branch of Rome's government
- Had legislative and administrative function of the government
- 300 hundred members, chosen from the upper class of Romans society. Later plebeians were allowed in the Senate
- Controlled both foreign and domestic affairs
- Tribal assembly organized by plebeians
- Elected the tribunes and made laws for common people
- Dictator, only in times of crisis, the republic could appoint a dictator or leader who had absolute power to make laws and command the army
- A dictator's power only lasted six months
- Dictators were chosen by the consuls and elected by the senate



Roman Society

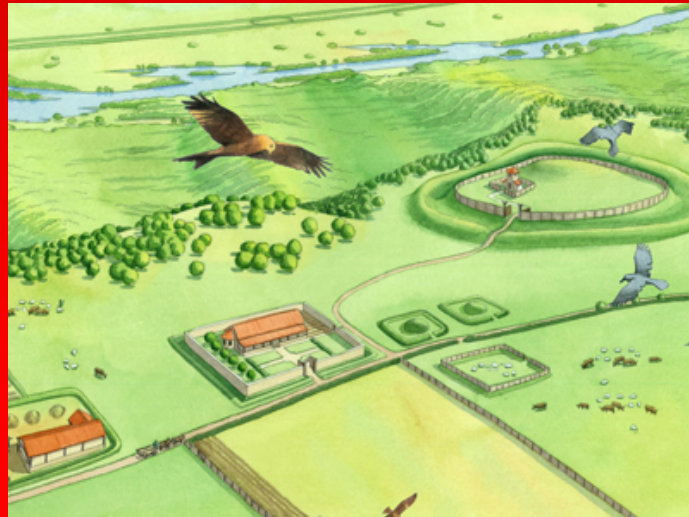
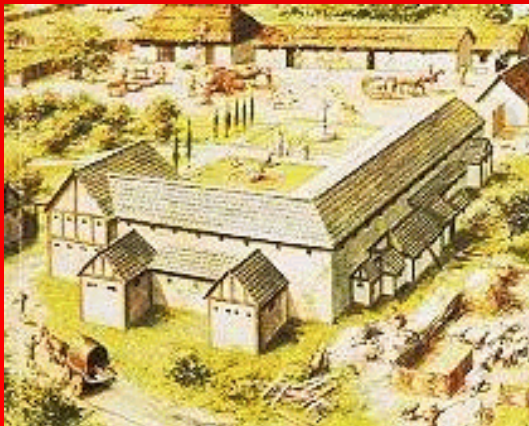
Patricians

- Patricians
- Wealthy landowners who held most of the power
- Lived very extravagant lives in beautiful villas with multiple rooms, well stocked kitchens and running water
- Enjoyed elaborate meals of many courses with the best ingredients



Plebeians

- Common farmers, artisans, and merchants
- Lived as common farmers on the land or as artisans in shops or later wealthy merchants who lived comfortable lives
- Most lived on simple peasant food



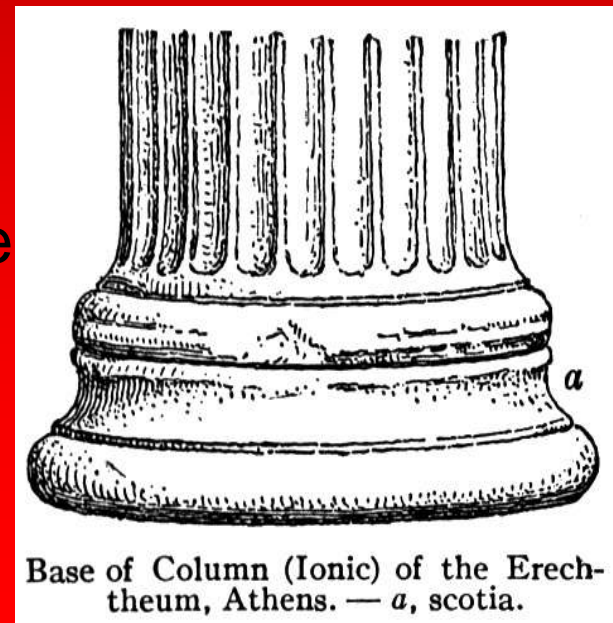
Twelve Tables

- A written codified set of laws (written law code) that was demanded by the plebeians
- Around 451 BC they began to write down Roman laws
- Carved into Twelve Tablets and hung in the Forum
- Became the basis for Roman law
- Established the idea that free citizens had a right to protection of the law



Roman Engineering – the Master Builders

- Mastered the use of the arch, the dome, and the use of concrete, all of these combined to build spectacular structures such as the Roman Coliseum
- Roman arches supported bridges and aqueducts, designed to bring water to the cities
- Roman architecture was practical and is still copied today, many buildings in the US capitol include Roman features
- Rome's empire was more vast than any previous civilization and connected the empire with a network of superbly build roads and bridges that connected all parts of the empire



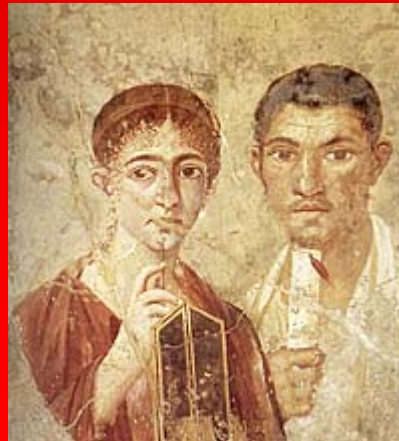
Roman Religion

- Borrowed gods and religious beliefs from those they conquered
- Religion drew heavily from the Greek traditions
- Polytheistic religion of many gods
- Took signs from nature



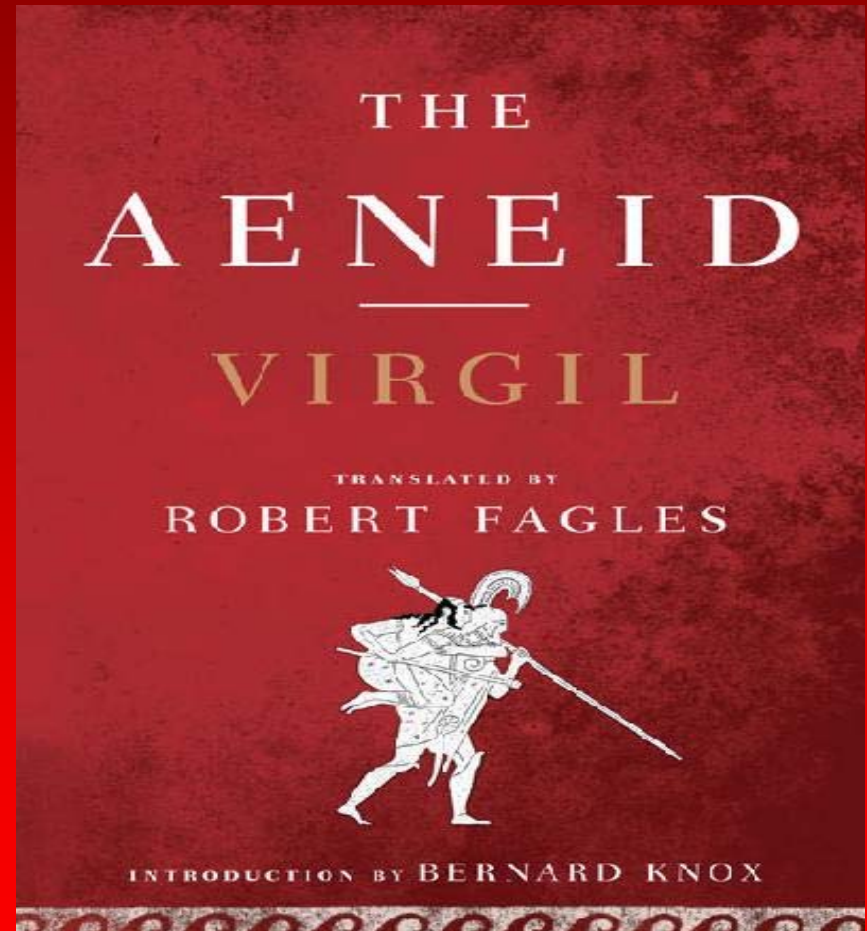
Roman Arts and Entertainment

- Arts
- Roman artists learned the art of sculpture from the Greeks
- Roman sculpture was practical and realistic portraits for the public display and education
- Roman artists were skilled in creating mosaics, pictures or designs made by setting small pieces of stone, glass or tile into a surface
- Roman artists excelled in painting large murals called frescoes painted directly on the walls
- Many Roman frescoes survive in Pompeii, the Roman town buried in volcanic ash in 79 AD after Mount Vesuvius erupted



Roman Literature

- Romans borrowed much of their philosophy from the Greeks
- Most famous of the Roman poets, Virgil, wrote the most famous work of Latin literature the *Aeneid*, written in praise of Rome and Roman writers
- Ovid, another famous Roman Poet, wrote lighter, more witty works for the enjoyment, such as the *Amores*



Public Entertainment

- Enormous circuses, stadiums, and amphitheaters provide the setting for public entertainment
- Circuses were oval structures with oval tracks for chariot racing
- Circus Maximus in Rome accommodated about 250, 000 spectators
- Entertainment in stadiums was often cruel and coarse: battles to the death between gladiators or between gladiators and wild animals
- The most famous and an architectural wonder of the Roman empire, the Roman Coliseum opened in 80 AD and provided seating for 50,000
- The Coliseum construction was so precise that it allowed for the floor to be flooded and stage naval battles within its walls

