

The Roman Empire



**BEFORE
YOU
READ**

Reach Into Your Background

This section might have been called "The Glory of Rome." What do you think that

means? What makes a country "glorious"?

Questions to Explore

1. How did the Romans establish sound government to rule their empire?
2. What advances did the Romans make in the fields of architecture, technology, and science?

Key Terms

province aqueduct

Key People and Places

Augustus Greece
Hadrian Colosseum

"Then the captured weapons passed. There were bronze helmets, shields, . . . and glittering steel swords piled on wagons. Then followed 3,000 men carrying 750 trays heaped with silver coins. . . . Next came the king's small children, now slaves, and the king himself in a dark robe. Some in the crowd wept for the children, but not for the king. Suddenly our great consul himself, in a golden chariot. . . . The crowd broke into a roar. . . . It was he who brought all this wealth and glory to Rome."

Rome's armies brought much wealth and glory to Rome in the years after Augustus came to power. When these armies returned to Rome, they were greeted with a magnificent parade, known as a "triumph."

Ruling an Empire

When Augustus came to power after Caesar's death, Roman control had already spread far beyond Italy. Under Augustus and the emperors who followed, Rome gained an even greater empire. Look at the map at the

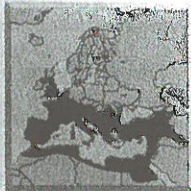
▼ The Arch of Constantine, erected in Rome about A.D. 315, honors Constantine, the first emperor of Rome to legalize Christianity. In the background stands the Colosseum, Rome's huge stadium.



READ ACTIVELY

Ask Questions What questions do you have about how the Romans governed their vast empire?

▼ Augustus ruled the Roman Empire from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. He issued new coins to promote trade, and he set up a postal service. He also ordered a census, or population count, to improve tax collection.



beginning of this chapter. The Roman Empire stretched from Britain to Mesopotamia. Rome controlled all the lands around the Mediterranean. This gave the Romans great pride. In fact, they called the Mediterranean *mare nostrum* (MAH ray NOHS truhm), or “our sea.”

Augustus, the Senate, and the People Augustus was an intelligent ruler. When he was struggling for power, he often ignored the senate and its laws. But after he won control, he changed his manner. He showed great respect for the senate and was careful to avoid acting like a king. He did not want to have the same fate as Julius Caesar. Augustus often said that he wanted to share power with the senate. He even said he wanted to restore the republic.

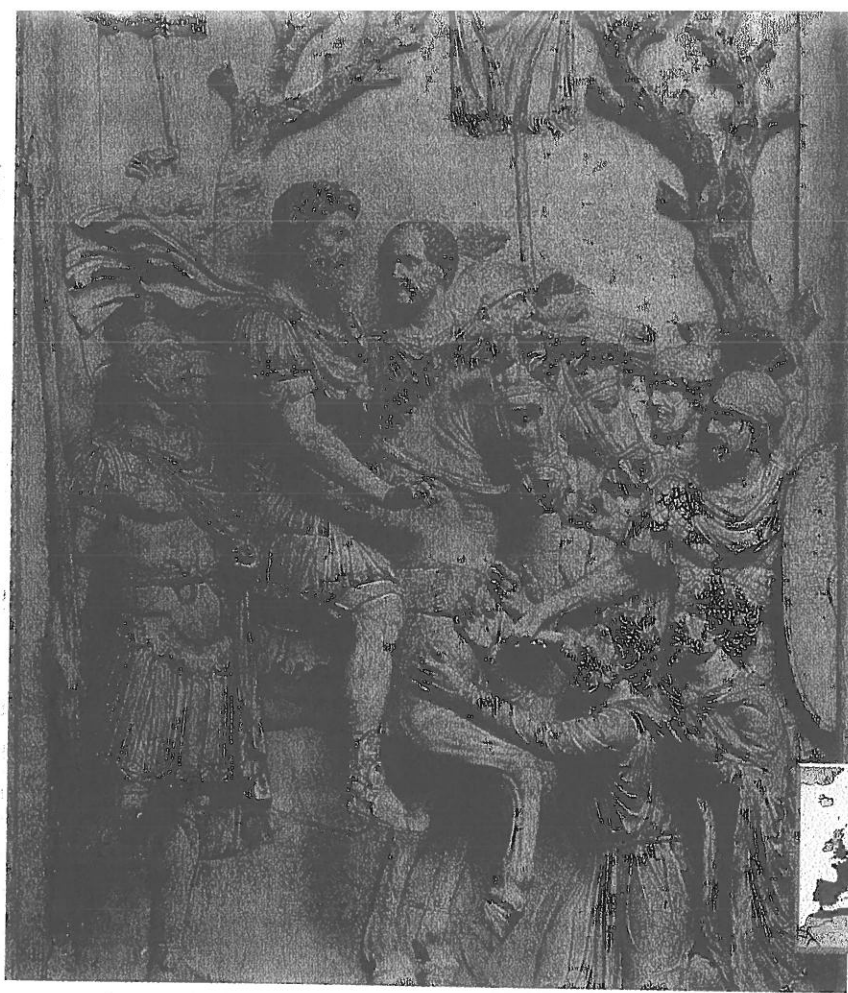
What really happened, however, was quite different. The senate and the people were so grateful for Rome’s peace and prosperity that they gave Augustus as much power as he wanted.

Governing Conquered Peoples The Romans treated conquered peoples wisely. The Romans took some slaves after a conquest, but most of the conquered people remained free. To govern, they divided their empire into areas called provinces. Each province had a Roman governor supported by an army. Often, the Romans built a city in a new province to serve as its capital.

Generally, the Romans did not force their way of life on conquered peoples. They allowed these people to follow their own religions. Local rulers were allowed to run the daily affairs of government. As long as there was peace, Roman governors did not interfere in conquered peoples’ lives. Rather, they kept watch over them. Rome wanted peaceful provinces that would supply it with the raw materials it needed. It also wanted the conquered people to buy Roman goods and to pay taxes. Many of the conquered people adopted Roman ways. Many learned to speak Latin, the language of the Romans, and to worship Roman gods.

The Five Good Emperors

Augustus died in A.D. 14. For 82 years after his death, Roman history was a story of good, bad, and terrible emperors. Two of the worst were Caligula (kuh LIG yuh luh) and Nero. They both may have been insane. Caligula



◀ Marcus Aurelius was the last of the five “good emperors.” In this stone sculpture, he pardons the barbarians whose attacks weakened the Roman Empire.



The Latin Language The Latin language was the source of today’s French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian languages. About half of all English words have a Latin history. Some came directly from Latin, such as *legal*, *computer*, and *library*. Others came into the English language from the French, after France invaded England in 1066.



Predict How does the civilization of Rome compare to that of Greece?

proclaimed himself a god and was a cruel, unfair ruler. Nero murdered his half-brother, his mother, and his wife.

In A.D. 96, Rome entered what is called the age of the five “good emperors.” Only the last of these emperors had a son. Each of the others adopted the best young man he could find to be the next emperor.

Perhaps the greatest was the emperor Hadrian (HAY dree uhn). He worked hard to build a good government. His laws protected women, children, and slaves. He issued a code of laws so that all laws were the same throughout the empire. Hadrian reorganized the army so that soldiers were allowed to defend their home provinces. This gave them a greater sense of responsibility. Hadrian also encouraged learning.

The Greek Influence on Rome

The Romans had long admired Greek achievements. People said that Hadrian spoke Greek better than he spoke Latin. The last of the “good emperors,” Marcus Aurelius (aw REE lee uhs), wrote a famous book of philosophy in Greek. Many Romans visited Greece to study Greek art, architecture, and ideas about government.

There was a major difference between Greek and Roman views of learning. The Greeks were interested in ideas. They sought to learn

truths about the world through reason. They developed studies such as mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy, which is the study of the stars and planets. The Romans were more interested in using these studies to build things. Under the Romans, architecture and engineering blossomed. With these skills, they built their empire.

Architecture and Technology

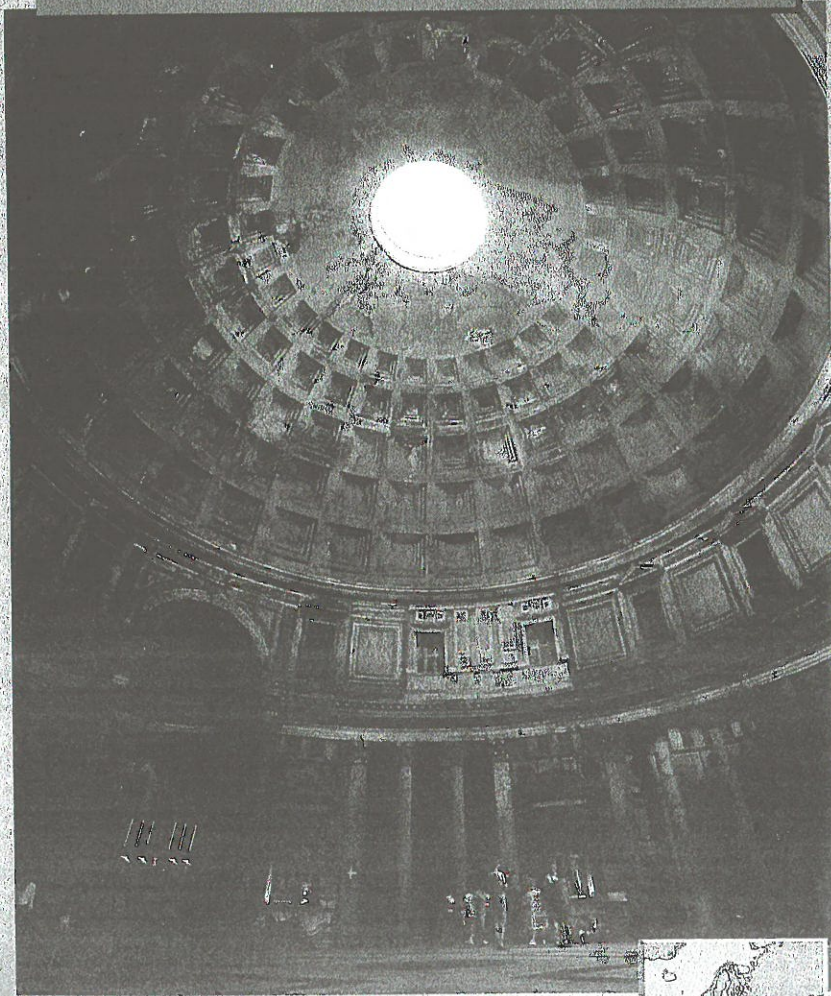
Early Roman art and architecture copied the Etruscans. Later, the Romans studied and copied Greek sculpture and architecture. However, Roman statues and buildings were heavier and stronger in style than those of the Greeks. Using arches, Romans were able to build larger structures. They could create large open spaces inside buildings with wide arched ceilings supported by heavy walls.

Most large buildings were built of bricks covered with thin slabs of white marble. However, one important development was a new building material—concrete. Concrete was a mix of stone, sand, cement, and water that dried as hard as a rock. Concrete helped the Romans put up buildings that were far taller than any built before.

The greatest Roman building was the Colosseum, a giant arena that held 50,000 spectators. Its walls were so well built that the floor of the arena could be flooded for mock naval battles using real people in real boats. Stairways and ramps ran through the building. There were even elevators to carry wild animals from dens below the floor to the arena.

Roman engineers built roads from Rome to every part of the empire. This road system covered a distance equal to twice the distance around the Earth at the Equator. Do you know the saying, “All roads lead to Rome”? In Roman times, it was true. No matter what road travelers started out on, they would eventually arrive in Rome.

The Pantheon in Rome



Built during the reign of Emperor Hadrian, the Pantheon was first used to hold statues of the Roman gods. Later, it became a Christian church. Now it serves as the burial place of many famous Italians. At its highest point, the Pantheon's majestic dome rises 71 feet (22 m) above the floor. Light streams in from the opening at the top of the dome.

A Roman Road

Roman roads were built to allow the speedy movement of troops and communication around the empire. The first road built was the Appian Way. Begun in 312 B.C., it connected Rome with southern Italy. Roman

roads were built as straight as possible and sometimes included tunnels. These roads were rugged and strong—some even have survived to today. The diagram below shows a typical Roman road.



Milestones were placed along Roman roads. Each was marked with the number of miles to Rome. A Roman mile was 1,000 paces. Each pace was two steps long, about 5 feet.

1
After surveyors laid out the road, workers dug parallel ditches. These ditches were lined with a row of curbstones.

4
Then came a layer of gravel, sand, and mortar about 1 foot thick.

2
Workers dug a deep ditch between the two rows of curbstones. They added a layer of broken flat stones 10 to 24 inches deep.

3
The next layer, about 9 inches thick, was made up of smaller stones mixed with lime mortar.

5
The road was paved with tightly fitted flat stones. The surface was higher in the center to allow rainwater to run off into the side ditches.

Romans were famous for their aqueducts, structures that carried water over long distances. The aqueducts were huge lines of arches, often many miles long. A channel along the top carried water from the countryside to the cities. Roman aqueducts tunneled through mountains and spanned valleys. Some are still being used today.

Roman Law

Roman law followed Roman roads throughout the empire. The great Roman senator Cicero (sis uh roh) expressed Roman feeling about law.

“What sort of thing is the law? It is the kind that cannot be bent by influence, or broken by power, or spoiled by money.”

A later ruler named Justinian (juh STIHN ee uhn) used Roman law to create a famous code of justice. Here are a few laws from that code.

“No one suffers a penalty for what he thinks. No one may be forcibly removed from his own house. The burden of proof is upon the person who accuses. In inflicting penalties, the age and inexperience of the guilty party must be taken into account.”

Roman law continued to be passed down to other cultures, including our own. Think of our Bill of Rights. Do any of Justinian’s laws appear there? Other Roman ideas of justice are also basic to our system of laws. For example, persons accused of crimes had the right to face their accusers. If there was doubt about a person’s guilt, he or she would be judged innocent.

READ ACTIVELY

Connect From what you know about law in the United States, how is it similar to Roman law?

SECTION 2 REVIEW

1. **Define** (a) province, (b) aqueduct.
2. **Identify** (a) Caligula, (b) Hadrian, (c) Greece, (d) Colosseum.
3. **Why** did the Romans give Augustus so much power?

4. **Why** is Roman law important to us today?

Critical Thinking

5. **Drawing Conclusions**
The “good emperor” Marcus Aurelius chose his son Commodus to follow him. Commodus was one of the worst emperors in Roman history. Why do you think a good emperor might make such a bad choice?

Activity

6. **Writing to Learn** Write down a few ideas for guidelines that you would give to every new governor of a Roman province. How should the governor treat the people of the province? What should the governor do about the religion and existing government of the conquered people?