

Ancient Rome

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Ancient Rome was a [civilization](#) that grew from a [city-state](#) founded on the [Italian Peninsula](#) circa the [9th century BC](#) to a massive [empire](#) straddling the [Mediterranean Sea](#). In its twelve-century existence, Roman civilization shifted from a [monarchy](#), to a [republic](#) based on a combination of [oligarchy](#) and [democracy](#), to an [autocratic empire](#). It came to dominate [Western Europe](#) and the entire area surrounding the [Mediterranean Sea](#) through [conquest](#) and [assimilation](#).

Nevertheless, the Roman empire eventually went into [decline](#). The [western half of the empire](#), including [Hispania](#), [Gaul](#), and Italy, broke into independent kingdoms in the [5th century](#). The eastern empire, governed from [Constantinople](#), is usually referred to as the [Byzantine Empire](#) after [476](#), the traditional date for the "fall of Rome" and for the subsequent onset of the [Early Middle Ages](#), also known as the [Dark Ages](#).

Roman civilization is often grouped into "[classical antiquity](#)" with [ancient Greece](#), a civilization that inspired much of the [culture of ancient Rome](#). Ancient Rome contributed greatly to the development of [law](#), [war](#), [art](#), [literature](#), [architecture](#), [technology](#) and [language](#) in the [Western world](#), and its [history](#) continues to have a major influence on the world today.

History

Further information: [History of Rome](#) and [Timeline of ancient Rome](#)

Monarchy

Main article: [Roman Kingdom](#)



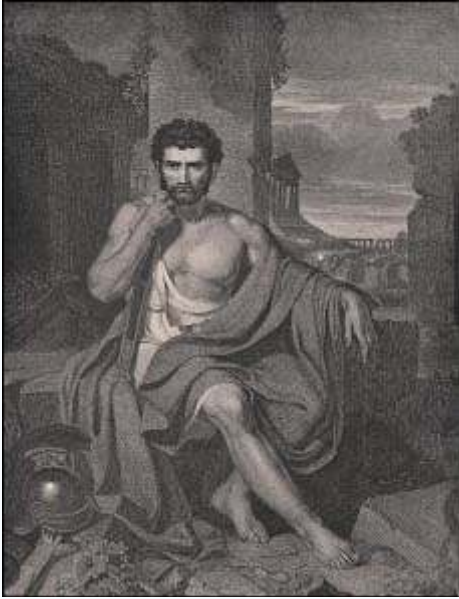
According to legend, [Rome was founded](#) in [753 BC](#) by [Romulus and Remus](#), who were raised by a she-wolf.

According to [legend](#), Rome was [founded](#) on [April 21, 753 BC](#) by twin descendants of the [Trojan](#) prince [Aeneas](#), [Romulus and Remus](#).^[1] The Latin King [Numitor](#) of [Alba Longa](#) was ejected from his throne by his cruel brother [Amulius](#) and Numitor's daughter, [Rhea Silvia](#), gave birth to Romulus and Remus.^{[2][3]} The new king feared that Romulus and Remus would take back the throne, so they were to be drowned.^[3] A she-wolf (or a shepard's wife in some accounts) saved and raised them, and when they were old enough, they returned the throne of Alba Longa to Numitor.^{[4][5]} The twins then founded their own city, but Romulus killed Remus in a quarrel over which one of them was to reign as the first of seven [Kings of Rome](#), as well as become the source of the city's name.^[6] As the city was bereft of women, legend says that the Latins invited the [Sabines](#) to a festival and stole their unmarried maidens, leading to the integration of the Latins and the Sabines.^[7]

The city of [Rome](#) grew from settlements around a ford on the river [Tiber](#), a crossroads of traffic and trade.^[4] According to [archaeological](#) evidence, the village of Rome was probably founded sometime in the [8th century BC](#), though it may go back as far as the [10th century BC](#), by members of the [Latin tribe](#) of Italy, on the top of the [Palatine Hill](#).^{[8][9]} The [Etruscans](#), who had previously settled to the north in [Etruria](#), seem to have established political control in the region by the late [7th century BC](#), forming the aristocratic and monarchical elite. The Etruscans apparently lost power in the area by the late [6th century BC](#), and at this point, the original Latin and Sabine tribes reinvented their government by creating a [republic](#), with much greater restraints on the ability of rulers to exercise power.^[10]

Republic

Main article: [Roman Republic](#)



[Marius](#), a Roman general and politician who dramatically reformed the [Roman military](#).

The [Roman Republic](#) was established around [509 BC](#), according to later writers such as [Livy](#), when the last of the seven kings of Rome, [Tarquin the Proud](#), was deposed, and a system based on annually-elected [magistrates](#) and various representative assemblies was established.^[11] The most important magistrates were the two [consuls](#), who together exercised executive authority in the form of [imperium](#), or military command.^[12] The consuls had to contend with the [Senate](#), which was initially an advisory council of the ranking nobility, or [patricians](#), but grew in size and power over time.^[13] Other magistracies in the Republic include [praetors](#), [aediles](#), and [quaestors](#).^[14] The magistracies were originally restricted to patricians, but were later opened to common people, or [plebeians](#).^[14] Republican voting assemblies included the *comitia centuriata* (centuriate assembly), which voted on matters of war and peace and elected men to the most important offices, and the *comitia tributa* (tribal assembly), which elected less important offices.^[15]

The Romans gradually subdued the other peoples on the Italian peninsula, including the [Etruscans](#).^[16] The last threat to Roman [hegemony](#) in Italy came when [Tarentum](#), a major [Greek](#) colony, enlisted the aid of [Pyrrhus of Epirus](#) in [281 BC](#), but this effort failed as well.^{[17][18]} The Romans secured their conquests by founding Roman colonies in strategic areas, establishing stable control over the region.^[19] In the second half of the [3rd century BC](#), Rome clashed with [Carthage](#) in the first of three [Punic Wars](#). These wars resulted in Rome's first overseas conquests, of [Sicily](#) and [Hispania](#), and the rise of Rome as a significant imperial power.^{[20][21]} After defeating the

[Macedonian](#) and [Seleucid Empires](#) in the [2nd century BC](#), the Romans became the dominant people of the [Mediterranean Sea](#).^{[22][23]}

But foreign dominance led to internal strife. Senators became rich at the [provinces'](#) expense, but soldiers, who were mostly small-scale farmers, were away from home longer and could not maintain their land, and the increased reliance on foreign [slaves](#) and the growth of [latifundia](#) reduced the availability of paid work.^{[24][25]} Income from war booty, [mercantilism](#) in the new provinces, and [tax farming](#) created new economic opportunities for the wealthy, forming a new class of [merchants](#), the [equestrians](#).^[26] The [lex Claudia](#) forbade members of the Senate from engaging in commerce, so while the equestrians could theoretically join the Senate, they were severely restricted in terms of political power.^{[27][26]} The Senate squabbled perpetually, repeatedly blocking important [land reforms](#) and refusing to give the equestrian class a larger say in the government. Violent gangs of the urban unemployed, controlled by rival Senators, intimidated the electorate through violence. The situation came to a head in the late [2nd century BC](#) under the [Gracchi](#) brothers, a pair of [tribunes](#) who attempted to pass land reform legislation that would redistribute the major patrician landholdings among the plebeians. Both brothers were killed, but the Senate passed some of their reforms in an attempt to placate the growing unrest of the plebeian and equestrian classes. The denial of [Roman citizenship](#) to allied Italian cities led to the [Social War](#) of [91–88 BC](#). The military reforms of [Marius](#) resulted in soldiers often having more loyalty to their commander than to the city, and a powerful general could hold the city and Senate ransom.^[28] This led to civil war between Marius and his protégé [Sulla](#), and culminated in Sulla's [dictatorship](#) of [81–79 BC](#).^[29]

In the mid-[1st century BC](#), three men, [Julius Caesar](#), [Pompey](#), and [Crassus](#), formed a secret pact—the [First Triumvirate](#)—to control the Republic. After Caesar's [conquest of Gaul](#), a stand-off between Caesar and the Senate led to [civil war](#), with Pompey leading the Senate's forces. Caesar emerged victorious, and was made [dictator](#) for life.^[30] In [44 BC](#), Caesar was [assassinated](#) by senators who opposed Caesar's assumption of absolute power and wanted to restore constitutional government, but in the aftermath a [Second Triumvirate](#), consisting of Caesar's designated heir, [Augustus](#), and his former supporters, [Mark Antony](#) and [Lepidus](#), took power.^{[31][32]} However, this alliance soon descended into a struggle for dominance. Lepidus was [exiled](#), and when Augustus defeated Antony and [Cleopatra](#) of [Egypt](#) at the [Battle of Actium](#) in [31 BC](#), he became the undisputed ruler of Rome.^[33]

Empire

Main article: [Roman Empire](#)



The [Roman Empire](#) reached its greatest extent in the year 116.

With his enemies defeated, [Augustus](#) assumed almost absolute power, retaining only a pretense of the Republican form of government.^[34] His designated successor, [Tiberius](#), took power without serious opposition, establishing the [Julio-Claudian dynasty](#), which lasted until the death of [Nero](#) in 68.^[35] The territorial expansion of what was now the [Roman Empire](#) continued, and the state remained secure,^[36] despite a series of emperors widely viewed as depraved and corrupt (for example, Caligula was completely insane^[37] and [Nero](#) had a reputation for cruelty and being more interested in his private concerns than the affairs of the state^[38]). Their rule was followed by the [Flavian dynasty](#).^[39] During the reign of the "[Five Good Emperors](#)" (96–180), the Empire reached its territorial, economic, and cultural [zenith](#).^[40] The state was secure from both internal and external threats, and the Empire prospered during the [Pax Romana](#) ("Roman Peace").^{[41][42]} With the conquest of [Dacia](#) during the reign of [Trajan](#), the Empire reached the peak of its territorial expansion; Rome's dominion now spanned 2.5 million square miles (6.5 million [km²](#)).^[43]

The period between 193 and 235 was dominated by the [Severan dynasty](#), and saw several incompetent rulers, such as [Elagabalus](#).^[44] This and the increasing influence of the army on imperial succession led to a long period of imperial collapse and external invasions known as the [Crisis of the Third Century](#).^{[45][46]} The crisis was ended by the more competent rule of [Diocletian](#), who in 293 divided the Empire into an eastern and western half ruled by a [tetrarchy](#) of two co-emperors and their two junior colleagues.^[47] The various co-rulers of the Empire competed and fought for supremacy for more than half a century. On [May 11, 330](#), Emperor [Constantine I](#) firmly established [Byzantium](#) as the capital of the [Roman Empire](#) and renamed it [Constantinople](#).^[48] The Empire was permanently divided into

the Eastern Roman Empire (later known as the [Byzantine Empire](#)) and the [Western Roman Empire](#) in 395.^[49]

The Western Empire was constantly harassed by [barbarian](#) invasions, and the gradual [decline of the Roman Empire](#) continued over the centuries.^[50] In the fourth century, the westward migration of the [Huns](#) caused the [Visigoths](#) to seek refuge within the borders of the Roman Empire.^[51] In 410, the [Visigoths](#), under the leadership of [Alaric I](#), sacked the city of Rome itself.^[52] The [Vandals](#) invaded Roman provinces in Gaul, Spain, and northern Africa, and in 455 sacked Rome.^[53] On [September 4, 476](#), the Germanic chief [Odoacer](#) forced the last Roman emperor in the west, [Romulus Augustus](#), to abdicate.^[54] Having lasted for approximately 1200 years, the rule of Rome in the [West](#) came to an end.^[55]

The Eastern Empire, by contrast, would suffer a similar fate, though not as drastic. The Arab tribes, pushed by [religious furor](#), conquered the richest provinces of the Empire, including those reconquered by [Justinian](#). Rome itself was reconquered, but an emperor of the west was never created. Instead, a viceroy in [Ravenna](#) would represent Constantinople to Italy, and would share de facto power with the [Pope](#). 1000 A.D. the eastern Empire was on its height: [Basileios II](#) reconquered Bulgaria and Armenia, culture and trade flourished.^[56] But soon the expansion was abruptly stopped at the [battle of Manzikert](#), 1071. This finally led the empire into a dramatic decline. Several centuries of internal strife and [Turkic](#) invasions ultimately paved the way for the horror of the [Fourth Crusade](#), resulting in the [Sack of Constantinople](#) by renegade Crusaders. The conquest of Constantinople in 1204 would see the fragmentation of what little remained of the empire into successor states, the ultimate victor being that of [Nicaea](#). After the recapture of Constantinople by imperial forces, the empire was little more than a Greek state confined to the [Aegean](#) coast. The Eastern Empire came to an end when [Mehmet II](#) conquered Constantinople on [May 29, 1453](#).^[57]

Society

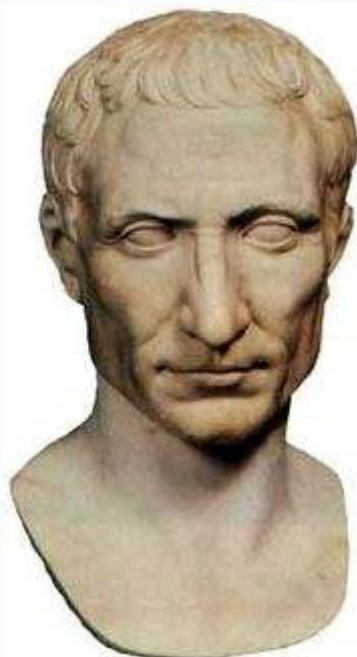


The [Roman Forum](#) was the central area around which ancient Rome developed, and served as a hub for daily Roman life.

Life in ancient Rome revolved around the city of [Rome](#), located on [seven hills](#). The city had a vast number of [monumental structures](#) like the [Colosseum](#), the [Forum of Trajan](#) and the [Pantheon](#). It had [fountains](#) with fresh drinking-water supplied by hundreds of miles of [aqueducts](#), [theatres](#), [gymnasiums](#), [bath complexes](#) complete with [libraries](#) and shops, marketplaces, and functional sewers. Throughout the territory under the control of ancient Rome, [residential architecture](#) ranged from very modest [houses](#) to [country villas](#). In the [capital city](#) of Rome, there were [imperial residences](#) on the elegant [Palatine Hill](#), from which the word "palace" is derived. The low and middle classes lived in the city center, packed into [apartments](#), which were almost like modern [ghettos](#).

The imperial city of Rome was the largest urban center of its time, with a population well in excess of one million people (about the size of London in the early 19th century, when London was the largest city in the world), with some high-end estimates of 3.5 million and low-end estimates of 450,000. The public spaces in Rome resounded with such a din of hooves and clatter of iron [chariot](#) wheels that [Julius Caesar](#) had once proposed a ban on chariot traffic at night. Historical estimates indicate that around 20 percent of population under the jurisdiction of the ancient Rome (25% to 40%, depending the standards used, in Roman Italy ^[58]) lived in innumerable urban centers, with population of 10,000 and more and several military settlements, a very high rate of urbanization by pre-industrial standards. Most of these centers had a [forum](#) and temples and same type of buildings, on a smaller scale, as found in Rome.

Government





Bust of [Julius Caesar](#), whose rise to power and assassination set the stage for [Augustus](#) to establish himself as the first *Princeps*.

Initially, Rome was ruled by elected [kings](#). The exact nature of the king's power is uncertain. He may have held near-absolute power, or may also have merely been the [chief executive](#) of the [Senate and the people](#). At least in military matters, the king's authority (*Imperium*) was likely absolute. He was also the head of the [state religion](#). In addition to the authority of the King, there were three administrative assemblies: the [Senate](#), which acted as an advisory body for the King; the [Comitia Curiata](#), which could endorse and ratify [laws](#) suggested by the King; and the [Comitia Calata](#), which was an assembly of the priestly college which could assemble the people in order to bear witness to certain acts, hear proclamations, and declare the [feast](#) and holiday schedule for the next month.

The [class struggles](#) of the [Roman Republic](#) resulted in an unusual mixture of [democracy](#) and [oligarchy](#). The word republic comes from the Latin *res publica* which literally translates to public business. Roman laws traditionally could only be passed by a vote of the Popular assembly ([Comitia Tributa](#)). Likewise, candidates for public positions had to run for election by the people. However, the [Roman Senate](#) represented an oligarchic [institution](#), which acted as an advisory body. In the Republic, the Senate held great authority (*auctoritas*), but no actual legislative power; it was technically only an advisory council. However, as the Senators were individually very influential, it was difficult to accomplish anything against the collective will of the Senate. New Senators were chosen from among the most accomplished [patricians](#) by [Censors](#) (*Censura*), who could also remove a Senator from his office if he was found "morally corrupt"; a charge that could include [bribery](#) or, as under [Cato the Elder](#), embracing one's wife in public. Later, under the reforms of the dictator [Sulla](#), [Quaestors](#) were made automatic members of the Senate, though most of his reforms did not survive.

The Republic had no fixed [bureaucracy](#), and collected [taxes](#) through the practice of [tax farming](#). Government positions such as [quaestor](#), [aedile](#), or [praefect](#) were funded from the office-holder's private finances. In order to prevent any citizen from gaining too much power, new [magistrates](#) were elected annually and had to share power with a colleague. For example, under normal conditions, the highest authority was held by two [consuls](#). In an emergency, a temporary [dictator](#) could be appointed.^[59] Throughout the Republic, the administrative system was revised several times to comply with new demands. In the end, it proved inefficient for controlling the ever-

expanding dominion of Rome, contributing to the establishment of the [Roman Empire](#).

In the early Empire, the pretense of a republican form of government was maintained. The [Roman Emperor](#) was portrayed as only a '[princeps](#)', or "first citizen", and the Senate gained legislative power and all legal authority previously held by the popular assemblies. However, the rule of the emperors became increasingly [autocratic](#) over time, and the Senate was reduced to an advisory body appointed by the emperor. The Empire did not inherit a set bureaucracy from the Republic, since the Republic did not have any permanent governmental structures apart from the Senate. The Emperor appointed assistants and advisers, but the state lacked many institutions, such as a centrally-planned [budget](#). Some historians have cited this as a significant reason for the [decline of the Roman Empire](#).

The territory of the Empire was divided into [provinces](#). The number of provinces increased with time, both as new territories were conquered and as provinces were divided into smaller units to discourage [rebellions](#) by powerful local rulers.^[43] Upon the rise of [Augustus](#) and the [Principate](#), the provinces were divided into imperial and senatorial provinces, depending on which institution had the right to select the governor. During the [Tetrarchy](#), the provinces of the empire were divided into 12 [dioceses](#), each headed by a *[praetor vicarius](#)*. The civilian and military authority were separated, with civilian matters still administered by the governor, but with military command transferred to a *[dux](#)*.

On a local level, towns were divided into [colonia](#), colonies composed of former soldiers or members of the Roman underclass, and *[municipia](#)*, towns composed of enfranchised provincials. These cities were given constitutions based on the Roman model, with the elected *[duovirs](#)* and *[aediles](#)* serving as magistrates, and with the local *[curia](#)*, appointed from men of property for life, serving in an advisory capability, similar to the Senate.

Law

Main article: [Roman law](#)

The roots of the legal principles and practices of the ancient Romans may be traced to the law of the [twelve tables](#) (from [449 BC](#)) to the [codification](#) of Emperor [Justinian I](#) (around [530 AD](#)). Roman law as preserved in Justinian's codes continued into the [Byzantine Empire](#), and formed the basis of similar codifications in continental [Western Europe](#). Roman law

continued, in a broader sense, to be applied throughout most of Europe until the end of the [17th century](#).

The major divisions of the law of ancient Rome, as contained within the Justinian and Theodosian law codes, consisted of *Ius Civile*, *Ius Gentium*, and *Ius Naturale*. The *Ius Civile* ("Citizen law") was the body of common laws that applied to Roman citizens. The [Praetores Urbani](#) (sg. *Praetor Urbanus*) were the individuals who had jurisdiction over cases involving citizens. The *Ius Gentium* ("Law of nations") was the body of common laws that applied to foreigners, and their dealings with Roman citizens. The [Praetores Peregrini](#) (sg. *Praetor Peregrinus*) were the individuals who had jurisdiction over cases involving citizens and foreigners. *Ius Naturale* encompassed natural law, the body of laws that were considered common to all being.

Economy

Further information: [Roman commerce](#), [Roman finance](#), [Roman currency](#), and [Roman agriculture](#)



A [Roman denarius](#), a standardized [silver](#) coin.

Ancient Rome commanded a vast area of land, with tremendous natural and [human](#) resources. As such, Rome's economy remained focused on [agriculture](#) and [trade](#). Agricultural [free trade](#) changed the Italian landscape, and by the [1st century BC](#), vast [grape](#) and [olive](#) estates had supplanted the [yeoman](#) farmers, who were unable to match the imported grain price. The [annexation](#) of [Egypt](#), [Sicily](#) and [Tunisia](#) in [North Africa](#) provided a continuous supply of grains. In turn, [olive oil](#) and [wine](#) were Italy's main [exports](#). Two-tier [crop rotation](#) was practiced, but farm productivity was overall low, around 1 ton per [hectare](#).

[Industrial](#) and [manufacturing](#) activities were smaller. The largest such activity were the [mining](#) and [quarrying](#) of stones, which provided basic construction materials for the buildings of that period. In manufacturing, production was on a relatively small scale, and generally consisted of

workshops and small factories that employed at most dozens of workers. However, some [brick](#) factories employed hundreds of workers.

Some economic historians (like [Peter Temin](#)) argue that the economy of the Early Roman Empire was a market economy and one of the most advanced agricultural economies to have existed (in terms of productivity, urbanization and development of capital markets), comparable to the most advanced economies of the world before the [industrial revolution](#), the economies of [18th-century England](#) and [17th-century Netherlands](#). There were markets for every type of good, for land, for cargo ships; there was even an insurance market.

The economy of the early Republic was largely based on smallholding and paid labor. However, foreign wars and conquests made [slaves](#) increasingly cheap and plentiful, and by the late Republic, the economy was largely dependent on slave labor for both skilled and unskilled work. Slaves are estimated to have constituted around 20% of the Roman Empire's population at this time and 40% in the city of Rome. Only in the Roman Empire, when the conquests stopped and the prices of slaves increased, did hired labor become more economical than slave ownership.

Although [barter](#) was used in ancient Rome, and often used in tax collection, Rome had a very developed [coinage](#) system, with [brass](#), [bronze](#), and [precious metal](#) coins in circulation throughout the Empire and beyond—some have even been discovered in [India](#). Before the [3rd century BC](#), [copper](#) was traded by weight, measured in unmarked lumps, across central Italy. The original copper coins (*as*) had a face value of one [Roman pound](#) of copper, but weighed less. Thus, Roman money's utility as a unit of exchange consistently exceeded its [intrinsic value](#) as metal. After [Nero](#) began debasing the silver [denarius](#), its [legal](#) value was an estimated one-third greater than its intrinsic.

[Horses](#) were too expensive, and other [pack animals](#) too slow, for mass trade on the [Roman roads](#), which connected military posts rather than markets, and were rarely designed for wheels. As a result, there was little transport of [commodities](#) between Roman regions until the rise of [Roman maritime trade](#) in the 2nd century BC. During that period, a trading vessel took less than a month to complete a trip from [Gades](#) to [Alexandria](#) via [Ostia](#), spanning the entire length of the [Mediterranean](#).^[43] Transport by sea was around 60 times cheaper than by land, so the volume for such trips was much larger.

Class structure

Main article: [Social class in ancient Rome](#)



ROMAN CLAD IN THE TOGA.

A Roman clad in a [toga](#), the distinctive garment of ancient Rome.

Roman society was strictly [hierarchical](#), with [slaves](#) (*servī*) at the bottom, [freedmen](#) (*libertī*) above them, and free-born citizens (*civēs*) at the top. Free citizens were themselves also divided by class. The broadest, and earliest, division was between the [patricians](#), who could trace their ancestry to one of the 100 [Patriarchs](#) at the founding of the city, and the [plebeians](#), who could not. This became less important in the later Republic, as some plebeian families became wealthy and entered politics, and some patrician families fell on hard times. Anyone, patrician or plebeian, who could count a consul as his ancestor was a [noble](#) (*nobilis*); a man who was the first of his family to hold the consulship, such as [Marius](#) or [Cicero](#), was known as a [novus homo](#) ("new man") and ennobled his descendants. Patrician ancestry, however, still conferred considerable prestige, and many religious offices remained restricted to patricians.

A class division originally based on military service became more important. Membership of these classes was determined periodically by the [Censors](#), according to property. The wealthiest were the Senatorial class, who dominated politics and command of the army. Next came the

[equestrians](#) (*equites*, sometimes translated "knights"), originally those who could afford a warhorse, who formed a powerful mercantile class. Several further classes, originally based on what military equipment their members could afford, followed, with the *proletarii*, citizens who had no property at all, at the bottom. Before the reforms of Marius they were ineligible for military service and are often described as being just barely above freed slaves in terms of wealth and prestige.

Voting power in the Republic was dependent on class. Citizens were enrolled in voting "tribes", but the tribes of the richer classes had fewer members than the poorer ones, all the *proletarii* being enrolled in a single tribe. Voting was done in class order and stopped as soon as a majority of the tribes had been reached, so the poorer classes were often unable even to cast their votes.

Allied foreign cities were often given the [Latin Right](#), an intermediary level between full citizens and foreigners (*peregrini*), which gave their citizens rights under Roman law and allowed their leading magistrates to become full Roman citizens. While there were varying degrees of Latin rights, the main division was between those *con suffrage* ("with vote"; enrolled in a Roman tribe and able to take part in the *comitia tributa*) and *sans suffrage* (without vote; unable to take part in Roman politics). Some of Rome's Italian allies were given full citizenship after the [Social War](#) of 91–88 BC, and full [Roman citizenship](#) was extended to all free-born men in the Empire by [Caracalla](#) in 212. Women shared some basic rights with their male counterparts, but were not fully regarded as citizens and were thus not allowed to vote or participate in politics.

Family

The basic units of Roman society were [households](#) and [families](#). Households included the head of the household, [paterfamilias](#) (father of the family), his wife, children, and other relatives. In the upper classes, slaves and servants were also part of the household. The head of the household had great power (*patria potestas*, "father's power") over those living with him: He could force marriage and divorce, sell his children into slavery, claim his dependents' property as his own, and possibly even had the right to kill family members.

Patria potestas even extended over adult sons with their own households: A man was not considered a *paterfamilias* while his own father lived. A daughter, when she married, usually fell under the authority of the *paterfamilias* of her husband's household, although this was not always the case, as she could choose to continue recognizing her father's family as her

true family. However, as Romans reckoned [descent](#) through the male line, any children she had would belong to her husband's family.

Groups of related households formed a family ([gens](#)). Families were based on blood ties (or [adoption](#)), but were also political and economic alliances. Especially during the [Roman Republic](#), some powerful families, or [Gentes Maiores](#), came to dominate political life.

[Ancient Roman marriage](#) was often regarded more as a financial and political alliance than as a romantic association, especially in the upper classes. Fathers usually began seeking husbands for their daughters when they reached an age between twelve and fourteen. The husband was almost always older than the bride. While upper class girls married very young, there is evidence that lower class women often married in their late teens or early twenties.

Education

Main article: [Roman school](#)

In the early Republic, there were no public schools, so boys were taught to read and write by their families, or by educated slaves, usually of [Greek](#) origin.^{[60][61]} The primary aim of education during this period was to train young men in agriculture, warfare, Roman traditions, and public affairs.^[60] Young boys learnt much about civic life by accompanying their fathers to religious and political functions, including the Senate for the sons of nobles.^[61] The sons of nobles were apprenticed to a prominent political figure at the age of 16, and campaigned with the army from the age of 17 (this system would still be in use among some noble families well into the imperial era).^[61] Educational practices were modified following the conquest of the Hellenistic kingdoms in the Third Century BC and the resulting Greek influence, although it should be noted that Roman educational practices were still significantly different from Greek ones.^{[62][61]} Boys and some girls at the age of 7 were sent to a school outside the home called a [lūdus](#), where a teacher (called a *litterator* or a [magister ludi](#), and often of Greek origin) taught them basic reading, writing, arithmetic, and sometimes Greek, until the age of 11.^{[63][61]} Beginning at age 12, students went to secondary schools, where the teacher (now called a *grammaticus*) taught them about [Greek](#) and [Roman literature](#).^{[61][63]} At the age of 16, some students went on to [rhetoric](#) school (where the teacher, almost always Greek, was called a *rhetor*).^{[61][63]} Education at this level prepared students for legal careers.^[61] Poorer people were usually taught by their parents as school was not free. [Pupils](#) went to school every day,

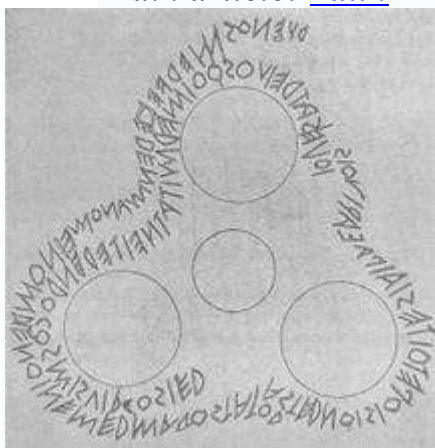
except religious festivals and market days. There were also summer holidays.

Culture

Main article: [Culture of ancient Rome](#)

Language

Main article: [Latin](#)



The [Duenos inscription](#), a [Latin](#) text from circa the [6th century BC](#), is the earliest known example of Roman writing.

The native language of the Romans was [Latin](#), an [Italic language](#) the [grammar of which](#) relies little on word order, conveying meaning through a system of [affixes](#) attached to [word stems](#).^[64] Its [alphabet](#) was based on the [Etruscan alphabet](#), which was in turn based on the [Greek alphabet](#).^[65] Although surviving [Latin literature](#) consists almost entirely of [Classical Latin](#), an artificial and highly stylized and polished [literary language](#) from the [1st century BC](#), the actual spoken language of the Roman Empire was [Vulgar Latin](#), which significantly differed from Classical Latin in [grammar](#) and [vocabulary](#), and eventually in pronunciation.^[66]

While Latin remained the main written language of the Roman Empire, [Greek](#) came to be the language spoken by the well-educated elite, as most of the literature studied by Romans was written in Greek. In the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which later became the [Byzantine Empire](#), Greek eventually supplanted Latin as both the written and spoken language. The expansion of the Roman Empire spread Latin throughout Europe, and over time Vulgar Latin evolved and [dialectized](#) in different locations, gradually shifting into a number of distinct [Romance languages](#).

Although Latin is an [extinct language](#) with very few remaining fluent speakers, it remains in use in many ways, such as through [Ecclesiastical Latin](#), the traditional language of the [Roman Catholic Church](#) and the official language of the [Vatican City](#). Additionally, even after fading from common usage Latin maintained a role as western Europe's [lingua franca](#), an international language of [academia](#) and [diplomacy](#). Although eventually supplanted in this respect by [French](#) in the [19th century](#) and [English](#) in the [20th](#), Latin continues to see heavy use in religious, legal, and scientific terminology—it has been estimated that 80% of all scholarly English words derive directly or indirectly from Latin.

Religion

Main articles: [Religion in ancient Rome](#) and [Roman mythology](#)

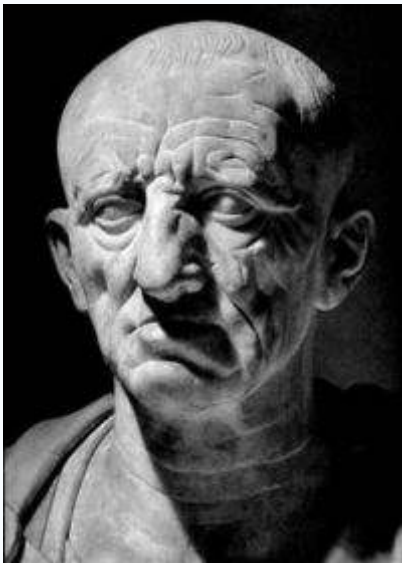
Archaic [Roman religion](#), at least concerning the gods, was made up not of written [narratives](#), but rather of complex interrelations between gods and humans.^[67] Unlike in [Greek mythology](#), the gods were not personified, but were vaguely-defined sacred spirits called [numina](#). Romans also believed that every person, place or thing had its own [genius](#), or divine soul. During the [Roman Republic](#), [Roman religion](#) was organized under a strict system of priestly offices, which were held by men of senatorial rank. The College of Pontifices was uppermost body in this hierarchy, and its chief priest, the [Pontifex Maximus](#), was the head of the state religion. [Flamens](#) took care of the cults of various gods, while [augurs](#) were trusted with taking the [auspices](#). The [sacred king](#) took on the religious responsibilities of the deposed kings. In the Roman empire, emperors were held to be gods, and the formalized [imperial cult](#) became increasingly prominent.

As contact with the [Greeks](#) increased, the old Roman gods became increasingly associated with Greek gods. Thus, [Jupiter](#) was perceived to be the same deity as [Zeus](#), [Mars](#) became associated with [Ares](#), and Neptune with [Poseidon](#). The Roman gods also assumed the attributes and mythologies of these Greek gods. The transferral of [anthropomorphic](#) qualities to Roman Gods, and the prevalence of [Greek philosophy](#) among well-educated Romans, brought about an increasing neglect of the old rites, and in the [1st century BC](#), the religious importance of the old priestly offices declined rapidly, though their civic importance and political influence remained. Roman religion in the empire tended more and more to center on the imperial house, and several emperors were [deified](#) after their deaths.

Under the empire, numerous foreign [cults](#) grew popular, such as the worship of the Egyptian [Isis](#) and the [Persian Mithras](#). Beginning in the 2nd

century, [Christianity](#) began to spread in the Empire, despite initial [persecution](#). Beginning with Emperor [Nero](#), Roman official policy towards Christianity was negative, and at some points, simply being a Christian could be punishable by death. Under Emperor [Diocletian](#), the [persecution of Christians](#) reached its peak. However, it became an officially supported religion in the Roman state under [Constantine I](#) and became exponentially popular. After a brief and unsuccessful pagan revival by the emperor [Julian the Apostate](#)^[68] Christianity became the permanent religion of the empire. All religions except Christianity were prohibited in [391](#) by an edict of Emperor [Theodosius I](#).^[69]

Art, music and literature



[Roman sculpture](#) was at its most original in the production of strongly characterized [portraits](#) such as this [bust of Cato the Elder](#).

Main articles: [Roman art](#), [Latin literature](#), [Roman sculpture](#), and [Roman music](#)

Most early Roman painting styles show [Etruscan](#) influences, particularly in the practice of political painting. In the 3rd century BC, Greek art taken as treasure from wars became popular, and many Roman homes were decorated with landscapes by Greek artists. Evidence from the remains at [Pompeii](#) shows diverse influence from cultures spanning the Roman world. Portrait sculpture during the period utilized youthful and classical proportions, evolving later into a mixture of realism and idealism. During the [Antonine](#) and [Severan](#) periods, more ornate hair and bearding became prevalent, created with deeper cutting and drilling. Advancements were also made in [relief sculptures](#), usually depicting Roman victories.

[Latin literature](#) was from its very inception influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest extant works are of historical [epics](#) telling the early military history of Rome. As the Republic expanded, authors began to produce [poetry](#), [comedy](#), [history](#), and [tragedy](#).

The Romans were a very sex-saturated culture. ^[citation needed] In documentaries and books describing what was unearthed at [Pompeii](#), the [frescoes](#), [paintings](#) and [mosaics](#) depict daily life or are just patterns. Others have been unearthed in public baths that could be considered the Roman equivalent of [pornography](#). ^[citation needed]

Games and activities

The ancient city of Rome had a place called *Campus Martius* (Translating roughly as "Field of Mars" named after Mars, the Roman god of war), a sort of [drill ground](#) for Roman soldiers, which was located near the [Tiber](#) river. Later, the *Campus Martius* became Rome's [track and field](#) playground, which even [Julius Caesar](#) and [Augustus](#) were said to have frequented. Imitating the Campus Martius in Rome, similar grounds were developed in several other urban centers and military settlements.

In the campus, the youth assembled to play and exercise, which included [jumping](#), [wrestling](#), [boxing](#), and [racing](#). [Riding](#), throwing, and [swimming](#) were also preferred physical activities. In the countryside, pastimes also included [fishing](#) and [hunting](#). [Women](#) did not participate in these activities. Ball-playing was a popular sport, and ancient Romans had several ball games, which included [Handball](#) (*Expulsim Ludere*), [field hockey](#), [catch](#), and some form of [football](#), where the aim was to carry a ball (made out of rags wrapped in leather) close enough to kick it into a large barrel the breadth of a man's shoulders.

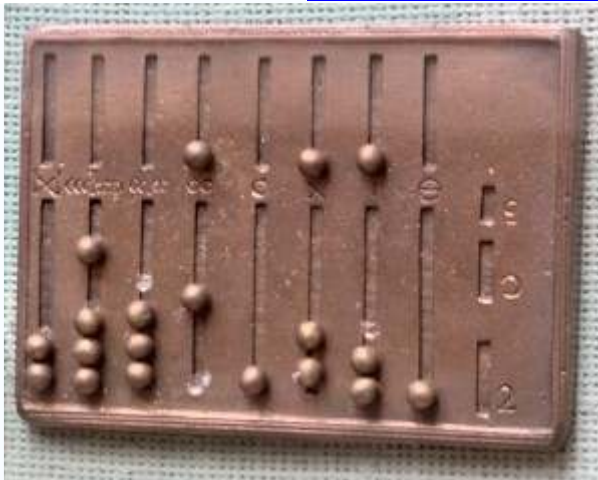
A popular form of entertainment were [gladiatorial](#) combats. Gladiators fought either to the death, or to "first blood" with a variety of weapons and in a variety of different scenarios. These fights achieved their height of popularity under the emperor [Claudius](#), who placed the final outcome of the combat firmly in the hands of the emperor with a hand gesture. Contrary to popular representations in film the gesture for death was not "thumbs down". The emperor would signify "death" by holding a raised fist to the winning combatant and then extending his thumb laterally. "Mercy" was indicated by a raised fist with no extended thumb. Animal shows were also popular with the Romans, where foreign animals were either displayed for the public or combined with gladiatorial combat. A prisoner or gladiator, armed or unarmed, was thrown into the arena and an animal was released. Gladiators fought in games held only ten days per year, and could

earn the ancient Roman equivalent of 500,000 EUR for competing in a single fight to the death.

The [Circus Maximus](#), another popular site in Rome, was primarily used for [horse](#) and [chariot racing](#), although it was also used in many other events. It could hold up to 385,000 people;^[70] people all over Rome would visit it. Two temples, one with seven large eggs and one with seven dolphins, laid in the middle of the track of Circus Maximus, and whenever the racers made a lap, one of each would be removed. This was done to keep the spectators and the racers informed on the race statistics. Other than sports, the Circus Maximus was also an area of [marketing](#) and [gambling](#). Higher authorities, like the emperor, also attended games in the Circus Maximus, as it was rude not to. They, knights, and many other people who were involved with the race sat in reserved seats located above everyone else. It was also found rude for emperors to root for a team. The Circus Maximus was created in 600 BC and hosted the last horse racing game in 549, lasting for over a millennium.

Technology

Main article: [Ancient Roman technology](#)



The [Roman abacus](#), the first portable calculating device, helped speed up the use of [Roman arithmetic](#).


Ancient Rome boasted the most impressive technological feats of its day, utilizing many advancements that would be lost in the [Middle Ages](#) and not be rivaled again until the [19th](#) and [20th centuries](#). However, though adept at adopting and synthesizing other cultures' technologies, the Roman civilization was not especially innovative or progressive. Many practical Roman innovations were adopted from earlier Greek designs. The development of new ideas was rarely encouraged; Roman society considered the articulate soldier who could wisely govern a large household the ideal, and [Roman law](#) made no provisions for [intellectual](#)

[property](#) or the promotion of invention. The concept of "scientists" and "engineers" did not yet exist, and advancements were often divided based on craft, with groups of [artisans](#) jealously guarding new technologies as [trade secrets](#). Nevertheless, a number of vital technological breakthroughs were spread and thoroughly utilized by Rome, contributing to an enormous degree to Rome's dominance and lasting influence in Europe.

Engineering and architecture

Main articles: [Roman architecture](#), [Roman engineering](#), and [Roman military engineering](#)



 [Pont du Gard](#) in [France](#) is a [Roman aqueduct](#) built in ca. [19 BC](#). It is one of France's top tourist attractions and a [World Heritage Site](#).

[Roman engineering](#) constituted a large portion of Rome's technological superiority and legacy, and contributed to the construction of hundreds of roads, bridges, aqueducts, baths, theaters and arenas. Many monuments, such as the [Colosseum](#), [Pont du Gard](#), and [Pantheon](#), still remain as testaments to Roman engineering and culture.

The Romans were particularly renowned for their [architecture](#), which is grouped with Greek traditions into "[Classical architecture](#)". However, for the course of the Roman Republic, Roman architecture remained stylistically almost identical to [Greek architecture](#). Although there were many differences between Roman and Greek building types, Rome borrowed heavily from Greece in adhering to strict, formulaic building designs and proportions. Aside from two new [orders](#) of columns, [composite](#) and [Tuscan](#), and from the [dome](#), which was derived from the [Etruscan arch](#), Rome had relatively few architectural innovations until the end of the Roman Republic.

It was at this time, in the [1st century BC](#), that Romans started to widely use [concrete](#) (which was invented in the late [3rd century BC](#)), a powerful [cement](#) derived from [pozzolana](#) which soon supplanted [marble](#) as the chief

Roman building material and allowed for numerous daring architectural schemata. Also in the 1st century BC, [Vitruvius](#) wrote *De architectura*, possibly the first complete treatise on architecture in history. In the late [1st century BC](#), Rome also began to make use of [glassblowing](#) soon after its invention in [Syria](#), which occurred about 50 BC, and [mosaics](#) took the Empire by storm after samples were retrieved during [Sulla's](#) campaigns in Greece. [Article on history of Roman concrete](#)



The [Appian Way](#) (*Via Appia*), a road connecting the city of [Rome](#) to the southern parts of [Italy](#), remains usable even today.

Concrete made possible the paved, durable [Roman roads](#), many of which were still in use a thousand years after the fall of Rome. The construction of a vast and efficient travel network throughout the Roman Empire dramatically increased Rome's power and influence. Originally constructed for military purposes, to allow [Roman legions](#) to be rapidly deployed, these highways had enormous economic significance, solidifying Rome's role as a trading crossroads—the origin of the phrase "all roads lead to Rome". The Roman government maintained way stations which provided refreshments to travelers at regular intervals along the roads, constructed bridges where necessary, and established a system of horse relays for [couriers](#) that allowed a dispatch to travel up to 800 km (500 miles) in 24 hours.

The Romans constructed numerous [aqueducts](#) to supply water to cities and industrial sites and to assist in [their agriculture](#). The city of Rome itself was supplied by eleven aqueducts with a combined length of 350 km (260 miles).^[71] Most aqueducts were constructed below the surface, with only small portions above ground supported by arches. Powered entirely by [gravity](#), the aqueducts transported very large amounts of water with an efficiency that remained unsurpassed for two thousand years. Sometimes, where depressions deeper than 50 miles had to be crossed, [inverted siphons](#) were used to force water uphill.^[11]

The Romans also made major advancements in [sanitation](#). Romans were particularly famous for their public [baths](#), called *thermae*, which were used for both hygienic and social purposes. Many Roman houses came to have [flush toilets](#) and [indoor plumbing](#), and a complex [sewer](#) system, the *Cloaca Maxima*, was used to drain the local [marshes](#) and carry waste into the Tiber river. Some historians have speculated that the use of [lead](#) pipes in sewer and plumbing systems led to widespread [lead poisoning](#) which contributed to the decline in [birth rate](#) and general decay of Roman society leading up to the [fall of Rome](#). However, lead content would have been minimized because the flow of water from aqueducts could not be shut off; it ran continuously through public and private outlets into the drains, and only a small number of taps were in use.^[72]

Military

Main articles: [Military history of ancient Rome](#), [Roman military](#), [Roman army](#), and [Roman navy](#)



Roman soldiers on the cast of [Trajan's Column](#) in the Victoria and Albert museum, London.

The early Roman army (circa 530 BCE) was, like those of other contemporary city-states influenced by Greek civilization, a citizen [militia](#) which practiced [hoplite](#) tactics.^[73] By the third century BCE, the Romans abandoned the hoplite formation in favor of a more flexible system in which smaller groups of 120 to 160 men soldiers, called "[maniples](#)," could maneuver more independently on the battlefield. A group of 30 maniples fighting in three mutually supporting lines of ten maniples each, with supporting troops, constituted a legion. An early Republican legion consisted of five sections, each of which was equipped differently and had different places in formation -- the three lines of manipular heavy infantry ([hastati](#), [principes](#) and [triarii](#)), a force of light infantry ([velites](#)) and the cavalry ([equites](#)). At nominal full strength, an early Republican legion

would have included 3,600 to 4,800 heavy infantry, several hundred light infantry and several hundred cavalymen, for a total of 4,000 to 5,000 men.^[74] Legions were often significantly understrength from recruitment failures or following periods of active service due to accidents, battle casualties, disease and desertion. During the Civil War, Pompey's legions in the east were at full strength because recently recruited, while Caesar's legions were in many cases well below nominal strength after long active service in Gaul. This pattern also held true for auxiliary forces.^[75]

As described by Goldsworthy, both the Greek and Roman phalanx and the early Republican legions were intended to fight large scale battles involving a quick, decisive clash with the enemy. At this they were generally very successful.^[76] By the time of the late Republic (circa 150-100 BCE), further organizational change created a more flexible, resilient and versatile force. The legion was now divided into ten cohorts of 480 men each, comprised of three of the old maniples (now called *centuriae* or "centuries" commanded by a [centurion](#)).^[77] Moreover, the *velites* (light infantry) and (probably) the *equites* were eliminated and replaced by *auxilia* (auxiliary units of cavalry, archers and slingers, and light infantry). There were no other subdivisions within a legion, but many men with specialized skills -- engineers, architects, technicians, artillerymen -- were included among the legionaries.^[78] The centuries in a cohort had a unified command structure and were experienced at working together as a unit. A legion organized in cohorts was easier to control, and cohorts could easily be detached and act independently where that was useful on the battlefield or a separate smaller force was needed. Accordingly, legions organized in cohorts could conduct operations of almost any scale.^[79]

Three long-term trends characterized the development of the Roman army over its history: increased professionalization, a widening of the base for recruitment, and an increase in the variety and flexibility of military units. Until the late Republican period, legionaries were largely property-owning citizen farmers from rural areas who served for particular campaigns and who supplied their own equipment and, in the case of *equites*, their own mounts. Harris suggests that down to 200 BCE, the average rural farmer (who survived) might participate in six or seven campaigns. Freedmen and slaves (wherever resident) and urban citizens did not serve except in rare emergencies.^[80] After 200 BCE, economic conditions in rural areas deteriorated as manpower needs increased, so that the property qualifications for service were gradually reduced and soldiers no longer supplied their own equipment. Beginning with [Gaius Marius](#) in 107 BCE, citizens without property and some urban-dwelling citizens (*proletarii*) were enlisted although most legionaries continued to come from rural

areas. Terms of service became continuous and long -- up to twenty years if emergencies required it although Brunt argues that six or seven years was more typical.^[81] Beginning in the third century BCE, legionaries were paid *stipendium* (amounts are disputed but Caesar famously "doubled" payments to his troops to 225 *denarii* a year), could anticipate booty and donatives (distributions of plunder by commanders) from successful campaigns and, beginning at the time of Marius, often were granted allotments of land upon retirement.^[82] Cavalry and light infantry attached to a legion were often recruited in the areas where the legion served. These troops were familiar with local conditions and fought in a style adapted to the local terrain.^[83] Caesar formed a legion, the Fifth Alaudae, from non-citizens in Transalpine Gaul to serve in his campaigns in Gaul.^[84] During the Civil War when large armies were required, both sides raised legions from non-citizens, as Goldsworthy notes, "without bothering with the formality of granting citizenship to the men on enlistment."^[85]

During the Principate, with a few exceptions,^[86] warfare was conducted on a smaller scale. The *auxilia* were not organized into larger units but remained independent cohorts, and legionary troops themselves often operated as groups of cohorts rather than as full legions. A new versatile type of unit, the *cohortes equitatae*, combining cavalry and legionaries in a single formation could be stationed at garrisons or outposts, could fight on their own as balanced small forces or could combine with other similar units as a larger legion-sized force. This increase in organizational flexibility over time helped ensure the long-term success of Roman military forces.^[87]

The Roman army was a marvel of discipline, which arguably made it one of the best armies of its time. Over the course of history, Rome faced many enemies who had more skilled warriors than the average Roman Legionary, at times Roman armies were faced with enemies that held the advantage of superior numbers; yet the Roman legions were still almost always able to come out victorious. The Roman army owed much of its success to its brilliant generals, but no general can command an army that doesn't obey him.

Roman discipline was brutal; running from a battle was generally punished by death, and minor breaches of military rules could earn a flogging. A Legion was trained to virtually worship the silver eagle standard, and its loss in battle meant the Legion's disbanding. The Roman Legions specialized in working as a team and sticking together: the Legionaries would follow their general anywhere, and in the case of the late [Roman](#)

[Republic](#) and the later [Roman Empire](#) this loyalty to individual generals was the largest factor in the famously incessant Roman civil wars.

The Roman army included foreign [Auxiliaries](#) from subjugated peoples almost from its very foundations. They especially relied upon these soldiers in roles where Romans did not traditionally excel such as [cavalry](#) and [archery](#). Somewhat predictably, as Roman territory expanded the ratio of these troops to Roman citizens in the military increased.

The last reorganization of the army came when Emperor [Constantine I](#) divided the army into a static defense force and a mobile field army. During the Late Empire, Rome also became increasingly dependent on allied contingents, *foederati*.

As the Western Roman Empire neared collapse in the 4th and 5th century Rome began to enlist entire tribes into the army rather than recruiting individuals into existing auxiliary units. In effect, Rome had outsourced the defense of their territory to outside peoples. Ultimately, this led to the slow death of the empire as the boundaries between the "[barbarian](#)" realms and Roman lands gradually became more ambiguous and eventually no distinction could be made at all. Almost without exception the new overlords of Roman land continued to rule under a Roman banner and kept the existing Roman institutions in place for approximately another century after the traditional date of the end of the western empire-476, when the position of Emperor (which had long been reduced to the status of a puppet position) was finally abolished by the [Ostrogoths](#) in 476.