

Key Topics Chapter 3

Res publica is a Latin term that means government of the people. The term is Latin because Romans spoke Latin. The first Roman government was a monarchy, but over two hundred years, the middle class became powerful. The *res publica* of Rome was ruled by two main classes of citizens: the plebians, small land owners who used their service in the military as leverage, and the patricians, large landowners who initially held the responsibility to make laws. The plebians did not have the right to make laws at first, but over time, they were granted this ability.

Rome's Rise to Empire: Rome's rise to power began with the strategic selection of land on the Italian Peninsula, which provided superb access points to both the Mediterranean Sea and the lands to the north. With a strong government, in addition to a vast army, Rome was able to focus on imperialism. The first targets of the people of Rome were the Etruscans. Next, Rome set its sight on conquering the rest of the Italian Peninsula. After conquering the Etruscans, Phoenicians, and Greeks, Rome was able to adopt the best parts of each culture. Roman conquest was primarily successful because they did not force the people whom they conquered to believe in a new set of values. Instead, the Romans helped the regions that they conquered by building roads, aqueducts, and bridges.

Caesar's Rome: Over time, with increased power of the senate, increased joblessness of the plebians, and increased economic advantage of the patricians, Rome's leadership fell to the hands of army generals. Caesar was the first general to declare dictatorship in Rome.

The husband of Queen Cleopatra of Egypt, he codified laws, regulated taxes, diminished debts, and initiated large public works. After two years as dictator, he was assassinated by political opponents.

Agustus and Pax Romana: Following the rule of Caesar, Octavian, Caesar's grandnephew, won the right to rule Rome for life after defeating the combined army of Queen Cleopatra and Mark Anthony. The senate dubbed him 'Agustus,' which means 'the revered one'. Although the senate was still able to make laws, Augustus was able to veto each law; therefore, he was a dictator. The period of time during his reign and approximately 200 years after was referred to as the *pax romana*, which means an era of peace and stability. During this time, Roman literature, art, and drama flourished. In addition, there were many public works and the religion of Christianity was born.

Roman Law: Roman law (as well as Roman society in general) focused on practical needs. The primary reason that the citizens of Rome (especially far from Athens) followed Roman law was the uniting force of engineering programs throughout the empire. Although the Romans created a basic law system, the law was constantly changing based on the opinions of the populous.

Oratory: With increased technology and the division of labor, Romans were able to pursue many other professions other than agriculture. Some of these Romans turned to art. In addition, the increased amount of time that common Romans had meant that they had time to read literature, view art, and watch theatrical performances. From these professions, as well as several others, came the art of public speaking, or oratory.

Stoicism: With practical needs in mind, most Romans adapted to stoicism. Stoicism was the belief that happiness resulted from one's acceptance of their fate. Thus, in everyday life, most Romans tended to accept all things around them. Stoicism was yet another reason that Romans found their government acceptable.

Satire: One literary element that Roman writers employed was the art of satires. A satire is a humorous account of the events, ideas, or people around the writer. The writer attempts to draw a point to the focus of the writing by making fun of it. The pioneers in Roman satire include Horace and Juvenal. Juvenal was especially bitter because he wrote sixteen satires about subjects such as filth, selfish people, violence, self-indulgence, and misogyny.

Misogyny: Misogyny is an anti-feminine belief. Several popular Roman poets targeted females in a negative way as a form to express their feelings about love and marriage. One such poet, Ovid, was sentenced to exile by expressing misogynic feelings in *The Art of Love*. Another famous poet was Juvenal, who wrote a (truthful) poem named *Against Women*.

Arch/vault/dome: The Roman deployment of arches, vaults, and domes are one of the greatest achievements in the Roman era. First adopted from the Etruscans, the Romans made many additional improvements by using better materials and new designs. One of these improvements was the vault, which was a long row of arches. Another was the dome, which resembled a hemi-sphere. The Romans used these types of arches for the public works, such as large aqueducts, and public buildings, such as the coliseum and the Pantheon.

Roman Engineering: Armed with their new building innovation, the Romans built many buildings. When designing a building, the Romans emphasized practicality and the use of new technologies such as concrete. Architects were so innovative that they designed villas, theaters, and temples based on their purpose and function. Roman Architects also devised hydraulic and city planning systems.

Art as propaganda: With their ability to build large-scale buildings, the Romans were able to draw attention towards these buildings. By building large public buildings like the Pantheon, Coliseum, and bathhouses, The Roman government boasted its importance to Roman citizens; who in turn admired the government. Another form of propaganda was the construction of grand war monuments. These monuments made the citizens of Rome have pride, and therefore loyalty, to their government.

Heroic portraiture: As another means of propaganda, the Romans constructed large sculptures of their emperors. In sculpture, the Romans depicted their emperors as supreme rulers with ultimate authority. Additionally, Romans used an idealistic style to depict their emperors, even though Roman art is mainly realistic.

Ancestor portraits: Romans placed very high value on family lineage, so it is no surprise that they represented their families with portraits or sculptures. Although most of the work of Romans was done in a realistic style, these family portraits were often idealistic to honor their family.

Pompeii's paintings and mosaics: Pompeii, which was one the dwelling city of upper-class Romans, and later the site of a massive volcanic eruption that decimated the town, was home to many Roman frescoes. Frescoes were by means of paint of mosaic. The

Roman's most likely adopted the idea of the mosaic from the Greeks. Because of the lava from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, many Roman mosaics were preserved. Mosaics were often found on the walls of atriums, which were a meeting place of the Romans. Artists attempted to cover the walls in such a way that the people inside felt as if there were no walls.

China's rise to empire: The Chinese rise to empire was very similar to the Roman rise to empire. Like the Romans, the Chinese controlled a vast military force. China used this force to defeat rival states and gain control over the land and people. China preserved old religion, literature, law, and arts. China did not base their everyday living on religion. Although they believed in realistic purposes, they also placed honor with the dead (especially emperors).

Han culture and technology: The Han Dynasty, which lasted approximately four centuries, from 210 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. was an era of technologic advancement. The Hans invented paper, block printing, the seismograph, the crossbow, the horse collar, and the wheelbarrow. In addition, they made landmark achievements in areas such as cartography, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy.

China's royal tombs: China's royal, or imperial, tombs were burials grounds for the emperors. These sites preserve the legacy of the emperor for eternity. Terra-cotta figures, which were life-sized, painted sculptures, accompanied the grounds as a means to replace living sacrifices and scare tomb raiders. The purpose of these sculptures was to serve the dead, rather than the living.