



ROMAN ART & ARCHITECTURE

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Portrait of a Young Woman, Pompeii, 1st century CE

Lime wood mummy portrait of a woman, Roman Period Egypt, 160–170 CE

- The Romans were practical, down-to-earth people who excelled at war and administration. They admired Greek art, collected it and employed Greek artists but they also added to Greek art as you can see from this wall painting from Pompeii.
- Let us begin with a five minute guide to the rise and fall of the Roman Empire...

NOTES

Introduction (5-10 minutes):

- Briefly introduce the historical context of ancient Rome, spanning from the Republic to the Empire.
- Highlight key periods like Early Republic, Late Republic, Early Empire, and Late Empire.
- Mention the dominant materials used: concrete, marble, volcanic rock.
- Briefly address the functions of Roman art and architecture: religious purposes, civic expression, commemoration, leisure, everyday life.

Early Roman Art and Architecture (10-15 minutes):

- Discuss the influence of Etruscan and Greek art on early Roman forms.
- Briefly address the development of portrait sculptures and their realistic

style.

- Touch upon the emergence of temples and their adaptation of Doric, Ionic, and eventually Corinthian orders.
- Mention the early use of concrete and its impact on architectural possibilities.

Late Republic and Early Empire (15-20 minutes):

- Focus on the golden age under Augustus and its artistic advancements.
- Discuss the iconic Ara Pacis Augustae and its relief sculptures depicting religious and political themes.
- Highlight the architectural marvels of the Roman Forum, including the Pantheon and Colosseum, explaining their innovative features and symbolic importance.
- Mention the development of narrative reliefs and their historical depictions.
- Briefly touch upon Pompeian art and its insights into domestic life and decoration.

Early Empire and Flavian Dynasty (10-15 minutes):

- Discuss the Flavian Colosseum and its engineering marvels, highlighting its function and symbolism.
- Briefly mention the Arch of Titus and its victory commemoration narrative.
- Touch upon the baths of Caracalla and their grand scale and luxurious features.

Late Empire (10-15 minutes):

- Briefly explain the political and social changes leading to the decline of the empire.
- Discuss the shift towards religious art and the rise of Early Christian symbols in mosaics and sarcophagi.
- Mention the architectural changes due to resource constraints and defensive needs, like smaller structures and thicker walls.
- Briefly touch upon the development of Byzantine art and its

connection to Roman traditions.

Conclusion (5-10 minutes):

- Briefly summarize the key features and contributions of Roman art and architecture.
- Mention the legacy of Roman art on later artistic movements, like Renaissance architecture and sculpture.

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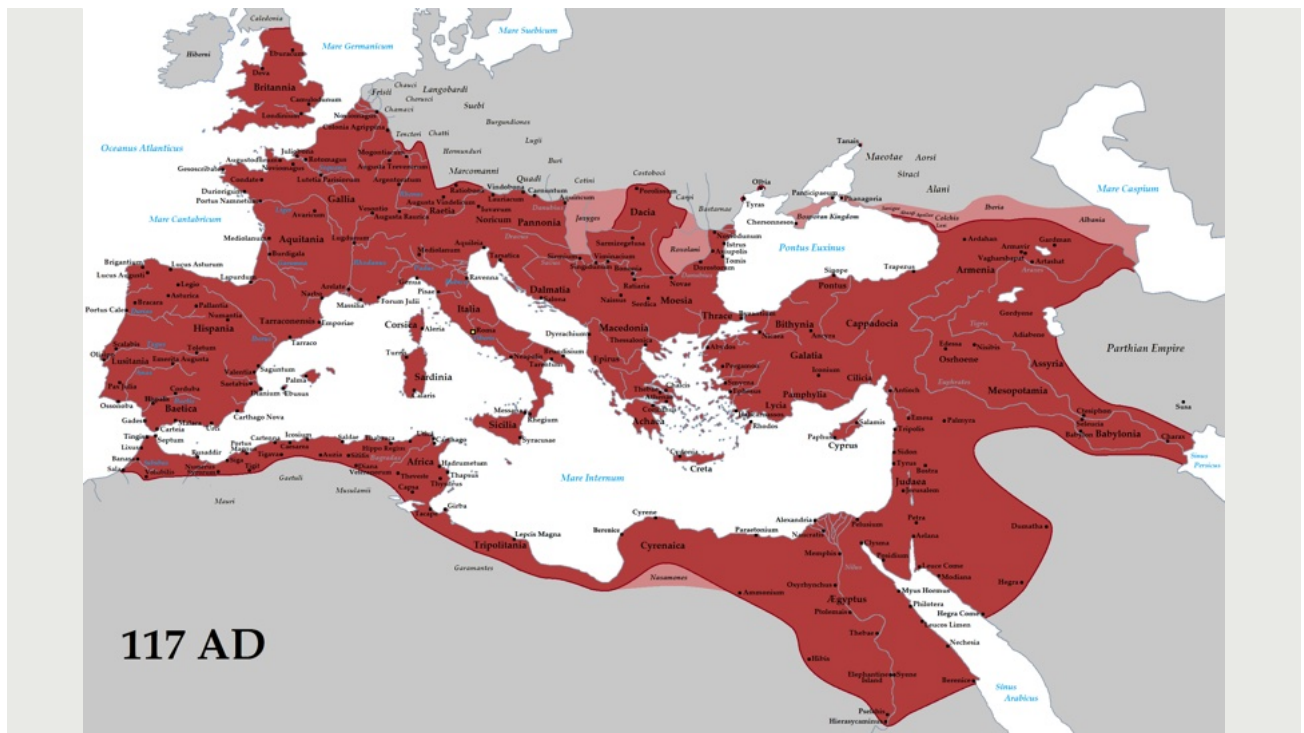
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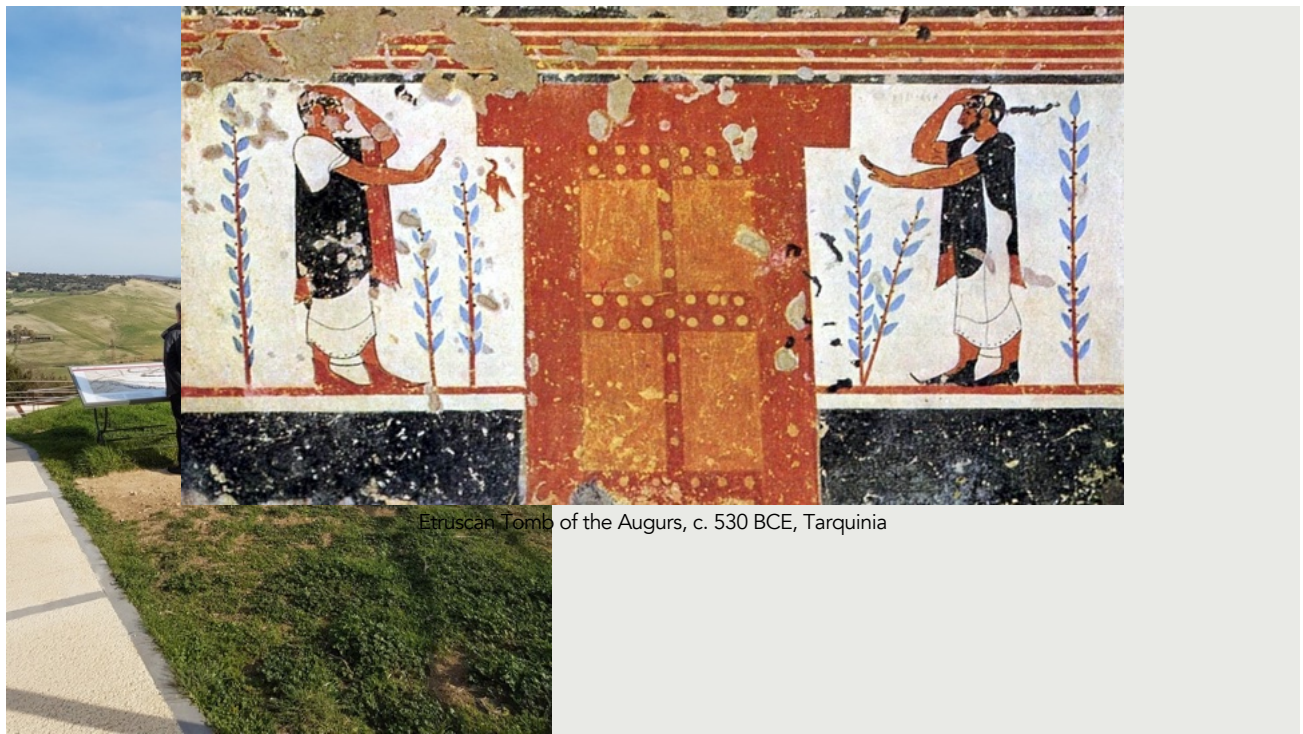
- This is the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in 117 CE, the time of Trajan's death. Vassal states are shown in pink.
- The Roman Empire began as a small city-state on the Tiber River in central Italy, founded according to legend by **Romulus and Remus** in 753 BCE. [1][2] Over the next several centuries, Rome grew from a monarchy into a powerful republic, conquering much of the Mediterranean world. [1][2]
- **The Etruscans** were an ancient civilisation of city states in that dominated most of Italy. The civilisation dates back to about 900 BCE. Rome gradually became the most powerful and important city in Etruria and in 509 BCE Julius Brutus expelled the Etruscans from Rome and Rome became a Republic and from then on the Roman people hated the title of king.
- Rome gradually grew in size and in 275 BCE **defeated the Greeks** and took control of the **whole of Italy**. The other great power in the Mediterranean were the **Carthaginians** and the **Punic Wars** (264-146 BCE) resulted in Rome gradually taking control of all the lands around the Mediterranean lands.
- In **27 BCE**, the **first Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar**, took power, marking the transition from the **Roman Republic to the Roman Empire**. [1][2] Under Augustus and the subsequent **Julio-Claudian dynasty**, the Roman Empire experienced a **golden age** known as the **Pax Romana**

(Roman Peace), with expansions of territory, economic prosperity, and cultural achievements. [1][2]

- The **Roman military** was a key factor in the empire's success, with a highly trained and disciplined army that conquered territories across Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. [2][3] Emperors like Trajan further expanded the empire to its greatest territorial extent. [2]
- **After the Julio-Claudian dynasty was the Flavian dynasty** (69-96 CE, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian), when the Roman Empire faced increasing challenges, including political instability, economic decline, and external threats. [1][2][3]
- Factors contributing to the empire's fall included:
 - Conflict between the emperor and the Roman Senate [3]
 - Weakening of the emperor's authority, especially after the **rise of Christianity** [2]
 - **Political corruption** and the lack of a clear system for choosing new emperors [3]
 - Excessive **spending on luxuries**, parties, and the military [3]
 - **The use of slave labour** and the decline of small farmers [3]
 - **Invasions by Germanic tribes** and other external threats [1][4]
- The sack of Rome by the Visigoths in 410 CE was a major blow, and the **last Roman emperor in the West, Romulus Augustulus**, was overthrown by the Germanic chieftain **Odoacer** (pronounced 'OH+doh+AY+suh) in 476 CE, marking the formal **end of the Western Roman Empire**. [1][4] The Eastern Roman Empire, known as the **Byzantine Empire**, continued for nearly a millennium after the fall of the West.
- In summary, the Roman Empire rose from a small city-state to become one of **the greatest civilizations in history**, only to eventually succumb to a combination of political, economic, social, and military factors over several centuries. [1][2][3][4]

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Etruscan Tomb of the Augurs, c. 530 BCE, Tarquinia

- Returning to the **Etruscans**. They were an ancient civilisation of city states that dominated most of Italy and they date back to about 900 BCE.
- This is me at the site of ancient Tarquinia, one of the most important Etruscan cities. The tombs at this site date back to the Iron Age, 900 BCE, and they are well preserved.
- (CLICK) This is one of the many Etruscan tomb paintings. In 509 BCE Julius Brutus expelled the Etruscans from Rome and Rome became a Republic.
- Rome gradually grew in size and in 275 BCE **defeated the Greeks** and took control of the **whole of Italy**.
- Early Roman art was influenced by Etruscan and Greek but we know very little about what was produced during the first few hundred years of Rome independence from the Etruscans.

NOTES

Introduction (5-10 minutes):

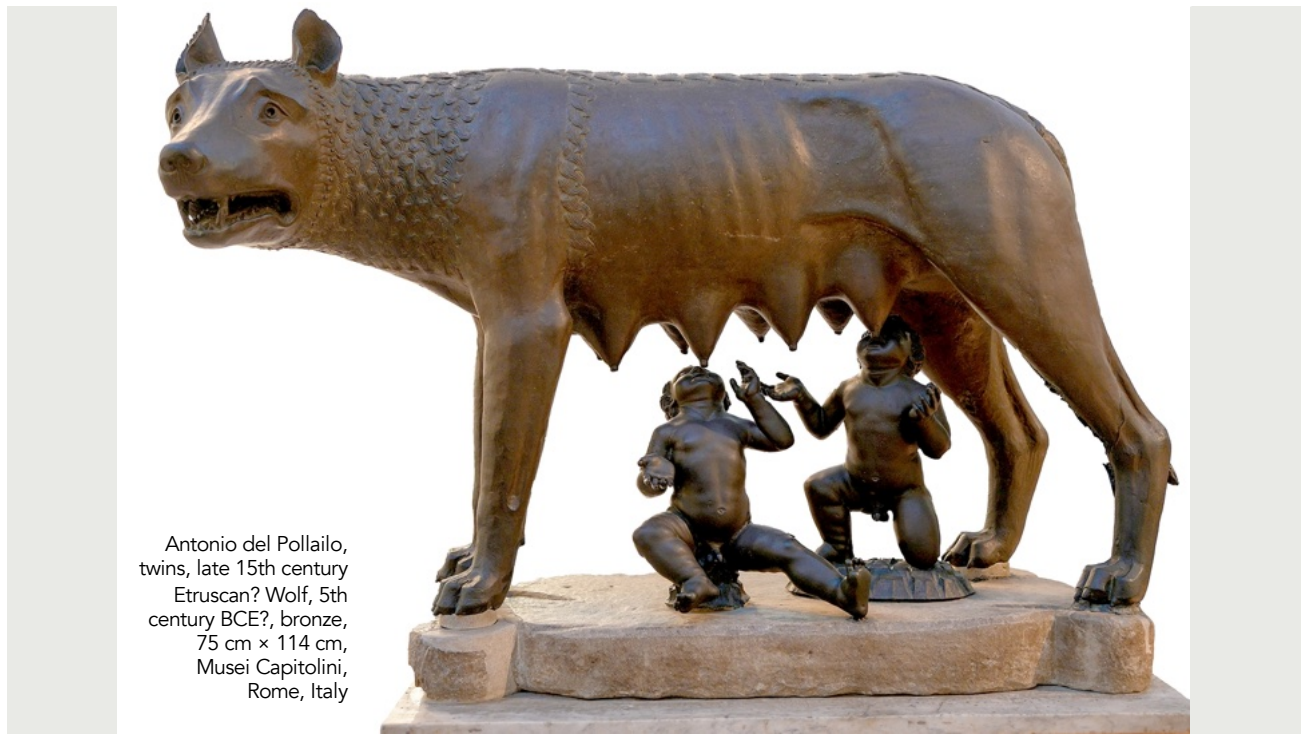
- **Early Republic** (509-27 BCE):
- Founded after overthrowing the Etruscan monarchy, the Roman Republic saw a period of expansion and political experimentation.

- Key figures like Cincinnatus embodied the ideals of citizen-soldiers and civic duty.
- Punic Wars against Carthage cemented Rome's dominance in the Mediterranean.
- Internal struggles between patricians and plebeians led to social and political reforms.
- **Late Republic** (27 BCE-44 BCE):
 - Growing territorial gains and wealth led to corruption and instability.
 - Powerful generals like Marius and Sulla challenged traditional power structures.
 - Julius Caesar's rise to power and eventual assassination plunged the Republic into civil war.
 - Mark Antony and Octavian (later Augustus) emerged victorious, paving the way for a new era.
- **Early Empire** (27 BCE-193 CE):
 - Augustus ushered in the Pax Romana, a period of relative peace and prosperity.
 - Trade flourished, art and architecture thrived, and Roman culture spread.
 - Emperors like Trajan expanded the empire to its maximum size, stretching from Britain to Mesopotamia.
 - Stoicism and other philosophies gained prominence, influencing Roman thought.
- **Late Empire** (193 CE-476 CE):
 - Political instability, economic woes, and barbarian invasions challenged the empire's unity.
 - Diocletian divided the empire into East and West for better administration.
 - Christianity gained ground, eventually becoming the official religion.
 - The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 CE under pressure from barbarian groups.
 - The Eastern Roman Empire, later known as Byzantine, persisted for

another thousand years.

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- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capitoline_Brutus
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tomb_of_the_Augurs



Antonio del Pollaiolo,
twins, late 15th century
Etruscan? Wolf, 5th
century BCE?, bronze,
75 cm × 114 cm,
Musei Capitolini,
Rome, Italy

Antonio del Pollaiuolo (c. 1432-1498), twins, late 15th century
Etruscan? Wolf, 5th century BCE?, bronze, 75 cm × 114 cm, Musei
Capitolini, Rome, Italy

- This is one very famous but controversial work from the period. It is possibly a 5th century BCE Etruscan bronze wolf but the twins were added by the Renaissance artist Antonio del Pollaiuolo (c. 1432-1498). The twins represent Romulus and Remus the legendary founders of Rome.
- Radiocarbon and thermoluminescence dating suggest but do not prove that the wolf may have been cast between 1021 and 1153 CE but the results are inconsistent and there is no agreement among the experts. So, for the time being, we will take the wolf as an example of ancient Etruscan art.

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Aldobrandini Wedding, fresco, 1st century BCE, 92 × 242 cm, Vatican Library

Aldobrandini Wedding, fresco, 1st century BCE, 92 × 242 cm, Vatican Library

- More certain is the so-called Aldobrandini Wedding from the second half of the first century BCE.
- There are a large number of statues exists from the 1st century BCE onwards but very little wall painting until 79 CE and the preserved works at Pompeii and Herculaneum. This work is one of the few early wall paintings. It was **discovered about 1600 in a house on the Esquiline Hill** and became the property of the Aldobrandini family until it was bought by the Vatican.
- It is painted in what modern historians call the Third Style, for more details see my talk The Invention of Antiquity.
- There a **ten people in three groups** situated both, on the left and centre, indoors and, on the right, outdoors. On the left a white hooded woman tests the temperature of water in a bowl on a pedestal from which hangs a towel. In the centre the woman wearing sandals with her legs crossed is the goddess of persuasion (Peitho). On the bed sits the bride and another bare breasted goddess, Venus, embraces her. On the right sitting at the foot. Of the bed is Hymen, the god of marriage.
- On the right three young women stand round an incense burner. One puts essences while another wears a crown of leaves and the third plays a

lyre.

- There are **various mythological interpretations** but it is clear the bride is suffering anxiety and is being **reassured by Venus** as she waits for the bridegroom. On the left is the Roman ceremony, called the acceptance of water and fire, that was used to accept the bride into the bridegroom's house. On the right is an offering to auspicious fortune while playing a wedding song that accompanied the bride into her new home.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldobrandini_Wedding



- This is the Temple of Mercury, from the 1st century BCE, the oldest surviving concrete dome and the largest before the Pantheon
- The Romans adopted the style of ancient Greek architecture that I describe in my talk on Greek art.
- Rome built large, buildings that were well engineered and many were used **Roman concrete**. This magic material is only now being fully understood as to how it achieved its great strength. It often used pozzolanic ash from the Bay of Naples and different types of lime to stop cracks from spreading. Unlike modern concrete it was laid rather than poured and like modern concrete it could set under water.
- Romans were lovers of beauty and we know that their buildings were covered inside with frescoes.
- Buildings were for religious and civic purposes, commemoration, as well as dwellings and leisure purposes.

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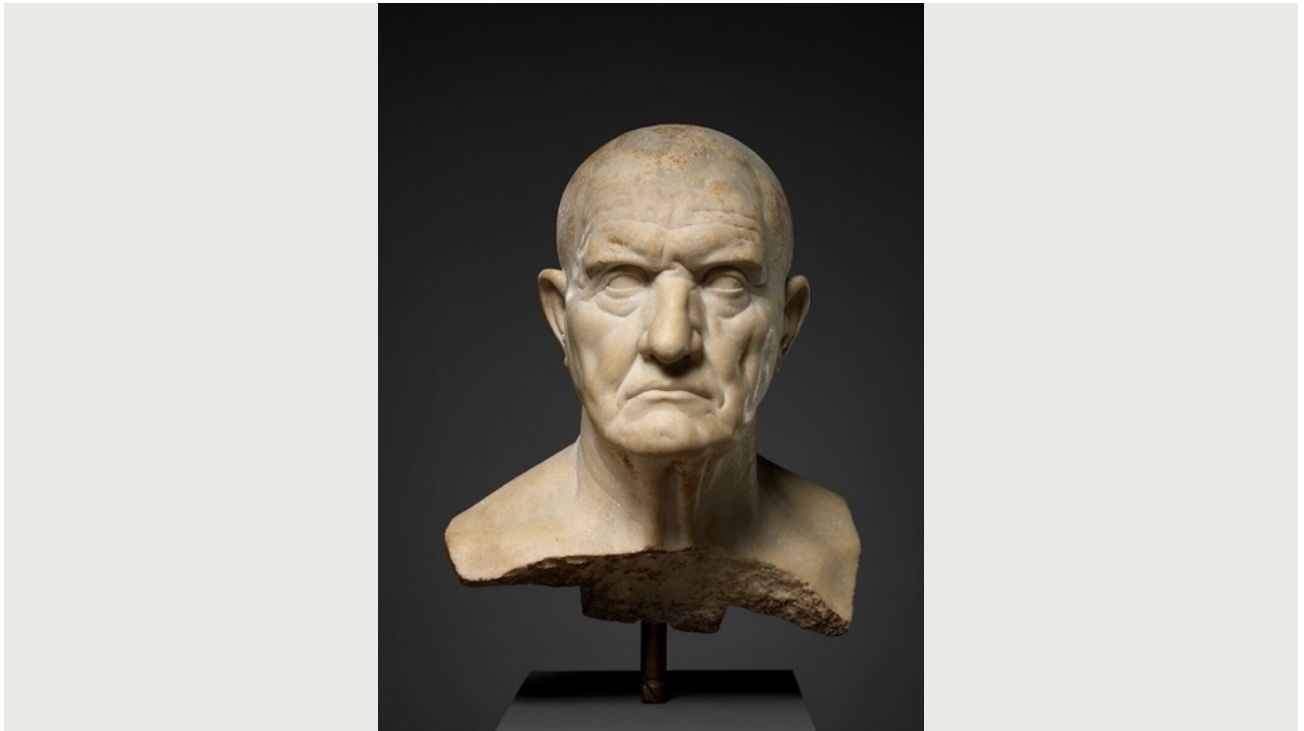
Capitoline Brutus, possibly Lucius Junius Brutus c. 275 BCE, 69 cm high, Capitoline Museums

Capitoline Brutus, possibly Lucius Junius Brutus c. 275 BCE, 69 cm high, Capitoline Museums

- Traditionally this was regarded as an **early example** of Roman portraiture, perhaps by an Etruscan artist influenced by Hellenistic art and contemporary Greek styles of portraiture.
- It was also traditionally but probably wrongly thought to be an imagined portrait of the Roman consul Lucius Junius Brutus (d. 509 BC).
- It has long been dated to the late 4th to early 3rd centuries BCE, but modern scholarship suggests it is perhaps as late as the 2nd century BCE, or early 1st century BCE as there was then a fashion for producing portraits in the ancient style.
- So, a lot of unknowns, but we do know that accurate portraiture was an important art form for the Romans.

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Marble bust of a man, Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian, mid-1st century CE, marble, 36.5 cm, The Met

Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, a cast from the original in bronze, found in Pompeii, c. 79 CE, now in the Naples National Archaeological Museum.

Marble portrait bust of the emperor Gaius, known as Caligula, Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian, 37–41 CE, Roman, marble, height 50.8 cm The Met

Marble bust of a woman, Late Imperial, mid-3rd century CE, Roman, marble, height 65.1 cm, The Met

The Patrician Torlonia bust thought to be of Cato the Elder (234-149 BCE)

- Portrait busts were taken from casts made during the lifetime of the person or from death masks as an accurate depiction, "warts and all" was regarded as important. They were displayed in the house in commemoration of the death and to demonstrate the ancestral greatness, wealth and power of the family.
- (CLICK) This is an unknown man from the mid-first century CE.
- (CLICK) Lucius Caecilius Iucundus, a cast from the original in bronze, found in Pompeii, c. 79 CE.
- (CLICK) The emperor Gaius, known as Caligula, Early Imperial, Julio-Claudian, 37–41 CE.

- (CLICK) and the marble bust of a woman from the mid-third century CE.
- (CLICK) This is thought to be a bust of Cato the Elder, possibly a copy of an earlier bust. Cato the Elder was the first to write history in Latin and his great grandson, Cato the Younger was the one who opposed Julius Caesar.
- As you can see Roman portrait busts were realistic unlike the idealised greek sculptures.

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Augustus of Prima Porta, 1st century, white marble, height: 204 cm, Vatican Museums



Augustus of Prima Porta, 1st century, white marble, height: 204 cm, Vatican Museums

- This is one of the most famous sculptures of the ancient world. It called the **Augustus of Prima Porta** and is a full-length portrait statue of **Augustus Caesar**, the first emperor of the Roman Empire.
- The statue was discovered in 1863, during archaeological excavations at the **Villa of Livia** owned by Augustus' third and final wife, **Livia Drusilla in Prima Porta**. Livia had retired to the villa after Augustus's death in CE 14.
- Crafted by skilled **Greek sculptors**, the marble statue is believed to be a **copy of a lost original bronze piece** displayed in Rome. It blends Greek and Roman elements. The head shows a realistic youthful Augustus but the body diverges from reality; despite its clothed form, it resembles the heroic stance found in Greek statues. The detail on the armour symbolises peace along the eastern frontier of the Roman Empire.[2]

NOTES

- The statue stands 2.08 metres (6 ft 10 in) tall and weighs 1,000 kilograms (2,200 lb).
- The Augustus of Prima Porta is now displayed in the Braccio Nuovo (New Arm) of the Vatican Museums. Since its discovery, it has become the best known of Augustus' portraits and one of the most famous sculptures of

the ancient world.

- The small Cupid figure at Augustus' right leg, riding a dolphin, is a reference to Augustus' divine lineage and the claimed descent of the family from the mother of Cupid, the goddess Venus. The dolphin symbolises Augustus' naval victory over Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium.

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Venus de' Medici. Marble, 1st century BCE, marble, height 1.53 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

The Capitoline Venus, height 193 cm, Capitoline Museums

Borghese Venus, 2nd century, marble, height: 192 cm, Borghese Collection, Louvre

Engraving of a coin from Knidos showing the Aphrodite of Cnidus, by Praxiteles

- I have talked about the Romans copying Greek originals and about how there are many copies so I thought I would chose one example of a well-known figure, Venus Pudica.
- (CLICK) It was one of the most widely copied statues in the ancient world. The original was lost but luckily we have an early coin, shown here, which shows Aphrodite holding a cloth in her left hand while covering her private parts with her right hand.
- The three examples I am showing here are well-known copies of the original by the famous Greek sculptor Praxiteles. As you can see the left hand now covers her private parts while her right hand covers her breasts. These copies have adopted a more modest pose known as the Capitoline Venus sub-type and a pose that is less appropriate to a goddess who knows no shame.

- The one on the left is the **Venus de' Medici**, believed to be a 1st-century BCE marble copy, perhaps made in Athens, of a bronze original Greek sculpture, following the type of the Aphrodite of Cnidos by Praxiteles. It was one of the most famous statues found during the Renaissance period and became the high point of the eighteenth-century Grand tour.
- The central figure is the **Capitoline Venus** a copy from the Antonine period, that is 96-192 CE. It was found on the Viminal Hill in Rome about 1670–76 was purchased by the Pope (Benedict XIV) and given to the Capitoline Museums.
- The figure on the right is the **Borghese Venus**, one of those in the Louvre. It is a 2nd century CE Roman marble copy of the Capitoline Venus subtype. It is in the Louvre as it was purchased by Napoleon from the Borghese collection. Cupid and the dolphin are attributes of Aphrodite but were probably added by the Roman copyist.

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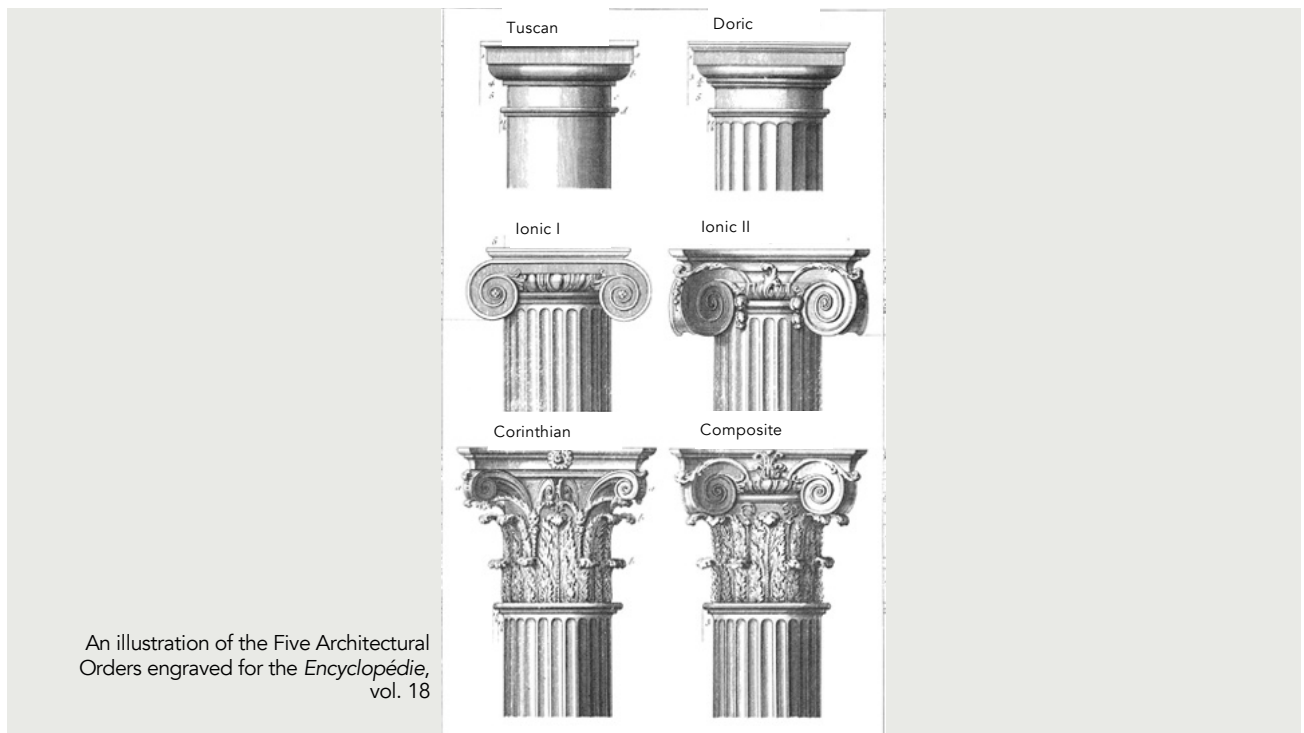
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Capitoline Venus

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An illustration of the Five Architectural Orders engraved for the *Encyclopédie*, vol. 18

An illustration of the Five Architectural Orders engraved for the *Encyclopédie*, vol. 18

- My talk on Greek Art explains how the ancient Greeks developed two distinct orders, the Doric and the Ionic, together occasionally with a third the Corinthian. The Romans adopted and adapted these in the 1st century BCE and added the Tuscan and Composite orders and they have been used ever since in Western architecture.
- In the early 15th century the only work on architecture from ancient Greece and Rome was rediscovered, ***De architectura*** by **Vitruvius**. Based on his work Renaissance and Baroque architects developed strict rules of proportion to a level of detail and rigidity undreamed of by the Greeks and even more rarely observed by the Romans.

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The Temple of
Hercules Victor, late
2nd century BCE,
Forum Boarium,
Rome



The Temple of Hercules Victor, late 2nd century BCE, Forum Boarium, Rome

- This is the **Temple of Hercules Victor**, the earliest surviving mostly intact marble building in Rome and the only surviving one made of Greek marble. It is situated in the former cattle market or Forum Boarium.
- It is a Roman temple to Hercules in the Greek tholos or round temple style. It is a Greek peripteral design which means the inner building is completely surrounded by columns, in this case Corinthian columns. The original roof has been replaced.
- It is well preserved because from 1132 to 1809 it was a Christian church.

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Gemma Augustea, Roman cameo, early imperial era. A depiction of Emperor Augustus surrounded by goddesses and allegories, CE 9-12, height: 19 × 23.1 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum



Gemma Augustea, Roman cameo, early imperial era, CE 9-12, height: 19 × 23.1 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum

Low-relief cameo-engraved gem, cut from a double-layered Arabian onyx stone. The gold frame is 17th century, German

- We are now in the golden age of Augustus. This exquisitely carved cameo is called the Gemma Augusta and shows the Emperor Augustus seated on an ornate throne, being crowned by the goddess Roma. Surrounding him are various allegorical figures and symbols representing the power, prosperity, and divine favour of Augustus' rules.

NOTES

- The Gemma Augustea is a renowned cameo gemstone carving that dates to around 10-20 CE, during the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus.
- This masterpiece of Roman glyptic art depicts a grand imperial scene, with Augustus seated on an ornate throne, being crowned by the goddess Roma. Surrounding him are various allegorical figures and symbols representing the power, prosperity, and divine favour of Augustus' rule.
- The Gemma Augustea is praised for its exceptional technical skill and artistry. The intricate carving of the multiple layers of the semi-precious stone creates a striking three-dimensional effect, with the figures and

details rendered with remarkable precision and realism.

- In addition to the technical mastery, the Gemma Augustea is also renowned for its sophisticated iconography and symbolism. The composition and imagery are carefully crafted to glorify Augustus and promote his status as a divinely-ordained ruler.
- For example, the inclusion of figures like Victory, Tellus (the earth goddess), and personifications of the Roman provinces convey themes of imperial conquest, fertility, and the expansion of Roman power under Augustus.
- Overall, the Gemma Augustea is considered a masterpiece of Augustan art that exemplifies the artistic and propagandistic achievements of the Roman golden age. Its technical virtuosity and symbolic complexity make it one of the most celebrated works of Roman imperial art.
- **REFERENCES**
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Ara Pacis dedicated to Pax, the Roman goddess of Peace. Museum of the Ara Pacis, Rome

Ara Pacis Augustae (Latin, "Altar of Augustan Peace"; commonly shortened to Ara Pacis). an altar in Rome dedicated to Pax, the Roman goddess of Peace, original west side, Museum of the Ara Pacis, Rome

- The **Altar of Augustan Peace** or Ara Pacis Augustae was commissioned by the Roman Senate to honour the return of Augustus to Rome after three years in Hispania and Gaul. It was consecrated in 9 BCE and is a testament to Augustan propaganda.
- **It has been moved** from its original location a mile away as it was in the former flood plain of the Tiber River and gradually became buried under 4 metres (13 ft) of silt deposits. It was reassembled in its current location, now the **Museum of the Ara Pacis**, in 1938, turned 90° counterclockwise from its original orientation so that the original western side now faces south.
- (CLICK) This is the well preserved and original frieze from the south wall. There is still a lot of argument among scholars about the figures. The **tall veiled priest is agreed to be Marcus Agrippa**. The small child behind him is non-Roman, probably a an eastern barbarian prince taken hostage. The woman to the right of the child is either Livia or Julia, Augustus's daughter.

NOTES

- An important example of high art from the golden age of Augustus is the Ara Pacis Augustae (Altar of Augustan Peace).
- The Ara Pacis Augustae was a monumental altar commissioned by the Roman Senate in 13 BCE to honour the peace and prosperity brought by Augustus' reign. It is described as "one of the most famous examples of Augustan monumental sculptures in Rome" and a testament to Augustan propaganda. [3]
- The Ara Pacis features intricate sculptural friezes that illustrate the origins of Rome, the Julian lineage, and the peace and prosperity of Augustus' rule. The incredible level of detail, precision, and thought that went into its construction is noted as "remarkable" and "undeniably noteworthy." [3]
- The Ara Pacis is also described as exemplifying the "rich iconography of Augustus's reign" through its strong themes of "legitimacy, stability, fertility, prosperity, and religious piety." [5] These themes were central to Augustus' efforts to promote the legitimacy of his rule and the new "golden age" of the Roman Empire.
- Additionally, the Ara Pacis incorporated classical Greek sculptural styles, such as the contrapposto pose, to connect Augustus' reign to the glory of ancient Greece. This blending of Roman and Greek artistic traditions was characteristic of the Augustan "golden age." [2][4]
- In summary, the Ara Pacis Augustae stands out as a prime example of the high quality, symbolic, and propagandistic art that flourished during the golden age of Augustus' rule over the Roman Empire.

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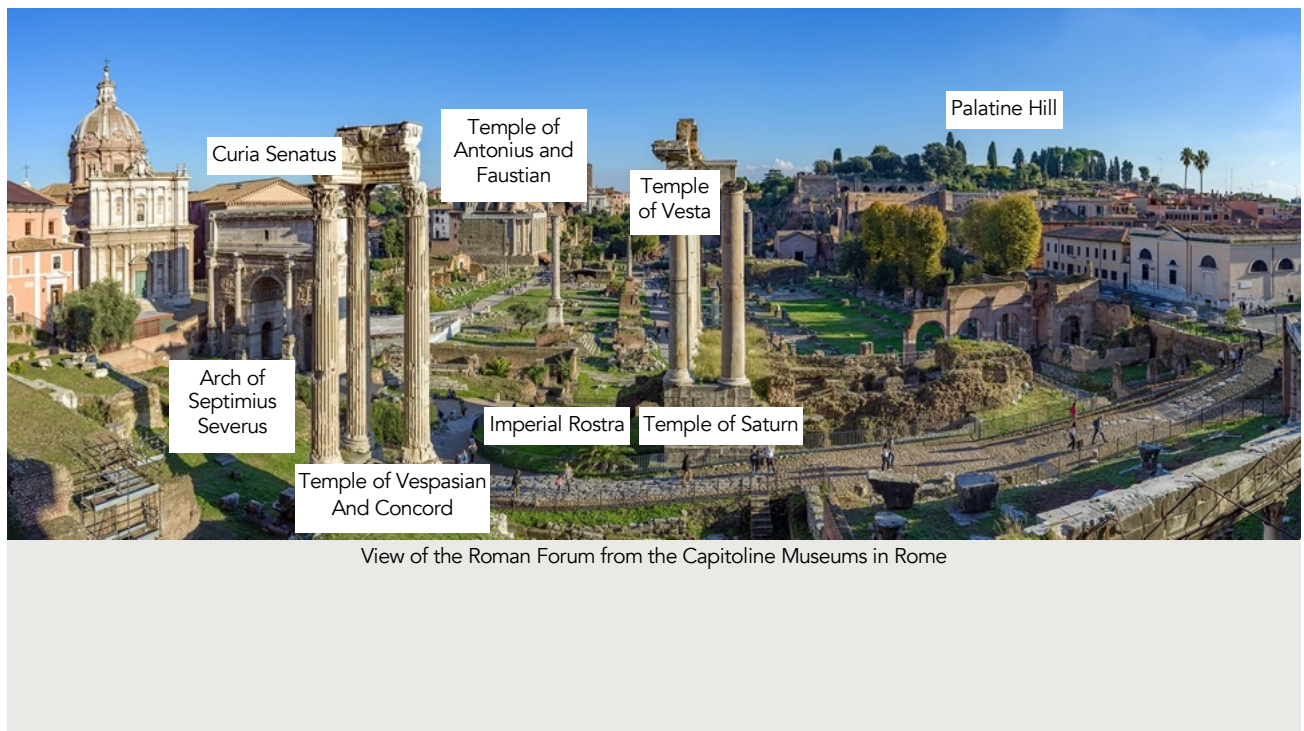
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View of the Roman Forum from the Capitoline Museums in Rome

Late Republic and Early Empire (15-20 minutes):

- Highlight the architectural marvels of the Roman Forum,
- **The Temple of Saturn** was an ancient Roman temple to the god Saturn at the foot of the Capitoline Hill at the western end of the Roman Forum. The original dedication of the temple is traditionally dated to 497 BC, Construction of the temple is thought to have begun in the later years of the Roman Kingdom under Tarquinius Superbus.
- **The Imperial Rostra** was a large platform built in the city of Rome that stood during the republican and imperial periods. Speakers would stand on the rostra and face the north side towards the senate house and deliver orations to those assembled in between.
- **Temple of Vespasian and Titus.** It is dedicated to the deified Vespasian and his son, the deified Titus. It was begun by Titus in 79 after Vespasian's death and Titus's succession. Titus' brother, Domitian, completed and dedicated the temple to Titus and Vespasian in approximately 87. Throughout Roman history, there was an emphasis on increasing the fame and glory of a family name, often through monuments commemorating the deceased. Therefore, the temple was constructed to honour the Flavian Dynasty
- **Arch of Septimius Severus.** a white marble triumphal arch dedicated in

203 CE to commemorate the Parthian victories of Emperor Septimius Severus and his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, in the two campaigns against the Parthians of 194-195 and 197–199.

- **Curia Sanatus.** This was the third senate house. It was built in 44 BC, when Julius Caesar replaced Faustus Cornelius Sulla's reconstructed Curia Cornelia, which itself had replaced the Curia Hostilia. It survives mostly intact as it was converted to a church in the 7th century, however, the roof and upper side walls are modern.
- **Temple of Antoninus and Faustina.** is an ancient Roman temple later converted into a Roman Catholic church (Chiesa di San Lorenzo in Miranda). The temple was constructed by the Emperor Antoninus Pius, beginning in 141 CE. It was initially dedicated to his deceased and deified wife, Faustina the Elder. Because of this, Faustina was the first Roman empress with a permanent presence in the Roman Forum.
- **Temple of Vesta.** Next to the House of the Vestal Virgins. The Temple of Vesta housed Vesta's holy fire, which was a symbol of Rome's safety and prosperity. The temple has a circular footprint, making it a Greek-style tholos.
- **Palatine Hill.** Is one of the seven hills of Rome and has been called "the first nucleus of the Roman Empire". Imperial palaces were built there, starting with Augustus. Before imperial times the hill was mostly occupied by the houses of the rich. The name of the hill is the origin of the word 'palace'. According to Roman legend Romulus and Remus were suckled by the she-wolf Lupa who kept them alive in a cave on the Palatine. Dominating the site is the Palace of Domitian which was rebuilt largely during the reign of Domitian over earlier buildings of Nero. Later emperors made significant additions.
- On the far side of the Palatine Hill is the Circus Maximus an ancient Roman chariot-racing stadium and mass entertainment venue. It was the first and largest stadium in ancient Rome and its later Empire. It measured 621 m (2,037 ft) in length and 118 m (387 ft) in width and could accommodate over 150,000 spectators.

NOTES

- In the centre far distance is the Colosseum. In front of it is the Temple of Venus and Roma, the largest temple in ancient Rome. It was rebuilt as the Church of Maria Nova in 850 renamed Santa Francesca Romana in 1612 with the Roman cella as its bell tower. In front of them is the Arch of Titus.
- The church with a dome on the left is the Church of St. Joseph the Carpenter that adjoins the Mamertine Prison of ancient Rome where the apostles Peter and Paul were held before execution.

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Facade of the Pantheon, with the Pantheon obelisk

Facade of the Pantheon, with the Pantheon obelisk

- The Pantheon is a **former Roman temple** and, since 609 CE, a Catholic church (Basilica Santa Maria ad Martyres or Basilica of St. Mary and the Martyrs). It was built on the site of an **earlier temple** commissioned by **Marcus Agrippa** during the reign of Augustus (27 BC – CE 14), then after that burnt down, the present building was ordered by the emperor Trajan and completed by Hadrian and probably dedicated c.126 CE.
- The dome is still the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world at 43 metres. In the centre of the dome is an opening to the sky called an oculus. The Corinthian columns are not made up of small drums but are solid granite that was mined in Egypt and transported to Rome despite each being nearly 12 metres long and weighing 60 tonnes. One mystery is that there is a second higher pediment behind the current one suggesting that the columns were too short when they arrived.

NOTES

- The inscription of the front translates as "Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, made [this building] when consul for the third time."

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- Discuss the Flavian Colosseum and its engineering marvels, highlighting its function and symbolism.
- The Colosseum is an elliptical amphitheatre in the centre of the city of Rome, just east of the Roman Forum. It is the largest ancient amphitheatre ever built, and is still the largest standing amphitheatre in the world, despite its age.
- Its name is thought to derive from the colossal statue of Nero which was later remodelled as the god Apollo and moved outside. It was built over what was originally a river that was turned into a lake by the Emperor Nero when he built his enormous Domus Aurea overlooking the lake following the great fire of Rome in 64 CE. The lake was later filled in and the Colosseum was built by Vespasian and completed by his son Titus funded by the treasures taken from the Jewish Temple in 70 CE following the Siege of Jerusalem. Over 9,000 wild animals were killed during the opening ceremony in 80 or 81 CE.
- It could hold an estimated **50,000 to 80,000 spectators** at various points in its history, having an average audience of some 65,000; it was used for gladiatorial contests and public spectacles including animal hunts, executions, re-enactments of famous battles, and dramas based on Roman mythology, and briefly mock sea battles. The people at the top were protected from the sun by what look like large sails.

NOTES

- Construction began under the emperor Vespasian (r. 69–79 CE) in 72 and was completed in CE 80 under his successor and heir, Titus (r. 79–81). Further modifications were made during the reign of Domitian (r. 81–96). The three emperors who were patrons of the work are known as the Flavian dynasty, and the amphitheatre was named the **Flavian Amphitheatre**.

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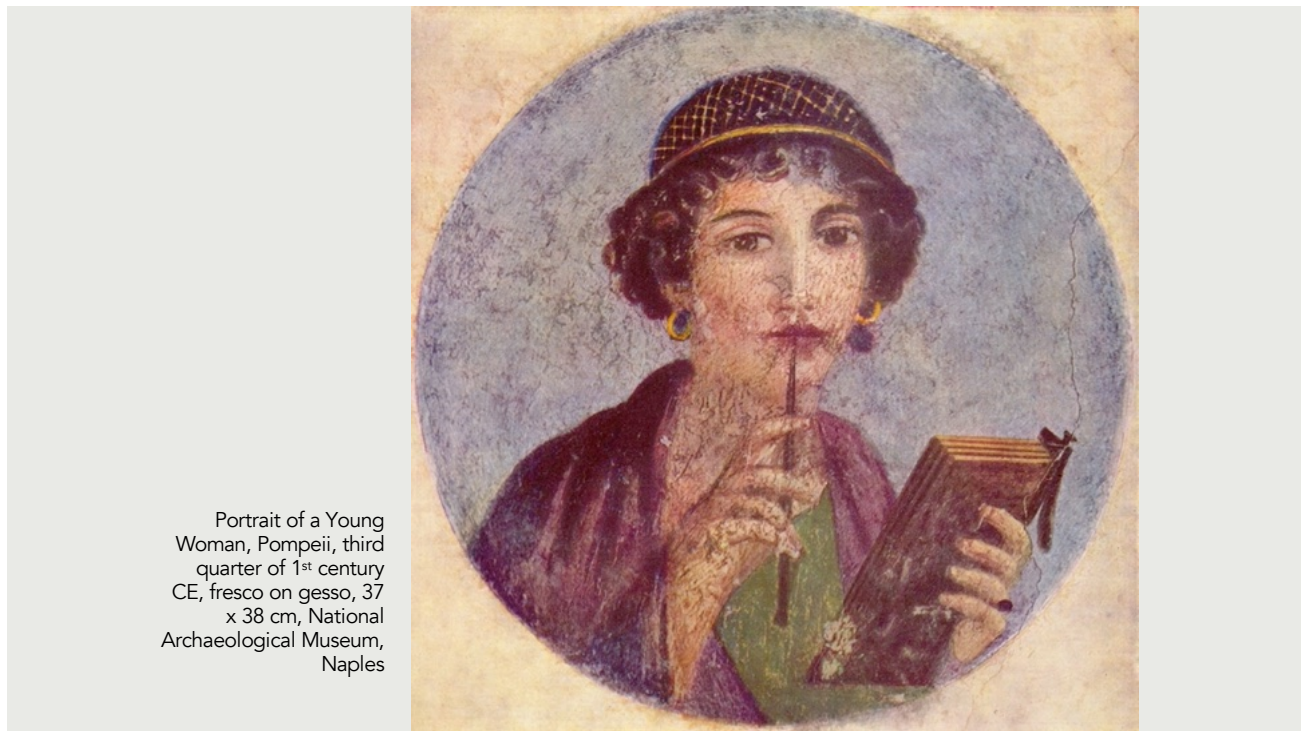
Trajan's Column, 113 CE

Scene 41, flight of the Dacians into the mountains

- Just north of the Roman Forum you will find this 30 metre high column. It commemorates Trajan's victory in the Dacian Wars and was completed in CE 113. It is 30 metres high and there is a spiral staircase inside leading up to a viewing gallery. A statue of Trajan was placed on top but it was lost in the Middle Ages and there is now a statue of Saint Peter placed there in 1587.
- (CLICK) This is a small part of the relief which includes 2,662 figures in 155 scenes that spiral around the column 25 times. The story told is the victory of the Roman army over the Dacians but few of the scenes show extreme violence and non show the rape and murder of women and children. Trajan was showing himself as a just and moderate man and quelling the distrust the Roman population had about the army.

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Portrait of a Young Woman, Pompeii, third quarter of 1st century CE, fresco on gesso, 37 x 38 cm, National Archaeological Museum, Naples

Portrait of a Young Woman, Pompeii, third quarter of 1st century CE, fresco on gesso, 37 x 38 cm, National Archaeological Museum, Naples

- Pompeii and Herculanium are discussed in my talk on 03-01 The Art of Antiquity. So I have selected just one image, a wall painting **Tondo of a Young Woman** that was discovered in 1760 and classical scholars immediately began to speculate that it might be the ancient Greek poet **Sappho of Lesbos** (c. 630-570 BCE) who wrote of the love between women.
- It is now known that it portrays a **high-society Pompeian woman**, richly dressed with gold-threaded hair and large gold earrings, bringing the stylus to the mouth and holding the type of **wax tablets used for accounts** which therefore have nothing to do with poetry and even less with the famous Greek writer Sappho. She is typically shown holding a lyre and a plectrum and if she is shown with writing equipment it is a papyrus roll not a wax tablet.
- This tondo was balanced in the corresponding position on the other half of the wall by a **tondo of a man holding a scroll**. We do not know if they are portraits but their features are particular and so portrait-like.

NOTES

- Sappho (c. 630–c. 570 BC) was a Greek poet from the island of Lesbos

known for her lyric poetry. Most of her poetry is now lost but was greatly admired through much of antiquity. She is well known as a symbol of love and desire between women and the word 'lesbian' comes from her island of Lesbos. However, in classical Athenian poetry she was caricatured as a promiscuous heterosexual woman.

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Street and dwellings of Ostia Antica

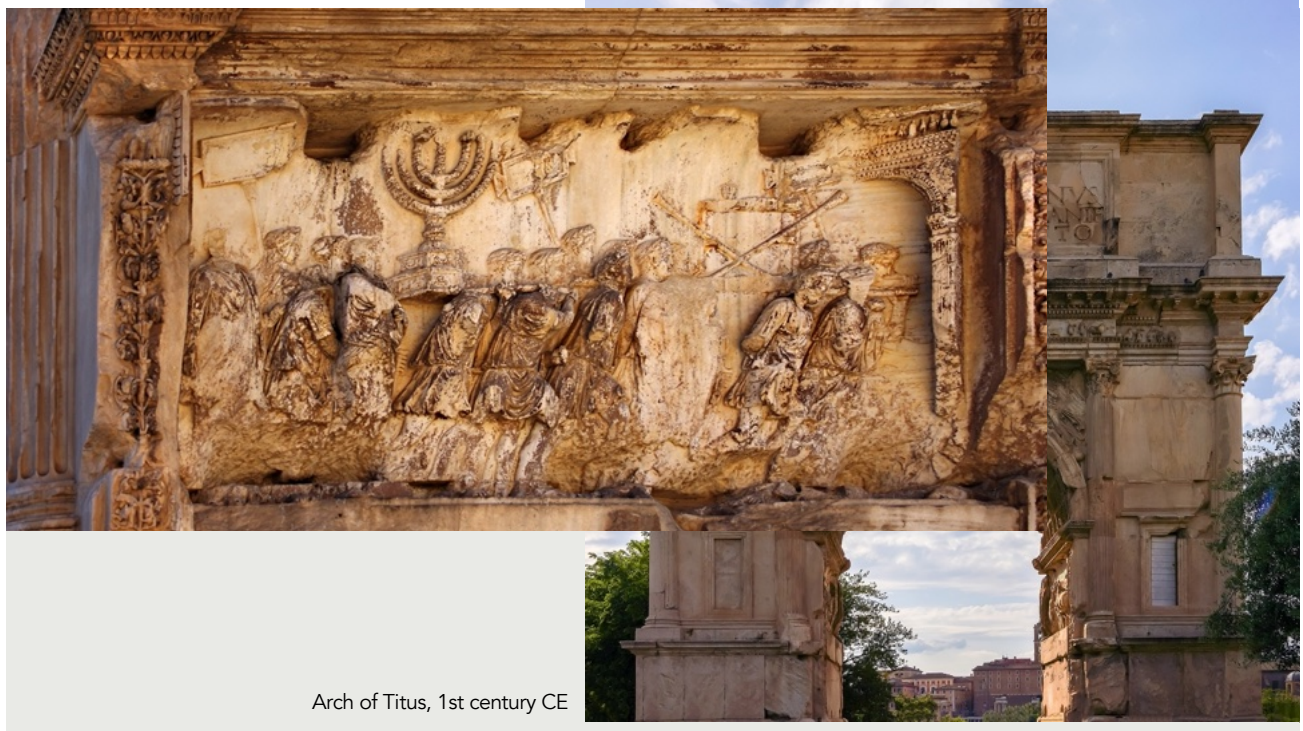
The Theatre in Ostia Antica

Ostia Antica, Panoramic view of the Place of Corporations taken from the top of the theatre.

- Ostia Antica is a short train ride from Rome. It is the old Roman port although because of silting it is no longer by the sea. It is a very well preserved Roman town as you can see from this street view. There are many streets like this that you can wander round imagining what it was like two thousand years ago.
- (CLICK) This is the theatre near the forum and
- (CLICK) this is where the traders did business. It is just behind the theatre and is called the Place of Corporations. There are some 70 offices of the companies which include shipowners and traders. Mosaics placed in front of each desk served as signs (1st century). In the center of the square was a temple attributed to Ceres, goddess of agriculture and harvest.

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Arch of Titus, 1st century CE

Arch of Titus, 1st century CE

- The Arch of Titus is a 1st-century CE honorific arch, located on the Via Sacra, Rome, just to the south-east of the Roman Forum. It was constructed in c. CE 81 by **Emperor Domitian** shortly after the death of his older brother Titus to **commemorate Titus's official deification** or consecration and the victory of Titus together with their father, Vespasian, over the Jewish rebellion in Judaea.
- The arch contains panels depicting the triumphal procession celebrated in CE 71 after the Roman victory culminating in the fall of Jerusalem.
- (CLICK) This is one of the panels showing the spoils taken from the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. It provides one of the few contemporary depictions of what was taken from the Temple. The original would have been coloured gold with the background in blue.

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The Baths of Caracalla, Rome, 211-217 CE. This image is taken from the south-west of the caldarium.

- The Baths of Caracalla in Rome, were the **city's second largest Roman public baths**, or thermae, after the **Baths of Diocletian**. The baths were likely built between CE 212 (or 211) and 216/217, during the reigns of emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla.[2] They were in operation until the 530s and then fell into disuse and ruin.
- The baths were fully functional in the 5th century when they were referred to as **one of the seven wonders of Rome** with a capacity of 1,600 visitors and a daily throughput of 6,000 to 8,000 visitors.

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Hadrians Villa outside Rome

- This is a small part of Hadrian's enormous villa built in Tivoli some 15 miles east of Rome.
- The site is some 300 acres making it one of the largest villas ever constructed in the Roman world. Hadrian designed it to incorporate architectural elements and features from the whole Roman Empire, including Egyptian, Greek, and Roman styles.
- It includes a large colonnaded garden, a long pool with a temple at the end, and this Maritime Theatre, a small island retreat. It also had extensive bath complexes and numerous statues, sculptures, and other artworks.
- It is well worth taking a tour bus from Rome as it is one of the most impressive and well-preserved examples of Roman imperial architecture.

NOTES

- Hadrian's Villa was an expansive and opulent imperial residence built by the Roman Emperor Hadrian in the early 2nd century CE, located about 15 miles east of Rome near the town of Tivoli. [1][2][3][4][5]
- The villa complex covered an area of over 120 hectares (300 acres), making it one of the largest and most impressive villa complexes in the Roman world. [1][2][4] It was more akin to an "imperial garden city" than

a traditional villa, with a sprawling layout that included numerous buildings, gardens, libraries, theatres, baths, and other amenities.

[1][2]

- Hadrian designed the villa to incorporate architectural elements and features that he had encountered during his extensive travels throughout the Roman Empire, including Egyptian, Greek, and Roman styles. [2][4][5] This eclectic mix of influences made Hadrian's Villa a unique and innovative example of Roman architecture. [3][4]
- Some of the villa's most notable features include the Pecile (a large colonnaded garden), the Canopus (a long pool with a temple at the end), the Maritime Theater (a small island retreat), and the extensive bath complexes. [2][3][5] The villa also contained numerous statues, sculptures, and other artworks that reflected Hadrian's interests and experiences. [2][4]
- Hadrian used the villa as an imperial retreat, and he is believed to have ruled the Roman Empire from the villa during the later years of his reign. [1][2] After Hadrian's death, the villa gradually fell into disrepair and abandonment, but significant portions of the complex have survived to the present day. [3][4]
- In 1999, Hadrian's Villa was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, recognised as "a masterpiece that uniquely brings together the highest expressions of the material cultures of the Mediterranean world." [1][3][4] It remains one of the most impressive and well-preserved examples of Roman imperial architecture and engineering.

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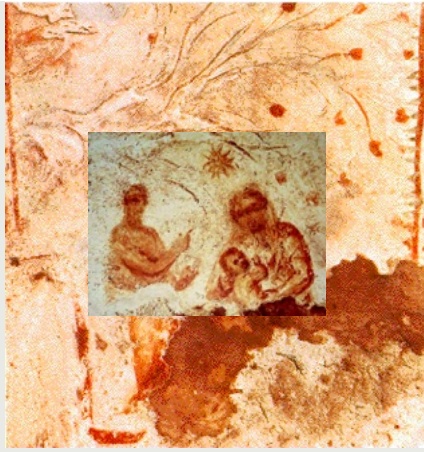
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The Virgin Mary with Jesus, late 2nd century, fresco, Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome

The Virgin Mary with Jesus, late 2nd century, fresco, Catacomb of Priscilla, Rome

THE INFANT JESUS

- The infant Jesus shown here in the earliest known representation of the Virgin Mary.
- (CLICK) She is shown holding the Infant Jesus and the figure at the left appears to be the prophet Balaam pointing to a star, from the book of Numbers. This wall painting is in the Catacombs of Priscilla in Rome.
- Christianity originated in the Roman province of Judea in the 1st century CE, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. After Jesus was executed by Roman authorities, his followers began spreading his message throughout the Roman Empire
- The catacombs around Rome were used to bury Christians and other persecuted groups such as Jews and pagans. Memorial meals and services were held to honour the dead but regular Christian services were held in the homes of wealthier members. Christians were persecuted by the Roman state, as they refused to participate in traditional Roman religious practices and emperors like Nero scapegoated Christians and arrested and executed many. However, periods of persecution were sporadic and not as widespread as sometimes portrayed.

NOTES

- The Priscilla catacombs may contain the oldest known Marian paintings, from

the early third century. Mary is shown with Jesus on her lap, and the catacombs may have a depiction of the Annunciation, though the latter has been disputed.

- Seven early popes and many martyrs were buried in the cemetery and it was known as the "Queen of the Catacombs" in antiquity. Some alleged relics have been exhumed and reinterred.
- Numbers 24:17 (King James Version)
 - I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: **There shall come a Star out of Jacob**, And a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, And shall smite the corners of Moab, And destroy all the children of Sheth.

CHRISTIANITY

- Christianity originated in the Roman province of Judea in the 1st century CE, based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. After Jesus was executed by Roman authorities, his followers began spreading his message throughout the Roman Empire. [1][3]
- In the early centuries, Christianity faced persecution from the Roman state, as Christians refused to participate in traditional Roman religious practices. Emperors like Nero scapegoated Christians, arresting and executing many. [1][2][3]
- However, despite this persecution, Christianity continued to grow rapidly, especially among the lower classes who were drawn to its message of salvation and equality. [1][2] Over time, the Roman Empire became more tolerant of Christianity, with emperors like Trajan no longer prosecuting Christians. [1]
- A major turning point came in 312 CE, when the emperor Constantine had a vision of Christ before a battle and subsequently converted to Christianity. In 313, Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, granting legal status to Christianity and other religions. [2][3][4]
- Over the next several decades, Christianity became increasingly influential in the Roman Empire. In 325 CE, Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea, which established the Nicene Creed as Christian orthodoxy. [5] By 380 CE, Christianity had become the official state religion of the Roman Empire. [4][5]

- The rise of Christianity transformed the Roman Empire, as the new faith became deeply integrated into the fabric of Roman society and politics. This legacy would continue long after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. [4][5]

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The Aurelian walls between Porta San Sebastiano and Porta Ardeatina, Viale di Porta Ardeatina, Rome

- In the final centuries of the Empire there was a shift towards **more defensive and fortified architecture**, especially in the provinces. This included the construction of larger gateways, fortified walls, and military complexes.
- From 235 CE for nearly half a century Rome was ruled by a series of short-lived imperial regimes under men, often from the frontiers of the empire, who had come to power through one military coup after another. An indication of the violence and insecurity of the times can be gauged in the **huge wall** built under **Aurelian**, emperor from 270–275 c.e., designed to keep out the northern hordes. This brick and concrete construction was originally 7.5 meters high, and 12 miles long with towers every 30 meters along its face.
- Another example in the Roman Forum is the **Arch of Septimius Severus that we saw earlier**. This triumphal arch was built in 203 CE and features thick, fortified walls and a compact, defensive design compared to earlier Roman arches.

NOTES

- **Shift Towards Defensive Architecture:** In the late Roman Empire, there

was a shift towards more defensive and fortified architecture, especially in the provinces. This included the construction of larger gateways, fortified walls, and military complexes. [1][4]

- **Smaller and More Compact Buildings:** The architecture also became more compact, with smaller-scale buildings and thicker walls, likely for defensive purposes. This contrasted with the grand, expansive buildings of the earlier Roman Empire. [4]
- One example of this defensive architecture in the late Roman Empire is the **Arch of Septimius Severus in Rome**. This triumphal arch, built in 203 CE, features thick, fortified walls and a compact, defensive design compared to earlier Roman arches. [1][4]
- Another example is the architecture commissioned by the emperor Diocletian, who ruled in the late 3rd/early 4th century CE. Diocletian oversaw the construction of heavily fortified palaces and military complexes, such as his palace in Split, Croatia, which had thick walls and a compact, defensive layout. [4]
- So in summary, the search results indicate that Roman architecture did shift in the late empire towards more defensive and fortified designs, with smaller, more compact buildings and stronger walls, likely in response to increasing threats and instability during that period. The Arch of Septimius Severus and Diocletian's palace provide two specific examples of this architectural trend.

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Arch of
Constantine, Rome
- south side, from
Via Triumphalist,
312-315 CE



Arch of Constantine, Rome - south side, from Via Triumphalist, 312-315 CE

- We are coming to the Fall of Rome. This is the Arch of Constantine just outside the Roman Forum and it shows the deterioration in the quality of the craftsmanship.
- Much of the sculptural decoration was removed from earlier triumphal monuments dedicated to Trajan (98–117), Hadrian (117–138) and Marcus Aurelius (161–180), with the portrait heads replaced with Constantines. This reuse of art is known as spoila.
- The sculptural elements added by Constantine himself are of a "**drastically different style**" and "**more abstract than naturalistic**" compared to the earlier spoliated sculptures. They are described as having "**squat and blocky figures**" that lack the natural aesthetics and idealized naturalism of the earlier sculptural elements. Specific criticisms include the figures having "**unrealistic proportions**" and the overall style being less lifelike compared to the earlier Roman sculpture.
- Some art historians have viewed the "**lower quality and simplicity**" of the Constantinian decorations as indicative of a decline in artistic quality compared to the high quality and elegance of the spoliated reliefs.

NOTES

- Political Changes

- Instability and conflict within the ruling class, with a lack of clear rules of succession leading to violent power struggles and assassinations. This significantly destabilized the state. [1]
- Weakening of legal institutions and the rule of law, leading to rampant crime, corruption, and public mistrust in the state. [1]
- Shift of political power away from Rome to other cities like Constantinople, as the emperors spent less time in the capital. [2]
- Increasing reliance on the military for political power and the selection of emperors, rather than traditional political institutions. [2]
- Growing distance and disconnect between the ruling elite and the common people (plebeians). [2]
- **Social Changes**
 - Increasing disparity between the rich and poor, with the traditional patron-client relationships breaking down. This weakened the social control of the elite. [3]
 - Decline of the smallholder class and growth of a large urban proletariat, leading to social unrest and instability. [3]
 - Demographic shifts and urbanization, with Rome becoming increasingly crowded and vulnerable to food shortages and disease outbreaks. [3]
 - Transformation of the traditional Roman family structure and values, with a decline in the power and stability of the family unit. [3]
 - Spread of Christianity, which challenged the traditional social hierarchy and contributed to a changing cultural landscape. [1]
- In summary, the search results indicate that a combination of political instability, weakening institutions, growing social divisions, and demographic/cultural changes all contributed to the gradual decline of the Roman Empire over several centuries. The inability to effectively manage these complex challenges ultimately led to the fall of this once mighty civilization.

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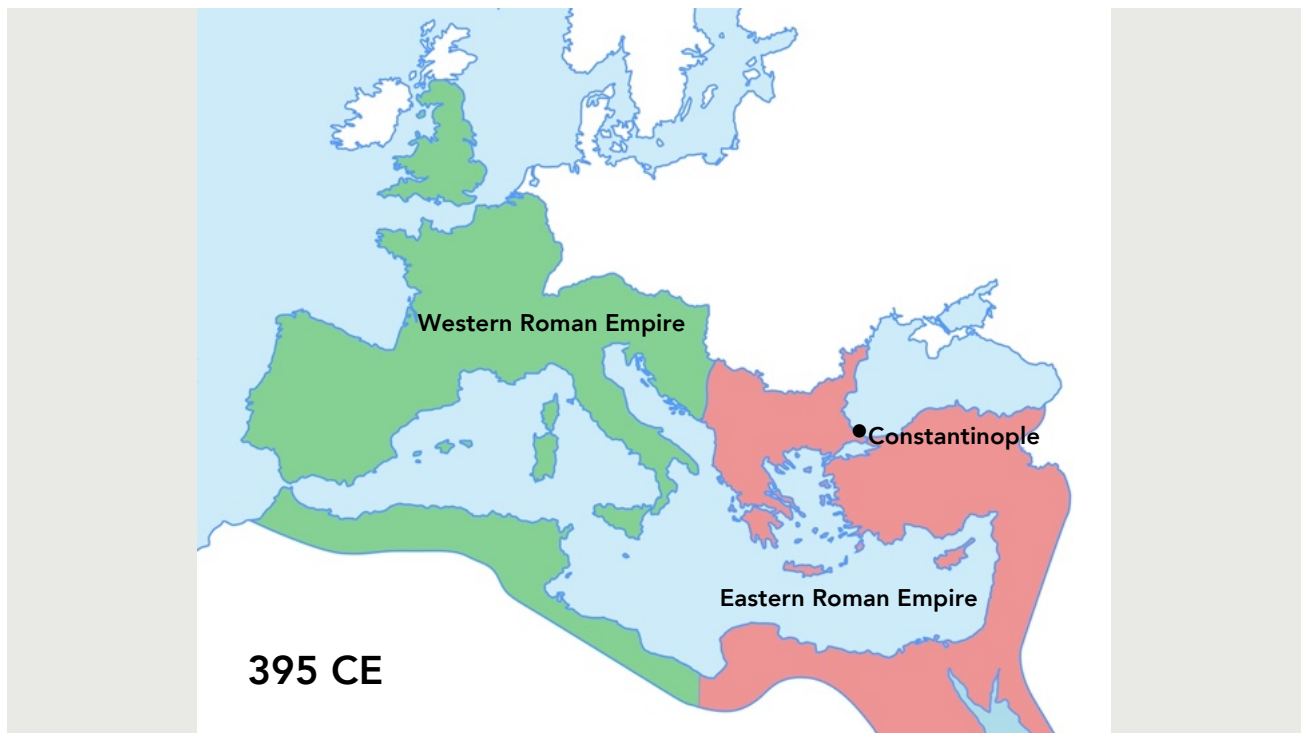
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- Division of the empire after the death of **Theodosius I (r. 347-395) in 395**. Green - the Western Roman Empire and red - the Byzantine/Eastern Roman Empire
- We reach the split in the Roman Empire.
- The Eastern Roman Empire, now known as the Byzantine Empire, **was founded by Emperor Constantine the Great in 330 CE**. Constantine rename the old town of Byzantium '**New Rome**' but almost immediately it was known a Constantinople after him. Historians use the old name Byzantium to describe the art and the name of the empire.
- Seventeen years later Theodosius I became emperor and established the Creed of Constantinople (or Nicene Creed) as the orthodox doctrine for Christianity and he was the last emperor to rule the entire Roman Empire before it was permanently split between the West and East.
- **Then**, for over eighty years (from 395 to 476 CE), there were two separate, coequal courts dividing the governance of the empire into the Western provinces and the Eastern provinces.
- **In 410, Rome was sacked by the Visigoths**, and in 476 Rome's power was ended when the last Roman emperor of the West (Romulus Augustulus) was deposed.
- The Byzantine Empire **regarded itself as the continuation of the Roman Empire** with Constantinople as the new capital. The Empire lasted over a thousand years until it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

NOTES

- It is believed Byzantium was founded in 657 BCE.
- There were 17 dynasties, around 93 emperors and four non-dynastic periods. The three periods and the important events and emperors regarding Byzantine Art are,
 - **Early Byzantine** (c. 330-843)
 - **Constantine I** "The Great" (306-337) at the Edict of Milan (313) made Christianity legal in the Roman Empire and paved the way for the flourishing of Christian art.
 - **Hagia Sophia** was built in 532-537 and became the iconic Christian symbol of the Byzantine Empire.
 - Theodosius I (379-395), reunited the whole empire
 - **Justinian I** "The Great" (527-565), brought in a golden age for art and architecture with lavish patronage and the creation of the **Ravenna mosaics**.
 - Constantine IV (668-685)
 - Justinian II (685-695)
 - Leo III (717-741), **initiated Byzantine iconoclasm** (726-843), religious art was destroyed or defaced.
 - Irene (797-802), **condemned iconoclasm**
 - Leo V (813-820), **revived iconoclasm**
 - **Middle Byzantine** (843-1204)
 - Michael III (840-867), **ended iconoclasm** (843) and brought in a revival of Byzantine art with an emphasis on spiritual expression and symbolism.
 - Macedonian Renaissance (9th-11th centuries), a flourishing of art and literature and a return to classical forms and a renewed interest in the human body.
 - Komnenian period (1081-1185), experimentation and diversification in art influenced by the West and Islamic art.
 - **Late Byzantine** (1204-1453)
 - Sack of Constantinople (1204): The Crusaders sacked the city in 1204, leading to a decline in Byzantine power and a shift in artistic focus. The city was retaken in 1261 but the

Empire was much reduced in power.

- Palaeologan Renaissance (14th-15th centuries): A final revival of Byzantine art, characterised by emotional intensity, dynamic movement, and a renewed interest in secular themes.
- Constantine X (1449-1453), and the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans (1453): The end of the Byzantine Empire, but Byzantine artistic influence continues through the Ottoman Empire and beyond.
- The Nicene Creed or Creed of Constantinople of 325 CE is the defining statement of mainstream Christianity. It regards Jesus as divine and "begotten of the Father" and that there is "one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible".
- It became Istanbul around 1730, a name believed to derive from the Medieval Greek meaning "to the city".

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The Pont du Gard is the most famous part of the Roman aqueduct which carried water from Uzès to Nîmes until roughly the 9th century when maintenance was abandoned. The monument is 49m high and now 275m long (it was 360m when intact) at its top. It's the highest Roman aqueduct, but also one of the best preserved (with the aqueduct of Segovia). The Pont du Gard has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1985.

- The Romans left a vast legacy. Listing their lasting achievements reminds me of the phrase "What have the Romans ever done for us" from Monty Python's *The Life of Brian*.
 - Roman innovations in engineering, such as **concrete construction and aqueducts**, had a lasting impact on infrastructure development. This is the best preserved Roman aqueduct, the **Pont du Gard** that took water to Nîmes.
 - **Roman roads** facilitated trade and military movements and were built so well many are still in use today.
 - Their separation of the **executive, legislative, and judicial** branches influenced the development of modern democratic governments, including the United States.
 - Roman legal concepts, such as **trial by jury, civil rights, contracts, property rights**, and corporations, have had a lasting impact on legal systems around the world.

- The **Latin language** spread throughout the Roman Empire and evolved into the Romance languages such as Italian, French, and Spanish.
- **Christianity**, which originated in the Roman Empire, became a dominant religion in Europe and then spread globally
- There are many other lasting achievements. The Roman Empire was one of the most influential civilisations in human history.

REFERENCES

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pont_du_Gard



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Portrait of a Young Woman, Pompeii, 1st century CE

Lime wood mummy portrait of a woman, Roman Period Egypt, 160–170 CE

- That brings us to the end of my talk for today.
- Thank you for your attention, remember to subscribe and I hope to see you again soon.