

depth study option

Ancient Rome

The civilisation of ancient Rome lasted some 1300 years. At its heart was the city of Rome, one of the cities built by the ancient Etruscans. These advanced people are thought to have moved into what we call Italy about 2800 years ago.

A people known as **Latins** then lived in a fertile region on the west coast of what is now Italy. It became known as Latium (see Source 5.75). The Latins built simple farming settlements and, later, towns. One of these towns was Roma (Rome). The Etruscans turned Rome into a city.

In 509 BCE, the inhabitants of Rome revolted and expelled the Etruscan kings. They then set up a **republic**. Through trade, alliances and the victories of its army, the republic of Rome continued to grow. By 201 BCE, it included today's mainland Italy and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica.

Within another 300 years, the Roman army (including the **Praetorian Guard**, shown on this page) had conquered lands as far north as today's England and as far east as Azerbaijan. By this stage, ancient Rome was an empire.

As it grew, ancient Rome was influenced by the **societies** it conquered. One of these was ancient Greece. Later, in turn, many of Rome's traditions, and cultural and technical legacies, were to influence our own **Western civilisation**. These included Christianity, Rome's road-building methods, its architecture, its body of law and its urban planning.

By the 5th century CE, discipline and order were in decline. Rome's huge empire was split in two to make things more manageable, but it was not enough. The western Roman empire was eventually overrun by **barbarians**—people from outside the Roman empire and its civilisation. The last **emperor**, a boy called Romulus Augustus, was removed from power in 476 CE. The eastern empire continued until 1453 CE, when it was absorbed into the **Ottoman** (Turkish) empire.

Key inquiry questions

- 5.1 How do geographical features influence human settlements?
- 5.2 What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient societies?
- 5.3 How do beliefs, values and practices influence lifestyle?
- 5.4 How do contacts and conflicts change societies?

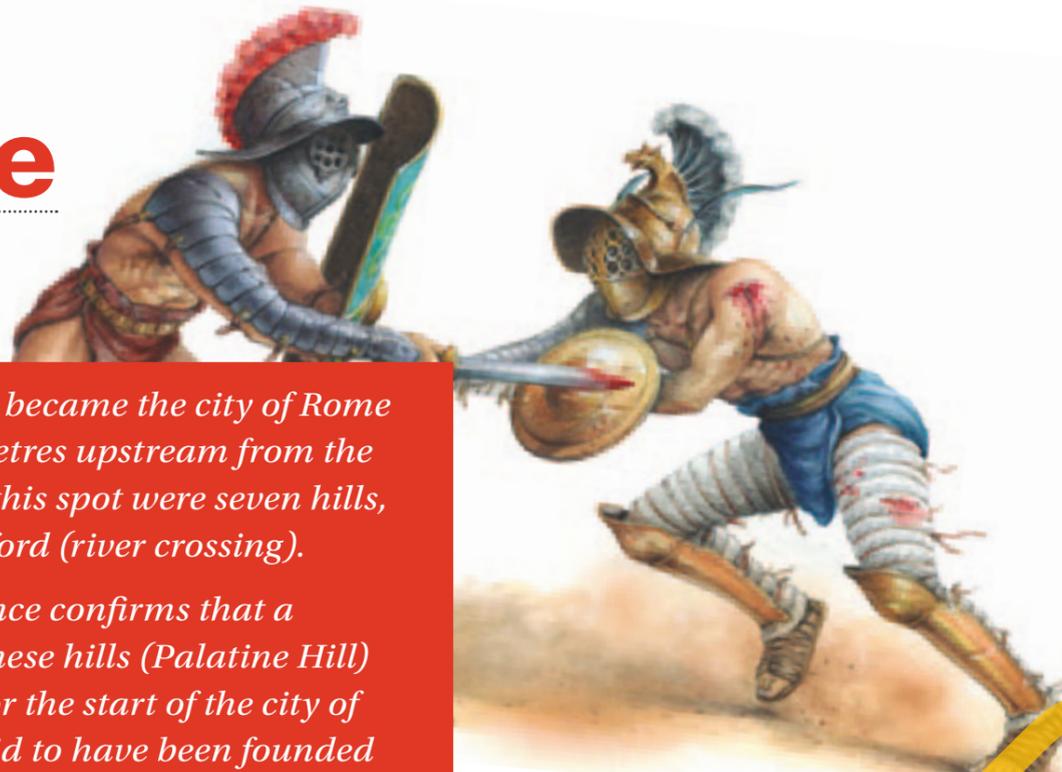
bigpicture

Ancient Rome

The farming settlements that became the city of Rome were located about 25 kilometres upstream from the mouth of the Tiber River. At this spot were seven hills, marshy land and a natural ford (river crossing).

Recent archaeological evidence confirms that a settlement began on one of these hills (Palatine Hill) close to the legendary date for the start of the city of Rome: 753 BCE. Rome was said to have been founded then by a man named Romulus.

During its history, ancient Rome was ruled as a monarchy (under Etruscan kings), a republic and finally an empire. It proved to be a powerful civilisation with a highly advanced culture and very strong army.



An ancient mosaic of fighting gladiators; many staged fights were held in the Colosseum



80
The Colosseum opens in Rome; it could hold more than 50 000 spectators and hosted gladiator fights, hunts, and mock naval battles

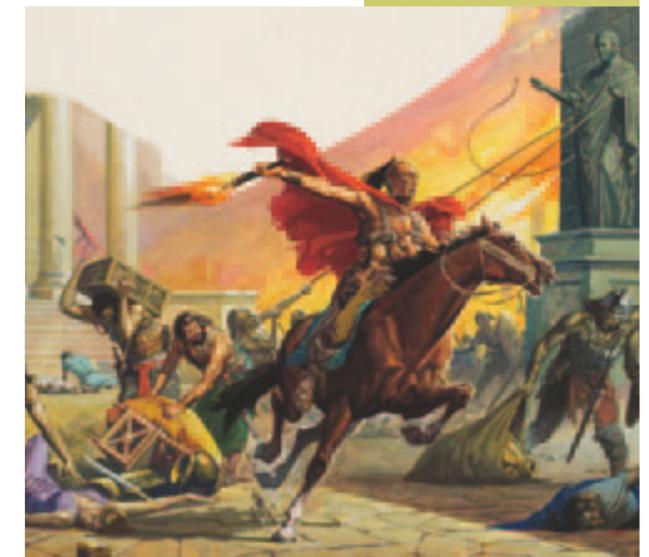
330
Work starts on St Peter's Basilica in Rome

395
Empire permanently divided into east and west

451
Last strong military campaign of Roman army

476
Odoacer, King of the Ostrogoths, forces last Western emperor to give up power

410
Visigoths attack Rome



Artist's impression of the sacking of a Roman city by invading barbarians

44
The consul Julius Caesar assassinated

146
End of Third Punic War; Rome destroys Carthage and conquers Corinth

264
Start of First Punic War between Rome and Carthage

79
Eruption of Mount Vesuvius, which destroys the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum

64
Great Fire of Rome

27
Start of the rule of Augustus; Rome moves towards becoming an empire

109
The aqueduct Aqua Traiana built by Emperor Trajan



One of many aqueducts that supplied water to Roman settlements

202
Hannibal's defeat by Rome at Zama (Second Punic War)

c. 450
First law code, Law of the Twelve Tables, published

509
Rome becomes a republic

753
Legendary founding of Rome



Legend has it that Romulus and his brother, Remus, were raised by a wolf; Romulus is said to have killed Remus before founding Rome.

Source 5.1 Timeline of some key events and developments in the history of ancient Rome



Source 5.2 The River Tiber, with St Peter's Basilica in the background

5.1 How do geographical features influence human settlements?

Ancient Rome's position within the Mediterranean Sea gave it sea access to a range of markets. It also allowed it to develop a strong navy for a time. At its peak, it grew to absorb all the cultures then around the sea. These included those of ancient Greece and ancient Egypt. Rome's expanded territory comprised a range of landscapes.

The Italian peninsula was the centre of the ancient Roman empire. It is shaped like a leg wearing a high-heeled boot. It is about 960 kilometres long and 150 kilometres wide. Its coastline is about 7600 kilometres in length.

Only about one-third of its area is suitable for farming. A rugged mountain range, the Apennines, runs down its centre. To the north, the Alps largely separate it from the rest of Europe. The landscape is mostly mountainous to the central east, while there are fertile plains to the central west. It was in this western plains region (Latium) that the civilisation of ancient Rome began.

The Mediterranean Sea

Some scholars think that the Mediterranean Sea was once a low-lying desert, with a number of deep depressions. It flooded when high ridges to the west, separating it from the Atlantic Ocean, broke down some 5–6 million years ago.

Geographical features

The sea is around 2.5 million square kilometres in area (including the Sea of Marmara). It has little tidal movement and mostly stable wind patterns, so it has very few bad storms. Its waters wash about 46 000 kilometres of coastline, much of which twists around sheltered bays and natural harbours. The climate of the region sees mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. These factors all helped to make the Mediterranean an important physical feature in the development of many early societies.

Sea transport route

The sea connected a diversity of coastal settlements. It also allowed access to inland centres that lay on rivers discharging into the sea. Its waters were criss-crossed by the ships of many ancient peoples before coming under Roman control. These included the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Egyptians, Minoans, Mycenaeans and Greeks.

Trade made sea ports busy centres, where peoples of different cultures exchanged goods, ideas, technologies and processes. The ancient Romans called the Mediterranean Sea *Mare Nostrum*—our sea.

The sea also provided an easy passage for the navies of conquerors. It was a factor, for example, in Rome's conquest of the empire of Carthage (see pp. 258–9).

Earthquakes and volcanoes

The moving tectonic plates underlying the Mediterranean region make it prone to earthquakes. One fault line runs more or less down the length of the Apennines. Another runs across the Italian peninsula north of Naples. The eruptions over time of Mount Etna and other nearby volcanoes (such as Vesuvius) have had major impacts on the settlements of people living nearby.



Source 5.3 Physical map of the Mediterranean Sea and surrounds

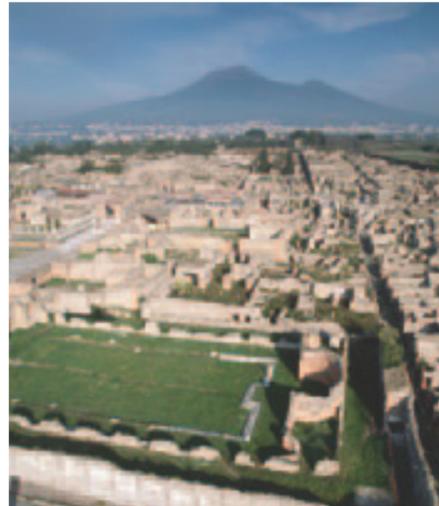
examining evidence

Pompeii

Pompeii was an ancient port. It lay about 350 kilometres south of Rome. (Its remains lie inland today, due to lava build-up.) It was (and still is) close to Italy's horizontal fault line. By the 3rd century BCE, it was loosely controlled by Rome as an ally (friend). That changed in 89 BCE, when the Roman **consul** Sulla put down a revolt by Pompeii (and other ally cities). He then sent some 5000 Roman army families to settle in Pompeii.

Ten years later it was buried under a thick layer of ash and debris when nearby Mount Vesuvius erupted. Recent estimates suggest its population may then have been that of a medium-sized Australian town.

Today, Pompeii is a protected **World Heritage Site** and one of Italy's most popular tourist destinations. This is because its ruins, when found, were more or less as the city had been in 79 CE. The **excavations** have provided a wealth of **evidence** for historians about ancient Roman lifestyles.



Source 5.4 Part of the excavated city of Pompeii, with Mount Vesuvius in the background

The excavated ruins (see Source 5.4) provide evidence that Pompeii had a **forum** (with temples and markets) and paved streets. It also had a stone **amphitheatre** (where drama performances were held). The largest of its public baths, the Stabian baths, would have covered a quarter of the Melbourne Cricket Ground. As well, there were many luxurious villas, such as shown in Source 5.6.



Source 5.6 Artist's impression of a Roman villa, based on evidence provided by ruins uncovered in Pompeii



Source 5.5 Location of Pompeii and nearby towns

On the day Vesuvius erupted (24 August 79 CE), a Roman fleet was moored at Misenum, commanded by Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE). He ordered it to sail closer to Pompeii but he then lost his life. His nephew, Pliny the Younger, was also at Misenum. Some years later, he reported what happened in a letter to the Roman historian Tacitus (56–117 CE). (See Source 5.9.)



Source 5.7 Artist's impression: eruption of Mount Vesuvius

Sixteen years earlier, in 62 CE, Roman records report that an earthquake damaged a number of buildings in Pompeii. On the morning of the eruption (see Source 5.7), tsunamis (tidal waves) smashed into the coastline, and smoke and ash blackened the sky. A rush of boiling mud wiped out farms and villas almost instantly. Suffocating gases filled the air.

Source 5.9

We [Pliny and his mother] had hardly sat down when darkness fell, not like the dark of a moonless night, but as if a lamp had been put out in a closed room. You could hear the shrieks of women, the wailing of babies and the shouts of men ... Some were so terrified they prayed for death. Many prayed to the gods for help, but even more were of the view that there were no gods left, and that the universe had been plunged into eternal darkness ... The flames continued for a while, some distance away. Then the darkness returned and ashes began to fall again, this time in heavy showers. We stood up every now and then to shake the ash off or we would have been crushed under its weight.

Translated extract from a letter to Tacitus by Pliny the Younger

The excavation of Pompeii started in 1860. The **archaeologist** Giuseppe Fiorelli found many strange cavities. He soon realised they had contained human and animal remains. Over time, the bodies had been reduced to dust and bits of bone. He poured a type of plaster into the cleaned-out cavities to reveal shapes such as those shown in Source 5.8.



Source 5.8 These plaster shapes are of Pompeiians at the moment of their death

Check your learning

- Which of these sources are primary sources for a study of Pompeii?
 - Write down a question for each source that would help you discover more about it than you currently know.
- Study Source 5.4.
 - Estimate the approximate distance between Mount Vesuvius and the city.
 - Check your estimate against Source 5.5, using the map's scale.
- Refer to Source 5.6. What evidence does it provide about villa life in Pompeii? Is this source reliable? Explain.
- How useful was 5.7 in helping you to better appreciate Source 5.9? Explain.
- Read Source 5.9 carefully.
 - What evidence does this source provide about the reaction of the people of Pompeii to the eruption?
 - Use the scale on Source 5.5 to estimate how far (in a direct line) ash was being dispersed from Vesuvius if it was falling on Pliny the Younger and his mother.
- With a partner, use Google Earth to zoom in and out on Pompeii. Look at some of the photographs and close-ups of street views, and take note of Mount Vesuvius. Jot down notes about anything that particularly interests you.



Source 5.10 A stone relief showing men hauling cargo up a river, probably the Rhône in France, during the time of ancient Rome. This was also done on the Tiber.



Source 5.11 A section of the Tiber River

The River Tiber

The River Tiber begins as freshwater springs in the Apennines. It then flows west some 400 kilometres across the Italian peninsula to the Tyrrhenian Sea. (This is one of many deep sea basins that make up the Mediterranean Sea.) The city of Rome developed on the eastern bank of this river.

At first, the river did little more than to mark off the territory of tribes in the region. As the city of Rome developed, the river became increasingly important as a transport route. Upstream from its mouth, it could be navigated for about a quarter of its length. Vessels that sailed its waters included boats propelled by oarsmen and barges dragged along by men walking the banks (see Source 5.10).

The river also served as an outlet for a huge sewer, the Cloaca Maxima, built around 600 BCE. The sewer's remains are still there today.

A port, Ostia, was built at the river mouth. (Later, Ostia became an important naval base.) Through Ostia and other ports such as Pozzuoli and Portus (see Source 5.12), trade goods poured into and out of Rome. These were mostly from colonies that Rome had set up.

The Tiber River also caused some problems for Rome. Each year, it flooded with snow melt from the Apennines, sometimes seriously. This prompted successive Roman rulers to erect structures to strengthen river banks to protect areas of the city from flood. Wharves were also built.

bigideas

5.1 How do geographical features influence human settlements?

Remember

- 1 List three physical features of the Italian peninsula.
- 2 Make an A3-sized facts chart on the Mediterranean Sea. Refer to Source 5.3 for some of your information.
- 3 What physical feature caused the devastation of Pompeii in 79 CE? Explain in a few sentences what happened and why the geography of the region made such an event likely.

Understand

- 4 Suggest what it would have been like to have been one of the boat haulers shown in Source 5.10. Think about the difficulties and challenges of doing such a job.
- 5 In small groups, write and present one of the following to convey the essence or spirit of the Mediterranean Sea:
 - a a rap
 - b a collage of images and assorted texture items (e.g. seaweed, shells, sprinkles of sand)
 - c a mime, accompanied by selected commercial music
 - d a climograph, based on researched climate data for a selected location.
- 6 In your notebook, construct an acrostic poem using the word TIBER. Your poem should reflect the impact of the river on ancient Rome. An example is shown below to give you an idea of what is required:

Tumbling from the mighty mountains
Into the Mediterranean Sea,
Barges on its waters,
Enters the mighty Tiber—
Rome's lifeblood.

Apply

- 7 **a** With a partner, decide on the benefits and shortcomings your school has because of its geographical location. You will need to identify all the physical features of the surrounding area.
- b** Brainstorm inventive, but workable, solutions to allow your school to take advantage of any benefits and to overcome any disadvantages. Be creative in your thinking.



Source 5.12 Artist's impression of the ancient Roman port of Portus, north of Ostia, showing its artificial harbour and the canal that linked it to the River Tiber

- 8 Present a one-minute 'What am I?' oral presentation for the class on a selected physical feature of the Mediterranean region. You will need to do some research. Leave it until the last minute to reveal what you are.

Analyse

- 9 [A link to a virtual site tour of Ostia is available on the ebook.](#) Take notes on what you observe as you 'walk' around. Highlight any observations you regard as especially useful.
- 10 Look carefully at Source 5.12. Decide how each of the built structures you identify would have benefited Rome's trade.

Evaluate

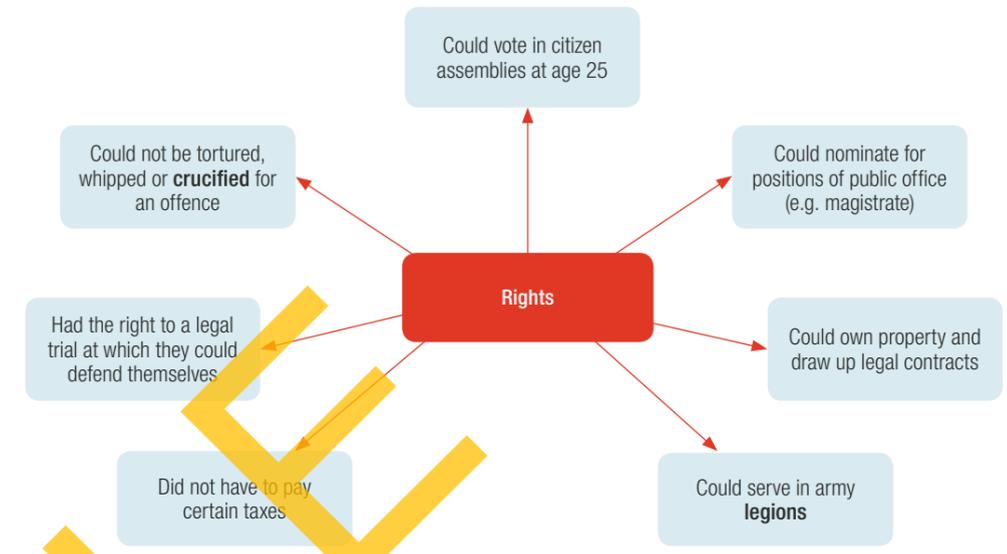
- 11 Prepare a list of criteria (standards) that would help you decide which physical feature most influenced the way ancient Rome developed as a civilisation.

Create

- 12 Conduct photo research to create a four-page paper or digital album of one of the following: The Alps, Rhine River, Apennines, Nile River, Adriatic Sea. Add suitable captions that help to explain how you think this feature may have influenced the growth of ancient Rome, and why.



Source 5.13 This 19th-century fresco is the artist's impression of a Senate meeting in Rome.



Source 5.14 Some of the rights of a full Roman citizen

5.2 What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient societies?

The political and social divisions that shaped the roles of key groups in Roman society were similar to those of ancient Greece. For example, only certain people could be citizens. There was also a clear distinction between rulers and those who were ruled, between slaves and free-born people, between the wealthy and the poor, and between men and women.

The role of citizens

Under Roman law, a boy was born a citizen if his father was a citizen and his parents were legally married. (From time to time, these requirements changed slightly.) Foreigners (free men born outside ancient Rome, such as in Roman colonies) had some rights. But these foreigners could not be full citizens until 212 CE. That was when the emperor Caracalla changed the law to allow this.

Slaves were not citizens and had no rights at all. However, if slaves were freed, they were given a limited form of Roman citizenship and their sons could become citizens. Freed slaves were called freedmen, or *liberti*. Some *liberti* become very wealthy and often influential. Women were not citizens, although they had limited rights and a degree of personal freedom.

Classes of citizen

Roman citizens were divided into classes based on birth (lines of descent) and property (how much land they owned). This determined their role in society and thus their lifestyle. Broadly, the society was made up of **patricians**, **plebeians** and **slaves**.

Patricians

Patricians were people who could typically trace their line of descent back to the heads of those influential families who made up the original **Senate** in Rome. (This was an advisory body first set up to advise the Etruscan kings.)

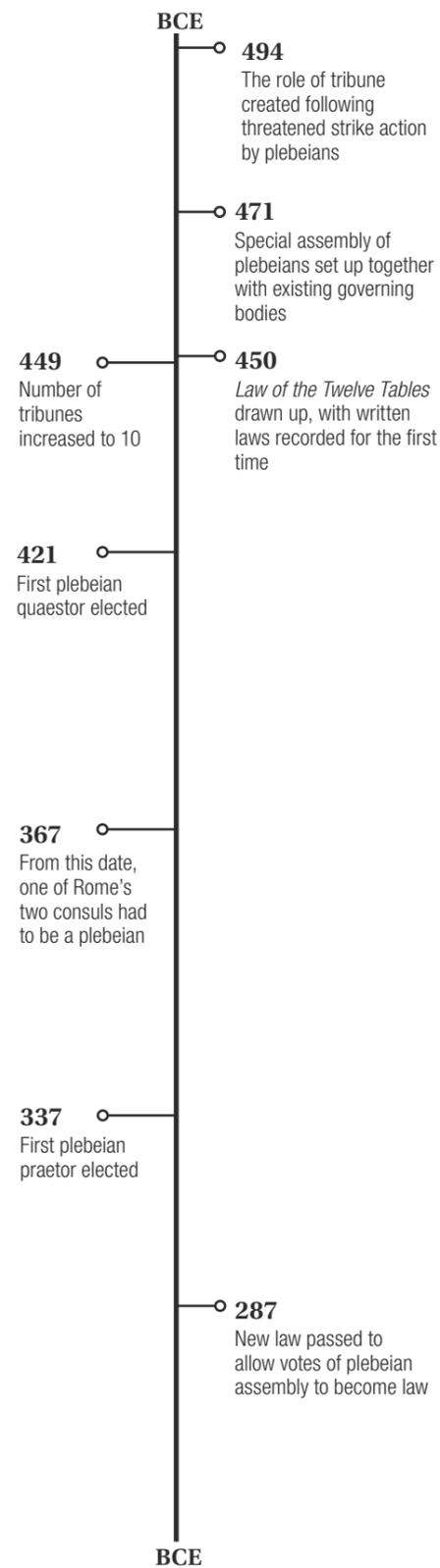
Patrician families were wealthy and typically owned huge estates. For a long time, they held all the positions of political importance, such as offices listed in Source 5.15. Only they could interpret the laws (unwritten until 450 BCE). It was considered beneath them to be involved in commerce.

Source 5.15 Key government officials of ancient Rome

Official	Number appointed	Role and responsibilities
Consuls	Two (for 1 year)	Top ruling officials who shared power; called and oversaw meetings of the Senate and assemblies
Praetors	Up to eight	Managed the legal system, appointed (or were) judges; could be appointed as governors of the provinces
Aediles	Two	Looked after food supply, games, public buildings, city maintenance and markets
Quaestores	Up to 40	Looked after financial matters within cities and the army
Censores	Two (every 5 years)	Reviewed Senate membership; enrolled new citizens; conducted census; oversaw tax collection and public works contracts



Source 5.16 This statue of a patrician shows him wearing a toga and holding busts of his ancestors. Such busts were regarded with great respect.



Source 5.17 Timeline of gradual increase in political power of the plebeians

Plebeians

Plebeians were the ordinary people of ancient Rome. They made up the bulk of the population and thus the army. They also included those who *were* involved in commerce. They had some say in how they were ruled through their membership of the **Citizens' Assembly**. However, this body was still dominated by patricians.

The poorest of the plebeians owned no property at all. Wealthier plebeians (called **equites**) included **artisans** and moderately rich landowners. These landowners were often those whose forebears had been wealthy enough to join the cavalry of Rome's first armies.

During the years of the republic, the plebeians began to challenge the long-held authority over them of the patricians. Unrest grew. As Source 5.17 shows, they made their first threat in 494 BCE: they refused orders to attack an enemy force. Instead, they retreated to another hill near Rome. The patricians were very concerned for the plebeians greatly outnumbered them; they also needed plebeian support and services to survive. And so began the first of many concessions made to the plebeians over the next 200 or so years. These included changes to the law.



Source 5.18 Tomb of the plebeian Gaius Cestius, who died during the 1st century BCE. He was a tribune in ancient Rome.

focus on ...

empathy: the role of slaves

Today most would be offended by the idea of owning slaves who had few or no human rights. It would thus be easy to judge Roman slave owners by our standards. It is true that many slaves were treated badly. But let's look at this from the perspective of an ancient Roman. Let's exercise some historical empathy. In ancient Rome, owning a slave was a bit like us owning a lawnmower! This does not make what some of them did **moral**. But we do need to view slave ownership through their eyes, not ours.

Most slaves were prisoners of war, though some were bought as 'goods'. A few were abandoned children or people who could not pay their debts.

Clever, well-educated slaves might become tutors in wealthy households. A few even worked in powerful positions for emperors, as the former slave Marcus Antonius Pallas (c. 1–63 CE) did for the emperors Claudius and Nero. Some slaves were given their freedom, or earned enough money to buy it.

Slaves had no choice in what they did. Ancient records report some having to wear metal collars engraved with their owner's name. The less fortunate might be forced to fight to the death as **gladiators**, or to work in Rome's mines and quarries. Punishments could be cruel. Text sources record one man's attempt to feed his slave boy to lampreys (blood-sucking eel-like fish) for breaking a glass.

As in most ancient societies, including Rome, slaves provided a vital source of labour, especially on farms and in mines and quarries. Their efforts, though often costing them their lives, helped to increase the prosperity of Rome.

Source 5.19 Advice on managing slaves on an estate

Clothing for the slaves. A tunic weighing three and one half pounds and a cloak in alternate years. Whenever you give a tunic or a cloak to any of them, first get the old one back to make patchwork cloaks of. Good wooden shoes should be given to them every second year.

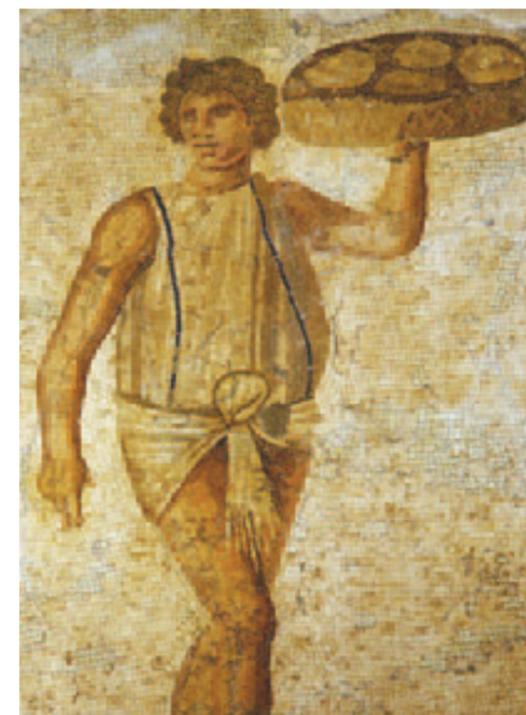
From *On agriculture* by Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE)

Check your learning

- 1 Create a mind map about citizenship in ancient Rome.
- 2 Why were the patricians such a powerful social group?
- 3 Find out more about the *Law of the Twelve Tables*. How was this law code recorded, why was it set down, and whom did it benefit?
- 4 The setting is ancient Rome; the time is the day before harvest. Many slaves will have to work hard to bring in the wheat crop that the landowner hopes will bring him much wealth. Record the thoughts about tomorrow from two different perspectives: that of the landowner and that of a slave.
- 5 a Why would the patricians have feared the strike action of the plebeians in 494 BCE?
b How did changes to the law and governing arrangements change the role of the plebeians over time?



Source 5.20 Domestic female slaves in ancient Rome could be asked to attend to every need of their mistress.



Source 5.21 Strong and/or beautiful people, such as the slave depicted in this ancient mosaic, were typically sought out to work in the households or on the estates of the wealthy.

Source 5.22 Fresco from Pompeii of a young mother and her baby



The role of women

What we know about Roman women was written by men. There are also very few sources about the lives of poor women. But we do know that the *paterfamilias*, the oldest male in the family, had all the power. (A family in ancient Rome typically included parents, married and unmarried children and slaves.) The *paterfamilias* decided whom his daughter married and whether a newborn lived or died.

Source 5.23 Roles of women in ancient Rome

Constraints (legal and social)	Opportunities
Could not vote or own property	Had more personal freedoms than, say, the women of Athens
Had no legal control over their children	Many were taught how to read and write
Had to have a male guardian in public	Many became highly respected figures
Most had a less formal education than boys (e.g., learned spinning and weaving rather than, say, maths, history and philosophy)	A number were able to work or run their own businesses, or helped their husbands with their business, unlike Athenian women who were largely shut away in their homes
Had no active role in civic or political life	Could play an active role in preparing sons for civic life

Changing women's roles

The main role of women, especially those of the higher class, was to raise children and run the household. The Punic Wars (see pp. 258–60) did much to change this. With their men away fighting, many Roman women had to manage on their own (with their slaves). After the war, widows often received large sums of money. This further boosted their self-reliance.

Much later in the republic, a new type of marriage evolved that gave women a little more freedom. They were now less under the direct control of their husbands. With their husbands, many women attended dinner parties, gladiator fights, chariot races and religious festivals, and regularly went to the public baths. Not all men were happy about this though.

Source 5.24

If you give women equal freedom with men, do you think this will make them easier to live with? Far from it! If women have equality, they will become men's masters.

Translated extract from the writing of Livy, a Roman historian (59 BCE to 17 CE)

By the early days of the empire, many upper-class women had a new prosperity and social standing. This encouraged many to further 'push the rules' in the way they behaved.

This development worried Rome's ruler Augustus (63 BCE to 14 CE). He believed Rome would be strong only if its people were moral. As part of his reforms, he introduced strict laws to restrict women's behaviour. For example, woman had to sit in the top tiers of the **Colosseum**. There were also harsh penalties for adultery. The laws he created saw even Augustus' own daughter, Julie, exiled.

focus on ...

significance: Cornelia Gracchus

Cornelia Gracchus (190–100 BCE) was a remarkable trailblazer for women's independence at this time in history. She was the daughter of the Roman general Scipio (see p. 258). She and her husband, Tiberius Gracchus Major, had 12 children, only three of whom (two boys and a girl) survived.

When her husband died, Cornelia refused to marry again, despite offers. Instead she took total control of her sons' education and made her own decisions. When asked why she dressed so simply, it is said that she replied 'My sons are my jewels.' She even set up a club where prominent literary and political figures could gather to share ideas.

She is significant because she was a woman ahead of her time. She was well regarded as a virtuous, ideal mother figure by ancient Romans. Yet she was also strong-minded and independent.



Source 5.25 Sculpture of Cornelia and her two sons

Check your learning

- How did the *paterfamilias* influence the role of women in ancient Rome?
- In your own words, explain why Cornelia Gracchus is a significant figure in history.
 - What do you think Livy might have thought of her? Why?
- How did the Punic Wars help to change the role of women in ancient Rome?
- What evidence does Source 5.23 provide about the limits on the role of most women in ancient Rome?
- The magistrate and his wife shown in Source 5.26 both hold writing materials. What do you conclude from this evidence?
- Word-process a short letter that a modern women's rights supporter might send to Cornelia Gracchus (if that were possible!) explaining why she is regarded today as such a 'trailblazer'.
 - Using the editing tools in your word-processing program, check your writing for spelling and grammatical accuracy. How does the grammar and spelling check compare with formal grammar and spelling you have learned in other classes, such as English? Assess the accuracy and suitability of the word-processing program you use. Would you recommend it to other students? Why?



Source 5.26 Painting of Roman magistrate Terentius Nero and his wife from Pompeii (1st century CE)

The role of emperors

Historians often talk about Rome being ruled by **emperors** after Octavian assumed almost total power in 27 BCE (see Source 5.30). This is because it is the easiest way to refer to the role they had. However, the ancient Romans never used the word 'emperor'.

In theory, the **republic** continued after 27 BCE. But this was a pretence. In practice, ruling power became more and more concentrated in one person. The Senate, which had been the supreme body during the republican years, lost much of its influence.

These rulers (hereafter called emperors) became so powerful because they took on (or were given by the Senate) so many rights, titles and official roles.

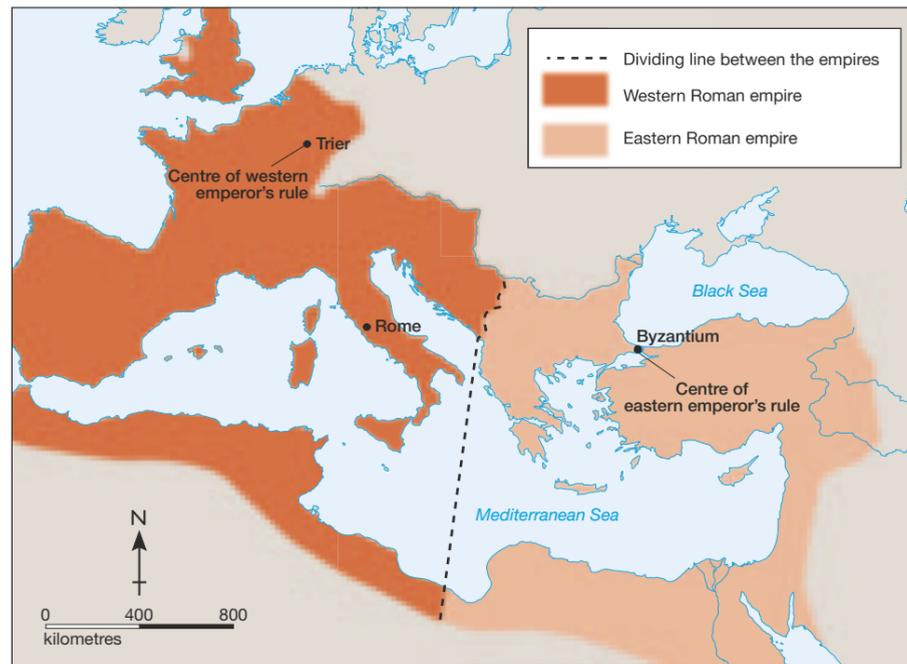
Many emperors ruled well and worked well with the Senate. Others were corrupt and brutally abused their power. Some, such as Augustus, were declared to be gods after their death. Others, such as Nero, declared *themselves* to be gods! Having a god-emperor as a central ruling figure helped to unify a territory that consisted of a diversity of peoples, languages and beliefs.

Source 5.27 The power of emperor Constantine (272–337 CE), the first Christian emperor

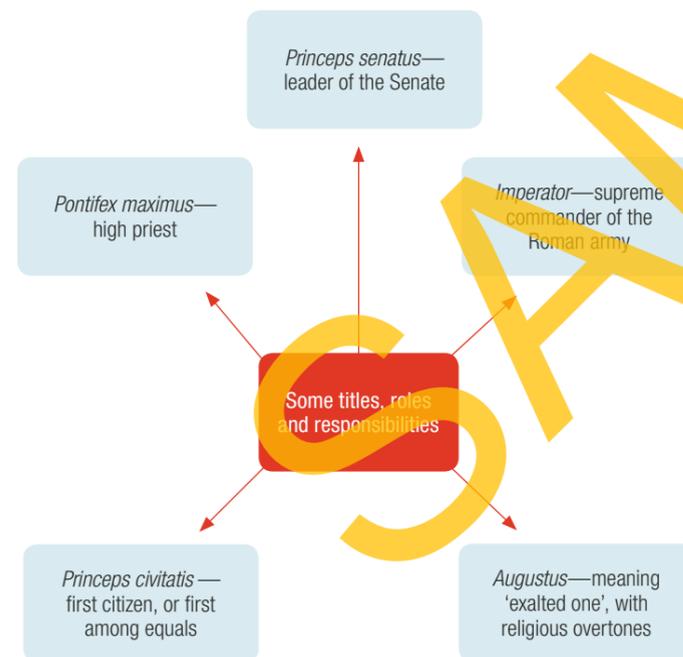
[He] controlled foreign policy, making peace and war at will; he could raise what taxes he willed and spend the money at his pleasure; he personally appointed to all offices, civil and military; he had the power of life and death over all his subjects. He was moreover the sole fount [source] of law and could make new rules or abrogate [discard] old at pleasure ...

From *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* by A.H.M Jones, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1964, p. 321

Between 27 BCE and 395 CE (when the Roman empire was finally divided in two), there were 147 emperors. Another 23 emperors ruled in the Western empire before its collapse in 476 CE. In the Eastern empire, another 94 emperors ruled until 1453 CE, after which it became part of the Ottoman (Turkish) empire.



Source 5.28 Western and eastern empires of ancient Rome



Source 5.29 Some of the titles, roles and responsibilities of Roman emperors

Four emperors

Source 5.30

I am Augustus, Rome's first emperor (though I never called myself that). After my great-uncle Julius Caesar was murdered in 44 BCE, I changed my birth name to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Caesar was like a father to me and I was very upset that he was killed. Historians say I was clever the way I became so powerful, as I was a 'nobody' in Rome when Uncle Julius was murdered. My rule began in 27 BCE. The Senate renamed me Augustus. It means 'exalted one'. You might be wondering why I ended up fighting Antony. After all, he had been my comrade in battle. Well, he left my sister for that Egyptian queen Cleopatra for a start. But when he gave away Roman provinces to their children ... that was enough for me! As Rome's leader, I made it a better place to live. For a while, there was peace (after a century of civil war). I increased its territory to include countries you know as France, Egypt and Spain. I built heaps of roads, bridges and aqueducts, and encouraged trade (including with the country you know as India). Art and literature flourished, too. After my death in 14 CE, the people worshipped me as a god. No wonder, I say!



Source 5.31

I am Caligula (Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus to be precise). I was Rome's third emperor, ruling from 37 to my death in 41 CE. Historians say I started well. I abolished sales tax, worked well with the Senate and put on lots of games. Did you know I fought a whale once during sea games in the Colosseum? Then I became very ill. Some say that's when I went mad. I suppose I did try to get my horse elected as consul. There's talk, too, that I was in love with my favourite sister, Drusilla. I loved putting those senators down. And money! I made it law that wealthy men leave me their fortunes in their will. Why not? I was a god. The Roman writer Suetonius said I was depraved. If enjoying watching gladiators die and the odd bit of slow torture is 'depraved', he might have been right. I was 29 when the Praetorian Guards murdered me. They were meant to protect me!



Source 5.32

I am Nero. I became emperor in 54 CE when I was only 17. The first few years went smoothly. I was very interested in the arts, but I was also a good chariot racer. So good, I might kill anyone who was better than me. I had my mother killed when I was 21. Then there were the military campaigns in Britain and Judea. But it was the fire in Rome in 64 CE that caused the most fuss. Some people said I started it. But I blamed the Christians—they made an excellent scapegoat. We fed some to the lions and painted others with tar before setting them alight. I built a new palace for myself on Rome's burned ruins. The Senate plotted to get rid of me, but did not succeed. But the army revolts in 68 CE were the final straw. I lost the throne to Galba—and a man from the province of Spain at that! So I took my own life that year.



Source 5.33

I am Marcus Aurelius. I was 40 years old when I became emperor of Rome, ruling between 161 CE until my death in 180 CE. Historians say I ruled well—the last of five good rulers they say. I increased the size of the army and introduced many social reforms, such as giving more rights to women and slaves. I was a thinker and philosopher, even if I was a bit cruel to the Christians from time to time. Fair enough; their beliefs were undermining ours. For most of my reign, I and my co-emperor (my stepbrother Verus) for a while fought the barbarians—he in **Parthia** (towards Asia) and I in **Germanica**. Unfortunately, his troops brought the **plague** back to Rome and thousands of people died. In 2000 CE they made a film called *Gladiator*, meant to depict one of my battles (when I was an old man). My son Commodus ruled after me. Historians say he was unbalanced and that people feared him. His rule marked the end of **Pax Romana**.



significant individuals

Julius Caesar

On 15 March in 44 BCE the consul Julius Caesar was murdered. A large group of senators, including his friends, stabbed him 23 times when he entered the Senate House.

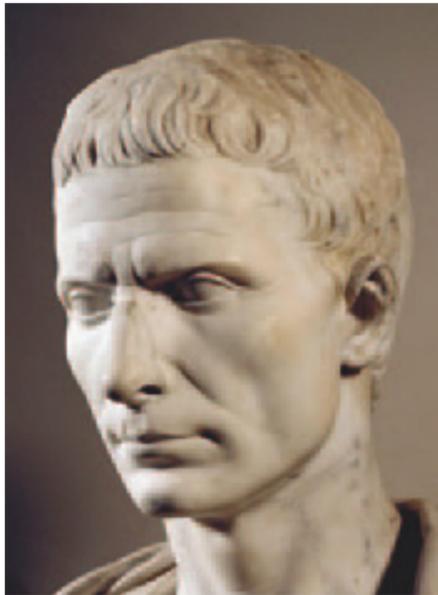
Can you imagine that happening to our Prime Minister? It would be a terrible crime. But let's look at this murder from the **perspective** of those who killed him. In other words, let's try to empathise with them. What were their motives for ending Caesar's life? Were these justified?

The early years

Julius Caesar was born into a patrician family in 100 BCE. In 68 BCE, he was elected as a *quaestor*. Some four years later, he was made a *praetor* and governor of the province of Spain.

On his return to Rome, Caesar made a pact (formed a **triumvirate**) with two other leading political figures, Pompey and Crassus. Pompey and Crassus agreed to help get Caesar elected as consul (one of two top governing positions in republican Rome). They succeeded in 59 BCE. Caesar was elected consul a further three times.

In short, Caesar was rising fast — becoming a 'tall poppy'.



Source 5.34 A bust of Julius Caesar. He is often shown wearing a laurel wreath on his head as he was reportedly sensitive about his balding hairline.



Source 5.35 This statue of Caesar shows him as a confident military commander — a role he carried out very well.

Caesar's rising popularity

Caesar was considered a brilliant military commander who was popular with the people and his troops. As governor of the Roman province of Gaul (roughly today's France), he fought the barbarian **Celts**. His victories there and elsewhere saw large amounts of new territory added to the Roman republic.

By 53 BCE one member of the triumvirate was gone: Crassus. He died fighting the Parthians in the east.

By 49 BCE, many senators had begun to worry about Caesar's rising popularity and his military successes. He was starting to take on roles without the Senate's approval. This was something republican senators had feared since the time of the Etruscan kings.

Showdown

In 49 BCE, the Senate ordered Caesar to give up his military command after his conquests in Gaul. But Caesar refused. He returned to Rome with his troops, crossing the **Rubicon River**. This was a clear sign of his refusal to obey.

Civil war was declared. Pompey (now directly opposed to Caesar) fled to Egypt in 48 BCE. Caesar and his troops followed, to be presented with Pompey's head. (The bloody deed was the work of the **vizier** Ponthius and the younger brother of Cleopatra, then the rightful ruler of Egypt. These two men, ambitious for power, had forced her to flee.) Caesar was revolted, rather than impressed as the men had hoped. Caesar had Ponthius killed and Cleopatra reinstated as ruler of Egypt.

Caesar and Cleopatra

While in Egypt, Caesar fell for Cleopatra's charms. They had a child, a boy named Caesarion, born in 47 BCE. The three of them returned that year to Rome to live. There Caesar threw himself into reforms. He introduced a new currency and reformed the calendar (called the **Julian calendar**). He declared that new Roman colonies had been set up in Africa, Gaul and Greece and started building what would become Rome's chief law courts: the Basilica Julia.

Too much ambition

In 44 BCE, Caesar adopted the role of dictator for life. This was too much for the republican senators so they killed him.

Source 5.36

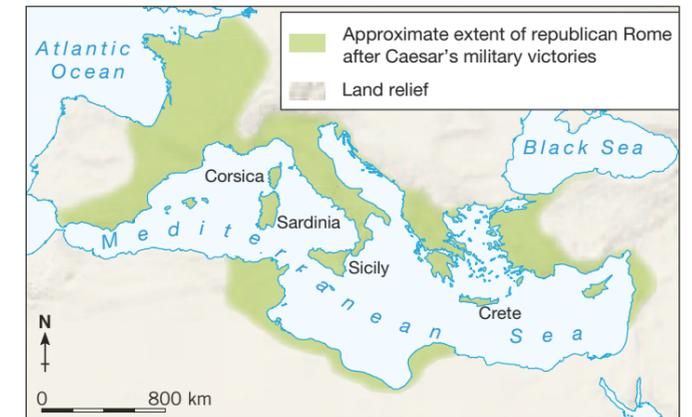
But those who had come prepared for the murder bared each of them his dagger and closed in on Caesar in a circle. Whichever way he turned he encountered blows and weapons levelled at his face and eyes, and driven here and there like a wild beast he was entangled in the hands of all; for it had been agreed that they should all strike him and taste of the slaughter ... For they say he received twenty-three wounds, and many of the conspirators were wounded by one another as they directed so many blows against one body.

From the *Life of Caesar* by the historian Plutarch (c. 45–125 CE)

And afterwards ...

Caesar's murder was followed by about 15 years of civil war. His death saw the rise to power of a man whom the Senate allowed to have a great deal of power. This man was Octavian, Caesar's great-nephew and declared heir (see Source 5.30).

- 1 Why do you think historians regard Julius Caesar as a significant person in history?
- 2 [A link to a timeline tool](#) is available on the **obook**. Draw a timeline online to list key events in the life of Julius Caesar.
- 3 Show your empathy for the perspective of one of those who assassinated Julius Caesar. Try to understand his motives. Prepare and deliver a short oral presentation for the class, describing why you participated in such a gruesome deed.



Source 5.37 The extent of republican Rome after Caesar's military conquests



Source 5.38 Artist's impression of the assassination of Caesar

- 4 Based on what you have learned about Caesar, would you say he was a strong leader? Justify your answer by first listing a series of points by which you judge leadership, and then deciding how he measured up against these.

5.2 What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient societies?

Remember

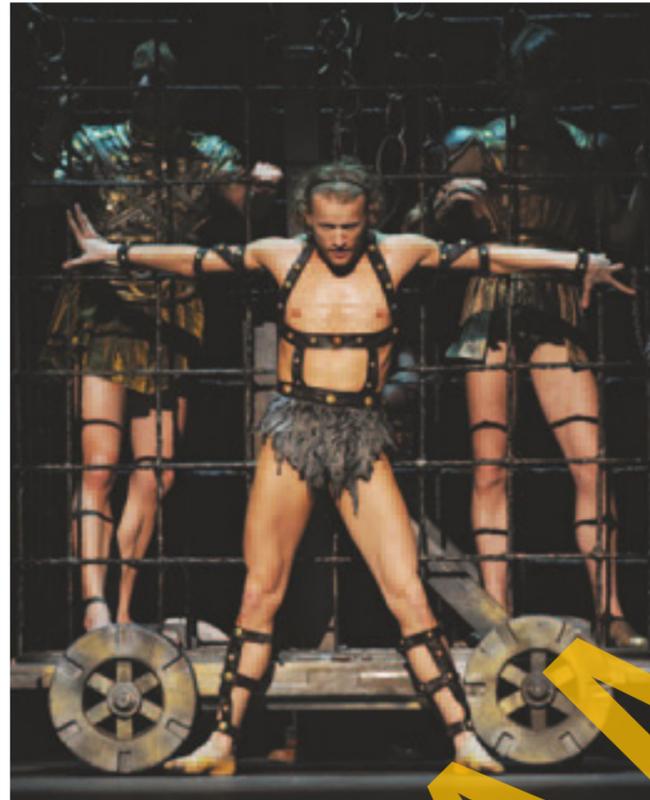
- Decide whether the following statements are true or false. Correct any false statements and write them in your workbook.
 - The patricians made up most of ancient Rome's population.
 - Sons born to slaves who had been freed could become Roman citizens.
 - A tribune was first elected as consul in Rome in 450 BCE.
 - The Senate was abolished once Octavian came to power in 27 BCE.
- A man named Marcus Antonius Pallas was the equivalent to the Treasurer of Rome during the rule of the emperors Claudius and Nero. What was significant about Pallas?
- What role did religion play in the way some emperors' roles were viewed?

Understand

- Look at Source 5.24. What evidence does this provide about what Livy really thought about women?
 - What do you think Cornelia Gracchus' perspective might have been on the issue Livy discusses?
 - What evidence is there that Augustus was prepared to 'put his money where his mouth was' with respect to his concern about the growing change in women's behaviour?
- The rations listed in Source 5.40 were documented by the Roman statesman Cato the Elder (234–149 BCE) in *On Agriculture*. What evidence does this provide about the restricted rights and entitlements of slaves in Rome?

Source 5.40

Item for issue to slaves	Quantity and quality
Bread	Four pounds a day in winter for those working in chains
Relish	Only olives that have dropped off the tree and then only those with least oil; when all eaten, pickled fish to be supplied
Wine	Set quantities of whatever wine can be made after the harvest for a vintage is completed



Source 5.39 The story of Spartacus has been told in films, plays, books, etc. This is a scene from the ballet *Spartacus*.

- Find out who Spartacus was and why he is regarded as significant by historians.
- Frame two questions that would guide your research in finding out more about Cornelia Gracchus.

- Write a news article suitable for the fictional newspaper *Ancient Rome Daily*, based on an interview you conducted with Julius Caesar at the height of his power. Include quotations you create (based on facts).
- Create a timeline of Rome's emperors, plotting as many dates as you can identify from the information provided on page 225.

Apply

- Work in small groups. Identify a modern person all members know of. Bring to the discussion some information about this person that you have found through research. Agree on factors that shaped this person's life and current role.
- What was a toga, and who wore them in ancient Rome?
 - A link to a website showing how to tie a toga (using an old bed sheet) is available on the **obook**. Bring digital or print photos of your efforts to share with your classmates.
- Use an online program to create a crossword based on key words (bolded text) used in this section. You will need also to prepare the clues. Swap your completed crossword with a partner to solve.

Analyse

- Turn to page 225 and compare and contrast the profiles of either the emperors Augustus and Marcus Aurelius or Nero and Caligula. What do you conclude about them as rulers?
- What does Source 5.41 reveal about how the emperor Constantine wanted his people to view him?
 - How is this supported by Source 5.27?

Evaluate

- Aelia Pulcheria (399–453 CE) was one of the few women ever to have real political power in ancient Rome. She was the *de facto* ruler (she acted as a ruler, though unofficially) of the Eastern empire for a time. Conduct some research to find out more about her. Rate her significance on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not significant, 5 = extremely significant). Justify your rating.



Source 5.41 The head, carved from marble, of a statue of Constantine. The statue was about 10 metres high.

Create

- With a partner, **hypothesise** about what might have happened in ancient Rome if:
 - the plebeians had withdrawn their services totally and permanently from Rome in 494 BCE
 - Julius Caesar had not been assassinated
 - women had been given the right to play a full and active role in political life in Rome.
 Consider, in particular, how these outcomes might have influenced social roles.



Source 5.42 Nero and his courtiers watch as Christians (at right) are set alight. (*Leading Light of Christianity—Nero's torches*, by Henry K. Siemiradzki)

5.3 How do beliefs, values and practices influence lifestyle?

Our lifestyles are influenced by the traditions and beliefs we inherit from our families and the communities in which we grow up. Some of these influences have a very long history. They may go back generations, even centuries. Others may reflect the recent influence of friends of a different culture.

It was no different in ancient Rome. People's customs and beliefs were often a mix of those they had inherited from their forebears and from the cultures of societies they conquered. Together, they had an impact on how the ancient Romans lived.

Religious beliefs and practices

The rulers of ancient Rome did not believe in one god, as Jews, Christians and Muslims do. Most of their deities were the equivalents of ancient Greek gods and goddesses (see Source 5.43). They also included **deities** of other conquered peoples, such as the Persian god **Mithras** and the Egyptian god **Isis**.

Roman deities were worshipped in temples and in the home. **Sacrifices** and offerings were made and festivals were held in their honour. Rituals and ceremonies were the most important part of Roman religious practice. For example, certain parts of sacrificed animals were burned as an offering to the gods. The Romans believed such practices would keep the gods happy. To discontinue them risked having bad things happen to Rome.

This was why Roman rulers such as Nero feared Christianity with its worship of one god. This fear motivated Roman leaders to try to stamp the religion out. In fact, for about 300 years, ancient Romans who became Christians were often tortured or killed. They might be crucified, burnt alive or fed to the lions, often in front of jeering crowds.

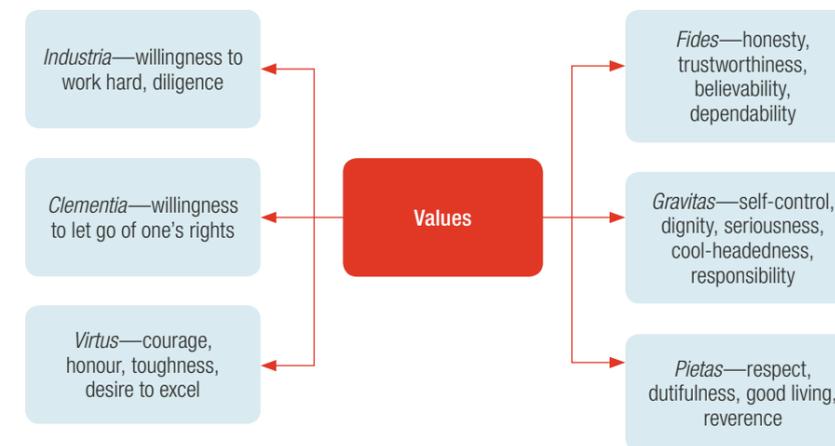
Despite these efforts, Christianity continued to spread. By 394 CE, Emperor Constantine had made it ancient Rome's official religion. Today, the traditions of Rome's early Christian church have gone on to influence the beliefs and practices of many people in the modern world.

Source 5.43 Some Roman deities, and their Greek equivalents

Ancient Roman deity	Role	Ancient Greek deity
Jupiter	king of the gods	Zeus
Juno	wife of the king, goddess of women and childbirth	Hera
Neptune	god of the sea	Poseidon
Mars	god of war	Ares
Venus	goddess of love and beauty	Aphrodite
Bacchus	god of wine and pleasure	Dionysus
Vesta	goddess of the hearth	Hestia



Source 5.45 Statue of the Roman ruler Augustus (see p. 225). When acting as chief priest, he covered his head with part of his toga to signify this role.



Source 5.44 Some key values of the ancient Romans. These made up part of an unwritten code on which ancient Romans based their behaviours and attitudes.

Options

How beliefs, values and practices influenced the lifestyle of the ancient Romans is discussed in respect to the three topic areas listed below. Choose ONE of these.

- warfare (pp. 232–7)
- everyday life (pp. 238–47)
- death and funerary customs (pp. 248–51).

Related activities are on pages 252–3.

Warfare

Military service was a part of life for Roman **citizens**. It was needed at first to help to increase Rome's territory and then to defend it. In fact, for a time the main Roman god was Mars, the god of war.

Through intense and disciplined training, Rome's army became very strong. It was fuelled by a belief in Rome and particularly by the value *virtus* (see Source 5.44). The breakdown in order and self-discipline in the army was one of the reasons Rome's western **empire** eventually crumbled.



Source 5.46 A still from the 2000 movie *Gladiator* showing Roman troops readying themselves for battle

evidence: a tough life

Evidence provided by ancient writers suggests that army life was hard. A soldier swore an oath of allegiance when he joined up. He had to do everything he was ordered to do, without fear or backchat.

Training was rigorous and conditions were often difficult. There were no anaesthetics or pain killers if a soldier had to have his leg cut off or have a bleeding wound **cauterised**. There were constant drills, practice fights and trials to test their nerve. The soldiers learned to be tough and flexible.

On long marches to distant frontiers, the men carried their food, equipment and everything needed to set up camp. Commanders often shared the hardships of the men, living as they lived and eating what they ate.

Soldiers were often whipped. If a leader thought his men might be plotting against him, he might order every tenth soldier in the unit to be stoned to death by his comrades. This practice was called *decimatio*. The writings of the historian Polybius provide evidence of the harshness of the punishment known as *bastinado*. This was reserved for those soldiers caught stealing, lying or breaking the rules.

Source 5.47

[The bastinado] is inflicted as follows: the tribune [an official] takes a cudgel [club] and just touches the condemned man with it, after which all in the camp beat or stone him, in most cases dispatching [killing] him ...

Translated extract from *Histories VI* by Greek historian Polybius

Early days

In the early days of the **republic**, the army was made up of landowners (large estates and small farms). Some were wealthy enough to own horses and buy armour and weapons. These men formed the cavalry.

By 260 BCE, the army had control of the country that we call Italy. As its territory grew, Rome needed a larger and more permanent army. Lengthy wars fought a long way from home made it hard for men to maintain their farms, even those that were quite small.

Around 100 BCE, a Roman **consul**, Marius, declared that anyone who joined the army no longer had to own land. Consequently, thousands of men (including the very poor) joined up.



Source 5.48 A suit of armour typically worn by legionaries after about the 1st century CE. The iron plates it contained protected the body. It was lighter than the chain mail coat worn by some auxiliaries.



Source 5.49 The *testudo* (from the Latin word for a tortoise shell) provided shell-like protection against enemy attack, such as when soldiers were approaching the walls of an enemy fort. The shields were sometimes held above the head.

Army organisation

The army comprised many **legions**. Each legion, led by a *legatus*, was made up of both heavy and light infantry and a cavalry. In each legion were 10 groups, each made up of **centuries**. There were 100 (later 80) soldiers in a century.

Soldiers were called legionaries. At first only Roman citizens could be legionaries. Later, **auxiliaries** were used (soldiers from, say, a Roman colony) who might have the special skills needed. They might, for example, be very good archers.

Roman soldiers in the 2nd century BCE were organised for battle according to age. At the front were the young men, the *spearmen*. Behind them were the *principes*; these were soldiers in the prime of their life. At the rear were the older soldiers. While keeping this age order, men were also arranged into blocks on the battlefield—into **maniples**, for example. These battle tactics proved to be very successful, such as in defeating the armies of Hannibal (see pp. 258–9).

Source 5.50 The armour and weapons of the *principes*

Besides [their] shield, they carry a sword which hangs down the right thigh ... As well, they have two heavy javelins, a bronze helmet and greaves [bronze strips, worn on the front of the shin] ... They wear [on their helmet] ... a circle of feathers with three upright purple or black feathers about a cubit [46 cm long] ... which makes every man look twice his real height.

Translated extract from *Histories VI* by Greek historian Polybius

Check your learning

- 1 Which god was at first the main god of Rome? What does this suggest?
- 2 How did the decision of the consul Marius in 100 BCE change the make-up of the Roman army?
- 3 Find out what a maniple was and how it worked as a strategy on the battlefield. Draw a sketch to illustrate your findings.
- 4 List some of the things that you think might have motivated those who were part of the Roman army.
- 5 What evidence does Polybius provide about the brutality of punishment in the Roman army?
- 6 Write down (from hardest to least hard) four things that, in your opinion, a Roman soldier might have found tough about army life.
- 7 How would values such as *virtus* and *industria* have helped a soldier to stay focused on his job?



Source 5.51 Artist's impression of Roman soldiers building a double wall in readiness to lay siege to a city

Siege warfare

Another factor that gave the disciplined Roman army an edge as a fighting force was its **siege warfare**. This involved starving a city into submission (and sometimes slaughtering them after they surrendered). A common approach was to build two parallel walls around the city. The inner wall was a barrier to stop food being brought into the city. The outer wall provided protection for the Romans in attacking any city warriors or supporters who might be outside the city.

Siege engines such as **catapults** were used. These launched large stones and even rotting carcasses of animals (to spread disease) over city walls. The historian Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, writes that catapults used in Rome's attack on Jerusalem in 70 CE fired rocks equivalent to about 25 kilograms.

The **battering ram**, with its heavy ram-shaped head on the end of a long log, was another device. It was useful in breaking down the wooden gate of, say, an enemy fort. Another tactic was to dig tunnels under a weak section of a wall (often a corner) to undermine it. The tunnel was propped up with wooden supports, which were then set on fire. When they collapsed, so did the tunnel.



Source 5.52 Medieval artist's impression of a *carroballista*, a horse-drawn weapon used by the ancient Romans in warfare

Standards and standard-bearers

Each legion carried a silver eagle, an *aquila*, into battle. It was a symbol of their strength. It was a matter of great shame if the standard were lost or captured. This would be likely to destroy the morale and discipline of a legion on the battlefield.

There were a number of **standard-bearers** in Rome's army. One was the *aquilifer*, who carried the *aquila* (see Source 5.53). Standard-bearers were chosen for their leadership qualities and the level of *virtus* they displayed.



Source 5.53 A modern artist's impression of an *aquilifer*, leading his men into battle

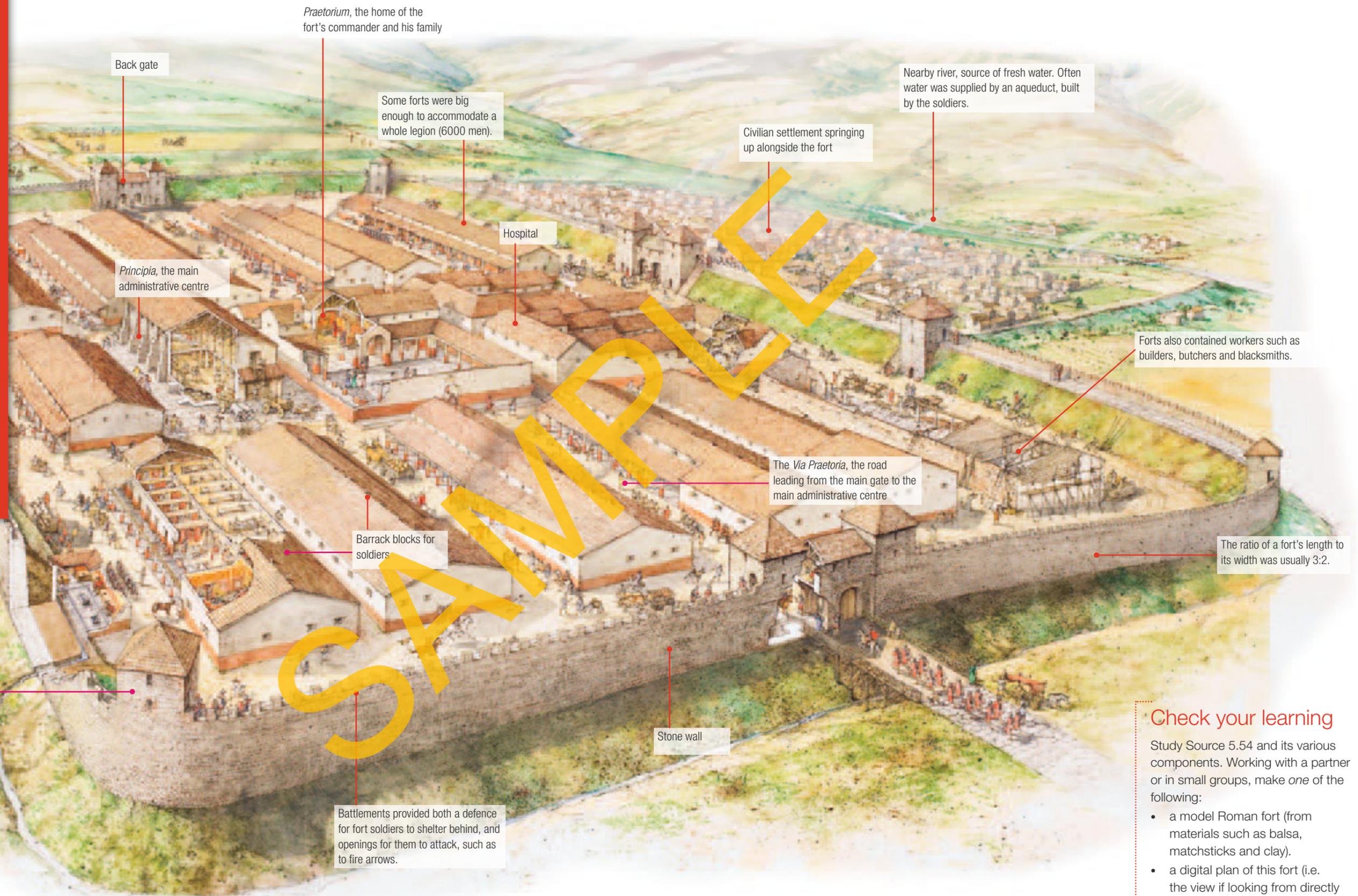
Check your learning

- 1 What was *virtus*, and why was it so important for a Roman soldier?
- 2 Do you think methods such as *decimatio* and *bastinado* would have been effective in forcing army discipline? Explain.
- 3 **a** Who were the *princeps*?
b Suggest why they might have fought where they did when in battle formation.
- 4 For what reason were auxiliaries sometimes called on to fight with the Roman army?
- 5 Study Source 5.52. Based on this representation, how do you think the *carroballista* worked? Suggest how it was loaded and fired, and what sort of damage it might have caused.
- 6 Sometimes battering rams were pushed on wheeled devices. These devices were often covered with a long 'roof' layered with wet hides from freshly killed animals. What purpose do you think such a roof served?
- 7 Draw up and complete a table with two columns headed 'Perspectives of the Roman army about a siege on a city' and 'Perspective of city occupants about a siege by a Roman army'.
- 8 **a** What did the *aquilifer* carry?
b How might its capture by the enemy affect the outcome of a battle?
c How were the standards of Rome's army like the flags carried by modern armies?
- 9 Soldiers were often rewarded after a battle with booty. For successful army commanders, there was the prospect of a political career. Based on what else you know about ancient Rome, compose *one* of the following:
 - a short dialogue between two soldiers the night before a battle
 - a letter a commander writes to his wife at the start of the siege of a city.

Roman forts

Many soldiers were skilled builders or **stonemasons**. Some had engineering skills. As the army pushed outwards, it built roads, canals and bridges when not fighting. Some of its camps were temporary (mostly tents). Some of the more permanent forts grew into towns and, later, cities. For example, the castle in Paris where French monarchs lived until 1300 CE was once a Roman fort.

Forts were built along the frontiers (outposts) of Roman territory to protect it from invaders. The forts also provided a supply base for further army expansion. Sites were generally chosen to take advantage of nearby resources or natural features. These might be a harbour or a river. Often, though, fresh water had to be supplied by an **aqueduct**.



Praetorium, the home of the fort's commander and his family

Back gate

Some forts were big enough to accommodate a whole legion (6000 men).

Nearby river, source of fresh water. Often water was supplied by an aqueduct, built by the soldiers.

Civilian settlement springing up alongside the fort

Hospital

Principia, the main administrative centre

Forts also contained workers such as builders, butchers and blacksmiths.

The *Via Praetoria*, the road leading from the main gate to the main administrative centre

Barrack blocks for soldiers

The ratio of a fort's length to its width was usually 3:2.

Ditch

Bank formed by digging a ditch

Guard tower

Stone wall

Battlements provided both a defence for fort soldiers to shelter behind, and openings for them to attack, such as to fire arrows.

Check your learning

Study Source 5.54 and its various components. Working with a partner or in small groups, make *one* of the following:

- a model Roman fort (from materials such as balsa, matchsticks and clay).
- a digital plan of this fort (i.e. the view if looking from directly above).

Source 5.54 All army forts were laid out the same way. This meant that soldiers could erect them rapidly, and easily find their way around a new fort.

Everyday life

Everyday life in ancient Rome varied according to whether people were male or female, rich or poor, citizens or not, and freeborn or slave. Lifestyles also reflected people's beliefs, values and traditions.

Men, women and the family

The basic social unit in ancient Rome was the extended family. As already mentioned, it was headed and controlled by the *paterfamilias* (the 'father' of the family). Roman practice had long revered the father figure. (The emperor and senators were also seen as 'fathers'.)

The dominant role of men in Roman society—and of the *paterfamilias* in particular—was partially shaped by the religious belief that women, children and slaves did not have souls. For this, they needed to depend on a freeborn man.

Women in ancient Rome were expected to be good wives and mothers. They had no active role in civic or political life.

Education

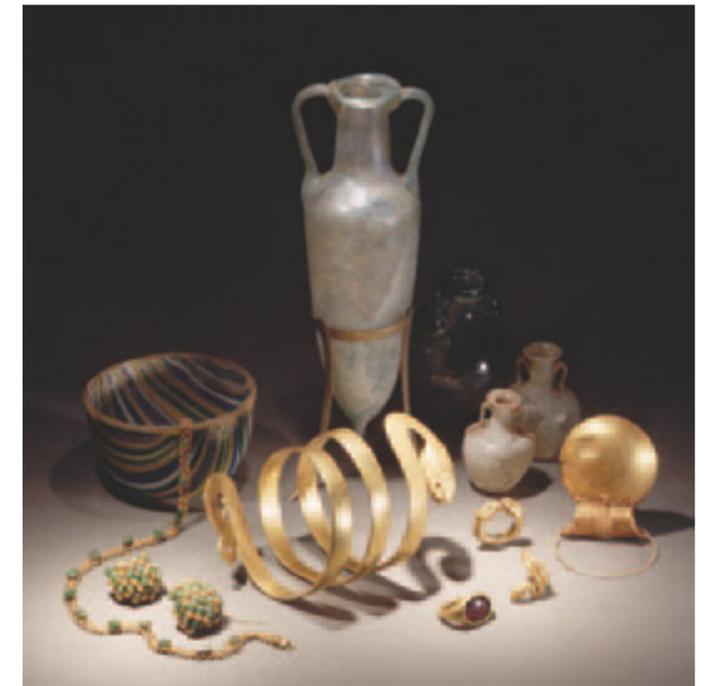
Education was a privilege of the wealthy, and then usually only for boys. Girls learned to spin and weave. Teachers in the home were often educated slaves (and frequently Greek). Subjects studied typically included history, geography, astronomy, mathematics, reading, writing, and Greek and Latin. Once learned, Roman values (see p. 231) became part of how people behaved in public life.

'Graduation from school' happened for a boy around 17. It was marked by his putting on a new toga and going out to register on the census as a full citizen. The occasion was a family celebration.

Fashion, grooming and cleanliness

Men and women wore tunics (with and without sleeves) made from linen or wool. Women's tunics (*stole*) were ankle length; men's were shorter. Only citizens (men) could wear a toga over this; they did this when in public. Women wore a *palla*. Women covered their head in public with a veil or part of the *palla*. Marking their lower social status, slaves wore only tunics.

Personal cleanliness, hygiene and grooming were very important, especially for the rich. There were daily visits to public baths (see pp. 242–3). Wealthy women spent time caring for their hair and skin. Complexions were lightened with chalk, and lips coloured with wine dregs or mulberry juice. Wigs, made from the hair of slaves, were often worn by men and women. Blond and red were popular hair colours. The clean-shaven 'short back and sides' look for men became the fashion after the 2nd century BCE.



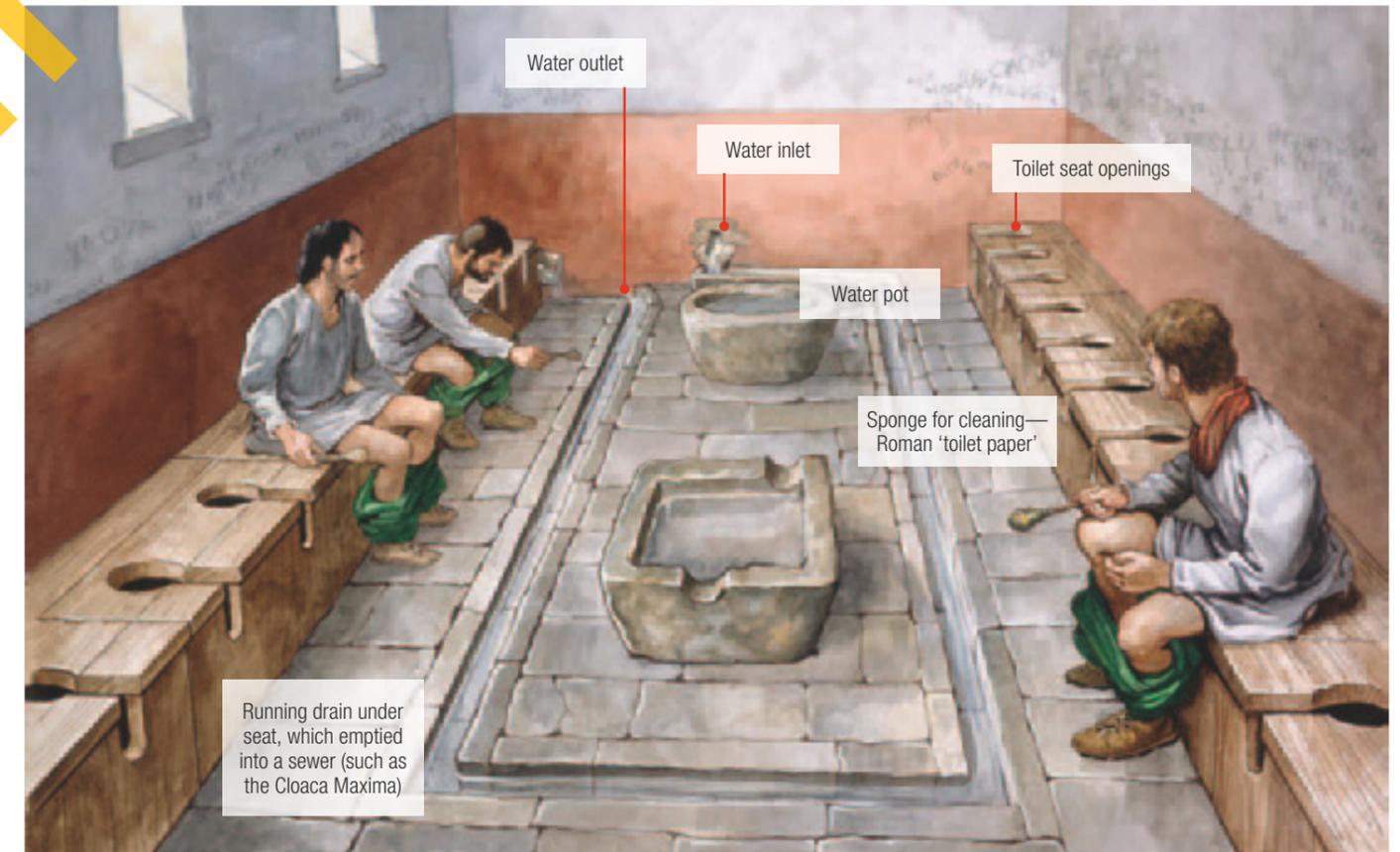
Source 5.56 Grooming accessories uncovered in a villa in Pompeii

continuity and change: weddings

Today there are religious weddings, civil weddings and *de facto* relationships. It was much the same in ancient Rome, where the type of ceremony depended on people's social status. Modern traditions continue the practice of ancient Roman brides to marry in white, and wear a veil and flowers. As today, ancient Romans drew up a contract and sealed it with a kiss.

Some other traditions have changed though. Generally, girls in ancient Rome were married at around 14 years, sometimes younger. Marriages were arranged by the father of the bride, or the *paterfamilias*. (The bride had no say in the matter.) He handed control over his daughter to her husband on marriage. Echoes of this continue in the practice of some ceremonies today when the priest or celebrant asks 'Who gives this woman away?' and the father of the bride answers 'I do'.

Source 5.55 Stone relief of a wedding ceremony in ancient Rome. The groom holds the wedding contract.



Source 5.57 Artist's impression of a public latrine (toilet) in ancient Rome

Roman housing

The poor in ancient Rome usually lived very hard lives. In **urban** areas, they typically crammed into dark, tiny rooms in multi-storey apartment buildings called *insulae*. Sometimes even these rooms were shared with other families. These rooms were often smelly and badly maintained. Some people kept domestic animals indoors.

There were few home comforts for the poor. Water had to be collected in pots from wells that might be some walking distance away (as might be the latrine!) Rooms did have hearths, but cooking indoors could be a fire hazard. Most food, usually bread and gruel (watery soup), was bought from street stalls. Malnutrition was common, especially among children.

By contrast, the life of a wealthy upper-class family was very privileged. They typically lived on spacious country estates, such as illustrated here.



Check your learning

Use Source 5.58 to write a diary entry of a day spent on this villa from the perspective of *either* a member of the wealthy family who own it or a slave who works on the villa.

Roman baths

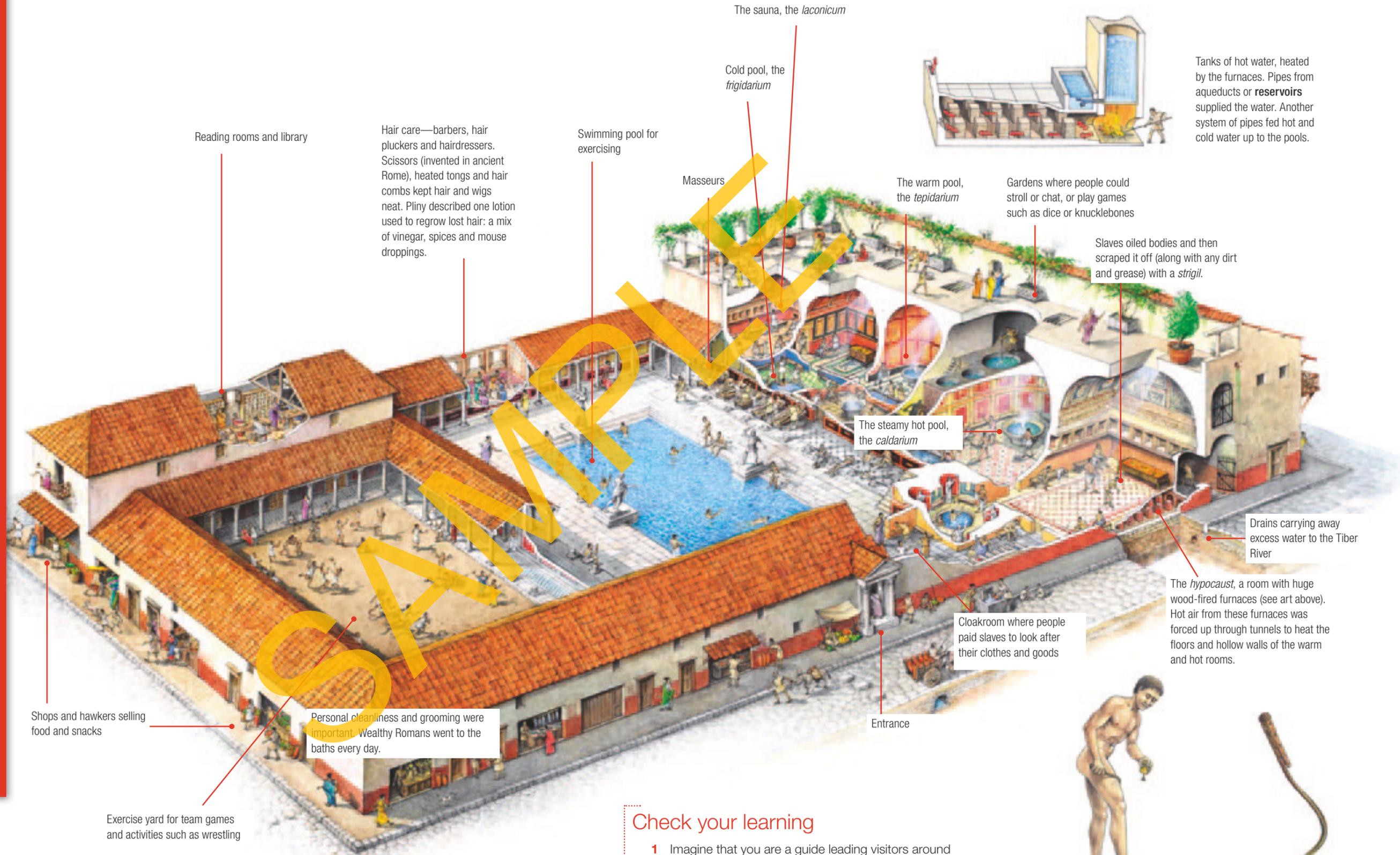
The public baths built in ancient Rome were further evidence of the advanced level of Roman technology. These were often very large facilities that combined stately architecture with complex heating and plumbing services. They were similar in some ways to our health spas or water-theme parks. They were places to get clean and, sometimes, beautiful. They were also places to relax, eat, meet friends and conduct business.

By the end of the 3rd century BCE, there were 11 public baths and about 1000 private baths in ancient Rome. (Private baths were usually smaller and simpler in construction.)

Source 5.59

I live over the public baths—you know what that means. Ugh! It's sickening. First there are the 'fitness fanatics' doing exercises and swinging heavy weights about with grunts and groans and hissing breath. Next the lazy ones having a cheap massage ... I can hear someone being slapped on the shoulder ... and the sound of a professional ball player ... Then there's the man who always likes the sound of his own voice in the bath and of those who like to leap into the water with a huge splash. As well as all these voices ... there is the thin and strident voice of the hair plucker, calling out for business, until the yells of the customer having his armpits plucked replace his ... [as well as the cries of] people selling sausages, sweets, and other cooked items.

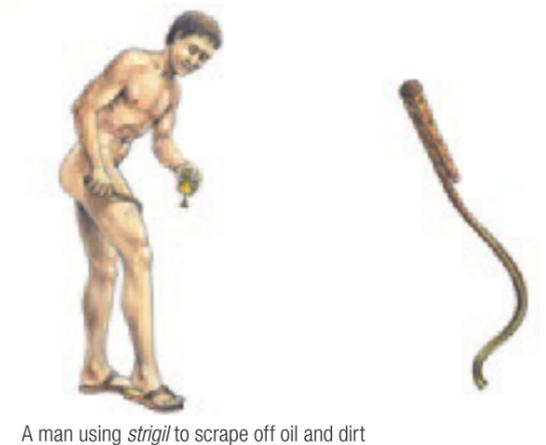
Translated extract from *Moral Epistles* by Seneca



Tanks of hot water, heated by the furnaces. Pipes from aqueducts or reservoirs supplied the water. Another system of pipes fed hot and cold water up to the pools.

Check your learning

- 1 Imagine that you are a guide leading visitors around the ruins of a facility such as shown in Source 5.59. Word-process (and record if you have the facilities) the transcript of what you might say.



Source 5.60 Artist's impression of a Roman public bath

Public entertainment

Many ordinary Romans lived hard lives. As today, it would have been at times a source of envy and irritation for the poor to see how the rich lived, and the privileges enjoyed by the powerful. It thus became a common practice for Roman rulers to provide lots of free entertainment for the people. This ensured that they did not become restless and rebellious.

Fronto, an ancient Roman writer, said the people were held together by two things: grain supply and shows. Another Roman writer, Juvenal, later expressed this as 'bread and circuses'.

By the end of the 1st century BCE, entertainment was provided for the people on 159 days of each year in Rome. A day out at the **Circus Maximus**, which could seat close to a quarter of a million people, meant watching horse-drawn chariots thunder around the track. Death and terrible injuries were common for both horses and riders. But that was then seen as part of the entertainment!

Check your learning

- 1 What happened when a boy in Rome (typically from a wealthy family) graduated from 'high school'?
- 2 Name three wedding traditions today that are an example of continuity of wedding ceremonies in ancient Rome.
- 3 Suggest why blond and red-haired wigs would have been so popular in ancient Rome.
- 4 Look at Source 5.57. What has changed in public toilet design since the days of ancient Rome?
- 5 Study Source 5.60. Then complete a Y-chart (see p. 112 for an example) on what it might be like to make use of that public bath.

focus on ...

contestability: gladiator games

It was an Etruscan practice to hold fights to the death at the funeral of a ruler. Some historians think this is where the tradition of Roman **gladiator** games began.

But other historians **contest** this claim as there is little evidence for it. Other scholars claim that the games began in 264 BCE when two brothers arranged for six slaves to fight to the death. This was done as a religious ritual to honour their dead father, Junius Brutus.

However they began, the tradition of entertaining people with free gladiator fights was well laid down by the time of the Roman empire.

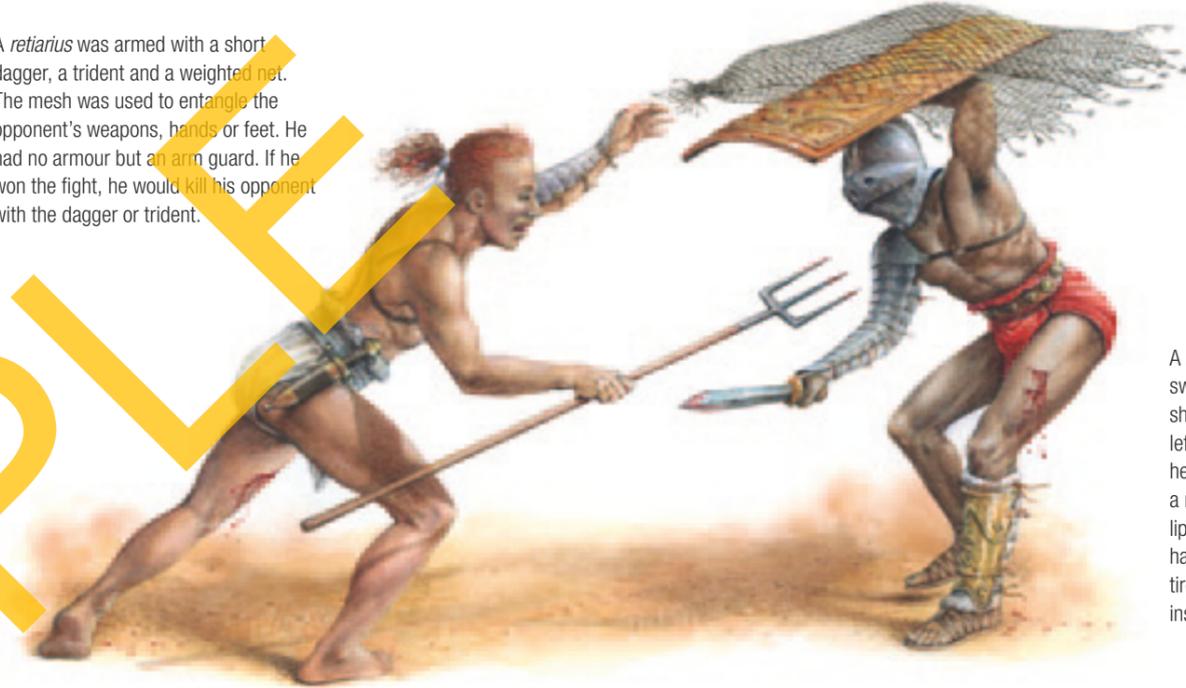


Source 5.61 The remains of the Colosseum. Gladiators, soldiers and animals were housed in the rooms and corridors under the arena.

Types of gladiators

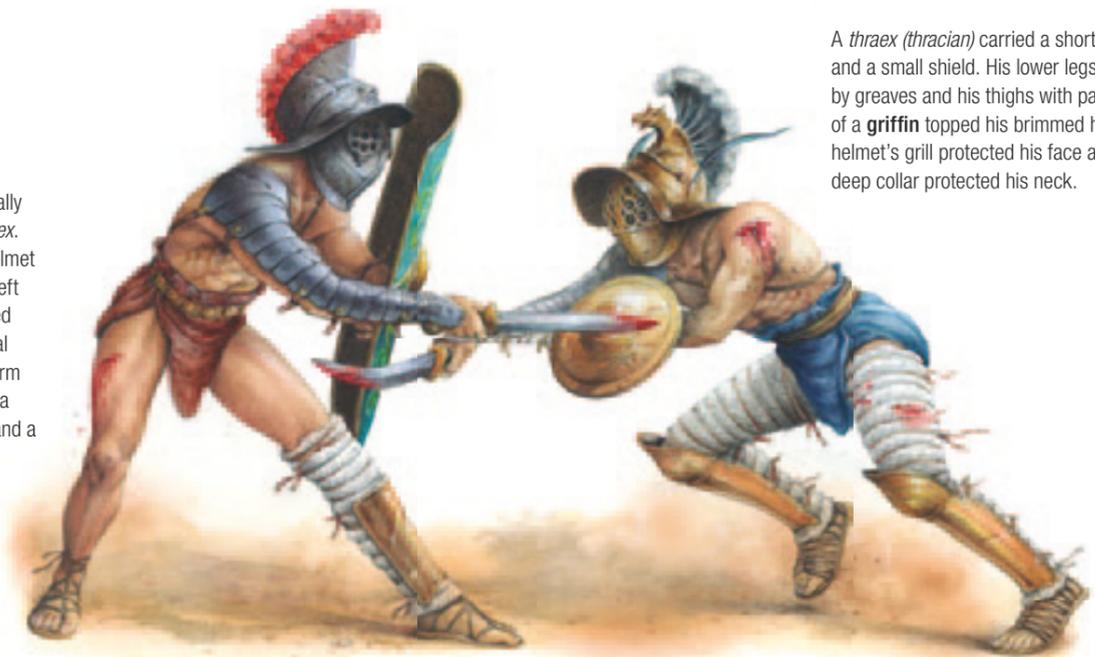
Most gladiators fought on foot. Others, such as the *equite*, fought on horseback. Some were heavily armoured, while others were almost naked. There were even 'clown' gladiators, known as the *andabatae*. Their helmets had no eye holes. They would be pushed towards each other, hacking wildly with their weapons, to the enjoyment of the crowd.

A *retiarius* was armed with a short dagger, a trident and a weighted net. The mesh was used to entangle the opponent's weapons, hands or feet. He had no armour but an arm guard. If he won the fight, he would kill his opponent with the dagger or trident.



A *secutor* carried a short sword or dagger and a shield. His right arm and left leg were covered. His helmet had small eye holes, a rounded top and protective lips at the neck. A *secutor* had to kill quickly before he tired from the lack of oxygen inside the helmet.

The *murillo* was usually pitted against the *thraex*. His broad-brimmed helmet was fish-shaped. His left lower leg was protected by padding and a metal greave, and his right arm by armour. He carried a short, straight sword and a large curved shield.



A *thraex* (Thracian) carried a short, curved sword and a small shield. His lower legs were protected by greaves and his thighs with padding. The head of a **griffin** topped his brimmed helmet. The helmet's grill protected his face and eyes, and a deep collar protected his neck.

Source 5.62 Artist's impression of typical gladiator duels. Pairs were typically matched to make the fight fair. One gladiator's advantage was the other's disadvantage.

The Colosseum

The massive **Colosseum**, in the heart of ancient Rome, was the place to go for gladiator fights. This stadium was completed in 80 CE. Its external dimensions are about 20 metres longer and wider than the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Ancient Romans flocked here, often day after day, to watch gladiators kill each other (or animals) and see people being eaten by animals. Gladiators fought to the death. Sometimes there was an appeal for mercy. It is said that the emperor or official put a thumb up (for mercy) or a thumb down (for death). He might be influenced by the mood of the crowd.

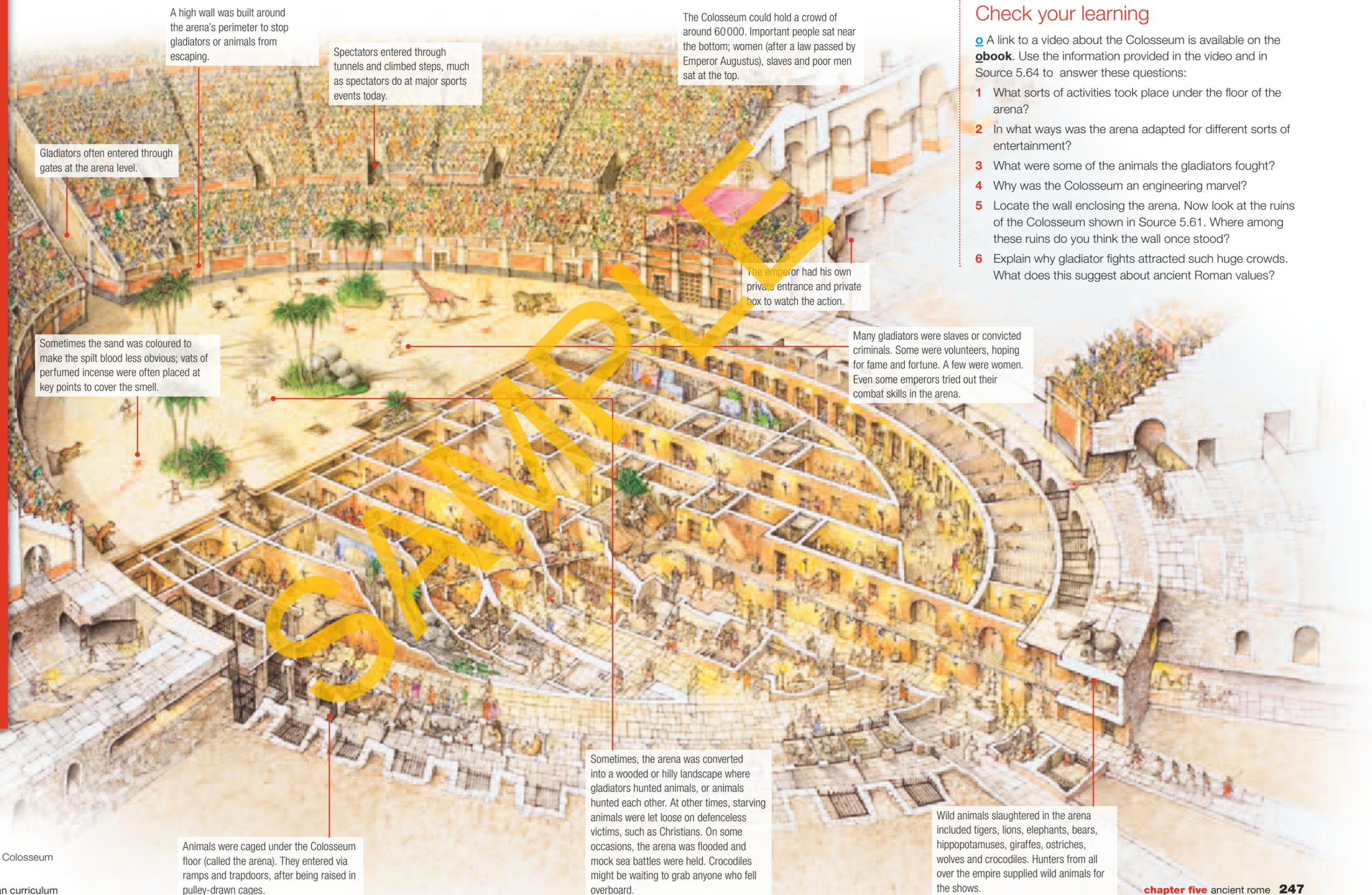
Dead bodies were dragged out and stripped of armour and weapons for later use by other gladiators. A popular gladiator who had won many fights might be presented with a wooden sword to mark his freedom. Some then became trainers of other gladiators.

Source 5.63

In the morning, men are thrown to the lions and the bears, and at midday they are thrown to their spectators. The spectators call for the slayer to be thrown to those who in turn will kill him. Then they hold the winner of that fight for another butchering. The outcome for the combatants is death.

Translated extract from *Moral Epistles* by the Roman writer Seneca

Source 5.64 Artist's impression of a day at the Colosseum



Check your learning

[A link to a video about the Colosseum is available on the obook.](#) Use the information provided in the video and in Source 5.64 to answer these questions:

- 1 What sorts of activities took place under the floor of the arena?
- 2 In what ways was the arena adapted for different sorts of entertainment?
- 3 What were some of the animals the gladiators fought?
- 4 Why was the Colosseum an engineering marvel?
- 5 Locate the wall enclosing the arena. Now look at the ruins of the Colosseum shown in Source 5.61. Where among these ruins do you think the wall once stood?
- 6 Explain why gladiator fights attracted such huge crowds. What does this suggest about ancient Roman values?



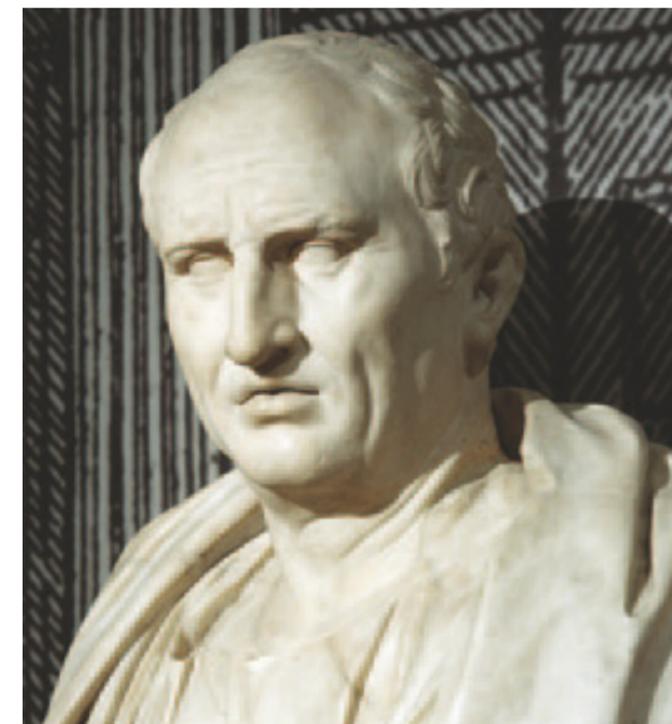
Source 5.65 A 16th-century CE painting of the Underworld, showing Charon, the ferryman



Source 5.66 Trajan's column



Source 5.67 Monuments marking ancient grave sites along the Via Appia



Source 5.68 A bust of Cicero, who argued against the consul Antony for a full restoration of the republic after Caesar's assassination (see pp. 226–7)

Death and funerary customs

Romans had no set beliefs about what happened after death. This at least was the case until Christian ideas began to dominate. **Myths** and beliefs of conquered people influenced some people's lives. These included, as mentioned earlier, the cults of Egypt's goddess Isis and Persia's god Mithras. Ancient Romans also had great reverence for their ancestors. Often they kept wax death masks (or stone busts) of them in their homes, which they might parade on special occasions (see Source 5.16).

Influence of Greek mythology

A common influence on Roman beliefs about death was Greek **mythology**. Many Romans believed, as did the Greeks, that there was a gloomy **Underworld: Hades**. Dead souls reached it by paying the ferryman, Charon, to row them across the River Styx. Only the bravest of heroes made it to the Elysian Fields (see p. 194).

Despite having no certainty about life after death, the ancient Romans were uneasy about their dead. Many believed the spirits (or souls) of the dead would roam around, haunting them, if certain rituals, such as *decursio*

(see p. 253), were not carried out. Wandering souls might be a good, or bad, thing. Hence, the people showed a great deal of *pietas* (see Source 5.44) towards those who had died.

Influence of the law

One of the *Laws of the Twelve Tables* (a code of written laws drawn up in about 450 BCE) stated that people, other than small children, could not be buried or cremated within the city. This was partly for reasons of health and because burial space was limited. It also avoided air pollution from cremations. As towns and cities grew, and their borders expanded, this pushed funeral activity further and further away from the built-up area. Grave sites (and tombs) of the wealthy began to line access roads to towns and cities, especially the **Via Appia**.

The law also made it illegal to 'carry on' too much at a funeral. For example, women were forbidden from gouging their cheeks with their fingernails. The punishment for vandalising a grave or mutilating or disrespecting a corpse was death.

On special occasions this law was put aside, as happened for the Emperor Trajan (53–117 CE). His ashes were buried within the tall column in Rome erected in his honour.

Graves for the poor

Something had to be done for the dead among the poor and the homeless of ancient Rome. The historian Suetonius (c. 71–135 CE) describes the risks of having their bodies left to lie in city streets. He tells of a horrifying incident where a dog dropped a human hand it had been chewing at the feet of Emperor Vespasian!

Those who could not afford a burial plot or tomb were usually buried in a mass grave on the Esquiline Hill outside Rome. Typically, the corpses of the poor were carried there at night, often by slaves. Each corpse might be wrapped in cloth or covered with a sack. They were not placed in coffins. When the grave was starting to fill up with corpses, it was filled in with dirt.

Graves for the brave ... and the despised

Mass graves were also likely for Roman soldiers who died bravely in battle, and a long way from home. Some people, though, did not receive the respect of even a 'bulk burial'. Corpses of outcasts, such as prostitutes and people who took their own lives, were left out in the open for wild animals to eat.

Influence of beliefs and traditions

The ancient Romans regarded dead bodies as pollution, and those who tended them as 'polluted'. Polluted people could not carry out certain civic and religious duties until they had carried out purification rituals.

This meant that funeral workers and executioners were constantly 'unclean'. They thus became social outcasts, and had to live outside the city.

Given their law, and the way Romans felt about dead bodies, it is puzzling that they were so keen to watch people die. For example, they flocked to the arenas to watch gladiators die. Those who were tortured to death in public could always expect a large audience! The consul Mark Antony, for instance, had the head and right hand of his public critic Cicero cut off in 43 BCE and displayed it on the **Rostra** in Rome's forum. His wife pierced Cicero's tongue with her hairpins.

Perhaps these actions had something to do with appeasing the souls of the dead (as opposed, say, to someone dying naturally). The writer Tertullian (c. 200 CE) did suggest as much. He said that dead souls were pacified (calmed down) by the shedding of human blood.

Cremations and burials

Cremation (the burning of the corpses of people who had died) was the preferred procedure for a dead body during Etruscan times and the republic. By the end of the 1st century CE—and certainly after Christianity became more popular—burial was more common.

The body of a person to be cremated was either placed into a trench filled with wood or on an elevated pyre (pile of wood). Often belongings were burned with the body. The ashes and remains of bone were then placed in an urn which was then buried or placed in a tomb.

Sometimes many people were cremated at once. In such instances, funeral workers would try to include a woman's corpse with those of men as her extra body fat boosted the fire.

Before the wood was lit, the dead person's eyes were opened again (as they had been pushed shut on death). After their remains were burned, the embers were put out with wine.

Funerals (whether cremations or burials) were usually organised by undertakers who often provided dancers, singers, mimes and mourners for the event.



Source 5.69 Burial urns in a Roman tomb in Naples

Step 1: A close relative kissed the dying person and listened for any last words. On death, the eyes were closed and a coin put in the mouth (as in ancient Greece). The dead person's name was called repeatedly until the burial or cremation to make sure that he or she was dead!

Step 2: The corpse was washed and rubbed with lotions and oils. The body was then laid out for a time in the home, surrounded by flowers and torches and burning **incense**. People would come to pay their respects.

Step 3: Friends were invited to join family in the funeral procession. For someone important, this meant heading for the forum. It was typically a carnival atmosphere, with singers, dancers and musicians organised by the undertaker. Mourners might carry busts or masks of their ancestors.

Step 4: On reaching the forum, a **eulogy** might be delivered at the Rostra.

Step 5: A ceremony was held at the gravesite or crematorium. Goods might be buried with the dead person, especially if a non-Christian. People who were well off were buried in coffins. Graves were marked, even if only by partly buried **amphora** (for the poor) and simple **epitaphs**.

Step 6: The mourners returned home to purify themselves. Rituals included sweeping the house with a special broom and sprinkling water from a laurel branch.

Step 7: Nine days after the funeral, family members returned to the grave to hold a 'party'. They shared food and drink with the remains of the dead person, by means such as pushing a tube down into the earth where the body or ashes were buried. Such visits continued over time.

Source 5.70 Typical funeral procedures in ancient Rome for someone with at least average wealth

Festivals

Two festivals of ancient Rome honoured the dead. The *Parentalia* was a time in February when people remembered their ancestors, particularly dead parents. The *Lemuria* was an occasion to remember all those who had died.

Source 5.71 The rituals of the *Lemuria*, held at midnight in May each year.

No shoes with shoe laces constrict his [the worshipper's] feet, and with his thumb between his fingers, he makes a sign in case in the quiet he should meet a shadowy ghost. With hands washed clean with water from a spring, he turns around to receive black beans; these he throws away, but does not look at them. As he throws them away, he says, 'These I cast away. These beans I use to save myself and mine.' He says this nine times but must not look behind him. For the ghost is thought to gather up the beans and follow him unseen. Again, he touches water, bangs some bronze cymbals ... and asks the shade [ghost] to leave his house. When he has said the following nine times, 'Ghosts of my fathers, go away', he looks behind him and believes he has performed the sacred customs in the proper way.

Ovid, *Fasti*, V, 421–44

Funeral clubs

Today we have gardening clubs, books clubs and toy train clubs. In ancient Rome, they had funeral clubs called *collegia*. Members were mostly the poor.

Membership gave Rome's poor some comfort that they would have the honour of a decent burial. While still alive, members enjoyed social occasions, perhaps getting together for a few glasses of wine while discussing their funeral arrangements. The ashes of members, after being placed in an urn, were often stored in the one tomb. Each person had a pre-arranged spot for his remains.



Source 5.72 Mausoleum of Augustus (see p. 225). Such tombs were often built for people who were especially wealthy or influential. The tribune Gaius Cestius, who died soon after Rome took control of Egypt, had a mausoleum built like a pyramid (see p. 220).

Check your learning

- Write a paragraph to explain how Roman beliefs about what happened after death influenced their funeral practices.
- What might be the lot of a poor person who died in Rome?
 - Why might a poor person fear such a fate, given their beliefs?
 - What action was taken to try to give the poor some hope for the 'journey' at life's end?
- Where were the graveyards and crematoriums in ancient Rome? Why?
- Convert Source 5.70 into a comic-strip format. Use stick figures if you cannot draw. Each comic panel will need either speech bubbles or a small caption, or a mixture of the two.
- What was the purpose of the *Parentalia* festival?

5.3 How do beliefs, values and practices influence lifestyle?

Everyday life: Complete questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 14, 17, 20.

Warfare: Complete questions 1, 2, 4, 8, 13, 15, 18, 21.

Death and funerary customs: Complete questions 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 12, 16, 19, 22.

Remember

- 1 Explain how the ancient Romans initially treated Christians. What did this have to do with their beliefs?
- 2 Who was the Roman deity equivalent to the following Greek deities: Poseidon, Dionysus, Hestia, Zeus?
- 3 Who was the *paterfamilias* and why was his role so influential?
- 4 Write definitions in your own words for *each* of the following terms: legion, *principes*, *auxiliaries*, *testudo*.
- 5 **a** When was the ceremony of *Lemuria* held, and what was its purpose?
b Draw a flow chart to depict the steps of the *Lemuria* ritual.

Understand

- 6 Why was the practice of putting on a *toga virilis* significant for boys?
- 7 Cleanliness was valued by the ancient Romans. Study the illustration of Roman baths shown as Source 5.60. How did such facilities cater for this?
- 8 Copy an extended version of this table in your workbook and complete it with as many items as you can think of.

Factor	Likely influence on behaviour of soldiers
Religious belief	
Fear of punishment	
Training	
Long absence from families	

- 9 When a Pope dies, his name is repeated three times. Explain why this is an example of change and continuity.
- 10 What evidence does Source 5.71 provide of one of the rituals performed at funerals?

Apply

- 11 In groups brainstorm ways in which beliefs, values and traditions influence how many of us live. Consider aspects such as the roles of women, homes, education, fashion, marriage, entertainment and so on.
- 12 Make a papier mâché or clay model of a mausoleum or monument you would have built in honour of an influential person in society today whom you respect. Explain what influenced your design. Seek feedback from a partner and discuss any modifications you consider would have been worthwhile.
- 13 Think about the Roman army punishment of *decimatio*. Now think about how you would feel if ordered by some higher authority to severely punish a friend. How might that make you feel and behave? How effective do you think such a method is for enforcing discipline?

Analyse

- 14 Look carefully at Source 5.58, noting its different areas. Prepare a brochure on this villa for an open-house day in ancient Roman times, which highlights its special features. Your tour group will include a number of ancient Rome's poor.
- 15 [A link to a website giving information about Roman legionary soldiers is available on the obook.](#) Explore any aspects of this site you choose. Then write a review of the website, commenting on what you see as its strengths and weaknesses.
- 16 Use a Venn diagram (see p. 161) to compare and contrast the funeral procedure for an important ancient Roman with what you know about funerals in Australia today.

Evaluate

- 17 Which type of gladiator would you choose to be (if forced to) and why? You may need to conduct some research. (Note



Source 5.73 Carving on the Antonine Column in Rome, which was erected c. 180–196 CE to honour Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–180 CE). It shows Roman soldiers performing the ritual known as *decursio*, which involved circling the funeral pyre (fire) of an important person.

that evidence has been found that indicates that there were female gladiators.)

- 18 Make a digital booklet that explains the six things you think are most important for new recruits to the Roman army (both to protect them and to encourage them to be good soldiers). Ask a partner to give you an honest evaluation of your work.
- 19 Compare and contrast funeral proceedings in ancient Rome (see Source 5.70) with those in ancient Greece. On a scale of 1 (extremely similar) to 5 (not similar at all), rate how much you think practices in ancient Rome owed to this earlier civilisation.

Create

- 20 [Links to websites about mosaic design are available on the obook.](#) Design a floor tile suitable for a Roman villa. (Hint: Draw any shapes that you want to be defined in the same colour.)
- 21 Using only materials and equipment available at the time, design a new siege engine for the Roman army. (You could illustrate it, design it digitally, or build a model.) Explain its workings and benefit for the class.
- 22 Two ancient Roman epitaphs read: 'May the passer-by who sees these flowers and reads this say to himself: This flower is Flavia's body' and 'I was not, I was, I am not, I care not'. Devise an epitaph you might have liked had you been an ancient Roman.



Source 5.74 Artist's impression of a Roman sea battle. Devices such as the *corvus* (boarding-ladder that hooked into the deck of the enemy ship) and the battering ram (at the front of the hull) were used to good effect in its victories.

5.4 How do contacts and conflicts change societies?

Ancient Rome's development from a small farming settlement to a massive empire was due to a number of factors. Trade played a significant role. Warfare, too, was vital to its growth. Battle victories or negotiated peace treaties meant new territories to control. This meant, in turn, new resources, potentially new skills and an increased labour force for Rome.

Alongside this were the more subtle changes brought about by contact with different peoples. These contacts introduced, for example, new ideas about religion (such as the cult of Isis). They also introduced new fashions (such as the silks from ancient China) and new ways of doing things (such as temple designs from Greece).

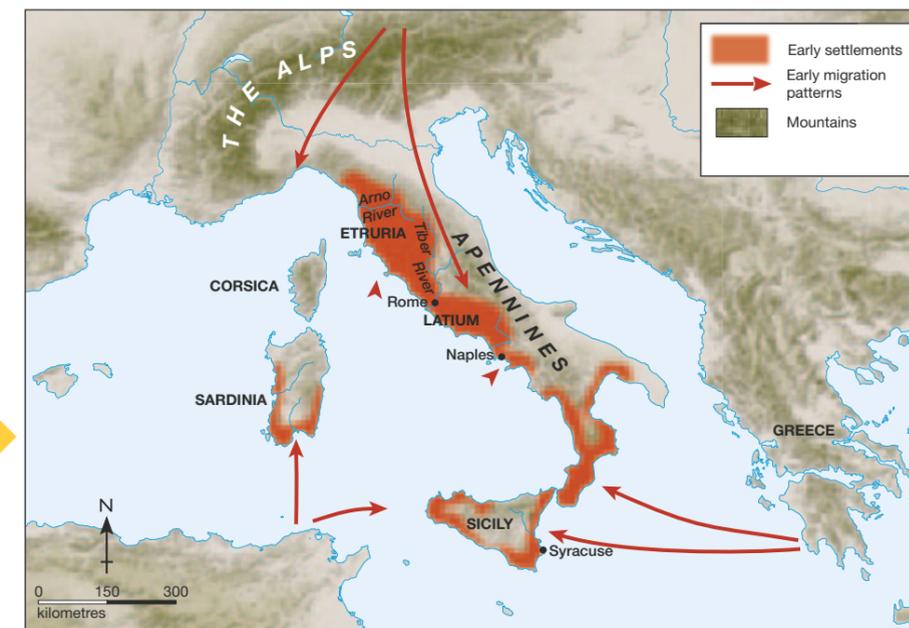
Changes through migration

The Etruscans were a migrating sea people, but historians still debate where they originally came from. Some now confidently say it was southern Turkey. This view, shared by the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, has more recently been supported by DNA studies.

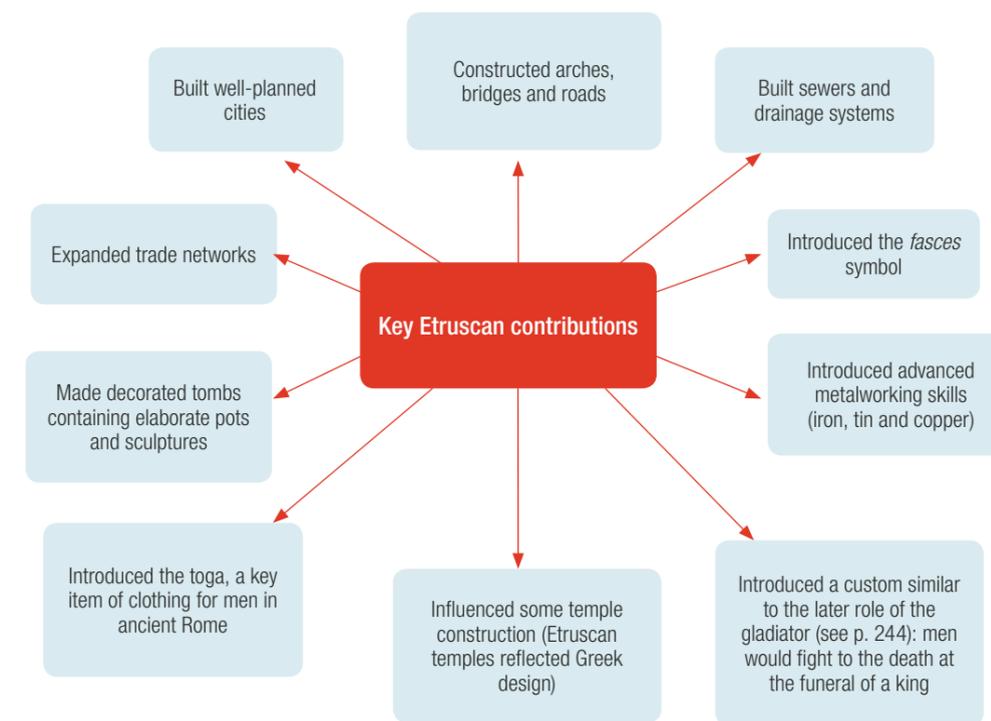
The Etruscans were settling in the north of modern-day Italy from about 800 BCE. From there they drifted south into Etruria (see Source 5.75). By about the 7th century BCE, they were ruling Latium.

The Etruscans were more advanced, wealthy and civilised than the local Latins. They had a written language (we know this from inscriptions that have been found); however, so far, no-one has been able to decode it. The Etruscans made many contributions to the early development of the society of ancient Rome, such as architecture, music and some family institutions.

Etruscan rule ended in 509 BCE with a revolt by the Roman people, who drove out the last Etruscan king. Rome then became a republic.



Source 5.75 The central region of ancient Rome, and the directions of early migration patterns



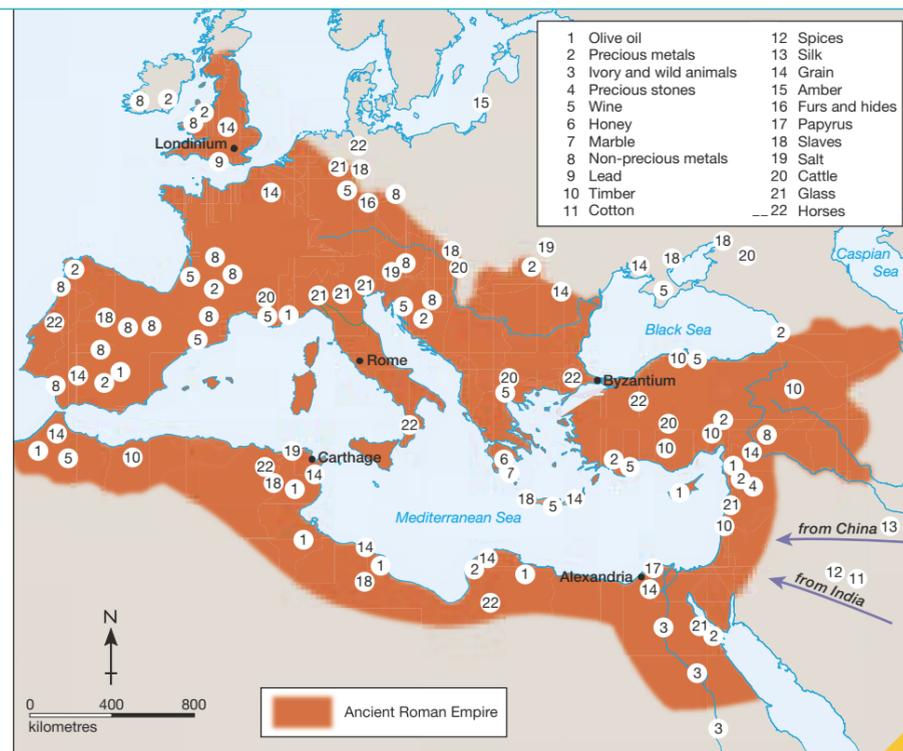
Source 5.76 Some Etruscan contributions

cause and effect: contact through trade

Ancient Rome's key industry was agriculture. Its farmers, helped by vast numbers of slaves, grew barley, wheat and rye, olives and grapes. They also raised goats, sheep, cattle, pigs and chickens. The key challenge for ancient Rome as it expanded was to feed its people. Particularly important was feeding its growing army.

One way that farmers could pay tax was in grain. But the more grain a farmer grew, the more tax he had to give away. Therefore, few were motivated to produce more crops than they had to. This was one of the causes of Rome's takeover of grain-growing lands elsewhere. It is why Rome, for instance, was motivated to gain control of places such as Egypt and Sicily.

Rome also had other needs besides food. There were temples to build, tools and weapons to forge, and infrastructure such as bridges and aqueducts to construct. Large numbers of slaves were needed to work the farms and local mines. This demand caused Rome to build a large trading empire, where huge volumes of goods were imported.



Source 5.77 Map showing some of the sources of Roman imports

The effect of this booming trade was that Rome became very prosperous and many individuals (especially merchants) became wealthy. This then caused a demand for imports such as animal skins, gold, ivory and amber (fossilised tree sap used for jewellery). Other less luxurious imports boosted Rome's manufacturing industries and workers: cloth weavers, tool and weapon makers, potters, jewellers and glassmakers. The products they made added to Rome's exports.

Check your learning

- 1 How did the Etruscans change the early society of ancient Rome?
- 2 What motivated Rome to acquire new grain-growing territories?
- 3 Draw an exports–imports diagram to depict the flow of some of the goods that made up ancient Rome's trade with its various markets.
- 4 How did Rome's importing of a range of precious metals (such as gold and silver) ultimately have an impact on the trading practice known as **bartering**?
- 5 Do you think migration significantly changes societies in the world today? Discuss as a class, giving examples.

Trade networks

Ancient Rome was well located, and made contact with a large number of markets around the Mediterranean Sea. Sea travel was cheaper and faster than land travel, especially for large, bulky loads such as timber, metals and grain.

Harbours, lighthouses and ports were built to service Rome's growing sea trade. The largest port was Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber River; others included Portus (see p. 217) and Pompeii. Many Roman ports grew into thriving cities. A number of ancient Roman shipwrecks and their cargoes of **amphoras** have been found along key shipping routes in the Mediterranean Sea (see Source 5.80).

Roads

The heart of ancient Rome was also connected by land to mainland Europe—and beyond, by way of the **Silk Road**, to distant lands such as China and India. When expanding Rome's territory (through conquest), Roman leaders had used the army to create a vast network of well-built roads. These began to be used by travellers and merchants. Goods were carried on the backs of donkeys and camels and in carts pulled by oxen.

Loaded donkeys and carts became a common sight in the streets of many Roman towns and cities. They became bustling places, full of the noise of buying and selling. In fact, the streets of the city of Rome became so busy that a law was passed that meant people could only use carts at night. The ancient Roman writer Martial (c. 40–100 BCE) noted there was 'nowhere a poor man can get any quiet in Rome'.



Source 5.79 Stone relief showing a woman selling her wares (fruit and vegetables) in Ostia



Source 5.78 Ancient Roman glassware, made in the Roman port city of Pompeii

evidence: smelly amphoras

In 2000, divers off Spain's south-eastern coast found the wreck of a large Roman merchant ship. The evidence revealed by dating analyses confirms that the ship sank about 2000 years ago.

The wreck was wedged in mud on the sea floor. Its cargo (much of it still in good condition) included over 1200 amphoras, some still with their seal (a pine resin plug) in place. Smell tests provide evidence that the amphoras had contained garum, a costly Roman delicacy. This stinking sauce was made by fermenting the blood and intestines of fish. Curious octopuses and salt water corrosion are the chief suspects for those seals that are missing!



Source 5.80 Amphoras from the wreck of an ancient Roman merchant ship



Source 5.81
Bust of Scipio

Impact of conflict on ancient Rome

In time, the ancient Romans built up a very powerful army. In fact, most of the territory they gained was through land battles. But, until the First Punic War of 264–241 BCE, Rome did not have war ships. This had to change if it was to have any chance of defeating Carthage, then a large empire and a strong sea power in the Mediterranean.

The ancient Greek historian Polybius reports that the Romans learned how to build war ships by being 'copy cats'. They found a stranded Carthaginian vessel and used it as a model. Very quickly, they built about 140 ships. Given their lack of experience in sea warfare, Rome's early defeats at sea are not surprising. This changed when the Romans invented the **corvus**. When hooked in place, Roman sailors could quickly board an enemy ship and do what they were very good at: fight as soldiers.

The society of the western empire of ancient Rome was also changed drastically by the invasion of barbarians that began pushing into the empire during the 3rd century CE. In fact, this conflict ended the empire.

Punic Wars

The Punic Wars were fought between Rome and Carthage. This conflict eventually gave Rome supreme control of the Mediterranean Sea.

The port city of Carthage was set up around 900 BCE as a colony of the Phoenicians (Punics). It became the centre of a large trading empire. As such, it was a major threat to the emerging power of ancient Rome.

First Punic War

The First Punic War (264–241 BCE) involved battles on land and sea. This was the war that forced Rome to build a navy (see above). There were heavy losses on both sides. Carthage's ships were better, and their sailors more experienced. But Rome won in the end. It took from Carthage the territory we know as Sicily.

Second Punic War

The Second Punic War was fought between 219 and 202 BCE. Carthage's leader at that time, Hannibal, was a very strong military commander. He was also good at developing battle strategies. His stated motive for war was that he hated the Romans with a passion. His father had fuelled this hate since Hannibal was a boy because of what Carthage had lost in the First Punic War. Hannibal's war planning began in southern Spain in 221 BCE. From there he marched his army nearly 2000 kilometres to battle.

Source 5.82

Hannibal's army included some 38000 foot soldiers, 8000 horsemen and 37 elephants. During its long march, the army crossed many rivers and the Pyrenean Alps (in winter). Thousands of men and horses died, along with 34 elephants. Yet Hannibal had stunning victories in battles at Trebia, Lake Trasimene and Cannae. The loss of Roman soldiers was reported to be massive. Afterwards, the Romans referred to the battle at Cannae...which was their greatest defeat...as clades Carnensis (the disaster at Cannae).

Source 5.83

The descending path was very narrow and steep, and as both men and beasts could not tell on what they were treading owing to the snow, all that stepped wide of the path or stumbled were dashed down the precipice...Hannibal...set the soldiers at work to build up a path along the cliff... sufficiently wide for the pack train and horses... with great difficulty in three days he managed to get the elephants across.

Translated extract from *Histories III* by Polybius

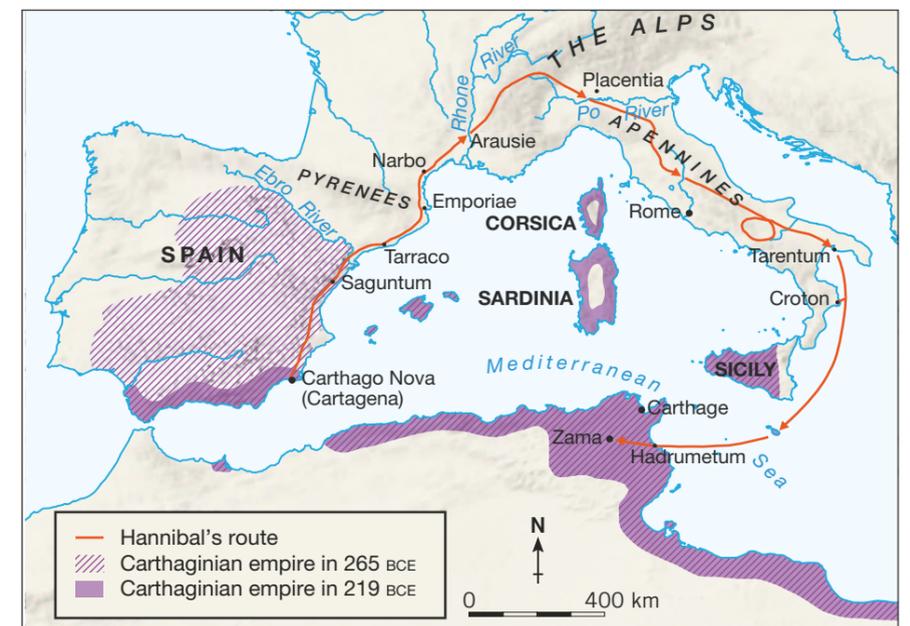


Source 5.84 Artist's impression of Hannibal's crossing of the Alps.

The Roman general Publius Cornelius Scipio was, however, a military match for Hannibal. Scipio won the battle fought against Hannibal in 202 BCE at Zama in north Africa. It is thought Hannibal died about 20 years later, still fighting the Romans.

Third Punic War

By the middle of the 2nd century BCE, Rome had defeated the kingdom of Macedon, to Greece's north. In 146 BCE, it looted Corinth, the last Greek city-state to hold out against Roman rule. That year, the Romans also decided to destroy Carthage, their troublesome rival. Its people were killed, taken captive or sold as slaves. The outcome of all these conflicts was that Rome greatly increased its territory.



Source 5.85 The route followed by Hannibal



At the Battle of Zama, Scipio's troops faced a row of 80 elephants. Each elephant carried a walled platform on its back packed with armed soldiers. Behind the elephants were the rest of Hannibal's troops. Yet this fearsome force was no match for Rome's Scipio. Scipio and Hannibal were both clever military leaders. But Scipio won at Zama because, this time, he had the better strategy.

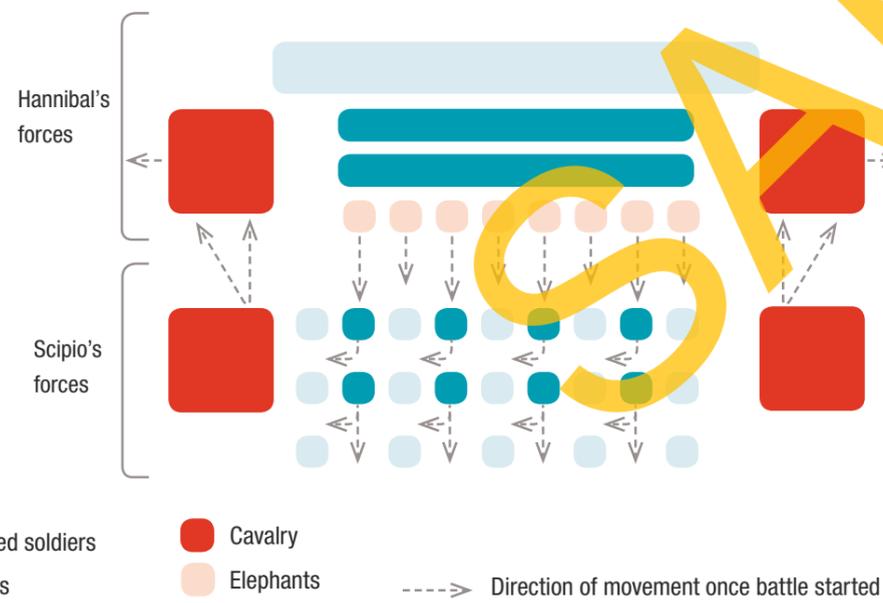
Strategic thinking is critical for military leaders. It is often the difference between life and death. It is also a skill *you* will use often in life, no matter what you do. It involves working out what you plan to do. Often, it also involves working out what your opponent might do in response—and what you might then do in turn. It means thinking ahead. It also means planning for the unexpected.

This task is to be completed in small groups. It gives you a chance to exercise your strategic thinking skills. You may like to work it out on paper. Some groups might prefer to act it out.

Study Source 5.87 carefully. Your task is to come up with a battle strategy that might have allowed Hannibal, instead of Scipio, to win at the Battle of Zama. Defend your strategy to members of another group.



Source 5.86 Artist's impression of Hannibal's elephant troops at Zama



Source 5.87 Scipio's battle-winning strategy

bigideas

5.4 How do contacts and conflicts change societies?

Remember

- 1 How did the arrival of the Etruscans change the settlement of Rome?
- 2 How did the Punic Wars change the territory of ancient Rome and of ancient Carthage?

Understand

- 3 Think about the location of the Italian peninsula, which was the heart of the empire of ancient Rome. Explain how its location would have been a benefit for sea trade.
- 4 Why was the Silk Road significant for Rome's contact with other societies?

Apply

- 5 In small groups, brainstorm the various ways (in broad terms) that Australia has been changed (for good or bad) as a country since the first arrival of Europeans in 1788.

Analyse

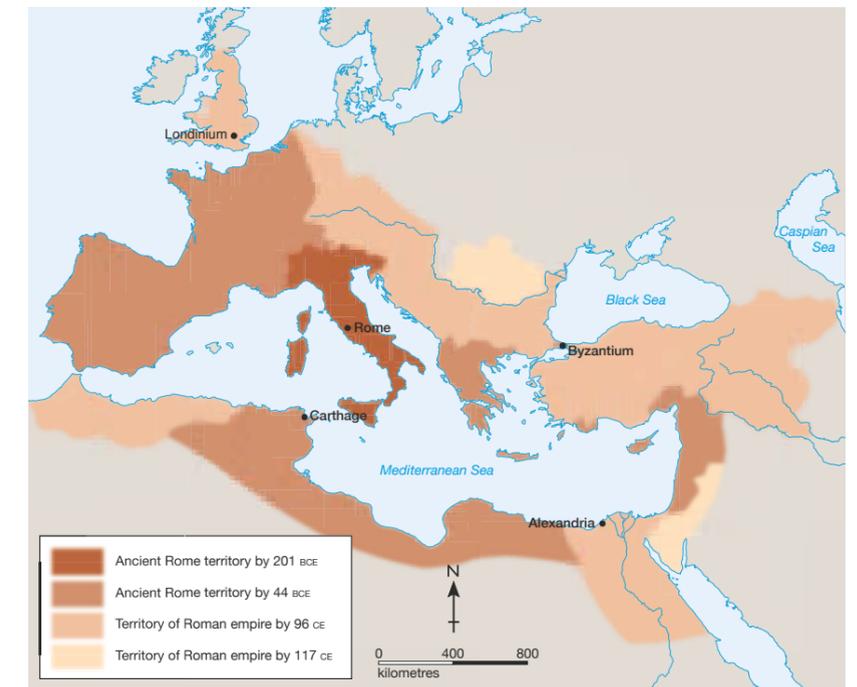
- 6 Study Source 5.77.
 - a List three metals, three foods and three clothing goods that Rome imported.
 - b Suggest some ways in which the three goods you have listed for 6a might have been used by the Romans. How might these have changed people's lifestyles?
 - c Use an atlas to name a modern country from where ancient Rome once imported *each* of the following: marble, ivory, timber, horses.
- 7 Look carefully at the map shown as Source 5.88.
 - a Between which time periods did ancient Rome grow the most?
 - b In pairs, come up with a strategy to measure the approximate area of the ancient Roman empire at its greatest extent.

Evaluate

- 8 Hold a class debate on *one* of these statements:
 - 'Without conflict, societies anywhere in the world would never change.'
 - 'Without trade, societies anywhere in the world would never change.'

Create

- 9 Prepare and role-play a discussion between either an ancient Roman merchant and a modern businessperson OR an ancient Roman centurion and a modern army sergeant. Your discussion will be about how significant you think your roles are as 'social changers'. You may need to conduct some research.



Source 5.88 The expansion of ancient Rome over time; most territory was acquired as a result of conflict, motivated (in many cases) by a need for trading markets.

connecting ideas

Ancient Rome

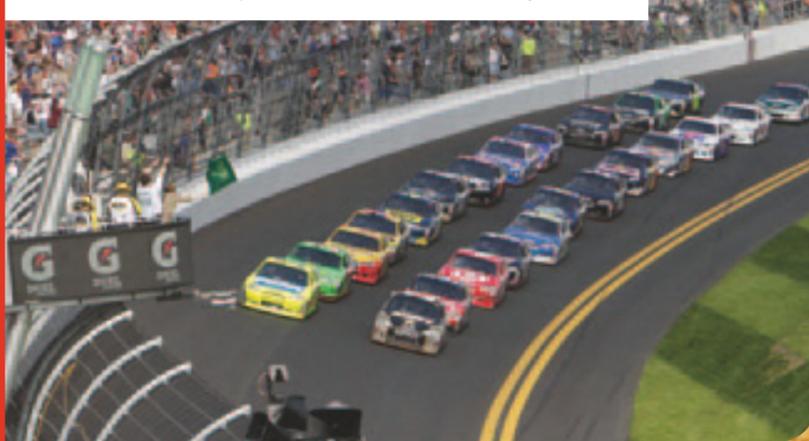
Bread and circuses

As you read earlier in this chapter, the ancient writer Juvenal said that two things held the Romans together: bread and circuses. His view, like Fronto before him, was that people who had a regular supply of food and entertainment were less likely to complain about their government or ruler. Clever Roman rulers recognised this and acted accordingly. Do you think this principle still applies today?

Today people around the world flock in their thousands to watch high-speed cars and bikes, as well as horses and horse-drawn buggies, race around circuits. For the winner, as in ancient Rome's chariot races, there is wealth and prestige. There is also the risk for all participants of accidents, even death.

- List six words you would use to describe modern events such as those mentioned.
 - How many of these words would you say also apply to the chariot races in Rome's hippodrome?
 - Explain why such events (both today and in ancient Rome) would be likely to distract people—at least for the moment—from day-to-day irritations.
- In ancient Rome, accidents happened regularly in the hippodrome. Maiming or death, for both riders and horses, was common. For the crowd such accidents were all part of 'a day out at the races'. Do you think this attitude is still true today? Discuss in groups, giving reasons for your views.

Source 5.89 Cars line up for the start of the NASCAR Daytona 500



Source 5.90 Bullfighting in Spain

Source 5.91 Two UFC fighters battle it out in 2010

The modern sport called Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) is often fought within a cage. It attracts wild, cheering crowds. In 2006, it brought in earnings of a quarter of a billion dollars. It is similar to the *pankration*, a sport introduced to the ancient Olympics in 648 BCE. (The Greek Olympics were for a time a part of Rome's sporting culture.) The *pankration* involved boxing and wrestling. UFC also has boxing and wrestling as well as some martial arts. At first, UFC was marketed, like the *pankration*, as a 'no rules' sport, but this has changed. Contestants now cannot bite one another or gouge eyes, but they can pull hair.



- Pankration* fighters and Roman gladiators frequently faced death. Things have changed—but how much? Rate the following from 1 (very violent) to 5 (not violent at all): boxing, UFC, computer games with physical aggression, horror movies, wrestling, rugby brawls. Share your ratings as a class. What do you conclude?

Rome's gladiators sometimes fought wild and hungry animals, such as tigers and lions. Sometimes the animals were pitted against each other. Thousands of animals were slaughtered in the name of public entertainment. Today, some people still find activities such as cock fighting, dog fighting and bullfighting entertaining.

- If you don't already know, find out what a bullfight involves.
- Many tourists who visit places such as Spain regard a bullfight as a cultural 'must see'. What are your views? Is it entertainment? Give reasons for your response.
- What do you think an ancient Roman might have thought about today's bullfights? Write their thoughts about this. Remember to write from their point of view.



Do you think Juvenal's 'bread and circuses' observation applies to modern Australia as much as to ancient Rome? To help you decide, predict how Australians might react if:

- food suddenly became very scarce
- all forms of sport and public entertainment in this country were forbidden.