



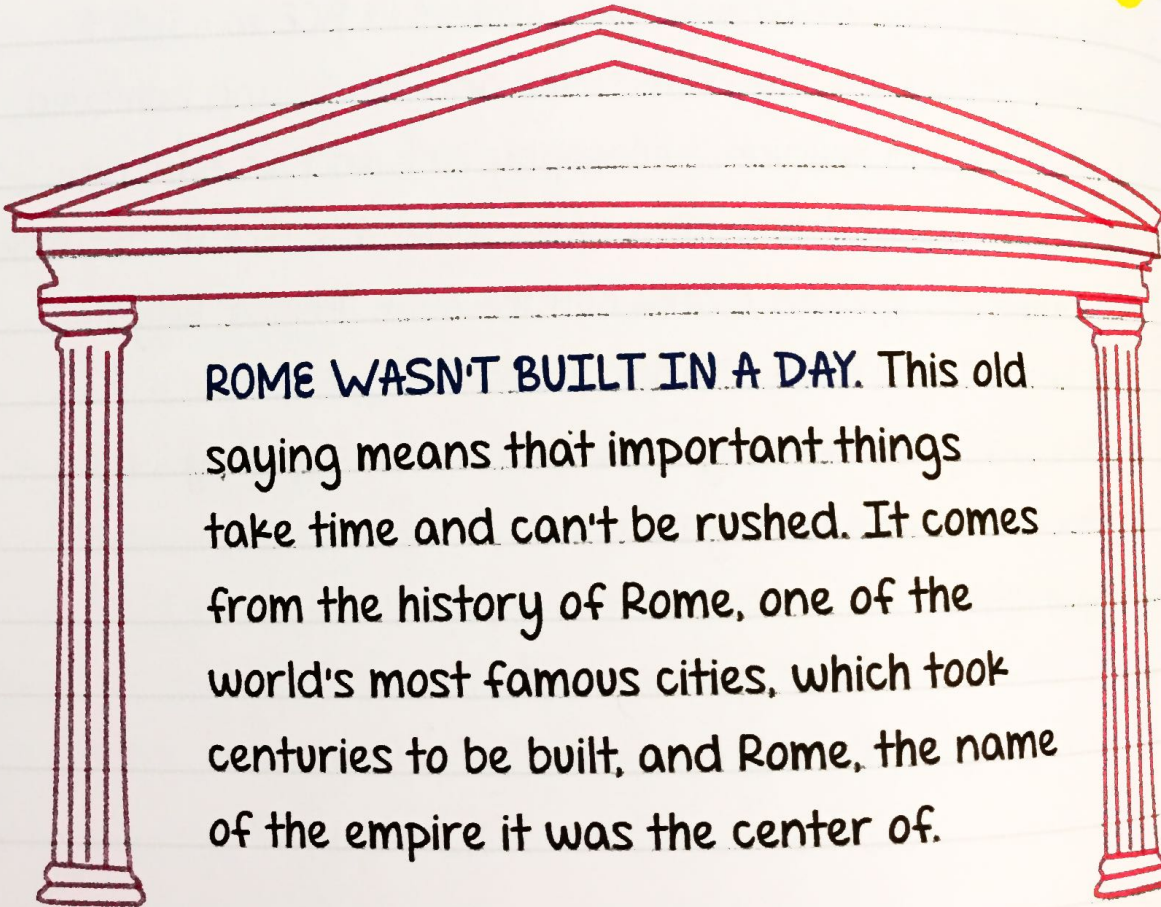
Chapter 9



ANCIENT



ROME



ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY. This old saying means that important things take time and can't be rushed. It comes from the history of Rome, one of the world's most famous cities, which took centuries to be built, and Rome, the name of the empire it was the center of.

ANCIENT ROME

The ancient period of Rome begins in 600 BCE, when the **ETRUSCANS** came into power and ruled as kings. The Romans rebelled against the **TYRANT** kings. Eventually, these Romans defeated the Etruscans and formed the **ROMAN REPUBLIC**. In a **REPUBLIC**, citizens with the right to vote select their leader, who then rules as a representative of the people. The Roman Republic also had a senate to propose and vote on new laws.

TYRANT
an all-powerful,
cruel ruler



In the early republic, only **PATRICIANS**, or wealthy upper-class men, could sit in the senate. **PLEBEIANS**, or ordinary citizens, couldn't. Laws were enforced by two officials called **CONSULS**, who were elected by citizens. **PRAETORS** served as judges, who settled disputes and arguments about money and contracts.



LAUREL WREATH

A laurel wreath (made from the leaves and branches of a laurel tree) was used to show religious, political, and military significance in ancient Roman society. Roman generals wore laurel wreaths during their victorious marches through Rome. Emperors and gods were shown in art wearing laurel wreaths, too. The Romans used many different kinds of wreaths to show off important life achievements or status changes, but the laurel wreath was reserved for the gods and the most prestigious members of society.

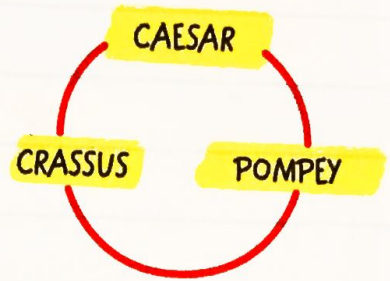
The Romans conquered territories like Carthage in North Africa, as well as Greece, Spain, and Gaul (present-day France). But civil war constantly threatened to tear Rome apart, until an army leader named **JULIUS CAESAR** came along.

JULIUS CAESAR

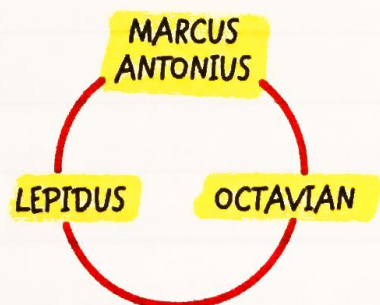
Caesar had military command in Gaul and was considered a powerful victor of the civil wars. He, along with two other men (Crassus and Pompey), ruled in what is known as the **FIRST TRIUMVIRATE**. Many

TRIUMVIRATE
a government by three people with equal power; from TRI (three) and VIRATE (of men)

of the Roman senators regretted this new set of rulers. The senate decided Pompey should lead alone, but Caesar refused (and Crassus had been killed trying to match the military achievements of the other members of the triumvirate). In 45 BCE, Caesar defeated Pompey and took over the Roman government to create his own dictatorship. Caesar tried to fill the senate with his friends. The rest of the senate was less than thrilled. On March 15, 44 BCE (called the **IDES OF MARCH**), Caesar attended a meeting of the senate. The senators pulled knives from their togas and killed him. Civil war followed for thirteen years.



A **SECOND TRIUMVIRATE** was formed to try to restore order: **MARCUS ANTONIUS** (Caesar's right-hand man), **OCTAVIAN** (Caesar's nephew and adopted son), and a rich Roman named **LEPIDUS**, who mostly tried to keep his head down while Antonius and Octavian fought each other.





EMPEROR AUGUSTUS

Through a lot of war and a lot of killing, Caesar's adopted son Octavian took power and was given the title of **AUGUSTUS** ("highly respected") by the senate in 27 BCE. The republic was over after 500 years, and now Rome had an empire, and Augustus was its first emperor.

The Roman Empire stretched from parts of Europe to Egypt at that time. Most conquered people remained free. Provinces were formed from areas of the empire, each with its own governor and army. Conquered people could become citizens (they also had to pay taxes, though). Augustus was careful to respect the senate to avoid meeting his father's fate, and he ruled until his death in 14 CE.

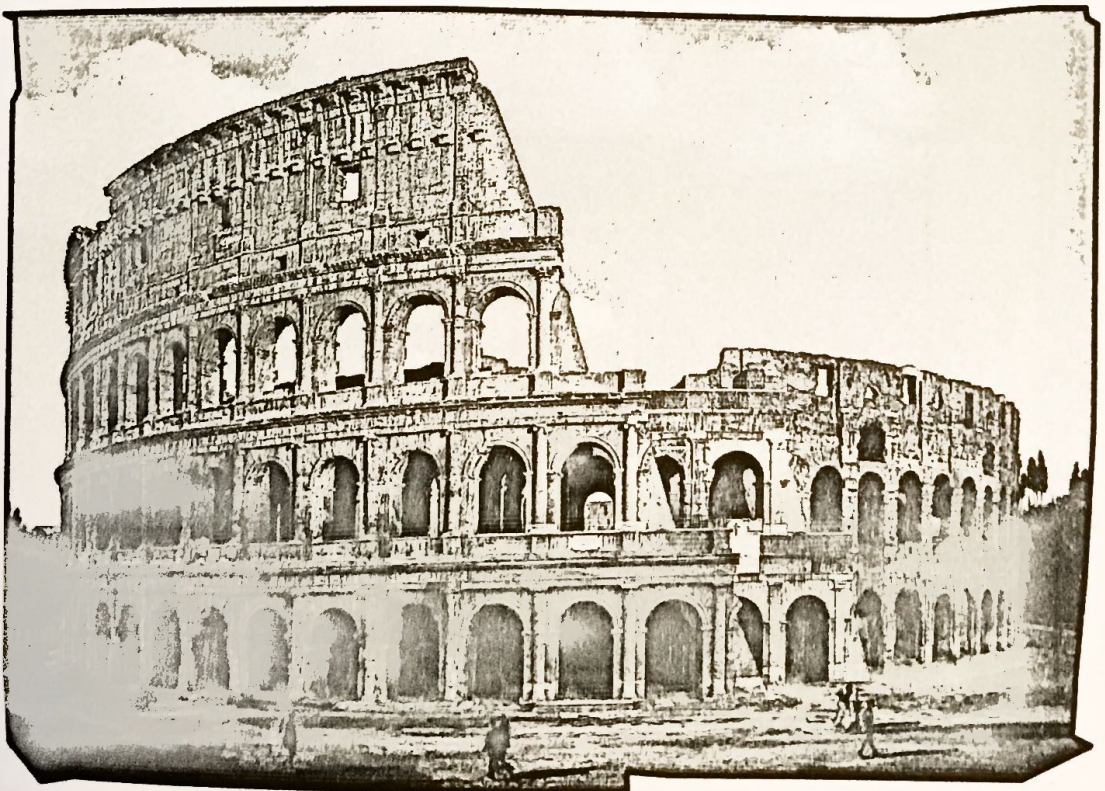
BUILDING ROME

The Romans were amazing builders—even if it did take more than a day to build Rome.

IT WAS MORE
LIKE CENTURIES!

One of the most famous Roman buildings is the **COLOSSEUM**, an amphitheater (stadium) where gladiatorial spectacles were held, sometimes with people fighting animals.

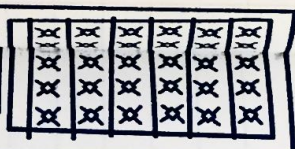
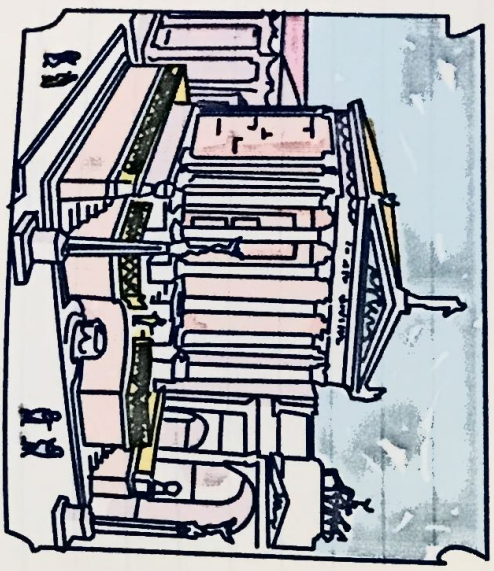
The **COLOSSEUM** was as large as a football stadium. It was used for contests between gladiators (swordsmen), for punishing criminals, and even for pretend sea battles.



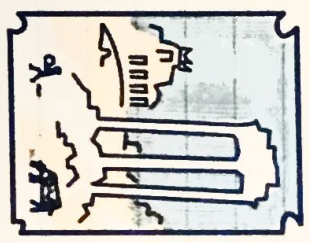
THE ROMAN FORUM

FORUM ROMANUM

Roman cities across the empire were known for their public city centers, called FORUMS. They were places where Roman citizens would meet to trade goods, visit religious temples, vote for political leaders, celebrate military achievements, and meet up with their friends. The largest forum in Rome was called the FORUM ROMANUM.



The first Roman emperor, Augustus, wanted to make Rome the most beautiful city in the world. So, starting in 26 BCE, he built elaborate, expensive temples, basilicas, and arches in the Roman Forum. But, by 476 CE, the Roman Empire had officially fallen and the Roman people and invaders took precious stones and metal from the buildings to construct new ones. During the Middle Ages, the Romans forgot what the Roman Forum was used for and it became a cow field! They called it the *Campo Vaccino*. In the 19th century, archeologists excavated the Roman Forum and restored the ruins to reflect their former glory.



The Romans also built statues and buildings with arches that allowed them to create larger indoor spaces in these new buildings. They used a crazy newfangled invention called concrete. The Romans also built roads to spread trade and to move their armies. They're also famous for their **AQUEDUCTS**, channels that carried water from the country to the city. They had public toilets and a lot of baths.

WATER RAN DOWN THESE CHANNELS.



ROMAN LAW

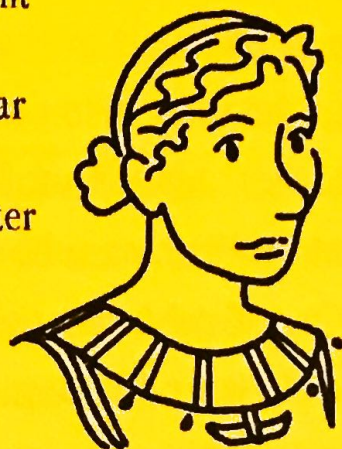
Many Roman laws are familiar to us now because they've been passed down through the years, like being innocent until proven guilty if you are accused of a crime.

Everything about Rome was built around families, and the government was structured to give support to them. Women, who otherwise didn't have much power, got special benefits if they had three or more kids. Unmarried men and couples with no children didn't get help from the government. Many believe this was the Roman government's way of encouraging population growth. Some also believe that this was a way to keep property in male-controlled families.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA

Cleopatra VII was the last independent ruler of Egypt. Julius Caesar took up with the Egyptian queen. When Caesar was assassinated, Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony) married Cleopatra after leaving his wife, Octavian's sister. The Romans back in Italy thought of Cleopatra as foreign, dangerous, and way too female to be trusted.

There are many plays and movies about the romance between Antonius and Cleopatra, including *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* by William Shakespeare.



The RISE of CHRISTIANITY

There were many religions in the Roman Empire. At first, most Romans were polytheistic (they worshipped many gods) and believed in a mix of local myths and Greek mythology. But

they changed the names of the gods. For example, the Greek "Zeus" became "Jupiter" (which basically means "father" in Latin). The Romans allowed people to worship as they wanted, for the most part, but soon Christianity began to stand out as a problem. Roman emperors began to believe that it was a dangerous cult that had broken away from Judaism.

ZEUS → **JUPITER**

HADES → **PLUTO**

POSEIDON → **NEPTUNE**

Christians believed in the teachings of a Jewish man named **JESUS**, who was also called Christ (so his followers are "Christians"). Jesus taught that there was one God (this is called monotheism), who was kind and forgiving. People had to love God and each other, show forgiveness, and lead responsible lives to have an everlasting life. Some Romans believed that this assumed God was more important than the emperor. Worried that Jesus might lead a revolt against the government, a Roman governor condemned him to death. According to the religious writings called the **GOSPELS**, Jesus returned to life and told his disciples to spread his teachings.

Groups of Christians gathered throughout the empire. One follower, Paul, wrote letters to groups in faraway cities and traveled to spread Jesus's teachings.

Christians grew in such numbers that the Roman government made it a crime to be Christian, and **PERSECUTION** of the Christian people followed. Many died for their religion and became **MARTYRS**. But Christianity continued to spread, and by 300 CE, nearly one in every ten Romans had become Christian.

Christianity is still one of the most popular religions worldwide today.

PERSECUTE

to attack, imprison, or harass a people because of their beliefs

MARTYR

a person who is willing to undergo great suffering or die on behalf of a cause or principle

EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

The emperor **CONSTANTINE** also helped spread Christianity. The Roman Empire was weakening, but the Christian Church had gained more authority. Constantine, who ruled from 312 to 337 CE, converted and became the first Christian emperor. He declared freedom of worship across the empire in his **EDICT OF MILAN**, ending the persecution. He built churches for worship. Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium (in what is now Turkey) and called it the New Rome (later Byzantium became Constantinople, and much later it became Istanbul, which is what it's called today). The city was in a strategic location that provided protection for the eastern frontier of the empire.

DECLINE of the ROMAN EMPIRE

The emperor Commodus was eighteen when he began ruling in 180 CE, and his poor choices led to the beginning of the end for the Roman Empire. He disregarded the senate and bribed the army to stand by him. His successors also followed this pattern of bribery and poor leadership. Rome faced other problems too, like having to pay **MERCENARY** armies who had no loyalty to the empire, battling **INFLATION** (due to making too many valueless coins), fighting off **PLAGUES**, and fighting to keep the land they had conquered. Eventually German invaders took over the empire in the west. Constantinople held on as the capital of the Byzantine Empire.

MERCENARY

a professional soldier hired to serve in a foreign army

INFLATION

an increase in prices of goods and a fall in the value of money

PLAGUE

a contagious disease



CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Who were the first rulers of ancient Rome?
2. The Romans are famous for founding the first republic. So what is a republic, anyway?
3. What happened on the Ides of March?
4. Who took over after Caesar died and how was this person's fate different from Caesar's?
5. Under the Roman Empire, architecture and engineering flourished. Describe some important things the Romans created during this time.
6. Initially, were the Romans polytheistic or monotheistic? What is the difference between the two?
7. How did Christianity spread through the Roman Empire?