

Ancient Republican and Imperial Rome

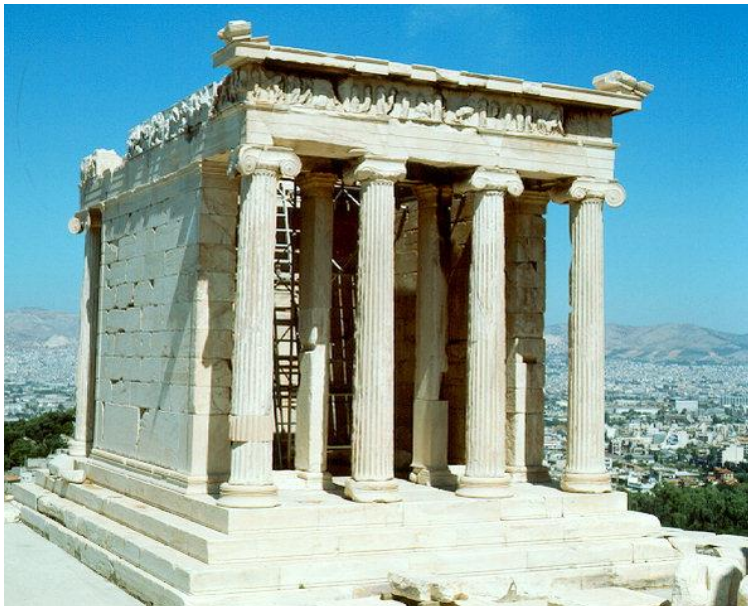
Key Point #1

- Roman art is known for its **civic ideals** and **polytheism** and is influenced by early Mediterranean cultures.



Key Point #2

- Roman artists adapted Greek art to appeal to Rome's **eclecticism and tradition.**



Greek
←

Roman
→



Key Point #3

- Much of Roman architecture borrows from Greek and Etruscan, yet Roman architecture is about public structures and **technical innovation**.

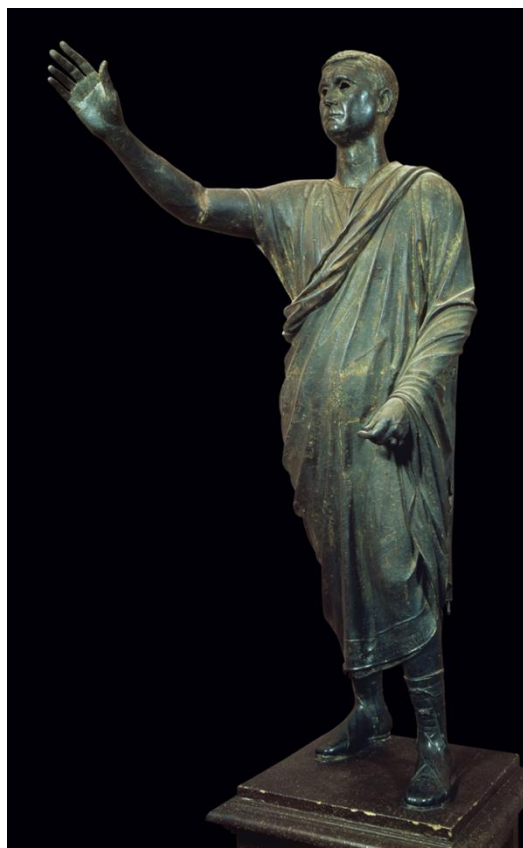
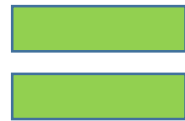
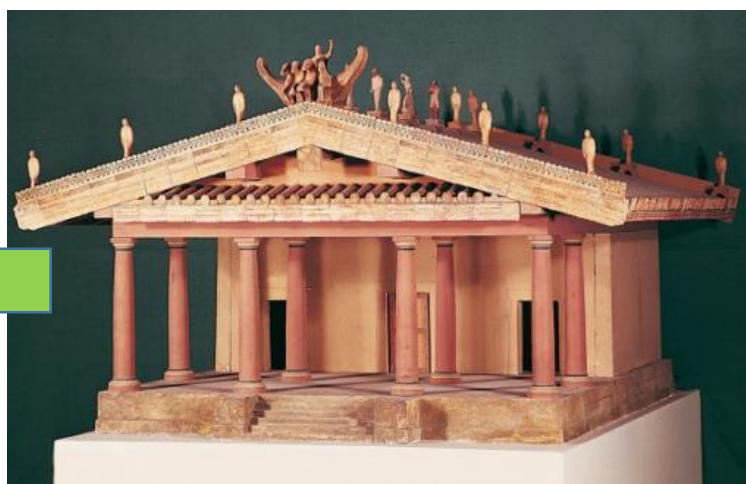
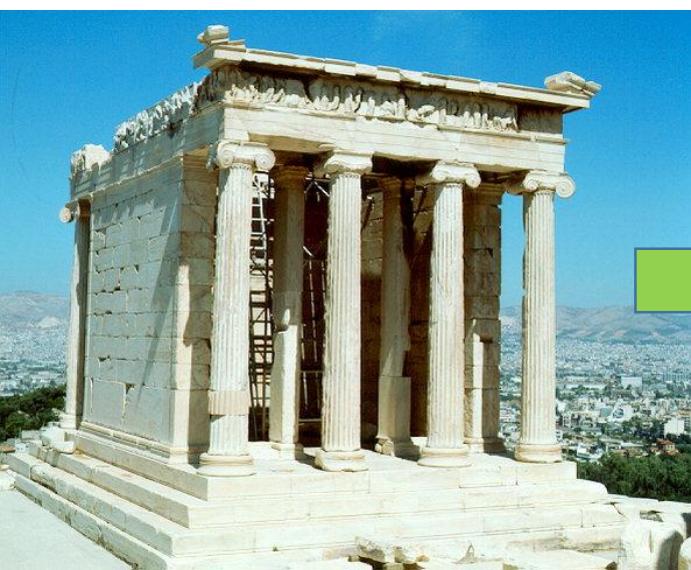


Concrete!
Arches
Barrel Vaults
Groin Vaults

Roman Republic

- 509-27 BCE
- Ruled by the upper class called “patricians.”
- Worship of their ancestors causes for portraits to be **veristic**.
- As their territory grew, their taste for Greek art did too.
- Greek masterpieces were sent to Rome and copied in marble.
 - The Greek originals in bronze were melted down.
- Julius Caesar ruled.
 - Tax laws
 - Calendar





Republic

Temple of “Fortuna Virilis” (Temple of Portunus), Rome, Italy, ca. 75 BCE.

- Pseudoperipteral
 - What?!
- Ionic capitals
- **Eclecticism**
- Does plan follow Greek ratios?
- What is similar to the Etruscans?



Patrician Portraiture in Republican Rome



- **Patrician** = member of the original citizen families of Rome.
- Patricians were held in great esteem because of their loyalty to the state and for how hard they worked to prevent Rome from being ruled by a dictator, emperor, or tyrant.
- Only for the most wealthy.
 - Senators, generals, etc
 - Indication of social elite
- Displayed in homes.
- Toga indicates Roman citizenship.
- *Wax Imagines*.
 - Masks made to look like the deceased
- Used in funerary processions and celebrations on special occasions.
 - Families would carry or wear the masks of their deceased ancestors.

Portraiture in Republican Rome

- Romans believed the bust alone was enough to capture a portrait.
 - Frequently old heads were placed on youthful bodies.
 - Body would be modeled after a Greek athlete – typically nude.
 - Again – shows one cultures (Roman) domination over another culture (Greece).



Head of a Roman Patrician.

Republican Roman. c. 75-50 BCE. Marble.



Context

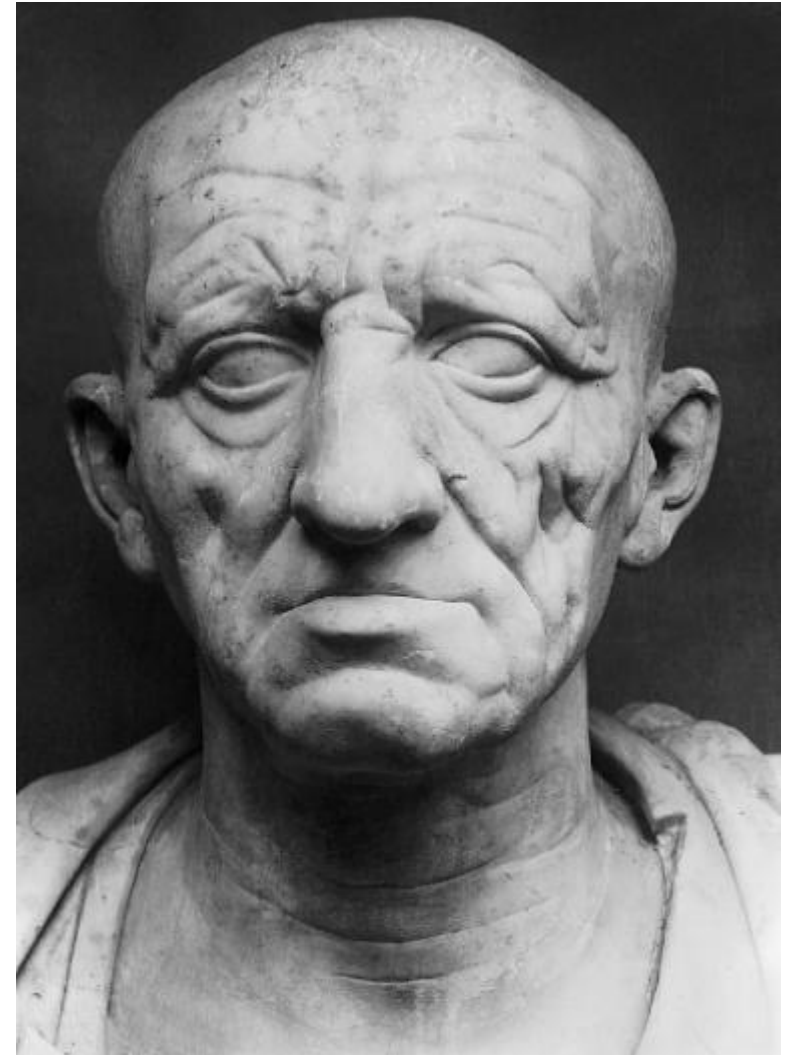
- His physical traits of age reveal **seriousness of mind** and the **virtue** of having a public career (The Republic).
- He represents the male aristocrat: hooked nose, strong cheekbones/
- These are derived from wax death masks.
- **Verism**- hyperrealism
 - naturally occurring features like wrinkles and sunken cheeks (signs of age) are depicted and sometimes even exaggerated.
- **Patrician**- male head of family
[smart history: Roman Republic](#)

Head of a Roman Patrician.

Republican Roman. c. 75-50 BCE. Marble.

Context

- Prestige came with age, morality, courage, and experience.
- A way to honor distinguished family members.
 - Displayed in the home.
 - Wax versions would be part of funeral processions.
- Debate as to how accurate they were.
 - Idealized?
- Eclecticism
 - Greek – Hellenistic sculptures
 - Etruscan – portrait heads



Head of a Roman Patrician.

Republican Roman. c. 75-50 BCE. Marble.



Content

- Shows elevated class status through genealogy.
- Depicts the culture of Elders.
 - Full of experience, morality, courage, responsibility.
- He was probably only middle-aged, but made to look older.
- Verism.
- No emotion.

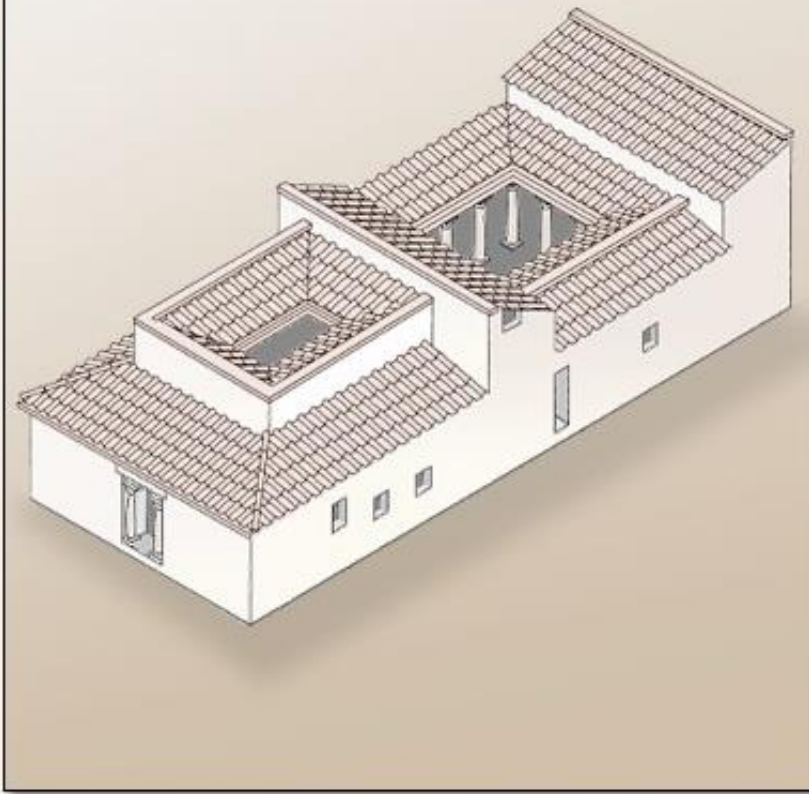
Head of a Roman Patrician.

Republican Roman. c. 75-50 BCE. Marble.



- Different from Greeks who used full length portraits.
- Greeks interested in philosophy, art and science.
- Romans interested in conquest and administration.
- Greeks – artists were valued and recognized.
- Romans – artists are servants of the patron.



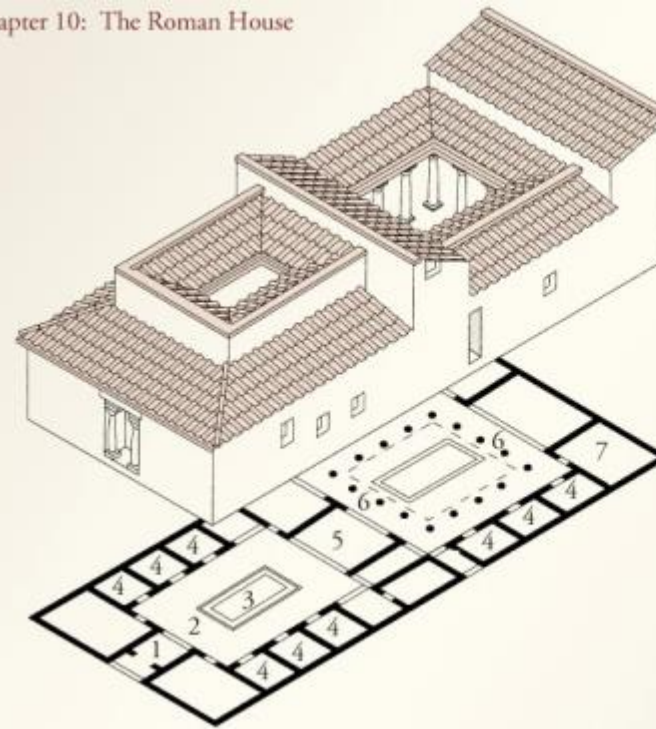


A client calling on a patron would enter the typical Roman **domus** (private house) through a narrow foyer (**fauces**, the "throat" of the house), which led to a large central reception area, the **atrium**. The rooms flanking the fauces could open inward, as in our diagram, or outward, in which case they were rented out as shops. The roof over the atrium was partially open to the sky, not only to admit light but also to channel rainwater into a basin (**impluvium**) below. The water could be stored in cisterns for household use. Opening onto the atrium was a series of small bedrooms called **cubicula** (cubicles). At the back were the patron's **tablinum** or "home office," a dining room (**triclinium**), a kitchen, and sometimes a small garden.

Patron/Client relationships

The Roman Home

Chapter 10: The Roman House

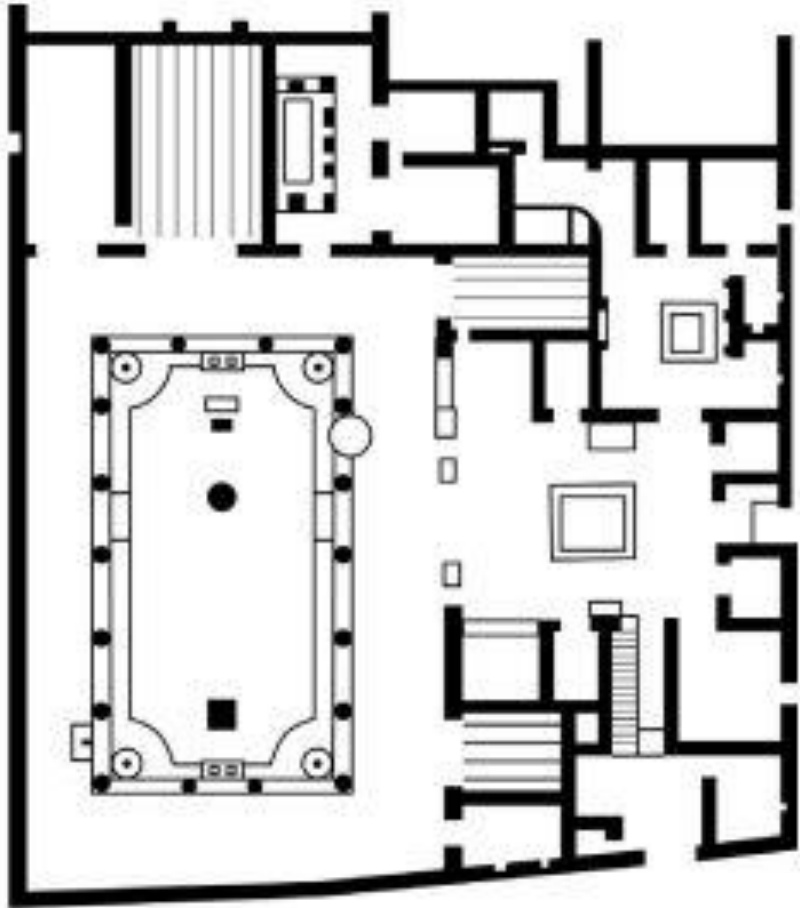


- 1 Fauces
- 2 Atrium
- 3 Impluvium
- 4 Cubiculum
- 5 Tablinum
- 6 Peristyle
- 7 Triclinium



House of the Vettii, plan.

Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE.



0 10 m

House of the Vettii plan

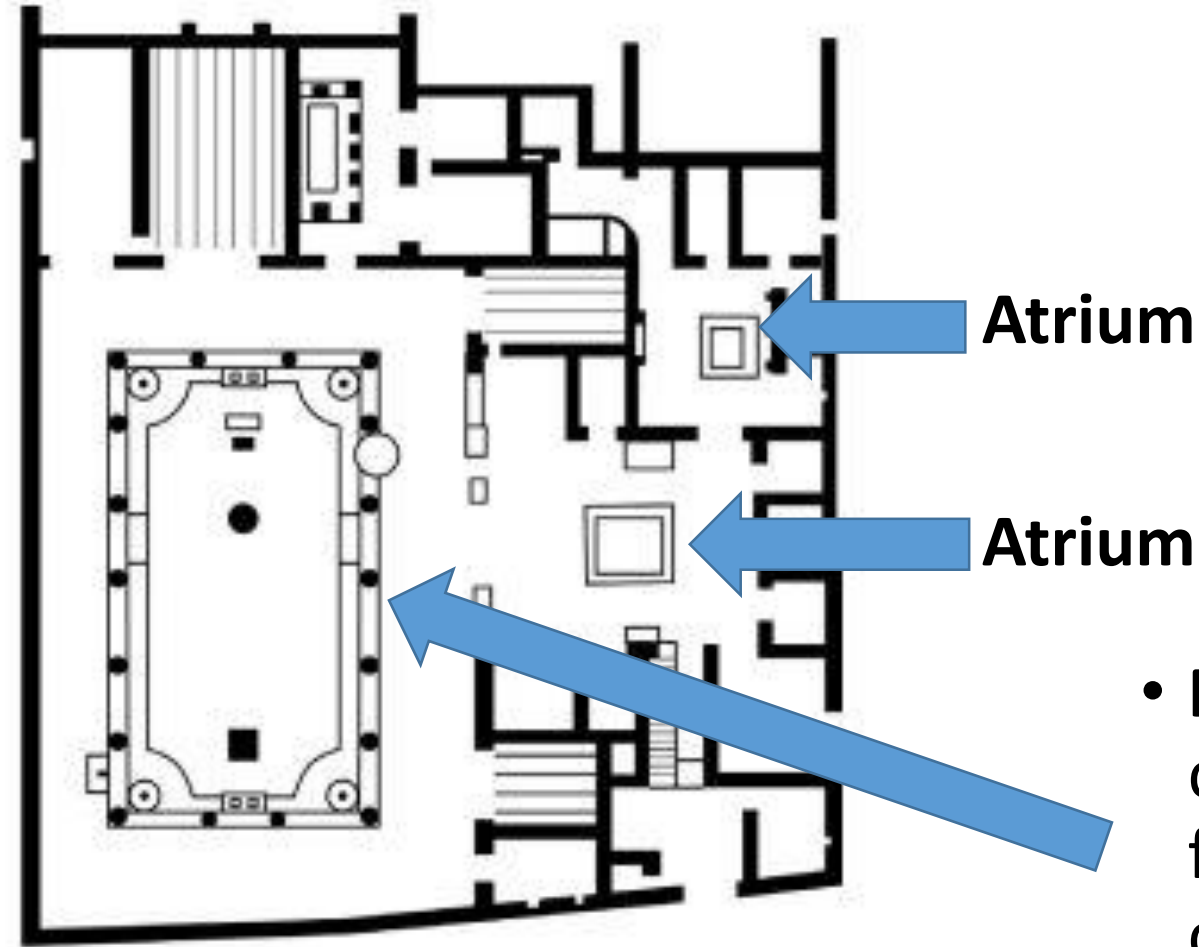
- Pompeii-"The city of the living dead."
 - August 24, 79 B.C.E, Mount Vesuvius erupted. The House of Vettii is one of the best-preserved houses of Pompeii.
- Owned by two brothers, nouveau riche wine merchants.
- Few windows on the exterior.
- Interior rooms were multipurpose.

[3 min video of Roman Domus](#)

House of the Vetii, plan.

Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE. Cut stone and fresco.

- Same size as many of our homes today.
- 2 large central halls.
- Peristyle courtyard.
- 2 atriums.



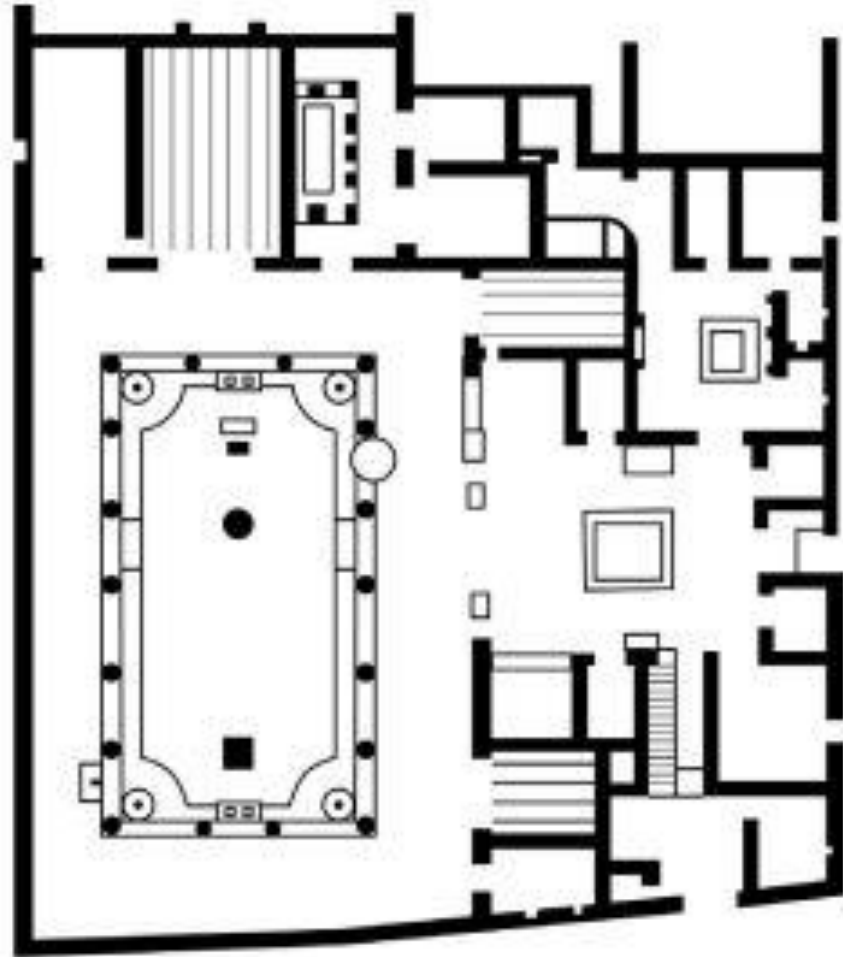
- **Peristyle**, open courtyard with fluted Doric columns.

0 10 m

House of the Vetii plan

House of the Vettii, plan.

Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE. Cut stone and fresco.



0 10 m

House of the Vettii plan

The Roman Home-

- Republican society operated on patron-client relationships.
- The patron's home was also a meeting place for clients and often had spaces for merchants.

House of the Vettii, plan.

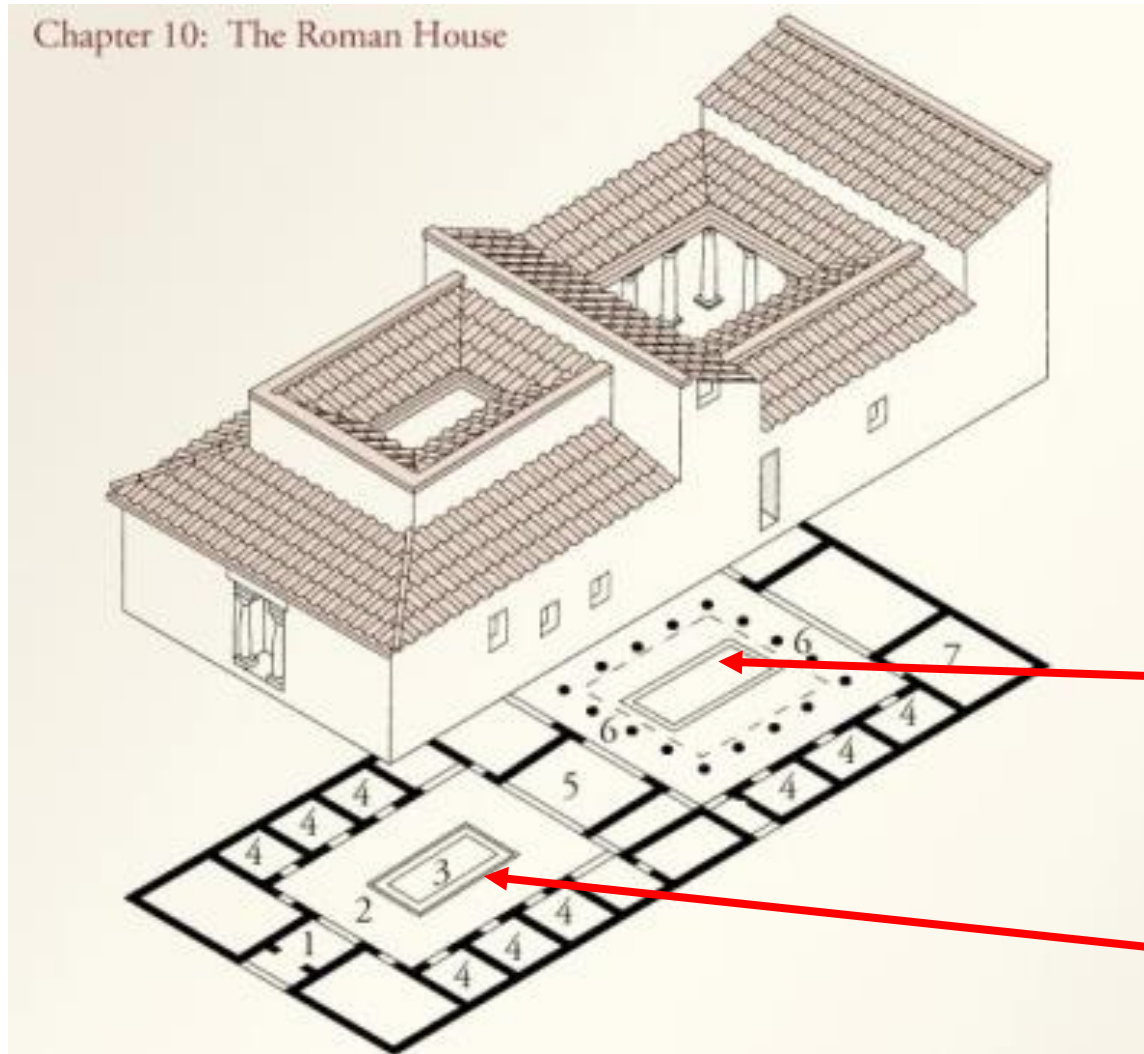
Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE. Cut stone and fresco.



- The photograph was taken in the **fauces**.
- Shows the **impluvium** in the center of the **atrium**, the opening in the roof above, and in the background, the **peristyle** garden with its marble tables and mural paintings.
- **Atrium** had an open roof with an impluvium to catch rainwater.

House of the Vetii, Atrium.

Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE. Cut stone and fresco.



House of the Vetii, frescoes.

Pompeii, Italy. Imperial Rome. c. second century BCE; rebuilt c. 62-79 CE. Cut stone and fresco.



Establishes Western painting traditions

- Frescoes throughout the home.
 - A sign of wealth.
 - Many were inappropriate and perhaps indicative of an altered sense of morality for the "new money" of the time.
- Most of the paintings are done in the Third and Fourth Style.
- **Fourth Style**- A style of painting full of fantastical images and irrational architectural vistas.
 - Rejected the quiet elegance of 3rd.
 - Combination of all previous styles.
 - Eclecticism.
 - Low – imitated marble – 1st Style.
 - Delicate floral frames – 3rd Style.
 - Unrelated architectural elements on top – 4th Styl.e

Alexander Mosaic from the House of Faun,

Pompeii. Republican Roman. c. 100 BCE. Mosaic.



8'10" x 16'9" floor mosaic

The size of the mosaic and intricate detail and tesserae technique indicate the extreme wealth the family had.

Content

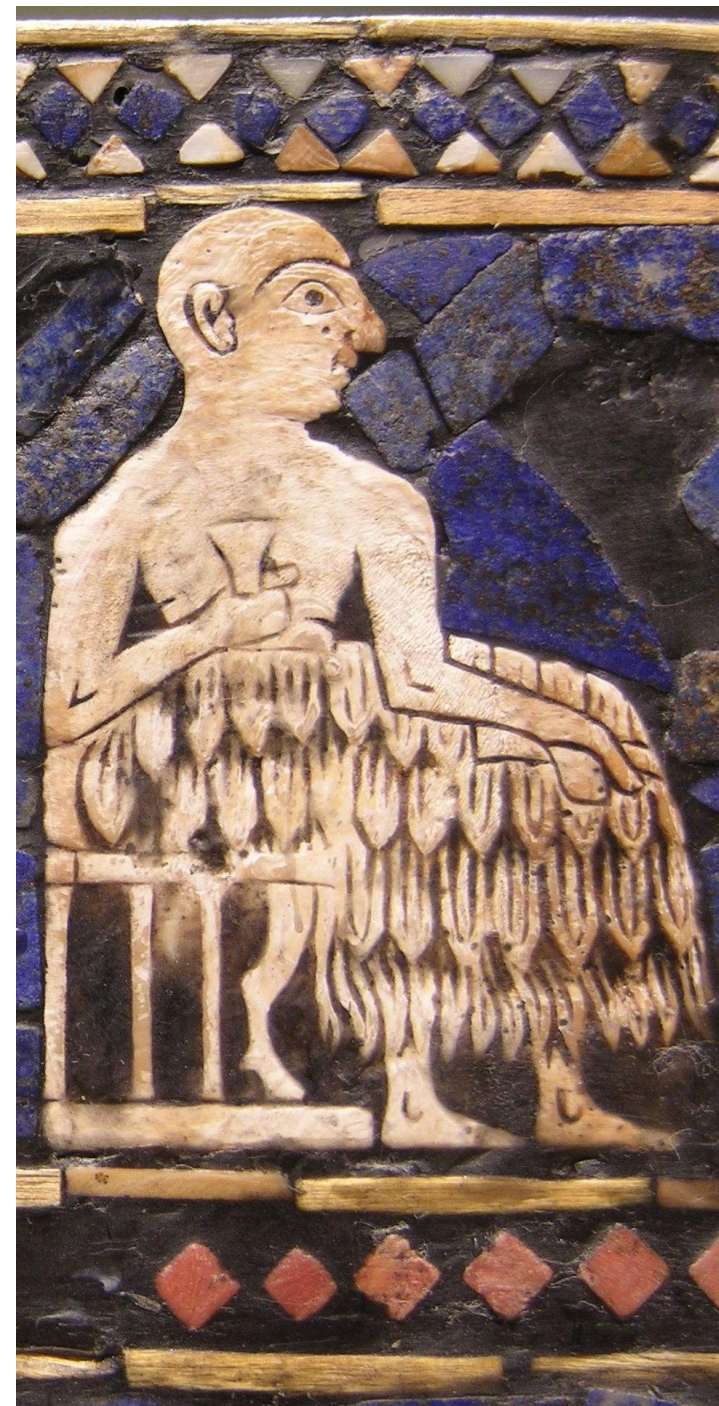
- Depicts the Battle of Issus.
 - Alexander's defeat of Persian King Darius II.
 - Alexander – young, brave, confident.
 - Darius – horrified, fleeing, reaches back .
- Crowded, lots of movement.
- Floor **mosaic** (an image made of small colored pieces of glass or stone).
 - Use of **tesserae** (glass or tiny stone cut to size, rather than just pebbles).
 - Over 1 million tiles used.
 - Enabled the artist to create illusionistic details.
 - Modeling of form.
 - Shadows and reflections like never before.
- Amazing **foreshortening**.
 - Adds drama by increasing the sense of motion.

Alexander Mosaic from the House of Faun, Pompeii. Republican Roman. c. 100 BCE. Mosaic.

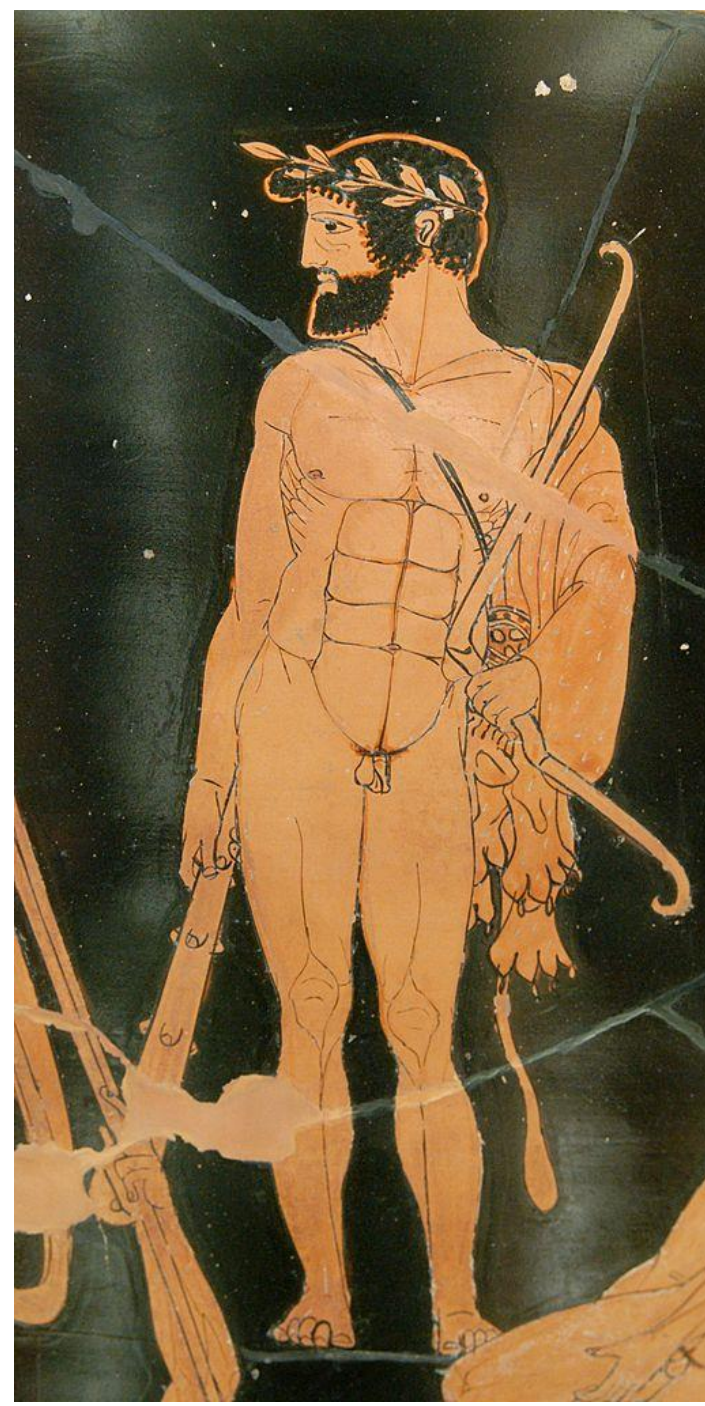


Context

- Found in a home in Pompeii.
 - Art was used in Rome to show the taste and education of the owner.
- Based off of a Greek painting.
 - Painting was described in ancient texts by Pliny the Elder.
 - **Gives insight to the quality of Greek painting.**
- Characterizes most of Western art from Renaissance onwards.



- Over 1 million tiles used
 - Enabled the artist to create illusionistic details
 - Modeling of form



Imperial Rome

Pax Romana



- Begins with a 41 year time of relative peace under Augustus' (aka Octavian) rule
 - The end of a century of civil war.
- Empire is under the rule of one leader instead of a Senate.
- Lasts about 200 years, 27 BCE – 180 CE.
- Unprecedented growth and prosperity.
 - Roads, forums, baths, and temples,

Early Empire Artistic Trends

- A return to the **ideal**
 - Augustus started the trend of being portrayed as forever youthful.
 - Ends Republic era's "rule by elders."
 - Inspired by Classical Greece.
- Emperor's are big patrons.
 - Shows their power, authority, and divine right to rule.
 - Sound familiar???

Augustus of Prima Porta.

Early Imperial Roman. Early first century CE. Marble.



Content

- Idealized = sign of changes from Republic to Empire.
- Contrapposto.
- Breastplate = warrior/soldier.
- Judges robes = civic ruler.
- Barefoot = sacred ground (because he is divine).
- Back not carved – meant to be placed against the wall.
- Right hand raised in Roman orator pose to show he can lead effortlessly.
- Cupid = divine lineage from Venus.
- Staff = symbol of the Emperor.
- Dolphin = leader of the lands and sea.

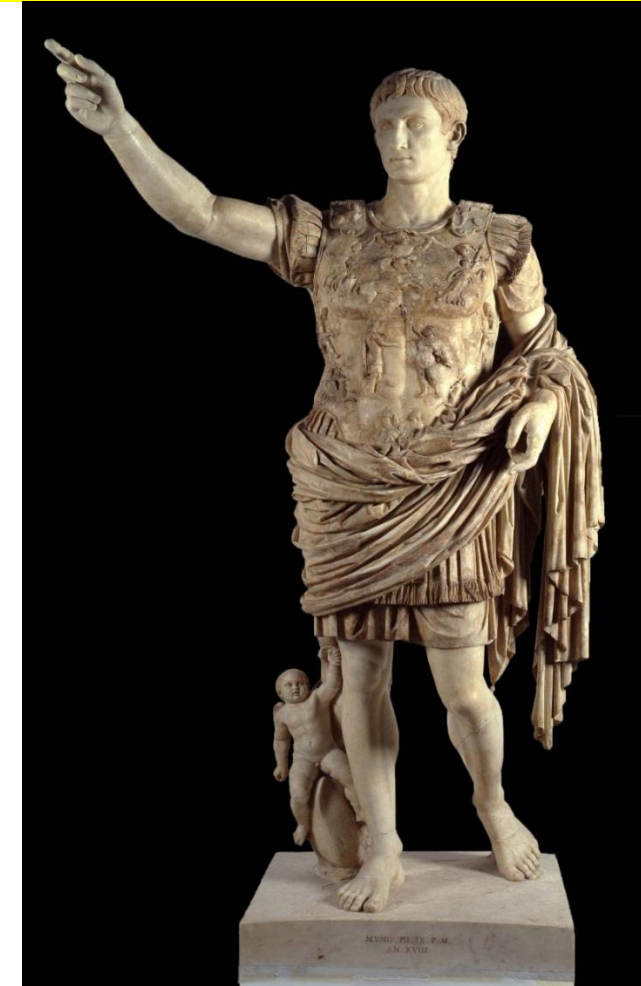
Augustus of Prima Porta.

Early Imperial Roman. Early first century CE. Marble.



Content

- **Cuirass** (breast plate) depicts a number of gods participating in the return of Roman standards from the Parthians.
 - Refers to a specific victory in 20 BCE.
- Apollo pulls the sun chariot across the sky to show it is a new day for Rome.
 - Associates Augustus with the sun god.
- On the sides are female personifications of conquered territories.
 - Refer to **Pax Romana** that brought peace and prosperity to the empire.



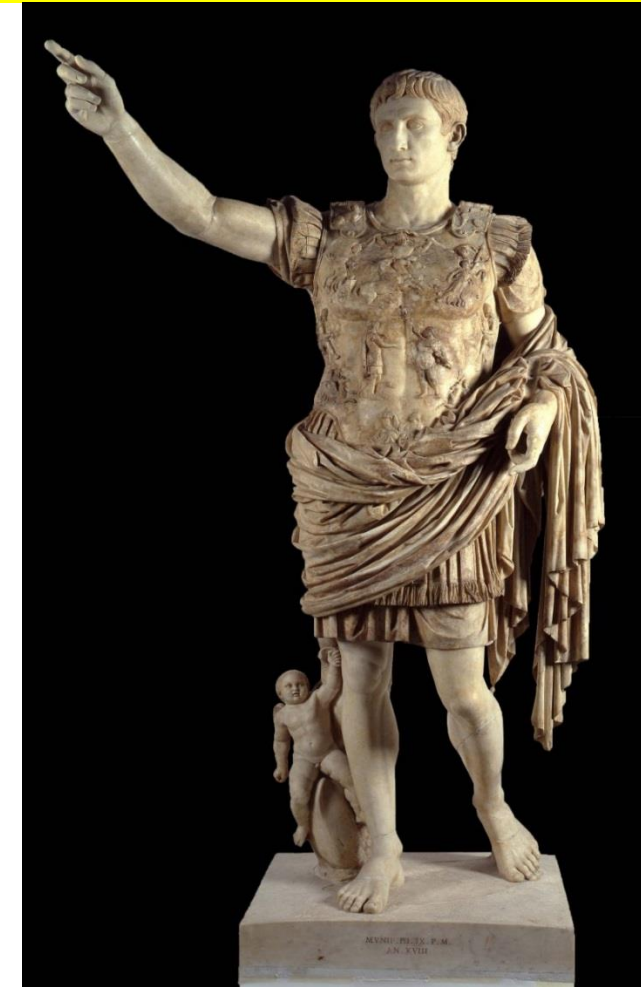
Augustus of Prima Porta.

Early Imperial Roman. Early first century CE. Marble.



Content

- Propaganda
 - Designed to accustom the Roman citizens to his authority.
 - Peace-making
 - Diplomacy
 - A return to the “good ole days” of Roman respectability and virtue
 - Symbolized in the idealized Greek pose and figure.



Augustus of Prima Porta.

Early Imperial Roman. Early first century CE. Marble.



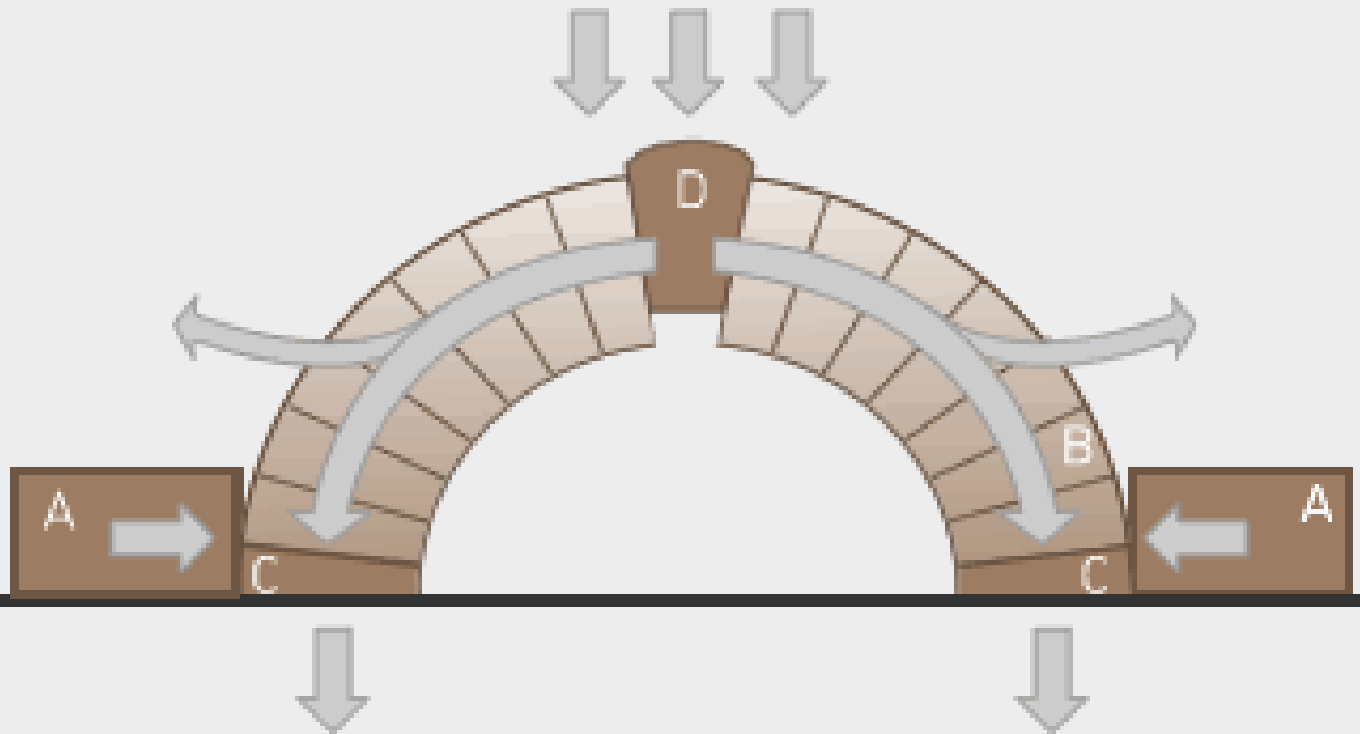
Context

- Died at 72, always depicted this young.
- Over 300 created and placed around the Empire.
- An example of Augustus using **art as propaganda** and to further his agenda.
- Based off the contrapposto of the Spear Bearer.
- **Divine right to rule** is displayed in the cupid and Apollo on cuirass (breastplate).
- Represents the change in rule from the Senate/Elders to Caesar/youth.

Architecture Terms to Know

Arch diagram

Arrows suggest forces acting on the structure



A - Abutments

C- Footers

B - Voussoirs

D- Key stone

- **Arch**

- **Voussoirs** – wedge shaped stones to create an arch.

- **Key Stone** – top, middle stone that holds arch in place.

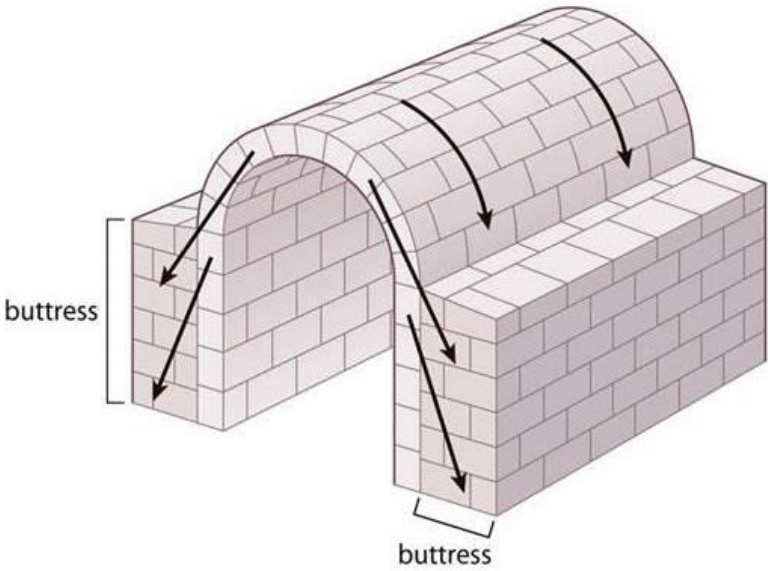
- Romans understood the possibilities of the arch to bear weight and open space.

Barrel Vault

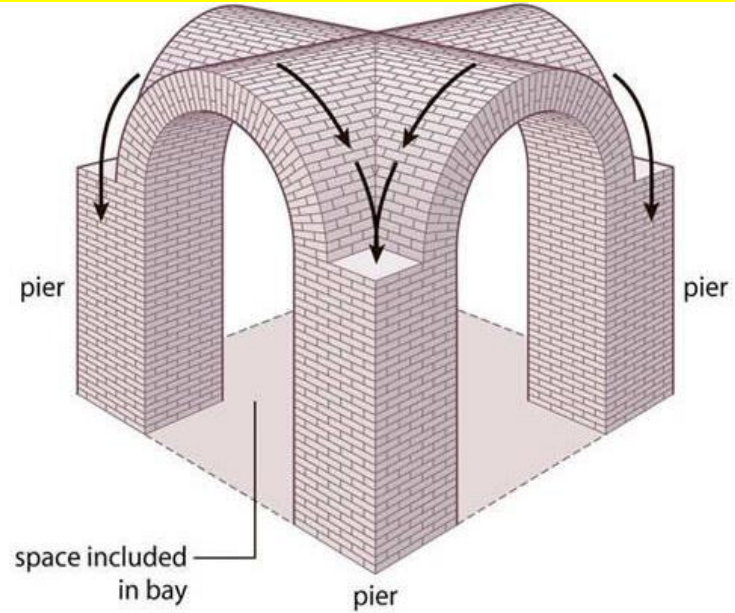
- Arched roof
- Barrel Vault is a series of arches that forms a semi-circular ceiling with straight walls.
 - When the ceiling of a building is an arch.
- **Arches and Vaults make enormous open spaces possible.**



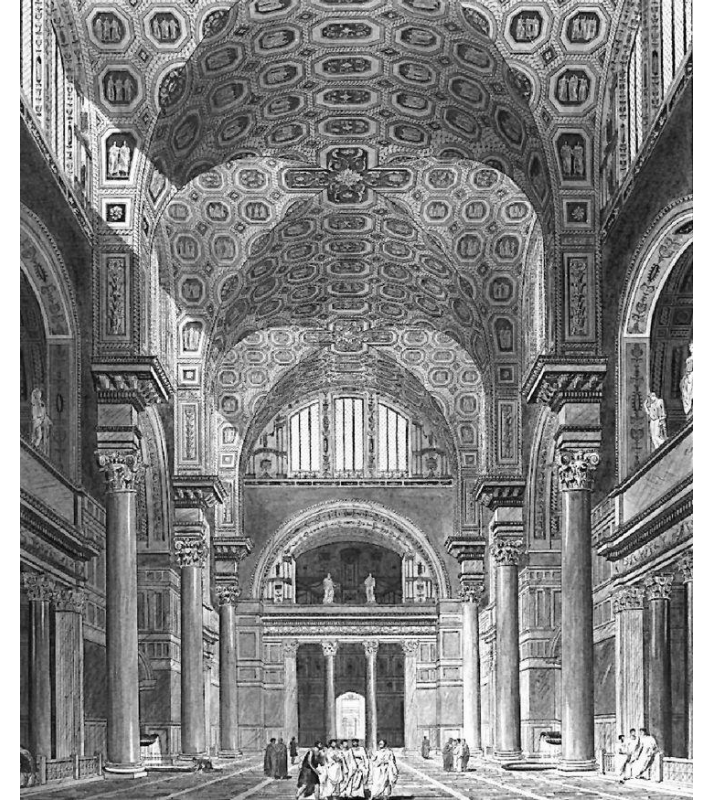
Groin Vault



barrel vault



groin vault



- When two barrel vaults intersect.
- Allows for more open space.
- Supported by 4 **piers**.
 - Piers are bigger, stronger columns.

City Planning and Buildings

- Learned from the Etruscans (lived in Italy and were conquered by the Romans).
- Built **civic buildings and public building**.
 - Paid for by the government.
- Buildings impressive because of their **size and practicality** – not aesthetics.
- *First structures with vast interior spaces.*
 - This is because of concrete and arches.

Amphitheater

- “Double theater”
 - Used the Greek theater model by placing 2 theaters together to create an enclosed space.
- Different purposes
 - Greeks had civilized dramas and entertainment.
 - Romans had bloody battles for entertainment.
- Built using **barrel vaults**.
- Only possible because of the use of arches, vaults, barrel vaults, and concrete.



Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater), aerial view.

Rome, Italy. Imperial Roman. 70-80 CE. Stone and concrete.



Although cheaper materials were used in construction, they were able to create a large structure with a marble veneer gave an impression of great wealth for the emperor

Content

- Held 50,000 (same as the old Turned field).
 - Romans just as sports crazy as we are.
- Was originally covered in marble and statues.
- Made with a combination of arches and vaults.
 - Used concrete with brick facing and stone veneer.
 - Concrete allowed for quick construction at a lower cost.
 - Water resistant
 - Durable
 - Able to span large spaces
 - Able to be formed through casting

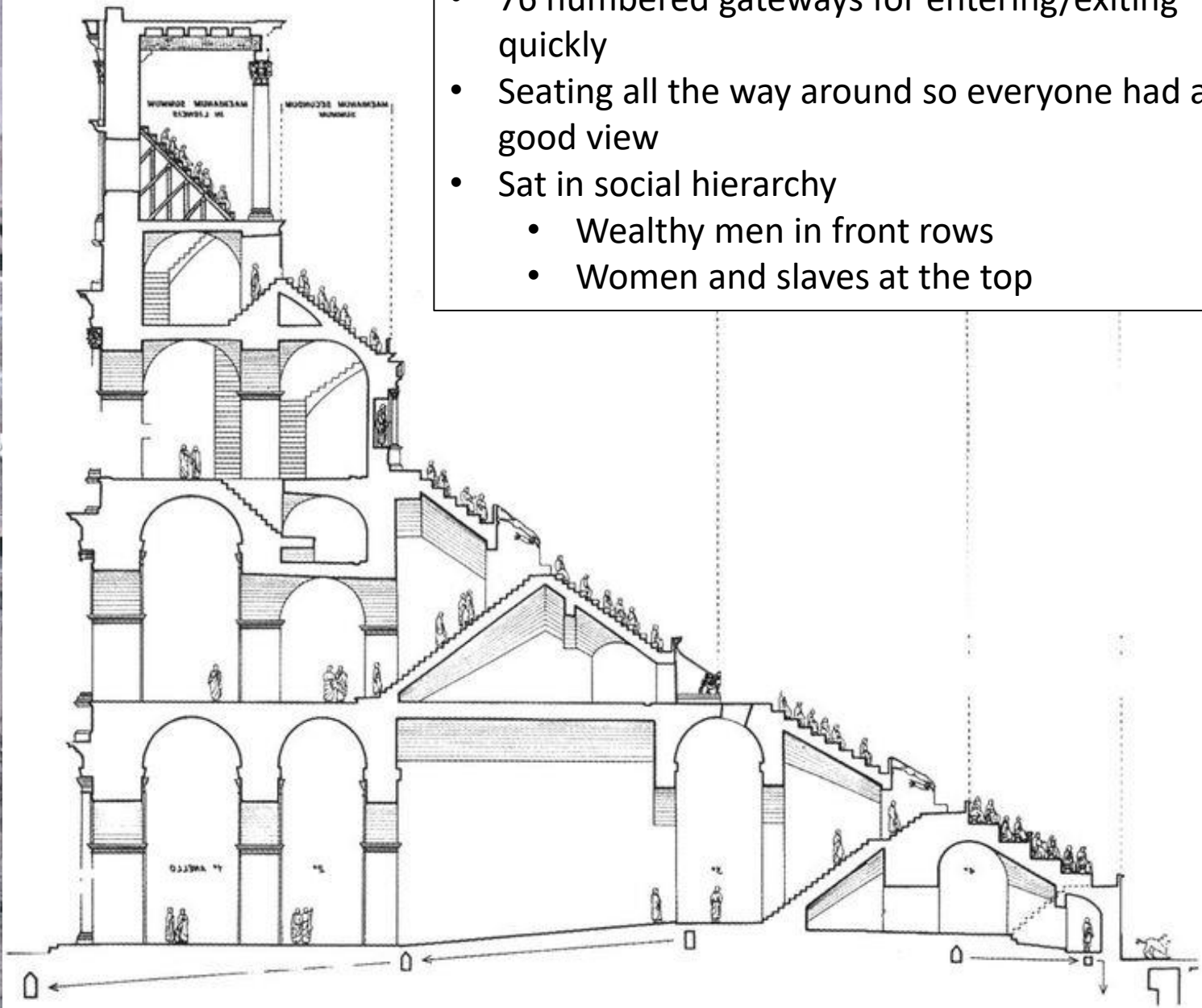
Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater), aerial view.

Rome, Italy. Imperial Roman. 70-80 CE. Stone and concrete.



Content

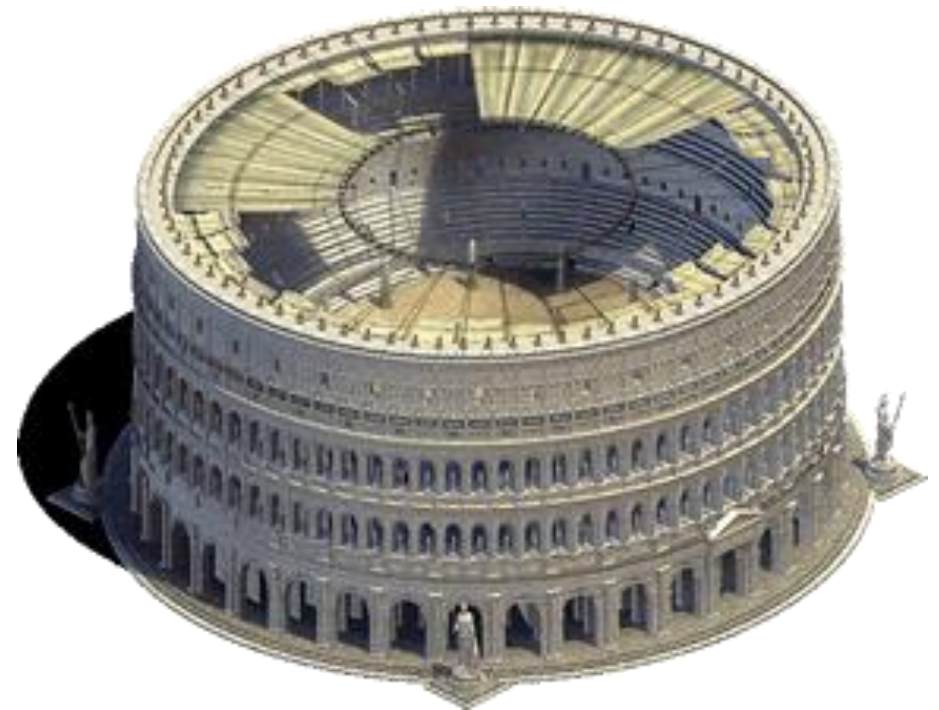
- Arches, barrel vaults and groin vaults were used to funnel crowds quickly in and out of the building.
- Allowed builders to make the colosseum taller.
 - Also because the concrete was lighter than stone.

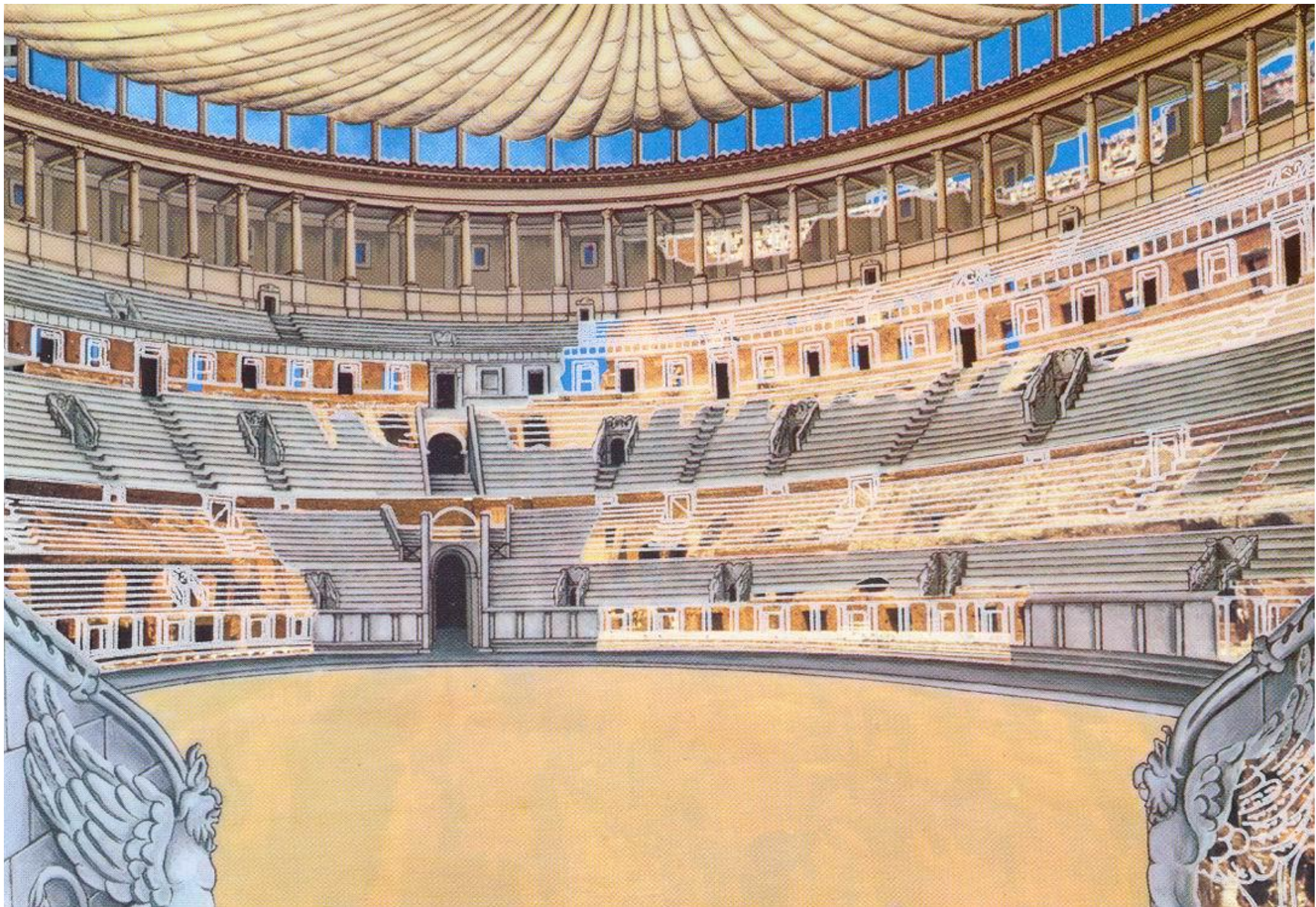


- 16 stories tall
- 76 numbered gateways for entering/exiting quickly
- Seating all the way around so everyone had a good view
- Sat in social hierarchy
 - Wealthy men in front rows
 - Women and slaves at the top



- Concrete
- Barrel vaults
- Stripped of all marble – seats
- **Velarium**
 - Tented roof
 - Above square windows are brackets to hold the velarium (retractable roof)

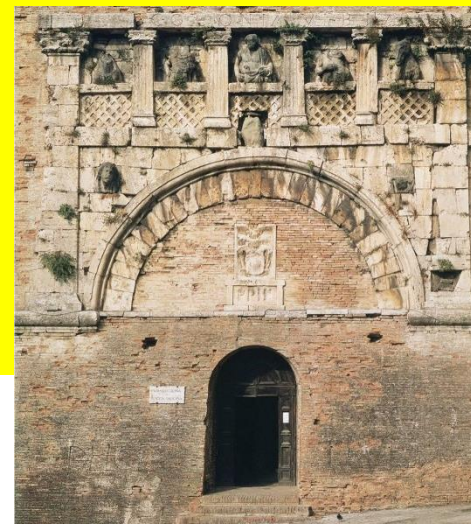




Corinthian Capital

- Architecture becomes more diverse with international influence.
- Acanthus leaves and fern tendrils.
- Previously the Corinthian column had only been used in interiors, now it is used on the exterior.
- Building projects move away from mainland to opulent cities in Asia Minor – more central to the Hellenistic world.





Colosseum borrows
from the Etruscan
Porta Marzia

- Engaged columns with post and lintel.
- Projecting entablature.
- Orders based on proportions – heaviest on bottom.
 - Tuscan (Etruscan version of the Doric)
 - Ionic
 - Corinthian
 - Flat Corinthian
 - **Not structural, just decorative.**
- **Eclectic** mix of Greek order w/ Etruscan plan.
 - Adds variety to the surface.
 - Unified surface with verticals and horizontals.

Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater), elevation view.

Rome, Italy. Imperial Roman. 70-80 CE. Stone and concrete.



CONTEXT

- Patron – Flavian family
 - Considered a gift to the citizens to gain political support.
- Placed on what used to be an artificial lake built by Nero.
 - The land had been confiscated from the public and used for Nero's own purpose.
 - Represented the new dynasty of Flavians over the Julio-Claudius.
 - Name "Colosseum" is because it was next to the *Colossus of Nero* – 120 ft tall statue of Nero.



FUNCTION

- To entertain the people and keep them happy.
- Gladiator battles, mock battles, and animal hunts.
 - Gladiators were usually slaves who were trained specifically for this and rented out for profit.

Forum of Trajan, reconstruction drawing. Rome, Italy.
Apollodorus of Damascus (architect). Forum and markets.
106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



- Triumphant Arch entrance
- Temple
- Column of Trajan
- Library
- Basilica Ulpia
- Forum of Trajan
- Equestrian statue of Trajan (larger than life)

Forum of Trajan, reconstruction drawing.

Rome, Italy. Apollodorus of Damascus (architect). Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



- 1 Forum of Caesar
- 2 Forum of Augustus
- 3 Forum of Nerva
- 4 Forum of Vespasian
- 5 Forum of Trajan



Forum of Trajan, reconstruction drawing.

Rome, Italy. Apollodorus of Damascus (architect). Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



CONTENT

- Very opulent and large to symbolize Trajan's greatness and generosity
- Large central plaza flanked by stoa-like buildings.
- Complex had: Triumphant Arch, Basilica Ulpia, Markets of Trajan, Column of Trajan, Libraries, Temple, Equestrian Statue.
- Unusual in the closed end (Basilica).
- Held many statues celebrating Trajan's military prowess.
 - Along the stoa were statues of Roman statesmen, generals, & captured prisoners.
 - Glorified the military might of Rome.
- Large open space of the forum contrasted the narrow crowded streets.

Forum of Trajan, reconstruction drawing.

Rome, Italy. Apollodorus of Damascus (architect). Forum and markets. 106-112 CE.
Brick and concrete.



Context

- Patron = Trajan.
- Used money from 2 victories over the Dacians.
- Originally had an equestrian statue in center.
- Built by Trajan's chief military engineer, **Apollodorus of Damascus**.
- **Practical Function:** public meeting space and ceremonies.
- **Administrative Function:** accommodated the formulation and implementation of Roman law and justice (Basilica Ulpia.)
 - **Reinforces social hierarchy** by recognized Roman loyalty and ancestry.
 - **Brought social cohesion** by uniting the diverse population.

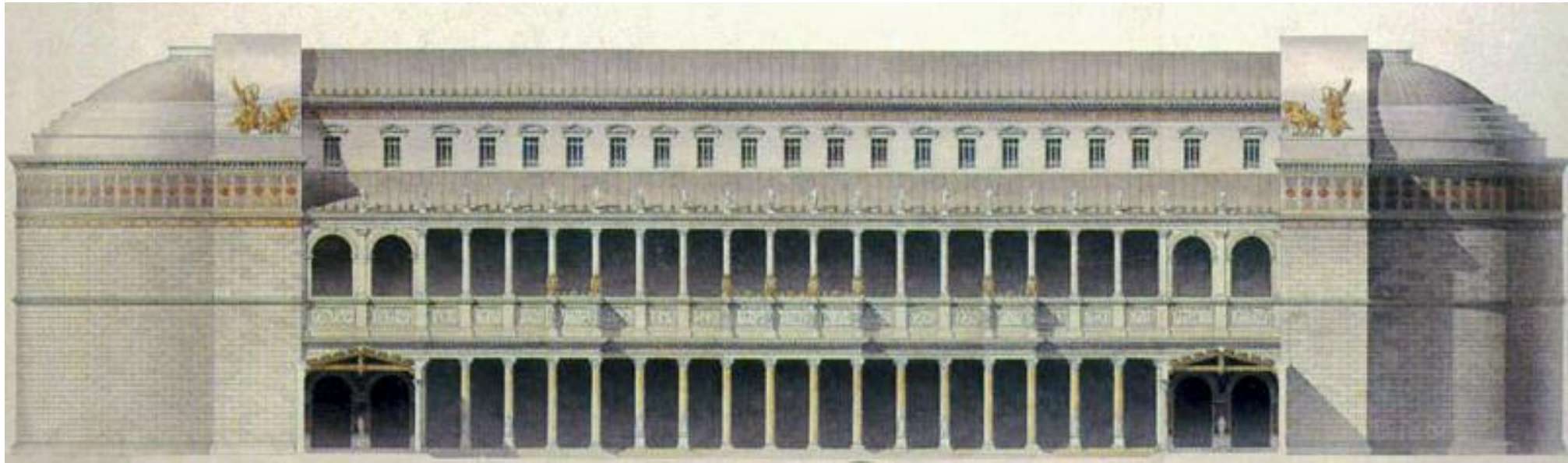
- **Symbolic Function:** Propaganda meant to glorify Trajan
 - Deifies Trajan

Basilica

- A Roman civic building.
- Used for meetings and court.
- When Christians took over they converted them to churches.



Basilica Ulpia



Basilica Ulpia, reconstruction drawing. Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.

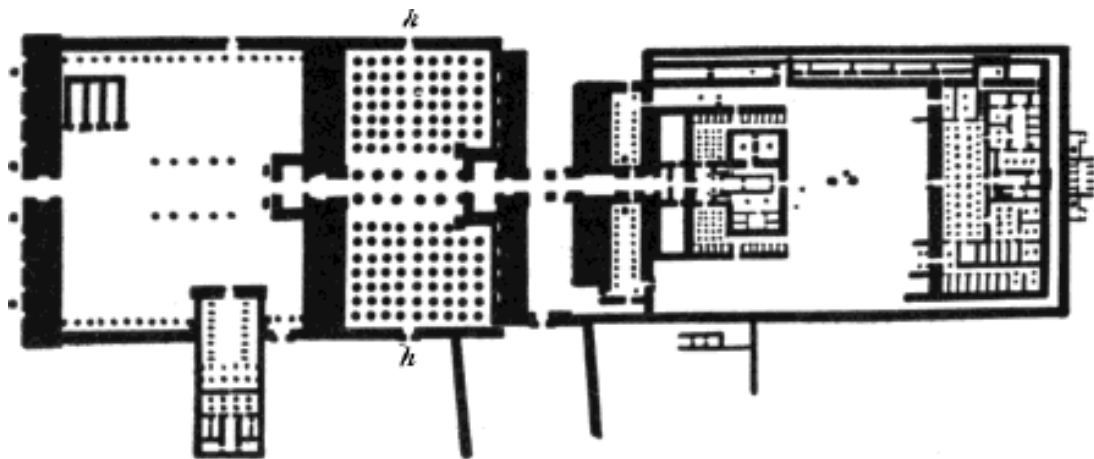
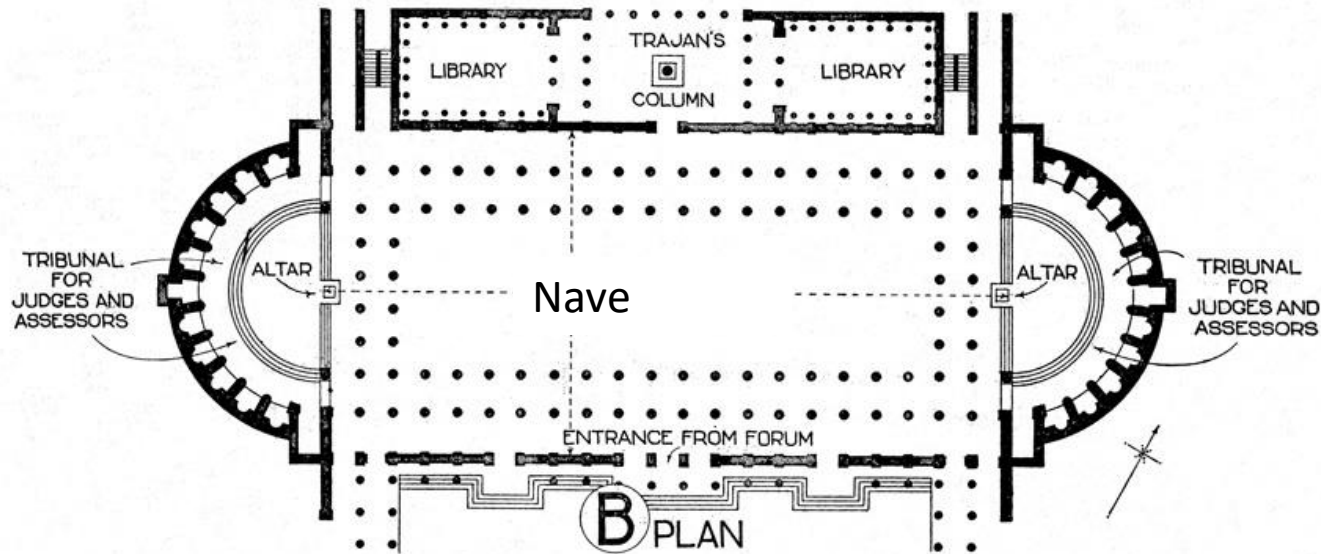


CONTENT

- **Timber ceiling** is 80 ft across with **bronze tiled roof**.
- 385 feet long, 182 wide.
- Large interior space to accommodate a large number of people.
- Second floor had **clerestories** and possibly **galleries**.
- **Apses** (semicircular ends).
- **2 Aisles** were on each side of the **nave**.
 - Aisles are **Post and Lintel** construction.

Basilica Ulpia, reconstruction drawing. Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.

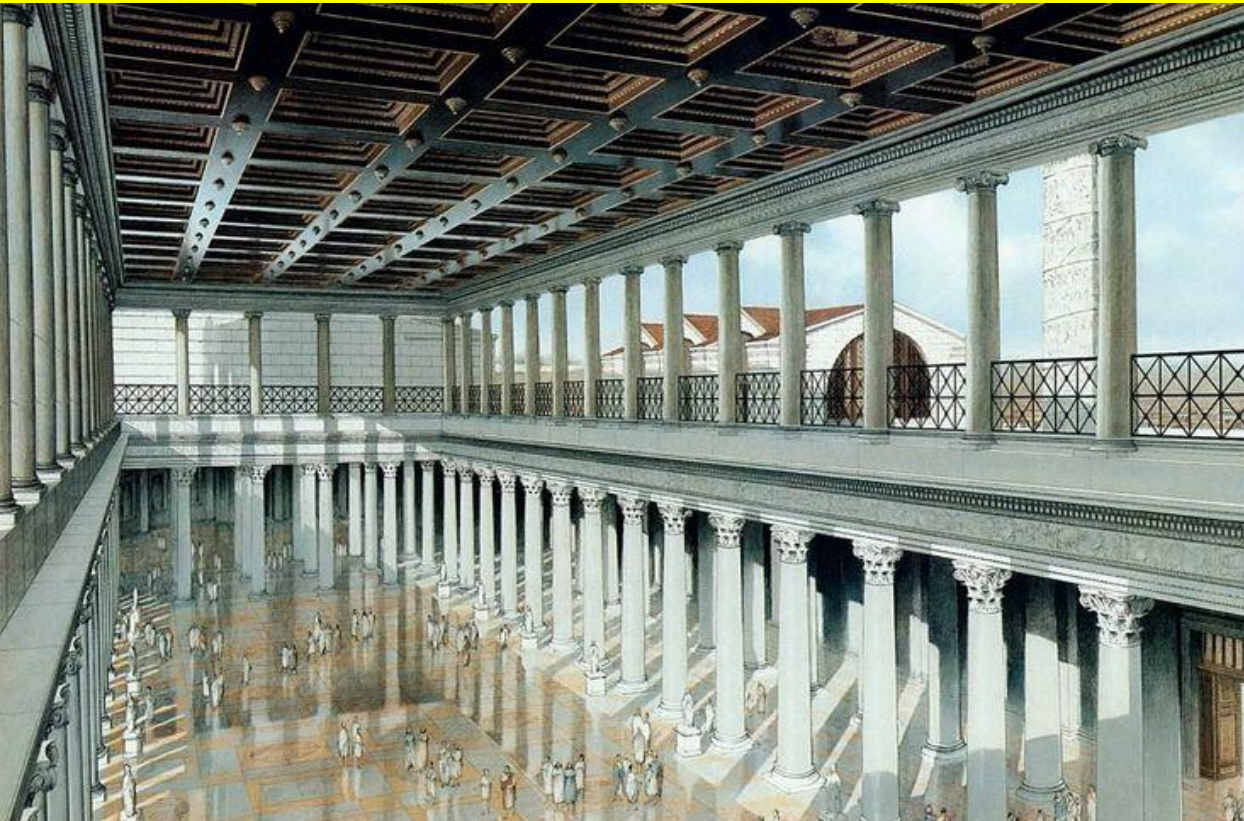


CONTENT

- 2 apses.
- Grand interior space.
- Second floor had **clerestories** and possibly **galleries**.
- **Apses** (semicircular ends).
- 2 **Aisles** were on each side of the **nave**.
- Had a gilded bronze roof over timber.
- *Connection*: Temple of Amen Re.

Basilica Ulpia, reconstruction drawing.

Rome, Italy. Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



Context

- Ulpian was Trajan's family name.
- Paid for with money from defeat of the Dacians.
- **Law courts** were held here.
 - And possibly imperial audiences.
- **Apse** were settings for the judges.
- Becomes the basic building style of future churches (like Santa Sabina).



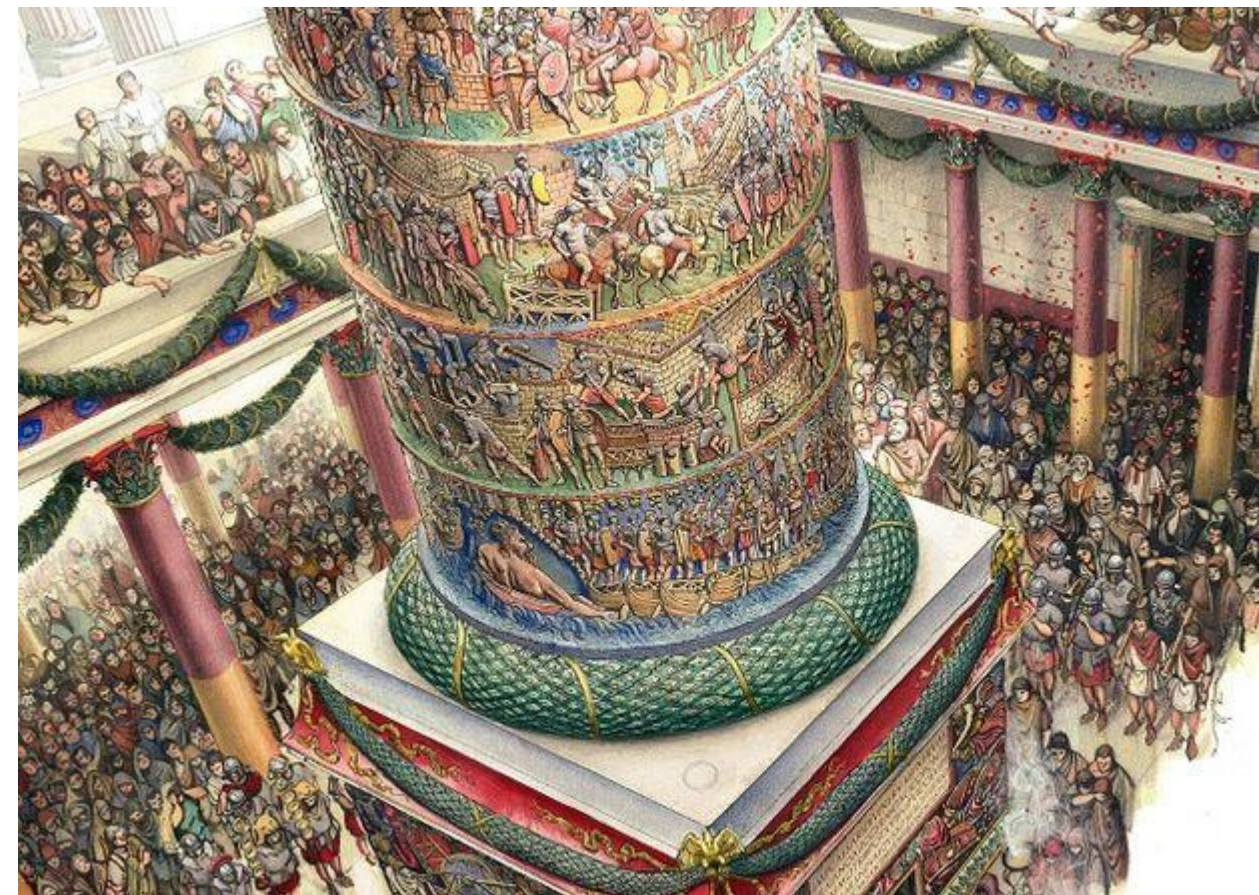
- Behind the Basilica Ulpia stood two libraries that housed the emperor's collection of Greek and Latin manuscripts
 - Honored and contributed to the historical legacies of the antique world.
- Finished after Trajan's death and served to deify him.

Column of Trajan.

Rome, Italy. Completed 113 CE. Marble.



- Low relief
- Painted to read easier
- Located between the 2 libraries
- [How it was built](#)





Column of Trajan.

Rome, Italy. Completed 113 CE. Marble.

Content

- Subject = Trajan's defeat of the Dacians, twice.
 - 128 ft high, 625 foot narrative cycle
 - 150 episodes, 2,500 figures, 23 registers
- **Continuous Narrative**
- Crowded composition.
 - But the Roman army is depicted as organized and strategic.
- Gets wider as it goes up so it's easier to read.
- Staircase carved inside is perfectly measured and fits seamlessly together.

Context

- **First** of many victory columns.
- First time a column decoration combines figural and spiral decoration.
- Tomb of Trajan at bottom.
- Top originally had a bronze, heroically nude statue of Trajan
 - Indicated a god-like status
 - Now St. Peter
- Originally column was painted.
- Depicts the Romans as victorious because of their superior organization and more powerful army.
 - Shows battles, sacrifices, road and fort construction.
- Height of Roman power.



Column of Trajan.

Rome, Italy. Completed 113 CE. Marble.

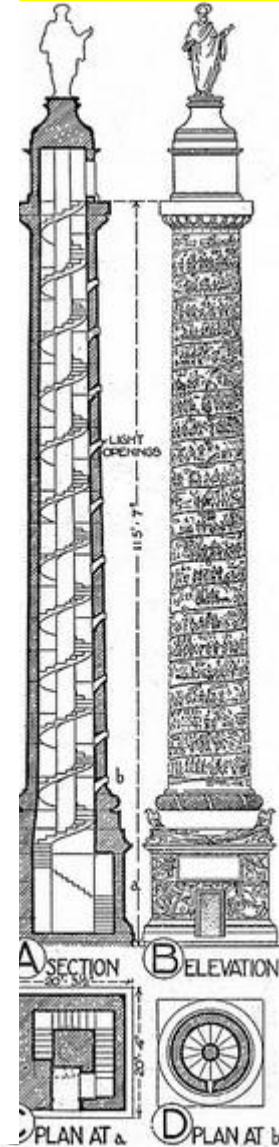
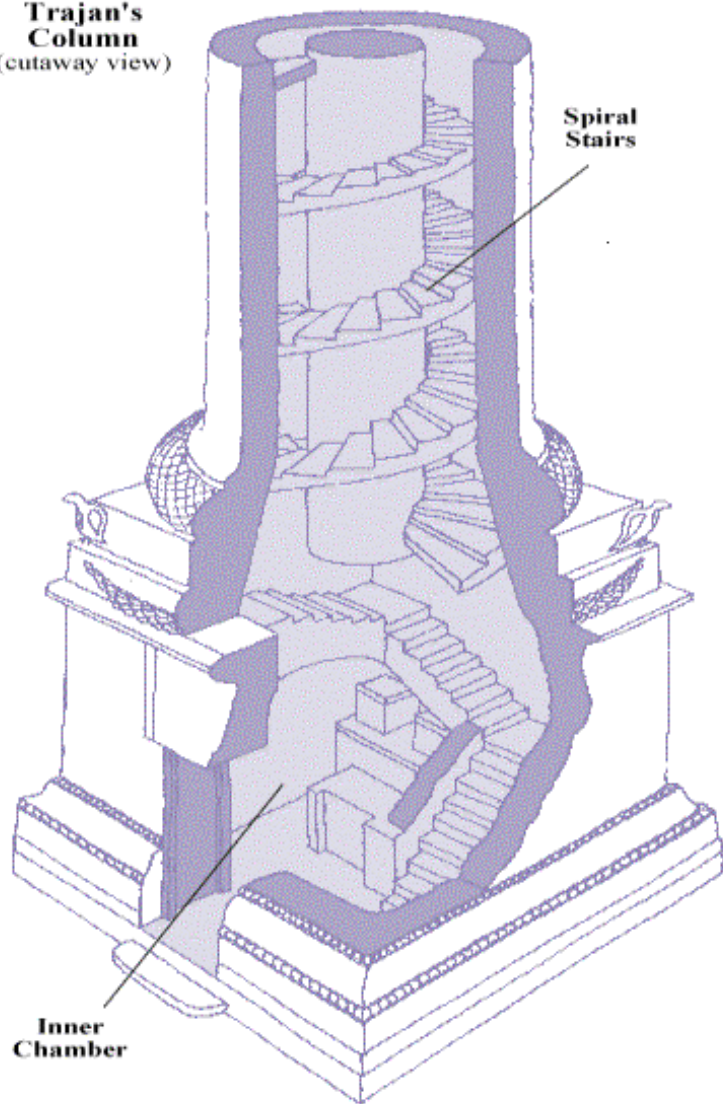
Content

- Trajan is depicted effortlessly conquering the Dacians, never actually engaged in battle.
 - His presence is enough to ensure a victory.
- Continuous Narrative depicts Trajan repeatedly in different scenes.
- War spoils decorate the bottom, reminding Rome that the Dacian's paid for Trajan's forum.
- Not realistic.
 - Gods are there to approve Trajan's actions.
 - Multiple ground lines to enhance understanding.
 - Generic scenes that were recognizable to the Roman citizens.
 - Hierarchy of scale/

Column of Trajan.

Rome, Italy. Completed 113 CE. Marble

Trajan's Column
(cutaway view)



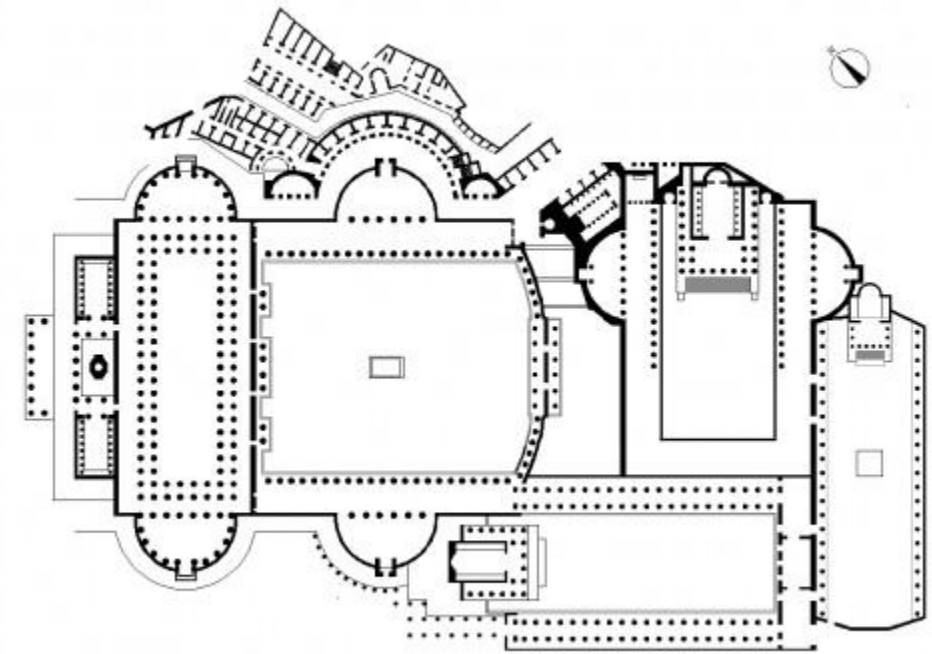
Context

- After his death the senate used the base as a mausoleum.
 - Sanctified the spot as the final resting place of Trajan and wife.
 - Held the cremated remains of Trajan.
- Inscription at the base describes the height as equivalent to a recently excavated hill.
 - A testament to the engineering of the Romans.
- Debate over how it was meant to be viewed.
- From top is a view of the forum and markets.
- Library on either side and the Basilica Ulpia.
 - Indicates the historical and societal importance of Trajan.
 - Functions as a pictorial history.
- Was meant to be entered.
- Could view the upper levels from the libraries.

Trajan Markets.

Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



- Shop façade has been recreated here.

Trajan Markets.

Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



Content

- Had 150 shops and administrative offices.
- Multilevel “mall.”
- Semi-circular building.
- Main space > groin vaulted.
- Shops > barrel vaulted.

Trajan Markets.

Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



Context

- In order to build the forum as large as it was, the old commercial sector had been destroyed/
- Built into a hillside.

Trajan Markets.

Rome, Italy.

Apollodorus of Damascus. Forum and markets. 106-112 CE. Brick and concrete.



Content

- Each shop was a single-room barrel vault.
- Upper level shops had sky lights.
- Doorways were wide enough for window displays.
- Complex engineering with poured concrete and groin vaulting.
- Utilizes the strength of the arch and the strength of concrete.

- [2 min video](#)

Pantheon

Imperial Roman, 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing



Inscription: "Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucias, having been consul three times, built it."
But really built by Hadrian.

- Original approach from a colonnaded courtyard.
- Originally raised on a platform so someone walking in would only see the pediment.
- Façade is traditional.
- 8 Corinthian columns.
- Pantheon means "all gods."
- Purpose of building changed over time, pagan to Christian.
- 2,000 years old!
- **Tholos**

Pantheon

Imperial Roman, 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing



- Walls of the **cupola** (a dome on a drum) are 20 feet wide at the base.
- The concrete is made with heavy, hard basalt at the base and transitions to lighter pumice stone at the top.
- The thickness of the dome thins as it approaches the **oculus**
 - This lightens the weight of the dome.
 - Solves the problem of holding up the center of the dome.
- Reflects the Roman Imperial view of the **Emperor as both head of state and church as this building connects the heavens and earth.**

Pantheon

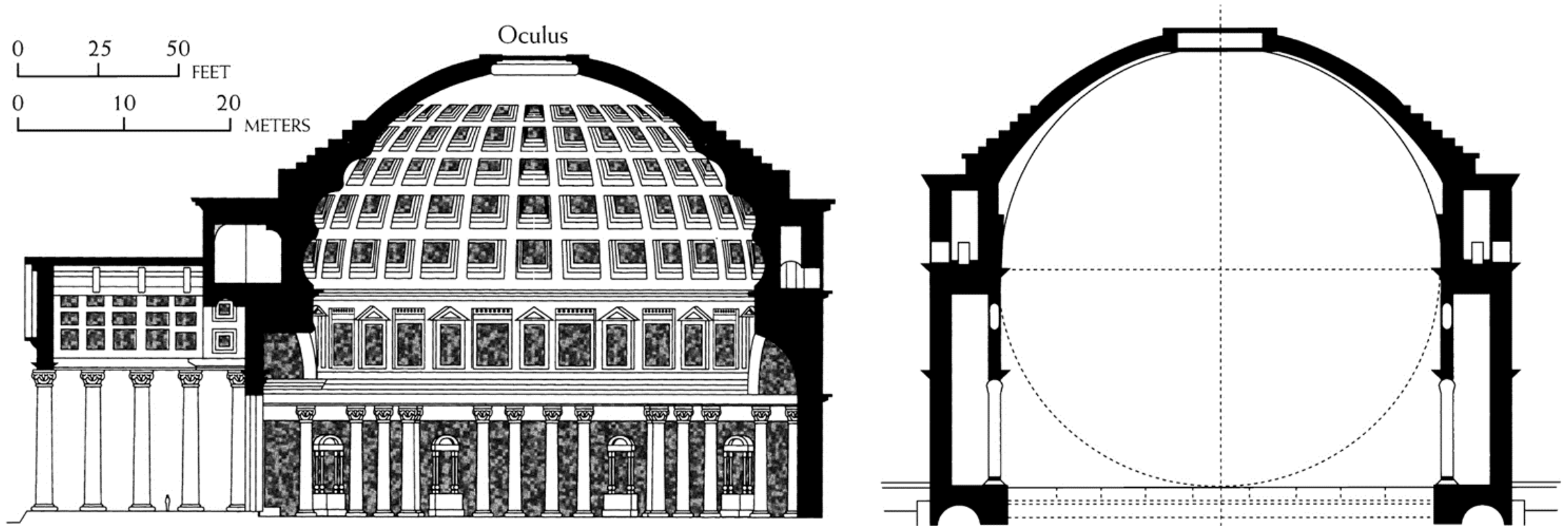
Imperial Roman, 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing



- The concrete is made with heavy, hard basalt at the base and transitions to lighter pumice stone at the top.
- Walls were originally covered in marble.
- Dome was covered in metal.
- Represents the height of Roman building technology.

Pantheon

Imperial Roman, 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing



- The perfect sphere (124 feet in diameter) represents the orb of the earth.
- The ceiling represents the vault of the heavens.
- Unexpected and incredibly open interior space/

Pantheon

Imperial Roman. 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing.



- **Oculus**—a round opening.
- The oculus here is 30 feet in diameter.
- On sunny days the beam of light from the oculus moves across the dome, highlighting various sections.
- Contrast of circles and squares.
- Materials from around Roman Empire show their domination.
 - Like the Audience Hall of Darius and Xerxes.

Pantheon

Imperial Roman, 118-125 CE. Concrete with stone facing



- **Coffer**—a decorative sunken panel in a ceiling, dome, soffit, or vault.
- The coffering here lightens the load on the ceiling.
- Also creates a decorative pattern.
- Originally held gilded bronze rosettes at the center of each coffer.

Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



- **Sarcophagus**—a stone coffin.
- Discovered in 1621 and bought by Cardinal Ludovisi.
- Unusually large.
- **Horror vacui**—the filling of an entire surface or work of art with detail.

[Smarthistory – 5 min](#)

Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



- **Form**

- Deep carving and drilling create harsh contrast between lights and darks.
 - Helps emphasize the drama.

[Smarthistory – 5 min](#)

Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



CONTENT

- Depicts the Romans vs. Goths
 - Romans are depicted noble vs. Goths depicted in caricature.
- A rejection of Classical perspective.
- No illusion of space.
- No ground lines.
- Highly emotive.
 - *Connection*: Hellenistic Greece
- Figures lack individuality.



Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



- **CONTEXT**

- Indicates a shift in burial methods for Romans.

- Republican and Imperial Rome cremated the dead.

- Influenced by the Etruscans and Greeks.

- Usually placed in a mausoleum in a niche or against a wall.

- Only the front and sides were carved.

Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

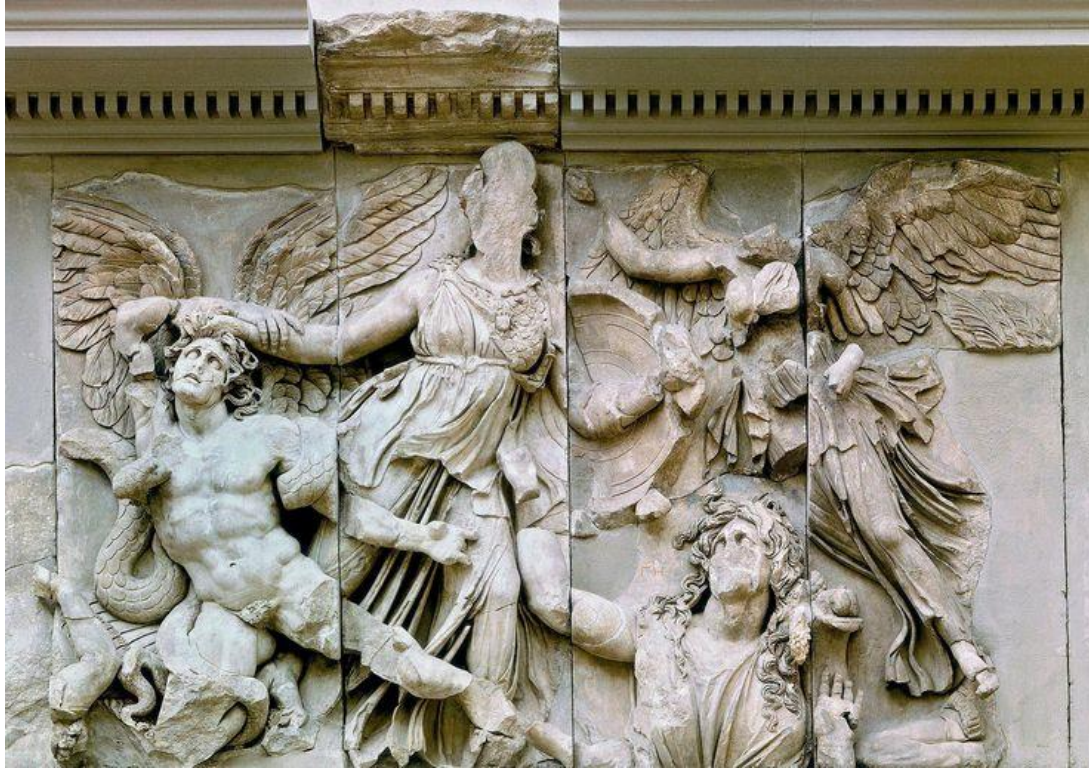
Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



- *Connections*

Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.



- *Connections*



Ludovisi Battle Sarcophagus.

Late Imperial Roman. c. 250 CE. Marble.

- Front shows chaotic battle scene between the Romans and Northern foes (probably the Goths).
- Central horseman is the focal point.
- He wears no helmet, holds no weapon to show his invincibility.
- Reality was that times were challenging for rulers; constant power struggles.



Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, from Rome, Italy, ca. 175 CE. Bronze, approx. 11' 6" high.

- Conveys the awesome power of the godlike Roman emperor as ruler of the whole world.



Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius

- Mistaken as Constantine and not destroyed during Middle Ages.
- Horse's raised leg had a cowering barbarian under it.
- Head portrait is similar to the Republic style.
- Like Egyptian kings, he conquers effortlessly by the will of the gods.



Edict of Milan 313 ce

- The Edict of Milan was granted by Emperor Constantine the Great in the West and Licinius Augustus in the East in 313 **granting religious freedom throughout the Roman Empire**. In addition, the Edict of Milan ordered the restitution of property confiscated from Christians.