

# The (Strange) Roman World at the Time of Christ

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# The (Strange) Roman World at the Time of Christ

## **1. Life in the Roman World**

2. Roman Cities

3. Lesser Beings: Women, Children, Slaves. The Elderly

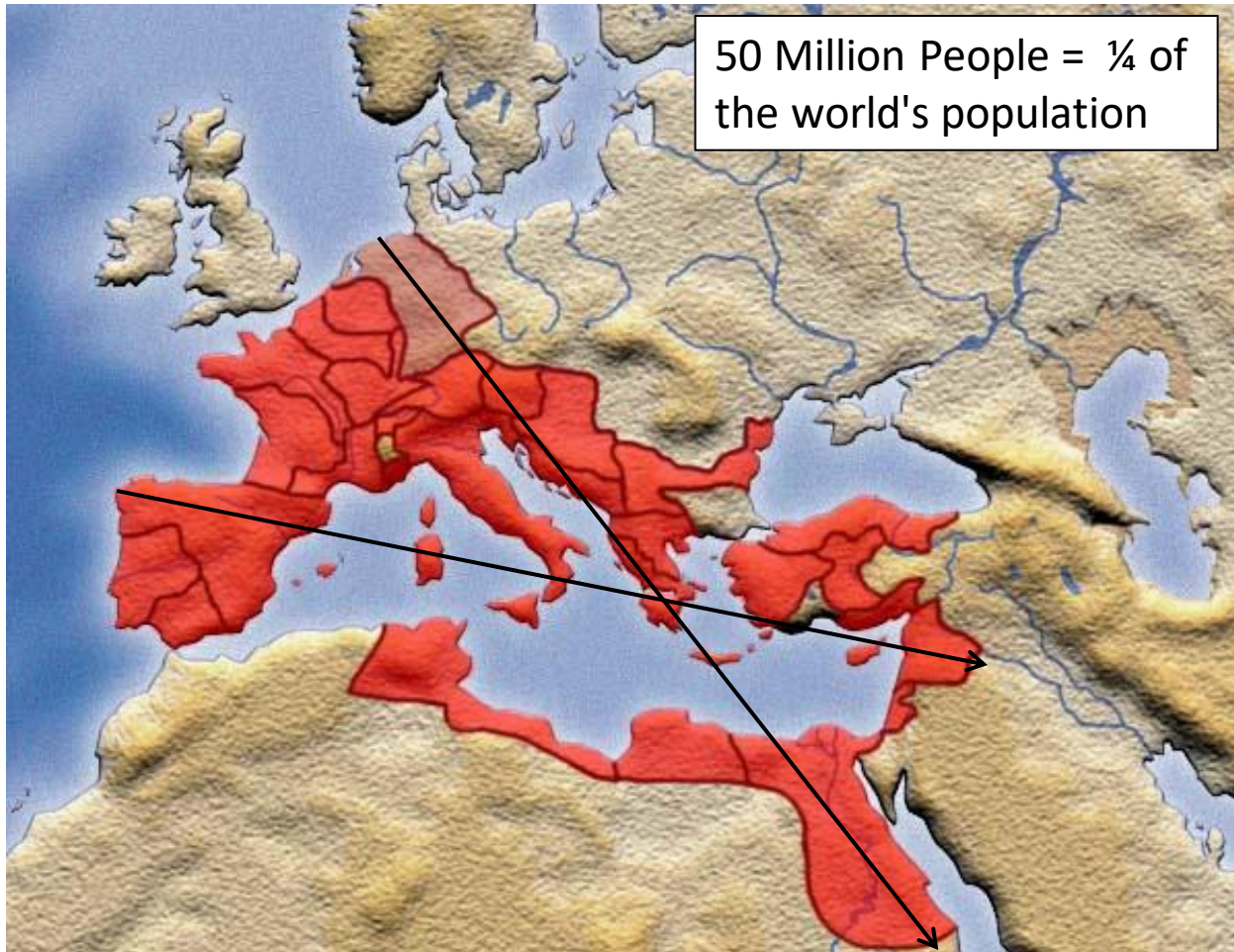
4. Religions of the Roman Empire

- Setting the Stage for Christianity

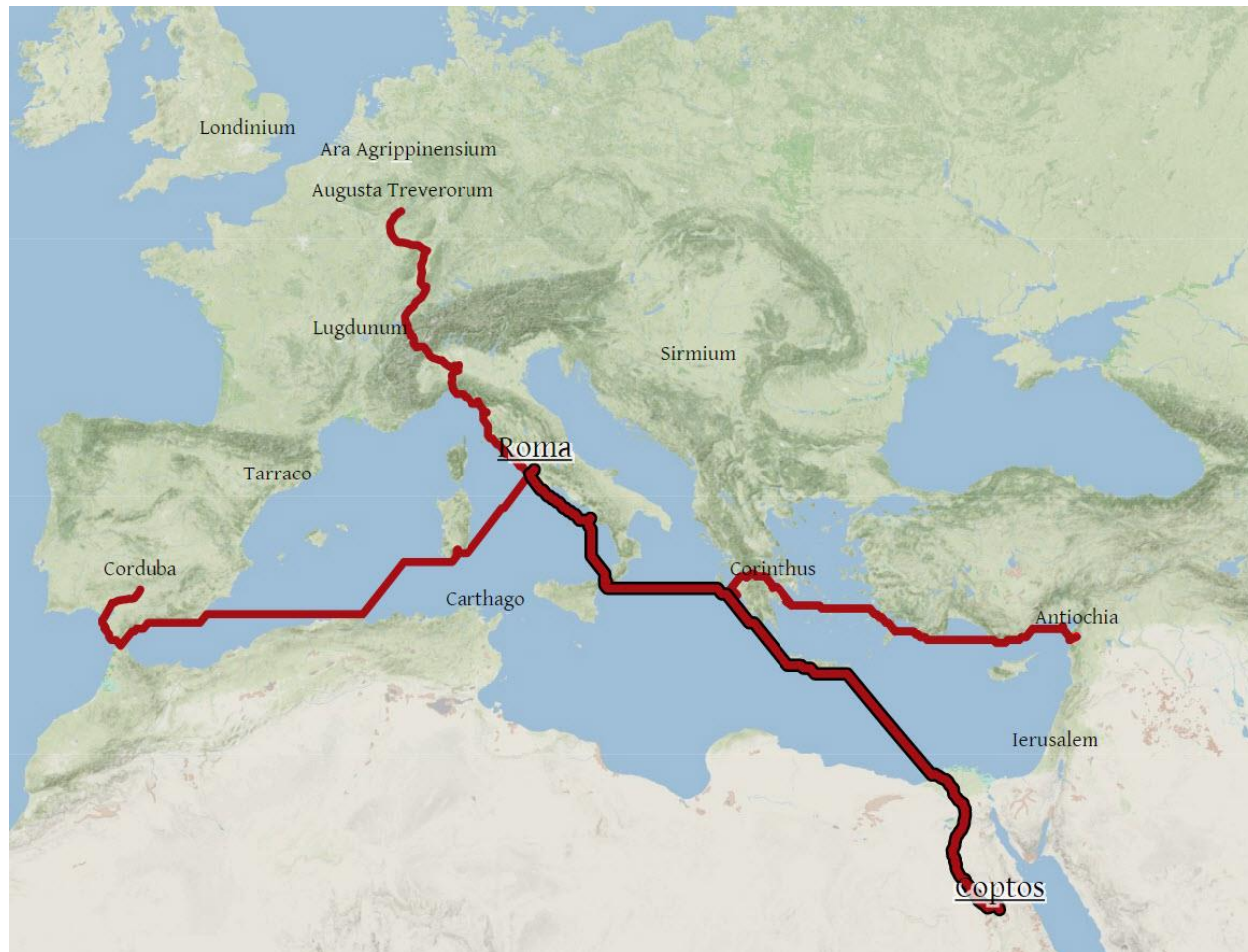
# I. The Roman World

- How many are you?
- Where do you live (geographically) ?
- Who rules? Do you have political rights?
- How secure are you?

# How Big Is It?

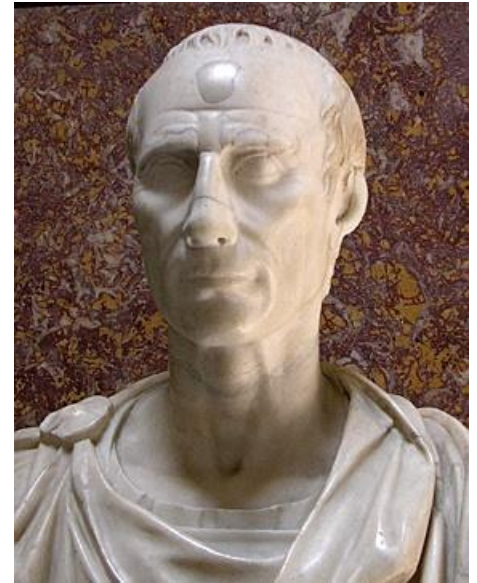


# The Roman World: How Far Away from Rome?



# Who's Who: Julius Caesar

- Julius Caesar, Rome's greatest general and very popular
- Assassinated in 44 BC. by Brutus and 30 other Roman Senators
- His death set off latest round civil in Rome's Civil Wars
- All about power: who in the elite was going to be #1.



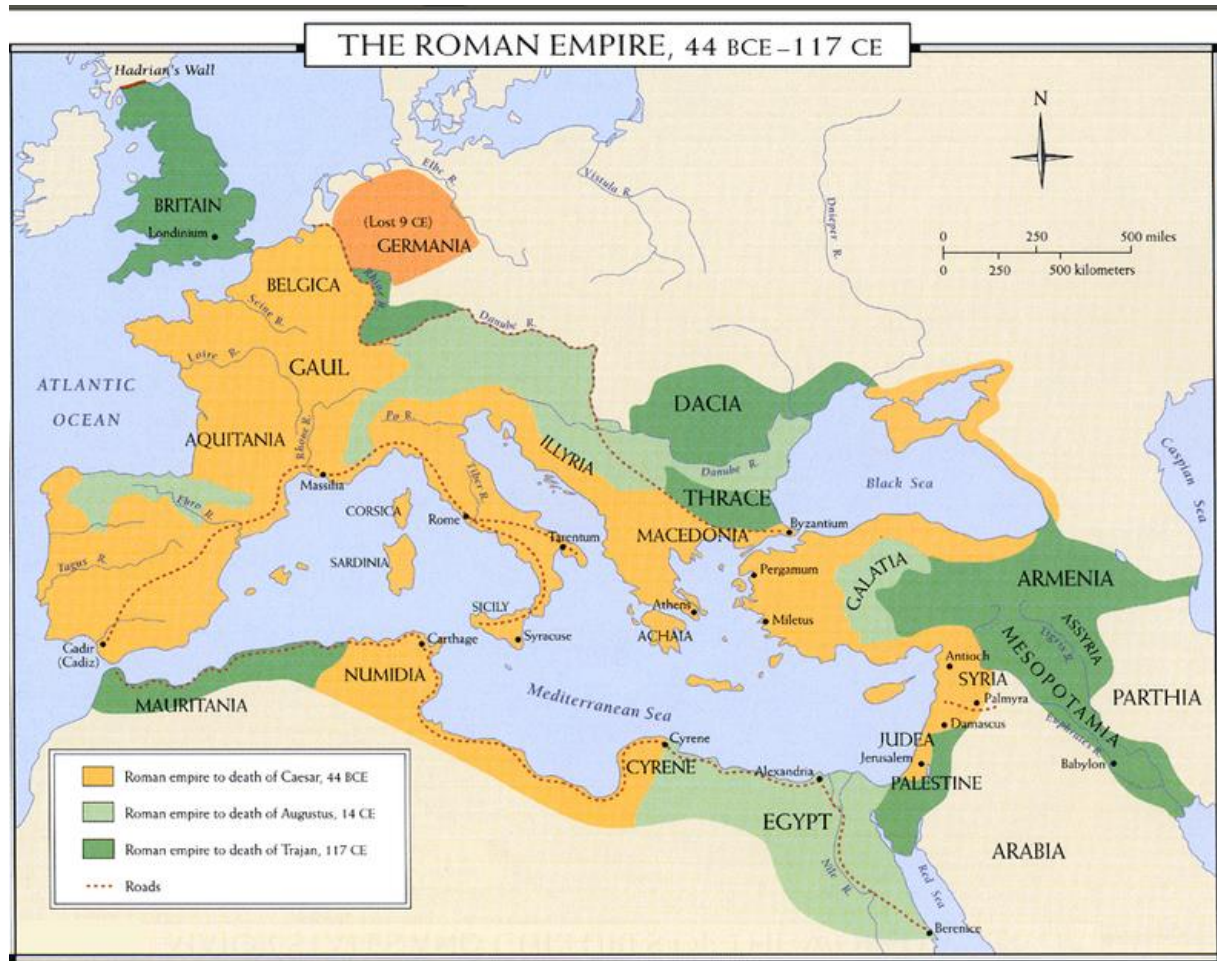


# Who's Who: Augustus

- The Emperor at the time of the birth of Christ
- Grand-nephew of the popular Julius Caesar
- Defeated Marc Antony - Cleopatra, thus ending the Civil Wars.



# Where Romans Lived: AD 117





# The Parthians: Rome's Biggest Threat



# Who's Who: Herod the Great

- The Herod at the time of the **birth** of Christ (Matthew 2.1)
- The Roman Senate made him "King of the Jews" in 40 BC. Judea was a Roman client state. Herod was supposed to help keep out the Parthians.
- He ruled 37 years, building many civic works.
- And, he kept out the Parthians.

# Internal Collapse: The Civil Wars

- The Civil Wars were fought throughout the Empire.
- Many affected: 25% of all male citizens had served in the military by the end of the war.
- The losers **and** their extended families at each round were “cleansed.” Land grabs. Stolen wealth.
- Roman society was torn apart.

# Augustus Brings Security

- Proclaims the "pax Augustus."
- He's now solely in charge, and the old elites reduced to ceremonial positions.
- Most people cheered. They were tired of the old elite. The elites alone had brought all this destruction. Everyone else now ready for security, even at the cost of some of their traditional rights.

## II. Daily Life

- Your legal status
- What you wore
- What you ate
- How long did you live?
- What did you do for entertainment?



# Your Legal Status

Your legal status determined your life:

- freeborn vs slave ; freedmen and freedwomen
- male vs female
- citizen vs non-citizen
- the father vs children

# Freeborn Male Citizens: Rights

- Vote; stand for public office
- Military service
- No taxes and fewer regulations
- Make legal contracts; hold property
- Right to a trial by a court. No physical punishment, death by crucifixion.
- Have a lawful marriage with a female Roman citizen, with the right of "head of family". Their children counted as Roman citizens.

# What Elite Men Looked Like: The Military Body

How a Guy Stayed in Shape:

- Military exercises
- Ball Playing
- Shadow boxing, similar to Tai-Chi.
- Vocal exercises



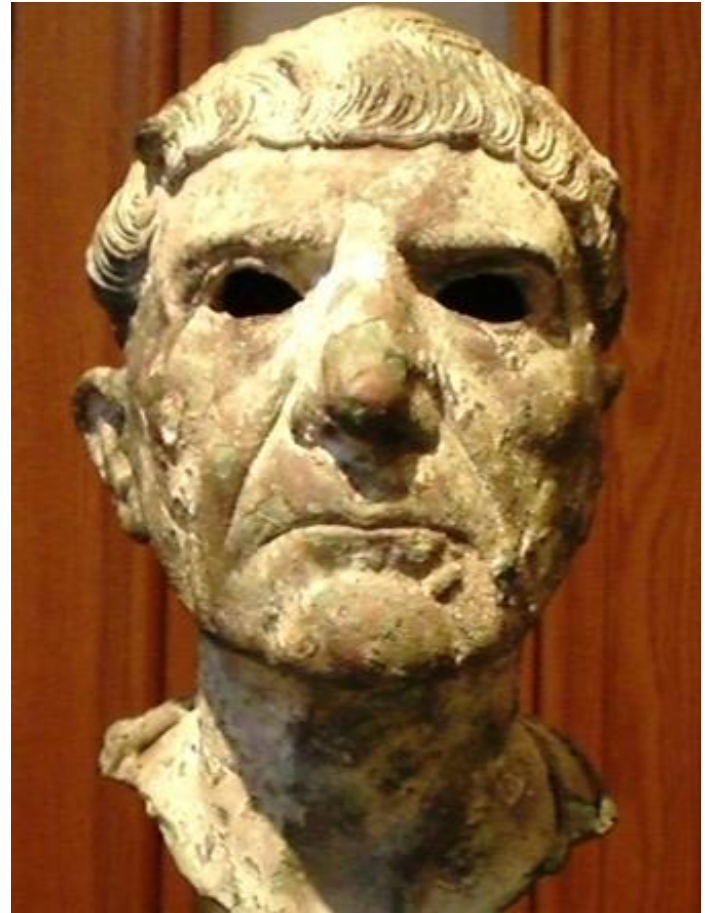
# What Men Wore

- Tunic: the jeans & T-shirt of the era
- Toga: the 3-piece suit.
  - Only Roman citizens
  - 6 yards, semi-circular
  - Went over the tunic
  - Complex draping
  - Red stripes= Senator
  - Red-Purple toga = generals



# What They Ate

- Although some indulged in orgies, not fully embraced. Showed lack of self-discipline.
- Simple diet best for health, longevity, power over others.



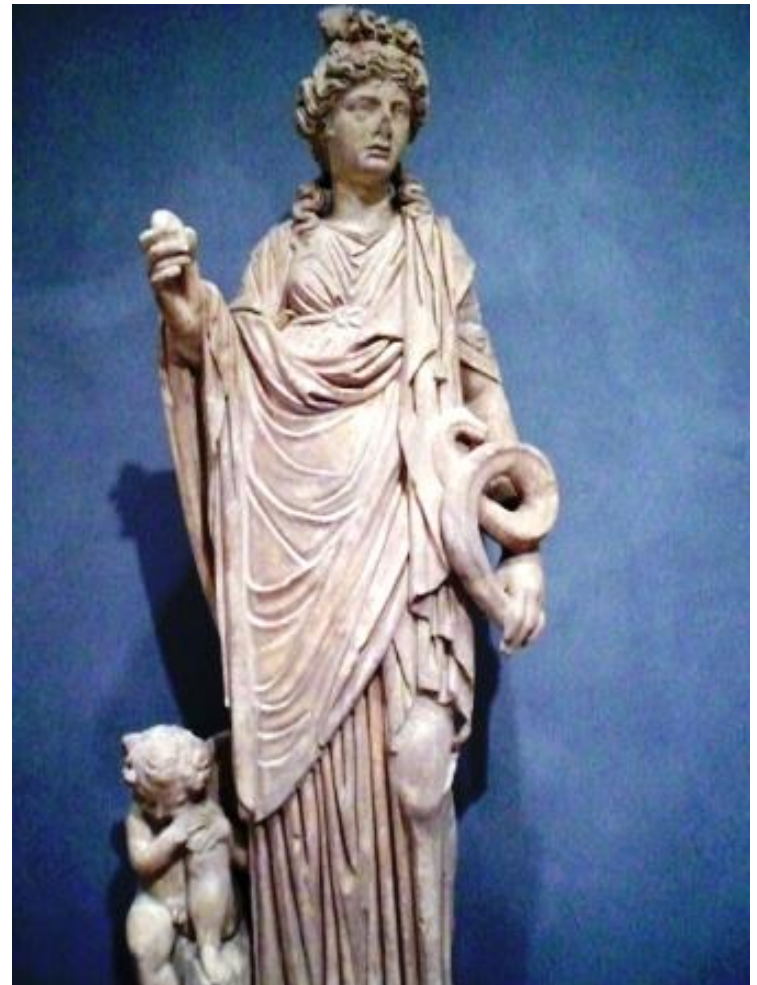


# Females

- Freeborn Roman citizens who were females were still "lesser beings," under the control of the father or the husband.
- No vote, no public office, but often well-educated; could hold property, leave a will
- Expected to accompany husband to social events. Scandalous to the Greeks.
- Not much "personal" identity

# Elite Women: What They Wore

- *Layer 1: the tunic*
- *Layer 2: the stola.*
- *Layer 3: the palla*
- *The hair: waves and ringlets*
- *The head: covers could include jewels*



# Women's Hairstyles

- Most required skilled hairdressers.
- Hair often adorned: gold hairnet, jewels



# The Dark Side: Slaves

- Endemic in the ancient world, mostly from war booty.
- Not based on race
- Some slaves valued and freed. Their children could be Roman citizens.



## II. Living

- Where you lived
- The Marvels around You
- Entertainments



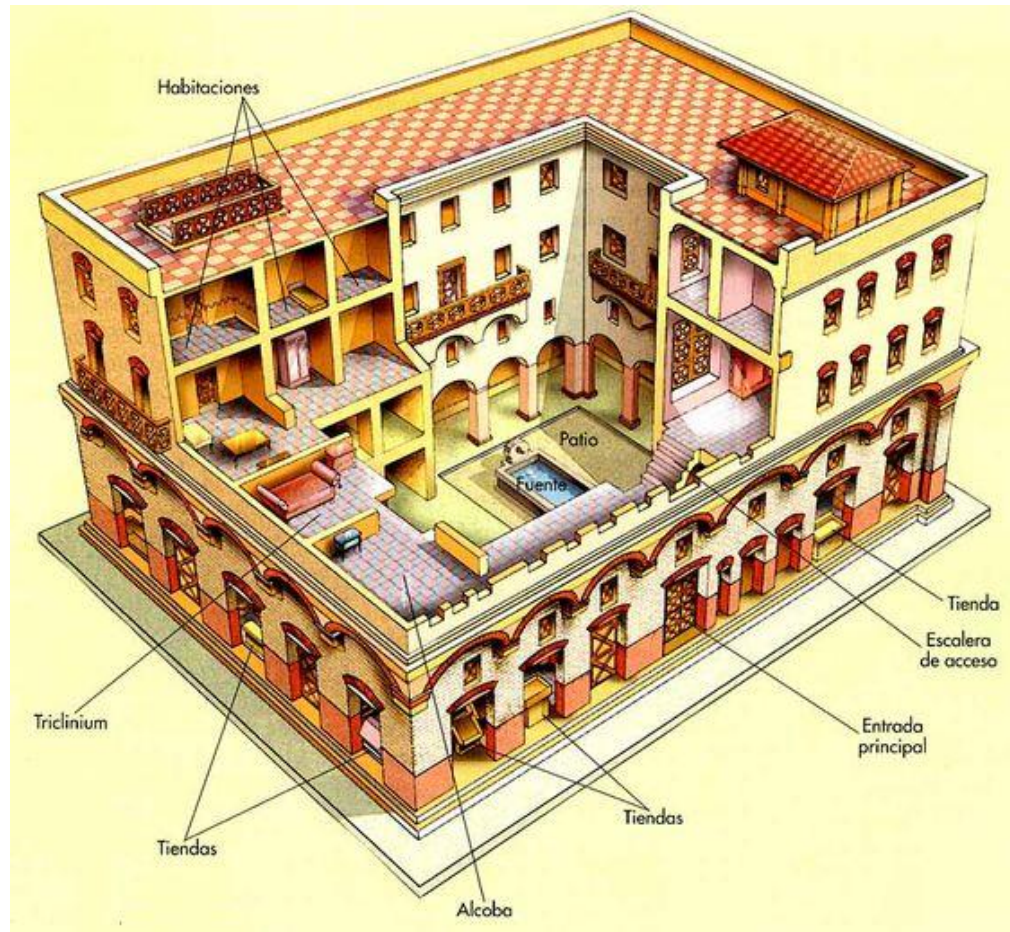
# How Long Did You Live?

- Not long regardless of class or wealth.
- Average life expectancy for baby surviving childbirth about 20 years. In the US today, it's 76 years. Pre-historic level. Thus: women perpetually pregnant.
- Older males died from military warfare. Older females from childbirth. Civil Wars both.
- Medical causes: dysentery; infections.

# Where you Lived: The Wealthy



# Where You Lived: The Poor



# The Marvels Around You: Aqueducts

- Aqueducts meant fresh water for bathing, cooking, sewage, entertainments





# An Aqueduct Marching Across the Countryside





# The Marvels Around You: Roads Travel in All Seasons



# The Roman Road Network



# The Marvels Around You: Temples

Temples meant  
festivals, and food.



# The Marvels Around You: Shops



# Entertainment:

## Huge Expenditure on Public Pleasures

- Amphitheaters, baths, the circus race-course, games in honor of the gods, gladiatorial
- In 65 BC, Julius Caesar gave public "funeral games" in honor of his long-dead father. He supplied 320 pairs of gladiators for gladiator shows. To demonstrate to his rivals his wealth and popular approval.



# Entertainment: The Amphitheater





# Performers You Might See

- Bear trainers, clowns, jugglers, tightrope walkers, singing ropedancers, dancers.
- Actors, readers of epic poetry, and bards.
- Charioteers for chariot races
- Athletes: professional wrestlers and boxers.

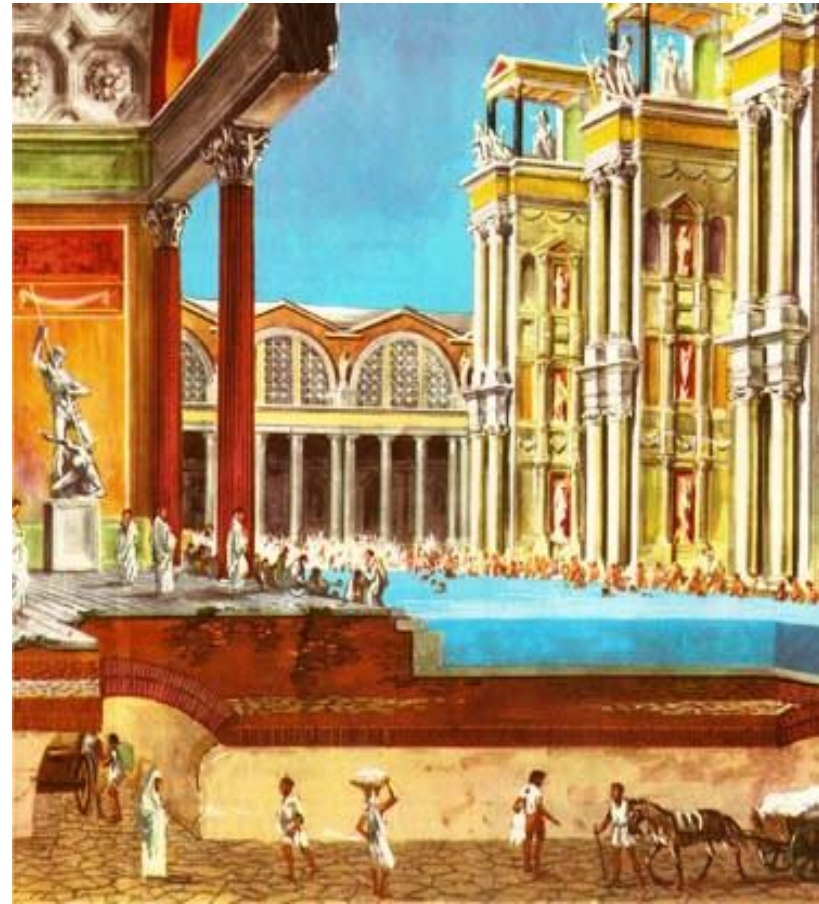
Marc Antony hired a famous mime to play Julius Caesar at Caesar's funeral, fueling a riot.

# Entertainment: Drama



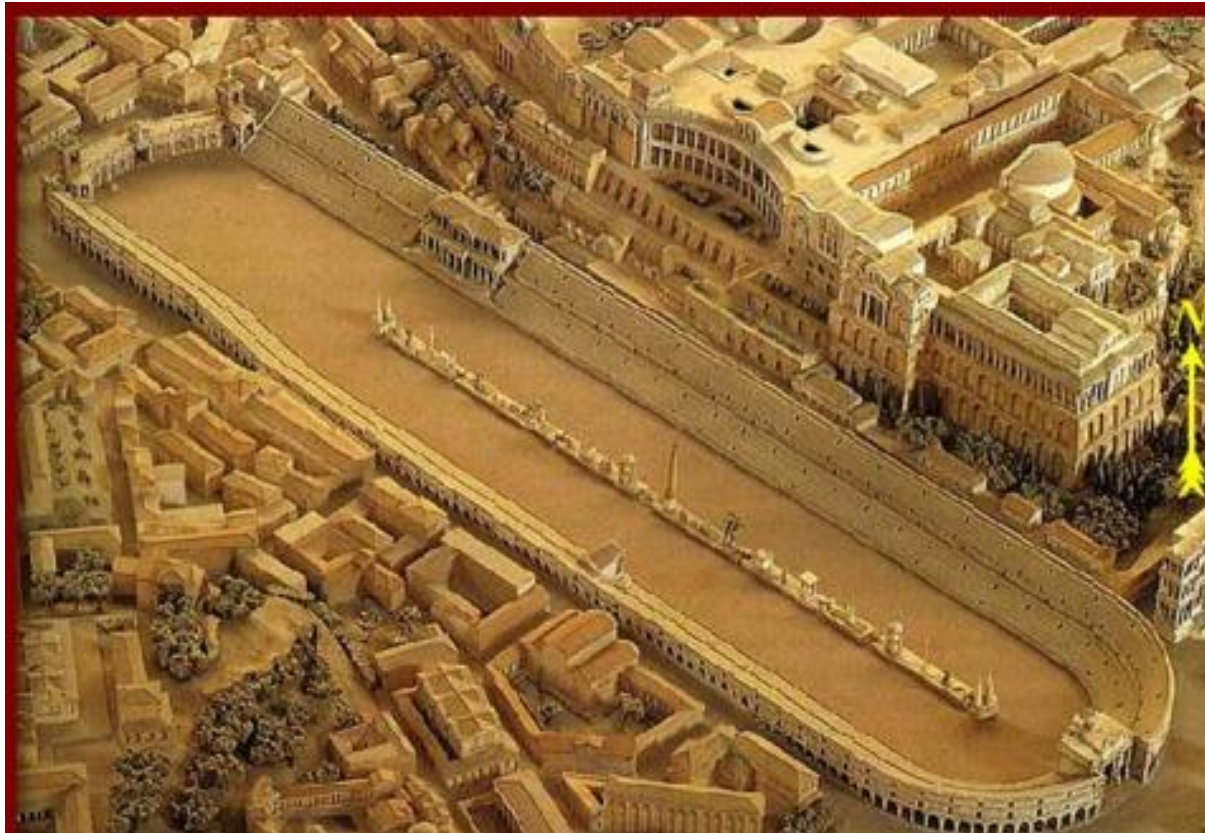
# Entertainment: The Baths

- Baths, large and small, throughout a city
- Sweat baths, underfloor heating for walls and floors.
- Libraries, meeting rooms, exercise rooms, gardens, snack bars, services





# Entertainment: Chariot Racing



# III. What You Would Not See

- Hospitals
- Public Schools
- Fire Stations
- Police Stations
- Doctors' Offices
- Orphanages
- Older people and children

# Conclusion: Life

- Life insecure: long Civil Wars part of the very recent past, high mortality
- Still, most people at the time would have been incredulous at the thought that the life they knew would end.