

# The Romans

David Maule

British English  
*Original*

Over hundreds of years, the Romans built an empire. As they occupied the countries around them, they took with them their skills as builders and their language, laws and lifestyle. They changed the western world. But who were the Romans? How did they live? How were they ruled? How did they build their empire – and how did they lose it?

*Number of words (excluding activities): 14,265*

Series Editors: Jocelyn Potter and Andy Hopkins

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David Maule

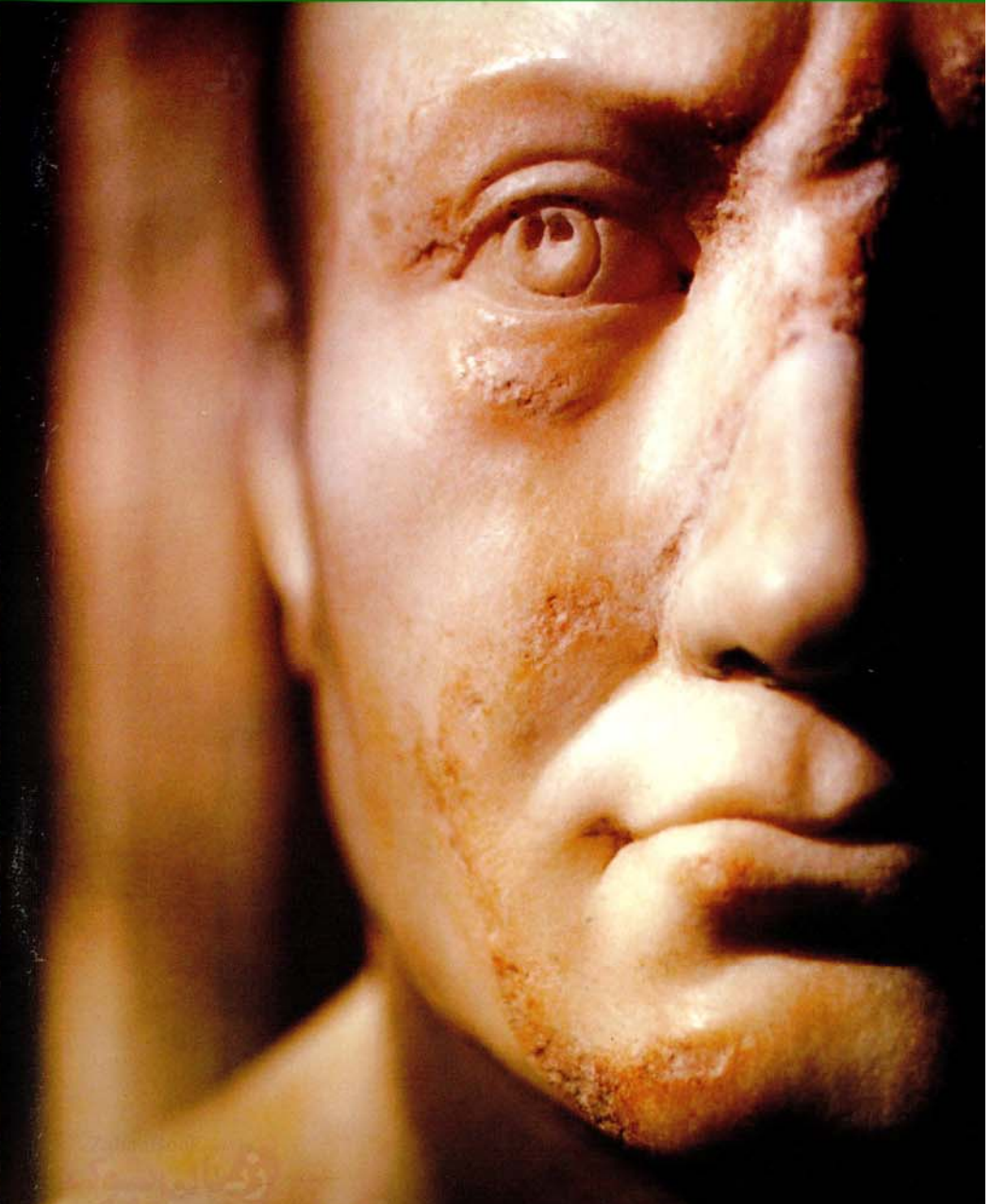
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# The Romans

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Pentium 350Mhz  
128 MB RAM

Macintosh OSX  
Power PC and  
Intel Processor 300Mhz  
128 MB RAM

Linux: GNU/Linux  
Kernel 2.6  
Pentium 350Mhz  
128 MB RAM



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Level 3

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Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

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# Contents

	Activities 1	iv
Chapter 1	The Roman Empire	1
Chapter 2	Life in Rome Activities 2	4 8
Chapter 3	The People of Rome: Rich and Poor	10
Chapter 4	The People of Rome: Slaves Activities 3	13 16
Chapter 5	The Wars with Carthage	18
Chapter 6	The Roman Army Activities 4	21 24
Chapter 7	Sport and Games	26
Chapter 8	Republic to Empire Activities 5	31 36
Chapter 9	Roads and Water	38
Chapter 10	Writing, Counting and Building Activities 6	41 44
Chapter 11	The Early Emperors	46
Chapter 12	The Empire and After	51
	Talk about it	56
	Write about it	57
	Project: A Roman Dinner Party	58

1.1 What's the book about?

How much do you know about Rome and the Romans?

- Which of these modern countries was not part of the Roman Empire?  
a Denmark b Egypt c Turkey
- When was the Roman empire at its largest?  
a 900 years ago b 1,900 years ago  
c 2,900 years ago
- Which river runs through the city of Rome?  
a the Thames b the Danube c the Tiber
- Which of these Roman emperors was not murdered?  
a Claudius b Caligula c Nero
- What was the building in picture A for?  
a government b shopping c sport
- What did the building in picture B carry?  
a water b horses c soldiers
- Which of these rulers of Rome was a lover of the Egyptian queen Cleopatra?  
a Mark Antony b Brutus c Cassius
- Who was Spartacus?  
a a Roman emperor b a Roman general c a slave
- What is the Roman number IX?  
a nine b ten c eleven
- Which of these men helped to destroy the Roman empire?  
a Attila the Hun b Genghis Khan c Hannibal



1.2 What happens first?

Work with another student and discuss these questions. Make notes below.

- Look at the map on page 2. Find Rome. Which modern countries were in the west, east, north and south of the empire at its largest?
- What do you know about life in Rome at that time?

Notes

# The Roman Empire

*For the first but not the last time, the Romans won because they fought harder.  
And they were more ready to die.*

● The Roman world

In the north of England the Romans built a wall. It was started by the emperor Hadrian in 122 AD\* and took more than ten years to finish. It was 120 kilometres long and six metres high in places. About every seven kilometres there was a strong **camp**. The wall crossed England from sea to sea and many parts of it are still there today.

In the east of Syria, near the River Euphrates, is the old city of Dura-Europos. The Romans arrived there in 165 AD. They took the city and made it a centre for their wars against the people to the east. And, of course, they built walls around it. Those walls are still there today too. The Romans stayed in Dura-Europos for almost a hundred years.

In Britain and in the Middle East the Romans went farther. They moved north of Hadrian's Wall into Scotland, and past Dura-Europos into Iraq. But the walls in England and the Syrian city show the real ends of the Roman **empire**. And from one to the other it is almost 4,000 kilometres.

In the north of Europe, the Romans held all the land south of the rivers Rhine and Danube. In north Africa, they **ruled** the coastal lands from Egypt to Algeria. Their empire went right round the Mediterranean. But in the years before the growth of the empire, Rome was like every other city in Italy – no bigger, no richer and no stronger. So who were the Romans? How did they live? How did their government work? How was this great empire built, and how was it lost? And what did the Romans leave behind in the countries they ruled?

In this book we will look at all these questions. We will meet some of the Roman emperors: the good and the bad. And we will look at the lives of ordinary Romans. We will find out how this city was able to rule so much of the world.

● The beginning

The Romans believed that their city started in 753 BC. In fact, the Latin people moved into the area hundreds of years earlier. Some of them made their homes on the seven hills near the River Tiber. This was a very good place to choose.

\* AD/BC: years after/before Christ was born

**camp** /kæmp/ (n) a place where people stay in tents for a short time  
**empire** /'empaɪə/ (n) a group of countries that are under one government or *emperor*  
**rule** /ru:l/ (v/n) to be the government of a country



There was an island in the river, so the river was easier to cross than in other parts. It was also 25 kilometres from Rome to the sea, so the city was safe from attack by foreign ships. But Roman ships could sail down the river to the sea and carry things to other places. People made money and the city began to grow.

In later years, its position became important for other reasons. Rome was in the centre of Italy, so it could attack to the north and the south. And Italy was a safe country. It had sea on three sides and mountains to the north. It was also in the centre of the Mediterranean. When the Romans began to attack other countries, they attacked from a good position.

In the early years of Rome, the Greeks were building cities in the south of Italy. From them the Romans learned many skills, like reading and writing. To the north were the Etruscans. These people had many Greek ideas and some of their own. From them the Romans learned a lot about building.

The Romans believed that two brothers, Romulus and Remus, started their city. Then Romulus killed Remus and became the first king of Rome. After Romulus, Rome was ruled by six more kings. None of these was the son of the last king. After a king died, the people chose the next one. From the start, ordinary people were part of the government of Rome. The last king was Tarquinius Superbus ('Tarquin the Proud'). In about 509 BC the Romans

decided that they did not want him. They sent him out of the city. For the next five hundred years, Rome was a **republic**. The people chose their politicians, but they did not make them kings.

After Romulus, Rome grew slowly stronger. In 430 BC there were disagreements with the city's nearest neighbour, the rich Etruscan city of Veii, 20 kilometres to the north, on the other side of the Tiber. The two cities wanted the same river crossings and the same land. Over the next forty years they were at war many times. The wars finally ended when the ruler of Rome, Camillus, ordered the Romans to fight all year. Before that they were able to go back to their farms every year. For the first but not the last time, the Romans won because they fought harder. And they were more ready to die.

For the next two hundred years Rome was at war with its neighbours in Italy. At first the Romans fought with the other cities around it. When these cities were **defeated**, they came under Roman rule. Some of them began to work closely with Rome. Their people could become **citizens** but could not choose the politicians. Other cities were not as friendly with Rome, but they understood its importance. Rome was a dangerous enemy. Later, as its **army** grew bigger, Rome went to war with neighbouring peoples. By 272 BC it ruled all of Italy south of a line from Pisa to Rimini. Then Rome looked towards new lands in the north, and also across the sea.

**republic** /rɪˈpʌblɪk/ (n) a country where people choose the politicians. A republic has no king or emperor.

**defeat** /dɪˈfi:t/ (v/n) to win a war against someone

**citizen** /ˈsɪtəzən/ (n) a free person in a country who is protected by the law

**army** /ˈɑ:mɪ/ (n) a large number of soldiers who belong to one state