GRACE

Chart Reading - Ancient Rome

GOVERNMENT

Patricians and Plebeians Under Etruscan Rule

Between 616 and 509 B.C.E., a group of people known as the Etruscans ruled Rome. During this time, Roman society was divided into two classes, **patricians** and **plebeians**.

Upper-class citizens, called **patricians,** came from a small group of wealthy landowners. Patricians comes from the Latin word *patres*, which means "father." The patricians chose the "fathers of the state," the men who advised the Etruscan king. Patricians controlled the most valuable land. They also held the important military and religious offices.

Lower-class citizens, called **plebeians** **(plih-BEE-unz)**, were mostly peasants, laborers, craftspeople, and shopkeepers. The word plebeians comes from *plebs*, which means "many." Plebeians made up about 95% of Rome's population.They could not be priests or government officials. They had little say in the government. Yet they still were forced to serve in the army.

The Patricians Create a Republic

Over time, the patricians came to resent Etruscan rule. In 509 BC, a group of patricians rebelled. They drove out the last Etruscan king. In place of a king, they created a republic. In a republic, elected officials work for the interests of the people.

To the patricians, "the people" meant the patricians themselves, not the plebeians. They put most of the power in the hands of the Senate. The Senate was a group of 300 men that the patricians elected. The senators served for life. They also appointed other government officials and served as judges. Two elected leaders called consuls shared command of the army. The Senate was supposed to advise the **consuls**. In fact, the Senate's decisions were treated as law. The creation of the republic gave Rome a more democratic government. But only the patricians could participate in that government.

The Plebeians Rebel

Rome was now a republic, but the patricians held all the power. They made sure that only they could be part of the government. Only they could become senators or consuls. Plebeians had to obey their decisions. Because laws were not written down, patricians often changed or interpreted the laws to benefit themselves. As a result, a small group of families held all the power in Rome.

The plebeians had to fight for what they wanted. They began to demand more political rights. The struggle between the plebeians and the patricians was known as the Conflict of the Orders, or conflict between the classes. The conflict grew especially heated during times of war. The new republic frequently fought wars against neighboring tribes. Plebeians had to fight in the army even though the Patricians decided whether to go to war. The plebeians resent this.

The struggle took a dramatic turn in 494 BC. By then, Rome was a city of between 25,000 and 40,000 people. Most of the population were plebeians. Angry over their lack of power, the plebeians marched out of the city and camped on a nearby hill. They refused to come back until the patricians met their demands.

Rome was in crisis. Work in the city and on the farms came to a halt. Without the plebeians, patricians feared that the army would be helpless if an enemy struck at Rome. The patricians had little choice but to compromise.

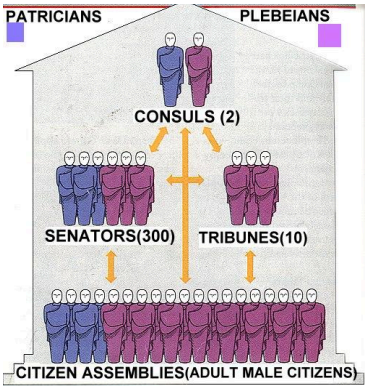
The Plebeians Gain Political Equality

The plebeians' revolt led to a major change in Roman government. The patricians agreed to let the plebeians elect officials called **Tribunes** of the Plebs. The tribunes spoke for the plebeians to the Senate and the consuls. Later, they gained the power to veto, or to overrule, actions by the Senate and government officials that they thought were unfair. Over time, the number of tribunes grew from 2 to 10.

Plebeians could also elect a lawmaking body, the Council of Plebs. However, the council made laws only for plebeians, not the patricians. The plebeians had gained some important rights. But they still had less power than the patricians. Over the next 200 years, the plebeians used a series of protests to gradually win political equality.

First, they demanded that the laws be written down. That way, the patricians couldn't change them at will. Around 451 BC, the patricians agreed. The laws were written down on tablets called the Twelve Tables. Next, in 367 BC, a new law said that one of the two Roman consuls had to be a plebeian. Former consuls held seats in the Senate, so this change also made it possible for plebeians to become senators.

Finally, in 287 BC, the plebeians gained the right to pass laws for all Roman citizens. Now, assemblies of all Roman citizens could approve or reject laws. These plebeian assemblies also nominated the consuls, the tribunes, and the members of the Senate. More and more plebeians served alongside patricians in the Senate. After 200 years of struggle, the plebeians had won their fight for equality.



Rome's republican form of government inspired future ages in Europe and America. Rome set an example of a government ruled by a written **constitution** (set of basic laws). Future republicans also pointed to Roman ideals of elected assemblies, citizenship, and civic duty. They adopted the model of governmental bodies that could check each other's power. Above all, they were inspired by the spirit of republicanism.

GEOGRAPHY

The development of civilization is affected by geography. Rome did not spring into being as a power on the Italian peninsula. It began as a tiny village along the Tiber River. It was an excellent location. The soil was good so crops could be grown easily. It was surrounded by seven hills, offering a natural defensive barrier. It was on a river, the Tiber River, giving these early settlers access to fresh water for drinking and bathing, as well as a waterway for trade. With all these advantages, it's no surprise that Rome grew quickly.

Protection From Invasion

Two mountain ranges, the Alps and the Apennines, helped to protect Rome from invasion. The Apennines divided the Italian peninsula in half and allowed the Romans to mass forces for counter-attack whenever they were threatened. Any army attempting to attack Rome would be at risk of attack from the other side of the mountains. The Alps, located on the northern border of modern-day Italy, seal off the peninsula from the rest of Europe during winter. This natural roadblock protected Rome from outside invasions by forcing attackers to move slowly through narrow passes, giving the Romans time to respond.

Fertile Land

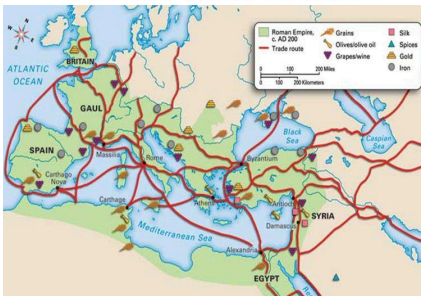
Rich volcanic soil makes the Po and Tiber river valleys ideally suited for agriculture. Volcanic ash made the soil near Rome some of the best in all of Europe. Rome attracted new settlers during its rise to power due to its agricultural potential. The Roman population grew quickly, thanks to surplus production of grains, olives and other crops. The extra population later helped Rome's military

expansion by providing a large supply of troops. The surplus also helped Rome to establish trade ties with other Mediterranean powers, dramatically improving their economy.

Center of Trade

Rome further benefited from its position at the center of the Mediterranean Sea. The Italian Peninsula is only 50 miles from Greece, while Sicily is less than 100 miles from Africa. Rome is also a short voyage by boat from Spain and only a few days' journey to France on horseback. Its central location made Rome a desirable trading post even before the city's rise to power. Being at such a crossroads later helped the Romans administer their empire effectively by reducing communication times.

Roman Trade Routes



RELIGION

EARLY BELIEFS & INFLUENCES

Early forms of the Roman religion centered around the belief that spirits inhabit everything around them, people included. The first citizens of Rome also believed they were watched over by the spirits of their ancestors. As Rome began to conquer more land, the religion absorbed many of the gods and cults of conquered nations, but the primary influence would always remain Greece. Due to the presence of Greek colonies to the south, the Romans adopted many of the Greek gods as their own. Most of the Roman gods had their Greek counterparts, although there were some notable exceptions. Apollo had no Roman equal and he was simply the Greek god of poetry, medicine, music, and science. Janus who had no Greek equal. He was the two-faced guardian of doorways and public gates. Janus was valued for his wisdom and was the first god mentioned in a person's prayer; because of his two faces he could see both the past and the future.

Priests were the main link between the people and their gods. There were augures, individuals who read the **entrails** (intestines and internal organs) of animals and the flight of birds to interpret omens, or in other words, the will of the gods. Rituals were performed to bring Roman victory in battle, and no declaration of war or major event was undertaken without the clear approval of the gods. One interesting example was that before a battle during the First Punic War, Roman Commander Publius Claudius Pulcher ignored the fact that the

sacred chickens of the priests had refused to eat. He was defeated, as was his military career.

ROMAN RELIGION CHALLENGED

Christianity, originally a Jewish religious sect, emerged in Rome in the first century AD. The religion gradually spread throughout Rome. For the first two centuries, the imperial authorities largely viewed Christianity simply as a Jewish sect rather than a distinct religion. That began to change after the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. Some in the population held Emperor Nero responsible, but to shift the blame, he targeted and blamed the Christians.

Persecution of Christians would be a recurring theme in the Empire for the next two centuries. But as the 4th century progressed, Christianity had become so widespread that it became officially tolerated, then promoted **(Constantine I),** and in 380 AD established as the Empire's official religion **(Theodosius I)**. Ironically, this would lead to the persecution of the traditional polytheistic religions that had once dominated most of the Empire.

ACHIEVMENTS

The Western Roman Empire may have fallen more than 1,500 years ago, but its rich legacy of innovation and invention can still be seen today. The Romans were great builders and expert civil engineers, and their thriving civilization produced advances in technology, culture and architecture that remained unequaled for centuries. From aqueducts to newspapers, find out more about 12 innovations that built ancient Rome.

AQUEDUCTS

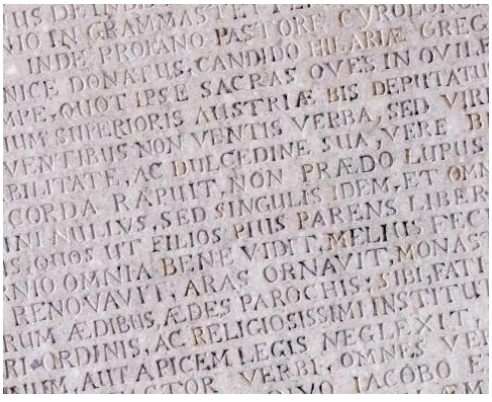
The Romans enjoyed many luxuries for their day, including public toilets, underground sewage systems, fountains and public baths. None of these water-based innovations would have been possible without the Roman aqueduct. First developed around 312 BC, these engineering marvels used gravity to transport water along stone, lead and concrete pipelines and into city centers. Aqueducts freed Roman cities from a reliance on nearby water supplies and promoted public health and sanitation. While the Romans did not invent the aqueduct—primitive canals for irrigation and water transport existed earlier in Egypt, Assyria and Babylon—they perfected the process. Hundreds of aqueducts eventually sprang up throughout the empire, some of which transported water as far as 60 miles. Perhaps most impressive of all, Roman aqueducts were so well built that some are still in use to this day. Rome's famous Trevi Fountain, for instance, is supplied by a restored version of the Aqua Virgo, one of ancient Rome's 11 aqueducts.

CONCRETE

Many ancient Roman structures like the Pantheon, the Colosseum and the Roman Forum are still standing today thanks to the development of Roman cement and concrete. The Romans first began building with concrete over 2,100 years ago and used it throughout the region in everything from aqueducts and buildings to bridges and monuments. Roman concrete was considerably weaker than its modern counterpart, but it has proved remarkably durable thanks to its unique recipe, which used seawater, lime and a volcanic ash known as pozzolana , to create a sticky paste. Combined with volcanic rocks called pozzolana , this ancient cement formed a concrete that could effectively endure chemical decay. Pozzolana helped Roman concrete set quickly even when submerged in seawater, enabling the construction of elaborate baths, piers and harbors.

NEWSPAPERS

The Romans used official texts detailing military, legal and civil issues. Known as *Acta Diurna*, or "daily acts," these early newspapers were written on metal or stone and then posted in heavily trafficked areas like the Roman Forum. Acta are believed to have first appeared around 131 BC, and typically included details of Roman military victories, lists of games and gladiatorial bouts, birth and death notices and even human interest stories. There was also an Acta Senatus, which detailed the proceedings of the Roman senate. These were traditionally withheld from public view until 59 BC, when Julius Caesar ordered their publication as part of the many populist reforms he instituted during his first term as consul.



WELFARE

Ancient Rome was responsible for many modern government programs, including measures that subsidized food, education and other expenses for the needy. These entitlement programs date back to 122 BC, when the tribune Gaius Gracchus instituted *lex frumentaria*, a law that ordered Rome's government to supply its citizens with cheaply priced grain. This early form of welfare continued under Trajan, who implemented a program known as "*alimenta*" to help feed, clothe and educate orphans and poor children. Other items including corn, oil, wine, bread and pork were eventually added to the list of price-controlled goods, which may have been collected with tokens called "*tesserae*" (think early food stamps). These generous handouts helped Roman emperors become popular with the public, but some historians have argued that they also contributed to Rome's economic decline.

BOUND BOOKS

For most of human history, literature took the form of clay tablets and scrolls. The Romans made improvements to the design by creating the **codex**, a stack of bound pages that is recognized as the earliest book.

The first codices were made of bound wax tablets, but these were later replaced by animal skin parchment that more clearly resembled pages. Ancient historians note that Julius Caesar created an early version of a codex by stacking pages of papyrus to form a primitive notebook, but bound codices did not become popular in Rome until the first century. Early Christians became some of the first to adopt the new technology, using it extensively to produce copies of the Bible.

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

At its height, the Roman empire encompassed nearly 1.7 million square miles and included most of southern Europe. To ensure effective administration of the empire, the Romans built the most sophisticated system of roads the ancient world had ever seen. These Roman roads—many of which are still in use today—were constructed with a combination of dirt, gravel and bricks made from granite or hardened volcanic lava. Roman engineers followed strict standards when designing their highways, creating arrow-straight roads that curved to allow for water drainage. The Romans built over 50,000 miles of road by 200 AD, primarily in the service of military conquest. Highways allowed the Roman legion to travel as far as 25 miles per day, and a complex network of post houses meant that messages and other intelligence could be related with lightning speed. These roads were often managed in the same way as modern highways. Stone mile markers and signs informed travelers of the distance to their destination, while special complements of soldiers acted as a kind of highway patrol.

ROMAN ARCHES

Arches have existed for roughly 4,000 years, but the ancient Romans were the first to effectively harness their power in the construction of bridges, monuments and buildings. The ingenious design of the arch allowed the weight of buildings to be evenly distributed along various supports, preventing massive Roman structures like the Colosseum from crumbling under their own weight. Roman engineers improved on arches by flattening their shape to create what is known as a segmental arch and repeating them at different intervals to build stronger supports that

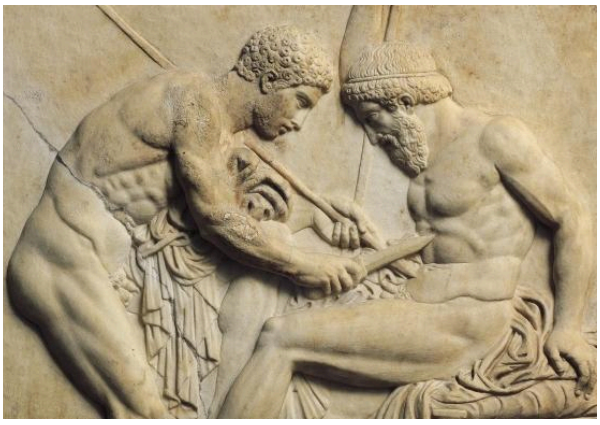
could span large gaps when used in bridges and aqueducts.

JULIAN CALENDAR

The modern Gregorian calendar is modeled very closely on a Roman version that dates back more than 2,000 years. Early Roman calendars were likely based on Greek models that operated around the lunar cycle. But because the Romans considered even numbers unlucky, they eventually altered their calendar to ensure that each month had an odd number of days. This practice continued until 46 BC, when Julius Caesar and the astronomer Sosigenes created the Julian system to align the calendar with the solar year. Caesar lengthened the number of days in a year from 355 to the now-familiar 365 and eventually included the 12 months as we know them today. The Julian calendar was almost perfect, but it miscalculated the solar year by 11 minutes. These few minutes ultimately threw the calendar off by several days. This led to the adoption of the nearly identical Gregorian calendar in 1582, which fixed the mistake by altering the schedule of leap years.

BATTLEFIELD SURGERY

The Romans invented many surgical tools and pioneered the use of the cesarean section, but their most valuable contributions to medicine came on the battlefield. Under the leadership of Augustus, they established a military medical corps that was one of the first dedicated field surgery units. These specially trained medics saved countless lives through the use of Roman medical innovations like **tourniquets** (devices that tighten to slow the flow of blood). Roman field doctors also performed physicals on new recruits and helped stem the spread of disease by overseeing sanitation in military camps. They were even known to disinfect instruments in hot water before use,



pioneering a form of antiseptic surgery that was not fully embraced until the 19th century. Roman military medicine proved so advanced at treating wounds and promoting wellness that soldiers tended to live longer than the average citizen despite constantly facing the hazards of combat.

ROMAN NUMERALS

The first usage of these numbers dates back to somewhere between 900 and 800 BC. Back then, much of the existing numbers and counting systems could not keep up with increasing calculation requirements. The Roman numerals were developed to serve the exact purpose of delivering a standard counting method that could be efficiently used in communications and trade. Though the Roman numbers also came with their flaws such as absence of the number zero and inability to calculate fractions, among many others. However, these numbers were able to survive even after the fall of the ancient Roman Empire. Their use in movies titles, cornerstones and many other popular and cultural references today shows the long lasting legacy of this ancient numeral notation.

I	1	XXI	21	XLI	41
II	2	XXII	22	XLII	42
III	3	XXIII	23	XLIII	43
IV	4	XXIV	24	XLIV	44
V	5	XXV	25	XLV	45
VI	6	XXVI	26	XLVI	46
VII	7	XXVII	27	XLVII	47
VIII	8	XXVIII	28	XLVIII	48
IX	9	XXIX	29	XLIX	49
X	10	XXX	30	L	50
XI	11	XXXI	31	LI	51
XII	12	XXXII	32	LII	52
XIII	13	XXXIII	33	LIII	53
XIV	14	XXXIV	34	LIV	54
XV	15	XXXV	35	LV	55
XVI	16	XXXVI	36	LVI	56
XVII	17	XXXVII	37	LVII	57
XVIII	18	XXXVIII	38	LVIII	58
XIX	19	XXXIX	39	LIX	59
XX	20	XL	40	LX	60

SANITATION AND SEWAGE

The ancient Roman Empire in many ways boasted the highest level of sewage and sanitary management of its time. They had established a number of public baths, bathrooms and an interlinked sewage line binding them all together in a complex yet an efficient feat of engineering. Rome and other major cities had an extensive network of sewers and drains that ran along the sides of streets. The abundance of water in the Roman aqueducts along with runoff water from local streams was regularly used to flush these drains and sewers. The flush would then dump all the waste into the nearest river (usually the Tiber), which does not sound the best of sanitary solution, but was far better than leaving the sewage lying around in the

streets. The ancient Romans also excelled in the used of covered gutter and sewer lines to which a majority of houses in the city was connected. Without a doubt, their sewage and sanitation system made the ancient Romans a forerunner for newer practices in sanitation throughout the world.

MILLS

The Romans didn't invent the mill, but they began constructing them for use in agriculture, mining and construction by the 3rd century BC. Mills allowed for the production of large quantities of flour which was essential to bread production. Before mills were ever invented, humans ground cereals into flour by hand, but the mill allowed a person to turn a crank to grind the grain. However, several improvements were made to Roman mills over time. Rotary mills allowed the crank to be attached to a large animal for grinding. Such mills increased the production of flour so much that the number of commercial bakeries dramatically increased. The watermill was another significant invention which, according to most historians, came later in the 1st century BC, or slightly earlier. In this version of the mill, water would strike the paddles of a wheel and cause it to rotate. The rotating wheel would then power the grinder. In fact, it was so powerful that it could grind more than just flour. Similar mills would later be used to crush rocks to extract their ore (used to make metals), and power saws for construction. The advances in milling technology decreased reliance on human labor and greatly improved life in Rome. They allowed for the production of flour and bread on industrial scales. Stamp mills accelerated ore processing at mining sites throughout the empire, while sawmills allowed for marble and other stones to be cut precisely and at record speeds.

Culture

Social History and Structure

Many aspects of Roman culture were borrowed from the Greeks. In architecture and sculpture, the difference between Greek models and Roman paintings are apparent. The chief Roman contributions to architecture were the arch and the dome. Rome has also had a tremendous impact on Western cultures following it. Its significance is perhaps best reflected in its endurance and influence, as is seen in the longevity and lasting importance of works of the writers Virgil and Ovid. Latin, the Republic's primary language, remains used in religion, science, and law.

Slavery and slaves were part of the social order; there were slave markets where they could be bought and sold. Many slaves were freed by the masters for services rendered; some slaves could save money to buy their freedom. Generally mutilation and murder of slaves was prohibited by legislation. It is estimated that over 25% of the Roman population was enslaved.

Education and Language

Following various military conquests in the Greek East, Romans adapted a number of Greek educational concepts to their own system. Home was often the learning center, where children were taught Roman law, customs, and physical training to prepare the boys to grow as Roman citizens and for eventual recruitment into the army. Conforming to discipline was a point of great emphasis. Girls generally received instruction from their mothers in the art of homemaking skills like spinning, weaving, and sewing.

Schooling in a more formal sense began around 200 BC. Education began at the age of around six, and in the next six to seven years, boys and girls were expected to learn the basics of reading, writing and counting. By the age of twelve, they would be learning Latin, Greek, grammar and literature, followed by training for public speaking. Public speaking was an art to be practiced and learned, and good public speakers commanded respect.

The native language of the Romans was Latin. Latin eventually became the basis for many languages, including French, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian and Spanish. Although English is Germanic rather than Romanic in origin, English borrows heavily from Latin and Latin-derived words. For instance, the Latin root *aqua* means water, and from that we get aquarium and Aquaman, and the Latin roots *ben* and *bon* means good and well, and from that we get the words benefit and bonus.

LATIN ROOT	MEANING	EXAMPLE
aqu-	water	aquarium, aquamarine
aud-, audi-	hearing, listening, sound	auditorium, auditory, audio
aug-, auct-	grow, increase	augmentation
avi-	bird	aviary, aviation
ben-, bon(i)-	good, well	benefit, benign, bonus
bi-	two	binocular, bigamy,
brev(i)-	brief, short (time)	abbreviation, brevity

The Arts

Roman literature was from its very inception influenced heavily by Greek authors. Some of the earliest works we possess are of historical epics telling the early military history of Rome. As the republic expanded, authors began to produce poetry, comedy, history, and tragedy. **Virgil** represents the pinnacle of Roman epic poetry. His **Aeneid** tells the story of flight of Aeneas from Troy (yes, that Troy!)and his settlement of the city that would become Rome.

Around the 2nd century BC, **mosaics** began appearing throughout Rome. A mosaic is a piece of art created by assembling small pieces of colored glass, ceramic, stone, or other materials into an image (in fact, we have several mosaics throughout Maplewood Middle School). Romans used mosaics to decorate floors and walls in homes and temples. They were a complex and beautiful art that often indicated the importance of a place or the wealth of a homeowner. Roman mosaics, especially floor mosaics, are found all across what was once the Roman Empire, which indicates how popular the art form was back then.

Sports and Entertainment

The city of Rome had a place called the Campus Martius ("Field of Mars"), which was a sort of drill ground for Roman soldiers. Later, the Campus became Rome's track and field playground. In the campus, the youth assembled to play and exercise, which included jumping, wrestling, boxing and racing. Riding, throwing, and swimming were also preferred physical activities. In the countryside, pastime also included fishing and hunting. Board games played in Rome included Dice, Roman Chess, Roman Checkers, Tic-tac-toe, and games that were very similar to backgammon. There were several other activities to keep people engaged like chariot races, musical and theatrical performances.

Gladiators

A **Gladiator** (Latin: gladiator, "swordsman", from gladius, "sword") was an armed individual who entertained audiences in the Roman Republic and Roman Empire in violent confrontations with other gladiators, wild animals, and condemned criminals. Some gladiators were volunteers who risked their legal and social standing and their lives by appearing in the arena. Most were slaves, schooled under harsh conditions, socially marginalized, and segregated even in death. Regardless of their origin, gladiators offered

audiences an example of Rome's ethics and, in fighting or dying well, they could inspire admiration and could even become celebrities.

The games reached their peak between the 1st century BC and the 2nd century AD, and they persisted not only throughout the social and economic crises of the declining Roman state but even after Christianity became the official religion in the 4th century AD. Christian emperors continued to sponsor such entertainments until at least the late 5th century AD, when the last known gladiator games took place.

ECONOMY

A Simple Yet Powerful Economy

For all of the glory of Ancient Rome, the Roman economy never developed into anything terribly complex compared to modern economies. Ancient Rome was an **agrarian** (farming) and slave based economy whose main concern was feeding the vast number of citizens and soldiers who populated the Mediterranean region. Agriculture and trade dominated Roman economic fortunes.

The staple crops of Roman farmers in Italy were various grains, olives, and grapes. Olive oil and wine, outside of direct food stuffs, were among the most important products in the ancient civilized world and led Italy's exports. Farmers could donate surplus crops to the government as a way of paying taxes. This system allowed Roman leaders to gain popularity with the masses through free grain distribution and also help to feed the legions at no direct financial cost.

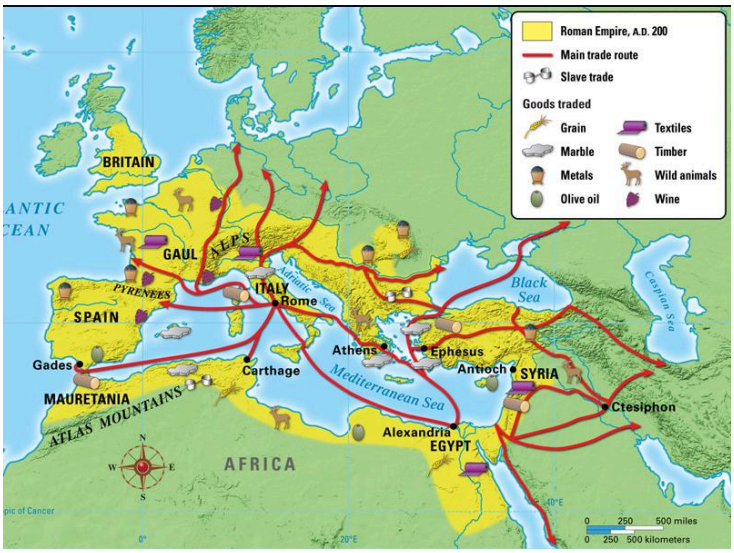
Unfortunately it also left farmers with little incentive to increase productivity or output, since more crop translated to more taxes (and more free grain distributions). Citizens grew dependent on these grain giveaways and the large volume of trade that ensued.

The need to secure grain providing territories was one of many important factors that would lead to the expansion and conquests of the Roman State. Among these

conquests were the provinces of Egypt, Sicily and Tunisia in North Africa. These areas were of vital importance in the processing and shipment of grain to Rome.

Trade Goods and Manufacturing

There was also a vast exchange of other goods from all parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The prosperity of the Empire and many of its citizens created a need for luxurious and exotic imports. Silks from China and the Far East, cotton and spices from India, Ivory and wild animals from Africa, vast amounts of mined metals from Spain and Britain, and slaves from all over the world discovered that all roads did indeed "lead to Rome."



The importance of industry and manufacturing was comparatively less than that of agriculture, but was still significant. The largest industry in ancient Rome was mining, which provided the stones for the enormous building projects and metals for tools and the weapons that conquered the western world. Greece and northern Italy provided marble for the buildings that amazed the ancients and modern people alike. Large quantities of gold and silver were mined in Spain to mint coins and create jewelry, while mines in Britain produced iron, lead and tin for weapons. Cities and towns throughout the empire established small-scale manufacturing plants which turned out hand-made pottery, glassware, weapons, tools, jewelry and textiles.

Trade Routes and Infrastructure

Extensive trade routes were established on land and sea. The Roman roads are one lasting legacy of Roman domination and many are still in use today. While a benefit of a large network of roads was the transport of goods, their most significant purpose was the fast mobilization of the legions. Following the

marching of soldiers, vast numbers of goods were carried along these roads. Transporting goods by land was slow and expensive, however, as large loads in wagons and carriages were pulled by oxen. Large, slow shipments were vulnerable to raids and bad weather so faster horse drawn loads were used, but they could only deliver lighter cargos.

Imports/Exports

Romans exported raw materials and finished products like grain, olive oil, and wine. However, they thrived off of imported goods, and importers were among the wealthiest citizens of the Empire. The trading of goods for goods barter system was alive and well in the ancient world, but the Romans also used one of the world's most developed coinage systems. Coins of brass, bronze, copper, silver and gold in the Imperial system were minted and circulated under strict rules for weights, sizes, value and metal composition. The popularity and value of Roman coins became so great that they could be found as far east as India.