An Urban Empire

• About 80 percent of the 50 to 60 million people of the Roman Empire were rural farmers, but the empire was administered through and for a network of cities and towns.

• In this sense, it was an urban empire.
Living Quarters in Rome

• In Rome, the upper classes lived in elegant, well-built, well-appointed houses; many aristocrats also owned country villas.

• The poor lived in dark, dank, fire-prone wooden tenements in squalid slums built in the low-lying parts of the city.
Ruins of the north end of the 2nd century A.D. Roman bath house at Chesters, England. In every part of the Empire, the Romans created frontier fortifications as comfortable as possible for the legions. This bath house had all the amenities that the Romans had come to expect, even in an area so far away from home and facing hostile tribes. This building included a changing room, cold and steam rooms, and hot and cold pools. The arched opening at lower right is the "stoke hole" for the furnace to heat the hot dry room above.
Other Towns

- Provincial towns imitated Rome both in urban planning and in urban administration.
- The local elite, who served the interests of Rome, dominated town councils.
- The local elite also served their communities by using their wealth to construct amenities such as aqueducts, baths, theatres, gardens, temples, and other public works and entertainment projects.
• Rural life in the Roman Empire involved lots of hard work and very little entertainment

• Rural people had little contact with representatives of the government

• Manufacture and trade flourished under the “pax romana.”
• Grain had to be imported to feed the huge city of Rome.

• Rome and the Italian towns (and later, provincial centers) exported glass, metalwork, pottery, and other manufactures to the provinces.

• Romans also imported Chinese silk and Indian and Arabian spices.
Roman Art Architecture and Engineering
Roman Architecture
Model of Rome
Characteristics

1. During the Republic - Temple Architecture:

- blended Etruscan & Greek features.
- emphasis on the front of the building.

example: Temple of Fortuna Virilis.
Temple of "Fortuna Virilis"
2. **CONCRETE**: 🏛️ created a revolution in architectural design. 🏛️ create larger, heavier buildings.

* example: 
  - The Sanctuary of Fortuna Palestrina.
SANCTUARY
OF FORTUNA PALESTRINA
Characteristics

3. **ARCH & VAULT:**
   - Coliseum
   - Race Track – *Circus Maximus*
   - Public Baths
   - Amphitheaters
Triumphal Arch of Titus
Arch of Constantine
Barrel or “Tunnel” Vault

Windows can be placed at any point.

These vaults require buttressing to counteract the downward thrust of weight.
Groin Vault

Also called a cross vault.

Needs less buttressing.
Multi Groin Vaults

- A series of groin vaults can have open lateral arches that form Clerestories.

- Windows that allow light into the interior of churches.

- These concrete windows are fireproof [an important consideration since many early churches burned!]
Early Roman Amphitheater

- Seats about 20,000
Roman Theater
Roman Coliseum
**Interior of the Coliseum**

- **Arena** is Latin for the sand, coating the floor that soaks up the blood of the combatants.
Circus Maximus

300,000 seat capacity!
Roman Bath in England
Characteristics

4. **DOME**: 

- Basilicas
  - Large and relatively open space.
  - examples:
    - Pantheon
    - early Christian churches
With the dome, the Romans could surpass earlier cultures by their ability to span space.

Light enters through the *oculus* on top.
The Pantheon Plans

Fig. 1. The Pantheon, Elevation

Fig. 2. The Pantheon, Section

Fig. 3. The Pantheon, Plan

Fig. 4. Plan of Pantheon
Roman Engineering
Innovative Engineering Techniques

1. Roads – macadam
2. Aqueducts
3. Arch Bridge
All roads lead to Rome!
Roman Aqueduct
Aqueduct in Segovia
Roman Arch Bridge in Spain
Hadrian’s Wall in Britain
Characteristics of Roman Sculpture

1. Collectors and copiers of Greek works [more idealistic].

2. Categories:
   - Portrait sculpture
   - Statues
   - Paintings & mosaics
   - Relief sculptures

3. More realism [show the wrinkles, the bulges, and ageing!]
Roman Copy of Greek Art

Original created by the Greek sculptor, Polyclitus, 5c BCE
Republican Couple

- Realistic portraits - like Hellenistic Greek style.
Portraits of Emperors

Julius Caesar

Nero

Hadrian

Marcus Aurelius
Mosaics on a Roman Villa Floor
Column of Trajan
Base Relief Legionnaires on Trajan's Column
Roman Sarcophagus

- Marble base relief - Etruscan influence?
Roman Frescoes
This reconstruction drawing (below) of a villa complex shows the magnificent main residence and the simpler farm buildings beyond its garden walls. The owner may also have had a house in a neighboring town. This bedroom (right) at Boscoreale shows the fine furniture and rich wall paintings that decorated such buildings. (Metropolitan Museum of Art)
Frescoes on a Villa’s Walls
Roman Crafts

- 1st century BCE glass bowl
- Gold earrings
- Ivory Cameo
GREEK AND ROMAN ART AND ARCHITECTURE ARE ALL AROUND US
JEFFERSON MEMORIAL
Lincoln Memorial
The US Capitol Building
Statue of Justice
US Supreme Court
Building
Federal Court Building in NYC
Metropolitan Museum of Art
Statue of Liberty