

## UNIT 4: ANCIENT ROME

### ROMAN SOCIETY IN THE DIFFERENT PERIODS.

We identify three periods in the timeline of Ancient Rome:

MONARCHY	753 B.C. -----509 B.C
REPUBLIC	509 B.C.-----27 B.C.
EMPIRE	27 B.C.-----400 A.D.



#### THE MONARCHY:

In the first centuries, Rome is governed by a KING. Most of the kings are Etruscans. The king is helped by a SENATE formed by members of aristocratic families. They are the PATRICIANS.

#### THE REPUBLIC:

The romans fight against Etruscans and a new period begins: the Republic. People is governed by three institutions:

- the *SENATE*
- the *COMITIAS*.
- the *MAGISTRATUS*.



- a) The *SENATE* is the most important institution. It establishes the laws, gives instructions and leads foreign policy.
- b) The *COMITIAS* are assemblies where citizens meet to vote and discuss.
- c) The *MAGISTRATUS* govern the city.

In the Republic, society is divided into two groups:

- **PATRICIANS:** They are a minority. They are the members of the most powerful families, descendent of the founders of Rome. Initially they only have political rights.
- **PLEBEIANS:** all the others. They are artisans or peasants. At the beginning, they have no rights, but then, they have



#### THE EMPIRE:

Republic is weakened by corruption and conflicts: The power of military increases. In 27 b.C. OCTAVIO, known By AUGUST (that means "chosen by the gods") introduces a new form of government: the Empire

## SOCIETY IN THE EMPIRE:

People of Rome are divided into different social groups with unequal rights:



**-CITIZENS:** They are free.  
They have rights. They can vote and get married. They can own property. They are:

- **Senators:** They own property.
- **Nobilitas:** They are patricians and rich plebeians.
- **Middle class:** people in general (artisans, landowners, traders...)



- NON CITIZENS:**  
They have no political rights. They are:
- **Freedmen:** They are free but they can not vote. Women are under the rule of a man.
  - **Slaves:** They are not free.
  - **Liberts:** They are liberated slaves. They are free.

## ROME: THE CIVILIZED CITY.



According to the Roman tradition, the city is founded by Romulus and Remus in 753 B.C. Rome was the capital of the Empire and all the Roman cities have a similar structure and similar way of Life.

In the centre of the city there is a **FORUM**, where political social and cultural life is developed. There are markets and statues of emperors. The main buildings (**Capitol**: main temple; **Curia**: city council; **Coliseum**: amphitheatre for games and spectacles; **Pantheon**: temple; **Circus**, and **Basilica**: for trade and justice) are around the Forum.



The city has several forums and beautiful houses, palaces, temples, arches, theatres and libraries. In 64 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Nero, a terrible fire destroyed many parts of Rome, but many years after, it is rebuilt.