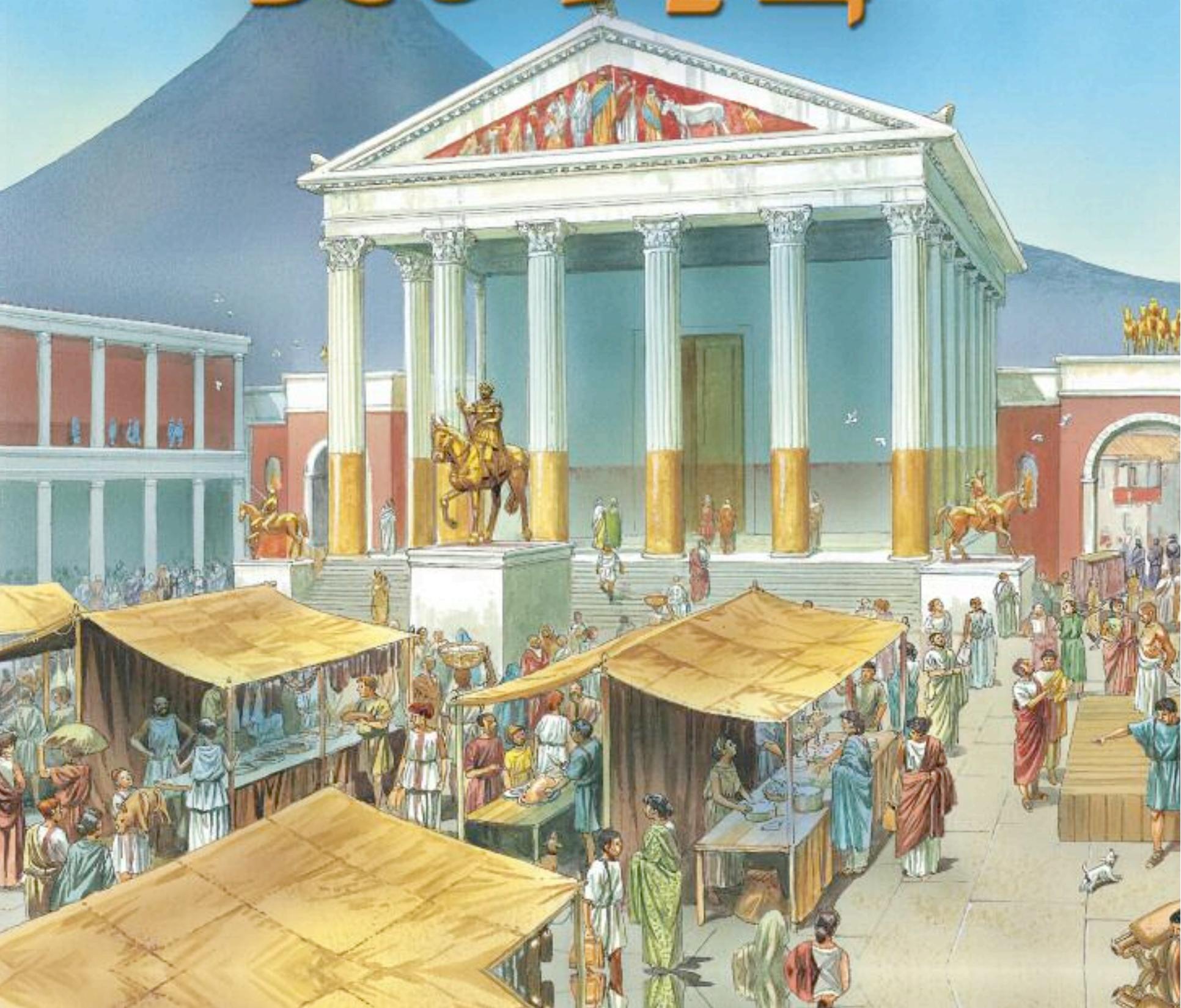
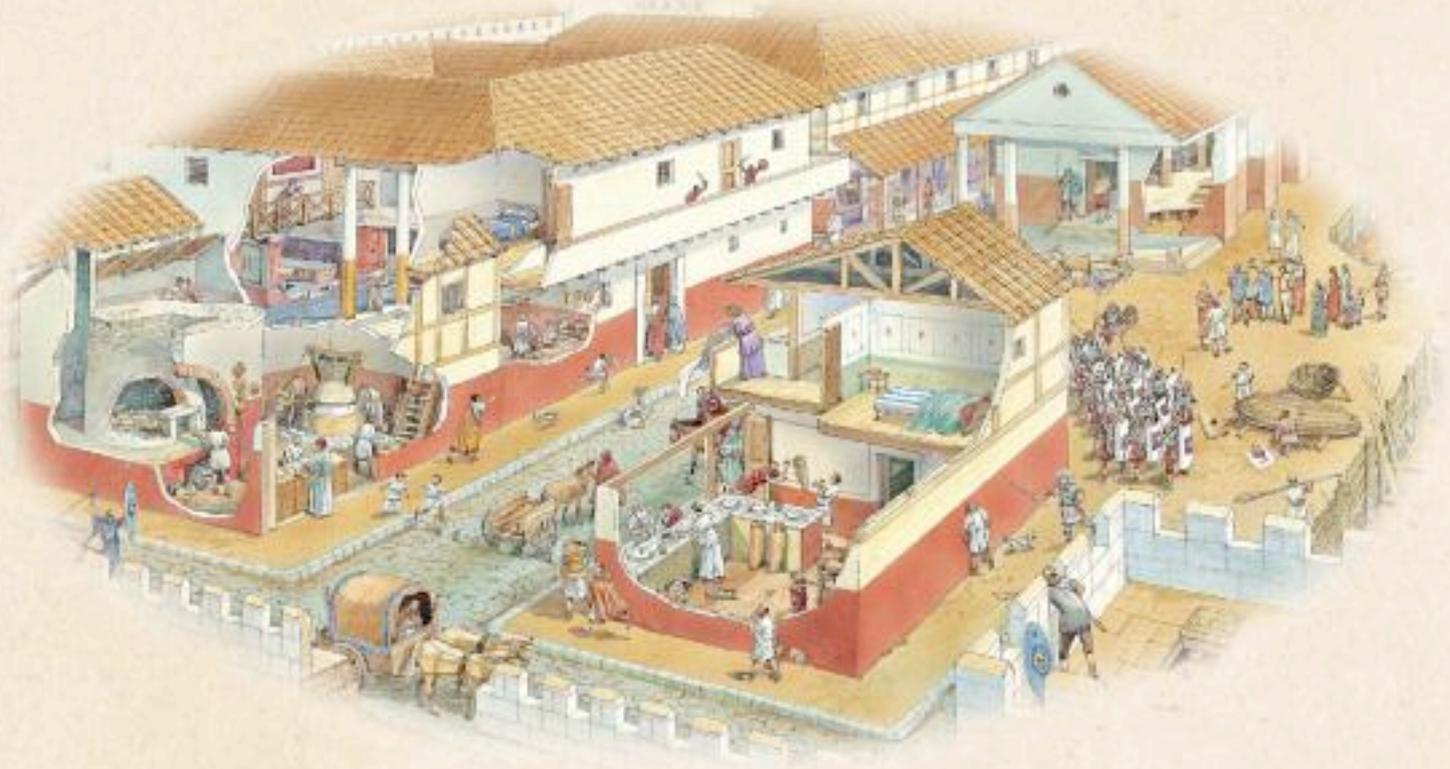


Inside Story  
ANCIENT  
ROME



Inside story  
ANCIENT  
ROME



Illustrated by Peter Dennis

 Orpheus

# Contents

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# Roman Empire

In about 750 BC, a tribe of people who spoke a language called Latin settled on the banks of the River Tiber in Italy. This settlement became a town called Rome. Over time, Rome grew to be a large and powerful city, the capital of an empire conquered by its all-powerful army, stretching from Britain to the Middle East.

Early Rome was ruled by kings, but the people decided in 510 BC to establish a republic, with a ruler elected by the Roman people.

## ANCIENT ROME

This panorama of ancient Rome shows the Temple of Venus and Rome (1), the Emperor's palace (2), the Colosseum (3) and the Circus Maximus (4), where chariot races were held.



Julius Caesar

Julius Caesar (*below*) was a very powerful consul, one of the Roman republic's elected leaders. He conquered many new lands for Rome, but was assassinated in 44 BC by others who had become jealous of his power.

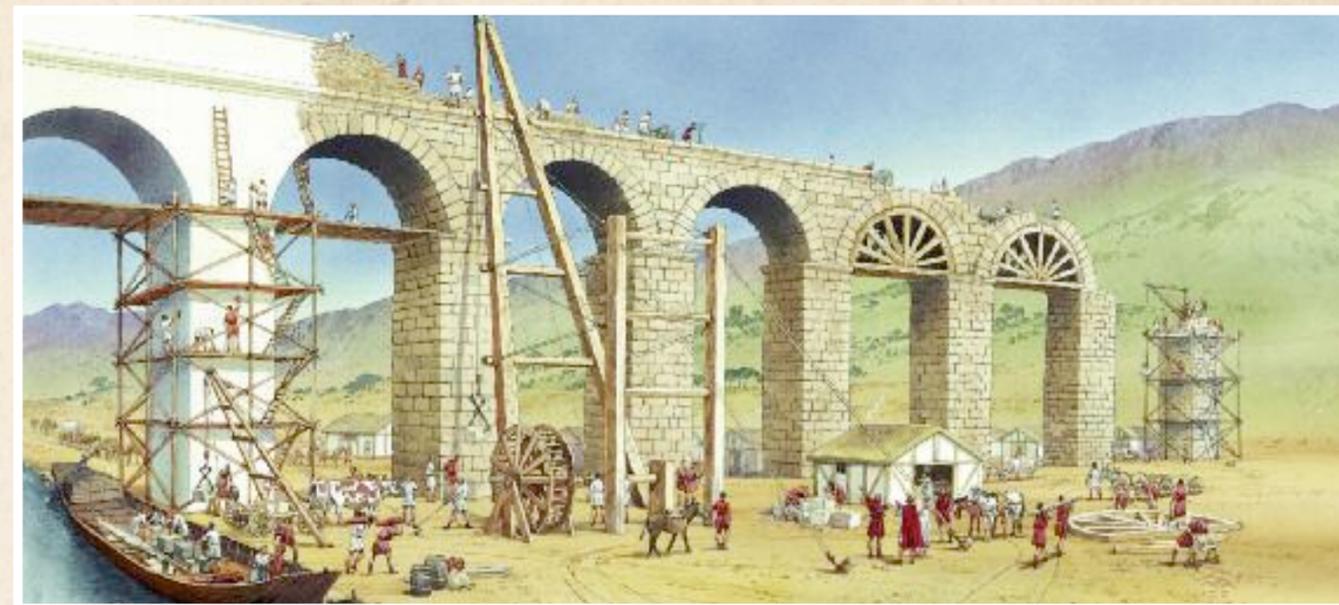


Caesar Augustus

After Caesar's death, there was a battle for power, in which Caesar's adopted son, Octavian (*above*) emerged victorious.

In 31 BC he became the first Emperor of Rome, naming himself Augustus, which means "deeply respected one". Augustus brought peace, but chose his own successor. The Romans could no longer vote for their leader.

By the time Augustus came to power, Roman lands had expanded enormously. The empire now had a population of 60 million.

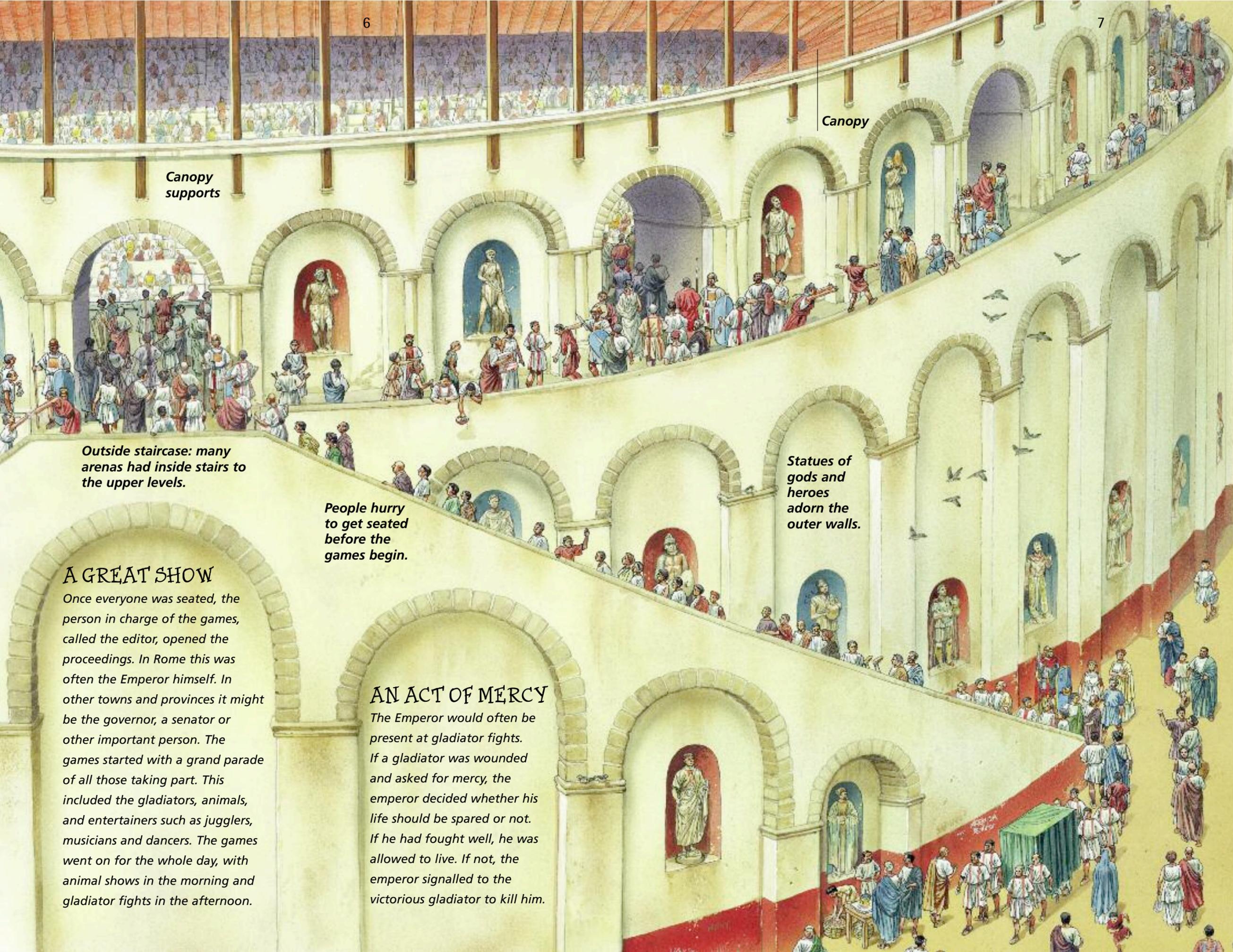


The Romans were skilful builders and engineers. They built 85,000 kilometres of roads across their empire and many aqueducts (*above*) to carry water from rivers or lakes to their towns. Wherever the army went, they took surveyors and builders with them.

This book tells the INSIDE STORY of Rome. What happened inside an amphitheatre? How did the Romans live? To find out more, you can look inside a Roman town's buildings, a frontier fort and a ship.

The Roman Empire at its height in AD 117





Canopy supports

Canopy

Outside staircase: many arenas had inside stairs to the upper levels.

People hurry to get seated before the games begin.

Statues of gods and heroes adorn the outer walls.

## A GREAT SHOW

Once everyone was seated, the person in charge of the games, called the editor, opened the proceedings. In Rome this was often the Emperor himself. In other towns and provinces it might be the governor, a senator or other important person. The games started with a grand parade of all those taking part. This included the gladiators, animals, and entertainers such as jugglers, musicians and dancers. The games went on for the whole day, with animal shows in the morning and gladiator fights in the afternoon.

## AN ACT OF MERCY

The Emperor would often be present at gladiator fights. If a gladiator was wounded and asked for mercy, the emperor decided whether his life should be spared or not. If he had fought well, he was allowed to live. If not, the emperor signalled to the victorious gladiator to kill him.

# Arena

Today is a public holiday and games have been organized in the local arena. There will be gladiator fights and wild beast hunts to delight and scare the crowd in equal measure. The games are very popular and entry is free, but you do need a ticket. These are given out several days in advance.

## SEATING PLAN

Anyone could attend the games, but they had to sit in the correct seats. The lowest seats, closest to the action, were reserved for the most important citizens. Rich Roman men sat in the middle tiers, while above them sat poorer citizens, slaves, foreigners and women. At the very top sat the wives of the highest-ranking men, protected from sun and rain by a canopy.

**Dimachaerius**



**Samnite**      **Bestiarius**

**GLADIATORS**

Gladiators did not always fight to the death, and if they fought well enough they might be given their freedom. Some gladiators made great careers for themselves, becoming celebrities, like footballers today.

Each gladiator had his own speciality. A gladiator who fought animals was a bestiarius. A myrmillo wore heavy armour. A thracian had a curved dagger and a small shield. A samnite carried a sword and shield, and wore a helmet with a visor. A gladiator who carried a net which he used to trap his opponent was a retiarius. A lightly armed fighter who chased his opponent was called a secutor.

**Hoplomachus**

**Myrmillo**      **Essedarius**



**Thracian**      **Retiarius**

Box for the editor of the games

Gladiators

Access tunnel

Bears, lions, tigers and elephants

**BATTLING BEASTS**

Exotic animals from all over the Empire were brought to Rome for the games. Some were trained to do circus tricks to thrill the crowd. There were also animal hunts and fights. This could get quite bloodthirsty with unarmed prisoners being thrown into the ring to face the hungry beasts, such as lions, wolves and bears.

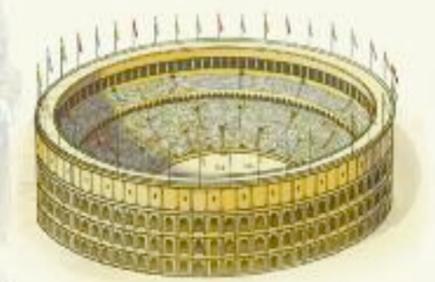
**ANIMALS**

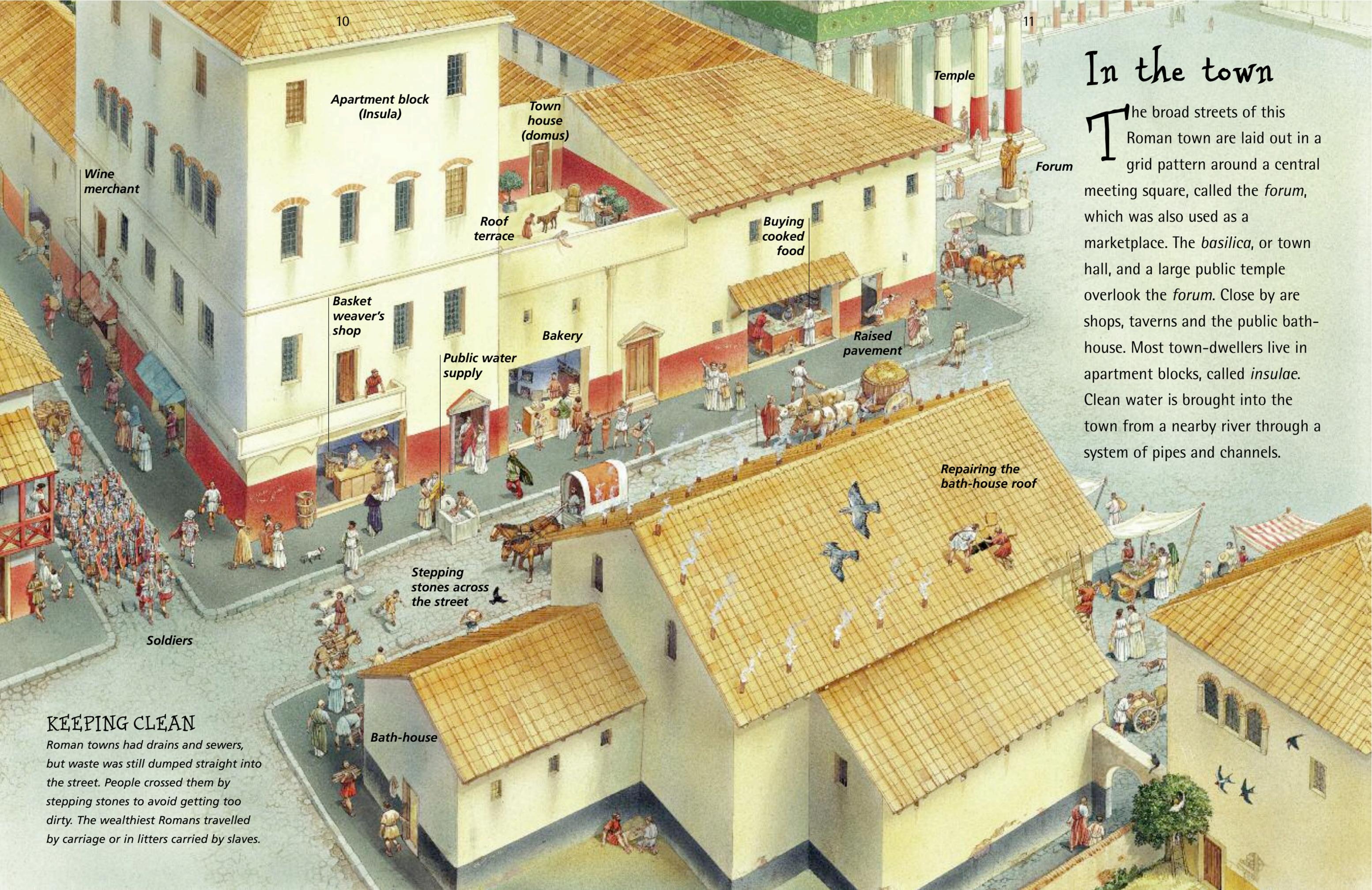
In some arenas wild animals were kept in tunnels under the floor and winched up to the arena in specially designed cages.

**Gladiators**

Gladiators are slaves or criminals trained to fight each other—often to the death—as the crowds look on. Gladiator contests, called *munerae*, attract huge crowds. They are held in stadiums called amphitheatres—an oval-shaped arena covered in sand and surrounded by rows of seats.

**THE COLOSSEUM**  
The largest amphitheatre in the Empire was the Colosseum in Rome itself. It could hold up to 50,000 spectators. Built nearly 2000 years ago, much of the building still stands today.





Apartment block  
(*Insula*)

Town house  
(*domus*)

Wine  
merchant

Roof  
terrace

Buying  
cooked  
food

Temple

Forum

Basket  
weaver's  
shop

Bakery

Raised  
pavement

Public water  
supply

Repairing the  
bath-house roof

Stepping  
stones across  
the street

Soldiers

Bath-house

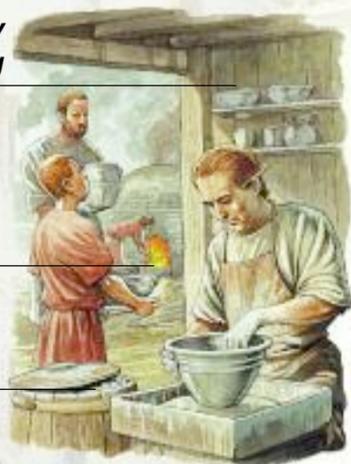
## KEEPING CLEAN

Roman towns had drains and sewers, but waste was still dumped straight into the street. People crossed them by stepping stones to avoid getting too dirty. The wealthiest Romans travelled by carriage or in litters carried by slaves.

## In the town

The broad streets of this Roman town are laid out in a grid pattern around a central meeting square, called the *forum*, which was also used as a marketplace. The *basilica*, or town hall, and a large public temple overlook the *forum*. Close by are shops, taverns and the public bath-house. Most town-dwellers live in apartment blocks, called *insulae*. Clean water is brought into the town from a nearby river through a system of pipes and channels.

Pots ready for firing

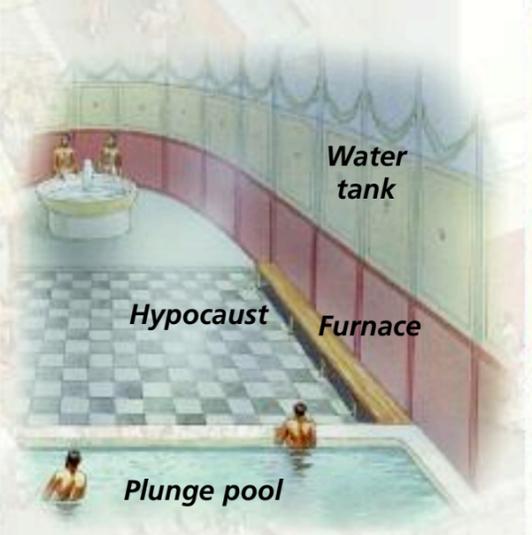


Kiln

Potter's wheel

### LOCAL POTTERY

Most pottery was made locally. It was usually one colour, and decorations were moulded into the clay. Pots were made on a potter's wheel or by pushing the clay into plaster moulds.



Water tank

Hypocaust Furnace

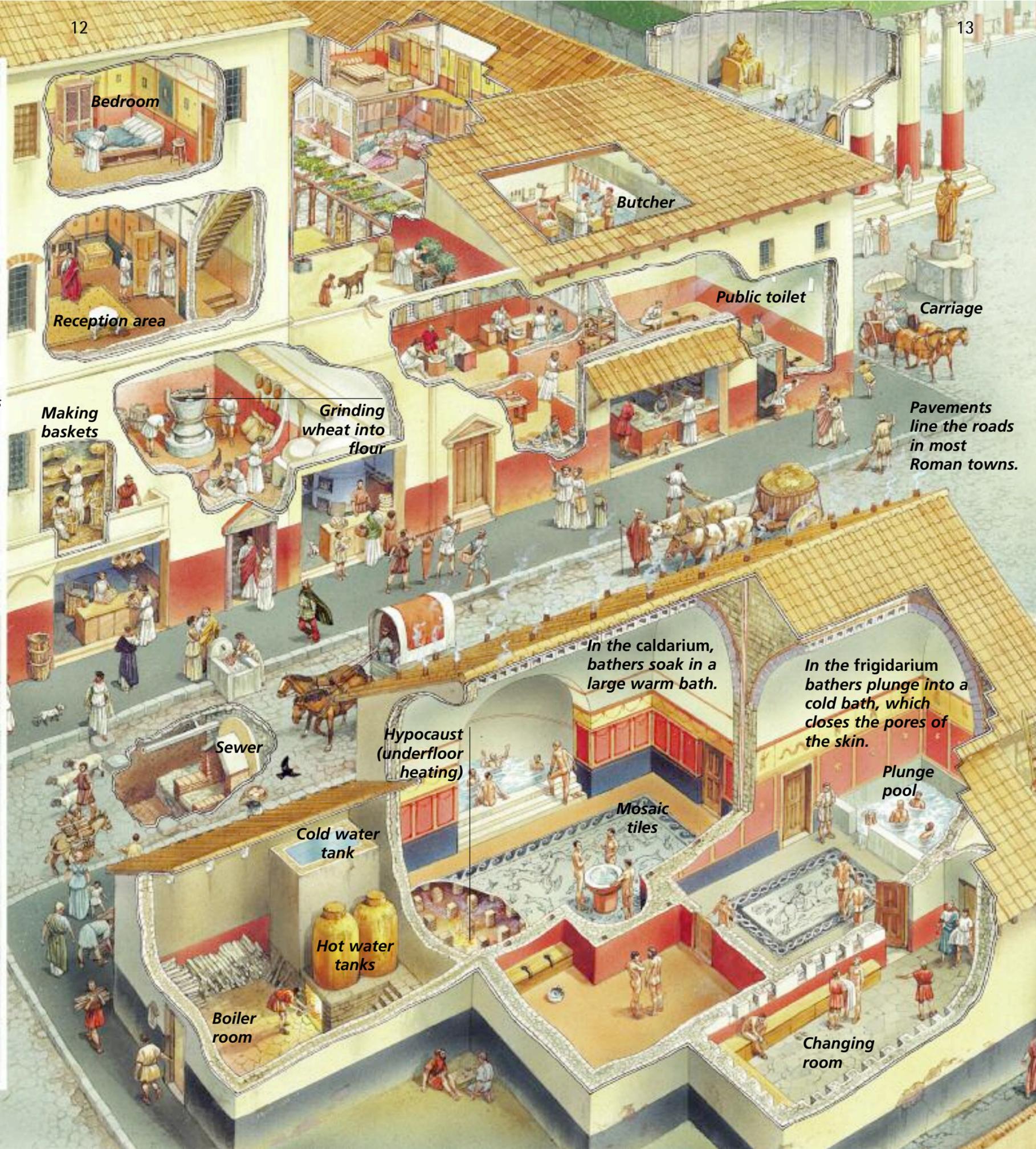
Plunge pool

### ROMAN BATHS

All Roman towns had at least one bath-house where people went to wash, exercise and socialize. Most Romans went every day, women in the morning, men in the afternoon. The Romans invented an underfloor heating system, or hypocaust, for heating their baths. The floor was raised on pillars of tiles. Hot air, heated by a furnace, flowed around the spaces between pillars.

# How people live

Apartment buildings are several storeys high. Poorer families live in small rooms at the top, while the better-off have large, comfortable rooms on the lower floors. Shops and bars occupy the ground floors of buildings. Most apartments have no running water or toilets, so people use public baths and lavatories, and fetch fresh water from public fountains on street corners.



### ROMAN MONEY

Roman coins were used across the whole Empire. Everyone in the Empire had to pay tax—a portion of their wealth. Some of this went back to Rome, but some was spent locally, for example on building roads. Tax would be taken in the form of crops, goods or coins.



Sestertius

Aureus

Denarius



## A *domus*

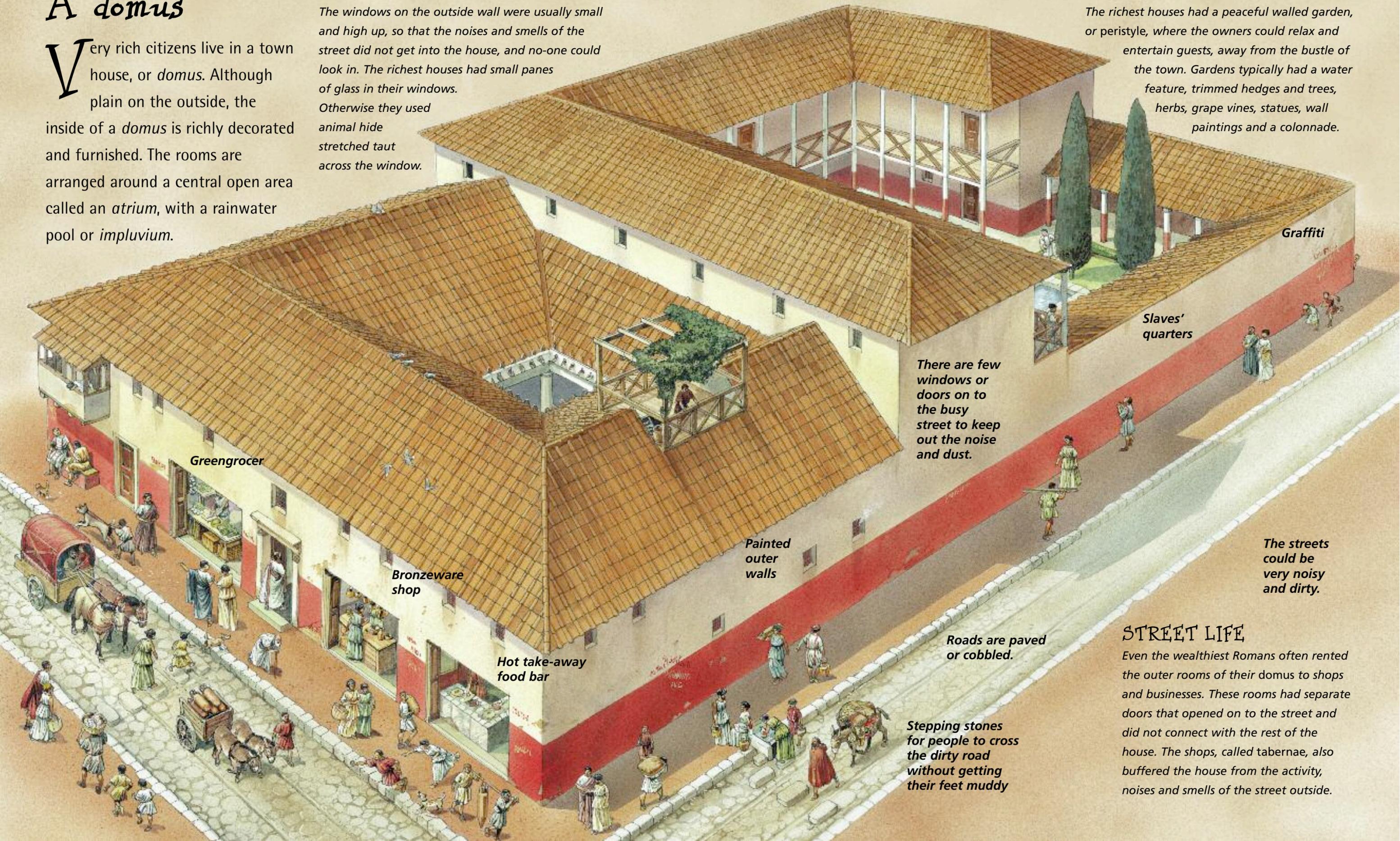
Very rich citizens live in a town house, or *domus*. Although plain on the outside, the inside of a *domus* is richly decorated and furnished. The rooms are arranged around a central open area called an *atrium*, with a rainwater pool or *impluvium*.

## WINDOWS ON THE WORLD

The windows on the outside wall were usually small and high up, so that the noises and smells of the street did not get into the house, and no-one could look in. The richest houses had small panes of glass in their windows. Otherwise they used animal hide stretched taut across the window.

## SECRET GARDEN

The richest houses had a peaceful walled garden, or peristyle, where the owners could relax and entertain guests, away from the bustle of the town. Gardens typically had a water feature, trimmed hedges and trees, herbs, grape vines, statues, wall paintings and a colonnade.



Graffiti

Slaves' quarters

There are few windows or doors on to the busy street to keep out the noise and dust.

Painted outer walls

Greengrocer

Bronzeware shop

Hot take-away food bar

Roads are paved or cobbled.

The streets could be very noisy and dirty.

Stepping stones for people to cross the dirty road without getting their feet muddy

## STREET LIFE

Even the wealthiest Romans often rented the outer rooms of their *domus* to shops and businesses. These rooms had separate doors that opened on to the street and did not connect with the rest of the house. The shops, called *tabernae*, also buffered the house from the activity, noises and smells of the street outside.

## A ROOM FOR EVERYTHING

A typical domus would have a grand atrium for receiving visitors. The shrine to the lar, the household god, was also kept here. There would be a dining room (triclinium), kitchen, storeroom, bedrooms, offices and toilets.

The very richest houses also had a bathroom.



## SLAVES

Slaves were men and women with no rights—mostly prisoners captured in battle. They could be bought or sold at a slave market (above). Slaves did all the labouring work in a Roman town. In the homes of wealthy Romans they cooked, cleaned and looked after the children. A rich man might have as many as 400 slaves working for him.

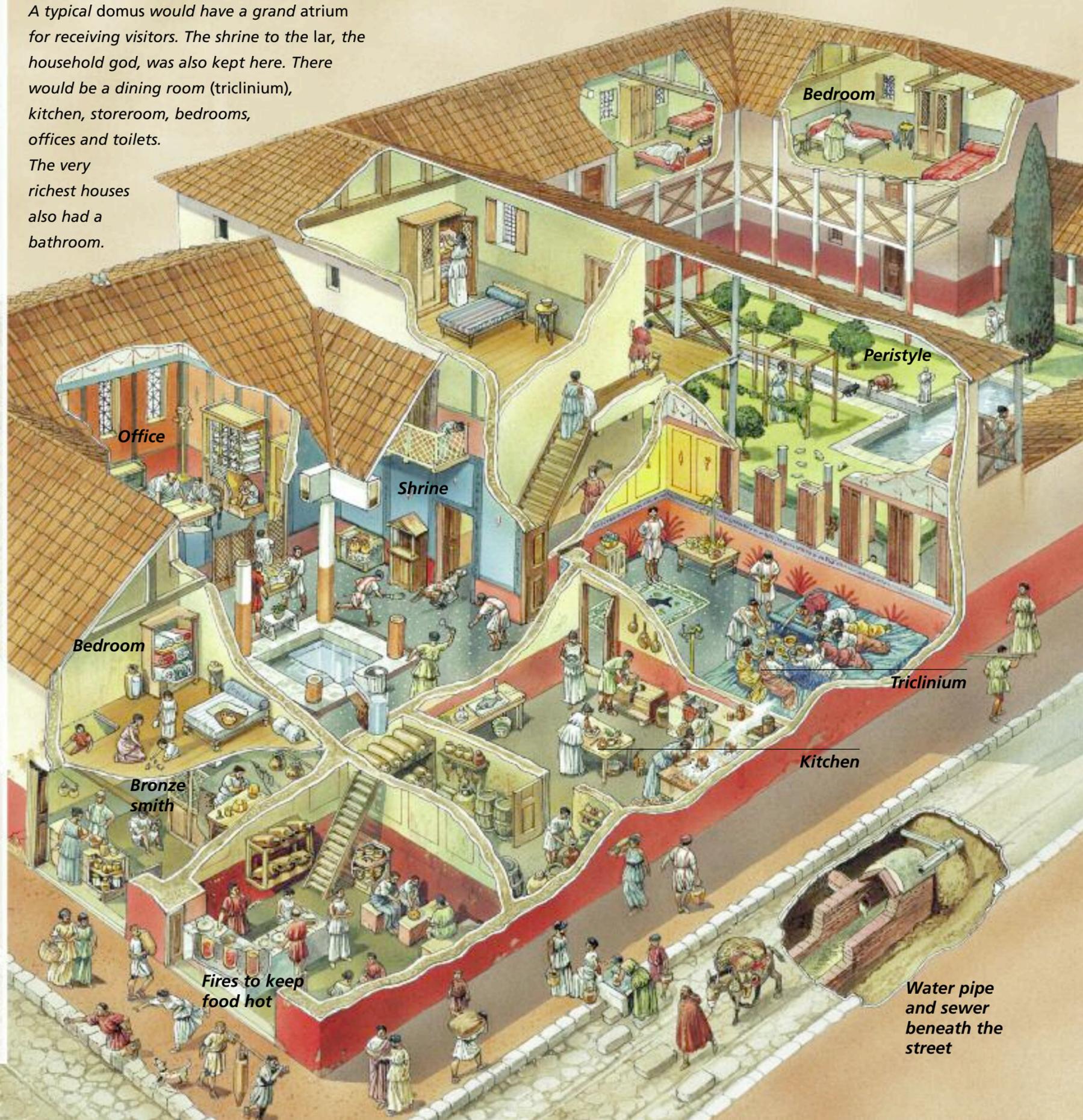
Applying plaster

Wood frame

Wattle panel

## BUILDING THE HOUSE

Houses were often made of wattle and daub. That is, timber frames with panels of woven twigs between them (wattle). The panels were covered with plaster (daub), then painted. This was quick and easy way to build, but the wooden structure could easily catch fire. Curved red-pottery pan-tiles were used to roof most Roman houses.



## WHAT'S ON THE MENU?



For rich Romans, dinner was a lavish three-course meal with a variety of meats and fish, accompanied by fine wine. It was eaten in the dining room (triclinium) where guests lay on cushioned couches and ate with their



fingers. On the menu might be such luxuries as pig's udders, snails, dormice and flamingoes' tongues. For poor Romans, dinner might be a hot porridge, vegetables, fruit and—on rare occasions—meat.



## Luxury living

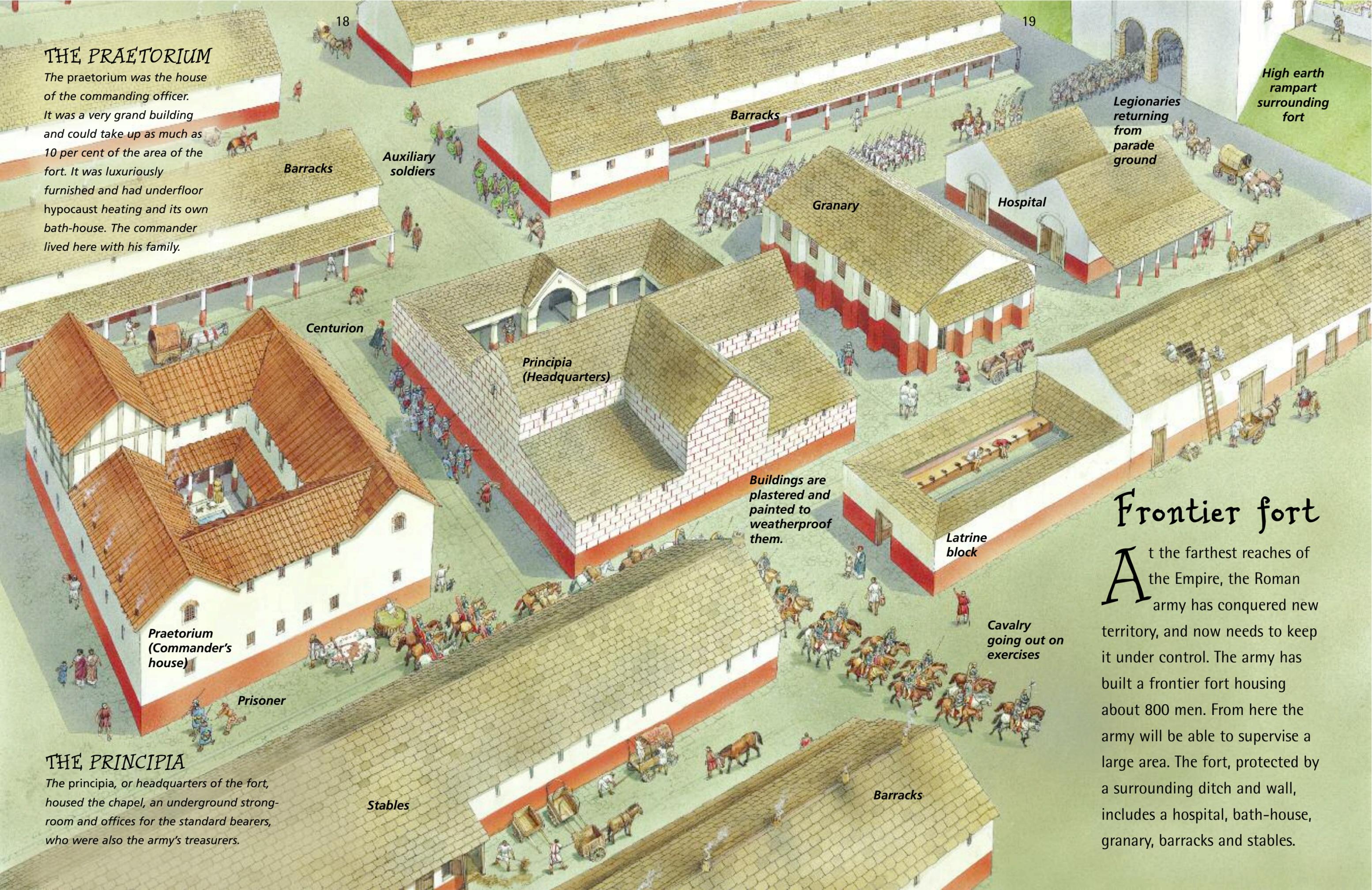
Townhouses are beautifully decorated with paintings on the walls and mosaics on the floors. There is little furniture, even in the homes of the rich. Women and honoured guests sit on chairs, but everyone else is seated on stools. Villas in cold provinces, such as Britain, have central heating to keep them warm.

## THE PRAETORIUM

The praetorium was the house of the commanding officer. It was a very grand building and could take up as much as 10 per cent of the area of the fort. It was luxuriously furnished and had underfloor hypocaust heating and its own bath-house. The commander lived here with his family.

## THE PRINCIPIA

The principia, or headquarters of the fort, housed the chapel, an underground strong-room and offices for the standard bearers, who were also the army's treasurers.



Barracks

Auxiliary soldiers

Barracks

Legionaries returning from parade ground

High earth rampart surrounding fort

Granary

Hospital

Centurion

Principia (Headquarters)

Buildings are plastered and painted to weatherproof them.

Latrine block

Praetorium (Commander's house)

Prisoner

Cavalry going out on exercises

Stables

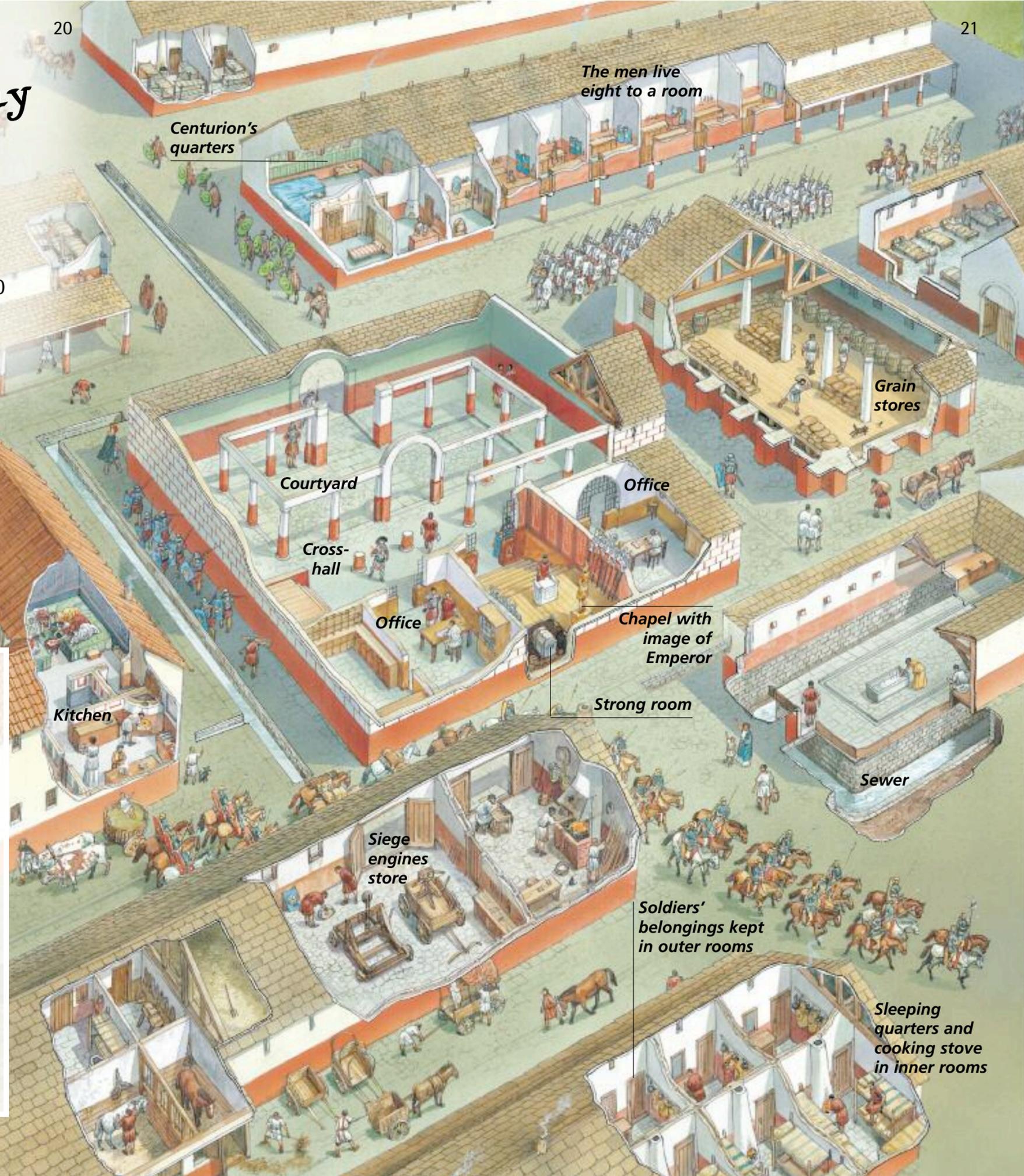
Barracks

## Frontier fort

At the farthest reaches of the Empire, the Roman army has conquered new territory, and now needs to keep it under control. The army has built a frontier fort housing about 800 men. From here the army will be able to supervise a large area. The fort, protected by a surrounding ditch and wall, includes a hospital, bath-house, granary, barracks and stables.

# The Roman army

The Roman army is divided into legions of about 6000 foot-soldiers or legionaries. A legion consists of 10 cohorts, each of which have six centuries, or companies of 80 men. A group of 120 cavalry ride on horses with each legion.



Centurion's quarters

The men live eight to a room

Grain stores

Courtyard

Office

Cross-hall

Office

Chapel with image of Emperor

Strong room

Kitchen

Siege engines store

Soldiers' belongings kept in outer rooms

Sewer

Sleeping quarters and cooking stove in inner rooms

## LEGIONARIES

Roman foot soldiers were known as legionaries. A legionary (left) wore an iron helmet and armour over a woollen tunic and a leather kilt. He had to carry his sword, dagger, shield, spear and all his own provisions. Legionaries were all Roman citizens. They had to be at least 1.75 m tall and physically fit with good eyesight.



## LIFE INSIDE THE FORT

Each day would start with a morning report. All commanding officers (centurions) would give the camp commander a written account listing how many men were available for work and what tasks had been given out. Then the duties for the day would be allocated between the army units.

Basic footsoldiers, called legionaries, would train every day. New recruits would spend several hours a day in practice.

Camp commander

Reports written on wax tablets

Centurions



Until they learned how to control their weapons, trainees would use wooden swords and practise moves against a stake. They could easily injure each other if they used real weapons too soon.



## Ostia

Merchant ships are bulky and slow compared to a sleek and powerful quinquereme.

Square sail

Controlling the sweeps

Pulling up the mast

Sweep for steering

Line of three oars

There are 92 oars on each side of the ship.

## Under sail

Ships are vital to Rome. It is often cheaper and quicker to transport goods or troops by boat than any other form of transport. Shipping here in the Mediterranean is always busy – slow merchant vessels and great quinquereme warships jostle outside the bustling port of Ostia, near Rome.

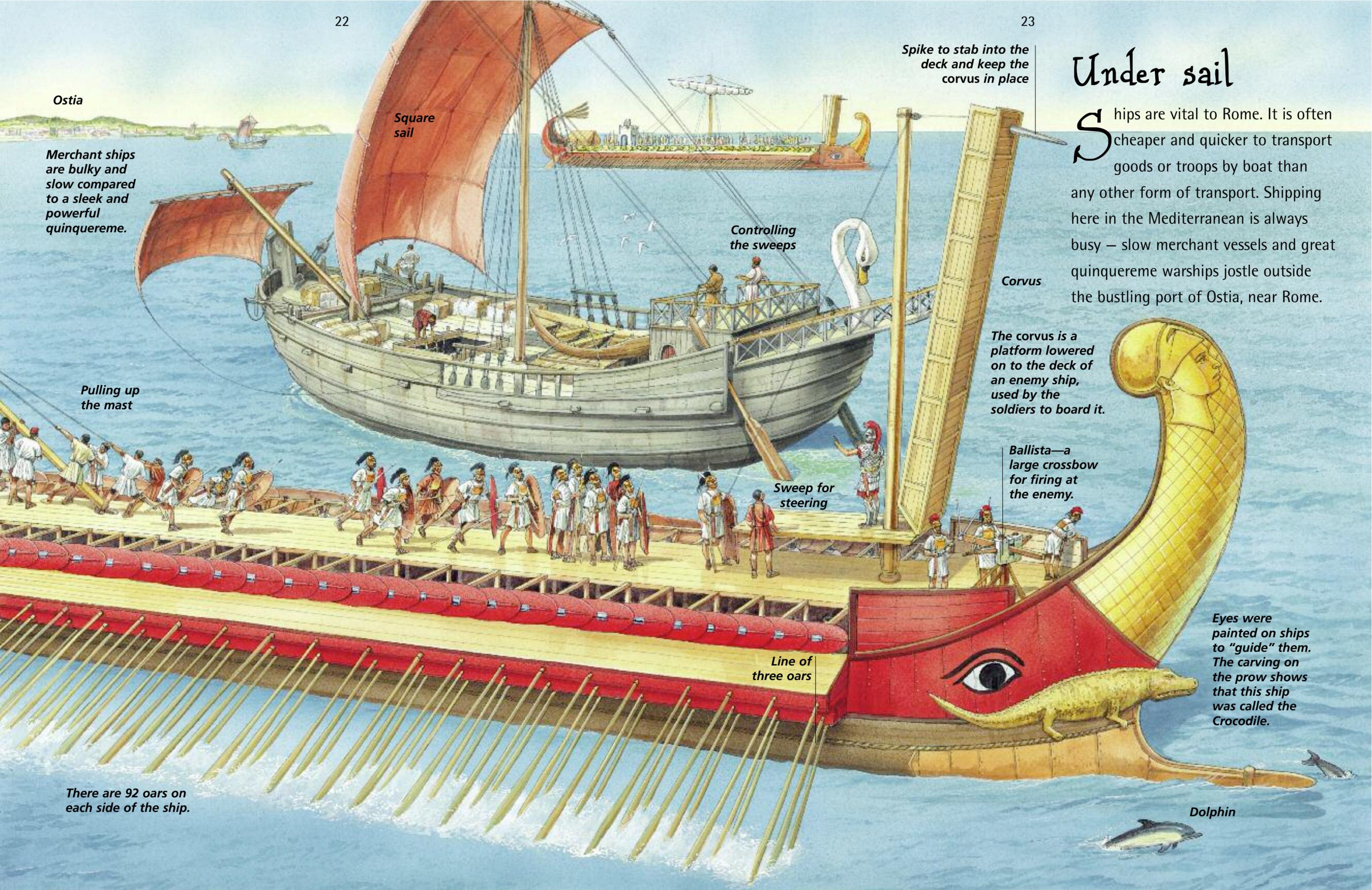
Corvus

The corvus is a platform lowered on to the deck of an enemy ship, used by the soldiers to board it.

Ballista—a large crossbow for firing at the enemy.

Eyes were painted on ships to “guide” them. The carving on the prow shows that this ship was called the Crocodile.

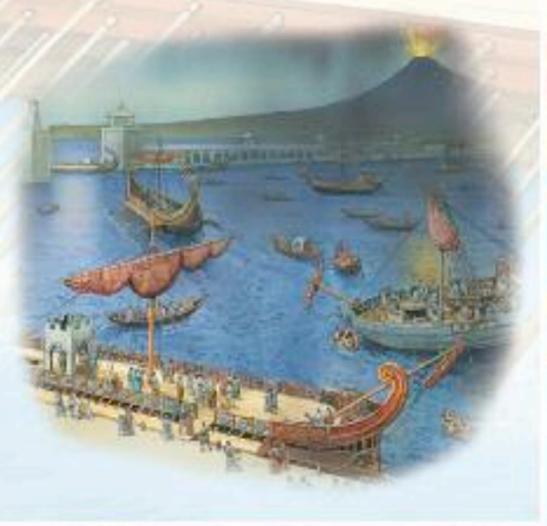
Dolphin





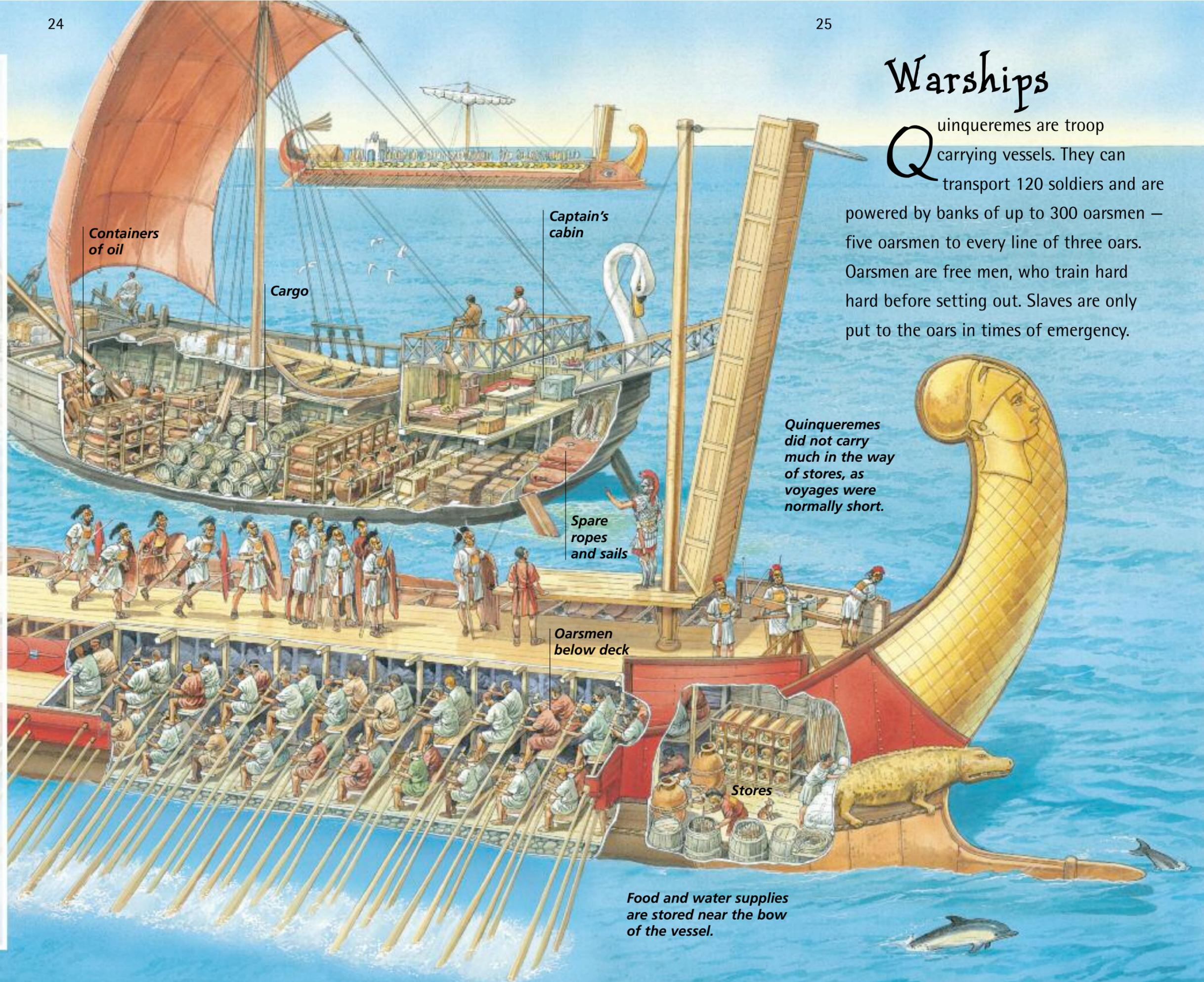
## POMPEII

*Pompeii and Herculaneum were ports on the bay of Naples. Wealthy merchants traded local produce—wine, cloth and garum (a fish sauce)—for glassware, jewels and spices. Much of our evidence about Roman life comes from the ruins of these two cities, which were destroyed in AD 79 when the volcano Vesuvius erupted, burying the cities under several metres of ash (above). To escape the falling ash and noxious fumes, many people made their way to the harbour, to escape by boat (below). In Herculaneum, the city was evacuated, but hundreds of people died along the shore while waiting to be rescued.*



## Warships

**Q**uinqueres are troop carrying vessels. They can transport 120 soldiers and are powered by banks of up to 300 oarsmen — five oarsmen to every line of three oars. Oarsmen are free men, who train hard before setting out. Slaves are only put to the oars in times of emergency.



Containers of oil

Cargo

Captain's cabin

Spare ropes and sails

Oarsmen below deck

Stores

*Quinqueres did not carry much in the way of stores, as voyages were normally short.*

*Food and water supplies are stored near the bow of the vessel.*

## WAR ELEPHANTS

Elephants were used in battle because of their immense size and strength. They gave their riders a great advantage, being high up above the action. In battle, the enemy could be attacked both by the men riding in the towers on the elephants' backs, and the beasts themselves. Their sheer size made them a terrifying enemy for an opposing army to face. The elephants' trunks and tusks were dangerous weapons, and there was the ever-present danger for the soldiers of being trampled underfoot.

## FIRST PUNIC WAR

The wars between Rome and Carthage are called the Punic Wars. The first war broke out in 264 BC over the island of Sicily, which lay directly between Italy and Carthage. Much of the fighting took

place at sea, and at first a victory for Carthage looked certain. Then the Romans built a massive fleet, which finally defeated Carthage in 241 BC. But that was not the end of the story.

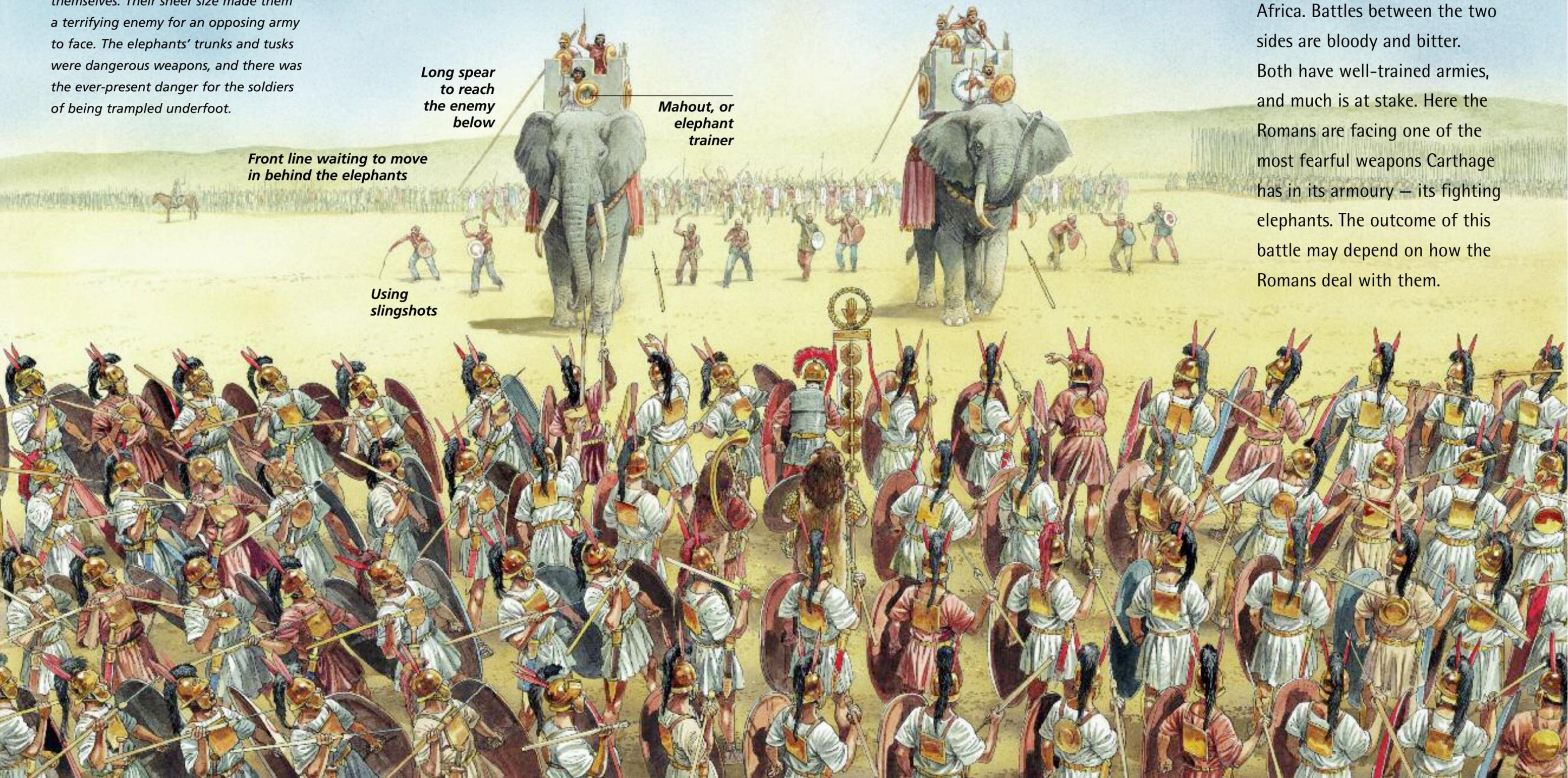
## SECOND PUNIC WAR

In 219 BC war between Rome and Carthage broke out again when Carthage attacked a Spanish city that was an ally of Rome. It then set about invading Italy. Carthage had a brilliant general called Hannibal, who marched his army,

including 37 elephants, across the Alps and into northern Italy. Despite his victories, Hannibal was defeated by the Romans in 202 BC and Carthage eventually fell in 146 BC.

## Into battle!

For decades, Rome has been locked in a struggle for power in the Mediterranean with Carthage, a rival city on the coast of North Africa. Battles between the two sides are bloody and bitter. Both have well-trained armies, and much is at stake. Here the Romans are facing one of the most fearful weapons Carthage has in its armoury – its fighting elephants. The outcome of this battle may depend on how the Romans deal with them.



Long spear  
to reach  
the enemy  
below

Mahout, or  
elephant  
trainer

Front line waiting to move  
in behind the elephants

Using  
slingshots

# Romans in retreat

Facing the elephants with a solid wall of shields is the wrong tactic. Like modern tanks, the elephants can easily force their way through a line of soldiers, breaking it up and weakening it. Then all the attackers have to do is flood into the gaps the elephants have created and wreak havoc among the Roman ranks.



## ROME'S ENEMIES

Besides the Carthaginians, the Romans faced opposition to their growing empire from the Celtic peoples who lived in Europe at the time. In Britain, Queen Boudicca (above) and her tribe, the Iceni, recaptured many towns from the Romans before she was eventually defeated.

In the 4th century AD, the Empire increasingly came under attack from Barbarians, the peoples from beyond its borders: Huns, Goths, Vandals and others. The western Roman Empire finally collapsed when Rome was sacked in 455.

The elephants' tusks are tipped with bronze. Some have spears attached.

## MOVING CASTLES

Towers to carry soldiers were fastened to the elephants' backs by ropes or chains. The towers made the

elephants look even bigger and helped to protect the soldiers from arrows and other missiles.

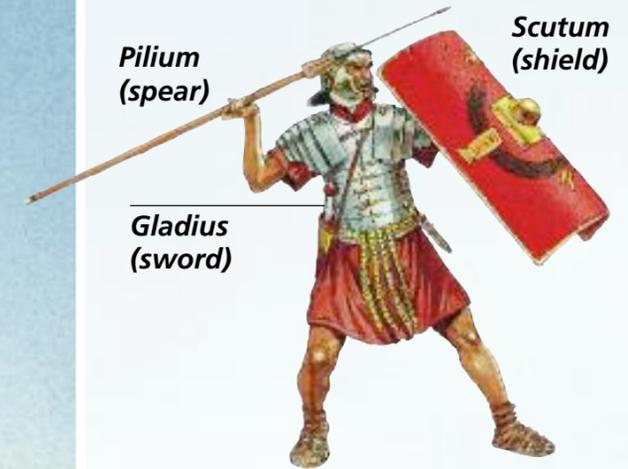
Archers have a clear aim from the castles.

Elephants crash through the Roman ranks

Pilium (spear)

Gladius (sword)

Scutum (shield)



## BATTLE TACTICS

Legionaries (above) were armed with a shield (scutum), sword (gladius) and spear (pilium). Spears could be launched at the enemy over the heads of the Roman soldiers. Sword fighting was for combat at close quarters.

The army usually fought in tight formation, maintaining an unbroken front line, with troops in reserve to immediately replace any fallen men and fill in any gaps.

In the testudo (below), men marched in close formation overlapping their shields both over their heads and in front of them. This formed an almost impenetrable barrier, protecting the men from arrows and spears as they advanced towards the enemy. The word testudo means tortoise.



# Glossary



**Aqueduct** A system of pipes and channels that brought clean water into towns from natural springs and rivers.

**Arena** A place where Romans went to watch entertainments, particularly gladiator combat and animal hunts.

**Atrium** Central reception area in a *domus* with an open roof and an *impluvium*.

**Basilica** A large public building where important local business was carried out—much like a modern town hall.

**Caldarium** Hot room in a bath-house.

**Corvus** Boarding platform on a quinquereme.

**Domus** A large town house owned by a rich Roman citizen.

**Forum** An open space in the middle of a town where meetings, and sometimes markets, were held.

**Frigidarium** Cold room in a bath-house.

**Gladiator** A slave, criminal or prisoner of war trained to fight other gladiators and animals in an arena for the entertainment of the people.

**Hypocaust** A central-heating system using hot air from a furnace channelled through channels under floors and within walls.

**Impluvium** Decorative rainwater pool at the centre of an atrium in a *domus*. It helped to cool the house in hot weather.

**Insula** An apartment block in a town.

**Peristyle** A garden in a *domus* surrounded by a colonnade.

**Quinquereme** A warship powered by 300 oars arranged in three rows on each side of the ship. There were five oarsmen to each column of three oars.

**Roman Empire** The lands and people controlled by Rome for about 400 years from 27 BC.

**Triclinium** A dining room, usually furnished with three sofas around a table.



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Vandals 28  
Vesuvius, Mount 24  
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